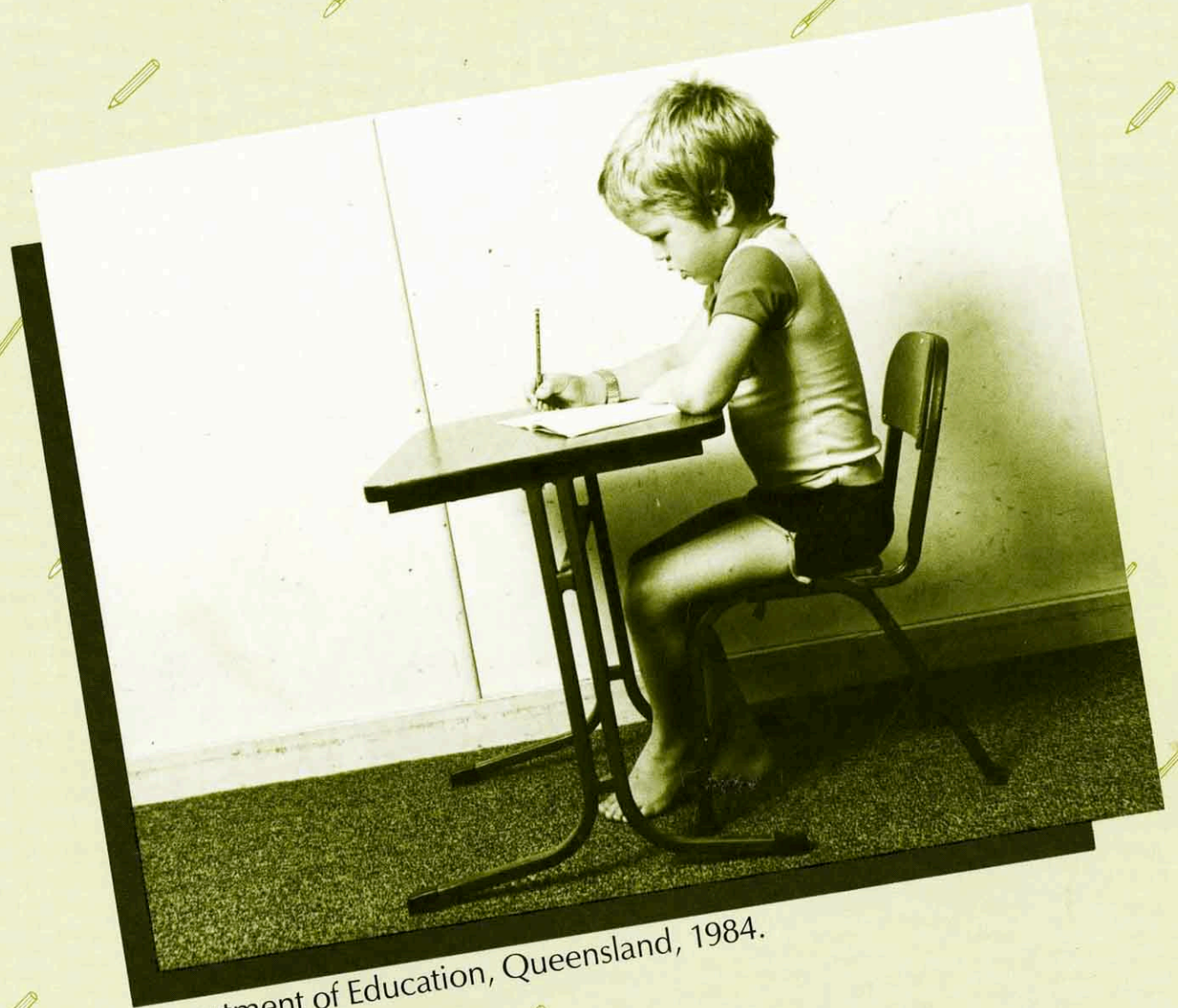


# The Teaching of Handwriting: a handbook



Department of Education, Queensland, 1984.

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# Acknowledgments

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Jan Boys, Project Officer, and

Lorraine McCulloch, Assistant Principal, Junior Primary, Bundamba State School, with the assistance of:

Barbara Nichol, Handwriting Consultant, and

Julie Haysom, Illustrator.

The Primary Handwriting Curriculum Project was conducted by the Curriculum Services Branch on behalf of the Primary Language Arts Syllabus Committee under the chairmanship of Mr John Dwyer.

The writers wish to acknowledge Mr Tom Gourdie, Calligrapher and Handwriting Consultant, Fife, Scotland, for his valuable assistance in reading and reacting to draft material connected with the project.

Special thanks are extended also to the staff and children of the following primary schools who have trialled the methods and scripts described in the Handbook:

Bardon  
Brookfield  
Bundamba  
Cloncurry  
Gabbinar

Fitzgerald  
Gympie West  
Hillview  
McDowall

Petrie  
Richlands East  
Tallegalla  
Woodridge North

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the rapid growth of 'keyboard technology', the ability to write legibly and to cope with the demands of writing at speed remain important and necessary skills.

If children are to develop flexible handwriting skills which will allow them to develop efficient, individual styles, consistent instruction based upon sound methodology is required.

This handbook provides teachers with an outline of the techniques and mechanics of handwriting, makes suggestions about teaching methodology throughout the primary school, and gives some suggestions for those students who encounter difficulties.

AIMS OF THE PROGRAM

- To develop in each child an understanding of the techniques of handwriting.
- To develop practical and flexible handwriting skills.
- To introduce a basic print script, which, with the addition of entry and exit strokes (ligatures), leads directly to a cursive script.
- To teach children to write legibly and with sufficient speed for all practical purposes.
- To provide children and teachers with strategies for recognising and preventing handwriting problems.
- To introduce a style which will lend itself to individualisation in the mature hand.

THE TECHNIQUES OF HANDWRITING

(1) Writing is produced in the following manner:

- (a) We write with a combined finger/hand/arm movement –
- our *fingers* and *hand* place the letter shapes on the page; and
  - our *hand* and *arm* move the fingers along like the carriage on a typewriter (hand *slides* along, does not pivot at wrist)
- (b) The basic movements are –
- index finger pulls down;
  - middle finger pushes away; and
  - thumb flexes at the first knuckle to accommodate the finger movement.
  - hand and arm move from left to right;

This combined movement produces a relaxed tension – release action, e.g.



(2) Rotation

(a) Letters contain rotation.

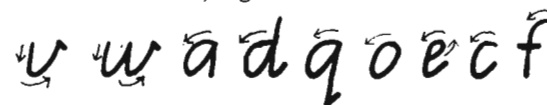


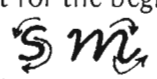
(b) These letters have bodies that rotate clockwise.



An understanding of the rotation of letters is essential. The ability to change the direction of rotation at speed produces the most fluent and legible writing.

(c) Many of the letters of the alphabet rotate anti-clockwise, e.g.



(d) Some letters and numerals contain both rotations and are more difficult for the beginning writer to produce, e.g.  Therefore, the child needs to master directional changes, both horizontally and vertically, e.g.



(3) Letters

- (a) The lower case letters of the alphabet originate from the Roman capitals. They all start (with the exception of 'd' and 'e') at the top.

h B l u f

Most letters finish at the bottom, with the exception of 'p' and the top finishers 'f, o, r, t, v, w'.

(4) Joins

- (a) Entry and exit ligatures are necessary for joining but are not part of the letter structure, e.g. *mint manage*. The join should be made in as short a movement as possible (i.e. a straight line) otherwise exaggeration and distortion may occur, e.g.

*accountancey accountancey*

- (b) Bottom finishers join at an angle of approximately 45°, e.g. *minimum*

- (c) Top finishers join horizontally, e.g. *wood*

- (d) Speed loops (i.e. joining from the tail of a letter to increase speed) are simply trace lines left as the pen skims towards the starting point of the next letter, e.g.

*gh gh* *g.h*  
starting point of 'h'  
end of 'g'

Such loops are *not* part of letter structure. Some speed loops will occur naturally in the handwriting of a mature writer. It is generally not recommended that they be actively 'taught', since they can contribute to illegibility.

- (e) Pencil lifts should occur every 3-4 letters to prevent —  
▪ letter shape distortion  
▪ writing into a bent wrist position (pivot writing)  
Lifts assist the less well co-ordinated who find difficulty sustaining a continuous writing movement.

(5) Parallelity

- (a) Downstrokes in letters are parallel (at speed, a minor loss of parallelity may occur).

*hitting hitting modern*

- (b) Capital letters should be parallel to lower case letters.

*Hoise Hoise*

- (c) A consistent angle for joining within and between letters is necessary to achieve parallelity. The support point (i.e. the side of the hand) should be moved every 3-4 letters.

*minimum minimum*

Consistency with parallelity is more important than the degree of slope.

(6) Legibility

- (a) Clearly defined heads and tails increase legibility.

*monkey monkey*

- (b) Use of both clockwise and anti-clockwise movements in letters produces maximum legibility, e.g.

*man enumerate*

Speed may be increased, to a degree, by the use of anti-clockwise strokes, but legibility decreases, e.g.

*manufacturing enumerate*

(7) Expansion and Compression

- (a) Consistent separation between letters creates rhythmic (and therefore faster) writing, e.g.

*many many many*

- (b) Increased, but consistent separation is required to maintain legibility at speed. This allows time to change rotation more easily, e.g.

*many hand*

(8) Speed

- (a) The fingers need to work harder to increase speed.  
(b) The slope should be increased, e.g. *many* and the size decreased to 3mm body size or less.  
(c) The distance between the letters and the words should be increased, e.g.

*The many is*

- (d) The writing style becomes simplified, e.g.

*bag tiny*

- (e) Covering strokes are used less in fast writing, e.g.

*all ap all ap*

- (f) Fewer pen lifts occur at speed (after approximately every 5-6 letters).  
(g) Children leaving primary school should be able to write 100 letters per minute, e.g. 'land' 25 times.



(9) Pressure

- (a) Writing pressure should be firm but not heavy.
- (b) A suitable instrument can be chosen, once the writer's pressure pattern is known (carbon paper can be used to test pressure).

Suitable Instruments

| Type of pressure child uses | Pencil | Ball Point | Fibre | Nylon | Felt Pen | Rolling Ball Pen |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------|-------|-------|----------|------------------|
| Light                       |        |            | ✓     | ✓     | ✓        |                  |
| Medium                      | ✓      |            | ✓     | ✓     | ✓        |                  |
| Heavy                       | ✓      | ✓          |       | ✓     |          | ✓                |

THE MECHANICS OF HANDWRITING

Posture

*Straight back at approximately 30° angle to chair back.*

*Bottom towards back of seat*

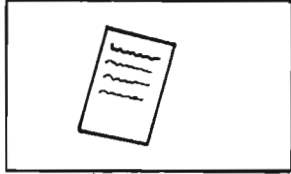


*Arms supported on desk with elbow of the writing arm off the desk. The weight of the body is taken on the non-writing arm.*

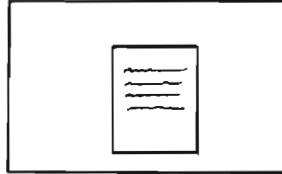
*Table or desk height approx. level with child's waist line or a little higher*

*Feet touching the floor*

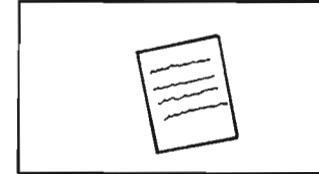
### Paper Positions



Left-handed



Right-handed



Right-handed

In the initial stages it may be better not to make this a teaching point. Simply correct those with incorrect paper positions.

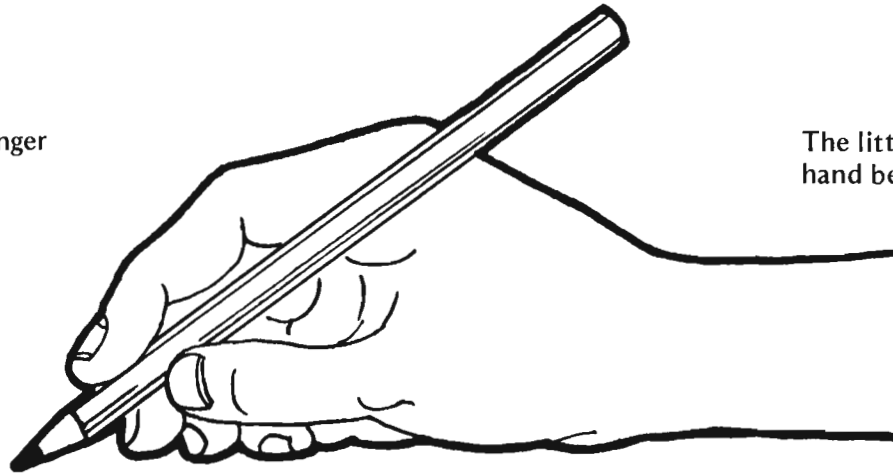
### Pencil Hold

Pencil should be held against the index finger on or just behind the first knuckle.

Pencil should not rest in the 'web' between the thumb and index finger.

Pencil rests on the middle finger on the nail fold.

The little finger and the side of the hand become the support point.



There should be a distance of approx. 2–2.5 cm from the pen point to the tip of the index finger.

Support the pencil between the thumb and index finger. Try to use the tip of thumb not the 'pad' underneath.

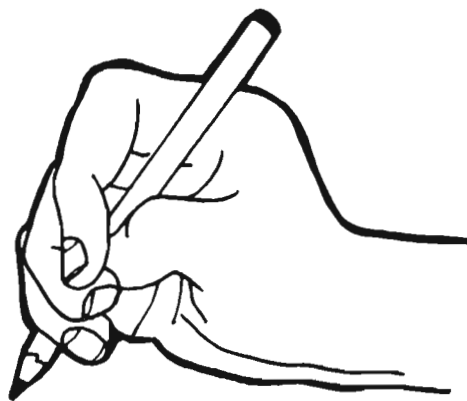
**Incorrect penholds for either hand**  
 Watch for these penholds, and correct immediately.



middle finger resting on pencil barrel



predominant thumb



fingers tightly curled

**Check the recommended pencil hold on page 5**

Remember to check also the child's

- posture
- positioning of paper
- angle of presentation of pen to paper, as all of these can affect pencil hold.

Three-sided pencil grips (which are commercially-produced, and fit over the pencil) may be useful in helping some children to master the recommended grip. However, don't overdo their use.

### Writing instruments

Children should be encouraged to use a wide variety of writing instruments. Fibre and nylon tipped pens are more easily controlled than ball point and rolling ball pens. They are therefore ideal for use in the early primary years, along with crayons, brushes and pencils. Children in the upper school enjoy having the opportunity to use fountain pens, italic-nibbed pens, fine brushes and nylon tipped pens, in addition to the familiar rolling ball pens, ball point pens and pencils.

However, when beginning writing instruction, the following suggestions may prove useful.

Crayons  
Brushes



Felt Pens  
Pencils  
(soft lead, e.g. 2B)

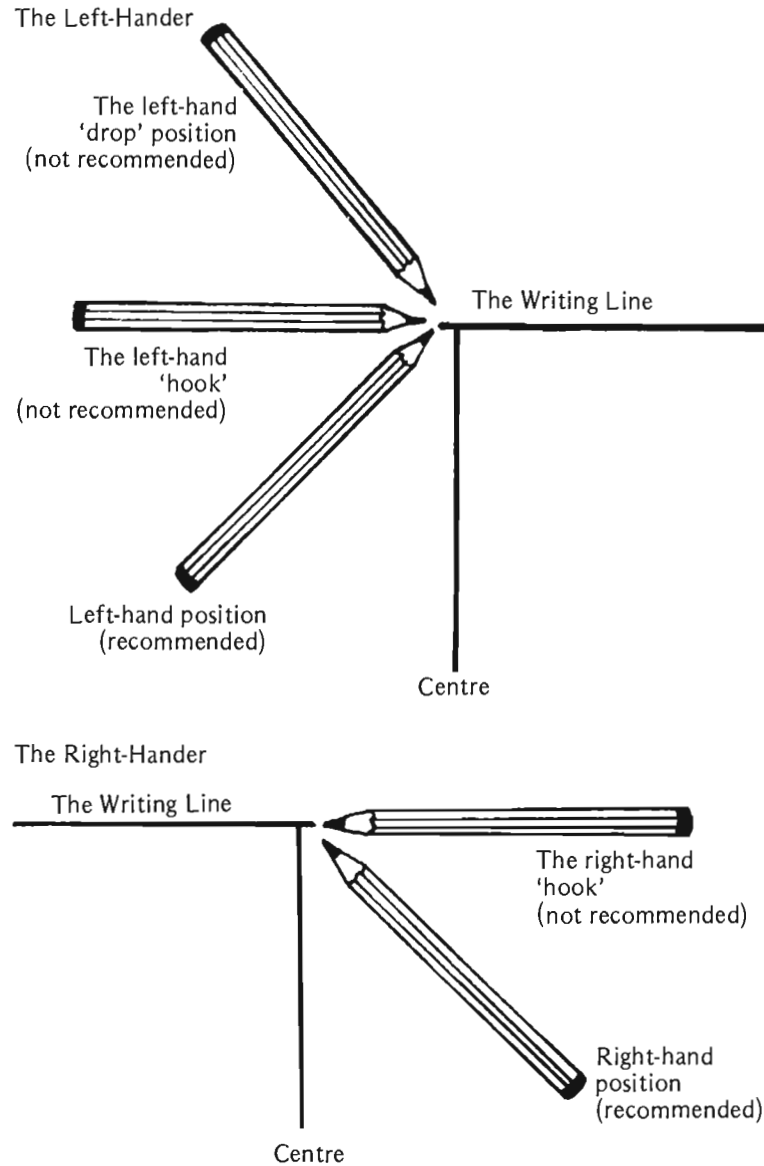


Pencils

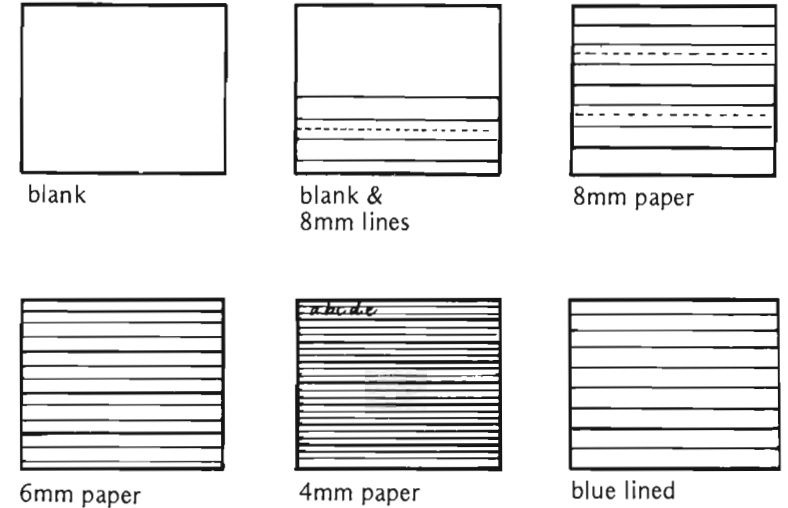


Since many Year One children have had 'preschool experiences' with a variety of manipulative toys and writing instruments, some Year One children may be ready to begin writing at this point.

## Pen Presentation



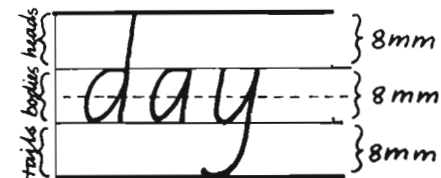
## Line size



NOTE: The measurement refers to the distance between the blue lines.

The terms:

- 'body' letter refers to a letter which occupies the blue lines only, e.g. 'a'.
- 'head and body' letter is one with an ascender, e.g. 'd'.
- 'body and tail' letter is one with a descender, e.g. 'y'.



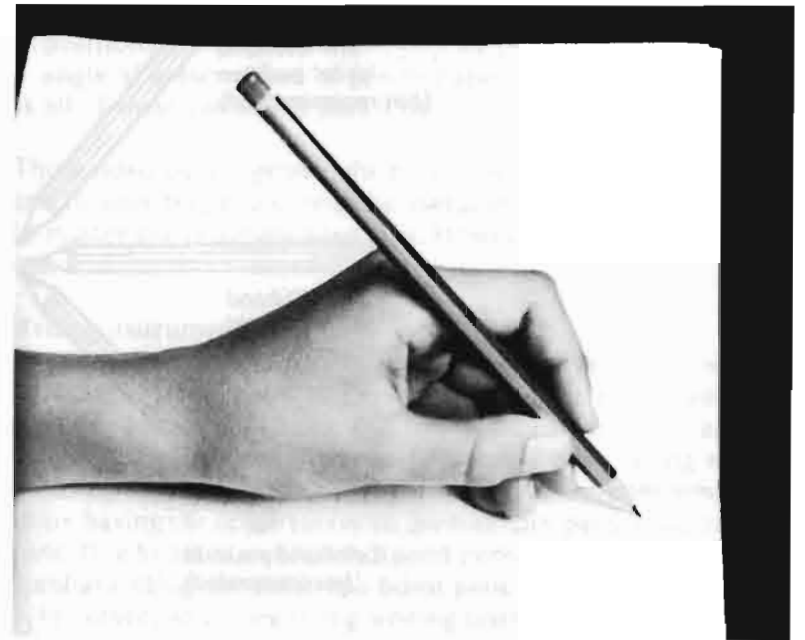
Writers vary. So too does the angle at which the pen is presented to the writing line. The diagrams above are approximate guides only.

### Left-handed children

- A left-handed child should be seated where he/she is not likely to bump elbows with a right-handed child.



- Some left-handed writers present their pens to the writing line in 'hook' or 'drop' positions. This is NOT recommended. The pen should be presented from below the writing line.



- Pencil hold is as shown on page 5, except that the fingers should be placed higher up the 'barrel' of the pencil, (approximately 3cm). This allows the work to be seen more easily.



- Paper should be placed to the left of the centre line of the body and tilted to the left.

## STYLE

### Beginner's Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j  
k l m n o p q r s  
t u v w x y z



### Queensland Modern Cursive

abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstuvwxyz

### Why use this style?

- the *natural scribble movements* of children provide the basis for the letter shapes.



- *letter confusions are reduced.*  
The letters b/d, p/q are given definite characteristics by—
  - (i) movement
  - (ii) the addition of ligatures
  - (iii) clearly defined ascenders and descenders.
- *consistent starting points* are re-inforced by verbalisation.
- *Ligatures* (entries and exits) are added to the Beginner's Alphabet. In most instances, this requires no relearning of letter shapes, and thus leads to an easy transition from the printed to the cursive style.
- *Pen lifts within words* create ease and fluency of writing.
- The style lends itself to *individuality* in the mature hand.
- The style should remain *legible at speed.*

NOTE: The teacher and student should be aware that it is *not* the style alone which will lead to quick legible writing in the mature hand, but an understanding of the process of handwriting.









THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET









aA bB cC dD eE fF gG hH  
iI jJ kK lL mM nN  
oO pP qQ rR sS tT  
uU vV wW xX yY zZ












QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE













a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r  
s t u v w x y z













| THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET |  | QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE   |  |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| Lower Case Print Script | Letter Description   | Lower Case Cursive  | Letter Description   |
| a                       | Starts at the top on the blue line. Moves along the line in an anti-clockwise direction then drops down. Makes a quick turn at the bottom line, returns to the starting point then drops down. Make sure there is a big wedge, e.g.  <br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift. |    | As for the Beginner's Alphabet but with an exit. The exit is made with a quick directional change. |
| b                       | Starts on the top red line and moves down to the bottom blue line then retraces up and around. Based on the inverted 'a' pattern. There should be a big wedge, e.g. <br>A 'head and body' letter – no pencil lift.  |    | No change.   |
| c                       | Starts on the top blue line and moves in an anti-clockwise direction. Based on the oval shape but with a flatter top. The back is kept fairly straight.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.   |    | No change.   |
| d                       | Starts in the same manner as an 'a' but has an ascender which reaches the top red line. The final flick helps distinguish it from the 'b'.<br>A 'head and body' letter – no pencil lift.   |   | No change.   |
| e                       | The only letter which does not start at the top. Based on the oval shape as is letter 'c';<br>Keep a straight back.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.   |  | No change.   |

| THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET   |   | QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Lower Case Print Script   | Letter Description  | Lower Case Cursive  | Letter Description   |
|    | Starts on the top red line and runs back as for letter 'a'.<br>The down stroke is straight but sloped.<br>The pencil is lifted to make the short, horizontal crossbar.<br>A 'head and body' letter – pencil lift.   |    | As for the printed 'f' but the downstroke is extended for a descender and the crossbar is slightly sloped.<br>This is the only letter which has a head, body and tail.<br>The letter is modified by a looped entry stroke when there is a letter preceding it, e.g. <i>ef</i> . The loop prevents a 'rocking' movement, e.g. <i>et</i> . |
|    | Starts on the top blue line as for letter 'a'.<br>It has the same movement as 'a' but also has a descender which runs along the bottom red line.<br>A 'body and tail' letter – no pencil lift.  |    | No change.   |
|   | Starts on the top red line and moves down to the bottom blue line. A retrace movement is made which springs up from the base. There should be a big wedge, e.g. <i>h</i> .<br>Based on the <i>mn</i> pattern.<br>A 'head and body' letter - no pencil lift. |   | As for printed 'h' but with an exit (quick directional change).  |
|  | Starts on the top blue line and slants down.<br>The pen is lifted for the dot.<br>A 'body' letter – pencil lift.  |  | As for printed 'i' with a short, <i>pointed</i> entry at a 45° angle and an exit.  |

| THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET   |   | QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lower Case Print Script   | Letter Description  | Lower Case Curisve  | Letter Description  |
|    | <p>Starts on the blue line as for 'i' but has a descender.</p> <p>A letter 'b' should fit into the descender, e.g. </p> <p>A 'body and tail' letter – pencil lift.</p>   |    | As for printed 'j' but with a <i>pointed</i> entry, as for 'i'. |
|    | <p>Starts on the top red line and moves in the same manner as 'h' but the loop is indented.</p> <p>If the body of 'k' is placed in a parallelogram, the loop will meet the diagonals where they cross, e.g. </p> <p>A 'head and body' letter – no pencil lift.</p> |    | As for printed 'k', with an exit.                               |
|   | <p>Starts at the top red line and makes a downward, slanting stroke.</p> <p>A 'head and body' letter – no pencil lift.</p>  |   | As for printed 'l', with an exit.                               |
|  | <p>Starts at the top blue line then slopes down, moves up and around and repeats the movement. Should have big wedges.</p> <p>Based on the  pattern.</p> <p>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.</p>  |  | As for printed 'm' but with a <i>rounded</i> entry and an exit. |

| THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET   |  | QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Lower Case Print Script   | Letter Description   | Lower Case Cursive  | Letter Description   |
|    | As for letter 'm' but with a single branched movement.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.  |    | As for printed 'n' with a <i>rounded</i> entry and an exit.  |
|    | Starts on the top blue line. A sloped oval shape which finishes at the starting point.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.  |    | As for printed 'o'   |
|    | Starts at the blue line and slopes down. The descender is retraced and branches away approximately halfway up the body, leaving a big wedge.<br>A 'body and tail' letter – no pencil lift. |    | As for printed 'p' but with a <i>pointed</i> entry.  |
|   | Starts on the top blue line as for 'a' but has a descender with a short, pointed exit. This helps distinguish it from 'p'.<br>A 'body and tail' letter – no pencil lift.                   |   | No change.   |
|  | Based on letter 'n' but when the top line is reached, a small, straight downward arm is made.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.   |  | As for printed 'r' but with a <i>rounded</i> entry.  |
|  | Starts on the top line and moves in an anti-clockwise direction. Requires a change in direction.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.  |  | No change but the letter is modified by an entry stroke when 's' occurs within a word, e.g. <i>has</i> |

| THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET   |  | QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Lower Case Print Script   | Letter Description   | Lower Case Cursive  | Letter Description   |
|    | Starts half-way between the top red and blue lines. A downward, sloped stroke is followed by a short, horizontal crossbar.<br>A 'head and body' letter – pencil lift.            |    | As for printed 't' but with an exit. The horizontal crossbar is lifted so that it sits above the line. |
|    | Starts on the top blue line and is an inverted 'n'.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.   |    | As for printed 'u' but with a <i>pointed</i> entry and an exit.  |
|    | Starts on the top line and makes the same movement as for 'u' with the upward stroke being more rounded.<br>A short, straight exit stroke is made at an approximately 45° angle. |    | As for printed 'v' but with a <i>pointed</i> entry.  |
|   | As for 'v'.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.   |   | As for printed 'w' but with a <i>pointed</i> entry   |
|  | Starts on the top blue line and makes two crossed, sloping strokes.  |  | As for printed 'x' but with a <i>rounded</i> entry and an exit.  |





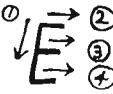
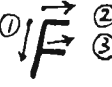


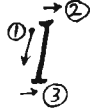


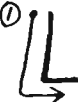




| THE BEGINNER'S ALPHABET |   | QUEENSLAND MODERN CURSIVE |  |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| Lower Case Print Script | Letter Description  | Lower Case Cursive        | Letter Description   |
| y                       | Starts on the top blue line and is the same as letter 'u' with a descender. The tail runs along the line.<br>A 'body and tail' letter – no pencil lift. | y                         | As for printed 'y' but with a <i>pointed</i> entry   |
| z                       | Starts on the top blue line and moves to the <i>right</i> .<br>Based on a parallelogram.<br>A 'body' letter – no pencil lift.                           | z                         | Starts with a rounded entry using the same movement as letter 'n'. Branches up then around using the same base for the descender as 'g'.<br>A 'body and tail' letter – no pencil lift. |










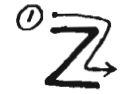
**Some points to remember!**

- No pencil lifts occur within lower case letters except in the case of dots and crossbars.
- All letters (except 'e' and 'd') start at the top of the letter.
- Letters 'f' and 'z' are the only letters that change in the cursive script.
- Letters 's' and 'f' are modified by an entry stroke when there is a letter preceding them, e.g. *es ef*
- All exits are made using quick directional changes, e.g.

h. ✓    Not       Not   

- All letters in the print and cursive style are sloped.

| Upper Case Letters  | Letter Description   | Upper Case Letters  | Letter Description  |
|---|--|---|---|
|    | 'A' is comprised of two downward strokes, a pencil lift and the horizontal stroke.   |    | 'B' has a downward stroke, a pencil lift and two curved sections, the top section being slightly smaller than the bottom. |
|    | 'C' is the same shape as the lower case letter.  |    | 'D' has a downward stroke, a pencil lift and a curved line.   |
|    | 'E' has a downward stroke with three horizontal lines of equal length.   |    | 'F' has the same basic shape as 'E', but with two horizontal lines of equal length.                                       |
|    | 'G' is based on the oval shape, with a downward stroke and is made in one movement.  |    | 'H' is comprised of two downward strokes joined by a horizontal stroke.   |
|    | 'I' has a downward stroke with two short strokes at the top and the base.  |    | 'J' is the same shape as the lower case letter but has a horizontal stroke across the top.                                |
|   | 'K' has a downward stroke, with a pencil lift, followed by legs, which branch out from the middle of the downstroke. The legs are the same length. |   | 'L' is the same as the lower case letter but with a horizontal leg.   |
|  | 'M' has a downward stroke with a pencil lift, and the remainder is done in one movement.   |  | 'N' has two downward strokes, joined by a sloped line.  |
|  | 'O' is the same shape as the lower case letter.  |  | 'P' is similar to 'B' but with one curved stroke only.  |

| Upper Case Letters  | Letter Description   | Upper Case Letters  | Letter Description  |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | As for the 'O', with a short, sloped stroke crossing at the base line. |  | 'R' is the same shape as 'P', but has a straight leg which branches out from the middle point on the downward stroke. |
|  | As for the lower case letter.  |  | 'T' is a sloped stroke with a horizontal line across the top.   |
|  | As for the lower case letter.  |  | 'V' is made in two strokes.   |
|  | 'W' is the same basic shape as letter 'M', upside down.                |  | As for the lower case letter.   |
|  | 'Y' is a small 'v' with a pencil lift then a downward stroke.          |  | As for the lower case letter.   |

**Some points to remember!**

Upper case letters —

- are initially twice the body height, for simplicity (i.e. they start on the top line). They can be reduced in Year 3.
- are all 'head and body' letters.
- all start at the top.
- remain the same for the Beginner's Alphabet and Queensland Modern Cursive.
- do not join to the following letter, e.g. *Man*
- assume the same slope as the lower case letters, e.g. *Pat*
- in most instances have pencil lifts.



## QUESTIONS TEACHERS ASK

Should my charts and activities be in the same style as the one the children are being taught?

Children appear to have a very flexible image of letter shapes so, if they are reading an activity, the style does not appear to matter.

However, if they are copying directly from the script, e.g. activity work, the style they are being taught to write should be used.

What should I do with newly-enrolled children who have been taught another style?

Pressure should not be placed on children to change their style as long as it is neat and legible. Modifications can be made when children are experiencing problems.

Will children who have learnt this style be able to read a looped cursive style?

Once children are proficient with the Modern Cursive style, comparisons can be made with other styles. The majority of letter shapes are similar, but particular attention could be paid to the upper case letters.

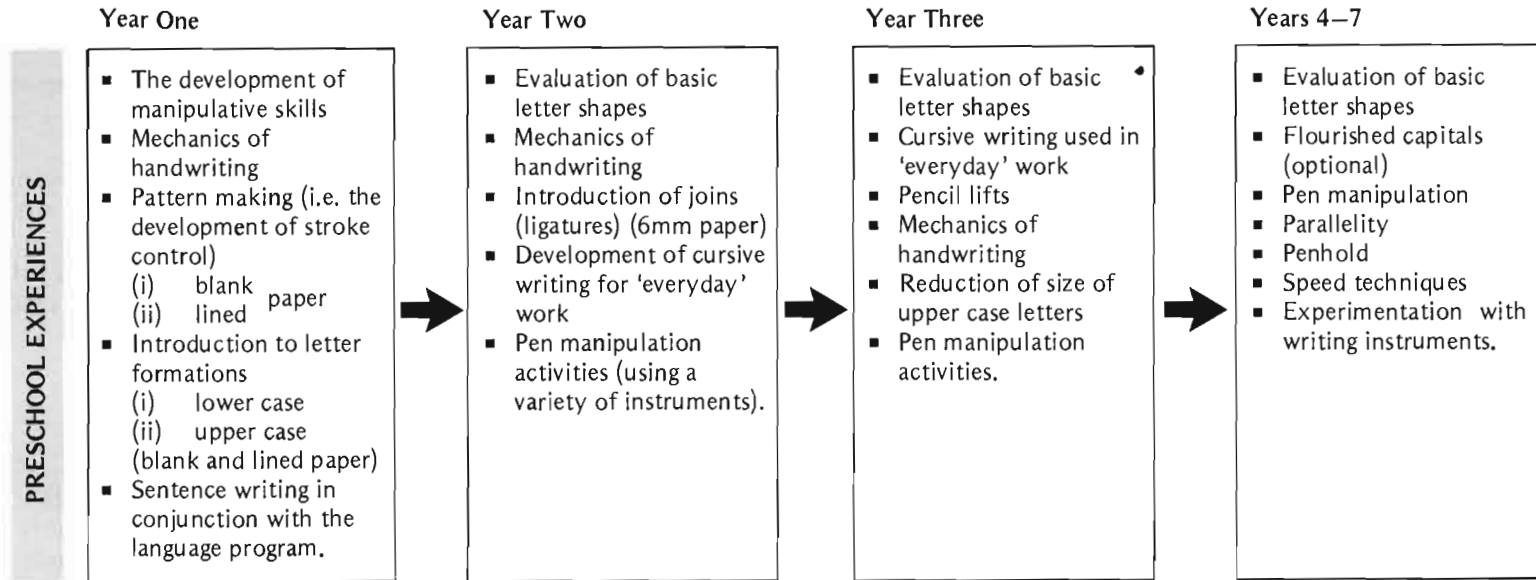
What style will the children use for mapping in the middle and upper school?

The Beginner's Alphabet is highly suitable.

Does this style require any special type of pen?

The style is designed to be written with any instrument. Encourage children to try a wide variety of instruments, so that they can choose those which best suit their needs.

SECTION  
**2**  
 A  
 suggested  
 teaching  
 sequence



**HANDWRITING INSTRUCTION**

**A suggested timetable**

To develop an understanding of the techniques used in handwriting, it is important that consistent instruction be given throughout Years 1–7. Because of the heavy

demands of time, this instruction could be integrated with other subjects areas, particularly in the middle and upper schools, e.g. Social Studies, Science, Spelling etc.

|                              | Year One   | Year Two                | Year Three         | Years 4–7              |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Guided lessons (whole class) | Daily (approx. 15 mins)  | Daily (approx. 15 mins) | 2–3 times per week | Approx. twice per week |
| Individual Instruction       | Opportunities will arise continually throughout the day to observe and correct problems, e.g. penhold. |                         |                    |                        |

## YEAR ONE

When they first come to school, children differ in their

- perceptual development
  - motor development
  - emotional development,
- all of which affect their ability to write.

They have different ideas about

- what handwriting is for
- what it looks like
- what we do when we write
- why they will be learning to write.

These ideas may be reflected in their interest in writing, and in their motivation to learn it.

For example, children in week two of Year One wrote the following samples, and put forward the following opinions:

A piece of paper with the handwritten text 'k o t h l o o h' written in a simple, spaced-out font.

It's to write  
when we grow up

It looks like neat

A piece of paper with a small asterisk followed by the word 'Mum' written in a simple, blocky font.

It's so we can send letters

A piece of paper with the word 'Digger' written in a simple, blocky font.

It looks  
important.

A piece of paper with the word 'Dad' written in a simple, blocky font.

It looks like  
shapes

It's for other people  
to read

A piece of paper with the text 'Look at Kate.' written in a simple, blocky font.

It's for reading

When we write we get a pencil and  
put marks on the paper.

A piece of paper with the text 'L o o l . 9 x h i o d f .' written in a simple, blocky font.

It looks like lots of words

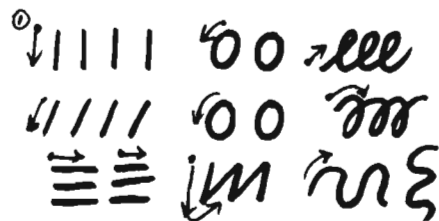
So, before any formal handwriting instruction commences, the teacher should ensure that each child

- has some idea of the functions of handwriting
- has the opportunity to develop skills, according to *individual need*.

## Developing a beginning writing program

### A Suggested Approach

1. Assess the child's skills through careful teacher observation. These basic movements are required to form the letters and numerals.



Assessment could be made on blank paper then 8mm strips (see page 7 )

Note:

- Penhold
- Support point (Is the hand resting on the table?)
- Preferred pattern size
- Movements (top to bottom, left to right, clockwise—anticlockwise).

2. Children requiring extended development in manipulative skills. (see page 24).

3. Children needing further development with directional movements.  
Equal attention need not be paid to all pattern types. The assessment will indicate which areas need developing. ( see above ).

4. Children ready to begin formal letter instruction. (see page 26).

A child needs to have had plenty of opportunities to develop the following before instruction can begin —

- visual discrimination
- visual memory
- manipulative skills (hand/eye co-ordination, fine motor control, instrument hold).

#### Visual Discrimination

As the letters of the alphabet differ in shape to varying degrees (some are simply inverted or reversed) it is essential that a child is able to discriminate fine differences.

#### Suggested activities

- school/home made games
  - matching games, e.g. Dominoes, 'Snap'
  - recognising the 'odd one out' in a sequence
  - finding hidden objects in pictures, environmental materials.
- A wide range of ideas is available in commercial texts and fun pads available from supermarkets.


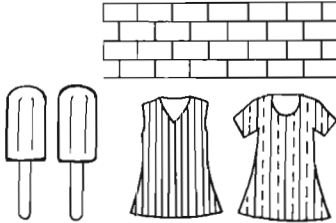



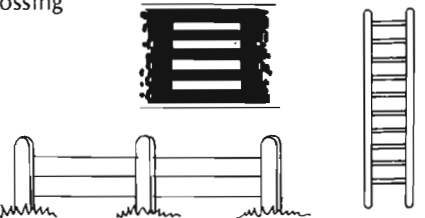



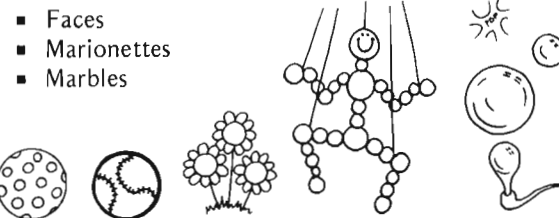
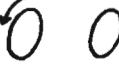
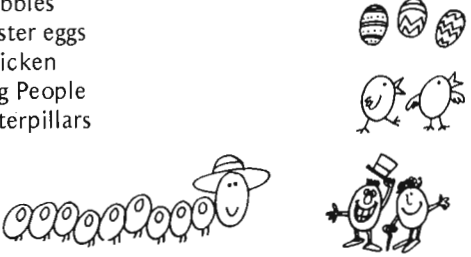
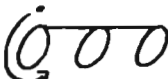
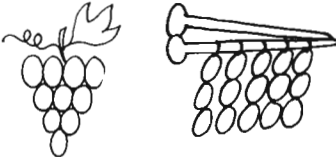


#### Visual Memory


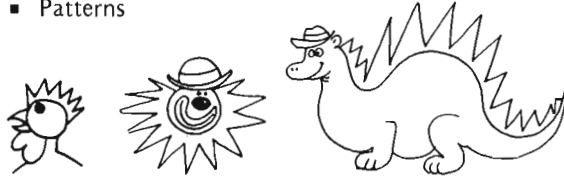

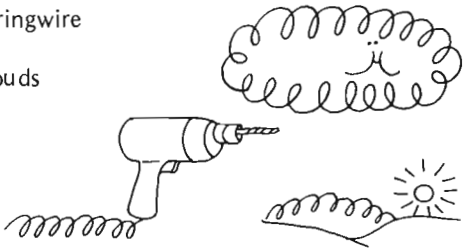

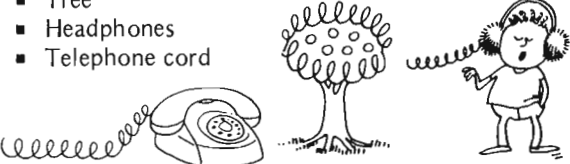

A child needs to be able to remember a shape and then reproduce it from memory.

#### Suggested activities


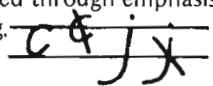
- memory games — objects are shown then covered — an attempt is made to recall the items.
- reproducing, after a brief exposure to the original, a sequence of
  - shapes
  - objects
  - letters
  - colours.



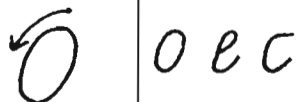
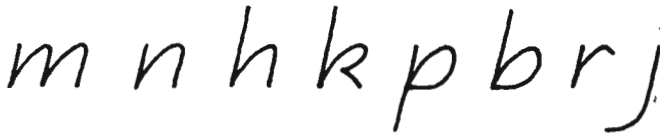



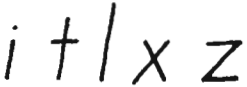
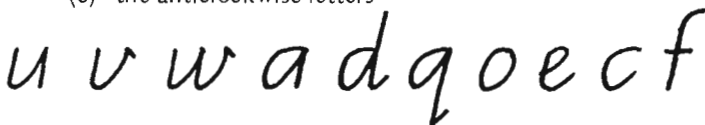


## Manipulative Skills

| Basic Movement   | Some Ideas<br>(Add your own)  | Basic Movement   | Some Ideas<br>(Add your own)   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>1.</p>  <p>Top to bottom<br/>attempting<br/>even spacing</p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fences</li> <li>▪ Brick wall</li> <li>▪ Ice-block sticks</li> <li>▪ Designs</li> </ul>           | <p>2.</p>  <p>Top to bottom<br/>(even<br/>spacing)</p>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rain Clouds</li> <li>▪ Echidna/Porcupine</li> </ul>    |
| <p>3.</p>  <p>Left to right<br/>(even<br/>spacing)</p>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zebra crossing</li> <li>▪ Ladder</li> <li>▪ Fence</li> </ul>                                     | <p>4.</p>  <p>Join dots from<br/>left to right,<br/>keeping the hand<br/>below the work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rooftops</li> <li>▪ Mountains</li> </ul>   |
| <p>5.</p>  <p>Start at top<br/>Move in an<br/>anticlockwise<br/>direction</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bubbles</li> <li>▪ Balls</li> <li>▪ Faces</li> <li>▪ Marionettes</li> <li>▪ Marbles</li> </ul>  | <p>6.</p>  <p>Start at top<br/>Move in an<br/>anticlockwise<br/>direction</p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bubbles</li> <li>▪ Easter eggs</li> <li>▪ Chicken</li> <li>▪ Egg People</li> <li>▪ Caterpillars</li> </ul>  |
| <p>7.</p>  <p>No more than<br/>3 to a pattern</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knitting</li> <li>▪ Truck wheels</li> <li>▪ Bunch of grapes</li> </ul>                         | <p>8. 'Up and<br/>down And<br/>up and<br/>down'</p>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Waves</li> <li>▪ Worms</li> <li>▪ Smoke</li> </ul>   |

| Basic Movement  | Some Ideas<br>(Add your own)   | Basic Movement  | Some Ideas<br>(Add your own)   |
|---|--|---|--|
| 9.<br><br>'Jack and Jill went up the hill' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals (e.g. Stegosaurus, Dragon, Comb of Chicken)</li> <li>Patterns</li> </ul>  | 10.<br><br>Clockwise Loops 'Round and round and round' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Springwire</li> <li>Clouds</li> </ul>  |
| 11.<br><br>Anticlockwise Loops             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curly hair</li> <li>Tree</li> <li>Headphones</li> <li>Telephone cord</li> </ul>   | 12.<br><br>'1, 2, 3, 4'                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal Shapes</li> </ul>  |

### Suggested Teaching Sequence Years 1–3

|          | Content   | Teacher's Notes   |
|----------|---|---|
| Year One | <p>(1) <i>Manipulative Activities</i> ( see p.24).</p> <p>(2) <i>Patterns to Develop Directional Movement</i> (see p.23).</p> <p>An emphasis is placed on <b>a m m o</b> as these are the basic movements on which most letters are formed.</p> <p>(3) <i>Introduction to Lines</i> (see p. 7 ).<br/>           (8mm headed paper)<br/>           The pattern is practised first on the blank paper, then on the lines.<br/>           Spatial awareness, an understanding of the positioning on lines, e.g. <br/>           is developed through emphasising the starting and finishing points, e.g. </p> | <p>The time spent on these activities depends on the child's stage of development.</p> <p>These activities can easily be integrated into other subject areas.</p> <p>Blank paper is suggested initially to allow concentration on –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>starting point</li> <li>directional movement</li> <li>correct formation.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: Children are only introduced to lines when they have developed sufficient manipulative skills.</p> <p>The shapes are practised first on blank paper, then on sheets of paper headed with one 8mm set of red and blue lines. (One set of lines is less confusing at the outset than a whole lined page.)</p> |

|   | Content  | Teacher's Notes   |
|---|--|---|
| Year One  | (4) <i>Formation of Lower Case Letters.</i> Most of the lower case letters are formed using these basic shapes.  |   |
|   |    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See page 12 for a full description of the formation of letters.</li> <li>All letters except 'e' and 'd' start at the <i>top</i> of the letter.</li> <li>Generally, the pencil is not lifted while making lower case letters other than for dots and crossbars, e.g. i, t. An exception to this is the letter 'p' which some Year One children find easier to make in two movements.</li> </ul>   |
|   |    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Teaching sequence</i><br/>There is a variety of ways in which the letters may be grouped for instruction, e.g.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the directional movements required to form the letters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the clockwise letters<br/></li> </ul> </li> </ol>  |   |
|   | <p>Letters <i>i t l x z</i> are formed using straight lines.</p> <p>An 'a' fits into the ascender of 'f', e.g. , and 'b' into the the descenders, e.g. </p> <p>(a) Verbalisation – it is important that the children watch and listen as the teacher demonstrates a letter, e.g.<br/>'Start at the top red line and slope down to the bottom blue line. Finish on the bottom line'.</p> <p>The children verbalise in a simple form as they make the letters, e.g. 'Down up and around'.</p> <p>(b) Development of Spatial Awareness<br/>As a letter is introduced, its spatial properties are discussed using the terms 'head, body, tail' – e.g.  is a 'body and tail' letter.</p> <p>Body letters<br/><i>a c e i m n r o s</i><br/><i>u v w x z</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) letters comprising straight lines<br/></li> <li>(c) the anticlockwise letters<br/></li> <li>(d) letters comprising more than one rotation<br/></li> </ul> </li> <li>In 'family' groups, e.g. spatial awareness groups, ('body', 'head and body', 'body and tail' letters).</li> <li>In conjunction with letter sounds. This approach is not recommended. Care must be taken to introduce letters which are easy for the child to make, as well as having a distinct sound, e.g. l, i, t, n etc. Some letters which might be dealt with early in phonics programs are very difficult to make, as they involve complicated changes in direction, e.g. </li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the children become proficient using headed paper, pages of 8mm paper could be introduced, then booklets.</li> </ul> |

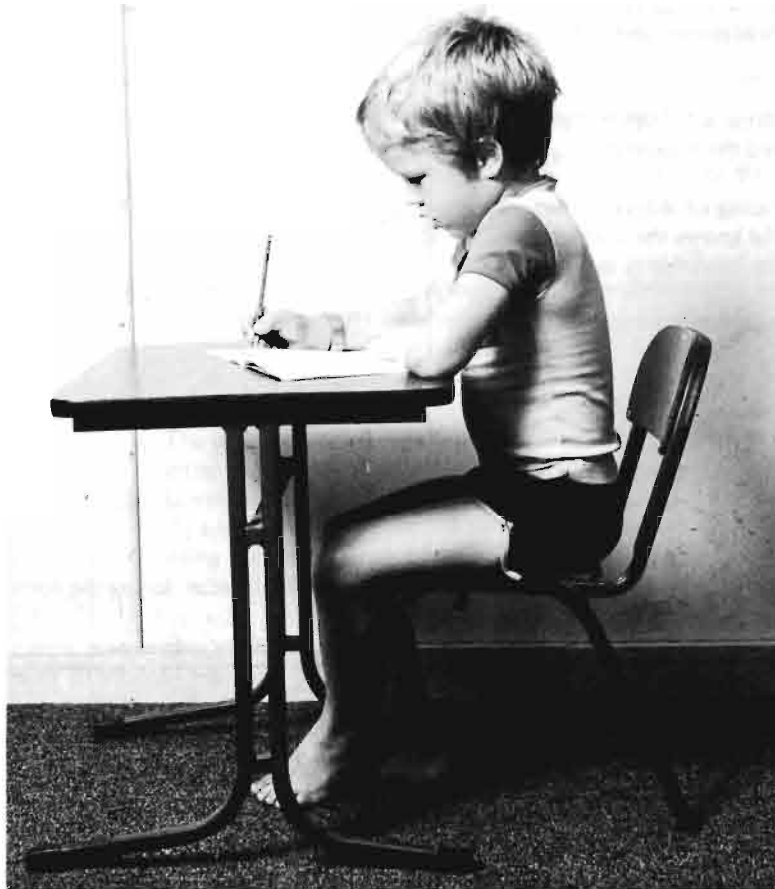
|          | Content  | Teacher's Notes   |
|----------|--|---|
| Year One | <p>'Head and body' letters</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;">b d f h t l k</p> <p>'Body and tail' letters</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;">g j p q y</p> <p>(5) <i>Language Experience Activities</i><br/>Following a suitable activity, the child suggests a story which the teacher writes and the child traces over and, later, writes under.</p> <p>(Small groups are suggested for these activities initially, until the children have internalised the movements).</p> <p>NOTE: Any activity involving the tracing of letters or numerals must <i>not</i> be undertaken until the child knows the correct starting points and has internalised the movements involved.</p> <p>Incorrect formations may result if unsupervised tracing is used widely in the initial stages.</p> <p>(6) <i>Guided Writing Activities</i></p> <p>Suitable short sentences are practised in conjunction with other aspects of the school program, e.g. social studies, music, reading.</p> <p>(7) <i>Capital Letters</i></p> <p>Upper case letters (capital letters) are introduced throughout the year as the need arises (see p.18 for a detailed description of letter movements).</p> <p>(8) <i>Numerals</i><br/>(See page 49 for a detailed description of movements.)</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;">0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8 9</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pencil lifts occur during the formation of capital letters.</li> <li>■ For simplicity, upper case letters are introduced as twice the body height. They are reduced in Year 3.</li> <li>■ Be constantly aware of the problems encountered by left-handed writers (see p. 8 ).</li> </ul> |

NOTE: At the outset, a small number of children may have difficulty in achieving the degree of slope which has been suggested. Some may produce letters which are vertical. The ability to slope the print script is regarded as developmental, and the issue should not be forced. Teachers have found that the slope occurs, given time.

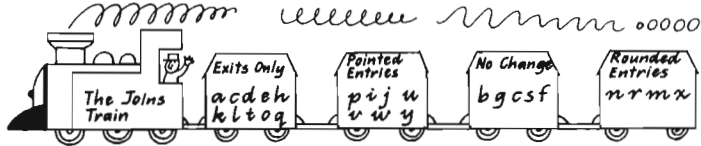



By the end of YEAR ONE, children should know that:

- All letters (except 'e' and 'd') start at the top.
- Usually, the pencil is not lifted when making a lower case letter (except for dots and crossbars).
- The pencil can be lifted when making capital letters.
- Big wedges are a feature of many of the letters, e.g. **ag**
- Writing is faster if retracing is kept to a minimum.
- A finger/hand/arm movement is used to write.
- Letters have 'heads', 'bodies' and 'tails' and should be placed on the lines in the correct position.
- The pencil should *not* be held in the web of the hand.



|          | Content   | Teacher's Notes   |
|----------|---|---|
| Year Two | <p>(9) <i>Evaluate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pencil hold</li> <li>▪ posture</li> <li>▪ paper position</li> <li>▪ letter formation                    lower case<br/>   upper case</li> <li>▪ spatial awareness (grouping into head, body and tail categories).</li> </ul> <p>(10) <i>Revision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ basic patterns</li> <li>▪ letter shapes (Beginner's Alphabet)</li> <li>▪ letters plus entries and exits</li> </ul> <p>(11) <i>Introduction to Queensland Modern Cursive</i><br/>The following ideas are introduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ letters are joined to facilitate speed</li> <li>▪ entries and exits are added to most lower case letters — some do not change</li> <li>▪ capital letters do not change at this stage</li> </ul> <p>The children's names can be introduced on flashcards for recognition purposes. Ideally, the joins should be taught before children write their names. However, children will be eager to try, so it would be useful to take time to show each child how to write his/her name.</p> <p>(12) <i>Addition of entries and exits (6mm lines)</i></p> <p>(a) <i>Exits only</i> (using diagonal joins)</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; text-align: center;"><i>a c d e h k l t</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Joins — bottom of body to top of body letters.</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; text-align: center;"><i>ae at ce ct de dt et</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; text-align: center;"><i>ac ao cc co do ec</i></p> | <p>To develop relaxed hand movements, 'fish-hooks' and walking sticks' may be practised, e.g. <i>lllll 7777</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 6mm lines can now be introduced for most children.</li> <li>▪ See p.46 for a list of all possible letter joins.</li> <li>▪ Ligatures (joins) can be either diagonal, e.g. <i>an</i> or horizontal, e.g. <i>log</i></li> <li>▪ The join should diverge half-way up the body height, e.g. <i>hall</i> leaving a well-defined wedge.</li> </ul> |




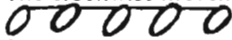
|          | Content  | Teacher's Notes  |
|----------|--|--|
| Year Two | <p>(b) <i>Rounded entries</i> (diagonal joins)<br/> <i>n r m x</i><br/> <i>an am en em hen</i><br/> <i>hem ten den</i></p> <p>NOTE: Stress the difference between the letter proper and its joining element. Dotting the joins may be useful for teacher demonstration purposes initially.</p> <p>(c) <i>Pointed entries</i> (diagonal joins)<br/> <i>i j p u v w y</i><br/> <i>ai aj ap au av aw</i><br/> <i>ay in im</i></p> <p>(d) <i>Letters that change</i><br/> <i>f</i> 'f' now has a descender. The crossbar slopes to allow for ease of joining.<br/> <i>3</i> Changes shapes to allow for ease of joining.</p> <p>(e) <i>Letters that don't join</i><br/> Most letters that finish with a clockwise movement don't join to the following letter as a retrace stroke is required.<br/> <i>g j b s y 3</i></p> <p>(f) <i>Letters which move back along the top line, e.g. a c g d q</i> are 'dropped on' so that a covering stroke is not required.<br/> A high exit, e.g. <i>a</i>, is required before the following letter is dropped on so that the join does not become obvious, e.g. <i>cat</i></p> | <p>Always use the entry stroke for these letters, e.g. <i>me</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clockwise letters (<i>r n m</i>) have rounded entries while anticlockwise letters (<i>p, i, j, v, w, y</i>) have pointed ones.</li> <li>▪ Distortions may occur if the children incorporate the join in the letter shape, e.g. <i>hat<sup>x</sup> hat<sup>v</sup></i></li> <li>▪ A wall chart grouping the entries and exits could be useful for reference purposes, e.g.</li> </ul>  <p>NOTE: Care must be taken at this stage with the words selected. Only letters which have diagonal joins should be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A loop occurs when 'f' requires an entry stroke from a previous letter, e.g. <i>after</i></li> <li>▪ Letters 'f' and 's' don't have two forms — their shapes are merely modified by entry strokes when necessary, e.g. <i>as</i></li> <li>▪ Joins may occur at a later stage when speed is developing, e.g. <i>sat</i> However, the join is only a quick trace.</li> <li>▪ To drop a letter on, extend the exit of the previous letter, e.g. <i>C</i> lift the pencil, and start the next letter at the usual starting point. No covering stroke is required.</li> </ul>  |

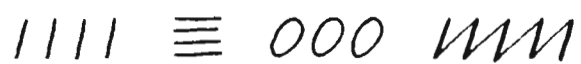
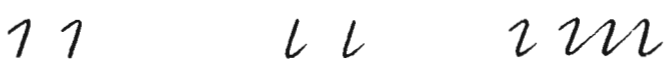
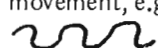

|          | Content   | Teacher's Notes   |
|----------|---|---|
| Year Two | <p>(g) <i>Horizontal ligatures</i><br/>Top finishing letters – <i>or wvf</i><br/>to top of body letters, e.g. <i>or ow vo for</i><br/>etc.</p> <p>(h) <i>Top finishing letters to ascenders</i> <i>rk rf rt rl</i><br/>Words containing –<br/><i>ok of ol ol ul uf ut</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Letter 'e' is 'dropped on' after a top finishing letter</i><br/>Words containing – <i>we ve re oe</i></p> <p>(j) <i>Double letter combinations</i><br/><i>doll add seed room</i><br/><i>pretty cross lass off hurry</i></p> <p>(k) <i>Joining activity</i><br/>These letters are joined<br/><i>a c d e h i k l m n s u</i><br/><i>f o p r t v w x y z</i></p> <p>(l) <i>Writing own names</i><br/>Individual cards may be used for tracing and copying once all the joins have been learnt.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distortion of 'e' may occur if a join is made e.g. <i>we<sup>x</sup></i></li> <li>▪ Letter 'e' may be 'dropped on', in all instances, if preferred, to prevent distortion, e.g. <i>we</i></li> <li>▪ A pencil lift may be made initially after 'r' if problems are experienced with the join, e.g. <i>hurry hurt</i></li> <li>▪ Double 'ss' may also be joined as follows: <i>cross lass</i></li> <li>▪ The cross on the <i>tt</i> is a single stroke.</li> <li>▪ Upstrokes should be at an angle of approximately 45° otherwise cramping e.g. <i>doll</i> or expansion, e.g. <i>doll</i> will occur.</li> </ul> <p>▪ By the end of Year 2, the majority of children will be using cursive writing in most situations.</p> |




By the end of YEAR TWO, children should know:

- Letters are joined to promote faster writing.
- Writing should be neat and quick. Wedges help to promote faster writing.
- The pencil can be lifted within a word.
- Too many pencil lifts within a word can slow down writing.
- Some letters have rounded entries and some have pointed entries.
- Some letters don't join to the following letter.
- Capital letters don't join to the following letter.
- Letters are retraced only halfway up the body height, e.g. *h*, otherwise time is wasted.
- Some letters can be 'dropped on' to save making a slow covering stroke, e.g. *a c d g q*
- How to hold the pencil in an acceptable way.
- The following terms: pencil lift, 'drop/dropped on', letter, entry, exit, wedge, web of hand, covering stroke, ascender, descender.



|            | Content  | Teacher's Notes  |
|------------|--|--|
| Year Three | <p>(13) <i>Revision</i> – the Beginner's Alphabet<br/>Revise all basic letter shapes. (See Year One program)</p> <p>(14) <i>Revision</i> – the joins<br/>Revise all joins (See Year Two program)</p> <p>(15) <i>Pen manipulation activities</i></p> <p>(a) <i>An understanding of the correct role of the fingers and hand is essential</i><br/>The fingers and muscles of the hand make the letter shape and then the hand moves along.<br/><i>Activity</i> to develop the correct movements by the fingers and the hand.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>(b) <i>Rhythmic work on rotation</i><br/>Anticlockwise patterns</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>uu eee eleelel</i></p> <p>Clockwise patterns</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>eee uu</i></p> <p>Combined</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constant attention should be paid to acquiring and maintaining the correct pencil hold.</li> <li>▪ Watch the <i>support point</i>.<br/>The end of the pencil should point between the shoulder and the elbow. Some children tend to 'roll' the writing hand so that the pencil points out an a 'hook' position results. (See p. 7 ).</li> <li>▪ Children may benefit from having line size reduced to 4mm at this stage. Some may need to continue using 6mm lines.</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If children 'pivot' on the wrist during the  activity, put a spare sheet of paper under the hand and pull gently as they circle on the spot.</li> <li>▪ The clockwise movement may be easier for left-handers, e.g. </li> <li>▪ <i>Stroke control</i> is important – stop the fingers before moving the hand.</li> <li>▪ The basic structure of letters is made up of rotation, either clockwise or anticlockwise.</li> <li>▪ The pencil should be lifted after 3 or 4 letters to prevent cramping.</li> <li>▪ Suitable music or rhymes could assist the rhythmic flow.</li> </ul> |

|            | Content   | Teacher's Notes   |
|------------|---|---|
| Tear Three | <p>(16) <i>Development of Spatial Awareness</i><br/> Letters must be evenly spaced. This requires a tension-release movement.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Clockwise                  Anticlockwise                  Combined </p> <p>(17) <i>Parallelity</i><br/> The downstroke of the letter should be parallel –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ within letters, e.g. <i>m</i></li> <li>▪ within words, e.g. <i>man</i></li> </ul> <p>(18) <i>Pencil Lifts</i><br/> The pencil <i>may</i> be lifted, where required, within words. Suitable times to lift occur –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ before letters that are dropped on, e.g. <i>cat</i></li> <li>▪ after letters that finish in a clockwise direction –<br/> <i>bgspjy</i> e.g. <i>bin</i></li> <li>▪ after most bottom finishing letters, e.g. <i>u, t, s</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Never</i> lift before rounded entries (i.e. <i>n m r x</i> )</p> <p>In some instances a strict adherence to the practice of dropping letters on will cause too many pencil lifts, e.g.<br/> <i>aidid space aidage</i></p> <p>Discussion should take place as to where the join (or joins) should be made. There is no one right way.<br/> e.g. <i>aidage adage adage</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poor stroke control will have 'flat' spots (e.g. <i>o</i> ).</li> <li>▪ The bases of the letters are compared for spacing, e.g. <i>happy</i></li> <li>▪ If children are still experiencing problems in placing letters correctly between the lines, practise in spatial awareness groups, e.g. 'body' letters –<br/> <i>ace m n r o s w v x i</i></li> <li>▪ A quick directional change should be used rather than a ticking movement, e.g. <i>unn</i> , or a slow directional change, e.g.<br/> </li> <li>▪ The pencil can be placed on the downstrokes to ensure they are pointing in the same direction, e.g. <i>till till</i></li> </ul> <p>Visual discrimination activities could be useful, as would allowing children to evaluate their own work, e.g. 'Find the odd man'.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pencil lifts aid in keeping the hand moving comfortably across the page. Therefore, each writer will have different preferences.</li> </ul> |

|            | Content   | Teacher's Notes   |
|------------|---|---|
| Year Three | <p>(19) <i>Speed Loops</i><br/>           Small loops may occur naturally on ascenders or descenders when written at speed. However, they are <i>not</i> to be taught.</p> <p>(20) <i>Upper Case Letters (Capitals)</i></p> <p>The letter size may now be reduced.</p> <p>The following proportions should be used –</p> <p>Whole square </p> <p>Half square <b>B E F J K L P R S</b></p> <p>Three-quarter square <b>A H N T U Y V</b></p> <p>Three-quarter square + rounded <b>C G D</b></p> <p>Five-eighths square <b>X Z</b></p> <p>(21) <i>Basic Letter Shape</i></p> <p>If deterioration is noticed in the letter shapes, practise the Beginners Alphabet by grouping into movement categories (i.e. <b>a m o</b> ).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The loop is a quick, tracing upstroke which should not be exaggerated – this would distort the letter shape and decrease the speed, e.g.</li> </ul>  <p>Loops should be discussed if they begin to appear in children's work. They are <i>not</i> incorrect, but they should <i>not</i> be taught. These proportions are for the <i>teacher's</i> benefit only. Children should not be made to attempt the exact proportions.</p> <p>These proportions are for the <i>teacher's</i> benefit only. Children should not be made to attempt the exact proportions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As letter 'M' is related to 'W' the legs may be directed outwards, e.g. </li> </ul> |



By the end of YEAR THREE, children should know:

- How to hold the pencil correctly.
- The pencil can be lifted within a word.
- Capital letters do not join to the following letter.
- Sometimes covering strokes are needed.
- Slope of letters should be consistent.
- Spacing between words should be even.
- Downstrokes should be parallel.



The Year 4–7 section of this Handbook is to be expanded and presented in a separate booklet.

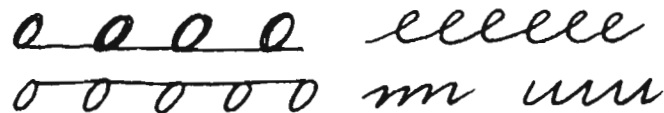
Students in the middle and upper primary school will begin to develop their own distinctive handwriting styles. To assist them in the development of efficient, legible personal styles, teachers should:

- Provide consistent instruction in the techniques of handwriting.
- Give students the techniques to be able to evaluate their own handwriting.
- Provide assistance for those students who need further practice to improve letter structures, pen manipulation, or writing speed.
- Give students the opportunity to experiment with different writing instruments and different styles.

(1) *Pen Manipulation*

The training stroke control program initiated in Year One (see p. 23 ) should be continued. Some time each week should be devoted to —

- Doodling exercises set to music to develop finger manipulation and rhythm.



- Expansion exercises to co-ordinate fingers and hands. It should be emphasised that this is a training exercise only to increase speed and flexibility.



NOTE: The penhold should be monitored carefully during these activities. The orthodox penhold should be used, regardless of how the child normally holds his pen. This will increase tactile awareness of the correct hold and build the child's confidence in using it.

(2) *Speed*

It is necessary for each child to be able to write neatly, legibly and at speed. Speeds in excess of 100 letters per minute are rarely comfortable for primary school students. However they should be capable of short bursts of speed.

Regular speed tests lasting 1 minute followed by an assessment of legibility will encourage children to build up speed.

Rhythm should not be sacrificed for speed. Frequent coupling of letters with 'm' will develop a balance between speed and rhythm e.g.



### (3) *Improvement of Letter Structure*

Constant revision of letter shapes and joins should be part of the weekly handwriting program (See Year One program, p. 26 ).

- Write the alphabet one letter at a time with emphasis on entries and exits, e.g. *a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z*

- Write the alphabet joined, e.g. *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy z*
- Write the expanded alphabet, e.g. *a b c d*

### (4) *Flourished Capitals*

Some students in the upper school may be interested in learning flourished capital letters. The following flourished capitals are provided as an example. They are *not* compulsory.

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

### (5) *Calligraphy* (not compulsory)

The art of calligraphy, if fostered, will –

- improve stroke control
- improve spacing
- develop aesthetic appreciation of ‘good’ letter shapes
- build confidence in using writing instruments
- foster excellence in presentation of finished work.

The Italic style is recommended as a starting style. Broad edged pens in felt or nib form are the correct instruments. Larger nibs (or felt points) are recommended for beginners.

Italic

*a b c d e f g h i j*  
*k l m n o p q r s*  
*t u v w x y z*

With the present revival of interest in handwriting as an art form, there is no shortage of commercially produced material for students to use. School and local libraries usually hold copies of texts on lettering, graphics and/or the art of calligraphy.

SECTION  
**3**  
Evaluation

An understanding of the basic processes of handwriting underlies the development of fast, legible writing. It is therefore essential that a child understands these processes and is able to discuss his/her own work critically from the beginning stages.





As the writer matures, an individual style will emerge. This does *not* mean that the child's handwriting be allowed to deteriorate, rather that criteria other than strict adherence to the model be evaluated. Such criteria would be —

- Line quality (thick and thin strokes)
- Fluency of movement
- Joining capabilities
- Simplification of strokes to increase speed
- Balanced proportions in letters
- Even expansion
- Consistent slope

Evaluation should be a two-fold process —

- Teacher observation
- Pupil Self-Evaluation.

**EVALUATION**  
Pre-Writing Stage

| Names | Penhold | Pencil Control | Directional Movements      |                             |                             |  |  |   |   | Spatial Awareness<br>Ability to use lines | Comments |
|-------|---------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|----------|
|       |         |                | horizontal<br>left → right | vertical<br>(top to bottom) | diagonal<br>(top to bottom) | anticlockwise<br> | clockwise<br> |  |  |   |          |
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EVALUATION

Writing Stage – Print Script

| Names | Formation of Lower Case Letters    |             |                            |             |  |             |                        |             | Formation of Upper Case Letters | Comments |
|-------|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|----------|
|       | 'a' Family<br><i>a d g q (p b)</i> |             | 'o' Family<br><i>o e c</i> |             | 'm' Family<br><i>n m r h k u v<br/>w y</i> |             | <i>i t l f j s x z</i> |             |                                 |          |
|       | blank paper                        | lined paper | blank paper                | lined paper | blank paper                                | lined paper | blank paper            | lined paper |                                 |          |
|       |                                    |             |                            |             |  |             |                        |             |                                 |          |
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**EVALUATION**  
**Writing Stage -- Cursive Script**

| Names | Penhold | Spatial Awareness | Parallelity<br>■ within letters<br>■ within words | Even expansion<br>(within words) | Joins | Balanced proportions<br>within letters | Even spacing<br>between words | Correct pressure<br>pattern (firm but not heavy) | Comments |
|-------|---------|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------|
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SECTION

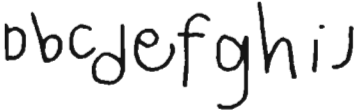
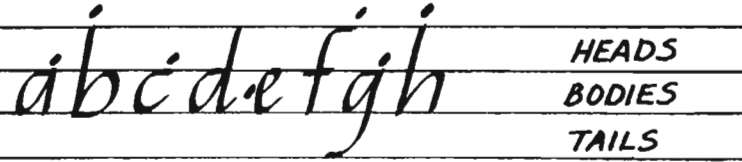
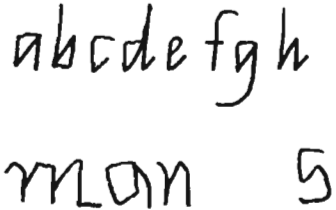
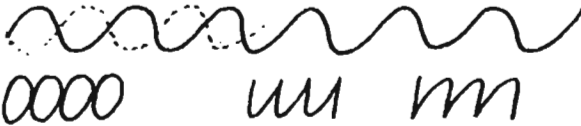
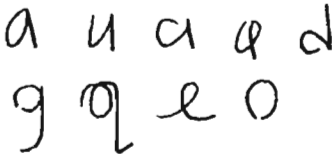
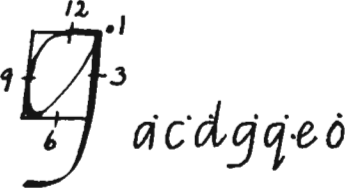

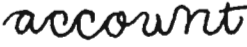

# 4

## Corrective techniques

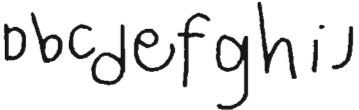
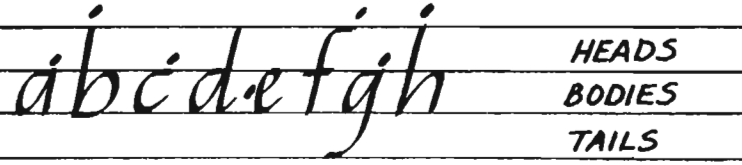
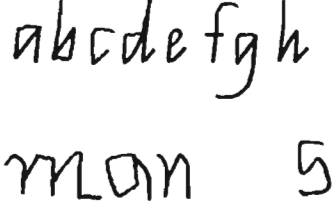

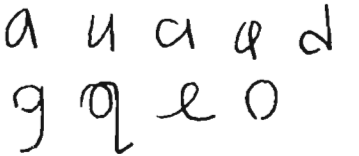
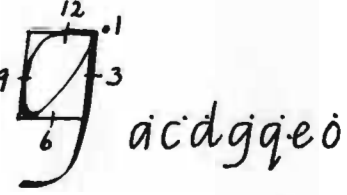









CORRECTIVE TECHNIQUES

| Sample  | Problem   | Teach   | Exercises  |
|---|---|---|--|
|    | Spatial awareness<br>Location & Orientation                             | (1) Bodies only<br>(2) Heads & Tails<br><br>Starting points. Do <i>not</i> change pen hold until spatial awareness problem is solved.<br><br>Reduce size              |  <p><i>No unsupervised writing until starting point is mastered. Use lines.</i></p>                               |
|    | Tick writing<br><br>Curving strokes and directional change undeveloped. | Curves<br><br>Ovals<br>Snake patterns<br><br><i>Pen Hold</i><br>Pen should not be in web area of hand.  |  <p>Draw shapes above with eyes open and then shut to check if the brain has internalised the curve movement.</p> |
|   | Incorrect starting point causes letters to distort.                     |  <p>1 o'clock start.<br/>                     Make a horizontal backward push.</p> | Use parallelogram and mark starting point.<br>Show start only → → → Develop crisp turn at 7 o'clock               |
|  | 'Rocking' writing action distorts at speed.                             | Teach pen lifts in words<br>Use exits <i>a</i>  |   |

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| Sample                            | Problem   | Teach   | Exercises   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <p>he me<br/>           ue ne</p> | The letter e distorts preceding letter.         | Dropped letter technique.<br><i>me we fe ne re</i>  | Any words containing e after w v m n.   |
| <p>manage</p>                     | Parallellity<br>Poor co-ordination.             | Downward rhythm needed for parallellity.  | <i>fffff mmm uuu</i>  |
| <p>singing man</p>                | Compressed writing.                             | Expansion. Reduce size to 3mm body and expand distance between letters.   | <i>hand sing sing</i>   |
| <p>os or</p>                      | Joining comprehension lacking.                  | Modified 's' after joins.<br>Top finishing letters and joining.   | <i>scissors assist as os or<br/>           soar</i>   |
| <p>ALEK</p>                       | Formation/Parallellity.                         | All Roman Capitals move from top to bottom and left to right.   | <i>A B C D E F G H I J K</i>  |
| <p>mine<br/>           right</p>  | Slow, unattractive becoming illegible at speed. | Difference between slow directional change and quick directional change. Joins move upward at 45° from bottom to top for efficient writing. | Demonstrate (1) Slow Directional Change <i>uu</i><br>(2) Quick Directional Change <i>uu</i><br>Construct an 'm' from Q.D.C's. <i>uu m</i> |
| <p>osno</p>                       | Formation                                       | 's' contains both clockwise and anticlockwise rotation, even if modified after a join.<br>Show how small letter originates from capital.    | <i>S' start as for 'a'</i><br><i>sss sss</i>  |

| Sample                    | Problem   | Teach   | Exercises  |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| <i>elelely</i><br>(daddy) | Writer writes continuously without lifting the pen.           | Lift before 1 o'clock starting letters a c d g q and sometimes e.                               | <i>ama cmc dmd eme etc.</i>  |
| <i>daddy home</i>         | Writing quickly with a wrist waggle or hand and arm movement. | Finger writing.<br>Co-ordinate fingers and hand and arm.  |                       |
| <i>daddy</i>              | Backward slope.   | Check thumb position is at least 2 cm from tip – thumb should <i>not</i> be below index finger. | Pen hold exercise<br> |

## Joins

Aa ab ac ae ad af ag ah ai aj ak al am an ao ap aq  
ar as at au av aw ax ay az.

Bb As "b" moves in a clockwise direction, it does not join to the letter following.

Cc ca cc cd ce cf cg ch ci ck cl co cr cs ct cu cy.

Dd da de dg di dk dl do dr ds dt du dv dw dy.

Ee ea eb ec ed ee ef eg eh ei ej ek el em en eo ep eq er  
es et eu ev ew ex ey ez.

Ff fa fe ff fi fl fo fr fs fu fy.

Gg Does not join to following letter.

Hh ha hd he hi hl hm hn ho hr hs ht hu hy.

Ii ia ib ic id ie if ig ih ij ik il im in io ip iq ir is it  
iu iv iw ix iy iz.

Jj Does not join to following letter.

Kk ka ke ki kk kl ko kr ks kt ku ky.

Ll la lb lc ld le lf lg lh li lk ll lm ln lo lp lr ls lu lv lw ly.

Mm ma mb mc md me mf mg mh mi mj mk ml mm  
mn mo mp mr ms mt mu my

Nn na nd ne ng ni nk nl nm nn no np ns nu ny

Oo oa ob oc od oe of og oh oi oj ok ol om on oo op oq or  
os ot ou ov ow ox oy oz

Pp Does not join to following letter.

Qq Does not join to following letter.

Rr ra rc rd re rf rg rh ri rk rl rm rn ro rp rr rs rt  
ru ry (Some writers prefer not to join "r".)

Ss Does not join to following letter.

Tt ta tc td te tf ti tj th tk tl tm tn to tr ts tt tu tv tw ty

Uu ua ub uc ud ue uf ug uh ui uj uk ul um un oo up  
uq ur us ut uu uv uw ux uy uz

Vv va vc ve vf vg vh vi vk vl vm vn vo vr vs vt vu vy vz

Ww wa wb wc wd we wf wg wh wi wk wl wm wn wo wp  
wr ws wt wu ww wx wy

Xx xa xe xh xi xo xy

Yy Does not join to following letter.

Zz Does not join to following letter.

**Note:** Letters **b g j p s y z** do not join to the following letter, (except at speed), as the final movement is made in a clockwise direction.

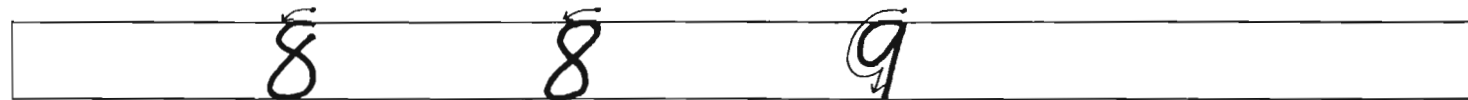
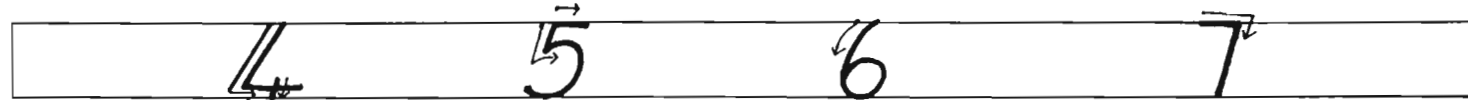
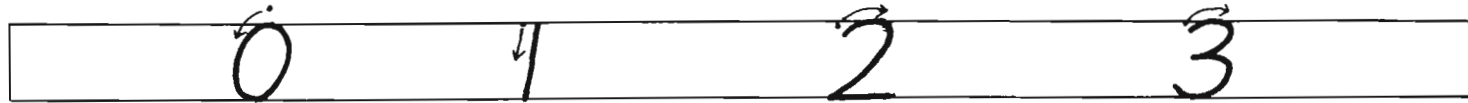
Letters **a c d g q** are "dropped on" so that a covering stroke is not required, eg. **cát** ("lift pencil").

SECTION

5

Appendix

The Primary Mathematics Syllabus Committee has suggested some changes to the shapes of numerals. They have been included in this Handbook for the information of teachers.



Some beginning writers find an 'open' eight easier to make than a 'closed' eight.

## Glossary of Technical Terms

### ascender

That part of the letter that rises above the top 'body' line, e.g.

*cake*

### 'caterpillar' writing

A writer who moves the support point while the fingers momentarily stop to allow this to happen. The pen is not lifted from the paper.

### compression

The action of drawing the finger into the palm of the hand while holding the pen.

### covering stroke

A stroke which occurs when an upstroke is covered by a downstroke, e.g.

*d w*

### descender

The part of a letter which lies below the base line, e.g.

*g*

### diagonal join

A join made from the bottom of the body of one letter to the top of the body of the other, e.g.

*an*

### 'dropped' letters

Letters within a word that have a pencil lift before them but give the appearance of continuous writing, e.g.

*can*

### extension

The action of extending the fingers to reach up for ascenders or capitals.

### 'hook' writers

A method of presenting the pen where the wrist is curved out, placing the hand on or above the writing line.

### horizontal join

A join made from the top of the body of one letter to the top of the body of another, e.g.

*wood*

### lettering

A careful placement of individual letters on a page.

### ligatures

That part of a letter which joins it to the succeeding or preceding letter.

### line quality

An examination of the writing line should reveal thicker downstrokes and light upstrokes. This will be produced naturally by the fluent writer and no unnatural concentration should be required.

### 'over the top' writer

A left hand writing action. The writer pushes the downstrokes down from the top.

### 'pad' of the thumb

The inner soft fleshy underside of the thumb, near the tip.

### palm writer

The appearance of writing into the palm of the hand, causing the pen to become more and more vertical towards the end of each group of words.

### parallelity

The ability to make parallel strokes within a word, e.g.

*hall*

### pencil lift

The pencil is lifted from the paper and the support position of the hand is moved along. Pencil lifts may occur within words.

### 'pivot' writer

A continuous writing action in which the support point is not moved often enough.

### predominant thumb

A penhold in which the thumb is placed over the index finger or is used in a manner which overpowers the finger movement.

### print script

A style of writing using letters with no entry or exit strokes.



**progression**

Movement from left to right across the page.

**'pusher'**

A writer who pushes the tip of the pencil along the paper so that the end of the pencil is pointing to the left (for a right-hander).

**Quick directional change (Q.D.C)**

A quick directional change to avoid too much angularity, e.g.

*ant* or excessive roundness, e.g. *ant*  
l not L or U

**retrace stroke**

The stroke which occurs when a downstroke is covered by an upstroke, e.g. *m*

**rhythm**

Fluent writing in which an emphasis is made on the downstroke rather than the join, e.g. *man*

**'rocker'**

A continuous writing motion which over-emphasises the joins and does not allow for pencil lifts within words.

**rotation**

The clockwise and anticlockwise finger movements within letters.

**Slow directional change (S.D.C)**

A slow directional change within a letter or join which causes excessive roundness, e.g. *man*

**spatial awareness**

The ability to place letters on lines correctly, e.g. *j j*  
✓ x

**structure of the letter**

The starting point, shape and finishing point of a letter formed by the correct movement.

**support point**

The point at which the writing hand rests on the page.

**tension and release**

Writing should be produced with a balanced pattern of tension and release movements, e.g. *MMM* by the fingers.

**wedge**

The space left between the upstroke and downstroke, e.g. *b g*