



## Drawing leaves using negative spaces

You will need: pencil, paper, a plant with leaves, or some things you've got around you like a cup, fork, spoon, a set of bottles.

This exercise builds on the ability to see and draw edges, by seeing and drawing negative spaces. Negative spaces are the 'empty' space around an object. This makes it easier to draw difficult views, especially foreshortened views. Negative spaces build on the idea of edges as shared edges: if you draw the negative spaces around a foreshortened form, you will inadvertently also draw the form. It strengthens and improves the unity of your compositions.

Lay the stem with leaves on a piece of paper. Rather than thinking of drawing a leaf, look at the white shapes surrounding the leaves. Focus on one of those shapes and begin to draw that first 'negative' space or 'empty' space.

Draw all the white spaces/empty spaces onto your paper. Do not draw the leaves at all, but be aware that in drawing the edges of the negative spaces, you will have inadvertently drawn the edges of the leaves. Where one leaf crosses another, ignore that edge. Your concern is with the negative / empty spaces only. When you have drawn all of the spaces, use your pencil to fill them in so that the negative spaces are dark and the positive forms (the stem and leaves) are left untouched.

Drawings that emphasise negative' empty spaces and shapes are unified, giving equal attention to both object you are creating and the 'empty' space around it. Try it with a chair, or bottles any house hold object, or things around you.

