

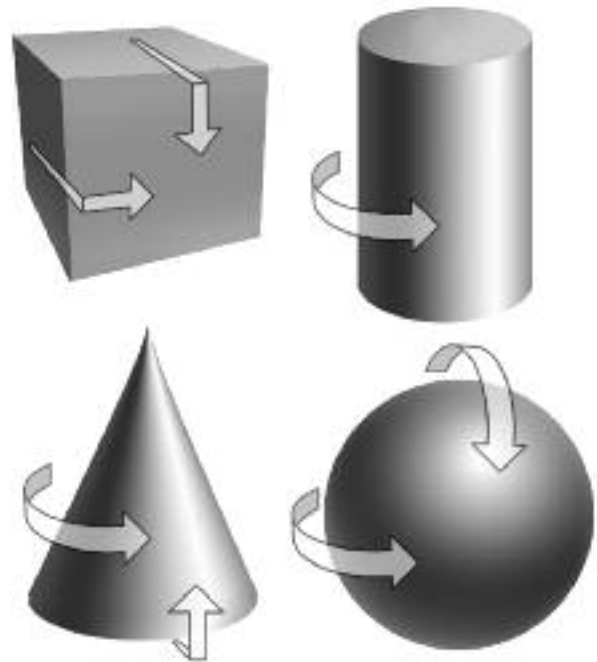
## Part 3: Forms

*Form by definition is the shape or structure of anything.* At this point in our drawing we should have already defined the forms when we defined the structure, but now we need to create the illusion of light on form. To do this it is best if we break things down into the four basic primitives of form; the *cylinder, sphere, cube, and cone.*

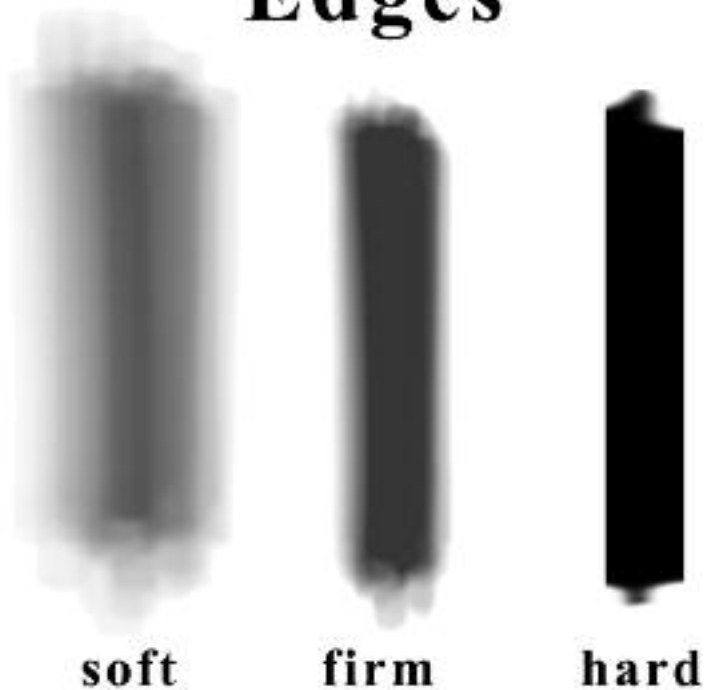
By breaking things down in to basic forms we remove ourselves from having to think about drawing complicated things like legs, fingers, etc. On any basic form lit by a single direct light source, (this is the best way to observe and learn about form) there are two basic fields of value; lit and unlit or light and dark. We have already discussed this to some degree in the previous chapters, but as in all things art related, there is overlap. Because we already discussed value I am going to jump right into the key factor in developing form and that is *edges, or the transition between light and dark.* Any time you have a light and dark value coming together within a form, a corner or change of plane is created visually. The sudden or gradual transition from one value to another is going to tell us weather this change of plane is sudden like on a cube or gradual like on a sphere or cylinder. This transition is what is called an edge in drawing or painting.

Basically there are four kinds of edges, soft, firm, hard, and lost. Soft edges are those gradual transitions that you will see on a rounded form. Hard edges are what you would see on an angular form like a square or at the edge of a cast shadow. A firm edge, as its name implies, is somewhere in between and would be found most commonly on an angular form that is not completely squared off, like a nose, knee or other bony areas.

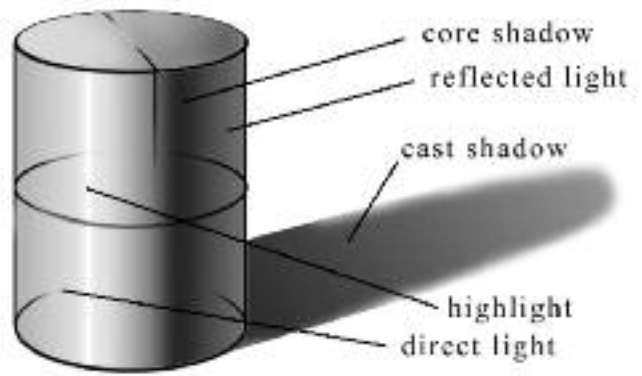
Occasionally you will observe a dark band of value at the edge of a shadow. This is called a core shadow. Basically this is created when there is a transitional plane that is not being lit by the direct light source or by the reflected light bouncing off the surface beneath the form.



## Edges



Identifying the value zones is very important to developing form. Even before applying your edges the careful analyzation and placement of your light, shadow and reflected light can reveal important changes of plane to the viewer. Be careful to not over-play the reflected light or core shadow card. When used too often they can create a metallic look to your figure. Even more, they can break down a drawing into too many values, and in doing so create confusion for the viewers eye. You should always strive to keep the lighting situation very clear. It will allow the viewer a stronger foot hold in your little world you have created, and therefore make a more comfortable place for the viewer to visit.



A few problem solving tips: If your drawing or painting is looking cartoon-like, check to see if your edges are too hard. This can create a graphic or cartoon-like look to your drawings. If your shapes are appearing ambiguous and lacking in structure, check to see if your edges are too soft, this can create a foggy or weak appearance to the drawing. Overly hard edges are generally favorable to overly soft for two reasons. One, viewers will grow quickly bored of a drawing they are having difficulty solving, and two, it is easier to soften an edge than to harden an edge.

