



FACES
THE ULTIMATE COMPOSITE PICTURE

The ultimate composite software!

Observational skills are critical in increasing personal awareness and safety!

LESSON PLAN #1 FOR FACES 4.0 EDU

History of composite drawings

*This is an excerpt from
"The Police Artist & Composite Drawings"
By Horace J. Heafner*

Well over a hundred years ago, law enforcement agencies began using composite drawings to aid in an investigation where evidence was scant and the perpetrator unknown. No doubt there were many isolated instances earlier that aided criminal investigations. Major cases such as: "Jack the Ripper," "Lindbergh Kidnapping," "D.B. Cooper," the first airline hijacker, "Assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King," "Richard Speck Case," "Hillside Strangler," and the "Kidnapping of Patricia Hearst" are but a few of the national and international cases where composite drawings were used.

Man has been drawing the human face as long as history has been recorded. The face presents a set of intriguing characteristics that create a pattern of identifiable features. From this physiognomy, a person is able to recognize thousands of faces, often linking names, personality, background, etc. to them. In fact, a person is able to mentally encode a huge gallery of faces and store them for later retrieval. Since no two faces are exactly alike, the facial features (along with head shapes) lend themselves to a classification system.

In the 1880's, Alphonse Bertillon, sometimes called the father of scientific detection, developed an identification system referred to as "Portrait Parle" or "speaking likeness." This system was a compilation of facial features taken from photographs with descriptive detail provided. Originally, Bertillon meant for the catalog to be an identification aid for the recognition of local prisoners but it later was found to be useful in obtaining descriptions of unknown suspects. Bertillon's classification provided a basis for modern recall systems that would aid the artist in producing sketches as well as the development of composite kits, catalogs and computer systems.

A research of the FBI archives revealed an early use of the composite sketch. The sketch was done in 1920 for a bombing incident that took place at an office on Wall Street. The investigation developed a witness from a nearby blacksmith shop who had shod the horse of a stranger observed carrying a covered object in back of his wagon. An interview with the blacksmith indicated he felt capable of providing enough facial detail to have an artist prepare a drawing of the stranger. A commercial artist was hired to make a sketch that provided a sufficient likeness to develop leads with subsequent identification and arrest of the perpetrator.