Pen-and-Ink Hair Texture: Micron Stroke Direction and Layering Practice

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a 5 cm wide texture band with strokes flowing left to right. Use 10 strokes in the first layer with 2 mm gaps, then add 5 shorter strokes in the middle third with 1 mm gaps. Keep all strokes within 20 degrees of the flow line.

Answer: A band with a clear left-to-right flow, a first layer of 10 tapered strokes, and a denser middle third created by 5 shorter overlapping strokes. All strokes stay within 20 degrees of the flow line.

Reason: The first layer establishes direction; the shorter middle strokes add density without changing flow. Taper and consistent angle make the texture read as hair rather than fur.

Check: Verify that every stroke is within 20 degrees of the flow line, that the middle third has more overlapping strokes than the ends, and that most strokes taper at both ends.

Task 2

Create two small swatches side by side. Swatch A uses even 2 mm spacing for all strokes. Swatch B alternates 1 mm and 3 mm gaps. Both use 8 strokes flowing downward. Describe which looks more natural and why.

Answer: Swatch B looks more natural because the alternating gaps create varied density, while Swatch A looks mechanical and fur-like.

Reason: Hair texture benefits from uneven spacing that suggests clusters and gaps. Even spacing removes the visual variation that reads as individual strands.

Check: Count the gaps in each swatch. Confirm Swatch A has eight equal gaps and Swatch B has alternating tight and loose gaps. Check that both swatches still follow a downward flow.

Pen-and-Ink Hair Texture: Micron Stroke Direction and Layering Practice

Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a texture patch with a first layer of 6 long strokes flowing right to left. Add a second layer of 4 shorter strokes at 30 degrees off the flow. Add 2 isolated flyaway strokes at 40 degrees off the flow. Keep the darkest area where the second layer overlaps the first.

Answer: A patch with a clear right-to-left flow, a second layer at 30 degrees, and two flyaways at 40 degrees. The overlap area is darkest because it has the most strokes.

Reason: Layering at slight angles adds depth without breaking flow. Flyaways at 40 degrees suggest individual strands lifting away. Darkness comes from overlap, not pressure.

Check: Check that the second layer is within 30 degrees of the flow, flyaways are within 40 degrees, and the darkest area has the most overlapping strokes rather than the heaviest ink.

Task 4

Draw a 4 cm by 3 cm panel with hair texture flowing from top to bottom. Make the top half denser than the bottom half. Use at least two layers. Then mark one stroke that lacks a taper and redraw it correctly beside the panel.

Answer: A panel with top-to-bottom flow, a denser top half built by more overlapping strokes, and a corrected tapered stroke drawn beside the panel.

Reason: Gradual density change avoids blotches. Identifying a non-tapered stroke and redrawing it reinforces pressure control and clean lifts.

Check: Confirm the top half has more strokes per square centimeter than the bottom half, that at least two layers are visible, and that the redrawn stroke shows a light-middle-light taper.

Pen-and-Ink Hair Texture: Micron Stroke Direction and Layering Practice

Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Strokes follow a single clear flow direction within 40 degrees.
- [ ] Most strokes show a visible taper at start and end.
- [ ] Spacing varies and density changes gradually.
- [ ] Dark areas are built by layering, not heavy pressure.
- [ ] Cross-strokes stay within 20 to 40 degrees of the main flow.
- [ ] Valid alternatives: different stroke lengths, fan angles, or layer counts are acceptable if flow, taper, and gradual density are present.

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