Ballpoint pen and pens essay sample

The history of writing instruments and stationery is as old as the history of mankind itself. Early humans used the all-purpose skinning and hunting tools to scrape and scratch on cave walls to draw in order to express themselves. Then came the clay made portable records which made things easier. With development of the alphabet, the Greeks employed a stylus made of bone, metal or ivory to mark wax-coated tablets. The invention of paper was paralleled by the invention of ink. Initially a quill made from a bird feather was used as a pen. The problem with quills was that even the best of them lasted for just a week and then it had to be replaced. This led to the birth of the fountain pen. And this is where the marketing and branding for pens started.

The fountain pen was conceptualised after using the fountain-pen for over a thousand years. Some inventors tried to produce a fountain pen which had a natural ink reserve like the one found in bird's feathers. However, it was not feasible. Lewis Waterman had an idea to add an air hole in the nib and 3 nibs inside the feed mechanism. A mechanism is comprised of a nib which comes in contact with the paper. The ink flow from the reservoir to the nib is controlled by the feed. The barrel protects the reservoir of ink. The first ball point pen was invented by Laszlo Biro, a Hungarian journalist in 1938. He noticed that the ink in newspapers dried up fast and lest the paper smudge free and dry. He used the same type of ink but to do that he had to design a new type of nib. The ball in the nib rotated as it moved along the paper, picking up the ink from the cartridge. He patented this pen in 1938. The British government bought the patents license during the war for using them

at high altitudes in Fighter Airplanes. Their success in the Air Force brought these ball point pens into the limelight. 1938: Invented by Laszlo Biro

1945: Eversharp Co. and Eberhard-Faber join hands to acquire the rights of Biro Pens of Argentina and re-named it as the " Eversharp CA". 1945 June: Milton Reynolds starts the Reynolds International Pen Company in America disregarding Eversharp's parent. 1945 October: Reynolds sold his product at Gimbel's departmental store in New York. It was an instant success. It was priced at $12. 50 and sold $100000 worth on the very first day. December 1945: The first ball point pens were introduced in Britain by the Miles-Martin pen Company 1948: Poor designs, low quality, heavy advertising and frequent price wars affected each adversely and the prices fell upto 50% 1950: Bich, the French Pen Baron, starts selling pens under the name of BIC 1951 The ball point pen fades away and the fountain pen regains its position. 1954: Parker Pens brings out its first ball pen, the Jotter which wrote 5 times more than the older pens. It sold 3. 5 million pens in less than a year.

PENS IN INDIA

The British brought the Fountain Pen to India with them. Initially only British fountains were available in the Indian markets. Mahatma Gandhi has played a major role in shaping India's history and present and he played a major role even in the history of Pens and Penmanship in India. Mahatma Gandhi had a terrible handwriting and he was embarrassed about his poor penmanship and tried to improve his handwriting. However it was too late for him. So he began to teach that " Bad handwriting is a sign of imperfect education." This instilled in people a spirit for good penmanship and in turn it led to the use of fountain pens. However Mahatma Gandhi was a freedom

fighter, fighting against Imperialism and the British Rule in India. In those days, Imperialism meant that all local Indian industries were destroyed and India served as a supplier of raw materials for the factories in Britain and also served as a market for the finished goods.

So to fight this Mahatma Gandhi had launched the " Swadeshi Movement" wherein all British goods were to be boycotted and only Indian goods were used. He even refused to use British pens to write. And on Gandhi's call for swadeshi, K. V. Ratnam responded by manufacturing Indian fountain pens hence a pioneer was born in the writing instruments industry in form of Ratnam Pens. On 6th July 1935, Mahatma wrote a letter to K. V. Kamath which said, " have used it and it seems to be a good substitute for the foreign pens one sees in the bazars." And this endorsement by Gandhi worked as many freedom fighters and Congress men started using the ebonite fountain pens. Over the years fountain pens were replaced by ball and gel pens but Indian fountain pens still enjoy a niche market and are a collector's item.

BALL PENS

The ball pen was invented in 1938 and it became popular because it left the paper dry and it was smudge free. The British bought the license for the patent to produce ball pens from Lazlo Birzo. They wanted pens which could be used at high altitude and would not leak in the Air Force planes. The successful use of these ball point pens in Britain made the pen reach India. Even though ball point pens had become popular in India, most of them were not Indian brands. Indian brands came up only in 1960s and became popular only later. Though today there are a lot of Indian companies with very stiff

competition in the market but the major changes came only after liberalisation and with increase in literacy rate over the years.

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