

Drawing Chibi Style



a quick guide
by

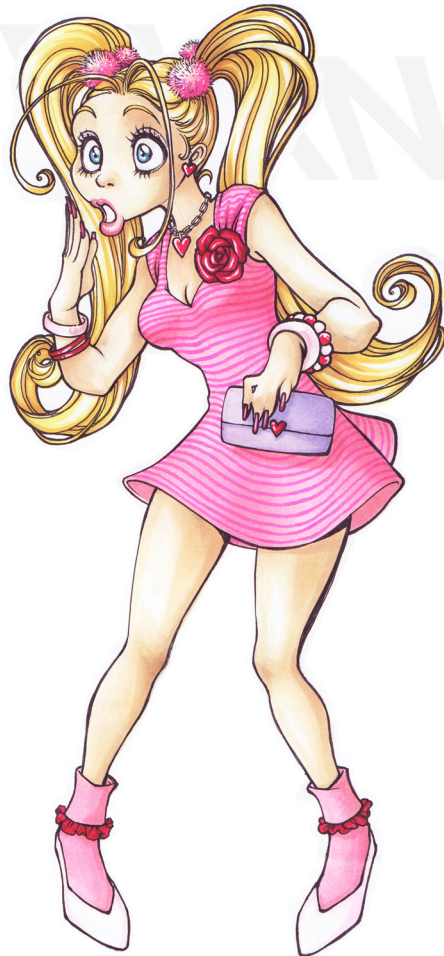
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Chibi, also known as "super-deformed," is a style (specifically found in Japanese anime/manga) in which a character is drawn with child-like or exaggerated features. Super-deformed characters are used in a variety of situations, such as comical/joking or cute events, moments of embarrassment, or "inner monologues."

SD doesn't necessarily mean simpler - the amount of detail you want to have in your SD drawings is completely up to you. The "stage" of chibi is also completely up to the artist, and can range from looking child-like to looking very abstract, like a doll. One important key with chibis though, is to be able to select the key features of your character: eye shape, hairstyle, etc - and to reproduce them in SD form.

In the diagram below, I've taken an original character design of a girl, and drew 3 other SD caricatures in various "SD" stages.

<http://mangastart.com>



Original Character

Chibi #1 retains a lot of the original detail found in the original character. All facial features (eyes, nose, mouth) are present, and the arms and legs have various widths/muscle definition.



Chibi #1

Chibi #2 is what I would consider the middle-ground of SD styles: the face is much rounder, and the body is greatly shortened and the limbs are more solid in shape rather than having any muscle definition.

At this point, exaggeration of certain features becomes important: the eyes are much larger, while the hands and feet have shrunk considerably to add to the "cute" feeling.



Chibi #2

Chibi #3 is an extreme abstraction of the original character. In this case, there are less details, and the drawing is much more simplified. Certain features, such as the eyes and the hands, are very simplified, which adds a strong cuteness factor.

However, even though the detail may have been simplified, you can still see the same emotion on her face on all 4 drawings.



Chibi #3

Some Drawing Tips:

1. Before you start any drawing, plan ahead, and know what your character is doing: what emotion is he/she feeling? What is he/she wearing? It helps to know all these details ahead of time so you can pick and choose what to exaggerate (or not draw) in your SD version.
2. Experiment with different abstractions and styles: everyone draws chibis differently- some like to have very detailed chibis, others like to draw them very simplified. Keep in mind that Chibi is simply the fundamental characteristic that can be described as "a child-like version of a character."
3. Sometimes it can be easy to overdo it. Even if you are exaggerating or abstracting your character, all of the fundamental rules of proportion, symmetry, and composition apply. Don't ignore all of the lessons you've learned while drawing chibi!