Timed Animal Gesture Drawing: 30-Second Pose Practice

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Imagine a cat leaping to the right. Its body forms a curved arc that rises from the head at the upper left, peaks over the shoulders, and slopes down toward the hips at the lower right. The front legs reach forward and slightly down; the rear legs are gathered under the hips with the paws tucked close to the belly. The tail trails behind the hips, curving slightly upward. Draw a 30-second gesture sketch with one curved action line, two body masses, and one motion line along the jump arc.

Answer: Draw a curved action line from the head through the spine to the tail, following the rising-then-falling arc. Add a chest mass near the front legs and a hip mass near the gathered rear legs. Add one motion line along the arc behind the cat, parallel to the path of travel. The sketch should read as a leaping cat.

Reason: The curved action line captures the arc of the jump. The two body masses show the chest and hips, which carry the weight. The single motion line reinforces the direction of travel without cluttering the sketch.

Check: View the sketch from a short distance. If the curve and motion line suggest an upward or forward leap within two seconds, the gesture is clear. If the body looks flat or the motion line crosses the body, redraw the action line and move the motion line behind the animal.

Task 2

Imagine a rabbit sitting upright and facing left. Its body is compact and vertical: the head is at the top, the chest is small and upright, and the hips form the widest part at the base. The rear legs are folded beneath the hips, and the ears point straight up. Draw a 30-second gesture sketch with one vertical action line, two body masses, and no motion lines.

Answer: Draw a vertical action line from the head to the hips. Add a small chest mass above the hips and a hip mass at the base. Add folded rear legs as two short angled strokes beneath the hip mass. Omit motion lines because the pose is stationary.

Reason: A sitting pose has a vertical center of gravity. The vertical action line and compact body masses show the settled weight. Motion lines would suggest movement, so they are left out.

Check: Check that the body mass sits over the hips and that the chest is smaller than the hip mass. If the sketch looks like a standing animal, lower the chest mass and shorten the legs. The sketch should read as sitting within two seconds.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Imagine a horse running to the right. Its body leans forward, with the head and chest ahead of the hips. The front legs reach ahead of the chest, and the rear legs push back behind the hips. The tail streams behind the body. Draw a 30-second gesture sketch with one action line, three body masses, and two motion lines behind the rear legs.

Answer: Draw a forward-leaning action line from the head through the spine to the tail. Add a chest mass near the front legs, a mid-body mass between chest and hips, and a hip mass near the rear legs. Add two short motion lines behind the rear legs, angled slightly upward and parallel to the path. The sketch should read as a running horse.

Reason: Three body masses help show the longer body of a horse without detailed anatomy. The motion lines behind the rear legs reinforce the push-off direction.

Check: Check that the action line leans forward and that the motion lines are behind the animal, not crossing the legs. If the sketch reads as standing, increase the forward lean of the action line and stretch the front and rear leg strokes.

Task 4

Imagine a squirrel leaping to the right. Its body forms a curved arc that rises from the head at the upper left and slopes down toward the hips at the lower right. The front legs are tucked close to the chest, and the rear legs extend back behind the hips. The tail curves upward behind the body. Draw a 30-second gesture sketch with one curved action line, two body masses, and one motion line behind the takeoff point.

Answer: Draw a curved action line from the head through the body to the tail, following the jump arc. Add a chest mass near the tucked front legs and a hip mass near the extended rear legs. Add one motion line behind the takeoff point, parallel to the arc. The sketch should read as a leaping squirrel.

Reason: The curved action line follows the jump. The two body masses show the tucked front and extended rear. The motion line behind the takeoff point clarifies the direction of the leap.

Check: Check that the motion line is behind the animal and follows the arc. If the sketch looks like a running pose, curve the action line more and tuck the front legs closer to the chest. The sketch should read as leaping within two seconds.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The action line clearly shows the main direction of the pose.
- [ ] Two or three body masses are placed to show weight and balance.
- [ ] Motion lines follow the direction of travel and do not cross the body randomly.
- [ ] The sketch reads as running, leaping, or sitting within two seconds.
- [ ] The sketch was completed within the 30-second timer.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted: different line styles, left- or right-facing poses, and simplified leg counts are allowed if the motion reads clearly.

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