

Draw from Imagination

See with Imagination



"There He Lay"

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Seeing with imagination means seeing the world like a child.

There are two parts to seeing with imagination:

Part 1 is seeing with newness

Part 2 is the nuts and bolts of translating your new ideas into lines, shapes, and values

Part 1

What does it mean to see with imagination?



It means to look at the world, really look. Life gets so busy that too many of us forget to stop and see what's happening around us. When you look at tall grass what do you think? Do you think "Aaah, I gotta mow the lawn," or do you think "I wonder if fairies live there?"



Watch children play. They do it with enthusiasm, with gusto. When they pick up a stick it becomes a magical staff, a baseball bat, or even a plain walking stick. What it becomes to them isn't as important as them using their imagination to transform it into something more.

That's what seeing with imagination is. It's transforming the normal everyday boring thing into something more than it is. When you see a rock imagine it as something more. Imagine it as a ground shark lurking in the weeds waiting to catch that pesky stray cat.



Imagine it as ten different things. See how far you can push yourself. Ask yourself "What more can that rock be?"

1. We already came up with ground shark. Nine more to go.
2. Perhaps it was an Ogre turned to stone by daylight. Got that one from Lord of the Rings.
3. The tip of a missile poking out of an underground silo.
4. Maybe it's the hiding place of a secret treasure.
5. The earth's pimple? Ewe gross.
6. Maybe it's the nose of a giant who's been asleep for a thousand years.
7. Petrified dinosaur poop.
8. A meteorite that carries the cure for cancer.
9. The fallen tooth of an alien child who's now crying because he can't put it under his pillow for fifty space cents.
10. Perhaps the rock is nothing more than an old man's chair who has been walking ten miles every day to visit his wife's grave, and the rock is exactly half way between his house and the graveyard.

What you think of isn't as important as thinking of something, anything. The point is to get your mind working in a new way. Look at the way the light hits the mountainside in the morning. What color are the mountains? What color are they at sunset? Notice how an object may look a certain way on one day but completely different on another. See how the light can change a thing into something else.



Don't think of the chair you're resting your butt in as a simple parking place. Think of it as a launchpad for your ideas. A ship to carry you from the mundane world into the world of your own creation.

Challenge yourself to see one thing differently every day. Look at the things around you. Imagine what more they can become. Imbue stories into them. Give them life. Create a history for them. Give them personalities.

My computer mouse just turned into a small spider robot that is a refugee from his home planet that has been at war with a neighboring planet for four hundred and seventy-two earth years.

The things you imagine don't have to be outlandish or fantastical. They can be simple.

Imagine the trip your pencil took from China all the way to you. How it started as a tree, got chopped down, milled in a lumber yard, sent to the pencil factory, milled some more, stuffed with a spear of graphite, painted, boxed up, loaded into a giant shipping container, shipped to sea for a month, unloaded, then hauled to a warehouse, stuffed onto a truck, shoved onto a display and finally bought by you or someone else.

The pencil's story may be true but you've probably never thought of it before. Now you may be looking at it in a new way.



That's the idea. Look at the world around you in a new way. See it with the curiosity of a child. To a child everything is new and interesting. They're excited to experience life and learn about all the cool stuff around them. They want to play and experience life. Remember all your firsts. Your first birthday, first day at school, your first vacation, your first girlfriend or boyfriend, your first time playing a sport, or your first Christmas.



Think of the feelings you experienced and try to imagine how you could capture them on paper. What colors would you use? Would the picture be dark or light? Would it be filled with a huge variety of objects or just one?



Look at the world new. Look at the things around you in a different light.

Try doing these three challenges:

1. Challenge yourself to see one thing in a new way every day.
2. Take one day a week to see one thing in ten new ways.
3. Give a story to the things and people around you and then imagine how you could capture that story in an image.

Keep it simple or go crazy. How wild can you make something? Let the stars be your limit, or don't. It's up to you. Go and make this world yours and do it your way.

- Part 2 the Nuts and Bolts of seeing with imagination