

The anatomy of a pencil

Pencil end

Dipped ends embellish the pencil: the longer the dipped end, the higher the quality of the pencil.

The Noris pencil from STAEDTLER stands out due to the dipped end with its iconic crown.

Coat

Lime tree, white fir and cedar are the most common types of wood used for pencil production.

The wood for the STAEDTLER pencils comes from certified, sustainably managed forests.

Dimensions

The standard size of a classic pencil is **175 mm** in length.

Form

The classic pencil is round, hexagonal or triangular. The pencil in the **hexagonal shape** was invented to prevent it from rolling away. The ergonomic **triangular shape** in turn ensures a relaxed hand while writing and drawing.

Degree of hardness

H stands for "hard" and marks hard pencils. Soft Pencils are labelled with a B – the abbreviation for "black". The most common degree of hardness is HB.

The Mars Lumograph pencil from STAEDTLER is a front runner: this product is available in 24 degrees of hardness – from **10H to 12B**.

Lead

The pencil lead consists of a graphite and clay mixture. The more clay, the harder the pencil – the more graphite is added to the mixture, the softer the pencil and the darker the colour application.

Did you know that...

...contrary to popular belief, a pencil **does not contain lead** but mainly graphite and clay.

In the 16th century, an anthracite-coloured material was discovered. It could be used for writing and marking. The mass was thought to be lead mineral and was therefore referred to as "plumbago" or "black lead" due to its silver sheen.

In 1778 the chemist Carl Wilhelm Scheele proved that the material was actually graphite. Though the belief persisted anyway – and today we still talk about "pencil lead".

A reliable companion:

Be it for writing, sketching or drawing – students around the world use pencils to learn how to write. There are some astonishing differences depending on country, tradition and culture, for example:

Europeans attach great importance to ergonomics. So, triangular pencils are in much greater demand here than in the rest of the world.

In **Great Britain** and many other European countries the yellow and black Noris pencil is very well known and popular.

In **Japan**, students prefer high-quality pencils – such as the blue Mars Lumograph – for school work. Only at the age of around 18 years do the students switch from pencils over to inked pens.

For learning how to write, the degrees of hardness HB, B and 2B are particularly popular: HB is chosen in large parts of **Europe**. In contrast to **Asia**: here, students prefer particularly soft pencils – 2B being the most popular hardness degree.

In **South Africa**, pupils up to the 4th grade often write with pencils – mainly because of financial reasons. The red and black traditional pencil is particularly popular here. Later, the students switch to a ballpoint pen instead of a fountain pen.