Dragon Drawing Construction: Body Masses, Wings, Horns, and Tail

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

On a page with a baseline-to-midline distance of 6 cm, construct a dragon with a chest oval 9 cm wide and a hip oval 6 cm wide. Use a 60-degree wing spread from the spine. Describe the first four construction steps and state one symmetry check.

Answer: Draw a baseline. Draw the chest oval 9 cm wide and the hip oval 6 cm wide, overlapping by one-third. Connect with a spine curve. Mark shoulder points and draw both leading edges at 60 degrees from the spine, equal length, then add two scallops per trailing edge. Check that both wing-tip heights match the baseline distance.

Reason: The chest is 1.5 head-lengths and the hips are 1 head-length, following the lesson's hypothetical proportions. The 60-degree spread is a wide but valid choice. Symmetry is checked by comparing wing-tip heights.

Check: Measure both wing tips from the baseline; they should be equal within your drawing tolerance. Confirm the chest oval is wider than the hip oval.

Task 2

A learner draws horns 1.5 head-lengths long that cross the wing leading edge. Using the lesson's convention, describe a fix and a check. Assume a head-length of 5 cm.

Answer: Shorten the horns to about half a head-length, about 2.5 cm, and angle them backward away from the wing. Check that the horn tips do not touch the wing leading edge and that both horns are similar in length.

Reason: The lesson suggests half a head-length as a hypothetical starting point. Backward angling moves horns away from the wing spread. The check is visual and measurable.

Check: Measure each horn from skull rear to tip; both should be about 2.5 cm. Confirm no overlap with the wing leading edge.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Construct a dragon with a tail that curves away from the wings. The hip oval is 7 cm wide. Describe how to start the tail and one check that the tail base is not too wide.

Answer: Start the tail at the edge of the hip oval, on the side away from the wing spread. Taper immediately so the tail base is narrower than the hip oval. Check by comparing the tail base width to the hip oval width; the base should be visibly narrower.

Reason: Starting at the hip oval edge integrates the tail with the body mass. Immediate tapering prevents an unbalanced look. The check uses a simple width comparison.

Check: Measure the tail base width and the hip oval width; the tail base should be smaller. Confirm the tail curves away from the wings.

Task 4

A dragon drawing has wings attached at the hips and a tail base wider than the hips. Describe two fixes and one overall balance check using the baseline.

Answer: Move the wing attachments to shoulder points on the chest oval and keep both at the same height. Narrow the tail base so it is smaller than the hip oval and taper it to a point. For balance, compare the highest wing tip and the lowest tail point to the baseline; the silhouette should not lean to one side.

Reason: Shoulder attachment is the lesson's convention for wings. A narrower tail base restores body balance. The baseline check tests overall silhouette stability.

Check: Mark shoulder points and confirm both wings attach there. Measure tail base width against hip width. Compare left and right wing-tip heights to the baseline.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body masses: chest and hip ovals overlap and connect with a clear spine and belly curve.
- [ ] Wing construction: wings attach at shoulder points, leading and trailing edges are present, and both wings are symmetric in spread.
- [ ] Horns: two horns sit on the skull rear, angle backward, and read clearly without crossing the wing leading edge.
- [ ] Tail: tail starts at the hip oval, tapers to a point, and curves away from the wings.
- [ ] Legs: four tapered legs with toe lines support the body and are similar in length.
- [ ] Overall readability: the dragon reads as one creature with no confusing overlaps; construction lines are erased or lightened.
- [ ] Convention note: one head-length is measured from baseline to midline; letter styles vary, so proportions may differ. Valid alternatives are accepted if the dragon reads clearly.

Reflection: What did you check, what did you change, and what will you try next?