

Students going to the school in the early 1900s did not use paper and pencil to do their lessons – both were very expensive. Instead of a pencil, students wrote with chalk or slate pencils. Instead of paper, students wrote on slate boards! Writing with slate pencils was very difficult. A student needed to press hard with the pencil in order to make it write on the slate board, and the pencils broke very easily if a student was not careful. Chalk, on the other hand, was easy to use, easy to erase and easy to replace if broken. Many students going to school during this time period preferred chalk to slate pencils.

Follow the recipe below to make your own chalk. Then use your chalk to write like a student of the early 1900s!

1. Find a mold for your sidewalk chalk. Anything from a toilet tissue roll or small paper cup to fancy candy molds will work.
2. Mix together 1 cup of Plaster of Paris with 1 cup of water.
3. Add color to your mixture using powdered tempera paint.
4. Blend well and let stand for a few minutes.
5. Pour your mixture into the molds you chose.
6. Set aside and let dry completely.
7. Once dry you can remove your chalk from the mold.
8. Set it aside to dry for approximately 24 hours more.
9. Take your chalk outside or write on black construction paper.