

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# *Handwriting*

Updated 2016  
Fonts updated 2020

## Fonts updated 2020

**Title:** *TasBegCursive*

**Examples:** *TasBegRegular, TasBegCursive, TasLinkCursive*

*Please be aware that none of the TasFonts collection has the capital I described in these guidelines.*

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## References

Hill S (2006) *Developing early literacy: Assessment and teaching*, Eleanor Curtin Publishing, Prahran, Victoria.

Stevens L (2004) *Hands up! Handwriting skills resource book*, Handwriting Project, Torrensville Primary School, Participatory Community Practice, University of South Australia, Division of Health Sciences, School of Health Sciences, Adelaide.

# Pre-requisite physical skills for handwriting

## Explores sensory play

The child enjoys a wide range of sensory play with hands; not shying away from involvement in messy play, and is able to tolerate many textures and sensations.

### To promote this:

- ✎ The child should participate in a wide range of sensory play activities such as finger painting, water play, sand play, play dough, rice play, gloop, cooking, cornflour and water.
- ✎ If the child is reluctant, gently and firmly encourage small amounts of involvement until his tolerance increases.
- ✎ In extreme cases, start with a zip lock bag with finger paint or similar inside, so he experiences the play without getting messy.



## Fine finger grasp

The child can pick up tiny objects between thumb and index finger easily, but may be faster and more accurate with dominant hand.

When grasping a small object, the thumb and finger form a rounded shape.

### To promote this:

Any activity which requires the child to grasp small objects will encourage the consolidation of these skills. If a student uses a raking movement, the small objects can be placed in small shallow dishes such as eggs cups, or ice cube trays, so that he has to use his fingertips to pick them up.

Activities include:

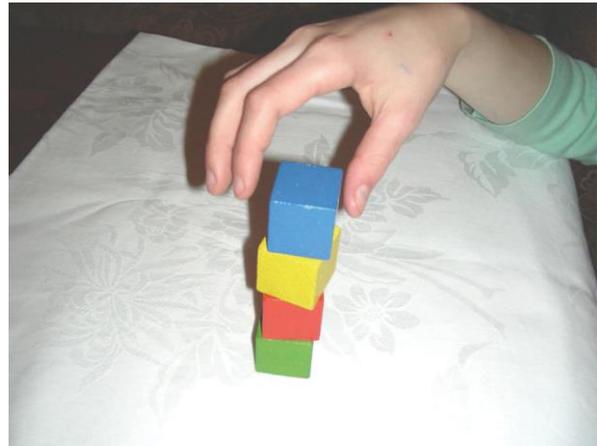
- ✎ Making collage pictures using pieces of wool or string
- ✎ Decorating iced biscuits with small cake decorations
- ✎ Posting small items into narrow necked bottles (food colouring bottles are ideal)
- ✎ Small peg boards
- ✎ Games which include small sorting activities such as 'Hamer' beads.

## Controlled release

The child can stack more than 10 small blocks using his fingertips.

### To promote this:

- ✎ Posting activities such as shape sorters
- ✎ Inset puzzles
- ✎ Stacking games
- ✎ Games such as 'Pick up Sticks'



## Proximal stability at shoulders, elbows and wrist joints

The child can support weight on arms playing 'wheelbarrows', or hang from a monkey bar supporting own weight, without discomfort.

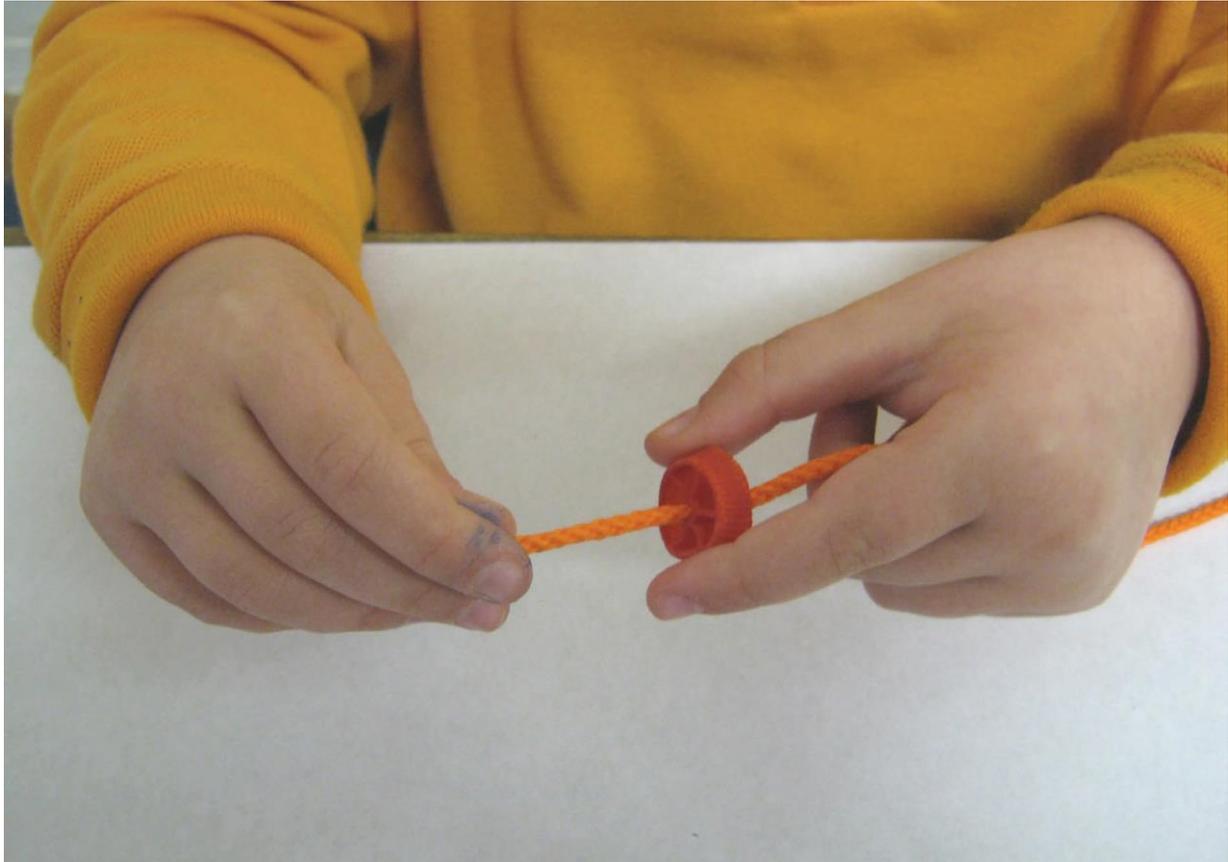
He can keep shoulders still and relaxed, while moving his arm and wrist to perform a range of actions.



### To promote this:

Any activity which requires the child to bear weight with his arms, e.g.

- ✎ *wheelbarrows* - the child walks forward on his arms while an adult holds his legs
- ✎ the child rolls over a fit ball, supporting his weight with his arms and walking forward on his arms, as far as he can
- ✎ any drawing activity in the vertical plane
- ✎ making patterns in the air with a ribbon twirler.



## **Bilateral use of hands with dominance emerging**

- ✍ Chooses one hand fairly consistently for activities such as feeding self and drawing.
- ✍ When drawing at a table, the child uses both hands, one to hold the pencil and one to stabilise the paper.
- ✍ The child crosses the midline when needed.

### **To promote this:**

- ✍ Any activity which requires the child to use both hands, e.g.
  - ☞ threading
  - ☞ cutting with scissors
  - ☞ sewing or lacing
  - ☞ screwing and unscrewing jars.
- ✍ Any activity which requires the child to cross the midline, e.g.
  - ☞ making a figure of 8 in the air with a ribbon twirler
  - ☞ hitting a suspended balloon across the body
  - ☞ copying body movements in *Simon Says*-type games
  - ☞ clapping pattern games.

## Uses wrist extension to support the hand when using a pencil

The child's wrist is slightly extended to enable the fingers to grasp efficiently.

### To promote this:

Encourage the use of vertical surfaces for pre-writing activities, e.g.

- ✍ 'painting' an outside wall with a paintbrush and small bucket of water
- ✍ provide experience of experimenting with drawing materials attached to walls if easels are not available
- ✍ whiteboard markers or chalk on blackboards can be used if they can be fixed at accessible heights for students to reach.



## Uses a storage grasp and in-hand manipulation skills

The child is able to hold a small object in the palm with his little and ring fingers, while using the index and thumb to do something else.

The child is able to move small objects from the palm of one hand to the finger tips with increasing ease.



### To promote this:

- ✍ provide posting activities with small objects such as coins and tiddly winks, and small containers with slotted lids.
- ✍ the child holds the container in one hand, and posts the coins with the other hand, in increasing numbers, until he can post a handful into the jar one by one.

## Uses a tripod grasp

The child is able to use this grasp and maintain it while he forms some shapes.

### To promote this:

- ✍ use triangular pencils in early childhood classes
- ✍ encourage the student to hold a cotton ball in his palm with his little and ring fingers; this leaves only his thumb, index and middle fingers available to form a tripod grasp.

# Fine motor skills needed for fluent handwriting

## Use of the intrinsic muscles of the hand

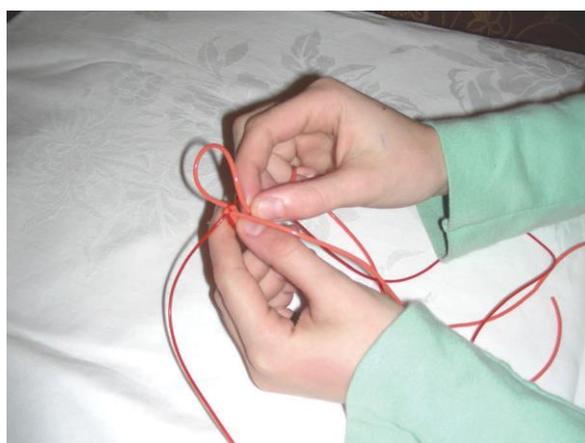
The child is able to use the tiny muscles in the hand to produce the finger movements, which are required for highly dextrous activities.

These are seen in isolated use when the fingers are spread apart and moved back together, and when the hand forms a pyramid, with fingers straight, on a flat surface.

### To promote this:

✍ Finger exercises can be used such as:

- ☞ making a duck's bill out of the thumb and fingers
- ☞ making the hand into a caterpillar and crawling across the desk
- ☞ making circles out of the thumb and each finger in turn
- ☞ spreading fingers apart while flat on the desk and then slide them back together again.

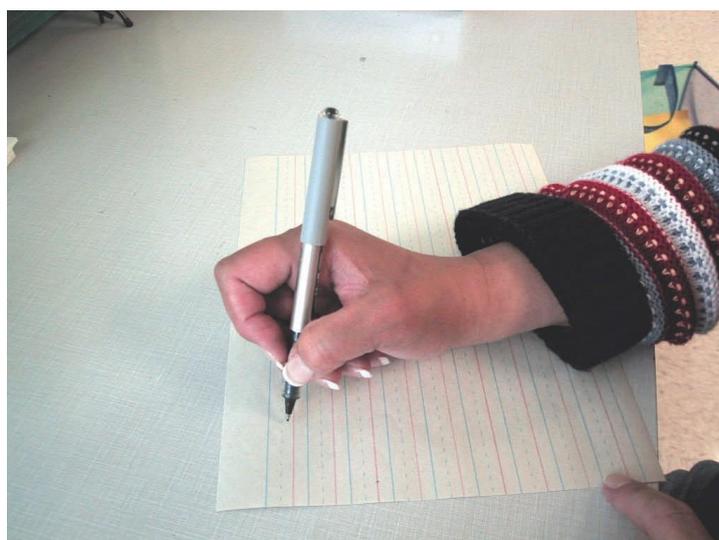


Practical tasks include ones where the fingers move forward and back such as when threading a needle, or making dots on paper with a marker.

The warm up exercises in this document promote these skills.

## Use of a dynamic tripod grasp

The child is able to use this grasp and has adequate strength in finger and hands to use hands for prolonged periods without excessive fatigue. This takes years of handwriting practice and fine motor development to mature.



# Developmental stages of learning



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## Early Years Birth–Age 5

Understanding the developmental stages of writing assists educators to monitor learners' growth as writers, identify appropriate teaching focuses, and select teaching approaches to meet different learning needs. The following section describes some of the likely handwriting skills and understanding needed by learners at differing stages of their writing development.

The developmental stages of writing are not to be viewed as discrete, sequential stages. Learners will demonstrate a range of behaviour, attitudes and skills depending on the complexity of the writing task and the degree of support provided.

Educators will need to be aware of possible disparities between the development of some learners' handwriting skills and their ability to compose a text. Some learners may be able to

create texts that are well beyond their ability to write by hand. To help avoid frustration, specific handwriting tasks appropriate to their physical abilities can be planned while learners' composing abilities are recognised. Additional methods of recording their writing, such as scribing or using a computer or tape recorder, can be considered.

Other learners may develop proficient handwriting skills yet require additional support with the composing aspects of writing.

Hill (2006) describes learning to write or to represent language in written symbols as involving learning to use a writing tool, to hold it properly and to create letters, words and sentences to convey meaning to others.

Emergent drawing and writing skills are crucial in the development of handwriting. Children

## Developmental stages of learning continued



will make marks on paper from an early age and call it 'their writing'. Marie Clay describes their repetitive squiggles or attempts at adult writing as the 'recurring principle' (Hill 2006, p 281).

Hand-eye coordination is important in the development of handwriting. Young children should be supported in the development of their hand-eye coordination, balance, spatial awareness and fine and gross motor skills.

Children's early ability to grasp and manipulate writing tools will vary depending on their experiences and level of development. When they feel confident they will experiment using a range of grasps as they use different tools to make 'marks on paper'. If very young children are forced to hold a writing tool with the correct grasp before they are developmentally able to do so, their interest and motivation to engage in the writing process can be impaired.

Experiences that support the development of these handwriting skills include moulding and squeezing materials such as dough and clay, finger painting, finger plays and clapping games, music and movement, pasting, paper tearing, cutting, construction toys, putting together and pulling apart toys and building blocks, jigsaws, finger puppets, ball games, balancing games, climbing, crawling and negotiating obstacle courses.

Children's early drawings and paintings are associated with the need to represent and experiment with different tools and writing surfaces. Their projections of ideas through drawing and writing processes demonstrate their understanding, thoughts and feelings. As educators scribe for children, opportunities are created to model, promote and explore the processes and purposes of handwriting. Young children experiment with and imitate scribbles, shapes, lines, patterns, figures and letter and numeral shapes.

## Developmental stages of learning continued

They enjoy writing signs and messages related to their play, drawing and writing to represent and make meaning. Children will begin to write by imitating what the adults they see are writing and how they are writing and will produce their own shopping lists, notes, telephone numbers and other messages relevant to their everyday context.

Hill (2006) refers to the 'sign principle' that develops when children realise that letters and symbols stand for something. Children begin to understand that the drawing of a car represents a car, but that the word 'car' has none of the actual features of a car. Hill (2006) also refers to the 'linear principle' which is about directionality – young children learn that English is written from left to right in lines that go across the page. Children learn that the same letter can be written in different ways, such as upper case and lower case.

Young children need a range of quality materials to experiment with and time and support to practise their emerging handwriting skills. Access to a wide range of books and written texts from different cultures supports their understanding of drawing and writing for different purposes.



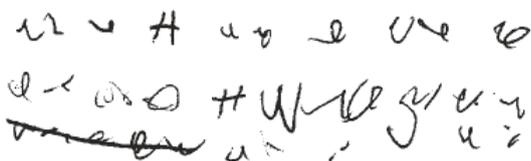
## Developmental stages of learning

Hill (2006, pp 283–286) proposes the following developmental model that represents stages in young children’s writing:

- ✍ Beginning writing
- ✍ Early emergent writing
- ✍ Emergent writing
- ✍ Early writing
- ✍ Transitional writing
- ✍ Extending writing.

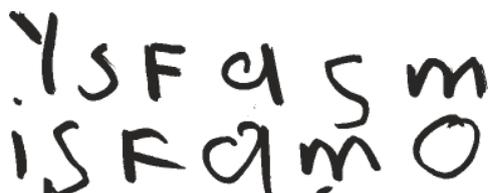
The first four stages, which are applicable to the birth to age 5 group, are described below. It is important to remember that children will progress through the different stages at different rates and ages, depending on their experiences and developmental abilities.

### 1. Beginning writing



This stage is where young children use drawings to represent and communicate a message while ‘reading out’ their narrative relating to the drawing. The writing can occur as different shapes or in scribble-like lines that may follow a left to right pattern. As children engage with the writing process, they are exploring the process they have observed adults engaging in.

### 3. Emergent writing



In this stage, children begin to create more letter-like shapes, with spaces between the letters. Children may begin to use sequences of letters such as those in their own name, and repeat each letter several times as they refine the way that letters are made.

### 2. Early emergent writing



In this stage, children begin to explore the use of symbols (both drawings and letters) to represent words. The child may draw a picture and then write below some of the letters that represent that picture. By doing this, the child demonstrates an understanding of directionality and placement of the picture and understands the concept of a written word as a separate entity.

### 4. Early writing



In this stage, children continue to create or invent spellings of words. Differences between capitals and lower case become apparent. Spacing between words becomes more consistent. As they continue to explore their understanding of the concepts of written language, they enjoy copying letters, words and sentences.

## Early Years Prep—2

Educators of beginning and emergent writers learning to recognise, form and name letters and numerals emphasise the purposes of legible handwriting. They focus explicitly on handwriting in their teaching programs, including specific lessons on correct letter and numeral formation posture, paper placement, seated position and pencil grip.

Depending on learners' needs and their developmental stages, educators focus on particular aspects of handwriting to support:

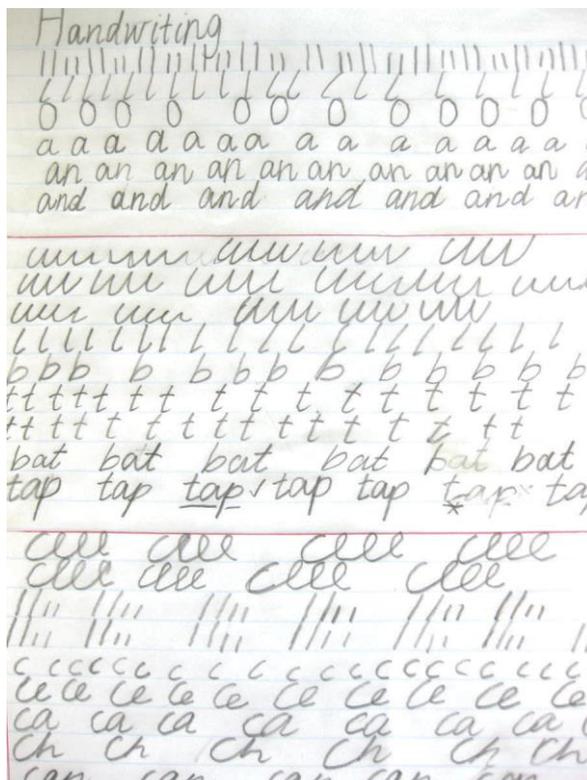
- ✎ the purpose of legible writing
- ✎ the ability to differentiate between drawing and writing
- ✎ an understanding that writing can represent thoughts ideas, messages and speech
- ✎ the development of fine motor coordination
- ✎ a writing-hand preference
- ✎ awareness of the terms and concepts relating to written and printed material – spaces, words, letters, direction
- ✎ letter formation
  - ☞ starting and finishing points, and direction and number of strokes
  - ☞ slope, size, shape, proportion, placement and spacing of letters
  - ☞ letter links if appropriate
  - ☞ the equal-size relationship of heads (ascenders), bodies and tails (descenders)
- ✎ numeral formation
- ✎ appropriate pencil grip
- ✎ paper placement and hand, arm and sitting positions (relating to left-handers and right-handers)
- ✎ a visual memory of letter shapes
- ✎ movements that form the basis of later automatic processes in handwriting
- ✎ the ability to identify and correctly form lower-case and upper-case letters.



## Primary Years 3—5

Handwriting lessons continue to be important through these years. Learners need time to consolidate and to move from print to cursive writing. They are working to:

- ✎ understand the terms and concepts relating to written and printed material – spaces, words, letters, chunks of letters and directionality
- ✎ identify and form correctly the 26 lower-case and upper-case letters
- ✎ develop automaticity with letter patterns that appear regularly in English
- ✎ develop sufficient legibility and fluency to enable them to focus on the message, form and purpose of the writing
- ✎ develop further an understanding of the purposes of legible writing.



Once basic letter shapes and letter sequences have become 'automatic' to the point of legibility and fluency, learners can be shown how the letter shapes that they have learned initially may be joined. Learners are ready to join letters when they:

- ✎ can form correctly the 26 lower-case letters to write words, using an efficient pen grip
- ✎ show consistent use of slope, size, spacing and letter alignment
- ✎ show signs of trying to join the letters together
- ✎ have developed an understanding of common letter patterns.

To avoid the development of inappropriate linking techniques, the teaching of linking ought to begin as soon as the learner displays these characteristics, and usually this will occur around the beginning of Year 3. The links that form the exit from the letter are the precursors to linking and are usually introduced towards the end of Year 2.

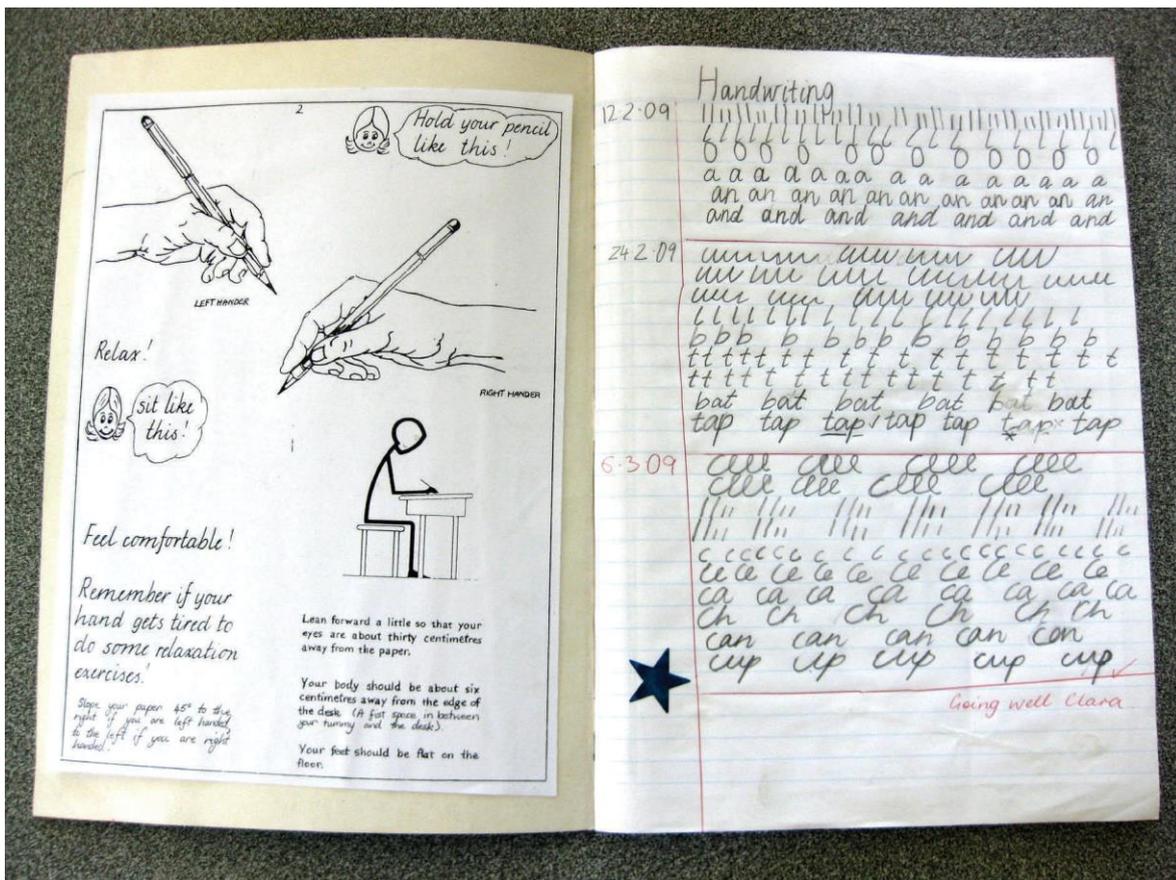
# Middle Years

## 6—9

Once learners have a well-developed standard form, usually during the middle years of schooling, they may be encouraged to personalise their handwriting.

They may build on the basic style and adapt it to suit their writing purposes. Learners at this stage may be:

- ✎ developing a personalised style which is legible, fluent, durable and aesthetically pleasing
- ✎ using efficient deviations from the model form, if appropriate
- ✎ using embellishments and alternative styles for different purposes, if appropriate
- ✎ experimenting with different writing instruments, surfaces and styles, and to note the effects of writing with speed
- ✎ practising note-taking at speed with telephone messages, recorded interviews, broadcasts and short lectures
- ✎ developing and / or practising speed loops.



# Warm-up activities

The warm-up activities described below are based on the work of Laura Stevens, occupational therapist, in *Hands up!* (2004), a description of a handwriting project for Torrensville Primary School.

## Finger warm-ups

### Put on imaginary writing gloves

Pull on the 'gloves', applying firm pressure to the fingers and back and palm of each hand. This exercise provides tactile feedback and prepares the muscles for movement.

### Spider push-ups

Place finger tips together and bend and straighten the fingers while pushing the finger tips against each other.

### Pencil Olympics

Twirl the pencil like a baton, spinning it both horizontally and vertically.

### Inchworm

Using a tripod grip, move the fingers along the pencil from one end to the other. Do not use the other hand to hold or support the pencil.

### Piano

Drum the fingers on the desk as if playing a piano. Ensure each finger tip touches the desk.

## Shoulder warm-ups

Shoulder warm-ups prepare the arm for writing and may help to release tension in the neck and shoulders.

### Shoulder shrugs

Shrug shoulders forwards, then backwards.

### Crocodile snaps

Start with one arm straight above the head and the other extended down one side of the body, then snap the hands together meeting above the head, like a crocodile snapping its jaws. Repeat with reversal of arm positions.

### Air-traffic controller

Start with the elbows bent and the hands in a fist in front of each shoulder. Then straighten the elbows, moving one arm out to the front of the body and the other arm to the side of the body. Alternate the movements.

### Butterflies

Begin with arms extended straight in front of the body. Link the thumbs to make an 'x' and turn the palms to face out. Using the shoulders to move, make small circles with the hands, moving the hands to the left and right in unison (the fingers lie side by side and are not moving—the movement is coming from the shoulders).

### Chair push-ups

Begin by sitting up straight in the chair with hands gripping the sides of the chair, thumbs facing forwards and fingers pressing against the underside of the chair. Using the strength in the arms, push the bottom up from the chair. The feet should come up from the floor.

### Desk push-ups

Start with hands flat on the desk, with the tips of the thumbs and index fingers facing each other to create a triangle. Bend the elbows to bring the nose towards the triangle and then push up with the arms to straighten the elbows again.

# Planning for handwriting

The creation of a handwriting program will involve educators in:

- ✍ establishing aims
- ✍ organising the timetable and resources
- ✍ deciding on techniques and styles
- ✍ placing handwriting in context (to select appropriate teaching strategies)
- ✍ assessing learners' handwriting and progress
- ✍ using appropriate assessment techniques
- ✍ evaluating the program.



Educators also need to become familiar with a metalanguage that they can use with colleagues and learners.

## Organising the timetable and resources

Focused teaching of handwriting is most effective when educators provide dynamic handwriting demonstrations, forming the letters in front of learners. This provides correct models for learners. Handwriting, however, has no purpose unless it is used for the development of authentic texts within the handwriting program.

In addition, educators can consistently use and display models of handwriting and take advantage of the many opportunities throughout the school day for reinforcing handwriting skills. Learners need explicit opportunities to learn and practise effective letter formation. Short, focused sessions are more effective than long sessions designed to cover many aspects of the process.

Therefore, timetabling for handwriting should include:

- ✍ explicit teaching time within modelled, shared and guided writing practices at least three times per week
- ✍ whole class writing time
- ✍ small group writing time
- ✍ independent writing time.

## Introducing the letters

Introducing the letters based on the hand and finger movements used to form the letters is particularly helpful for learners with poor fine motor skills. It may be that all of the clockwise letters are not introduced together but in two or more 'groups', interspersed with groups of letters that require a different basic movement.

Possible groupings are:

The anti-clockwise letters:

*adqq ceos uy f*      *adqq ceos uy f*

The 'stick' letters:

*litj*      *litj*

The clockwise letters:

*mnr hpb*      *mnr hpb*

The diagonal letters:

*kvwxz*      *kvwxz*

These groupings are particularly useful for the revision of letter formation in the following years, even if it is not used as a sequence for the introduction of the letters. If the similarities of movement are pointed out, the learners are able to develop a metacognitive awareness of letter formation that can support their practices of letter writing.

## Letter formation

Teaching correct letter formation involves providing learners with opportunities to talk about the names and features of letters and the sounds they represent. This enhances letter recognition in texts on computer keyboards and in the environment. When learners practise forming letters they develop a visual and motor memory of their important features. Looking at the letters and undertaking the movement of writing then helps learners see and feel how each letter is formed, fixing the letter in the learner's visual memory for future identification and reproduction.

The formation of letters involves starting and finishing places, direction of movement and number of strokes per letter. These are important aspects if linking, fluency and speed are to develop with ease. An oval body shape is recommended with a 2 o'clock starting position for all anti-clockwise ovals.

### Size

Letter shapes should be in proportion. Within letters, the heads, bodies and tails should be of equal proportions. This means letters will maintain relativity in both width and height to each other. Larger letter shapes help in the establishment and maintenance of combined finger–hand–arm movements in handwriting. Small letter shapes, less than 2mm, may be the result of a tense pen hold and will make the task of identifying incorrect letter shape formation more difficult.

## Slope

A slight slope to the right is the outcome of a well developed cursive technique for learners who are using a relaxed finger–hand–arm movement. Slope should be consistent for each individual. However, a variation of 5 to 15 degrees in the slope to the left or right of vertical is acceptable between individuals.

## Spacing

Consistent spacing enhances the legibility and appearance of handwriting. Spacing within words, between words, between lines of writing, and the use of blank space on the page should be highlighted to learners.

## Alignment

The visual pattern of words becomes more consistent when hooks, links, descending letters and ascending letters are positioned accurately in relation to each other.

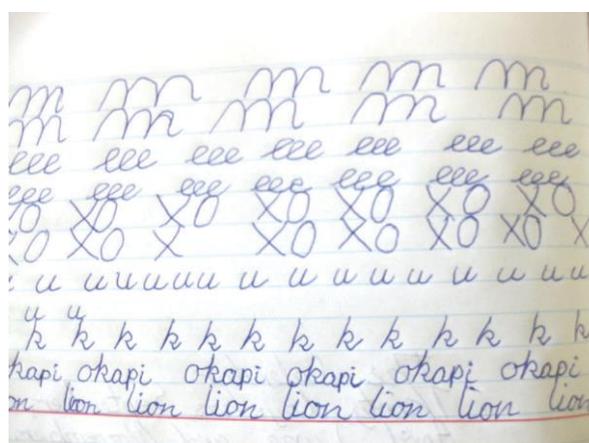
## Cursive style

The correct stroke sequence for each letter should be learned in order to develop a legible, consistent cursive style. The differences between the beginners' alphabet and cursive formation are

apparent in the letter *f* and in the exits of

*a d h i k l m*

*n o r t u v* and *w*.



When cursive formation is being taught, two points should be considered:

- ✎ special attention will be required for letters with exits
- ✎ more attention will be required in the spacing of letters.

## Linking

The introduction of links should not be a slow and laborious process because letter shapes themselves do not change. There should not be any deliberate drawing of lines between letters. When learners have developed a good handwriting technique, whole groups of links may be introduced concurrently, as the letter shapes are already quite familiar.

Important things to remember about linking:

- ✎ There is no link from upper-case letters to lower-case letters.
- ✎ Small groups of letters should be practised by linking two letters at a time, or writing short words.
- ✎ Letters that link to the following letter should link directly from the end of the letter to the beginning of the next letter.
- ✎ The point at which the exit links to the following letter should be no higher than the exit of *o*.
- ✎ Do not dot the *i* or cross the *t* until the end of the word.

## Pen lifts

Pen lifts occur in handwriting even though the writer may not be aware of them. These natural pauses relax the hand and help avoid illegibility. Individuals develop pen lifts to suit their personal style and technique. They will occur at various intervals within words, but not always before the same letter.

Learners should be discouraged from making a pen lift during the formation of an individual letter, other than where specifically indicated. As learners increase the speed at which they write, they will develop pen lifts naturally. Educators should be aware of the functions of pen lifts and encourage learners to use them where necessary.

## Speed of handwriting

Learners should be given time to practise handwriting in situations such as brainstorming, where speed is necessary.



## Setting up for writing

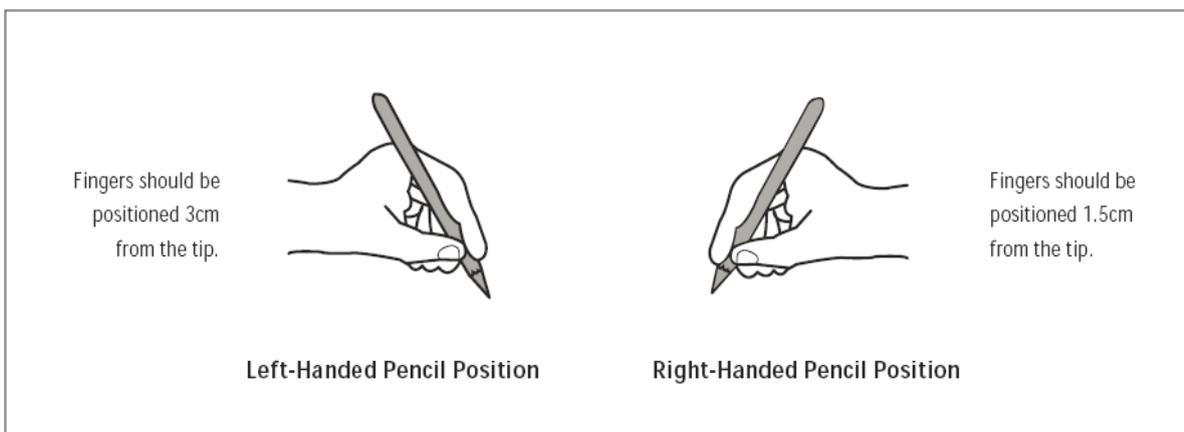
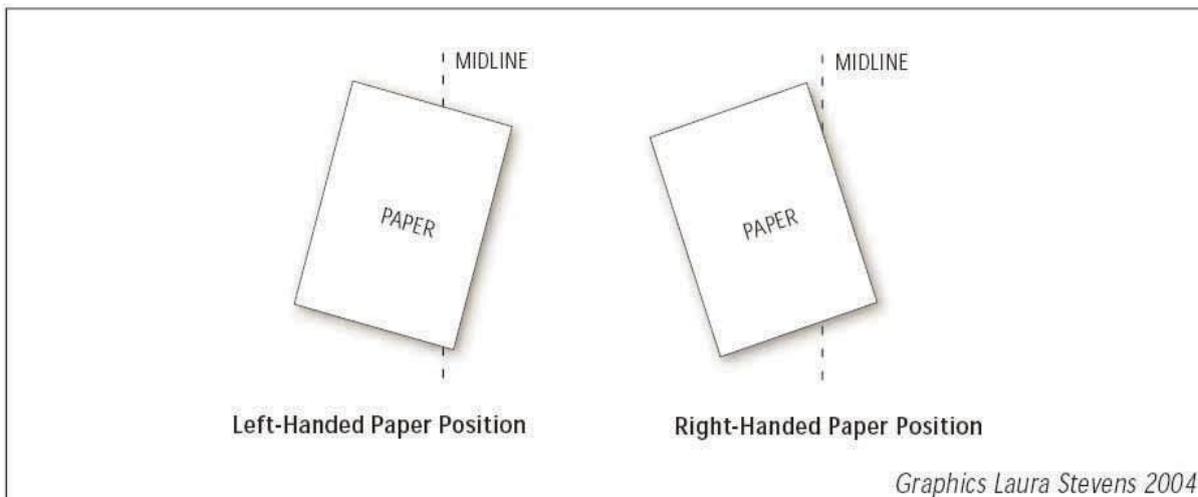
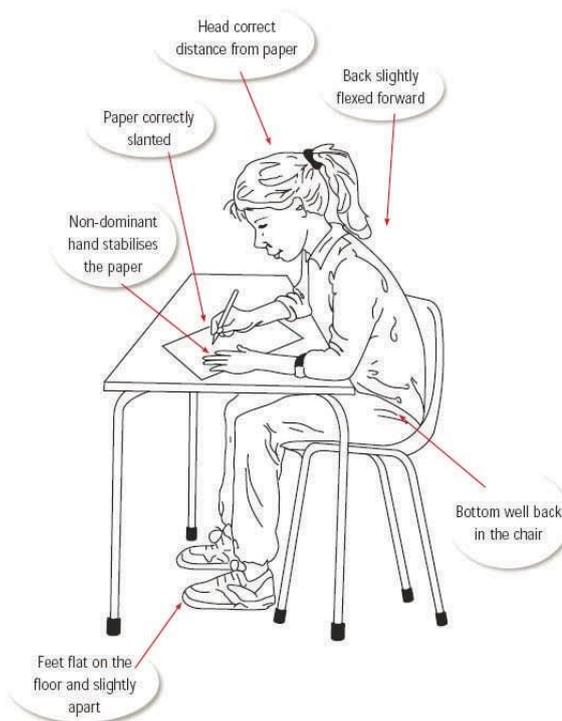
### Sitting position for handwriting

The handwriting movement is a combined finger, hand and arm movement. The arm should be supported lightly by the forearm and the little finger. This allows the writing hand to move smoothly across the page.

Avoid a fixed forearm. The wrist should be extended to allow the fingers to move efficiently. A flexed wrist, often used by left-handers, is very tiring. The fingers will flex slightly in moving to form the letter shapes. The hand will move smoothly ahead of the point of contact between instrument and paper. Writers should hold the writing instrument so that fingers are up to 3cm from the end.

Left-handers should hold the writing instrument further back from the point so that they can see what is being written.

Paper position is also important.





## Letters with links

1. Links from *o v w r f* join to all letters except *e s* and *Z*.

*on vase went ran*

2. Diagonal links from

*i u e m n l k t a c d h*

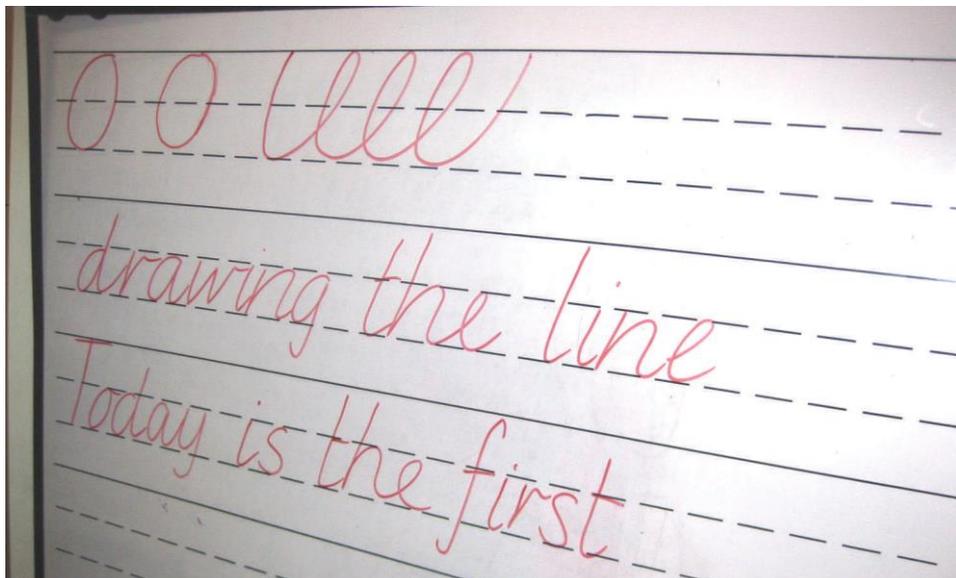
*in under many like kite ant*

These letters never join to the top of tall letters

3. Letters that do not link to following letters

*p b s g j x y z*

*pencil bread salt*



## Letter connections

Aa	aa ab ac ad ae af ag ah ai aj ak al am an ao ap aq ar as at au av aw ax ay az
Bb	does not join to following letters
Cc	ca cc cd ce ch ci ck cl co cq cr cs ct cu cw cy cz
Dd	da dc dd de df dg dh did j dk dl sm dn do dp dq dr ds st du dw dy dz
Ee	ea eb ec ed ee ef eg eh ei ej ek el em en eo ep eq er es et eu ev ew ex ey ez
Ff	fa fe ff fh fi fj fl fn fo fp fr fs ft fu fy
Gg	does not join to following letters
Hh	ha hb hd he hi hl hm hn ho hp hq hr hs ht hu hy
Ii	ia ib ic id ie if ig ih ii ij ik il im in io ip ir is it iu iv iw ix iy iz
Jj	does not join to following letters
Kk	ka kd ke kf kg kh ki kk kl kn ko kp kr ks kt ku ky
Ll	la lb lc ld le lf lg li lk ll lm ln lo lp ls lt lu lv lw ly lz

Mm	ma mb mc md me mf mg mh mi mk ml mm mn mo mp mr ms mt mu mw my
Nn	na nb nc nd ne nf ng nh ni nk nl nm nn no np nq nr ns nt nu nw nx ny nz
Oo	oa ob oc od oe of og oh oi oj ok ol om on oo op oq or os ot ou ov ow ox oy oz
Pp	does not join to the following letter
Qq	does not join to the following letter
Rr	ra rb rc rd re rf rg rh ri rk rl rm rn ro rp rr rs rt ru rv rx ry rz
Ss	does not join to the following letter
Tt	ta tb tc td te tf tg th ti tj tk tl tm tn to tp tq tr ts tt tu tv tw tx ty tz
Vv	va vb vc vd ve vf vg vh vi vl vm vo vp vr vs vt vu vv vw vx
Ww	wa wb wc wd we wf wg wh wi wk wl wn wo wr ws wt wu wx wy wz
Xx	does not join to the following letter
Yy	does not join to the following letter
Zz	does not join to the following letter

# Assessing handwriting

## Handwriting Observation Guide

Kinder—Year 2

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Hand preference</b>	L	R

<b>Code</b>	✓ <b>Correct</b>	• <b>Not yet evident</b>
-------------	------------------	--------------------------

General handwriting skills	Code	Comments
Sitting position / posture		
Pencil grip		
Paper placement		
Uses spacing appropriately		
Correct orientation		

### Lower case letter formation

Anti-clockwise letters	a	d	g	q	c	e	o	s	u	y	f	Comments
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Stick letters	l	i	t	j								
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Clockwise letters	m	n	r	h	p	b						
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Diagonal letters	k	v	w	x	z							
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												

### Upper-case letters

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

### Numerals

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## Handwriting Observation Guide—Year 3+

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Hand preference</b>	L	R

<b>Code</b>	✓ <b>Correct</b>	• <b>Not yet evident</b>
-------------	------------------	--------------------------

General handwriting skills	Code	Comments
Sitting position / posture		
Pencil grip		
Paper placement		
Uses spacing appropriately		
Correct orientation		

### Lower case letter formation

Anti-clockwise letters	a	d	g	q	c	e	o	s	u	y	f	Comments
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Slope												
Links												
Fluency												
<b>Stick letters</b>	<i>l</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>j</i>								
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Slope												
Links												
Fluency												
<b>Clockwise letters</b>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>						
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Slope												
Links												
Fluency												
<b>Diagonal letters</b>	<i>k</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>z</i>							
Formation: Starting place Direction Shape Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												
Slope												
Links												
Fluency												

### Upper-case letters

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

### Numerals

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

# Frequently asked questions

## 1. What is the best handwriting grip?

- ✍ The writing instrument is held gently so that the index finger can flex slightly.
- ✍ Pressure on the handwriting instrument and consistent tension in the fingers or hand may cause fatigue and cramp, preventing fluent handwriting.
- ✍ The instrument rests on the side of the top joint of the middle finger, with the thumb resting on the side of the instrument and the forefinger resting on top (i.e. the tripod grip).
- ✍ A small space should be visible between the thumb and forefinger.
- ✍ The fingers should not be placed too closely to the writing tip because tension will develop.
- ✍ The angle of the instrument to the paper should be about 45 degrees.
- ✍ A steep angle will also lead to greater tension.
- ✍ Some left-handers will hold the writing instrument further back from the point so that they can see what is being written.

## 2. What if a learner has a persistently incorrect grip?

- ✍ Use coloured markers on the barrel of the writing tool to indicate the relative position of the finger and thumb.
- ✍ Put a triangular implement grip on the writing tool, ensuring that a part of the grip is visible between the index finger and thumb.
- ✍ Provide the learner with triangular pencils, both coloured and lead pencils.
- ✍ Focus on one or two aspects of the grip at a time. For example, say 'Your thumb must be on the pencil' or 'Your pencil must point towards your right shoulder' (only for right-handers) or 'Your pointer finger should point to the tip of the pencil'.
- ✍ Ask the learner to hold a cotton ball in the palm of his hand with his little finger and ring finger—freeing up the index finger, middle finger and thumb to hold the pencil.

## 3. What is the best handwriting position?

- ✍ The paper and body position should be comfortable for the writer, so that the writer may write with ease for long periods.
- ✍ The paper should be placed so that its base is at right angles to the forearm of the writing hand, and the body should have comfortably balanced support so that body weight does not rest on the writing arm.
- ✍ Tension in the eyes, neck, wrist, shoulders or back indicates an uncomfortable paper and/or body position, which will interfere with the optimum handwriting movement and cause fatigue.

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#### 4. How can I support a learner with the layout of his or her work?

The collection and examination of different layouts will help learners improve their own layout techniques.

Learners will come to understand that:

- ✍ a planned layout can increase both the legibility and the attractiveness of the finished product
- ✍ different-sized paper and instruments require different layout techniques
- ✍ the time used to prepare a rough layout is well spent when it enhances the finished product
- ✍ the number of words per line influences the appearance of the page
- ✍ a line with too many words tends to tire the eye of the reader
- ✍ the use of wide margins emphasises the importance of the writing which they surround.

#### 5. How do I help a learner with incorrect posture?

- ✍ Ensure correct seating with feet flat on floor.
- ✍ Reinforce posture by setting a time limit and expecting the correct posture to be maintained during that time. Start with a short time and gradually extend it. Congratulate the learner on achieving the correct posture for the given time.
- ✍ Ensure the chair is not too close to the table.
- ✍ Organise for a check of the learner's vision, if appropriate.

#### 6. How do I support left-handers?

- ✍ Find a left-handed educator or parent / caregiver who writes well using the appropriate grip and movements as an assistant for the left-handers in the class. He or she can show the correct hold.
- ✍ Seat the left-hander to the left of a right-handed child so that their elbows do not bump each other.
- ✍ Check that the light comes from their right-hand side so they are not writing in their own shadow.
- ✍ Use a lower writing surface (lower the desk or have the learner sit higher).
- ✍ So the writing is not obscured, ask the learner to hold the implement at least 3cm (a rubber band can mark the spot) from the tip, or use a commercial triangular implement grip placed far enough up the barrel that the learner can see around his or her hand.
- ✍ Position the paper to the left of the midline of the body for a comfortable writing position.
- ✍ Use a fibre-tip pen or softer pencil (e.g. 2B, 4B or 6B) which causes less 'digging' into the paper.
- ✍ Allow learners to experiment with crossbar links (e.g. *t* and *f* (a right-to-left line is often easier for left-handers) and letters that change direction (e.g. *f* and *s*) until they find something that suits.

## **7. I'm a left-handed teacher teaching right-handed learners. What should I do?**

- ✍ Depending on the age of the learners, you could discuss what is similar and different about the way you hold a pen and the way they hold theirs.
- ✍ You might also talk to them about how you as a left-hander must position your hand and the paper in order to see what you are writing and how this is different for right-handed writers.
- ✍ Find a right-handed educator or parent/caregiver who writes well using the appropriate grip and movements as an assistant for the right-handers in the class. He or she can show the correct hold.

## **8. How do I support a visually impaired learner to write?**

It is most important that there is good contrast between the writing implement and the writing medium. Learners can use felt-tipped pens and the paper should not be shiny. It is also important to provide additional time for practice. For older learners, you could use dark line stationery.

Learners with a visual impairment may also need to be closer to their work and will require good lighting. They could also benefit from having a sloping desktop.

## 9. One of my learners is having difficulty handwriting. What might be the problem?

Consider which foundation skills the learner may be having difficulties with in developing his or her handwriting skills.

The problem may be in any one or combination of the following five areas.

<p><b>Vision</b> In order to write, you need the ability to sustain clear binocular vision at near point.</p>	
<p><b>Postural control</b> In order to write, you need the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ hold your body up against gravity</li> <li>✍ make coordinated trunk, shoulder, forearm and wrist movements</li> <li>✍ sit in a chair</li> <li>✍ make subtle adjustments to these movements</li> <li>✍ plan the motor patterns you make with your whole body.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Visual skills</b> In order to write, you need the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ track visually from top to bottom, left to right, and diagonally</li> <li>✍ remember the form and shape of different objects</li> <li>✍ recognise similarities between shapes</li> <li>✍ recognise differences between shapes</li> <li>✍ pick out important information from a busy background</li> <li>✍ remember sequences of visual information</li> <li>✍ look at and focus on the different aspects of the work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fine motor skills</b> In order to write, you need the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ use one hand as a leader, and the other to support the page</li> <li>✍ hold a pencil in a tripod grasp</li> <li>✍ plan how big the letter will be, and where to start it in relation to other letters and lines on the page</li> <li>✍ move fingers while keeping the wrist diagonal and hand and arm stable</li> <li>✍ manipulate objects in your hand without using the other hand to help.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Visual-motor skills</b> Visual-motor skills are the ability to look at something, interpret it and respond with a motor action. This is an essential skill for learning how to form letters, copy letters, and interpret what you have written.</p> <p>In order to write, you need the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ copy a series of geometric shapes (including prewriting shapes and their combinations) in order to go on to write letters</li> <li>✍ start drawing in the correct place for individual letters</li> <li>✍ stop drawing in the correct place for individual letters</li> <li>✍ change direction when drawing</li> <li>✍ control the pencil to form line and shape combinations automatically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ starting and stopping drawing lines in the right places</li> <li>☞ combining lines in the correct sequence to form a letter</li> <li>☞ drawing lines in the correct size</li> <li>☞ changing direction.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 10. How can I help a learner having difficulty with pre-writing basic shapes?

- ✎ Determine which pre-writing basic shapes the learner can copy and the ones the learner cannot.
- ✎ Consider whether this will affect the learner's ability to form particular letters accurately.
- ✎ Try different ways of teaching the shapes that the learner finds difficult (e.g. copying, tracing, painting, pencil and paper approaches, making the shapes, games, worksheets, using whole body activities to form the shapes).
- ✎ Try different activities that involve controlling the pencil, such as mazes, colouring-in, and tracing activities. These can be practised in different ways (e.g. at the table with pencil and paper, drawing on whiteboards or blackboards, with paint, as part of construction).
- ✎ Try using different writing tools (such as pencils, crayons, felt-tipped pens and paint).
- ✎ Consider the size and shape of the pencil (the thicker a pencil the easier it is to grasp and control) and different density of the tips (softer leads can be easier to colour with, harder leads can look neater).
- ✎ Consider a binocular vision assessment.

## 11. One of my learners has trouble forming the shapes of letters. What should I do?

Consider the learner's ability to consistently and accurately form the letters (shape, size, way they write the letter each time).

- ✎ Formation of letters can be taught relative to the different shapes. Always reinforce the starting place, and encourage learners to form letters the same way each time.
- ✎ Try using rhythm, words, mnemonic devices or counting to help make the pattern of forming the letters more automatic. Examples are:

*When forming the letter O, 'you go backwards around the moon and then land on Earth'.*

*When forming the letter j, 'drop down the line and remember the fishing hook'.*

- ✎ Organise for a check of the learner's binocular vision, if appropriate.
- ✎ Provide a whiteboard marker and laminated sheet.

## **12.A learner is slow in handwriting. What should I do?**

If the learner writes more slowly than expected, consider the following:

- ✍ What happens to the quality and speed of writing when the learner is told to write quickly? Does he or she write more quickly or at the same speed? Does the writing change in size, or become more inconsistently spaced on the line? Does the learner tire more quickly?
- ✍ What happens when the learner perceives the need to write neatly? Does he or she write more slowly? Does the quality really change?
- ✍ For how many minutes can the learner write? At what point does the learner get tired? Does that match your expectations of his or her year level?
- ✍ Does the learner's speed of writing change when he or she is copying, or writing from memory, or being creative?
- ✍ Does the learner write more neatly at different times in the day (e.g. in the morning when less fatigued)?

Then use the following strategies:

(1) Consider strategies in the classroom to reduce the amount of writing required by the learner:

- ✍ Could he or she receive a worksheet rather than having to copy the information?
- ✍ Could he or she use another way of recording the information other than writing (e.g. computer, tape recorder, scribe with another learner in the group, oral presentation)?
- ✍ Could time frames be extended to allow additional time for writing?
- ✍ Can written work be set when the learner is less fatigued (e.g. in the morning, or after breaks)?

(2) Confirm that the learner is aware of the quality and speed of writing required.

- ✍ Does he or she know which work (e.g. copying) needs to be written quickly?
- ✍ Does the learner know in which lessons he or she needs to write neatly?

(3) Include 'pauses' in the writing tasks.

- ✍ Can breaks be included during handwriting?
- ✍ Try having learners put their pencils down and shake and stretch their hands, stand up, and stretch their arms and necks. Does this alter the quality and duration of their writing?

## **13. A learner has trouble positioning letters on the line. What should I do?**

Consider the learner's ability to position letters accurately on the line.

- ✍ Do the letters sit too far above the line, or below the line?
- ✍ Are 'tails' on letters positioned under the line?
- ✍ Are there adequate spaces between letters within the words?
- ✍ Are letters drawn the same size within words?
- ✍ Are capital letters taller than lower-case ones?

Then use the following strategies:

Try using visual cues to organise letter positions:

- ✍ provide a framework to describe where the letter must go
- ✍ provide a grid for each letter to be placed inside the square
- ✍ give a grid example (marking the position on the line, below the line, above the line)
- ✍ use different colours on a grid to remind where the letter goes.
- ✍ Consider a binocular vision assessment.

**14. One of my learners exerts too much pressure on the implement.**

**What do you suggest?**

- ✍ Use a softer implement, such as a fibre-tip pen or a 4B or 6B pencil.
- ✍ Practise patterns and put on music for rhythms.
- ✍ Ask the learner to concentrate on relaxing the fingers.
- ✍ Check that the learner's pencil grip is not too close to the tip.
- ✍ Check their sensation—can they recognise objects hidden in a bag by feel alone?

**15. One of my learners produces faint / shaky writing and does not exert enough pressure.**

**What do you suggest?**

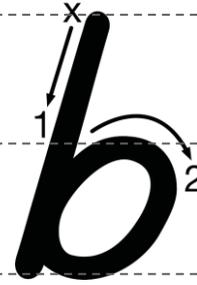
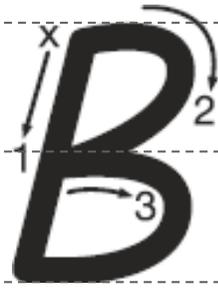
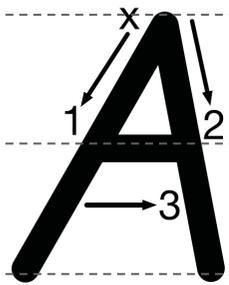
- ✍ Use a softer implement, such as a fibre-tipped pen or a 4B or 6B pencil.
- ✍ Practise patterns with light and dark lines in them.
- ✍ Discuss with learners why they need to 'press harder'.
- ✍ Consider activities such as clay moulding to develop fine motor skills.
- ✍ Consider activities to improve upper limb strength (see appendix).

**16. A learner's cursive writing is hard to read. What do you suggest?**

- ✍ Practise the alphabet, concentrating on making letters as a series of parallel downstrokes.
- ✍ Use patterns to emphasise a downward rhythm.
- ✍ Use a slope card.

**17. Do children and students need to learn keyboard skills?**

- ✍ Keyboard skills are a crucial skill to learn. For learners, communication through a keyboard will be a fundamental and growing necessity in order to take their place in society. All learners need to experiment with a keyboard, enjoy it, become familiar with it and learn the functions of the keys. All learners need to develop and practise their typing skills.
- ✍ For some learners, using a keyboard will be their only form of communication. The development of keyboard skills in those learners who are unable to write by hand is a priority for educators. It enables learners to communicate on an equitable basis.
- ✍ Consider making keyboard skills a high priority for a student, as soon as a gap becomes apparent between their ability to formulate ideas and their ability to express themselves in writing.



No change.

**UPPER-CASE**

**LOWER-CASE**

**LINKED**

**UPPER-CASE**

**LOWER-CASE**

**LINKED**

**Three Movements**

- Two diagonal strokes followed by a horizontal bar at height of a lower-case 'o'.

**One Movement**

- An oval completed by a downstroke.
- Commence at the 2 o'clock position.

**One Movement**

- An oval completed by a downstroke and a link.

**Two Movements**

- A downward stroke.
- Two outward swings.

**One Movement**

- A downward stroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o', completed by an oval.

**Note**

- Commence at the top.
- Height of the bar.

**Note**

- Not joining the oval causes illegibility.

**Note**

- Correct starting point, and development of exit point.

**Note**

- The outward swings are equal.
- The outward swings start and end with horizontal strokes.

**Note**

- Emphasise the starting point to minimise reversal.
- Practise starting and completion points.

**Note**

**NOT**



**NOT**



Amy

all

all

Ben

bat

bat

Adam

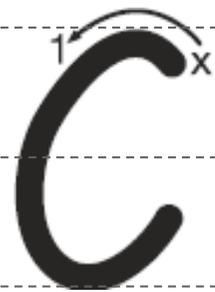
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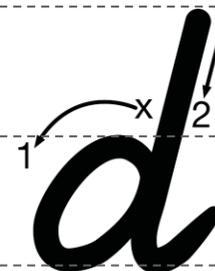
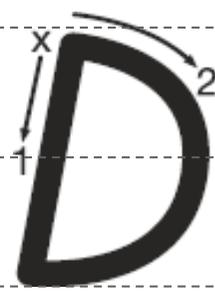
Brie

bed

bed



No change.



No change.

**UPPER-CASE**

**LOWER-CASE**

**LINKED**

**UPPER-CASE**

**LOWER-CASE**

**LINKED**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A segment of an oval.
- ✍ Commence at the 2 o'clock position.

**One Movement**

- ✍ A segment of an oval.
- ✍ Commence at the 2 o'clock position.

**Note**

- ✍ Lengthens for exit.

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ A horizontal line, a segment of an oval, a horizontal line.

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval completed by a downstroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o' with a link.

**Note**

- ✍ Remember the beginning and ending points conform to the slope.

**Note**

- ✍ Avoid squashing due to omission of horizontal strokes.

**Note**

- ✍ Not joining the oval causes illegibility.
- ✍ Failure to retrace causes illegibility.

**Note**

- ✍ May develop a pen lift before downstroke (it then becomes two movements).

NOT 



Colin

Casey

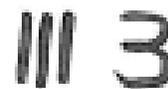


cab

can

can

ace



Danika

Dan



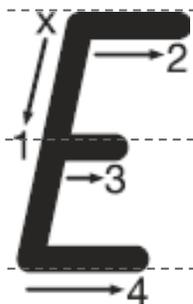
dad

dive



dad

dive



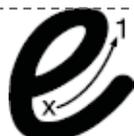
**UPPER-CASE**

**Three Movements**

- ✍ A downward stroke and horizontal bar.
- ✍ Top and central horizontal bars.

**Note**

- ✍ Continuous movement for first section.
- ✍ The middle bar is at the height of a lower-case 'o'.



**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A slanted upstroke completed by a segment of an oval.

**Note**

- ✍ Failure to join oval segment to initial stroke causes illegibility.

**NOT**

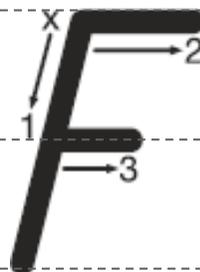


No change.

**LINKED**

**Note**

- ✍ Lengthens for exit.



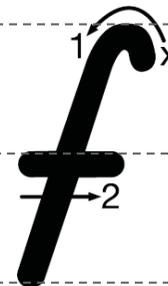
**UPPER-CASE**

**Three Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ Top horizontal bar.
- ✍ Central horizontal bar.

**Note**

- ✍ Central bar is at height of lower-case 'o'.



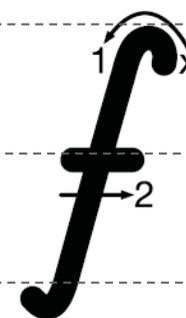
**LOWER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ An oval segment completed by a downstroke.
- ✍ A horizontal bar.

**Note**

**NOT**



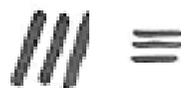
**LINKED**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ An oval segment completed by a lengthened downstroke with a hook.
- ✍ A horizontal bar.

**Note**

- ✍ Bar becomes exit.
- ✍ Link the cross bar for double f.



Emily

Eric



ear

eel

eat

heel



Frank

Frances

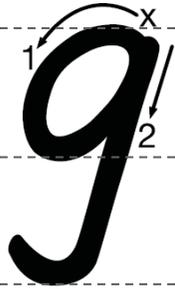
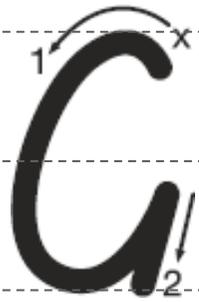


fan

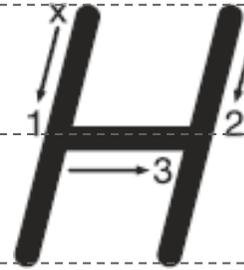
fed

fan

fry



No change.



**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**

✎ A segment of an oval followed by a downstroke.

**Note**

✎ The short downstroke conforms to the slight diagonal slope.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

✎ An oval completed by a downstroke and a hook.

**Note**

✎ The downstroke must be consistent with the slope.

**LINKED**

**Note**

✎ Do not link from the hook.

**UPPER-CASE**

**Three Movements**

✎ Two downward strokes.  
✎ A central horizontal bar.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

✎ A downward stroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o', completed by an arch.

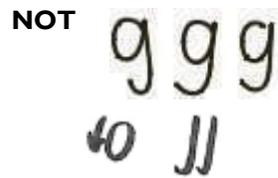
**Note**

✎ Confusion with 'n' if downstroke is too short.

**LINKED**

**One Movement**

✎ A downward stroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o', followed by an arch and ended with a link.



Cabrielle

gone

good

Hobart

hat

hand

Geoff

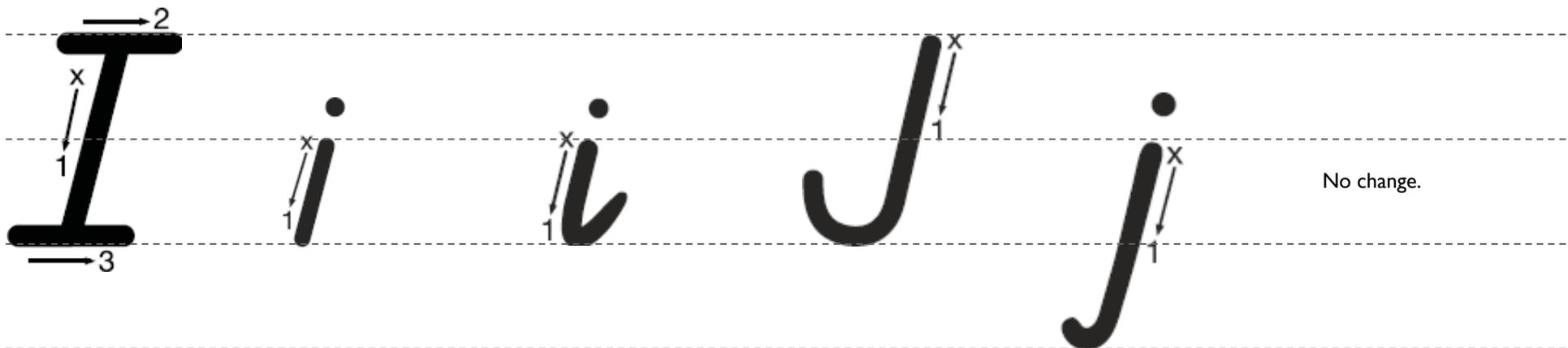
give

bag

Holly

home

hug



**UPPER-CASE**

**Three Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ Top and bottom horizontal bars (serifs)

**Note**

- ✍ Addition of serifs avoids confusion with lower case 'l' and number 1.
- ✍ Serifs may be removed as children get quicker.

**LOWER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ A dot directly above the downstroke.

**Note**

- ✍ Dot at same height as top of 't'.

**NOT**



**LINKED**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ A dot directly above the downstroke followed by a link.

**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke with a hook.

**LOWER-CASE**

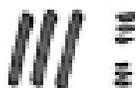
**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke with a hook.
- ✍ A dot directly above the downstroke.

**LINKED**

**Note**

- ✍ Does not link to the following letter.



Ian

Isabelle



ice

him



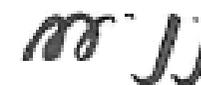
ill

him



Jane

Jacob



jam

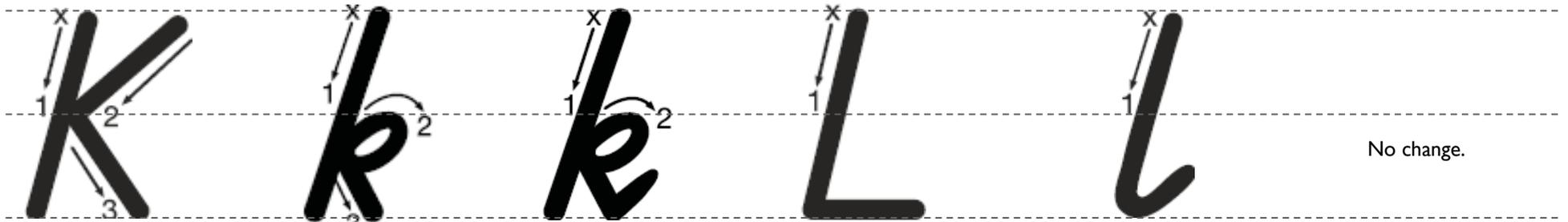
jet

jar

junk



Tasmania  
Explore the possibilities



No change.

**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downward stroke.
- ✍ An arrowhead.

**Note**

- ✍ The arrowhead intersects the downstroke at the height of a lower-case 'o'.

- ✍ Note where the arrowhead begins.

**NOT**



Kate

Kevin

**LOWER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downward stroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o,' completed by a segment of an oval and an angled downstroke.



kid

keep

**LINKED**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downward stroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o,' completed by a segment of an oval, an angled downstroke and link.



key

milk

**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke with a horizontal base.

**Note**

- ✍ Pen stays on paper until completion of letter.



Luke

Linda

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke twice the height of a lower case 'o' followed by a link.



leg

look

**LINKED**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke twice the height of a lower case 'o' followed by a link.

**Note**

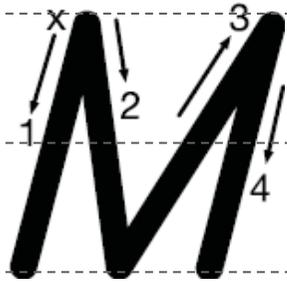


like

level



Tasmania  
Explore the possibilities



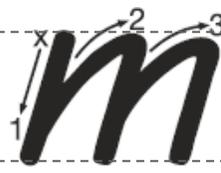
**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ Three diagonal strokes.

**Note**

- ✍ Both sections are equal in size and width.
- ✍ The two top points are level.



**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke completed with two arches.

**Note**

- ✍ Pen lift inhibits fluency.
- ✍ Failure to retrace leads to illegibility.
- ✍ Emphasise regular size and movement.



**LINKED**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke completed with two arches and a link.



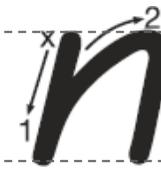
**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downward stroke.
- ✍ Two diagonal strokes commencing at the top of the downstroke.

**Note**

- ✍ Outside strokes are equal and parallel.



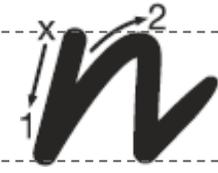
**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke completed by an arch.

**Note**

- ✍ Top of arch is a segment of a circle.
- ✍ Sprawl must not be too wide.



**LINKED**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke followed by an arch and ended with a link.

**Note**

- ✍ Take notice of where the downstroke should begin.



Mary

man

mum

Ned

net

nut

Michael

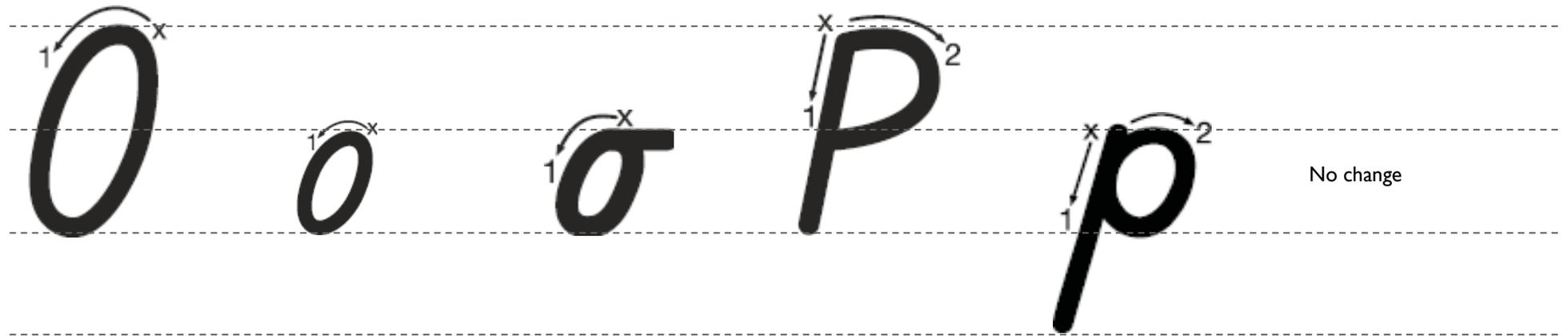
mug

some

Nellie

nap

none



No change

**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval commenced at the 2 o'clock position.

**Note**

- ✍ The 2 o'clock starting position promotes the oval shape and slope.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval commenced at the 2 o'clock position and continued in an anti-clockwise direction.

**LINKED**

**One Movement**

- ✍ An anti-clockwise oval commenced at the 2 o'clock position and ending with a link.

**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ An outward swing.

**Note**

- ✍ The outward swing commences and ends with a horizontal stroke.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke twice the height of a lower-case 'o', completed by a clockwise oval.

**Note**

- ✍ Emphasise starting point to minimise reversals.
- ✍ One continuous movement to aid fluency.

**LINKED**



Olive

Otto



out

one



owl

moon



Peter

Penny

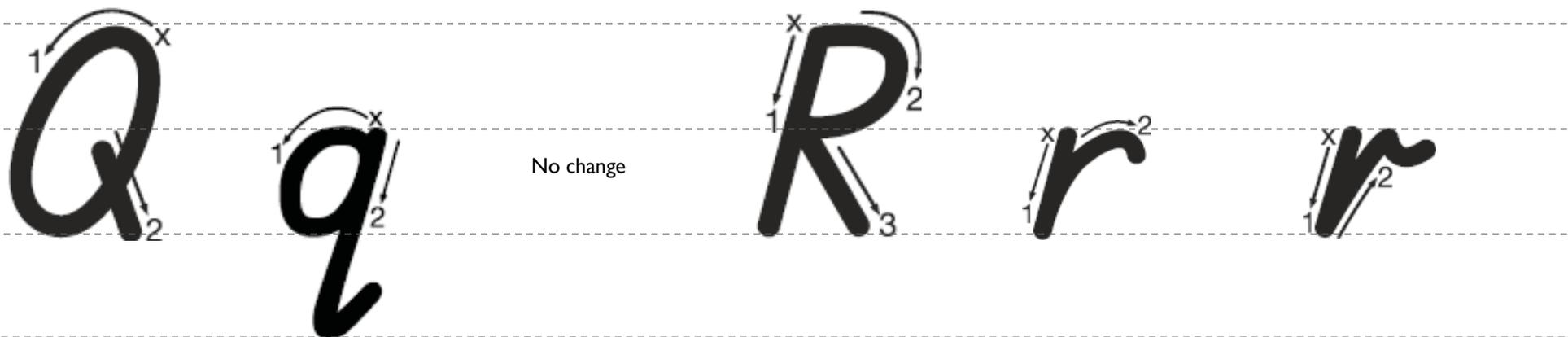


pat

pen

pest

apple



**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ An oval.
- ✍ A short angled downstroke.

**Note**

- ✍ The 2 o'clock starting position promotes the oval shape and slope.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval, a downstroke twice the size of a lower-case 'o' and a link.

**Note**

- ✍ Not joining the oval causes illegibility.
- ✍ Emphasise one movement to avoid reversal

**NOT**



**LINKED**

**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke.
- ✍ An outward swing and an angled downstroke..

**Note**

- ✍ The outward swing commences and ends with a horizontal stroke

**NOT**



**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke completed by a rounded arrowhead.

**Note**

- ✍ Sprawled and no retracing leads to illegibility.

**NOT**



**LINKED**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A downstroke completed by a rounded arrowhead and a slight hook.



Quinn

quick

quiet

Ruth

ran

rag

Queen

quilt

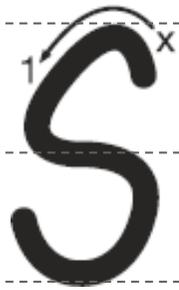
equal

Riley

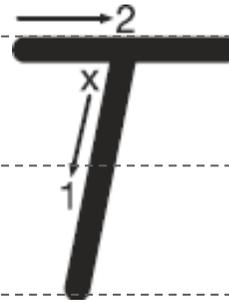
red

are





No change



**UPPER-CASE**

**LOWER-CASE**

**LINKED**

**UPPER-CASE**

**LOWER-CASE**

**LINKED**

**One Movement**

✍ Commences at 2 o'clock and curves anti-clockwise to 10 o'clock, curve and cross down to 4 o'clock, curve clockwise to complete ending at 8 o'clock position.

**One Movement**

✍ Commences at 2 o'clock and curves anti-clockwise to 10 o'clock, curve and cross down to 4 o'clock, curve clockwise to complete ending at 8 o'clock position.

**Note**

✍ If you link to an 's' you don't link from it.

**Two Movements**

✍ A downstroke.  
✍ A horizontal bar.

**Two Movements**

✍ A downstroke 3/4 the height of tall letters.  
✍ A horizontal bar, height of a lower-case 'o'.

**Two Movements**

✍ A downstroke 3/4 the height of tall letters followed by a link.  
✍ A horizontal bar, height of a lower-case 'o'.

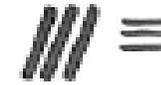
**Note**

✍ Emphasise starting point.  
✍ Letter fits inside an oval.

**Note**

✍ Emphasise starting point.  
✍ Letter fits inside an oval.

**Note** cross the *t* at the end of writing the word  
**NOT**



Sam

sad

said

Tania

the

that

Sarah

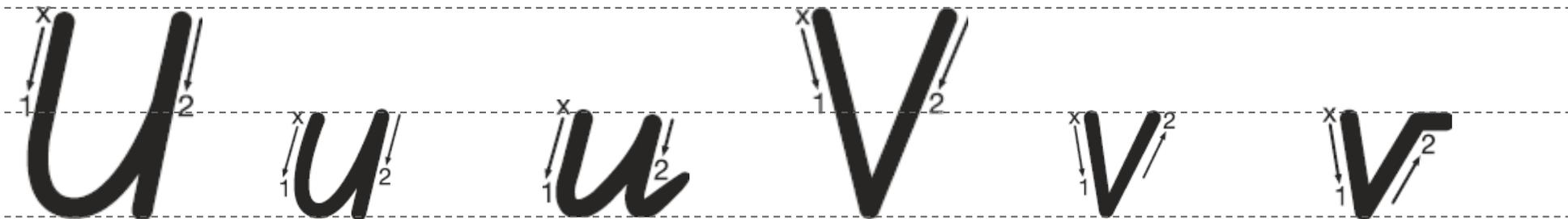
see

asked

Tom

tell

toy



**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**  
 ✎ An inverted arch completed with a downstroke.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**  
 ✎ An inverted arch completed with a downstroke.

**LINKED**

**One Movement**  
 ✎ An inverted arch completed with a downstroke and a link.

**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**  
 ✎ Two diagonal strokes.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**  
 ✎ Two diagonal strokes.

**LINKED**

**One Movement**  
 ✎ Two diagonal strokes finished with a link.

**Note**

✎ No retracing leads to incorrect formation.

**Note**

✎ The first stroke appears more upright.

**Note**

✎ One motion, no lifting of writing tool.



Una

up

use

Victor

vet

van

Uncle

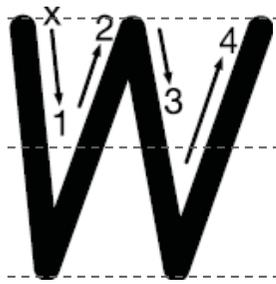
under

out

Vera

vase

over



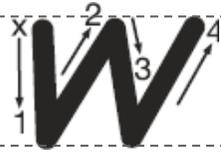
**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**

✍ Four diagonal strokes commencing with a downstroke.

**Note**

✍ No lifting of writing tool.  
✍ The two base points are where the direction changes.



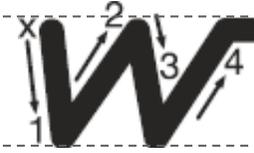
**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

✍ Four diagonal strokes commencing with a downstroke.

**Note**

✍ Sprawling may cause illegibility.

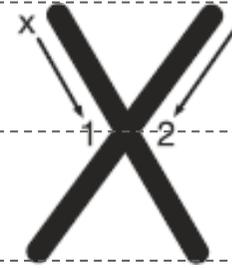


**LINKED**

**One Movements**

✍ Four diagonal strokes commencing with a downstroke.

**Note**



**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

✍ Crossed diagonals starting at the top.

**Note**

✍ The top points are level.  
✍ The base points are level.  
✍ Intersection of diagonals occurs at height of lower-case 'x'.



**LOWER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

✍ Crossed diagonals starting at the top.

**Note**



No change

**LINKED**

**Note**

✍ Does not link to other letters.



William

wig

was

Xanthe

axe

fix

Wendy

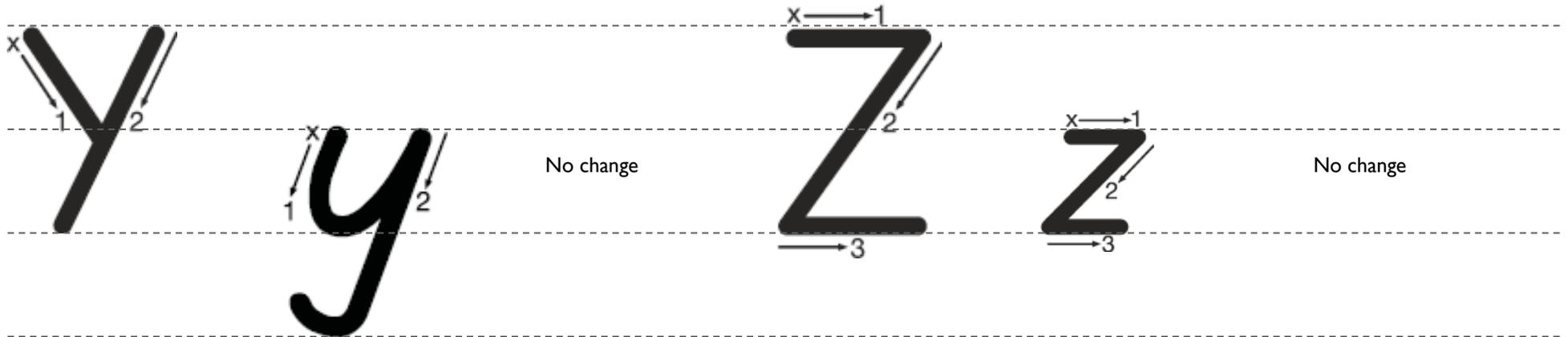
way

away

Xavier

fox

exit



**UPPER-CASE**

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A short diagonal downstroke.
- ✍ A long diagonal downstroke.

**Note**

- ✍ The short downstroke meets the midpoint of the long downstroke at the height of a lower-case 'o'.

**LOWER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ An inverted arch and a downstroke with a hook.

**LINKED**

**Note**

- ✍ Does not link to other letters.

**UPPER-CASE**

**One Movement**

- ✍ A horizontal bar, a diagonal downstroke and a horizontal bar.

**Note**

- ✍ The horizontal bars are of equal length.

**LOWER-CASE**

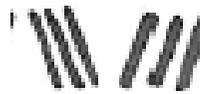
**One Movement**

- ✍ A horizontal bar, a diagonal downstroke and a horizontal bar.

**Note**

- ✍ Points should be sharp.

**NOT**



Yolla

you

young

Zack

zip

zebra

Yvette

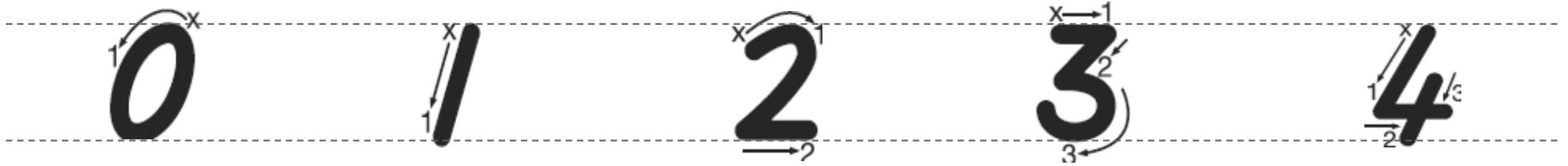
yet

boy

Zara

zoo

fizz



**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval commenced at the 2 o'clock position.

**One Movement**

- ✍ A down stroke.

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval segment, a diagonal and horizontal line commenced at the 10 o'clock position.

**One Movement**

- ✍ A horizontal line, a diagonal line, and an oval segment.

**Two Movements**

- ✍ A diagonal downstroke and a horizontal bar.
- ✍ A downstroke which bisects the horizontal bar.

**Note**

- ✍ All numerals are at a height of a lowercase 't'.

**Note**

- ✍ Emphasise correct slope.

**Note**

- ✍ Emphasise correct slope

**Note**

- ✍ Emphasise correct slope.

**NOT**





**Two Movements**

- ✍ A downstroke and an oval segment.
- ✍ A horizontal bar.

**Note**

- ✍ Emphasise correct starting point to prevent breakdown at speed.

**NOT**



**One Movement**

- ✍ A curved downstroke and an inward curve.

**Note**

- ✍ Start at the 2 o'clock position.

**One Movement**

- ✍ A horizontal bar and a diagonal downstroke.

**Note**

- ✍ Horizontal bar is the same width as a lower-case 'o'.

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval segment and diagonal curve followed by another oval segment and diagonal curve.

**Note**

- ✍ Emphasise starting point.

**One Movement**

- ✍ An oval and a downstroke commenced at the 2 o'clock position.

# Appendix One

## Activities to improve arm, hand and finger strength for writing



- ✍ Popping plastic bubble wrapping material using a pincer grasp.
- ✍ Squeezing clothes pegs (helping to hang up or take down clothes on the clothes line or similar activity).
- ✍ Using a hole puncher for art activities.
- ✍ Open and hold the school door for the teachers or class.
- ✍ Help erase the blackboard or whiteboard.
- ✍ Pouring activities e.g. water plants.
- ✍ At home, digging in the garden, raking, sweeping, cleaning windows, carrying groceries etc.
- ✍ Finger Painting – using individual fingers, do shapes, pre writing patterns.
- ✍ Play dough-squeezing, rolling, and pinching.
- ✍ Use a rainbow ribbon to make circles and figures of 8 in different positions.
- ✍ Climbing and monkey bar games where the arms have to pull up the child's bodyweight.
- ✍ Playing 'wheelbarrows' or other games where the child bears his bodyweight through his arms.
- ✍ Animal walks, obstacle courses and crawling.
- ✍ Crab walks in all directions (tummy in air).
- ✍ Making bridges with their bodies.
- ✍ Making the letter shapes with their bodies; this will teach them about shapes and improve core strength.

## Appendix Two



### The function of the intrinsic muscles of the hand



The intrinsic muscles of the hand are the tiny muscles in the hand, which are responsible for many of the fine finger movements. These include:

- ✎ The ability to spread the fingers out wide, and bring them back together.
- ✎ The ability to move a hand, that starts flat on the table, to make a pyramid, with the knuckles at the apex, fingertips touching the table, and the palm raised from the table surface. The thumb moves into contact with the side of the index finger as the pyramid is raised.
- ✎ These movements can be seen functionally, when the hand is stabilised on the table, and the fingers move a pencil to write, and when the fingers make fine movements to thread a needle.
- ✎ The intrinsic movements can best be observed in activities that require the tip of the thumb, index finger and middle finger to be touching, while performing small movements in mid range flexion and extension, at the MCP joints (the knuckles joining the fingers to the hand).



These movements are performed best with the wrist in the slightly extended Functional Position.

### Activities and exercises to promote the use of the intrinsic muscles



- ✎ Rest hand flat on the table and raise the palm up into a pyramid, while the fingertips, little finger and thumb, all stay in contact with the table. The student can try to 'open the door' of the pyramid with his thumb by slowly moving it away from the hand in an arc as far as possible.
- ✎ The student interlocks the straight fingers and thumbs of both hands, and, as he slowly moves his hands apart, he tries to hold his fingers together by squeezing his fingers against each other.
- ✎ The student holds a piece of card, fabric, or paper between two fingers, and tries to hold it for as long as possible, while the teacher slowly draws it out. This is repeated between each pair of fingers on both hands. Initially it will be easier if materials with more resistance are used, such as corrugated cardboard, thin foam, non slip mat etc.
- ✎ The student uses both hands to make a large "ball" by keeping the joints softly bent, touching all the fingertips, and arching the palms. When this position can be found easily, the student can begin to move in and out of it, in various ways, e.g.
  - ☞ move the hands from the 'ball' to the 'prayer' position,
  - ☞ move the palms away keeping the fingertips touching by moving them closer together, forming a long hollow cage out of the two hands, and repeat to show a movement like a jellyfish.

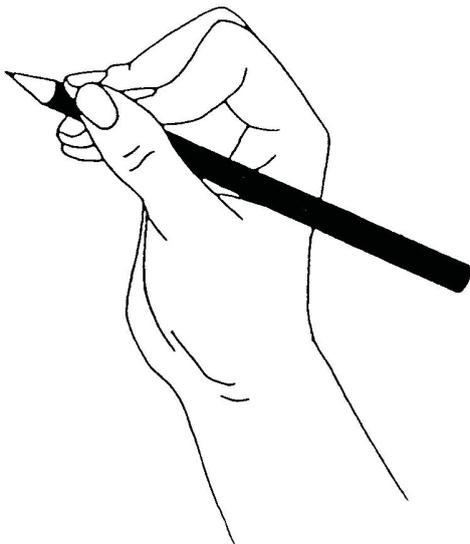
# Appendix Three



## Grips which may restrict finger movement and reduce fluency

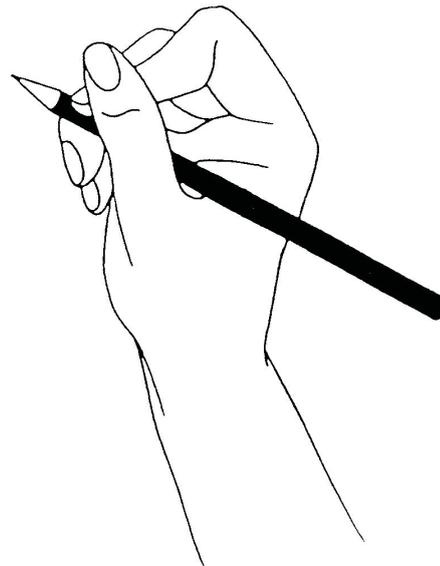
**Incorrect**

Middle finger on top, disregard of index finger.

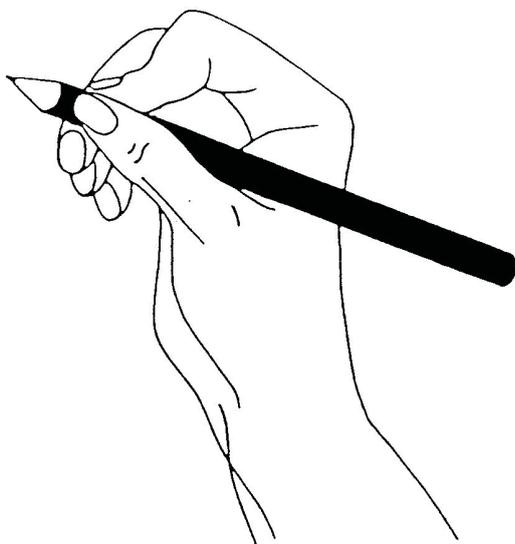


**Incorrect**

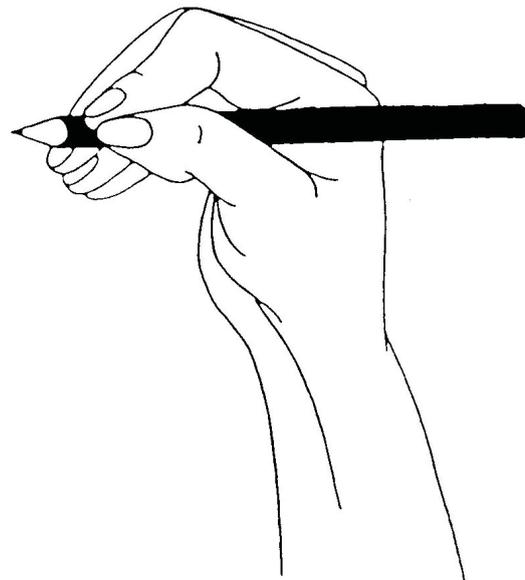
Thumb over index finger, pencil shaft low in



**Incorrect**



**Incorrect**





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