How to Draw the Joker

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

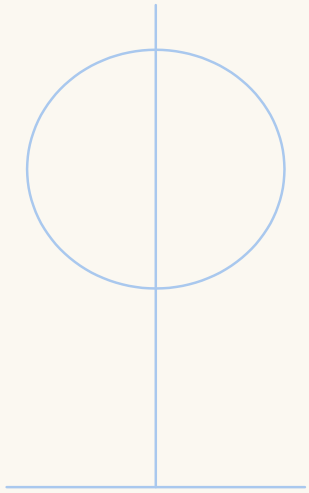
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Green, purple and orange markers
- White paper

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 →

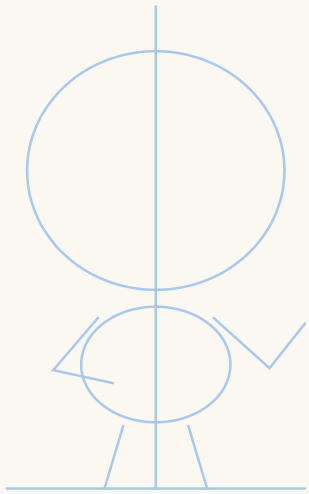
STEP 1 Draw a head oval, a center line and the ground



Start with a big oval in the top half of the page. In chibi style the head is almost as tall as the body, so don't shrink it. Run a light line down through the middle, and add a short flat line near the bottom where his shoes will stand.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a finger's width of space above the oval, because the hair grows taller than the head.

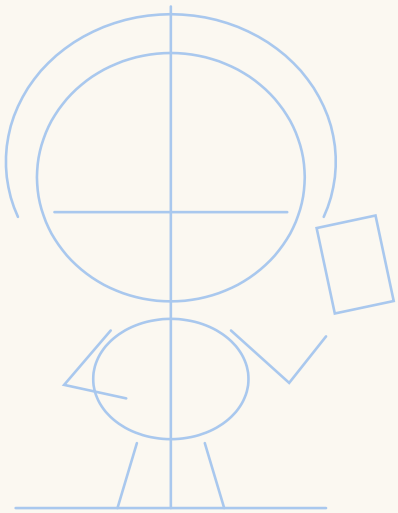
STEP 2 Add a body oval and stick lines for the pose



Below the head, sketch a smaller oval for the body, a bit more than half as wide as the head. Then plan the pose with sticks. The arm on your left bends out at the elbow and comes back to rest on his tummy. The other one bends up beside his face. Two short legs reach the ground.

💡 **Tip:** Bend the tummy arm into a clear V; if the elbow is too soft, the arm just looks like it's hanging.

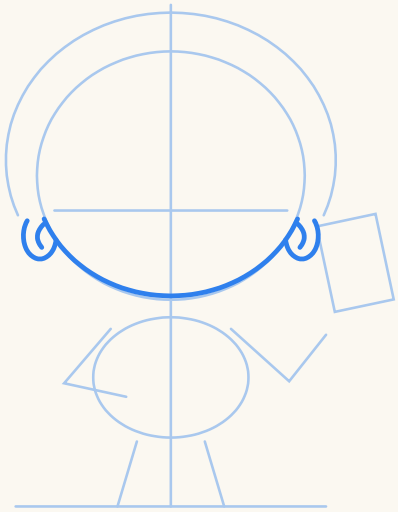
STEP 3 Sketch guides for the hair, card and eyes



Draw a large arch around the top of the head, about a thumb's width outside it, stopping a little below the middle on both sides. The hair will fill that space. Beside his raised hand, add a small tilted rectangle for the card, then a level line slightly below the middle of the head for the eyes.

💡 **Tip:** Tilt the card so its top leans away from his head; an upright card looks stiff.

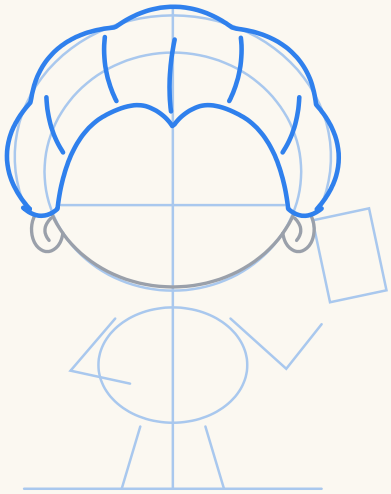
STEP 4 Draw the lower face and the ears



Trace the bottom half of the head oval, from one side of the hair arch around the chin to the other. Only this part of the face line stays, since the hair covers the top. Add a small C-shaped ear on each side with a little curve inside.

💡 **Tip:** Stop the face line at the hair arch now, so there's nothing extra to erase later.

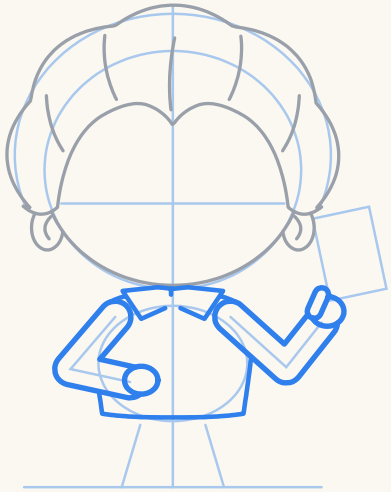
STEP 5 Draw the swept-back wavy hair



People recognise the hair first, so take your time. Inside the arch, draw a row of soft waves over the top, like a bumpy cloud edge. On the forehead, the hairline dips to a small point in the middle. Round off each side into a little curl near the ear, then add a few long strands sweeping up and back.

💡 **Tip:** Keep each wave about the same size; one oversized bump makes the head look lopsided.

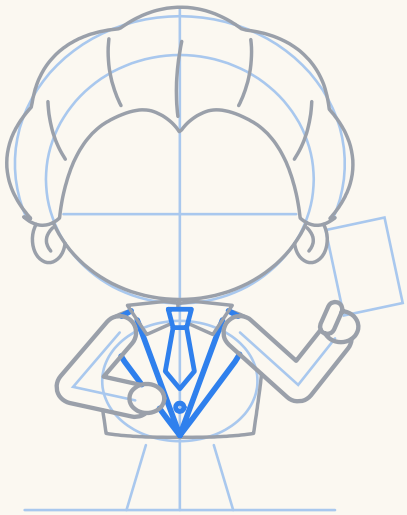
STEP 6 Draw the collar, the jacket and the arms



Start under the chin with a wide shirt collar shaped like two flat triangles. Below it, draw the jacket with round shoulders, getting slightly wider toward the hem. Build the arms around the sticks as thick, even tubes. I give each one a round mitten hand: one rests on his tummy, and the raised one curls a small thumb forward.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the arms as wide as the ears are tall; skinny arms make a chibi look like a puppet.

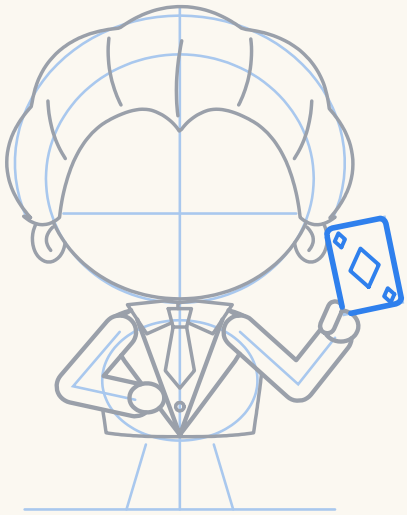
STEP 7 Add the lapels, the tie and a button



Draw a long V from the collar down to the bottom of the jacket; this opening shows his vest. Along each side, add a narrow lapel that starts wide at the shoulder and tapers to a point. In the middle goes a small tie knot, a slim tie and one tiny button.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the tie a bit shorter than you think; it should end well above the jacket hem.

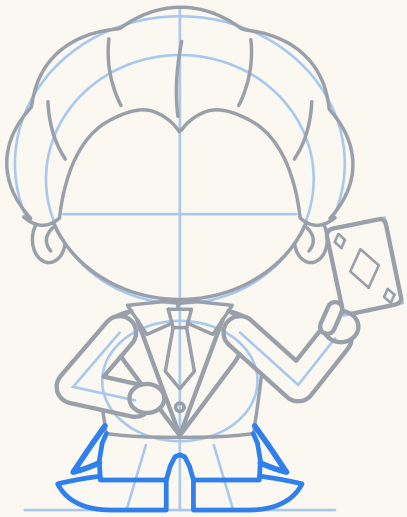
STEP 8 Draw the playing card in his hand



Go over the rectangle guide with a smooth line and round off the corners. The bottom edge tucks behind his raised hand, so stop the line at the fingers. Put one larger diamond in the middle and two tiny diamonds in opposite corners, like a real card.

💡 **Tip:** Draw each diamond as four short lines from a center dot; it keeps the points even.

STEP 9 Add the coat tails, the pants and pointy shoes



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A tailcoat has two long tails at the back, and from the front you only see their tips. Draw two narrow points sticking out below the jacket. Then add short pants with a small notch between the legs. Each shoe comes to a point, turns slightly outward and sits flat on the ground line.

💡 **Tip:** Let the pant hems overlap the shoes a little, so the feet look attached.

STEP 10 Draw arched brows and a closed grin



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The eyebrows decide whether he looks fun or grumpy. Draw two high, round arches above the eye line. Place two dark ovals on the line, each with a flat lid across the top for a sly look and a white dot for shine. Add a tiny curved nose, then a wide crescent smile with a soft curl at each corner.

💡 **Tip:** Curve the brows upward in the middle; brows that slant down toward the nose look angry.

STEP 11 Ink your lines and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with your pen and leave the helper shapes in pencil. Most beginners rush the hair waves at this point. Draw each wave in one smooth stroke and lift the pen between them. Give the ink a minute to dry, then erase all the pencil underneath.

💡 **Tip:** Ink from the top of the page down, so your hand never rests on wet lines.

STEP 12 Color your Joker



Color the hair bright green, darker along the bottom of the waves. The suit is purple, a little darker on the lapels and the right side of the jacket. The vest is orange, the tie and button dark green. Use red for the smile and the card diamonds, pink for two cheek spots and dark gray for the shoes. Face and hands stay white.

💡 **Tip:** Color the white face last and simply leave it blank, so no purple or green smudges onto it.