How to Draw Balloons

10 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

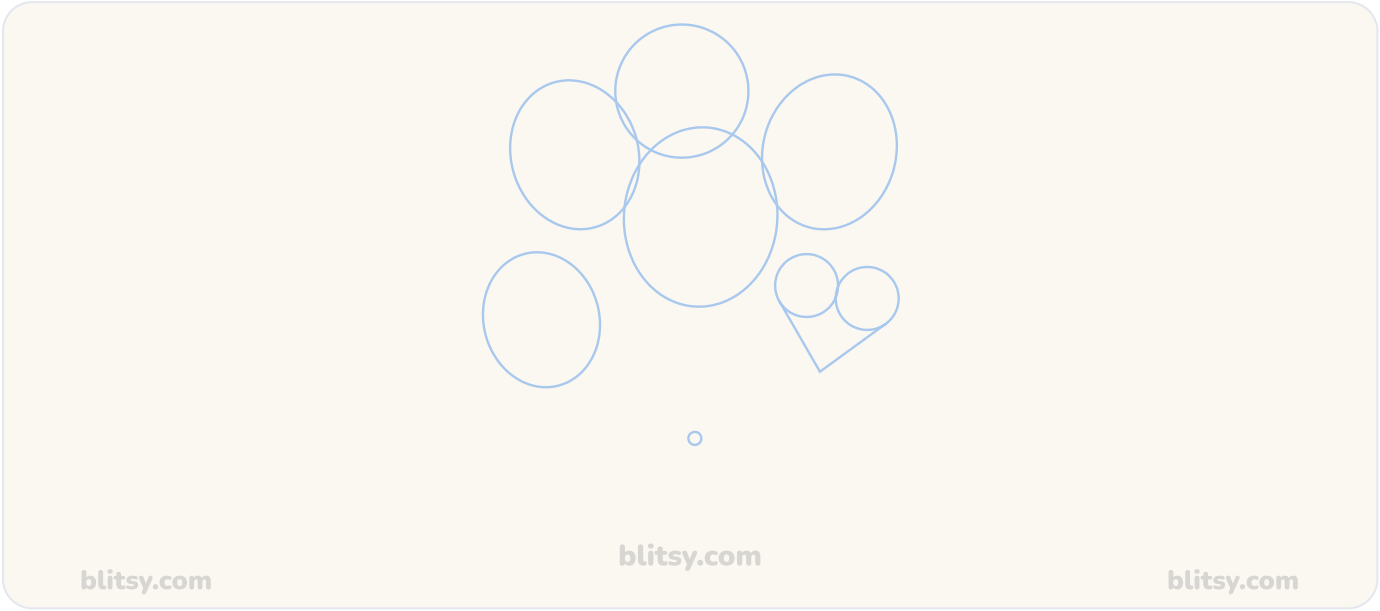
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Coloring pencils
- Plain paper

How to use this guide

New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

Read the full tutorial online →

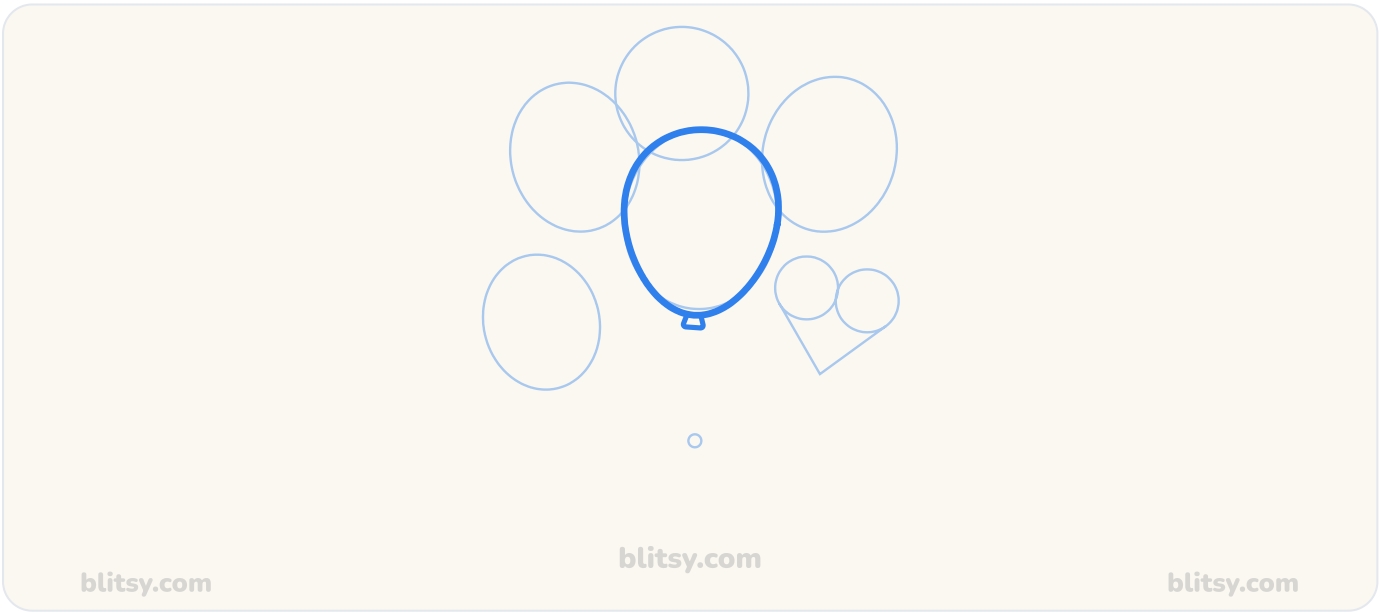
STEP 1 Sketch ovals and a meeting dot



Lightly draw four ovals in a loose bunch: a big one in the middle, two leaning outward above it, and a smaller one low on the left. For the heart, put two small circles side by side on the lower right with a V hanging under them. Add one more circle on top for the star. Then place a tiny dot well below the middle oval. Every string will meet there.

💡 **Tip:** Keep these shapes so faint that one swipe of the eraser would lift them.

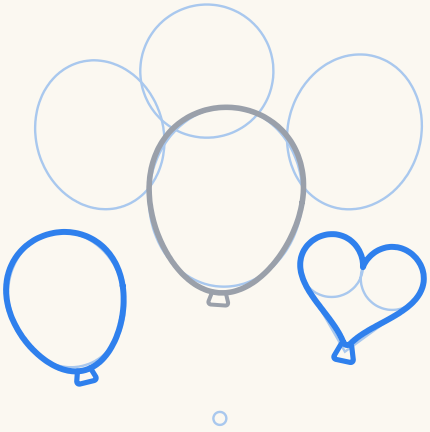
STEP 2 Outline the big front balloon



Go over the middle oval, but pull the bottom in a little so it narrows toward the base, like an egg standing on its wide end. Real balloons taper where the rubber gathers at the neck, and that small change stops yours from looking like a plain circle. At the bottom point, draw a tiny knot: a short shape that's wider at the bottom than the top. I always draw this front balloon first, because nothing covers it.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you go around so your hand pulls the curve toward you.

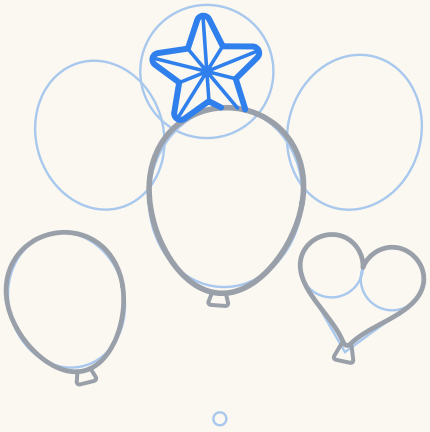
STEP 3 Add the green egg and the heart



The green balloon on the lower left gets the same egg shape and knot as the red one, only smaller and tipped a little to the left. For the heart, trace around the outside of both circles, dip into a soft notch where they meet, and follow the V lines down to a rounded point. Hang a little knot from that point too.

💡 **Tip:** Round off the bottom of the heart slightly, or it starts to look like a playing card.

STEP 4 Draw the gold foil star



Inside the top circle, mark five points around the edge, evenly spaced, with one pointing straight up. Join them through five inner corners to make the star, and soften every tip, since foil balloons are puffy rather than sharp. Where the star meets the red balloon, stop your line; the star floats behind it. Finish with a thin line from the middle out to each tip and each inner corner. Those ten lines make the foil facets.

💡 **Tip:** Count the points out loud as you place them. A sixth one sneaks in surprisingly often.

STEP 5 Draw the two balloons behind



Now trace the upper left and upper right ovals for the yellow and blue balloons. Wherever a balloon passes behind the red one or the star, stop at the edge and don't draw through it. Give each one its own knot at the bottom, tilted the same way the balloon leans. Most beginners want to finish the whole oval here, and that's what makes a bunch look see-through.

💡 **Tip:** Unsure which line to skip? Ask yourself which balloon is closer to you.

STEP 6 Add shine marks and shadow lines



On every round balloon and on the heart, draw a short curved shine near the upper left, shaped like a narrow loop, with a small dot just past its end. You'll leave these white later. Next, draw one long curve just inside the lower right edge of each balloon. The thin strip between that curve and the outline becomes the shadow. I put the shine and the shadow on the same sides every time, so the light seems to come from one place.

💡 **Tip:** Place the shine well away from the middle of each balloon, up near its shoulder.

STEP 7 Let the strings wave down



From each knot, draw a thin string down toward the meeting dot. Let it wave gently, bending one way and then the other, rather than running ruler-straight. A string that passes behind a lower balloon disappears and comes out again below it; the star's string hides behind the red one. Stop each one a little before the dot, because the bow will cover the ends.

💡 **Tip:** Use a quick, relaxed stroke for strings. Slow lines tend to wobble.

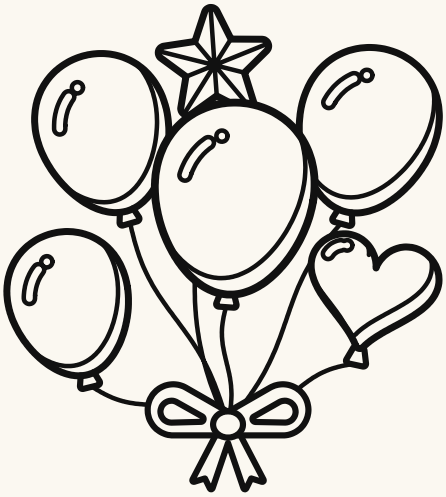
STEP 8 Tie a ribbon bow



Over the meeting dot, draw a small oval for the bow's knot. On each side, add a loop shaped like a fat teardrop lying on its side, with a smaller teardrop inside for the opening. Under the knot, draw two short ribbon tails that spread apart like an upside-down V, and cut a notch into each end. I keep the bow about as wide as the green balloon; any bigger and it steals attention from the balloons.

💡 **Tip:** Make each notch from two tiny slanted lines that meet in a point.

STEP 9 Ink the lines and erase guides



Trace every line you want to keep with a black marker, starting with the big outlines and saving the small shines and the strings for last. Give the ink a full minute to dry. With so many shapes close together, your hand will cross wet lines more than once. Then erase the ovals, circles, the V and the dot. A guide left inside a balloon will show through light colors like yellow, so check each one.

💡 **Tip:** Rest your hand on a scrap of paper so it never drags across fresh ink.

STEP 10 Color the party balloons



Color the middle balloon and the bow red, the back two yellow and blue, the low one green and the heart pink. Use gold or a deep yellow for the star. In every shadow strip, switch to a darker shade of the same color, or simply press much harder with the normal one. The darker star facets get the same treatment. Leave every shine white, and the balloons will suddenly look round and glossy.

💡 **Tip:** Color carefully around the white shines first, then fill the rest freely.