

Drawing Media and Processes

AP Drawing • Topic 4

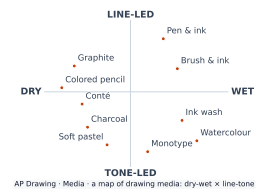
AP Drawing



Drawing Media and Processes

What we will cover

- 1 Graphite
- 2 Charcoal & conté
- 3 Ink: pen brush & wash
- 4 Coloured pencil & pastel
- 5 Paint & printmaking
- 6 Mixed media
- 7 Sketchbooks



1 Dry media

Drawing Media and Processes

↳ Dry media

Graphite

Graphite 石墨 is precise, erasable, and reaches a full – if **silvery** – value range.

Grades 硬度等级 run 9H (palest, hardest) through HB to 9B (darkest, softest).



Graphite line can define portrait form

Heavy graphite turns **shiny** – for the deepest blacks switch to charcoal or a **carbon pencil** 炭笔. Vary the grip: writing grip for detail, **overhand** 横握 for broad shading **from the arm**.

Drawing Media and Processes

↳ Dry media

Working large, and taking the light back out

woodless graphite	a solid stick of graphite – covers big areas fast, and its edge still gives a line
graphite powder	rubbed on with cloth or brush for smooth, even tone across a whole sheet
the eraser as a tool	once the ground is laid, carve the lights back out – a kneaded eraser lifts, a plastic one cuts
overhand grip 握持法	hold the pencil from above for loose, whole-arm marks; the writing grip is for detail only
sanguine 红粉笔 and conté 孔特笔	chalk sticks in earth reds and browns – a warmer alternative with the same handling

Subtractive drawing – lay tone, then remove it – is a **different discipline** from adding marks to white paper, and portfolios that show both read as more experimental.

Drawing Media and Processes

↳ Dry media

Charcoal and conté

Charcoal 木炭 is fast, bold and deeply black – the medium of gesture, chiaroscuro and **large-scale** drawing.

- **vine charcoal** 柳条木炭 is soft and dusts off – perfect for **starts**
- **compressed charcoal** 压缩木炭 is dense and **permanent**
- **conté** 炭精条 is waxier: crisper lines, the classic figure look



Charcoal builds deep value in still life

Charcoal: surface, blending, and fixing

the paper	charcoal loves toned and textured paper – smooth white gives it nothing to grip
blending	stumps, cloth, or the side of your hand; each leaves a different quality of edge
fixative 定画液	stops smudging. Spray lightly, in layers , and always with ventilation
the trade	fixative darkens the surface slightly and makes further lifting harder – so fix when a stage is settled, not before
vine against compressed	vine charcoal is pale and forgiving; compressed charcoal is dense, black, and nearly permanent

Choosing a **toned ground** is a decision the scorer can see. It commits you to working in both directions – adding dark *and* lifting light.

Ink – commitment builds confidence

Ink 墨水 commits – there is no erasing – and that is exactly why it builds decisiveness.

- dip pens and fineliners build value by **hatching and stippling**
- **brush and ink** 毛笔墨线 swings hairline to broad in **one gesture**
- **ink wash** 淡彩 layers like watercolour: **lights first**, darks last

Mistakes become **decisions** – incorporate them or design around them.



Rembrandt: pen, brown ink, wash – committed line

Ink: the line that cannot be taken back

waterproof line	holds its edge under a wet wash – crisp drawing, tonal washes over it
water-soluble line	bleeds when washed – softer, atmospheric, and unrepeatable
the nib 笔尖	pressure changes the line's width; a brush changes it far more
ink painting 水墨画	in East Asia the single loaded brushstroke is a whole discipline of control – loading, speed and pressure decide the mark before it lands
why it teaches	you cannot erase, so every mark is a decision made in advance

Two ink lines, waterproof and soluble, are **two different looks** and both are useful. Testing them side by side on one page is experimentation evidence in itself.

Coloured pencil and pastel

Colour enters drawing through **dry colour media** 干性彩色媒介 – fully allowed in the Drawing portfolio.

- **coloured pencil** 彩色铅笔 layers transparently; **burnishing** 压光 fuses glossy
- **soft pastel** 软色粉 is almost pure pigment – paint-like colour by gesture
- **oil pastel** 油画棒 can be scratched through – **sgraffito** 刮画法

Grey with the **complement** 互补色, not black. Value still rules.



Degas pastel: colour media as drawing gesture

2 Paint, print & mixed

Paint and printmaking as drawing

The Drawing portfolio welcomes painting and printmaking – **when mark-making leads the work**.

- a **grisaille** 灰调单色画 is drawing with a brush
- a **monotype** 独幅版画 gives painterly, **unrepeatable** marks
- **relief** 凸版画 and **intaglio** 凹版画 build every value from **scratched lines**

Line, tone and mark → **Drawing**;
colour-shape design → 2-D portfolio.



Rembrandt etching: every value from scratched lines

Mixed media and experimental surfaces

Combining media turns the **surface itself** into a drawing decision. Classic pairs: ink line over wash, charcoal over acrylic ground, pastel over watercolour.

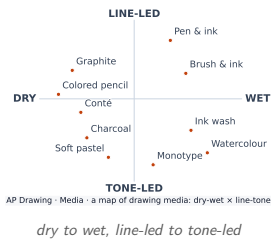
A **resist** 防染法 protects the lights; **gesso** 石膏底料 lets wet media sit on almost any support.

Working on something other than white paper

the supports	kraft paper, old book pages, maps, fabric – the ground becomes part of the meaning
relief prints 凸版印刷	lino and woodcut: carving is drawing, and the print is the drawing's other half
coloured pencil 彩色铅笔	layered and burnished, it holds detail that pastel cannot
test first	try combinations on scraps , then glue the tests into your journal – perfect experimentation evidence
keep it photographable	heavy glossy buildup glares under lights , and the scorer sees only the photograph

A support chosen for its meaning – a map for a drawing about migration – is **synthesis** 综合, not decoration. Say so in the writing.

Mixed media and experimental surfaces, in detail



Combining media turns the **surface itself** into a drawing decision.

3 Practice

The sketchbook is the engine of the course

Daily low-pressure drawing compounds into skill **and** into portfolio evidence.

- **short daily sessions beat rare marathons** – twenty focused minutes a day transforms a year
- fill pages with studies: hands, cups, corners of rooms, colour tests
- a **master copy** 临摹 teaches a mark system **from the inside** – label it clearly as a study

Date every page and add a one-line note – a dated sketchbook is documentation of **growth over time**.

Pages you expect to fail

daily practice	short and frequent beats long and rare – the tenth ellipse teaches more than the first hour
designate experiments	treat some pages as tests you expect to fail
why	the CED rewards visible practice 练习, experimentation and revision – all three need evidence, and only a journal has it
annotate	one line under a failed test saying what failed turns a dead page into evidence

A sketchbook of only successes proves nothing about process. **Keep the failures**, dated and annotated.

Worked example – choosing a medium in writing

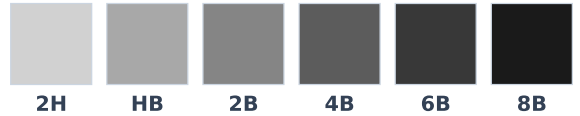
Say *why*, not just *what*

✗ "This drawing is charcoal on grey paper."

✓ "I chose charcoal on grey paper because I could pull the lights out with an eraser – which let the figure emerge from the dark, echoing my question about memory fading."

The medium, the **reason**, and the **idea** – three parts. Listing a material with no reason earns little.

Check yourself, in detail



harder · lighter · precise

softer · darker · faster

AP Drawing · Media · graphite grades and the value each reaches

Pencil grades: hard grades stay light and precise; soft grades reach rich darks fast

Exam tips

- **Name materials precisely in written evidence** – "compressed charcoal and white conté on toned paper" reads as expertise; "pencil and stuff" reads as guesswork.
- **Show at least two media families** across the portfolio (for example graphite plus ink wash): range of material control is easy, visible evidence.
- **One ink piece is worth including** – the medium's no-eraser honesty shows decisiveness that scorers recognise instantly.
- **Fix charcoal before photographing**. A smudged transit mark across a finished drawing is a silly way to lose the craft impression.
- **Sketchbook spreads photograph beautifully as process images** – pick spreads that show tests and notes, not just finished mini-drawings.

4

Recap

Topic 4 – key takeaways

1 Graphite

grades hard to soft; it goes shiny, so charcoal for true black

2 Charcoal & ink

work big; ink commits, and that builds confidence

3 Colour

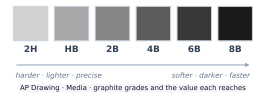
grey with the complement, not black – value still rules

4 Sketchbook

short daily sessions; date every page as growth evidence

Check yourself

- 1 9H or 9B: which reaches the darkest value?
- 2 Why switch from graphite to charcoal for deep blacks?
- 3 How do you grey a coloured pencil without using black?
- 4 Vine or compressed charcoal for a start you may change?



Answers 1. 9B 2. heavy graphite goes shiny 3. layer its complement 4. vine – it dusts off