



# THE PHILOSOPHICAL ADVENTURES OF PENCIL PERSON

These sessions may well blend into each other as there is a good deal of overlap with the ideas. For instance, if the discussion in Meet Pencil Person turns towards the distinction between types and individual things then run Pencil Person Meets Pencil Person to help focus this.

## Introducing Pencil Person

**Props:** four (or eight) pencils, a book, a ball (or any objects that can function as ‘a head’ and ‘a body’) - Pencil Person should have pencils, though, to be ‘Pencil Person’.

**Assembly instructions:** take four (or eight) pencils, a book and a ball. Place the book on the floor so that the book is facing you the right way up. Now place the pencils at the corners of the book to make arms and legs. Finally, place the ball at the top to make a head. (For younger ones then, before, during or after assembling Pencil Person, read or recite the poem Introducing Pencil Person).

### Thoughting: Pencil Person

I’m a person all made of pencils  
Well, maybe not quite all  
I’ve pencils for arms and legs  
A book for a body  
And my head is a ball.

So, here’s a question for you  
To get you chewing your pencils:  
How many things am I?  
Am I One or Many?  
Though clearly made of utensils.

## Start Question

How many things are there here? (Point to the assembled Pencil Person on the floor)

### Questions to take you further:

- ✓ Is Pencil Person one thing?
- ✓ Is Pencil Person many things? If so, how many?
- ✓ Is Pencil Person a person?
- ✓ How many different answers can you give to the Big Question above?
- ✓ Is there one thing and many things? At the same time?
- ✓ What is a 'thing'?
- ✓ What is an 'object'?
- ✓ Do the parts need to be connected to be one thing?
- ✓ Does it just depend on how we see it?
- ✓ Can someone be wrong about how many things there are?
- ✓ The philosopher Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE) said, ‘The whole is different from the sum of its parts.’ What do you think he meant by this?