Tattoo Shading Practice: Gradient Blending and Stipple Density Drills

Original tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 1

In a 2 cm square, you count 6 dots. Estimate the density in dots per square centimeter.

Answer: About 1.5 dots per square centimeter.

Reason: A 2 cm square has an area of 4 square centimeters. Six dots divided by 4 square centimeters equals 1.5 dots per square centimeter.

Check: Multiply the density by the area: 1.5 times 4 equals 6 dots, matching the count.

Task 2

A gradient strip has four segments. Segment 2 reads lighter than segment 1 when squinted. Describe one fix.

Answer: Add a transition pass to darken segment 2 or lighten segment 1 so the order reads 1 lightest to 4 darkest.

Reason: The tonal order is reversed at the first boundary. Adjusting one segment restores the intended ramp.

Check: Squint from arm's length and confirm segment 1 is lightest and segment 4 is darkest.

Task 3

A stipple grid cell measures 1 cm by 1 cm and contains 12 dots. A neighboring cell contains 18 dots. Which cell should read darker?

Answer: The cell with 18 dots should read darker.

Reason: Higher dot density increases average darkness when dot size is consistent.

Check: Squint at both cells and confirm the 18-dot cell reads darker than the 12-dot cell.

Task 4

On a blank shape, the right third has dense stipple and the left third has a light gradient. The middle reads as a hard stripe. Name one adjustment.

Answer: Add a light transition pass across the middle third and reduce stipple clumping near the boundary.

Reason: A hard stripe means the tonal change is too abrupt. A transition pass and reduced clumping smooth the ramp.

Check: Reveal the shape in 2 cm strips and confirm each strip reads slightly darker than the previous one.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Gradient strip shows five readable tonal steps from light to dark when squinted.
- [ ] Stipple grid shows five density steps with consistent dot size and recorded counts.
- [ ] Blank shape combines gradient and stipple into one continuous tonal change.
- [ ] Transition passes reduce visible stripes at boundaries.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted if average darkness order remains clear.

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