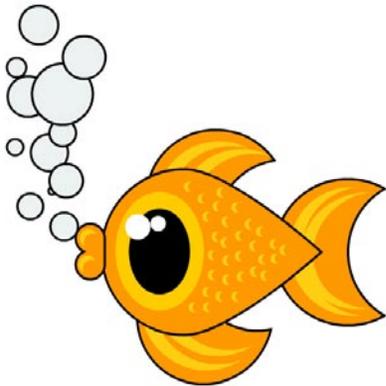


Illustrator is a drawing based program. However, this term is a little misleading because the process of working in Illustrator has little relationship to traditional drawing. A better analogy maybe woodwork or metalwork because of the fact that you can cut shapes up and weld or stick them back together. This exercise demonstrates how using basic shapes and the Pathfinder Palette you can create a drawing, this particular drawing only uses circles.

Click the image below to play an animation of the steps in creating this illustration.



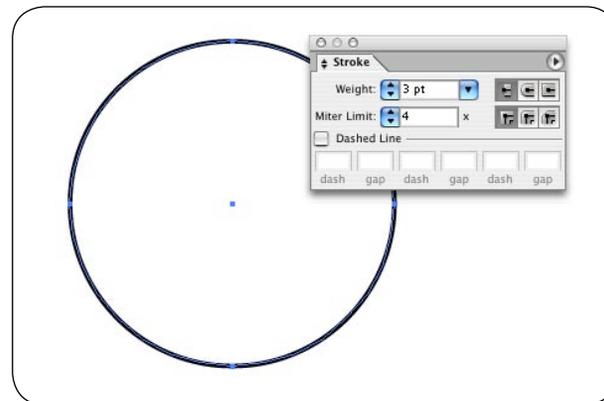
1. Open Illustrator

2. Go to File > New to create a new Illustrator document.

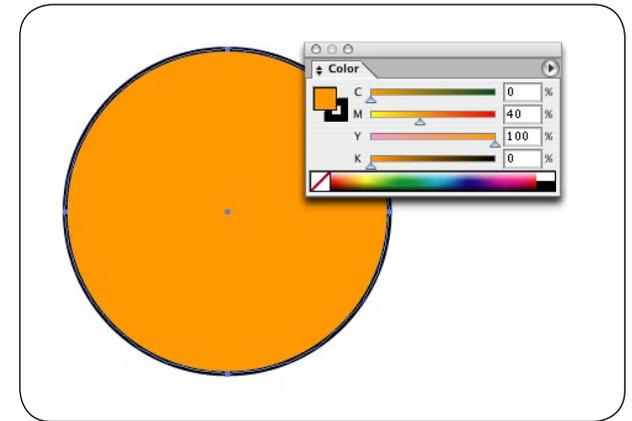
3. Choose the Ellipse Tool  and click inside the work area. In the dialog box set the size to 3 in x 3 in.



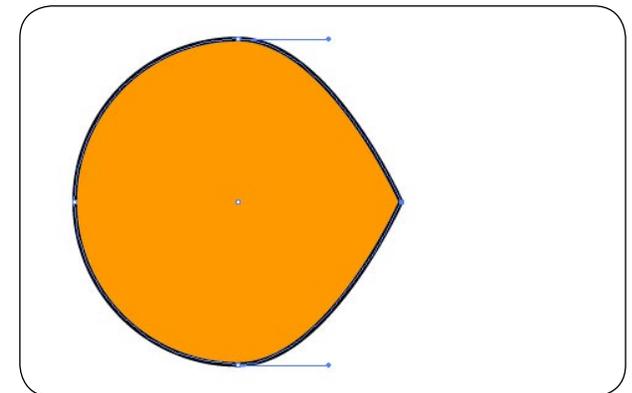
4. Go to Window > Stroke and change the stroke size to 3pt.



5. Go to Window > Color and adjust the sliders to 0% cyan, 40% magenta, 100% yellow and 0% black.

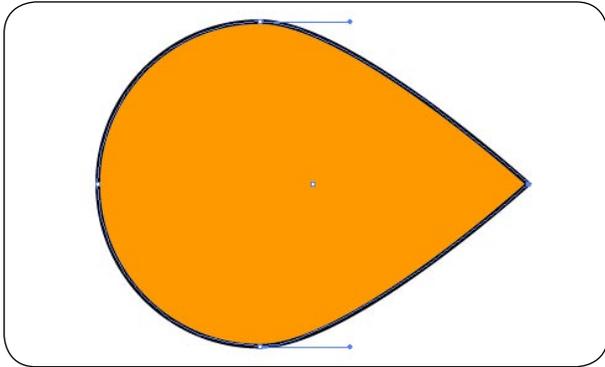


6. Choose the Convert Direction Tool . Click once on the anchor that's on the right side of the circle. This will remove the directional lines that form the curves turning this side of the circle into a corner.

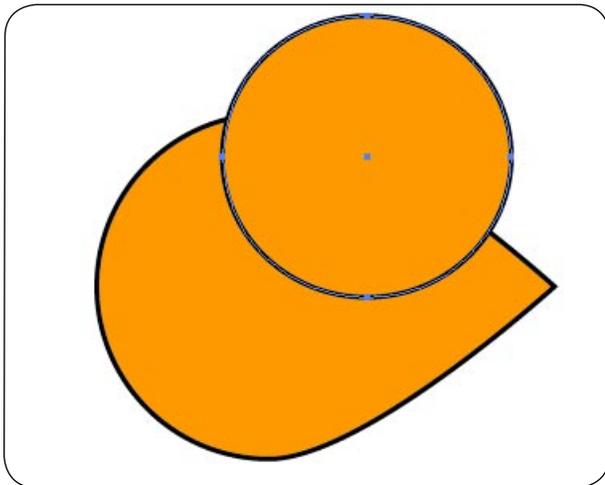


7. Choose the Direct Selection Tool  and drag the anchor point to the right. This modified circle will form the body of our finished fish.

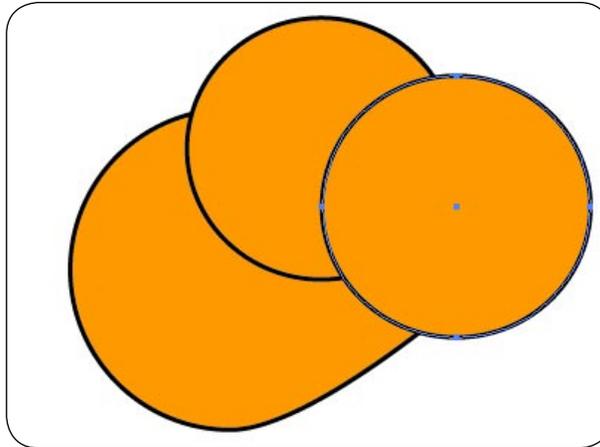
Note: *It's often easier to create the shape you want by modifying simple shapes rather than drawing the shape.*



8. Choose the Ellipse Tool  and draw another circle that looks like this.



9. Drag this circle to the right holding option, holding option will duplicate the object that you are dragging. Position this circle as shown below.

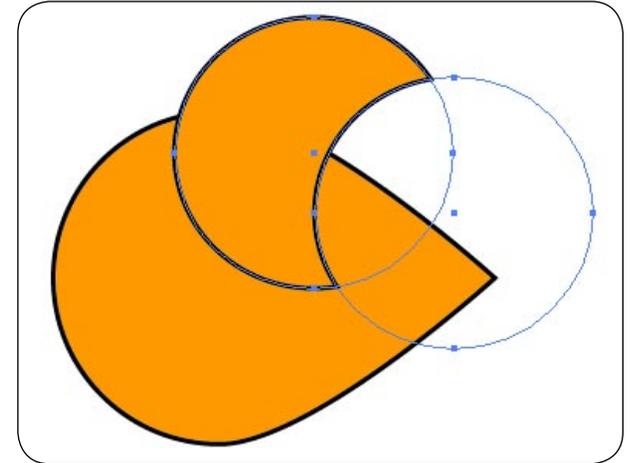


10. Go to Window > Pathfinder to open the Pathfinder Palette. Select the two circles you just created, these will form the fin of the fish. Click the second icon in the top row of the Pathfinder-Palette called Subtract from Shape Area...

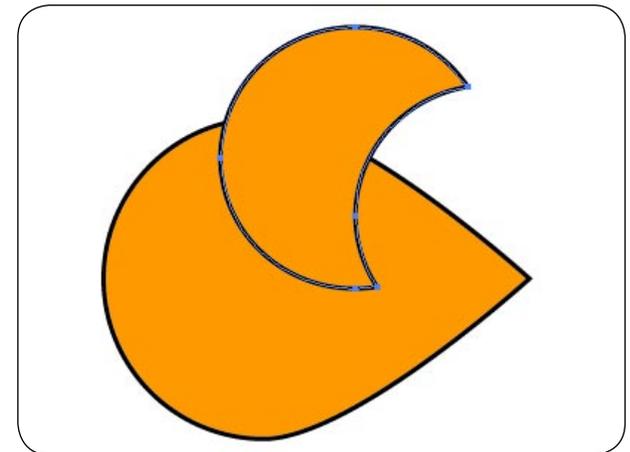


Note: *Before you click expand the Subtract from Shape Area option has changed the appearance of the objects. It now looks as though the circle*

that was on the top has gone and where it overlapped the other circle has also be deleted. However, the two shapes are in fact still there. When you click the expand button in the Pathfinder Palette the objects have literally been changed.



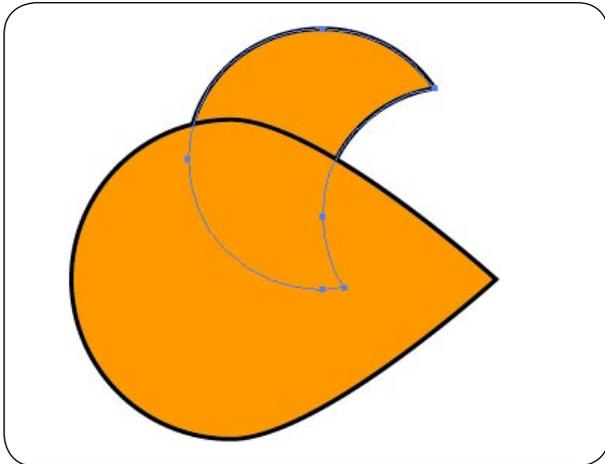
This is what the appearance looks like prior to expanding when the objects are selected.



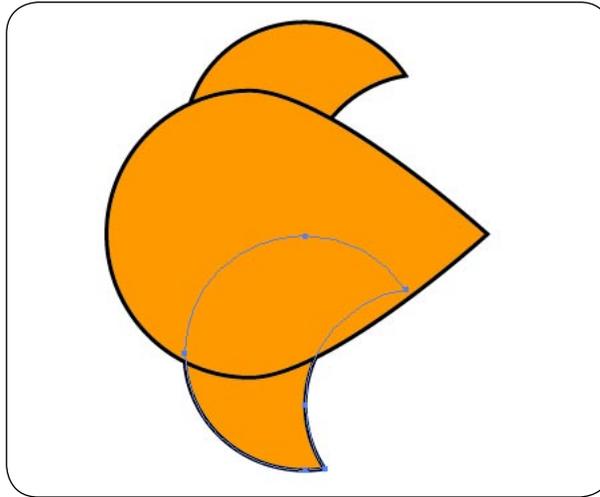
This is what the fin looks like when the shapes have been expanded.

11. With the shape of the fin still selected Go to Object > Arrange > Send to Back.. To send the fin behind the body of the fish.

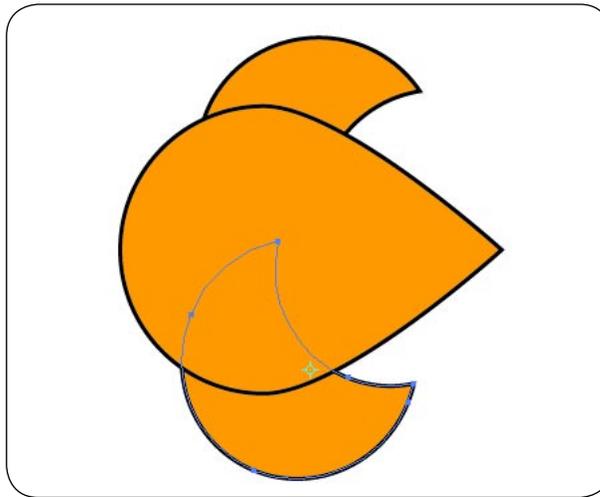
Note: Every object you draw in Illustrator occupies it's own level within the layer. The last object you create is always on top of anything already drawn. Object > Arrange gives you the option to Send to Back, Send Backward, Bring to Front or Bring Forward. Understanding how to arrange you vector objects within the stacking order is an important aspect to using Illustrator effectively.



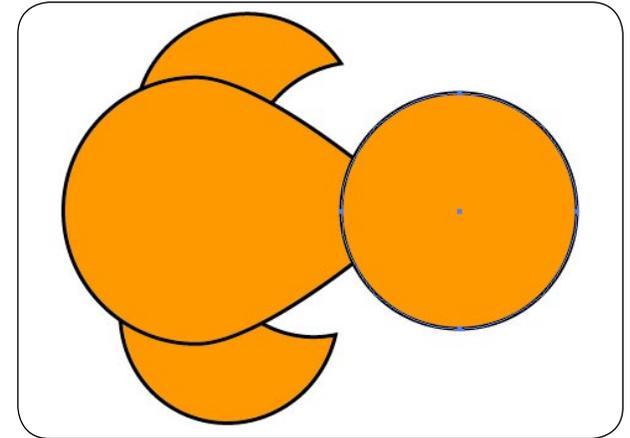
12. Hold the option key and drag the fin down to create a duplicate of the fin that you can place at the bottom.



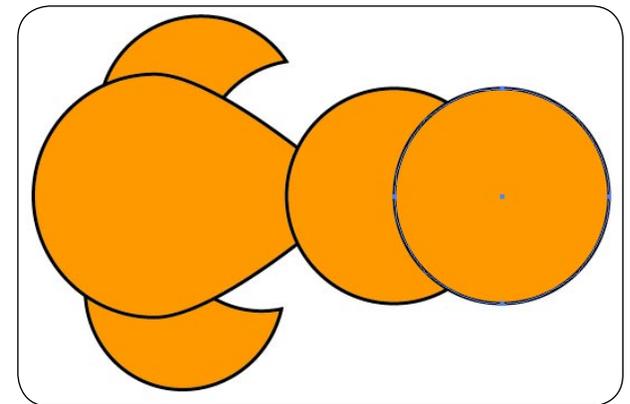
13. Choose the Rotate Tool  and drag the bottom fin around as shown below.



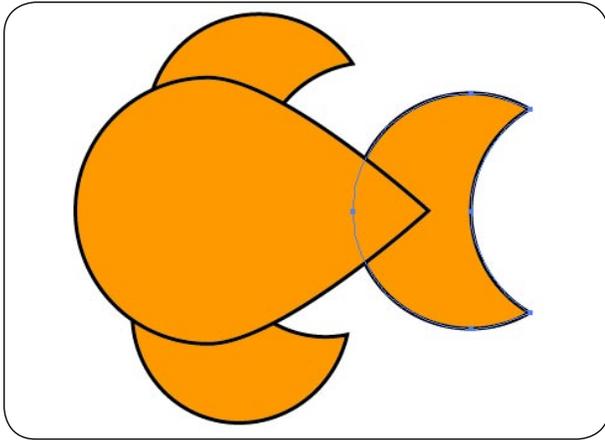
14. Choose the Ellipse Tool again and drag out holding shift to constrain the ellipse to a circle. This circle will form the fish's tail. Place it over the pointed side of the body.



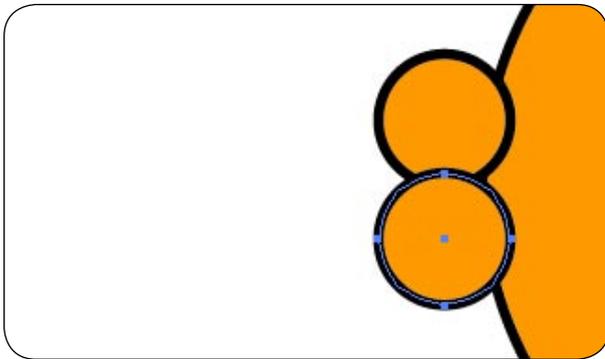
15. With the Selection Tool select the circle you just drew with the Selection Tool, hold option and drag the circle to the right to create a duplicate of the circle that overlaps the first one like the illustration below.



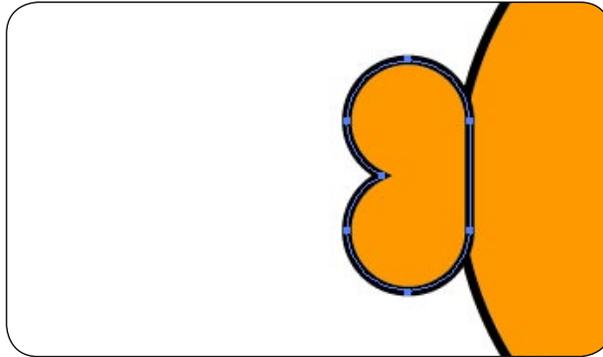
16. With both circles you just drew selected click Subtract from Shape Area in the Pathfinder Palette. Don't forget to click Expand in the Pathfinder Palette.



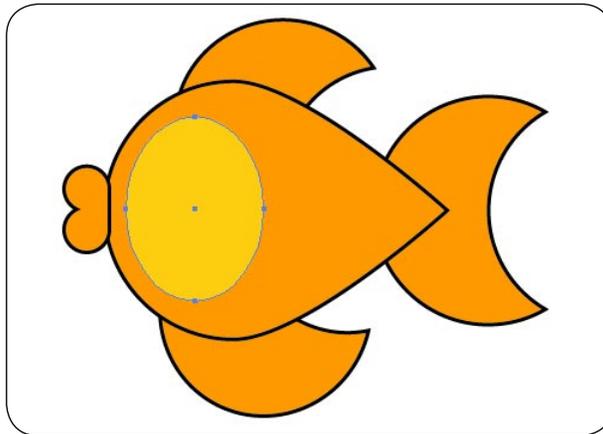
17. Using the Ellipse Tool draw a smaller circle that will form the fish's lips, don't forget that holding shift constrains the Ellipse Tool to a circle. Make a duplicate of this circle by dragging down holding option the two circles want to slightly overlap.



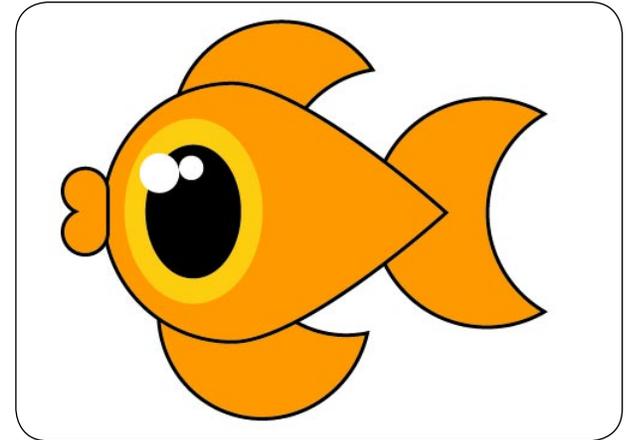
18. Select both these small circles in the Pathfinder Palette click the first icon which is called Add to Shape Area, then expand. Now these two circles will be one shape.



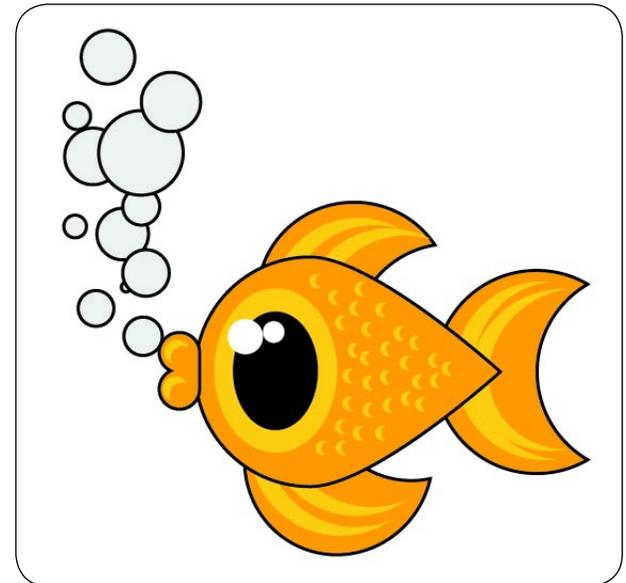
19. With the Minus Anchor Points Tool  click on the anchor point on the right side of the shape. This will change the shape of the object to look like the illustration above.



20. Draw an ellipse for the eye, set the stroke to none and then adjust the color in the color palette. Here the yellow is 0% cyan, 20% magenta, 100% yellow and 0% black.



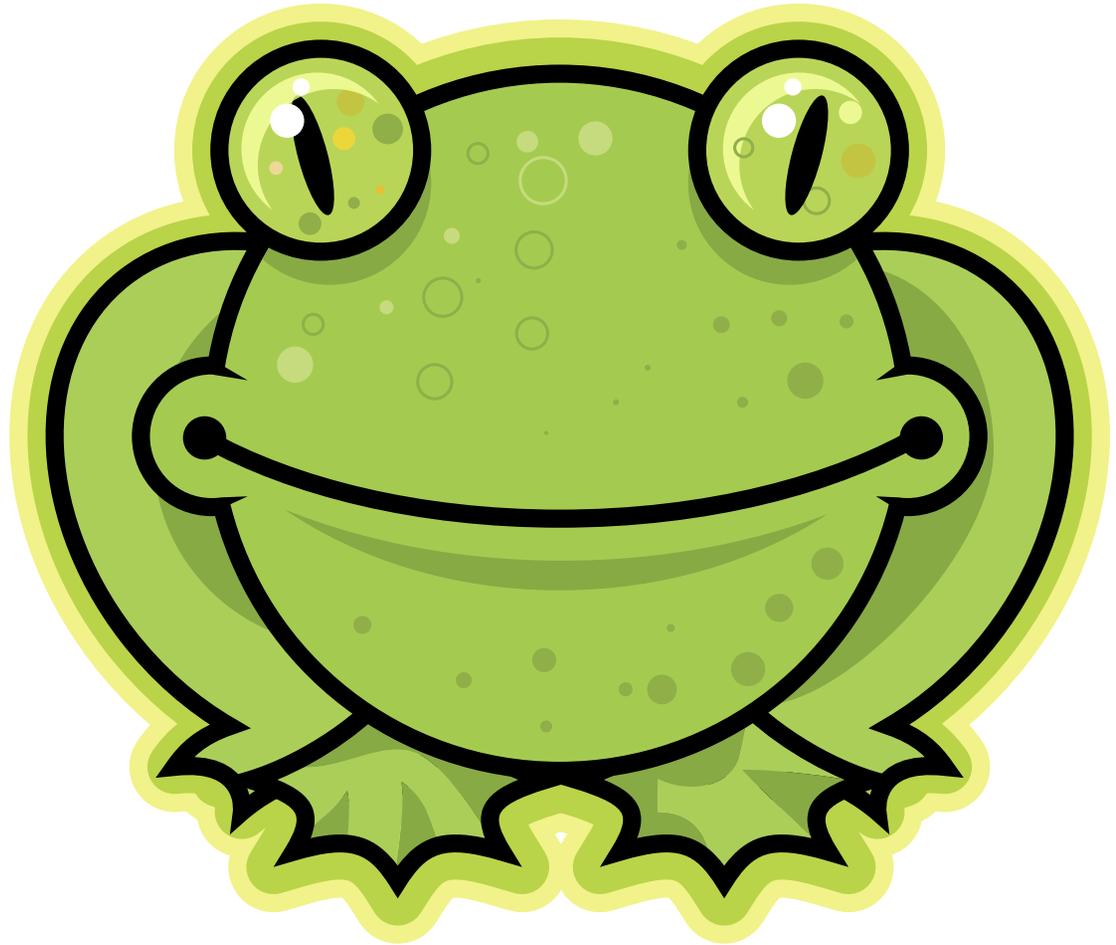
21. Draw another ellipse that is a bit smaller than the yellow ellipse and color it black. Draw a couple of circles colored white that will represent highlights.



22. The last stage of this illustration was made by adding some highlights. All of these

highlights are created as crescent shapes. The crescent shapes that are used for the scales and for the light areas on the fins and tail. These shapes are all made in the same manner that the fin was created. You begin by drawing a circle with the Ellipse Tool and then duplicate it so that they overlap, select both circles and apply Subtract from Shape Area in the Pathfinder Palette. The Bubbles are created by simply drawing circles of different sizes that are colored a very light blue.

Note: *This exercise is intended to demonstrate how using simple shapes and pathfinder you can create a relatively complex illustration. Now try creating other illustrations that use simple shapes as the basis for the drawing.*



Here is another example of an illustration created using the Ellipse Tool in Illustrator.

For more examples and more exercises in PDF format go to jonmeasures.com