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## 101 Uses for a Pencil by Peter Gray

**Publisher: New Holland Publishers**

**RRP \$24.99**

This is a clever concept for a 'how to' book incorporating practical illustration and drawing techniques with quirky, inventive uses for a pencil. The brief, handy hints are perfect for budding artists who don't want to be overwhelmed with technical information.

In the introduction, Peter Gray marvels at the simplicity of a pencil. "It requires no batteries, user's guide, and no online support." Yet, he explains how the humble pencil has had a powerful effect on history. "World changing inventions and designs took shape at the point of a pencil," Also, "Many of the great novels and poems were first set down in pencil."

The pages are packed with short, illustrated segments that give useful examples of how to sketch and draw a range of subjects from portraits to landscapes, animals and caricatures. Methods demonstrated include tracing, light and shade, texture, different perspectives, thumbnails, plus many other aspects of pencil drawing.

Amusing suggestions and facts are interleaved with the practical drawing techniques. Some of the creative uses for a pencil can be to prick out seedlings, a handy back scratcher, a makeshift tape measure, a toy for a cat, lubricant for a tight lock, a drink stirrer, and chopsticks. There are even ideas on how to use pencil shavings, plus plenty more gems to discover.

'Enjoy your art' seems to be the message woven into this lively, helpful guide. It's a brilliant, ready reference for artists of all ages and stages.

**Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett**

**Author's website:**

<http://petergrayillustration.co.uk/>

