

Drawing Media and Processes

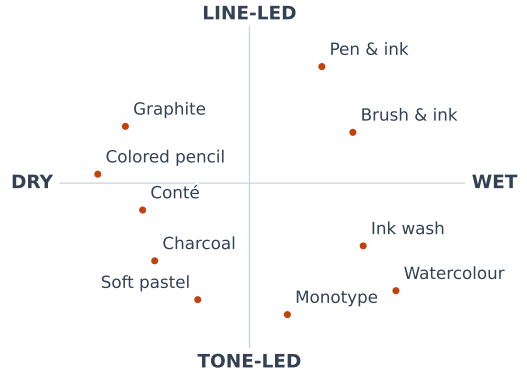
AP Drawing ■ Topic 4

AP Drawing



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



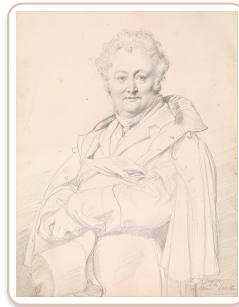
AP Drawing · Media · a map of drawing media: dry-wet × line-tone



Graphite

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

Grades 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**. Vary the grip: writing grip for detail, **overhand** for broad shading **from the arm**.

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

hold the pencil from above for loose, whole-arm marks; the writing grip is for detail only

sanguine and conté

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.

Charcoal and conté

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

- **vine charcoal** is soft and dusts off – perfect for **starts**
- **compressed charcoal** is dense and **permanent**
- **conté** 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

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 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** swings hairline to broad in **one** gesture
- **ink wash** 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

pressure changes the line's width; a brush changes it far more

ink painting

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

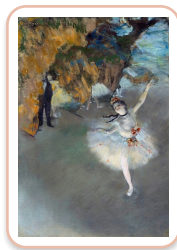
Two ink lines, waterproof and soluble, are two different looks and both are useful. Testing them side by side on one page is experimentation evidence in itself.

Coloured pencil and pastel

Colour enters drawing through **dry colour media** – fully allowed in the Drawing portfolio.

- **coloured pencil** layers transparently; **burnishing** fuses glossy
- **soft pastel** is almost pure pigment – paint-like colour by gesture
- **oil pastel** can be scratched through – **sgraffito**

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



*Degas pastel: colour media as drawing
gesture*



Paint and printmaking as drawing

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

- a **grisaille** is **drawing with a brush**
- a **monotype** gives painterly, **unrepeatable** marks
- **relief** and **intaglio** 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** protects the lights; **gesso** 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

lino and woodcut: carving is drawing, and the print is the drawing's other half

coloured pencil

layered and burnished, it holds detail that pastel cannot

test first

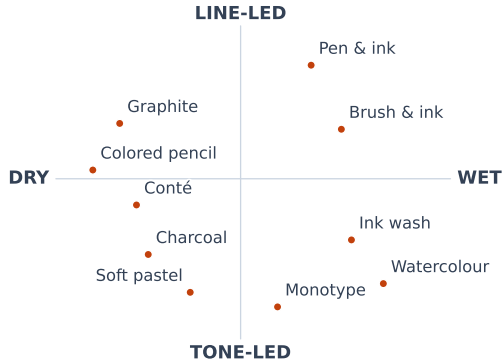
try combinations on **scraps**, then glue the tests into your journal – perfect experimentation evidence

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**, not decoration. Say so in the writing.

Mixed media and experimental surfaces, in detail



AP Drawing · Media · a map of drawing media: dry-wet × line-tone

dry to wet, line-led to tone-led

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



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** 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**, 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 **rea-son**, and the **idea** – three parts. Listing a material with no reason earns little.

Check yourself, in detail

**2H****HB****2B****4B****6B****8B**

AP Drawing Media — graphite grades and the value each reaches

harder, lighter, precise *softer, darker, faster*

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.



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

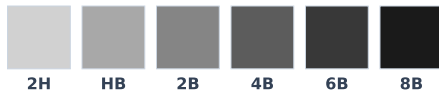
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Sketchbook

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?



AP Drawing Media – graphite grades and the value each reaches
 harder, lighter, precise softer, darker, faster

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