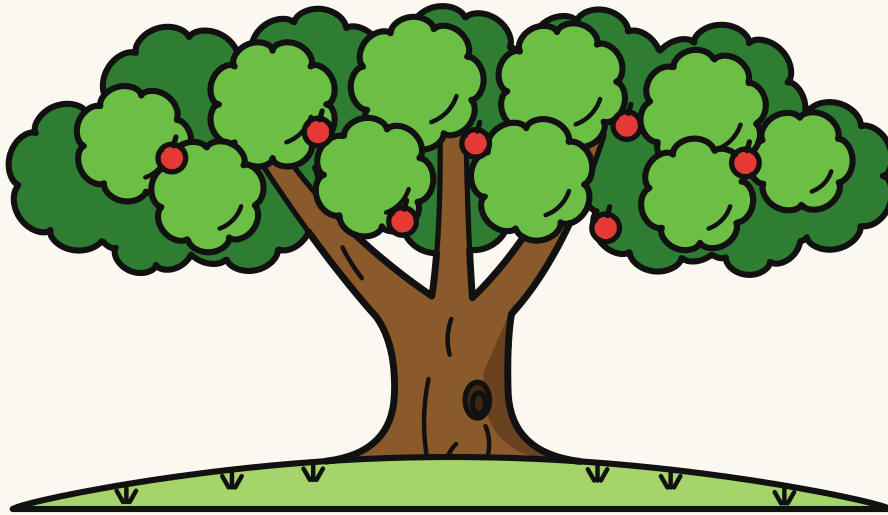


How to Draw a Tree

12 easy steps for beginners



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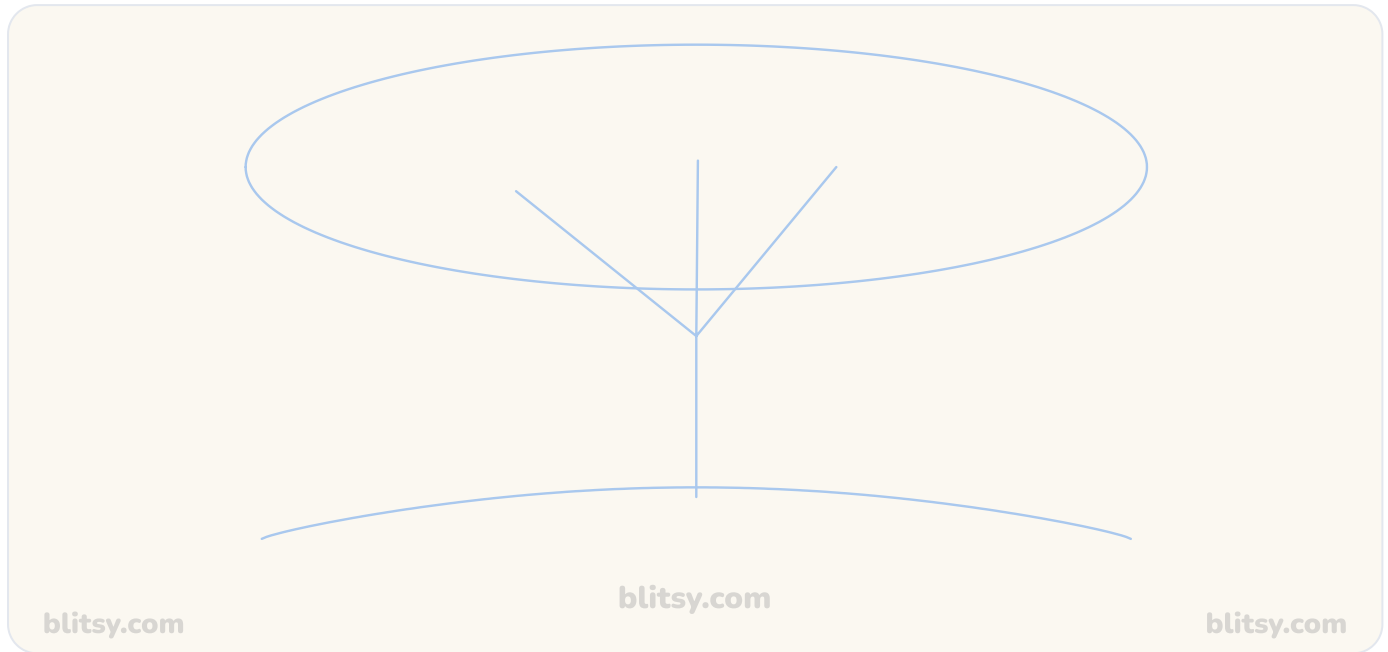
What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black pen
- Colored pencils
- Paper

How to use this guide

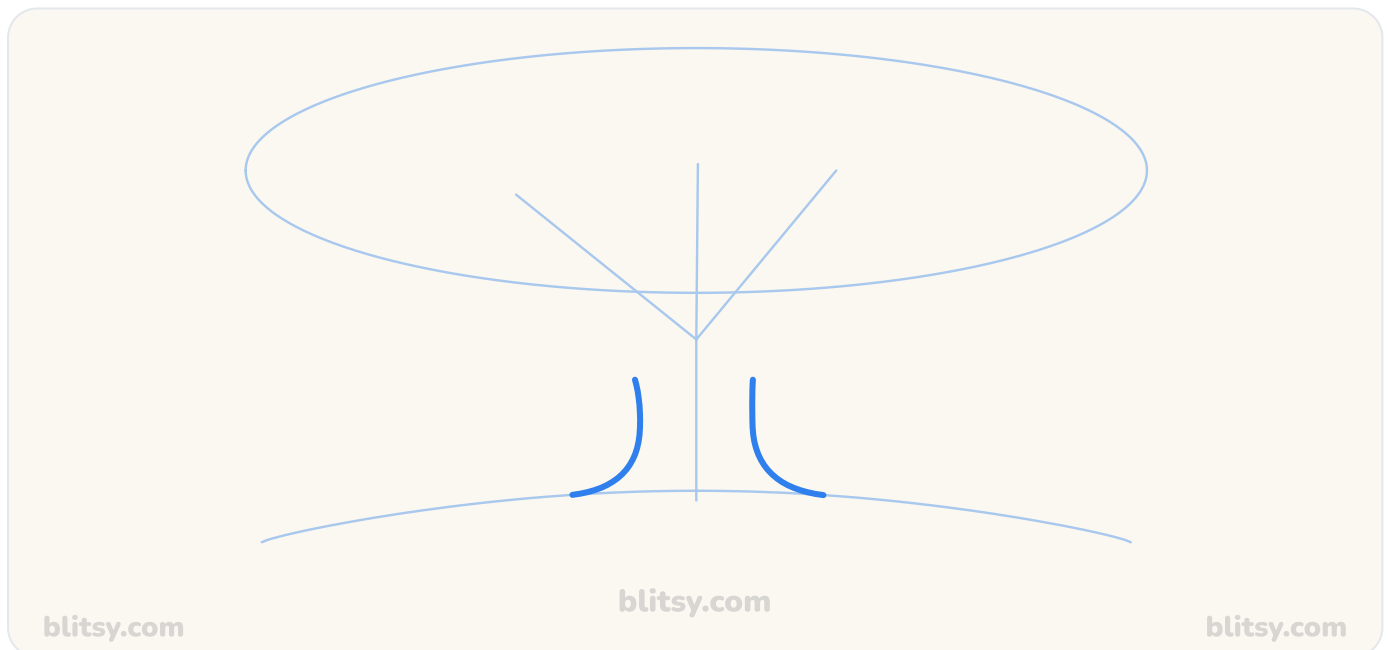
New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

[Read the full tutorial online →](#)

STEP 1 Sketch the ground, a stick Y and a crown oval

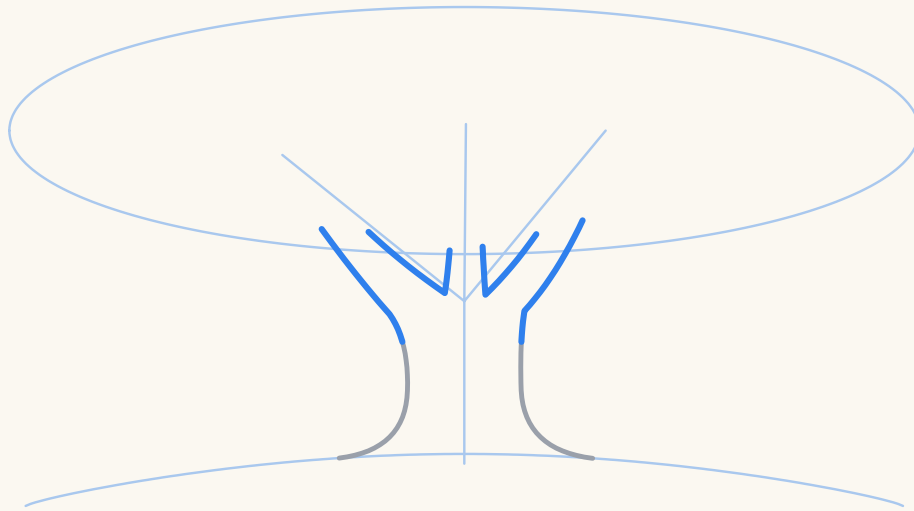
Start low on the page with a gentle hill curve. From its middle, draw a line up about a third of the page, then split it three ways: left, straight up and right. Around the top, add a wide, flat oval spanning almost the whole paper. That oval is where the leaves will live, and the stick Y shows where the branches run inside it.

 **Tip:** Keep the oval wider than it is tall, about three times wider.

STEP 2 Draw a thick trunk that flares into roots

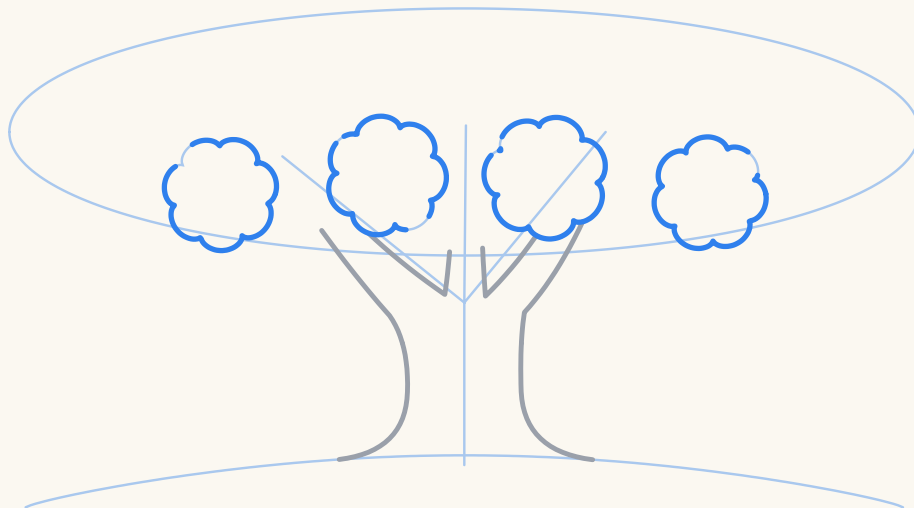
Draw two lines on either side of the stick and let them run down to the hill. Near the ground, curve both outward so the trunk spreads like a skirt. That flare is what makes a tree look planted. A trunk that meets the ground as two straight posts looks pushed into the soil.

 **Tip:** Bend the root curves late, only in the bottom quarter of the trunk.

STEP 3 Split the trunk into three branches

Where the stick Y splits, carry the outer trunk lines up and out along the left and right guides. Then draw a narrow V on each side of the middle guide, so a smaller third branch rises between the big ones. Let every branch taper a little as it climbs, and stop the lines at the bottom of the oval.

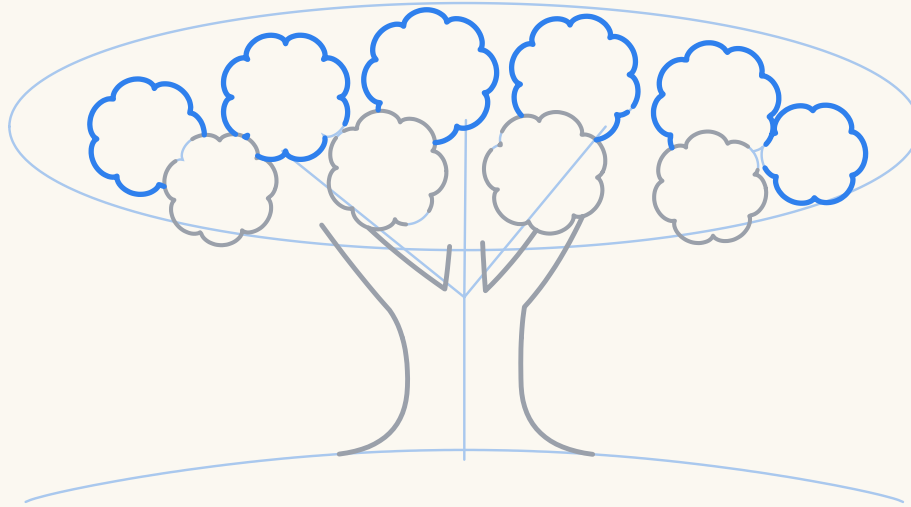
 **Tip:** Branches should never be wider than the trunk they grow from.

STEP 4 Add the front row of leaf clusters

Now the leaves. Draw four round, bumpy shapes along the lower half of the oval, like small clouds with scalloped edges. I draw each one as a chain of little bumps going around in a circle rather than one smooth circle, because the bumps are what tell people they're looking at leaves.

 **Tip:** Make the bumps different sizes so the clusters don't look stamped.

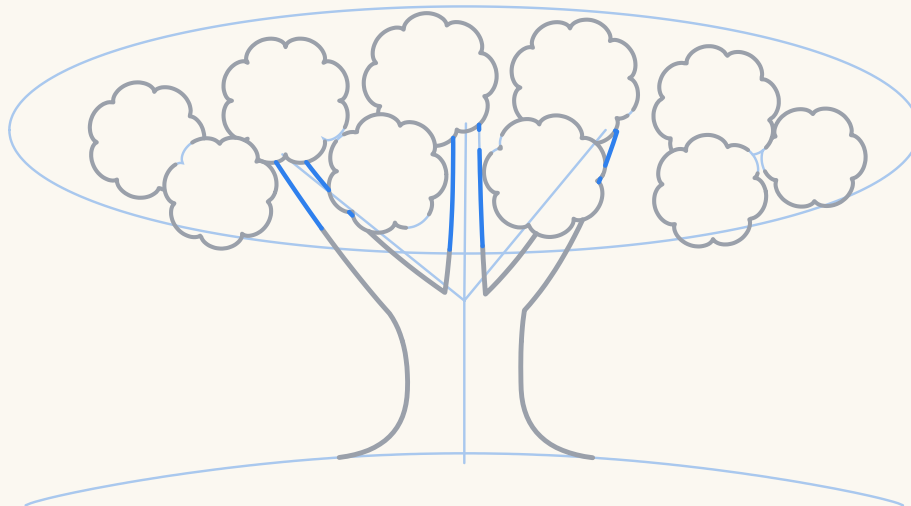
STEP 5 Stack the upper clusters behind them



Add six more bumpy clusters higher up, filling the top of the oval from side to side. These sit behind the front row, so wherever a new cluster runs into a front one, stop your line at its edge. Skipping that habit is why so many crowns turn into a pile of crossing circles.

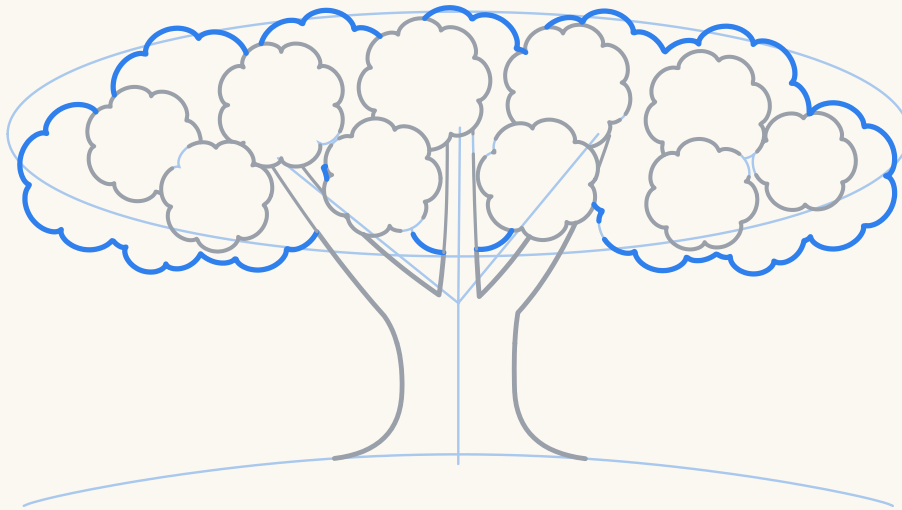
Tip: Ask which cluster is closer before every line. The closer one stays whole.

STEP 6 Let branch tips peek through the gaps



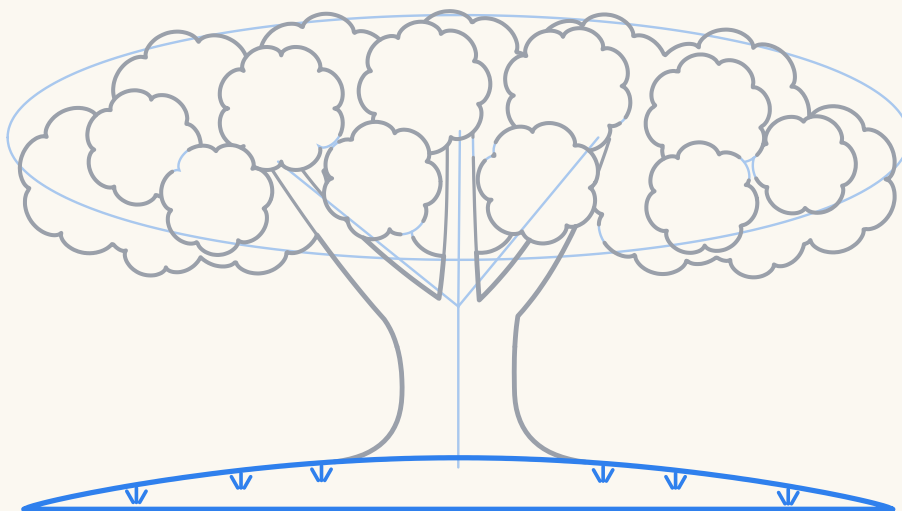
Look for the small spaces left between the clusters. Inside a few of them, continue the branch lines from step 3 so the wood seems to pass behind the leaves. The middle branch shows best. A short piece in each gap is enough for the eye to connect the branches all the way up.

Tip: Line up each branch piece with the part below it, like a ruler hidden behind the leaves.

STEP 7 Fill the outer crown with back clusters

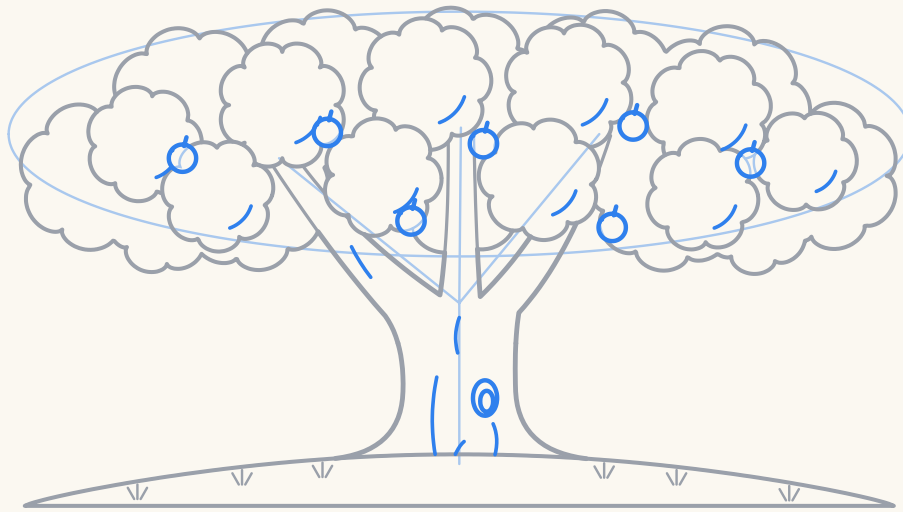
Wrap a bumpy line around the outside of everything, filling the oval right to its edges. Let it dip a little lower on both sides than in the middle, so the crown droops the way heavy leafy trees do. These are the leaves furthest back, so the line stops wherever a front cluster or a branch is in the way.

 **Tip:** Bigger bumps on the outer edge make the crown look fuller from a distance.

STEP 8 Draw the grass mound and tufts

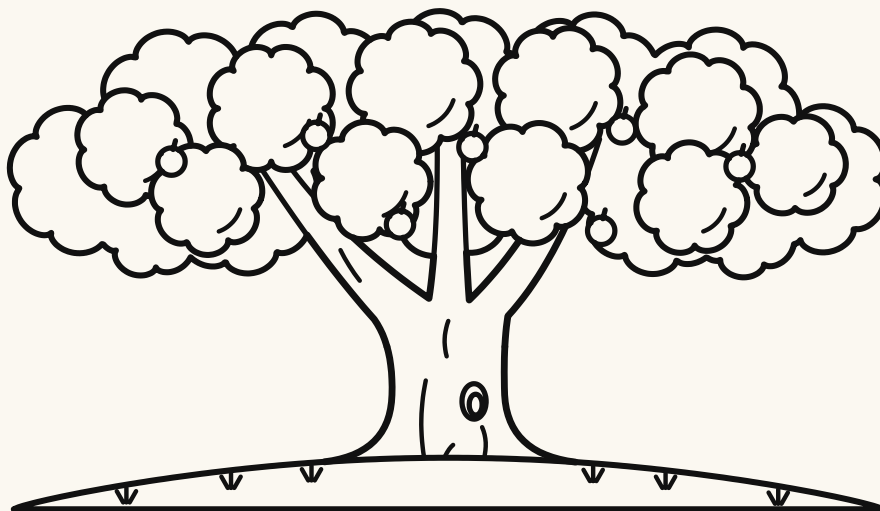
Go over the hill guide with a firm curve, then close it with a flat line along the bottom. The roots should sit right on that top curve. Scatter six small grass tufts across the hill, each made of three short strokes fanning out from one point, and keep them away from the trunk.

 **Tip:** Put the tufts at different heights on the hill instead of in one row.

STEP 9 Add bark lines, a knothole and apples

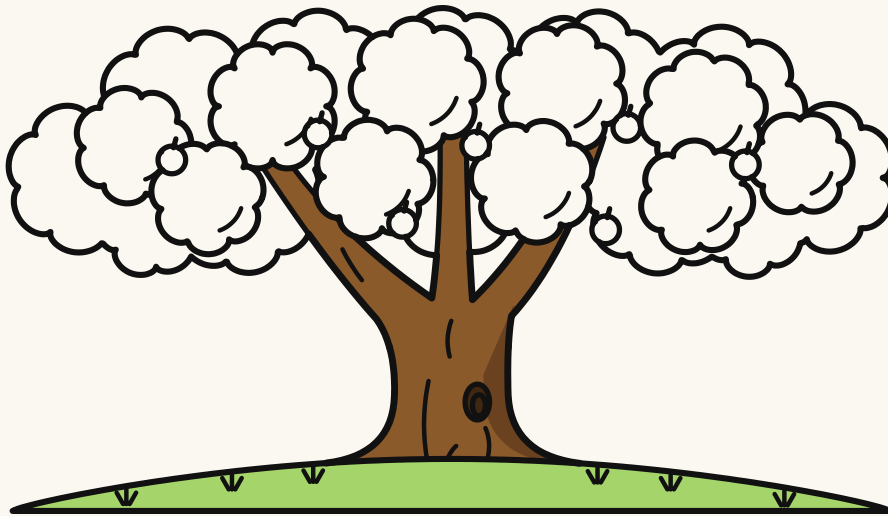
On the trunk, draw a few short, wavy up-and-down lines, plus two on the branches. Below the split, add a tall oval knothole with a smaller oval inside. Then dot seven small circles over the crown for apples, each with a tiny stem. A short curved mark on the lower right of every front cluster hints at the shadow under each clump.

 **Tip:** Leave gaps between bark lines; five or six are plenty for the whole trunk.

STEP 10 Ink the tree and erase the helper lines

Trace all the keeper lines with your black pen, from the trunk and clusters down to the tufts. Wait a minute for the ink to dry. Then rub out the oval, the stick Y, the hill guide and the bits of cluster outline crossing the apples. What's left is a clean line drawing that already looks like a tree.

 **Tip:** Ink the big outer outline first, while your hand is fresh and steady.

STEP 11 Color the trunk and the grass

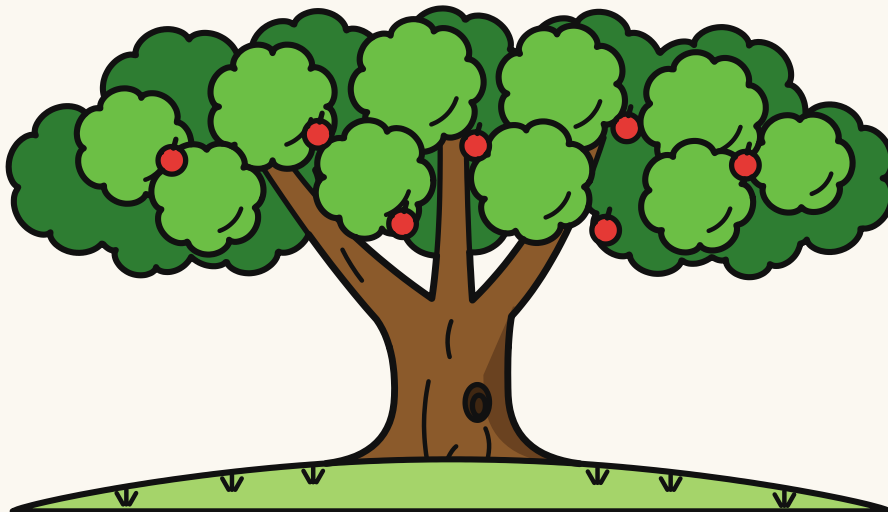
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Fill the trunk and the branch pieces with medium brown. Go over a thin strip along the right side of the trunk with dark brown, and fill the knot hole with your darkest brown. That darker side makes the trunk look round instead of flat. Finish the hill in light green.

 **Tip:** Press lightly for the first layer of brown; you can always add more.

STEP 12 Color the leafy crown and apples

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Color the back clusters, the ones around the outside and in the gaps, dark green. Use a brighter, lighter green for the ten front clusters. The two greens give the crown its depth, so don't skip the dark one. Color the apples red last.

 **Tip:** Color each cluster in small circles to match the bumpy edges.