Realistic Sloth Drawing: Fur Direction and Face Rendering

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw only the head of a sloth using the proportion guide. Place the eyes on the horizontal midline, add the nose and mouth, and draw fur strokes that flow down and outward from the forehead to the cheeks. Use one light source from the upper right.

Answer: A head circle with a vertical midline and a horizontal eye-level line. Two small eye ovals sit on the midline, spaced about one eye-width apart. The nose is below the eyes on the vertical midline, and the mouth is a short curve beneath. Fur strokes taper from forehead down and outward toward the cheeks. Shading is darker on the lower left, lighter on the upper right.

Reason: This isolates facial proportion and head fur direction, the two features most responsible for a realistic look. The light source is fixed so shading can be checked consistently.

Check: Verify that eyes lie on the horizontal midline, the nose is on the vertical midline, and every fur stroke tapers and points down-and-out. Check that the darker shading is on the side opposite the upper-right light.

Task 2

Draw a body oval with a spine line down the center. Add fur strokes that sweep from the spine downward and slightly outward on both sides. Use three to five strokes per patch and leave small gaps between patches. Shade the lower half more densely than the upper half.

Answer: A body oval with a central spine line. Strokes on each side begin near the spine and sweep down and outward, grouped in patches of three to five tapered strokes with gaps. The lower half has denser, slightly darker strokes; the upper half has fewer, lighter strokes.

Reason: This practices body fur direction and tonal grouping without the distraction of the face. Patch density is a simple, checkable way to build shadow.

Check: Count strokes in a few patches to confirm three to five per patch. Check that all strokes point down and outward from the spine and that the lower half is visibly denser or darker.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a front limb hanging from the shoulder. Use lengthwise fur strokes from shoulder to paw, with a light source from the left. Add a darker band of strokes along the right edge of the limb.

Answer: A tapered limb shape from shoulder to paw. Fur strokes run lengthwise, starting firm near the shoulder end and tapering toward the paw. The left side is lighter with fewer strokes; the right edge has a denser, darker band of strokes.

Reason: Limb fur direction differs from body fur, so this exercise checks that the student can switch direction and still apply the taper convention.

Check: Confirm strokes are lengthwise, not diagonal or horizontal. Check taper at the paw end and verify the darker band is on the right edge, opposite the left light source.

Task 4

Combine head and body into one drawing. Use the proportion guide, add direction arrows before drawing fur, and apply shading from a single light source. Then write one sentence explaining how your fur direction matches the arrows.

Answer: A complete head-and-body drawing with a body oval about twice the head width, eyes on the eye-level line, and fur strokes following the arrows: down-and-out on the head, down-and-out from the spine on the body, and lengthwise on the limbs. Shading is consistent with one light source. The sentence explains that head strokes flow toward the cheeks, body strokes sweep from the spine outward, and limb strokes run from shoulder to paw.

Reason: This integrates proportion, direction, taper, and shading, and the written sentence makes the student's reasoning checkable.

Check: Compare the drawing to the guide for head-to-body ratio and eye placement. Trace a few strokes to confirm they match the arrows. Read the sentence and check it names the three fur directions correctly.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Proportion: head and body sizes match the guide within a reasonable adjustment, and eye placement is on the eye-level line.
- [ ] Fur direction: strokes consistently follow the defined arrows on head, body, and limbs.
- [ ] Stroke convention: strokes start firm at the skin end and taper to a fine tip; valid alternative stroke shapes are accepted if taper and direction are consistent.
- [ ] Shading: one clear light source is evident, with darker tones on the shaded side and softer edges.
- [ ] Face rendering: eyes are small with highlights, nose is soft and rounded, and facial fur frames the features without overwhelming them.

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