



Drawing Human Faces: Getting the Proportions Right

KS3 ART & DESIGN

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

Why Proportions Matter

When you draw a face, getting the **proportions** (the sizes and distances between features) right is what makes it look realistic instead of wonky. Artists have discovered rules over hundreds of years that help us understand where eyes, noses, and mouths should go on a human face.

The good news? These rules are actually quite simple once you know them!

The Head as a Guide

The first rule is to think of a face as fitting inside a **rectangle or oval shape**. This imaginary outline helps you place everything correctly. Most faces are about as wide as they are tall, though some people have longer or rounder faces.

Think of it like a picture frame - you wouldn't hang a painting where the frame is way too big or too small, right? Your face features need to fit nicely inside their frame too.

The Eye Line Rule

Here's a key secret: **the eyes sit roughly in the middle of the head**, not higher up like you might think. If you draw a line across your face horizontally, your eyes should be about halfway down. The space from the top of your head to your eyes should roughly equal the space from your eyes to your chin.

Eyes are also spaced with about **one eye-width between them**. If you measure the width of one eye, that's usually how much space fits between the two eyes.

Nose and Mouth Placement

The **nose** sits in the middle line of your face and extends down about halfway between your eyes and your chin. Your **mouth** sits roughly one-third of the way down from your nose to your chin. The mouth is usually about as wide as the distance between your pupils.

Think of it like dividing a chocolate bar into sections – each part has its own space, and they all need to fit together properly.

Ears and Other Details

Don't forget the **ears**! They typically start at about eye level and extend down to roughly where your nose ends. Many beginners forget about ears or draw them too small.

Remember, these are **guidelines, not rules set in stone**. Every face is unique, and once you master the basics, you can break these rules on purpose to capture someone's individual features. The proportions give you a strong foundation to build on!