

The Grid

The start of every composite is the grid. It will allow you to concentrate on the witness and facial features without having to worry about scale. The grid is set up to define an average Caucasian male face. With 'average' defined, you'll know what a 'long nose' is, a 'small mouth,' 'wide-set eyes,' and so on. They are minor adjustments to the grid.

Students, over the years, have developed shortcuts to drawing the grid. The 'cheat ruler' helps, but some have created a cardboard template, some have added measurements to the ruler, some have different papers that allow the grid to show through. I have the grid inked into a piece of paper and use a portable light box. That saves me from erasing the grid at the end. Whatever method works for you and allows you to create a successful composite is the one you should use.

We will be moving forward with dropping facial features into this grid. Here's how this will work. I'll be sending/posting step-by-step drawings of eyes, nose, mouth, and so on to you. You will create that step-by-step process. I'll then send you a particular facial feature to draw into your grid—just like a witness would select for you. At this point, however, you will NOT BE SHADING. I know—this will drive you crazy, but for now we are working on the shape of each feature.

Once all the features are in place, we will be shading the features.

Questions? Let me know.