Draw a Shark: Fin Placement and Body Shape Construction

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Using an x-height of 3 cm, construct a shark body 9 cm long. Mark the widest point 3 cm from the nose. Describe where the dorsal fin base should start and how long it should be.

Answer: The dorsal fin base should start on the top curve above the widest point, which is 3 cm from the nose. The base should be about 3 cm long.

Reason: The widest point is one x-height from the nose, and the dorsal fin sits above it or slightly behind. The base length equals one x-height, so 3 cm.

Check: Measure the distance from nose to widest point (should be 3 cm) and the dorsal fin base (should be about 3 cm). Confirm both use centimetres.

Task 2

A shark drawing has an x-height of 5 cm. The pectoral fin starts 2.5 cm behind the nose and is 5 cm long. Is the start position consistent with the lesson? Explain.

Answer: Yes. The pectoral fin should start about half an x-height behind the nose. Half of 5 cm is 2.5 cm, so the start position is consistent.

Reason: The lesson places the pectoral fin start about half an x-height behind the nose. With x-height 5 cm, half is 2.5 cm.

Check: Divide the x-height by two and compare with the stated start distance. Both values are in centimetres.

Task 3

Draw a shark with x-height 4 cm and body length 12 cm. The dorsal fin base is drawn 6 cm long. Identify the mistake and give a corrected base length.

Answer: The mistake is that the dorsal fin base is too long. It should be about one x-height, so the corrected base length is about 4 cm.

Reason: The lesson sets the dorsal fin base at about one x-height. With x-height 4 cm, a 6 cm base is too long by 2 cm.

Check: Compare the dorsal fin base to the x-height. The base should be close to 4 cm, not 6 cm.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A shark sketch uses a 4 cm x-height. The tail lobes extend 8 cm beyond the tail mark. State whether this fits the lesson guide and give a corrected maximum tail extension.

Answer: No, 8 cm is too far. The tail should stay within about one x-height, so the corrected maximum extension is about 4 cm.

Reason: The lesson keeps the tail within about one x-height of the tail mark. With x-height 4 cm, 8 cm is twice the guide.

Check: Measure the tail extension from the tail mark and compare it with the x-height. It should be about 4 cm or less.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body tapers smoothly from head to tail; top and bottom curves are close to symmetric at three check points.
- [ ] Dorsal fin base is on the top curve, about one x-height long, above the widest point or slightly behind it.
- [ ] Pectoral fin starts below the midline near the head and is angled slightly back.
- [ ] Tail lobes are present and stay within about one x-height of the tail mark.
- [ ] All measurements use one consistent unit; valid alternative proportions are accepted if the checks pass.

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