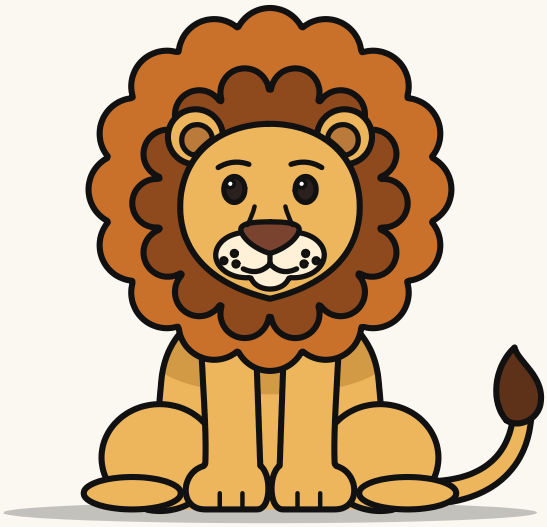
How to Draw a Lion

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

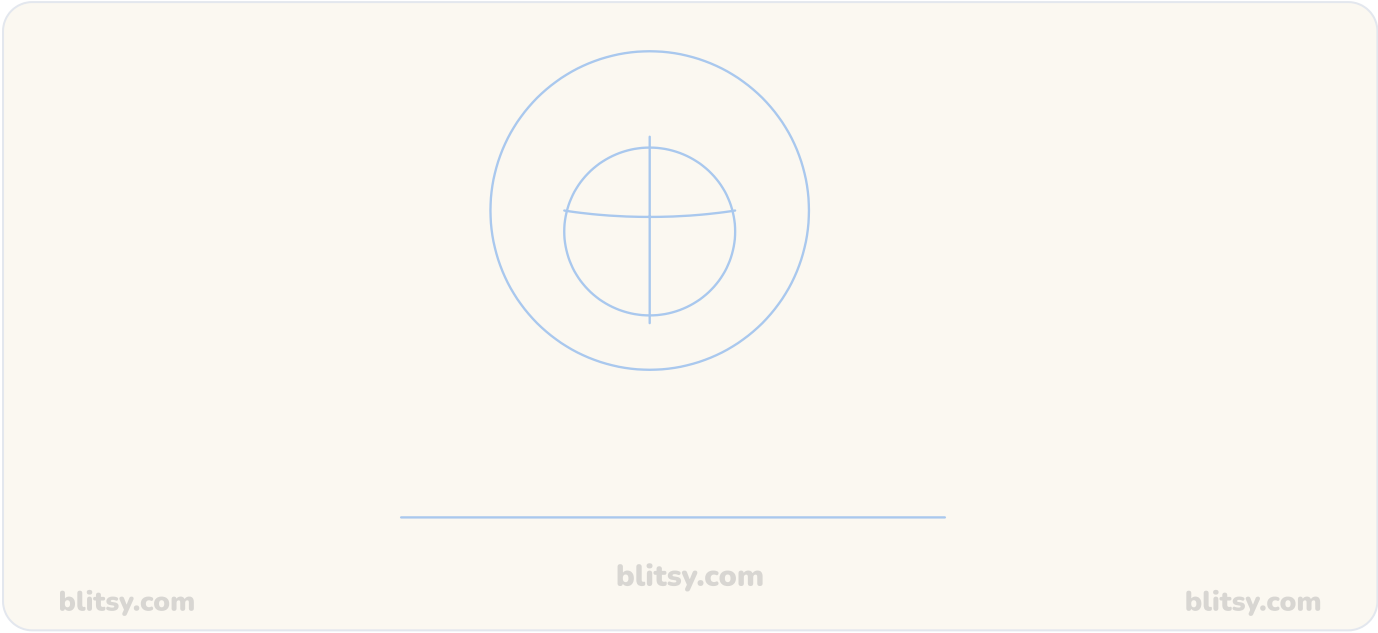
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper

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 →

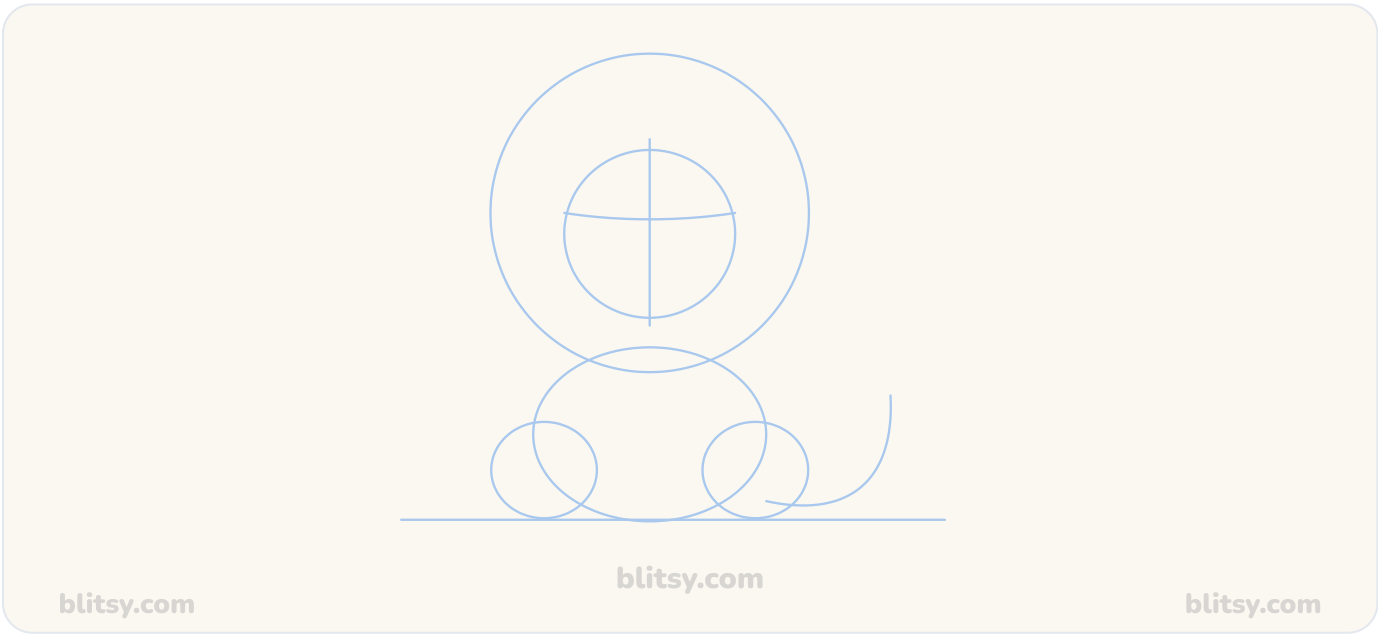
STEP 1 Draw the mane circle and the face circle



Start with a light ground line low on the page. Above it draw a big circle for the whole mane. Inside it, slightly below the middle, draw a smaller circle for the face, about half as wide. Add a line down the face and a gentle curve across, just above halfway, where the eyes will sit.

💡 **Tip:** Press so lightly that you can barely see the line. You'll erase all of it.

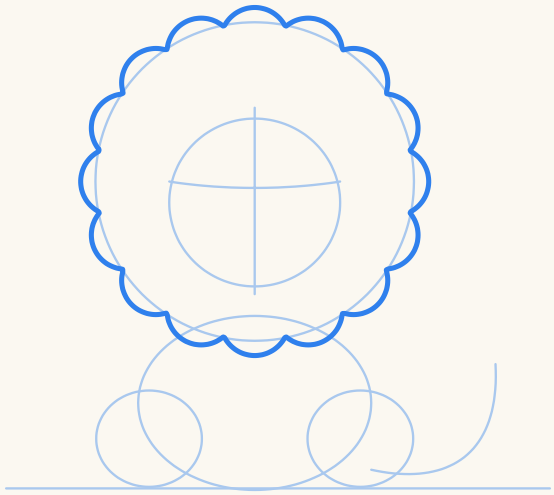
STEP 2 Add body and hip guides plus a tail line



Under the mane, sketch a wide oval for the chest and body that rests on the ground line. Its top should tuck up into the bottom of the mane circle. Put a smaller circle on each side at the bottom for the back legs, then one long curved line from the right hip that sweeps out along the ground and up. That curve is the tail.

💡 **Tip:** If the body oval looks wider than the mane, shrink it. The mane should stay the biggest shape.

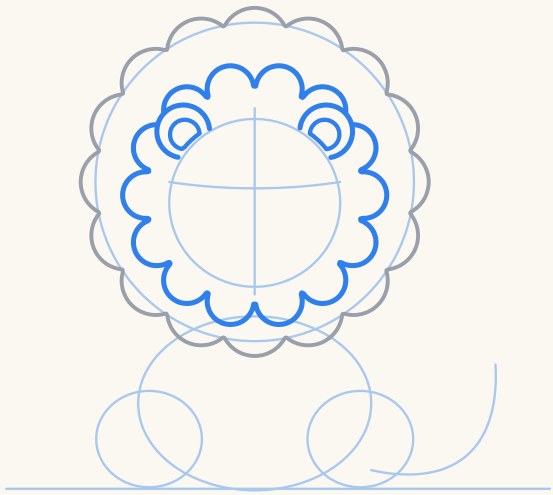
STEP 3 Draw a scalloped outer mane



Go around the big circle with a row of rounded bumps, like the edge of a cloud. I aim for about sixteen, all roughly the same size, each sitting half outside the guide so the mane gets a little fuller. Put one bump right at the top and one at the bottom, and the rest falls into place.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you go round. Bumps are easier to draw when your hand moves the same way every time.

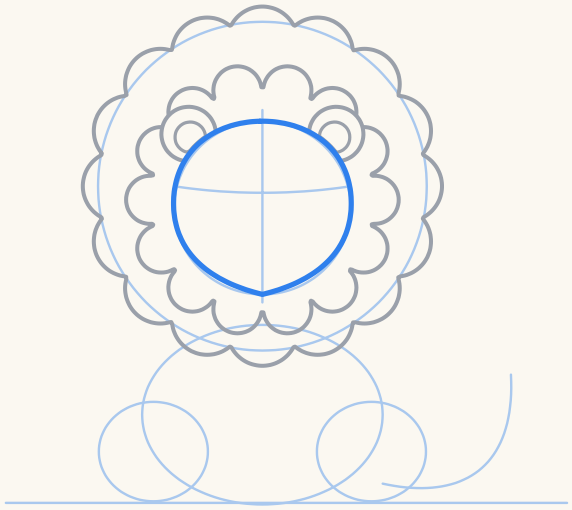
STEP 4 Add the inner mane and two round ears



Draw a second, smaller ring of bumps inside the first, leaving a gap between them. This inner layer gives the mane depth, since it gets a darker color later. Near the top of the face circle, add two small round ears with a smaller circle inside each. Their bottoms tuck behind the face, so stop where the face will be.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the ears small. Big ears make a lion look like a bear or a mouse.

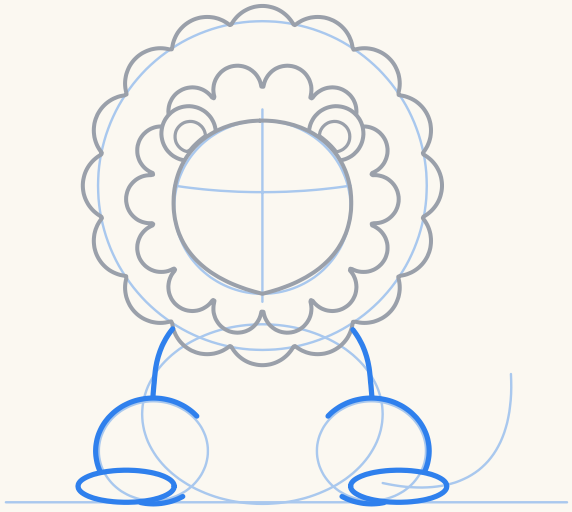
STEP 5 Outline the round face



Trace over the face circle with a firm line, letting the bottom come to a very soft point where the chin is. Any mane or ear lines inside the face can go later. I usually wait, because those leftovers help me check that the face sits in the center of the mane.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the face wide at the cheeks. A narrow face loses the big cat look.

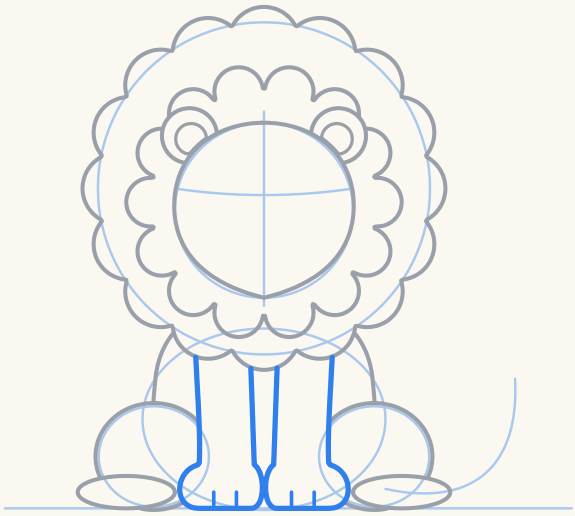
STEP 6 Draw the chest and back haunches



From under the mane on each side, bring a short line down for the shoulders. Over the hip circles, draw rounder, firmer outlines, and in front of each one add a flat oval lying on the ground for a back foot. Leave a gap in the middle of the chest. The front legs fill it in the next step, so there's no need to draw anything there yet.

💡 **Tip:** Rest the back feet flat on the ground line so the lion looks heavy and settled.

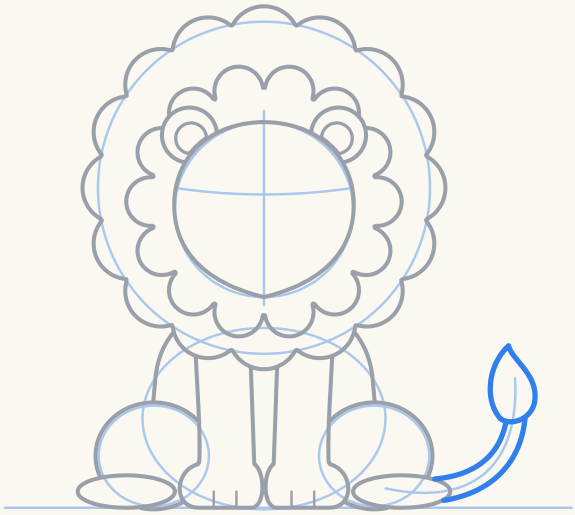
STEP 7 Add the front legs and big paws



Each front leg is a tall column coming straight down from the mane to the ground, close to its neighbour. Near the bottom, swell the outside of each leg into a wide, rounded paw, clearly wider than the leg. Two short lines on each paw split the toes.

💡 **Tip:** Draw both outer edges first, then the inner ones. It keeps the two legs the same width.

STEP 8 Draw a tail with a fluffy tuft



Follow the tail guide with two lines a finger width apart, starting from behind the right hip. They curve out along the ground and then lift upward. At the end, draw a teardrop shape with a pointed tip for the tuft. Don't draw the part of the tail that the hip and foot would hide.

💡 **Tip:** Let the tail get just a touch thinner toward the tuft, which makes it look softer.

STEP 9 Draw the muzzle and a broad nose



The muzzle is two puffy cheek bumps side by side with a small chin bump under them, low in the face. On top of them, where they meet, draw a broad nose shaped like a rounded upside-down triangle. Two short lines rise from the nose toward the eyes for the bridge. Under the nose, a small line drops down and splits into two curves, one into each cheek.

💡 **Tip:** Make the nose wider than you think. A broad nose is one of the things that says lion.

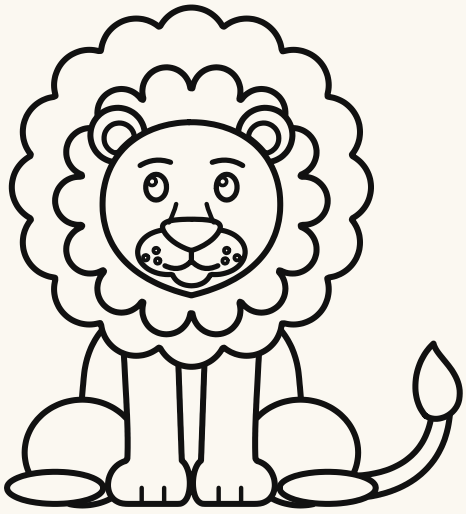
STEP 10 Add kind eyes with brows and whisker dots



Place two oval eyes on the curved cross line, one on each side of the center, a nose width or more apart. Add a small shine circle in the top left of each. Above them, draw short brows that curve up softly, which keeps the face calm and friendly rather than fierce. Then add three little dots on each cheek where the whiskers grow.

💡 **Tip:** Check that both shine circles are in the same corner before you ink them.

STEP 11 Ink the lion and erase the guides

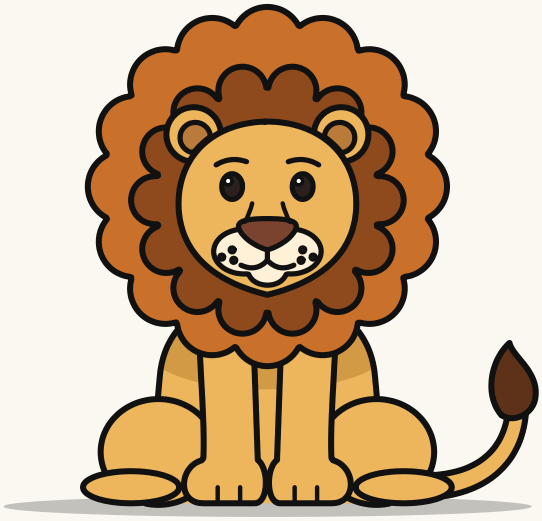


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Go over every keeper line with the black marker. I start with the face while my hand is fresh, then the mane rings, and the body last. Skip the light circles and cross lines. Once the ink is dry, erase the pencil until only the clean outline is left.

💡 **Tip:** Lift the marker between mane bumps instead of dragging it. The scallops stay crisper.

STEP 12 Color your lion



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Golden yellow covers the face, ears, body and legs, plus the tail. Color the outer mane orange brown and the inner mane a deeper brown. The muzzle is cream, the nose reddish brown, the tuft dark brown. Fill the eyes and whisker dots black but leave the shine white. A darker yellow under the mane on the chest and a gray ground shadow finish it.

💡 **Tip:** Color the mane with short strokes that point outward, the way the fur grows.