

Homework 2

Line

What is Line in Terms of Art?

Line is one of the formal [elements of art](#). It is considered by many to be the most basic element of art. In terms of art, line is considered "a moving dot".

A simple way of thinking of a line is to imagine a point that moves...



Drawing and Painting with Line

Line has an endless number of uses in the creation of both drawings and paintings. Although we typically associate line with drawing, it's also foundational to painting.

Contour Lines

Perhaps the most obvious use of line is when it is used to define the edges or boundaries of a subject. We can obviously communicate a subject's edges by using line. In most cases, when we begin a drawing, we start by drawing the outlines of the subject.

The outlines are just the beginning since line is also used to describe the details on the subject as well. Usually, we can simplify areas of contrast on a subject into a line.



In the image below, we can see the photo reference next to the resulting line drawing of a flower. The flower is communicated clearly in the line drawing. However, you'll note that the drawing is not an exact replica of the reference. There are only lines used in the drawing, yet there are many more complexities present in the photo.



The drawing above is part of "Drawing Bootcamp". [Click here to view Drawing Bootcamp](#) (Membership required).

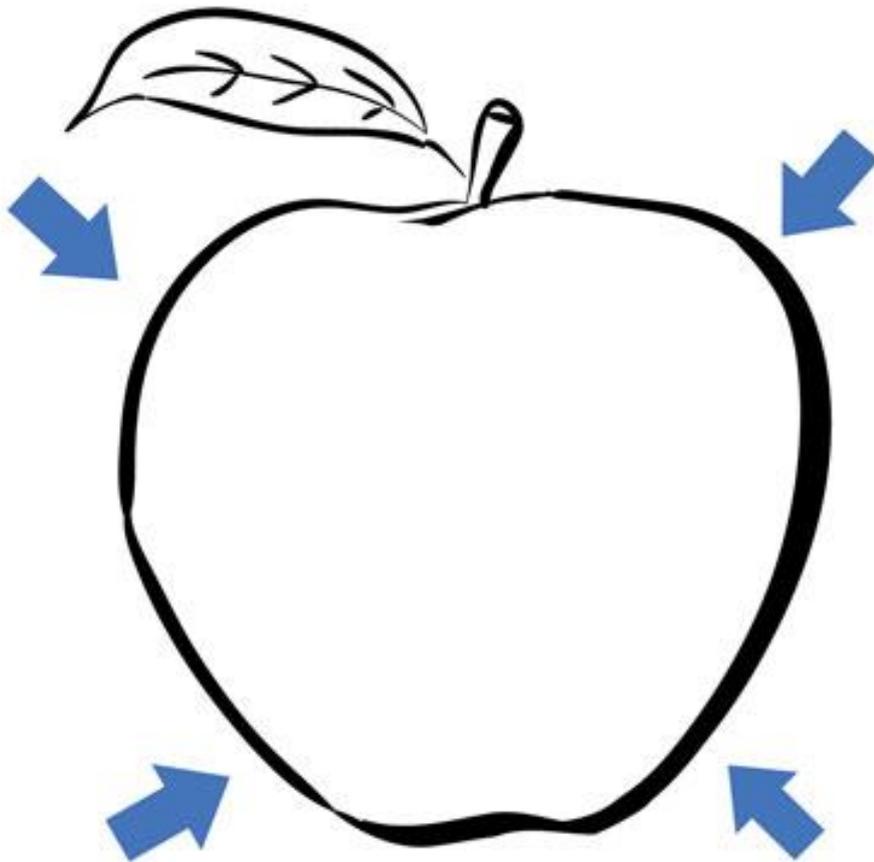
As we can see, line is great for describing a subject in a drawing, but outlines on their own are not complete. Other elements of art (specifically value) must be used in addition to line to create a realistic drawing.

Lines that are used to communicate the edges and/or to describe the details of a subject (like we see above) are called contour lines. We commonly call these lines outlines.

Line Quality

Line quality refers to the characteristics of the line drawn. In many cases, line quality refers to the thickness of a line. By varying the line quality (including both thick and thin lines), we create drawings that are more interesting and provide more information to the viewer.

Take a look at the line drawing of the apple below. Notice how the contour lines are thicker in areas. A thicker line is used where we expect to see shadow and where the apple itself is a little thicker.



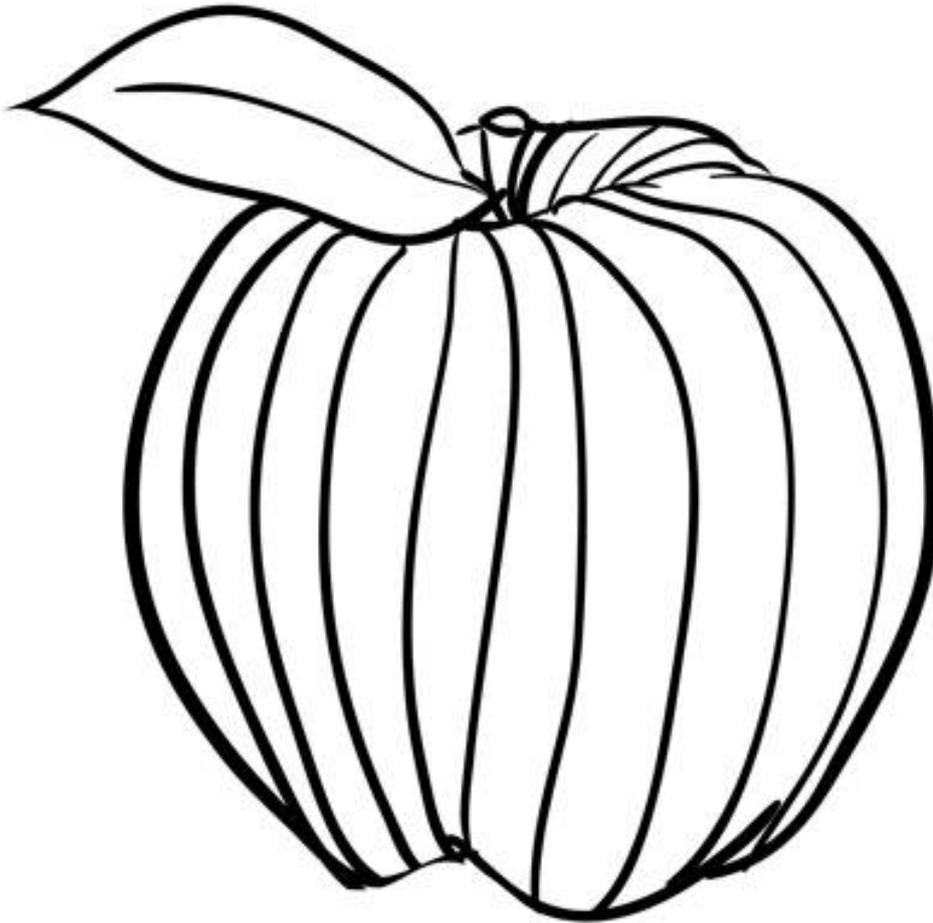
In this way, we can communicate a bit about the form of the apple and the light using a simple line.

Cross Contour Lines

Cross contour lines are more complex than contour lines. Cross contour lines flow over the form of the subject. These lines can be implied or visible. Cross contour lines are mostly used when line is used to shade a drawing with hatching and cross hatching.

To better understand cross contour lines, you may imagine running your finger over the surface of an apple. Start from the stem and move down to the bottom. As you move your finger, imagine leaving a line behind. If you continue repeating this, making "lines" with your finger all around the apple, you would have created cross contour lines.

We can see this illustrated in the image below...



The importance of understanding the concept of cross contour lines lies in shading (or adding shadow and highlight) with line. Depending on the form of the object you are drawing, these lines may curve or change direction.

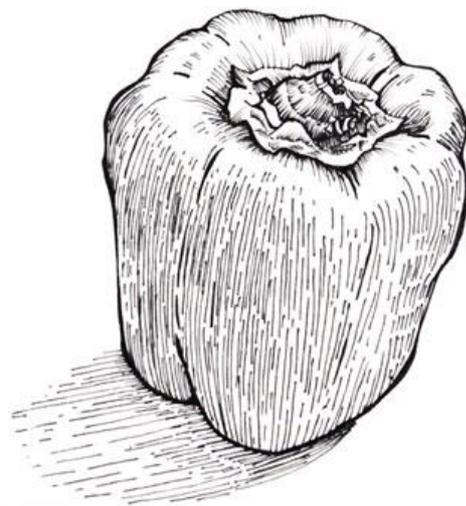
For more on cross contour lines, see the following lessons...

Shading with Line

Line can be used to shade drawings as well. Shading is the process of developing the value (art element). Value is the darkness or lightness of a color. Darker values typically represent shadows while lighter values typically represent highlights or lighter tones.

Lines can be concentrated to create darker values. The more lines that are used, the darker the perceived value. Lighter tones can be achieved by allowing more of the white of the paper to show through or with less concentrated lines.

We can see this concept illustrated in the image below. The pepper has been shaded using lines. In areas where the value is darker, more lines are used. In areas where the value is lighter, less lines are used. You'll also notice that line quality (variety in line thickness) is also used to create a more interesting drawing.



You'll also notice that the lines used to shade the drawing curve and change direction slightly based on the form of the pepper. This illustrates the concept of cross contour lines discussed before.

Hatching

Hatching is the process of using directional linear strokes that do not cross over each other to develop the shading in a drawing.

Hatching can be used with any drawing or painting medium but it is at its best when used with linear drawing medium. Below we can see a drawing that was created with pen and ink that utilizes hatching.



The drawing above is part of "Subjects with Pen and Ink". [Click here to view Subjects with Pen and Ink](#) (Membership required).

Cross Hatching

Cross hatching is the process of developing the value (or shading) in a drawing or painting using lines that cross over each other. Just like with hatching, the greater the concentration of marks, the darker the value. Hatching and cross hatching are often used together.

Below, you'll find a drawing created with pen and ink that utilizes cross hatching.

