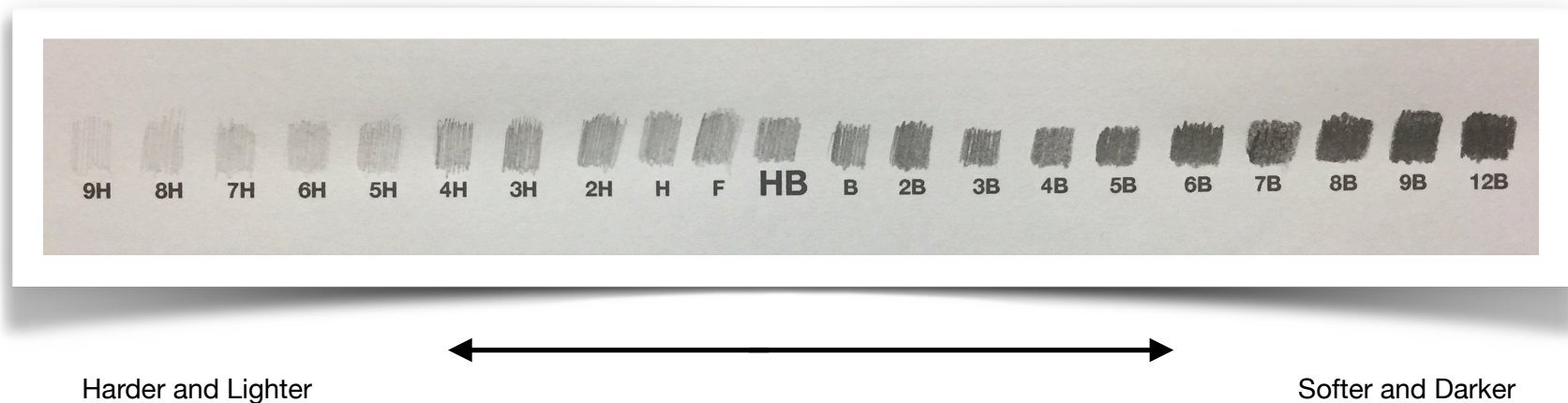


HB Pencils Demystified



The HB Scale: HB stands for Hard Black, which is found in the middle of the scale. As the scale moves to the right from HB the graphite becomes softer and darker. A softer pencil will dull more quickly than a harder pencil and give a darker mark. The graphite is seen to be increasingly thicker as it becomes softer. As the scale moves to the left from HB the graphite becomes harder and lighter. You will notice after HB on the left 'F' (Fine) then 'H' (Hard) then the numbers are used with H to denote an increasingly hard pencil which gets lighter as we move along the scale.

The Numerical Scale: There are two systems used to grade graphite pencils. The system used in Australia and many parts of the world is the 'HB Scale' explained above. The other scale is a numerical scale in which the graphite is denoted by numbers, "3" or "3.5" for example - the higher numbers are given to the harder and lighter pencils.

Choosing a Pencil: Which pencil you choose will depend on personal choice, the depth of tone required or the paper used for the project. A HB pencil is commonly used for everyday applications such as writing.