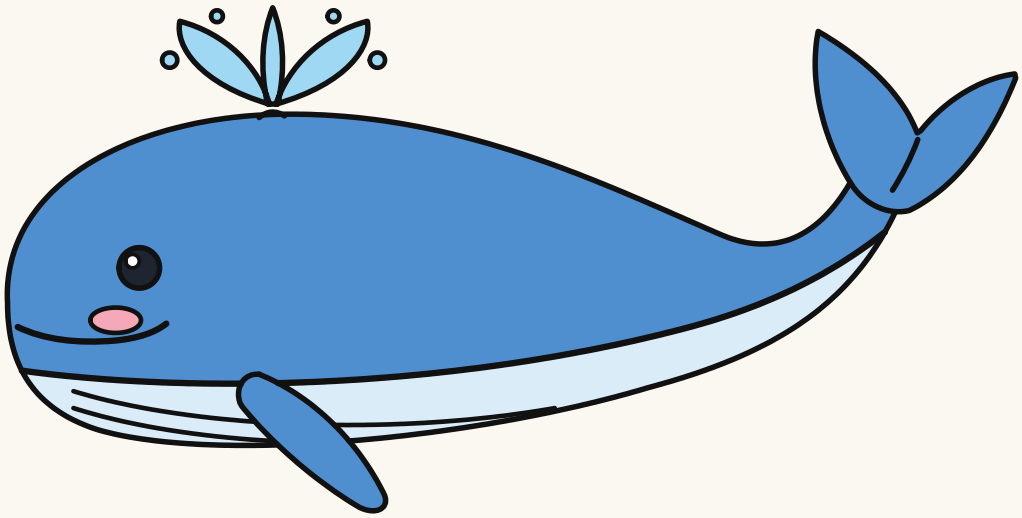
How to Draw a Whale

10 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

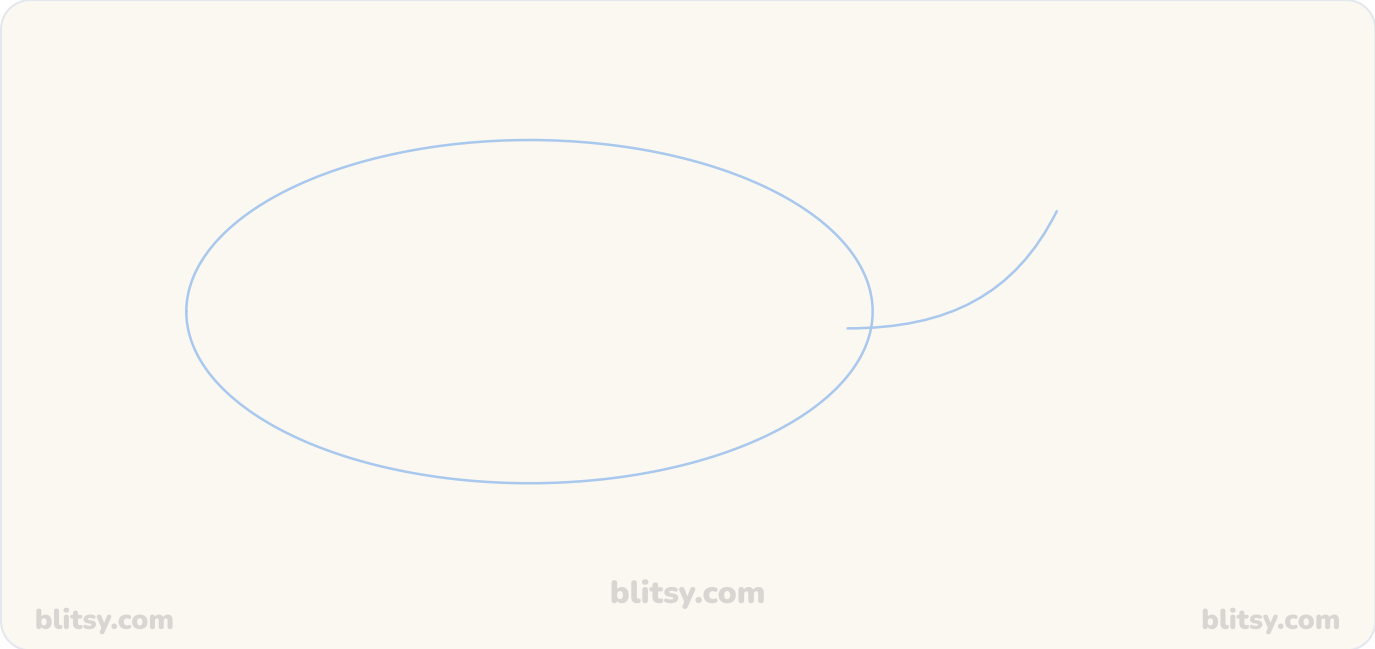
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- Plain paper

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 →

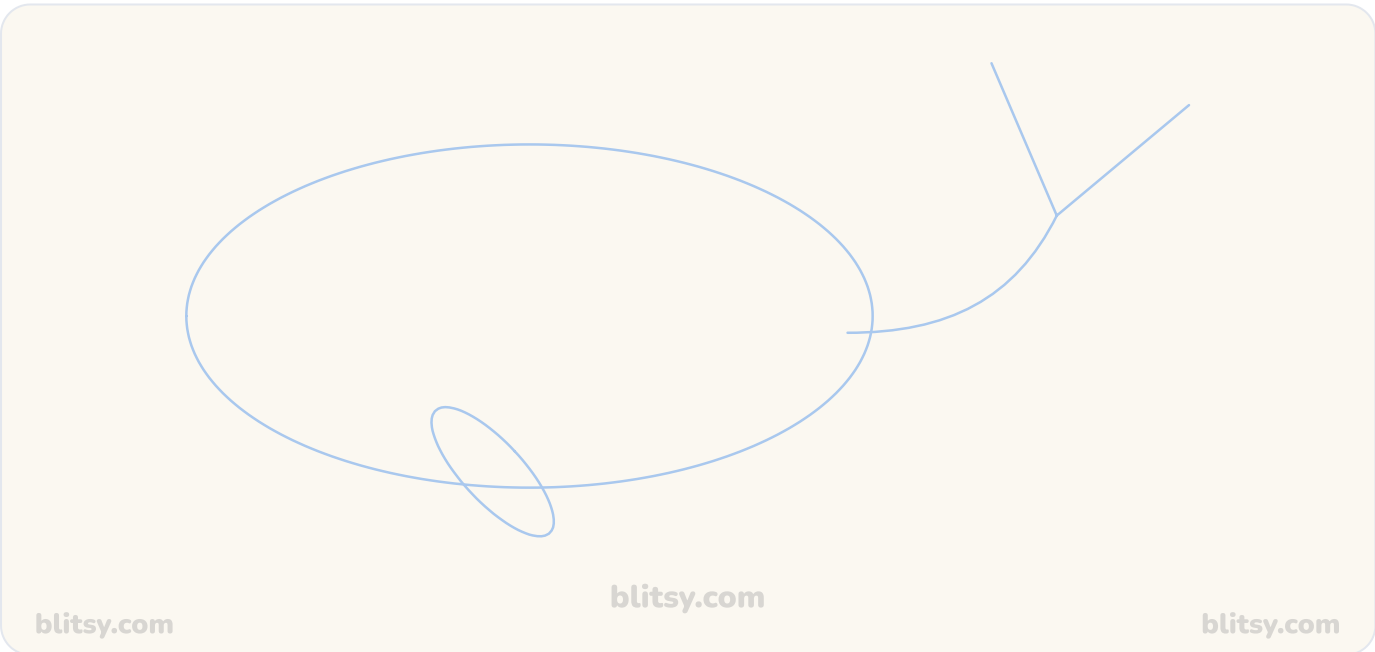
STEP 1 Sketch one long body oval



Lightly draw a wide oval across the left two thirds of your paper. It should be about twice as wide as it is tall. From the right end of the oval, draw a curved line that sweeps right and then bends upward. That curve marks the tail, which is just a narrowing continuation of the body.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the oval with your whole arm, not just your fingers. Big ovals come out rounder that way.

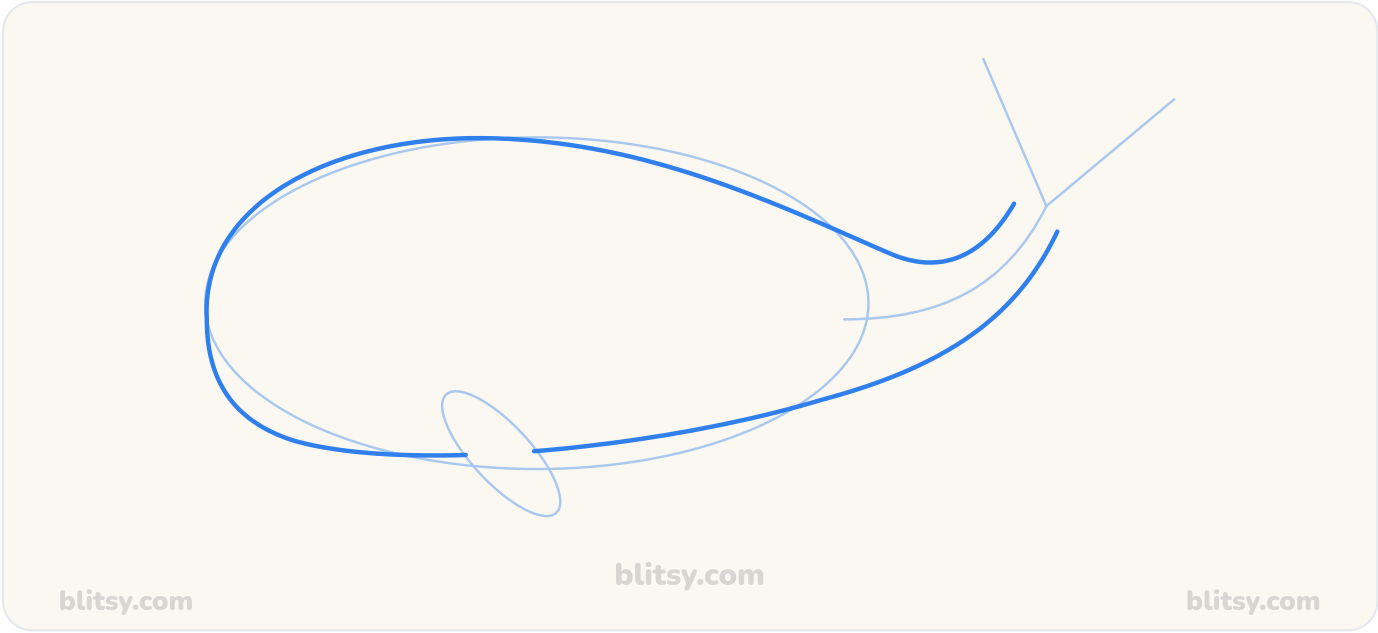
STEP 2 Add guides for the tail and flipper



At the top end of the tail curve, draw two straight lines spreading out like a wide letter V. One points up and a little left, the other up and to the right. These show where the flukes will go. Then add a thin, tilted oval near the bottom of the body, slightly left of center, for the flipper.

💡 **Tip:** Make the V wide open. A narrow V turns the tail into a fish tail.

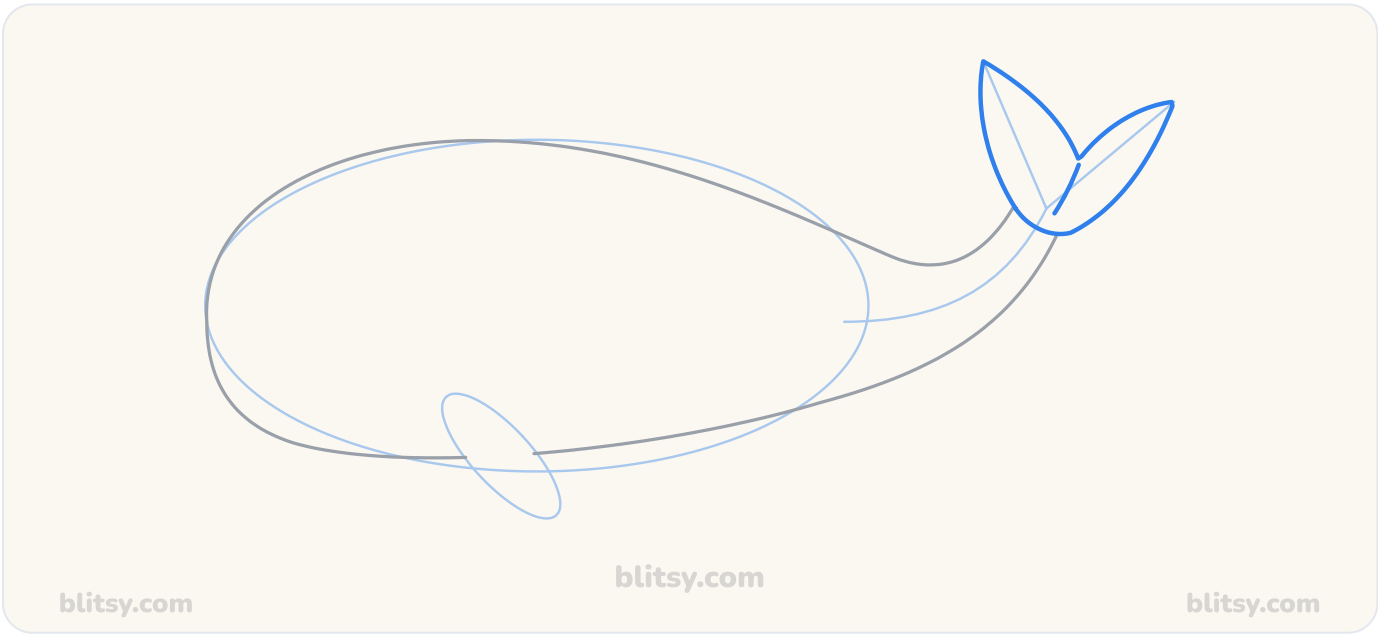
STEP 3 Draw the whale body outline



Now trace the real shape over your guides. I begin at the front, where the head is tall and rounded, almost like a bump of bread dough. Follow the oval along the back, then let the top line dip down and curve up again as it heads into the tail. The belly line goes underneath, rising gently toward the tail so the body gets thinner.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the front of the head blunt. A pointed nose makes it look like a shark or a dolphin.

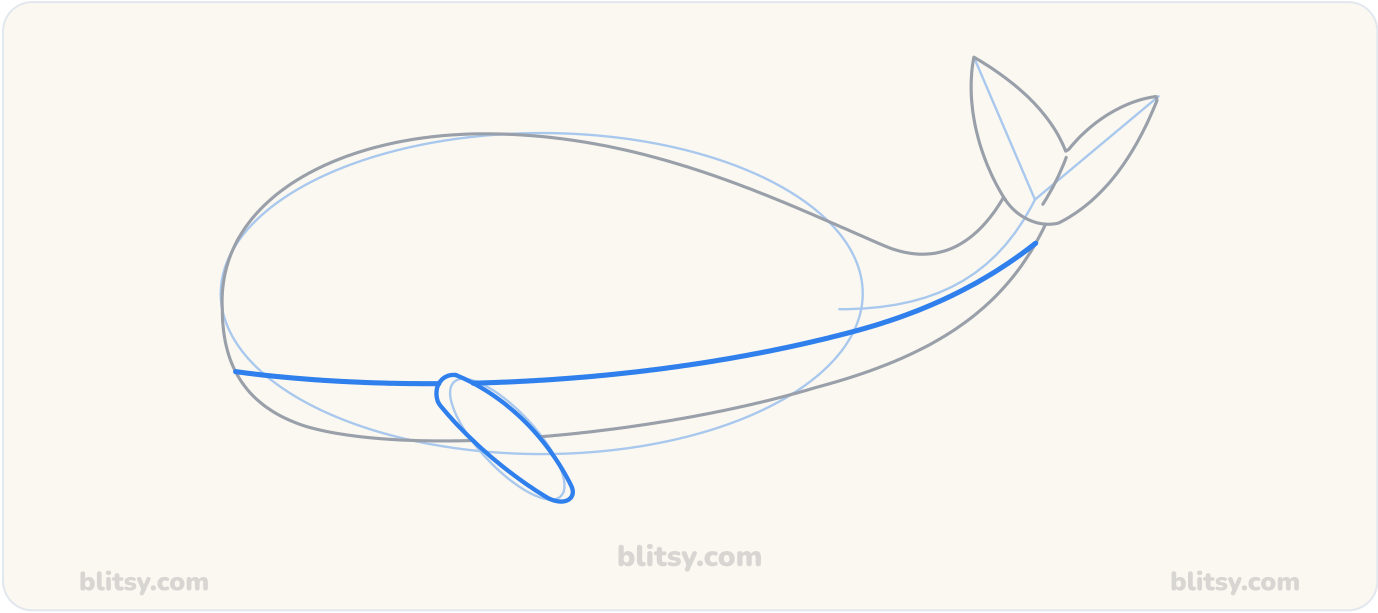
STEP 4 Shape the two tail flukes



Use the V lines as the middle of each fluke. This is the part I slow down on. Draw each one like a long leaf that is pointy at the tip and wide where it joins the tail. Where the two leaves meet, leave a small dip, then add a short line down from that dip. That tiny crease makes the tail look like one piece that splits in two.

💡 **Tip:** Let the left fluke stand a bit taller than the right. Slight unevenness looks more alive.

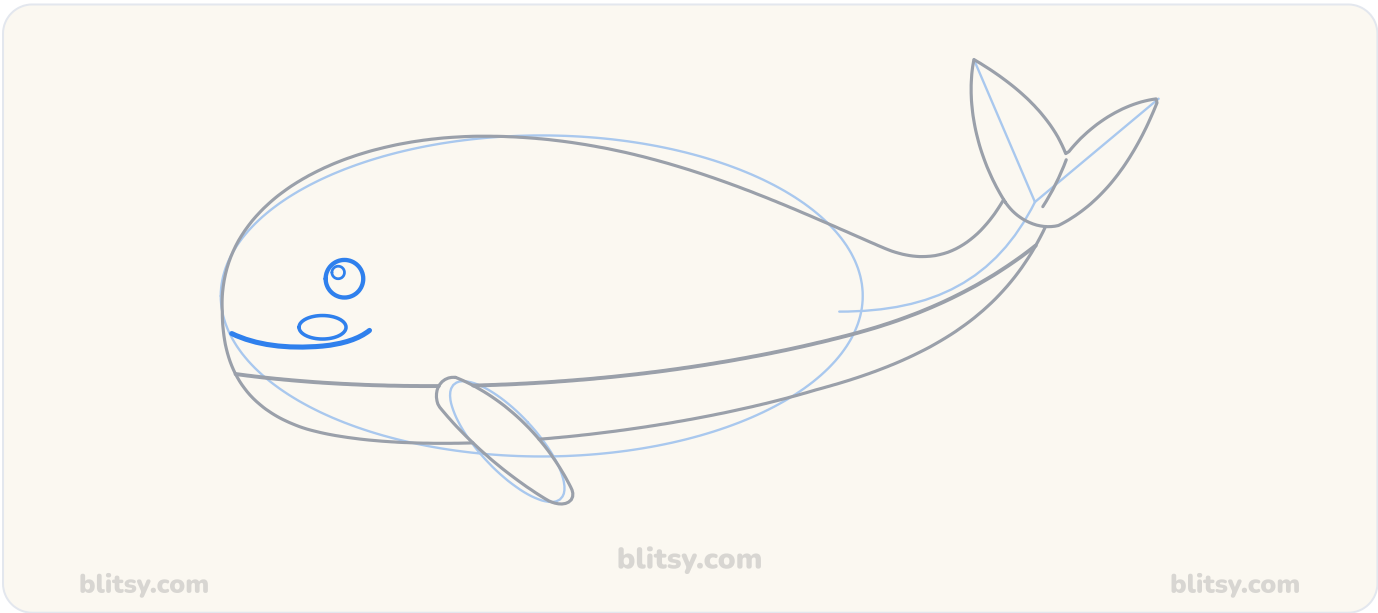
STEP 5 Add the flipper and the belly line



Turn the flipper guide into a rounded paddle: start where it touches the body and end with a soft, round tip. Next, draw a long smooth line from just under the face all the way to the tail. Everything below that line becomes the pale belly. Stop the belly line where it meets the flipper, because the flipper sits in front.

💡 **Tip:** Pull long curves in one slow stroke. Lots of short strokes leave a hairy line.

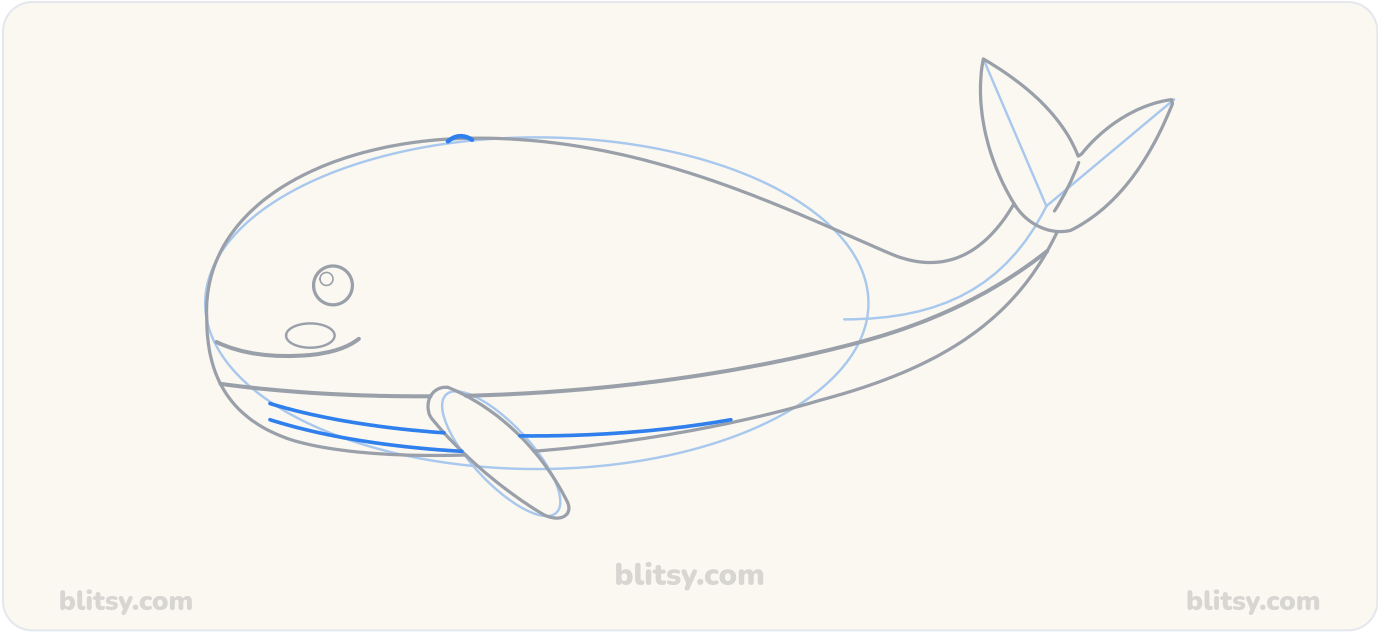
STEP 6 Draw the eye, smile and cheek



A whale's eye is small for its size, but on a cartoon I make it a bit bigger. Place a circle about a third of the way back along the head, above the smile. Add a tiny circle inside for the shine. Below it, draw a long curve from the very front that turns up at the end, then a small oval cheek just under the eye.

💡 **Tip:** Put the eye above the end of the smile, not over the middle of it. That's what makes the face read as a grin.

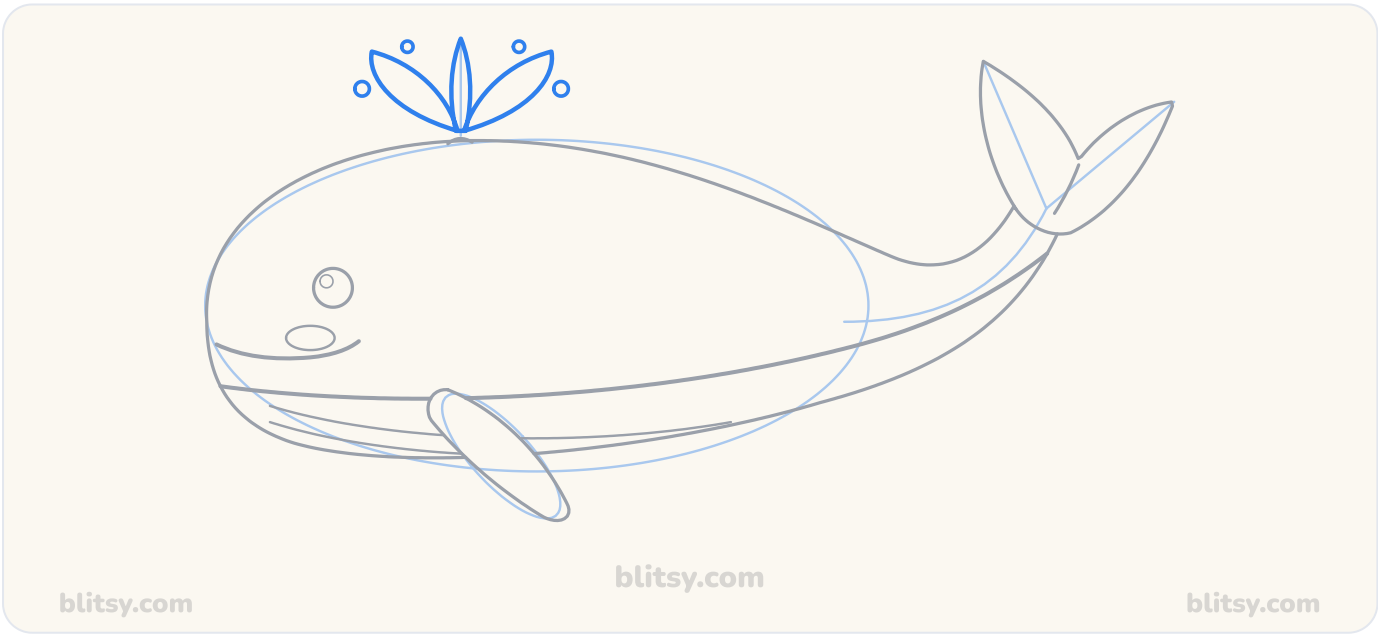
STEP 7 Add the belly grooves and blowhole



Real whales like humpbacks and blue whales have long folds under the throat. I find two thin lines inside the belly area, following its curve, are enough to suggest them. Stop them before the flipper and pick them up again on the other side. On top of the head, add a little curved mark for the blowhole.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the grooves thinner than the outline. They are texture, not edges.

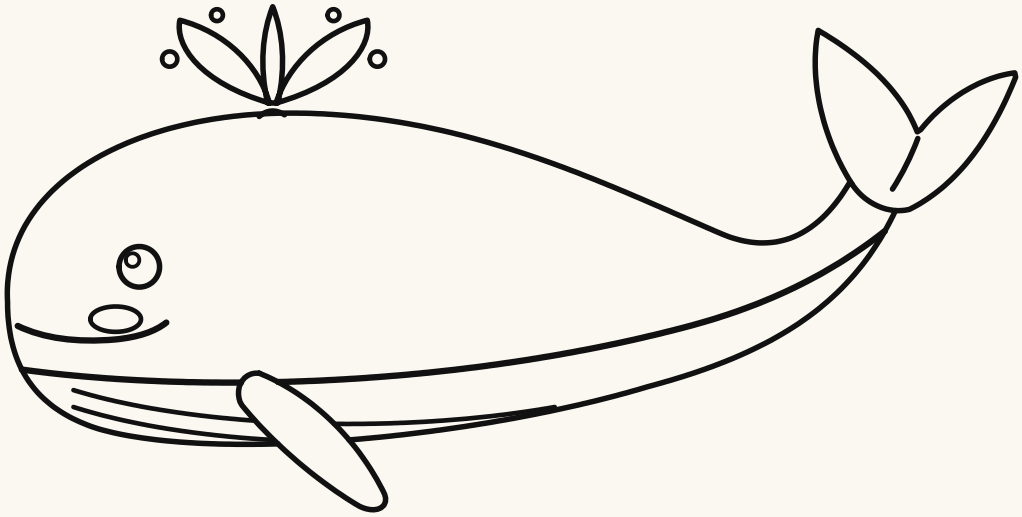
STEP 8 Draw the water spout



Draw a short, faint guide line straight up from the blowhole. Around it, build three leaf shapes: a thin one going straight up and two wider ones leaning out to each side. Add four small circles around them for flying drops. I keep the spout smaller than the head so it doesn't steal the attention from the face.

💡 **Tip:** Space the drops evenly on both sides so the spout looks balanced.

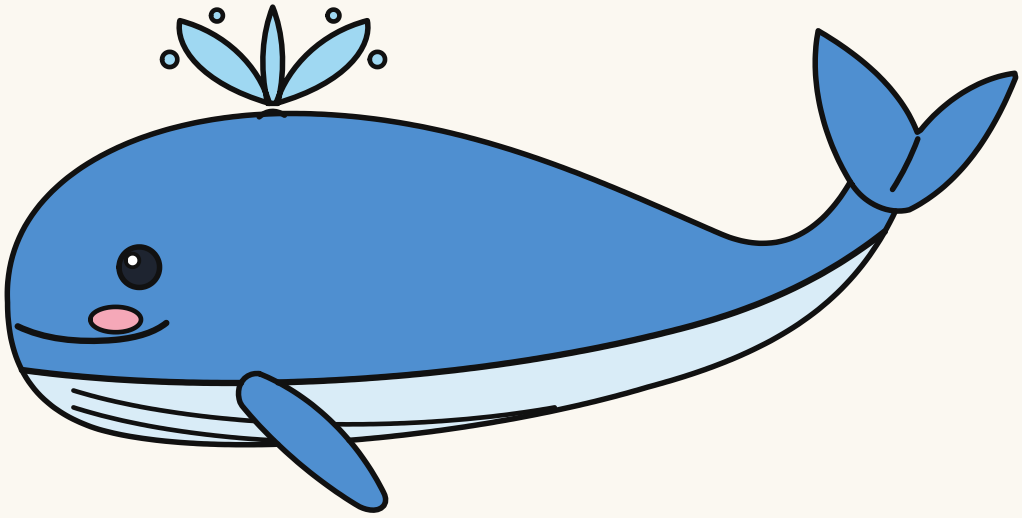
STEP 9 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Trace every line you want to keep with your black pen. Most beginners press too hard on the long body lines, so go slowly and steady your hand on the paper. Skip the oval, the tail curve, the V lines and the spout guide. Wait for the ink to dry, then erase all the pencil.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the small face details first while your hand is steady, then the long body lines.

STEP 10 Color your whale



Fill the body, tail and flipper with a medium blue. The belly gets the palest blue you have, or you can leave it white. Color the spout and drops a light sky blue so the water looks different from the skin. Finish with a pink cheek and a black eye, leaving the little shine circle white.

💡 **Tip:** Color the body in long strokes from head to tail, the way water slides along it.