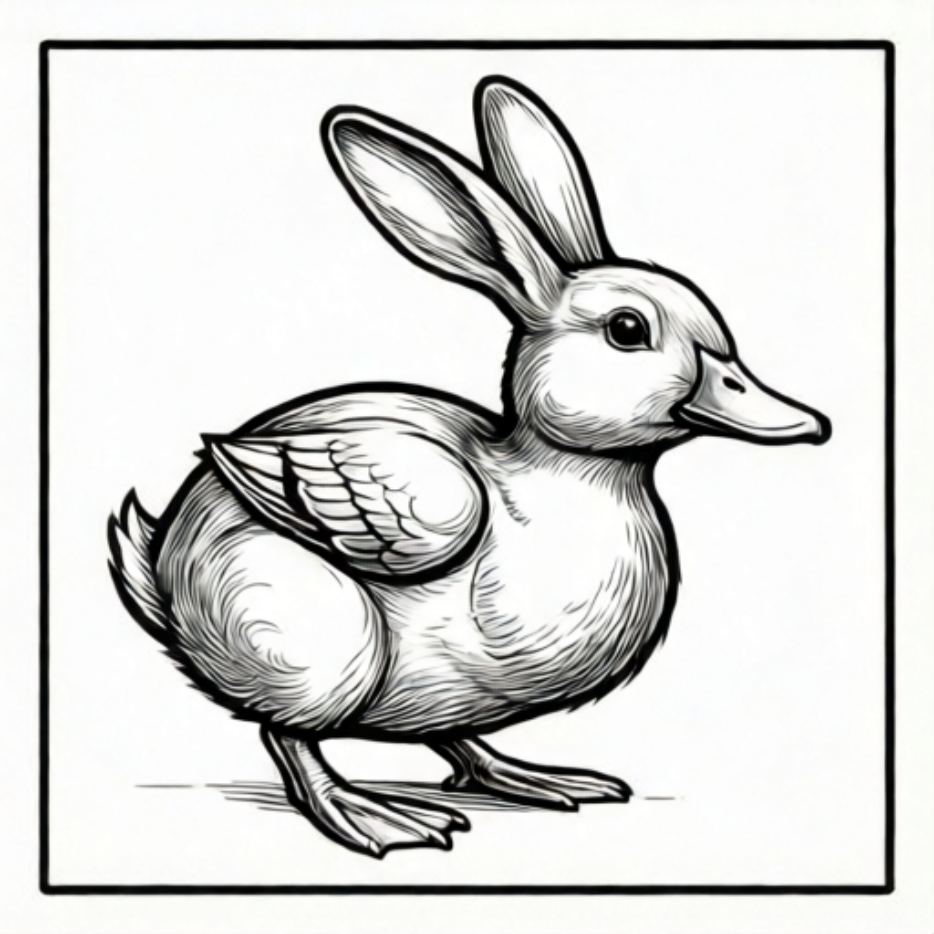
Duck-Rabbit Ambiguity: Draw and Compare Two Readings

Ordinary topic reference / separately checked pixels



Duck-Rabbit Ambiguity: Draw and Compare Two Readings

Original worked example / unchanged complete key

Prompt: A student draws a shared head with an upper front projection 2 cm long and a lower front projection 1.5 cm long, using a 3 cm x-height unit. The eye sits 1 cm behind the projections. The student labels the upper projection as a bill edge in the duck overlay and as a far ear in the rabbit overlay. Explain why this figure can switch readings and what the student should check.

Answer: The figure can switch because the two front projections are close enough in position to serve as bill edges in one reading and as ears in the other. The eye is shared and sits behind the projections, so it works for both animals: behind the bill in the duck reading, and behind the ear bases in the rabbit reading. The student should check that neither projection is so long or angled that it forces only one reading, and should confirm that a viewer can switch without changing the lines. The 3 cm x-height unit and the 2 cm and 1.5 cm projection lengths are hypothetical examples; the student should measure their own drawing and keep units consistent.