Mustang Silhouette in Negative Space: A Figure-Ground Drawing Lesson

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

On a 16 cm by 12 cm panel, draw a low car silhouette about 10 cm wide and 3 cm tall. Shade only the surround. State whether a fully enclosed window stays white or becomes dark.

Answer: A valid result shows a clean white car about 10 cm wide, an evenly shaded surround, a closed contour, and a stated convention for the window.

Reason: The car is defined as the unshaded region inside a closed contour; the surround is the shaded area outside it. The window rule must be declared before drawing.

Check: Measure the car width and the widest dark span in centimeters; confirm the car is unshaded and the convention note is present.

Task 2

A student shades the surround but leaves a 5 mm white gap along the car contour. Is the drawing valid under the stated convention? Explain and give a fix.

Answer: It is not fully valid because the gap breaks the dark surround into a separate band. Fix by extending the shading to the contour without shading inside the car.

Reason: The convention requires the surround to be one connected dark shape meeting the car boundary. A gap creates an unintended white strip.

Check: Inspect the boundary: dark should meet the car contour continuously, and the car interior should remain white.

Task 3

On a 20 cm by 15 cm panel, a car occupies about 12 cm of the width. Estimate the widest dark span across the panel and state the unit.

Answer: About 8 cm, assuming the car is centered and the panel is 20 cm wide; the unit is centimeters.

Reason: Subtract the car width from the panel width: 20 cm minus 12 cm equals 8 cm. This is a hypothetical example; measure your own panel.

Check: Measure the panel and car with the same ruler and subtract; confirm both values use the same unit.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Draw a car silhouette with one wheel opening that touches the outer contour and one fully enclosed window. Apply the convention that connected openings become dark and enclosed openings stay white. Describe the result.

Answer: The wheel opening connects to the surround and is shaded dark; the enclosed window stays white. The car remains the largest unshaded region.

Reason: The convention treats any opening connected to the outside edge as part of the surround, while fully enclosed openings remain part of the car.

Check: Trace the contour: the wheel opening should join the dark surround, and the window should be surrounded by white car paper.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The car region is unshaded white paper.
- [ ] The surround is shaded with even, consistent strokes.
- [ ] The car contour is a single closed boundary.
- [ ] The convention for windows and wheel openings is stated and applied consistently.
- [ ] The figure-ground separation is clear from a step back.
- [ ] Panel dimensions and any numerical values are measured and labeled as examples.

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