How to Draw a Panda

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

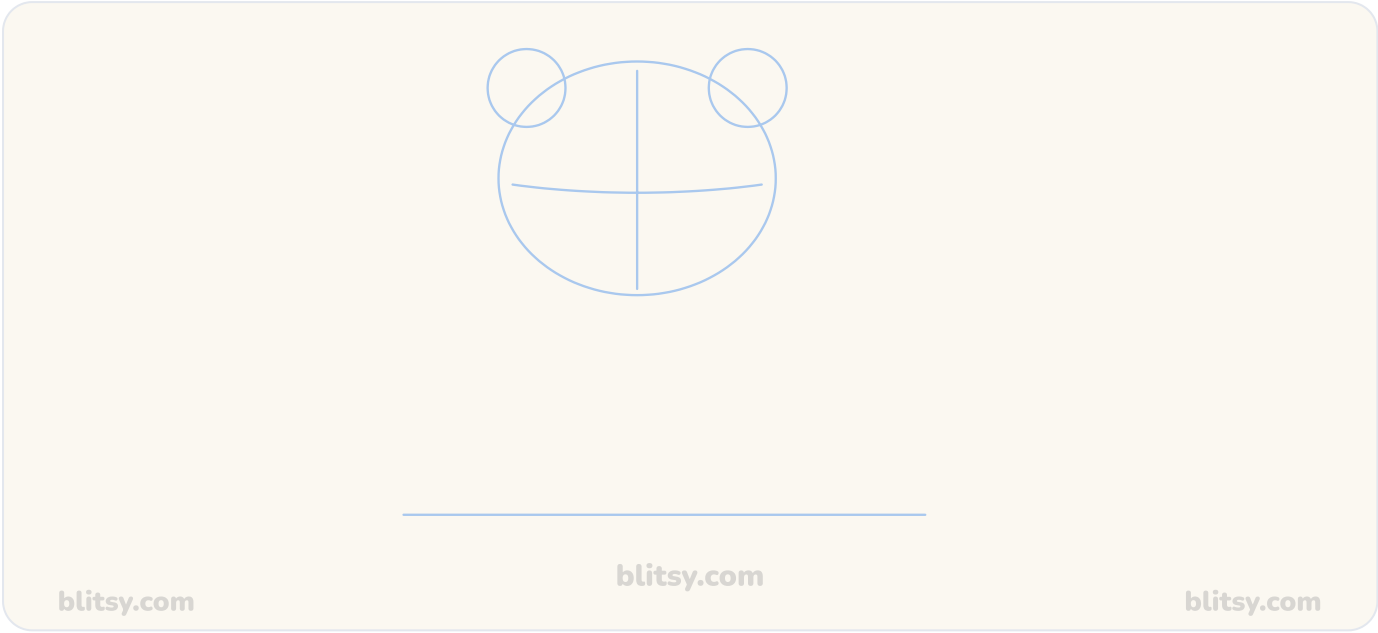
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Plain paper

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 →

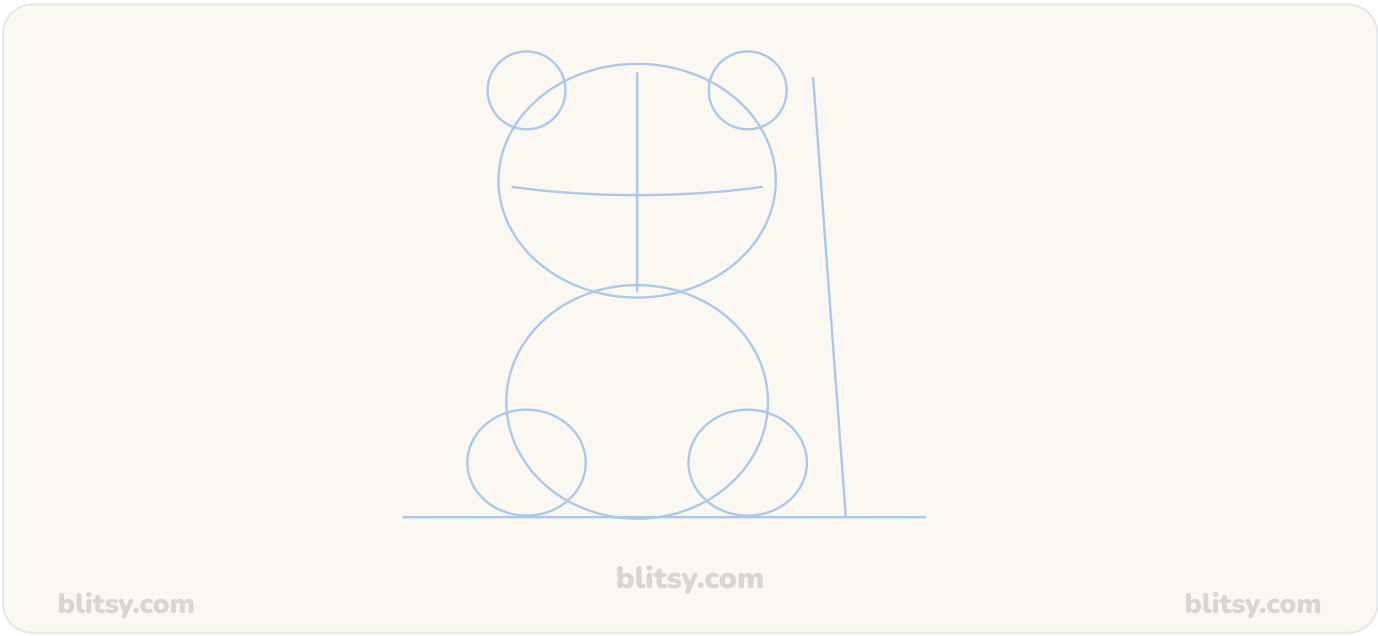
STEP 1 Sketch a head circle and two ear circles



Draw a big circle in the upper middle of the page, a little wider than it is tall. Put a small circle on each top corner so it overlaps the head by about a third. Then draw a line down the middle and a slight curve across, just above the center. Those two lines tell you where the eyes and nose go later.

💡 **Tip:** Keep your pencil light here. You'll erase all of these guides at the end.

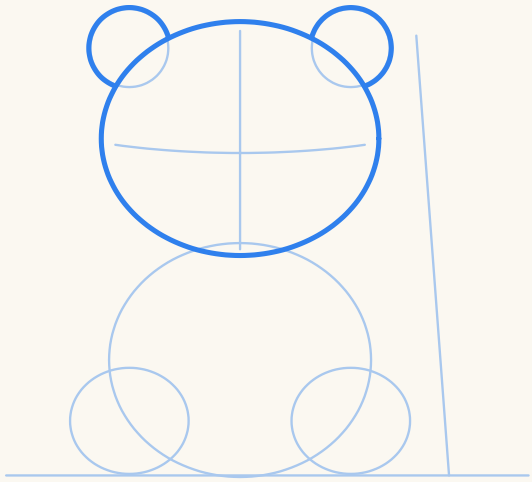
STEP 2 Add guide shapes below the head



Under the head, draw an oval for the body that touches the chin. It should be about as wide as the head, because a cartoon panda looks chunky and round. Add two smaller ovals at the bottom corners for the back legs and a flat ground line under everything. Last, draw one long straight line on the right side, leaning a little, where the bamboo will stand.

💡 **Tip:** Leave a gap between the body and the bamboo line, about the width of a paw. The arm needs that space.

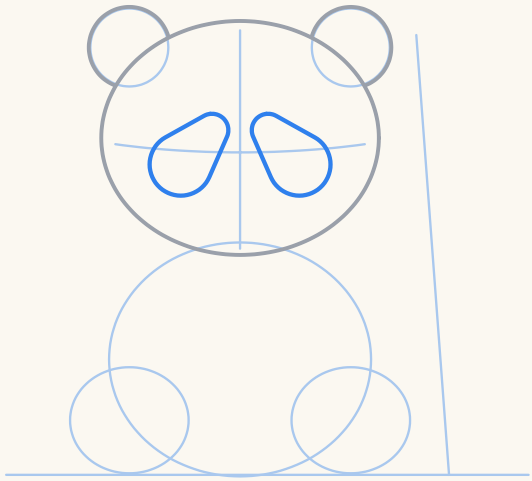
STEP 3 Outline the round head and ears



Trace around the head circle with a firm, smooth line. Then go over the outer part of each ear circle, stopping where it meets the head. I keep the ears small and fully round, since pointy or tall ears make a panda look like a cat or a fox.

💡 **Tip:** Turn your paper as you go around the head. Curves are smoother when your hand moves in its natural direction.

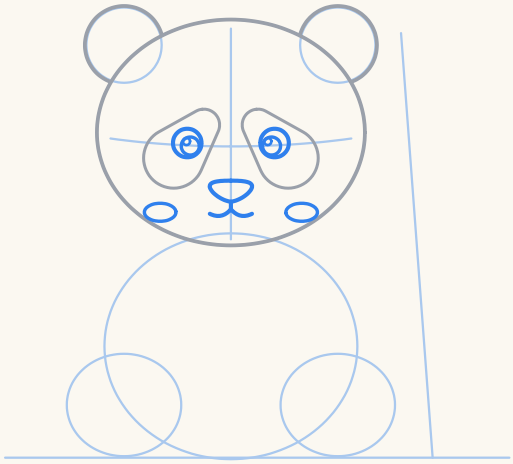
STEP 4 Draw the teardrop eye patches



This is the step that turns a plain bear into a panda. Each patch is a teardrop lying on its side: the narrow end points up toward the middle line, and the wide end drops down and out toward the cheek. Sit both patches on the cross curve with a nose-sized gap between them.

💡 **Tip:** Draw one patch, then copy its tilt for the other side. Patches that tilt the same way make the panda look cross-eyed.

STEP 5 Add the eyes and the rest of the face



Inside each patch, near the top, draw a small circle for the eye with a smaller circle inside it for the pupil and a tiny shine dot. Below the patches, on the middle line, draw a nose shaped like a rounded upside-down triangle. A short line down from the nose splits into two little curves for the smile. Two flat ovals under the patches become pink cheeks.

💡 **Tip:** Put the shine dot on the same side in both eyes. It looks like light coming from one place.

STEP 6 Draw the shoulder band and both arms



Pandas wear their black fur like a vest across the shoulders. Draw a gently curved line across the chest, a little under the chin, for the bottom of that band. The left arm comes down from the shoulder and ends in a round paw that rests on the tummy. The right arm reaches out to the bamboo line and ends in a round paw sitting right over it.

💡 **Tip:** Give both arms the same thick width all the way down. Thin arms make the panda look like it's wearing a jacket that's too big.

STEP 7 Draw the tummy and the back legs



Follow the body oval down each side, only where you can still see it between the arms and the legs. Then trace the two leg ovals as big round shapes that bulge out past the body. Most beginners make the legs too small, and the panda ends up looking like it's standing instead of sitting.

💡 **Tip:** Skip the lines where the arm crosses the leg. The arm is in front, so the leg hides behind it.

STEP 8 Add round feet and paw pads



At the front of each leg, near the ground line, draw an oval foot facing you. Inside it, draw one larger oval pad and three small toe beans in an arc above it. I like this little detail because it shows the panda is sitting with its feet stuck out in front, like a toddler.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the toe beans close together and a bit smaller than you think. Big ones crowd the foot.

STEP 9 Draw the bamboo stalk



Follow the bamboo guide with two lines a finger's width apart and give the top a rounded end. The stalk goes behind the right paw, so stop your lines at the paw and start again just below it. Add four short curved lines across the stalk for the joints, spaced out evenly.

💡 **Tip:** Let the joints curve slightly downward. Flat lines make the bamboo look like a ruler.

STEP 10 Add long, narrow bamboo leaves



Bamboo leaves are long and thin with a sharp point. Draw a fan of four leaves near the top of the stalk and a pair coming out of a lower joint, all pointing out and away from the panda's head. Each leaf starts behind the stalk. A line down the center of each one makes the vein.

💡 **Tip:** Make a few leaves a little shorter than the others. Identical leaves look stamped on.

STEP 11 Ink the lines and erase the guides



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Go over every keeper line with your black marker. I start with the face, while my hand is fresh, and then work down to the feet and over to the bamboo. Wait a minute for the ink to dry, then erase all the pencil guides.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the small eye circles slowly. A wobble there changes the panda's whole expression.

STEP 12 Color your panda



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Use black for the ears and eye patches, the nose and pupils, and every arm and leg. The feet and the shoulder band are black too. Leave the head and tummy white, along with the eye shines. The paw pads are gray, the cheeks pink, the stalk light green and the leaves a deeper green.

💡 **Tip:** Color the big black areas with the marker and leave a thin white gap around each eye shine so it doesn't disappear.