
Art Masterpiece: Rembrandt van Rijn - "Night Watch"

Keywords:

- Light
- Shading and Value - Blending, Hatching, Cross-Hatching and Stippling
- Atmosphere and Mood
- Light & Dark Contrasts

Grade: 5th- 6th

Activity: Shading Techniques with 2B Sketching Pencil



Meet the Artist:

- Born July 15, 1606 in Leiden, Netherlands
- His father owned a Mill and his mother was the daughter of a baker
- His modest parents took great care with his education, Rembrandt began his studies at the Latin School
- At the age of 14 he was enrolled at the University of Leiden. The program did not interest him, and he soon left to study art
- After six months, having mastered everything he had been taught, Rembrandt returned to Leiden, where he was soon so highly regarded that although barely 22 years old, he took his first pupils.
- He was a Dutch artist during the Renaissance, which was a period in history of enlightenment in Science, Philosophy, Music and Literature
- A Renaissance artist took as its foundation, Classical Antiquity, but transformed that tradition with elements that reflected the recent developments in these four different areas of study
- Rembrandt enjoyed drawing/painting people he knew, landscapes, as well as self-portraits and was known as the most accomplished etcher
- He liked dogs and included them in many of his paintings
- He painted over 500 pictures and enjoyed creating the bold contrast between light and dark colors
- "Night Watch" is considered his masterpiece and was ordered as a group portrait by the Archer's Guild

- He married Saskia van Uylenburg in 1634 and had one son named Titus
- The house he called home for so many years is now the "Rembrandt House Museum" which displays his many etchings and paintings. The Rijksmuseum display his larger works such as the "Night Watch"

Meet the Art

- Rembrandt painted *The Militia Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq* between 1640 and 1642. This picture was called the "*Nachtwacht*" by the Dutch and the "*Night Watch*" by Sir Joshua Reynolds because by the 18th century the picture was so dimmed and defaced throughout time, that it was almost indistinguishable and looked quite like a night scene. After it was cleaned, it was discovered to represent broad day—a party of musketeers stepping from a gloomy courtyard into the blinding sunlight.
- Rembrandt departed from convention, which normally expected such genre pieces be stately and formal. This depiction was casual, showing the militia readying themselves to embark on a mission.
- The canvas is buzzing of activity and creates an **atmosphere** of excitement by the **contrasts** between **light and dark**, shiny and dull colors and a high variety of positions, gestures and facial expressions.

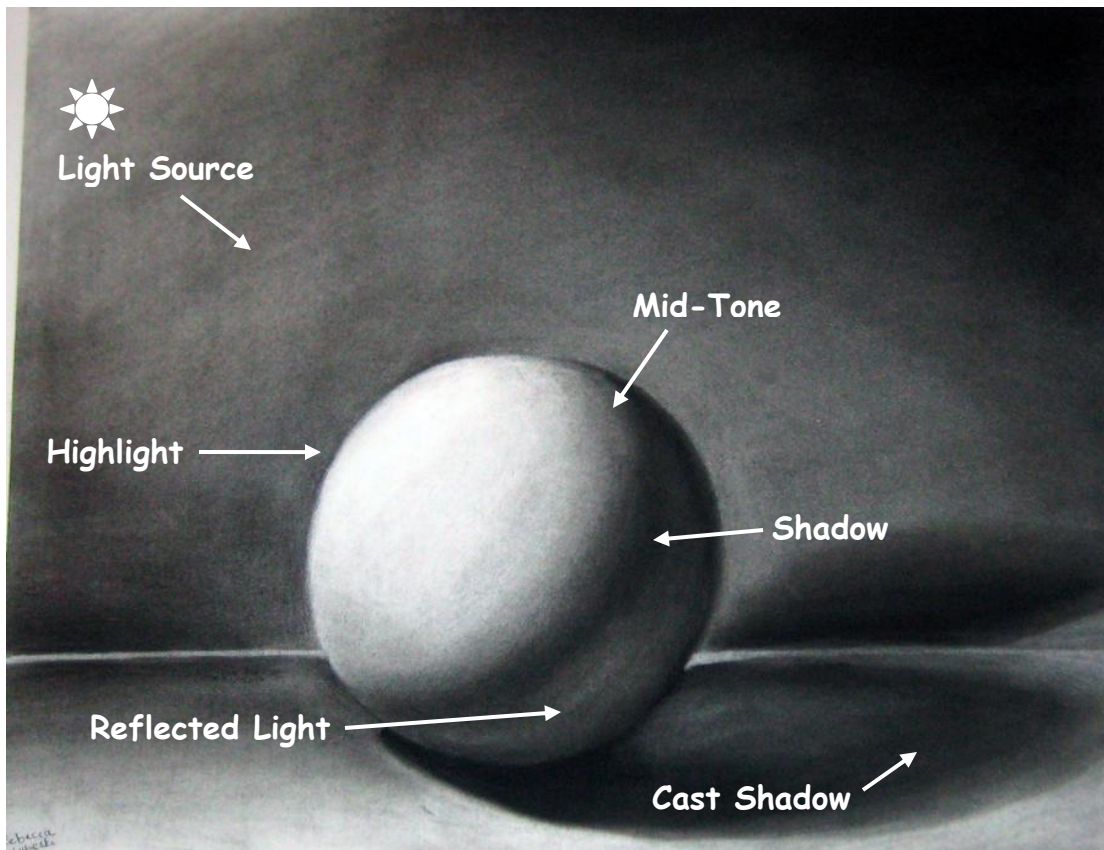
Possible Questions:

- Who do you think the people in the painting could be?
- Describe your thoughts about the painting.
- Explain why some people in the painting are painted more brightly than others.
- Does this painting seem to be still or to move? Why?
- Describe where the light source is coming from.
- What time of day do you think this painting was painted? Why?

Activity: Adding Value through Shading Techniques

Materials needed:

- Scratch paper for practicing Shading Techniques
- Drawing paper or 9x12 white construction paper
- Pencils (for practice only)
- 2B drawing pencils
- Aerosol hair spray to set graphite
- Artists erasers

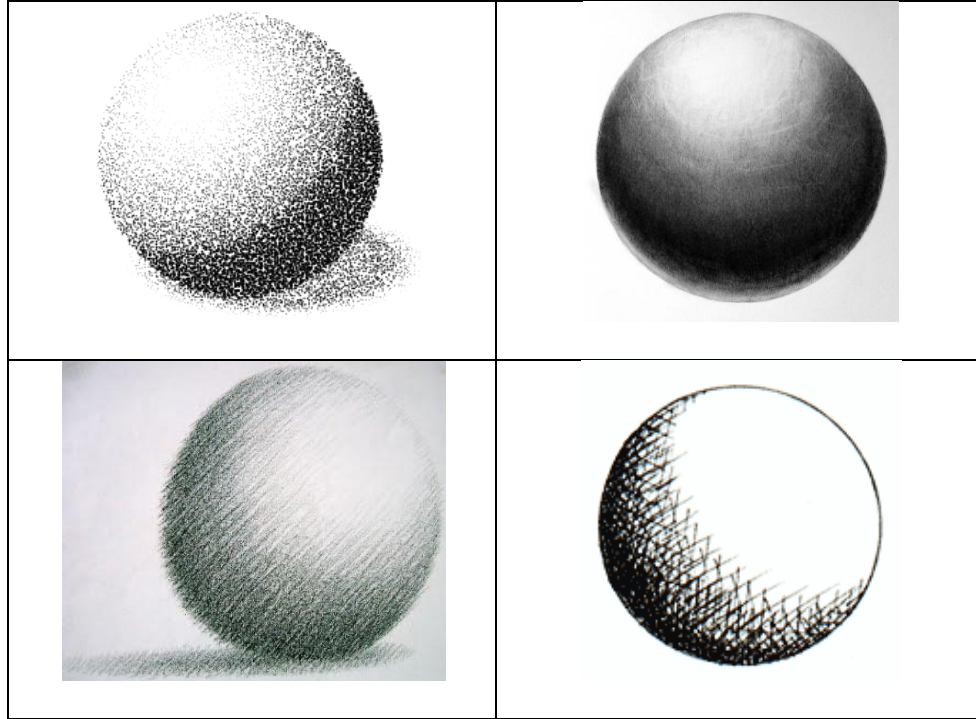


In your drawings, you will generally have one light source, which determines the location of highlights and the direction of shadows. The spot where the light hits your subject directly is called the highlight, and is usually pure white. The side facing away from the light source will be in shadow. The midtones refer to the gradation of tones between the shadow and the highlight. Most objects will also have an area of reflected light. This reflection happens when light hits the surface next to your object and bounces back. You will notice that these values blend into each other smoothly, which communicates to us the shape of the object.

Process:

- After displaying the art print & discussing the artist's life, introduce students to the various shading techniques
- Pass out practice sheet and while using the "Hatching & Cross Hatching Examples" sheet, have students **practice** techniques for **5-10min**. You may want to provide a copy of this sheet and the 4 shaded spheres sheet for reference, (1 pair per table)
- Pass out drawing paper and instruct them to fold paper in half to draw & shade 2 spheres using any 2 shading techniques
- Remind students to draw a horizon line, so the spheres are on something, not floating in mid-air
- Instruct students to shade each sphere with a different directional light source
- Lightly spray aerosol hair spray on project to set the graphite.

Use the following pages to demonstrate shading techniques.
Hand out to students for reference during the lesson.



Control Your Pencil

The key to smooth shading is learning how to control your pencil. You need to be aware of how you hold the pencil, how you apply your strokes, and how hard you press. For darker shadows, press slightly harder and slowly lessen the pressure as you work away. Keep in mind that you shouldn't have to press very hard; if you want darker shadows, build them with layers of graphite. Your pencil strokes should be even and regular. You don't want to be able to see the paper between your lines. Try to make your pencil strokes in the same direction to get smoother results. This is easier if you hold your pencil closer to the end and at an angle, using the side of the lead to shade.

Drawing Pencil Grades

Extremely Hard - 9H to 7H	Very Hard - 6H to 5H	Hard - 4H to 3H
Medium Hard - 2H to H	Medium - F to HB	Medium Soft - B to 2B
Soft - 3B to 4B	Very Soft - 5B to 6B	Extremely Soft - 7B to 9B

Shading Techniques

Shading is a drawing technique that adds dimension to your project. Shading changes your drawing from flat and lifeless to a 3-d work of art. There are 2 main shading techniques that artists use – hatching and crosshatching.

Hatching and Cross Hatching Examples

