

Beyond Classrooms Kingston

Learn to Sketch Video 2: Sketching a Leaf with Francesca Pang

Transcript

Hello everyone, welcome to a sketching workshop, virtual edition. Today we are going to be learning about how to sketch some objects we might find in nature for our journals and also just for some fun. So, we're going to need a couple of things. First of all, you'll need a piece of paper, a pencil and an object you can find outdoors. On my walk today I found this neat leaf here. It's got some really cool curves and bumps and lines that we're going to be exploring today and your leaf will probably look a little bit different than mine but we can use the same ideas when sketching it.

Now my leaf here does fit in the palm of my hand and I suggest when you go out for your walk to find something, also about the size of your hand. So, you've got something that's a good size to look at, turn around and play with. For my example today, you will notice that my usual orange pencil will be replaced by a blue one. It's a little bit darker so that you can see my work a bit better. However, when you're at home, any regular pencil will do.

So, for this leaf today, we're going to look at it and we're going to think a little bit about how we're going to draw it. We are not going to be tracing it today, putting it down and going around. We're really going to try to use our eyes and our hands to work together and draw what we see while it's off of our paper. So, we're going to practice using some lines, recognizing some shapes and trying to put it all on a piece of paper so that it looks like our leaf. Keeping in mind a drawing is not a photograph. So, if your drawing looks a little bit different than your actual leaf, that's super okay, and that's kind of the whole point of this fun exercise today.

My leaf here is what we would call a symmetrical. Symmetry is something you might be familiar with, it's when you've got that invisible line down the middle of an object, where one side looks just like the other, as if it were being flipped in a mirror. However, my leaf today, if we have an invisible line down the middle, is asymmetrical. This side looks a little bit different than this side. Here we've got something sticking out, here maybe something got a little bit hungry and took a bite. And all these little lines look similar but are different. So, it is asymmetrical.

For my leaf, because I am not tracing it, it might be a little bit tricky to think about where to start. Do I start at the top of my leaf and draw down? Do I start in the middle? What if I start too small or too big? To help us with these questions, we're going to use something that we're all familiar with to start drawing this picture. We're going to go back to some basics. Shapes. There are lots of shapes out there in the world. We're going to review a couple of simple ones to start today. Shapes include a triangle, a circle, a square, and a rectangle.

There are many other shapes out there with lots of different sides, angles, and we can use all of these shapes to help us draw seemingly difficult objects such as our leaf today. So instead of saying, "Oh my gosh, this leaf is crazy and I don't know how I'm going to draw it," I'm going to say, "Let's start with some simple shapes and see what we can find in here to begin our drawing." So, we're looking at this leaf together, side-by-side with my shapes. I am seeing a bit of a wonky one, but maybe a square for the middle, right? It's quite large, and from that square, I'm recognizing some things that resemble triangles.

They might be a little lopsided, but there's some sharp angles in here that remind me of our shape friend, the triangle.

We might not see a full circle here today, but we can see some semicircles, as well as just a nice plain old line here down the middle and along the sides of our leaves. Instead of seeing a crazy leaf, we're seeing a friendly square, some triangles, and maybe a couple of semicircles. So, with that in mind, I'm going to put my leaf up there, and I am going to try and use my whole piece of paper today. To start my square shape, I'm going to draw that in about the middle of my paper so I make sure that it fits. I'm drawing a little darker than I might normally just so you can see my process today. When you are drawing with your regular pencil start very lightly so you can kind of see your lines as this is your rough work.

Next, I'm going to look for some of these extra shapes. I'm actually going to use a rectangle for the top part here and then add some triangles just to rough in the shape. A cool semi-circle here, a triangle here, right? You'll notice my pencil is showing where my eye is going. I'm looking up at this object in front of me and back down at my paper. This is an important thing to do when drawing from objects in real life, or pictures, because you want to see what it is you're working with.

You'll notice I'm already going outside my square and that's okay, because my leaf is quite a cool shape today, and so my drawing is going to look like that. I might jump over here, say there's a triangle, another line. I might use a round part here to help me put a spot in for now. I'm going to come back to this later. Up here, I'm seeing, you know, a really nice triangle. I'm seeing a kind of rectangle, semicircle, right, triangle, another big rectangle. And there is a semicircle in here, right? It's a little bit close now, so I'm going to move my drawings over.

You'll notice my lines are, I don't care if I draw over them. I'm just having a bit of practice for the shape of my leaf as I realize the size of it is a little bit different. There, so I'm using my outside lines. I might want to come back and erase it later, but I can use always a darker line to show that this is my final part of my leaf. So, I'm just using my shapes right. I'm going circle instead of looking for crazy lines. I'm looking at familiar things—you know, a pointy bit here, a triangle here and this one's really nice it's just a simple line down and another one it's almost parallel where they're running in the same direction and I'm going to continue drawing my leaf.

So, I'm going, I'm trying to take my time. You'll notice I'm using some smaller lines when I'm trying to think about what that looks like and small lines can help me, you know, change my mind instead of one long thing, a short one might be helpful. Some people might like to just go for it, right, everyone's got a little bit of a different drawing style. I'm changing my lines once again, oh my gosh. Up in here, this one's really fun. It's just zigzaggy. So, I'm going to make my lines the same as I capture these shapes. Right. I'm going.

I'm taking my time. I'm going to change it here a little bit. Semi-circle. Oh, there's actually a small part here. And that is looking pretty neat if I do say so myself. I want to make sure that its kind of is the same size everything, right? For this red part, it is shorter than my whole green leaf here. So, I can try and make sure it is to scale. My drawing is larger than my leaf. However, if I were to measure the leaf, my fingers like a pinching motion, taking the red part here, putting it on the green part here, I can see that after this same measurement, there's a little bit extra. So, I know that my green part of...

Then I can start to add more details, right? I've got the outside of my leaf. I'm going to work on the inside now on some of these veins. So here I might start with a light line first. Make sure I've got it in the place that I like. And if I like it, I can go in a little bit darker to show how that will work. And I don't have to draw every single tiny line on my leaf. But I am going to pick out some of the more fun ones that I like today, and draw them in. I'll start, as always, a little bit lighter.

I might draw on a couple more. It's actually a bit of a tip of a triangle here, so I'm going to use that and help me guide my picture. Oh, there's actually a little hole here. Maybe I'll add that in, like a bit of a thing to show the unique characteristics of my leaf. Some more veins up here. I'm just going to pick a couple for today and this one's in the middle of these two so that's there, right? And some smaller ones coming off the big guys. As soon as I like it, I go in again with a darker line to help my picture show the good lines and the rough lines so I can see the difference going back in.

And my leaf is not a photograph. Remember it is just a sketch so as close as I can get it for today, I will be very happy. Oh, I'm going to add. Yes, that's nice and here. Okay, and that's the outline of my leaf as good as I can get it today. Now if I'd like to take this to the next level, I am welcome to add some shading, and that's when we take our pencil and kind of color in some areas darker than the natural white of the paper to show where light is hitting it, right? Because my leaf is not flat. It's kind of curved as a matter of fact, right?

And so, when the light hits it differently, you'll see that it goes over the shape, right? So, if my hand is covering part of it, it's darker where the shadow is. But if I lift it away there's light on more spots of it. So, to capture this on my paper I'm going to take my pencil and I might try and really quickly color in some of those parts to show that it's not a flat leaf, it's a little bit curved because it is a 3D form. It's not the whole thing, not super dark, a quick covering and it actually will cover some of my rough lines too, which will help my picture come together, right?

I'm not doing all the areas, just where I'm seeing that shading. You'll notice I'm holding my pencil on the side to color, and that makes it look a little bit softer, so there's not as many lines. It's a little bit nicer. That's just the way I like to do it. A little bit here, right. And when objects are sitting on tables or surfaces the light underneath it is blocked. You can see the shadow of my leaf on the table here and from where I am underneath it's quite dark because it's blocking the light. So, with my pencil I'm going to help you see that as well. And I'm going to create a shadow under my leaf—not everywhere, just parts that I can see.

And this will show us that the leaf is not floating in the air, which it could be if it's falling down during the fall season. But in this particular moment, it is sitting on my table, letting me draw it. Right, some of these lines I drew before actually worked out as part of the shadow. That's why I don't always erase it until the end because you never know what you can use. Ho, ho, ho, there. Shadows, shadows, right? And it's making some areas of my leaf pop out which is great. Down here a little bit more, a little bit more here and here.

I've got a little hole here so maybe I'll shade it to show that it goes through onto the table and under here. Right? I'm just doing some quick things now really at the bottom of the leaf. I'm going quickly as well. You can take your time and get all the parts of the leaf, right? The shadow is not going to be a square because the leaf has all these edges. Usually, your shadow follows the edges of the object that is blocking the light. So, I'm going to make sure my shadow is kind of also using these semi circles and

triangles I drew earlier. It's all about the shapes. All those shapes are what helped me draw a nice picture. A sketch.

There we go. So now that we are done our masterpiece, the most important part of this is one: your name, which you can put in the bottom right corner. All good artists will sign their work so we know who made it. And underneath that name should go a date. So, you can remember when you made this masterpiece. As well, when we finish our drawings, if we've got a little bit of time, it could be very helpful for our journals to label the different parts of our leaf to show our knowledge.

So, alongside your name and date, you could name your artwork. If you know what kind of leaf or natural object you've got, you might want to write it at the top. For my example, I'm just going to write "leaf," and then I might label a couple parts of it. So, I'll just pick some easy ones for my drawing here, but you can use as many words as you know. I will label the tip of my leaf with a line and some words. And these parts in the middle, these lovely lines we drew earlier, I'm going to draw a line to show that it is a vein. Right? And you can label all these different parts. You could even say over here, this is a little hole. Right? Perhaps an insect did it. You can write some questions you might have and help yourself remember all these things you were wondering about your object. And that is my leaf.