Value Blocking for Black-and-White Portrait Drawing

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A face outline is divided into four zones: left forehead (1), right cheek (4), chin shadow (5), and nose bridge (2). Describe the fill order and one check.

Answer: Fill 1, then 5, then 2 and 4. Check by stepping back: the chin shadow should be the darkest patch and the left forehead the lightest.

Reason: Filling extremes first establishes contrast; intermediates follow. The check confirms the value structure reads before features.

Check: Compare each filled zone to a five-patch scale strip made on the same paper; confirm 1 is lightest and 5 darkest.

Task 2

A learner shades every zone to a similar grey. Using the numbered map, state two corrections.

Answer: Re-test each zone against the scale strip and darken value 5 zones while lightening value 1 zones; keep zone boundaries crisp until contrast is clear.

Reason: Similar greys collapse the structure; restoring distinct extremes rebuilds readable light and shadow.

Check: View from several steps away; the face should show clear light and dark patches, not uniform grey.

Task 3

A portrait has three tones: 1 on the forehead, 3 on the cheek, 5 under the jaw. The cheek looks too dark next to the forehead. Suggest a change and a check.

Answer: Change the cheek to 2 or lighten the forehead to keep contrast; check by comparing the cheek patch to the scale strip and to the forehead patch side by side.

Reason: Adjacent zones need enough separation to read as different planes; adjusting one value restores the relationship.

Check: Place scrap-paper patches of the two tones side by side; they should differ visibly but not compete with the darkest zone.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

You must block a face with strong side light using four tones. List the zones you would assign and the order of filling.

Answer: Assign 1 to the lit cheek and forehead, 2 to the nose bridge, 4 to the shadowed cheek, 5 to the under-jaw and cast shadow. Fill 1, then 5, then 2 and 4.

Reason: Extremes first lock contrast; intermediates refine planes. Four tones suit strong side light without overcomplicating.

Check: Squint at the finished block; the lit side should read as one clear light shape and the shadow side as one clear dark shape.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Uses 3–5 distinct numbered tones matching the value map.
- [ ] Fills all zones before drawing features.
- [ ] Zone boundaries remain visible until the block reads correctly.
- [ ] Tonal scale strip is matched by eye to the learner's own pencil; alternative tone choices are valid if contrast is clear.
- [ ] Final portrait reads as light and shadow from a distance.

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