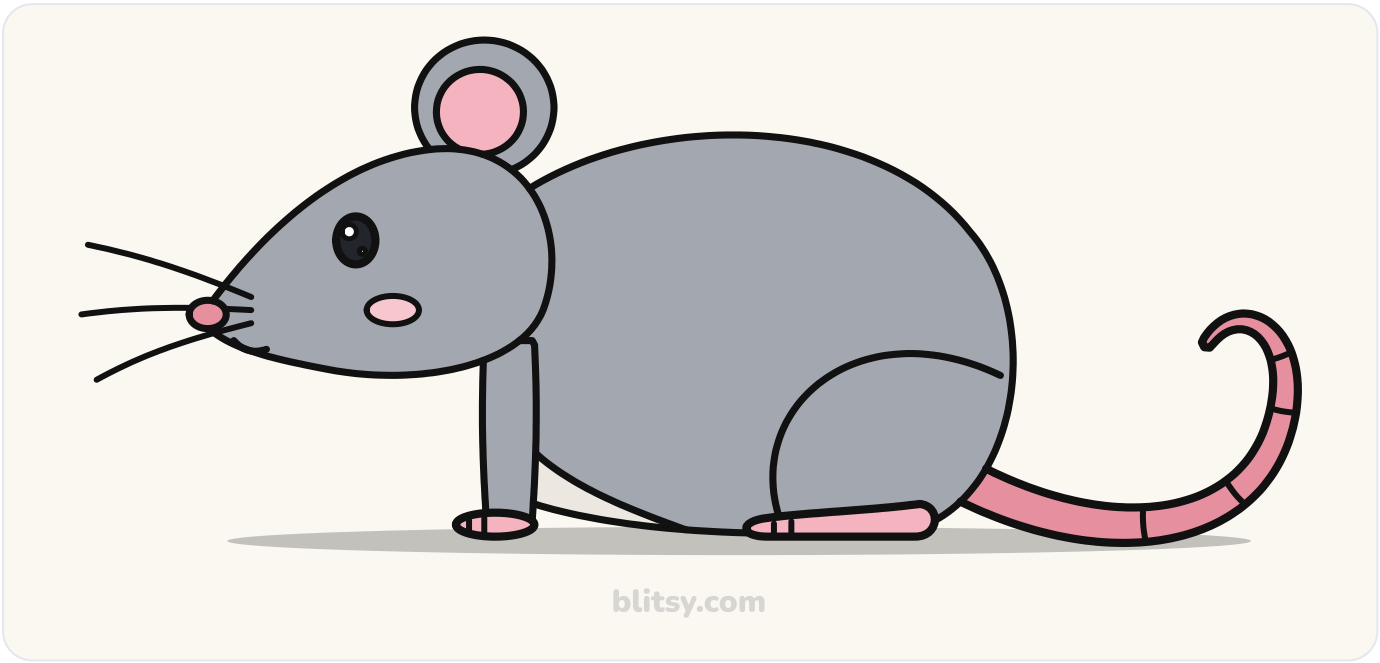
How to Draw a Rat

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

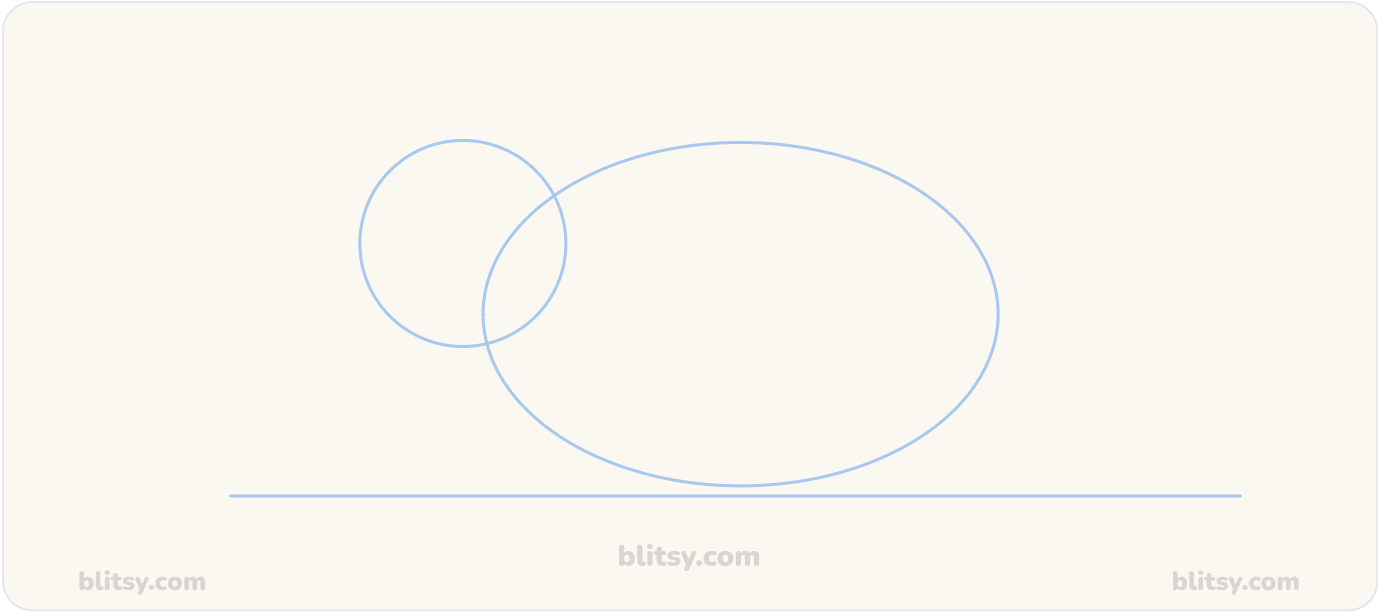
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- Plain paper

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 →

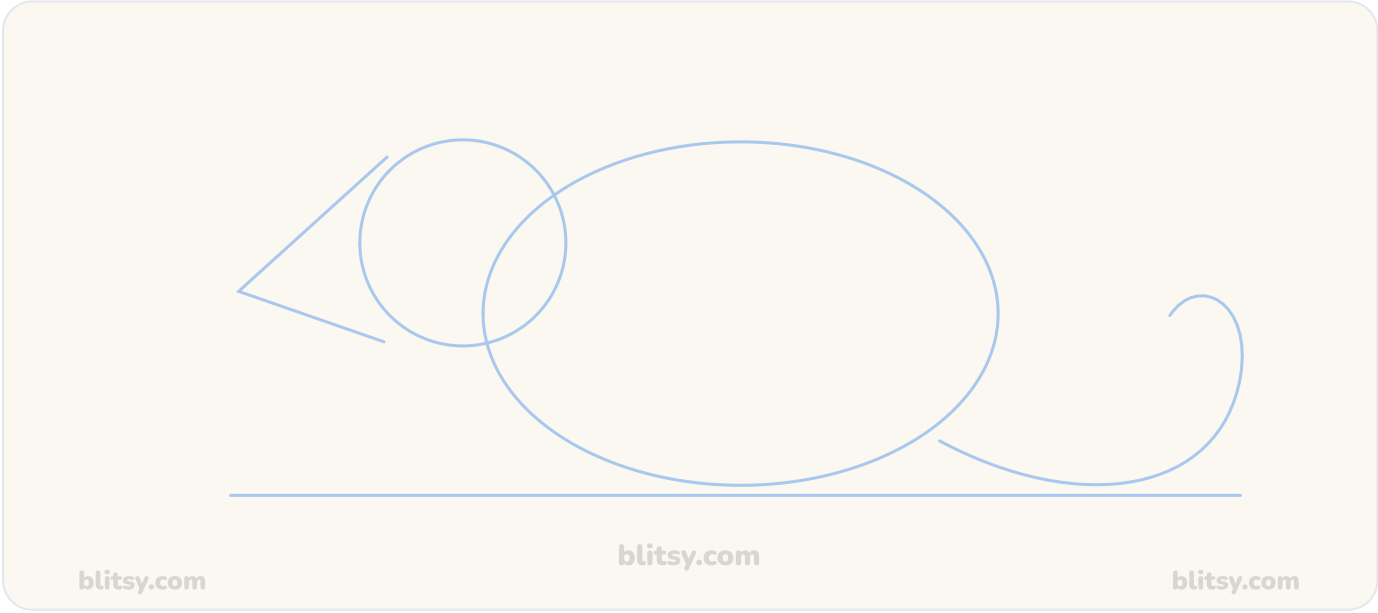
STEP 1 Sketch a body oval and a head circle



Draw a light ground line near the bottom of the page. Sitting just above it, sketch a wide oval for the body, about one and a half times as wide as it is tall. Then add a head circle on the upper left, overlapping the oval a little. I keep the circle roughly half as tall as the oval; any bigger and you'll end up with a mouse.

💡 **Tip:** Sketch with loose, quick passes. Two or three faint ovals stacked together are fine at this stage.

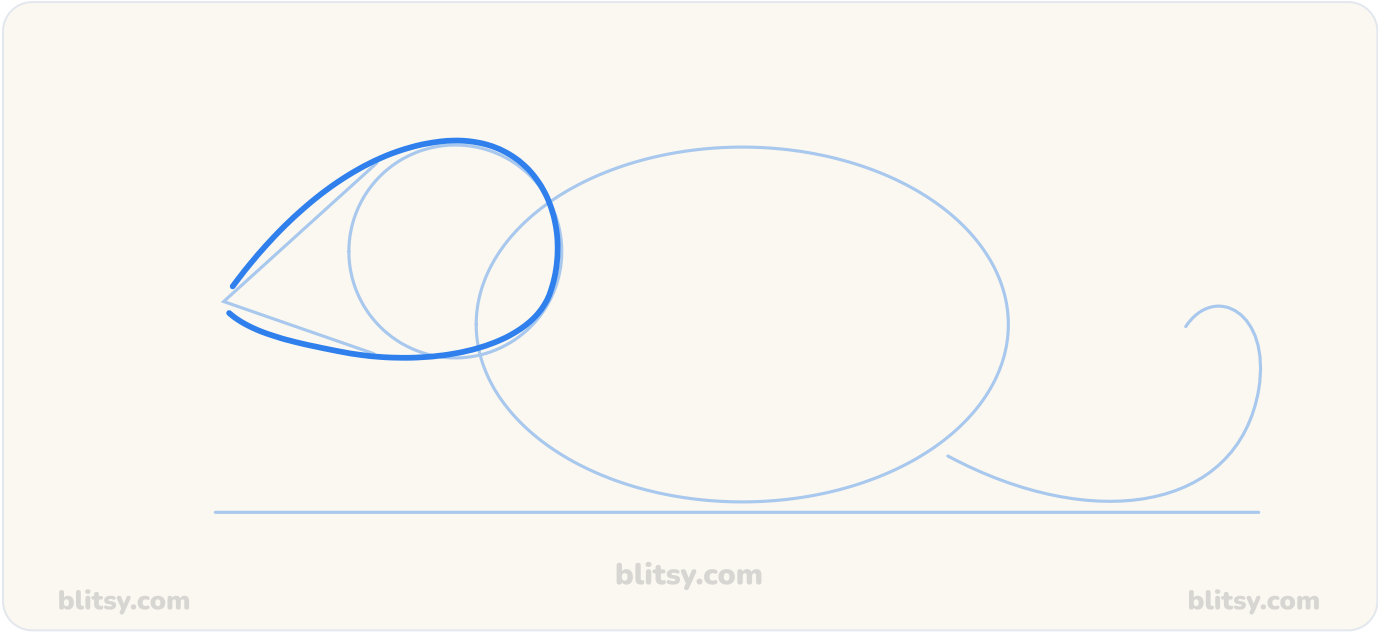
STEP 2 Add guide lines for the snout and tail



From the top and bottom of the head circle, draw two straight lines that meet at a point out to the left. This triangle sets the snout length. On the right, start a curved line at the back of the body, let it dip along the ground, then swing it up and curl the end over. The tail is about as long as the body, so give it room.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the snout point level with the lower half of the head circle, not the middle.

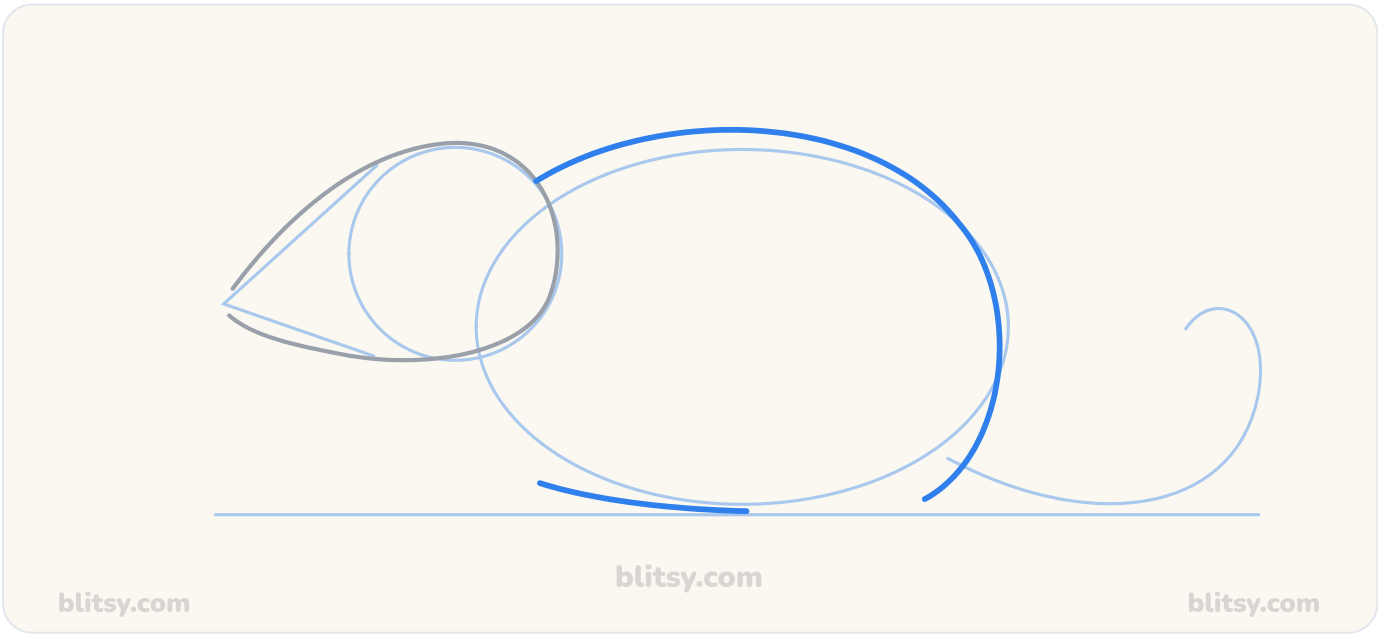
STEP 3 Draw the pointed head



Now outline the real head. Start at the snout point, curve up and over the top of the circle, round the back of the head, then come along underneath and taper into the snout again. I picture a teardrop lying on its side. The top line is fuller than the bottom one, because a rat's forehead slopes while the chin stays fairly flat.

💡 **Tip:** Stop just short of the very tip. A tiny gap there gets covered by the nose later.

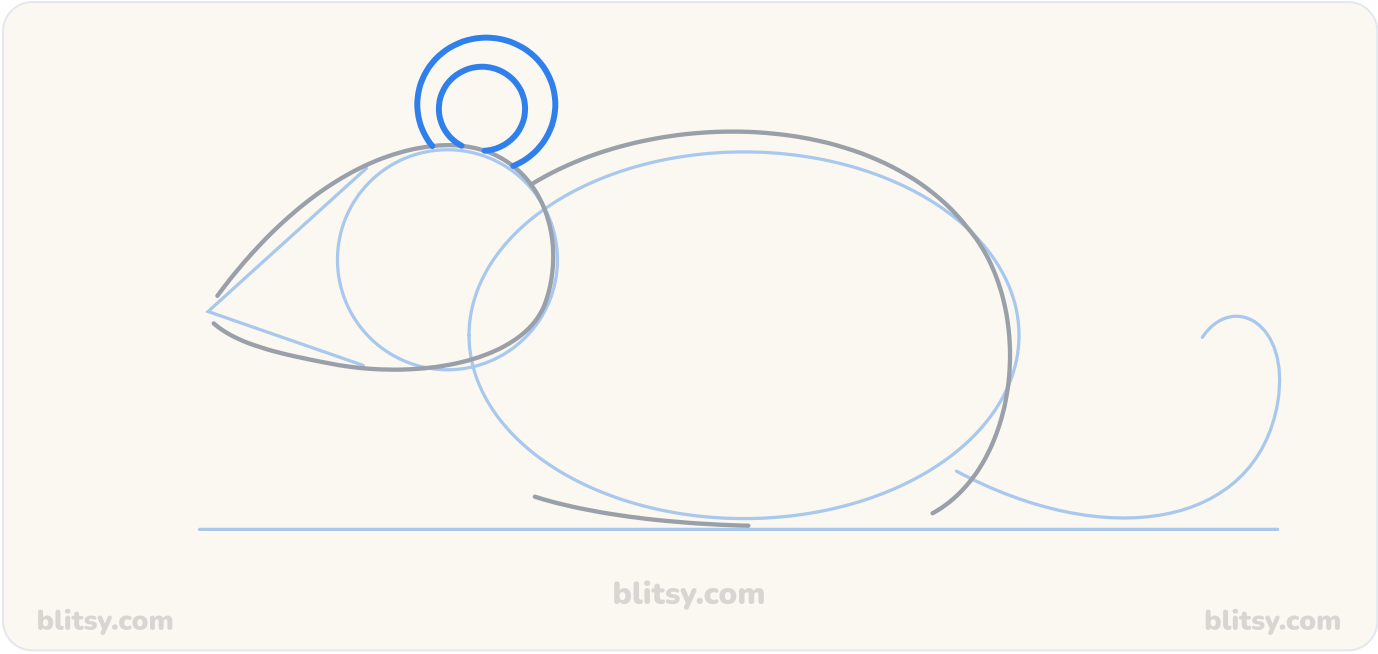
STEP 4 Shape the round back and belly



Begin the back where it meets the head and curve it up into a high, rounded hump, higher than the head. Bring it down over the rump and along the bottom, close to the ground line. I leave the chest open under the head, since the front leg fills that gap later. That high back is what makes the animal read as a rat instead of a sausage.

💡 **Tip:** Push the highest point of the back toward the rear half. Rats carry their weight behind.

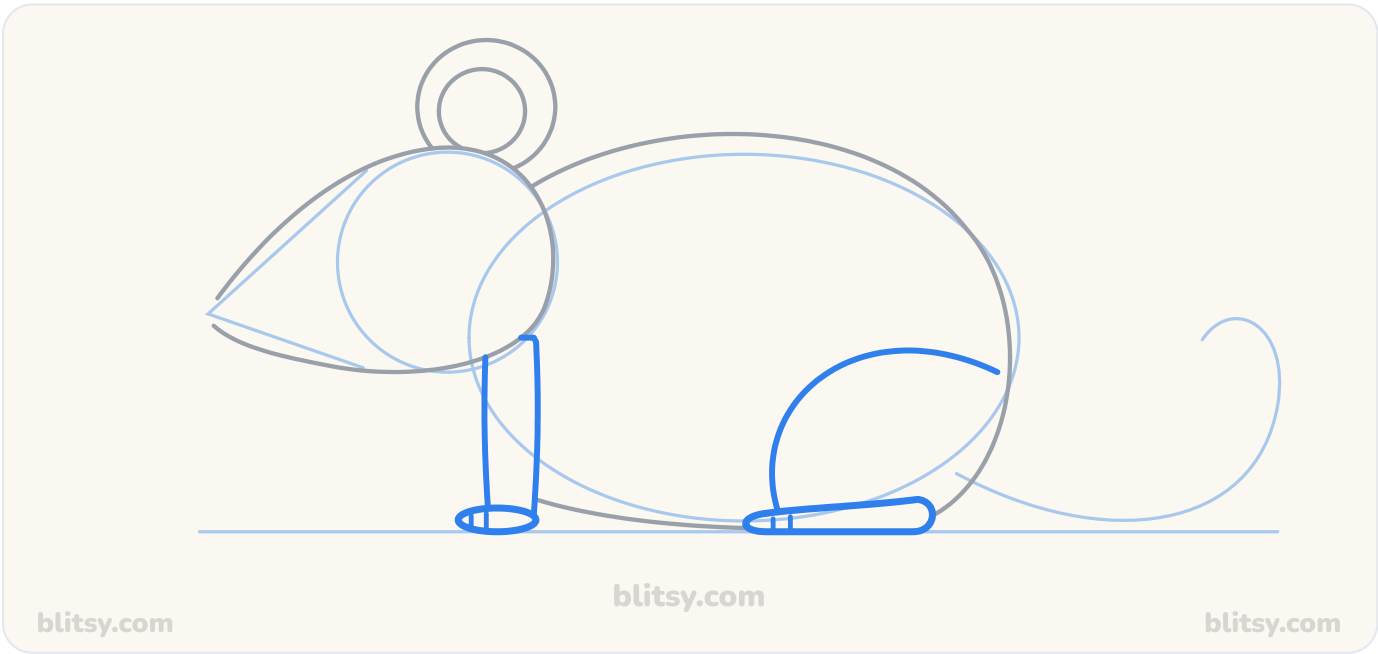
STEP 5 Add the big round ear



Rats have large, thin ears. On the top of the head, toward the back, draw a circle that sits mostly above the head line. Its bottom part disappears behind the head, so only draw the part you can see. Inside it, add a smaller circle for the pink part, leaving an even rim of gray between the two.

💡 **Tip:** Use a coin or bottle cap as a circle stencil if your round shapes come out lumpy.

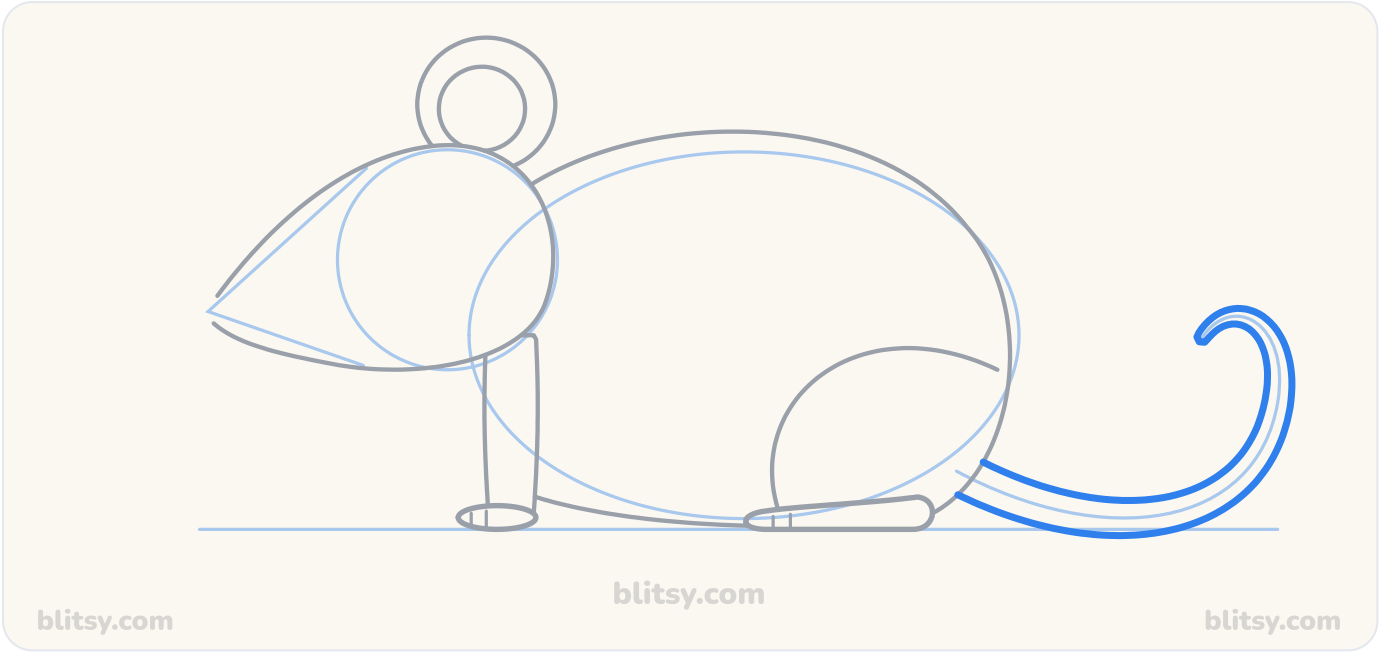
STEP 6 Draw the legs and long feet



Under the head, drop a narrow front leg straight down and finish it with a flat oval paw. At the back, draw a big curve for the haunch, like an upside-down U that fades into the back. Below it, draw a long, thin hind foot pointing forward, plus two tiny toe lines on each foot. Rat hind feet are surprisingly long, and showing that helps a lot.

💡 **Tip:** Rest the front paw and the back foot on the same ground line so the rat doesn't tilt.

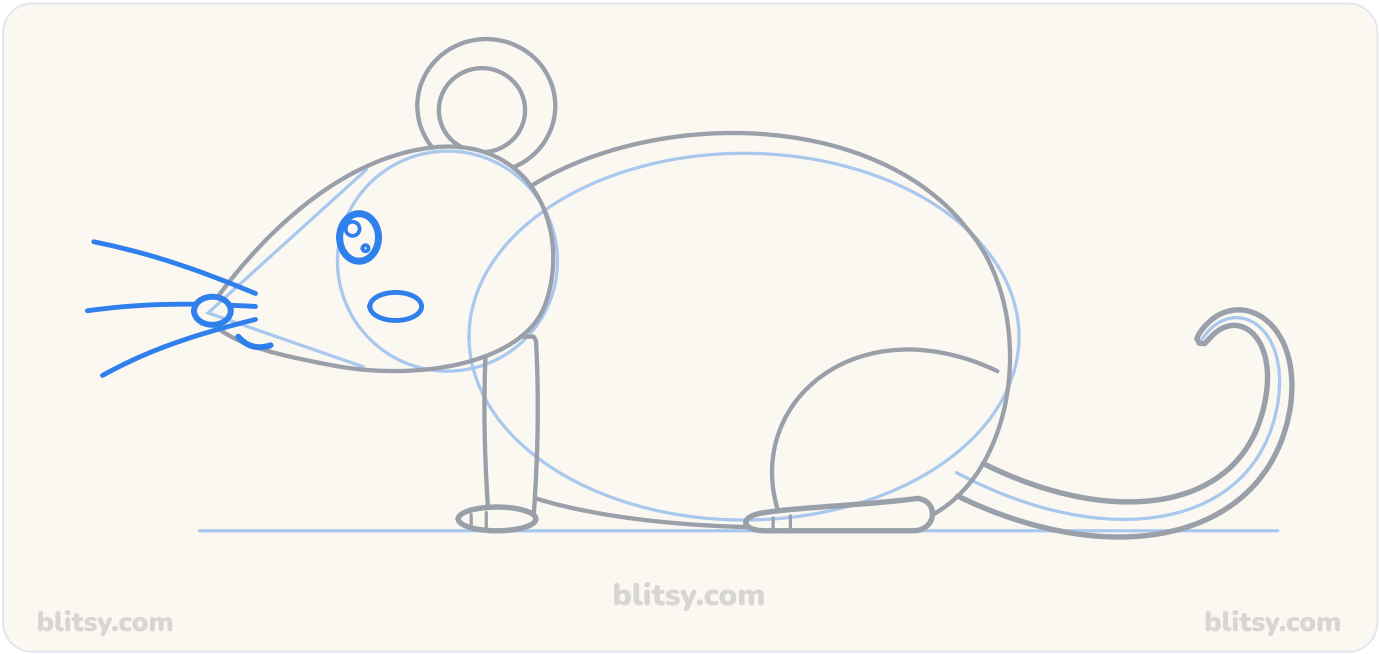
STEP 7 Outline the long, curvy tail



Follow your tail guide. Draw the bottom edge first, starting behind the body, then the top edge just above it. Keep the lines wide apart near the body and bring them closer as they travel, so the tail thins out. Close the curl with a small round tip. Don't draw the tail inside the body outline; it starts behind the rump.

💡 **Tip:** Slow down at the curl. That's where a tail usually goes lumpy.

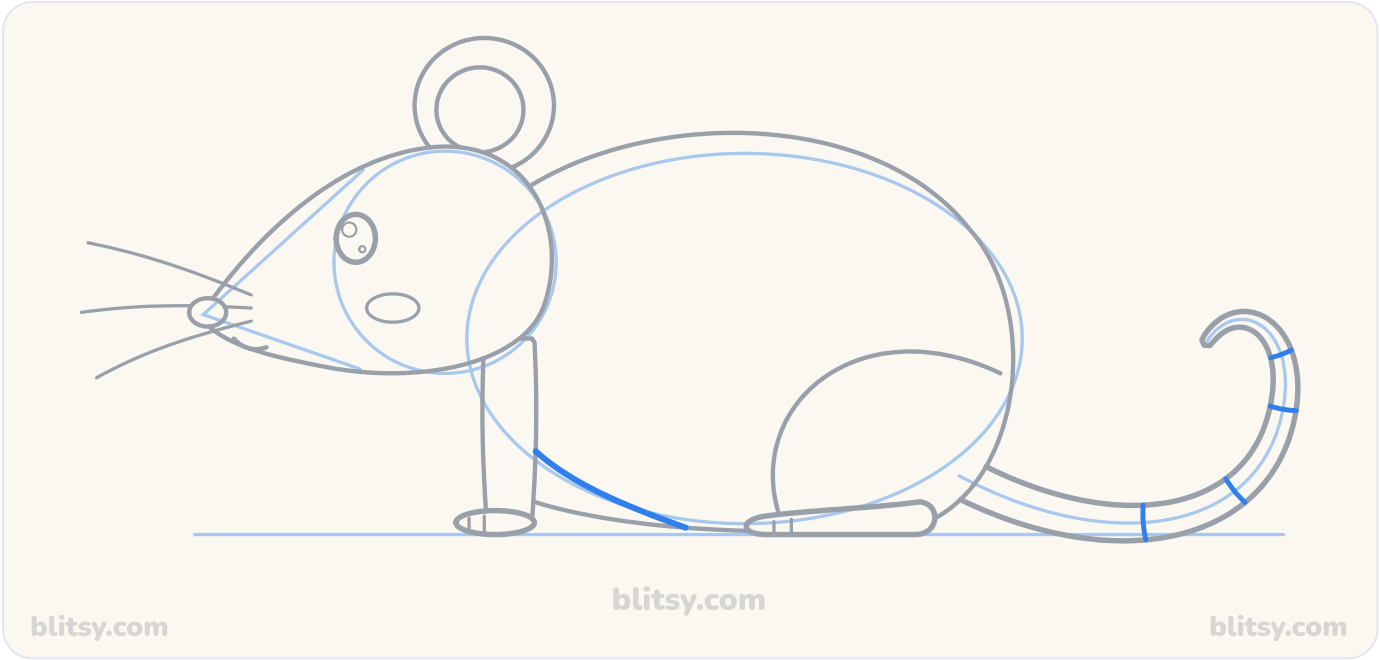
STEP 8 Add the eye, nose and whiskers



Put a tall oval eye in the upper part of the head, closer to the snout than to the ear, with two small shine circles inside. Cap the snout with a little oval nose and add a tiny curve under it for the mouth. Draw a flat oval cheek below the eye, then three long whiskers fanning out from behind the nose.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the eye a bit higher than the nose. A low eye makes the face look sad.

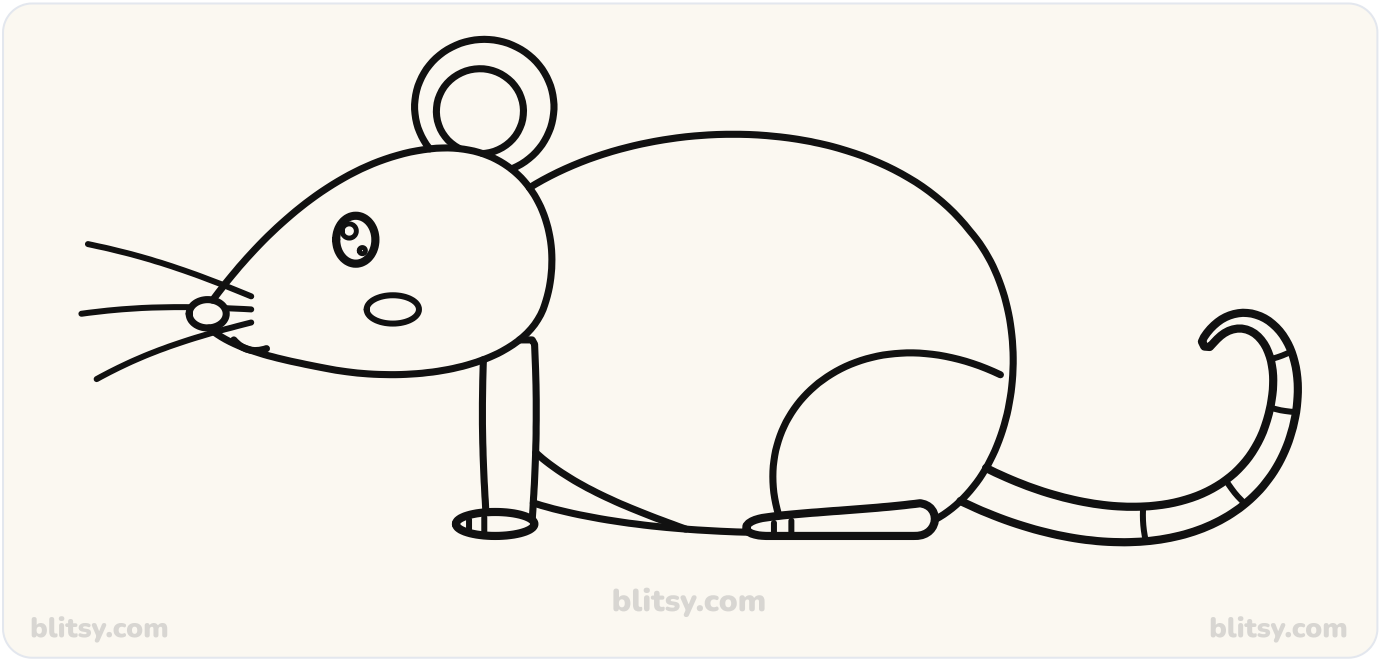
STEP 9 Draw the belly line and tail rings



Behind the front leg, draw one gentle curve from the chest down toward the hind foot. Everything below it becomes the pale belly. Then add four short lines across the tail. Real rat tails are covered in fine scaly rings, and I find a few marks suggest them without cluttering the drawing.

💡 **Tip:** Curve each tail ring slightly, like it wraps around a tube. Straight dashes look flat.

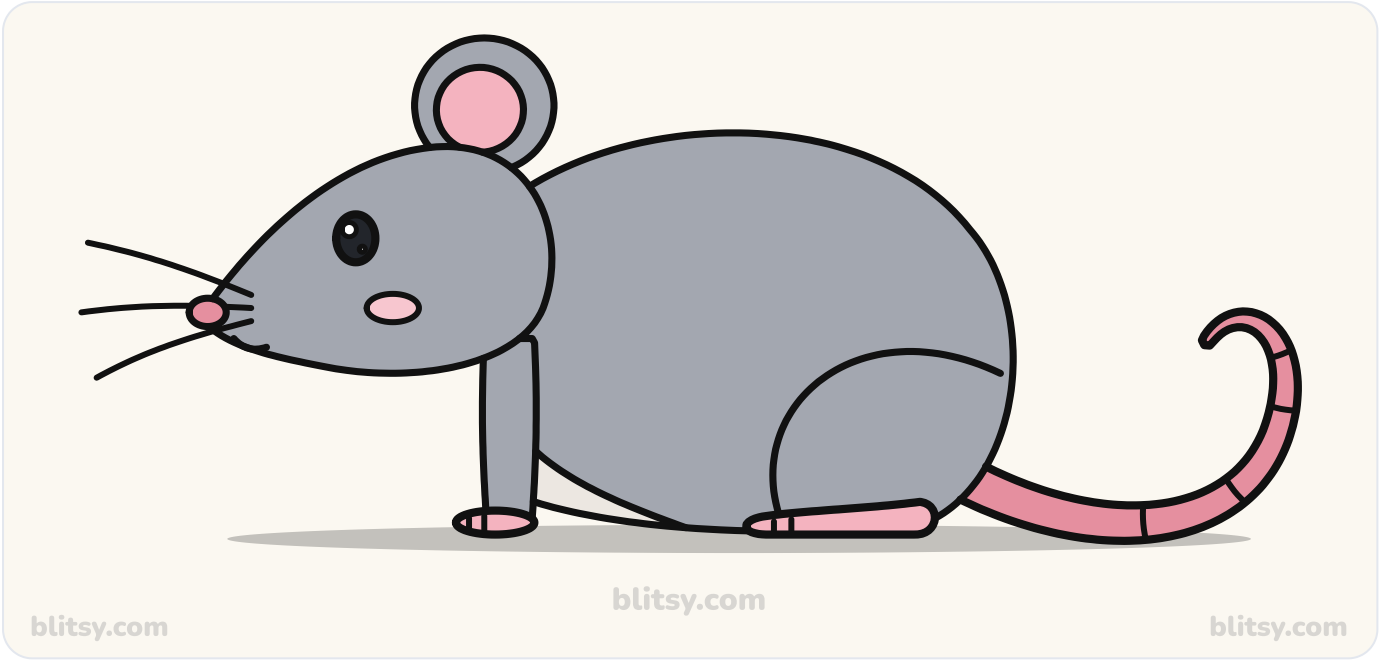
STEP 10 Ink the outline and erase the guides



Trace every line you want to keep with the black pen. My order is face first, then the head and ear, then the body, legs and tail. Skip all the guide shapes and the ground line. Wait until the ink is completely dry, then erase the pencil underneath.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the whiskers in one quick flick each so they taper naturally.

STEP 11 Color your rat



Use a medium gray for the head, ear, body and leg. The belly gets a pale cream, almost white. Color the inside of the ear and both feet pink, and use a darker pink for the tail and nose. The cheek takes your lightest pink. Fill the eye black, leaving the shine circles as white paper, and add a soft shadow under the feet.

💡 **Tip:** Layer the gray lightly two or three times rather than pressing hard once. It stays smooth that way.