

Affordance

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An **affordance** is a relationship between the properties of an object and the capabilities of the agent that determine just how the object could possibly be used. Affordances define what actions are possible.

Perceived affordances help people figure out what actions are possible without the need for labels or instructions.

(Norman, The Design of Everyday Things)

20 things that a pencil affords:

1. Eraser
2. Write
3. Balance (not perceived affordance)
4. Sharpen
5. Draw
6. Poke (not perceived affordance)
7. Chew/nibble (not perceived affordance)
8. Break (not perceived affordance)
9. Scribble/doodle
10. Scratch something out
11. Tapping (not perceived affordance)
12. Defensive weapon (not perceived affordance)
13. To pick up something nasty (not perceived affordance)
14. Building like Lincoln Logs (not perceived affordance)
15. Stepping hazard
16. Color/shade
17. To hold a hair bun (not perceived affordance)
18. To reach high or long places (not perceived affordance)
19. To snag a spider in web (not perceived affordance)
20. Scratch your head (not perceived affordance)

How many items on your list are affordances but not perceived affordances?

Most of my list was perceived affordances. The pencil does not have as many affordances to fit 20 items unless you use all the synonyms for the same tasks.

Three different affordance examples of a pencil that is not a perceived affordance.

1. Balancing the pencil
2. Building things with it, like blocks or Lincoln Logs
3. Removing a spider and web

