

OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING

Title/Name: Observational Drawing - Learning to look closely

Rationale and Possible Implications:

Looking Closely is one capacity that young people can develop as they explore all the ways that design is embedded in the world around them. While exercising the ability to Look Closely is often part of STEAM programming or engineering and design activities, a young person from early childhood through high school can look closely and observe far outside of a formal learning context—from the breakfast table, to outdoor spaces, or even by looking at images posted online. Observational drawing is one exercise that can help learners to do some of this close looking.

Find a brief write-up of the observational drawing activity from Agency by Design [here](#).

Observational drawing could be done by a child and caregiver, or asynchronously by older learners, though sharing drawings and reflecting on what was noticed through drawing could be a great follow-up activity to encourage in-person or online conversation. Anything from a piece of fruit, to a garden tool, to a piece of furniture or a kitchen appliance could be used for observational drawings.

Observational drawing could be used in many different ways, including:

- Parents at home could use the prompts and questions on the linked activity write-up to encourage a young child to notice and draw an object they see in front of them, and to start conversations with learners about what they noticed through drawing.
- Older children could engage in observational drawing on their own, then share their work with others through an online gallery, a peer-to-peer video chat, posts on a private blog for the classroom, etc.
- As a follow-up, learners could reflect on their work using a thinking routine as a prompt for online discussion, classroom video chats, or independent process journaling. Two routines we recommend are [Parts—Purposes—Complexities](#) and [See—Think—Wonder](#).

For more thinking routines, tools, and practices, visit the [AgencybyDesign.org website](https://www.agencybydesign.org). For a wealth of examples on how educators and parents are using Agency by Design practices in socially-distanced and at-home settings, check out our Twitter and Instagram feeds [@AgencybyDesign](#).

Suggested Use: Asynchronous (with opportunities for synchronous follow-up discussion); In-Person guided activity