Draw a Realistic Axolotl: Body Shape and Gill Branches

Original tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 1

A drawing uses U = 5 cm. Find the head length, shoulder width, and total body length in centimeters.

Answer: Head length 6 cm, shoulder width 4 cm, total body length 22.5 cm.

Reason: Multiply each proportion by U: 1.2 × 5 = 6; 0.8 × 5 = 4; 4.5 × 5 = 22.5.

Check: Recheck each multiplication and confirm units are centimeters.

Task 2

A sketch shows two gill branches on the left side and three on the right. State the fix and the check you would use.

Answer: Add a third distinct branch on the left side in the upper rear quarter, then check that each side shows three separated branches clear of the eye and mouth.

Reason: The convention requires three branches per side; the missing branch breaks symmetry of structure, not necessarily of curvature.

Check: Count branches per side and confirm none overlap the eye or mouth.

Task 3

A tail is drawn 3.0U long and as wide as the shoulder. Identify two problems and give corrected values.

Answer: The tail is too long and too wide. Correct to about 2.5U long and narrower than 0.8U shoulder width.

Reason: The convention sets tail length at 2.5U and requires the tail to taper narrower than the shoulder.

Check: Compare tail length to 2.5 head widths and tail width to shoulder width by eye.

Task 4

A front limb is placed at 2.4U from the snout. State the correct attachment and the difference in U.

Answer: Correct attachment is about 1.7U; the drawn limb is 0.7U too far back.

Reason: Subtract 1.7 from 2.4 to get 0.7U.

Check: Re-subtract and confirm the limb sits just behind the head.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Head is rounded and wide, with a shallow mouth curve across the front third.
- [ ] Three distinct gill branches per side attach in the upper rear quarter of the head.
- [ ] Four limbs attach near 1.7U and 3.0U, with four front toes and five hind toes.
- [ ] Tail tapers to a flattened tip and is narrower than the shoulder width.
- [ ] Texture is sparse and does not obscure the body outline.
- [ ] Valid alternatives: branch curvature, filament count, and mottling pattern may vary if the three-branch structure and proportions remain clear.

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