

# How to Draw Braids

By Darlene Nguyen - August 30, 2016

Do you want to be a braid drawing master? There's actually a super simple way to construct braids. Once you get the hang of it, you can draw braids in practically any shape.



In fact, it's so fun that I got carried away drawing more braids than I intended to for this tutorial! Once you get the steps down and draw your first braid, you're not only going to be a pro, you'll also get hooked!

By the way, this is the first time I'm introducing videos in my tutorials. Sometimes pictures just aren't enough!

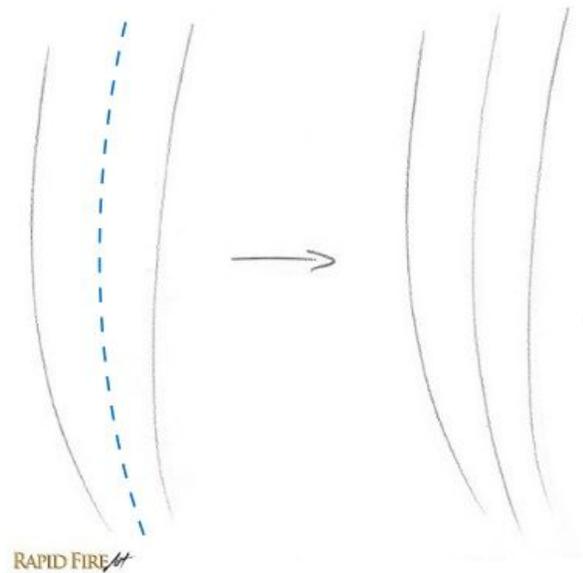
## Tools I Used ([You can find all my recommended tools here](#)):

- Dull sewing needle
- Derwent HB, 2B and 4B
- Mechanical pencil with 0.5mm 4B lead by Ain

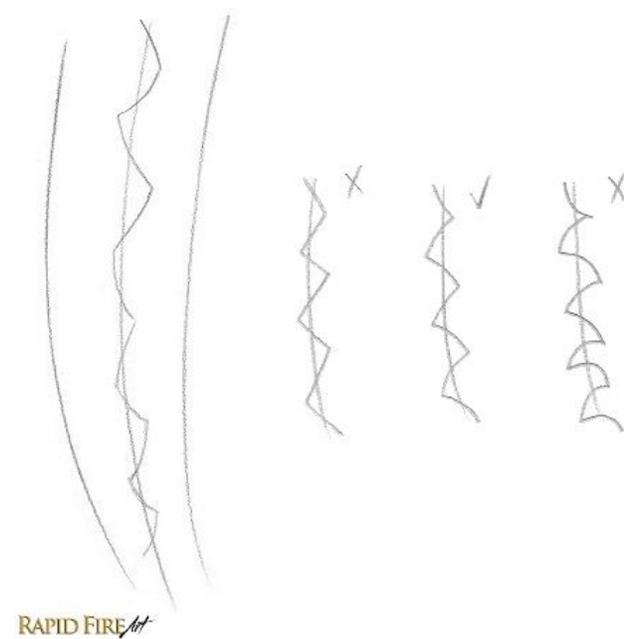
## Step 1

Draw 2 lines using an HB pencil.

These 2 lines will mark the thickness and length of your braid. Then, draw a curve down the middle.



## Step 2

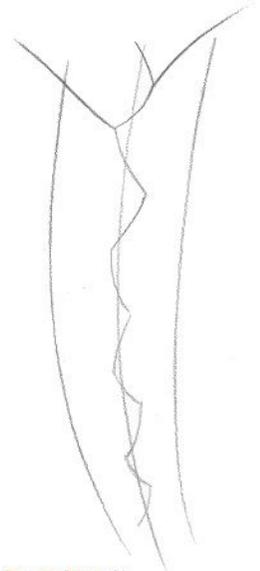


Along the middle line, draw curvy zigzags all the way down. Make your zigzags smaller and shorter as you work your way down. The bigger your zig zags, the larger each individual portion of braid will be.

Avoid drawing all your zigzags using straight or overly curvy lines. This will make your braid look less natural.

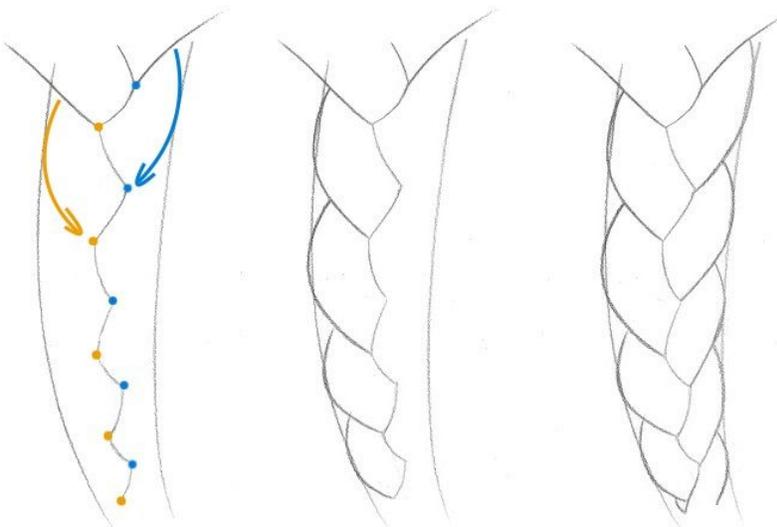
### Step 3

Now, let's draw the hair. At the very top of your braid, draw 2 curves that reach out beyond the guidelines made in step 1. This is where the braid begins, hence the funnel shape.



RAPID FIRE Art

### Step 4



RAPID FIRE Art

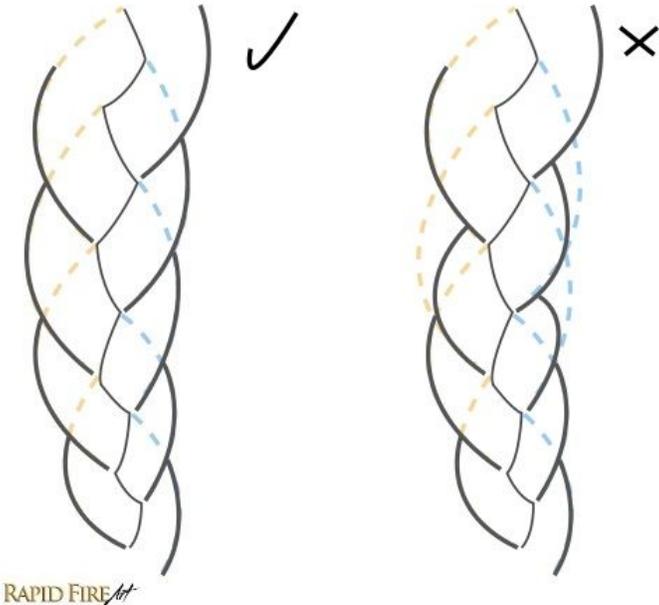
Before you proceed, erase the line going down the middle (through the zigzag).

Starting on the left side of the braid, draw a curve that touches the top portion of hair and ends at every convex corner.

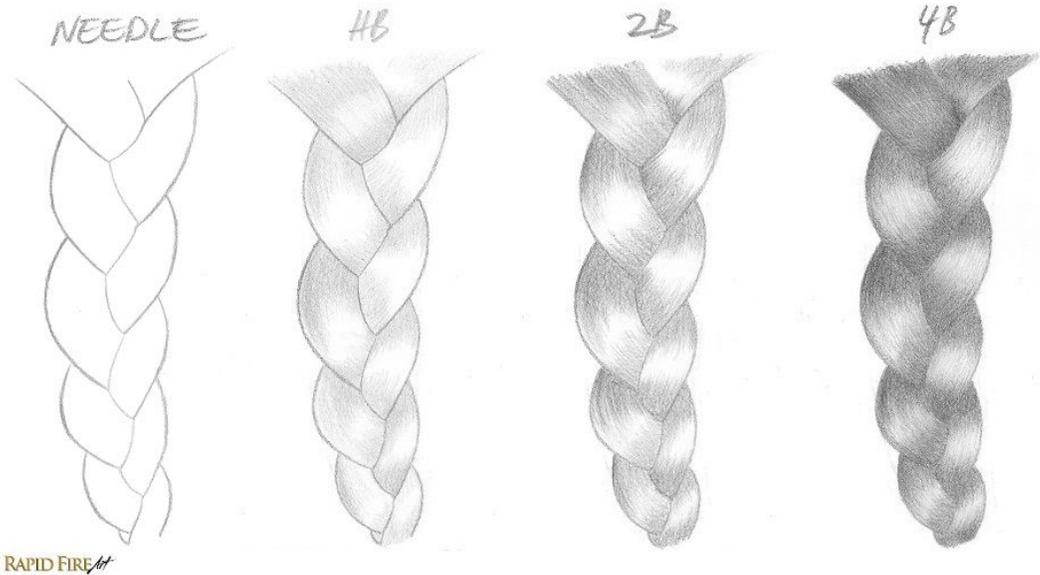
Do this all the way down. Do the same for the right side.

Stay close to the outline made in step 1. There is no need to stay exactly within the boundary. If you want your braid to look more natural, don't follow the outline exactly.

Here's a diagram to help you maintain good hair flow



**Step 5**



Erase the boundary outlines. Then use a blunt needle or any sharp edge that won't puncture the paper to draw invisible hairs. Apply a range of different pressures to create a variety of thin and thick hairs. What this does is it creates indentations in the paper, making it difficult for graphite to fill. Later, when you start shading the hair, these indentations will give the hair a more realistic texture and show up as thin white lines.

Here's a close up picture of my paper so you can see what I mean:



Determine the light source for the braid and map out areas of light and shadow by using a dull HB pencil to do some light planning (pun intended). Always shade into highlights, not away from them. Lift your pencil at the end of each stroke to create a nice gradient.

Then, use a 2B pencil to go over those same areas. Play around with different lead thicknesses by rotating your pencil every now and then. This not only

darkens the braid but also gives it some more detail. You might start to notice some of your needle work showing through now! Pretty cool huh?

If you're drawing dark colored hair, use a 4B pencil to do the same as what you did with the 2B.

Watch this video if you're a little confused :) [Video not available in PDF]

## Step 6



Here's the fun part! Grab a 0.5mm mechanical pencil with 4B lead or an ultra pointy 4B pencil to do some detailing (if you're drawing light colored hair, use a harder pencil).

You mapped out areas of light and shadow in the last step, so in this step, just go over the same areas again. In some areas, press harder to

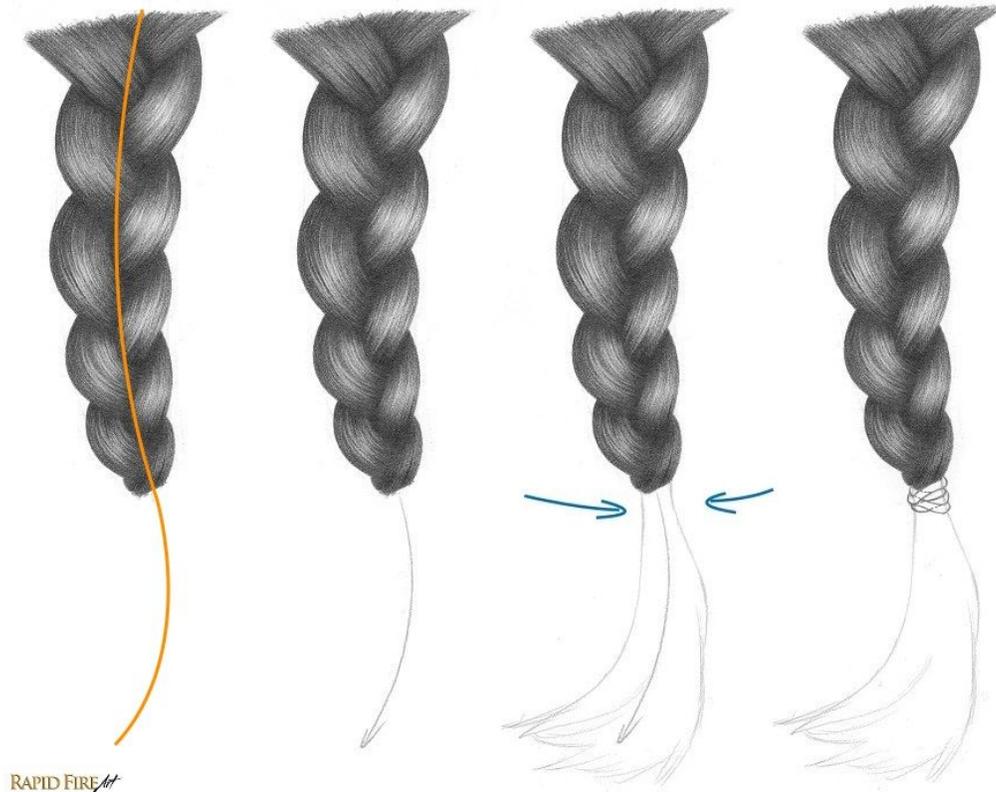
make portions of hair look more interesting to the eye.

Here's a short video for this step: [Video not available in PDF]

When working around the zigzags, keep a clear boundary between each group of hair. If the boundaries are not clear enough, darken your zigzags very slightly.

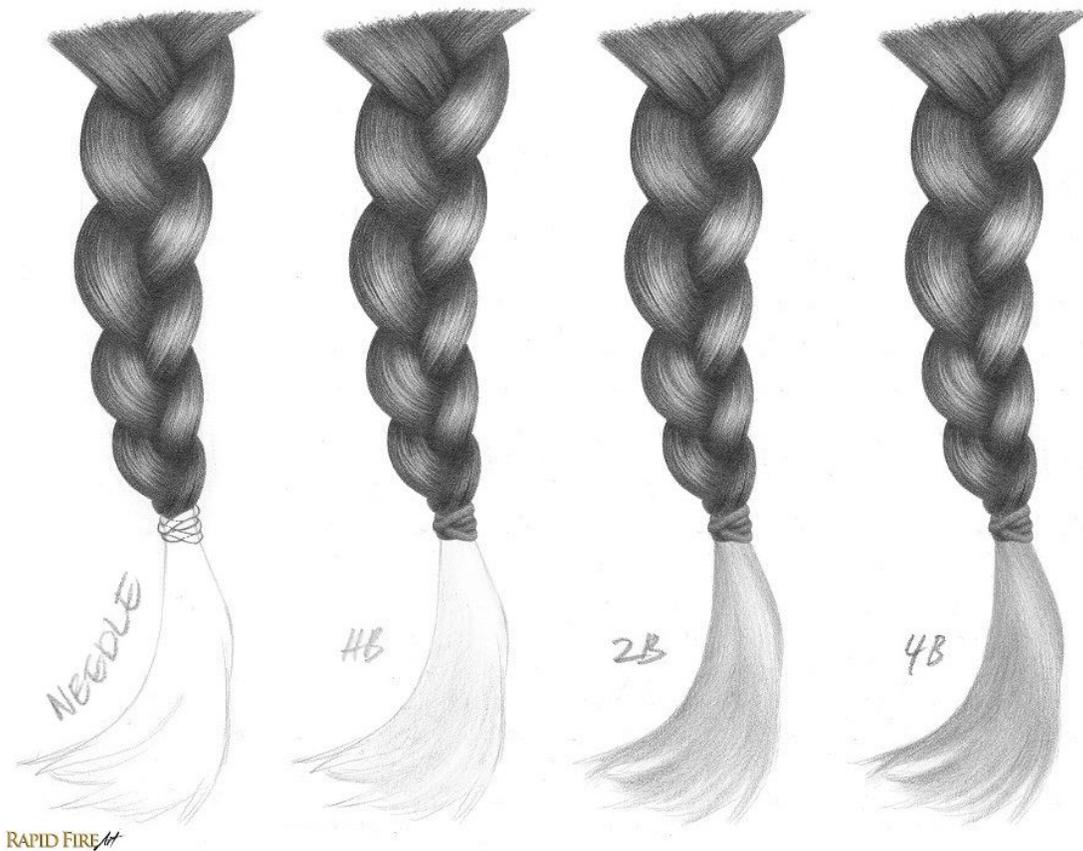
If you want to draw super shiny hair, keep the highlights as clean and as white as possible. If you want dull highlights, shade over them using an HB pencil after you're done detailing.

## Step 7



Time to draw the tail. To draw a natural flowing tail at the end of a braid, use a single curve to mark the direction and middle of the tail. This curve should be a smooth and have a natural curve.

## Step 8



Shade the hair tie using a completely different shading technique to give it a noticeably different texture. I used a squiggly motion to give the hair tie a fuzzy texture.

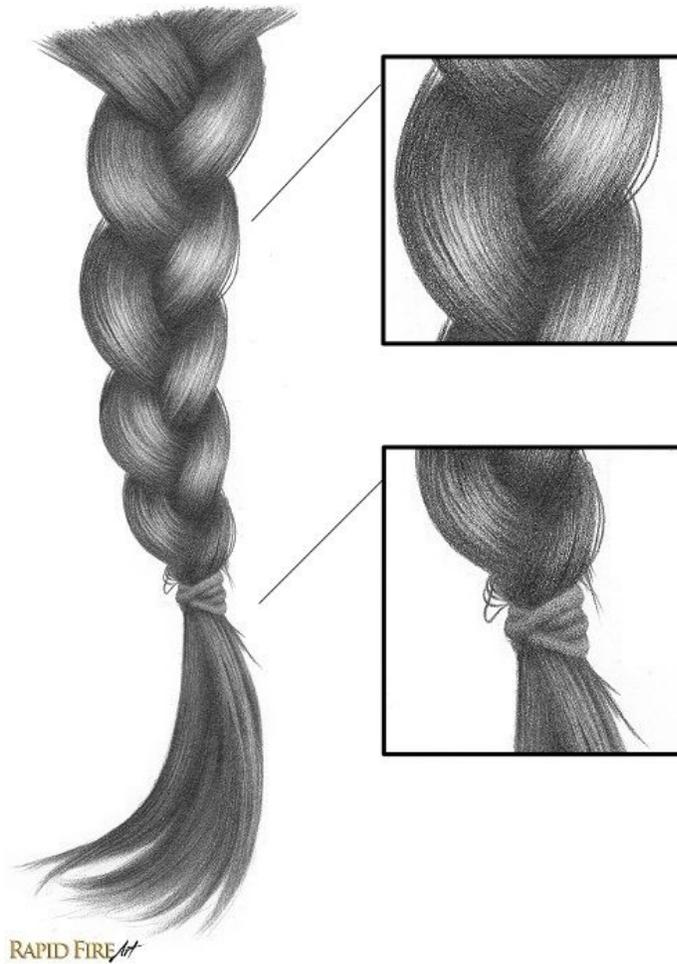
Just like what you did in step 5, use a needle to draw invisible hairs and then shade areas of hair that are in shadow using HB, 2B and then 4B.

## Step 9



Detailing! Time to draw those individual hairs again. I'm showing you many pictures so you can see that I broke the hairs into individual groups and shaded each area one after the other. Dark area first, light area last.

## Step 10



Not natural enough for you? Grab a 0.5mm pencil and add some loose hairs here and there. Especially around the hair tie.

Here are some examples of cool shapes you can make. This is useful for drawing hairstyles that consist of winding braids. For example: milkmaid braids, halo braids and hearts to name a few.

What cool designs can you think of?

## More Examples:

