

# Chapter 2

## Lettering

# TECHNICAL LETTERING

# IMPORTANCE OF GOOD LETTERING

## 1. **Legibility** – Each letter must be distinct

Industry can't tolerate errors caused by poor drawing legibility.

## 2. **Corporate Pride** –

Poor lettering reflects poorly on company product and potential customers may question their engineering accuracy.

## 3. **Personal Pride** –

*“A good landscape designer should strive to be a good graphic artist “*

- Pay your "dues" and practice.
- You can improve with effort and don't sell yourself short.
- Believe in yourself.

# Choice of Methods for Applying Letters

1. Importance of the drawing
2. Time schedule for its production
3. In house drawings vs. presentation drawings
4. Easy to create “Time is Money”

# 5 Methods for Applying Letters

# #1 - Lettering Templates

- Guides to reproduce the same letters over and over
- Various template sizes required to complete drawings
- Time consuming
- Lack visual interest



## #2 - Waxed press-on letters

- Quick and easy to use
- Letters sold on sheets of plastic or waxed paper
- Transferred to drawing by pencil rubbing
- Create a professional graphic image
- Easily removed w/cellophane tape
- Expensive
- Crack w/age
- Wasteful - vowels used more than consonants

# #3 - Lettering Machines

- Initial expense is greater
- More cost effective
- Mass produce designs
- Simple to operate
- Print on transparent tape
- No waste





# #4 -Transfer Film- “Sticky Back”

- Plastic sheet w/adhesive back
- Used for plant lists
- Construction notations
- Client names and addresses
- Company logos
- Prepared on a word processor and photo copied onto plastic film
- Very versatile



# #5 - Hand Lettering

- Distinctive style of a professional
- Visual evidence of designer's competency
- Created w/single stroke of the pen, pencil, or marker
- Basic block style
- Use of guide lines

**COMIC BOOK LETTERING (SHOWN HERE AT ACTUAL WORKING SIZE)**

SET UP YOUR PAPER, T-SQUARE AND GUIDE AS IN THE SMALL DRAWING. SET THE WHEEL AT  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , AS SHOWN IN LARGE DRAWING, FOR STANDARD COMIC LETTERING. PLACE PENCIL POINT IN ONE OF HOLES MARKED, AND WHILE HOLDING T-SQUARE WITH ONE HAND, SLIDE GUIDE ACROSS PAPER WITH PENCIL POINT. REPEAT WITH EACH HOLE, AND YOU WILL HAVE THE GUIDE-LINES FOR THREE ROWS OF LETTERS. HERE ARE THE COMICS ALPHABETS:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ !? (THESE ARE DONE BY ME WITH #2 & #2½ CASTELL TECHNICAL PENS.)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ !?

WARM UP WITH THESE PRACTICE STROKES: |||| |||| |||| OOOO ≡≡≡. WORK ON KEEPING THE LETTERS THE SAME HEIGHT AND WIDTH! (EXCEPT M, W & I)

NEXT TO THE LETTERS, THE BALLOON SHAPES ARE HARDEST.

PRACTICE DRAWING THE OVALS FREEHAND, AND THEN INKING THEM WITH AN OVAL TEMPLATE.

LUCKILY, THOUGHT BALLOONS ARE EASIER!

THIS IS THE **BLOCK-LETTER ALPHABET** THAT FORMS THE BASIS FOR MANY OF MY TITLES AND SOUND EFFECTS:

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ!**

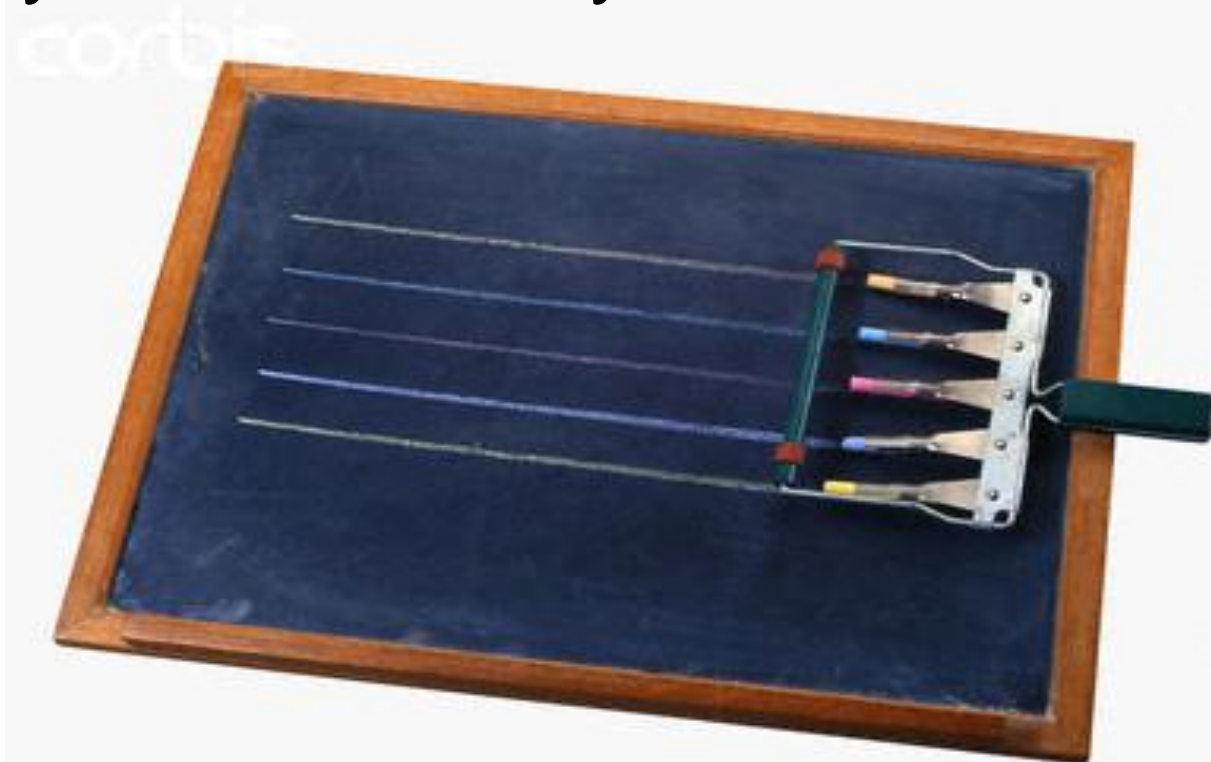
**AND, FOR SMALLER DISPLAY LETTERS, USE SPEEDBALL!**

TRY PRACTICING YOUR BALLOON LETTERING FOR AN HOUR OR MORE A DAY OVER A MONTH. IF YOU'RE STILL INTERESTED BY THEN, AND CAN SEE SOME IMPROVEMENT, YOU MAY BE ON THE WAY. **GOOD LUCK!** *Gods Kleir.*



# Using the Ames Lettering Guide

- Ames Lettering Guide works like the chalk holder your elementary school teacher used



# Using the Ames Lettering Guide

- It makes guidelines for you to use when doing your architectural lettering
- it will take a bit of practice to master this tool - so be patient as you get started
- hand lettering gives a personal touch
- *Practice Makes Perfect!*

# General **Lettering** Tips

- Be conservative with letters and do not add to much flair to the letters
- Keep letters consistent
- **Use** guidelines
- Minimum size is 1/8"
- Titles are 3/16" or 1/4"

# More **Lettering** Tips

- **Use** 0.5mm automatic pencil with H, F, or HB lead
- Rest hand on clean protective sheet
- Keep vertical lines farther apart than angles or curved lines
- Relax and be comfortable
- Slanted letters should be at about 68°

# 1<sup>st</sup> Practice Lesson – Graph Paper Letters

- Practice your lettering strokes
- Follow the direction of each stroke in composing your letters
- Letters are composed via the number of strokes
- Grid - The grid is comprised of a 6 x 6 matrix of 36 boxes to aid composition and width.
- TOM Q VAXY = 6 x 6 proportion
- All other letters = 6 x 5 proportion
- ONLY “W” is the exception = 6 x 8
- Groups - Letters such as O, C, G, and Q are grouped to ease learning & to maintain common traits.



# Lettering

- lettering is a skill that takes a lot of practice
- always use your straight edge to make your verticals
- Note: straight side of the Ames lettering guide works great for this
- don't forget that **dark black** letters are our goal

# ELEMENTS OF QUALITY LETTERING

- **Stability** –
- The bottom of letters such as B are larger than the top, not top heavy
- **Composition** –
- Each portion of each letter is formed to an exact standard.
- **Uniformity** –
- All "A's" are alike. All B's" are alike, etc.
- **Alignment** –
- The imaginary axis of all letters are all parallel and either vertical or inclined to the right at 68 degrees, no back slant.

# Single stroke Lettering

- Each letter is made up of a series of single strokes
- Some letters as many as five
- Assignment:
- Write a row for each letter and number using the graph paper supplied (margin to margin)
- Leave one graph line row between each letter and number

# Guidelines

- Must be used to establish uniform height, not crooked.
- Use the **Ames Lettering Guide**.
- Guidelines must be extremely light via 6H.

# Lettering Size

- Height –
- 1/8" is common (1/4" for titles etc.)
- Upper & Lower Case –
- Engineering lettering is commonly upper case  
CAPITALS

# Fractions

- Not too common except for certain materials such as wood.
- Five guidelines are required for mixed numbers.
- The numerator and denominator are  $\frac{3}{4}$  the height of the whole number.

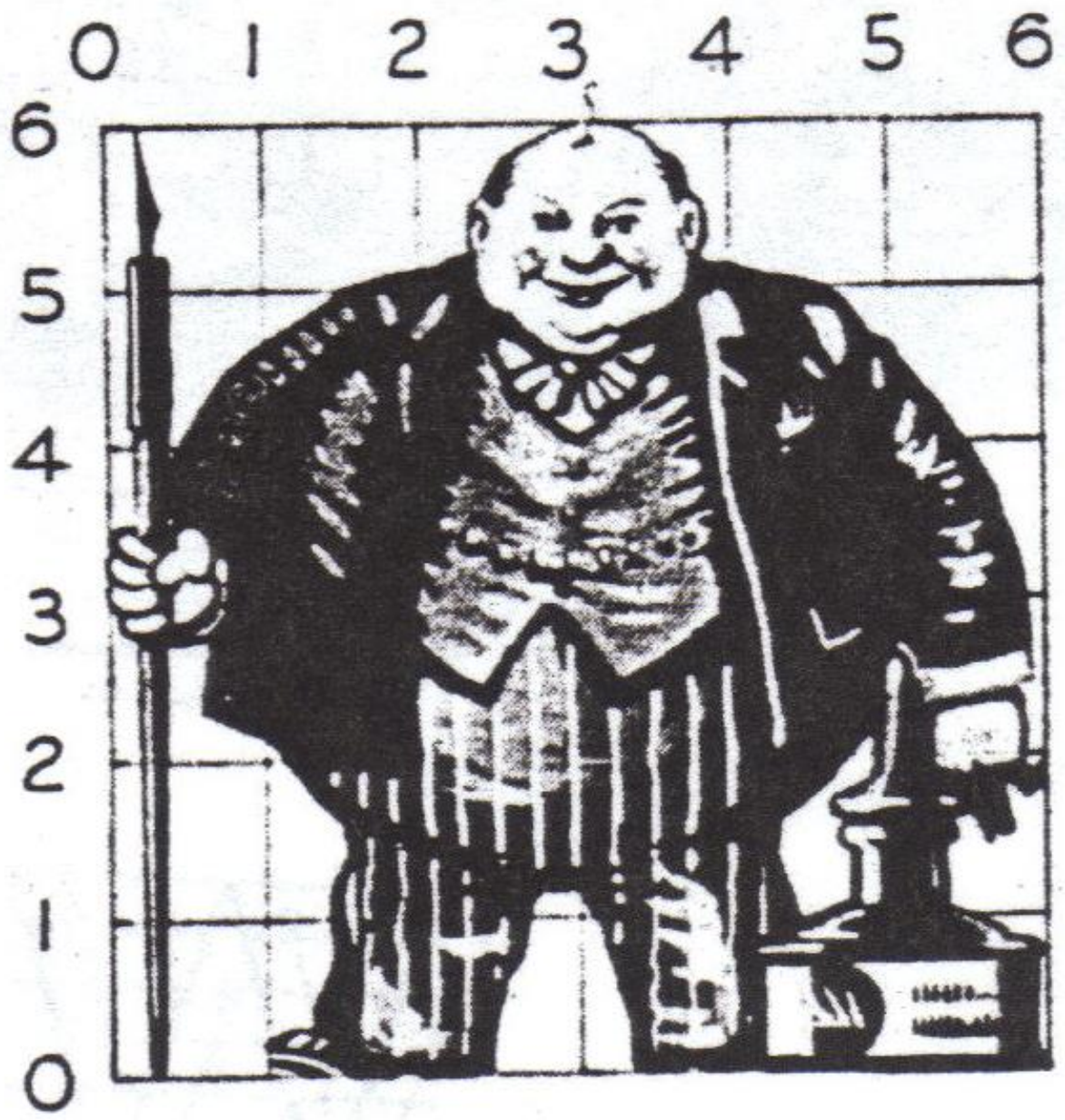
# Lettering Strokes

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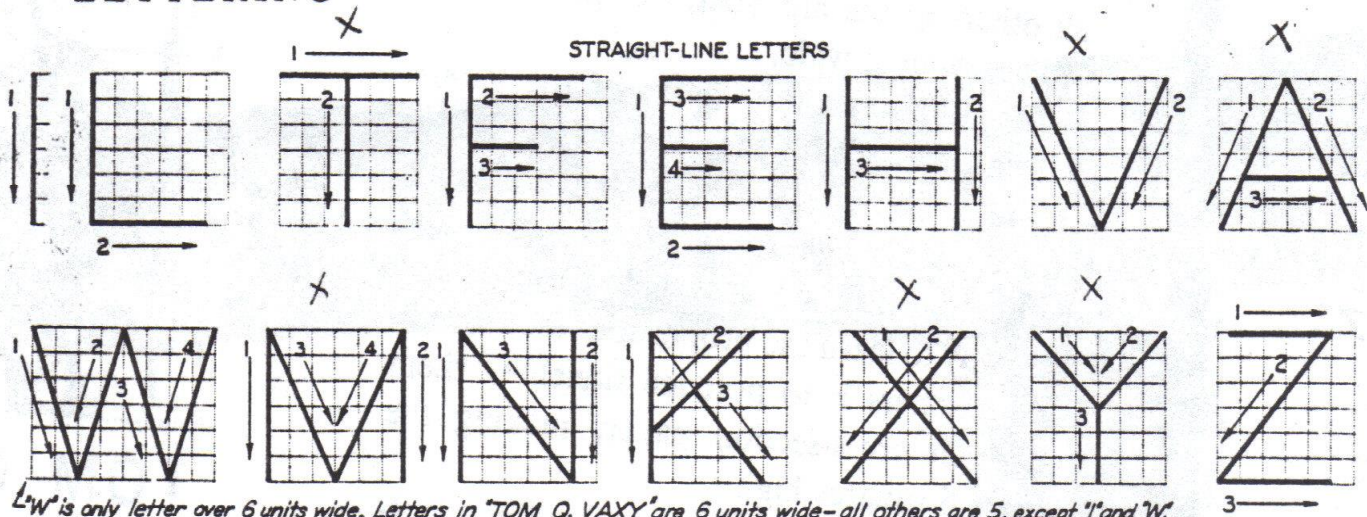
# TOM Q. VAXY

- The letters in this name are exclusively six units wide meaning they are as wide as tall
- The remaining letters are five units wide - somewhat narrow
- Letter “W” is the widest in the alphabet ( 8 units wider than its height)

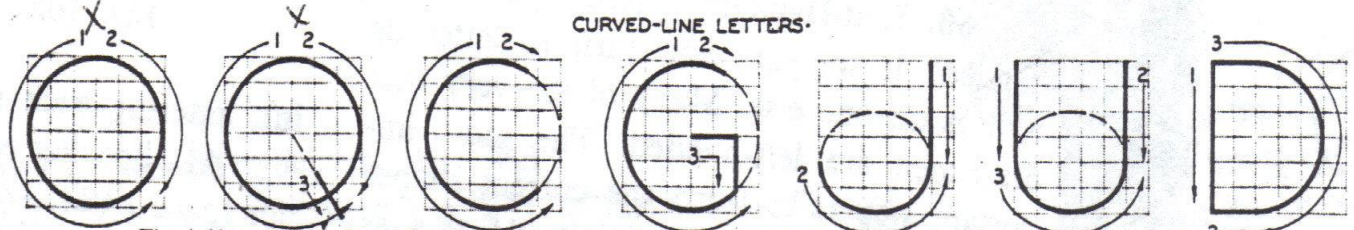




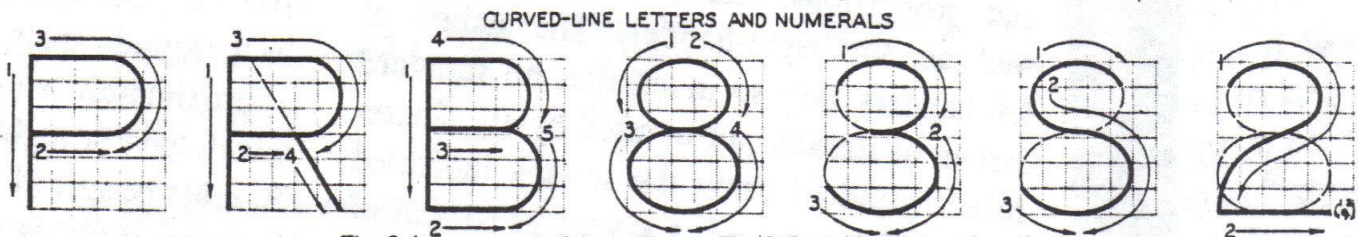
TOM Q. VAXY



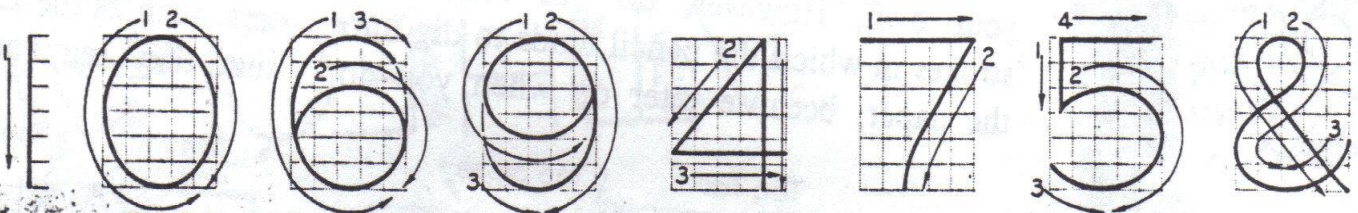
*L and W are only letters over 6 units wide. Letters in "TOM Q. VAXY" are 6 units wide—all others are 5, except "I" and "W".*



*The letters Q, C, G, and D are based on a true circle. The lower portion of the J and U is elliptical.*



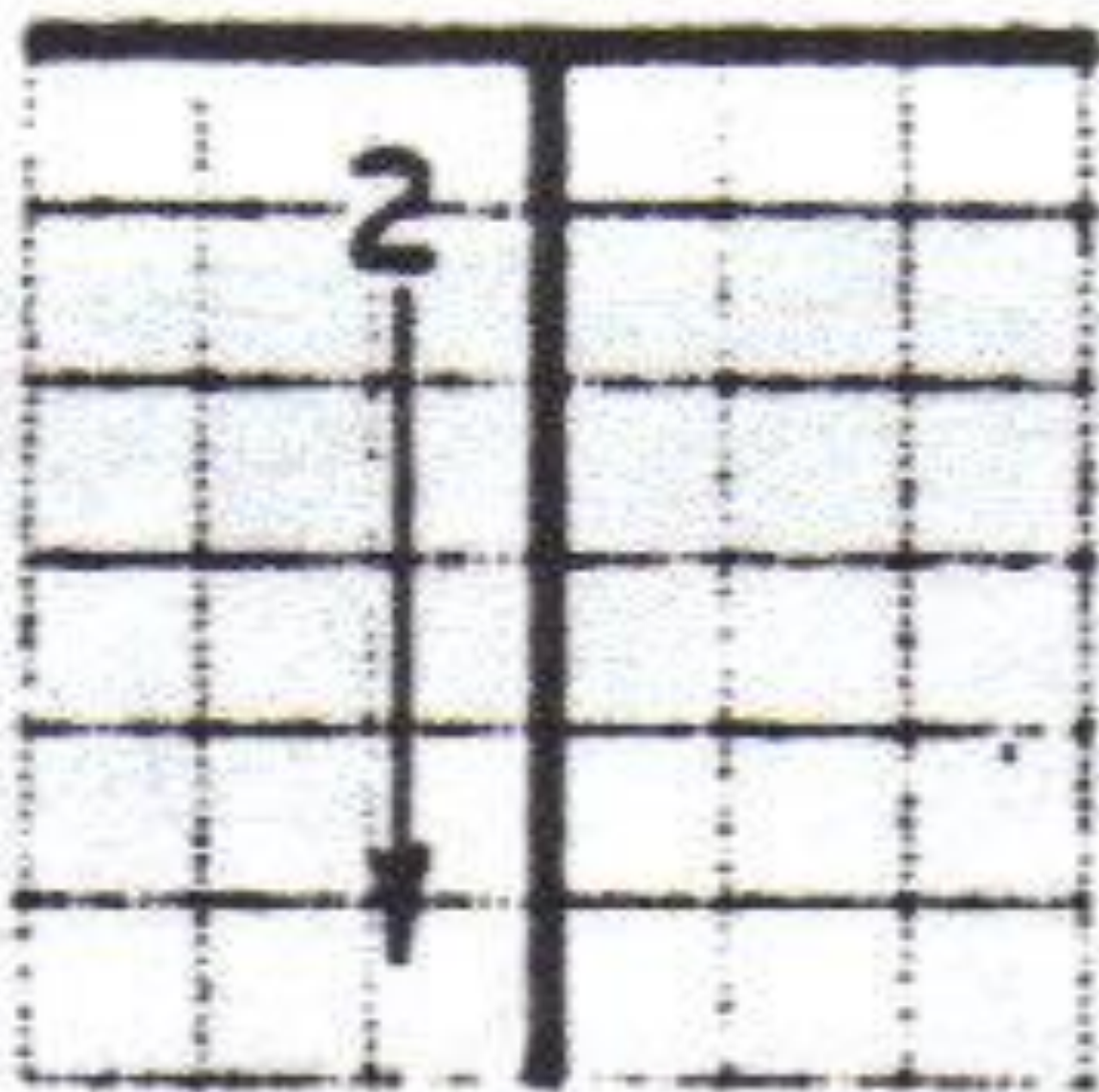
*The 8 is composed of two ellipses. The 3, S, and 2 are based on the 8.*

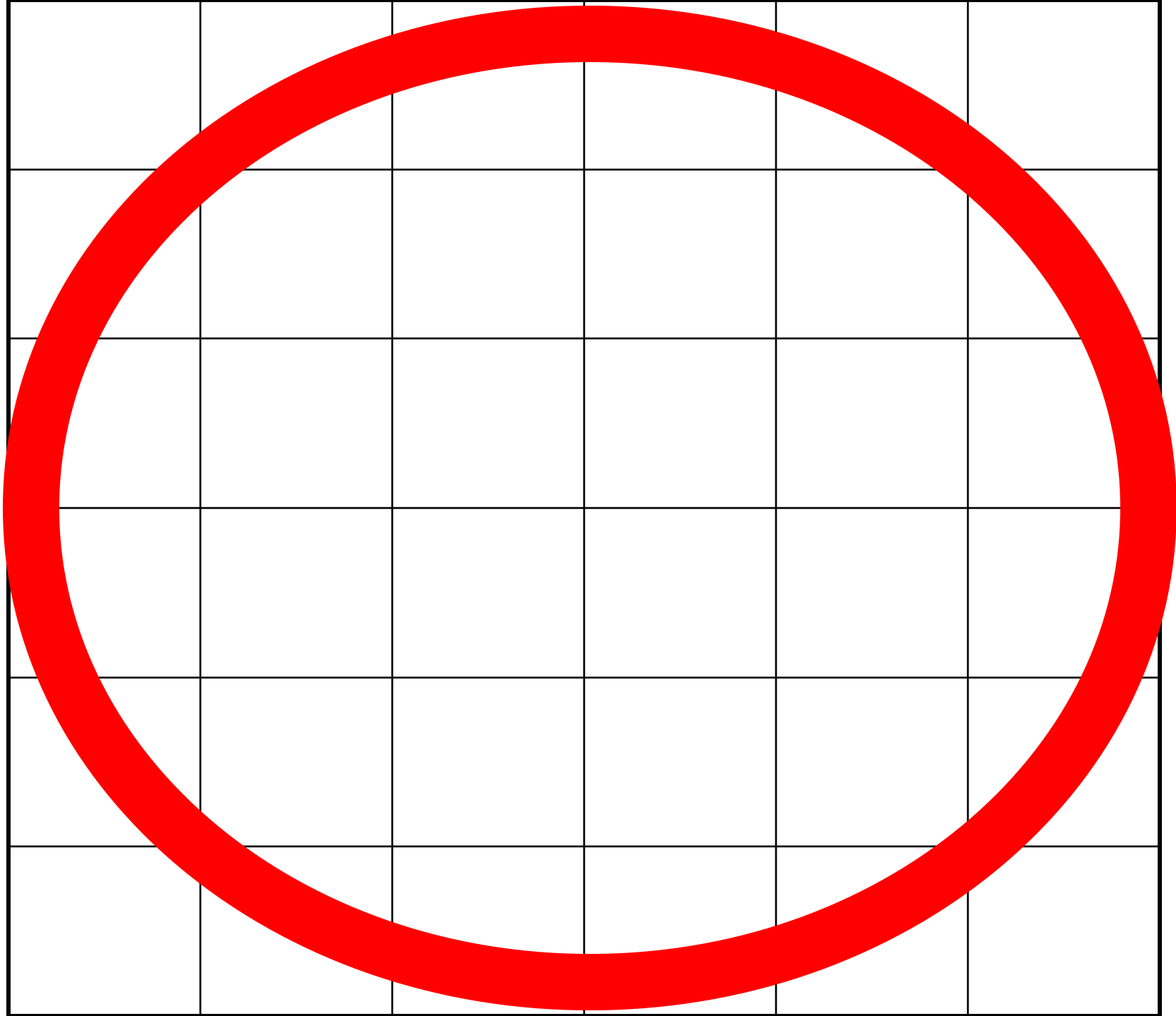


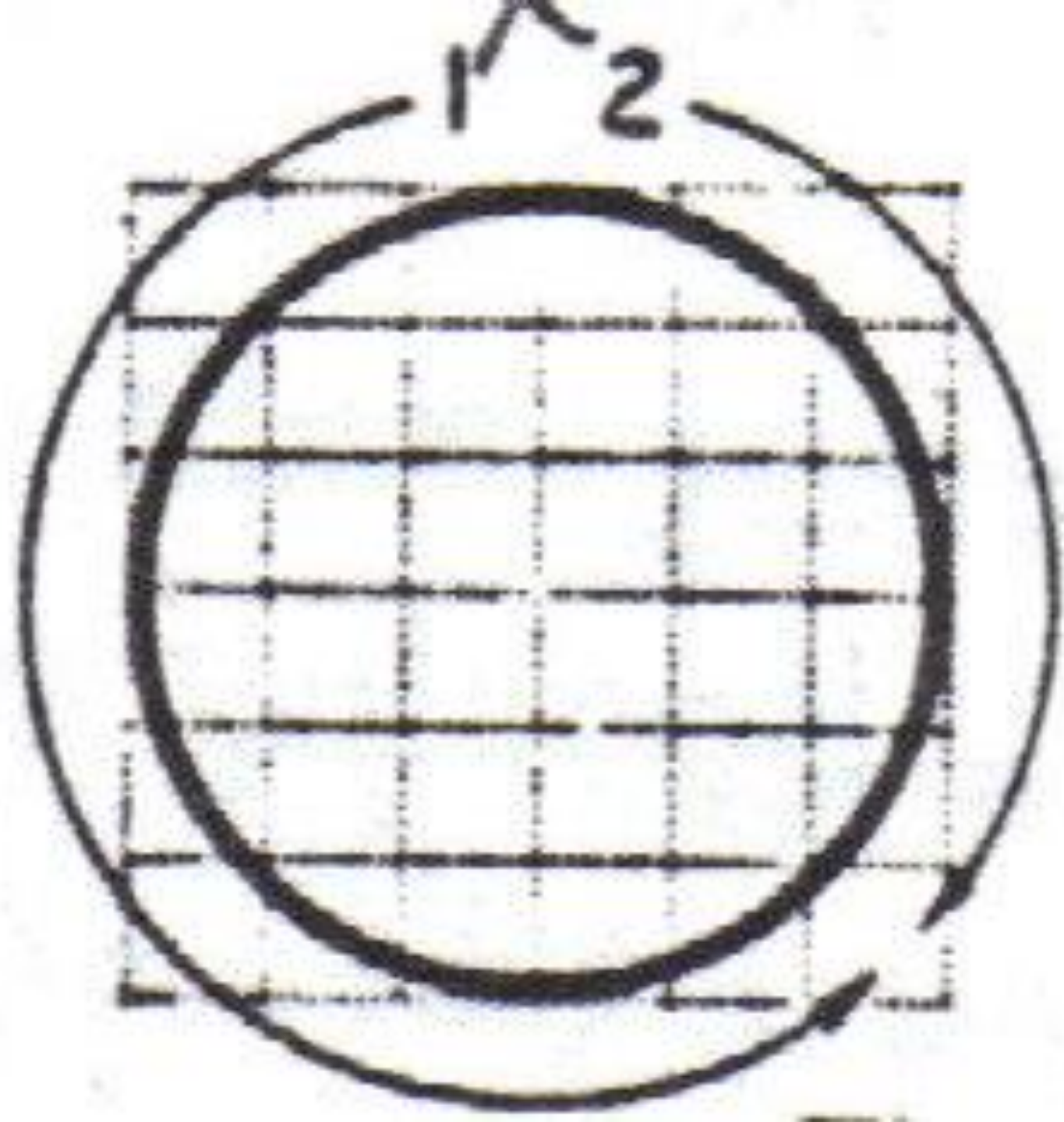
*The O, 6, and 9 are elliptical.*

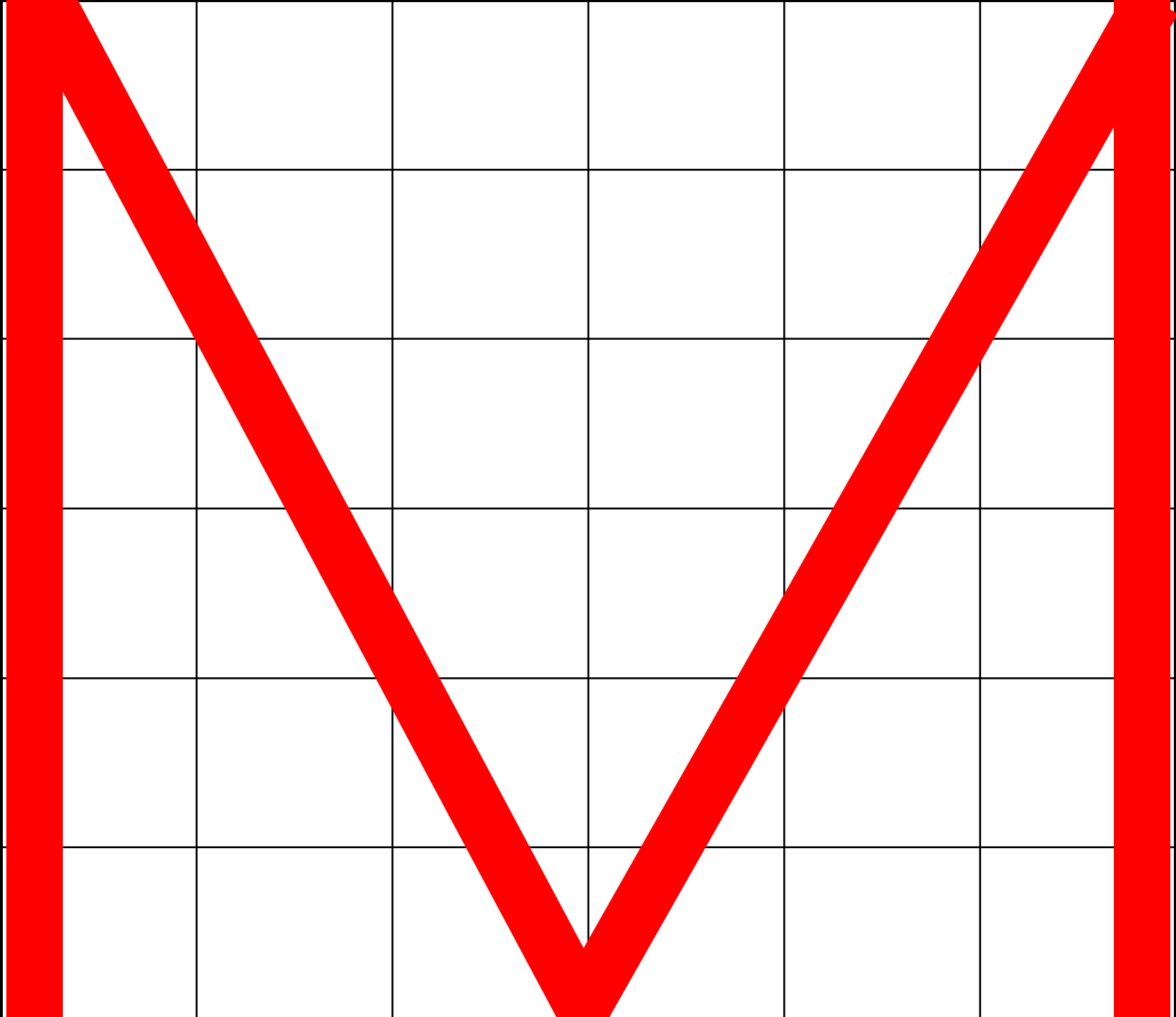
Fig. 101. Vertical Capital Letters and Numerals.

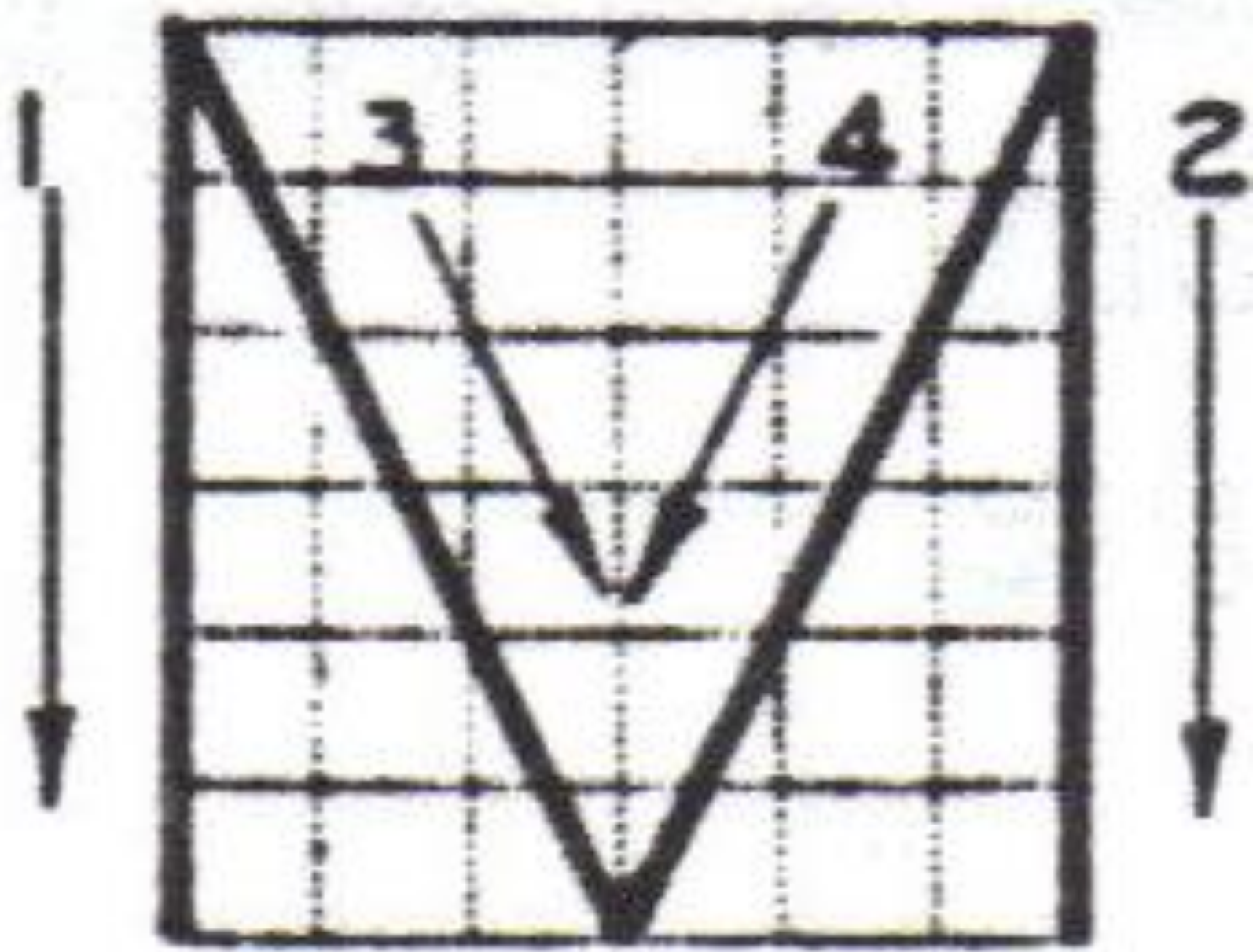




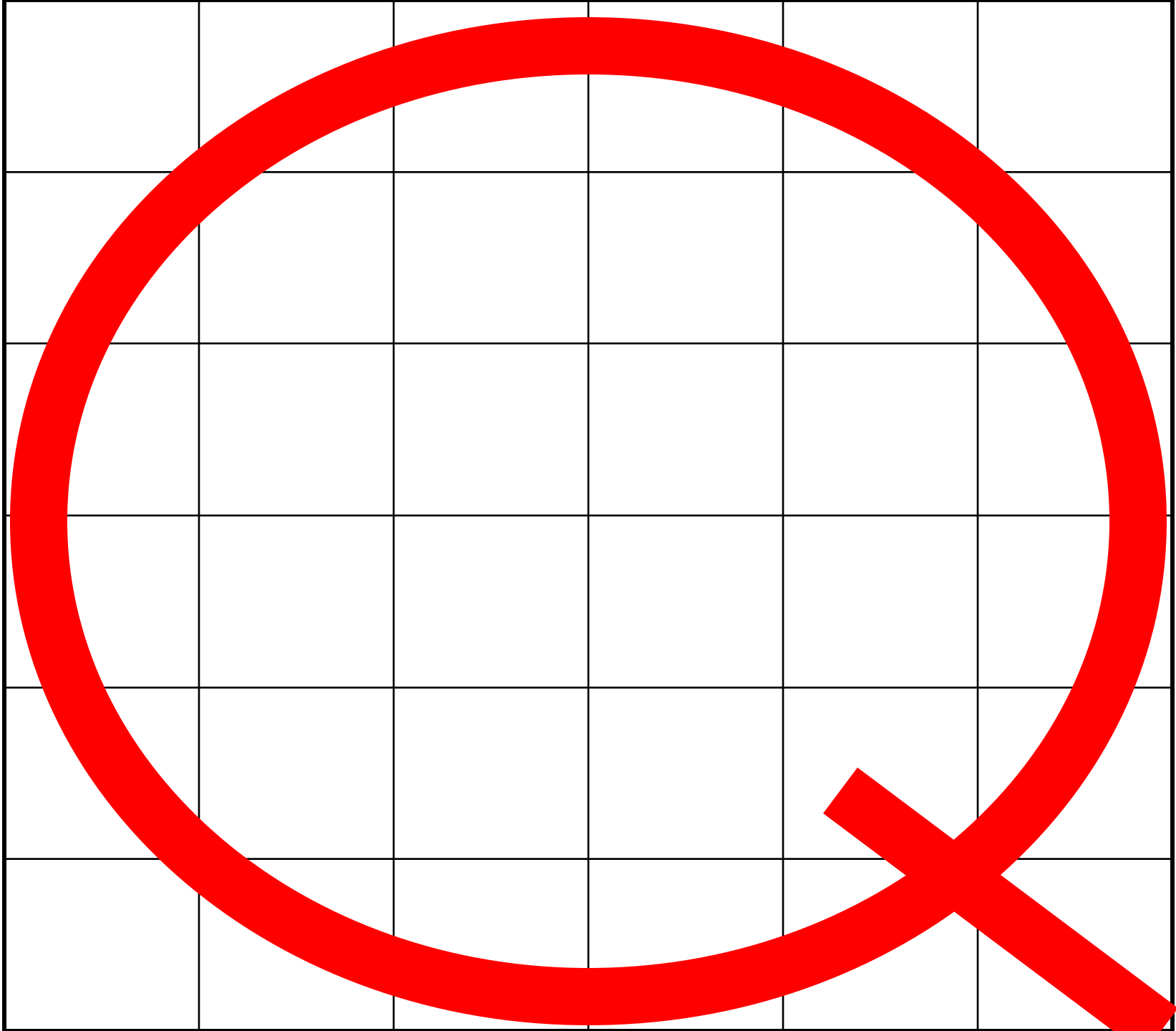


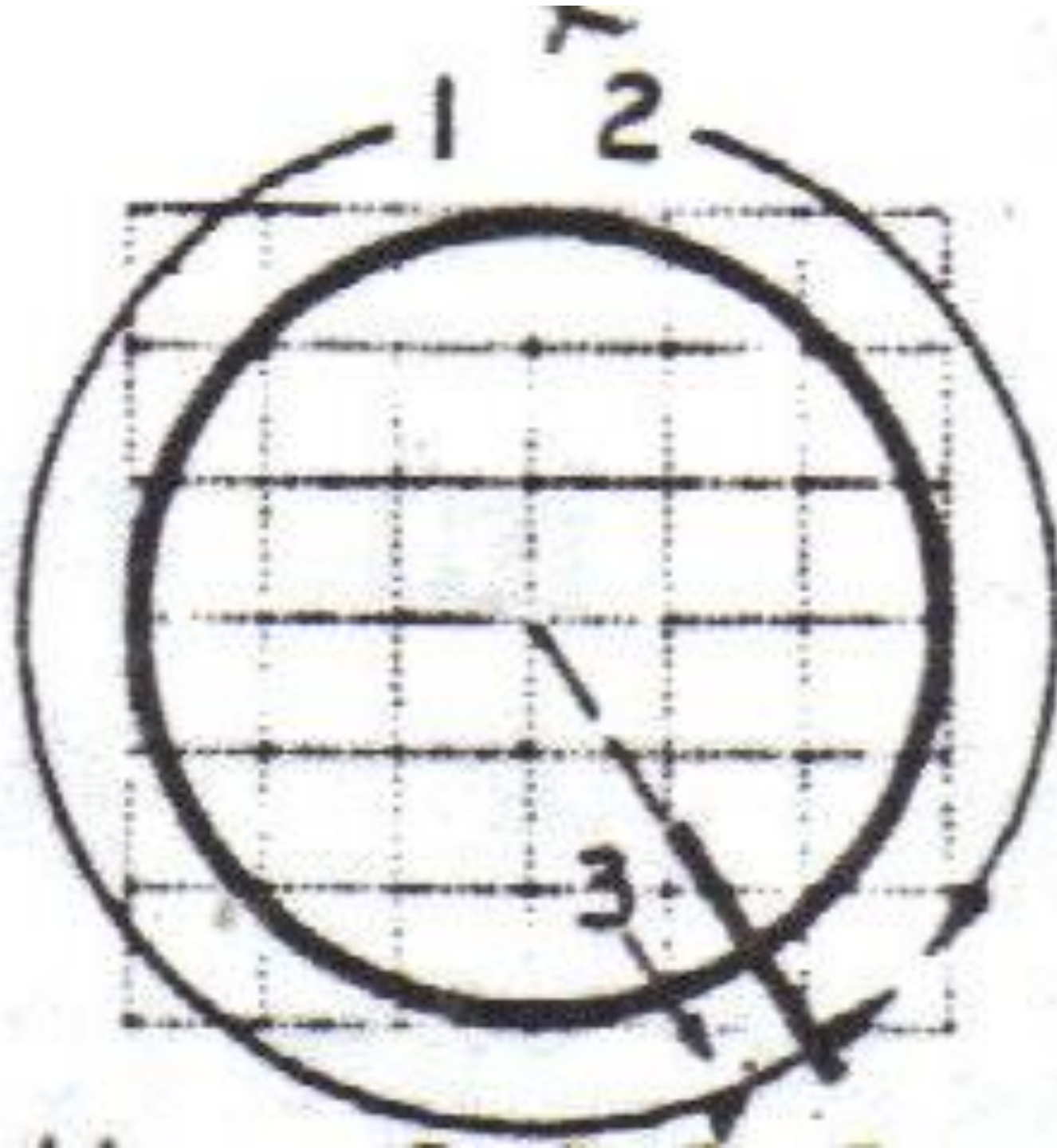


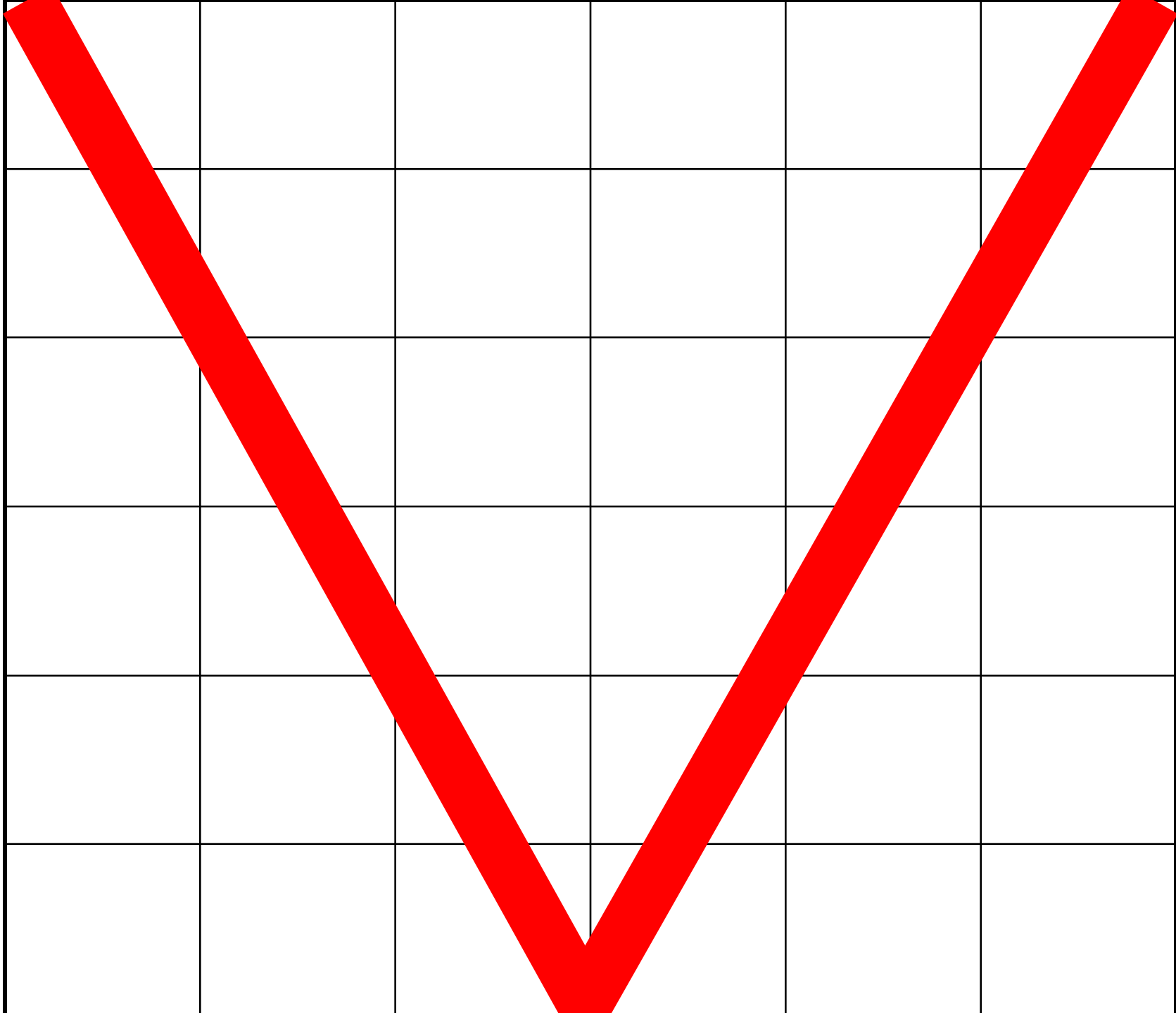




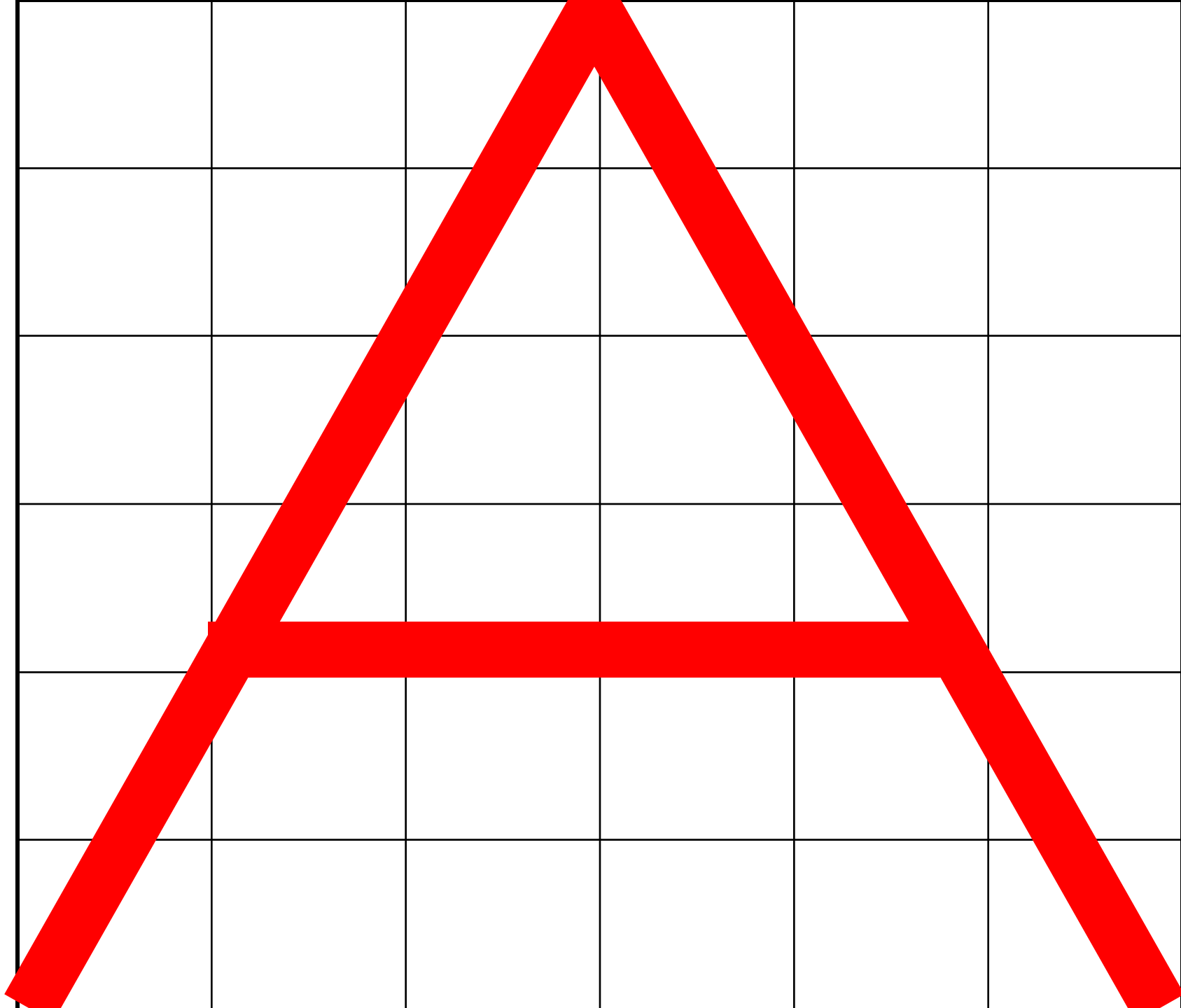


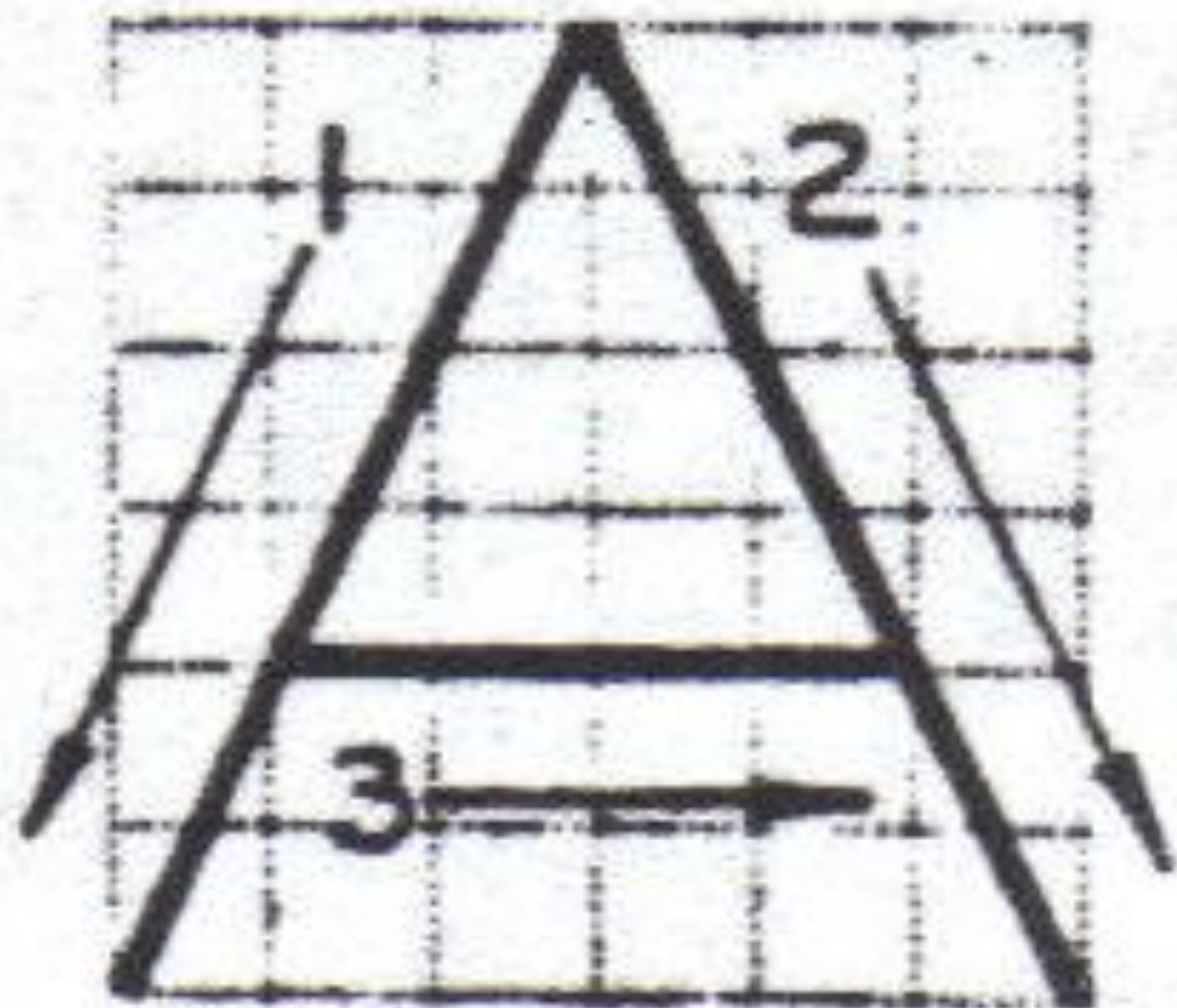


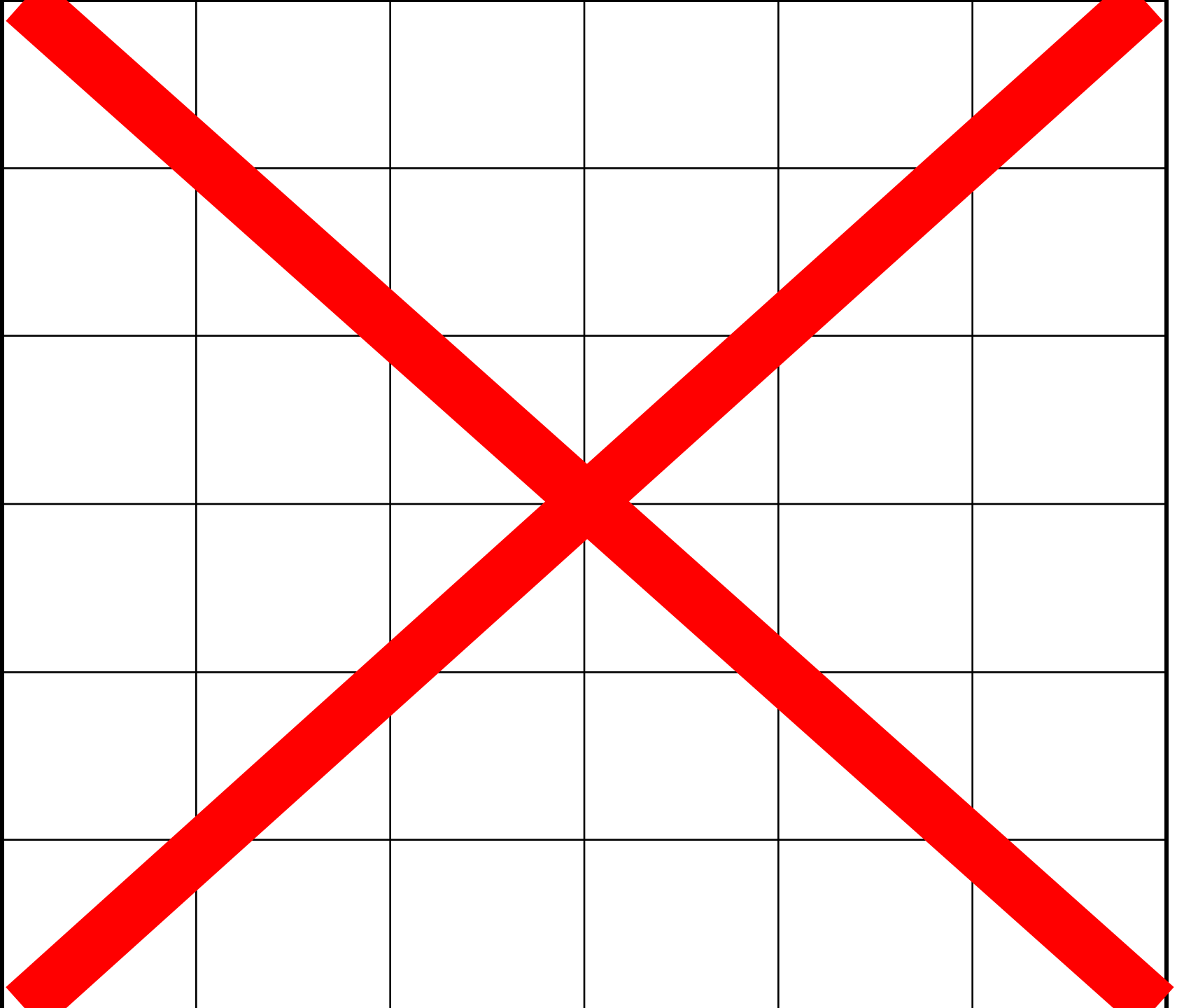


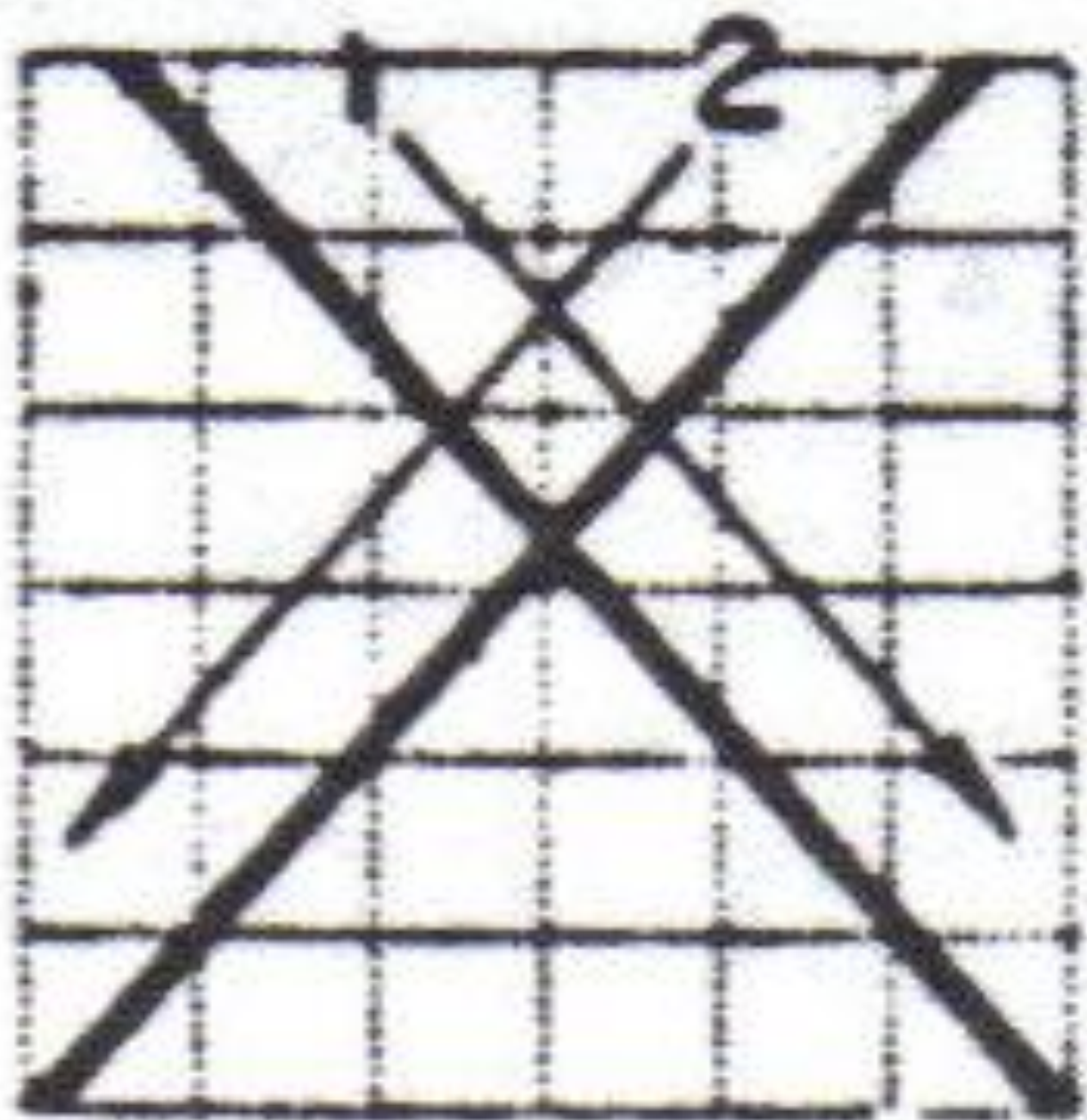




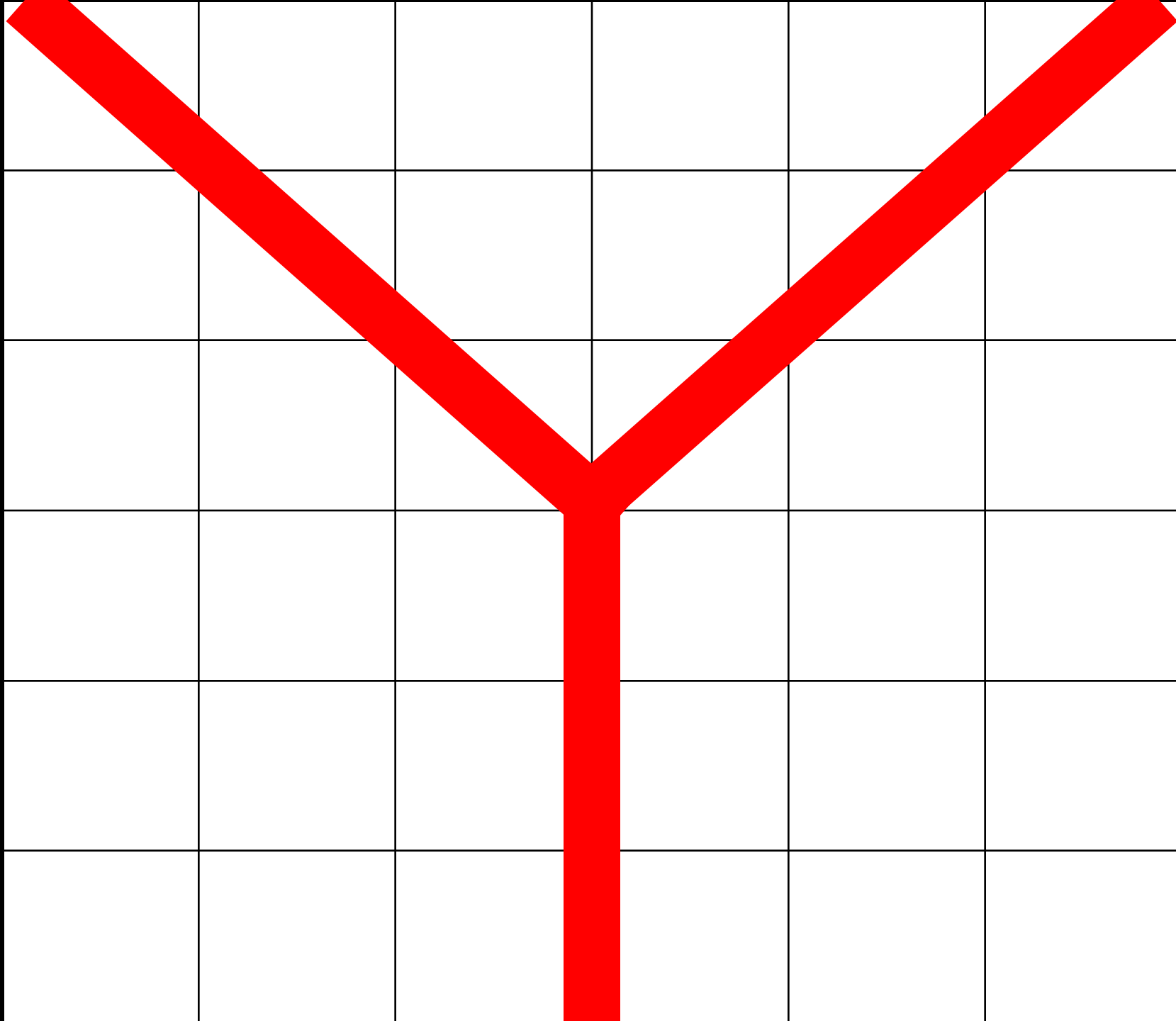


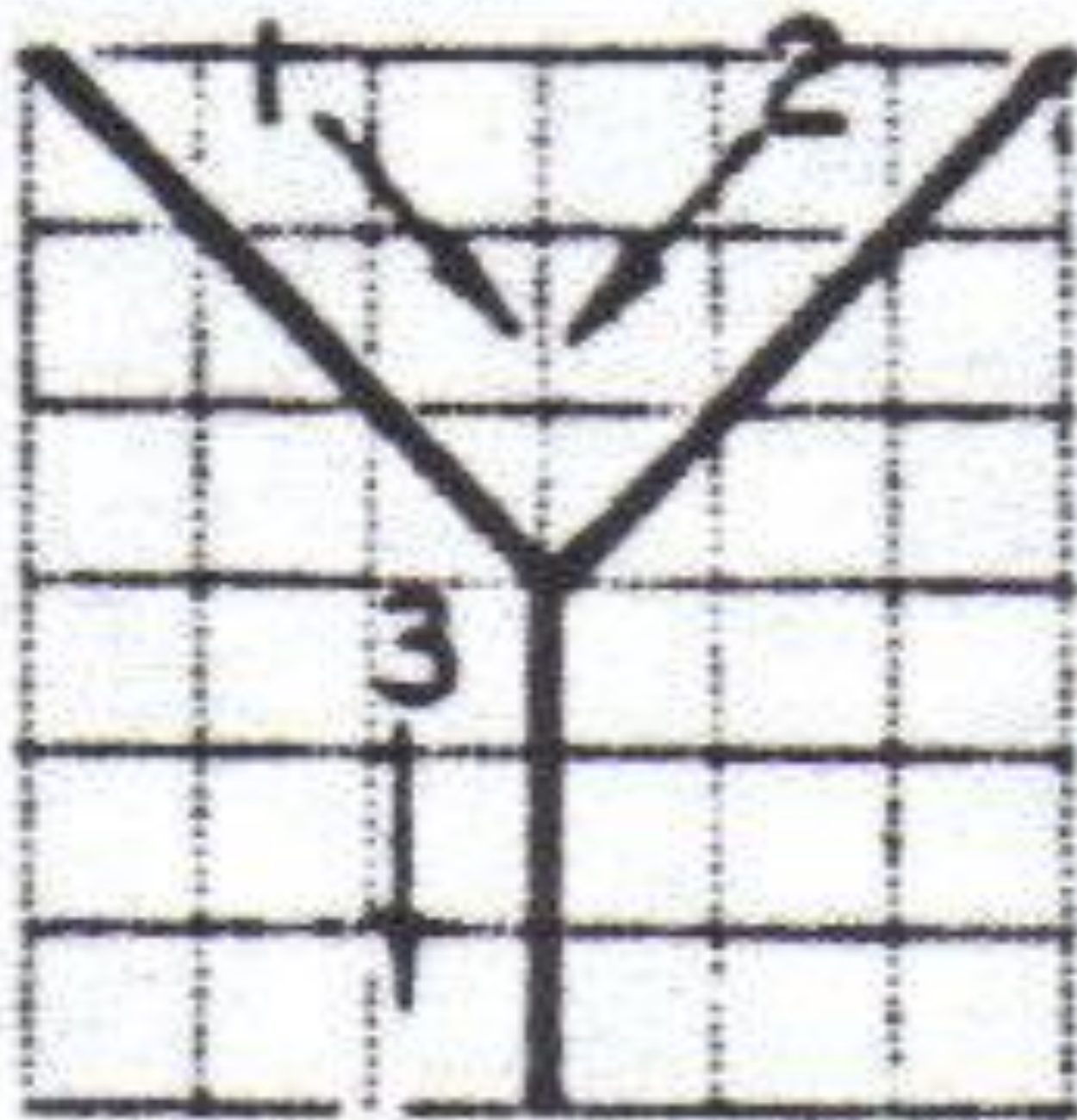


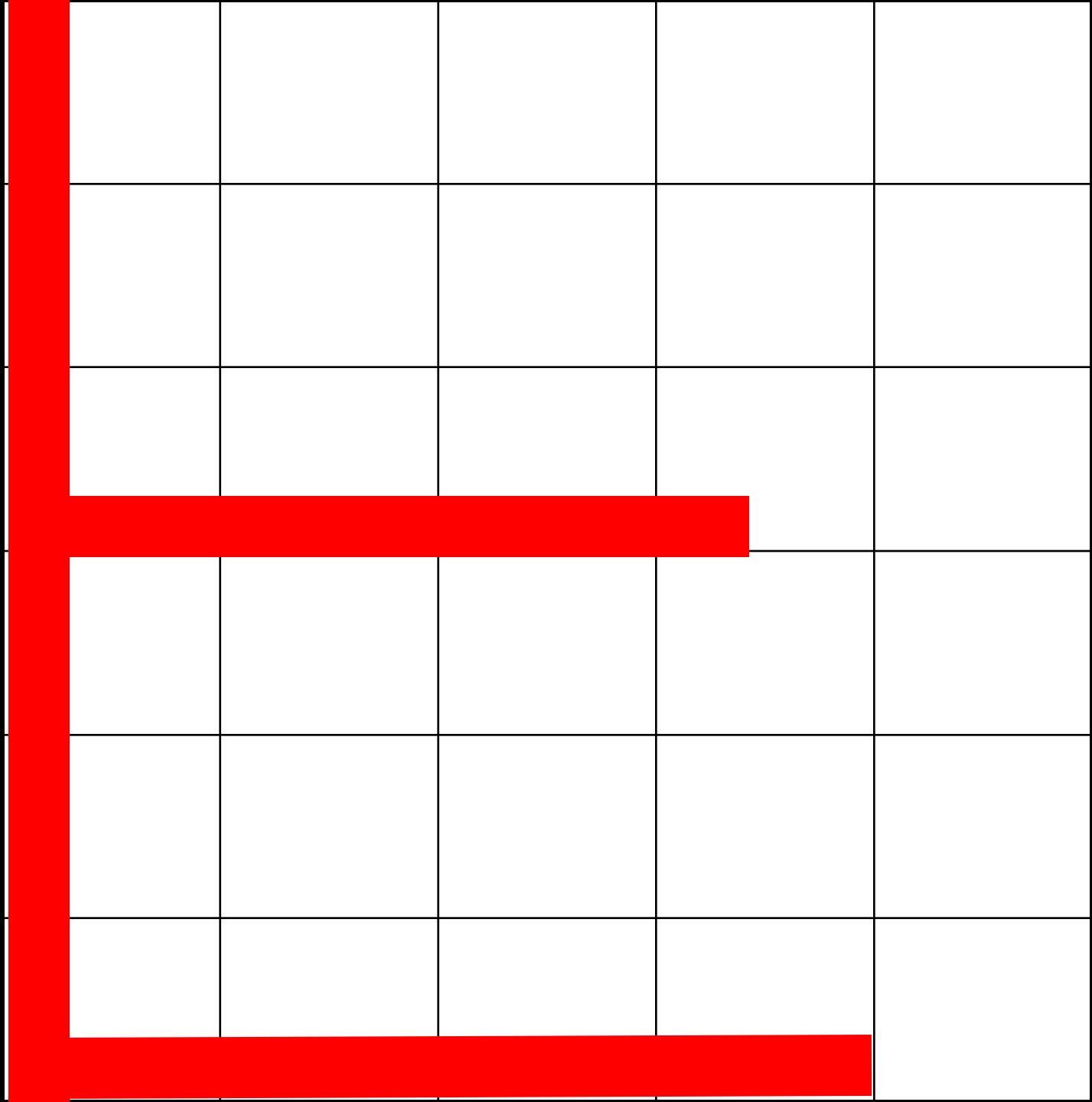


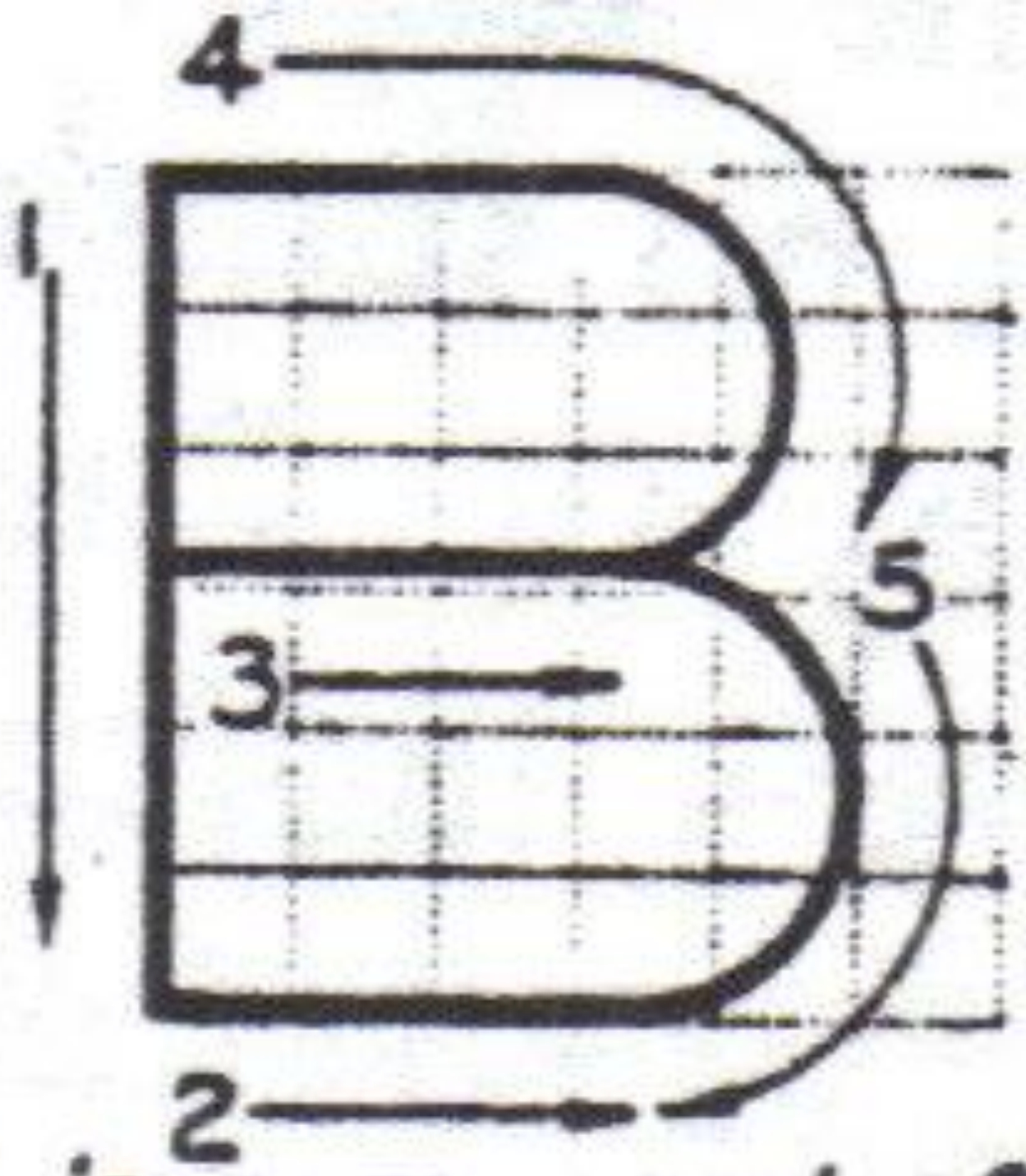


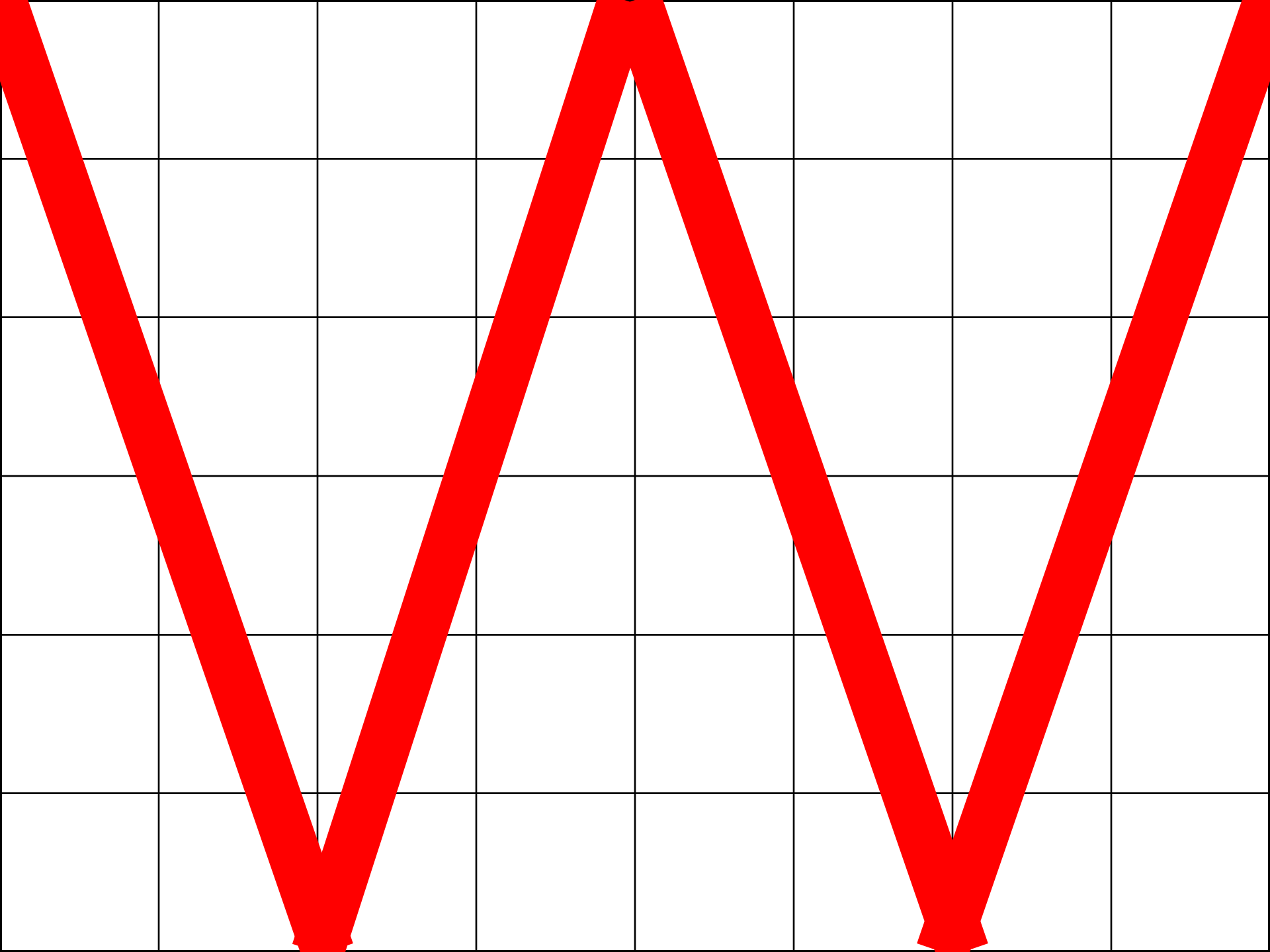


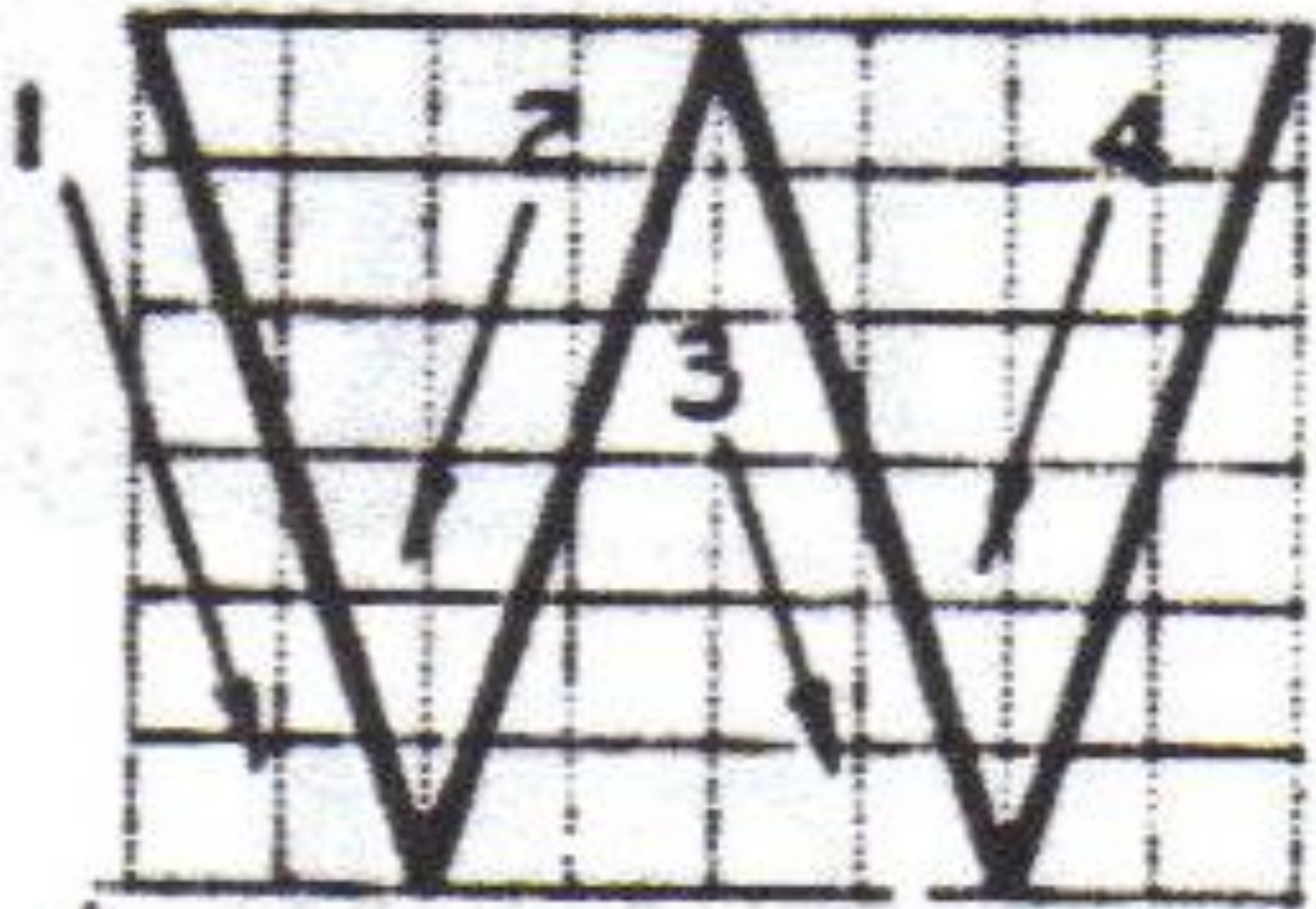














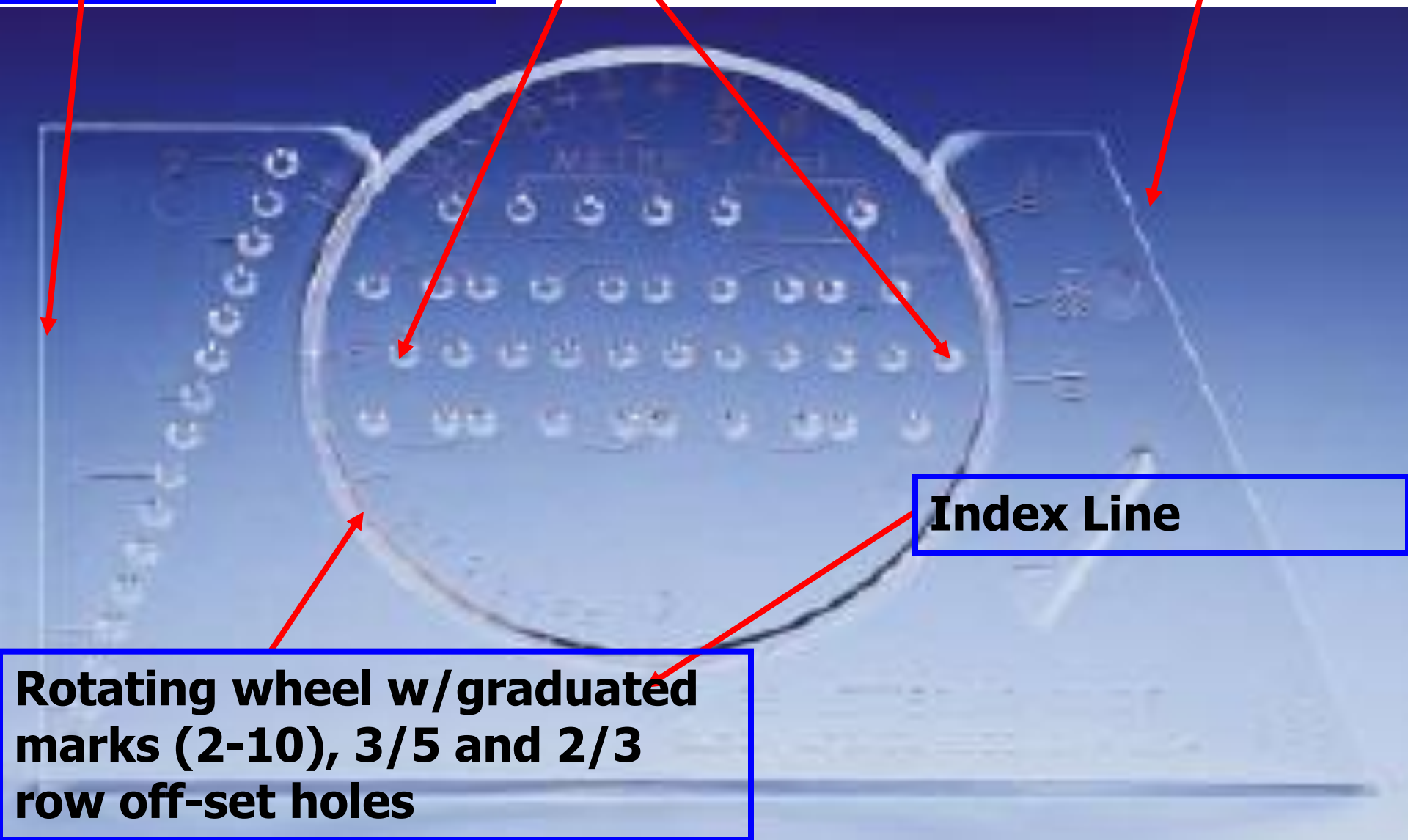




**Ctr Row-evenly spaced holes**

**60° Slant letters**

**Vertical letters**



**Index Line**

**Rotating wheel w/graduated marks (2-10), 3/5 and 2/3 row off-set holes**

# Using the Ames Lettering Guide

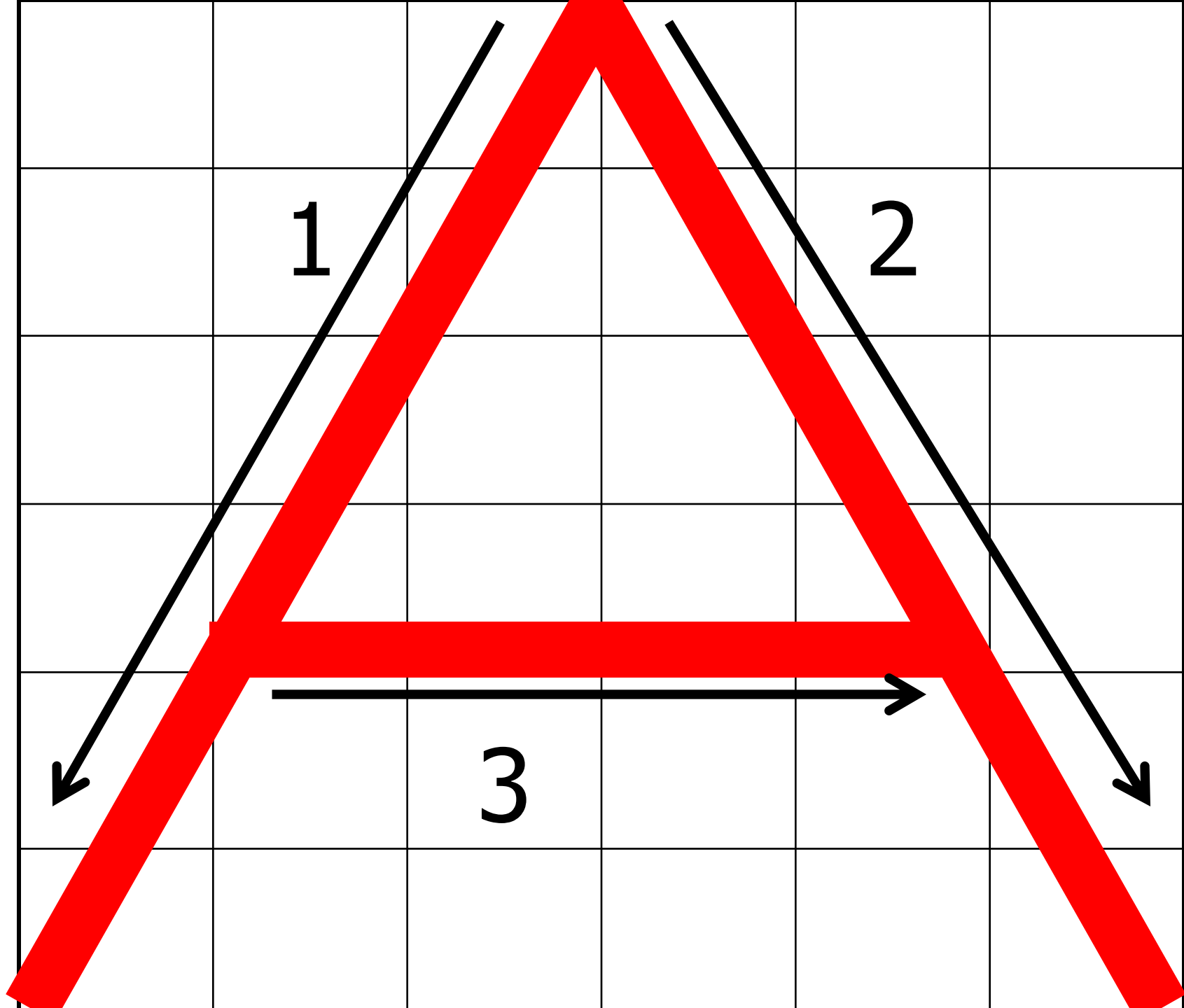
- Ames Lettering Guide works like the chalk holder your elementary school teacher used
- It makes guidelines for you to use when doing your architectural lettering
- it will take a bit of practice to master this tool - so be patient as you get started
- hand lettering gives a personal touch
- *Practice Makes Perfect!*

# Lesson #1

6 x 6 letters

# Instructions

- Graph paper will be supplied to you for this lesson
- Mark off all your 6x6, 6x5, or 6x8 squares on your graph sheet before you start lettering
- Skip a square between each letter on the line and a row of squares between each row of letters and numbers
- Write a whole row of each letter and number, starting with the letter “A”
- Be sure to draw and number the directional arrows for each stroke. **ONLY THE 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER & NUMBER ON EACH LINE**
- Remember letters “T O M Q V A X Y” are 6 squares by 6 squares tall and wide
- The rest of the letters and numbers are 6 squares tall by 5 squares wide
- W is the exception – it is 6 squares tall by 8 squares wide

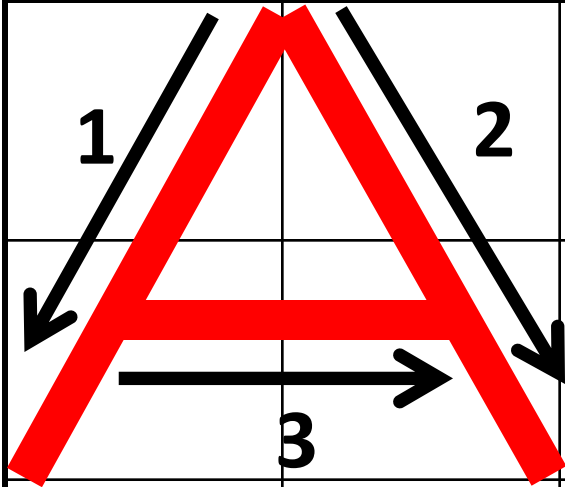


# Lesson #2

2 x 2 letters

# Instructions

- Graph paper will be supplied to you for this lesson
- Mark off all your  $2 \times 2$ ,  $2 \times 1\frac{2}{3}$ , or  $2 \times 2\frac{2}{3}$  squares on your graph sheet before you start lettering
- Skip a square between each letter on the line and a row of squares between each row of letters and numbers
- Write a whole row of each letter and number, starting with the letter "A"
- Be sure to draw and number the directional arrows for each stroke. **ONLY THE 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER & NUMBER ON EACH LINE**
- Use the same proportions for your  $2 \times 2$  letters and numbers as you did for your  $6 \times 6$  letters and numbers
- Remember letters "T O M Q V A X Y" are 2 squares by 2 squares tall and wide
- The rest of the letters and numbers are 2 squares tall by  $1\frac{2}{3}$  squares wide
- W is the exception – it is 2 squares tall by  $2\frac{2}{3}$  squares wide





# Lesson #3

1 x 1 letters

# Instructions

- Graph paper will be supplied to you for this lesson
- Mark off all your  $1 \times 1$ ,  $1 \times \frac{2}{3}$ , or  $1 \times 1 - \frac{2}{3}$  squares on your graph sheet before you start lettering
- Skip a square between each letter on the line and a row of squares between each row of letters and numbers
- Write a whole row of each letter and number, starting with the letter "A"
- Be sure to draw and number the directional arrows for each stroke. **ONLY THE 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER & NUMBER ON EACH LINE**
- Use the same proportions for your  $1 \times 1$  letters and numbers as you did for your  $6 \times 6$  and  $2 \times 2$  letters and numbers
- Remember letters "T O M Q V A X Y" are 1 squares by 1 squares tall and wide
- The rest of the letters and numbers are 1 squares tall by  $\frac{2}{3}$  squares wide
- W is the exception – it is 1 squares tall by  $1 - \frac{2}{3}$  squares wide

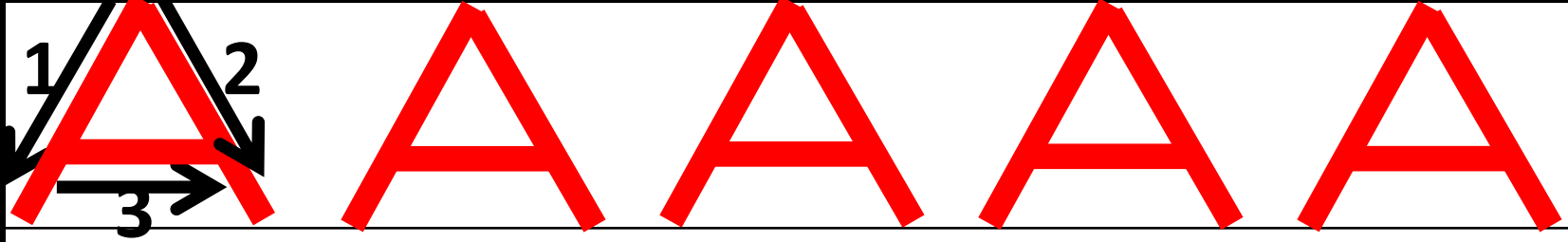


# Lesson #4

Notebook Sheet Letters

# Instructions

- You will use your own notebook paper for this lesson
- Write a whole row of each letter and number, starting on the left margin with the letter “A”
- Your letters and numbers **MUST TOUCH** the top and bottom line on each row
- Skip a row between each row of letters and numbers
- Be sure to draw and number the directional arrows for each stroke. **ONLY THE 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER & NUMBER ON EACH LINE**
- Use the same proportions for these letters as you did previously for your 6 x 6 and 2 x 2 and 1 x 1 letters and numbers
- Remember letters “T O M Q V A X Y” are as tall as they are wide
- The rest of the letters and numbers are the same height by  $\frac{2}{3}$  the width
- W is the exception – it is as tall by  $1\frac{2}{3}$  the width



Skip a row

Write your next letter on this entire row

Skip a row

Write your next letter on this entire row

Skip a row