

How to Draw a Dress

12 easy steps for beginners



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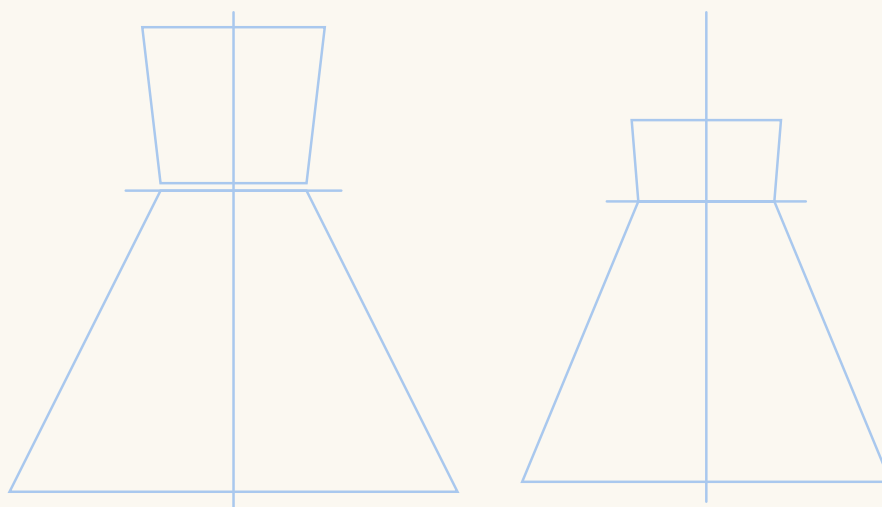
What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A ruler
- A black pen
- Colored pencils

How to use this guide

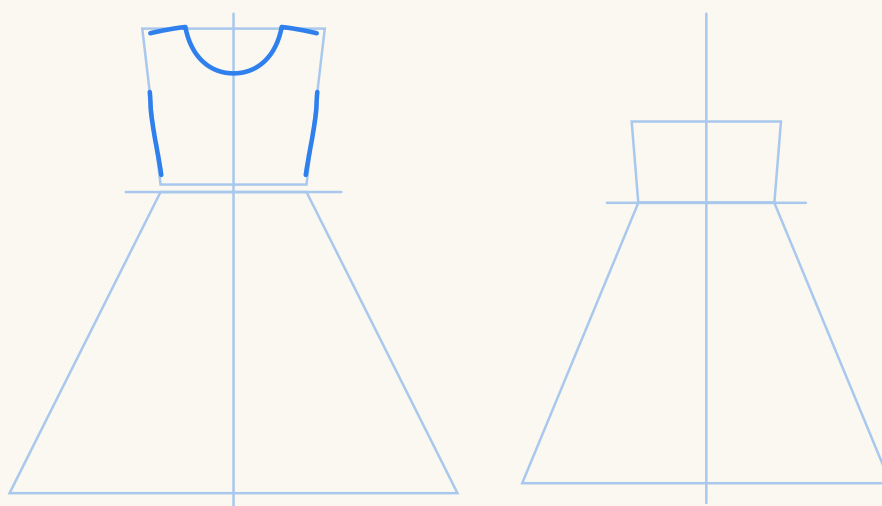
New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Sketch the center lines and guide shapes

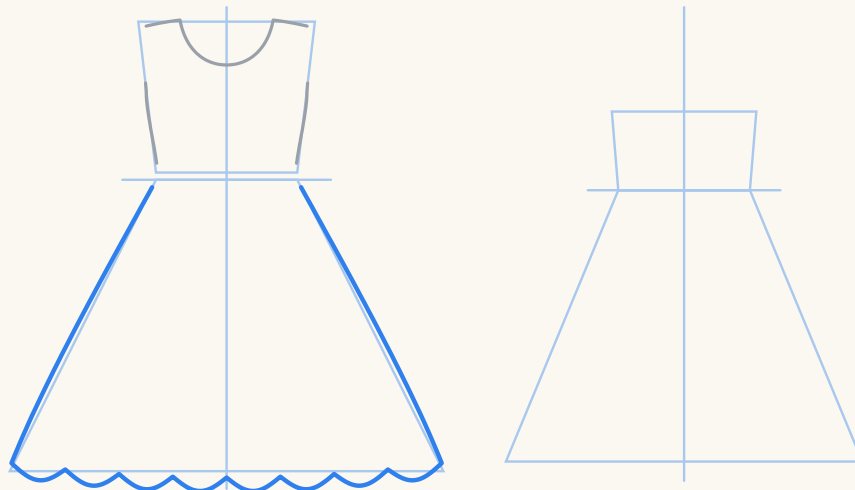
Turn your paper sideways. Draw two straight vertical lines, the left one a bit taller, then cross each with a short waistline about a third of the way down. Above the waist on the left, add a narrow box for the bodice, and below it a wide trapezoid for the skirt. Repeat a smaller version on the right. I press so lightly that I can barely see them.

 **Tip:** Make the skirt trapezoid at least three times wider at the bottom than at the waist.

STEP 2 Draw the fitted bodice and the round neckline

Start at the top of the bodice box with a scooped U for the neckline, centered on the middle line. From each end of the U, draw a short shoulder sloping outward. Then bring the sides down so they pinch in slightly toward the waistline. That inward curve makes the top look fitted, not boxy.

 **Tip:** Check the neckline dips the same depth on both sides of the center line.

STEP 3 Add the flared skirt with a scalloped hem

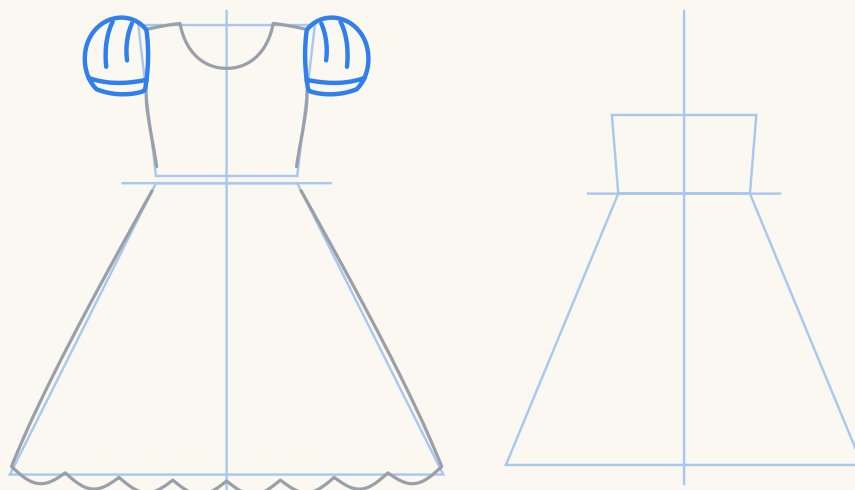
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From each end of the waist, sweep a long curved line down and outward along the edges of the trapezoid. Let the curves bow out a tiny bit so the skirt looks full. Across the bottom, draw a row of small bumps, like the top edge of a cloud turned upside down. Eight scallops fit nicely, with one dip landing right on the center line.

 **Tip:** Draw the middle scallops first, then work outward so both sides end evenly.

STEP 4 Draw two puff sleeves

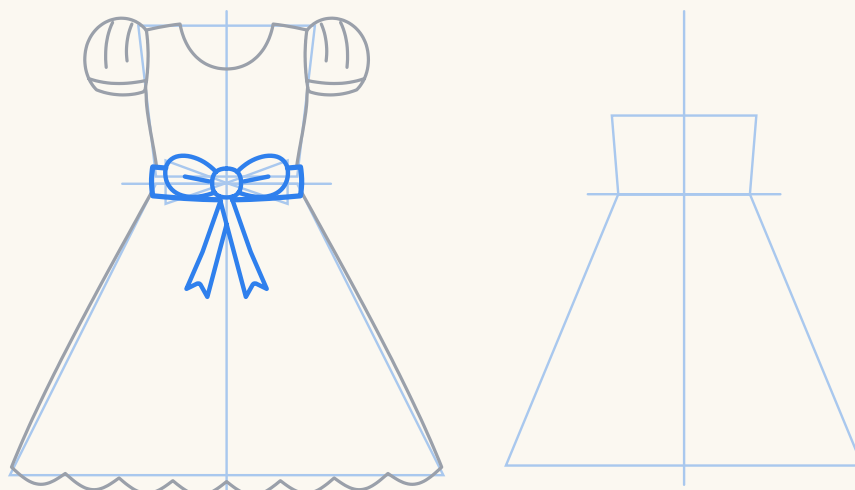
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Each sleeve is a short, rounded balloon sitting on the shoulder. Begin where the shoulder meets the armhole, puff the line up and out, and curve it back in at the bottom. Underneath, add a thin band for the cuff. A few short curved lines inside the puff show where the fabric is gathered. Little ones can skip the gathers.

 **Tip:** Keep the sleeves short; if they reach the waist they turn into long sleeves.

STEP 5 Wrap a sash and tie the bow

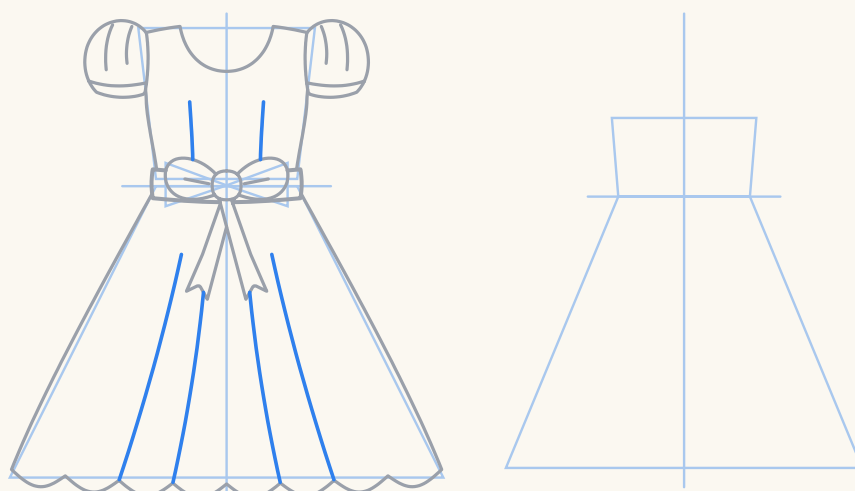
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Draw a wide band across the waistline, slightly wider than the dress itself so it looks wrapped around. In the middle, sketch two light triangles pointing outward and round them off into bow loops. Add a small round knot where they meet. Last, let two ribbon tails hang down onto the skirt, each ending in a little V notch. I always draw the knot after the loops so it sits on top.

 **Tip:** Tilt the two bow tails apart a little, like an upside-down V.

STEP 6 Add soft folds and bodice darts

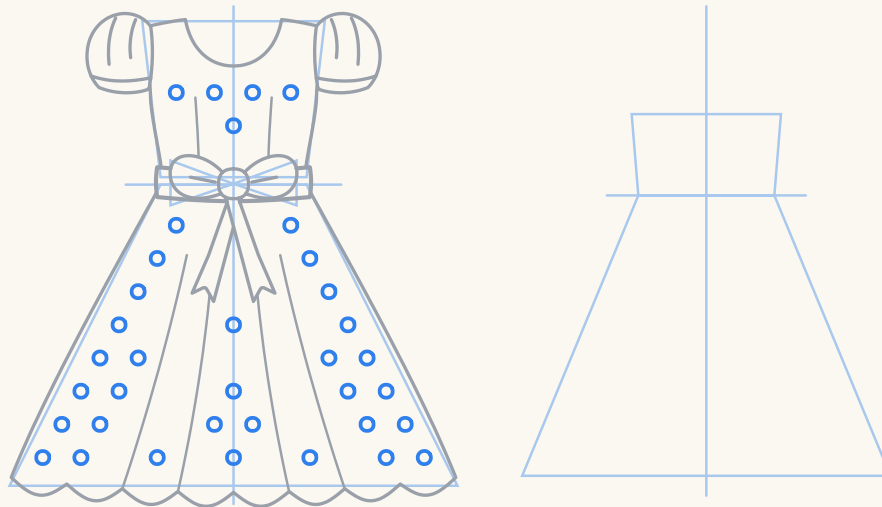
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Folds make the skirt look like fabric instead of a cardboard triangle. From four of the scallop dips, draw a gently curved line upward, fading out about halfway to the waist. Keep them leaning toward the bow, the way real pleats spread from the waist. On the bodice, two short lines from the chest down to the sash are the darts that shape the top.

 **Tip:** Stop each fold line before the sash; folds that touch the waist look like stripes.

STEP 7 Scatter the polka dots

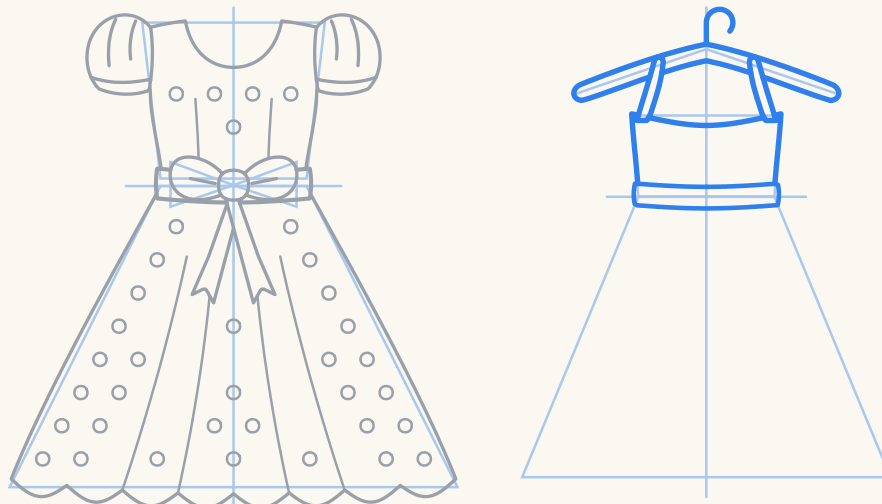
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Polka dots look tidy when they sit in staggered rows, like bricks in a wall. Draw one row of small circles, then shift the next row half a space sideways. Skip any dot that would land on a fold, the bow or the edge of the dress. It's the slowest step, so take your time.

Tip: Trace around the end of a pencil cap if your circles keep coming out lumpy.

STEP 8 Draw the hanger and the sundress top

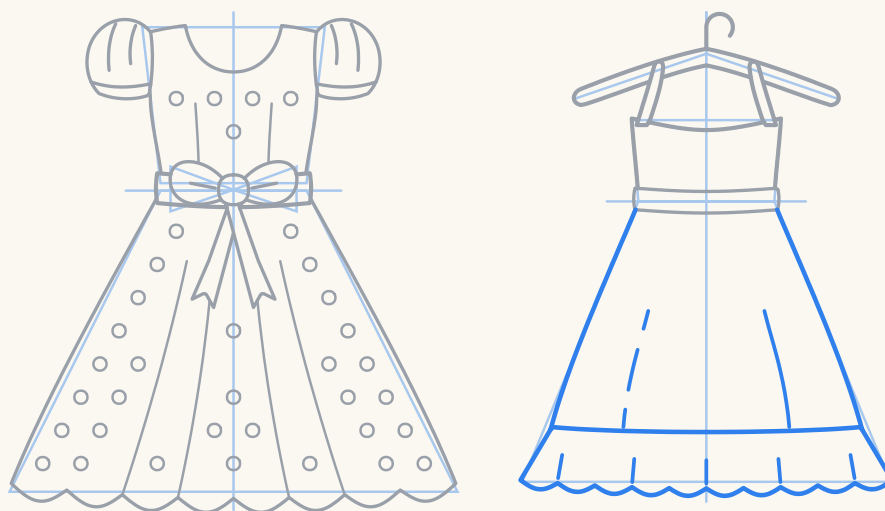
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Move to the right-hand guides. Above the box, draw a small question-mark hook, then a wide, curved bar sloping down to both sides like a gentle roof. Below the bar, sketch a short rectangle for the sundress top, and loop two thin straps over the hanger. A narrow ribbon across the waistline finishes the top.

Tip: Let the straps cross over the front of the hanger bar, not behind it.

STEP 9 Shape the skirt with a ruffle

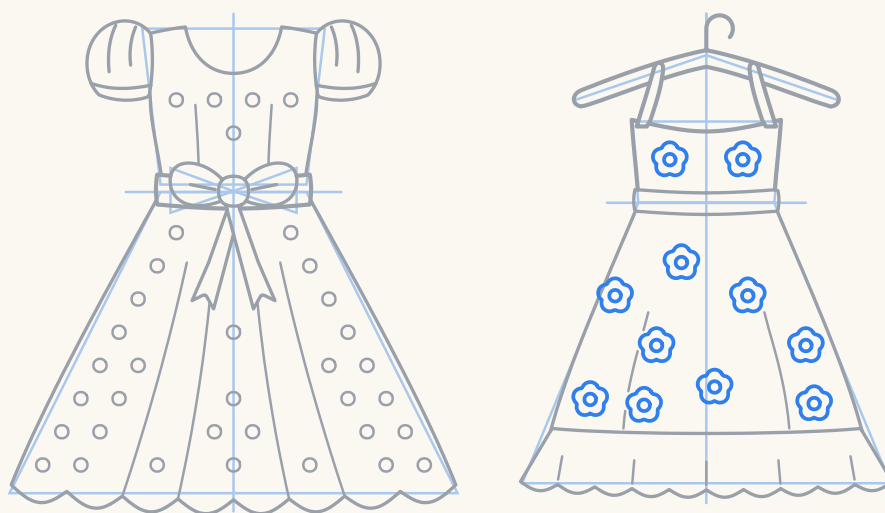
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From the ribbon, draw the skirt sides flaring outward, a bit narrower than the party dress so the two look different. Stop a little above the bottom of the guide and draw a straight-ish seam across. Under that seam, add a wider ruffle with a wavy edge, then a few short lines in it to show the gathers.

 **Tip:** Make the ruffle stick out past the skirt on both sides so it looks bouncy.

STEP 10 Draw tiny flowers on the sundress

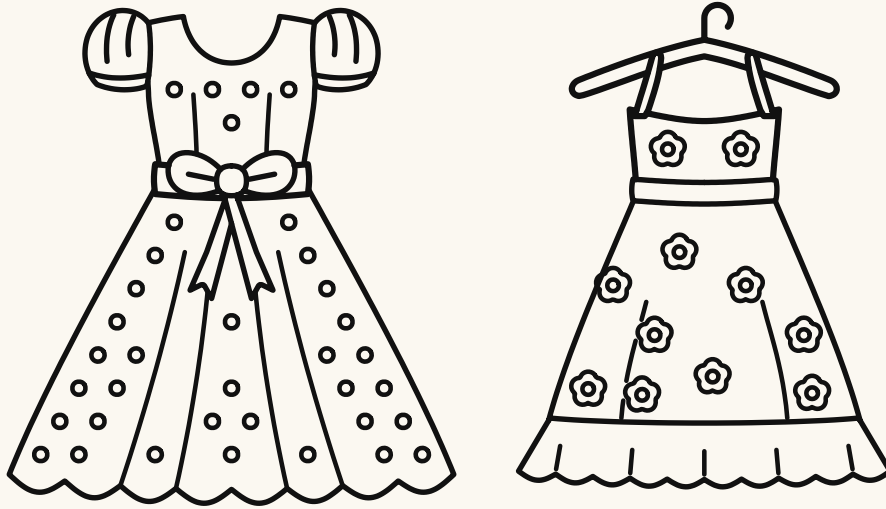
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Each flower is five rounded petals around a small circle. My trick is to draw the center circle first, then add the petals around it like the numbers on a clock. Spread about nine flowers over the skirt and two on the top, leaving gaps between them. Keep them clear of the ruffle seam.

 **Tip:** Vary the spacing a little; flowers in perfect rows look like wallpaper.

STEP 11 Ink the lines and erase the guides

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Go over every line you want to keep with your black pen. I ink the long outlines in slow, steady strokes and then switch to a lighter touch for the dots and petals. Leave the boxes and the center lines in pencil. Once the ink dries, erase all the pencil.

Tip: Ink the left side and then its mirror on the right, so both match in weight.

STEP 12 Color both dresses

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Pink goes on the party dress, with dark pink down the right side and beside each fold for shadow. The sash, bow and cuffs are navy, and the polka dots stay white. For the sundress, use lavender, then purple for the straps and ribbon plus a shadow down its right edge. Fill the flowers white with yellow centers and give the hanger a light brown.

Tip: Color the dots and petals last, or leave them as bare white paper.