Ink Reptile Scales: Texture Drawing Guide

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

On a 30 mm by 20 mm panel, draw two staggered rows with row height 5 mm and scale width 6 mm. Stagger the second row by 3 mm. Leave lower rims uninked.

Answer: Two baselines 5 mm apart. Top row: four scales of 6 mm width, occupying 24 mm with 3 mm margin at each end, so the row spans 3 mm to 27 mm within the 30 mm panel (3 + 24 + 3 = 30 mm). Second row staggered 3 mm: three full scales (3×6 = 18 mm) plus two half-scales of 3 mm at the edges (2×3 = 6 mm), giving 24 mm of scale coverage; with 3 mm margins at each end the row spans 3 mm to 27 mm within the 30 mm panel (3 + 24 + 3 = 30 mm), offset 3 mm from the top row. Lower rims left white, row gap darkened once.

Reason: Staggering by half a scale width prevents vertical gaps. Uninked rims create highlight and keep density controlled.

Check: Squint at the panel: confirm no vertical white or dark channel crosses both rows, and each scale's lower edge overlaps the row below.

Task 2

Draw one row of five scales, each 6 mm wide and 4 mm tall. Shade only the lower third of each scale with parallel strokes following the curve. Leave the upper two thirds white.

Answer: Five closed scales in a row. Lower thirds shaded with consistent curved strokes. Upper portions white. Row gap darkened once.

Reason: Limiting shading to the lower third builds mid-tone without filling the scale, preserving three values.

Check: Count scales and confirm each has white upper area and shaded lower third. Check stroke direction is consistent across all five.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Create a transition panel: three rows of large scales 8 mm wide, one transition row, then three rows of small scales 5 mm wide. Reduce width gradually across the transition row.

Answer: Seven rows total. Rows 1–3 at 8 mm width. Row 4 is the transition row at 6–7 mm width. Rows 5–7 at 5 mm width. Stagger every other row by half the current width.

Reason: Gradual reduction avoids abrupt size jumps and keeps texture readable across regions.

Check: Measure row widths with a ruler. Confirm no single row changes width by more than about one third from the row above.

Task 4

Draw a 20 mm by 20 mm patch with three rows. Use rounded scales in the top row, pointed in the middle, and keeled (central ridge) in the bottom. Keep stroke direction consistent and leave lower rims white.

Answer: Three rows of four scales each. Top row rounded, middle pointed, bottom keeled with one central ridge line per scale. Lower rims uninked, row gaps darkened once.

Reason: Mixing shape families sparingly tests control while preserving row structure and edge highlights.

Check: Verify each row uses one shape family, ridges appear only in the bottom row, and squint test still shows three values.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Rows are staggered so no vertical gap runs through two consecutive rows.
- [ ] Each scale has a closed shape with a lower edge overlapping the row below.
- [ ] Stroke direction is consistent within each scale and follows its curve.
- [ ] Three values are visible: white highlight, mid-tone stroke, dark gap.
- [ ] Scale size changes gradually across regions, not abruptly.
- [ ] Lower rims show a thin uninked highlight.
- [ ] Valid alternatives: rounded, pointed, or keeled shapes; parallel or controlled cross-hatch strokes; any scale size measured to fit the panel.

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