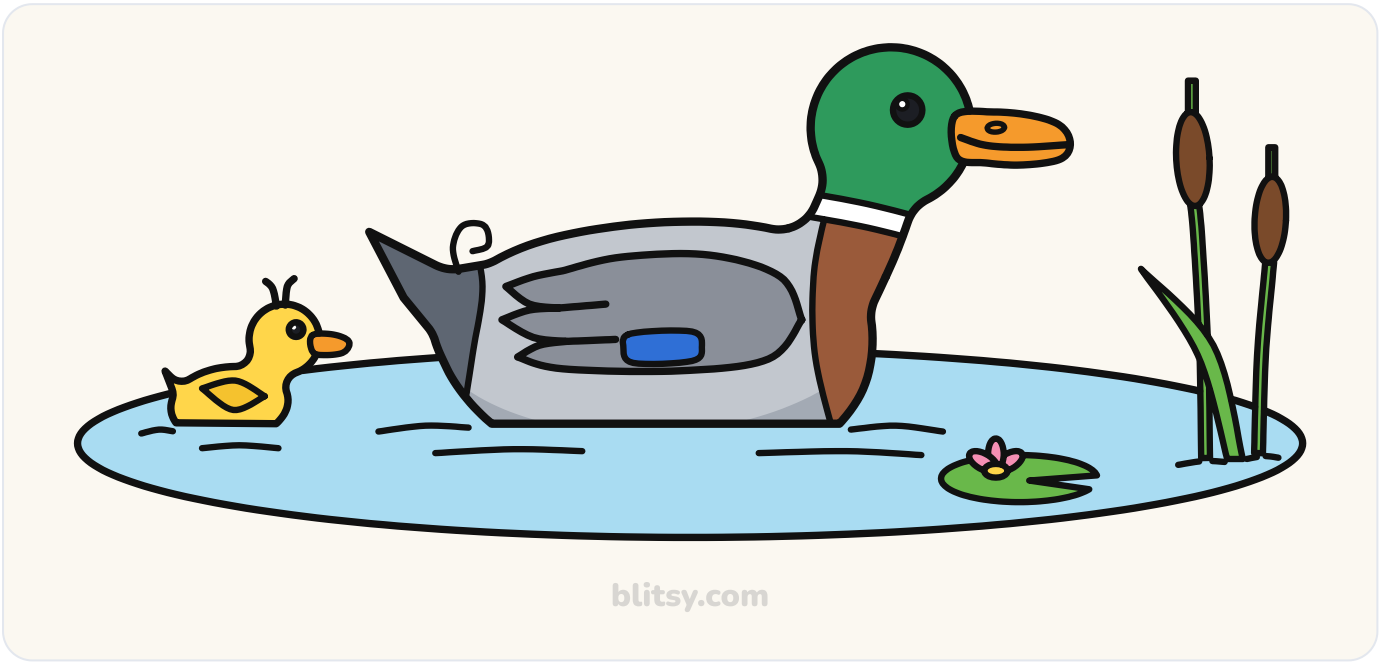
How to Draw a Duck

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

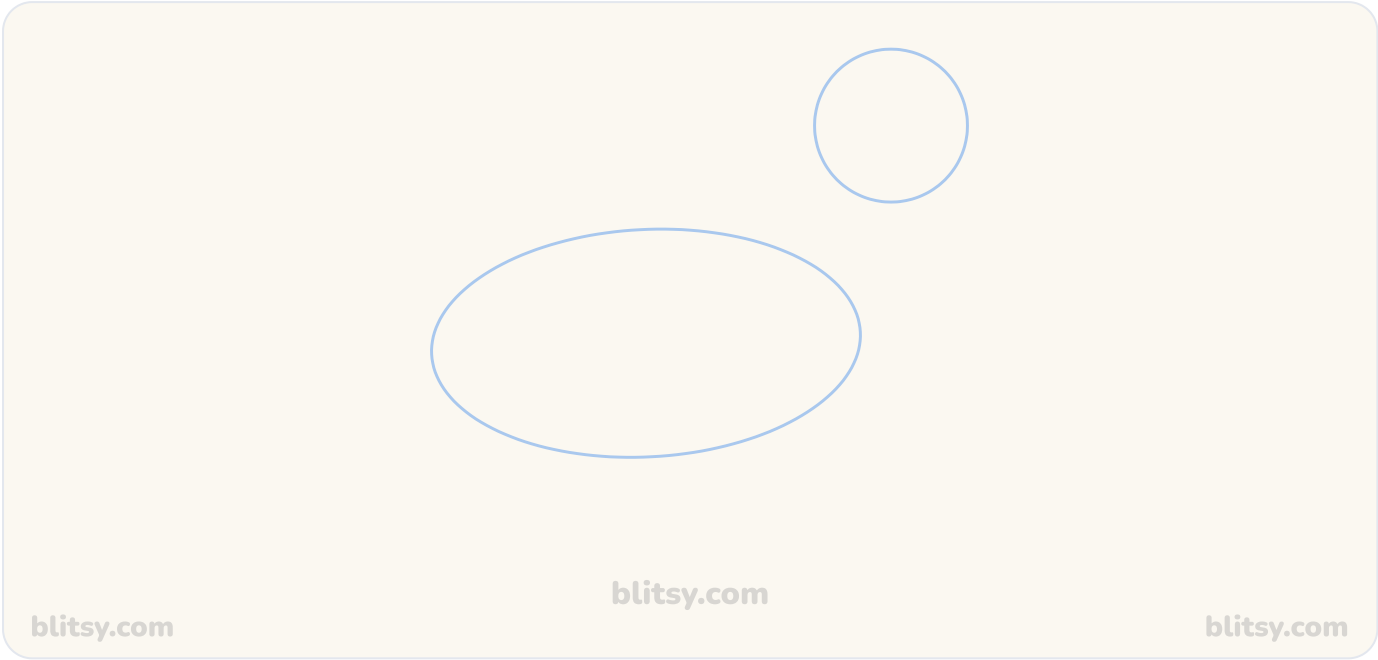
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

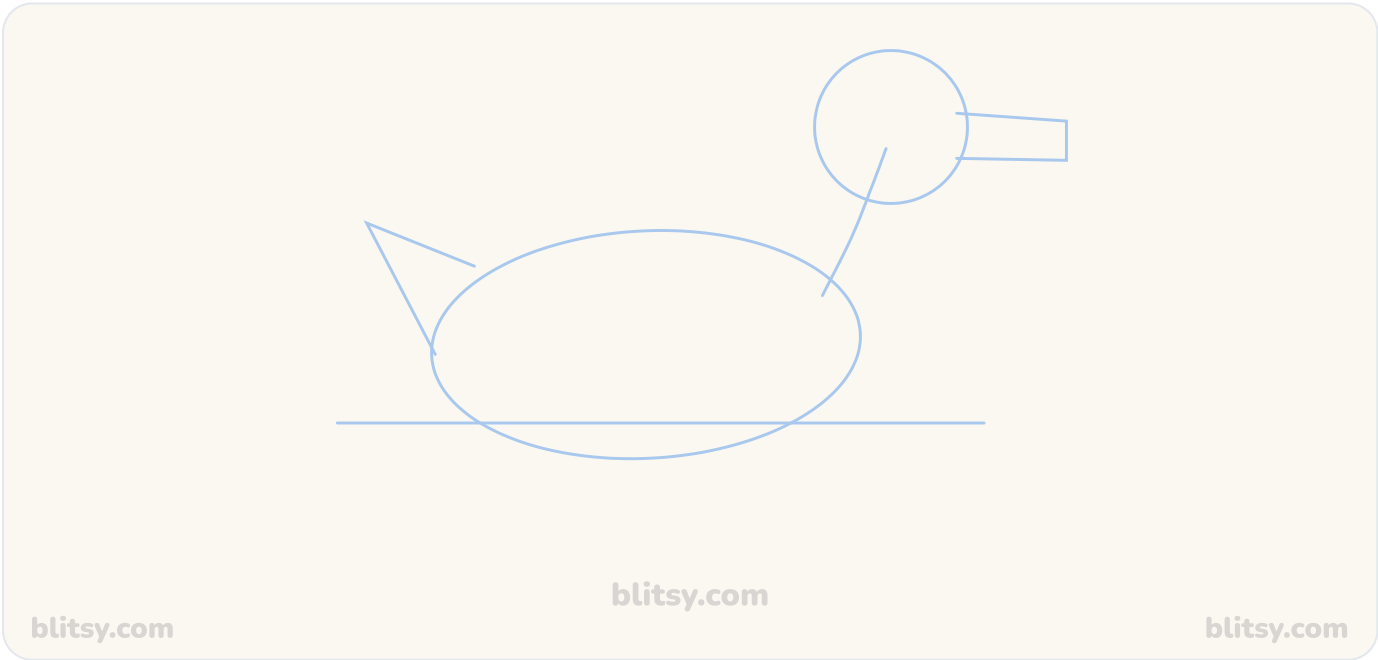
STEP 1 Draw a head circle and a body oval



Start with a wide, flat oval a little left of center for the body. Then put a circle up and to the right for the head, about a third as wide as the oval, with a clear gap between them. That gap is where the neck will go, so don't let the shapes touch.

💡 **Tip:** Press so lightly that you can barely see the line. These shapes disappear later.

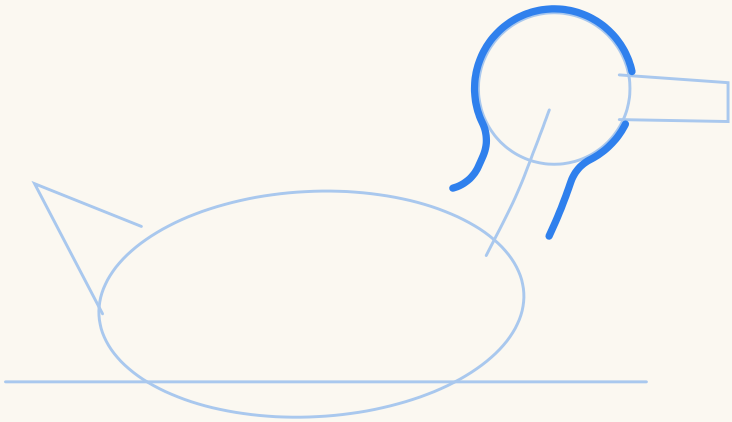
STEP 2 Add the neck, water, tail and bill guides



Join the head and body with one gently bent line for the neck. Draw a straight waterline across the lower part of the oval; nothing under it will show. On the left, sketch a narrow V for the tail, and on the right side of the head add a long box for the bill.

💡 **Tip:** Make the bill box almost as long as the head is wide. Ducks have big, flat bills.

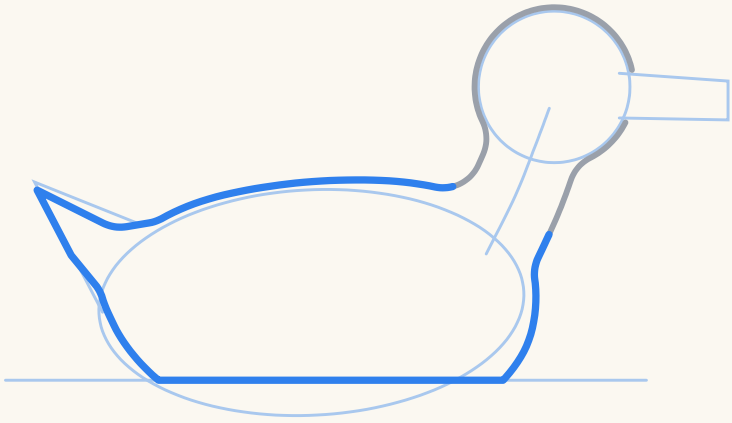
STEP 3 Outline the head and S-curve neck



Follow the head circle around the top. At the back, let the line dip into the neck and bulge out again as it reaches the body, a soft S shape. The front of the neck curves under the chin and then swells forward into the chest. I leave a gap where the bill joins the face, because the bill sits on top there.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the neck thick. A thin neck turns your duck into a goose.

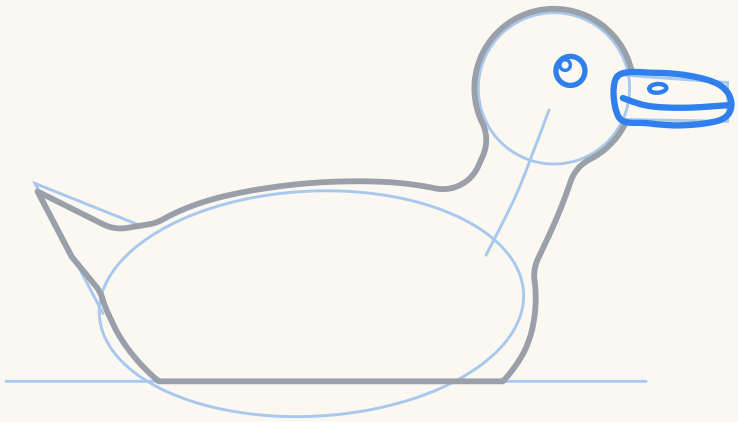
STEP 4 Draw the egg body and pointed tail



From the back of the neck, draw a slightly arched back toward the tail guide. Sweep up into a sharp tail point, then come down along the underside to the waterline. Bring the round chest down to the water too, and trace the waterline between those two points so the body floats.

💡 **Tip:** Let the back rise in a gentle hump before it dips to the tail. A flat back looks like a toy boat.

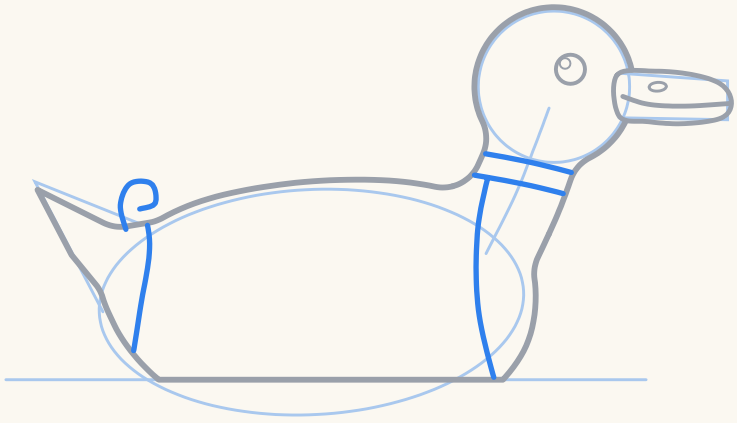
STEP 5 Add the spoon bill and the eye



Inside the bill box, draw a flat bill with a straight end on the face and a rounded tip, like a spoon. Run one line along the middle for the mouth and add a small oval nostril. Place a round eye just above and behind the bill, with a tiny circle inside for the shine.

💡 **Tip:** Curve the mouth line up slightly where it meets the face. It reads as a small smile.

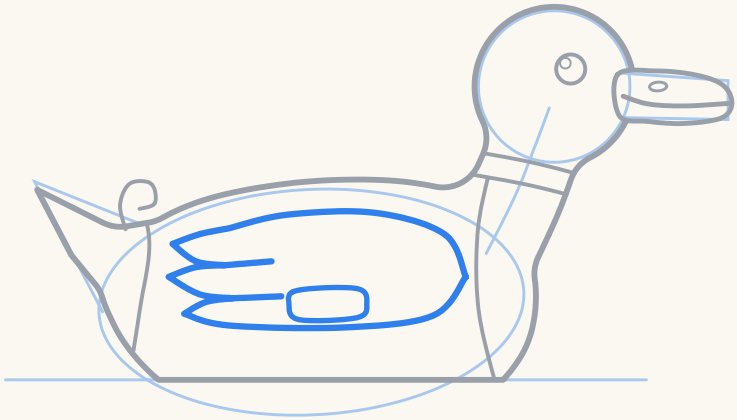
STEP 6 Mark the neck ring, chest and tail colors



A mallard drake has a thin white collar, so draw two parallel curves across the neck, slanting down toward the front. From the lower curve, run a line down to the water to separate the brown chest from the gray body. Add one more line near the tail for the dark tail feathers, plus a little curl on top.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the white ring thin, about the width of your fingernail tip on the paper.

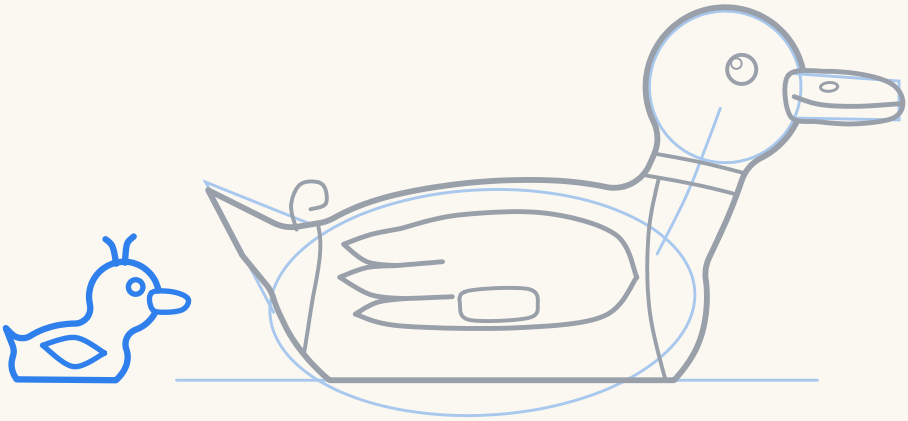
STEP 7 Draw the folded wing and feathers



The folded wing lies along the side like a long teardrop, round at the front, just behind the chest line. Instead of ending in one point, split its back end into three feather tips stacked one above the other. Then add a small rounded rectangle for the blue patch.

💡 **Tip:** Stop the wing short of the tail line so the dark tail still shows behind it.

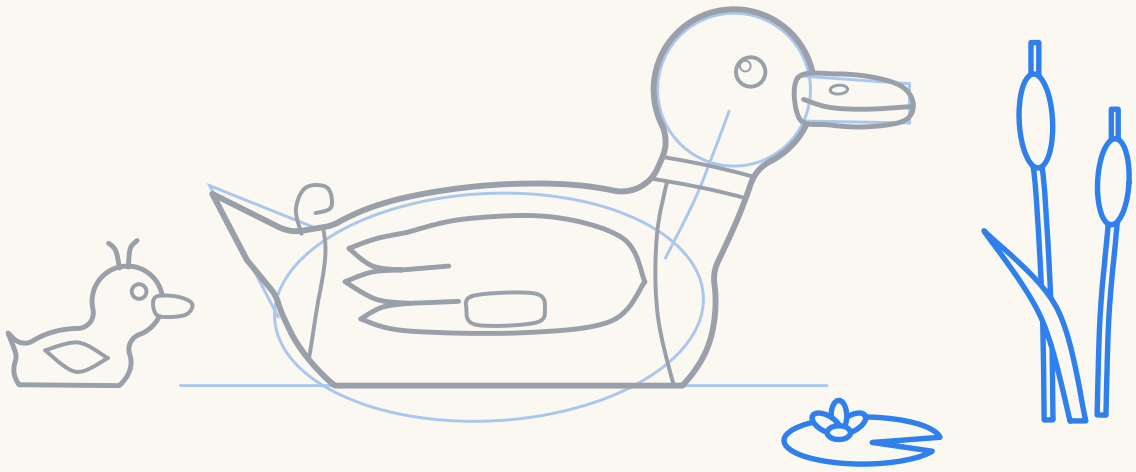
STEP 8 Add a little duckling behind



To the left, leave some space and draw a tiny duck: a round head, a small oval body and a stubby tail. Give it a short bill, a dot eye and a leaf-shaped wing. Two little hair tufts on top make it look newly hatched. Its bottom sits on the same waterline as the big duck.

💡 **Tip:** Make the duckling's head big compared with its body. Baby animals always look cuter that way.

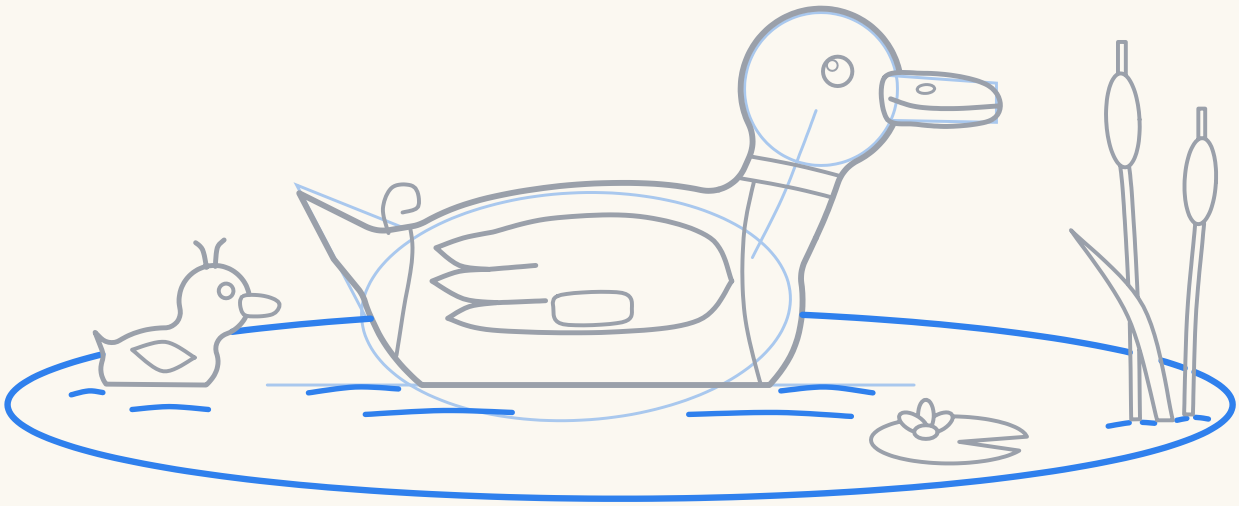
STEP 9 Draw a lily pad and cattails



Low down, under the bill, draw a flat oval lily pad with a narrow wedge cut out, and a small pink flower on it. On the far right, add two tall cattail stems with brown, sausage-shaped heads and one long leaf leaning left.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the lily pad as a very squashed oval. Seen from the side, water plants look flat.

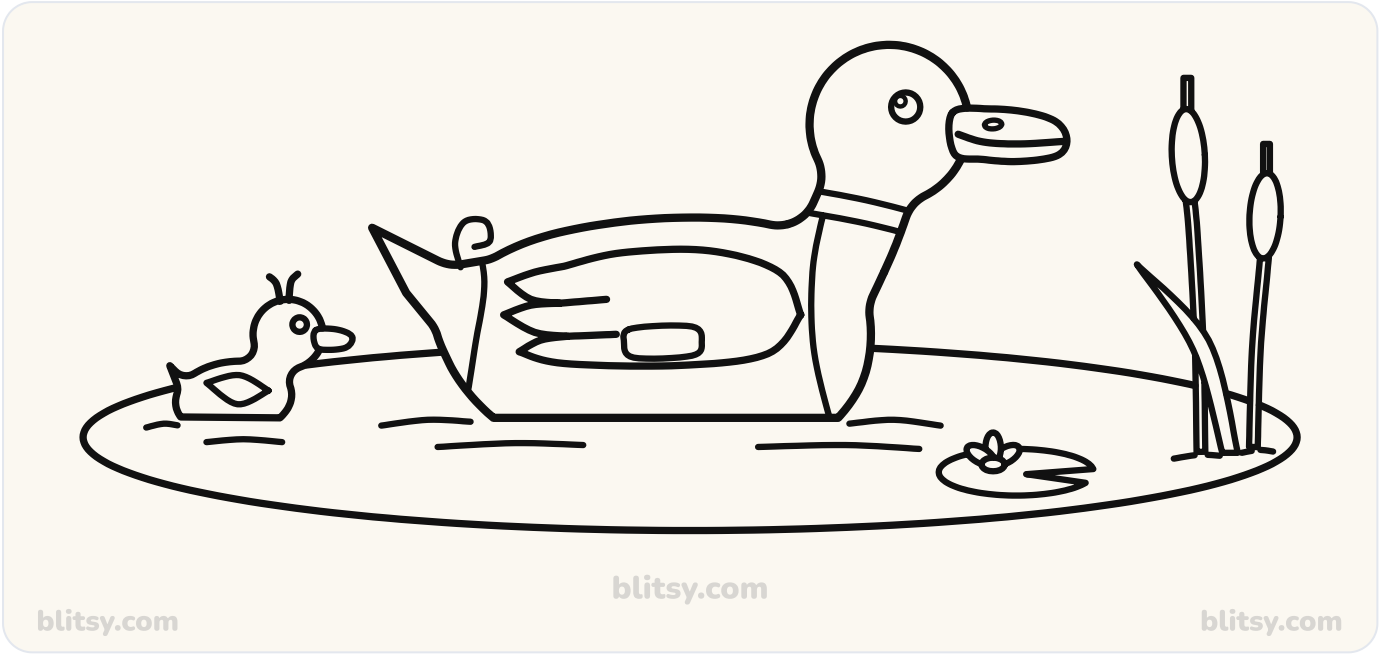
STEP 10 Draw the pond and ripples



Now draw a wide oval around everything for the pond. Its back edge goes behind both ducks, so stop the line at each body and pick it up on the other side. Short, curved ripple lines beside each duck show that they're floating, not sitting on a floor.

💡 **Tip:** Draw ripples in pairs of different lengths. Matching ones look like stripes.

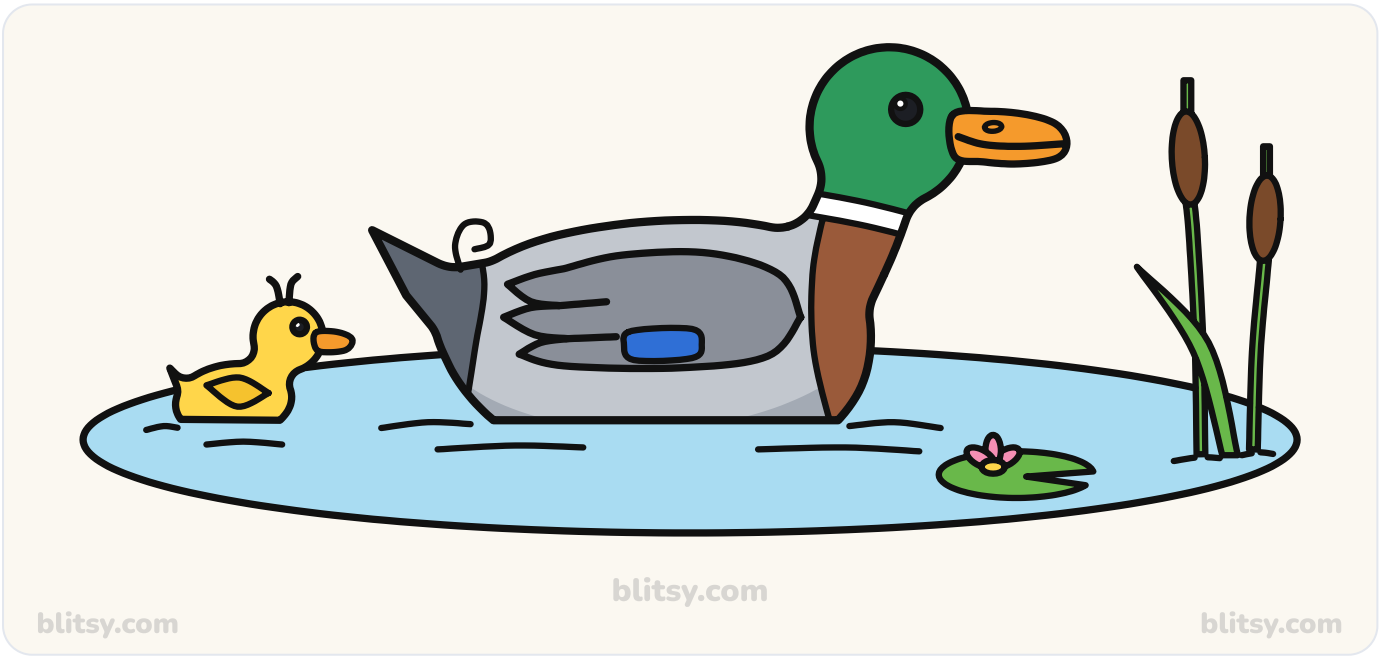
STEP 11 Ink your lines and erase the guides



Trace every line you want to keep with the black pen. I ink the face first, while my hand is fresh, then the body, the duckling and the pond. Skip the oval, the circle and the guide lines. Once the ink is fully dry, erase all the pencil guides and any smudges.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you ink the long pond oval, so your hand always pulls the pen toward you.

STEP 12 Color your duck



Color the head dark green and leave the neck ring white. The chest is chestnut brown, the body light gray, and the wing a darker gray with a bright blue patch. Use dark gray for the tail and orange for both bills. The duckling is yellow and the pond light blue.

💡 **Tip:** Shade the bottom edge of the gray body a little darker, right where it meets the water.