Side-Profile Character Drawing: Torso Angle and Limb Overlap

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A side-view character has a vertical torso-angle line of 6 cm. The shoulder cross-line is 3 cm and the hip cross-line is 3 cm. Where should the shoulder and hip cross-lines be drawn relative to the torso line?

Answer: Both cross-lines should be perpendicular to the vertical torso line, so they are horizontal. The shoulder cross-line is centered at the shoulder point, and the hip cross-line is centered at the hip point.

Reason: Perpendicular means a 90-degree angle. With a vertical torso line, perpendicular cross-lines are horizontal. Centering them at the joints keeps limb attachment symmetrical.

Check: Use a right-angle corner or protractor to confirm 90 degrees at each joint. Measure 1.5 cm on each side of the joint for a 3 cm cross-line.

Task 2

A character's near leg is drawn fully from hip to ankle. The far leg is visible above the knee and below the ankle but not between. Describe where the far leg's outline should break.

Answer: The far leg's outline should break where the near leg crosses it, roughly between the knee and ankle. The far leg appears above the knee and below the ankle, with a clean gap where the near leg is in front.

Reason: The near-far overlap rule says the nearer limb is unbroken and the farther limb is interrupted at the crossing. The visible segments are the parts not hidden by the near leg.

Check: Trace the near leg with a finger; it should be continuous. Confirm the far leg has exactly two visible segments separated by the near leg's width.

Task 3

A profile head oval is 8 cm tall. Where should the ear be placed, and what is the height of the face wedge rectangle if its height equals the oval?

Answer: The ear goes at the oval's midpoint, 4 cm from the top. The face wedge rectangle is also 8 cm tall.

Reason: The midpoint of an 8 cm oval is 4 cm from either end. The face wedge height matches the skull oval height in this construction.

Check: Measure 4 cm down from the top of the oval. Measure the wedge rectangle's height and compare it to 8 cm.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

A torso-angle line is 10 cm long and tilted 30 degrees from vertical. The shoulder cross-line is drawn horizontal. Is this correct according to the lesson? Explain.

Answer: No. The shoulder cross-line should be perpendicular to the torso-angle line, not horizontal. A 30-degree tilt means the cross-line should also tilt 30 degrees from horizontal.

Reason: Perpendicular cross-lines follow the torso angle. If the torso tilts 30 degrees from vertical, the perpendicular cross-line tilts 30 degrees from horizontal.

Check: Measure the angle between the torso line and the cross-line; it should be 90 degrees. A horizontal cross-line would not meet this check.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Profile head includes a skull oval, face wedge, and ear at the midpoint.
- [ ] Torso-angle line connects hip and shoulder and is visibly tilted or vertical as intended.
- [ ] Shoulder and hip cross-lines are perpendicular to the torso-angle line.
- [ ] Near-far overlap rule is applied consistently, with clear breaks at crossings.
- [ ] Near limbs are unbroken; far limbs stop where overlapped.
- [ ] Construction lines are light and do not obscure the final contour.
- [ ] Labels use the baseline-to-midline x-height convention consistently.
- [ ] Valid alternative overlap choices are accepted if applied consistently and explained.

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