

How to Draw a Ghost

10 easy steps for beginners



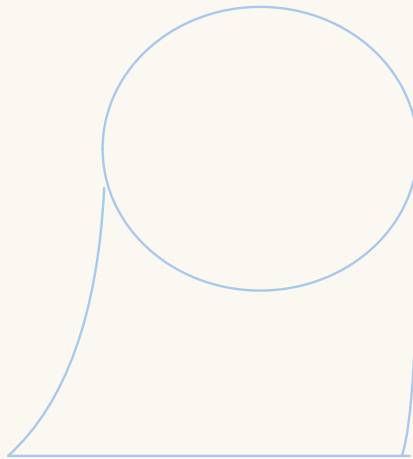
What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Colored pencils
- White paper

How to use this guide

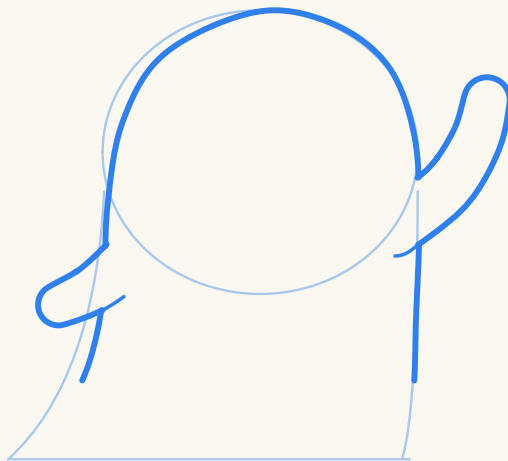
New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Sketch a head circle and a hem line

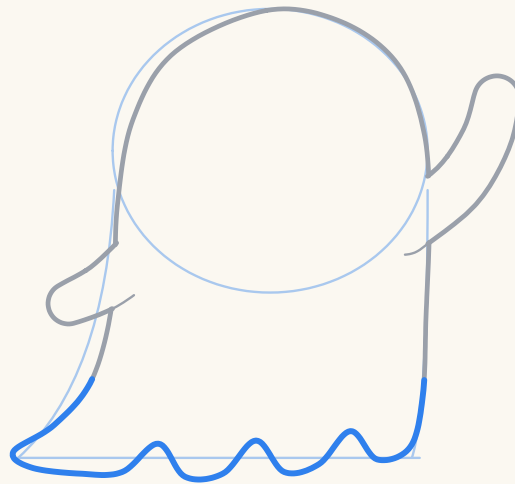
Start with a large circle a little left of the page's center, roughly a third of the page tall. From its sides, drop two lines down: the right one almost straight, the left one sweeping out to the lower left. Join their ends with a flat line. This rough bell shape sets the size of the ghost and shows where its tail will drift.

 **Tip:** Press so softly you can barely see the lines. They're only scaffolding.

STEP 2 Draw the dome, the sides and two arms

Trace over the top of the circle to make a smooth dome, then let it flow down both sides. On the right, pull a long arm up and outward, as if the ghost is saying hi. The left arm is a short rounded nub pointing down. I draw a tiny curve under each arm where it meets the body, so the arm looks like it's in front instead of glued on.

 **Tip:** Make the waving arm longer than the other one. Unequal arms read as movement.

STEP 3 Add a wavy hem with a trailing tail

Now close the bottom. Starting on the right, draw a row of soft bumps along the hem line, four or five of them, each hanging down like a scallop. As you reach the left, stretch the last part into a long, thin tail that tapers to a point. That tail is what makes the ghost look like it's drifting rather than standing.

 **Tip:** Keep the bumps round, not pointy. Points make a ghost look ragged and spooky.

STEP 4 Draw big oval eyes with shines

Two tall ovals go just below the middle of the head, spaced about one eye-width apart. In my experience, big eyes are the secret to a cute ghost; if they're small and far apart, the face turns blank and a bit eerie. Inside each oval, draw a round shine near the top left and a tiny dot near the bottom right.

 **Tip:** Put both shines on the same side of each eye, or the ghost looks cross-eyed.

STEP 5 Add a happy mouth and rosy cheeks



Under the eyes, draw a wide mouth with an almost flat top and a deep rounded bottom, like a slice of melon. Add a small curved line inside the bottom for the tongue. Then place a flat oval cheek under each eye, a little outside it. Cheeks sitting low and wide make the face look even happier.

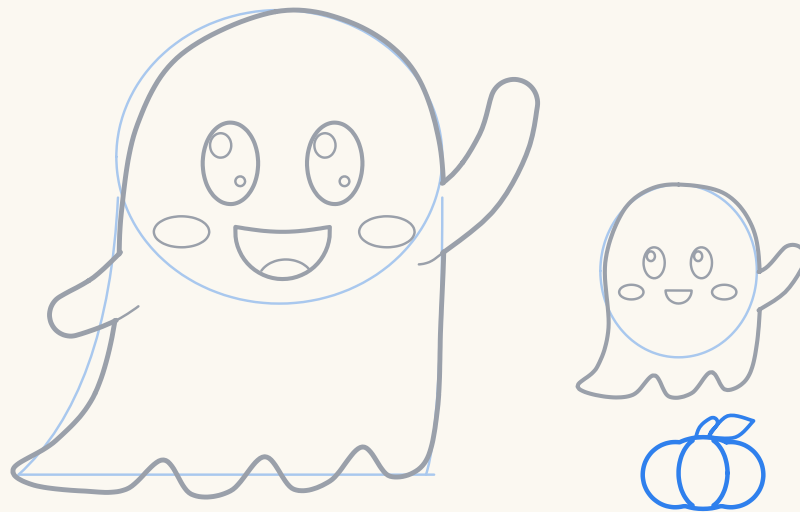
Tip: Keep the mouth between the eyes' outer edges. Wider than that starts to look wild.

STEP 6 Draw a baby ghost beside it



To the right, sketch a light circle about half the size of the big head. Build the baby the same way: a dome, two sides, a small waving arm and a short wavy hem with a little tail to the left. Its face is simpler, with two small eyes, cheeks and a tiny smile. Most beginners draw the baby too big; keep it clearly smaller, so the pair reads as parent and child.

Tip: Copy the big ghost's tail direction. Both drifting the same way looks like they float together.

STEP 7 Add a tiny pumpkin below

Below the baby ghost, draw a wide, squashed oval for a pumpkin, then a narrower oval in the middle of it for the front rib. Top it with a short bent stem and a small pointed leaf. It's a little detail, yet it tells everyone this is a Halloween scene and fills the empty corner of the page.

 **Tip:** Keep the pumpkin smaller than the baby's head so it stays a background detail.

STEP 8 Sprinkle stars and motion swooshes

Scatter three or four five-pointed stars in the empty sky: one large, a couple of medium ones and a tiny one. Then, close to the big ghost's tail, draw three short curved lines that follow the shape of its left edge. They work like speed lines in a comic and show which way it's floating.

 **Tip:** Leave a small gap between the swooshes and the body, so they don't merge into the outline.

STEP 9 Ink the lines and erase the guides

Go over every keeper line with the black marker: both ghosts, the faces, the pumpkin, the stars and the swooshes. Let the ink dry for a minute, then erase the circles and helper lines from steps 1 and 6. If a gray smudge stays behind inside the ghost, erase gently in one direction, since white areas show every mark.

 **Tip:** Trace the thick outer edge in one slow pass. Stopping halfway leaves blobs.

STEP 10 Color the friendly ghosts

Leave the ghosts white, but shade a thin band of light purple along the right side and the bottom bumps, plus under the left arm. I never skip this, because that soft shadow is what makes a white ghost show up on white paper. Fill the eyes black and keep the shines white. Color the cheeks pink, the mouth dark red with a pink tongue, the pumpkin orange with a green leaf, and the stars yellow.

 **Tip:** Shade with the side of the pencil tip. Light pressure keeps the shadow soft.