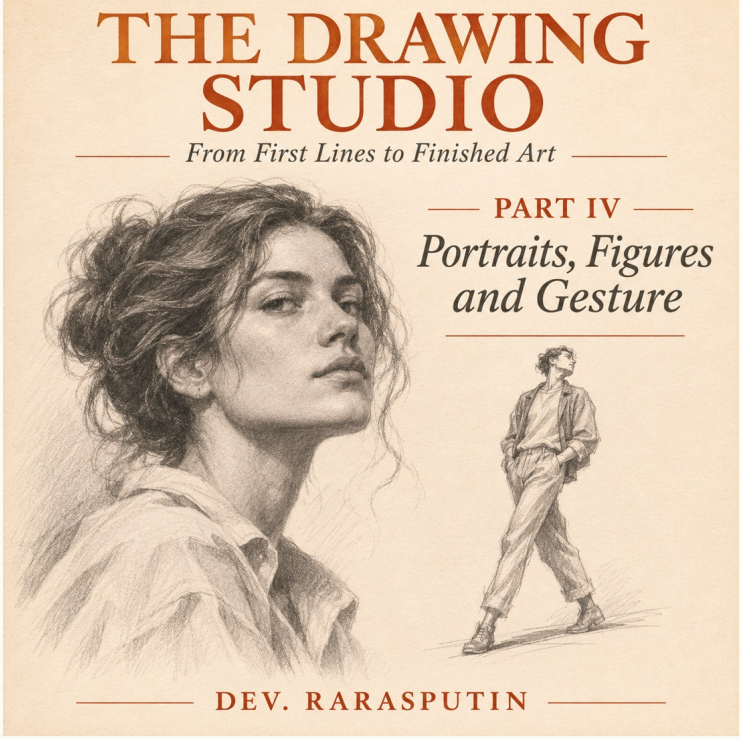
FROM FIRST LINES TO FINISHED ART

The Drawing Studio

Part IV / Portraits, Figures and Gesture



Pencil-and-paper instruction and sketch practice.
200 pages / 16 lessons / AI-generated reference plates and original vector teaching diagrams.

HOW TO USE THIS VOLUME

Start with simple materials

A pencil, an eraser and ordinary drawing paper are enough to begin. A spare sheet is useful for testing marks and values. Use materials you already have before deciding whether a different pencil grade or paper would help a particular task.

This is a tutorial and sketch-practice workbook. Its 200 pages include generous drawing space, comparison studies and project sheets. It is not 200 pages of continuous prose, a video course or an interactive fillable PDF. Print selected pages or draw in a separate sketchbook.

Each twelve-page lesson moves through a concept, a reference plate, a guided sequence, focused drills, observation, diagnosis, timed options, variation, transfer, a mini project, review and a final study. Reuse a lesson when it gives you a useful comparison.

The series progresses toward advanced projects. Completing pages alone does not guarantee professional skill. Use the exercises to develop observation, construction, deliberate practice and specific review.

My materials, current experience and one visible drawing skill to practice

REFERENCE GUIDE

Read the images critically

The four-panel plates are AI-generated illustrative references. Upper left is a realistic grayscale reference; upper right is a light construction study; lower left is a contour treatment; lower right is a developed value study. They are not photographs from life or exact measured demonstrations.

AI images may contain inconsistent details or geometry. Do not copy an ambiguity simply because it appears in a plate. Use a real object, your own hand, a clear photograph, or a consenting adult sitter when a detail needs confirmation. The original vector diagrams are simplified teaching models, not tracings of the generated plates.

Reference groups in this volume:

1. adult head and shoulders in three-quarter view
2. fully clothed adult seated on a plain chair
3. two adult hands resting open on a tabletop
4. fully clothed adult standing with weight on one leg

Record the source of a study honestly: observation from life, your own photograph, another reference used with permission, or an AI-generated practice plate. Do not present an AI-reference study as direct observation from life.

A REPEATABLE DRAWING SEQUENCE

Practice with a visible question

Observe

Compare the whole envelope, main directions, relative dimensions, gaps and large value groups before selecting details.

Construct

Use light provisional masses and guides. Check relationships while changes remain easy. A guide is useful only when it helps explain the observed view.

Practice

Choose one visual focus for a study. Repeat with a deliberate comparison rather than filling a page with unrelated marks.

Review

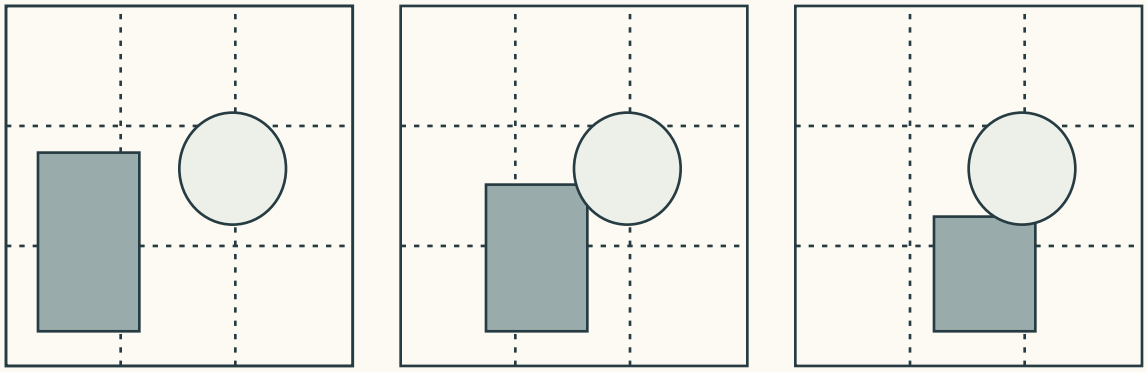
Name a specific issue in proportion, structure, values, edges or composition. Keep a first attempt so that a later version can be compared honestly.

Suggested study times are optional practice constraints, not speed tests. Work at a comfortable pace, change scale when useful, and pause when your hand needs a rest. Keep your viewing position steady when comparing a real setup.

LESSON 01 / UNDERSTAND

Place the portrait on the page

Begin with the head-and-shoulders envelope and the space around it. Decide how much room the gaze and shoulders need before drawing features. The crop affects the portrait's emphasis. A useful first study can remain simple and proportion-focused without attempting a polished likeness immediately.



Simplified original teaching diagram. Compare its principle with the actual subject rather than treating it as a tracing.

Focus for this study

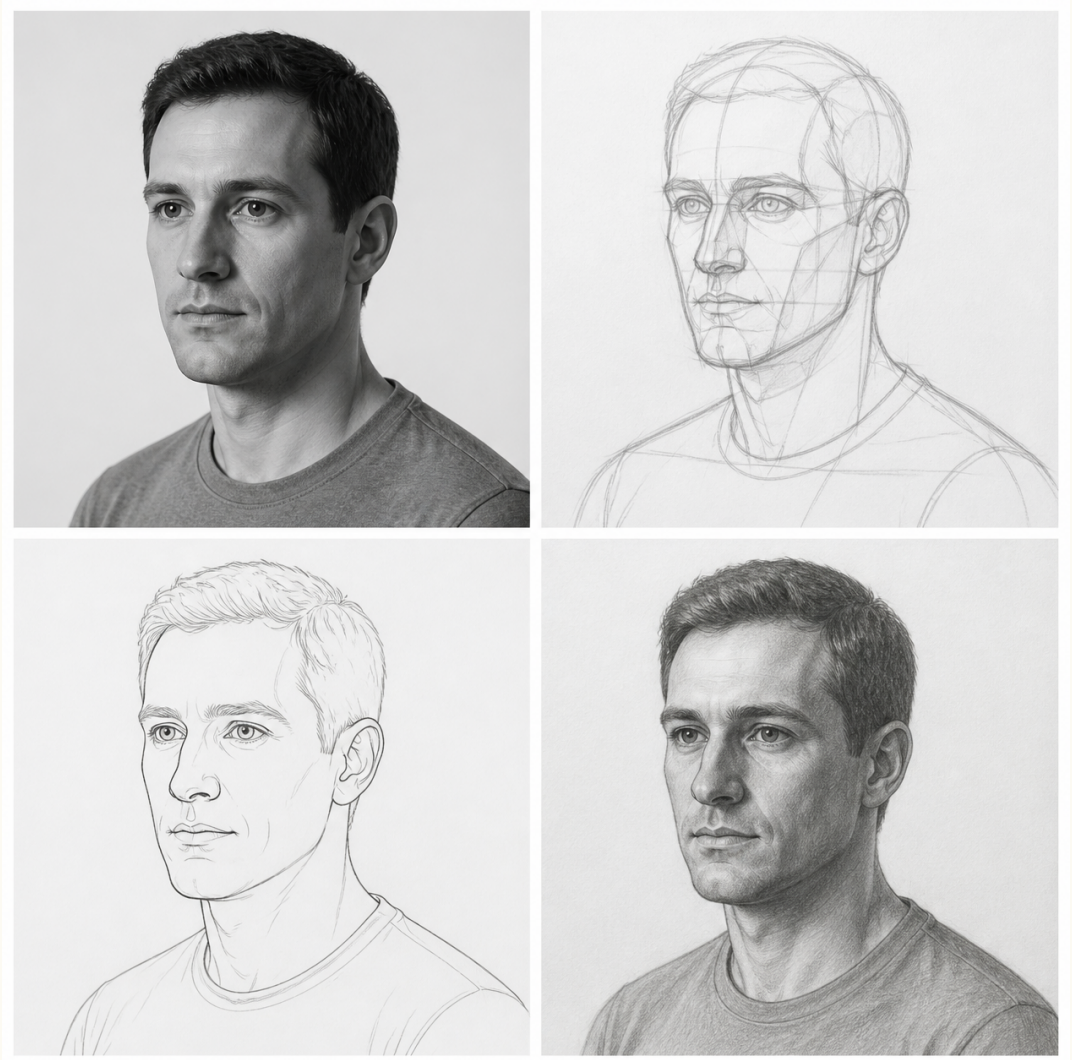
Does the head fit the chosen page before features are added?

What I will compare before adding detail

LESSON 01 / LOOK

Study the reference plate

Reference group: adult head and shoulders in three-quarter view



AI-generated illustrative plate: reference / construction / contour / value. The viewpoint and small details may vary; check uncertain structure against observation.

This lesson asks

Does the head fit the chosen page before features are added?

LESSON 01 / GUIDED SEQUENCE

Build the study in stages

1. Mark the portrait's height and width

Work lightly, compare the relevant relationship, and keep the previous stage available for review.

2. Compare the head with the shoulders

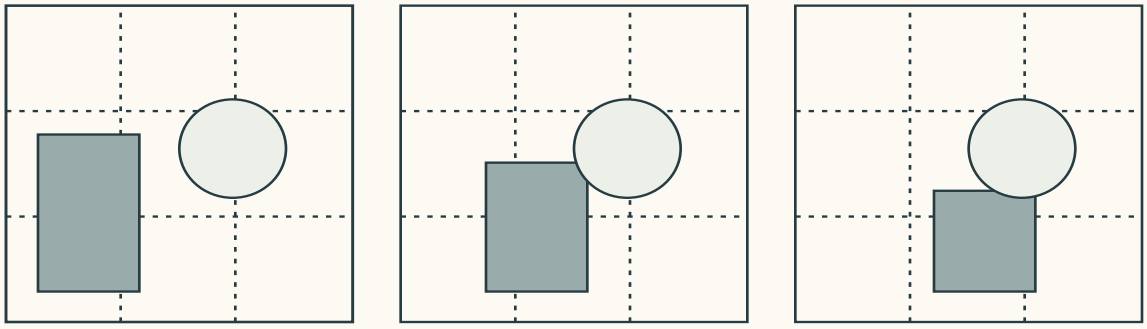
Compare this change with the whole subject before moving to the next stage.

3. Test the surrounding space

Compare this change with the whole subject before moving to the next stage.

4. Choose the crop.

Compare this change with the whole subject before moving to the next stage.



Correction to keep available

Recover the whole envelope and move the small feature within it.

LESSON 01 / MARK PRACTICE

Repeat one focused drill

Make four portrait-placement thumbnails without eyes, nose or mouth.

Use the first boxes for exploration and the later boxes for a deliberate correction. Change one feature at a time so you can describe what the comparison shows. Keep marks light when the task calls for construction.

First attempt

Compare

Adjust

Repeat

Choose

Check

One visible difference between the early and later attempts

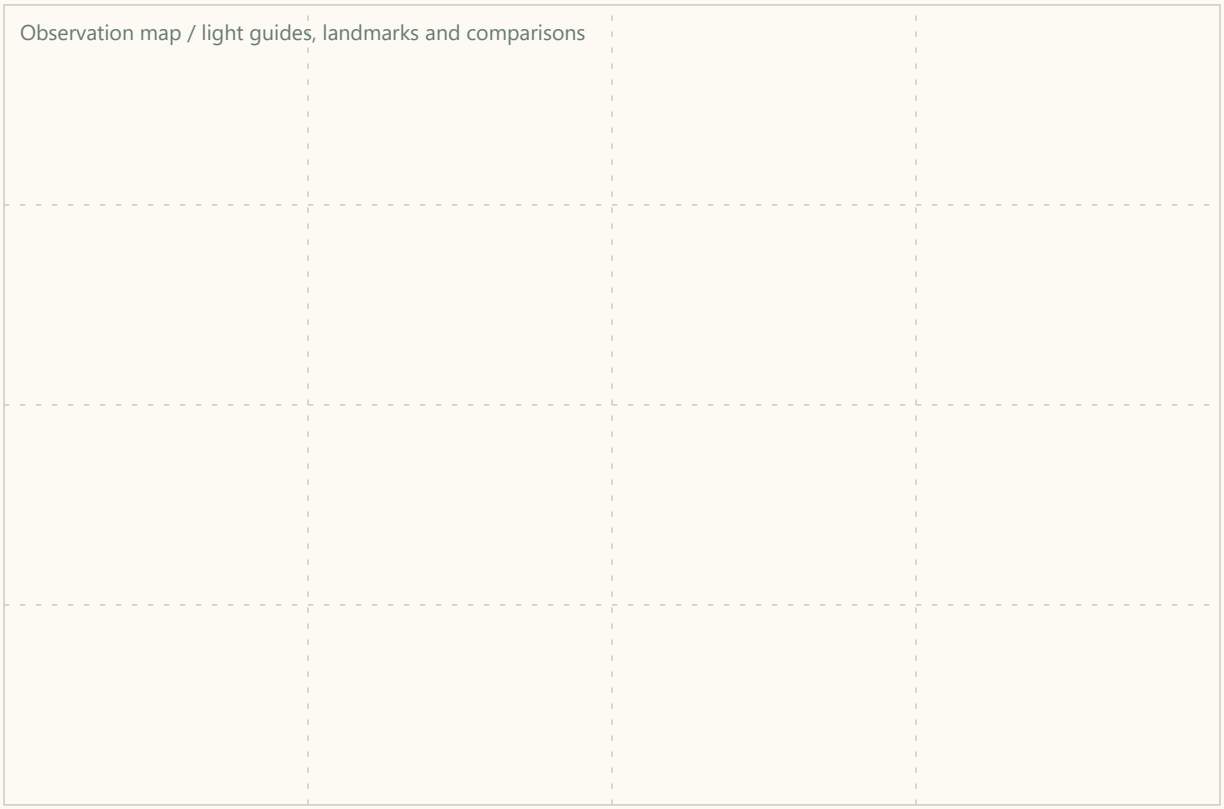
LESSON 01 / MEASURE AND COMPARE

Map the observation

Study adult head and shoulders in three-quarter view. Identify the overall envelope, one main direction, two useful landmark relationships and a gap or overlap. For a value-focused lesson, add the largest light and dark groups.

Keep this question visible

Does the head fit the chosen page before features are added?



The comparison that changed my drawing most

LESSON 01 / CORRECTION

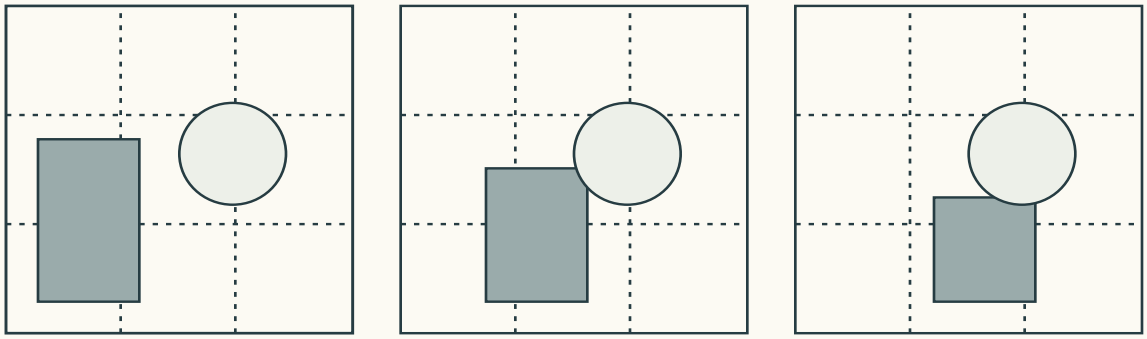
Diagnose before adding detail

A common problem

Starting with an eye can leave the head too large or poorly placed.

A more useful response

Recover the whole envelope and move the small feature within it.



This schematic is a comparison aid, not a claim that every reference contains this exact error. Apply the written correction to the actual study you are making.

My correction study / show the changed relationship

LESSON 01 / TIMED OPTIONS

Try three scales of attention

Use optional short, medium and longer study periods, such as one, three and ten minutes. The times are constraints for comparison, not performance scores. Choose comfortable intervals when needed.

Keep the same focus

Does the head fit the chosen page before features are added?

Short / main idea	Medium / structure	Longer / selection

What improved when I had more time, and what did not?

LESSON 01 / VARIATION

Change one visual decision

Make a new study with a different crop, page placement, scale or amount of detail. Keep the lesson focus recognizable. If you want a new viewpoint, use a real setup or another clear reference rather than pretending the plate shows an unseen side.

Practice anchor

Make four portrait-placement thumbnails without eyes, nose or mouth.

Original choice

New crop or scale

New emphasis

Chosen variation

Which variation serves the study best, and why?