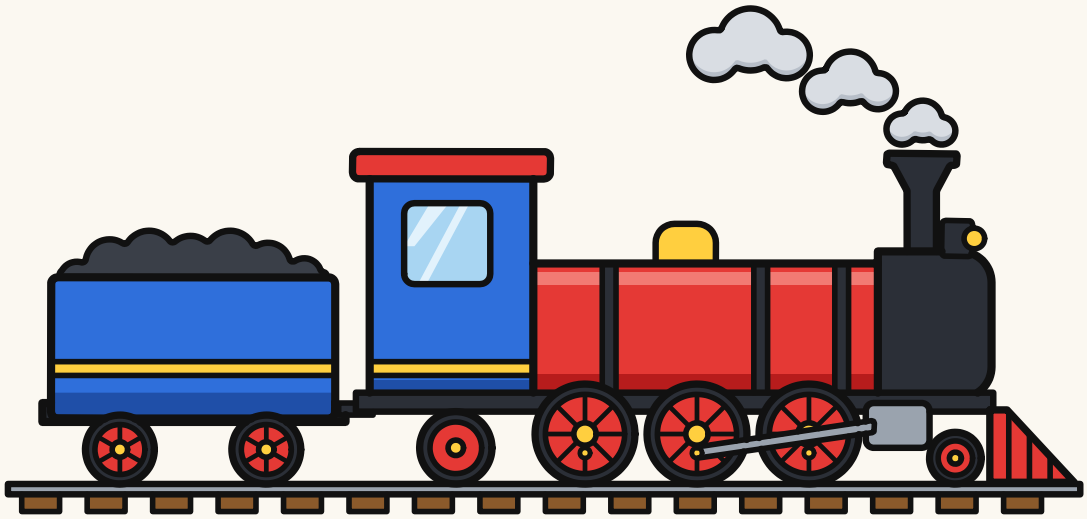
How to Draw a Train

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- Paper turned sideways
- A ruler (optional)

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 →

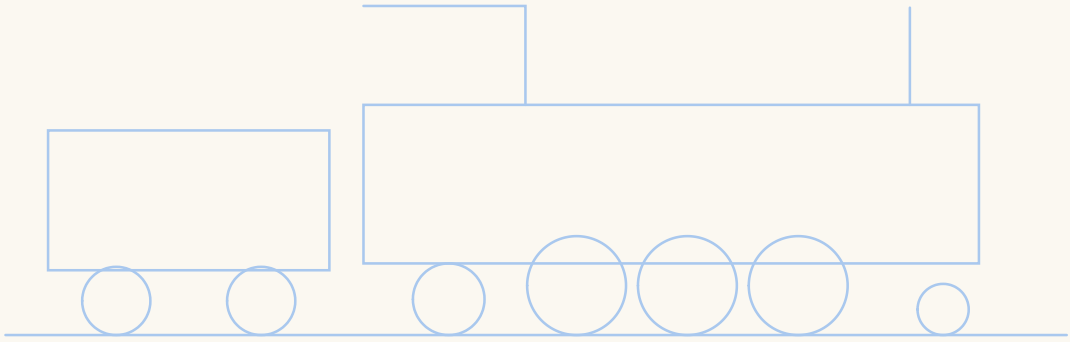
STEP 1 Draw the track line and wheel guides



Turn your paper sideways and draw one long straight line near the bottom for the top of the rail. Sit circles on it: three big ones in the middle for the driving wheels, a small one to their right, a medium one to their left, and two on the far left for the tender. Every circle must touch the line, or the wheels look like they float.

💡 **Tip:** Trace a coin or a bottle cap if your circles keep coming out lumpy.

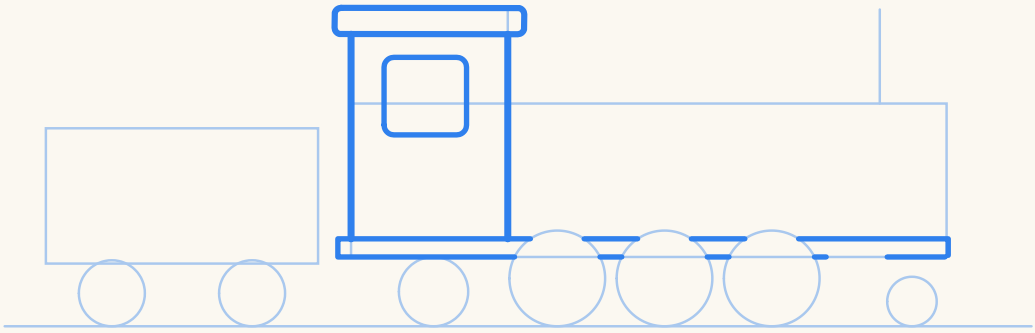
STEP 2 Sketch boxes for the engine and the tender



Above the right-hand wheels, draw one long, low rectangle for the engine. Over its left end, add a taller corner shape for the cab. On the left, draw a shorter box above the two tender wheels, then a short upright line near the engine's front where the smokestack will stand.

💡 **Tip:** Press so lightly that you can barely see these boxes.

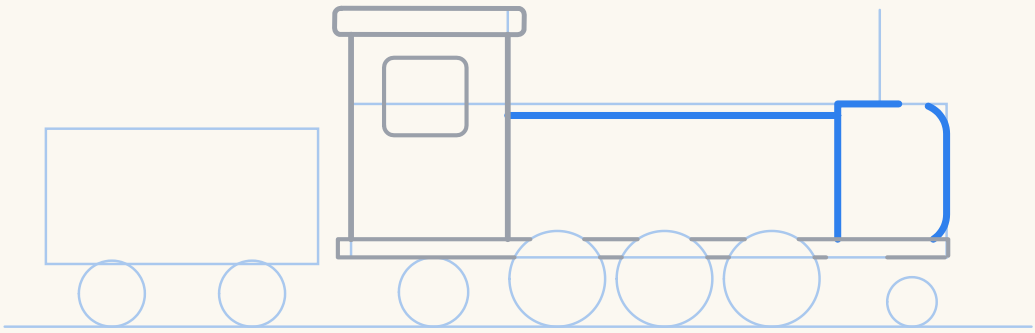
STEP 3 Draw the cab, its roof and the running board



Inside the tall corner guide, draw the cab as a tall rectangle. Give it a flat roof that sticks out a little on both sides and a square window near the top. Then draw a long thin strip along the bottom of the engine. That's the running board the boiler and cab rest on. Leave gaps where the big wheels will overlap it.

💡 **Tip:** Let the roof hang over the cab walls by about a finger's width.

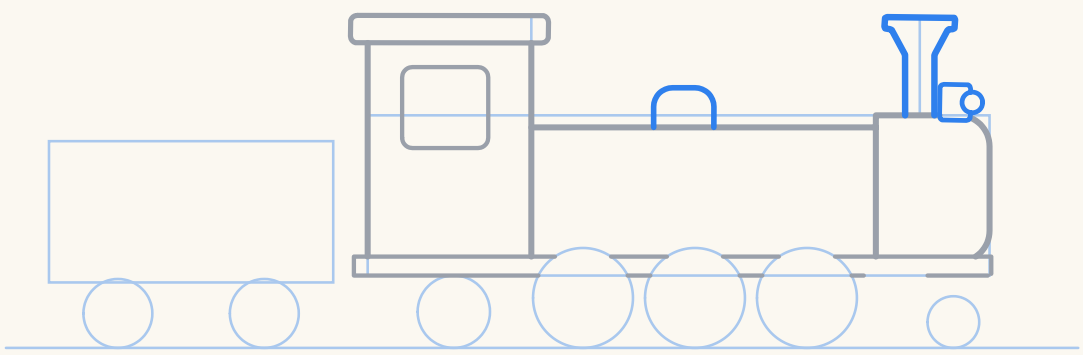
STEP 4 Add the boiler and the smokebox



From the front of the cab, draw a long straight line forward for the top of the boiler, the big tube where water was heated to make steam. Near the front, draw a slightly taller section with a rounded nose: the smokebox. I make it a touch higher than the boiler so the front looks strong and heavy. Skip the short bits of its top edge where the stack and lamp will go.

💡 **Tip:** Round the front corners generously; sharp corners make it look like a truck.

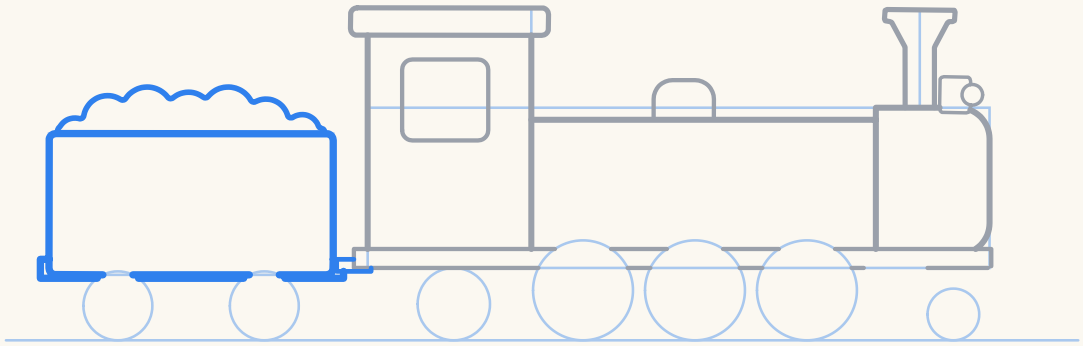
STEP 5 Shape the smokestack and dome, then the lamp



On top of the smokebox, draw a narrow chimney that flares out wide at the top, with a flat cap. Halfway along the boiler, add a small rounded hump for the steam dome. Then put a tiny box with a circle on its front at the tip of the smokebox for the headlamp. Small kids can leave the lamp off.

💡 **Tip:** Draw both sides of the flared top as mirror images.

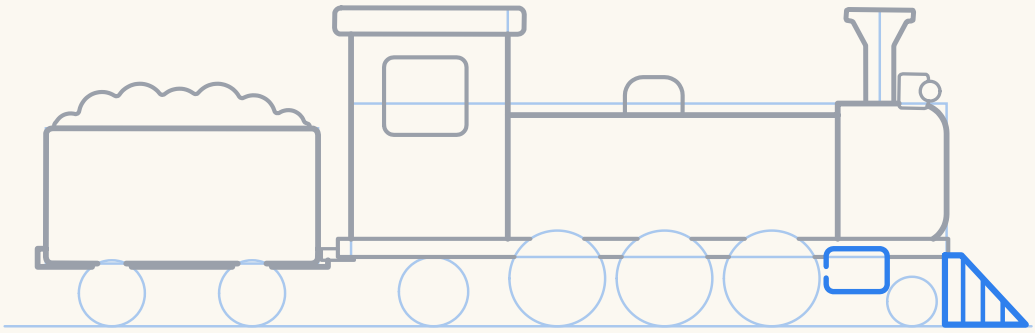
STEP 6 Draw the tender and its coal heap



Use the left box to draw the tender, the wagon that carries coal and water for the engine. Give it soft corners and a thin frame strip underneath. Along the top, draw a row of round bumps for the coal peeking over the edge. Join the tender to the cab with a short bar, the coupling.

💡 **Tip:** Vary the size of the coal bumps so they look like real lumps.

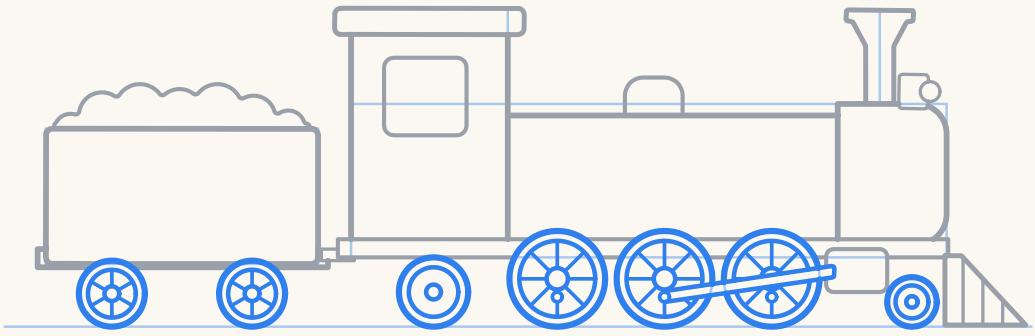
STEP 7 Add the cylinder and the cowcatcher



Just under the smokebox, draw a small rounded box. That's the cylinder, where steam pushes a piston back and forth. At the front of the running board, draw a slanted shape reaching down toward the rail and add three short lines inside it. This cowcatcher was built to push things off the track. Stop its bottom just above the rail.

💡 **Tip:** Slope the cowcatcher forward, so its bottom is further out than its top.

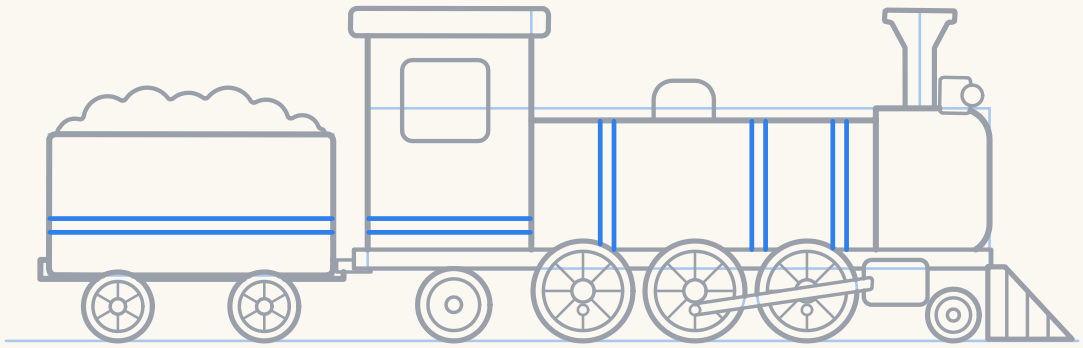
STEP 8 Draw the wheels and the connecting rods



Go over the wheel guides with firm lines. In each big wheel, add a smaller ring, a tiny hub and eight spokes like the slices of a pizza. Give the small wheels a ring and a hub too. Then draw a flat bar joining the three big wheels just below their hubs, plus a second rod from the cylinder to the middle wheel. I always draw the spokes after the rings are in place.

💡 **Tip:** Draw opposite spokes as one straight line through the hub.

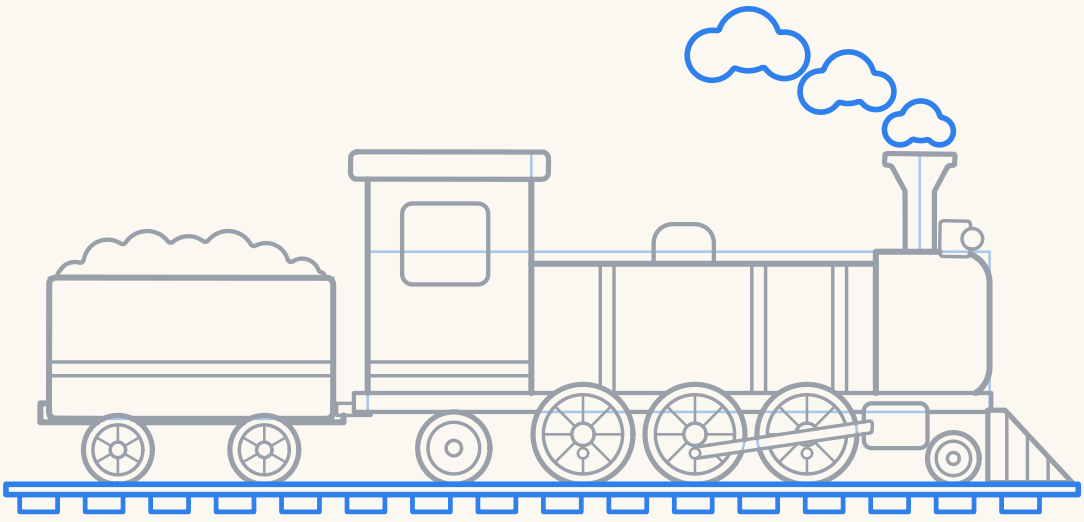
STEP 9 Mark the boiler bands and side stripes



Draw three pairs of upright lines across the boiler for the metal bands that wrap around it. Next, draw two close lines across the lower cab and carry them across the tender at the same height. When the stripes line up, the train looks like one matching set.

💡 **Tip:** Hold a ruler level so both stripes sit at exactly the same height.

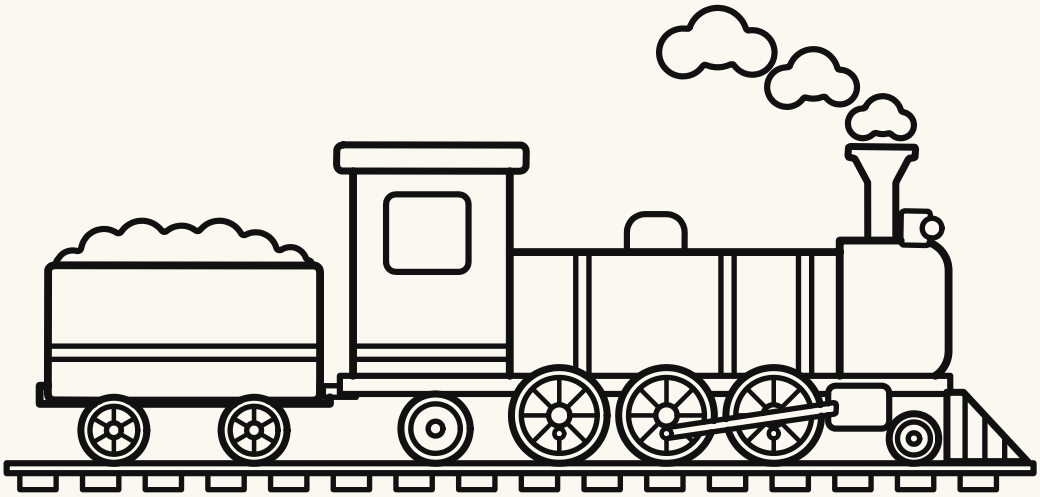
STEP 10 Add the rails and sleepers, then the steam



Turn the track line into a thin rail with a second line just below it. Under it, draw a row of short, evenly spaced blocks for the sleepers, also called railroad ties. Last, draw three fluffy clouds drifting up and back from the smokestack, small first and bigger after, because steam spreads out as it rises.

💡 **Tip:** Space the sleepers by eye first with tiny dots, then draw the blocks.

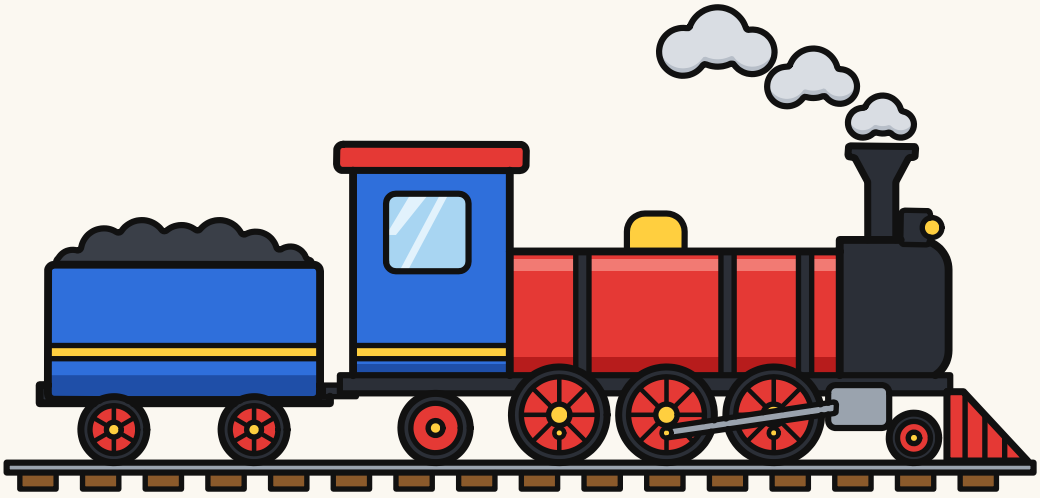
STEP 11 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Trace every line you want to keep with your black pen. I start at the top with the steam and the stack and work down, so my hand never rests on wet ink. Go slowly around the wheels. Once the ink has dried for a minute, erase the boxes, the stack line and the guide circles.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the page as you ink each wheel so your hand stays comfortable.

STEP 12 Color the train



Color the boiler red, with darker red along its bottom and a lighter strip near the top so it looks round. The roof, cowcatcher and wheel centers are red too, while the cab and tender are blue. Black goes on the smokebox, stack, bands, frame and tires, plus the coal. Yellow is for the dome, lamp, stripes and hubs. Add light blue on the window, gray on the steam and rails, and brown on the sleepers.

💡 **Tip:** Color the black parts last so dark smudges don't spread onto the red.