

## What defines Anime Style

The biggest mistake beginners make when drawing anime characters is thinking they need to mimic reality. Anime characters may look human, but they are not built like real people. Anime is deliberately designed, not copied from life. Simplification is intentional. Attention is directed through exaggeration, and clarity is prioritized over realism. Everything serves one purpose: guiding the viewer's eye and constructing the strongest possible visual experience.

The anime eye has become a symbol of the entire art form and is a perfect example of what I just explained.

### Reduction to improve Readability

Anime eyes are reduced in detail. Skin folds become single lines **1**, the lacrimal caruncle is often omitted entirely **2**, and complex reflections are simplified into clear, graphic highlights. **3**

### Shape Over Anatomy

Stylized elements, such as a graphic iris or a distinctly shaped upper lid **4**, define character more effectively than strictly mirroring anatomical reality.

### Exaggeration Serves Emotion

Anime eyes are typically larger and higher in contrast. This increases emotional impact and strengthens the visual focus of the character.

### Visual Hierarchy

The high-contrast pupil **5**, thick upper lash line, and simplified surrounding facial features deliberately guide the viewer's attention toward the eyes. More details create a focal point. Reduced contrast elsewhere reinforces this focal point.



### Bonus Tip

Use silhouettes to test your character designs. By removing all internal lines and details, only the outer shape remains. If that shape is clear, readable, and expressive, the design works!

