Draw a Killer Whale: Dorsal Fin, Saddle Patch, Flukes and Eye Patch

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A learner draws a 16 cm body axis and puts the dorsal fin base at 4 cm from the nose. Using the four-part rule, where should the fin base be, and how far off is the drawing?

Answer: The four quarter marks are at 4 cm, 8 cm, 12 cm and 16 cm. The fin base should be at the second quarter mark, 8 cm. The drawing is 4 cm too far forward.

Reason: Divide 16 cm into four equal parts of 4 cm each. The second quarter mark is 8 cm from the nose. Subtracting 4 cm from 8 cm gives a 4 cm error.

Check: Re-divide the axis into four equal parts and confirm the second mark is 8 cm. Measure the drawn fin base and compare.

Task 2

On a 24 cm body axis, a learner places the saddle patch from 12 cm to 15 cm and the dorsal fin base at 12 cm. What placement problem does this create, and what is a simple fix?

Answer: The saddle patch starts at the same point as the fin base, so the two features overlap. A simple fix is to move the saddle patch to start just behind the fin base, for example from 13 cm to 16 cm.

Reason: The fin base is at the second quarter mark, 12 cm. The saddle patch should sit behind it, not share its starting point. Shifting the patch back by 1 cm creates a clear gap.

Check: Mark 12 cm on the axis and confirm the fin base and patch do not share a starting point. Measure the gap between them.

Task 3

A learner draws flukes that are 6 cm tall and 4 cm wide at the tail-base point of a 20 cm body. Is this a good fluke shape for a side view, and why?

Answer: No. The flukes are taller than they are wide, which makes them look like a second dorsal fin. They should be wider than tall, for example 6 cm wide and 4 cm tall.

Reason: In a side view, flukes read as tail fins when they spread horizontally. A tall narrow shape competes with the dorsal fin and breaks the feature order.

Check: Measure the width and height of the drawn flukes. Confirm width is greater than height and the notch sits on the body axis.

Draw a Killer Whale: Dorsal Fin, Saddle Patch, Flukes and Eye Patch

Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

On a 20 cm body axis, the eye is at 4 cm and the eye patch is centred at 4 cm. What is wrong, and where could the patch go instead?

Answer: The eye patch is centred on the eye, so it covers the eye instead of sitting above and behind it. Move the patch above and behind the eye, for example centred near 6 cm and raised above the eye level.

Reason: The eye sits low on the head slightly behind the first quarter mark, at 4 cm on this axis. The patch should be above and behind that point, for example centred near 6 cm, not on the eye.

Check: Mark the eye position and the patch centre. Confirm the patch centre is behind the eye and higher than the eye, with no overlap.

Draw a Killer Whale: Dorsal Fin, Saddle Patch, Flukes and Eye Patch

Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body axis is horizontal with clear nose and tail-base points.
- [ ] Dorsal fin base sits near the second quarter mark and is attached to the back line.
- [ ] Saddle patch is behind the dorsal fin and separate from its base.
- [ ] Flukes sit at the tail-base point with two lobes wider than tall and the notch on the axis.
- [ ] Eye patch is above and behind the eye and does not touch it.
- [ ] Shading convention is consistent: darkest fin and body, medium saddle patch, lightest eye patch.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted if feature order and relative placement are correct.

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