

🔪 Red Pen (static drop-in)

User manual - review notes for any site that renders in a browser. One script tag, no backend, no build.

Version 0.1.1 · August 2026 · by Lincoln Tracy · redpen.tools

What it does

Add one script tag to any HTML page - a Jekyll blog, an Astro site, a React app, a hand-written homepage from 2009 - and it gets the Red Pen overlay: a red button, a notes panel, numbered pins on elements. Notes are stored in the browser's own storage for that site. No server, no account, no build step.

Add it to a page

```
<script src="red-pen.js"></script>
```

Place it at the end of `<body>`. That's the entire setup - it works from a local file, a dev server, or a live site. All configuration happens in the overlay itself.

Leaving notes

Red Pen (static) - demo

This page loads red-pen.js with no server. Look for the red button bottom-right. Add a note, pin one to an element, reload - it persists (localStorage).

A feature block

1

Pin a note to this heading or paragraph.

Another section

All 2 on

Open "All notes" in the panel to see the cross-page board, export, and import.



A page with the drop-in: pins 1 and 2 anchored to the heading and the button, the red button bottom-right.

Click the red button to open the panel. Type the note, pick a type (Note, Idea, Problem, Question) and priority, and Add - or Ctrl+Enter. **Pin** lets you click the element the note is about; pins are numbered, amber while a note is in progress, and the **J** key jumps between them. Each note carries status (Open, In Progress, Resolved), replies, Locate, and edit.

Pins re-resolve when the page changes, not only when you scroll or resize, so a route change in a single-page app or a lazy-loaded section no longer leaves every pin frozen at a stale coordinate.

Red Pen (static) - demo

This page loads red-pen.js with no server. Look for the red button bottom-right. Add a note, pin one to an element, reload - it persists (localStorage).

A feature block

Pin a note to this heading or paragraph.

Another section

A **2** on

Open "All notes" in the panel to see the cross-page board, export, and import.

Red Pen

All notes

Problem normal Jul 12 5:08 AM

Body copy runs long on phones - tighten the second paragraph

In Progress Edit Delete

Jul 12 6:00 AM

Half done - first cut is in

Reply... Reply

2 Question normal Jul 12 5:04 AM

Button label reads odd - "Try the demo" instead?

Locate Open Edit Delete

Reply... Reply

1 Idea high Jul 12 5:00 AM

This heading should mention the launch date

Locate Open Edit Delete

Reply... Reply

Leave a note on this page...

Pin Note Normal Add

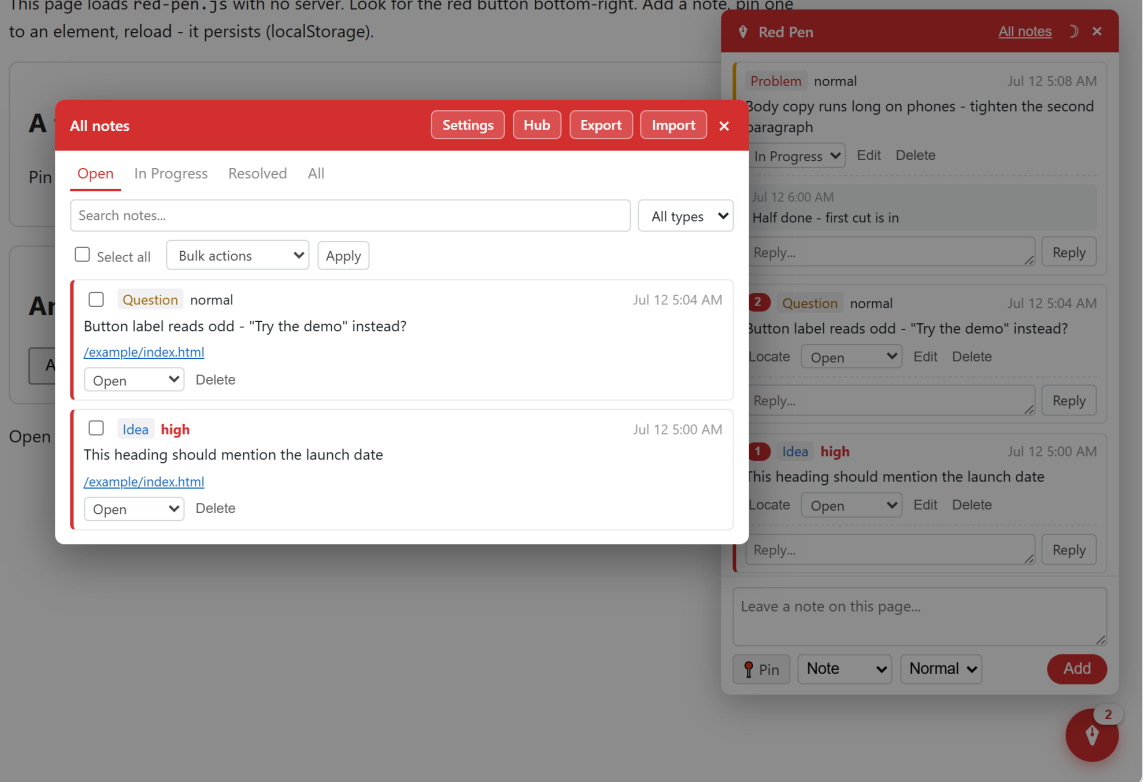
The panel on the demo page, with the notes for this page.

The All-notes board

All notes in the panel header opens the cross-page board: every note on the site, status tabs, search and type filters, bulk actions (resolve, reopen, delete several at once), and page links that navigate to where each note lives.

Red Pen (static) - demo

This page loads red-pen.js with no server. Look for the red button bottom-right. Add a note, pin one to an element, reload - it persists (localStorage).



The All-notes board with tabs, filters and the bulk bar.

The board's header also holds **Settings** (custom note types, custom pin color, and **Your name**), the dark-mode toggle, and **Export / Import**.

Signing your notes

There are no accounts here, so you set a display name once - Settings on the All-notes board - and this browser stamps it on every note and reply it writes from then on. It is blank until you set it and never guessed at, so a note with no name is simply a note written before anyone set one. The point is a second person: hand the site to a colleague, both of you set a name, and the panel says who wrote what.

On a phone

Below 600px the panel becomes a bottom sheet - full width, anchored to the bottom edge, and clear of the iOS home indicator - and the All-notes board becomes a sheet too. Tap targets grow, and every input is floored at 16px so iOS stops zooming the page when a field takes focus.

Pinning works by touch: a tap pins, a drag scrolls. The page pans normally while pin mode is on, and a touch only counts as a pin if your finger barely moved. There is no Esc key on a phone, so the on-screen hint doubles as the cancel target.

When a pin loses its element

If the element a note was pinned to stops resolving, the note is not hidden. A bar at the top of the panel counts how many notes have lost their pin, the notes themselves are flagged, and **Show them** filters the list down to exactly those. Nothing is deleted: a selector can stop resolving because the element was removed, or because this render has not produced it yet.

Where your notes live - read this one

Notes live in this browser, on this machine, for this site. The store is the browser's localStorage. Clearing site data deletes your notes, and a different browser or computer won't see them. **Export regularly:** the Export button downloads all notes as a JSON file you can back up, hand to a teammate, or Import on another machine. If you want notes that live outside the browser, that is exactly what the Hub connection or the Express middleware are for.

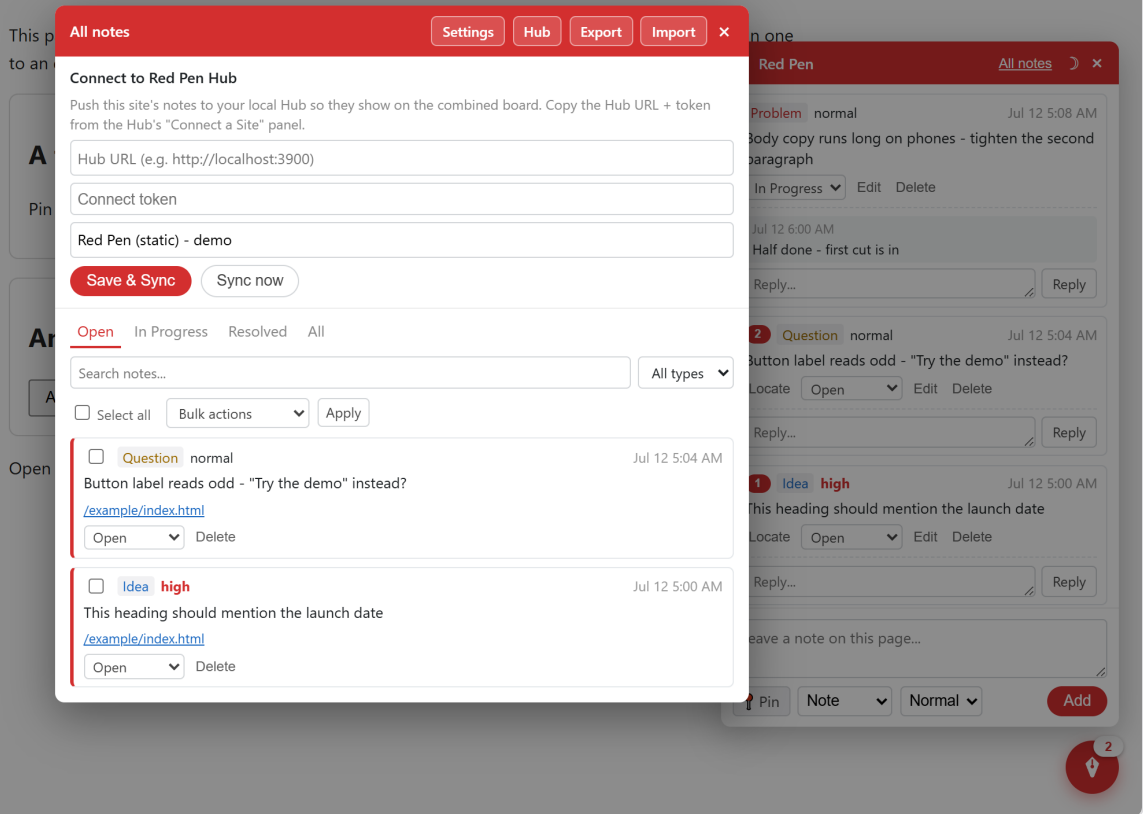
localStorage has a size limit, and a page with a lot of notes can reach it. If a write does not fit, Red Pen says so and offers Export rather than swallowing the failure - the note you typed and the pin you placed are left where they are, so nothing is lost while you export and clear some room.

Import keeps a note's middle state: a note that arrives In Progress stays In Progress. Versions before 0.1.1 quietly downgraded it to Open.

Push to the Red Pen Hub (optional)

If you run the free Red Pen Hub, the **Hub** button on the All-notes board takes a Hub URL, connect token, and project name. Save and the site's notes push to your Hub board and pull status changes back - resolve on either side and the other follows. This also rescues notes out of browser storage into something permanent.

Red Pen (static) - demo



The Hub connection fields on the All-notes board.

If something breaks

Symptom	Likely cause and fix
No red button	The script tag isn't on this page, or it sits before <code><body></code> content exists. Put it at the end of body.
Notes disappeared	Browser site data was cleared, or you're in a different browser/profile. Restore from your last export - and export more often.
A pin doesn't show	The element it was anchored to no longer exists on the page. The bar at the top of the panel counts these and Show them filters to them; the note is still in the panel and on the board.
Notes don't follow me across pages	They do - per site. The panel shows the current page's notes; the All-notes board shows everything.
"Storage is full" and a change did not save	localStorage is out of room for this site. Export your notes, delete some, and try again - the change is still on screen until it saves.

The rest of the family

Red Pen also runs on WordPress, Express apps, Blender and Ableton Live, with the Red Pen Hub collecting them onto one board. Each surface is its own port of one shared model, so they do not all have the same features at the same time. The **Surface matrix** at `docs.redpen.tools/matrix.html` is the per-feature answer for which surface has what today.

Red Pen static drop-in 0.1.1 - built by Lincoln Tracy. Part of the Red Pen family: WordPress, Express, static sites, Blender, Ableton Live, and the Red Pen Hub. redpen.tools