How to Draw an Anime Character

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

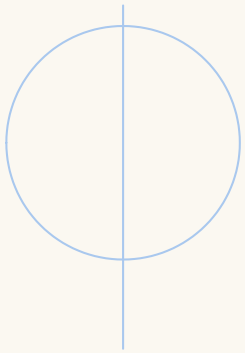
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils or markers
- Plain paper

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 →

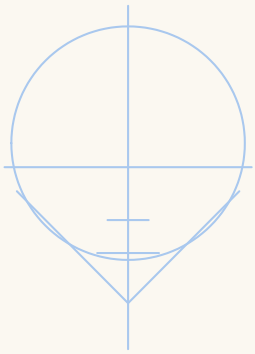
STEP 1 Draw the head circle and a center line



Begin with a circle about the size of a jar lid in the upper half of the paper. Drop a straight line through the middle of it and carry it well below the circle. The face is symmetrical in anime, and this line is how you'll keep the eyes level and the chin centered later.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the circle in two or three light passes instead of one heavy loop; it ends up rounder.

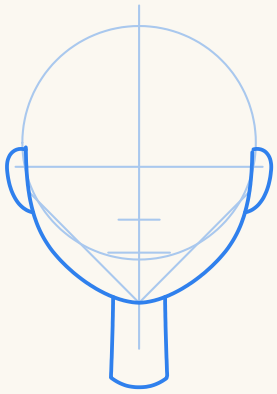
STEP 2 Add the jaw guide, eye line and two small marks



Pick a spot on the center line a short way below the circle. From each side of the circle, draw a straight line down to that spot to make a soft V. Now the most important anime rule: the eye line goes halfway between the top of the circle and the chin point. Add one short mark for the nose and a wider one just under it for the mouth.

💡 **Tip:** Measure the halfway point with your pencil held against the paper before you draw the eye line.

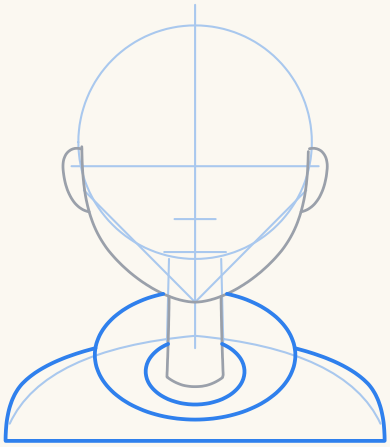
STEP 3 Outline the face, the ears and the neck



Round off the V into a face. Keep the cheeks full near the eye line, then let them slope into a soft chin. On a boy I make the chin a little wider and blunter than on a girl, which reads as older and sturdier. Add a small C-shaped ear on each side, level with the eyes, and a neck that drops straight down from under the jaw.

💡 **Tip:** If the ears look like handles, tuck them closer to the head and make them shorter.

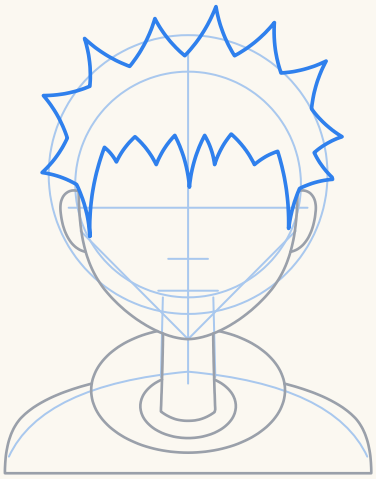
STEP 4 Sketch the hoodie and the bunched-up hood



Lightly guide in the shoulder curve, then draw the hoodie over it with a flat line along the bottom. Behind the neck, draw a large oval for the hood lying down, and a smaller oval inside it for the neck opening. The hood is thick at the back and thin in front, so put the small oval low inside the big one.

💡 **Tip:** Make the shoulders much wider than the head; narrow shoulders make him look like a toddler.

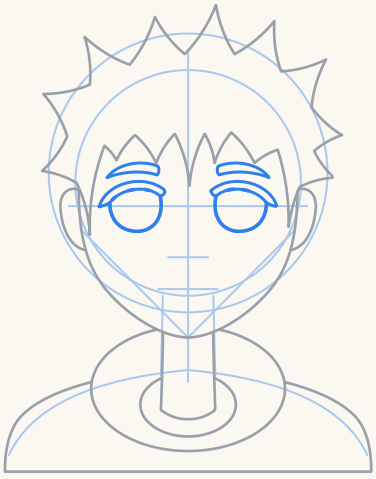
STEP 5 Draw the spiky hair and the bangs



First, draw a bigger circle around the head, since hair sits well above the skull. Then work along that circle with spikes that point up and outward, uneven in size, with the tallest near the top. Across the forehead, draw bangs as smaller pointed locks, one dipping between the eyes and two longer ones down the sides of the face.

💡 **Tip:** Bend each spike slightly in the same direction, like flames, so the hair looks like it moves.

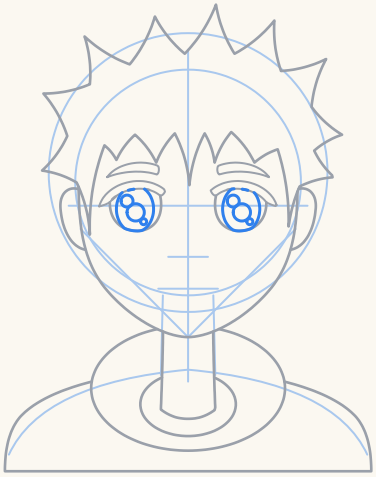
STEP 6 Shape the eyes, lash lines and brows



Sit both eyes on the eye line, with a gap between them about one eye wide. They're large but a little wider than tall here, which gives a boyish look. Over each one, draw a thick lash line that flicks out at the outer corner. Then add a short, bold brow just under the bangs, raised a little in the middle to match his happy mood.

💡 **Tip:** Compare the two lash lines side by side before moving on; one tilted eye throws off the whole face.

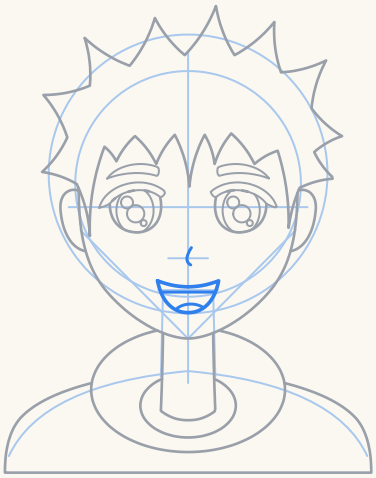
STEP 7 Fill the eyes with irises, pupils and shines



Draw a tall oval iris in each eye, big enough to touch the lash line at the top. Put a round pupil in the middle. Then add one large shine at the upper left of each iris and one tiny shine at the lower right. Both eyes get their shines on the same side, because the light comes from one place; mirrored shines look cross-eyed.

💡 **Tip:** Leave the shines as bare paper when you color; that white is what makes anime eyes sparkle.

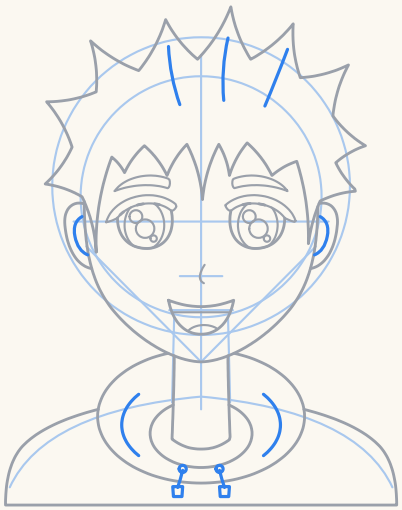
STEP 8 Add a tiny nose and a big grin



The anime nose is almost nothing: one little hooked line on the nose mark. For the mouth, draw a wide, slightly curved top line, then a deep curve underneath to make an open grin shaped like the letter D on its side. Inside, a straight line near the top marks the teeth and a small curve at the bottom makes the tongue. Keep it close under the nose.

💡 **Tip:** Stop the grin's corners at about the middle of each eye, or the smile starts to look forced.

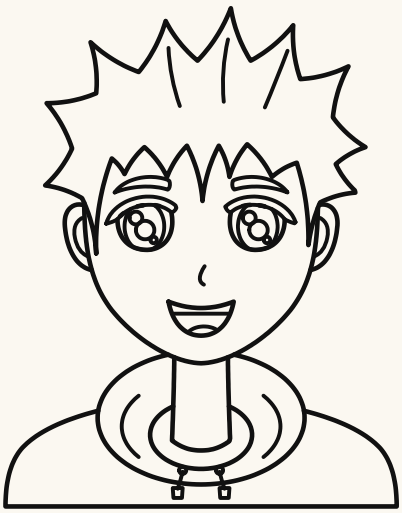
STEP 9 Add hair lines, ear details and drawstrings



Draw three long strokes inside the hair, each one running from a spike toward the forehead. Inside each ear, a small curved line shows the inner fold. Two short arcs on the hood show its folds. Finish with two drawstrings hanging from the front of the hood, each with a tiny circle at the top and a small square tip.

💡 **Tip:** Fewer hair lines look cleaner, so stop at three even if the hair feels empty.

STEP 10 Ink the drawing and erase the guides



Go over the lines you want to keep with your black pen. I always ink the face and eyes first, while my hand is steady, and leave the hair and hoodie for last. Skip the circles, the V and the eye line. After the ink has dried for a minute, erase all of the pencil underneath.

💡 **Tip:** Turn the paper as you ink the spikes so you're always pulling the pen toward you.

STEP 11 Color your anime boy



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Use dark blue for the hair and leave a jagged lighter band across the top for shine. Peach covers the skin, with a slightly darker strip under the bangs and under the chin. Give the irises a darker green at the top and a lighter green at the bottom. The hoodie is orange, the hood a deeper orange, and the mouth dark red with a pink tongue.

💡 **Tip:** Color the darkest parts of each eye first, then blend lighter green downward into them.