Charcoal Flower Drawing: Smudge, Blend and Erase for Petal Tones

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

On a scrap sheet, draw two petal shapes side by side. Smudge a light tone across the left petal only, using a clean finger and short strokes from base to edge. Leave the right petal white. Describe what you see at the shared edge.

Answer: The left petal shows a soft, slightly uneven tone; the right petal stays white; the shared edge is soft on the left and crisp on the right.

Reason: Smudging spreads loose charcoal outward, so the tone softens toward the edge while the untouched petal keeps a clean boundary.

Check: Hold the scrap at arm's length: the left petal should read lighter than a compressed stick mark and the right petal should show no grey.

Task 2

Draw one petal with a dark base and a light edge. Blend the transition between them with a stump or soft brush. Then erase a small pointed highlight near the light edge. State the order of operations and why.

Answer: Lay dark at the base, blend toward the light edge, then erase the highlight and lightly blend its border. Erasing last keeps the highlight from being filled in by later blending.

Reason: Blending before erasing prevents the highlight from being smothered; a light blend after erasing keeps the highlight from looking like a hole.

Check: Check that the highlight is smaller than the mid tone and that no hard white patch sits on the petal.

Task 3

Draw a stem and a single petal attached to it. Make the stem darker than the petal using compressed charcoal, and erase a thin light line along one side of the stem. Describe how the stem contrast changes the flower.

Answer: The darker stem with a thin erased light line reads as round and firm, and it makes the lighter petal appear softer by comparison.

Reason: Contrast between firm, dark stem edges and soft petal edges separates the two forms and anchors the flower.

Check: Squint at the drawing: the stem should be the darkest element and the erased line should be visible but thin.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Plan a five-petal bloom at hand width with light from the upper left. Name which petal gets the darkest overlap shadow, which gets the erased highlight, and which two petals stay mostly light. Then draw it and check your plan against the result.

Answer: A valid plan names one petal for the darkest overlap, one for the erased highlight, and two mostly light petals, with the fifth carrying a smudged mid tone. The drawing should match the named plan.

Reason: A written tonal plan forces distinct values before marks are made, which prevents uniform grey petals.

Check: Compare the finished drawing with the plan: the named darkest and lightest areas should be identifiable at arm's length.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Petal tones show at least three distinct values: light, mid and dark.
- [ ] Smudged areas are soft and uneven; blended areas transition without a hard seam.
- [ ] At least one erased highlight is small, pointed and blended at its border.
- [ ] The stem is darker than the petals and has firmer edges.
- [ ] The darkest dark sits at an overlap or stem base, and the lightest light is on a petal.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted: a highlight may be left as untouched paper instead of erased, and smudge tools may be finger, cloth or stump, provided the tonal result matches the plan.

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