

# **B B C BITESIZE**

We all know what a line is - right? It's a mark that joins two points. Straight or curved; long or short; rough or smooth. A line that defines the edges of an object is called an outline or contour line.

Contour lines divide space by separating areas.

A line's weight, or thickness, can create perspective and give the illusion of form. Varying it's weight allows a two-dimensional line to seem more like a 3D object.

Lines can be descriptive and informative like in this five hundred year-old drawing by Albrecht Durer. He used cross hatching to create tone and describe the shape of the hands. The closer the lines are together the darker the tone. Durer used black lines to create shadow and white hatching to show highlights.

Edgar Degas used pastels for this sketch of a ballet dancer. The weight of the lines tell us how the dancer is moving. The heavy lines on her left foot suggest where the dancer is resting her weight. The light curves of her right leg imply she's lifting or moving it. Changing weight and direction of lines helps describe the fabric of her tutu and bow.

Lines can have expressive qualities suggesting particular feelings. In this painting by Paul Cezanne, there are no calming horizontal lines. Instead acute angles make us feel uneasy. The outline of the circular millstone stands out against the bold vertical tree trunks and the busy, diagonal brushstrokes. Rather than a quiet, peaceful woodland we sense movement and energy.

We all know what a line is but it is the endless possibilities of the weight, shape and orientation of lines that give an artwork its unique look and feel.