

Explore & Describe:

Drawing with Pencil

Timing

10 minutes to explore & describe

20 minutes (or more) for independent drawing

Space

Clear desks or tables

Materials

For each child-
a sharpened pencil &
an 8 x 11 sheet of paper

For each table-
a large sheet of paper

Additional supports

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1. Meet the Magic Pencil

Sample Script (1 minute)

- Teacher: Let's hold up our pencils and sprinkle some magic dust on them! Now, look at your pencil and say Pencil!
- Kids: Pencil!
- Teacher: What kind of line do you want to make?
- Kids: What kind of line do you want to make?

Tips for Step 1

- Take time to listen to your pencils!
- An audible pencil voice or sound effects can be very engaging!

2. Model exploring & describing

Share ideas from your pencil!

Sample Script (1-2 minutes)

- **DESCRIBE & SHOW-** My pencil wants to make (1) long diagonals (2) using my whole arm (3) very light and fast (*show the idea in the air as you describe it*)
- **DO IT-**Let's all try my pencil's idea in the air first! Can we use our whole arm to quickly draw light diagonals in the air?
- **DRAW IT-** Now let's make long, light diagonals on our line library moving our whole arm fast.
- **REPEAT** with another line and three different descriptors if needed.

Tips for Step 2

- Choose three ways to describe your pencil's idea verbally.
- Always show your idea in the air and have kids do it in the air before doing it on paper
- Students may spontaneously start talking about what the lines remind them of or make them imagine! Allow some time for that conversation. Try a turn and talk.

continue...

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3. Kids drive further exploration

Sample Script (1-2 minutes for each suggestion)

- **ASK FOR IDEAS-** Let's all ask our pencils what they want to do! Magic Pencil! What do you want to do now? (listen) What does your pencil want to do? Does anyone want to share?
 - **ASK FOR DESCRIPTORS-** (If a student says wiggly lines) Shall we make big wiggly lines or small wiggly lines? Shall we draw them fast or slow?
 - **DO IT-** (if child says big & slow) Let's all make big, slow wiggly lines in the air.
 - **DRAW IT-** Now, let's all make big, slow wiggly lines on our line library.
 - **REPEAT** so that multiple students get a turn and the class can 1) gain confidence trying out their own ideas and 2) practice meeting the challenge of making more specific choices.
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Tips for Step 3

- Always build on kids' suggestions by asking for two or three additional specific descriptors.
 - Always have the whole class do and draw ideas that their peers' pencils suggest.
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4. Independent exploration

Allow at least 20 minutes for independent drawing

While students work teachers circulate to...

- Notice & describe the choices kids are making in their drawings. For support use the **Describing Tool: Pencil Drawing**.
- Notice, observe & support how kids are choosing to work as artists. Use the **Observe & Support Tool: Visual Art**.
- At the end, collect and save the line libraries to use for inspiration in future drawing activities. Have students write their names before you collect them.

Explore & Describe

Drawing with Pencil

Be playful & creative as you animate the pencil.

How can you use your pencil as a puppet? Does it have a voice or a special way of moving? How do you bring your pencil to life?

Plan 3 ways to describe each line

your pencil wants to make. Use the describing tool for Drawing as a planning support. Remember to describe how your pencil wants you to move your body

Try ideas in the air then put them on paper.

This engages kinesthetic learners and builds confidence.

Ask scaffolded questions

that offer language that kids can use to describe their idea with specificity.

Allow time for conversation

about what lines remind us of and what they make us imagine or feel! This is an opportunity for students to make personal connections.

Use child driven during art making time to observe your students.

For support, use the Observation Tool for Visual Arts.

Describe with specificity and enthusiasm.

Use the Describing Tool for Drawing for support. The work does not have to be finished or fully developed to be described. You do not have to understand or like the work to describe it. Describing, helps all students to develop their work further and build language.

Planning and preparation guide for...

Explore & Describe

Drawing with Pencil

In this activity, the teacher models getting ideas from their magic pencil. The pencil is always very specific and descriptive about exactly how it wants to draw!

Material Checklist

For each child:

- a sharpened pencil
- an 8 x 11 sheet of paper

For each table:

- a large sheet of paper for the line library
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Planning

How will you support visual, kinesthetic & multi language learners in your class? Consider doing a quick pose warm up with descriptive language prompts. Use sound effects (as well as words) to engage kids non-verbally.

How will you model describing what your pencil wants to draw? Use the Describing Tool for Drawing to find words to describe and prompt drawing. We recommend planning 3 descriptors for each line or shape.

Tips for choosing your descriptive prompts:

- Include a **Gestural Description** (how to move your body or pencil)
- Include a **Graphic Description** (size, shape & direction of the line)
- Include a **Compositional Description** (how the lines are arranged)
- **Use different descriptors each time, to model a variety of options.**

Examples: My pencil wants to...

- Make **big, curvy** lines, pulling my **whole arm!**
 - use **just my fingers** to make **tiny, precise zig zags!**
 - use **short, dark, straight** lines, to make a triangle!
 - make **slow, tangled** lines **using my wrist**, to make a shape I've never seen before!
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Planning and preparation guide for...

Explore & Describe

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Preparation

Before the activity:

- **Practice talking to your pencil!** Does your pencil have a name? Does it have a voice?
 - **Practice making sound effects** Each kind of line might have its own sound. Sound effects can help engage students and encourage them to use their voice, even as their understanding of descriptive language is just emerging.
 - **Plan how you will describe what your pencil wants to draw.**
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During the Activity

- **Always try the ideas in the air before doing them on paper.** This engages kinesthetic learners and builds confidence. Sounds can also be a fun and engaging addition.
- **Allow time for kids to make connections.** During the explore & describe lesson, students may spontaneously start talking about what lines remind them of or make them imagine. Try a turn & talk.
- **Always build on kids' ideas.** If they say their pencil wants to make a zig zag, ask them if they want to make it slow or fast? horizontal, vertical or diagonal? With their whole arm, wrists or fingers?
- **Use the Describing Tool for Drawing** to find specific words to describe kids' choices during the independent drawing time.
- **Use the Observation Tool for Visual Arts** to notice how your kids are working as artists during the independent drawing time. Be prepared to support students in continuing to work in a variety of ways.