



**THE GUIDED SKETCHBOOK
THAT TEACHES YOU HOW TO**

DRAW!

ROBIN LANDA

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THAT TEACHES YOU HOW TO**

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The guided sketchbook that teaches you how to DRAW!

Robin Landa

Peachpit Press

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Dedication

For my darling daughter, Hayley, and you, dear Reader. I hope you fall in love with drawing.

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But most of all, I am indebted to my beloved daughter and thoughtful reader, Hayley, who carefully edited my manuscript and created wonderful drawings based on it.



“Drawing may be the most intimate and honest of all art mediums. Its lightweight materials enable artists to work almost anywhere and often give their efforts a truth-telling transparency that exposes the very nerve endings of their talents. Sometimes drawings function almost as a kind of signature, distilling an artist’s sensibility to its essence. Sometimes they express gifts visible in no other medium.”

—Roberta Smith, Co-Chief Art Critic, The New York Times

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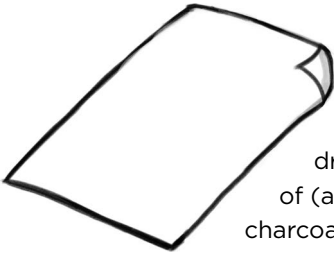
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Essential Materials and Tools

It's time to gear up. You'll need most of the following tools to do the exercises in this book.

Analog Tools



Paper

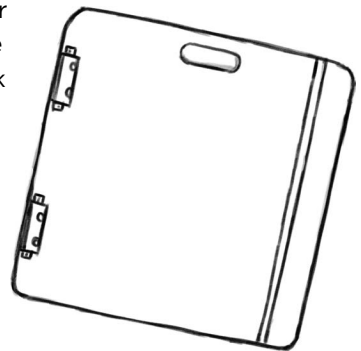
It's OK to draw in this book. I want you to! But to practice you should have additional drawing paper. Most drawing paper will do for beginners, such as a drawing pad of (acid-free) paper that takes pen and ink, pencil, crayon, charcoal, light ink washes, and markers. A handy size for most subjects (and laps) is 11x14- or 14x17-inches.

Or go with graph paper for use with pencil or marker, which provides a modular grid for visual measurement.

A couple of the prompts in this book call for heavier paper or art board, such as bristol board, which is a lightweight board with two working surfaces, front and back. Other prompts call for tan or gray toned paper, which you can purchase ready-made or make yourself. Using a big brush, you can hand-tone paper with cold black coffee, cold tea, or thinned ink or water-based paint.

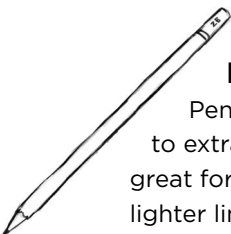
Drawing board

You can place your sketchbook on a table or on your lap when drawing, but you may prefer to use a drawing board. Inexpensive Masonite sketchpad boards afford a sturdy sketching surface. But such a board is optional.



Pencils

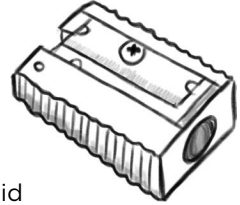
Pencils are available in varieties that range from very soft (8B) to extra hard (6H). Soft graphite pencils make darker marks and are great for quick sketching. Harder pencils retain a sharp point and make lighter lines; they're good for detail work and straight lines.



Get these: 6B; 2B; B; H or F; and 2H. (When I don't specify which pencil to use, try several to learn what each can do and which you prefer.)

Pencil sharpener

A hand-held, all-metal sharpener for standard size pencils (8 mm) works well for sharpening artist's pencils.



Cylindrical charcoal sticks

Vine and willow charcoal sticks are good drawing tools for rapid visualization and creating broad areas of tone, and they are easily removed with a kneaded eraser. Some artists prefer compressed charcoal for its strength. Charcoal is inexpensive so you can



experiment with different kinds. But you'll need to spray them with a nontoxic fixative for permanence (see next page).

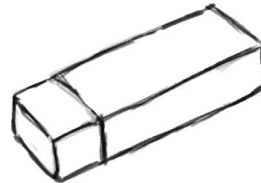
Black and White Conté crayon

Conté crayons are made from a blend of natural pigments, kaolin clay, and graphite, and are used for rapid sketching as well as shading on a variety of paper surfaces. These crayons are popular drawing implements. You can sharpen the crayon's tip to a chisel point (using a sandblock) for detailed work, or use its blunt tip or its broad side.

Erasers

White plastic eraser

These erasers remove graphite marks cleanly and completely from paper, and they are my recommendation for working with pencil.



Kneaded rubber eraser

These knead into any shape, erase marks fairly cleanly, and pick up residue. They self-clean when kneaded and are excellent for use with pencil, vine, and willow charcoal.

Pink Pearl eraser

Soft and pliable, this eraser removes graphite marks and has beveled ends for better control.

Gum eraser

This is an all-purpose eraser, but it leaves a good deal of residue.



Markers

Many visual artists favor fine-point black markers (nontoxic) as sketching or drawing tools. Experiment with different brands; some have less drag than others. Markers are *not* easily erased. Consider their marks permanent.

Wide-nib black markers (nontoxic) are good for experimenting and drawing boldly as well as for fill-in work.

Nontoxic markers are available in packs of assorted colors in both fine-point tip and wide-nib. An inexpensive small assortment is fine for working in this book. Or you may prefer student-grade colored pencils.

Nontoxic workable fixative

This variety of fixative is workable (you can continue drawing on top of it after applying it) and nontoxic; SpectraFix Natural Casein Spray

Fixative brand is one example. Fixative protects your work. Even if you use a nontoxic fixative, be sure to use it in a well-ventilated room or outside.



Black India ink

Black India ink is highly pigmented, opaque permanent ink that can be diluted with water and used with most brushes.

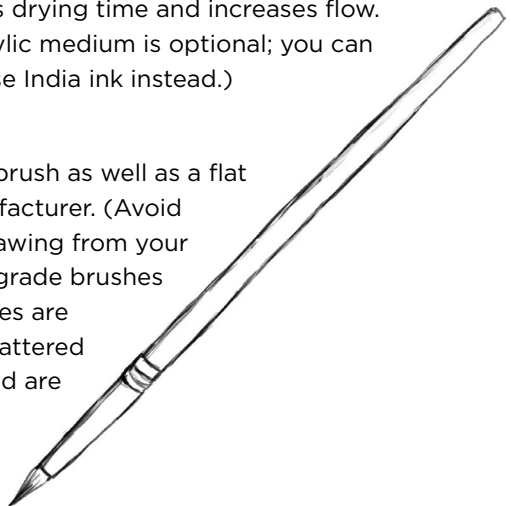
It's good for wash drawings and drawing experiments. For wet drawing media, I recommend it over black acrylic paint.

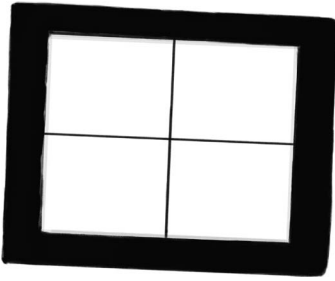
Black and white acrylic paint and acrylic medium

Acrylic paints are water-based, fast drying, and diluted with water or acrylic medium, which lengthens drying time and increases flow. (For the exercises in this book, acrylic medium is optional; you can dilute acrylic paint with water or use India ink instead.)

Brushes

It's good to have a round, pointed brush as well as a flat brush. Sizes of brush vary by manufacturer. (Avoid small brushes, which encourage drawing from your wrist rather than your arm.) Artist-grade brushes can be costly; student-grade brushes are fine for learning. (If you have old, battered brushes, those can be used, too, and are excellent for experimentation.)





Drawing aids (optional)

Viewfinder

A viewfinder is an artist's tool—a clear, lightweight plastic grid window for visualizing compositions in thirds or other modular unit grids. It allows you to isolate a section of a scene, or separate a scene or space into modules, which helps you determine where elements fall on the page. You can make a viewfinder with clear, hard plastic and a dry erase marker or purchase a readymade one. One brand is the QuicKomp Artist's Drawing Tool, whose side also can be used as a straightedge.

Rule of Thirds grid

The Rule of Thirds is an asymmetrical compositional plastic grid that you can use as a viewfinder to aid the positioning of a focal point in the composition. You'll learn more about it in Chapter 1. You can purchase this or make one by ruling the grid onto clear, hard plastic.

Four-quadrant grid

A four-quadrant modular grid viewfinder, made of plastic or heavy acetate, allows you divide what you see into manageable, smaller parts. You can purchase this or make one by ruling the grid onto clear, hard plastic.

Wooden artist's model

This is a wooden, fully jointed and proportioned figure (available in various sizes), that you can pose to help you visualize form.

Digital Media

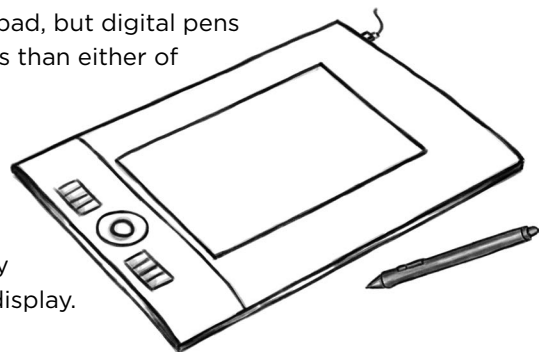
Digital pens and tablets

Some digital pens and tablets emulate the feeling of drawing on paper. Purchase the largest tablet you can afford. Some people are comfortable drawing with a mouse or trackpad, but digital pens and tablets offer better drawing experiences than either of these options.

Always check software needs and specifications before purchase of this equipment.

Pen-on-screen

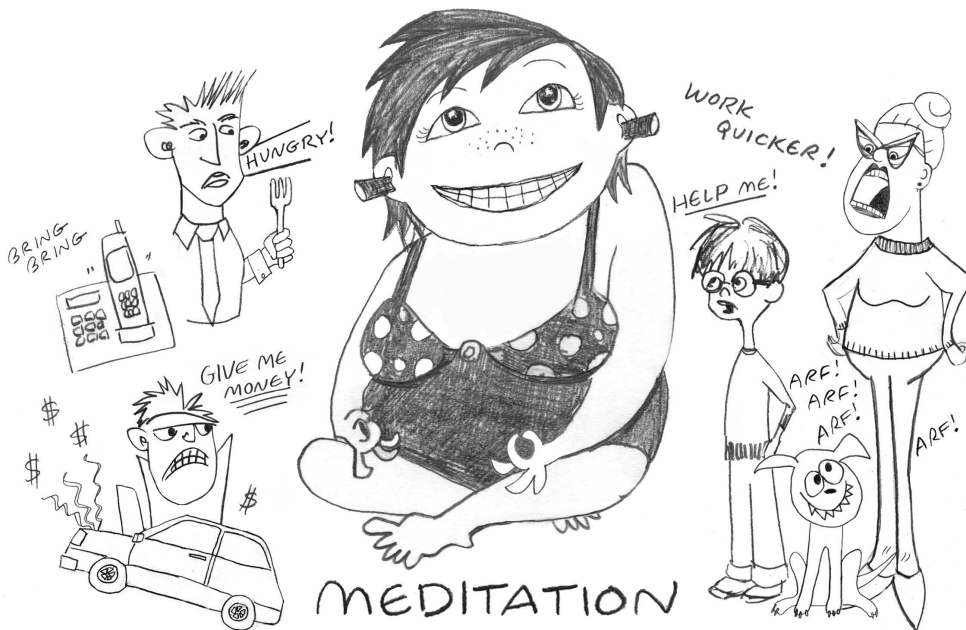
Some digital pens allow you to draw directly on the surface of a high-performance LCD display.



Elizabeth Blazer

{ANIMATOR, DESIGNER, [HTTP://WWW.LIZBLAZER.COM/](http://www.lizblazer.com/)}

“Draw yourself doing the impossible.”



Introduction

Why People Draw

Drawing makes your brain happy.

When you draw, you are using multiple brain regions. Your frontal lobe kicks into action providing reasoning, planning, movement, emotions, and problem solving. Your parietal lobe provides movement and orientation, recognition, perception of stimuli; your occipital lobe delivers visual processing; your temporal lobe, perception and memory; and your cerebellum, additional movement.

When you draw, you are concentrating, allowing the rewarding neurotransmitter dopamine to flow. Some people report feelings of calm. Others say drawing allows them to keenly focus.

Drawing entertains many of us.

Drawing is a way to make sense of one's self in the world, a way to relate to others and to explore one's own identity. It allows you to explore what you see in the visible world and interpret what you see.

Drawing is a way to visually communicate ideas and feelings.

Drawing visually records people, places, things, memories, and events.

Drawing is a form of creative self-expression.

Drawing is visual thinking—a cognitive way to explore and understand ideas and experiences.

Drawing from observation entails interpreting and visualizing what you see. Or you might visualize what you think in a conceptual drawing, or you can visualize what you imagine.

As a child, tracing your hand was a magical way to replicate your hand. Instinctively you knew the drawing was a record of your existence. Now, drawing can be anything you desire: naturalistic, realistic, stylized, abstract, nonobjective, whimsical, satirical, flat, illusionistic, textural, colorful, expressionistic—anything.



This book introduces drawing topics in a logical way, allowing you to build technical and compositional skills and comprehension. Some techniques have comprehensive step-by-step instructions. Some instructions are short prompts that cue a creative action. Highly esteemed artists, designers, illustrators, architects, filmmakers, animators, cartoonists, educators, and other creative professionals contributed many of the prompts in this book.

There are many ways to draw. Portraying the world as we see it is only one way to visualize. This guided sketchbook will teach you how to draw what you see as well as encourage you to draw conceptually and experiment. So make your brain happy—draw!

B.E.S.T. Practice

When drawing, it's B.E.S.T. to:

Be patient. Breathe. Relax and enjoy yourself. Learning to draw takes time.

Erase. Feel free to make mistakes. All visual artists do.

Stay open to experimentation, which expands your vision and drawing vocabulary.

Toss out preconceived notions. Enter this experience freshly.

More Best Practice Tips to Remember

- Try to use “gist” thinking, or *big-picture thinking*, to think about the whole rather than parts. For example, when drawing a still life, don't render one object and then move on to the next. Rather, work the entire composition at the same time, cultivating spatial relationships.
- Play!
- Observe mindfully.
- Evaluate spatial relationships. Pay as much attention to the interstices—the spaces between forms—as to the forms themselves. Imagine that between each form in your drawing there is a stretchy band that creates visual tension.



Draw! Checklist

Have You S.E.E.N. It?

S = Spatial relationships. Consider the spaces between forms as much as the forms themselves.

E = Edges. Consider all drawn elements in response to the format's edges.

E = Emphasis. Consider emphasizing some elements and deemphasizing others. Create a focal point.

N = Negative shapes/space. Consider all negative space.

.....

- Does the page's orientation best suit the direction or emphasis of your subject matter?
- What kind of graphic or pictorial space do you want to create? (Flat or illusory? Near or far?)
- Have you created a focal point?
- Have you arranged the composition to guide the viewer through the pictorial space?
- Have you created a point of entry into the composition?
- Have you evaluated spatial relationships?
- Did you consider the negative shapes?
- Is the composition balanced? (If not, what expressive purpose does imbalance serve?)
- Have you drawn with as much specificity to each shape or form as possible?
- Have you used tools to their best advantage?



Diamond Rivera

{ARTIST}

“When starting off with an idea and a blank page you don’t need to tell every inch of the story. You need to include enough detail to allow the viewer to get an idea of what is going on.

“You can let them fill in some blanks, too, which will keep the audience engaged for a longer period of time. And it’s OK if not everyone walks away with the same story.

“Crop your drawing to give it an interesting perspective.”





Just Draw with Lines!

Facing an empty page can be daunting, even for experienced visual artists. Artist James Romberger explains how one master cartoonist felt about the blank page.

“Mort Meskin [Golden Age comic book artist] was known to face an empty page with considerable trepidation, staring at it for hours in a total block. Eventually his studio mates figured out to go over and scribble a few random lines on his page, which he was then able to begin turning into a composition.”

“According to Alex Toth [American comic book artist and animation designer], later in his career Meskin would shade the entire page with the flat side of a pencil lead, then begin to pick out white areas here and there with an eraser—in this way he was able to avoid the creative blocks that stymied his youth.”

This chapter is full of ideas that will help you to get past any trepidation and just start drawing.



Start by Scribbling

Part 1. Find a piece of scrap paper. Or if you have a drawing tablet, use that. Start scribbling with abandon (try really hard if you're adverse to being messy or unrestricted). Be as unconstrained by preconceptions about making marks as you can. Scribble over scribbles, making some areas darker and denser than others. Fill the scrap of paper or digital page without concern about representing any person, place, or object.

Critique: Did you use your wrist? Was your arm resting on a table?

Do the scribbles drawn over scribbles look a bit like atmosphere? Did you create the illusion of spatial depth? Did you touch the edges of the page? Does the page look boundless?


.....

Part 2. Find as big a piece of paper or substrate as you can, for example, a sheet of newsprint paper, an actual spread from a printed newspaper, a couple of paper towels, or the side of a big cardboard carton.

Put the substrate on the floor or on a table surface. Scribble. But this time, use your whole arm to make the marks. It's best if you stand while you do this. Use arm movements, not just wrist movements, to make marks.

As in Step 1, fill the entire surface without concern about representation or making anything other than marks.

Critique: Did using your arm feel differently than using your wrist to draw? Did the scribbles look different?



Line Palette: Assemble an assortment of pencils in varying degrees of hardness, for example, a 6B, 2B, and an H; a stick of charcoal; any kind of crayon; a fine-point marker; a brush plus ink or paint; an unconventional implement, such as a cotton swab, rosebud, or twig; ink or watered-down paint; and paper or this journal.

A line can have a specific *quality*—it can be thick or thin, solid or broken, continuous or noncontinuous (implied), changeless or varying, smooth or uneven, and so on. Using each drawing implement, sweep your hand across the page twice. The first swipe should be light and fast. The second swipe should be more controlled, pressing with a moderate amount of pressure.

Compare the marks. Can you match each mark with an emotion? An actual texture?

Draw a light, long line. Then draw a scratchy long line.

Determine several types of lines that you can draw with the *same* pencil; for example, a light, delicate line; an uneven line; a rough line; a smudged or messy line; a dark, thicker line; a staggered line; and so on.



Use a tool to its full potential but never force a tool to make a mark it wasn't meant to produce. Use a drawing implement for its innate quality. If you want a dark line, for instance, use a soft pencil or another appropriate tool. (Some artists and designers deliberately force a tool to make unnatural marks, but they have some expressive intention in mind.)





Create a palette of lines (an assorted range) using more than one drawing tool. For example, use an H pencil and a Conté crayon.

Look out of a window. Use your palette of lines to draw what you see, being mindful of how each line quality contributes to the overall emotional tone or communication.



**DRAW!**

Continuous Contour: Imagine a leaf or daisy. Or find a leaf or flower as a visual reference. Using an unbroken line, draw the outer shape of the leaf or flower so that it fills the entire page. Don't worry about drawing details but do carefully examine the outer shape of the object, drawing with as much specificity to the shape as possible. Go as near to the edges of the page as possible. Once you start drawing, keep your pencil moving on the page. Don't lift your hand to stop and start. (Search online to see American artist Ellsworth Kelly's plant drawings.)





Continuous Line: The best tool for this project is a soft pencil, fine line marker, digital pen, or your finger on a touchscreen. Your subject matter will be a room space, still life, figure in space, or yourself.

Once you start drawing a line, your drawing tool maintains contact with the page, producing a continuous (unbroken) line.

Think of this exercise as if you were taking a line for a walk through graphic space. Use the line to describe whatever you are looking at, if you have a life reference. You can use a continuous line to draw from your imagination, as well. To describe enclosed shapes, simply overlap the line. The objects and spaces will appear to look transparent.



**DRAW!**

Blind Contour: Pretend you are drawing a big circle on this page, a circle that almost touches the boundaries of the page, *without* looking at the page.

Now, actually draw the contour of an object or form that has an interesting silhouette, such as a crab or shoe, but do not look at the page—look only at the subject matter. Make it as big as possible, feeling for the boundaries of the page as you draw. Don't be concerned with the end result as much as with experiencing this *blind contour* process.



**DRAW!**

Quick Contour: Ask a friend to pose for you. Use a single line to record the contour of the figure. The goal is to quickly record a general gesture. Study the figure for its general shape, drawing as rapidly as possible (about 15 to 60 seconds). Repeat this several times. Repeat it again, allotting up to two minutes. You may need more paper. (If you don't have a friend around, use an object or animal as reference for these rapid sketches.)



**DRAW!**

Cross Contour: Look at a spherical object or form, such as a coffee mug, a pear, or your hand. Draw the form's outline and add cross-contour lines (parallel lines that curve to describe the form's rounded volume).





Flowing Line: Start drawing a line at the top-left corner of the page. Allow yourself to draw whatever comes to mind—a spiral, a vine, a flower, a figure, or a car. Use a flowing, lyrical line to create the form. (Search online to see drawings by French artist Henri Matisse.)






Distressed Line: Using lines made with charcoal or a very soft pencil, draw something that upsets you. Smudge and scrape the lines.



**DRAW!**

Implied Line: Draw a car using broken lines that describe enough for the viewer to understand the shape without closing or completing the lines.





Organizational Lines: Using a soft pencil, draw a still life, interior space, or cityscape. Based on careful observations of all major vertical and horizontal emphases within the subject matter, begin by drawing horizontal and vertical lines that will serve to build the composition, to create structural axes as well as describe forms.

Organizational lines display and emphasize the structural axes of a composition and link forms in space. Simultaneously, the lines organize the pictorial space, create the illusion of spacial depth through overlapping, and define objects.

After establishing the relative heights of forms using horizontal and vertical lines, extend those lines further beyond the forms they describe into adjacent forms, as if the objects were transparent. The lines also extend into the surrounding pictorial space, as if the lines were a beam searching the pictorial space. For example, if you're drawing a chair in a room space, the lines you draw to define the chair also act to partially define the pictorial space of the room, the wall and floor, and any objects next to or overlapping the chair.

You can use sighting—holding up your pencil in front of you and using it as a measuring tool to compare relative heights and widths of objects in your subject matter—to determine the relative heights, widths, and angles.



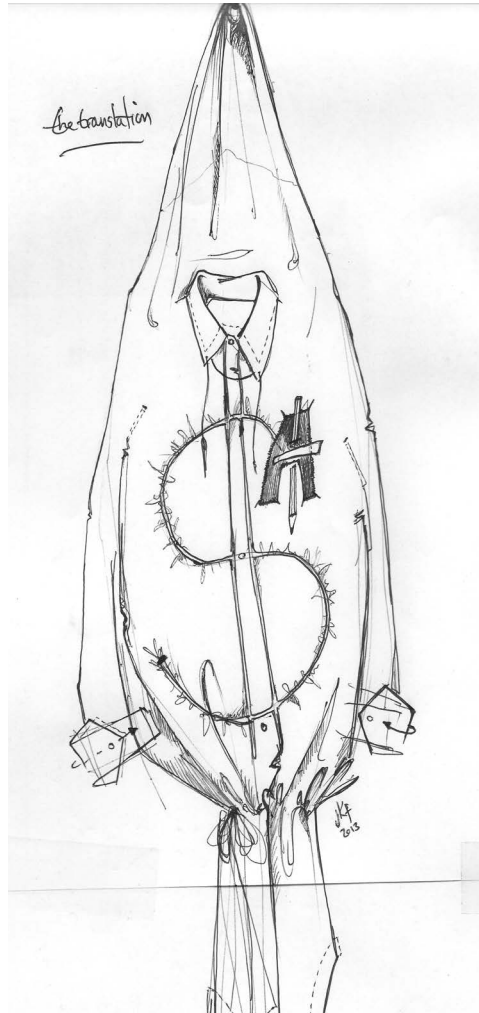
Jonathan KYLE Farmer, ma(rca)

{ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FASHION,
PARSONS THE NEW SCHOOL FOR DESIGN}

The Description



The translation



**FASHION AND TRANSLATION:
DESCRIBE IT, DRAW IT.
TRANSLATE IT, DRAW IT.**

**The description:
WHAT IS SH.I.RT?**

It is a white button-up shirt with the placket set for a male wearer.

The collar is medium spread with a matching thread topstitch.

The buttons are made of mother-of-pearl.

The side seams are flat-felled and cause a slight puckering in the seams from the tight stitches being laundered but not ironed.

There is a breast pocket on the left-hand side. It is the traditional shape, a square with a V-shape at the bottom.

In addition to the horizontal topstitch about 1.25 inches from the top of the pocket, it is also topstitched into two sections.

The topstitch is about an inch from the center side of the pocket, giving it a small section that a pen or pencil would easily slip into.

The sleeve is a one-piece sleeve with a barrel cuff.

The cuff has a single button and an angled cutout on the overlap.

The hem of the shirt is long enough to stay inside the pants when tucked in and has a slight curve on the sides.

The yoke of the shirt has no topstitch and there is a fabric-hanging loop centered at the back base of the yoke.

DRAW IT:



A TRANSLATION:**English → Greek → German → Arabic → Chinese → English**

His is a button on a white shirt placket male users.

Collar is a match for the string before the needle deployment.

Mother-of-pearl buttons.

Side of the sewing at seams and a slight wrinkle layers close to the money-laundering networks, but not normal.

There is a pocket on the left.

This is the traditional form of the letter box at the end of the horizontal seam in addition to the constraints 1.25 inches from the top of the pocket all the parts.

At the top about an inch from center to his side pocket a small part, pen, or pencil can be easily changed.

Cover part of the sleeve and the sleeve of the barrel.

Rotator cuff contains a button and a corner piece of the paint. In the hem of the shirt long enough to stay in his pants, when they came to a slight curve on the side.

Yoke shirt sewing machines and fabric with the highest hanging ring in the middle of the rear base of the yoke.”

DRAW IT:

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