

Handwriting Manual Grades 3-5



Moore County Schools

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INTRODUCTION

This curriculum was developed as an instructional tool to be utilized by classroom teachers of grades three through five. It was written especially keeping the beginning teacher in mind.

Use of this curriculum by each teacher of each elementary grade will provide a consistent program in handwriting throughout all schools in the Moore County System. This curriculum is intended to be used as a standard procedure for teaching handwriting.

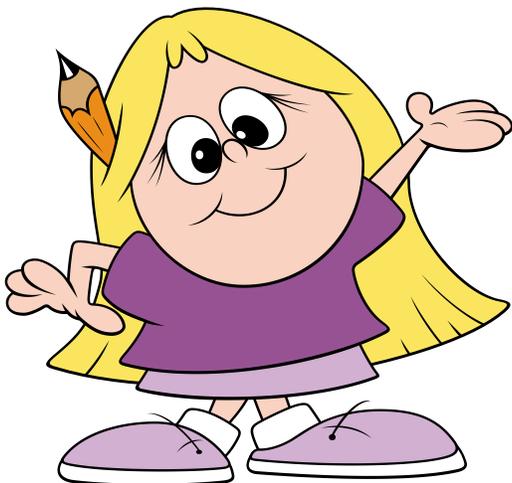
PHILOSOPHY

Grades 3 – 5

One of the most important tools for communicating effectively is handwriting. Therefore, we should aim to teach our students to write legibly, with speed and ease.

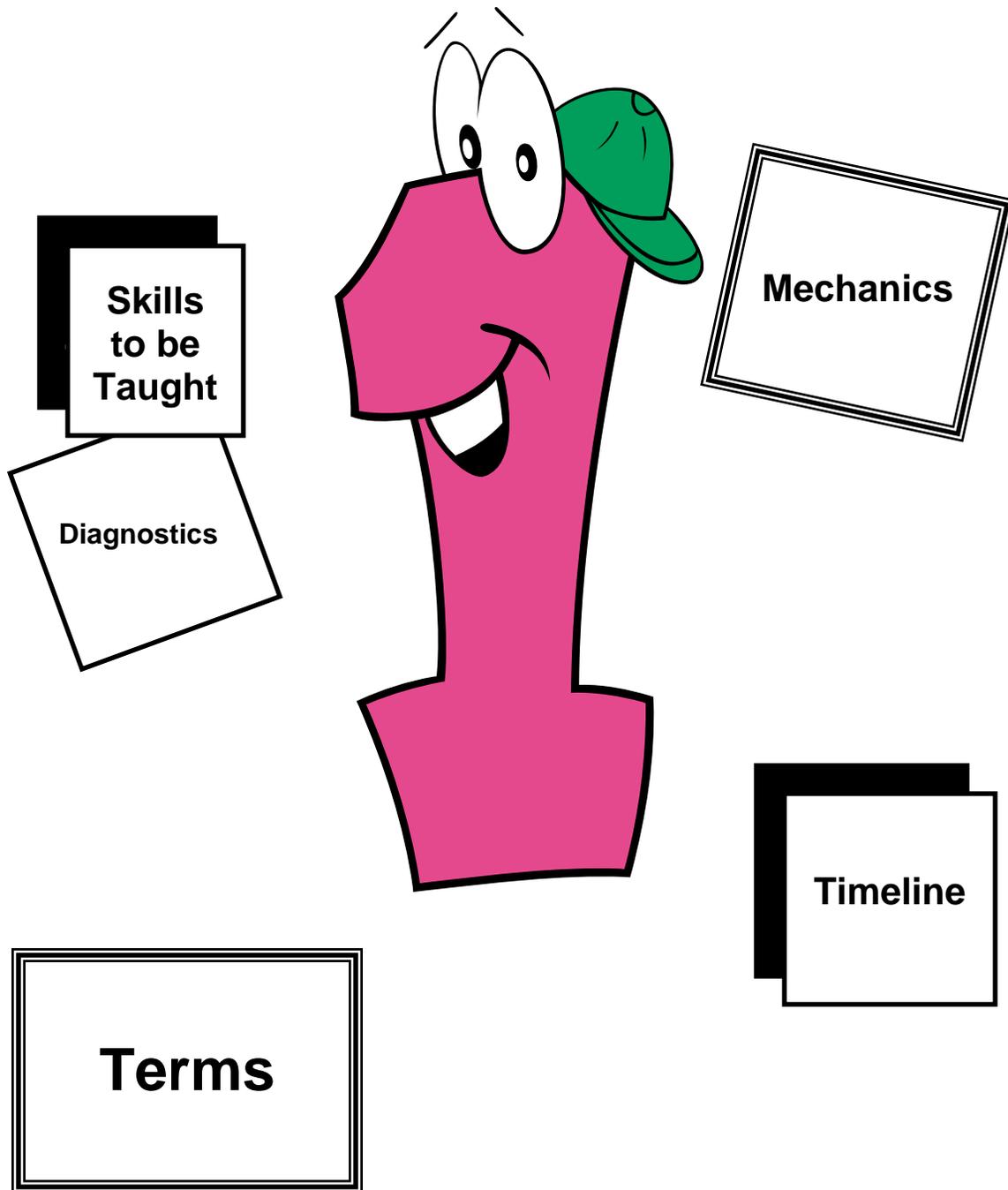
Handwriting is best developed through direct, repetitive practice with reinforcement through interesting activities. Handwriting is an invaluable skill for everyone and should be maintained at the highest level throughout life. Additionally, handwriting reinforces language and writing skills.

Teacher directed instruction is the most effective means of acquiring good handwriting skills. A standard procedure should be used consistently with all students to teach these skills. Maintenance and improvement of these skills can be achieved only through systematic evaluation.



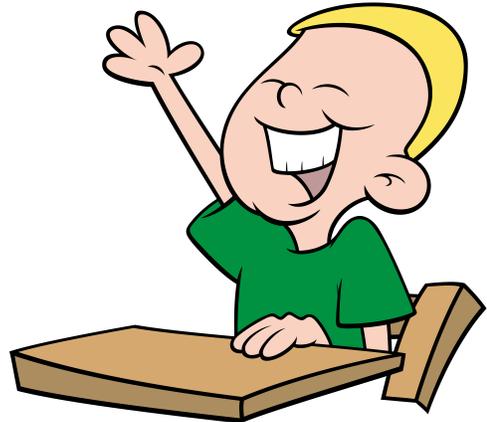
The goal of the handwriting curriculum is to teach both the manuscript and cursive writing styles so that each student will write legibly and attractively in all writing situations.

SECTION I



Third Grade

3rd



Skills to be taught:

- Paper position for cursive
- Review correct pencil grip, paper position, and body position
- Name of strokes
- Differences in manuscript and cursive
- Basic cursive strokes through gross motor involvement
- Cursive letters grouped by similarities of strokes in upper and lowercase sequence
- Difficult cursive joinings

Third Grade

Cursive Writing Timeline

Directions: During the third week of school, start with week one. The timeline below will comprise twelve weeks of instruction

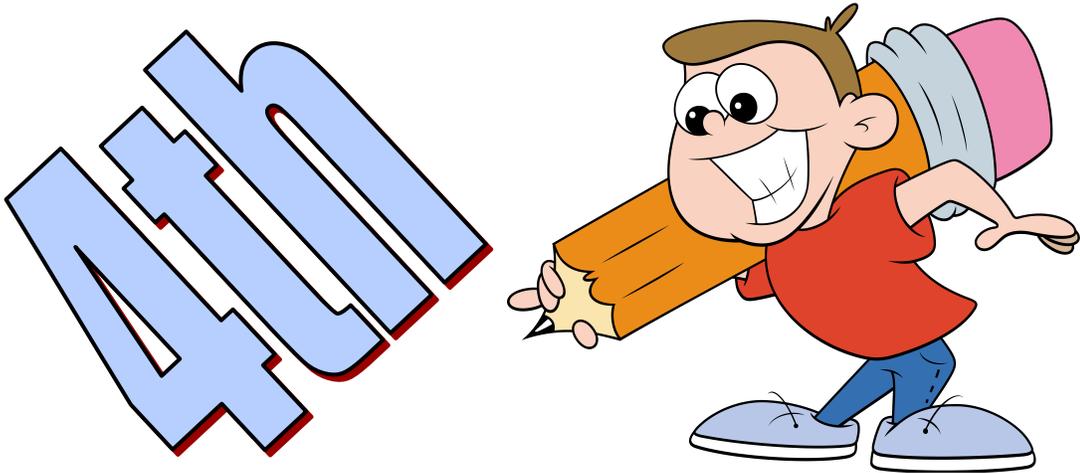
(Focus on paper position and pencil grip)

Skill to be Taught	Week in Which Skill is to be Taught											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
All the Clock Climbers – a, d, q, g, c	X											
Kite String – i, u, w, t		X										
Finish Kite String – j, p, r, s, o			X									
Loop Group – h, k, b				X								
Finish Loop Group – f, l, e					X							
Hills/Valleys – n, m, v, y, x, z						X						
Slim 7's – R, P, B, H, K							X					
Umbrella Top – C, E, A/Eggs – O, Q								X				
Hills/Deep Valley – M, N, U, V, Y									X			
SneakySnake Tops – T, F (teach both formations)										X		
Half Hearts – X, W/Left Swingers – I, J											X	
Fat Bellies – G, S, L, D and Zip - Z												X

NOTE:

For fourth grade students being taught cursive handwriting for the first time during this “transition year”, follow the timeline above.

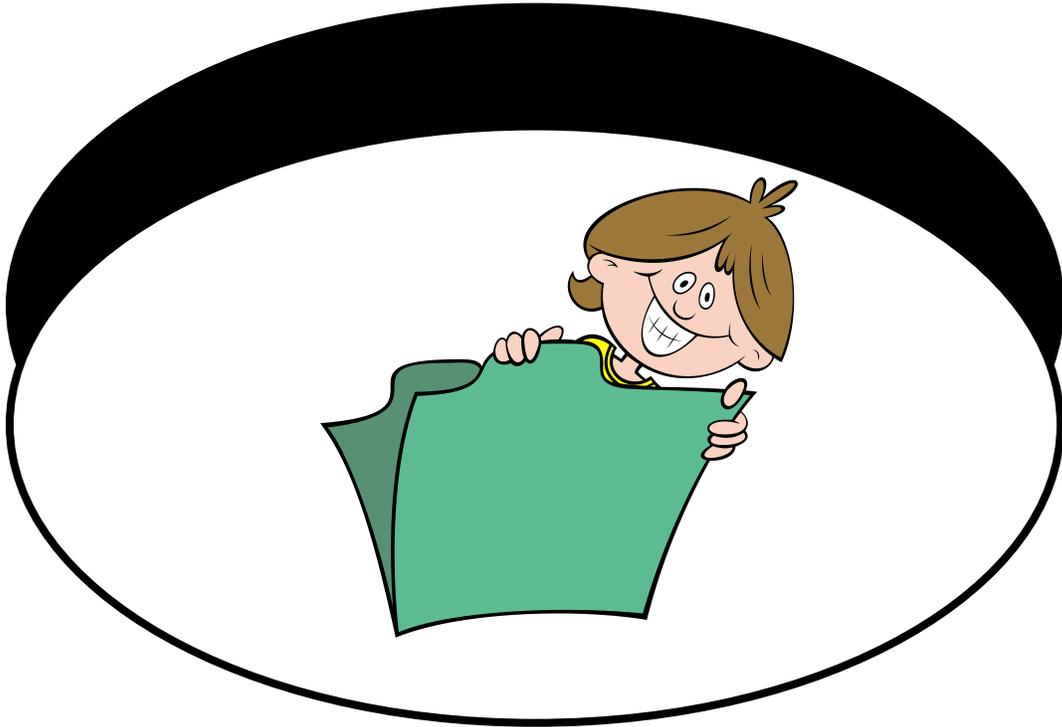
Fourth Grade



Skills to be taught:

- Review correct pencil grip, paper position, and body position
- Review of all cursive letters in isolation
- Mastery of difficult joinings
- Maintenance of manuscript where appropriate (charts, posters, labeling forms and applications)
- Increased completion of content work in cursive
- Aim for speed in primary proportions
- Continued self-evaluation techniques
- Mastery of all primary cursive upper and lowercase letters from memory

Fifth Grade



Skills to be taught:

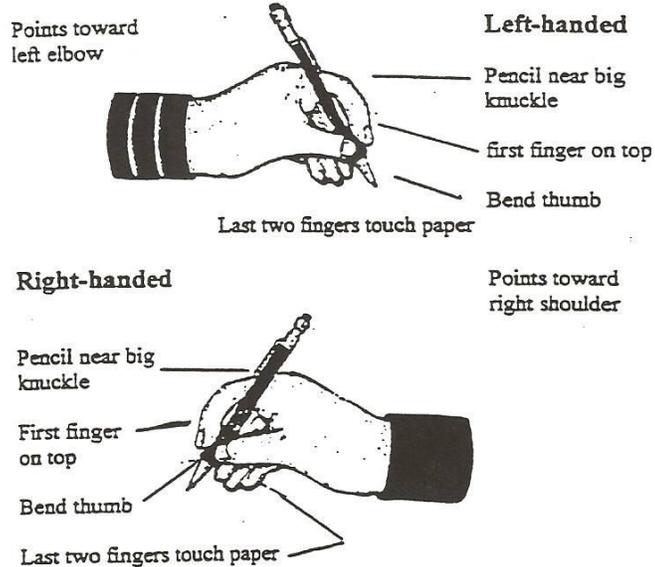
- Review correct pencil grip, paper position, and body position
- Correct use of all combinations of letter joinings
- Adult proportion in cursive writing (1/3 size)
- Speed and rhythm in cursive writing
- Completion of all content work in cursive by all students
- Continued self-evaluation techniques

MECHANICS

MANUSCRIPT

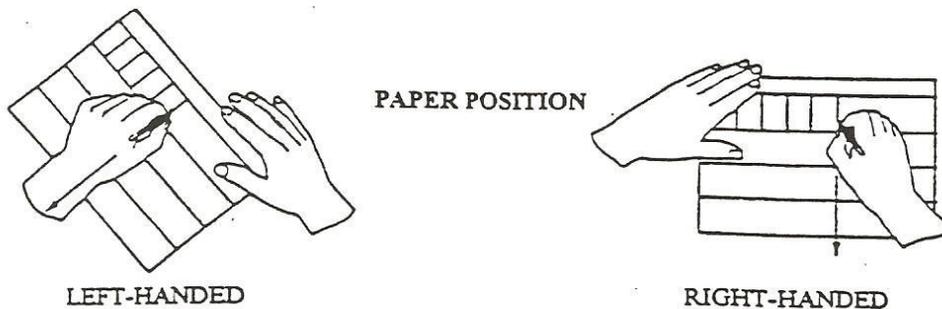
Pencil Position and Grip

After determining handedness of pupils, teachers should ensure that proper pencil grip and pencil position are being practiced.



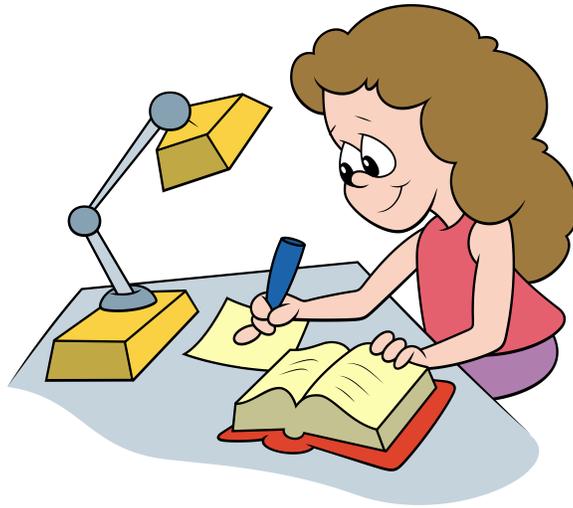
Paper Position

Position paper correctly, pull down-strokes in the proper direction, and shift the paper as the writing progresses across the line.



Body Position

Proper body position is important to ensure legibility in writing as well as to promote those factors that lend to good health. Students should sit straight in their chairs, leaning forward slightly to place arms on the desk top in the proper writing position.



Cursive Paper Position

When a child has demonstrated readiness, he needs to be taught paper position. In cursive writing, proper letter slant is achieved by positioning the paper at the proper angle and by pulling the strokes correctly toward the body. The non-writing hand should be on the paper, shifting it to keep the handwriting paper area in front of the body. Right-handed students should tilt paper approximately 30° to the left and should pull strokes toward the center of the body. Left-handed students should tilt paper approximately $35^\circ - 45^\circ$ to the right and should pull strokes toward their left elbow.

HANDWRITING MOTIVATORS

The following are just a few activities to aid the teacher in keeping handwriting instruction interesting and maintaining legible handwriting with all students.

- Prepare two handwriting stations. Decorate one with a bright smiley face and the other with a sad face. Encourage students to evaluate their own handwriting by comparing it to a displayed model and place it in the proper station.
- Students will attempt better handwriting when they know outsiders will view it. Reserve a place in the hall or other central location to display the best handwriting of the week, month, etc.
- During the first week of school, select one paper that each student has written that will provide an "average" sample of the student's handwriting. Also ask for a sample of their "best" handwriting to be included in the folder. Be sure that the samples are dated. Repeat the process during the first week of each month of the school year. Each time a month passes and the new papers are added to the student's file, take a few minutes to notice where the student's skill is improving. Note also the improvement that is evident on the "best" paper samples as compared to the "average" samples that you choose at random from their daily work. Help each student set goals for each new month. Use awards for improvement.
- Begin by telling the class one handwriting problem that you have had and how recognizing the problem enabled you to overcome it. Next, ask the students to review their handwriting to identify one problem they have. Ask them to suggest ways they can work to overcome the problem. Keep encouraging students to practice so they can overcome the problem.
- Write **Good, Better, Best** on the chalkboard and have the students write the same words at the top of their handwriting paper. Distribute the students' papers. (They should be recently written papers, but may be from any school subject.) Ask the students to pick out five letters that they think are "Good" and write them under the word "Good". Next, ask them to find five letters that they think are "Better" and five letters that they think are the "Best". Have them write these letters under the proper headings on their handwriting papers. Have the students study and practice the letter forms of those they placed in the "Good" and "Better" columns. Encourage them to make the good "Better" and the better "Best".

- Label a file folder for each student. Have each student pick out the paper he feels is his best work during that week of school. Keep the folder as an open file so that a student may challenge his best paper at any time with another he thinks is better. The better paper would then become the one kept in the file. In this way, the student has the opportunity at any time to compete with his own efforts.
- Project an anonymous handwriting sample for all student to view using an overhead projector. Allow students to verbally critique the handwriting.
- Arrange three pockets for students' papers to be filed in labeled "In A Hurry", "Just So-So", and "My Best".
- To take the boredom out of handwriting, use catchy riddles or poems. Write these on sheets of paper so the students may each choose one to write that is different than those of his classmates. Students may then share riddles or poems and compare handwriting papers.
- Write a message containing one or two illegible words. Send the message through several people and consider the information gained by the last reader.
- Award students who have learned to write a certain number of letters legibly and neatly.
- Students pretend the cursive words and letters are children. As they write sentences, they award the "make-believe" children by giving points as follows:
 - 📖 One point for all letters on line
 - 📖 Two points for closing a, d, and g
 - 📖 Two points for even slant
 - 📖 One point for even height
 - 📖 One point for not looping d, t, and i
- Appoint a team of "handwriting coaches". Allow the "coaches" to critique their peers' work; look for strong and weak points in their handwriting. Rotate the team of coaches so that every student has a chance.

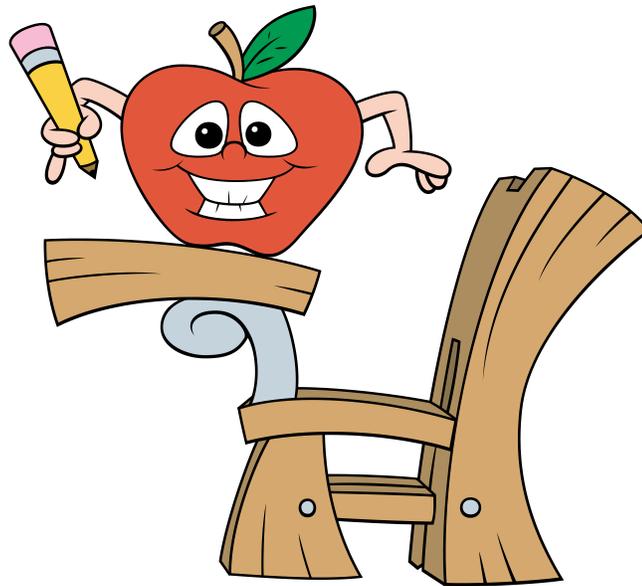
TEACHING HANDWRITING THROUGH MODALITY STRENGTHS

Each person has a dominant modality. Whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, this modality is the style in which a student best receives and retains information. Barbe and Lucas, noted authorities on handwriting, present these three styles of learning as they relate to the handwriting curriculum in the following outline.

1. Visual (with model)
 - a. Given letter models, writes lowercase manuscript letters
 - b. Given letter models, writes uppercase manuscript letters
 - c. Given numeral models, writes numerals one through thirty
 - d. Given models, writes number words one through ten
 - e. Given letter models, writes without reversal letters that are frequently reversed: b-d, p-g-q
 - f. Given word models, writes without reversal words that are frequently reversed: on-no, was-saw
 - g. Given letter models, writes lowercase letters grouped by similarity of strokes
 - h. Given letter models, writes uppercase letters grouped by similarity of strokes
 - i. Given models, writes punctuation marks: period, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, quotation mark

2. Auditory (with oral directions, letter name or strokes)
 - a. Told letter names, writes lowercase manuscript letters
 - b. Told letter names, writes uppercase manuscript letters
 - c. Given letter sound, writes letter
 - d. Told letter names, says letter strokes
 - e. Told numeral names, writes numerals one through thirty
 - f. Told numeral names, writes number words one through ten
 - g. Given oral directions, writes lowercase letters grouped by similarity of strokes
 - h. Given oral directions, writes uppercase manuscript letters grouped by similarity of strokes

- i. Told names of punctuation marks, writes: period, comma, question mark, quotation mark
 - j. Told letter names, writes with reversal letters that are frequently reversed: b-d, p-g-q
 - k. Told words, writes without reversal words that are frequently reversed: on-no, was-saw
3. Kinesthetic (tracing, motioning, chalkboard)
- a. Given example, traces or motions in air lowercase letters grouped by similarity of strokes
 - b. Given example, traces or motions in air the uppercase letters grouped by similarity of strokes
 - c. Given example, traces or motions numerals



DIAGNOSTIC CHART FOR CURSIVE WRITING

FACTOR	PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	REMEDIATION
Shape	Letters too oval in size	Overemphasis of arm movement and poor image of letter size and shape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check arm-desk position; review letter size and shape. • Check pencil grasp – lateral tripod may be the problem.
	Letters too narrow in shape	Finger writing Overemphasis of straight line stroke Poor mental image of letter shape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check positions to allow for arm movement. • Make sure straight line stroke does not come all the way down to base line in letters like l, b, and t. • Reteach stroke concept. • Use transparent overseer for pupil's personal evaluation of shape. • In all problems of letter shape, review letters in terms of the basic strokes
Size	Letters too large	Exaggerated arm movement Poor mental image of letter size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check arm-desk position or over-movement of forearm. • Review base and top line concepts in relation to 1/4 space, 1/2 space, and 3/4 space; use transparent overseer for pupil's personal evaluation of letter size.
	Letters too small or letters not uniform	Finger movement Poor mental image of letter size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check arm-desk and pencil-hand positions; stress arm movement. • Review concept of letter size (1/4 space, 1/2 space, and 3/4 space) in relation to base and top lines; use transparent overseer for pupils' personal evaluation of letter size.

FACTOR	PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	REMEDICATION
Space	<p>Letters in words crowded or spacing between letters uneven</p> <p>Too much space provided between letters in words</p> <p>Uneven space between words</p>	<p>Finger movement</p> <p>Poor understanding of joining strokes</p> <p>Exaggerated arm movement</p> <p>Poor understanding of joining strokes</p> <p>Poor understanding of between word spacing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check arm-desk, pencil-hand positions; stress arm movement. • Review how letters are joined; show ending stroke of one letter to be beginning stroke of following letter; practice writing letters in groups of five. • Check arm-desk position or over-movement of forearm. • Review joining strokes; practice writing groups of letters by rhythmic count. • Review concept of spacing between words; show beginning stroke in second word starting under ending stroke of preceding word.
Alignment	<p>Poor letter alignment along base line</p> <p>Uneven alignment of letters in words relative to size</p>	<p>Incorrect writing position; finger movement; exaggerated arm movement</p> <p>Poor understanding of base line concept</p> <p>Incorrect use of joining strokes</p> <p>Poor understanding of size concept</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check all writing positions; stress even, rhythmic writing movement; use dark line for visual cue. • Use repetitive exercise with emphasis on relationship of base line to written word. • Review joining strokes; use paper with dark lines and dashed midline. • Show size relationships between upper and lowercase and 1/4 space, 1/2 space, and 3/4 space lowercase letters; use repetitive exercise with emphasis on uniform height of smaller letters.

FACTOR	PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	REMEDIATION
Speed and Ease	<p>Writing becomes illegible under stress and speed (grades 4, 5)</p> <p>Writing becomes illegible when writing activity is too long</p>	<p>Degree of handwriting skill is insufficient to meet speed requirements</p> <p>Handwriting positions have not been perfected to allow handwriting ease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve writing positions; develop more arm movement and less finger movement. • Improve all writing positions, especially hand-pencil position; stress arm movement.
Slant	<p>Back slant</p> <p>Vertical</p> <p>Too far right</p>	<p>Left-handedness</p> <p>Poor positioning</p> <p>Overemphasis of finger movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct hand-pencil and paper-desk positions • Correct hand-pencil and paper-desk positions • Make sure pupils pull slant strokes toward center of body if right-handed and to left elbow if left-handed. • Use slant line instruction sheets as aid to teaching slant. • Use transparent overseer for pupil's personal evaluation. • Review all lowercase letters that derive their shape from the slant line. • Write lowercase alphabet on chalkboard; retrace all slant strokes in colored chalk.



WRITING PAPER

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated 10 times down the page.

GLOSSARY OF HANDWRITING TERMS

MANUSCRIPT

TERM	DEFINITION
Alignment	The evenness of letters along the baseline and along their tops with all the letters of the same size at even height
Backward Circle	The opposite direction from which the clock hands move (counterclockwise)
Baseline	The line upon which the letters rest
Cursive	Writing in which the letters are joined together in a flowing motion
Descenders	Letters and/or their parts that descend below the baseline; the "tail letters" descend
Descender Space	Space below the baseline which marks the lowest point to which "tail letters" descend
Forward Circle	The direction in which the hands of a clock move (clockwise direction)
Headline	The top line of the writing space
Horizontal Line	Left-to-right or right-to-left progression of a line used in manuscript writing
Imagery	The process of perceiving (visually, auditorially, kinesthetically) the form of letters and words
Intermediate Letters	All letters that extend halfway between the midline and headline (in manuscript, only the letter <i>t</i> is an intermediate letter)

Line Quality	The smoothness, thickness, and evenness of the pen or pencil line
Lowercase Letter	A letter written or printed in a size smaller than or in a form differing from its corresponding uppercase letter; also called the "small letters" in primary grades
Manuscript	Writing in which the letters are not joined, and the writing instrument is lifted after most strokes; also called "print writing"
Maximum Letters	All letters of the greatest height from the baseline upward (in manuscript, all uppercase letters and the lowercase letters b, d, f, h, k, and l)
Midline	A line that is halfway between the baseline and the headline
Minimum Letters	All letters extending from baseline to midline (in manuscript, the lowercase letters a, c, e, g, i, j, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, u, v, w, x, y, and z)
Modality	The sensory mode (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) through which information is received
Proportion	The relationship in height of letters to each other and to the writing space
Retrace	Backtracking on same line for short distance
Slant Line	The diagonal line that is a basic manuscript stroke and is always pulled downward
Spacing	The distance between letters, between words, between sentences, and between lines
Uppercase Letter	A letter often written or printed in a form differing from its corresponding lowercase letter; a capital letter of the alphabet
Vertical Line	One of the manuscript basic strokes; it is always pulled downward (except in uppercase manuscript U)

SECTION II



***Instructional
Guide***

Overview

This handwriting method allows children to visualize and verbalize the letter movement pattern while also experiencing the feel of the letter. Instead of learning the letters individually and in alphabetical order, students will learn four groups of letters. These groups will share common movement patterns and are named and illustrated so that the student can easily visualize the lead-in stroke for each letter in the group. The names of the groups are Clock Climbers, Kite Strings, and Hills and Valleys. Teachers should continuously use these group names to provide cues for remembering how to make the letters.

This writing program is designed to teach all **lowercase letters** to third graders in six weeks. The timeline for this is as follows:

- Week 1 – Clock Climbers
- Week 2 – First four Kite Strings
- Week 3 – Last five Kite Strings
- Week 4 – First three Loop Group letters
- Week 5 – Last three Loop Group letters
- Week 6 – Hills and Valleys letters

Lowercase letters should be constantly reinforced for at least two months before the capital letters are introduced. This constant reinforcement will stabilize the learning of the lowercase letters. During this period of time, students should use manuscript capital letters with the cursive lowercase letters. The use of this method during this period of time will help reduce confusion of letters in children with deficient memory for configuration.

In order to make it easier to master **uppercase letters**, they should be taught in groups that follow common movement patterns. The clusters in which they should be taught are as follows:

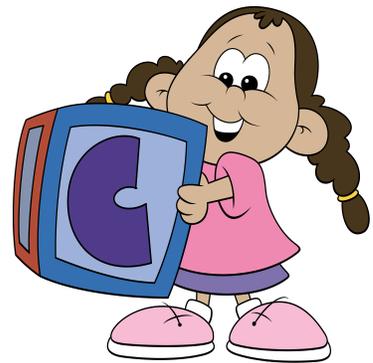
- Week 1 – Slim 7 group
- Week 2 – Umbrella Tops and Eggs
- Week 3 – High Hills and Deep Valleys
- Week 4 – Snake Tops
- Week 5 – Half Hearts and Left Swingers
- Week 6 – Fat Bellies and Zip

This writing program builds quickly by over learning the first letter in each group. The other letters in the same group will use the same motor pattern as the first letter with slight modifications.

Each practice page is set up with the model letter or word printed in both the right and left margins. This is done to help both right-handed and left-handed students who may cover one side of the page as they write. It also helps students maintain the quality of their writing as they move across the page.

Any student who is still having trouble keeping up with the pace after the first week should receive additional help.

Classroom Procedures



- Students' desks should be facing the board or screen where model demonstrations will take place. If students are arranged in clusters, their desk may be rearranged in order to reduce directional and positional confusion.
- Writing paper should be positioned properly. The paper should be at a slant that is parallel to the slant of the writing arm when both hands are clasped together or relaxed at the midpoint of the desk. A piece of masking tape can be used to mark the position of the paper until this position becomes natural to the student. The paper should also be placed and readjusted on the desk far enough from the child so that the writing hand will be below the writing line. This will eliminate the tendency of the student to hook the wrist while writing.

Terminology

Line

The writing line is a dark solid line. The dotted middle divider is not a line but is a guide for half-spaced letters. The middle divider for drop-loop is one half-space below the writing line. When writing, the child needs to fill the bottom half, whole, or whole plus half-space below. This is important so that the child can get the “feel” of the correct proportions of each letter.

Starting Point

Lowercase letters start at the ● on the left-hand side of the writing line.

Lead-In Stroke

The group placement is determined by the lead-in stroke. All lead-in strokes should start at the starting point on the writing line. Teachers should model all lead-in strokes. Optional lead-in strokes are in the clock climber group, but should still be modeled by the teacher. Consistent lead-in strokes aid motor control and reduce memory demands.

Retrace

This is the area of the letter that the initial stroke must be written over in order to continue the letter. This is seen in Clock Climbers (going back from one o'clock to nine o'clock) and Kite Strings (going from top of string back almost to the writing line before turning outward). There are only four lowercase letters that do not retrace (f, l, e, and x).

Release Strokes

All of the lower letters except four return to the writing line before turning or continuing for their release stroke. The four letters that do not return to the writing line are called bridge connectors (b, o, v, and w). These four letters retrace slightly below the middle divider before they release or lead in for the next letter.

Drop-Loop Strokes

The drop-loop group contains seven letters (f, g, j, p, q, y, and z). All of these letters drop with a slight slant stroke to the half space below. After they touch the divider, they turn a narrow loop upward and cross the drop stroke exactly at the writing line for release or lead-in to the next letter.

Instructional Guide

Motor Teaching

The teacher uses a fifteen-inch line model that has been drawn on the board or on a transparency. The model will be used to demonstrate the following:

- Analysis of each letter position as it relates to the three line segments should include the number and name of half-spaces.
- The beginning point for all lowercase letters should be indicated by a dot on the writing line to the left of the letter space.
- Discussion of the lead-in group assignment will reinforce visualization and facilitate rapid movement into the letter.
- Each stroke movement should be carefully demonstrated and verbalized. Appropriate terminology for all writing instructions should be mastered. This is a must, as it will be very significant as the training progresses.
- Incorrect shapes produced by paper lines and letter strokes will help students determine if their letter formations are correct. Focus students' attention on the larger triangle created on the writing line by the lead-in and round strokes from nine to six o'clock section in the Clock Climber letters. Contrast this to the smaller triangle made before the release stroke in this same group. Focusing attention on the small triangle produced at the writing line by the letters "i", "u", "w", and "t" will promote mastery of these letters.
- The formation of letters with multiple parallels such as "w" and "b" will be improved if students are instructed to look back at the initial line so the shape does not get wider. Keep the horizontal line flat along the writing line to prevent spreading outward in a continuous flow line.
- Tips are provided to assist instructors in guiding students to avoid common errors in the beginning stages of learning cursive writing.

Motor Learning

- Teachers should instruct students to “trace” the letter model in the air, using shoulder movement. Students should extend their index and middle finger as a pointer for tracing the letter while holding the ring and little finger with the thumb. Students should visualize the stroke progression details to themselves and focus on the “feel” of the movement.
- When the child is confident in forming the letter, he should rest his elbow on the desktop, close his eyes to visualize and verbally self-guide the letter formation in the air with his pointed fingers. Movement should be from the wrist and finger joints. The teacher should monitor each child’s verbalization and motor plan **before** the child is allowed to write the letter on the paper.
- The students are now ready to check their own learning when they practice letter formations on paper. After ten attempts at writing a letter, students should circle the ones that they feel are the most accurately written. This practice will reinforce cognitive learning and assist the child in quality central for independent motor learning. Children need to understand that the brain learns to write faster than the hand. Once the child can re-visualize and verbalize the stroke progression, the hand needs multiple motor repetitions before letters will become smooth and learning becomes permanent.
- The child has reached the kinesthetic level of learning when he can write the letter with his eyes closed. Mystery writing intrigues children and it can be reinforced once they have learned a few letters. A new writer holds chalk in his hand to write a letter or short word on the chalkboard. He uses movement to visualize and identify the word **before** looking at the evidence. This practice helps to achieve the goal of gaining an automatic level of skill. This is fundamental for increasing speed of cursive writing without compromising quality. With much practice and close monitoring, penmanship can become an invaluable life skill.

Developmental Issues in Learning Graphomotor Skills

Body Awareness and Posture Consistency

Two factors can be attributed to a child's lack of ability to develop good sitting posture while performing a fine motor task such as writing. The first is a lack of body awareness, which is observable in many young children. The second is poorly designed writing furniture. Students lack postural sensitivity for making minute adjustments to keep their bodies in an upright position.

Desks and chairs that are properly fitted to each child's height are essential in developing posture control. The height of the chair should allow the child's heels to have firm contact with the floor to ensure weight shifting and counter balance reactions as his writing hand moves horizontally along a line. The desk height should be two inches above the bent elbow when a child is seated squarely on his chair to write. If the desk is too low, the child will use the recessive hand to support his head rather than hold the paper. If the desk is too high, his elbows will be spread too widely for maximum control of the hands. Keeping the body in a stable posture is essential for learning to write kinesthetically. Each handwriting session should begin with every child assuming a symmetrical and functional position to write.

Wrist Posture and Stability for Skilled Hand Use

Maximum speed and dexterity will develop if the child's wrist is able to support the hand while manipulating a pencil in a slightly extended position. An extended wrist will enable the thumb to move into its opposing plane to work distally with the finger pads. This wrist alignment facilitates the balanced use of the hand's fine motor muscles. Many second graders are highly motivated and cognitively ready to learn cursive writing. A small percentage of this age group's hand and wrist development may be delayed at an earlier skill level. Certain pencil pre-skills such as functional finger and

wrist posture should have been addressed at the nursery school and kindergarten levels. Many early childhood teachers often overlook hand-skill progression that should be advanced to higher developmental levels before writing activities become routine. Pencil postures that are practiced early by repeated use at an intermediate level of skill will later impact negatively on writing performance when speed and volume demands increase. Teachers should monitor wrist and thumb posture of all students when they are using a pencil or scissors. When using both of these, the wrist should be held in a slightly extended position for the fingers to work efficiently. Allow children to practice writing with chalk at the chalkboard if they are having difficulties maintaining wrist and thumb positions. Writing should be above eye level so the wrist and hand will automatically assume a functional position.



Pencil Grip for Distal Control

The human hand grasps objects in two ways: power grip and precision grip. The finger and hand muscles simply hold on to an object in a power grip. However, in a precision grip, the finger and hand muscles manipulate the object as they hold it. An example of a precision grip is a hand manipulating a writing tool. The most important element of an effective pencil grip is the rounded open web space between the thumb and index finger. The thumb and finger hold the pencil while the wrist and elbow provide the movement. The fingers and thumb flex and extend in alternation, which results in distal dynamic control. A standard three-digit pencil grip allows the fastest, longest, and most dexterous control of a pencil by the hand. Nearly half of all normal children follow an alternate four-finger quadripod progression.

An open web-space grip will provide satisfactory control. When manipulating a pencil with an open web posture, the fine motor receptors and tactile sensors of the finger pads regulate grip pressure while guiding the pencil's complex rhythmic movements. Specialized receptors provide the writer with internal dynamic awareness of finger and pencil location as the hand performs this complex task kinesthetically. Childhood activities such as tracing small shapes, circling, and outlining will refine dynamic control of the fingers once an open web posture has emerged. When a child uses a power grip while holding a pencil, the web spaces between the digits are closed. With all power grips, the fine motor muscles that control speed and dexterity and adjust holding pressure of the digits are silent. To perform a fine motor activity using a power grip, more proximal, larger, slower, and less precise muscles will be substituted to control the hand. Clutching the pencil against the side of the palm reduces each finger's ability to elongate strokes.

Teachers should provide many activities to help young children develop open web-space posture before pencil or coloring tasks are undertaken on a regular basis. The

closed web pencil posture persists after wrist extension and distal finger skills have developed. When the grip is incorrect but the thumb is stable, a pencil grip often will correct finger positions quite effectively. These devices can also fit Crayola thin markers for drawing and coloring. Writing tools fitted with the grip should be substituted for coloring and outlining while developing distal pencil skills.

If the joints in a child's hands are very loose, an adapted pencil posture may be the ideal solution at the kindergarten level. This adaptation is made by shifting the shaft of the pencil into the web space between the index and middle finger. This position is more stable and the muscles that control the dynamic tripod are positioned for use. This adaptation will help a child with loose joints to develop age-appropriate skills.

Bilateral Integration

For many children experiencing neurological deficits and those slow to develop, a number of motor behaviors can impede the progress of learning to write. The difficulties may include crossing the midline, ineffective use of the dominant and recessive hands, reversal, and uncoordinated shifting of stroke direction in a continuous flow pattern.

When a student visually guides the pencil along a horizontal or diagonal line, a hesitation or jerk may occur at the place where the pencil crosses the midline. This interruption is more disorganizing with diagonal strokes, leading the child to avoid them, often unconsciously, in written work. An obvious indicator that the child is not fully bilaterally integrated is the failure to stabilize the writing paper with his recessive hand. The dominant hand does not assume a strong role, so the recessive hand is less inclined to perform an assisting role. Instead of cooperation between the two sides of the body, there is residual competition. Motor overflow is usually observable, thus an indicator that the dominant body side is not operating in isolation. An obvious sign that the child is experiencing a delay in bilateral integration is confusion or reversal of mirror image letters or numbers. Reversals are usually limited to three of the left-moving stroke letters. Cognitive strategies may be helpful once the specific letters and numbers are identified.

Reversals are usually limited to the following:

- The number "3" for "E"
- The letter "f" for "J". "I" and "J" are left swingers and are side by side in the alphabet. If the child is not having trouble with one of the letters, usually "I", then teach the child to sense the beginning stroke and cue himself for "J".

- The letter “b” for “I.” If both “I” and “J” are causing problems, reinforce the name *left swinger* and over learn the two letters together.

A movement indicator of incomplete bilateral integration is seen in the child’s ability to change stroke direction in a continuous flow pattern. Directions for this writing system include tips for visual-motor reorganization by the child. They are included in the steps for “r”, “s”, “G”, “D”, and “S”. Immature children have great difficulties with Snake Tops (capital “T” and “F”) because of the alternating swoop line. After making a closed-loop starter, a straight crossing line can be an acceptable substitute.

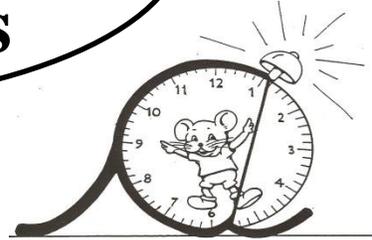
Pencil and Line Width Compatibility

The lines on the writing paper should match the bluntness of the writing tool, not the age, grade, or size of the child. Teachers should allow children to experiment with many writing tools so that they can determine which feels best for their specific motor style: pencils with varying hardness of lead, markers, calligraphy pens, and ballpoint pens. If dull-colored porous practice paper is routinely used, a red ballpoint pen is ideal for seeing what one has produced.



Diagnostic Observations by Letter Groups

Clock Climbers



Range of Motion: Children who have trouble rounding strokes over the top are often tight in wrist and/or forearm rotation. Another factor may be a closed web posture in which the pencil is braced against the edge of the palm so the fingers have no way to manipulate it. These conditions physically limit the lateral rounding over the stroke. Specific motor patterns to achieve the correct formation with a slant should be taught, practiced, and reinforced.

Directionality: Continuous patterns, “roller coaster”, or wrap-around letters are not used in cursive writing. A continuous pattern is typically made by children delayed in developing directionality, or it may be a carry over from forming manuscript letters incorrectly at an earlier stage of development. If it is not carefully corrected and reinforced, children tend to generalize this motor behavior.

Integration of the Diagonal with Space Relations: Students who lack perceptual-motor integration of the diagonal will compensate by stopping the top rounded stroke short of one o'clock, which will cause them to move on the vertical to one o'clock. The result will be a slower vertical line rather than a faster diagonal line.

A clock face rubber stamp is a valuable tool for teaching the Clock Climbers. It gives spatial reference for all the rounded segments of the letters and it can be used to guide the rounded sections of letters in other groups. The clock face should be printed on a writing line which can be dotted for the starting point of a lead-in stroke.

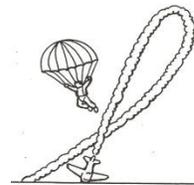
Eye-Hand Coordination: Children who are slow in developing motor proficiency usually benefit from being coached as to the correct speed at which to perform certain actions. The development of these writing skills can be facilitated by guiding the learner in determining the quick or slow motion of his pencil. Once the child can re-visualize and verbalize the progression of the letter, he should be coached to make a speedy lead-in as he curves up and over to one o'clock, then a slower retrace to nine o'clock. This should facilitate kinesthetic learning and reduce the tendency to draw the letters using the visual-motor approach.

Kite Strings



Perception/Integration of the Diagonal: When there is a delay in the visual integration of the diagonal, children will tend to move up from the writing line on a slower vertical rather than on a faster diagonal. To help the child, ask him to look at a drawing and think about the difference between the way a helium-filled balloon and a kite pull their strings. To encourage more slant in his writing, ask the child to visualize a stronger wind pushing the kite. For the kite string letters, the lead-in is most naturally produced quickly followed by a slower retrace, "slide down almost to the ground before going around" for the turn-and-release stroke.

Directional Changing in Continuous Flow Pattern: Children who lack bilateral integration have difficulties changing directions in a continuous flow pattern while writing certain letters. The letters "r" and "s" require abrupt shifts in direction. Stopping at the starred points allows time for visual-motor reorganization so that the necessary shifts can be made correctly. If teachers stress this step, all children will have success with these letters.



Loop Group

Perception/Integration of the Diagonal: Loop letters such as "h", "k", and "b" that cross their lead-in stroke at the middle divider require long swooping diagonals. A lack of visual-motor integration of the diagonal will cause children great difficulty in writing the lead-in stroke for these three letters. The angle of the slant must allow room for the down stroke to cross the lead-in stroke at the middle divider and continue toward the starting point. The entire loop of these letters must fit above the divider to allow room for their unique structure in the bottom half-space of the line. The letters "e", "f", and "l" cross lower because they do not have an additional structure to fit under the loop.

Directional Changes in Continuous Flow Pattern: Children who lack spatial skills have difficulty starting to loop as they approach the top of the line. They tend to touch a point before changing a movement progression. The sophisticated level of skill in the upward moving loop group will require carefully guided practice and many repetitions to master.

Directionality: After the over-the-top stroke is rounded from one to twelve o'clock across the top of the line, many children pause before slanting back toward the starting point. Children have a natural tendency to slant right as they continue in a downward direction. The key to success is to pause with a verbal self-cue. Kinesthetic over learning is recommended for this letter group.



Hills and Valleys

Space Relations: Children who lack spatial skills often do not see the difference between the angle of the lead-in and the angle of the main part of the letter. They need to be shown and told that the angle of the overhand lead-in stroke is somewhat wider in "n" and "m" than the angle of the other down strokes. Specific attention needs to be directed to these differences.

A visual guide will aid children when making multiple units of letters equally spaced or parallel. Observing the first down stroke in "m", "v", or "y" will help children keep spacing uniform and the shape will not get wider with successive units of the letter.



SECTION III

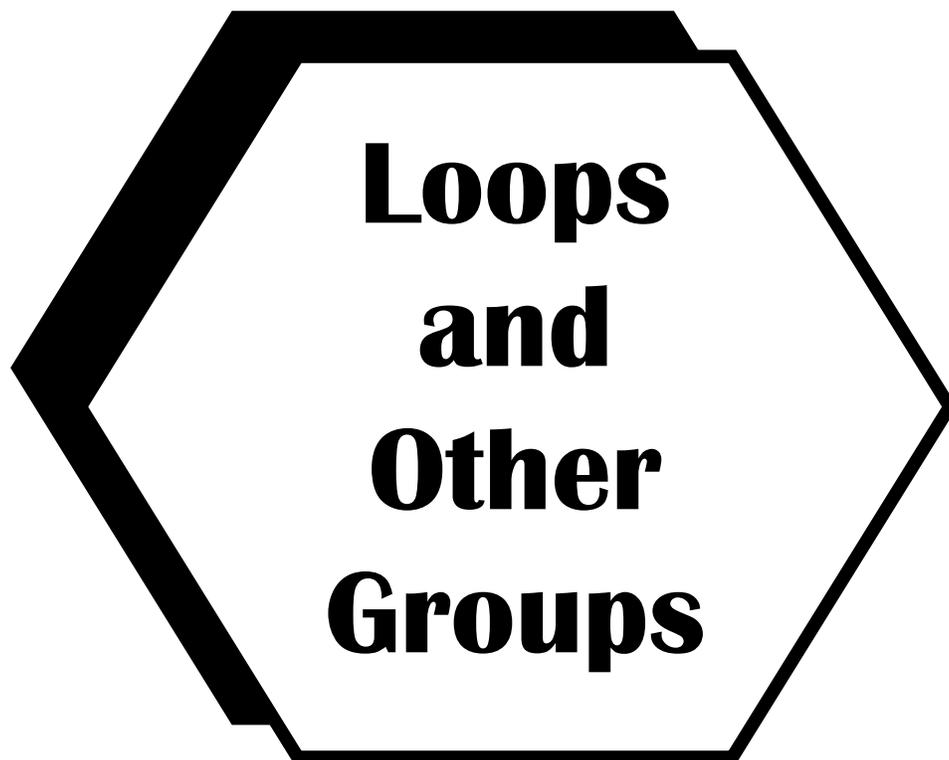


Loops

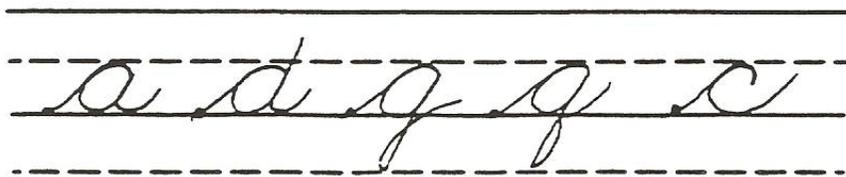
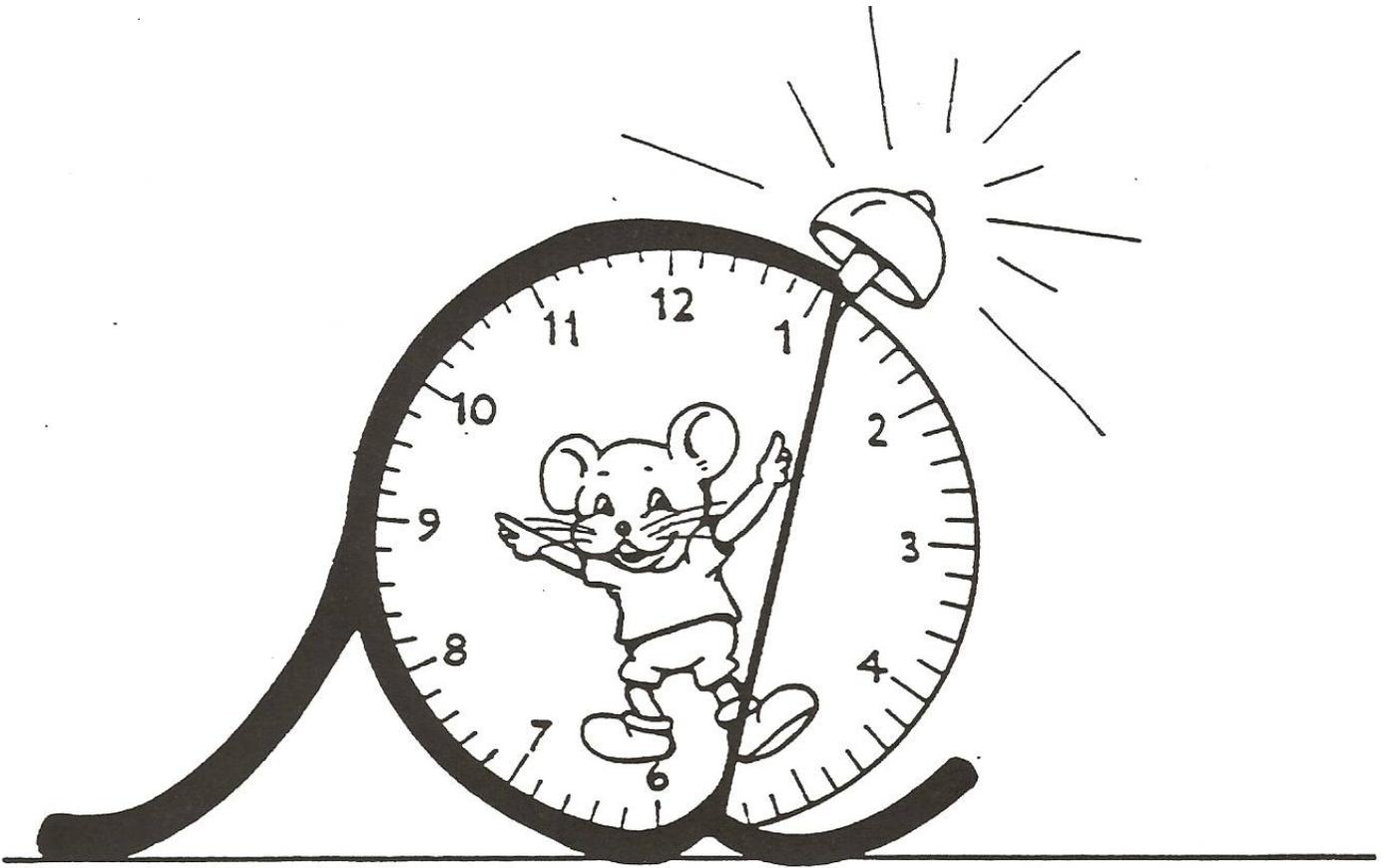
Letter Formation

A Comprehensive Guide to
Forming and Connecting Letters
for the

Kinesthetic Writing System

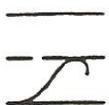
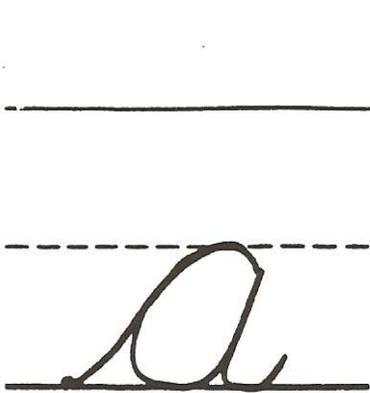


Clock Climbers



Practice the letter *a* until you get the “feel” of the movement pattern with eyes open and closed.

This *a* pattern will be adapted for the remainder of the letters in this group.



STEPS

Start at the writing line and climb over the clock to 1.



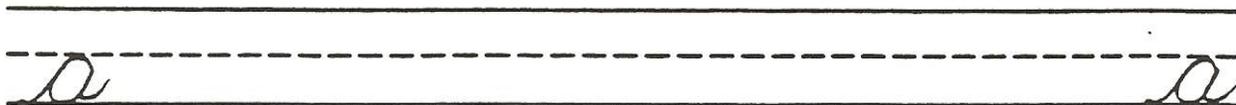
Retrace to 9, separate and round down to the writing line past 6.



Slant a stroke up to 1 to touch shape together with lead-in stroke.

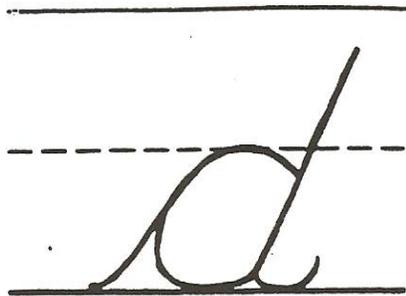


Retrace stroke to the writing line for turn-and-release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

Repeat the *a* but continue the straight slanted stroke into the upper half-space.



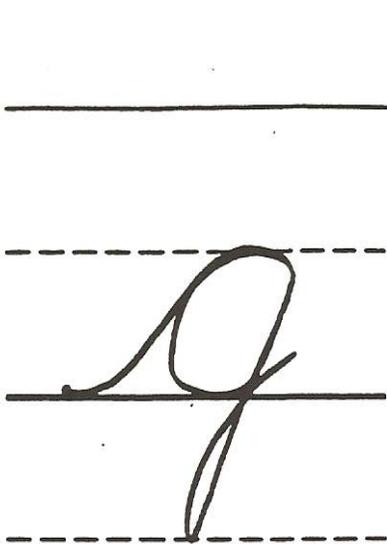
Retrace the slanted stroke to the writing line for turn-and-release stroke.

Handwriting practice lines for the cursive letter 'd'. Each line consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. The practice is organized into five rows, each with two examples of the letter or sequence:

- Row 1: A cursive 'a' on the left and a cursive 'd' on the right.
- Row 2: A cursive 'd' on the left and a cursive 'd' on the right.
- Row 3: A cursive 'ad' on the left and a cursive 'ad' on the right.
- Row 4: A cursive 'add' on the left and a cursive 'add' on the right.
- Row 5: A cursive 'dad' on the left and a cursive 'dad' on the right.

Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

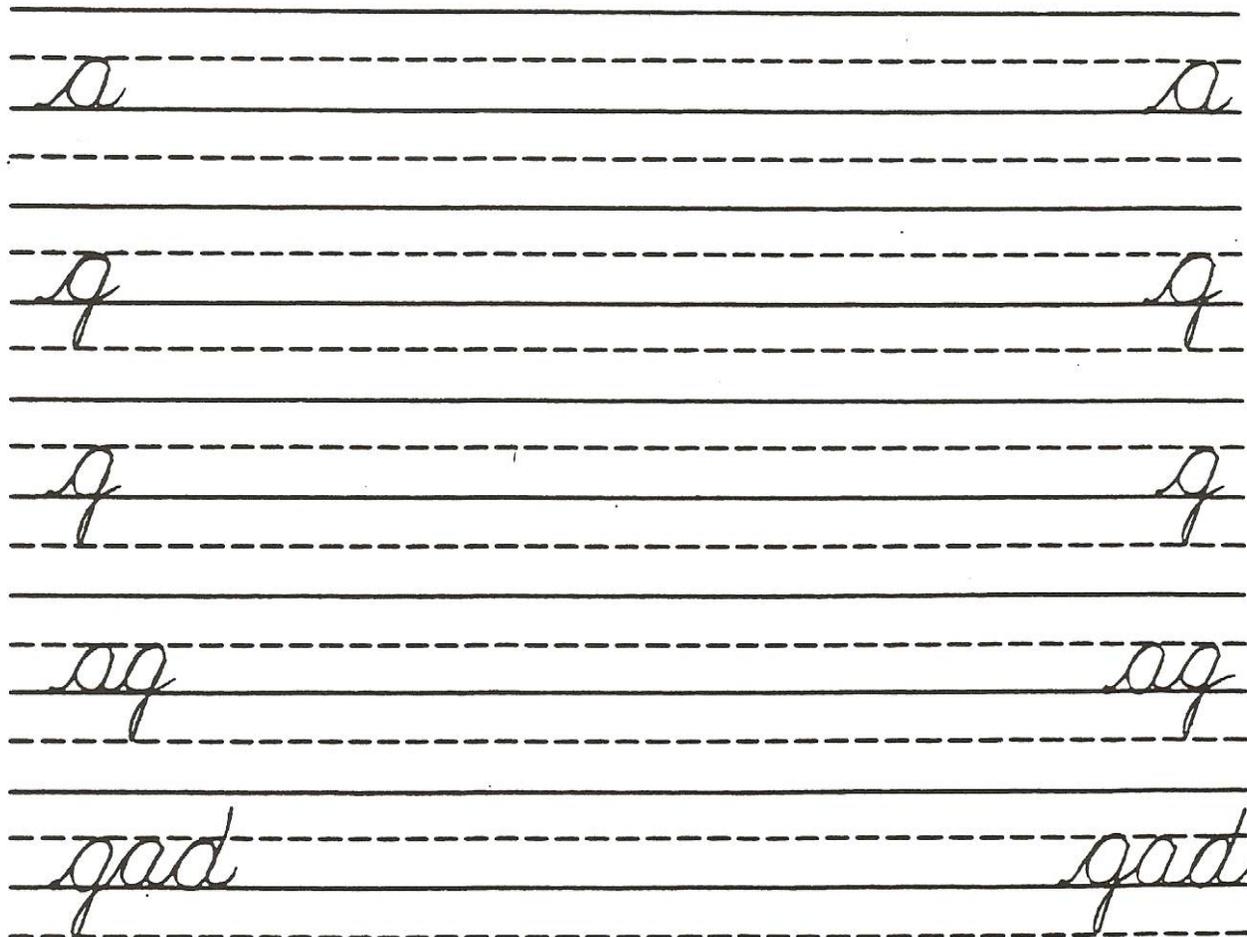
Repeat the a except for turn-and-release stroke.



After retracing the straight slant stroke, continue down to the middle divider below the writing line.

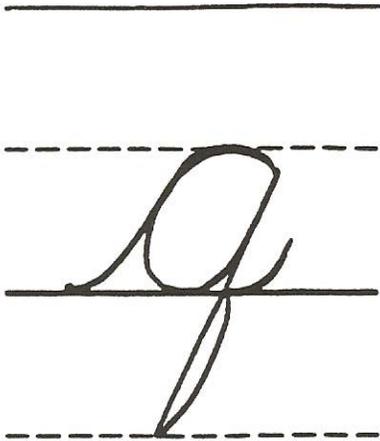


Loop left under main part of the letter and cross the downstroke exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

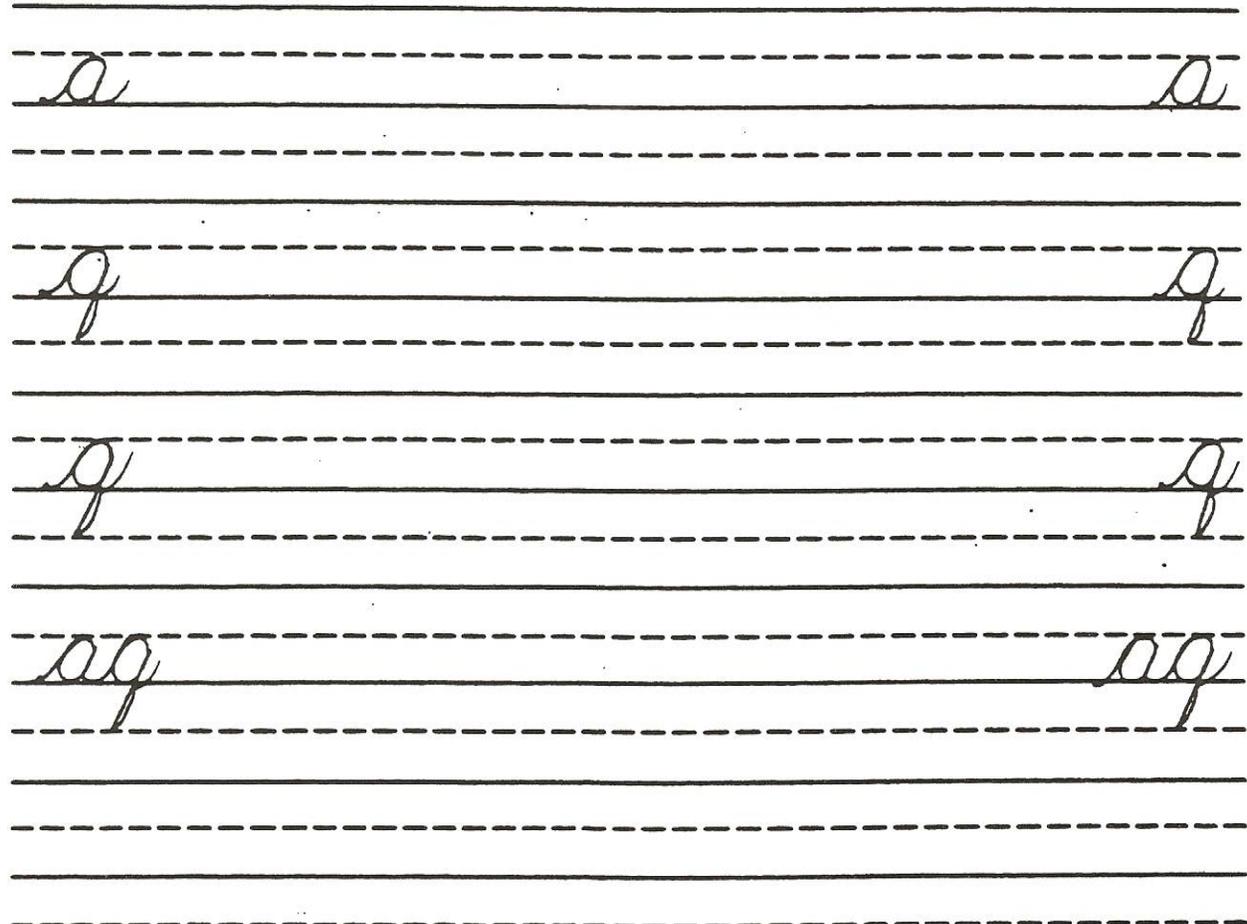
Repeat the *a* except for turn-and-release stroke.



Retrace the slant stroke and continue down to the middle divider below the writing line.

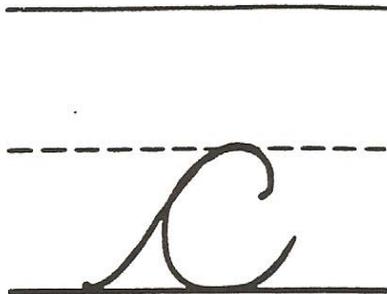


Loop right, **not** under the main part of the letter, and touch loop together with the slanted stroke exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS



Start at the writing line and climb over the clock to 1.



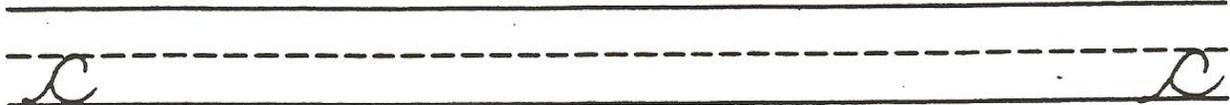
Hook the end of the stroke back slightly toward the middle of the clock.



Retrace to 9, separate strokes and round down, touching the writing line between 7 and 5.



Continue for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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ad

ad

add

add

gad

gad

gag

gag

cad

cad

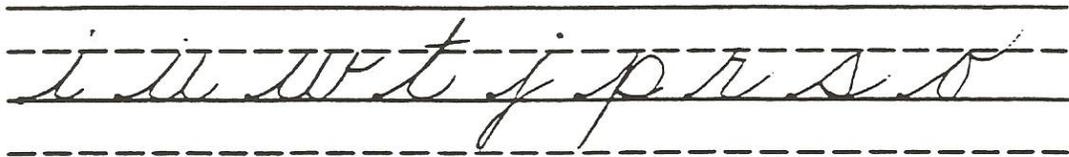
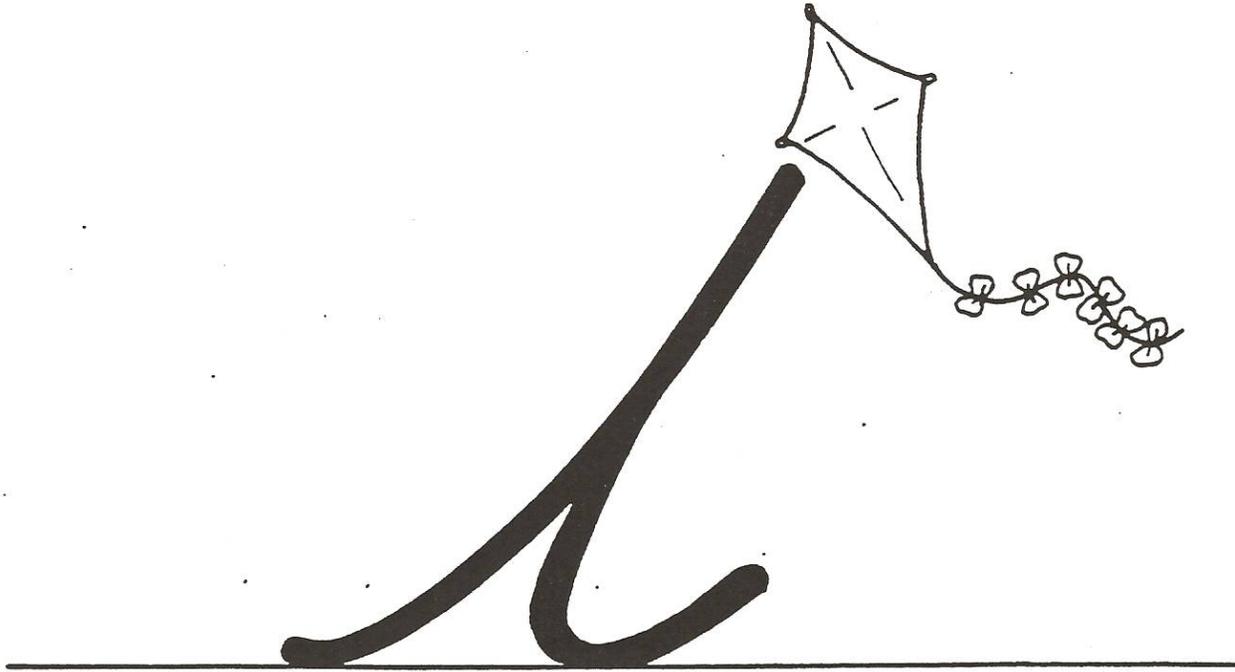
dad

dad

ag

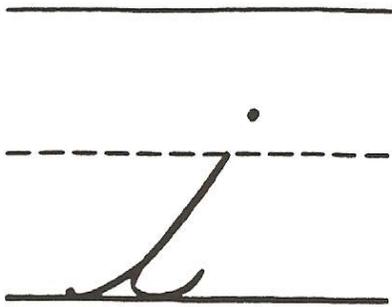
ag

Kite Strings



Practice the letter *i* until you get the “feel” of the movement pattern with eyes open and closed.

This *i* pattern will be adapted for the remainder of the letters in this group.

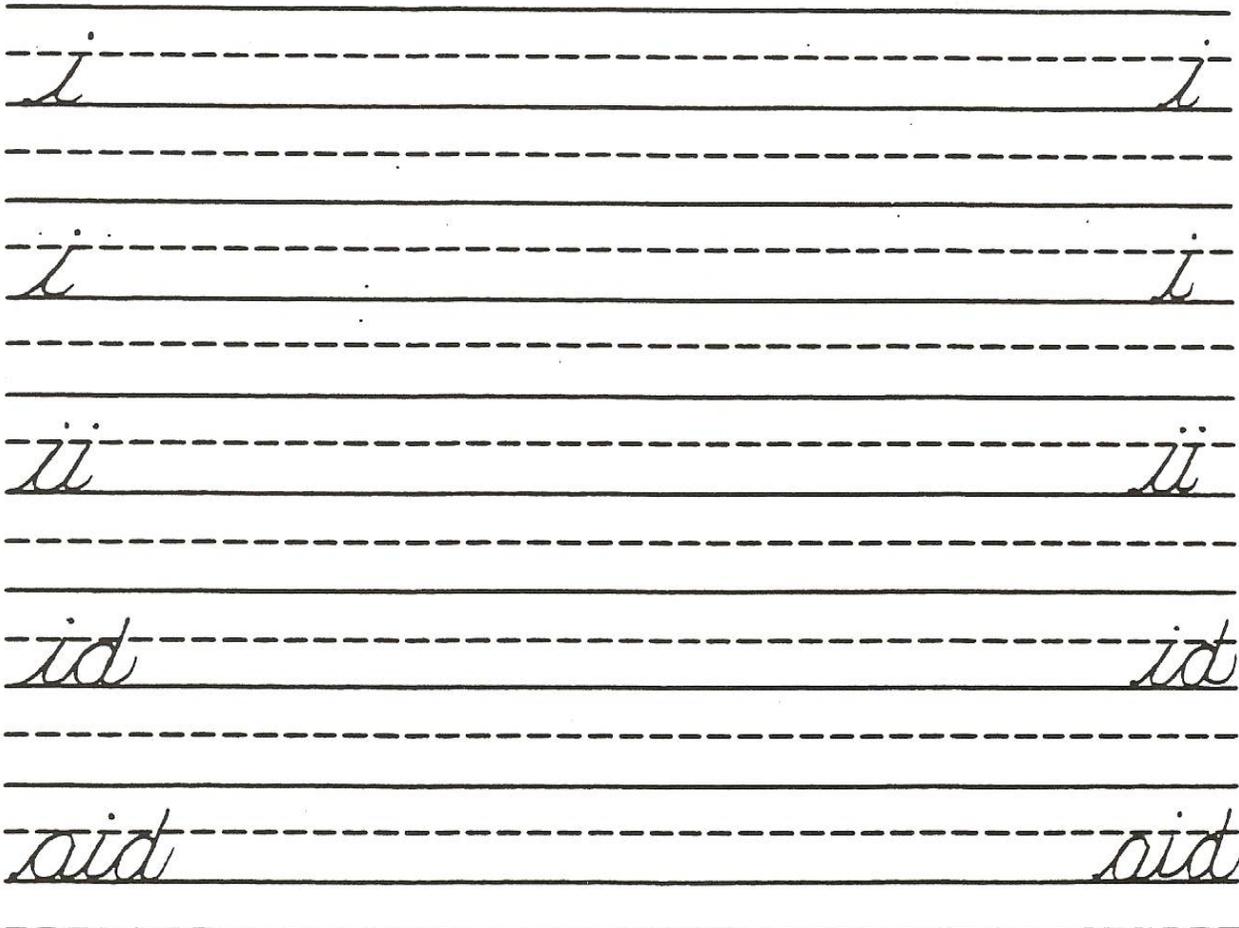


STEPS

Make a kite string from the writing line to the middle divider.

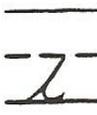
Retrace—"Slide down almost to the ground before going around"—almost to the writing line before turn-and-release stroke.

Dot slightly above the middle divider.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

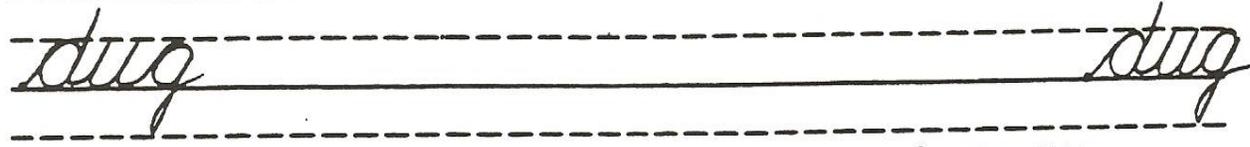
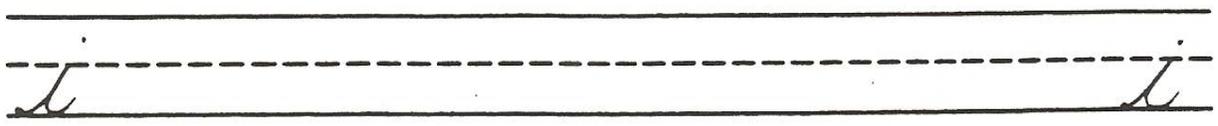
Make an *i* but don't dot it.



After sliding down, follow along the writing line from 7 to 5 o'clock for a second *i* stroke. Look back at the first *i* stroke and let it guide you so the shape doesn't get wider.

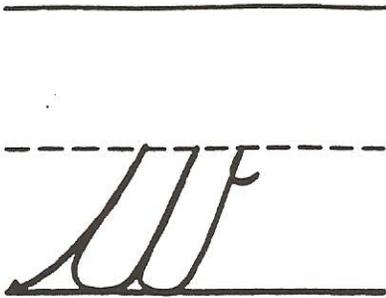


Turn for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

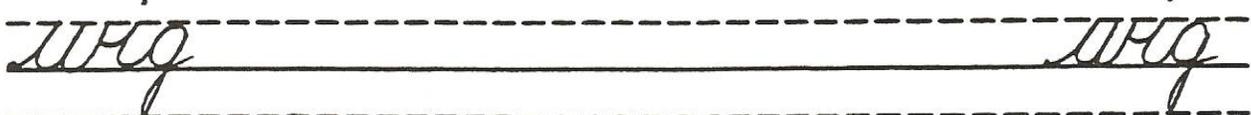


Make a *u* and follow along the writing line from 7 to 5 o'clock for a kite string stroke.

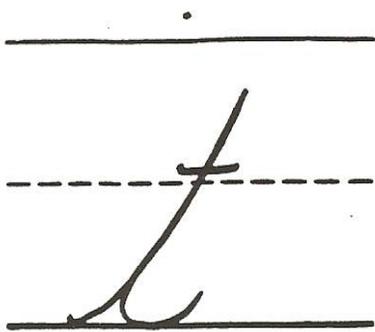


After touching the middle divider, retrace slightly and curve right for release stroke. This is a bridge connector.

TIP: When you make more than one slant stroke, keep your eyes on the first, so the shape doesn't get wider.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

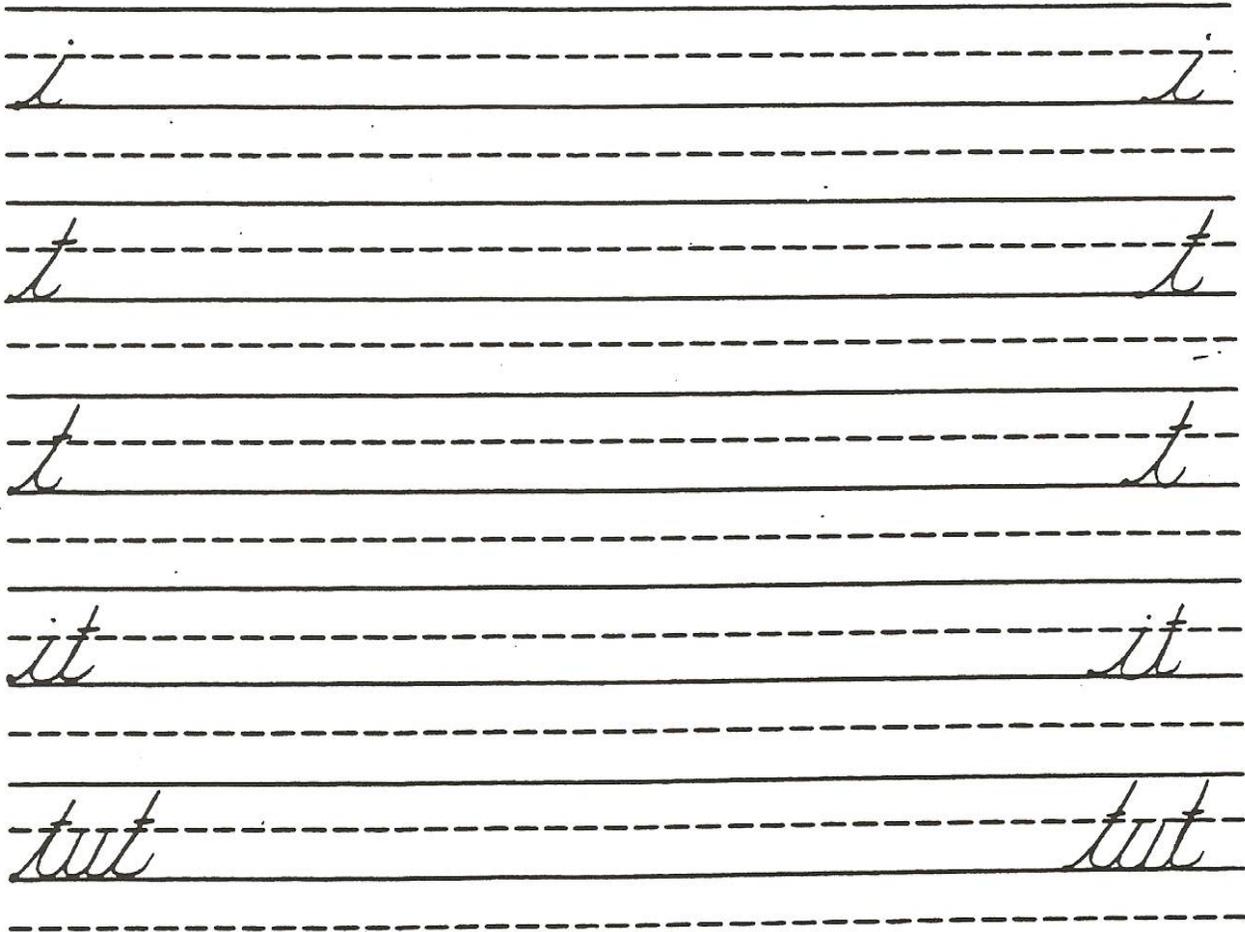


STEPS

Make a tall kite string from the writing line into the upper half-space.

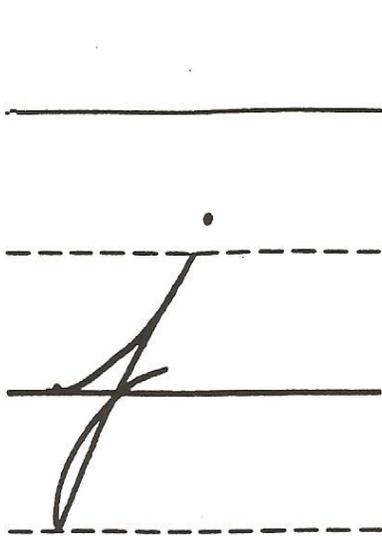
Retrace—"Slide down almost to the ground before going around"—almost to the writing line and turn for release stroke.

Cross slightly above the middle divider.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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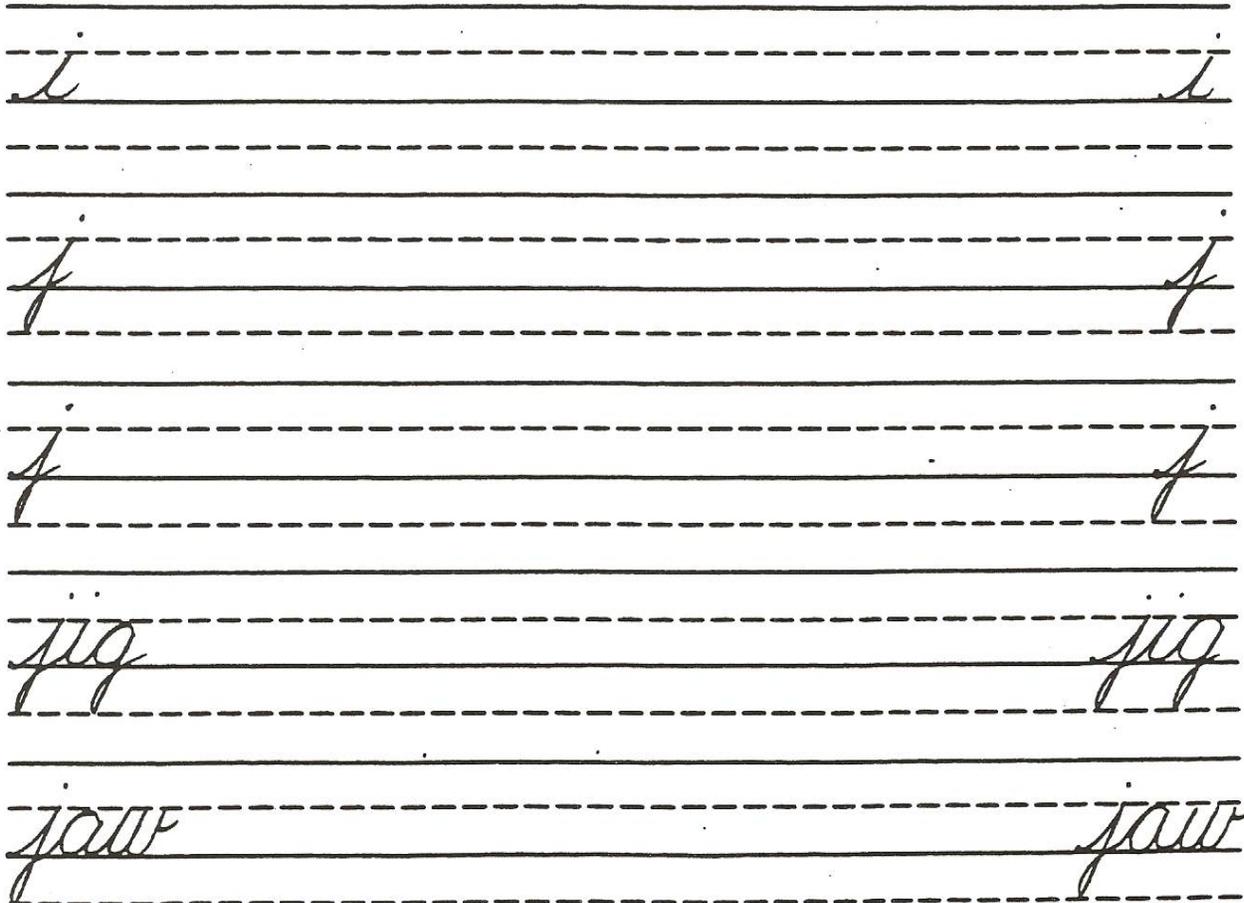
STEPS

Make a kite string from the writing line to the middle divider.

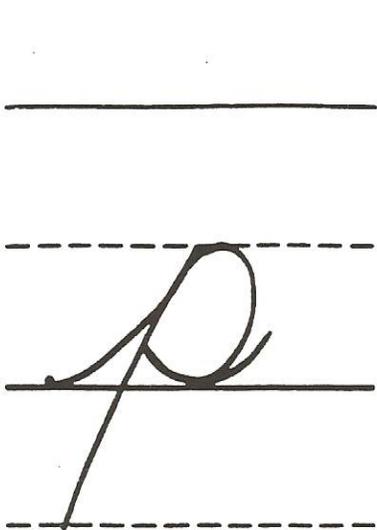
Retrace slightly and continue a slanted stroke down to the middle divider below the writing line.

Loop left under the main part of the letter, and cross the slanted stroke exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.

Dot slightly above the middle divider.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.



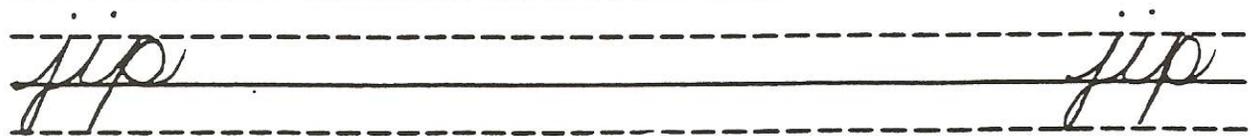
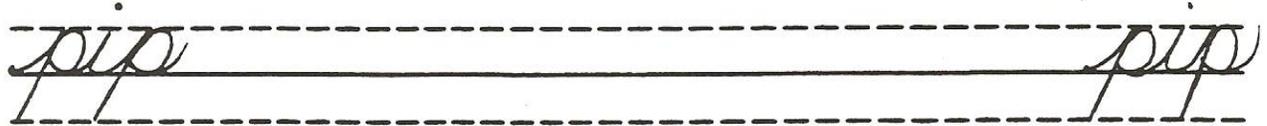
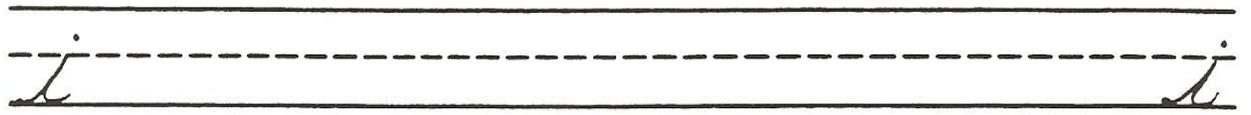
STEPS

Make a kite string from the writing line to the middle divider.

Retrace slightly, and continue a straight slanted stroke down to the middle divider below the writing line.

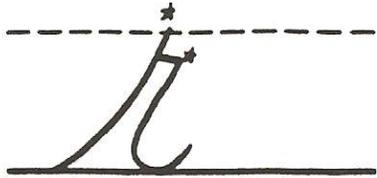
Retrace slanted stroke almost to the middle divider, circle right from 11 around to 7 o'clock, touching the shape together with the slanted stroke.

Retrace from 7 to 5 o'clock and continue for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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TIP: When you make the second slanted stroke, look back at the first and let it guide you so the shape doesn't get wider.



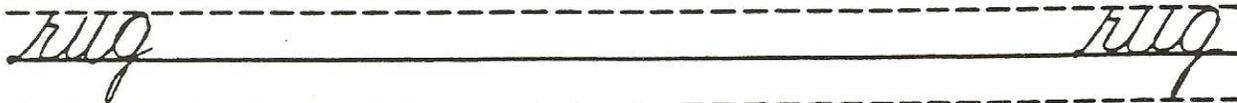
STEPS

Make a kite string from the writing line to the middle divider.

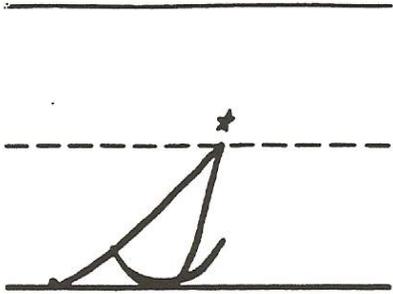
Stop at the star (*) on the middle divider.

Retrace slightly and make a tiny right horizontal shelf. Stop at the second star (*).

Make a square corner and continue the slanted stroke to the writing line for turn-and-release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.



STEPS

Make a kite string from the writing line to the star (*) on the middle divider. **Stop** at the star (*).



Aim straight down for the writing line, and round a "fat belly" at 5 o'clock.



Continue the "fat belly" around 7 o'clock to touch the shape together with the kite string stroke.



Retrace from 7 to 5 o'clock and continue for release stroke.

s

s

s

s

sir

sir

sat

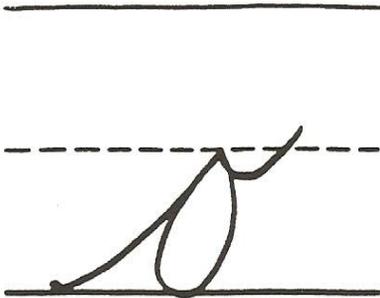
sat

is

is

Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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—

STEPS



Make a kite string from the writing line to the middle divider.



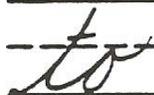
Retrace slightly, and "drop an egg" on the writing line.



Curve up and touch egg shape together at its top.



Swoop down from the top and curve up right for the release stroke. This is a **bridge connector**.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here:

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did

pug

tug

saw

cut

rut

gut

sat

aid

jaw

tip

was

pup

gad

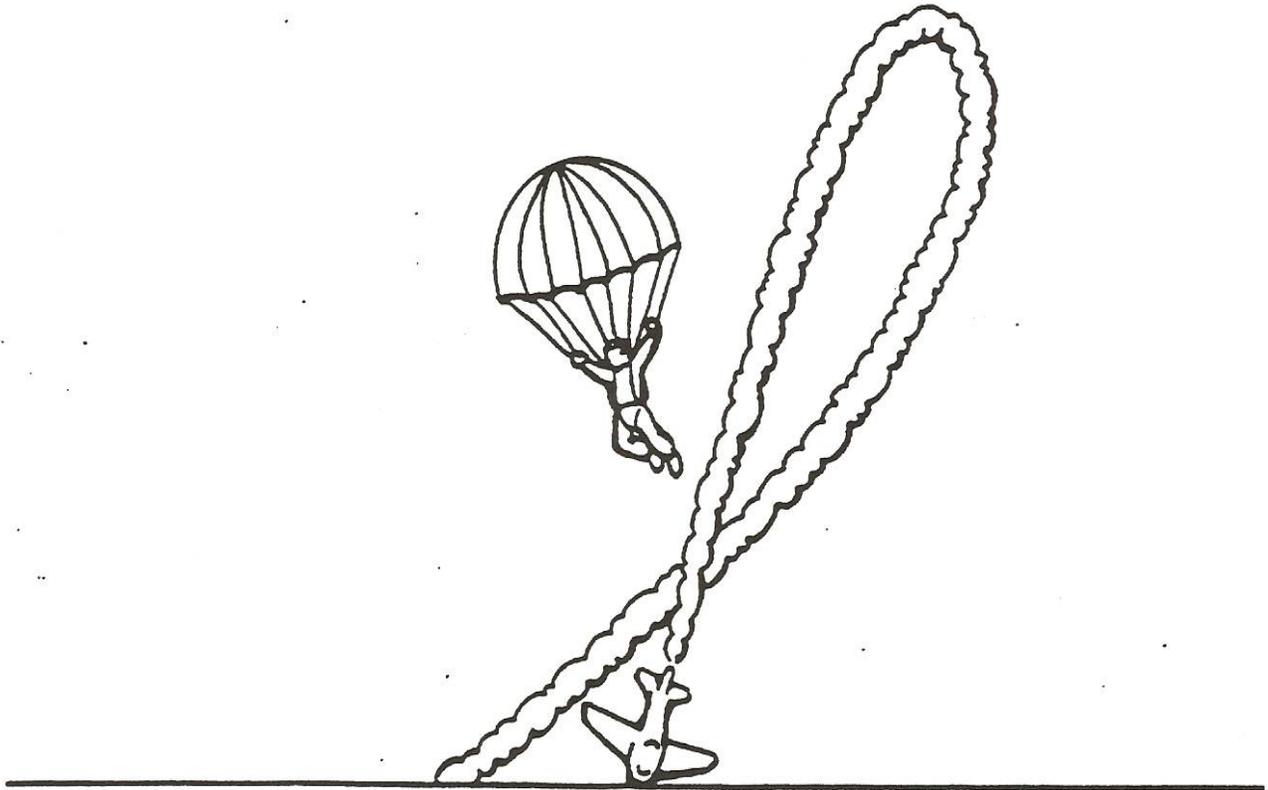
jar

pig

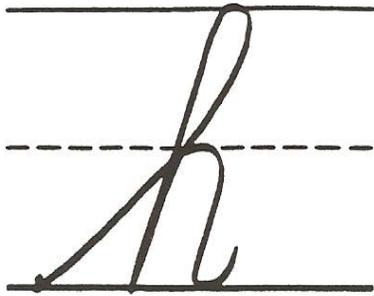
cup

aid

Loop Group



Practice this long kite string, which loops as it approaches the top line. Learn to “slant a lot and loop over the top.” This pattern will be adapted for the remainder of the letters in this group.



STEPS

Make a very slanted kite string from the writing line toward the top line.



As you approach the top line, loop left from 1 to 12 o'clock, and continue a straight slanted stroke to the writing line. Cross the kite string exactly at the middle divider.



Retrace slanted stroke almost to the middle divider, round over from 11 to 1 o'clock. Continue with a downstroke (look back at the first so the shape doesn't get wider) to the writing line. Continue for turn-and-release stroke.

TIP: The entire loop is above the middle divider.

h

h

h

h

h

h

ha

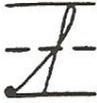
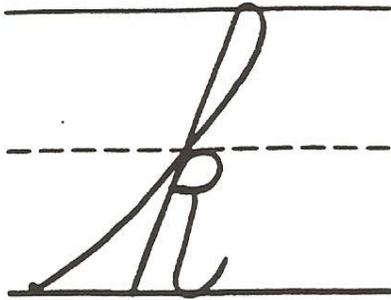
ha

ho

ho

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STEPS

Repeat the first two directions for *h*.

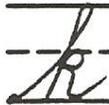
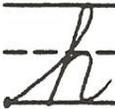


Retrace the slanted stroke almost to the middle divider. Round a circular curve to right and touch the shape together at the kite string.



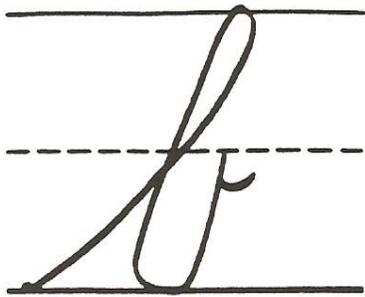
Retrace the bottom circular stroke halfway, curve and continue a downstroke to the writing line for turn-and-release stroke.

TIP: The entire loop is above the middle divider.

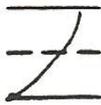


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TIP: The entire loop is above the middle divider.



STEPS

Make a very slanted kite string from the writing line toward the top line.



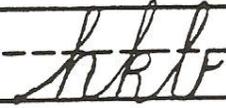
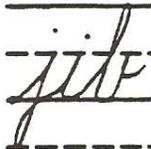
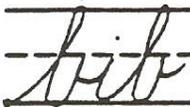
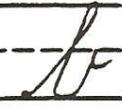
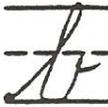
As you approach the top line, loop left from 1 to 12 o'clock. Continue a straight slanted stroke to the writing line, crossing the kite string exactly at the middle divider.



Follow along the writing line from 7 to 5 o'clock and slant up to the middle divider.

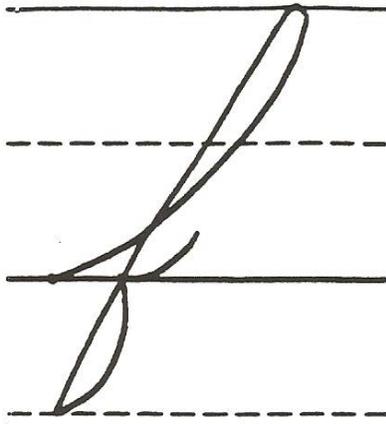


Retrace slightly, and curve right for release stroke. This is a **bridge connector**.



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TIP: This letter is a Paper Hog—it fills 1½ lines!



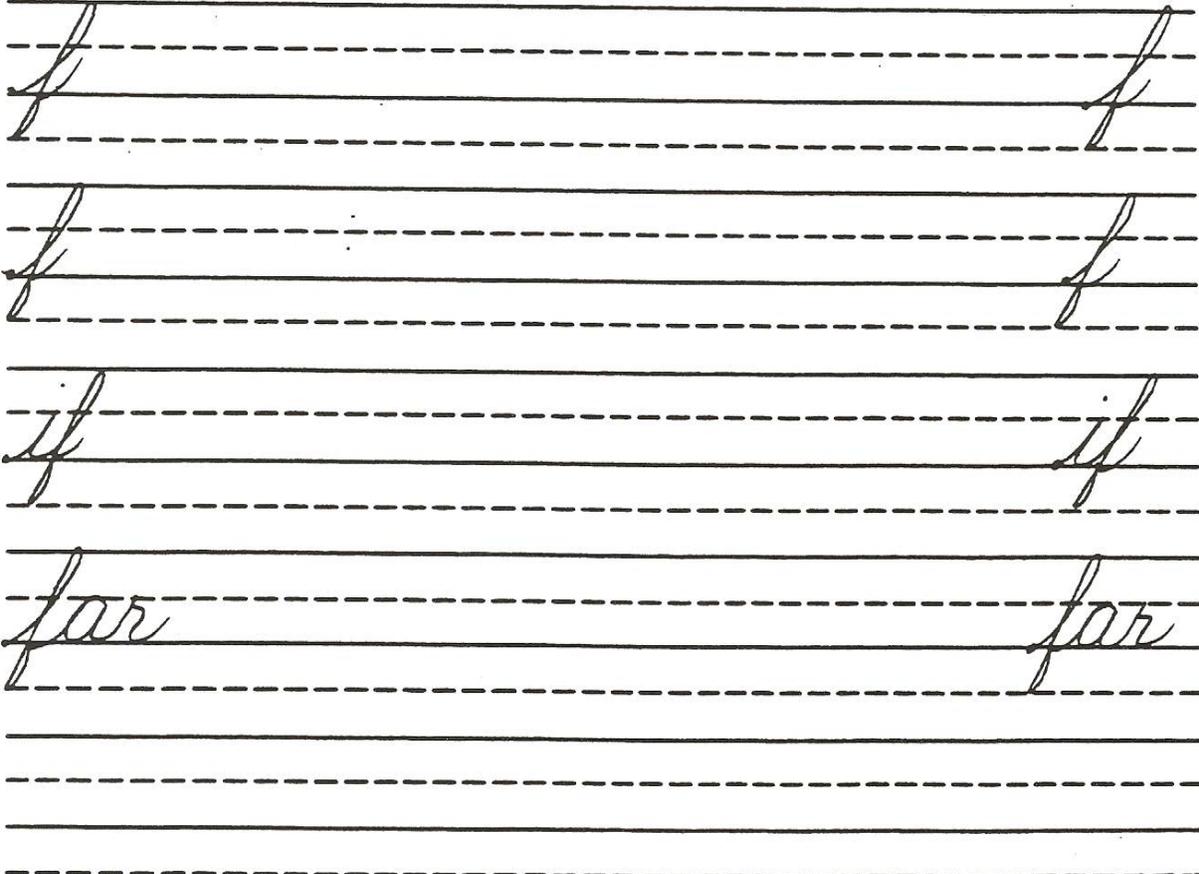
STEPS

Make a very slanted kite string from the writing line toward the top line.

As you approach the top line, loop left from 1 to 12 o'clock.

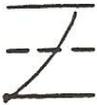
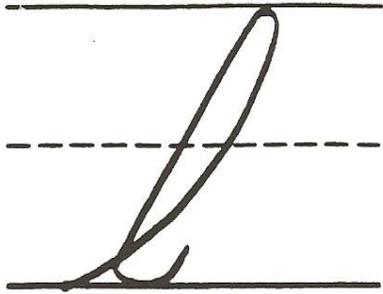
Make an extra long slanted stroke to the middle divider below the writing line, crossing the kite string halfway between the middle divider and the writing line.

Loop right under the main part of the letter and touch bottom loop together exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

Make a very slanted kite string from the writing line toward the top line.

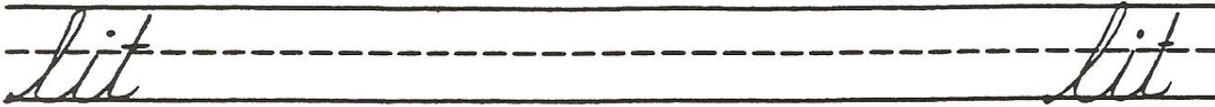
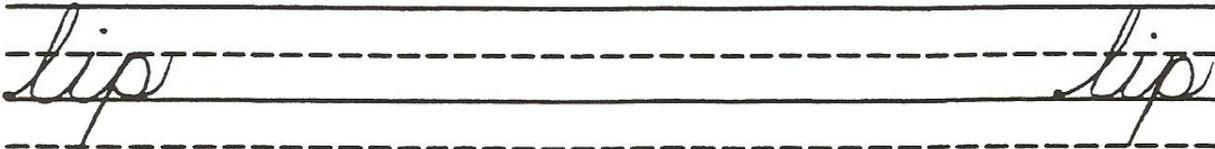
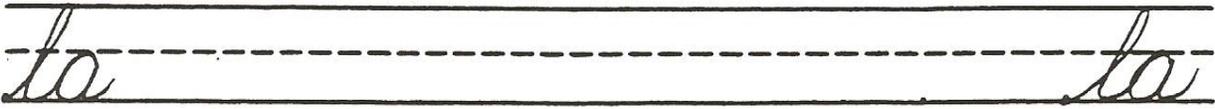
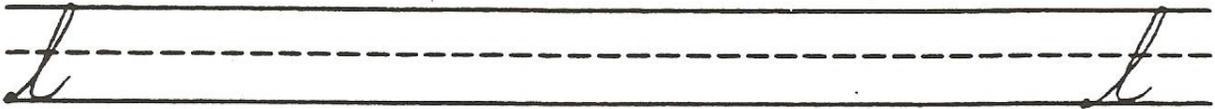


As you approach the top line, loop left from 1 to 12 o'clock. Continue a slanted stroke to the writing line, crossing the kite string halfway between the middle divider and the writing line.



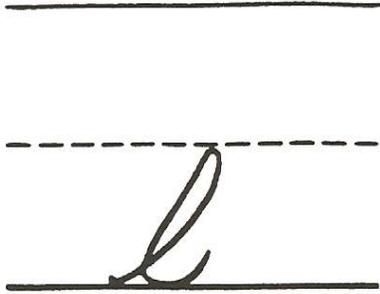
Turn and curve for the release stroke.

TIP: The *l* has a curved front and a straight back. The loop fills $\frac{3}{4}$ of the line.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

Make a short kite string from the writing line toward the middle divider.



As you approach the middle divider, loop left from 1 to 12 o'clock. Continue a straight slanted stroke to the writing line, crossing the kite string near the writing line.



Turn for the release stroke.

TIP: The *e* has a curved front and a straight back.



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hop

hit

kit

kid

lap

fat

ear

bib

bad

elf

for

elk

hat

fit

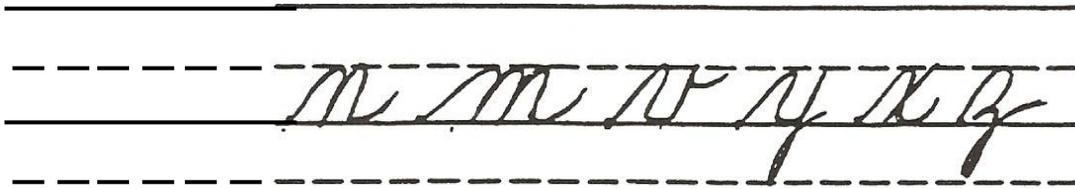
lip

bit

egg

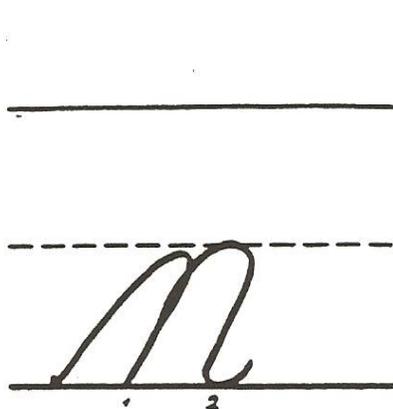
ell

Hills and Valleys



Practice slanting overhand to round a pointed “hill top” and count downstrokes for *n* and *m*.

Practice curving up and keeping the valley floor flat. This pattern will be adapted for the four valley letters.



STEPS

Make an overhand curve from the writing line to the middle divider.

Round a pointed "hill top" and slant down to the writing line.

Retrace slanted stroke to the middle divider and round a flatter "hill top." Slant down to the writing line, letting the first slanted line guide you.

Turn and release stroke.

TIP: Count the downstrokes. The letter *n* has two. Note that the lead-in is at a wider angle than the downstroke.

n

n

n

n

no

no

nut

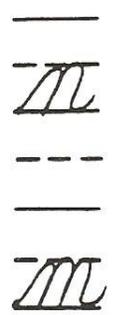
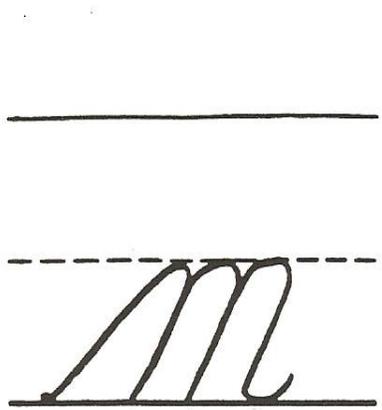
nut

on

on

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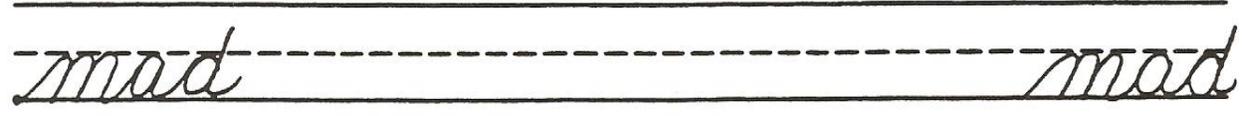
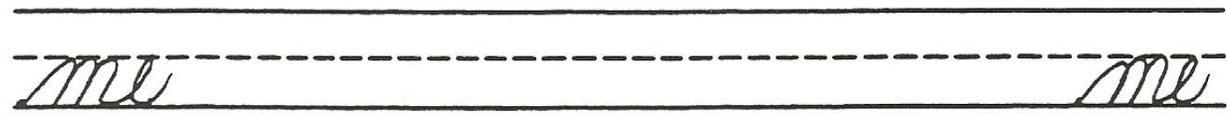
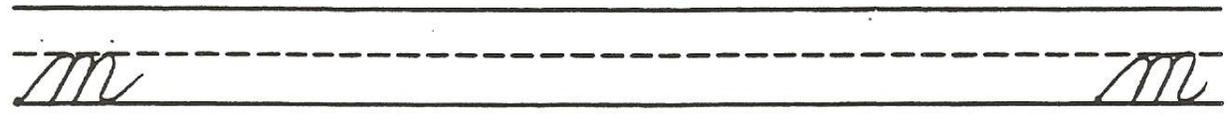


STEPS

Repeat the directions for *n*.

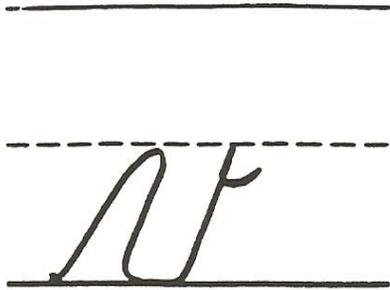
Retrace the second downstroke and round a second flatter "hill top." Make a third slanted stroke to the writing line, and turn for the release stroke.

TIP: Count the downstrokes. The letter *m* has three.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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TIP: Keep the "hill" and "valley" lines slanted and parallel with the lead-in stroke.



STEPS

Make an overhand curve from the writing line to the middle divider.



Make a pointed "hill top" and slant a stroke to the writing line.



Follow along the writing line from 7 to 5 o'clock. Slant up to the middle divider.

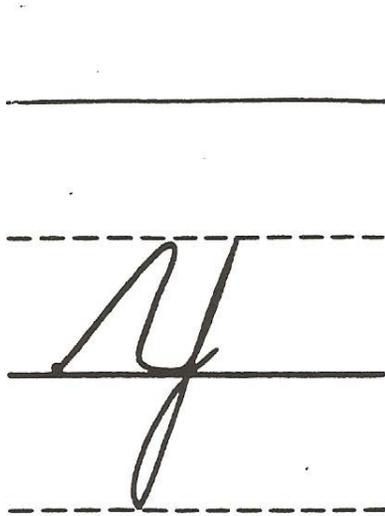


Retrace slightly and curve right for release stroke. This is a bridge connector.



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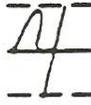


STEPS

Repeat the first three directions for *v*.



Retrace the slanted stroke to the middle divider below the writing line.

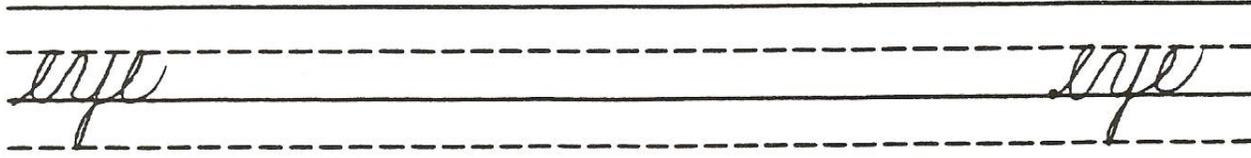
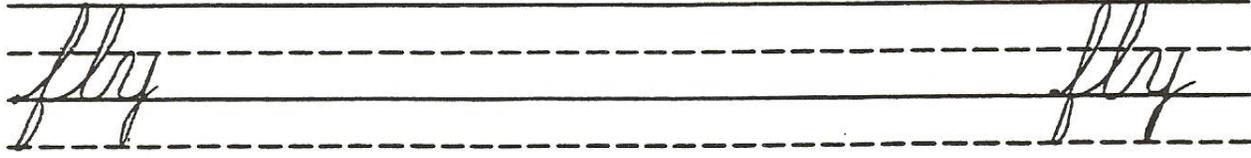
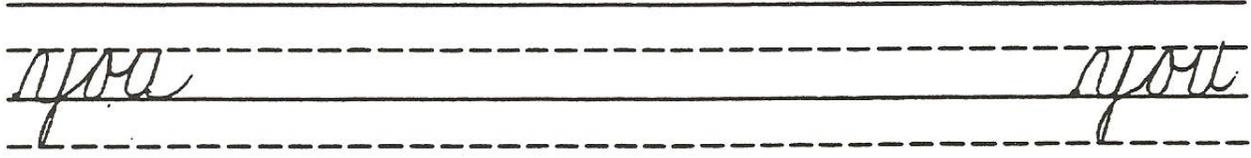
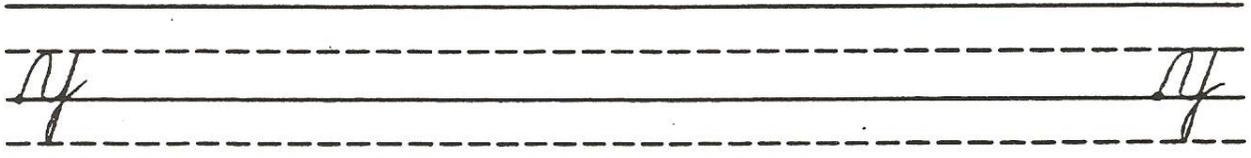
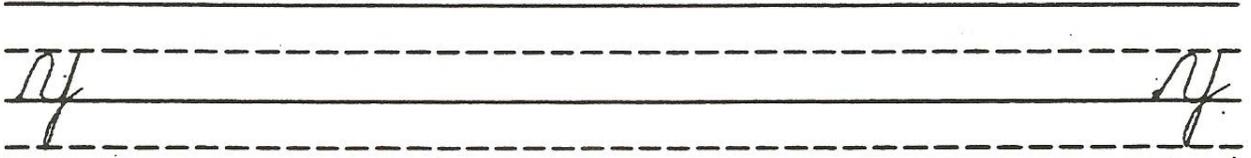


Loop under the main part of the letter and cross the downstroke **exactly** at the writing line.

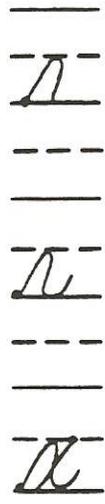
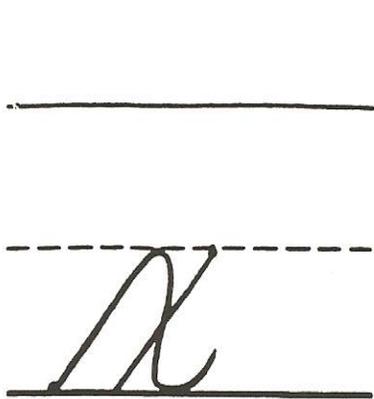


Continue for release stroke.

TIP: Keep the "valley" flat along the writing line.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

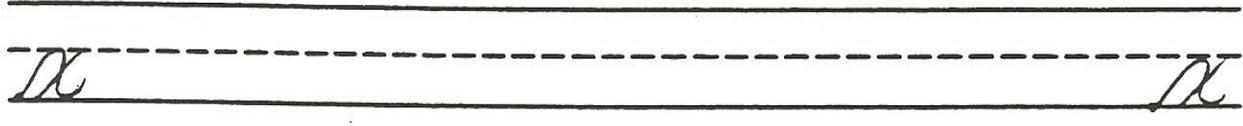
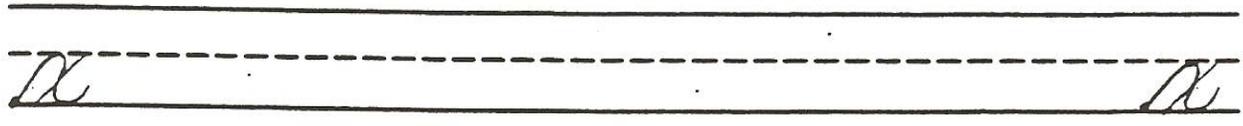
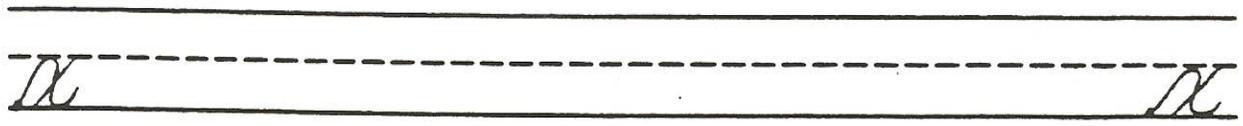


STEPS

Repeat the first two directions for *v*.

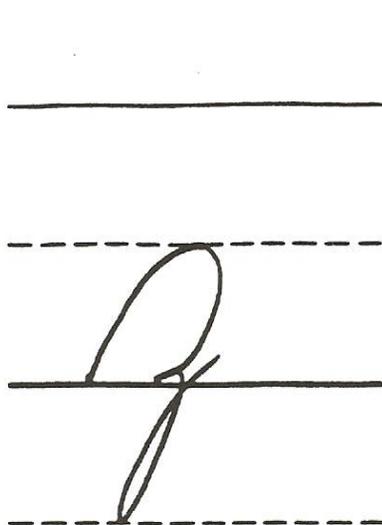
Follow along the writing line from 7 to 5 o'clock. Stop.

Start a second stroke at the middle divider directly above the 5 o'clock stop. Make a left diagonal stroke, crossing the lead-in stroke halfway between the middle divider and the writing line.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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STEPS

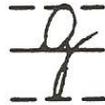
Make an overhand curve from the writing line to the middle divider.



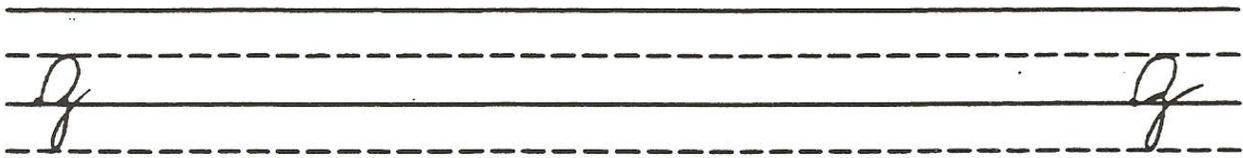
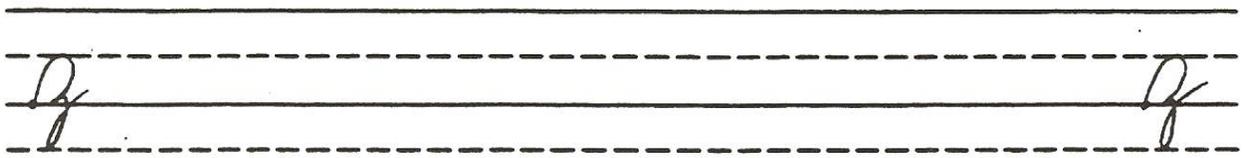
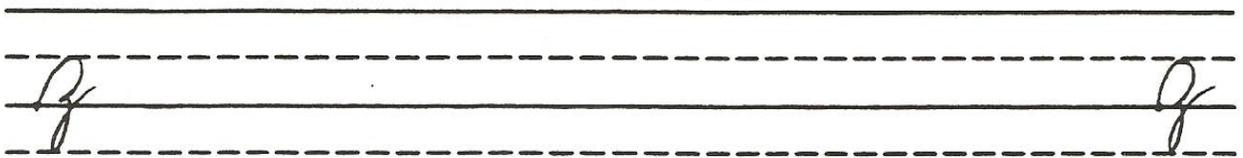
Make a rounded "hill top" and curve left toward the writing line. As you approach the writing line, make a diagonal "bend-in" and stop at the writing line.



Retrace the "bend-in" and round a small curve. Continue a slanted stroke to the middle divider below the writing line.



Loop left under the main part of the letter, crossing the downstroke exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.



Close your eyes and try the new letter here.

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Word List for Handwriting Practice

a	at	ape	away
d	do	did	dual
g	go	gig	good
q	qu	que	quit
c	cc	cot	coal

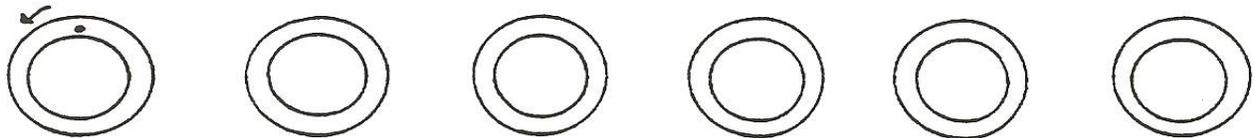
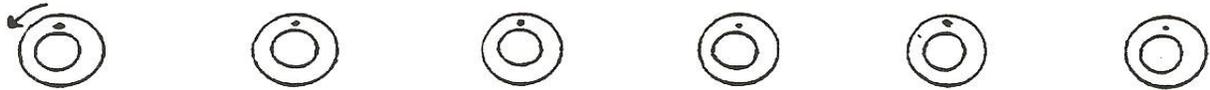
i	if	ice	into
u	up	use	ugly
w	we	was	walk
t	to	tea	toot
j	jj	job	joke
p	pa	pod	pear
r	ra	rib	read
s	so	sad	soap
o	on	odd	open

h	ho	hum	half
k	ko	key	king
b	by	bog	baby
f	fa	fog	flee
l	lo	leg	look
e	el	elf	earn

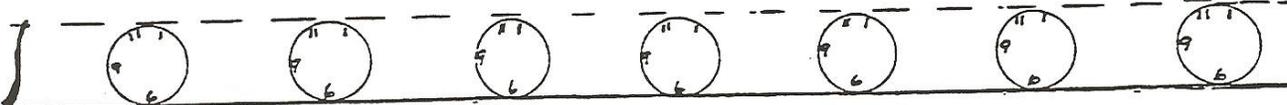
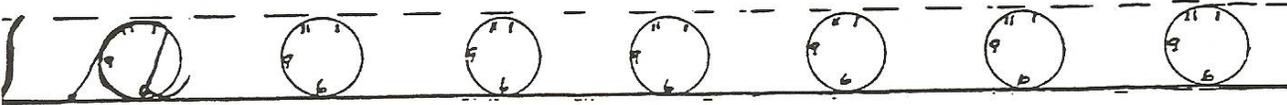
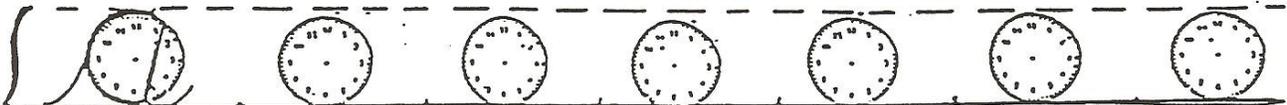
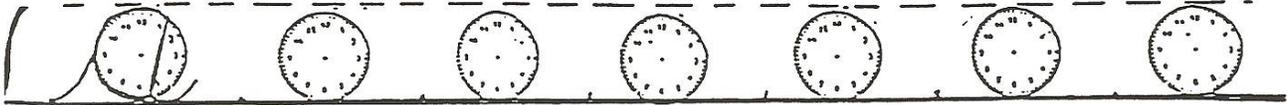
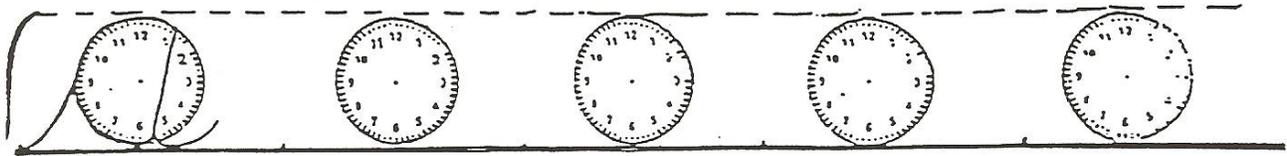
n	no	now	nook
m	my	mop	milk
v	vo	vat	very
y	ye	yam	year
x	xu	xxx	xero
z	za	zip	zeal 6

Distal Finger Control

Rest side of hand on desk. Use stroke to circle left from top around to top within the donut.

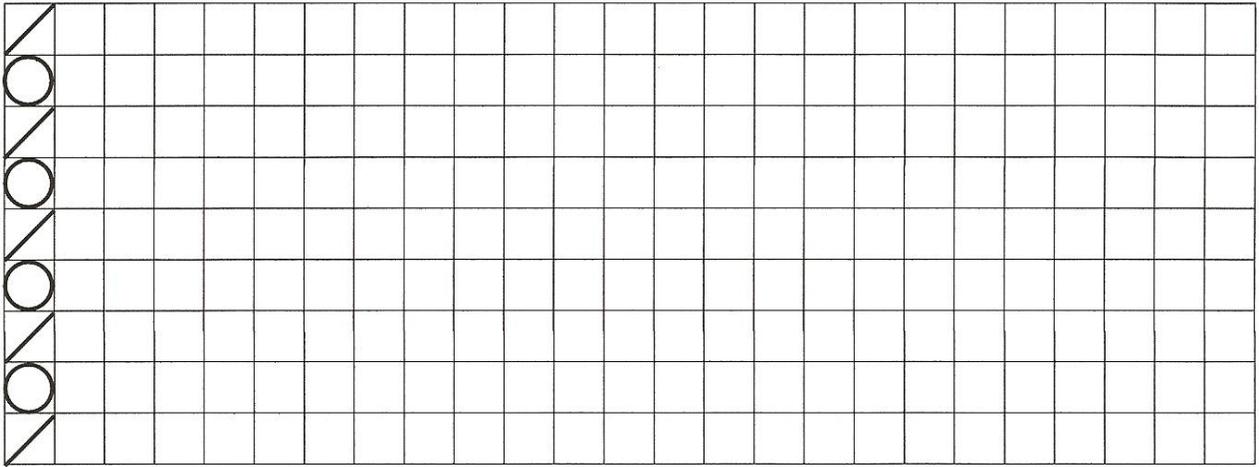


Clock Climbers



Grid for Diagonal and Circular Strokes

Draw (L to R) upward diagonals within the $\frac{1}{4}$ " grid spaces.
Circle within the $\frac{1}{4}$ " grid spaces (bump all 4 walls of the square).



Practice Loop Group and remember to round over the top as your pencil approaches the top of the line.



Loop Control

h h h h

l l l l

o o o o

u u u u

z z z z

k l o u

b l o u

f o u u

l o u u

Bridge Connectors

ba

oa

be

oe

bo

oi

bi

oo

bu

ou

br

or

by

os

bus

hoot

baby

book

Bridge Connectors

who

who

what

what

when

when

where

where

why

why

wow

wow

yet

wig

wow

war

culture

wise

Bridge Connectors

or

oat

os

cow

who

bye

box

now

ur

boss

for

orbit

toss

boot

brim

horse

boat

hog

Bridge Connectors

f g j p q y z

far

gap

joy

pat

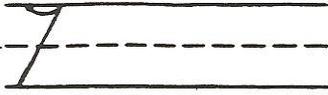
que

you

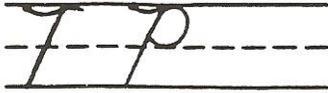
zip

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 sets of three horizontal lines: a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Slim 7

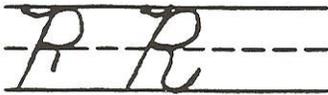


Start at the top line, swoop down slightly to the right, and retouch the top line. Slant a left downstroke to the writing line. *TIP:* It looks like the number 7 with a shorter top.



P

1. Make a "slim 7."
2. Retrace downstroke almost to the top line.
3. Round a stroke from 11 to 7 o'clock within the upper half-space, and touch shape together above middle divider. Stop. This letter has no release stroke.



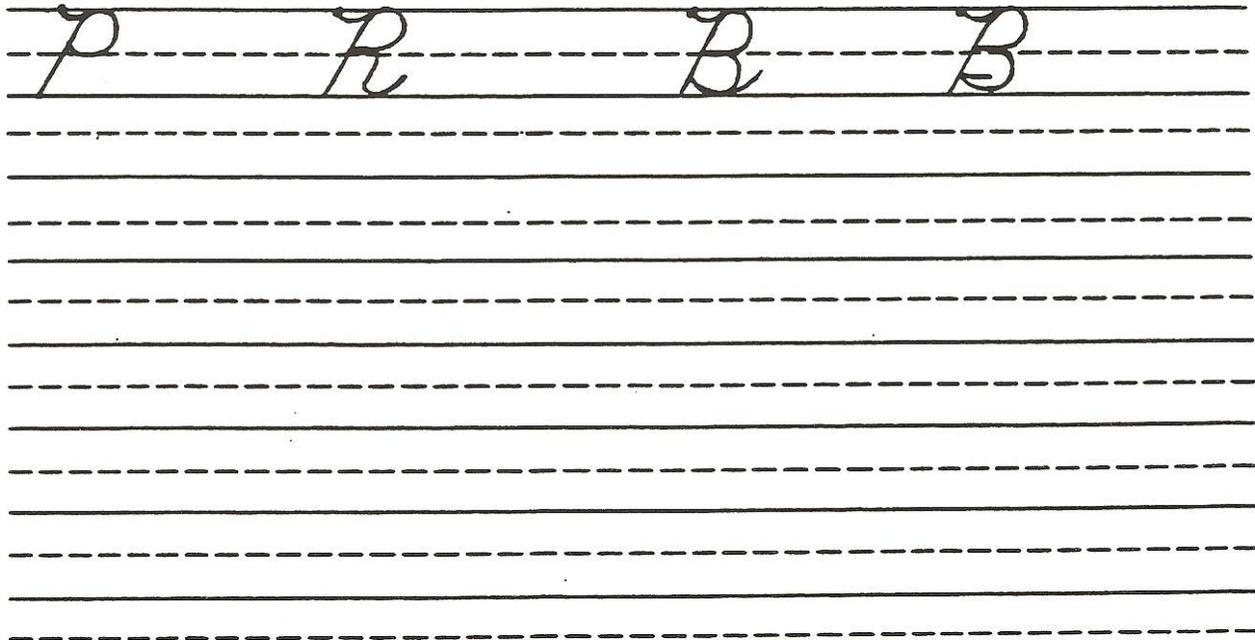
R

1. Repeat directions 1-3 for *P*.
2. Retrace halfway across bottom of circle and curve right down to the writing line for turn-and-release stroke.



B

1. Repeat directions 1 through 3 for *P*.
2. Retrace almost across bottom of circle and make another circle in the bottom half line, touching shape together at 7 o'clock.
- 3a. If *B* is connected, retrace bottom of circle and continue for connector stroke; or
- 3b. If *B* stands alone, make a right horizontal stroke halfway across bottom circle for inside Boat Release.



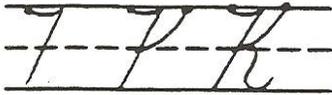
Slim 7



H

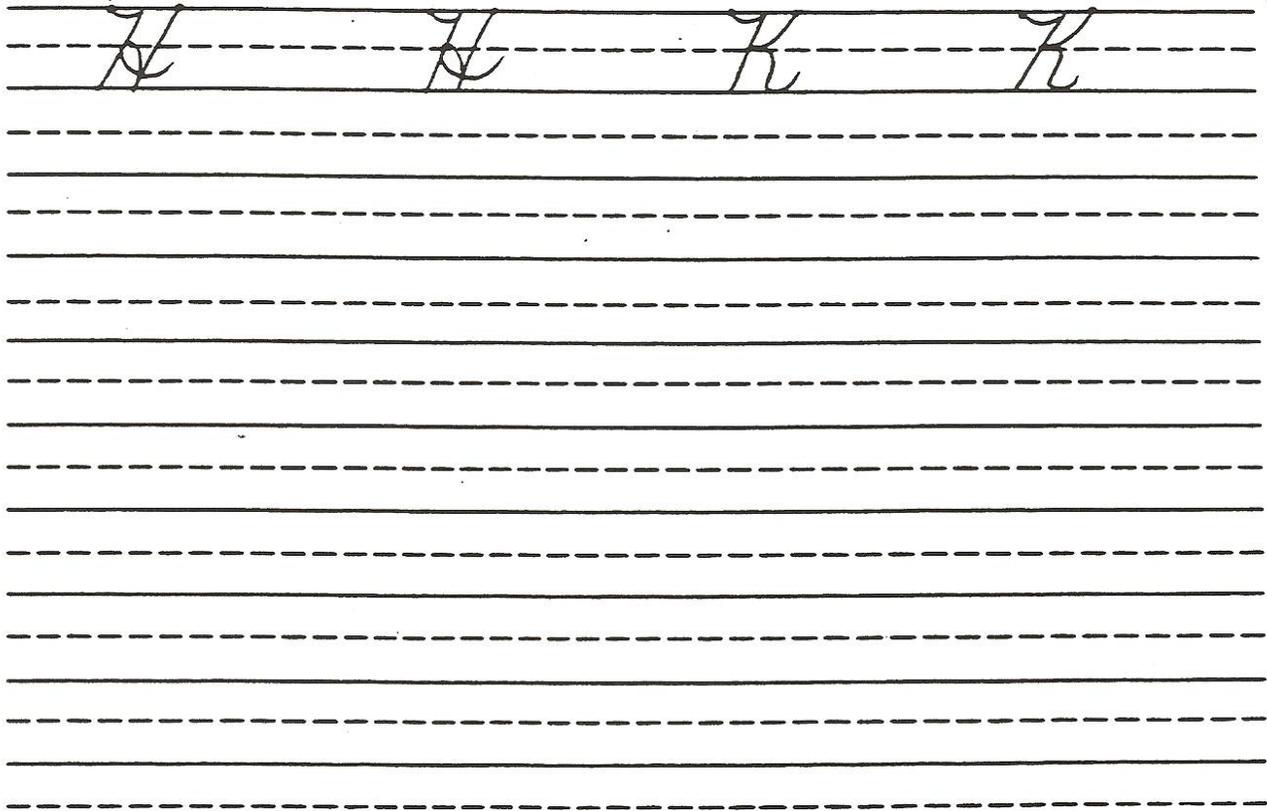
1. Make a "slim 7."
2. To the right and close to the "slim 7" slant left a second downstroke to the writing line.
3. Retrace slightly and—"loop over, under, and out"—loop over the middle divider and out low in the bottom half-space for easy connecting to the next letter.

TIP: A narrow *H* is easy, a wide *H* is tough.

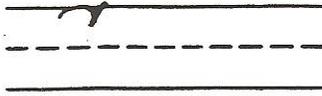


K

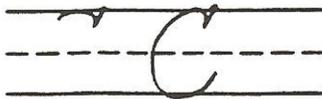
1. Make a "slim 7."
2. To the right and close to the "slim 7" make an underhand curve which touches the 7 at the middle divider.
3. Retrace slightly, and curve right down to the writing line for turn-and-release stroke.



Umbrella Top



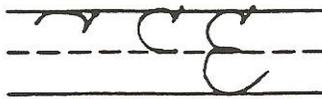
Closed Loop Starter: Start at top line, and make a short left downstroke. Retrace to top line. This double thick line helps with motor control and enhances the design of the capital letter.



C

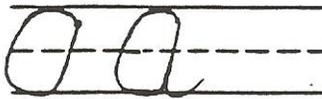
1. Start at 1 o'clock with a "closed loop starter."
2. Circle up and left across top line to 11 o'clock, and round down and across writing line for release stroke.

TIP: This is a round letter.



E

1. Start at 1 o'clock with a "closed loop starter."
2. Circle up and left across top line to 11 o'clock.
3. Round down and make a right horizontal stroke at the middle divider.
4. Retrace horizontal stroke and round down and across writing line for release stroke.

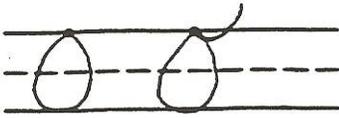


A: No Starter.

1. Start slightly below 1 o'clock.
2. Round up and across top line to 11 o'clock, and continue to round down and across writing line to 6 o'clock.
3. Slant a stroke to 1 o'clock to touch shape together.
4. Retrace slanted stroke for turn-and-release stroke.

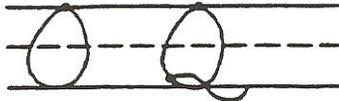


Eggs



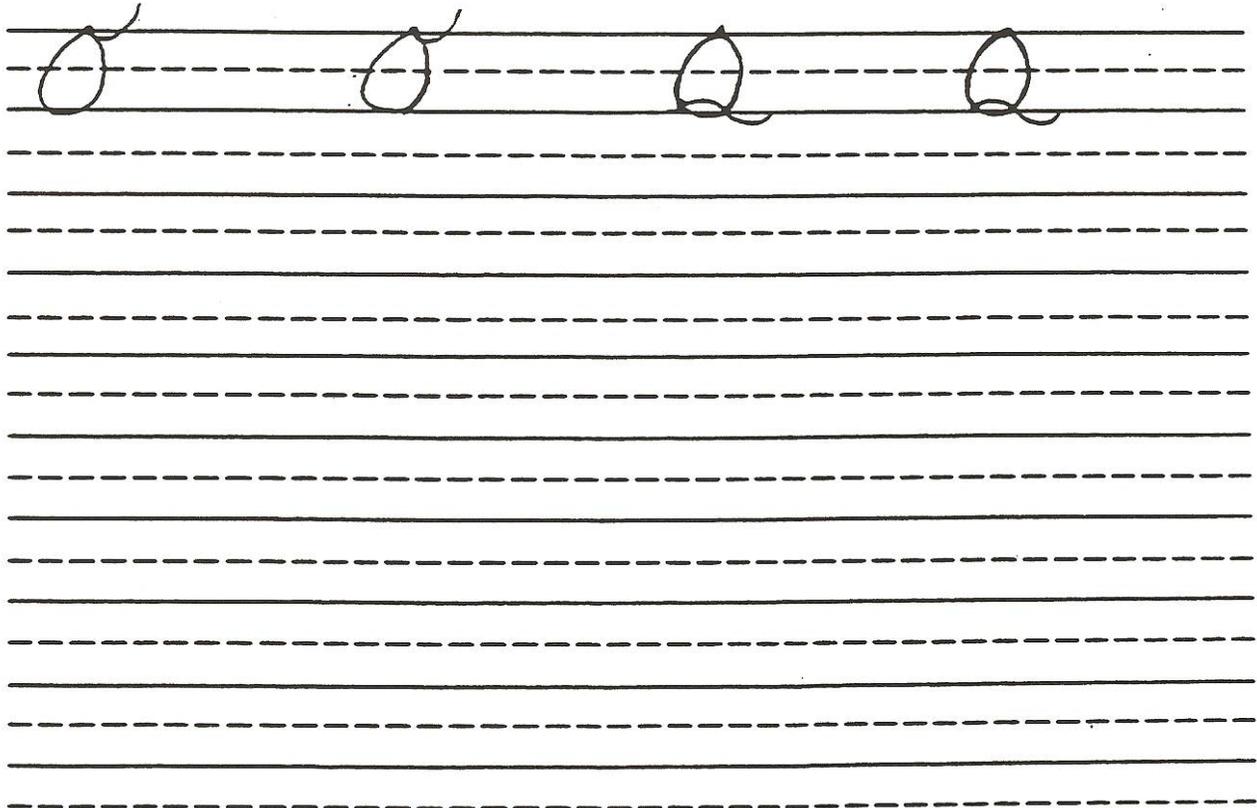
O

1. Curve an "egg" left from 12 o'clock, touching the writing line and continuing up to touch shape together at top.
2. Swoop up for release stroke.

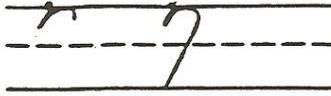


Q

1. Repeat direction 1 for O.
2. At 7 o'clock, arc a second stroke within the "egg" to 5 o'clock.
3. Continue arc stroke under writing line and swoop up to touch writing line for release stroke.

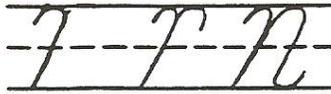


High Hills



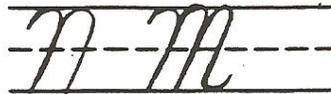
Candy Cane: Start with a “closed loop starter” and continue retrace right with a small up-curve at top line. Slant a left downstroke to the writing line.

TIP: It looks like a candy cane with a thicker “hook.”



N

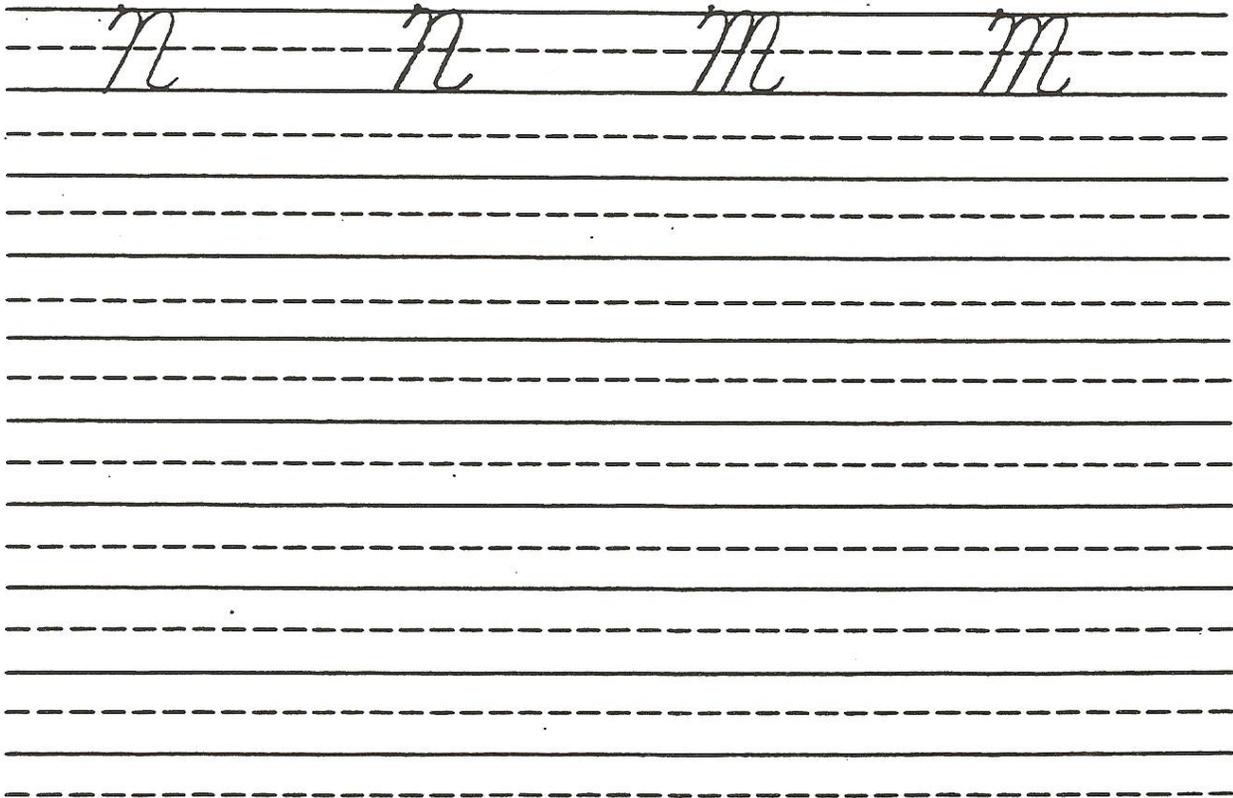
1. Make a “candy cane.”
2. Retrace to top line.
3. Round over hill from 11 to 1 o'clock.
4. Slant left to writing line for turn-and-release.



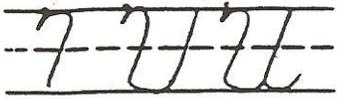
M

1. Repeat directions 1 through 3 for *N*.
2. Retrace second downstroke and round over a second hill.
3. Slant a third downstroke to writing line for turn-and-release stroke.

TIP: When making second or third downstrokes, look back at the first and let it guide you so shape doesn't get wider.

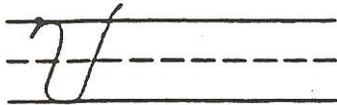


Deep Valleys



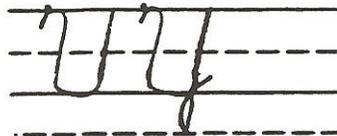
U

1. Make a "candy cane," stopping at 7 o'clock.
2. Curve underhand right and follow across the writing line to 5 o'clock.
3. Continue a slanted stroke to top line.
4. Retrace for turn-and-release stroke.



V

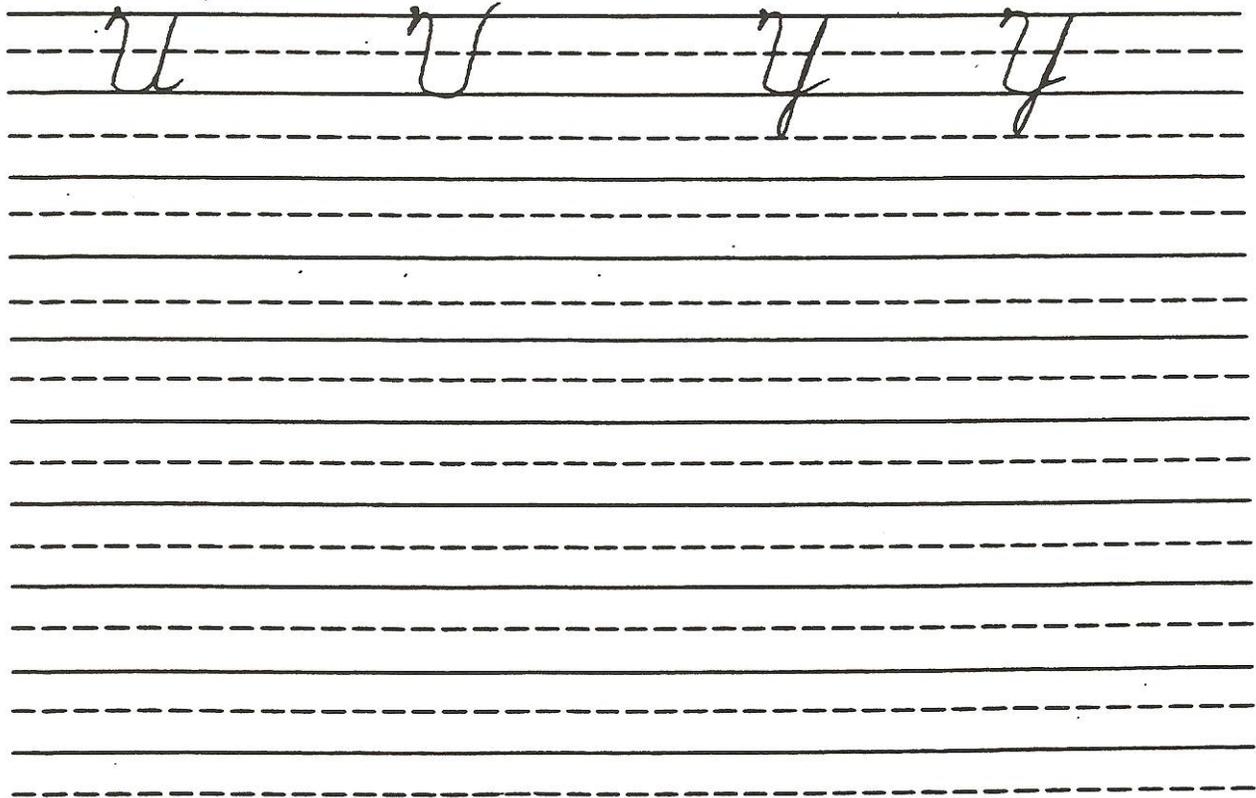
1. Repeat directions 1 and 2 for *U*.
2. Continue slanted line slightly above top line. **Stop.**



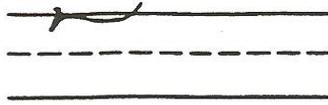
Y

1. Repeat directions 1 through 3 for *U*.
2. Retrace slanted stroke and continue to middle divider below the writing line.
3. Loop left under main part of letter and across downstroke exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.

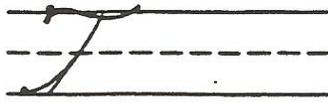
TIP: Flat bottoms work well in this group.



Sneaky Snake Tops



Make a "closed loop starter" and swoop "up, down, up" across the top line, ending slightly above the top line.



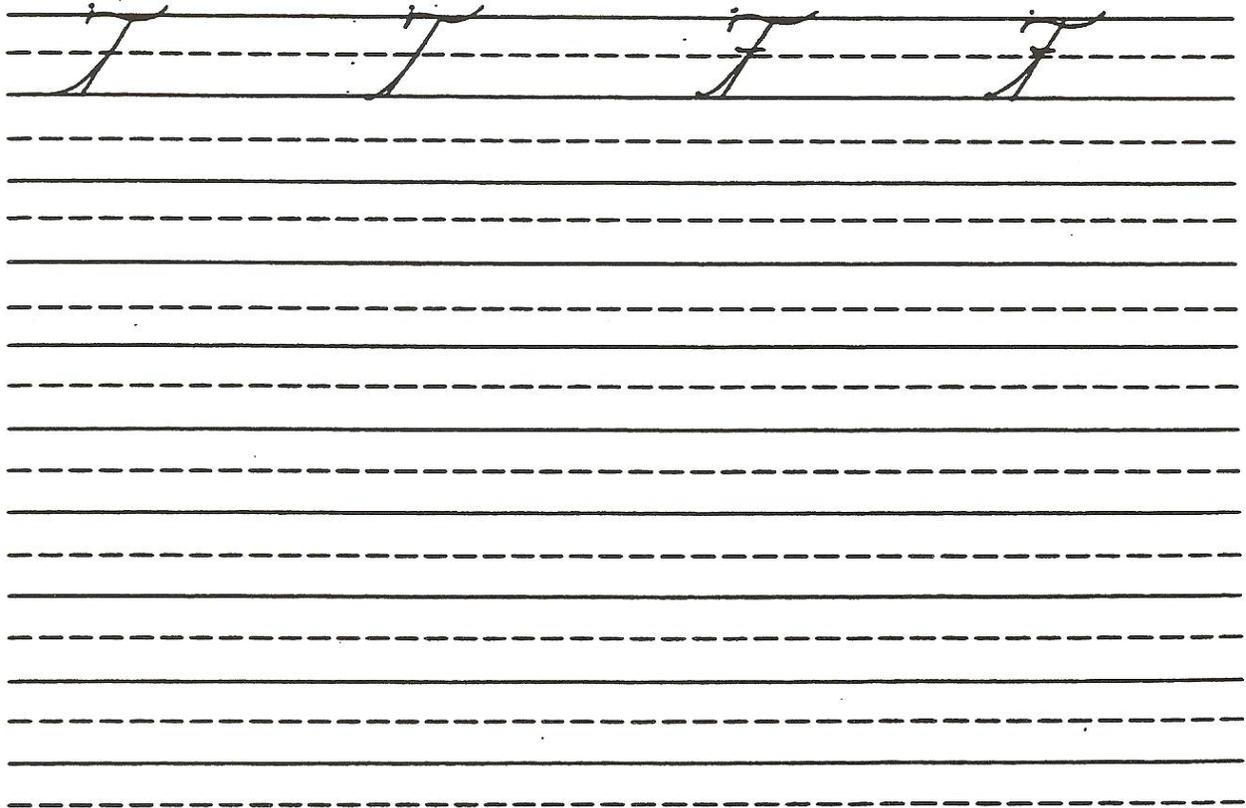
T

1. Make a kite string from the writing line to the top line.
2. Retrace kite string to middle divider and continue downstroke to writing line. **Stop.**
3. Cross kite string with "sneaky snake top."

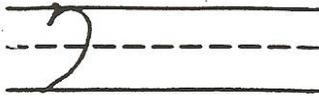


F

1. Repeat all directions for T.
2. Make a short horizontal stroke through the kite string at the middle divider.



Half Hearts

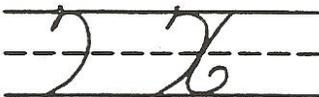


Start with a "closed loop starter." At top line, round a stroke right from 12 to 2 o'clock, and down to touch the writing line at 6 o'clock. This will look like the right half of a heart.



W

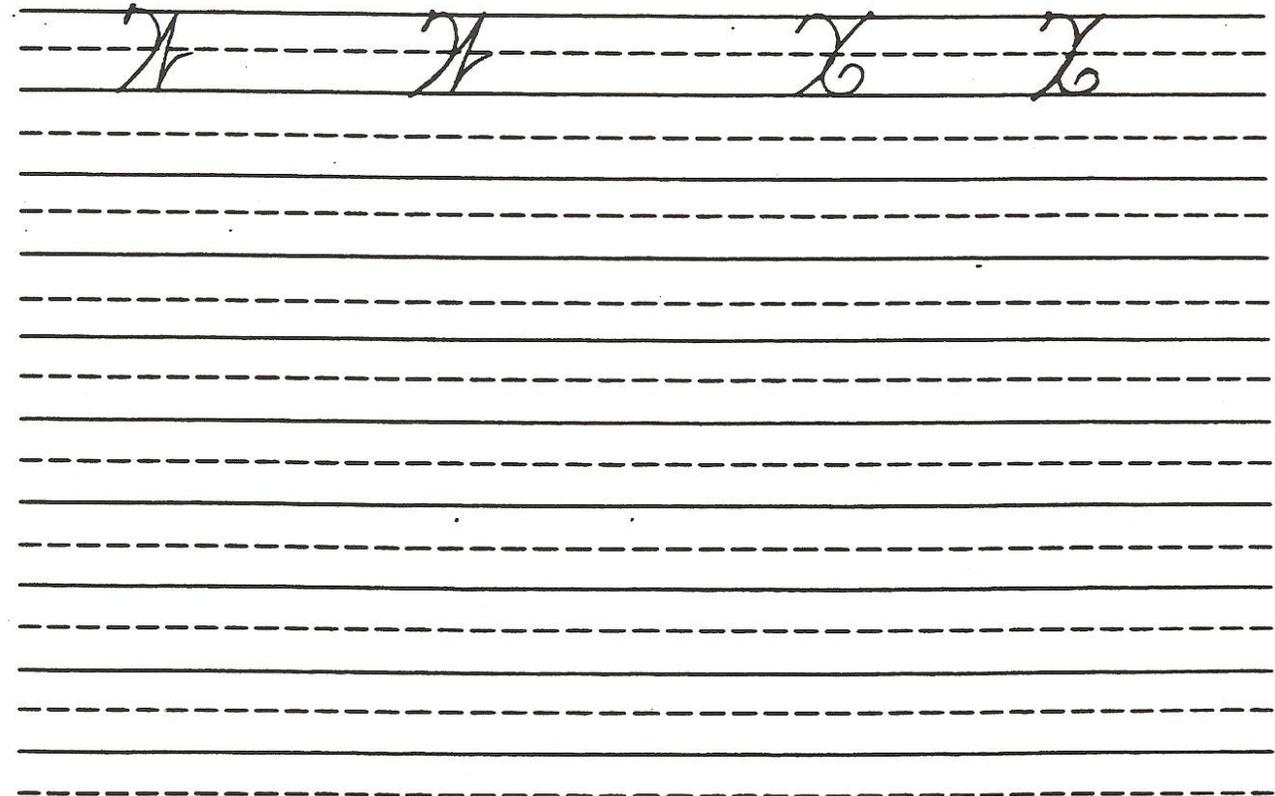
1. Make a "half heart."
2. Retrace bottom half of stroke to the middle divider.
3. At middle divider, separate and continue stroke to top line.
4. Without any retrace, drop a vertical stroke to the writing line.
5. Retrace slightly and continue an overhand curve above the middle divider for release stroke.



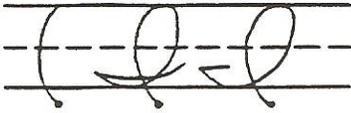
X

1. Make a "half heart."
2. To the right and close to the "half heart," round a stroke to touch the "half heart" at the middle divider.
3. Continue to circle, touching the writing line, and continue to curve toward middle divider. Stop. It will look like an unclosed 6.

TIP: For *W* and *X* you must use a "half heart"—a candy cane will not work.

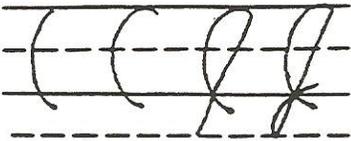


Left Swingers



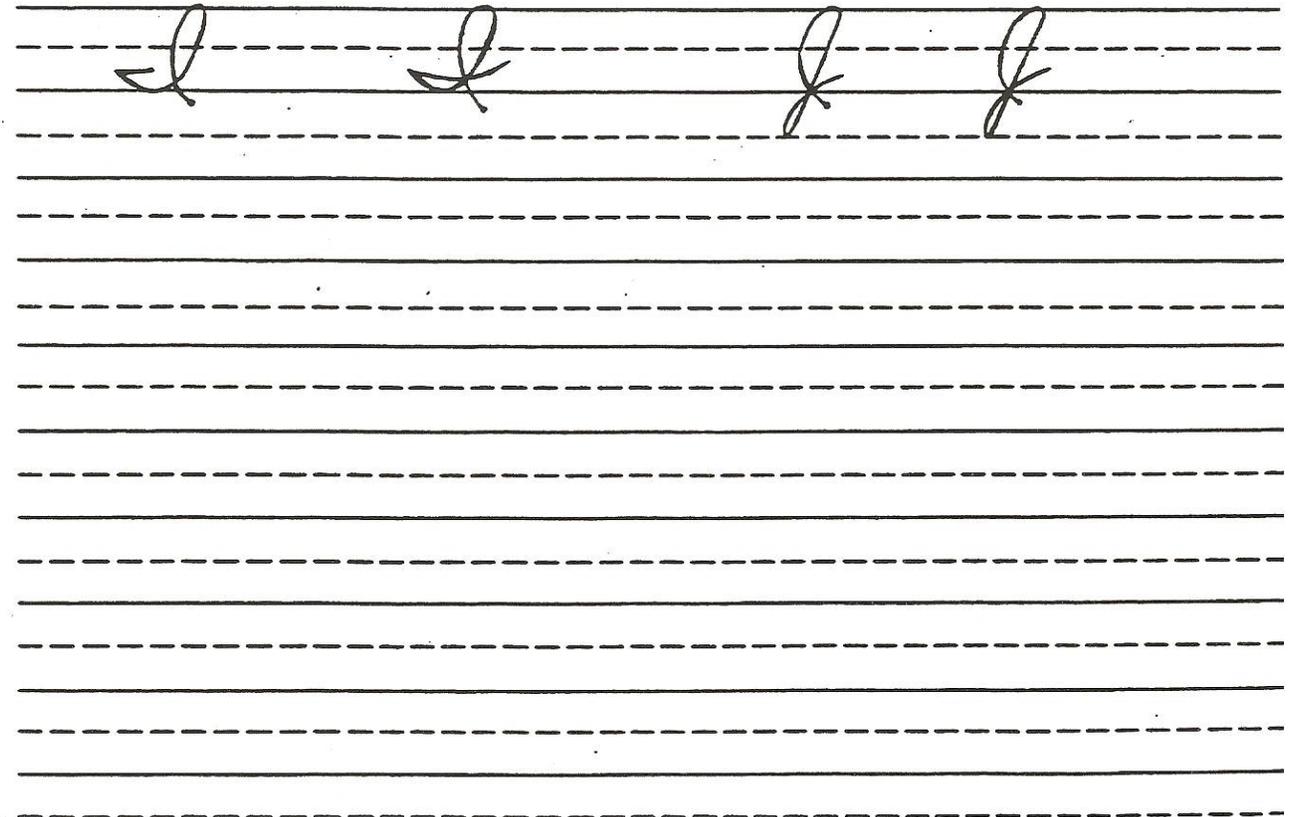
I

1. Start slightly below the writing line to the right of the space where the letter will appear.
2. Swing a rounded stroke up left to 11 o'clock, continue to circle past 5 across the writing line to 7 o'clock. **Stop.**
- 3a. If *I* is connected, make a horizontal stroke from 7 to 5 o'clock for the lead-in to the next letter; or
- 3b. If *I* stands alone, make right horizontal stroke to the middle of the letter.

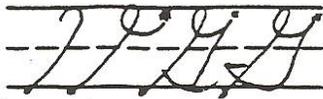


J

1. Repeat direction 1 for the letter *I*.
2. Swing a rounded stroke up left to 11 o'clock.
3. Round toward 12 o'clock and drop an **extra long** downstroke to the middle divider below the writing line.
4. Loop left under the main part of the letter and cross the downstroke **exactly** at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.

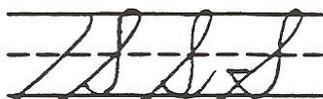


Fat Bellies



G

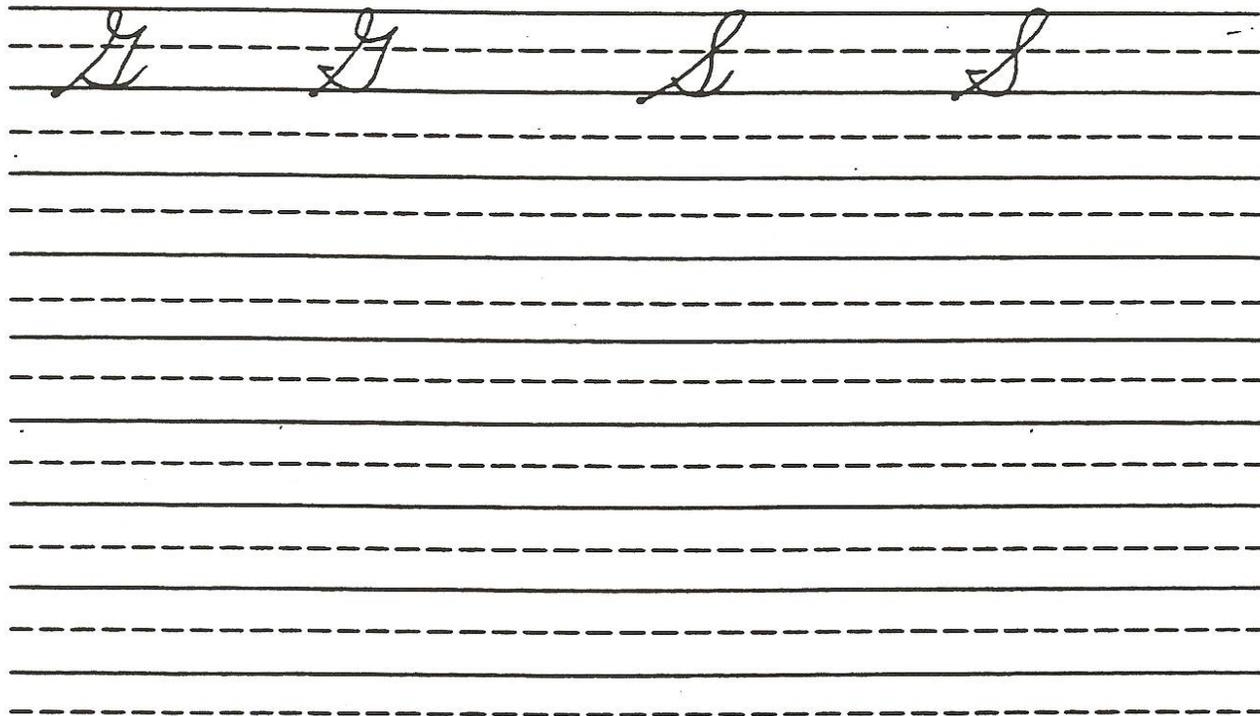
1. Start at the writing line. Make upward stroke that curves back left to loop at top line.
2. Swoop right to a point slightly below top line.
3. Stop at the star (*).
4. Continue a downstroke to 5 o'clock and round a "fat belly" on the writing line. Close the shape together at 7 o'clock.
- 5a. If G is connected, retrace bottom of circle and continue for connector stroke; or
- 5b. If G stands alone, continue rounded stroke past the lead-in and make an outside Boat Release.



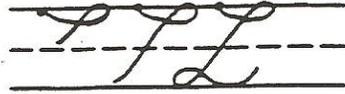
S

1. Start at writing line and make an extremely slanted kite string to top line.
2. Loop left over the top and drop a stroke toward 5 o'clock. Place a "fat belly" on the writing line. Close the shape together at 7 o'clock.
- 3a. If S is connected, retrace bottom of circle and continue for connector stroke; or
- 3b. If S stands alone, continue rounded stroke past the lead-in and make an outside Boat Release.

TIP: The more you slant the kite string, the easier the letter S will be.

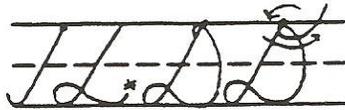


Fat Bellies



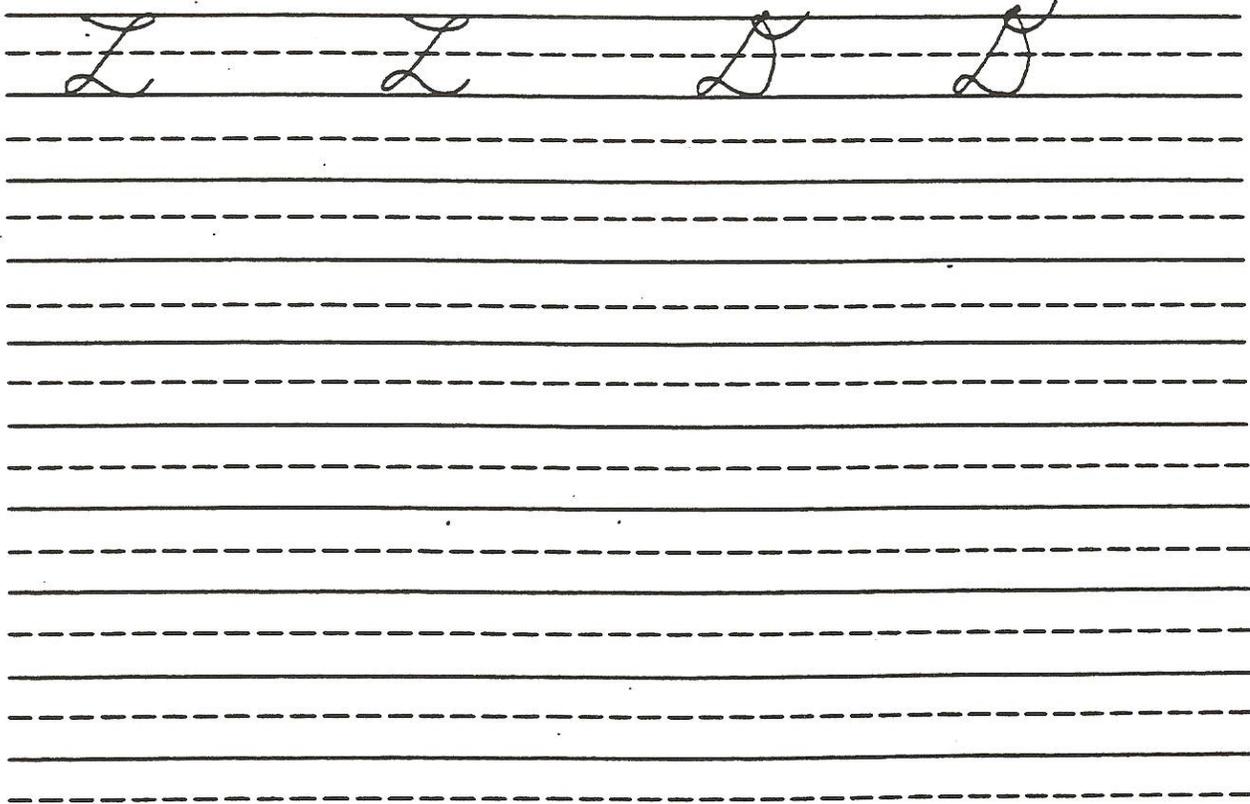
L

1. Start at top line. Swoop down slightly and up to make a small underhand loop touching the top line.
2. Continue a left slanted downstroke to the writing line.
3. Make a small underhand loop on the writing line and round a stroke right to place a "fat belly" on the writing line. Stop at 5 o'clock.

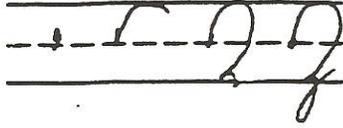


D

1. Start at top line. Make a straight left slanted downstroke to the writing line.
2. Make a small underhand loop on the writing line and round a stroke right to place a "fat belly" on the writing line.
3. Stop at star.
4. Look at the starting point on the top line, and move pencil quickly to it without watching the pencil.
5. Make an overhand left loop at top line and curve up slightly for release.



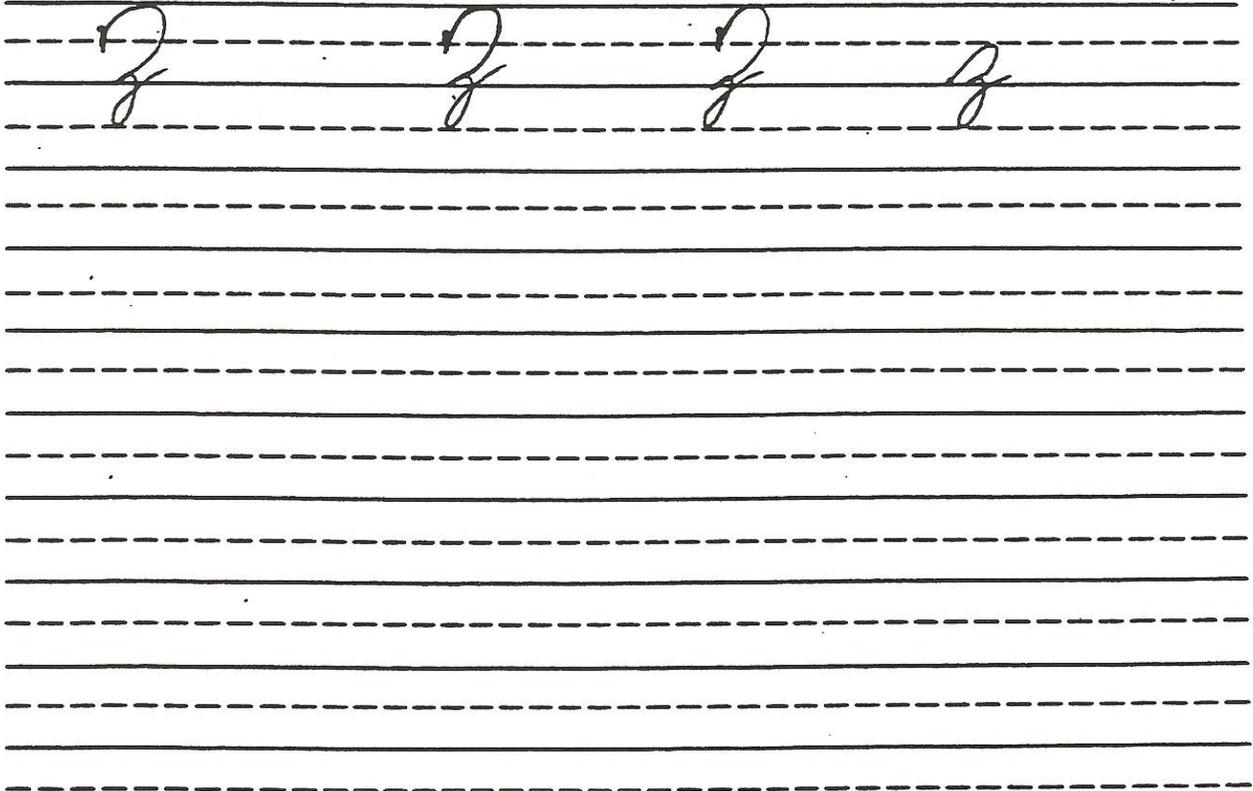
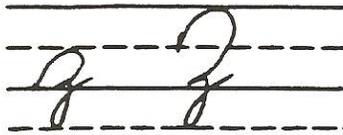
Zip



Z

1. Make a "closed loop starter" at the middle divider.
2. Continue its retrace and round a stroke across the top line from 11 to 1 o'clock, and continue to 5 o'clock. **Stop.**
3. Make a left diagonal "bend in" to the writing line.
4. Retrace the "bend in" and round a small curve right, and continue a downstroke to the middle divider below the writing line.
5. Loop left under the main part of the letter and cross the downstroke exactly at the writing line. Continue for release stroke.

TIP: It is easy to confuse z and Z. Notice their size and location.



Capital Practice Lists

Amy	Austria	Accident, MD
Bozo	Belgium	Babbie, AL
Claire	Chili	Chewey, OK
David	Denmark	Dinosaur, CO
Earl	Egypt	Experiment, GA
Frank	France	Fancy Farms, KY
Gigi	Greece	Guffey, CO
Helen	Haiti	Horse Heaven, OR
Ian	Italy	Ishawooa, WY
Jane	Japan	Jackpot, NV
Kenny	Kenya	Kissimmee, FL
Lori	Laos	Looxahoma, MS
Mandy	Mexico	Muddy, IL
Norman	Nigeria	Nassawadox, VA
Owen	Oman	Oot Park, NY
Paul	Peru	Pinnebog, MI
Quincy	Qatar	Quitman, LA
Ray	Russia	Rainbow, CT
Steve	Spain	Sleepy Eye, MN
Tracy	Turkey	Teaticket, MA
Ursa	Uganda	Upshur, WV
Vega	Venezuela	Viking Village, OH
Wendy	Wales	Walla Walla, WA
Xerox	Xoops	Xenia, IL
Yogi	Yugoslavia	Yaak, MT
Zorba	Zambia	Zap, ND

Making Connections

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Spring

Summer

Fall

Winter

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

Aa Aa Na Na
Ba Ba * Ca
Ca Ca * Pa
* Da Qa Qa
Ea Ea Ra Ra
* Fa Sa Sa
Ha Ha * Ta
Ia Ia Ua Ua
Ja Ja * Va
Ka Ka * Wa
La La Ya Ya
Ma Ma Za Za