

HOW TO MAKE A QUILL PEN AND BERRY INK



At home, school and businesses we have pencils and pens lying around whenever we need them. When the ink runs out or it gets dull we toss it and snag a new one from the drawer. But back before pens and pencils, in the early days of our country, people had to use bird feathers and ink to write and draw. Do you wonder what that would be like?

First you need a feather. You can usually buy them for a small price at craft stores or at your local Walmart. You want a long feather with a large point. If you have large birds in your neighborhood, look around and see if you can find a large feather. Ask a parent to wash the point for you, then to carefully cut the quill at a sharp angle. This gives an open tube for the ink to go into. Your quill is now ready, so set it aside, and work on the red berry ink!

Ink: 1 cup of fresh or frozen strawberries
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vinegar

Start with one cup of frozen strawberries. Thaw them completely. Mash the strawberries, squishing them as much as you possibly can. You'll want to get as much liquid from them as possible by mashing them with a fork or other masher. Push the mixture through a strainer. The juice (liquid) will be reserved for your ink, and the strawberry pulp can be discarded or, if you're like my family, set aside for smoothies. You'll get a lot of nice liquid from the berries, which will be the base of your red berry ink.

Stir in a teaspoon of salt. Then, stir in a teaspoon of vinegar. Let it sit for a minute after mixing thoroughly. It'll thicken slightly to make it write cleanly so the quill will draw it up nicely.

Dip your quill, and now you can write! You'll need to re-dip as the pen starts to run dry. Think of how much quicker it would be to use the computer these days, or even a regular pen.

