Draw the Sphinx: Headdress and Paw Construction Steps

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a Sphinx with a body length of 9 cm using the construction sequence. State the face height, side-flap flare per side, and forepaw length you used.

Answer: Face height 2.25 cm; side-flap flare 1.125 cm per side; forepaw length 3 cm.

Reason: Apply the conventions: face height is one-quarter of body length (9 ÷ 4 = 2.25), flare is one-eighth per side (9 ÷ 8 = 1.125), and forepaw length is one-third (9 ÷ 3 = 3).

Check: Measure each stated value on your drawing with a ruler. Confirm the face oval height, the horizontal distance from center line to each flap edge, and the paw rectangle length match the calculated values within 2 mm.

Task 2

A drawing has a body length of 15 cm and a total height from ground line to top of headdress of 8 cm. Using the half-length convention, is the height acceptable? If not, what should it be?

Answer: No. The expected total height is 7.5 cm (half of 15 cm). The drawn height of 8 cm is 0.5 cm too tall.

Reason: The convention states total height is about half the body length. Half of 15 cm is 7.5 cm. Compare the measured 8 cm to 7.5 cm.

Check: Measure body length and total height on the drawing. Divide body length by 2 and compare to measured height. A difference of 0.5 cm or less is acceptable for practice.

Task 3

Describe how to adjust a Sphinx drawing where the head sits above the midsection and the forepaws are at different heights. Give the corrected placement in order.

Answer: Move the vertical center line to the chest mark in the front third of the body oval. Redraw the headdress and face on that line. Then redraw both forepaw rectangles parallel to the ground line so both paw ends touch it.

Reason: The head must align with the chest, and the paws must be level on the ground line. Correcting the center line first prevents repeating the head placement error when redrawing the headdress.

Check: After correction, measure the horizontal distance from the body oval's front edge to the center line; it should be about one-third of body length. Place a ruler along the ground line and confirm both paw ends touch it.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Using a body length of 18 cm, calculate the face height, the total width added by both side flaps beyond the face oval, and the forepaw length. Then state one symmetry check.

Answer: Face height 4.5 cm; total added width from both flaps 4.5 cm (2.25 cm per side); forepaw length 6 cm. Symmetry check: measure from the center line to each outer flap edge at the same height; the two distances should be equal.

Reason: Face height is 18 ÷ 4 = 4.5 cm. Each flap flares 18 ÷ 8 = 2.25 cm, so both add 4.5 cm total. Forepaw length is 18 ÷ 3 = 6 cm. Symmetry is checked by comparing left and right distances from the center line.

Check: Measure the face oval height, the combined outward flare of both flaps, and one paw length with a ruler. For symmetry, measure left and right flap distances at the shoulder line height and confirm they differ by no more than 2 mm.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body mass is drawn as a long oval with the chest higher than the hindquarters.
- [ ] A vertical center line aligns the head with the chest, not the midsection.
- [ ] The headdress is a trapezoidal shape with a top band and two side flaps reaching the shoulder line.
- [ ] The face oval is centered on the vertical line and contains simple eye, nose, and mouth marks.
- [ ] Two forepaws extend forward, are parallel to the ground line, and are level with each other.
- [ ] Construction lines are light and final outline is clear.
- [ ] Valid stylistic alternatives are accepted if the construction order and relative proportions remain consistent.

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