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How to Figure Out, Once and for All, Which Brow Product You Need

What they all do, from powder to pomade.

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Since 2014, eyebrow product [sales](#) have been booming. As a result, pretty much every single makeup brand out there now has something to offer for your arches (or lack thereof). If you search [Sephora](#), 160 eyebrow products pop up. [Ulta](#) has 172. It can be overwhelming, because they all help you address different issues.

To break through the noise, I called on celebrity makeup artist [Mai Quynh](#), who has worked with Emma Stone, Kristen Stewart, Julianne Moore, and Saoirse Ronan. Here's what each type of product is best for, as well as some best-in-category recommendations to help you shop.

Pencils

Pencils are the OG brow product, and Quynh says they're the easiest for beginners to use. Pencils go directly onto your skin, so they're best for filling in patchy areas and drawing on "hairs."

There are different types of pencils, though. Traditional pencils look like, well, pencils. Most are hard wax, though some newer versions come in a gel formula that's softer. Look for a pencil that includes a spoolie brush for grooming your brows. (Quynh recommends brushing them up.) *Try:* [Laura Mercier Eyebrow Pencil](#) (\$24).

Micro-pencils are fine-tipped and are best for really drawing on individual hairs. They require a bit more skill to use than regular pencils, utilizing a feathering technique, but

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still aren't terribly hard. *Try:* [Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Wiz](#) (\$21). If you care about such things, this one is a favorite of Kim Kardashian.

Angled pencils offer a two-in-one option. Depending on which side you use and how you hold it, these pencils can offer both thick and thin strokes. *Try:* [Hourglass Arch Brow Sculpting Pencil](#) (\$34).

Fat pencils act as a pencil and wax in one. Quynh says a big wax pencil can tame unruly brows. These are best for brows that need some control as well as evening out. (You can't be very precise with these, though. They will give you more of a sheer color wash.) *Try:* [Maybelline Eye Studio Brow Drama Pomade Crayon](#) (\$8.99).

Brow Mascara/Gel

Quynh likes to use these to either darken or lighten brow color. Unlike pencils, they deposit product directly onto brow hairs. They don't generally add much volume. Clear gels can be used to hold brows in place, sort of like hairspray for your brows. *Try:* [Glossier Boy Brow](#) (\$16). Yes, the hype is true on this product — great color and not sticky or stiff. For a clear option: [e.l.f Clear Lash and Brow Mascara](#) (\$1.99).

Fiber Gels

This is brow mascara with added fibers. People generally love or hate these. Much like mascara that has fibers to pump up lash volume, these add visible fullness to brows. Use sparingly. *Try:* [Milani Easybrow Tinted Fiber Gel](#) (\$6.99).

Pomade/Cream/Gel/Gel-Cream

This category, which goes by multiple names, is Quynh's favorite. It's usually found in a pot and best applied with a brush. Quynh uses a [skinny eyeliner brush](#) to create little hairs or a small [angled stiff brush](#) to fill in a thicker line. *Try:* [NARS Brow Defining Cream](#) (\$23). For longer wear, plus it comes with a brush: [Benefit Cosmetics ka-Brow! Cream Gel Eyebrow Color](#) (\$24).

Colored Powder

Quynh likes to use powder on top of creams and waxes to intensify color and also to make the product last longer, sort of like applying powder blush over cream blush. Some powders come in two shades so that you can use the lighter one on the thicker part of your brow and the darker one on the thinner part.

“They're great for people with dense brows but fine patchy areas,” says Quynh. Many come with transparent wax on top of which you can layer the powder so you don't have to buy a separate cream or wax. *Try:* [Sephora Collection Eyebrow Editor Complete Brow Kit](#) (\$19).

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Brow Markers

Imagine a Sharpie for your brows. They're a bit scary to Quynh, because there isn't much room for error. But if you've mastered a micro-pencil and want something a bit bolder and more long-wearing, this product is for you. *Try:* Stila Stay All Day Waterproof Brow Color (\$21).

Combo

Finally, many brands sell combo products, for when you need to both fill in and mess with the color of your brows. *Try:* Nudestix Eyebrow Stylus Pencil & Gel (\$24).

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