

How to draw like a fashion designer

Celia Joicey and Dennis Nothdruff



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Hello, I'm Zandra Rhodes. I'm a fashion and textile designer. I hope that you'll find lots to inspire your fashion drawing on the pages that follow.

For a designer, drawing is a way of finding time to look and think. It is a **way of solving problems** - to take a photograph is too easy. It is important to **go out and observe** what's around you. By drawing you learn to see things from different perspectives. It is only when I draw that I am forced to understand the way that things are constructed.

I often find the **inspiration for my designs** when I draw. The process of drawing requires me to coordinate my eyes, hand and brain. What I see with my eyes and draw with my hand also gets filtered through my brain, so I can end up with ideas I would never have thought of otherwise.

Where I do my drawing plays a part too. I nearly always get inspired when I am travelling. My rule when I travel and am away from my studio is to **do a drawing a day**. It need not be a textile or an idea for a dress - it could be an animal. But it has to be a drawing, and one that might just lead to a new design. It is wonderful to look back on a trip and see that you have managed to do a drawing every day.

I began to be sure that I wanted to be a designer when I first went to art college. At first, drawing led me to think of a career in book illustration. But I soon learned that **drawing is a foundation for all design** and I naturally drifted into being a textile designer, which I really enjoy. I love the way **textiles influence the shape of a garment**, and how the print can achieve wonderful things.

I suppose I have always drawn and painted to gain inspiration. Indeed, one of my reasons for establishing the Fashion and Textile Museum in London is my belief in how seeing and drawing the exhibits in museums can stimulate ideas.

Drawing is my foundation for **seeing and thinking in original ways**. I hope this book will demonstrate the key role that drawing can play and will give confidence to all young artists setting out on a career in design.

Zandra Rhodes



This design by Zandra Rhodes dates from about 1970. It comes from her Chevron Shawl Collection, and features her characteristic 'magic head' figure.

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So you want to draw like a designer?

This book shows you how to follow the same step-by-step process that you would use in workshops at the Fashion and Textile Museum in London. It is divided into three sections: *Inspiration*, *Let's draw the basics* and *Let's design*.



Zandra Rhodes is known for the gorgeous colours and rich patterns of the textiles she uses.



Anna Sui sketches in pencil then uses coloured markers to show the detail of lace and ruffles.



Bellville Sassoon evening gowns create a mood of elegance and sophisticated glamour.

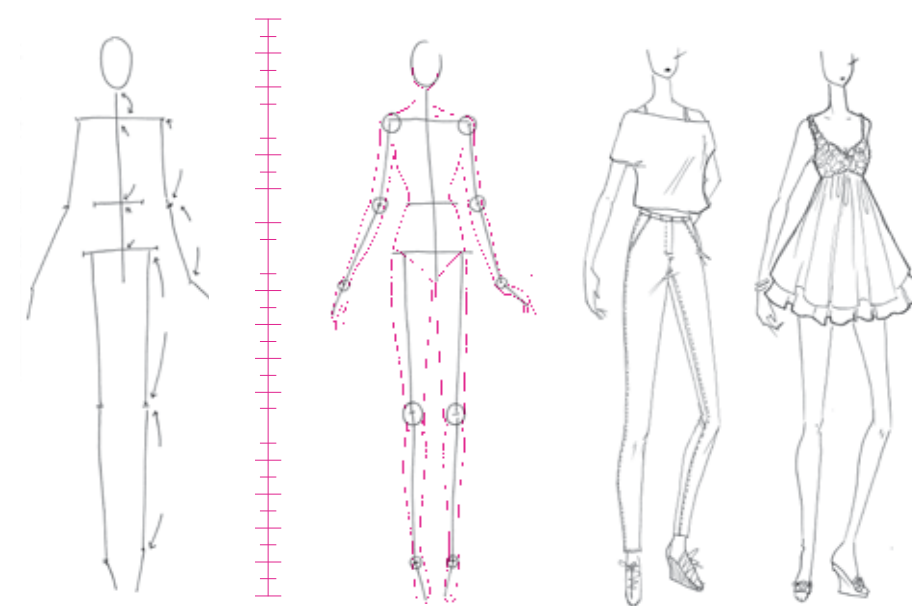
Inspiration
 The first section of this book is all about inspiring you to design great clothes. It includes interviews with some of the most famous fashion designers in the world, and shows some of their drawings.

Study the drawings and read the interviews to discover how these designers developed their own drawing styles, and learn all kinds of techniques, tips and tricks.

Take inspiration from these designers, but remember: it's just as important to develop your own individual drawing style that shows your ideas in a way that is special to you. Remember to keep your sketches too so that you can refer back to them.

Let's draw the basics
 Before you can begin designing, you need to learn the basics of drawing. This section starts by showing you how to draw a 'croquis', or figure shape. Once you can draw your croquis with confidence, you can begin designing your clothes around it – from dresses, skirts and shirts through to trousers, jackets, coats and party wear.

In this section, you'll also find drawing tips and suggestions for how you can vary your designs, as well as places to look for more inspiration.



Let's draw the basics guides you through all the stages you will need, from drawing your basic figure to designing clothes to dress your figure.



Let's design
 You've looked at the work of famous designers, you've learnt how to draw a croquis and different types of garment – now it's time to start designing. This section explains how to get started by doing research, developing your ideas and sorting through them so that you can build your own fashion collection.

It also explains the kind of training you might need to get into the fashion industry, and describes the different jobs you can do.

At the end of the book, there's a list explaining what particular words mean, and an index so you can easily find what you are looking for inside the book.



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You'll need a variety of materials for your designer's kit. You'll need to do research too. The *Let's Design* chapter tells you how.



Name

Zandra Rhodes

Born

1940, Chatham, Kent, UK

Design training

Medway College of Art, Kent, and Royal College of Art, London

Trademark style

Theatrical, glamorous and extrovert



"I draw anywhere I can."

Background

Zandra Rhodes is a British designer who helped London to become a leading centre of international fashion in the 1970s. At art college, she specialized in printed textiles. Since then, she has played an important role in making printed patterns fashionable.

Her pink hair and colourful make-up are part of Zandra Rhodes' look but she uses these elements in her drawings too. Her clients range from rock stars to royalty, and her vintage designs are popular with celebrities including Kate Moss, Kelly Osbourne and Ashley Olsen. In 1977, she launched her pink and black jersey collection, which she called 'Conceptual Chic'. The designs had holes in them and beaded safety pins, and earned her the name 'Princess of Punk'.

Zandra Rhodes has also designed sets and costumes for the opera.

Over 500 illustrations can be accessed from the Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection www.zandrarhodes.ucreative.ac.uk.

Interview

What inspires you to draw?

Time and space are important. But if something catches my eye I must draw it there and then, even if it is 4 o'clock in the morning.

Where do you draw?

I draw mainly in my sketchbook because I lose everything! But if the drawing is in a sketchbook my ideas are safe. I start at page one and use all the pages until I get to the back. I draw anywhere I can.

What media do you like best?

Japanese felt-tip pens on Japanese rice paper.

How do you start your design drawings?

I drape the printed textile in different ways on my body or on the stand and try to think about how it would look made up. Then I draw what's in front of me.

Do your drawings always look like the finished garment?

No, but the drawing provides inspiration throughout the design process.

How does a drawing become a finished garment?

There are lots of stages. Initially, my drawings are given to the pattern cutter.

Do you keep your drawings?

Yes, in my sketchbooks.

Do you have a favourite drawing?

No I don't. I am fortunate that the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) has digitized my archive so it is now even easier for me to access and refer to previous work.

The Conceptual Chic Collection includes clothes with holes made and stitched to look like tears. These tears are caught with beaded safety pins and chains. The dresses have their seams on the outside.



Zandra Rhodes designed her Mexico Collection in 1976. The print was inspired by a type of Mexican hat called a sombrero. It is full of wonderful colours and textile patterns. It shows how a designer can take inspiration from all sorts of different places.

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Name

Valentino

Born

1932, Voghera, Italy

Design training

École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, and Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne. Worked initially with Jacques Fath, Balenciaga, Jean Dessès and Guy Laroche

Trademark style

Opulent, ultra-feminine designs for Hollywood icons in 'Valentino Red' – his signature colour



"I remember with love my first drawings."

Background

Valentino Garavani, often known simply as Valentino, is a fashion designer and master couturier. He founded his fashion house in Rome in the late 1950s and since then has been designing for the world's most glamorous women.

From the time he began in the industry, Valentino and long-time partner Giancarlo Giammetti have built the Valentino brand into one of the most famous names in international fashion.

Sophistication, stylishness and luxury are all part of Valentino's signature style. Chiffons, silks, satins and delicate laces are among the fabrics he uses to flatter women's figures and make them look more feminine. His work is also known for its exquisite detailing and embroidery.

Valentino retired from his career in fashion in 2008.

To learn more about him, visit www.valentinogaravanimuseum.com. There are more than 150 original drawings on the site, as well as 5,000 pictures that record his career.

Interview

What inspires you to draw?

The responsibility to deliver the work to hundreds of people.

Where do you draw?

Mostly in my office.

What medium do you like best?

Pencil.

How do you start your design drawings?

From the head, the hair and mostly by profile. A long neck has more style.

Do your drawings always look like the finished garment?

Yes, I very rarely change during fittings, a detail maybe, but the silhouette stays.

How does a drawing become a finished garment?

It is a long process; choice of fabric as first step, the cutting, the fittings, choice of buttons. There is a lot of attention, work and people involved.

How important is drawing to your business today?

Everything I do, even a costume for a ballet or a sofa for my house, needs an explanation and I do it by sketching.

Do you keep your drawings?

Of course, thousands of them.

Are there any drawings that are really special to you?

No, there are too many. I do remember with love my first drawings when I was working in Paris.



Valentino draws quickly. This design could be one of 60 to 100 drawings that he made in just one day. 'I start everything with a drawing,' he says. 'All my ideas come from the pencil.'



The slim pencil skirt of this daytime outfit contrasts beautifully with the wide sleeves, wide stand-up collar and full outline of the swing jacket. Drawing the figure in side view shows off the shapes really clearly.



Using just a few lines, Valentino is able to create a mood and give essential information about a design. This simple outline shows a short cocktail dress. The most detailed part is the gathered area, with buttons, at the waist.



For evening glamour, Valentino designed this long dress with a draped and fitted bodice and a layered flared skirt.

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1



Step 1: Stick figure

The shoulders are wider than the waist or hips.

2



Step 2: Full figure

shoulders

waist

hips

knees

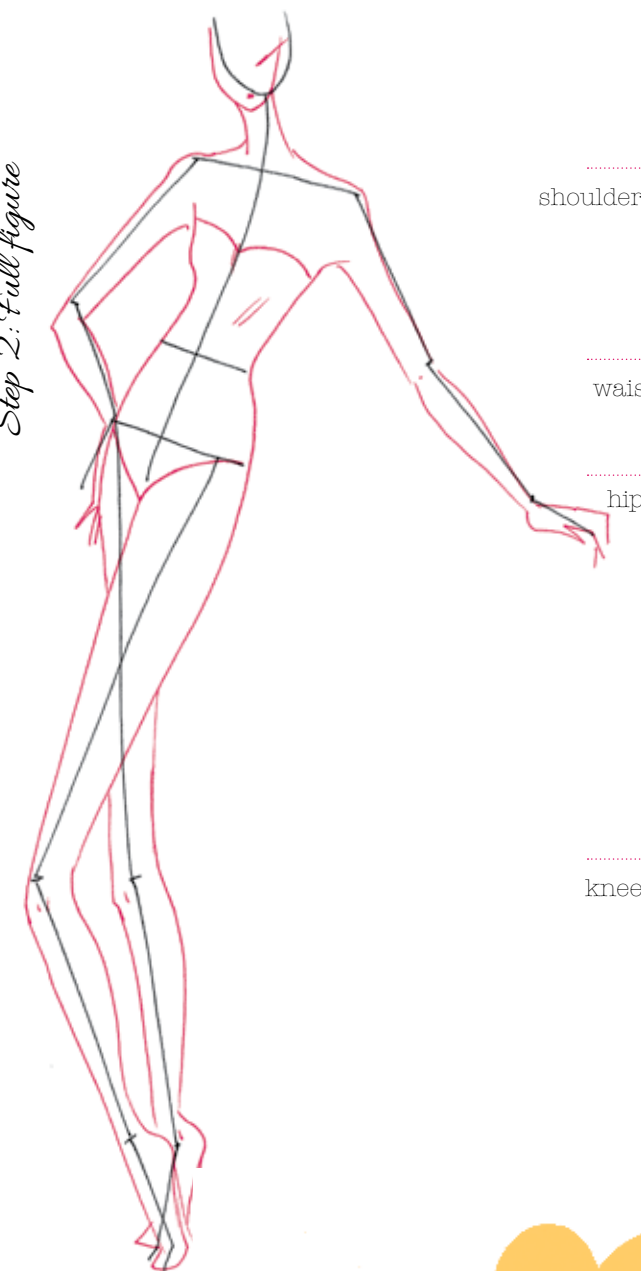
1



Step 1: Stick figure

Position the toes side by side.

2



Step 2: Full figure

shoulders

waist

hips

knees

The stroll: step 1

When you have mastered the basic croquis, try out different poses to add variety to your designs.

For this pose, start with an oval head and a gently curving spine. Draw the shoulders, waist and hips at a slight angle. Drop a line for the left thigh. Mark the knee. Drop a line for the other thigh so that both knee joints almost touch. Continue both lines down to the ankles.

Draw the upper arms and forearms the same length, marking the elbows and wrists. Add hands and feet.

IDEA

Pay careful attention to proportions. Here, the spine should be at least three times as long as the head and each leg should measure at least five times the height of the head.

The stroll: step 2

Draw the torso with a line that starts at each shoulder and curves out around each hip. Draw a line in from each hip for the lower torso.

Draw the outside of both thighs. For the straight rear leg, continue this line to the foot. Draw a single line between the thighs. Working from the back of each knee to the ankle, create a shapely curve for the lower leg. Add a curve at each ankle point for the heel.

Drop two graceful lines on either side of the head for the neck and the top of each shoulder.

IDEA

Keep checking the proportions - for example, the calf should be narrower than the thigh. Remember that the outlines of the limbs should curve gently.

The lean: step 1

Draw an oval head, then the spine with an exaggerated curve. Draw the shoulders, waist and hips at an angle across the spine.

Drop a line for the straight rear leg from the raised hip to the foot. Mark the knee and ankle. Drop a line for the bent leg from the lower hip to the knee, then continue to the ankle.

Draw the bent arm from the highest shoulder, then the other stretched arm. Mark the elbows and wrist.

IDEA

Look at fashion magazines to find models in poses you like. Trace the pose and draw lines for the spine, shoulder, waist and hips to help create a basic guide for your own fashion drawings.

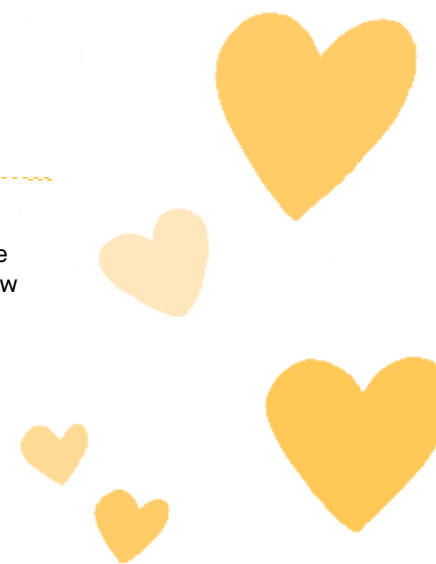
The lean: step 2

Draw the torso with a line starting below each shoulder curving into the waist, then out around each hip. Draw a line in from each hip to create the lower torso.

Draw the silhouette, or shape, of the front leg first with curves for the thigh, calf and ankle. Fill in the leg behind.

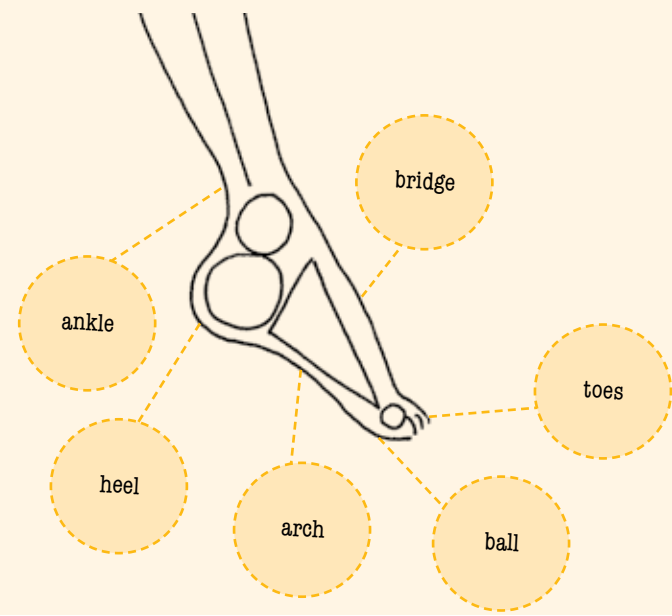
Drop two graceful lines either side of the head for the neck and the top of each shoulder. Draw the silhouette of each arm.

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Parts of the foot



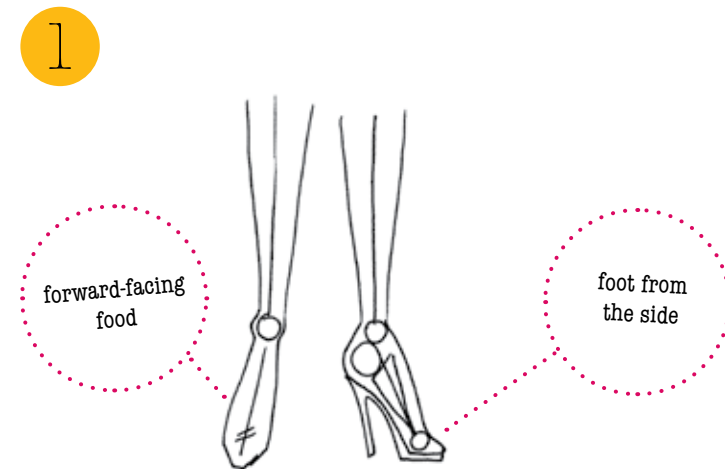
Remember that a foot measures the same length as the head. The ankle is a circle, the heel is a circle below and behind the ankle, the bridge is a triangle and the toes are an oval. The arch is the curved part of the sole. The ball is the widest part of the foot.

Two views of feet

For the forward-facing foot, draw a small circle for the ankle joint, then an oval for the foot. To draw a foot from the side, simplify the four key parts: ankle, heel, bridge and ball of the foot.

IDEA

When you start designing, it is easiest to position the figure and the feet facing forwards.

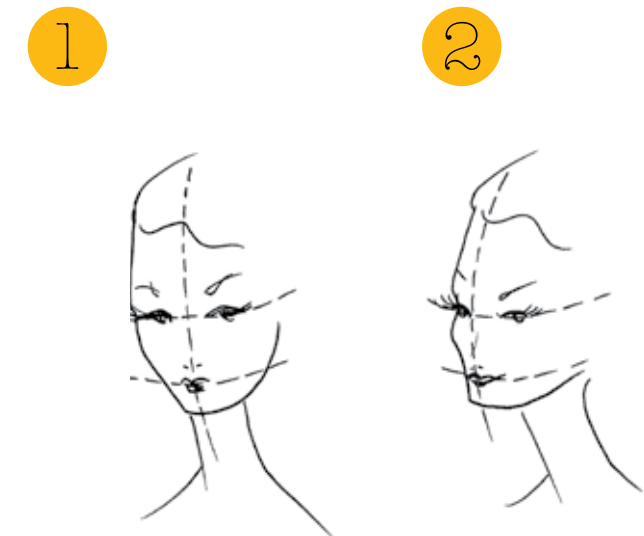


Facial features

Draw an oval for the head. Imagine a horizontal and vertical line crossing directly through the centre. Imagine another horizontal line dividing the lower face. Use these guidelines to help position the eyes, nose and lips.

IDEA

Change the horizontal and vertical lines when you rotate the head to help position the features correctly.

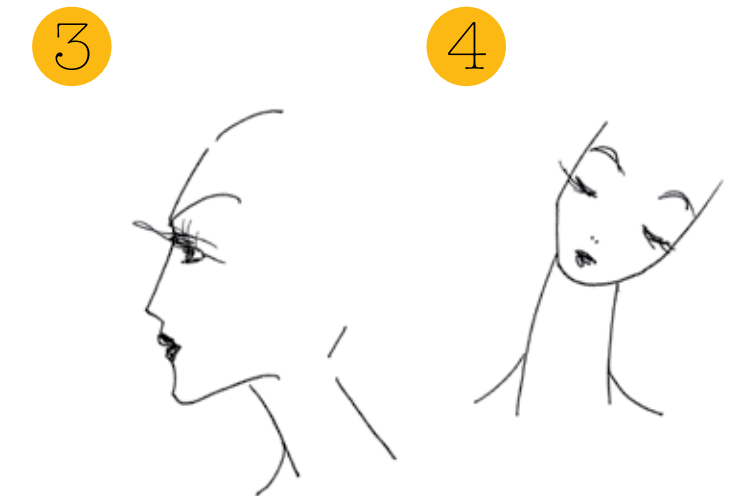


The ideal face

Keep your faces simple so that you don't draw attention away from the clothes. Practise drawing eyes, eyebrows and lips - you could just hint at them with one or two lines, or even leave them out altogether.

IDEA

Consider how faces and features look from a side and three-quarter angle, as well as tilted to one side.



Hand measurements

As with feet, you need to find a quick, simple solution to represent hands. Think about proportion. Outstretched hands are usually bigger than a person's face. The palm and the fingers measure approximately half a head each.

IDEA

Draw around your own hand in different positions. Include the wrist to see how much slimmer it is.

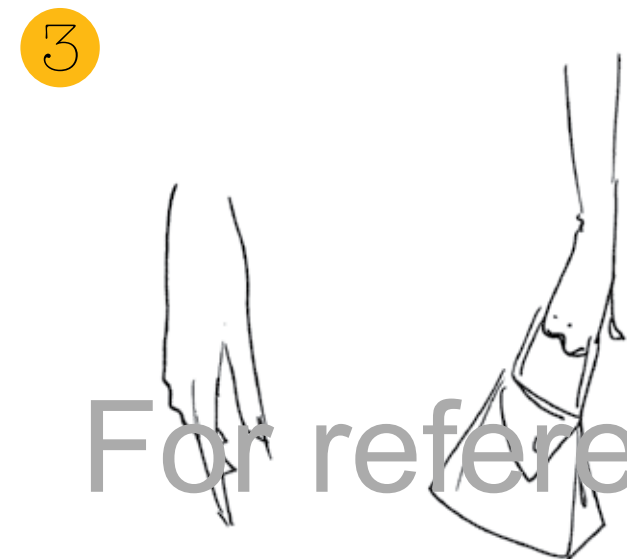


Hands in position

Keep your hands simple, leaving out details such as knuckles or fingernails. Consider the position too. A hand on a hip, in a pocket, or posed to one side can help to show your design off.

IDEA

Draw the hand holding an accessory such as a bag to add detail to your drawing.

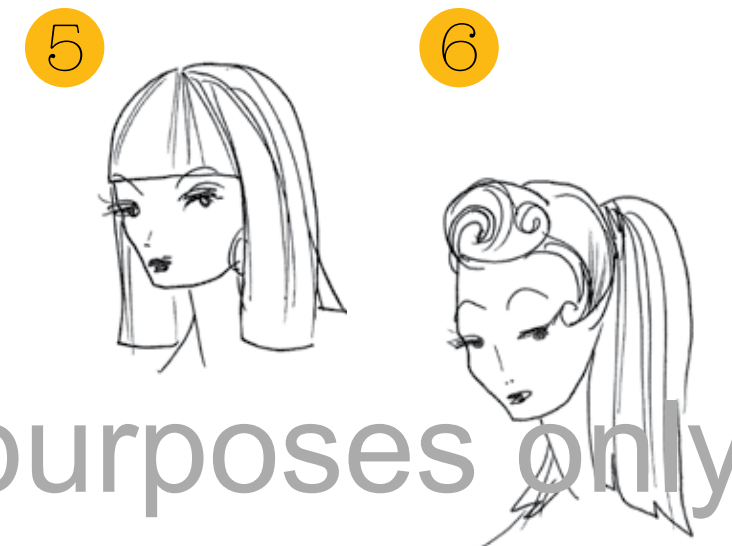


Bobs and ponytails

For fashion drawing, you need to think of the hair as solid - imagine it as a plastic helmet on the head. Start with the outline shape and draw this around the head. The hairline usually begins a quarter-way down the head.

IDEA

What hairstyle will suit the theme of your collection? Copy hairstyles that you like.

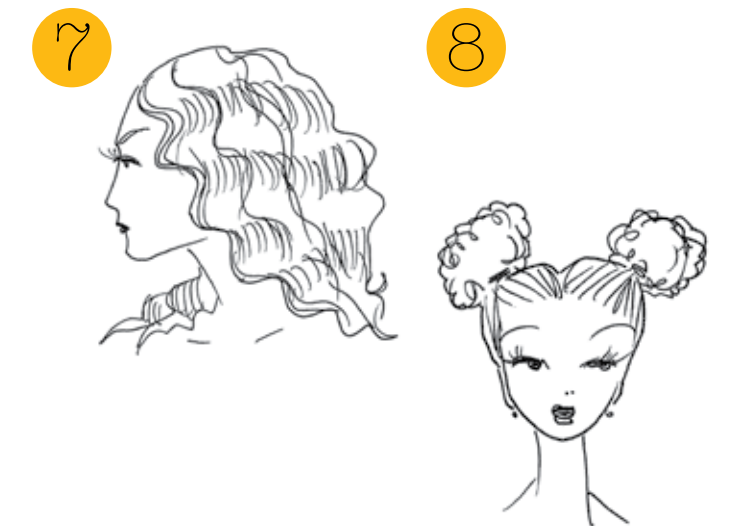


Waves and bunches

For curly hair, start with the outline. Then draw just a few wavy lines inside the outline to suggest curls. With more complicated styles, imagine them as simple shapes, then add a few lines to show the direction of the hair.

IDEA

Think how to draw the edges of the hair - these are rarely straight lines.



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