



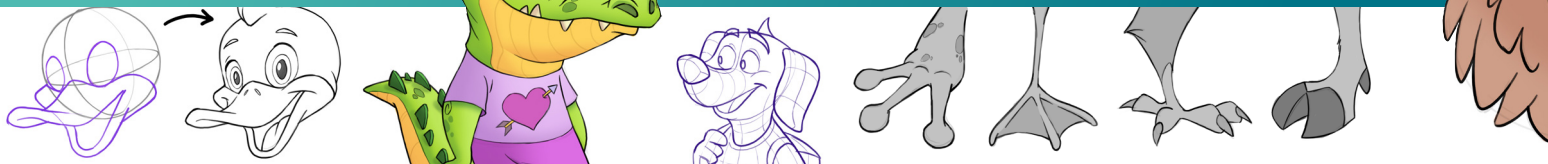
BOUGHT AT [GUMROAD.COM](https://gumroad.com/mitchleeuwe) MITCHLEEUEW

HOW TO DRAW ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERS

BY MITCH LEEUWE

YOU'LL LEARN:

- DRAWING HUMAN-LIKE ANIMALS
- DRAWING DIFFERENT ANIMALS
- BASICS OF DRAWING CHARACTERS



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mitchleeuwe.nl

Printed in the Netherlands
First Printing, 2021

Graphic design: Harmke Leeuwe
harmke.com

HOW TO DRAW ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERS

BY MITCH LEEUWE



Hi THERE!

Let me introduce myself. I'm Mitch Leeuwe and am an illustrator from the Netherlands. I always drew a lot as a kid. I even had the childhood dream to become an animator at Disney. During my teenage years, I lost that dream. Luckily, I slowly started drawing more and more. When I was 19, I began to do some freelance work as a graphic designer, which made me consider picking up drawing again. I attended several drawing programs at schools but I learned most from online resources. Now, I'm a freelance artist working on visual development. This means I design characters, props and backgrounds for games, animation and toys. However, you probably know me from my Instagram where I release tutorials and more. My goal is to create a place where people can learn the things I wanted to learn when I started out.



ABOUT THIS EBOOK

In this ebook, I'll talk about how to draw anthropomorphic animals. Anthropomorphic is a somewhat tricky word. Anthropomorphic means the attribution of human traits, emotions, and behavior to non-humans. In this ebook, I'll focus on anthropomorphic animals. However, it could also apply to plants, objects, and other non-human things.

Anthropomorphic animals are often used for commercials, games, and animation. Somehow we humans are really drawn to them. This also shows that there are many opportunities for artists to find a job. The world needs us to design these characters and mascots!

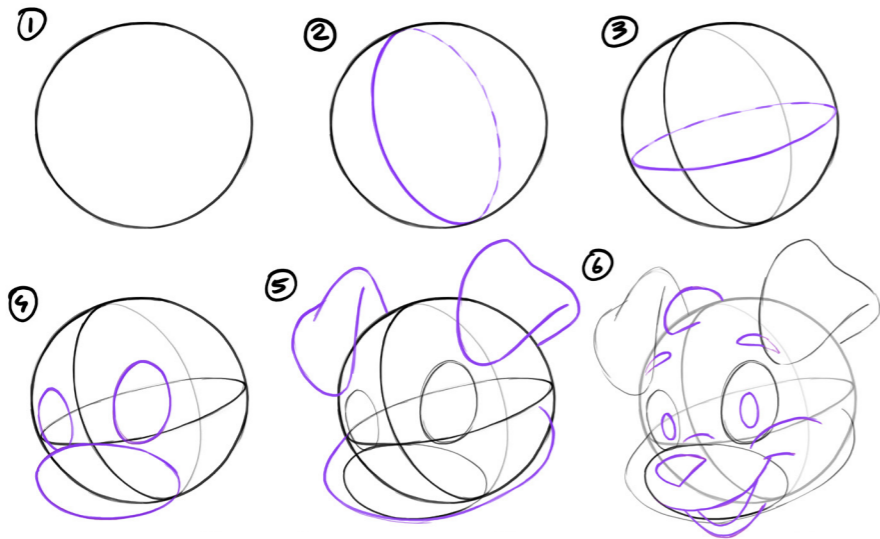
This ebook is for everyone who wants to learn how to draw. There are tutorials in it for absolute beginners up to the more advanced artists. I want to share how I learned to draw the way I do.

You don't need a fancy computer or tablet with an expensive app or software. Paper and pen are actually as good. Although I draw a lot on my computer and use it for almost all my client work, I learned how to draw with paper and pencil. I would recommend you draw as much as you can on paper or in a sketchbook. This is an excellent way of learning how to draw because it lets you focus on the fundamentals of drawing. There are fewer tricks than on the computer, and it's way more straightforward. I would recommend starting practicing by copying my illustrations step by step. Try

to understand the way I draw and why I draw that way. After that, you can take my characters and draw them in different poses. The next step would be to create your own characters. Of course: Do what you love to do, but by studying these drawings and tutorials, you would gain skills you can apply to your own original drawings.

CONSTRUCTION

HOW TO DRAW A DOG



As 'man's best friend,' the dog is a very popular character to draw. When I was a kid, a dog actually was one of the first things, after stick figures, I liked to draw the most. In this blog, I'll give you tips on drawing a dog step by step, and I'll show you how you can apply these steps to draw other animal characters.



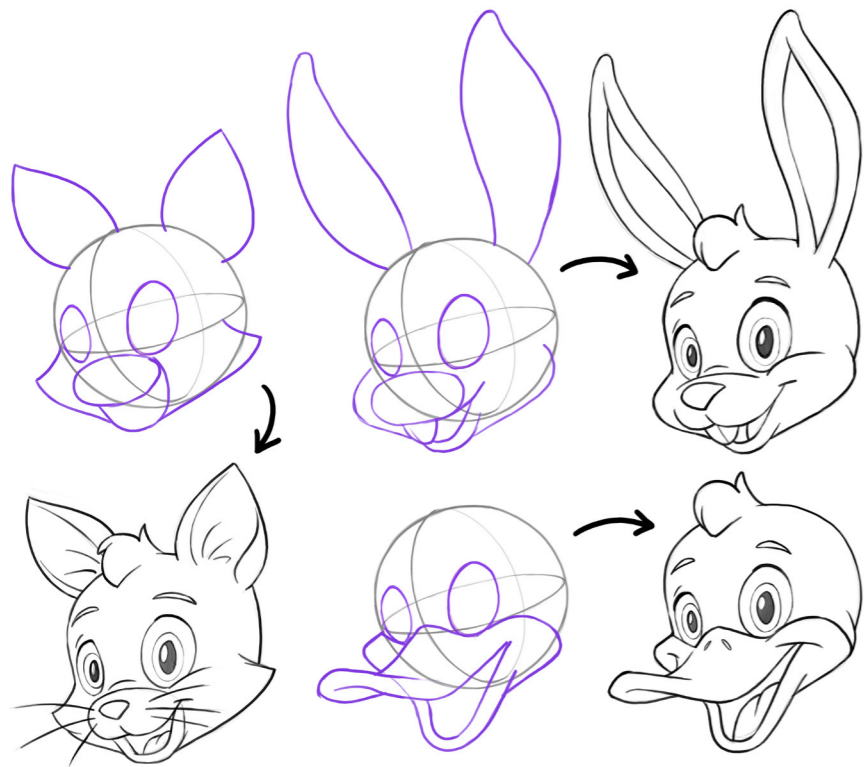
When drawing characters, it's perfect to start with some basic shapes. Here, I began by drawing a flat circle. In step 2, I drew an ellipse inside this circle, making the circle appear three-dimensional. In step 3, I added a horizontal ellipse. The dotted line emphasizes that the line is going around and back of the other lines. Notice how this gives an angle to the sphere.

With the next step (4), I start adding shapes on top of the ball. Try to think as if you're using clay to sculpt the basic shapes. Start with the biggest shapes first; in this case,

the mouth and the eyes. At step 5, I add the ears, jaws, and cheeks, and it starts to look more like a dog now. The smaller shapes, like the nose, eyebrows, and beak, are added in step 6. Now you have a final sketch you can use to make the final drawing, and you can start adding the colors.

EXERCISE

Copy the dog's head by following the steps in this example. Try to copy it as closely as possible.



Other characters

The method of using basic shapes can also be useful to create other kinds of characters. Try to draw these characters using the same steps I've shown at the tutorial on how to draw a dog. Pay attention to how I build these characters with really basic shapes. It can be quite hard, but try to draw in three dimensions.



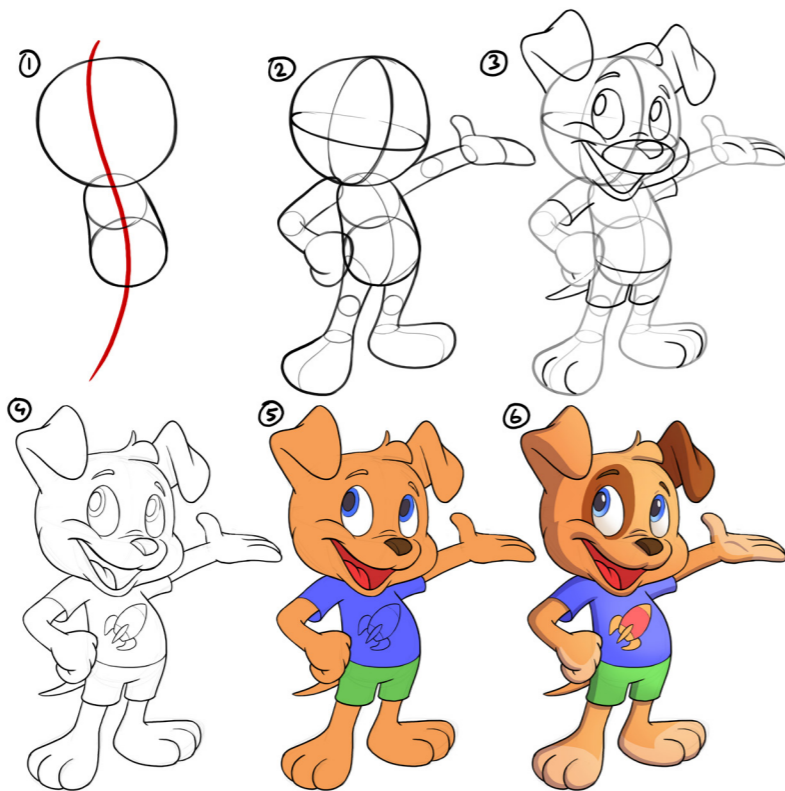
Here are some more complex animal heads, but all created with construction in mind.

EXERCISE

Follow the steps of the drawing of the dog's head to break down these animal heads to their construction. Can you recreate them?

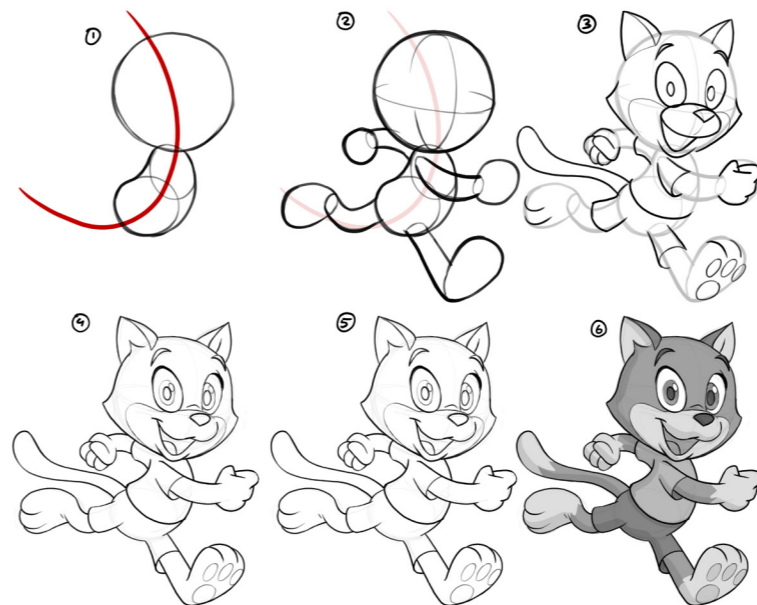
DRAW THE DOG'S BODY

When I'm drawing the whole body, I follow the same principles as when I drew the dog's head. Now, I start with a line of action (see step 1). The action line is simply a line that represents the pose. Most of the time, it has a simple S shape. I use this line to give the character some flow. Without the line of action or flow, the pose will look stiff. On top of this line, I draw the limbs by building construction with basic shapes.



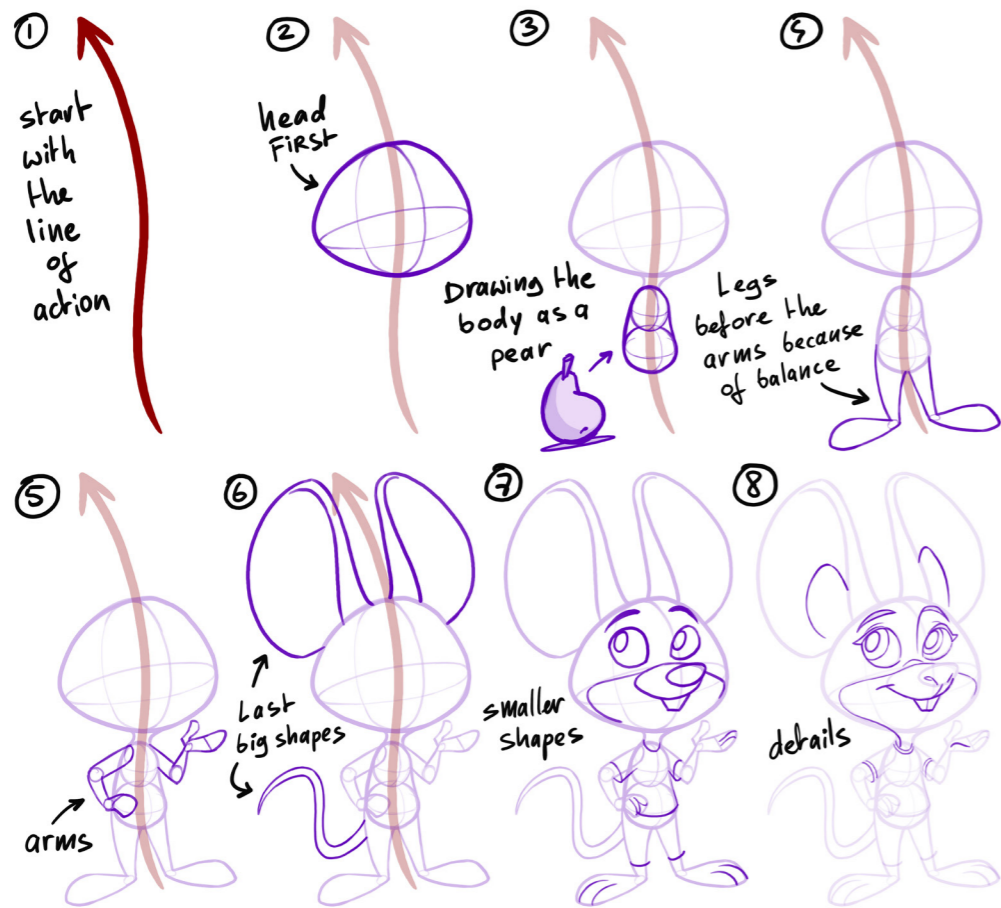
Other poses

The use of these basic shapes makes it easier to draw a character in different poses. This is because it's easier to imagine how a sphere, cylinder, or cube looks when shown at different angles.



EXERCISE

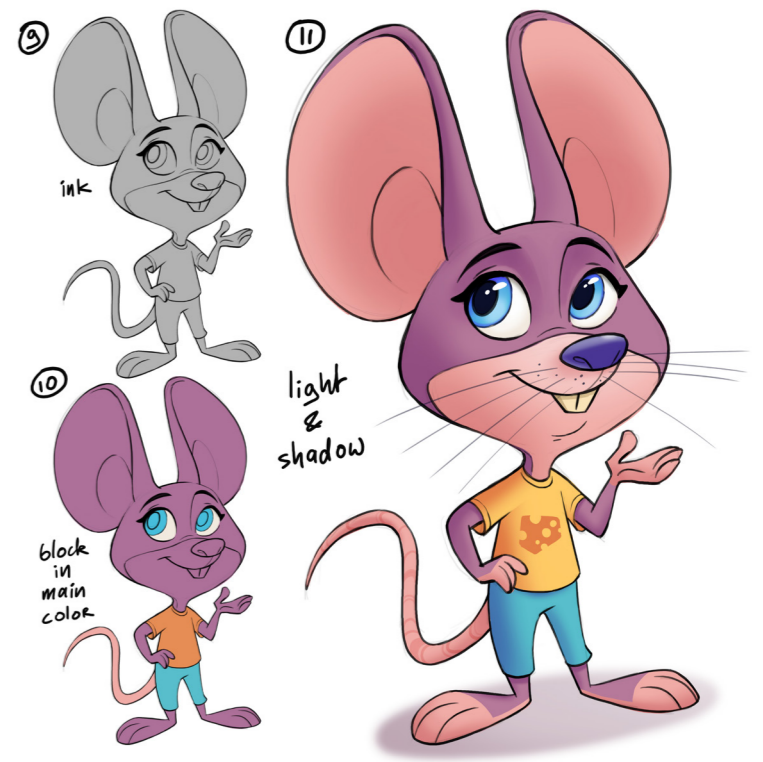
Practice these techniques by drawing the examples and follow the steps I've shown you. Draw all the different shapes in each step. The significant thing is that everyone can start practicing this. Just use a pencil and paper.



HOW TO APPLY THIS BOOK

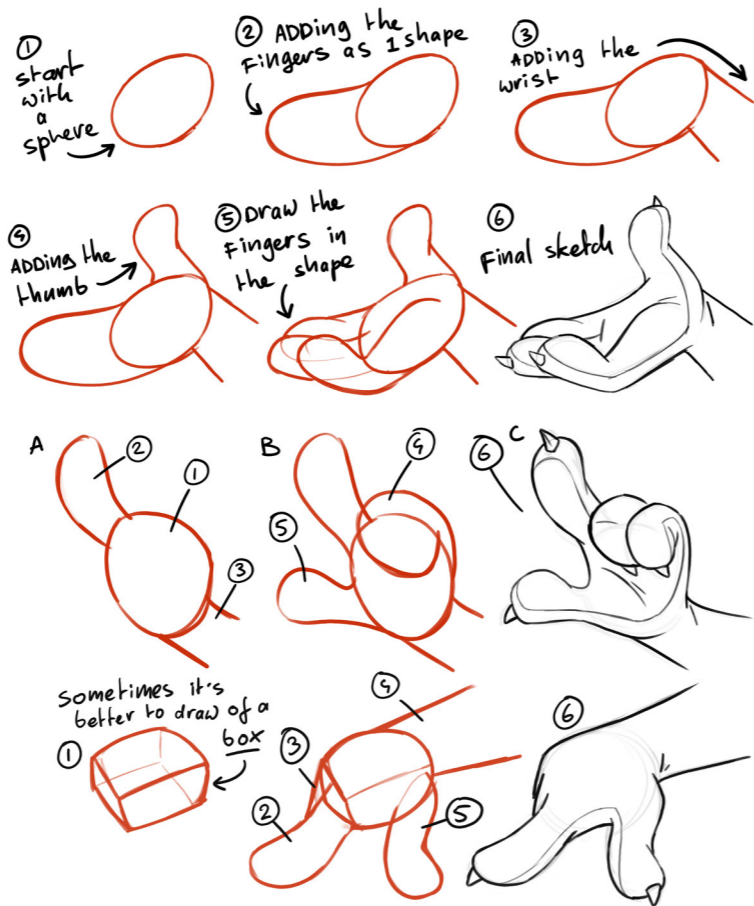
This book will show many different characters and share the steps I take to draw these characters. I would encourage you to follow these steps. Try to get as close as you can and try to understand why I did that.

This is also how I learned to draw. I studied a lot of art from classic cartoons and tried to understand how they did it. I would encourage you to draw your own characters as well, mainly because it's fun! But you'll really learn by studying art you like, and later you can apply it to your own drawings.



HOW TO DRAW HANDS

Drawing with construction makes drawing complex objects (like hands) easier. Hands can look really challenging and overwhelming. By breaking them down into basic shapes can truly help to make it more manageable.



These are more examples of some hand gestures. Figure out how I used basic shapes to draw these hands. My tip is to practice this and if you want, try to draw some of your own hand gestures. Side note: I use 4 fingers instead of 5 in many of my illustrations because 5 fingers can become a bit too complex.



EXERCISE

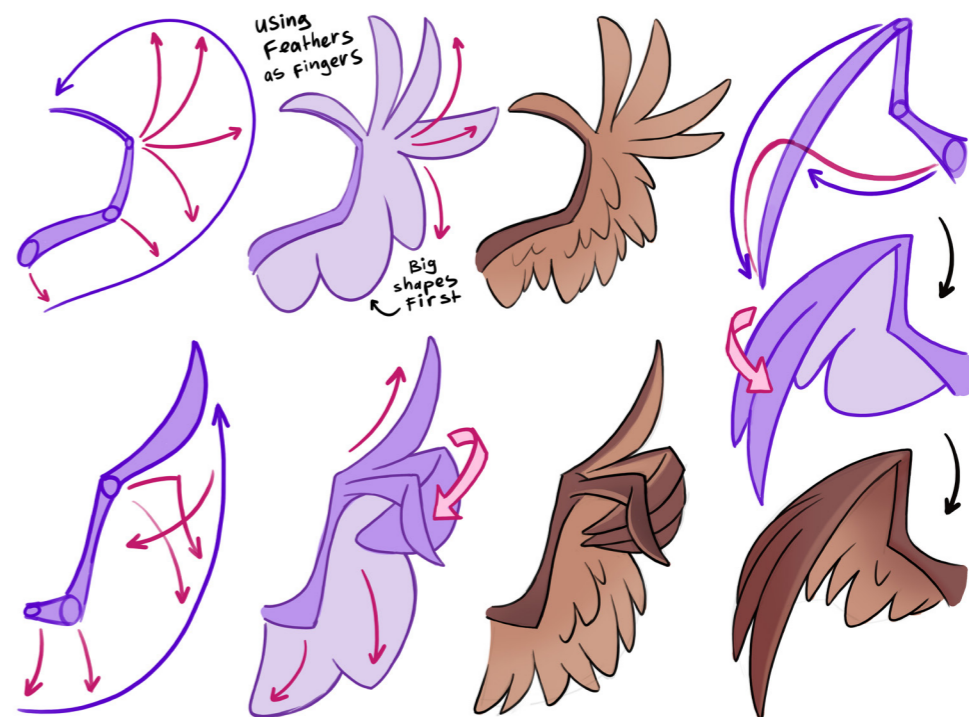
Copy these hands to get used to the construction. When you are comfortable with that, try to draw them in different poses.

Tip: Use your own hands as reference.

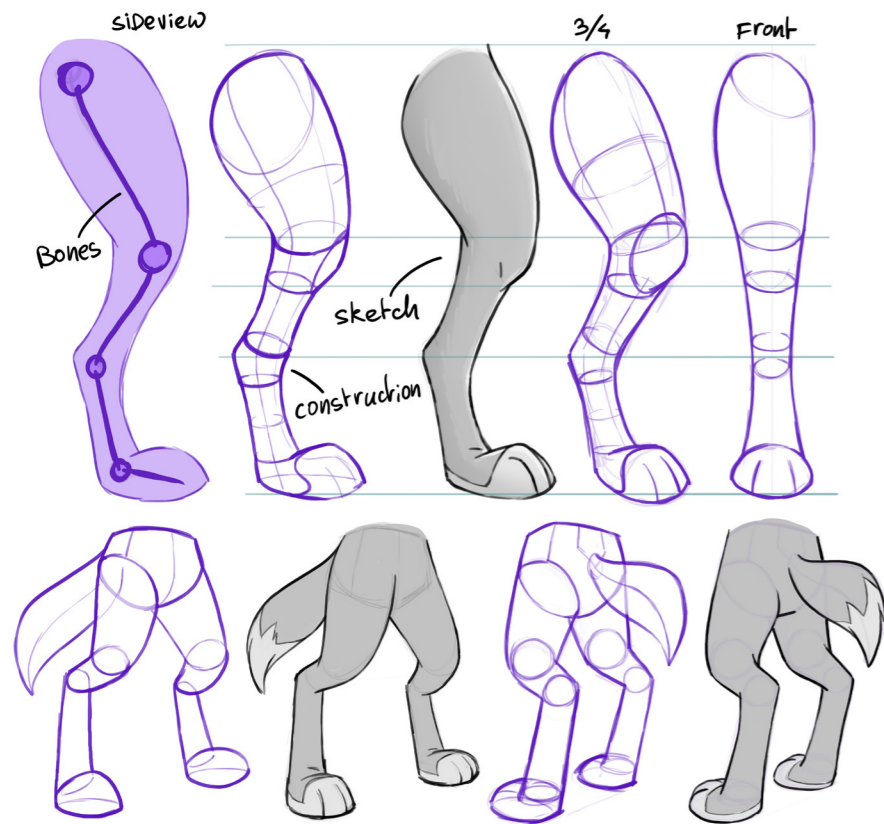
WINGS



With this trick, you can break down many complex shapes into understandable shapes. In this example, I show you how to apply it to a wing.

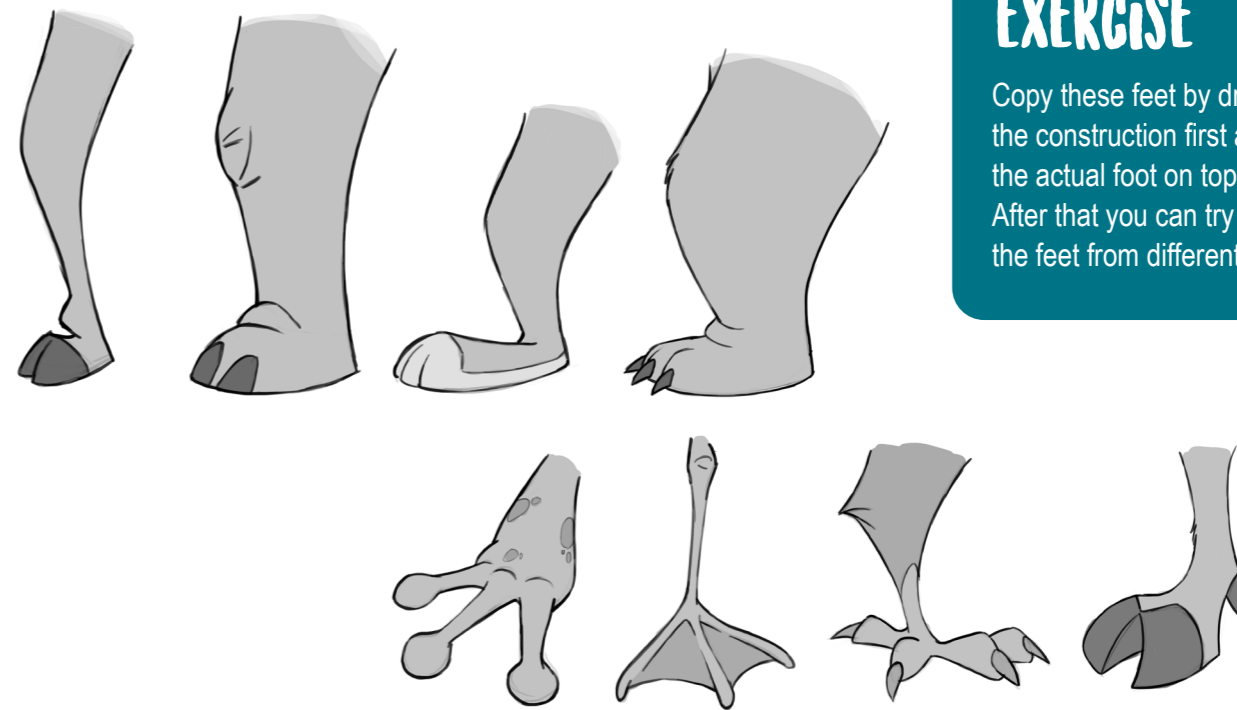


Here I show you different kinds of wings. After you practiced drawing these wings, you could try drawing your own. It can be pretty hard, and don't be afraid to fail!



LEGS

When drawing anthropomorphic animals, you need to think about how far you want to "humanize" them. You can make it really human-like or keep it close to the original animal anatomy. In this image, you can see how I kept the anatomy quite close to animals' anatomy. Sometimes I also study the bones of animals to figure out how I want to draw them.

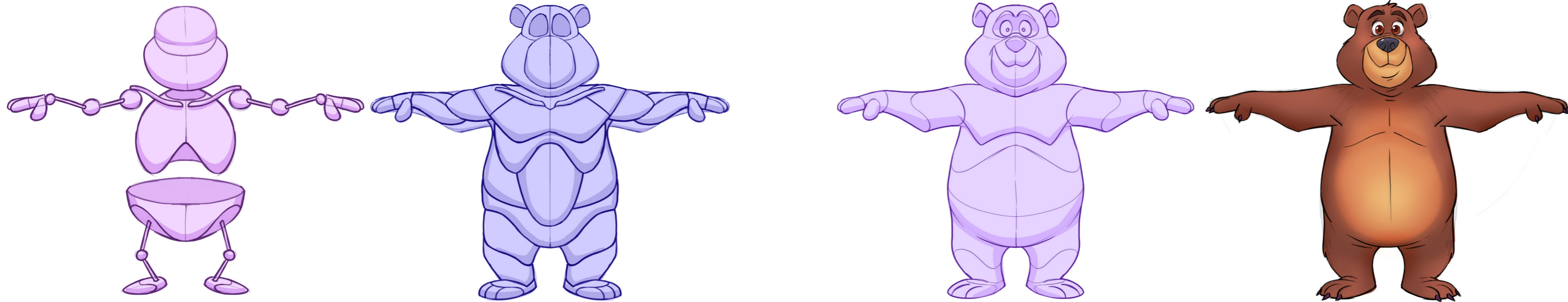


In this image, I show a variety of different animal legs. An exercise you could do is draw the construction and break these drawings down as with the legs I have drawn on the left page.

EXERCISE

Copy these feet by drawing the construction first and draw the actual foot on top of it. After that you can try to draw the feet from different angles.

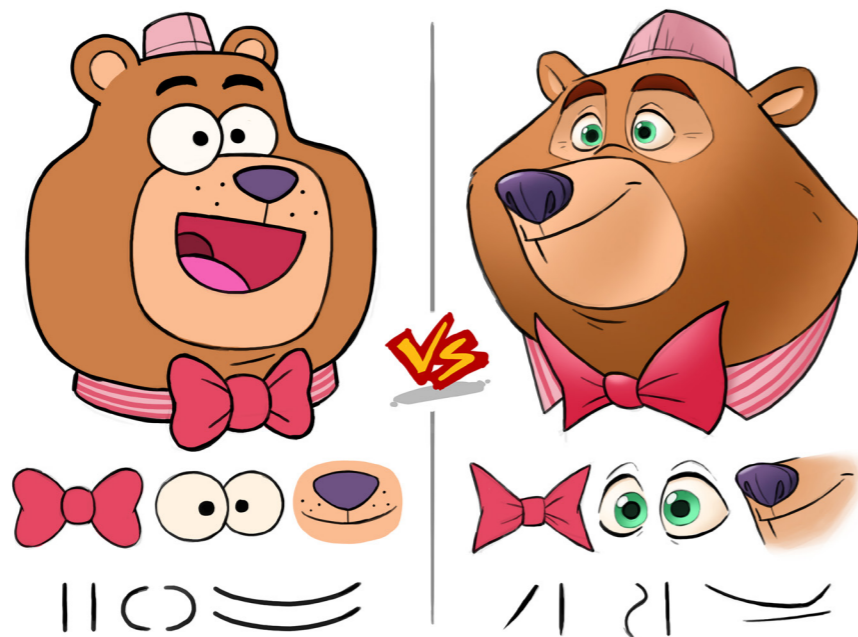
ANATOMIC REFERENCE

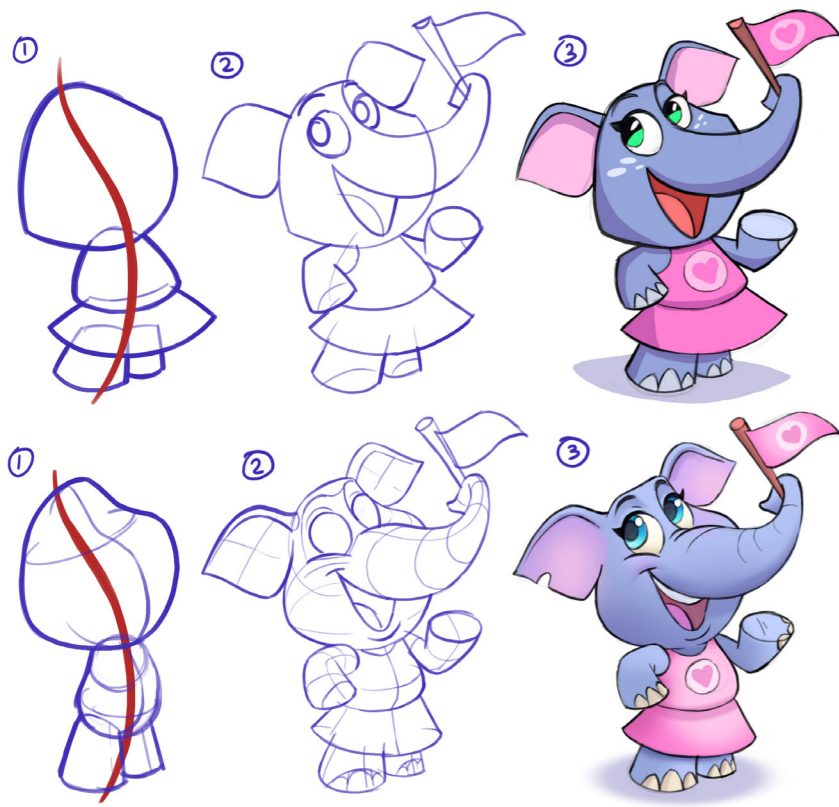


I often use realistic anatomic references when I draw a cartoon animal. This way, I learn to understand how the creature is built, and after I do, I try to simplify it. See these steps I take in this example. I start with drawing the skeleton, really simplified, and almost like a stick figure. Then I look at the anatomy of the bear and break it down into groups. After that, I even simplify it more, and in the end, I finally draw the final drawing.

DIFFERENT STYLES

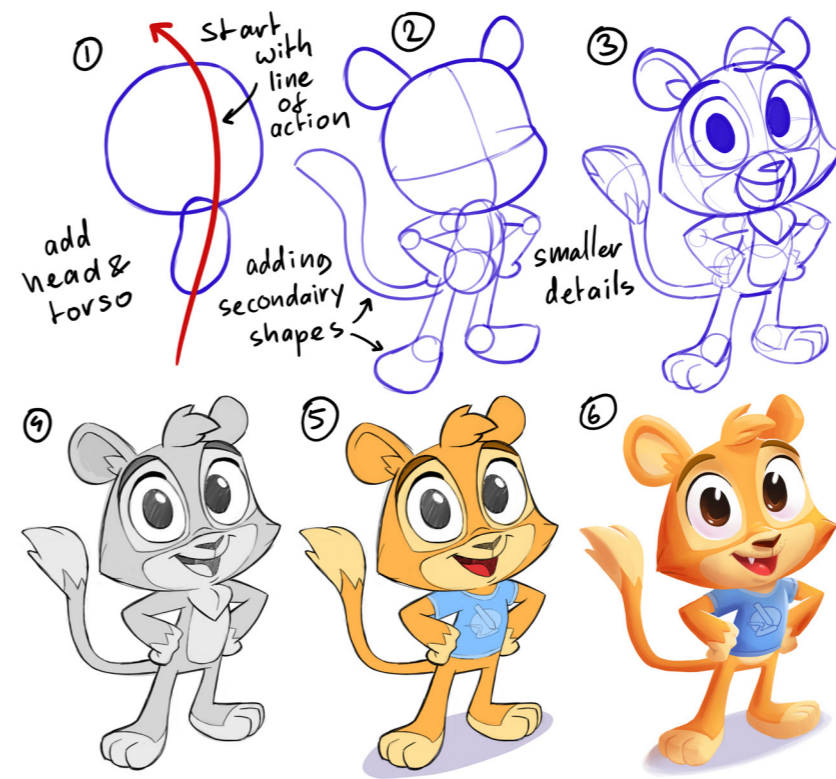
There is no such thing as "one right way of drawing". I prefer to draw in the traditional classic way, but it's totally okay if you want to draw more stylistically. The surprising fact is that both styles share many drawing principles. Here is an example of some of the differences in style. It's actually just a difference in the way of how to apply the principles.





Here you see another example of the same character in two different styles. And again, there is no wrong or right in this, and I encourage you to come up with your own style! I often analyze art with a style I like and try to look for a pattern in it. Like, what kind of shapes and proportions are used, etc.

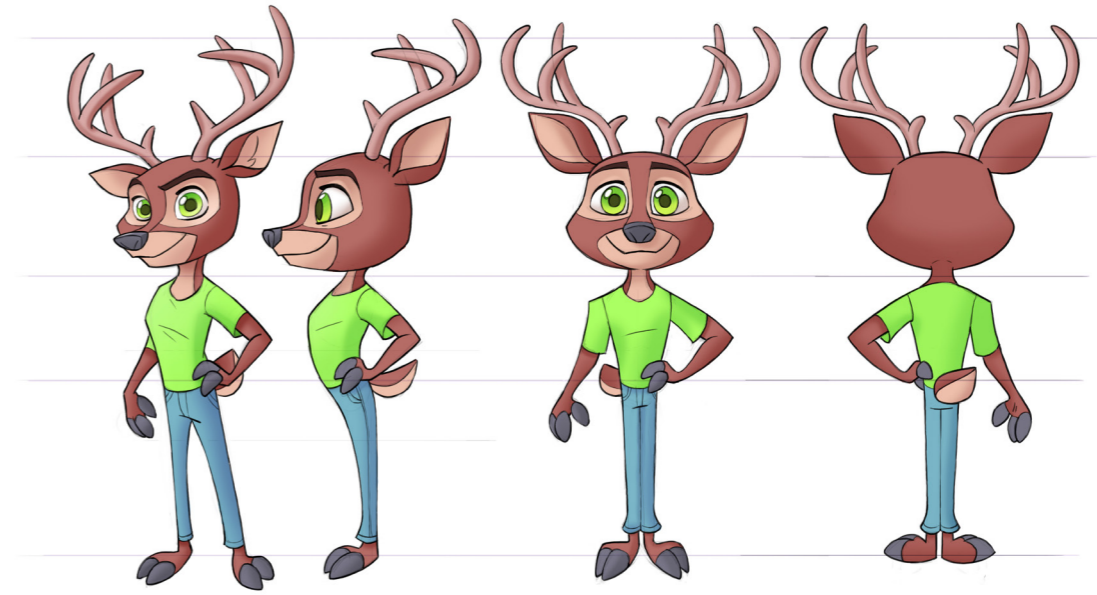
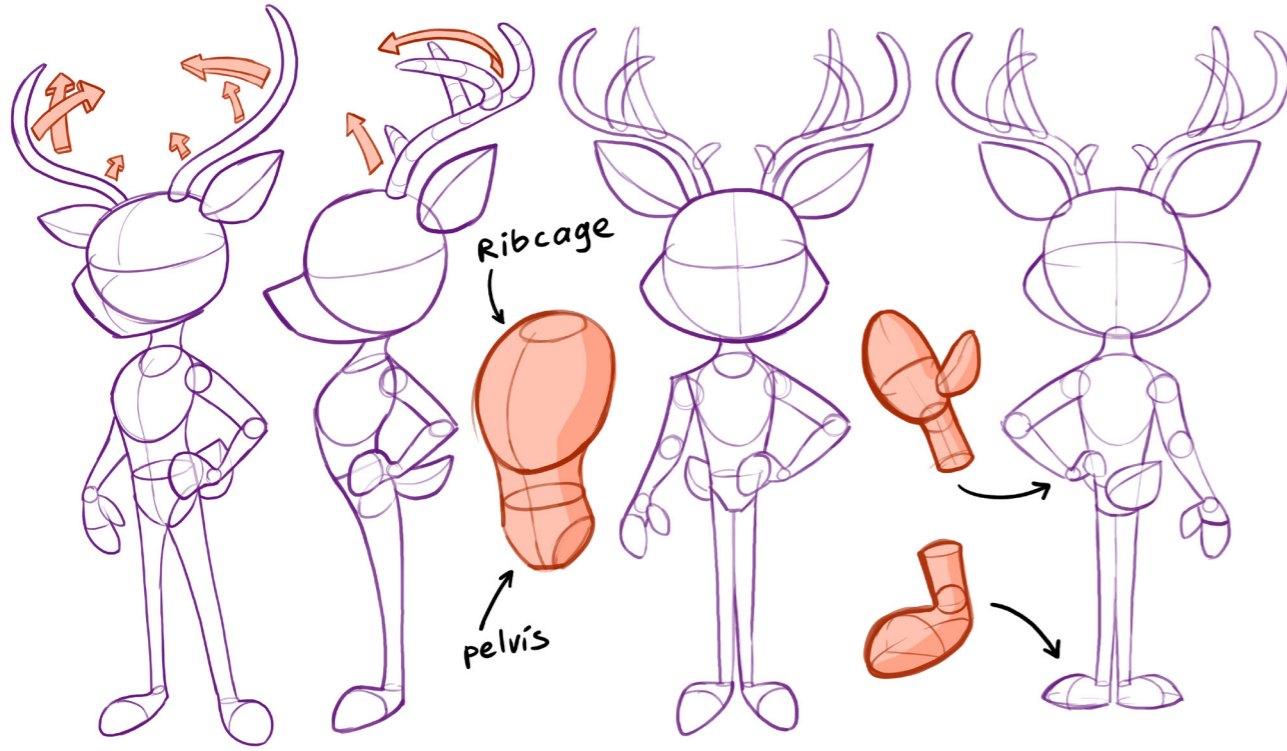
You could also look for a style bible. This is a document with style guidelines for a feature animation or tv show. There are many art books available from almost every animated movie.



Different painting styles

There are also different styles in how you finish a drawing. For example, you can use cell-shaded, like number 5. Or go for a more painted look, like number 6. The decision of which style you pick depends on your personal preference and or the drawing's purpose. For example, a 3D-painted style could be great for concept art for a game or 3D animated feature movie.

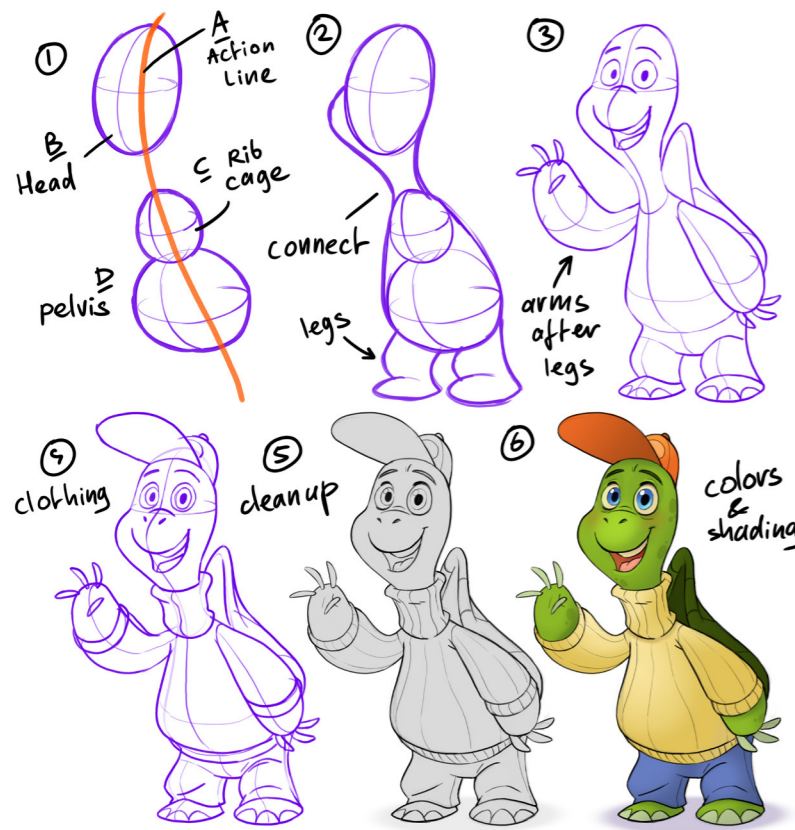
CREATE A TURNAROUND



Drawing turnarounds is something that might be part of your job as an artist. It can be used as a reference for a 3D modeler, a comic with many different poses, and more. One advantage of using construction shapes is that they are easier to rotate than the final drawing. For example, look at the head. The head's base is a circle, and you add other shapes on top of it. For the different angles, you

firstly draw a circle in the angle of the view. After that, you can easily add the shapes on top of it.

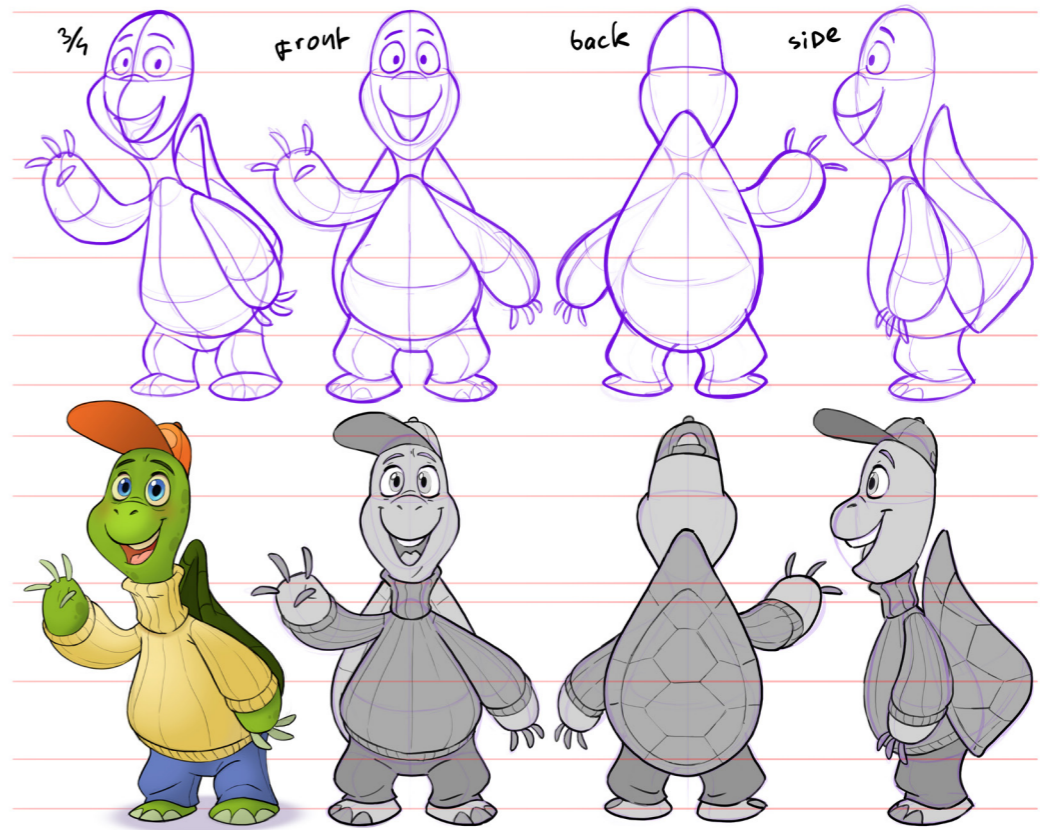
That's also why classic 2D animators loved to use construction to draw their characters. It makes it easier to stay consistent when they are moving around the characters.



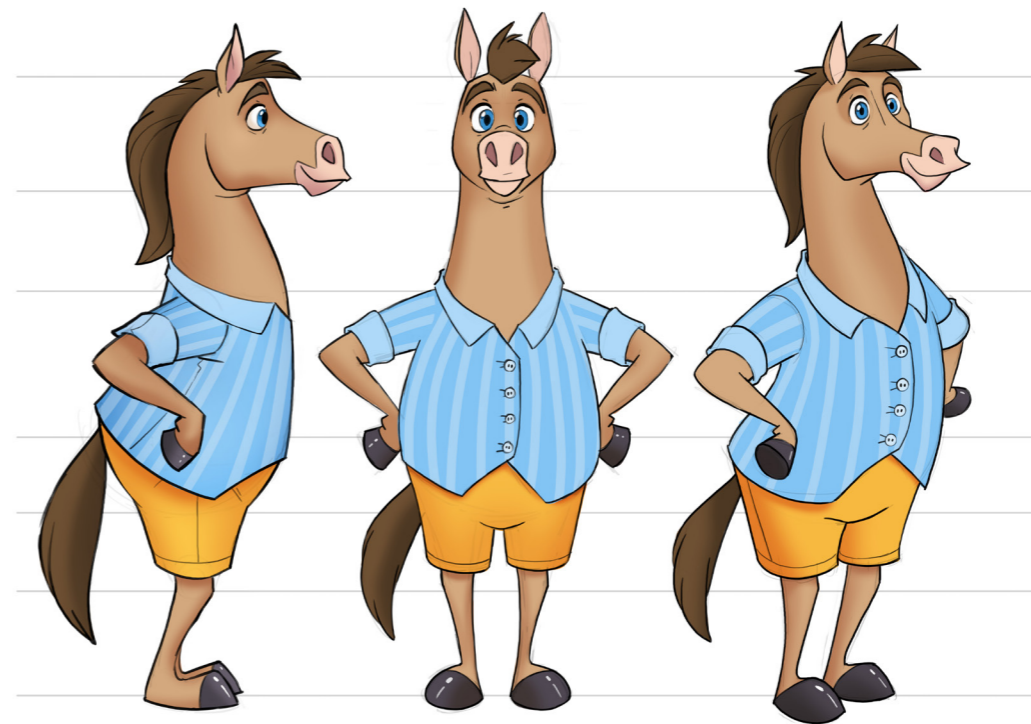
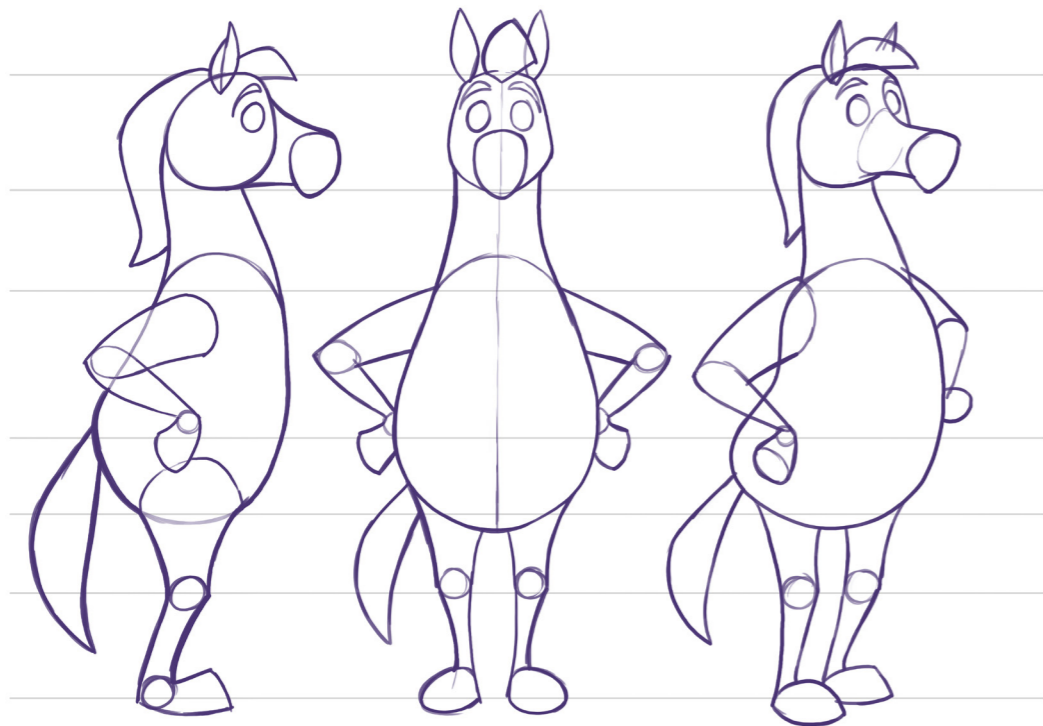
EXERCISE

Draw this character in a slightly different pose with the help of this turnaround. Use the construction to guide you.

Here you can see how I broke down this character in a simple construction. This breakdown can be used to draw the character in different angles (or poses as well).



Horses are hard to draw, but it becomes less overwhelming when you break them down into basic shapes. As you can see in these images, you can divide the horse into simple shapes. It looks much easier like this, right?



EXERCISE

Draw a horse (or unicorn!) with the help of this construction. I would recommend to get the construction right first and then draw your design on top of it.

FLOW

Take notice of the lines I used in step 2 for drawing this wolf character. You can make a character more interesting by using opposite angles in the pose. For example, the angle of the shoulders is the opposite of the angle of the hips. This way, your character doesn't stand straight up as a stick but bends a bit in a nice flow.



In this image, I show you how I draw a zebra step by step. With this construction, you can also draw a horse, unicorn or a donkey.



DRAWING KID ANIMALS



VARY WITH CONSTRUCTION

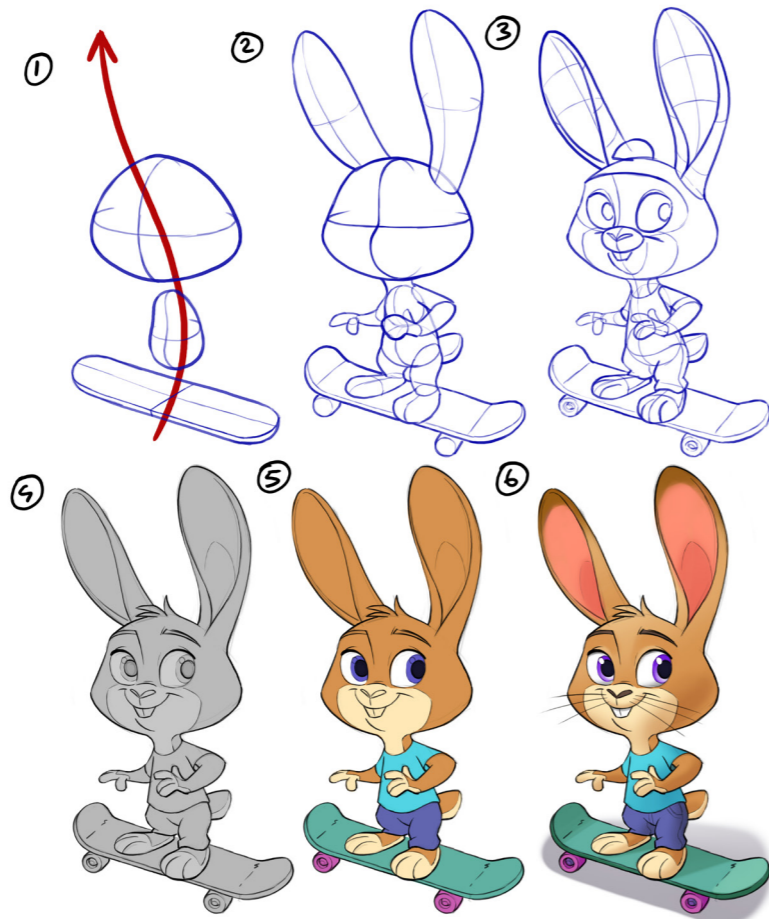
Basically, I'm using the same shapes for every character I'm drawing over and over again. That feels a bit limited, but you can create an endless stream of characters, as you can see in all the next pages. Just by changing the proportions and transform the shapes, you can create different characters.

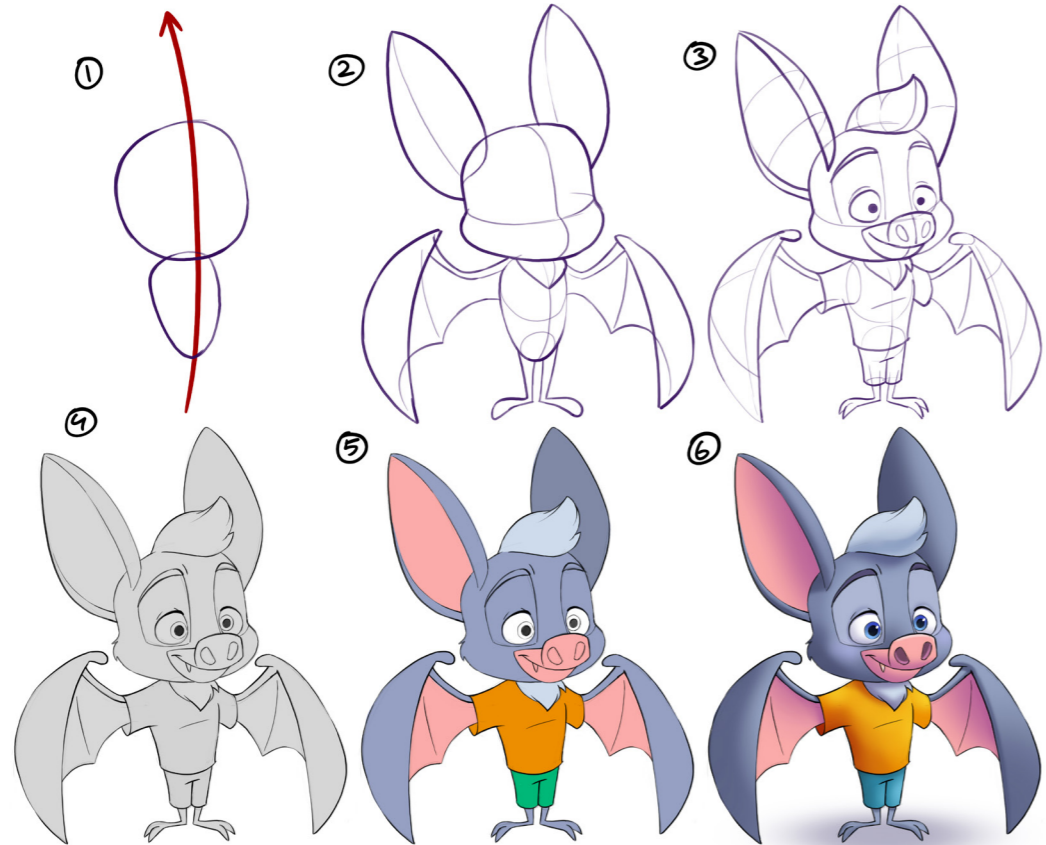
You can use these examples to study first. Copy the illustration step by step, as I show in the example. This may take many attempts, but don't give up! Seek for the little differences in your drawing vs. mine to make your copy as perfect as possible. If you are confident about your drawing, you can draw it again but with a different outfit, other facial features, or maybe change it into a different creature. You can even challenge yourself more by changing the pose.

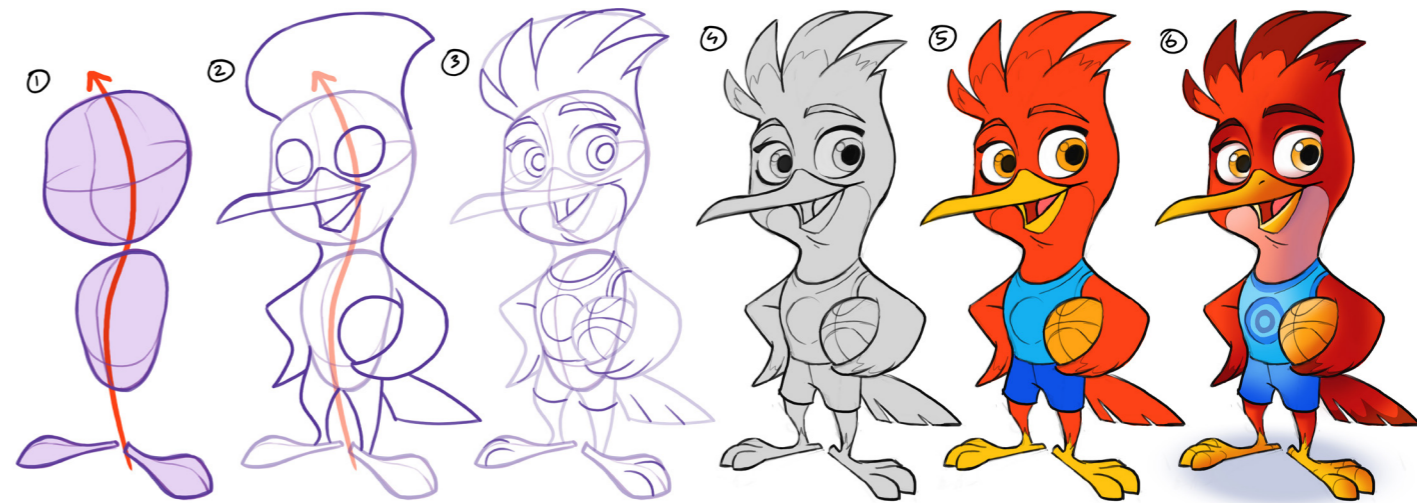
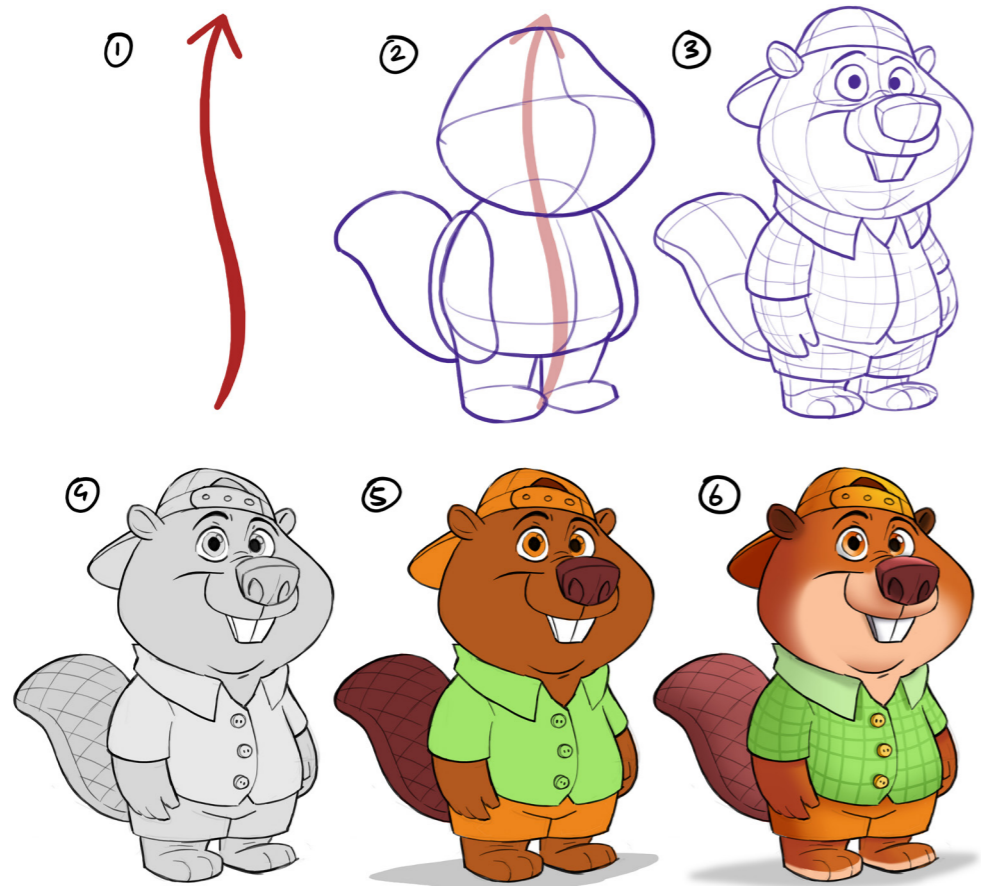
Don't be afraid to try and experiment with this. I have been there too. By don't giving up and try and try again, you can grow as an artist. If it feels hard, remind yourself that this means that there is room to learn something new.

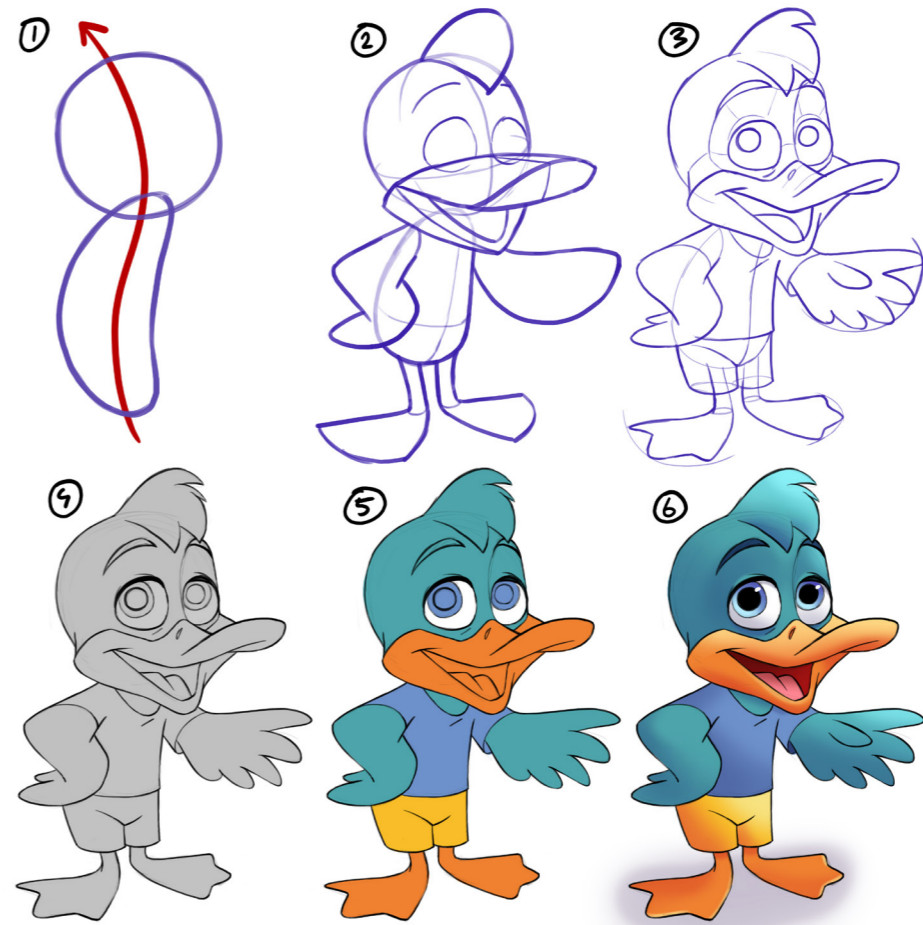
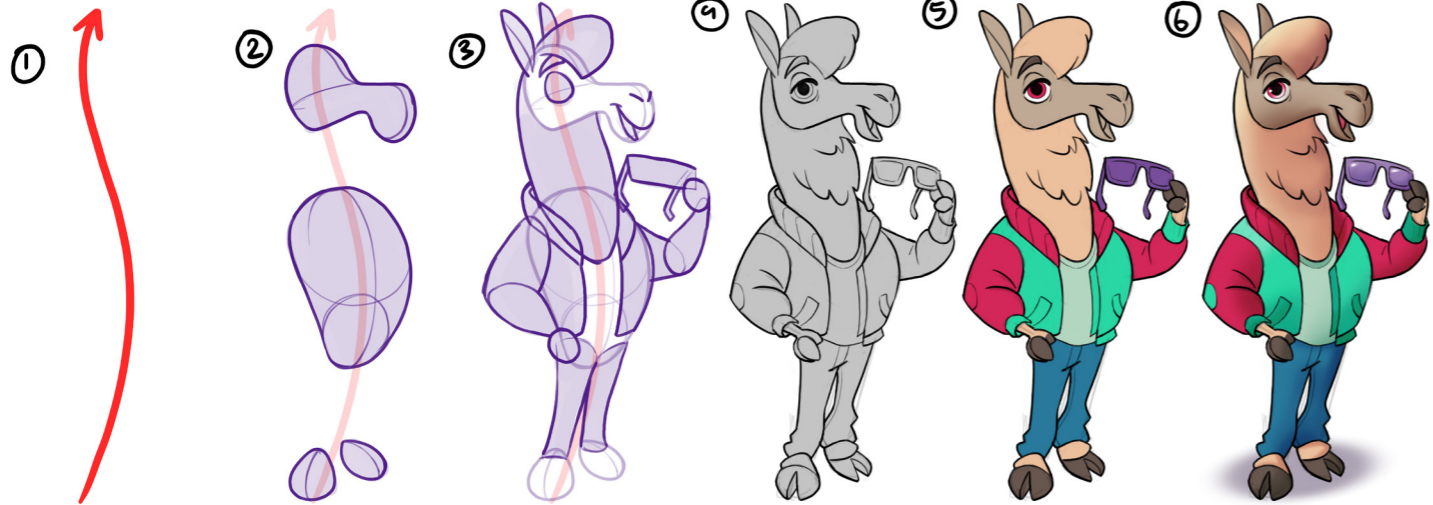
EXERCISE

Copy the characters on these (and the following) pages. This will help you to understand construction and draw your own characters later on.



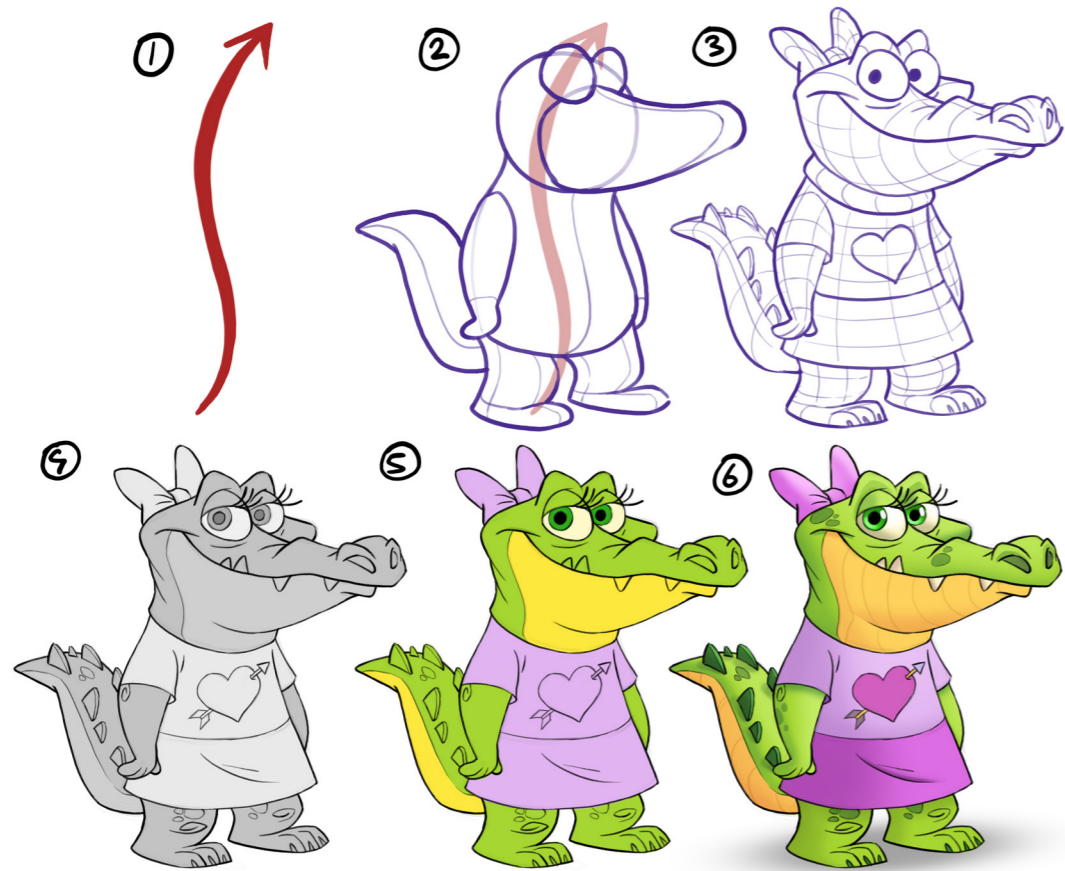


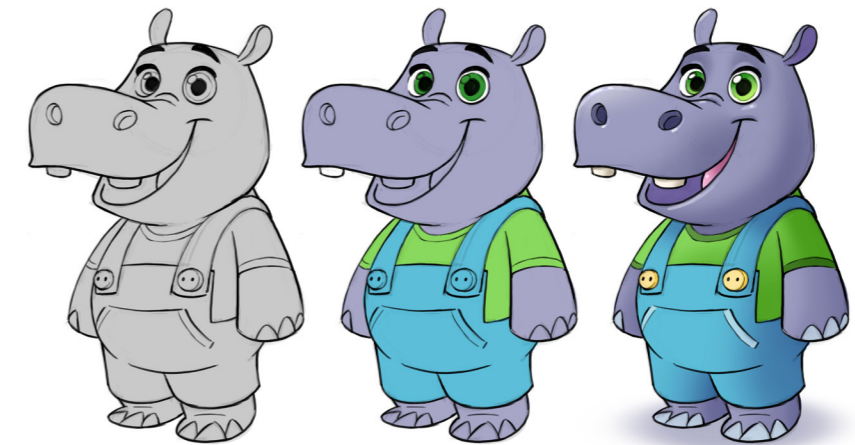
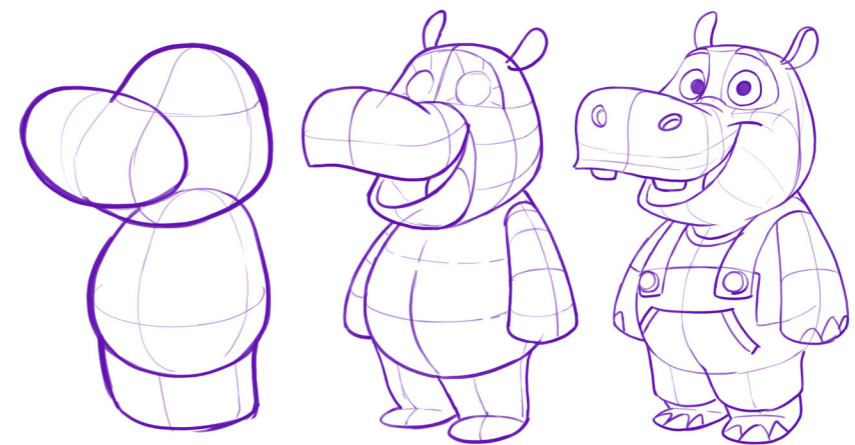




EXERCISE

As a next step you can try to draw one character in the pose of another. For example: draw this duck in the pose of the bunny on the skateboard.

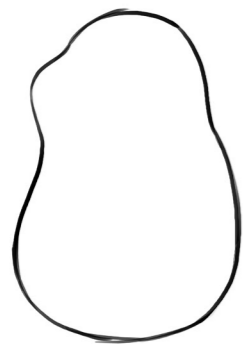




EXERCISE

What would this character look like with different clothes? Draw this hyena with the outfit of the hippo or the crocodile.

① start with a big shape ② big shapes first ③ smaller shapes ④ even smaller shapes



⑤ rough sketch



⑥ clean up

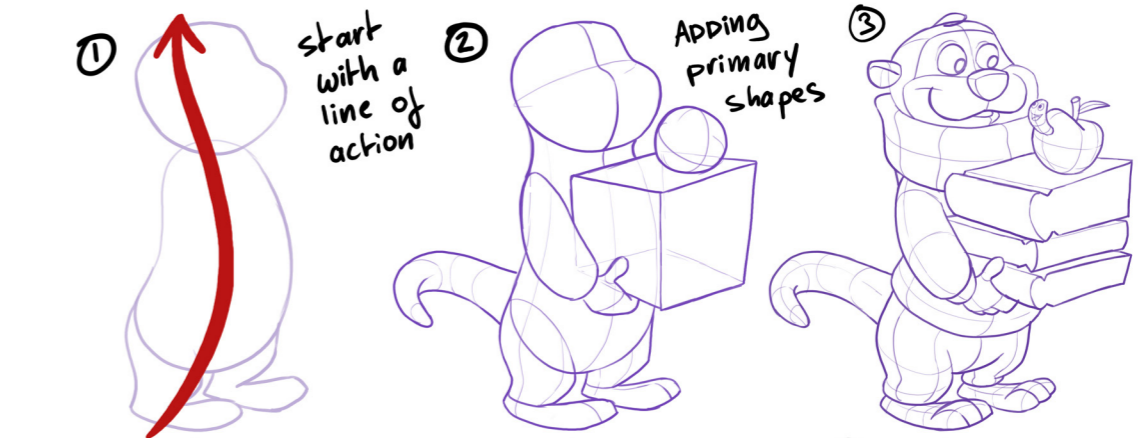
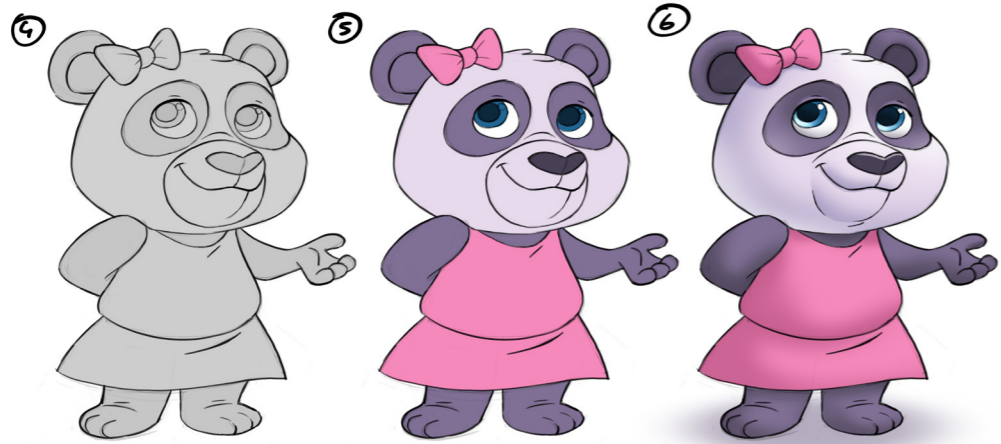
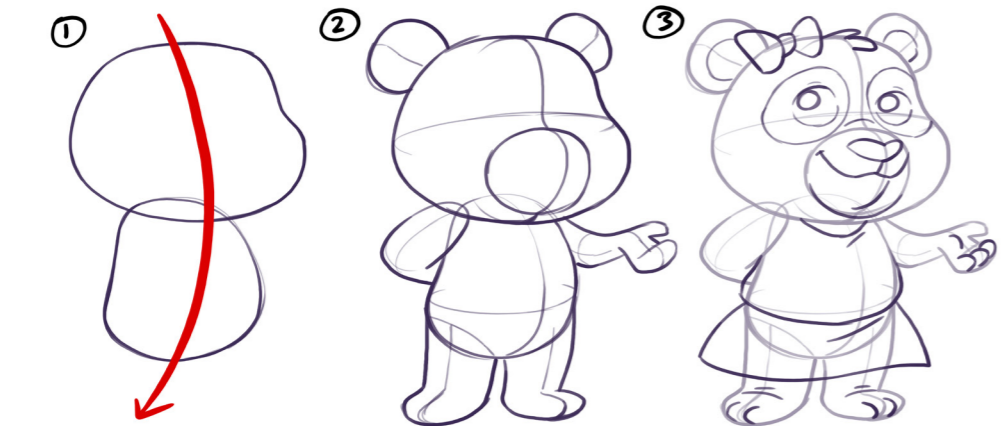


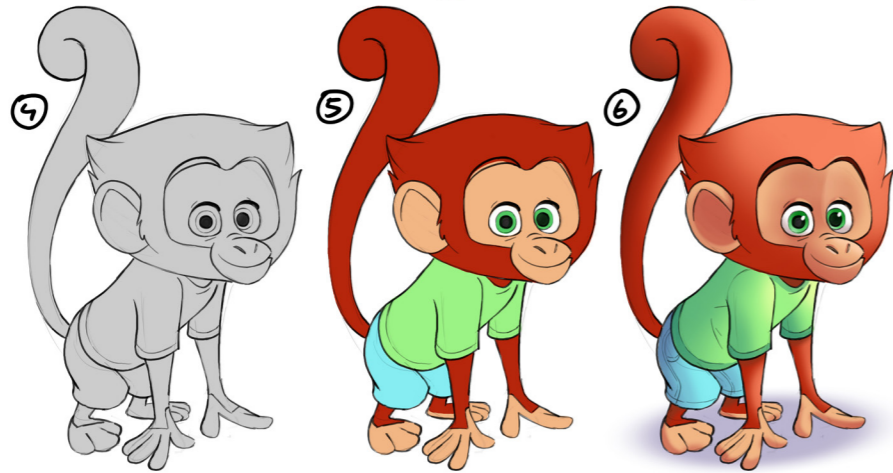
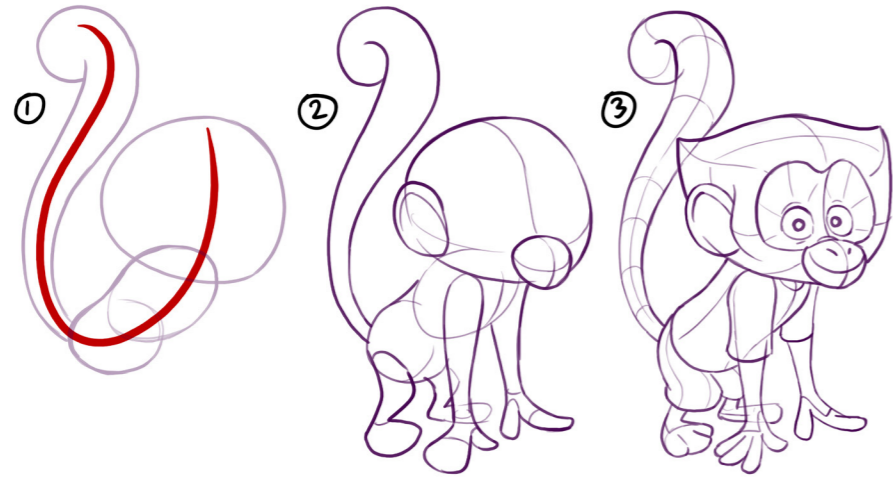
⑦ color block



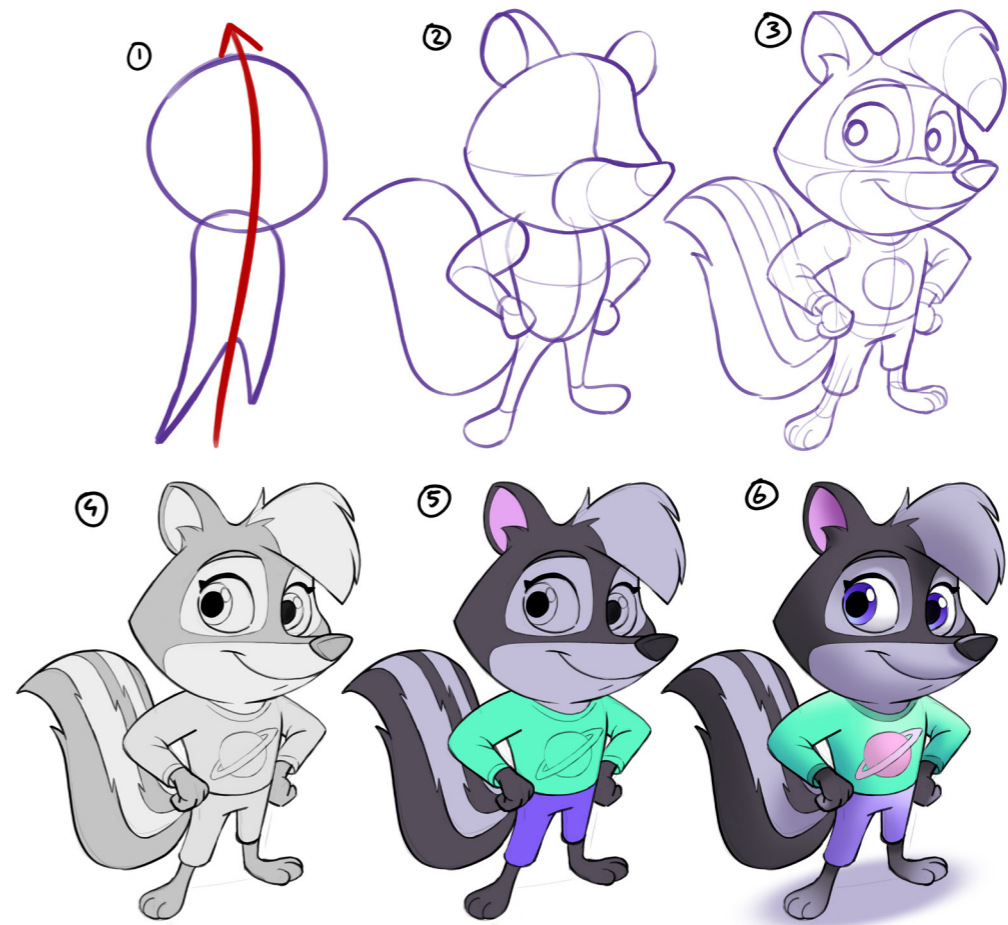
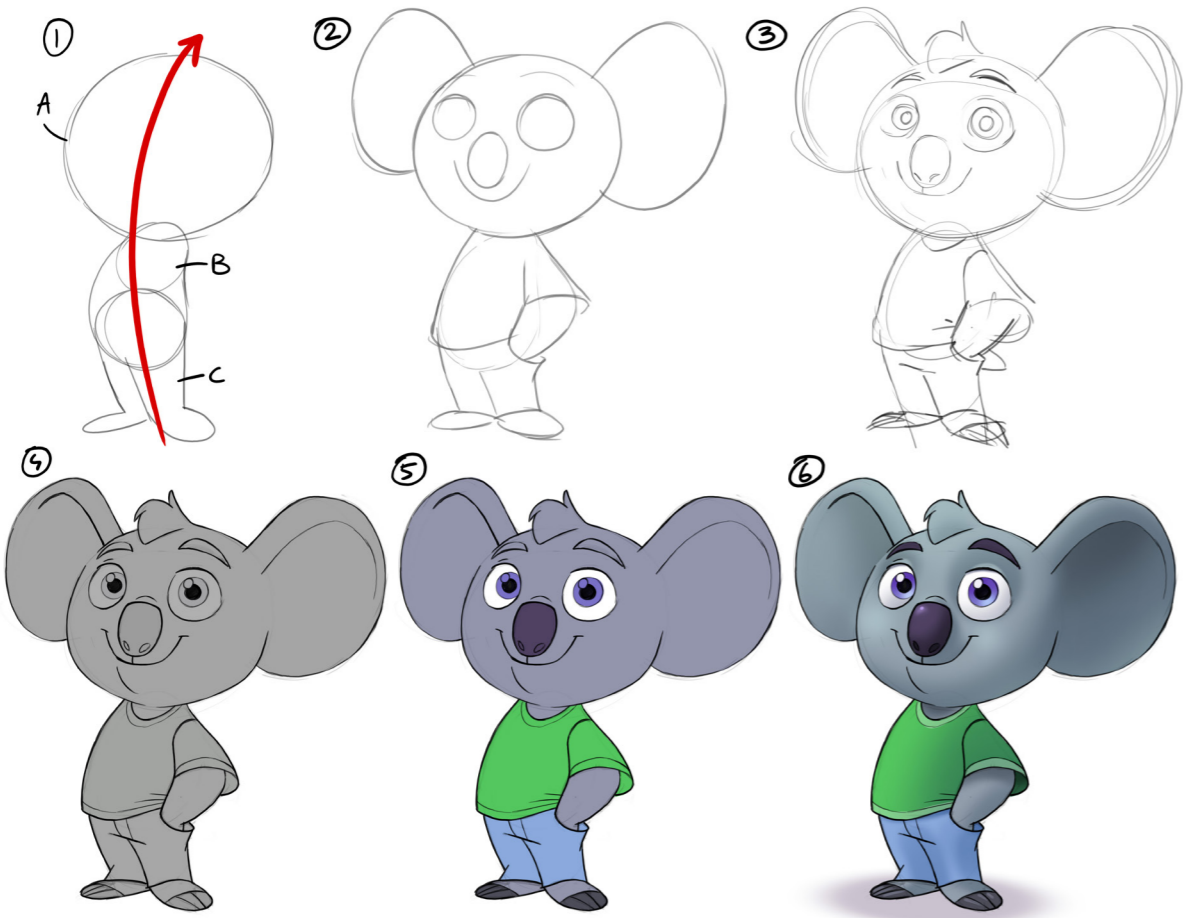
⑧ shading





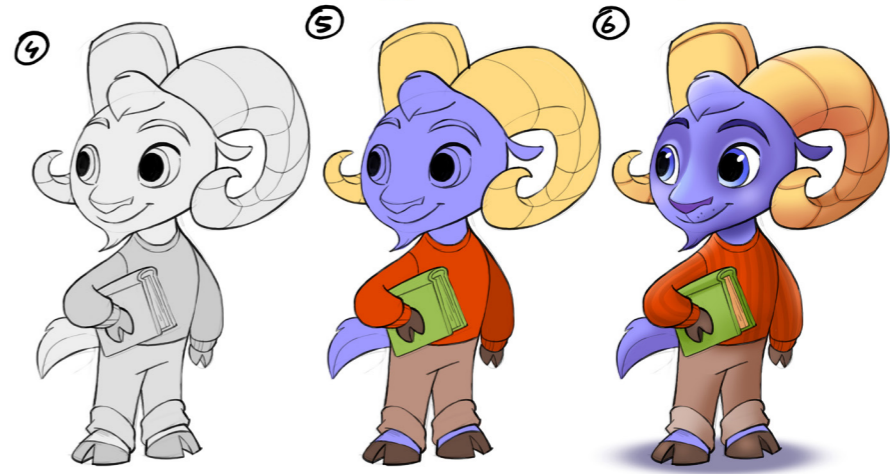
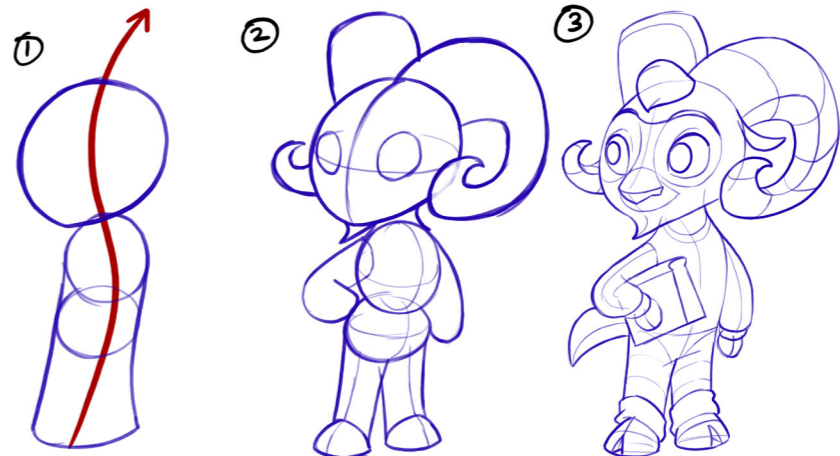


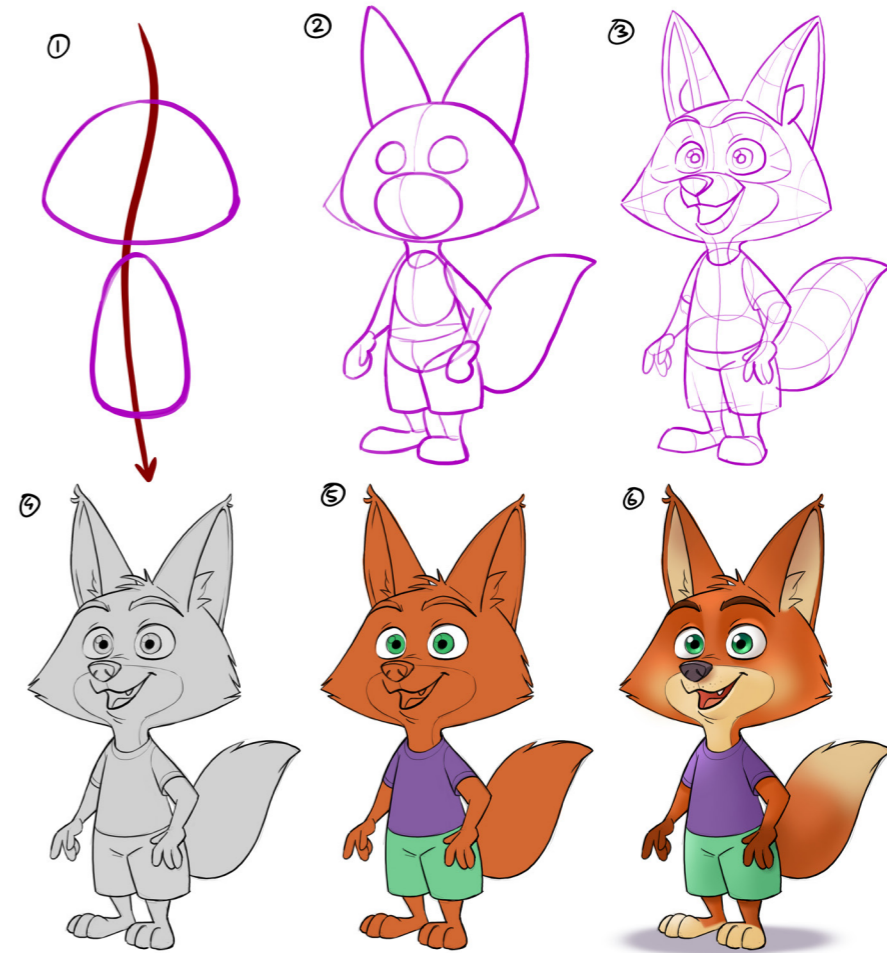
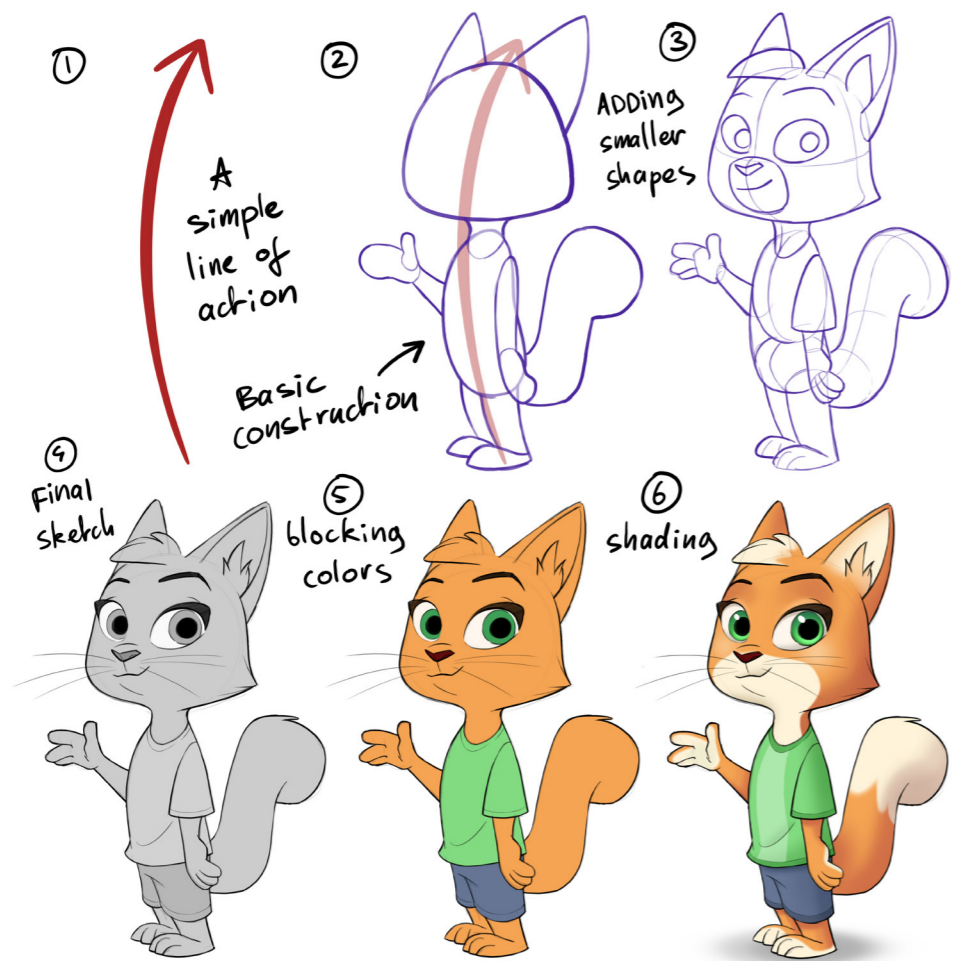
EXERCISE
 The otter gave his books to this lizzard. What would she look like? Draw her with the books of the otter.

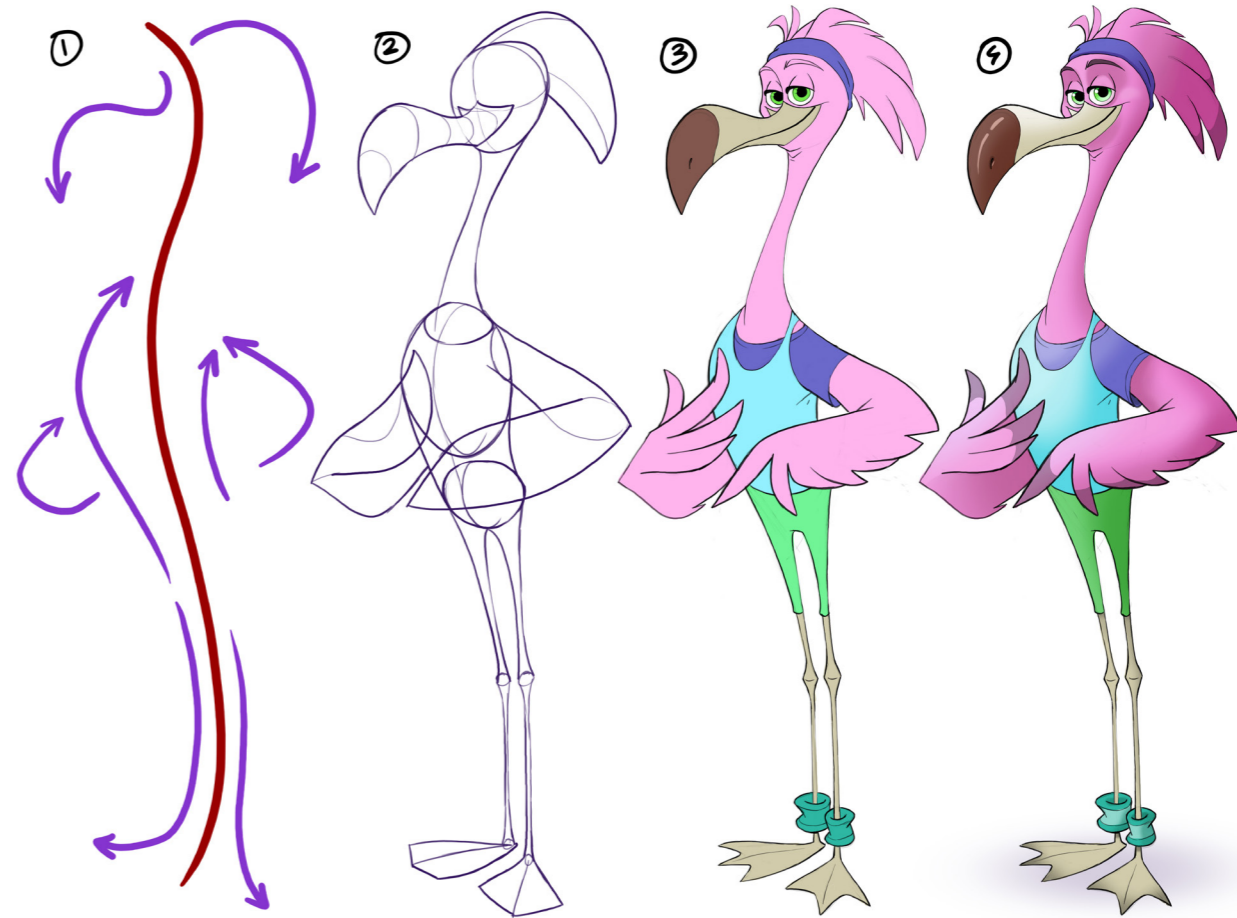
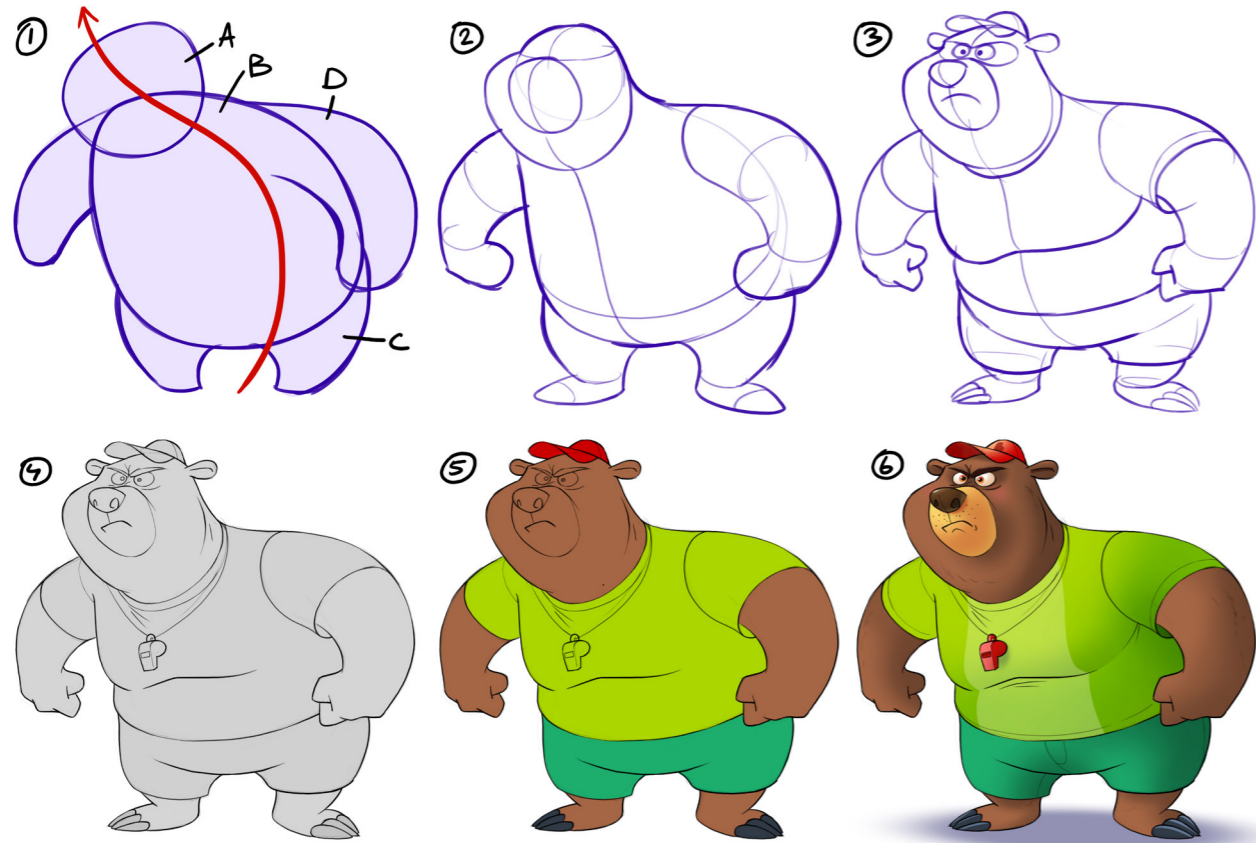


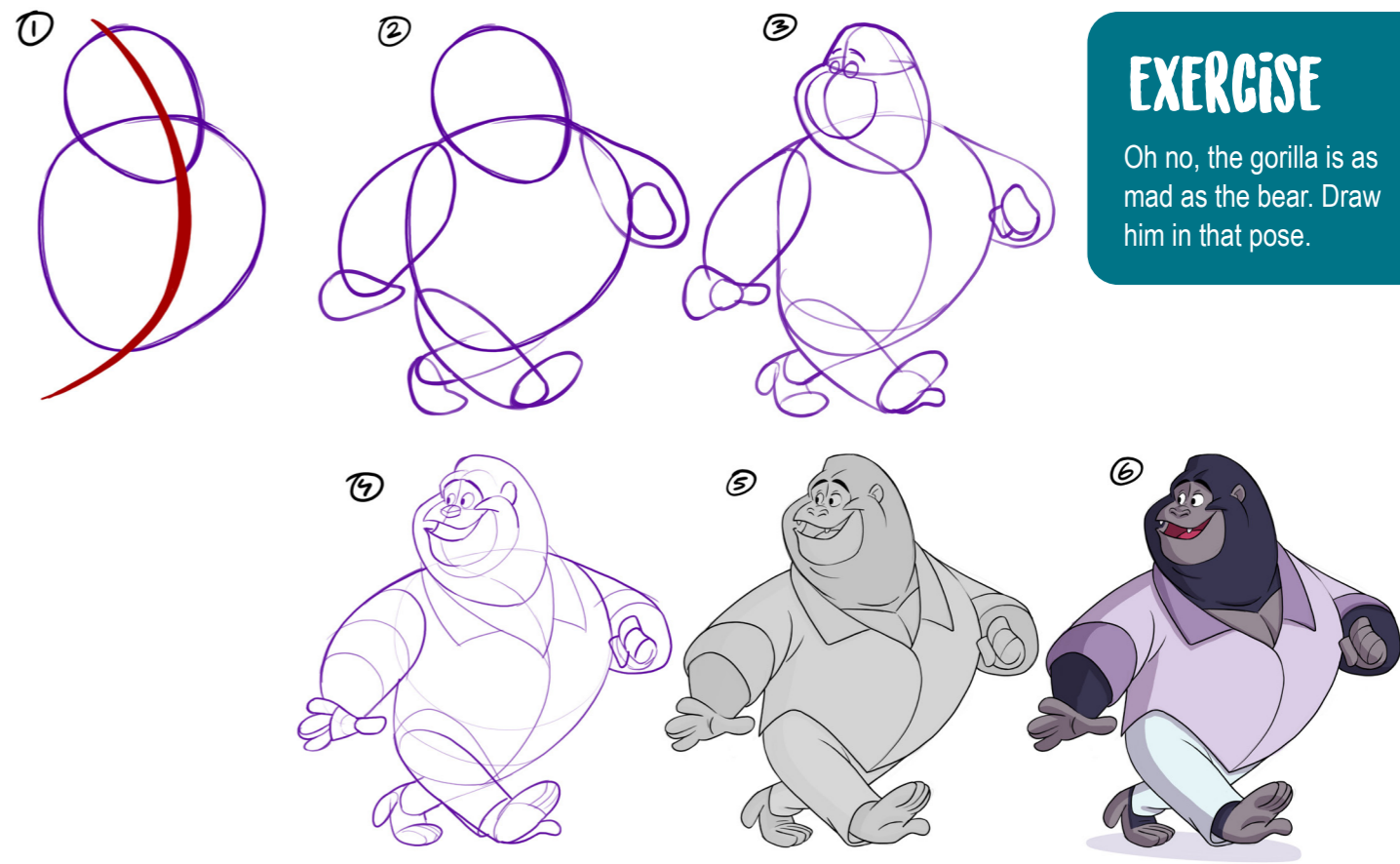
EXERCISE

The penguin gave his gaming console to this hedgehog. Draw her holding it or playing on it



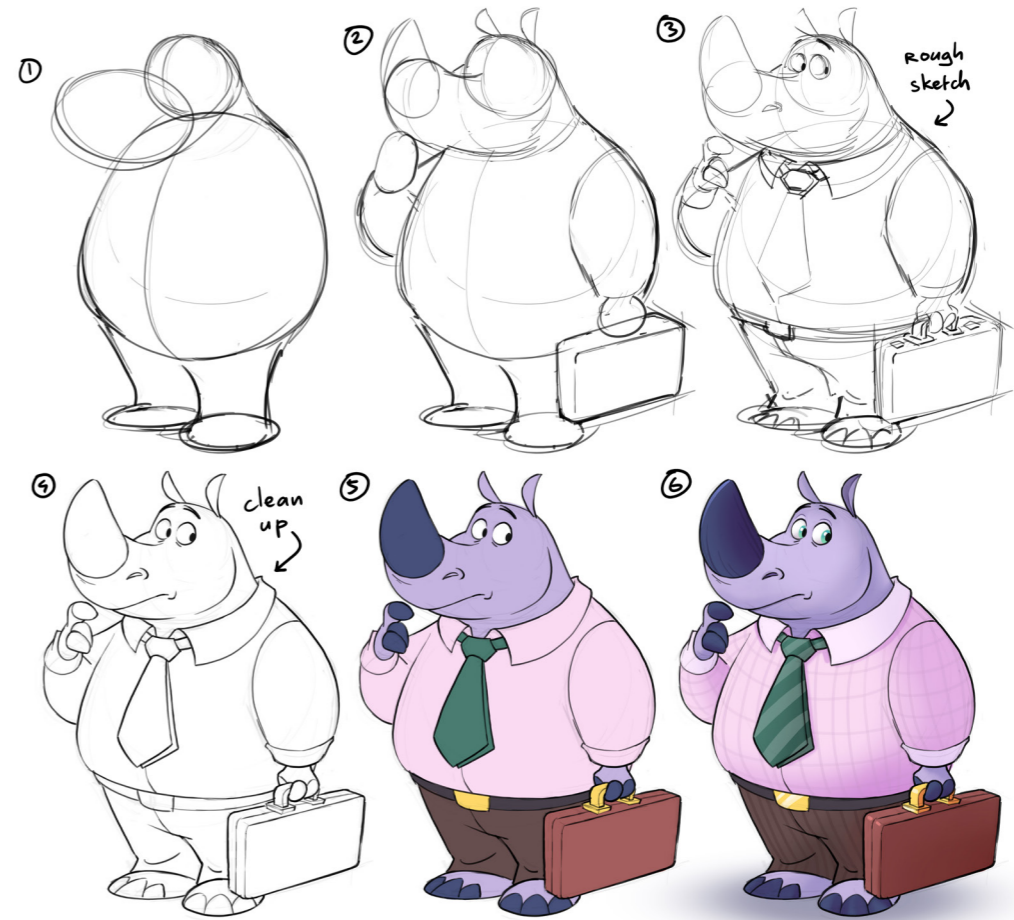
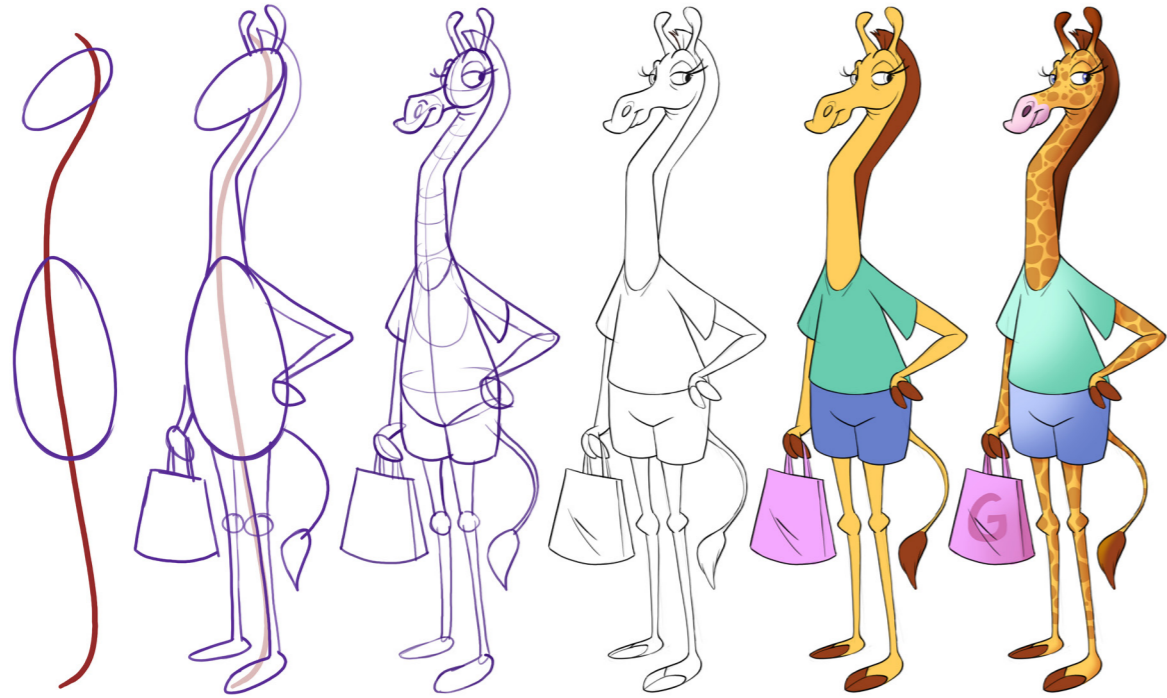


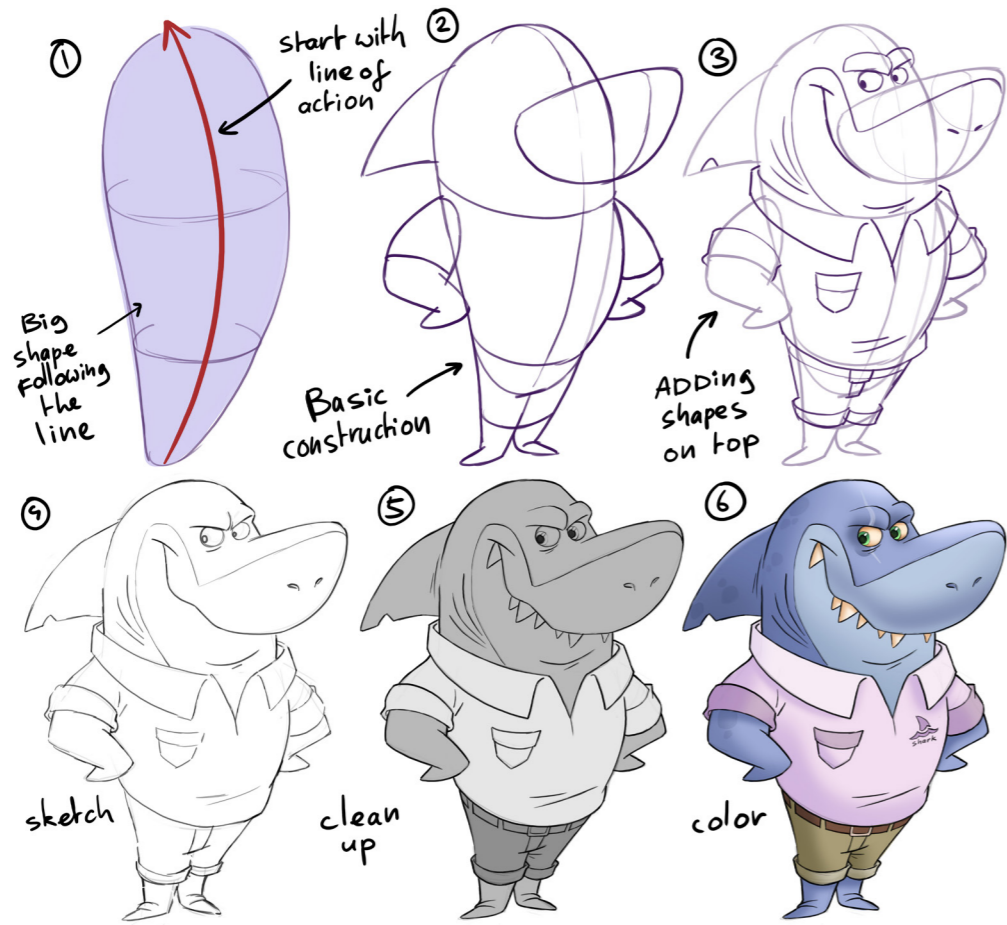


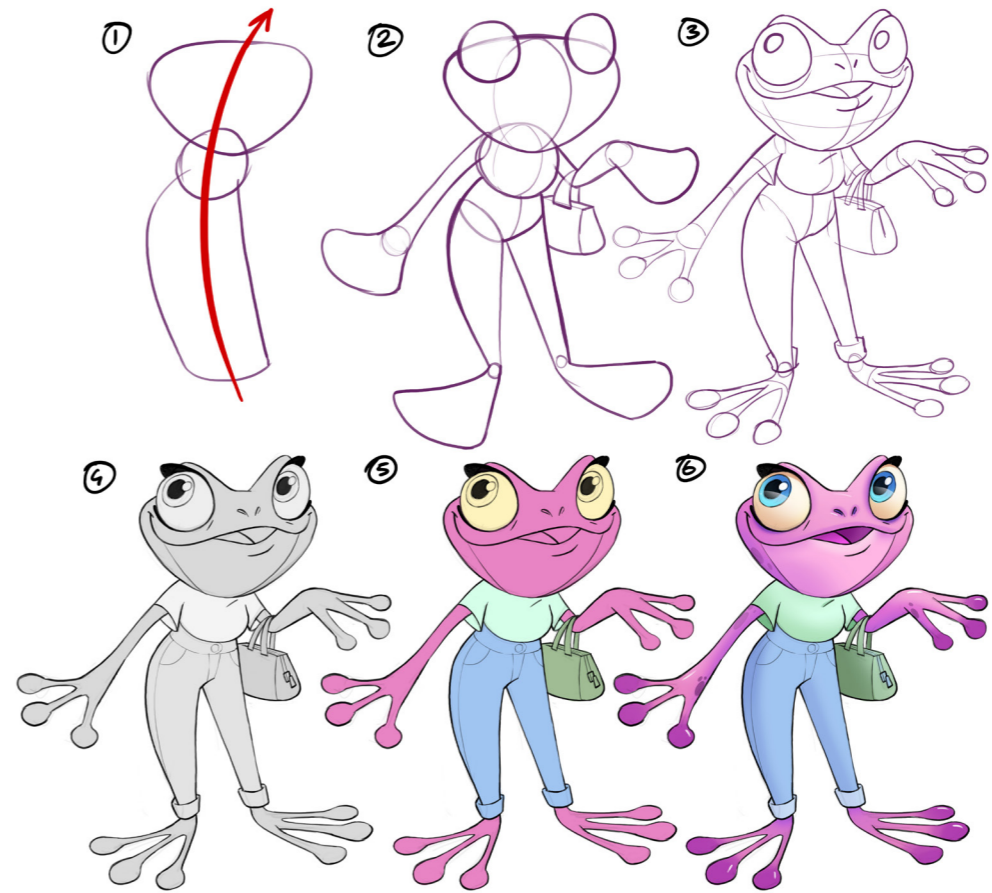
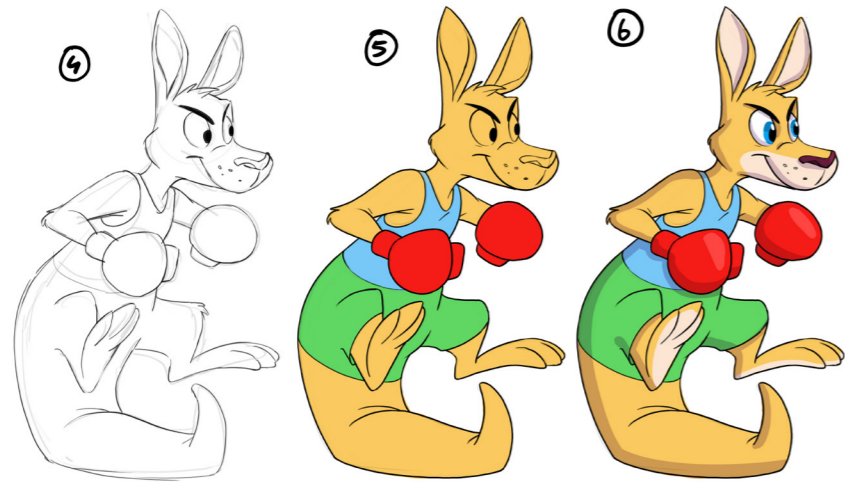
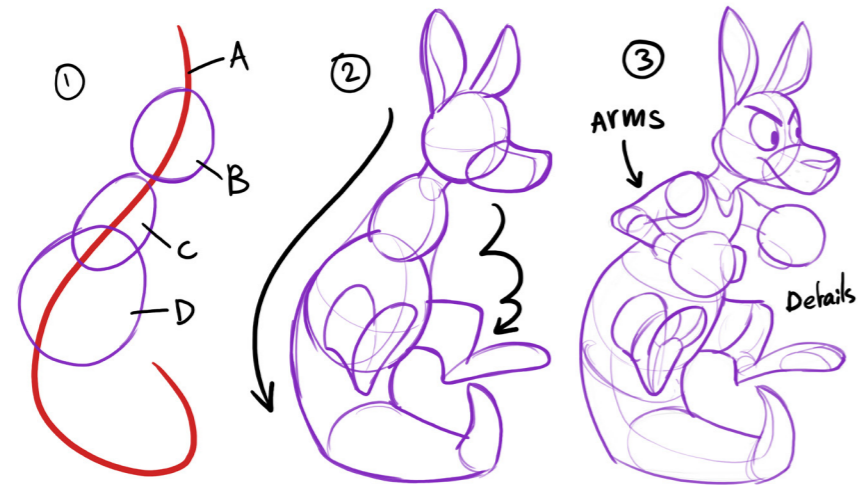


EXERCISE

Oh no, the gorilla is as mad as the bear. Draw him in that pose.







EXERCISE

The fish gave this frog also some coffee. What would she look like holding her cup?



CHARACTER LINE-UP



PORTFOLIO PIECES

When you would like to work as a character designer, a portfolio can be handy to get a studio position or get hired as a freelance artist. Your portfolio should represent your work and proofs you can do the job. That could be hard when you're looking for your first job since you never worked on a similar project.

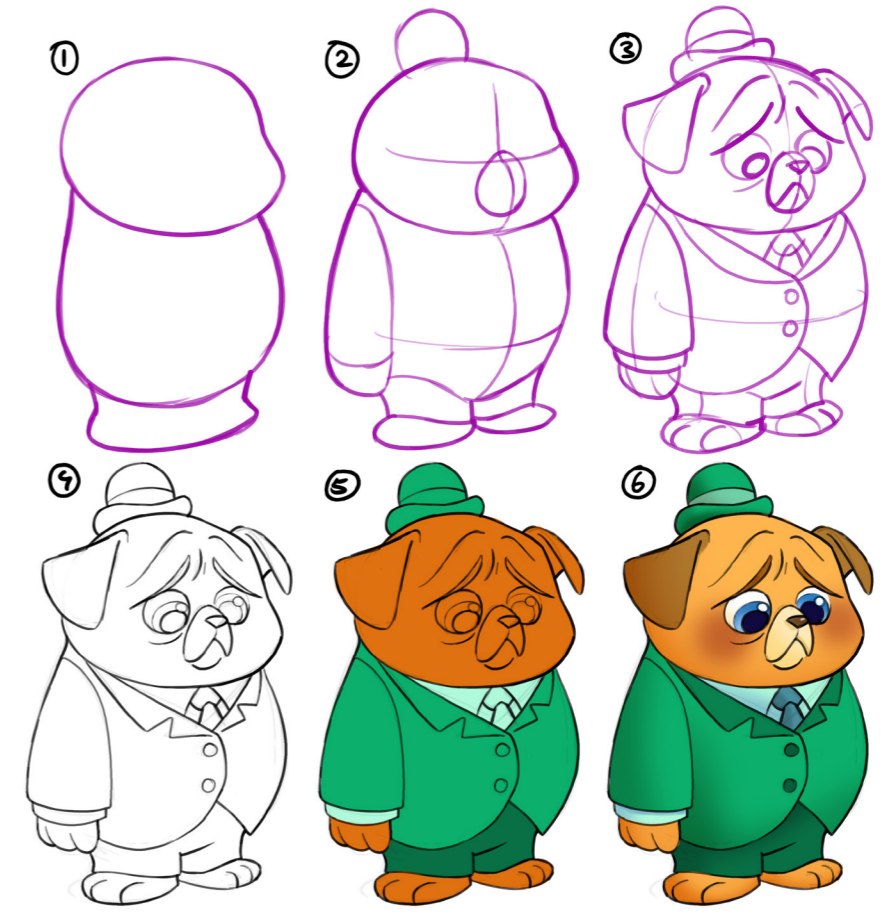
In that case, you could create your own product or project for your portfolio. In this example, I've created a character lineup of four. You can do this too! Create your own character lineup for your portfolio. This way, you show your ability to create different kinds of characters within one concept.

I chose four different types of dogs, but to give some extra inspiration: A family of hamsters. A squad of policemen of a variety of animals. A rebel group of winter animals (penguin, polar bear, seal, etc.)

EXERCISE

You can still practise construction by copying these characters and their construction.





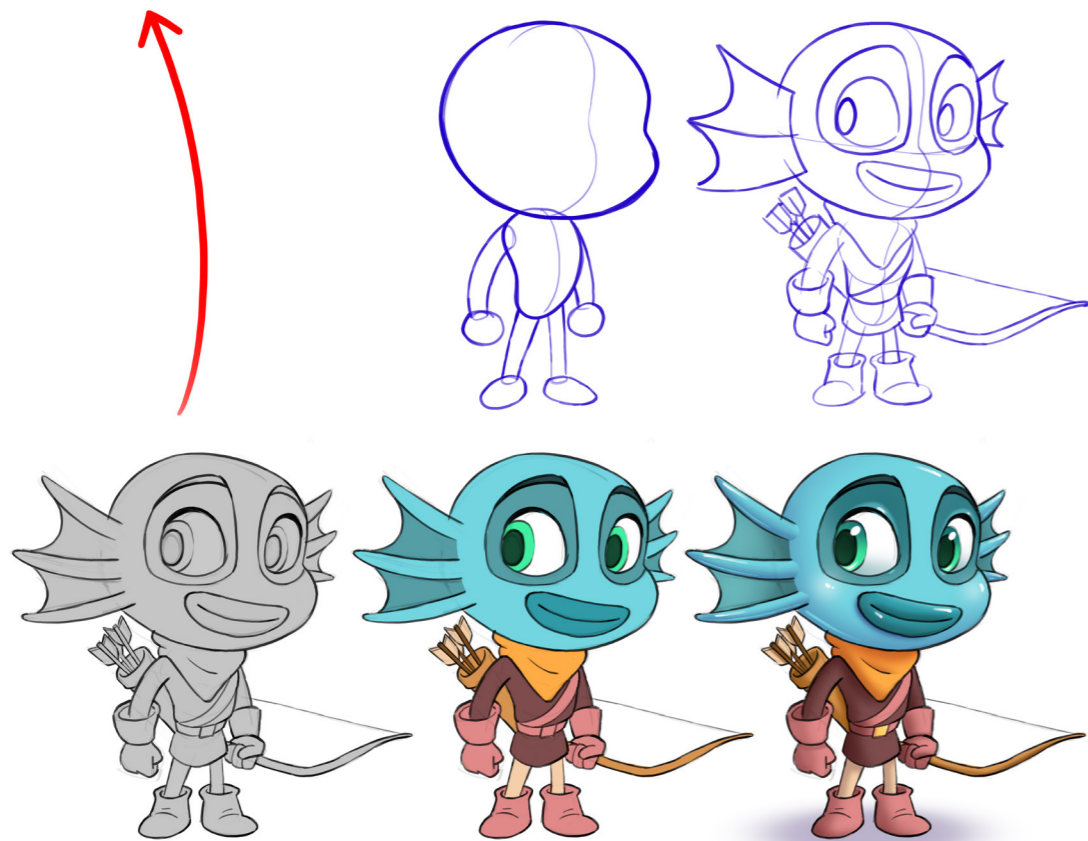


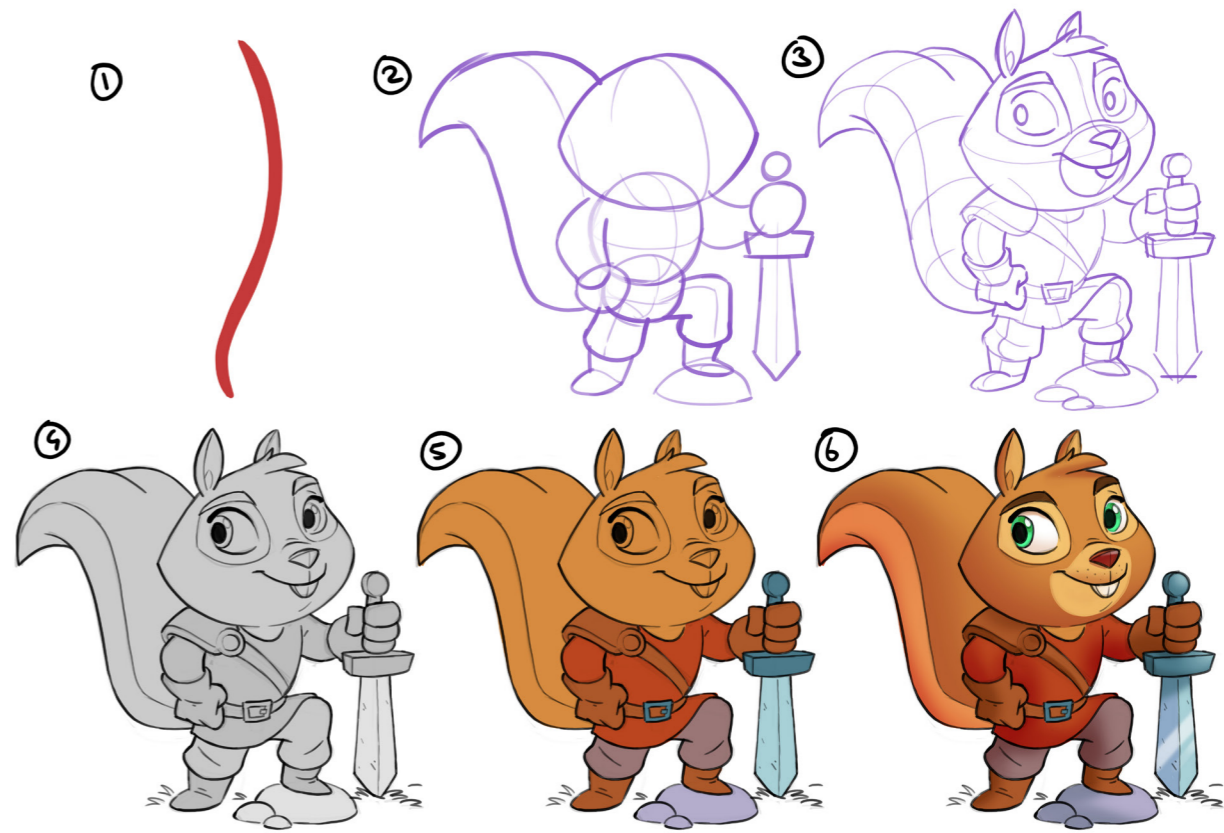
CREATE A TEAM

This group of animals is another idea for a personal project. Here I've created a group of characters that can work together as a team.

The steps I take for this: Pick a theme; I chose fantasy for this one. Then decide what kind of team it is and what kind of roles the characters should have. After that, you can pick an animal for a specific role and design them.

Think of this project as if you are making art for your own movie, comic, tv show, or another project.





TV SHOW LINE-UP

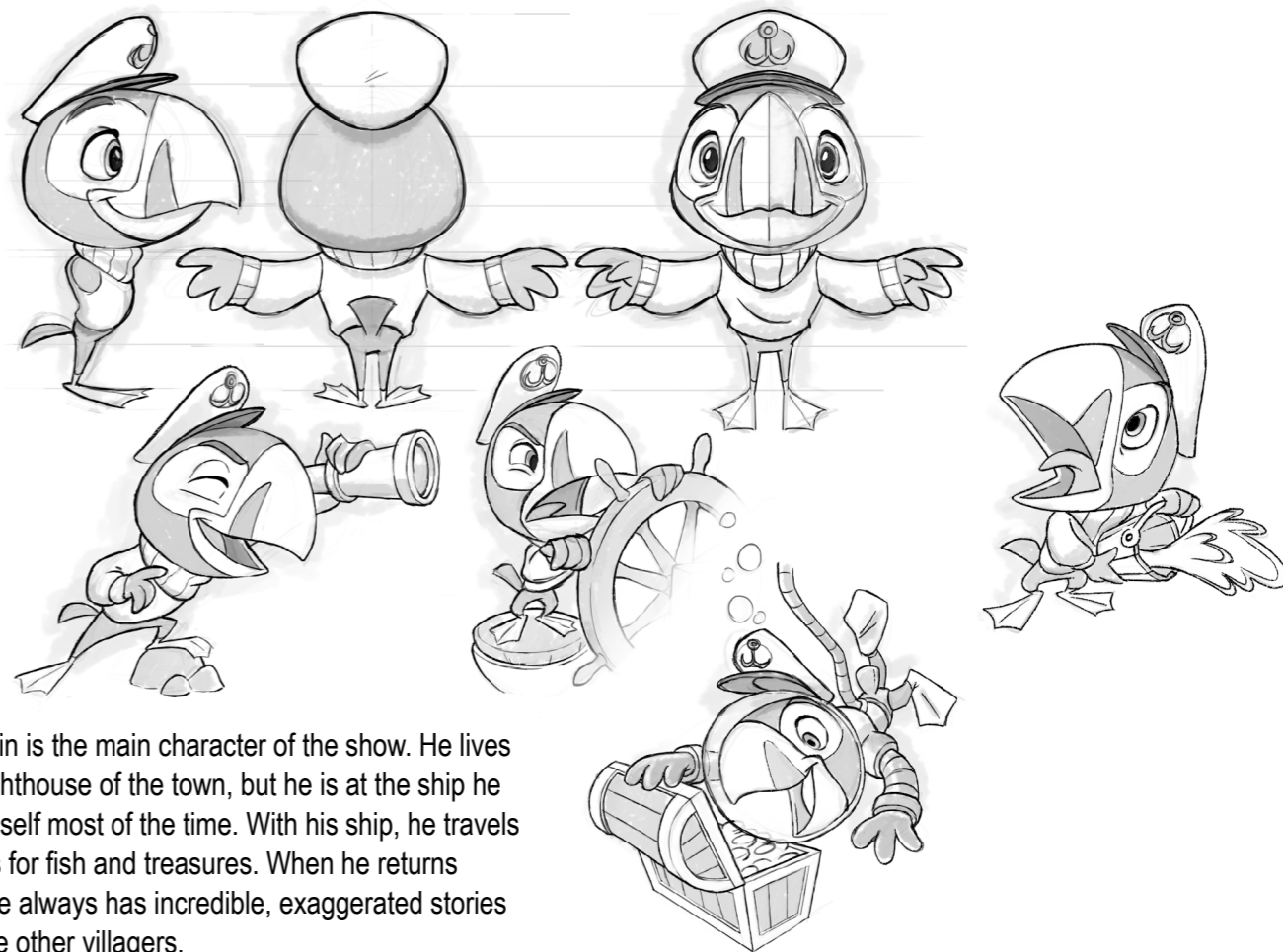
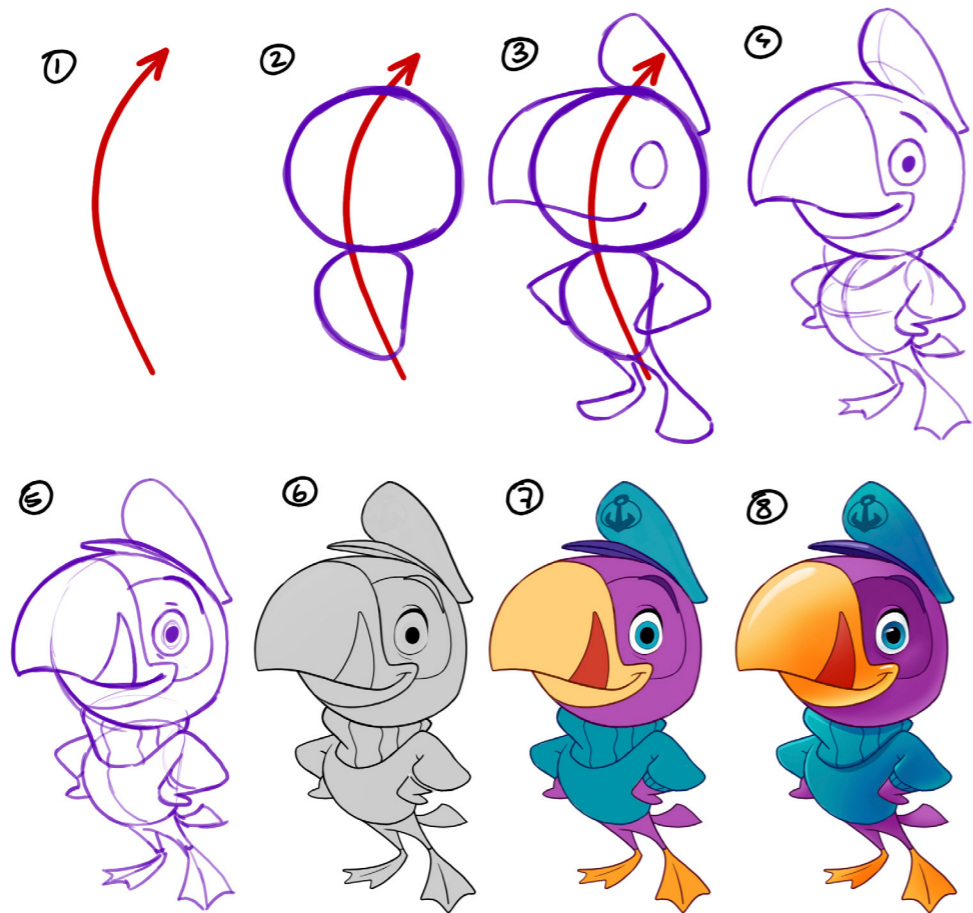
This is another character lineup I made for my own portfolio. I wanted to create concept art for a tv show about a fisher village with animals. I started by designing the lead character, the puffin. After this, I thought about how all the other villagers could fit into this concept.

All the characters have a little backstory, which you can read on the following pages. This makes them come to life even more!

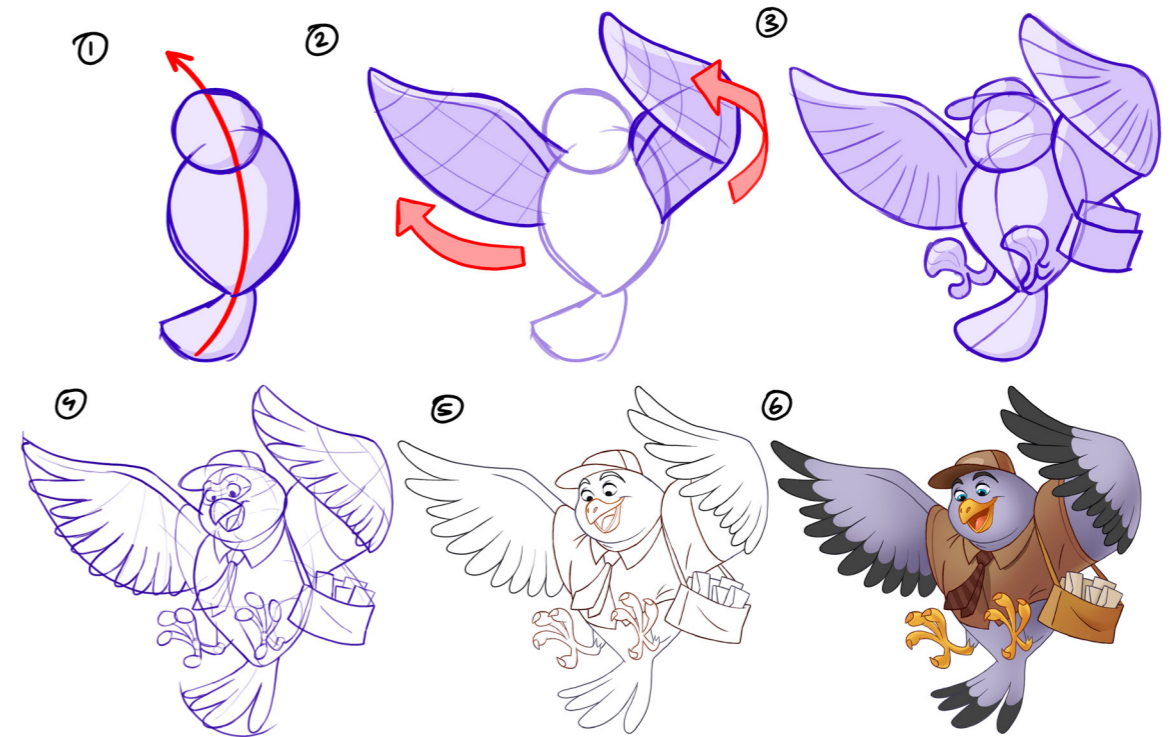


EXERCISE

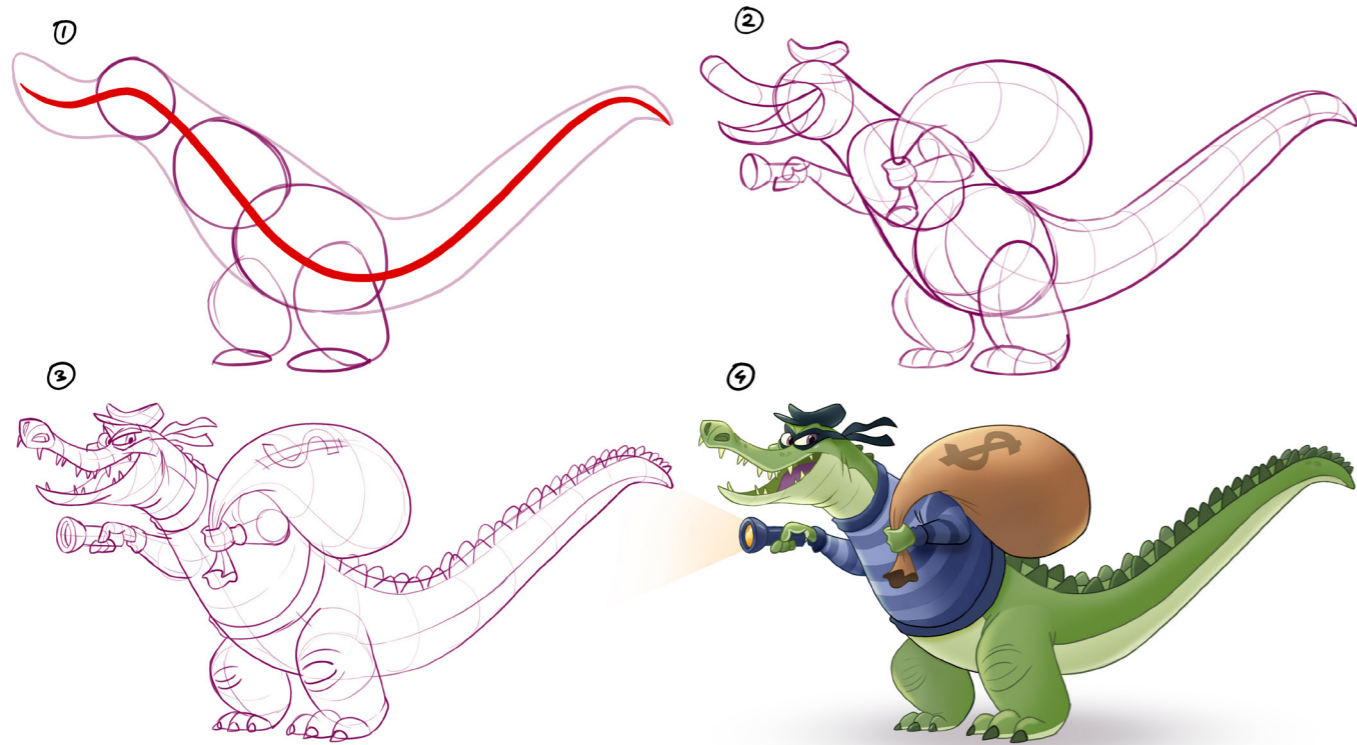
You can still practise construction by copying these characters and their construction.



This jolly bear is the police officer of the village. As a police officer, he should be very strict, but he actually is not, especially if you offer him some fresh salmon.



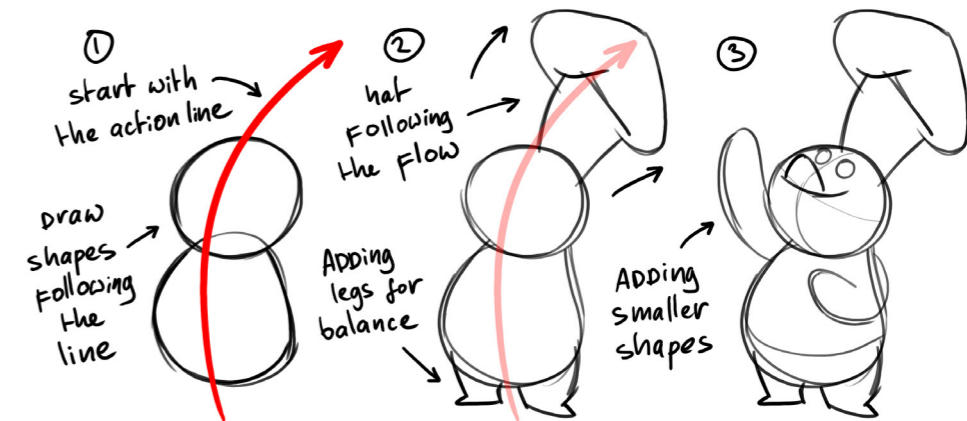
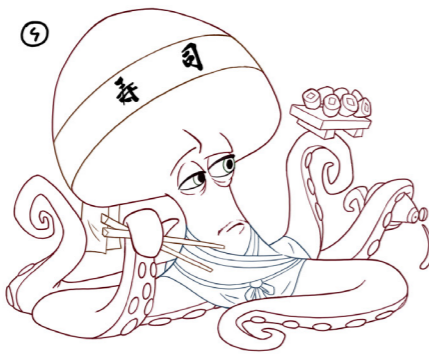
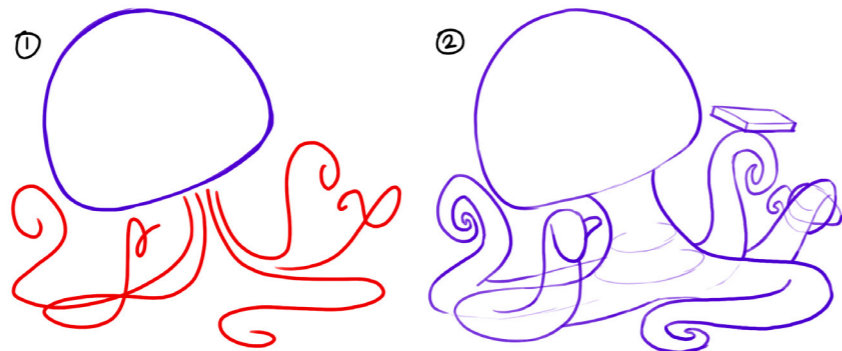
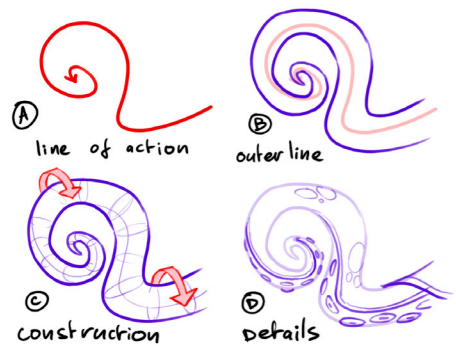
The mail in the village is delivered by this pigeon. He takes his job very seriously and always makes sure everybody gets their mail on time. Fun fact: to prevent his cap from being blown away by the wind, he has glued it to his head with special feather glue invented by the beaver character.



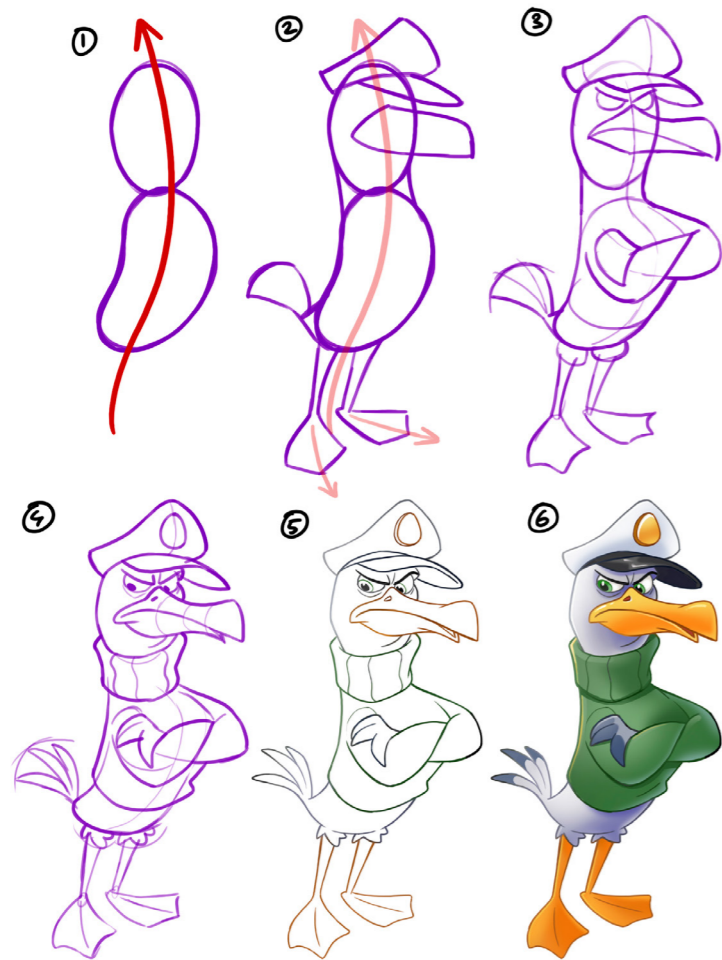
Watch out if you see this guy wandering down the streets. This suspicious-looking crocodile is the thief of the town and is always looking for some valuable stuff to make them disappear. The bear police officer is always chasing after him but has never caught him in the act.



The richest man in the village is this hamster. He has a huge house with many rooms, tunnels, and cozy spots to take a nap. The crocodile thief guy is often lurking around the house of this hamster. Because the police officer still fails in catching the thief, the rich hamster has bought a gun of his own to scare off the thief.



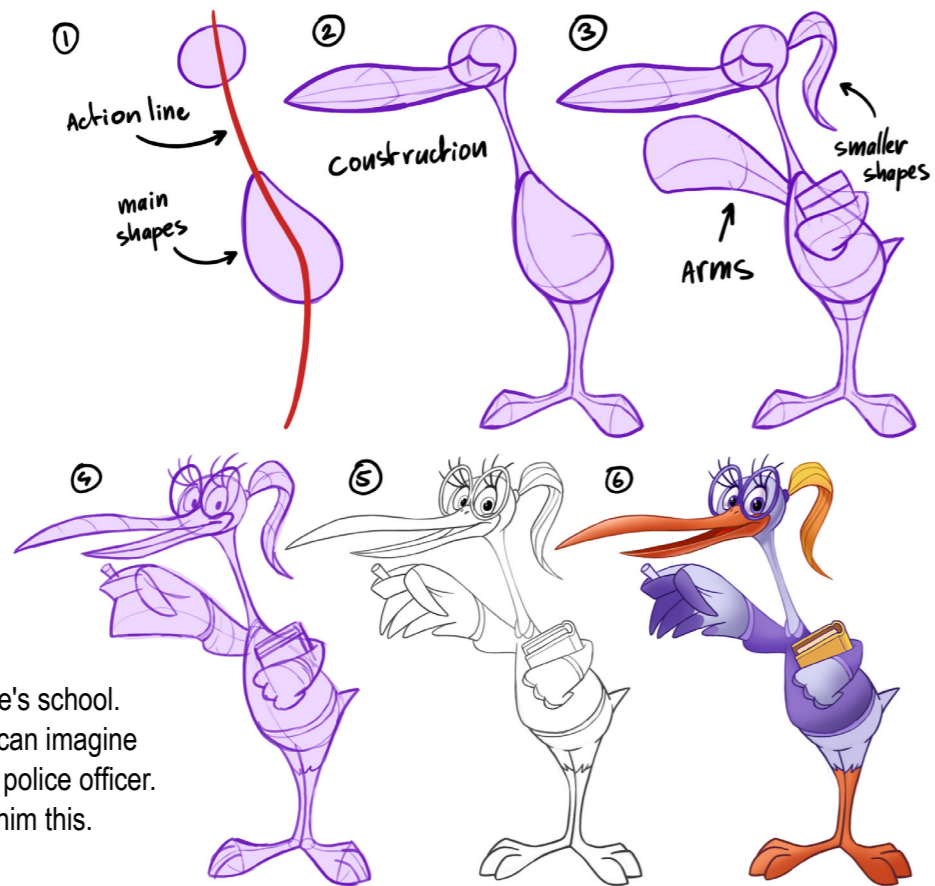
The two chefs in town are this octopus and pig. They work together as a team, but both have their own vision on cooking. While the pig loves to serve soups and stews, the octopus is more a sushi chef. This resulted in hilarious discussions when they had to come up with their restaurant menu, which is called Fishy Tales.



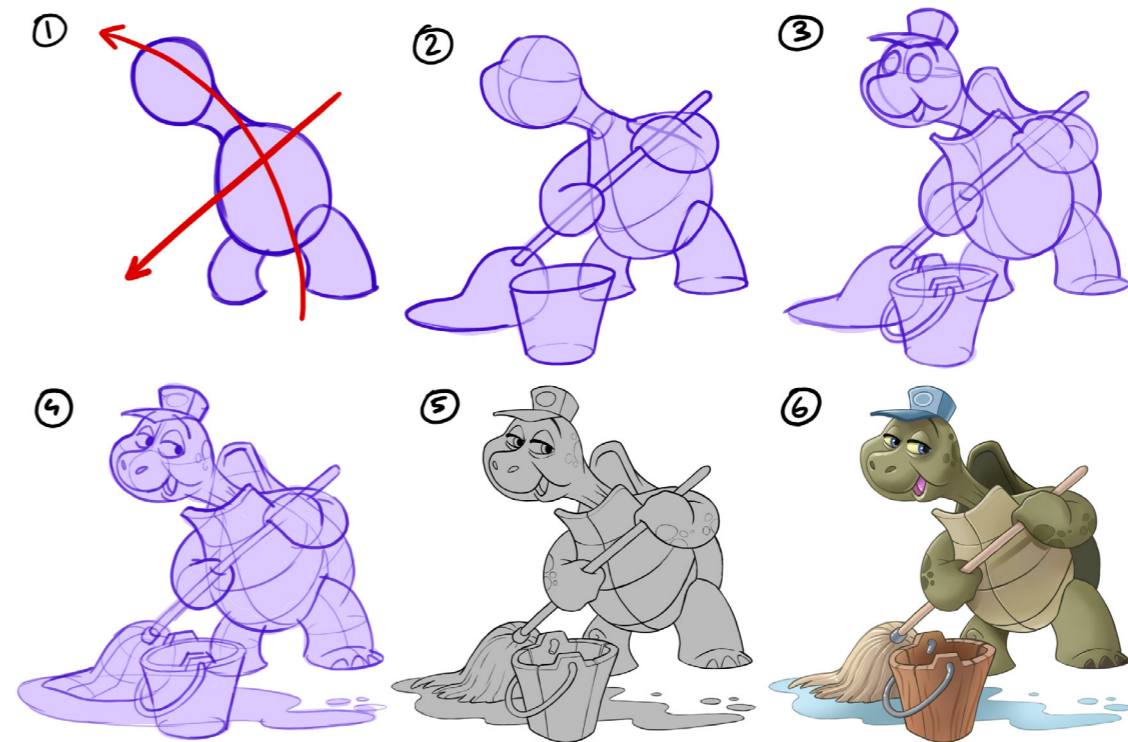
As you probably can tell by the look on his face, this guy the jealous type. Every time the puffin character returns home and has an exciting sea story to tell, this seagull has to top that, which is strange because he doesn't even have a ship. He envy's the puffin with everything, and although there is no proof for it, there are indications that he sabotaged the ship of the puffin a couple of times.



The otter and the walrus are two retired fishermen who like to fish at the dock every day. While fishing, they discuss the news together, make the town gossips even juicier, and tell each other exaggerated stories about their life at sea. They barely catch some fish because the walrus secretly eats the bait himself.



This stork teacher leads the village's school. She is the friendliest teacher you can imagine and is madly in love with the bear police officer. However, she doesn't dare to tell him this.

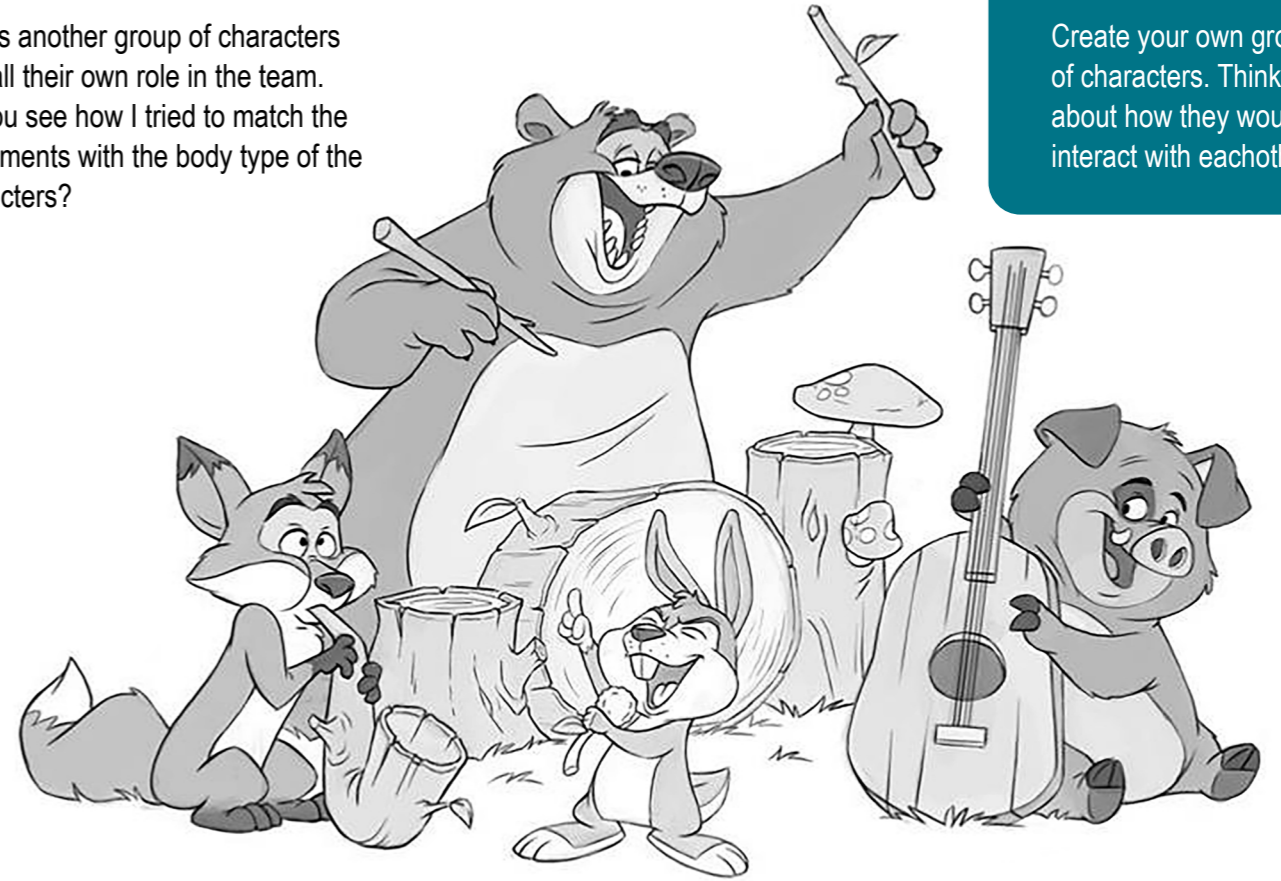


The cleaner of the school and the rich hamster's house is this relaxed-looking turtle. He takes his time with whatever he does and is never in a hurry. Because he moves kinds slow by himself, his favorite hobby is racing with his motorcycle.

If you need somebody to build or fix anything for you, this beaver is your guy. He often overestimates himself and gets himself in trouble by this. However, everything always turns out fine in the end.



This is another group of characters with all their own role in the team. Do you see how I tried to match the instruments with the body type of the characters?



EXERCISE

Create your own group of characters. Think about how they would interact with each other.

CONCLUSION
and THANK YOU

THAT'S IT!

I hope I have inspired you to create your own animal characters! I often get the question on how to learn how to draw. Honestly, the best way is just to start drawing. I understand that that probably sounds very lame, and when I started out, I've searched for a simple answer. But there is no other answer.

I started to make real progress when I began to apply the line of action and construction. In my opinion, the most fun and quick way of learning how to draw is by starting copying art you love and try to look for the action line and construction in it. That's also why I have added many characters you can use for practice in this book by following the steps. I would really encourage you to draw the examples step by step. Try to stay as close as possible and try to understand each step.

I think it's also important to realize that learning to draw takes time and patience. We often overestimate what we can do in a short period and underestimate what we can do over a longer period. What I mean by that is you should just start drawing and have fun. Practice as much as you can.

Focus on the line of action and construction first. Start with practicing the first images from this book and repeat this until you can match them perfectly. After this, you can start drawing these characters in your own poses. Maybe copying and repeating sounds boring to you because you want to draw something more interesting, like your own characters or something else. That is fine, and I would encourage you to that too. But maybe try to practice studying these characters a little bit every day, perhaps

just as a warm-up. At one point, this technique will start to click, and then you can use those skills for your own characters. This is how I learned to draw, and it took me a while too. The theory of construction and the line of action is quite basic, but it's tough to master.

Best, Mitch Leeuwe



