Eyes

The eyes are one of the most important features of anime style characters; they are the most expressive parts of the face, and are part of what makes each character different and recognizable. Thus, it is very important to be able to draw them correctly. In this section of the general face tutorial, I will show you how to draw a variety of anime style eyes. A lot of other sites only show you how to draw large female eyes, without really going over the large variety of other styles. In this tutorial, I will cover different types of male and female anime eyes, plus give you examples of numerous other styles for you to use to help you draw your own original characters, or to refine your style with existing characters.

Female Eyes

Lets begin with the most basic and common of anime eyes, the large female type. Start off by drawing a line that curves upwards, and is slightly thicker at the highest point. This eye will be on the right side of the face, so make the left end of the curved line higher than the right. The top of this particular eye (Lina Inverse's eye, (from Slayers) actually ^.^) isn't a perfect curve; it is slightly angular. Some styles of eyes are nearly perfectly curved on the top.

Next, you want to draw in the lower part of the eye. To help you place the lower half, lightly draw diagonal lines pointing down, starting at the edges of the top part of the eye. The steepness of the slope of these lines will determine how large and wide the eye will be. If you look at the other tutorials on this page, you will see that the steepness of these lines varies. Using these lines as a guide, draw the lower part of the eye. It should slope down to the right a little, and should be thicker at the right corner.

Erase the guidelines and draw a long oval within the eye. Some characters have large circles for irises, but this particular one has thin ovals. You can adjust the shape so it's wider, if you like. Make part of the oval obscured by the upper part of her eye. With all styles, the complete iris is rarely visible; part of it almost always is concealed by the border of the eye.

Next, draw the outline of the light glares. Anime characters' eyes should always have at least some sort of shading. Anime females in particular tend to have really heavy shading and lots of shiny areas. Make sure you choose a light source, and stick with it throughout your picture. For example, since the light is coming from the left in this picture, I have to make sure all the highlights on the rest of the picture originate from the left, or the lighting will be inconsistent (unless I'm using multiple light sources, but I won't get into that). Draw two long ovals: a large one on the left side of the iris (which overlaps the outline of the iris, as you can see), and a very small one on the other side of the eye.

Next, draw the pupil underneath the light glares. The highlights are always on top; never draw the pupil on top of the light glares. Draw the eyelashes, too; with this particular eye, the eyelashes are a series of spikes coming off of the top-right part of the eye. Make the spikes follow the curve of the eye, so it looks like they are coming off of the eye; don't just draw zig-zag lines sticking out of her eye. ^_~ Also, draw the eyelid on the left part of the eye. Its just a thin, curved line originating from the top of her eye.

Set Layer 1 to "Preserve Transparency" by checking the box on the Layers menu, as shown at the left. This allows you to paint on top of the existing lines without coloring over them and messing them up. Its a very handy feature. :) Select a big paintbrush and paint over the entire picture with pure black. The outline should be back to its former darkened self. :)

Okay, now we are going to draw another style, one that isn't as common. This eye is much more slender, elegant, and realistic looking, and is used in more serious anime and manga. This particular eye belongs to Deedlit from Record of Lodoss War, which is a considerably more serious show than Slayers (which is where the previous eye came from). Begin by drawing a long, slightly curved line. The left side should be lower than the right, and the line should curve in sharply at the left edge.

To help you define the sides and bottom of the eye, lightly draw two diagonal guidelines that originate from the edges of the eye. Unlike the previous tutorial, these lines are not very steep; the more horizontal the lines are, the smaller the eye will be. Don't make them too flat, though, because you don't want this eye to be too squinty. Using the guidelines, draw the bottom line of the eye.

Erase the guidelines and draw the outline of the iris. If there were no eyelids, the iris would be a perfect circle. However, since the iris is bordered by the eyelids, the top and bottom of the iris will be hidden from view. The iris should not be so small that you can see the entire thing (unless you wanted to convey certain emotions like anger or surprise, but that is covered in another section).

Next, draw the light glares on the iris. The placement is the same as in the previous tutorial, but like the iris itself, the glares are much smaller and more circular. Draw the eyelid above the top line of the eye, as well.

Draw the eyebrow and shading in the rest of the iris. Remember to draw the pupil beneath the light glares, and to make it stand out from the rest of the eye a little no matter how darkly you shade the rest of the iris.

Here are a variety of other styles of female eyes you can make using the same methods. Try to see the differences between each style, as well as the similarities. Though the shape and proportions change, the top border of the eyes is always thicker, there are always multiple layers of shading on the irises, etc. Some of these were sketched fairly quickly and are a little messy, but I hope they are still helpful. ^.^;

Male Eyes

Next we will draw some male eyes. Male characters are sometimes neglected by fan artists, because many fan artists have trouble drawing guys. They really aren't that hard, though, just different. Most male eyes are more thin and narrow than female eyes, though there are several exceptions. This particular eye (which I think belongs to Hotohori from Fushigi Yuugi) is narrower than other female eyes, without being so thin that it looks like it belongs to a more shady, suspicious character. ^_^ Begin by drawing a thick, very slightly curved line. Its almost horizontal, but still has a slight curve to it. The edges should curve inwards a little, more so on the left.
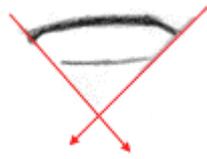
Lightly draw two diagonal lines, starting from the edges of the top line, to help define the lower part of the eye. The lines are almost perpendicular to each other. Don't make them too steep or too flat, or the size of the eye will be off. Draw the lower line of the eye, using the guidelines to help you position it.

Erase the guidelines and draw the iris. The iris is a perfect circle, but is paritally covered up by the eyelids. Do not draw the iris so small that you can see the entire thing (unless trying to convey a strong emotion like surprise or anger, which is covered in the expressions section).

Male characters have light glares in their eyes, too, though they often are not as large or obvious. Draw one oval light glare on the left side of the eye, and a pointed one on the right side.

Draw the pupil benath the light glares and shade heavily, especailly if the character has darker colored eyes. Draw the eyelid and eyelash. Male characters tend to have darker, thicker eyebrows, so make sure they aren't too thin. There, that wasn't too hard, was it? ^_^ Don't worry if the eyes look too 'girly'; often times its hard to tell if some eyes belong male or female characters. Some styles of eyes are interchangable and can be used for either gender.

Slender, narrow eyes are often (but not always) associated with darker, brooding characters. Villains often have narrower eyes, but not all characters with such eyes are antagonistic. To draw this style of eye, start with a long, curved line. Notice that the curve is steeper on the left hand side than the right.
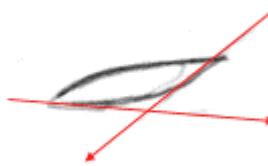
Next, draw two diagonal guidelines from the edges of the top of the eye. The angle of these lines are different from the ones in the three previous tutorials; the left one is much flatter than the the right. Draw in the lower part of the eye using the guidelines; it should be curved, rather than a straight line, so that the entire eye is like an elongated, pointy oval.

Erase the guidelines and draw the iris. The iris is covered up by the upper eyelid; if the eyelids weren't there, the iris would be a perfect circle. Thicken the lines on the right side of the eye.

Draw in the light glares, as well as the upper eyelid on top of the eye.

Finish up the eye by adding the pupil and shading the iris, and adding the eyebrow. Smooth and darken your lines, and you're done. ^_^

Here is a collection of male eyes. Notice that some could be mistaken for female eyes; the difference between the two genders isn't always that distinct, especially in young children. Most of the eyes here are narrower than the female eyes, and the tops of their eyes aren't as thick. Male characters don't always have light glares on their eyes, but I tend to draw them in anyway. ;)
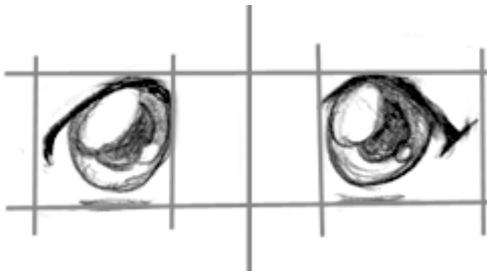
Once you have the right eye drawn, you're probably going to want to draw the left eye, too. ^_^ All you have to do is draw the mirror image of the exact same eye. The placement of the second eye can be tricky, though. Anime eyes, no matter what style, are always drawn about one eye length apart. The distance may be a little more or less, but one eye length is a good measurement.
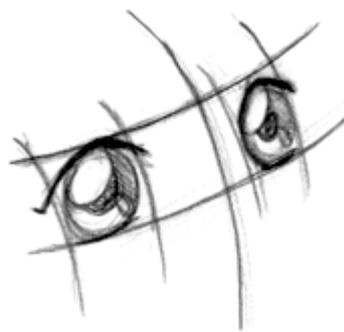
You probably are not always going to draw your characters facing towards you, though, so you'll need to know how to line up eyes at different angles. On the head portion of this general face tutorial, you will see that I use curved guidelines to define where I'm going to place the eyes. Always draw guidelines to help you position the eyes, until you are really good at it and no longer need them. You don't want the eyes to be off-center. Notice that in this picture, the right eye is smaller and flatter than the left since it's further away from you.

This is pretty much the same thing, except the head is tilted in the other direction. In this picture, the left eye is smaller than the right. Both eyes still follow the curve of the face. Eyes that don't line up properly can look very sloppy, so be careful.

Nose and Mouth

Anime style noses and mouths are pretty straightforward, so rather than taking you through various styles step by step, I have several examples for you to use.

Here is your basic anime style nose and mouth. It consists of three basic simple shapes: a wedge for the nose, a long, thin line for the mouth, and a shorter line to define the lower lip (this lower line is not always included, though). In frontal views like this, you can get away with using very few lines to define the nose and mouth. The size and shape of each feature varies with each character. Always make sure the features line up; to help you line them up, draw vertical guidelines as shown. In the second picture, the face is turned to the side, but the features are still aligned along the curved guideline that represents the center of the face.

Drawing the nose and mouth for a profile is more difficult than drawing them from the front or at a 3/4 view. The main reason for this is because you can't get away with not defining the lips as much. ^_^ You have to draw them in, rather than using just simple straight lines. Despite the difficultly, if you get it right, it can look really nice. The main thing to consider is the curve of the nose, lips, and chin. The upper lip curves inward, and lower lip (which is slightly receded on the face) curves outward. It may take some practice before you can get it to look like the character isn't making a weird face or puckering their lips or anything like that. ^_~

The lower half of the face consists of a series of contrasting curves. Notice that how in both pictures, the nose curves in towards the face, then curves back slightly out right above the upper lip. The
 upper lip curves inward, and the lower lip curves outward. The chin is not just a straight line; it is round and curves outward.
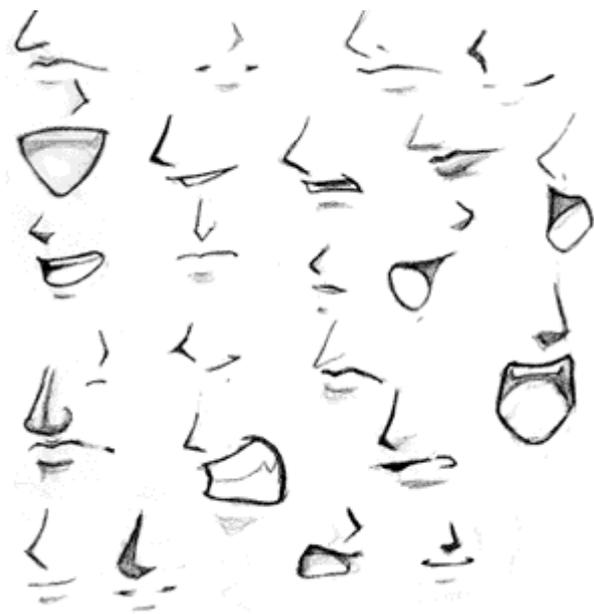
Here is a selection of examples of different styles of mouths and noses. Several of these can be used for either gender, do I didn't bother separating them. ^_^ Notice that with some styles, the mouth is defined by only a thin, straight line, while with other styles, the lips are more well defined. Anime mouths are not often very large, unless the character is yelling or shouting, so keep them relatively small. The noses vary quite a lot, as well; some are drawn as wedges, some are defined solely with shading, and some are detailed enough that you can see the nostrils. Female characters will tend to have smaller, less defined noses, while male characters will often have longer, angular noses.

Here are some more examples of noses and mouths, drawn at a profile. Even though the proportions and expressions change, they all stick to the same basic shape as mentioned above. When drawing faces at this angle, be careful not to make the noses really pointy and the face too flat. Make sure the features curve properly, or the face is not going to turn out looking right.

Shape of the Head

In this tutorial, I'm going to show you how to draw basic anime faces from various angles. Though the faces here are standard anime female faces, the proportions I show you here can be adjusted to fit any sort of character you wish to draw. ^_^
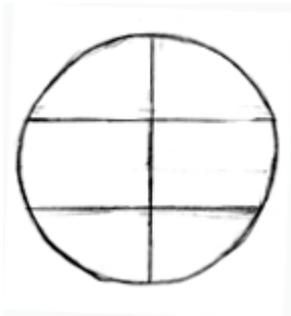
Front View

Begin by drawing a large circle. Divide this circle horizontally into thirds, and cut it in half with a vertical line. Do not worry if your horizontal lines don't split the face into even pieces; the proportions will be different depending on the style of face you want to draw, anyway, so its all right if they aren't exact.
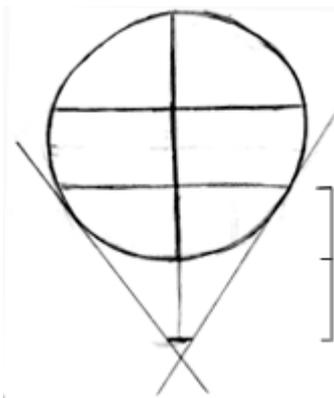
Next, draw a little mark (a short line, not a dot) directly beneath the circle. In this particular picture, the distance from the circle to the mark is the same as the length of the lower third portion of the circle. This mark will represent the chin, so make sure it's a short line rather than a dot or the chin will be too pointy. Raising or lowering the chin mark is one way to adjust the shape and appearance of the face. Next, draw two diagonal guidelines. They should be tangent to the sides of the circle, and intersect the edges of the chin mark.
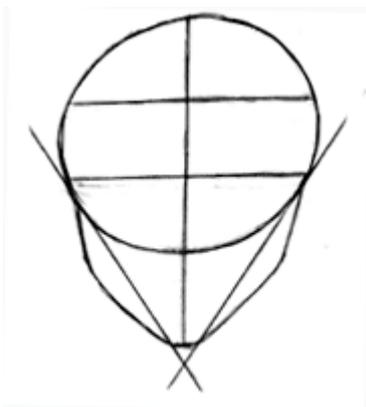
Next, you want to flesh out the face so it isn't so thin. Draw two rounded triangular shapes on each side of the face. Adjusting the thickness of the triangles and the height of the cheekbones (the place where the triangle bends) are ways to alter the shape and appearance of the face and draw different types of characters.
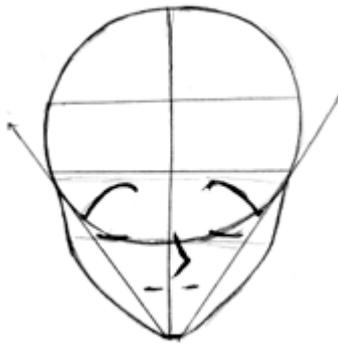
Now that you have the shape of the face down, you will want to add the eyes, nose and mouth. The placement of the eyes varies slightly with each character, but they generally should be located within the lower half of the circle. The nose is about halfway down the lower part of the face (the area below the circle), and the mouth is drawn directly beneath that.
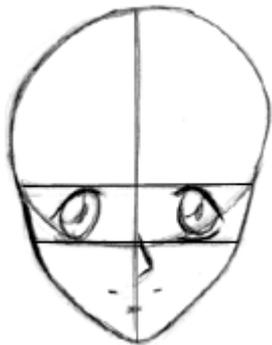
Next, erase those diagonal guidelines and fill in the detail on the eyes. Now you have the basic shape of the face completed, and you can add whatever details you like, such as hair, clothing, jewelry, tattoos, scars, etc.

3/4 View

Begin with a large circle, just like you did with the frontal view, except now rotate all the guidelines up and to the left. This part of the head is a three dimensional sphere, so when you rotate it in any direction, the guidelines should follow the curves of the sphere. Divide the face up horizontally into thirds, and vertically into halves. Of course, because of the angle we are drawing this circle at, the guidelines are not going to divide the shape into equal sections, but just remember that if you rotated this shape back to a front view, it should look the same as in the first step of the tutorial for the frontal view.
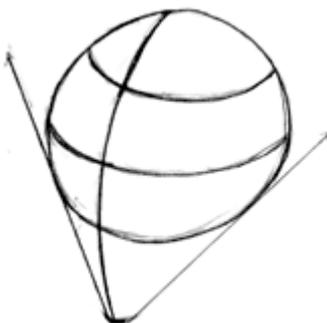
Next, extend the curved vertical guideline down the sphere, and select a point beneath the sphere to represent the chin. The distance from the circle to the chin should be a little bit more than the length of the lower third of the circle. Draw two diagonal guidelines tangent to the edges of the circle that intersect the chin mark. Make sure the left guideline is steeper than the right.

To flesh out the face a little more, draw round triangles on the sides of each of the diagonal guidelines. The left side of the face should curve out where it touches the circle, and the curve of the right side should be more gentle and sloping. It may take some practice to get this to look right.

Next, draw the eyes, nose, and mouth. The eyes are located within the lower half of the circle. For more information on how the eyes line up at this angle, go to the anime eye tutorial. All of the features should line up along the central guideline. Do not let your features become lopsided! It won't look right, trust me. ;) The nose generally starts right beneath the eyes, and the mouth right beneath the nose. Notice, though, that the mouth does not extend to the left of the nose; at this angle, most of it stays on the right side of the curved vertical guideline.

Refine the lines a little more, and you have completed drawing the basic shape of the head at a 3/4 angle. From this point, you can add whatever details you like, such as hair, jewelry, etc.

Here are some more heads, drawn at various angles. With every single one, I started with a basic circle and ad ded the guidelines as I did in the previous tutorials (for more info on drawing heads at a profile, such as in the picture at the top left, check out the nose and mouth turorial. The proportions for these faces probably aren't perfect, because the pictures I used as examples had completely different sized features (a lot of them were guys... ^.^).
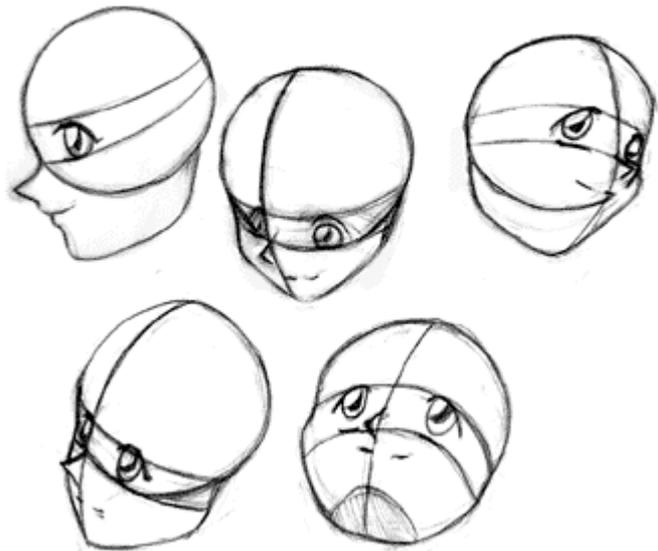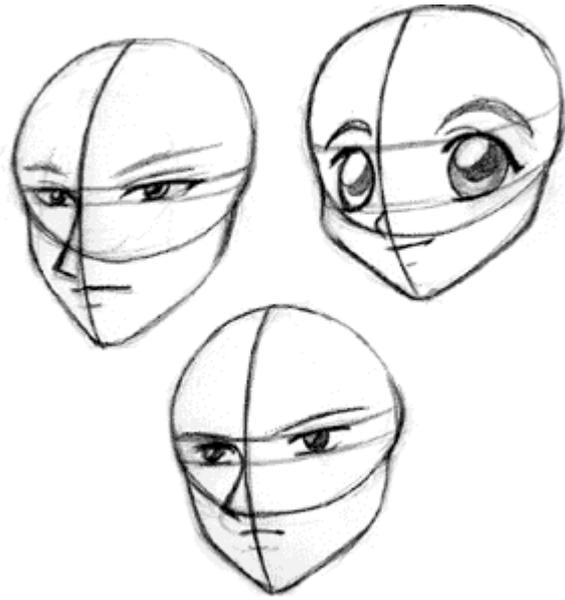
Of course, there are many other types of characters other than simple anime girls... ^_^ Here is a very small sampling of some other proportions you can try out. They all have the same basic shape, except some of the lines have been lengthened or shortened. In the top left picture, for example, the lower half of the face is longer and thinner, the cheeks are more sharply angled, and the eyes are narrower. On the top right picture, the lower half of the face is much smaller and the eyes are huge. Male faces tend to be longer and more angular, while female faces tend to be smaller and more rounded.

Childrens faces, either male or female, are very small and round.

Changing the expression of an anime character isn't particularly difficult, but it helps to know which features need to be adjusted for each type of emotion. In this tutorial, I will show you how the various parts of the face work together to convey different emotions. Once you learn what features to change to achieve the look you want, you should be able to draw any emotion you like. Please read through my other facial tutorials, though, since it helps to have a working knowledge of how the features should be aligned before you begin.

First, we'll start off going over sadness, a fairly common emotion. This is a trypical anime face, but notice the changes that have been made. The most obvious indicator of the character's emotion, in this case, are the eyebrows. Notice how the inner tips of the eyebrows curve upwards. Also, her lower eyelids curve upward slightly, while her upper eyelids have a more large, round curve. Curving the lower eyelid can indicate stress, sorrow, or anger; in this case, the shape of the eyebrows shows us that it is sorrow. ^_^ Also, notice the shape of the mouth; it is small, and curves downward. Overall, the character looks like she's about to burst into tears.

This form of sadness is more subdued. The character seems depressed, but not as sad as the previous example. The eyes are smaller here (partly because this is a guy ^_^), and the mouth is larger and does not curve down so far. The angle of the eyebrows and the arch of the lower eyelid still let you know that this character is upset about something.

This picture is sort of a transition between sadness and anger. The eyebrows curve down sharply and his mouth is drawn so it looks like he is shouting, both of which indicates that he is mad, yet his irises are still very large. This sort of makes him look like he is angry, yet hurt or upset at someone or something.

This guy is clearly very ticked off, even though he isn't shouting. ^_~ You can draw angry people without them screaming their heads off. In this picture, the eyebrows are close to the eyes and angle down sharply (I also drew the folds in the skin caused by drawing ones eyebrows together like that), and the mouth angles downwards sharply. The eyes have been narrowed, and irises are very small, which helps to make a character look even more angry. ^_^

I'm not sure about this one; he looks both confused and ticked off. Alternating the angles of the eyebrows like this indicates confusion or incredulity. To add to the expression, draw the mouth slightly off-center, as well.

Its surprising how often anime characters talk with their eyes closed... ^_^ I wonder how many people actually talk like that...? Anyway, closed eyes can express a variety of emotions. Here, they express impatience or annoyance, but they can also express calmness, happiness, or smugness. Flip the eyes around and have them curve upwards, and they can express extreme sadness, as well as excitement. For this particular picture, I made the eyebrows angle downwards and drew the mouth open. Notice how I drew the upper left lip slightly raised; this helps whatever emotion you are trying to convey seem more negative, whether you are drawing anger, unhappiness, or impatience. ^_^

Happiness is one of the most common emotions you see with pictures of anime characters. Excessive happiness or excitement can be expressed by large eyes, highly arched eyebrows, and a big smiling mouth. Other features such as extra shinies in the eyes and the upward curving of the lower eyelid are also common. On a side note, more kawaii characters tend to have huge eyes, and small noses and mouths (unless their mouth is open, as in this picture).

This character is happy, as well, but not to the extent as in the previous example. The emotion is much more subtle. Notice that the eyebrows have been lowered (though they still arch slightly) and the curve of the mouth is very slight. The lower eyelids are arched, though, and the irises are still pretty large, so though the characters' contentment is not as obvious, it is still clear he's in a good mood. ^_^

To express surprise or shock, enlarge the eyes and make the pupils smaller. This is particularly apparent in anime face faults, when a character is so suprised that his/her eyes become almost as large as the rest of the face... ^_^ In this particular example, the mouth is drawn really small, but other sizes will work too.

This guy isn't particularly exciting, he just looks irritated. The irises are small, the eyebrows are arched down, and the mouth is small and slightly off center. I can't think of much else to say for this one... ^_^

Depending on the style, anime hair can be very complex. However, if you break it down into its basic components, the process of drawing anime hair becomes a little simpler.

Like real hair, anime hair is composed of many strands. However, rather than drawing each individual strand, the hair is often drawn in various sized/shaped clumps, as shown here. These are some of the simplest forms of each hair style. Notice that in most cases, the outline is more curvy on the bottom of the hair clump.

This is especially apparent on the top leftmost example; the lower line is curvier than the top line, giving the hair more depth and more of that anime-ish look. Sometimes this is highly exaggerated, and other times it is hardly noticable, but for most anime hair styles, each individual strand of hair will have this basic shape.

Once you know how to draw each strand/clump of hair, you can start putting them together to form more something that more resembles anime hair. Look at each example here (well, exept maybe for that one on the lower left; I'm not sure why I left that in), and notice how the basic strands from the first step are used. The same similar shapes generally persist throughout many different hairstyles. Making one line curve out more than the other on each strand can really help to flesh it out.

Another thing to keep in mind is that you can make the hair as detailed as you like; just keep adding more strands. I'll go over this more shortly. ^_^

Now, we are getting into some slightly more complex shapes. Notice how varying the size and shape of each strand gives the hair different character; the strands can be long and thin, thick and curvy, or sharp and spiky. Again, notice that you can either make the hair very detailed, or very simple, depending on how many individual strands you draw.

Here are more examples of different basic shapes of hair. Take note of how the hair overlaps and is nested in itself when it bends or twists. You can make some really interesting hair by having it twist and turn all over the page. ^_^
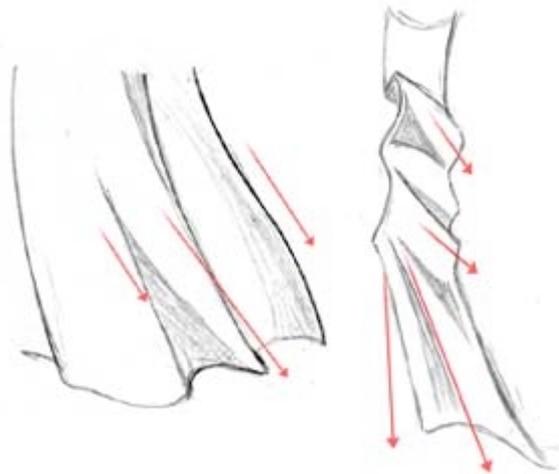
Basic Folds
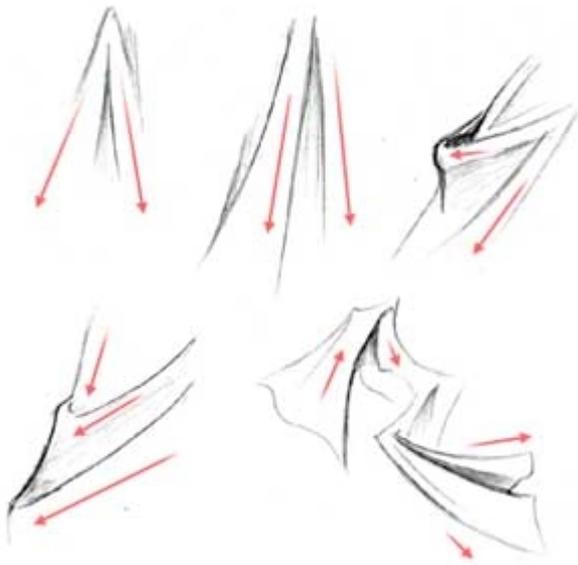
The most important thing to consider whenever you are drawing clothing or any type of fabric is the direction the fabric is going to be pulled in. Folds are caused wherever the fabric is being stretched or pulled; figure out how exactly you want the fabric to move, and the rest is pretty easy. Always remember to consider the figure beneath the clothing; the cloth should reveal the shape of the figure beneath. I'll go into more detail on this later.

At the left are some examples of basic types of folds. Notice the movement of each example shown; the fabric flows downward on the top left two, for they are being pulled down by gravity. This type of fold would be on something that hangs loosely, such as a cape or long shirt. On the lower left and upper right examples, the fabric is not only pulled by gravity, but stretched to the left (probably by an arm that is underneath the clothing). The folds become more horizontal than vertical the further it is stretched. Also notice how sometimes the folds are nested within one another. This will often occur at joints or areas in which loose clothing is bunched up. The lower right picture is a slightly more complex example of a more inert piece of cloth being pulled in a viarety of directions. Notice how the folds follow the direction that the cloth is being pulled in.

Here are a few more examples of basic fold shapes. On the left, the cloth is being pulled downwards by gravity and to the right by wind or motion. One the left, the long strip of cloth is bunched up near the top. Remember to use shading to give your subjects more form. Generally, you shade along a fold line, or on any places that you think a shadow would be cast. This takes some getting used to. It helps to look at actual folds sometimes to see where to shade. Sometimes, I'll sketch the drapes or a towel hung over a chair just to practice and get a better feel for how clothing is shaded.

Here are a few more random examples, of a bow and some sleeves. The most important thing to note here is the shape of the folds at the joint of the sleeve in the middle.

These are some more complex, overlapping and nested folds. The more detail you put into it the folds, the more interesting it will look. On the left, notice how the fabric bunches up where it is tied together; the weight of the fabric pulls it down and causes extra creases and folds to form where it is gathered together. The tie itself is drawn with lots of detail, and the cloth beneath it blows loosely in the wind. The fabric is shaded

around the folds and in the crevasses formed by the cloth. On the picture to the right, a length of fabric is draped upon the floor; notice how the folds nest in one another and overlap, creating an interesting effect.
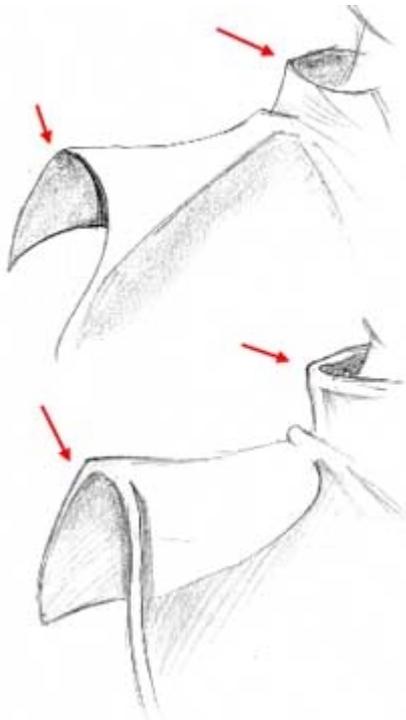
Another thing I want to point out is the thickness of the fabric in question. The fabric on the top example appears thinner than the fabric in the lower example. Take note of both collars. On the top, the circular rim of the collar connects directly to the rest of the collar, while on the bottom, there is a space between the circular rim and the vertical part. The same applies to the edges of the cape. While on the top example, the edge is crisp and thin, on the bottom example there is extra space between the rim and the rest of the cape. This extra space makes the clothing look more thick and heavy.