

# UNION HILL SCHOOL

## Mechanics of Writing



Title I Presentation for Parents  
December 2020

# Handwriting: Alive and Well



Contrary to the view that handwriting is a trivial skill, handwriting is actually important for a number of reasons. Attention to teaching handwriting in the primary grades can benefit most students, particularly those with learning disabilities.

"Although word processing programs and assistive technology are undeniably boons to children with writing problems, these technological advances do not eliminate the need for explicit teaching of handwriting. Research shows that modest amounts of formal handwriting instruction in Kindergarten and first grade may help to prevent later writing difficulties for many children".

(Spear - Swerling)

**Consider some research based "facts":**

1. The average first grader writes 9 to 10 letters per minute; after 15 minutes of daily handwriting instruction, their writing speed doubles and they construct more complex sentences. (Graham)
2. The activities of letter tracing and copying contribute to the development of fine motor skills that determine the willingness and the ability to write. In addition, the speed and accuracy with which beginning readers recognize letters determines their future reading skill. (Adams)
3. Berninger notes that dyslexics in particular often need to use writing in order to learn to read. In addition, a) Written language taps the process of creating letter representations in memory and then retrieving them. (Berninger)



# Handwriting - Alive and Well (cont'd)

b) The more fluent and automatic handwriting is, the more working memory is available for higher level composing.

4. Kinesthetic performance with the use of symbols and their letter names forms a multi-sensory association that strengthens recall for reading and writing.  
(Cox;Slingerland)

5. Handwriting instruction should include 3 simultaneous processes: auditory (listening to the sound); visual (looking at the letter); and kinesthetic (making the movement to form the letter).

**Let's consider some more "facts":**

Children not only learn to read more quickly when they first learn to write by hand, but they also remain better able to generate ideas and retain information. In other words, it's not just what we write that matters — but how.

1. "When we write, a unique neural circuit is automatically activated," said Stanislas Dehaene, a psychologist at the Collège de France in Paris. "There is a core recognition of the gesture in the written word, a sort of recognition by mental simulation in your brain."



# Handwriting: Alive and Well (continued)

2. Indiana University researcher, Dr. Karin James, states "that handwriting is important for the early recruitment in letter processing of brain regions known to underlie successful reading. Handwriting therefore may facilitate reading acquisition in young children." Much of the benefit of handwriting in general comes simply from the self-generated mechanics of drawing letters. Dr. James conducted brain scans on pre-literate 5-year olds before and after receiving different letter-learning instruction. In children who had practiced self-generated printing by hand, the neural activity was far more enhanced and "adult-like" than in those who had simply looked at letters. The brain's "reading circuit" of linked regions that are activated during reading were activated during handwriting, but not during typing. (James, 2012)

3. The ability to write one's name is an important indicator of early literacy. The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP; 2008) identified name writing as an indicator related to later reading ability. Research indicates that "children's skills in naming letters and writing their name at 5 years was linked with their reading skills at age 7. " (Weinberger; 1996)

4. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) found that one of the top six variables that correlated with later literacy and predicted literacy development, even when IQ and socioeconomic status (SES) were accounted for, was —the ability to write letters in isolation on request or to write one's own name.

Reference: Dorothy Strong, 2016 Dyslexia Training




# "TALKING" LETTER FORMATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The following slides provide the "Speech" to use when helping your child with letter formation.

When in doubt, Zaner-Bloser is a great resource tool.

There are many YouTube videos that show teachers teaching letter formation. Just be careful to choose ones that follow Zaner-Bloser.

SEE RESOURCES AT THE END OF THE PRESENTATION



# Condensed/Fluid Handwriting Manuscript Verbiage (Uppercase)

**A** – slant down left, slant down right, pick up and connect in middle

**B** – Pull straight down, push way up, loop around right to middle, loop around right to bottom

**C** – loop around left and stop

**D** – Pull straight down, push way up, loop around right to the bottom

**E** – Pull straight down, pick up, push right at top, push right at middle, push right at bottom


**F** – Pull straight down, pick up, push right at top, push right at middle

**G** – Loop around left, pull left at middle

**H** – Pull straight down, pick up, slide over, pull straight down, pick up, connect in middle

**I** – Pull straight down, pick up, cross on top, cross on bottom

**J** – Pull straight down, hook left, pick up, cross on top



# Condensed/Fluid Handwriting Manuscript Verbiage (Uppercase)

**K** – Pull straight down, pick up, slant in then out

**L** – Pull straight down, push right at bottom

**M** – Pull straight down, pick up, slant down, slant up, pull straight down


**N** – Pull straight down, pick up, slant down, push straight up

**O** – Loop around left and connect

**P** – Pull straight down, push way up, loop around right to middle

**Q** – Loop around left and connect, pick up, slant out at bottom

**R** – Pull straight down, push way up, loop around right to middle, slant out



# Condensed/Fluid Handwriting Manuscript Verbiage (Uppercase)

**S** – Curve left, curve right, curve left

**T** – Pull straight down, pick up, cross on top

**U** – Pull down, loop right, push way up.

**V** – Slant down, slant up

**W** – Slant down, slant up, slant down, slant up

**X** – Slant down right, pick up, slant down left and cross

**Y** – Slant down right to middle, push up right, pick up, pull down from middle

**Z** – Push right, slant down left, push right





# Condensed/Fluid Handwriting Manuscript Verbiage (Lower-Case)

- a** – Loop around left, pull straight down
- b** – Pull straight down, push up, loop around right and stop
- c** – Loop around left and stop
- d** – Loop around left, push way up, pull straight down
- e** – Slide right, loop around left and stop
- f** – Curve back left, pull straight down, pick up and cross
- g** – Loop around left, pull way down and hook left
- h** – Pull way straight down, hump over.
- i** – Pull straight down, pick up and dot



# Condensed/Fluid Handwriting Manuscript Verbiage (Lower-Case)

**j** – Pull way down and hook left, pick up and dot

**k** – Pull straight down, pick up, slant in then out

**l** – Pull straight down and stop.

**m** – Pull straight down, hump over, hump over

**n** – Pull straight down, hump over

**o** – Loop around left and connect

**p** – Pull way down, push up, loop around right and stop

**q** – Loop around left, push up, pull way down and hook right



# Condensed/Fluid Handwriting Manuscript Verbiage (Lower-Case)

**r** – Pull straight down, push up and over

**s** – Curve left, curve right, curve left

**t** – Pull straight down, pick up and cross

**u** – Pull down, loop right, pull down

**v** – Slant down, slant up

**w** – Slant down, slant up, slant down, slant up

**x** – Slant down, pick up, slant down and cross

**y** – Slant down, pick up, slant way down

**z** – Slide right, slant down, slide right

# Cursive Writing -grades 2 & up

## Handwriting Guidelines 101: cursive



One way you can introduce cursive handwriting is by approach strokes. There are 4 approach strokes:

1. Swing up, stop - p, t, e, u, w, i, j, r, s
2. Curve way up, loop left - b, f, h, k, l
3. Under over stop - a, c, g, o, q
4. Push up and over - m, n, v, x, y, z

To make your handwriting instruction multi-sensory, it is KEY that you use the verbal component on each page. When introducing and practicing a letter, both the parents and the child must "talk" as they form the letters. The child will take over the "talk" and gradually it will fade, becoming "permanent". For each handwriting lesson, remember to have the child "name" the letter ( p ), then "talk" using the verbiage as they trace and write.



## Resources:

Zaner-Bloser: Debbie Clement - [https://youtu.be/CvXd\\_RyvMjo](https://youtu.be/CvXd_RyvMjo)

Lowercase Alphabet App using Zaner-Bloser - [https://youtu.be/CvXd\\_RyvMjo](https://youtu.be/CvXd_RyvMjo)

Free Zaner-Bloser Handwriting Resources:

<https://www.zaner-bloser.com/handwriting/zaner-bloser-handwriting/free-resources.php>