

Lesson 7: Introduction to Line Quality

By Darlene Nguyen - August 15, 2017

Do your drawings have good structure but lack depth, weight, texture or realism? In this lesson, we're going to learn how line quality can:

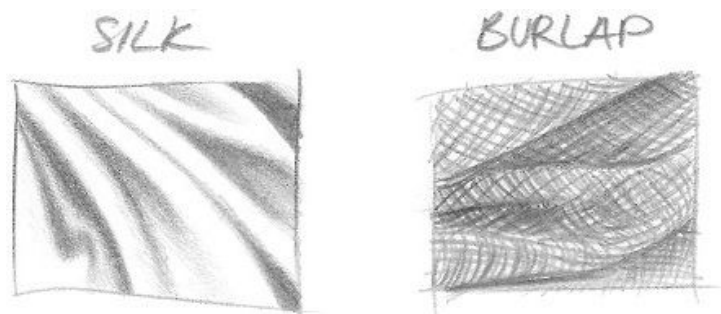
- Accentuate a drawing to make it more interesting.
- Allow you to direct the viewer's eyes where you want.
- How it can make 3D objects appear even more realistic.
- And more!

The Power of Lines!

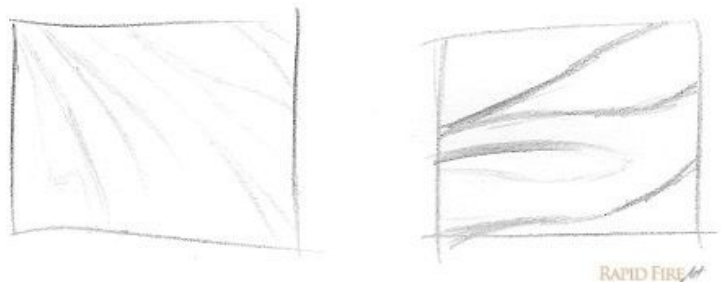
The weight (or thickness) of a line is referred to as line quality and can suggest material, lighting, weight and more! Introduce a variety of line weights into your artwork to enhance it further. You can find some examples of this below.

Texture and Material

Thin lines appear softer than thick ones when it comes to drawing textures on clothing or even strands of hair:



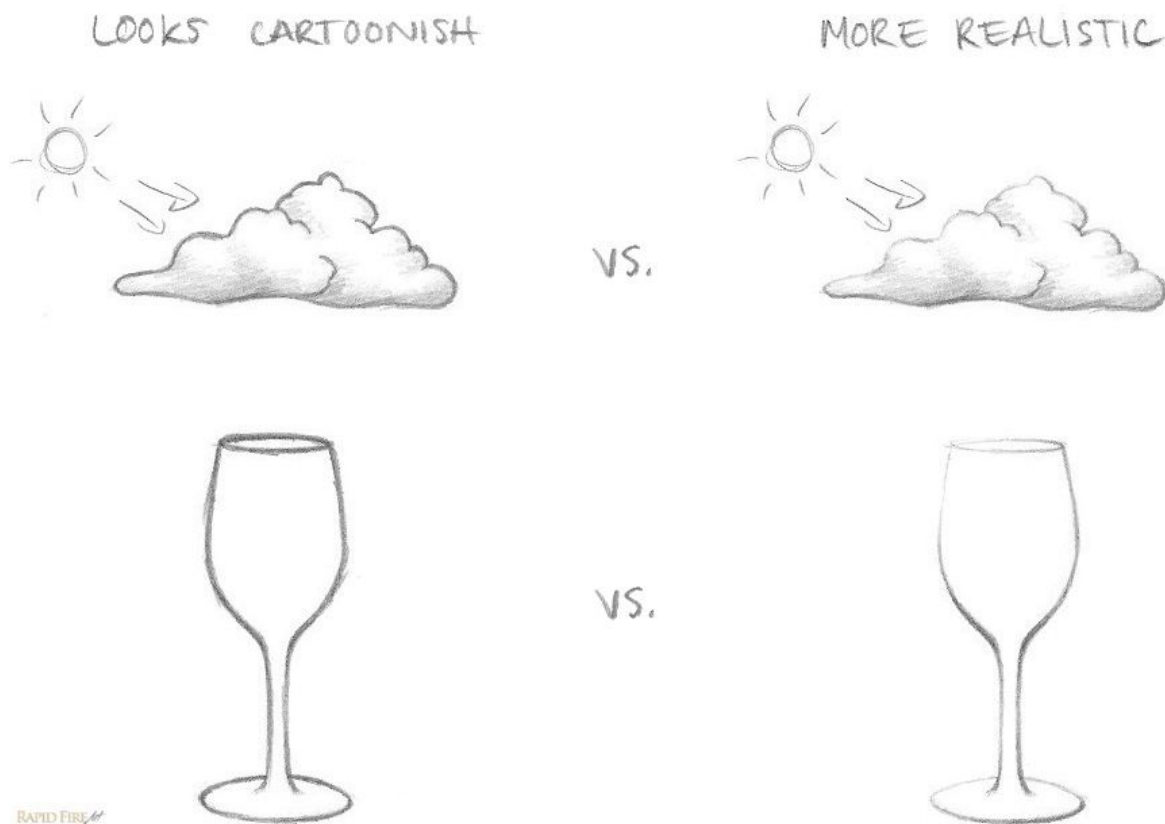
The example on the left contains very faintly sketched lines because each strand of silk is very thin. You can probably imagine how the fabric feels just by looking at it. Burlap on the



other hand is a very rough and thick material, so each of the lines are bold and blunt.

Lighting

If you're drawing a scene with high contrast, try using heavier lines for shadowed areas. Any side facing the light should be thin. In certain places, lines can even be non-existent – leading the viewer to **fill in the gaps** on their own.



The sun and arrows illustrate the direction in which the light is shining. For the wine glass example, there is a good mix of thin, medium and thick lines. The thickest lines can also be interpreted as the thickest areas of glass. While the thinnest parts show how **delicately thin** the mouth of the glass can get.

Weight

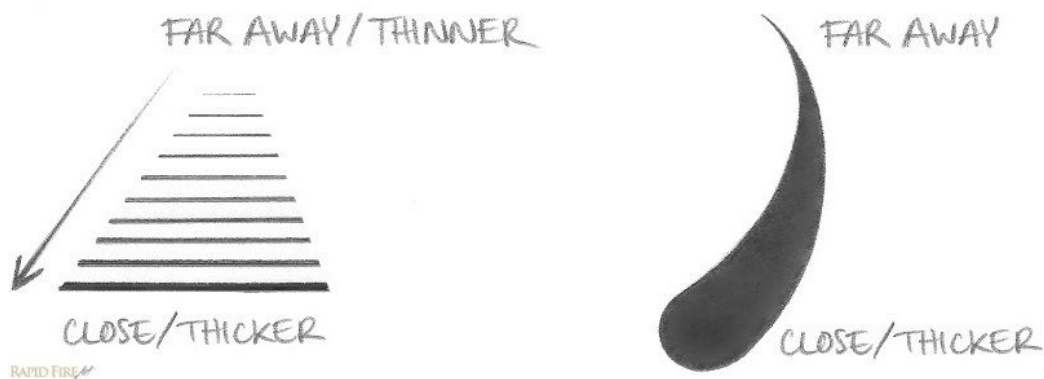
Check out how a simple change in line weight can transform an object from light to heavy!



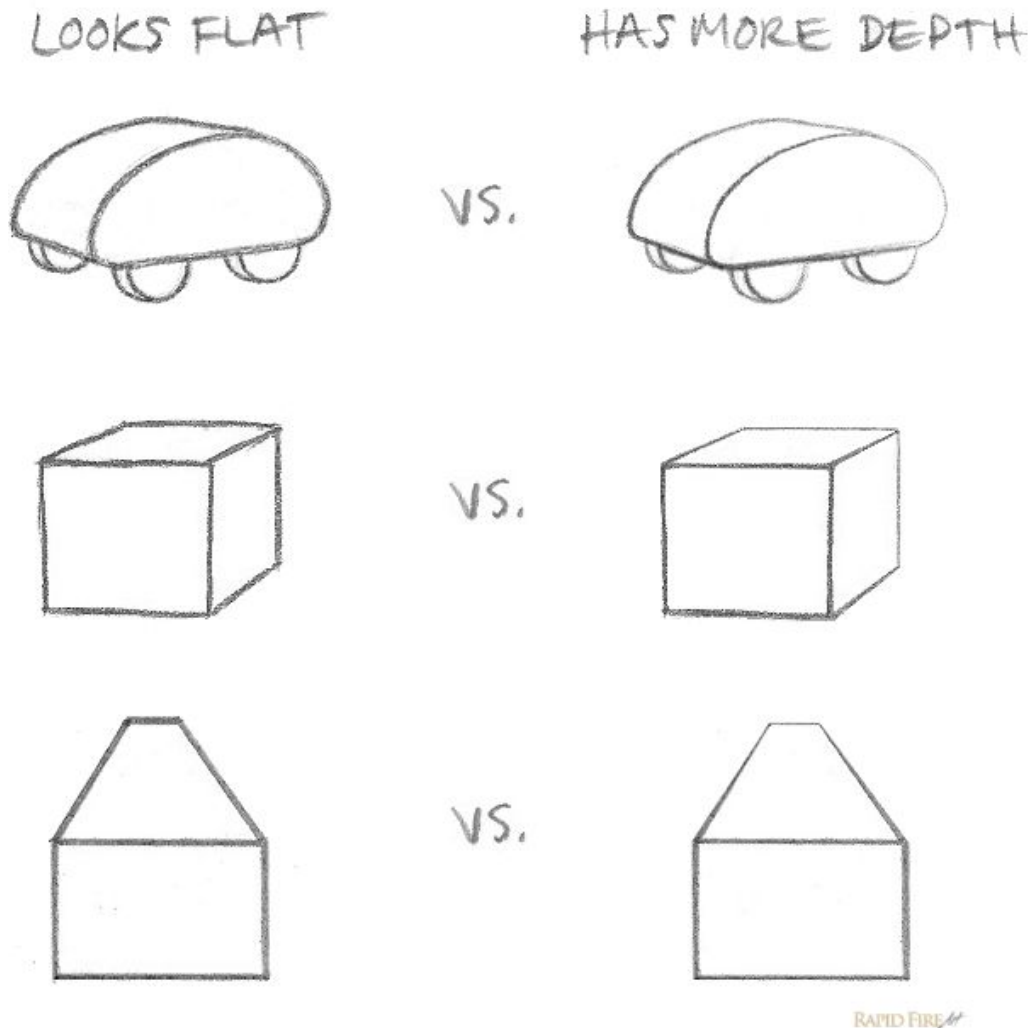
This also works the other way around. What would you do if you wanted to draw a helium balloon?

Enhance 3 Dimensional Drawings

You can manipulate the viewer's perception by using thin lines for objects far away in the distance and thicker lines for objects, edges, etc in the foreground. The closer the object, the thicker it should be drawn to better illustrate that 3 dimensional space.



Here are some examples of 3D objects being enhanced so they appear even more realistic:



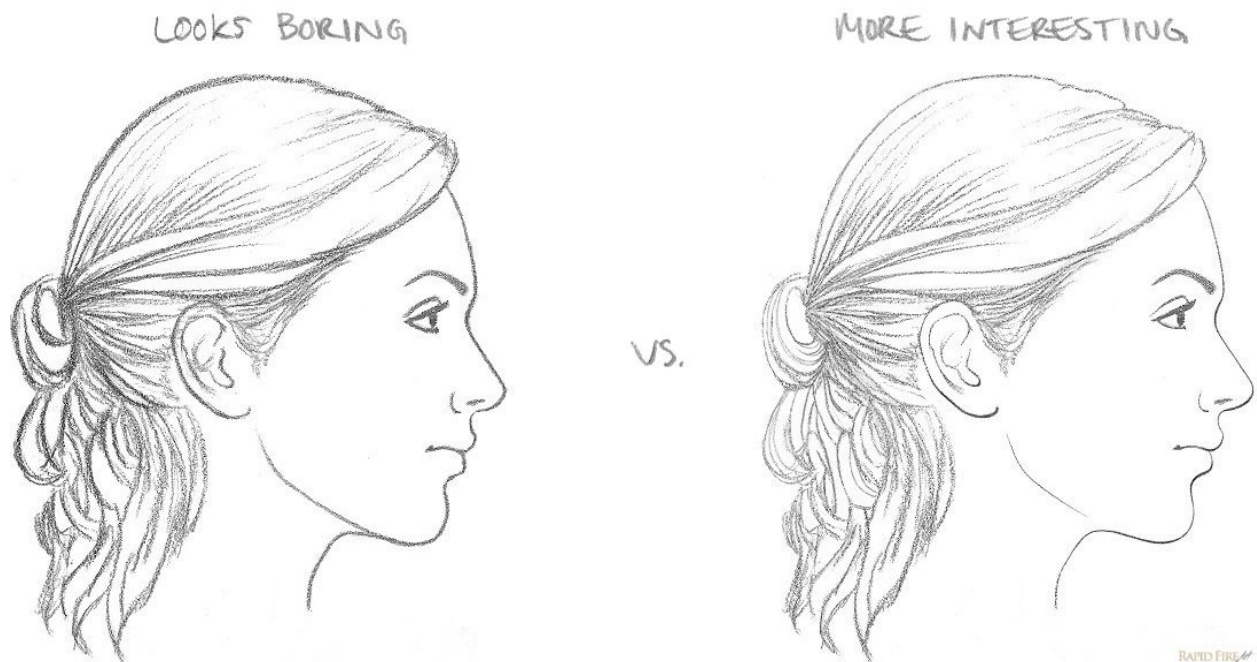
An object stretching far into the distance appears to become thinner and thinner.

If I want to draw a long road stretching beyond the horizon on the morning of a foggy day, I would gradually lighten and thin out my lines until they disappear into the fog.

Create Interest and Guide the Viewer's Eyes

A drawing done using the same line weight from beginning to end can look a little boring. Consistent line weight can confuse people because they don't quite know where to look.

Vary the line weight to guide your viewer's eyes where you'd like them to go.

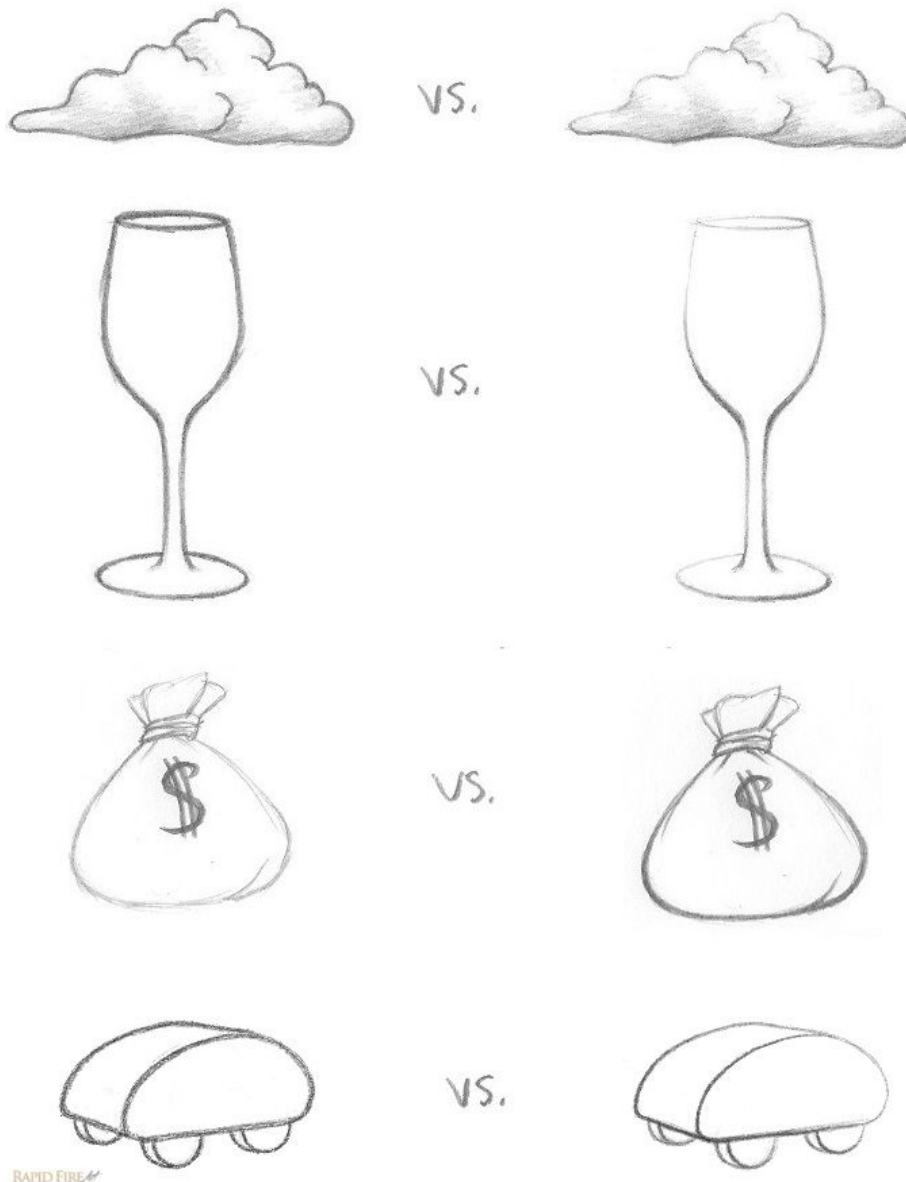


Our eyes are naturally drawn to thicker lines. You can use this to your advantage when drawing an image that tells a story!

If you're drawing a scene with various objects or people, you can draw secondary subjects using medium to thin lines so they don't stick out as much as the main subject. This is very helpful especially in a busy scene.

Homework Assignment and Challenge

Go over your sketches and drawings from the previous lessons and transform them using what you learned in this tutorial. Post 10 of your favorite transformations on the [RFA Facebook page](#) in 'before and after' style like the one below and I'll feature your work here, along with a link to your facebook page!



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Happy drawing guys!

Read more: <http://rapidfireart.com/2017/08/15/lesson-7-introduction-to-line-quality/>