

^ . ^ How to: Draw Anime Style

There are a myriad of drawing styles when it comes to animation and cartoons, usually depending on the person and/or purpose. Whether it is drawing villains, superheroes, regular people, animals, or even landscape, different regions have different styles that appeal to different audiences. But in this article we will focus on the workings of Japanese animation, also known as Anime.



Figure 1.1

Japanese anime drawing originated in the early 20th century where Japanese filmmakers experimented with the animation techniques also pioneered in France, Germany, the United States, and Russia. (Japaneselifestyle.com) The success of The Walt Disney Company's 1937 feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* influenced Japanese animators. In the 1960s, manga artist and animator Osamu Tezuka adapted and simplified many Disney animation-techniques to reduce costs and to limit the number of frames in productions. (Marwah Zagzoug) He intended this as a temporary measure to allow him to produce material on a tight schedule with

inexperienced animation staff. Osamu received widespread acclaim and is said to be the “Godfather of Anime” and a “legend” of anime. (Marwah Zagzoug) Many Japanese



Figure 1.2



Figure 1.3

animated shows such as the popular Dragonball Z (Figure 1.1),

Sailor Moon (Figure 1.2), Pokémon (Figure 1.3), and The Big O (Figure 1.4)

have gained great popularity in the Western World and use many of the

fundamental drawing techniques Osamu pioneered. Some of these basic techniques will be shown in



Figure 1.4

this article so that you too can one day create your own anime. But enough background info, let's get to drawing!

Anime style is very unique in the sense that, unlike Western style, figures, faces, and hair are very sharp and pointed, usually to emphasize masculinity or to put emphasis on clothing or certain features. Faces usually start as a circle, as most humans' heads have a circular/oval shape as shown in **Figure 1.5**. (Rio) A

large plus sign is then drawn to pinpoint the center of the face, which will be important for drawing more features in a different step. Next, a horizontal line is drawn about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way up from the center point. This is where the characters eyes will be placed.

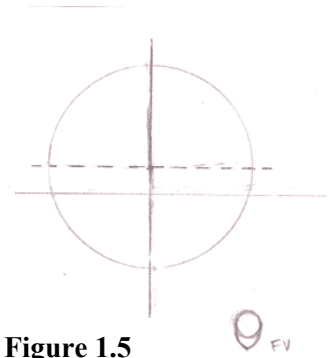


Figure 1.5

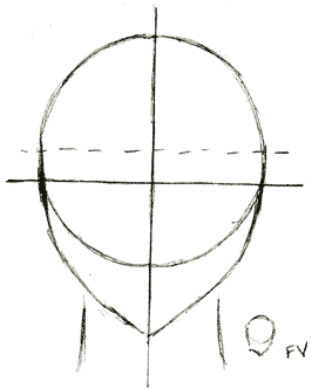


Figure 1.6

The next crucial step is drawing the jaw line of the character. This is because this will define how your character's face will be shaped and what type of "look" is desired. Many anime artists draw this feature along with eyes, noses, ears, and hair, again, depending on style. But for simplicity sake, we'll stick with the basic. The jaw line is a simple triangle shape, coming from the sides of the face down to the vertical line in the center of the face (shown in **Figure 1.6**). From the center of those lines, curved (for women) or straight (for men) vertical lines are

drawn down. (Rio) Now that you've drawn your face, it's time to put features on it. There are numerous ways to draw a face and at various angles, as shown in **Figure 1.7**, using the same formula. (Rio)

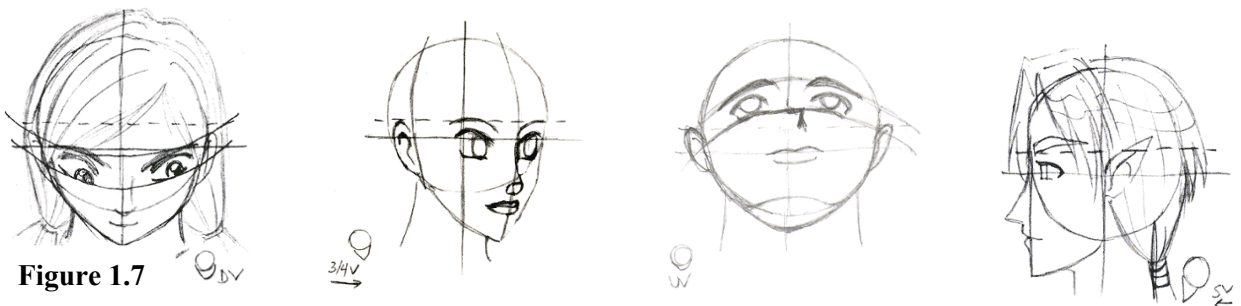


Figure 1.7

Features: Eyes

Eyes are undoubtedly one of the most defining features of an anime character. Like us humans, they tell how the character is feeling and can show what kind of person the character is. (Rio)

Again, there are countless ways to draw an eye, but for beginners we stick to basics. An anime style eye is generally a sideways oval, so we'll start with that. Draw two sideways ovals at the line drawn on

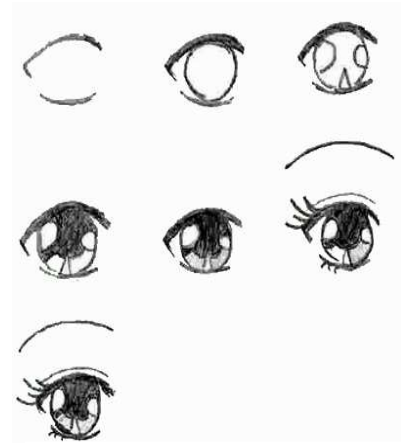


Figure 1.8

the face in the previous step. The lines used to draw the ovals can be stylized any way the artist wants to create a certain look. A small circle is then placed in the center of each eye; this is the retina. This is a very vital point because large eyes create a look of innocence, fear, or sadness. (Rio) Small eyes illustrate a look of sneakiness or awe, so draw accordingly. (Rio) The eyes are then shaded, which further

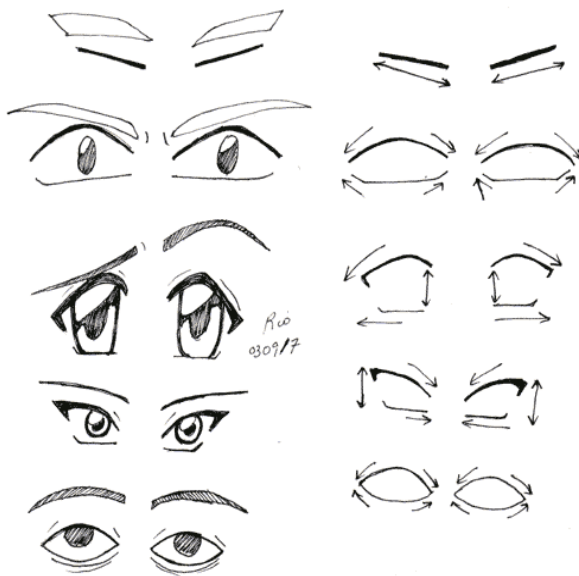


Figure 1.9

enhances the look the artist is going for (**Figure 1.8**). A look of innocence consists of shading in the eye very dark, but leaving bubbles of white spots for a shiny effect. Evil or menacing eyes usually have no shine and are very dark, sometimes without a retina. A chart of various eye styles is provided (**Figure 1.9**). Like faces, eyes are often exaggerated also mostly to emphasize emotion or character.

Lips, Noses, and Ears

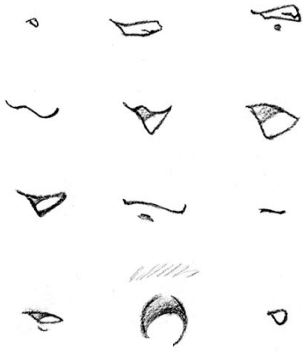


Figure 2.0

Next we have our other three defining features: lips, noses, and ears. Anime lips are much like human lips, but can be very simple. They can be as simple as a horizontal line (**Figure 2.0**), or as intricate as actual lips with a bottom and top (**Figure 2.1**). Depending on the desired look, start with short horizontal line. This line can be shaped to look like the parting of lips also. Then, draw an even shorter line below to give definition to the bottom lip. (Rio) This is the basic lip of an anime character, but it can be enhanced. Lips are one of the most flexible features, but watch out, the more defined the lips, the more feminine the look. (Rio)

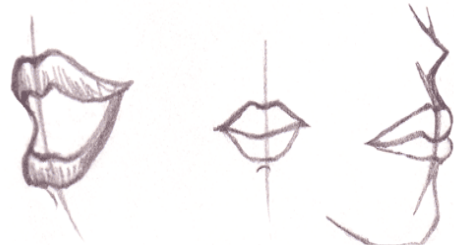


Figure 2.1

Noses can be the simplest part of the face or one of the hardest. This is depending on whether or not the artist wants to draw nostrils and shade the nose (**Figure 2.2**). An anime nose generally consists of a half circle, a point, or a combination of both. The view point at which you are drawing the nose is also very important. It's almost like drawing a simple mountain, just at different angles. (Rio)

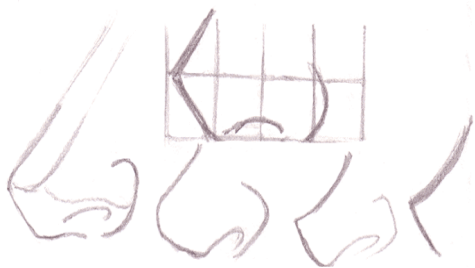


Figure 2.2

Next we have the ears, which are probably the simplest part of the drawing because there aren't too many ways to draw the ear. Most are either rounded (human figures) or pointed (elf, or beast-like figures). (Rio) They both have the same method with a slight modification. To draw a rounded

ear (side-view), draw a half circle and a diagonal line leading back to the top of the jaw line, and draw a smaller circle below it

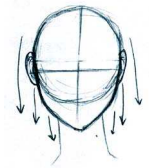


Figure 2.4



Figure 2.3

for the earlobe. The inner ear can be stylized, and some lines erased to create a good looking ear (**Figure 2.3**). A pointed ear or “elf” ear is the uses the same method, but with one difference. (Rio) In the first step, instead of drawing a circle, draw a long arched line. At the point where you end the arched line draw another arched line going back towards the jaw line, giving an almond shape as show in **Figure 2.4**. (Rio)



Hair

The final step in making a character is adding the hair. This is the final and most crucial part of the character because this is what gives the character flare and their overall appearance. This is also the of the most complex part of drawing an anime style face, cause like most features, hair is unique from person to person, and from artist to artist.

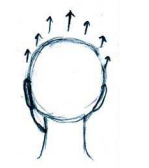


Figure 2.5

Anime style hair is normally spiked or long, these are the signature looks of anime characters. There are limitless methods to draw hair that they all have one thing in common, they all involve the hair coming back to one central point (**Figure 2.5**). (Rio)

To draw spiked hair, pick the angle at which you want the hair to flow and your central points, one of course being the head, the second being some random point you create. (Rio) Next, start from either side of the head, left or right, and draw pairs of connected diagonal lines that come to a point, almost in a zigzag pattern as shown in **Figure 2.6**. (Rio) The hairline is also in a zigzag pattern, which adds



Figure 2.6

the spiked style. The end result should look similar to (**Figure 2.7**)

The concept of anime drawing is such a vast subject that the article just barely touches the surface on the techniques that can be used to draw any character you desire.



Figure 2.7

The best thing about it is that it isn't limited and can be incorporated into any

type of artwork. Never be afraid to mix and match styles; you never know what new style you may make your own.

Citations

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