Realistic Human Figure Drawing: Proportion Landmarks and Tonal Shading

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A figure is seven head units tall with a head unit of 4 cm. What is the total height? Where is the hip line if it is at the midpoint?

Answer: Total height is 7 × 4 cm = 28 cm. The hip line is at the midpoint, so 28 ÷ 2 = 14 cm from the top.

Reason: Multiply the number of head units by the head unit size to get total height. The midpoint is half the total height.

Check: Verify that 14 cm is half of 28 cm and that 7 × 4 = 28.

Task 2

A figure is eight head units tall with a head unit of 2.5 cm. Shoulder width is two head units. What is the shoulder width in cm? If the hip line is four head units from the top, how far is it from the ground?

Answer: Shoulder width is 2 × 2.5 cm = 5 cm. Total height is 8 × 2.5 cm = 20 cm. Hip line from top is 4 × 2.5 cm = 10 cm. From the ground, it is 20 − 10 = 10 cm.

Reason: Multiply head units by the head unit size. Subtract the hip line distance from the top from the total height to get the distance from the ground.

Check: Check that 5 cm is twice 2.5 cm and that 10 cm + 10 cm = 20 cm.

Task 3

A figure is six head units tall with a head unit of 5 cm. The knee line is two head units below the hip line, and the hip line is at the midpoint. Where is the knee line from the top?

Answer: Total height is 6 × 5 cm = 30 cm. Hip line is at the midpoint: 30 ÷ 2 = 15 cm from the top. Knee line is two head units below the hip line: 2 × 5 cm = 10 cm below. So the knee line is 15 + 10 = 25 cm from the top.

Reason: Find the midpoint for the hip line, then add the knee offset in head units converted to cm.

Check: Verify that 25 cm is less than 30 cm and that 15 + 10 = 25.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A figure is eight head units tall with a head unit of 3 cm. The light comes from the upper right. Describe where the highlight, core shadow, and cast shadow should be placed.

Answer: Total height is 24 cm. With light from the upper right, the highlight is on the upper right side of each form. The core shadow is on the lower left side. The cast shadow falls to the lower left on the ground.

Reason: The highlight faces the light source. The core shadow is opposite the light. The cast shadow falls away from the light direction.

Check: Check that the highlight and cast shadow are on opposite sides of the figure relative to the light direction.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Head unit is clearly defined and used consistently.
- [ ] Shoulder width, hip line, and knee line are placed using head units.
- [ ] Tonal zones include highlight, mid-tone, core shadow, and cast shadow.
- [ ] Light direction is consistent across the figure.
- [ ] Shading supports the form without distorting proportions.
- [ ] Valid stylistic variations in line quality and shading texture are acceptable.

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