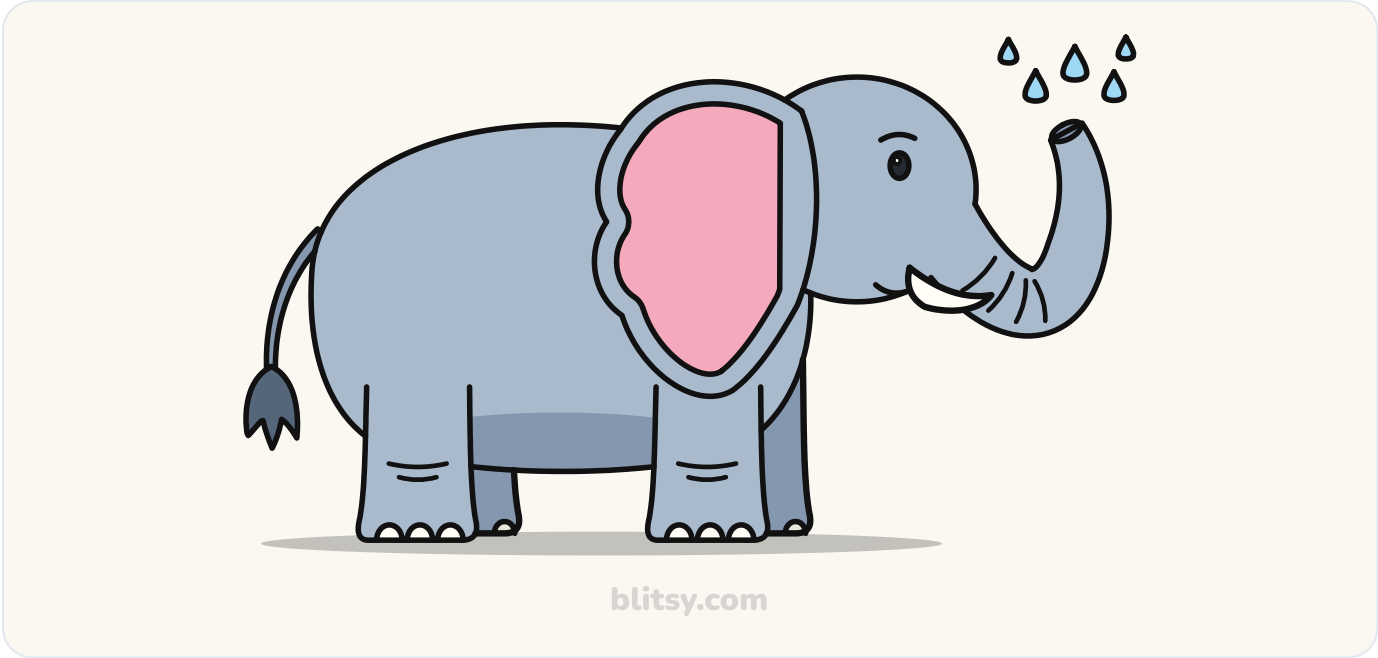
How to Draw an Elephant

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

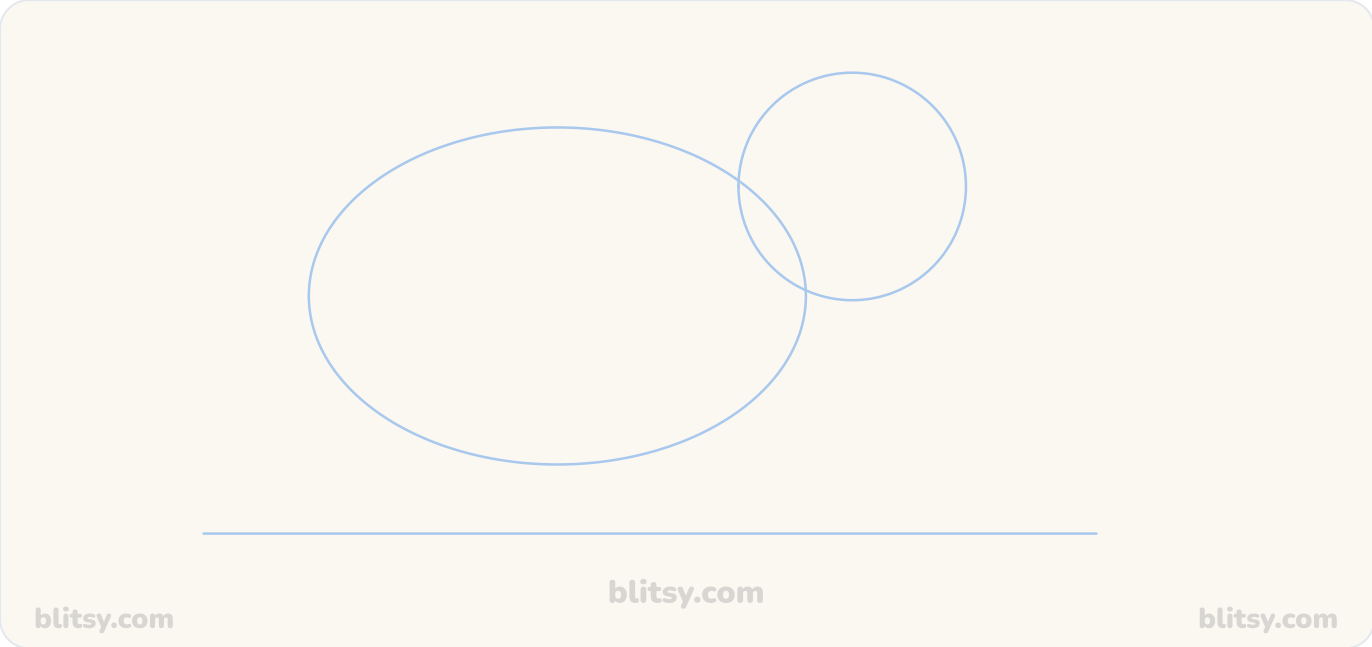
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper, landscape

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 →

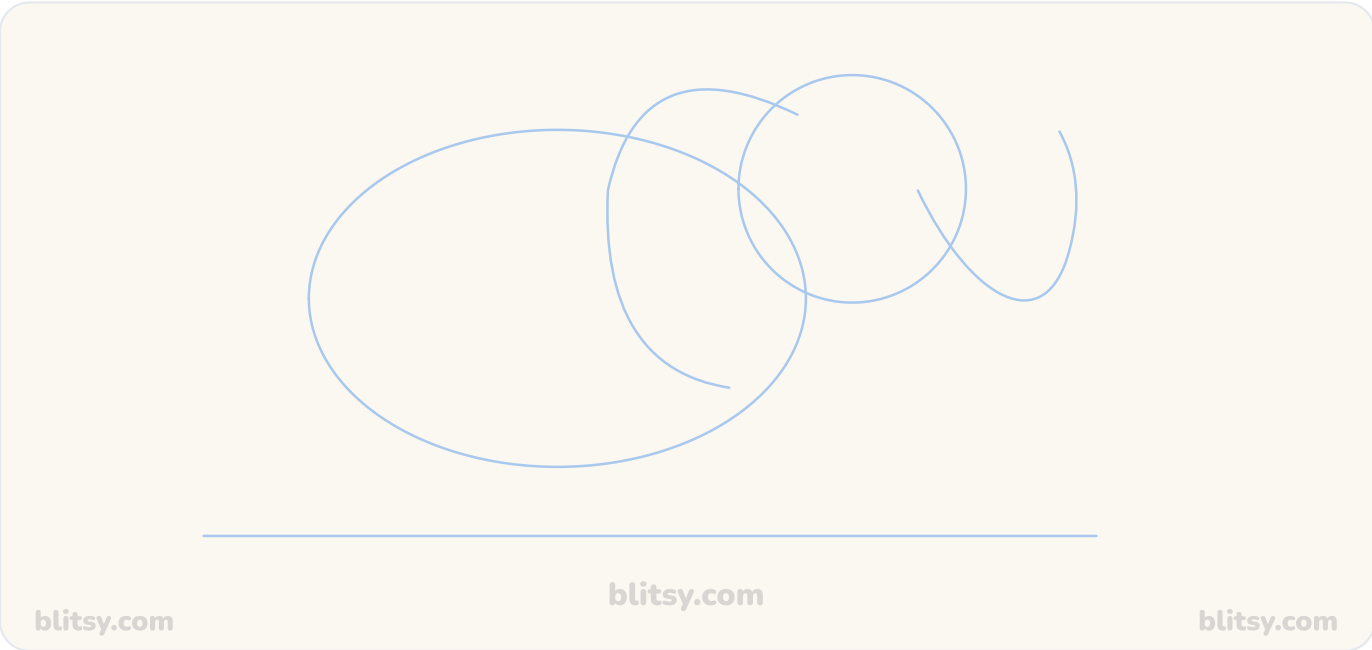
STEP 1 Draw a ground line, a body oval and a head circle



Start with a long ground line near the bottom of your paper. Above it, draw a big wide oval for the body, a bit left of center, and leave a gap under it for the legs. Then add a circle on the upper right that overlaps the front of the oval. Make it about half as wide as the oval, so the body still wins.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the oval with a few quick, loose passes instead of one careful line.

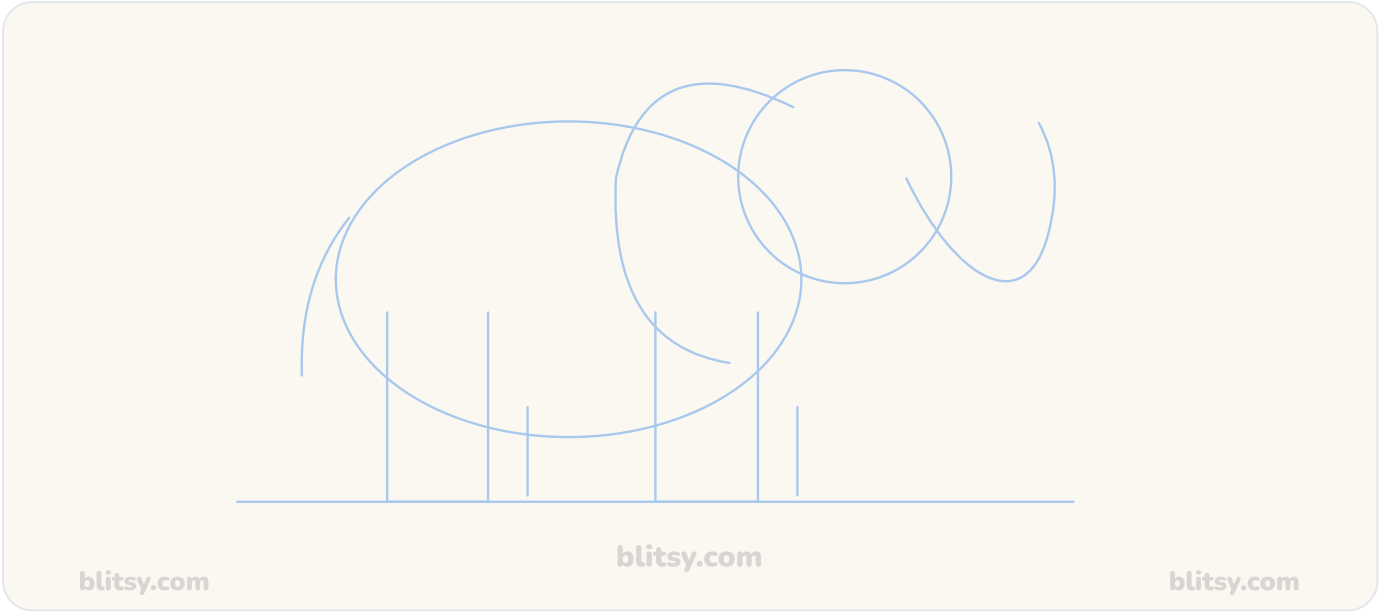
STEP 2 Sketch a trunk curve and an ear guide



From the lower front of the head circle, pull a line down and forward, then let it swing back up like a hook. That curve sets the whole pose, so I place it first. Next, draw a big rounded arc that starts at the top of the head, swings back over the body and comes down to about the middle of the oval. This is where the ear will sit.

💡 **Tip:** If the trunk curve looks like the letter J lying on its side, you've got it.

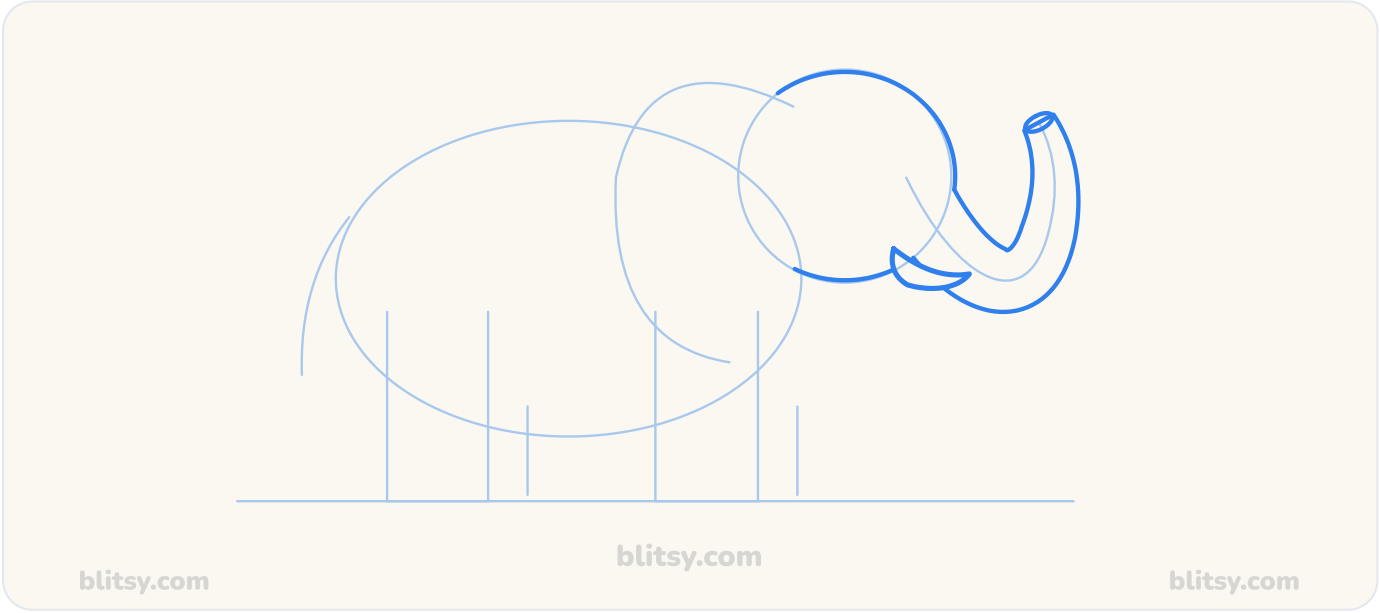
STEP 3 Add pillar guides for the legs and a tail line



Elephant legs are thick and straight, so plain vertical lines work well as guides. Drop two parallel lines from the back of the oval down to the ground for the near back leg, and two more under the front of the body for the near front leg. Add one short line just to the right of each for the far legs. A thin curve off the rump marks the tail.

💡 **Tip:** Space the two near legs widely apart. Legs too close together make the body look like it's balancing.

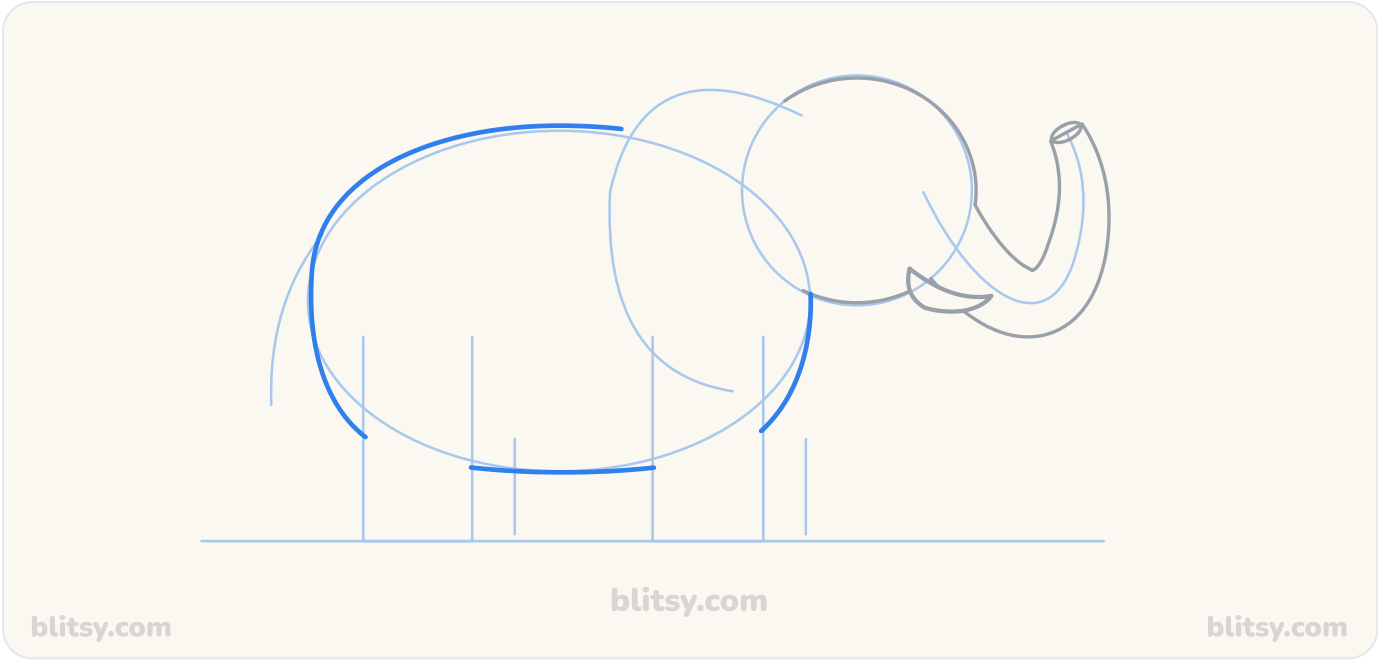
STEP 4 Outline the head, the trunk and the tusk



Go over the head circle with a firm line, but stop at the top where the ear will cover it. Now build the trunk around its curve: wide where it leaves the face, getting slimmer toward the tip. Finish the tip with a small oval opening. Tuck a short pointed tusk under the trunk, curving gently up, and let it overlap the trunk a little.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the trunk tip about half as wide as the base, or it turns into a hose.

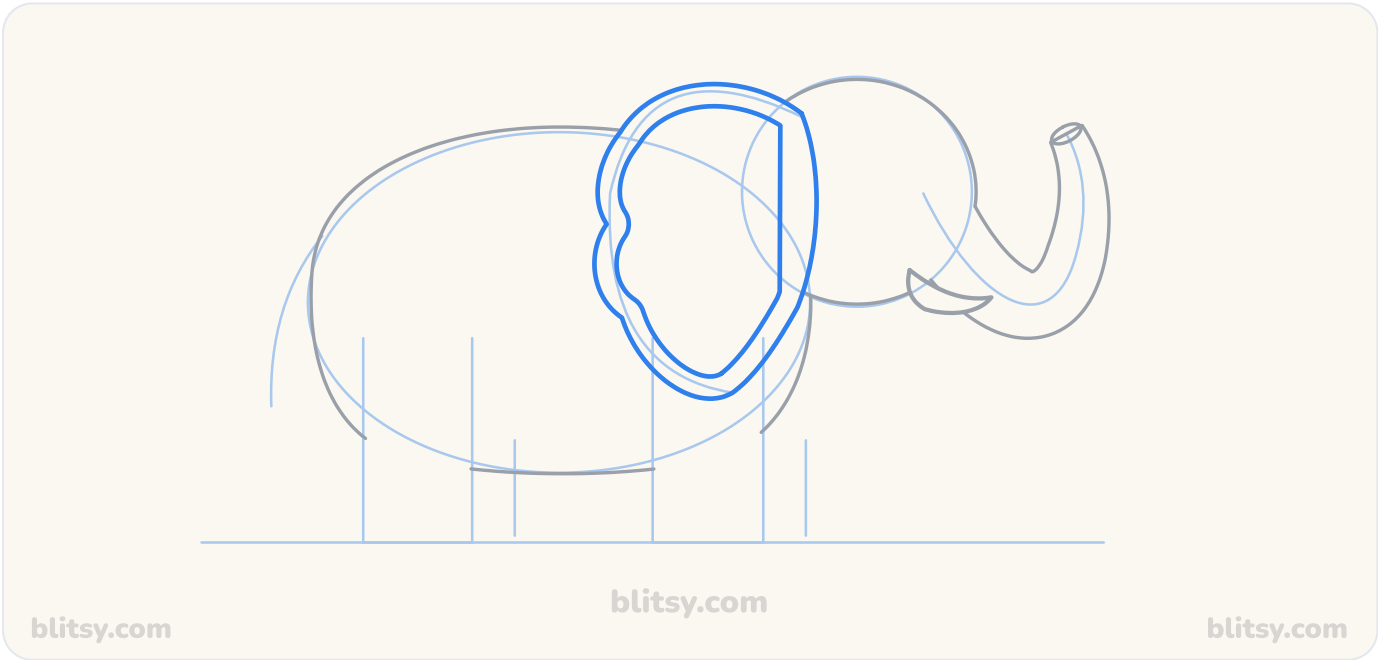
STEP 5 Shape the round back and belly



Trace around the body oval to make the real outline, lifting the back a little higher near the shoulders. The rump stays round. Along the bottom, draw just a shallow belly curve between where the legs will go. Skip the part behind the ear, since the ear will hide it.

💡 **Tip:** A slightly humped back near the head reads as elephant straight away.

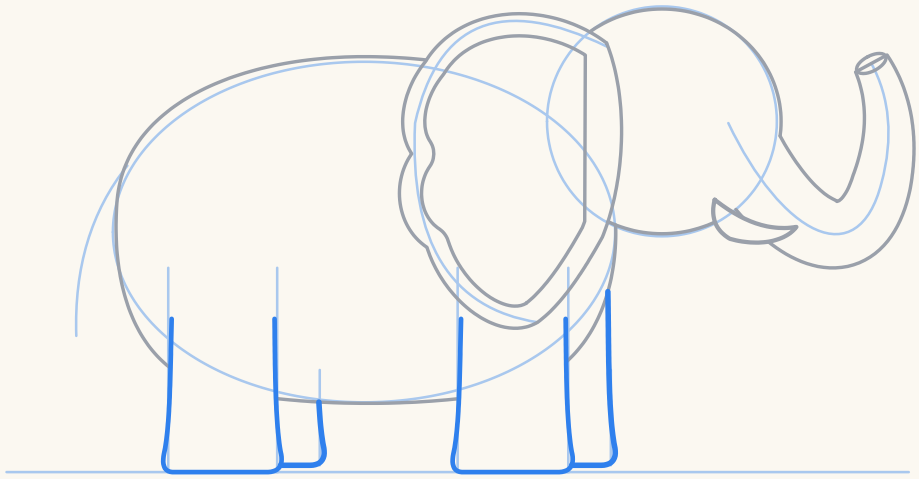
STEP 6 Draw the big fan-shaped ear



Start at the top of the head, sweep back over the body, and give the back edge two gentle waves before it rounds into a droopy lobe at the bottom. Bring the front edge up along the side of the head. Inside, draw a second line that follows the outside about a finger's width in, for the pink part.

💡 **Tip:** Go bigger than feels right. A small ear makes the elephant look like a mouse or a hippo.

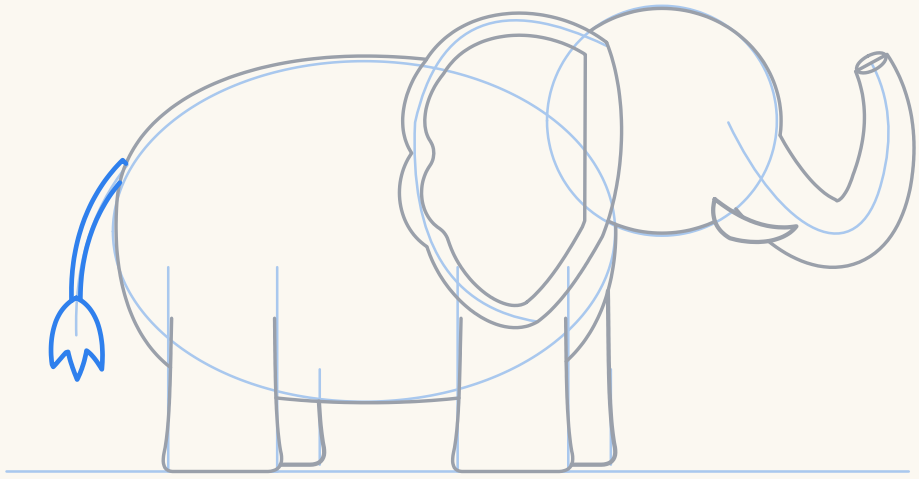
STEP 7 Build four thick pillar legs



Use your guides to draw the two near legs as wide tubes, with the sides flaring out a touch at the feet and flat bottoms resting on the ground. Behind each near leg, draw only the slice of the far leg you can see, a bit shorter and slightly narrower.

💡 **Tip:** Round off the bottom corners of each foot so the legs look heavy, not like table legs.

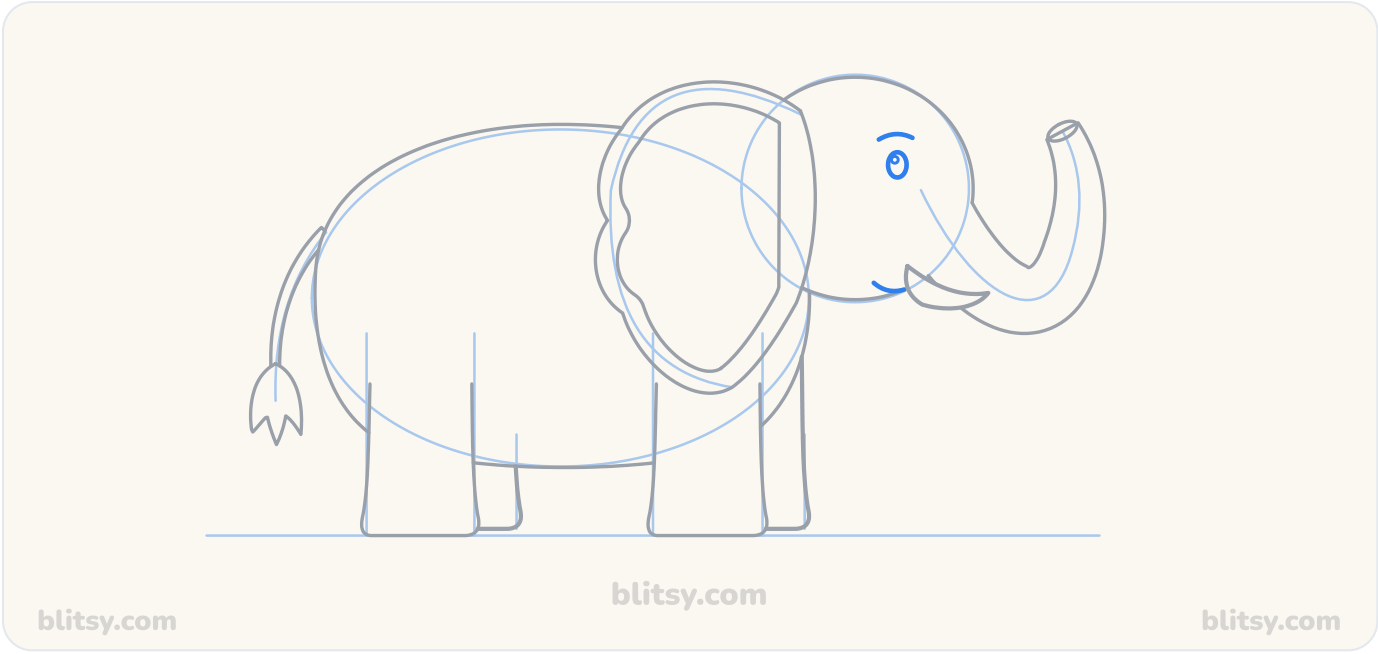
STEP 8 Add a thin tail with a tuft



Elephant tails are surprisingly skinny, almost like a rope. Draw two close lines that follow your tail guide down from the rump. At the bottom, add a small tuft with three pointed tips, a bit like a paintbrush. Most beginners make it far too thick.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the two tail lines close together, then let the tuft be a little chunkier.

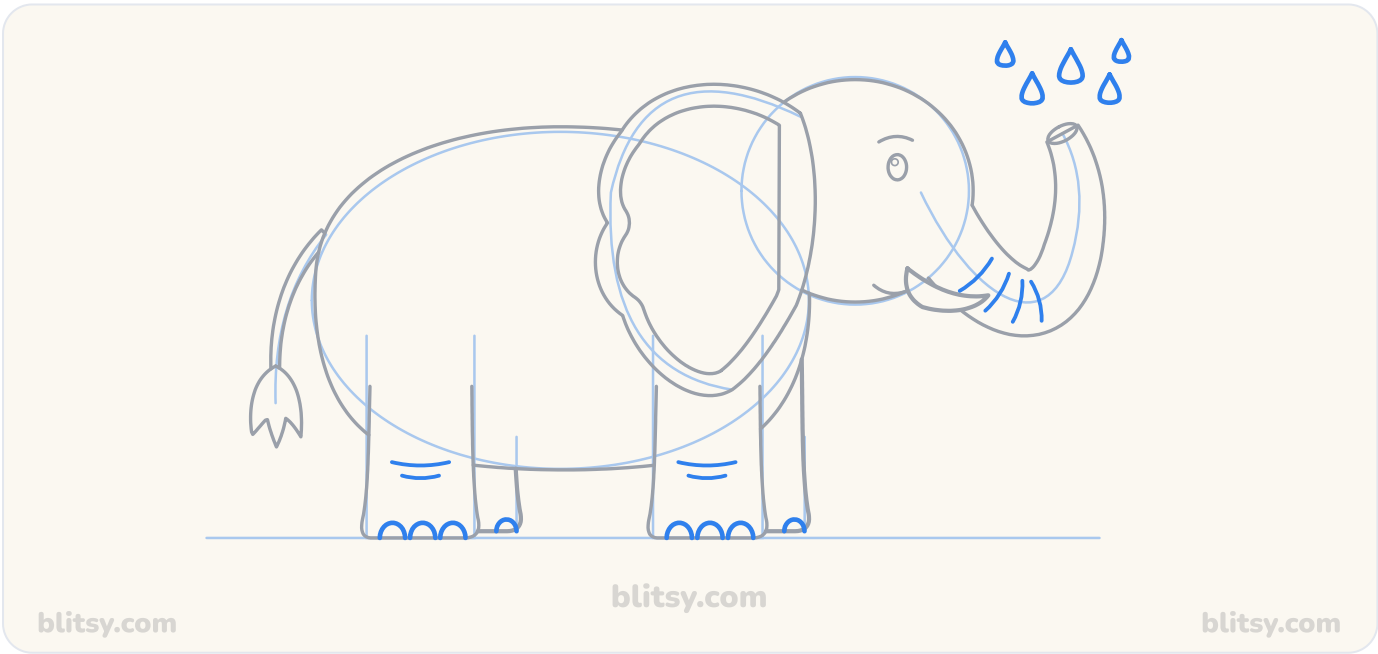
STEP 9 Give it a kind eye and a smile



Place a small oval eye in the upper middle of the head, closer to the trunk than to the ear. Leave a white dot inside it for a shine and draw a soft brow curve above. Under the tusk, add a short smiling line. A small eye is what makes an elephant look gentle.

💡 **Tip:** Put the shine dot on the side facing the trunk so the elephant looks forward.

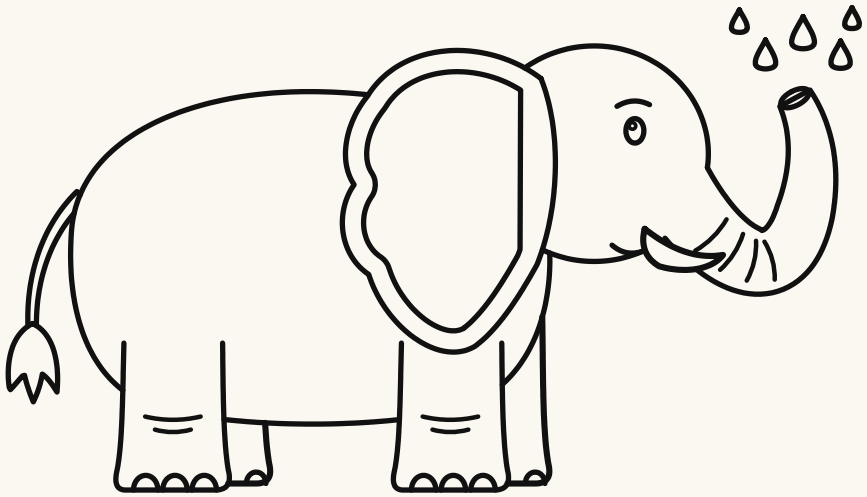
STEP 10 Add toenails, wrinkles and water drops



Elephants have big rounded toenails, so draw three little arches along the bottom of each near foot and one on each far foot. A few curved lines across the lower trunk and two short lines on each leg add wrinkles. Then, above the trunk tip, draw five small teardrops of different sizes, as if the elephant just sprayed water into the air.

💡 **Tip:** Stop at three or four wrinkle lines per spot. More starts to look like stripes.

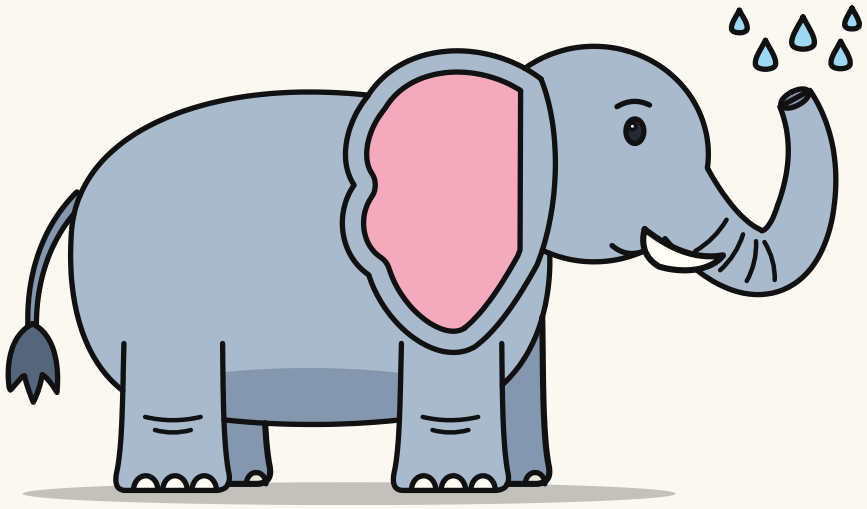
STEP 11 Ink the outline and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with a black marker. I start with the head and trunk, then the ear, then the body and legs, moving away from my drawing hand. Skip the oval, the circle and all the straight leg guides. Let the ink dry, then erase.

💡 **Tip:** Ink each trunk side in one long, steady stroke so the curve stays smooth.

STEP 12 Color your elephant



Light gray goes on the head, trunk, ear, body and near legs. With the darker gray, shade the bottom of the belly and fill the two far legs and the tail, which pushes them back and makes the body look round. Color the inner ear pink, keep the tusk and toenails white, and use dark gray for the tuft. Light blue on the drops finishes the splash.

💡 **Tip:** Press softly with the light gray and go over it twice. Big gray areas get streaky if you press hard.