Pearl at Home

Art projects designed for suggested ages of 5 and up, designed to be completed at home with easily-accessible art materials.

DRAWING HORSE PORTRAITS

Leonardo da Vinci, *Study of a Horse* (detail), silverpoint on vellum, c.1490

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DRAWING HORSE PORTRAITS

MATERIALS

• **Paper:** Any paper: copy or printer paper, drawing or sketch paper
• **Pencils or markers:** A regular school pencil, or drawing pencils in varied values (start with a lighter pencil like HB and use the darker pencils like 2B-9B for details and finishing). Sharpies or art markers.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The point of making any portrait is to try to make the art look like the specific subject, and to be as accurate as you can.

The first step in learning to draw what you actually see is to recognize the simple shapes within a more complex object. You will be refining the drawing after we use these basic shapes as guides.

DIRECTIONS

1. Draw 2 circles a small distance apart: the big one will be the horse’s jaw where the neck starts, and the smaller one will be the horse’s nose and mouth. Look at the horse you are trying to draw to determine how big each circle should be and how far apart. Draw LIGHTLY so you can hide or more easily erase these ‘construction’ lines later.

2. Draw long lines to connect the horse’s forehead to his nose. Some times the line is more curved than on other horses.
3 Make a circle for the eye and one for the nostril – it can be a tiny bit tilted.

4 To make the big ear (ear closest to you), draw a triangle shape in line with the eye and nostril at the top of the big circle, with the side away from the eye a bit curved. Use another triangle to start the inside of the ear.

Draw a second triangle closer to the front of the horse’s forehead (this ear is on the other side but you would see it in our composition). Remember you will be refining the drawing after we use these basic shapes as guides.

5 If the horse is standing, draw a curved line from right behind the front triangle away from the horse’s head for the top of the neck. Draw another line at the back of the horse’s jaw for the front of the neck. Change the direction of the neck lines if the horse is in a different position.

*After you have drawn the details, you can erase the “construction” lines or work them into the drawing.*
Refine the drawing before you use your other media on the artwork by adding the eyelid, muscle around the nostril, and the lips. Make the parts of the ears more rounded, as in the example below. You can LIGHTLY indicate shading.

Artist Monika Zagrobelna* has found that slightly different shapes work well for her. The shapes she’s chosen allow good placement for eyes, nostrils, lips, ears, etc.

You can use the circle drawing method you learned to draw a whole animal:

* https://monikazagrobelna.com/2019/09/15/sketchbook-original-how-to-draw-horses/