How to Draw a Koala

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

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

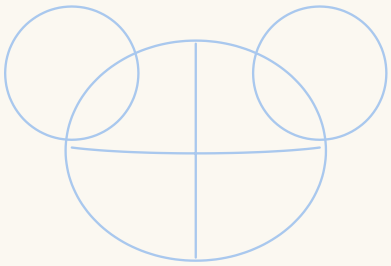
How to use this guide

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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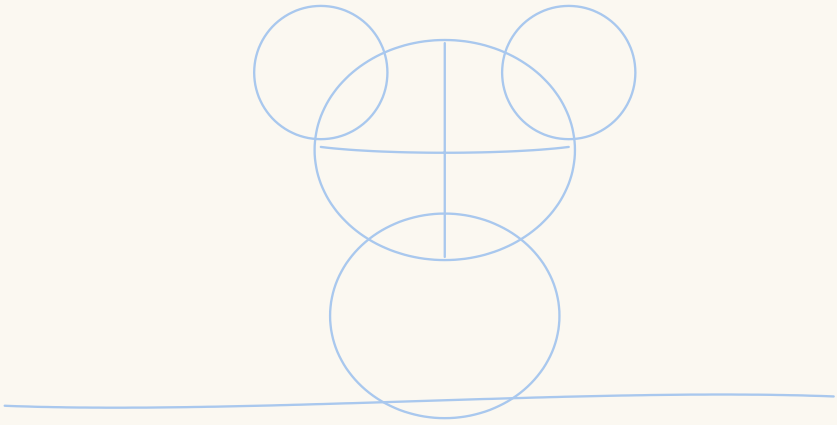
STEP 1 Sketch the head oval and two ear circles



Draw a wide oval in the upper middle of the page for the head. It should be a little wider than it is tall. Put a circle on each top corner, half on the oval and half outside it, for the ears. Then add a line down the middle of the face and a gentle curve across, a bit above halfway. The eyes sit on that curve later.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the pressure feather light. Every line in this step gets erased.

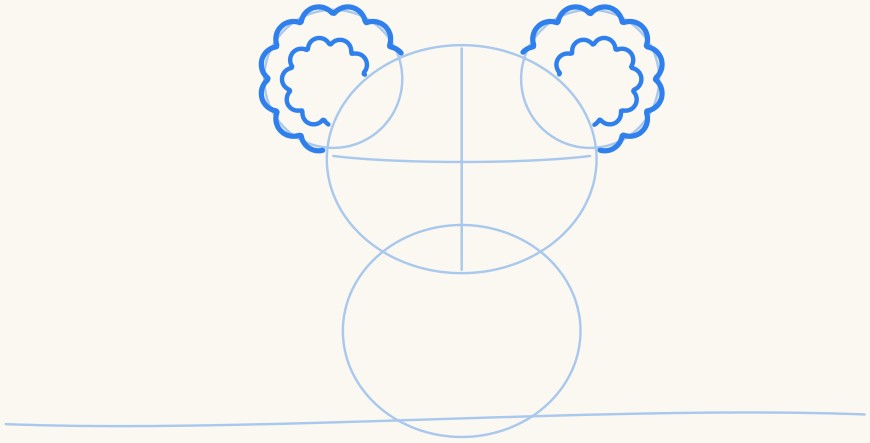
STEP 2 Add a body oval and a branch line



Below the head, draw a rounder oval for the body that tucks up under the chin. I make it narrower than the head, because a big head on a small body is what makes a koala look cute. Then run one long, slightly wavy line across the whole page right under the body. That's the middle of the branch.

💡 **Tip:** If the body comes out wider than the head, shrink it now. It's much harder to fix later.

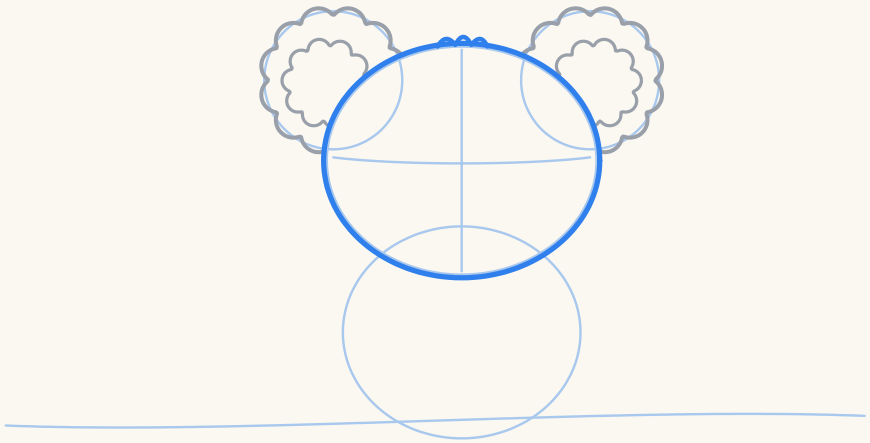
STEP 3 Draw the fluffy ears with white fluff



I go around each ear circle with a ring of small rounded bumps, like a little cloud. Inside, I draw a second, smaller bumpy shape for the white fluff, sitting a touch toward the outside of the ear. Stop both shapes where they meet the head oval, since the head covers that part.

💡 **Tip:** Aim for about a dozen bumps on each ear. Tiny bumps look scratchy and big ones look like petals.

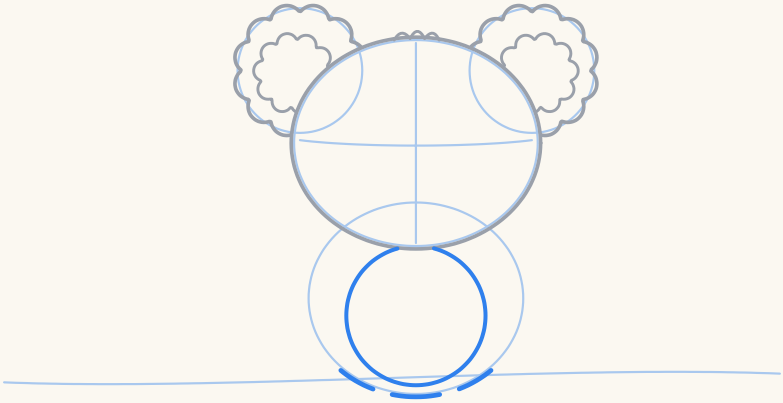
STEP 4 Outline the big round head



Trace over the head oval with a firm line. I let the sides bulge out just a little at the cheeks, which makes the face look soft and chubby. On top, add three tiny bumps in a row for a tuft of fur.

💡 **Tip:** Don't worry about the guide lines inside the face yet. They help you place the nose and eyes later.

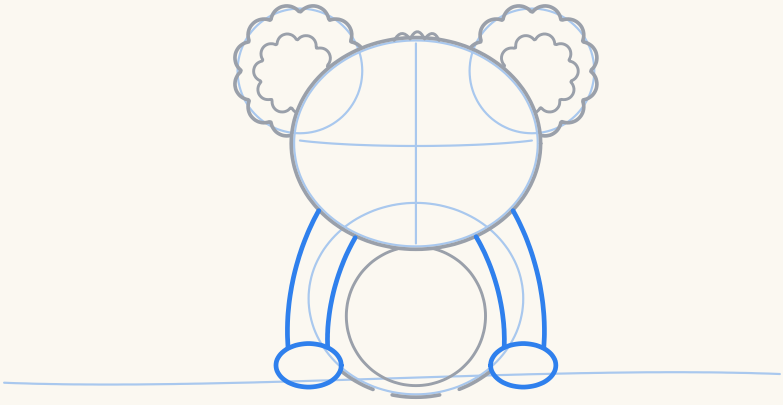
STEP 5 Draw the body and the light belly



Draw the curve along the bottom of the body oval, where it will rest on the branch. The sides of the body will be hidden by the arms, so you only need the bottom part for now. In the middle, draw a round belly circle, starting just under the chin and ending above the bottom curve.

💡 **Tip:** Center the belly on the middle guide line. An off-center belly makes the koala look like it's leaning.

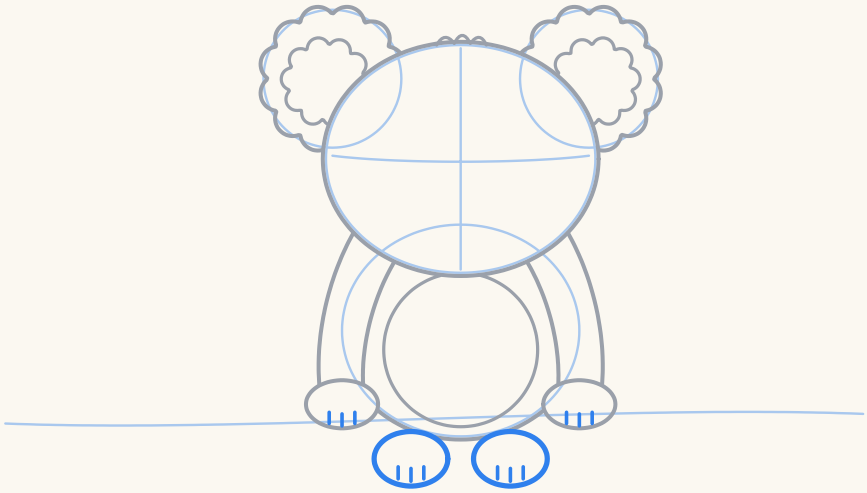
STEP 6 Add the arms and mitten paws



Each arm starts under the head, at the side of the body, and comes down in a soft curve to the branch line. Give the arms real width, about as wide as an ear circle, with rounded edges. At the bottom of each arm, draw a flat oval paw that rests on top of the branch. Add three short lines on each paw for the claws. I like to curve the arms in slightly at the bottom, so the paws look like they're really holding on.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the outside edge of both arms first, then the inside edges. It helps you keep them the same thickness.

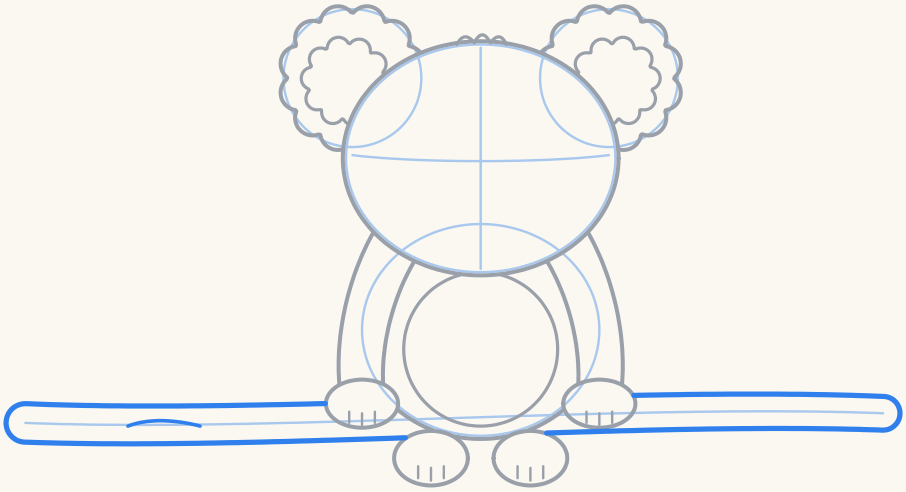
STEP 7 Draw the feet and little claws



Under the body, draw two round feet side by side, close together. They hang down in front of where the branch will be, as if the koala is dangling its legs. When I teach this, kids love the next bit: add three short claw lines at the bottom of each foot, like the ones on the paws.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a small gap between the feet. If they touch, they blur into one blob.

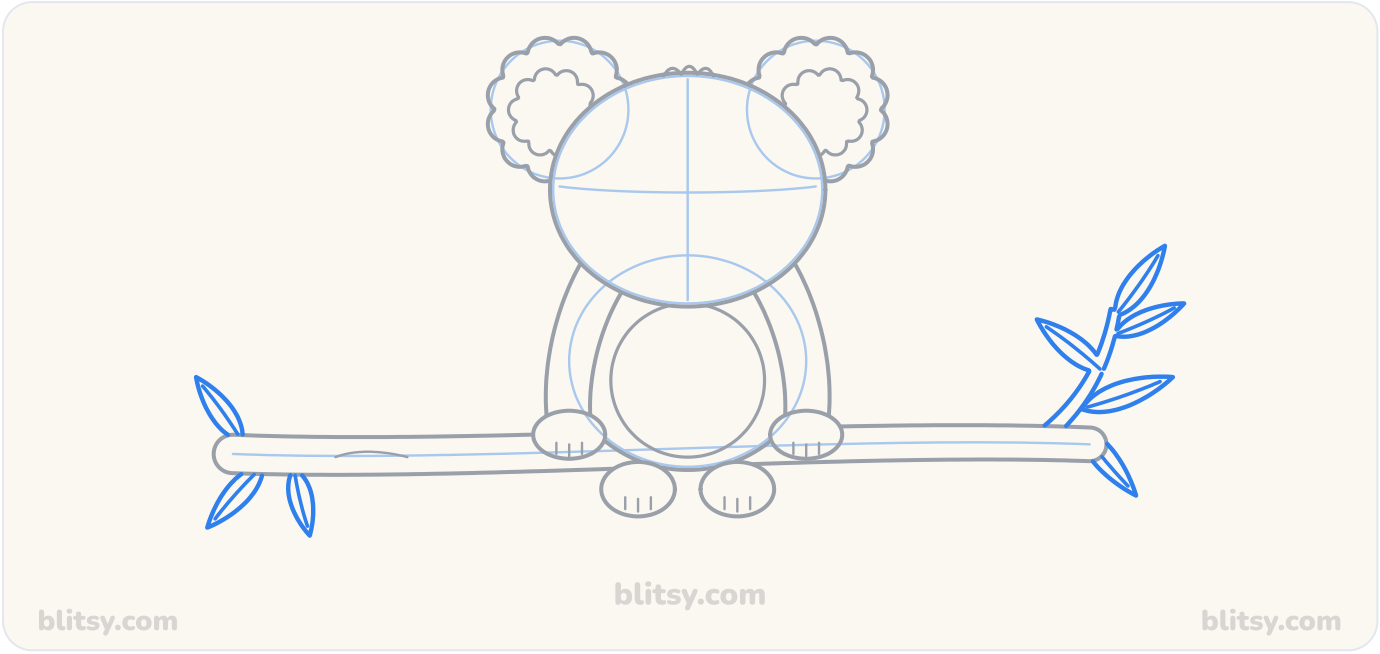
STEP 8 Draw the eucalyptus branch



Follow the branch guide with two lines about a paw's height apart and round off both ends. The branch goes behind the body and the feet, so stop your lines where they meet the koala and pick them up again on the other side. One short curve on the left adds bark texture.

💡 **Tip:** A slightly wavy branch looks more natural than a ruler-straight one, so let your hand wobble a little.

STEP 9 Add a twig and long eucalyptus leaves



From the right end of the branch, draw a thin twig curving up. Eucalyptus leaves are long and narrow with pointed tips, so I draw them like stretched-out teardrops along the twig and a few more hanging from the left end. A line down the middle of each leaf makes the vein.

💡 **Tip:** Point the leaves in different directions. If they all lean the same way, they look stiff.

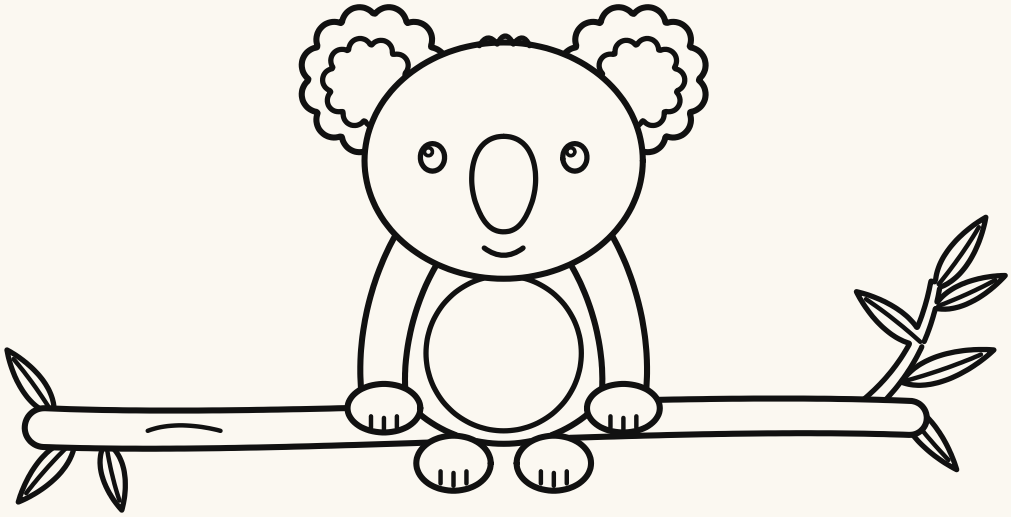
STEP 10 Draw the big nose, small eyes and a smile



The nose is the koala's best feature, so I'm always generous with it. Draw a tall oval in the middle of the face, a little wider at the top, starting just at the eye line. Put two small round eyes on the cross curve, well apart from the nose, each with a little shine circle. A short, gentle smile under the nose finishes the face.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the eyes small next to the nose. Big eyes make it look more like a bear or a mouse.

STEP 11 Ink the koala and erase the guides



Trace all the keeper lines with your black marker. I do the face first, while my hand is steady, then the ears, body, branch and leaves. Let the ink dry for a minute and then erase every pencil guide.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the bumpy ear edge in short strokes, lifting the pen at each dip.

STEP 12 Color your koala



Color the head, ears, arms, paws and feet gray. The belly is a lighter gray and the ear fluff stays white. Fill the nose and eyes with black but leave the shine dots white. Add two pink cheeks, a brown branch and twig, and green leaves to finish.

💡 **Tip:** Press lightly with the gray first and add a second layer near the edges. It gives the fur a soft, round look.