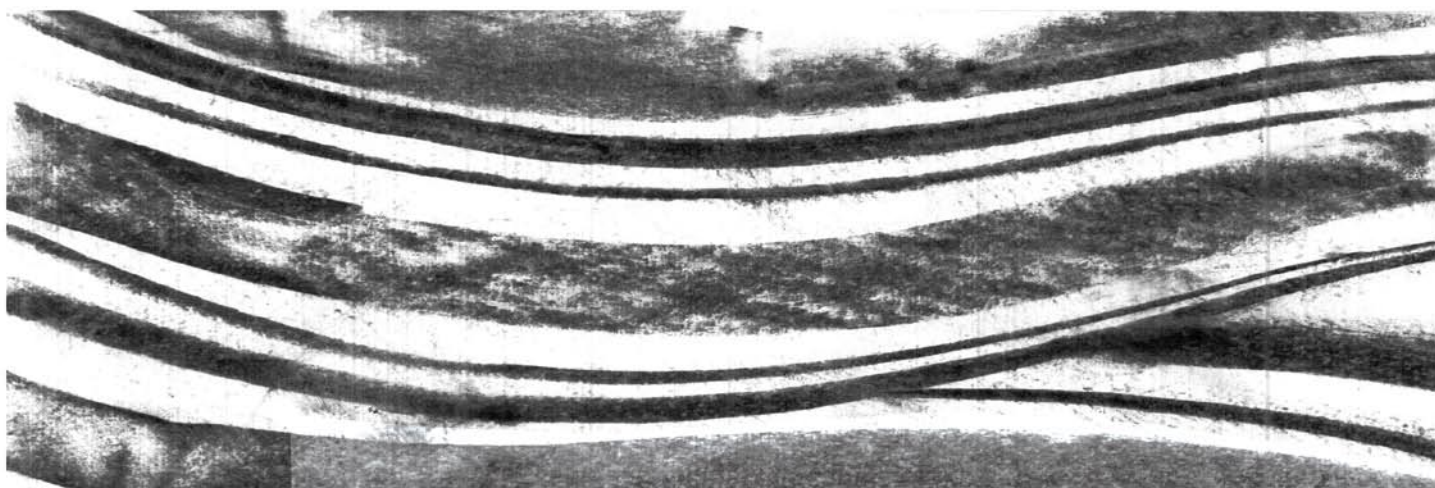


Explore the High Weald with Charcoal in 1 hour



**Things you'll need:** Viewfinders (L shaped pieces of card), 6B pencils, good quality A3 and A4 cartridge paper, willow charcoal, putty rubbers, a stopwatch, industrial and natural landscape images in black and white, hairspray

**Get prepared!** Lay out for each pupil a 6B pencil, and a sheet of A4 paper. Each table will need landscape images, more A4 and A3 paper.

## What is the High Weald and what does it have to do with Charcoal?

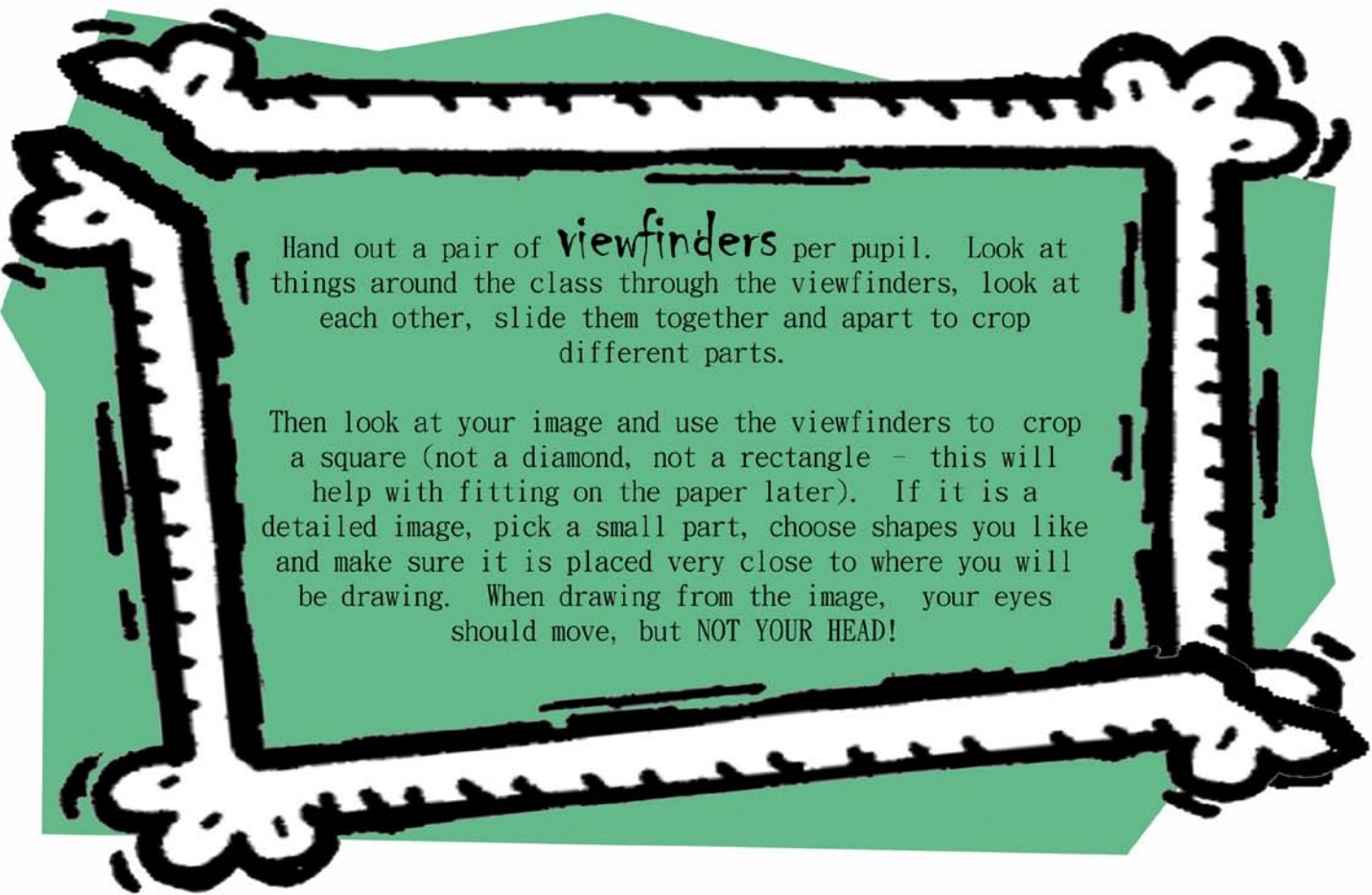
The High Weald is an area of protected countryside (you could show it on a map). People have lived and worked in the High Weald for thousands of years, using resources found naturally in the area. We will be working with charcoal, so what is it? Charcoal is essentially burnt wood. The High Weald is one of the most heavily wooded areas in the country and it was once a place where iron was produced (particularly in Roman and Tudor times). It had all the resources needed for this process: Iron ore (found in the ground), fast flowing streams (to power the furnaces and forges) and wood (to make CHARCOAL, which was burned slowly, producing high temperatures to heat the furnaces). The Romans thought that Sweet Chestnut trees made the best charcoal and introduced them to this country. .

Get your artists started....

**GO**

Look at the images on the table - some are industrial and some are natural... some have irregular shapes and flowing lines and some have angular shapes and straight lines. Once you've looked for a couple of minutes, choose 1 image to work from (everyone will need an image each so make sure you have enough). There will be NO CHANGING so take all the spare images away.....

Hold up the image you chose and put it 1 fingers length away from your nose. Keep it there for a count of 30 and then put it down. Did it make your eyes go googly? Now hold it at a full arms length - are you struggling to see the detail? This is why we need to the image we are working from to be at the right distance from our eyes while we work.



Hand out a pair of **viewfinders** per pupil. Look at things around the class through the viewfinders, look at each other, slide them together and apart to crop different parts.

Then look at your image and use the viewfinders to crop a square (not a diamond, not a rectangle – this will help with fitting on the paper later). If it is a detailed image, pick a small part, choose shapes you like and make sure it is placed very close to where you will be drawing. When drawing from the image, your eyes should move, but **NOT YOUR HEAD!**



## Welcome to **READY, STEADY, DRAW!**

This is a great technique that is used as a drawing warm up and can be applied before any artistic endeavour. It's like stretching at the gym before you start exercising. It will help your hand and your eyes to start working together. Be warned, it is quite exciting and can get quite noisy!

With the pencil, draw a cross on the paper to make 4 equal rectangles (you can also fold in half and in half again if you prefer). In the corner of one square write 1, in another write 30, in another write 15 and in the last one write 10. Put your name on the back.

Ask everyone to look at the image they have cropped – we will be copying that into the square with 1 in it, and we will have one minute to do it.

**BUT NO-ONE START** until you say..... **READY, STEADY, DRAW!**

Don't worry about shading or little details, concentrate on shape and pattern, but you must try to fill the whole square. Use the stopwatch then and do a countdown for the last 10 seconds, when everyone must put their pencil down. Move to the second box, where you will repeat the exercise with only 30 seconds to complete your drawing. Then the third in 15 seconds, and finally the fourth in only 10 seconds (don't forget the countdown from 10 to 0 every time).

**Phew!** Now look at the 4 drawings - which is your favourite? Surprisingly, it often isn't the one that took the longest. Fold the paper to reveal your favourite and tick it. Now remove all the original images and the viewfinders.

Take another sheet of A4, split it up as before and put your name on the back. Put the pencil in the hand you never write with..... look out for cheeky types here trying to use their writing hand! Now repeat the exercise but don't pause between drawings to calm down or chatter...



just **TAKE A BREATH** and move straight onto the next one.



At the end pick your favourite and tick it. Try a show of hands to see which drawing was most commonly favourite - was it 30 seconds, 10 seconds? Now pick your favourite from the two ticked drawings, and tick it again.

Now remove the pencils...

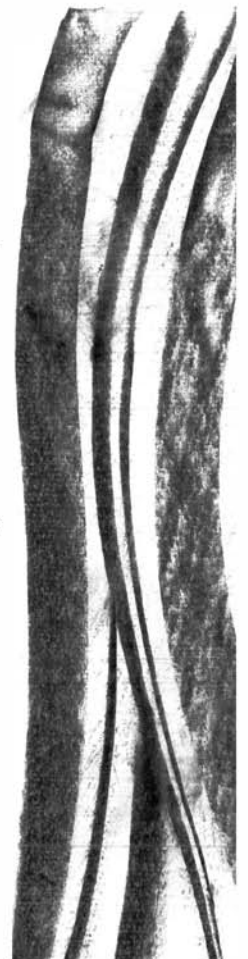
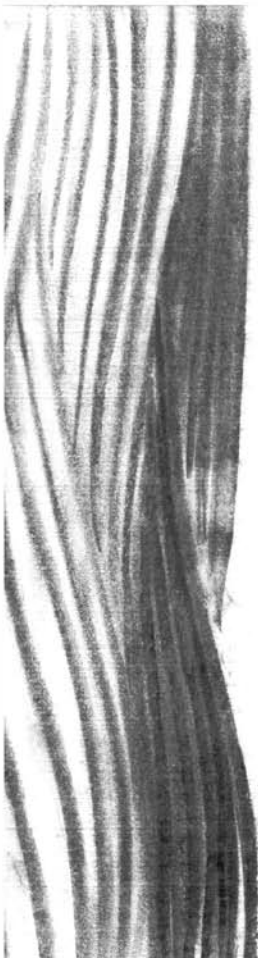
Hand out a sheet of A3 and a piece of THIN charcoal (most boxes of charcoal have thick and thin pieces in them).

**NOW LIE....** yes really... tell everyone that charcoal is very, very expensive and that if they snap it deliberately you will charge them £1 a piece! This should deter those who can't resist turning it into tiny pieces as soon as they see it. Put your name on the back of the paper. Be warned, you'll get grubby, the paper will get smudgy and there will be no hand washing.

The charcoal is round but will have a sharper edge - use this to make a thin line across the middle of the page. The charcoal can also be used vertically using the whole of the end - use this to make a fatter line down the middle of the page.

Did some little bits ping off? This happens when you press a bit too hard and if you press really hard it snaps. Write in 1, 30, 15 and 10 and repeat the exercise using the double ticked drawing you chose.

When you are finished put it to one side, or under your chair to make space (don't stack them up yet or they will smudge).



## The magic of mark making

Take another sheet of A3 and hand out thick pieces of charcoal (snap the thick lengths in half to make a useable length for this exercise). Using the thick charcoal on its side, make a fat stripe going UP the page. Now do it again going DOWN the page... you will find one way easier.

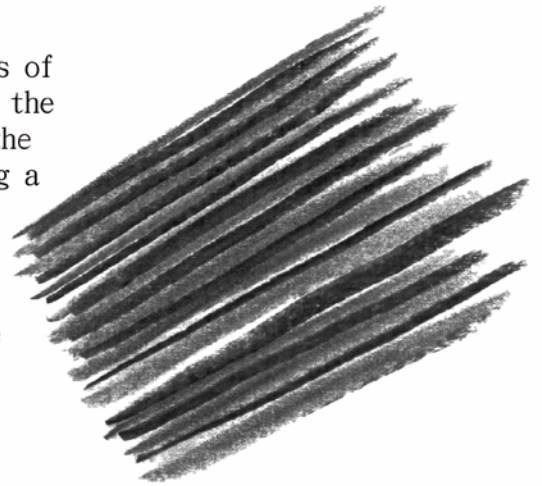
Using the thin charcoal, try to make one thin controlled line right on the edge one of your fat lines. Now do it again beside one of your fat lines leaving a thin white space between... looks a bit like a shaft of light down a chimney doesn't it?

Using the thick charcoal on its side again, make a curved line. Using the thin charcoal, make a thin line on the edge of the fat curved line, and do another one on the same side, but just beside it.



Now take the thin charcoal and make a series of fast lines next to each other. Make them all in the same direction and imagine stars falling from the sky... so they tail off at one end. Then using a finger, smudge them all from one end in the direction you drew them.

Now try to draw more fast, crisp lines in between the original smudged ones. This technique is useful for creating shading, tone and giving an illusion of perspective.



With the thick charcoal on its side, make an amorphous, blobby shape. Now smudge it with your finger to look like a cloud, or smoke. With the thin charcoal, define some of the swirls in your shape to accentuate this cloud/smoke effect. Now use the tip of your finger to gently soften these parts.

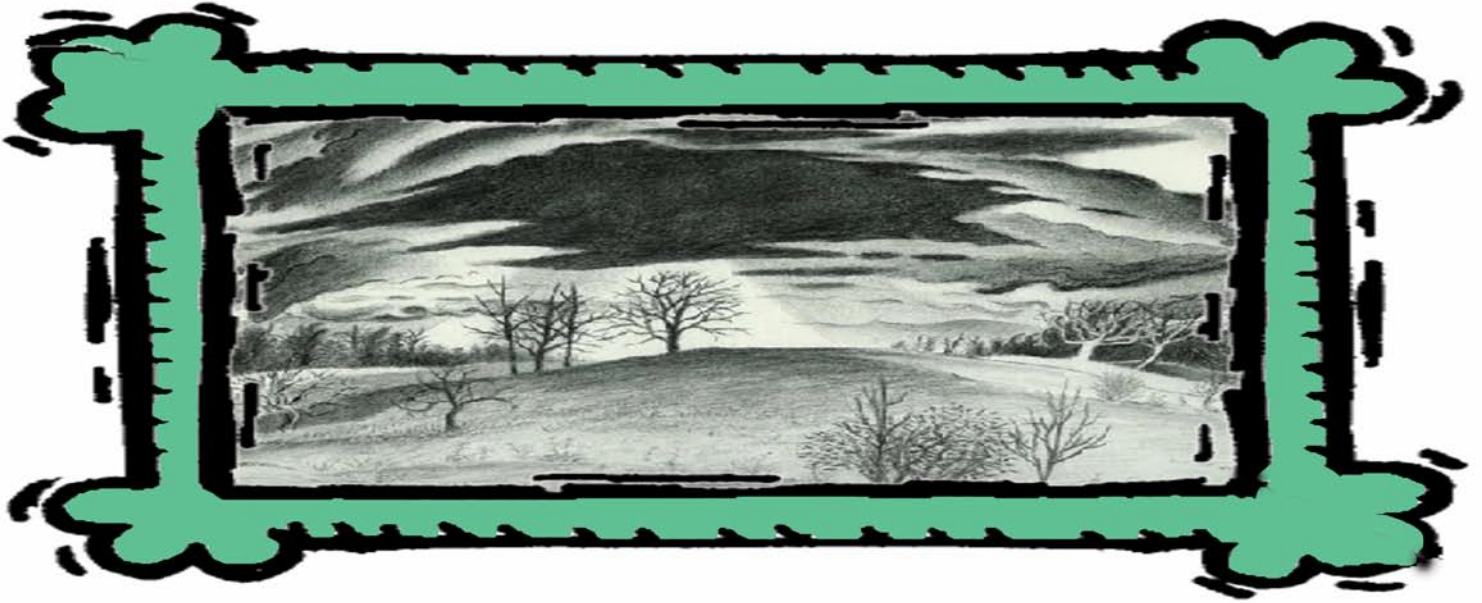


Hand out the putty rubbers. You need to make a point on one corner working and warming the rubber in your fingers. Blow off any excess charcoal from your cloud/smoke. Use the rubber to gently remove parts of the cloud, creating highlights. You'll need to rework the rubber when the point becomes blackened.

**DON'T RUB TOO HARD** - the more you rub, the worse it gets so less is best!

## The final masterpiece

Now you are all warmed up and proficient with your charcoal... Decide whether you want to go back to the original image you selected and cropped, or whether you want to work from one of your drawings. Using the techniques you've practised, spend 10 minutes creating your final artwork. After Ready Steady Draw, this will seem like an eternity!



Once all your happy artists have left the room, it is a good idea to spray all the charcoal work with hairspray to limit unwanted smudging.

## Now Char your own Cheap Charcoal!

Get a bit bushcrafty and make charcoal on an open fire or barbecue.....

Step 1. You need buff willow (that's willow with the bark stripped off). Pick out the thicker sticks and cut them to 6-8". Wrap the sticks in aluminium foil.

Step 2. Place them in the fire and wait about 20 minutes. Then find your foil package and look at it... **LEAVE IT IN THE FIRE.** There will be lots of smoke and some flames coming out of the foil.

Step 4. When there are no more flames and barely any smoke is coming out of the foil, then gently remove it from the fire.

Step 5. Wait a couple of minutes for it to cool then carefully open it.

### Top tips:

You'll see white smoke as the moisture is driven off and blueish smoke when the charcoal needs to be removed from the fire.

If it is not removed in time you'll end up with a pile of

**ASHES!**

## Making Charcoal in an oven

**Step 1.** Cut up some reasonably thick buff willow into 6-8" lengths

**Step 2.** Lay out the sticks in a row on the tin foil. Roll them up in the foil.

**Step 3.** Wrap in a another layer of foil and fold the ends over. It is important that the sticks are thoroughly burnt and reduced to carbon... but they mustn' t be burnt in air or they will be reduced to ashes! So the sticks need to be packed tightly in little bundles.

**Step 4.** Place the bundles into a casserole dish with a lid on, and bake in a slow oven. They will need approximately 12 hrs in an electric oven and 6hrs in a gas oven. Be warned, they will make your kitchen smell a bit peculiar...! You won' t be able to see the colour of the smoke as you could in the fire, so take them out and check them towards the end of the cooking time.



## How to make CHEAP AND EASY pastels

Having tried out charcoal drawing techniques, you can apply them to chalk pastels and introduce colour to your drawings. Make your own in a few easy steps....

The basic ingredients of pastels are simple: pigment, a filler, and a binder. It will take a bit of practice and experimenting, so keep records of what you do so you can recreate your successes!

**Things you'll need:** Quarter cup of rolled or crushed oats (combined with the water to make a binder), a quart (just over a litre) of water (preferably distilled so there isn't any chlorine in it), 2 tablespoons of powdered tempera or poster paint (for pigment) and half a cup of unscented talcum/baby powder (for filler)



**Step 1:** Put the water in a pan and heat it to boiling. Add the oats and leave it to boil for five minutes.

**Step 2:** Pour the oats mixture through a fine sieve to strain out the oats. You'll just be using the water.

**Step 3:** Mix the talc with the powder paint, then add a teaspoon of the strained oats water. You're after a consistency like dough or putty consistency, which sticks to itself not your fingers.

**Step 4:** Roll out into sausages, put on absorbent paper (newspaper is a cheap option), then cut into pieces about two inches (6 cm) long.

**Step 5:** Leave to dry at room temperature, at least 24 hours.



### Top Tips:

If your pastels are very crumbly, your binder was too weak; add some more oats next time. If your pastels are very hard, your binder was too strong; break up the pastel and dissolve it into some more binder.

You can also use diluted wallpaper paste as a binder.

Create tints of a particular colour by adding more filler or white pigment.

## How to make SIMPLE PIGMENT pastels

This version uses pigments rather than powder/poster paint, which will improve the colour of your pastels. However, different pigments bind differently: some pigments have enough innate binding characteristics, others need to be mixed with a binder in order to form usable sticks.

The first category is much easier to work with, so they're the ones we'll cover here.

Pigments which don't require binder include: all earth colours; the Cadmium pigments; Titanium White; Cerulean Blue; Chromium Green Oxide, and all black pigments.

**Things you'll need:** The most important material is the powdered pigment itself. You can buy this from art supply stores. You'll also need a stabilizing mixture to combine with your pigment. Try a mixture of 2/3 calcium carbonate and 1/3 talc. Finally, you'll need some distilled water, a non-porous mixing surface (a glass plate works well), and a putty knife.

**Step 1:** Pour out some pigment onto your mixing surface, add a little distilled water, and mix it into the pigment using a putty knife. You just want to moisten it.

**Step 2:** Now add your stabilizing mixture, and mix it in until you get a nice firm dough that'll hold a shape easily.

**Step 3:** Now shape or roll your dough into pastel sticks - whatever size and shape you want - and lay them out on a large sheet of paper to dry.

## Resources

Viewfinders (L shaped pieces of card) - make your own!

6B pencils - Kent County Supplies, 0845 270 8811  
(most schools have accounts)

A3 and A4 cartridge paper - as above

willow charcoal - Kent County Supplies, 0845 270 881

putty rubbers - Kent County Supplies, 0845 270 881

stopwatch - Kent County Supplies, 0845 270 881,  
or a phone, watch, or clock

hairspray, talc - any chemist, supermarket or £1 shop

oats - any supermarket

powder paint - Kent County Supplies, 0845 270 8811

distilled water - most hardware stores

powder pigments - [www.jpennyltd.co.uk](http://www.jpennyltd.co.uk) ,  
[www.soapkitchenonline.co.uk](http://www.soapkitchenonline.co.uk)

calcium carbonate - [www.georgeweil.com](http://www.georgeweil.com)

Created by Bec Britain and Sharon Mee for the High Weald Heroes Programme  
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