

DRAWING LIKE AN ARCHITECT

▶ FREEHAND

Architectural blind contour drawing.

It sounds simple, but is a challenge, even for those of us who “draw for a living”. Can be done on-site (field trip), or with photographs in the classroom or at home.

1. Identify a local or internationally recognized building to draw. Each student should have easy access to an image (in-person, projected, or a print sitting on their desk) of the exterior of a building.
2. Ask students to draw the building without looking at their paper. Some find it easier when they do not lift their pen.

Drawing Activity: Massing Study

Part 1: Fields of color - NO LINES.

Can use the same building, or image as the free-hand exercise, or something different.

Materials: crayons, pastels, or watercolors

1. (same as step 1 above)
2. Select two or three colors or shades of gray to work with.
3. Ask students to “draw” the building using only fields of color. No line-work allowed. They will need to pay attention to the effects of light and shadow on a surface.

Part 2: Massing Blocks

1. (same as above) - new paper.
2. Directive: only draw the essential components.
3. Trace the building (or draw it while looking at the paper) and break down the form into masses - the largest shapes that make up the building. Disregard the ornamentation (the small details) and only focus on the essential elements.

For Example: Union Terminal would be a horizontal line for the ground, a half circle for the rotunda, and two rectangles for the wings.

Drawing Activity: Diagramming

Diagramming exercises to communicate design features or a point about the building in an abstract image.

Buildings do many different things all at once. Focusing on one specific function throughout a structure helps you to see or even find relationships between the parts of a building that you don't necessarily notice up front. This exercise is performed on an existing building, but the concept can be used for design as well, by diagramming the DESIRED way a certain aspect functions in a particular project.

1. Identify a familiar building. Can be the students' homes, the school, etc.
2. Select four functional categories: light, wind/airflow, entry, circulation, water, energy, sequence, etc. Your architect should be able to come up with more.
3. Each student draws four corresponding boxes on a page, and draw a diagram for each category within the boxes.

Diagrams can be bubble-diagrams, paths, arrows, different shapes, etc. Hint: do a web-quest for graphic diagram images.