

Vector art

Step 1: Set Up Your Document

1. Open Adobe Illustrator.
2. Create a new document (File > New), choosing the appropriate size for your character design.

Step 2: Use the Pen Tool to Create Outlines

The **Pen Tool (P)** is essential for creating precise paths and shapes for your vector character.

1. **Select the Pen Tool (P)** from the toolbar.
2. Click to create anchor points for the outlines of your character.
 - **Straight lines:** Click once to create the starting point, then click again where you want the next point.
 - **Curved lines:** Click and drag to create direction handles that curve the path.
3. Connect all anchor points to form the basic outline of your character.
 - You can adjust curves by selecting the **Direct Selection Tool (A)** and dragging the direction handles.
4. After creating the outline, close the path by clicking on the starting anchor point.

Step 3: Use the Brush Tool for Detailing

The **Brush Tool (B)** is great for adding organic, hand-drawn details, textures, and strokes to your vector character.

1. **Select the Brush Tool (B)** from the toolbar.
2. Choose a brush from the **Brush panel** (Window > Brushes).
 - Use basic round brushes for clean strokes or artistic brushes for more texture.
3. Start drawing over your outlines to add details like hair, clothing, or features like eyes and mouth. You can adjust the brush size and style to match the desired effect.
4. Hold **Shift** to draw straight lines or use the **Smooth Tool** (under the Pencil Tool) to refine any rough strokes.
5. You can convert a drawn stroke to a vector path by selecting the stroke and going to **Object > Expand** to turn it into a filled shape.

Step 4: Fill Color in Your Vector Character

1. **Create Color Swatches:** In the **Swatches panel**, you can pick from preset colors, or create custom swatches by selecting the **Fill** color and using the color picker (Window > Color).
 - For custom colors, use the **Color Picker** to adjust the RGB, CMYK, or Hex values.
2. **Select a Shape/Path:** Use the **Selection Tool (V)** to select a path or closed shape you want to color.
3. **Fill Color:**

- To fill a path with color, click on the **Fill box** in the toolbar and choose a color.
 - Alternatively, use the **Eyedropper Tool (I)** to sample colors from other elements in your design.
4. **Apply Color to Brush Strokes:**
 - After using the Brush Tool, select the stroke, and choose a color in the **Color panel** to apply it.
 - If you want to apply a fill to a brush stroke, you may need to convert it to a shape first using the **Expand** function.
 5. **Gradient Fills (Optional):**
 - For more complex shading or textures, use the **Gradient Tool (G)** to apply gradient fills for smooth transitions between colors.
 - Create gradients in the **Gradient panel** (Window > Gradient) and apply them to your character's shapes.
 6. **Rearrange Layers:**
 - If necessary, use the **Layers panel (F7)** to organize elements, ensuring fill colors are applied correctly on top of or behind other parts of the character.

Step 5: Final Touches

- **Refine Details:** Use the **Direct Selection Tool (A)** to adjust any paths or anchor points for smoother lines.
- **Add Shadows and Highlights:** Use darker or lighter shades for depth by creating additional shapes or using the **Opacity** slider in the **Transparency panel**.
- **Outline Text:** If your character includes any text, you can outline it (Type > Create Outlines) to turn it into a vector object.

Step 6: Save Your Work

1. **Save as .AI** (File > Save As) to keep the project in a fully editable format.
2. For export, save as a **.SVG, .PNG, .JPG**, or other desired file type (File > Export).