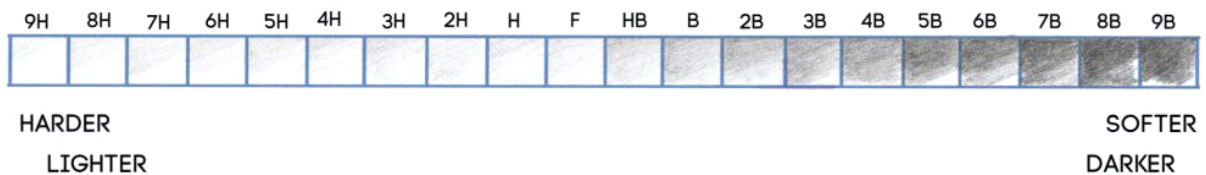
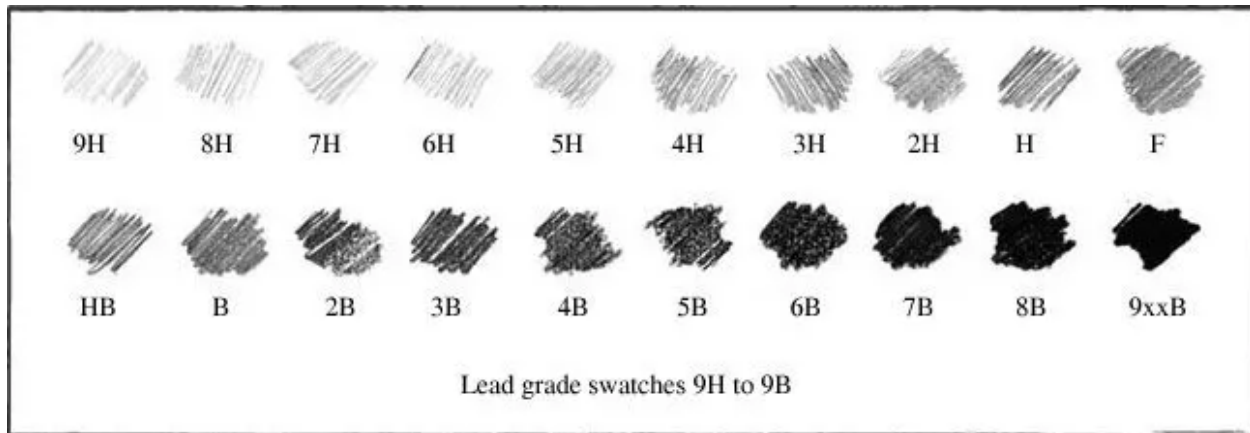


Graphite Grading Scale



HB GRAPHITE SCALE

The second graphite grading scale is known as the HB scale. Most pencil manufacturers outside of the U.S. use this scale, using the letter “H” to indicate a hard pencil. Likewise, a pencil maker might use the letter “B” to designate the blackness of the pencil’s mark, indicating a softer lead. The letter “F” is also used to indicate that the pencil sharpens to a fine point.

Historically, pencil makers also use combinations of letters to tell us about the graphite — a pencil marked “HB” is hard and black, a pencil marked “HH” is very hard, and a pencil marked “BBB” is really, really black! Today, however, most pencils using the HB system are designated by a number such as 2B, 4B or 2H to indicate the degree of hardness. For example, a 4B would be softer than a 2B and a 3H harder than an H.