

Grade Level: Seniors

Energetic Gestures

Medium: Pencil, Colored Pencils

Visual Art Standard:

Skills & Technique

Creation & Communication

Applications to Life

Vocabulary

Gesture drawings

Art Element: Line, Shape

Objectives:

Learn basic principles of lines in art. Explore familiar objects through multiple lenses.

Supplies: sketch paper, pencils, eraser, pencil sharpeners, timer, clipboards

Resources: Brenda Chapman biography (attached), Gesture Drawing Tips from [MasterClass.com](#) (attached), Gesture Drawing Examples (attached)

Preparation:

Prepare each station with a clip board, several sheets of paper, a pencil, eraser, ruler

Procedure:

Part 1: Lesson about Lines

Part 2: Line Drawing Activity

Part 1: Lesson about Lines (Read Aloud)

Today, we are going to explore lines in drawings, with a focus on how it relates to animation.

Read Brenda Chapman biography (attached)

Often times, when we are drawing, we want to go straight to the details. But we must first set a good foundation before we can add in any detail. You can't decorate a house before you build it! Gesture drawing can help us lay the foundation before adding the details.

Gesture drawing is a foundational exercise that helps teach fluidity and movement. Gesture drawing is usually a quick, simple drawing that captures the feeling, energy, movement, action, or pose of a subject. It contains a minimum amount of detail to achieve the maximum essence of the subject. Brenda Chapman enrolled in dance classes so she could learn how to sketch the movement of the dancers. Gesture drawing is an important practice for artists and animators to capture a subject's movement, form, and character.

Gesture drawing is typically timed, taking between 15 seconds and 30 minutes for each sketch. Artists make quick, simplified sketches of a subject, often a live human model. The purpose of gesture drawing is to help artists focus on the essence of the pose rather than small details, prioritizing flow and movement to quickly capture the subject as a whole and avoid a result that looks stiff or out of proportion.

Gesture drawings are the basis of animation.

Read 5 Gesture Drawing Tips (attached)

5 Gesture Drawing Tips (Source: [MasterClass.com](https://www.masterclass.com))

1. Keep your lines fluid. Gesture drawing is all about capturing the feeling of movement and fluidity—pass up short, sketchy, straight lines in favor of long, fluid strokes, using the motion of your whole arm (rather than just your wrist) to emphasize the line of action in your subject's spine and limbs. Some artists recommend thinking of a gesture drawing as a fluid stick figure in which you capture the spine and limbs in simple, meaningful gesture lines.

2. Forget the details. Beginning artists may get caught up trying to render one specific part of their subject in precise detail—for example, trying to get the chin just right and missing out on capturing the rest of the pose. Gesture drawing aims to help you see the big picture, forgoing detailed lines until the gist of the subject is on the page.

3. Draw from life. For best results with gesture drawing, use a human model, animal, or object. Life drawing allows artists to practice translating a 3D object into their 2D drawing medium. The gesture drawing experience can help you decide which details are essential to capture and which to omit.

4. Leave the eraser behind. Since gesture drawings are usually done as quick sketches for a drawing exercise or warm-up, avoid spending time erasing your mistakes during a quick drawing class or session. Instead, use the time to make new lines on top of old ones or start a new drawing while keeping any previous mistakes in mind.

5. Experiment with lengths of time. Individual gesture drawings can range from 15 seconds to 30 minutes—practicing with several different time limits can help you get a feel for the level of detail each limit allows and offer valuable lessons in capturing a moment as quickly as possible.

Part 2: Line Drawing Activity

Invite the girls to sit in a circle with their clipboards.

Instruct them to divide their papers into a 3 x 3 grid.

The girls will take turns in the center of the circle, posing for 9 different gesture drawing exercises. Due to the angle of the circle, each girl's perspective and drawing will be unique.

Read Aloud:

Gesture drawings vary from artist to artist. There is no perfect gesture 'style' – every artist is unique. Find your own rhythm and method of getting down gesture drawings, and don't worry about whether your gesture drawing looks exactly like someone else's.

It's not a masterpiece. It's a practice. And the best way to practice is to repeat it over and over and over.

Look back and forth, studying the object and your drawing. Think of it as if you're following a tennis match. Look between the subject and your paper.

Focus on the basic shape and the placement, rather than the details. Don't spend any time erasing, just draw right over it. Think about core forms and lines of movement; you want someone looking at the drawing to recognize the emotion or action, not the person feeling the emotion or doing the action.

Start with light lines, then if you are satisfied with their placement go over them again slightly darker.

Set the timer for 2 minutes.

When the timer goes off, rotate to the next girl with the next pose.

Optional: Depending on the number of girls, you may do more than one page (9 poses) of practice. If time allows, use colored pencils and creativity to add details (real or imagined) to the gesture drawings.

Real Life Reference

Brenda Chapman



“I’ve been drawing since I could hold a pencil, and I always knew that I wanted to do something that would allow me to draw. I considered career paths like fashion design and commercial art, but animation had always fascinated me – and captured my imagination. It wasn’t until I was in high school that I realized there had to be somebody drawing all of those characters and the worlds in which they lived. Watching the credits for the first time, I was stunned at how many people worked on animated films! So why shouldn’t I try to be one of them?”

I started on my official creative journey at Lincoln College in Lincoln, IL (I grew up in a tiny farm town nearby). I took every art class they had! I even took a dance class so I could sketch all the dancers in movement. I received an Associate of the Arts when I graduated, then packed up and moved to California to attend California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) because it seemed like the natural next step. It was the only art school at the time that had a program specifically for character animation. I graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. I made three short films while I was there, and the last one, entitled *A Birthday*, helped me land a job at Walt Disney Feature Animation Studios – a dream come true! The timing couldn’t have been better; I started at Disney as the big reemergence of animation began to unfold. I cut my teeth on projects like *Roger Rabbit*, *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Later in my Disney career, I worked as the head of story on *The Lion King*, which was an amazing journey. Looking back, I realize that I grew up in the industry at Disney, and those experiences paved the way for my future career.

Of course, as anyone involved in any career path knows, transition is inevitable. You’re consumed with a desire to push yourself, to try something new, and to accept challenges that are as exhilarating as they are frightening. After nearly eight years at Disney, I left to help launch a new company: DreamWorks Animation Studios.

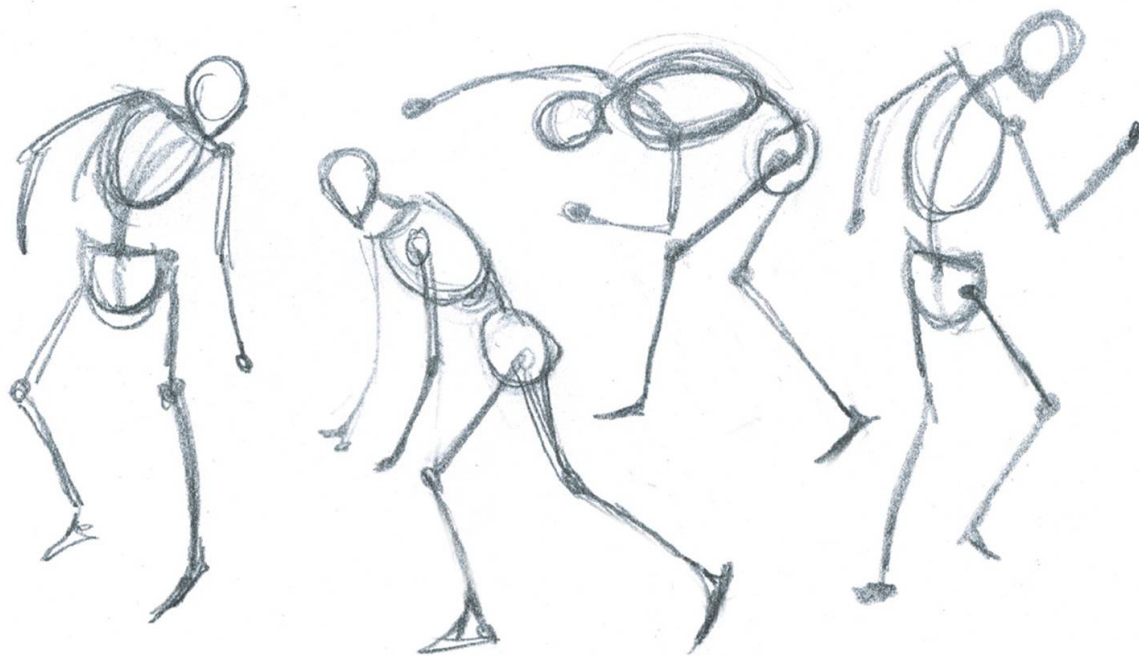
While at DreamWorks, I expanded my experience and also had the chance to help create a different environment. The highlight of my DreamWorks experience was undoubtedly the opportunity to co-direct the 1998 film *The Prince of Egypt*, along side of Steve Hickner and Simon Wells. **I became the first woman to direct an animated feature film for a major Hollywood studio.** It’s not something that I consciously strove for, I just wanted and want to tell great stories in whatever capacity I can. I actually find the distinction embarrassing most of the time. **Titles and accolades aren’t as important to me as what my work might mean to young women and men who are interested in the animation industry—I hope I can serve as an example to them and show that limitless possibilities await.**

In 2003, I joined Pixar Animation Studios as a senior story artist ... to work on *Cars*. I soon stepped up as director to create the film, *Brave*, which features Pixar’s first-ever female

protagonist. The film was inspired by my relationship with my daughter. Even though we frequently clash and are both control freaks, my love for her is fierce and unwavering—and I channeled those feelings into a story that gives contemporary working moms, their daughters and their families something to relate to in a fairy tale/folk tale setting.

Over the years, I've helped to develop and consult on films for several studios including Disney, Pixar, DreamWorks, Universal, Sony, Lucasfilm and Fox.

Art has been my lifelong passion, and storytelling through visuals and writing are deeply rooted within that. I feel lucky every day to have been given the chance to have a career in which I can express myself through my art – and share that passion and knowledge with others.”





10 seconds



30 seconds



2 minutes