How to Draw a Red Panda

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

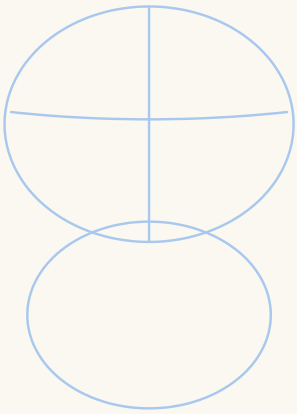
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper

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 →

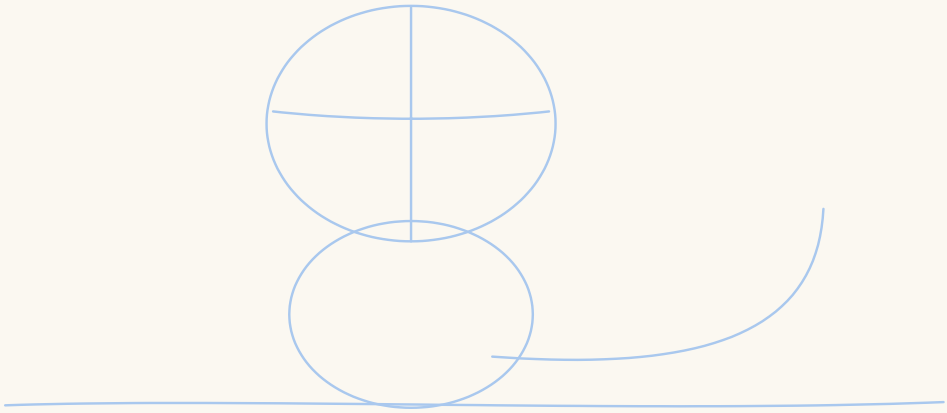
STEP 1 Sketch a head oval and a body oval



Draw a wide oval a little left of the middle of your page for the head. Right under it, overlapping a bit, draw a smaller oval for the body. I add a line down the center of the head and a gently curved line across it, just above halfway, because the eyes sit on that curve.

💡 **Tip:** Make the head oval clearly bigger than the body. A big head is what makes a cartoon animal look cute.

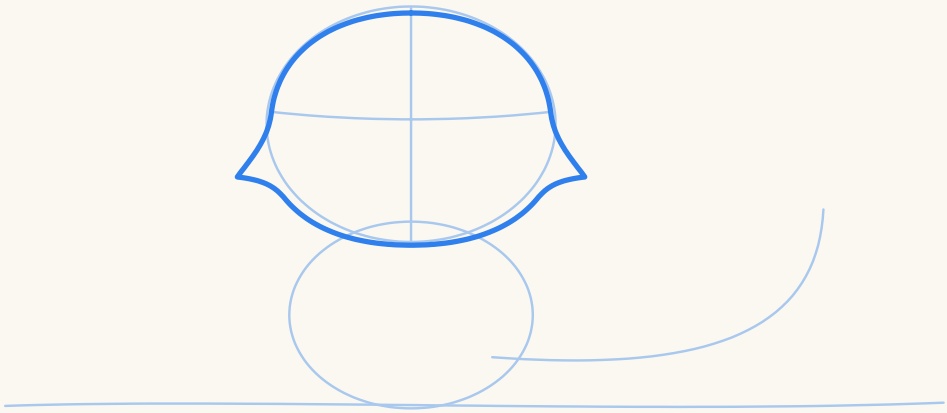
STEP 2 Add the branch and tail guides



Draw a long, almost straight line across the bottom of the body oval and past it on both sides. That's the top of the branch. From the right side of the body, draw one curve that runs along the branch and then sweeps upward. It shows where the tail will go.

💡 **Tip:** Let the branch line wobble slightly. A ruler-straight branch looks like a pipe.

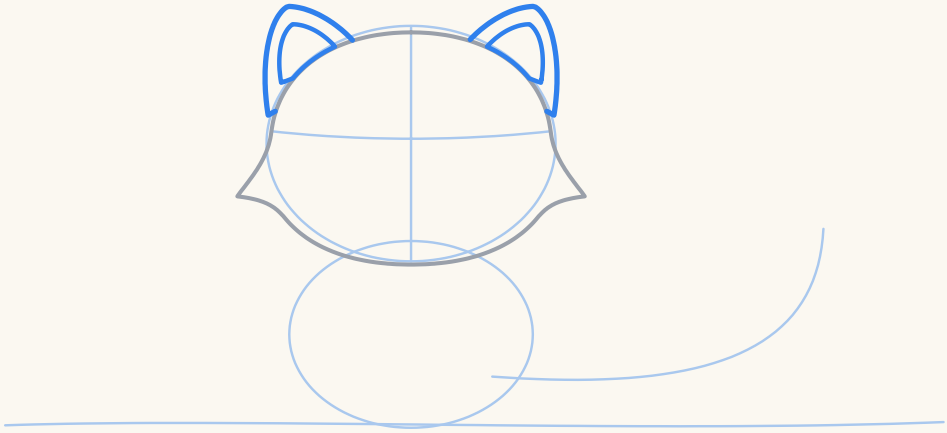
STEP 3 Draw a wide head with cheek tufts



Go over the head oval with a firmer line, but let the lower sides puff out into a pointed tuft of fur on each cheek. Then curve back in and round off the chin. In my experience those tufts are what make people say red panda and not cat.

💡 **Tip:** Point both tufts slightly down and out, like a little mustache made of fur.

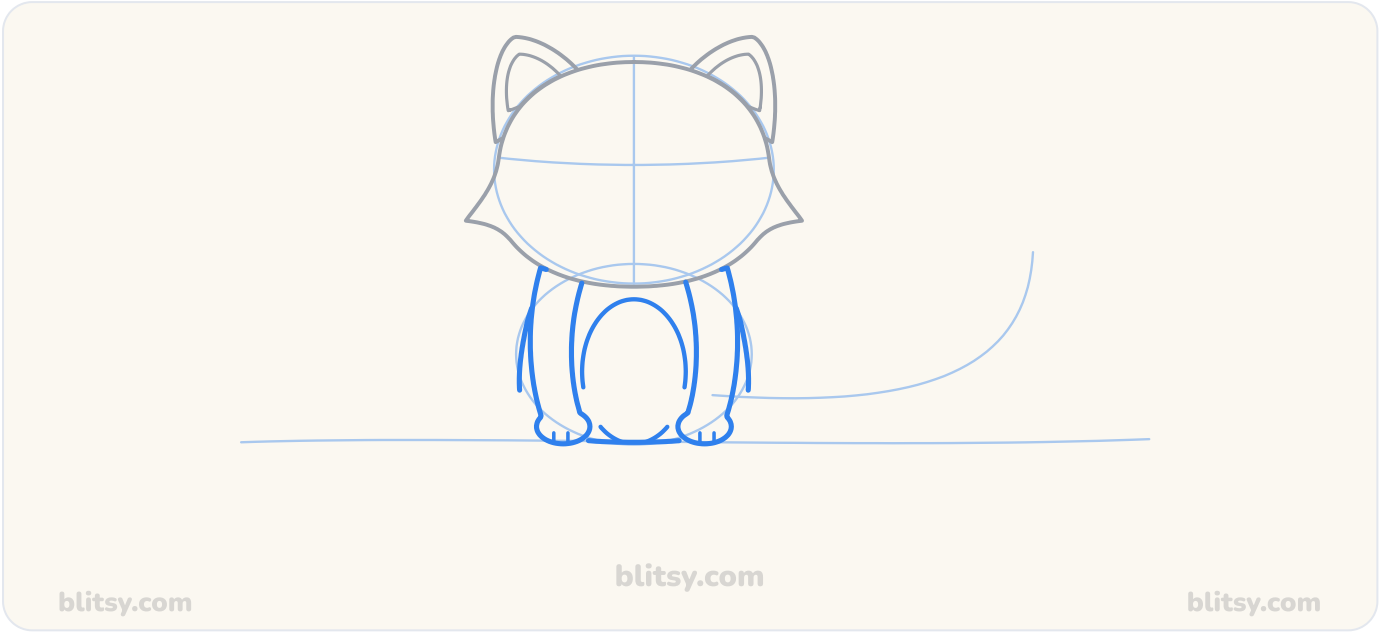
STEP 4 Add two pointed ears



On top of the head, near each side, draw a tall ear with a soft point. The ears lean outward a little. Inside each one, draw a smaller copy of the ear shape for the white fur. The bottom of each ear tucks behind the head line.

💡 **Tip:** Keep a wide gap between the ears. If they sit too close together, the face starts to look like a fox.

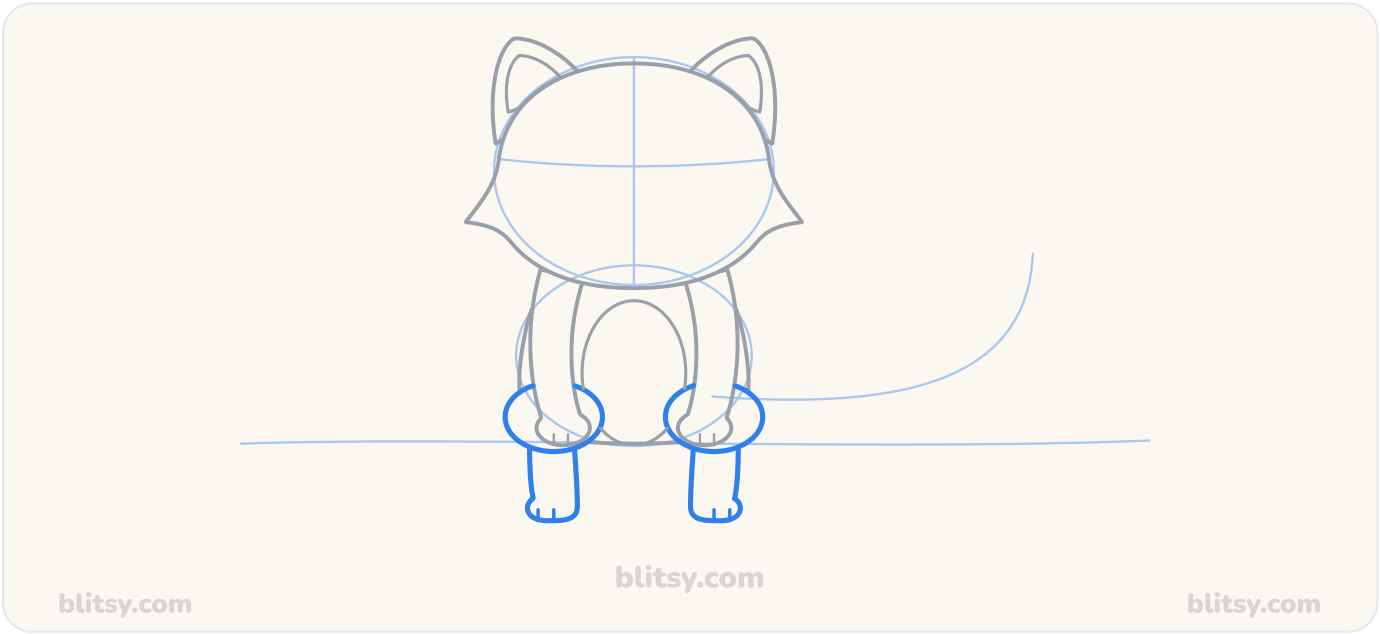
STEP 5 Draw the body, arms and belly



From under the cheeks, bring the body outline down on each side so it widens toward the branch, like a pear. Over it, draw two thick arms that come down from the shoulders to round paws resting on the branch, with two little claw lines on each paw. Between the arms goes a tall oval for the dark belly.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the arms nearly as wide as the paws. Thin arms make the panda look like a stuffed toy with sticks.

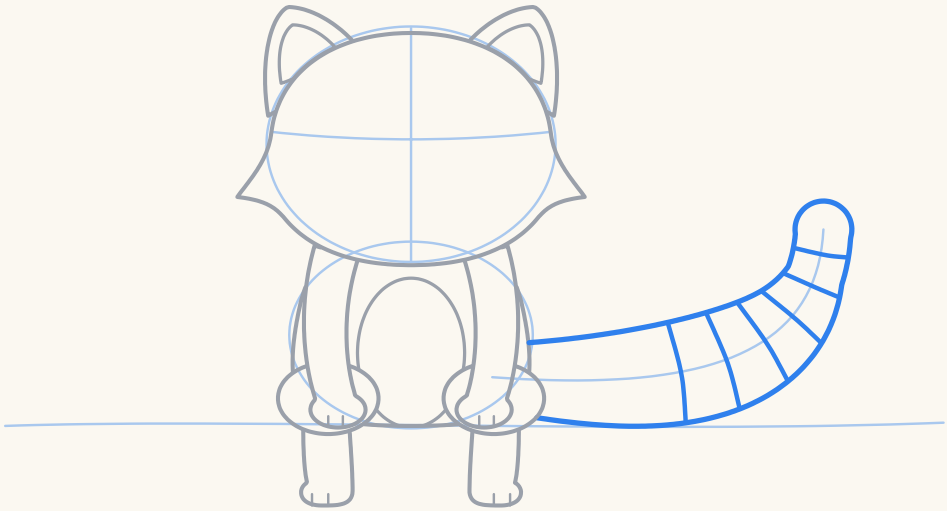
STEP 6 Add thighs and dangling legs



At the bottom corners of the body, draw a rounded bump on each side for the thighs. Under each thigh, drop a short, thick leg straight down below the branch line and finish it with a flat foot and two toe lines. The legs hang in front of the branch because the panda sits on top of it.

💡 **Tip:** Line the feet up at the same height so the panda doesn't look tipped over.

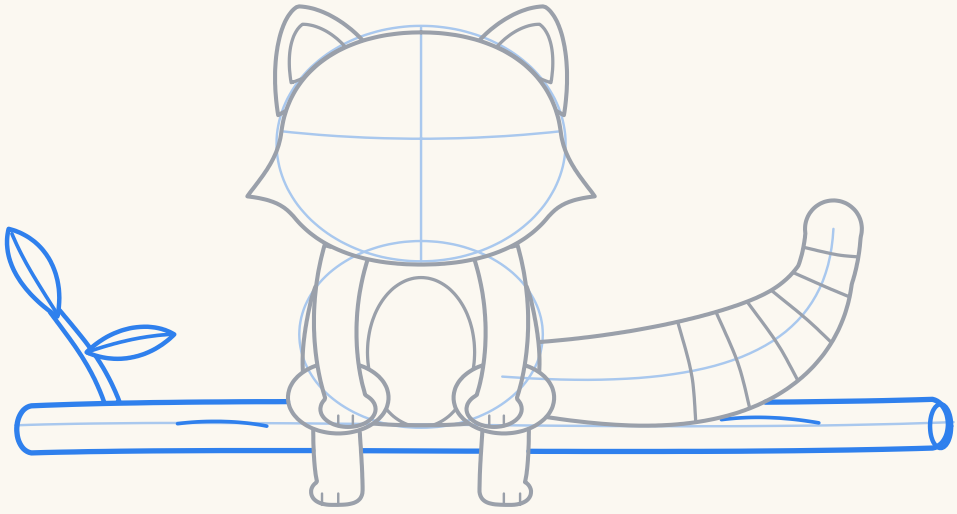
STEP 7 Draw a big bushy tail with rings



Follow the tail guide with two lines that start behind the body. I make the tail wider in the middle than at the base and round off the tip at the top. Then draw three curved lines across it to mark the rings, spaced so the rings and the gaps between them are about the same width.

💡 **Tip:** Bow each ring line slightly instead of drawing it straight. The tail looks fluffier that way.

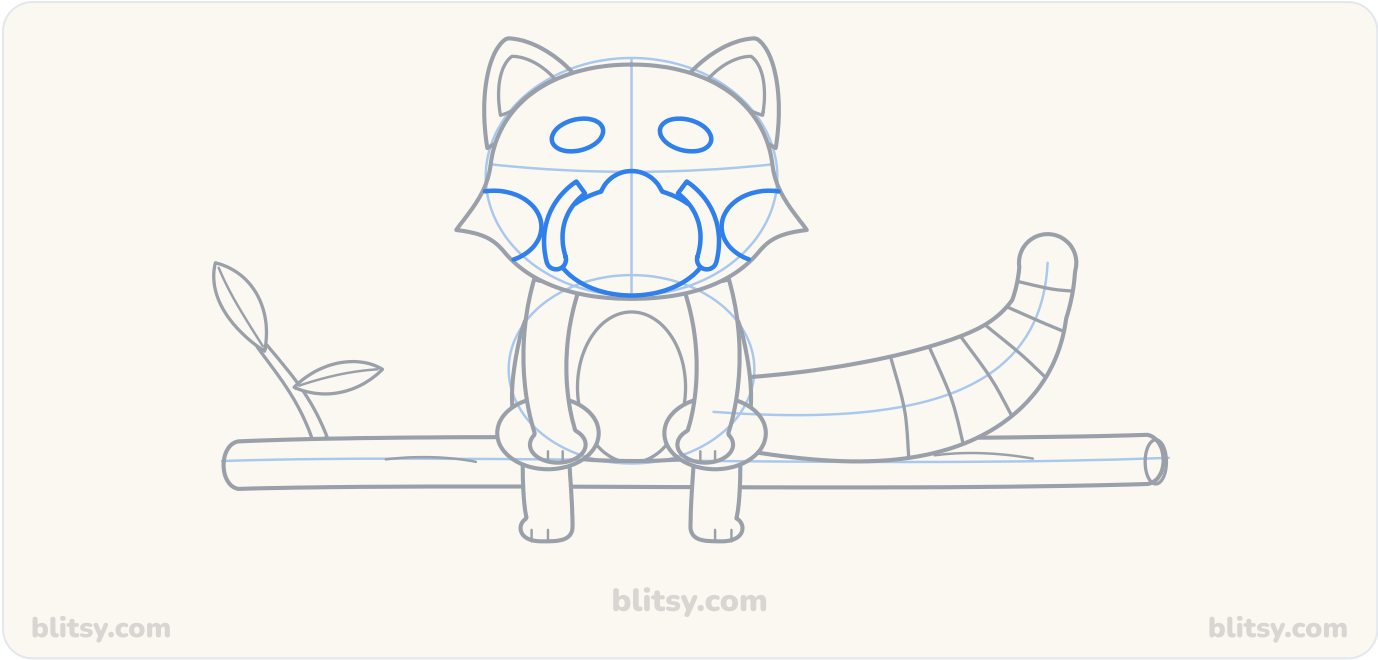
STEP 8 Draw the branch and a little twig



Now draw the branch as a long log: one line on top, one underneath, and a small oval at the right end where it was cut. Stop the lines wherever the panda and its tail are in front. I like two short bark lines and a thin twig with two leaves on the left to fill the empty corner.

💡 **Tip:** Leaving the branch until now means you never have to erase lines that go behind the panda.

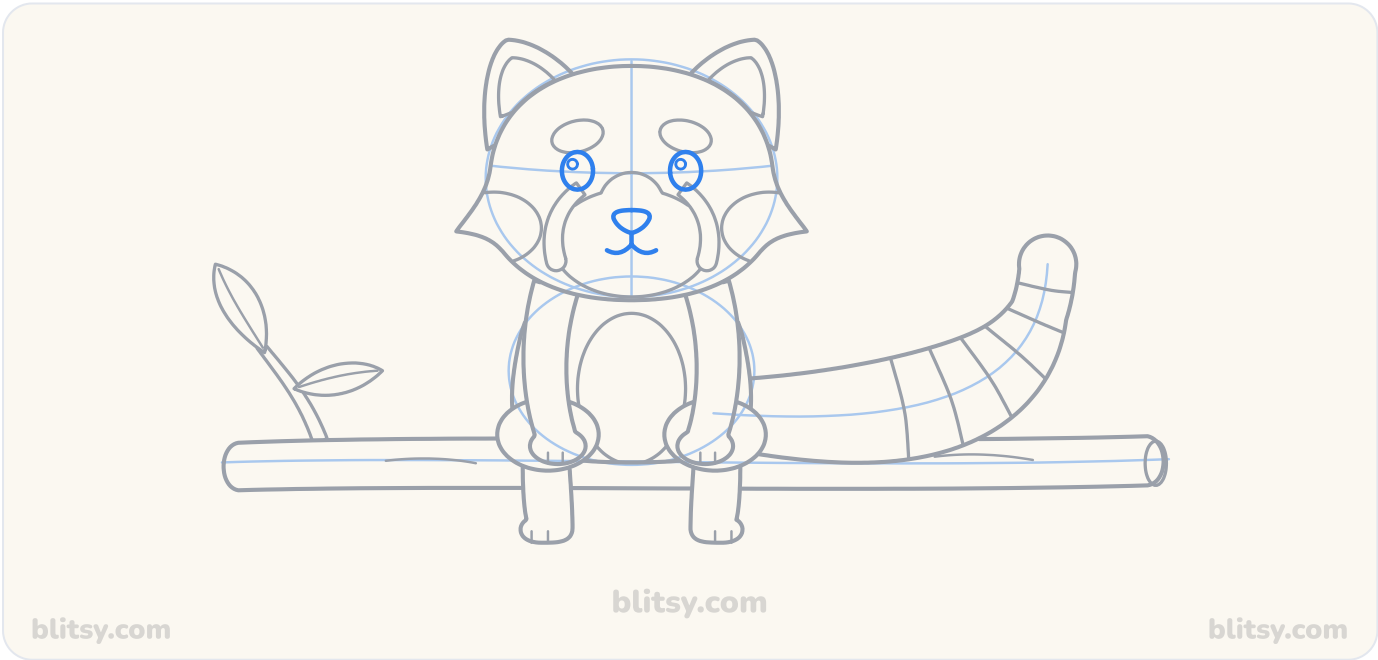
STEP 9 Add the face patches and tear marks



Draw a small tilted oval above each eye position for the white eyebrows. Around the bottom of the face, draw a big rounded muzzle, then outline a white patch inside each cheek tuft. Finally add the tear marks, a curved stripe under each eye that runs down along the edge of the muzzle.

💡 **Tip:** The tear marks curve toward the mouth at the bottom. Straight stripes look like stitches.

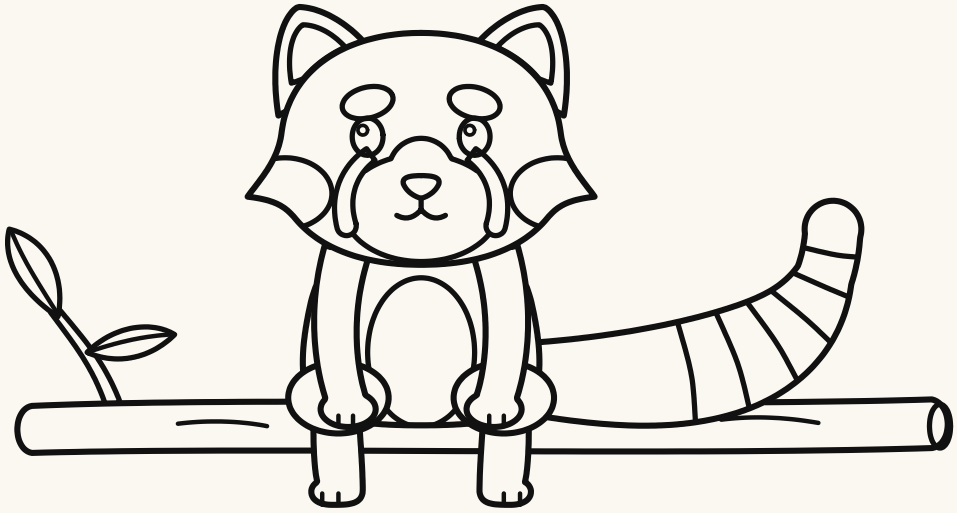
STEP 10 Draw the eyes, nose and smile



Put a round eye at the top of each tear mark, right on the curved guide line, with a small shine circle in the same corner of both. In the middle of the muzzle, near the top, draw a small rounded nose shaped like an upside-down triangle. A short line drops from it and splits into a little smile.

💡 **Tip:** Big round eyes with shine dots make it cute. Small dots for eyes make the face look sleepy.

STEP 11 Ink your drawing and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with the marker. I begin with the face, while my hand is steady, and finish with the long branch lines. Leave the light ovals and guide curves alone. When the ink is completely dry, erase all the pencil so only the clean outline stays.

💡 **Tip:** Give the ink a full minute before erasing. Wet marker smears into gray streaks.

STEP 12 Color your red panda



Rusty orange covers the head and body, plus the ears and tail. Color the tail rings light orange. The limbs and belly are dark brown, the tear marks red brown. I leave every white patch as bare paper. Fill the eyes and nose black, keeping the shine dots white, then color the branch brown and the leaves green.

💡 **Tip:** Color the tail with strokes that follow its curve. It helps the fur look soft.