

Art Illusions

Learning Objective:

To explore how artists use perspective in their work.





Artists have been trying to fool people for thousands of years by creating illusions. What kind of illusions do you think artists use?



One illusion that artists try to create is that of depth and distance in their paintings or drawings.

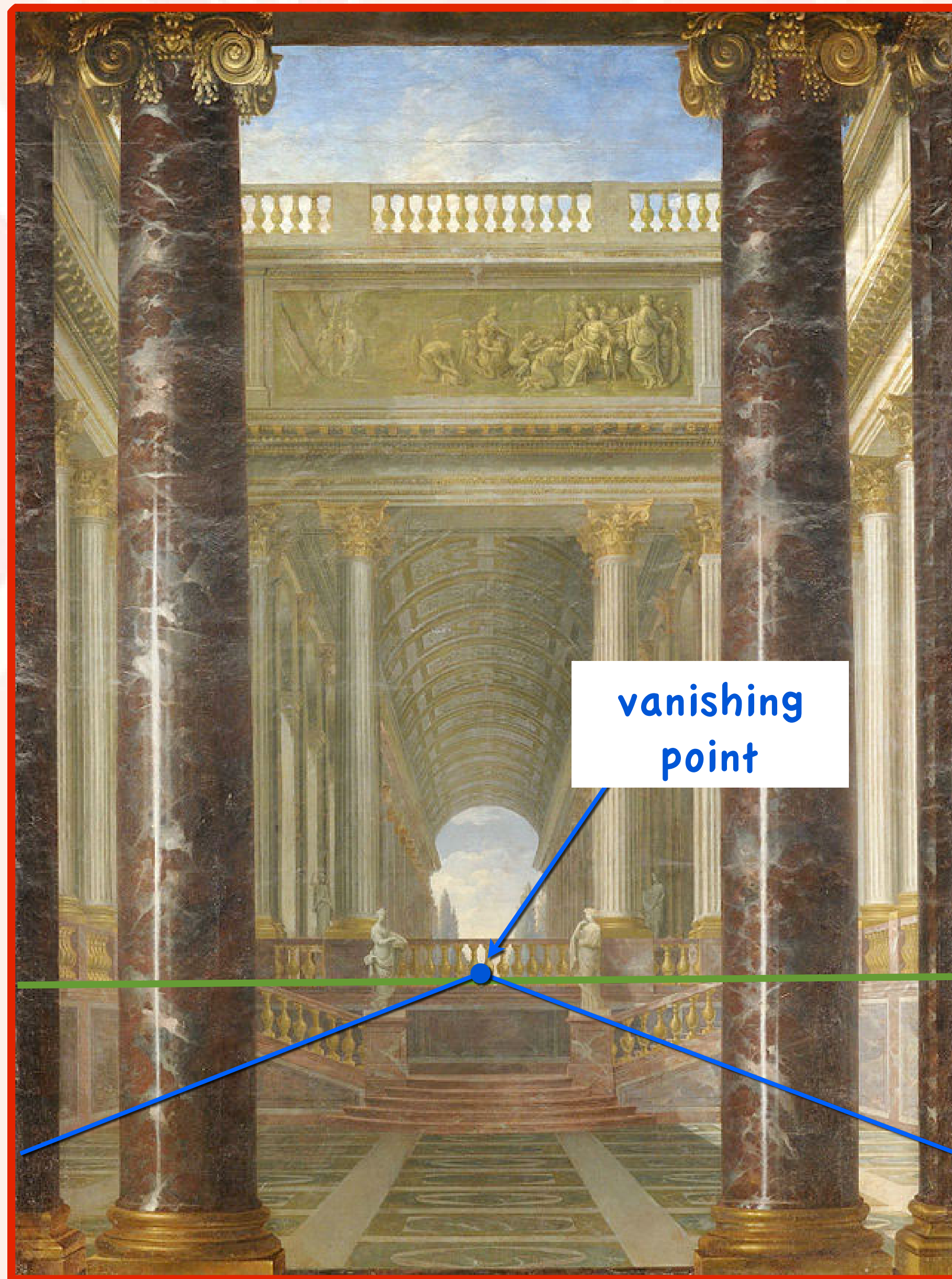


How has this artist made the viewer feel as though they could just walk straight into the painting?

Objects appear to get smaller as you get further away from them, and parallel lines eventually converge and meet at a point. In art, this is known as the vanishing point. You can see this using the example of train tracks.



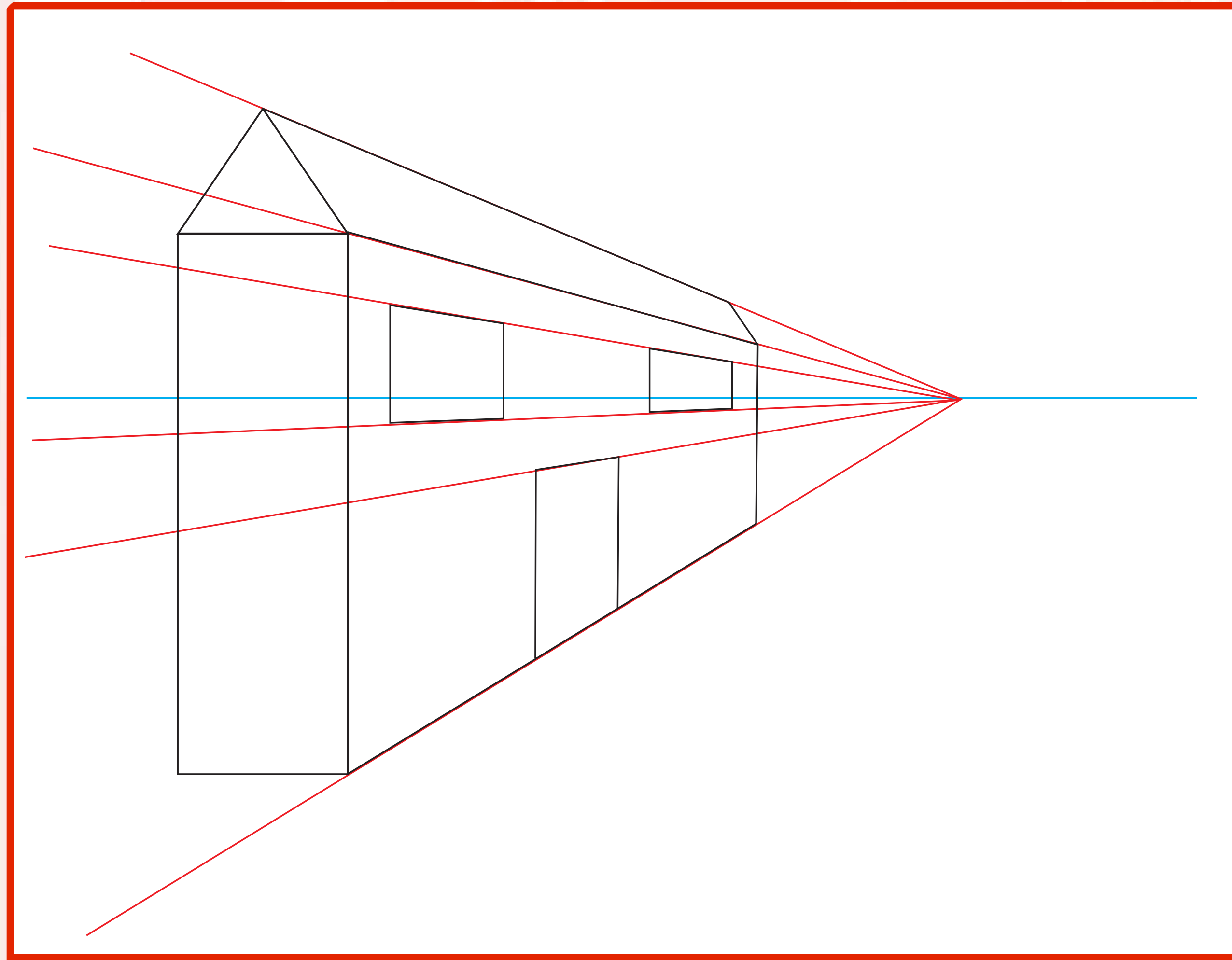
The point where two lines meet at a vanishing point is on another imaginary line called the horizon line. Artists use horizon lines and vanishing points as a starting point in their work to give the painting depth and a sense of distance.



horizon line

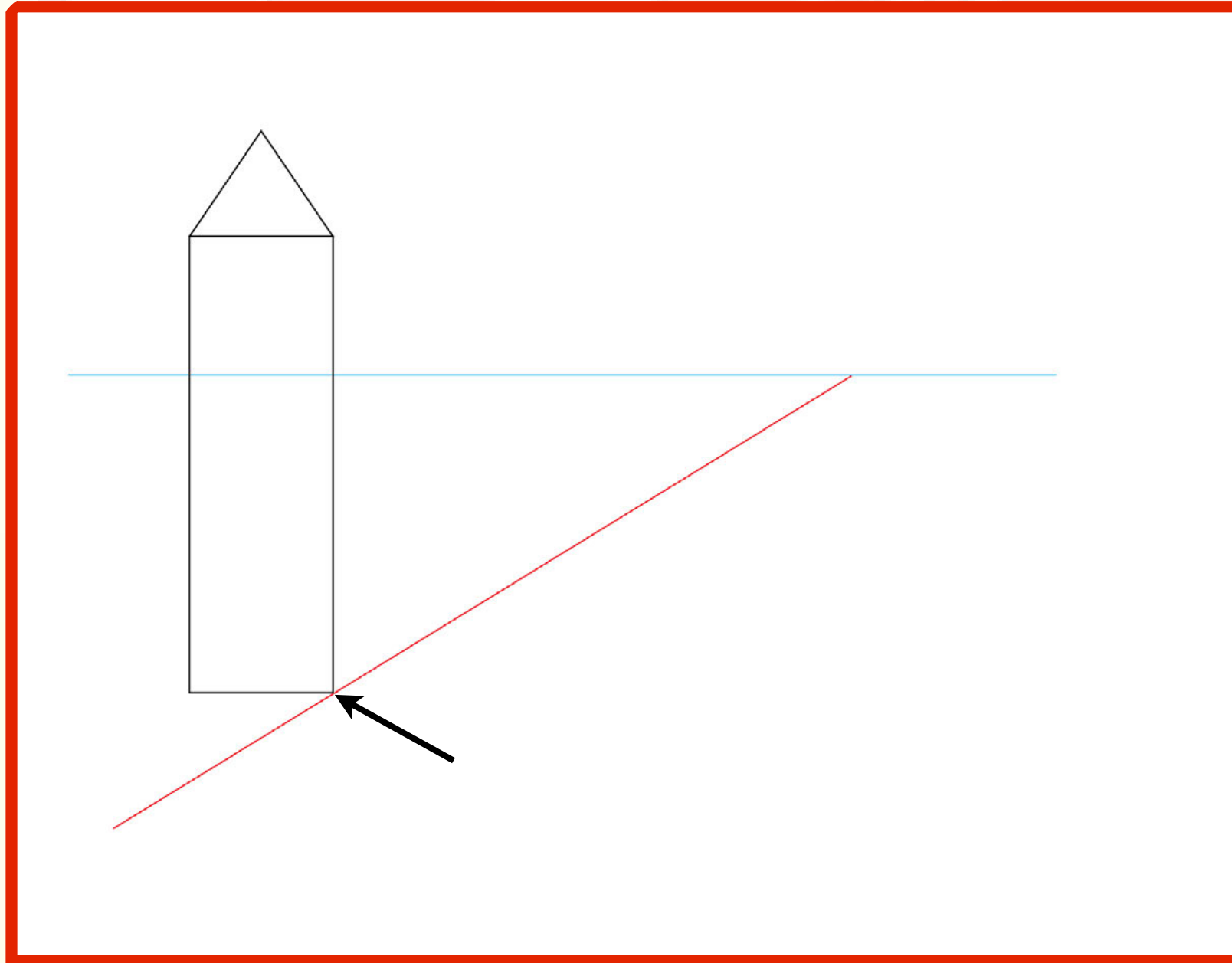
vanishing
point

The red lines in this picture are called construction lines. They all lead directly to the vanishing point. The blue line is the horizon line.

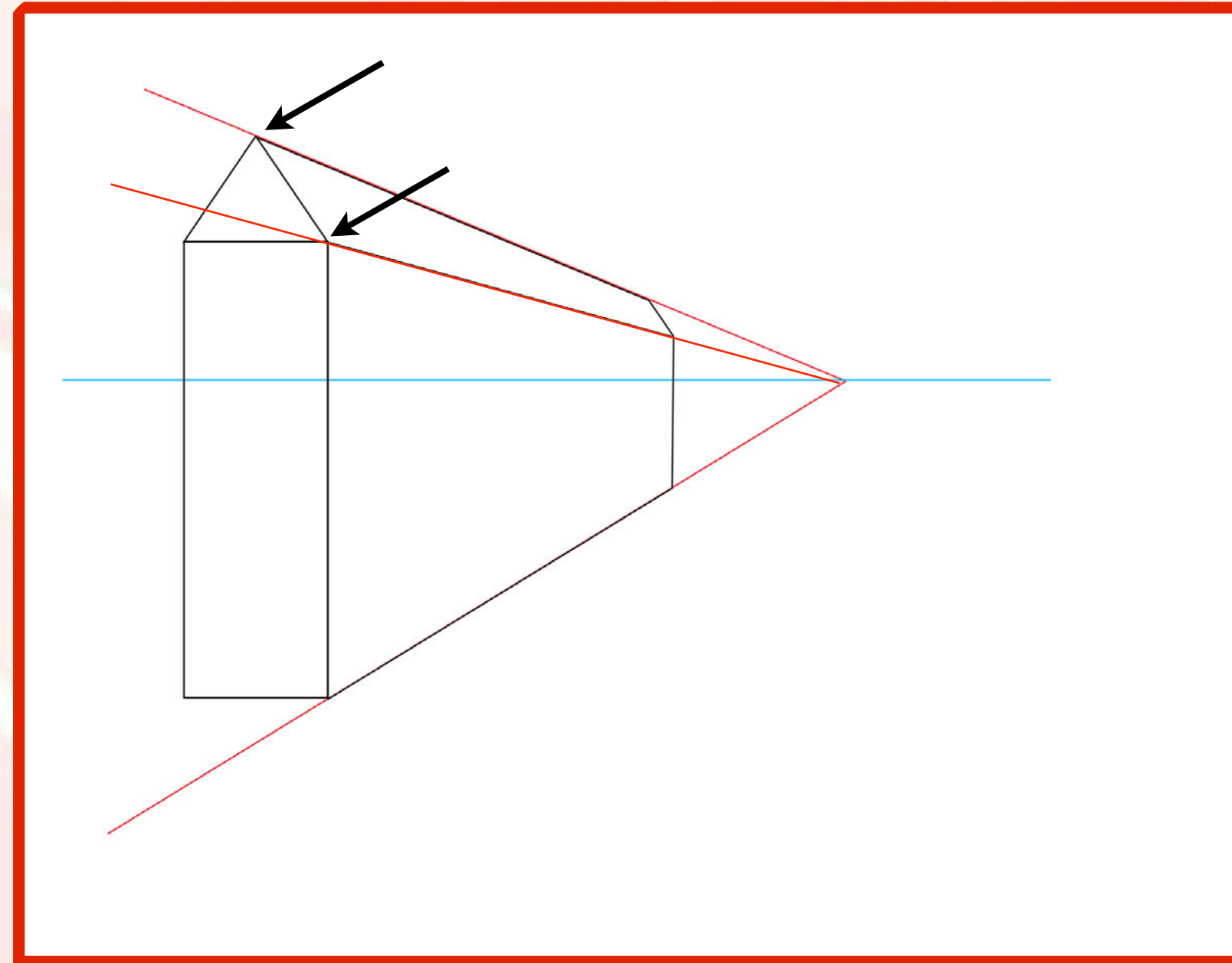


Can you see how the construction lines are used to keep everything in proportion to create a sense of distance and depth?

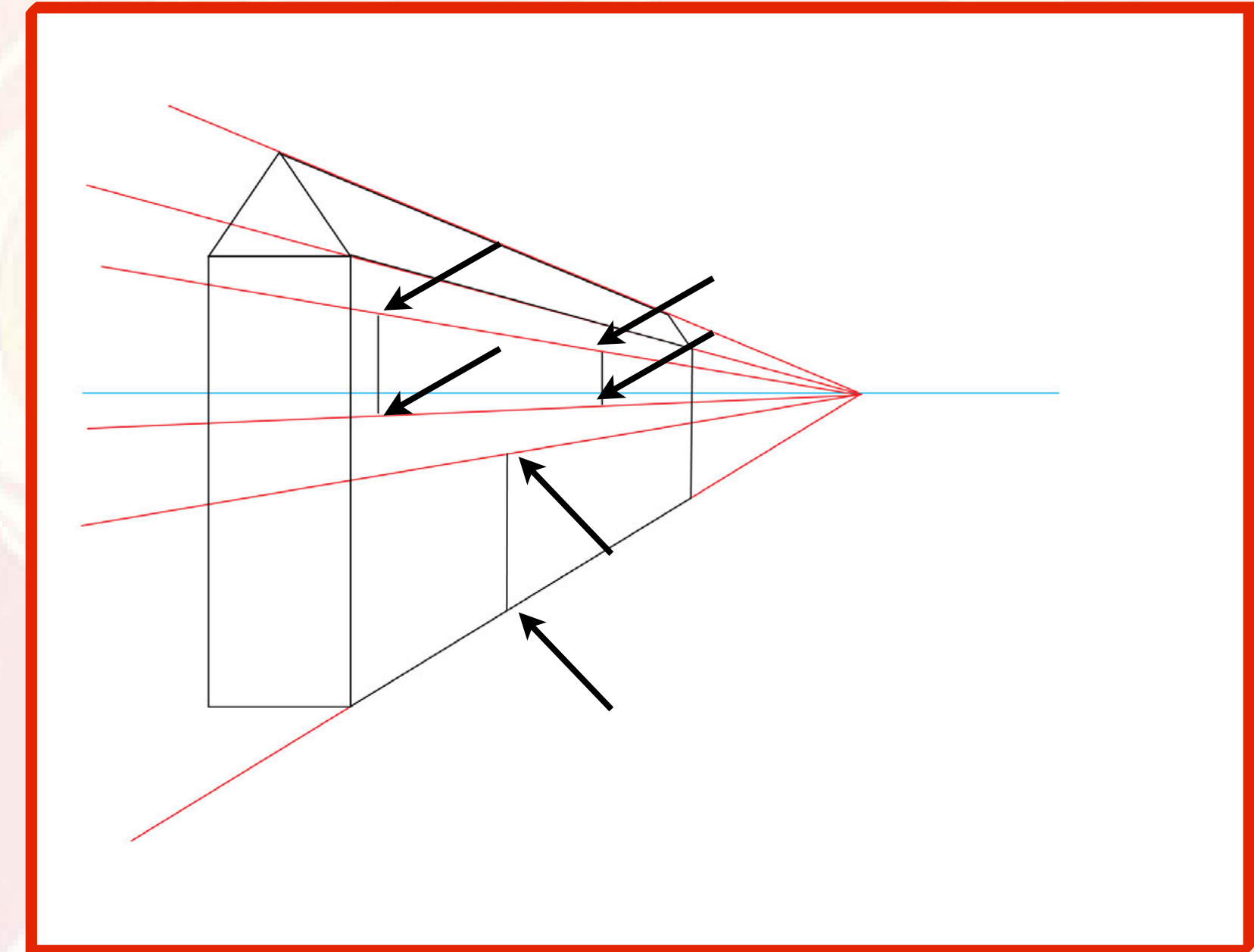
Let's have a look at how we can draw a house like this using construction lines...



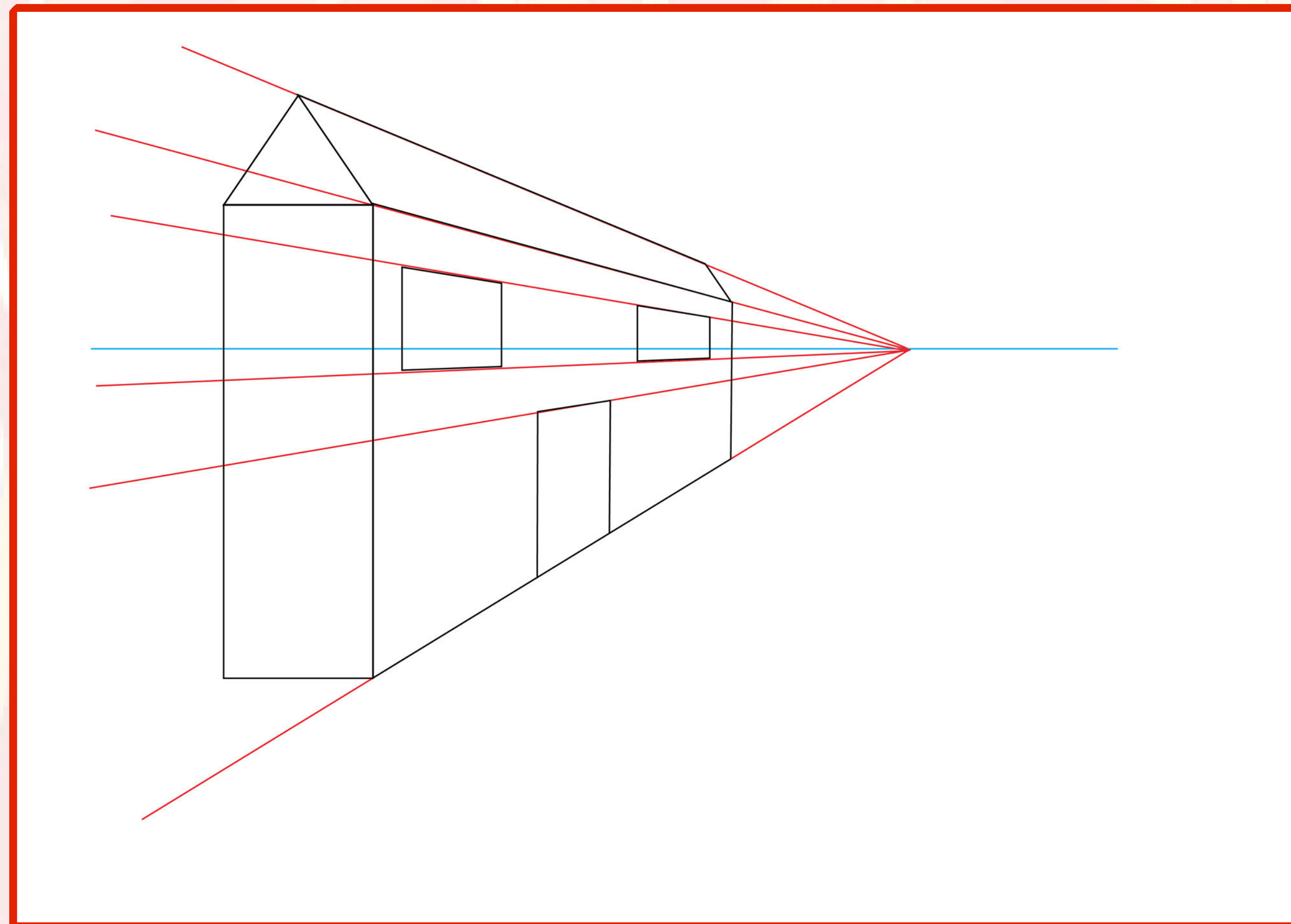
Start by drawing your horizon line. Draw the flat edge of the house and draw a construction line from the bottom corner to wherever you want your vanishing point to be.



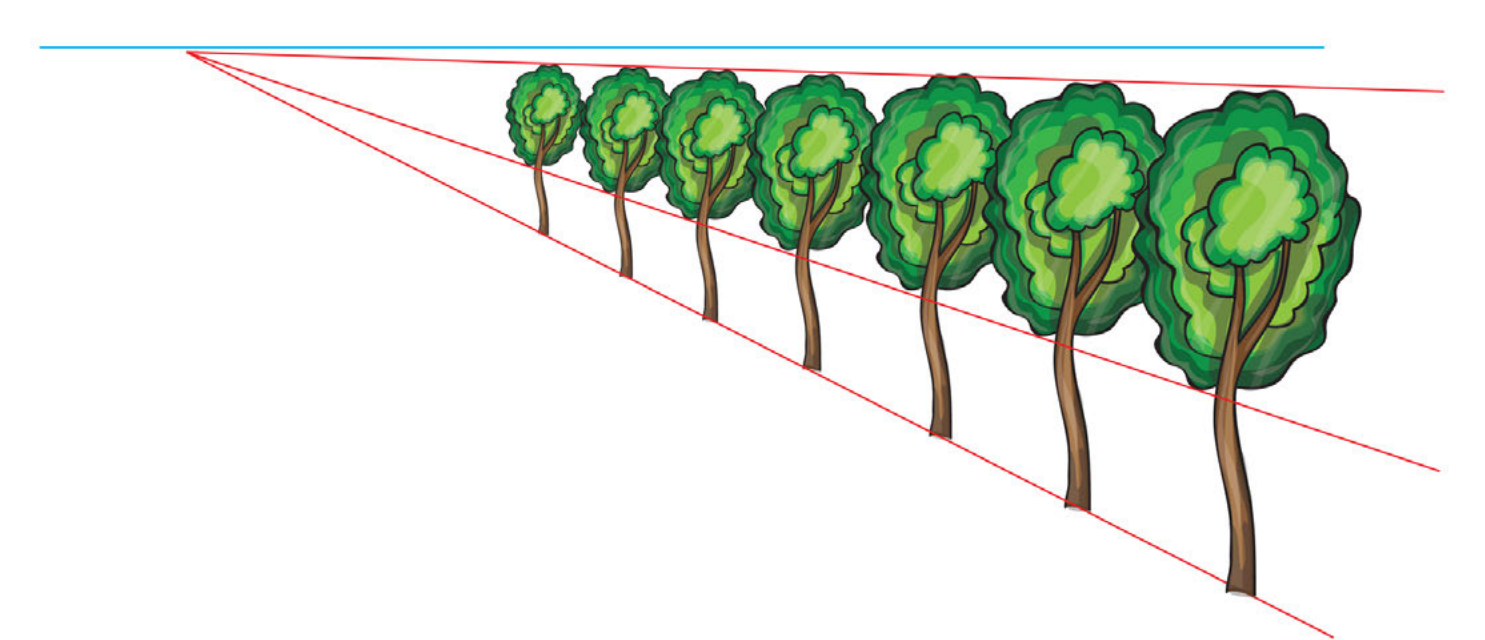
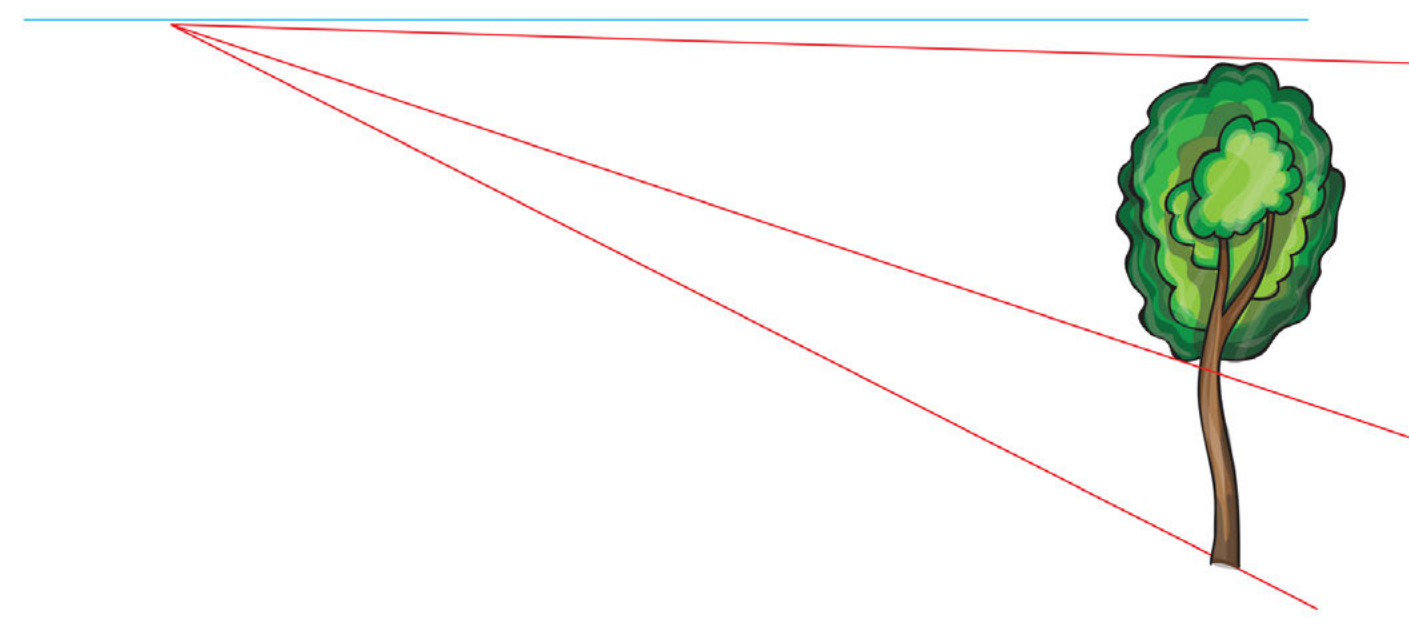
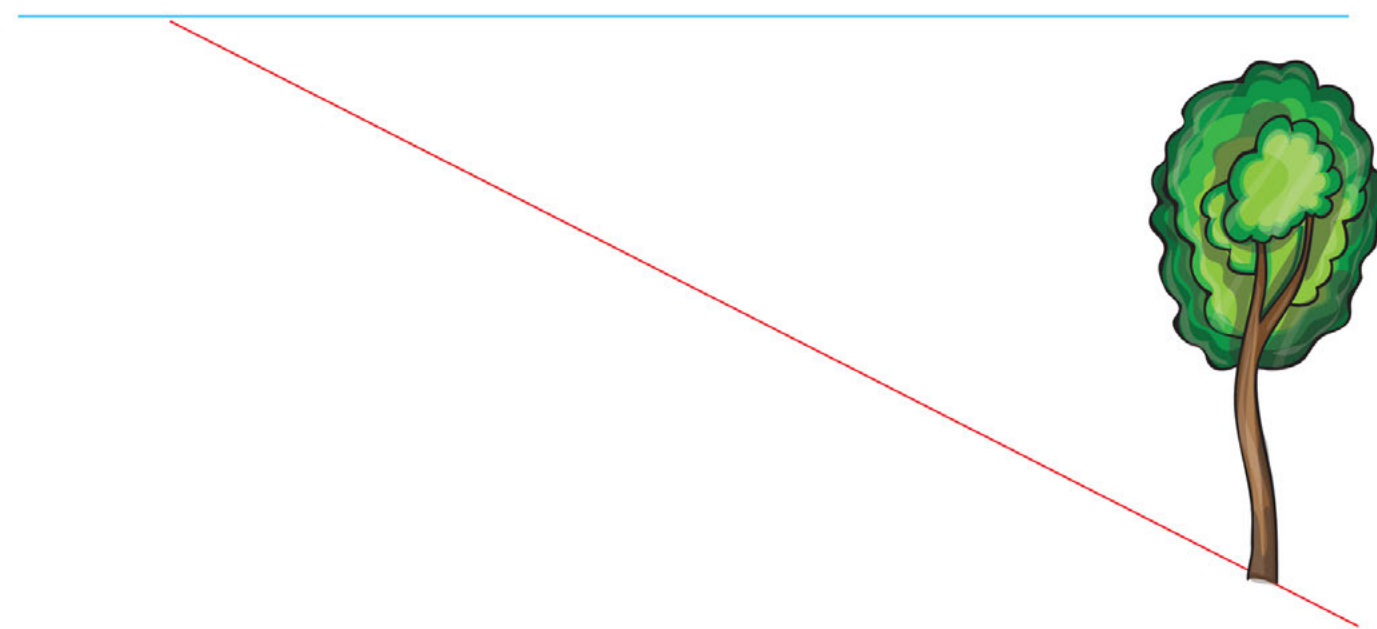
Draw a construction line from the point of the roof to the vanishing point. Do the same for any other points, then draw in the outline of the house, following the construction lines.



Draw lines to show where you want the windows and doors to be. Again, draw construction lines to help guide you, then follow these lines to complete the shapes.



Construction lines are really useful for making sure that your drawings stay in perspective. Eventually, you won't need to draw them out but will be able to use just your eye to see where your shapes need to be drawn.



Have a look at this example. Can you explain to a partner how construction lines have been used to keep this row of trees in perspective?



Have a look at the paintings on the next slides. Can you see where the vanishing points are? How has the artist created the illusion of depth?

“Berlin Street in the Sunshine” Lesser Ury



“Boston Common in Twilight” Childe Hassam



“Grand Canal in Venice” J.M.W. Turner



When you're
creating your own artwork,
use a vanishing point, horizon
line and construction lines to help
you. If you practise, soon you will
be drawing perspective perfectly
without even thinking about
it!

