Turtle Color Drawing: Shading Shell Scutes and Skin

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a shell section with three square scutes, each 2 cm by 2 cm. Apply the three-band convention and state the tone count after shading.

Answer: Each scute has a base band along its seam, a mid band across the middle, and a highlight near the center. Three scutes give nine tone regions and three tones per scute.

Reason: The convention assigns exactly three bands per scute, so the tone count equals three times the number of scutes. Keeping the highlight away from the seam preserves the raised look.

Check: Count tones per scute; confirm each seam has a base band on both sides; measure that the highlight is narrower than the mid band.

Task 2

A turtle neck is 4 cm long and 1 cm wide with one deep fold at the midpoint. Shade the skin using the two-layer convention and describe the shadow placement.

Answer: Apply the skin base across the full 4 cm by 1 cm area. Place one narrow shadow band at the midpoint fold, about 0.5 cm wide, then soften its edge with a light base pass. The skin shows two tones.

Reason: Only the deepest fold receives shadow, so the neck stays soft rather than striped. The shadow width is a hypothetical example measured on the drawing.

Check: Count two skin tones; confirm the shadow sits only at the fold; check that the shadow edge is softened and not a hard line.

Task 3

Draw a shell with five scutes: three in a top row and two in a bottom row. After shading, a classmate counts fourteen tone regions. Is that consistent with the convention? Explain.

Answer: No. Five scutes at three tones each should give fifteen tone regions. Fourteen means one scute is missing a tone or two tones merged. Recheck each scute for a countable base, mid, and highlight.

Reason: The convention fixes three tones per scute, so the expected total is three times five. A mismatch signals a shading error, not a valid alternative.

Check: Multiply scute count by three; compare with the counted total; inspect the scute with the missing tone.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A leg is 3 cm wide with two folds. You shade the base and two shadow bands, each 0.75 cm wide. State the total shadow width and whether the shadows leave enough base tone visible.

Answer: Two shadows at 0.75 cm each total 1.5 cm of shadow. The leg is 3 cm wide, so 1.5 cm of base tone remains visible, which is half the width. That is acceptable because base tone still separates the shadows.

Reason: Adding shadow widths and subtracting from total width checks whether shadows dominate. Keeping at least half the width as base tone preserves the soft skin look.

Check: Add shadow widths; subtract from total width; confirm remaining base width is at least equal to total shadow width.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Each scute shows three countable tones: base, mid, highlight.
- [ ] Base bands touch every scute seam on both sides.
- [ ] Highlight bands sit away from seams and are narrower than mid bands.
- [ ] Skin shows two countable tones with shadows only at folds or contact lines.
- [ ] Shell and skin tones differ by at least one visible value step.
- [ ] Band widths and stroke direction are consistent across adjacent scutes.
- [ ] Any chosen numerical width is labeled as a hypothetical example and measured on the actual drawing.

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