Adobo Drawing: Four-Step Shading Guide for a Plated Still Life

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A plate ellipse is 10 cm by 7 cm. The meat cluster covers about 30 square cm, the sauce about 20 square cm, and the rice about 12 square cm. List the four shading passes and state which zone receives the darkest tone.

Answer: Pass 1 light tone over plate; Pass 2 midtone on meat (30 square cm); Pass 3 dark tone on sauce (20 square cm) and crevices; Pass 4 highlights and refinement. The sauce receives the darkest tone.

Reason: The sauce is the darkest zone by convention; the meat is midtone and the rice is lightest. The areas are simple examples to keep the zones distinct.

Check: Squint at the drawing: sauce should read darkest, meat middle, rice lightest. Confirm the four passes are visible.

Task 2

Your light source is upper right instead of upper left. Describe where the cast shadow under the food should fall and how the meat highlights should shift.

Answer: The cast shadow falls to the lower left. Meat highlights shift to the upper right side of each piece, with darker tone on the lower left.

Reason: Shadows fall opposite the light source; highlights face the light. Consistency is the key requirement.

Check: Trace a line from the light source past each meat piece; the shadow should fall on the opposite side. Check that all highlights face upper right.

Task 3

A drawing shows the rice as dark as the sauce and the meat lighter than both. State the tone order error and give one fix using midtones.

Answer: The tone order is reversed for rice and sauce. Fix: lighten the rice to the lightest zone and darken the sauce to the darkest, adjusting meat to a middle tone.

Reason: The convention requires sauce darkest, meat middle, rice lightest. Adjusting midtones first prevents over-darkening.

Check: List the three zones in order from darkest to lightest and compare with the drawing. The order should be sauce, meat, rice.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

You have completed passes 1 and 2. The meat looks flat and the sauce is not yet dark. Describe what to do in passes 3 and 4 without adding heavy outlines.

Answer: Pass 3: darken the sauce and add darker tone to the sides of meat pieces facing away from the light; add a soft cast shadow. Pass 4: add small highlights on meat tops and sauce streaks; refine edges by erasing excess outline rather than drawing new lines.

Reason: Flat meat needs side tone, not outlines. The sauce needs its dark pass before highlights. Erasing outlines keeps edges tone-defined.

Check: Check that meat has a light top and darker side, sauce is darkest, and no outline is heavier than adjacent shading.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Plate ellipse is clear and the rim is visible where food touches it.
- [ ] Three food zones are distinguishable: meat cluster, sauce pool, rice mound.
- [ ] Tone order reads correctly: sauce darkest, meat midtone, rice lightest.
- [ ] Shading shows at least three passes with visible midtones and darks.
- [ ] Cast shadow direction is consistent with the stated light source.
- [ ] Outlines are light and do not overpower the shading.
- [ ] Valid alternatives: any consistent stroke pattern or light direction is accepted if tone order and consistency hold.

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