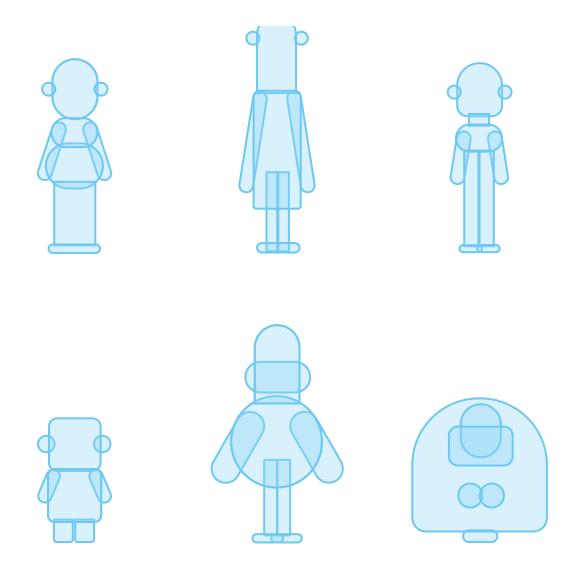
**ILLUSTRATION** 

# characters

Duolingo characters are rather simple to construct, but our aim is always to make them feel like more than the sum of their parts. These guidelines will help you create those parts, put them together, and help something uniquely Duolingo emerge.

Body Types  $\mathscr{P}$ 



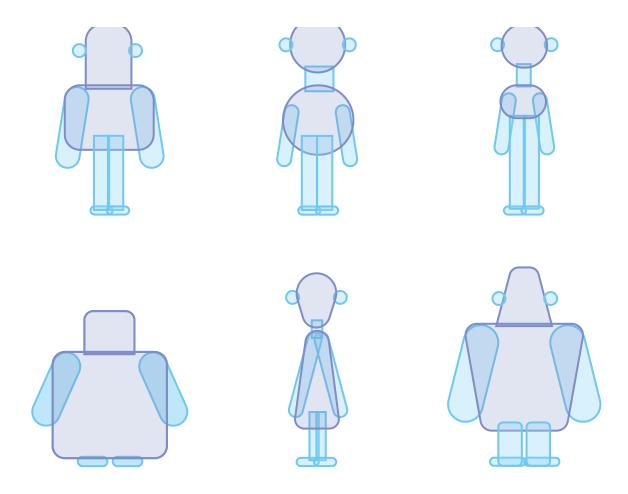


Our characters are diverse, quirky, and lovable. But remember that our characters need to scale in terms of both size and production. When the pieces are simple, a character is much easier to pose in other positions. But there's still room for uniqueness. All of the pieces — head width and height, head shape, facial features, and so on — are customizable. Usually, the head and body are composed of 1–2 basic shapes each. The examples on the left are a few of the many possible shape combinations.

#### BODY TYPES

#### Repetition



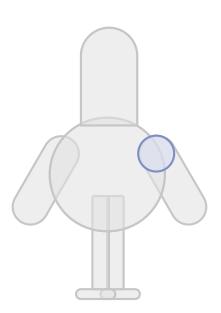


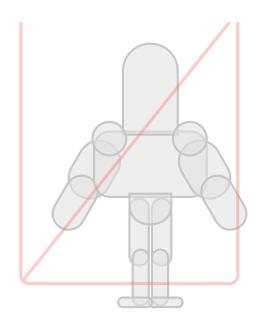
One way of keeping a character's shape language cohesive is to use shape repetition throughout their design. While this isn't always required, it's a good starting point.

**BODY TYPES** 

### **Shoulders**





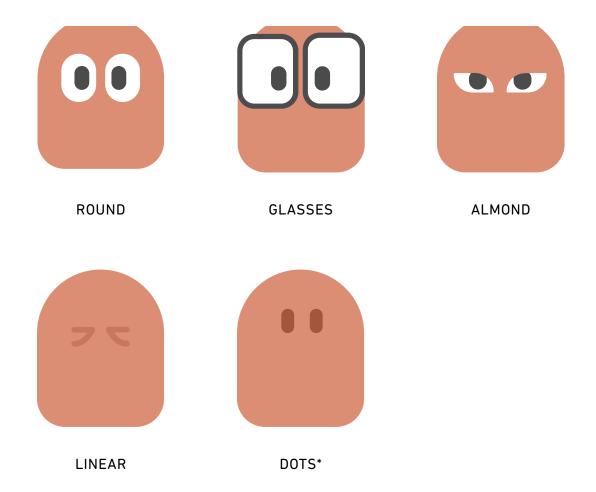


Ensure that the arm socket is always concealed behind the torso.

Avoid too many shapes. It complicates the overall silhouette.

# Eyes &





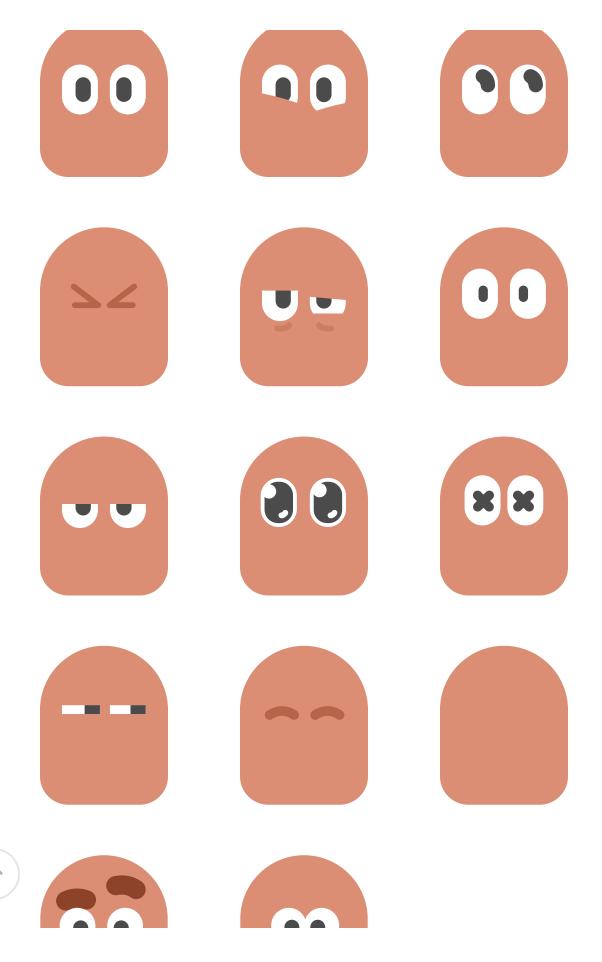
We use five main eye styles in our characters. Different eye styles can be explored, but make sure they're geometric in nature. No ovals!

#### EYES

### **Emotions**



<sup>\*</sup> Only recommended if a character always appears at a small scale.

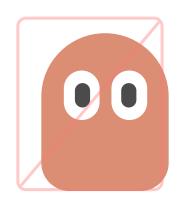


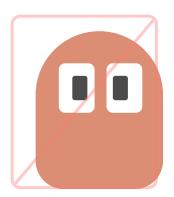
Eyes are an incredible tool for conveying our characters' personalities and state of mind. You could enlargen or shrink the pupil, suggest tears with a little shiny-eye effect, or lower the eyelids. All these effects make our characters feel both playful and relateable.

EYES

#### Please Don't...





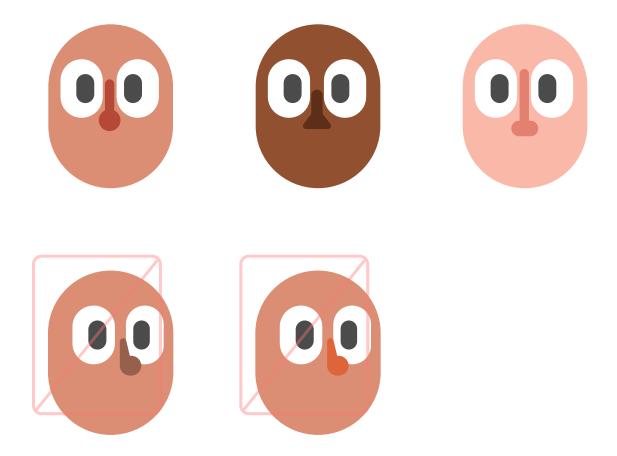


Use small glasses, because they hide eye emotions.

Center pupils vertically within the eye.

Use shapes other than a fully-rounded "pill" for eyes.



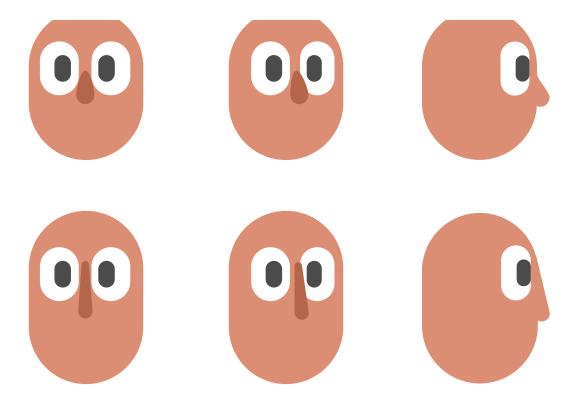


Noses are made up of 1–2 rounded rectangles. The size of the nose is up to you and the character you're creating. When coloring the nose, make sure it's as saturated as it is dark. When in profile, the nose should take on the color of the base skin tone.

#### NOSES

### **Angles**





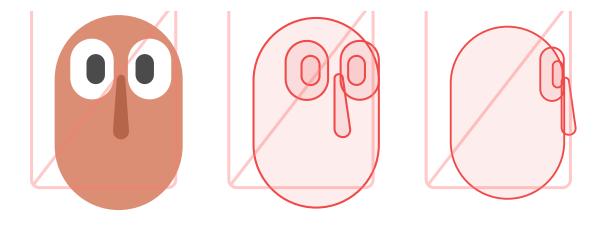
In three-quarter view, the right side of the nose angles out while the left side becomes a vertical line.

When in profile, the nose takes on the color of the base skin tone.

NOSES

Please Don't...

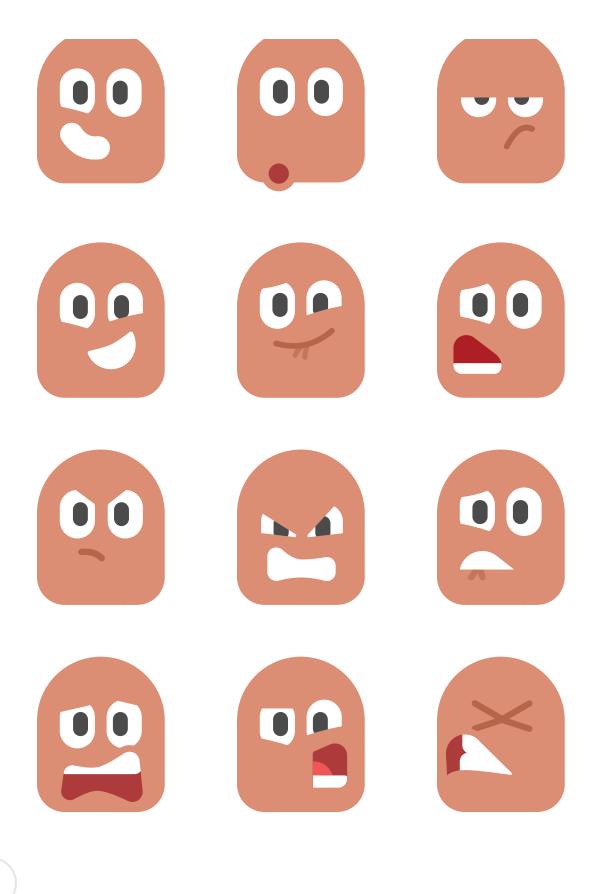




Align the eyes too closely with the top of the head. If the eyes are fixed on an area that is curved, you'll find that as you begin turning the character in space, the eyes will appear as though they're floating.

# $\mathbf{Mouths} \ \mathscr{S}$





#### MOUTHS

### **No Boundaries**





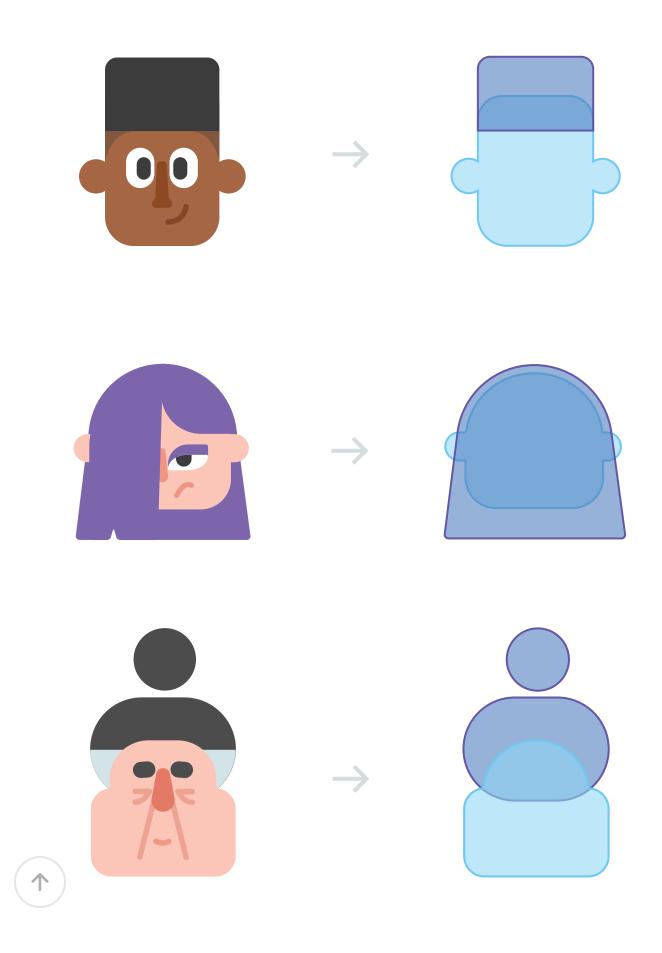


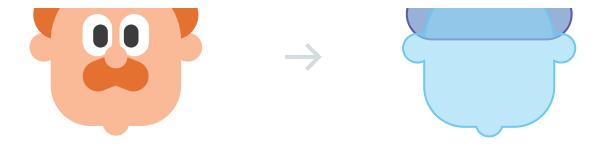
The mouth can break out of the frame of the face to convey more extreme emotions.

The teeth and tongue should always be centered inside the mouth.

# Hair &







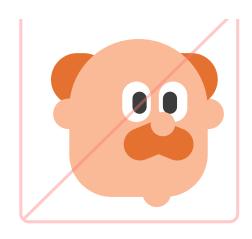
Hair should be simple but interesting. Too many irregular shapes will make the hair unnecessarily complex and difficult to turn in space. If possible, compose hair with just one or two large shapes.

HAIR

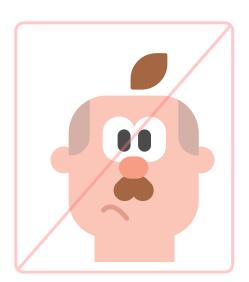
#### Be Careful









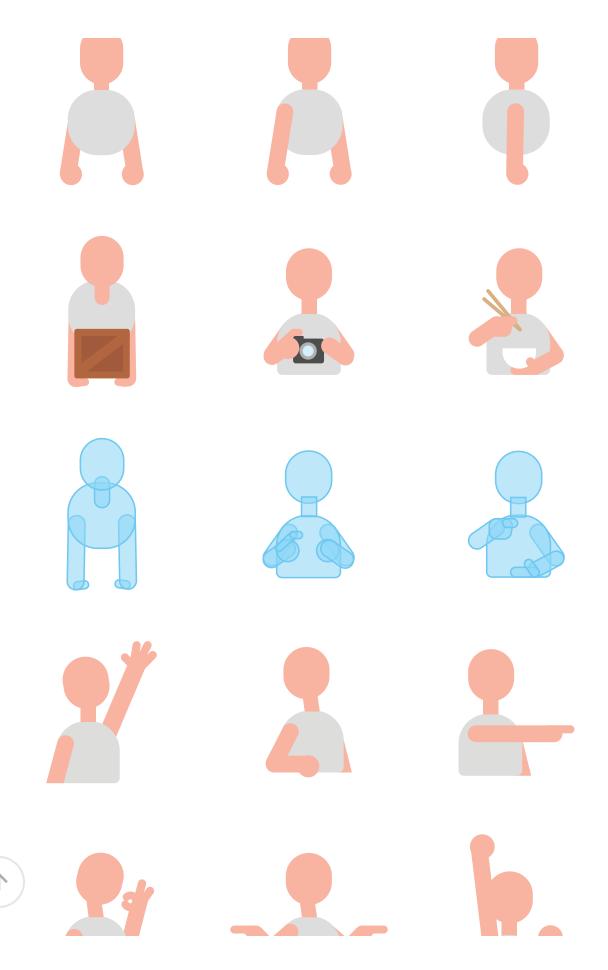


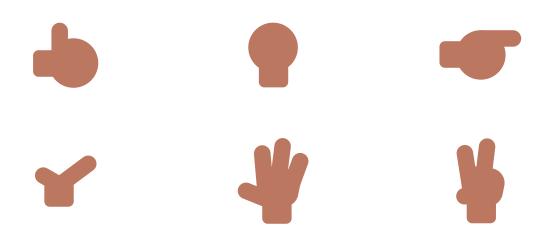
Ensure that you include some kind of hair above the ear/sideburn in your hairstyle. Otherwise, they look like they just got a bad haircut.

When adding facial hair, keep the nose the same color as the skin. This avoids adding too many colors to the face, which sometimes leads to noisy features and muddy colors.







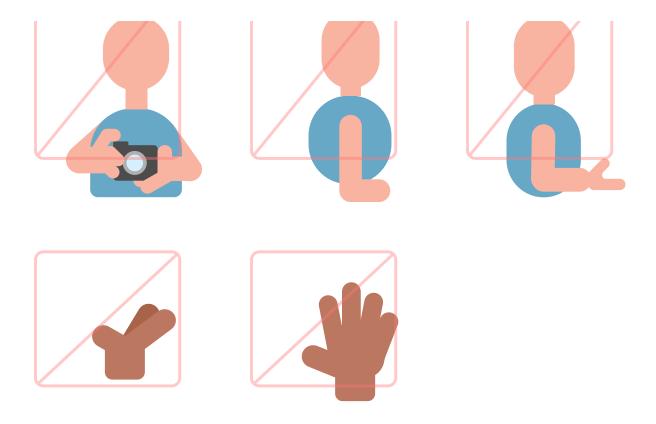


These can be the most time-consuming parts for illustrators and animators when posing and animating. Try to keep hands as abstract as you can by keeping them as circles in most places. If you need to show fingers, display the bare minimum needed for the pose.

ARMS AND HANDS

Please Don't...





Use too many fingers when it could be accomplished with less.

Shorten the forearm.

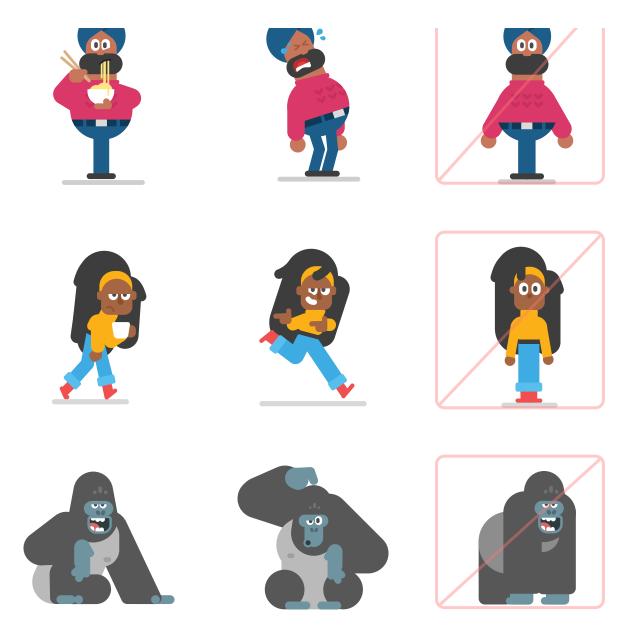
Separate the hand from the arm.

Add fingers to the hand where they're not necessary. It's just more to keep track of.

Use more than 4 fingers.

# Posing &





Posing a character adds personality and quirk to their design and ultimately tells more of their story. As much as possible, try not to use characters in a static, expressionless state, which could make them feel lifeless.

Not all poses will work for certain characters. You'll need to explore what works for their character within the Duolingo style. In the example of the gorilla, both of these poses are very gorilla-like, but only one of them works within our style. Since the gorilla is composed of large blocks of color, it's best to em separated in a static pose.

< Shape Language Duo >





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