Realistic Crab Drawing: Anatomy, Texture, and Shading

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Sketch a crab carapace from a top-down view. Make the carapace 8 cm wide and 5 cm tall. Along each side, mark four leg attachment points as small dots, spaced at roughly equal intervals between the front margin and the rear: place the first dot about 1 cm back from the front edge and the last dot about 1 cm forward of the rear edge, so the four dots lie within the middle 3 cm of the 5 cm height. Draw the claws extending forward from the front sides, each 4 cm long. Use light pencil lines.

Answer: A correct sketch shows an oval 8 cm wide and 5 cm tall, with a slight front dip. Eight leg attachment points (four per side) are marked along the sides, spaced at roughly equal intervals between about 1 cm back from the front edge and about 1 cm forward of the rear edge. Claws extend forward from the front sides, each 4 cm long, with fingers slightly open. Proportions: carapace width twice claw length.

Reason: The carapace dimensions and claw length are given; spacing leg points evenly ensures natural arrangement. The front dip adds realism.

Check: Measure the carapace width (8 cm) and height (5 cm) with a ruler; verify each claw is 4 cm long; count eight leg attachment dots (four per side). On each side, check that the first dot is about 1 cm back from the front edge and the last is about 1 cm forward of the rear edge, so the four dots lie within a 3 cm span, and that they are roughly evenly spaced within that span.

Task 2

Draw a top-down crab with an 8 cm by 5 cm carapace and two 4 cm forward claws. Use this named reference description: the Atlantic rock crab carapace and pincer ridges are granulated. Add small marks only to those areas, and leave other surfaces unmarked unless a visible reference detail is specified.

Answer: The outline remains clear. Small surface marks indicate the Atlantic rock crab’s granulated carapace and pincer ridges; no generic bumps or leg hairs are added where the reference does not show them.

Reason: The named reference limits which textures belong in this practice drawing. The VIMS description identifies granulation on the carapace and pincer ridges, while details on other surfaces should be copied only if visible.

Check: Compare every texture mark with the named Atlantic rock crab reference. Keep granulation on the described carapace and pincer-ridge areas; remove marks that are not supported by the image or description.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a top-down crab with an 8 cm by 5 cm carapace, four walking-leg attachment points on each side, and two 4 cm forward claws. Use a light source from the upper left. Add a highlight on the upper left of the carapace, midtones in the center, shadows on the lower right and under the claws, and a cast shadow on the ground.

Answer: Shading shows a gradient from light upper left to dark lower right on the carapace. Claws have shadows underneath. A cast shadow extends to the lower right on the ground.

Reason: Consistent light source creates depth. Cast shadow anchors the crab.

Check: Verify that the lightest area is upper left and darkest is lower right; cast shadow direction matches light source.

Task 4

Draw a crab from a side view using this named reference description: the Atlantic rock crab carapace and pincer ridges are granulated. Show the domed carapace profile, one forward claw, and three visible legs with at least three segments each. Use hypothetical dimensions of 4 cm carapace height, 5 cm claw length, and about 2 cm per leg segment. Add marks only on the described areas and shade with light from above.

Answer: The side view shows the stated carapace, claw, and visible jointed legs. Copy only reference-visible granulation or ridges; leave unsupported leg surfaces unmarked. Keep the highlight on top and shadows underneath for the stated light direction.

Reason: The exercise separates anatomy, reference-led texture, and the chosen shading convention. The named source constrains surface marks; the light direction controls tone.

Check: Measure the stated dimensions and count at least three segments per visible leg. Compare each texture mark with the selected reference, then confirm the lightest values are on top and shadows below.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Carapace shape is wider than tall and shows slight natural irregularities.
- [ ] Claws are proportionate and show fixed and movable fingers.
- [ ] Legs attach in the locations and with the segment forms shown by the selected species reference.
- [ ] Surface marks, if present, match the selected species reference; smooth areas stay clean and texture does not obscure form.
- [ ] Shading indicates a consistent light source with highlights, midtones, and shadows.
- [ ] Overall drawing conveys a realistic crab, not a cartoon or other crustacean.

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