

Drawing an Orca

By Vicky Earle

At first glance, whales look simple to draw. But sometimes the proportions can be tricky. Using a "bounding box" and guidelines over your reference helps the angles and negative spaces around your subject become more obvious. This is useful to define the outline and edges of the shapes you are drawing.

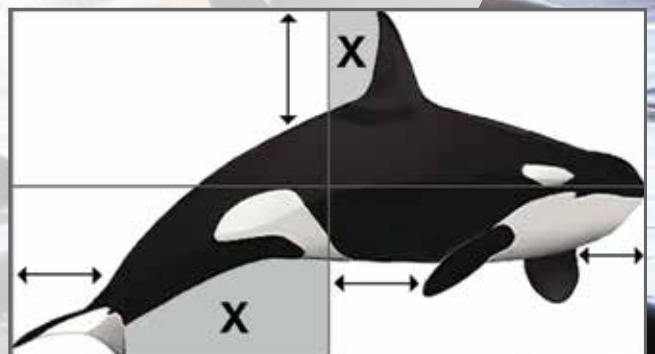
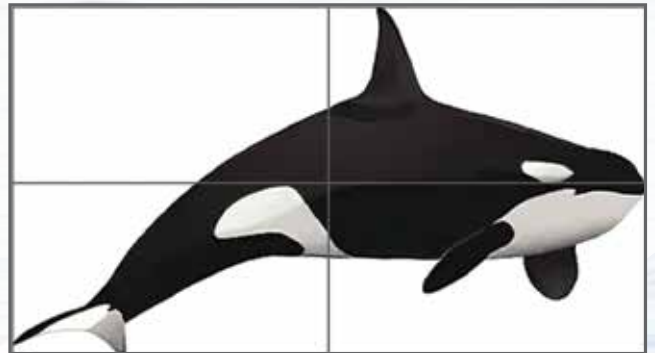


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1) Draw a box around your subject, making sure each side of the box touches the top, bottom, and sides of the object you are drawing. Then find the halfway point on each side and divide your box into equal quarters.

2) Notice the negative spaces between the vertical and horizontal guideline lines and the angles of the whale (gray areas with an "x"). Also notice the distance between different parts of the whale and the sides of the bounding box.

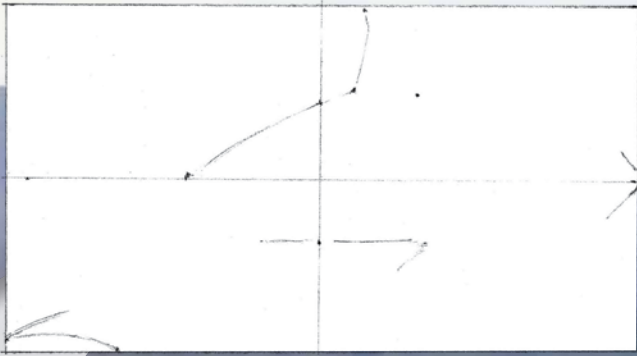


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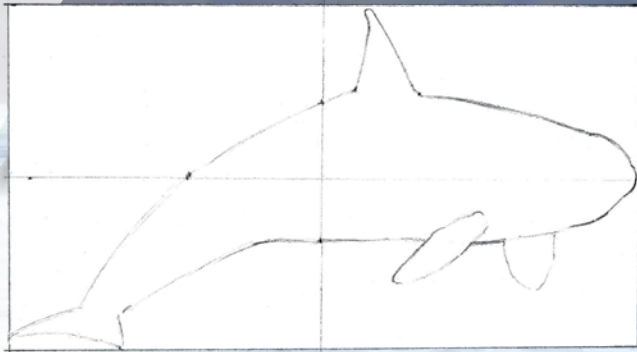
3) When you're ready to draw, set up your box and guidelines lightly in pencil.



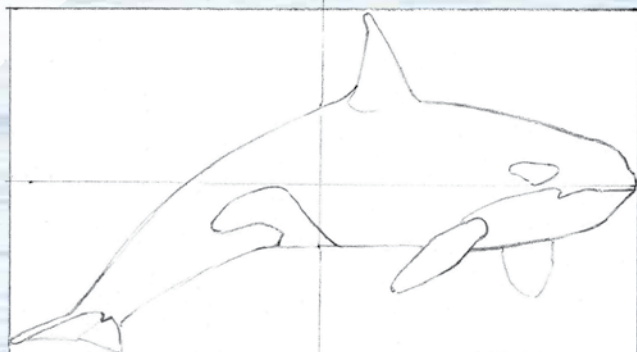
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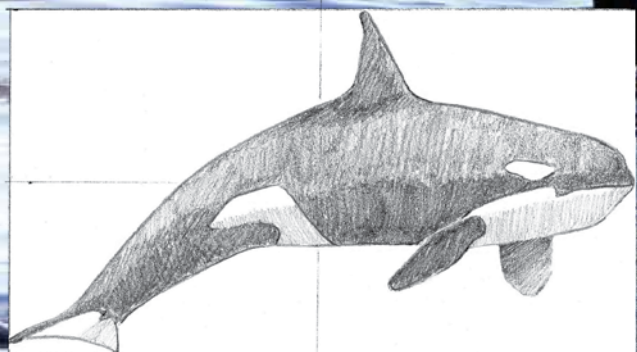
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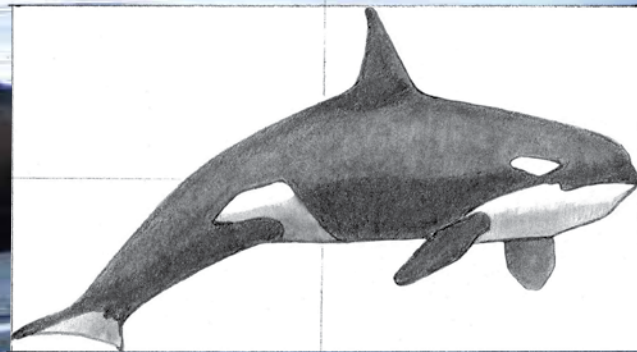
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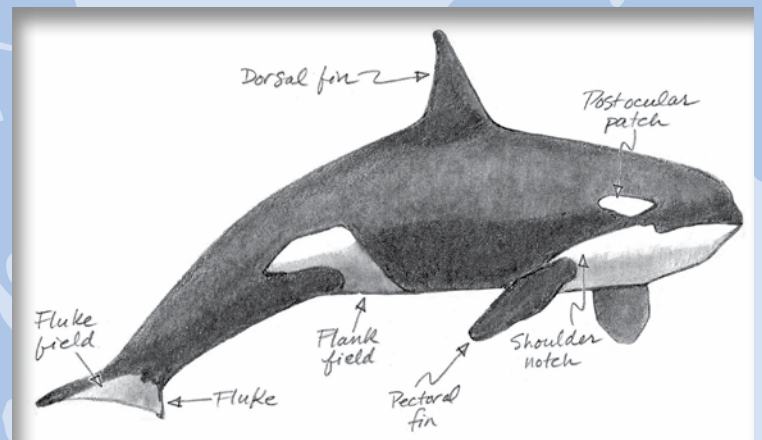


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- 4) Next, looking at the reference, make a few marks in your bounding box that correspond to key points on the whale. For example, the position and angle of the dorsal fin, nose, belly, the arch of the back, and the tail.
- 5) Now, looking closely at the reference, fill in the lines between your key points.
- 6) Add in the white shapes, paying attention to how far (or close) they are to the guidelines. Finding the negative spaces is helpful here too.
- 7) Shade in the middle value and dark areas of the whale with the side of your pencil. Notice it will be slightly lighter on top and darker on the bottom, even in the white areas.
- 8) You can go one step further and blend your pencil marks with the end of a cotton swab to smooth out the tones on the surface of the whale.
- 9) As a final step, erase the box and guidelines. It's fun to label the different parts of your whale too!



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Natural science, medical, and botanical illustrator Vicky Earle delights in connecting people to nature through art. She is a member of Nature Vancouver, the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, and a signature member of the Artists for Conservation. Her recent award-winning book *Exploring Vancouver Naturehoods* is available at bookstores throughout Vancouver and BC. Details can be found on her website, drawinnature.com, and Instagram [@drawinnature](https://www.instagram.com/drawinnature).