Old Man Drawing: Wrinkles and Posture Portrait Guide

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

On a blank sheet, draw an elderly man's head only using an 8 cm head height. Mark the eye line at half the head height and the nose base one-third below the eye line. Taper the jaw and add two forehead lines and three crow's feet per outer eye. Use the continuous-line convention.

Answer: A head with an 8 cm height, eye line at 4 cm from the top, nose base about 5.3 cm from the top (one-third down the eye-to-chin span), mouth line about 6.7 cm from the top (two-thirds down that span), tapered jaw, two curved forehead lines, and three short crow's feet per outer eye. Lines are continuous with breaks at bone ridges.

Reason: The proportions set the construction, and the wrinkle zones test placement and the convention. Tapering the jaw avoids a young, square read.

Check: Measure the head height and eye line with a ruler. Confirm the nose base sits about one-third down from the eye line to the chin and the mouth about two-thirds down. Count two forehead lines and three crow's feet per eye. Check that each wrinkle is one continuous line with a break where it crosses a bone ridge.

Task 2

Draw an elderly man's portrait from head to mid-chest. Use a neck tilted forward about 5 to 10 degrees as a hypothetical example, a shoulder line sloping down from the neck, and one shoulder slightly higher. Add nasolabial folds and three neck rings.

Answer: A portrait with a forward-tilted neck, sloping shoulder line, one shoulder higher, nasolabial folds from nose wings to mouth corners, and three neck rings following the neck cylinder.

Reason: Posture is the main age cue here. The forward neck and sloping shoulders read older than a vertical neck and horizontal shoulders. Neck rings follow the cylinder rather than crossing straight.

Check: Draw a vertical line from the ear through the shoulder; the ear should sit slightly ahead of the shoulder line. Check that the shoulder line slopes down and one side is higher. Count three neck rings and confirm they curve with the neck.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw an elderly man's head with uneven wrinkle density. Use two dominant forehead lines, one dominant nasolabial fold per side, and lighter secondary lines elsewhere. Keep the forehead lighter and darken under the jaw and side of the neck.

Answer: A head with two dominant forehead lines, one dominant nasolabial fold per side, lighter secondary lines, a light forehead, and darker shadow under the jaw and side of the neck.

Reason: Uneven density prevents the face from looking covered in equal dark lines. Contrast separates the face from the neck and helps wrinkles read as surface detail.

Check: Identify the two dominant forehead lines and one dominant nasolabial fold per side. Check that secondary lines are lighter. Compare the forehead tone to the shadow under the jaw; the forehead should be lighter.

Task 4

Draw an elderly man's portrait from head to mid-chest and then review it against the rubric. Mark any wrinkle that crosses a bone ridge without a break and redraw it with a small gap. Confirm the portrait stops at mid-chest.

Answer: A reviewed portrait with corrected wrinkle breaks at bone ridges and a clear mid-chest boundary. The rubric check confirms proportions, wrinkle placement, posture, and contrast.

Reason: The review step tests whether you can apply the convention consistently. Correcting breaks at bone ridges is the most common fix for wrinkle errors.

Check: Use the rubric line by line. For each wrinkle crossing a bone ridge, confirm a small gap. Measure the portrait boundary to confirm it stops at mid-chest and does not include a full body.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Head proportions: eye line near half the head height, nose base about one-third down from the eye line to the chin, and mouth line about two-thirds down, adjusted to reference.
- [ ] Jaw and chin: lower third tapered with chin slightly forward, not wide and square.
- [ ] Wrinkle placement: lines in forehead, eye, mouth, and neck zones, with uneven density and two or three dominant folds.
- [ ] Wrinkle convention: each wrinkle is a single continuous line following the skin surface, with breaks allowed at bone ridges.
- [ ] Posture: neck tilted forward a few degrees, shoulder line sloping down, one shoulder slightly higher, ear ahead of shoulder line.
- [ ] Boundary: portrait stops at mid-chest and excludes full-body figures.
- [ ] Contrast: forehead lighter, shadow under jaw and side of neck darker, wrinkles read as surface detail.

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