How to Draw an Emoji

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

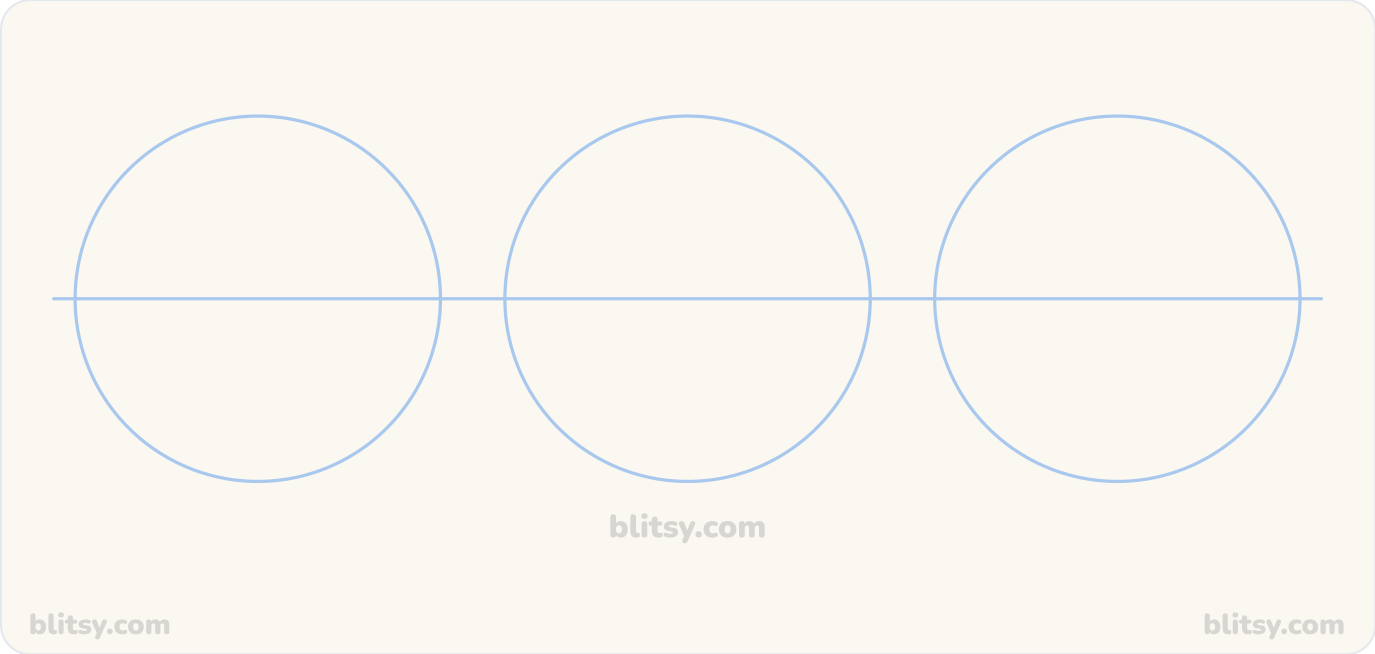
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Coloring pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

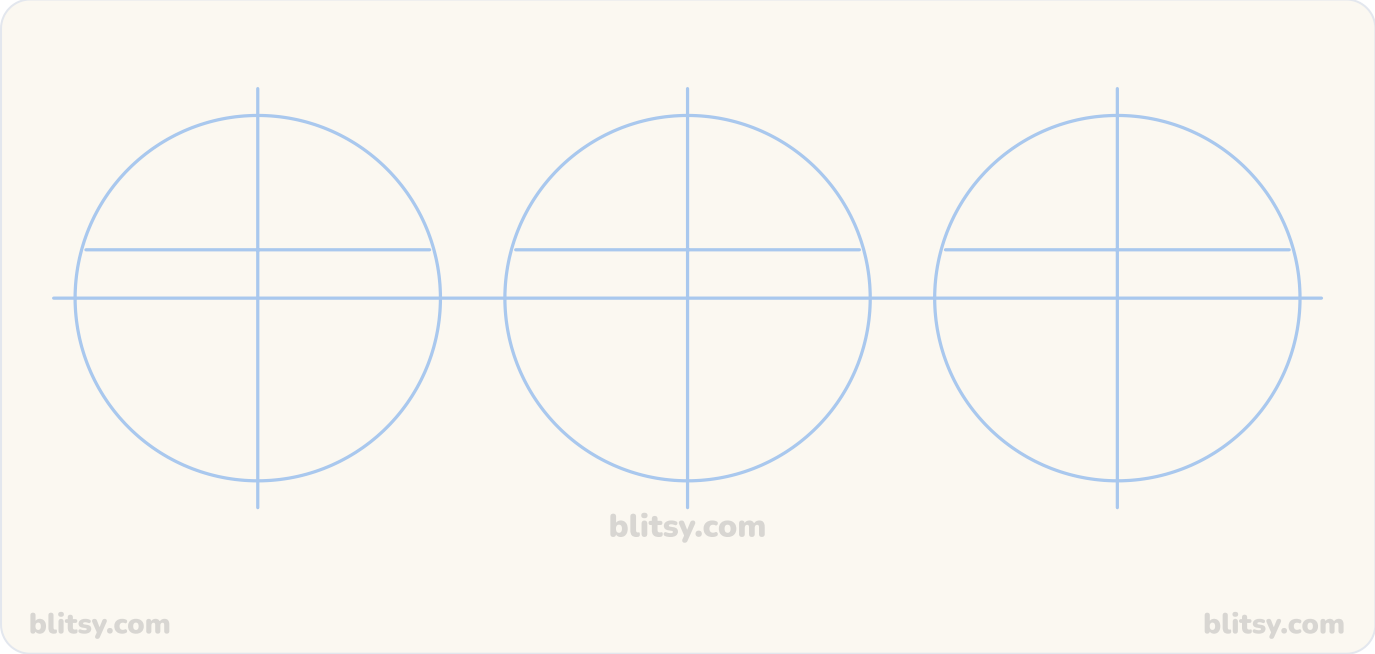
STEP 1 Draw a row line and three circles



Start with one long, light line straight across the middle of your paper. Now draw three circles of the same size along it, with the line passing right through the center of each one. Leave a small gap between them. I always draw the row line first, because it keeps all three faces at the same height.

💡 **Tip:** Trace the bottom of a cup three times if freehand circles keep coming out lumpy.

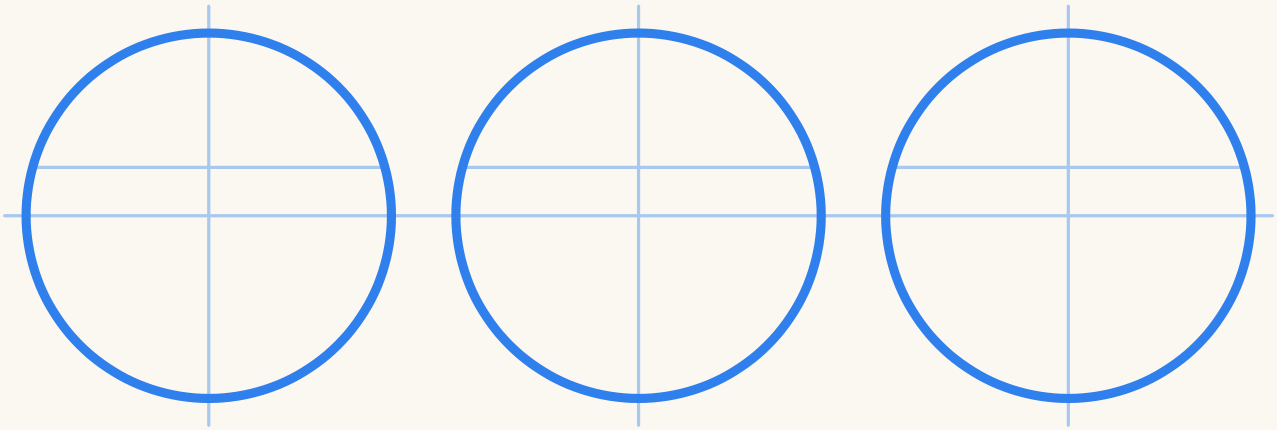
STEP 2 Add a center line and an eye line to each face



Inside each circle, draw a straight line from top to bottom through the middle. Then add a short level line a little above the row line. That upper line is where the eyes will sit. Anything you put left of the center line gets a twin at the same distance on the right.

💡 **Tip:** Put the eye line slightly above the middle, not on it, or the faces look sleepy.

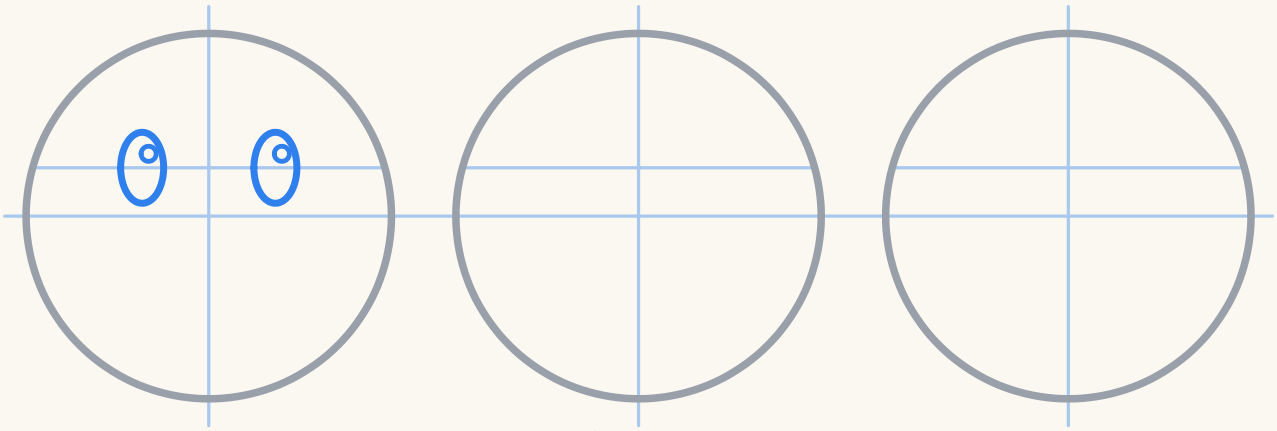
STEP 3 Go over the three face outlines



Pick the best version of each circle and go over it with a firmer pencil line. Keep the guide lines faint underneath. A firm outline now makes the next steps feel much more like a real face.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you go around each circle so your hand stays comfortable.

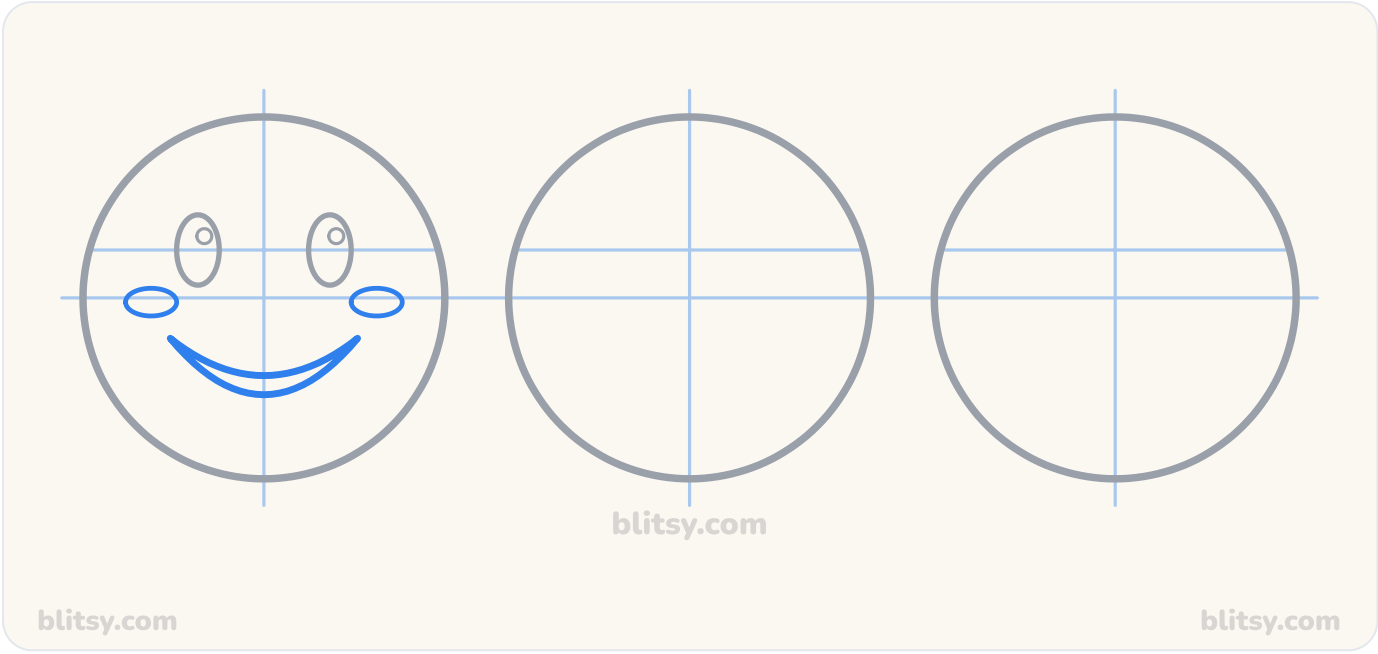
STEP 4 Give the first face two oval eyes



On the left face, draw two tall ovals sitting on the eye line, one on each side of the center line. Then put a tiny circle near the top right of each oval for the shine. Shines facing the same way make the eyes look alive.

💡 **Tip:** Make the ovals taller than they are wide. Round dots look surprised, not happy.

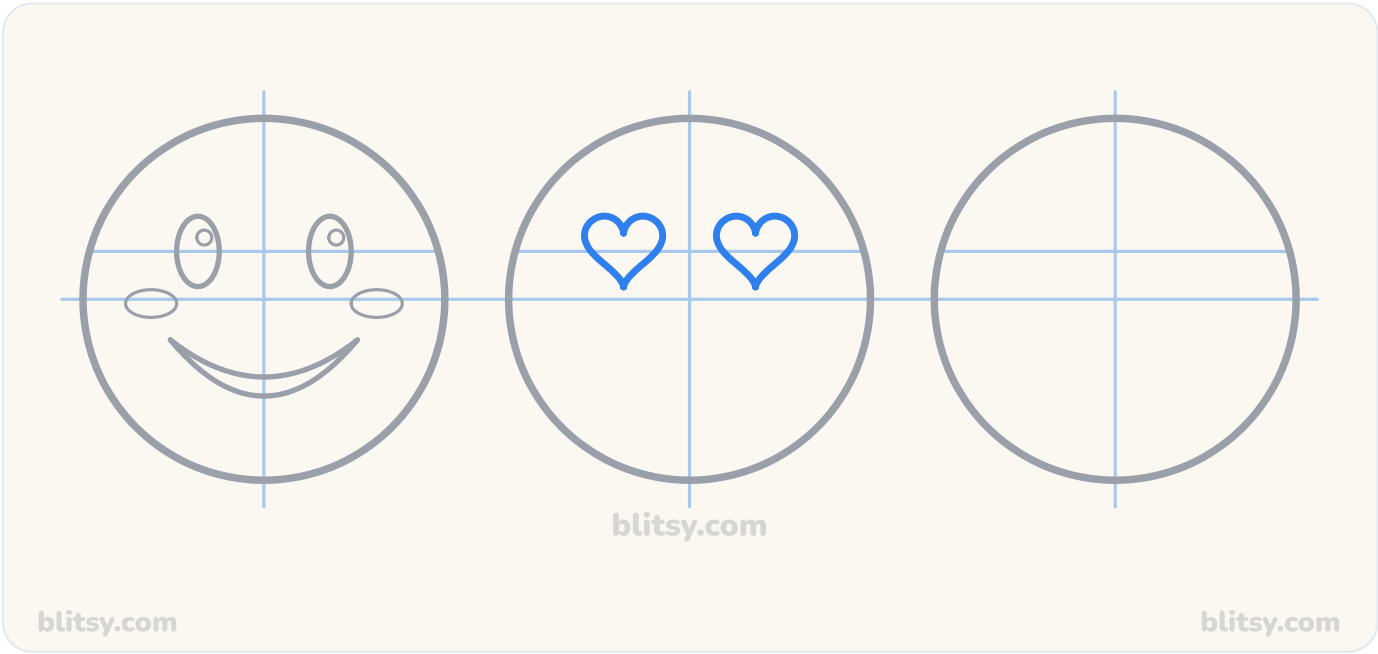
STEP 5 Draw a curved smile and round cheeks



Below the row line, draw a wide curve like a bowl, centered on the middle line. Then draw a second, shallower curve that joins both ends, so the smile becomes a thin crescent. Add a small flat oval under each eye for the cheeks. My rule for this face: the smile should be a little wider than the space between the eyes.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the cheeks just under the eyes and outside them, never touching the smile.

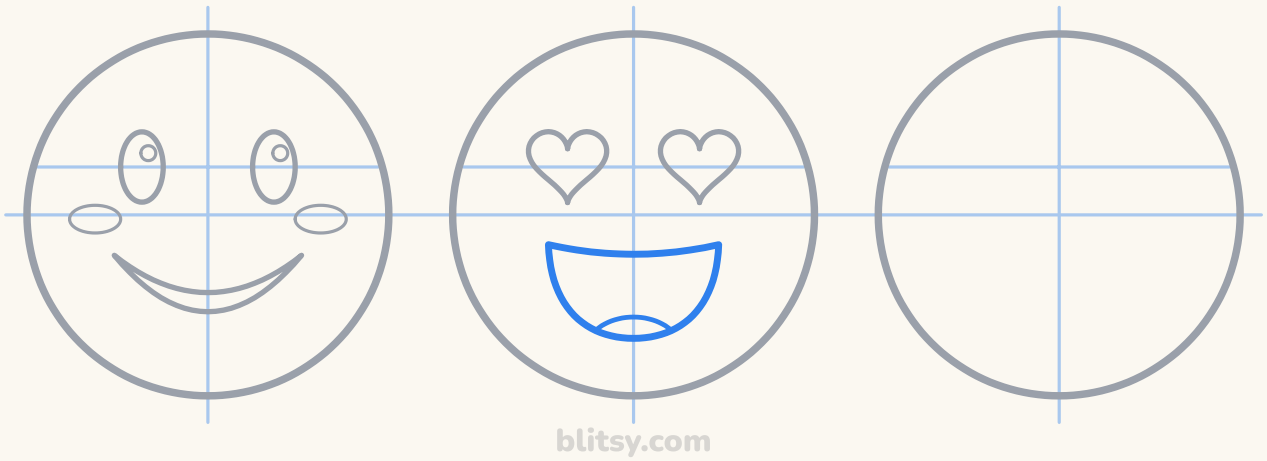
STEP 6 Draw two heart eyes on the middle face



Hearts replace the eyes here, so center each one on the eye line in the same spots the ovals took on the first face. Start every heart with two bumps on top and bring both sides down to a point. Small hearts look like freckles, while big ones crowd the forehead.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the left half of each heart, then mirror it, to keep both sides even.

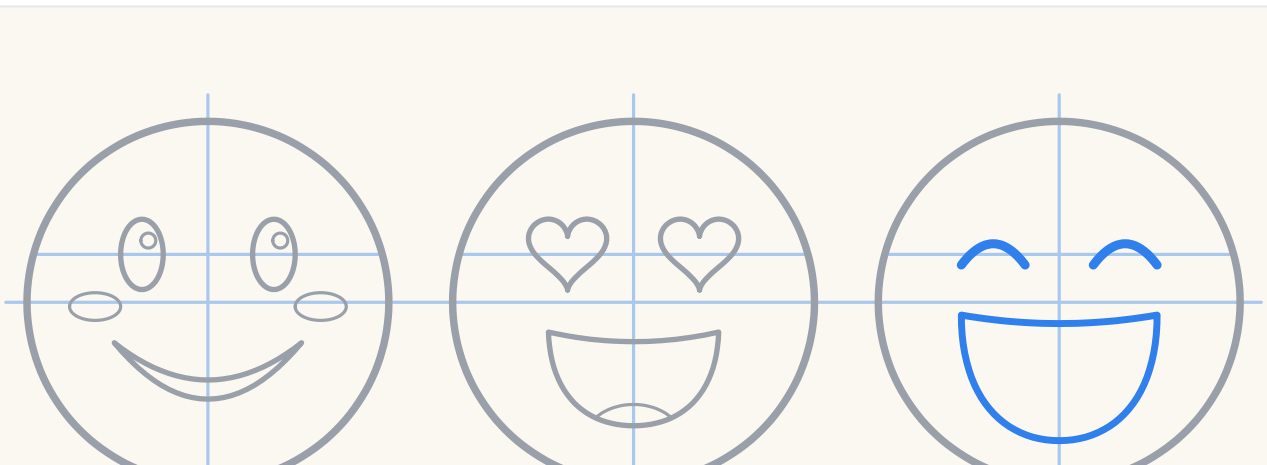
STEP 7 Add an open grin and a tongue



Just below the row line, draw a slightly curved top edge for the mouth. Hang a deep U from both ends so the mouth looks like a wide letter D lying on its back. At the bottom of the mouth, add a low hill for the tongue. When I draw this one, I keep the grin inside the two hearts' outer edges so the face stays balanced.

💡 **Tip:** Round the bottom corners of the D; sharp corners make the grin look like a box.

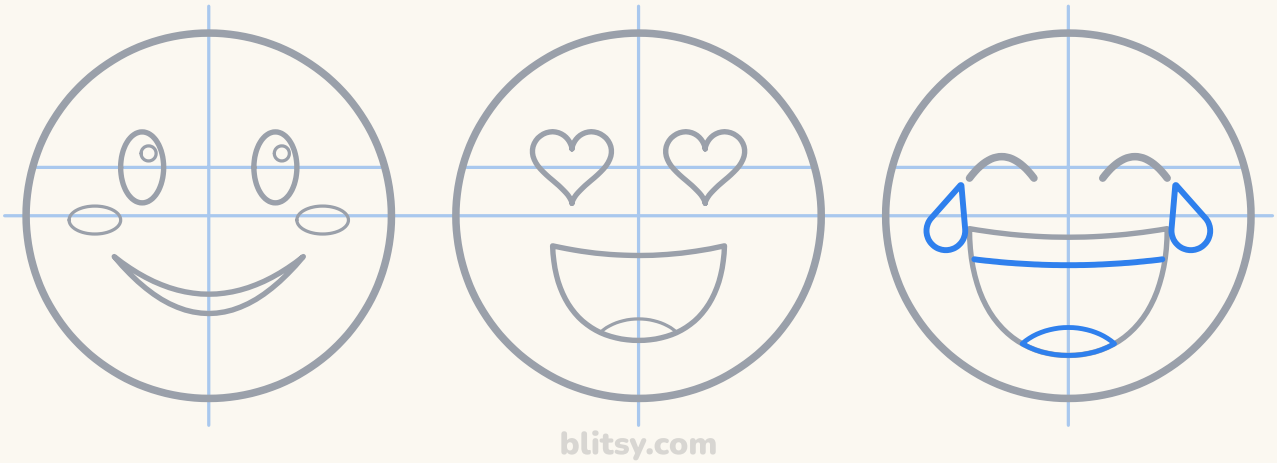
STEP 8 Draw squeezed laughing eyes and a big mouth



Laughing eyes are closed, so on the right face draw two arches on the eye line, curving up like little rainbows. Then draw the biggest mouth of the three: a gently curved top edge that starts higher than the other mouths, and a deep round bottom. Honestly, it's meant to look too big.

💡 **Tip:** Make the arches thick and short. Long thin ones read as raised eyebrows.

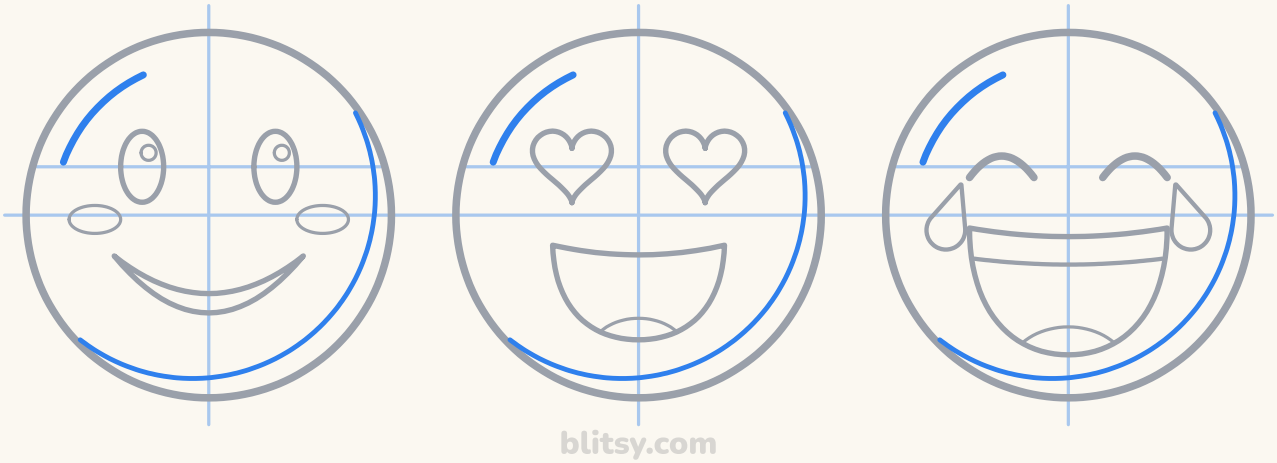
STEP 9 Add teeth, a tongue and two tears



Draw a curved line across the top of the laughing mouth to make a band of teeth. Add a tongue at the bottom, a little wider than the one on the middle face. Next, draw a teardrop beside each eye: a pointed tip near the outer end of the arch and a round bottom just above the mouth corner.

💡 **Tip:** Start each tear at its tip and swing round the bottom in one stroke.

STEP 10 Draw shading lines and shines



Shading makes a flat circle look like a ball. Inside each face, draw a long curve that follows the bottom right edge, close at the ends and a bit farther away in the middle. Then put a short curved stroke inside the top left edge of every face for a shine.

💡 **Tip:** Stop the shading curve before it reaches a mouth, cheek or tear.

STEP 11 Ink the faces and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with a black marker: the outlines, eyes, hearts, mouths, teeth, tongues, tears, cheeks, shading curves and shines. Wait a minute for the ink to dry, then erase all the pencil. Without the crosses, the faces suddenly look like real emoji.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the outer circles slowly and a bit thicker than the features inside them.

STEP 12 Color the three emoji



Fill the faces with yellow and the shading strips with orange. Use brown for the oval eyes and all three mouths, white for the teeth and eye shines, and pink for the tongues and cheeks. The hearts go red and the tears light blue. I color the yellow first, because it's the biggest area.

💡 **Tip:** Lay the orange right over the yellow edge so the two blend softly.