Contour Line Hands with Watercolor Wash: A Guided Drawing Lesson

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a continuous outer contour of your own hand palm down, about 100 mm tall on A4 paper. Add one interior line at the thumb joint. Do not shade.

Answer: A single closed contour from wrist around fingertips and back, with one interior line near the thumb joint, fitting within about 100 mm height.

Reason: The task tests continuous edge reading and scale control. One interior line keeps focus on the outer silhouette.

Check: Trace the outer line with your eye: it should close at the wrist and separate each finger. Measure the height against a 100 mm mark.

Task 2

Plan a wash for the drawing above: choose palm only, mix a pale test wash, and state the unpainted margin width you will keep along the outer contour.

Answer: A stated margin, for example 5 mm, with a pale wash tested on scrap paper and applied only inside the palm boundary.

Reason: Planning before wetting paper prevents bleeding and keeps the contour visible.

Check: Confirm the margin is marked in pencil and the test wash dries pale enough that a pencil line remains visible beneath it.

Task 3

Draw a hand with fingers overlapping, using contour line only. Add a pale wash to the background, leaving the hand unpainted. State one check for contour visibility.

Answer: Overlapping fingers shown by contour lines, background washed pale, hand left unpainted, with a check such as stepping back to trace the outer edge.

Reason: Background-only wash is a valid alternative that preserves contrast and tests boundary control.

Check: After drying, step back and confirm the outer contour is still traceable against the tinted background.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Draw a hand contour at 80 mm height, then apply two separate pale washes: fingertips and wrist, leaving a dry gap between them. Describe how you prevent bleeding.

Answer: Two pale washes separated by a dry unpainted gap, applied one at a time and dried flat before the second.

Reason: Separate drying prevents pigment from crossing the contour and tests sequencing.

Check: Inspect the gap: it should remain unpainted and dry, with no pigment bridge between the two areas.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Contour is continuous and readable as a hand silhouette.
- [ ] At least two interior contour lines describe knuckles or overlaps.
- [ ] Wash is pale and does not obscure the contour.
- [ ] An unpainted margin or unpainted area preserves contrast.
- [ ] Paper is flat after drying, with no severe buckling.
- [ ] Valid alternatives, such as background-only wash, are accepted if contour remains clear.

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