

STUDY UNIT I

Getting started

Welcome to your Cartooning Diploma Course!

Whether you are a complete beginner who hasn't drawn for many years, an artist from another field who wants to have some fun with drawing, or somebody who already loves to read or draw cartoons and wants to start selling their own work, you have come to the right place.

You are also joining a branch of the arts with a long history.

Originally the name 'cartoon' referred to a large-scale drawing, usually in charcoal, which formed the basis of the final layout for a painting. The term was first used during the Renaissance (about 1500) by painters like Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

The Renaissance artists weren't the first to draw lines and shapes and create pictures from them but this was the first time the word 'cartoon' was coined to describe what they were doing.

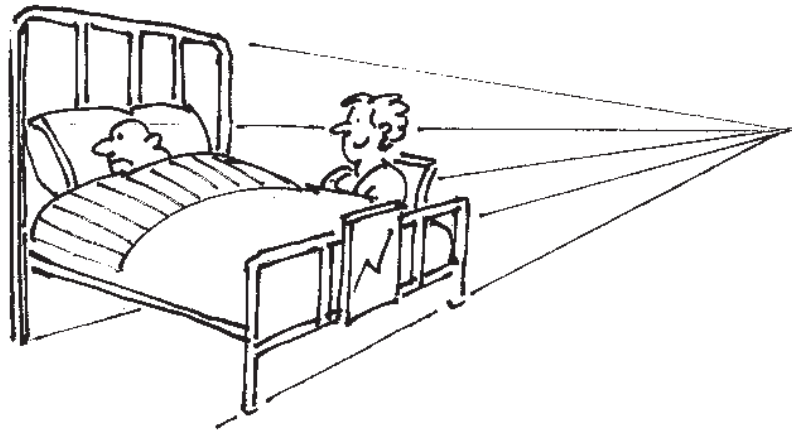
Slowly but surely the term 'cartoon' came to refer not only to serious sketches but also to humorous or satirical drawings developed by caricaturists and political illustrators.



As with all art and literature, these drawings were once mainly owned and enjoyed only by the rich, but by the end of the nineteenth century methods of mass reproduction had improved so much that the cartoon, as we know it today, became hugely popular with all classes.

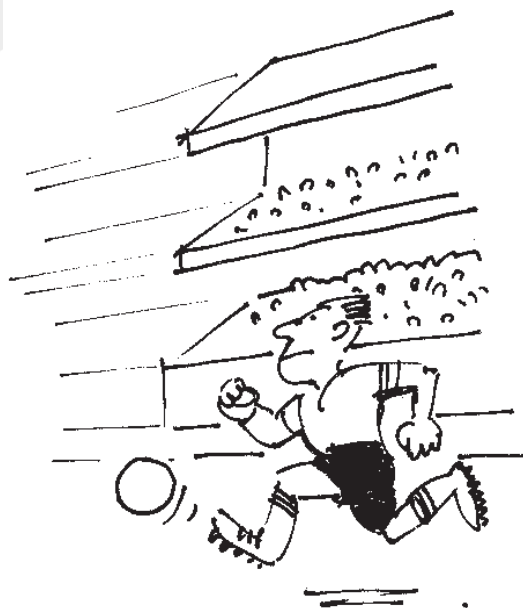
The use of line drawing is still the starting point for almost every cartoon whether that line is drawn with a pen, a brush, a digital pen on a computer screen or a finger or stylus on a touchscreen, so in this section let's work on the basic tool of cartooning: your drawing ability.

The drawing below shows how the theory of perspective is put into practical use to give depth to a cartoon scene. (The lines of perspective are not, of course, drawn into the cartoon, but are either drawn with pencil and then erased, or, with practice, visualised in the mind's eye)



Do practice drawing that cardboard box. By looking at it from different angles you can learn all you need to know. After a few days' perspective will hold no terrors for you!

Go outside and look at your own street. Notice how buildings or trees seem to diminish in the far distance. Often in a cartoon it is just enough to suggest the background perspective. To be honest, there are also cartoonists who would not really recognise perspective if you hit them over the head with it! They just ignore it by keeping their humour confined to a figure or two in the foreground and the merest hint of background in line.



FACIAL EXPRESSIONS - BASIC FORMS



SAD



SMILING



LAUGHTER



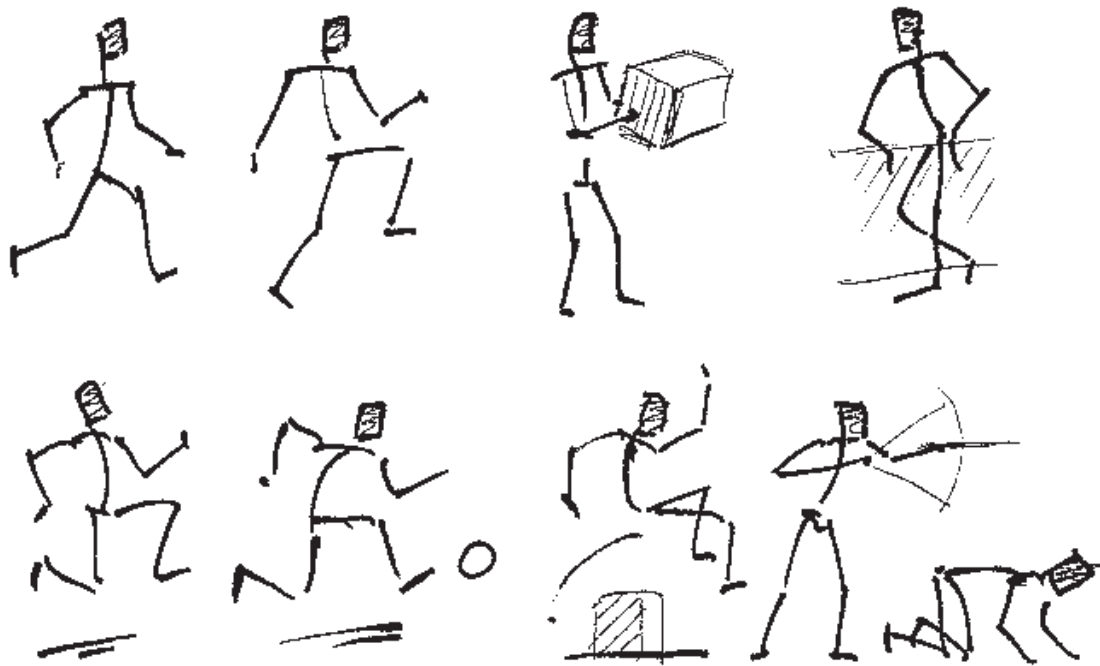
ANGER



CUNNING



DRUNK



There are certain things to notice about these figures. With the running figure you can see that the head appears to be leaning slightly backwards. If you run yourself, you will know this to be true. As you gallop along the head does go slightly backwards because of its great weight. However, in the case of the kicking figure the head is slightly forward.

This head tends to move forward to act as a counterweight in the effort to kick the ball. Watch footballers on TV and notice how these rules apply.

Now we will move forward with our matchstick figures and start to make them recognisable as people.

As we are working with generalities to start off with, on average, men tend to be taller than women of the same age, and, of course, children are proportionally smaller than the adult figures. Feel free to break those 'rules' if they don't apply to you or a subject you are drawing, but for simplicity we will use them in our basic instructions,

The figures illustrated before did not show hips, so we introduce them now to show how they help differentiate between male and female in typical cartoon drawings. The pelvis determines the width of the hips and we indicate this with another cross bar at the base of the torso line.

The same rules apply to a bird. The 'arms' of the bird are wings and usually the neck is longer. The body usually sweeps down in a graceful curve, ending in the tail formation, but with the legs being rather shorter. The head is kept fairly small.

1.

2.

3.



To draw a kangaroo, follow the same rules using the matchstick method of construction. Notice how the tail is an extension of the backbone, while the legs are bigger and more powerful than the short arms or forelegs. The head is almost dog-like. (Don't forget the pouch!)

1.

2.

