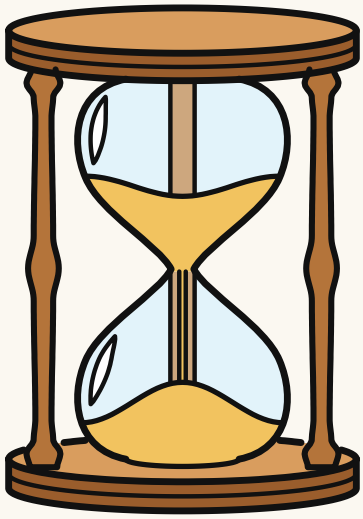
How to Draw an Hourglass

12 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

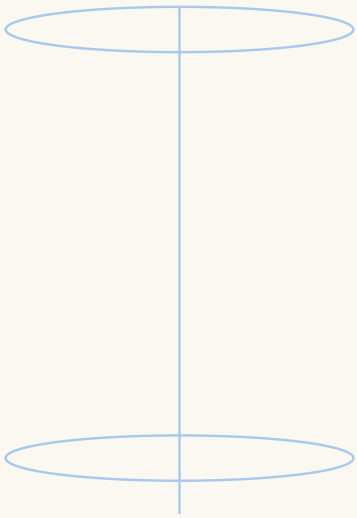
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A ruler (optional)
- A black marker or fineliner
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Plain paper

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 →

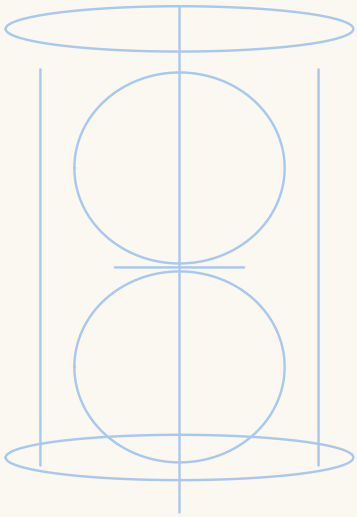
STEP 1 Draw a center line and two end ovals



Draw one straight vertical line down the middle of the page. Near the top, cross it with a wide, flat oval, and near the bottom draw a matching oval of the same size. When I teach this, I call the center line the boss of the drawing, because every shape after it gets copied from one side to the other.

💡 **Tip:** Use a ruler for the center line if your hand drifts. A tilted line makes the whole timer lean.

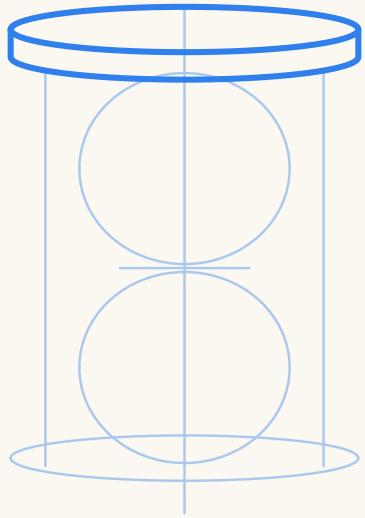
STEP 2 Add two bulb ovals and the post lines



Stack two tall ovals between the end ovals so they just touch at the middle of the center line, and mark that point with a short cross line for the neck. Then draw a vertical line on each side, a little inside the ends of the big ovals. Those mark where the front posts stand.

💡 **Tip:** Make both bulb ovals the same size, or the hourglass starts to look like a snowman.

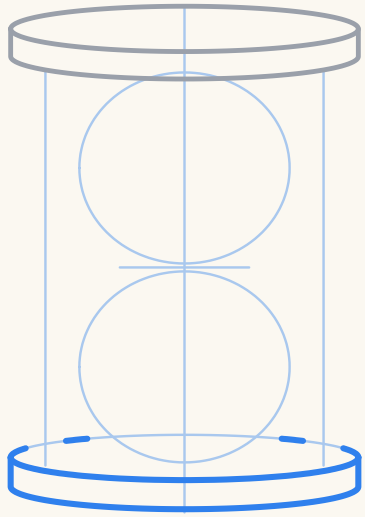
STEP 3 Give the top cap some thickness



Trace the top oval with a firm line. From its two ends, drop short straight lines down and join them with a curve that copies the front half of the oval. That band is the side of the wooden disc. Without it, the top looks like a flat plate floating in the air.

💡 **Tip:** The lower curve should bend exactly like the oval above it, just moved down.

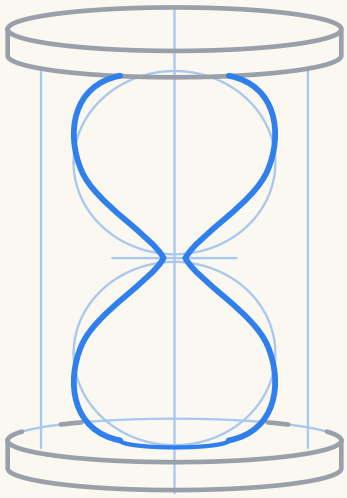
STEP 4 Draw the wooden base the same way



The base is built just like the cap: the oval, two short sides and a curved bottom edge. I make the base band a touch thicker so the timer feels steady. Posts and glass will hide parts of the back edge, so leave little gaps there or erase them later.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the base the same width as the cap. A wider base looks like a cake stand.

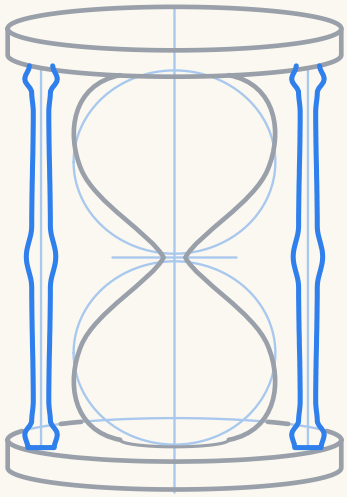
STEP 5 Outline the glass bulbs and the thin neck



Start just under the cap, swing a line out around the right side of the top bulb oval, then curve it in sharply to the neck mark. From there it flares out around the bottom oval and tucks in to meet the base. Copy that S-shaped curve on the left, then add a short curve where the glass sits on the base. This is the step where I slow down the most.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the neck narrow, about as wide as a pencil tip on paper. A thin neck is what makes it read as an hourglass.

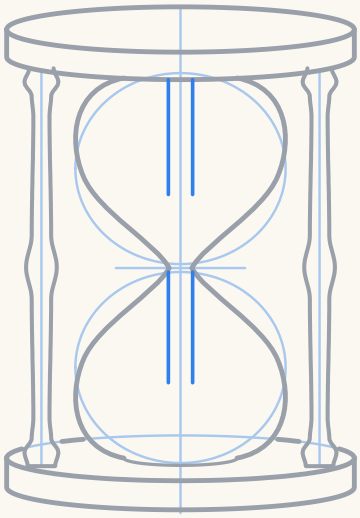
STEP 6 Draw two turned front posts



Over each post line, draw a slim post from under the cap down to the base. Give it a round bead at the top, another at the bottom and a bulge in the middle, with thin stretches between them. Real turned posts are carved on a lathe, which is why both sides of each one match.

💡 **Tip:** Draw the left post first, then copy its bumps at the same heights on the right one.

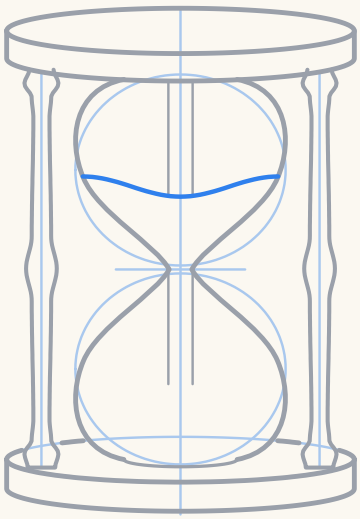
STEP 7 Add the third post behind the glass



Most hourglasses have three posts, and the third stands at the back. You see it through the glass, so draw just two thin parallel lines down the center, one pair in each bulb. Small kids can skip this step. I like it because it quietly tells the eye the glass is clear.

💡 **Tip:** Keep these lines thinner and lighter than the front posts. Things farther away should look quieter.

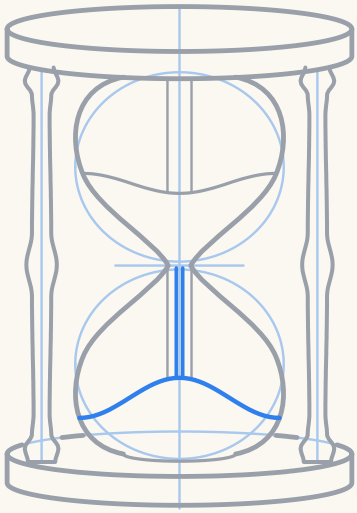
STEP 8 Fill the top bulb with sand



Draw a wavy line across the top bulb, a bit above its widest point, dipping slightly in the middle. Everything below it, down into the neck, is sand. The little dip shows the sand sinking as it drains.

💡 **Tip:** Stop the sand line right at the glass on both sides so it doesn't poke through the walls.

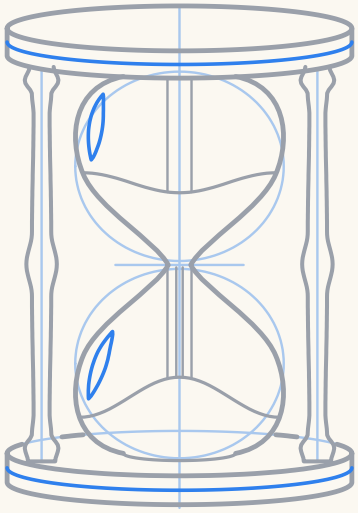
STEP 9 Draw the falling stream and a sand mound



From the neck, draw two close parallel lines straight down for the stream. Stop them on a soft hill in the bottom bulb: low at the glass walls and highest in the middle, where the stream lands. That mound is how sand really piles up.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the stream very thin. A wide stream looks like a pipe instead of falling sand.

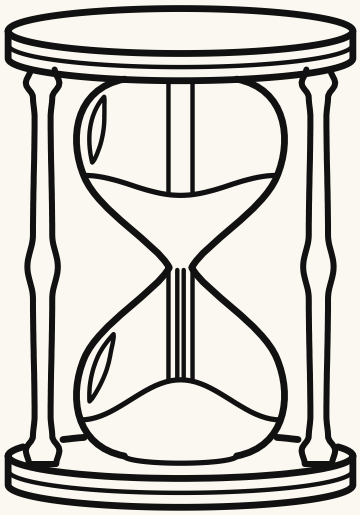
STEP 10 Add glass shine and wooden grooves



Inside the upper left of each bulb, draw a slim curved sliver that follows the glass. In my experience this tiny shine mark does more than anything else to make glass read as glass. Then add one curved groove around the middle of the cap band and one around the base band.

💡 **Tip:** Put both shine marks on the same side. Light comes from one direction, so the shine should too.

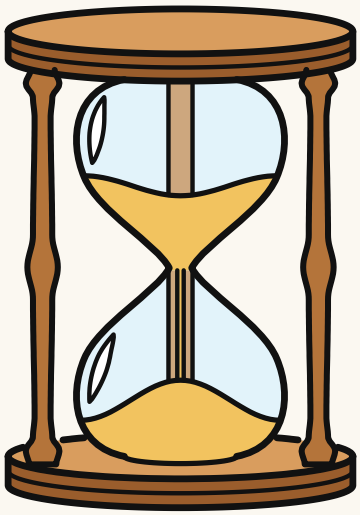
STEP 11 Ink the outline and erase the guides



Trace every keeper line with a black marker. I start with the cap and base, move to the glass and finish with small lines like the stream and the shine. Skip the center line, bulb ovals and post lines. Once the ink is dry, erase the pencil.

💡 **Tip:** Wait a full minute before erasing. Smudged marker on glass lines is hard to hide.

STEP 12 Color your hourglass



Color the tops of the cap and base light brown and their sides dark brown, so the discs look thick. The front posts are a middle brown and the back post a soft tan. Glass gets a very light blue, the sand golden yellow. Leave the shine marks white.

💡 **Tip:** Press lightly with the blue. Glass should look clear, so a pale wash works better than a solid color.