

# Character Design and Turnaround

with Becca Miller

Rebecca Miller is Head of Animation at Raw Pictures based in Oxfordshire. She concepts, illustrates and animates for a huge variety of clients from local small businesses to companies such as the NHS and Amazon.

## Objective

The workshop will guide you through the character design process- from idea generation and shape theory, to a turnaround of your character for use in a wide range of industries.

## YouTube workshop link

 [Youtube workshop video](#)

## Workshop duration

This activity should take approximately 1.5 hours to complete. Please adapt to your circumstances.

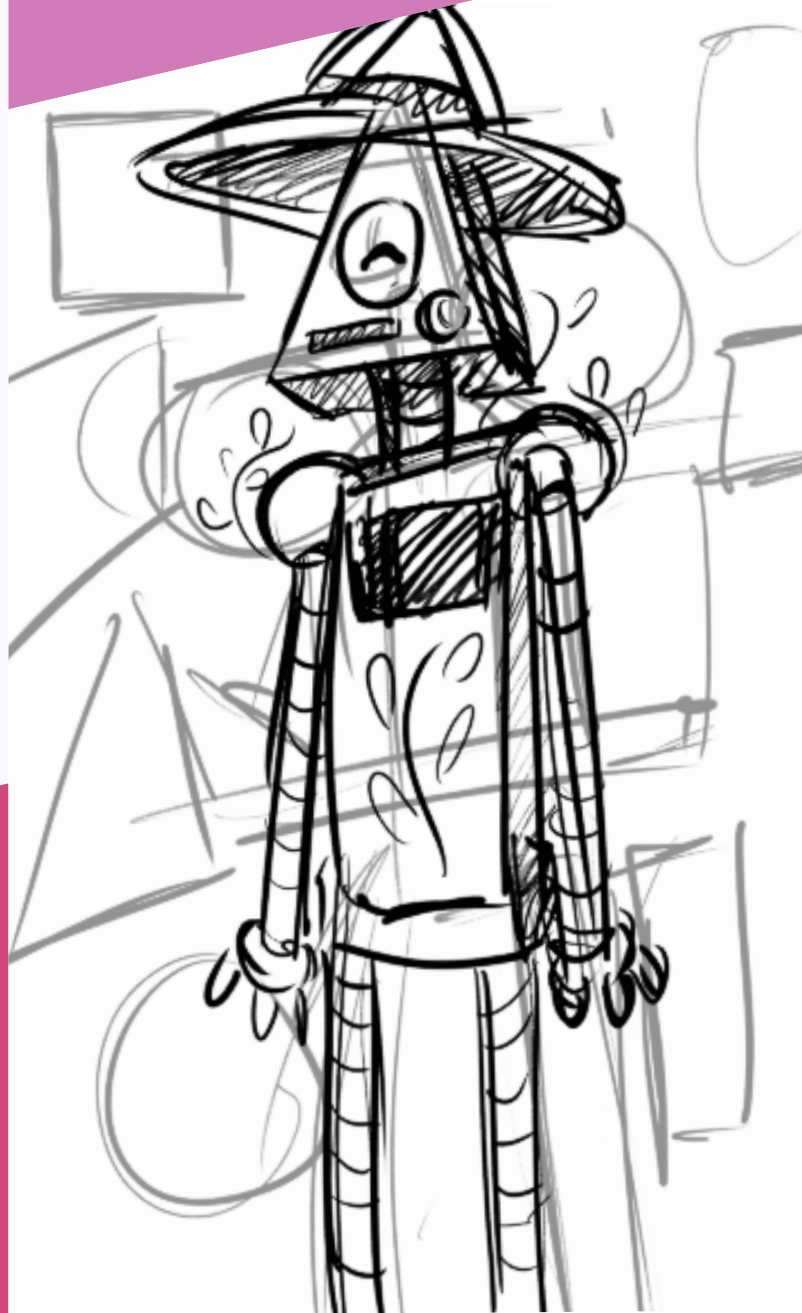
What materials do I need?

## Digital drawing

- Digital art program such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator or InDesign or similar tools.
- Drawing pen/tablet

## Traditional drawing

- Paper
- Pencil / Pen
- Eraser
- Ruler *(or something to draw a straight line with)*



## Introduction

The goal of this workshop is to create a character turnaround, with your own original design.

Character design is used across lots of creative fields and industries, from Animation, Gaming, Illustration, Advertising, Branding and Merchandise to Theme parks, Children's entertainment, book covers, E-learning, Web design and VR.

These are also great places to look for inspiration depending on your interests and future goals, think about some of your favourite characters as you work through the tasks.

The theme for this workshop is Robot Gardner to tie in with the Character Design Challenge at time of delivery.

Catch up on the recording:

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## Principles of character design

In character design, different shapes can have meanings and evoke certain emotions. They can influence how a viewer relates to that character. Here are some examples of what each shape commonly represents in character designs:

Circles: Softness, friendliness, warmth, whimsy, playful, innocence, youth

Triangles: Strength, stability, aggression, tension, dynamic, energetic

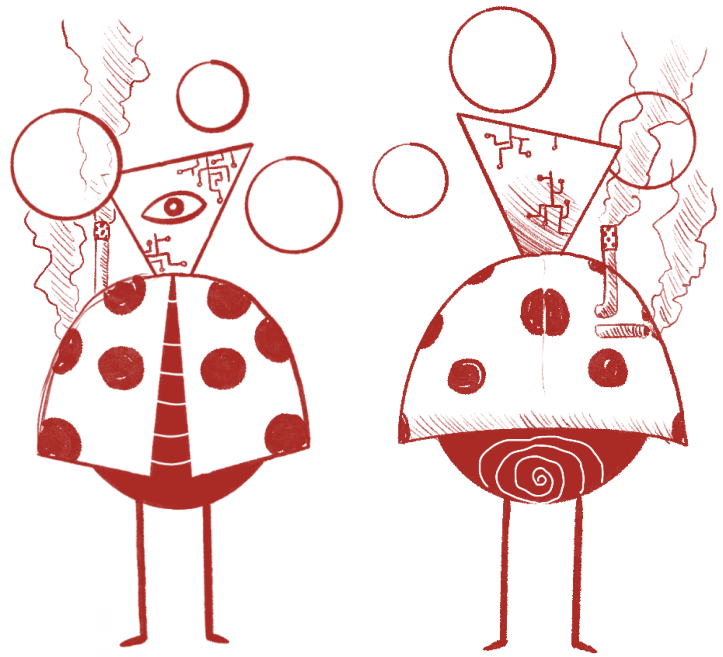
Squares: Reliability, dependable, serious, control, order, balance

Using these, whether it's just one of the shapes or a combination of the three, consider how they could come together to create interesting silhouettes.

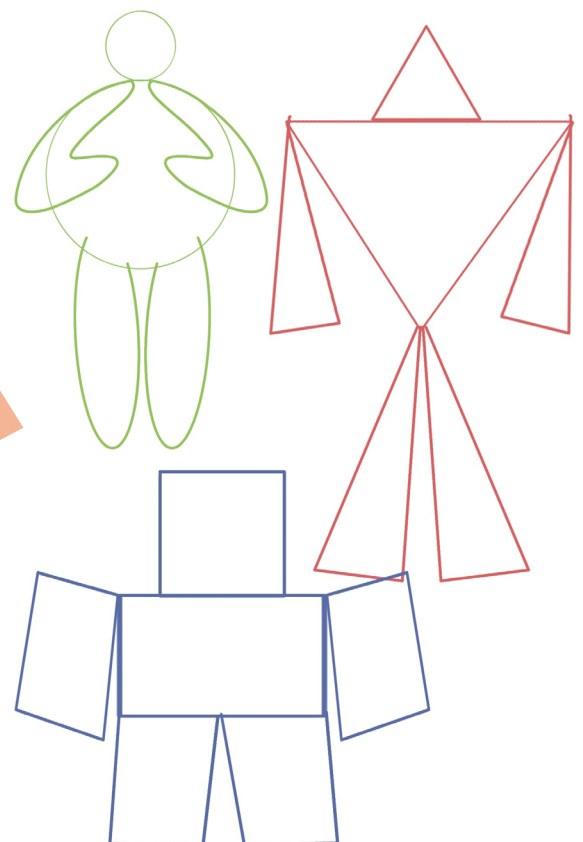
- Show examples and analyse how principles reflect personality in characters.

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*TOP TIP:* As you develop as an artist it's important to take inspiration from diverse sources and cultures, and consider what impact your character might have on the audience.



## Task one: initial ideas

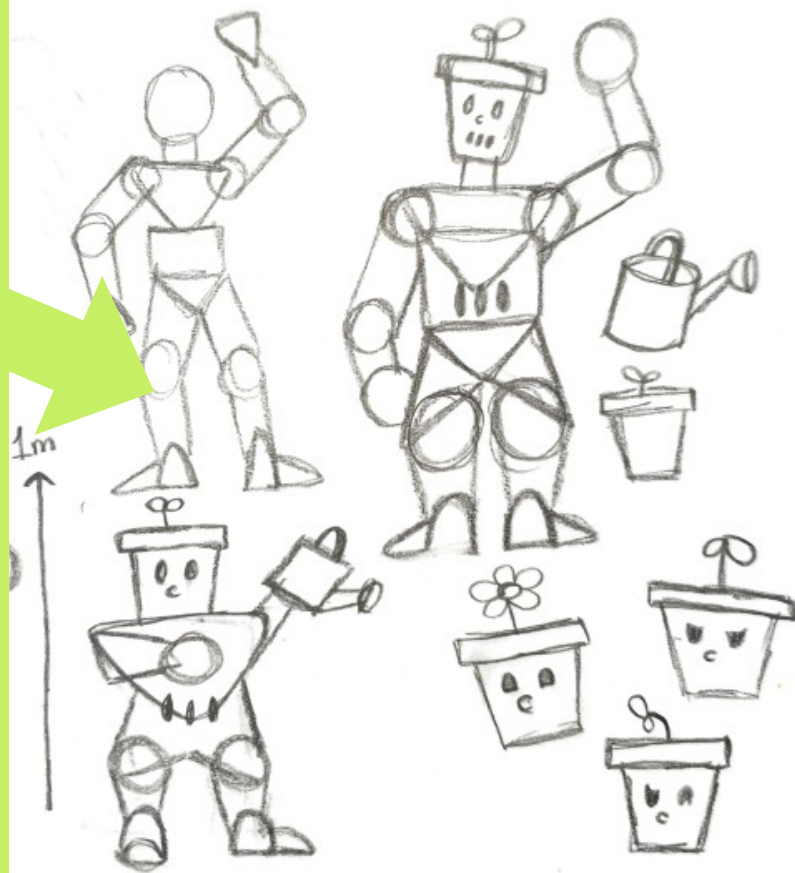
Begin by sketching some simple silhouettes using the shape theory previously discussed, keep it loose and try to vary the proportions and shapes used.

If you'd like to follow along with a theme, follow me in creating something for 'Robot Gardener'.

Aim for at least 5 varied sketches, but the more at this stage the better!

Catch up on the recording:

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## Task two: character development

Take a look at your sketches, and see if you can come up with a personality for a selection of them. I'd suggest 2.

Do they have a large round head? This might suggest that they're friendly and lovable. Do they have long pointy legs? Perhaps they're the villain!

You can then begin to add in details to develop this initial thought, scars, clothes, extra limbs. Anything that you think helps to demonstrate their background and personality.

Catch up on the recording:

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## "BUG STYLE"

shape exploration



**TOP TIP:** A strong silhouette helps viewers identify the character at a glance, helping to make them memorable.



## Task three: turnaround

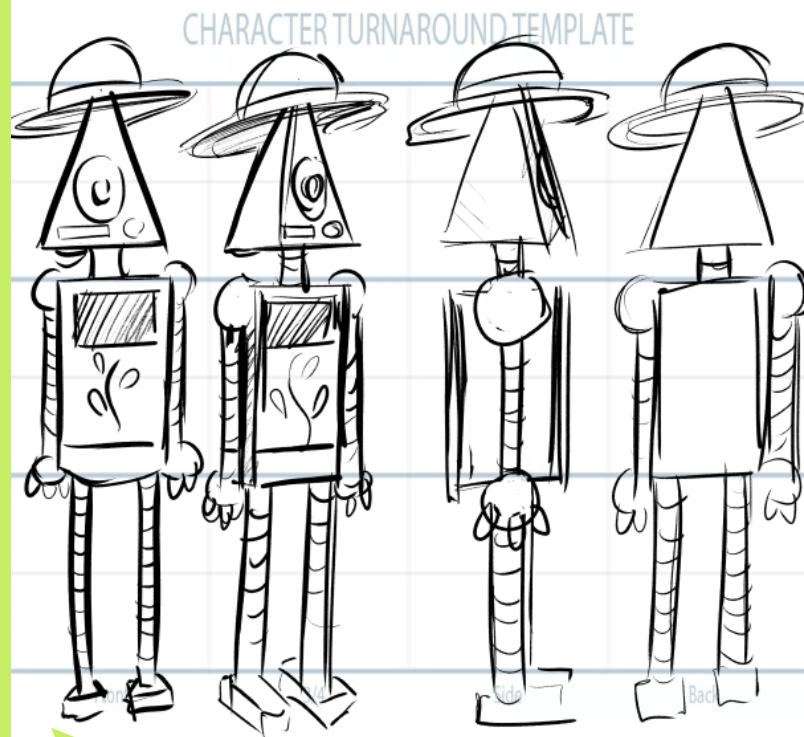
Drawing a character turnaround is an important stage of the character design process, as it allows you to visualise your character from different angles and ensure consistency in their appearance. It's rare that once a character is designed, it'll only be used once, from one angle.

We're going to create a front, side, back and  $\frac{3}{4}$  view. Chances are you've already finished the front!

Please refer to the guidelines in the Padlet, these will help you. You can also take a ruler or use guides to help line up the key parts of the body. Top of the head, torso, mouth and eyes, etc.

Catch up on the recording:

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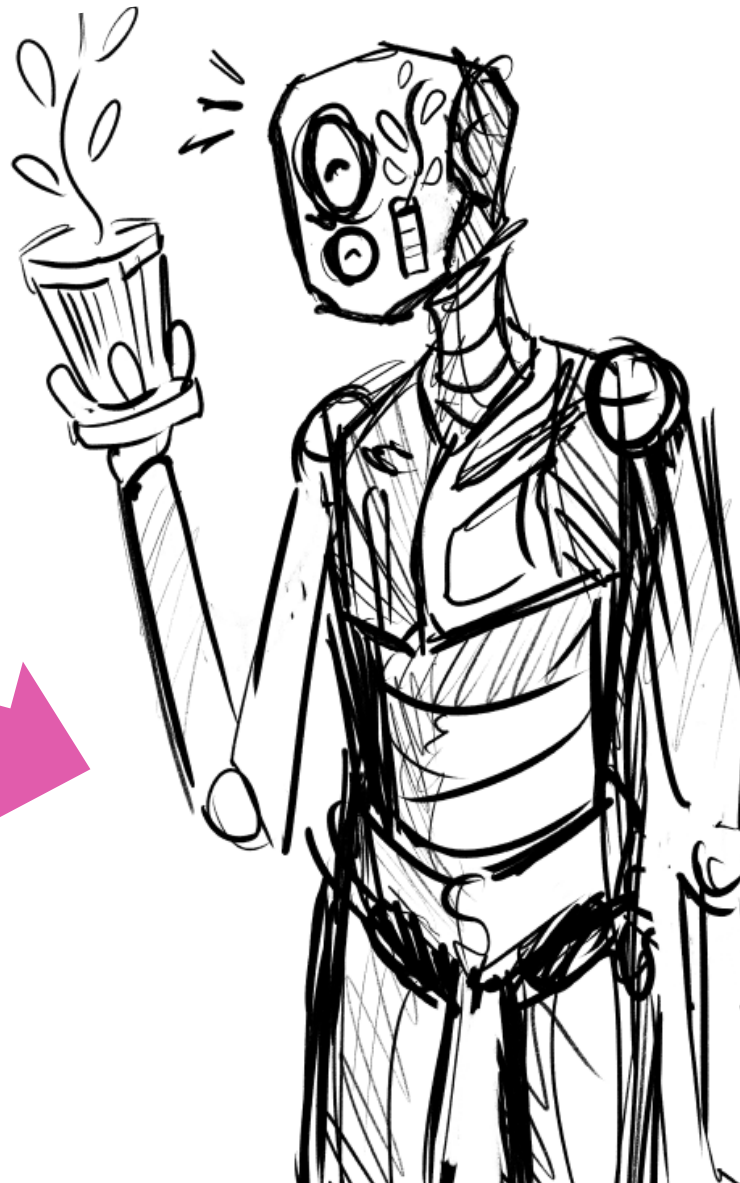
## Conclusion and next steps

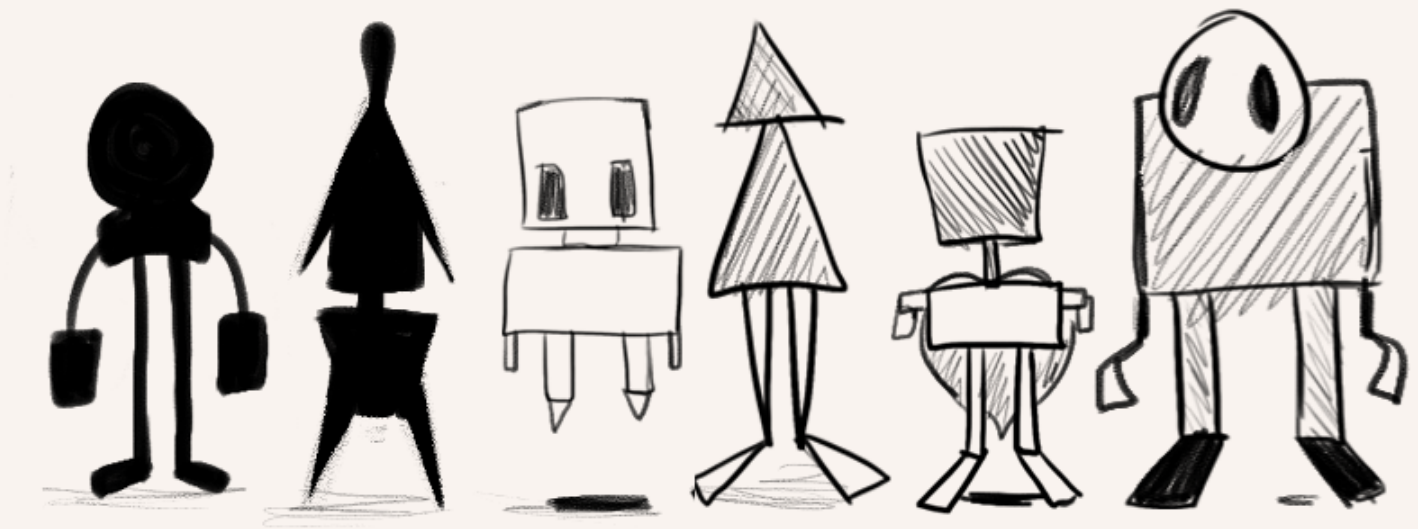
We've explored principles and techniques that make characters compelling, memorable, and relatable.

If you'd like to continue with character design, look at pose and expression examples online and consider what you'd like this character to be used for. Is it a 2D TV series? A 3D video game, advertising? This can impact the style and design.

There are a host of roles in the animation industry from Director to Sound Designer. This workshop has covered just one aspect of the diverse industry!

[Find out more about these incredible career paths here](#)





## Find out more about Becca Miller

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We would love to see your work! Share it with us on Instagram:

 [@norwichuni\\_outreach](#)

 [@takeyourplace\\_he](#)

Take a look at our Padlet board from the live session to see how others responded to the workshop!

 [View our Padlet board here](#)

## Further resources

 [Cartoon Animation](#), Preston Blair

 [Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators](#), Michael D. Mattesi

 [Framed Ink: Drawing and Composition for Visual Storytellers](#), Marcos Mateu-Mestre

 [Character Design Challenge](#)

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## Useful links

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