

Illustrating Childrens Characters

Lesson one - The digital side of things

what will you learn?

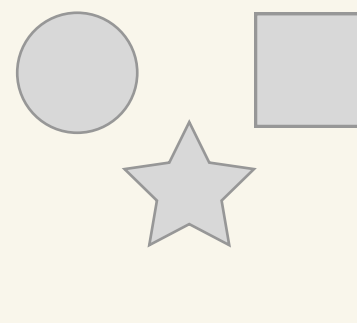
- Learning how to use artboards
- Using the shape tool is key
- How do we use the vector tool

Artboards

1 An art-board is the canvas you create your work on. You can have an art-board of any size. Children's books tend to have larger illustrations so I would recommend an art board up to A5 size.

Do it
Go to:
Insert
Artboard
Paper Sizes
A5

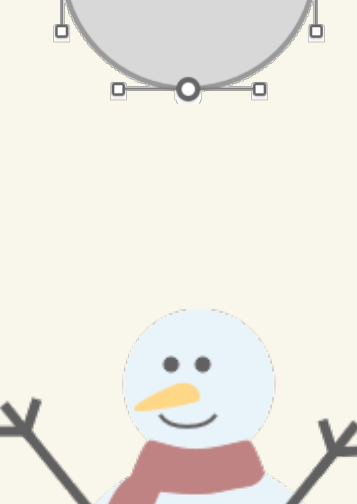
2 You can change the name of your artboard by double clicking on it in the pages tab.



Shapes

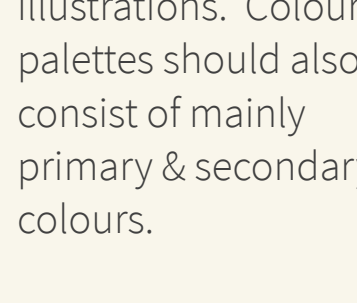
1 The shape tool is the main tool you will use. Your characters will be made up of mainly shapes, so it is important to get to grips with some of them.

2 Hold your shift key so your shape doesn't change form, if you want to squash your shape or elongate it you would let go of your shift key.



Do it

Now I'm going to give you the opportunity to experiment with some of the shape tools so you can understand how to use them.

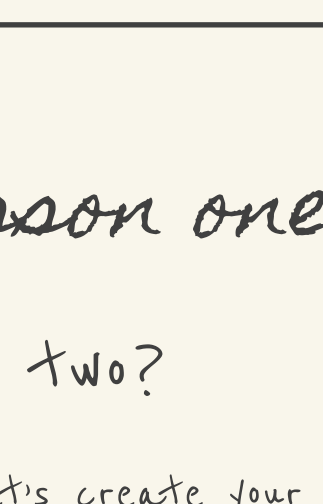


Vector

1 Vectors can be difficult to get to grips with. However they are key if you want to illustrate digitally.

2 All the shapes you just created are made up of vector points.

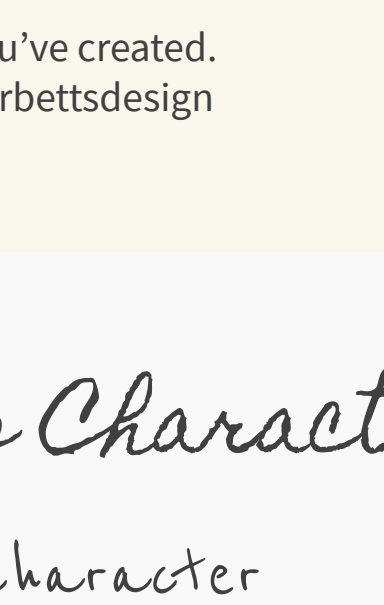
3 You can move these vector points around to create different shapes.



Your turn

Go to: Insert > Vector

I want you to copy this image I have created on the right of a snowman using shapes and the vector tool. Try and use colours similar to what I am using for this task. Look at the section below on colour for guidance.



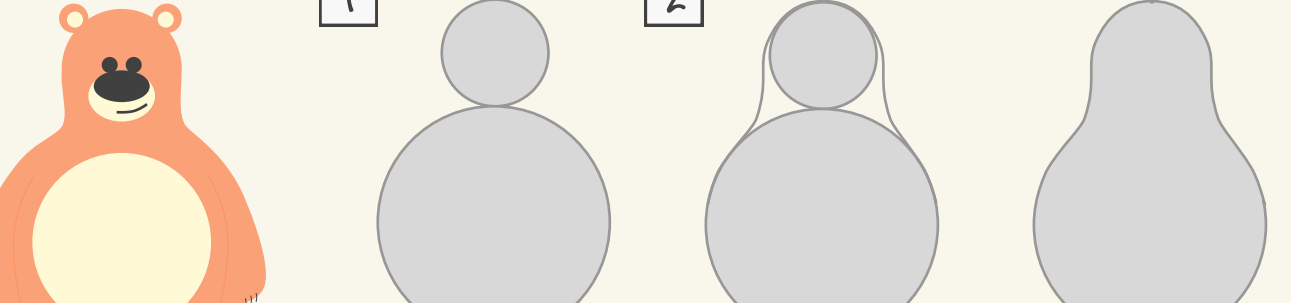
Colour

1 Below are some of the colours you should use for children's illustrations.

2 You can use the fill tool to add colour to your design and the border tool to change the line colour.

3 Soft, pastel colours should be used for childrens illustrations. Colour palettes should also consist of mainly primary & secondary colours.

Your Palette



You've completed lesson one

Are you ready for lesson two?

Now you know how to use all the key tools, let's create your first step by step character.

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Illustrating Childrens Characters

Lesson two - Your first character

what will you learn?

This lesson will focus on how to create your first character. You will be a pro at using the key tools after this lesson.

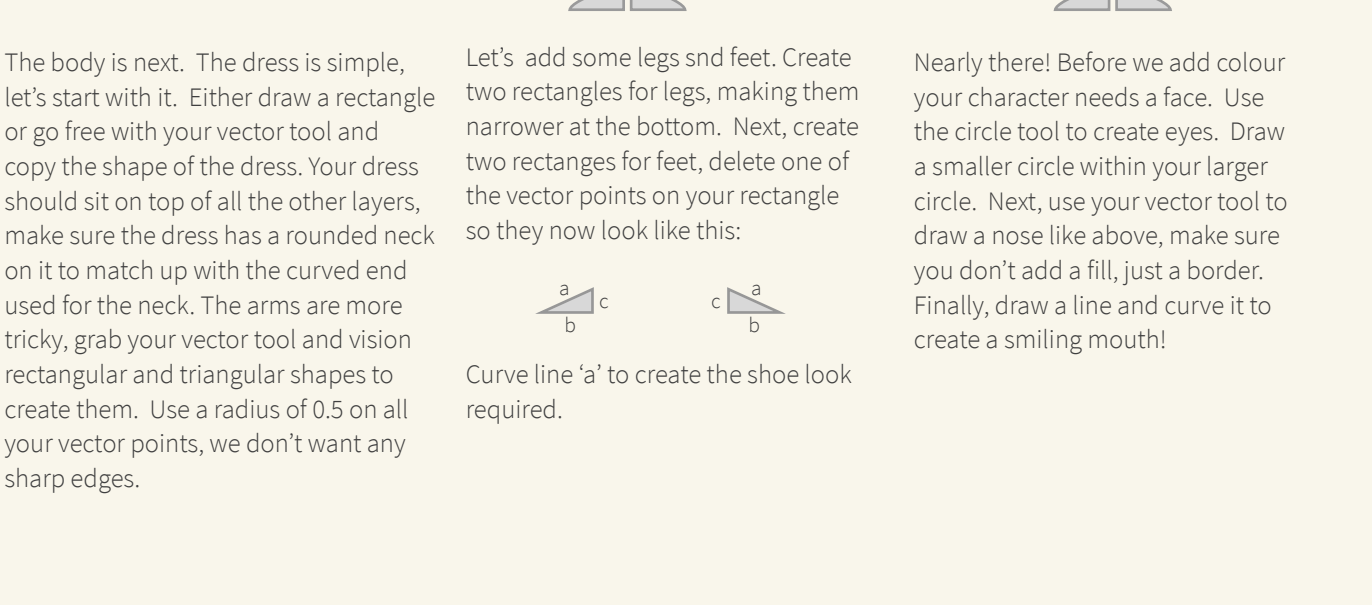
To begin

1 Hopefully from lesson one you have gotten to grips with using the different digital tools.

2 Next, we are going to create our first character of the course, a bear!

3 So create a new document, name it what you wish, create your A5 art-board and get ready!

Do it



Use the circle tool to create two ears, a nose/mouth, two eyes and stomach.

Create two arms using the circle tool, then two legs with the rectangle tool, move your vector points to create the shape required. On the layers panel move the shapes you just created to the bottom. Use the vector tool to create a smirk and claws for some detail.

Now use the fill and border tools to add colour to your bear. Add slightly darker lines for definition at the bears arms & legs. Zoom into the image above to see the lines more clearly.

You've completed lesson one

Are you ready for lesson three?

You have created your first character, next we are going to create your second character and focus on emotions through facial expressions.

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Illustrating Childrens Characters

Lesson three - Adding emotion

what will you learn?

- How to create your first human character
- Different emotions
- How to change your characters emotion

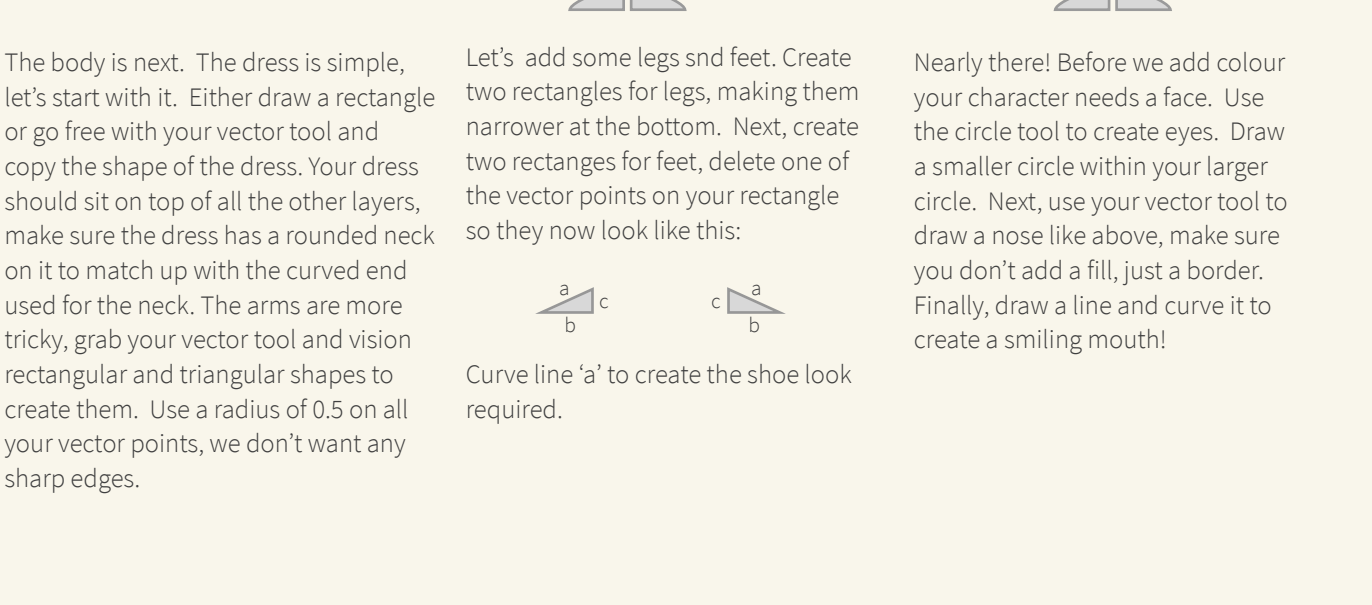
Creating your first human character

1 We are going to be using mainly the shape tool and the vector tool to create our character.

2 The emotion on their face is going to be 'happiness'.

3 So create a new document, name it what you wish, create your A5 art-board and get ready!

Do it



The body is next. The dress is simple, let's start with it. Either draw a rectangle or go free with your vector tool and copy the shape of the dress. Your dress should sit on top of all the other layers, make sure the dress has a rounded neck on it to match up with the curved end used for the neck. The arms are more tricky, grab your vector tool and vision rectangular and triangular shapes to create them. Use a radius of 0.5 on all your vector points, we don't want any sharp edges.

Let's add some legs and feet. Create two rectangles for legs, making them narrower at the bottom. Next, create two rectangles for feet, delete one of the vector points on your rectangle so they now look like this:

Curve line 'a' to create the shoe look required.

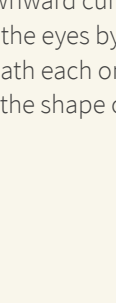
Nearly there! Before we add colour your character needs a face. Use the circle tool to create eyes. Draw a smaller circle within your larger circle. Next, use your vector tool to draw a nose like above, make sure you don't add a fill, just a border. Finally, draw a line and curve it to create a smiling mouth!



Lastly, let's add some colour!

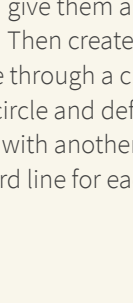
Different types of emotion

Happy



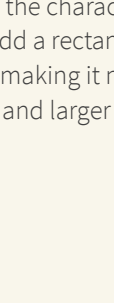
This is the emotion we've already placed on our human character

Sad



Turn that smile upside down! Literally. Then add some eyebrows with a slight curve.

Bored



Add a straight line for your mouth. Then move your characters 'pupil' to the top of their eyeball.

Tired



Create a straight mouth with a slight downward curve. Add 'bags' beneath the eyes by creating one line beneath each one. Lastly, add eye lids in the shape of a semi-circle.

Excited



Add two straight lines for the eyes and give them an upward curve. Then create a wide smile through a curved semi-circle and define the cheeks with another curved downward line for each cheek.

Angry



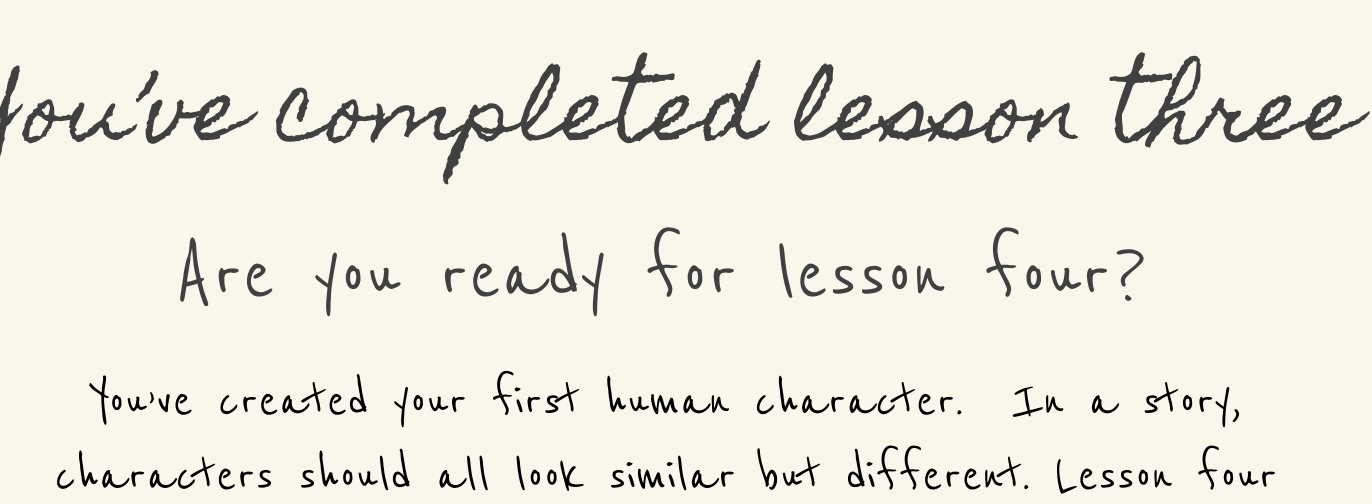
Create two downward lines above the characters eyes. Next, add a rectangle for the mouth making it narrower at one side and larger at the other.

Do it

1 Using your shape and vector tool I want you to try and copy all of the above emotions.

2 Perhaps create a new artboard or file for your emotions so you always have them to drag and drop onto your character.

3 Give it a go! Start placing different facial expressions onto your character to change their mood and emotion. Below are a few examples.



Top tip

Make sure you rename every element on your artboard and group them as needed. This makes things easier to find!

You've completed lesson three

Are you ready for lesson four?

You've created your first human character. In a story, characters should all look similar but different. Lesson four teaches us how to create more characters with aspects of similarity.

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