

Anatomy Of Light Terminology and Labeling

Understanding how and where various conditions of light, shade and shadow appear on a three-dimensional object is critical to your ability to show light and form and create the illusion of three-dimensions in your painting.

To start, look at the photo and read notations below. It is important to understand each of these descriptions and explanations of different conditions and intensities of light, shade, and shadow.

NOTE: What I always refer to as “shade” is called “form shadow”. Note also that there are a couple different light values in the Form Light, or lit, side of the sphere, along with very light value for the highlight. The Shade or Form Shadow area has at least three mid-values and the Cast Shadow area at least two.

In all, there are five or six different values on the sphere and two more in the cast shadow for a total of seven or eight. This is far more than most of us deal with in most of our paintings.

