

Optional Activity: How to make a “quill” pen (out of a plastic drinking straw)

Materials:

- Plastic drinking straw
- Scissors
- Ink
 - Fountain pen ink will work; it is sold in office supply stores in bottles.
 - Some types of washable paint may work also; test any materials beforehand for ease of use.
- Paper
- Feather (optional – for decoration)

The feather quill pen is provided for reference (but please do not use).

Also provided is an example of a drinking-straw pen.

How-To:

1. If the straw has a flexible part, cut that off.
2. Cut the tip off the straw at an angle.
3. If you wish, stick a feather in the other end.
4. To use, dip the pen about ½” deep in ink, and apply gentle pressure to write. Too much pressure will split the tip and damage the pen; it can be easily fixed by trimming the tip again, which people had to keep doing in the 18th century too! “Pen knives” were common tools used to fix damaged pens.

