

## Draw Scamper with Janet Griffin-Scott

Would you like to learn how to draw horses? I'm Janet Griffin-Scott, illustrator of the Sonrise Stable series. I love drawing horses of all kinds—ponies, foals, drafts, donkeys, or mules—it doesn't matter, I love them all! In fact, when I was in ninth grade, I nearly failed art class, because my teacher was frustrated with me for turning every assignment into a horse project!

In this first lesson, we'll draw Rosie's pony, Scamper. Here is the original photo I worked from.

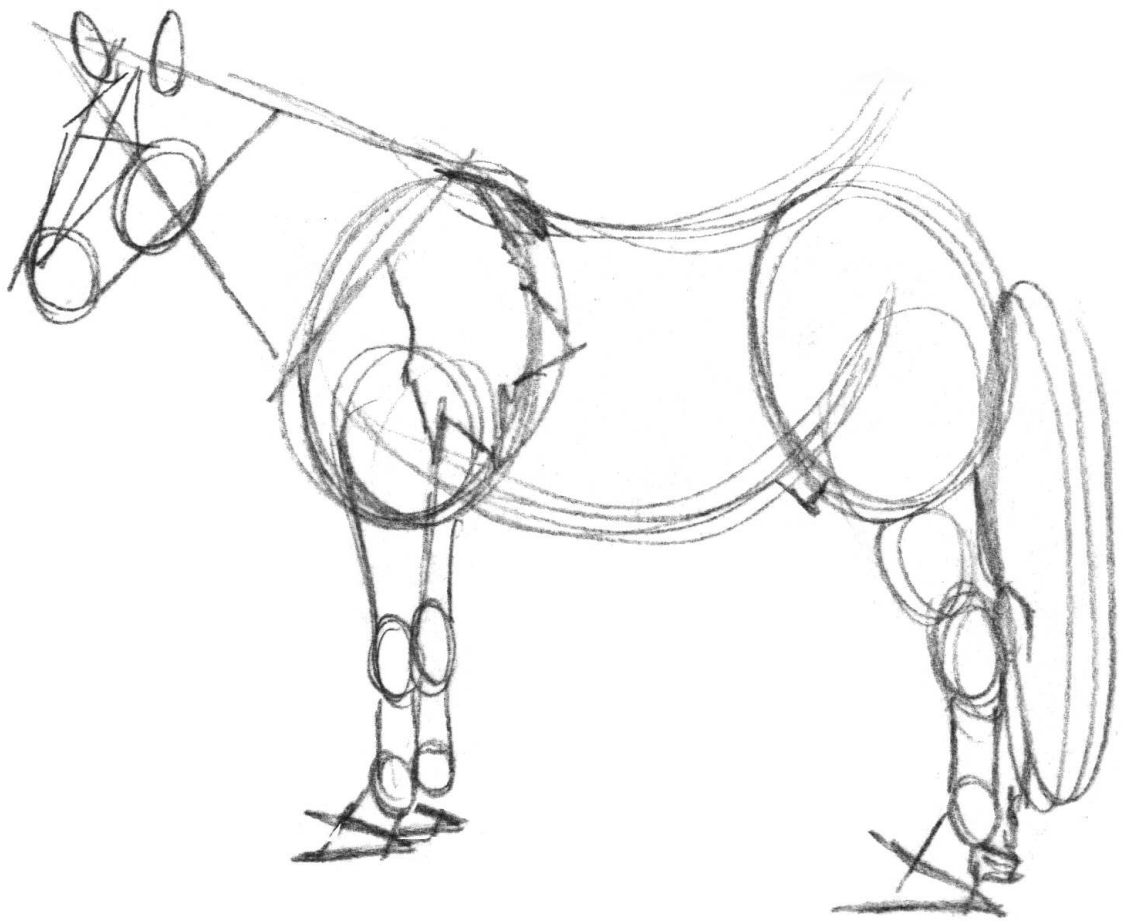


With a dark horse, the challenge for the artist is to provide muscle definition so that you don't end up with a flat, black blob. Decide what your focus will be, and eliminate any unnecessary background details. If you know how to use graphics software and have a digital version of the photo, lightening the image will show more muscle definition in the dark areas.

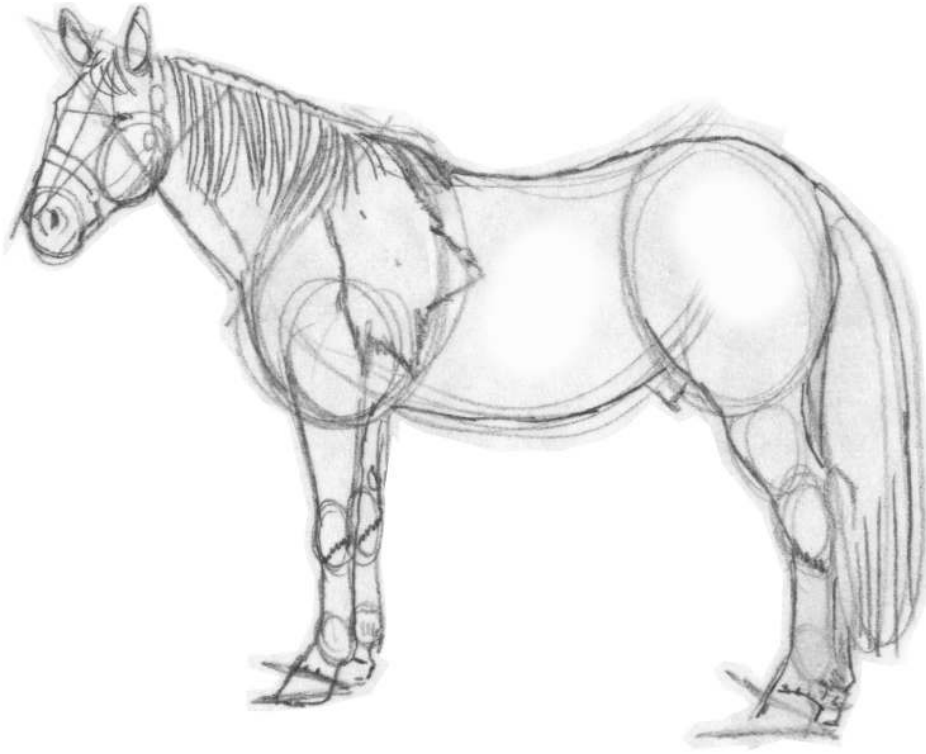
The first step is to break your subject down into its basic shapes: circles, squares, triangles, and ovals. For instance, we see the kite shape in his head, lining up his eyes. His jowl and muzzle are ovals, as are the joints in his legs.

His hooves are triangles with the ends cut off. Even his tail and ears can be seen as stretched-out ovals. His barrel looks like a banana shape, but is actually a sagging oval with pointed ends.

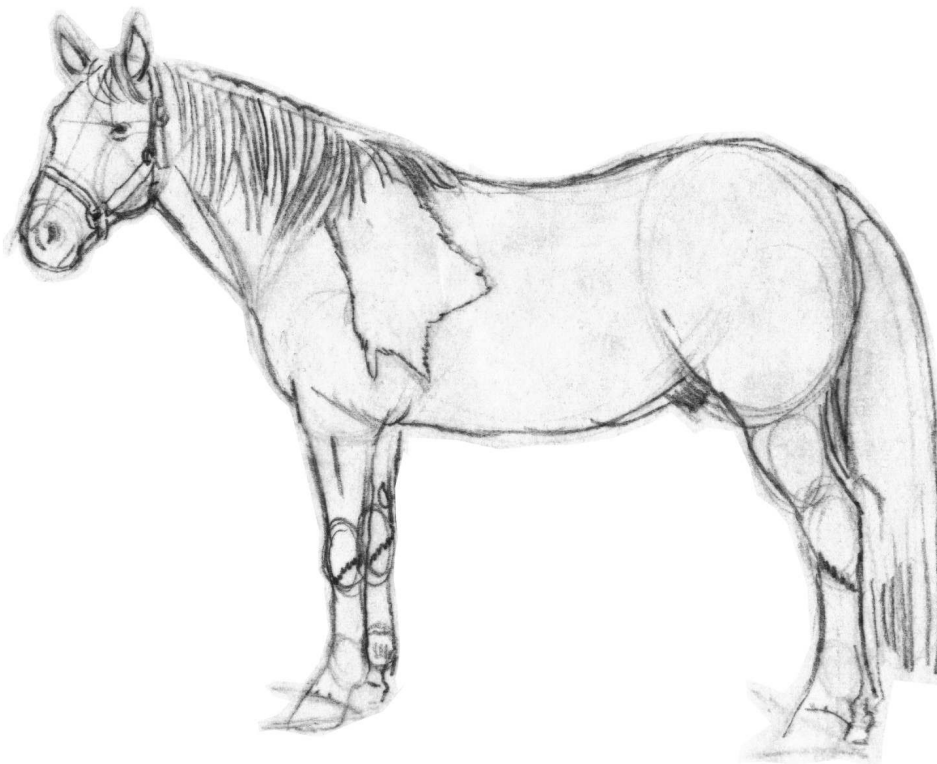
Making sure the outline shape matches the photo of the horse is the hardest part, because all horses are put together in a slightly different way. Spend lots of time on this first step.



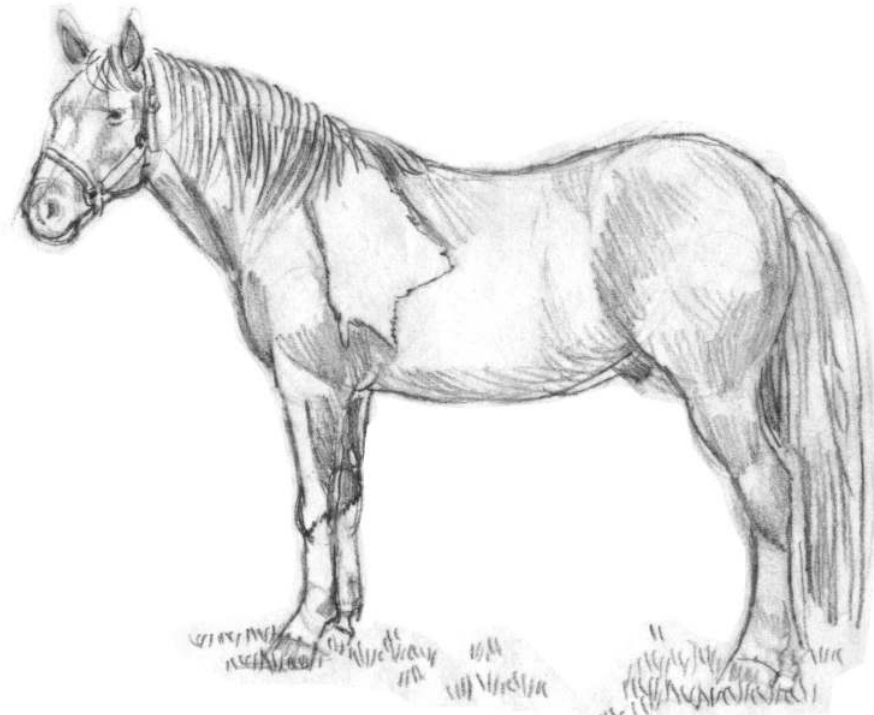
Next, outline the shapes while carefully studying the photo. Sketch in the paint markings on his shoulder, using the underlying circles as a guide. It's important to study the photo as you work in order to get a good likeness.



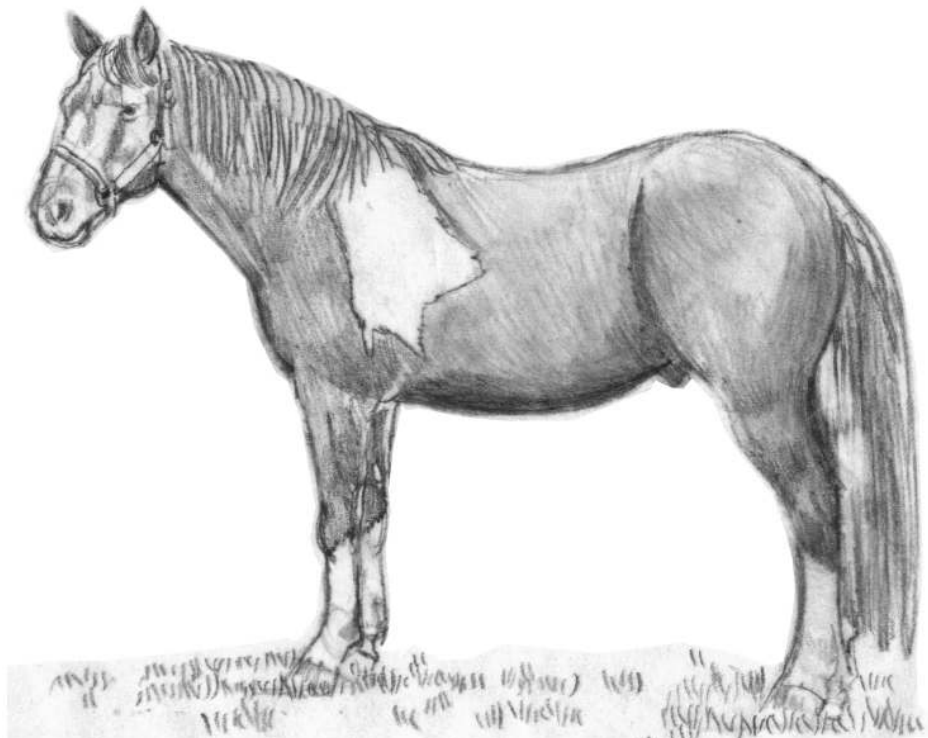
Then erase the underlying shapes. If some of the outline disappears in the erasing process, gently draw it back in. Do a rough sketch of the markings on his legs. Begin adding details of his mane, halter, and eyes. Add a few strokes of long lines for his tail hair.



Add small strokes with a sharp pencil to suggest blades of grass. To make it look realistic, aim the strokes in the directions grass grows, from the bottom up. Begin to add rough shading on his barrel, neck, and along the lower part of his neck (the brachiocephalic muscle). This muscle is usually in shadow due to its large size and shape under the shiny hide.



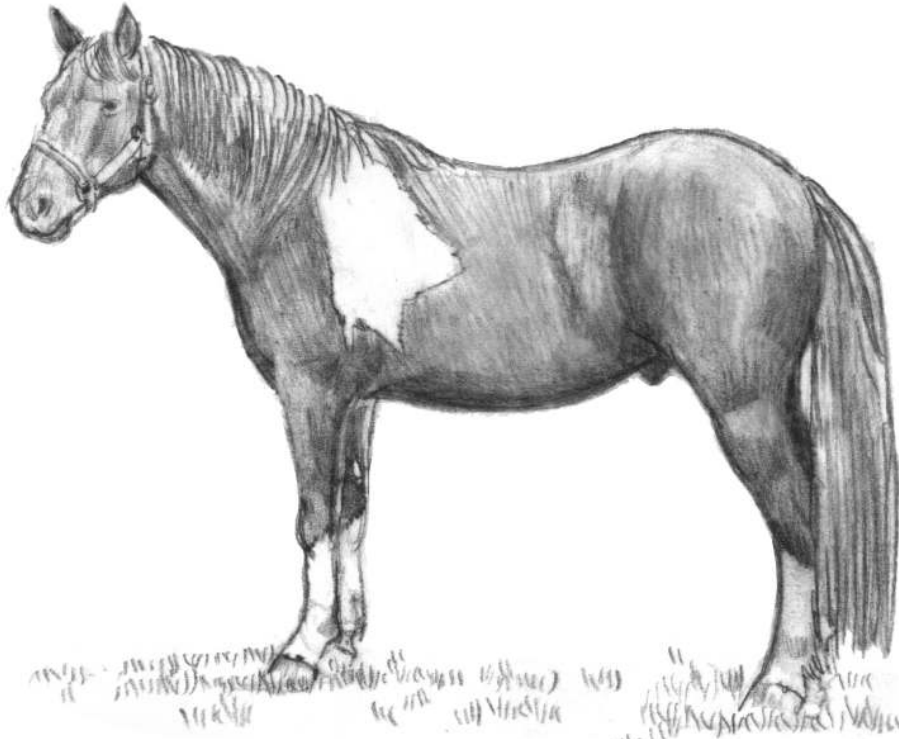
Next add large areas of shading to darken him. There are several different ways you can do this—by using long thin parallel strokes or circular strokes, then smudging and blending the areas with a cotton swab, tissue, or dry paintbrush. Crosshatching, where the pencil strokes go in different directions to darken the color, may also be used.





Create darker areas by making several passes of the pencil over the same area. His rump, stifle area, neck, and barrel all get extra strokes with more pressure on the pencil. When shading, use the pencil at a lower angle to the paper to get a softer, wider stroke. Hold the pencil more upright to create narrower lines and tighter detail.

In this next step I gradually darken the whole drawing, building up the darker areas with repeated strokes and blending. You can use a kneaded eraser with a point pulled up to remove areas that get too dark. Drawing is messier than painting, so my hand smudges areas, and I have to keep erasing outside the drawing to keep the surface clean. Fixatives can be sprayed on the finished drawing to set the graphite.

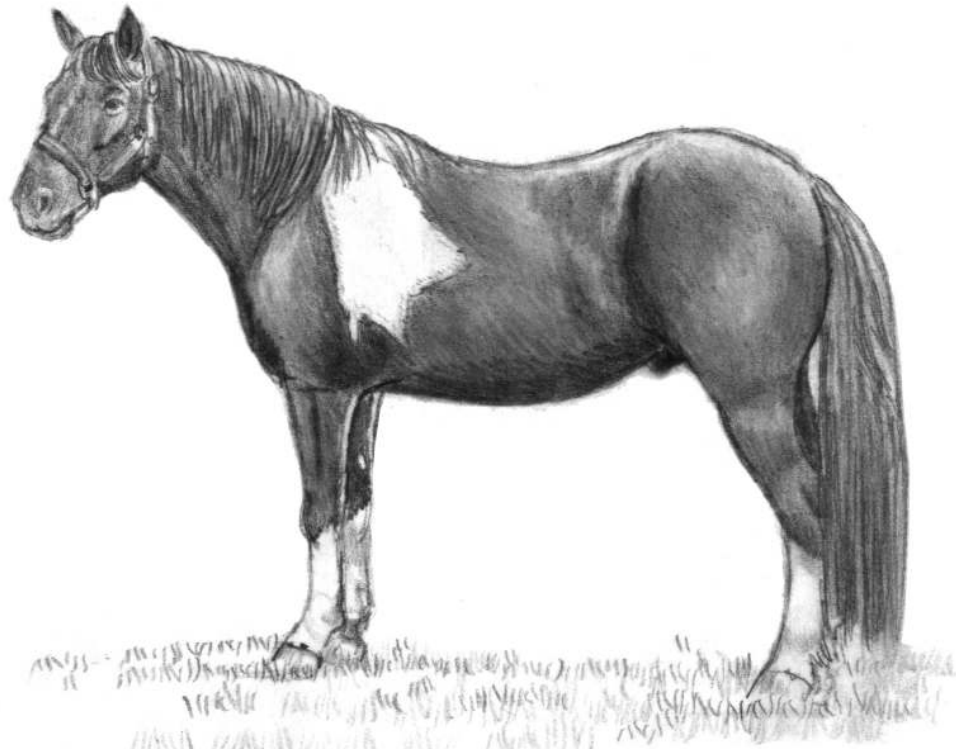


Notice the small dark strokes in Scamper's white markings. Look at the original photo again, and you'll notice this halo effect where dark skin appears under the light-colored hair. Some horses have markings with a straight edge, and others have this transitional area. I have darkened his belly and tail again with additional alternating strokes and blending.

From the photo, you can see that the light was overhead, making his topline lighter, with a very light area on his back and rump. Early in the morning or later in the day, the shadows are longer and at different angles. When drawing, always ask yourself what direction the main light is coming from. That way you'll get the light and shadowy areas correct. This is critical to making the drawing look realistic.

Scamper is a black horse, but you can still use darker areas to suggest the curves and angles on his body. I mainly use kneaded erasers for creating highlight areas and to clean up smudges. Vinyl erasers, when they are new, have sharp edges that can be used in small areas.

I continued to add graphite all over, stopping in between layers to blend with my fingers, tissue, cotton swab, and paintbrush. This is a flexible process that goes differently for each drawing. I erase small areas to add highlights, allowing the white paper to show through.



To develop an eye for horses, it's important to observe them in a variety of settings—at work, rest, and play. This is a good excuse for attending as many horse events as possible! For most equestrian sports, the horses are moving too fast to draw from life. It's important to become a good photographer in order to capture the beauty of the horse in a still form that's easier to translate into a sketch or painting. Photos from horse magazines or the internet are all right to practice with, but check for copyrights. If an image is protected by a copyright, it's illegal to use it for other purposes.

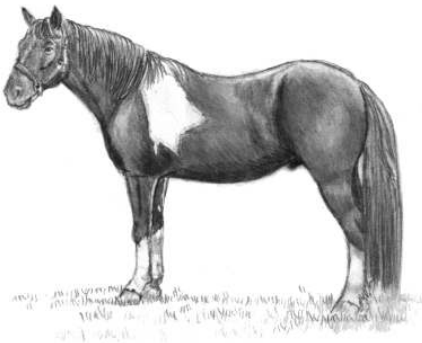
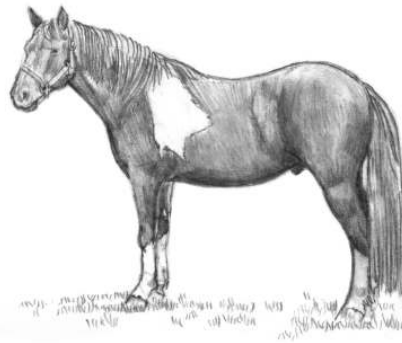
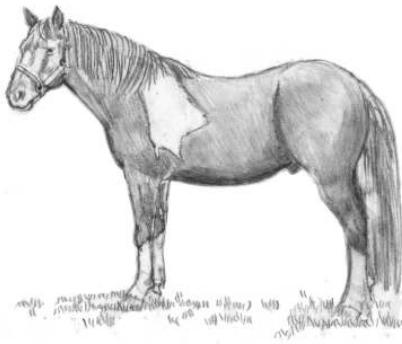
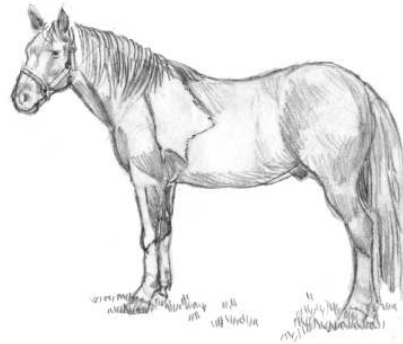
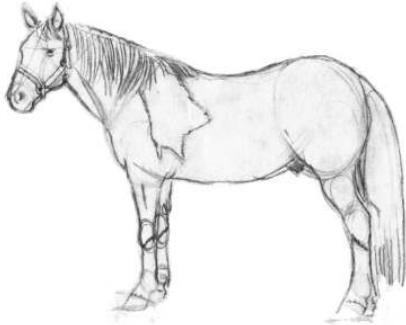
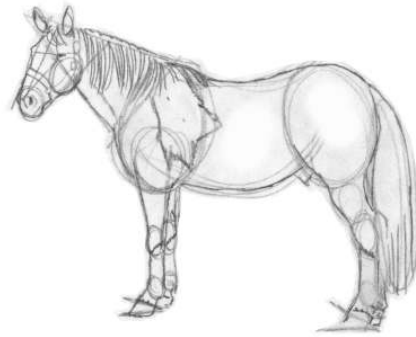
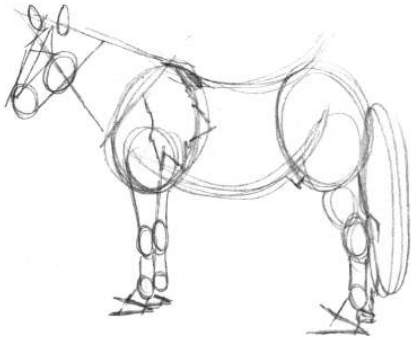
You don't need to spend a fortune for art supplies and equipment. Inexpensive cameras, or even a cell phone, will provide acceptable quality for your photographs. I created the drawing of Scamper for this lesson with a cheap drawing pencil from an office supply store and plain bond paper used in photocopiers.

Don't be discouraged if your first drawing of Scamper doesn't look exactly like mine. I've been doing this for a long time, and many artists consider horses to be one of the more difficult animals to draw. No one learns to ride a horse by taking just one lesson. Learning to ride requires continued effort and practice. The same is true for drawing. No one was born an artist. It takes lots of study and practice to learn to draw well. It's fun and encouraging to draw with a partner. Why don't you invite someone to draw Scamper with you?

**Here's my guarantee—you will improve—if you continue to study and practice!** Keep a notebook of your sketches, and you will begin to see progress. Draw Scamper several times and learn from your mistakes.

As Rosie's grandmother says, "Just do your best."

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. - Colossians 3:17 NKJV*



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