
Art Masterpiece: Frederic Remington "Turn Him Loose Bill"



Keywords: line, movement, detail

Grade: 5th – 6th

Activity: Horse Sketch with a Grid

Meet The Artist:

- Frederic Remington was born in New York (1861 – 1909). His father was a Calvary soldier. He loved athletics and was good at swimming, fishing and riding horses.
 - He liked to draw and his favorite subjects were horses, soldiers and Native American Indians. He also liked to draw caricatures of teachers and cadet officers.
 - As a young man he attended college but was not good in his studies. At age 19 he left college and headed West. He worked 4 years as a cowboy and a wagon train hand. He sketched everything he saw wherever he traveled – Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona and Texas. Much of his art was a recording of the West's history – he showed the viewer a realistic picture of what the frontier was like at that time.
 - Painting daily life in the west established him as an artist. His art made him famous by the time he was thirty. He was also a well-known sculptor.
 - He did not like to learn by following other people's rules – he preferred to work directly from nature in his own way.
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Background information on the artwork:

“Turm Him Loose Bill” is a real action painting. Everyone is wondering if the bucking bronco can be tamed. The largest figure is the hard-riding cowboy who is trying to stay on the horse. The other cowboys are painted smaller so they look farther away.

The figures are carefully painted to show **movement**. Movement is easily shown through the use of curved and straight lines. The man on the left leans back to swing his lariat. The **curved lines** of the horses’ legs and riders’ body also show movement.

The painting’s many **details** also create an image of action. Clouds of dust tell us that the horse and cowboys have been kicking the ground. Fringes on chaps are blowing in all directions. Belts, ropes, the horse’s mane and tail all swing out and up into the air. Details matter and must have been well thought out by the artist for the image to make sense to us the viewer.

Remington seems to want us to feel as if we are right there with the cowboys.

Discussion:

What is happening in the painting? (Cowboys are taming a wild horse).

Where do you see **horizontal lines**? (the fence, the horizon) **Vertical lines**? (fenceposts, figures of men).

Where do you see **diagonal lines**? (in the horse and the rider). The diagonal lines and curved lines indicate movement.

Where do you see **movement** in the painting? (Horse is leaping, man is swinging in the saddle).

Can you find 3 details that add to the feeling of movement? (horse’s mane and tail, the dust is floating, fringe on mans pants).

Have you ever been to a ranch? Did you see any horses? Describe their bodies in simple shapes.

Have you ever drawn a horse? Was it a simple animal to draw? Why not? Today we hope to help make it a bit easier.

ACTIVITY: Drawing a Horse using Grid lines

8.5 X 11 Horse picture with grid lines (1 set - reusable)

8.5 X 11 paper with grid lines only 1/student

8.5 x 11 Plain white paper - to be used as a covering page (reusable)

5 x 7" scrap paper - 1/student

Pencils

Individual pencil sharpeners (not all classrooms have one)

2" x 2 1/2" post-it note pad (1 pc/student)

Colored pencils

***Grids/ Horse for this project is available through your District Coordinator.

Process:

The purpose of this Horse-drawing project is to help the student realize that even drawing complicated objects can be made easier if broken down and viewed as a series of lines connected to each other. They should try not to set their minds on drawing a horse but rather that they are drawing what they see in each section of the grid. The horse will be the by-product.

Explain that this is an actual technique used by many artists. Some artist will use actual grids made of wire and situate the structure between them and the actual subject they are drawing.

**Students should NOT trace the horse.

PLEASE use the document-camera and the classroom pull-down screen to walk through these steps with the students.

1. On scrap paper tell students you want them to draw a horse using their imagination. Give them no visual references. This should be a quick sketch. Limit to 1 minute.
2. Set aside their first horse and handout the grids and plain paper.

Students should begin by placing the plain piece of paper over the grid drawing with the horse. Only the top row of the grid should be visible.

Students will be drawing on the paper with the grids lines.

3. Students begin by counting across the correct number of squares so they begin drawing in the right spot on their empty grid paper.

4. Direct them to LIGHTLY draw what the first square shows and then move to the next square. When they complete the first row they can lower the cover paper to reveal the next row of squares of the horse drawing. Continue till completion.

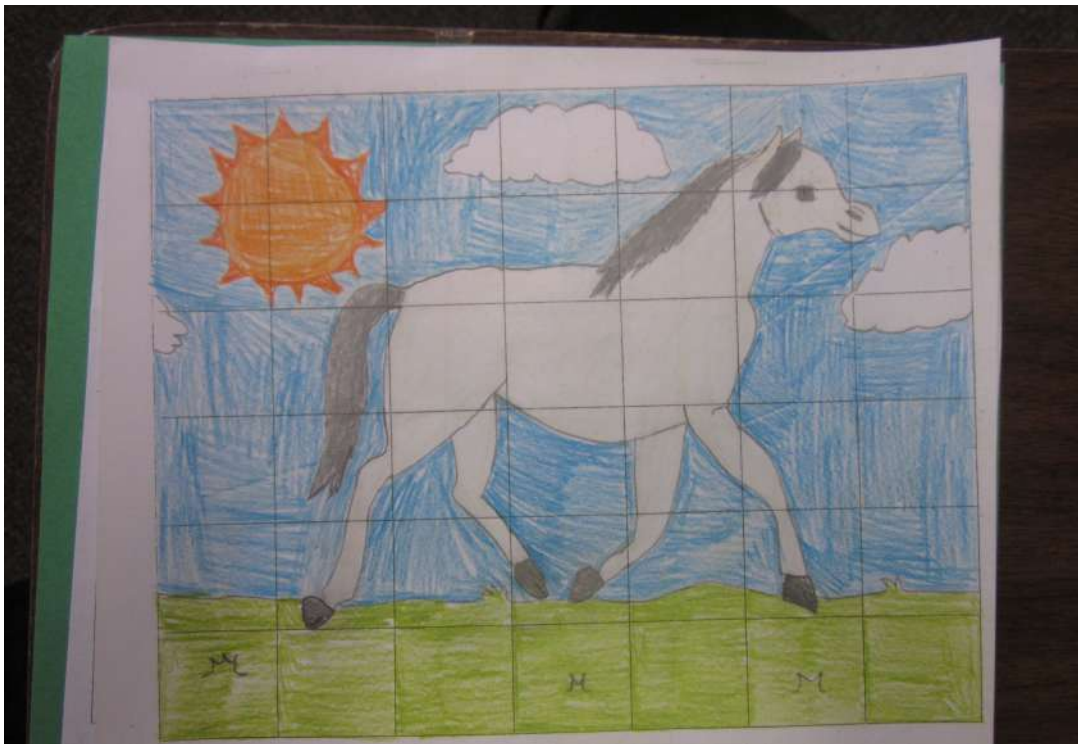
Students may struggle with this technique. Encourage them to stay patient and try to only focus on what they see in one square at a time. You may use a small 2" post it note to cover over the square that is coming next so they truly are only looking at the one square. It is a process of moving the post-it along the row.

5. Once they are done working through the entire grid they can go back over their lines and darken them. This will be a continuous smooth line.
6. If time permits, students can then use colored pencils to draw a simple scene/landscape to complete their drawing.
7. **In closing, ask the students to compare their two horse drawings. The first one drawn from their imagination and the second horse drawn using the grid technique.**

Ask what they have learned today. We are wanting them to walk away realizing that even difficult objects can be drawn successfully if we stop *thinking* about what we are drawing but instead focusing on drawing what we see... one line at a time.

Artists are masters of observing lines and shapes and how they come together.

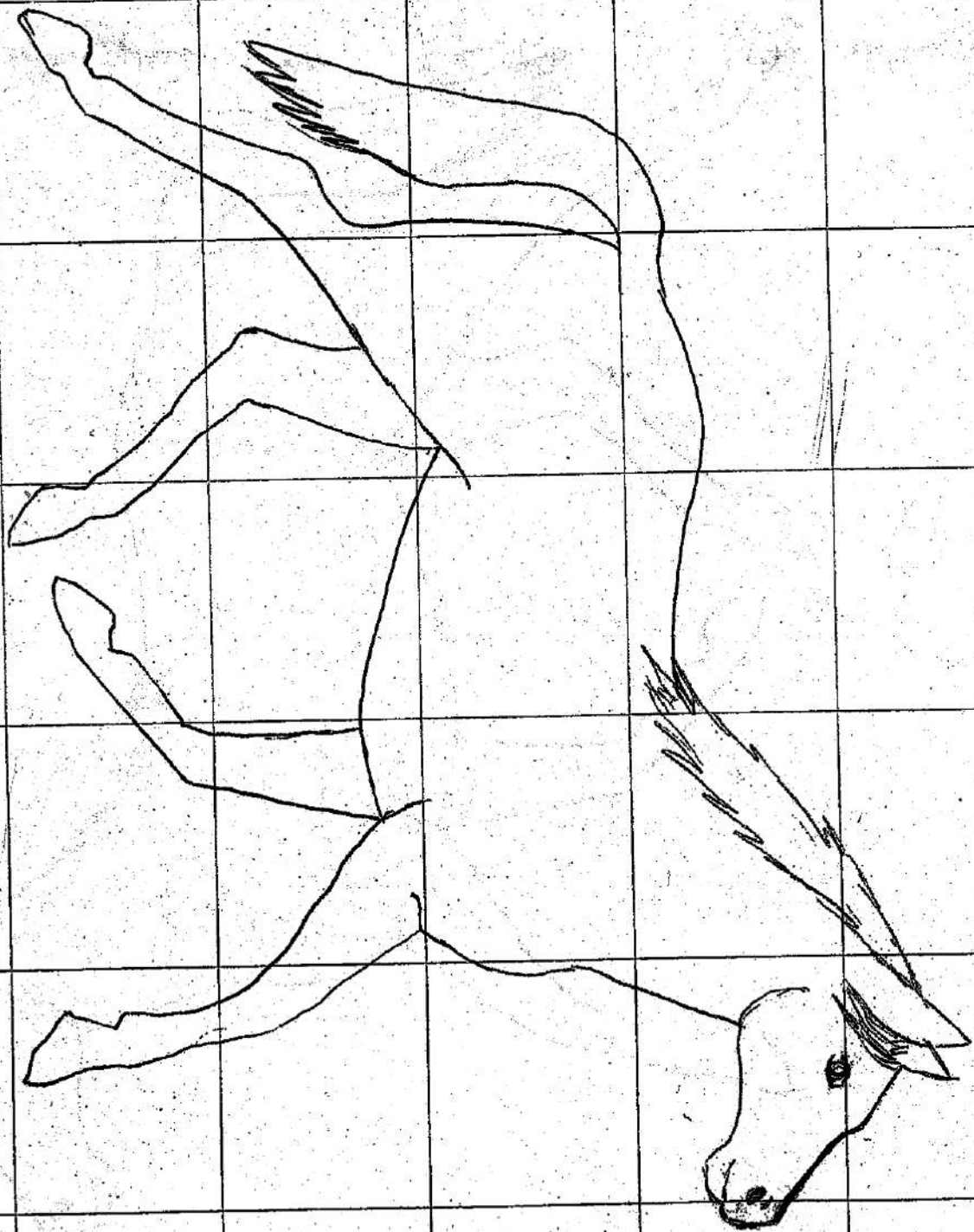
Student Samples below:



Chandler Unified School District Art Masterpiece



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