Charcoal is usually produced by slow pyrolysis, the heating of wood or other substances in the absence of oxygen.

**Step-by-Step Process Of: Charcoal Sketch with Tools - A Realist Style**

**Step 1:** Find a subject to draw. Make your sketch from life, if possible, to become familiar with your subjects’ form and the direction of the light. Take a variety of pictures to reference. Chose a picture to work from and use the others for character or close ups. Use images from books or magazines as an alternative but pay attention to the light source, photo manipulation and find a simple composition. (see samples on right panel)

**Step 2:** Tone your paper. Use a cloth to smooth lines and re-apply charcoal.

**Step 3:** Rough Sketch to block in shape with soft vine charcoal. (lower left)

**Step 4:** Create half tones with cloth and begin defining forms by drawing with a charcoal pencil. (middle and close-up)

**Step 5:** Creating details with all tools: charcoal pencil, soft vine charcoal, smudge stick and cloth to blend and create half tones, a gummy eraser to lift off charcoal or create highlights, hard charcoal to create darks, and a white charcoal, chalk or conte’ stick to create a bright highlight. (continued on back)
Step 5: Creating details with all tools: charcoal pencil, soft vine charcoal, smudge stick and cloth to blend and create half tones, a gummy eraser to lift off charcoal or create highlights, hard charcoal to create darks, and a white charcoal, chalk or conte’ stick to create a bright highlight. (continued from front)

Tips: Working with an iPad enables the image to be manipulated larger to study the form, see lights and darks and decide which aspects to keep in your rendering and which to simplify when viewed at regular magnification. Remember to squint to get the basic forms and not become overly detailed. Using charcoal paper will enable the soft charcoal to stick and not rub off. Slick paper will allow the charcoal to be moved around to create soft edges and wiped off to create cleaner edges. You can spray your work with a fixative to keep the charcoal from dusting or being rubbed off. Happy Charcoaling!!