

How To Handle the Pencil

HOLDING THE PENCIL

When you start to draw, hold the pencil two different ways. The first is the way you hold a pencil to write a letter. The second is how you normally hold a brush for oil painting—between the thumb and first finger, with the pencil under the palm of the hand. Notice in the illustration (right) how the little finger acts as a guide for your hand. It is easier to control the amount of pressure on the pencil when you let the nail of your little finger glide over the paper. In both methods of holding the pencil, do not grip it too tightly.



Hold the pencil in the most comfortable manner for you. Ferdinand Petrie uses these two methods because they are the most natural for him.

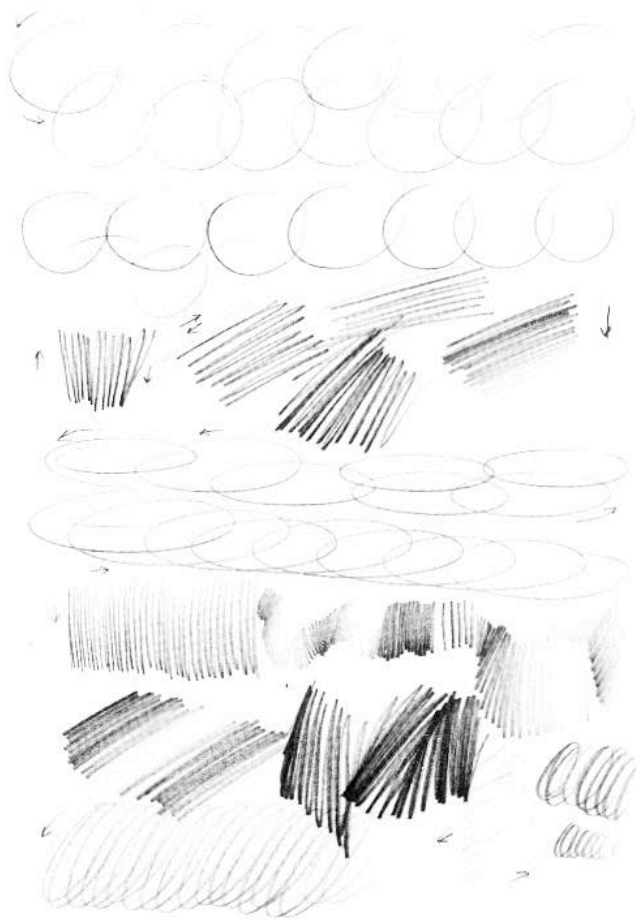


LOOSENING-UP EXERCISES

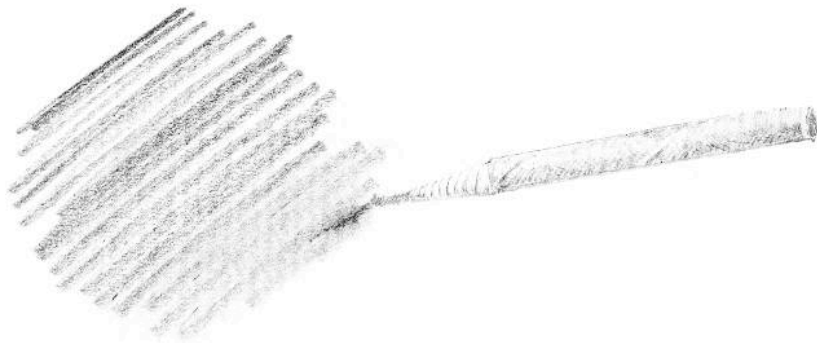
Using an HB pencil, loosen up with a series of lines, circles, and ovals. Do not spend a lot of time with each, but do them very quickly (right). Try to achieve complete control of the pencil by using the whole arm instead of just the fingers. You will eventually obtain even circles, lines, and tones.

In making the beginning circle exercise, start with your pencil above the paper and your little finger on the paper. Make a circular motion with your hand. As you get the rhythm of the circle, lower the pencil to the paper. Repeat the same procedure with each circle, doing each very quickly. Fill a page of these circles by pressing heavily on the paper, and finish the circle with light pressure. After you get the rhythm and the circles are clean, reverse this procedure.

Next, do a series of straight lines. By again varying the direction and the pressure, notice the various effects you can obtain.



Try these loosening-up exercises with different grade pencils. Notice the dark values you can obtain with the B pencils. Do these quickly, using your arm, not just the fingers.



Smudging is done mostly with the softer pencils from HB to 6B. You can also smudge with a cloth or tissue wrapped around your finger.

SMUDGING FOR TONES

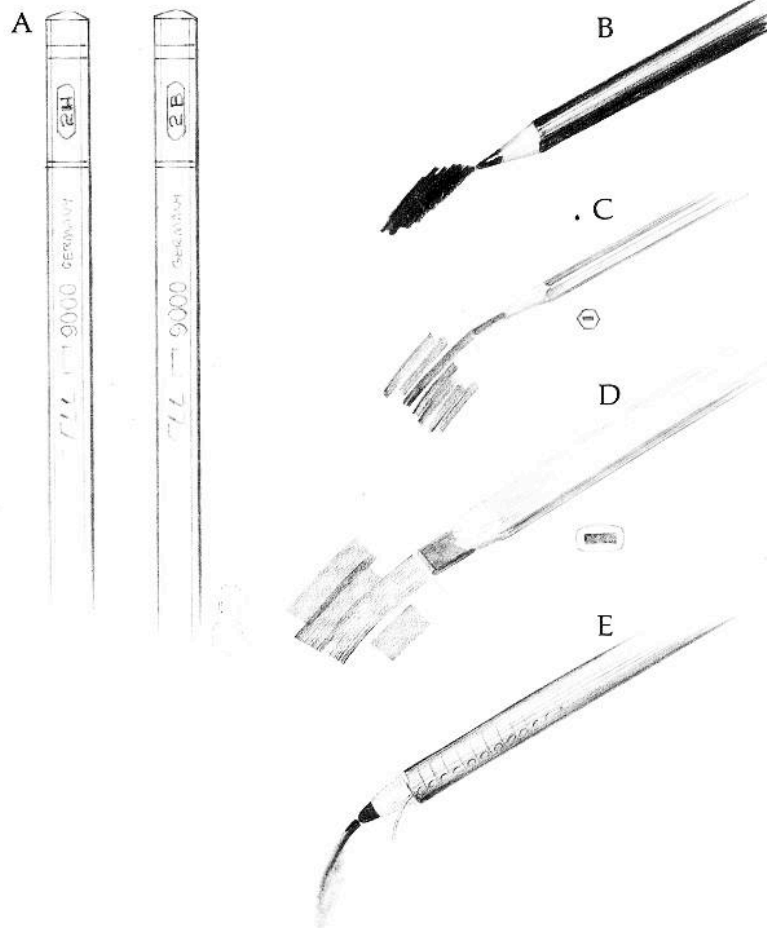
Many artists use a paper stump and smudge or blend their pencil drawings to give a very lean, almost photographic quality. Ferdinand Petrie occasionally uses this method, but only where he wants to create a soft blending of the edges of a vignette. He does not recommend this technique when drawing on location. There is a tendency in smudging to indicate even the slightest value changes. This is difficult to do when you are outside and the light is changing rapidly. Also, smudging obscures the special quality and charm of the pencil strokes. To see an example of a drawing done by using smudging techniques, turn to page 45.

CHOOSING PENCILS

If you were to look in a catalog from one of the large art suppliers, you would find many types of pencils. There are carbon pencils, drawing pencils, ebony, flat sketching, layout, charcoal, China marking, etc. Each is used for a specific purpose and has its own characteristics. For example, the ebony pencils are very black and are good to use when reproducing your work. The flat sketching pencils contain square leads that become a chisel point when sharpened. Chisel point drawing is excellent for quick sketching and architectural renderings. Layout pencils were used for advertising layouts before markers were invented. They contain flat leads that are about $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) wide, and are used now mostly for quick sketching. Charcoal pencils are familiar to oil painters who use them for their initial drawings, and charcoal is also used for portrait drawings. China marking pencils are wax crayons used for working on slick surfaces, like photographs, which will not take a carbon pencil.

The type of pencil Ferdinand Petrie uses is the graphite or more commonly called "lead" pencil. The graphite pencil comes in various degrees of hardness, designated by letters: "H" for the harder pencils and "B" for the softer ones. They also have numbers that indicate the degree of hardness or softness. For example, 6H is the hardest and 2H is the softest of the hard leads that Mr. Petrie uses. Later on in this section, you will see how the hardness of the lead enables you to create the values you will use in your drawings.

Pencils made by different manufacturers may differ in their degree of hardness or softness. Therefore, it's a good idea to obtain sets of pencils made by the same company. This artist uses hexagon-shaped pencils called "Castell 9000," which are made by the A.W. Faber Company. He uses the



following pencils: 6H, 4H, 2H, HB, 2B, 4B, and 6B. HB is the transition between the hard and soft leads. He has also used the Koh-I-Noor drawing pencil, the Venus pencil, and the Eagle "Turquoise"—all are of excellent quality.

All manufacturers identify the grade pencil by numbers located in the same place (A). Be careful you don't sharpen the wrong end of the pencil and lose the grade number. The leads in the Ebony pencil (B) are round, soft, and very black. The flat sketching or chisel point pencil (C) has the same outside shape as other pencils, but the leads

are rectangular. They can only be sharpened with a razor blade. The flat layout (D) is also called a carpenter's pencil. The leads are usually $\frac{3}{16}$ " (.48 cm) or $\frac{5}{16}$ " (.80 cm) wide and again must be sharpened with a razor blade. Large areas can be covered quickly, so it is often used for fast sketching. There are many makes and varieties of charcoal pencils (E). Some are similar to the regular lead pencil and can be sharpened with a sharpener. Others like this are paperwrapped and have a string pull to sharpen the pencil.