Colored Mushroom Drawing: Layered Cap, Gill, and Stem Shading

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

A learner draws a cap dome 10 cm wide and a stem 5 cm wide. They apply base tone to the cap, mid tone along the top edge, and a highlight at the bottom. They shade the gills lightly and put stem mid tone on the right with a highlight on the left. Identify the main shading error and state the fix.

Answer: The cap mid tone and highlight are reversed: the mid tone should be along the lower edge and the highlight near the top. The stem shadow on the right and highlight on the left are consistent with each other, so keep them. Fix the cap by moving the mid tone to the lower edge and the highlight to the top.

Reason: Light strikes the top of a dome, so the top is the highlight and the lower edge is shadowed. The stem already follows this logic on its own axis, so only the cap needs correction.

Check: Compare the cap and stem shadow directions. If the cap shadow is at the top while the stem shadow is on one side, the cap is reversed.

Task 2

A learner shades a mushroom with base tone on the cap, mid tone on the gills, and no highlight anywhere. The stem has base tone only. Describe two thin layers to add and where to place them.

Answer: Add a small highlight near the top of the cap dome, and add mid tone along one side of the stem with a narrow highlight on the opposite side. Keep both layers thin. The gills already have mid tone, so no change is needed there unless the gaps look too light.

Reason: The cap needs a highlight to read as rounded, and the stem needs a mid tone and highlight to read as a cylinder. Thin layers preserve the existing base tone.

Check: After adding the layers, confirm the cap has three values and the stem has three values. If either still looks flat, add one more thin mid tone layer.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

A learner uses a cap 12 cm wide and a stem 6 cm wide. They apply base tone, then a heavy mid tone that covers the whole cap, then a large bright highlight across the top half. The gills are left white. List three corrections using the three-layer convention.

Answer: First, reduce the mid tone so it sits mainly along the lower edge and blends upward. Second, shrink the highlight to a small soft spot near the top. Third, shade the gills with mid tone between the lines and darken the deepest gaps slightly.

Reason: A heavy mid tone over the whole cap removes the base tone, and a large highlight flattens the dome. White gills do not look recessed under a shaded cap.

Check: Check that base, mid, and highlight are each visible on the cap, and that the gills are darker than the cap edge.

Task 4

A learner draws a cap dome 9 cm wide and a stem 4.5 cm wide. They put stem mid tone on the left and a stem highlight on the right. They put cap mid tone along the lower edge and a cap highlight at the top. They shade the gills with mid tone but leave the deepest gaps the same as the rest. State one improvement and explain how to check it.

Answer: Improve the gills by darkening the deepest gaps slightly more than the rest. Check by comparing the gaps to the cap edge: the gaps should be the darkest area under the cap. If they match the cap edge, add a thin darker layer in the gaps only.

Reason: Varied depth between gill lines makes the gills look recessed. The cap and stem shadow directions are already consistent, so the gills are the remaining weak point.

Check: Squint at the drawing. The gill gaps should read as the darkest zone. If the cap edge is darker, adjust the gills.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Cap shows three distinct layers: base, mid tone, and highlight.
- [ ] Gills are darker than the cap edge and show varied depth between lines.
- [ ] Stem shows a rounded form with mid tone on one side and highlight on the other.
- [ ] Shadow direction is consistent across cap and stem.
- [ ] Layers are thin and the paper is not buckled.
- [ ] Color choices are valid alternatives if the three-layer convention is followed.

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