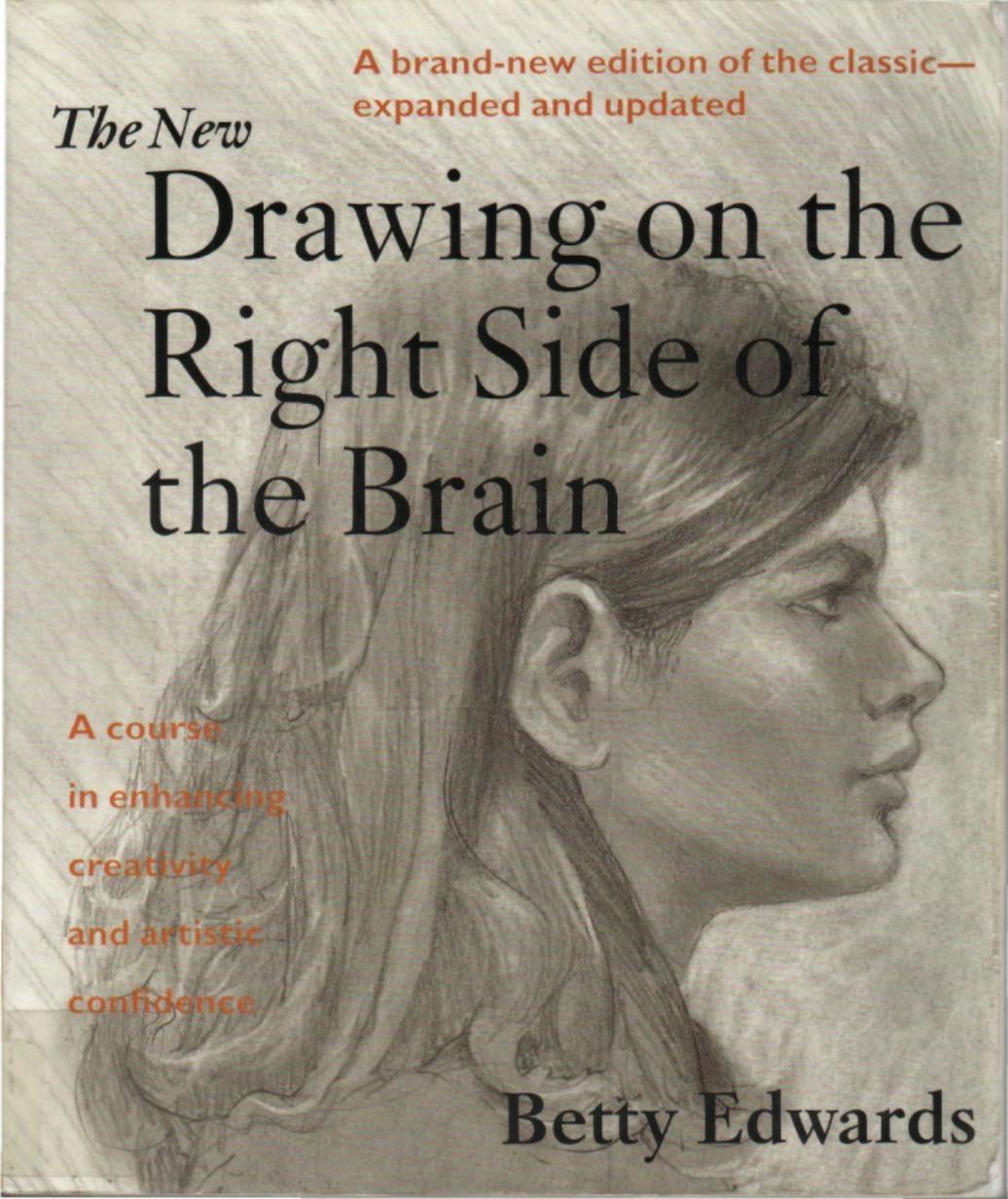


A brand-new edition of the classic—
expanded and updated

The New

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain



A course
in enhancing
creativity
and artistic
confidence

Betty Edwards

Now, the real thing: A profile portrait of a person

Now you are ready to draw a real portrait of a person. You'll be seeing the wondrous complexity of contours, watching your drawing evolve from the line that is your unique, creative invention, and observing yourself integrating your skills into the drawing process. You will be seeing, in the artist's mode of seeing, the astounding thing-as-it-is, not a pale, symbolized, categorized, analyzed, memorized shell of itself. Opening the door to see clearly that which is before you, you will draw the image by which you make yourself known to us.

If I were personally demonstrating the process of drawing a portrait profile, I would not be naming parts. I would point to the various areas and refer to features, for example, as "this form, this contour, this angle, the curve of this form," and so on. For the sake of clarity in writing, unfortunately, I'll have to name the parts. I fear that the process may seem cumbersome and detailed when written out as verbal instructions. The truth is that your drawing will seem like a wordless, antic dance, an exhilarating investigation, with each new perception miraculously linked to the last and to the next.

With that caution in mind, read through all of the instructions before you start and then try to do the drawing without interruption.

What you'll need:

1. Most important, you'll need a model—someone who will pose for you in profile view. Finding a model is not easy. Many people strenuously object to sitting perfectly still for any period of time. One solution is to draw someone who is watching television. Another possibility is to catch someone sleeping—preferably upright in a chair, though that doesn't seem to happen too often!
2. Your clear plastic Picture Plane and your felt-tip marking pen
3. Two or three sheets of your drawing paper, taped in a stack onto your drawing board



4. Your drawing pencils and eraser
5. Two chairs, one to sit on and one on which to lean your drawing board. See Figure 9-25 for setting up to draw. Note that it's also helpful to have a small table or a stool or even another chair on which to put your pencils, erasers, and other gear.
6. An hour or more of uninterrupted time

What you'll do:

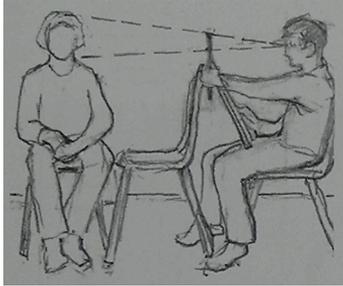


Fig. 9-25.

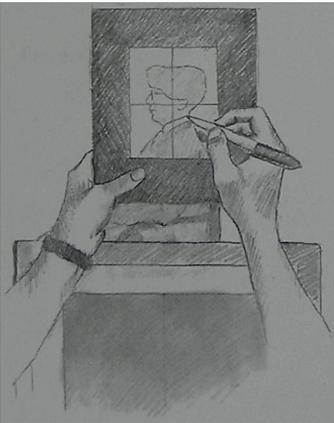


Fig. 9-26.

1. As always, start by drawing a format. You may use the outside edge of your Picture Plane as a template.
2. Lightly tone your paper. This will allow you to erase out lighted areas and to add graphite for shadowed areas. I'll give complete instructions for the fourth perceptual skill, perceiving lights and shadows, in the next chapter. You have already had some experience with "shading," however, and I find that my students greatly enjoy adding at least some lights and shadows to this exercise. On the other hand, you may prefer to do a line drawing without toning the paper, as John Singer Sargent did in his profile portrait of Mme. Gautreau. Whether you tone the paper or not, be sure to add the crosshairs.
3. Pose your model. The model can be facing either right or left, but in this first profile drawing, I suggest that you place your model facing to your left if you are right-handed, and to the right if you are left-handed. With this arrangement, you will not be covering up the features as you draw the skull, hair, neck and shoulders.
4. Sit as close to your model as possible. Two to four feet is about ideal, and this distance can be managed even with the intervening chair for propping up your drawing board. Check the setup again in Figure 9-25.
5. Next, use your plastic Picture Plane to compose your drawing. Close one eye and hold up the Picture Plane with a clipped-on Viewfinder; move it backward and forward until the head of your model is placed pleasingly within the format—that is, not too crowded on any edge and with enough of the neck and shoulders to provide "support" for the head.

A composition you certainly don't want is one in which the model's chin is resting on the bottom edge of the format.

6. When you have decided on your composition, hold the plastic Picture Plane as steadily as possible. You will next choose a Basic Unit—a convenient size and shape to guide proportions as you draw. I usually use the span from the model's eye level to the bottom of the chin. You, however, might prefer to use another Basic Unit—perhaps the length of the nose or the span from the bottom of the nose to the bottom of the chin (Figure 9-27).
7. When you have chosen your Basic Unit, mark the unit with your felt-tip marker directly on your plastic Picture Plane. Then, transfer the Basic Unit to your drawing paper, using the same procedure that you have learned in previous exercises. You may need to review the instructions on pages 126-130 and Figures 8-11 and 8-12, page 146. You may want to also mark the topmost edge of the hair and the back of the head at the point opposite eye level. You can transfer these marks to your paper as a rough guide for the drawing (Figure 9-28).
8. At this point, you can begin to draw, confident that you will end up with the composition you have so carefully chosen.

Again, I must remind you that although this process seems cumbersome now, later on it becomes so automatic and so rapid that you will hardly be aware of how you start a drawing. Allow your mind to roam over the many complicated processes you accomplish without thinking of the step-by-step methods: making a U-turn on a two-way street; cracking and separating an egg yolk from the white; crossing a busy intersection on foot where there is no stoplight; making a phone call from a pay phone. Imagine how many steps you would need to put instructions into words for any one of those skills.

In time, and with practice, starting a drawing becomes almost completely automatic, allowing you to concentrate on the model and on composing your drawing. You will hardly be aware of choosing a Basic Unit, sizing it and placing it on the drawing paper. I recall an incident when one of my students realized that

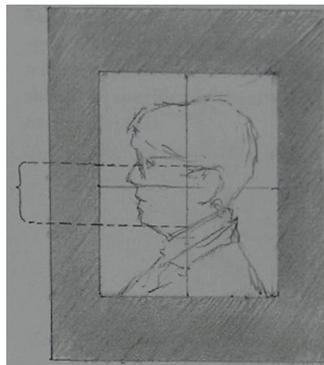


Fig. 9-27.

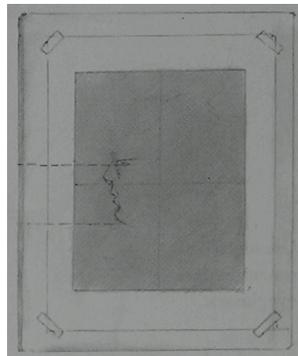


Fig. 9-28.



Fig. 9-29.

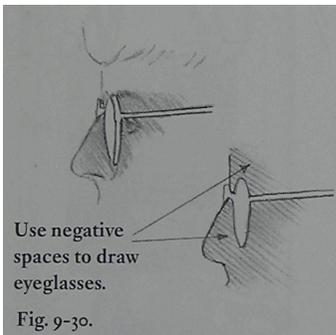


Fig. 9-30.

she was "just drawing." She exclaimed, "I'm doing it!" The same thing will happen to you—in time, and with practice.

9. Gaze at the negative space in front of the profile and begin to draw that negative shape. Check the angle of the nose relative to vertical. It may help to hold up your pencil vertically to check that shape, or you may want to use one of your Viewfinders. Remember that the outside edge of the negative shape is the outer edge of the format, but to make a negative space easier to see, you may want to make a new, closer edge. See Figure 9-29 for how to check the angle formed by holding your pencil on the plane against the tip of the nose and the outermost curve of the chin.
10. You may choose to erase out the negative space around the head. This will enable you to see the head as a whole, separated from the ground. On the other hand, you may decide to darken the negative spaces around the head or to leave the tone as it is, working only within the head. See the demonstration drawings at the end of the chapter for examples. These are aesthetic choices—some of the many that you'll make in this drawing.
11. If your model wears glasses, use the negative shapes around the outside edges of the glasses (remembering to close one eye to see a 2-D image of your model). See Figure 9-30.
12. Place the eye in relation to the innermost curve of the bridge of the nose. Check the angle of the eyelid relative to horizontal.
13. Use the shape under the nostril as a negative shape (Figure 9-31).
14. Check the angle of the centerline of the mouth. This is the only true edge of the mouth—the upper and lower contours only mark a color change. It's usually best to draw this color-change boundary lightly, especially in portraits of males. Note that, in profile, the angle of the centerline of the mouth—the true edge—often descends relative to horizontal. Don't hesitate to draw this angle just as you see it. See Figure 9-32.
15. Using your pencil to measure (Figure 9-33), you can check the

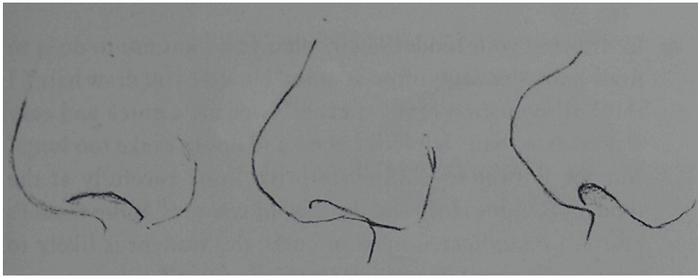


Fig. 9-31. Look for the shape of the space under the nostril. This shape will vary from model to model and should be specifically observed on each individual.

position of the ear (if it is visible). To place the ear in profile portrait, recall our mnemonic: Eye level-to-chin equals back-of-the-eye to the back-of-the-ear. Remember also that this measure forms an isosceles triangle, which can be visualized on the model. See Figure 9-34.

16. Check the length and width of the ear. Ears are nearly always bigger than you expect them to be. Check the size against the features of the profile.
17. Check the height of the topmost curve of the head—that is, the topmost edge of the hair or of the skull if your model happens to have a shaved head or thin hair. See Figure 9-35.
18. In drawing the back of the head, sight as follows:
 - Close one eye, extend your arm holding your pencil perfectly vertically, lock your elbow, and take a sight on eye level to chin.
 - Then, holding that measure, turn your pencil to horizontal and check how far it is to the back of the head. It will be 1 (to the back of the ear) and something more—perhaps 1:1+1/2 or even 1:2 if the hair is very thick. Keep that ratio in your mind.
 - Then, turn back to your drawing to transfer the ratio. Using the pencil, re-measure eye level to chin in the drawing. Holding that measure with your thumb, turning your pencil to the horizontal position, measure from the back of the eye to the back of the ear, then to the back of the head (or hair). Make a mark. Perhaps you will not believe your own sights. If carefully taken, they are true, and your job is to believe what your eyes tell you. Learning to have faith in one's perceptions is one of the principal keys to drawing well. I'm sure you can extrapolate the importance of this to other areas of life.



Fig. 9-32.

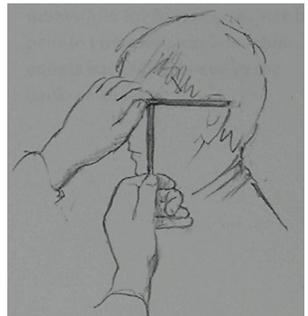


Fig. 9-33.

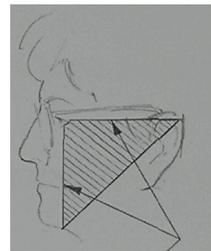


Fig. 9-34.



Fig. 9-35.

19. In drawing your model's hair, what you want not to do is to draw hairs. Students often ask me, "How do you draw hair?" I think the question really means, "Give me a quick and easy way to draw hair that looks good and doesn't take too long." But the answer to the question is, "Look carefully at the model's (unique) hair and draw what you see." If the model's hair is a complicated mass of curls, the student is likely to answer, "You can't be serious! Draw all of that?"

But it really isn't necessary to draw every hair and every curl. What your viewer wants is for you to express the character of the hair, particularly the hair closest to the face. Look for the dark areas where the hair separates and use those areas as negative spaces. Look for the major directional movements, the exact turn of a strand or wave. The right hemisphere, loving complexity, can become entranced with the perception of hair, and the record of your perceptions in this part of a portrait can have great impact, as in the portrait of *Proud Maisie* (Figure 9-36). To be avoided are the thin, glib, symbolic marks that spell out h-a-i-r on the same level as if you lettered the word across the skull of your portrait. Given enough clues, the viewer can extrapolate and, in fact, enjoys extrapolating the general texture and nature of the hair. See the demonstration drawings at the end of this chapter for examples.

Drawing hair is largely a light-shadow process. In the next chapter, we'll take up the perception of lights and shadows in depth. For now, I'll set down some brief suggestions. To draw your model's hair, gaze at it with your eyes squinted to obscure details and to see where the larger highlights lie and where the larger shadows fall. Notice particularly the characteristics of the hair (wordlessly, of course, though I must use words for the sake of clarity). Is the hair crinkly and dense, smooth and shiny, randomly curled, short and stiff? Take notice of the overall shape of the hair and make sure that you have matched that shape in your drawing. Begin to draw the hair in some detail where the hair meets the face, transcribing the light-shadow patterns and the direction of angles and curves in various segments of the hair.



Fig. 9-36. Anthony Frederick Augustus Sandys (1832-1904), *Proud Maisie*. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 9-37. Note the position of the ear. The placement fits our mnemonic for locating the ear in profile view: Eye level-to-chin equals back-of-the-eye to the back-of-the-ear.

20. Finally, to complete your profile portrait, draw in the neck and shoulders, which provide a support for the profile head. The amount of detail of clothing is another aesthetic choice with no strict guidelines. The major aims are to provide enough detail to fit—that is, to be congruent with—the drawing of the head, and to make sure that the drawing of details of clothing adds to, and does not detract from, your drawing of the head. See Figure 9-36 for an example.



Fig. 9-38.



Fig. 9-39.

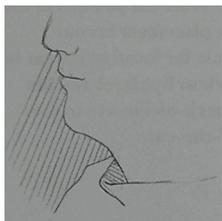


Fig. 9-40.

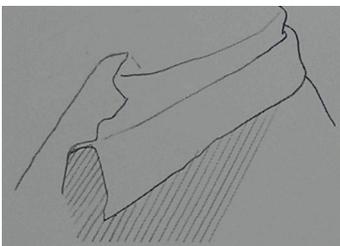


Fig. 9-41.

Some further tips

Eyes: Observe that the eyelids have thickness. The eyeball is behind the lids (Figure 9-38). To draw the iris (the colored part of the eye)—don't draw it. Draw the shape of the white (Figure 9-39). The white can be regarded as negative space, sharing edges with the iris. By drawing the (negative) shape of the white part, you'll get the iris right because you'll bypass your memorized symbol for iris. Note that this bypassing technique works for everything that you might find "hard to draw." The technique is to shift to the next adjacent shape or space and draw that instead. Observe that the upper lashes grow first downward and then (sometimes) curve upward. Observe that the whole shape of the eye slants back at an angle from the front of the profile (Figure 9-38). This is because of the way the eyeball is set in the surrounding bony structure. Observe this angle on your model's eye—this is an important detail.

Neck: Use the negative space in front of the neck in order to perceive the contour under the chin and the contour of the neck (Figure 9-40). Check the angle of the front of the neck in relation to vertical. Make sure to check the point where the back of the neck joins the skull. This is often at about the level of the nose or mouth (Figure 9-22).

Collar: Don't draw the collar. Collars, too, are strongly symbolic. Instead, use the neck as negative space to draw the top of the collar, and use negative spaces to draw collar points, open necks of shirts, and the contour of the back below the neck, as in Figures 9-40 and 9-41. (This bypassing technique works, of course, because shapes such as the spaces around collars cannot be easily named and have generated no preexisting symbols to distort perception.)

After you have finished:

Congratulations on drawing your first profile portrait. You are now using the perceptual skills of drawing with some confidence, I feel sure. Don't forget to practice seeing the angles and propor-

tions you have just sighted. Television is wonderful for supplying models for practice, and the television screen is, after all, a "picture-plane." Even if you can't draw these free models because they rarely stay still, you can practice eyeballing edges, spaces, angles, and proportions. Soon, these perceptions will occur automatically, and you will be really seeing.

Showing of profile portraits

Study the drawings on the following pages. Notice the variations in styles of drawing. Check the proportions by measuring with your pencil.

In the next chapter, you will learn the fourth skill of drawing, the perception of lights and shadows. The main exercise will be a fully modeled, tonal, volumetric self-portrait and will bring us full-circle to your "Before Instruction" self-portrait for comparison. Your "After Instruction" self-portrait will be either a "three-quarter" view or a "full-face" view. I'll define the three portrait views for you before we turn to lights and shadows.

Another example of two styles of drawing. Instructor Brian Bomeisler and I sat on either side of Grace Kennedy, who is also one of our instructors, and drew these demonstration drawings for our students. We were using the same materials, the same model, and the same lighting.



Demonstration drawing by the author.



Demonstration drawing by instructor Brian Bomeisler.