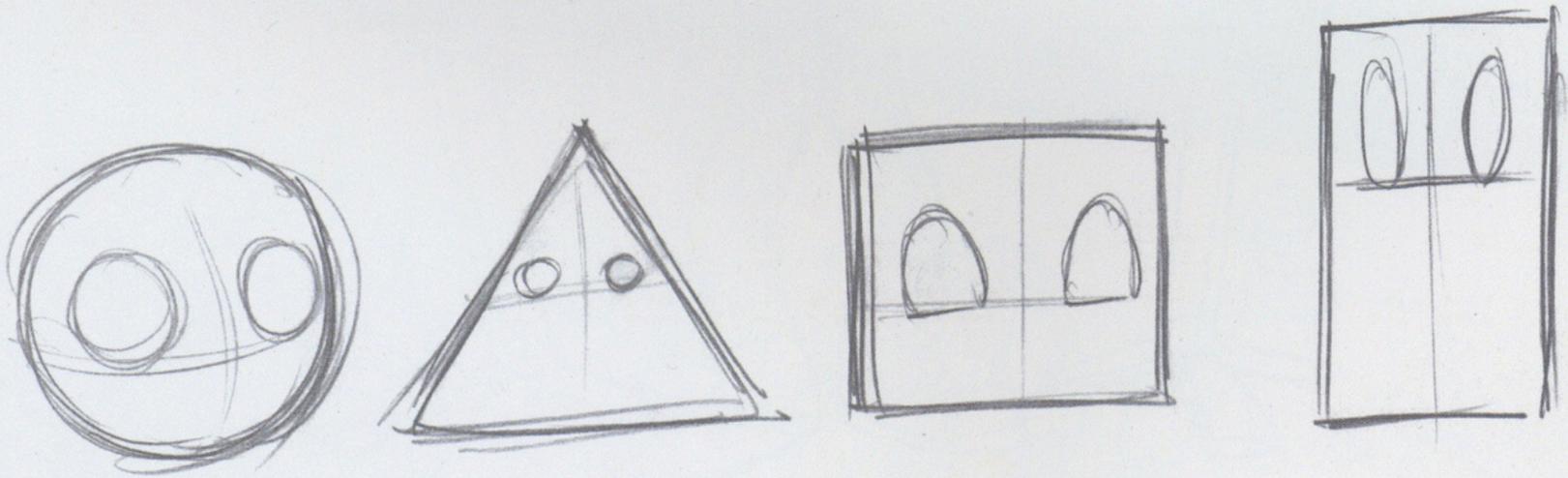# START WITH SHAPES

SHAPE

This is the meat. Is the head a circle or a square? The overall shape will speak for the character's personality even before he or she utters a word. Also, knowing how to break your character into basic shapes is key to recreating that same design from different angles and poses.

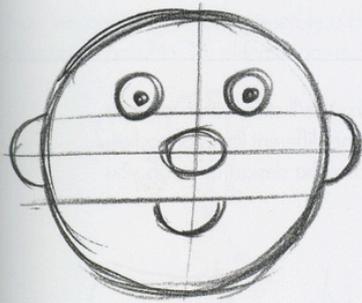Simple shapes make simple characters . . .

BEGIN WITH THE BASIC SHAPES

Now, let's road test shape, size, and variance, and look at how you can combine all three elements in the same design for maximum effect.

Let's start with three identical circles.

These are the basic shapes to work when constructing a character's face.

BLAH!

I place these basic shapes—an oval, two circles with dots inside of them, a curved line, and two half circles–into the circle, without paying any attention to the principles of size and variance. The result is as plain and basic as you can get. It's a character, but now a very interesting one!
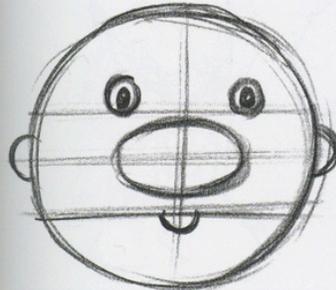
BETTER!

In the second circle, I take the same shapes and add the element of size, using small, medium, and large shapes to help make my character design stronger. This design is better and you can start to see a little personality shining through.
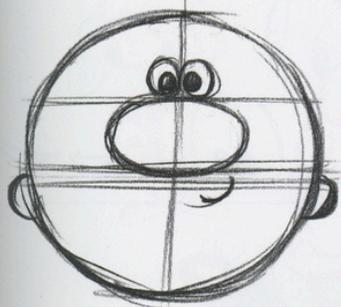
BEST!

In the last circle I add variance to the mix. Still using the same-sized shapes, I vary their spacing and placement– and make a huge difference in the design! This is the strongest design of the three because shape, size, and variance are working in harmony. The best designs, no matter how simple, work on all three levels.
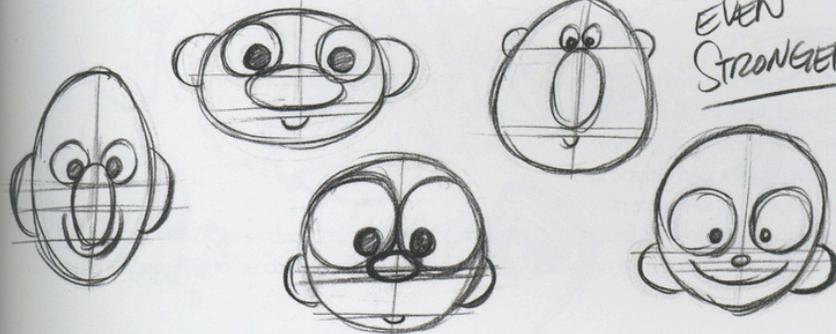
EVEN STRONGER!

You never want to stop with your first success. Now I take all the same elements and apply even more variations.
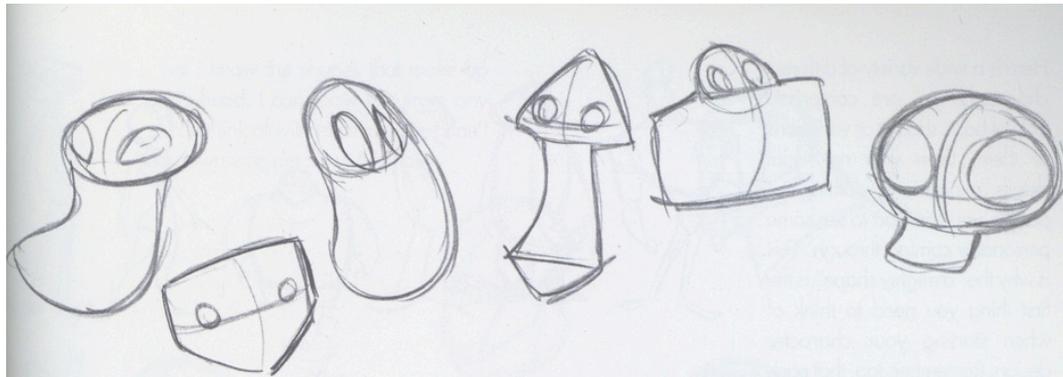
. . . while combining shapes makes more complex characters. Some slightly more complex characters will be made up of altered shapes; that is, a shape composed from multiple shapes. Being able to recognize a shape's origin will help you re-create the character. The example below begins with (1) a basic oval shape as its base, but (2) slices off the front third at an angle to create a flat surface. Next, (3) a square shape with a flattened triangle on the bottom is added. Then, (4) the smaller, interior shapes are added and, finally, (5) the lines are rounded and varied as the details are added. Voila!
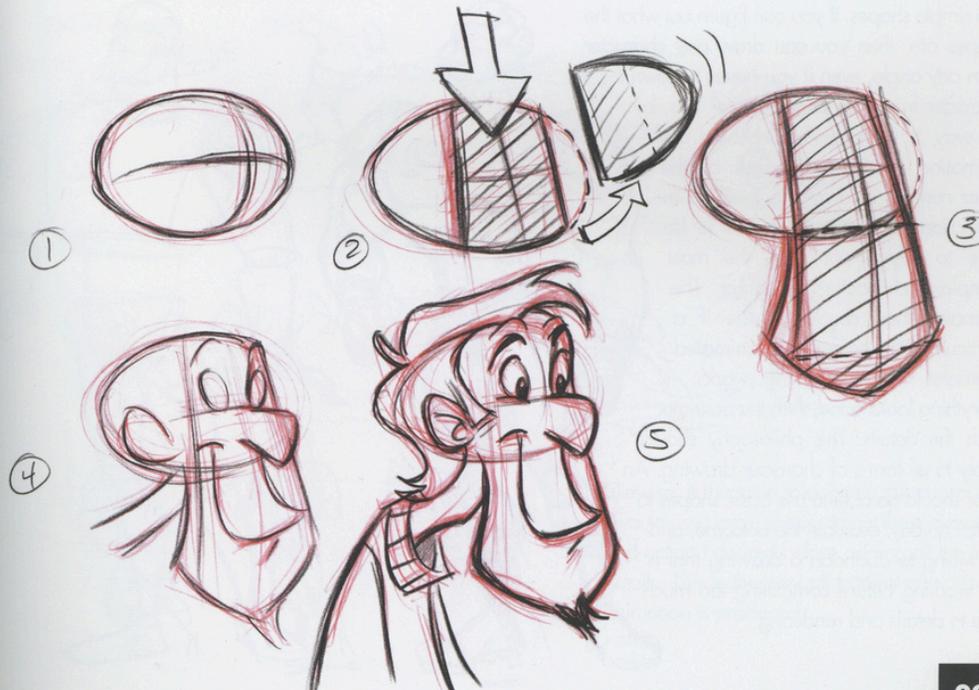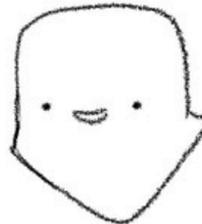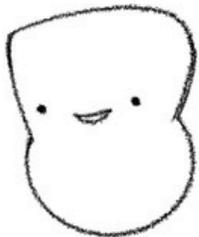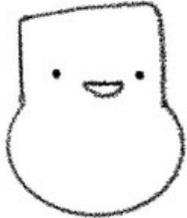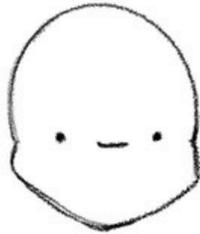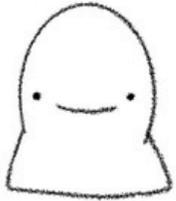
Silly Faces!

Beginners Toolkit by JeyRam
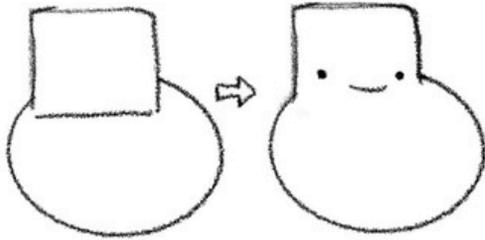
Let's have some fun by using some combo shapes
and faces to create these silly heads!
Copy from the examples and use the video lesson on the site

Headshapes

Let's draw the shape of the head using the organic forms that we practiced in
the Basics section of the course. Feel free to review that section if this feels challenging.

Copy the examples below. Make sure to draw the form lines so we know where the centerline is.
Pay attention to how these shapes alone help define the character of a face.

Draw the form
lines to better
describe
the curves
of the face

1. Eye Placement

Shorter
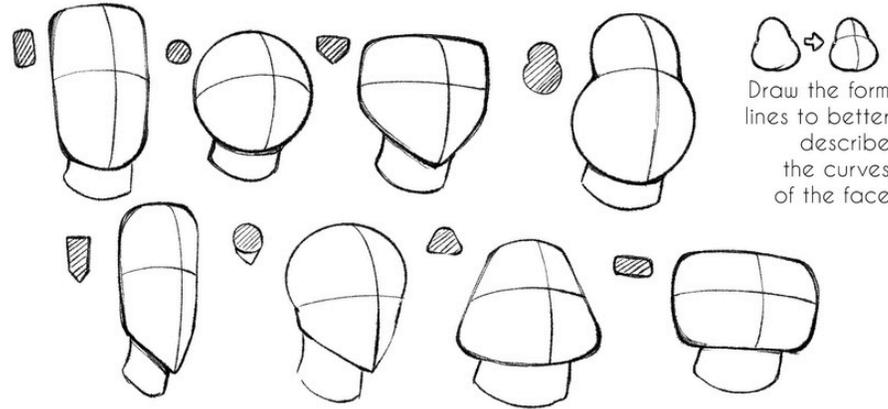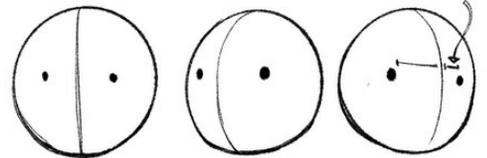
Eyes are evenly
spaced when
facing forwards.

Eye on the larger
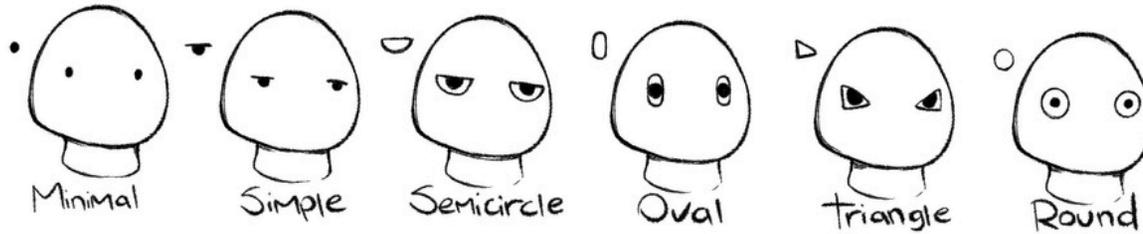half of the face is further
from the centerline.

2. Experiment

Play with these shapes and see what type of
heads you can come up with. You can lengthen,
widen and adjust proportions to come up with
tons of variations.

Add a box under
the shape of the
face for the neck.

JeyRam.Org
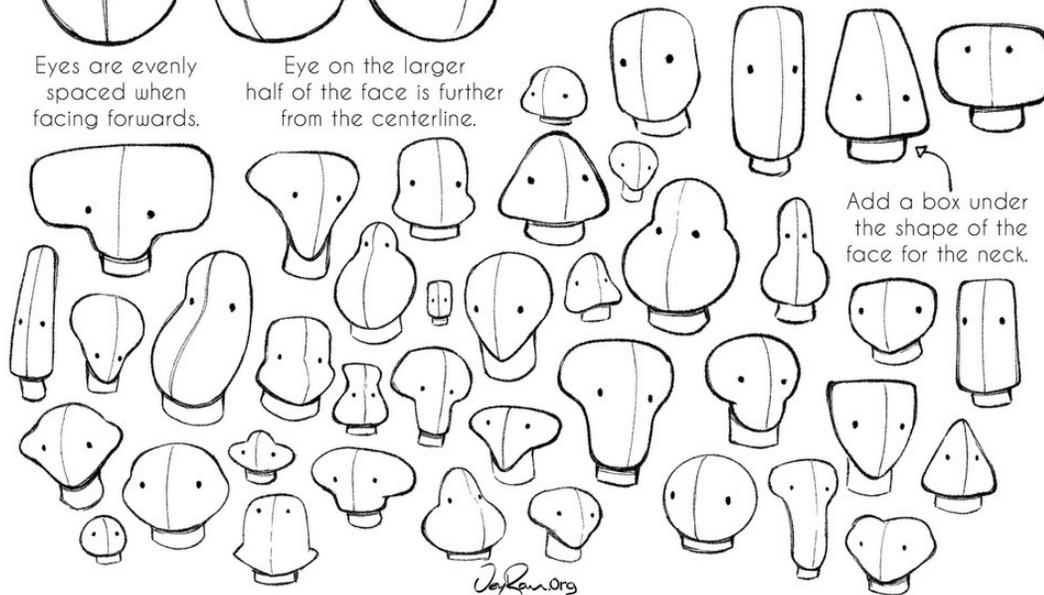
Eyes

Copy these examples and play with these outer shapes.

Minimal Simple Semicircle Oval Triangle Round

Eyelid Detail

We can add small lines to the sides of the upper eyelid to create more depth around the eye. These details can help bring the character to life.

Almost like a hat
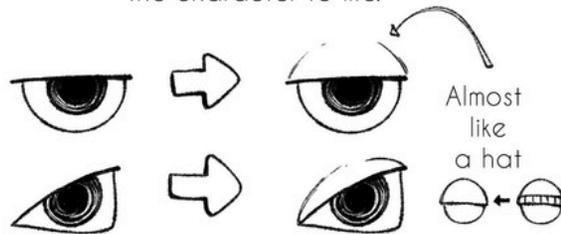
Eye Squish

As the face turns the eye further away gets squished, but only the width changes while the height of the eye stays the same.

Same size facing forwards

The eye further away will appear squished.

Heads

Let's add the eyes to the head, pay attention to the spacing of the eyes relative to the centerline. You can play around and make them closer or further away depending on the character.
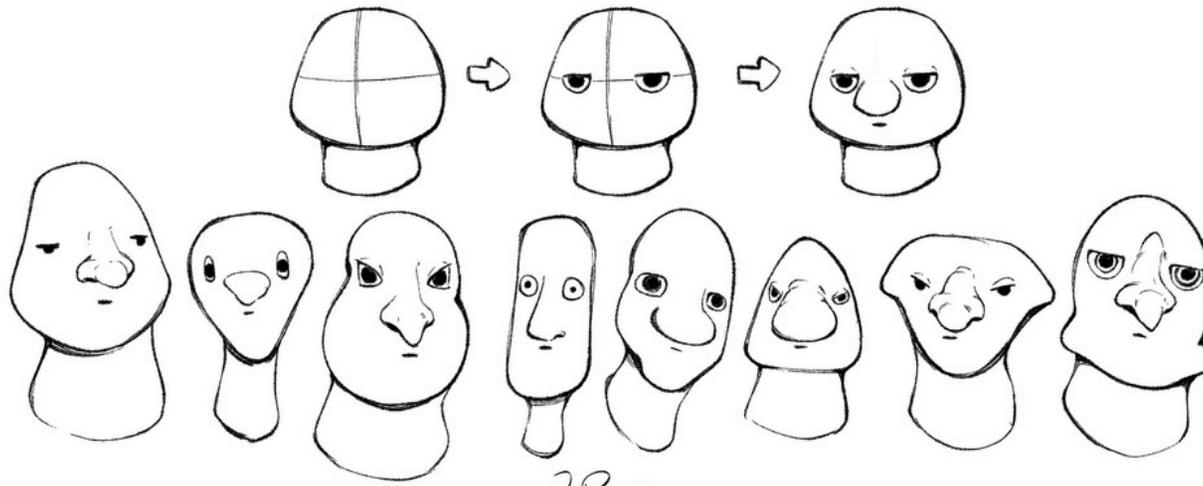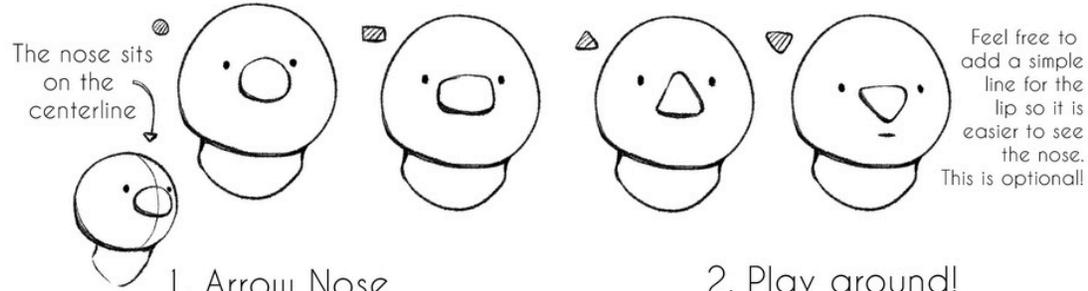
Noses

To draw simple noses lets use the organic shapes that we learned earlier. Below you can see a circular nose, rectangular nose, pyramid nose and a pizza slice nose.

The nose sits in the middle of the face, on the centerline, so it will move to the side that the face is turning as seen in (A).

The nose sits on the centerline

Feel free to add a simple line for the lip so it is easier to see the nose. This is optional!

1. Arrow Nose

We can use the top of a triangle, or the head of an arrow, to draw a pointed nose. The direction of the nose follows the direction of the face.

This is a great nose to use when drawing very minimal faces. Copy the examples below!

2. Play around!

Drawing noses is so fun so make sure to take your time and experiment with the different noses we can draw!

Also play with the headshapes and necks that we learned earlier.

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