American Mink Drawing: Body, Fur and Tail Construction

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A practice drawing uses a head length of 5 cm. Calculate the body length and shoulder height using the guide's ratios.

Answer: Body length is 15 cm; shoulder height is 7.5 cm.

Reason: Body length is three head units: 3 times 5 cm = 15 cm. Shoulder height is one and a half head units: 1.5 times 5 cm = 7.5 cm.

Check: Re-multiply 5 by 3 and by 1.5; confirm the results match 15 cm and 7.5 cm.

Task 2

A tail base is 3 cm wide and the tip is 0.8 cm wide. State the taper amount and describe where fur strokes should begin and end on the tail.

Answer: Taper is 2.2 cm. Fur strokes begin at the base and end toward the tip.

Reason: Subtract tip width from base width: 3 cm minus 0.8 cm = 2.2 cm. Tail fur flows from base to tip, so strokes are drawn root to tip in that direction.

Check: Add 0.8 cm to 2.2 cm to recover 3 cm; trace a stroke to confirm it points from base toward tip.

Task 3

A side-view sketch has body length 18 cm and head length 7 cm. Using the three-head-unit guide, is the body proportion correct? Show the arithmetic.

Answer: No. Three head units would be 21 cm, so the body is 3 cm short.

Reason: Multiply head length by three: 7 cm times 3 = 21 cm. Compare with the drawn body length of 18 cm; the difference is 21 minus 18 = 3 cm.

Check: Subtract 18 cm from 21 cm to get 3 cm, then confirm that adding 3 cm to the body would reach three head units.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

On a page, the baseline-to-midline distance is 2 cm. A tail is drawn 4 cm long. Using a hypothetical head length of 2.5 cm, calculate the expected tail length at one and a half head units and state whether the drawn tail is longer or shorter.

Answer: Expected tail length is 3.75 cm; the drawn 4 cm tail is 0.25 cm longer.

Reason: One and a half head units is 1.5 times 2.5 cm = 3.75 cm. The drawn tail is 4 cm, so 4 minus 3.75 = 0.25 cm longer. The 2 cm baseline-to-midline value is a separate spacing guide and does not change the ratio calculation.

Check: Multiply 2.5 by 1.5 to get 3.75, then subtract 3.75 from 4 to confirm the 0.25 cm difference.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body length is approximately three head units.
- [ ] Shoulder height is approximately one and a half head units above the baseline.
- [ ] Belly line is low and the back line slopes gently.
- [ ] Neck is short and blends head into chest.
- [ ] Fur strokes follow regional flow from root to tip.
- [ ] Tail length is approximately one and a half head units.
- [ ] Tail tapers from a wider base to a narrower tip.
- [ ] Construction lines are erased or lightened in the final drawing.
- [ ] Valid alternatives such as a slightly longer tail or rounder head are accepted if overall proportion remains low and slender.

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