How to Draw a Light Bulb

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

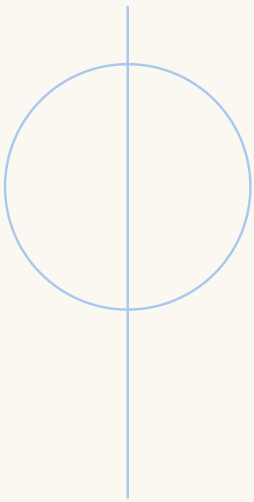
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- White paper

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 →

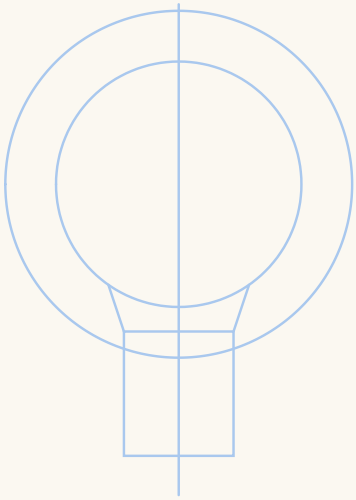
STEP 1 Sketch a circle and a center line



Draw a large circle in the upper half of your paper. This is the glass globe, so make it the biggest shape on the page. Then pull a straight line from above the circle down through its middle, ending well below it. That line keeps the bulb symmetrical.

💡 **Tip:** Trace a round lid if your freehand circle keeps turning into an egg.

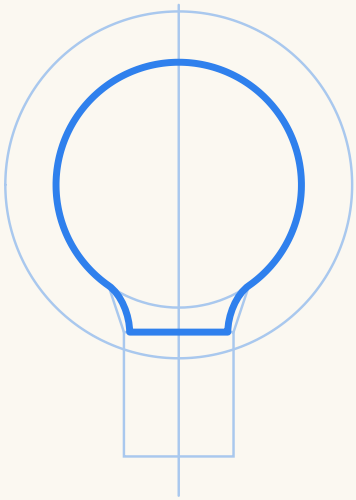
STEP 2 Add the neck lines, a base box and a ray ring



Below the circle, draw a tall narrow rectangle centered on your line. It should be a little less than half as wide as the circle. Connect the lower sides of the circle to the top corners of the box with two short slanted lines; that's the neck. Last, draw a bigger circle around the globe, leaving a gap about as wide as a finger. The rays will sit on it later.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the box narrow. A wide base makes the bulb look like a jar.

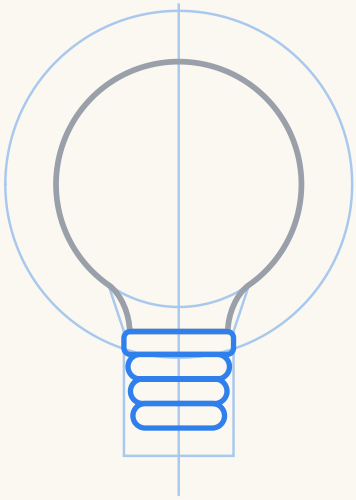
STEP 3 Draw the glass globe and neck



Now trace the real outline. Follow the circle all the way over the top, and when you reach the lower sides, curve inward so the glass pinches into the neck. Close the neck with a flat line on top of the box. I tell beginners to think of a balloon tied at the bottom, because the curve into the neck should feel soft, not like a sharp corner.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the left curve, then the right one, and compare them before you go on.

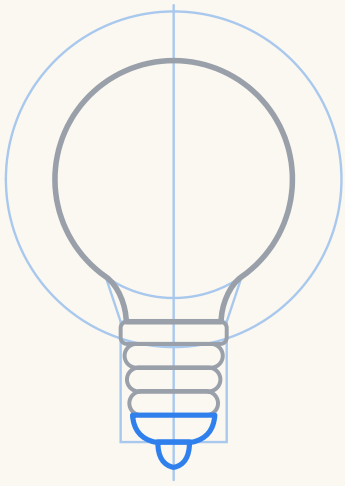
STEP 4 Add the collar and the screw threads



Start the base with a flat rounded strip right under the glass, slightly wider than the neck. That's the collar. Under it, stack three rounded bands, each one a little narrower than the band above. Their round ends make the bumpy edge of a screw thread without any tricky diagonal lines.

💡 **Tip:** Make every band the same height so the base looks machine-made.

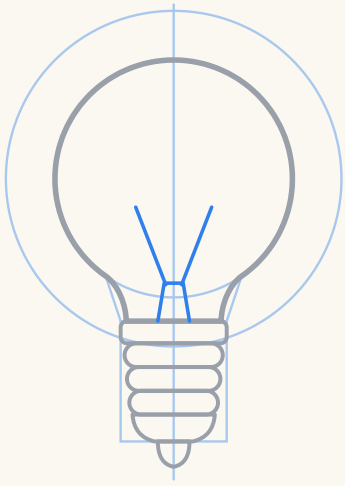
STEP 5 Finish the base with a cap and a tip



Under the last band, draw a short bowl shape that narrows toward the bottom. Then add a small rounded tip in the middle, like a tiny upside-down dome. On a real bulb this is the contact point that touches the socket, so it should be clearly smaller than the cap. If the tip gets too big, the bulb starts to look like a spinning top.

💡 **Tip:** Use the center line to keep the little tip right in the middle.

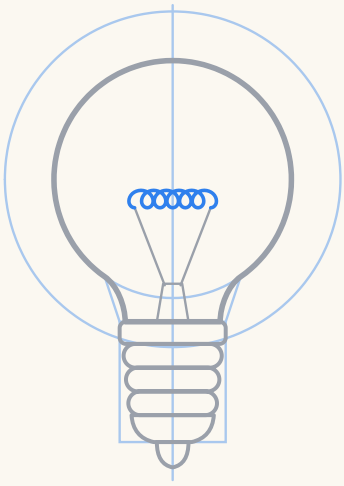
STEP 6 Draw the glass stem and two wires



Inside the neck, draw a small trapezoid sitting on the collar, narrow at the top. This is the glass stem that holds everything up. From its top, draw two thin straight wires spreading out in a V toward the middle of the globe. Stop them a bit below the center of the circle. Keep these lines thin and light.

💡 **Tip:** Stop both wires at the same height so the filament sits level.

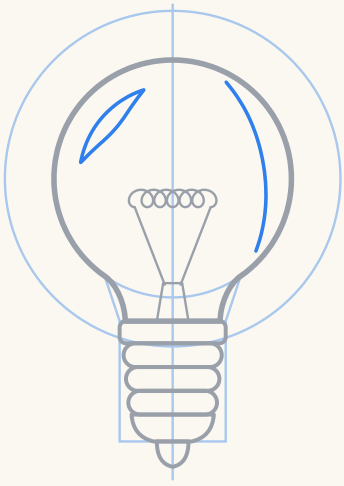
STEP 7 Draw the curly coiled filament



Connect the tops of the two wires with a row of small loops, like a stretched spring or a line of cursive e's. Six loops is plenty. Keep them small and overlapping, all the same size. Honestly, this is the fiddliest part of the whole bulb, so slow down. Younger kids can draw a simple zigzag instead and it still reads as a filament.

💡 **Tip:** Practice the loops on scrap paper first, moving your whole wrist.

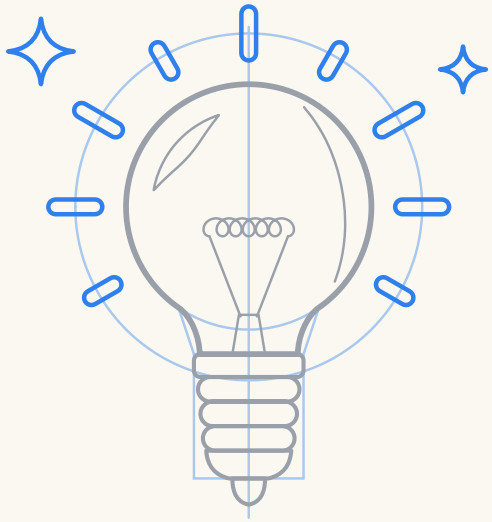
STEP 8 Add the shine and the shading line



On the upper left of the glass, draw a thin curved crescent that follows the edge of the globe. This is where light reflects, and it instantly makes the glass look smooth. On the right side, draw a long curve just inside the outline, from near the top down to where the glass turns into the neck. The strip between that curve and the edge becomes the shaded side.

💡 **Tip:** Put the shine and the shading on opposite sides so the light makes sense.

STEP 9 Draw the glow rays and two sparkles



Using the outer ring as your guide, draw short rounded strips that point away from the bulb: one straight up, two at the sides, and a few in between. I make the top and side rays a bit longer than the diagonal ones, which gives the glow a gentle rhythm. Then add two four-pointed sparkles in the top corners, a bigger one on the left and a smaller one on the right.

💡 **Tip:** Point every ray at the center of the globe, never at the base.

STEP 10 Ink the keeper lines and erase the guides



Go over the glass, the base, the stem, the wires, the filament, the shine, the shading line, the rays and the sparkles with your black pen. Leave the circles, the center line, the box and the neck lines in pencil. Wait for the ink to dry completely, then erase all the guides.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the thin wires with a lighter hand than the glass outline.

STEP 11 Color the glowing bulb



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Fill the glass with pale yellow and the shaded strip on the right with a stronger yellow. Around the filament, color a soft oval of light orange, then a smaller, deeper orange oval inside it, so the glow looks hottest in the middle. Leave the shine white. Color the threads light gray, the collar and cap a darker gray, and the tip black. Finish the rays and sparkles in golden yellow.

💡 **Tip:** Color the orange glow before the yellow glass so the edges blend.