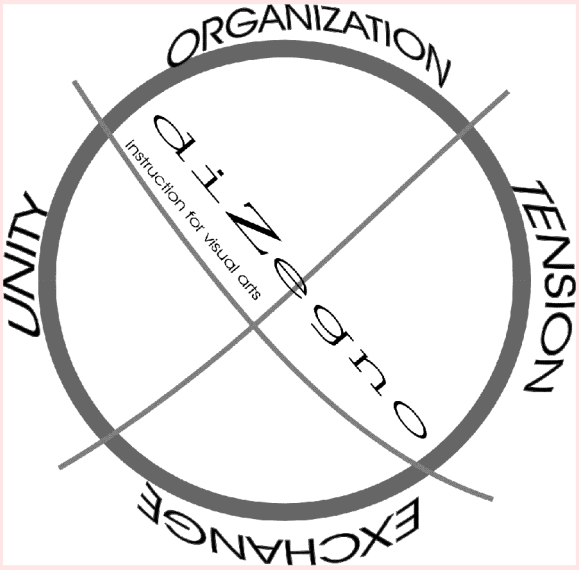
VISUAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6



PART I
OBSERVATION AND DRAWING

An instruction module
Part I of IV, Visual Language for Grade 6

diZegno
instruction for visual arts

Toronto, Canada

VISUAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6

OBSERVATION AND DRAWING LESSONS

Module expectations

The following are outcome expectations specific to the content of this module. References to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training expectations are made at the front of each lesson.

Students are:

- Expected to coordinate observation and understanding with motor control during early stage drawing.
- Expected to identify major and minor parts of an object during early stage drawing.
- Expected to compare parts of an object by using one part as a unit of measure.
- Expected to coordinate parts of an object by using internal alignments.
- Expected to harmonize information provided by gesture, armature and alignment in the outer contour.
- Expected to recognize the nature of a contour through its dynamic characteristics.

Lesson 1

Blocking in shapes

Concepts

Curvilinear lines
Extreme points
Orientation
Simplicity and complexity

Expectations

Students are:

- Expected to represent complex shapes with curvilinear rectangles.
- Expected to identify extreme points of a form and their location on a curvilinear rectangle.
- Expected to position a curvilinear rectangle that represents an object in its correct orientation.

The following Ministry Grade 6 expectations are addressed:

6a30 - describe how line can be used to direct the viewer's attention;

6a35 - describe how the strengths and limitations of both traditional and contemporary art tools, materials, and techniques affect artistic choices;

6a37 - solve artistic problems in their work, using the design elements and at least one of the design principles for this grade;

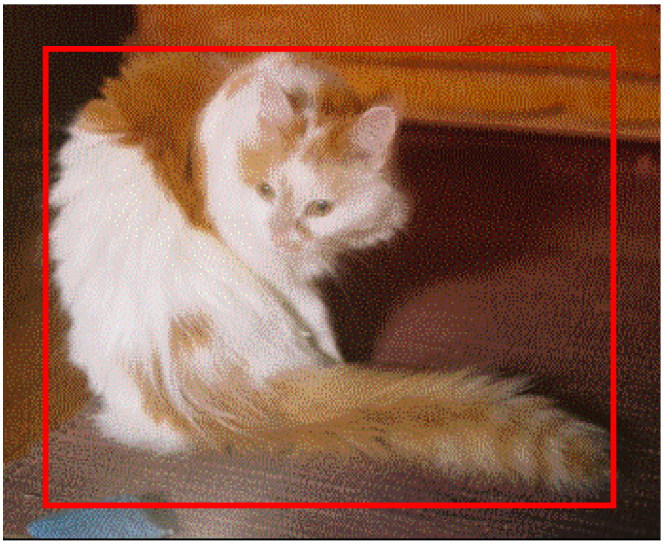
6a38 - produce two and three-dimensional works of art;

6a42 - demonstrate awareness that an artist intentionally used some of the design elements and principles to convey meaning, and explain how the artist accomplishes his/her intentions.

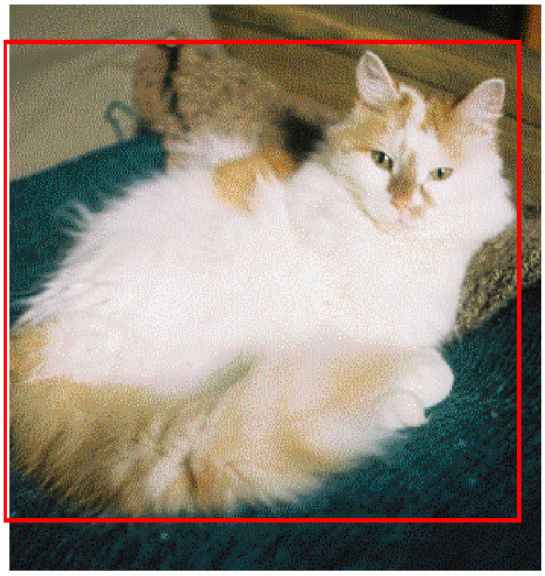
TEACHER'S NOTES

Simple geometric shapes are building blocks that can help you see and draw the complex things around you. When you look for simple shapes behind the details, you are taking an important first step in finding ways these separate things are alike or different. The easiest way to compare two things is by finding something they have in common. In drawing, this is done by placing each object in a rectangle that fits its shape exactly. When doing this, you can compare sizes among the different things in your picture. Also, you can see how each shape is unique in the way it fits inside the rectangle. How does the shape of a cat that is standing differ in appearance from the shape of one sitting down?

Simplicity and complexity



The rectangle enclosing Charlie, to the left, when he is sitting up with his tail stretched out is longer than it is high. In the picture below, the rectangle enclosing his shape as he is laying down is almost square.



Curvilinear lines

The lines of the rectangles should be very light because they are temporary guidelines for the final drawing. They should be slightly curved so that they blend in with the shape as the drawing progresses. The lines that make these shapes are curvilinear, that is they are slightly curved, and the process you use to make them is called blocking-in. Guidelines are helpful in getting your drawing started. They are like gesture lines, but instead of setting the direction of movement for the shape, they set the outer limits on your drawing for the subject and all its parts.

The rectangular shape surrounding the sculpture fits the shape of the head exactly. The lines are slightly curved to blend in with the lines in the figure.

Extreme points

To begin, locate the outer-most points on all four sides of the shape and use these points to determine the size of the curvilinear box. A way to identify outer-most points is to hold your pencil in a vertical or horizontal position and line it up with the point on the subject that is farthest from the centre. You will be able to see the parts that "touch" the pencil and those that do not. Make these alignments on each side of the subject, as well as on the top and bottom. Remember that only the outer-most points of the object touch the block. All other points on the contour fall inside. Because the points that touch the curvilinear block are the outermost parts of the object's contour, they are called extreme. These points are the first things to look for when you block-in a drawing.

The curvilinear rectangle touches the figure at certain points along its contour. These are the extreme points of the shape and all other parts of it fall inside the block.
When you begin your drawing this way, you can see how much space it will need on the page, and how the subject sits inside this space.

Orientation

By placing a second rectangle at an angle similar to the way the object is tilted, inside the first one, you can determine how much something is leaning. When you compare the two rectangles, you can estimate the correct orientation of the object. The first rectangle shows you the amount of space on the paper the drawing will need. The second, tilted rectangle should match the orientation of a gesture line that might be drawn for the subject, and helps you to place the object more carefully inside the first before you start to draw it.

Lesson props and questions

1. What kind of rectangle would you need to hold these shapes and forms?
2. Is the shape taller than wide, or wider than tall?
3. Where would you estimate the furthest points on all sides from the centre of these objects to be (left, right, top and bottom)?
4. Check this by holding a pencil vertically against the right and left extreme points, then horizontally against the top and bottom points.
6. Were your original extreme points correct?
7. What would a rectangle look like that holds all four extreme points?
8. Is the object standing upright or at an angle?
9. How would you draw the rectangle for objects leaning at an angle?
10. How do these rectangles compare to horizontal and vertical lines?
11. What would these rectangles look like in an upright box?

Lesson props and questions

Exercise 1

Explore the relationship between a rectangle and object

represent complex shapes with curvilinear rectangles

1. Draw several rectangles of different sizes on a paper.
2. Find an object that you can easily draw.
3. Place the object in each rectangle, stretching or distorting it so that it fits exactly.
4. On a separate paper draw the rectangle that you think best fits the object, using curvilinear lines.
5. Draw the object inside the rectangle. How well does it fit?
6. Arrange several objects in front of you and draw curvilinear rectangles for each of them.
7. Try to match the size of the rectangles to each object.

Time required

first drawings:	½ - ¾ hour
final drawing:	¼ - ½ hour
total time:	¾ - 1¼ hours

Materials

paper

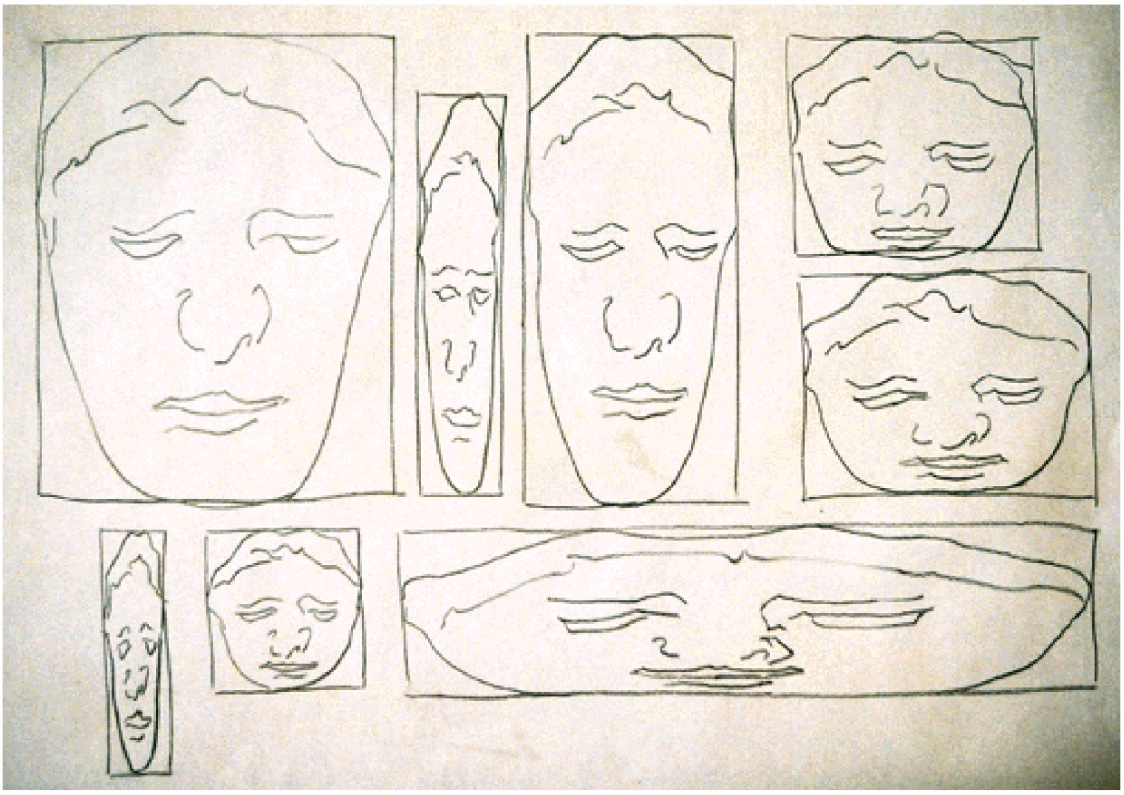
pencil

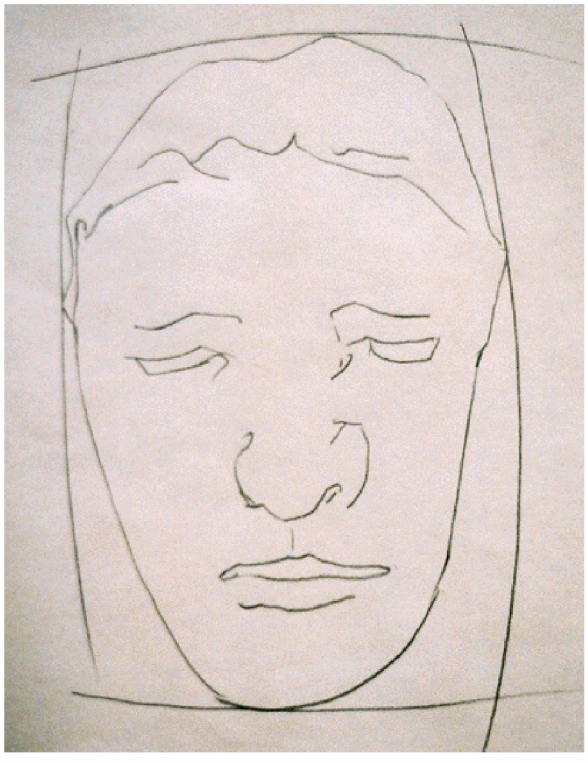
Evaluation criteria

- range of rectangular shapes
- distortion includes all parts of the subject
- appropriate rectangle is chosen for the final drawing

Exercise 1

Illustration





Exercise 2

identify extreme points on an object and their location on a curvilinear rectangle

1. Use your pencil to help you locate the four extreme points of the object from the previous exercise.
2. Draw a curvilinear rectangle based on these points.
3. Draw the shape of the objects inside the rectangle, making sure those extreme points are touching the rectangle.

Time required

drawing: ½ - ¾ hour

Materials

paper

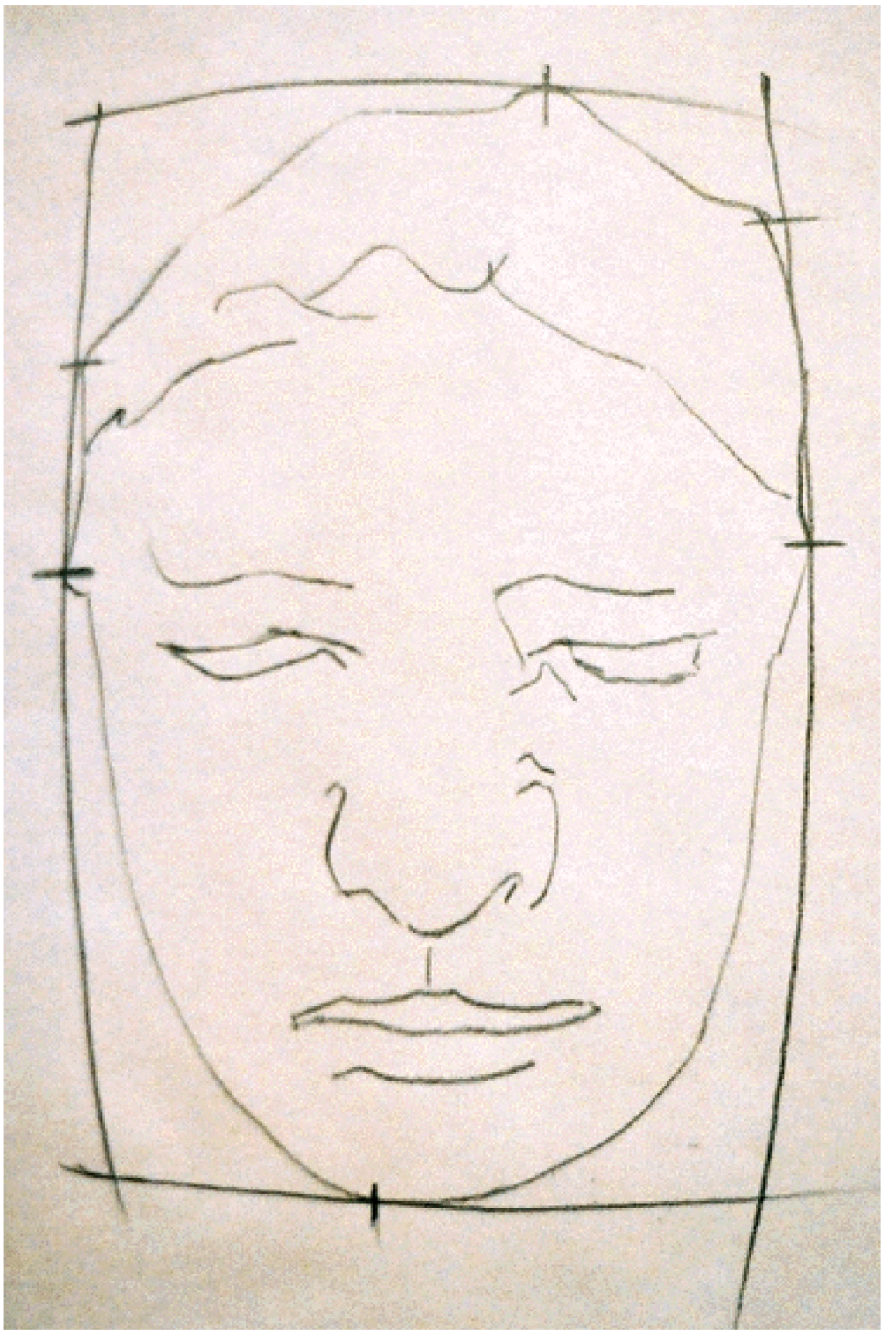
pencil

Evaluation criteria

- locates extreme points on all four sides
- uses the rectangle and extreme points to construct the drawing
- other parts of contour fall inside the extreme points

Exercise 2

Illustration



Exercise 3

position a curvilinear rectangle that represents an object in its correct orientation

1. Find an object that you can safely lean against something without it falling over.
2. Use your pencil to locate the four extreme points of the object in this position.
3. Draw a large upright rectangle that will hold the entire object.
4. Now draw another rectangle inside the first that leans in the same direction as the object.
5. Draw the object inside the second rectangle.

Time required

drawing: ½ - ¾ hour

Materials

paper

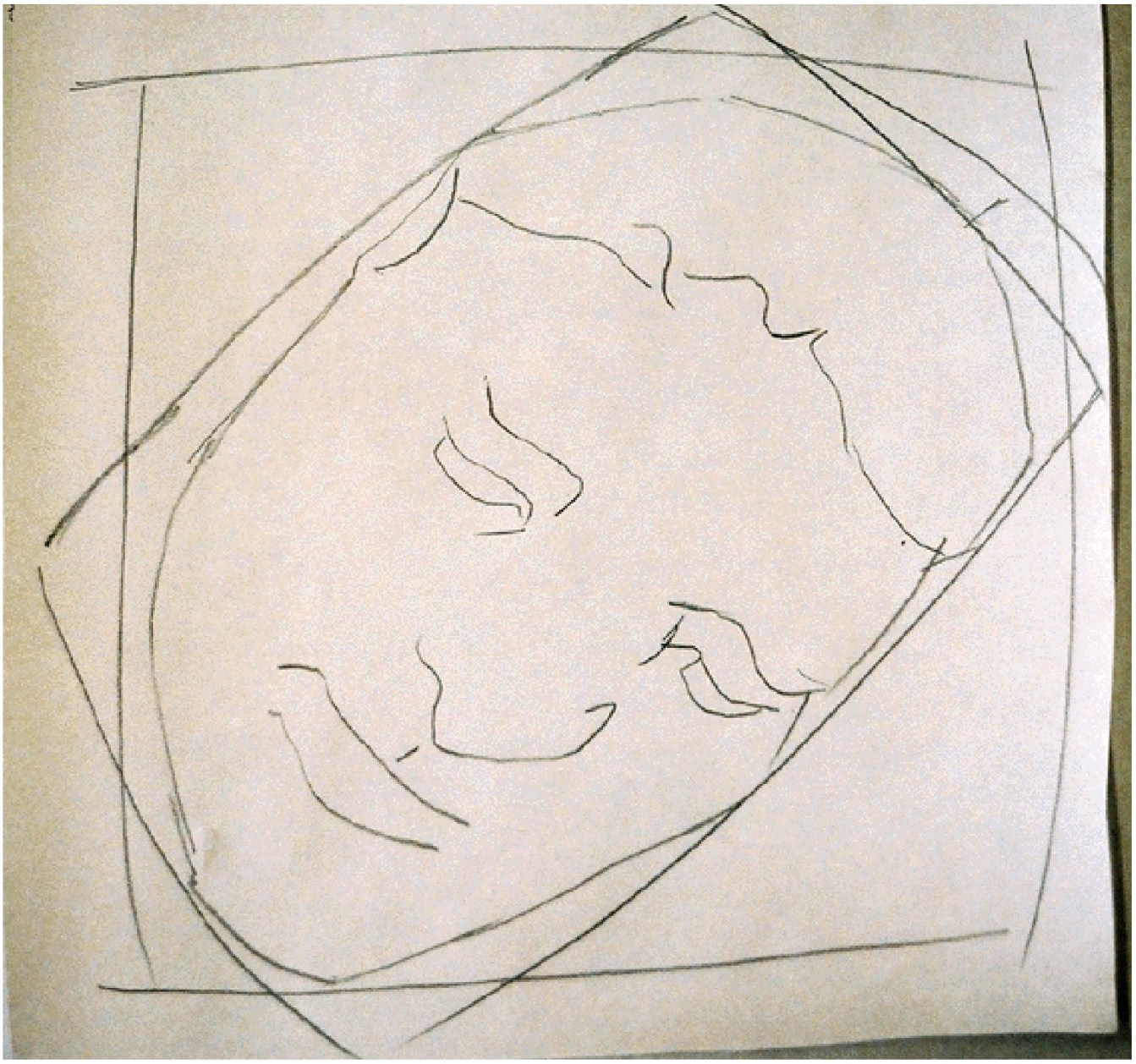
pencil

Evaluation criteria

- tilted rectangle matches the object's orientation
- drawing of the object shows the lean correctly inside the tilted rectangle
- first rectangle is big enough for the tilted object

Exercise 3

Illustration



Links to topics at other Grade Levels

2/3	elementary shapes	basic forms
4/5	gesture complex form	form contour
6	Forward link: proportion alignment	linear and planar drawing
7/8	drawing development	contraposto

Suggested cross-curricular topics

Social Studies/Canada and World Connections-Canada and its trading partners:

- Identify outstanding contributions of Canadians from various backgrounds to the global community through dance, sports, music, literature, art, science and technology.

Measurement:

- Determine the relationship between linear, square and cubic units.
- Understand the relationship between area and lengths of sides.
- Sketch a rectangle, square, triangle given its area/perimeter.

Other Skills:

- Observation
- Analysis