

Drawing Heads

TEACHING ART & DESIGN

Sheeaun, Kilmaley, Ennis,
Co. Clare, Ireland.

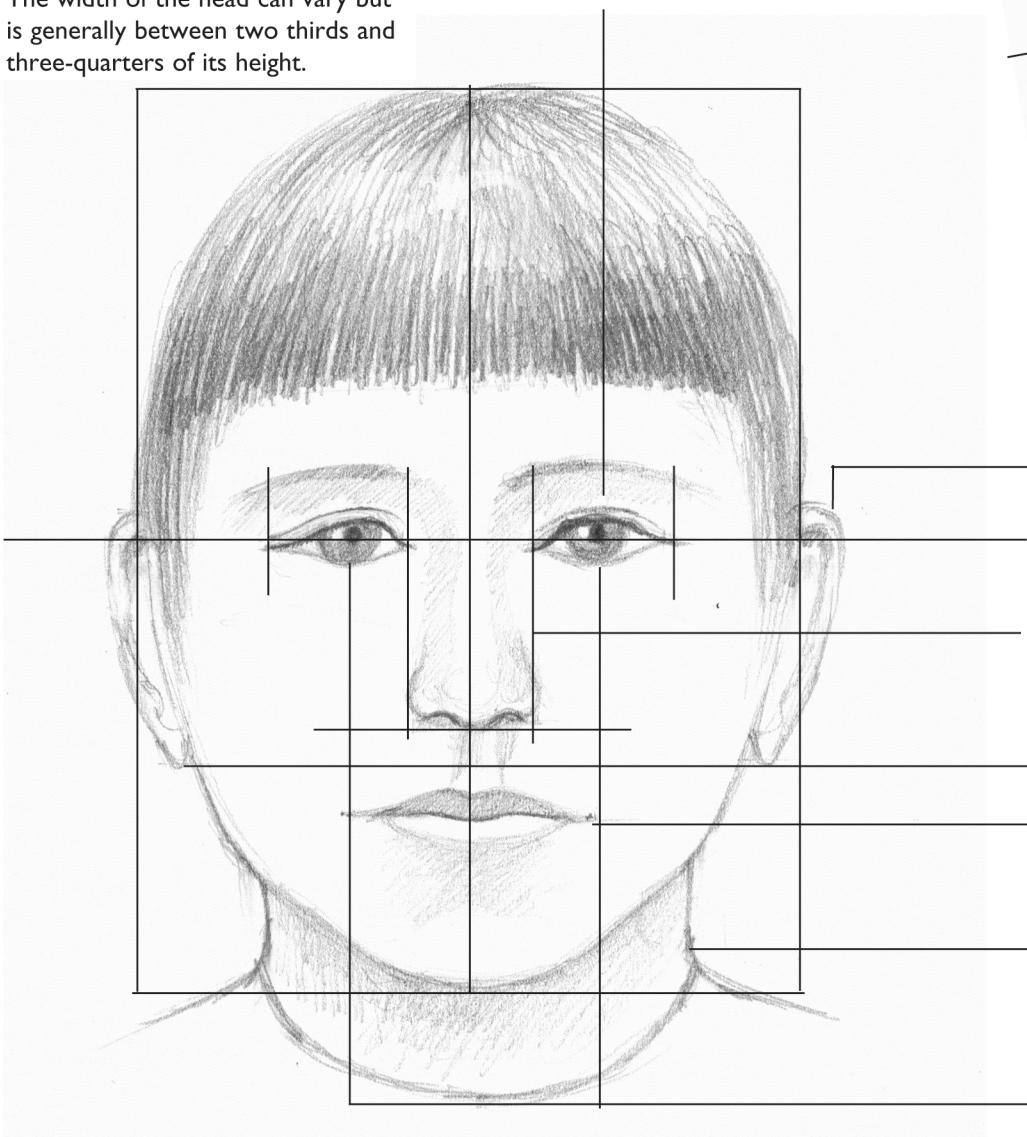
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Generalised front view of a young person's head to show proportion

The two halves of the face on either side of the centre line are not always absolutely symmetrical.

The width of the head can vary but is generally between two thirds and three-quarters of its height.

Each eye is about equal to the space between the eyes and equal to about a fifth of the total width of the head.



The axis lines of the eye level and centre line of the face rotate with the head as it is tilted.

Top of the ears higher than the eyes when looking straight ahead.

The eye level is half way between the top and bottom of the head.

The width of the bottom of the nose is about equal to the width between the eyes

The bottom of the ears line up to a point between the bottom of the nose and the mouth.

The mouth is more than a third of the distance between the bottom of nose and the chin.

The neck is slightly less than the width across the jaw at the height of the mouth.

The width of the mouth is about equal to the distance from the centre of each eye to the next.

Some general notes

All of these notes on proportion are intended as a general guide only.

Of course every head is different and so it is essential to look carefully at the actual shapes and proportions of the person that you are drawing.

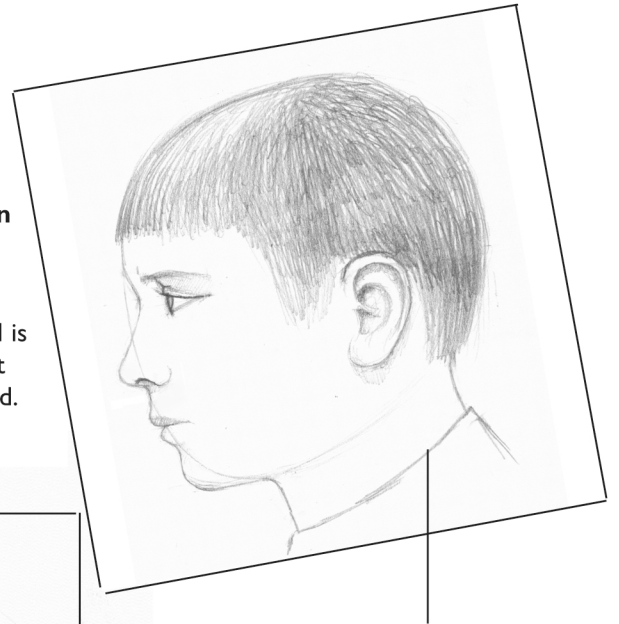
Our ability to recognise people is based on observing the slight differences between one person's head and another. Therefore it only takes a small error in judging proportion to make your drawing not look like the person you are drawing.

One of the problems in drawing people is that we are inclined to draw what we think that the person should look like rather than as they actually are. There is also a tendency to make the face too large for the rest of the head since our recognition of people is very much concentrated on the face.

Generalised side view of a young person's head to show proportion

The distance from the front of the nose to the back of the head is more or less equal to the height of the head.

The highest part of the head is usually towards the back but sometimes is further forward.



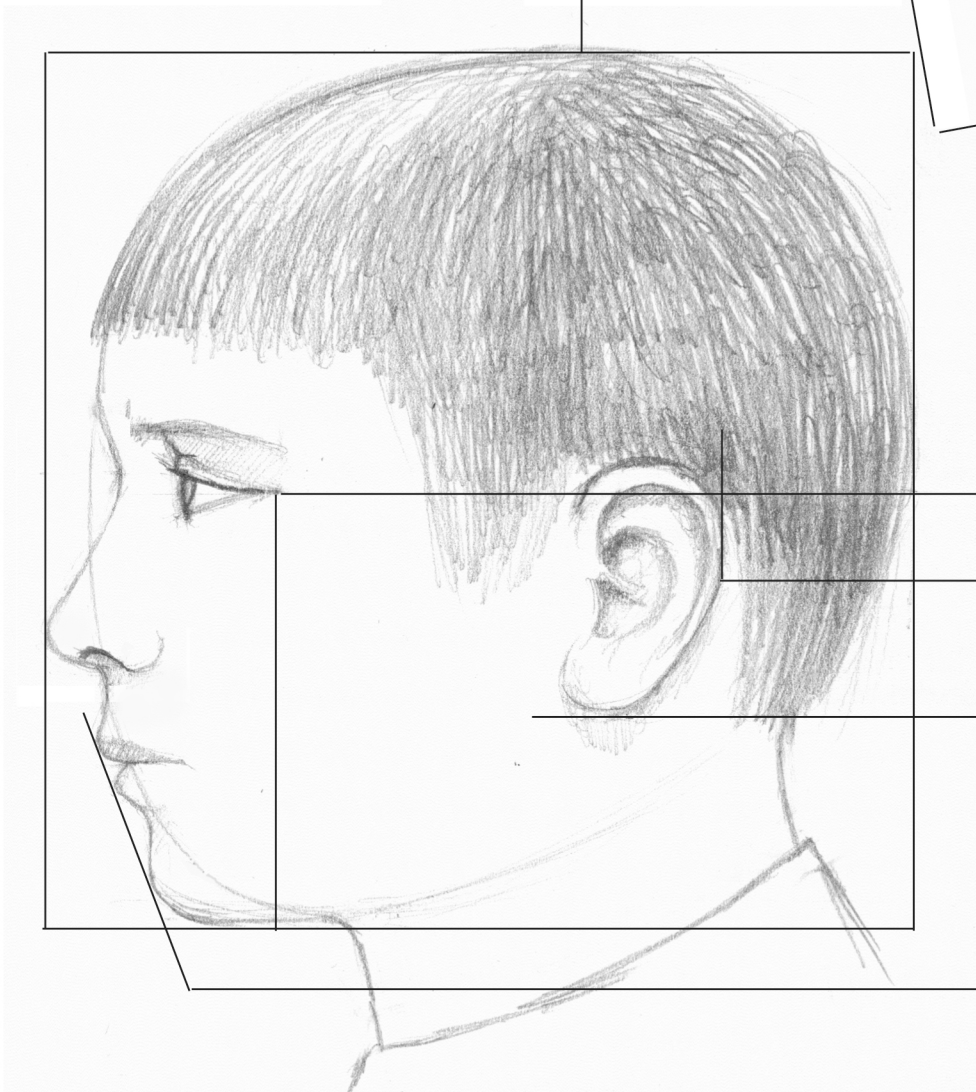
When the head is tilted downwards the square in which the head is drawn needs to be rotated to the required angle.

The eye level is half way between the top and bottom of the head.

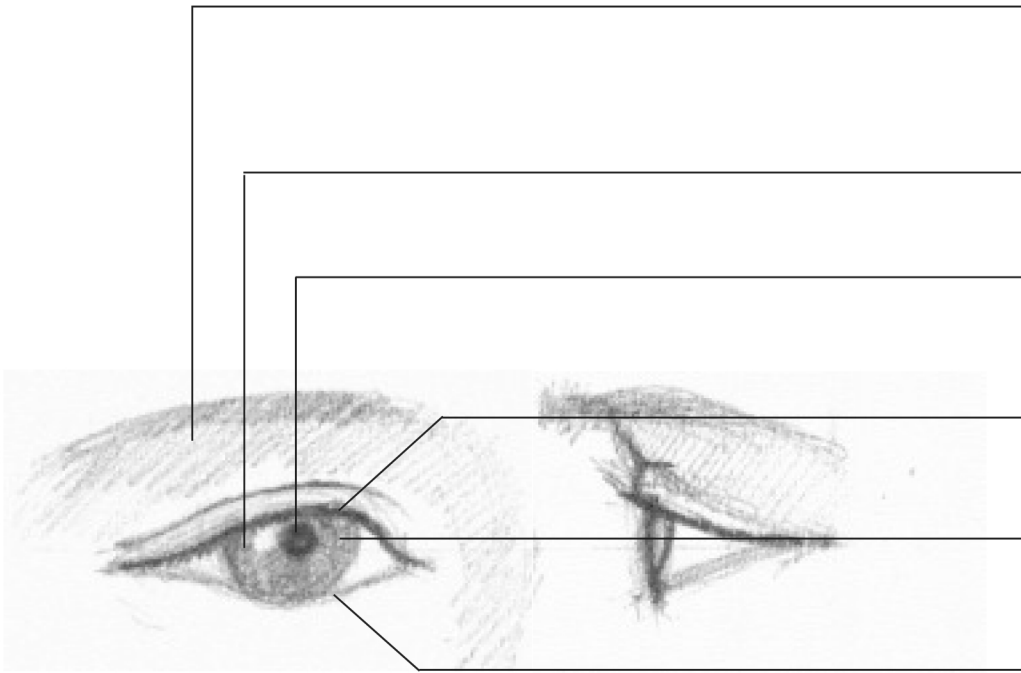
The distance from the back of the eye to the back of the ear is about equal to the distance between the eye level and the chin.

The point at which the back of the neck joins the head is about level with the bottom of the ear.

The top lip projects further than the bottom lip and the bottom lip often projects further than the chin, although not always.



Drawing the eyes



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The eyebrow is usually about as far from the eye as the height of an open eye.

Light reflecting in the eyeball creates a highlight. If the light is coming from above the highlight will be in the upper part of the eye.

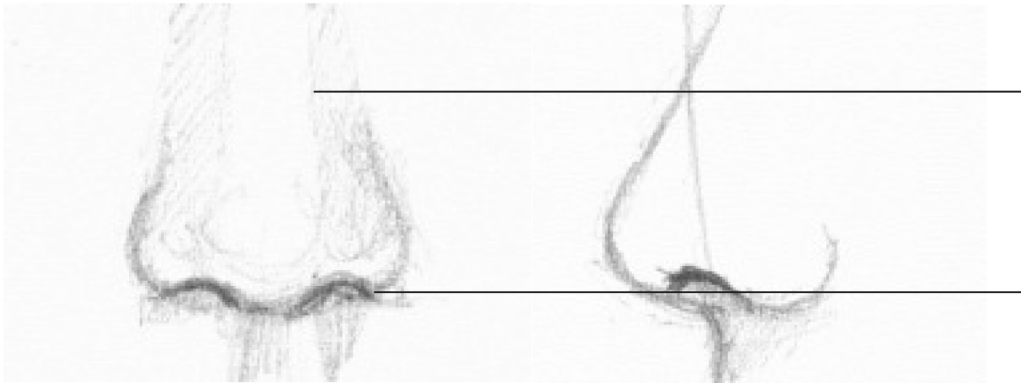
The top and bottom eyelids are different shapes as are the inner and outer edges of the eyelid.

The upper eye lid forms a crease line just above the eyelashes when the eye is open.

The upper eye lid makes a strong line due to the eyelashes and also because it casts a shadow.

The lower eye lid makes a less emphasised line since it catches the light and has fewer eye lashes.

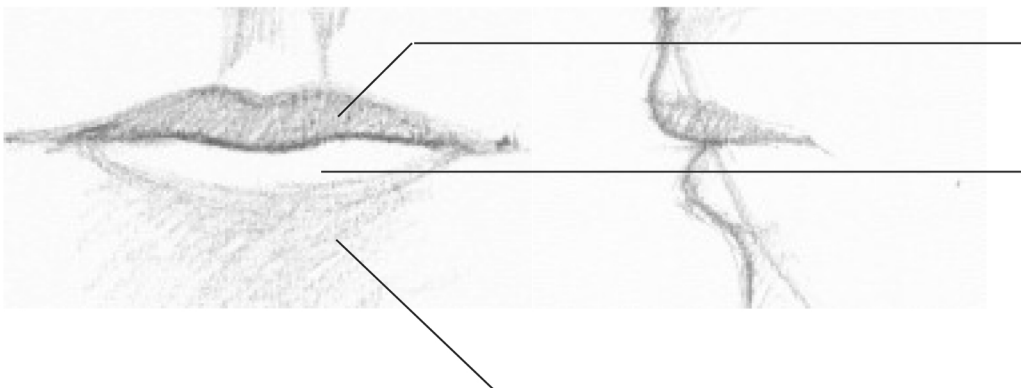
Drawing the nose



The sides of the nose are only defined by shading in the view from the front. The side profile is more defined.

The base of the nose is the most defined part in both views.

Drawing the mouth



The upper lip is in shadow if light is coming from above but doesn't usually have a sharply defined edge.

The lower lip is highlighted if the light is coming from above. The edges are usually not at all defined especially at the sides.

The area under the lower lip will be in shadow if the light is coming from above.