Bird Contour Drawing: Single-Line Outline Practice

Original tasks 1 / complete keys

Task 1

Blind-contour drill with your own reference. Choose a simple bird picture or a real bird you can see clearly, and place it where you can look at it but not at your paper. On a 12 cm by 12 cm practice box, draw the bird's contour for 60 seconds while looking only at the bird. Include the body outline, beak edge, wing edge, and tail edge as single lines. After 60 seconds, look at your drawing and measure the straight-line distance from the beak tip to the tail tip on both the reference and your drawing, in centimeters. Record both distances and their difference.

Answer: A completed blind contour with two recorded measurements: beak-tip-to-tail-tip distance on the reference and on the drawing, plus the difference in centimeters. The drawing will likely be distorted; that is expected and acceptable. The answer is the recorded measurement pair and difference, not a polished drawing. Valid alternatives: any bird subject, facing direction, or beak shape is acceptable as long as the four contour zones are attempted and the two measurements are recorded.

Reason: Blind contour trains hand-eye coordination and edge observation by forcing you to watch the subject rather than the paper. Using your own reference makes the task self-contained, and the single beak-to-tail measurement gives a simple checkable comparison in consistent units without requiring a predefined reference geometry.

Check: Measure beak tip to tail tip on the reference with a ruler and record it in centimeters. Measure the same two points on your drawing and record it. Record the difference as the absolute value of (reference distance − drawing distance), in centimeters. Because blind contour is expected to distort, use this difference only as a baseline: repeat the drill once and compare the new difference to the first rather than applying a fixed pass threshold.

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Original tasks 2 / complete keys

Task 2

Edge-tracing drill with your own reference. Choose a clear bird picture. In three separate 8 cm by 8 cm boxes, draw one continuous line for each of three edges: the beak edge from base to tip, the wing edge from shoulder to wing tip, and the tail edge from base to tail tip. Before drawing each edge, trace it in the air with your finger. After drawing, measure each line with a ruler and record its length in centimeters. Also record the same three lengths measured on the reference.

Answer: Three boxes, each containing one continuous edge line, with six recorded lengths in centimeters: beak, wing, and tail lengths on the reference and on your drawing. The drawing lengths need not match exactly; the answer is the recorded pairs. Valid alternatives: any bird subject or edge orientation is acceptable as long as each box holds one continuous line and all six lengths are recorded.

Reason: Tracing each edge separately isolates the three attached contours before they are combined into a full drawing. Measuring both the reference and the drawn line in the same units makes the comparison checkable and shows whether the hand followed the observed edge length.

Check: Measure each reference edge and each drawn edge with a ruler in centimeters. For each of the three edges, subtract the drawn length from the reference length and record the difference. A difference greater than 1 cm on any edge means that edge should be retraced once in a fresh box.

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Original tasks 3 / complete keys

Task 3

Full bird contour with your own reference. Choose a clear bird picture and place it beside a 15 cm by 20 cm sheet of paper. Draw the full contour at the same scale as the reference: one closed body outline, a beak contour attached at two points on the head outline, a wing edge inside the body outline from shoulder to wing tip, and a tail edge from tail base to tail tip. Use three or fewer pencil lifts and mark each lift point with a small dot. After drawing, count the lift dots and measure the straight-line distance from beak tip to tail tip on both the reference and your drawing in centimeters.

Answer: A full bird contour containing one closed body outline and three attached contours (beak, wing edge, tail edge), with three or fewer marked lift points. The answer includes the lift count and the beak-tip-to-tail-tip distances on the reference and the drawing, in centimeters. Valid alternatives: a left-facing bird, a different beak shape, or a different wing position are acceptable if the contour convention and the lift count and distance check are met.

Reason: This exercise combines the body outline with the three attached contours and applies the single-line convention. Using your own reference makes the task solvable from the text alone, and the lift count plus one measured distance give two simple, checkable criteria.

Check: Count the lift dots; the count must be three or fewer. Measure beak tip to tail tip on the reference and on the drawing in centimeters and record the difference as the absolute value of (reference distance − drawing distance). Check that the beak contour touches the head outline at exactly two points and does not enter the head area, and that the wing edge stays inside the body outline. If the lift count exceeds three or the distance difference exceeds 1 cm, redraw the affected zone.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Zone revision with your own reference. Choose a clear bird picture and draw a full contour on a 20 cm by 20 cm sheet at the same scale, following the convention: closed body outline, beak attached at two points, wing edge inside the body outline, tail edge from tail base to tail tip. Measure the straight-line distance from beak tip to tail tip on both the reference and your drawing in centimeters, and record the difference. Identify the zone (beak, wing, tail, or body outline) that you judge most off, redraw only that zone, then measure the same beak-tip-to-tail-tip distance again and record the new difference.

Answer: A full contour with one revised zone. The answer includes the before and after beak-tip-to-tail-tip differences in centimeters, plus a short note naming which zone was redrawn. Valid alternatives: any zone may be chosen for revision, and any bird subject or facing direction is acceptable, as long as the before and after differences are recorded and the revised zone is named.

Reason: Revising one zone at a time preserves the rest of the drawing and targets the largest visible error. Recording the measured difference before and after the revision makes the improvement checkable with simple arithmetic in consistent units.

Check: Record the first difference as the absolute value of (reference distance − drawing distance), in centimeters. After redrawing the chosen zone, measure the same two points again and record the new difference the same way. A smaller difference after revision confirms improvement; if the difference grows, redraw the zone once more or choose a different zone and repeat.

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Task 1 / answers

Bird contour / own-reference tasks / measured blanks, not fabricated learner results

Use your own reference and your own 60-second drawing. Measure the STRAIGHT beak-to-tail distance on each. Absolute difference = absolute value of drawing minus reference. No fixed pass threshold is supplied.

Reference: _____ cm

Drawing: _____ cm

Absolute difference: _____ cm

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Task 2 / answers

Bird contour / own-reference tasks / measured blanks, not fabricated learner results

Measure all three original edge traces separately on the reference and drawing: beak, wing and tail. For curved edges use the same thread or short-chord method on both. Record six real lengths; compare each absolute difference to the selected 1 cm classroom criterion.

Reference / before: _____

Drawing / after: _____

Check / selected revision: _____

Bird Contour Drawing: Single-Line Outline Practice

Task 3 / answers

Bird contour / own-reference tasks / measured blanks, not fabricated learner results

Count actual lifts in your own full contour: no more than three. Measure your own beak-to-tail distances using the same scale. A closed body, two-point attached beak, internal wing edge and separate attached tail edge are the selected convention.

Reference / before: _____

Drawing / after: _____

Check / selected revision: _____

Bird Contour Drawing: Single-Line Outline Practice

Task 4 / answers

Bird contour / own-reference tasks / measured blanks, not fabricated learner results

Select only the zone with the largest actual mismatch, redraw it and remeasure. State before and after honestly; improvement cannot be guaranteed or invented. Keep single clean contours without feather barbs or shading.

Reference / before: _____

Drawing / after: _____

Check / selected revision: _____

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The drawing uses a single continuous line for the body outline with three or fewer lifts.
- [ ] The beak contour attaches at two points on the head outline and does not cross it.
- [ ] The wing edge stays inside the body outline from shoulder to wing tip.
- [ ] The tail edge connects to the body outline at the tail base and ends at the tail tip.
- [ ] The contour excludes individual feather barbs and shading.
- [ ] The five key points are within 1 cm of the reference measurements when drawn at the same scale.
- [ ] Valid alternatives: a left-facing bird, a different beak shape, or a different wing position are acceptable if the contour convention and five-point check are met.

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