

Spindle Turning Pen



Tools and Supplies

- Roughing gouge
- Spindlemaster or skew
- Drill center
- Barrel trimmer
- Pen insertion tool
- Pen mandrel
- Pen press
- Pen kit of choice
- CA glue and accelerator
- Pen blank of choice
- EEE Cream
- Woodturner's finish
- Sanding pads
- Lathe (speed set to 1000 to 2500 rpm)

In these times of instant gratification, nothing satisfies a woodturner more than finishing a project in a few hours. Creating a fine writing instrument from a block of wood fits this mind-set. The styles, designs, and finishes for pen kits today have come a long way in just a few short years. Pen making appeals to a great number of people and has seen resurgence in popularity due to the short time needed to finish a project. Besides, don't we all need a pen or pencil to write with? And what better gift to give than a handmade writing instrument.

There are many styles of pens that are offered today, from the basic slimline to the elegant statesman's pen manufactured from rhodium-plated components (a platinum derivative) and 22K gold. Other quality pen kit manufacturers use rose gold and sterling silver as components for their kits. The pen kit chosen for this project is the Craft Supply Gentleman's Platinum Rollerball, and the pen blank is gold-dyed stabilized box elder burl.

You can use full-size turning tools, like the Spindlemaster on top, to make a pen; however, using tools more suited for smaller pieces, like the five bottom tools, will make your job easier.





1

Remove the parts from the kit and read the instructions that came with the kit to understand how the project will be turned. Line up the pen mandrel, pen bushings, pen blank, and pen kit and familiarize yourself with the parts.



2

Use the pen tubes as a guide to cut the pen blank into two pieces slightly larger than the pen tubes. Rough up the surface of the tubes by scratching them on a piece of sandpaper so the tube can adhere better to the inside surface of the pen blank.



3

Use a drill-centering device and drill the pen blank with the appropriate size drill bit for the particular pen kit chosen.



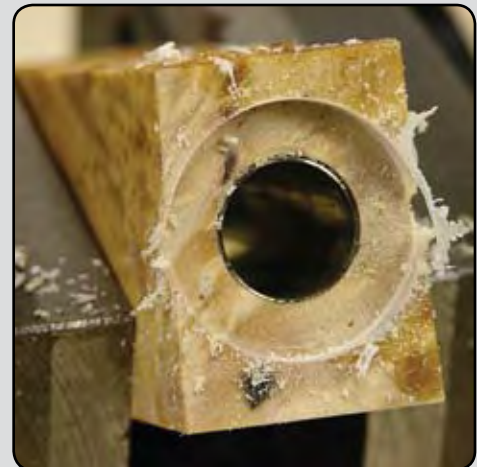
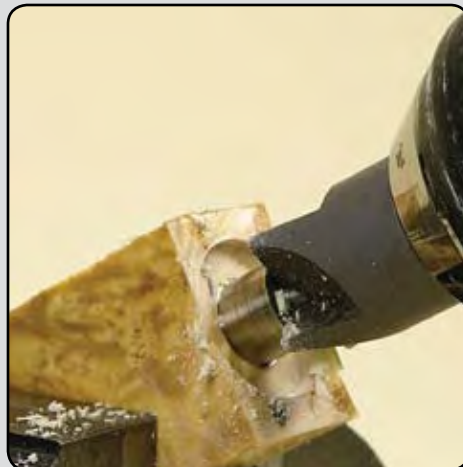
4

Glue the pen tubes into the wooden pen blanks with a medium grade CA glue. Use a pen insertion tool so glue will not get on your fingers.



5

Use a barrel-trimming tool to remove any excess glue that was inside the tube and to ensure that the pen tube is now square to the pen blank.





6

Position the mandrel into the headstock of the lathe, and then place the pen blanks onto the mandrel with the bushings for the Gentleman's pen in the correct orientation. Note the orientation marks on the pen blank.



7

Thread the locking nut on the mandrel; it should only be hand-tight! **Caution:** Make sure that you do not over-tighten the locking nut. If you do, damage to the mandrel may occur and your pen will not turn symmetrically. At this time, bring the tailstock up to the mandrel and lock it down. Also, do not place too much pressure on the mandrel from the tailstock.



8

Using a roughing gouge and the bevel-rubbing technique, have the gouge lightly touch the pen blank and move it back and forth along the blank to round the pen blank.



9

Use a skew to shape the pen blank. Notice the clean shavings coming off the sweet spot of the skew. If you cannot use a skew, use the Spindlemaster (see inset). Leave the pen blanks slightly proud of (slightly higher than) the bushings. Do not shape them flush with the bushings at this time.



10

The sanding grit that you will start with will depend on whether or not your pen blank has any tool marks or deep scratches. Usually, if you have used the skew or the Spindlemaster correctly, you can start out at 180- to 220-grit sandpaper.



11

My preferred method is to sand to 800 and then use sanding pads, such as the Abralon sanding pads, to remove any microscratches and to offer the best possible surface for the finish. The pen blank should now be flush with the bushings.



12

Apply a small amount of EEE Cream on your finger; then apply it to the workpiece with the lathe running at approximately 500 to 700 rpm.



13

Turn up the speed of the lathe and apply pressure with a cheesecloth to build up some friction, thus sealing the EEE Cream into the pen blank.



14

Apply woodturner's finish to a paper towel and, with the lathe running, slowly apply the finish to the entire pen. Then, turn up the speed of the lathe and apply pressure to once again cause some friction to seal the polish into the pen.



15

Arrange the finished pieces of the pen according to the assembly instructions for the pen.



16

Using a pen press, press the front end coupler and the end cap into the lower portion of the barrel as per the instructions for the pen kit and continue assembling the pen to completion.



17

Here is your finished pen.