

Drawing Media and Processes

AP Drawing

Graphite

Graphite 石墨 is the everyday drawing medium — precise, erasable, and capable of a full (if silvery) value range.



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

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

- Pencil **grades** 硬度等级 run hard to soft: 9H (palest, hardest) through HB to 9B (darkest, softest).
- Hard grades suit construction lines and fine detail; soft grades build rich darks fast.
- Heavy graphite turns shiny. For the deepest blacks, switch to charcoal or a **carbon pencil** 炭笔.
- Vary the grip: the writing grip for detail, the **overhand grip** 横握 for broad, light shading from the arm.
- Woodless graphite sticks and graphite powder cover big areas; erasers then carve the lights back out.
- A full-value graphite still life is the classic control test — worth one polished example in any portfolio.



Ingres's graphite portrait: precise hard-grade line and controlled value describe form cleanly

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 easily, perfect for starts; **compressed charcoal** 压缩木炭 is dense and permanent.
- Charcoal loves toned and textured paper. Blend it with stumps, cloth, or the side of your hand.
- **Conté** 炭精条 crayons (sanguine, sepia, black, white) are waxier: crisper lines and the classic figure-drawing look.
- Work big — charcoal rewards shoulder-scale marks that graphite cannot make.
- **Fixative** 定画液 stops smudging. Spray lightly, in layers, and always with ventilation.
- White conté plus **sanguine** 血色红棕 and black on toned paper (the *trois crayons* look) is a proven portfolio classic.



A charcoal still-life sketch: soft media build broad value shapes before detail

Ink: Pen, Brush, and Wash

Ink 墨水 commits — there is no erasing — and that is exactly why it builds decisiveness and mark confidence.

- Dip pens and fineliners build value by hatching and stippling; **nib** 笔尖 pressure varies the line's weight.

- **Brush and ink** 毛笔墨线 swings from hairline to broad stroke in one gesture — the most expressive line tool.
- **Ink wash** 淡彩 (diluted ink applied in layers) works like watercolour: light washes first, darks last.
- A waterproof line under wet washes keeps its edge; a water-soluble line bleeds — two different looks, both useful.
- East Asian **ink painting** 水墨画 treats the single loaded brushstroke as a whole discipline of control.
- Mistakes become decisions in ink: incorporate them or design around them — strong material for the process journal.



Rembrandt pen and brown ink with wash: committed line and layered tone without eraser

Colored Pencil and Pastel

Colour enters drawing through **dry colour media** 干性彩色媒介 — layered, luminous, and fully allowed in the AP Drawing portfolio.

- **Colored pencil** 彩色铅笔 builds colour in transparent layers; **burnishing** 压光 (a heavy final layer) fuses them into a glossy, solid surface.
- Grey a colour down by layering its **complement** 互补色 instead of reaching for black — the shadows stay alive.
- **Soft pastel** 软色粉 is almost pure pigment: paint-like colour applied with drawing gestures, blended or left in strokes.
- **Oil pastel** 油画棒 is creamy and smudge-resistant; layered, it can be scratched through — **sgraffito** 刮画法.

- Toned paper unifies pastel work: let the ground colour breathe between the strokes.
- Value still rules. Get the values right and almost any hue works; get them wrong and no hue can save the drawing.

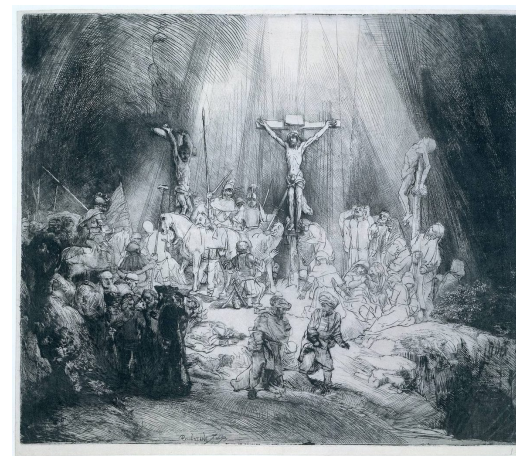


Degas pastel: soft colour media build light and form with drawing gestures

Paint and Printmaking as Drawing

The AP Drawing portfolio welcomes **painting** 绘画 and printmaking — when mark-making and drawing skills lead the work.

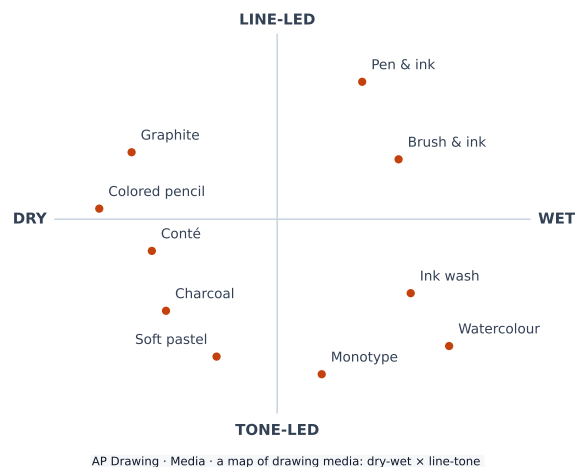
- Monochrome painting (a **grisaille** 灰调单色画 in oil, acrylic, or watercolour) is drawing with a brush: value, edge, and gesture.
- Watercolour over a drawn line keeps the drawing visible — the line carries structure, the wash carries light.
- A **monotype** 独幅版画 (paint on a plate, printed once) gives painterly, unrepeatable drawing marks.
- **Relief prints** 凸版画 (linocut) and **intaglio** 凹版画 (drypoint, etching) are mark-making systems: every value is built from cut or scratched lines.
- Choose the process because it serves your inquiry — then say so in the written evidence.
- If the work's visual language is line, tone, and mark, it belongs in Drawing; if it is colour-shape design, the 2-D portfolio fits better.



Rembrandt etching: printmaking as drawing — every value built from scratched lines

Mixed Media and Experimental Surfaces

Combining media and preparing your own grounds turns the surface itself into a drawing decision.



Where the media live: dry to wet, line-led to tone-led — mixed media combines corners of this map

- Classic pairs: ink line over wash, charcoal over an acrylic ground, pastel over watercolour, collage under drawing.
- A **resist** 防染法 (wax, masking fluid) protects the lights; **gesso** 石膏底料 lets wet media sit on almost any support.
- Draw on non-white supports: kraft paper, old book pages, maps, fabric — the ground becomes part of the meaning.
- Test combinations on scraps first and glue the tests into your journal — perfect experimentation evidence.
- Keep layering stable enough to photograph well: heavy, glossy buildup can glare under lights.
- The CED's **synthesis** 综合 of materials, processes, and ideas is exactly this: media choices that embody the idea.

Sketchbooks and Daily Practice

The **sketchbook** 速写本 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, and copies of master drawings.
- Date every page and add one-line notes — a dated sketchbook *is* documentation of growth over time.
- A **master copy** 临摹 (Dürer, Rubens, Kollwitz, Hokusai) teaches a mark system from the inside; label it clearly as a study.
- Photograph strong sketchbook spreads properly: process images are legitimate Sustained Investigation images.
- Treat some pages as experiments you expect to fail — the CED rewards visible **practice** 练习, experimentation, and revision.

Exam tips

- **Name materials precisely in written evidence** — “compressed charcoal and white conté on toned paper” reads as expertise; “pencil and stuff” reads as guess-work.
- **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.