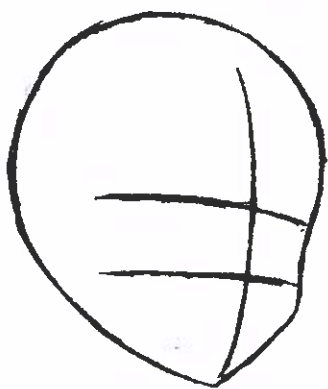


Shojo Cuteness

One of the most popular ways of drawing in Japan is the *shojo* style. Used for books that are primarily aimed at a female readership, it's the ideal manga style for high school romances, slice-of-life tales and any story that focuses more on emotions than on packing in action scenes.

In this lesson, you will learn how to draw a shojo-style character. The eyes are large and highly detailed, and the line work is light and delicate. Eager to invent your own shojo character? Now's your chance: Change the details and make it your own!



1 Mark the Head Guidelines

Begin by drawing a basic head contour in a three-quarter view. The shape is nearly as wide as it is tall. Add two horizontal lines for placing the tops and bottoms of the eyes. The higher of these two lines is about halfway between the top of the head and the chin. Then add a curving vertical line to help place the nose and mouth.



2 Draw the Basic Features

Draw the eyes. The character is turning away from us but looking back, so the two oval-shaped irises are shifted to the side of each eye. Note that because the eye on the right is farther away, it is smaller than the eye on the left. Experiment with your placement of the nose, mouth, ear and eyebrows. You may find that you prefer how they look in slightly different locations.



3 Add Details to the Features

Add details to the eyes and to the ear. Use small circles at the edges of the irises to create white highlights, which will make the eyes appear shiny later on. I've chosen to make the pupils quite large, but you may decide to make them smaller. A single line drawn above each eye indicates the fold of the eyelid.



4 Draw the Hair and Eyelashes
Add lines for the hair. Be creative—no need to have it look exactly as it does here. Just try to make the lines follow along with the crown of the head, curving to the left and to the right to reveal the shape of the scalp beneath. For an extra-feminine look, add eyelashes. Often the upper eyelash is more prominent than the lower one.



5 Draw the Neck and Shoulders
This over-the-shoulder pose is well worth learning: It's an attractive and visually interesting way of presenting your character. To draw it accurately, note the width of the neck and the distance between the chin and the shoulder.



6 Add Hair Details
Add lines to the hair, breaking the larger shapes into smaller individual strands. When hair has been pulled up into a pigtail, the parts near the roots follow the surface of the head beneath. I added ribbons to give a sense of innocence to the character.



7 Add More Details to the Hair and Eyes
Continue adding lines to the hair and to the eyes. You can make the hair as detailed or as simple as you like. I added shading to the edges and the tops of the irises to give the eyes greater depth.



8 Ink the Drawing
Switch from pencil to pen, and ink all the lines. Try inking the hair with quick, loose strokes of the pen to get the smoothest possible line work. Allow plenty of time for the ink to dry, then erase away all the pencil lines. Congratulations! You've drawn an authentic shojo character, start to finish.