Pencil Snake Drawing: Coil Spacing, Taper, and Head Construction

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A coil plan has four loops with gaps of 10 mm, 11 mm, 9 mm, and 16 mm. Mid-body width is 14 mm, neck 7 mm, tail tip 4 mm. State the spacing problem and one correction.

Answer: The fourth gap, 16 mm, is 5 mm wider than the 11 mm gap and 7 mm wider than the 9 mm gap. Redraw the outer loop so its gap is about 10 mm, within one pencil width of its neighbors.

Reason: Even spacing is judged by comparing each gap with its neighbors. The 16 mm gap is the outlier, so the outer loop needs adjustment.

Check: Compare each gap with its neighbors: the 16 mm gap is the outlier. After redrawing, confirm the outer gap is about 10 mm, within 1 mm of the 9–11 mm neighbors.

Task 2

A body outline is drawn with mid-body width 16 mm, neck width 15 mm, and tail tip 5 mm. Identify the taper error and describe the corrected widths.

Answer: The neck is too wide relative to mid-body; it should be noticeably narrower. For example only, keep mid-body 16 mm, reduce neck to about 8 mm, and keep tail tip 5 mm.

Reason: A snake tapers from mid-section toward neck and tail. A 15 mm neck nearly equals the 16 mm mid-body, so the taper is missing.

Check: Confirm mid-body 16 mm is greater than neck about 8 mm, which is greater than tail tip 5 mm, with the neck roughly half the mid-body width.

Task 3

A head is drawn as a single circle 20 mm across with the eye at the center. Describe two construction changes that would make the head read as a snake head.

Answer: Replace the circle with two overlapping ovals: a skull oval and a narrower snout oval at the front. Move the eye to the upper side of the skull oval, about one x-height from the snout edge, and add a jaw line returning to the neck.

Reason: A single circle gives no snout direction. Overlapping ovals create a wedge shape, and the eye position plus jaw line clarify orientation.

Check: Confirm the snout oval is narrower than the skull oval and that the eye sits on the upper skull, not at the center.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A tonal plan uses one heavy layer over the whole snake, making the head as dark as the body shadow. State the tonal problem and give a two-layer correction.

Answer: The single heavy layer flattens the coil and hides the head. Apply a light base layer over the whole body, then a second layer only on loop undersides, keeping the head lighter than the darkest body shadow.

Reason: Layered tone preserves roundness and keeps the face readable. Equal darkness on head and body removes the visual hierarchy.

Check: Compare the head tone with the darkest loop underside; the head should be visibly lighter, and two distinct layers should be present.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Coil loops show roughly even spacing, with no gap differing by more than about one pencil width from its neighbors.
- [ ] Body taper is visible: mid-body is widest, neck is narrower, and tail tip is narrowest.
- [ ] Loop crossings are handled consistently, with the nearer loop drawn through and the farther loop stopped.
- [ ] Head reads as a rounded wedge with a distinct snout direction and a jaw line returning to the neck.
- [ ] Eye placement is plausible relative to the snout, using x-height as a flexible guide.
- [ ] Tone is layered, with darker loop undersides and a lighter head; highlights are left along loop tops.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted: different loop counts, head positions, and letter-style-based x-height choices are allowed if the checks above hold.

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