

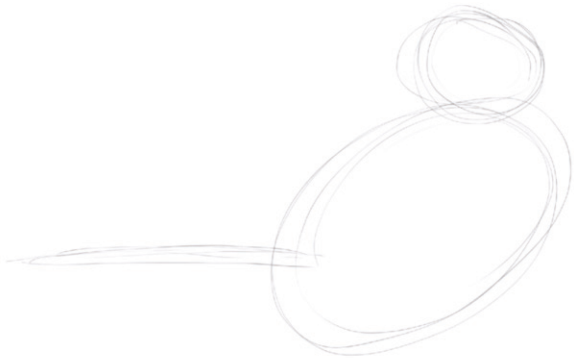
## How to Draw a Chickadee with David Sibley



❶ For any bird drawing it's helpful to begin with an oval for the body and a circle for the head just to get the basic proportions started. The oval for the body should be tilted depending on how you want the finished bird to be posed. I'm starting with an oval angled up a bit.



❷ For the head, draw a smaller circle, balanced on top of the oval of the body. Birds have long necks (under their feathers) and the head can move around a lot, in this drawing I've placed it high and far back.



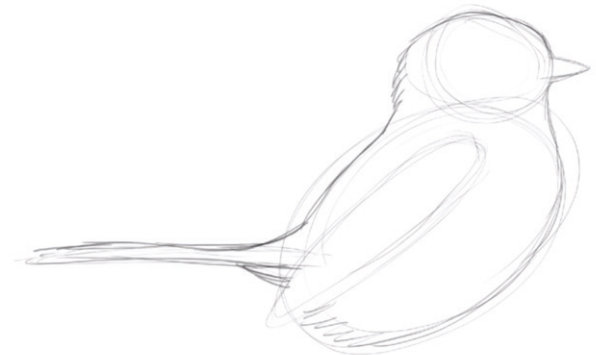
❸ The tail in this drawing will be more or less horizontal, extending back from the farthest left part of the body oval. Like the head, a bird's tail can move around a lot.



❹ The wings fold up against the side of the body into a long narrow oval shape starting just below the head and following the same angle as the body.



❺ The chickadee's bill is a small narrow triangle coming off the front of the head.



❻ Now we can start creating the outline of the feathers. The bird is shaped by feathers, and feathers help to streamline the body so that the bird can slide easily through the air as it moves forward. All of the feathers grow towards the back of the body, and the outline is all smooth curves. Only the back end of the body and the back of the head can be a little fluffy.



7 Putting the eye in the right place can be tricky. Imagine a line coming straight back from the top of the bill. The eye will be on that line and a little bit forward of the center of the head.



8 This being a chickadee it has a black cap, white cheek, and black throat. The border of the black cap goes right through the eye, curving up a little bit at the front and back, with black feathers down the back of the neck. The black throat patch forms a triangle when viewed from the side.



9 Feathers overlap the front edge of the wing. The wing coverts form a panel on the forward half of the wing, while the large flight feathers are stacked up to form the rear half of the wing. When the wing is folded all that we see is the edges of these feathers leading back to the wingtip.



10 Add some shading to the belly, remembering that all of the feathers grow toward the tail, so it's important to keep your pencil strokes going in that direction as well.



11 A bird is usually balanced over its feet. Try to imagine where the balance point of the body would be (the tail weighs almost nothing) and put the feet under that point. The legs go back toward the tail and then at the "ankle" joint turn and disappear into the feathers of the body.

Have fun! Experiment! Try starting a drawing with the head circle in a different position, or finish with the legs and feet in different positions and see how that changes the bird's appearance.

*Drawings by David Sibley*