

What is a Contour Skeleton?

How do Contour Skeletons help improve your art?



Contour Skeleton

- **Contour drawing**, is an artistic technique used in the field of art in which the artist sketches the **contour** of a subject (or object) by **drawing** lines that result in a **drawing** that is essentially an outline; the French word *contour* meaning, “outline.”



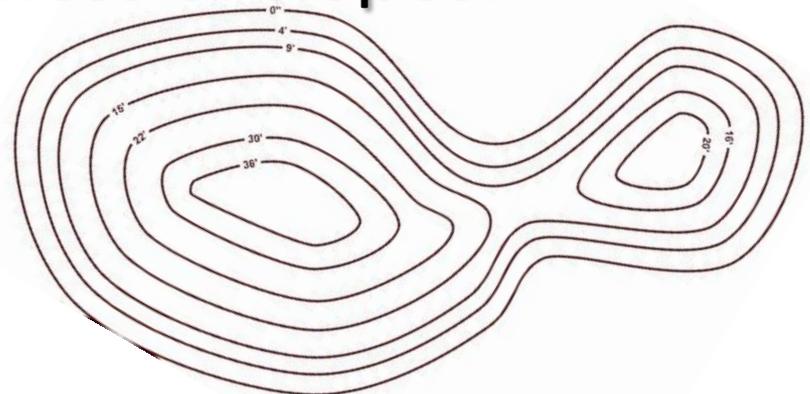
Contour Skeleton



- a supporting framework, as of a leaf, a building, or a ship.
- an outline, as of a literary work:
the skeleton of the plot.
- something reduced to its essential parts.
- like or being a mere framework; reduced to the essential or minimal parts or numbers:
a skeleton staff.

Contour Skeleton

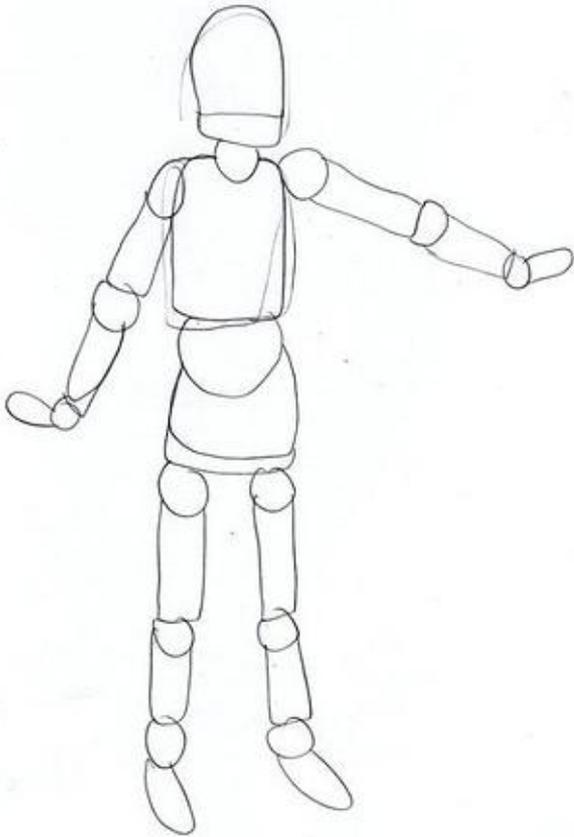
- In cartography, a **contour line** (often just called a "**contour**") joins points of equal elevation (height) above a given level, such as mean sea level. A **contour map** is a map illustrated with **contour lines**, for example a topographic map, which thus shows valleys and hills, and the steepness of slopes.



These 'contour skeletons' will help an artist to draw a human head.



There are many different types of contour skeletons.



- Manikins
- Stick figures
- Shapes
- Lines
- Grids
- Tracing

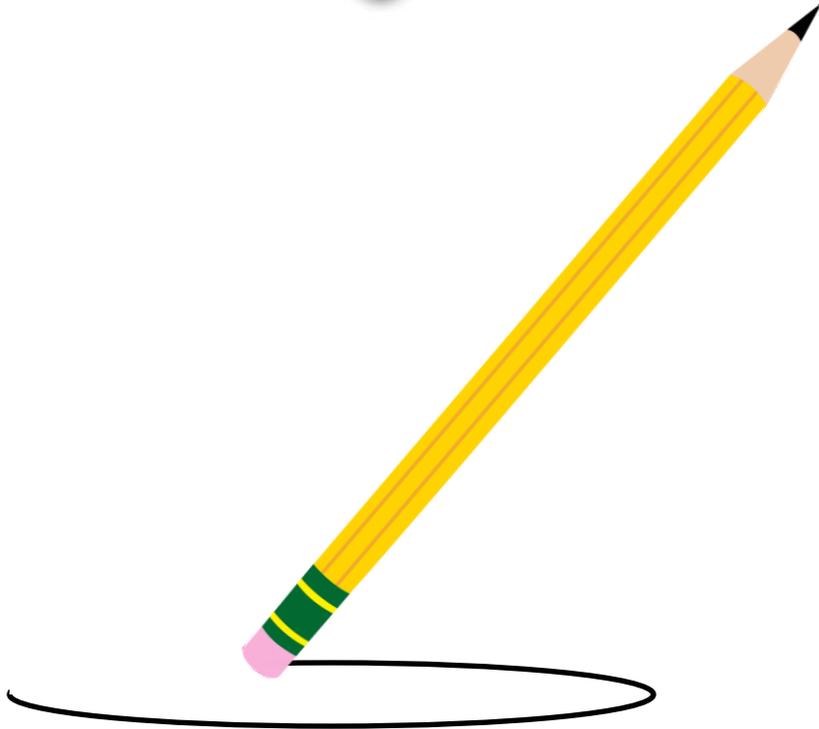
These 'contour skeletons' will help an artist to draw a human body.



•When creating a contour skeleton, the artist can pose the skeleton in any way they want to.

•After the artist creates the pose for the skeleton, the skeleton can be replaced with a proper picture or object.

Make sure you have a good eraser tool!



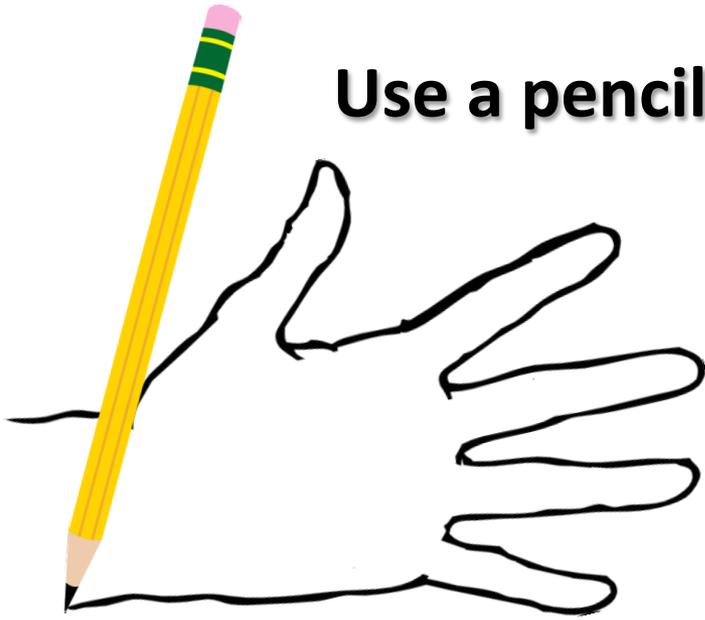
- **When doing contour drawing, expect to do a lot of erasing.**
- **Contour lines that are used to make your 'contour skeleton' are usually temporary. They will likely be erased later on.**
- **The point of a 'contour skeleton' is to help an artist to decide the place where important things will go. Try to draw the lines of your 'contour skeletons' very light or they may be tough to erase.**

Practice blind contour drawing.

The purpose of drawing blindly is to force the artist's eye to move along the contour of the subject as his or her pencil moves along the paper. Initially, this type of drawing may be difficult and slow, but an artist will find that with practice, it is an effective way of defining observation skills such as identifying and underlying the structure of the subject, relating forms, and conveying the sensual experience of the subject. Through thorough practice in this style, he/she will be skilled at drawing anything quickly and successively



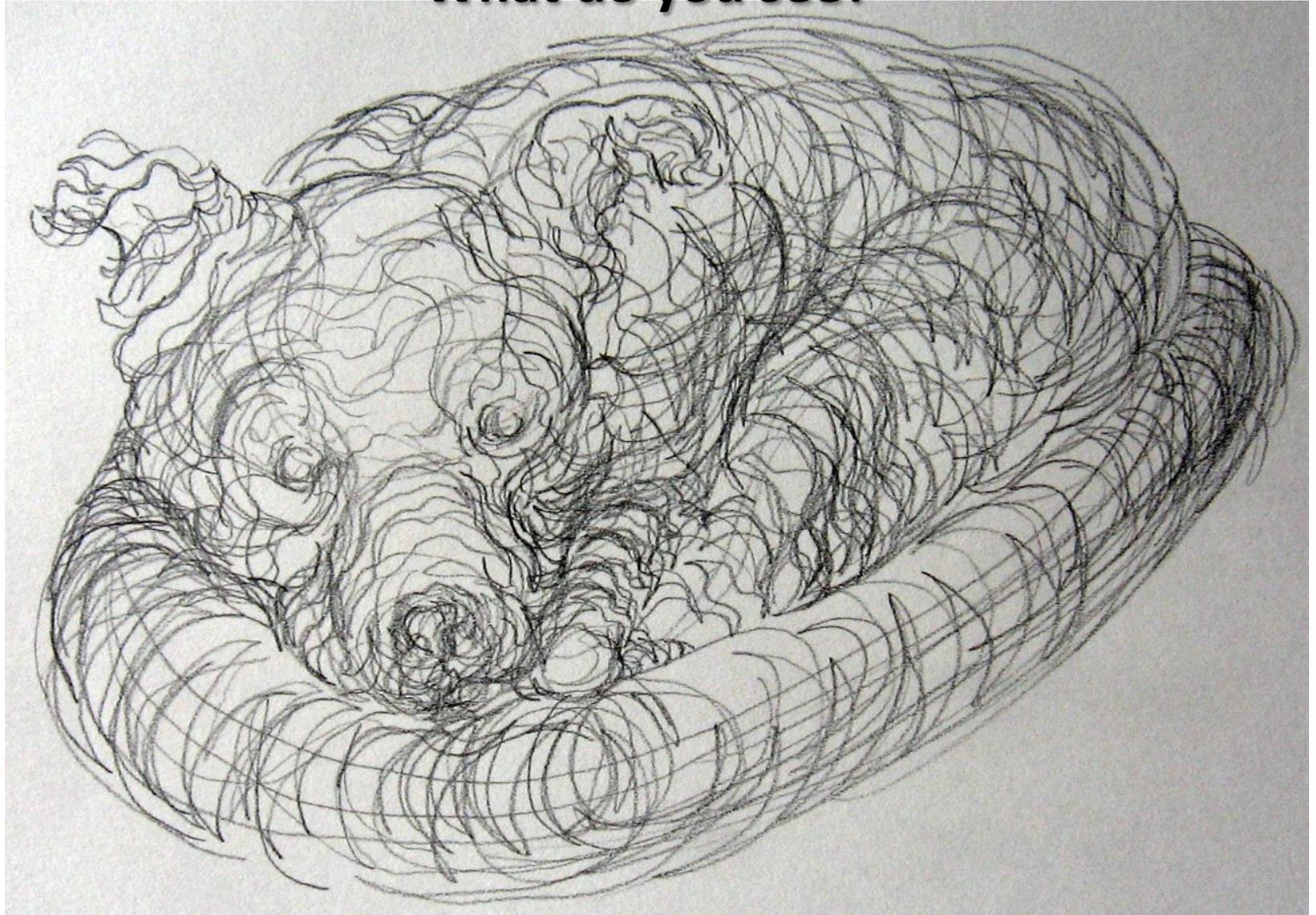
Use a pencil or crayon to trace your hand!



- Trace your own hand without looking down at it on a blank sheet of paper, no peeking!
- After tracing your hand, use the same hand as a reference tool to help make the drawing look more realistic!
- What differences do you notice between your real hand and the hand in your drawing?



What do you see?

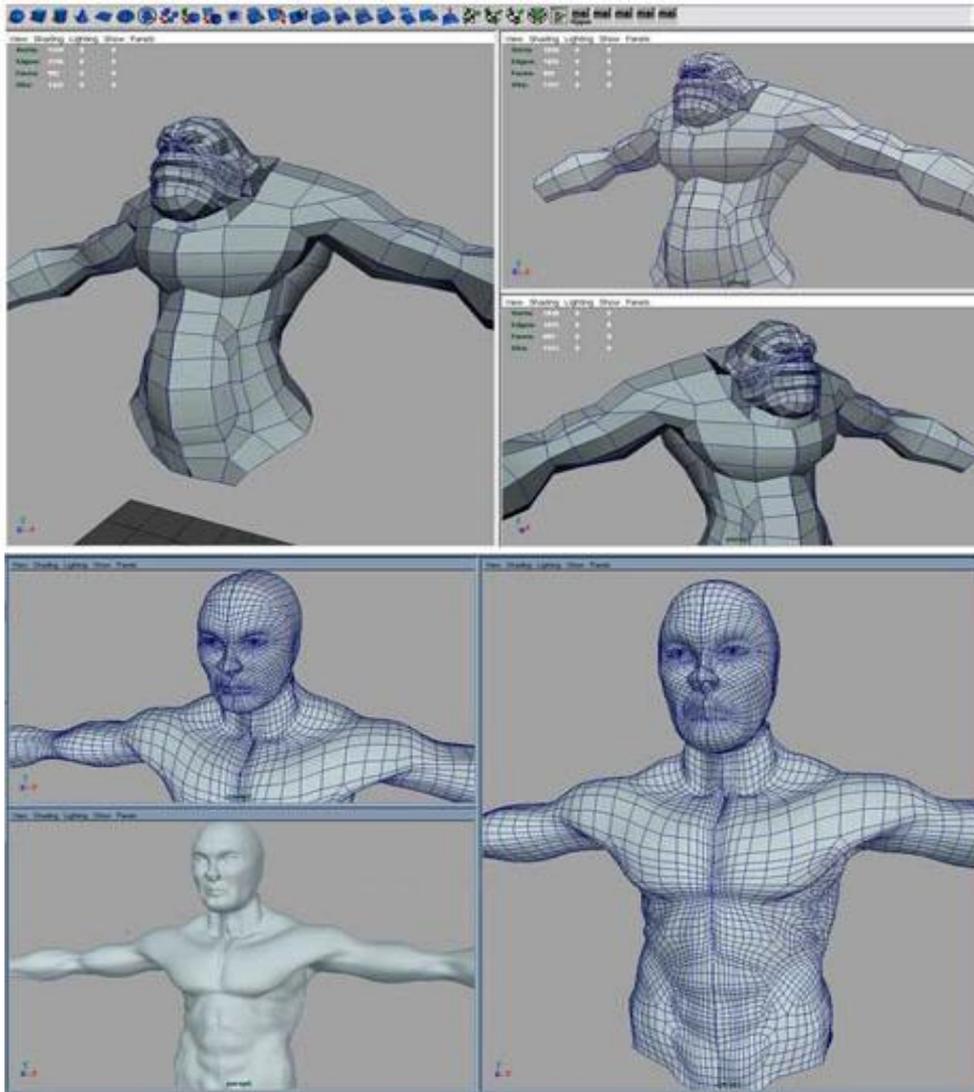


Use 'contour skeletons' step by step.

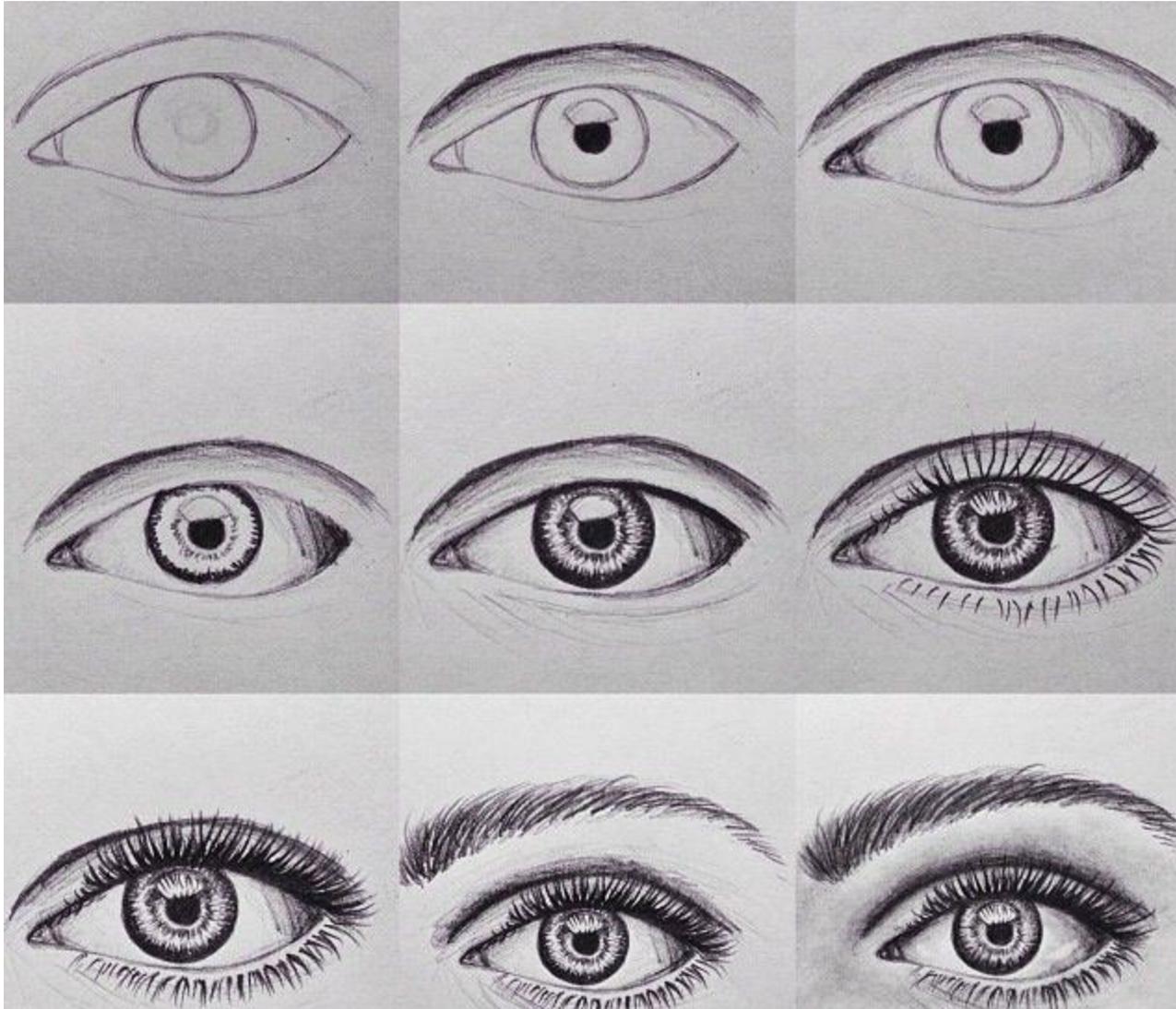


- When using 'contour skeletons', the works of art that you create will improve as you complete each step.
- A 'contour skeleton' is also called a "framework" when used by other types of artists, such as 3D animators.
- Contour skeletons will help an artist to create works that are much more difficult to make without using them.
- Keep in mind that 'contour skeletons' are usually just a guide. Most times they will either be erased by the artist or covered up with something else.

Can you see how 'contour skeletons' and "frameworks" are similar?

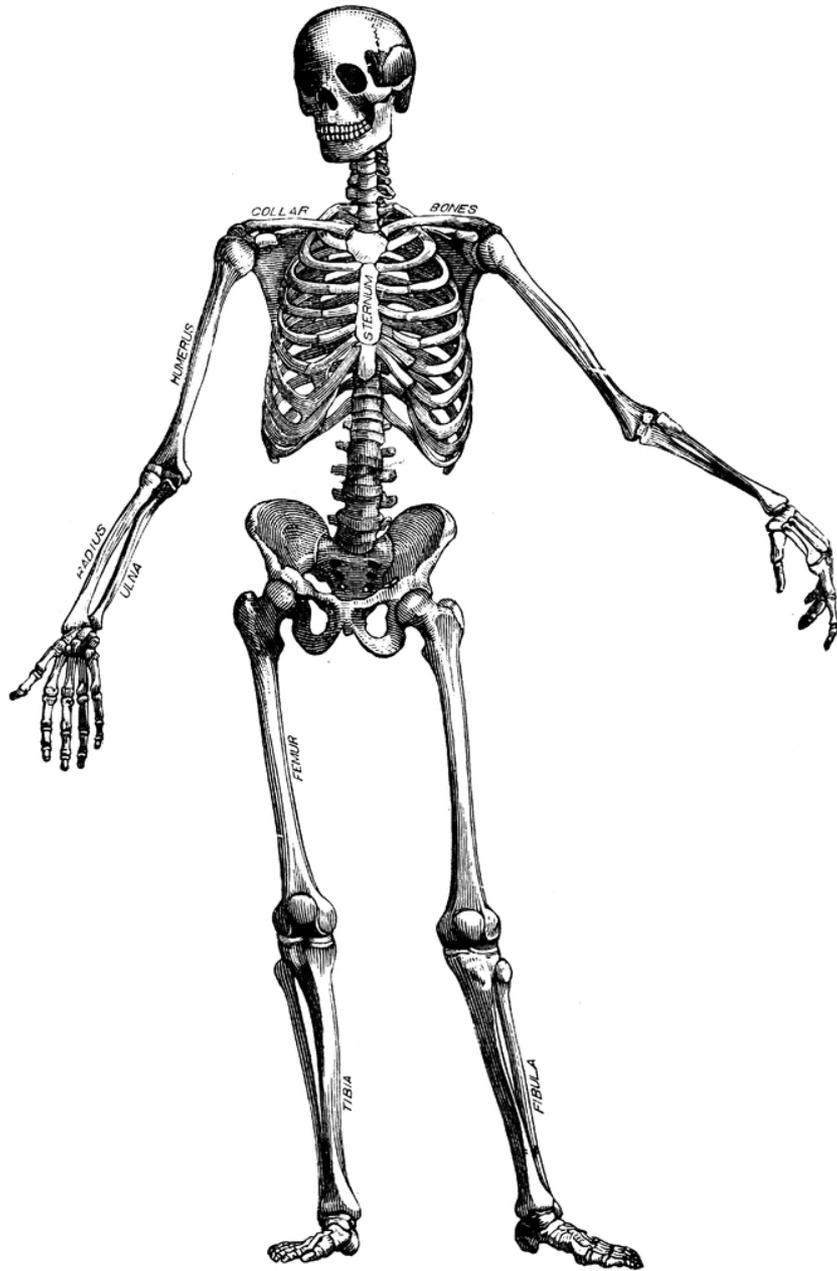


Can you see the 'contour skeleton' disappearing step by step?



Can you see the 'contour skeleton' in this picture?



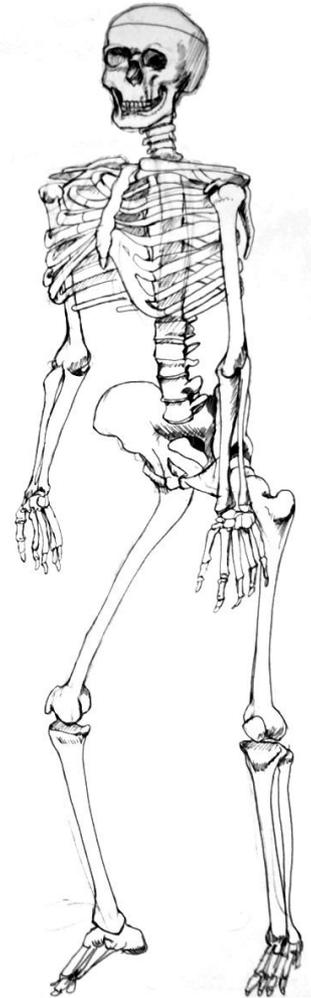
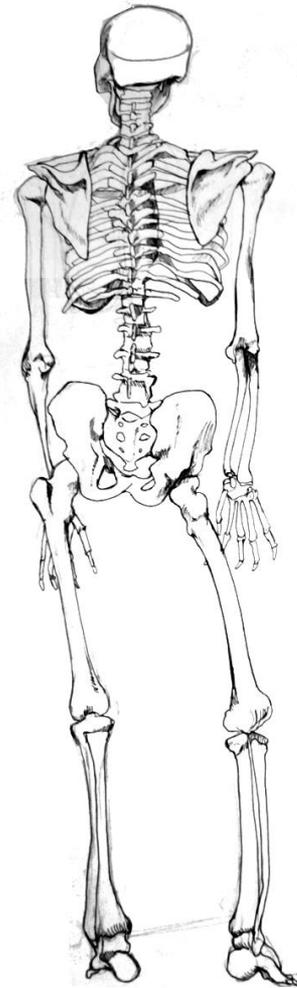
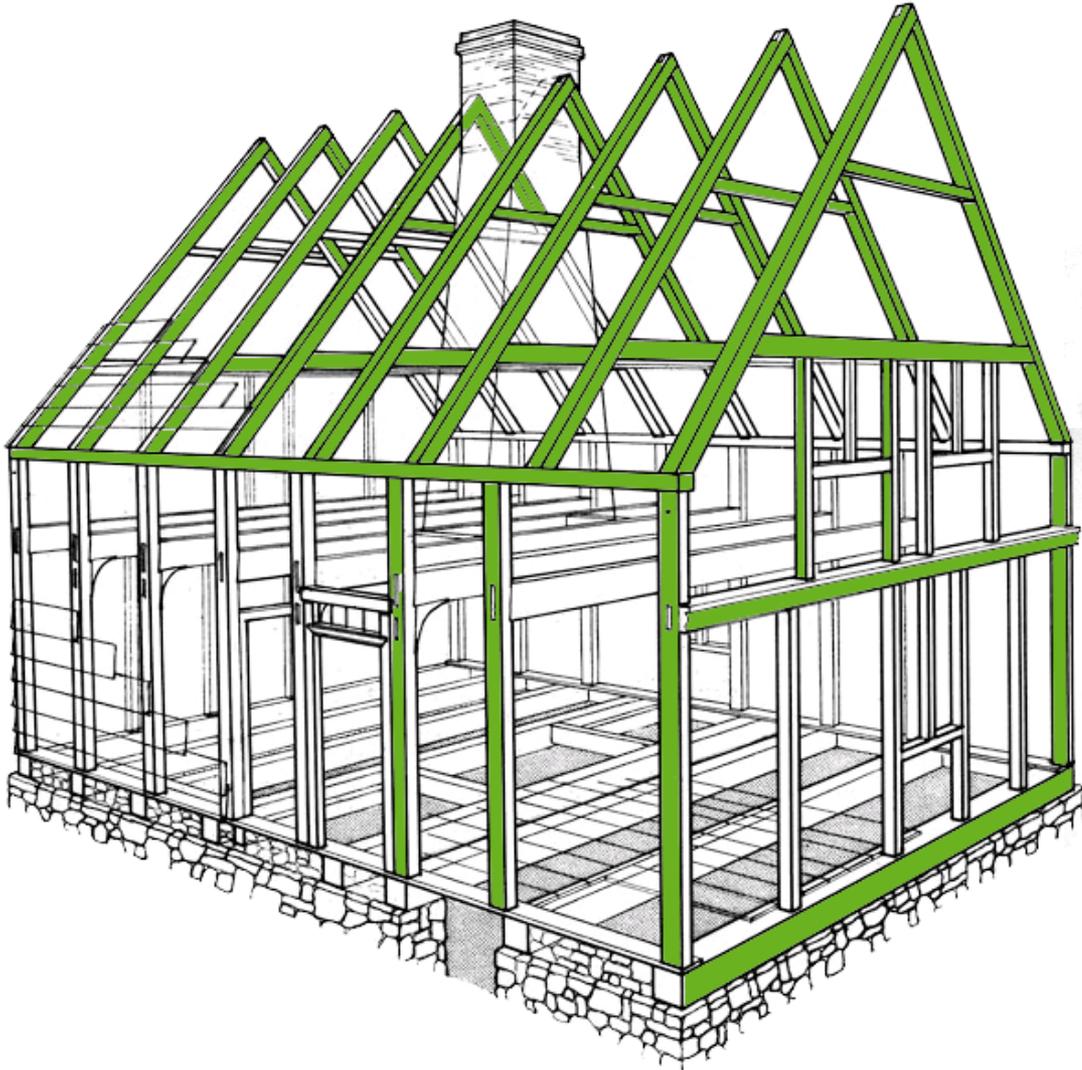


•Contour skeletons are a lot like real skeletons. They help to give your art work shape, dimension, measurement and character; almost the same way as the bones in your body.

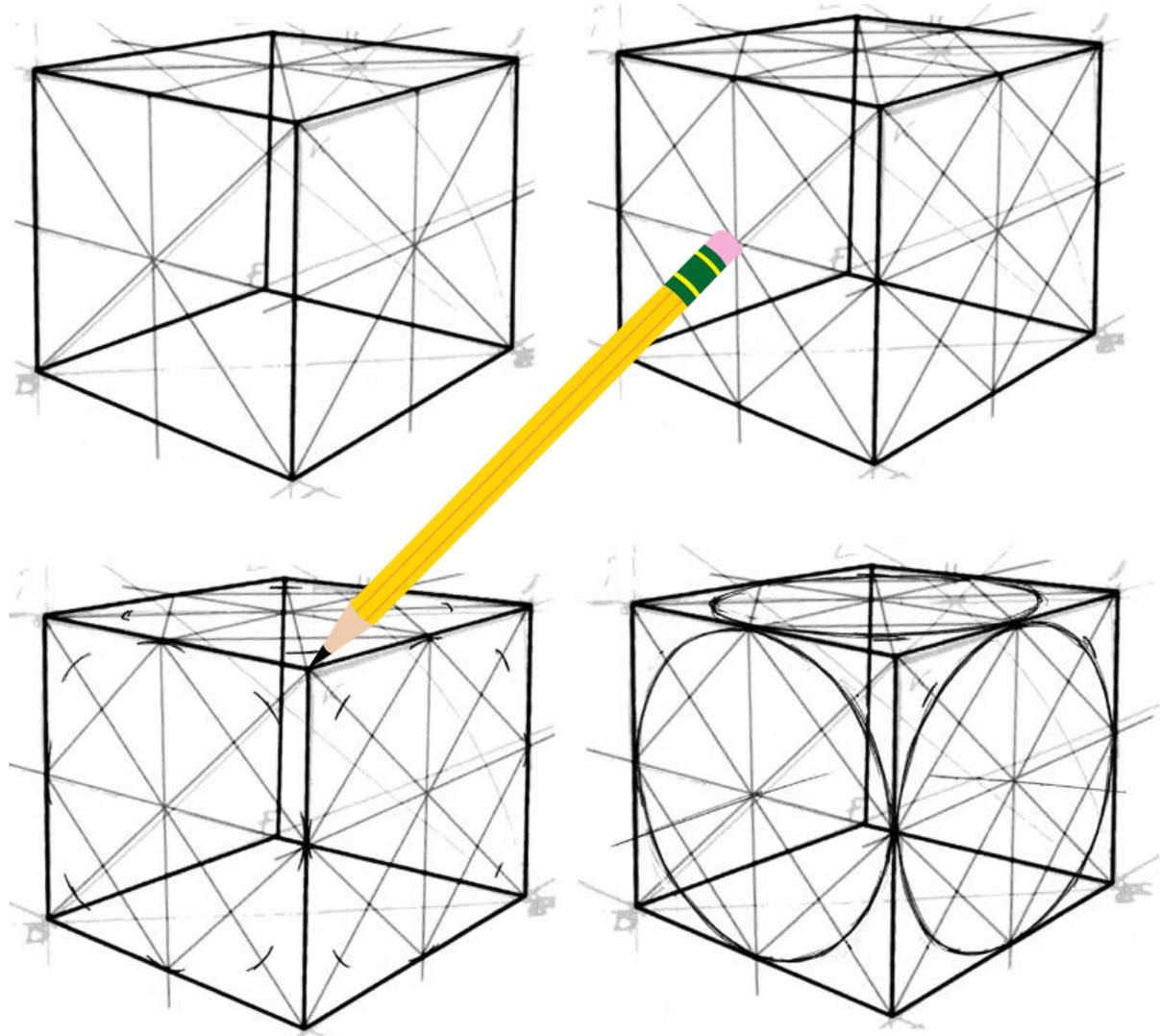
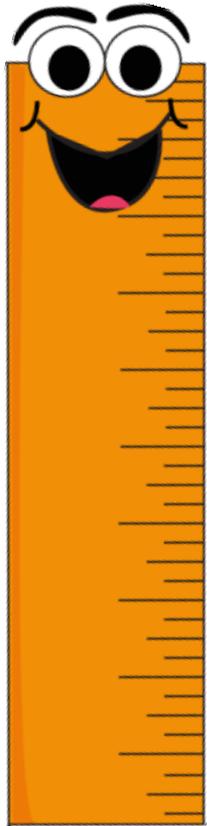
•Contour skeletons are usually not as detailed as a real skeleton, because the artist will likely erase the 'contour skeleton' or cover it up.

•Can you think of other ways that a 'contour skeleton' might be used artistically, besides in drawings?

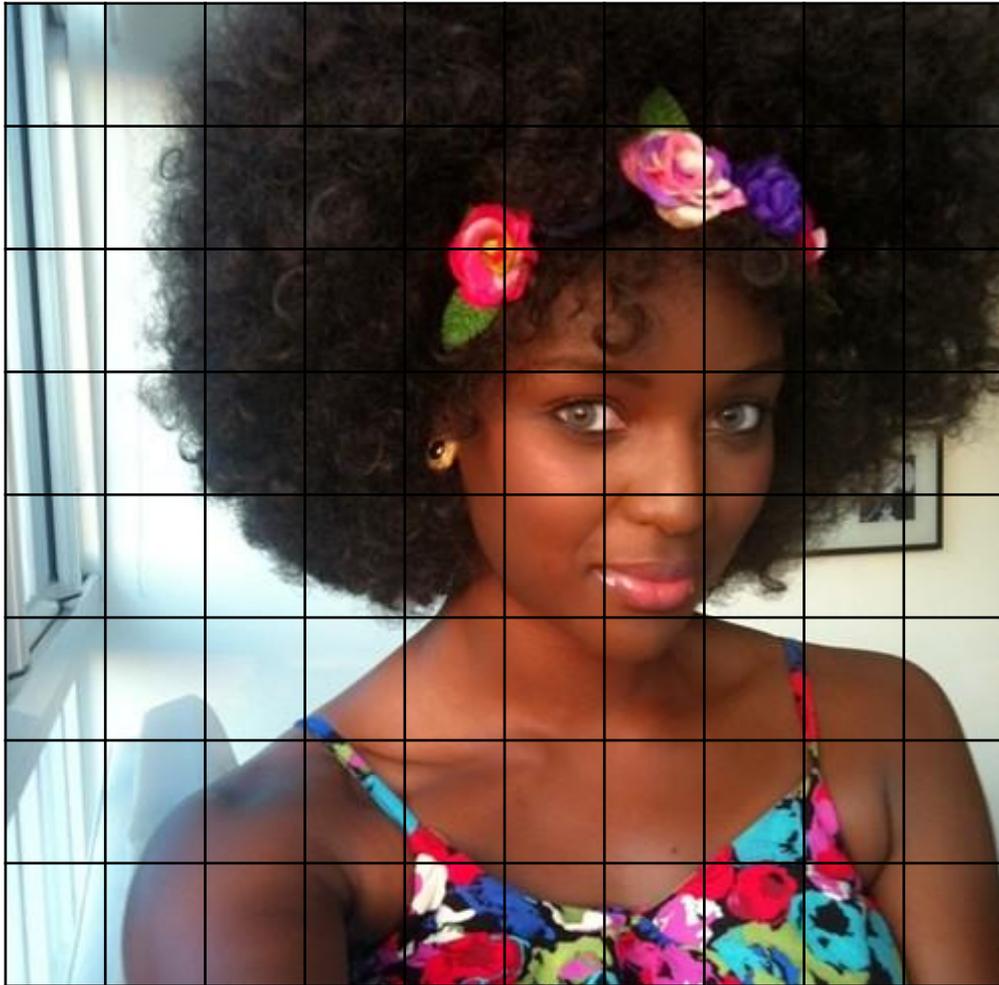
Can you see why 'contour skeletons' are important?



Do you consider these cubes 'contour skeletons'?



Using ‘contour skeletons’ or “frameworks” will help you to create much more realistic art!



Let's use a contour skeleton!

