Blackbird Drawing: Body, Wing, Beak, and Tail Construction

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A body oval is 8 cm wide and 4 cm tall. The baseline-to-midline distance is 1.6 cm. What is the recommended beak length if it is one-fifth of body width?

Answer: 1.6 cm.

Reason: One-fifth of 8 cm is 8 divided by 5, which equals 1.6 cm.

Check: Multiply the answer by 5 and confirm it equals 8 cm.

Task 2

A drawing has the wing tip 2 cm beyond the tail base. The guide says the wing tip should be 1 cm above the tail base. How far should the wing tip move?

Answer: 3 cm forward.

Reason: The tip is 2 cm past the base and needs to be 1 cm above it, so the total change is 2 plus 1 equals 3 cm.

Check: Subtract the new position from the old: 2 cm beyond minus 3 cm forward equals 1 cm above.

Task 3

A body is 12 cm wide. The beak is drawn 4 cm long. Is the beak within the recommended one-fifth body width?

Answer: No. The recommended length is 2.4 cm.

Reason: One-fifth of 12 cm is 12 divided by 5, which equals 2.4 cm. A 4 cm beak is too long.

Check: Divide 12 by 5 and compare with 4 cm.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A tail is drawn 3 cm long on the same side as the beak. The body is 9 cm wide. Describe one correction and one check.

Answer: Move the tail to the opposite side of the body from the beak. Check that the beak and tail point in opposite directions.

Reason: The tail base must be opposite the beak. Direction is checked by comparing the two ends of the body.

Check: Draw a line from beak to tail and confirm it crosses the body from front to back.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body outline is closed and roughly oval.
- [ ] Baseline and midline are marked, and the x-height is consistent.
- [ ] Wing shape follows the body and the tip stays above the tail base.
- [ ] Beak is built from two lines meeting at a point and is near one-fifth of body width.
- [ ] Tail is opposite the beak and tapers slightly.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted when proportions and directions match the checks.

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