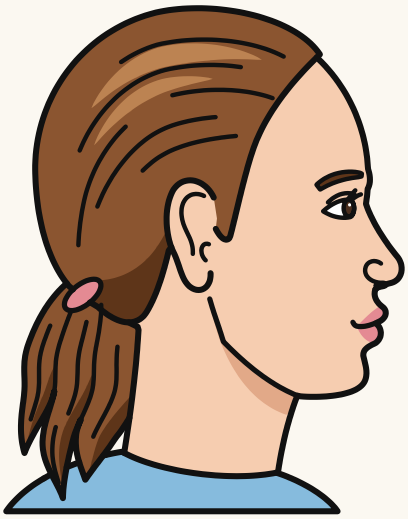
How to Draw a Side Profile

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

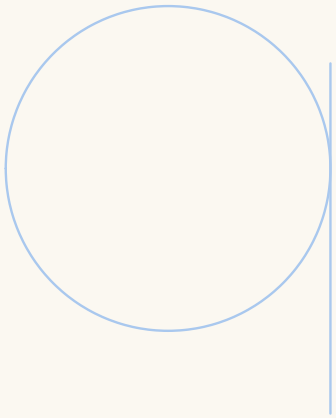
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Peach, pink and brown colored pencils
- White paper

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 →

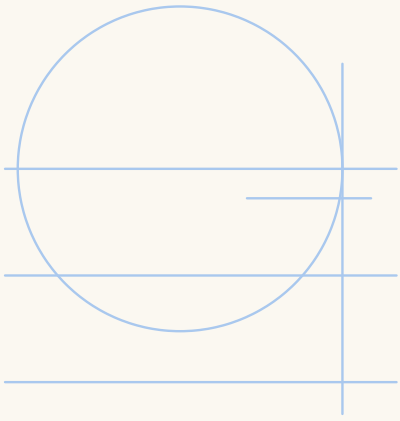
STEP 1 Draw a circle and a straight face line



Lightly draw a circle a little left of the middle of your page. It stands for the round back part of the skull, and its top is the top of the head. Then drop a vertical line that just touches the right edge of the circle and runs well below it.

💡 **Tip:** Trace around a roll of tape if your circles come out lumpy.

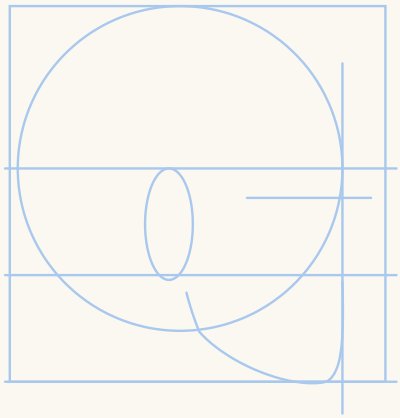
STEP 2 Add the thirds and the eye line



Draw a level brow line through the middle of the circle. Mark the hairline where the front of the circle starts curving back, a third of the way down from the top. That gap, hairline to brow, is one third of the face: copy it down once for the nose line and again for the chin line. Then add a short eye line halfway between the top of the head and the chin.

💡 **Tip:** Hold your pencil against the paper to measure the first gap, then slide it down to copy it.

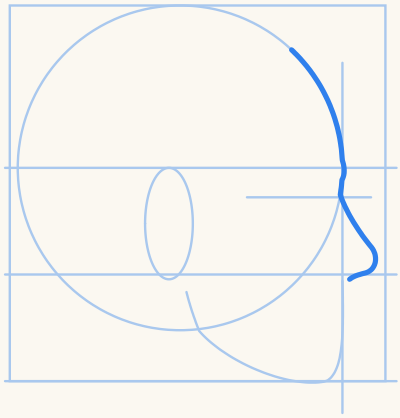
STEP 3 Sketch the jaw, a square box and the ear oval



Hang a rough jaw from the circle: down the face line to the chin, then back to a corner below the ear. Then box the head in a square from the top of the circle to the chin. A head in side view is about as deep as it is tall, so the skull and nose should both reach the box. I add the ear as a tall oval just behind the middle of the box, between the brow and nose lines.

💡 **Tip:** The ear sits further back than most people expect. If yours is near the cheek, slide it back.

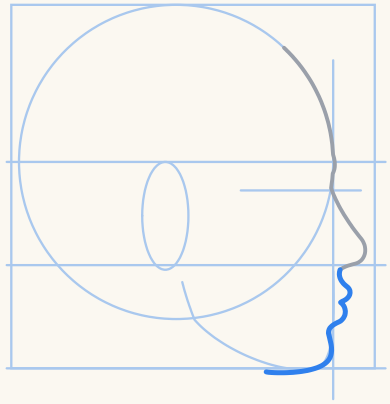
STEP 4 Draw the forehead, brow and nose



Now the real profile begins. Follow the circle from the hairline down to the brow line, where the brow sticks out a tiny bit. Dip in where the nose starts, then slope the bridge forward to a rounded tip just above the nose line. Curve under the tip and back.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the tip of the nose rounded. A sharp point turns a friendly face into a cartoon witch.

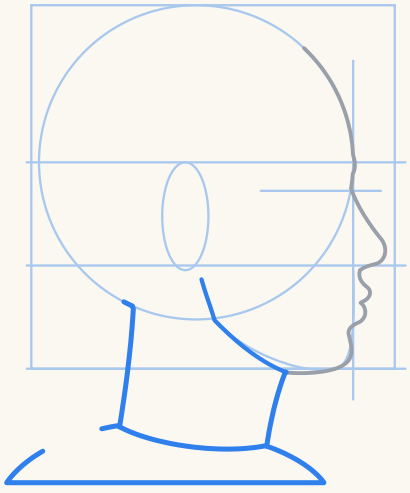
STEP 5 Shape the lips and the chin



From under the nose, curve inward for the small groove above the mouth. Bump out for the upper lip, tuck in, then make a slightly smaller bump for the lower lip. My upper lip always sticks out a little further, because that's how most mouths look from the side. Curve in again, round a short chin out to the face line, then draw the under-chin line back to where the throat starts.

💡 **Tip:** Think of nose, upper lip and lower lip as three bumps that get smaller as you go down.

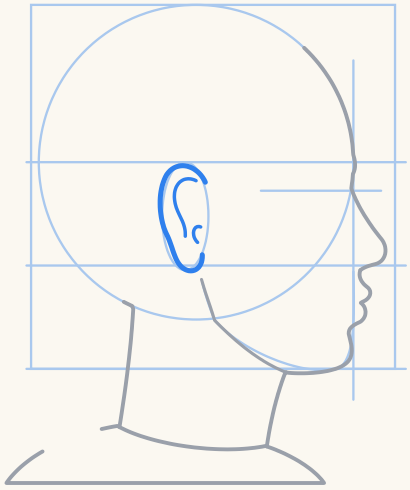
STEP 6 Draw the jaw curve and a leaning neck



From the throat, run the jaw line back and up to a clear corner just below and in front of the ear, then up toward the earlobe. Drop the front neck line from the throat, and start the back line under the skull at the nape. Keep the neck clearly narrower than the head. Add a curved neckline and a rounded shoulder, leaving a gap behind the neck for the ponytail.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the chin short: about one mouth height below the lower lip is plenty.

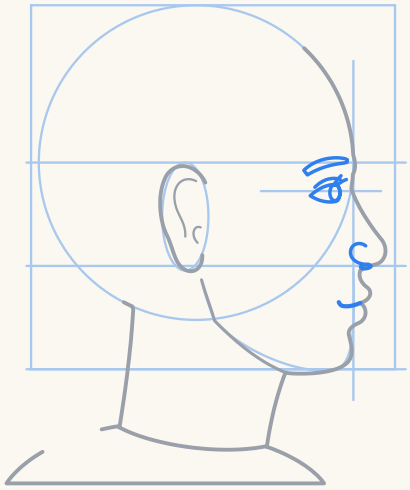
STEP 7 Draw the ear and its curves



Use the oval as your guide. Draw a C-shape for the outer rim, wider at the top and narrowing to a soft earlobe. Inside, add a smaller curve that follows the rim and a little hook near the front for the opening. Extra folds only make a small ear look crumpled.

💡 **Tip:** The top of the ear lines up with the eyebrow, and the lobe with the bottom of the nose.

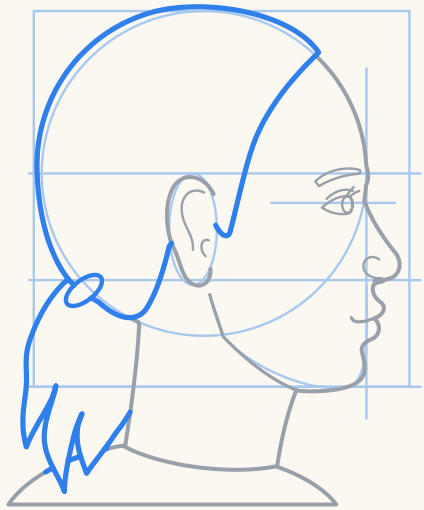
STEP 8 Add the side-view eye and small details



Set the eye back from the nose bridge, on the eye line. From the side it's a sideways V, pointed at the back and open at the front, with the iris as a narrow oval peeking out. Add a lid crease, two short lashes and the brow above. Finish with a small C for the nostril wing and a short mouth line running back from the lips.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a little skin between the eye and the outline. An eye touching the edge looks glued on.

STEP 9 Draw the hair and a low ponytail



Draw the hair outline a little outside the circle, since hair has thickness. Start the hairline at the top of the forehead and curve it past the temple to a small sideburn in front of the ear. Behind the ear, bring the hair down to the nape. Add a hair tie, then let the ponytail hang in a few wavy locks with pointed ends.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the ear on top of the hair so it looks neatly tucked behind it.

STEP 10 Add strands and map the shine and shadow



Sketch a few broken curves from the hairline sweeping back toward the tie. Split the ponytail with two clump lines. Then lightly outline where the color will change: two shine streaks on top of the head, a shadow band at the nape, and a shadow under the jaw.

💡 **Tip:** Every hair line should point toward the tie. Lines going sideways make the hair look messy.

STEP 11 Ink the keeper lines and erase the guides

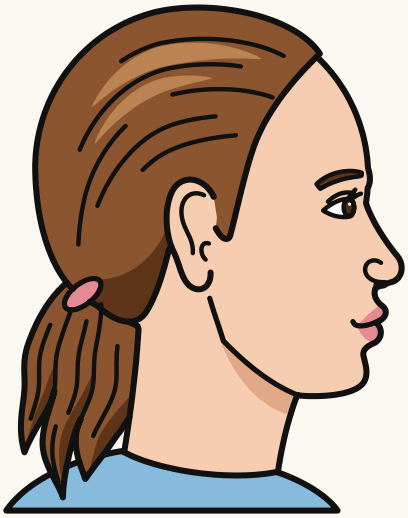


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Go over every keeper line with your black pen. Skip the circle, the thirds, the box and the shading map; they only helped you measure. Let the ink dry, then erase all the pencil.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the profile slowly from top to bottom. Rushing causes wobbles around the lips.

STEP 12 Color the side profile



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Fill the skin with peach and the shirt with light blue. Color the hair brown, stroking from the hairline toward the tie and down the ponytail. Add dark brown at the nape and along the ponytail, plus dark peach under the jaw. I finish with light brown shine streaks, pink lips and tie, and a dark brown eyebrow.

💡 **Tip:** Press lightly for the shadow under the jaw. It should whisper, not shout.