Tropical Flower Drawing: Compare Hibiscus, Bird-of-Paradise and Orchid Forms

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a hibiscus with a disc radius of 3 cm. Add a foreshortened column. State the column length you chose and why.

Answer: A column length of about 1.5 cm is appropriate because it is half the disc radius, keeping the column clearly shorter than the radius.

Reason: The hibiscus disc faces the viewer, so the column is foreshortened. A column shorter than the radius preserves the flat disc read.

Check: Measure the column against the disc radius with a ruler; the column should be less than the radius.

Task 2

Draw a bird-of-paradise bract 10 cm long. Draw three pointed petals inside the opening. State the petal length you chose and check it against the bract.

Answer: Petals of about 6 cm are appropriate because they are shorter than the 10 cm bract, preserving the compact stacked silhouette.

Reason: The bract encloses the petals; petals longer than the bract would break the boat-like form.

Check: Measure each petal tip against the bract tip; no petal should extend beyond the bract.

Task 3

Draw an orchid face 8 cm tall. Place two upper petals, two side petals and a lower lip. State the lip width you chose and compare it to a side petal.

Answer: A lip width of about 4 cm is appropriate because it is wider than a side petal of about 2.5 cm, making the lip the widest single element.

Reason: The orchid lip is a modified lower petal that dominates the lower half of the face; it should be broader than the side petals.

Check: Measure the lip width and the widest side petal; the lip should be wider.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

On one page, draw all three blooms side by side at the same overall height. Label each using the x-height convention. Then list one structural difference between each pair.

Answer: A complete response shows three blooms of equal height, consistent labels, and differences such as: hibiscus is radial with a column; bird-of-paradise is asymmetric with stacked pointed petals; orchid is bilateral with a broad lower lip.

Reason: Equal height allows fair comparison of silhouette and internal structure. The differences follow from the construction rules for each form.

Check: Measure the overall height of each bloom with a ruler; they should match within 1 cm. Check that each label's lowercase letters share the same baseline-to-midline height.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Hibiscus shows five overlapping petals arranged radially around a central disc.
- [ ] Hibiscus column is foreshortened and shorter than the disc radius.
- [ ] Bird-of-paradise bract is elongated with a beak-like tip pointing away from the stem.
- [ ] Bird-of-paradise petals are pointed, stacked in a fan and shorter than the bract.
- [ ] Orchid uses a vertical axis with two upper petals, two side petals and a broad lower lip.
- [ ] Orchid lip is the widest single element and sits at the bottom center.
- [ ] Labels use a consistent lettering style with x-height measured baseline to midline.
- [ ] Construction lines are light and erased or faint in the final drawing.

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