Colored Cake Drawing: Palette Layering and Shading

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a single-tier cake on a plate. Use a light base, a mid tone, and a dark tone. Light comes from the upper right. Describe where you place the highlight, mid tone, and dark band on the tier, and where you place the cast shadow on the plate.

Answer: Highlight on the upper right of the tier; mid tone across the center and lower left; dark band on the lower left and under the tier overhang; cast shadow on the plate to the lower left, fading outward.

Reason: A single light direction from the upper right means the upper right receives the most light and the lower left receives the least. The tier overhang creates a dark band beneath it. The plate cast shadow falls opposite the light, to the lower left.

Check: Squint at the drawing. The darkest area should be under the overhang and on the lower left. The highlight should be on the upper right. The cast shadow should be on the lower left and fade gradually.

Task 2

Draw a two-tier cake with a total height of 10 cm on your paper (hypothetical). Make the bottom tier 6 cm and the top tier 4 cm. Draw the plate so it extends 2 cm beyond the cake on each side. Check that each tier is centered and that the plate rim is lighter than the plate center.

Answer: Bottom tier 6 cm tall, top tier 4 cm tall, both centered on the vertical center line. Plate extends 2 cm beyond the cake on each side. Plate rim is lighter than the plate center, with the darkest plate area directly under the cake.

Reason: The total height is divided into two bands with the lower tier taller. Centering each tier on the same vertical line keeps the stack stable. The plate extension is measured from the cake edge. The rim is a raised edge, so it catches more light than the center.

Check: Measure the tier heights and plate extension with a ruler. Check that the center line passes through the middle of both tiers. Compare the rim and center values: the rim should be lighter.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a cake with a short word on the bottom tier. Use a baseline and midline. Keep lowercase x-height from baseline to midline. Then draw a second version using all capital letters with a consistent height. Explain why both versions can be valid.

Answer: Both versions are valid because the convention requires a consistent baseline and consistent x-height within the same word, not a single letterform. The lowercase version keeps x-height from baseline to midline; the all-capital version keeps a consistent capital height. Legibility and consistency are the criteria.

Reason: Letter styles vary, so the rubric accepts any legible style that maintains a consistent baseline and x-height. All capitals are a valid alternative because they have a consistent height and clear baseline.

Check: Check that the baseline is straight and that lowercase letters reach the midline consistently. For the all-capital version, check that all capitals have the same height. Confirm that both words are readable.

Task 4

Draw a three-tier cake with a light base, mid tone, dark tone, and one accent. Use light from the upper left. Add a narrow accent band around the middle tier. Describe the order of layering and one check you would use to confirm the shading is consistent.

Answer: Apply the light base across all three tiers first. Add the mid tone on the lower right of each tier and under each overhang. Add the dark tone under the overhangs, on the lower right sides, and where the bottom tier meets the plate. Add the accent band around the middle tier last, with light pressure. Check by squinting: the darkest areas should be under the overhangs and on the lower right, and the highlight should be on the upper left of each tier.

Reason: Layering from light to dark keeps the base clean and allows the mid and dark tones to build form. The accent is added last so it does not overpower the base. A single light direction from the upper left places highlights on the upper left and shadows on the lower right.

Check: Squint at the drawing and trace the light direction. Confirm that every tier has its highlight on the upper left and its dark band on the lower right. Check that the accent band does not obscure the shading beneath it.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Tier construction: each tier is a cylinder with a consistent ellipse width and sits centered on the tier below.
- [ ] Proportion: lower tiers are taller than upper tiers, and the plate extends beyond the cake on both sides.
- [ ] Palette layering: light base is applied first across the whole cake body, followed by mid and dark tones, then accent sparingly.
- [ ] Shading: one light direction is used consistently; darkest areas are under tier overhangs and on the shadow side; plate shading includes a soft cast shadow.
- [ ] Text convention: any text has a consistent baseline and x-height from baseline to midline; valid alternatives such as all capitals or simple script are accepted if legible.
- [ ] Overall clarity: the cake reads as a cake, not a stack of coins, and the drawing is free of unintended white paper inside the cake shape.

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