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42. The Versatile Lead Pencil (万能的铅笔)

1. The lead pencil is one of the most used pieces of merchandise in the world. It is the simplest, most convenient and least expensive of all writing instruments. 1、铅笔是这个世界上使用的最多的商品之一。在所有的书写工具中，它最简单，最方便，最便宜。

2. Perhaps the most surprising thing about the lead pencil is that it is not lead at all. And it is not a pencil. The "lead" is actually graphite from the Greek word "to write." The word "pencil" is from Latin. The first pencils were fine or stiff brushes of hair. 2、可能关于铅笔最让人吃惊的事情是它根本就不是铅做的，而英语PENCIL也不是笔的意思。所谓的铅实际上是石墨，英语的“LEAD”源自希腊语的“写”。英语中的“PENCIL”源自拉丁语，是指用毛制作的细致的硬刷子。

3. American pencil makers turn out their product by the millions. Probably there is no more useful article in the world. As one wise person remarked: “Everything begins with a pencil. Whether its a pin or a battleship, it is first rendered with a pencil.” 3、美国的铅笔制造商生产了数以百万计的铅笔。在这个世界上可能没有比铅笔更有用的东西了。因为一个智者曾经这样评述“一切都开始于一支铅笔，无论它是一个别针还是一艘战舰，它的第一个表述都来自一支铅笔。”

4. There is a pencil for every purpose. In fact, the industry now supplies 370 different types and styles in more than 70 different colors and in 18 degrees of hardness.

4、一支铅笔可以用于不同的书写目的。事实上，工业界现在提供着370种不同种类不同风格、超过70种不同颜色、18种不同硬度的铅笔。

5. Some write clearly on slippery surfaces, such as glass and plastic. Surgeons use a special pencil for outlining the operation area on the patients skin, and packing-plants use another type to write identification on sides of beef. There is even a special electric pencil used for tests checked by electronic machines.

5、某些铅笔可以在光滑的表面诸如玻璃、塑料上清晰书写。外科医生使用一种特殊的铅笔在病人的皮肤上勾勒出手术区域。包装厂使用另外一种类型的铅笔在牛肉的侧面写上识别号码。甚至有一种用来协助电子仪器进行测试的特殊的电子笔。

6. There are many novelty pencils. Some have the Ten Commandments, calendars or the multiplication table on them. Some are in the shape of umbrellas, canes, baseball bats and traffic signals. One may be 12 feet long, while others are only 1/2 inch.

6、还有许多新颖的铅笔。有的上面有（基督教的教条的）十诫、日历或者乘法表。有的铅笔被做成雨伞、手杖、棒球、甚至交通信号灯的样子。有的可能长达12英尺，而另有一些只有半英寸长。

7. One recent novelty is a pencil with paper in it. A small roll of paper fits in the center of the pencil and is drawn out through a slit in the side. It ' s just the thing for those who are always looking for a scrap of paper.

7、最近的一种新奇铅笔，里面有一卷纸。小小的一卷纸恰好放在铅笔的中央部分，纸可以通过在铅笔边的缝抽出来。它适用于那些总是需要小纸片的人。

8. A popular idea is that a check, will, or other legal paper written in pencil is not legal. This is not true. Any legal document which does

not specify otherwise can be legally signed in pencil. 8、一般认为用铅笔签署的支票或其它法律性文件是不合法的。事实并不是这样。任何法律文件只要没有明确指出，都可以用铅笔签署。

9. By one means or another, man has been writing for thousands of years. The Greeks and Romans used metallic lead for drawing faint lines. But it was not until around 1400 A.D. that graphite, the main part of the modern pencil, first appeared. And for a long time it was used without any covering. 9、无论怎样，人类数千年来一直在书写。古希腊和古罗马人使用金属铅来画暗淡的线。但是直到公元1400年，现代铅笔的主要部分石墨才被发现，并且在相当长一段时间，都是用没有木头外套的石墨直接书写。

10. About a century and a half later, in 1564, a high wind blew over a heavy oak tree near Cumberland, England. The earth revealed a slab of black rock which was actually a huge deposit of almost pure graphite. Shepherds used it to brand their sheep. George II controlled the graphite by declaring it a crime to ship it out of the country. 10、大约一个半世纪之后，也就是1546年，在英国坎伯兰郡附近，一场大风吹倒了一棵大橡树，一层厚厚的黑色岩石在地表显露出来，这实际上是一块巨大的几乎纯净的石墨矿藏。当地的牧羊人用它给自己的羊打标记。乔治二世为了控制石墨开采，宣告用船运石墨出国是一种犯罪。

11. This graphite could be used in its natural state for writing. Seeing the find as a rich prize, merchants cut it into sticks. They sold it for writing purposes. By present-day standards, however, it was far from satisfactory for writing. For one thing, the graphites hardness could not be changed. 11、这种石墨可以在自然状态下用来书写。这

个发现被看作财富的奖励，商人们把石墨切割成棒状，当成书写工具来卖。然而，按照今天的标准，它还远未达到书写的要求。比如说当时石墨的硬度是不能改变的。 12. Grinding low grades of graphite to remove impurities, pencil makers elsewhere found difficulties. Their problem was to bind the black powder together again so it would be hard enough to serve as a writing instrument. 12、对于各地的铅笔制造者来说，碾磨碎低品质的石墨以去掉里面的杂质，是十分困难的。它们的难题是如何重新组合这些黑色的粉末，使它成为有足够硬度的书写工具。

13. Napoleon Bonaparte had a finger in the development of the modern pencil industry. Cut off from English pencils. He was stuck with his own impure French graphite. Never one to accept second best, Napoleon hired Nicholas Conte to solve the problem. 13、波拿巴拿破仑影响了现代铅笔工业的发展。由于来自英国的铅笔供应被切断，他被限制只能使用他的不纯净的法国石墨上。他从不接受次好，于是拿破仑雇佣了尼古拉斯康特来解决这个问题。 14. Conte found the answer in 1795. By mixing refined graphite powder with clay, then heating it, he produced a firm hard lead. German researchers later perfected the method. The lead pencil was launched on its way to general use. 14、1795年，康特找到了问题的答案。把经过精炼的石墨粉末混合以泥土，然后进行加热烧结，他生产出了牢固而坚硬的“铅”。德国的研究员其后又完善了这一方法。铅笔向着通用性发展。 15. William Monroe, the Concord, Massachusetts, cabinet-maker, made the first pencils in the United States. The War of 1812 halted imports of pencils. Monroe developed machinery to make wooden slats. Each

one was grooved to half the thickness of a pencil lead. Two slats were glued together with the lead between. The method is still being used today. 15、威廉门罗，马赛诸塞州康科德城的一个橱柜制造者，在美国生产了第一批铅笔。1812年的战争中断了铅笔的进口。门罗设计了一套机器用来制作木条。每一根木条中开了一条只有铅笔直径一半宽的槽，两个木条用胶粘合在一起，铅笔芯置于两个木条中间。这种方法一直沿用到今天。

16. Monroes first American-made lead pencils-about 30 of them-were sold to a Boston hardware dealer in July, 1812. But it was not until many years later that American pencils began to sell as well as European brands. 16、1812年7月，门罗的第一批大约30支铅笔卖给了波士顿市的杂货店中间商。但是直到很多年以后，美国制造的铅笔才开始和欧洲品牌卖的一样好。 17. Today the nations 15-odd pencil manufactures produce about a-billion-and-a-half wooden pencils a year. This amounts to about nine apiece for each man, woman, and child in the country. At manufacturers wholesale prices this business amounted to \$35 million in 1957 not including mechanical pencils. About nine wooden lead pencils are sold here for every one of all other varieties of writing tools. 17、今天，这个国家的15个铅笔制造厂，每年生产出大约15亿支木制铅笔。这个数量差不多使这个国家里的每个人平均拥有9支铅笔，包括男人、女人、和孩子。在1957年，按照商品生产商的批发价格计算，铅笔销售总额达到了三千五百万美元，其中还不包括机械自动铅笔。差不多每一支其它种类的书写工具售出，就有9支木制铅笔被售出。 18. The modern 7-inch long pencil can draw a line 35 miles in length. it can write an average

of 45,000 words, and it can take an average of 17 sharpening. For some strange reason, about 75 percent of all pencil sold for general use are finished in yellow. A carpenter's pencil is usually finished in bright red. The color makes the pencil easy to find in wood shavings.

18、一支7英寸长的现代铅笔可以画出35英里长的线，它平均可以写出45000个单词，并且平均能够进行17次的削尖。由于某些奇怪的原因，被卖出的铅笔差不多百分之七十五是黄色的。而木匠用铅笔则通常是明亮的红色。这种颜色使得铅笔很容易在木屑中被发现。

19. Judging by the ever-increasing demand for them, it appears that the lead pencil is here to stay. At least as long as business and industry, educational institutions and the U.S. Government continue. For they are its three largest consumers.

19、从对铅笔需求不断增长的情况判断，看来铅笔还会继续存在，至少只要工商业、教育机构、美国政府继续存在，对于铅笔业来说它们是三个最大的客户。100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com