

How to draw eyes from life 1st and your imagination 2nd

From Life First

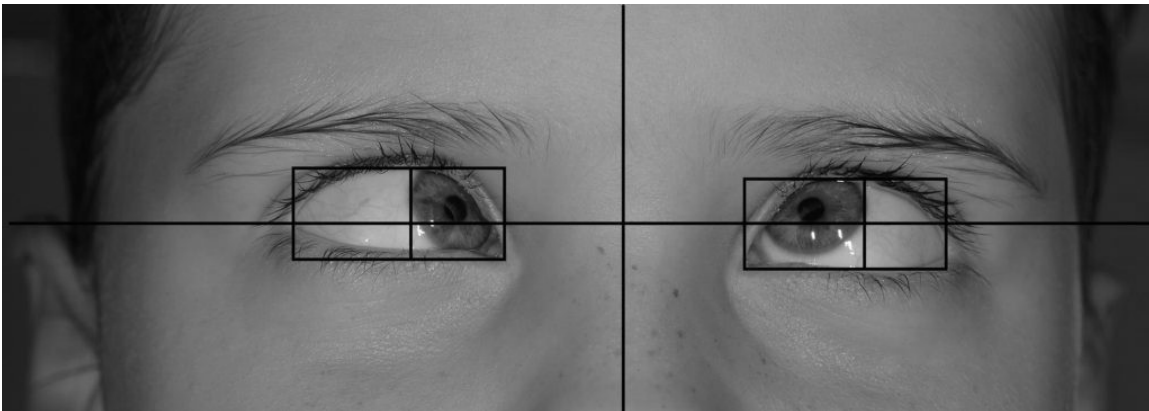
Look at your eyes. Set a timer for 15 minutes. Bring a see-through ruler and stand in front of a mirror. At this point we aren't drawing, we're just looking. Begin to ask yourself some questions:

- In fractions, how tall is my eye in comparison to the length? Is it $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{2}{3}$, etc?
- How much space does my iris take up? My pupil?
- How thick is my eye-lid, above and below, in comparison to the visible eye?
- Comparing the length of the eye to the space between the eyes how large is that space?
- Is the curve of the eyelid the same on the top as the bottom or is one steeper?
- Does the eyelid angle more sharply in some areas and curve lightly in others?
- Is the iris one solid color or are there flecks of different colors?
- Are some parts of the eye more shadowed than others?
- How does your pupil change when you dim the light?
- How do your eyelids change when you change your expression? Notice any lines in your skin around the eyes?
- What about your eyebrows? Distance from the eyes, width, angle of the hairs.

Write down your answers to all these questions and any other observations you make.

Record your observations as guide lines. Now with a drawing pencil and sketch book go back to your mirror.

- I find it helpful to begin with a cross that runs down the middle of the face and through the eyes. If the face is tilted then the cross should also be tilted at the same angle.
- I like to begin with the most concrete measurements. Width, height, thicknesses, distances between... These can be marked as little lines or as boxes that contain the eyes.
- At first it is simpler to use boxes because then you can see the angles and curves of the eyelids by imagining the negative space left by the box. Simple lines are easier to erase though.



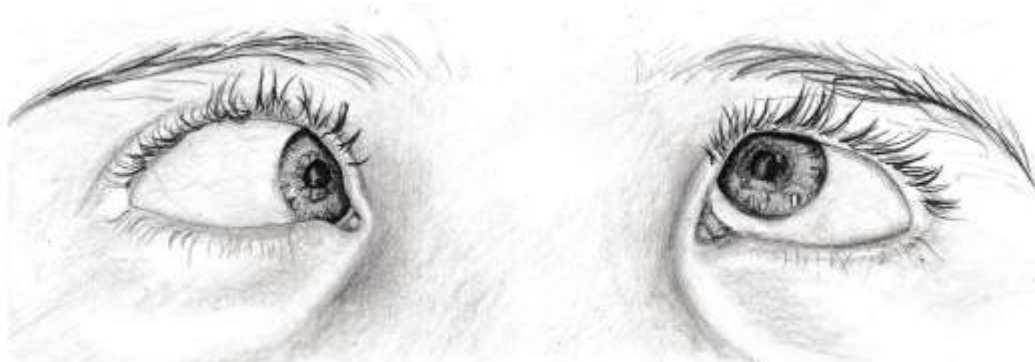
Draw in the basic forms of the eye. This is the rough drawing.

- Once the marks have been made the eyelids can be drawn in by carefully observing and recreating the curves while using the guidelines to keep the height and width accurate.
- The iris and pupils can be drawn in by locating where in the eye they sit, how much space they cover, how full their circles are.
- The eyebrow is drawn using the guidelines for height and width by observing how steep or shallow the angles and curves are as your eye follows along the eye brow. Notice where the thickness changes.



Add detail and shading for realism. Time to go from a line drawing to excellence.

- Look back and forth between your drawing and your eye, is there anything in your line drawing that doesn't match the real thing. If you're unsure recheck any curves or measurements and correct them if they're not accurate.
- Add shading. Think: darkest dark, middle dark, mid shade, light shade and lightest lights. Only shade what you see. Use a blending tool to keep the shading smooth.
- Fill in details like the angle of the hairs in the eyebrow, the tear duct, the different specks of color/shade in the iris, veins in the eye.



From Your Imaginations Second

Now you have a pretty good idea how to draw an eye don't you? There's just the task of remembering it for next time. This is where formulas come in, it's time to write your own. Your eye is not much different from the average eye. Any measurements that you used as guidelines for drawing your eye can be roughly re-used as a formula.

Write it as steps. The first couple should cover measurements, then details, and finally shading.

Your Eye Formula:

Here's a sample:

I measure from the inside of the eye, the lids are extra.

- 1.Width $\frac{1}{2}$ the length of eye.
- 2.Iris about $\frac{1}{2}$ width of eye.
- 3.1 eye in-between eyes.
- 4.Top of eyebrow about 1 eye above eye.
- 5.Angles for top of eye level out $\frac{1}{3}$ way in.
- 6.Bottom of eye flatter than top.
- 7.Little sliver for bottom lid, bigger sliver for top lid.
- 8.Slight shadows from lids.
- 9.Lines and crinkly circle in iris.
- 10.Light spots and veins.



And here's an eye from my imagination done in pen. My formula is for a wide open eye. A sleepy or squinting eye would have less eye and more lid visible, so I'd use mostly the same measurement and just add more eyelid overlapping the eye. Other little changes can be made as well, drawing different types of eyes will teach you what changes are common and you can put them in your tool box.

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