

Tips for Realism in Scientific Drawings

- Begin by roughly positioning the main shape on your page lightly using lines and basic shapes. This way you will not end up bigger or smaller than the space you intend to fill.
- Observe very closely the outline of the specimen following along with your eyes as you draw it, being careful to move your pencil only as quickly as your eyes move along the outline.
- Stop and check the distances on the outline against one basic distance. For example the size of various parts of a plant can be measured against a single leaf.
- Focus on important details like the number of leaves in a bunch, the texture of the edge, and internal details like direction of veins.
- When stippling or shading look first for the darkest darks and fill them in, then the lightest lights and medium shades.
- Remember the accuracy of the line drawing is the most important consideration with a scientific drawing, shading and color are secondary.