Facial Shading Practice: Light Direction and Plane Shadows

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a simple face outline. Mark a light arrow from the upper right. Shade the forehead, left cheek, nose, and jaw underside using the three-zone convention. Describe your zone assignments in one sentence each.

Answer: Forehead: right side light, left side mid. Left cheek: mid to shadow because it turns away from upper-right light. Nose: top light, right side mid, left side shadow, underside shadow. Jaw underside: shadow. A cast shadow from the nose falls on the left cheek.

Reason: Upper-right light means planes facing right and up are light; planes facing left or down move to mid or shadow. The nose blocks light on its left side, creating a cast shadow.

Check: Trace each shadow to the upper-right arrow. Confirm three zones are visible and the nose cast shadow falls opposite the light.

Task 2

Sketch two small face outlines side by side. On the first, mark light from the upper left; on the second, light from the upper right. Shade only the nose and cheek planes on both. State one difference between the two versions.

Answer: First face: nose left side light, right side shadow; right cheek receives cast shadow. Second face: nose right side light, left side shadow; left cheek receives cast shadow. The cast shadow switches cheeks.

Reason: Changing the light arrow mirrors which planes face the light and which receive cast shadows. The nose form shadow flips sides.

Check: Compare each nose shadow to its own light arrow. Confirm the cast shadow is on the cheek opposite the light in both versions.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a face outline with light from the upper left. Shade the eye socket, upper lip, and lower lip planes. Explain why the eye socket is darker than the brow.

Answer: Eye socket: shadow because it is recessed and faces away from upper-left light. Brow: light or mid because it faces up and left. Upper lip: mid because it faces up but tilts. Lower lip: light or mid depending on tilt. The socket is darker because it is a recessed plane receiving less direct light.

Reason: Recessed planes face away from the light source and often receive cast shadow from the brow, so they read darker than protruding planes.

Check: Check that the socket shadow is justified by recess and brow cast shadow, not by arbitrary darkening. Confirm lip planes follow their tilt.

Task 4

Draw a face outline with light from the upper left. Shade the full face using the three-zone convention. Then write two sentences: one naming a form shadow and one naming a cast shadow.

Answer: Form shadow example: the right side of the forehead is mid because it tilts away from the light. Cast shadow example: the nose casts a shadow on the right cheek. The jaw underside is shadow because it faces down.

Reason: Form shadows come from a plane turning away from the light; cast shadows come from an object blocking the light. Both must trace to the upper-left arrow.

Check: Verify that the named form shadow corresponds to a plane turning away and the named cast shadow corresponds to a blocking feature. Confirm zones remain distinct.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Light direction is marked and every shadow traces to a plane or cast source.
- [ ] Light, mid, and shadow zones are distinguishable.
- [ ] Edge hardness matches plane curvature: soft on curves, sharper at angles.
- [ ] Feature shadows do not contradict the main light direction.
- [ ] Valid stylistic alternatives are accepted if the light logic remains consistent.

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