Drawing Media and Processes

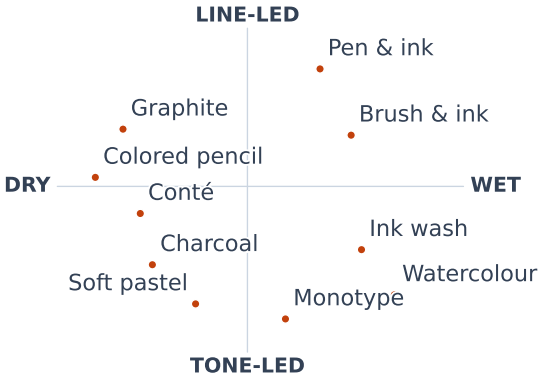
AP Drawing ▪ Topic 4

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



1 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.

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.

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

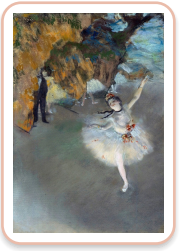
Two ink lines, waterproof and soluble, are two different looks and both are useful. Testing them side by side on one page is experimentation evidence in itself.

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.

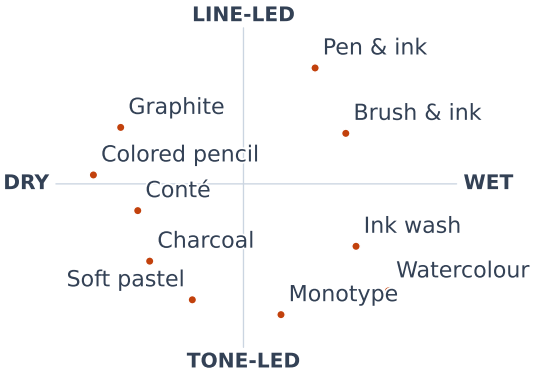
> A **resist** 防染法 protects the lights; **gesso** 石膏底料 lets wet media sit on almost any support.

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



dry to wet, line-led to tone-led

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

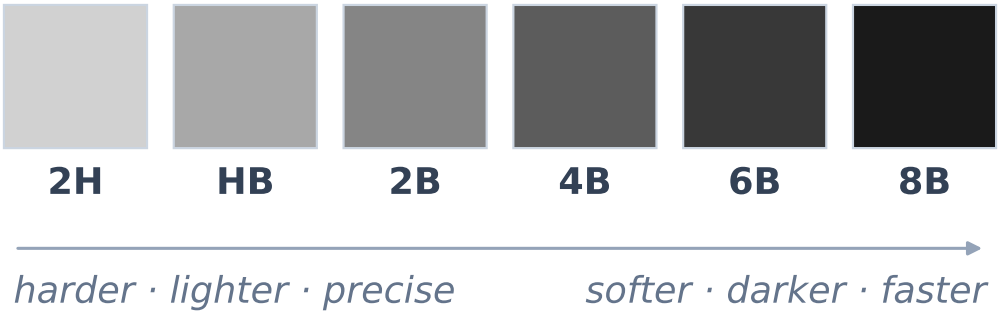
Say *why*, not just *what*

✗ *"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



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

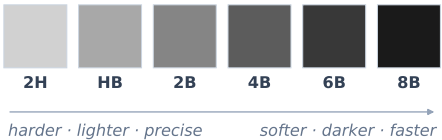
grey with the complement, not black – value still rules

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