

# An Artist's Guide to Fountain Pens

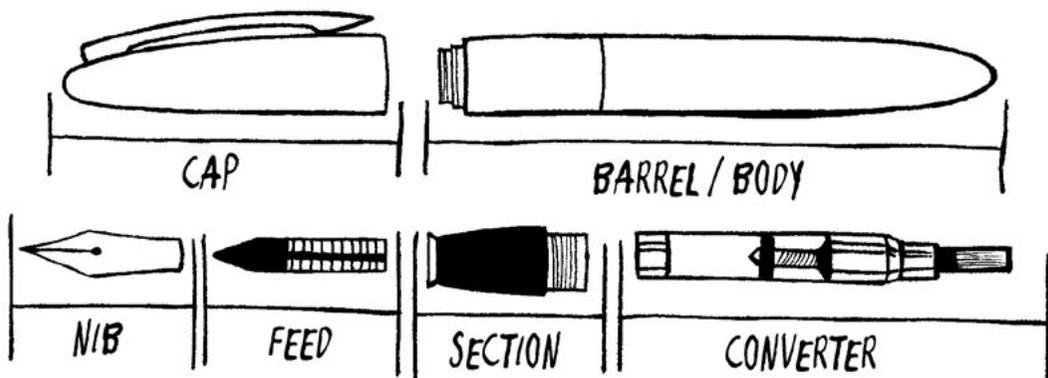
with Ammy & Jey



# What is A Fountain Pen?



A fountain pen is a portable dip pen!  
They can be almost infinitely customized and tailored to suit the user's preferences, and as you'll soon find, there are A LOT of different kinds of fountain pens!

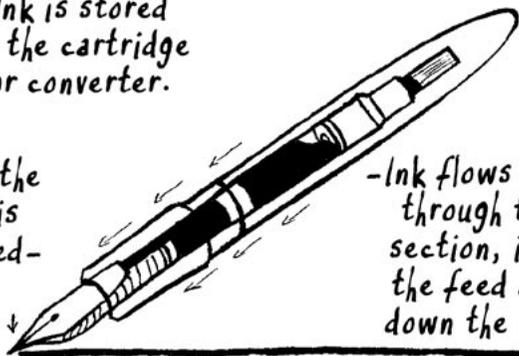


Ink is stored in the cartridge or converter.

Different nibs, inks, and feeds can vastly change how your pen works.

When the nib is pressed-

-Ink flows down through the section, into the feed and down the nib.

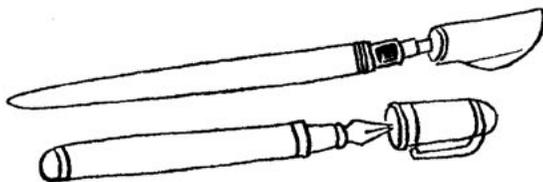


# How Did We Get Into Fountain Pens?

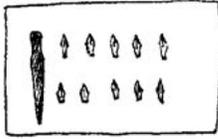
Ammy: I think the first "nib type" pen I bought was a Pilot Parallel pen, because one of my favourite artists at the time was always using one.

Shortly after, I started working at my current job and my boss is a huge fountain pen nerd; we'd chat about brands and inks, and eventually I started seeking out my very first "official" fountain pen.

It was a Jinhao X750 that I bought for under ten bucks on Amazon and still use to this day!



Jey: I started doing comics in 2013 and was using dip pens because that's how E-K. Weaver was doing "TJ and Amal".

	While shopping for pens on eBay I picked up a cheap off-brand fountain pen for \$5
	Free Shipping
	3190 MATTE GREEN FOUNTAIN PEN C \$5.00 Free Shipping

It was a good beginner pen, and even though I don't use it anymore I think about it fondly.



3190 MATTE GREEN YIKEN PEN

# Nibs



There are many types of nibs (and many ways to tailor nibs), but the main types you'll come across are:

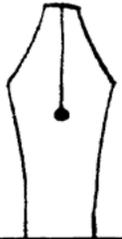
## Pointed

- standard fountain pen shape
- comes in different sizes (extra fine, fine, medium, broad) however these sizes can vary between companies
- can also be a flex nib: the nib will flex and create variations in line thickness



## Broad/Italic

- sized by the millimeter width of their tip
- traditionally used for writing, however, can make interesting lines for drawing



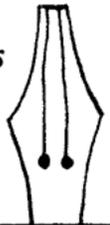
## Stub

- not as flat as the broad/italic nib, but not pointed like the pointed nib: an inbetween of the two



## Music

- not standard, more of a luxury nib (expensive)
- traditionally used for writing sheet music, it has three tines (can have two) and is very flexible!



Nibs can be made from different metals and alloys: typically they are made from stainless steel, but they can also be made from gold, which is softer and springier.



There are several tutorials on the internet on how to shave down nibs, heatset them, and other fun customization jobs, but I'd recommend these once you're a bit more experienced.

Be sure to wear the right safety equipment!



# Bodies & Converters VS Cartridges



Fountain pen bodies can be made of almost any material, but common materials include: steel, acrylic, ebonite, and various alloys.

Clear acrylic demonstrators are my personal favourite, as you can easily tell your ink level - plus they're neat to look at!

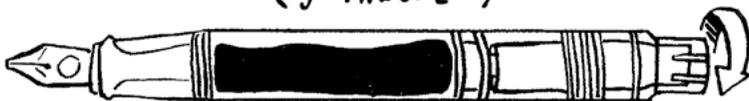
The big plus to fountain pens as opposed to dip pens is the fact that they are equipped with either a converter or a cartridge. A converter is a small reservoir that allows the pen to draw up ink through the nib to refill the reservoir, while a cartridge is pre-filled and one-use.

Me and Jey prefer converters over cartridges, as it's the easiest and most cost-effective way of filling up your pen! No need to buy one-use cartridges and you can then pick your own ink!



There are several types of converters:  
piston, squeeze, plunger, and some even built into the pen itself

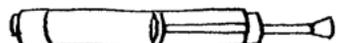
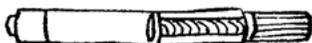
(eg. TWBS/ Eco).



Piston

Squeeze

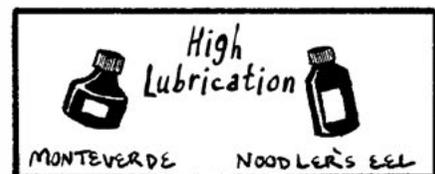
Plunger



Different brands of fountain pens use their own special converters. Most are not interchangeable.



Things to consider:  
colour, drying speed,  
water resistance, lubrication



# Paper

Putting ink to paper might seem like no big deal but it is!



How absorbent or smooth your paper is can change how your ink looks on the page.

Things to consider:  
weight, bleed-through, feathering, drying speed, ghosting

## Weight

Heavier papers take inks better and help against bleed-through.



## Smooth vs Toothy

A smooth paper won't feather as badly as toothy paper but the ink will take longer to dry.

**DRYING TIME**

## Ghosting



X-Feather  
Platinum Carbon ink



Carbon based inks will sit on top of coated paper and can rub off onto the next page.



20lbs copy paper is not recommended as a fountain pen paper.

Try some brands like Rhodia, Fabriano or Clairefontaine!

# Storing and Cleaning

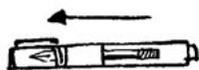
Taking good care of your fountain pen can give it a long and healthy life.



Be kind to it and it could last you longer than you expected.

- Store your pen in a cool, dry place
- Clean your pen every 2-4 weeks
- Don't leave your pen in direct sunlight
- Clean your pen when changing inks

## Store horizontal



Good for most pens, it keeps ink stationary and stays in the feed

## Store nib up



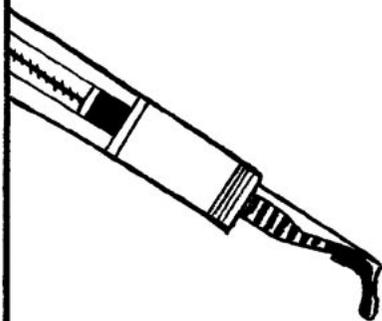
Good for pens that gush ink

## Store nib down

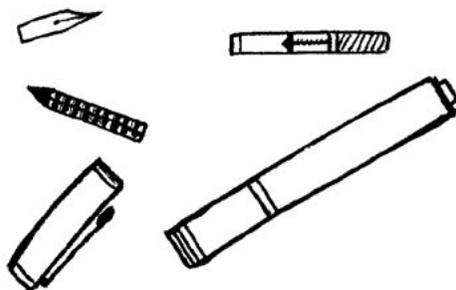


Good for dry pens that skip

1 Empty any ink that's in the pen



2 Take apart the pen, removing the converter, nib, and feed if you can



3 Run the parts of the pen under warm water until the water runs clear



4 Place your pen parts on a paper towel or cloth and let them air dry



# Troubleshooting

Sometimes things happen and your pen might not be working how you expected it to.



If something does happen to your pen, there's a few things you can do to hopefully get your pen in working order again.

What seems to be the problem?

Skipping or not writing?

1. prime the feed: use the converter to push ink down into the feed

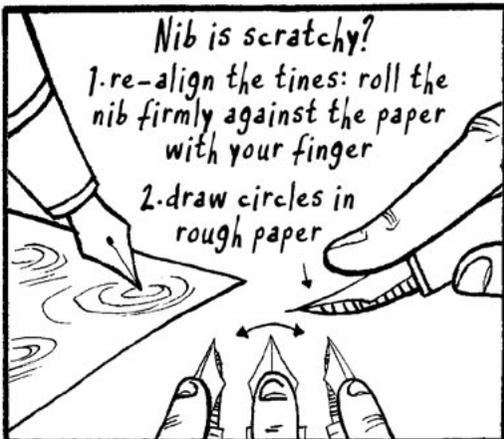
2. tap the nib gently against the paper to shake down the ink into the nib



Nib is scratchy?

1. re-align the tines: roll the nib firmly against the paper with your finger

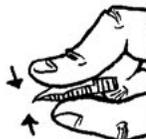
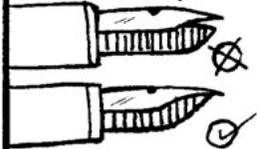
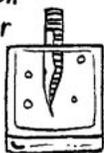
2. draw circles in rough paper



Dripping or gushing?

1. make sure the nib fits the feed

2. heatset the feed: put the pen (without ink) in boiling water for 30 seconds and hold the nib and feed together with your fingers.



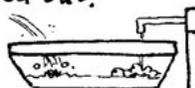
Clogged and dried out?

-fill a regular sized cup with warm water and dish soap

-put the whole pen in the water and let it soak for 1-2 hours

-take the pen apart and follow the cleaning instructions from before

-if it still doesn't work, repeat!



Be prepared to get messy when troubleshooting or hacking your pens!



\*never use bleach, acetone, or alcohol on your pens!

# Our Recommendations

Ammy: For your first fountain pen, I'd really recommend Fountain Pen Revolution's pens; they're affordable, offer a huge selection, make their own pens, and have one of the best flex nibs I've tried so far!

They also have fantastic customer service!



For a nicer, more polished pen, I've found that the TWSBI Eco is a gorgeously fabricated pen, and the body is sturdy, crystal clear and high-quality.



Jey: For my recommendations, here's my two current favourite pens, and a real good, affordable beginner pen:

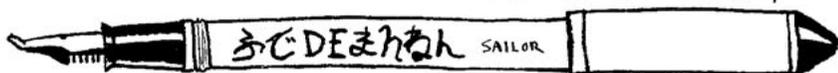
Noodler's Konrad with a Fountain Pen Revolution flex nib:  
my go to inking pen

|||||



Sailor Fude DE Mannen 55: almost exclusively used for comic making

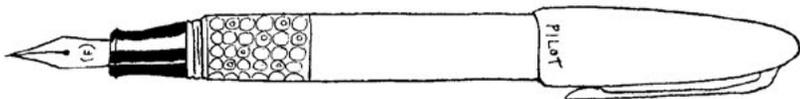
|||||



\*inked this zine with this pen

Jey's beginner fountain pen recommendation: Pilot Metropolitan

|||||



# Resources

## Recommended Stores

wonderpens.ca



jetpens.com



fprevolutionusa.com



gouletpens.com

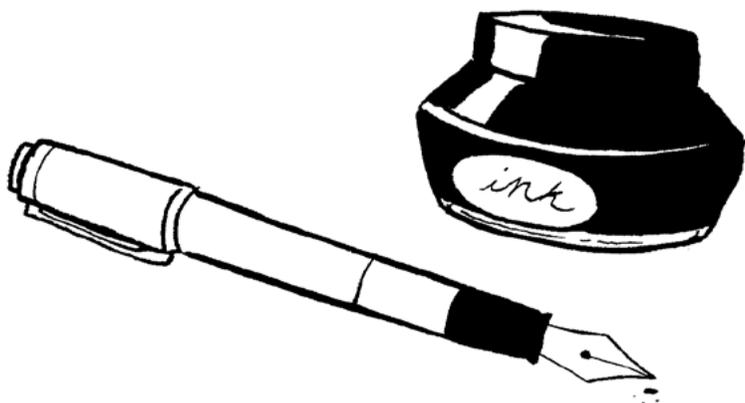


## Fountain pen guides

[gouletpens.com/pages/fountain-pen-101](http://gouletpens.com/pages/fountain-pen-101)

[jetpens.com/blog/the-beginners-guide-to-fountain-pens/pt/927](http://jetpens.com/blog/the-beginners-guide-to-fountain-pens/pt/927)

[fountainpennetwork.com/forum/](http://fountainpennetwork.com/forum/)



# The Pen Enthusiasts



*Ammy is a full-time illustrator working out of Toronto. He likes drawing queer fantasy, monsters and animals wearing clothes.*

*@thesandlord | twitter*



*Jey is a queer/nonbinary freelance artist who uses their collection of fountain pens on their two webcomics: Dead City and Gender Slices.*

*@jepawlik | tumblr | twitter | instagram*

*jpawlik.com*

Thanks for Reading

