Draw your own family portrait

When everyone gets together over the festive break, use the opportunity to sketch them.

What you need
- Two sheets of paper
- Pencil
- Black pen
- Coloured pencils

Hello my name's Olaf Falafel and I'm an author, an illustrator and also a stand-up comedian. My latest book is a joke book called *A Poo On A Pogo Stick*. I love to share ideas for how to create art, whether it's inspired by famous artists or places I've been to. I also like to tell a joke – like this one from my book: When does a joke become a dad joke? When it's fully groan!

That joke is very apt, because this page is all about how to draw your family. The Christmas holidays are often a time when families gather, so what better time to try capturing them all together, on paper. I'm going to be drawing myself, my partner and our two daughters, but your own family will be unique to you. I have also added our cat into my picture, and you can put your own pets into your drawings if you want.

It may be helpful to have a photograph of your family to use for reference, or maybe you can get everyone together to pose for you in real life. Make sure to pay attention to everyone's height and try to get everyone in proportion to each other. For example, make sure your tall uncle doesn't look the same height as your little sister!

When you get to the part of this tutorial where you need to trace over your rough pencil sketch, it's easier if you use a light box, which helps to make the lines appear much more visible. Lots of people don't have a light box though, so a great tip is to use the natural light through a window instead. Stick your pencil sketch to a window in daytime, using masking tape, and then tape your second sheet of paper over the top and get tracing.

Also, if you have a printer at home, you might like to scan or photograph your black outline before you start colouring it in. That way you can print out extra sheets and try colouring them in all sorts of different colour schemes, like I have.

The style I'm using for my family portrait is quite simple, and once you've tried doing something similar to mine you might want to try making your drawings less cartoon-like and more realistic.
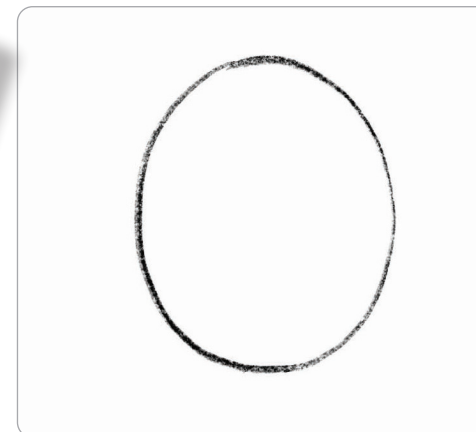
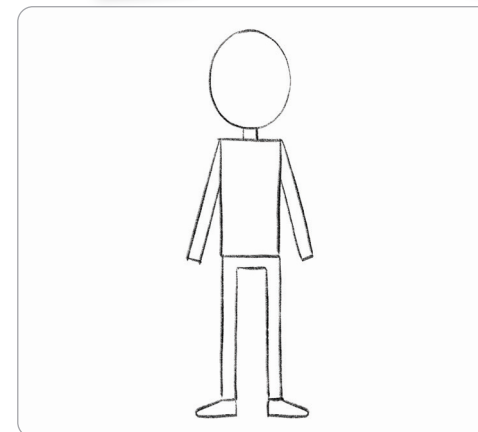Olaf's portrait of him and his family, including Badger the cat.

1 Take one sheet of paper and using a pencil, start by drawing an oval shape, which will be your head. You can do this quite roughly because this isn't going to be your finished drawing.

2 Then, using very simple shapes like rectangles and triangles, draw a neck, torso, legs, arms and feet. Look carefully at where people's arms end so you don't draw them too long.
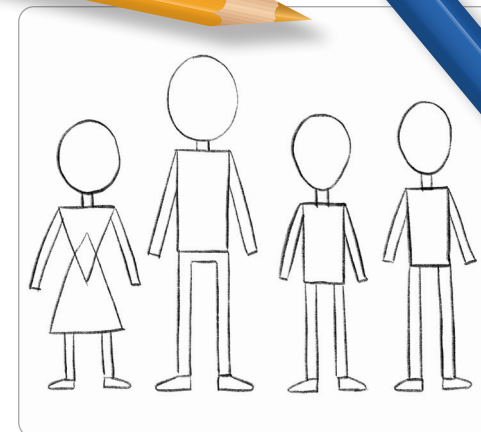
3 Repeat this process for every other member of your family. Remember to draw them in proportion and not too close together, so you can easily add more details later.

4 Divide your face into quarters using two faintly drawn lines in a cross shape. These guidelines will help you to better position the features, such as the eyes, ears, mouth and nose.
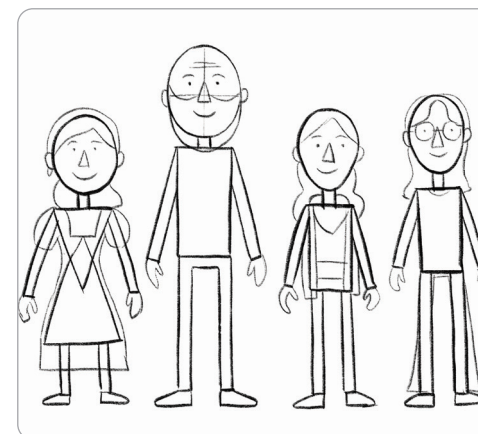
5 Repeat the previous step for all the people in your portrait. Then add more detail to your figures, like hair, hands and clothing. Don't forget facial hair and jewellery, if you want to.
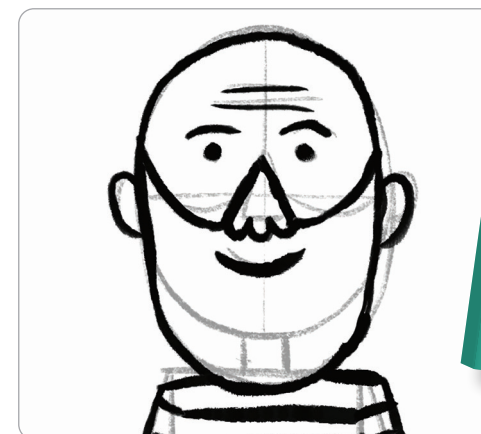
6 Place the second sheet of paper over your rough pencil drawing and trace over it with a black pen. Try to be as neat as possible because this is your final drawing.

7 Repeat the previous step for all your family, so that everyone stands out in bold outlines. You can also add patterns to clothes and any pets.

8 Now use your coloured pencils to colour in each figure. Don't worry about choosing exactly matching shades.

9 If you were able to make copies of your portrait before colouring, experiment with different colours until you find your favourite.

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