



# Sketch WORKSHOP

CHARACTERS





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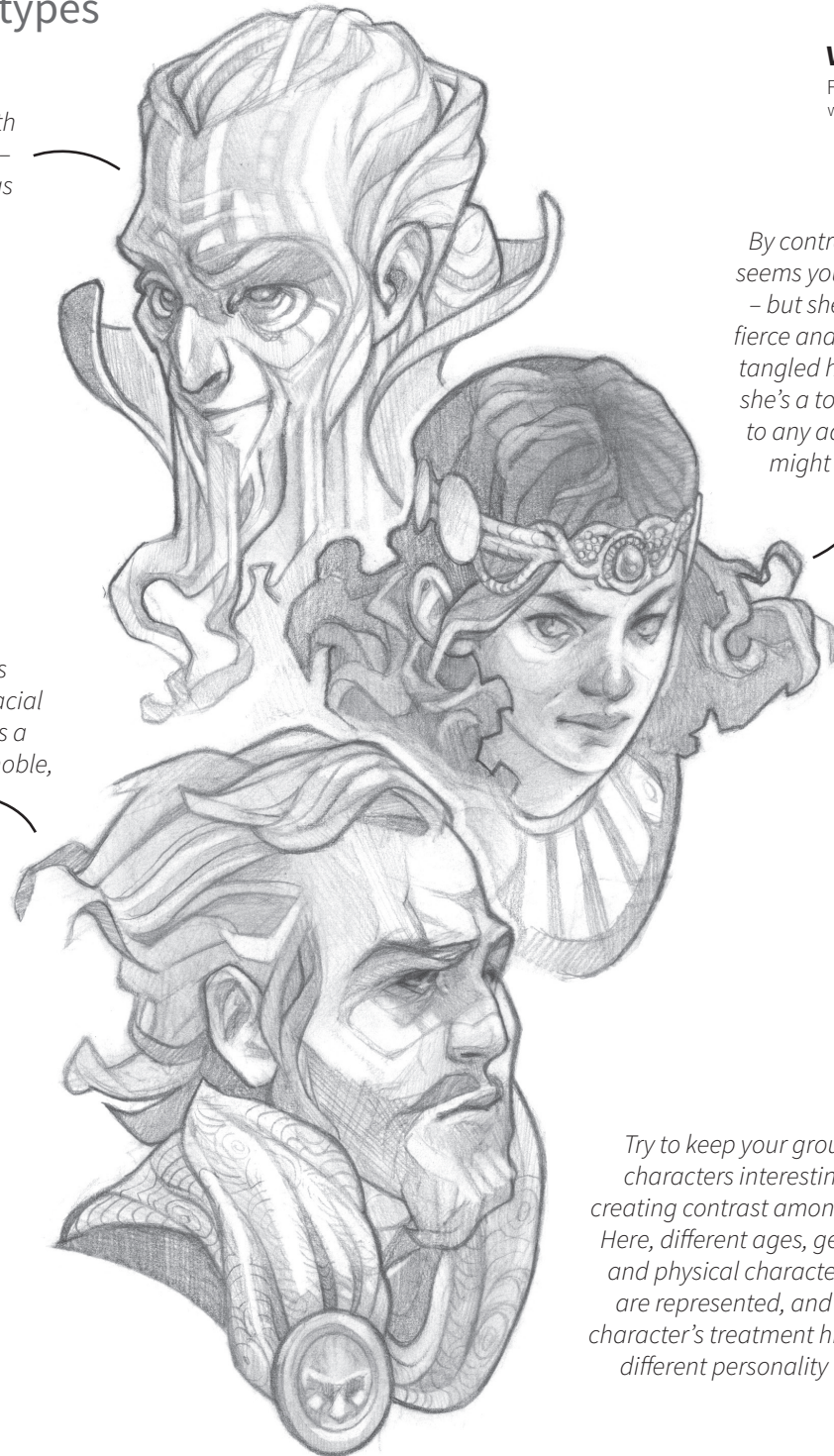
# Learn to draw fantasy characters

Jump into character design by creating your own trio of fantasy archetypes

*Our wizard is old (perhaps centuries old) and gnarled, with an unsettling glow in his eyes – perhaps the study of magic has driven him a little bit mad?*

*The male hero of our sketch is rugged and battle-scarred; his facial expression and styling suggests a stern but kind personality and a noble, heroic demeanor.*

*By contrast, our princess seems young and innocent – but she's still a little bit fierce and mischievous. Her tangled hair suggests that she's a tomboy, and equal to any adventure this trio might embark upon.*



*Try to keep your group of characters interesting by creating contrast among them. Here, different ages, genders, and physical characteristics are represented, and each character's treatment hints at a different personality type.*

One of the foundations of good character concepting is creating a design with a vivid personality – one whose appearance hints at a story from the very first glance. In this workshop, you'll be exploring variations on three common fantasy

characters: a hero, a princess and a wizard. You'll gain experience drawing male, female, young and old characters, while getting a chance to experiment with different facial features and developing a sense of how these decisions can affect your

final character. These exercises, combined with a little bit of practice and a good dose of perseverance, will help to put you on the path to developing your very own successfully unique and expressive characters from scratch.





The templates on the page below use the same scale as this reference image, to allow you to pick and choose from these designs when coming up with your own variations.

Eyes: Deep shadows, glowing tattoos and creative eyebrow designs can give your wizard a range of dramatic looks.

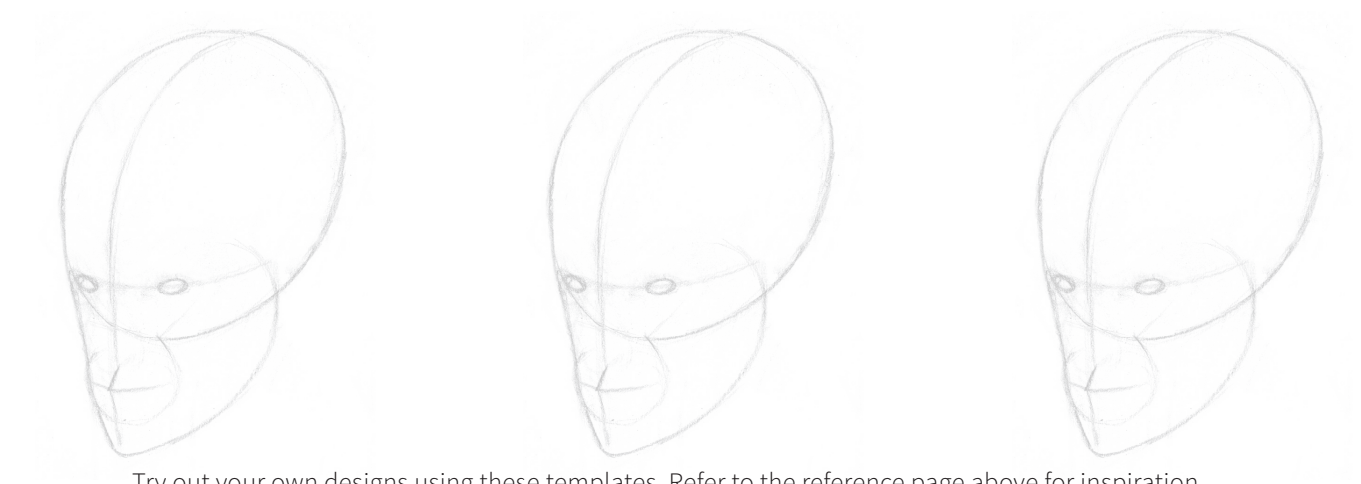
Nose: You could downplay the nose or make it a central feature of your character. If a character needn't be conventionally attractive – like our wizard here – have fun with the shape.

Mouth: Build a 'muzzle' by anchoring a half-ball shape to the face below the nose, then wrap the mouth around it. Notice how expressions can create ridges and furrows at corners and edges.

Hair: Design an interesting silhouette for your character's hair or beard. Decide what direction the hair grows or hangs and flesh out large locks of hair. Choose a few key places to highlight individual strands.

Face shape: An interesting face shape isn't just an outline; it's the three-dimensional volume on which the features will be placed. Notice how the same set of features, placed on three different base shapes, yield unique results.

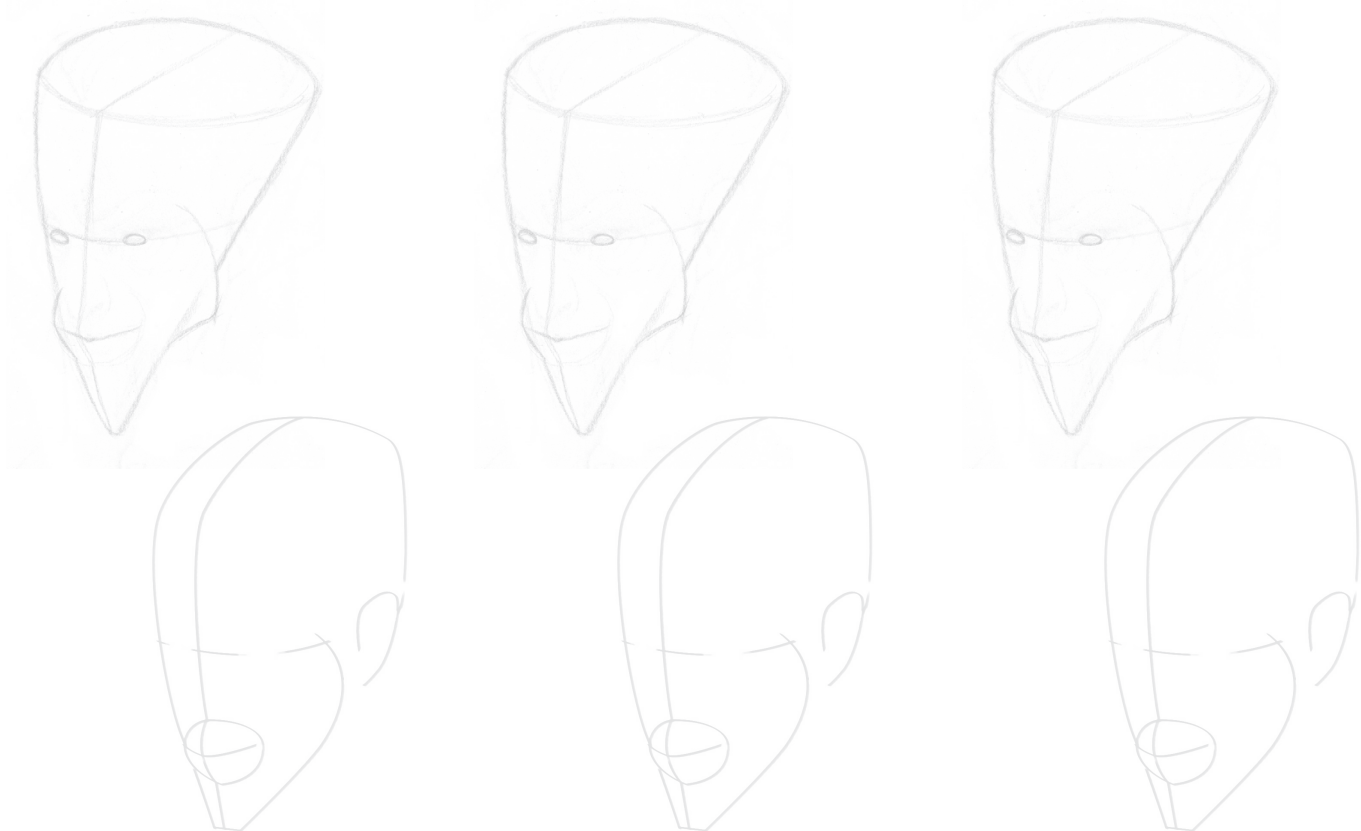




Try out your own designs using these templates. Refer to the reference page above for inspiration.



Always start your freehand drawings by sketching guidelines like these for yourself – roughly positioning each feature before getting into the detail work is an important habit to get into.

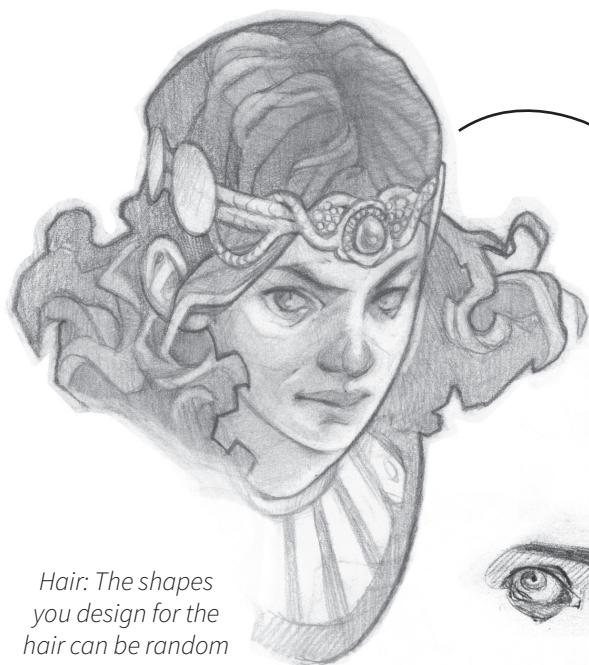


You've started to get an idea of how to build a dramatic, somewhat villainous character. Next, you'll take a slightly more subtle approach in designing a younger, softer character...



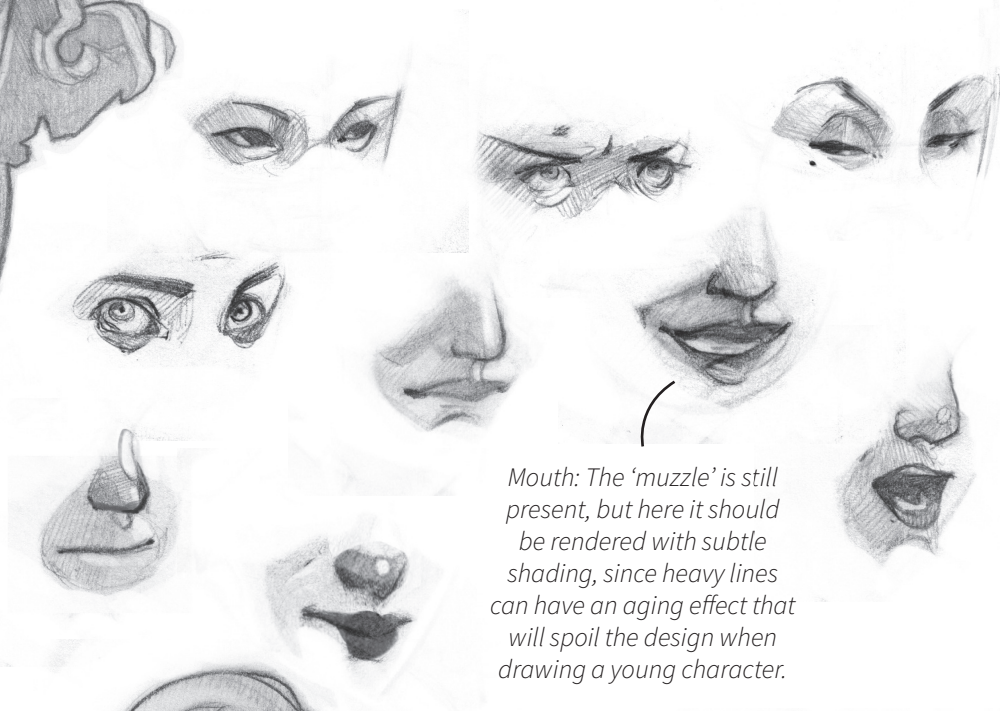
**CHARACTERS**



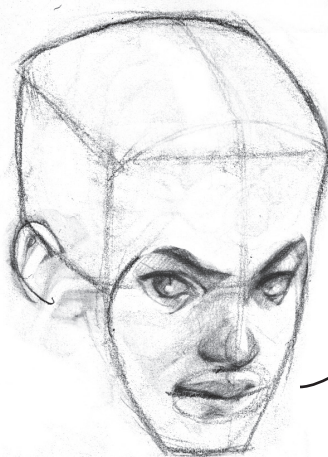
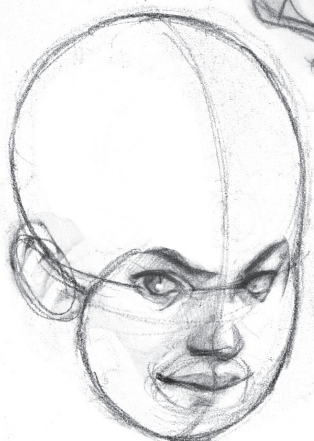
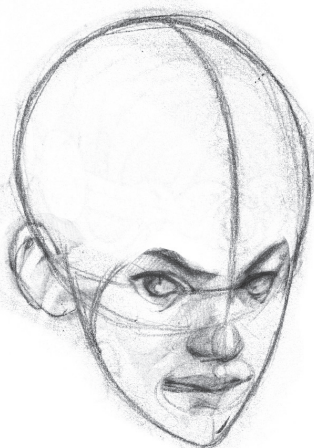


All of the features on this page are drawn to the same scale (and from the same angle) as the main reference image shown here. The templates on the page below use the same scale, to allow you to pick and choose from these references when designing your own variations.

*Hair:* The shapes you design for the hair can be random and decorative. You can use the shape to create flow in your composition or frame an important feature or design element.



*Mouth:* The 'muzzle' is still present, but here it should be rendered with subtle shading, since heavy lines can have an aging effect that will spoil the design when drawing a young character.



*Face shape:* Once again, notice how the face shape affects the overall design. In general, a rounder face shape will make a character look younger; to age a character, use more angular shapes – especially for the jaw and cheekbones.





These templates will help you grasp how changing a single feature can affect your overall character design.



Be as inventive as you can at the sketching stage – if your designs all look the same, try changing the size, shape, or position of the features to create a fresh look.



Now that you've had some practice drawing characters on opposite ends of the spectrum, it's time to try something in the middle. Our next character – neither very young nor very old – is a good starting point...

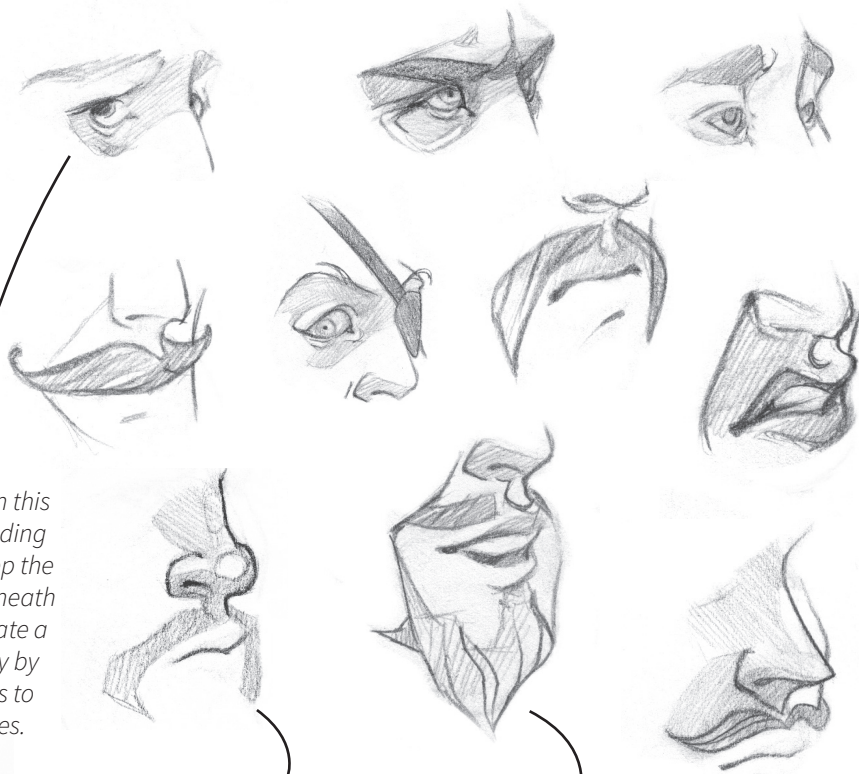


**CHARACTERS**





All of the features on this page are drawn to the same scale (and from the same angle) as the main reference image shown here. The templates on the page below also use the same scale, to allow you to pick and choose from these references when designing your own variations.



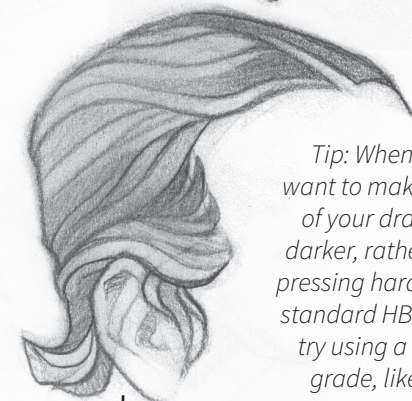
**Eyes:** To maintain this character's brooding look, you can keep the eyes deep-set beneath the brows or create a friendlier quality by lifting the brows to show wider eyes.

**Nose:** A nose with a slightly broken or flattened shape can suggest old battle wounds or a pugilistic temperament – one of many visual possibilities for telling your character's backstory.

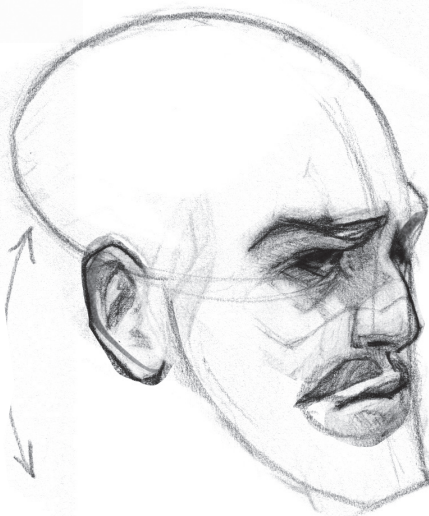
**Mouth/beard:** A mirror (or a helpful friend) is one of your most valuable tools when drawing faces. Don't guess what a facial feature looks like – study it for yourself.



**Tip:** When you want to make parts of your drawing darker, rather than pressing harder on a standard HB pencil, try using a softer grade, like 6B.

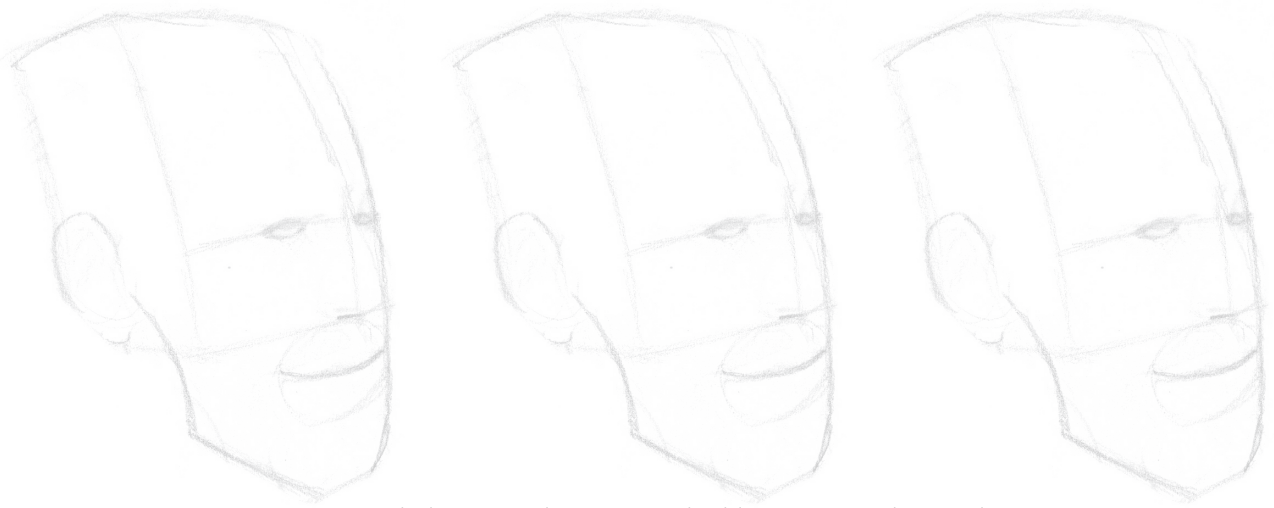


**Hair:** Even short hair can have a strong shape and a sense of movement – just build your locks out of choppy, angular shapes rather than long, flowing lines.



**Face shape:** For a rugged male character, try building your face on blocky, hard-edged shapes. Adding emphasis to the brow ridge and jaw line will help create a solid, imposing character.

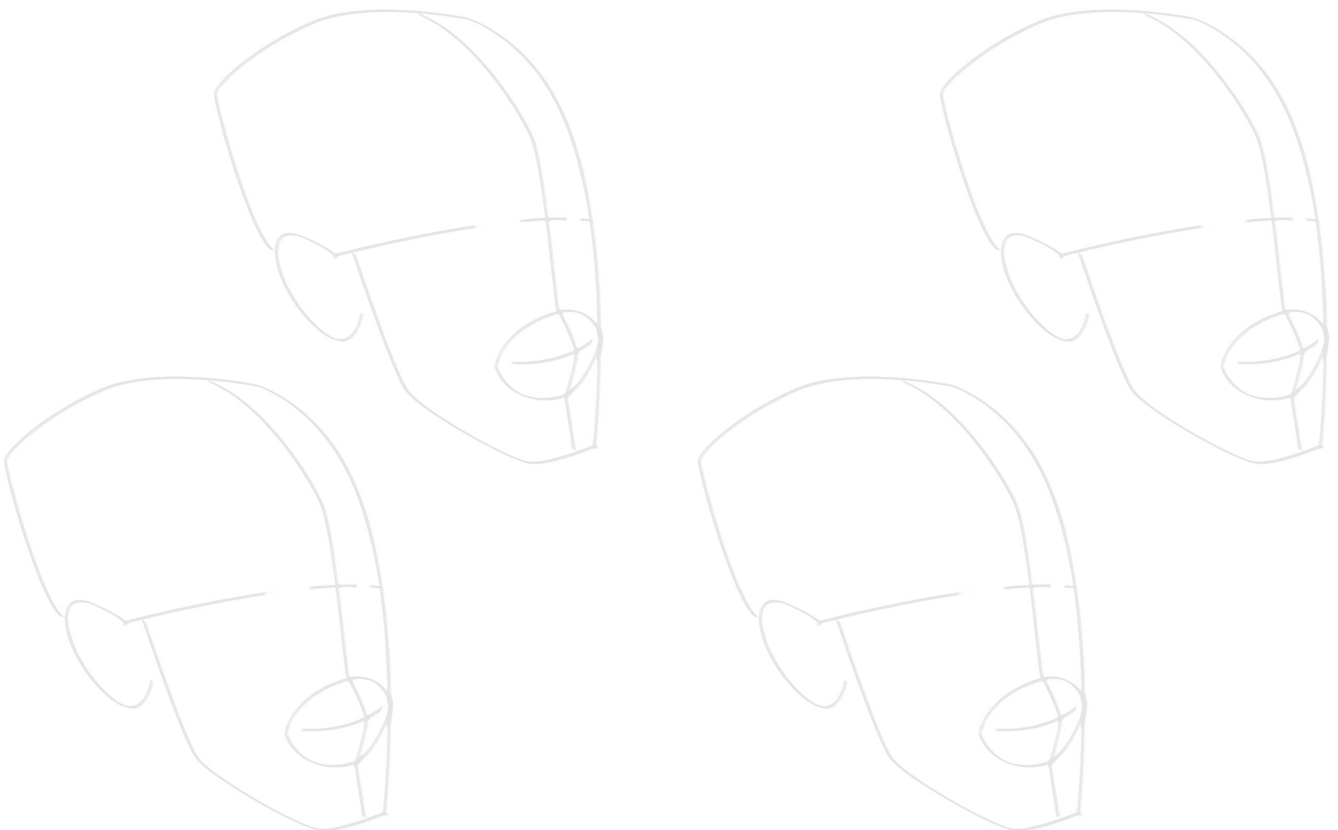




Experiment with these templates to start building your own heroic character.



Don't feel limited by the templates if you have a bigger or better idea for your character. You can sketch similar templates on your own at any size, which is always a good way to start a character drawing.



**CHARACTERS**





For this exercise, you'll be finishing up a rough character sketch. You can practice on the pre-sketch designs below or, if you're feeling ambitious, design your own with the blank templates from the previous exercise. You can download spare templates from [www.3dtotalpublishing.com/resources](http://www.3dtotalpublishing.com/resources).

With a sharpened eraser pencil (or a kneaded eraser shaped into a point), start pulling white areas (cheekbones, nose, background – anywhere that light might fall) from out of the midtones.

Pencil sketches tend to smudge, especially if you're erasing and reworking a design. You can use this to your advantage by blending out a base tone that will simplify the rendering process.



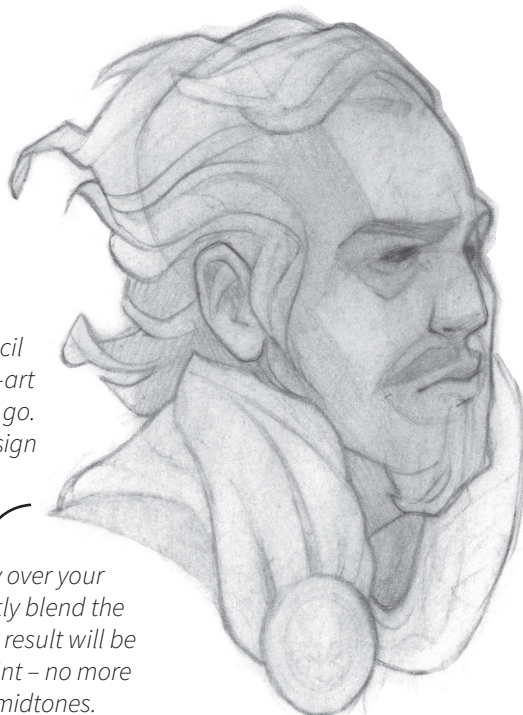
Switching back to pencil, re-establish the lines that define the features and carefully deepen the shadows. The eye sockets, jaw line and underside of the nose are usually the darkest.



Push and pull the image with pencil and eraser, tightening up your line-art and refining your highlights as you go. It's never too late to adjust your design or bring in extra details.



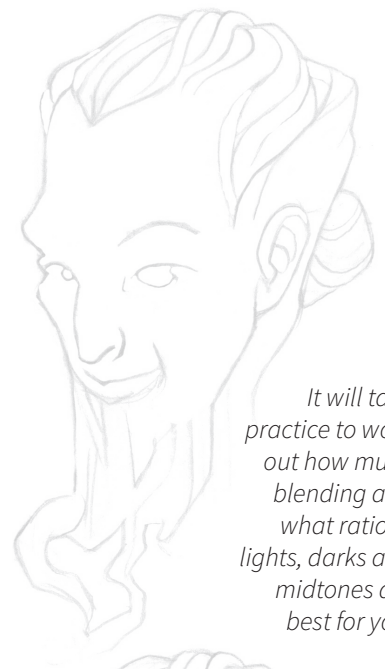
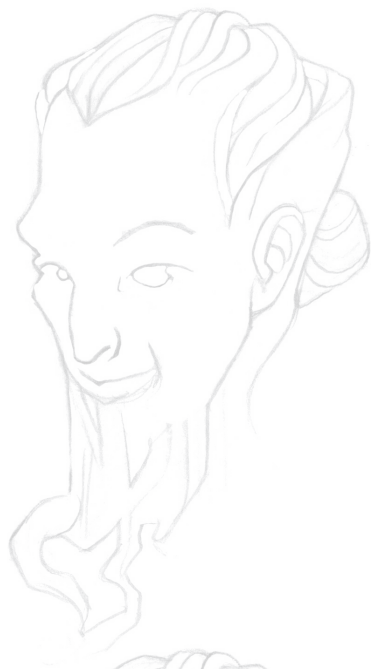
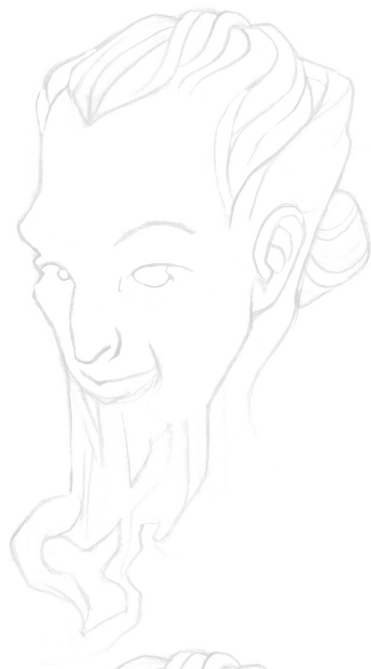
Try shading lightly and evenly over your character sketch, and then gently blend the entire drawing with a tissue. The result will be softer lines and a uniform gray tint – no more tedious shading to fill in the midtones.



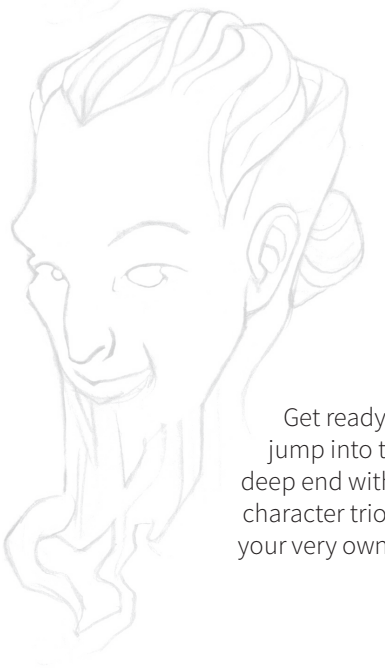
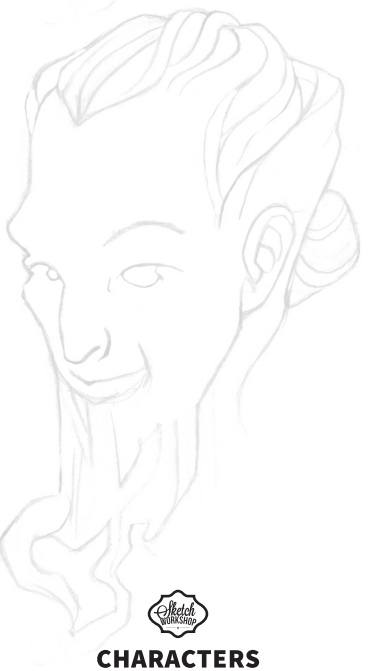
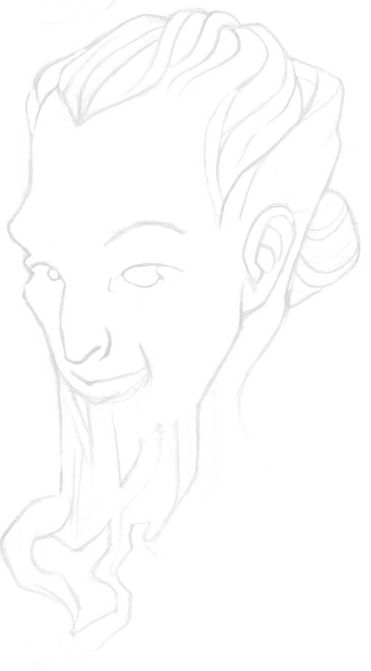
**CHARACTERS**



Practice your rendering by shading and blending lightly over these character sketches, then establish your lights and darks with an eraser and pencil.



*It will take practice to work out how much blending and what ratio of lights, darks and midtones are best for you.*



Get ready to jump into the deep end with a character trio of your very own...



**CHARACTERS**



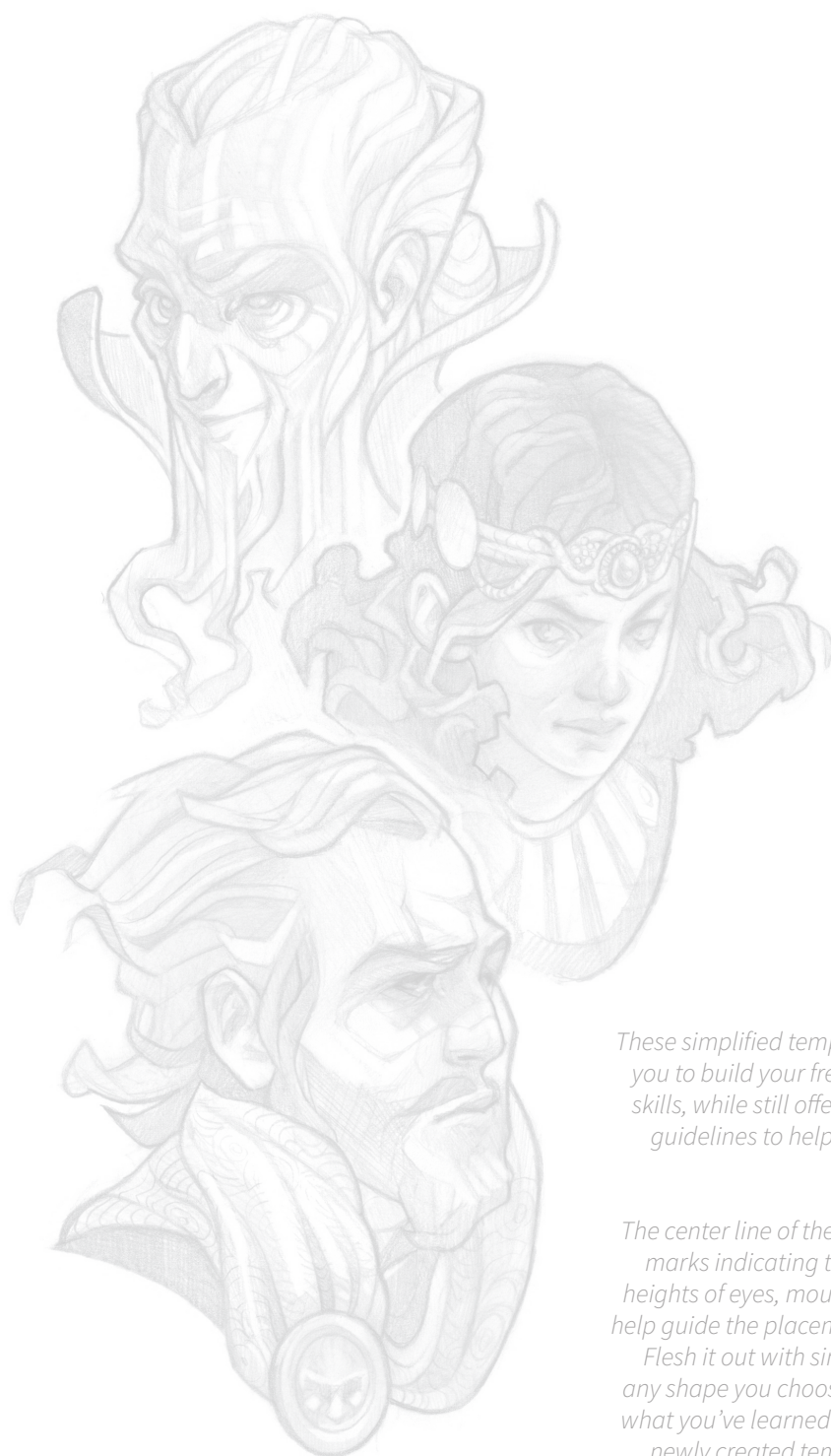
As you build your characters on the template below, refer back to your earlier sketches. Your past successes (and failures) will help guide your drawing.



DOWNLOAD EXTRA TEMPLATES FROM  
[3DTOTALPUBLISHING.COM/RESOURCES](http://3DTOTALPUBLISHING.COM/RESOURCES)







*These simplified templates will allow you to build your freehand drawing skills, while still offering some basic guidelines to help steer you in the right direction.*

*The center line of the face, as well as marks indicating the approximate heights of eyes, mouth and chin, will help guide the placement of features.*

*Flesh it out with simple volumes in any shape you choose, and then use what you've learned to develop your newly created template into a full character design. You can get as wild as you like with your designs. Don't be afraid to seek inspiration in photos, nature and the work of your favorite character artists.*









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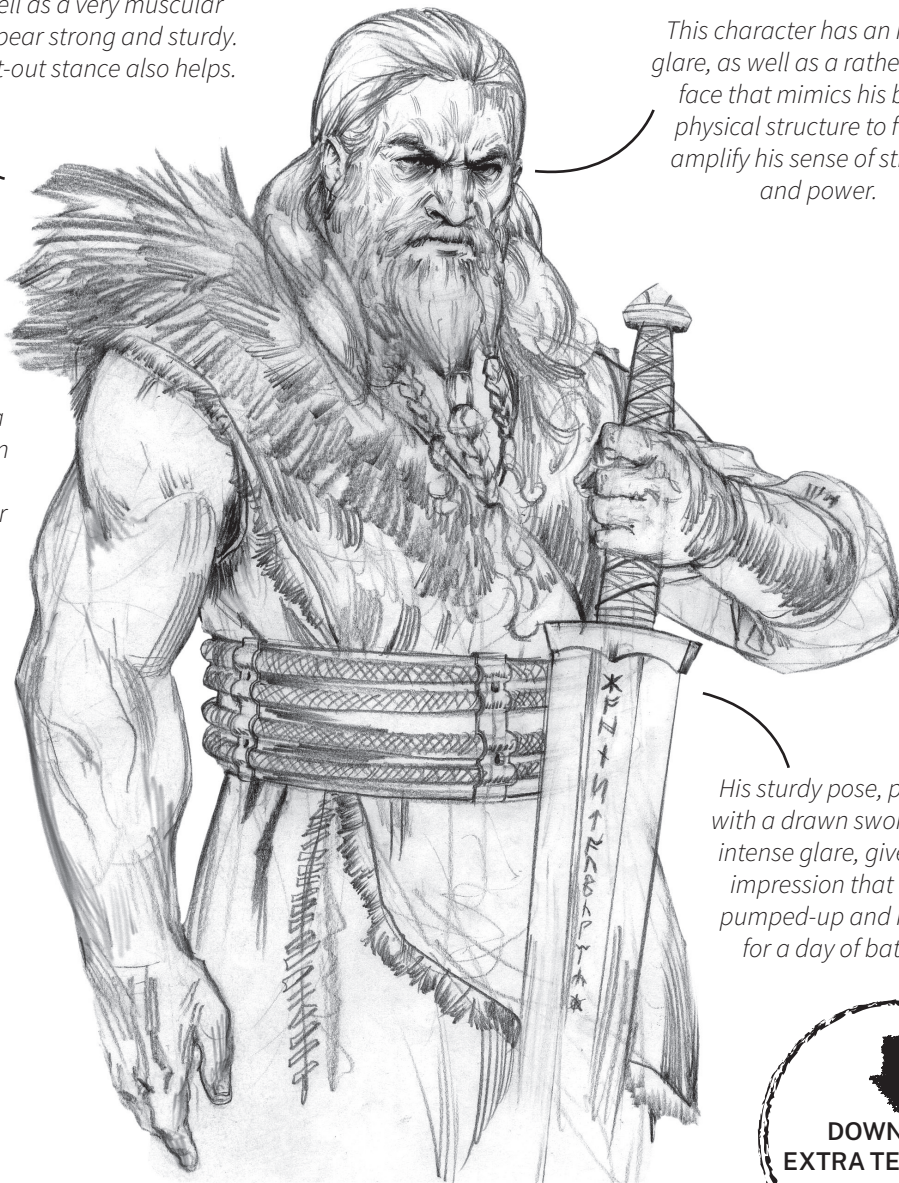
# How to draw Viking warriors

Conceptualize a convincing and powerful-looking Viking warrior

*A Viking warrior notoriously has square shoulders as well as a very muscular body type, to appear strong and sturdy. An upright, chest-out stance also helps.*

*This character has an intense glare, as well as a rather square face that mimics his body's physical structure to further amplify his sense of strength and power.*

*I want him to feel like a leader, so I've given him majestic fur-adorned clothing, as well as hair and a beard that's fit for a king.*



*His sturdy pose, paired with a drawn sword and intense glare, gives the impression that he is pumped-up and ready for a day of battle.*



The process of conceptualizing a great character is the same for designing pretty much anything else. It is all about communication: being able to lock down what you want to say to your audience, as well as

being able to pick and choose visual cues that clearly articulate what your character is about.

As we go through the workshop, we're going to take a look at various

body and head proportions. We'll also explore various facial features, including hairstyles and facial hair possibilities, to really bring out a variety of captivating and unique character ideas.





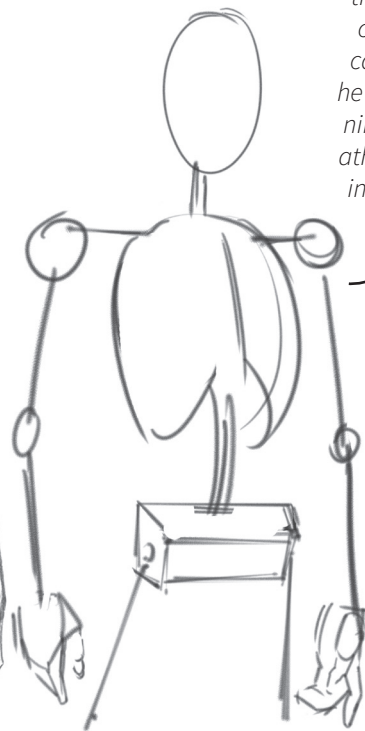


Use this main reference to see in context how the following exercise is used in order to build the character's base. Even though most of it won't be seen, the top layers depend on the underlying structure of the character.

The body type is the base of your character. This can determine if he is a strong type, nimble type, non-athletic-but-more-intellectual type, and so on...

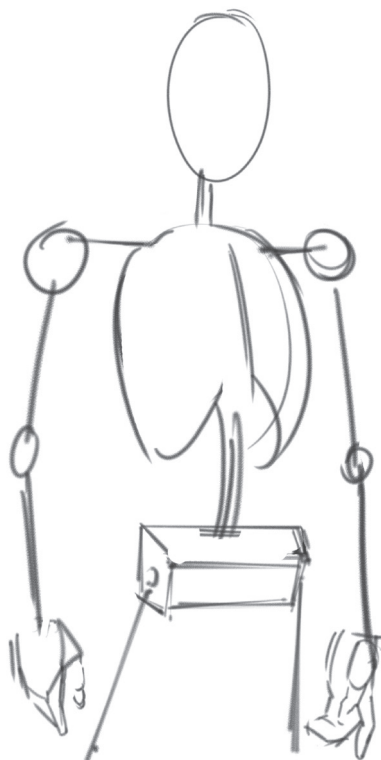


The shape of his head also acts as a base for the facial features of the character. The overall structure informs what type of character he is.



A smaller head and large jaw accompanied by a very muscular body, shows that he relies on his muscles to do the talking and may not be able to be reasoned with.

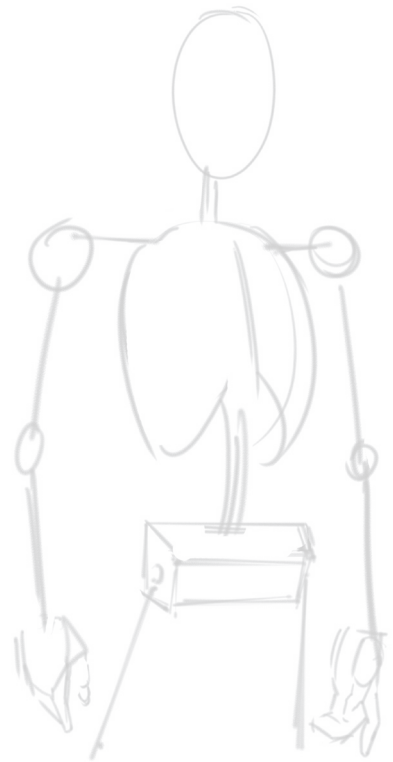
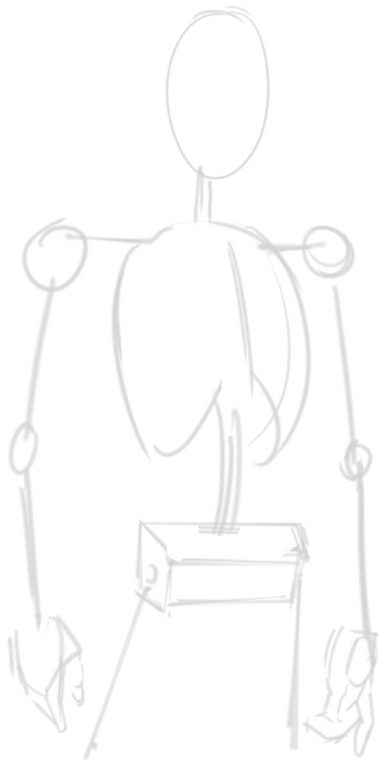
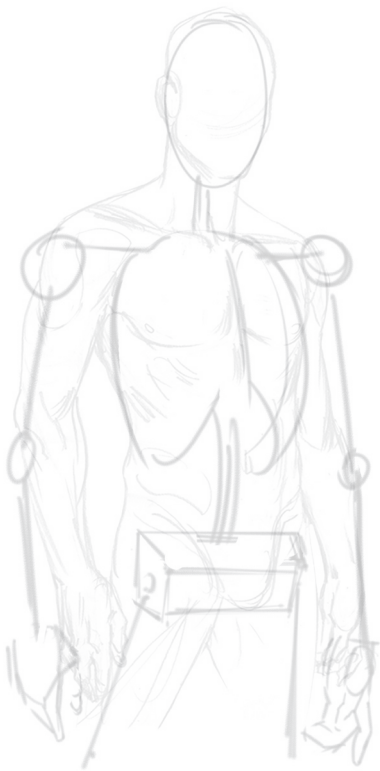
A thin, long but muscular and toned body gives the impression that the character is nimble and fast. Paired with a large head, he looks like a strategist.



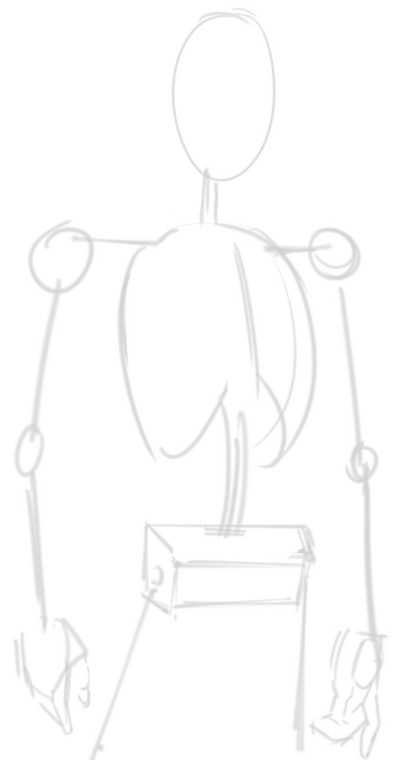
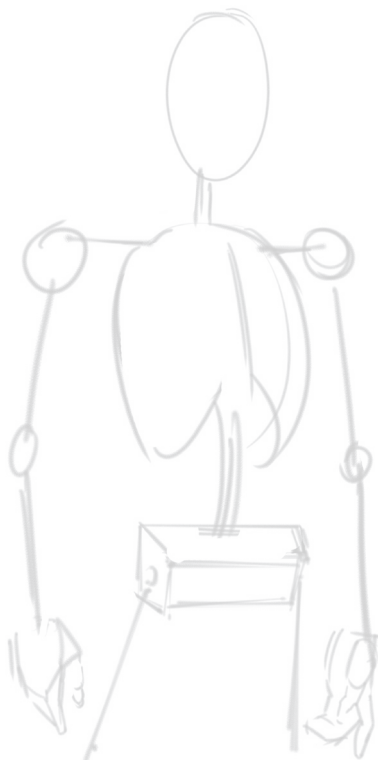
A large cranium, weak jaw and overall thin structure gives the impression he is an intellectual type that relies on his wits rather than brute strength.



**CHARACTERS**



Using the templates on this page and the references above, explore various head and body shapes.



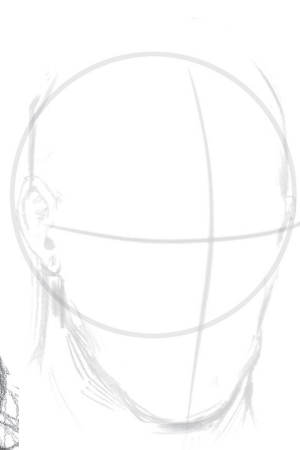
*It helps to take a moment and think about what type of character you want to express on the page. Is he built like a rock, or swift and nimble like the wind?*

Once you have the base of the character nailed down you can move on to more specific features, like the eyes and nose...



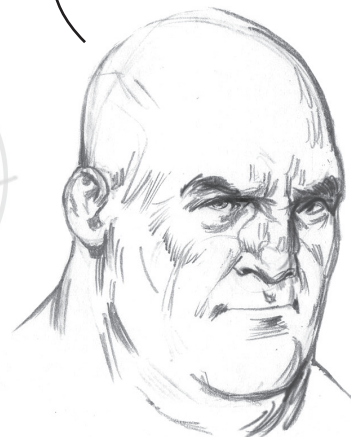
**CHARACTERS**





The type of facial features you choose and how they relate to each other can really give a lot of information about the type of character you are creating. For example, certain choices could create a feeling of wisdom or brashness in a character design.

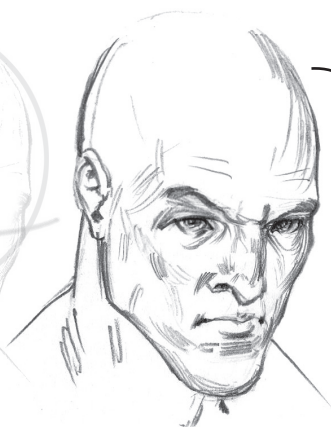
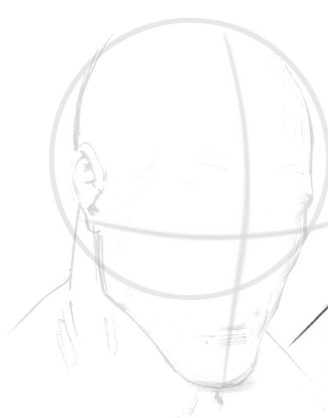
Pay attention to the spacing relationship of the different facial features. This can really affect the type of character that comes out of your drawing.



The ears and nose don't stop growing as people age, so older people tend to have larger noses and ears. Sometimes, a bulbous nose can also be used to imply a sense of stubbornness in a character.



It's often thought that people who live in higher climates tend to have a higher nose bridge – perhaps because there is less oxygen there. People in tropical climates may have smaller nose bridges for the opposite reason.



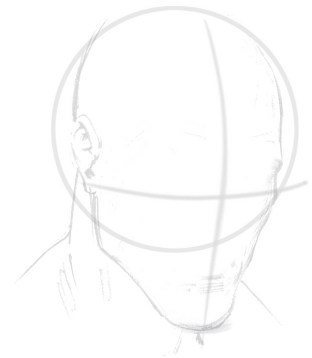
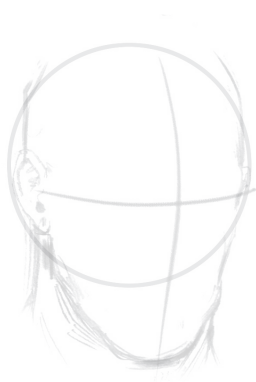
A large and protruding forehead with deep eye sockets could be the signs of a great fighter. A large forehead with a protective brow would keep his eyes safe from damage in a battle.



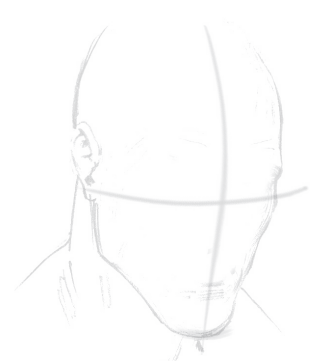
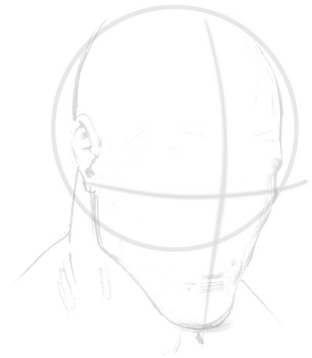
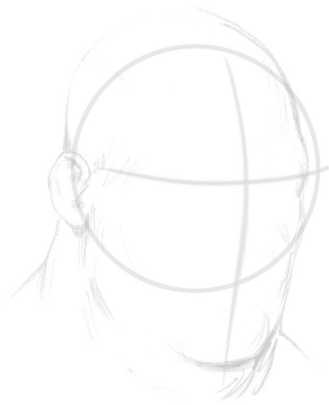
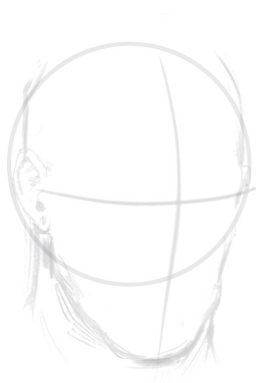
A short nose can make a character feel cute and innocent. Whereas, sometimes a long, elongated nose can make characters feel more snooty – and even conniving.



**CHARACTERS**



Use the templates on this page to create unique head structures and explore some possible facial features.



*Use the horizontal line as a guide to plot your eyes and the vertical line to align your nose and mouth so that they stay symmetrical.*

Combining what we've covered so far with body and head structures, we can now detail the hair to put on his head and face...

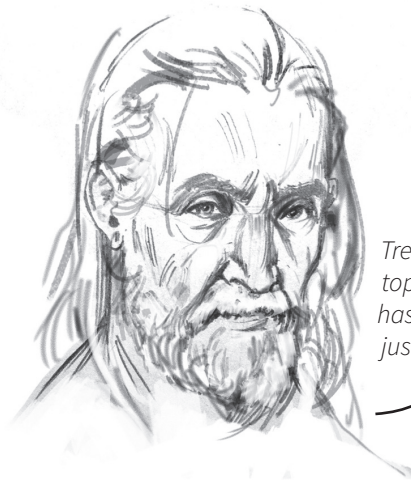


**CHARACTERS**

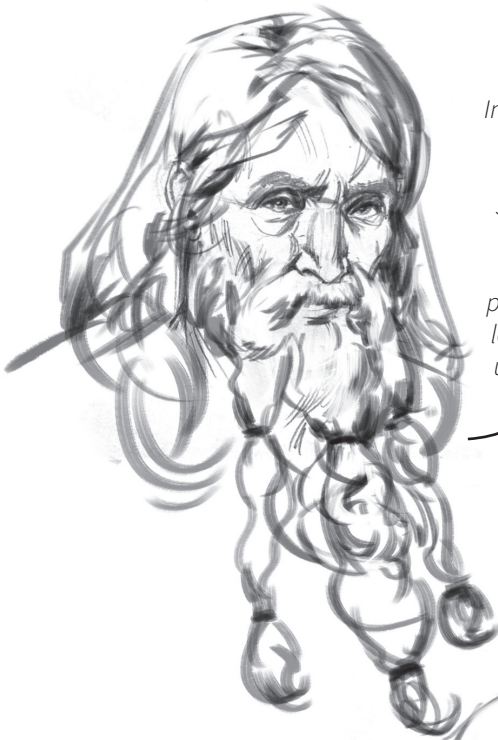




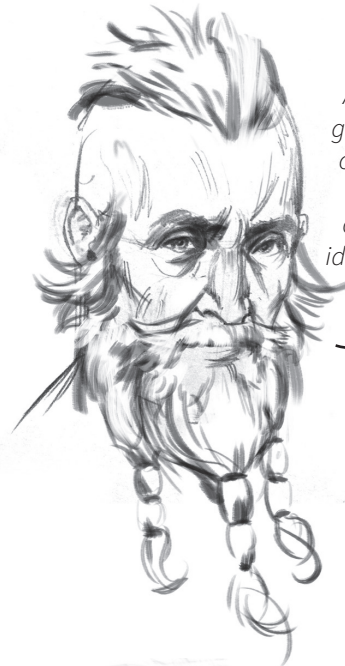
Here we can try out some different hairstyles for our Viking warrior character. All references on this page are shown to the same scale as the original character so you can pick and choose your favorite designs.



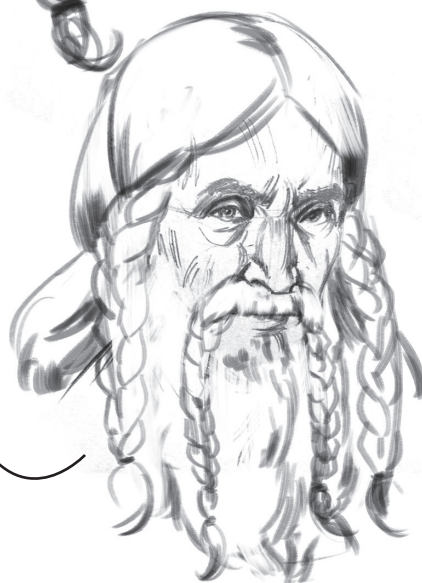
Treat hair like clothing. It lies on top of the surface of the body; it has volume and mass and is not just a flat element that's placed like a sticker.



In some cultures, the amount of facial hair can express a person's social class. Sometimes, the longer and bigger the hair, the higher up the social ladder the person is. On the other hand, long hair can often imply an unkempt lifestyle, and even homelessness.



A hairstyle can also be a great visual cue to make a character stand out from the rest of the crowd. It can help to immediately identify a specific character from the rest.

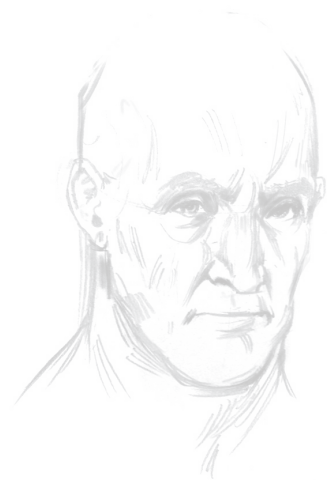
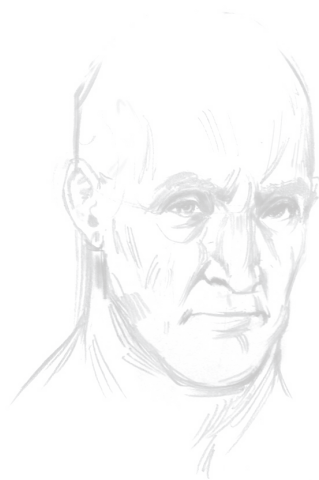
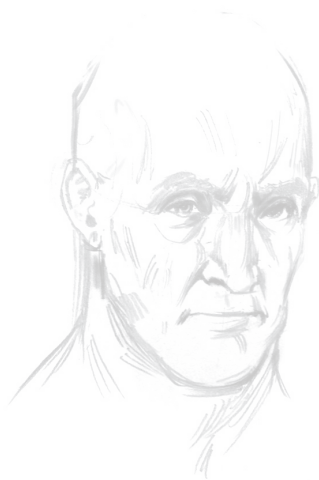


Try experimenting with various ways to tie your character's hair back. It can add a great pattern and texture to the image, as well as make them appear more unique.

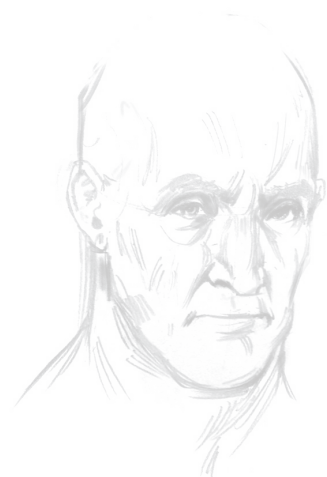
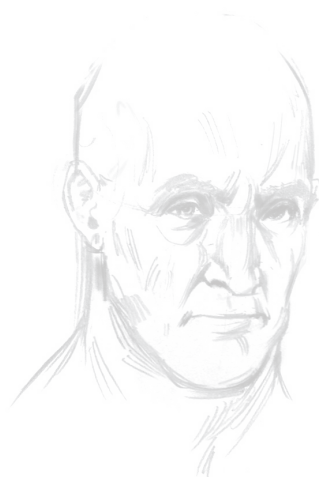
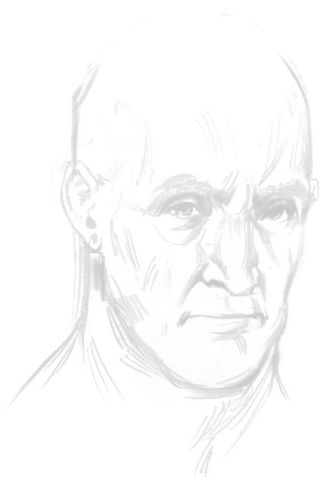
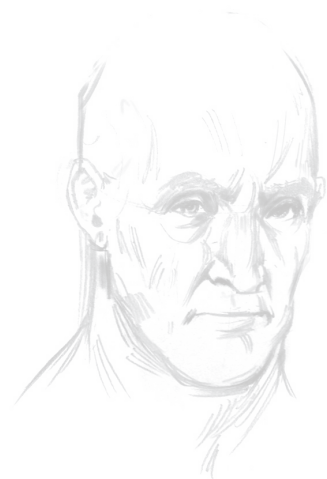
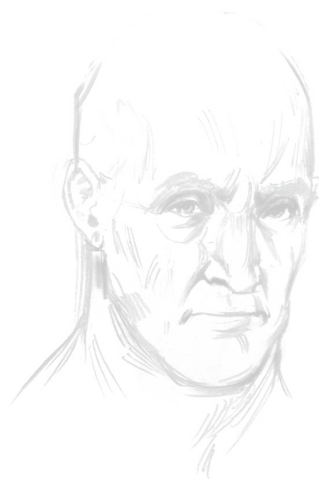
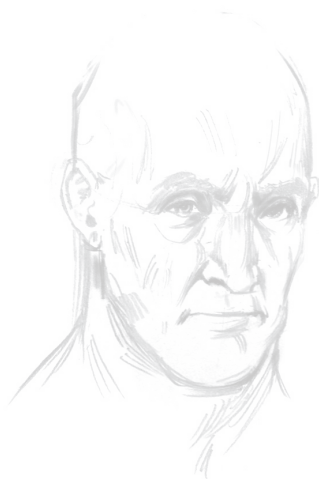


Short, unkempt hair can make a character feel more rugged, while longer, cared-for hair can give a sense of elegance and grace.





Use these templates to explore and experiment with a variety of hairstyles and facial hair.



*Be aware of the character's hairline and its shape: too far back and it will age him; too far forward and it will make your character's head look small.*

Now that we've gained some confidence in drawing the character's head and body, in the next exercise we will give him some clothes...



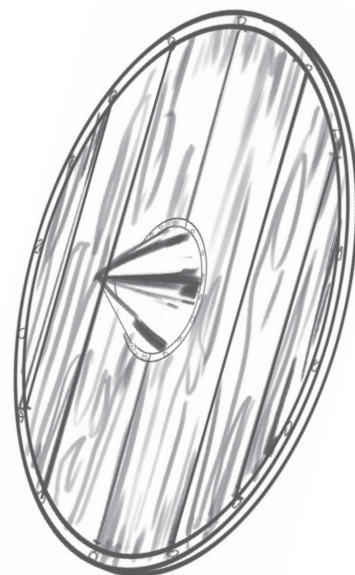
**CHARACTERS**





Use these references as a guide for dressing up your character. There are many possibilities and these are just a few. Who your character is, what he does and what kind of environment he lives in can dictate what type of clothing he wears.

Viking warriors don't always charge in headfirst with just a sword. Give him a shield to make him feel like a well-balanced warrior.



A little research never hurt anyone. The more you know about a subject, the better and more unique information you are able to put down onto the page.



Vikings have been known to wear the fur of their prey. Pretty much anything they kill will be skinned for something to wear, so a lot of their clothes are leathery.



Whether it's food for a long journey or survival supplies, Vikings need a place to keep these things. A few bags and pouches might help.



When a character wears a lot of fur, especially around the shoulders, it is usually a symbol of leadership or someone high up on the social ladder.



**CHARACTERS**



Use the templates on this page and the references above to practice costume designs.



We've looked at different heads, bodies, hairstyles and clothing, so now let's bring it altogether in a final drawing...



**CHARACTERS**



Using the templates provided below and the reference image on this page, you can now draw a complete Viking warrior.



DOWNLOAD EXTRA TEMPLATES FROM  
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*Now that you have successfully created your very own Viking warrior, the next step is to create your own templates. Below, you will find a very simplified stick figure version of the template for you to build upon.*

*It is important to have a clear idea of where all the joints are in your character as you create your own template, and to mark them down clearly. These will become reference points as you continue to lay down the anatomy of your character. From the wireframe, build up into cylinders and spheres and then further detail the anatomy as you go along.*







## The Tutor



**Marta Nael**

Illustrator & Matte Painter  
[www.martanael.daportfolio.com](http://www.martanael.daportfolio.com)

# Sketch a fantasy Goddess

Discover how to draw a mysterious character in a seated pose using a dynamic perspective



*The right arm helps balance the whole pose and also adds more movement to the scene, as does the hair and fabric, which are moving to follow the curvy gesture of the body.*

*Her facial expression is really important and will define the whole mood. She has a mysterious and kind of evil look, which describes her personality well.*

*You should take full advantage of a dynamic pose, even when drawing a sitting character. Her curved body helps increase her superiority and majesty.*

*Her clothes and sultry look define the story behind her. She's a Dionysus goddess, related to the god of wine, vegetation, pleasure and festivity.*



When drawing fantasy characters in a realistic style, you need to consider the character as a whole and the aspects that will define them. Depending on the body language, gesture and facial expression, we'll

get a different personality or story behind the character.

Throughout this workshop, you'll be learning how to create a character with a regal, goddess-like posture,

sitting on a throne from a front-on perspective. We'll pay special attention to the dynamism of the pose as well as trying to achieve a mysterious facial expression to bring our character to life.

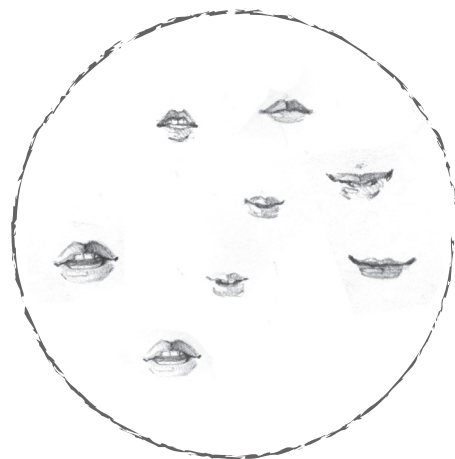


**CHARACTERS**

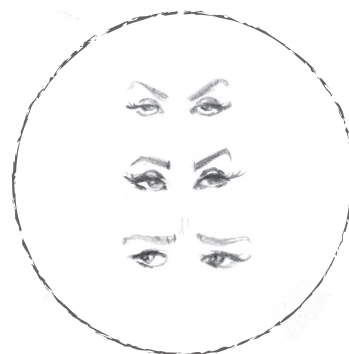




All the references on this page are drawn to the same scale as the goddess's face. The templates on the page below also use the same scale and pose, to help you grasp how the features and expressions relate to one another for different effects.



If a character glances sideways, it can make her look intrigued. This also adds to her backstory, which is always a nice touch.



Eyebrows can emphasize expressions. Arched eyebrows can create a malicious look.

As well as experimenting with hair, try different headdresses or maybe try adding horns to your character. Skulls also work well if you're intending to create a dark goddess.

Hair may be wavy, perhaps enhanced by a breeze; this type of look can also increase the glamor of a character.

An open mouth can make the character look quite defiant.

A smile can make your character look conniving when paired with a raised eyebrow. Eyes that are more closed and looking straight on can also help promote your character's personality.

Freckles can help you give an innocent touch to an otherwise disobedient character.

Hair will be thicker when closer to the head, becoming thinner down the strands.



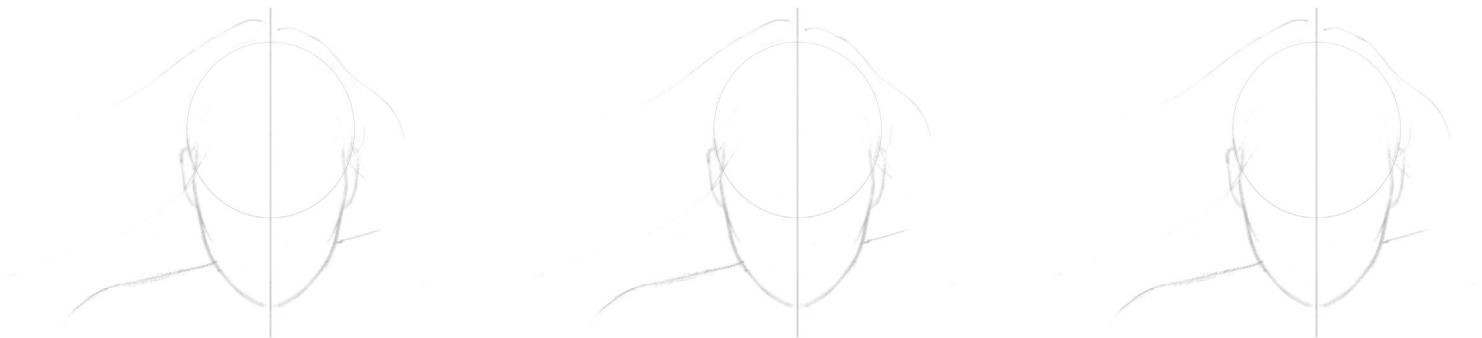
*The guidelines will help you to place the different features; use them to understand the alignment of the eyes, nose and mouth.*



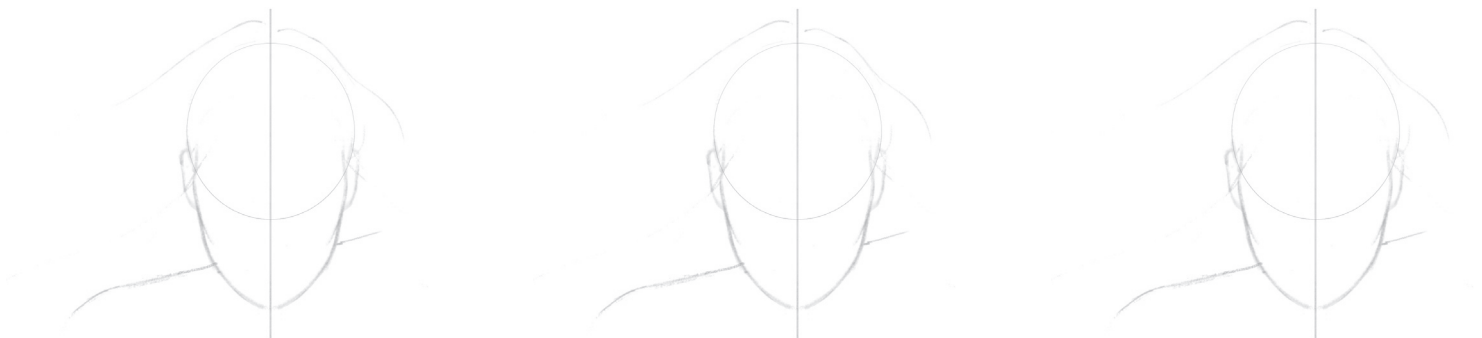
Using the templates on this page and the references above, draw the features onto these faces to achieve different looks, such as defiant, innocent – and even evil.



Now try out some different hairstyles for your character. You can also add a headdress and jewelry.



Keep in mind that the character is looking down slightly, so there should be plenty of hair visible on the top of her head.



*All hair will initiate from the center of the head and follow the geometry of a sphere. Follow the guidelines in order to work out how to place hair.*

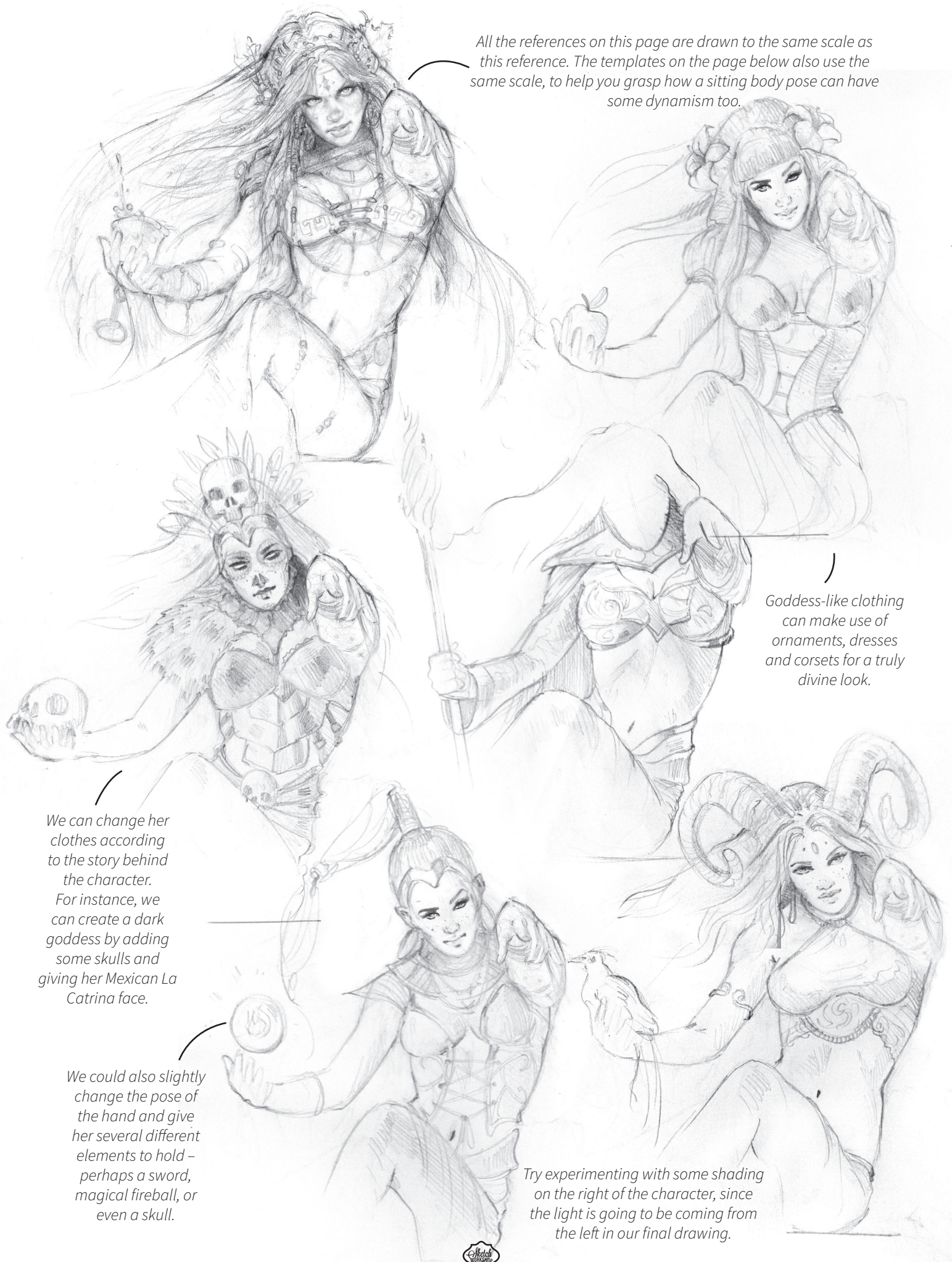
Try combining your face and hair studies into full head sketches. We'll tackle the body next...



**CHARACTERS**



All the references on this page are drawn to the same scale as this reference. The templates on the page below also use the same scale, to help you grasp how a sitting body pose can have some dynamism too.



Goddess-like clothing can make use of ornaments, dresses and corsets for a truly divine look.

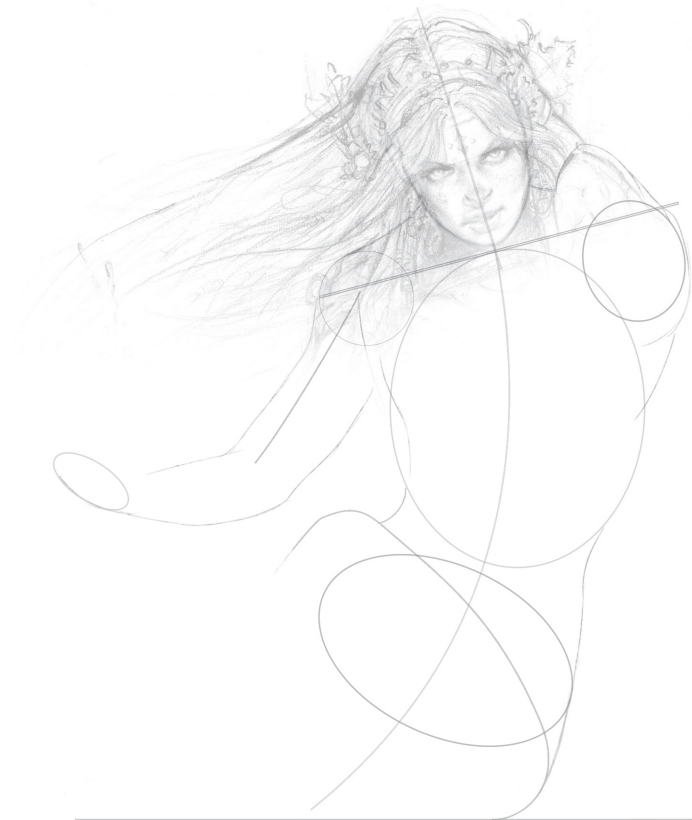
We can change her clothes according to the story behind the character. For instance, we can create a dark goddess by adding some skulls and giving her Mexican La Catrina face.

We could also slightly change the pose of the hand and give her several different elements to hold – perhaps a sword, magical fireball, or even a skull.

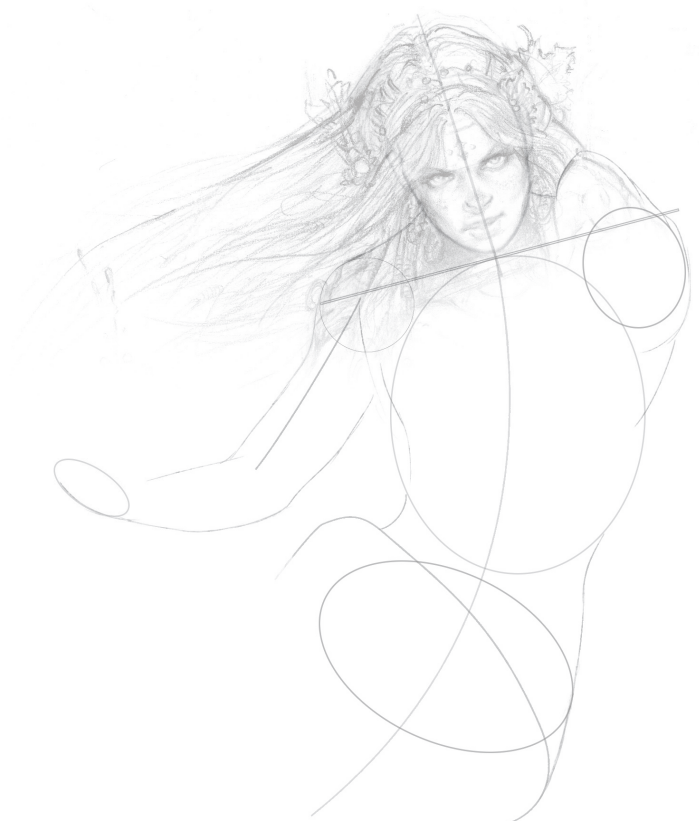
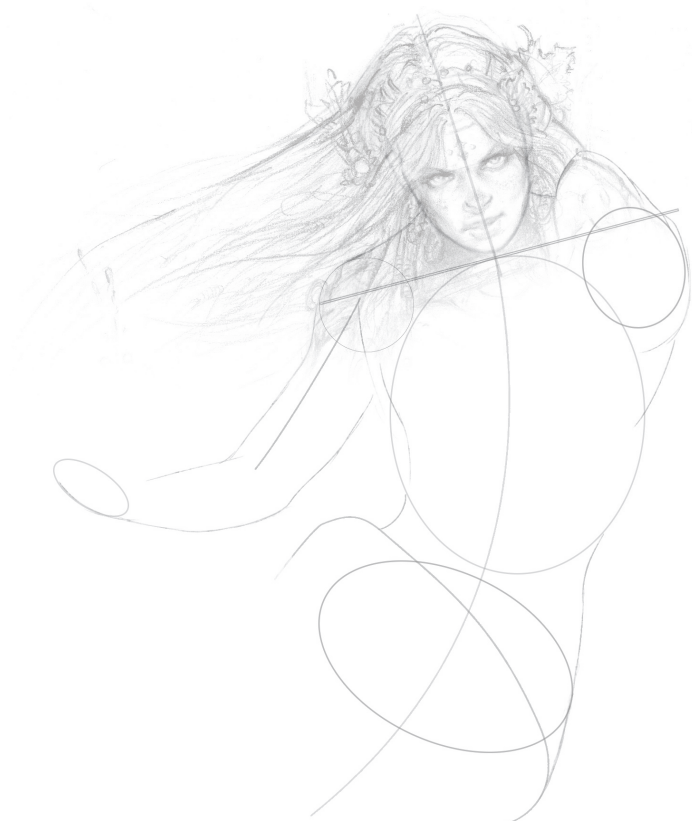
Try experimenting with some shading on the right of the character, since the light is going to be coming from the left in our final drawing.







Using the templates on this page and the references above, add the accessories and clothes to your character.



*Remember that the pose leans to the right, but it balances to the left with the head, hair and the right arm. This creates a half circle from the bottom to the top of the head.*

You should now feel confident drawing the key qualities of goddess-like characters. It's now time to combine what you've learned in a final sketch...



**CHARACTERS**

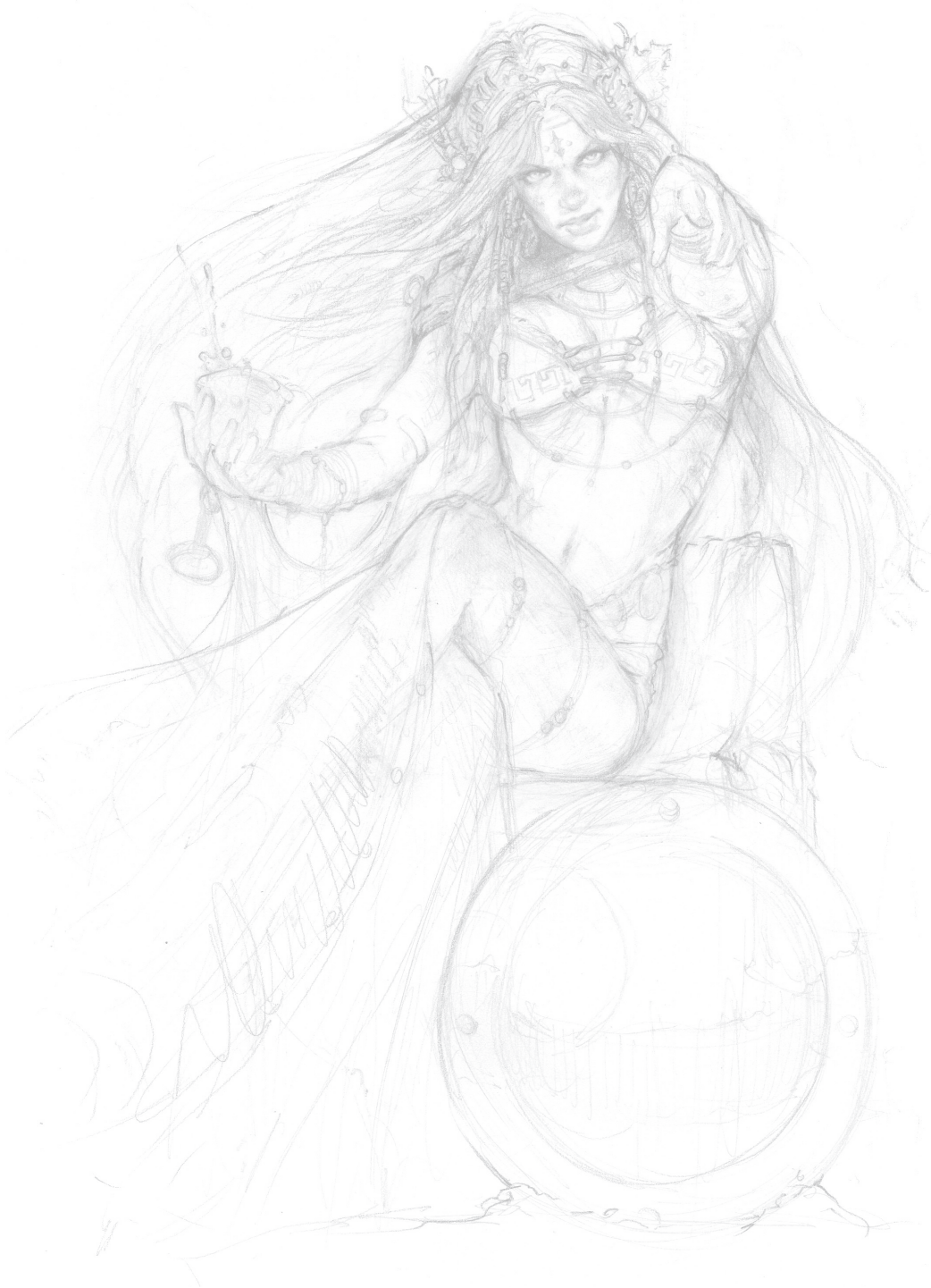
Using the template on the page below and this image as a reference, draw a sitting goddess using a dynamic and front-on perspective.



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*Whenever you want to create your own templates, remember that using circles and simplified lines gives you a foundation to draw upon. For example, it's useful to divide the body from the neck to the bottom into two sections (the thoracic cage and hips) and then join them together using a vertical line. At the top of the line, add another horizontal line (the collar bones), at the end of which you can add two more small circles (the shoulders), one on each side, to start adding the arms.*







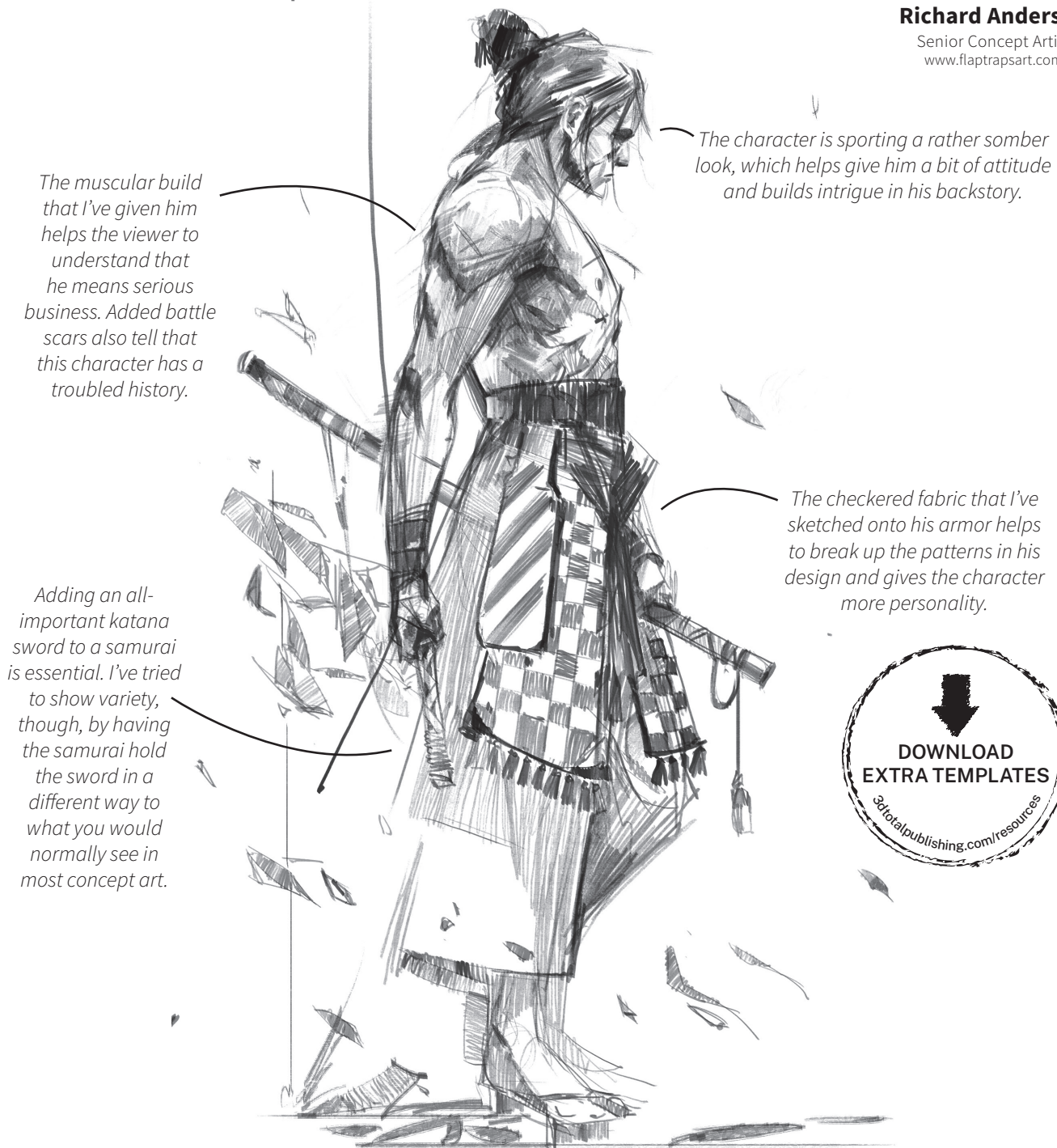


**Richard Anderson**

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# Master a samurai warrior

Discover how to draw and add shading to a dynamic samurai warrior in profile view



Designing a new character is always great fun for any artist. It allows you to use your imagination, along with helpful references, to design a complete person with an entire backstory. One of the best ways that I find to show off a character is in

profile view, which gives a dynamic look that tends to catch the eye.

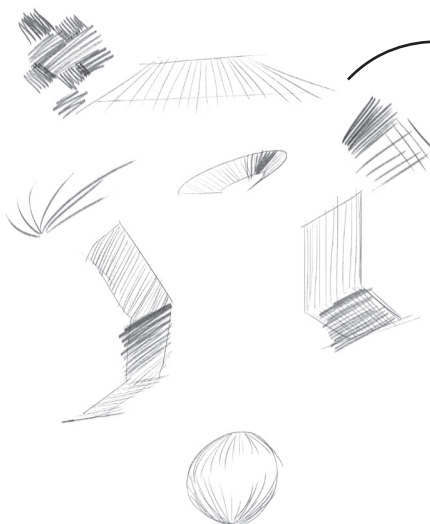
In this workshop, we'll go over how to build the muscular look of a samurai warrior in a natural stance. We'll focus on hatching and shading techniques

to give dimension to the form, while considering different materials and patterns to show various textures and outfit ideas. You will also learn how to create different weapon and armor concepts after learning the basics of building your character.

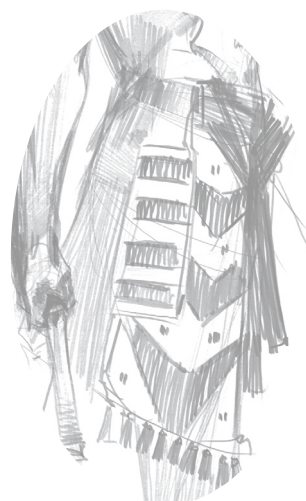




You can see from this reference image that my drawing is built up using various shapes that are shaded using different techniques to offer levels of darkness and texture. The references on this page reveal how I work from basic shapes through to a final drawing using these shading techniques.



Here is a swatch to show you some of the different strokes that I use. Try these for yourself, using either pens or pencils, to build up areas of shadow in your drawings. Following the angle of a shape helps to describe form.

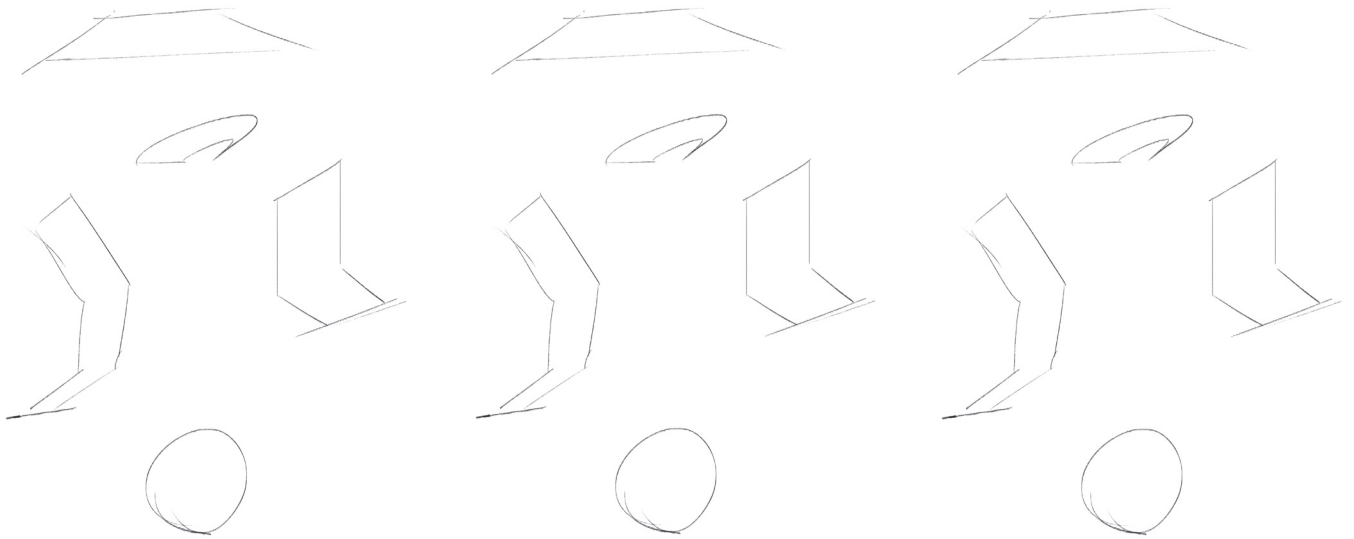


I've broken down the basic shapes from the reference image. You can see how I start to shade using hatching techniques to define shadows and bring out his muscular build.



Here, you can see the different angles of hatching in the circled areas A and B. This shows how changing the angles describes different parts of the body and which direction they flow in. For example, on the hair you can see the lines wrapping up and around his head, whereas on the chest the lines flow downwards.





Using the above templates, try practicing your hatching and shading techniques using the references provided.



Pay attention to the direction that your shapes are going in: are they side-to-side or vertical? This will help you figure out the direction your shading lines should follow.

Now you've learned these shading techniques, it's time to apply them to some different costume designs...



**CHARACTERS**



All the armor and ideas for the samurai warrior are drawn to the same scale and position of the character shown here. You can use the position of the arms, head and feet to help come up with ideas for armor and different hairstyles. It's important to have references of what actual samurai warriors used to wear and what patterns were used. On this page you can see a few examples of different armor concepts that I have come up with using the same template and positioning, so you can mix and match your favorites.

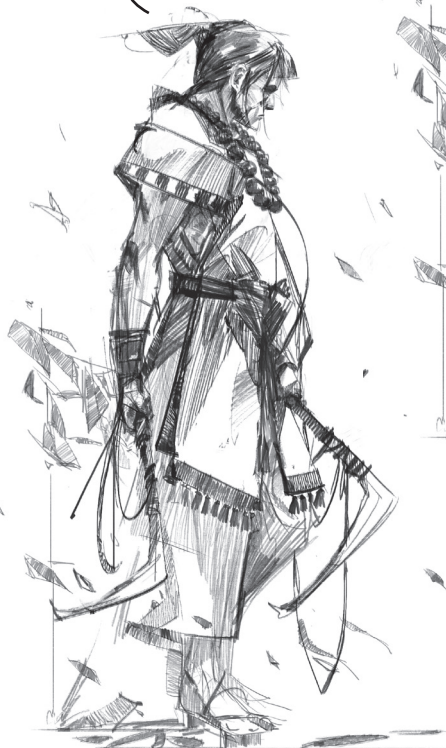


Here, I've designed a wider and bolder shape of armor that covers his upper body. By using a hatching technique, you can describe the texture of the armor.

Positioning the long spear in an opposite direction to that of the body creates contrast. Use hatch marks as a pattern to describe the cloth that he is wearing and how it fits to his body. Also, paying attention to the position of his head and face, I thought it would be cool to give him a samurai helmet that changes his silhouette.



Play with the shape of his hair and give it a more dynamic style. You can see from the template that his head is angled downwards and so this particular hairstyle adds contrast – the straight angle of his ponytail gives a more interesting silhouette. I stay with this position and do some research to find other weapons to put in his hands.



This is my favorite example. I've used the same position for the head but placed a hat on it, which hides his face and makes him more of a mysterious character. Using the shading techniques shown previously, I've given his robes darker shading than the other characters on this reference page.





Using the templates provided, try drawing the character's armor, outfits and weapon ideas to imagine your own samurai.



*Try to simplify the shapes of your armor and weapons first to make sure they are in the right position before going into them with more detail. Don't be afraid to get really creative and think outside of the box.*

So we've learned some effective shading techniques used in concept design, and explored costume ideas. Now it's time to bring it altogether in a final drawing...



**CHARACTERS**

Using the template below, try to get your shading and armor ideas down. When you're feeling more confident, try using the second – more basic – template to really get creative and try out your own ideas. You could even make a female samurai warrior using the simplified template – or a whole new warrior altogether!



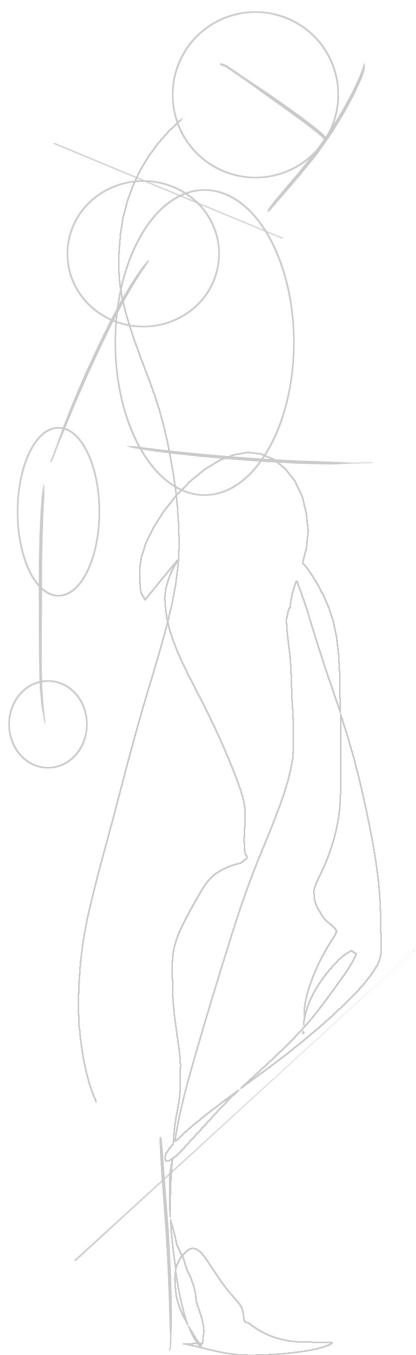
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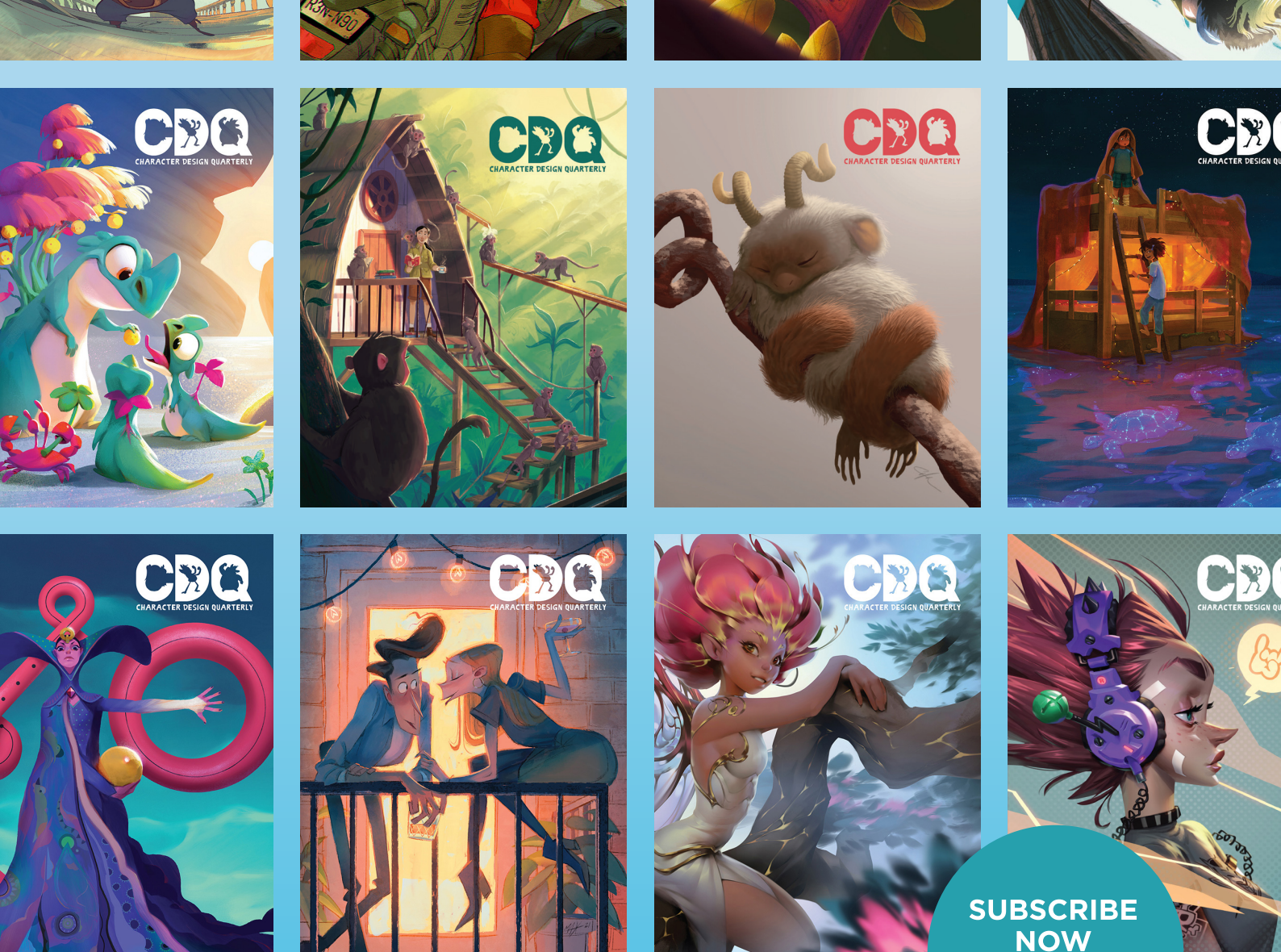


*Using what you have learned so far, it should give you an idea how to make your own templates for other characters. Just remember to find some good reference photos and try to simplify the shapes, breaking down ideas into simple forms, and then working in the details. Don't worry about making mistakes – that's how you learn, so have fun with it and get as creative as you want to.*









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