Realistic Cake Drawing: Cylinder Perspective, Shading, and Highlights

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a cake seen from a high viewpoint with light from the left. Use a wide, open top ellipse and show the cast shadow on the plate.

Answer: A wide top ellipse, side lines from its widest points, shading on the right side, a highlight band on the left, and a cast shadow extending to the right.

Reason: A high viewpoint opens the ellipse; light from the left puts the shadow on the right and the highlight on the left. The cast shadow must point away from the light.

Check: View in a mirror: the ellipse should look wide, the darkest band should be on the right, and the cast shadow should extend right.

Task 2

Draw a cake at near eye level with light from the upper front. Keep the top ellipse nearly flat and place the highlight on the front of the side.

Answer: A nearly flat top ellipse, a front-facing highlight band, shading toward the back and sides, and a cast shadow behind the cake.

Reason: Near eye level flattens the ellipse; front light places the highlight on the front and the shadow toward the back.

Check: Squint: the front band should be brightest, the back darker, and the cast shadow should fall behind the cake.

Task 3

Draw a cake with light from the upper right but deliberately place the highlight slightly too far toward the center. Then correct it.

Answer: The corrected drawing moves the highlight band toward the right side and keeps the core shadow on the left.

Reason: A central highlight contradicts the light direction and flattens the cylinder. Moving it toward the light restores form.

Check: Compare the highlight position with the light arrow; the highlight should be on the same side as the arrow.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Draw a cake on a plate and add a second, weaker highlight on the plate rim. Keep the cake's highlight dominant.

Answer: A strong vertical highlight band on the cake's light-facing side and a faint highlight on the plate rim near the light, with the cake highlight clearly brighter.

Reason: Secondary highlights are acceptable if subordinate. The cake's form must remain the brightest element.

Check: Check values: the cake highlight should be lighter than the plate highlight, and both should sit on the light-facing side.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Top ellipse reads as a surface, not a circle, and aligns with the side lines.
- [ ] Side lines drop from the ellipse's widest points and the bottom arc matches the viewpoint.
- [ ] One light direction governs shading, core shadow, reflected light, and cast shadow.
- [ ] Highlight is a vertical band on the light-facing side and is the brightest area.
- [ ] Values are built in layers with curved strokes; no hard outline flattens the form.
- [ ] Valid alternatives: any consistent light direction, any reasonable ellipse openness, and either reserved-paper or lifted-graphite highlights are acceptable if the logic holds.

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