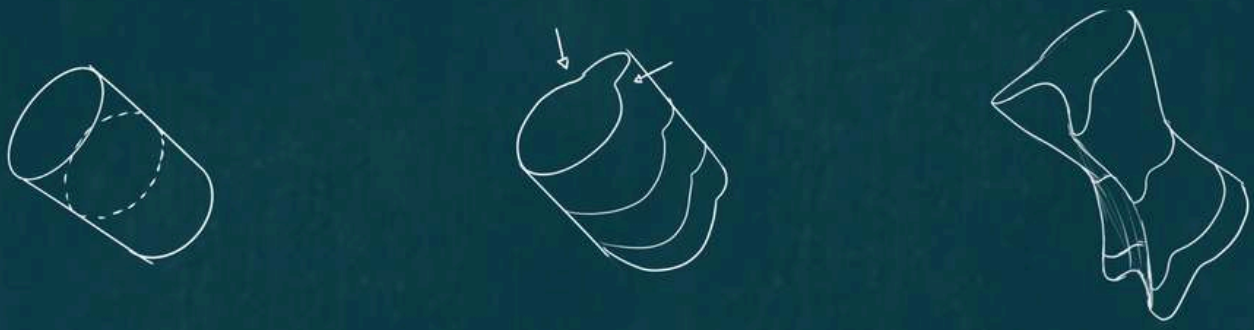
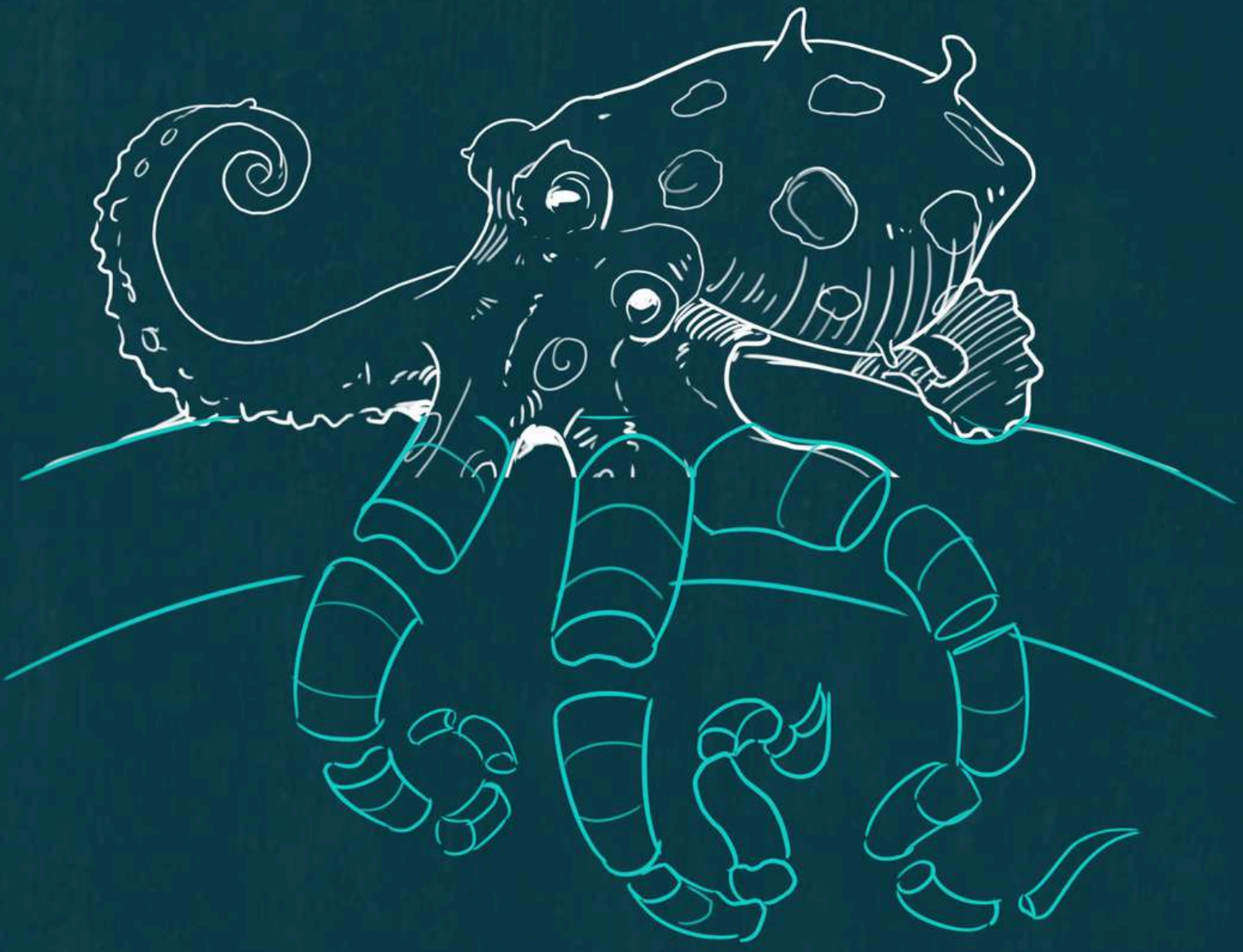


SIMPLE STEPS TO DRAW ANYTHING



ARTWOD

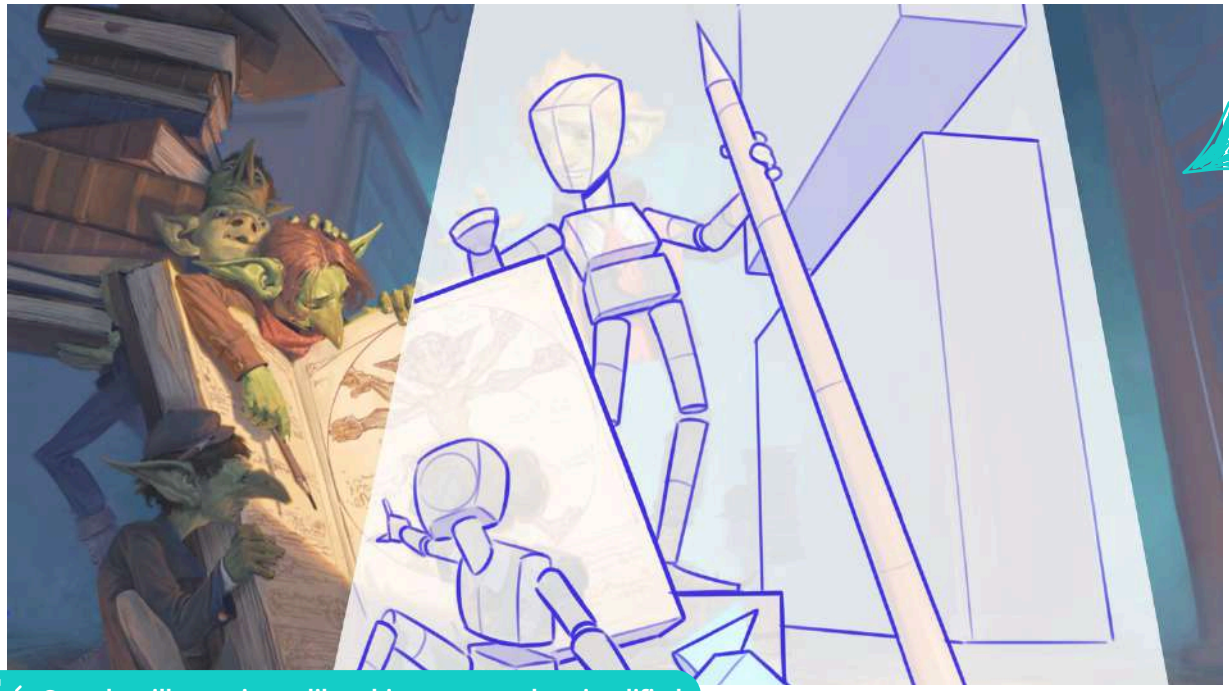
Foreword

We made this book to help you understand the Artwod way of learning how to draw FAST.

It's all about understanding simple forms in perspective and using them as building blocks for anything you want to draw. Why?

Because every drawing begins with basic forms in perspective.

We'll guide you through what perspective is and how you can use it to draw awesome things!

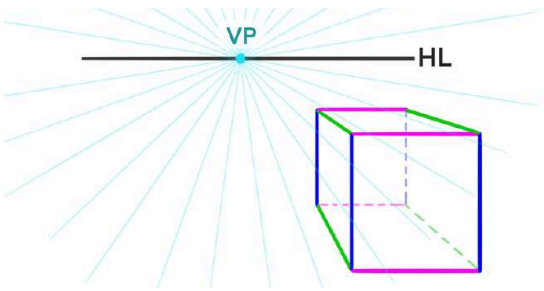


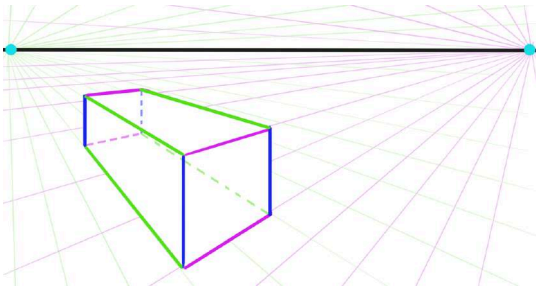
Complex illustrations, like this one, can be simplified into basic forms like boxes and cylinders.

Chapters In This Book

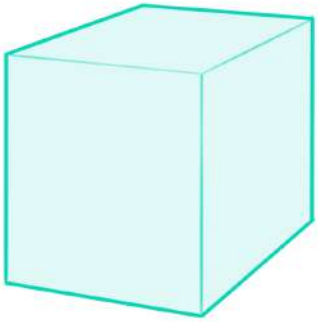
CHAPTER 1

We'll start with the basics: 1-point perspective, then move to 2-point perspective. Most artists use 2 or 3 point perspective, but we'll focus on 2-point perspective for now.



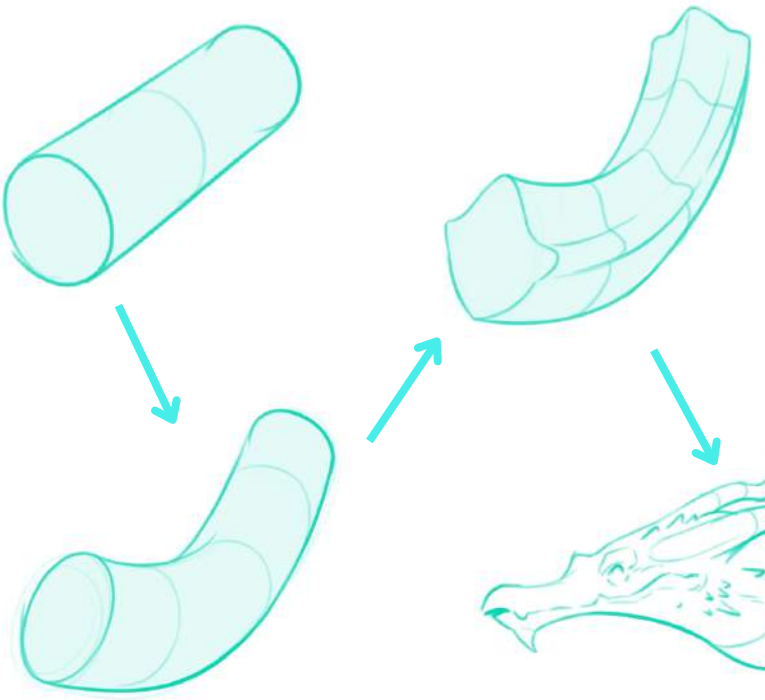


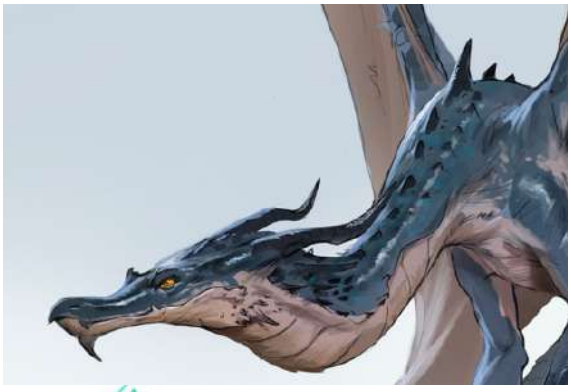
We'll explain what boxes and cylinders are, why they're key for drawing, and how to create them in 1-point and 2-point perspective.



CHAPTER 2

By the end, you'll know how to manipulate boxes and cylinders to create cool new forms for drawing ANYTHING.





Here's an example of how a simple cylinder can be bent and manipulated into a dragon's neck.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Intro to Perspective

Step 1: 2D vs 3D

First, remember that we draw on a flat 2D surface, like a piece of paper or a tablet.

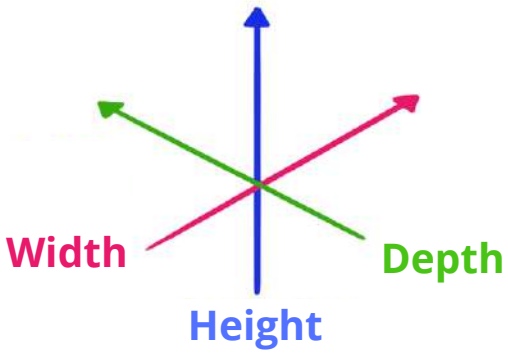
As artists, we use perspective to make flat lines look 3D. It's the most important drawing skill. If your perspective is off, your whole drawing will look wrong.

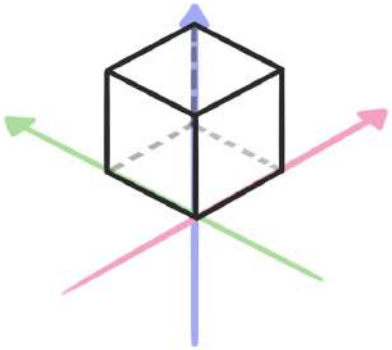
3D WORLD → **2D IMAGE**

When we draw, we create a 2D image, like a snapshot from a viewer's eye or a camera. It's like taking a photo – turning a real 3D scene into a flat 2D picture.

Or like watching a movie – the screen is flat, but it feels like you're looking into a 3D world.

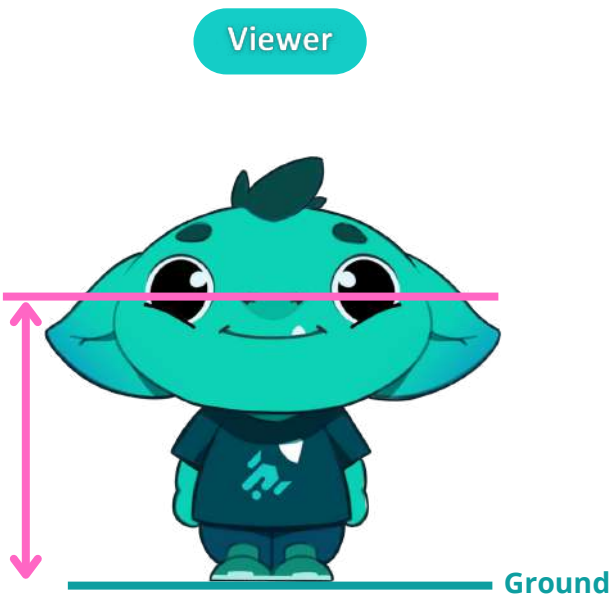
3D means 'three dimensions': height, depth, and width.

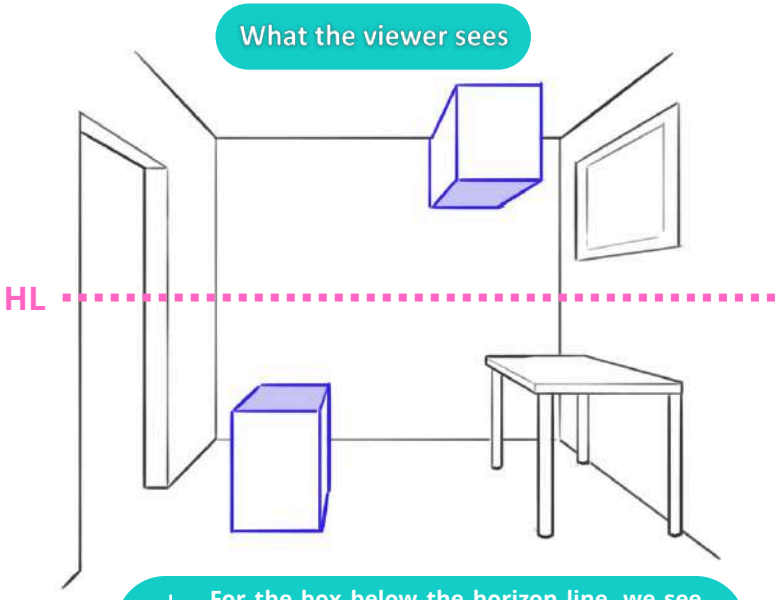




Step 2: Horizon Line (HL)

To make a 2D image look 3D, we first need to understand the horizon line.
The horizon line in your drawing represents the viewer's eye level. It shows how high the viewer (or camera) is above the ground in the 3D scene.

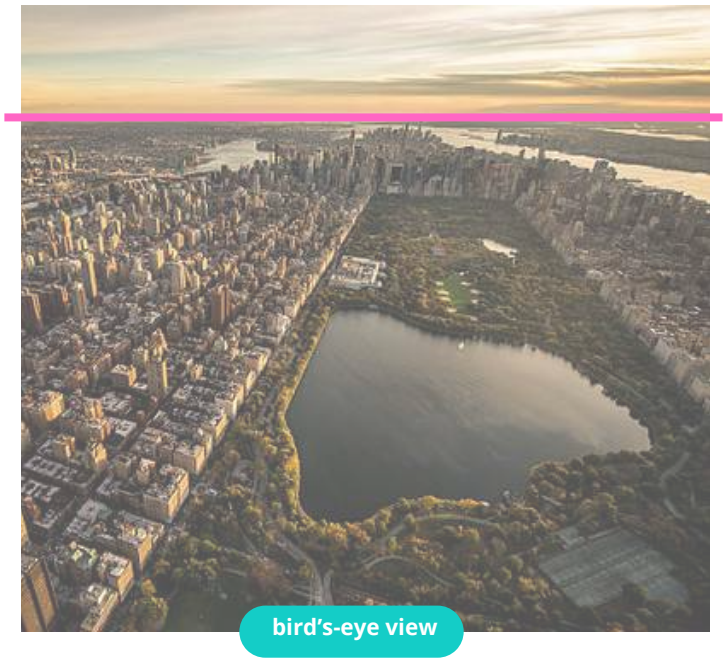


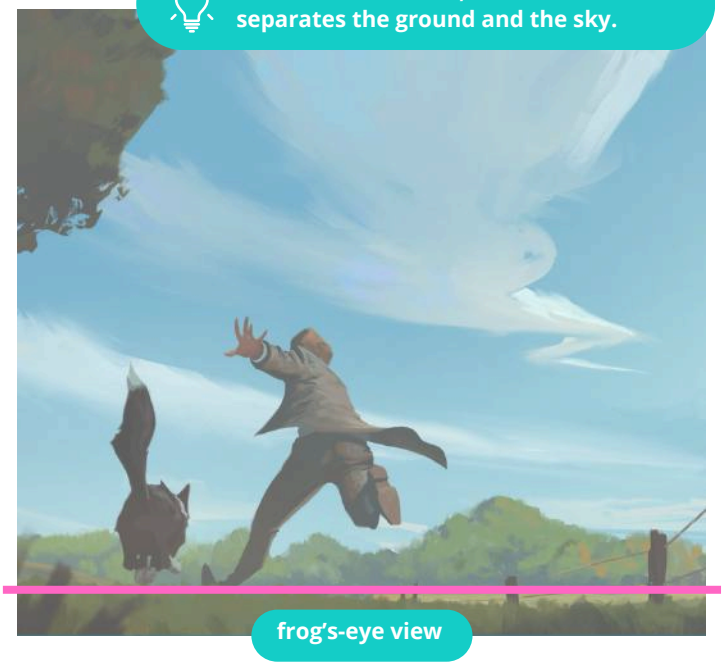


For the box below the horizon line, we see its top plane. For the box above, we see its bottom plane.

So, if something is above the horizon line, we look up at it because it's higher than eye level. If it's below, we look down on it.

In outdoor scenes, the horizon line separates the ground and the sky.





This relates to bird's-eye view and frog's-eye view.

A bird flies high, so a bird's-eye view means looking down on everything; in a 2D image, the horizon line is at the top.

A frog is low to the ground, so a frog's-eye view means looking up; in our image, the horizon line is at the bottom.

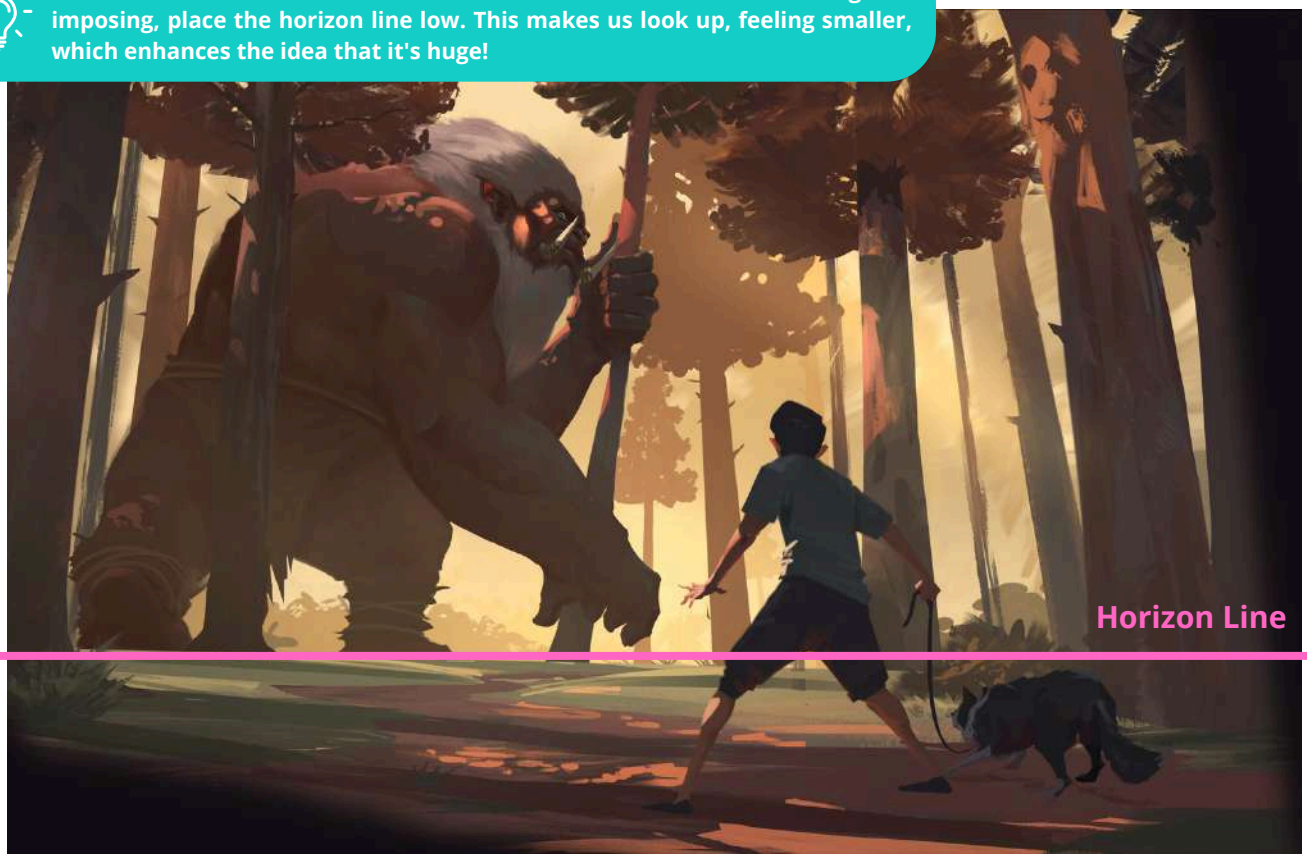
Examples

Why is this important? Because when we draw, we can use the position of the horizon line to our advantage. Take a look at these two characters drawn by Antonio Stappaerts:

The first character is a dwarf. Since dwarfs are small, placing the horizon line higher in the image makes sense.

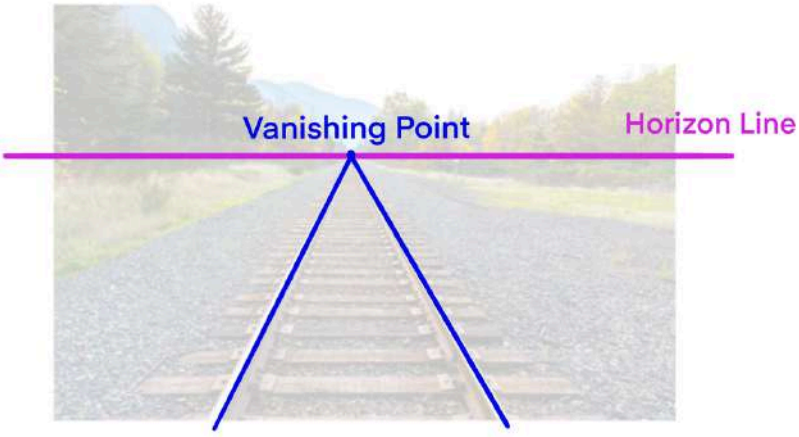
This way, the viewer looks down on the dwarf. It makes the drawing feel more believable because we usually look down at things smaller than us.

The reverse is also true. To draw a character or creature that feels big and imposing, place the horizon line low. This makes us look up, feeling smaller, which enhances the idea that it's huge!



Step 3: Vanishing Point (VP)

The next step in understanding perspective is knowing what a vanishing point is, which is placed on the horizon line. A good way to understand vanishing points is by looking at train tracks. In reality, train tracks are two parallel lines.
Parallel lines are two or more lines that are always the same distance apart and never cross.

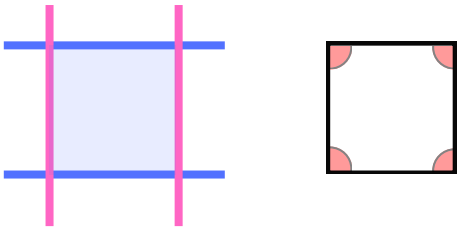


But in our 2D image, because of perspective, those lines appear to come together and meet in the distance. That single point where they seem to meet is the VANISHING POINT.

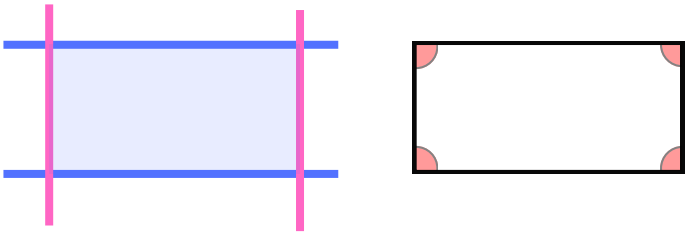
Just remember: in reality, those lines never touch; they stay perfectly parallel. It's the illusion of depth and distance that makes them look like they converge.

Step 4: Planes

If we combine two sets of parallel lines—the pink and the blue ones—we create a square or rectangular plane.
This square or rectangle is a flat shape made by two sets of parallel lines.



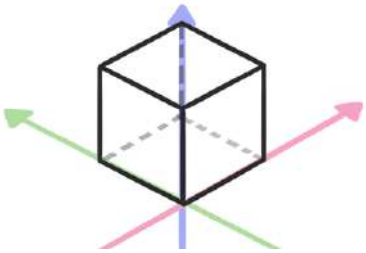
Square = a plane with four equal straight lines and four right angles

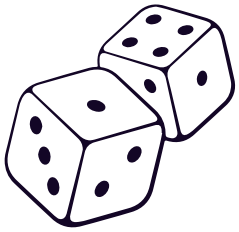


Rectangle = a plane with four unequal straight lines and four right angles

The plane is our first step toward building a box, because a box is made up of six planes. If you have trouble remembering this, think of the most famous boxes in the world: dice.

Dice have six faces, just like the six planes that make up a box.



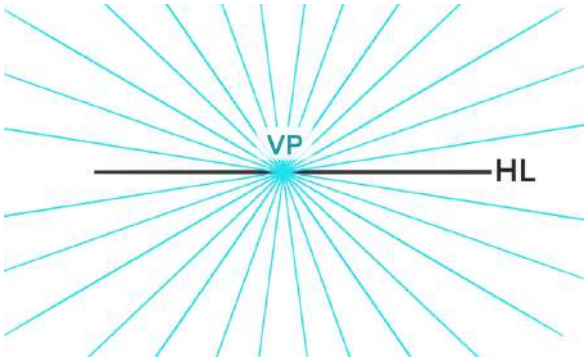


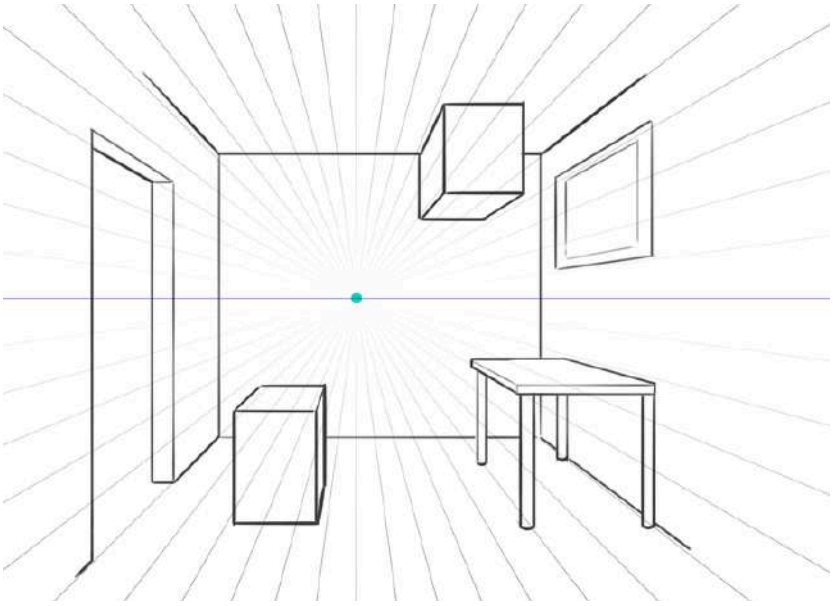
Step 5: One-Point Perspective

Now that you know the horizon line (HL) and vanishing point (VP), let's start with one-point perspective.

One-point perspective means you're drawing something with just VP. You start by placing a HL, and then add one VP on that line.

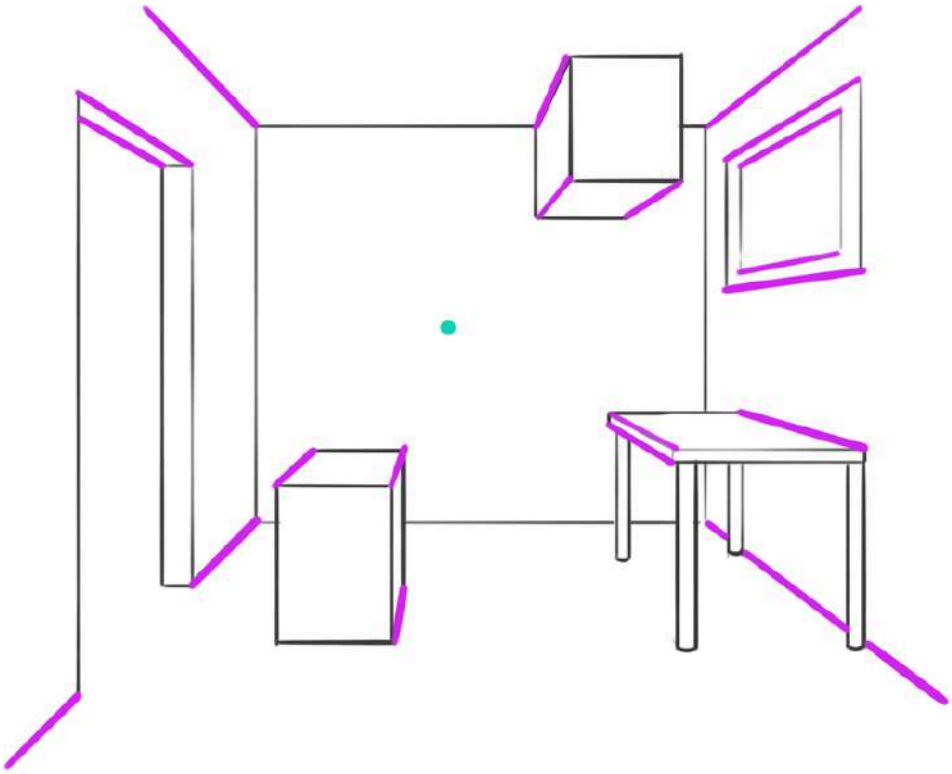
All the lines that converge toward that point are parallel lines in real life—just like the train tracks example.





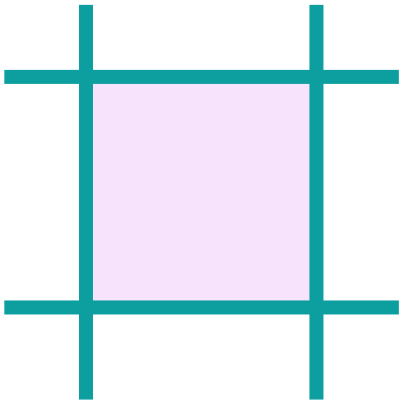
In this drawing of a room in 1-point perspective, you can see all the pink lines that resemble parallel lines in the 3D scene.

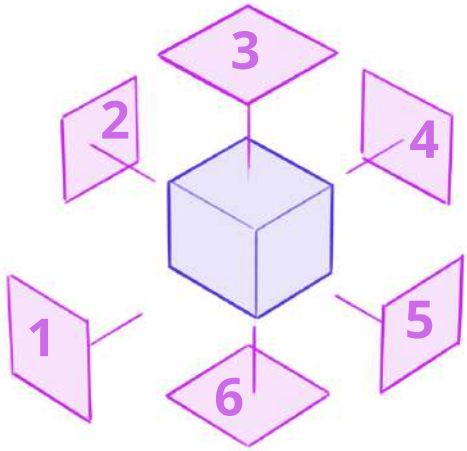
In our drawing, they don't look parallel because they are converging towards the vanishing point.



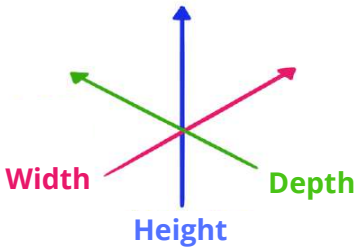
Step 6: The Box in a 1-Point Perspective

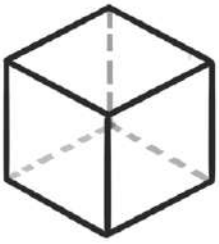
Okay, so you know that a rectangular plane is made of 2 pairs of parallel lines, and a box is made of 6 planes.

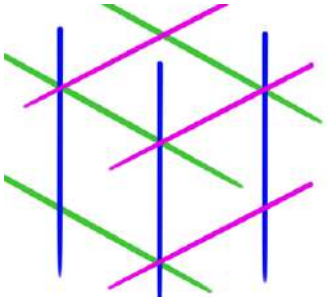




Knowing this, we can see that a box is made up of three types of parallel lines.
These lines represent the three dimensions: height, depth, and width.

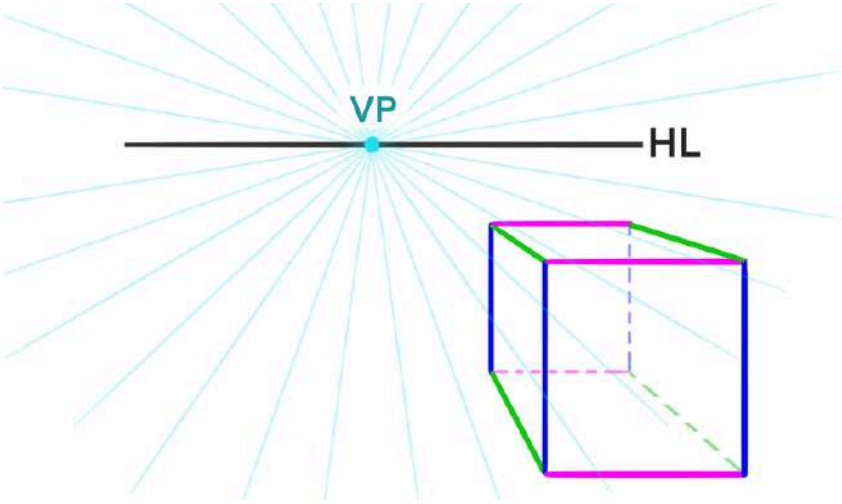






Drawing a box in one-point perspective means only the parallel lines of one dimension will go towards the single vanishing point. In this example it's the depth that converges to the vanishing point.

The other two dimensions height and width, stay unchanged and remain parallel lines.

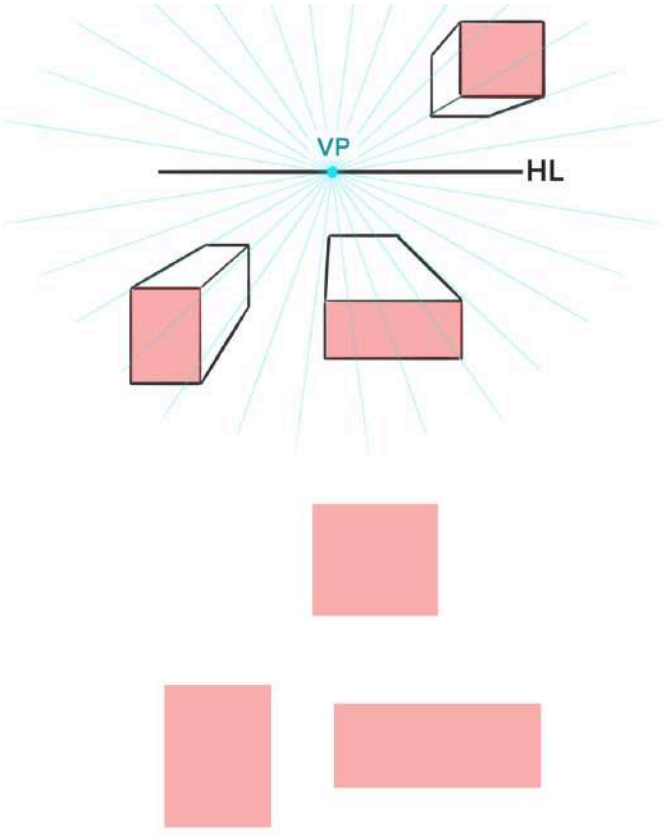


That's why in one-point perspective, you keep the horizontal lines perfectly parallel to the horizon line, and the vertical lines parallel to each other.

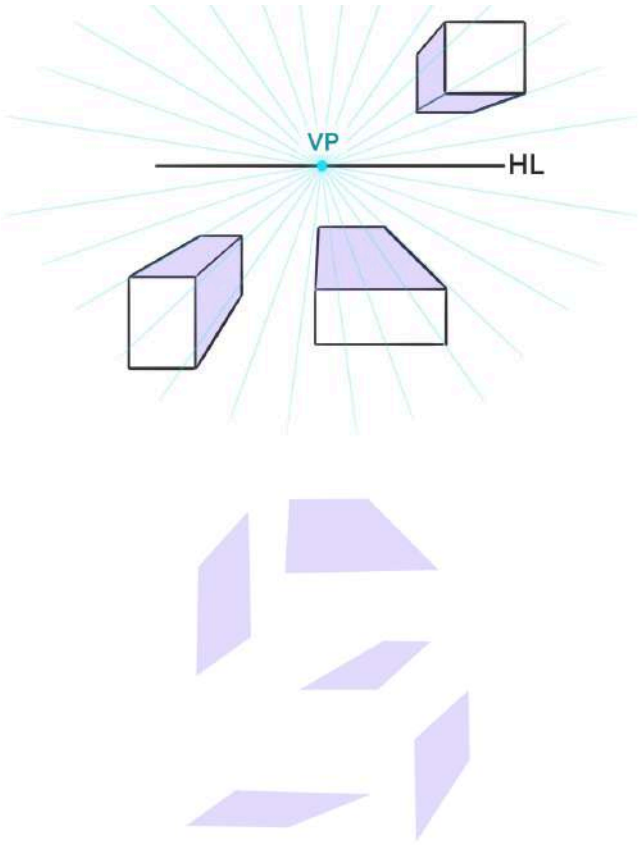
Because there's no convergence in those two dimensions.

Because of this, any planes formed by the unchanged height and width will look like perfect rectangles or squares, with no convergence.

But the planes formed by the converging depth lines will no longer be perfect; they become foreshortened planes, appearing compressed due to the perspective.



Perfect squares and rectangles

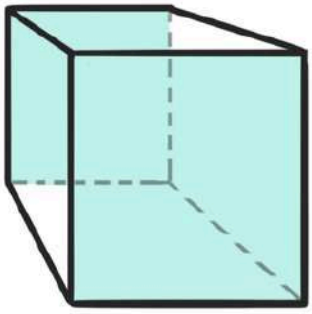


Foreshortened planes

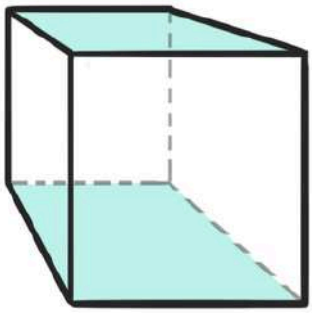
You might have noticed that in one-point perspective, the front and back planes of the boxes are always the perfect planes.

They keep their full square or rectangular shape because the lines used to create those planes are not converging.

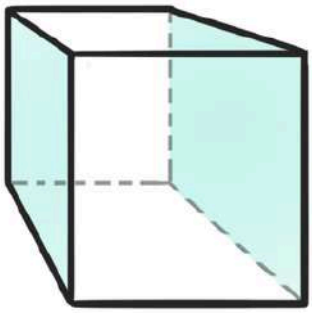
All the other planes, like the top, bottom, left and right are foreshortened, because they are made with lines that converge toward the vanishing point.



Front and back planes



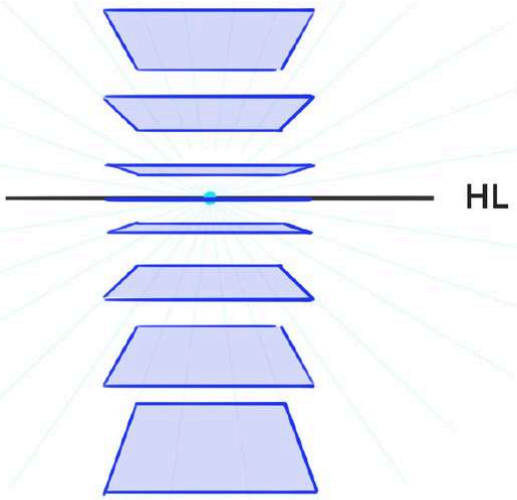
Top and bottom planes



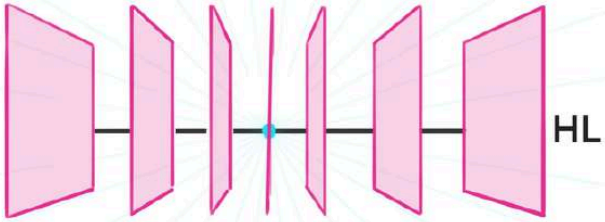
Left and right planes

When thinking about planes/boxes and the horizon line, remember these rules: top/bottom planes become more compressed/foreshortened as they approach the horizon line.

A plane directly on the horizon line looks like a flat line.

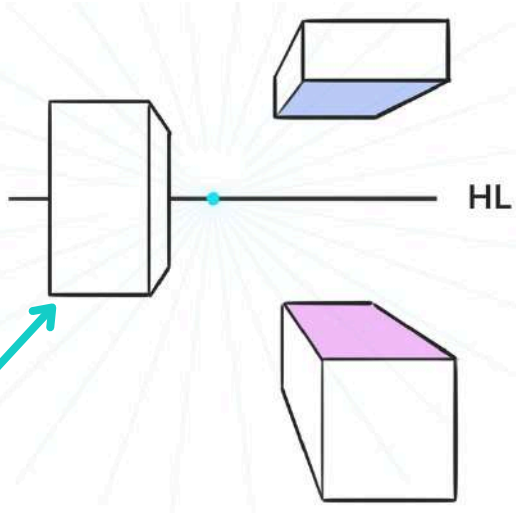


Side planes become more compressed/foreshortened as they approach the vanishing point.



We can't see the top plane of a box above the horizon line, only the bottom plane. The opposite is also true: we can't see the bottom plane of a box below the horizon line, only the top plane.

Remember, the HL is our eye level, so we look up at everything above it and down at everything below it.

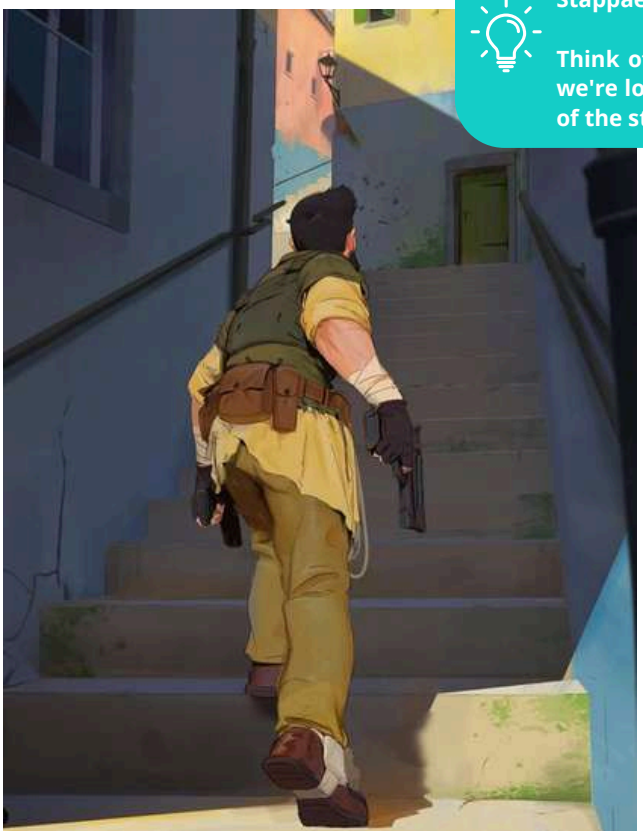


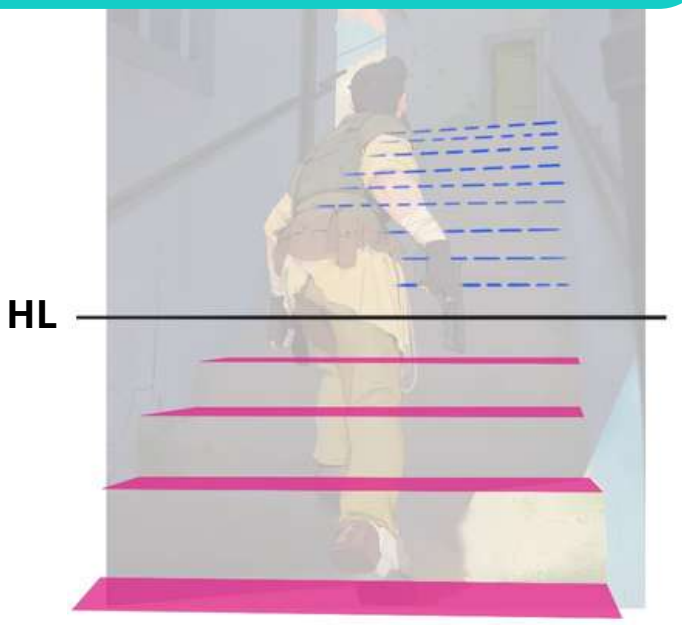
When the horizon line crosses a box, we can't see the top or bottom plane.

Examples

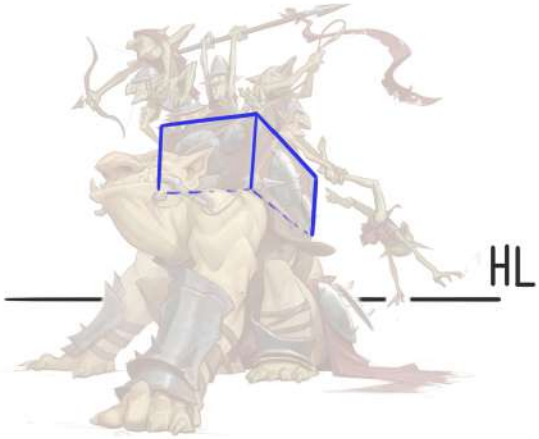
Here you can see how these rules apply. This illustration from Antonio Stappaerts shows our character walking up the stairs.

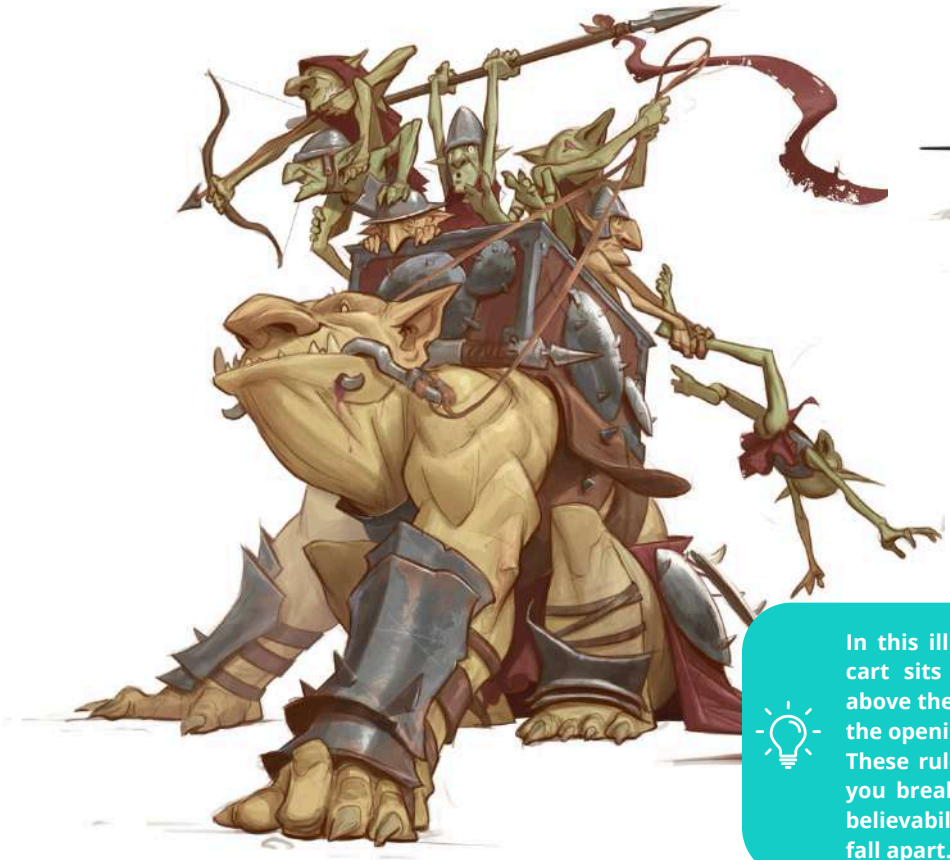
Think of each step as a box. We only see the top planes of the steps we're looking down on (below the the HL). We can't see the top planes of the steps above eye level.





Remember, these illustrations are drawn in 2- or 3-point perspective, not the simpler 1-point perspective. Don't worry, more on that later.

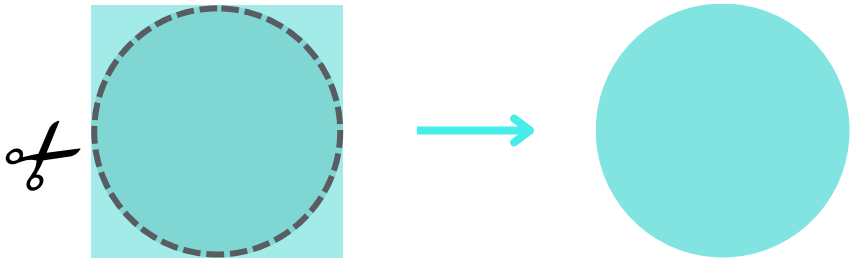




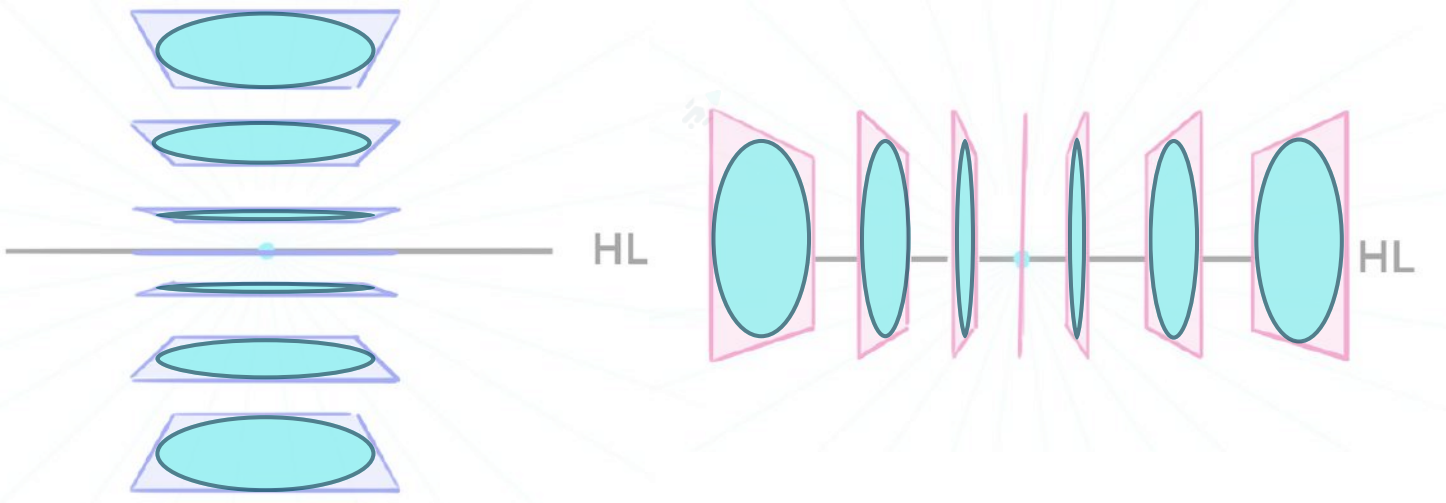
In this illustration by Axel Van Nederkassel, a boxy cart sits on the troll's back. Since it's positioned above the horizon line in the illustration, we can't see the opening on top.
These rules are what makes our drawing look 3D. If you break these rules, your illustration will lose its believability, and the 3D effect of the 2D image will fall apart.

Step 7: Ellipses

A flat circle is also a type of plane. Imagine cutting out a perfect circle from a square plane.

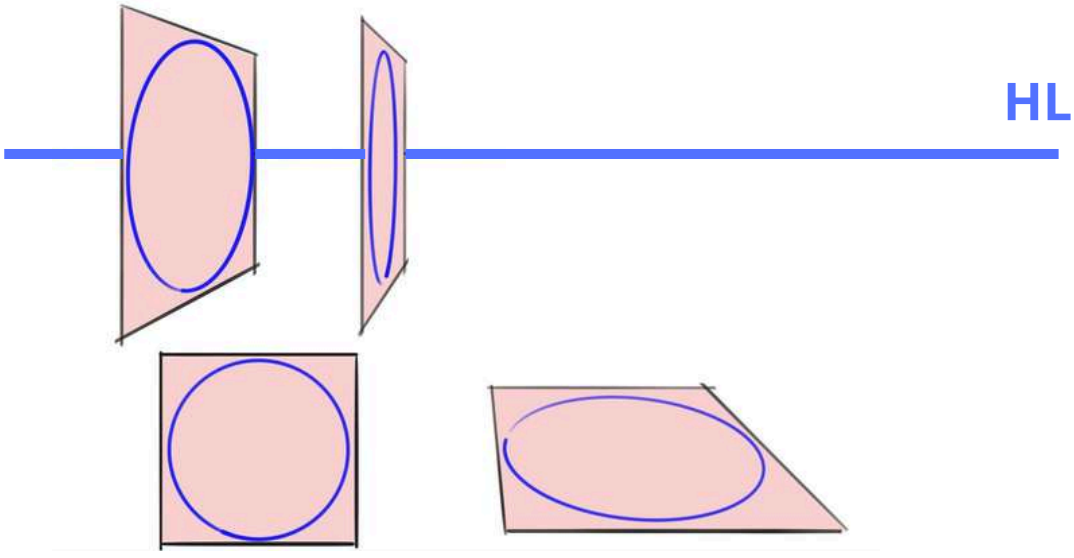


This circular plane in perspective is what we call an 'ellipse'. An ellipse is a foreshortened circle. Remember, you can only draw ellipses inside foreshortened square planes.



The same rules about foreshortening planes applies to foreshortening ellipses.

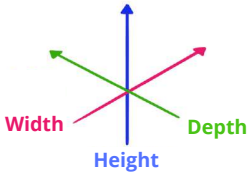
As you can see, circles only look foreshortened (are ellipses), when drawn on planes that are also foreshortened. In 1-point perspective, they stay perfect circles if drawn on a perfect square.

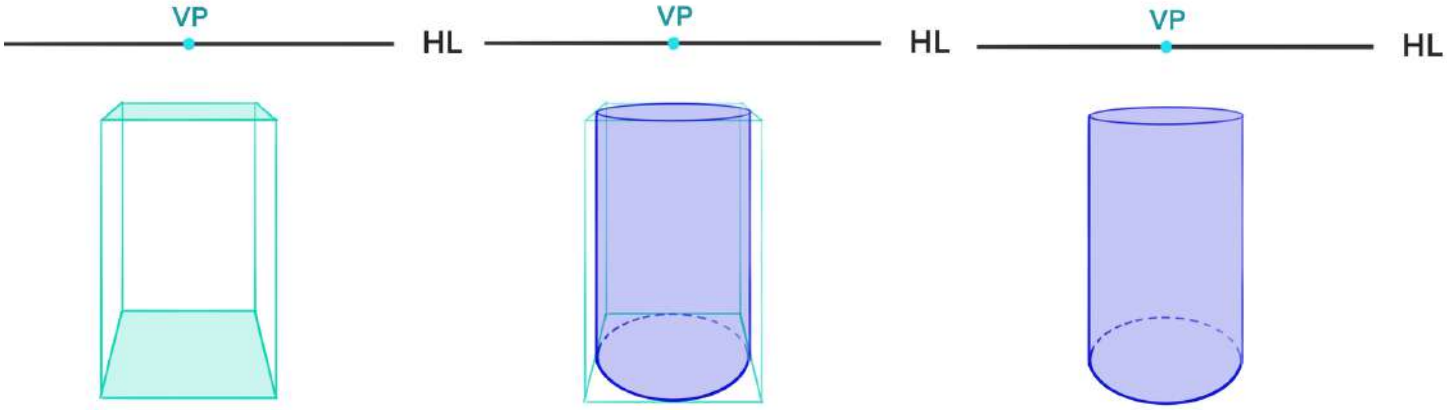


Step 8: The Cylinder in a 1-Point Perspective

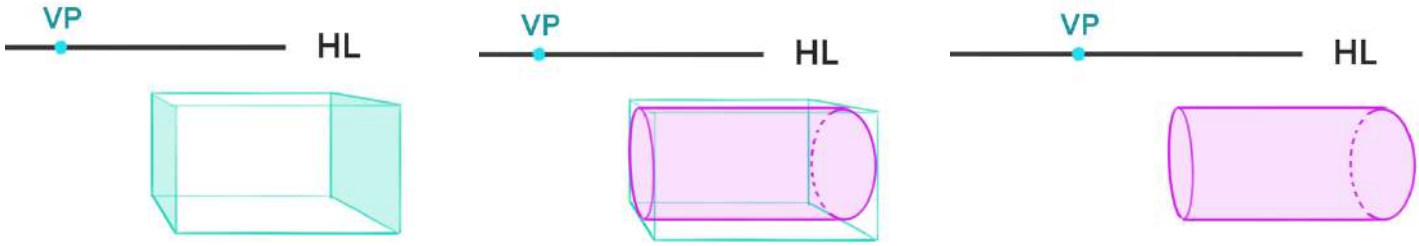
Just like we make a box with squares and rectangles, we can make a cylinder by connecting two ellipses with straight lines. In 1-point perspective, you can draw 3 types of cylinders, one for each dimension.

1) Vertical cylinders are made by putting an ellipse on the top and bottom of a box. The two straight lines connecting both ellipses are vertical parallel lines, referring to the height dimension.

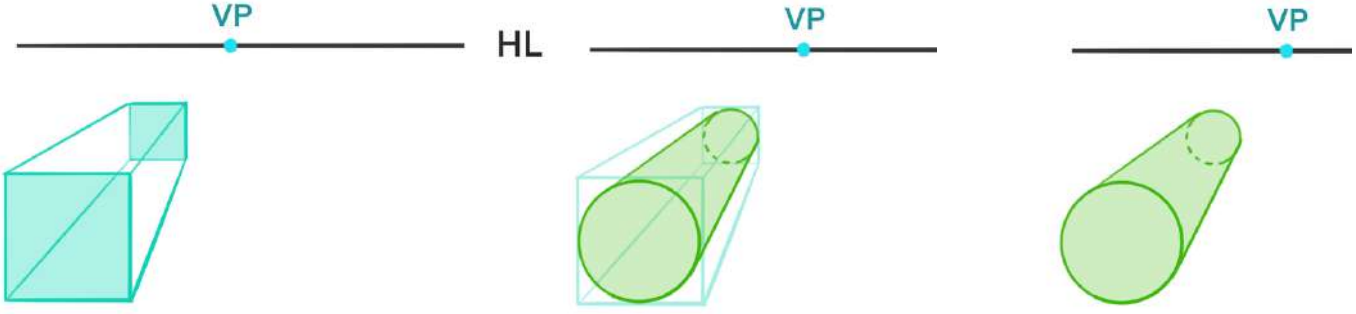




2) Horizontal cylinders are created by drawing an ellipse on the left and right planes of a box. The two straight lines connecting the ellipses are horizontal and parallel.



3) Converging cylinders are created by drawing an ellipse on the front and back planes of a box. Remember, in 1-point perspective, these planes are perfect squares, so the ellipses will always be perfect circles. The two straight lines connecting them converge toward the vanishing point.



Examples

This crossbow is pointing directly at us and the crossbow bolt can be simplified into a cylinder. In this perspective, the front and back ellipses appear as perfect circles, and the straight lines connecting them converge toward the vanishing point.

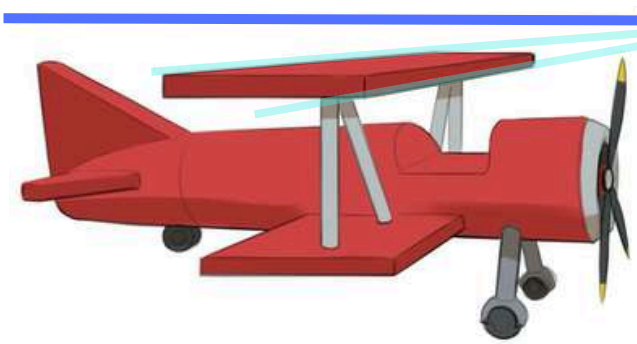
HL

This castle tower can be drawn as a vertical cylinder. Since the tower is drawn below the horizon line, we can see inside the opening at the top. The top ellipse appears narrow because it's closer to the horizon line, while the bottom ellipse is slightly wider, as it's farther from the horizon line.

HL

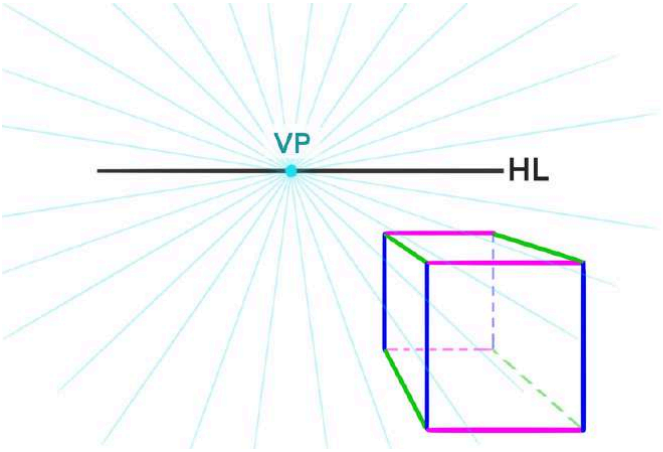
The body of this airplane can be simplified into a cylinder. Since we can see the propeller on the right side, we know the vanishing point is further to the right on the horizon line. As a result, the ellipse on the right side of the horizontal cylinder becomes visible.

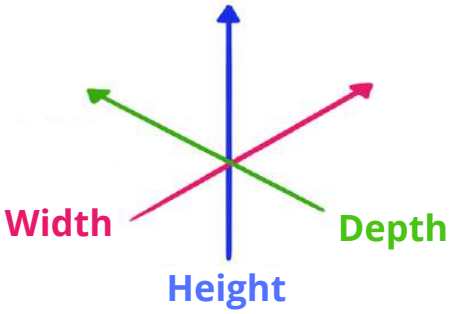
HL



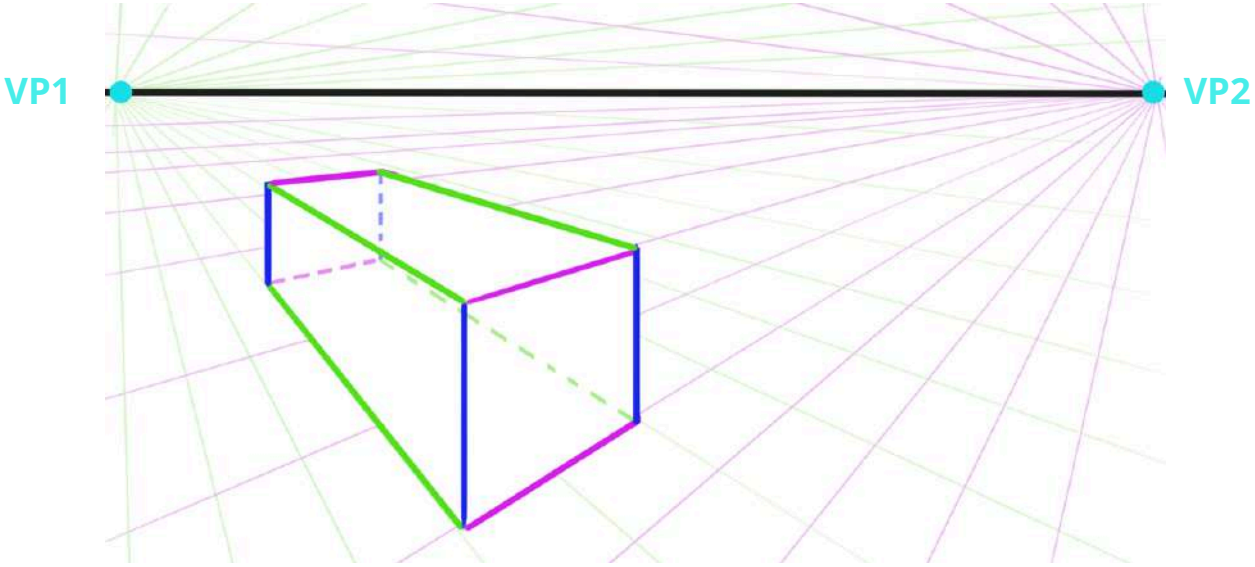
Step 9: The Box in a 2-Point Perspective

Now that you've seen how 1-point perspective creates convergence in one of the three dimensions, the next step is to add a second vanishing point to your horizon line to create convergence in two dimensions.

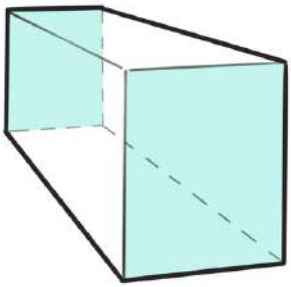




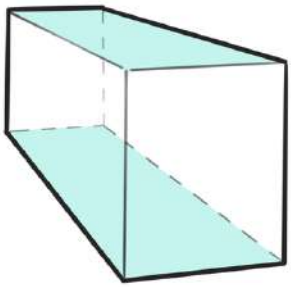
By adding a second vanishing point (VP2), we create convergence in the width and depth dimensions. However, the height dimension remains unchanged, meaning all vertical lines stay straight and parallel to each other.



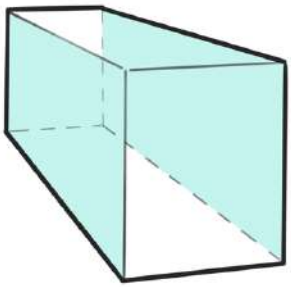
Because of this, there are no longer any perfect squares or rectangles. All six of our planes are now foreshortened.



Front and back planes

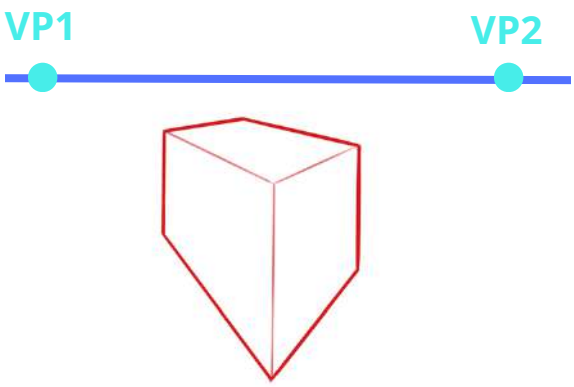


Top and bottom planes

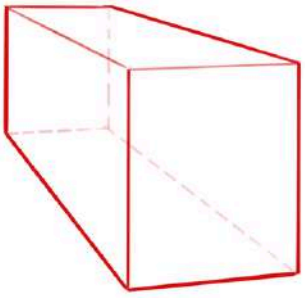


Left and right planes

A common mistake is placing your two vanishing points too close together on the horizon line, which can make your box appear distorted.

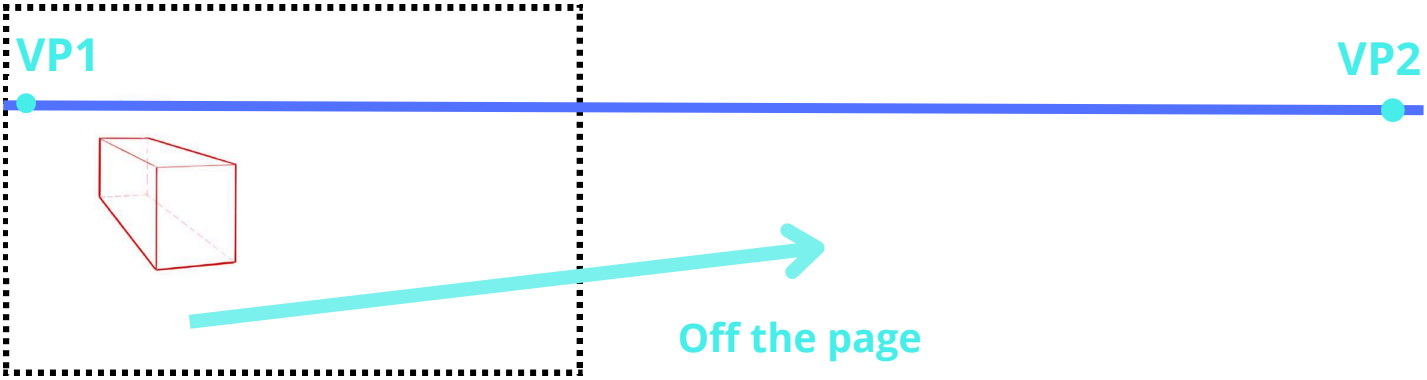


Distorted



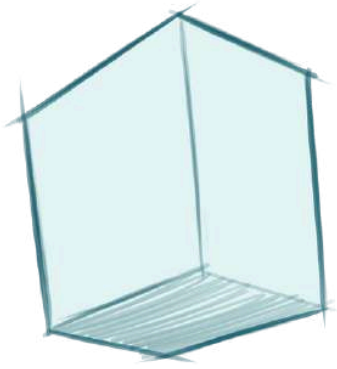
Normal

To avoid this distorted look, we place one vanishing point far off the page. This increases the distance between the two vanishing points, making the box appear more natural.



Page

The box is our best friend when it comes to drawing. It helps us establish perspective before we add complexity to our drawings.

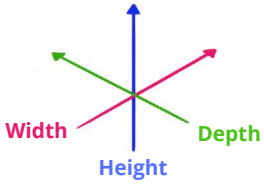


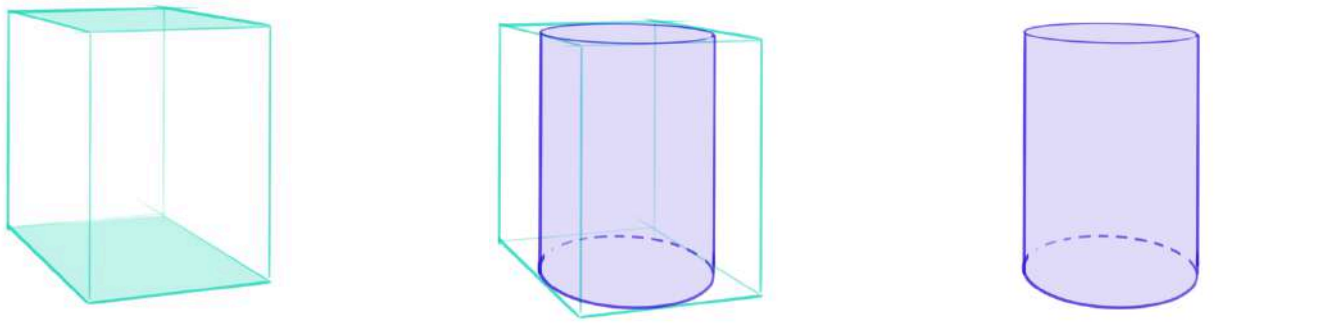
Step 10: The Cylinder in a 2-Point Perspective

We can apply what we know about boxes to cylinders as well. In two-point perspective, you can draw cylinders in three different ways, just like we discussed in one-point perspective.

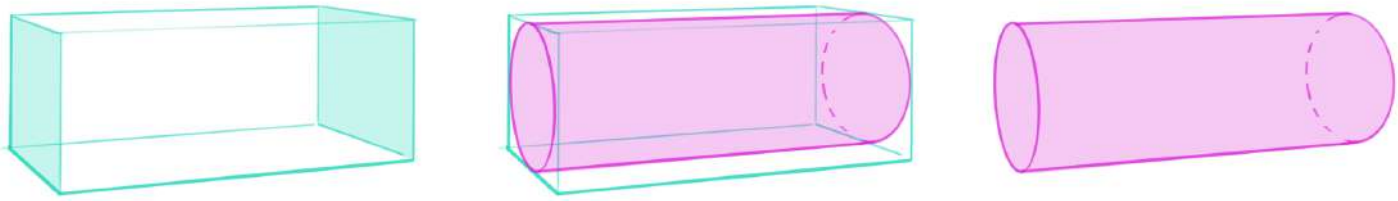
1) Vertical cylinders are created by drawing an ellipse on the top and bottom planes of a box.

Vertical cylinders are the only type in two-point perspective where the straight lines remain parallel, as there is no convergence in this height dimension.

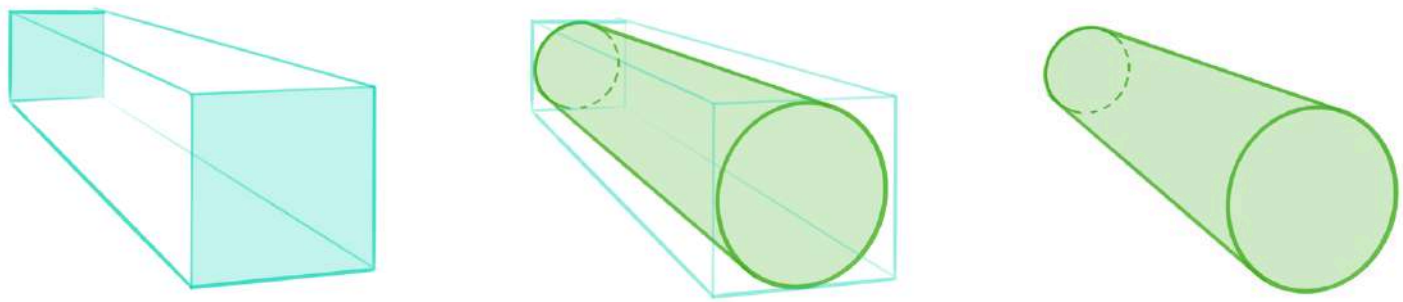




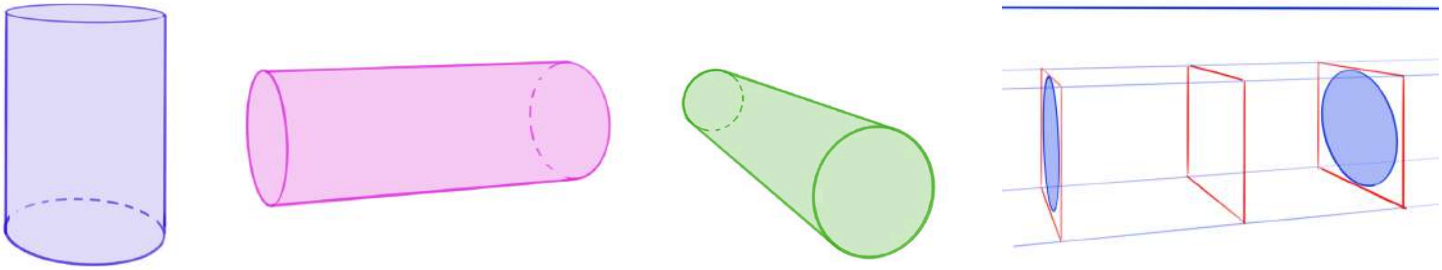
2) Horizontal cylinders are created by drawing an ellipse on the left and right planes of a box. The two straight lines converge toward the second vanishing point, which is far off the page.



3) Converging cylinders are created by drawing an ellipse on the front and back planes of a box. The two straight lines converge toward the vanishing point that's closest to the page.

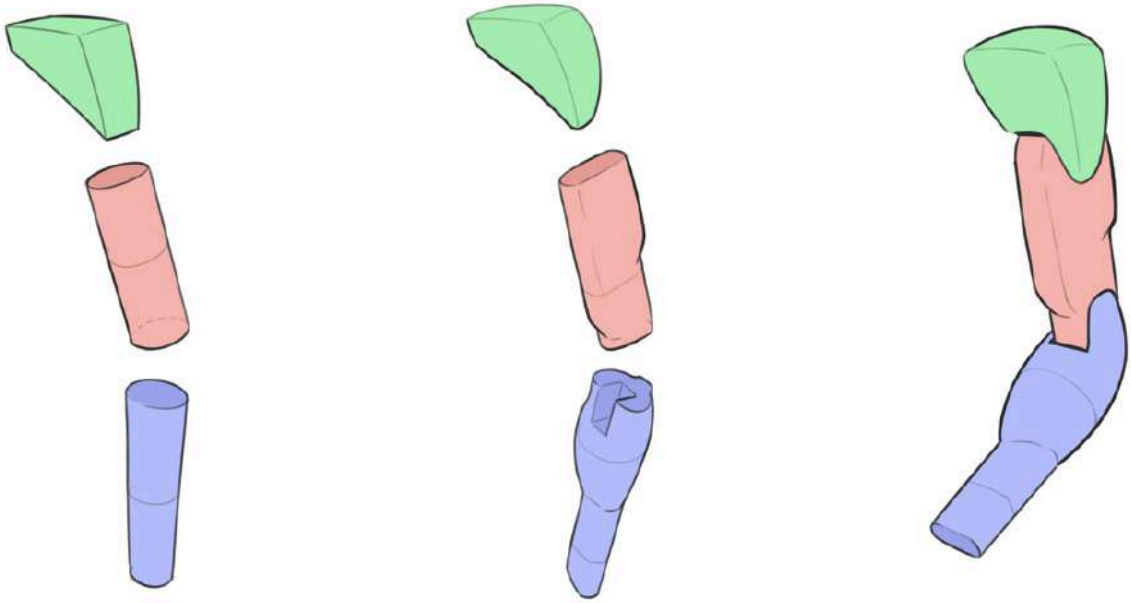


A fundamental rule for cylinders is that the front ellipse, the one closer to the viewer, should always be narrower and more foreshortened than the back ellipse. You can see this in all of the previous examples as well.

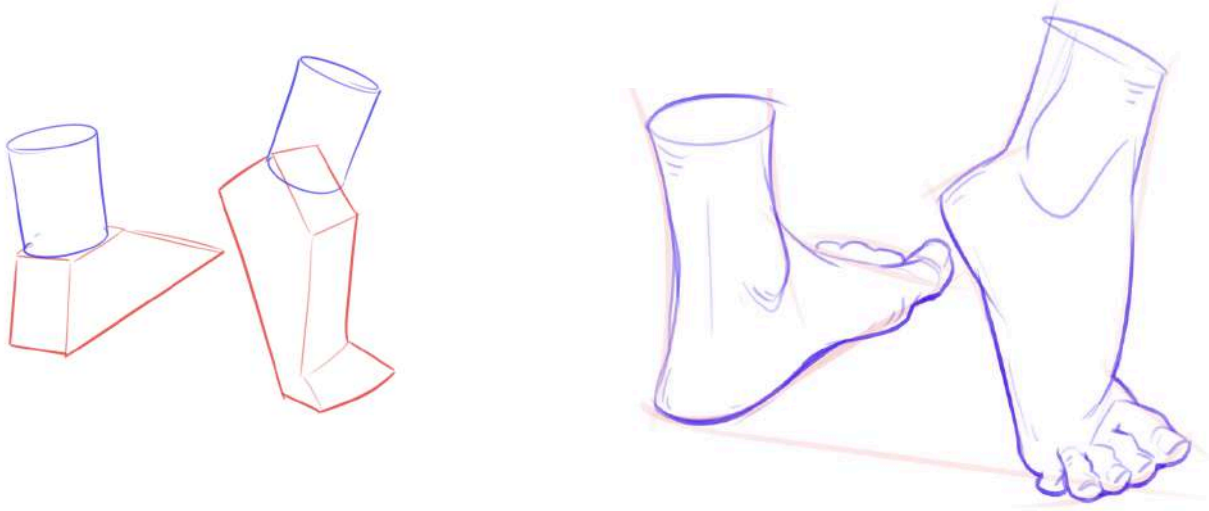


Examples

With boxes and cylinders, we can build almost anything, especially when it comes to figures. The human body can be simplified into a mannequin made from boxes and cylinders. Which we can then manipulate into more anatomical forms.

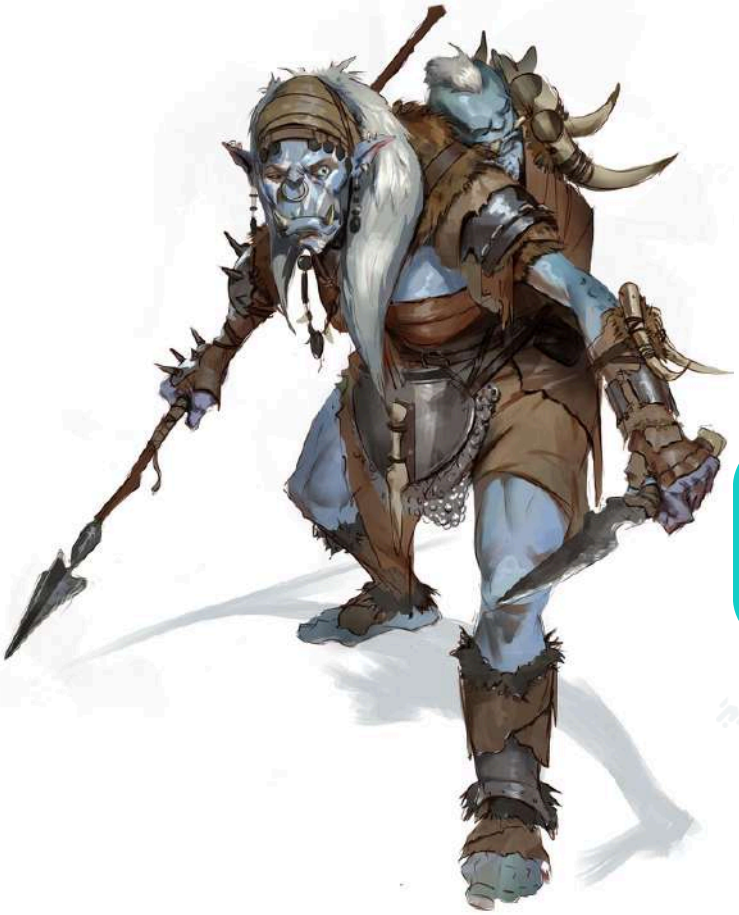


Understanding these forms allows us to draw them from imagination with ease, and then refine them into whatever we want them to be.



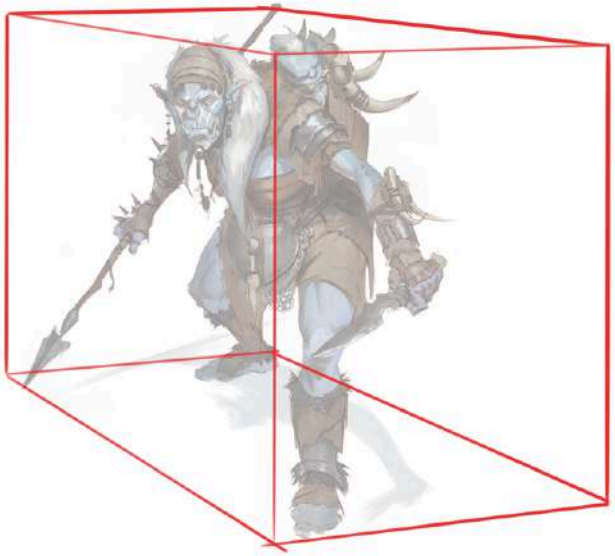
Examples

Here's another example of how we can simplify this complex character design by Antonio into simple boxes and cylinders.



A mannequin is a simplified version of a character, drawn using only boxes and cylinders. We use mannequins to practice drawing characters in perspective without focusing on the details. If the mannequin looks right, we can then refine it to add more complexity.

The box can also be used to establish the overall perspective of the character.



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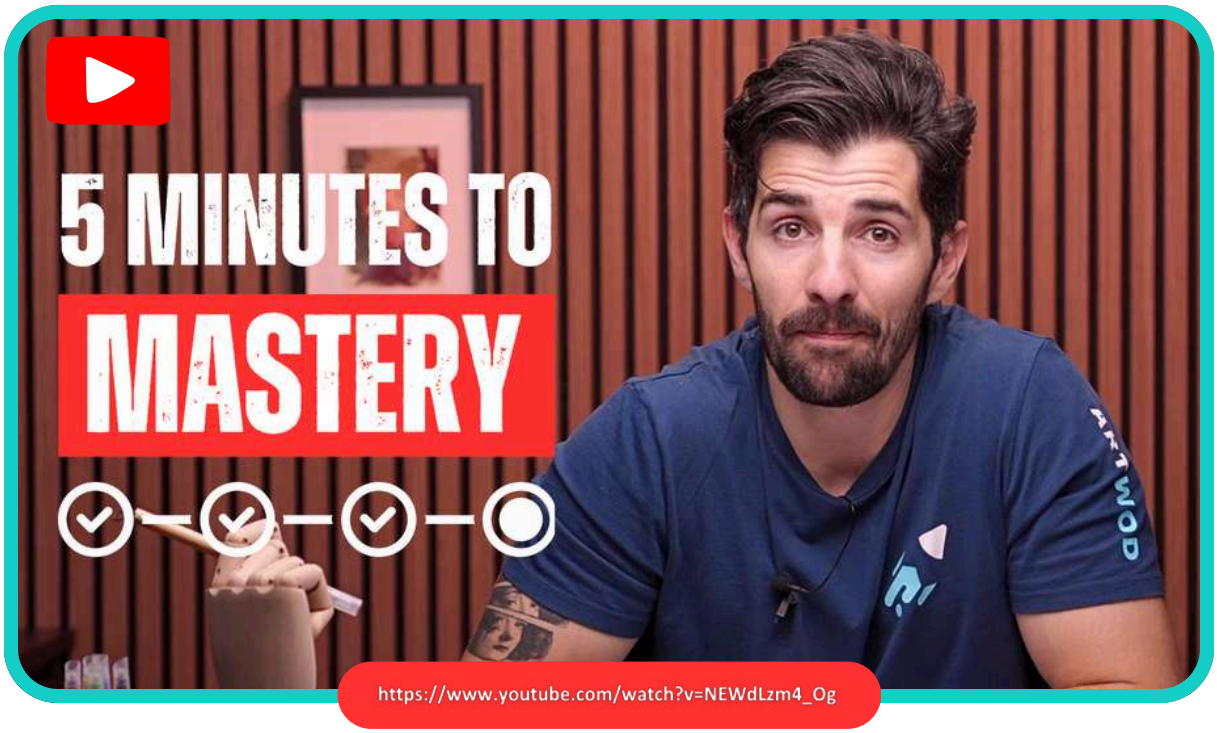


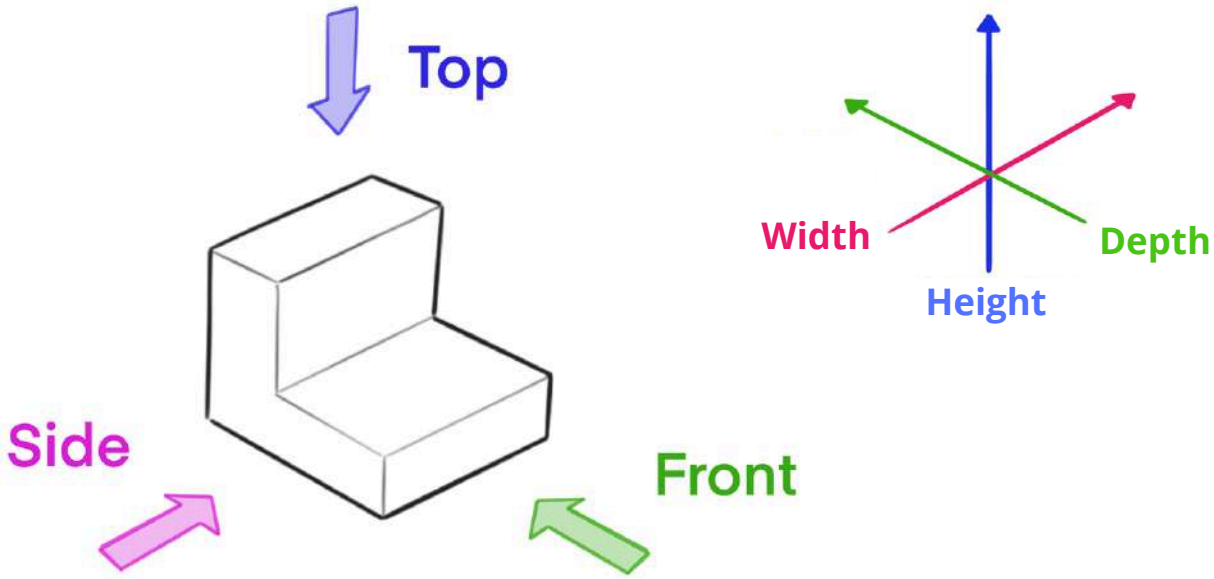
In these '5 Minutes to Mastery' series Antonio explains how the simple concepts we teach at Artwod allow us to make seemingly complex and amazing drawings with little to no need for reference.

Chapter 2: Intro to Form Manipulation

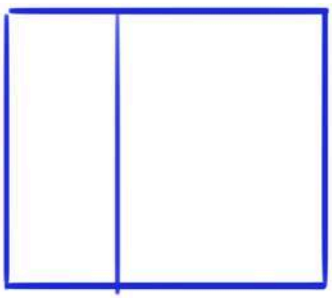
Step 1: Orthographic Views

Before we start manipulating forms, we need to understand orthographic views. An orthographic view is a way of representing 3D objects in 2D by viewing them from fixed angles, such as the front, side, or top.

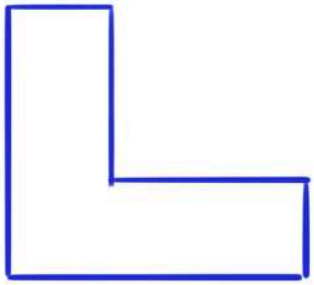
In each of these views, one dimension is completely flattened. For example, if you're looking at an object from directly above, you can't tell how tall it is, you're only seeing its shape from the top.



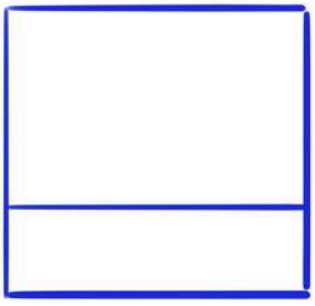
These 2D shapes are what we see when we view the object from the three orthographic views:



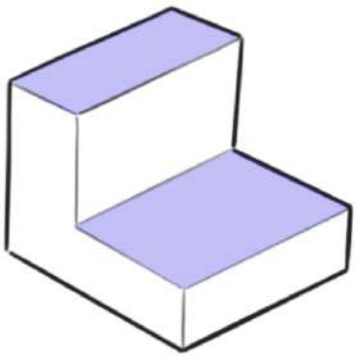
Top down view

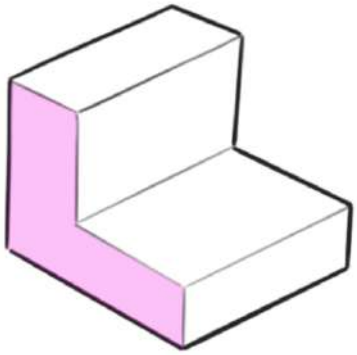


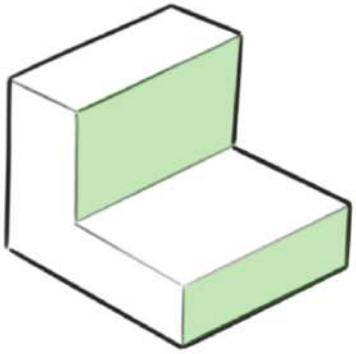
Side view



Front view



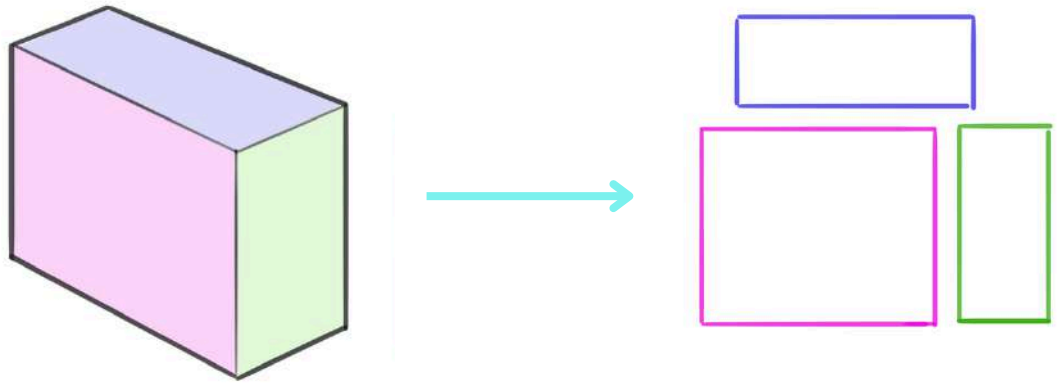




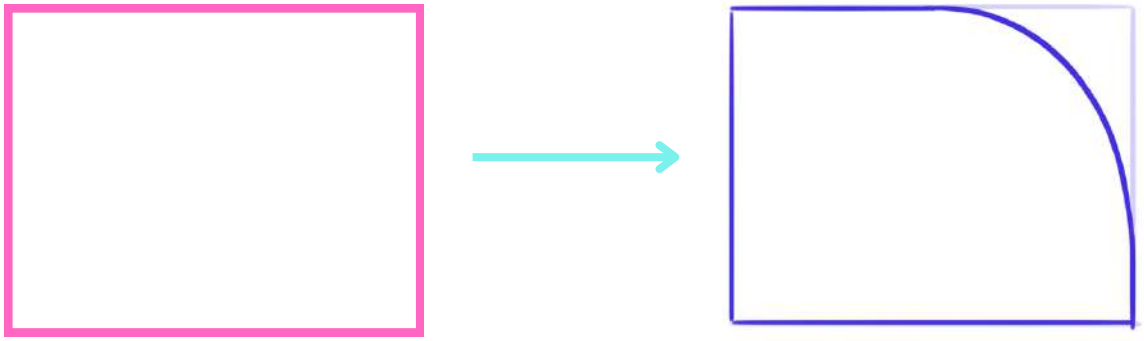
Step 2: Manipulating Boxes

Now we can start manipulating our forms! By manipulation, we mean altering the shape of the box while maintaining its underlying structure.

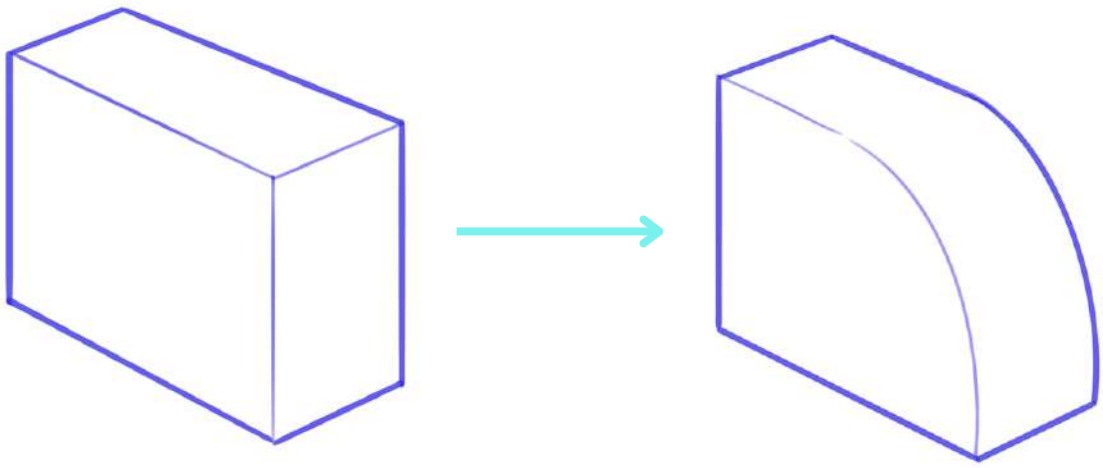
If you look at the orthographic views of a box, you'll see that they are all perfect squares or rectangles.



Focusing on one orthographic view, we can change the shape of the rectangle by rounding off the corners.

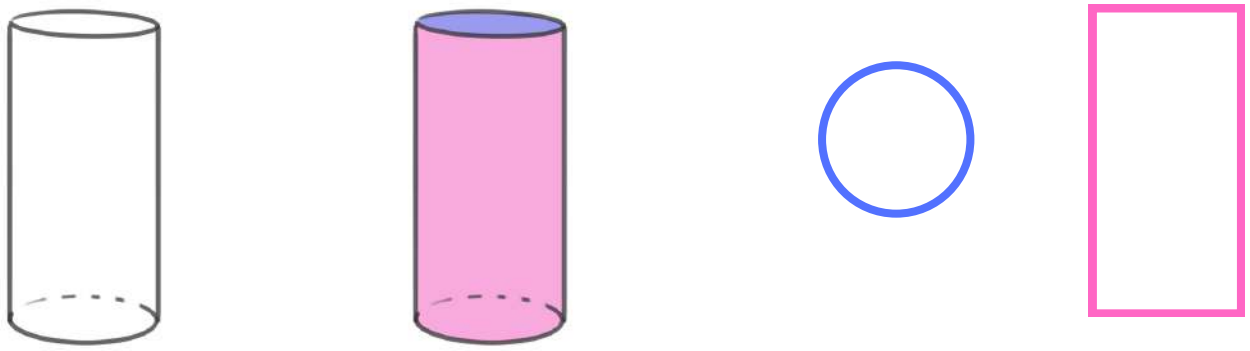


Now we can draw the manipulated version of our box, following the rounded shape we created in the previous step.

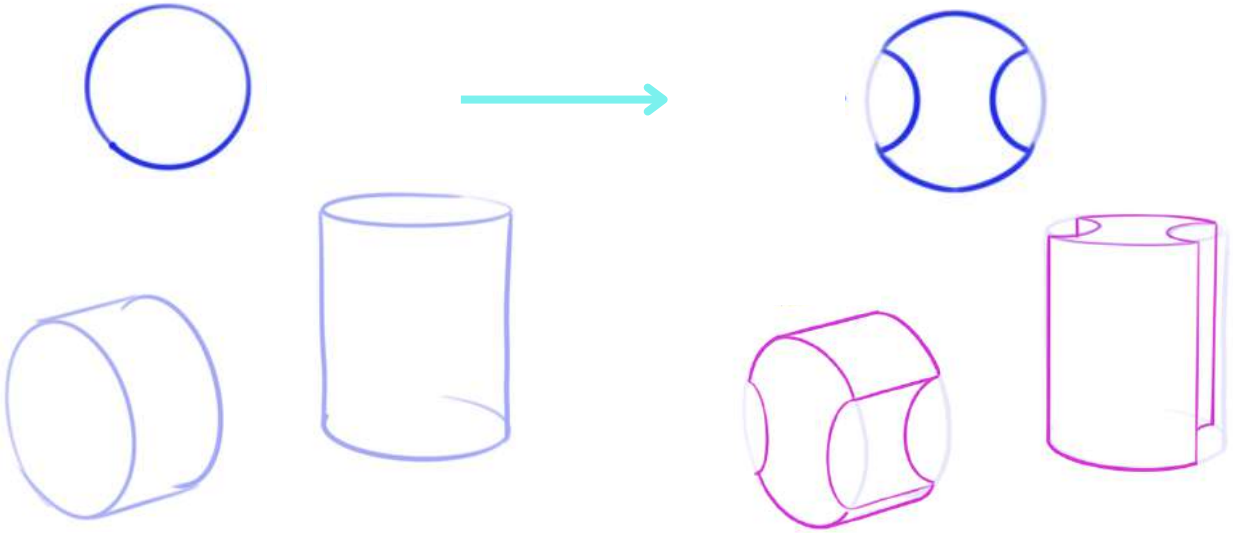


Step 3: Manipulating Cylinders

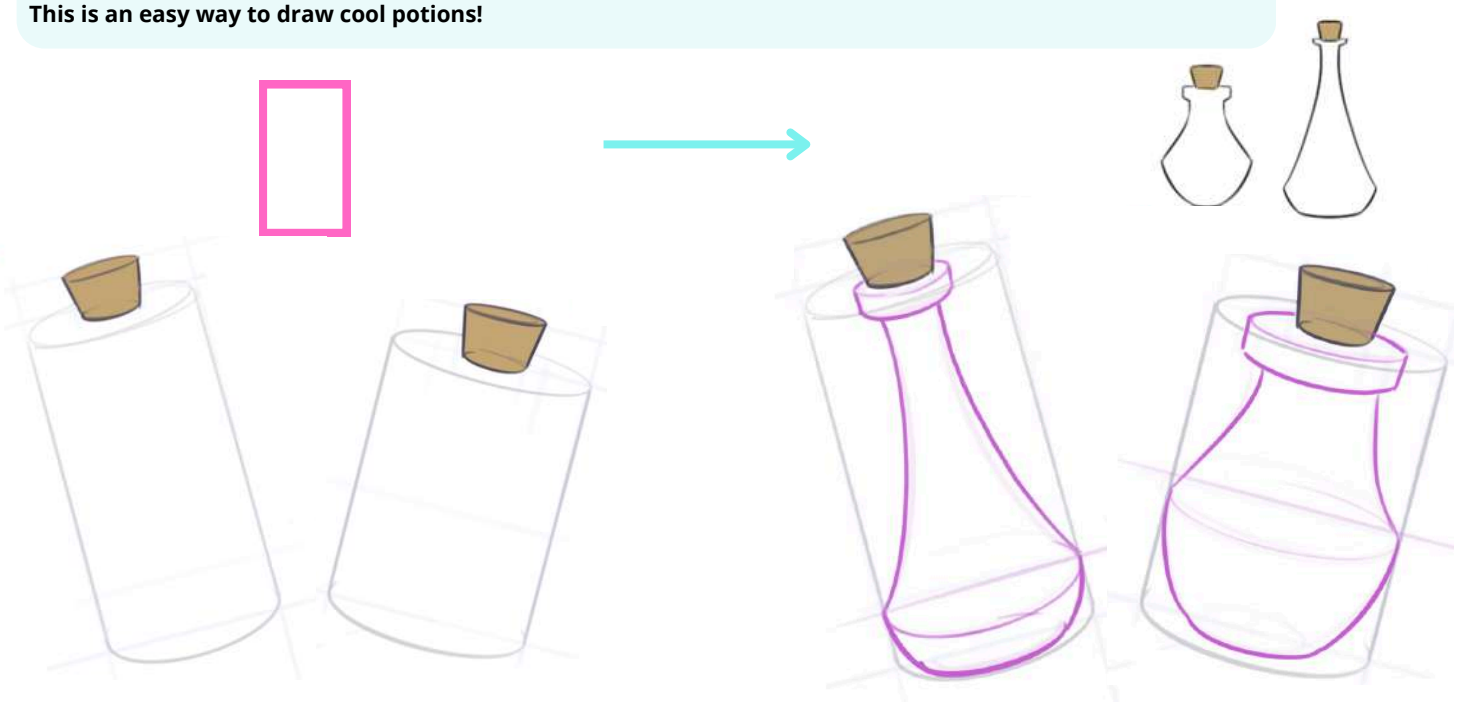
We can use the same approach to manipulate cylinders. A cylinder only has two orthographic shapes: a circle for the top-down view and a rectangle for any side or front view.



Manipulating the shape of the circle is what we call at Artwod 'contour manipulation.' While the top-down view shape has changed, our rectangular silhouette remains the same.

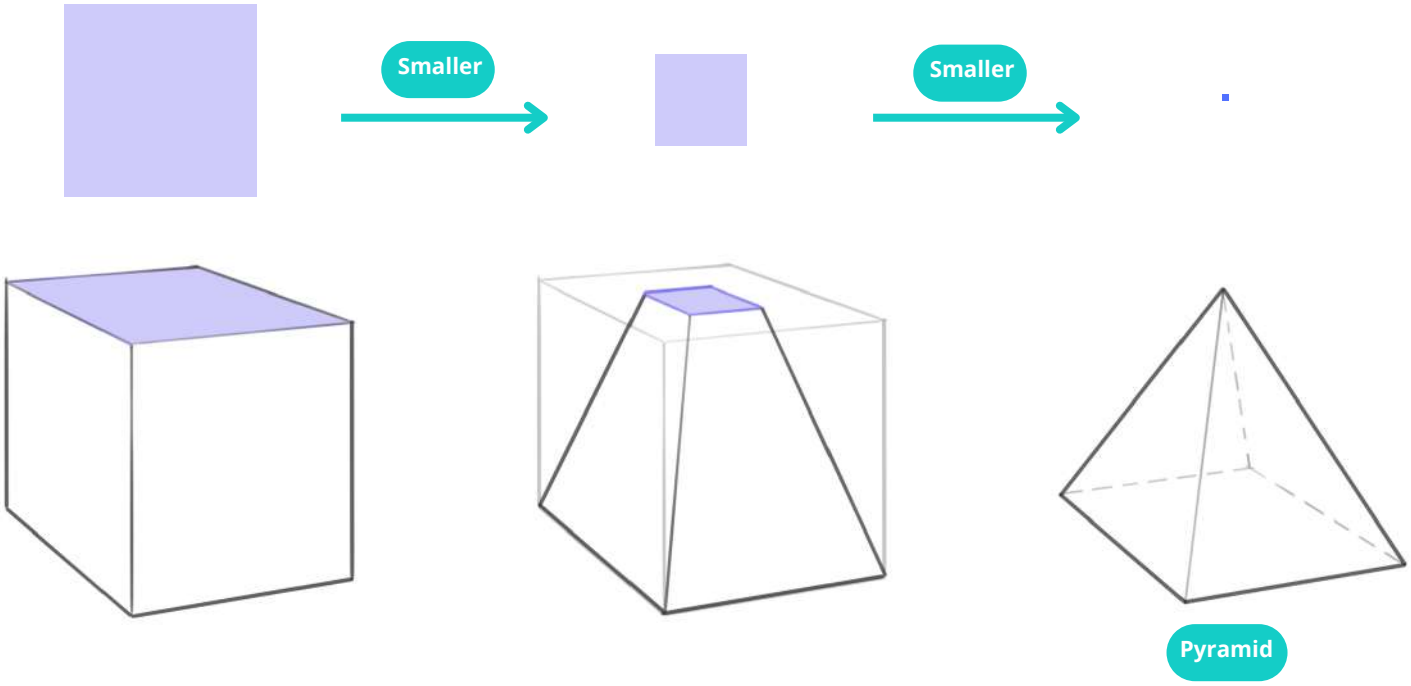


Another thing you can do is manipulate the rectangular silhouette while maintaining the circular contour. This is an easy way to draw cool potions!

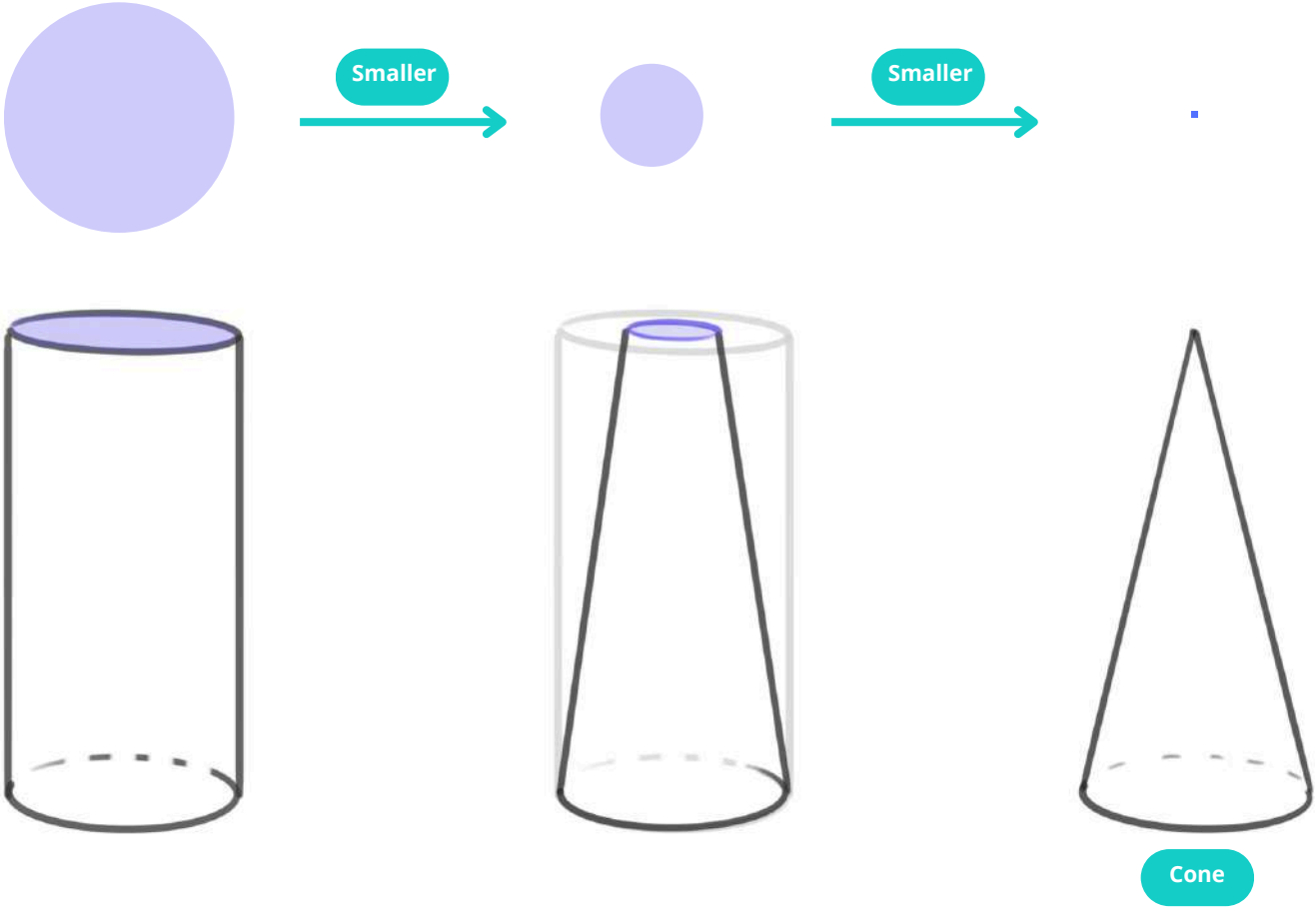


Step 4: Tapering

Besides changing the orthographic shape, another way to manipulate our forms is by reducing the size of it. We call this tapering. Reducing one plane of a box to its smallest size will give us a pyramid!

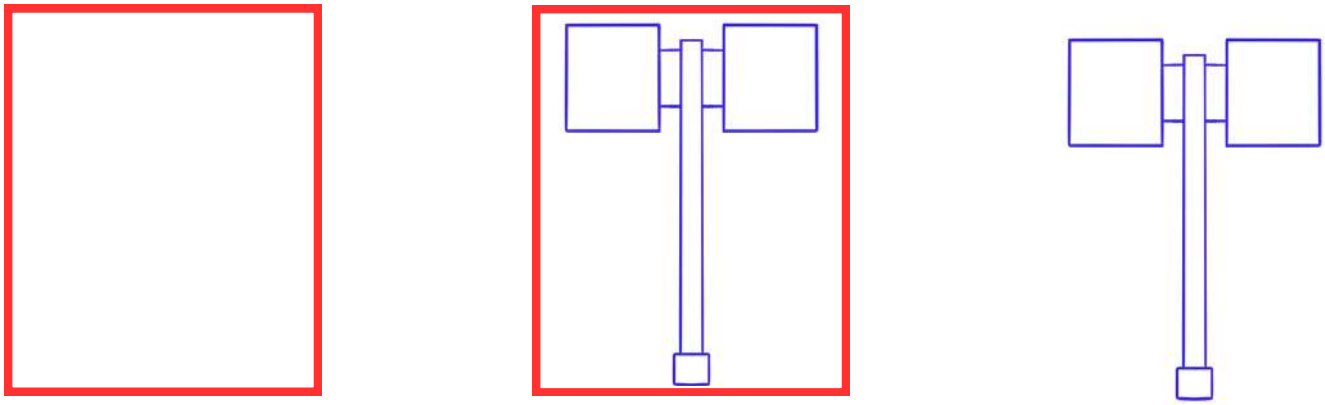


We can do the same with cylinders. Reducing the size of the circle or ellipse on a cylinder to its smallest size will give us a cone!

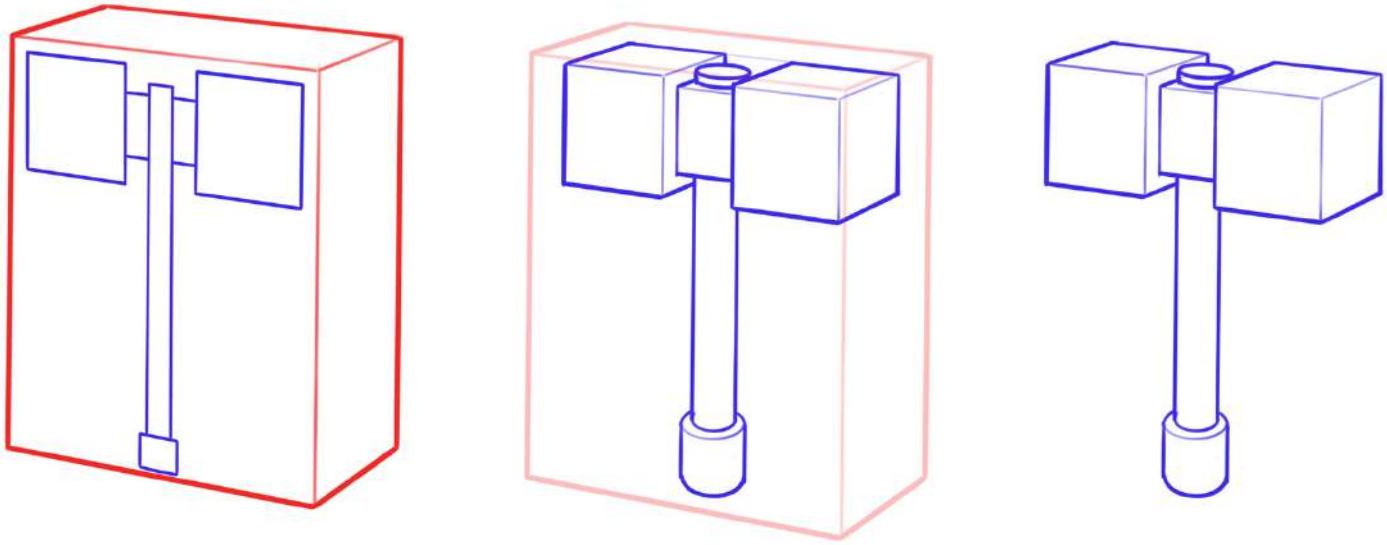


Examples

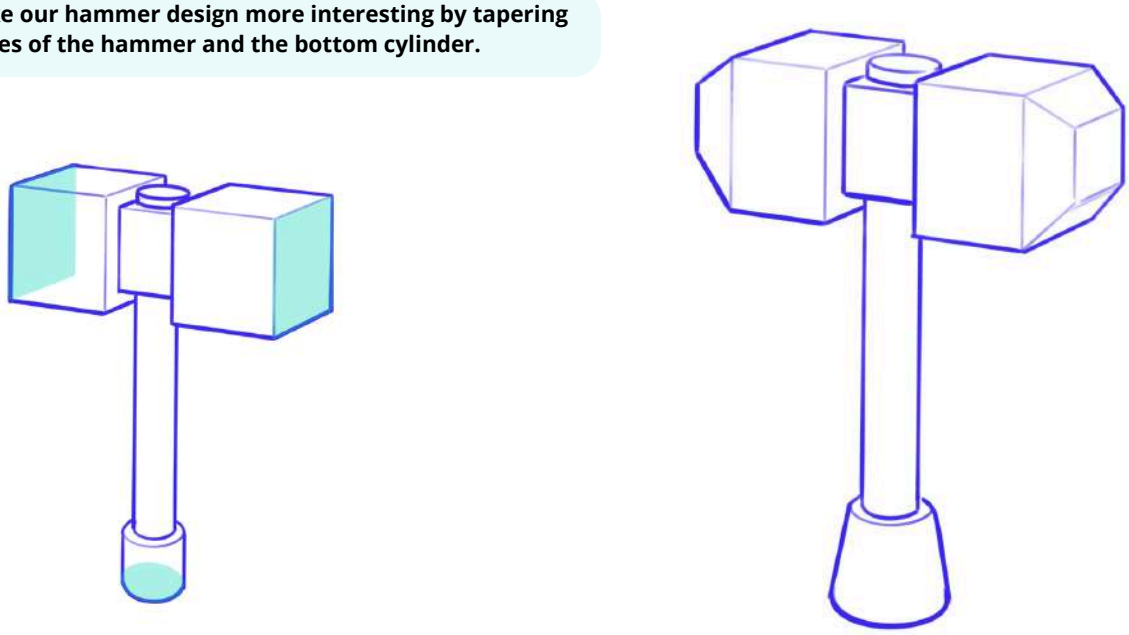
Let's see how we can use this knowledge to create a cool-looking hammer. We start with our plane and draw shapes in an orthographic view that resemble a hammer.



Next, we draw a box in 2-point perspective. Then, we can transform our 2D hammer shape into a 3D hammer drawing, using the box as a guide for the perspective. So far, we've only drawn boxes and cylinders in 2-point perspective.

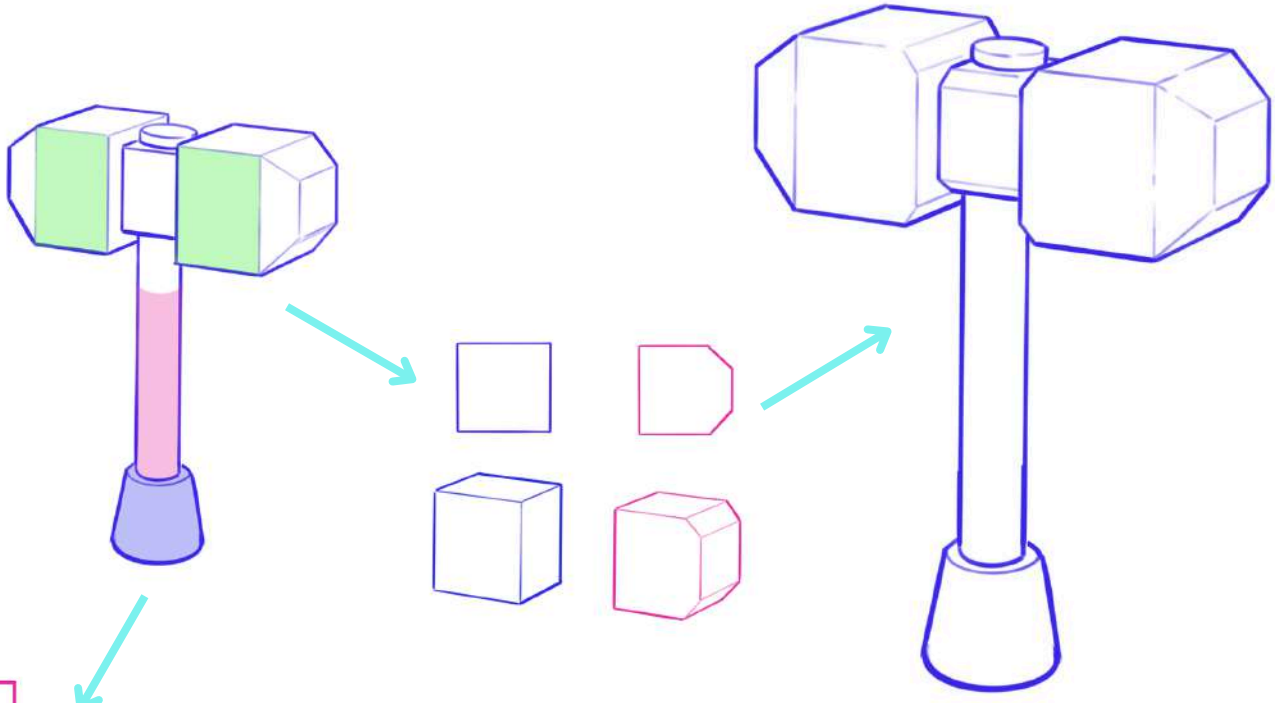


We can make our hammer design more interesting by tapering the two boxes of the hammer and the bottom cylinder.



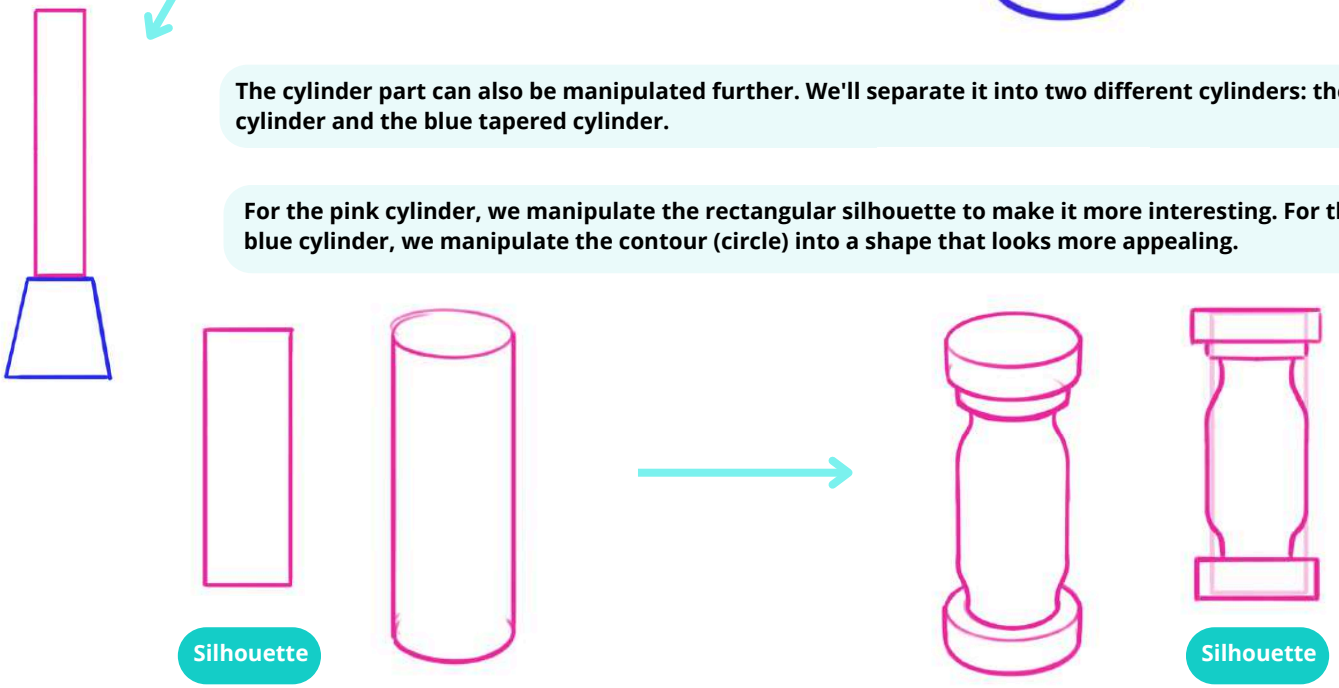
Examples

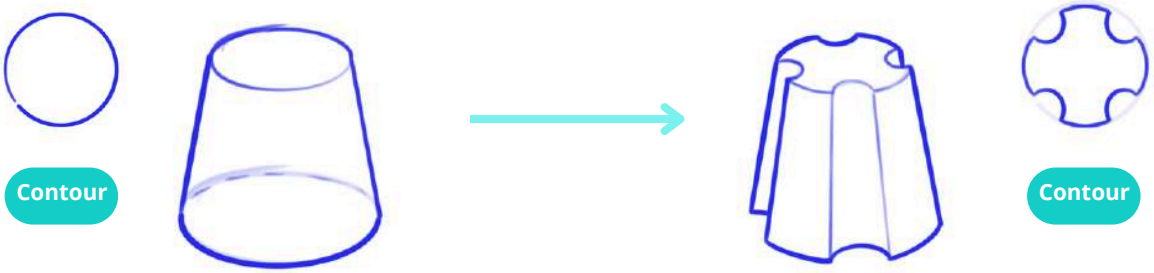
Next, we can further manipulate the boxes by altering their shape. In this example, we cut off the corners of the two larger boxes, as well as the smaller box in the middle that's connected to both of the larger boxes.



The cylinder part can also be manipulated further. We'll separate it into two different cylinders: the pink cylinder and the blue tapered cylinder.

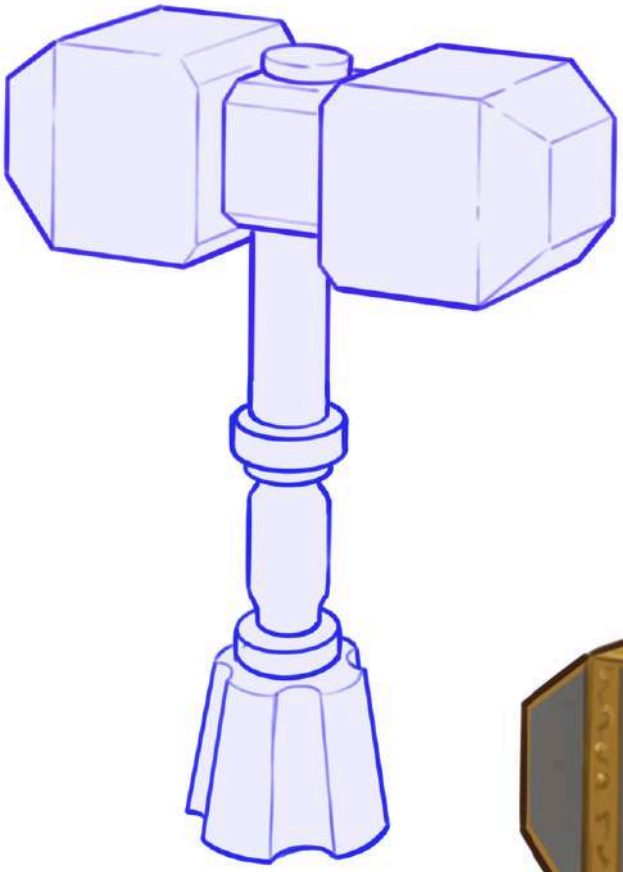
For the pink cylinder, we manipulate the rectangular silhouette to make it more interesting. For the blue cylinder, we manipulate the contour (circle) into a shape that looks more appealing.





Examples

In the end, we end up with this drawing of a hammer. It looks complex, but by using our knowledge of simple forms and form manipulation, we can create complex-looking things by following simple steps.



Then, we add a bit of color, and voila, we've just created a cool-looking hammer from imagination.

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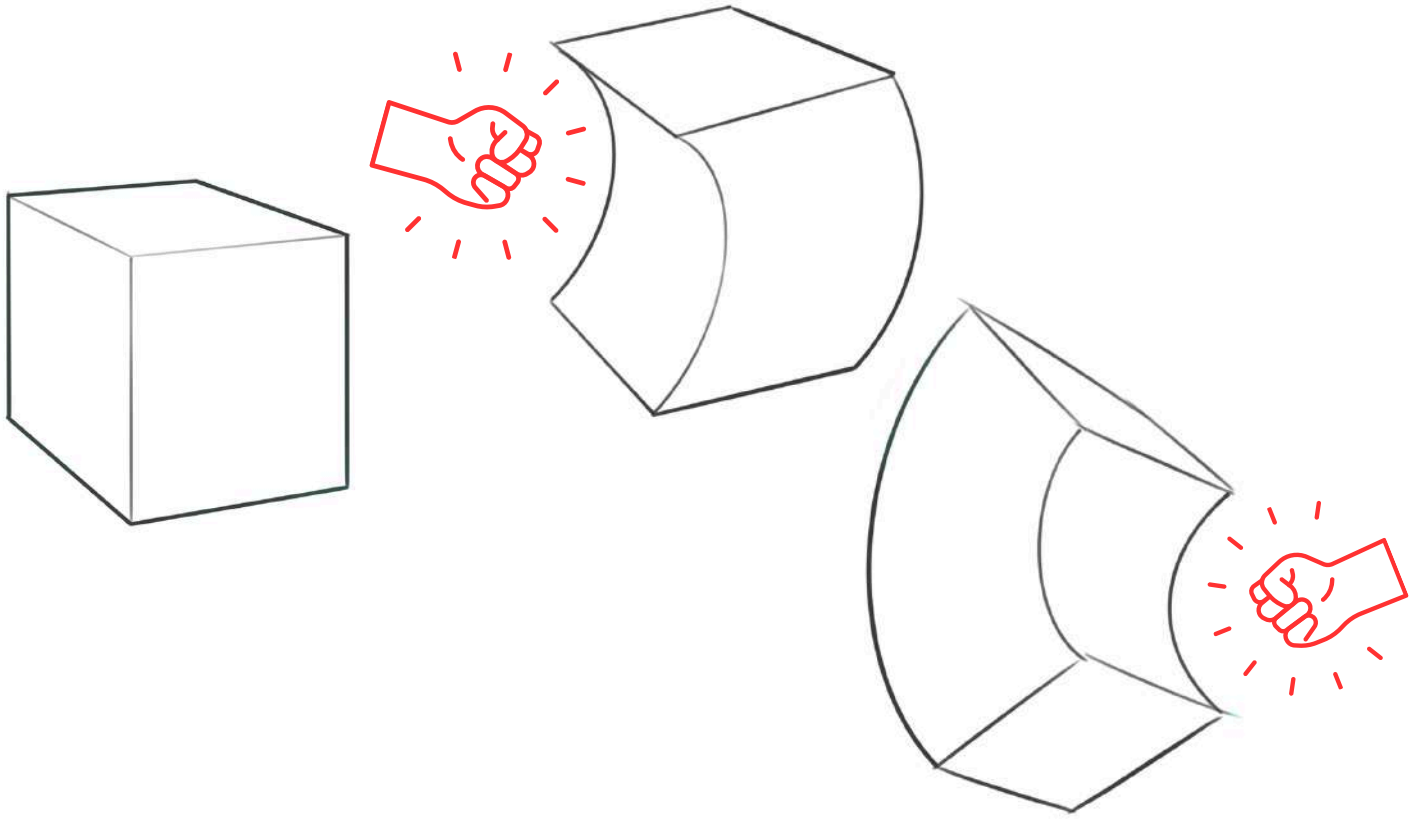
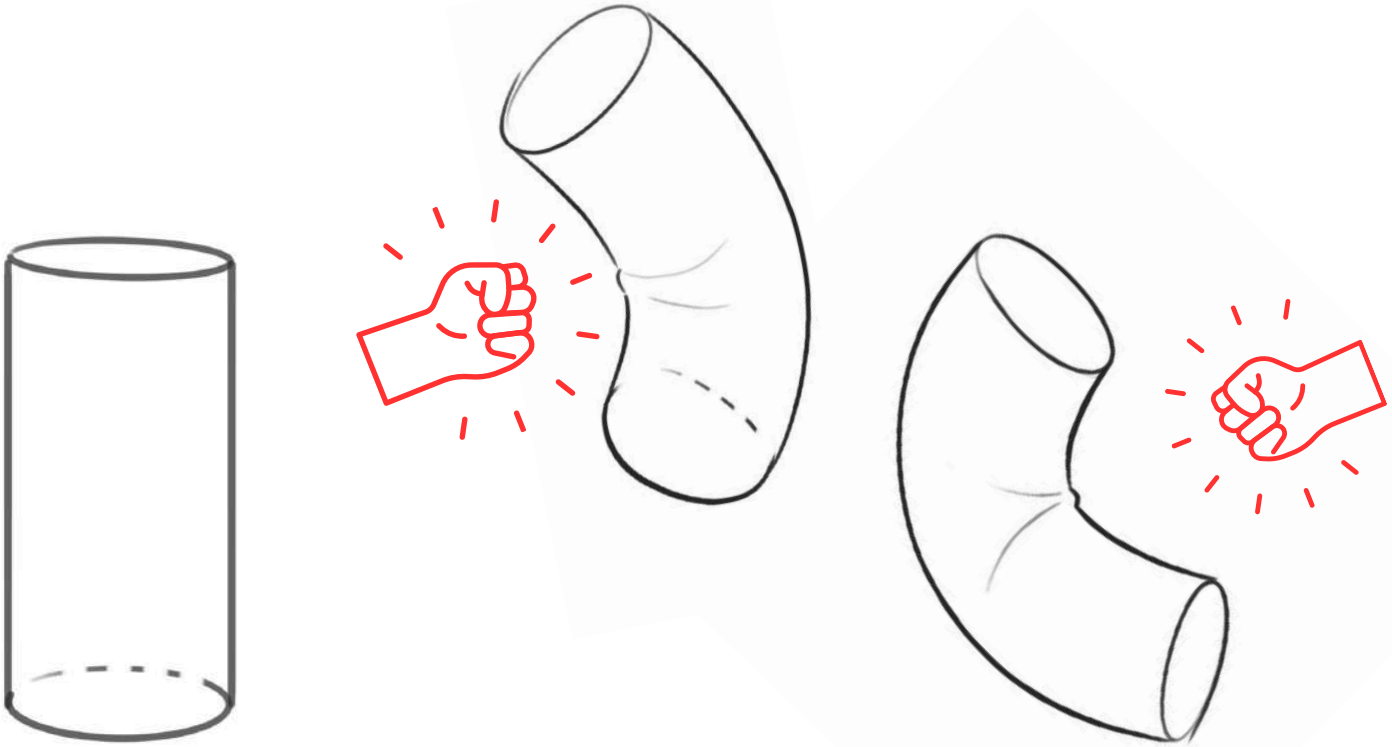
In these '5 Minutes to Mastery' series Antonio explains how the simple concepts we teach at Artwod allow us to make seemingly complex and amazing drawings with little to no need for reference.

Step 5: Bending Boxes & Cylinders

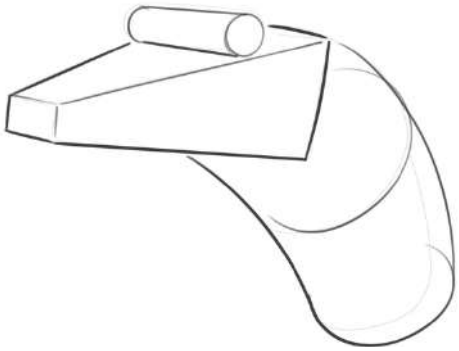
Another thing we can do is manipulate boxes and cylinders by bending them. It helps to imagine that we're applying force to the shape, causing it to bend.



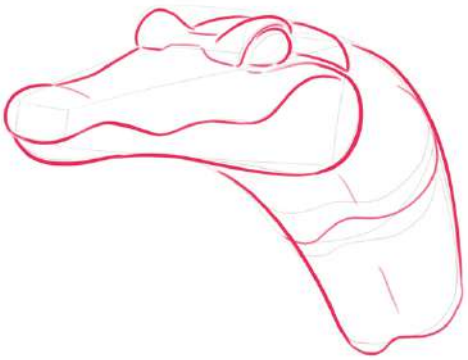


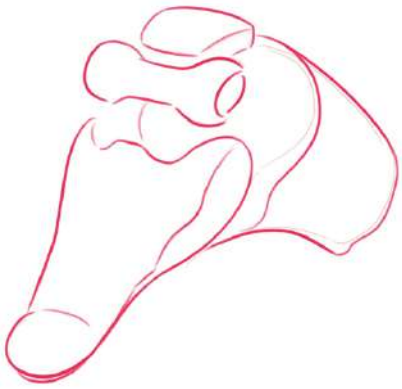
Here you can see how we use a bent cylinder as the base for a dragon's tail. Then, we manipulate the circular contour of the cylinder to create a more interesting shape.

When drawing from reference, we can better understand the structure by breaking it down into simple forms, mannequinizing what we see using boxes and cylinders.



Then, we can manipulate those forms to create a more detailed mannequin.

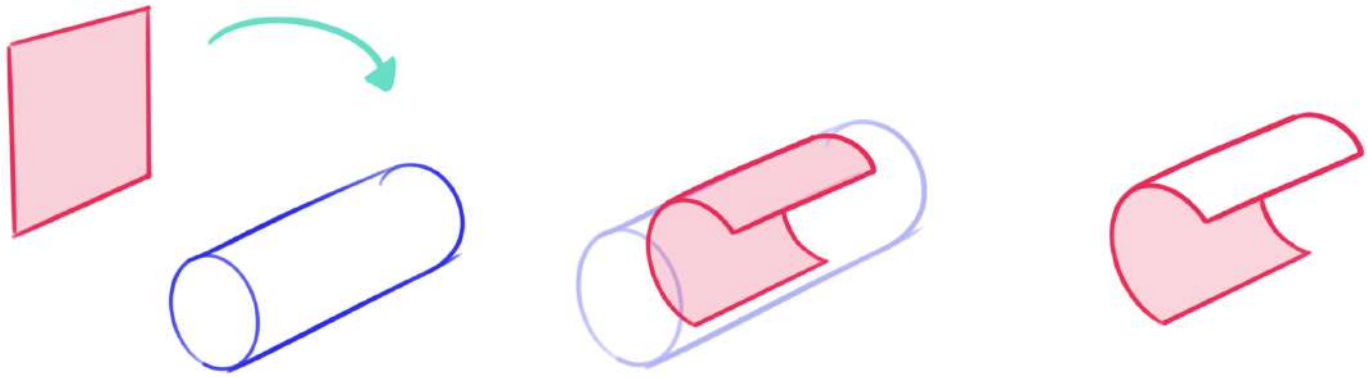




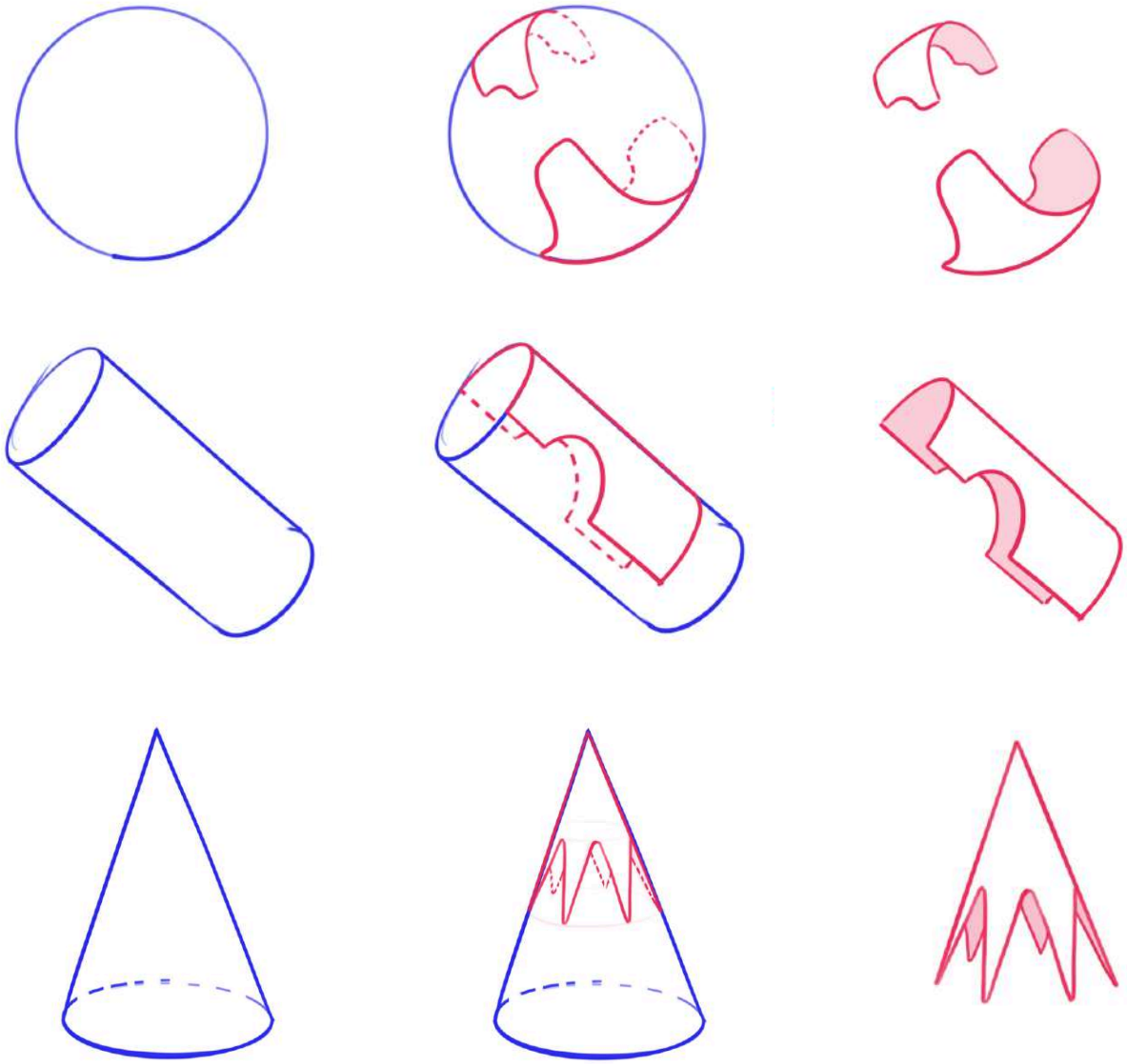
Now, we can draw our subject from a different angle using our imagination, without needing to fully learn and understand its anatomy.

Step 6: Form Wrapping

Lastly, let's look at our next concept: 'form wrapping.' Imagine wrapping a paper plane around a simple form, for example, wrapping a flat rectangle around a cylinder. This gives us a bent plane that follows the contour of the cylinder.

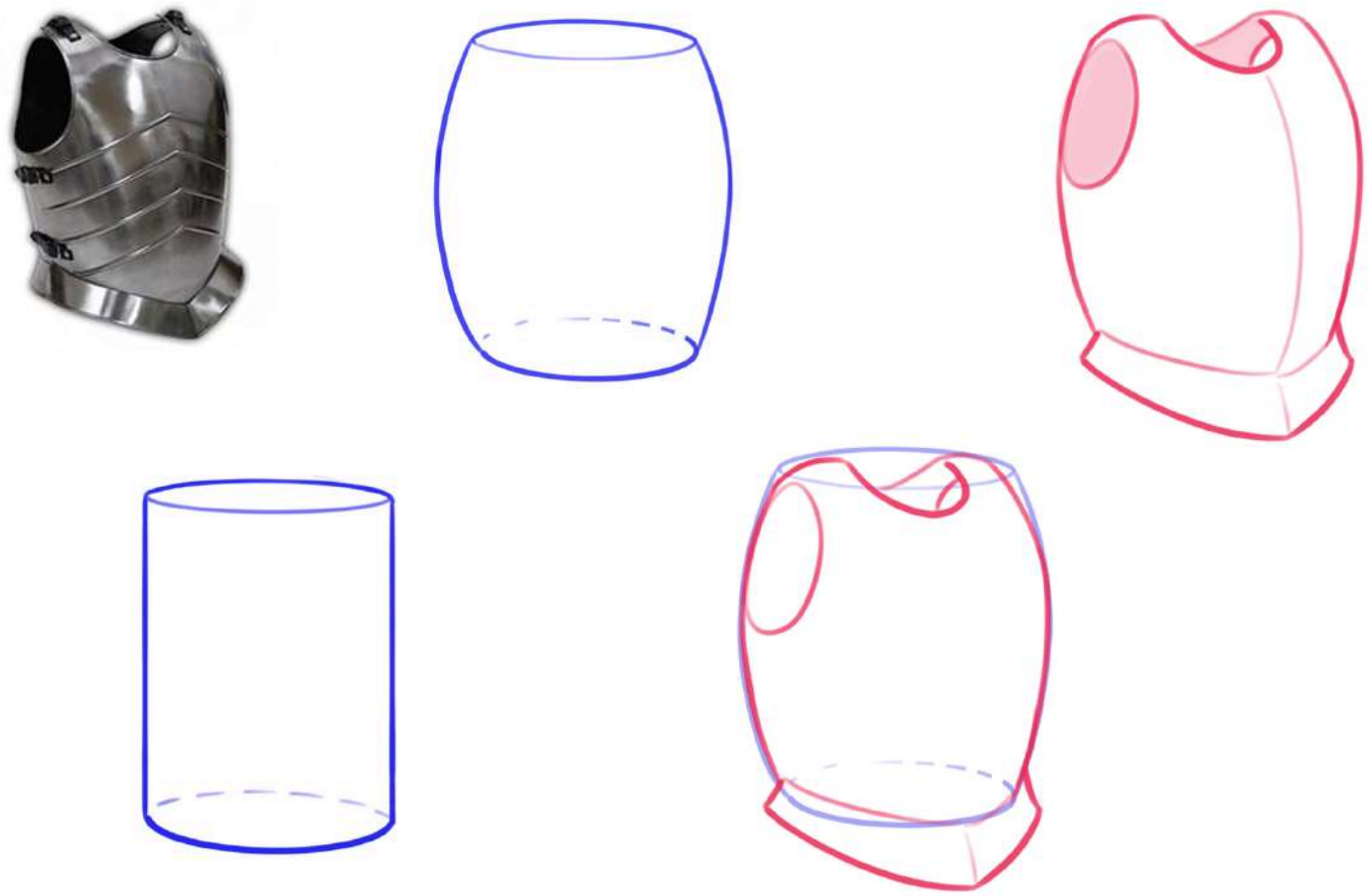


You can also think of it as cutting shapes out of your base form, there are endless ways to do this. You can wrap any shape around any form you can imagine. Here, we created three examples using a sphere, a cylinder, and a cone.

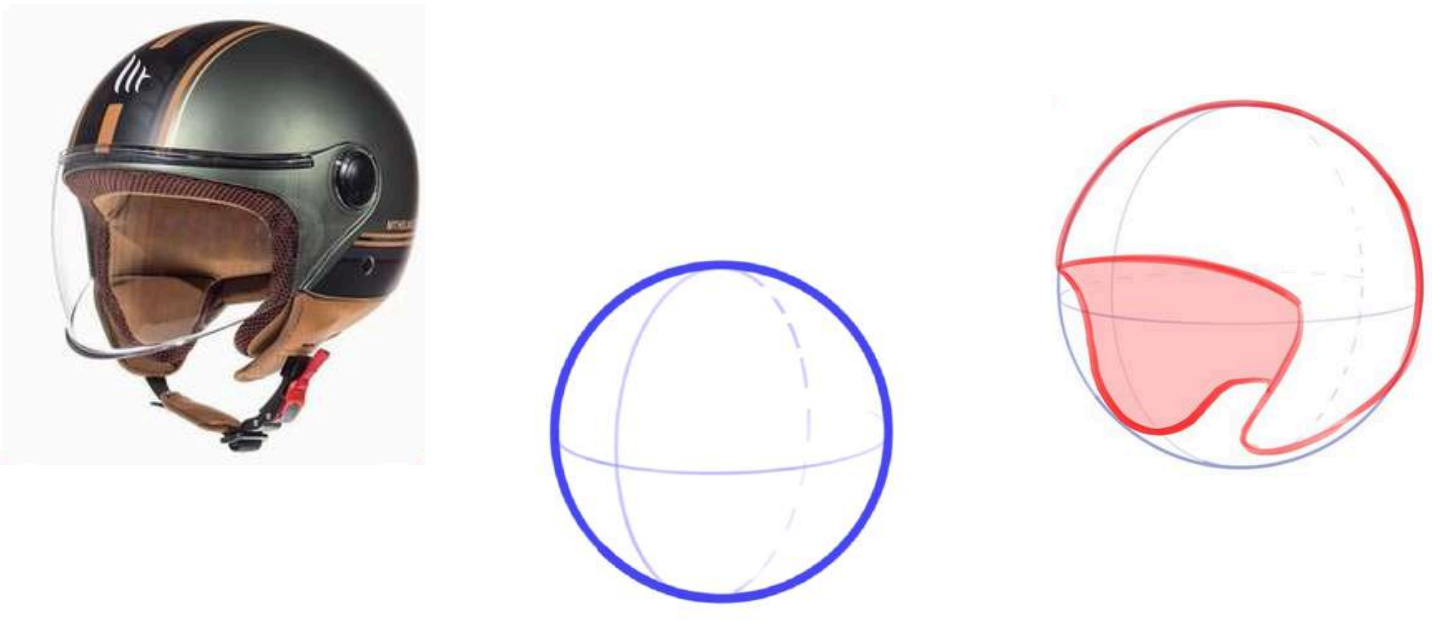


Examples

Here you can see how to draw an armor chest plate by starting with a cylinder. Then, we manipulate the silhouette of the cylinder to match the shape of the armor. Using that underlying structure, we can wrap forms around it to create our own armor chest piece.



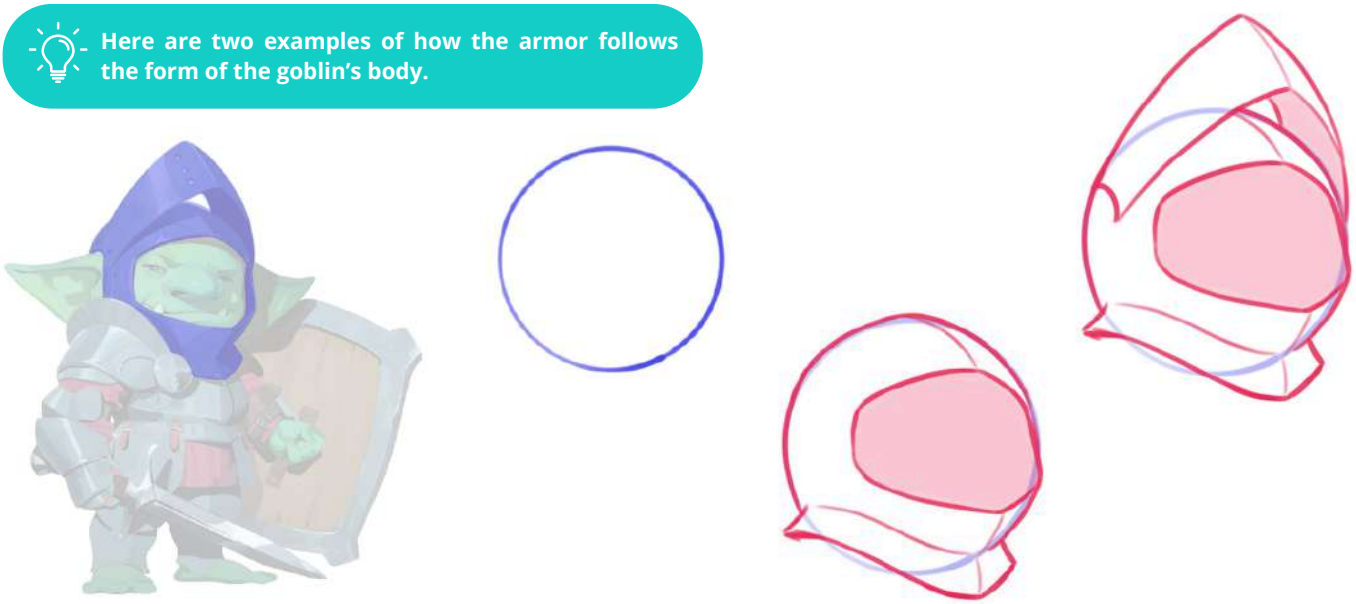
The same idea applies to this helmet. We start with a sphere that captures the overall shape of the helmet. Then, we wrap forms around the sphere to create a simplified version based on the reference.



Examples

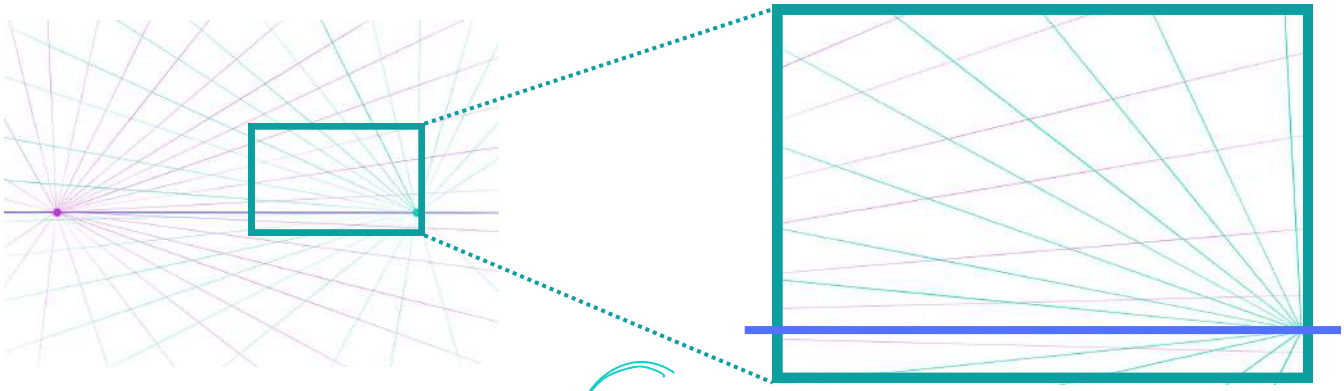
Form wrapping is useful when drawing armor. Before we can draw a cool character in shiny armor, we first need to understand the mannequin, it represents the underlying structure of the character. The mannequin is made of simple, manipulated forms. Armor is just a collection of flat steel plates that wrap around those forms.

Here are two examples of how the armor follows the form of the goblin's body.



Examples

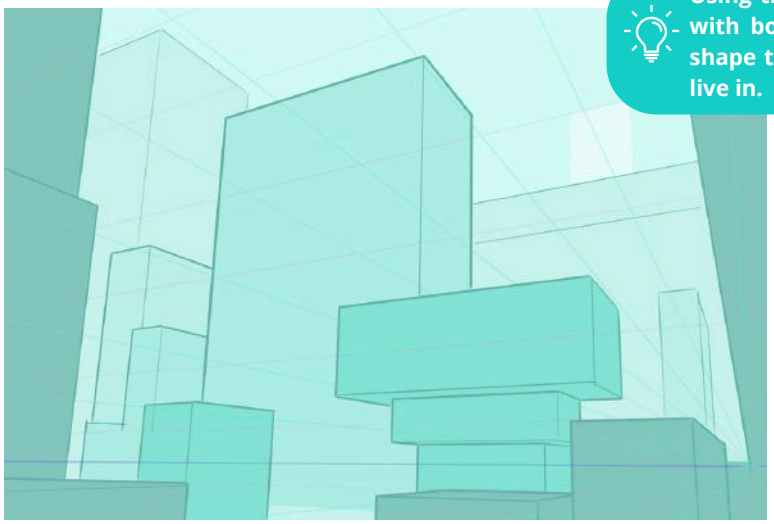
Let's see how we can build up an illustration from the ground up, using everything we've learned so far. We begin by choosing our perspective. Remember: the two vanishing points should be placed far apart; one far off the page, the other still visible on it. Next, we position the horizon line toward the bottom of the page. This places the viewer lower in the scene, giving us an upward view of the subject in the illustration.



Zoomed out page

Page

Using this perspective, we can start filling the scene with boxes. It's like playing with building blocks to shape the environment you want your characters to live in.



Next, we can add characters to the scene using simple mannequins made out of cylinders and boxes.

Examples

Now we can make our simple boxes and cylinders more interesting by manipulating them, slowly building up the detail of the illustration. This is the secret sauce we teach at Artwod!

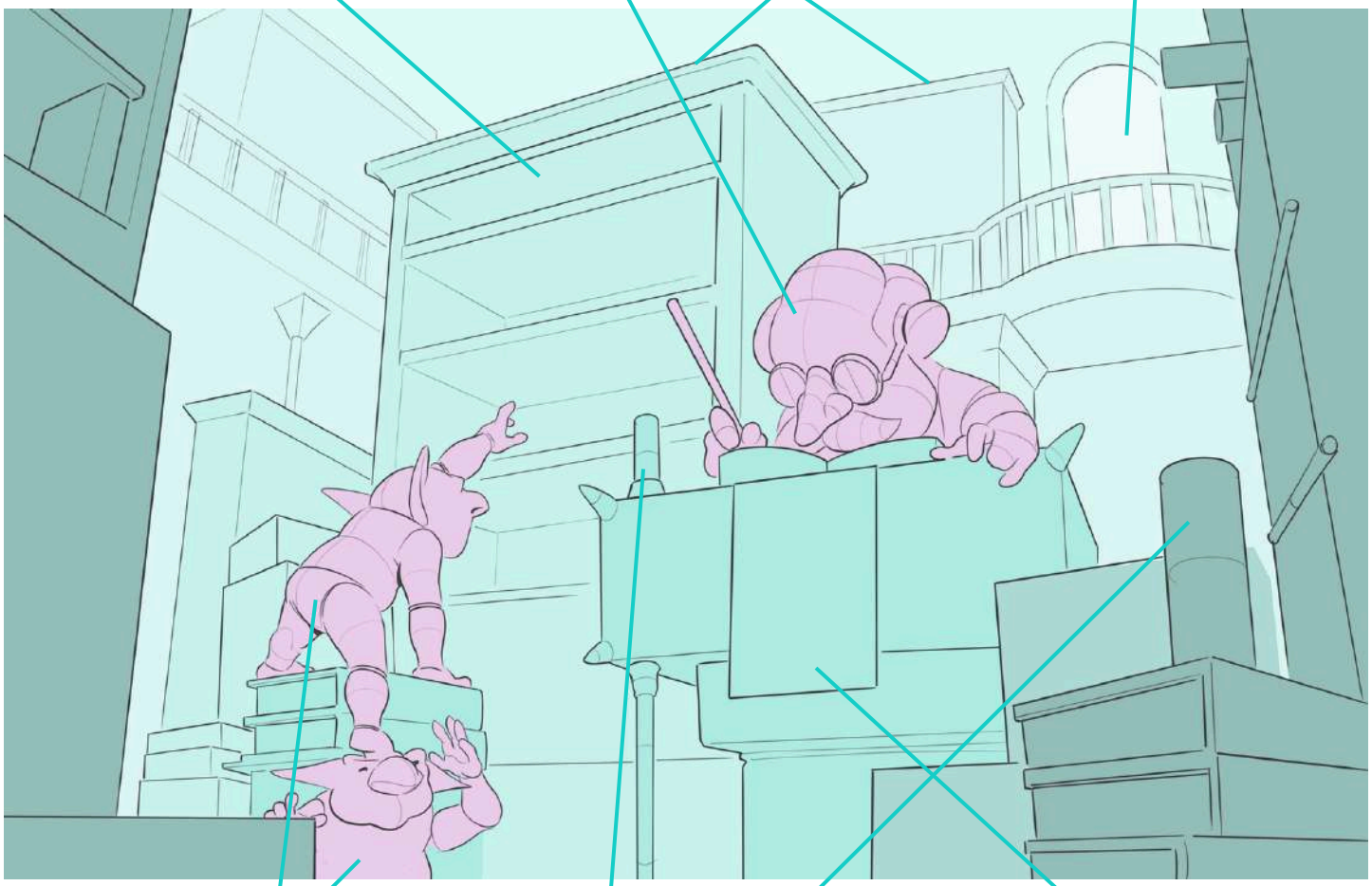
We have to make sure that in our final illustration, there are no longer any simple boxes or cylinders, everything must have some sort of design, created through form manipulation.

We manipulated the forms of this mannequin to make it look more like a dwarf. Notice how the moustache and beard are also simplified into organic forms.

We rounded off the corners of our rectangular shape to make it look like a curved doorway.

We carved holes in this box so we can fill them with books.

We tapered the tops of the boxes to make them look more like bookcases.



We manipulated the forms of the mannequins to make them look more like goblins.

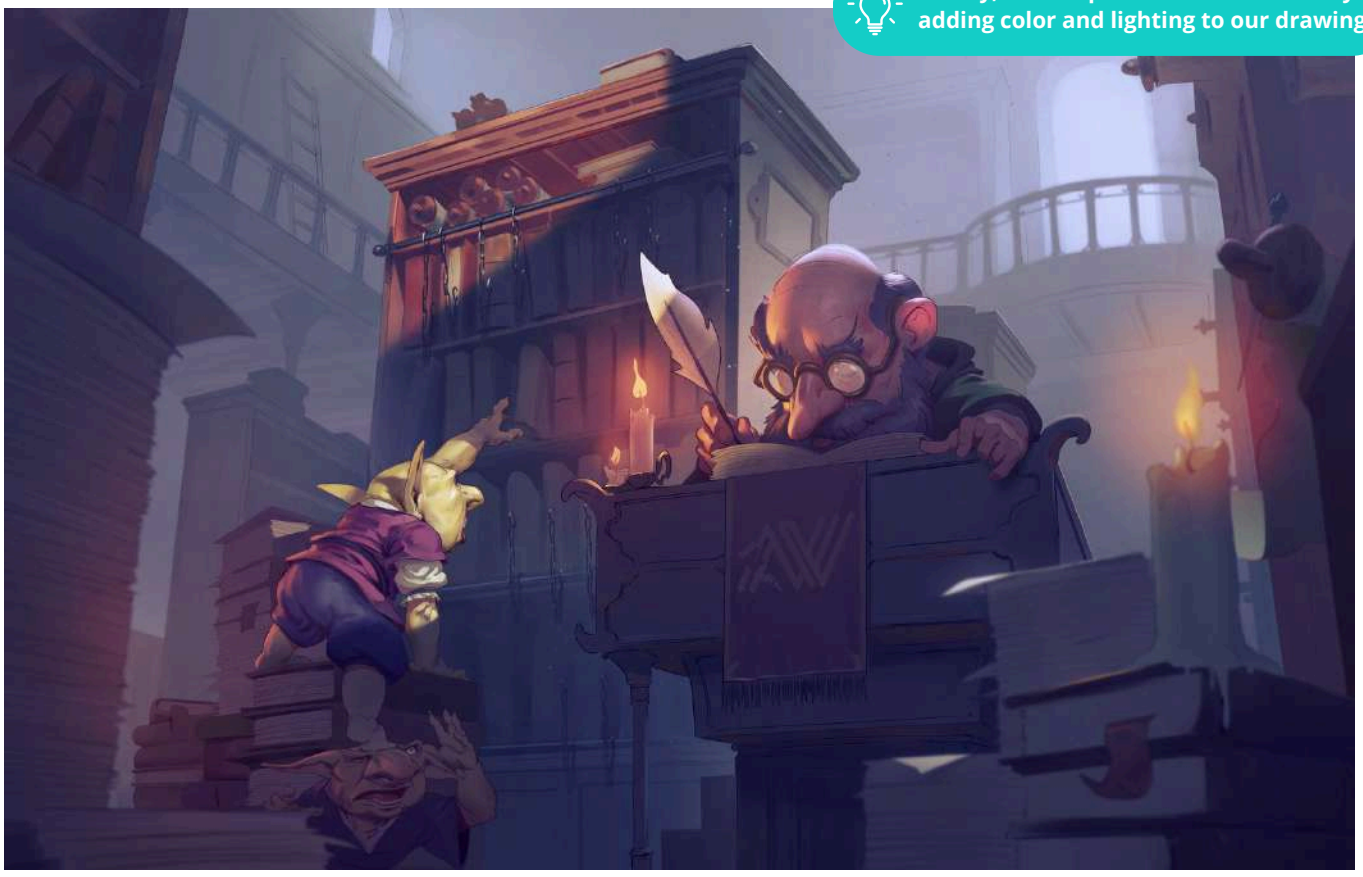
We made the desk more interesting by adding small cones to the corners and a few cylinders for support.

We added some cylinders that can be refined into candles.

Examples

Now we can refine all our manipulated forms into a detailed drawing.

Finally, we can paint our illustration by adding color and lighting to our drawing.



SPECIAL GIFT

We hope you enjoyed this free book, filled with many of our teaching secrets.

It's important to recognise that drawing at a high level doesn't happen overnight, and simply reading about it won't significantly improve your skills. Learning to draw takes time and consistent practice, but understanding what we need to draw is the crucial first step.

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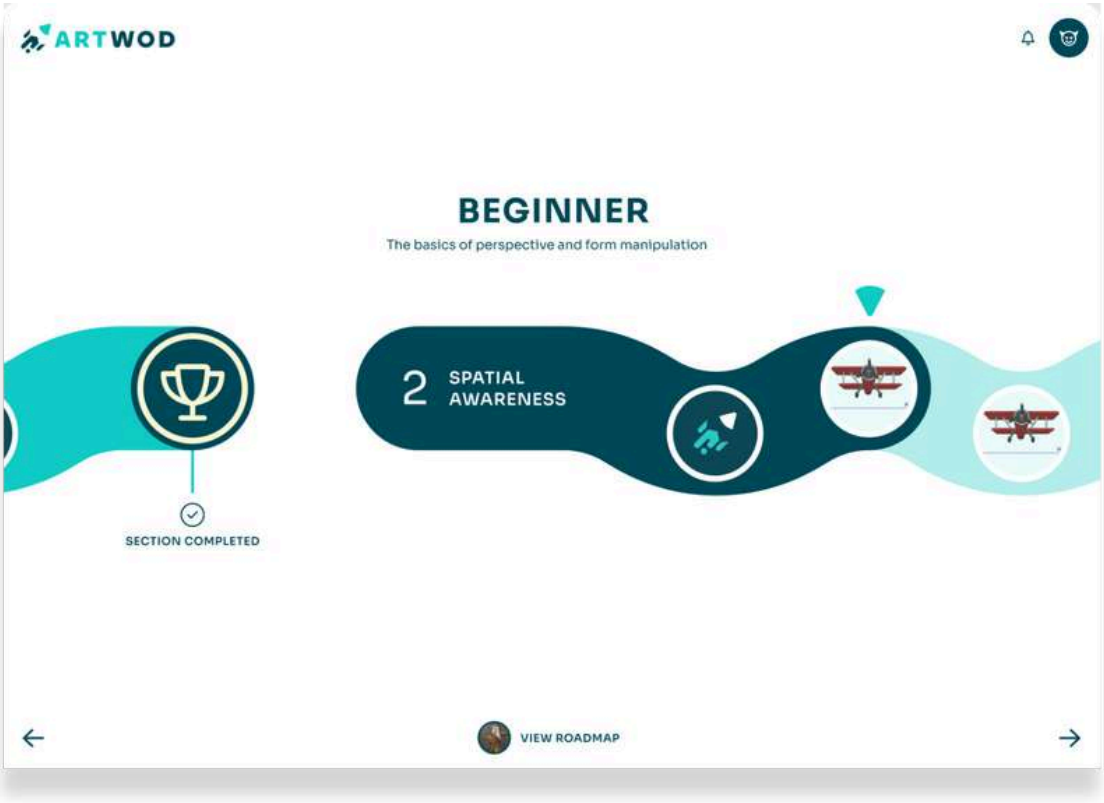

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