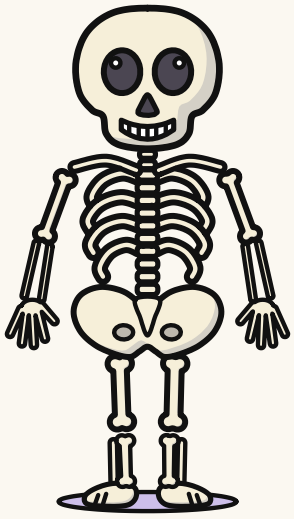
How to Draw a Skeleton

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

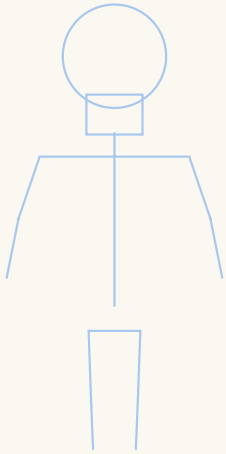
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

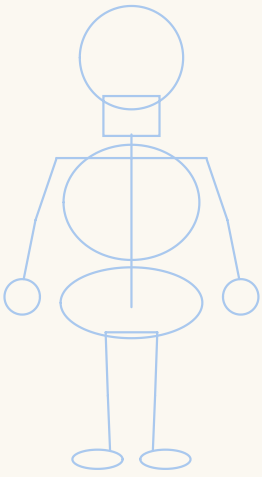
STEP 1 Sketch a head circle and a stick body



Draw a circle near the top of the page, then a small box under it for the jaw. From the box, run a straight line down the middle for the backbone. Add a short level shoulder line, two bent arm lines and two leg lines. The head is big in this cartoon style, about a quarter of the whole height, which keeps the skeleton cute.

💡 **Tip:** Mark the top of the head and the bottom of the feet first, so the whole figure fits on the paper.

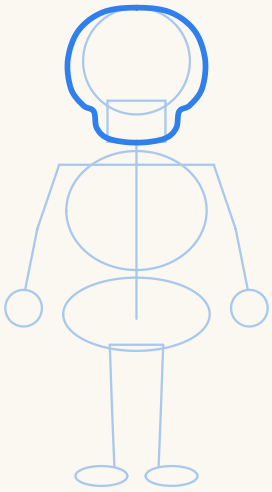
STEP 2 Add ovals for the ribs and hips



Place a tall oval over the upper backbone for the rib cage. Under it, draw a wide flat oval for the hips. Add a small circle at the end of each arm and a flat oval under each leg for the feet. These shapes only show size and position, so keep them soft.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a short gap of plain backbone between the two ovals. That gap becomes the lower spine.

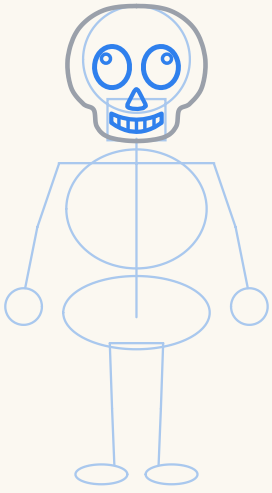
STEP 3 Outline the round skull



Trace around the head circle to make the skull. Keep the top round, push the sides out a little at the cheekbones, then step in to a narrower jaw at the bottom of the box. I think of it as a light bulb with soft corners. A wide, rounded skull reads as friendly, while a long pointed one looks spooky.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the left half, then copy each bump on the right side so the skull stays even.

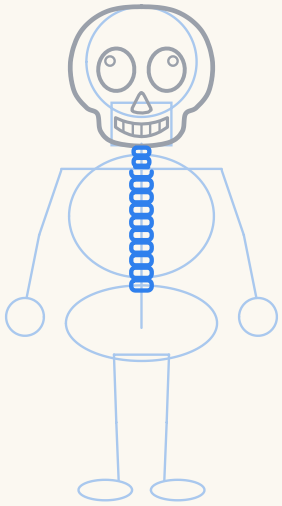
STEP 4 Draw the eyes, nose and smile



Inside the skull, draw two big oval eye sockets side by side with only a small gap between them. Add a tiny shine circle in each one. Below the eyes, a small rounded triangle makes the nose hole. For the mouth, draw a curved band that bends up like a smile, then split it with short vertical lines into teeth.

💡 **Tip:** Those tiny shine circles are what make the face look kind instead of creepy, so don't skip them.

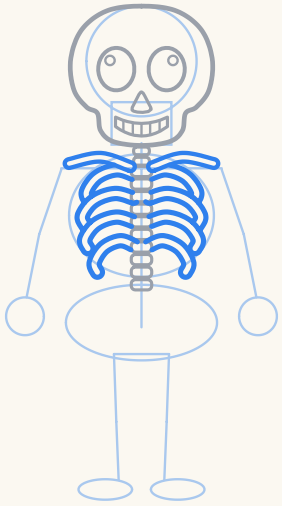
STEP 5 Stack the neck bones and backbone



Follow the center line down from the jaw and stack small rounded rectangles like a pile of coins. Make the top two a bit smaller for the neck, then keep going with wider pieces until you reach the hip oval. Most beginners rush this. A thin gap between each piece is what makes it read as a spine and not a ladder.

💡 **Tip:** Count as you stack. Around a dozen pieces looks right for this size.

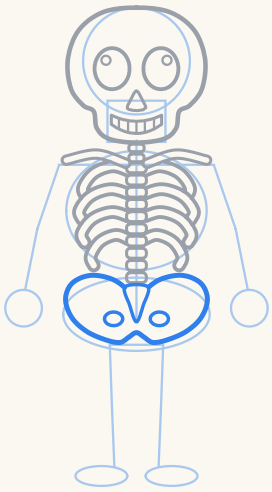
STEP 6 Add the collarbones and four pairs of ribs



From the top of the backbone, draw a thin curved collarbone out to each shoulder. Then add the ribs as curved bands that leave the spine, swing outward and bend down at the ends. Draw four on each side inside the tall oval, with the bottom pair shorter than the rest.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the same small gap between each rib so the cage looks even from top to bottom.

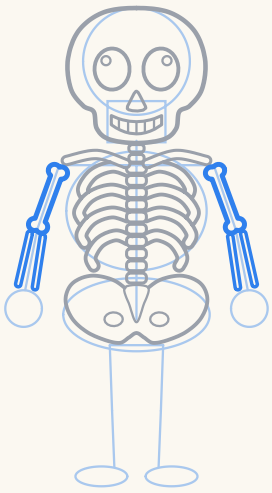
STEP 7 Shape the butterfly pelvis



Inside the hip oval, draw the pelvis as two rounded wings joined in the middle, a bit like a butterfly. Dip the top edge down in the center where the spine meets it, and notch the bottom edge up a little too. Add a small pointed shape in the middle for the tailbone and a little oval hole in each wing.

💡 **Tip:** Make the pelvis about as wide as the rib cage. Wider than that, and he looks like he's wearing a tutu.

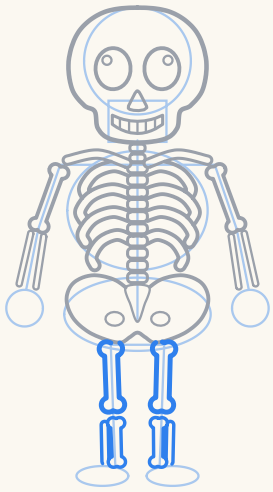
STEP 8 Draw the arm bones and elbows



Each upper arm is one bone with two little knobs at each end, like a cartoon dog bone. Start it at the end of the collarbone and follow the guide down to the elbow. Below the elbow, draw two slim bones side by side down to the wrist. Real forearms have two bones too, so this detail is both cute and correct.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the two forearm bones apart with a narrow strip of paper between them.

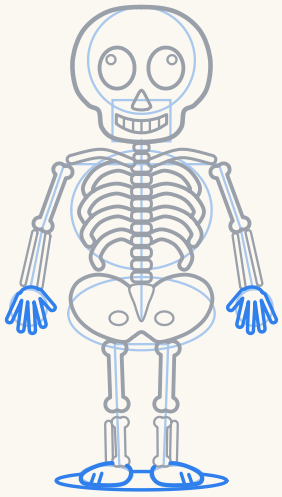
STEP 9 Draw the leg bones and knees



Tuck the top of each thigh bone just under the pelvis so the knob peeks out at the side. Follow the leg guide down and finish at the knee with another pair of knobs. Under the knee, draw a thinner shin bone plus a skinny second bone on its outer side. The thigh should be a touch longer than the shin.

💡 **Tip:** Line the knees up at the same height by checking them against a ruler held sideways.

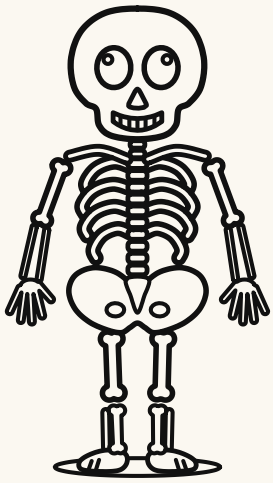
STEP 10 Add bony hands, feet and a shadow



At each wrist, draw a small oval palm. Fan out four thin finger bones below it and add a short thumb pointing toward the body. For the feet, draw rounded shapes that point slightly outward, with two short toe lines. A flat oval under both feet gives him a shadow, so he doesn't float.

💡 **Tip:** Spread the fingers like a small fan rather than drawing them side by side, so each one stays visible.

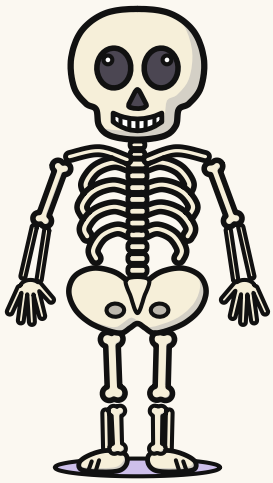
STEP 11 Ink the bones and erase the guides



Go over every bone outline with your black pen, plus the face, the hip holes and the shadow. Skip the guides. Wait a minute for the ink to dry before you erase, or it will smear across the ribs. You should end up with a clean skeleton and no stray pencil marks.

💡 **Tip:** Use a thicker line for the skull outline than for the small bones. It pulls the eye to the face first.

STEP 12 Color the skeleton



Shade all the bones with a light cream, pressing gently. Add light gray along the lower right edge of the skull, the pelvis and the bigger bones, as if light came from the upper left. Fill the eye sockets and nose with dark gray but leave the shines white. Use gray in the hip holes and lavender for the shadow.

💡 **Tip:** Color the cream first and the gray on top. The other way round, the gray smudges into the bones.