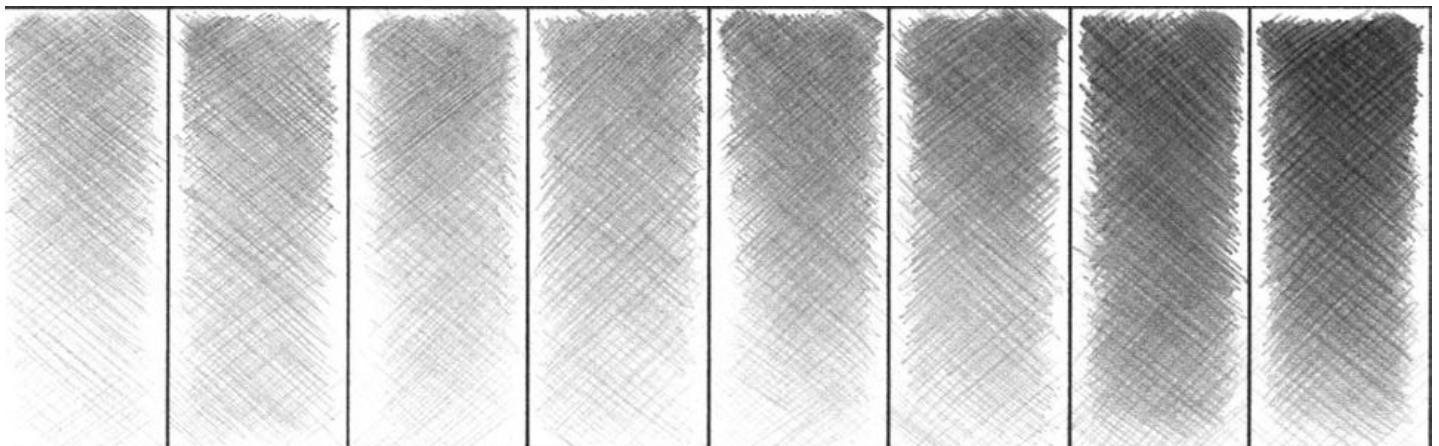
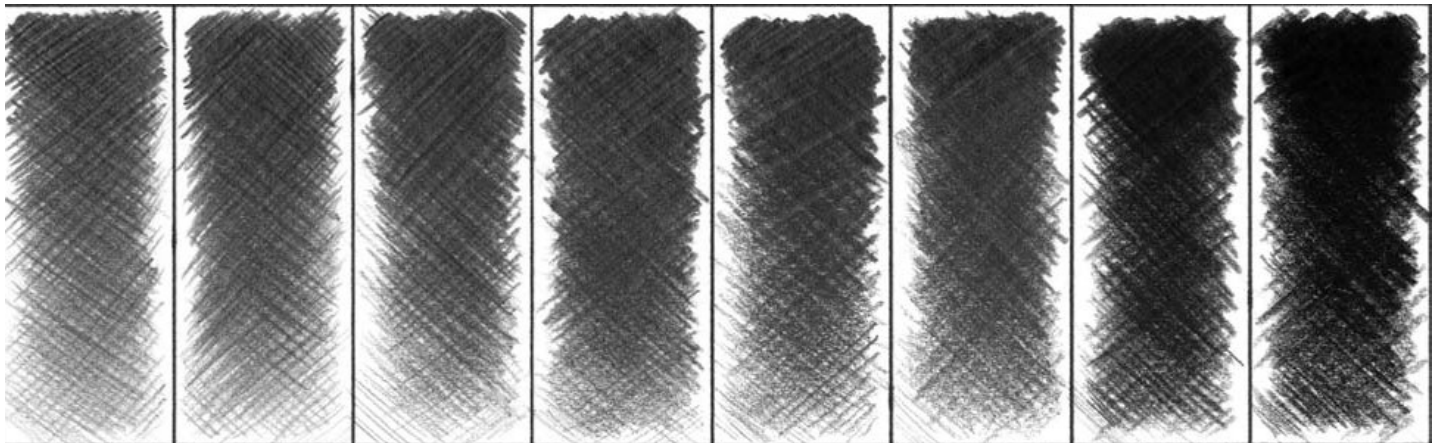


Grades of pencils



6H 5H 4H 3H 2H H F HB



B 2B 3B 4B 5B 6B 7B 8B

2B or not 2B?

2B or 3B is the conventional pencil grade for general use, and is particularly good for those starting to learn to draw. The commonly accepted scale runs from 9B (the softest) through 8B, 7B, 6B....B, F, HB, H, 2H, 3H....9H (the hardest). Vary the grades to change the quality of your shading.

Paper

You can draw on just about any type of paper. A standard cartridge is the most common, A3 allowing you to work on a larger scale. Generally (as with most art materials) you get what you pay for. More expensive papers are usually worth it, but beware of buying something so good you don't dare make a mark on it!

Inspiration, Perspiration and Exasperation

Choose your subject to encourage or to challenge yourself. When you need some TLC, choose something simple that will boost your confidence.

When you feel in need of a step forward choose something that gives you a chance to practise a new technique or area of interest. For instance try:

- Objects the same shape, but different textures.
- Fabrics of different weights and patterns.
- Objects in perspective.
- Any subject you usually avoid!
- Varying your drawing material. Try pen if you usually work in pencil, or draw with white on black paper.

Plan your work so that it fits the page. Never squash a drawing so that it will just reach to the edge of the paper. Instead, either stick on extra paper (if Degas can do it so can we), or only draw part of the subject.

Work over the drawing as a whole, so that all parts progress evenly rather than finishing one part before another has been started.

Knowing Where to Draw the Line!

Get the outlines right first. There is no point in adding detail and shading only to find they are in the wrong place.

Negative shapes (the spaces around and between parts of your subject) can help you to check proportions.

Correct a line first, then erase the wrong one, rather than constantly rubbing out mistakes and returning to the original white paper.

Backgrounds are important. Even just adding the line of a table will place your subject in a space rather than having it float in mid air.

Me and My Shadow

Always reduce (shade) large areas first, rather than details.

Shading is about tone not colour. Ignore the colour of the object and look for darker or lighter areas within it and check the tonal balance over whole drawing so that you have a range of light, medium and dark areas across your work.

Shading is simply making an area of your drawing darker, by as much or as little as you choose. You can hatch (draw parallel lines), crosshatch (overlap parallel lines), stipple (cover with dots), or cover the paper evenly so that no white paper shows. During your drawing life your style of shading will evolve to become unique to you, so don't worry about your choice when you first start.

Don't forget you can draw with an eraser. Shade part of your drawing and then use an eraser to "draw" in the highlights.

Shading the background will define the edge of a pale object, and is more realistic than using a dark outline.