Draw an elephant

Start with any subject

Elephant — page 2

Use a pencil, eraser and paper. Draw temporary guides lightly. Green pointers help you; do not copy them.

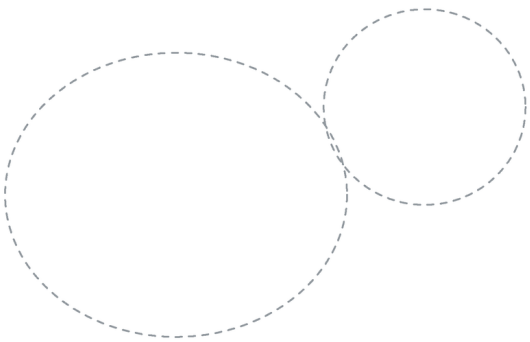
Read each drawing goal from top to bottom. Some pages scroll so the pictures can stay large. Compare the before and after views when erasing.

The lesson tells you when the base animal is complete. Extra details, objects, coloring and another try are optional.

Place the main shapes

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

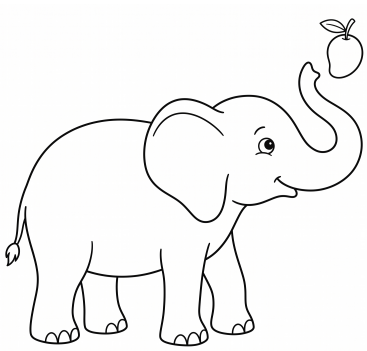
Body and head



Place a wide body oval, then overlap a smaller head oval at its upper right. Leave room above and to the right for the trunk.

The head is a little over half the body width. Adjust the light ovals now if the page feels crowded.

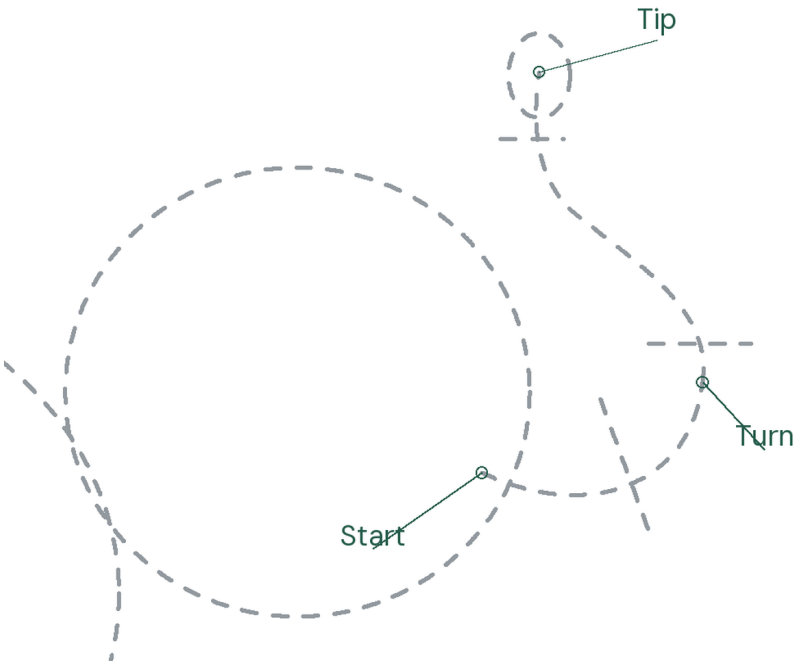
Finished example with optional details



Plan the trunk’s reach

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Path, width and tip



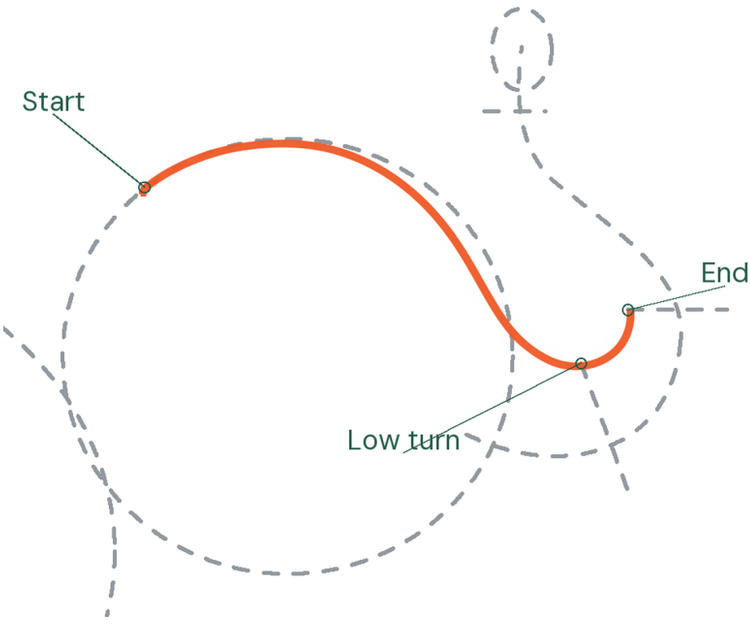
Sweep a light path out from the head, around the low turn, then up and back to the tip. Add three crossbars, broad at the base and narrow at the top, plus a small tip oval.

The path is the middle of the trunk. The crossbar ends show where its two edges will go.

Build the inside curve

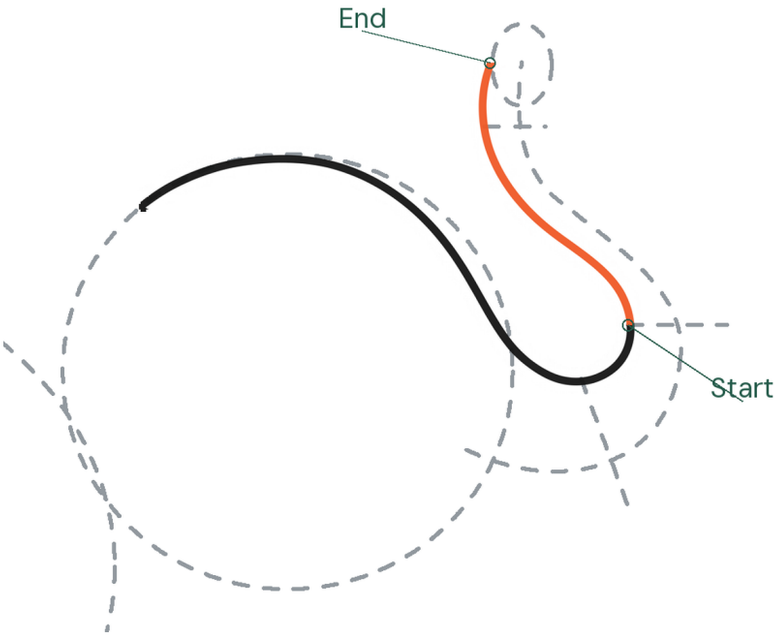
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Round the crown and low bend



From the head oval’s upper left, round the crown and turn down. Curl around a broad U to the middle crossbar’s left end.

Continue up to the tip



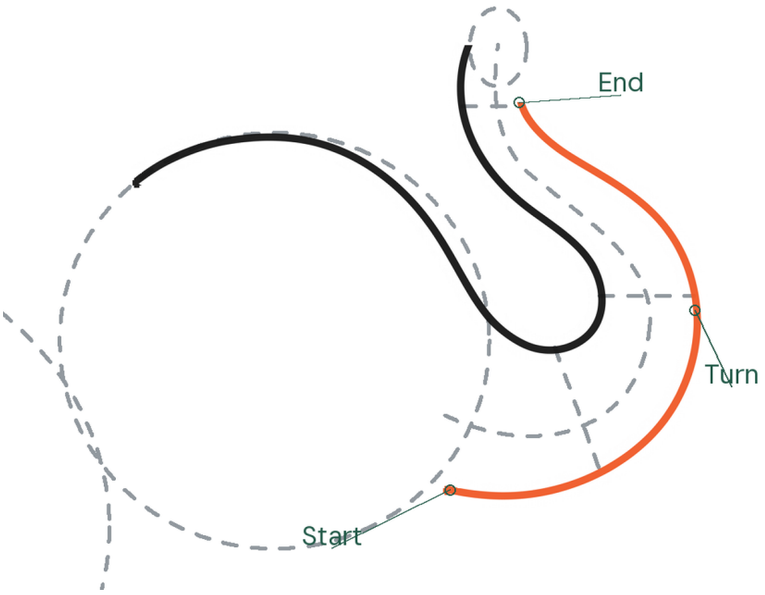
Continue upward from that crossbar. Follow the left side of the light path, pass the narrow crossbar and stop at the left side of the tip oval.

Keep one connected curve and leave the tip open. The crossbars help place each turn.

Build the outside and close the tip

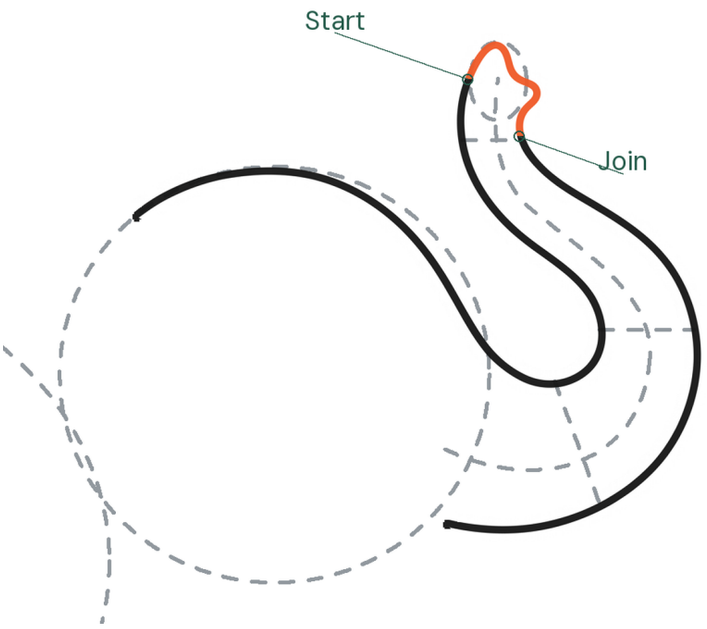
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Sweep around the outside



Start low on the head. Curve beneath the path, around the wide bend and upward along the other side. Narrow toward the tip oval and stop at its lower right side.

Round the tip and join



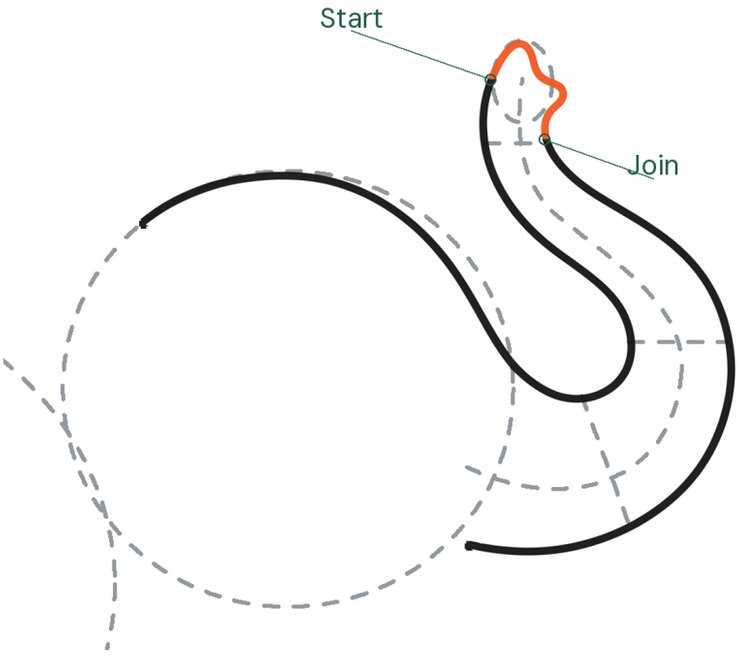
From the inner edge, round over the tip oval. Make the small outward bump, return inward, then meet the outside edge.

The tip should join both edges. Keep a wide opening inside the bend; the tiny tip bump may be gentler.

Erase the guides and check

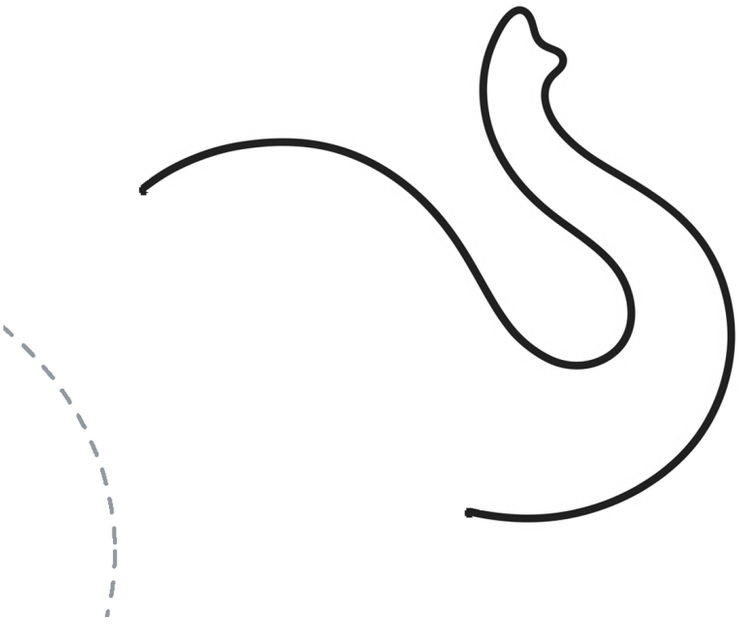
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Before: choose what goes



Erase the dashed head oval, middle trunk path, three crossbars and small tip oval. Keep the solid outline and body oval.

After: keep the outline



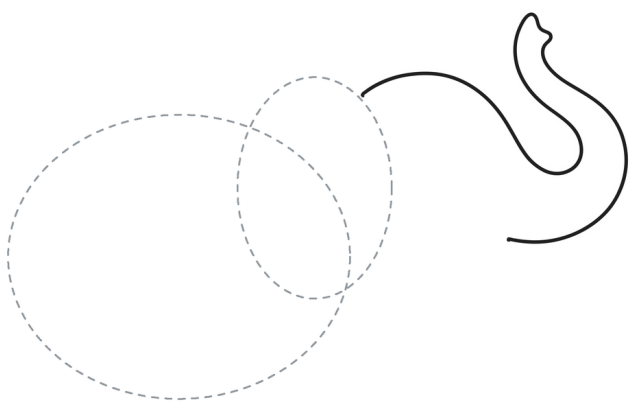
The named guides are gone. Keep the open ends on the left and below for the ear and jaw.

You have drawn the head and trunk. Keep the light body oval; the rest of the elephant comes next.

Shape the hanging ear

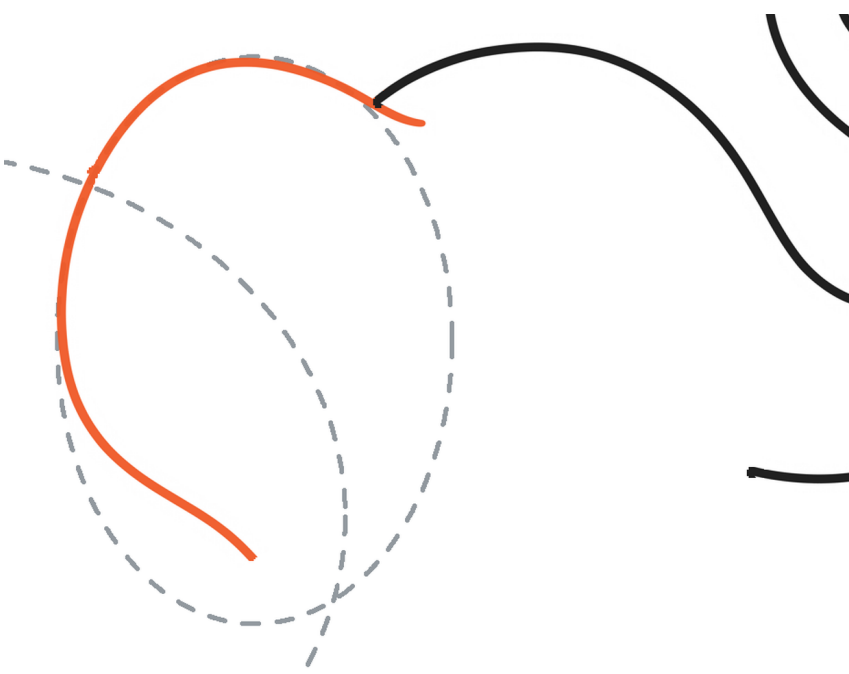
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Place the hanging ear



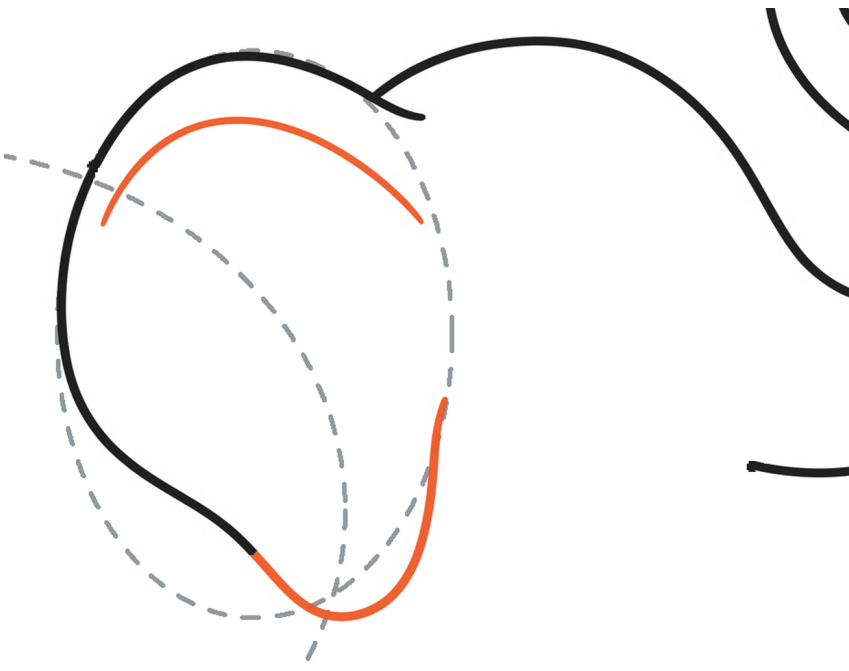
Overlap a tall oval with the left side of the head. Let its lower end hang below the trunk base.

Round the top and outside



From the upper body side, round over the ear guide to the crown. Continue a short way into the head, then follow the ear's left side down toward the lobe.

Curl the lobe back upward



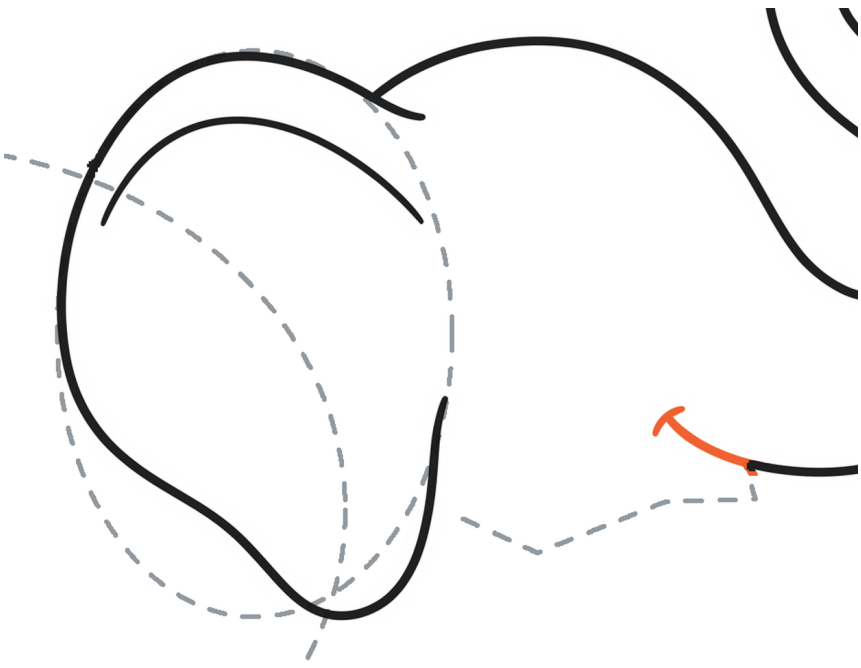
Round the bottom lobe and curl upward inside the head. Stop before the top; add a smaller arch inside the upper ear.

Keep the large ear in front of the body and head; its inner end stays open.

Join the jaw and clean the head

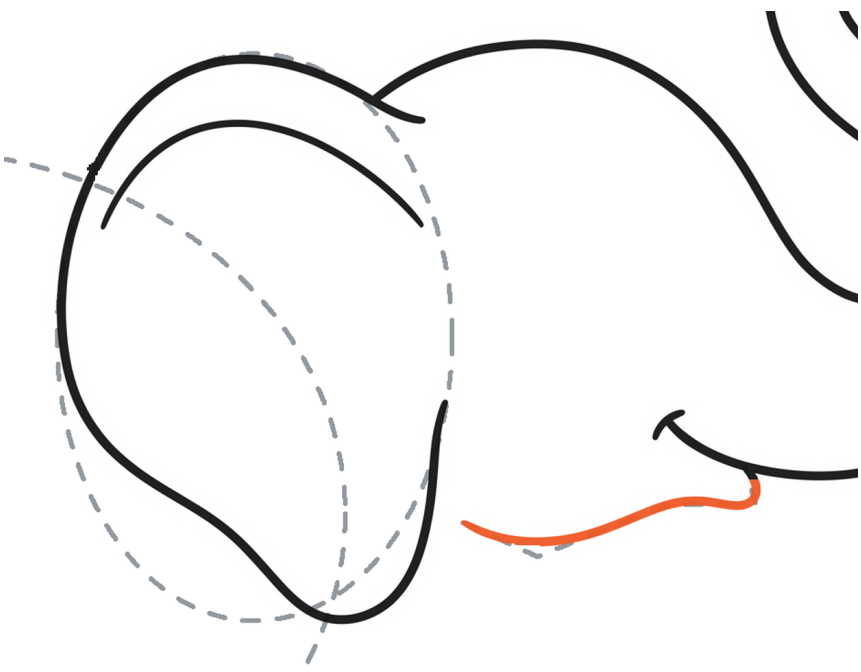
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Place the jaw beneath the smile



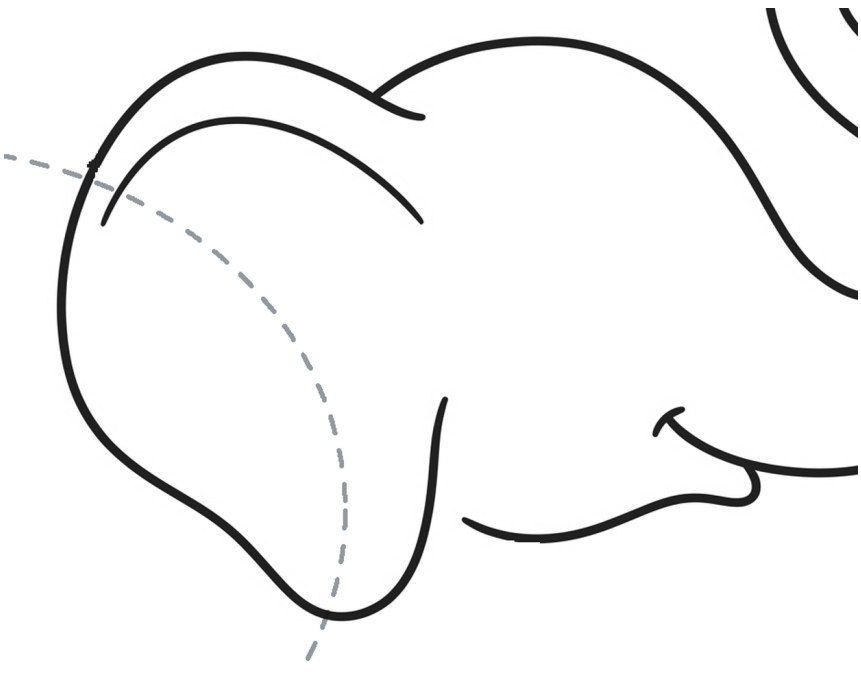
Place a light bent line under the trunk. Add a short smile corner and curve its upper edge to the trunk's existing lower end.

Round the chin toward the ear



From the trunk's lower join, make a small rounded turn underneath, then sweep left along the jaw guide. Stop just before the ear's folded edge.

Keep the face, remove its guides



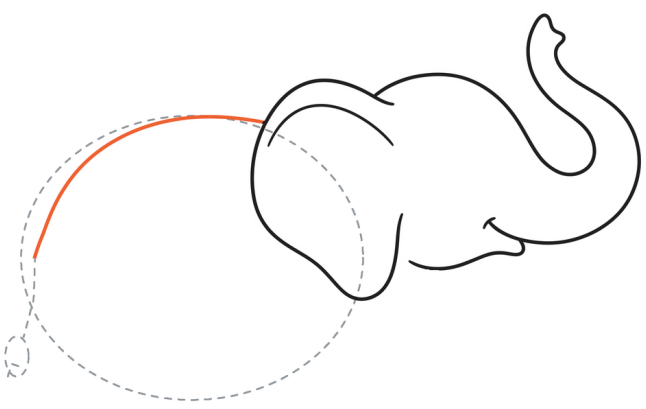
Erase the dashed ear oval and bent jaw guide. Keep the solid ear, smile and chin, plus the body oval.

The trunk, ear and jaw stay attached. The light body oval stays for the next form.

Build the back and narrow tail

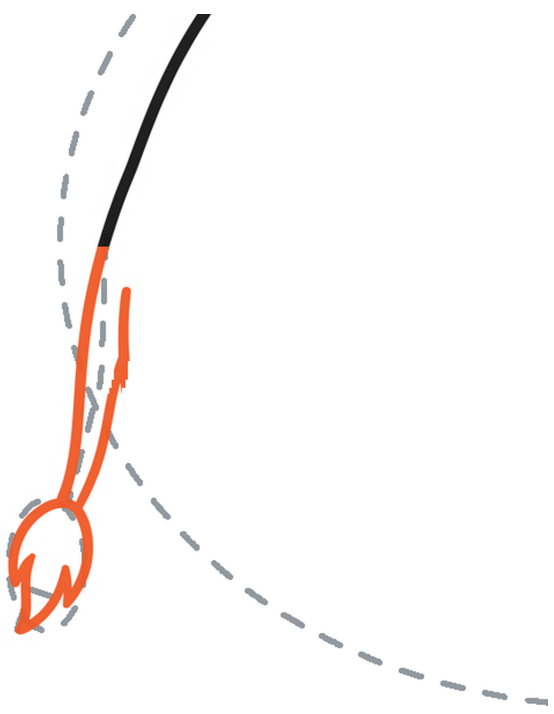
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Round the back and place the tail



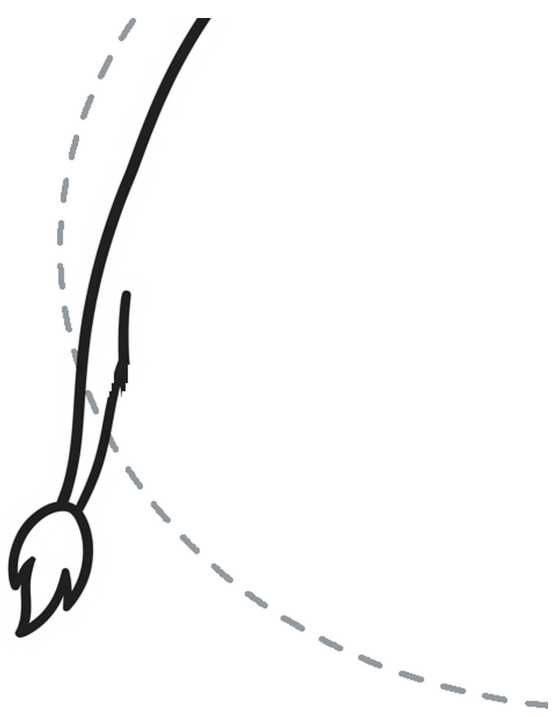
Follow the body oval from behind the ear over the back and down toward the rear. Place a thin tail path and a small tuft oval below it.

Shape the narrow tail and tuft



Continue along both sides of the tail path. Round the tuft's top, then form a long point below the oval's lower left and a shorter point on its right. Curve inward between them and return to the tail.

Keep the back and tail



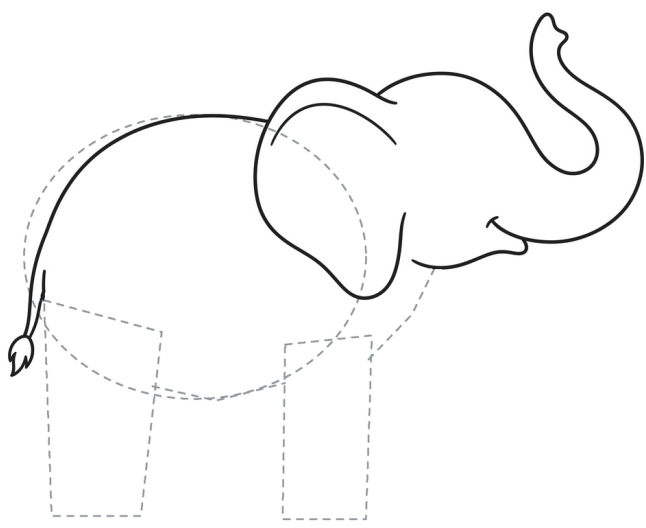
Erase the thin tail path and tuft guide. Keep every solid curve and the body oval.

Keep the tail attached to the back, beside the space for the rear leg.

Place and round the nearer legs

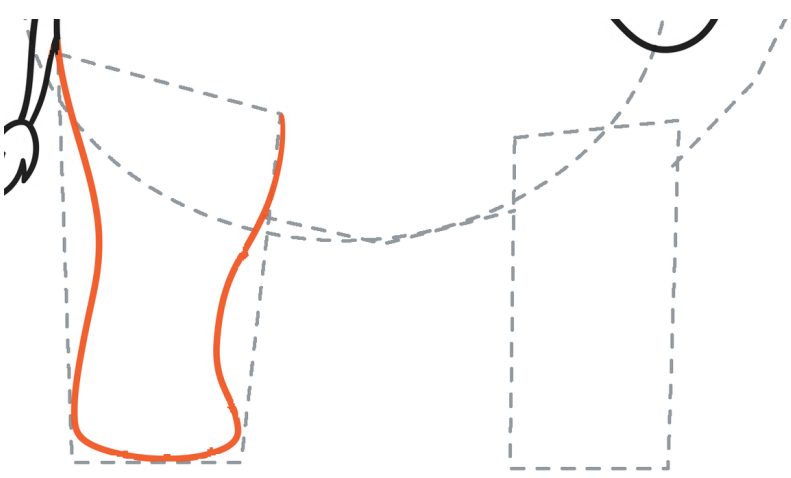
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Place the legs and their joins



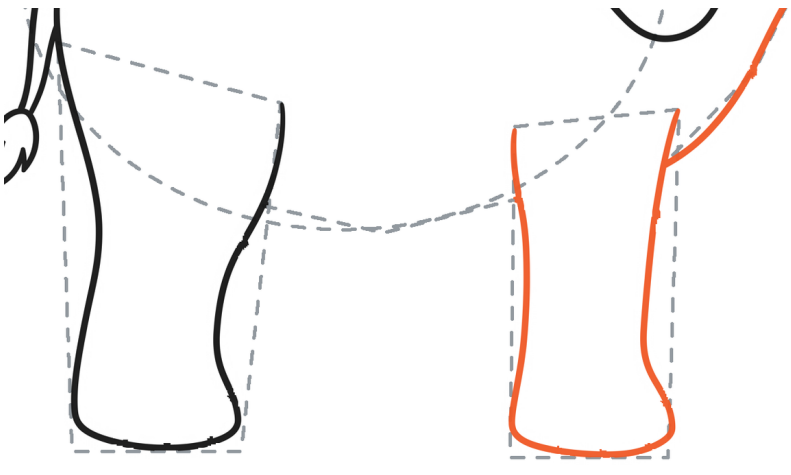
Place two broad leg blocks below the body, with their bottom edges almost level. Add a light chest path from the jaw to the front block and a shallow belly guide between the blocks.

Round the nearer back leg



From the tail root, curve down the left side of the rear block. Round the wide foot and return up its inside edge.

Connect the chest and front leg



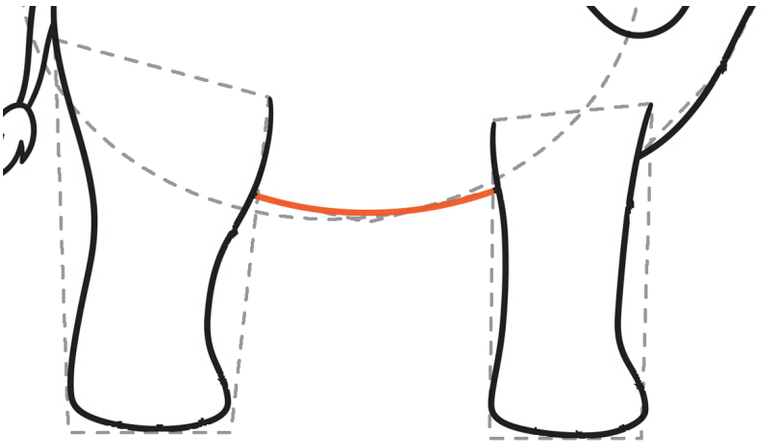
Follow the chest guide down from the jaw. Continue along the front block, round its foot and bring the other edge upward.

The blocks locate both legs. Keep the feet broad; toenail arches are optional details later.

Join the belly and clear its guides

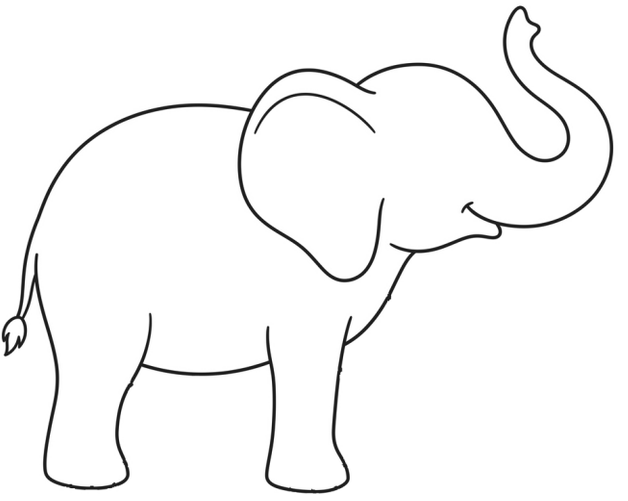
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Join the shallow belly



Round the belly guide from the back leg's inner edge to the front leg. Stop when the line meets each leg.

Keep the joined body and legs



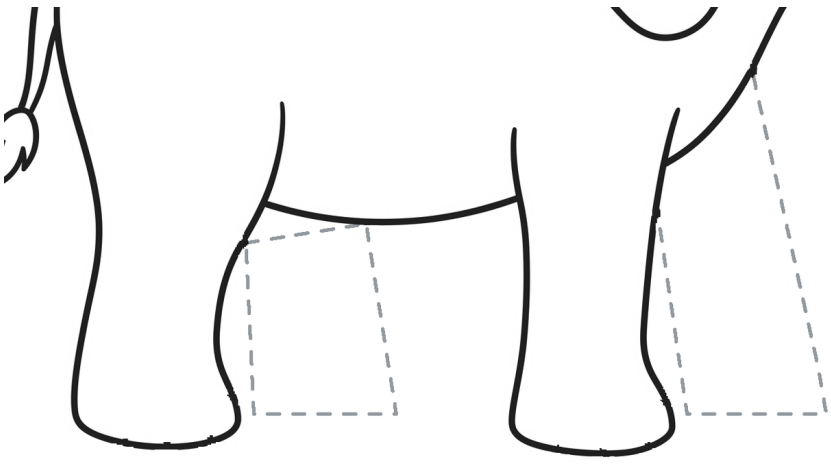
Erase the body oval, near-leg blocks, chest path and belly guide. Keep the solid back, chest, belly and feet.

The body now joins both nearer legs. Optional repair help shows a short missing belly join.

Add the two farther legs

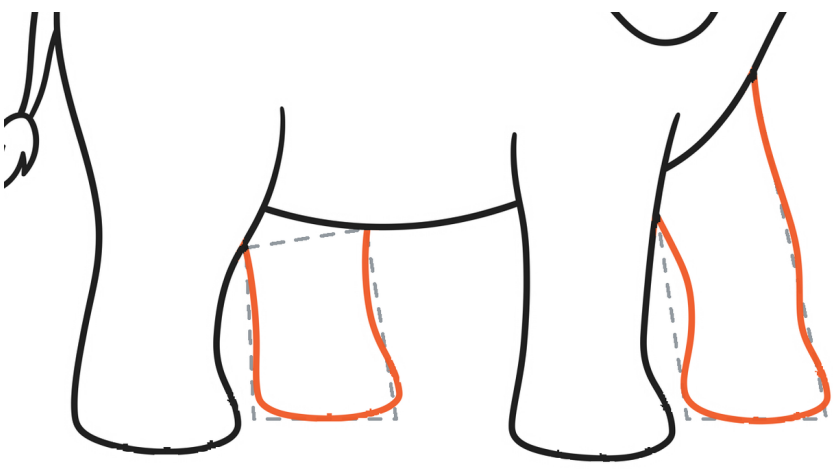
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Place two legs behind



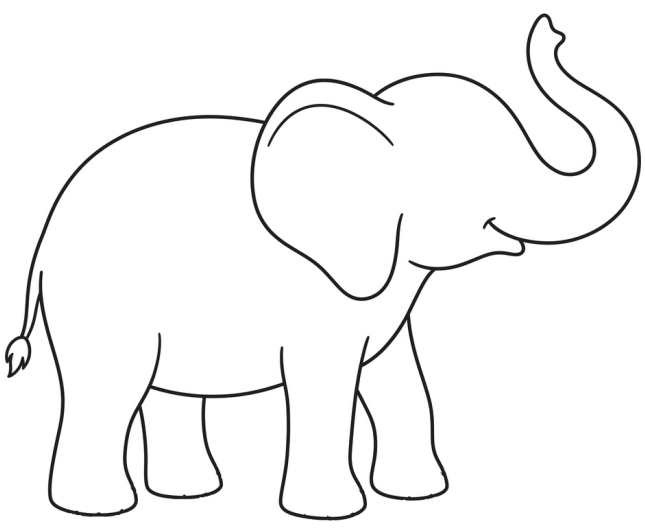
Place two narrower light blocks behind the nearer legs. Let their feet finish a little higher on the page.

Repeat the rounded-leg method



Begin at the visible ends beside the nearer legs. Follow each smaller block down, round its foot and return upward until the nearer shape hides it.

Keep four attached feet



Erase the two farther-leg blocks. Keep all four feet and the intentional overlaps.

The second pair repeats the same leg method; the new decision is which edges are hidden.

Finish the face and base elephant

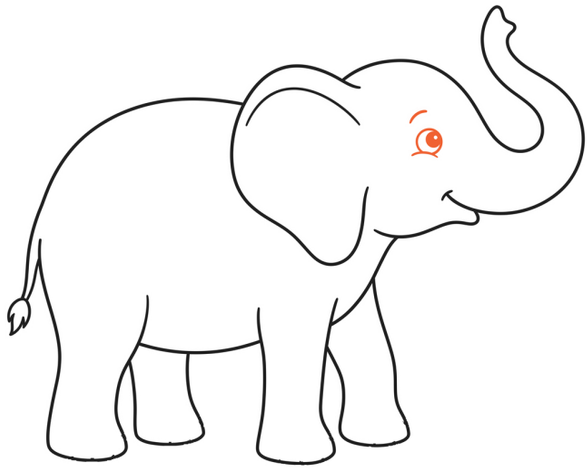
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Give the face a curious look



Draw a small oval eye above the smile. Add a round pupil toward the trunk, leaving a white highlight. Curve a short lower eyelid beneath the oval and an eyebrow above it.

Your base elephant is complete



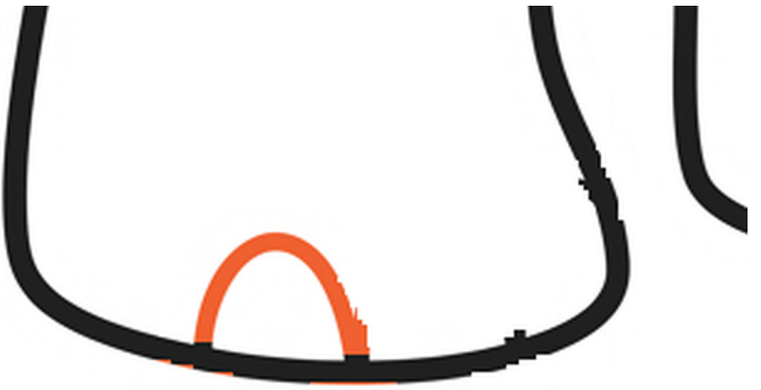
Keep the joined trunk, ear, jaw, body, four feet and tail. Toenails, fruit, coloring and another try are optional.

You can change the gaze or eyebrow. If you want another try, cover the details, place the big guides and uncover any picture when you need help.

Optional toenail arches

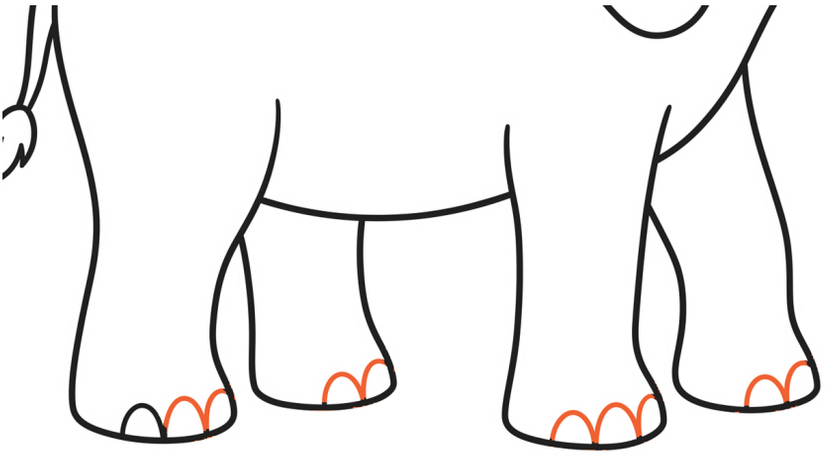
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Make one arch inside a foot



Begin at the bottom edge of the nearer back foot. Curve upward, then return to the same edge.

Repeat the arch if you want



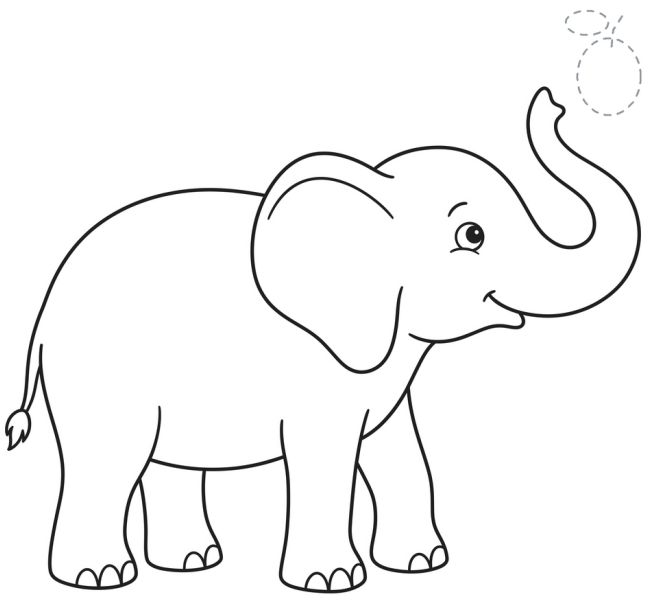
Repeat the little arch beside the first, then inside the other feet. Let the outer foot edges close the end nails.

Use the same small arch for each nail. Fewer marks are fine.

Optional fruit to reach for

Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Place a small fruit and leaf



Place a small upright oval above the trunk, a light stem path and a sideways leaf oval.

Round the fruit



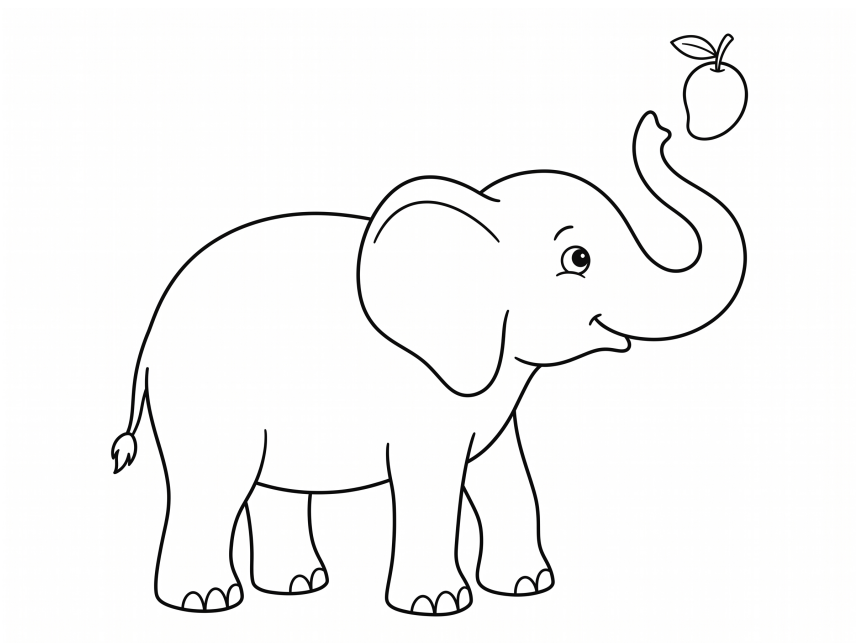
Round the fruit oval, gently pinching its lower left side inward. Leave the two tiny openings at its top for the stem edges. Keep the stem and leaf guides light.

Join the stem and pointed leaf



Add narrow edges around the stem path. Round the leaf oval to its far point, return to the stem and add a short vein. Let the leaf hide the stem edge where they overlap.

Keep your chosen details



Erase those three light guides. The finished reference includes toenails and fruit; your base drawing is complete without them.

The fruit is a separate choice after the base elephant is complete.

If the belly stops short

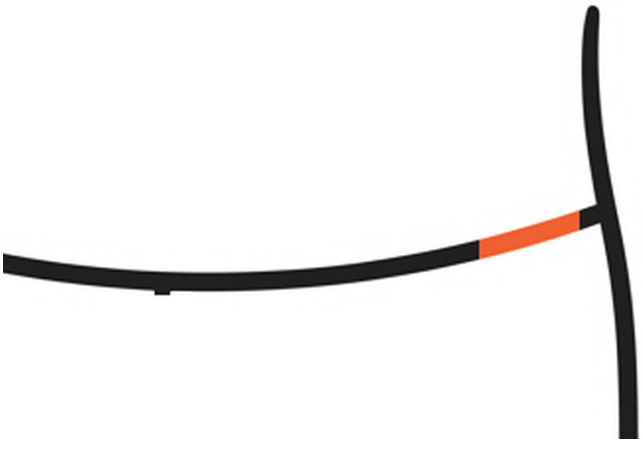
Gray dashes: light guides. Black: kept outlines. Orange: new outlines. Green helpers are not drawing marks.

Before: a short belly gap



Keep the belly and front leg where they are.

After: extend the same curve



Extend only the short belly end until it meets the front leg.

Repair only the short missing join; keep the surrounding curves.

Try it your way

Choose any animal. Cover its detailed pictures and place the main shapes first. Uncover any help whenever you want.

Check room for the limbs, important joins and which shapes sit in front. Move a light guide before adding detail if the placement feels crowded.

Choose your own pattern, object or simple setting. Your curves do not need to match the example exactly.

A helper can point or demonstrate on spare paper while you keep your pencil. Coloring, sharing and another try are optional.

Make another version

Try the main shapes on fresh paper.
Use the lesson to check the difficult joins,
then choose any extra details you want.

Screen guide: fit the page width.

Color Page Prints

More free drawing lessons