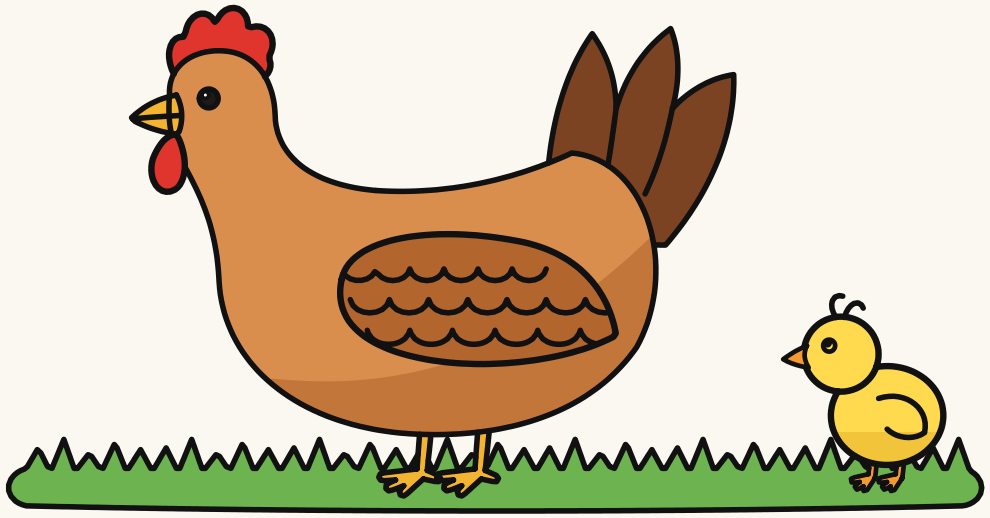
How to Draw a Chicken

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

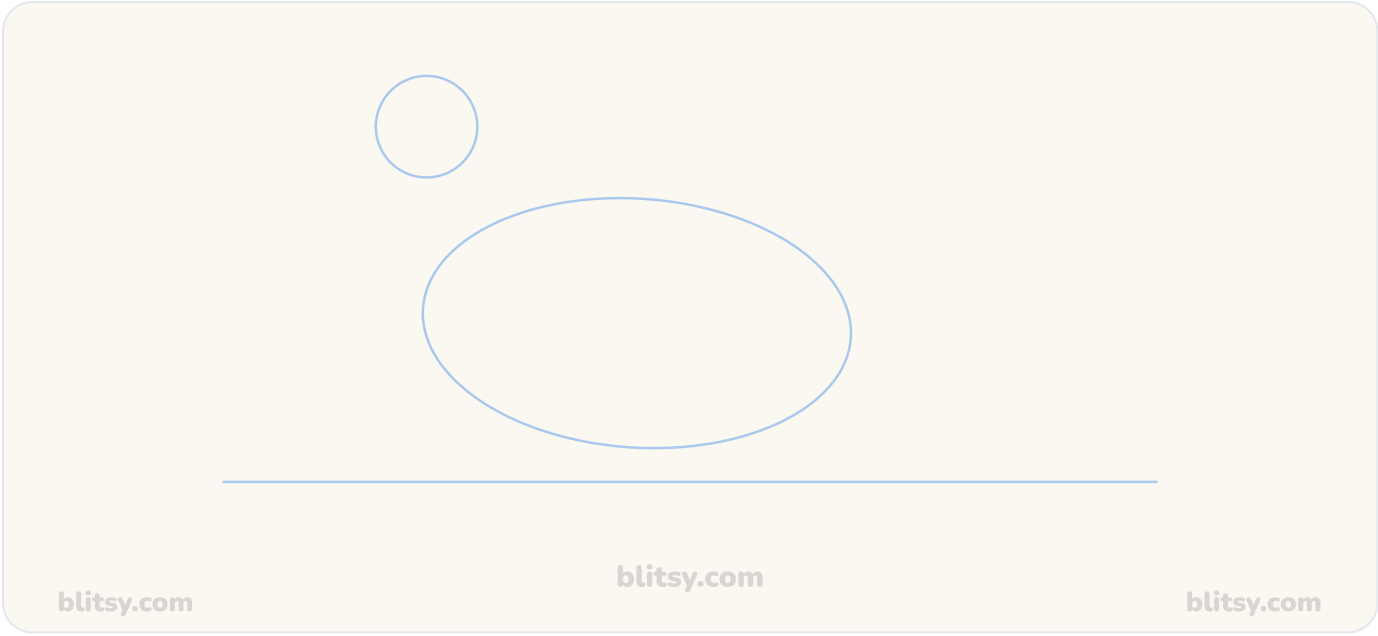
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

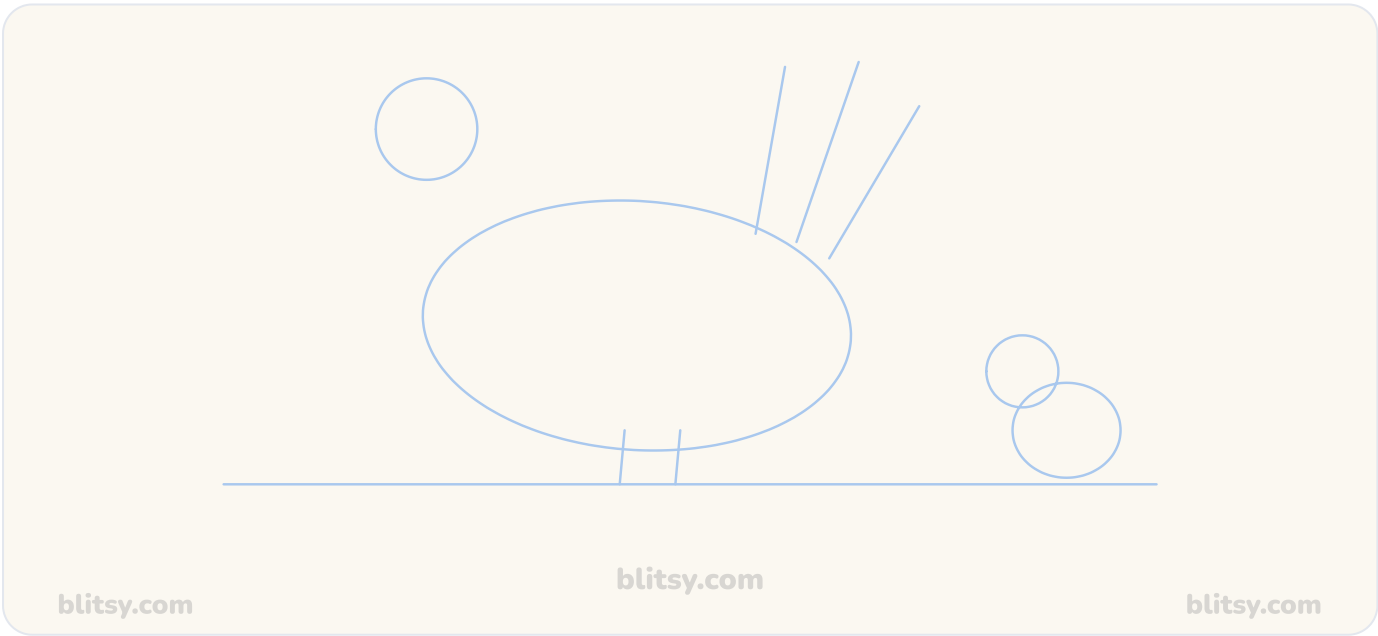
STEP 1 Sketch the head, body and ground guides



Draw a long, flat line near the bottom of the page for the ground. Above it, sketch a wide oval for the body that stops a little above the line. Then add a small circle up and to the left of the oval for the head. Keep all three very light.

💡 **Tip:** The head circle should be about a quarter as wide as the body oval. Hens have tiny heads compared to their bodies.

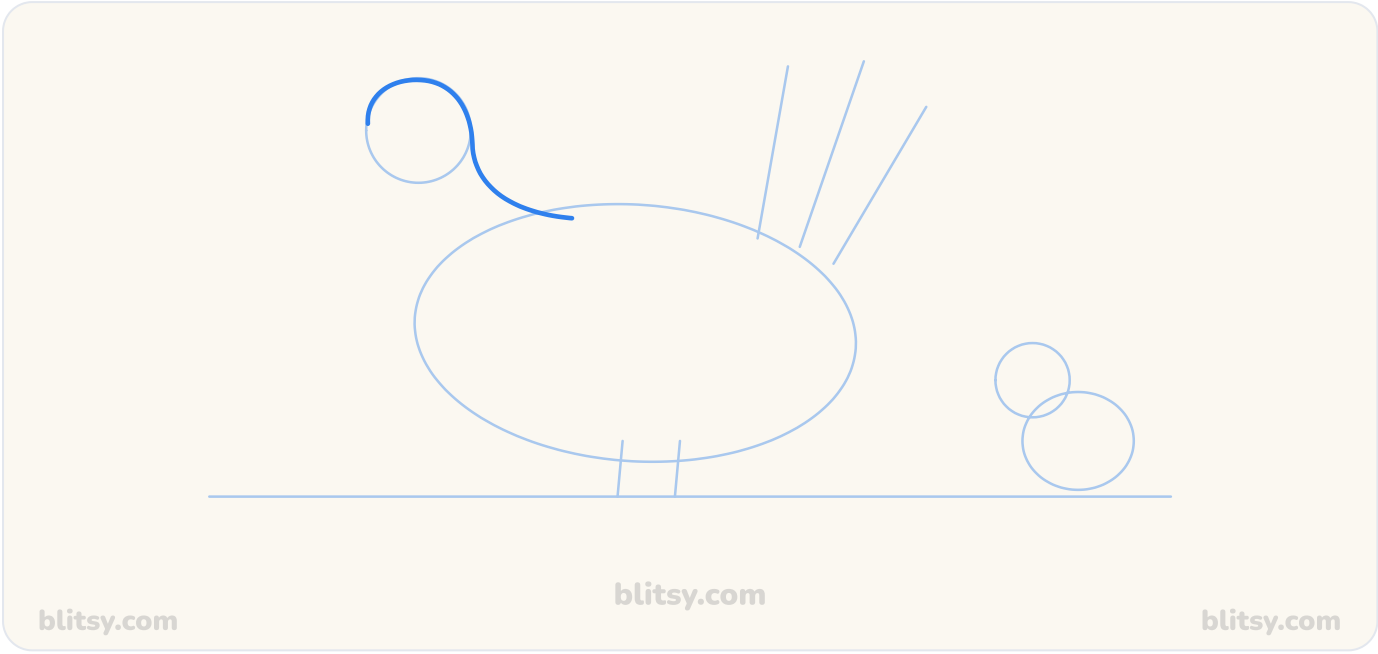
STEP 2 Add the tail, leg and chick guides



From the upper right of the oval, draw three straight lines fanning up and back. They show where the tail feathers will stand. Under the belly, drop two short lines to the ground for the legs. On the right, sketch a small circle on top of a slightly bigger oval for the chick.

💡 **Tip:** Space the leg lines close together, about a finger apart. Wide legs make a hen look like she's doing the splits.

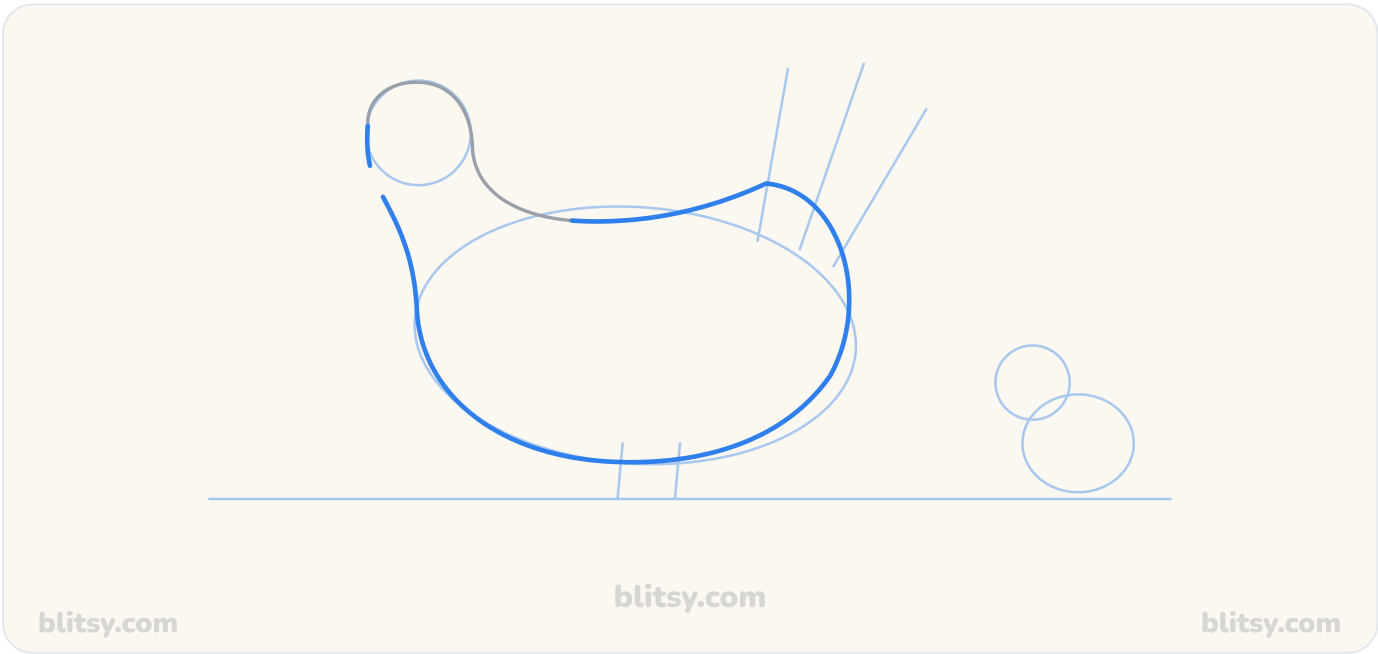
STEP 3 Draw the round head and neck



Start at the front of the head circle and trace over its top to the back. Instead of closing the circle, let the line flow down and curve out to the right, forming the back of the neck. Stop where it meets the top of the body oval.

💡 **Tip:** Give the neck a gentle S-curve. A straight neck makes the bird look stiff.

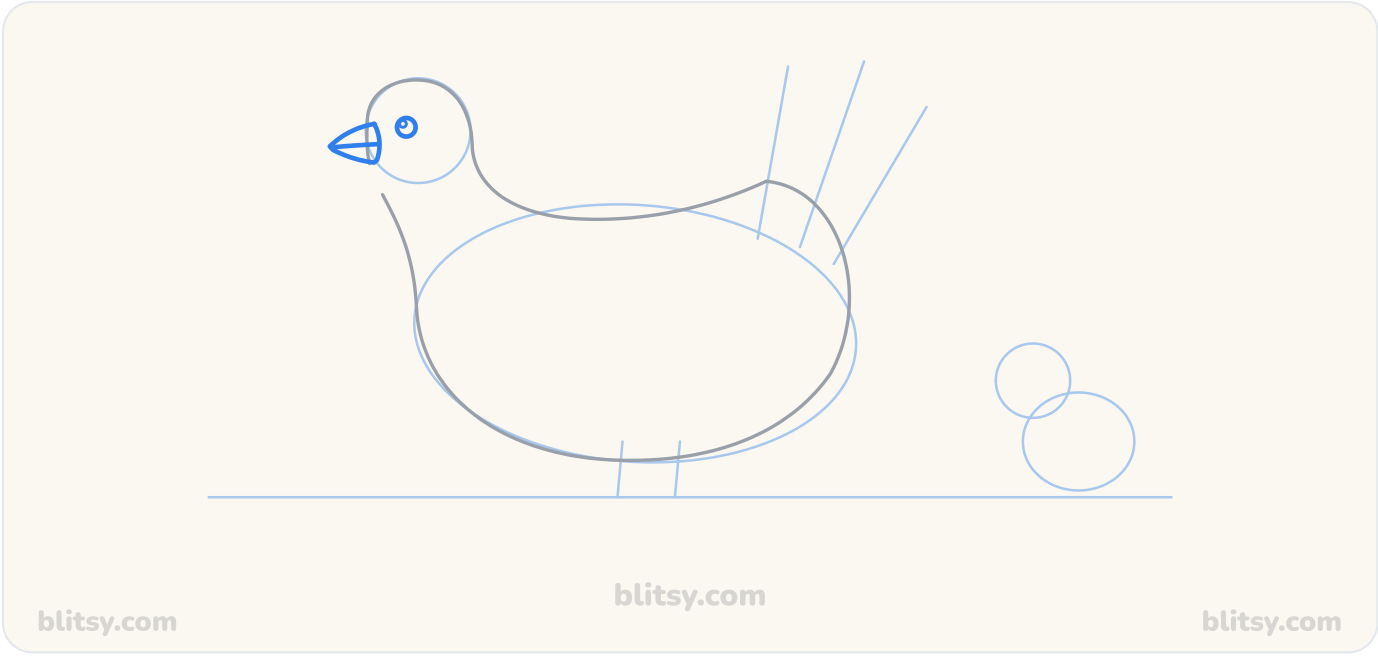
STEP 4 Shape the plump teardrop body



Continue from the neck along the back, rising a little toward the tail guides. Round off the rear, sweep under the belly and bring the line up the front into a full, pushed-out breast. Finish with a short curve under the face. I always exaggerate the breast, because that round chest is what makes a chicken look like a chicken and not a duck.

💡 **Tip:** Let the back climb gently toward the tail. A flat back turns the hen into a sausage.

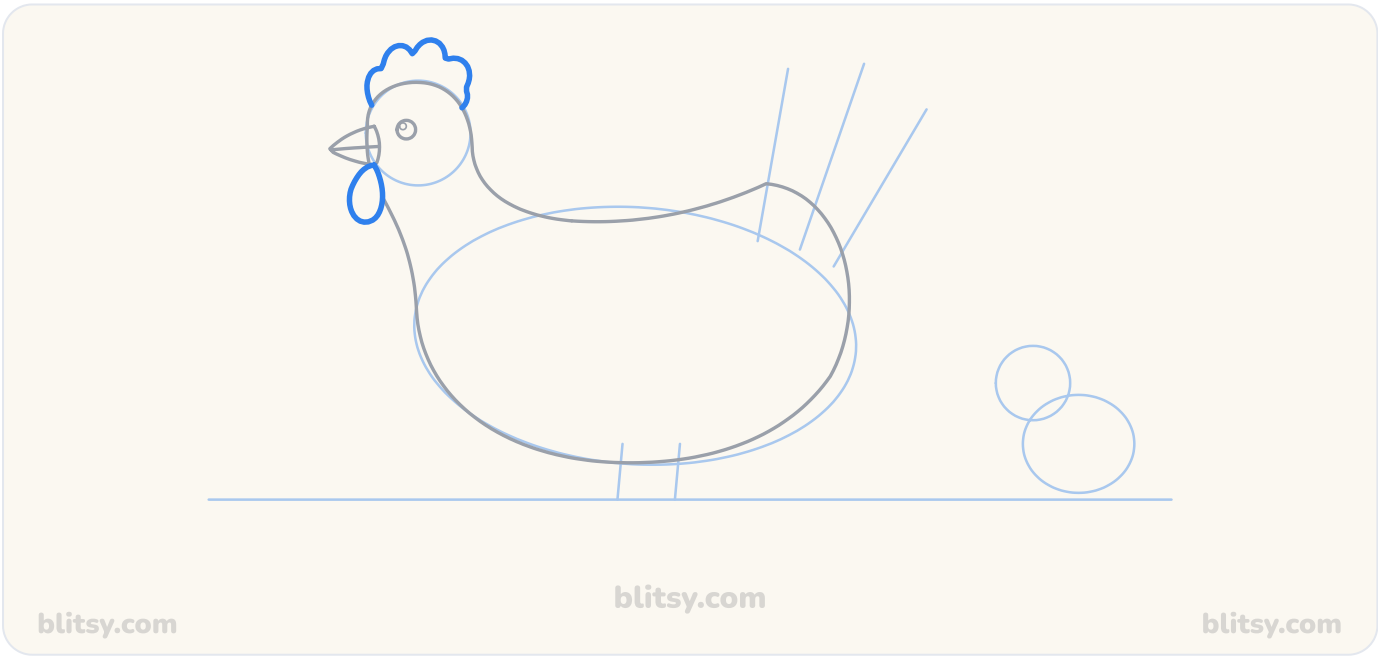
STEP 5 Add the small beak and eye



On the left side of the head, draw a short pointed beak, like a little triangle with curved sides. Add a line through the middle where it opens. Place a round eye just behind and above the beak, with a tiny circle inside for the shine.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the beak short. A long beak changes the hen into a heron or a crow.

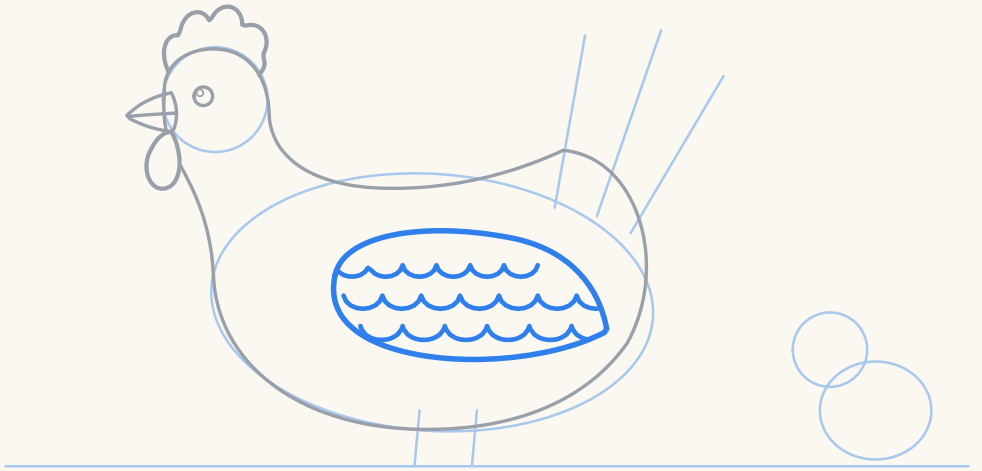
STEP 6 Draw the bumpy comb and wattle



On top of the head, draw the comb as four rounded bumps sitting in a row, the middle ones a bit taller. Under the beak, hang the wattle, a soft drop shape that dangles toward the chest. These two red pieces are the quickest way to tell anyone this bird is a chicken.

💡 **Tip:** Make the bumps slightly different sizes. Identical bumps look like a crown instead of a comb.

STEP 7 Outline the wing and its feather rows



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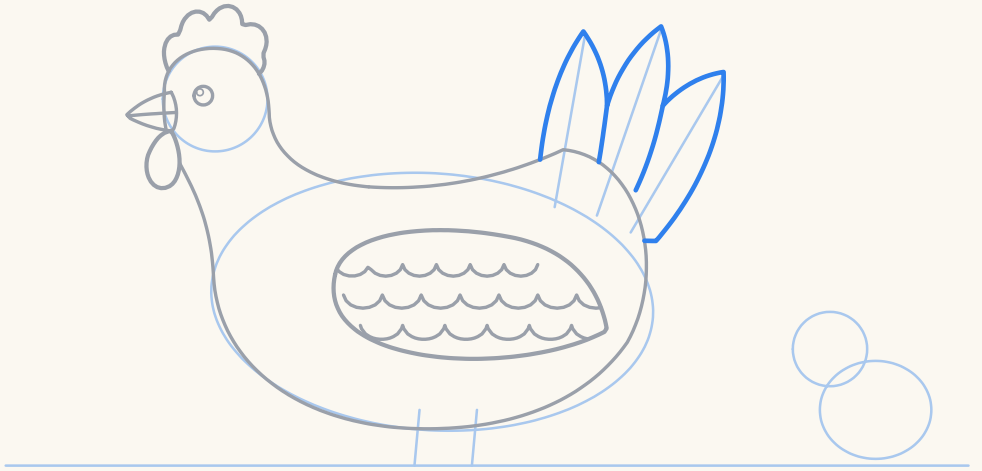
In the middle of the body, draw a long rounded wing that ends in a soft point near the back. Inside it, add three rows of small U-shaped scallops, one under the other. Most beginners make these scallops too big. Small ones look like real overlapping feathers.

💡 **Tip:** Start each scallop row a little further right than the one above it, so the rows look stacked.

STEP 8 Draw the upright tail feathers



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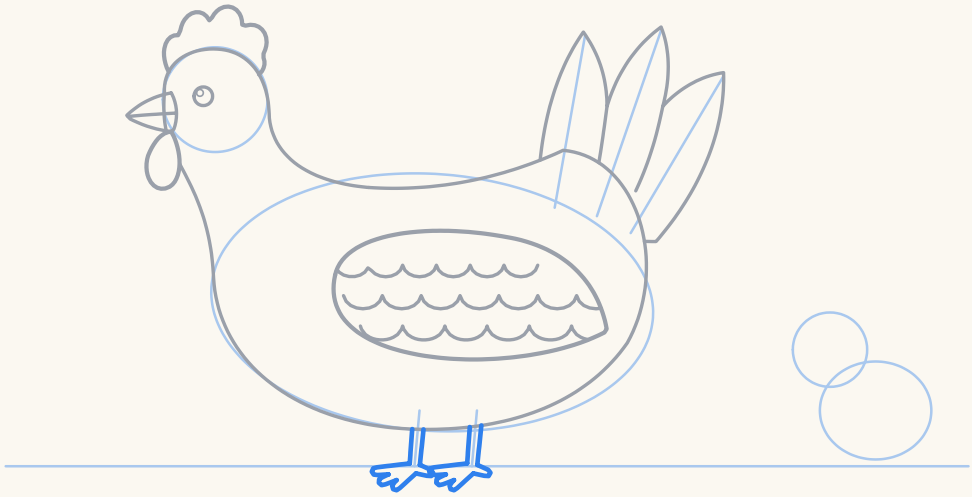
Follow the three tail guides to draw three tall, pointed feathers, each one starting behind the body and ending in a rounded tip. Let the front feather stand the straightest and the back one lean out the most. Draw a line down from each notch between feathers.

💡 **Tip:** Hide the bottom of every feather behind the body line. Tail feathers that sit on top of the back look glued on.

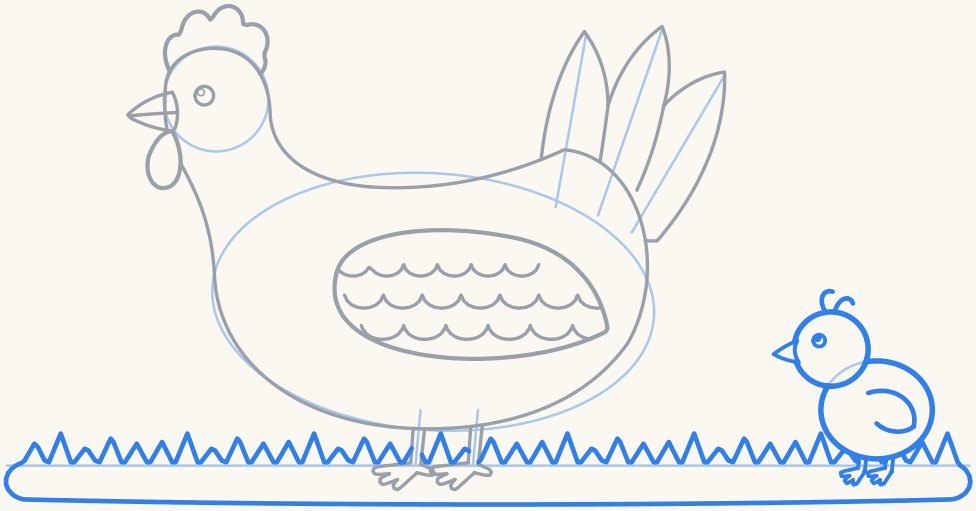
STEP 9 Add the thin legs and toes



Go over the leg guides with two thin legs, each a narrow tube. At the bottom of each, spread three toes forward and one tiny toe back. Here's the honest bit: feet are fiddly, so small kids can draw three simple lines per foot instead.

💡 **Tip:** Point the toes toward the beak. Feet that face the other way make the hen look like she's walking backward.

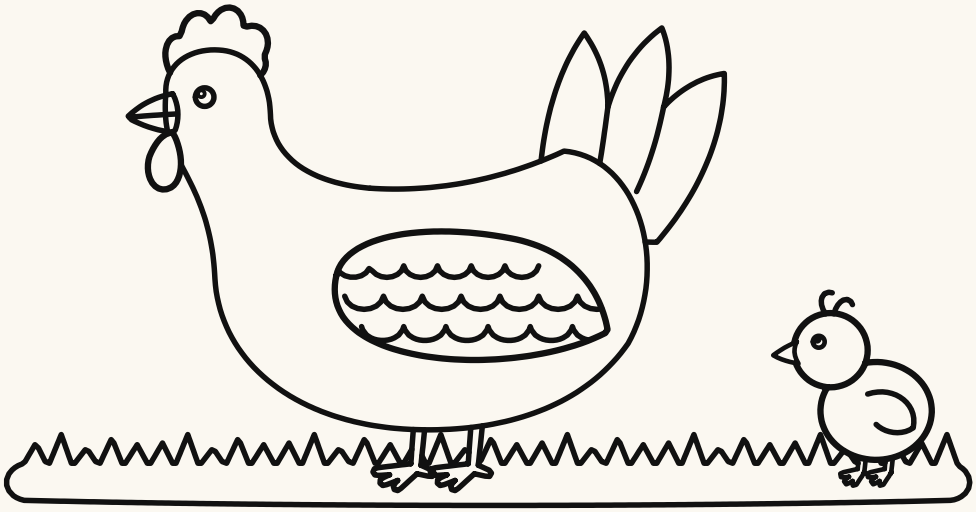
STEP 10 Draw the fluffy chick and the grass



Trace the chick guides into a round head on a round body, with a tiny beak pointing at the hen. Add a dot eye, two little curls of fluff on top and a C-shaped wing on its side. Give it short legs. Then turn the ground line into a strip of grass with zigzag blades along the top.

💡 **Tip:** Vary the height of the grass blades. Even zigzags look like a saw blade.

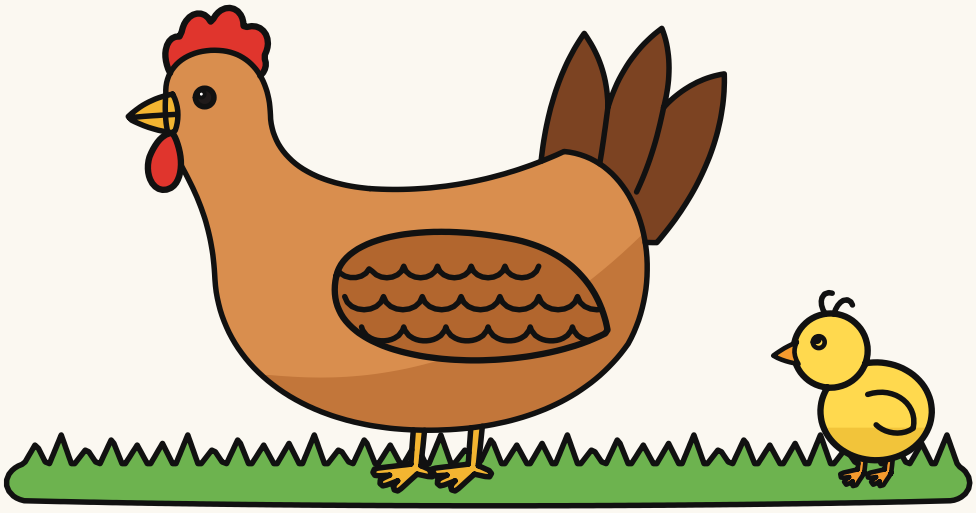
STEP 11 Ink the lines and erase the guides



With the fineliner, trace every line you want to keep. I like to ink the face first while my hand is fresh, then the body, the wing, the tail and the chick, and the grass last. Leave the guides alone. Once the ink has dried, erase the circles, the oval and the straight helper lines.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the wing scallops slowly, one bump at a time. Rushed scallops turn into a scribble.

STEP 12 Color the hen and chick



Color the head and body light brown, then add a slightly darker band along the bottom of the belly so she looks round. Use brown for the wing and dark brown for the tail. The comb and wattle are red, the beak and legs golden yellow. Make the chick bright yellow with an orange beak, and finish with green grass.

💡 **Tip:** Leave the tiny eye shine white. That speck of paper makes both birds look awake.