

PRESS RELEASE

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NATIONAL PENCIL DAY: SPOTLIGHT ON AN UNASSUMING EVERYDAY HERO

Even in this era of digitalization, there's nothing quite like the analogue all-rounder that is the humble little pencil. This was the finding of a representative market research survey carried out by INNOFACT on behalf of STAEDTLER, the writing and creative goods manufacturer based in Nuremberg. To mark National Pencil Day on 30 March, we should take a closer look at this unassuming everyday hero.



Popular use for pencils: jotting down notes and writing shopping lists

Pencils are the go-to tool for learning how to write – everywhere from Europe to Japan and South Africa. Even in China, where writing revolves around characters and calligraphy, pencils are an indispensable tool for delving into the world of writing. But then what? What is the role of the pencil when ballpoint pens, fountain pens and coloured pencils come into our lives?

Pencils are handy helpers that remain with us throughout our lives – both professional and private. This was the finding of a representative survey carried out on behalf of STAEDTLER by market research institute INNOFACT. Over 94 per cent of participants said they still use pencils; 62 per cent even said they use them regularly or very often. Younger people (18-34 years of age) use pencils more frequently than older people (50-69 years of age), and those with a higher level of education use pencils more than those with a lower education level.

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THE ultimate writing tool for any situation

The pencil is particularly popular for jotting down notes, such as on the phone. Over 71 per cent of the surveyed pencil users said they use it to take notes, with around half of survey participants saying they still use them to write shopping lists. But pencils don't just have to be used on paper: these all-rounders also cut a fine figure on other surfaces, for example, on wood and wallpaper. The second most common use of pencils is for manual tasks (61.6 per cent) like marking drill holes on the wall or for making other kinds of marks on a wide range of materials. In third place, over 60 per cent of survey participants said they use pencils for painting and drawing.

There has been a real surge in pencil use in recent years thanks to the new trend for being creative and handicrafts, which has fuelled a renewed interest in painting, drawing and creativity among young people. Endless posts and articles on social media are the proof of this development. Mandalas, hand-lettering, bullet journals and DIY greeting cards: the humble pencil is an indispensable tool for all sorts of creative tasks, such as sketching, preliminary drafts and hatching.

Fascinating findings: despite digitalization, streaming providers and lots of other modern-day pastimes, classic board games are still extremely relevant. Almost half of those surveyed (46 per cent) said they still indulge in these kinds of games for fun, using a pencil to keep track of their scores.

Quickly correct small errors

The great thing about pencils is that if you change your mind when you're writing or marking – on paper or another surface – you can instantly make those mistakes vanish with an eraser. This is the biggest advantage of pencils, at least according to 80 per cent of those surveyed. It also explains why pencils are the first choice when it comes to jotting down notes or writing things that will probably need to be corrected. Typical examples here include diary entries, crosswords and puzzles, rotas and sums.

The other reported benefits, by a large margin, include the pleasant feel of writing with a pencil (12.4 per cent of survey participants), its suitability for drawing and sketching (7 per cent), the variable thickness options (5.7 per cent) and the long useful life (4 per cent).

The myth of lead

Even today, the myth prevails that pencils contain lead. Almost six per cent of the survey participants that don't use pencils said they were worried about the substances pencils contain (such as lead). But there's no need to worry! Though we talk about "pencil leads", the mines actually consist of graphite and clay. Lead is NOT part of the mixture. Graphite was discovered in the mid-sixteenth century, people thought it was a lead mineral because of its look and feel. They called the substance "plumbago" or "black lead" because of its shiny silvery surface. It was only in 1789 that the Swedish chemist Carl Wilhelm Scheele proved that this "black lead" was actually graphite. All the same, we still talk about "pencil lead".

About the survey:

In March 2020, a total of 1,015 Germans between the ages of 18 and 69 were surveyed on behalf of STAEDTLER by the market research experts at INNOFACT. The focus of the study was on the use of various writing tools.



About STAEDTLER

STAEDTLER is one of Germany's oldest industrial companies. The group ranks among the world's leading manufacturers and suppliers of writing, colouring, drawing and creative products. With its products, STAEDTLER inspires the creativity of its customers throughout their life: from their first attempts at colouring in early childhood to products for creative work. The writing and creative goods manufacturer offers a wide range of high-quality products for all ages and demands, constantly developing new approaches to connect analogue tradition and digital innovation. STAEDTLER headquarters are located in Nuremberg. It employs 3,000 people in 26 countries worldwide – of which 1,200 work in STAEDTLER'S domestic market. For production the company stays true to its roots and counts on quality "Made in Germany": nearly two-thirds of all STAEDTLER products are manufactured in Germany. www.staedtler.com