



POWERED BY SKYROCKET™

Introduction to Cartooning Course Reader

*For use with the following course:
6005 Introduction to Cartooning*

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SEMESTER DESCRIPTION

Grade Level: 9-12

Prerequisite: N/A

This Introduction to Cartooning course covers the fundamentals of character and scene design, beginning with shape language and how it helps create compelling characters. Students will then explore how to draw diverse body types and dynamic poses, using both realism and exaggeration to heighten action and expression. The course also includes background design, focusing on perspective and composition to build engaging scenes. Finally, students will study various art styles, analyzing techniques from popular shows to develop both versatility and efficiency as cartoonists.

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UNIT 1

Character Creation

Unit Contents

- ❑ **Lesson 1:** Shape Language and Face Construction
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- ❑ **Lesson 3:** Hair, Hats, & Props

LESSON 1 | Shape Language and Face Construction

Lesson Content

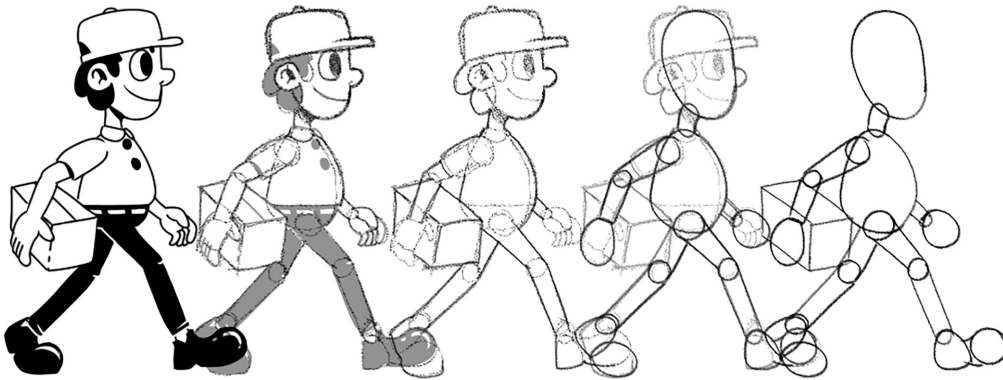
- **Activity 1:** Shape Language
- **Activity 3:** How to Draw Faces

Complete by: _____

Vocabulary Term

protagonist

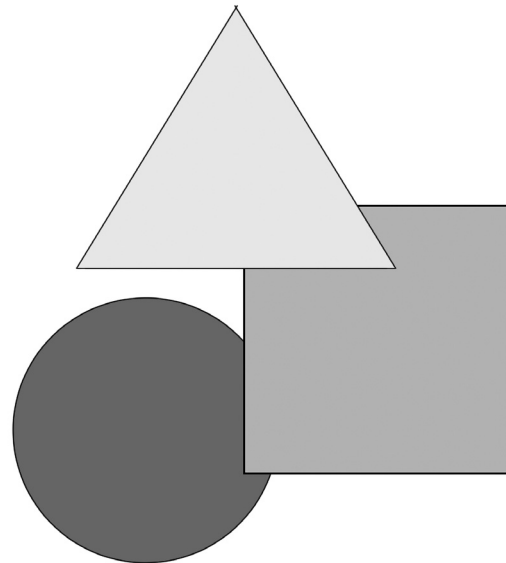
Everything you see can be simplified into the most simple shapes—circles, squares, and triangles. Shape language is a concept widely used in art and character design. It involves incorporating shapes as a form of communication to tell a story behind one's design. Each basic shape is associated with its respective stories and personalities that the audience interprets.



Finding the Simplest Form

Breaking a character into its simplest form is the easiest way to find the shapes used in its design. These shapes are used to predict how a viewer might perceive your characters. The application of shapes can be either straightforward or abstract. A complex character design combines these shapes strategically to provide a well-rounded character. Learning to use basic shapes to your advantage is critical to good character design.

Plenty of social and psychological tests use shapes to define a personality or a mental condition. Each shape has a central idea, similar to how colors are usually associated with a specific emotion. Find out the meaning behind these shapes and learn how to use them to control the audience's perception of your character.



LESSON 1

SHAPE LANGUAGE

Circles

Circles are usually associated with welcoming, friendly, and warm personalities. Roundness and curves depict softness, harmlessness, and femininity. Circles are easy on the eyes, hence why they are typically used in **protagonist** designs, heroic young characters, and mother-like figures. Rounded shapes help the audience perceive characters as kind, approachable, and trustworthy.

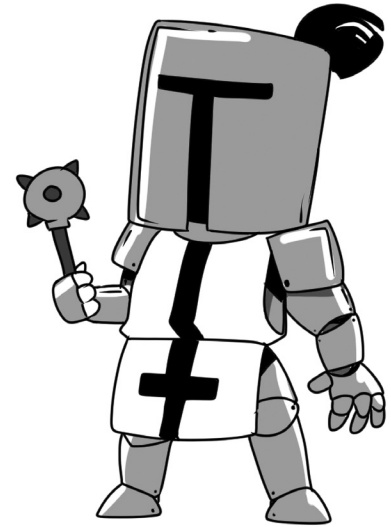
Vocabulary

Protagonist: the main character in a story; often a hero.



Squares

Squares and straight lines represent stability and structure. They are associated with stoicism, masculinity, might, and protection. In more masculine characters, squares are commonly used for father-like figures that provide supportive roles as protectors or reliable people. On the other hand, squares can also be depicted as stubborn or strong-willed, also often used as a typical trait for a protagonist.



Triangles

Triangles represent energy, motion, and tension. They are associated with being edgy, cool, fast, and sharp. In character design, triangles are often used to show characters who are dynamic, unpredictable, or sharp in personality. You'll see this shape used in action-oriented heroes, clever tricksters, or even villains — anyone who needs to feel like they're always moving or thinking one step ahead. Triangles can suggest danger or confidence, making them perfect for characters who stand out and break the rules.



LESSON 1

HOW TO DRAW FACES

Eyes

The eyes are commonly called the “window to the soul.” It is said that you can see someone’s inner emotions if you look directly into their eyes. In designing a character, the eyes and eyebrows are the most expressive features of their face.

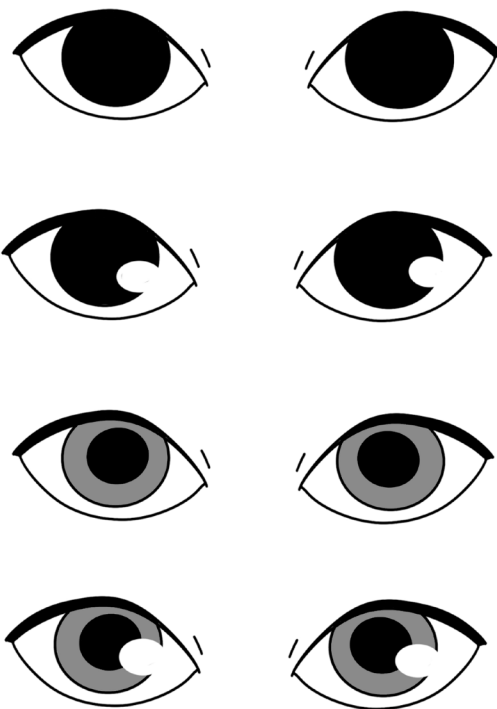
Eyes can be drawn in various shapes and sizes. In this art style, the eyes usually consist of the eye shape, the iris, and the pupil.

To keep the design minimal, the iris and pupil can be colored in as one, usually black.

You can add a highlight on one side of the pupil to make it pop out even more.

To draw colored eyes, you can separate the iris and pupil by coloring the pupil black and the iris a different color.

Using unique shapes and stylized eyes is common in a cartoon art style.



Round

Round eyes are usually used to convey innocence, kindness, and youth. Younger characters are typically drawn with more prominent eyes or larger pupils.



Square

Square or flat eyes are more suited to serious characters. They can also convey strength, boredom, or suspicion.



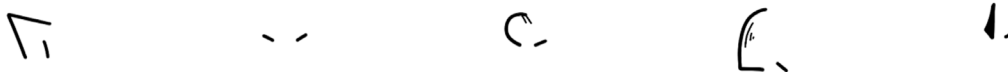
Triangle

Triangular or more angular eyes show menace, intelligence, and maturity. Older characters are usually designed with smaller or thinner-shaped eyes.



Feel free to experiment and use various shape combinations when designing the eyes, but keep it simple enough to still be expressive. You should still be able to manipulate the shape to help convey emotions without changing the features.

Nose



In a realistic drawing, the nose is a complex part to draw. It is irregular and mostly drawn through shading instead of line art. In cartoons, noses are usually simplified and stylized. They are typically drawn with at least two lines.

These two lines are a simplified version of a side profile of a realistic nose. The only lines drawn are the contour of the side nose and one of the nostrils.



LESSON 1

HOW TO DRAW FACES

Ears

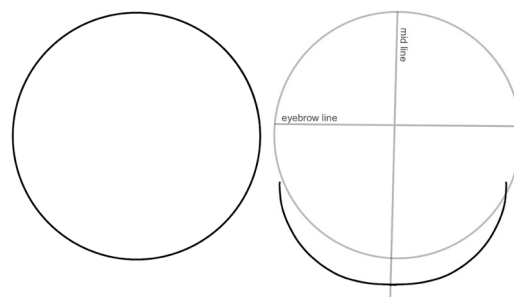
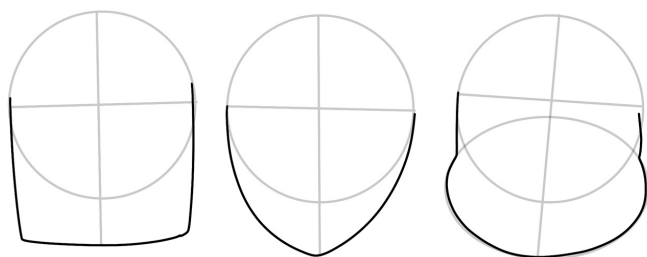
Like the nose, the ears are simplified and can be stylized using different shapes. To draw the ears, you need to start by drawing the outline of their shape, usually a C-shape or something similar. They can be drawn in various forms: round, wide, pointy, square, etc.



Face

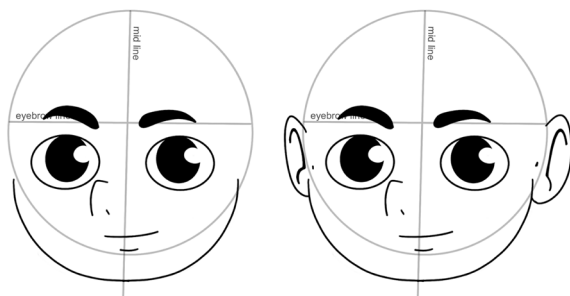
The first step in drawing a head is to draw a circle. This circle will serve as the cranium and base of your skull.

Start by drawing a vertical midline to center the face, then add a horizontal line for the eyebrows. This will be your guideline for the orientation of the face.



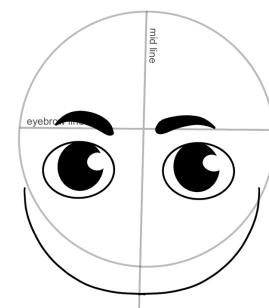
This example is a front view of a face.

Start drawing the eyes under the eyebrow line, then draw the eyebrows.

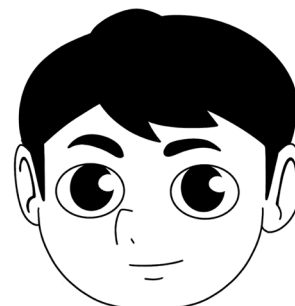


The nose is drawn between the eyes and the mouth under it, but not too close to the jawline.

The ears are usually drawn from the top of the eyebrows to the bottom of the nose.



Now that you have finished drawing the face, add the hair and other details you want. You'll be taught how to add specific details in later units. For now, add what you want.





This is the end of the sample, but not the end of the course.

If you would like to see more of this or any other course, please reach out to us at:
info@lylaeducation.com

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