

eyebrow pencil

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Eyebrow Pencil

A wax-and-pigment pencil for drawing on and filling in the brows. The brow is the feature that frames the face and the one whose fashionable shape has swung further than any other in living memory — thin and arched, thick and straight, brushed up, laminated — and the pencil is how most of that is achieved.

The formats

Type	Behaviour	Best for
Twist-up / mechanical, fine tip	1–1.5 mm tip, draws individual hair strokes	Sparse brows, realism
Wooden pencil, sharpened	Firmer, more control, needs sharpening	Precision; the sharpener also serves hygiene
Triangular or chisel tip	Edge for outlining, flat for filling	Speed
Powder pencil	Softer, dustier deposit	A diffused, natural finish

Most are wax and oil carrying iron oxides, with a spoolie brush on the other end. The spoolie matters as much as the pencil — brushing through after drawing is what turns visible strokes into something that reads

as hair.

Choosing a shade

The most useful rule in this category: **match the brow, not the hair on the head, and go one shade cooler and lighter than instinct suggests.**

- **Fair hair** — a taupe or grey-brown, not a warm blonde, which reads orange.
- **Dark hair** — a shade lighter than the hair itself; a matched black brow reads drawn.
- **Red hair** — auburn or warm taupe.
- **Grey hair** — soft grey or taupe; brown looks harsh against grey.

Too warm is the near-universal error and it is what makes a filled brow look drawn.

Technique

- **Draw in the direction the hair grows** — up and out at the inner third, along the arch, down and out at the tail.
- **Short, light, flicking strokes**, not a continuous outline. The outline is what makes a brow read as a shape rather than as hair.
- **Fill the sparse areas only.** A brow that has hair does not need pigment across all of it.
- **Brush through with the spoolie afterwards**, always. It softens everything.
- **Set with a [Eyebrow Gel](#)** if the brow moves or the day is long.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic in the US — FDA primary category **(03) eye makeup preparations**, because the brow is part of the eye area for regulatory purposes. That brings the eye-area rule set:

- **Only colour additives approved for eye-area use** may be present. Iron oxides, titanium dioxide and the permitted inorganics do the work; most certified organic lakes are not available here.
- The **mercury carve-out** — prohibited except as an eye-area preservative at ≤ 65 ppm where nothing else works.
- Under MoCRA the **small-business exemption from registration and listing does not apply** to products that regularly contact the eye's mucous membrane.

The important adjacent rule: **the coal-tar hair dye exemption does not extend to eyebrow dyes.** A pencil is pigment sitting on the surface and is unaffected — but any product that *dyes* the brow must use colour additives FDA has approved for that use, and the required caution statement on hair dye explicitly warns against use on eyelashes and eyebrows. See [Eyelash and Eyebrow Dye](#).

Shelf life

Twelve months to two years after opening. Wooden pencils that are sharpened before use last longest, because sharpening removes the contaminated surface — the same hygiene logic as [Eyeliner](#). Twist-up pencils cannot be sharpened and should be replaced sooner; wipe the tip with alcohol occasionally.

Never share a brow pencil, and **stop at the first sign of eye irritation or infection**, discarding the product.

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- [Makeup](#) — the shelf this sits on, and the rest of it.
- [Cosmetics](#) — what the label is legally allowed to say, and the full catalogue.
- The rest of *Brows* — [Eyebrow Gel](#) · [Eyebrow Powder](#).
- [Permanent Makeup Pigment](#) — where microblading and tattooed brows sit.
- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.