Realistic Car Drawing: Body Shading and Surface Reflection

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a simple car side panel 12 cm long and 4 cm tall with light from the upper right. Show a light zone, a core shadow, and a reflected-light band. Describe where each zone sits.

Answer: The light zone sits on the upper-right area of the panel. The core shadow runs vertically near the left edge. The reflected-light band sits just inside the core shadow, slightly lighter. A cast shadow falls to the lower left.

Reason: With light from the upper right, the right side faces the light and stays light. The left side turns away, creating a core shadow. Light bouncing from the ground creates a thin reflected-light band inside the shadow edge.

Check: Measure the panel with a ruler to confirm 12 cm by 4 cm. Squint to check that three zones are visible and that the darkest band is not at the very edge.

Task 2

Draw a car hood 10 cm wide and 6 cm deep with light from the front. Add a sky reflection band and a ground reflection band. State which band is closer to the windshield.

Answer: The sky reflection band runs along the rear edge of the hood, closer to the windshield. The ground reflection band runs along the front edge. The hood curves so the rear edge catches more sky.

Reason: A curved hood tilts upward toward the rear, so the rear edge reflects more sky. The front edge tilts downward and reflects more ground. Keeping the bands parallel to the hood's curvature makes the reflection believable.

Check: Measure the hood to confirm 10 cm by 6 cm. Check that the sky band is nearer the windshield and that both bands follow the hood's curve.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw two wheels for a car seen at an angle. Each wheel should be an ellipse 3 cm wide and 2.4 cm tall, with centers 8 cm apart on the same horizontal line. Shade the tires and add a rim highlight.

Answer: Two ellipses 3 cm wide and 2.4 cm tall, centers 8 cm apart horizontally. Tires are dark with a lighter rim highlight on the upper-left side, consistent with light from the upper left. Wheel wells are dark.

Reason: At an angle, wheels appear as ellipses wider than they are tall. Aligning centers keeps the car level. The rim highlight sits on the side facing the light.

Check: Use a ruler to check the ellipse dimensions and the 8 cm center distance. Confirm both centers lie on the same horizontal line.

Task 4

Draw a car body 14 cm long and 5 cm tall with light from the upper left. Add a cast shadow on the ground. Describe the shadow's direction and where it is darkest.

Answer: The cast shadow falls to the lower right, away from the upper-left light. It is darkest near the tires and fades outward. The shadow shape is simple and connects the car to the ground.

Reason: A cast shadow falls opposite the light source. Contact with the ground is darkest because the car blocks light most completely there. Fading outward suggests the shadow spreading.

Check: Measure the body to confirm 14 cm by 5 cm. Check that the shadow points lower right and that its darkest area touches the tires.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Light direction is marked and all shading, reflections, and cast shadows are consistent with it.
- [ ] Curved panels show three distinct zones: light, core shadow, and reflected light.
- [ ] Reflections follow the surface curvature and are limited to a few clear shapes.
- [ ] Wheels are ellipses with aligned centers, and proportions are checkable with a ruler.
- [ ] Cast shadow falls away from the light source and connects the car to the ground.
- [ ] Labels use the learner's natural handwriting; x-height is baseline to midline and letter styles may vary.

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