

Using charcoal for drawing

If you have just begun drawing with charcoal you should start drawing with a medium size charcoal. You should start out with this size because it helps students treat subjects in more broad terms and it helps them not get too many details and become lost in detail. To erase the charcoal that is medium size you easily can rub off with your finger or you can erase it by wadding a tissue up and rubbing it on the mistake.

For charcoal drawings there are different types of utensils you can use. Such as, charcoal sticks, compressed charcoal, and charcoal pencils. Just like drawing with pencils there many ways of toning, shading, highlighting, and etc.

One of the good things about charcoal is that it is quite cheap, so try to buy a variety to experiment with. Willow and vine charcoal give delicate greys and smudge easily, and is wonderful for all kinds of drawing. Choose compressed charcoal sticks for a more robust drawing that doesn't smudge so much. Select a medium or soft grade for all-purpose use. Hard charcoals can be a bit scratchy, but are good for fine lines on a strong paper.

Charcoal pencils are basically compressed charcoal, but the timber casing keeps your hands clean, and they are easy to sharpen for fine work. However, they wear out quickly if you are shading big areas.

For guidance on drawing with charcoal visit The Big Draw website below

<http://www.show.me.uk/topicpage/The-Big-Draw.html>

Two Methods of Drawing in Charcoal

One way to draw with charcoal is by using the point alone, the shading being put in with lines which are not blended, without the use of the stump or rubbing of any kind.

A second way is that in which the charcoal is blended with a stump (torchon) or a soft rag, no lines being visible in the modelling. This manner of drawing is most popular in schools because a higher finish can be achieved over the first method. Charcoal and crayon portraits are drawn using this method. Stumps are made of leather, chamois skin and paper. For school purposes, paper stumps will be all that you need to use.

Paper for Charcoal and Crayon Drawing

For general purposes, the rough charcoal paper, made specially for the purpose is best.

Removing mistakes

You can use ordinary bread, at least a day old, that is free from butter, lard or milk in its making, to rub out charcoal or crayon, erasing mistakes, and taking out lights from a mass of dark.

To correct a line or erase the charcoal with bread, take a small piece between the fingers, roll it into a ball, and shape it to a point, use it as you would use a rubber eraser, but more slowly.

You'll also need a fine, soft, cotton rag to work with charcoal or crayon. It is used sometimes to dust the charcoal from the paper, and if the charcoal has not been very heavily used, the rag is often enough to erase without using bread or rubber.

A rag is also useful when too much charcoal or crayon has been rubbed on a tone.

If a shadow appears too black, a soft rag may be passed gently over the surface, when the superfluous charcoal or crayon will come off, leaving behind a tone more soft and light in quality.

This tone can be worked over in any manner you wish. The rag, too, may be used in sketching landscapes to spread a soft flat mass, such as a sky.

In many cases, it is better to use the stump for this purpose.

Fixing Charcoal Drawings

A charcoal drawing will become smeared and defaced if left unprotected. Therefore, it is necessary to fix your drawings with a varnish-like preparation. Don't use a brush to apply the varnish! You can buy ready prepared fixative from art supply stores (online or offline).