

Sample Drawing Lesson

1. Have the students look at their copy of the Chinese Dragon Figurine. Have them find familiar shapes and lines in the picture. Start them off by saying things such as "Can anyone see a 'U' shape on the dragon?" "Who can spot a circle?" "Where do you see a squiggly line?" etc.
2. Then let them turn spotting familiar shapes and lines on the picture.
3. Next have them lay a piece of tracing paper over the Dragon picture. Call out different familiar shapes and lines to trace, such as "See how the teeth look like a jagged line? Trace the jagged line in the Dragon's mouth." "See how the front of the Dragon's neck and chest looks like a backwards 'S'? Trace the backwards 'S'". Coach them to trace lightly with their pencils. Continue till everyone is very comfortable with this.
4. Let them trace the rest of the picture. Encourage them to spot familiar shapes and lines and tell about them.
5. Tell them we are now going to learn to draw the dragon without tracing paper. Have them put the tracing paper aside.
6. This is a good time to tell them that their dragon probably won't look exactly like the drawing in the picture or like anyone else's drawing. Stress that this is a good thing - art would be boring if it all looked the same! Get the idea across that you can't wait to see how different each of the dragons turn out!
7. Start with practice paper and pencil. Tell them we are going to practice drawing parts of the dragon before drawing the whole thing. Pick a part (such as the tail). Have everyone spot familiar shapes and lines in the tail. Then have them draw it. Coach them to draw lightly with their pencils, rather than pressing down hard. They should draw it over and over on the practice paper. They can change it to go in a different direction if they want as well. The idea is to get them to be comfortable with drawing this small part.
8. Do the same with other parts. They should be covering their practice paper

with them. Make no attempt at this point to join parts together. Ask which parts they think will be tough to draw and treat them the same. Do this till they feel comfortable with all parts of the Dragon. For kids who get this before the others, suggest that they be creative with the individual parts by adding to them and changing them. Don't belabor this too much. It can go pretty quickly.

9. Have everyone get a second piece of practice paper. Choose a combination of parts, such as the back legs and the tail, or the nose and the mouth, and have them practice putting them together. Do this with many different combinations. Let them choose combinations as well.

10. Put the practice paper aside. Give everyone a piece of drawing paper. Have them use pencils. Tell them the erasers can be used but try not to use them too much. Show them how you can make several sketch lines of one part and erase the extra lines you don't want when you're done. This is a good reason to keep the lines light!

11. Have them visualize their drawing on the page so they have enough room to draw it. I use the words "Draw it with your imagination first." Where will the head be? The back, the tail?

12. Choose a starting point. (The eye is usually a good place to start. This is what I chose for this lesson.) Remind them to use what they practiced. Have everyone draw it.

13. Move to the top of the head. Have them imagine where it should go in relation to the eye. "How far away from the eye do you want the top of the head to be? Put your pencil there."

14. Continue on in this manner. If anyone has a problem with a part, have them spot it's familiar shapes and lines and practice it on scrap paper.

15. When anyone completes their drawing, have them erase any extra sketch lines.

16. When the drawings are finished, have them practice a few coloring techniques and materials on a piece of scrap paper.

17. Show them how to use different lines and patterns to fill a space. Have each draw several large shapes (can be circles, squares, blobs, etc.) Then brainstorm different patterns with them and have them try them in their shapes. Some of these might be; creating a rainbow effect with several colors; Using Cross-hatching; filling a space with wavy lines; Stripes; Drawing overlapping "U" shapes to create scales. The possibilities are endless! Have them try markers, crayons and color pencils to see what different effects are created with each.

18. Now have them color their picture. They may want to outline it first in black. This is a simple matter of tracing the lines that are there.

19. If anyone makes a "mistake" help them see how they can turn that mistake into something else. A stray line becomes a horn on the top of the head or flames shooting out or part of a pattern. Some very interesting ideas and pictures can develop this way!

20. Keep it light! You can always find something about a picture that you like and can honestly admire. Don't criticize! If a student originates that they themselves don't like something they've done, try to coach them into changing it into something they will like. The purpose of this lesson is not to create a professional artist, but to help the students master enough skills to be able to confidently express themselves through drawing and the use of color.