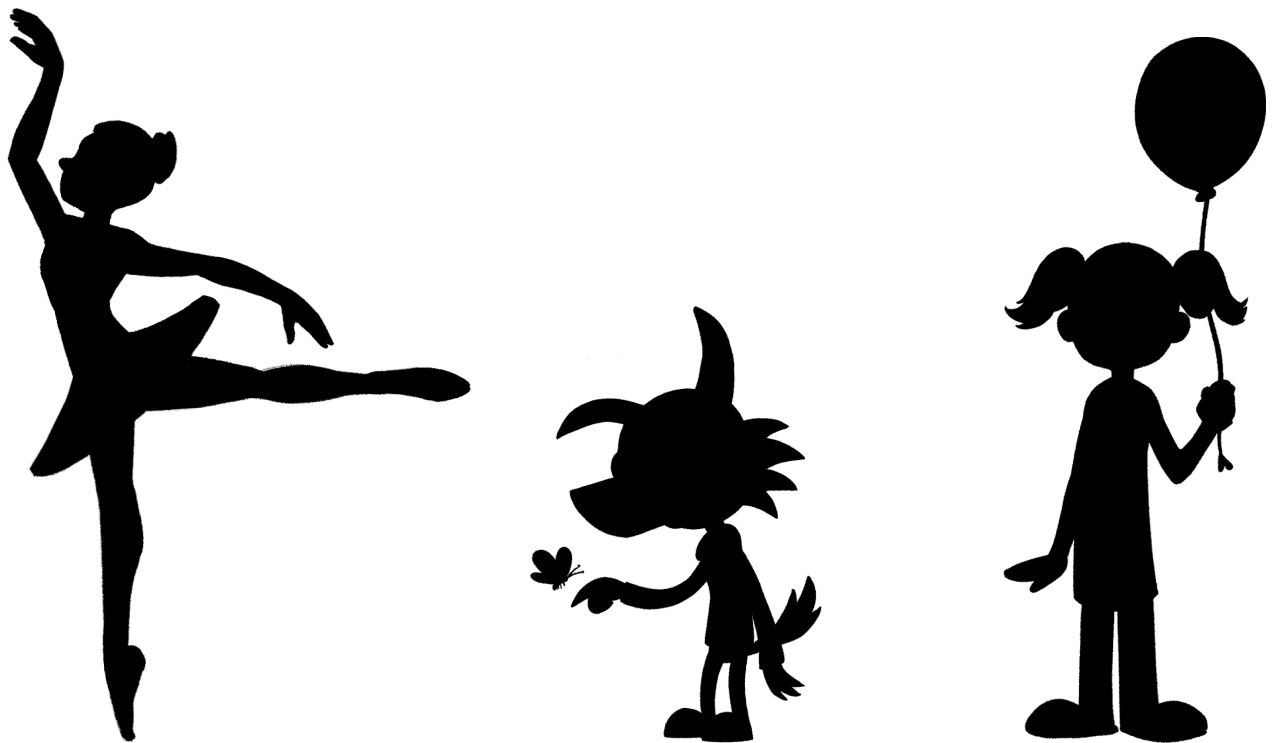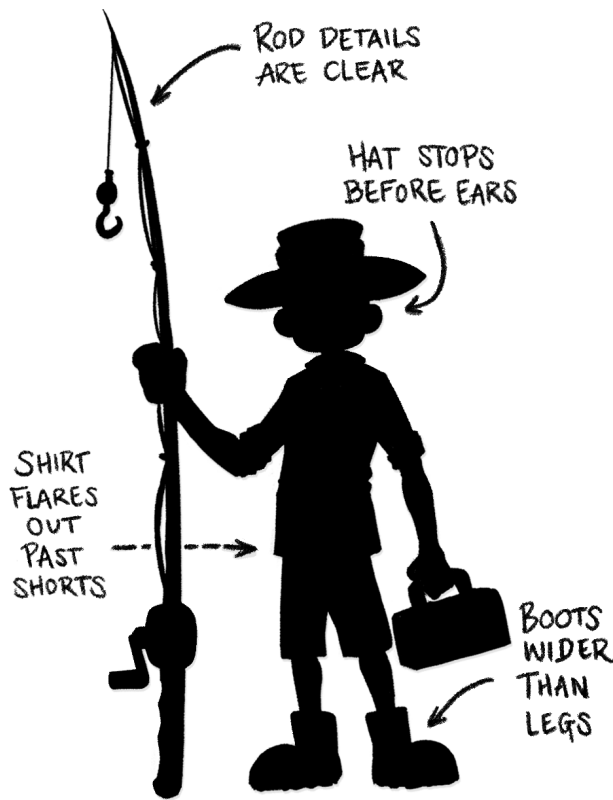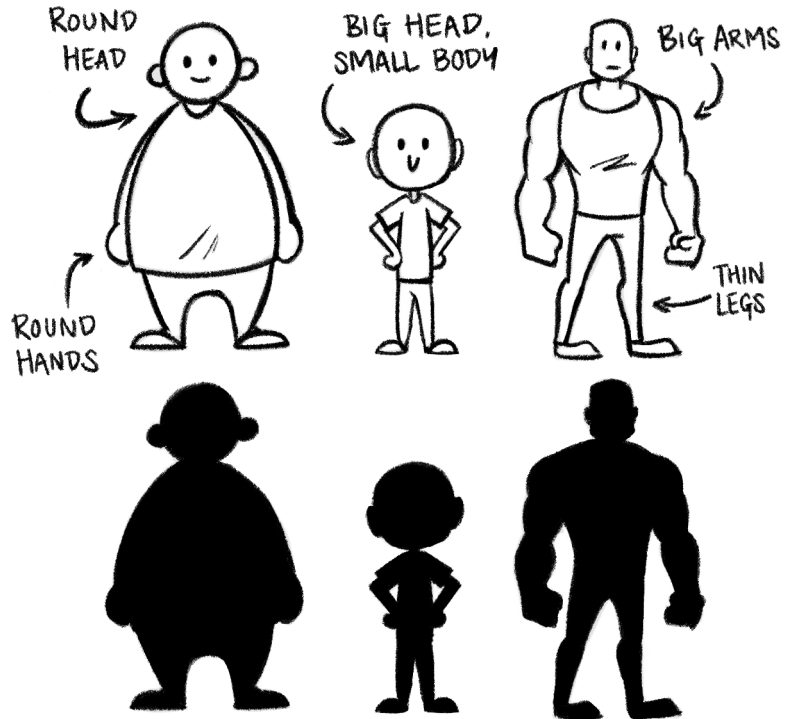# Tips & Techniques

Silhouette

When designing characters, artists often use a silhouette to test whether the character's basic design "reads" to the audience. From the silhouette we are able to see a distinctive and recognizable design without details and understand what the figure is saying with its overall form.
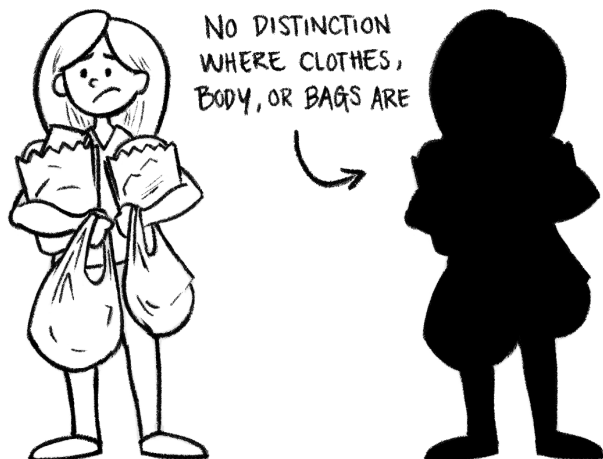
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Find out more about studio programs and virtual offerings at waltdisney.org/education-resources

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ROUND HEAD

BIG HEAD, SMALL BODY

BIG ARMS

ROUND HANDS

THIN LEGS

TIP: Use simple shapes or play with the proportions on different parts of the body to give your character a unique style. Try changing the proportions of you character in size, weight, and height.
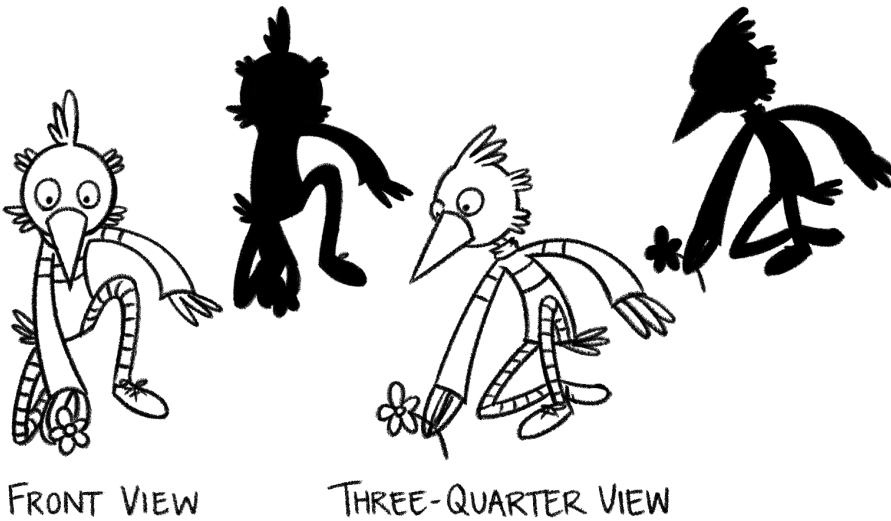
ROD DETAILS ARE CLEAR

HAT STOPS BEFORE EARS

SHIRT FLARES OUT PAST SHORTS

BOOTS WIDER THAN LEGS

TECHNIQUE: Consciously and carefully place shapes on a character. Consider the outline and make sure each part of the character, whether the body, hair, or clothes, are separately identifiable from each other. Shapes should blend together naturally, but should not be layered on top of one another as to create a blob. Know where one shape starts and where another ends.

NO DISTINCTION WHERE CLOTHES, BODY, OR BAGS ARE

TRIP-UP: Placing too many complicated shapes in one design will lose its focus.

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FRONT VIEW   THREE-QUARTER VIEW

TIP: Draw your character in a three-quarter view. It allows you to see differences on both sides of the body that would not be seen with a forward facing stance.

TECHNIQUE: Push your pose! Body language and posture can help show a character's personality or their action. To push your pose, you need to exaggerate the gesture, sometimes even more than what would feel natural in real life. Think about how the character is feeling as well as what they are doing, since there are no facial expressions.

EXCITED GESTURE

PUSHED POSE

DON'T:

DO:

TRIP-UP: Be careful of having actions take place in front of the character's body. These actions might get lost in the overall silhouette or cause odd shapes. To avoid this, try drawing your character and then fully color it in with a black marker. When blocked out, you will be able to see what's working and what needs adjustment.