Edge-Only Contour Portrait Drawing: A Line-Only Guide

Topic reference / ordinary illustration



Ordinary topic reference. Hypothetical dimensions in the four tasks are supplied in their own text; this illustration is not their measured answer.

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Worked example / complete source key

A reference shows a face in three-quarter view with a clear jawline, a visible eyelid rim, and a distinct lip border. The hairline meets the brow, and the brow edge connects to the eyelid rim. In this reference the nostril curve is isolated: no visible edge connects it to the lip border or the cheek edge. Trace an edge-only contour portrait in one continuous line, allowing one lift for the isolated nostril curve.

Answer: Start at the crown. Trace the outer silhouette in one continuous line: crown, forehead edge, temple, cheek edge, jawline, chin, neck, and shoulder. Where the hairline meets the temple edge, enter the internal edges: follow the brow edge into the temple edge and down the cheek edge, then trace the upper eyelid rim from the outer eye corner to the cheek edge. Continue to the mouth corner, which connects to the cheek edge in this three-quarter view, and trace the lip border from there. Because the nostril curve is isolated in this reference, lift once to place the pencil at its start and trace it; this is the single permitted lift. The final drawing has one main continuous silhouette line, connected internal feature edges entered from the silhouette, exactly one lift for the isolated nostril, no shading, and every line matches a visible edge.