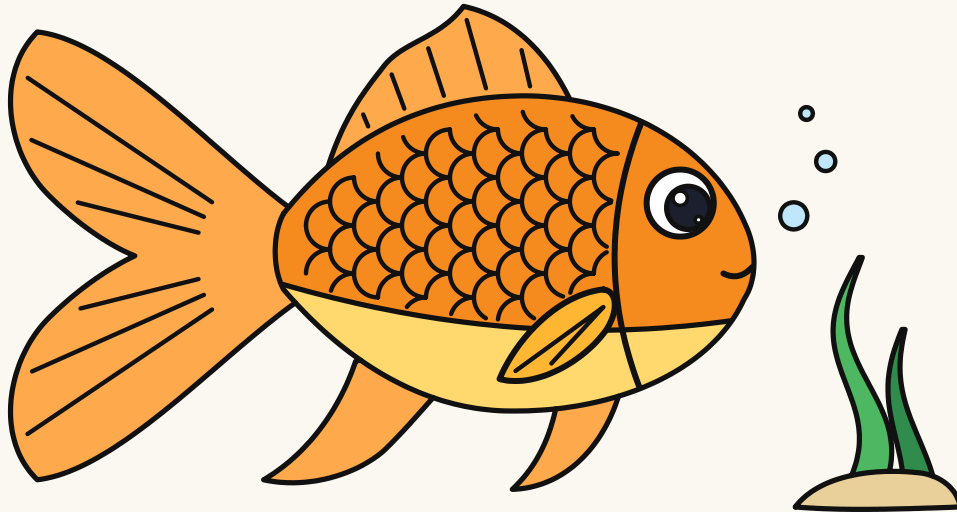


# How to Draw a Fish

11 easy steps for beginners



blitsy.com

## What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- 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 the body oval and a center line

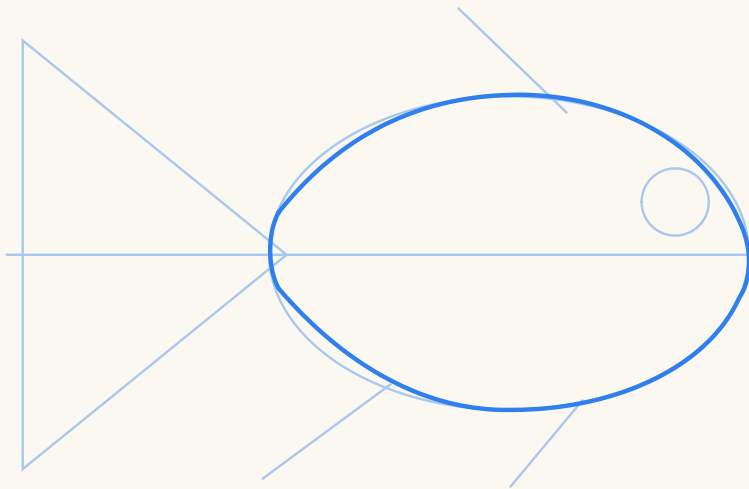
Begin a little right of the middle of your page with a wide oval, about one and a half times as wide as it is tall. Then run a straight sideways line through its middle and let it stick out far to the left. That line marks where the tail will go and keeps the fish level.

 **Tip:** Draw the oval in two or three light passes rather than one hard loop.

**STEP 2** Add guides for the tail, fins and eye

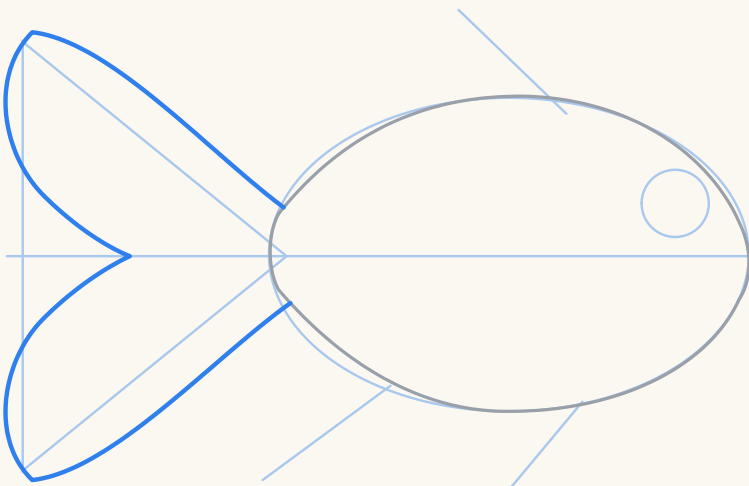
On the left end of the oval, draw a big triangle lying on its side, with its point touching the body. Above the body, add one slanted line for the top fin, and two short slanted lines underneath for the bottom fins. Finally, place a small circle near the right end, a little above the center line. That's the eye.

 **Tip:** Make the triangle tall. A small tail guide always gives you a stubby little tail.

**STEP 3** Shape the egg-shaped body

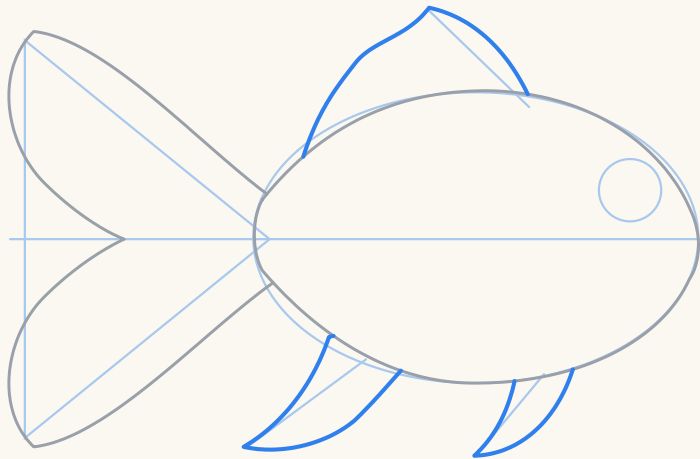
Trace over the oval, but change it slightly. The head end on the right stays round and full, and the left end narrows into a short neck where the tail joins. I think of it as an egg lying on its side with the pointed end toward the tail. Pinch the curve in a little right at the tail point.

 **Tip:** Keep the front of the head round. A pointy nose turns a goldfish into a shark.

**STEP 4** Draw a flowing fan tail

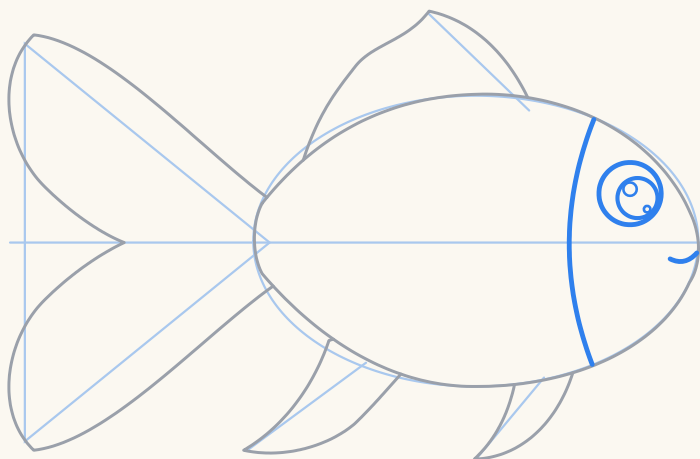
Use the triangle as a frame. Start at the top of the tail joint, sweep a curve up and out to the top corner, then curve back in toward the center line to make a V-shaped notch. Repeat the same shape below for the lower lobe. Both lobes should bulge outward like puffed sails.

 **Tip:** Swing your whole arm for the long tail curves, not only your wrist.

**STEP 5 Add the top and bottom fins**

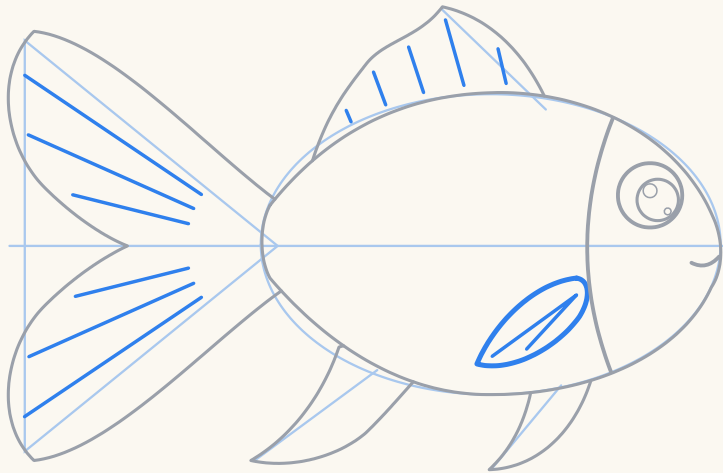
The top fin starts on the back near the head, rises to a peak above your slanted guide, and then slopes down toward the tail with a gentle wave. Underneath, draw two pointed fins that sweep back toward the tail, a longer one at the rear and a shorter one under the chest. Stop each fin line where it touches the body.

**Tip:** Point every fin slightly backward. Fins that point forward make the fish look like it's reversing.

**STEP 6 Draw the eye, gill and mouth**

Go over the eye guide with a clean circle, then draw a smaller circle inside it, shifted toward the front, for the pupil. Add one round shine and a tiny dot. Next, draw the gill as a long curve from the top of the body to the bottom, just behind the eye, bowing toward the tail. Finish with a small upturned mouth at the very front.

**Tip:** Leave the shines empty and round. They're what make the eye look wet and alive.

**STEP 7 Add the side fin and fin rays**

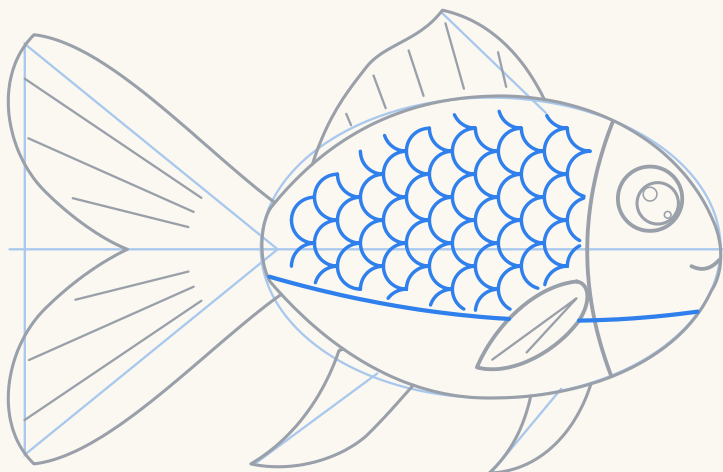
blitsy.com

blitsy.com

blitsy.com

Just behind the gill and below the middle, draw a leaf-shaped side fin that points down and back. Now give the fins some texture. Draw a few straight rays across each tail lobe, starting a little away from the body so they don't crowd the joint. Add four or five slanted lines on the top fin and two thin lines inside the side fin.

 **Tip:** Space the rays out generously. Five clean lines read better than fifteen crowded ones.

**STEP 8 Draw the belly line and scales**

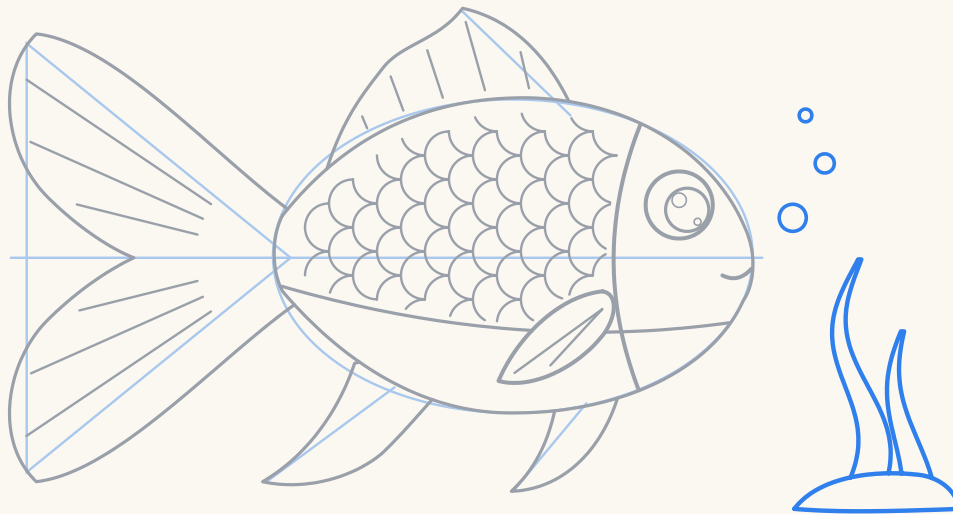
blitsy.com

blitsy.com

blitsy.com

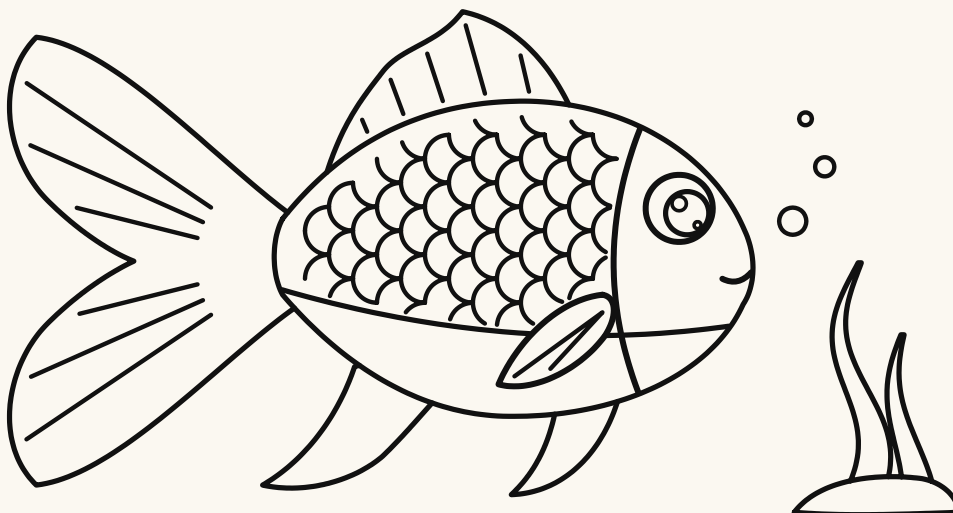
Draw a soft curve from the mouth back to the tail, through the lower third of the body. Below it is the belly, which stays smooth. Above it come the scales: small half circles in rows from the gill toward the tail, each bulging toward the tail. Start the next column halfway down the one before it, so the rows interlock like roof tiles.

 **Tip:** Finish one full column before starting the next. It keeps the pattern from drifting.

**STEP 9 Add bubbles and seaweed**

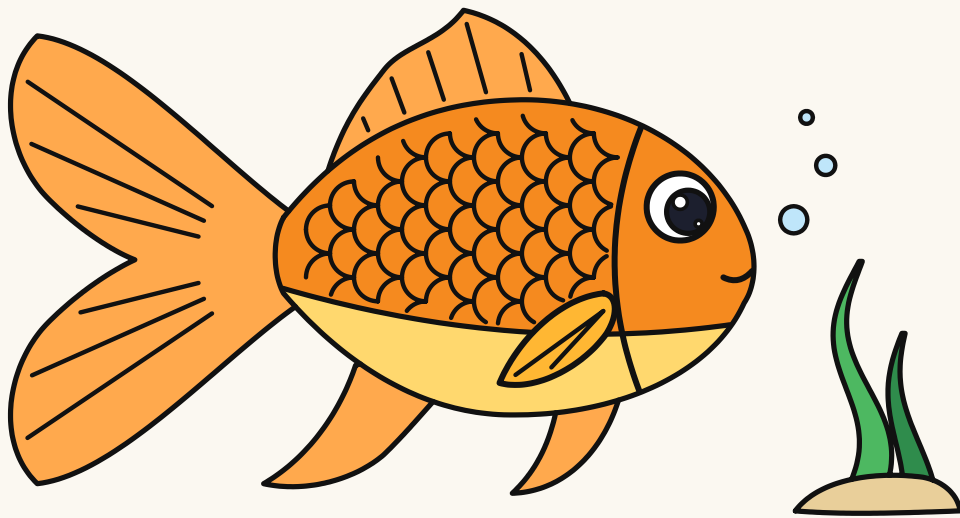
Put three bubbles in front of the mouth, getting smaller as they float up. To the right of the fish, draw two wavy blades of seaweed growing out of a small mound of sand. The front blade is taller, and the back one peeks out from behind it. This small scene tells everyone your fish is underwater.

 **Tip:** Wiggle the seaweed in an S shape. Straight blades look like grass on land.

**STEP 10 Ink the lines and erase the guides**

Take your black marker and trace every line you want to keep, from the body outline and fins down to the smallest scale and the sand mound. Skip the oval, the center line, the triangle and the fin guides. Let the ink dry for a minute, then erase all the pencil underneath.

 **Tip:** Ink the scales last, when your hand is warmed up and steady.

**STEP 11** Color your fish

blitsy.com

blitsy.com

blitsy.com

Color the body and scales a bright orange. Use a lighter orange for the tail and the top and bottom fins, which makes them look thin and see-through. The belly is yellow, and I like a gold side fin so it stands out against the body. Fill the pupil black and leave the shines white. Finish with light blue bubbles, two greens for the seaweed and tan sand.

 **Tip:** Color the tail in strokes that follow the ray lines outward.