Draw Aurora Ribbons: Layered Light Over a Horizon

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a horizon line at one third from the bottom of a landscape sheet. Add three overlapping ribbon guides above it: wide base, narrower middle, tapering top. Do not add glow strokes yet.

Answer: A light horizon line sits across the lower third. Three curved guides overlap above it, with the base widest and the top narrowest and tapered at one end.

Reason: This isolates the structural step: horizon placement and three overlapping guides with width order.

Check: Measure the horizon distance from the bottom and confirm it is about one third of the paper height. Check that each guide overlaps the one below and that widths decrease from base to top.

Task 2

Using your three guides, draw the ribbon edges with light pencil strokes. Make the base ribbon widen in the middle and the top ribbon taper at the left end. Keep edges light.

Answer: The base ribbon is wider at its middle than at its ends. The top ribbon narrows toward the left end. All edges are light and adjustable.

Reason: This practices width variation and taper, which prevent flat stripe effects.

Check: Compare the base ribbon width at its middle and ends; the middle should be wider. Confirm the top ribbon edges converge at the left end. Check that no edge is heavy or dark.

Task 3

Draw three overlapping ribbons and add short light strokes inside them to suggest glow. At each overlap, keep the upper ribbon edge visible and let the lower ribbon fade. Add a simple horizon silhouette.

Answer: The ribbons overlap with upper edges visible and lower ribbons fading behind. Short interior strokes suggest glow. A simple dark band sits on the horizon.

Reason: This combines overlap handling, glow suggestion, and a minimal anchor without landscape detail.

Check: At each overlap, confirm the upper ribbon edge is clear and the lower ribbon is less defined. Check that interior strokes are short and light. Confirm the silhouette has no detailed landscape features.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Draw a complete aurora scene with three ribbons, varied widths, overlaps, light glow strokes, and a simple horizon silhouette. Then write one sentence explaining how you kept the ribbons from looking like flat stripes.

Answer: The scene shows three overlapping ribbons with varied widths and a tapering top ribbon. Light interior strokes suggest glow, and a simple silhouette anchors the horizon. The sentence explains that width variation and overlaps prevent flat stripes.

Reason: This assesses the full task and asks the learner to articulate the key structural choice.

Check: Use the rubric to check horizon, three ribbons, overlaps, width variation, light edges, and simple silhouette. Confirm the sentence mentions width variation or overlaps.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Horizon line is present and leaves room for three ribbons.
- [ ] Three ribbons are drawn with a wide base, narrower middle, and tapering top.
- [ ] Ribbons overlap rather than stack with gaps.
- [ ] Width varies along at least two ribbons.
- [ ] Edges are light and glow is suggested with short interior strokes.
- [ ] Horizon silhouette is simple and no star field or foreground detail is added.

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