Pencil Sunset Landscape: Gradient Sky and Horizon

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

On a 15 cm by 20 cm page, place the horizon 5 cm from the bottom. The sky is 15 cm tall. Divide the sky into three equal bands. State the height of each band and which pencil grade you would use for each, from lowest to highest.

Answer: Each band is 5 cm tall. Lowest band: 2H. Middle band: HB. Top band: 2B.

Reason: The sky height is 20 cm minus 5 cm, which is 15 cm. Three equal bands are 15 divided by 3, which is 5 cm each. The lowest band is lightest, so use the hardest pencil; the top band is darkest, so use the softest.

Check: Confirm that 5 cm plus 5 cm plus 5 cm equals 15 cm, and that the horizon plus sky equals the page height: 5 cm plus 15 cm equals 20 cm.

Task 2

A sky area is 12 cm tall. You want four equal gradient bands. State the height of each band. If the lowest band is shaded with 2H and the next with HB, what values should the third and fourth bands have relative to the first two?

Answer: Each band is 3 cm tall. The third band should be darker than the second, and the fourth band should be the darkest.

Reason: Twelve divided by four is 3 cm per band. A sunset gradient becomes darker as you move upward, so values increase in darkness from the lowest band to the top band.

Check: Add the four band heights: 3 plus 3 plus 3 plus 3 equals 12 cm. Check that the stated values progress from lightest to darkest.

Task 3

You have drawn a sky gradient but see a sharp line between the middle and top bands. Describe two actions to fix it and state how you would check the fix.

Answer: Blend vertically across the line with a blending tool, then add a thin layer of graphite to the lighter side of the line and blend again. Check by squinting at the sky and looking for any remaining hard edge.

Reason: A sharp line means the values on either side are too different or the graphite was not blended across the boundary. Vertical blending merges the values, and a thin additional layer softens the transition.

Check: Squint at the drawing from a short distance. If no sharp line is visible between the bands, the fix is successful.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A foreground hill silhouette is 6 cm tall and sits below a horizon that is 8 cm from the bottom of a 24 cm tall page. State the height of the sky area and check whether the silhouette fits entirely below the horizon.

Answer: The sky area is 16 cm tall. The silhouette is 6 cm tall and fits below the horizon because 6 cm is less than the 8 cm distance from the bottom to the horizon.

Reason: The sky height is the page height minus the horizon height: 24 cm minus 8 cm equals 16 cm. The silhouette occupies part of the land area below the horizon, so its height must be less than the horizon height to fit.

Check: Confirm that 8 cm plus 16 cm equals 24 cm, and that 6 cm is less than 8 cm.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Horizon is deliberate, level, and clearly separates sky from land.
- [ ] Sky gradient is lightest at the horizon and becomes darker toward the top.
- [ ] Gradient transitions are blended with no sharp lines between bands.
- [ ] Foreground silhouettes are dark, simple, and contrast with the horizon sky.
- [ ] Shading is built in thin layers with controlled pressure.
- [ ] Page is clean with no stray marks outside the frame.

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