

## **Muji Polypropylene Pencil Case Product Review**

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ENGL 21007: Writing for Engineering

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2/26/2024

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The pencil case is a product that has been invented for the purpose of storing stationary items. From children to adults, most people have owned and used at least one pencil case in their lives and has become a staple in education, office work, and other fields. As the pencil case industry grew over the years there have been many different variations of pencil cases being made with different sizes, material, and shapes. The product that is being reviewed is the Muji Polypropylene Pencil case which will be reviewed based on three main criteria, durability, capacity, and accessibility.

### **Background Information**

Muji is a Japanese brand known for minimalist, functional products in various categories, including clothing, home goods, and stationary (Roll, 2023). Their designs prioritize simplicity and quality and the product being reviewed is one of their pencil cases. This pencil case has a rectangular shape with 2 compartments, a small and big compartment and uses the snap-closure system. This closure system is used to fasten two sheets of material together. The entire external measurements for the pencil case are 21 x 7.5 x 2.5cm (Approx. 8.3 x 3 x 1" inches). The large compartment measurements are 16.4 x 6.2 x 2.2cm (Approx. 6.5 x 2.5 x 0.9" inches) and the small compartment measurements are 3.8 x 6.2 x 2.2cm (Approx. 1.5 x 2.5 x 0.9" inches). The entire pencil case is made of the material called polypropylene, discovered in 1951 by J. Paul Hogan and Robert L. Banks of Phillips in an attempt to convert propylene into gasoline. This material has many uses ranging from plastic furniture to medical vials (Discovery of Polypropylene and High-Density Polyethylene, n.d.). There are many advantages to using this material as well as some disadvantages which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

### **Criteria 1**

The first main criteria in which this pencil case will be graded on is durability. Durability is measured based on the quality of the material, how resistant is it to wear and tear, and how long it can last compared to other pencil cases with different material. This material is made entirely out of polypropylene plastic as mentioned beforehand and is very durable for its purpose of storing stationary items. It is an exceptionally tough plastic that holds up well against high levels of stress and resistance while still being lightweight. It is also waterproof and extremely resistant to moisture absorption, avoiding water damage. (Polypropylene Plastic Uses, 2023). The biggest flaw of using this material is the low burning point of polypropylene which is why on the website of Muji it explicitly says to keep it away from high temperatures because it can easily catch on fire and melt. However, the chances of having a pencil case close to something of extreme heat is very unlikely but still possible. Comparing it to other materials such as leather/cotton or metal, it holds a good balance between being durable but also being light. Pencil cases made of leather/cotton are extremely light but not as durable, it can easily be pierced by sharp objects like pencils, and pens which has happened to me multiple times in the past. Metal on the other hand is extremely durable and most likely won't be pierced by any object however it is at the cost of weight, making it heavier as well as costlier since it's made from a more expensive material. Overall, the Muji Polypropylene Pencil Case is a great mix of both as it won't be pierced by the items within it and is extremely lightweight. There are many advantages of the material polypropylene plastic and very little disadvantages.

### **Criteria 2**

The second main criteria that the pencil case will be graded on is capacity. Capacity varies for every pencil case and is measured based on the amount of stationary materials you can fit in the case. This pencil case has 2 compartments, a small one, and a larger one. The small compartment measures 3.8 cm x 6.2 cm x 2.2 cm, only capable of fitting small items like erasers or small staplers. The large compartment measures in at 16.4 cm x 6.2 cm x 2.2 cm having the same width but being over 4 times longer. This compartment is meant to fit pencils, pens, and larger items. In terms of capacity the small compartment is very small and can fit around 3 erasers if placed on its side, but it does its job of keeping the items organized. The larger compartment has a very big flaw in terms of capacity, it cannot fit standard number 2 pencils. A standard number 2 pencil is 19 cm long while the large compartment is only 16.4 cm long. I ran into this problem when I needed to take an exam requiring a number 2 pencil and found out that the pencil could not fit. This pencil case was mainly made for mechanical pencils which are much shorter in size as well as pens. This capacity severely limits the variety of pencils you can use as you are essentially restricted to only using mechanical pencils. Another issue is the height of the pencil case, which is only 2.2 cm tall. This heavily restricts capacity as you can only stack up to 2 pencils on top of each other. So capacity is this product's greatest flaw especially compared to a lot of other pencil cases out there which can hold way more items within it. It holds enough for my usage however for some people it may not be enough storage.

### **Criteria 3**

The third main criteria that will be used to grade this pencil case is accessibility. accessibility is essentially how easy is it to open the pencil case and retrieve the item you need. To start this pencil case features a snap-closure function in comparison to the more common zippers. A lot of pencil cases uses zippers, mainly pencil cases made of fabric or leather. Zippers

can be extremely unreliable at times as it can get caught by the fabric causing it to get jammed or snapping off entirely. Snap-closure however allows the cover of the pencil case to pop on and off opening and closing it. It is much easier and more reliable to use in comparison to zippers however repeated opening and closing could cause strain on your fingers. Despite the snap closure, this pencil case when open, displays everything openly laid out so there isn't a need to dig through the case to look for a specific item. There are many pencil cases that are bag like causing you too look and dig through it just to find a pencil. In terms of ease of access, this pencil case is extremely simple and very easy to use.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion this product excels in durability and ease of access, however it struggles in terms of capacity. The material makes it extremely durable as well as light, and the snap closure makes the product extremely easy to use. The capacity isn't terrible, but it is the most lacking feature with the large compartment limiting what you can put in this pencil case. Ultimately this is a product used for storage so alternatively it can be used to store other items besides just stationary equipment. With my personal experience using this pencil case, since I am now in college, I don't use the number 2 pencil often and mainly carry around mechanical pencil and pens, so I haven't run into any issues with capacity in a while. It is extremely durable and has a minimalistic style that I really like. I have had this pencil case for quite a while, and I haven't run into any issues involving durability and I really like the snap closure. In its entirety it is a very good pencil case for its price of 4 dollars, but it isn't for people who use standard number 2 pencils.

## References

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