Artists draw **lines** within a space to create a picture. A **shape** is made when both ends of a line connect. A shape can follow the outside edge of an object.

**Explore Your World!** **A CREATIVE EXERCISE USING REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE**

Art is a visual record of life. Your parents create a visual record of you when they take photographs of you. They want to remember what you look like at certain ages. George Catlin, the artist we will look at in this unit, painted the native tribes of North America. When Catlin was a boy, he saw Indian cultures vanish from the eastern United States as more people from Europe moved onto the land. He knew this would happen to the western tribes as well. He wanted to record their lives, and did so by making many paintings of tribal activities while living with them. Catlin watched and then worked from the information he saw and remembered. Making artwork from memory teaches us to pay closer attention to things we see.

**TRY IT:** Your life changes too. Think of something that is in your life now that may not be the same in the next few years. Draw a picture from memory. It may be a scene of a baseball game, family trip, or piano teacher as they instruct a student.

**OBJECTIVE:** to understand the purpose of art in recording visual information. Practice and improve observation skills through memory drawing.
Most artworks begin with lines. Look at the unfinished lower half of this painting by George Catlin. He used lines to draw the figure before he filled it in with paint. Lines that show edges are called outlines. These outlines show the shape of the man’s legs. The lines that show the folds of the cloth do not make specific shapes. Do you see that the lines are not all the same thickness? Lines can be thick, thin, wavy, long, or straight. What the line looks like is called the quality of the line.


Look for a variety of line qualities.

Light lines show the edges of his arm.

Lines go from thick to thin in the blanket folds.

Heavy outlines show his leg.

Lines with soft edges are used on the ground.
THE ARTIST:
George Catlin (1796-1872)
American Explorer and Painter

Catlin began his professional career as a portrait painter just forty years after the United States had become a nation. He decided to paint Indian tribes of the West after seeing a group of them traveling to Washington, D.C. When he was a child his parents welcomed an Indian into their home. Young George was fascinated by the way the Indian dressed and his mannerisms, but saw that this man seemed very much like them in many ways. From 1830-1836 Catlin traveled thousands of miles, following the trail of Lewis and Clark, and lived among 50 Indian tribes. He painted portraits and scenes of their customs including war, dances, and buffalo hunts on the plains. Later, Catlin traveled even further into unsettled territories to paint the Indians living west of the Rocky Mountains. He also traveled to South America. Although he worked hard to promote the idea of an Indian Gallery so that people could understand their way of life, George Catlin did not see a gallery in his lifetime.

THE TIMES: Native Americans did not have a tradition of painting or making permanent objects for display. Their art was for sacred purposes, largely unseen, and mobile because most tribes moved frequently. Portrait painting was a European tradition and a few frontiersmen, working independently, were brave enough to meet new tribes, live with them, and paint what they saw. What George Catlin, Seth Eastman, and other explorers brought into their culture was unique. They created the first permanent records of Native American life. You may have heard about a large area of land purchased by the United States of America in 1803. Thomas Jefferson, the third president, did not purchase it from the Native American tribes who lived there, but from the country of France, who had claimed it. It was called the Louisiana Purchase and covered most of the Midwest. Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark with fifty other men to explore the area. Their job was to keep journals with pictures of rivers, plants, animals, and the people groups who lived there. It was a time of great discovery and the whole nation was interested in finding out what the land looked like and who they shared the land with.

The original paintings for Catlin's Indian Gallery are now housed in the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The National Museum of the American Indian, established in 1989, and built on the National Mall in Washington D.C. shows Catlin's fine work in one of their displays. His dream of an Indian gallery was finally accomplished.

MAKE AN OBSERVATION DRAWING!
Look for lines and shapes outdoors. What you see may look complex at first, but think about how you will simplify it into lines and shapes. Look carefully at the DIRECTION OF THE LINES. In the example shown, the lines we see on a pumpkin are not straight, but curve.

Common Mistake
What You Really See
What Is Subject Matter?

Subject matter is the object of a picture. Subjects are often divided into categories like portrait, landscape, still life, animal, machine, and so on. In this book you will use a variety of subjects. Always choose subjects that you like within the categories suggested.

When you begin to draw, take time to study the subject you've chosen. Turn the paper vertically or horizontally to fit the object or scene you wish to draw. As you draw, allow your hand to move around the paper. Do not rest your hand in one spot and expect your fingers to do all the moving. That would make the muscles in your fingers very tired!

1. Draw light outlines to make sure every object will fit on the page.

2. Redraw lines as needed, and then erase lines you don't want.

3. Draw lines inside the object and improve the outline.

4. Add the details.

**SOMETHING TO TRY:** Find a subject from your toys or models. Spend time looking at the object to observe the direction of the lines and details before you begin to draw. Then draw the subject as you follow the instructions on this page. Don't worry about mistakes. Keep drawing and erase as needed.
Every time you step out the door, you have an opportunity to see objects in a new way. One part of your brain gives names to those objects and thinks about them in simple ways for easy identification. Using this part of your brain, you can identify the objects below as a fish, a tree, and a bird. But, making art is more than identifying objects.

When studying art you will begin to use your visual brain. Your visual brain will notice more complicated shapes and lines when you look at familiar objects. The objects may look more like the images below than like those above when you draw what you see.

Draw a picture of a favorite subject. Draw all the lines and shapes you see while looking carefully at the object. See the reference list on the right to get ideas for subject matter.

---

**YOU WILL NEED**
- Drawing pencil
- Vinyl eraser
- Drawing paper
- Pencil sharpener
- Drawing board

---

**REFER TO THE FOLLOWING WHEN DRAWING**

Get your ideas from real objects, such as:
- a collection of robots
- car models
- doll figures
- toys

---

Student work by Matthew Ichiyasu shows detail outside and inside the car. The paper is placed in the horizontal position to best fit the shape of the car.

---

**LOOK BACK!** Did you use lines and shapes in the drawing and look at the object as you drew it? Did you draw a subject that interests you?