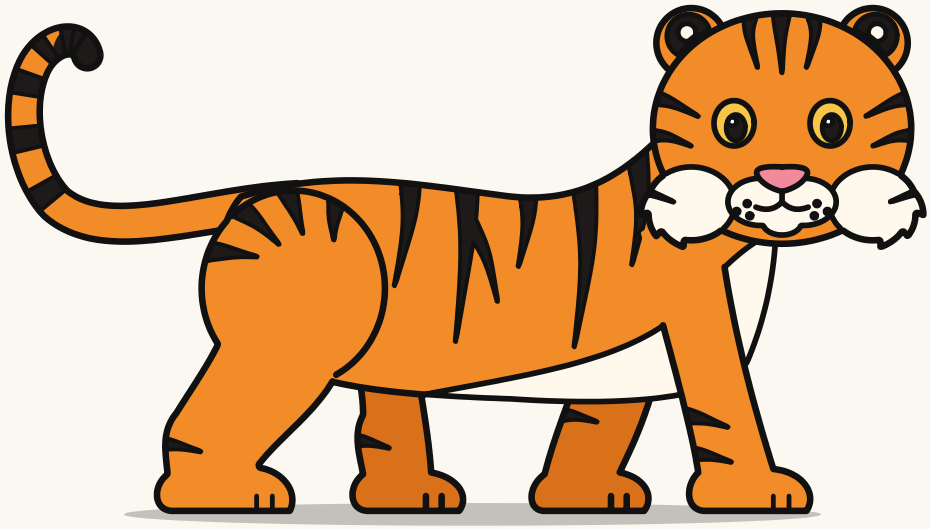
How to Draw a Tiger

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

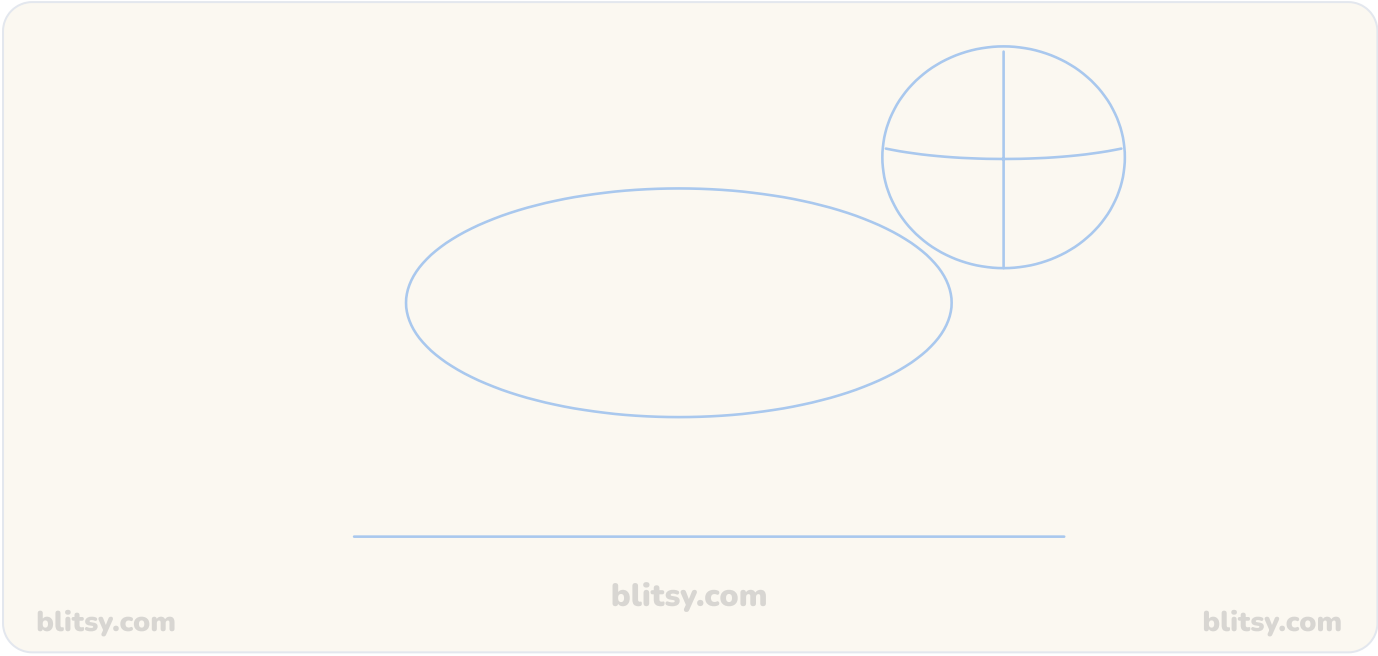
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- Plain paper

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 →

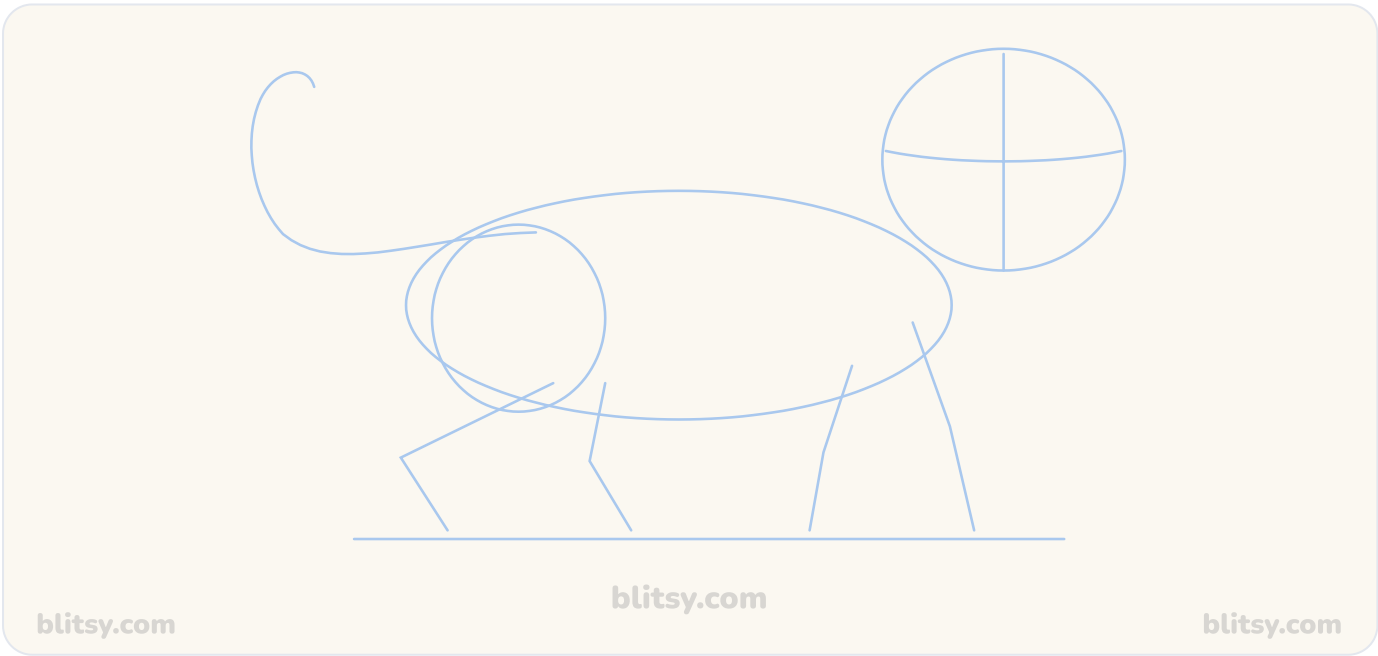
STEP 1 Sketch a long body oval and a head circle



Draw a flat ground line low on the page. Above it, sketch a long, wide oval for the body. Put a big circle up on the right, overlapping the front end of the oval, and cross it with a vertical line and a gently curved one for the eyes. A big head keeps a cartoon tiger friendly instead of fierce.

💡 **Tip:** Hold the pencil near its far end. Your guide lines come out pale without any extra effort.

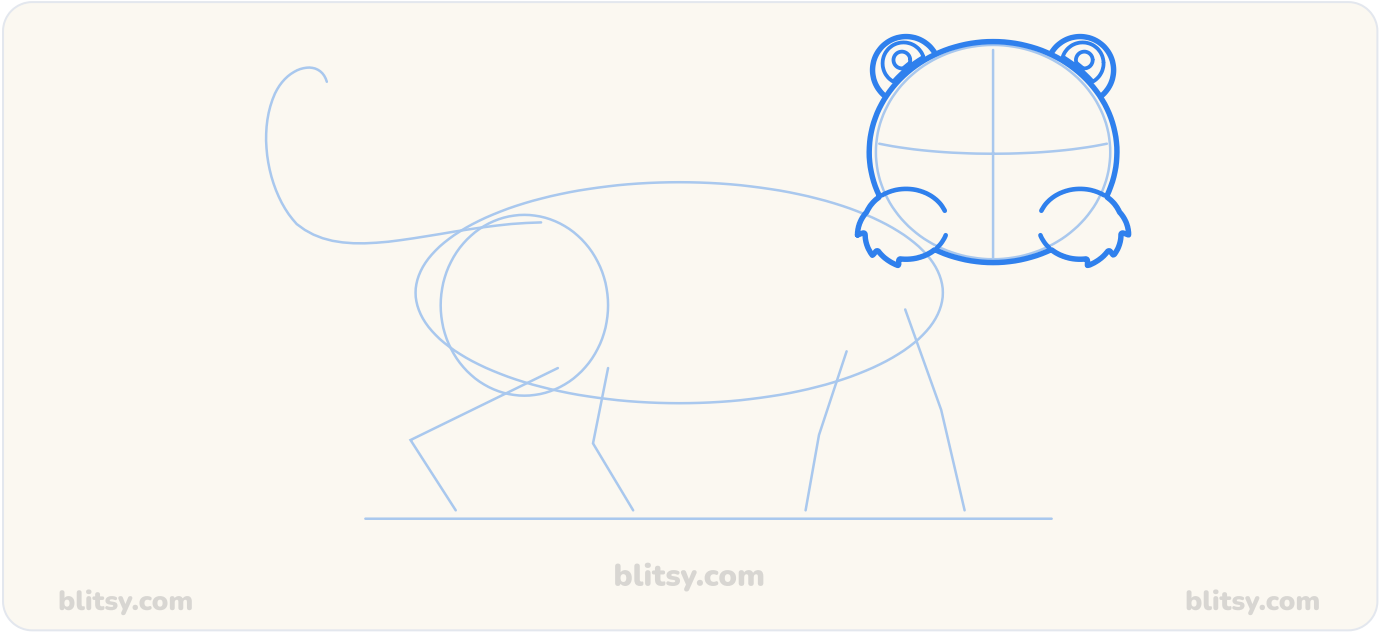
STEP 2 Add the hip circle, leg lines and tail curve



Place a circle over the back end of the oval for the hip. Now draw four leg lines down to the ground: the near front leg leans forward, the far front leg leans back, and the near back leg bends backward at the heel before dropping to the ground. Add one long tail curve that dips, rises and hooks over.

💡 **Tip:** Check that two legs lean forward and two lean back. That alone makes the tiger look like it's walking.

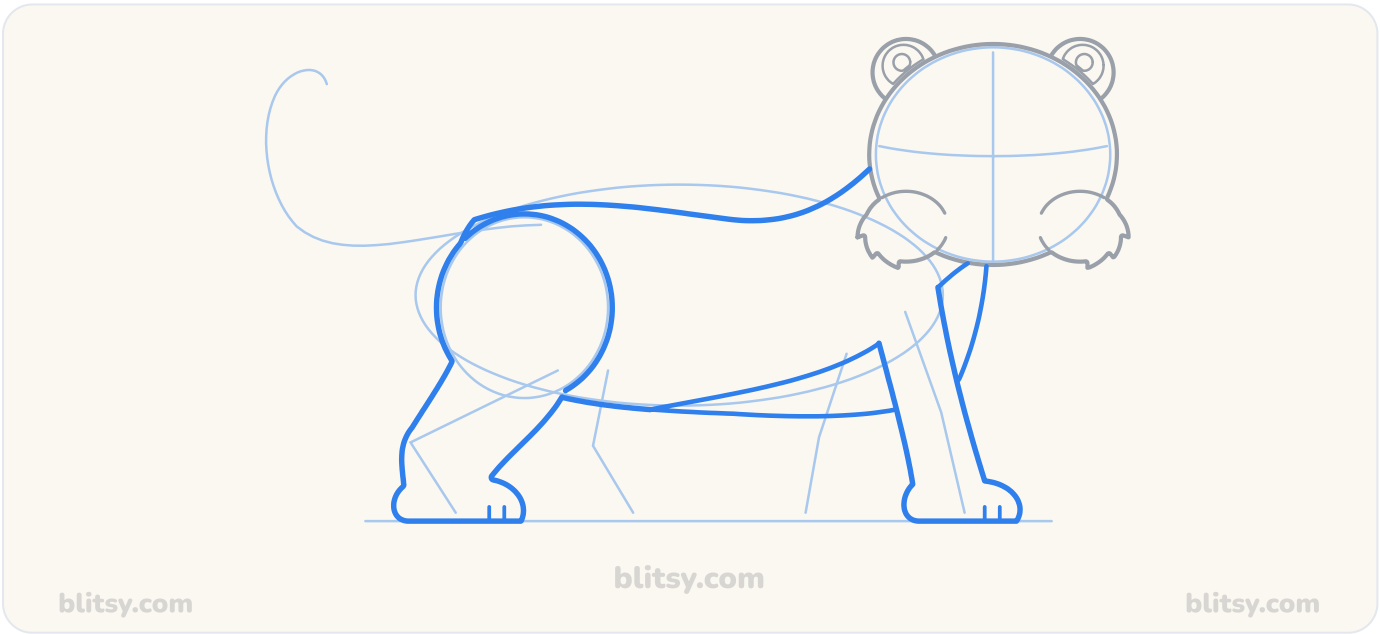
STEP 3 Draw the head with ears and fluffy cheek ruffs



Go over the head circle with a firmer line. Two small round ears sit on the top corners, each with a smaller circle inside and a tiny spot in the middle. Low on each cheek, let the head outline bulge out into three small pointed tufts, then draw a curve inside to mark the white cheek. Those fluffy cheeks say tiger faster than anything else.

💡 **Tip:** Let the tufts point down and outward, like fur pulled by gravity, never straight up.

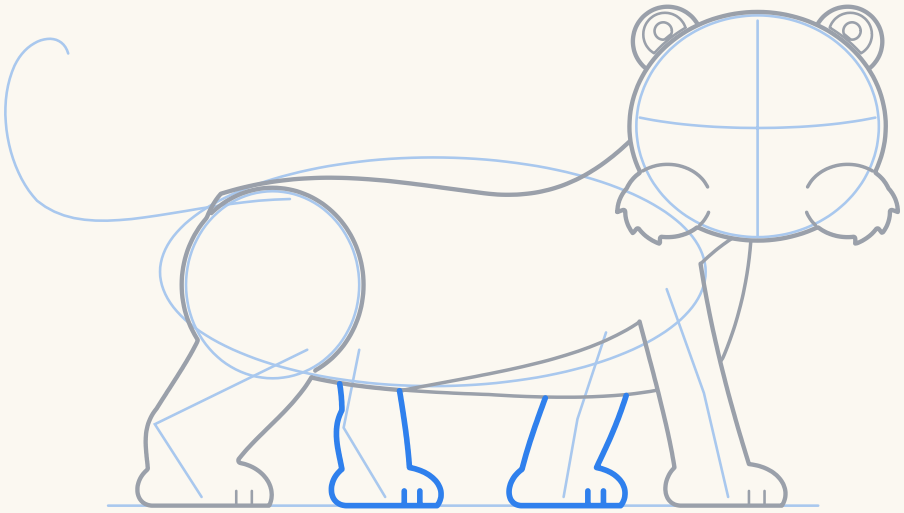
STEP 4 Outline the body and the two near legs



Run the back line from the round haunch over a slight dip, then up the neck into the back of the head. Bring the back leg down to a bump at the heel and a wide paw. The near front leg starts under the cheek and reaches forward. A curved line from the belly up to the chin marks the white fur.

💡 **Tip:** Make the paws wider than the legs. Big paws read as strong and a little bit cute.

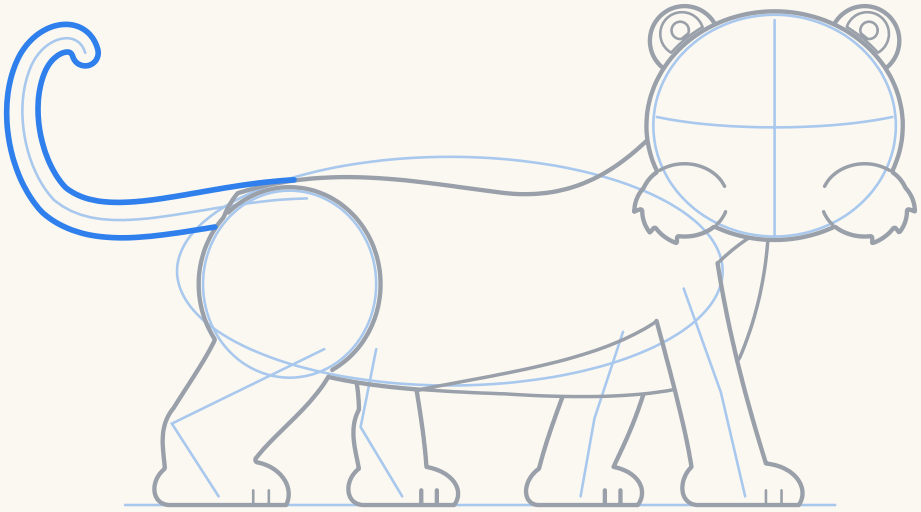
STEP 5 Tuck the far legs behind the body



The other two legs are farther away, so you only see their lower halves between the near legs. Draw the far back leg swinging forward under the belly and the far front leg angled back. Most beginners draw all four legs in a neat row, and the tiger ends up looking like a table.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the far paws on the same ground line as the near ones, or the tiger seems to float.

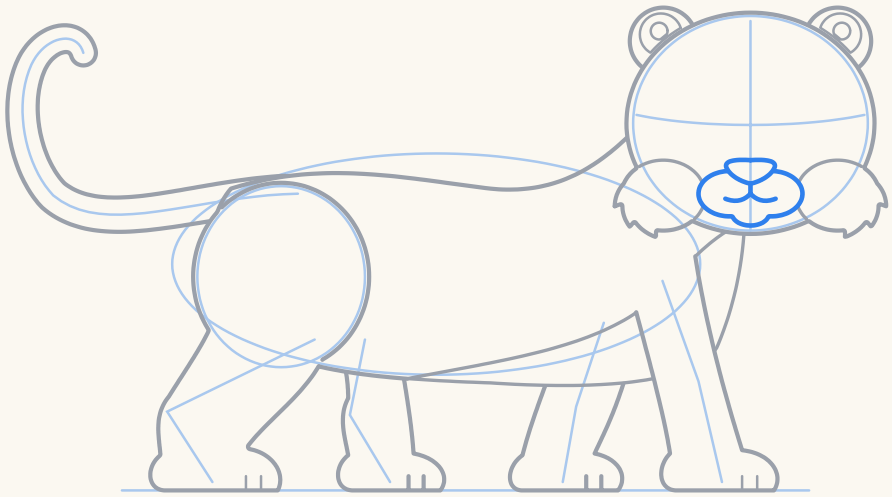
STEP 6 Draw the long tail with a curl



Follow your tail curve with two lines about a finger width apart. The tail dips a little, sweeps up and rolls over at the tip like a question mark. Real tigers have long tails that help them balance, so give yours plenty of room on the left side.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the outer line of the curl first and the inner one second. Matching the gap is easier that way.

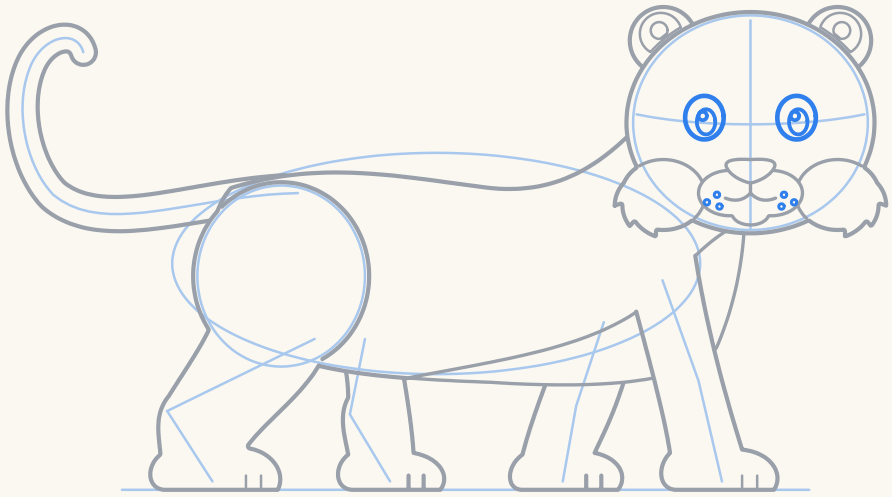
STEP 7 Add a muzzle with a pink nose and a smile



Between the cheek ruffs, draw two round muzzle puffs side by side with a small chin bump below. A wide, rounded triangle nose sits right on top where the puffs meet. A short line under it splits into two soft curves for the smile. I keep the muzzle low, because a muzzle placed too high pushes the eyes up into the forehead.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the nose wider than it is tall. A tall nose makes the face look long and dog-like.

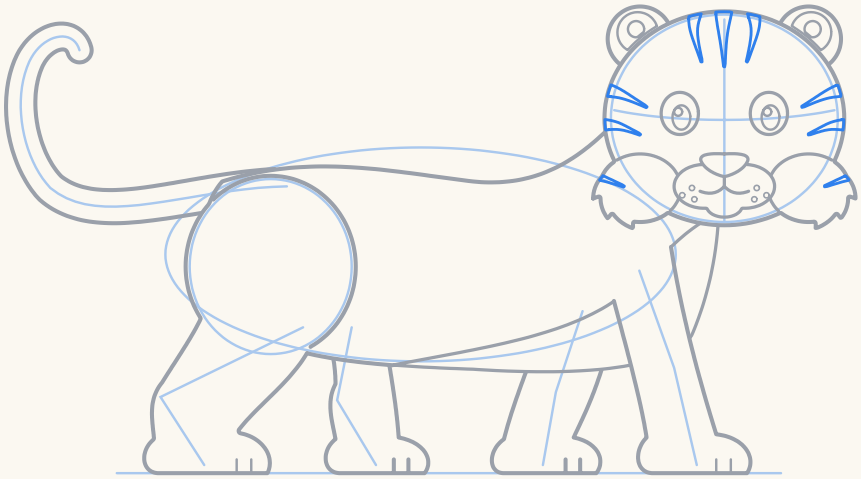
STEP 8 Give it kind eyes and whisker dots



Put two round eyes on the curved guide line, with a gap about the width of the nose between them. Inside each one, draw a dark oval pupil and a tiny shine circle near the top. Finish with three small dots on each muzzle puff where the whiskers grow.

💡 **Tip:** Place both shine circles on the same side, or the eyes will look like they point different ways.

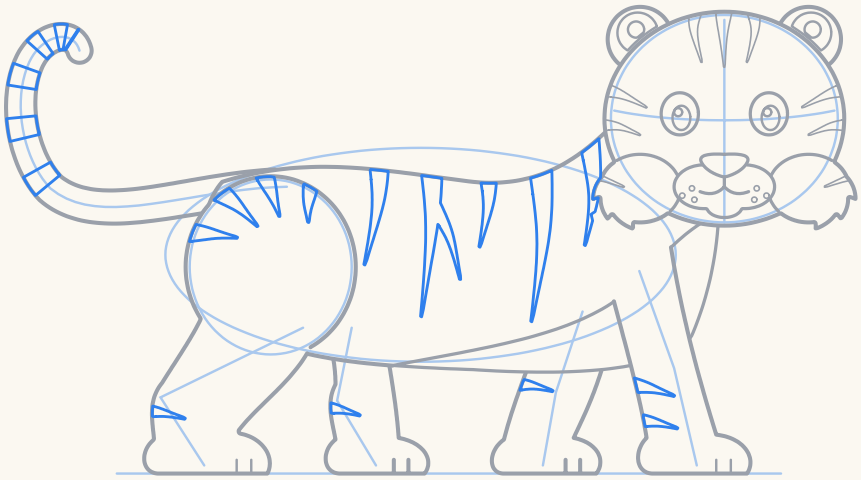
STEP 9 Draw the stripes on the face



Here's the trick: a stripe is a narrow pointed shape, wide where it starts at an edge and thin at the other end. Draw three on the forehead pointing down, the middle one a bit longer. Then add two on each side of the head, starting at the outline and pointing in toward the eyes. Give each ruff one small stripe.

💡 **Tip:** Draw each stripe as two lines that meet in a point, then you can fill it in later.

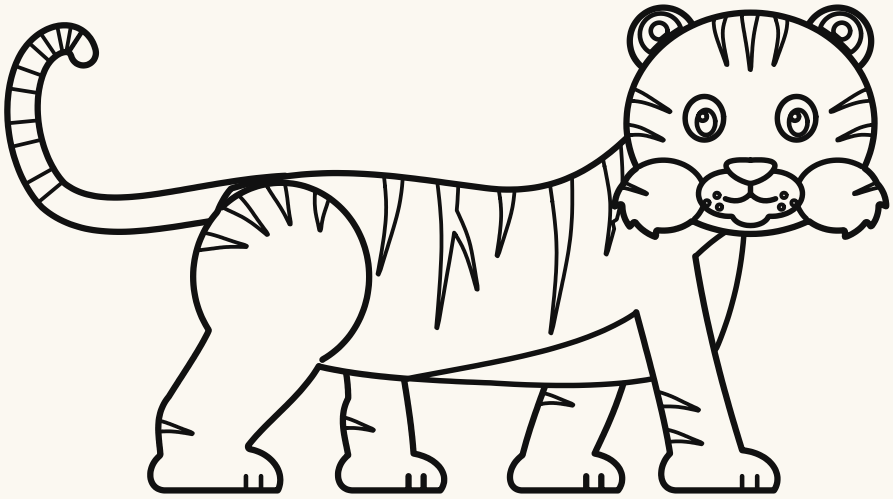
STEP 10 Wrap stripes around the body, legs and tail



Start each body stripe at the back line and let it curve down the side, the way a ribbon would wrap around a barrel. Vary the lengths and give one stripe a little fork. On the haunch, point the stripes toward the middle of the hip circle. Legs get short stripes from the back edge; the tail gets bands all the way across.

💡 **Tip:** Never draw two stripes the same length side by side. Uneven stripes look natural; even ones look like a barcode.

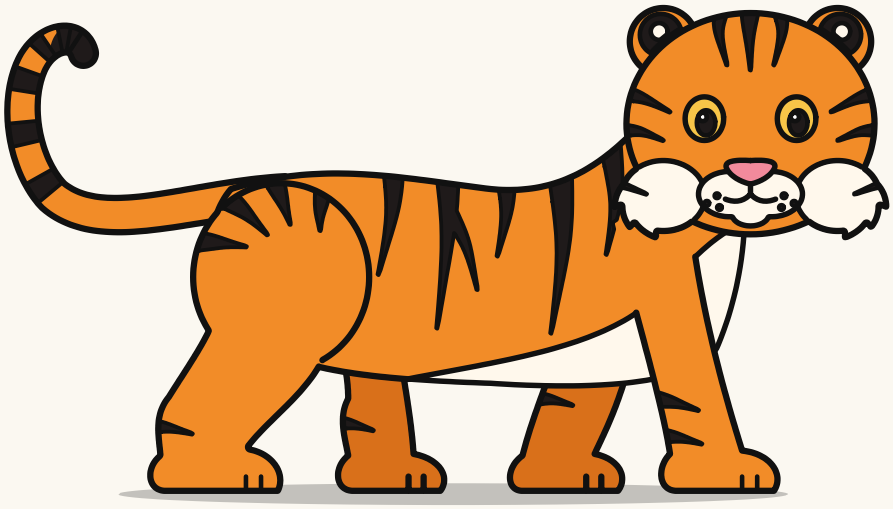
STEP 11 Ink the keeper lines and erase the guides



Trace over every line you want to keep with the fineliner. I do the face first while my hand is fresh, then the body, and the stripes last with short, slow strokes. Wait a minute or two so the ink can dry. Then erase the oval, the circles and all the guide lines.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you ink the curved stripes, so your hand always pulls the pen toward you.

STEP 12 Color your tiger



Fill the head, body, near legs and tail with orange. Use dark orange for the two far legs, which pushes them back in space. Leave the cheeks and muzzle white, along with the chest, belly and ear spots. The nose is pink and the eyes yellow. Last of all, fill the stripes, tail rings, tail tip and the patches inside the ears with black.

💡 **Tip:** Do the orange before the black, so the dark color isn't smeared across the light one.