

Craftsman package

Lets illustrate

learn wherever, whenever

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.

Do it > 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.

Do it > Your Palette

You've completed lesson one

Are you ready for lesson two?

Now you know how to use all the key tools, lets 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 >

1

Use the shape tool to create two circles, like a snowman.

2

Use the vector tool to create two lines down from the head to the 'shoulders' on either side of the body. Make this a solid shape by joining the lines in a triangle form. Select your two circles and triangles then click 'union'. This will merge multiple shapes into one.

3

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

4

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.

5

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 two

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 >

1

Create a circle for your characters head & a rectangle for their neck. Slightly indent the head where the characters cheeks & chin will be. Then make the bottom of your rectangle curved. Make sure the rectangle is beneath the circle!

2

Now we are going to create hair. Using the vector tool would be best for this. Try and copy my illustration above. Ensure the 'parton' of the hair is a vector 'point' along with the hair ends. The rest should be vector curves. Create hair bobbles by adding two rectangles.

3

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.

4

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:

5

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

6

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! Next, then move your characters 'pupils' 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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Illustrating Childrens Characters

Lesson four - Variation and likeness in characters

what will you learn?

- How to identify likeness in other characters
- How to create variation in your own characters

Identifying likeness in other characters

1 < Have you ever watched a cartoon show and noticed that each character looks similar?

2 < Whether it be the same noses, mouths, face or body shape, there is something that ties the characters together.

3 < To gain a better understanding we are going to look at these other characters and identify what makes them similar or different.

Do it > The Simpsons

1 Eyes

All of The Simpsons eyes are similar. The big circular eyes and eyelashes is something every character has.

2 Ears

Something discreet you may have not noticed is how even their ears are all similar. Small things like this tie your character together.

3 Skin

The main similarity and brand of The Simpsons is the yellow colour of their skin. Unlike any other cartoon character.

How to create likeness in your own characters.

1 < Hopefully by looking at some other characters you understand how if you create a set of characters they need to have certain aspects of similarity.

2 < Next, we are going to change the character of a girl we made in our previous lesson. So it looks similar but different and you can explore different ways to make a character your own.

3 < Lets begin! Duplicate your character from lesson 3 and paste it into a new sketch file to start creating.

Do it >

1

This is a 'headshot' of your original character, the following headshots you are going to see is simple ways I have changed my character to look like someone else but also look similar so they are in the same 'family'.

2

The eye colour has been changed to green.

3

The skin colour has been changed to a darker shade.

4

The hair colour has been changed to black.

5

The hair bobble colour has been changed to a dark shade of blue.

Top tip

Remember you can change your characters facial expression from lesson 3 or outfit to suit whatever personality you give them.

You've completed lesson four

Are you ready for lesson five?

This was a short but very useful lesson, you now know how to create multiple characters from one figure. Lesson 5 will teach you how to create 'props' and those added extras your characters may be holding. This will add to their individuality and personality, making them even more different!

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