

## Black line Drawing: Where do I start?

Black line drawing is a powerful educational technique that encourages young children to slow down and engage with their surroundings through observation.

Here's a step-by-step guide to get you and the children you partner with started:

### Materials Needed

- Paper
- Black pens
- Magnifying glass
- Interesting objects (w/ lots of texture, lines and shape)

### Agreements About Black Line Drawing:

Take time to invite the children to brainstorm agreements that foster respect and care for materials:

#### Sample Agreements:

##### 1. Show Care for Materials:

- Use materials with care.
- Keep materials in your hands or on the table.
- If materials fall, pick them up right away.
- Draw what you see
- Put the caps back on the pens

##### 2. Show Care for Yourself & Each Other:

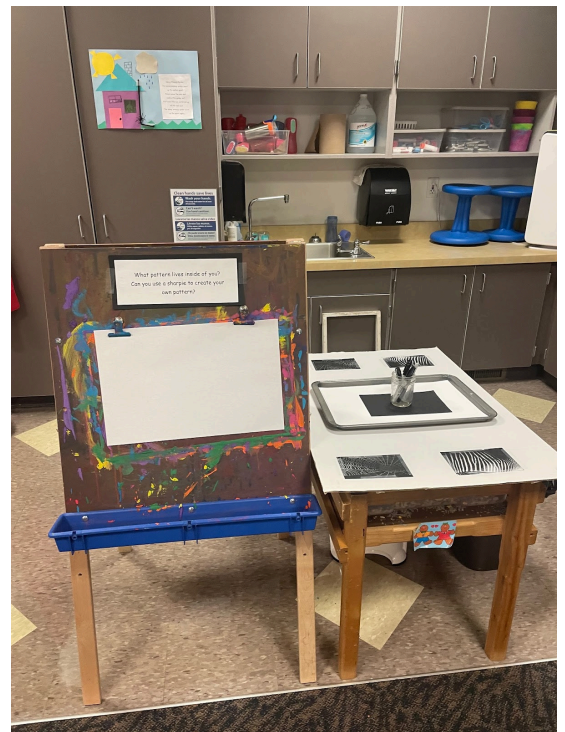
- Remember to be kind
- Be a helper and ask for help

##### 3. Be Creative:

- Take safe risks and try new marks, lines, and shapes

##### 4. Persist with Your Ideas:

- Have stamina; keep going back to observe what you are studying through drawing. Ask yourself: What else might I notice?
- Work on drafts. What are you able to capture the third or fourth time you draw the same object?



## What to think about when ordering pens:

There are many different kinds of pens.

**Ballpoint pens** have a rounded tip that allows oil-based ink to go on smoothly and dry quickly. The ink dries very fast, and you do not have to worry about smudging or bleeding while drawing. FYI: Cheap ballpoint pen ink rarely appears on the paper as pure black, and the ball can get gummed up with dust over time and stop working.

**Rollerball pens** are similar to ballpoints, but the ink is water-based. This kind of pen lays sharp, dark lines. Water-based inks flow out like paint onto the paper. The rollerball controls the speed, how much comes out, and where the ink touches the paper. (This is a great pen type to start with.)

**Gel pens** contain a thick "gel" like ink. This ink creates very smooth, dark lines. It takes some time for the gel to absorb into the paper, which causes the ink to take longer to dry.

**Felt tip pens** use a fabric tip through which the ink (usually permanent) flows. Felt tip pens use an alcohol-based ink that sets into the paper and dries quickly. However, they do tend to bleed through thin paper. Felt-tipped pens have the widest variety when it comes to the size of the tips.

## Steps to Create a Black line Drawing

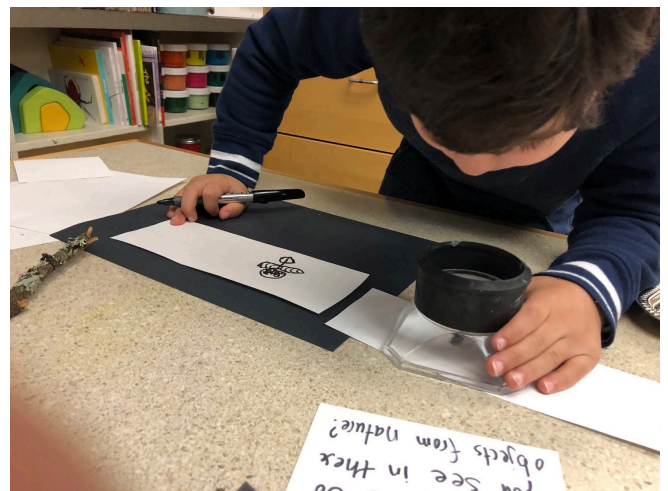
### Setting up the Space:

Offer a collection of objects for children to draw. Set these up so they are easily observed in a science center or on each student's table. Lay down colored construction paper as a mat under a white piece of drawing paper, along with a black pen at each spot.

TIP: One idea is to start with real flowers or natural objects in vases or pictures of natural objects.

### Observation:

Model for students how to slow one's attention down to observe the object. Use your finger to show how your eyes are slowly touching each part of the object while you look at it. As you move your eyes and fingers back and forth across the object, talk about the shapes, patterns, and details you



notice. Encouraging the children to use all their senses to see the object.

TIP: Offer children magnifying glasses to encourage them to slow down and zoom in more closely.

### **Drawing:**

While continuing to closely observe the object, pick up your pen and start drawing the outline of the big shapes on your paper. Once you have the big shapes, fill in the patterns and smaller details.

Then look back at the object again before you keep drawing. Remember to draw what you see or feel in the object, not what you think that object looks like.



### **Stepping Back and Double Checking**

When children feel like they are done, encourage them to stand back and look at their drawing from a distance. The goal is to record what they notice and expand their perception, not for their drawing to match the object perfectly. Teach them to ask themselves: "What else do I notice?"

(We choose to use notice instead of "see" to be honoring of those who can't see but could feel and draw as well) Children can continue adding to this drawing or put aside the one they had been working on and start a new drawing with the latest information they have added to their understanding of this object.

### **Sharing**

Use your drawing to tell someone else about what you recorded about this object through drawing.

What did you notice?

What surprised you?

What do you notice now that you missed earlier?

### **Adding Color (Optional):**

Children can leave their drawing as a blackline art piece or add color using colored pencils or watercolors.







## Possible Inquiry into Thick or Thin Tips

The thinner the pen tip, the more intricate details one can capture. Depending on what and how you are asking them to draw determines the pen tip size you set out. The thicker the tip, the faster one can fill in space. You may wish to set out a variety of sizes to playfully explore.

Offer children pens with a variety of tip sizes to play with.

### **As they draw, explore the following questions:**

*How does the pen tip size change the kinds of marks you can make as your pen dances across the page?*

*What can thin-tipped pens do that thick-tipped pens can't?*

*What are the advantages of using a thicker-tipped pen?*

*How are they similar? How are they different?*

## Picture Book Suggestions:

The Boy and the Mountain By Mario Bellini

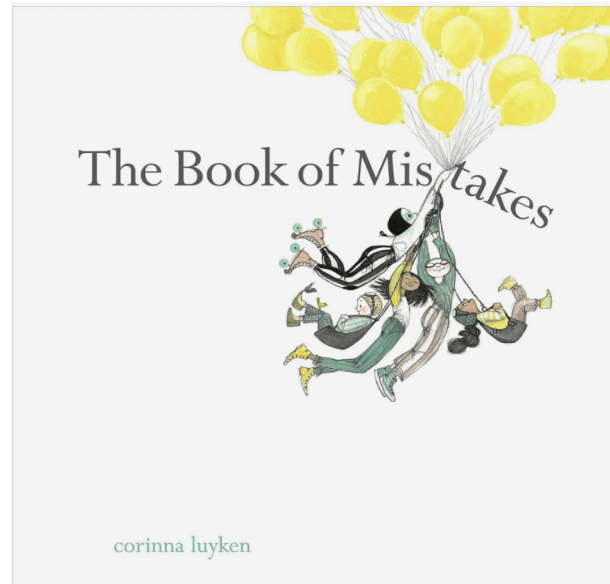
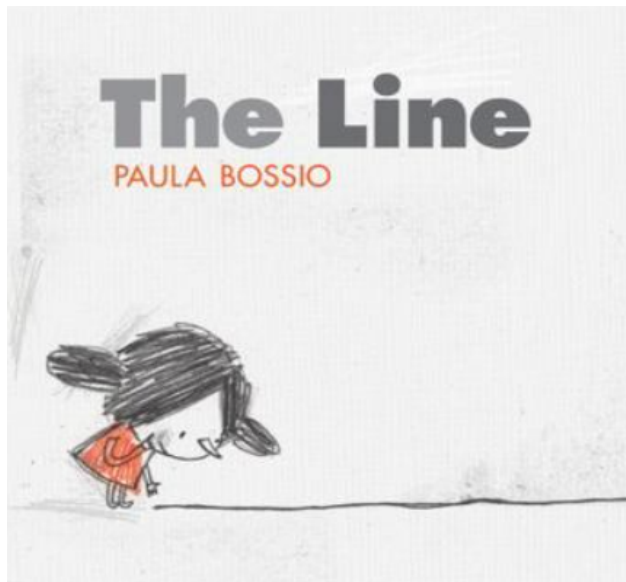
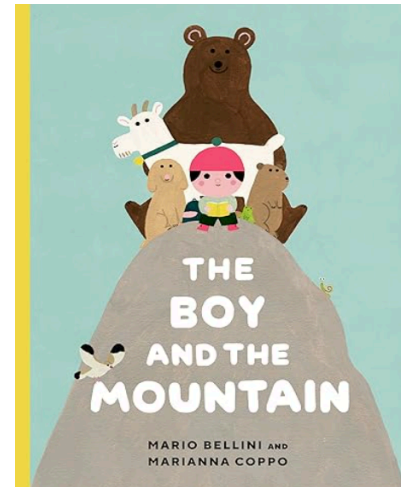
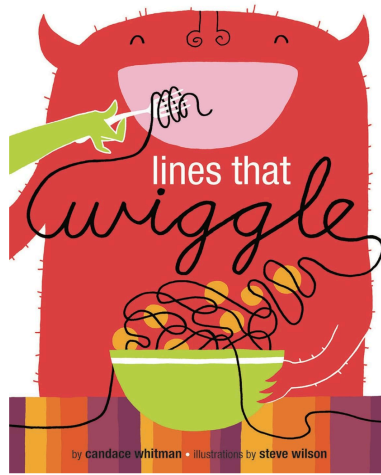
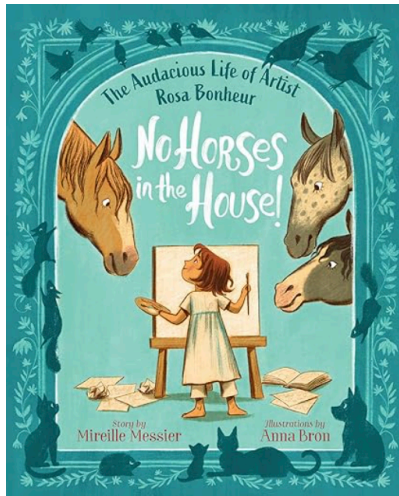
The Line By Paula Bossio

My Pen By Christopher Myers

The Book of Mistakes by Corinna Luyken

Lines That Wiggle by Steve Wilson

No Horses in the House! The Audacious Life of Artist Rosa Bonheur, by Mireille Messier



***What is possible for your pen this year?***