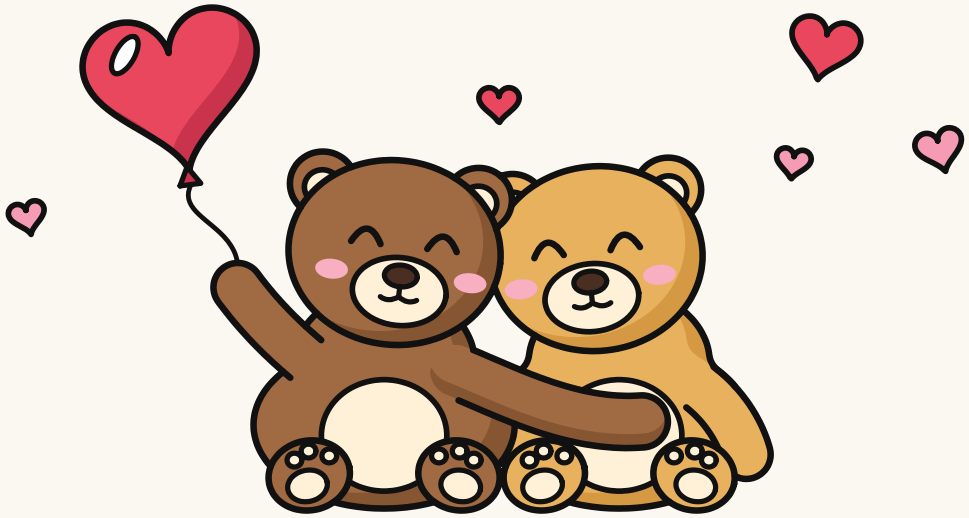
How to Draw Hugging Bears

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

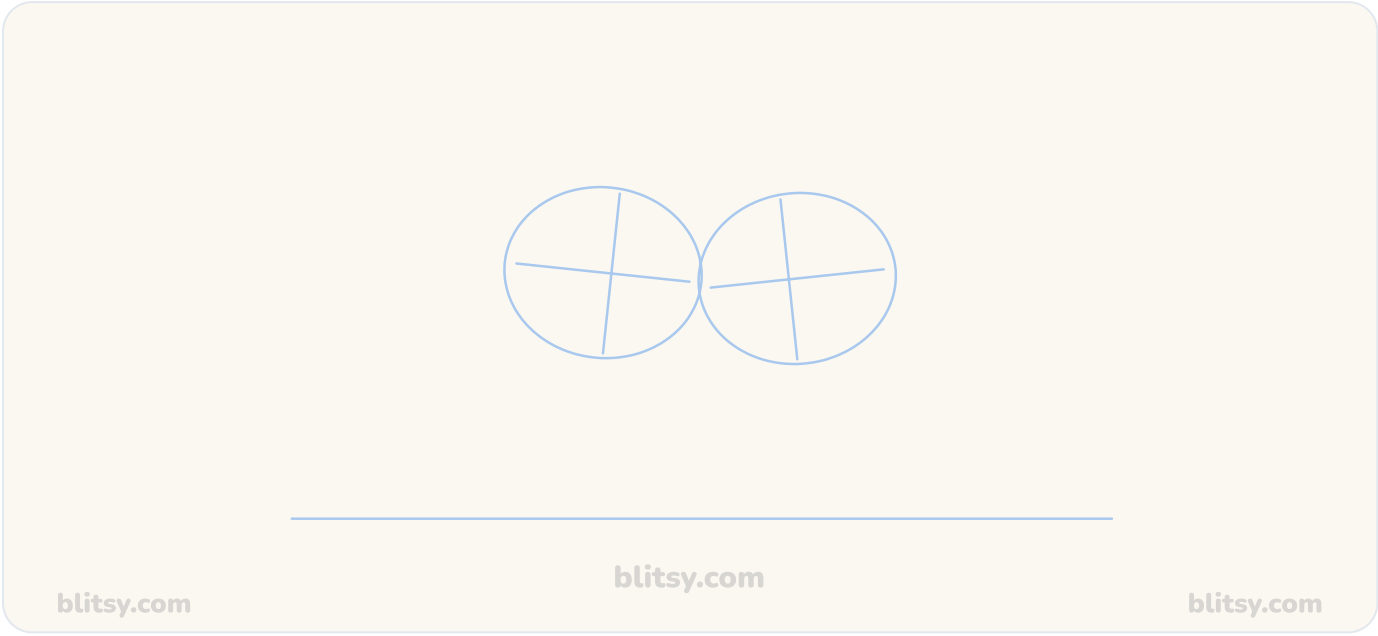
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Paper turned sideways

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 →

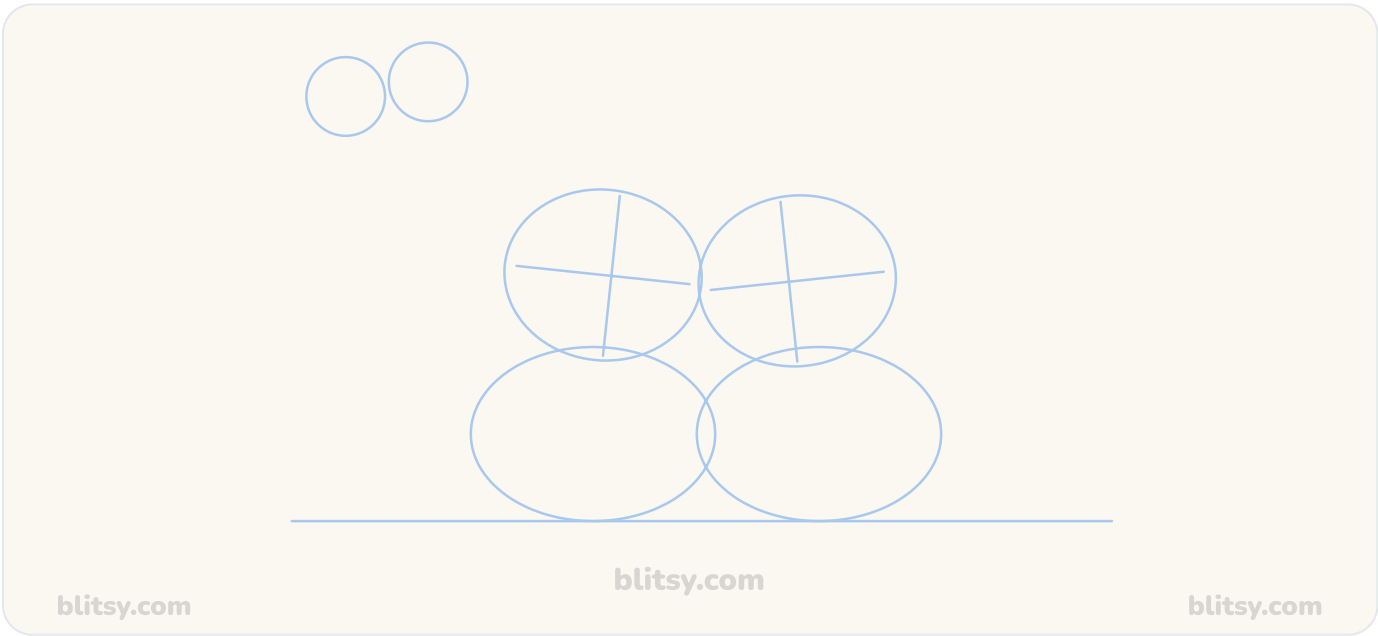
STEP 1 Sketch two leaning head ovals



Start with a long, faint line near the bottom of the page for the bears to sit on. Then draw two ovals side by side, each tipped a little toward the other so their tops lean together and their cheeks just touch. Add a cross through each oval; the sideways line marks the eyes.

💡 **Tip:** That small tilt matters most. Upright heads look like two strangers standing in line, while leaning heads look like friends.

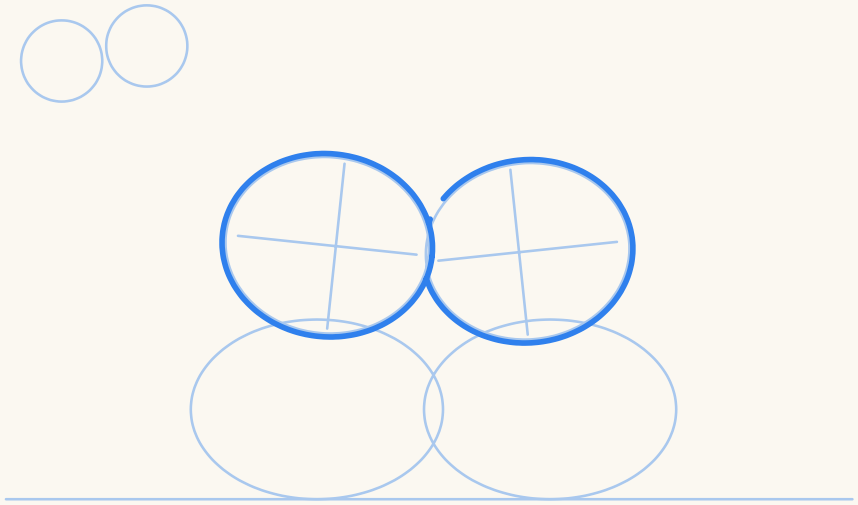
STEP 2 Add body ovals and the balloon circles



Under each head, draw a wider oval that sits on the ground line and tucks up behind the chin. The two bodies overlap in the middle. In the top left corner, draw two small touching circles. They're the top bumps of the heart balloon, and placing them now keeps the balloon off the page edge.

💡 **Tip:** Check the space before you go on. You need room above the left bear for the balloon and room on the right for small hearts.

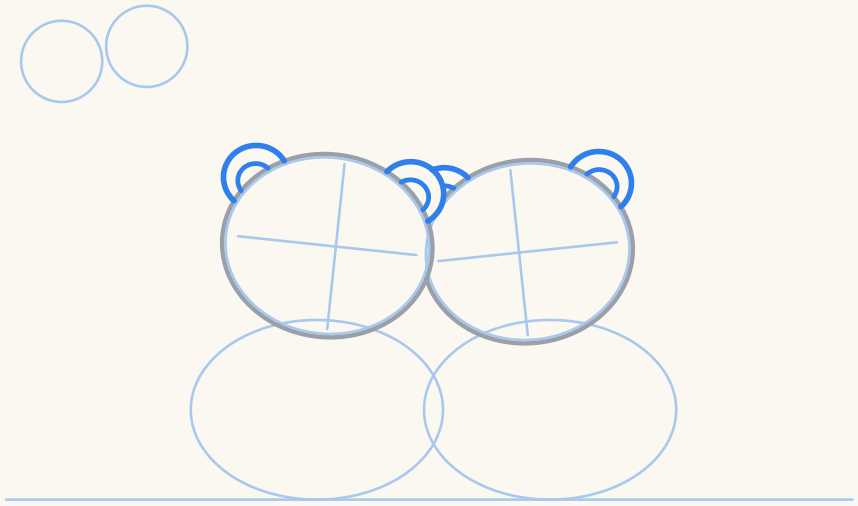
STEP 3 Outline both heads



Trace the left head first with a steadier line, because that bear sits in front. Then trace the right head, stopping where it meets the left one so it tucks behind. You'll also leave a tiny gap at the top left of the back head, where the front bear's ear will overlap it in the next step.

💡 **Tip:** Draw round shapes in two or three short curves instead of one long sweep. Joined short curves stay rounder.

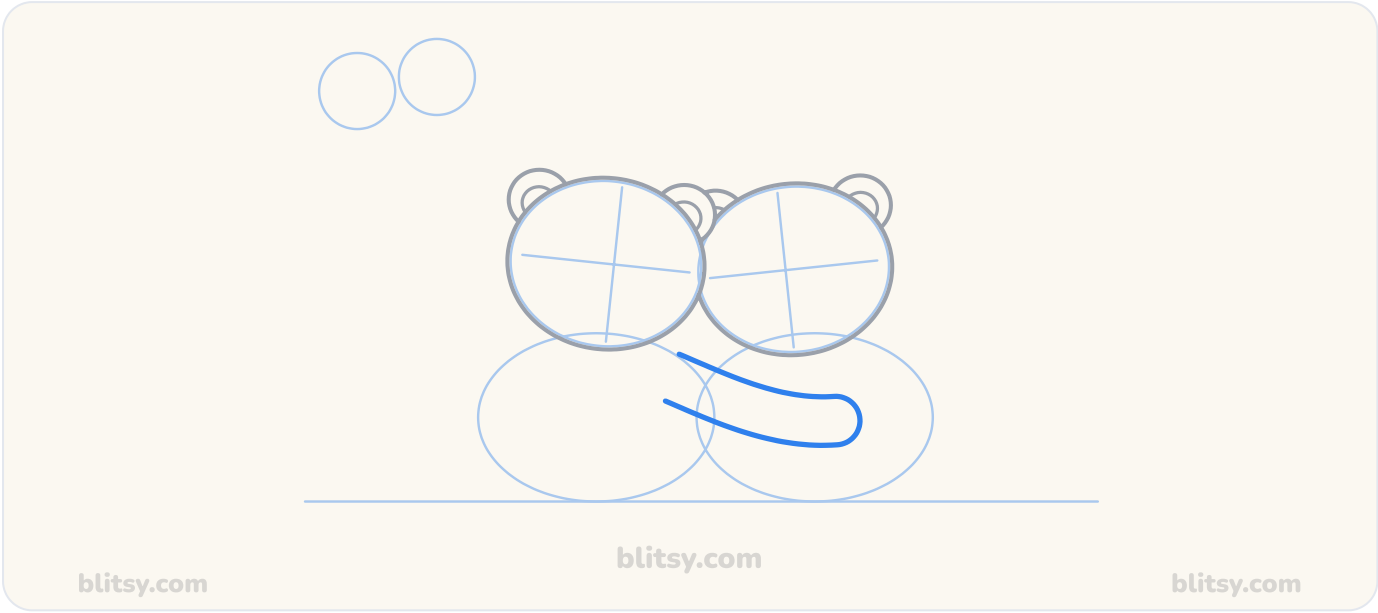
STEP 4 Put round ears on top



Each bear gets two round ears near the upper corners of its head, half hidden behind the oval, with a smaller circle inside. Between the heads the ears crowd together, so the back bear's ear only peeks out. I like that overlap, because it makes them feel close.

💡 **Tip:** Set the ears wide apart. Ears placed near the middle of the head turn a bear into a mouse.

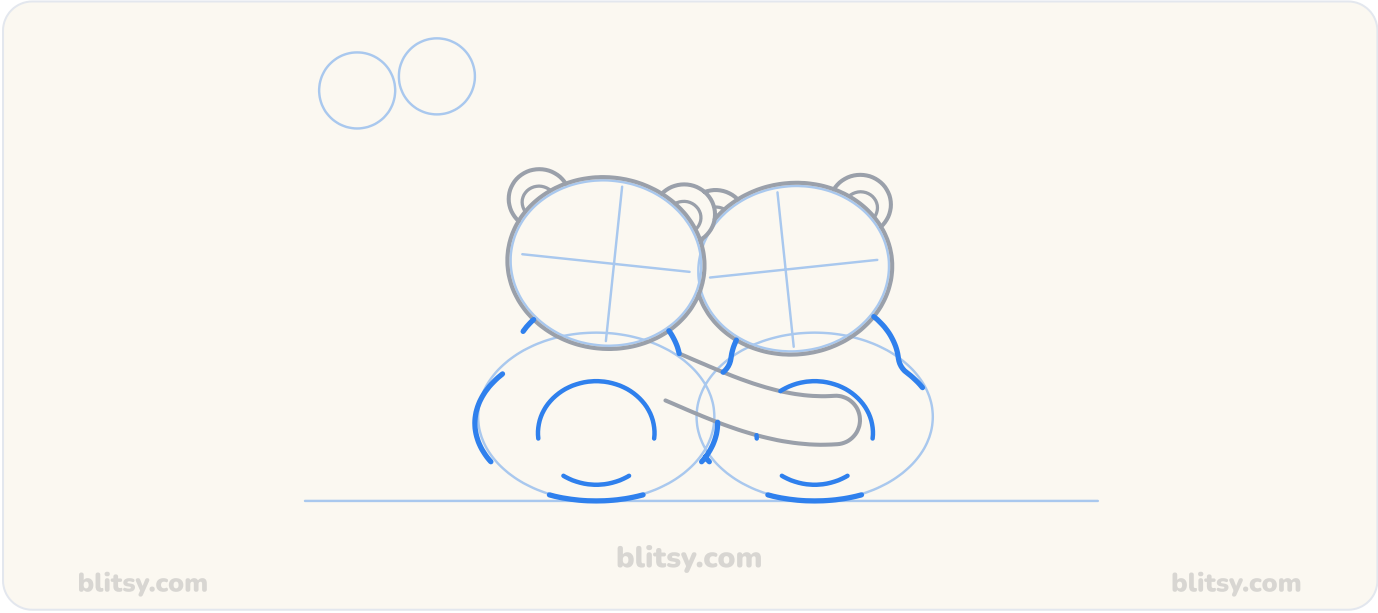
STEP 5 Draw the hugging arm before the bodies



Here's the part that makes it a hug. From the front bear's right shoulder, draw a thick, gently curved arm that reaches across the golden bear's tummy and ends in a rounded paw on its far side. I always draw this arm before the bodies. It sits in front of everything, so the body lines can simply stop when they reach it.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the arm the same thickness from shoulder to paw. A thin middle makes it look like a noodle.

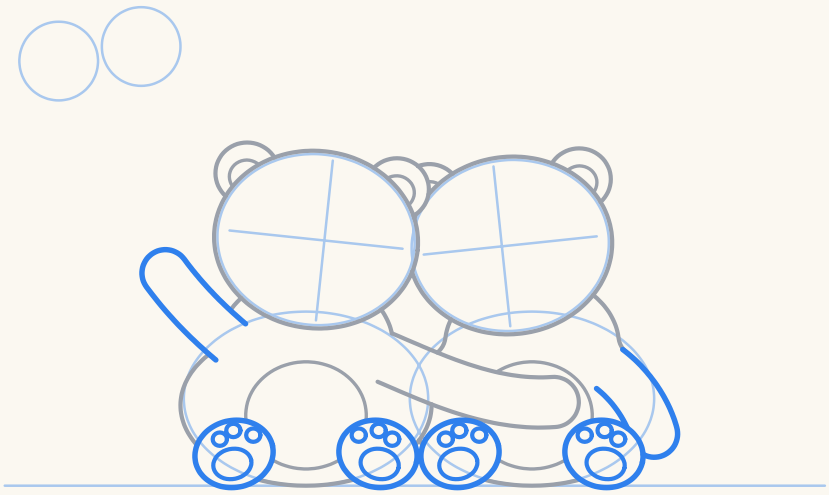
STEP 6 Shape the bodies and round tummies



Go around each body guide with a soft pear shape: narrow under the head, wide near the ground. Your lines will come in pieces, since they break at the hugging arm and where the feet will go. Inside each body, add a large round tummy. The golden bear's tummy hides mostly behind its friend's arm.

💡 **Tip:** Make the bodies a little smaller than the heads look like they need. Big heads on small bodies read as cuddly.

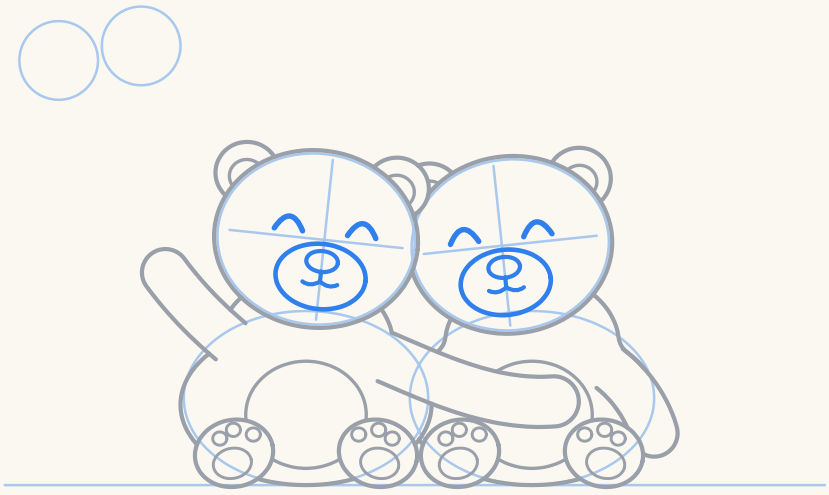
STEP 7 Add the arms, feet and paw pads



The front bear lifts its other arm up and out toward the balloon circles. The golden bear's outside arm hangs down along its side. At the bottom, draw four round feet, two per bear, with the soles facing you. Finish each foot with an oval pad and three little toe beans.

💡 **Tip:** Tilt each pair of feet slightly outward. Toes pointing straight up look stiff; a small outward turn looks relaxed.

STEP 8 Give them happy sleepy faces



Draw an oval muzzle low on each face, shifted a little toward the other bear so they seem to turn toward each other. Put an oval nose on top and a small W-shaped smile under it. For the eyes I use two upside-down U shapes on the cross line, because closed, smiling eyes look content.

💡 **Tip:** Space the eyes at the same distance on both bears. Mismatched eyes are the first thing anyone notices.

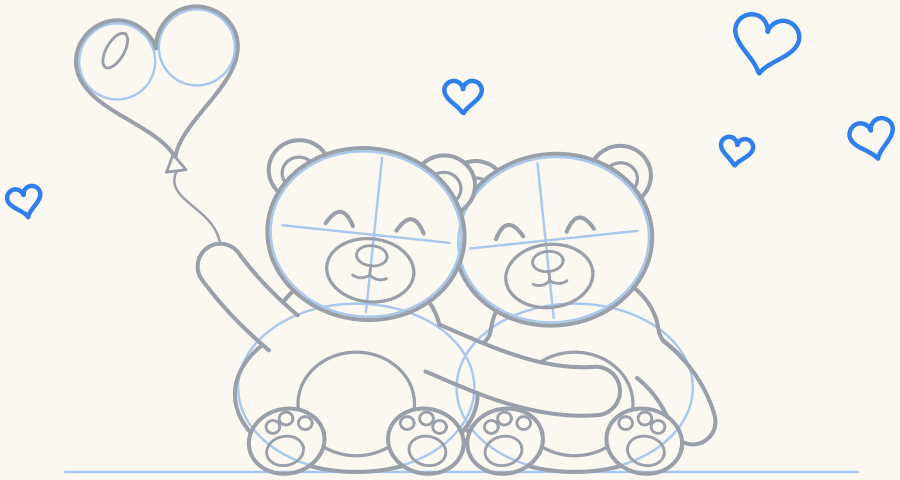
STEP 9 Draw the heart balloon and string



Use the two small circles as the top bumps of the heart, then bring both sides down to a point just above the bear's raised paw. Tilt the whole heart a little, the way a balloon sways. Add a small triangle knot under the point, a thin oval for a shine on the left bump, and a wavy string down into the paw.

💡 **Tip:** Let the string curve instead of drawing it ruler straight. A wavy string makes the balloon look light.

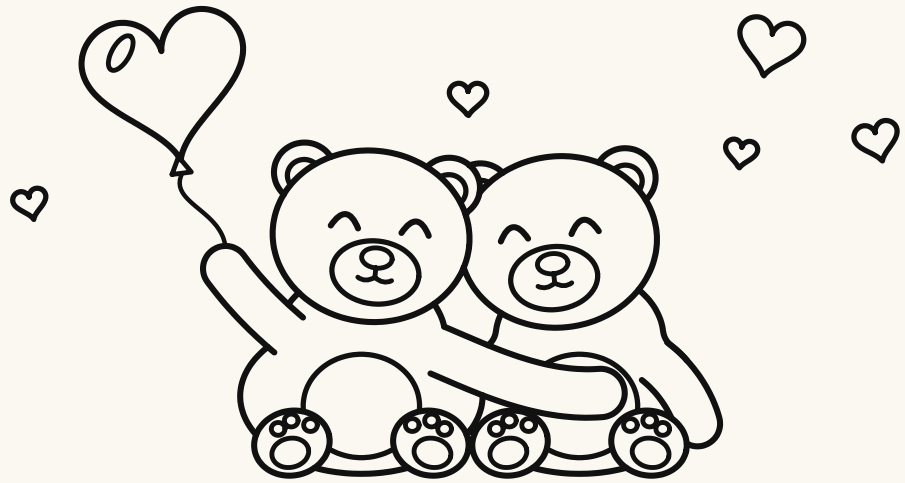
STEP 10 Scatter a few floating hearts



Draw five small hearts in the empty spaces: one above the heads, one on the far left and three on the right. Vary their sizes and tilt each one a different way. They balance the balloon and leave no doubt about what the picture means.

💡 **Tip:** Keep every small heart clear of the bears. Hearts that touch the ears or the balloon just look like clutter.

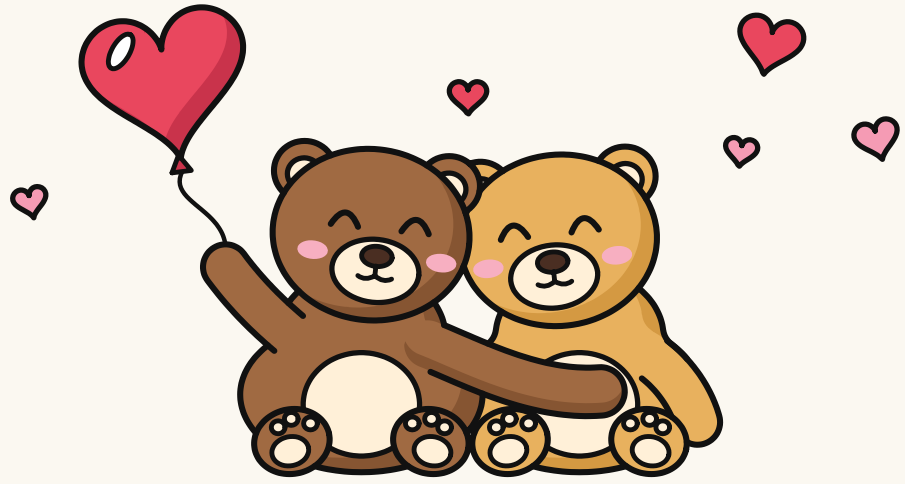
STEP 11 Ink the keeper lines and erase the helpers



Trace all the lines you want to keep with the black pen. I start with the front bear, then the back bear, and leave the hearts and string for last. Let the ink dry for a minute or two, then erase the ground line, the ovals and the crosses. The broken body lines now read clearly as one bear behind another.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the string in one quick, light stroke. Going over it twice usually makes it wobble.

STEP 12 Color the hugging bears



Color the front bear brown and the back bear golden yellow, with a darker shade of each along the right edges for roundness. Muzzles, tummies, inner ears and paw pads are cream. My balloon is red with a darker right side and a white shine. Finish with pink cheeks, dark brown noses and the small hearts.

💡 **Tip:** Color the cheeks with very light pressure. Soft pink blush looks sweet; heavy pink looks like a rash.