

**ASSIGNMENT 2: THE FIRST FIELD TRIP – SKETCHING ON YOUR HOME TURF**

This assignment builds on what you learned in Assignment 1. You are going to continue to sketch from life and continue to sketch what is familiar, but this time you'll be sketching outside – on a field trip on “home turf”.

For your first ‘field trip’ outside, try your garden or yard or maybe a nice quiet park. Basically anywhere which is close to home and where you feel comfortable and probably won't be disturbed by anybody – even your family (especially your family?). You'll need to get your kit together and start to think about how the light and the environment is different when working outside. The advantage of being at home is you can dash inside and get what you forgot as soon as you realise!

**PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT 2**

**Your second assignment is to complete a freehand sketch from life and outside. Choose somewhere familiar where you feel comfortable and are unlikely to be disturbed.**

The purpose of Assignment 2 is for you to:

- assemble what you would need to sketch outside the home – and find a sketch kit which works for you (it varies from person to person)
- become competent at using your sketch kit outside ‘as if’ you were in public
- tackle new challenges associated with sketching from life outside; and
- evaluate the impact sketching outside has on how you draw

**More things to think about:** Time your efforts and note what you get done in different periods of time. Maybe identify a regular time to sketch each day. Remember to observe how your style of drawing evolves so that you can draw in a “sketchy” way as well as a more refined way.

**TIPS FOR ASSEMBLING A BASIC SKETCHING KIT**

A **basic sketching kit** can comprise just a sketchbook and pencil.

However think about the choices you have and what else you might need:

- **Something to draw on:** Type of support / sketchbook / size of sketchbook:
  - small and unobtrusive sketchbooks don't tend to attract as much attention in public; larger sketchbooks enable you to draw more of a scene
  - sketchbooks which lie flat enable you to sketch across the double page spread
  - sketchbooks with a hardback mean you don't need a support for the paper
  - watercolour paper in blocks or sketchbooks enable you to use watercolours if you choose
- **Something to draw with** (for different types of drawing instruments see [Art Materials](#) on my website)
  - Make sure you have supplies of whatever you find easiest to use – and try this first.
  - Practice drawing first – and then move on to sketching with paints.
  - Make colour a second priority; introduce colour after you feel comfortable drawing quickly

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- Pencil is a good choice, mechanical pencils don't require sharpening – but don't provide any variation in quality of line.
- Pen and ink requires a suitable surface and refills for the ink.
- Pencils require a sharpener and an eraser.
- **Something to sit on:** Find something light and portable - unless you're planning all your sketches in cafes and bars or from a bench in the park! (See [In praise of my sketching chairs](#))
- **Drawing aids in the field** (see [Drawing Aids](#))
  - Visors and baseball caps help you to see and draw your subject without having the sun in your eyes and without having to use sunglasses (which distort both value and colour)
  - Try using a viewfinder – you can make it from a piece of card and remove a rectangle in the middle. Be sure that the frame obscures surrounding images so that the view finder works like the viewfinder on your camera.
  - Try using a scale finder – this is a Perspex sheet with a grid. It helps to check relative proportions if a subject is complex.
- **Basic protection**
  - Make sure you pack sun cream and suitable clothing to protect your skin from the sun
  - Pack bug cream or sprays if you're likely to be bothered
  - Some people find a cell / mobile phone to be reassuring
- **Something to carry it all in!**
  - Make sure your bag for carrying it all in is something which is easy to carry. I find backpacks to be ideal.
  - Lots of pockets (in your jacket, coat or bag) make it easy to find things.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT – WHAT NEEDS TO BE ACCOMMODATED

- **Lighting:** Think about where the sun is – and where it's moving to. What looks great right now might look completely different in half an hour.
- **Shelter:** Aim for shelter from any wind – it's difficult to draw when paper is flapping. Make sure you have packed some bulldog clips.

#### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT – THAT YOU CAN CONTROL

- Try using a view finder to identify what to draw
- If sketching a scene, work out:
  - Your eyeline (re. perspective)
  - the boundaries of the picture plane – try using a view finder. (See also [Composition - the four most important lines](#)).
  - relative proportions (use scale finder)

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- The big shapes in the key zones: background, middle ground and foreground – and think about aerial perspective and its impact on definition, value and colour across these zones
- The major and minor lines in your sketch – and how these can be represented
- The number of values in your sketch and where they are. I suggest there are usually at least five values. Squint to see your values. Work out where your darkest darks are and your lightest lights. And then where the middle tone is.
- If you want to compose a sketch (and you don't have to unless you're trying something out for a possible painting), then a composition checklist can be useful (but no rules have to be followed). See also the reference link in the reference section. You might want to think about:
  - Placement of the focal point and pathways to it and around the sketch
  - the golden mean / 'rule of thirds' (See [Composition – thinking in threes](#))
  - finding objects with similar/repeating shapes
  - the design of the basic value shapes - does the sketch 'read' as a thumbnail or does it look confusing? (See [Composition - why tonal values and contrast are important](#) )

## ASSIGNMENT 2: WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

- Assemble a basic sketching kit.
- Identify if you forgot to pack anything in your basic kit (e.g. sharpener, eraser, spare ink cartridges)
- Don't pamper yourself too much! Try drawing sat on a folding stool or with a sketchbook on you knee!
- Note how well you respond to and deal with the challenges of drawing from life outside. Reflect on:
  - The weather and the light, how it changes and how this impacts on you
  - Use of your viewfinder and/or camera viewfinder – how did you find drawing a scene with being able to see the edges as you can with a photograph?
  - How well you could see the different value zones

## WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED

- Post some or all your 'outside at home' sketches on your website/blog – identify how long they took
- Evaluate the impact of sketching on the way you draw, say what worked well and what you need to work on.
- Identify what changes, if any, you will make to your sketching kit before assignment 3.

If you now feel more comfortable drawing outside, it's time to move on to Assignment 3 – sketching in a public place.

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Portfolio Website:	<a href="http://www.pastelsandpencils.com/">http://www.pastelsandpencils.com/</a>	Art Blog:	<a href="http://makingamark.blogspot.com/">http://makingamark.blogspot.com/</a>
Travel sketchbook blog:	<a href="http://travelsketch.blogspot.com">http://travelsketch.blogspot.com</a>	Publications Website:	<a href="http://www.makingamark.co.uk">http://www.makingamark.co.uk</a>

You can find more 'Making A Mark Guides' with advice on sketching, blogging and the art business on the portfolio or publications websites listed above.

#### References:

- Making A Mark
  - [Composition - why tonal values and contrast are important](#)
  - [Composition - thinking in threes](#)
  - [Composition - the four most important lines](#)
  - [In praise of my sketching chairs](#)
- Pastels and Pencils
  - [Advice on Sketching](#)
  - [Art Materials and Other Resources](#)

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