Pixel drawings come in handy when you need clear, small graphics. They also have a great retro style to them, so graphic artists should know how to make them.

In this tutorial, I'm going to show you how to make pixel drawings using a reference image.

I'm starting out with this reference image. Your reference image can be a drawing, a photo, anything. You'll use it to help place your lines.

Shrink your reference image down to the desired size. (CTRL + T)

Sure it's nice and small, but it doesn't have the sweet pixel feel to it.

We'll start by drawing a black outline. First, set the opacity of your reference image to about 25% (so you can see what you're drawing) then create a new layer to draw on.

Zoom way in, then get out the pencil tool, and set it to 1 px.

Good **Bad**

Draw your lines. Try to avoid dragging big fat lines, it will look better if you take the time to draw lines pixel-by-pixel. Keep zooming in and out to check your results.

Once you have your black lines drawn, draw colored lines to divide the different sections of color.

We are using colored lines here because we don't want too many black lines making our drawing confusing.

The colors should correspond with the colors you will be using to fill your image in.

Now that your lines are drawn, filling is easy. Get the magic wand tool, (W) and use these settings:

Tolerance - 0
Anti-aliased - Unchecked
Contiguous - Checked
Use All Layers - Unchecked

Select the different regions and fill them in.

I used a gradient fill for some parts to add a little more detail. You may find a lot of little pixels that you missed when you zoom out.

Once you've had some experience with reference images, you should easily be able to make your own pixel images from scratch.