

Name _____

Everything You Need to Know about PENCILS



If the #2 pencil is the most popular, why isn't it #1?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYO3tOqDISE>

Pencil History: The Earliest Forms of Self Expression

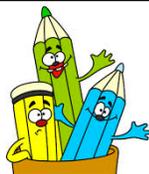
Did you know that modern pencils owe it all to an ancient Roman writing instrument called a stylus? Scribes used this thin metal rod to leave a light, but readable mark on **papyrus** (an early form of paper). Other early styluses were made of lead, which is what we still call pencil cores, even though they actually are made of non-toxic graphite. But pencil history doesn't stop there.

Graphite came into widespread use following the discovery of a large graphite deposit in Borrowdale, England, in 1564. Graphite was better than lead because it left a darker mark than lead, but the mineral proved so soft and breakable that it required a holder. Originally, graphite sticks were wrapped in string. Later, the graphite was **inserted** into hollowed-out wooden sticks. Then the wood-cased pencil was born! *Pencil* is an older word, derived from the Latin 'pencilus', meaning 'little tail', to describe the small ink brushes used for writing in the Middle Ages.

The modern pencil was invented in 1795 by Nicholas-Jacques Conte, a scientist serving in the army of Napoleon Bonaparte. The magic material that was just right was the form of pure carbon that we call graphite. Initially graphite was believed to be a form of lead and was called 'plumbago' or black lead (hence the 'plumbers' who mend our lead water-carrying pipes), a **misnomer** that still echoes in our talk of pencil 'leads'. It was called graphite only in 1789, using the Greek word 'graphein' meaning 'to write'.

How pencils are made.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZHp1fGdAWE>



"Did you hear the joke about the pencil?"

"No."

"It's pointless."

Trivia: The strange thing about graphite is that it is a form of pure carbon that is one of the softest solids known. Yet, if the atomic structure is changed, there is another crystalline form of pure carbon, diamond, which is one of the hardest solids known.

Pencil History: America Expresses Itself

Early settlers depended on pencils from overseas until the Revolutionary War when England cut off **imports**. William Monroe, a cabinetmaker from Concord, Massachusetts, is credited with making America's first wood pencils in 1812. Another Concord native, famous author Henry David Thoreau was also **renowned** for his pencil-making **proWess**.

The American pencil industry took off when The Joseph Dixon Crucible Company (now Dixon Ticonderoga) and more pencil manufacturers started getting into the act toward the end of the 19th century.

The first mass-produced pencils were natural and unpainted to show off high-quality wood casings. But, by the 1890s, many pencil manufacturers started painting pencils and imprinting them with brand names. There's an interesting story behind how the familiar yellow pencil came to be.

Pencils have been painted yellow ever since the 1890s. And that bright color isn't just so you can find them on your desk more easily! In fact, the yellow pencil has a much deeper history than you might expect.

During the 1800s, the best graphite in the world came from China. American pencil makers wanted a special way to tell people that their pencils contained Chinese graphite. In China, the color yellow is associated with royalty and respect. American pencil manufacturers began painting their pencils bright yellow to communicate this "regal" feeling and association with China. The rest, as they say, is history. Today, a majority of basic **hexagonal** graphite writing pencils sold in the United States are painted yellow and what was once **perceived** as "**regal**" has now become "**common**".

Pencil Poetry

<p>Ms. Pencil</p> <p>There she goes, dressed in yellow wearing a gaudy red cap. Standing tall, standing proud , high on her shiny black heels.</p>	<p>She dances onto the flat white floor As the girls around her simmer with silent envy. She leaves her elegant trail everywhere she goes till</p> <p>Whoops!</p> <p>She broke her little heel</p>
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Diary Entry

A day in the life of a pencil (personification)

I feel used. What is my purpose in life other than to be used by others? I am a tool, nothing but something that benefits others. Oh misery! My brother was chewed to death by a hairless dog. What fate will befall me?

At night they come with their noisy machines and make me sharp again. It hurts, but it keeps me alive so I can be used another day. Without that machine I am pointless, and if I am pointless then I am useless, and I so desire the touch of paper. It is relaxing for me.

How long do I have left? How long until I feel the emptiness that is death? Not so long ago, it was the first day of school, and I thought I had a long life ahead of me. But now I am getting shorter, and I hear the etching away of life each day. Yet, is this no better than being left in the dark dank locker with my friends, destined to die of boredom? But I cannot give up. I must be as useful as possible until my life nubs away, or until my eraser is flat and useless, and I am tossed aside.

Use context clues to choose the better synonym for each word.

1. <u>papyrus</u>	<u>reedy plant</u>	<u>early paper</u>
2. <u>inserted</u>	<u>added</u>	<u>loosened</u>
3. <u>misnomer</u>	<u>wrong name</u>	<u>identification</u>
4. <u>import</u>	<u>bring in</u>	<u>send out</u>
5. <u>renowned</u>	<u>well-known</u>	<u>unpopular</u>
6. <u>prowess</u>	<u>moving</u>	<u>ability</u>
7. <u>hexagonal</u>	<u>round</u>	<u>six-sided</u>
8. <u>regal</u>	<u>common</u>	<u>royal</u>
9. <u>perceived</u>	<u>understood</u>	<u>keep going</u>

Choose the correct answer.

10. Modern pencils owe it all to an ancient Roman writing instrument called

- a. a pencil
- b. a plumbago
- c. a stylus
- d. none of the above

11. We still call pencil cores *lead*, even though they actually are made of

- a. lead
- b. non-toxic graphite
- c. hard, black rubber
- d. charcoal

12. *Pencil* is an older word, derived from the Latin 'pencilus', meaning

- a. 'little tail'
- b. writing pen
- c. stylus
- d. writing instrument

13. It seems strange that graphite is a form of pure carbon that is one of the softest solids known. Yet, a crystalline form of pure carbon, one of the hardest solids known, is

- a. hard graphite
- b. diamond
- c. lead
- d. plumbago

14. Early settlers depended on pencils from overseas until

- a. the Revolutionary War when England cut off imports.
- b. The Germans started WWII
- c. The French Revolution cut off all imports
- d. Napoleon was conquered at Waterloo

15. During the 1800s, the best graphite in the world came from China. American pencil makers wanted a special way to tell people that their pencils contained

- a. Chinese lead
- b. Chinese yellow wood
- c. Chinese diamonds
- d. Chinese graphite

16. In China, the color yellow is associated with

- a. royalty and respect
- b. the best pencils
- c. graphite, not lead
- d. yellow wood called "maize"

17. Explain the irony in the following statement.

*Today, a majority of basic hexagonal graphite writing pencils sold in the United States are painted yellow and what was once **perceived** as "**regal**" has now become "**common**".*

Personification is a literary device in which the writer gives **person** qualities to something that is **not a person**.

Reread the poem "Ms Pencil." Identify three examples of personification, and then explain how each example is personification.

17.

