



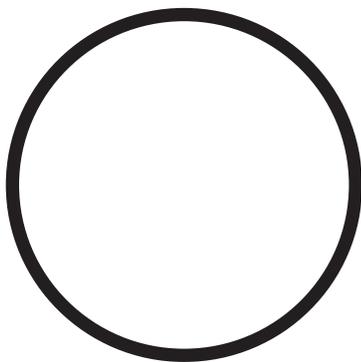
TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Shape Language

What is Shape Language?

Shape Language is a concept used in art and animation to communicate meaning based on shapes we are familiar with. When used in character, object, and background design, shapes can tell a story, show personality, and illicit an emotional response in the viewer without using any words.

When you look at these simple shapes, what do you feel?

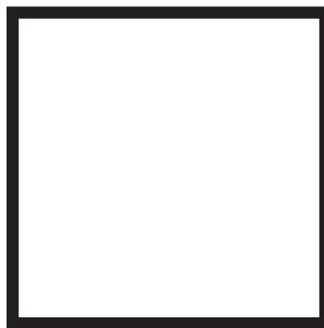


Soft, squishy

Harmless

Approachable

Changeable

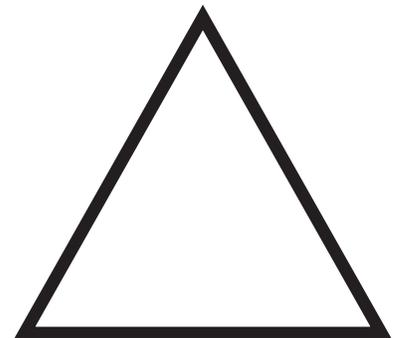


Solid, sturdy, strong

Supportive

Reliable

Inflexible



Sharp, directional

Dynamic

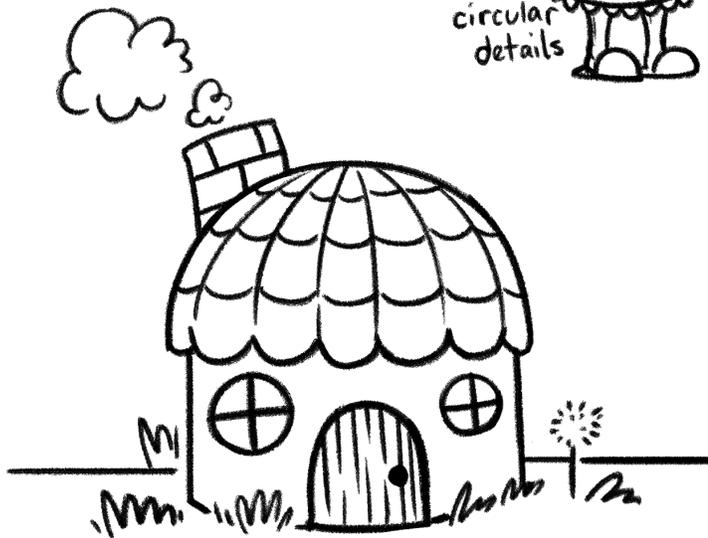
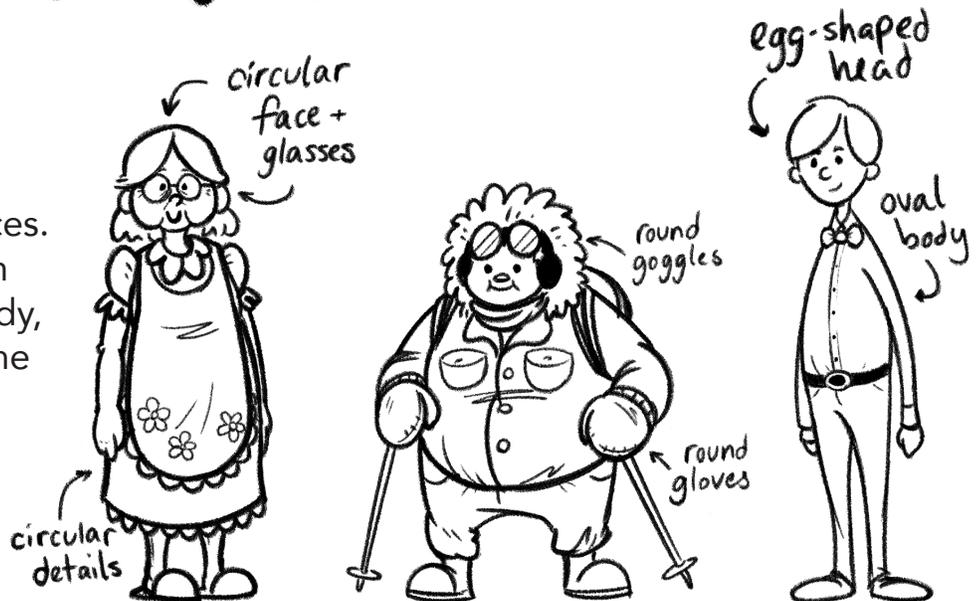
Dangerous

Unpredictable

The following pages will give simple tips and techniques of how to use these shapes in your drawings.

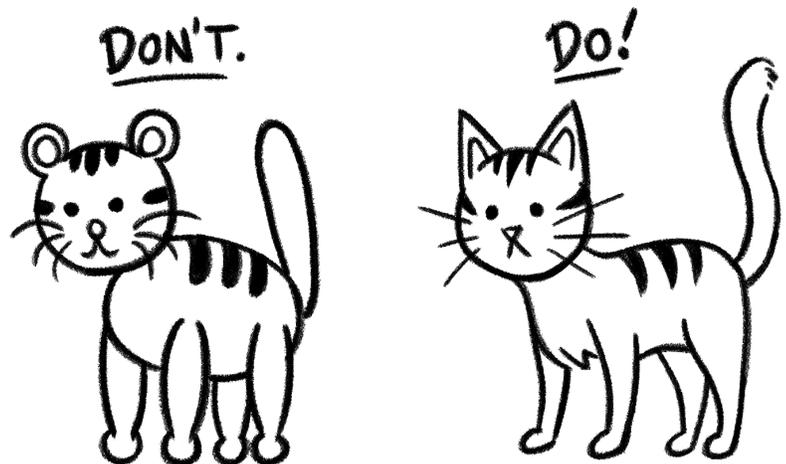
CIRCLES

TIP: Circles and ovals are great to use for friendly faces. You can also try using them in different parts of the body, clothes, and hair to show the same friendly feeling.



TECHNIQUE: Circles are organic and natural shapes. Round out edges and add curves to evoke a warm and welcoming feeling.

TRIP-UP: Don't be too literal. It's okay to mix shapes together!



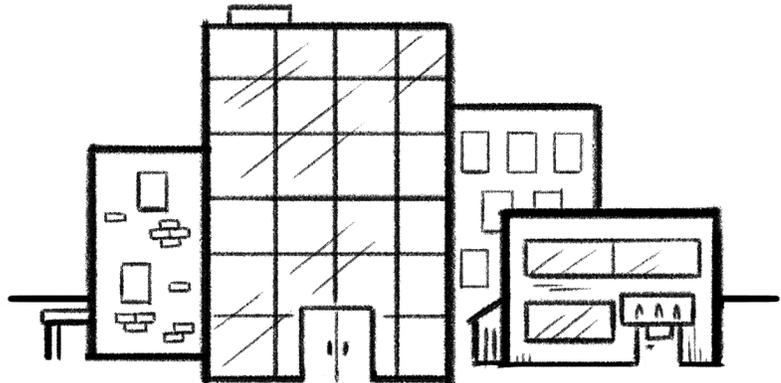
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Find out more about studio programs and virtual offerings at waltdisney.org/education-resources

SQUARES

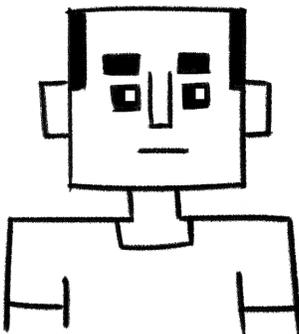


TIP: Square off things like jaws, shoulders, and even hands—they not only feel strong, but can feel difficult to move.

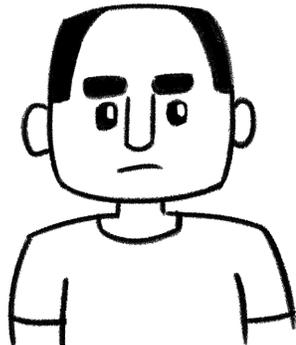
TECHNIQUE: Using squares and rectangles to block in certain aspects of a drawing can give us the sense of weight and how grounded or balanced it is. Make sure the shapes are planted flat to ensure the feeling of sturdiness.



DON'T.



DO!



TRIP-UP: Your edges and corners don't have to be perfectly pointed. They can be rounded or tapered.

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TRIANGLES

TIP: Triangles are sharp. Exaggerating the size and length of these shapes can heighten fear and transform how menacing the character is.

small triangles
(nose, ears, hair)



triangular
bags

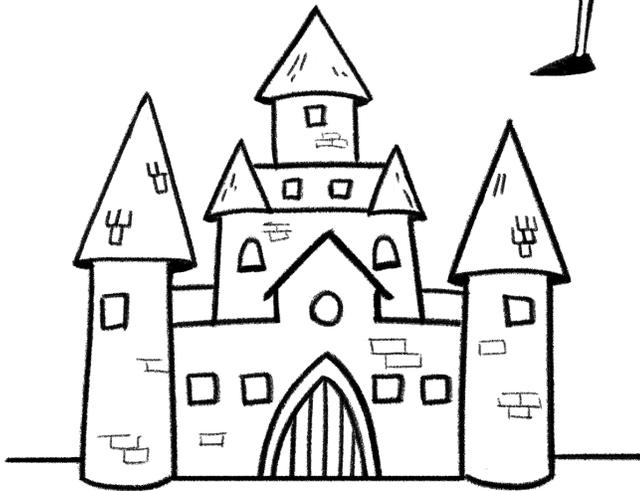
large
triangle
coattails



long, thin
head + body
triangles



wide-base
triangles



TRIP-UP: Too many points on an object can take away from what you are trying to communicate.

TECHNIQUE: When using triangles, the key word is point. How you use these points in terms of direction and quantity will suggest its functionality.



DON'T.

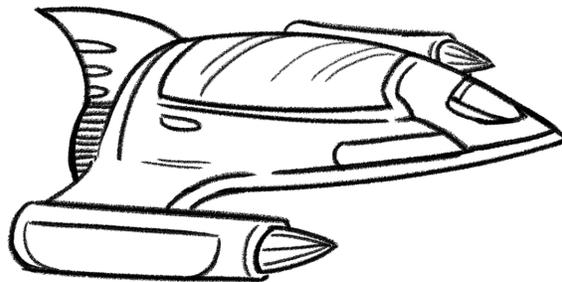


DO!

When the rules don't apply

The examples presented are general guidelines. Circles, squares, and triangles don't always mean one thing. There might be times when shapes are used to disguise the purpose or functionality of a character, object, or location.

Circles: There may be circular and rounded characters who are designed to look kind and are actually the antagonist. Using circular shapes is purposeful and can mislead the audience about who the character is. Adding circles to villains can imply their level of weakness and express that they do not have to look dangerous to be dangerous.



Triangles: These shapes don't always mean things are bad. Lots of triangular shapes on an object can allude to its strength. Triangles on a character don't always mean that they are a villain either. They can have spikes on their clothes for protection like a warrior, or points in their hair or face because they are intellectually sharp.