



Still Life Drawing: Capturing Objects with Skill and Care

KS2 ART & DESIGN

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

What is a Still Life?

A **still life** is a drawing, painting, or photograph of objects that don't move. These objects could be anything: fruit in a bowl, flowers in a vase, books stacked on a table, or old bottles. The word "**still**" means the objects stay perfectly still while you draw them. Unlike drawing a person running or a bird flying, still life lets you take your time and study every detail.

Artists have been creating still lifes for hundreds of years. Famous painters like **Paul Cézanne** and **Caravaggio** loved still life because it challenged them to show texture, light, and shadow in interesting ways.

Think of it like: A photograph that you get to draw—the objects aren't going anywhere, so you can really look closely at how light falls on them and what colours and patterns they have.

How to Draw a Still Life Well

Step 1: Arrange Your Objects Carefully

Choose objects with different shapes and sizes. A round apple next to a tall bottle looks more interesting than three similar items. Place them so light falls on them from one direction—this creates shadows that make your drawing look three-dimensional.

Step 2: Look at Shapes, Not Details

Before you start drawing, squint your eyes and see each object as a simple shape. An orange is a circle, a bottle is a rectangle with a narrower top. Once you get these basic shapes right, the details come later.

Think of it like: Building with blocks first, then decorating them. Get the structure right, then add the patterns and textures.

Step 3: Pay Attention to Light and Shadow

Look at where the light hits each object. The bright side is **highlight**, the dark side is

shadow, and the bit in between is called **midtone**. Drawing all three makes objects look real and solid.

Step 4: Draw Lightly at First

Use a soft pencil and sketch lightly. You'll probably make mistakes, and light marks are easy to erase. Only press harder when you're happy with your shapes.

Step 5: Add Details Last

Once the basic drawing looks right, add texture—the wrinkles in an apple skin, the label on a bottle, or the pattern on a cloth. These details bring your still life to life.

Why Still Life Matters

Still life teaches you to **observe carefully**. It slows you down and makes you really see the world. Every object has unique shapes, colours, and the way light plays across it. The better you get at drawing still life, the better you'll become at drawing *anything*.