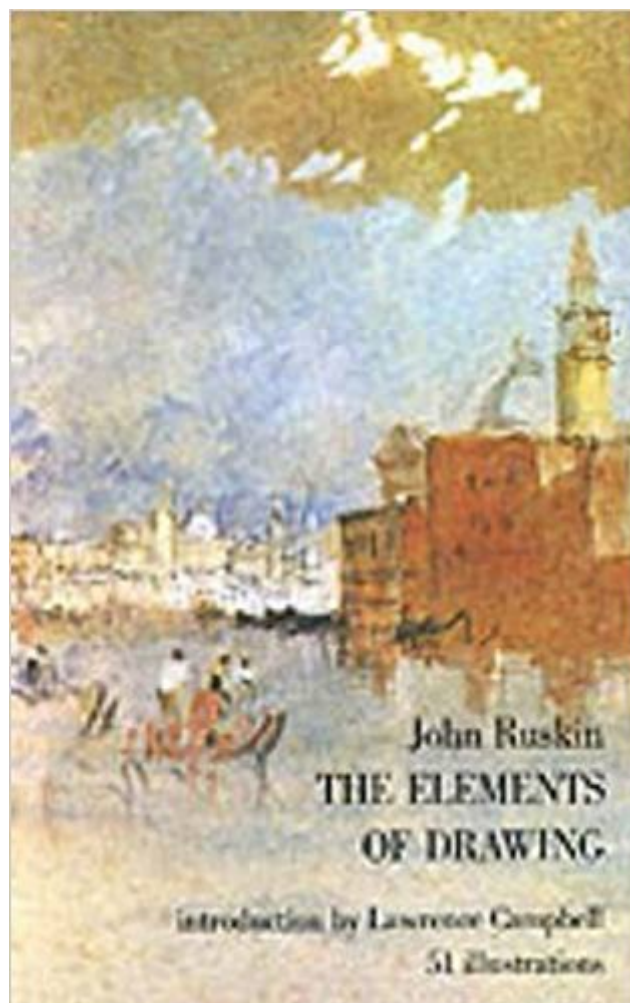


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# The Elements Of Drawing (Dover Art Instruction)



## Synopsis

Can drawing be sound, honest representation of the world as the eye sees it, not tricks with the pencil or a few "effects" be learned from a book? One of the most gifted draftsmen, who is also one of the greatest art critics and theorists of all time, answers that question with a decided "Yes." He is John Ruskin, the author of this book, a classic in art education as well as a highly effective text for the student and amateur today. The work is in three parts, cast in the form of letters to a student, successively covering "First Practice," "Sketching from Nature," and "Colour and Composition." Starting with the bare fundamentals (what kind of drawing pen to buy; shading a square evenly), and using the extremely practical method of exercises which the student performs from the very first, Ruskin instructs, advises, guides, counsels, and anticipates problems with sensitivity. The exercises become more difficult, developing greater and greater skills until Ruskin feels his reader is ready for watercolors and finally composition, which he treats in detail as to the laws of principality, repetition, continuity, curvature, radiation, contrast, interchange, consistency, and harmony. All along the way, Ruskin explains, in plain, clear language, the artistic and craftsmanlike reasons behind his practical advice underlying which, of course, is Ruskin's brilliant philosophy of honest, naturally observed art which has so much affected our aesthetic. Three full-page plates and 48 woodcuts and diagrams (the latter from drawings by the author) show the student what the text describes. An appendix devotes many pages to the art works which may be studied with profit.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

John Ruskin originally published this little volume in the winter of 1856/57. It promptly sold out and went into multiple printings. It is surprisingly still relevant today. Ruskin gives the reader many exercises beginning with a dip pen and ink and later moving to pencil and then watercolor (which in the 19th century was classified under drawing). I was so intrigued I actually bought a speedball dip pen and some india ink and began to practice the many exercises he gives. They work. By the time I finished the ink exercises I noticed a definite improvement from my early attempts compared to the later ones. And I am continuing the exercises. Another fascinating aspect of this book is the snapshot it gives into the mind of a prominent 19th century art critic. Ruskin not only was a master draughtsman and painter but a widely respected art critic in his day. Monet was quoted by a British journalist to have said, "90% of the theory of Impressionist painting is in Ruskin's Elements of Drawing." A young George Seurat obtained a copy and admitted to having read it carefully. Now I'm no Monet or Seurat but I figure if these guys valued Ruskin's instruction I should certainly pay attention to what he had to say. Ruskin explains exactly what the goal of each exercise is. He also recommends specific paintings or drawings to examine along with critiques of why this or that area in the drawing/painting is superior or lacking. He strongly believed it more profitable to study in-depth a few highly superior drawings/paintings to a wider assortment of middling/average execution. And he believed this even of famous artist's work - famous or not he advises to ignore for the moment their less masterful work and focus on the truly great ones. Ruskin pulled no punches.

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