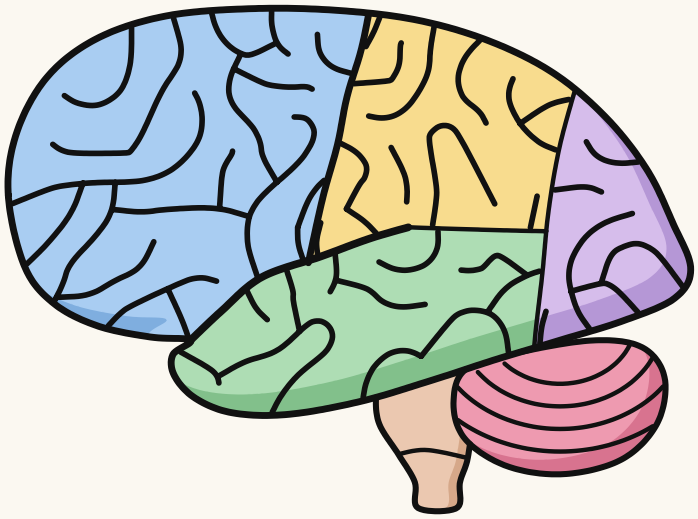
How to Draw a Brain

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

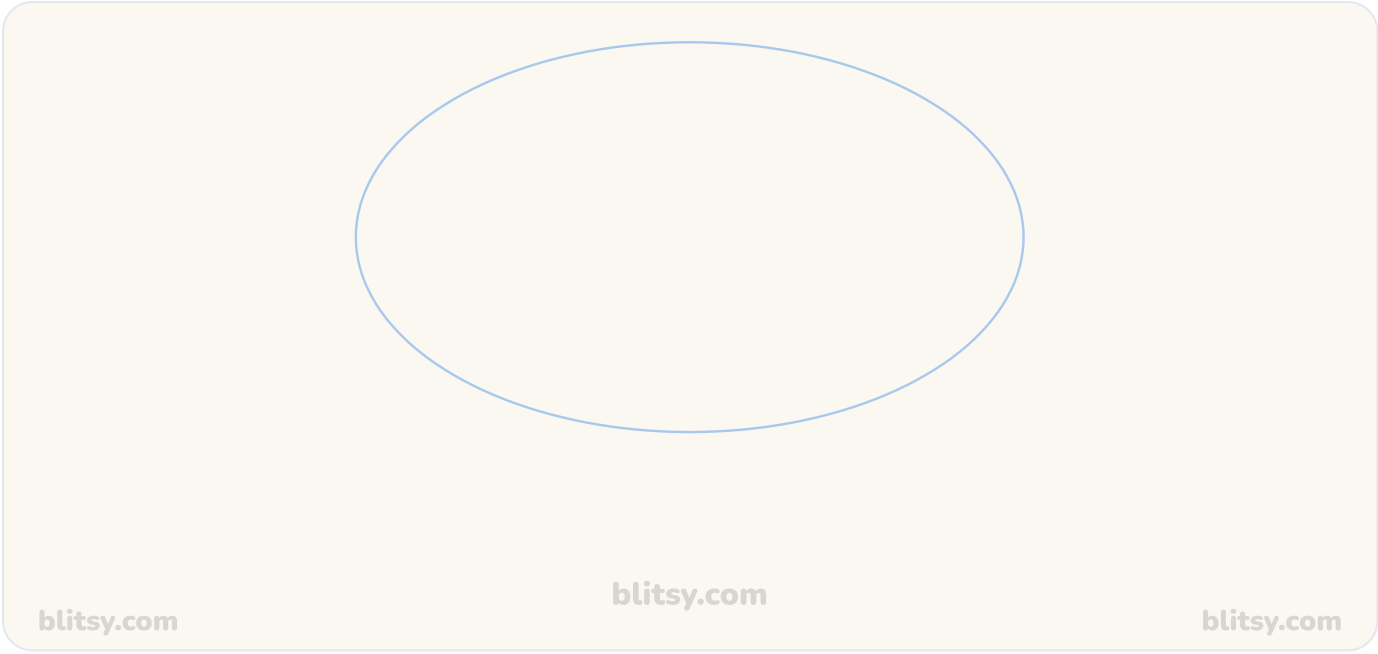
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Six colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

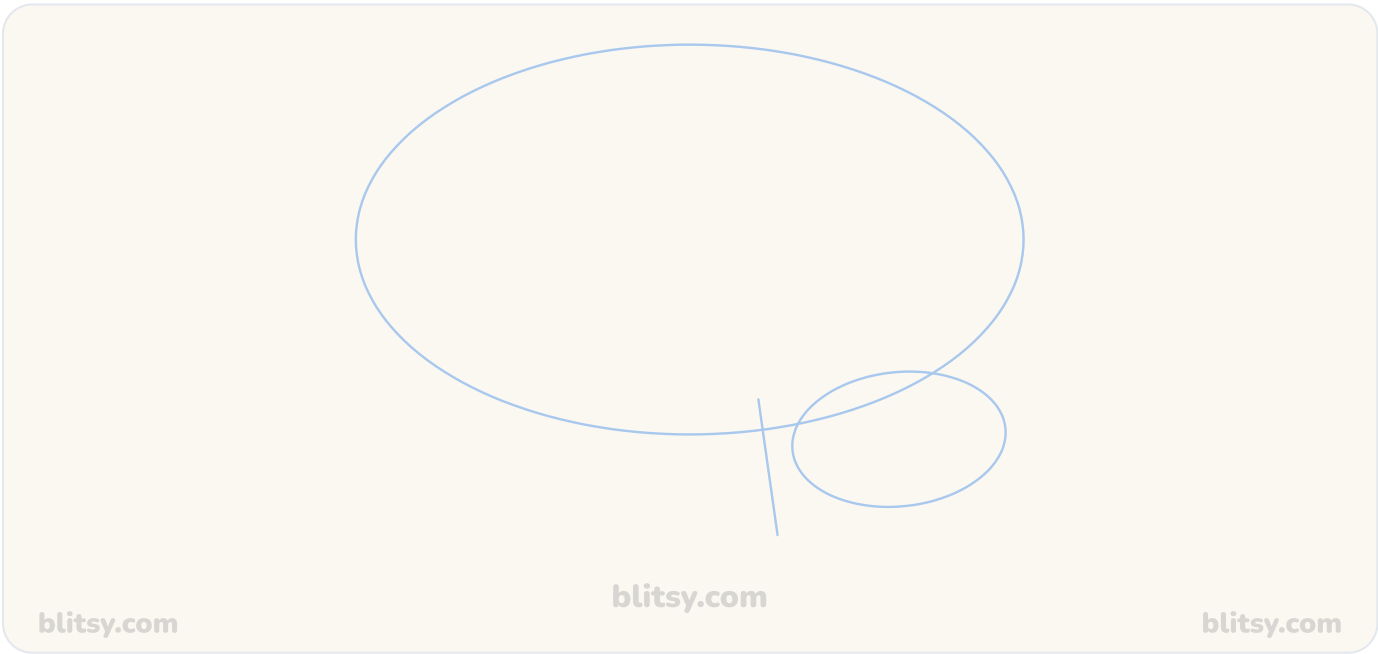
STEP 1 Sketch one big oval



Start with a wide oval that fills most of your paper, leaving a band of space underneath. This is the cerebrum, the big wrinkled part. I make it about one and a half times as wide as it is tall. The cerebellum and the stem will hang below it later.

💡 **Tip:** Hold the pencil near its end so the line stays faint and loose.

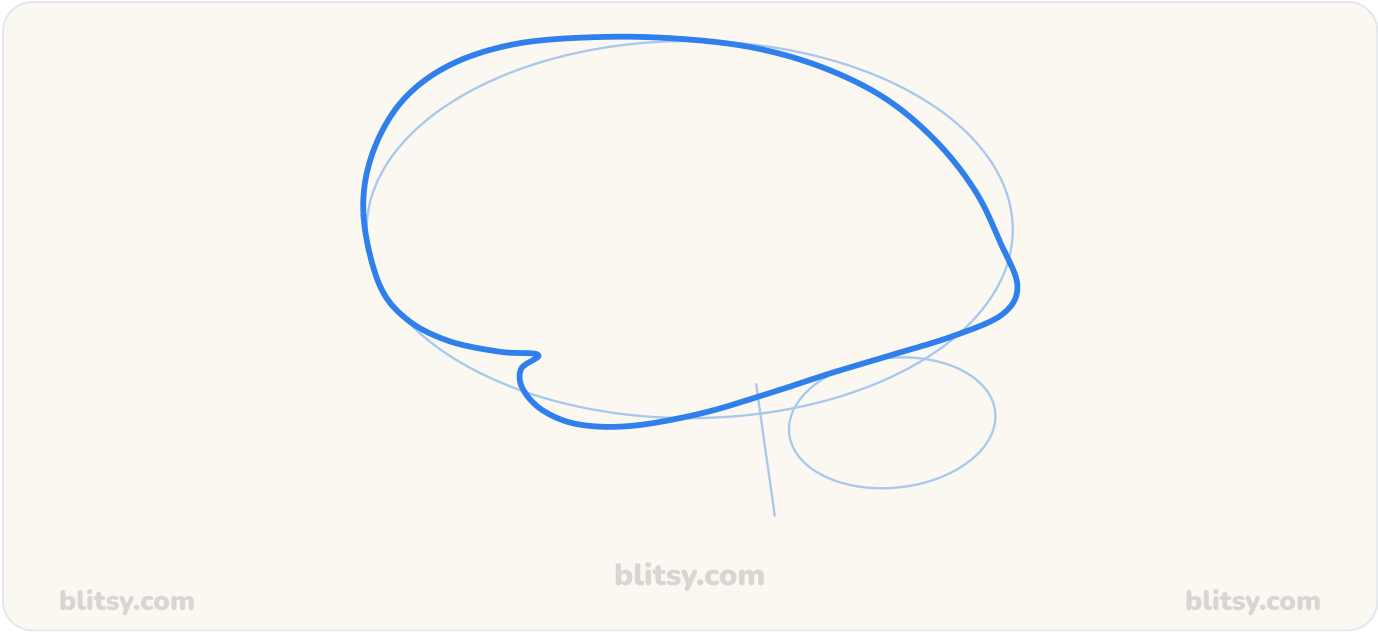
STEP 2 Add a small oval and a stem line



Under the right end of the big oval, sketch a small flattened oval that tucks partly behind it. It marks the cerebellum. Just in front of that small oval, draw a short line going straight down, tilted a hair to the right. That line is the path of the brain stem. Our brain faces left, so the back of the head is on the right.

💡 **Tip:** Decide which way the brain faces before you add anything else, then stick to it.

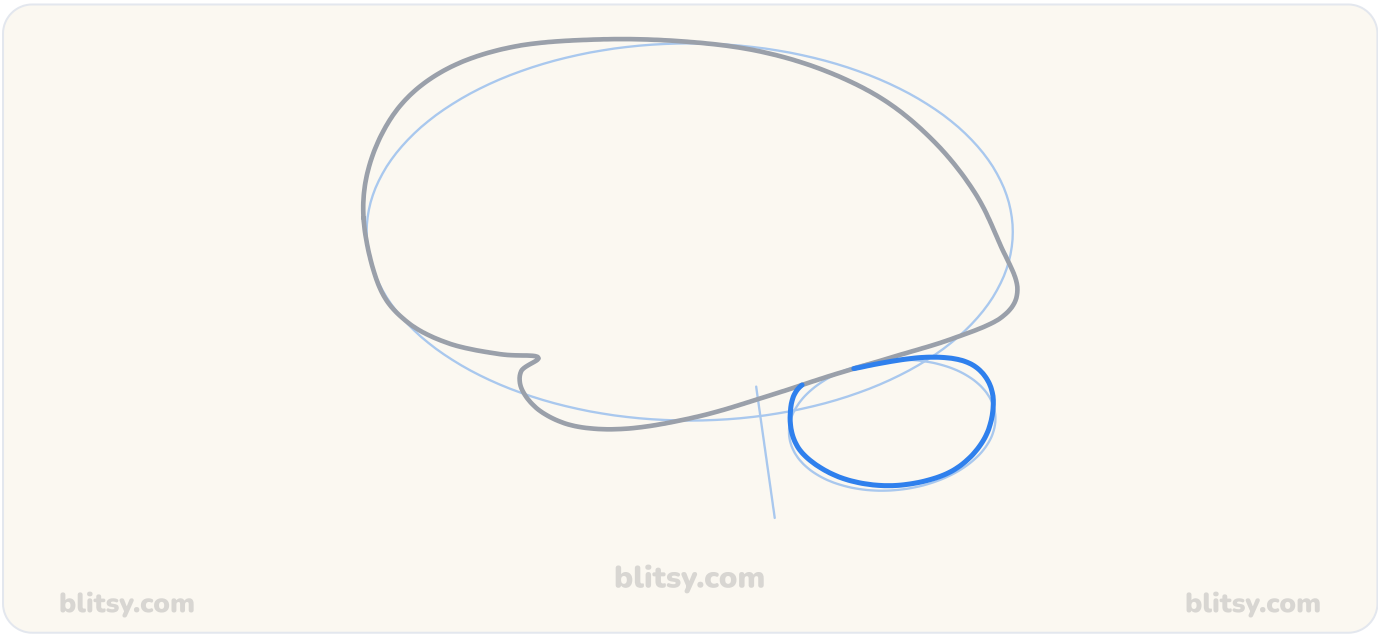
STEP 3 Outline the cerebrum



Go around the big oval with a firmer line, but change its shape as you go. The front on the left should be full and round, and the underside curves gently back from it like the bottom of an egg. The back on the right narrows to a soft point. Near the front of the bottom edge, make a tiny notch, with the rounded tip of the temporal lobe tucked just below it.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the top curve in one long sweep, moving your whole arm.

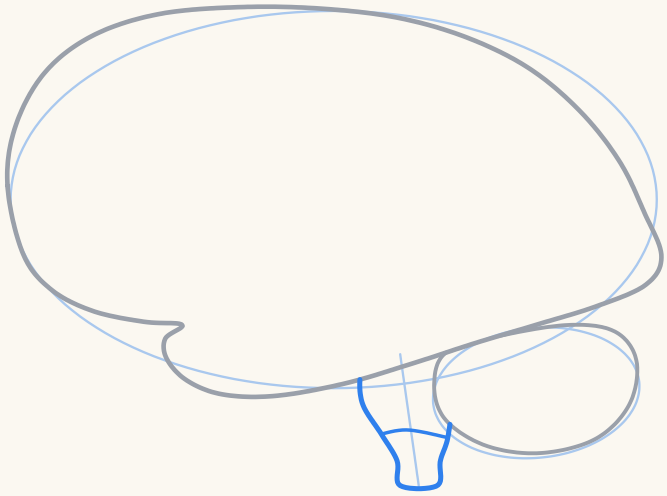
STEP 4 Tuck in the cerebellum



Now trace the lower part of the small oval to make the cerebellum. Its top hides behind the cerebrum, so draw only the part that shows. Keep its back end a little in front of the pointed back of the cerebrum. The cerebellum helps with balance and smooth movement, which is why it sits so close to the stem.

💡 **Tip:** Stop each line the moment it touches the cerebrum's outline.

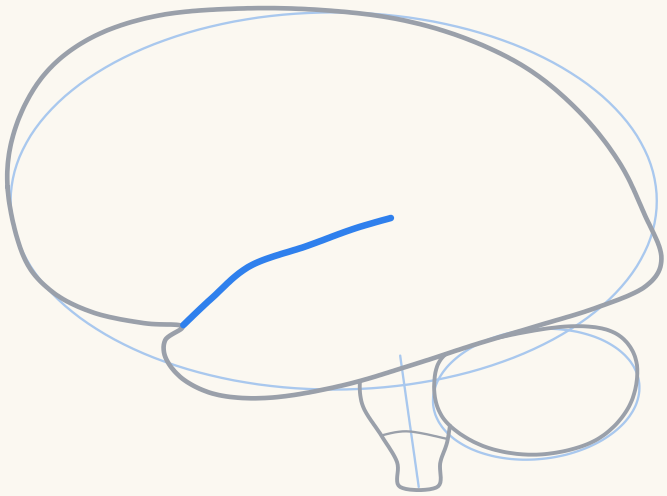
STEP 5 Draw the brain stem



Follow the stem line down with two outlines. Bulge them out at the top for the pons, then narrow them into the thinner medulla and finish with a flat end. The back edge disappears behind the cerebellum. Add one short curved line across the stem where the bulge ends. The stem links the brain to the spinal cord and runs automatic jobs like breathing.

💡 **Tip:** A flat bottom end looks neater than a rounded one, like a cut stem on a flower.

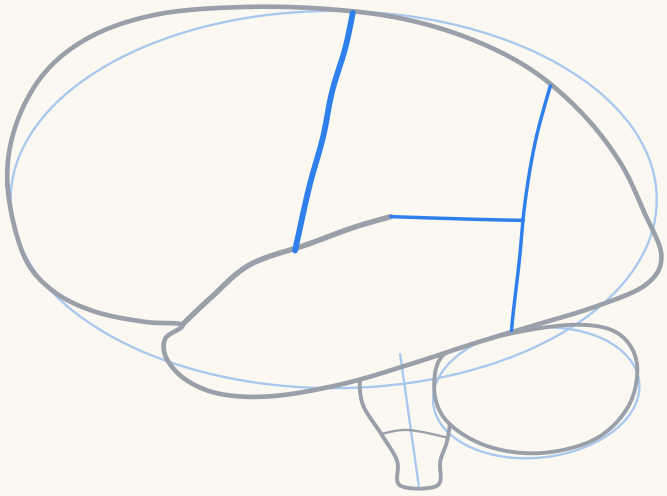
STEP 6 Draw the lateral sulcus



This is the most important line in the whole drawing. Start at the notch you made in step 3 and draw a smooth line up and back, ending a little past the middle of the brain. Scientists call this deep groove the lateral sulcus, or Sylvian fissure. It separates the temporal lobe below it from the lobes above. Once I have this line, the brain already reads correctly.

💡 **Tip:** Press a bit harder here than for the folds, since this groove is deeper.

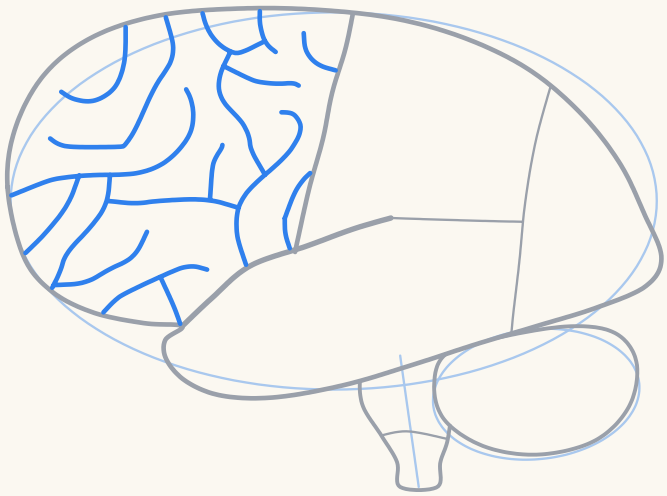
STEP 7 Add the central sulcus and lobe borders



From the top of the outline, a bit forward of the middle, draw a slightly wavy line down to the lateral sulcus. That's the central sulcus, the border between the frontal and parietal lobes. Then carry a thin line back from the end of the lateral sulcus, and drop another from the top near the back to the bottom edge. They box in the occipital lobe.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the two border lines thinner than the real grooves. They are mostly for coloring.

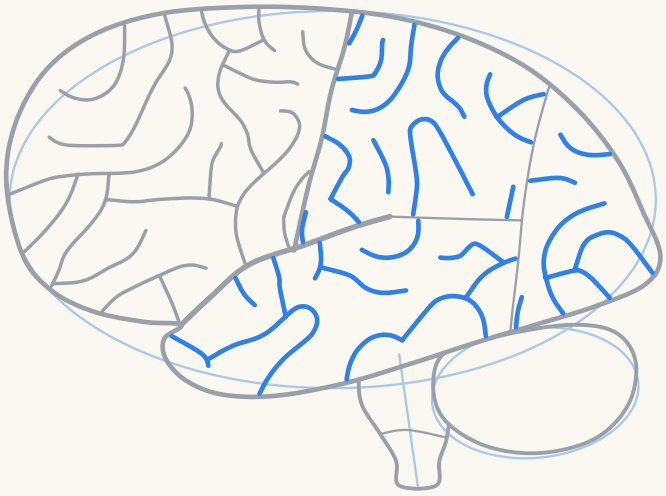
STEP 8 Draw folds on the frontal lobe



Here come the wrinkles. Draw a smooth, winding line that starts at the outline and wanders across the lobe, bending like a lazy river. Add more of them about a finger's width apart. Some can end freely with a rounded turn, and some can run into a neighbor or the edge. The spaces between your lines become the worm-shaped folds.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the gaps between lines about even, and let the curves stay round instead of sharp.

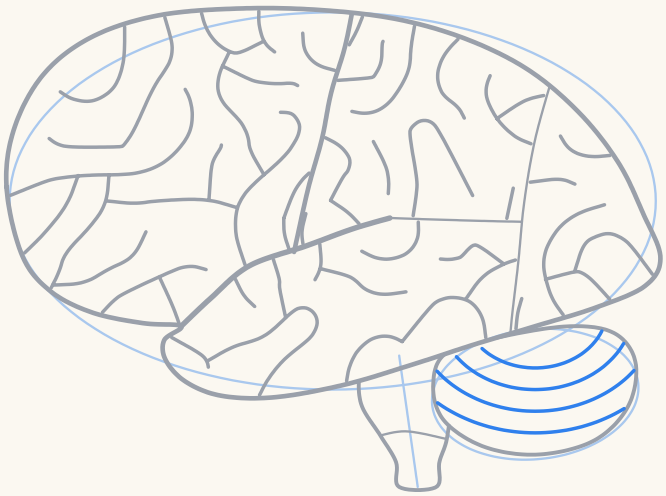
STEP 9 Fold the other three lobes



Fill the parietal, temporal and occipital lobes the same way. In the temporal lobe, let most lines run along its length, roughly parallel to the lateral sulcus. Real brains have more folds, and they matter: folding packs a much bigger surface into the skull. Stop each line just short of the two big grooves, so those stay the boldest marks.

💡 **Tip:** If two lines start to crowd each other, end one with a soft U-turn.

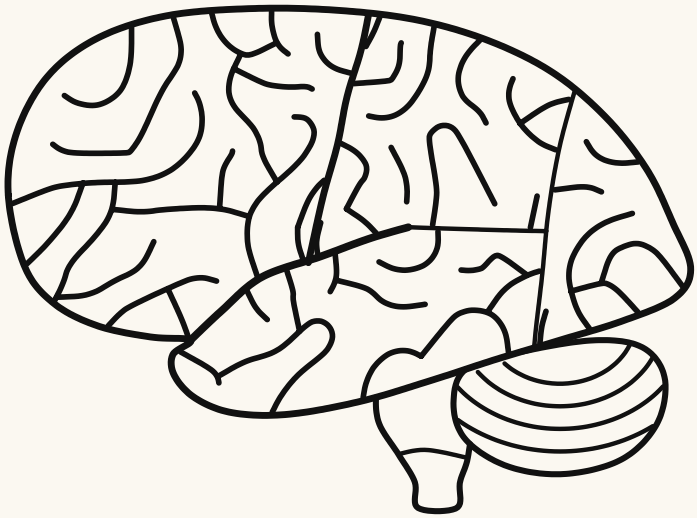
STEP 10 Add lines to the cerebellum



The cerebellum has its own tiny folds, packed close together. Draw four curved lines across it, stacked one under the other like the lines on a seashell. Each one bends down in the middle and ends at the outline on both sides. This striped look is what tells people at a glance that it's the cerebellum.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper so your hand can swing each curve naturally.

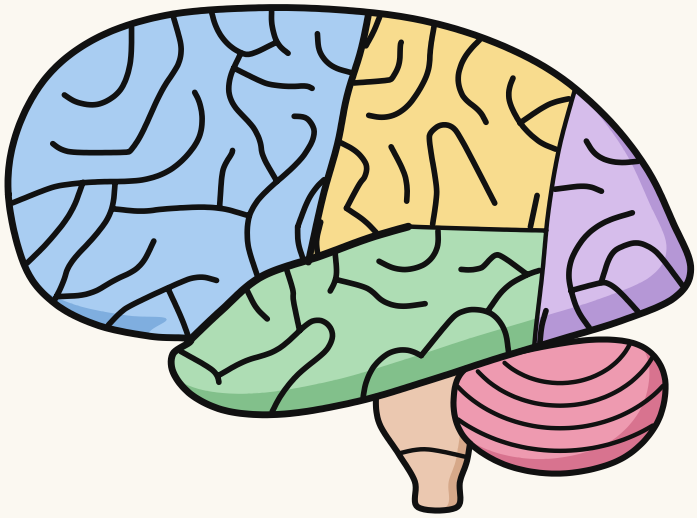
STEP 11 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Go over every keeper line with your fineliner. I start with the outline and save the small folds for last, when my hand is warmed up. Once the ink is fully dry, erase the ovals and the stem guide line.

💡 **Tip:** Wait at least a minute before erasing, or the black ink may smear.

STEP 12 Color the brain



I color the frontal lobe light blue, the parietal lobe yellow, the temporal lobe green and the occipital lobe lavender. The cerebellum gets pink; the stem gets peach. Add a darker shade along the bottom edges. These colors are only a learning code. A real brain is a soft grayish pink all over.

💡 **Tip:** Color with light, even strokes in one direction, then layer a second coat for depth.