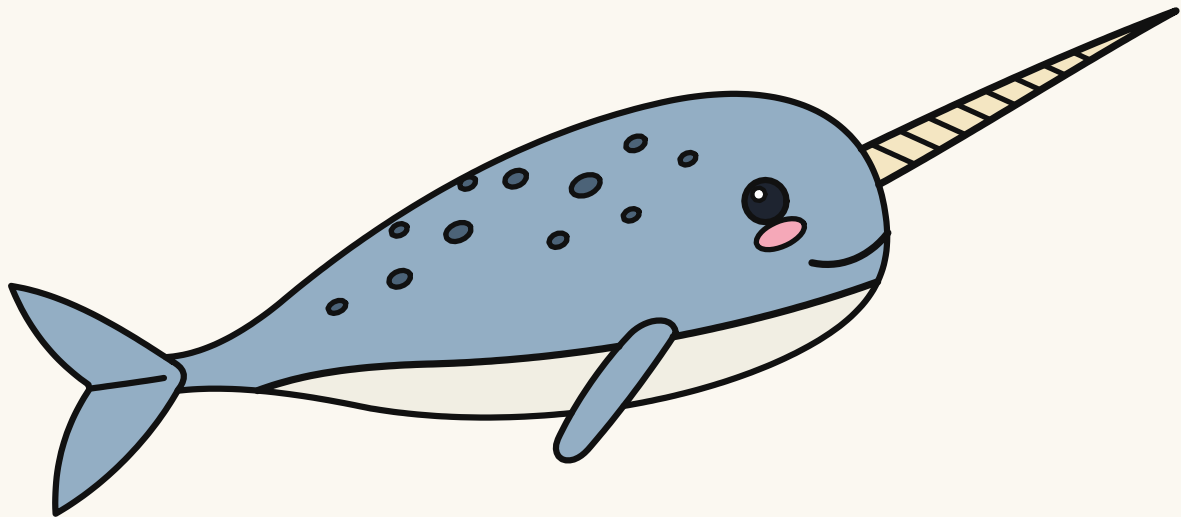


How to Draw a Narwhal

11 easy steps for beginners



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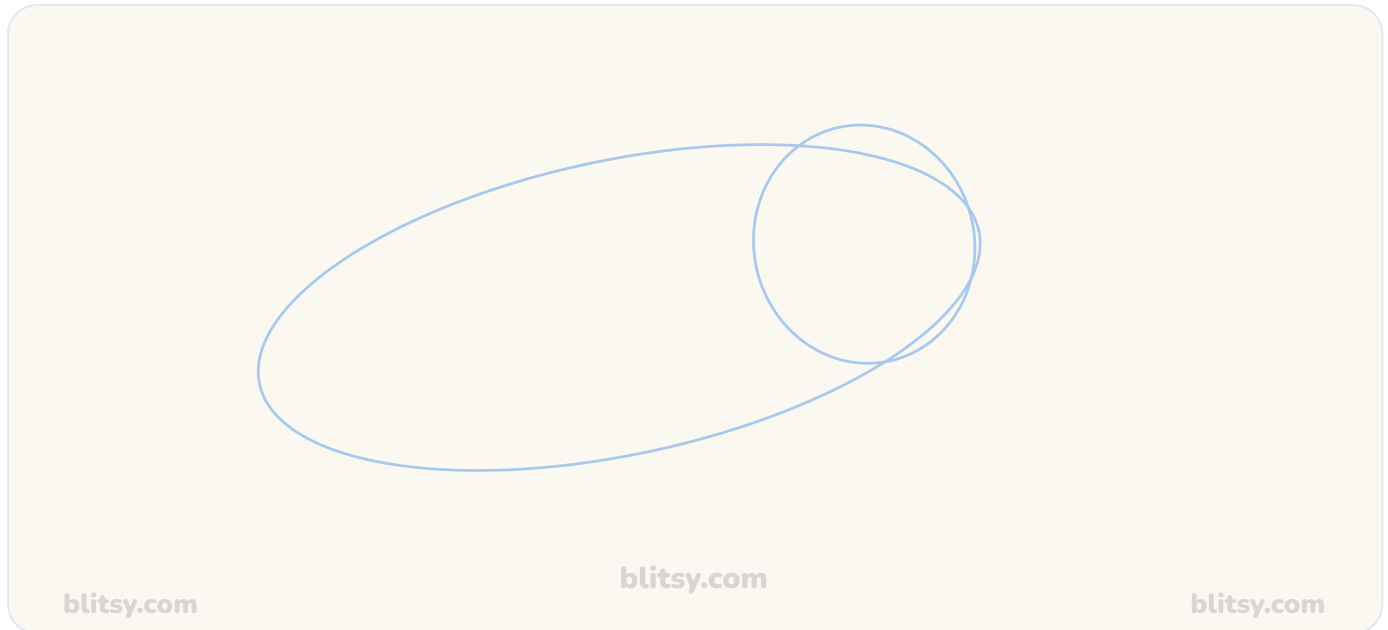
What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- A ruler (optional)
- 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 tilted oval and a head circle

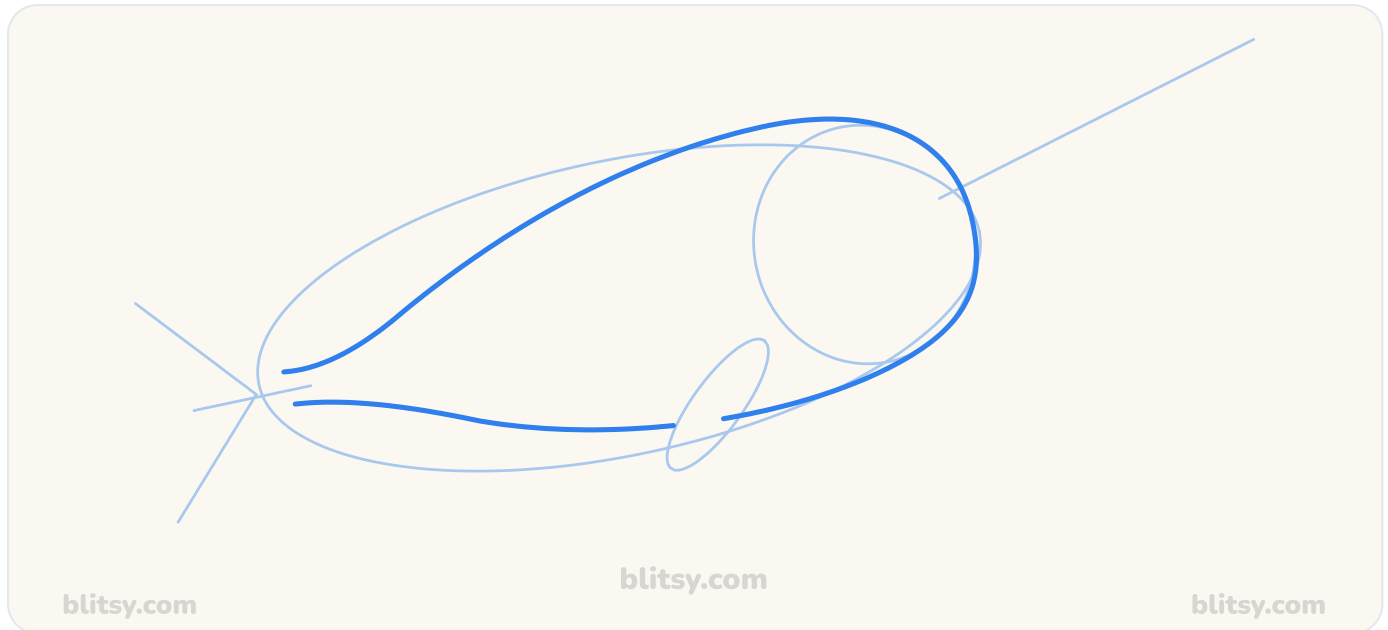
Draw a long oval across the middle of the page, tilted so its right end sits higher than its left. Make it a bit more than twice as wide as it is tall. Then draw a circle over the right end of the oval for the head. The circle should poke slightly above the oval, because a narwhal's forehead is rounded and bulgy.

 **Tip:** Keep your pencil pressure light enough that the lines almost vanish when you squint.

STEP 2 Add guides for the tusk, tail and flipper

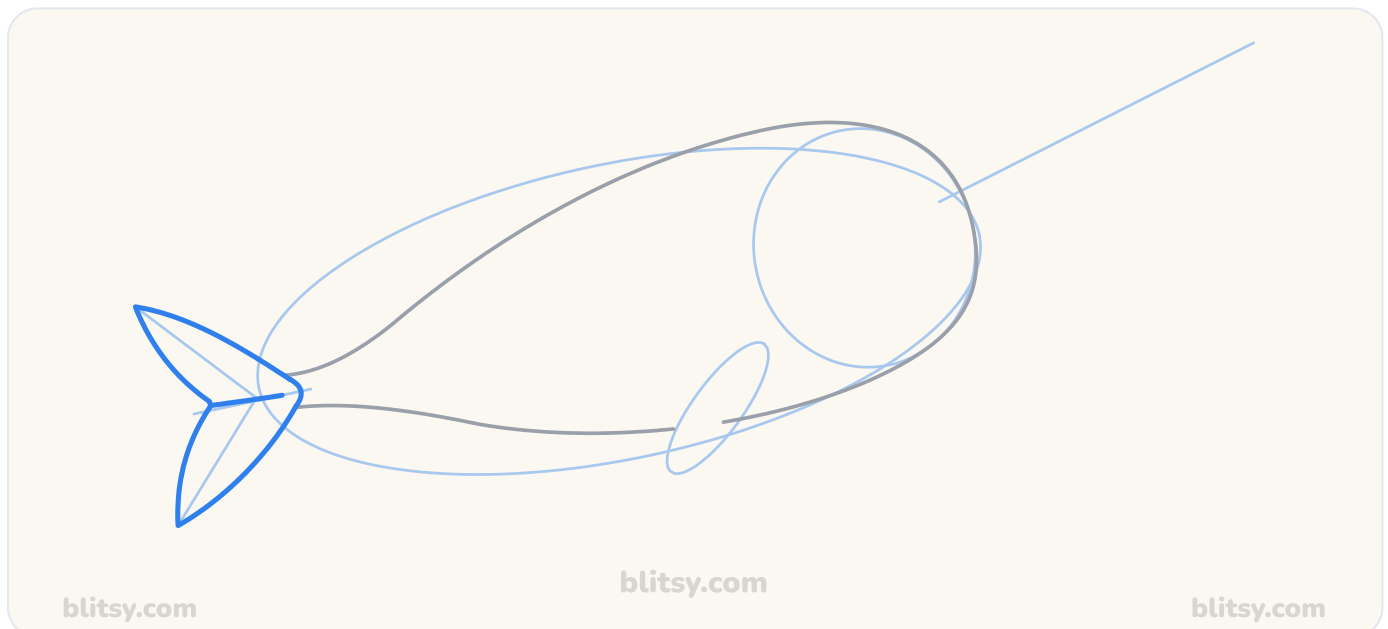
From the front of the head circle, pull one long straight line up and to the right. It's longer than you'd guess, roughly two thirds the length of the body. At the far left of the oval, draw a short line out for the tail, then a wide V opening to the left. Finally, add a thin slanted oval under the body, a little behind the head, for the flipper.

 **Tip:** A ruler helps on the tusk line. Every other guide looks better drawn freehand.

STEP 3 Draw the narwhal body outline

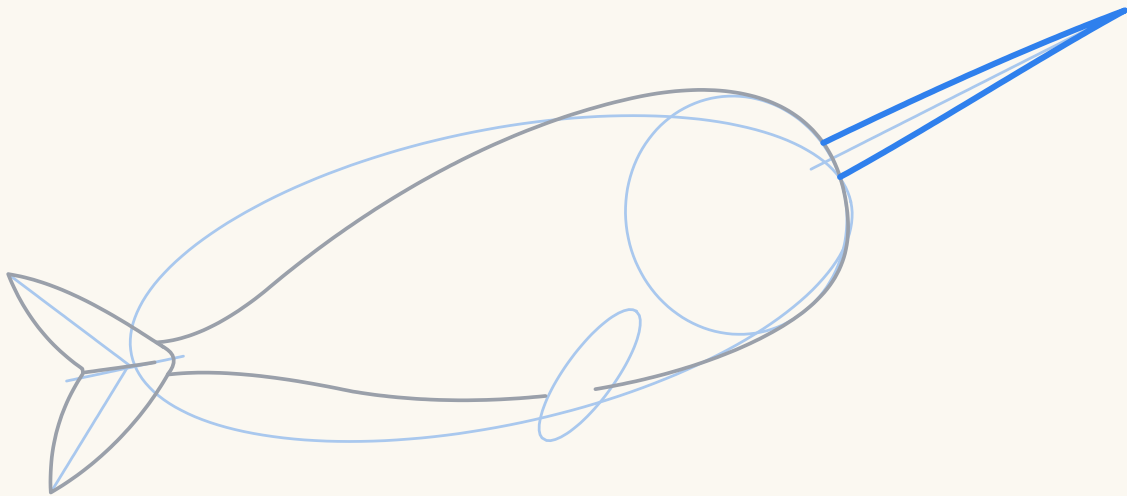
Start at the front of the head and follow the circle over the top, then let the line slide down the back toward the tail. The back curves gently, and the body gets narrow fast near the end. For the bottom, curve from the chin along the oval and rise toward the tail. Leave a small gap where the flipper will sit, and stop both lines before the tail tip.

 **Tip:** I round off the front of the head like a blunt thumb. Narwhals have no beak or snout.

STEP 4 Shape the two tail flukes

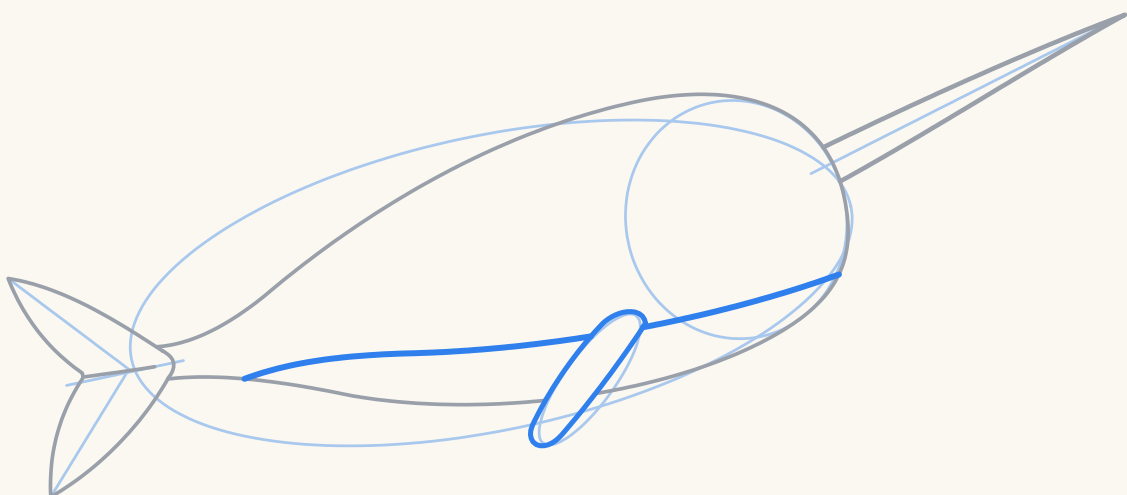
Use the arms of your V as the center of each fluke. I draw the top fluke first, from the tail stalk out to a point, then curve back in to the notch. Repeat it below so the two lobes look like a mirror image. Add a short line from the notch to the stalk to show where they split.

 **Tip:** Curve the outside edge of each fluke more than the inside edge so they look like they're pushing water.

STEP 5 Draw the long tusk

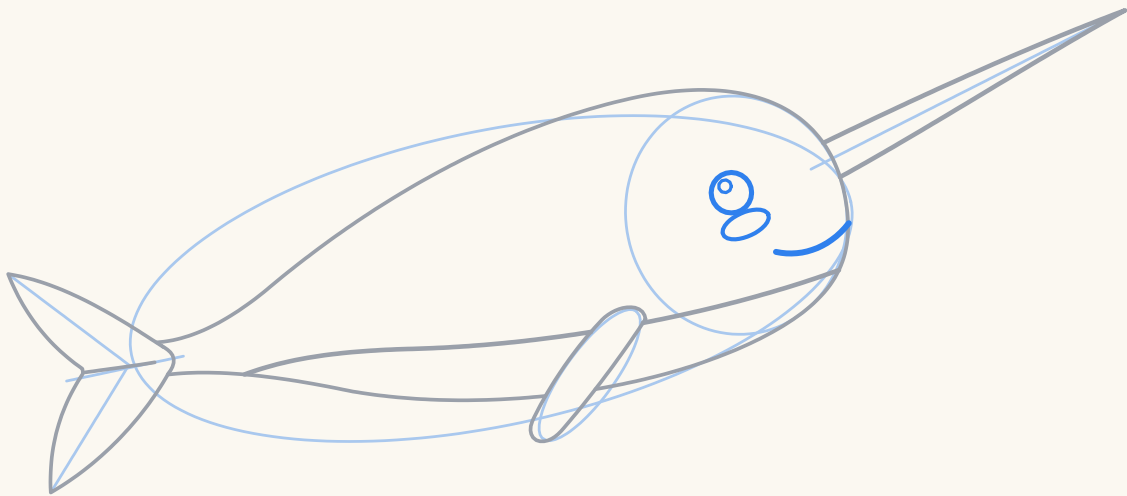
This is the part everyone recognizes, so take your time. The tusk is a very long, thin cone. Draw two lines along your guide that start a finger's width apart where they leave the head and meet in a sharp point at the end. The tusk comes out of the upper part of the face, above where the mouth will go.

 **Tip:** Stop the tusk lines where they touch the head outline so the head looks like it's in front.

STEP 6 Add the flipper and the belly line

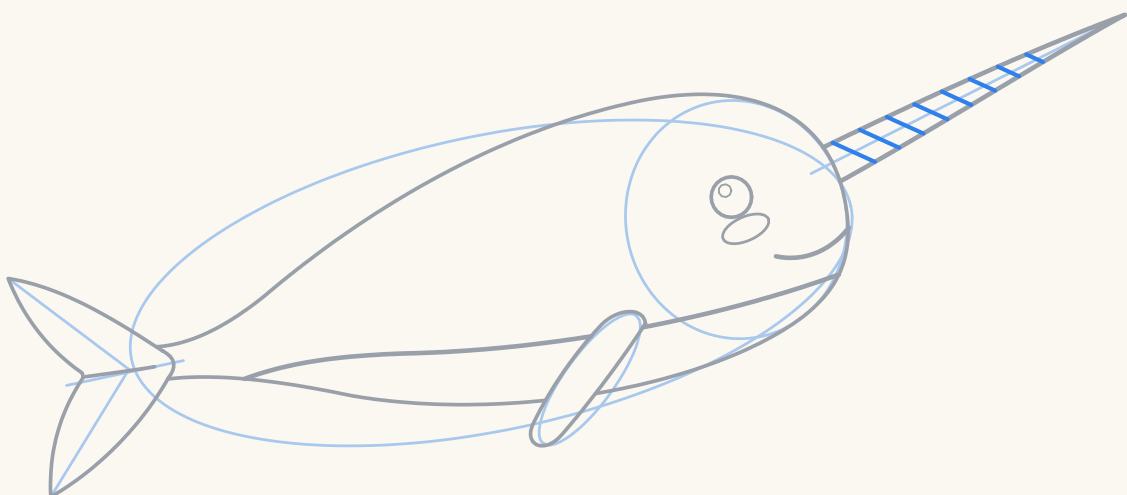
Turn the flipper guide into a narrow paddle with a rounded tip that points back and down. Then draw one smooth line from the lower front of the face back toward the tail. Everything under it becomes the pale belly. When the belly line reaches the flipper, stop. Pick it up again on the other side.

 **Tip:** I keep the flipper small, because a narwhal's flippers are short compared with its body.

STEP 7 Draw the eye, smile and cheek

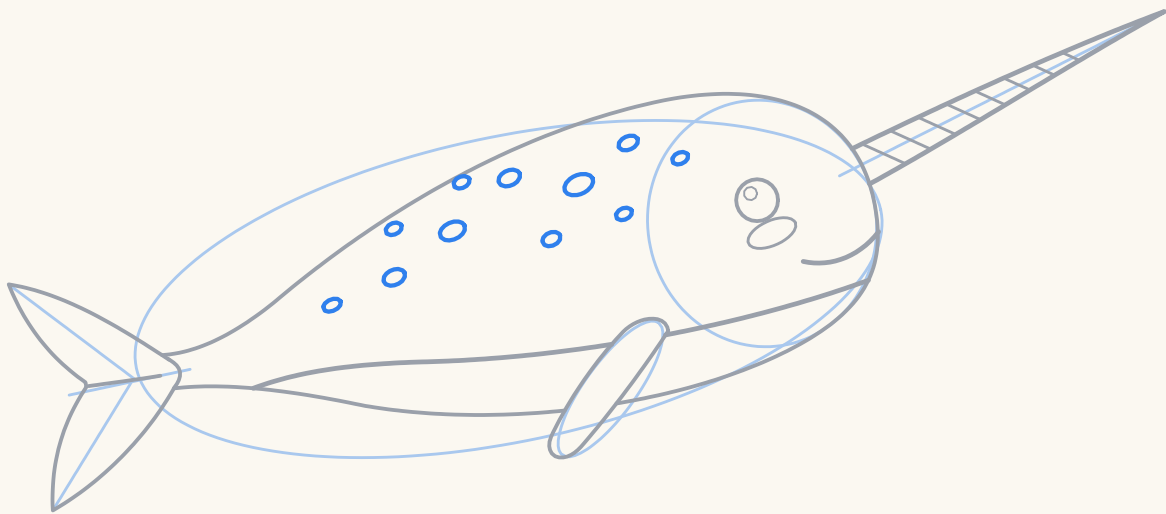
Place a small circle for the eye inside the head circle, about halfway between the top of the head and the belly line, and a little back from the front. Add a tiny circle in its upper corner for the shine. Under the eye, draw a short oval cheek. Then curve a small smile from the front of the face back toward the cheek.

 **Tip:** Set the eye well behind the tusk base. If it touches the tusk, the face gets crowded.

STEP 8 Add spiral lines to the tusk

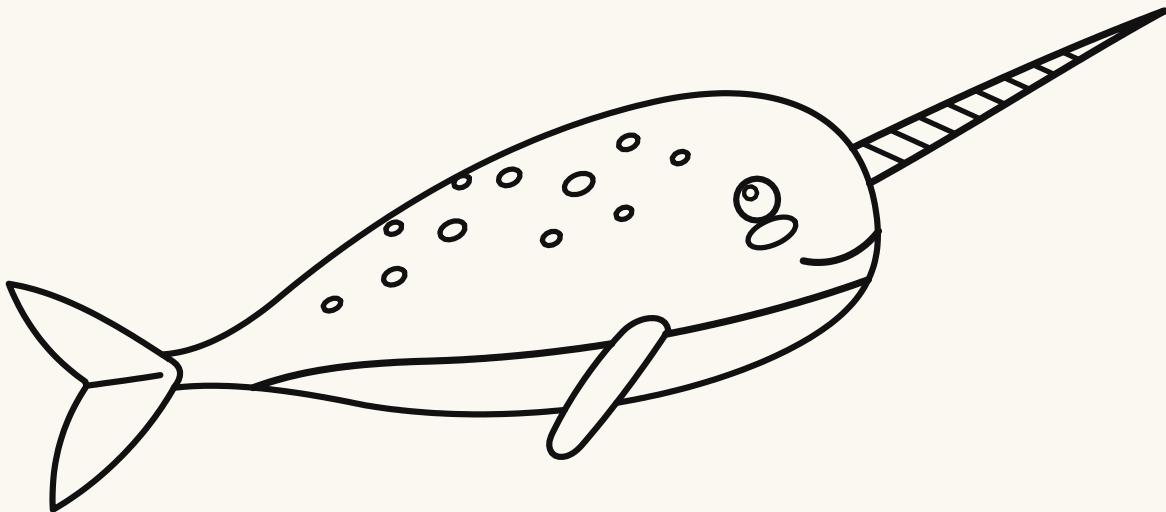
A real narwhal tusk twists along its length, and a few slanted lines are enough to show it. Draw short diagonal strokes across the tusk, all leaning the same direction and evenly spaced. Make them closer together as the tusk gets thinner. I usually stop a little before the tip, because tiny lines there just look like scribbles.

 **Tip:** Count your stripes as you go. Seven or eight is plenty for a tusk this size.

STEP 9 Draw the speckles on the back

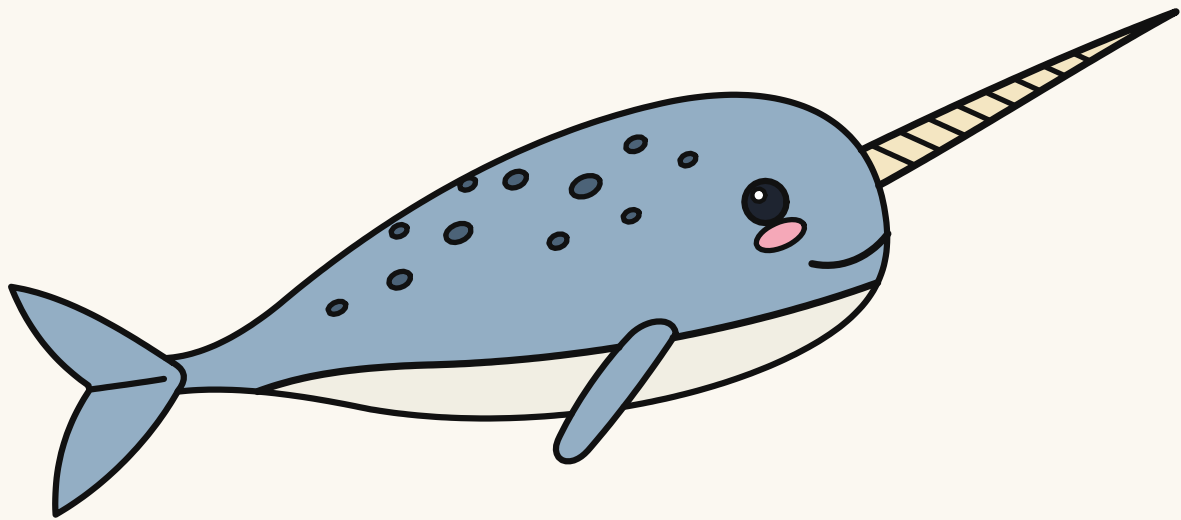
Narwhals are covered in dark mottled spots, mostly on top. Scatter small ovals across the back, above the belly line and behind the eye. I vary the sizes, mixing a few medium ovals with several tiny ones. Don't line them up in rows, since random spacing looks natural.

 **Tip:** Turn your paper upside down for a moment to spot any gaps or clusters in your speckles.

STEP 10 Ink the lines and erase the guides

Go over every keeper line with your black pen: the outline, flukes, tusk, flipper, the belly line, the face and the speckles. Leave out the oval, the circle, the V and the tusk guide. Once the ink is fully dry, erase everything in pencil. Most beginners rush this and smudge the pen, so give it a minute.

 **Tip:** Ink the speckles with a lighter touch than the outline so they don't compete with the shape.

STEP 11 Color your narwhal

Fill the body, the flukes and the flipper with a soft blue-gray. Color the speckles a darker slate so they stand out. The belly gets cream, and the tusk a pale, warm yellow like old ivory. Finish with a pink cheek and a black eye, leaving the shine white.

 **Tip:** I color the speckles first, then the body around them. It's easier than coloring dark over light.