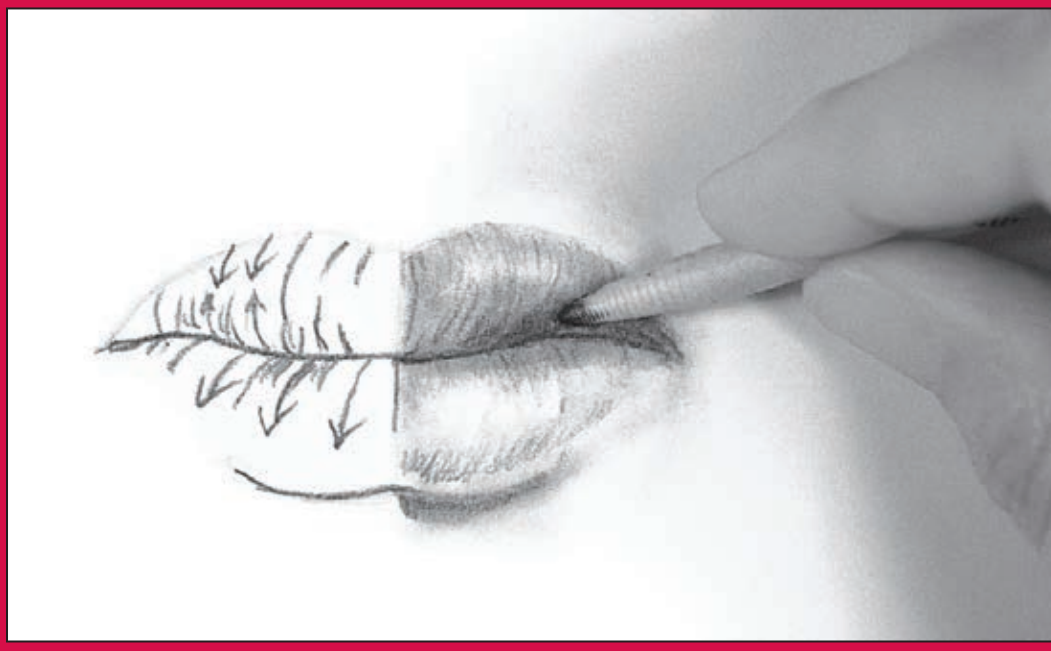
tips on how to draw a

NOSE & LIPS

Carrie Stuart Parks

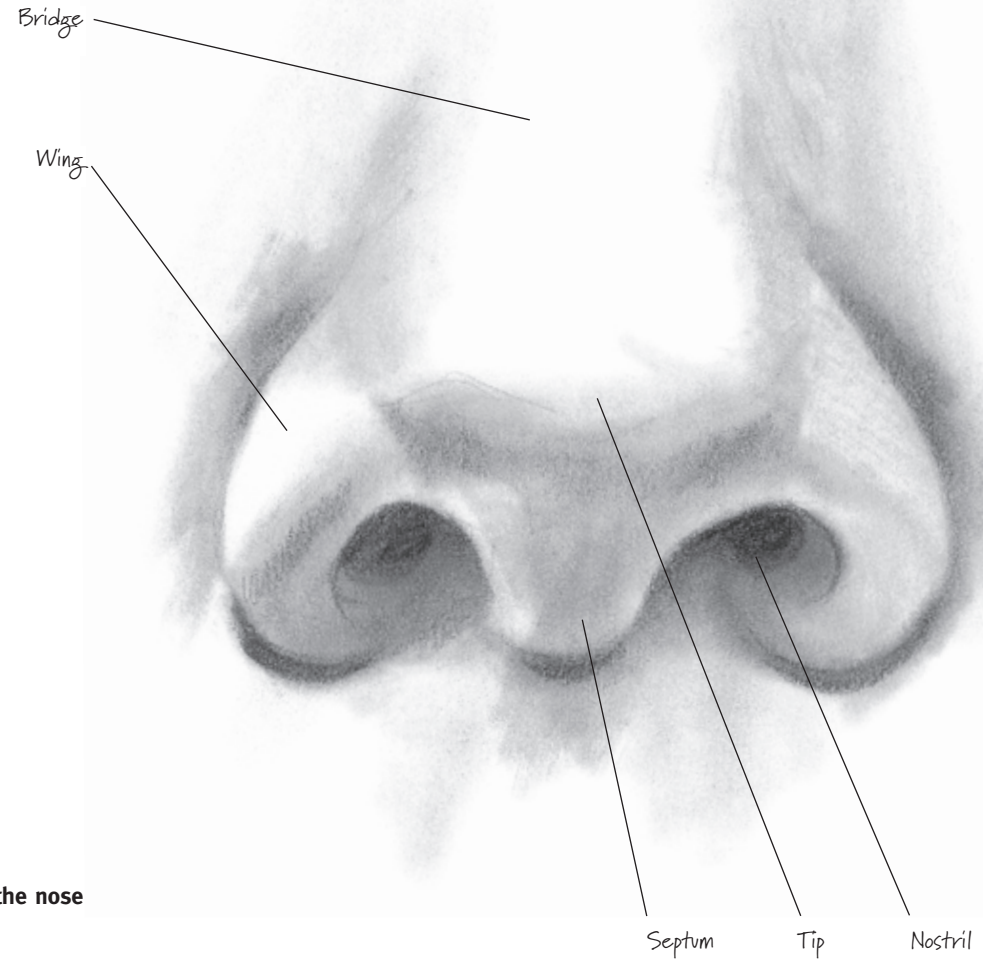


Drawing Noses

You might have noticed that few poets have waxed eloquently on the nose. Even emerging artists seem to stumble when it comes to drawing noses. If much of this chapter seems remedial, it is because the nose needs more attention... you don't want to blow it. OK, a number of puns and nose comments are running through my mind. I admit this is a hard chapter to write. But noses are really quite simple to draw once you understand the structure of what you are looking at.

Know your nose

Note that noses are shapes.
As seen in the illustration, the nose shape is created from two rounded shapes: the ball and the column. The nose is not created from lines.



The parts of the nose

One shot

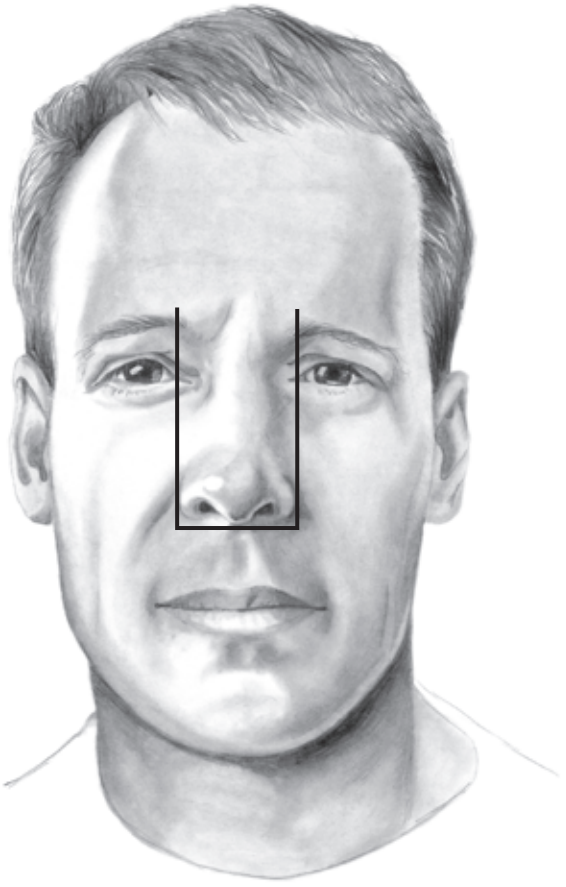
Look at your photo and try to find the multiple shapes that make up the nose in that one image. Drawing a nose will become much easier once you have identified all the individual parts that create the total image.

Nose site

Note: I am referring to the average nose in the following description.

The site of the nose is contained within a rectangle that begins in the forehead. It is as wide as the inside corner of the eyes on the female face (shown on the bottom left) and the start of the white of the eye on the male face (shown on the bottom right). Most people make the nose too long and too narrow. This is because the nose causes the artist to overrule what he or she really sees and perceives to be true. The nose starts in the forehead, but artists really don't pay attention to it until it is level with the eye. They therefore draw the nose the correct length from the eye down to the tip, not from the forehead, and the resulting nose is too long. Most books also show the male nose as too narrow—the width of the nose on the female face. Male noses are wider.

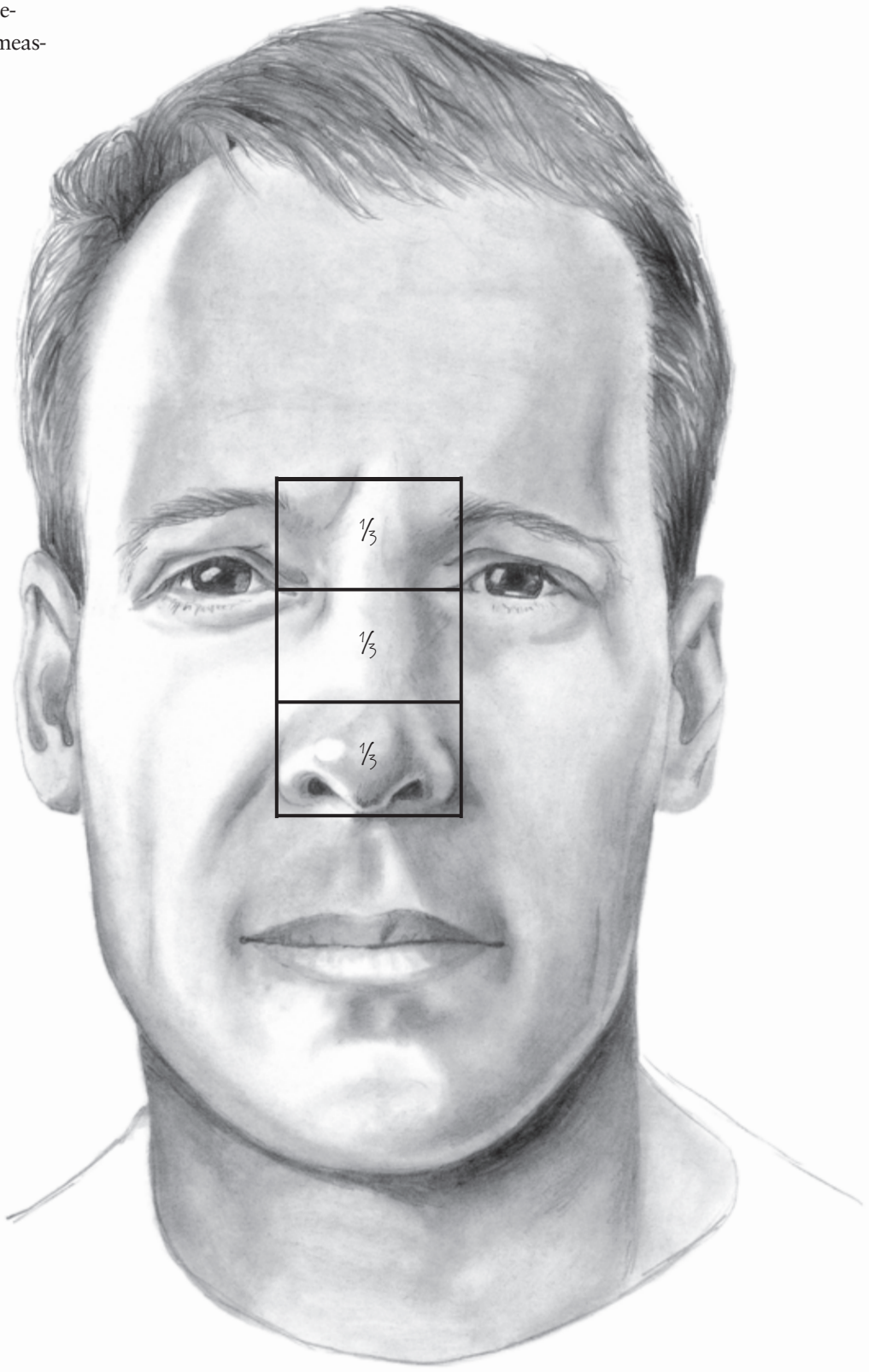
Female
Notice how the width of the nose begins at the corner of the eyes.



Male
The width of the nose is bigger; it starts at the white of the eye.

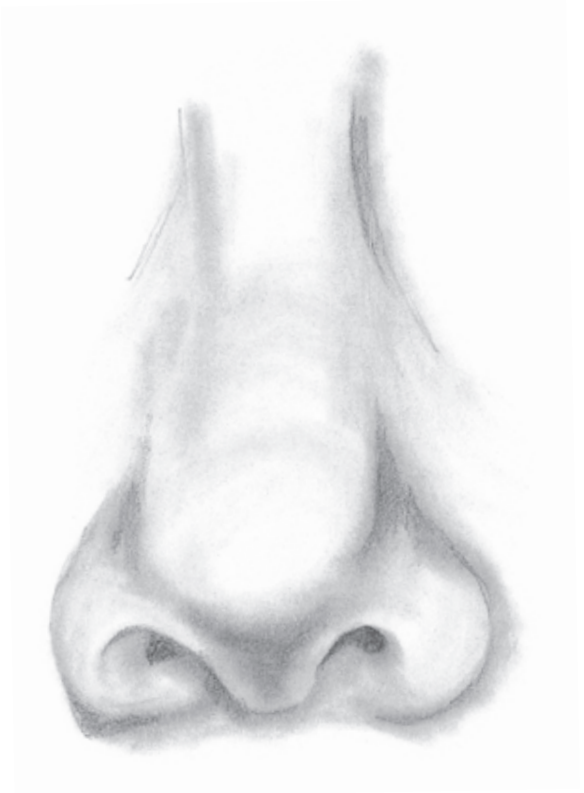
Wing site

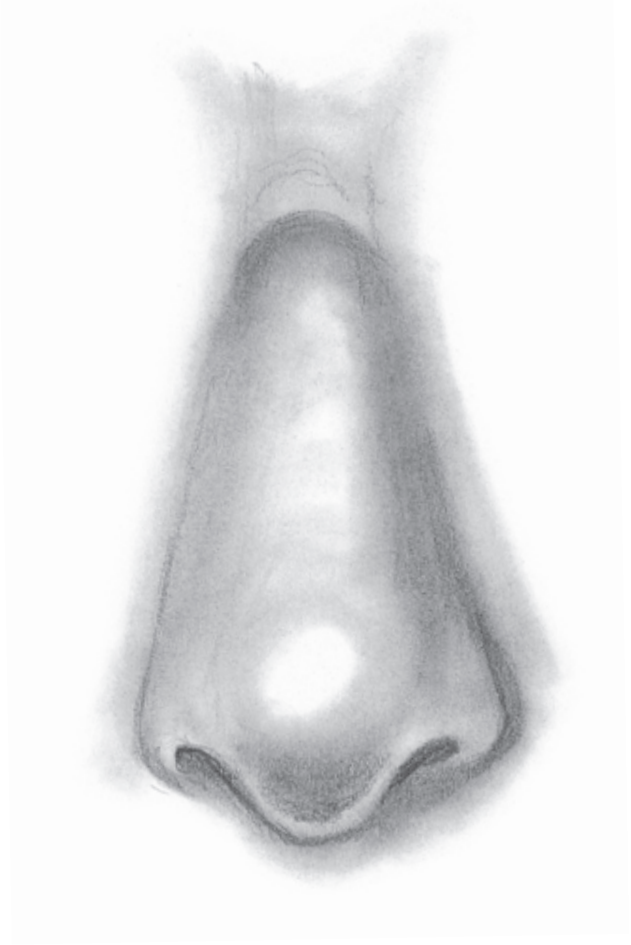
The wings of the nose are about one-third the height of the nose, if you measure from nose tip to the top of the eyebrow, as shown in this drawing.



Basic wing shapes

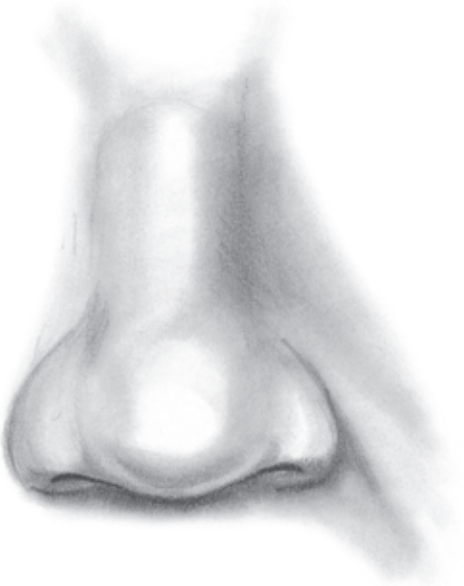
The wings of the nose may be round, flared, flattened or any combination of these shapes (as seen here).





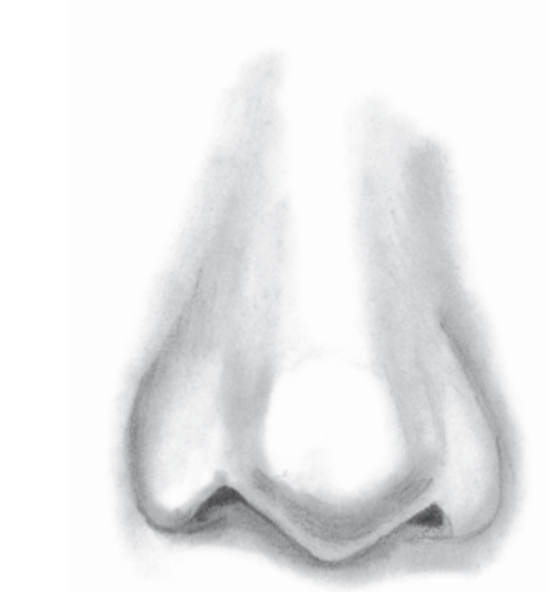
Nostril basics

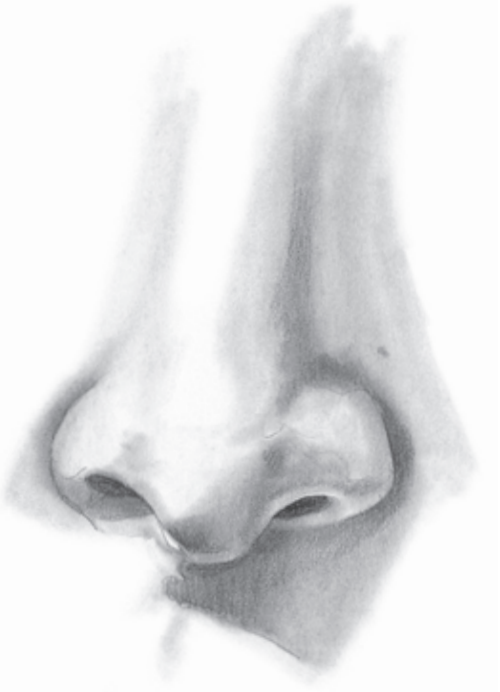
To get the hang of the nose (if you pardon the expression), study the nostril area. OK, so art isn't as glamorous as you once thought. The size and shape of the nostril help define the shape of the tip of the nose. The more the nostril shows, the more the tip of the nose tends to tilt up; the less the nostril shows, the more the tip of the nose tends to turn down. On some people, you cannot see the nostrils at all.



Nostril shapes

The nostrils have differing shapes. Some nostrils are round, some are more triangular and some are quite oval.





A word about bridges

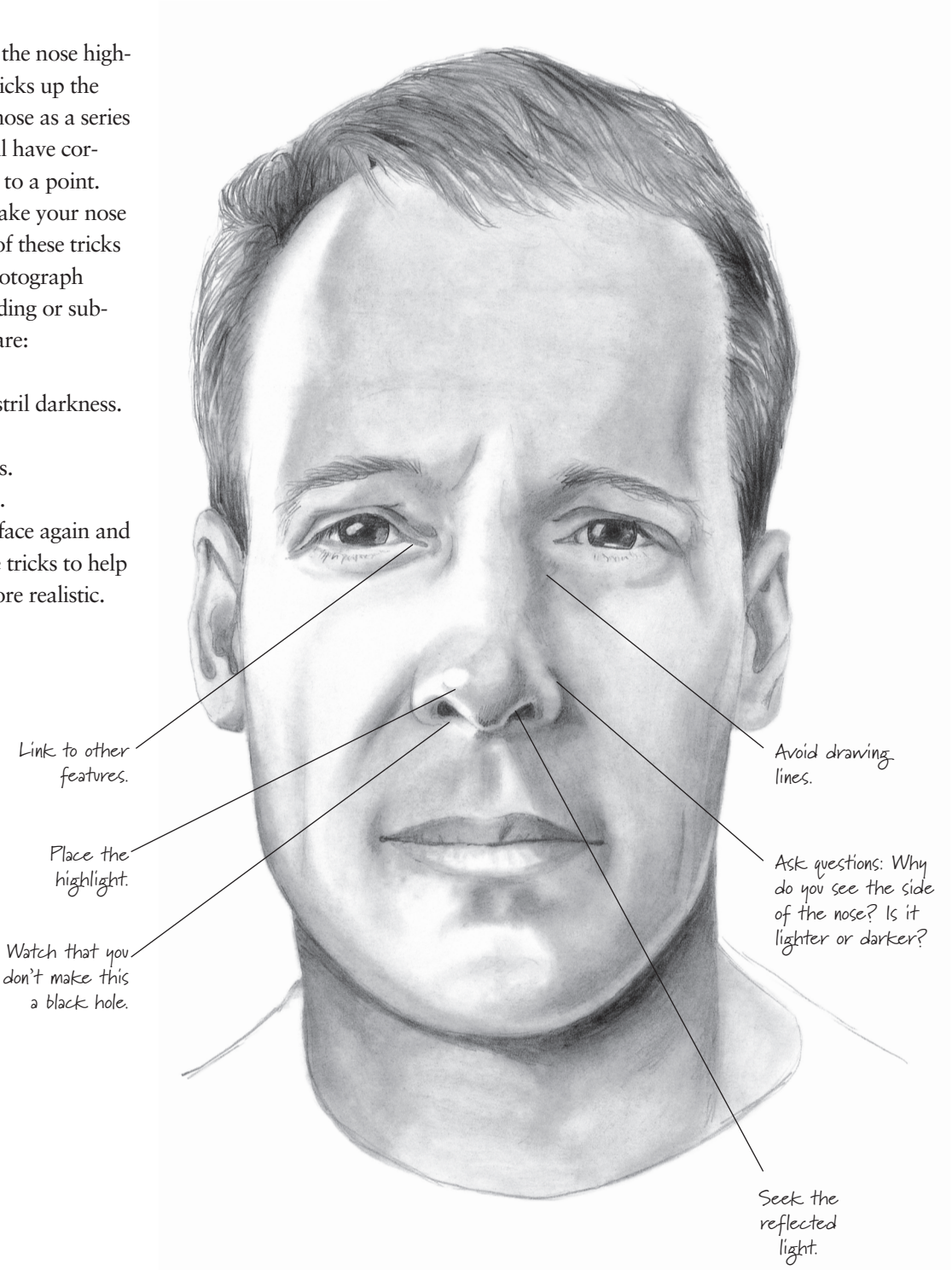
You've looked at the tip of the nose. Now study the start of the nose, the bridge. The nose begins in the forehead. I know that may seem obvious, but I have seen some drawings where the nose is connected to the eye. Some noses are on the same plane as the forehead. Some noses dip inward at a point below the eyebrows, while others are very flat across the bridge or protrude like the bow of a ship. Artists create all the shape of the bridge of the nose by shading.

Nose tricks

If you identify the shape of the nose highlight, find where the nose picks up the most light and "read" the nose as a series of lights and darks, you will have correctly shaded the nose... up to a point. There are a few tricks to make your nose look more realistic. Many of these tricks involve not drawing the photograph exactly as you see it but adding or subtracting details. The tricks are:

- Seek reflected light.
- Watch the level of nostril darkness.
- Avoid lines.
- Ask yourself questions.
- Link to other features.

Now, look at the man's face again and see if you can you use these tricks to help you make the nose look more realistic.



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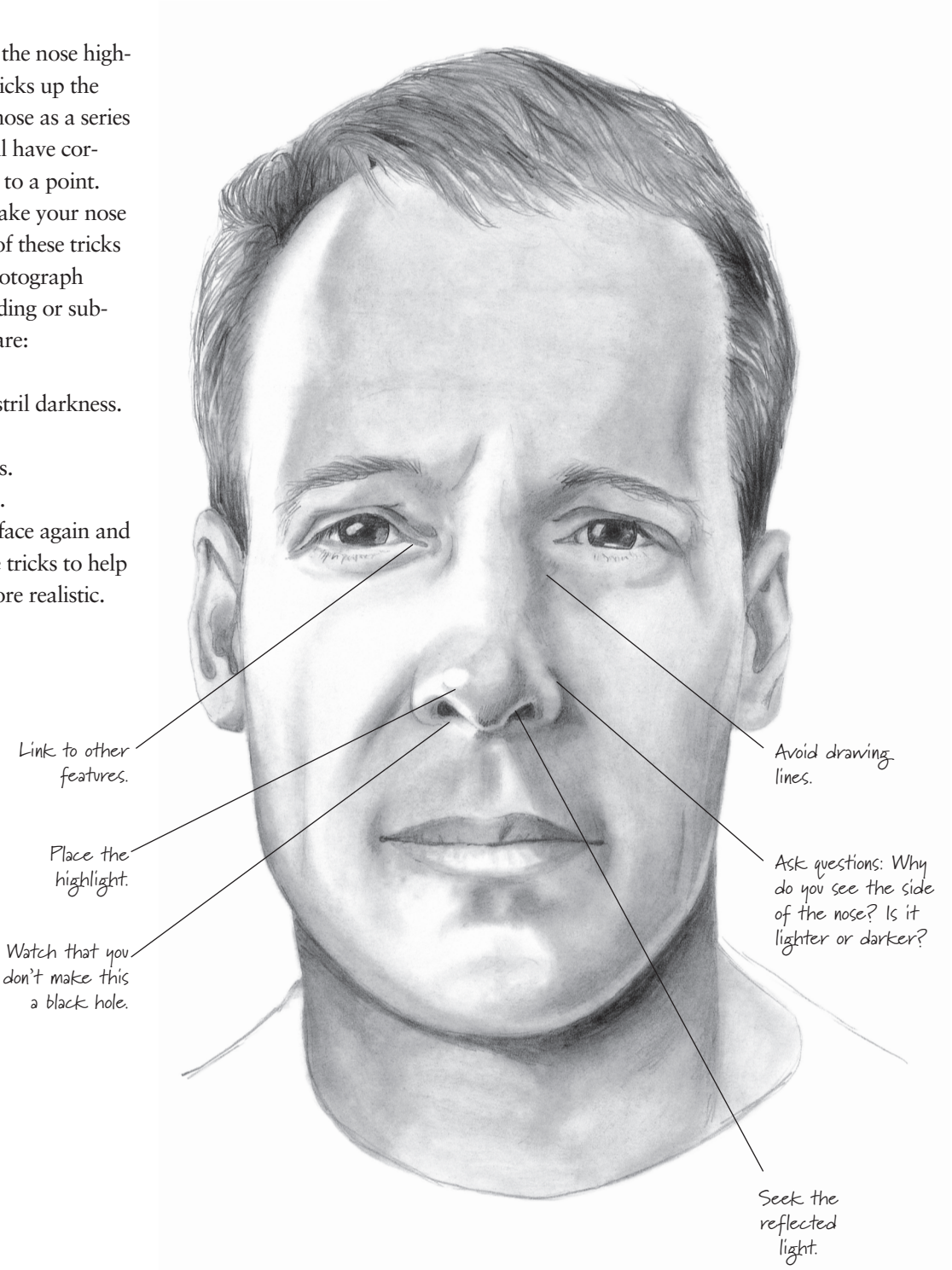

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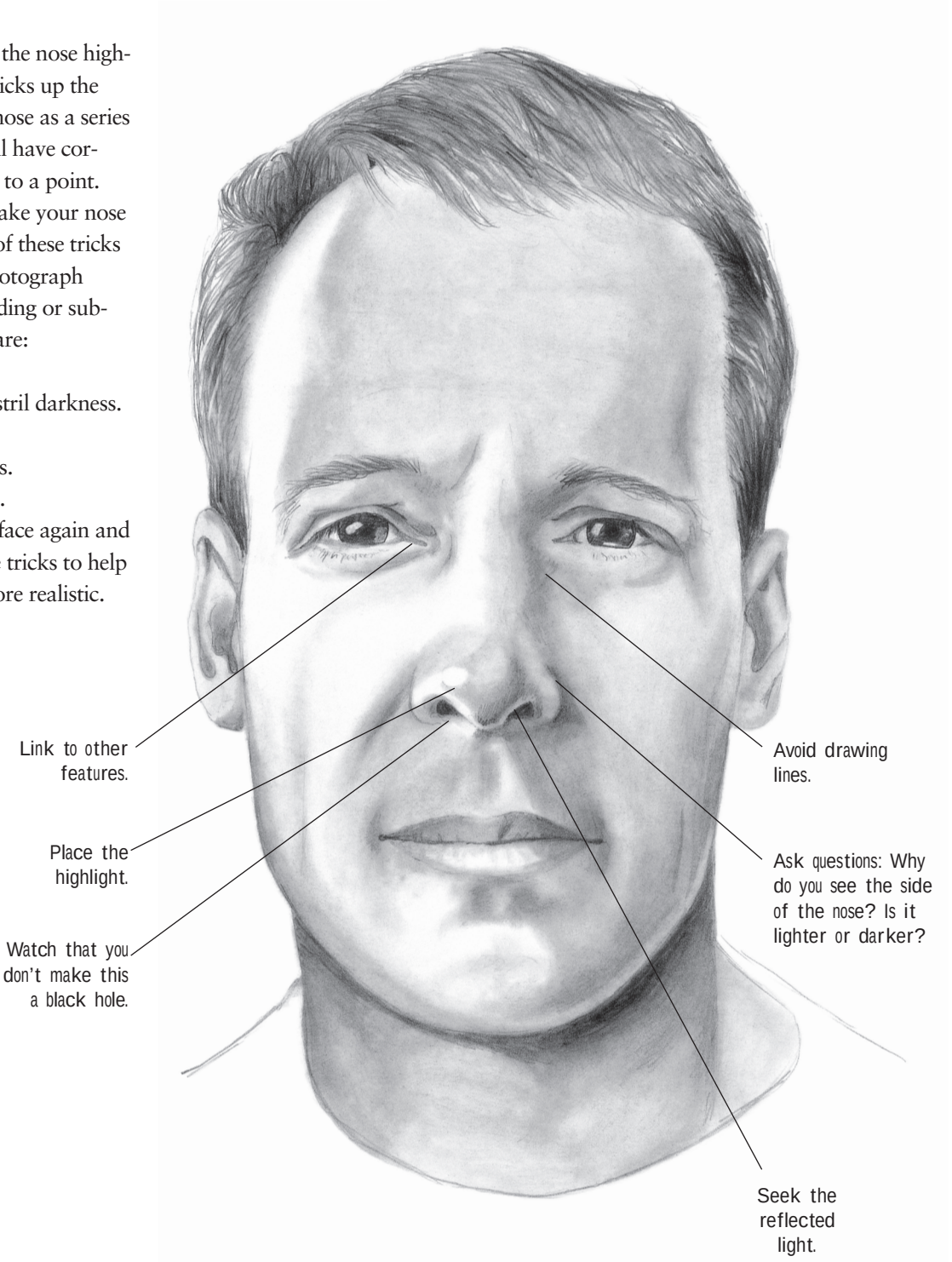
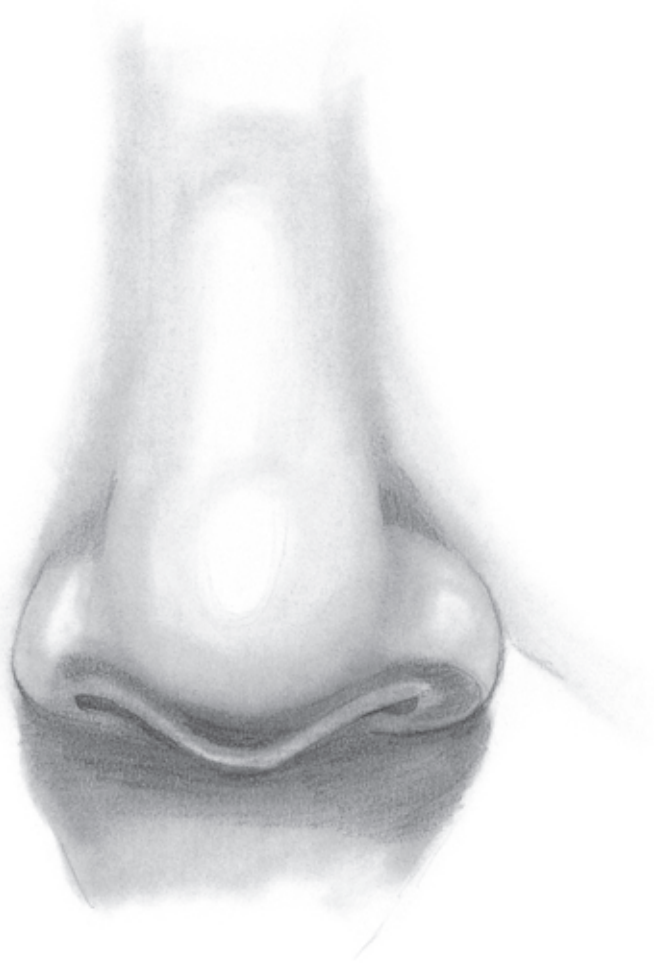


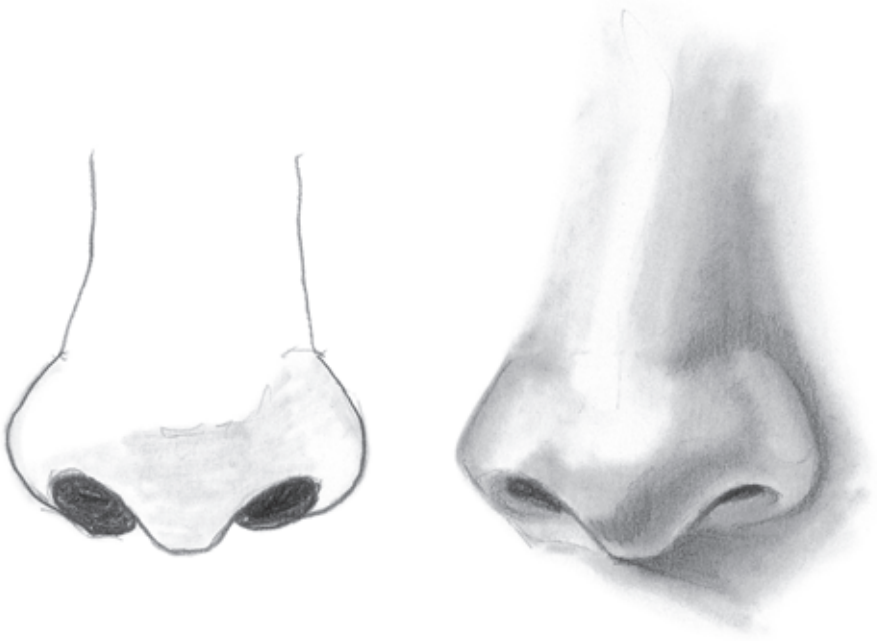
Seek reflected light

In chapter five, I reviewed the technique for making something round—I called it "seek." Artists seek to find round patterns and, when discovered, they shade that round object with a specific shading pattern. The tip of the nose is rounded (as in the drawing to the right); if you shade that particular pattern, even if you don't see it, you will have rounded the nose.

Watch the level of nostril darkness

Be careful when you draw the dark areas of the nostril. Two gigantic black holes in the face make viewers feel like they are staring down a shotgun barrel. Even if the photograph shows the nostrils as two black holes, don't get out the 6B lead and darken them in to that level. Make the darkest area near the top, as shown in the lower two drawings, and get lighter toward the bottom.

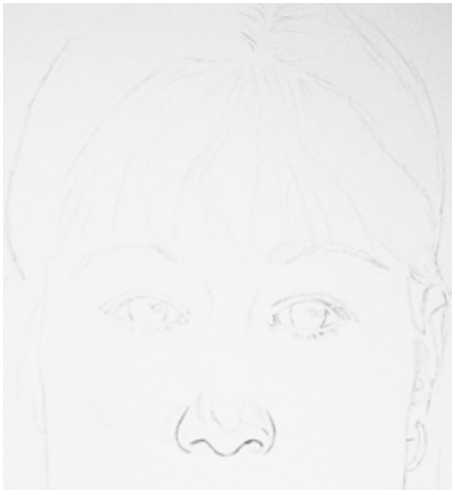




Look at the image on the left; it looks like two black holes rather than nostrils. Compare that to the image on the right, which is shaded more realistically. This just goes to show that shading can make or break your drawing. Keep these images in mind when you go to grab that 6B pencil.

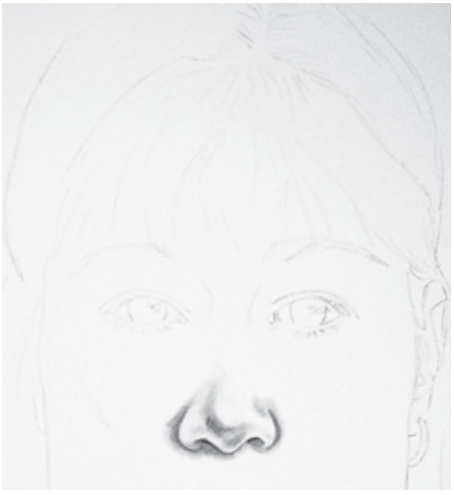
Shade the nose without lines

Get into the habit of never using lines to indicate the side of the nose. Avoiding lines on the side of the nose will limit the temptation to leave them in your completed drawing.



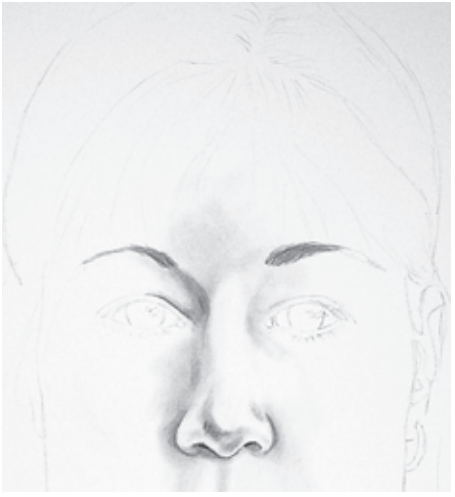
1 Begin with the bottom

Create the bottom of the nose with lines.



2 Blend away the Lines

Shade this area, all the while remembering to blend in the lines of the nose. Resist the temptation to leave them in!



3 Finish the shading

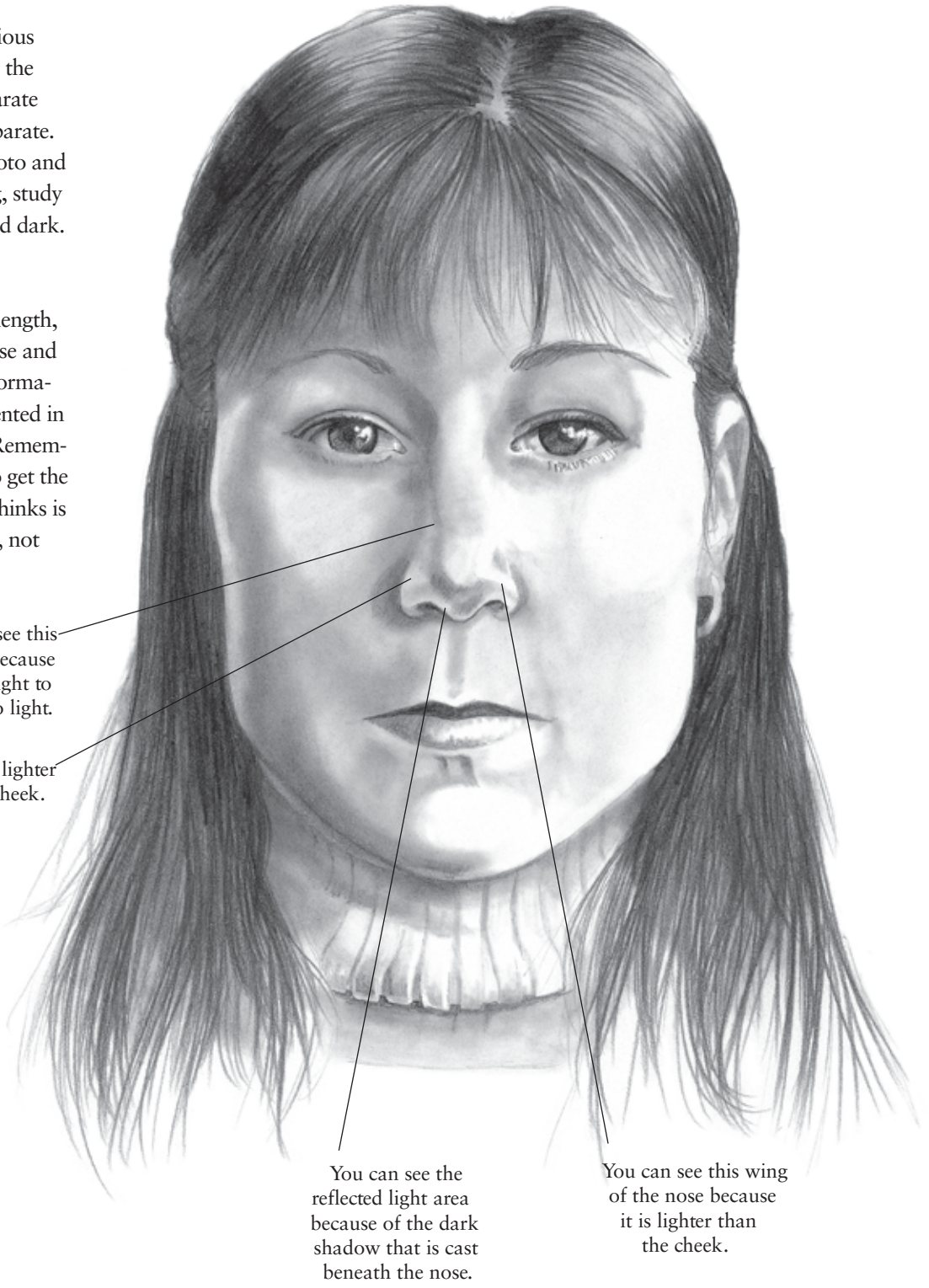
Create the top and sides of the nose with shading only. This will show the distinction between the cheek and nose without using any of those pesky lines.

Ask yourself questions

Ask yourself why you see the various parts of the nose. If two areas are the same shade, your eye cannot separate them, so you can't draw them separate. Lighting varies from photo to photo and face to face. Look at this drawing, study and question the areas of light and dark.

Link to other features

Be sure you link the nostrils, tip, length, direction, general shape of the nose and shading to the other available information on a face. Use the tools presented in the earlier chapters to help you. Remember, your mind is always trying to get the upper hand and tell you what it thinks is true of the art you're working on, not what is visually true.



Drawing Lips and Teeth

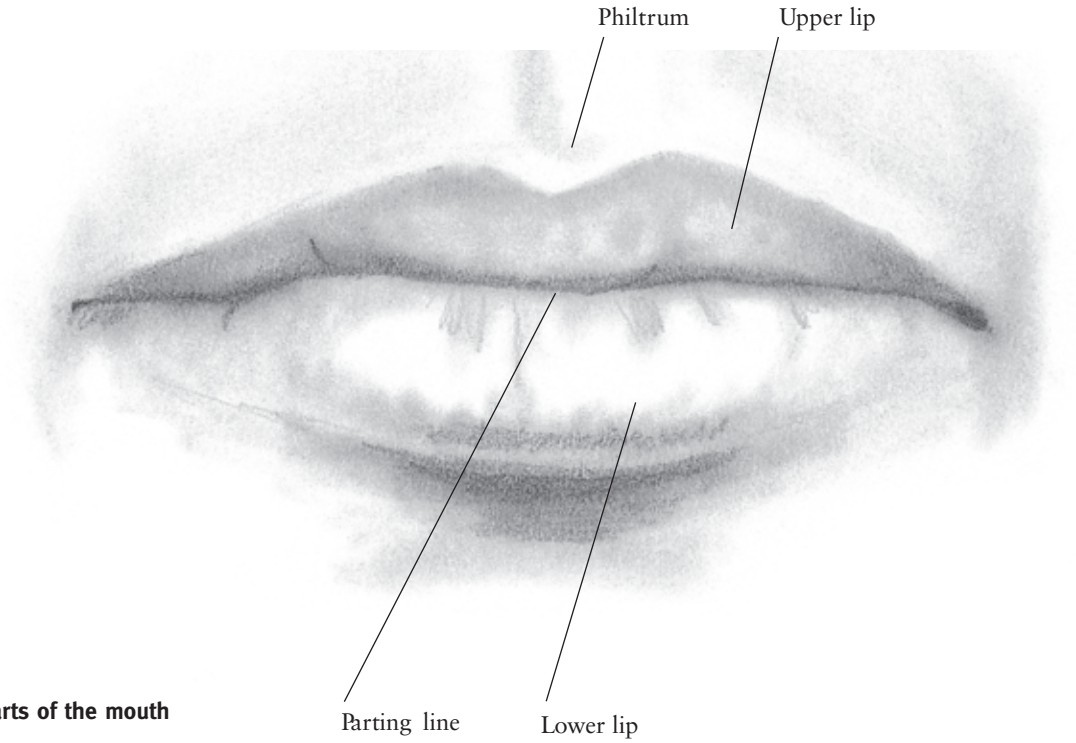
Lips are a fairly simple series of shapes. You will quickly notice a line that forms where the upper and lower lip meet. The upper lip looks like a mountain range with two distinct peaks; the lower lip looks basically like a half-circle. You will also quickly notice that a smile effects the other facial features. The lips widen and thin out, the cheeks pucker, the eyes crinkle and the jaw changes.

Teeth, on the other hand, are a real problem for many people. They can be difficult to shade realistically, especially as they move farther back in the mouth. This is also one of the few places you will be able to use some artistic license when drawing the face. If you draw exactly what you see, the hard lines between the teeth will create the appearance a picket fence.

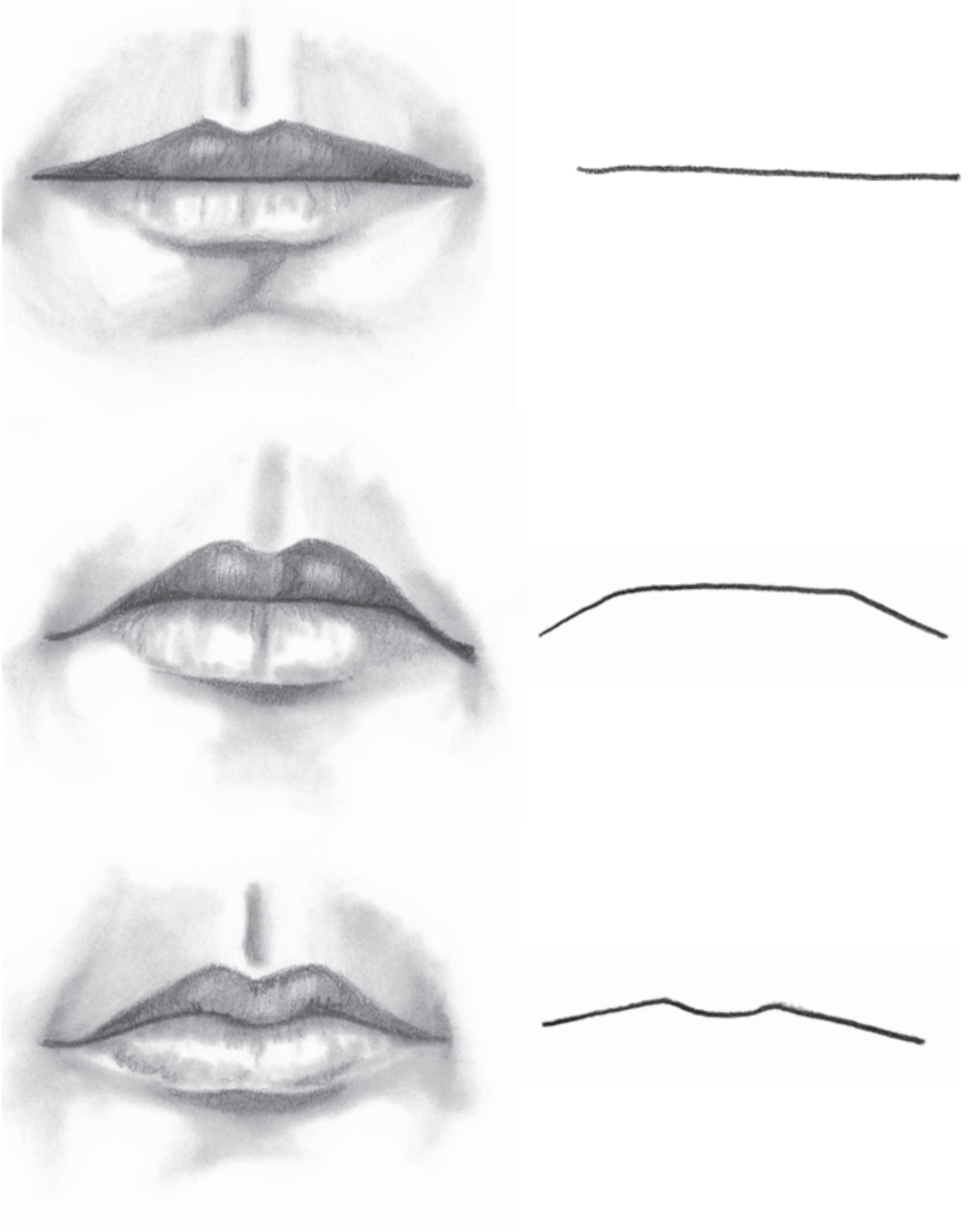
In this chapter, you'll tackle both lips and teeth. I will show you some helpful tricks and techniques to realistically render the mouth and avoid the picket fence look.

Parts of the mouth

The lips can be divided into three major areas of concentration: the upper lip, the line where the lips come together and the lower lip.

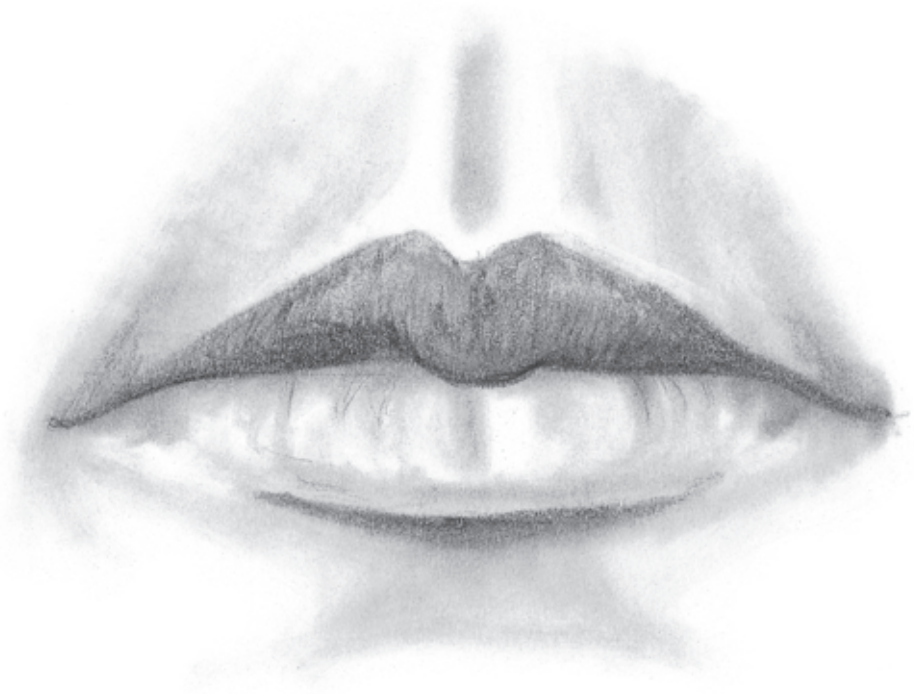


The parts of the mouth



OK, so the face has one line...
I usually start with the line of the mouth. Yes, the mouth is one of the few facial areas that actually contains a line. It is formed from the upper lip and lower lip touching each other. Pay particular attention to this line. Does it go up or down at the corners? Is it straight or wavy? Use a ruler to help you see the direction.

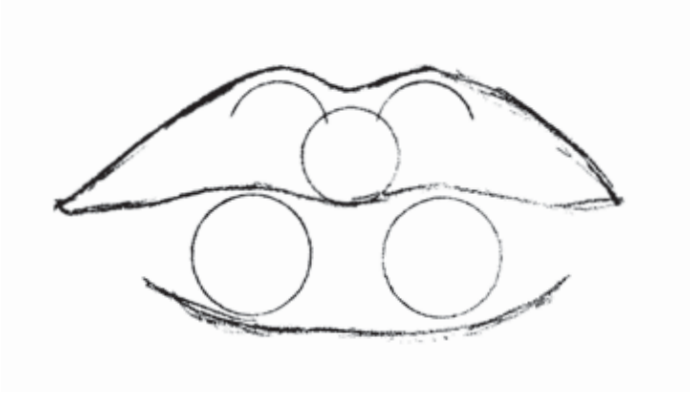
Upper lips
The upper lip is like a mountain range with two mountains. Some people have rolling hills, some have the Rockies and some have the Himalayas. Pay close attention to the location and shape of the two points of the upper lip.



In the groove
The top of the two mountains come to a point at two ridges that extend up to the nose and form a rounded groove called the *philtrum*. Some people have a pronounced philtrum, while on others it is slight.

Lower lips
The lower lip may be equal in size to the upper lip or smaller or larger. Use caution in indicating the lower lip. The top example is the correct way, while the lower example is incorrect. Do not completely outline the lower lip. Remember in chapter five the lower lip was used as an example of a problem area.

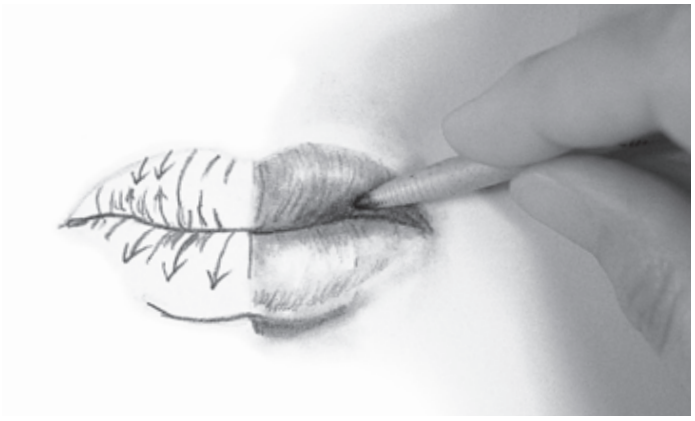
Shading the mouth



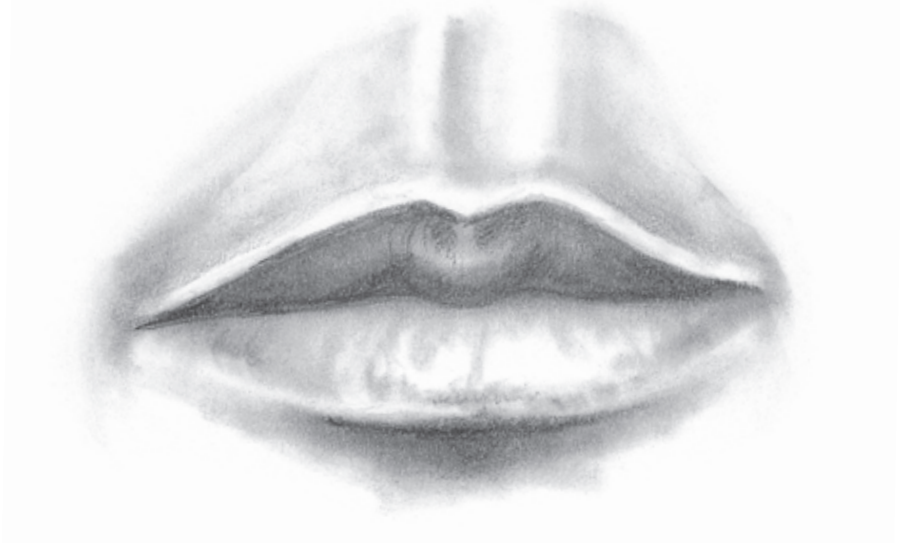
Don't drop the ball
We could, in a manner of speaking, say that the lips contain "five balls," that is, the lips form rounded shapes. These shapes may not appear in many mouths, but if you are sensitive to them, you will seek them when you shade the mouth.

Correct shading
Though upper and lower lips are about the same shade, artists usually shade the upper lip darker than the lower lip. This will help differentiate the two lips and add to the illusion of depth in the work.

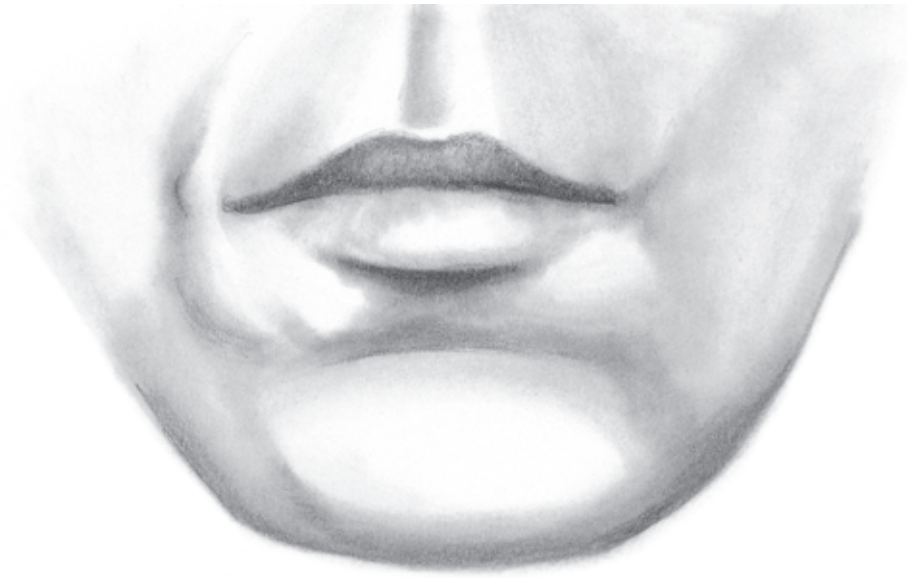
What to look for
Within the lip there are small lines or grooves. Use caution here, as they are usually subtle. Shading in the direction of the lip structure will help you define the roundness of the lips.



Think of a pumpkin
Consider a pumpkin when you shade the mouth. The ribs of the pumpkin help define its roundness. The "ribs" of the mouth help to define the roundness of the lip. This concept of shading something while thinking of the roundness of a pumpkin, is the same for shading mustaches, hair and other features.

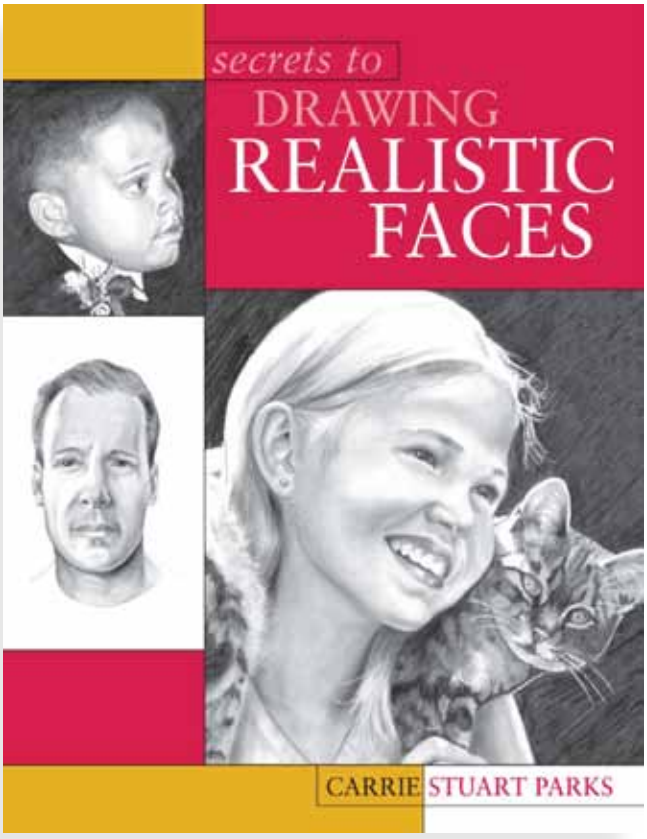


Lip rims
Around the mouth you might see a lighter area caused by a lip rim. This is a narrow area where light is captured around the mouth.



Other mouth shapes
The mouth forms a barrel, or rounded shape, over the teeth. There may be pouches and dips of lighter or darker areas caused by the shape of the underlying teeth, jaw and muscles.

Want More?



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