Shaded Heart Drawing: Light-Source Tonal Practice

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Draw a heart about 6 cm wide with light arrows from the upper left. Fill the upper-left lobe with step 2, the middle with step 3, and the lower-right edge with step 4. Add a small step 5 patch at the base. Describe where you place the darkest mark and why.

Answer: The darkest mark (step 5) goes at the base and along the lower-right edge, because those areas face away from the upper-left light source. The upper-left lobe stays at step 2.

Reason: The light arrows from the upper left mean the lower-right side and base receive the least direct light. Step 5 is reserved for the deepest shadow, not the whole shadow side.

Check: Compare the heart to the value strip: the upper-left lobe should match step 2, the middle step 3, and the lower-right edge step 4, with step 5 only at the base. Check that no step 5 appears on the upper-left lobe.

Task 2

A heart is shaded with light arrows from the upper right. The upper-right lobe is step 2, the middle is step 3, and the lower-left edge is step 4. Identify one mistake if the lower-left edge is actually lighter than the upper-right lobe, and state the fix.

Answer: The mistake is that the shading contradicts the stated light direction. The fix is to lighten the upper-right lobe to step 2 and darken the lower-left edge to step 4, keeping the arrows labeled upper right.

Reason: With light from the upper right, the upper-right lobe should be lightest and the lower-left edge darkest. If the lower-left edge is lighter, the tonal pattern is reversed.

Check: Trace each arrow to the heart and confirm that the lightest area is on the arrow side and the darkest area is opposite. Compare both areas to the value strip.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Draw a heart with light arrows from the upper left. Use only steps 2, 3, and 4, and include a narrow reflected-light band at step 2 just inside the lower-right edge. Explain why the reflected-light band must not be step 1.

Answer: The reflected-light band stays at step 2 because it is a subtle bounce of light, not a direct highlight. Step 1 is reserved for the paper white or the strongest direct light, which is on the upper-left lobe.

Reason: Reflected light is weaker than direct light. If the band were step 1, it would compete with the main light area and flatten the form.

Check: Compare the band to the upper-left lobe. The band should be darker than or equal to the lobe, never brighter. Check that the band is narrow and sits inside the step 4 edge.

Task 4

Draw a heart with light arrows from the upper left. Shade it with at least four values, then write one sentence explaining how your darkest value agrees with the arrows. Include a check for whether the heart edge is defined by tone rather than a dark outline.

Answer: The darkest value sits on the lower-right edge and base, opposite the upper-left arrows. The heart edge is defined by the contrast between the shaded heart and the lighter background, with no heavy outline.

Reason: A consistent light source places the darkest tones away from the light. Defining the edge by tone keeps the form rounded and avoids a flat, outlined look.

Check: Look at the heart from a short distance: the edge should be visible through value contrast, not a drawn line. Confirm the darkest area is opposite the arrows and matches step 4 or 5 on your strip.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Light-source arrows are drawn and labeled consistently with the shading direction.
- [ ] A five-step value strip is present and labeled.
- [ ] At least three distinct values appear on the heart: light, mid, and dark.
- [ ] The upper-left lobe is the lightest area and the lower-right edge or base is the darkest.
- [ ] Transitions between values are gradual, not abrupt, except where a crisp edge is intentionally chosen.
- [ ] No heavy dark outline defines the heart; tonal contrast defines the edge.
- [ ] Reflected light, if present, is subtle and not brighter than the main light area.
- [ ] The heart shape is recognizable with a top cleft and a pointed base; slight asymmetry is acceptable.

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