How to Draw a Jack-o'-Lantern

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

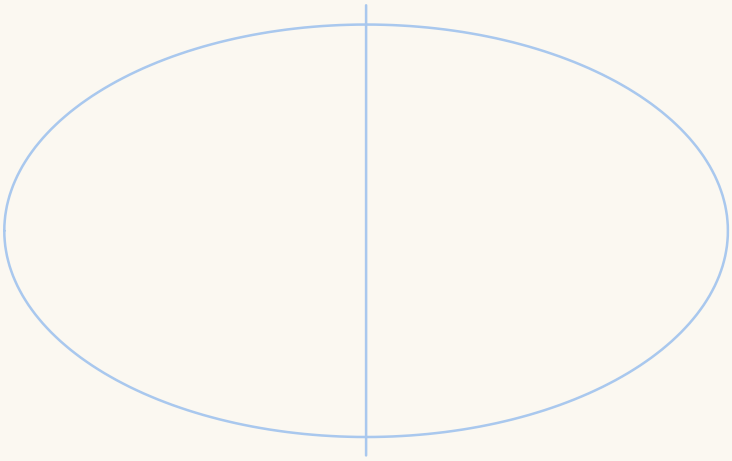
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

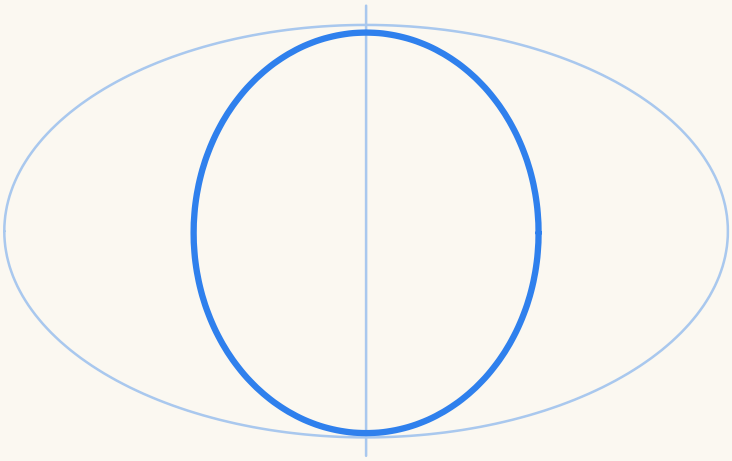
STEP 1 Sketch a wide oval and a center line



Draw a big oval across the middle of the page, about twice as wide as it is tall. Then run a light vertical line straight through its center, a little past the top and bottom. The oval sets the overall size of the pumpkin, and the line keeps the face centered later on.

💡 **Tip:** Hold the pencil near its end for guide shapes. Your lines come out lighter that way.

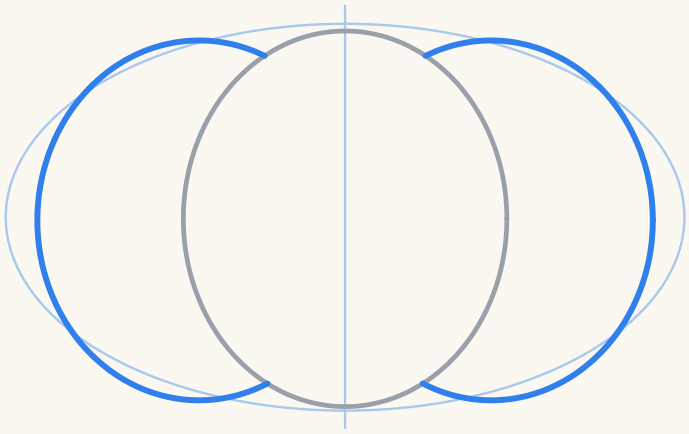
STEP 2 Draw the tall middle segment



Centered on the line, draw an upright oval that touches the top and bottom of your guide. It should take up a bit less than half the guide's width. This front segment is the one facing you, and it will hold the whole face, so give it enough room. When I demonstrate this, I let it poke just above the guide at the top, where the stem will sit.

💡 **Tip:** Check both halves against the center line. A lopsided middle makes the whole face lean.

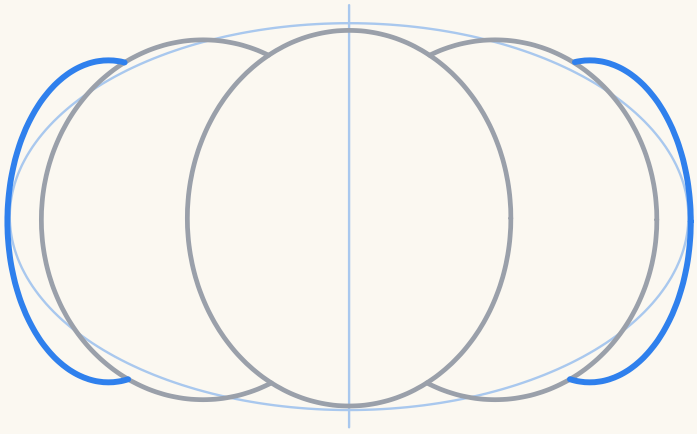
STEP 3 Add a side segment on each side



Start each side segment where it disappears behind the middle one, curve out toward the guide's edge and come back down to meet the middle again near the bottom. They're nearly as big as the middle segment. Don't draw through the middle oval; those parts are hidden behind it.

💡 **Tip:** Stop each curve the moment it touches the middle oval. Hidden lines make a pumpkin look flat.

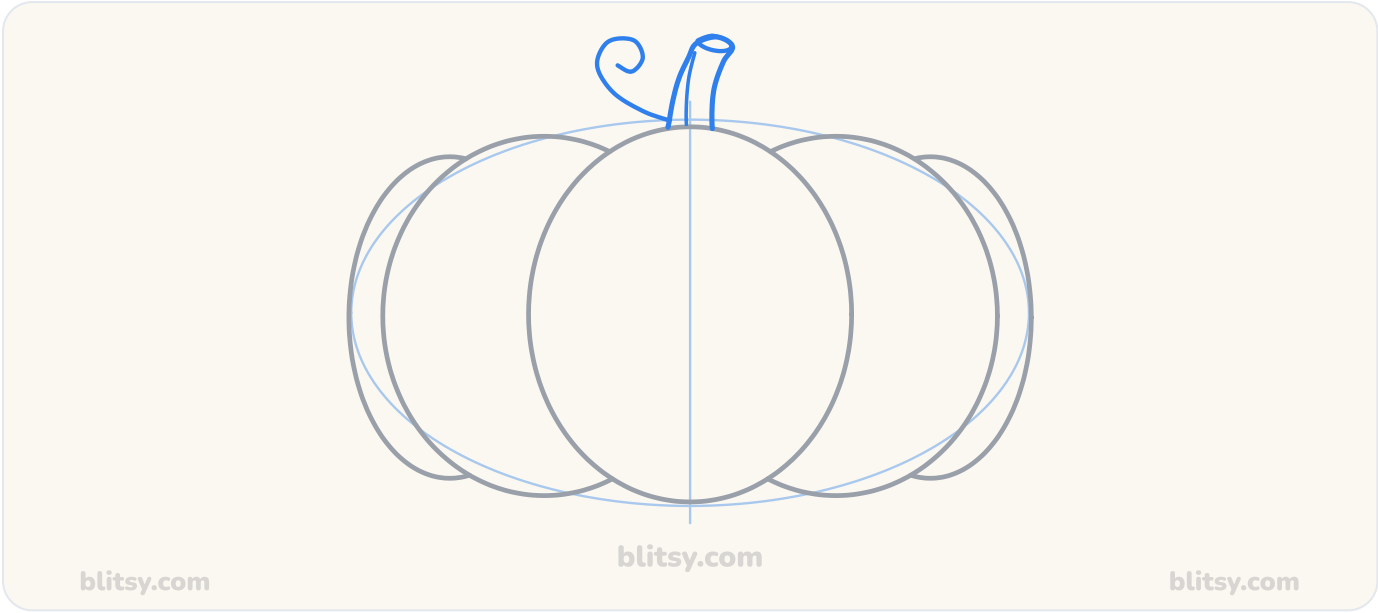
STEP 4 Finish with the outer segments



On the far left and right, draw a thin curved sliver peeking out from behind each side segment. These are the ribs turning away from you around the back of the pumpkin. Keep them narrow. Most beginners make them as fat as the others, and the pumpkin suddenly looks like a row of balloons instead of one round fruit.

💡 **Tip:** Let the slivers sit slightly lower than the side segments. Round things curve down at the edges.

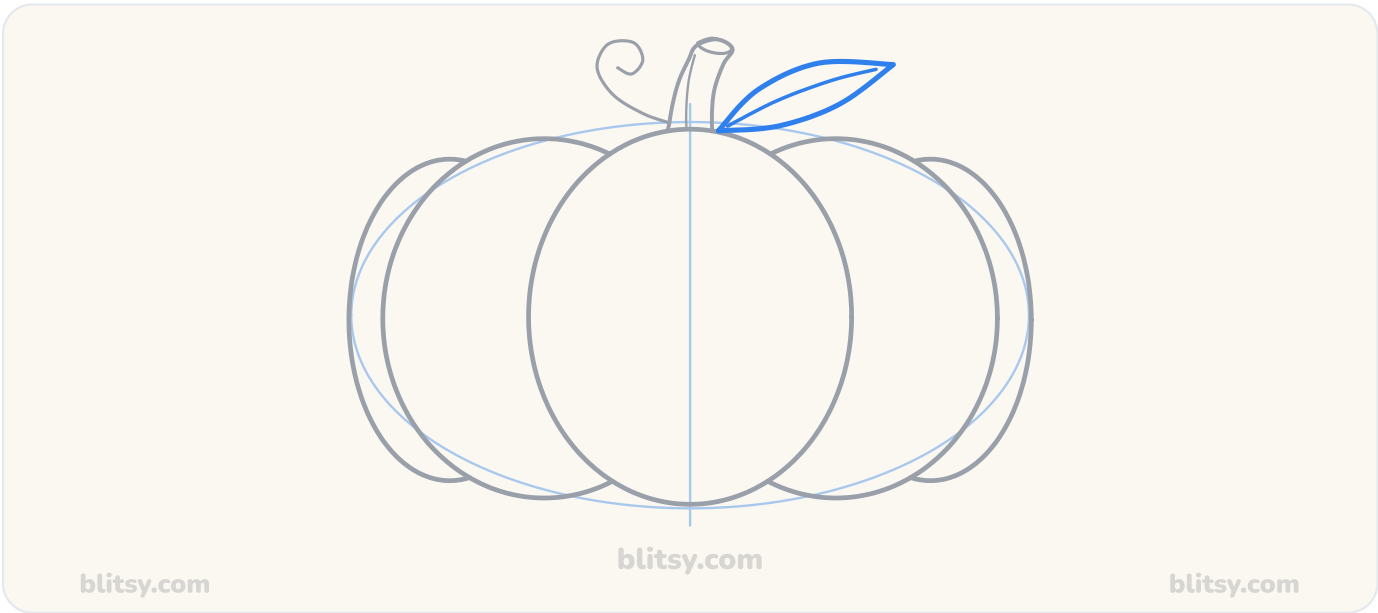
STEP 5 Draw a curved stem and a vine curl



On top of the middle segment, draw a short, thick stem that leans a little to the right and widens where it meets the pumpkin. Cap it with a small flat oval, as if it had been snipped off the vine. Add one line down the stem for a groove. From the left of the stem, pull out a thin vine that loops into a little curl.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the curl as one slow spiral, from the outside in. Two tries on scrap paper helps.

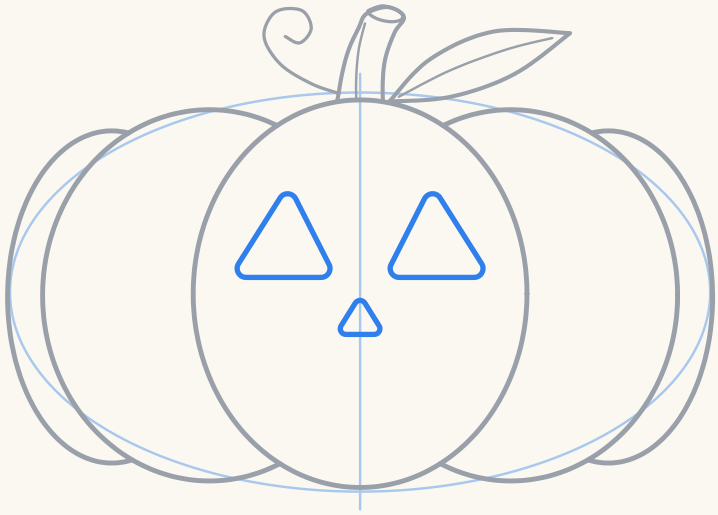
STEP 6 Add a leaf beside the stem



From the right side of the stem's base, draw a long pointed leaf reaching up and out to the right. Two gently curved lines that meet at a sharp tip are all it takes. Then add a vein down the middle. I tilt the leaf upward on purpose, since a drooping one tends to cover the top of the pumpkin and crowd the stem.

💡 **Tip:** Make the leaf's lower edge a touch rounder than the top. Real leaves are rarely symmetrical.

STEP 7 Draw triangle eyes and a small nose



Place two triangles pointing up, roughly a third of the way down the middle segment, one on each side of the center line. Leave a gap between them about the width of one eye. Soften the corners slightly; sharp points look angry, round ones look friendly. The nose is a much smaller triangle, centered just below and between them.

💡 **Tip:** Draw both eyes before judging them. Comparing a pair is easier than fixing one alone.

STEP 8 Carve a toothy smile



Below the nose, draw a wide smile that almost reaches both edges of the middle segment. The top lip curves only a little, while the bottom dips deep, so the grin opens like a half moon. Now notch in the teeth: two square blocks hanging from the top and one rising from the bottom, spaced apart so they don't line up.

💡 **Tip:** Odd, uneven teeth are charming here. Perfectly matched ones look like a fence.

STEP 9 Show the thickness of the carved edges



A real pumpkin wall is thick, so when you carve a hole you see the cut flesh along one side. Inside each eye and the nose, draw a second line close to the upper left edge, following its shape. Do the same just under the top lip of the smile. That thin band is what turns flat triangles into real holes.

💡 **Tip:** Put every band on the same side. Mixed directions confuse where the light comes from.

STEP 10 Ink the outline and erase the guides



Trace every line you want to keep with the black marker: the five segments, the stem, vine, leaf and the whole face. Wait a minute so the ink sets, then erase the big oval and the center line. If a pencil smudge stays behind, a kneaded eraser lifts it without scuffing the paper.

💡 **Tip:** Go a little bolder on the pumpkin's outer edge than on the face. Thick edges look finished.

STEP 11 Color the Jack-o'-Lantern



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Color the middle and side segments orange and the back slivers a darker orange. Add a dark orange crescent along the lower outer edge of each segment for roundness, and leave a small pale streak on the upper left as a shine. Fill the eyes, nose and mouth with yellow, keep their centers lighter, and color the carved bands light orange. Finish with a brown stem and a green leaf.

💡 **Tip:** Color the glowing holes first. Yellow picks up orange smudges, never the other way round.