How to draw a turkey for kids: two circles, a fan of feathers, or your hand

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How to draw a turkey for Thanksgiving, step by step for kids aged 4 to 8, plus the hand turkey, what to colour it with, and five ways to change it.

A turkey is two circles and a fan of feathers. Draw a big circle for the body, a small circle on top for the head, then long round feathers fanning out behind, every one starting on the body circle. Add dot eyes, a little pointy beak, the wobbly wattle, a wing on each side and two legs with three toes each. Peabody's turkey page shows each step one at a time and reads it out loud, so a child who can't read yet can follow along without a video to pause.

This is the turkey we drew for Peabody's drawing shelf: round, friendly and a little chunky, with no line that runs behind another one. It works for children from about 4, and older kids can add as much as they like once the shape is down.

What you need

- A piece of paper, any size. Turn it the long way up.
- A pencil, and an eraser if you have one.
- Crayons, markers or coloured pencils for the end.

That's all. A grown-up doesn't need to be able to draw: each step is one shape, said in one sentence.

The seven steps

1. Draw a big circle for the turkey's body. Put it a little below the middle of the page, because the feathers go above it. It doesn't have to be round: a bumpy circle makes a cosy turkey.
2. Draw a small circle on top for the head. It sits on the top of the body circle, overlapping it a little.
3. Draw long round feathers fanning out behind. Three on each side, like the fingers of a hand held up. Each feather starts and ends on the body circle, and you leave a gap at the top where the head is. Make them longer than the body is wide.
4. Add two dot eyes and a little pointy beak. The beak is a small triangle pointing down, between and below the eyes.
5. Draw the wobbly wattle hanging down by the beak. It's the red, droopy bit. A teardrop shape on one side of the beak is enough.
6. Add a wing on each side of the body. A leaf shape, pointing down, inside the body circle.
7. Draw two legs with three toes each. Two short straight lines under the body, then three

little toes on each, like a bird's footprint.

Then say gobble gobble. It's the rule.

The hand turkey

The other way to draw a turkey is the one most families already know, and it's the one children search for ("how to draw a turkey with your hand").

1. Put your hand flat on the paper with the fingers spread wide.
2. Trace round it with a pencil. A grown-up can trace a little child's hand, or the child can trace a grown-up's.
3. Your thumb is the turkey's head and neck. Draw an eye, a beak and the wattle on it.
4. Your four fingers are the tail feathers. Colour each one a different colour.
5. The palm is the body. Add two legs underneath, with three toes each.

Hand turkeys are a good first drawing for a three- or four-year-old, because the shape is already there. They're also a nice keepsake: write the date on the back and you'll have a record of how big the hand was this Thanksgiving.

Colouring it

Feathers in red, orange and gold look like autumn leaves; brown for the body and wings; a lighter brown or tan for the head; a red wattle; a yellow or orange beak and legs. But a purple turkey with green spots is also a turkey. If your child wants a rainbow turkey, they've understood the assignment.

On the turkey page, the finished picture shows Peabody's colours, so a child can copy them or ignore them.

Five ways to change it

- Trace your own hand for the feathers. Draw the circles first, then trace your fingers fanning out behind the body instead of drawing feathers.
- Give the turkey a hat or a scarf. A bobble hat, a chef's hat or a party hat all work.
- Draw a baby turkey beside it, half the size. Same steps, smaller circles.
- Fewer feathers for little hands. Three feathers is still a turkey. Older kids can draw ten.
- Give it a place. A fence, a pumpkin, a hill and the sun going down behind it.

Why we draw step by step

A blank page is hard. A page with one circle on it isn't. Splitting a drawing into shapes a child already knows (a circle, a triangle, a leaf) is how most "learn to draw" books for young children work, and it's how Peabody's drawing pages are built: each step adds one thing, says it out loud, and waits until the child taps to go on. There is no video to scrub back through and nothing to watch, only the next line.

The same trick works for most animals. Peabody's drawing shelf has a dog, a cat, a dragon, a snowman and more, each starting with a circle or an oval.

More for Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving game night: six card and dice games for the whole table, from Pig while the turkey cooks to Yacht after pie, with the rules on one printed page.
- Thanksgiving games for kids: party games for the table and after dinner.
- Magic tricks for Thanksgiving dinner, with a spoon, a coin or a napkin.
- Turkey Cookies from the Peabody Kitchen, for a turkey you can eat.
- Free stories for kids to read together after the meal, at every reading level.

Peabody is free through the end of 2026, with no ads, and the drawing pages need no sign-up.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/how-to-draw-a-turkey-for-kids