MODULE 19

25 Days to Better Drawings

Sighting, Measuring, & Mapping

? What are we covering today?

Yesterday, we were introduced to three point perspective and saw how it can be used to create the illusion of space in drawings, especially in situations where a dynamic or extreme view is required.

Today, we'll look at strategies that can be used to help you find better accuracy in your observational drawings.

We'll take a look at using sighting, measuring, and mapping to lay out your drawing and create a simple still life using these techniques.

It's important to point out before we dive in that sighting is not a perfect science. It is merely a tool that we can use to help ensure better accuracy. It requires a thoughtful and rigid approach to drawing from observation.

! Today's Mindset

Today's mindset is…

"Sighting, measuring, and mapping are tools that we can use to ensure better accuracy in our drawings."

Sighting, measuring, and mapping are used concurrently. We use sighting to view the subject with a straight tool such as a pencil or paint brush.

Using this tool, we make measurements and comparisons. This is called measuring.

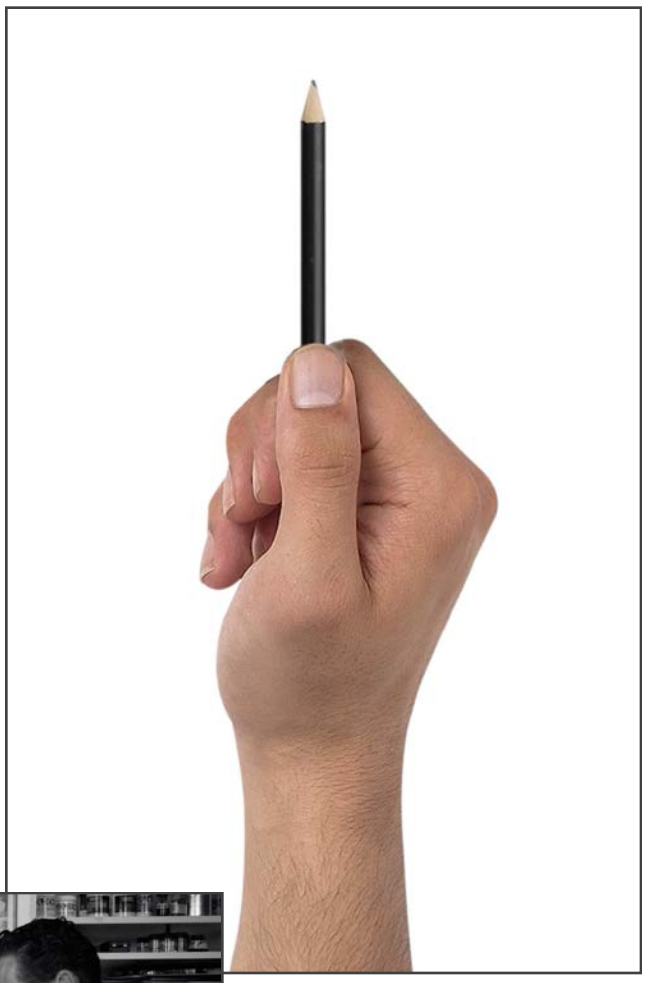
Then we use this information to map out the drawing on the drawing surface. This is called mapping.

These techniques can be used when working from a photo reference or directly from a live subject.

How It Works…

We'll first choose a tool. In most circumstances, a pencil will suffice.

We'll hold the pencil between our forefinger and thumb and stretch our arm out completely as we view the subject. Be sure that your elbow is locked and that you are sitting or standing in an upright position. You'll need to maintain this same posture every time you look and sight your subject.



You may tilt your head down over your shoulder and close one of your eyes to flatten what you are seeing.

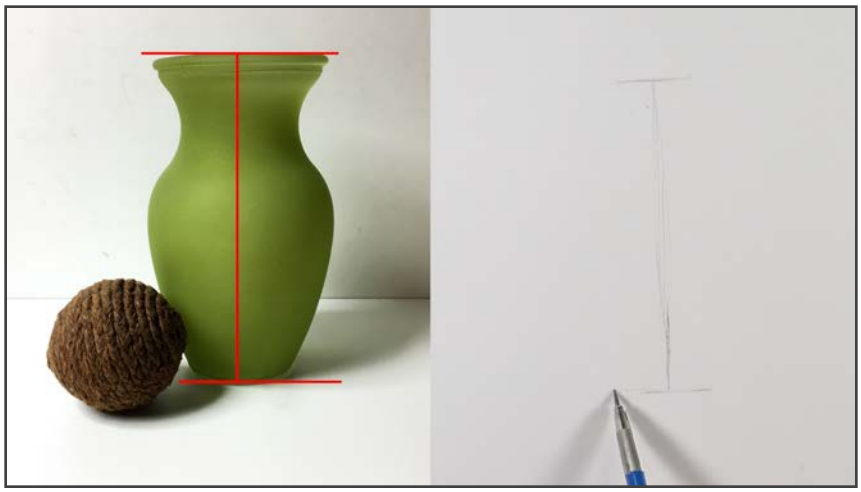
Align your arm up with your subject with the pencil or tool in hand.

You can slide your thumb up and down the tool to make measurements. These measurements are then used to make comparisons and map out your drawing on the surface.

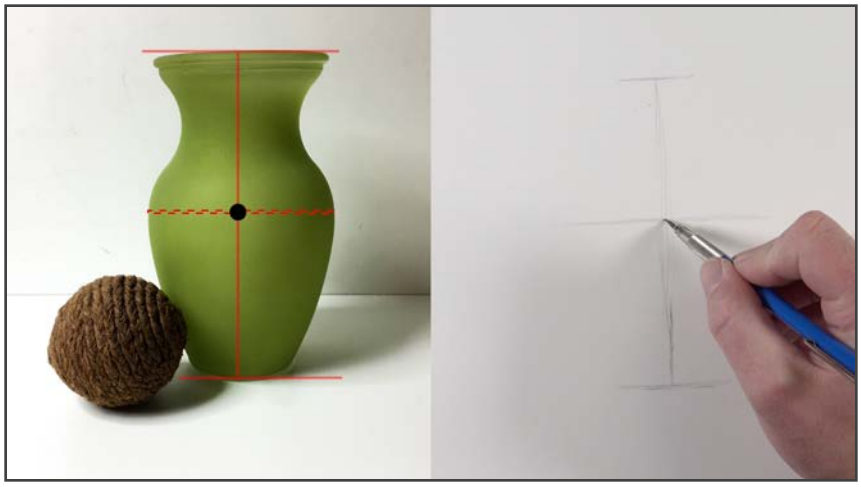
Today's Drawing Exercise

Now let's take a look at a practical example of how sighting, measuring, and mapping can be used to create a drawing. We'll draw a simple still life using a pencil as our measuring tool.

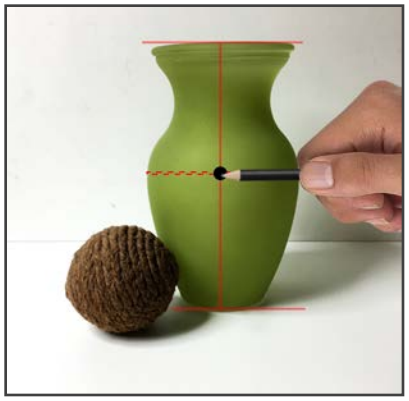
We'll start with the vase since it is the largest object. We'll start with a line from the top of the vase to the bottom on the drawing paper. This will help to ensure that we get the entire composition on the paper and provides us a starting point from which we can measure.

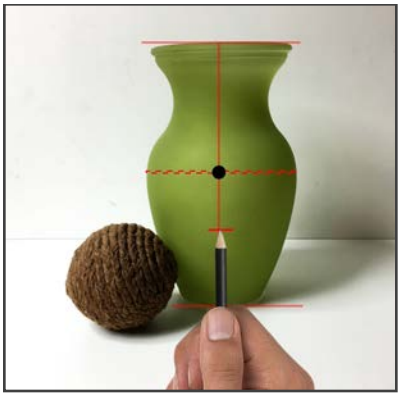


Next we'll find the approximate center of the vase and draw a line on the drawing surface. We can mark the center, where the lines intersect, with a small dot. This will help us make our subsequent measurements.

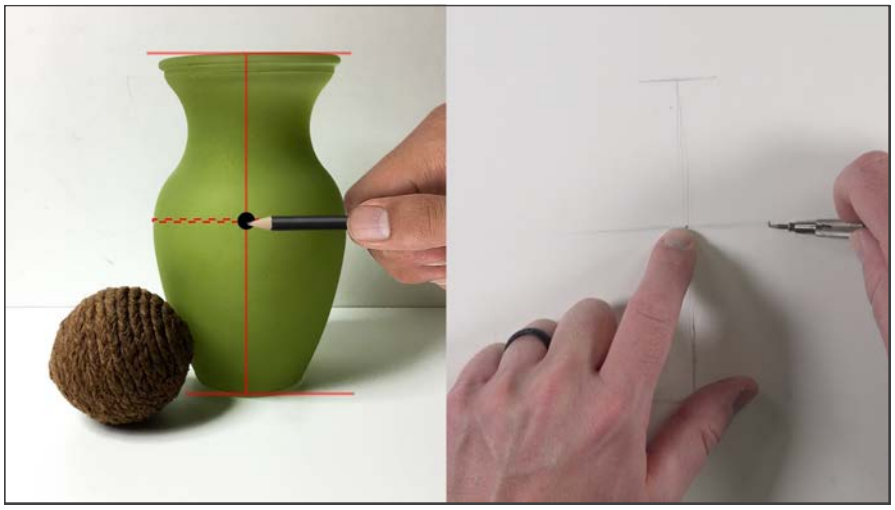


Next we'll figure out the approximate width of the vase. We'll measure one half of the vase and compare it with the bottom half of the vase. We see that half the width of the vase is slightly more than one fourth of the height of the vase.

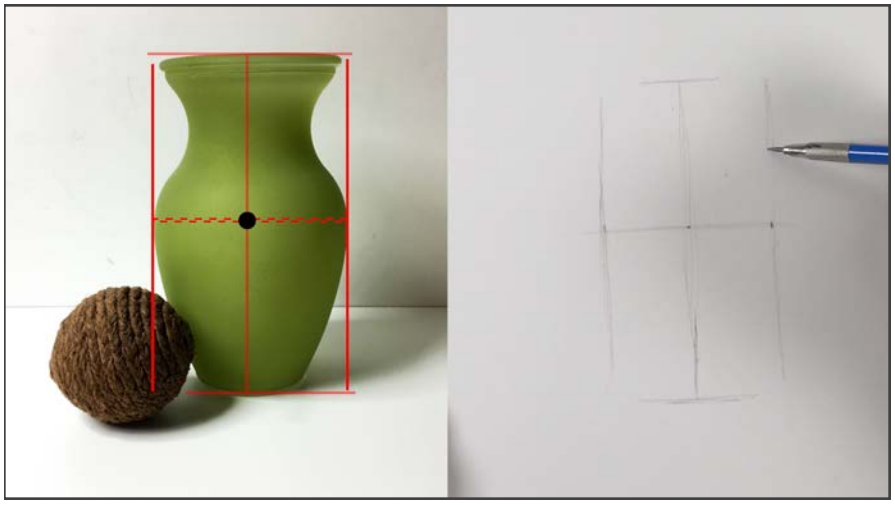




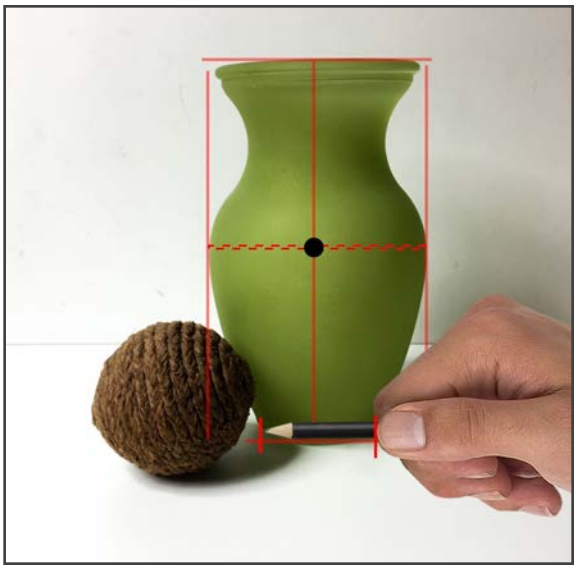
Using this measurement and comparison, we can mark half the width of the vase on either side of the center mark on the drawing paper.



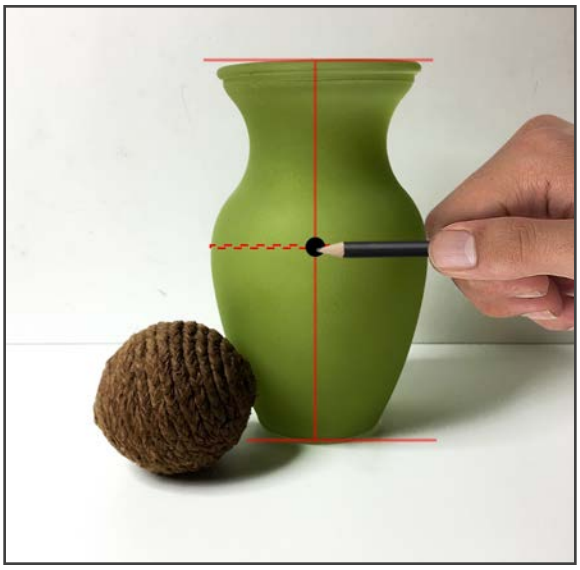
Then using these marks as a guide, we can draw a couple of vertical lines that mark the width of the entire vase. This creates a box around the area in which the vase is to be drawn.



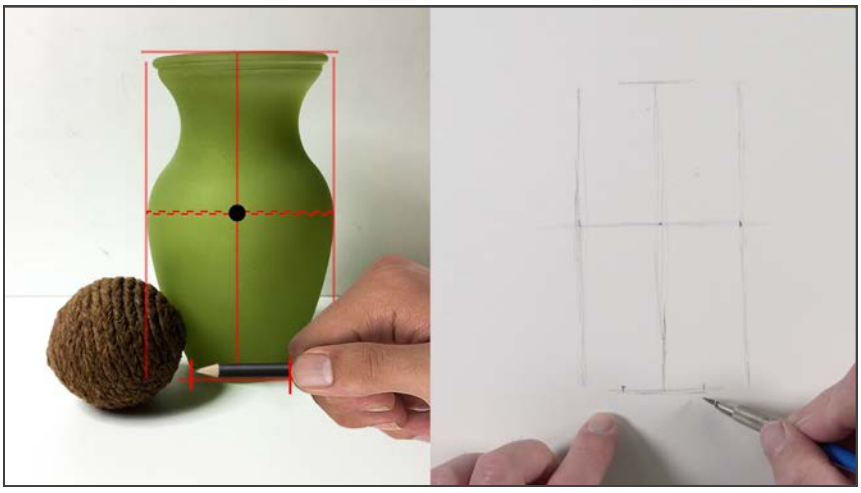
Now we'll figure out the width of the bottom of the vase. We'll measure it with the pencil and look for another area in which to make a comparison.

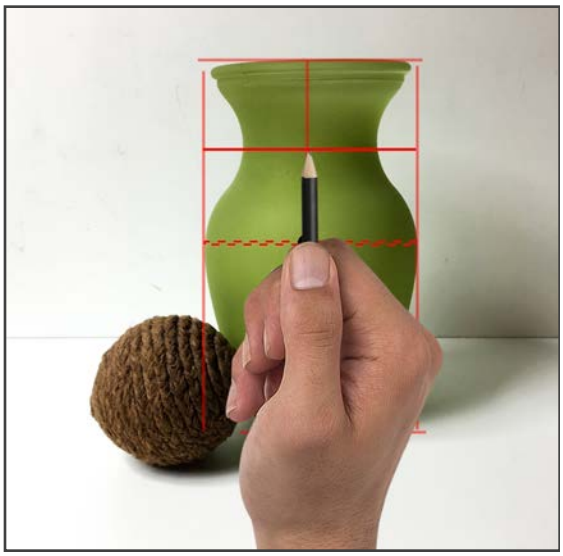


Conveniently, we see that the width of the bottom of the vase is the same as half the width of the vase at its widest point.



Using this measurement, we can mark the width of the bottom of the vase.

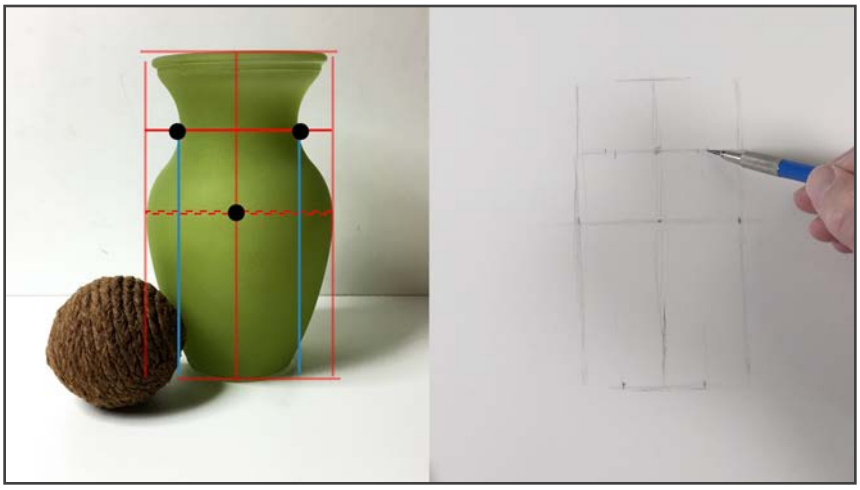




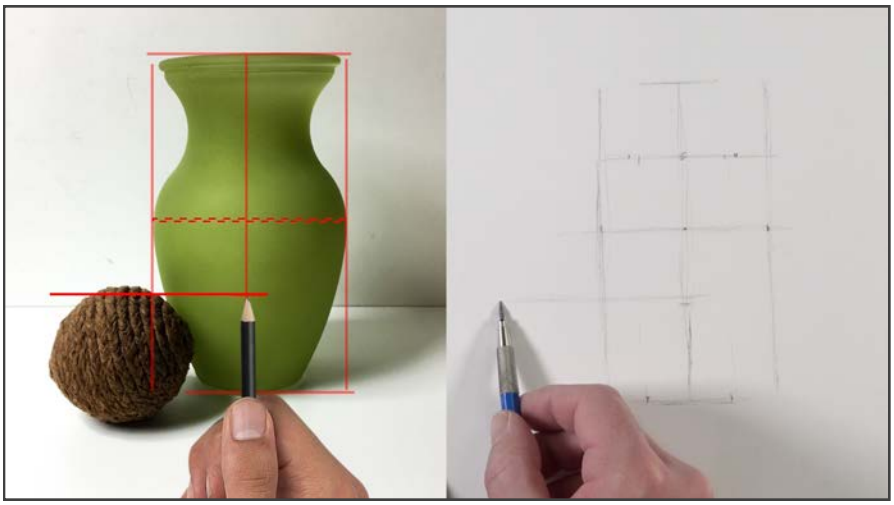
Now we'll determine the width of the vase at the concave section at the top. We'll first measure to find the point at which it is most recessed. Measuring from the middle line, we see that the vase is most recessed half way between the top of the vase and middle line.

We'll mark this line on the drawing surface.

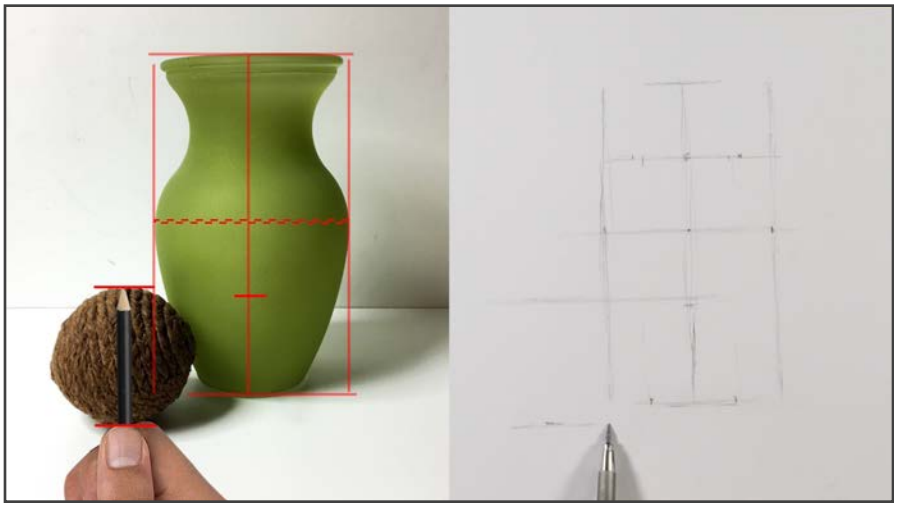
Now we'll look for an area to make comparisons. We can see that the width of the bottom of the vase is similar to the width of the concave section. When we compare it, we notice that the width of the top section is slightly wider than the width of the bottom of the vase. We'll mark this measurement on the drawing surface.



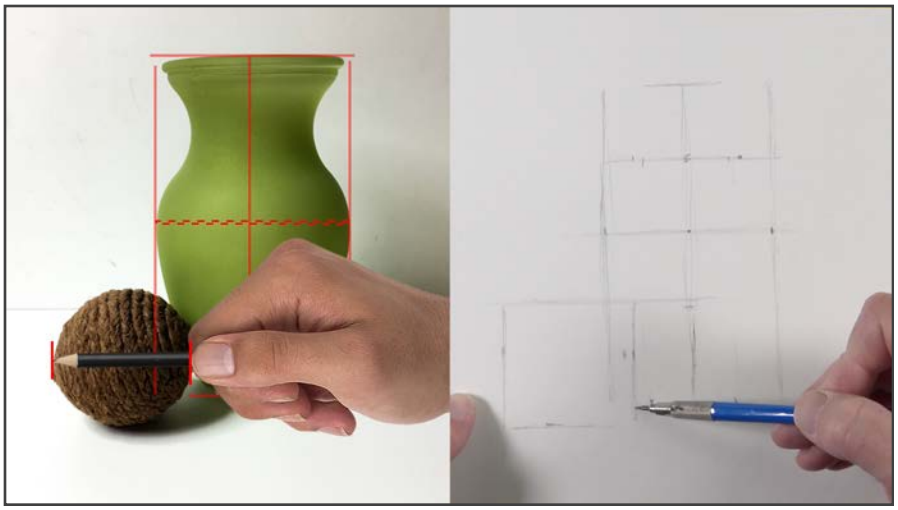
Before drawing in the contours for the vase, we'll go ahead and map the ball. We'll first determine its location. Using the measurement of half the width of the vase, we can see that the top of the ball is slightly higher. We'll mark this location and draw a line out.



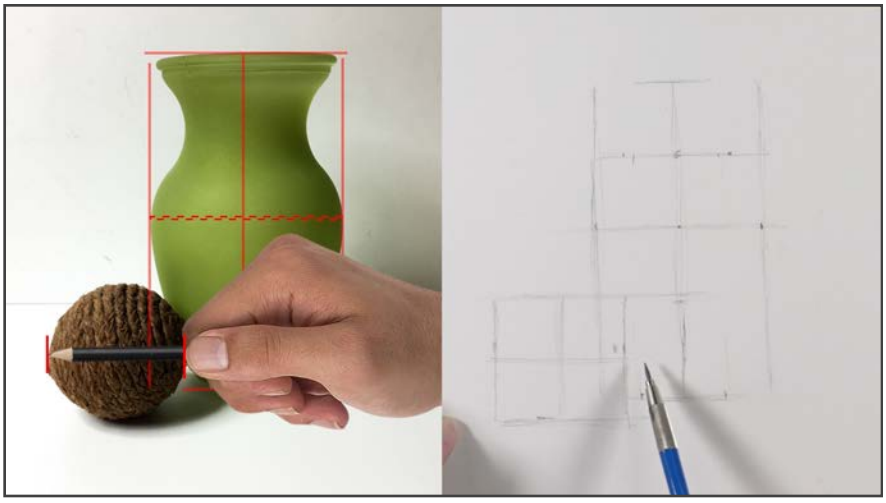
We can then measure the height of the ball and mark it on the drawing surface.



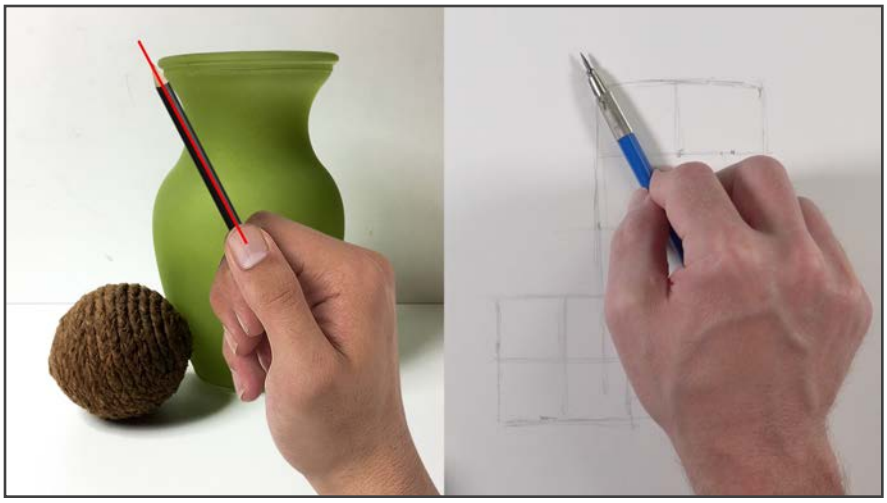
Measuring the width of the ball reveals that it is equal in height and width. We'll mark this measurement and draw lines for the boundaries. This creates a square that slightly overlaps the rectangle drawn for the vase.



It may be helpful to draw two intersecting lines within this square. We can use these lines to help us draw the contours of the ball in a moment.



As we begin drawing the contours, we can use the measuring tool to make comparisons between any angles that we see.



Using the marks that we have in place - thanks to our measuring and mapping, we can draw in the contours. We'll continue to look at the subject, making additional comparisons as we go.

We can reinforce the contour lines and add some variety in the line. We'll also add a few details to the ball and the top of the vase.

We'll then quickly add a bit of value and shading to make the objects appear as forms.

Today we learned that sighting, measuring, and mapping are useful tools that we can use to ensure better accuracy in our drawings. It isn't a perfect science but it is quite useful. These techniques can also be used to check our work and make changes if necessary.

Tomorrow, we'll take a look at positive and negative space and how it can help us to create more accurate drawings.