

Line and Mark-Making

AP Drawing • Topic 1

AP Drawing



Line and Mark-Making

What we will cover

1

Line quality

2

Contour drawing

3

Gesture drawing

4

Hatching & cross-hatching

5

Stippling & alternative marks

6

Texture & surface

7

Expressive mark-making

Hatching



parallel lines

Cross-hatching



cross-hatching

Cross-contour



across the form

Stippling



dots build tone

Scribble



fast energy

Broken marks



sketchy and quick

AP Drawing • Line and Mark-Making: six mark systems that build tone

1

Line



Line and Mark-Making

Line

Line quality – judged at a glance

Line quality 线条质感 is how a line looks and feels. The rubric names mark-making 笔触 first among the drawing skills.

Confident lines come from the shoulder and elbow, not only the fingers.

Line and Mark-Making

Line

Line quality – judged at a glance, in detail

Even line



same width all the way

Weighted line



thick and thin with pressure

Lost-and-found-line



fades out, comes back

Expressive line



fast, energetic, personal

AP Drawing • Line and Mark-Making: four line qualities compared

the same edge drawn four ways

Line quality 线条质感 is how a line looks and feels – and the rubric names mark-making 笔触 first among the drawing skills.

Line and Mark-Making

Line

Direction carries feeling

calm

horizontal

firm

vertical

active

diagonal

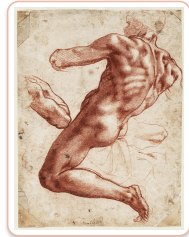
Examiners read line quality instantly – practise until your lines look decided, not timid. Warm up before every serious drawing.

Contour drawing – slow, careful looking

A **contour line** 轮廓线 traces the edges of a form – outer **and** inner edges of folds and overlaps.

- match the **speed** of your eye to the pencil
- **blind contour** 盲画轮廓: draw **without looking** at the paper
- **cross-contour** 横截轮廓线 describes volume, not edges

Overlapping contours create **instant depth**.



Michelangelo contour study: slow careful looking

Gesture drawing – energy before detail

Gesture drawing 动态速写 captures energy, movement and weight in **seconds**.

- 30 seconds to 3 minutes; draw the **whole** subject
- find the **line of action** 动势线 first
- ask **what the subject is doing**, not what it looks like

Energy → structure → detail. Photograph daily pages as practice evidence.



Seurat gesture: action in a few lines before detail

2 Mark systems

Hatching and cross-hatching

Hatching 排线 builds tone with parallel lines; **cross-hatching** 交叉排线 layers a second set at a new angle.

Closer, darker lines read as darker **value** 明度. Keep **one angle per plane**.



Dürer: value built only from line density

Beyond hatching – a vocabulary of marks

Stippling 点画
tone from **dots** –
dense reads dark
slow, but very
controllable

Scribble 乱线
fast tangles of line
good for fur, fo-
liage, energy

Dashes & broken marks
suggest texture **without**
outlining every detail

Marks are **additive** 加法 (putting material on) or **subtractive** 减法 (lifting it off with an eraser). A classic experimentation page: **one subject in four mark systems**.

Line quality, and building tone by hatching

a weighted line 轻重线条 changes thickness along its length – **press harder** where a form turns **away** or where a shadow begins

lost-and-found lines 虚实线条 fade out and come back; **the viewer's eye completes the missing edge**

why that works an implied edge reads as air and light, where a continuous outline reads as a cut-out

hatching parallel strokes; each cross-hatched layer deepens the tone **step by step**

the discipline **build darkness gradually** – one heavy layer cannot be lightened

direction matters strokes that follow the form describe it; strokes that ignore it flatten it

Line weight and lost edges are what separate a drawing from a tracing. Both are decisions the scorer can see.

3 Texture & voice

Texture and surface

Surface 画面质感 is a **named** AP drawing skill: the physical texture of the drawing and the drawn **illusion** of texture work together.

- **actual texture** 实际肌理 – rough paper, layered charcoal, collage
- **implied texture** 视觉肌理 – a drawn illusion
- **frottage** 拓印法 rubs real texture **into** the drawing

Paper **tooth** 纸纹 changes **every** mark – the same pencil reads differently on smooth and rough paper.

Build texture with the **logic of the material**: short strokes for fur, long for hair, broken marks for stone. Contrasting smooth skin against rough cloth makes **both** read more strongly.

Expressive mark-making – marks carry emotion

The same subject drawn with **angry, calm** or **nervous** marks tells three different stories.

- **expressive lines** 表现性线条 exaggerate speed, pressure and direction to **communicate feeling**
- Käthe Kollwitz's heavy charcoal, Egon Schiele's tense contours – the **marks themselves** carry the meaning
- **distortion** 变形 is a legitimate decision when it **serves your intent**

"Accurate" is **not** the only goal. A personal mark vocabulary is part of your **voice** 个人风格 – examiners look for it across the **whole** portfolio.

Choose the mark to match the idea: soft graphite for quiet subjects, aggressive ink for conflict.

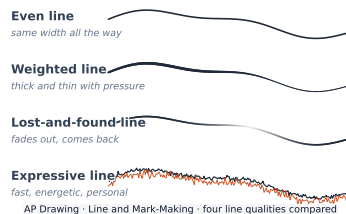
Worked example – linking marks to meaning

Written evidence: one sentence that scores

"Scratchy graphite lines echo the anxiety of exam season." It names the **mark**, and links it to the **idea**. That link is what scorers reward – a description of the picture alone is not evidence of thinking.

Photograph marks close up: a detail shot of your best passage **proves** a skill that a full view only suggests.

Check yourself, in detail



The same edge drawn four ways: an even line, a weighted line, a lost-and-found line, and a fast expressive line

Exam tips

- **Line quality is judged at a glance** – one page of confident, varied strokes tells a scorer more than an hour of timid rendering. Warm up before every serious drawing.
- **Show the systems, not just the results**: a portfolio image of hatching, stippling, and cross-contour studies is direct visual evidence of the **mark-making** skill the rubric names.
- **Photograph marks close up**. A detail shot of your best passage of marks proves a skill that a full view only suggests.
- **Blind contour and gesture pages belong in your process images** – they show observation and practice, exactly what the Sustained Investigation rubric asks to see.
- **Match marks to meaning in your written evidence**: one sentence like "scratchy graphite lines echo the anxiety of exam season" links technique to idea, which is what scorers reward.

4 Recap

Topic 1 – key takeaways

1 Line quality

judged at a glance – weighted, lost-and-found, decided

2 Contour & gesture

contour is slow looking; gesture is energy first

3 Mark systems

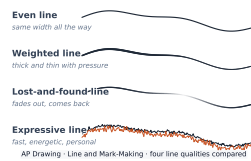
hatch, cross-hatch, stipple, scribble – density is value

4 Voice

match the mark to the meaning; distortion can serve intent

Check yourself

- 1 What do cross-contour lines describe – edges or volume?
- 2 In pen and ink, where does value come from?
- 3 What do you look for first in a gesture drawing?
- 4 Additive or subtractive: lifting charcoal with an eraser?



Answers 1. volume 2. line density 3. the line of action 4. subtractive