Cross-Contour Still Life Drawing: Map Curved Surfaces with Wrapping Lines

Topic reference / ordinary illustration



Ordinary topic reference. Hypothetical dimensions in the four tasks are supplied in their own text; this illustration is not their measured answer.

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Worked example / complete source key

A mug is placed with its handle to the right. Describe how to draw cross-contour lines across the mug's cylindrical body and handle.

Answer: Draw the mug's outer contour lightly. Across the cylindrical body, draw three to five lines that curve gently downward in the center and upward at the sides, spacing them evenly on the broad front and tightening near the left and right edges where the surface turns away. On the handle, draw two or three short lines that follow the handle's curve, crossing its thickness rather than outlining it. Check that the body lines describe a cylinder and the handle lines describe a curved loop.

Reason: The mug's body is a cylinder, so cross-contour lines behave like latitude lines: they curve consistently and tighten at the turning edges. The handle is a curved form, so its lines follow the loop's direction. This mapping communicates form without shading.

Check: Confirm that body lines curve in the same direction, that spacing tightens at both side edges, and that handle lines cross the handle's surface rather than tracing its outline.