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## Basic Composition

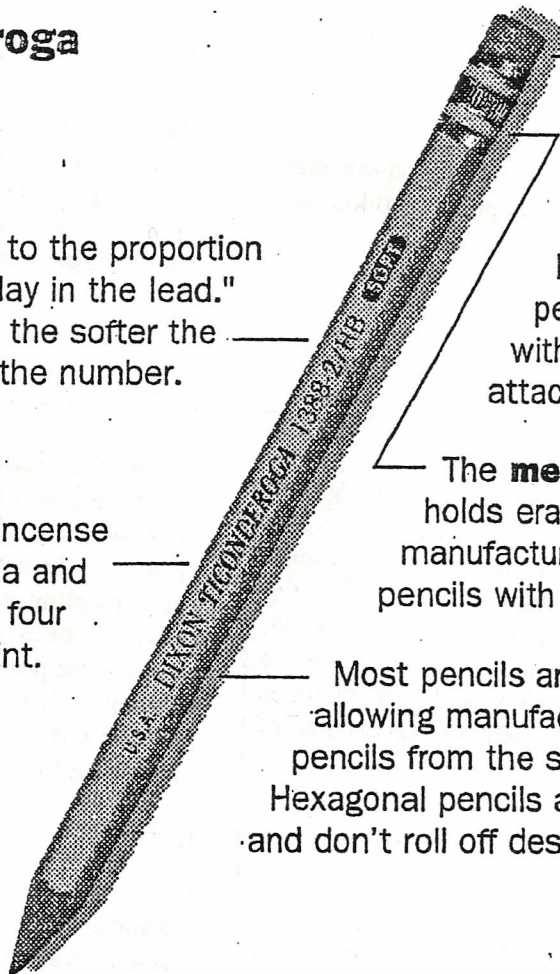
Americans bought an estimated 4.3 billion pencils in 1998, a 53% jump from 1991, but about half are coming from overseas as compared to only 16% in 1991:

### The Classic Ticonderoga No. 2 Pencil

**No. 2** relates to the proportion of graphite-to-clay in the lead." The more graphite, the softer the lead, and the lower the number.

**Outer cases** made of incense cedar, grown in California and Oregon, and covered with four coats of yellow paint.

Enough **lead** to draw a continuous line, 35 miles long.



#### Eraser

Pencil industry calls erasers 'tips' or 'plugs.' Americans prefer attached erasers. In Europe eraser-less pencils are still sold, along with separate rubber attachments.

The **metal ferrule** on pencils holds erasers, and allows manufacturers to decorate their pencils with distinct stripes.

Most pencils are hexagonal, not round, allowing manufacturers to get more pencils from the same amount of wood. Hexagonal pencils are also easy to grip and don't roll off desks.

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