

Ellipses

Art & Design

Drawing a circle in perspective without the pointed ends that give it away.

A circle in perspective is an ellipse whose minor axis lies along the axis of the cylinder.

minor axis = axis of rotation

Glass at eye level

Zero degrees open.

Closes to a line

Glass on a low table

More degrees open.

A rounder, wider ellipse

Tilted cylinder

Never stays vertical.

Minor axis tilts too

THE COMMON MISTAKE

✗ **Pointed ends, like a leaf**

✓ **Both ends equally rounded**

An ellipse has no corners. The tight ends still curve, and drawing them as points is the commonest sign of a guessed ellipse.

Ellipse degree is the viewing angle: a 30° ellipse is half as deep as it is wide, and a 90° one is a full circle.