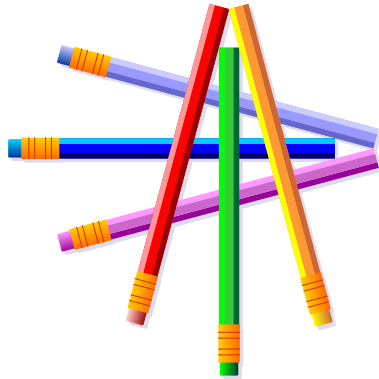
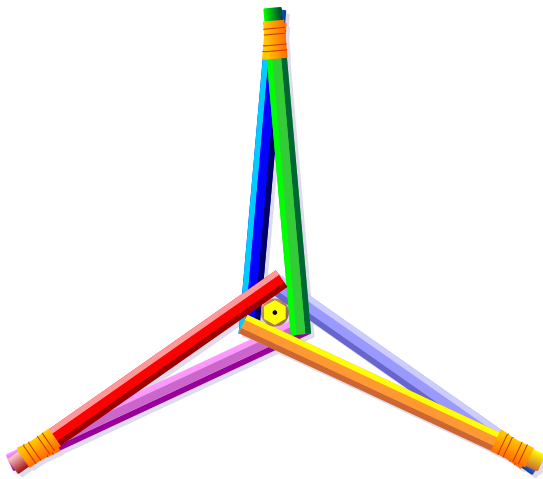


It's possible to place six pencils on the table in such a way that every one of them touches the other two - as shown in the illustration. Can you place the same six pencils on the table so that each pencil touches every other one?

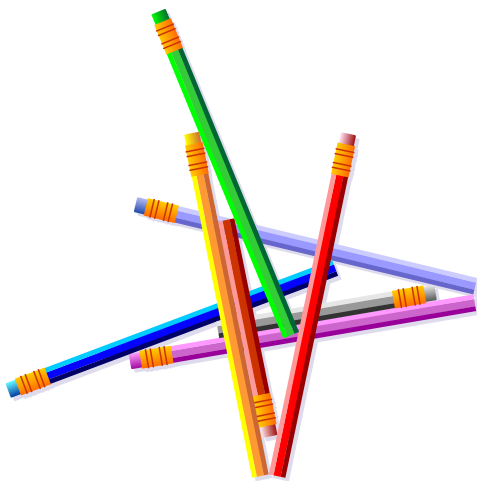
Some readers of Martin Gardner's famous puzzle column in the Scientific American magazine discovered that this puzzle has a solution for seven pencils too. So, after you solve the challenge with six pencils, add to them one more pencil, and try to discover that incredible 7-pencil solution.



One of the 6-pencil solutions is shown in the illustration on the left.



Actually the 7-pencil solution to this puzzle is possible as well. The 7-pencil solution is shown in the illustration on the left.



And if to add two pencils but somewhat shorter (approx half the length of the given pencil) to the existing 6 pencils, then it is still possible to perform the task with these 8 pencils. The 8-pencil solution is shown in the illustration on the left.

This solution was sent to us by Ed Pegg Jr. who runs www.mathpuzzle.com.