Bird Body Drawing: Head, Torso, and Tail Proportion Construction

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A perching bird has a head length of 3 cm. Use a torso of two head-lengths and a tail of one head-length. Calculate the torso length, tail length, and total body length.

Answer: Torso length = 6 cm. Tail length = 3 cm. Total body length = 12 cm.

Reason: Multiply the head length by the torso multiple and the tail multiple, then add the three lengths.

Check: Re-measure each unit in centimeters and confirm the sum equals 12 cm.

Task 2

A swimming bird has a head length of 2 cm. Use a torso of three head-lengths and a tail of half a head-length. Calculate the torso length, tail length, and total body length.

Answer: Torso length = 6 cm. Tail length = 1 cm. Total body length = 9 cm.

Reason: Three head-lengths is 3 × 2 cm = 6 cm. Half a head-length is 0.5 × 2 cm = 1 cm. The total is 2 + 6 + 1 = 9 cm.

Check: Measure the drawn torso and tail and confirm they match 6 cm and 1 cm.

Task 3

A soaring bird has a head length of 4 cm. Use a torso of two and a half head-lengths and a tail of two head-lengths. Calculate the torso length, tail length, and total body length.

Answer: Torso length = 10 cm. Tail length = 8 cm. Total body length = 22 cm.

Reason: Two and a half head-lengths is 2.5 × 4 cm = 10 cm. Two head-lengths is 2 × 4 cm = 8 cm. The total is 4 + 10 + 8 = 22 cm.

Check: Measure each unit and confirm the sum equals 22 cm.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A bird drawing has a head length of 2 cm, a torso of 5 cm, and a tail of 3 cm. The intended multiples were two head-lengths for the torso and one head-length for the tail. Identify which units are off and give the corrected lengths.

Answer: Both the torso and the tail are off. The intended torso length is 4 cm, so the drawn torso is 1 cm too long. The intended tail length is 2 cm, so the drawn tail is 1 cm too long. Corrected torso = 4 cm; corrected tail = 2 cm.

Reason: Two head-lengths is 2 × 2 cm = 4 cm. One head-length is 1 × 2 cm = 2 cm. Compare the drawn values to the intended values.

Check: Re-measure the torso and tail after correction and confirm they match 4 cm and 2 cm.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Head oval is drawn and its length and width are recorded.
- [ ] Torso length is between two and three head-lengths.
- [ ] Torso width is between one and a half and two head-widths.
- [ ] Tail length is between half a head-length and two head-lengths.
- [ ] Head, torso, and tail connect smoothly with a slight overlap at the neck.
- [ ] Measurements use one consistent unit and are checked with arithmetic.
- [ ] Handwritten labels keep x-height consistent from baseline to midline and are legible.
- [ ] Valid alternatives in oval shape, tail taper, and label style are accepted if the proportional ranges are met.

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