Traditional Tattoo Drawing Practice: Bold Outline and Flash Motifs

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

In a 50 mm by 50 mm cell, draw a heart with a 2 mm outline and 1 mm detail line. Add one solid black fill and two parallel hatch lines. Describe your symmetry check.

Answer: A symmetrical heart centred in the cell with 10 mm margins. Outline 2 mm, detail 1 mm. One small solid fill and two hatch lines spaced 4 mm apart. Symmetry checked by folding the cell vertically; deviation under 1 mm.

Reason: The heart uses two mirrored curves meeting at a bottom point. Consistent outline weight and limited shading follow the convention. Folding checks symmetry without needing a mirror.

Check: Measure outline strokes with a ruler; fold the cell to compare halves; view from one metre to confirm readability.

Task 2

Draw a swallow motif in a 60 mm by 60 mm cell using a 2 mm outline. Add three parallel hatch lines on one wing. State your spacing from the cell edge.

Answer: A simple swallow with curved wings and a forked tail, centred with 12 mm margins. Outline 2 mm. Three hatch lines spaced 3 mm apart on one wing. No solid fill.

Reason: The swallow is built from curved wing shapes and a forked tail. Hatching on one wing adds shading without gradients. Margins ensure spacing.

Check: Measure margins and hatch spacing; confirm outline width matches your recorded average; check readability from one metre.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Plan a four-cell flash plate on A4 paper with equal cells and 10 mm margins. Describe cell size and spacing, then draw one rose motif in the first cell with a 2 mm outline.

Answer: A4 is 210 mm by 297 mm. With 10 mm margins and 10 mm spacing, a 2 by 2 grid of 85 mm by 60 mm cells fits: width is 10 + 85 + 10 + 85 + 10 = 200 mm, within 210 mm, and height is 10 + 60 + 10 + 60 + 10 = 150 mm, within 297 mm. The rose is centred in the first cell with a 2 mm outline and one solid fill.

Reason: Equal cells and measured margins create a unified plate. The rose uses layered petal shapes; outline weight is consistent. Numerical values are hypothetical examples; measure your actual paper.

Check: Measure paper and cell dimensions with a ruler; confirm margins are at least 10 mm; check outline width and readability.

Task 4

Draw a small banner with the word FLASH using a consistent x-height. Mark baseline and midline, use a 1 mm detail line, and state your x-height measurement.

Answer: Baseline and midline marked 8 mm apart, giving an 8 mm x-height. Letters drawn with a 1 mm detail line, consistent style. Banner outline 2 mm. Valid alternative letter styles accepted if x-height is consistent.

Reason: X-height is baseline to midline; letter styles vary. A consistent x-height keeps the banner readable. The detail line is finer than the outline.

Check: Measure baseline-to-midline distance; confirm all letters share the same x-height; check outline versus detail line widths.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Outline consistency: all main contours use the recorded outline weight within plus or minus 0.5 mm.
- [ ] Symmetry and proportion: motifs are balanced; valid alternatives accepted if consistent.
- [ ] Shading control: limited to solid fills or parallel hatching; no gradients.
- [ ] Spacing and layout: margins and cell spacing measured and consistent.
- [ ] Readability: motifs identifiable from one metre; negative space preserved.

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