Realistic Nose Shading: Tonal Planes and Nostril Forms

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A nose outline has a bridge labeled value 1, a left side plane labeled value 3, a right side plane labeled value 4, and nostril openings labeled value 5. Light comes from the upper left. Which plane should be lightest after shading, and which should be darkest?

Answer: The bridge should be lightest, and the nostril openings should be darkest.

Reason: Value 1 is the lightest planned value and value 5 is the darkest. The bridge is labeled 1 and the nostril openings are labeled 5, so they remain the extremes after shading.

Check: Squint at the drawing and confirm the bridge is the lightest large area and the nostril openings are the darkest.

Task 2

An ala is about three x-heights wide. A planned nostril opening is about one x-height wide. If the drawing uses the same x-height unit, what is the ratio of nostril width to ala width?

Answer: The ratio is 1 to 3.

Reason: Nostril width is one x-height and ala width is three x-heights, so the ratio is 1:3. This is a hypothetical proportion, not a universal rule.

Check: Measure both widths with the same x-height unit on your paper and compare the numbers.

Task 3

A student shades the nostril opening with value 5 but blends the rim until it is also value 5. What visual problem occurs, and what is the fix?

Answer: The nostril loses its rim and looks like a smudge or solid oval. The fix is to keep the rim slightly lighter than the inside, for example value 4, and blend only the outer ala edge.

Reason: The rim catches light and separates the opening from the ala. If rim and inside share the darkest value, the opening no longer reads as a form.

Check: Turn the drawing upside down and check whether the nostril still reads as an opening with a distinct rim.

Realistic Nose Shading: Tonal Planes and Nostril Forms

Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A nose is shaded with light from the upper right. The right side plane is labeled value 2 and the left side plane value 4. The student then darkens the right side plane to value 4. What error has occurred, and how should it be corrected?

Answer: The student has contradicted the light direction by making the lit side as dark as the shadow side. Correct it by returning the right side plane to value 2 and keeping the left side plane at value 4.

Reason: With light from the upper right, the right side plane should be lighter than the left. Equal values remove the form's turn away from the light.

Check: Compare the two side planes by squinting; the lit side should be clearly lighter than the shadow side.

Realistic Nose Shading: Tonal Planes and Nostril Forms

Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Five tonal planes are identifiable and consistent with one light direction.
- [ ] Values follow a planned 1-to-5 scale, with the darkest value in the nostril openings.
- [ ] Nostril forms read as openings with a lighter rim, not solid ovals.
- [ ] Edges are soft on curved transitions and sharper at the nostril rim and ala-cheek crease.
- [ ] The whole nose reads as a solid form when viewed upside down.
- [ ] Valid alternative proportions and nostril shapes are accepted if the value logic and form remain coherent.

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