Whale Shark Side View Drawing: Spots, Gill Slits, and Proportions

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

On a five-unit body length, mark the snout at unit zero and the tail tip at unit five. Where should the dorsal fin base be placed, and where should the five gill slits fall?

Answer: Dorsal fin base near unit three; gill slits between unit one and unit two.

Reason: The dorsal fin sits closer to the tail than the head, and the gill slits are grouped just behind the head.

Check: Measure the marks against the five equal units and confirm the fin base is near unit three and all five slits lie between unit one and unit two.

Task 2

A drawing shows seven short vertical lines behind the head and a pointed snout. Name two corrections that would make the side view read more like a whale shark.

Answer: Reduce the gill slits to exactly five and widen the snout so the head is broad and blunt.

Reason: Whale sharks have five gill slits and a broad, flattened head, unlike pointed-headed sharks.

Check: Count the gill slits and compare the head width to the body depth; the head should look broad, not narrow.

Task 3

Describe how to place spots so the gill slits remain visible. Include one valid alternative for spot spacing.

Answer: Leave a narrow unspotted band around each gill slit and place spots in loose rows elsewhere. A valid alternative is wider spacing between rows, as long as the pattern stays irregular and avoids the slits.

Reason: Spots should not obscure the gill slits, and irregular spacing is acceptable under the defined convention.

Check: Trace each gill slit and confirm no spot crosses it; check that spot spacing varies rather than forming a grid.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A learner measures a body length of five units and places the dorsal fin base at unit four and a half. Is this acceptable? Explain using the proportion guide.

Answer: No. The dorsal fin base is too close to the tail; it should sit near unit three.

Reason: The guide places the dorsal fin base roughly three-fifths of the body length from the snout, not near the tail tip.

Check: Re-measure the fin base against the five-unit guide and move it to the three-unit mark if it falls outside the expected range.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Body length is divided into five consistent units and the snout and tail tip are clearly marked.
- [ ] The head is broad and blunt, and the mouth is wide and forward-facing.
- [ ] Exactly five gill slits are grouped just behind the head and follow the body curve.
- [ ] The dorsal fin base sits near the three-unit mark and the fin has a rounded tip.
- [ ] The spot pattern is irregular, varies in size, and leaves a clear band around the gill slits.
- [ ] The tail is crescent-shaped and the overall silhouette reads as a whale shark, not another shark species.
- [ ] Valid alternatives in spot size, spacing, and row curvature are accepted if the pattern remains irregular and avoids the gill slits.

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