Contour Line Castle Drawing: A Focused Study

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a blind contour of a castle silhouette described here: one central tower that is a rectangle about 3 x-heights tall and 1 x-height wide, with a flat top; a wall extending 2 x-heights to the left and 2 x-heights to the right of the tower, each wall 1 x-height tall; and a gate opening centered in the right wall, 1 x-height tall and half an x-height wide. Do not look at your paper while drawing. After finishing, compare your drawing to this written description and list two places where your line drifted.

Answer: A completed blind contour drawing showing a central rectangular tower, two side walls, and a gate opening in the right wall, plus a list of two specific drift points, such as the tower top being too wide or the right wall line curving unexpectedly.

Reason: Blind contour trains observation by removing visual feedback. Comparing to a written description rather than an absent image keeps the task self-contained, and the drift list shows where eye-hand coordination needs practice.

Check: Verify that the drawing was made without looking at the paper, that it contains the described tower, walls, and gate, and that two concrete drift points are listed.

Task 2

Using continuous line, draw a castle silhouette with three towers of heights 3, 2, and 2 x-heights and a wall of 1 x-height. Do not lift the pencil. Label each height using the x-height convention.

Answer: A continuous-line silhouette with three towers labeled 3, 2, and 2 x-heights and a wall labeled 1 x-height, with no pencil lifts.

Reason: Continuous line builds line control, and the labels check proportional consistency.

Check: Check that the line is unbroken and that the labels match the stated ratios within a reasonable visual estimate.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

First sketch a castle silhouette lightly: a wall 4 x-heights wide and 1 x-height tall, with three square battlements on top spaced evenly, and a gate opening centered in the wall that is 1 x-height tall and half an x-height wide. Then trace the edges of that silhouette with contour lines only, no shading. Mark baseline and midline and label the wall height as 1 x-height.

Answer: A contour tracing of the sketched silhouette that includes the three battlements and the centered gate opening, with baseline and midline marked and the wall labeled 1 x-height, and no shading.

Reason: Tracing edges focuses attention on visible boundaries, and sketching the shape first makes the task solvable without an external image. The x-height label enforces the convention.

Check: Confirm that three battlements and a centered gate are present, no shading is used, baseline and midline are marked, and the wall is labeled 1 x-height.

Task 4

Draw a castle silhouette with a tall tower of 4 x-heights centered on a wall of 1 x-height, where the wall extends 2 x-heights to each side of the tower and has a gate opening centered in the left wall that is 1 x-height tall and half an x-height wide. First do a blind contour, then a continuous line. Compare the two and state one improvement in the second drawing.

Answer: Two drawings of the described silhouette: a blind contour and a continuous line, plus one stated improvement such as a more accurate tower-to-wall ratio or a smoother wall line.

Reason: Comparing methods shows how observation and line control interact, and the explicit layout makes the silhouette fully specified from the text.

Check: Verify that both drawings exist, that the second is continuous with no pencil lifts, that the layout matches the description, and that the stated improvement is specific and plausible.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The silhouette includes at least one tall tower, two short towers, and a wall with a gate.
- [ ] The line is continuous with no lifts during the continuous-line portion.
- [ ] No shading or perspective construction is present.
- [ ] X-height labels are consistent and use a defined letter style.
- [ ] Proportions roughly match the stated x-height ratios.
- [ ] Valid alternatives are accepted if the silhouette is recognizable and the convention is applied consistently.

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