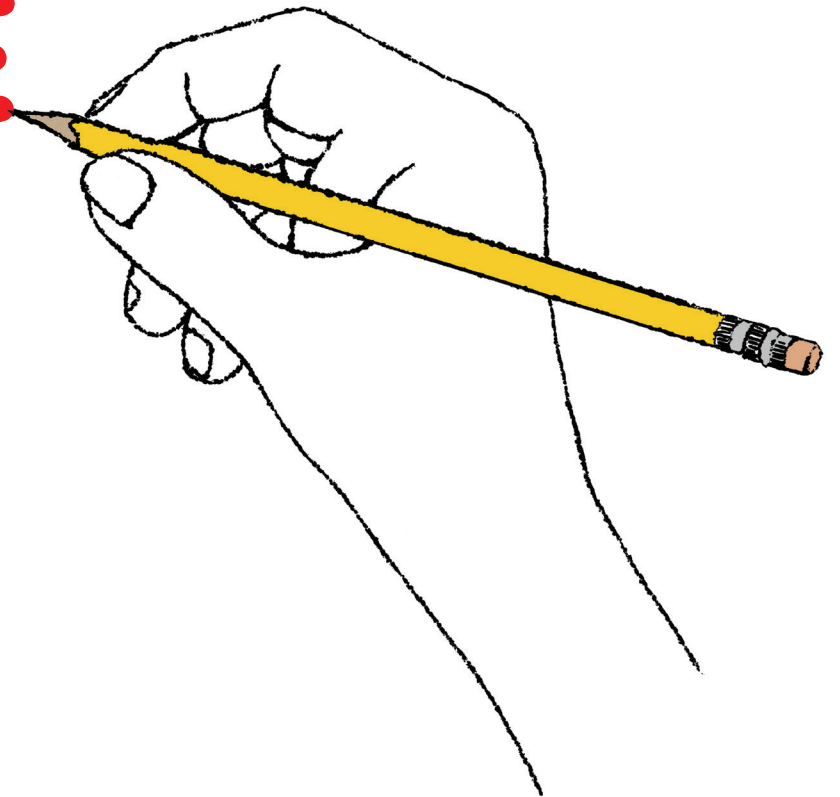


**FIX IT...
WRITE**



Nan Jay Barchowsky

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PART ONE

ALL THE THINGS THAT MAY NEED FIXING

Part Two Will Tell You HOW!

DISCOVER YOUR ABILITY TO WRITE LEGIBLY AND RAPIDLY

Do you consider your handwriting chicken scratch? Or, maybe you write clearly when you go slow, but you need to write faster. Then does it fall apart? This little book will guide you to handwriting that works. You may, or may not develop “beautiful handwriting,” but you will write legibly and faster.

It helps to understand that your handwriting issues are not likely to reflect a personal defect. When you first learned to write, two essentials may have been overlooked: *posture* and *rhythm*. They play equal roles in the development of legibility at satisfactory speed. Posture refers to the way you hold your pen or pencil, as well as to the position of the rest of your body. Rhythmic movement gives flow, consistency and automaticity to the formation of alphanumeric characters.

Consider any physical skill that you have learned, sports, music, maybe carpentry. You learned a specific posture, and how to effectively manipulate your body, a tool or instrument. Handwriting is another physical activity for which you need a certain posture and movement to efficiently transport the message in your mind onto paper.

You may not have been taught these essentials of handwriting. You may have first learned to print upper and lowercase letters that start strokes at their tops. Then you may have been introduced to conventional cursive where most lowercase letters start on the baseline, and uppercase letters change form markedly. It became necessary to change your habits of movement from those stiff, little print-script strokes to movements that are quite different. Some students manage the change; for others it's disaster!

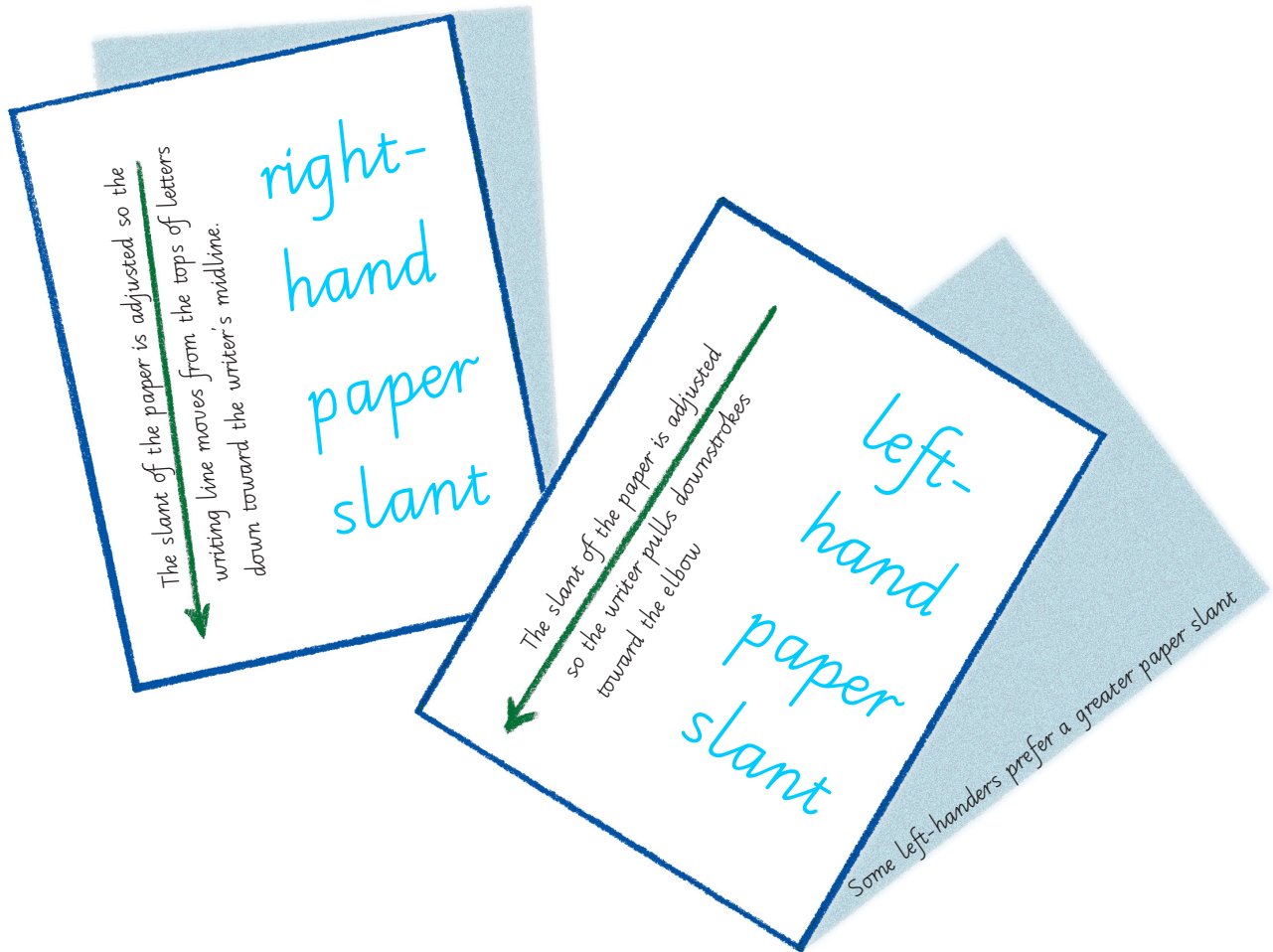
Perhaps you learned conventional cursive only. At least you did not undo habits and then retrain them. No doubt you were told to join every letter in each word. That works in short words, but is difficult in multi-syllabic words. In longer words the hand drags along and pulls letters off the baseline and changes their shapes, sizes and slants. In the 19th century when this method was taught, the pen hold was different: the hand did not touch the paper. The whole arm guided the pen with movement from the shoulder. Only the tips of the ring and little fingers touched the writing surface. Now most of us write with hand and finger movement. To avoid letter distortion the pen needs to drift off the paper occasionally.

Handwriting is a powerful tool! Enjoy the ability to send the handwritten message that shows you really care—bet you open a hand addressed envelope first!

THE GOAL: FIX CHICKEN SCRATCH!

for handwriting with maximum legibility at maximum speed

POSTURE



You may not always have the convenience of sitting comfortably at a desk when you write, but for practice the chair and writing surface should fit you. Sit straight, not rigid but comfortably relaxed, with your body leaning slightly forward. A hand should fit between the back of the chair and your back. A slanted surface such as a drawing table is good, but not essential.

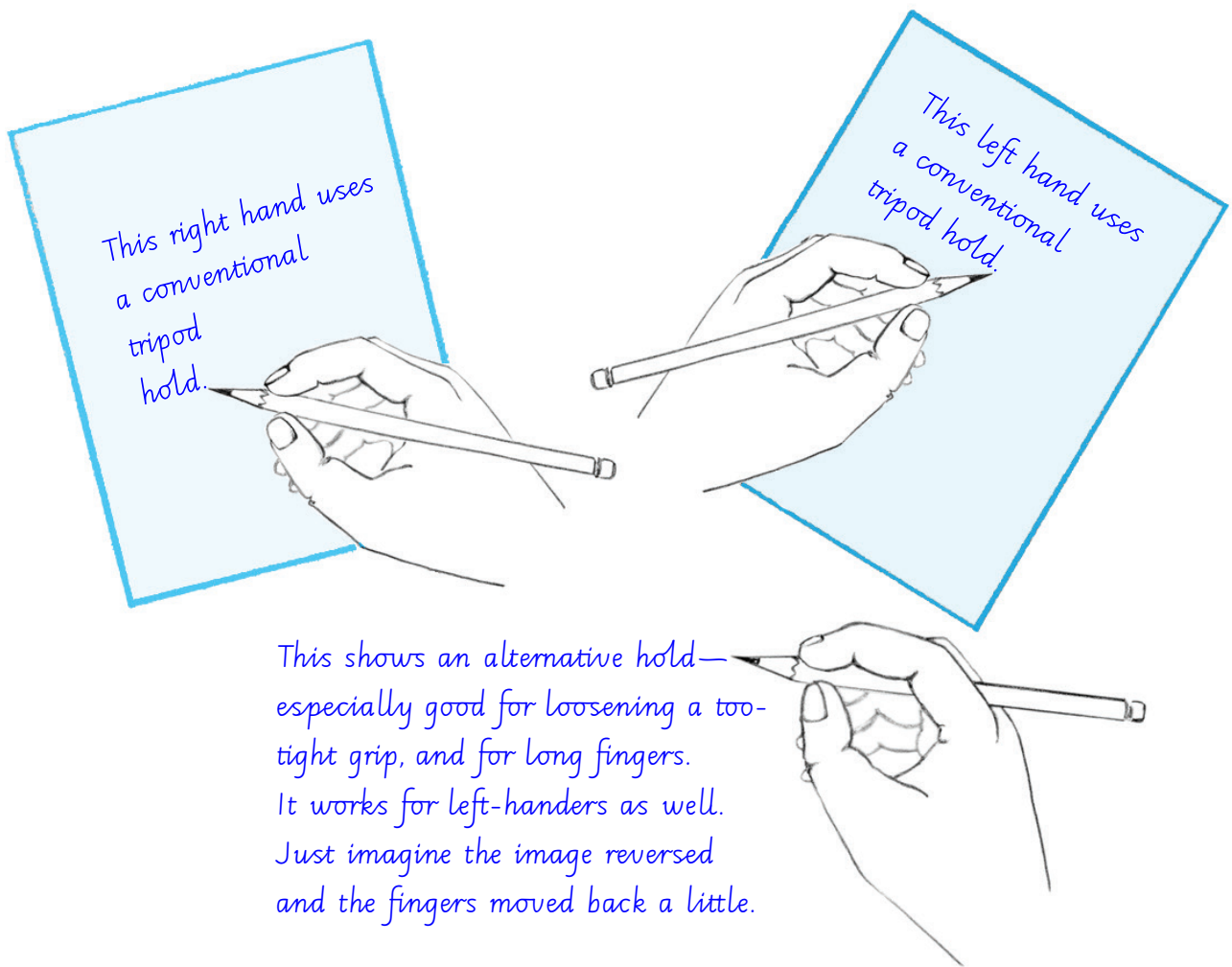
Forearms can rest on the desk, but the elbows should not. If an elbow rests on the desk, it tends to lock the body into an off-center position, and movement is restricted. The non-dominant hand keeps the paper in place.

Check the light source. Light should fall on your paper with no shadow.

Positions for the paper and writing tool are shown on this page and the next. The alternative hold can be very successful. It feels weird at first, but give it ten minutes and it will feel better. Always be sure that the pen rests in the web between fingers.



- To left-handers: Your handedness is not a handicap. Early instruction for you may have been ignored by a right-handed teacher with no experience in fine motor skills.




- Paper slant is more clearly addressed on page three. You may vary the slant. The blue backgrounds indicate possible variances that are fine as long as good posture is maintained and the slant of the writing is not excessive.
- Right-handers should place their paper slightly to the right of the body. Downstrokes do most of the work to define letter shapes. Strokes should move toward the midline of the body.
- Left-handers should place their paper to the left of the body. Downstrokes are pulled toward the left elbow.
- Left-handers should avoid a hooked wrist, or an elbow tucked in too close to the body. Both postures are tiring. A hooked wrist causes pain in any extended period of writing. Some right-handers also need to avoid a hooked wrist.
- Paper position should make writing comfortable with a relaxed arm, hand and fingers.
- The alternative hold will feel strange for the first few minutes that you use it. Persevere. It can be a valuable help, especially for those who have trouble with a death grip on the pen.

UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS

Your handwriting depends on your early instruction. You may have been told to sit up, but young children may not be told how to hold a writing instrument. Often both teacher and parent are clueless!

You probably had exemplars of the characters you were to emulate, but did anyone show you how? Did anyone ever mention the rhythm one needs for fluency?

Here is a list of common problems. Have a cold, hard look at your handwriting. If any of the items pertains to you, make a note of it to remind yourself of what needs attention.

- 1) Overall posture: sitting position, pen hold and paper placement.
 - 2) Proper *ductus*. Remember that handy, but obscure word because it refers to the sequence and direction of strokes that form letters and numerals.
 - 3) Spacing between letters, words and lines.
 - 4) Uneven or excessive letter slant.
 - 5) Uneven or excessive letter size, too large or too small.
 - 6) Letters crammed into the right margin.
 - 7) Numerals and math symbols poorly aligned.
 - 8) Failure to stay on the baseline.
 - 9) Overlapping writing lines; strokes of one letter run through another.
 - 10) Descenders tangle with the ascenders on the next line of writing. Descenders are the parts of letters such as *g* and *y* that go below the baseline. Ascenders are the parts of letters such as *b* and *h* whose tops extend above the body of letters.
- Posture, pen hold and paper placement have been discussed and illustrated.
 - Ductus is critical to legibility, especially with lowercase letters. As an example, if *o* is written from the baseline and around in a clockwise movement, the writing line will go through the counter (the inside of a letter), and perhaps go through the counter of a letter that follows: that's *ob!* 
 - Spacing depends on rhythmic movement. The emphasis is on downstrokes. Downstrokes are almost always equally spaced, with the space of an *o* or *n* left between words. Exercise patterns that are on the pages of daily lessons govern spacing, as you will see.

- Rhythm controls consistent letter size, shape, slant and spacing. Also, it corrects excessive size, whether too large or too small.
- One needs to be aware of where the writing sits on the page. If a long word looks like it will crowd the margin, just drop down to the next line before writing it. Usually the left margin is clear, but do not let it become too wide.
- The positioning of numerals and math symbols is also a matter of awareness.
- Failure to keep the writing on the baseline relates to a tense pen hold, and the attempt to join too many letters in a word. A student may have been previously told to join all letters within words. Rhythm is a factor too.
- For a simple solution when descenders tangle with ascenders on the next line use wide lined paper, or skip lines.
- ***Keep and date every practice paper.*** You will want to review and check on your progress periodically—and you ***will*** progress. You will be surprised by your progress, and encouraged to keep at it. Keep practice papers in a special place; a three-ring binder is ideal.

CHARACTER TROUBLE

Not your personal character! It's characters as in letters and numerals.

This is about some common problems with characters. Any letter or numeral not listed is one that seldom is misread. Review these examples, and make a note of any character that may be troublesome.

a: The final stroke must meet the baseline, or **a** will look like **o**, especially if joined to another letter: **ou** The top should be well defined and closed so **a** does not look like **u**: **u**

b: The bowl must be closed. If the bowl of **b** is written in a clockwise direction, it could look like **h** if left open: **h** If **b** is written with a counterclockwise bowl and left open it becomes illegible when joined to another letter: **br** The letter **b** can look like **l** followed by **r** or an undotted **i**, or...?

d: This letter needs to be closed too, or it will look like **cl**: **cl** If the ascender of **d** is too short **d** can look like **a**: **a**

e: This letter must have an open counter, the space that the writing line goes around. The counter is the red part shown here: **e** Otherwise, **e** can look like a poorly defined **r** or an undotted **i**: **i** If too tall it can look like a short **l**: **l**

g and **q**: Like **a**, **g** and **q** need well-defined, closed tops. Otherwise **g** can look like **y**: **y** and **q** can also look like **y**, as both are sometimes written with a straight tail: **y**

h: The ascender of **h** needs to be tall enough so it is not mistaken for **n**: **n**

i and **j**: Both letters need to have their dots, and to have them in place.






k: Too often **k** is first learned as a two-stroke letter. The result is that it can easily look like an uppercase **K** if the top part of the second stroke is not carefully placed. Uppercase letters, or the appearance of them in words look as though the writer knows no better!

m and **n**: Often **m** looks more like **w**: **M** and **n** look more like **v** or **u**: **M**

o: Just as **a** can look like **o**, so **o** can look like **a** if it joins to another letter with a join that droops too much: **ou** This letter needs its specific ductus. Can you see that in the sample below, where **o** is written in different directions?



Dear Nan & *Paul -
Because of the Seymour Bow (!!), we're going to aim for noon on the
30th. We're really looking forward to you being here. Also, I need to


p: The bowl of **p** must meet the first part that descends, not  or .

r: This can be a troublesome letter. If the print-script **r** is followed by **n** it can look like **m**: . The wiggle in italic **r** resolves the problem: . The conventional  has a shape that seems to be difficult to maintain at speed; the top dissolves into something that looks like an undotted **i**: . For those who learned print-script first  may be more troublesome because it is a new and different letterform.

t: Too often the crossbar misses its mark, or one forgets to cross **t**. The solution is to use the crossbar to join horizontally into letters, as described in Part Two.

u: Sometimes the last downstroke is missing. This makes **u** look like **v**.

Z: The problem posed by  is that it is a new character to learn if one learned **Z** first. A join to an italic **z** is discouraged because it can look like a conventional cursive **r**: .

5: If the numeral **5** is written with one stroke it too easily slips into something that looks like **S**: . Use two strokes, moving down and around the bowl; add the top stroke.

1 and **7**: If there is an entry stroke on **1** that is excessive, **1** can look like **7**. Conversely, if the horizontal stroke on **7** is too short it can look like **1**. Many people add a line through **7** to help define the numeral as **7**, not **1**.


The strokes for print-script uppercase letters all start at their tops. As long as the ductus is correct, there is seldom a problem.


Many of the uppercase letters in the conventional cursive alphabet differ significantly from their print-script counterparts, consequently they are not so easy for one who first learned print-script. The recommendation here is to use print-script or italic capitals unless you are completely comfortable with the conventional cursive ones. If you like, there is no harm in mixing some of one style with some of another, as long as the letters are legible.


All of the conventional cursive capitals below are essentially larger versions of their lower-case counterparts.


A M N U V W X Y Z


Some conventional capitals are essentially the same as the print-script ones, except that they slant more, may have curls and/or a different ductus. The ones that differ more are shown here.


 This letter starts like the print-script version. The writing line continues and makes the bowl of the letter instead of lifting for a second stroke.


 Consider this as a simpler way to write **E**, especially if the curl is eliminated.

 The downstroke of **F** is written first, with the writing line continuing and crossing for the middle stroke. Then the top is added.

 This letter looks very different from **G**. It starts at the baseline, moves up, circles around, makes a point and then comes down and around the bowl.

 There is no resemblance to **H**. Because we write **H** and **T** more often than other uppercase letters **H** is especially troublesome for those familiar with print-script. Instead of becoming an automatic movement, one often stops to recall how to form the letter. The writing line starts somewhere near the baseline, swings around and up, then comes down in a sort of curl.

 Here is another letter that can be confusing. It starts at the baseline, as does the lowercase **i**, but the resemblance stops there. **I** looks neither like **i** nor **J**.

 Some conventional cursive programs have abandoned this form because it looks too much like the numeral **2**. Something like **Q** is a more legible form.

 Except for the added loop at the top, and the left-to-right stroke at the end of the letter, **R** looks and moves much like its lowercase counterpart: **r**.

 Add loops and curves and an extra stroke at the end, and **T** becomes **T**.



Practice pages in *Fix it... Write* address lowercase letters and numerals. We use them far more than capitals. Establish good habits in lowercase letters, and your rhythmic movement will carry over to the uppercase letters you write.

PART TWO

The Groundwork for Fixing it Write

DAY ONE

THE PRELIMINARIES

Gather your supplies.

1) To read and use this book effectively you should have lined paper for practice and a folder or ring-binder for your papers. *Date and keep all practice!* You may be tempted to toss them, but as you go through the lessons you will improve. Stop after a few lessons and look back at what you were about to toss. You will be amazed at your progress and encouraged to continue.

Wide ruled paper, as in legal pads is good. Be sure the paper surface is neither too slick or too rough. Exemplar words and sentences are shown with a baseline, midline (the top of an *o*, *n*, etc.), ascender line (top of *b*, *l*, etc.) and descender line (bottom of *g*, *y*, etc.). For your practice you need a baseline only. If you want guidelines, please go to page 13 and either copy that page or use it with tracing paper, or other paper that you can see through.

Limit practice to ten minutes a day, never more than fifteen—or possibly ten in the morning and ten in the evening. Each lesson is intentionally kept short. Repeat any lesson if you wish, but do not write a letter, word or phrase over and over. If you do the first is often the best, the rest downhill. It's frustrating! Prove it. Try writing, "A quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." five times.

2) A soft pencil that makes a clear mark without undue pressure is a good alternative to a pen. The degree of hardness is hard to specify, as it varies according to the brand of pencil. A Ticonderoga "soft" is good, and the B and 2B pencils from art stores are reliably uniform.

3) Ballpoint pens are not recommended because they write best when held upright. It closes the palm and creates a tense hold. Try a gel pen for good flow when held as shown on page four. Fountain pens are even better. Start with a pencil or any pen you most like to use. You will probably try other pens as you go through this program. You may even disagree about ballpoints.

4) You will be asked to trace sometimes. One learns best by copying, as it allows your personal hand to rule. For tracing, use any paper that has satisfactory show-through.

Find a comfortable place to write. You may want a slanted surface; it provides the optimum eye-hand coordination. You can place a stiff board in your lap and lean it against a table. Masonite, about 41 x 61 cm or 16 x 24 works. You should have a writing surface that is softer than a bare tabletop. A small stack of loose-leaf papers or a tablet is good.

Lighting: For right-handers light should come from the front and left. For left-handers it should come from the front and right.

Please date and write the following. Keep it in your binder as a record of your handwriting when you started to work with this program.

Write a paragraph about your personal handwriting. Suggestions:

- 1) Why do you want to improve on your existing handwriting?
- 2) Do you want to change your method of writing?
- 3) General comments about your writing habits.

Write all letters and numerals of the alphabet in this order:

Aa Bb Cc (and continue through Zz) and 0 to 9

Write the sentence below. It has all the letters of the alphabet.

- 1) A quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.
- 2) Write the sentence again.
- 3) Now write the sentence as fast as you can.

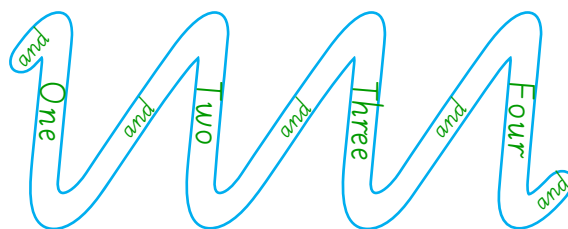
GUIDELINES FOR YOUR PRACTICE

DATE: _____

A series of horizontal lines for writing practice, consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dotted midline.

DAY TWO

Please take your time with this page. Trace the pattern below with your index finger. You will be tracing and writing patterns throughout the lessons. Patterns build the rhythm that is fundamental in good, fluent letter formations.



Now go to your own paper and write the patterns as shown below.



Put a little more pressure on the downstroke than on the upstroke. *Never* too much pressure! Let your pencil drift off the paper after you write four downstrokes. The patterns should not join. It helps to implant rhythmic movement if you chant while writing. Try “And **one**, and **two**, and **three**, and **four** and,” or “And **down**, and **down**, and **down**, and **down** and.” Background music helps too.

As you write, check your posture. Both feet should be on the floor. Legs should not be crossed, although the feet can be crossed. You do not want your body to lean to the right or left. Your back should be straight with the upper body leaning just a bit forward. Forearms can rest on the desk, but not elbows. If both elbows are on the desk the body is thrust too far forward. If the elbow of the non-dominant arm rests on the desk, the body is pulled off center.

Your pen hold and paper position: Keep the palm open, and the hand relaxed. Refer to page three and four.

You are in position? Good! Check the patterns you wrote. Did the downstrokes move downward at a slight angle like the model? Write another line of patterns.

Relaxed? Maybe not, because you are trying to coordinate pattern movements, body and pen positions. This will help: Close your eyes and write the pattern a few times. Concentrate on flowing movement. When your eyes are closed you can *feel* how your hand and fingers are responding to what your mind tells you to do. You are not distracted from what you see. Are you more relaxed now?

Date the page and save it.

After Day One your writing time, not counting time spent reading instructions, should be short. **Daily practice time should be limited to ten or fifteen minutes, no more.** If you practice longer you will begin to repeat errors, and become frustrated because it looks like you are not progressing. You may even be regressing!

DAY THREE

Analyze the way you write characters, and the way others write them. Understand characters, and you will find what you want to change, fix or keep. Here are three variations on our western alphabet and numerals. One, maybe two should resemble what you learned in grade school.

1) Print-script, often called manuscript or circle-and-stick. It is written with multiple strokes per letter. Some form of print-script is commonly taught to children in the early grades.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

2) Conventional cursive is commonly introduced after print-script. Some schools teach conventional cursive only. The cursive below and the print-script alphabet above are both generic forms. You may have learned slightly different letterforms.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3) Italic increases in popularity for its simplicity of form, and good relationship to one's natural hand and finger movements. Barchowsky Fluent Hand, or BFH is based on italic forms. The characters below are typed in the font for the BFH method. The numerals in parenthesis are not in the font, but are alternate forms that are acceptable.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk
Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
0 1 2 3 or (3) 4 or (4) 5 6 7 8 9 or (9)

No numerals were shown for the print-script. They are usually similar to the italic, but with just a slight forward slant.



This sample of writing shows how many of us revert to the print-script we first learned. To speed it up we join letters for better flow. For this reason the recommendation is to adopt some, or all of the features of italic characters, even incorporating some aspects of italic into conventional cursive.

The remainder of daily instruction is divided into two more parts, print-script with italic features, and conventional cursive.

Proceed to the next pages if you wish to improve your print-script writing, making it more legible and faster to write. Instruction is based on principles of the italic method. After Day Twenty you should continue to practice for ten to fifteen minutes per day until changes you make to your handwriting become automatic. For practice you can reuse pages. Use warmup patterns. Avoid boredom; change words and sentences.

Please go to page 37 if you want to improve your conventional cursive, making it more legible and faster to write.

PART TWO

SECTION ONE

Print-Script to Cursive with Italic Features

PRINT-SCRIPT & ITALIC

Modification of a print-script hand is based upon Barchowsky Fluent Hand, an italic method. The intent is to retain your individual look that is *you*. You will add legibility and speed to a personal hand.

Look at the characters on the next page. They are typed in the Barchowsky Dot OT font. Note the similarities and differences to what you wrote on Day One. The dots indicate starting points for each stroke of each character. The ductus (sequence and direction of strokes with which characters are written) should be standard, top-to-bottom, with few exceptions. All letters that require more than one stroke have numbered directional lines to further indicate correct ductus.

Occasionally it may be suggested that you trace, but you will move on to writing independently. The letterforms that evolve need not emulate the model. They may slant more or less, or be fatter or thinner. They should be *your own*.

There is a slight forward slant on BFH letters. Slant depends principally on posture and paper position. Please see page three and four.

Except for slant, uppercase letters may be close to those you are accustomed to writing. They may be a little smaller, but you can write them taller. Uppercase letters need no significant change unless yours differ greatly. The letters, *I* and *J* have no serifs (horizontal strokes at top and bottom). If you chose to use serifs, do so; it distinguishes *I* from *l* more clearly. The center of *M* comes down to the baseline purely as an aesthetic consideration. The second stroke for *Q* can be whatever easily distinguishes it from *O*.

Lowercase letters probably need the most modification. If you reverted from conventional cursive to whatever print-script method you first learned, you probably have made changes, some better than others. Understanding character formations is a first step to making handwriting fluent.

All lowercase letters should be written from the top down except *e*. All lowercase letters except *f*, *i*, *j*, *t* and *x* should be written with one stroke. The letters *d* and *p* are shown with two strokes to avoid retracing their ascender or descender. If you find it easier, write these letters with one stroke each, a good idea if one tends to reverse letters, but take care. A one stroke *d* can come apart and look like *cl:d*. Keep the ascender of *d* tall enough so it does not look like *a:d*. A one stroke *p* can come apart like this: *ps*. The rhythmic movement that you will develop carries the legibility of these, and all letters.

The first step toward fluency is to add exit strokes to print-script letters. The exit stroke is a tiny lift off the baseline, like a small check mark: ✓, shown here as green additions to the blue letters. Strokes that end on the baseline are abrupt stops, and abrupt does not equate with free, flowing writing. The small strokes will enable you to join into letters that follow, as in *him*.



a d h i k l m n u z

BARCHOWSKY FLUENT HAND (Italic Based)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk

Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp

Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu

Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

0 1 2 3 3 4 4

5 6 7 8 9 9

DAY FOUR
START TO JOIN FOR FLUENCY


Finger trace this pattern. You should be using your index finger.



Finger trace again, but with your eyes closed. Now go to your own practice paper. Keep your index finger dominant in the writing and copy the pattern both with your eyes open and closed.



You will use this pattern often as a warmup exercise because it is so simple, so good for rhythm, and it builds consistent letter size, shape, slant and spacing. And, you need not think about all the variety of letter formations as you practice.

If you are right-handed each downstroke should move toward the center of your body. If you are left-handed every downstroke moves toward your elbow. Be sure patterns do not look like these tents: 

Practice these letters: *a d h i k l m n u z*. Notice that *k* is written with one stroke, not two. Make sure you add the exit strokes. Notice that all downstrokes have the same slant, the same slant as the pattern.

Note that all the letters in these words join using their exit strokes. Be sure to keep the correct ductus. As you copy do not be concerned if the shape or slant differs from the example. Look for consistency, not exact replication of the model.

an din him in kin lint mint nut up zip

Try writing a few of the words with your eyes closed.



If you use an iPad or similar device, enlarge and finger trace some of the letters and words.

DAY FIVE
JOIN FROM C AND e

ce is the print-script version. ce is the BFH version. They are very similar, and they both end so that they can join to other letters with no change. The second ce letters are shaped for better flow; they are not so perfectly round.

Copy this warmup on your own paper.



Trace with your index finger:

ce ce

Practice ce, ce. Finger trace the words. Then copy them either large or small on your own paper.

cent enter

DAY SIX
HORIZONTAL JOINS

These letters use their crossbars to join to letters that follow them: *f* and *t* or *f* and *t*.
Finger trace the letters below:

fr ti

This is an efficient join, easier for a right-hander than a left because left-handers have a tendency to move from right-to-left. Please see page 29.

These letters can have horizontal exit strokes so they can join to letters that follow them.

o v w or *o* and *v* and *w*

The shapes of *f t o v w* will move more easily and fluently.

Practice *f t o v w* and the words below. Write them with your eyes open, and then with your eyes closed. Trace them if you wish.

fit tub on view cow

DAY SEVEN
JOIN FROM THE ARM OF *r*

See page 8 for an explanation of why the wiggle in arm of *r* works best with some joins. Finger trace the letters below. Write them. Close your eyes and write them.

ri ru

The letter *r* flows easily into these letters:

i m n p r u y

Copy these words

rim arm turn harp berry rust try

Practice these words and the sentence below, or make up your own sentence.

run farm sharp river fry arrow trim

*A warrior tried to rule the harpy. She struck
him with a rusty trident.*

You have practiced all of the basic joins, some of which you may have been making anyway.

DAY EIGHT
LETTERS THAT MOVE COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Finger trace this pattern. Always use your index finger; it's a reminder of the finger that is the principal mover of your pen.



Finger trace again, but this time with your eyes closed.

Now, go to your own practice paper, and copy the pattern both with your eyes open and closed. Vocalized reinforcement helps to implant the physical movement. Say, “and **down**, bounce up, **down** bounce up, **down** bounce up, **down** and” for each pattern you write. “Bounce” helps with the rounded bottom.

The pattern relates to counterclockwise movement in all of the letters that you see here.



Practice the counterclockwise letters that sit on top of the patterns. Then write the words below.

you yet dig gave will cove quit

DAY NINE
MORE PRACTICE WITH COUNTERCLOCKWISE LETTERS

Write the *uu* warmup pattern in one line across the page:

uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu uu

Next, write the same pattern with your eyes closed.

If you have the Barchowsky Fluent Hand Fonts you can compose your own sentences to practice, or you can copy these:

Sally will fix a cool, gooey salad.

A gaudy gull vacated the cage.

Dye wool to weave a yellow coat.



If you use words and sentences that relate to your special interests, practice will be easier and more productive.

DAY TEN
DEVELOPING GOOD RHYTHM



Make a note of this page. You may want to return to it for extra practice.

If you have an iPad or similar device, enlarge the patterns and finger trace them.

Copy the patterns on your paper as you count, “and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and.” Your pen or pencil should move down as you say each number, and drift up as you say “and.”



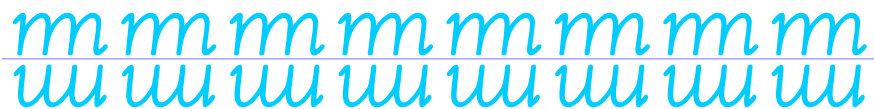
The patterns will help your writing rhythm. (Yes, I know I said that before! Please tolerate my insistence on flowing movement.) The one below will also help with the shape of the letters *u, y, a, d, g, q, c, o, e, l, t, v* and *w*.



The pattern below will also help with the shape of the letters *n, m, r, h, k, b* and *p*.



Try writing the patterns on either side of the baseline as shown here.



DAY ELEVEN
LETTERS THAT MOVE CLOCKWISE

Finger trace the pattern.



Copy the patterns on your own paper, first with your eyes open and then with them closed. You traced with your index finger. Remember to let that finger do the work of moving down and drifting up. As said before, auditory reinforcement helps to implant the rhythmic movement. Say, “And **down**, bounce over and **down**, bounce over and **down**, bounce over and **down** and” for each pattern you write.



The pattern relates to the clockwise movement in all of the letters you see here.



Practice the clockwise letters that sit on the patterns above. Then write the words below.



DAYTWELVE
MORE PRACTICE WITH CLOCKWISE LETTERS

Write the same warmup pattern that you used on Day Eleven.

m m m m m m m m m m m m m m m

Next, write the same pattern with your eyes closed.

If you have the Barchowsky Fluent Hand Fonts you can compose your own sentences to practice, or you can copy the ones below. Note that vowels are added from the counterclockwise series.

Hank's kin likes bubble bath.

Tim's mama raps a purple pan.

Petrouchka is not a peppermint.

DAY THIRTEEN USE CROSSBARS TO JOIN

You have been practicing posture, pen hold and rhythmic movement while writing words. Some letters within those words joined, and some did not. There are guidelines and rules for joining, but mostly guidelines. You, as an individual will find some joins easier than others.

Use the crossbar of *t* to join to *i, j, m, n, p, r, u, v, w, x* and *y*. Crossbar joins afford a convenient opportunity to lift the pen. Spacing is helped. These joins keep crossbars in place and you will always remember to cross *ts*.

Joins from the crossbar to *a, c, d, g, o, q* and *s* require that you trace over and back at the top of the letter that you are joining to, so it's your choice about joining to these letters. Where *tt* occurs, write the downstrokes first, and then the crossbar.

Use of *f*'s crossbar is more of a guideline than a rule, unless *ff* or *ft* or *tf* are in a word. Then you should write the two downstrokes first, then a line that crosses both letters, and maybe moves into a following letter.

Are you left-handed? Left-handers find it hard to make left-to-right strokes. Therefore these joins are not natural. Write a few words such as, *tilting, stilted, cattle, rattle, international, intuition*. Did you cross *t* from right-to-left? If yes, are your *t* crossbars well placed and legible? If not, it would be worthwhile to practice making them from left-to-right.

You are discouraged from joining from a crossbar into *e*. The counter usually becomes too small, or the *e* is distorted in some other way, especially when one writes fast. A join to *z* is always unwise, as the *z* can look like a conventional cursive *z*.

Joins from crossbars to ascenders are acceptable. The joins are similar to the ones you practiced on Day Four; they just move from the midline (top of a letter like *o*) to the ascender line. Most people join from *t* to *e* in the word *the*: *the*.

Just a note: Look at the conventional cursive *f* on page 40. If the letter were modified (*f*) it could fit the transition from print-script to italic-based cursive well. It would naturally join to letters that follow it: *ff ft* and *ff*. Keep the lifting movement from the bottom of *f* to the following letter light, or let the line disappear.



Good news for left-handers! This variation on *f* requires no unnatural left-to-right movement for the separate crossbar. The crossbar is incorporated into the formation of the character.

DAY FOURTEEN PRACTICE
CROSSBARS

You can divide this practice into two or more sessions so you write for about ten minutes each time. Begin each session with the warmup below. Write it with your eyes open, and then closed. Take care with your posture and pen hold.



Practice the letter combinations and the words below. Then write sentences with words that include crossbar joins. Make up your own or use the ones here.

ti tm tn tr tu tw ty

tint Batman catnip truck tug twin city

Batman tugs a truck through the city.

The treat was nutmeg tied to turnips.

My twin ties twigs to trees.

Practice the letter combinations and the words below. Notice that some of the crossbars continue to the end of a following letter, as in *tty*. Write sentences with words that include crossbar joins. Make up your own or use the ones here.

fi fu ff ft tt fy ffy ttu

fig fudge nifty gritty stuffy catfish

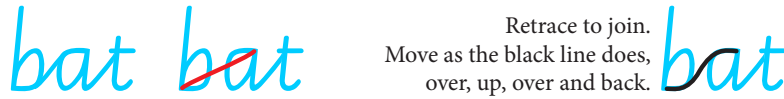
I stuffed waffles with figs and fudge.

Wolfman brought a nifty, glittery gift.

A mighty kitty tugged the tire.

DAY FIFTEEN
RETRACE AS YOU JOIN

You practiced letter combinations that required retracing. It is critical to legibility that the writing line moves around, not through letters. The word “bat” should be clear like the sample on the left, not like the next one.



It's the rhythm that makes it work. Note the *ccc* illustration below. The white dots indicate where pressure is lifted after making the downstroke. The black dots indicate the retraced area.



Finger trace the illustration. Then practice the *ccc* pattern on your own paper saying, “Over, around and up over, back around and up over, back and around.”



If you use Barchowsky Fluent Hand font, you will see that there is no join from *b* to *a* (*bat*), nor does it have a join from *p* to *a* (*pat*). That's because the join is not as easy as others for many people. It's a double trace at the bottom of *b* or *p*: out, around and up, then over and back for *a*.

Practice these words and sentences, or make up your own sentences. Notice that there is no double trace when *b* or *p* joins to *i*, *u* or *r*.

but bubble bib babble

put pump pat pup puppy

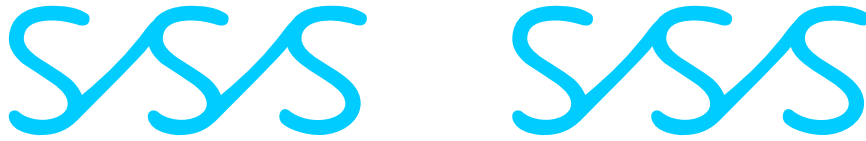
My cat catches cute caterpillars.

Bubba put a bit on the pony's bridle.

Pat pampered the baby.

DAY SIXTEEN
MORE RETRACING

The letter *s* appears to have much the same retracing, both at its top and at the baseline when it joins, but no legibility harm is done if either the top or end of *s* is clipped a bit short. Finger trace the large *sss*. Then use *sss* as a warmup exercise. Write it first with your eyes open and then with them closed. Then practice the words and sentences, using your own if you wish.



sss sss sss sss sss sss sss sss sss

sit sat scat miss muss bus bass

The cast saw six seasons of sad plays.

Sassy Susan sailed the Mississippi.

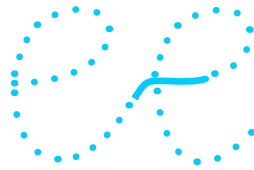
Tasty sausage pies satisfy most of us.


DAY SEVENTEEN
KEEP e LEGIBLE

How legible is the letter *e* when you write rapidly? Do you usually join horizontally into *e*? That would be into *e* from *o*, *r*, *v* or *w*, or from the crossbar of *f* or *t*. The *e* can distort. Please refer to page seven. Practice the warmup below.



The BFH *e* starts halfway between the top of the letter and the baseline, and joins by a slight wiggle. Finger trace the illustration. Are you making good use of your index finger? It should always be in control.



If you write an *e* like this , you need not change, but follow the rule of no joins into *e* from *o*, *r*, *v* or *w*, or from the crossbar of *f* or *t* to keep *e* legible. It **must** have an open counter, the part enclosed by the writing line shown as the orange parts below.



ee ee ee ee eel keel peel reel fee foe

tee toe we wee over oven steer stove

She sees egrets in trees, never in caves.

See eels in oceans, not in streams.

Jules serves tea in the green tepee.

DAY EIGHTEEN
RHYTHMIC PEN LIFTS

This warmup pattern is a little different from those you practiced earlier. It looks like a continuous line across the page, but the writing line between *u* and *l* lifts, and does not join to the ascender of *l*; neither does the writing line between *l* and *l* continue to the top of the ascender. The rhythm of down and lift and down and lift controls space between characters. Good spacing gives good legibility.

Look at the white dots. That's where the line starts to drift up.



Keep an even rhythm as you write. Never press hard. Use a soft pencil that will make a very dark line without too much pressure, or an automatic pencil; the lead will break with too much pressure. Did you keep equal distance between downstrokes? Is your slant consistent? While the pattern looks totally joined, letters such as *a*, *u* and *i* would not touch, or may just barely touch the letter following if that letter is *b*, *f*, *h*, *k* or *l*. If your writing line stops a bit sooner, or stays on the paper a bit longer than shown in the illustration, it is not a problem.

Write the words below for practice.

allow bubble still blow slide chow llama

Now write a few sentences. Please notice that there are some joins to ascenders, but they are from the midline, the top of letters such as *o*, *v*, *w*. You could move up to an ascender from the cross-bars of *f* and *t*. The writing line does not travel far enough to interfere with space between letters.


He slowly molds all of the cold bowls.


Milly, the yellow troll, glows as she floats.

Golly, it's folly to take Dolly on a trolley.




DAY NINETEEN
COMMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS

You need not try to write exactly like the model alphabet. Handwriting must be personal to be successful. Of course, it cannot be so idiosyncratic as to be illegible. Here are some possible deviations that you can make. There may be others. Refer to page 19 for the ductus of the exemplar alphabet. Dotted lines indicate the path of the pen when it lifts off the paper.



A You may write this letter from the baseline up in two strokes, like this: 


B, D, P and R You may write these letters with one stroke, moving down and back up, and then writing the bowl. Take care that the first down and up strokes do not separate: 


d and p You might try writing *d* and *p* in two strokes to keep their shapes. However, if you can easily retain the legibility of these two letters when written with one stroke, do so.

E This alternative form of *E* is easy to write: . It is usually a bad idea to write either *E* or *F* with these modifications:  or . The tops tend to get “mushy.”

H You can write the two downstrokes first. The ductus shown on page 19 helps the spacing within the downstrokes.

I and J Both letters can have serifs added:  and . They are omitted in BFH for simplicity, and for consistency; no other uppercase letters have serifs.

M The letter *M* can be written with one downstroke, followed by one more stroke that moves from the first top corner down, up and down again. The center of the letter need not touch the baseline: 

N The letter *N* can be written with fewer strokes. If *N* starts at the baseline, the shape of the letter tends to go too soft and splay apart: 

T It does not matter which line is written first. The top should move from left to right, but if you are left-handed, right-to-left is OK.

t Stay with the ductus, downstroke first, crossbar second. Left-to-right directionality of the crossbar matters more with the lowercase *t* than for the uppercase *T*.

As you write more fluently, the straight lines of uppercase letters will probably bend a bit, and you may even add some flourishes now and then. They might resemble the samples below.

A F K Q R T U X Y

DAY TWENTY NUMERALS



Page 19 shows the shapes and ductus for characters that represent numbers.

You have choices for three of the numerals. Use the ones that are most familiar.

Numbers and math symbols need clear alignment in order to make accurate computations. This practice pattern helps. Use it before every practice session with numbers. Take care with the spacing. Try to make your hand move with even, rhythmic strokes—always downward, of course!



0

The writing line should move around counterclockwise, starting at the white dot. If you are not in the habit of writing 0 in this manner, practice it with 6, 8 and 9. All of these numbers start in a counterclockwise direction. The counters of all four numbers must be open.

3

or

3

The rounded top on 3 may be easier to write. Sometimes 3 and 7 are written in reversed directions. Practice 2, 3 and 7 together because the writing lines start on the left and move to the right.

4

or

4

The open 4 is often used in handwriting programs. Some believe it is less apt to look like 9.

5

The number 5 should *always* be written with two strokes, as shown on the left, a downstroke from the dot and then a horizontal stroke from the dot toward the right. Practice 5 with 1 and 4. All three numbers start with a downstroke.

7

Often 7 has a line through it as you see on the left. The numeral 1 has a small lift to start. If the lift becomes too large, 1 can look like 7, so the horizontal line through the center distinguishes 7.

9

or

9

The number 9 must meet at its top or it can look like 4. Move around and up, meet the top and then down. The second 9 is similar to what one finds in many typefaces. It is written with two strokes, first a counterclockwise movement for the rounded part, and then a downstroke.



Practice numerals in groups as shown above: 0, 6, 8 and 9, then 2, 3 and 7, and 1, 4 and 5. Include math symbols and problems in your practice.

If you create an exemplar using the Barchowsky Fluent Hand font, you will have the first forms shown above (3, 4, and 9) and the 7 without its crossbar.

PART TWO

SECTION TWO

Conventional Cursive

A MORE COMMON CURSIVE

Cursive simply means that letters join up to flow from one to another. Part Two, Section One presents an italic cursive; this section presents what is labeled here as conventional cursive. If you prefer the characters on the lower half of page 15, this is for you.

The characters slant to the right, but slant is not so important as consistency. Even the back slant that is common to left-handers is not bad. Slant should not be excessive because it will compress the counters of letters, the area contained by the writing line. Clear counters are critical to legibility. Paper position, pen hold and the rest of posture control slant. Posture combined with rhythm will give you fluency. Please revisit pages three through six.

There are numerous conventional cursive handwriting programs. Letter formations will vary from one to the next, so the samples on page 15, and on pages 40 and 41 may differ from what you learned. The variations are not so important as building rhythmic movement into your writing.

Understand the source of conventional cursive. It developed in the nineteenth century as a more efficient, easier script to write than older copperplate based hands, such as Spencerian. Nevertheless, still more modification is necessary to make it work in the twenty-first century. Tools, and time devoted to learning to write are different now.

Quill pens (spines of bird's feathers) were mostly replaced by steel pens in the nineteenth century, but both pens are drastically different from ones we use today. There was no automatic flow of ink, or ink like substance. Pens were dipped into ink. Characters were formed with pressure on the downstrokes—not excessive, or the pen point would break. Upstrokes were light, otherwise the pen would sputter and splatter ink all over the paper. ***The variance in pressure is critical to retain for easy flowing movement.***

Posture controlled flowing movement. The pen was held in the hand much like the illustrations on page four, but no part of the forearm or hand touched the desk except the tips of the ring and little finger. All movement was in the arm and shoulder.

There is a specific way to hold any tool to use it effectively, whether a pen, a hammer or a violin bow. Our pens are ballpoint, rolling ball, gel and fountain. We move them with our hands and fingers; our arms seldom play a part. The heel of the hand should move freely across the writing surface.

MODIFICATIONS

Whole arm movement allows one to connect all letters in words, regardless of the number of letters. Finger and hand movement do not. We must put breaks in the writing line for multisyllabic words. Otherwise, unless one writes very slowly and carefully, the hand drags on the paper and pulls letters off the baseline. Letters start to slant in different directions. Sizes and shapes become inconsistent. Try writing the word below with all letters connected.

extraterrestrial

Is it easy to retain consistent letter size, shape, slant and spacing at a satisfactory speed?

Although you may start many lowercase letters on the baseline, try to focus on the counters, the essential parts of letters, the parts that writing lines enclose. This should help you to move from letter-to-letter more rapidly. If you look at different programs for conventional cursive, you will discover, for example, that some emphasize the undercurves and overcurves that start lowercase letters at the baseline. Overcurves are sometimes shown on *a*, *c*, etc. It would seem a good idea to include these strokes as a guide for joining all letters, but the focus can be too great on entry strokes, rather than on the essential parts of letters and how to achieve good handwriting.

VARIATIONS

For uppercase letters, notice the curl that starts the strokes for some letters like *C*. Some conventional cursive programs do not show these. It is more expedient to write a simpler letter, but that's your choice. There are many other deviations that one can make with the uppercase letters. For example, *l* could be written like this : *I*.



Please see pages eight and nine for more on conventional cursive uppercase letters. There are no practice pages for capitals. As you establish good, rhythmic movement in your lowercase letters, you will find few, if any difficulties with uppercase letters.

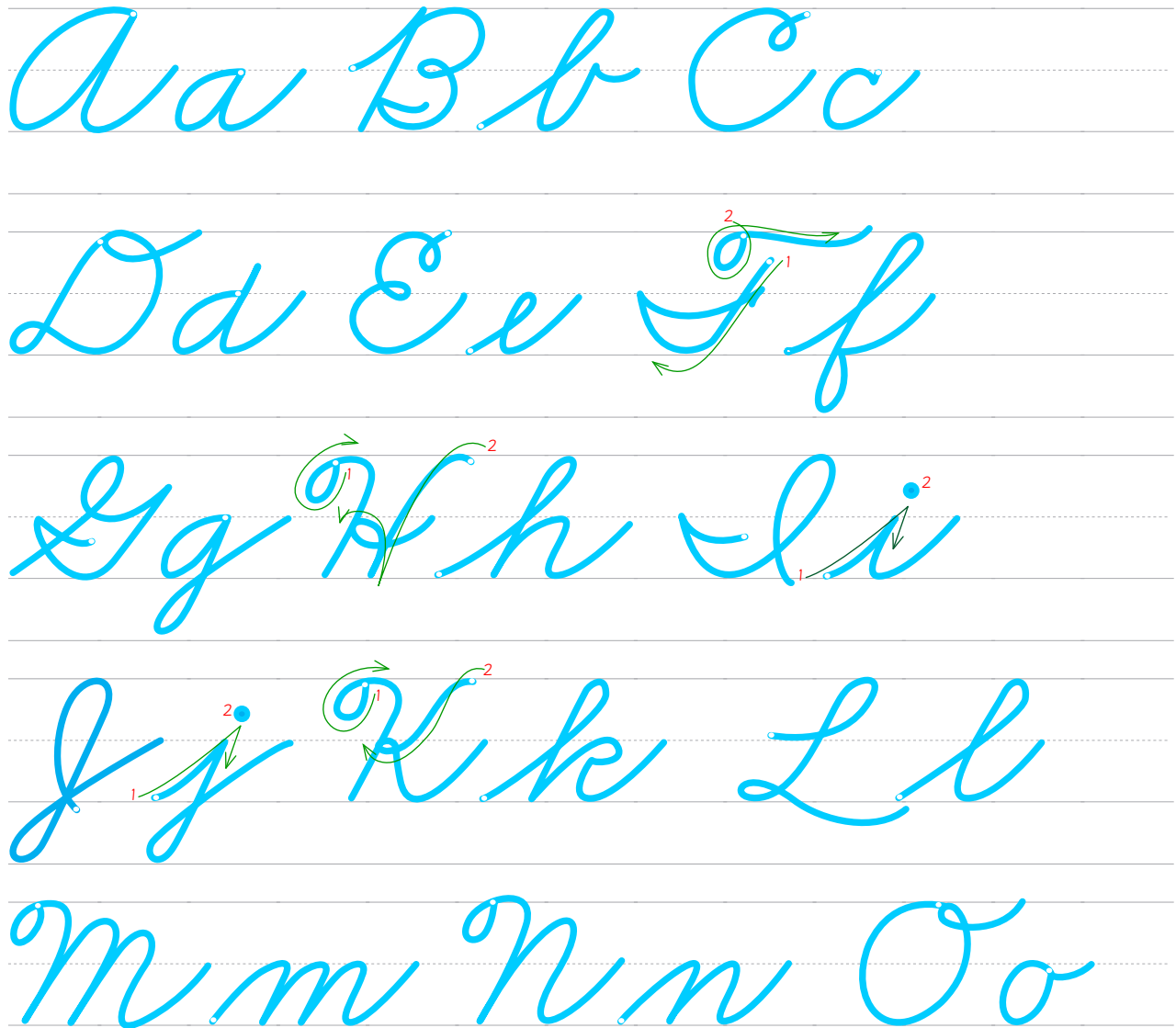
There are so many different versions of conventional cursive, or copperplate derivatives, that it is impractical to show all of them here. As you use variations, check with a mentor to be certain that they are easily readable. Your purpose is to develop handwriting that is legible at a satisfactory rate of speed. Your ability to take accurate notes in a lecture is a good test of success.

Prescribed practice for improving conventional cursive includes few exemplars for you to trace or copy, allowing you to follow your own preferred letter formations. You may want to look for a manual with a model alphabet that is close to your preferences.

A GENERIC CONVENTIONAL CURSIVE ALPHABET

Do you see a difference in size between the Barchowsky Fluent Hand on page 19 and these letters? The guidelines are spaced exactly the same. The uppercase letters are larger, reaching to the ascender line. Some, like *F* and *L* are wider. The BFH lowercase letters include smaller entry and exit strokes, whereas the conventional cursive letters have exit strokes that reach to any letter to which they might join. The result is that the same sentence, written in the two different methods will differ in length; the BFH sentence will be shorter than the conventional cursive.

The small white dots indicate starting points for strokes.



Pp Qq Rr

Ss Tt Uu

Vv Ww

Xx Yy Zz

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

TO BEGIN, GO BACK TO PAGES 11-16
DAY FOUR
MOVE FROM DRAWN LETTERS TO FREE FLOW

The pattern for practice should be traced with the index finger, the same finger that should dominate the movement of your pen or pencil.




Copy the pattern as you see it below on your own paper. Write it with your eyes open; then shut your eyes and copy. Use this pattern frequently to warmup before writing letters or words. It's simple, great for rhythm, and it builds consistent letter shape, size, slant and spacing. And, you need not be concerned about letter formations as you practice.



If you are right-handed each downstroke should move toward the center of your body. If you are left-handed every downstroke should move toward your elbow.

Chant, sing or whisper as you practice, “And **down**, and **down**, and **down**, and **down**, and.”

Be sure the patterns do not look like these tents:  . Lift your pen or pencil after four downstrokes. Do not let the pattern run on like this:

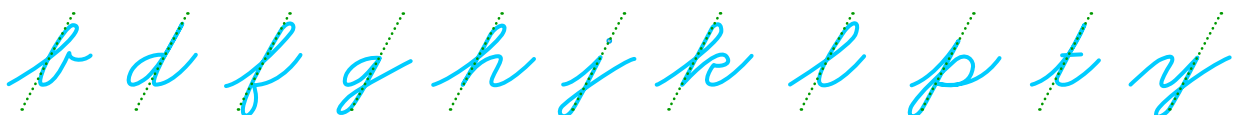


Why? It is difficult to retain shape and slant because the heel of your hand drags on the paper. It pulls the pattern out of shape, and off the baseline, unless you use the old whole arm movement with fingers and hand stationary with only the ring and little fingers touching and riding along the surface.

BREAK A RULE

That's right. Break the rule. **Do not join every letter in every word.** Let your pen or pencil drift up occasionally so your hand does not drag on the paper. Most adults who write a conventional cursive drag the heel of their hand on the writing surface without even realizing it.

Practice the letters below. Focus on the dotted lines that are drawn through the downstrokes as you build the rhythm of pressing and lifting.



Note that to allow for variances, the letters *d* and *t* are shown here with ascenders that are the same height as other letters with ascenders. Also notice that exit strokes will not always lead into letters that follow. As one writes cursively (with joined letters), one must adjust entry and exit strokes.

Write a few short words, and be aware of how you join, and your spacing.

DAY FIVE
DEVELOPING GOOD RHYTHM



Make a note of this page. You may want to return to it for extra practice.

If you have an iPad or similar device, enlarge the patterns and finger trace them. Otherwise, go to the next page and finger trace the large patterns there.

Copy the patterns on your own paper. As you copy, count, "and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and." Your pen or pencil should move down as you say each number, and drift up as you say "and."



The patterns will help your writing rhythm. The one below will also help with all lowercase letters where the principal movement is counterclockwise.



The one below will also help rhythm, as well with all lowercase letters where the principal movement is clockwise.



Try writing patterns on either side of the baseline.



Remove this page from the ring binder, and turn it around. Finger trace the patterns, using your index finger as the reminder of the finger that drives a pen. Try tracing with your eyes closed.

mmmmmm

mmmmmm

mmmmmm

DAY SIX
CONSIDER, THINK, WRITE

This page will help you to evaluate your current handwriting. Try out the letters and words as you read this page. Write slowly, and then rapidly. The four lowercase letters that are most often illegible are shown here and they are especially troublesome in conventional cursive. They spell the word *rate*.

a e r t

The reasons? The letter *a* can resemble *o*, and vice versa. The last downstroke of *a* must reach the baseline, and the exit stroke of *o* must not droop too much. As written in the *rate* sample, the top of *a* is a little broader than usual. That helps legibility.

The letter *e* is a problem in any cursive writing, conventional cursive or italic. Unless its counter is open, *e* can look like an undotted *i*, a poorly written *r*, or if the size is too large, *e* can look like *l*.

As one writes rapidly, the shape of *r* becomes modified, and the latter can look like an undotted *i*, or an *e* with a closed counter, or even an *l* that is too short.

In a short word such as *rate*, *t* is not a problem, but as one writes rapidly, the crossbar often misses its mark, or is forgotten. As stated on Day Three, you are advised to break a rule that you were probably taught. Do *not* join every letter in each word. Occasional drifts off the paper help the hand to move more freely, so use the opportunity to lift near the baseline, and then cross the *t*. As shown below, the crossbar of *t* can join to letters that follow it.

Please have a look at this word: *reevaluation*

The small, red dots indicate points at which the pen drifted up. Notice that the loop on the *l* is eliminated. The emphasis is on rhythmic movement. If the upstroke for the loop of *l* is drawn with pressure equal to the downstroke, legibility is diminished, and the writing is subtly slowed.

The *t* is short. Some conventional cursive programs show a tall *t*, as in *rate*. A shorter *t* is easier to write, as there is less retracing to keep in place. The crossbar of *t* joins into the *i* with its entry stroke eliminated.

DAY SEVEN
GO LIGHTLY ON THE UPSTROKES

The pattern on this page is different from the ones you practiced before. It looks like a continuous line across the page, but the writing line between *u* and *l* lifts, and does not join the ascender of *l*; neither does the writing line between *l* and *l* continue to the top of the ascender. The rhythm of down and lift controls space between characters. Good spacing is critical to legibility. Finger trace the large pattern.

Look at the white dots. That's where the line starts to drift up.



The lift of your pen is more of a drift; the pen just barely moves off the paper.

Write the smaller pattern on your own paper, first with your eyes open, then with them closed. Keep the rhythm. Never press hard. Use a soft pencil and you will see the difference in pressure. Did you keep an equal distance between downstrokes? Is your slant consistent? While the pattern looks totally joined, letters like *a*, *i* and *u* do not touch letters with ascenders, or they may just lightly touch them. If your writing line stops a bit shorter, or stays on the paper a little longer than shown in the illustration, it is not a problem.

Practice the words below. Your letterforms may not look just like the examples, but the ductus should be correct. Your slant, letter size and spacing should be consistent. Notice that in the first word the *l*s are joined, but the lift to join is light. Whether there is a light mark, or no mark before ascenders, and after descenders does not matter. Small red dots remind you to lift your pen or pencil.



Red dots also appear after *j*, *y* and *g*. If you continue the writing line too far up after writing the descender, your spacing will probably become distorted.

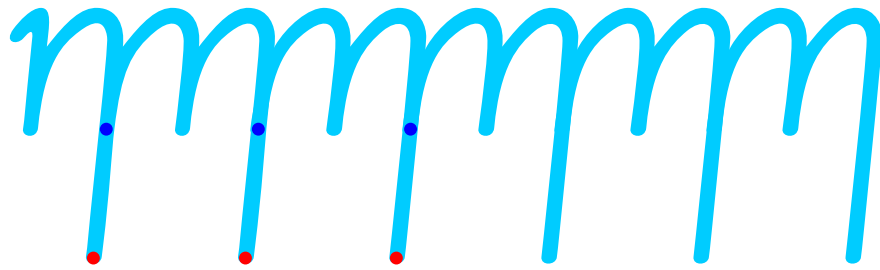
Did you notice that the exit strokes on the sample words are smaller than those on pages 40 and 41, more like the warmup patterns? Shorter exit strokes will help your flow from letter to letter.

Repeat your practice of the four letters. Put them in words, but stick to the ten-fifteen minute practice time. You can return later to this page, or any other for practice that puts rhythmic movement in your writing.

DAY NINE
MORE ON LIGHT UPSTROKES

Another different pattern! It looks like a continuous line across the page, but there are breaks in the writing line after each long downstroke. Finger trace the large pattern (always with your index finger!). Lift your finger after the long downstroke and replace it on the baseline to continue the pattern. The red dots tell you where to lift, and the dark blue dots show you where to replace your finger.

This pattern is designed to help with descenders, keeping an even space between descenders and letters that follow them. Remember to press on the downstrokes, and then bounce over the humps at the midline—*never press hard!*



Copy the pattern on your own paper.



Look at the sample words. Then practice them. The words have very light, or no upstrokes. Observe the red dots that tell you to lift your pen or go lightly. Loops that allow letters to join within words can disrupt even spacing, and they are lines that are unnecessary for reading.

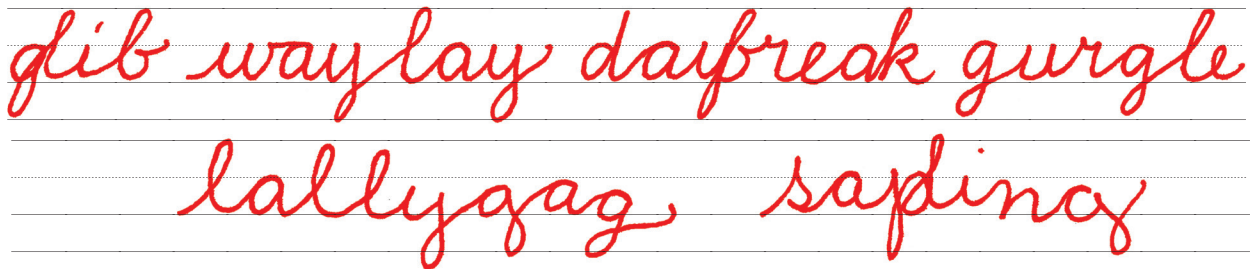


DAY TEN
MORE ON LIGHT UPSTROKES

You may want to do a few warmups from page 45 before you start.

Here are the same words that were on Day Eight. This time they were written with equal pressure, and without pen lifts. The writing lacks flowing movement. Spacing is inconsistent. On the second line letters are dragged off the baseline, letter sizes and slants vary, and again there's total joining within the words. Take a close look. Go back to pages seven and eight and check some of the possible problems.

Now, practice these words again, or other words with at least three syllables.



glib waylay daybreak gurgle
lallygag sapina

Frequently it looks worse and is less legible!

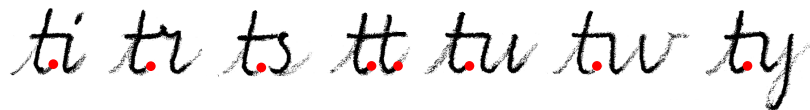
DAY ELEVEN
HOW TO BREAK BETWEEN LETTERS

The easiest, and most effective break between letters is the lift at the bottom of *t*'s downstroke. So many letters follow *t* in words to which a join can be made with its crossbar.

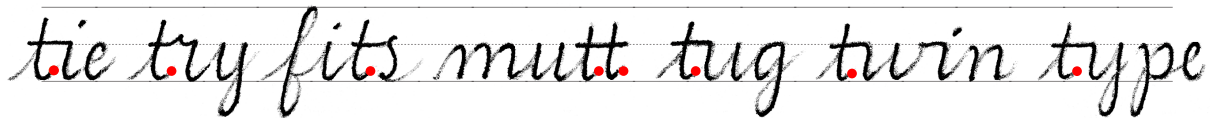
Use the pattern below to warmup, writing with your eyes open and then closed. Lifts between the four downstrokes of each pattern will help build a habit of lifting the pen within words.



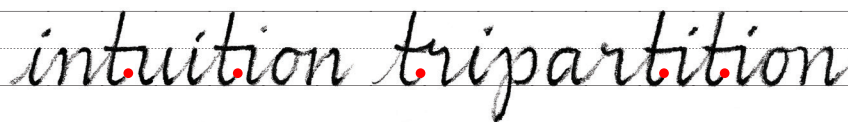
If you can do so, enlarge the line below and finger trace it. Otherwise, copy the letter combinations. Notice that the exit strokes are shortened so they do not interfere with letters that follow. The *t* crossbars are longer so they can connect to letters.



Practice the joins in short words such as the ones below. Red dots indicate the pen lifts.



If you have time in this session write the two words below. If not, return to this page later and to Day Seven. Pen lifts within words are probably new to you, so return to this page until the lifts help the flow of your writing.



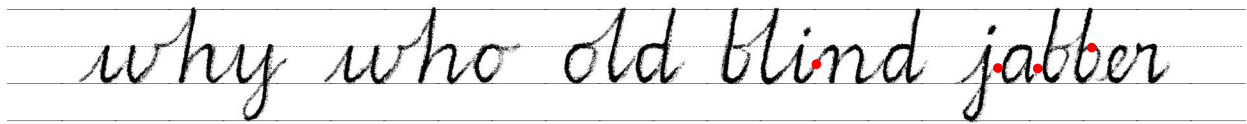
DAY TWELVE
JOINS FROM THE MIDLINE

The joins here are essentially the same as the one from the cross of *t* to the letter *h*. The letters *b*, *o* and *w* all have exit strokes at the midline (the top of the body of the letter) from which the line can easily lift to the ascender that follows any of these letters.

Either enlarge the pattern so you can finger trace it, or go back to page 45 and finger trace. Then copy the pattern on your own paper.



Copy the words, or trace and copy them if you wish.



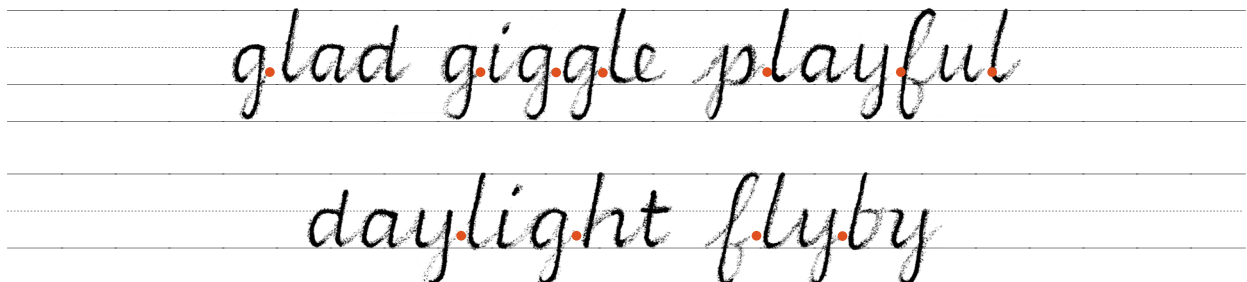
DAY THIRTEEN
LIFTS FROM DESCENDERS

The distance a writing line must travel if it is to join from a descender to an ascender is too far for most of us to manage easily, and still keep good spacing between letters. Even a line from the bottom of a descender to a short letter is best left unjoined. Rely on the rhythmic pressure on the downstrokes, and light upstrokes. Your writing will become more legible with no, or light loops for the reader, and the rhythmic movement makes it faster.

Use this pattern for a warmup. Lift the pen at the bottom of the pattern and replace it at the baseline. The red dot shows where to stop, and the dark blue dot that breaks the line shows you where to start again. Can you write this one with your eyes closed?



Practice the words below, lifting your pen at the red dots.

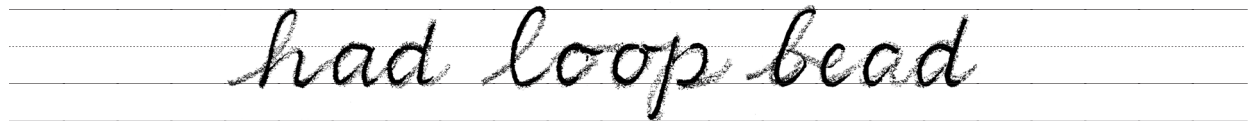


DAY FOURTEEN
OVERLAPPING LOOPS

Finger trace the large pattern with your index finger*. The rhythmic movement that goes around, up, over and back can train your hand to move around letters, not through them. Write three, joined *c*'s; then lift the pen for the next set. As you practice, say, "Over, around, bounce up and over and back around, up and over and back around."



Copy the pattern on your own paper. Then practice the words below. Choose other words to write with the letters *a* and *o*.



The three words in red illustrate what happens all too often. In both words, had and bead, the *d* could be *el*.



*Please forgive the repetition, but it's easy to forget that the index finger should drive the pen. When you use it to finger trace, it serves as a reminder.

DAY FIFTEEN
KEEP e LEGIBLE

The letter *e* is used, and abused more than any other letter, no matter the writing method. It is not easy to write rapidly and keep its counter open, and it *must* be open. Please see pages 7 and 33.

The problem is compounded when *e* follows a letter that either ends on the midline, or has a line that extends out to the right: *b*, *o*, *t*, *v* and *w*. If *e* follows any of these letters within a word, especially one that is multisyllabic, it provides an opportunity to lift the pen. In the sample (black letters) below, there are two ways to write *e* after either *b* or *w*.

Go to page 51. The crossbars of *t* do not join from *t* to *e*. Join from *t* as you are probably accustomed, from the baseline, as you see on the second line below.

Use this pattern for a warm-up:

ccc ccc ccc ccc ccc ccc ccc ccc ccc

Practice the words below, and any other words with *e*'s in them.

let bet bet seeds wet wet
better wetter



Notice how the slant on *e* compresses the counter. If you write with this slant, it becomes even more difficult to keep an open counter. It is for this reason that the sample letters are more upright.

The words in red below show *e*'s malfunctions. The first word might be lit, and the last might be wit, without dots on *i* s. What looks like suds is supposed to be seeds.

lit blt bit suds wlt wet

DAY SIXTEEN NUMERALS

Most instruction is given for lowercase letters, the characters we use most. They are the ones with which one builds the rhythmic movement needed for both capitals and numerals.

As with the lowercase letters, the numerals you see here may not be exactly like those that are familiar, but the ductus should be the same. All but the zero are rather small in relation to upper and lowercase letters; they can be larger.



Look again at the numerals on page 41. Notice the ductus; all strokes move from top-to-bottom, or horizontally at their tops.

Shapes and sizes of the numerals presented here vary somewhat, but if your numerals conform to the general construction of the exemplars, your only concern is placement. Numbers must line up well in order to use them for mathematic solutions.

Use this pattern for all numeral practice. Take care with the spacing. Try to make your hand move with even rhythmic strokes—always downward, of course!



0 The writing line should move around counterclockwise, starting at the white dot. If you are not in the habit of writing **0** in this manner, practice it with **6**, **8** and **9**. All of these numbers start out in a counterclockwise direction.

1 The number **1** often has a small lifting stroke to start.

7 One often sees **7** with a line through it. If **1** has that lift to start, but the lift becomes too large, **1** can look like **7**, so the horizontal line through the center distinguishes **7**. Neither **1** nor **7** needs the small hook on top.

2 and **3** These two alternate forms of **2** and **3** are shown here without the small entry strokes. The entry strokes can be added if it suits you. Practice writing **2**, **3** and **7** together. All three numbers move in similar directions.

5 The number **5** should be written with two strokes, as shown on the left, a downstroke from the dot and then a horizontal stroke from the dot toward the right. Practice **5** with **4**.

9 This number must meet at its top or it can look like **4**. Move around and up, meet and then down.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW

Please go back to page 46 for a reminder of the four letters that usually are the most trouble, *a*, *e*, *r* and *t*. In these suggestions, you will find sentences that focus on each of these letters, with suggested warmup patterns for each.

The sentences include letters with ascenders and descenders, and multisyllabic words that require lifts of the pen. Remember that “lift” means a slight drift, not an obvious lifting motion. The purpose is to achieve maximum rhythmic movement, the key to fluency. As you copy the sentences be aware of instruction on previous pages.



Reminder: The letters *d* and *t* are represented on previous pages with both short and tall ascenders. The heights do not matter. It is legibility that matters, so go with the letters that you can most easily write clearly.

The first focus letter is *r*. Write a few *r*s. Then copy the warmup pattern.



Copy the sentences. Rewrite them if you wish, use other words or sentences with multiple *r*s .

Irritate the irreverent, corruptible reprobate.

A burro carries red, rosy, rations of Burritos in the arroyo.

The next focus letter is *a*. Write a few *a*s. Then copy the warmup pattern.



Copy the sentences. Rewrite them if you wish, use other words or sentences with multiple *a*s .

An ample supply of acid apples apparently is adequate for autumn.

Fans are avid admirers of actors, actresses and acrobats.

The third focus letter is *t*. Please review page 51. Write a few *t*s. Then copy the warmup pattern.



Copy the sentences. Rewrite them if you wish, use other words or sentences with multiple *t*s .

A timid tale told of little trivial tidbits is terribly tedious.

Straight ties on railroad tracks aid the trail of trains that transport trucks and tractors.



The last focus letter is *e*. Write a few *e*s. Then copy the warmup pattern.



Copy the sentences. Rewrite them if you wish, use other words or sentences with multiple *e*s .

Even sheep bleat when they meet greedy, green gremlins.

Feed meat to eleven eels and they eventually feel sleepy.

A SUMMATION OF THE HUGE SUM OF HANDWRITING HISTORY



Those symbols represent thousands of years in the evolution of writing.

This is a modest attempt to squeeze that evolution into a few short pages. First a pictogram was used to communicate. The ox head on the left eventually became our letter “A.” Ideograms evolved from pictograms for a sort of shorthand for the picture. Then came phonograms; “A” represents a spoken sound in our western world. Handwriting is a complex, graphomotor skill with all parts of communication, meaning, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. coming together to transmit a message from the mind, not a skill that happened overnight.

Handwriting is seldom considered in a history lesson. Yet, it has a significant role. We tend to take literacy, and even electronic communication for granted. But, individuals and civilizations who can neither read, nor write share our world. Many earlier realms were ruled by illiterates. Monarchs retained scribes to convey decrees and other messages. The skill guaranteed scribes a high position in court. (Imagine a scribe who might advance his own agenda and turn events in his favor!)

The early, simple method of communication was mnemonics, memory joggers that serve minimal communication. They take the form of knots, notches, beads, and symbols such as the petroglyphs in the southwest. The Catholic Rosary is a mnemonic. Ideograms are similar. They can be read by anyone, and are used for international signage.

Writing evolved along with tools. Scribes in the past had few, and inferior tools at their disposal. Unlike those we have today, not all would move around in any direction. Around 5,500 BCE Cuneiform developed in the Tigris and Euphrates area. Representative shapes were scribed or stamped into damp clay. Variations of Cuneiform survived for a long period of time in the Middle East. Around 1,000 BCE alphabetic writing developed, and was carried to Greece, then to Rome.

A stylus on a wax tablet was also used. If you ever tried to write in wax you would find that the tool restricts the strokes. The same is true of a chisel on stone. The tools create stiff, simple strokes.

In Egypt scribes cut reeds to write on papyrus. A sheet of pressed papyrus segments is rough, so the writing must be larger than on vellum or paper. The Egyptian system of writing lasted for 3,500 years. Hieroglyphics was reserved for sacred, or highly important stone carvings. From hieroglyphics came two cursive styles, hieratic and demotic, both pen written. Cursive, here and throughout the history of writing simply refers to more rapid writing than a formal style. Frequently some letters are joined.

Hieratic and demotic writing was written with a reed on papyrus. Papyrus was rolled into scrolls, and could be cumbersome, yet for lack of a better material, it was traded freely beyond Egypt. Neither stone inscriptions nor wax tablets are handy to transport. Imagine the impact upon history when reed on papyrus came into use.

Animal skins have been used since ancient times, perhaps since 200 BCE. Skins were also rolled, but could be folded to fit into books for easier handling. Available writing surfaces were not cheap. Books and scrolls written by hand on papyrus or skin were precious. When printing was introduced in the fifteenth century, it took three hundred skins to produce one Bible!

The Moors brought paper to Spain from China in the eighth century CE. Far Eastern writing methods had little influence on Western writing, except for paper. That was of enormous import. The economical production of paper made communication viable throughout Europe and the British Isles.

Then, as today vellum, a highly refined skin, is preferred for the most elegant and important calligraphy. Quills are the specially treated, large flight feathers of certain birds. They are commonly used for writing on skins. Reeds are also sometimes used. Until copperplate came into fashion quills and reeds were cut so that the end, or nib is squared off, rather than pointed. Both must be sharpened frequently with a “penknife” (whence comes the name of that handy knife in many pockets). The nibs on quills are fragile; the chisel shape helped prevent breakage. In any case, letters and numbers have a thick and thin appearance that carries over to the typefaces that we most often read.

It is thought that the distribution of weight on characters, from inscriptions to book type, makes reading easier. We are accustomed to letters with thick and thin lines. Is that what makes them more readable?

For handwriting, the pressure on a reed, quill, or steel pen must be greater on the downstroke than the upstroke. Otherwise the nib will splatter, and the fragile nib of a quill is apt to break. A good relaxed hold on any writing tool moves most efficiently and fluently with a pull on the downstroke and a drift up on the upstroke.

Ancient Greece and Rome have left little other than stone inscriptions. Some fragments of cursive writing exist to tell us, for example, that Roman soldiers wrote threatening notes on their possessions to ward off thieves.

Books remain from the Dark and Middle Ages, but not much informal writing has survived. Writing styles and legibility differed considerably until the Emperor Charlemagne came into power in the eighth century. He conquered and united most of Western Europe. Although it is believed that he was illiterate, Charlemagne vigorously advanced scholarship. Among other learned persons from the empire, he brought Alcuin of York into his service, and it is he who is credited with reforming the handwriting of the day with Carolingian, a minuscule (lowercase) alphabet whose letterforms set a standard.

Although writing deteriorated in later centuries, Carolingian survives in most of the type you read today. It also was the apparent model for the handwriting of the Renaissance. Literacy in the Renaissance was relatively common. Political and Vatican matters demanded speed and clarity in the large amount of correspondence. Aesthetics, and purity of line were also a prime consideration. A bookhand of that time, and the italic hand fit the bill well, and are reminiscent of Carolingian.

Printing with a copper plate and burin was a huge influence on handwriting. Fashion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was extravagant, and fanciful letterforms were popular. Writing masters practiced, and learned to maneuver their quills to emulate the moves of a burin. They almost drowned out the use of italic, however it remained the choice of people in high levels of society. Italic also came to the New World with the Spaniards, and apparently thrived amongst literate people.

In Europe and in the early days of America the hand one learned was an indication of status: one hand for gentlemen, one for ladies, another for tradesmen, and so on. Commerce was a man's world, not to be entered by women (although a few snuck under the wire). Few women knew how to write. One's station in life could be easily determined by the appearance of the writing.

Steel pens with a pointed nib came into use in the eighteenth century. Pressure was applied to the downstrokes for a thicker line, sometimes a double line was written and then filled in for a look similar to that which a quill might make. Most writing methods were copperplate based. Spencerian was especially popular in the United States, allowing writing masters to flaunt their expertise with fanciful letters to woo clients.

As literacy grew amongst the populace, letterforms were simplified in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Two prominent reformers were Austin Norman Palmer and Charles Paxton Zaner. You may know of the Palmer, and the Zaner-Bloser methods. Almost the only handwriting taught to children was what we frequently refer to as "cursive."

In the first quarter of the twentieth century educators decided that the conventional cursive was difficult for young children who were learning to read the type in books. So-called manuscript and ball-and-stick were introduced to be closer to type. But then, it was decided that children need the conventional cursive for a more grown-up hand. Now, many children learn two separate and different ways to write, OK for a few, difficult for some, and disastrous for others!

Hopefully the historic pendulum will find a better way to swing.

"To draw a line means having an idea, a thought."
Richard Serra

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CONCLUSION

You have learned how to improve your handwriting. But, do you still need to stop and think about the changes you made? It is more legible, but you need speed. The writing needs to be automatic. Try keeping a journal. It provides great practice. Keep the events of your life, and your philosophies short in the beginning.

For continuing practice remember the ten-to-fifteen minute limit. Always start with warmup patterns before you write words or sentences.

Go back and review your practice pages. You will be encouraged, probably amazed at your progress. Congratulate yourself. Then take a hard look at areas that still need work. Use the characters, numbers or pairs of characters in words and sentences for continuing practice. Use appropriate pages over again.

Watch out for spacing when two words combine for a compound word. They often want to separate. Stalemate can become a stale mate; grandfather will say “grand father” even if he is not so grand!

If you started a journal for practice, it may not be the ideal you want to hand down to posterity, but you may be inspired to start a journal anew once you feel confident that you have acquired handwriting with automaticity. You will find yourself writing notes to your friends that they will keep long after an email or text message has been trashed.

Because most adults revert to what they first learned, there is greater focus on Part Two, Section One than on Section Two. If you want the Barchowsky fonts, or feel you need more practice, please visit <http://www.BFHhandwriting.com>.

Questions, suggestions and comments are welcome. Contact:

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