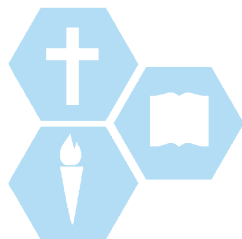


Handwriting

Writing with Prayer

Second Edition

Michael McHugh



Christian Liberty Academy
Handwriting Program

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Originally written by Geoffrey T. Garvey and Michael J. McHugh

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Contents

Preface	1
Introduction to Parents.	2
Proper Writing Posture.	3
Cursive Alphabet	4
Manuscript Review.	5
Punctuation: Period, Question Mark, and Exclamation Point	8
Capitalization	9
Writing Sentences	10
Punctuation: The Comma.	12
Writing Sentences with Punctuation	14
Writing a Paragraph in Manuscript	16
Cursive Readiness	19
Lowercase Cursive Letters a-m	22
Lowercase Cursive Letters n-z.	36
Uppercase Cursive Letters A-M.	49
Uppercase Cursive Letters N-Z.	64
Practice: Days of the Week	77
Practice: Months of the Year	78
Writing Sentences in Cursive	79
Writing a Letter to a Friend	81
Practice: The Ten Commandments.	83
Handwriting Teaching Suggestions.	87

Preface

This is the third text in the Christian Liberty Academy series in handwriting. We remind you that one key to teaching success is reducing frustration in both parent and student. A wise teacher will not fail to take into account the maturity of the children so they can enjoy their handwriting activities without constant boredom or extreme fatigue. Learning need not be a tedious exercise. The staff at Christian Liberty Academy has taken care to design each lesson to fit the attention span of the average primary student. Patience, prayer, and persistence are indispensable for success in teaching primary handwriting.

It is very important for instructors to realize that extra drill work (on the blackboard and practice paper) must be assigned for each and every concept in the textbook. In addition, have the students practice each exercise before writing their work in the book. In the first and second grade, the student's careful attention to the component strokes of letters becomes important. Special attention must also be spent on the development of good oral and visual memory of alphabetical order. Alphabet flash cards, games, and songs are convenient ways to establish this critical skill.

This text will review manuscript handwriting briefly. If extensive review is needed, we recommend placement in one of our previous texts. Transition from manuscript to cursive is completed by the end of the second semester.

Both gross and fine motor skills are involved in handwriting. Certain abilities are generally found at this beginning level of development:

1. Good control of pencils, scissors, buttons, and zippers.
2. Ability to follow a series of spoken or written directions.
3. Ability to trace lines.
4. Ability to draw figures such as circles and squares.
5. Ability to distinguish between proper and improper spacing.

This text contains activities to develop and maintain the above skills.

Good handwriting is an essential skill of expression and communication. Time spent on handwriting is well spent. May the God of all grace help you develop students who will desire to write legibly and attractively for the glory of God.

In Christian fellowship,
Michael J. McHugh

Introduction to Parents

After working with manuscript for a year or so, most students quite naturally start to introduce cursive into their writing. The odd cursive letter or word may already be appearing in your students' work. This natural ambition to grow up is better directed and channeled than discouraged.

Manuscript should continue to be practiced, however, to improve mastery. Even as adults we still have many occasions when manuscript is required: filling out forms and job applications, for example. Allow the students to make the transition at their own pace, but use this text to provide guidance as soon as cursive starts to appear in their work.

Look for these signs of readiness to begin cursive:

1. Good performance on this text's manuscript review.
2. The student's taking initiative in trying to reproduce cursive independently.
3. The ability to write three sentences in manuscript without tiring or losing control of good form.

Provide opportunities for your students to read cursive as well as write it. For a while, students will probably have more confidence in their manuscript work—it is more familiar. After two or three months' work with cursive, most students will come to prefer cursive as “easier,” “faster,” and “more grown up.”

The readiness activities that follow are a brief review of manuscript letters, a brief introduction to style (capitalization and punctuation), and practice with some important cursive strokes.

As when writing manuscript, students should:

1. Sit up straight, leaning forward slightly.
2. Rest both arms on the desk.
3. Keep both feet on the floor.
4. Relax.

Handwriting will improve if practiced every day. Fifteen to twenty minutes a day is sufficient at this grade level. If the student is improving at a slower pace than is reasonable, chances are that the student needs more time doing readiness activities first. Don't be tempted to increase handwriting practice time—when readiness skills are developed enough, the student will improve in handwriting skills most efficiently without being pushed.

Left-Handedness

Make sure your students are using the hand that is most natural for them. Remember that left-handed students will have a more difficult task, because the movement from left to right across the page is awkward for the left hand.

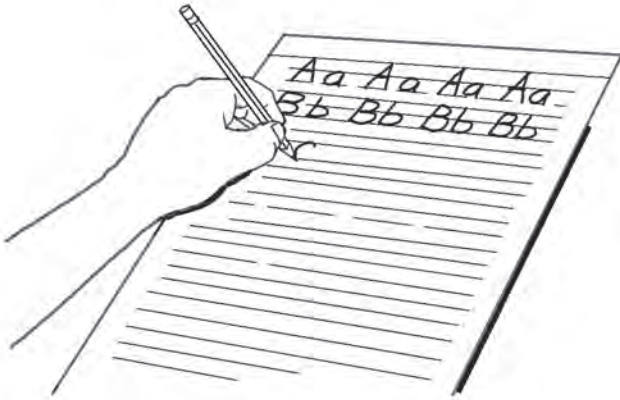
Proper Writing Posture



Some children write with their left hand. This picture shows how they should sit when they write.



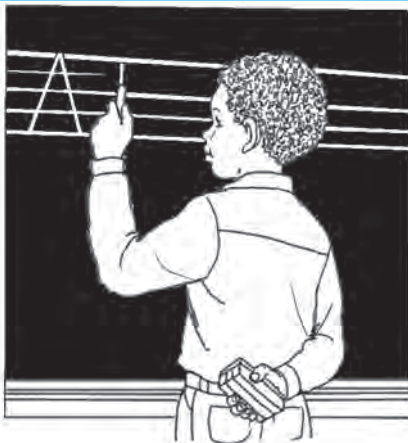
Some children write with their right hand. This picture shows how they should sit when they write.



Some children write with their left hand. This picture shows how they should hold their pencil.



Some children write with their right hand. This picture shows how they should hold their pencil.



Some children write with their left hand. This picture shows how they should stand at the chalkboard.



Some children write with their right hand. This picture shows how they should stand at the chalkboard.

Lowercase Cursive 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

•.....Headline
•.....Midline
•.....Baseline

Uppercase Cursive 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

•.....Headline
•.....Midline
•.....Baseline

Manuscript Review Aa-Ii

Practice writing upper and lower case letters. Trace each letter and write five more on each line.

Aa

Bb

Cc

Dd

Ee

Ff

Gg

Hh

Ii

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In the space below, practice writing any letters that are hard for you to form.

If students have difficulty forming any letters, they should practice writing them on a separate sheet of paper or on a chalkboard.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
~James 5:16

Instructor Tips

Make sure your students slowly stretch out their hand and arms before beginning to write. Encourage them to relax as they practice.

Chapter Check-up

How well can you write?

Do your best work as you copy these sentences:

The Lord is my Shepherd. My hope is in Jesus Christ.

Answer the following questions.

Circle

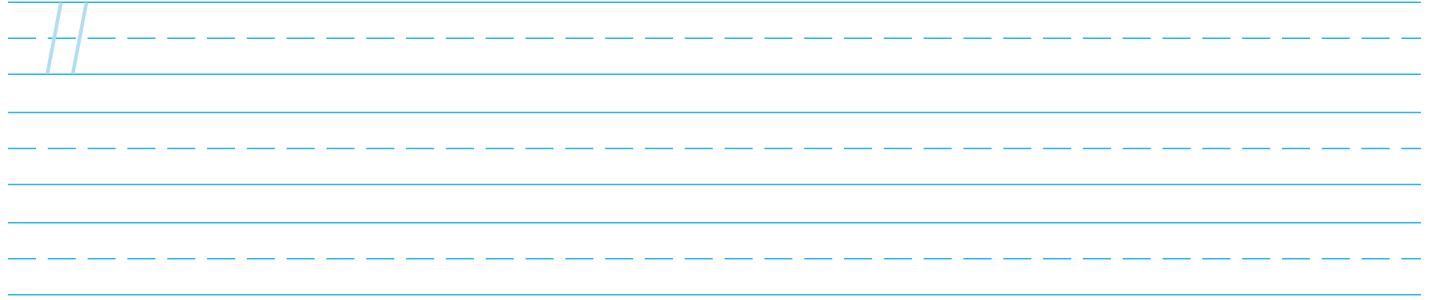
- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Am I keeping all letters on the baseline? | Yes | No |
| 2. Am I shaping every letter correctly? | Yes | No |
| 3. Am I making each letter the correct height? | Yes | No |
| 4. Am I spacing letters evenly? | Yes | No |
| 5. Am I leaving space between words? | Yes | No |
| 6. Am I leaving extra space between sentences? | Yes | No |
| 7. Am I including punctuation? | Yes | No |
| 8. Am I remembering to capitalize? | Yes | No |

Letters I write well:

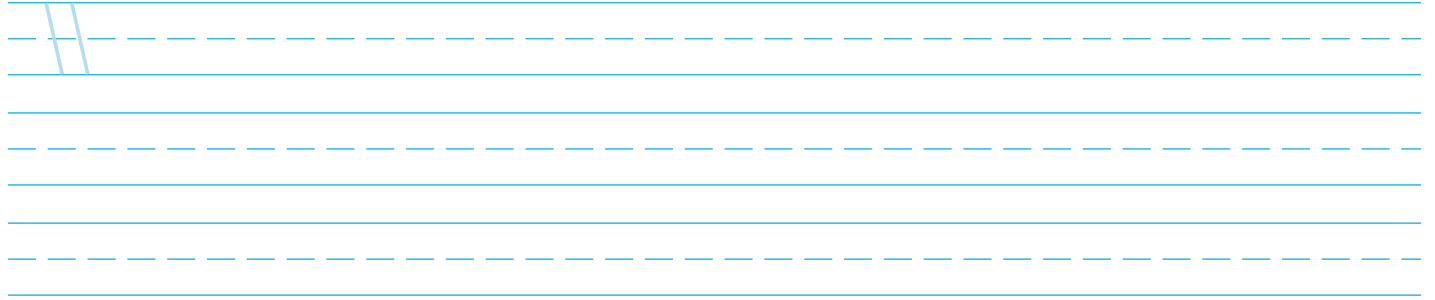
Letters I need to practice:

Cursive Readiness: Basic Strokes

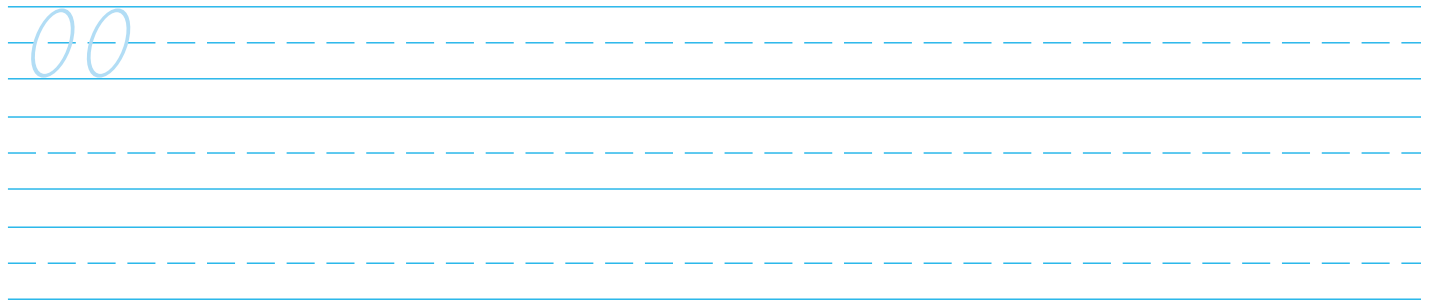
Trace the right-to-left slanted strokes. Make ten strokes on each line.



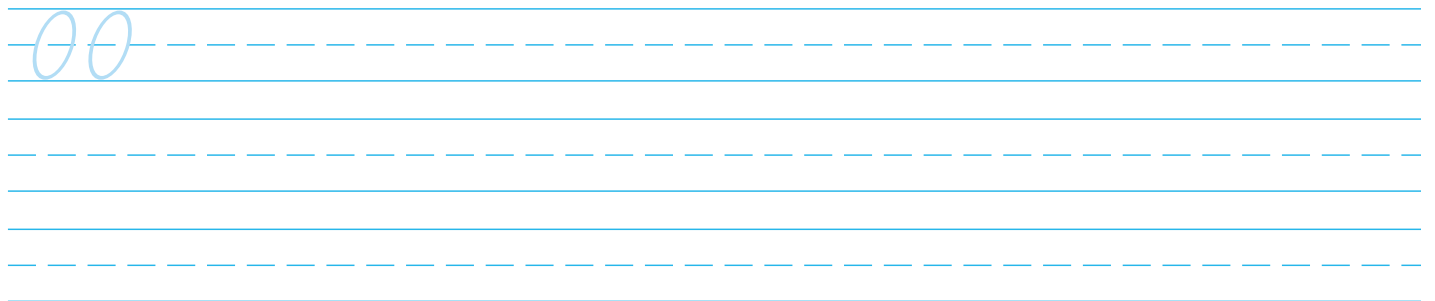
Trace the left-to-right slanted strokes. Make ten strokes on each line.



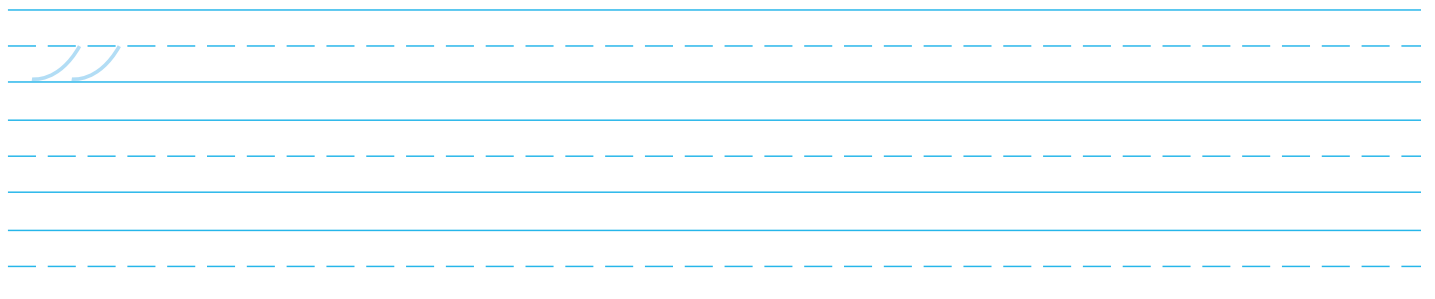
Trace the circles counter-clockwise. Make ten circles on each line.

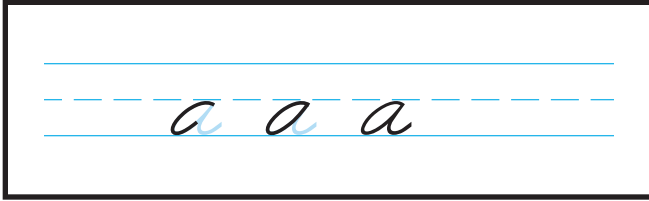


Trace the circles clockwise. Make ten circles on each line.



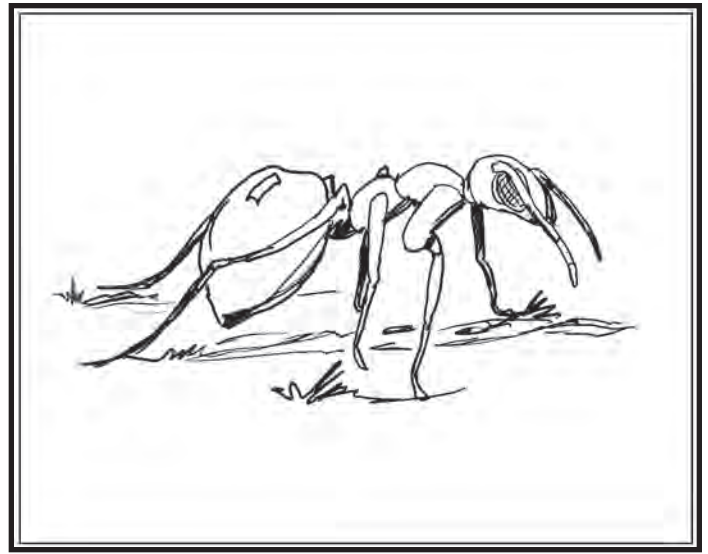
Trace the undercurves. Make ten curves on each line.



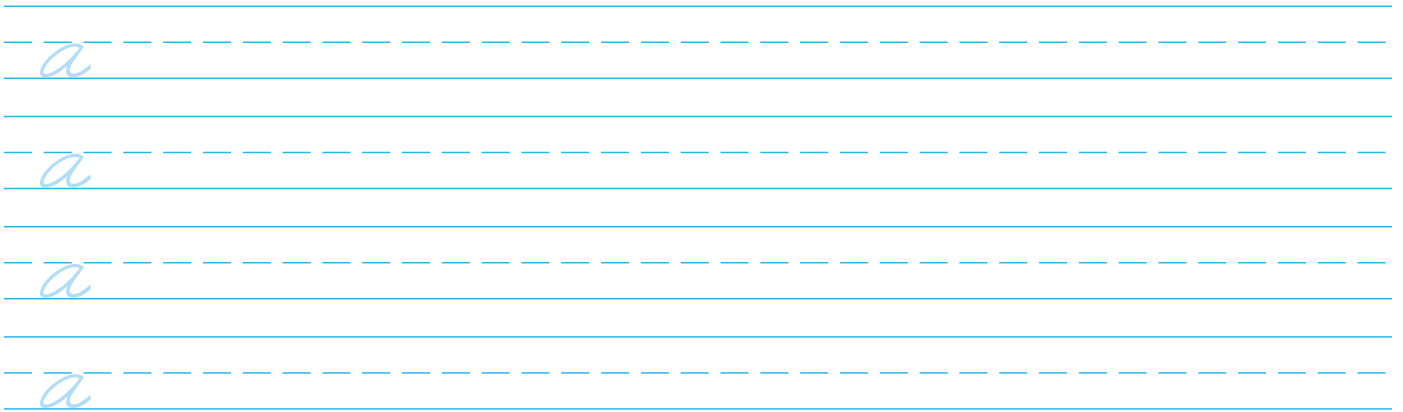


Instructions

1. Start slightly below the midline, then curve back and down to the baseline.
2. Continue the curve up to the beginning and pause.
3. Slant down to the baseline and finish with an undercurve half way.



Trace the letter and write it several times on each line.



Practice the first step of forming the letter "a."



Practice the second step of forming the letter "a."



Practice the third step of forming the letter "a."



Provide extra practice as needed on separate lined paper.



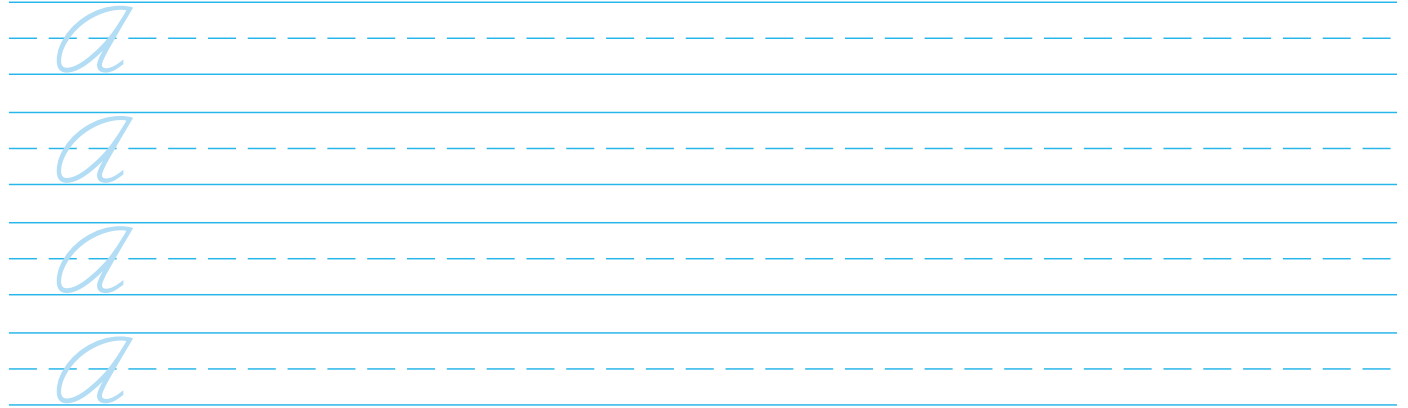
Instructions

1. Beginning at the headline, curve back and down to the baseline.
2. Undercurve back to the headline and pause.
3. Retrace and slant to the baseline.
4. Finish with an undercurve.

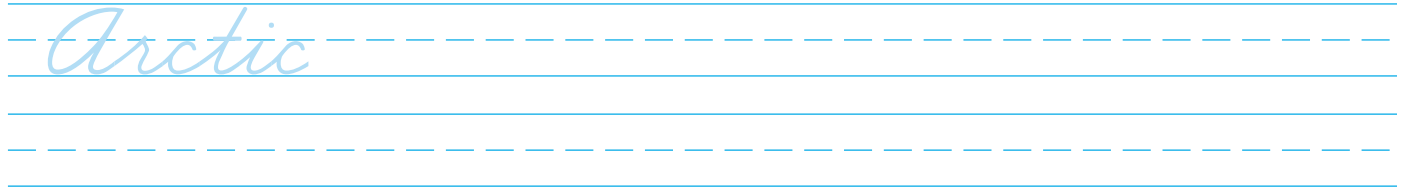


Angel

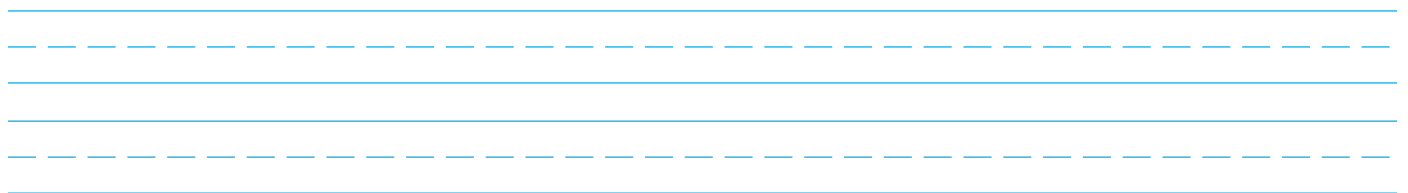
Trace the letter and write it several times on each line.



Write the word "Arctic"



Write the sentence "An alligator can swim fast." Remember to use a period.



Provide extra practice as needed on separate lined paper.

Practice: Months of the Year

Write out each of the months three times in the space below.

January February March April May June July August September
October November December

January February March

April May June July

August September October

November December

Writing Sentences in Cursive

Copy the sentences below in the space provided. Don't forget to include capital letters and punctuation.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

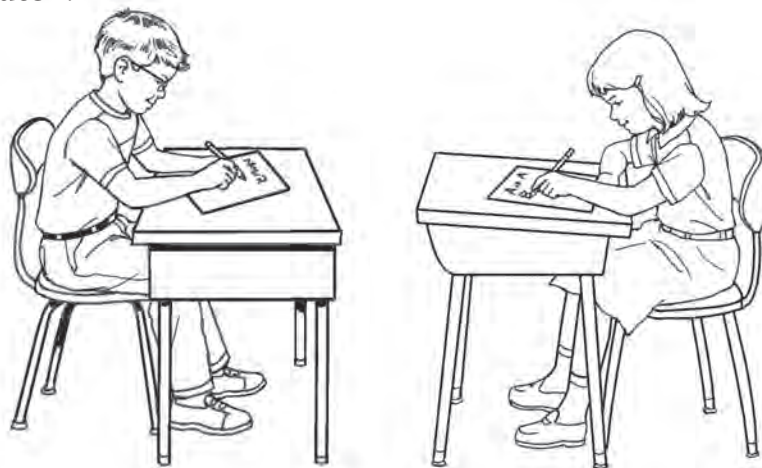
But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

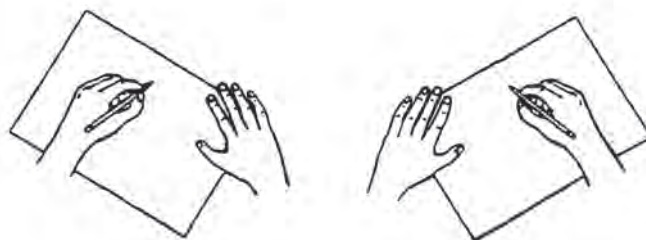
Handwriting Teaching Suggestions

Seating arrangements are important for any instruction in handwriting. The instructor should make the best use of lighting so that the incidence of shadows on the student's papers will be minimized. Overhead lighting, which fills in most shadows and provides even illumination in all parts of the room, is best. Natural lighting should come at an angle so that the student's writing hand will not cast shadows on his paper. If the instructor is teaching handwriting to both left and right-handed students, they must be seated so that they do not interfere with one another.

Good posture affects handwriting. The student should sit comfortably in his chair with his feet on the floor. The desk should be slightly higher than the student's waist. The student should sit, not leaning to the left or to the right, but bending forward slightly. His forearms should rest on his desk.



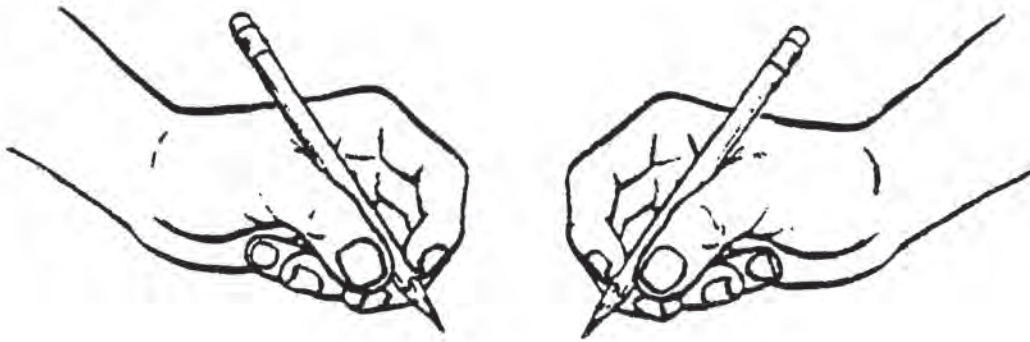
The position of the paper is related to the student's posture. The student should place his paper in front of his eyes and under his writing hand. The non-writing hand lies on the paper to hold it still. The slant of the paper will allow him to see around his hand as he works. Thus, he will not have to lean to the left or the right to see his work. A right-handed student will tilt his paper to the right, 30-45 degrees. These paper positions will eliminate the hooked-hand position which restricts hand and finger movement needed for writing. The hooked-hand position must also be avoided to prevent poor posture.



Handwriting Teaching Suggestions

The most desirable writing tool even for the beginning writer is a standard 2B pencil. This pencil is better suited to small hands than the extra-large pencil commonly thought to be good for small children. The pencil should be soft enough to mark readily and long enough to extend past the first knuckle of the hand.

The student's thumb and index finger should grasp the pencil, letting it rest on the middle finger. The last two fingers arch under the middle finger to support it. The hand rests on its side. The student should hold the pencil about one inch from the writing point. The pencil will point toward the shoulder. A student should hold his pencil lightly enough so it can be pulled from his hand with little resistance. In general, low or medium pressure produces better writing. Teaching correct pencil hold is one of the greatest responsibilities of the instructor. It is very difficult and often impossible to correct an improper hold that has become an established habit.



Writing at a chalkboard, if available, will help the student practice letter formations under the watchful eye of the instructor. The activity also allows for the development of the large muscles which are used in the writing process. If a chalkboard is not available, the student should be able to adequately complete most chalkboard exercises on a whiteboard or a hand-held slate.

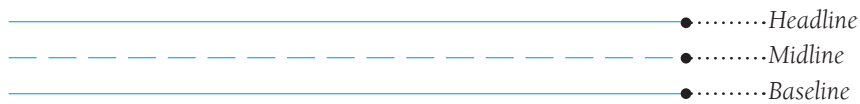
The following guidelines should be followed to make chalkboard writing a meaningful activity:

1. The student should stand comfortably about an arm's length from the chalkboard, allowing room for the elbow to bend at the proper angle (down and away from the body). Both feet should be on the floor.
2. All writing should be done at the student's eye level.
3. The chalk should be held between the thumb and the first two fingers. It should be long enough to be easily held.
4. The writing should be done with light, sweeping strokes, with the end of the chalk rounded so that it will not squeak.

Handwriting Teaching Suggestions

Illegible handwriting is often a clue to the instructor that the student may have special learning problems. Some children cannot write well because they are not mature enough to acquire the motor skills which are necessary to form letters and words. Other children may have poor vision, a problem that a visit to an ophthalmologist will often solve. A small number of children have a specific learning disability which makes it difficult for them to remember the vast amount of information they are exposed to each day. Students with these major learning problems should be referred to a learning specialist for diagnosis and evaluation.

Uneven or illegible writing is often the result of letters that do not rest on the baseline. Improper letter height can produce an uneven top alignment. Even spacing between letters and words is also essential to legible writing.



The student can easily master letter formations if he follows the procedure listed below:

1. The instructor should verbalize the letter formation as the student writes each new letter. If the student has access to a chalkboard, he should use a different color of chalk for each stroke if a letter has more than one stroke.
2. The student should stand and air-trace the letter as the instructor verbalizes the letter formation again.
3. If a chalkboard is available, the student should once again write the letter on the board.
4. The student should begin practicing writing the letter on the writing pad. The instructor should periodically review the student's work to ensure that the student is following instructions.
5. When the student has adequately practiced writing the letter, he should complete the exercise in the workbook.

Neatness also contributes to legibility. The instructor should teach the student to eliminate undesirable handwriting by drawing one line through it rather than scribbling over or erasing it. Sometimes vigorous erasing eliminates both the writing and the paper. Of course, learning to erase small mistakes properly comes from instruction in handwriting also. The student must be taught to think about what he is writing to avoid careless errors, but the instructor must be realistic about the degree of neatness expected of the student.

Rhythm is the regularity of the pressure patterns of fingers on the writing instrument. When we write, we tend to put more pressure on the instrument as we draw the line down toward us and less pressure as we push it up and away. Because of the simple one-stroke letters, the student will begin to learn rhythm from the outset of instruction in handwriting. It will

Handwriting Teaching Suggestions

become a part of the student's writing when he begins to see whole words, when he attains a speed that is appropriate for his skill, and when he eliminates unnecessary tension from his pencil hold and small muscle movements. The student needs to attain consistency of rhythm before he works to increase his speed.

In order to be effective, the evaluation of handwriting should directly involve the student. A checklist should be displayed which the student can use to correct errors in his handwriting. This list should include the following questions:

1. Do I hold my pencil correctly?
2. Do I have good posture?
3. Are all my letters resting on the baseline?
4. Do all small letters touch the midline, and do all tall letters touch the top line?
5. Are the spaces between the letters and words even?
6. Do all my letters slant the same way?
7. Are all my downstrokes parallel?
8. Are all my letters with loops well formed?
9. Are all closed letters formed correctly?

By comparing past and present work, the student can be encouraged to improve his handwriting. The work can be kept in a writing folder and individual assignments for writing practice can be made from the papers. If this comparison is made on a regular basis, it will keep the student's attention centered on improvement and will help to positively motivate him.