

GRAPHING A PHOTOGRAPH

To help you draw from photographs, you can create your own graph overlays. They are easy to make by drawing boxes on clear acetate report covers with a permanent marker. Use a ruler to make the lines very straight so the boxes are perfect squares. Once they are done, slip a photo underneath to turn your photo into a graph exercise.

Make two graphs, one with 1-inch squares and another with 1/2-inch squares. The more details

your photo has, the smaller the boxes should be. This helps you draw the little shapes better.

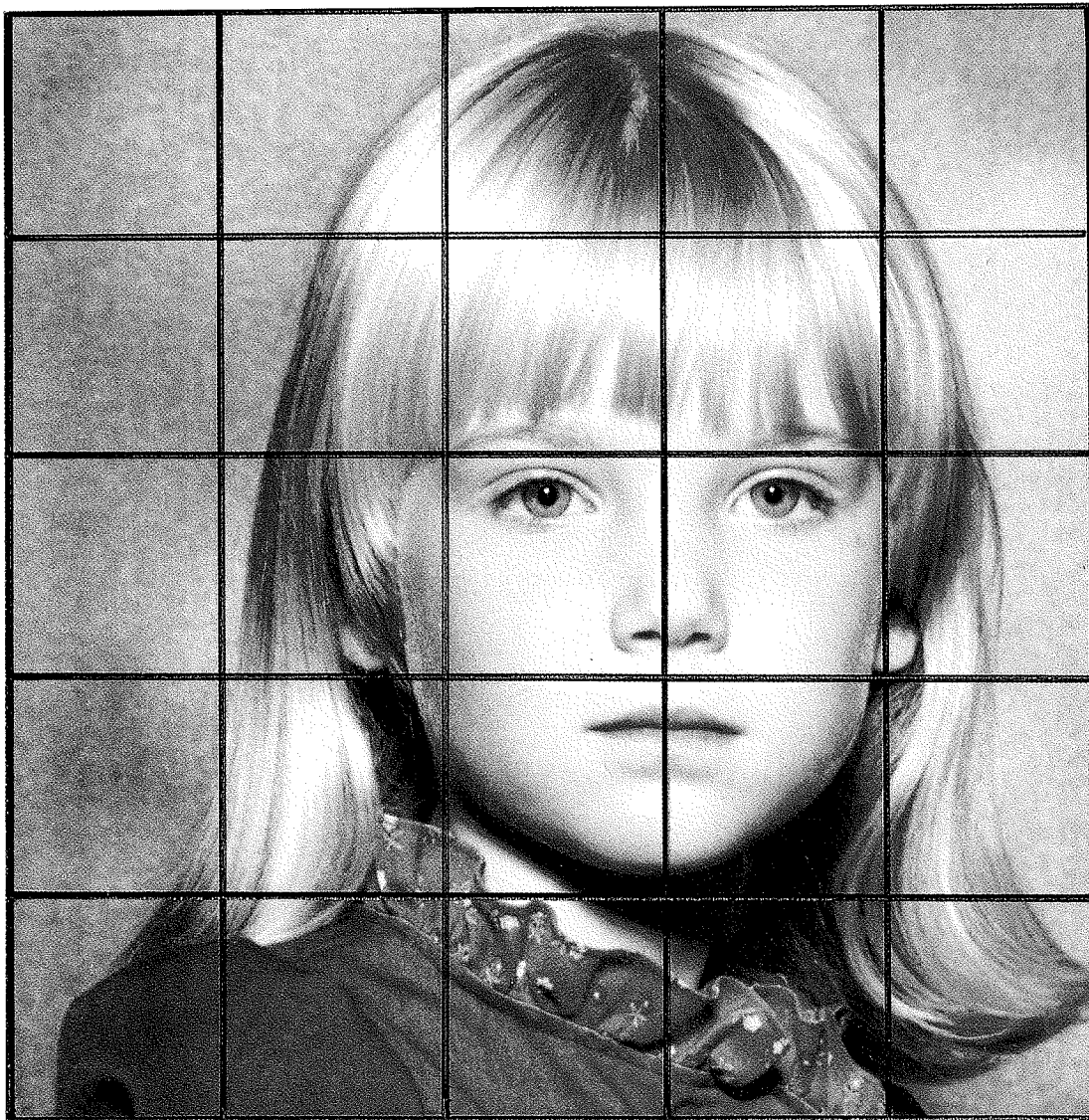
Drawing Shelly

This is what a photograph looks like under a graph (this one has 1-inch squares). See how it, too, is now a box exercise just like the line drawings? The difference is that now you have to see the shading, shadows and color as little puzzle-piece shapes, too.

I chose this photo because of

the subject's nice, simple expression. The face doesn't have a light side and a dark side, but it does have good shadows under the chin and against the sides (for contrast). The light is coming from the front instead of from one side. This makes the skin tones more even in color.

Turn the photo upside down now and try to draw it. Remember, you want to see this *not* as a picture of a face. You want to see it as *shapes*. When it is upside



Drawing something upside down helps you see it as just shapes.

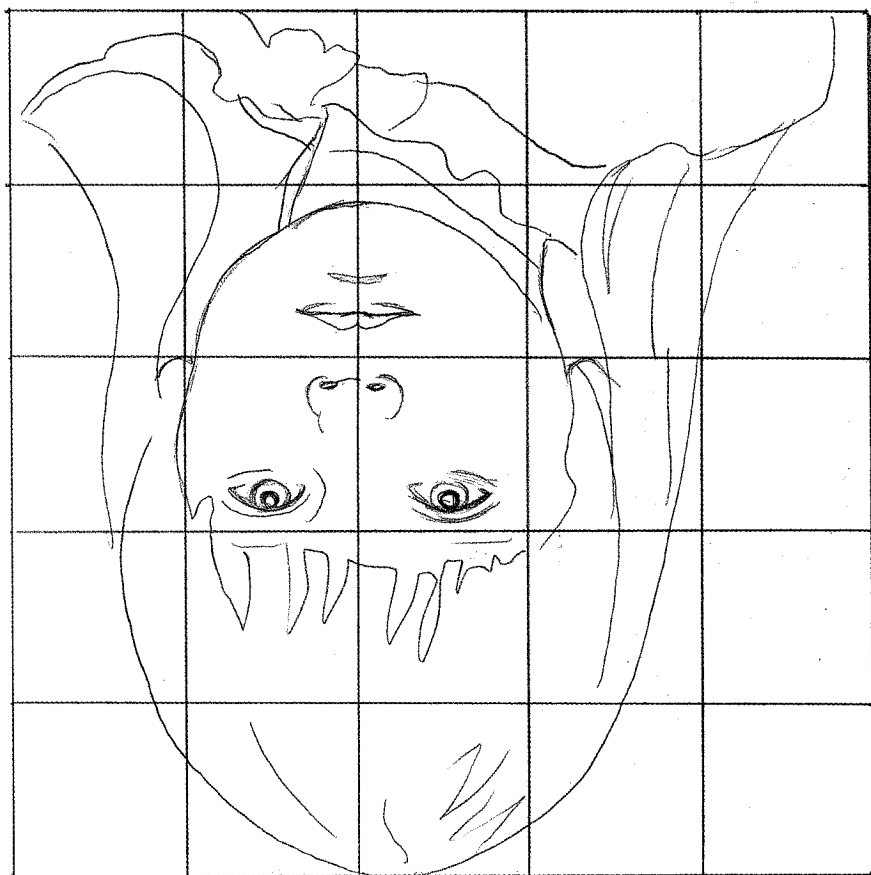
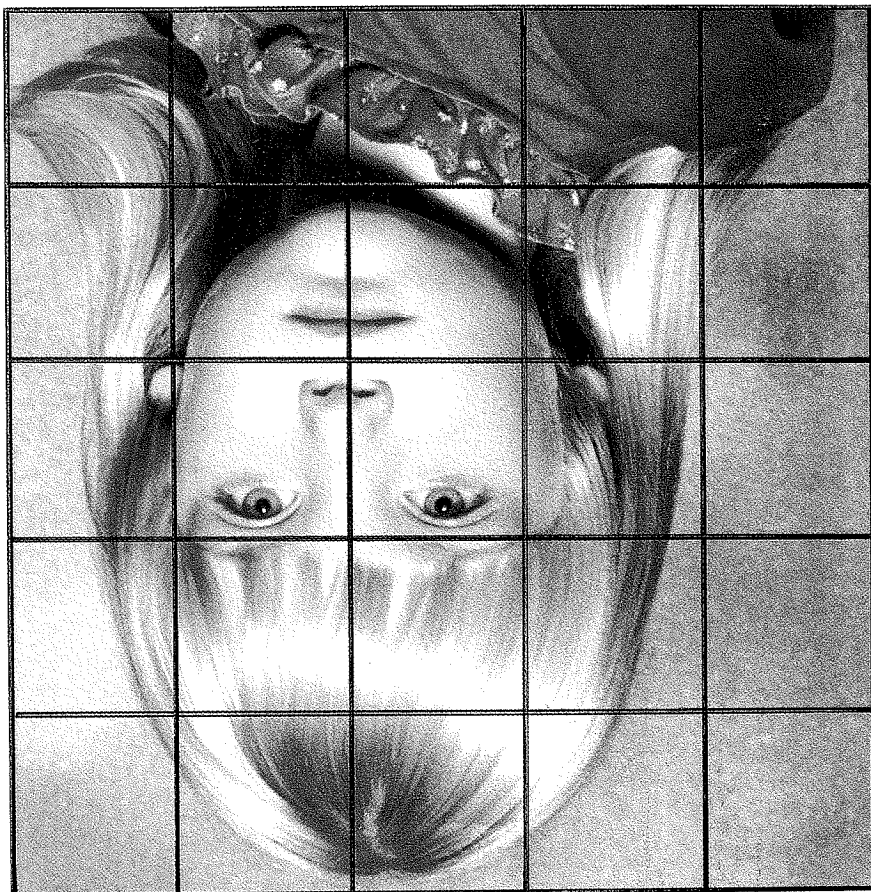
down, it prevents you from looking at it as a person's face and drawing from your memory of what a person looks like.

Draw a graph on your drawing paper. Be sure that the pencil lines are drawn *extremely light*. They will be erased later. You will need a 1-inch graph, with five boxes across and five boxes down. Be sure that your squares are perfectly "square." If their measurements are inaccurate, the size of your shapes will be incorrect. This will make your drawing look "off" in its likeness. Only a very accurate line drawing will make your work look real.

Before you begin drawing, study the shapes contained within each square over the photograph. Begin by drawing those shapes, *one box at a time*. Sketch your shapes lightly at first, making corrections as you go. Remember that these will only be guidelines for placement and will be drawn over or erased as your work develops with shading.

I have finished drawing the shapes in my graph. This is what is called an "accurate line drawing." This means that all of your shapes are now drawn in their proper size, shape and placement. All the facial features are now in place, thanks to the graph and your skills at seeing shapes.

Note: We will be drawing this portrait later on. Keep this line drawing in a safe place; we will come back to it later.



See how this now looks like the line drawings of Abe Lincoln on page 18?