

How to Illustrate a Great Children's Book Character

A few concepts that will help you create fascinating characters for children's books

Children are one of the most demanding audiences that exist.

But what are the most important concepts to consider when designing a character for a children's book? Here are some important points which will help you build attractive and charismatic characters.

1. Shapes

A character is most quickly identified with its shape. Starting with basic shapes like the square, the circle or the triangle, we can transmit a lot about the personality and attitude of a character: a square might mean seriousness and hardness, a circle might suggest to calmness.

If we build a character based on triangles say, we need to maintain that aesthetic, using the edges and angles in accordance with its personality.

2. Line

If we draw a line through their body, from their head to their feet, is it curved or straight? This will tell us a lot about their attitude to the world, whether they are relaxed, tense, or static for example.

3. Proportion

This refers to the size relationship between the different parts of the character's body: head, torso and, above all, legs. A character with a huge torso and a small head will look bigger than a character with a small torso and a huge head.

4. Balance

The combination of the elements above brings us to our character's balance: is your character firm and solid or unbalanced and dynamic, always on the verge of falling? By combining the line of their body with the proportion of their parts, we can play with these concepts.

5. Drawing the face

As with body proportion, how we organize and size our character's facial features will generate one effect or another.

When making the face, we have to consider caricature: normally, the more we exaggerate a character's facial features, the more caricatured it is. For example, if we use a photograph of a real person, we can simply trace the lines to obtain as realistic a drawing as possible, or we can exaggerate their features to make it more cartoonish.

6. Tips for construction

Take care with your contours: Make sure the lines of your character are clear: don't put too many on top of each other or make it too complicated.

Take advantage of volume: Play with the curves and folds of your characters' clothes to get more volume from their shapes and make them more attractive.

Harmony and contrast: It's interesting to play with the contrast in your character's shape, combining, for example, more curved parts with other more angular ones, but always take care, as we said before, that it makes sense together aesthetically.

It is important that each feature can be read separately.

Work the gaze: The eyes are the windows of the soul and can transmit a lot. It is important that they match the type of character you are building, that they are aligned with what they are thinking or feeling.

Sizes: Similar to contrast, a character whose parts are slightly different in size will always be more attractive than one where everything is the same size. Make the eyes bigger than the mouth, or vice versa, or draw them a huge nose.