



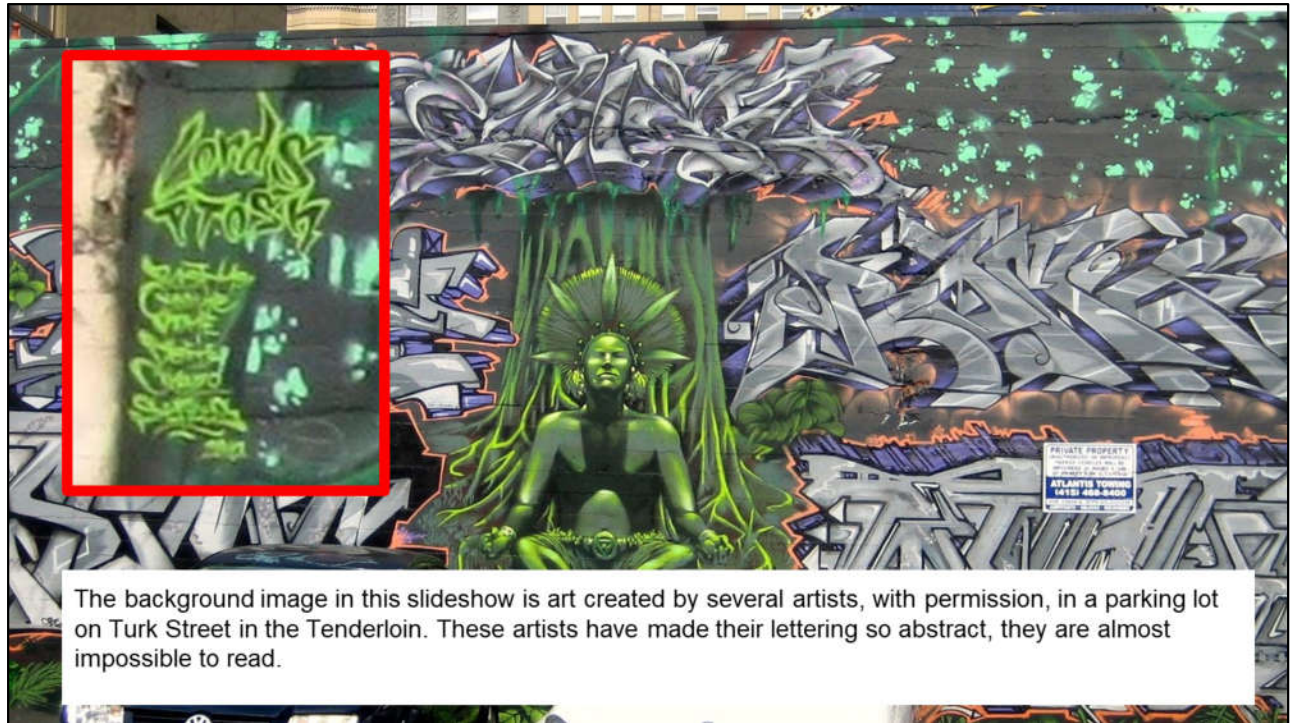
How to draw Graffiti style lettering

The Where Art Lives program

Remind students that some of the graffiti they may see on the street is illegal. If you don't have permission to paint or draw on someone else's property, it's called "vandalism" and is illegal. It can also be seen as rude and disrespectful. If you do have permission, or if you are drawing on your property or on paper, it can be awesome art.

In San Francisco, the property owner is legally required to clean up any graffiti vandalism that is painted on their property.

Where Art Lives can provide more curriculum resources to help you consider these issues.



The background image in this slideshow is art created by several artists, with permission, in a parking lot on Turk Street in the Tenderloin. These artists have made their lettering so abstract, they are almost impossible to read.

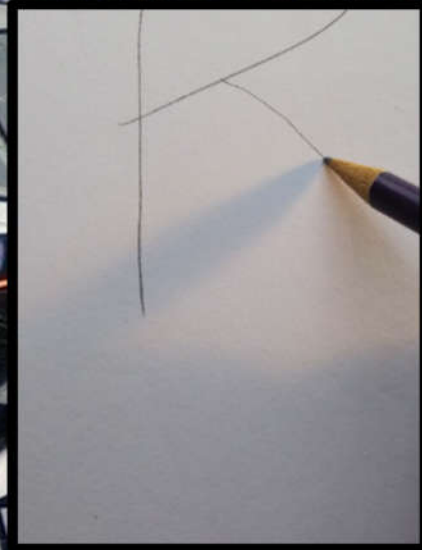
Can students find words to describe how each of these lettering styles is different? Which ones are more simple or more complex? Curvier or more angular? crazier or calmer? Thicker or skinnier? Etc. Letting the students develop a vocabulary to describe lettering styles will help them discuss and think about the choices they will make as artists.

There is a lot that students might want to discuss about this image, but the real lesson is about giving them ways to express themselves.

Supplies

You will need:

- Pencil
- Paper
- Eraser
- Markers, color pencils, or other coloring tools.



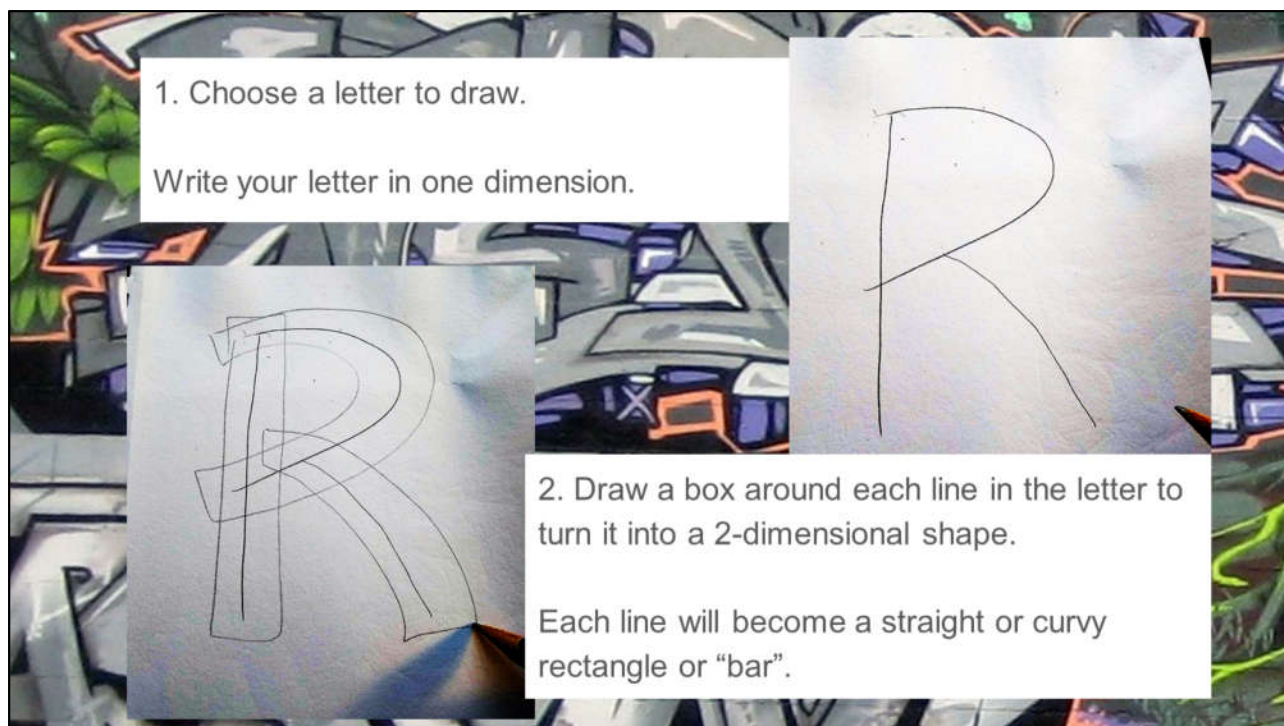
Markers can be great for outlining. Color pencils can be great for coloring in.

How lightly can you draw?



You'll want to draw as lightly as you can for the first steps, because you will be erasing your sketch once you create your letters.

If you have harder HB artist pencils, that can help the artist draw more lightly.



Step 1: One dimension = lines (length). Two dimensions = shapes (length and height). Three dimensions = 3d shapes (length, width, and height). The letter should be big enough that the drawing will fill the page, but with room for it to grow around all the sides.

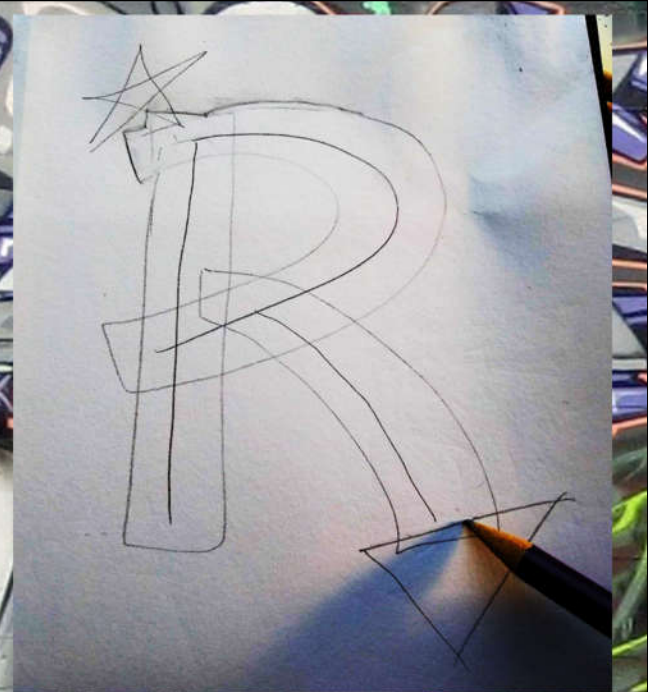
Step 2: The bars should be big enough that the artist can have fun coloring it in later.

Check that students are drawing lightly enough so that they'll be able to erase these lines.

3. Draw shapes on the edge of your letter.

You can use simple shapes, like circles and triangles, or more complex ones, like stars and bananas.

Use whatever shapes feel right for your letter.

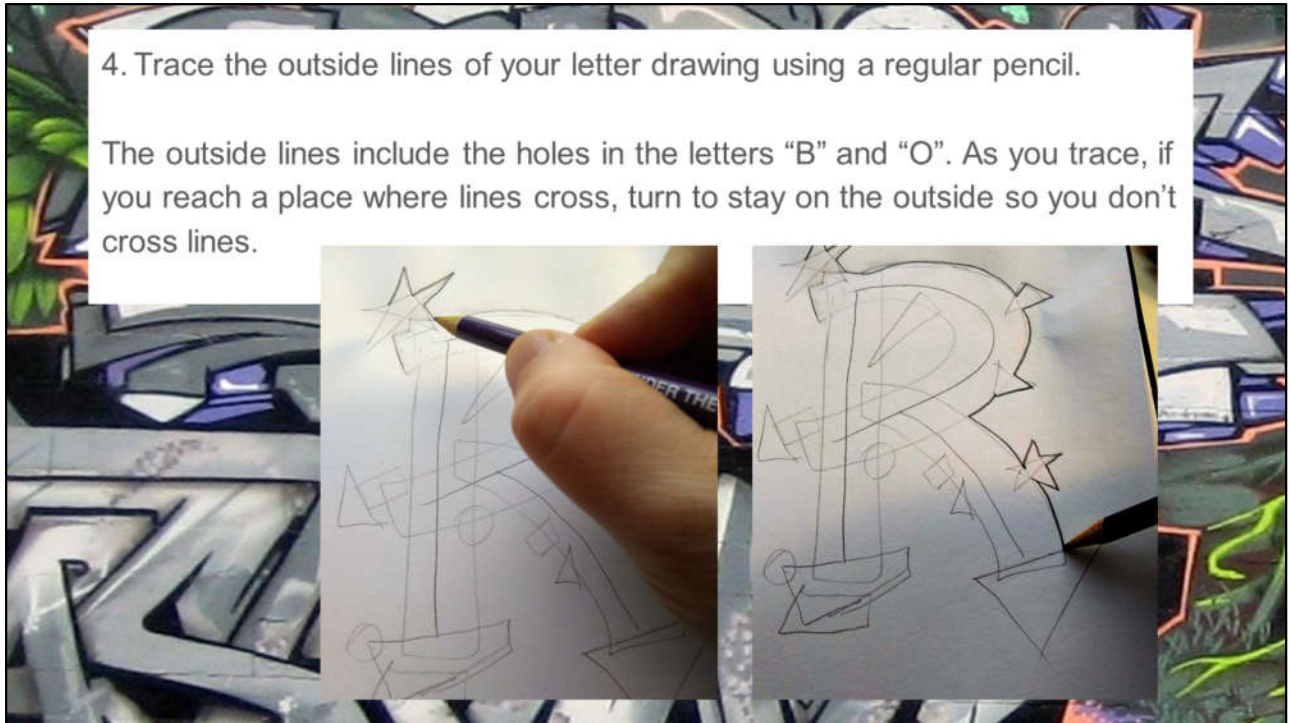


Note that all drawing involves putting shapes together to create a new form.

You can draw anything if you can identify the component shapes.

4. Trace the outside lines of your letter drawing using a regular pencil.

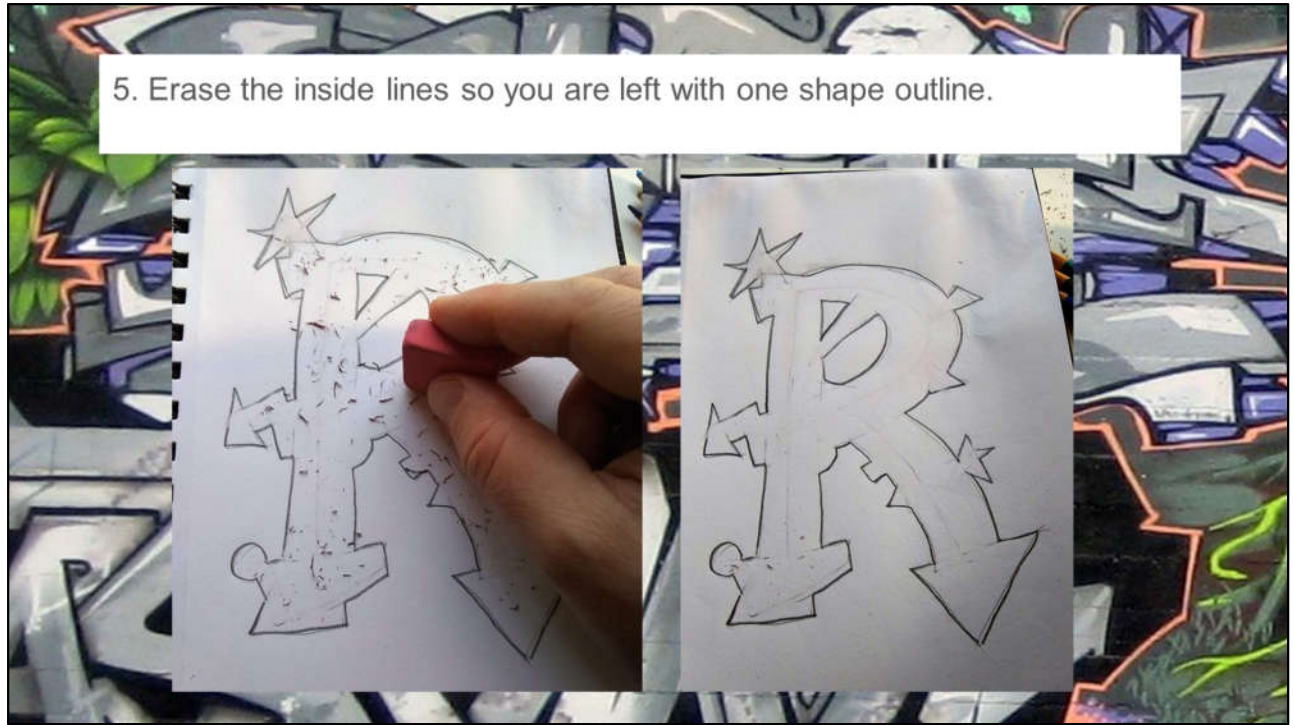
The outside lines include the holes in the letters "B" and "O". As you trace, if you reach a place where lines cross, turn to stay on the outside so you don't cross lines.



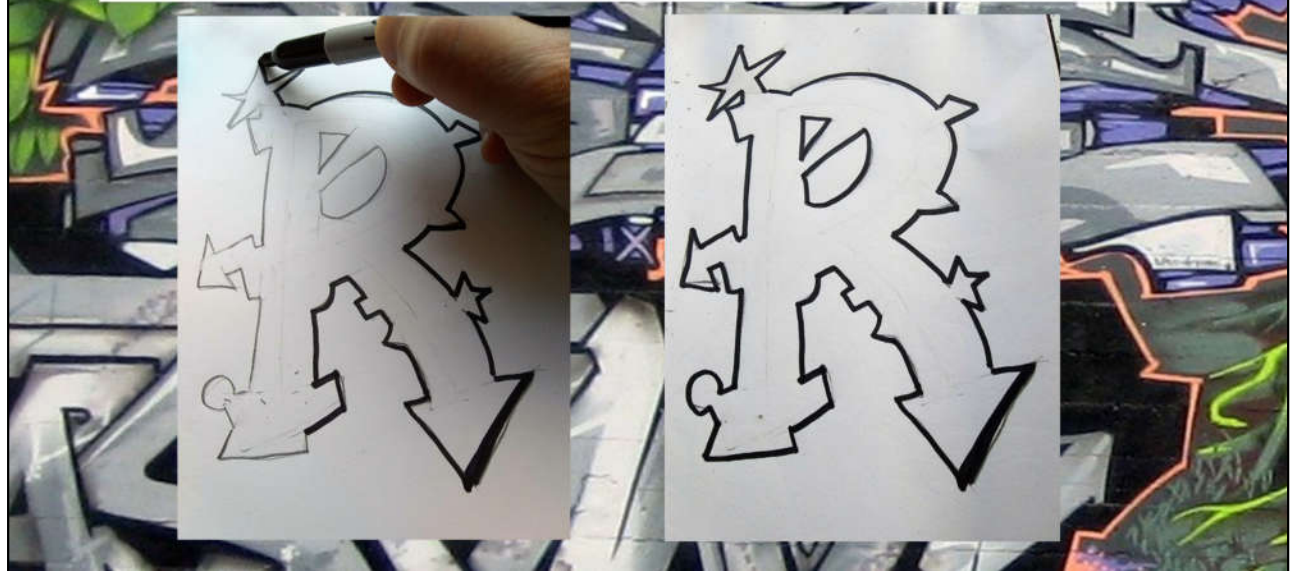
This part can be tricky. Students may need help figuring out which lines are on the outside.

When you practice enough, you can skip straight to markers for the outline.

5. Erase the inside lines so you are left with one shape outline.



6. Use marker or a dark color pencil to trace the graffiti-style letter outline you have created.



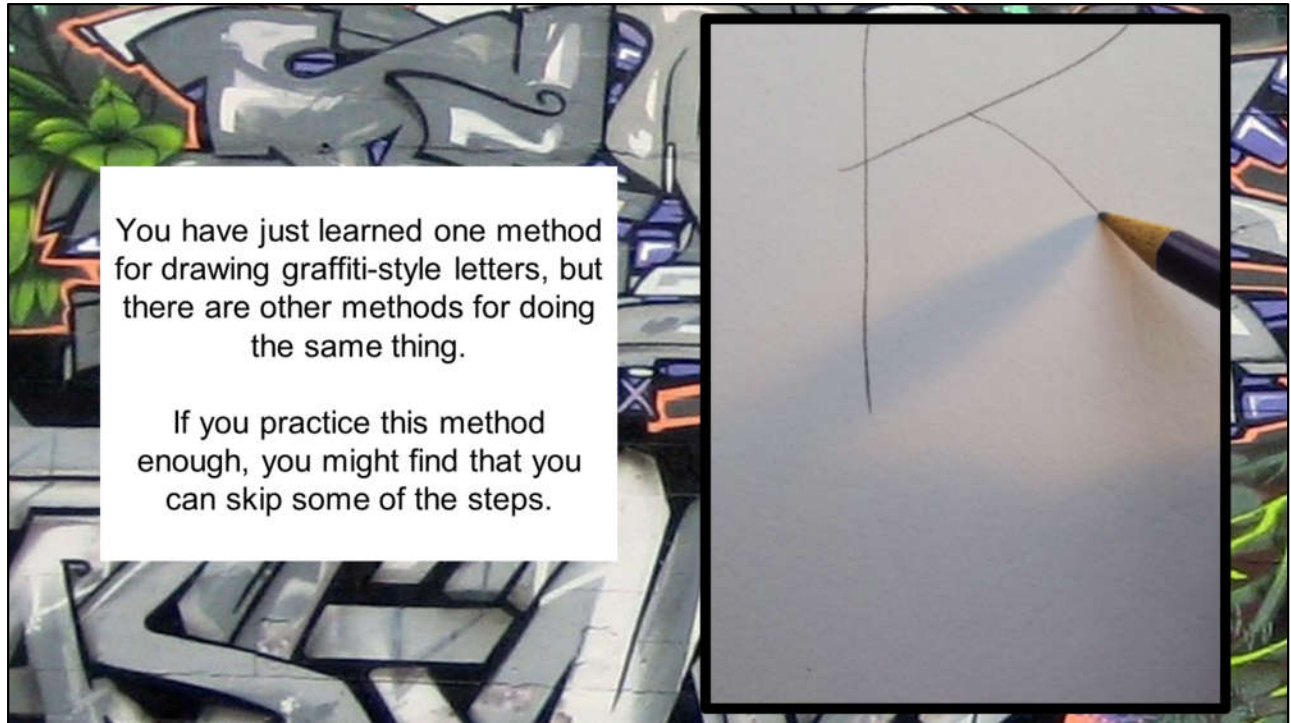


You can use gradients, or patterns, or whatever. Students can also color in the background.

The artist gets to do whatever feels right for the letter!

Markers can have more saturation. Color pencils can allow for more control of the color. Using both can be fun.

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You have just learned one method for drawing graffiti-style letters, but there are other methods for doing the same thing.

If you practice this method enough, you might find that you can skip some of the steps.

Now that you can draw letters, your class can collaborate to create a whole alphabet together. You can use this same technique to draw numbers or make abstract drawings.

Now, you can have an art exhibit in your class to compare your style with other students.

- What different strategies did everyone take?
- Do other artists in your class give you ideas for your next drawing?

The next lesson will be in drawing whole words.