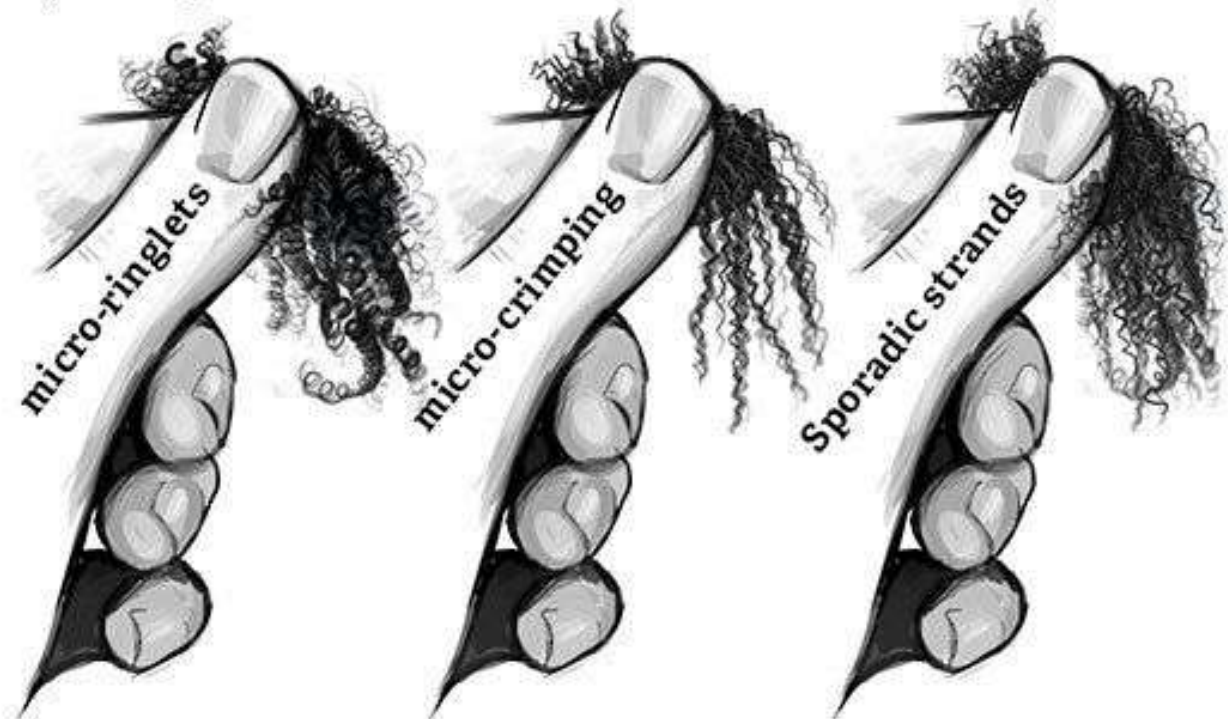


# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

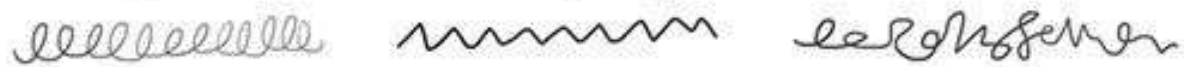
Introduction: Unique Visual Texture

The subject of Black hair is largely overlooked in drawing tutorials, but this hair type's visual texture and behavior is so unique that it deserves careful attention. We'll start with the building blocks of drawing this hair.

Up close, you will find that the hair has a wealth of different patterns:



Drawing this hair is a matter of layering lines which describe its texture:



Notice how, in comparison to straight-or-wavy hair, the texture also has an impact on the hairline, making it soft, gradual, and non-uniform.

# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Hair Types

There are a myriad of hair typing systems for natural Black hair. The most common one is the Walker hair type system, which we will use for the sake of how abundant reference pictures are in this system.



### **Type 3C**

voluminous corkscrew curls about as wide as a pencil.

### **Type 4A, 4B**

Strands in an S (4A) or a Z (4B) pattern, the locks about as wide as a crochet needle.



### **Type 4C**

The most tightly curled hair, in a Z. The difference between 4B and 4C visually speaking is how tight the individual curls are, eliminating an easily discernable curling pattern.





# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Lighting For Afro-Textured Hair

Due to its pattern, most 4B and 4C hair behaves differently than other hair types when it comes to receiving light. Rendering it properly is an exercise in thought, especially with those who follow formulas to shade hair. Here are the major considerations:



In drawing other hairtypes, you'll put these sharp pops of light in. This is specular highlighting, and you see it even in low lighting.



But afro-textured hair handles light differently. It still picks up the same amount of light, but it scatters it, softening these highlights for a matte look.



In drawing it left loose, think about this hair in layers from the outside in when you light and color it rather than using what you know from straight and wavy hair types. Block it into sections and then think about how they cast shadow on one another. This applies to 3C hair, but not as much.

# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Considerations For Hair Behavior

If you live in a context where you just don't see Natural hair, you may miss out on these subtler visual points its character.

When parted, you see more of the scalp than you may have expected.



Due to a thing called shrinkage, the hair is much longer than it looks, sometimes even up to 4 times longer.



This hair is finer in terms of density and generally in strand diameter, so it is actually much *lighter* than you might think!

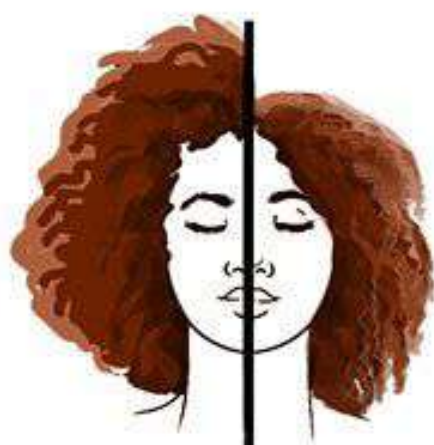




# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Further Considerations - When Wet

In cartooning and stylized works, we exaggerate the excess weight of water, the shine, and how it will stick to itself. This is similar for Black hair in most cases, but there are hair types which react to water in a unique fashion that one wouldn't intuitively assume.



In terms of body loss, wavy and straight hair goes completely limp when wet, but curly and coily hair keeps most of its curls despite the weight of the water within it.



Regarding lighting, the sharp specular pops of light are smaller, tighter, and more noisy than in hair which water straightens.



The final touch is the behavior of water still in the hair; instead of sliding down to drip off in sheets, hair can bead up along curls. This is not in every Black hair type, rather the more wiry ones, but it is an interesting effect that you may wish to draw.

# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Coloring

The color gamut of African hair (as in purely from Africa) is largely from eumelanin (●), or brown-black. The undertones have cooler hues than in European hair, which usually has more pheomelanin (●). Instead of rufous colors, undertones like crimson and maroon are more common.

Palette for likely base colors



Starter Palette for highlights & shadow



However, to say black and almost-black is the only range to ever use is nonsense. Make it honey blond, red, whatever, make it *green* even.



Whatever color you pick, shade with the base color's complement to create a nice depth. Highlight with the same temperature as the base.





# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Introduction To Dreadlocs

Dreadlocs are a hairstyle which demand months of patience and diligence to achieve. The hair is coiled and compressed by twisting it while it's wet (such as by using gel) into tight ringlets.

There are all sorts of methods to produce dreadlocs, but in the end there is no need for the artist to worry about differences in results because they result in dreadlocs.



The style doesn't end at the loc itself, however. Dreadlocs can be curled, crimped, twisted, braided, dyed, and summarily you can style them about as diversely as you can any hair of the same length.

# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Sectioning Patterns

The challenges of an artist drawing characters **at all** include maintaining a strong sense of 3D form, even in a cartoonish, non-realistic style.

Sectioned hairstyles add a layer of complexity which can look fantastic if you pay extra attention to 3D form. It's a matter of perspective, literally.



Pretend your drawing is actually a 3D model made of polygons.

Draw a grid pattern on the skull. Mark off the crown of the head.

If you are a total stranger to perspective, that's fine. Just pretend as if you are pinstriping an egg. You don't need to tackle this with a ruler and vanishing points, but a grip on perspective will indeed help you.



Once you're comfortable with your grid, you can use it for points of reference to draw sectioning patterns at any angle, simple or complex.



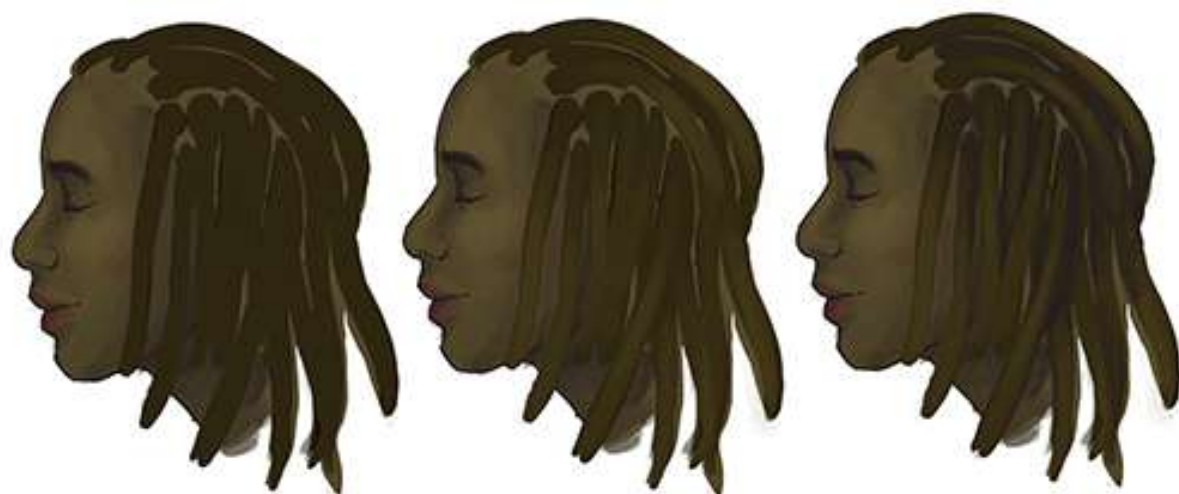
# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Rendering Dreadlocs

Like many things that are nuanced and intricate, drawing dreadlocs takes two things: patience, and, frankly, a whole lot of *scribbles*.



To figure out how the dreadlocs will lay, work from the bottom up. For poses with movement, dreadlocs move like braids of similar size.



Before we can apply the texture, however, we need to light the hair. To start shading, you use the principles behind ambient occlusion.

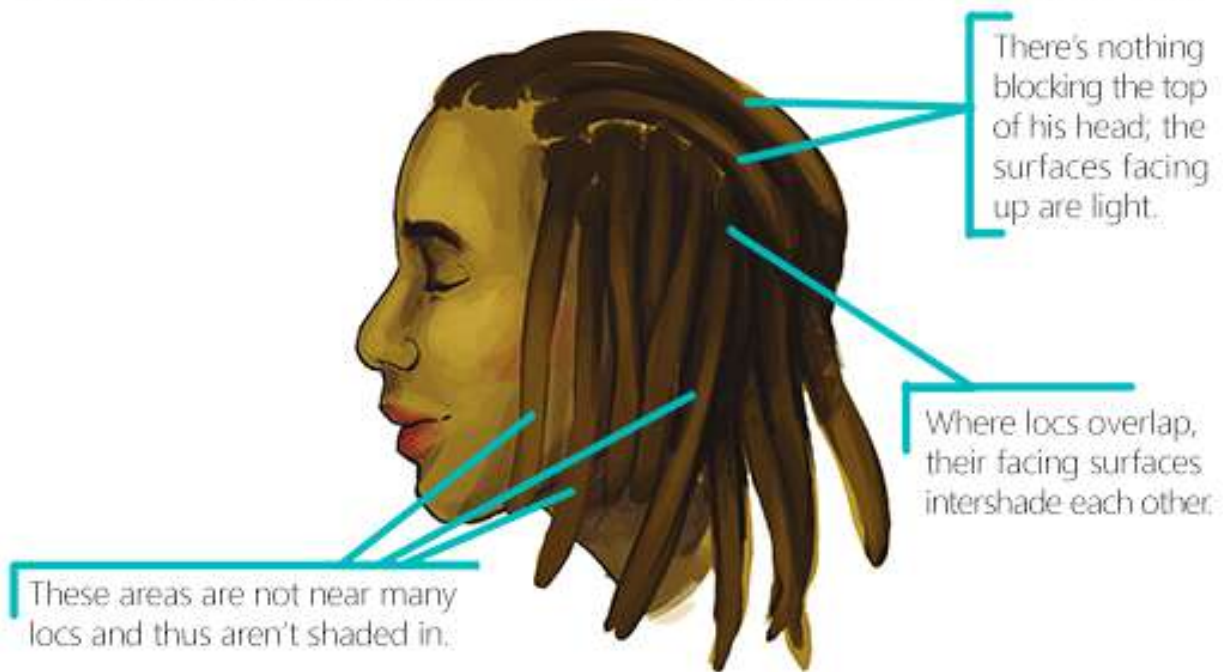
Ambient Occlusion is the idea that nearby surfaces block ambient light, so the closer two surfaces are, the darker they should be. Look at a corner of your ceiling. See it? Make the sides of the locs which are close to/facing each other the darkest.



# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Rendering Dreadlocs Continued

Let's look at how we can apply ambient occlusion to dreadlocs. The image in the previous page has had the contrast exaggerated so you can see.



For some styles this is enough visual information, but let's keep going.



There is a difference between old and new locs. Newer locs will have specular highlighting and old locs will not. That is, new locs will have bright pops of sharply rendered color. This makes them look shiny.

One can start dreadlocs with hair at any length, but most brand new locs are short.



# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## The Little Details in Dreadlocs

### From Root...

Depending on how recently one's dreadlocs have been touched up, you either will or will not see sectioning patterns. The closer to the root, the newer the hair, and thus the less compact the loc itself. There may be fuzz at the scalp from new growth or hair that just hasn't loced yet.



### ...To tip

The ends of peoples' dreadlocs are just as diverse as the styles the locs can be put into. Some are solid, some don't seal and turn into curls and whirls.



# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

Dreadlocs - Idea Gallery





# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

Dreadlocks - Idea Gallery



# Black Hair In Depth: Braids

## BUILDING BLOCKS

### Drawing The Plaits

I learned to draw braids this way from KuduArts.TUMBLR :D!



Define the space that you want the braid or braids to occupy, drawing braids-to-be like flexible cylinders.



Fill the braid with a stacked "y" shape down its length.

This can be upside down or backwards, depending on the look you want.



Draw a scalloped shape down each side to the tip.

Make sure to blend the lines in with the "y" shape to make it look continuous.



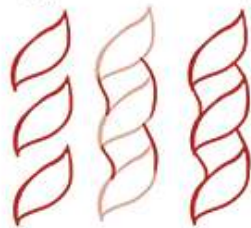
Now your braid is ready to be finished with any details that you need to finish the whole hairstyle with and look awesome!

### Drawing The Ends

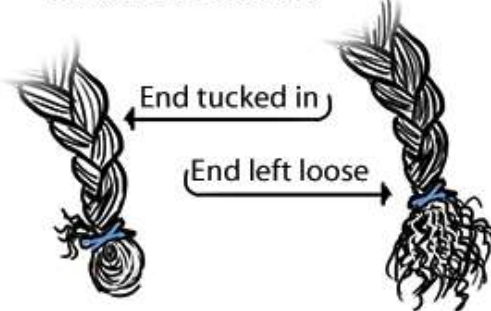
There are all sorts of beautiful ways to end a braid; here are some ideas.

Twirled, loose ends.

With the right texture, a braid can stay plaited without any ties.



Secured with a tie.



End tucked in

End left loose



A self-knotted/"organic" braid (when the sections are allowed to intertwine as the braid is made; this creates a braid that plaits in the opposite direction and where the two braids meet leaves a hole for you to tuck your hair through).

Sealed ends

Braids can be made from synthetic hair, which is typically sealed to prevent unwraveling/frizzing.



Tapered



Blunt



Curled



# Black Hair In Depth: Braids

TYPES OF BRAIDS

## ***FRENCH BRAID***



## ***DUTCH BRAID***

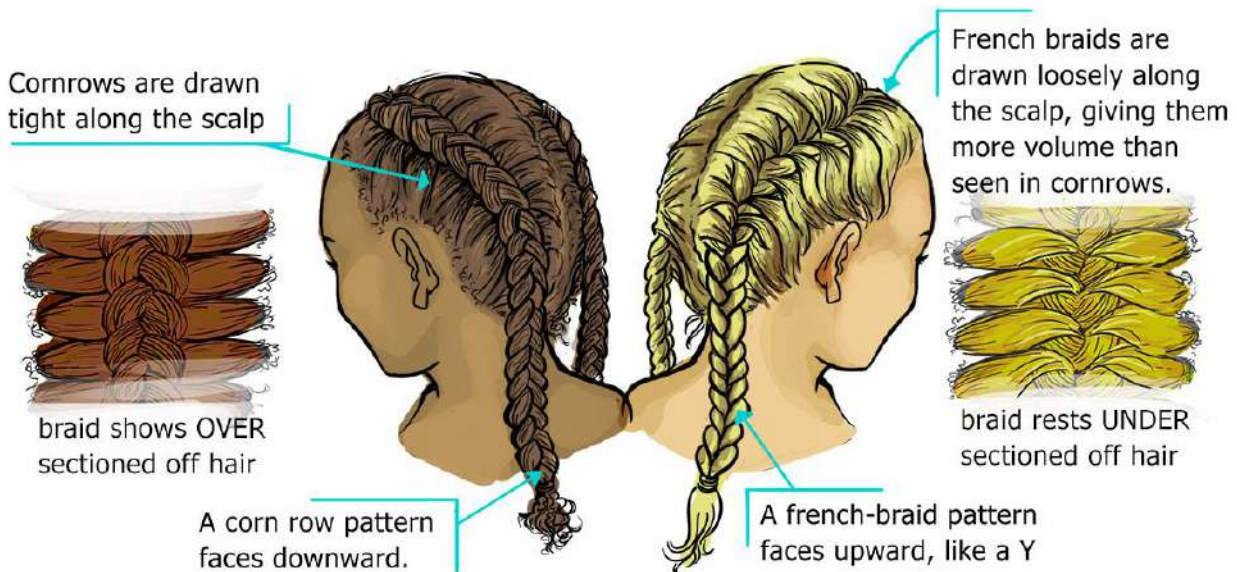


# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Cornrows: How To Draw A Cornrow

### More Than French Braids

It's easy to assume from afar that cornrows must look like a lot of small french braids, but they're not. French braids are braided overhand, while cornrows are braided underhand, resulting in these observable differences:



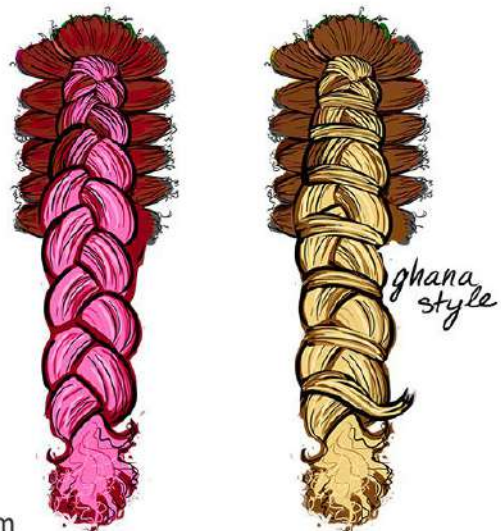
### The Braiding Pattern

Like a french braid, new hair is constantly being added to the braid as it travels along the scalp. Here is a multicolored example so you can see for yourself how it "works" when drawing cornrows in your own style.



### Working With Extensions

Sometimes, cornrows feature synthetic hair called "extensions." These can add length, volume, and extra decoration, such as the wrapping seen in ghana cornrows, or a pop of color without having to use hair dye.







## ***BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH***

How to draw Natural Black Hair

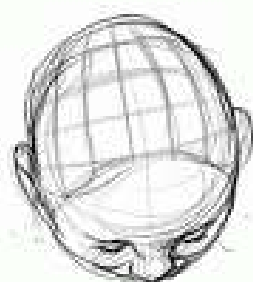
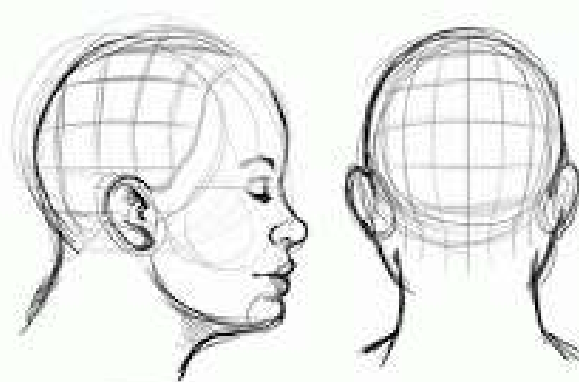
# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Building Sectioned Hairstyles



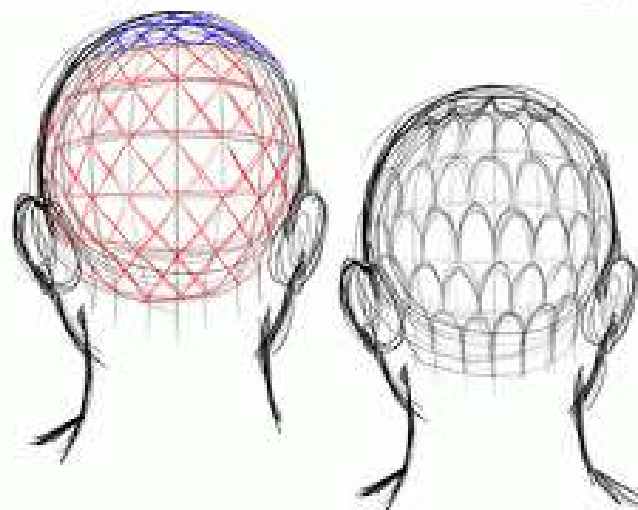
Even in the most simplistic styles, keeping a strong sense of 3D form is important to make your drawings really shine and to help you draw all kinds of hair and styling methods with confidence, be they traditional ones or your own, original concept.

Start by wrapping the scalp in your drawing with a grid pattern, thinking of how the skull exists in actual space, as if they were a 3D model.



Pretend like you're pinstriping an egg if you find the process difficult to conceptualize. When you start with a grid, you have less to think about and are more free to try various and extreme angles.

You can use the grid now as a point of reference and complicate your design or even leave it as-is.

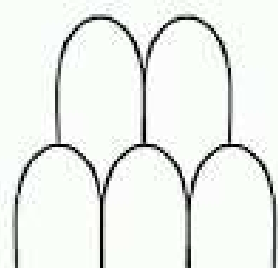




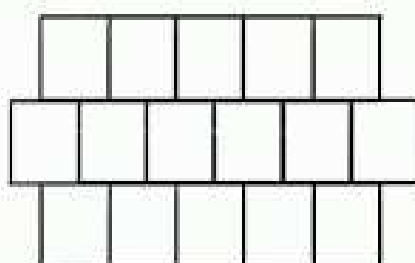
# BLACK HAIR IN DEPTH

## Designing Sectioned Hairstyles

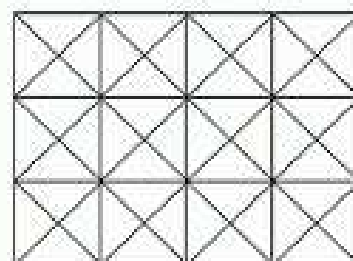
Once you've drawn a grid onto the skull, you can decorate it with more complex approaches. Here are a few ideas:



Fans, Arches

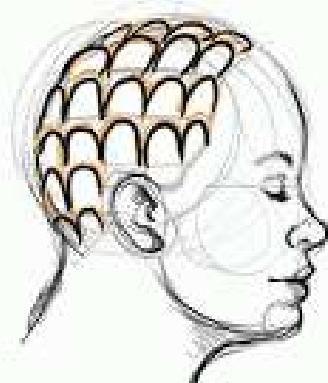


Bricks

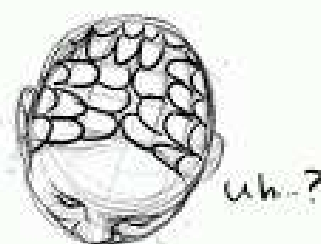


Triangles

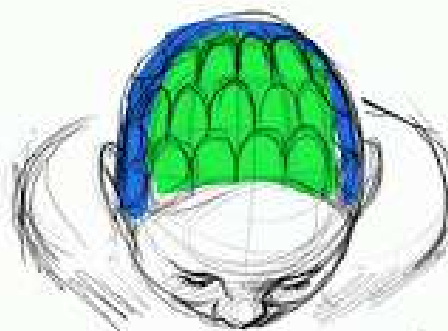
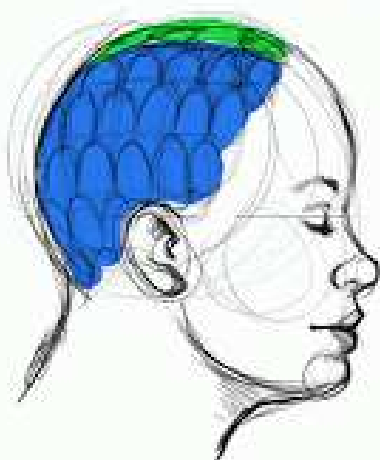
You may find yourself having trouble painting your pattern with consistency when you get to the crown of the head because of the sharp change of available surface area that happens there.



One angle will look right until you try to think how it looks when **turned...**



To fix this, imagine that there is a seam at the crown of the head!



Change the direction or orientation of the pattern on either side of the seam. This way, you won't have to deform your pattern.



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