

Introduction

The material in this book was designed for college-age students, but it can be easily adapted for younger students.

• Could this be you? •

“I like to draw – I think I could learn, but am I too old to begin? Am I too young?”

“I can’t draw a straight line, much less anything that looks like the original subject. But I want to. Is there hope?”

“I am an artist, and I’d like to polish my skills and improve, maybe even become a full-time illustrator.”

Do you fit one of those descriptions? If so, help is on the way. Because artistic ability isn’t a skill given to only a chosen few – we are ALL gifted with the ability to record our observations well enough to delight ourselves daily, and maybe even make a living with our art.

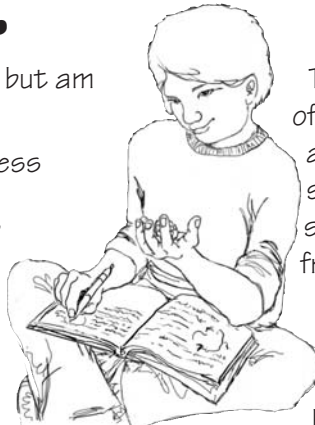
It’s all about learning how to SEE. In fact, those artists whom you admire and envy are artists **only** because they stumbled, early on, upon the key of **how to see and then translate the vision into a drawing**. Oddly, they may not even be aware that it happened, which can limit their progress later on.

As a child, you could probably turn out a pretty fair drawing similar to drawings of others in your age group. As you proceeded through the elementary grades, you drew pictures in school or to entertain yourself at home. Then, like most people, you probably stopped. Perhaps somebody ridiculed your masterpiece, or maybe you just got busy elsewhere.

Naturally, your artistic development stopped cold, and since your results haven’t improved, you may feel you have no artistic talent at all.

But that’s not true, even though your lifelong experience might scream that it IS. You have untapped capabilities, but perhaps they’re buried so deeply that you can barely recognize them. And regardless of your youth or age, it’s not too late to grab the reins and guide your artistic pony to the destination of your choice.

The job here is to locate and access your right brain hemisphere where your drawing skills dwell. Finding the key, opening the gate, then honing abandoned latent skills and abilities is what this book is all about.



• Explore your potential •

This book wasn’t just tossed off in a couple of months as a lark. It began several years ago as a collection of handouts for a scientific illustration class accepting students at all levels of art proficiency – from close to zero to art majors.

As the class grew in popularity, the handouts increased in number until it only made sense to collect them into a textbook. Then nonstudents and home-schoolers started asking for copies. So now it’s available for every aspiring artist to learn from, regardless of age or skill.

Exercises and projects have points assigned to them. The points are not to be awarded for the beauty of the final masterpiece but for the very act of ACCOMPLISHING the steps of the exercise. Since point values are assigned according to the importance of the task, you can either ignore them or use them to help you determine the relative usefulness of each task in developing your skills. This is really helpful if you have time constraints.

The exercises and projects have been tested, critiqued, enriched and polished by hundreds of eager, sharp-eyed students. Their work is found throughout the book – a distillation of what I have taught them, plus all they have taught me. That partnership has produced a no-frills approach, starting with basics and producing accomplished artists by the end of the book. And it really does. While not everyone can make the total breakthrough – *anyone* can achieve measureable improvement and satisfaction.

Upon completing this course, many students have had artwork published in periodicals. Others have gone into exhibit design and similar positions. The rest engage in journaling, field notes and scrapbooking with far greater skill and enjoyment.

This book is an essential classroom tool, but it is equally valuable for anyone, of any age, who wants to make the most of natural but underdeveloped skills. **It is a highly effective homeschool motivator.**

If you want to explore your artistic potential, learn new ways of seeing, and are willing to take a little time to make it all work, this book is for you.