

How to draw a plant in a pot: form and overlap

An oval sets the pot rim; a leaf and stem can hide part of it. The main decisions are form and overlap; choose your own sizes.



Simplest



A little more detail



Best version

Simplest: Keep two plain leaves without veins. Remove their pale direction lines in the final step.

A little more detail: Draw one middle vein inside each leaf, two in total. No side branches or shading.

Best version: Add two short side branches to each middle vein. Stop them before the leaf edge; no shading.

“Trial → After checking” pairs show a choice and a local repair. You do not need to copy a diagnostic error. These pencil-style illustrations are AI-generated, not photographs of human or child drawings.

Goal and preparation

One pot with two large leaves, seen slightly from above; no flowers or soil texture. Choose a curve on a form, explain the overlap order and erase only the covered rear edge.

Use paper, an HB/2B pencil and an eraser. Start with a rough circle, oval and curve. Allow 20–35 minutes, with a break if needed. Around age 7 is a suggestion for learners familiar with these shapes, not an ability rating. To simplify, omit small details but keep both checks. To extend, try all three transfer tasks and choose your own sizes.

Technique 1. A curve on the form

The rim ellipse shows an open circular mouth. Both arcs belong to the same rim, not to two separate pots.

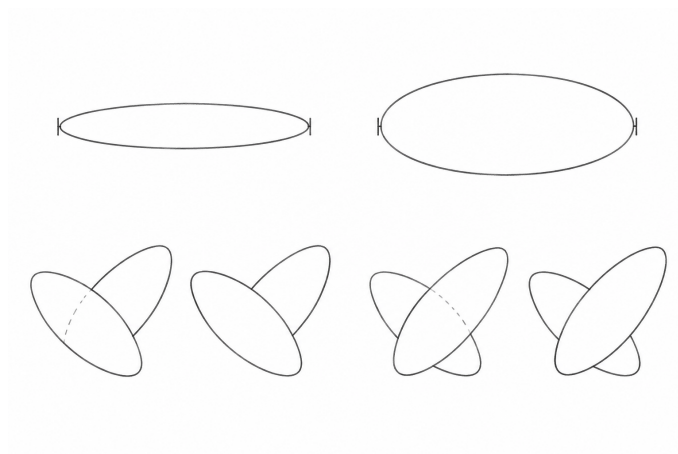
On a simple mass try the two warm-up curves: shallow, then deeper. Choose the one that better describes the selected surface or open circular rim.

Check: The curve endpoints stay on one mass; explain what the curve shows.

Technique 2. Overlap

An opaque foreground shape hides part of the rear shape. Draw two intersecting ovals, choose the front one and erase the covered rear segment. Swap the order in a second trial. Check: where does the rear line end? The criterion is at the foreground edge, not inside it.

Warm-up



Compare two ellipses of equal width: shallow and more open. Which exposes more of the opening? Then compare the trial and repair of two overlapping ovals; repeat with the other oval in front. The first exercise prepares step 2; the second prepares steps 4–5.

Step 1. Place the pot

Trial

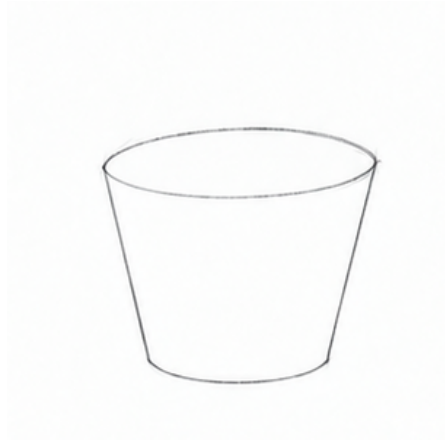


After checking



Simplest

Trial



After checking



A little more detail

Trial



After checking



Best version

Simplest: Sketch a light opening oval and two sides tapering down; join them with a rounded trial base. Leave room above the pot for leaves.

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Sketch a light opening oval and two sides tapering down; join them with a rounded trial base. Leave room above the pot for leaves.

Why: Large forms place the whole plant before details.

Check: Is there room above and to the left for two leaves?

Repair: Soften one side or move the light form lower.

Step 2. Check the rim

Trial



Trial



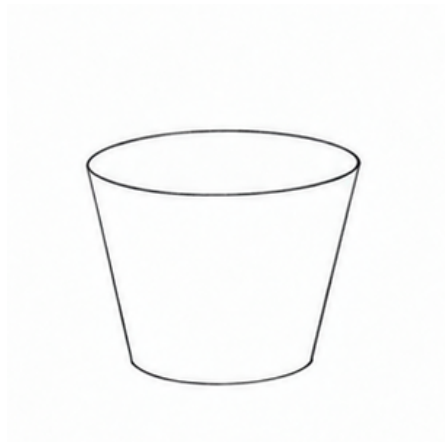
Trial



After checking



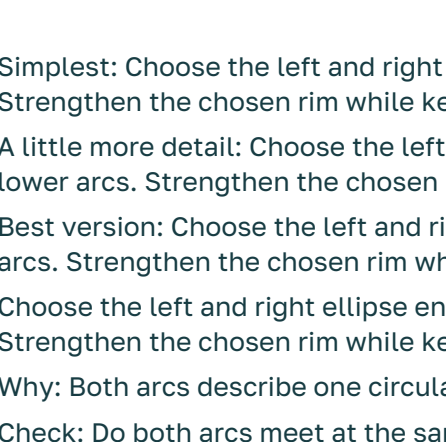
After checking



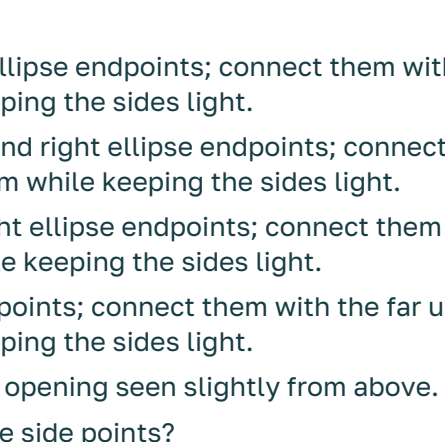
After checking



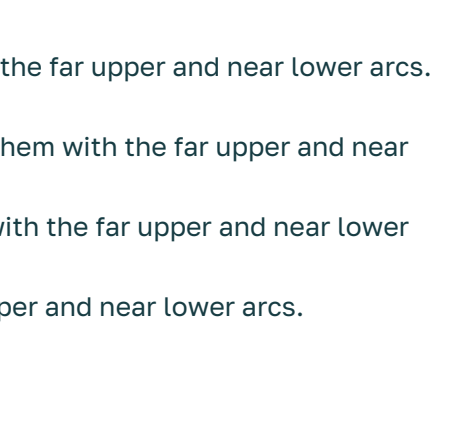
Simplest



A little more detail



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Simplest: Choose the left and right ellipse endpoints; connect them with the far upper and near lower arcs. Strengthen the chosen rim while keeping the sides light.

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Choose the left and right ellipse endpoints; connect them with the far upper and near lower arcs. Strengthen the chosen rim while keeping the sides light.

Why: Both arcs describe one circular opening seen slightly from above.

Check: Do both arcs meet at the same side points?

Repair: Repair only one endpoint while retaining the opening width.

Step 3. Place stem and leaves

Trial



After checking



Simplest

Trial



After checking



A little more detail

Trial



After checking



Best version

Simplest: Refine the sides and base. Raise a short curved stem from inside the opening; direct the right leaf up-right and bend the left leaf down-left across the near rim. Pale lines inside the leaves mark direction for now.

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Why: The leaves share one growth point; the hanging leaf becomes the foreground shape over the rim. The stem base is behind the near rim.

Check: Does the left leaf clearly cover the rim while the stem emerges from the opening?

Repair: Lower only the left leaf tip across the rim; keep the stem base inside the oval.

Step 4. Choose the hidden edge

Trial rim: full view



Trial rim: full view



Trial rim: full view



Covered section: close-up



Covered section: close-up



Covered section: close-up



Simplest

A little more detail

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Simplest: Find the trial pot-rim arc inside the lower left leaf. This is a diagnostic error, not a vein. Follow it to both leaf boundaries; the close-up shows the same area.

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The trial curve inside the lower left leaf is the covered pot rim, not a vein. It is a diagnostic comparison. The next step shows its removal in a close-up.

Find the trial pot-rim arc inside the lower left leaf. This is a diagnostic error, not a vein. Follow it to both leaf boundaries; the close-up shows the same area.

Why: The opaque foreground leaf hides the rear rim. A continuing arc inside it makes the leaf look transparent.

Check: Can you point to both places where the rear arc should stop at the leaf?

Repair: Name the foreground shape first, then select the short segment; do not erase the whole ellipse.

Step 5. Erase only the covered line

Covered edge: close-up



Covered edge: close-up



Covered edge: close-up



After erasing: close-up



After erasing: close-up



After erasing: close-up



Simplest

A little more detail

Best version

Simplest: Erase only the pot arc inside the left leaf. Preserve the leaf outline and visible rim endpoints. The close-up pair shows a local repair; keep your own drawing at its original size.

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Erase only the pot arc inside the left leaf. Preserve the leaf outline and visible rim endpoints. The close-up pair shows a local repair; keep your own drawing at its original size.

Why: Removing the hidden line commits the order: leaf in front, pot rim behind.

Check: Is only the covered arc gone, with the adjacent visible lines reaching the leaf?

Repair: Restore a short visible endpoint up to the leaf boundary if the eraser touched it; keep the hidden arc erased.

Step 6. Add the useful details

Trial



After checking



Simplest

Trial



After checking



A little more detail

Trial



After checking



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Simplest: Keep two plain leaves without veins. Remove their pale direction lines in the final step. Keep the pale axis until the final check.

A little more detail: Draw one middle vein inside each leaf, two in total. No side branches or shading. Keep the pale axis until the final check.

Best version: Add two short side branches to each middle vein. Stop them before the leaf edge; no shading. Keep the pale axis until the final check.

Choose the detail level: plain leaves in the simplest route; strengthen one middle line in each leaf in the next route; add two short side branches to each vein in the best route. A pale axis still helps the check.

Why: Veins follow the leaf directions already found and preserve the checked silhouette.

Check: Does every vein stay within its own leaf, with side branches stopping before the edge?

Repair: Shorten only a misplaced endpoint, or soften an unnecessary vein in the simplest route.

Step 7. Remove the guides

Trial



Trial



Trial



After checking



After checking



After checking



Simplest

A little more detail

Best version

Simplest: Remove the axis, endpoint ticks and pale direction lines that did not become veins. Keep the chosen silhouette, visible arcs and only the explained details.

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Why: Temporary supports helped make choices, but not all belong to the plant surface.

Check: Are there fewer guides, with the rim still stopping at the left leaf?

Repair: Restore only an accidentally erased visible endpoint; do not trace the entire drawing again.

If the drawing is unclear

The leaf looks transparent. Cause: The pot arc continues inside the foreground leaf. Repair: Remove only the arc inside the leaf; retain its outline and the adjacent rim.

The curve does not belong to the form. Cause: Its endpoints escaped the mass boundary. Repair: Soften one endpoint and return it to the side marker from step 2.

There is a gap after erasing. Cause: The eraser touched the visible rim next to the leaf. Repair: Restore a short endpoint up to the leaf boundary; leave the hidden segment erased.



Covered line: close-up

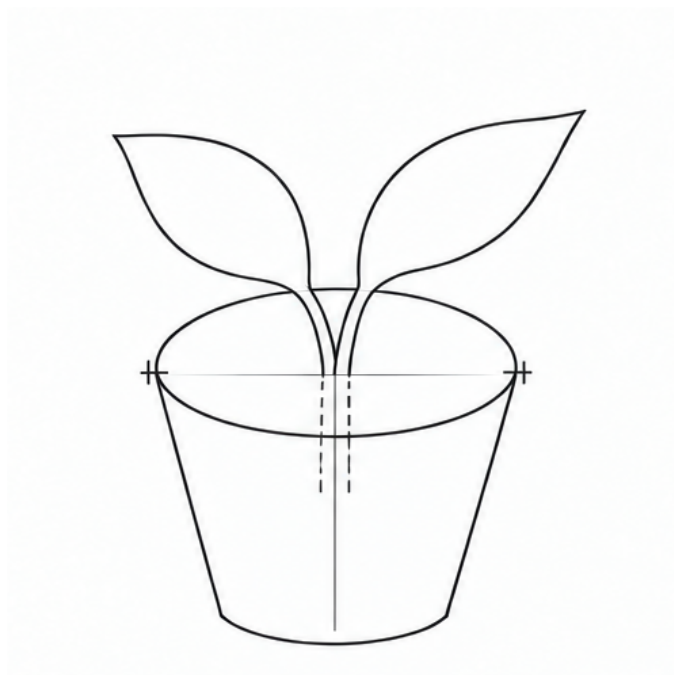


After erasing

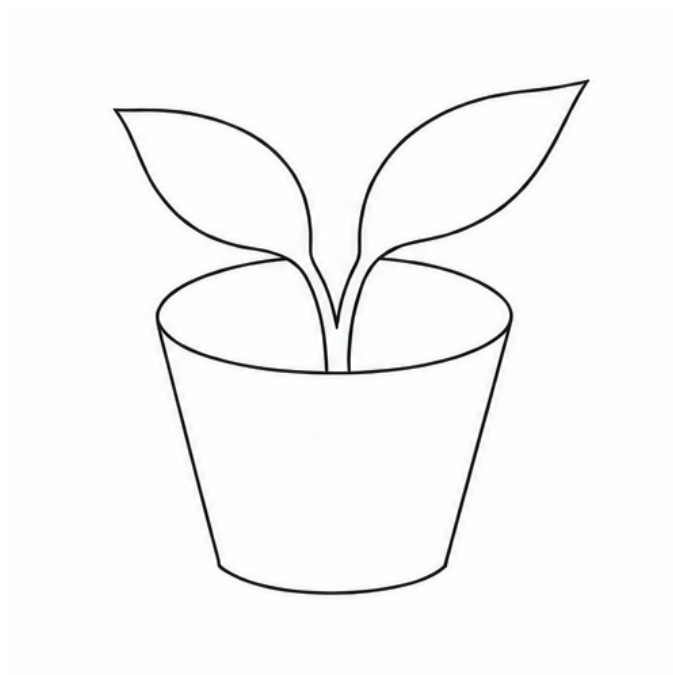
Independent tasks

Choose one new condition below. First construct your own masses and curve, name the foreground form, then draw the edge and erase the covered section. The construction-to-example pair explains the change; build rather than copy a finished outline. Your sizes and uneven lines may differ.

1. A more open top view



Construction: a new condition



Example after removing guides

Make the ellipse taller at the same width; lift the leaves clear of the rim. Place the stem inside the opening and decide where the near rim hides its base.

Why: The new top view exposes more of the opening and changes the visible intersections.

Check: Is the stem base behind the near rim, with both arcs belonging to one ellipse?

Repair: Erase the bottom stem ends behind the near rim; keep the visible arc.

2. A leaf in front of the far rim



Construction: a new condition



Example after removing guides

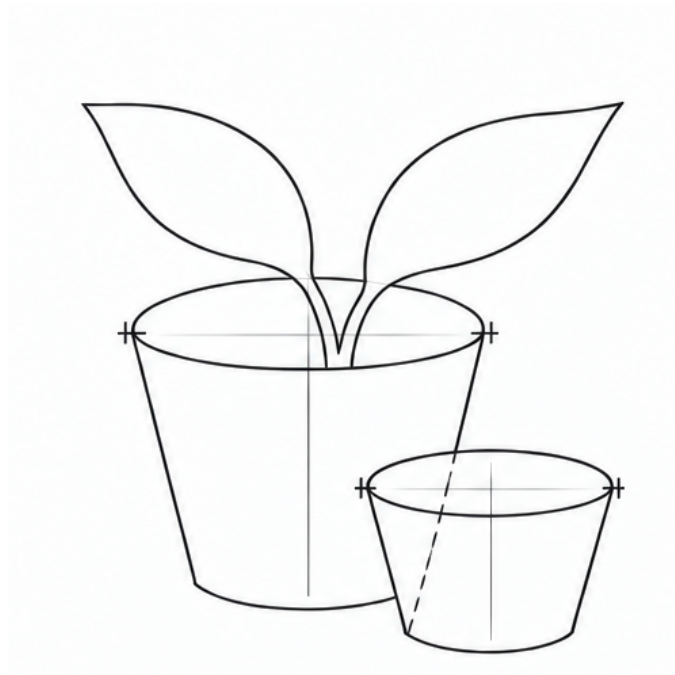
Keep the ellipse shallow. Direct the left leaf sideways across the far left arc; keep the near rim in front of the stem base. Locate the newly covered section.

Why: The leaf now hides a different arc; the old erasing location cannot simply be repeated.

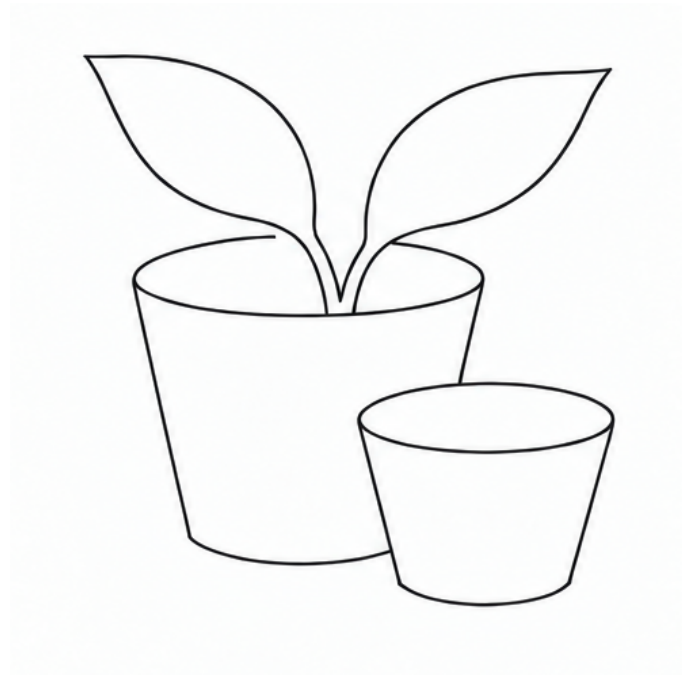
Check: Does the far arc stop at the leaf while the near arc stays visible?

Repair: Erase only the far arc inside the leaf; restore the near rim if the eraser touched it.

3. A second pot in front



Construction: a new condition



Example after removing guides

Place a small empty pot lower right in front of the first. Construct its own ellipse and find the large pot's right-side section that it covers.

Why: A familiar form in a new arrangement requires choosing the foreground object again.

Check: Does the rear side stop at the small pot, whose outline remains uninterrupted?

Repair: Remove only the large pot's sloping edge inside the small one.

Self-check

Name the changed condition, point to a curve on your new mass and show where the rear edge stops. Explain which guide you erased after checking.

Question: Why does the rear edge stop at an opaque foreground shape?

Answer: The foreground shape hides that segment. Continuing the rear edge inside it would suggest transparency. Retain the visible end up to the overlap.

Uneven lines are fine. Explain your chosen curve and where the rear edge stops. The example does not prescribe the only proportions. Structure and illustrations received editorial checks; no classroom trial has been conducted.