

The Grid Drawing Technique

Take a look at the attached photograph, it comes from artist Ansel Adams. Ansel Easton Adams was a photographer who photographed black-and-white landscapes, capturing the American West. Adams was an avid outdoors-man and environmentalist. His photographs are often described as capturing the spirit of the American West. Take time to look over the photograph of Yosemite National Park and think about the questions below.



Questions:

Using all of your senses, describe this place.

What does it make you think?

What does it sound like, smell like, look like, and feel like?

It appears that there are no people in this landscape. Why do you think the artist left the scene unpopulated?

What effect does this have?

Think of a place that has been inspirational to you. What is it like?

Drawing Challenge:

Now it's your turn! Get out a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil and draw your interpretation of Ansel Adam's photo of Yosemite National Park.

To assist you in developing your drawing skills, try using the grid technique.

The Grid Technique:

- The grid technique is a proven drawing technique that helps artists develop their freehand drawing skills and accuracy. This technique is fairly simple and straightforward. The grid will help you with your drawing, as it helps you to place objects and orient your drawing. The grid also gives you reference points for your drawing and breaks down your drawing into smaller more manageable sections.
- We have provided a grid for you already for Adam's photograph below. On your drawing paper, sketch in a grid that matches this 15 block grid. No need to worry if your grid isn't perfectly even.



- Using the grid on the above reference photo, you can judge the relative position of objects for your drawing and the placement of individual aspects. In our example, the grid provides us with reference points of the mountains, the trees, and the clouds.
- The power of this technique is that you can build our your drawing roughly first, by placing specific objects and as you continue to work through your drawing you will have more reference points to judge and measure. Each aspect of the photo as you draw it out, becomes a reference point for another aspect, and so on and so forth.
- Start by placing what you think is the most important aspects of the drawing and put in the rough shapes that you want. Artists often use the grid technique to meticulously copy photos for their drawing and painting segment by segment. In turn, it helps to create your initial artwork.
- As you work, make the drawing your own, let your drawing represent your artistic eye and style. And when you finish your drawing, please share with us! Because, after all, art is always a community project and we would love to see what you come up with and create.