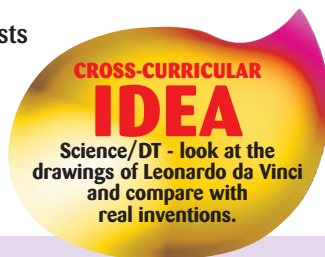


Black Pen Drawings

Use fine fibre-tipped pens to encourage a looser drawing style and to avoid the repeated use of an eraser.

Materials

Examples of portraits by a range of artists
Fine fibre-tipped pens - black
Cartridge paper
Drawing boards
Clips to hold paper to board
Model (teacher or other children).



Method

Children are often uncomfortable with leaving drawn lines that they consider to be wrong. Use of fine pens means the lines have to stay and, with practice, children will become more confident.

- Show the children a variety of portraits by artists such as Holbein, Rembrandt and van Gogh. Discuss and draw children's attention to various features of each portrait including lighting, how dark areas are shown, the features of the sitter, what position the sitter is in etc.
- Arrange the classroom with tables put against walls and chairs arranged in a horseshoe shape around the teacher acting as model. The teacher's role is to talk the children through the process of drawing the human figure, bringing attention to proportion, position and size of features, folds in clothing etc. Alternatively have children work in pairs with one modelling and the other drawing before reversing roles.
- Fix paper to drawing boards and seat the children with the boards on their laps. Encourage them to work in the way that feels most natural to them.
- Encourage the children to start with the face, head and features as this is always the focal point of a portrait.
- As the teacher models he/she can bring children's attention to particular areas such as hair and suggest the kind of marks that could be made to represent this. This should be building on previous work in other lessons or in sketchbooks looking at mark making.
- It is useful to take a break periodically where the children can walk around and look at each others' work and comment positively about which they like or what has been done well.
- Avoid making this a long activity as short but frequent sessions have proven to be more beneficial in building confidence.



YEAR 5 BOY

Taking it Further

Drawings can be used as the basis for paintings after looking at painted portraits by a range of artists. Start the activity by dividing the class into groups of 5 or 6 then sectioning the paper accordingly. Each child starts drawing in one section then passes the work along to the next who works in the next section and so on until all sections are complete to create a collaborative portrait. A section could be assigned to each child so that they only draw that one, enabling them to refine their drawing each time they do it.

Children are often uncomfortable about leaving lines in place that show what they consider to be mistakes. If this persists try showing them drawings by known artists who keep their sketching lines in place even when the work is finished e.g. Michelangelo or da Vinci.