How to Draw a Giraffe

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- 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 →

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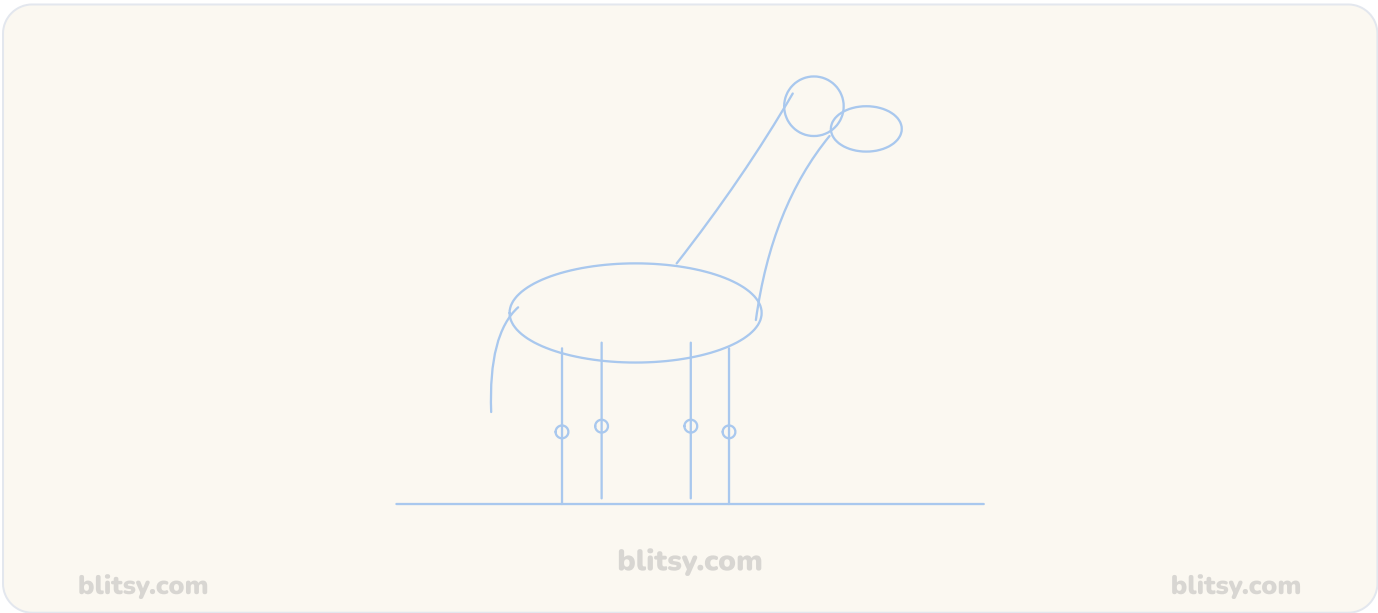
STEP 1 Draw a body oval and two head circles



Put a light ground line near the bottom of the page. Above it, about a third of the way up, draw a flat oval for the body, on the left side of the paper. Now go high and to the right: a small circle for the back of the head and a smaller oval just in front of it for the nose.

💡 **Tip:** The head circles should sit well above the body, roughly as high above the oval as the oval is above the ground.

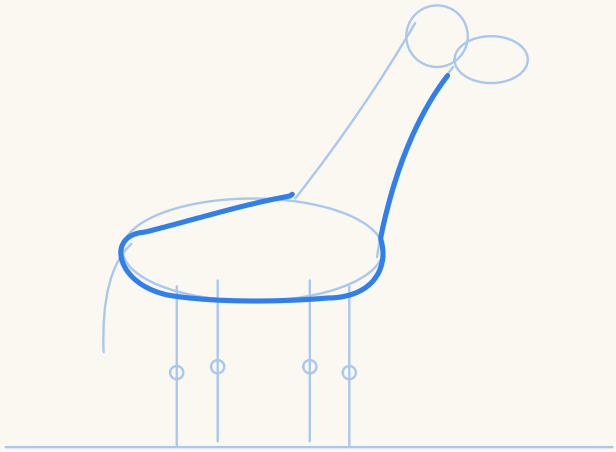
STEP 2 Sketch neck and leg lines plus a tail



Join the body to the head with two lines. One leaves the top of the oval near its middle, the other leaves the front of the oval lower down, and both meet the head circle. Drop four straight lines to the ground for the legs, two near each end, with a little circle on each for the knee. A short curve at the back becomes the tail.

💡 **Tip:** Put all four knee circles at about the same height. Uneven knees make the giraffe look like it's limping.

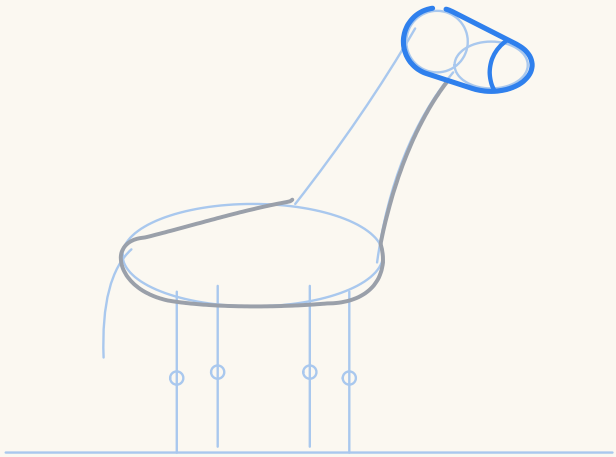
STEP 3 Outline the body and the long neck



Trace the real outline now. Start at the back of the body, run along the top, which slopes up toward the shoulders, and keep going up the neck to the head. Then come back down the front of the neck and around the round belly. The neck should be wide where it meets the chest and get thinner near the head.

💡 **Tip:** I always let the back slope downhill toward the tail. A flat, level back is the fastest way to make a giraffe look like a horse.

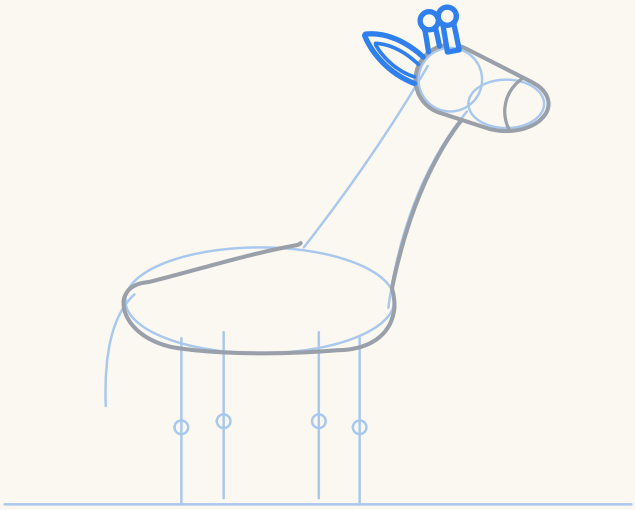
STEP 4 Draw the small head and muzzle



Wrap one smooth line around both head circles so they become a single head shaped a bit like a light bulb lying on its side. Near the front, draw a curved line across the snout to mark off the muzzle. I keep the head small, because giraffes really do have little heads on all that neck.

💡 **Tip:** Make the snout end round, not pointed, so the face stays gentle.

STEP 5 Add two horns and an ear



On top of the head, draw two short stubby rods side by side, each with a round ball on top. These are the ossicones, the giraffe's soft horns. The one in back sits slightly lower and to the left. Behind them, add a leaf-shaped ear that points backward, with a smaller leaf inside it.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the horns short. If they're taller than the head is deep, they start to look like antennae.

STEP 6 Draw a short mane and the tail



Along the back of the neck, from just behind the ear down to the shoulders, draw a narrow strip with a bumpy top edge. That's the short, stiff mane. For the tail, follow the guide with two thin lines close together, then finish it with a long teardrop for the hairy tuft.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the mane bumps small and close together, like the teeth of a comb.

STEP 7 Add four long legs and the grass



Build each leg around its guide line: two long, slightly wavy sides that bulge a little at the knee circle, ending in a small boxy hoof. Draw the two near legs first, then the two far legs just behind them. Run a ground line under the hooves and add a few spiky tufts of grass.

💡 **Tip:** The legs should be about as long as the body is wide. Short legs turn your giraffe into a llama.

STEP 8 Give it an eye, a nostril and a smile



Place an oval eye in the upper middle of the head, closer to the back than to the nose. Leave a tiny white circle in it for shine and add three short lashes on top. On the muzzle, a small oval makes the nostril, and a gentle curve under it makes the smile.

💡 **Tip:** A slightly bigger eye with lashes is what makes this giraffe look friendly rather than sleepy.

STEP 9 Draw patches on the neck



Fill the neck with small rounded shapes that look a bit like cracked pebbles. Leave an even gap of yellow between them, a little narrower than the patches themselves. I draw the smallest patches near the head and let them grow as I move down toward the shoulders.

💡 **Tip:** Avoid perfect circles or squares. Patches with four to six soft corners look most like a real giraffe coat.

STEP 10 Add patches on the body and legs



Carry the same pattern onto the body, with bigger patches this time since there's more room. Then add a few small patches to the top half of each leg. Below the knees, giraffe legs are usually plain and light, so I leave that part empty.

💡 **Tip:** Keep every patch a little away from the outline. That way you won't have to squeeze color into thin slivers later.

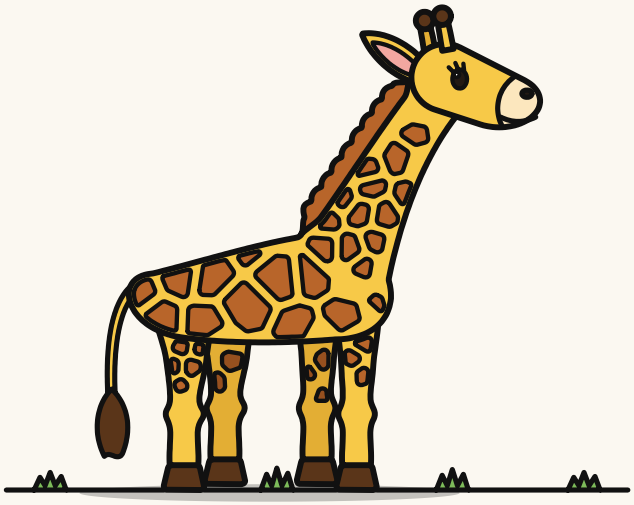
STEP 11 Ink the giraffe and erase the guides



Go over all the keeper lines with your marker: the outline and mane, the horns and ear, the face, then every patch. Skip the oval, the head circles and the straight leg lines. When the ink is dry, erase the pencil until only the clean drawing is left.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the patches last. They're the most lines, and your hand will be warmed up by then.

STEP 12 Color your giraffe



Color the whole giraffe a warm yellow, from the head down the neck to the tail, plus the two near legs. A slightly deeper golden yellow on the two far legs pushes them back. The patches and mane are brown. Dark brown goes on the horn tips and hooves, plus the tail tuft. Finish with cream on the muzzle, pink inside the ear and green grass.

💡 **Tip:** Color the yellow first and the brown patches second, so any brown that slips over the edge just looks like part of the pattern.