Contour Line Landscape Drawing: Ridge Lines and Horizon Layering

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

On a 15 cm by 10 cm page, draw a horizon line 4 cm from the top. Add one background ridge above the horizon and one foreground edge below it. Make the foreground edge interrupt the background ridge where they cross. Keep both contour lines continuous or exiting the page.

Answer: A valid drawing has a horizon line at 4 cm from the top, one background ridge above it representing a distant landform silhouetted against the sky, and one foreground edge below it. The foreground edge stops the background ridge at the crossing. Both lines are continuous or reach a page edge. Shapes may differ.

Reason: The task checks horizon placement, two layers, and the overlap rule. The numerical value is a hypothetical example measured on the stated page size.

Check: Measure 4 cm from the top for the horizon. Trace each contour line to confirm it is continuous or exits a page edge. Confirm the foreground line interrupts the background line at the crossing.

Task 2

Draw three overlapping ridge lines on a page. Label them background, midground, and foreground. Use a consistent line weight rule: either all lines the same weight or heavier lines for nearer layers. Do not use shading.

Answer: A valid drawing shows three ridge lines with consistent overlap: midground interrupts background, foreground interrupts midground. Labels match the layers. Line weight follows one stated rule. No shading is present.

Reason: This exercise checks layering order and a consistent line-weight convention. Different shapes and hand pressures are acceptable.

Check: Read from background to foreground and confirm each nearer line interrupts the farther line. Check that labels match the overlap order. Confirm the line-weight rule is applied to all three lines.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a contour landscape with a horizon line and two ridge lines above it. Make one ridge line close into a loop and the other exit the page edge. Add one shoulder line on the looping ridge. Keep all lines continuous.

Answer: A valid drawing has a horizon line, two ridge lines above it representing distant landforms silhouetted against the sky, one closed loop, one line exiting the page, and one shoulder line on the loop. All lines are continuous. The shoulder line follows a change in surface direction.

Reason: The exercise checks closed versus exiting lines and a shoulder line that explains a slope change. The loop shape is open.

Check: Trace the loop to confirm it closes cleanly. Trace the exiting line to a page edge. Confirm the shoulder line starts and ends on the ridge or exits the page without breaking.

Task 4

Create a contour landscape with background, midground, and foreground layers. Draw the foreground first, then add the midground and background behind it, stopping farther lines at nearer ones. State your line-weight rule in one sentence. Use no shading.

Answer: A valid drawing shows three layers with consistent overlap even though the foreground was drawn first. Farther lines stop at nearer lines. A one-sentence line-weight rule is stated and followed. No shading is present.

Reason: This exercise accepts the valid alternative of drawing foreground first while still requiring the overlap rule. The stated rule makes line weight checkable.

Check: Confirm the overlap order is consistent despite the drawing order. Read the stated line-weight rule and check it against all contour lines. Confirm no shading is used.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Horizon line is present and clearly separate from ridge lines.
- [ ] At least three layers are visible and labeled or distinguishable as background, midground, and foreground.
- [ ] Overlap rule is consistent: nearer lines interrupt farther lines.
- [ ] Every contour line is continuous or exits a page edge.
- [ ] No shading or perspective construction is used.
- [ ] Line weight, if varied, follows a stated and consistent rule.
- [ ] Valid alternatives, such as drawing foreground first, are accepted if the overlap rule and continuity are maintained.

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