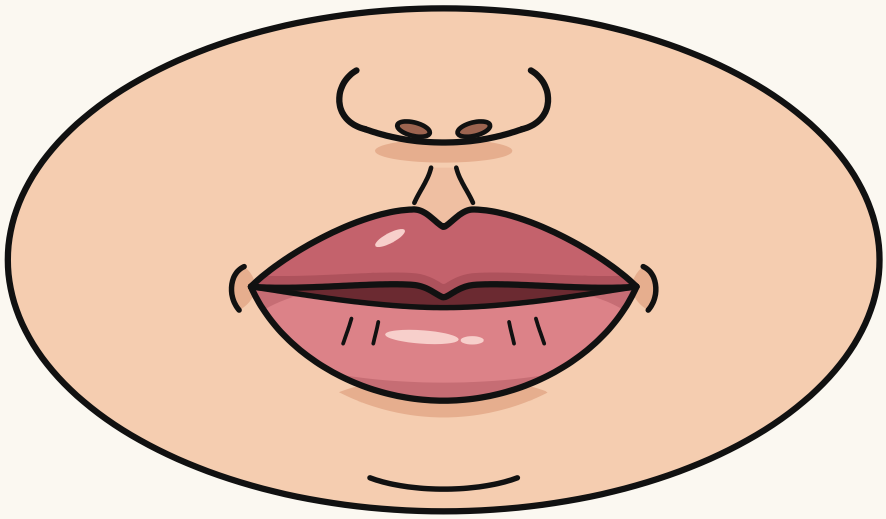
How to Draw a Mouth

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

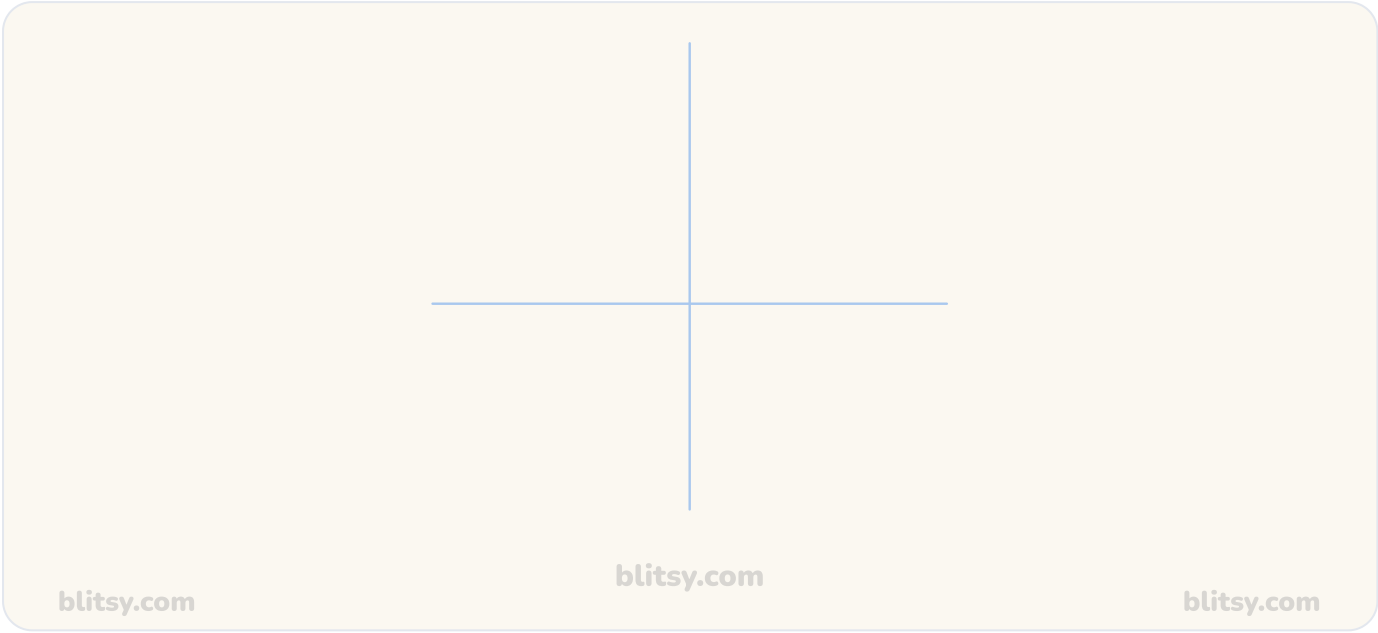
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black fineliner
- Colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

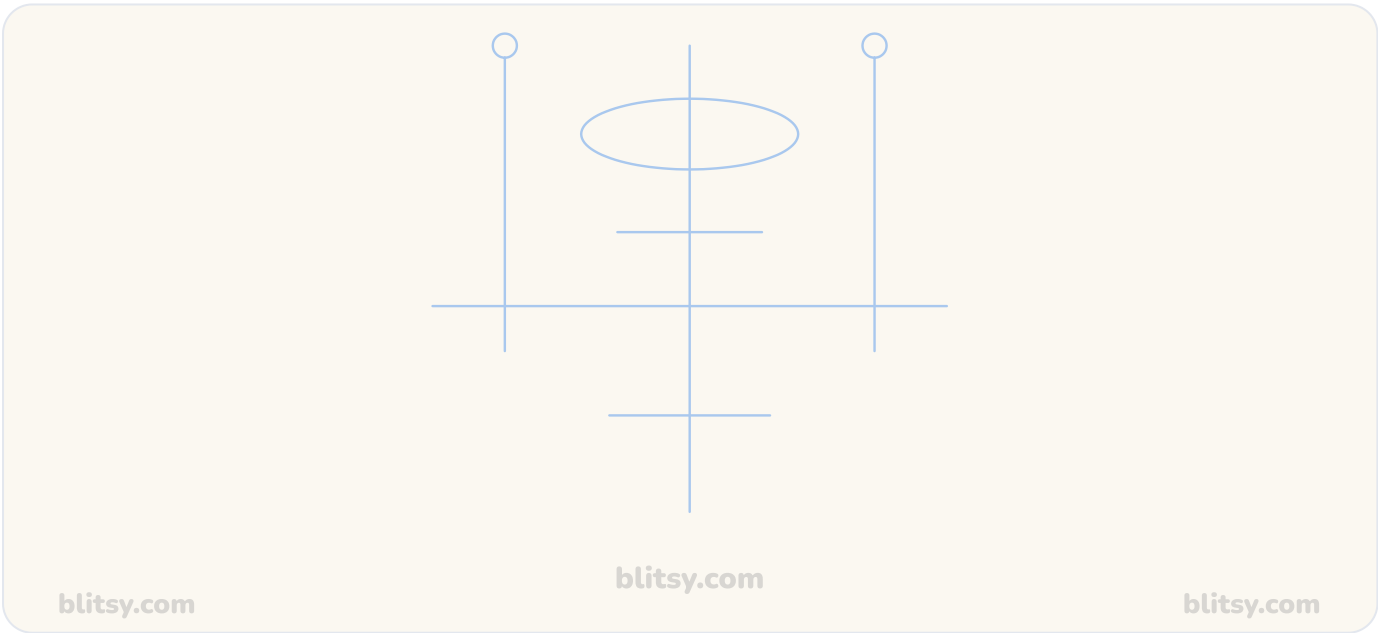
STEP 1 Draw a center line and a mouth line



Draw one light vertical line down the middle of your paper and a horizontal line across it, a little below the center. The horizontal one is where the lips will meet. I never skip this cross, because a front-view mouth is a mirror image and the cross keeps both halves even.

💡 **Tip:** Press so lightly you can barely see it. These lines disappear later.

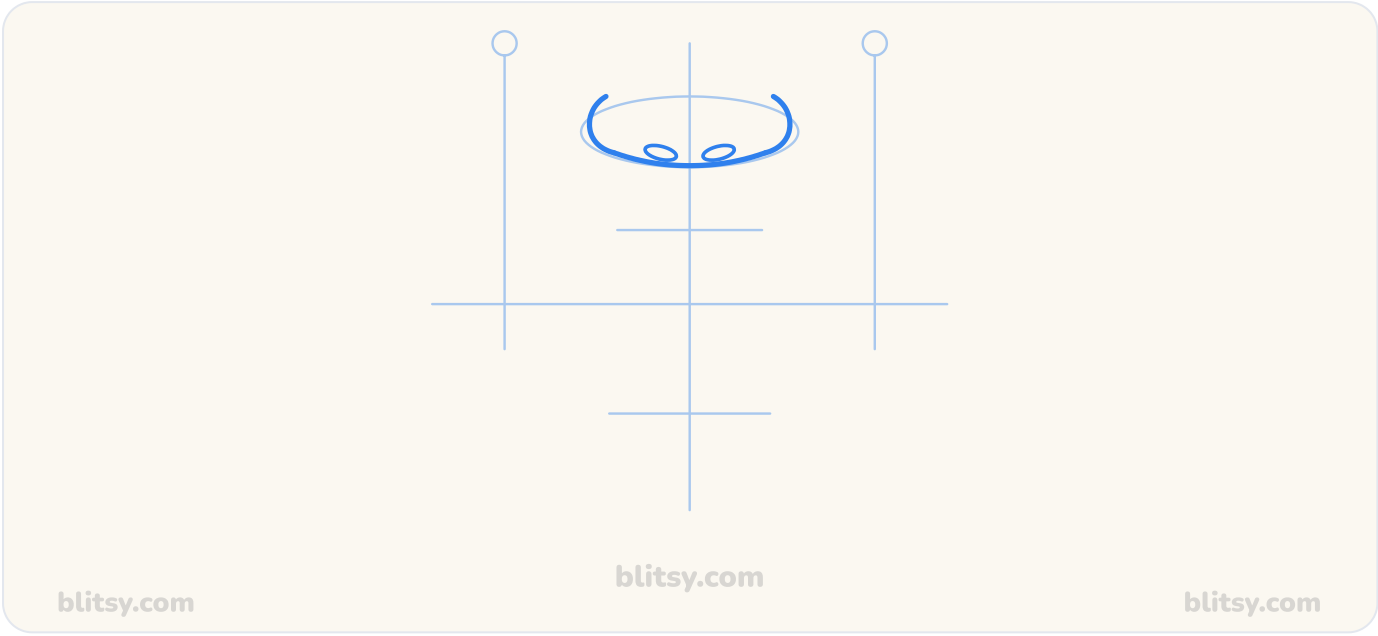
STEP 2 Mark the corners under the pupils



Imagine the eyes above your page. On a real face the corners of a relaxed mouth sit roughly straight under the pupils, so drop two vertical lines and mark the corners where they cross the mouth line. Add a short tick above for the top of the upper lip, a lower one for the bottom of the lower lip, and a flat oval higher up for the nose.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a little more space below the mouth line than above it. The lower lip is the fuller one.

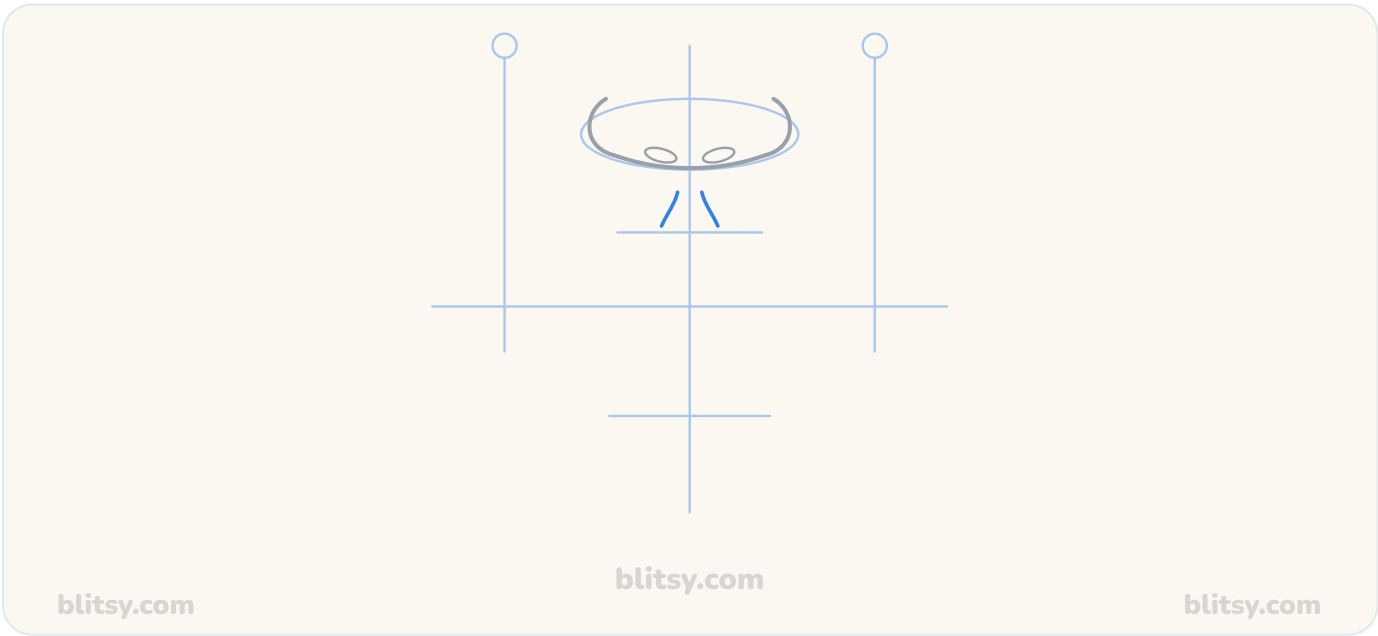
STEP 3 Sketch the base of the nose



Inside the oval, draw two curved wings like brackets and join them with a soft line along the bottom for the tip. Add two small slanted ovals just above that line for the nostrils. I only draw the bottom of the nose here, as a size check: the mouth should be clearly wider than it.

💡 **Tip:** If your nose ends up as wide as the mouth, the mouth is too small. Move the corner marks out, not the nose in.

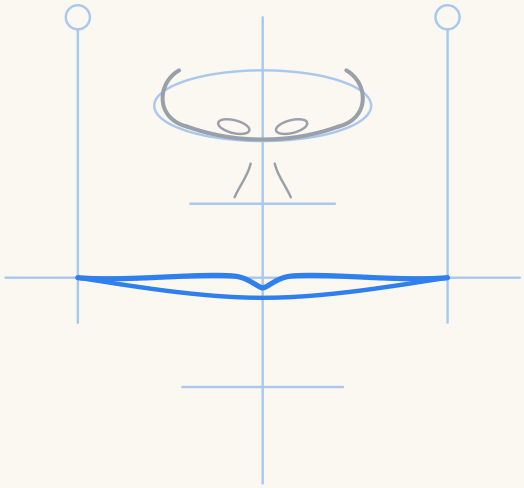
STEP 4 Add the two philtrum ridges



The philtrum is the little groove between the nose and the lip. Draw two short lines that start close together under the nose and spread apart going down. Stop just above the upper lip tick, because where they end is where the two points of the cupid's bow go.

💡 **Tip:** Keep these lines short and thin. Long, heavy philtrum lines make the face look like it has a mustache.

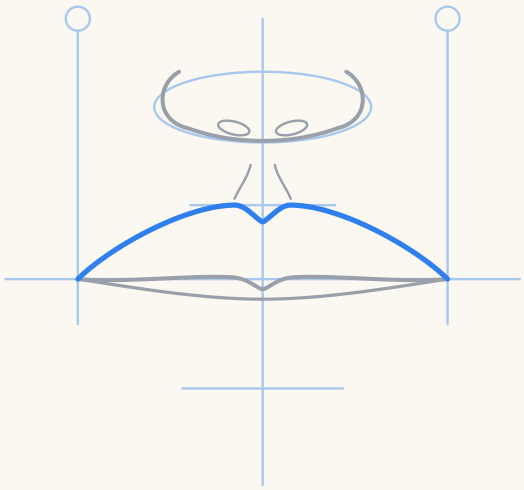
STEP 5 Draw the line where the lips meet



This is the most important line in the drawing, so I always draw it before the outer edges. Start at one corner, run a gentle curve toward the center, dip into a small point in the middle, then mirror it back to the other corner. A second, flatter line just under it opens the lips slightly in the middle.

💡 **Tip:** That small downward point in the middle is the bump of the upper lip. Without it the mouth looks flat and rubbery.

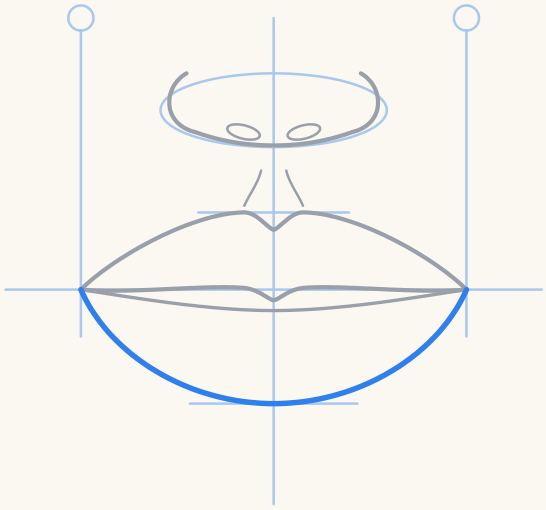
STEP 6 Shape the upper lip and the cupid's bow



From the left corner, curve up to the first point under the philtrum, dip down to the center line, rise to the second point and curve back down to the right corner. That M shape in the middle is the cupid's bow. The outer parts of the upper lip should slope gently, getting thinner as they reach the corners.

💡 **Tip:** Round off the two points a little. Sharp peaks look like a cartoon heart.

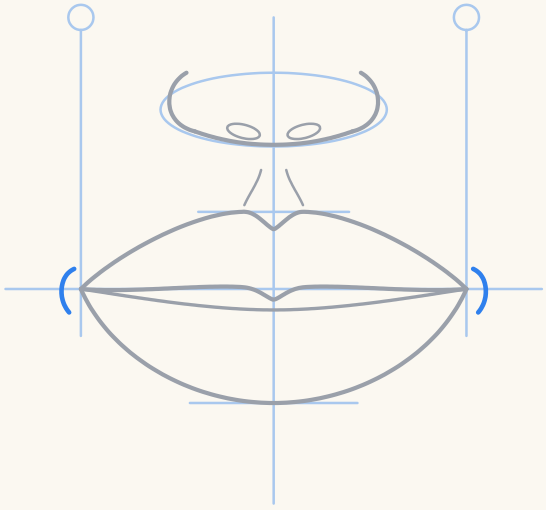
STEP 7 Add a fuller lower lip



Draw one smooth curve from corner to corner, dipping down to the lower tick. It's wider and rounder than the upper lip, and fairly flat across the bottom. On most faces the lower lip is a bit taller than the upper one, which is what makes it look soft.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the curve in one confident stroke. Lots of small strokes leave a hairy edge.

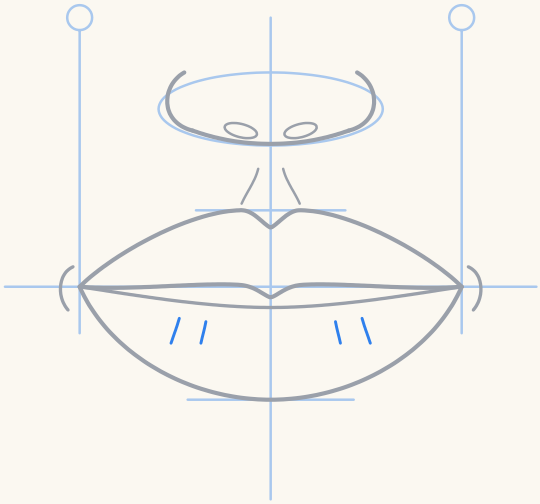
STEP 8 Soften the mouth corners



Just outside each corner, draw a tiny curved crease like a small bracket. That's where the cheek folds in, and it makes the mouth sit on a face instead of looking pasted on.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the creases tiny. Make them long and the mouth starts to smile.

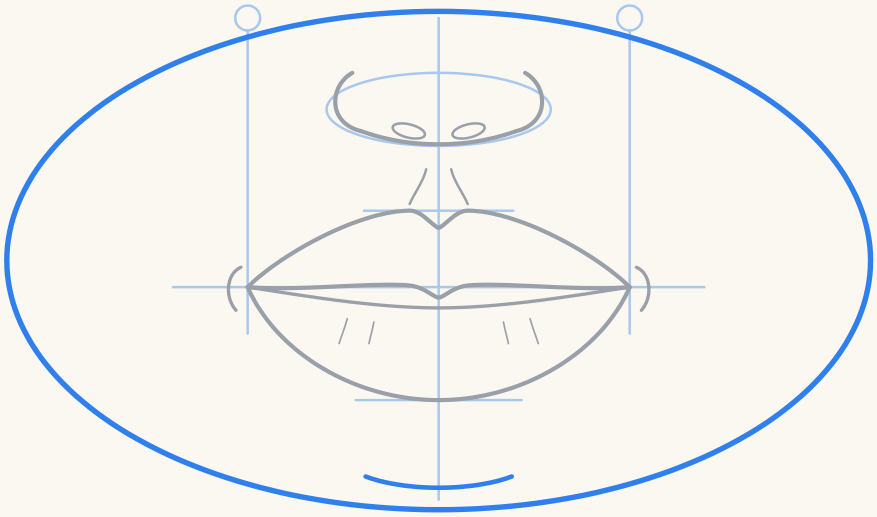
STEP 9 Draw soft lines on the lower lip



Add two short vertical lines on each side of the lower lip, curving slightly toward the middle. Real lips have fine creases, and a few hints are plenty. I keep them away from the center, where the shine goes later.

💡 **Tip:** Younger artists can skip this step completely. The mouth still reads well without it.

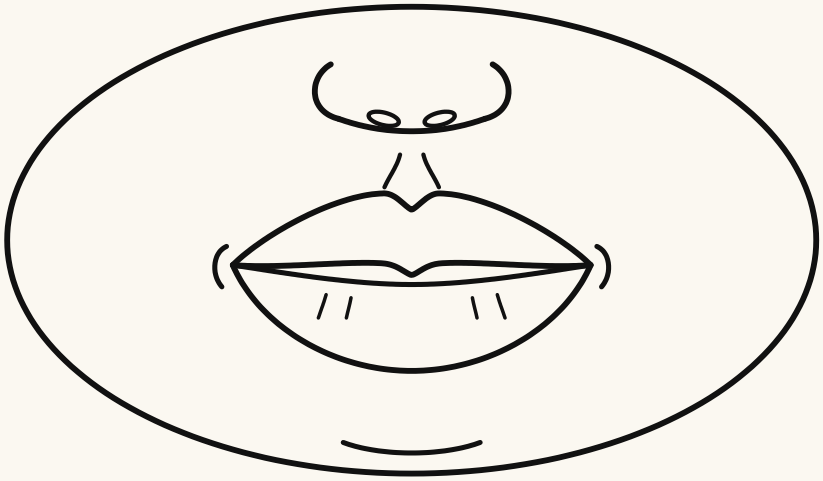
STEP 10 Add the chin curve and the skin shape



Below the lower lip, draw a short, shallow curve for the bottom of the chin. Then draw a big oval around everything. I like this oval for feature studies because it gives you a patch of skin to color without drawing a whole head.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a gap between the lip and the chin curve. The space between them is where the shadow goes.

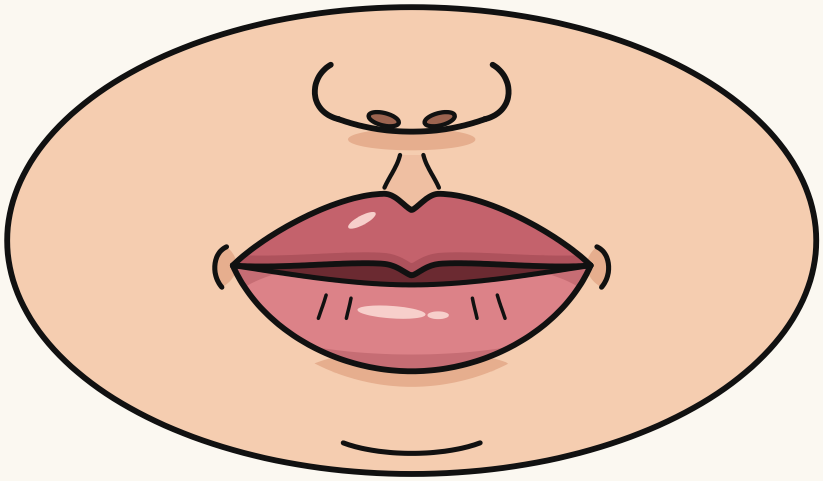
STEP 11 Ink the mouth and erase the guides



Go over every keeper line with the fineliner. I start with the line where the lips meet, then the lip edges, then the nose and chin. Skip the guides and pupil marks. Let the ink dry, then erase all the pencil.

💡 **Tip:** Make the line between the lips a little thicker than the rest. It's the darkest part of a real mouth.

STEP 12 Color the lips and skin



Color the skin peach, then use tan for the shadow under the nose, the philtrum groove, the corners and a soft crescent under the lower lip. The upper lip is rose with a darker band near the middle line. The lower lip is a lighter pink, darker along its bottom edge. Fill the gap with dark red and leave small light pink shines.

💡 **Tip:** Color the shine areas last and very lightly, or leave the paper white there. You can't easily get light back once it's dark.