

# a handwriting program

## Planning for handwriting

When writing, learners are encouraged to move flexibly through the recursive aspects of the writing process – planning, composing, recording, revising and publishing – to communicate their ideas, knowledge, information and feelings.

Writing enables communication through the recording of messages. By using the conventions of written language, the writer records ideas and messages in a text that can be read by others. Recording involves learners in handwriting and keyboarding while using their knowledge of writing conventions including:

- spelling
- grammar
- punctuation.

Learners bring their own knowledge and experiences about handwriting and its value to the educational setting but they need further explicit experiences that will enable them to develop understanding about the knowledge, attitudes and skills and abilities involved in developing their handwriting.

### Knowledge

Learners will become aware that:

- print conveys a message
- handwriting is one of a number of skills used in the writing process
- various handwriting styles can be produced with similar techniques
- the purpose and audience for writing influence the style and layout used

- pen lifts have specific functions
- letters can be described using such terms as bodies, heads and tails.

### Attitudes

Learners will be supported to develop:

- a positive attitude towards themselves and their handwriting
- the desire to experiment with various handwriting styles, and to develop a personal style
- a willingness to accept responsibility for their own written material.

### Skills and abilities

Learners will develop:

- hand–eye coordination
- fine motor control
- correct letter shapes by following the suggested sequence of movement
- consistent size, slope, spacing, proportion and alignment of letters
- appropriate use of pen lifts
- a relaxed technique
- legible handwriting, even at speed
- strategies to assess their own technique and style.



## Handwriting skills

Handwriting skills, like other aspects of the writing process, develop over time. With demonstration and opportunities for practice, and with application in meaningful contexts, handwriting movement patterns are established and reinforced, becoming 'automatic' processes within the learner's control.

### Letter formation

Teaching correct letter formation (see Appendix 1) involves providing learners with opportunities to talk about the names and features of letters and the sounds they represent. This enhances letter recognition in texts, on computer keyboards and in the environment. When learners practise forming letters they develop a visual and motor memory of their important features. Looking at the letters and undertaking the movement of writing then helps learners see and feel how each letter is formed, fixing the letter in the learner's visual memory for future identification and reproduction.

### Introducing the letters in Reception

There are several different approaches to the teaching of letter formation in the reception year, and each has its own merit.

#### Graphological approach

The graphological approach (see Appendix 2a) is based on the hand and finger movements used to form the letters. It is particularly helpful for learners with poor fine motor skills or who need extra practice to develop automaticity of correct letter formation. It may be that all of the clockwise letters are not introduced together

but in two or more 'groups', interspersed with groups of letters that require a different basic movement. Possible groupings for this method are:

The anti-clockwise letters: adgq ceos uy f

The 'stick' letters: litj

The clockwise letters: mnr hbp

The diagonal letters: kvwxz

These groupings are particularly useful for the revision of letter formation in the following years, even if it is not used as a sequence for the introduction of the letters. If the similarities of movement are pointed out, the learners are able to develop a metacognitive awareness of letter formation that can support their practices of letter writing.

#### Phonological approach

This approach ensures that similar looking and sounding letters are taught well apart and so it helps beginning readers and writers to avoid confusions over grapho-phonological (letter-sound) correspondence. The Carnine Order (Carnine et al 2004) sets out a very effective sequence for this approach, although it includes upper-case as well as lower-case letters. If the upper-case letters (which begin to be included between the lower-case letters 'y' and 'x') are removed from the order, the sequence of the lower-case letters is as follows:

'Learners need a lot of practice to enable their handwriting to become automatic'

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

This can be a useful reviewing sequence for a learner who is experiencing difficulties in developing letter-sound correspondence and correct letter formation.

Named after the researcher who developed it, the Carnine Order is based on four guidelines:

1. Introduce initially only the most common sound for a letter.
2. Separate letters that are visually or auditorily similar.
3. Introduce more useful letters before less useful letters.
4. Introduce lower-case (small) letters before upper-case (capital) letters.

The complete sequence can be seen below:

### An integrated or thematic approach

Many educators choose to integrate learning across several areas of the curriculum in order to provide rich learning experiences and also to help manage an overcrowded curriculum. Such an approach can be a very interesting and valuable experience for learners. The starting point for such integrated teaching and learning may come from any area of the curriculum.

For many learners, the sequence in which they are introduced to the sounds and the written formation of the letters will not affect their learning. For some, the sequence of instruction can affect their learning significantly. For the benefit of such learners, it may be that for their initial learning of grapho-phonological correspondence and letter formation the themes are best selected so that the Carnine Order is followed: the themes or integration are developed from the letter sequence rather than from some other area of the curriculum.

For further information refer to *Direct instruction reading* by Carnine et al (2004).

#### Carnine Order

amtsifdroglhucbnkvewjpyTLMFDINAREHGBxqzJQY

*Note that only those letters that differ in upper case are considered to need a special introduction.*



## Create a handwriting program

### Cursive or 'joined' writing

Learning about common sequences of letters in written English and the learning of joined handwriting to increase writing speed are complementary processes. Once learners have been taught the basic linking techniques, they can be continually encouraged to write words by clustering or chunking learned sequences of letters in a fluent handwriting movement. (See Appendix 2c for foundation script letters and numerals, and Appendix 2d for letters with links.)

As learners develop understanding of the nature of English spelling, they can be encouraged to look at the internal structure of words and to write words using the most logical and appropriate linking techniques. When learners practise linking, only legitimate sequences of two or three letters should be used. The act of linking letters provides visual and kinaesthetic feedback needed for correct spelling.

Similarly, by forming numerals effectively, learners' ability to record numbers automatically in a legible way will be enhanced.

The creation of a handwriting program will involve educators in:

- establishing aims
- organising the timetable and resources
- deciding on techniques and styles
- placing handwriting in context (to select appropriate teaching strategies)
- assessing learners' handwriting and progress
- using appropriate assessment techniques
- evaluating the program.

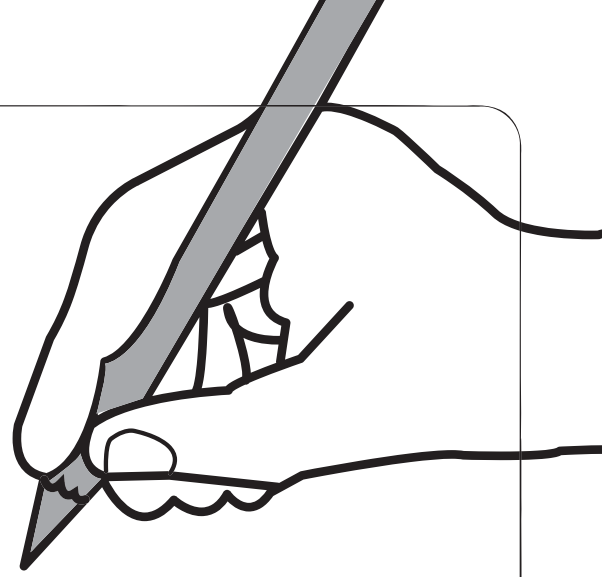
Educators also need to become familiar with a meta-language that they can use with colleagues and learners.

### Establishing aims

The handwriting program should guide learners to develop a handwriting technique that enables them to produce a legible and fluent personal style.

The handwriting program should, therefore, include the following elements:

- instruction in handwriting technique and style
- practice in developing technique and experimentation with various handwriting styles
- practice in correct posture and paper placement
- opportunities for learners to develop the ability to assess and monitor their handwriting progress
- opportunities for learners to develop the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills and abilities to enable them to produce the style with confidence.



## Organising the timetable and resources

Focused teaching of handwriting is most effective when educators provide dynamic handwriting demonstrations, forming the letters in front of learners. This provides correct models for learners. Handwriting, however, has no purpose unless it is used for the development of authentic texts within the handwriting program.

In addition, educators can consistently use and display models of handwriting and take advantage of the many opportunities throughout the school day for reinforcing handwriting skills. Learners need explicit opportunities to learn and practise effective letter formation. Short, focused sessions are more effective than long sessions designed to cover many aspects of the process.

Therefore, timetabling for handwriting should include:

- explicit teaching time within modelled, shared and guided writing practices
- whole-class writing time
- small-group writing time
- independent writing time.

Educators should provide a range of learning experiences and resources. Experience in using a range of writing implements and surfaces will help learners understand the effectiveness of various publishing formats for different purposes and audiences. Details of such resources are available in Appendix 6.

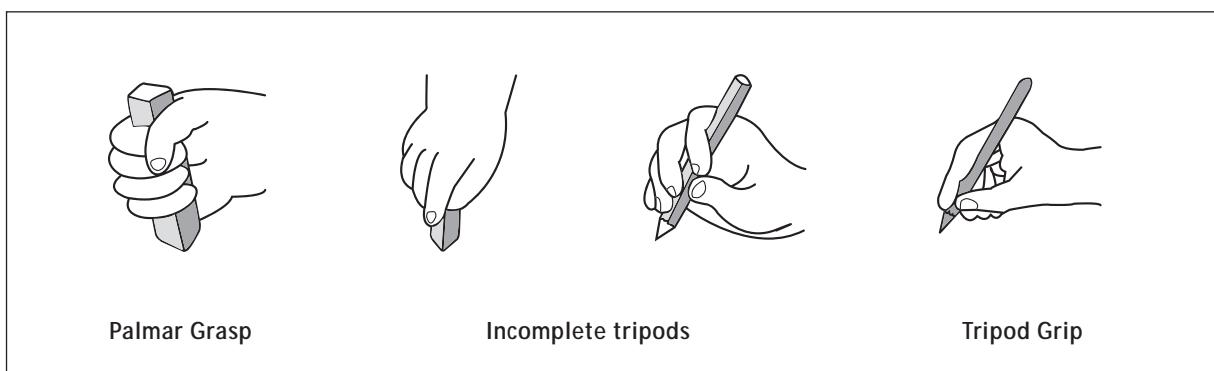
## Deciding on techniques and styles

'Technique' refers to the hold of the handwriting instrument, the position of the paper and body, and the actual handwriting movement. 'Style' refers to the manner in which letters (or numerals) are formed and linked together to make words (or numbers).

### Suggested methods for holding the pencil

One of the most important decisions affecting the success of a handwriting program is the extent to which learners are taught and encouraged to develop basic techniques.

The tripod grip (see illustration) is the preferred grip but there may be developmental stages as learners move towards its achievement.





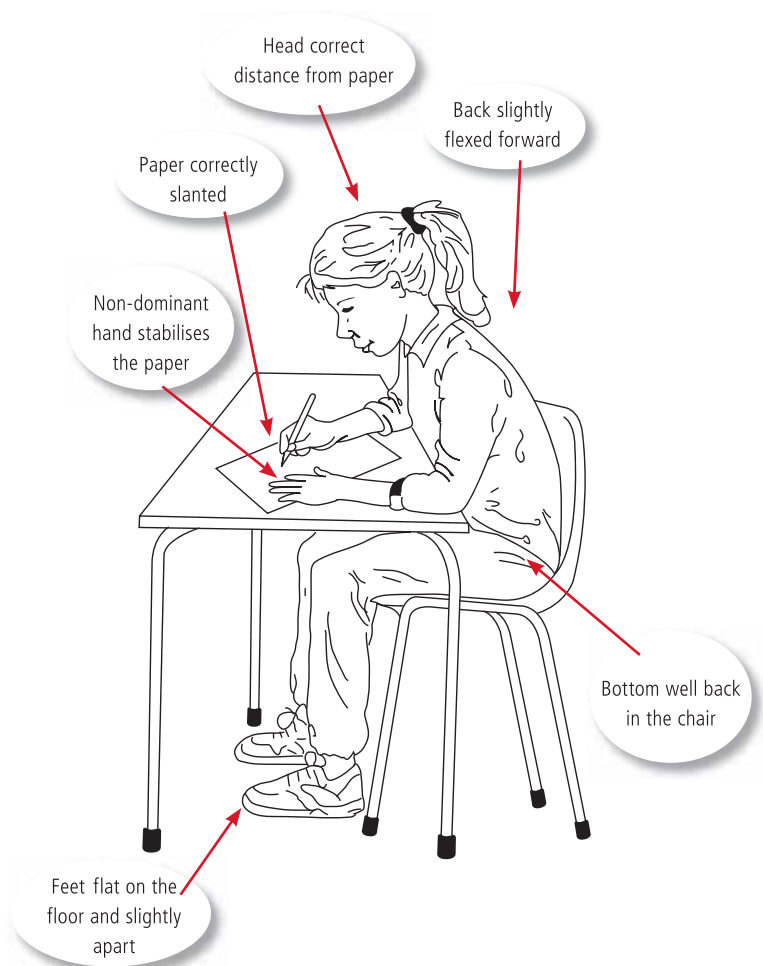
### Explicit instruction of handwriting movements

The handwriting movement is a combined finger, hand and arm movement. The arm should be supported lightly by the forearm and the little finger. This allows the writing hand to move smoothly across the page. Avoid a fixed forearm. The fingers will flex slightly in moving to form the letter shapes. The hand will move smoothly ahead of the point of contact between instrument and paper.

Writers should hold the writing instrument so that fingers are up to 3cm from the end. Left-handers should hold the writing instrument further back from the point so that they can see what is being written. Paper position is also important. (For left-handers, see Frequently Asked Questions p 39.)

Patterning of letter shapes can aid the development of a relaxed handwriting movement. (Finger, hand and arm movements in the air or using a whiteboard, blackboard or large pieces of paper enable learners to relax and 'warm-up' before a handwriting task.) Experimentation with repetitive scribble and letter patterns can also assist developing learners to gain a sense of fluency of movement. When educators are using letter-shape patterns during instruction on linking techniques, it is preferable to simulate a word by writing about three to five shapes and then lifting the instrument. It is unrealistic to insist on long lines of continuously linked letters.

As handwriting tasks lengthen, learners should be encouraged to use natural pauses as an opportunity to relax the instrument hold. Tapping the forefinger lightly on the instrument or freely rotating the wrist helps to relax the hand. Such exercises will be particularly valuable when learners are writing at a greater speed.



**Sitting Position for Handwriting**





### Formation of letters

The formation of letters involves starting and finishing places, direction of movement and number of strokes per letter (see Appendix 1). These are important aspects if linking, fluency and speed are to develop with ease. An oval body shape is recommended with a 2 o'clock starting position for all anti-clockwise ovals.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

### Size

Letter shapes should be in proportion. Within letters, the heads, bodies and tails should be of equal proportions. This means letters will maintain relativity in both width and height to each other. The overall size of writing will depend upon the purpose of the writing and the size of the surface being used. Larger letter shapes help in the establishment and maintenance of combined finger–hand–arm movements in handwriting. Small letter shapes, less than 2mm, may be the result of a tense pen hold and will make the task of identifying incorrect letter shape formation more difficult.

### Slope

A slight slope to the right is the outcome of a well-developed cursive technique for learners who are using a relaxed finger–hand–arm movement (see Appendix 1). Slope should be consistent for each individual. However, a variation of 5 to 15 degrees in the slope to the left or right of vertical is acceptable between individuals.

### Spacing

Consistent spacing enhances the legibility and appearance of handwriting. Spacing within words, between words, between lines of writing, and the use of blank space on the page should be highlighted to learners.

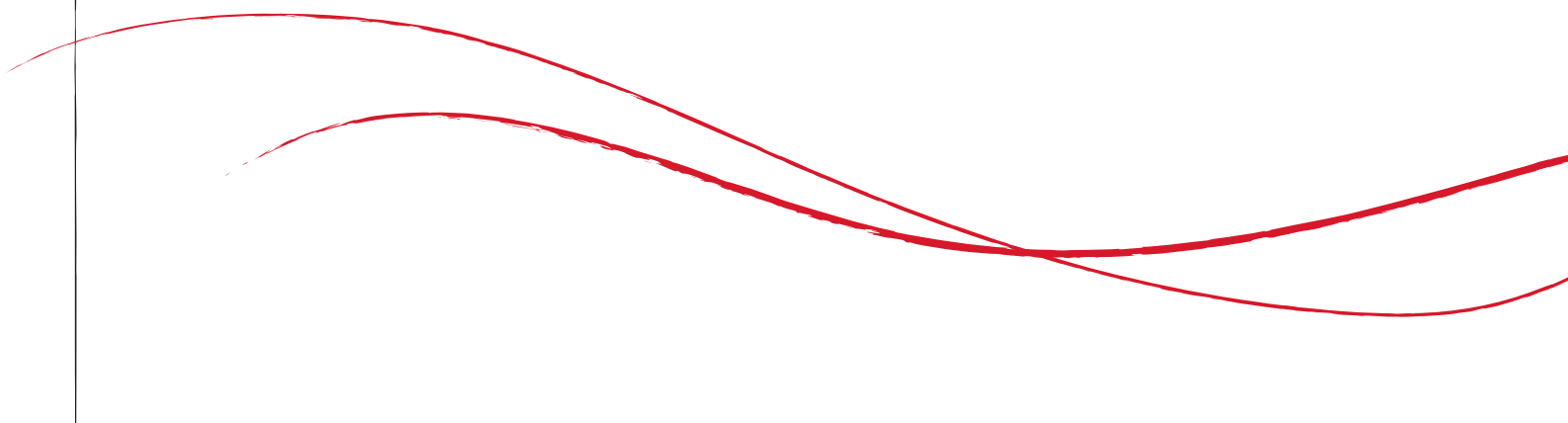
### Alignment

The visual pattern of words becomes more consistent when hooks, kicks, descending letters and ascending letters are positioned accurately in relation to each other.

### Cursive style

The correct stroke sequence for each letter should be learned in order to develop a legible, consistent cursive style.

The differences between the beginners' alphabet and cursive formation are apparent in the letter *f* and in the exits of *adhiklmnortuv* and *w*.



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When cursive formation is being taught, two points should be considered:

- special attention will be required for letters with exits
- more attention will be required in the spacing of letters.

The linking aspect of handwriting may become apparent to some learners before they have been given instruction in how to link letters because of the simplicity of the cursive alphabet shapes.

### Linking

When encouraged to develop a flowing, cursive handwriting technique, learners may naturally begin to link groups of letters. However, teaching will be necessary to avoid the development of awkward links (see Appendix 2d).

The introduction of links should not be a slow and laborious process because letter shapes themselves do not change. There should not be any deliberate drawing of lines between letters. When learners have developed a good handwriting technique, whole groups of links may be introduced concurrently, as the letter shapes are already quite familiar.

There are specific rules related to linking, detailed below:

- There is no link from upper-case letters to lower-case letters.
- The correct starting place and direction of movement for each letter shape are the bases for the development of links.

- The links are the outcome of a flowing handwriting movement rather than deliberately drawn connections between letters in a word.
- Any distortion caused to letter shapes through linking should be discouraged.
- Small groups of letters should be practised rather than individual letters as this is more likely to simulate the movements required for continuous writing.
- Letters that link to the following letter should link directly from the end of the letter to the beginning of the next letter.
- The position at which the letter finishes is important to linking.
- Some letters do not link to other letters. These are *g j x y* and *z*.
- The point at which the exit links to the following letter should be no higher than the exit of *O*.
- There is no link from an *s* if you link to it, for example, *glasses*.
- Do not link to *f* or *z*.





When linking is introduced to learners, they may need to practise:

- developing the exits before linking to the letters *adhiklmnt* and *u*
- developing the hook on *orv* and *w*
- linking directly to other letters
- linking two letters at a time, or writing short words containing direct links
- not dotting the *j* or crossing the *t* until the end of words.

Direct links need to be considered and practised during handwriting instruction. These links should be only those that occur in the English language because the teaching of handwriting should support the development of correct spelling. However, there is no specific order for introducing linking of the letters of the alphabet.

### Pen lifts

Pen lifts occur in handwriting even though the writer may not be aware of them. These natural pauses relax the hand and help avoid illegibility. Individuals develop pen lifts to suit their personal style and technique. They will occur at various intervals within words, but not always before the same letter.

Learners should be discouraged from making a pen lift during the formation of an individual letter, other than where specifically indicated. As learners increase the speed at which they write, they will develop pen lifts naturally.

Educators should be aware of the functions of pen lifts and encourage learners to use them where necessary. Learners struggling to write long words using continuous links should be shown where pen lifts could be incorporated in order to relax the hand. However, educators who observe learners making frequent pen lifts should look at the technique and stroke sequence used by them to find out why it is happening.

### Speed of handwriting

When words are written at considerable speed, legibility can deteriorate due to incorrect handwriting technique or poorly established letter and link formations. Learners can be encouraged to recognise the effects that speed has on their style and be given time to practise handwriting in situations such as brainstorming, where speed is necessary.



## Handwriting in context

The following teaching ideas provide a range of strategies for providing learners with the opportunity to practise handwriting and to develop their skills. Educators will use a range of strategies in cohesive handwriting programs that cater for the needs of the individual learners.

### Explicit teaching

'There is a clear link between effective teaching and explicit teaching' and Edwards-Grove (1999) makes the point that explicit teaching actually promotes a shift towards 'learning-centred' programs of literacy by letting the learners in on the big secret of what specific learning is going on.

Explicit teaching requires clearly structured and focused teaching and learning. Explicit teaching of handwriting involves explanation, demonstration and practice of the skill of handwriting. This skill can then be applied or used in contexts across the curriculum. Most letters are formed with one continuous stroke, so the rhythm that is important for cursive writing can be used from the beginning of learning to print. The print letters are slanted, as are the cursive letters, and so the print form of the letters is not unlearned but rather built upon when cursive writing is introduced.

Explicit teaching can help to prevent poor handwriting by clearly indicating the relationships between letters and the relationship of each letter to the writing base line (the line on which the bodies of the letters sit). Introduction of the letters in groups according to their patterns of formation ensures that letters such as b and d would be introduced at different times and related to different letter groups. This can limit confusion about letter formation and reduce the incidence of letter reversals.

### Lesson focus

In the explicit teaching of handwriting, each lesson should have a clear and simple focus (eg the correct formation of a single letter, revision of a group of letters such as those requiring clockwise movements, the introduction of a particular aspect of linking such as hooks, or the practice of linking letters in commonly found patterns). Letters should be taught in groups depending on their movement patterns. The similarities and differences should be stated clearly as this reduces the amount of new information to be learned as each new letter or type of linking is introduced (refer to Graphological Approach page 18 and see Appendix 2a).

The anti-clockwise letters: adgq ceos uy f

The 'stick' letters: litj

The clockwise letters: mnr hbp

The diagonal letters: kvwxz

Hook links from: o v w r

Diagonal links from: abcdehiklmnpstu

No link from: gjxyz

Not linked: Capital letters, Z

May be 'dropped in': oacdgs

'Educators will use a range of strategies to cater for the needs of individual learners'

### Explanation

Clear and unambiguous descriptions of the letter shape, components, starting point, movement and finishing point should be given. The use of a metalanguage helps to clarify such explanations.

### Demonstration

When using demonstration it is important to:

- have all materials prepared
- ensure all learners can see
- give an overview
- present at a suitable pace
- go through step by step
- 'think aloud' while demonstrating
- re-demonstrate particular points if necessary
- keep the demonstration short

*(adapted from Whitton et al 2004, pp 130–131).*

Demonstration shows what is to be done and can also motivate learners to be interested in their handwriting. The educator may demonstrate step by step, with the learners completing their practice step by step. The demonstration may include 'air writing' with finger and/or pencil as well as writing with an implement on board or paper, as rehearsal of the movement pattern with an associated verbal rehearsal helps to reinforce the movement patterns of the letter(s) or joining process.

### Practice

Individual practice should follow the demonstration. The desired goal is automaticity of handwriting so that attention may be focused on the message when handwriting is applied in contexts across the curriculum.

### Whole-class modelled and shared writing

During modelled and shared writing, the educator provides a strong handwriting model, articulating the process involved, describing letter formation and demonstrating handwriting as part of the integrated and recursive nature of the writing process.

Educators are preparing learners to write their own texts through demonstrating the construction of a text, using specific terms to describe the strategies used—including handwriting techniques.

While the whole-class focus on writing provides an ideal opportunity for educators to demonstrate legible and fluent handwriting and verbalise parts of the process as they do so, it is recognised that writing on a large board or piece of paper does not always demonstrate ideal paper placement or hand, arm and sitting positions. Therefore, educators should be explicit about the differences between writing on a large vertical surface and the more desirable 'paper and pen, sitting at a table' position when conducting a shared or modelled writing session.

## Interactive writing and joint construction

During interactive writing (often used in the R–2 years), the educator and learners jointly compose a large-print text, sharing responsibility for the recording at various points in the writing. The learners record words that they know how to write, and the educator engages learners in problem solving and recording words that provide challenges and opportunities for new learning.

Interactive writing helps learners understand how to write and spell in an interactive way. It is a form of shared writing in which the educator scaffolds not only the craft of writing but also the process, by sharing the pen with learners. Before they write, they compose a message together. During the writing of the message, they share the pen as the words are written. Then they re-read the message together. Interactive writing and joint construction provides opportunities for learners to practise aspects of handwriting collaboratively.

Before writing, educators:

- have an authentic reason for writing
- use learners' words
- repeat the message out loud
- clap, snap or count words.

During the writing of a message, educators:

- ask learners to say words clearly before writing them
- link words to names and/or to known words
- comment on known words, focusing on aspects of handwriting (eg letter formation, size, slope and style)
- re-read the sentence
- engage in handwriting that helps learners see how handwriting works.

After the writing of a message, educators:

- guide learners to read and point to the message
- display the message for learners to re-read
- comment on aspects of handwriting
- use the writing for extension if appropriate.

## Small-group and individual writing

Small teaching groups create opportunities for specific handwriting instruction as learners are engaged in authentic writing tasks. Individuals or small groups sitting with an educator have the best opportunity to imitate the way the educator holds the pen and to observe where to start forming letters, in which direction to move, where to finish and how many strokes are made.

Frequent explicit demonstrations, with groups and individual learners, of letter formation, linking techniques, pen grip, paper placement and hand, arm and sitting positions assist learners to learn to write effectively.



Developing writers need repeated demonstrations showing how letters and links are formed.

Demonstrations of the required movement (where to start, which direction to move and where to complete the movement, and linking techniques) are most effective when accompanied by an oral explanation.

### **Guided writing**

During this small-group teaching approach, the educator facilitates, guides, responds to and extends learners' thinking as they write individual texts. Guided writing provides opportunities for conversations with individual learners within a guided writing group on their attempts to incorporate demonstrated handwriting skills into their independent writing. Guided writing groups are generally based on similar developmental needs. This is best done sitting at tables rather than in a small group on the floor.

### **Independent writing with roving conferences**

During this time, the educator moves among learners, interacting with them through brief teaching conversations. These roving conferences prompt learners to reflect on their writing and consider the various options open to them, so developing their understanding of the writing process further.

Roving conferences involve the educator making teaching points by addressing how the message has been recorded. This individual teaching at the point of need may simply include reminders about some aspect of handwriting, such as forming a letter or linking letters correctly, using adequate spacing between words, or using the tripod grip.

As learners are seated on chairs at tables, roving conferences are ideal for reinforcing correct paper placement and hand, arm and sitting positions.

Roving conferences provide opportunities for educators to observe how well learners integrate aspects of the writing process. They can give immediate feedback on aspects that require improvement and can monitor writing development—including handwriting techniques. For example, the educator may comment on one or two handwriting issues, possibly asking the learner to identify a reversed letter (using an alphabet card for reference if necessary) or clarifying the starting point and formation of a letter formed incorrectly.

### **Sharing time**

At the conclusion of a writing activity, learners can come together for sharing time. This is an opportunity for them to reflect on, discuss and celebrate their learning. Effective use of handwriting skills within authentic writing contexts can be highlighted during this time.

# Assessing learners' handwriting and progress

Assessment of handwriting should be done over a period of time and in a variety of different ways (see Assessment Techniques page 32).

Learners will demonstrate a range of behaviour, attitudes and skills depending on the complexity of the writing task and the degree of support provided. To identify starting points for specific teaching and to monitor progress, educators should assess learners' handwriting in terms of the following qualities:

- legibility—formation, spacing, shape, size and slope
- aesthetic appeal
- speed and fluency.

These can be assessed both formally – approximately every eight to ten weeks depending on the needs of the learners – and informally during regular activities.

## Legibility

### Skills and behaviour

Assessable skills and behaviour include:

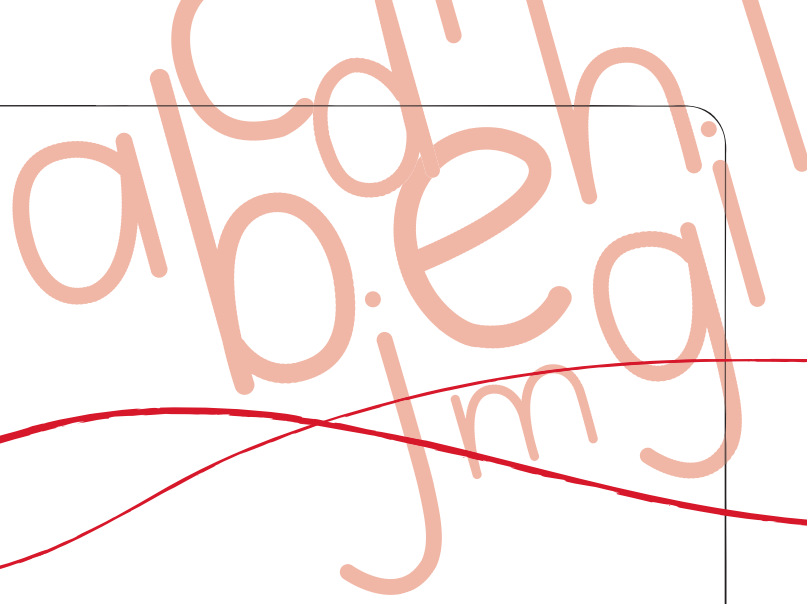
- preparation for writing
  - correct pencil grip*
  - appropriate seated position*
  - correct paper position*
- consistently formed letters with correct
  - starting points*
  - position on line*
  - direction of writing*
  - spacing*
  - shape*
  - size*
  - slope*
- speed and ease of writing (for older learners).

### Quality of letter formation

Assessment of letter formation includes consideration of:

- the starting position
- the direction of movement
- the completion of letters as well as the links, where appropriate.





### Consistency of handwriting

Assessment of consistency includes consideration of:

- spacing  
*Are the words spaced evenly or are they over-spaced or too compact?  
Is the spacing between letters consistent and appropriate?*
- shape  
*Are similarly formed letters and letter families consistent in shape—particularly on the bodies of letters?*
- size  
*Are the letters—particularly the bodies of letters—consistent in size?*
- slope  
*Is there uniformity in the slope of the writing?  
Are letters upright, or sloping 10–20 degrees to the right?*

### Aesthetic appeal

The aesthetic appeal of handwriting is largely determined by its legibility. Educators can consider:

- Can it be read easily and quickly?
- Is it attractive and pleasing to view?

Educators can also look at letter structure and quality:

- How consistent is the balance between the head (ascender) and the tail (descender)?
- Has the writing been formed using appropriate pen pressure?
- Is there excessive rotation in letter forms, linking and looping?

Presentation and format also contribute to the attractiveness of the writing. Where appropriate, educators can consider how learners are using conventions such as:

- ruling margins
- headings
- dating work
- layout on the page.

The model of a handwriting observation guide on pages 33–37 may be adapted for use by educators in their particular setting.

### Speed and fluency

Fluent writers who have acquired the necessary skills and are developing an automatic handwriting style can be assessed in terms of the speed of their handwriting in an authentic context. Learners could be given a few minutes to familiarise themselves with some information they need to write, say a message for their parents/ caregivers, and then allowed a few minutes to write it. This could take place on a regular basis – for example, monthly.



Ongoing  
Observation

Peer  
Assessment

Conferencing

Product  
Analysis

## Assessment techniques

The following assessment techniques could be used to assess learners' handwriting.

### Ongoing observation

Ongoing observation and anecdotal records can be undertaken and maintained by the educator. An example in practice is using an observation guide (see the examples on pages 33–37).

### Peer assessment

Learners can also observe others' skills and behaviour. Learners are asked, for example, to 'Check your partner's pencil grip' and 'Check your partner's seating position'.

### Product analysis

Educators can use a checklist to assess handwriting or learners could use rubrics to self-assess. Rubrics should be developed in negotiation with learners. For example, learners are given the opportunity to achieve the goal of a 'Pen Licence' by monitoring their progress and booking time to discuss this with the educator.

### Conferencing

Conferencing with individuals can take place during explicit modelled handwriting and other written tasks. Using self-assessment, learners check and identify their progress in their skills and behaviour before the conference. Learners could:

- underline their best letters and/or words in a line of handwriting and explain their choice
- compare their letter formation to display charts in the classroom.

# Handwriting Observation Guide

## Birth – Age 5

The journey of handwriting includes the young child's ability to manipulate tools and to understand that symbols are a powerful means of communication. The development of physical skills and competencies are crucial to the young child's ability to engage in handwriting activity.




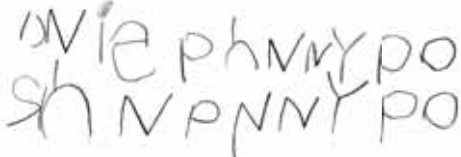

### CODE

- B Beginning
- C Consolidating
- E Established
- N Not yet covered

Physical Development and Competencies	Code	Comments
<p><b>Learners move confidently in space and perform different movement patterns with growing spatial awareness.</b>            Observe the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision/tracking objects</li> <li>Coordination of both hands</li> <li>Crossing the midline</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Learners actively explore, investigate and represent their environments, using tools, equipment and media with increasing physical skills.</b>            Observe the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finger/hand/muscle strength</li> <li>Hand/eye coordination</li> <li>Hand preferences</li> <li>Hand grasp</li> </ul>		
<b>Handwriting</b>		
<p><b>Scribble phase:</b>            Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiment to make marks on a surface</li> <li>• Scribble randomly</li> <li>• Scribble using wavy lines; left to right/ top to bottom</li> <li>• Write in scribble with the child pretending to 'write' using a range of tools</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Beginning Writing:</b>            Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand that signs and symbols tell a message</li> <li>• Draw familiar objects with some features</li> <li>• Recognise that marks can be made using a range of tools</li> <li>• Produce marks to represent written symbols</li> <li>• Copy adults engaged in writing</li> <li>• Represent different shapes elaborating on their earlier scribble</li> </ul>		

# Handwriting Observation Guide

Birth – Age 5

Handwriting	Code	Comments
 <p><b>Early emergent writing:</b> Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write some letter-like forms</li> <li>• Make scribble containing both drawing and writing</li> <li>• Begin to understand directionality</li> <li>• Copy some letters</li> <li>• Explore the use of symbols to represent words</li> <li>• Represent and record thoughts and understandings using drawing and letters</li> </ul>		
 <p><b>Emergent writing:</b> Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create more letter-like shapes</li> <li>• Begin to use space between letters</li> <li>• Understand the connections between oral and written representation</li> </ul>		
 <p><b>Early writing:</b> Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiate between upper- and lower-case letters</li> <li>• Write some words using invented spelling</li> <li>• Use space between letters and words more consistently</li> <li>• Copy environmental print with some accurate letter forms</li> <li>• Attempt to write their own name</li> </ul>		

# Handwriting Observation Guide

## Reception – Year 2

Name	Year level	Date
Hand preference	L R	

Code  Correct  Not yet evident

General handwriting skills	Code	Comments
Sitting position/posture		
Pencil grip		
Paper placement		
Uses spacing appropriately		
Correct orientation		

### Lower-case letter formation

Anti-clockwise letters	a	d	g	q	c	e	o	s	u	y	f	Comments
Formation:												
Starting place												
Direction												
Shape												
Finishing place												
Size (consistent and in proportion)												

Stick letters	l	i	t	j	Comments
Formation:					
Starting place					
Direction					
Shape					
Finishing place					
Size (consistent and in proportion)					

Clockwise letters	m	n	r	h	p	b	Comments
Formation:							
Starting place							
Direction							
Shape							
Finishing place							
Size (consistent and in proportion)							

Diagonal letters	k	v	w	x	z	Comments
Formation:						
Starting place						
Direction						
Shape						
Finishing place						
Size (consistent and in proportion)						

### Upper-case letters

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

### Numerals

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

# Handwriting Observation Guide

Year 3 +

Name	Year level	Date
Hand preference	L R	

Code ✓ Correct ● Not yet evident

General handwriting skills	Code	Comments
Sitting position/posture		
Pencil grip		
Paper placement		
Uses spacing appropriately		
Writes on lines		

## Lower-case letter formation

Anti-clockwise letters	a	d	g	q	c	e	o	s	u	y	f	Comments
Formation:												
Starting place												
Direction												
Shape												
Finishing place												
Size												
Slope												
Kicks												
Hooks												
Link and fluency												

Stick letters	l	i	t	j	Comments
Formation:					
Starting place					
Direction					
Shape					
Finishing place					
Size					
Slope					
Kicks					
Hooks					
Link and fluency					

Clockwise letters	m	n	r	h	p	b	Comments
Formation:							
Starting place							
Direction							
Shape							
Finishing place							
Size							
Slope							
Kicks							
Hooks							
Link and fluency							

Diagonal letters	k	v	w	x	z	Comments
Formation:						
Starting place						
Direction						
Shape						
Finishing place						
Size						
Slope						
Kicks						
Hooks						
Link and fluency						

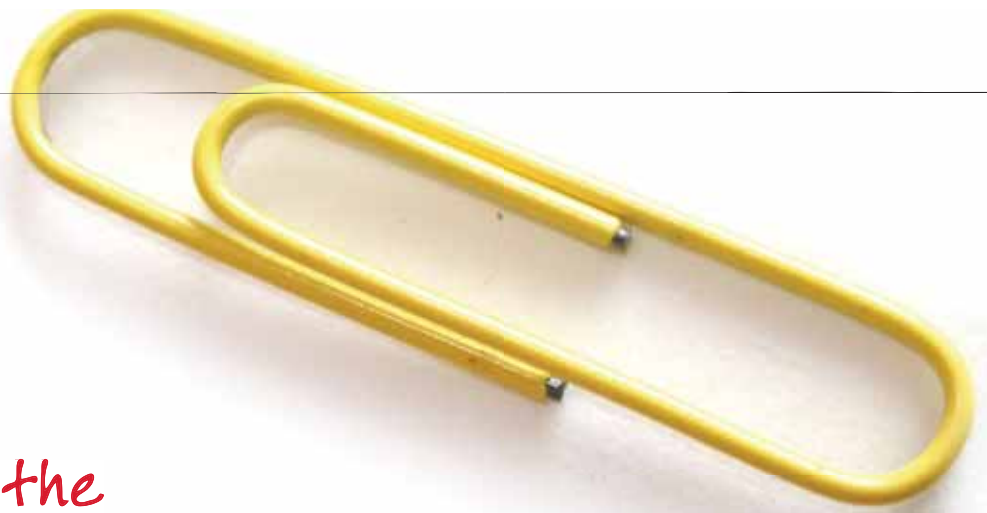
## Upper-case letters

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	

## Numerals

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9





## Evaluating the program

Evaluation of the whole-school handwriting program will identify staff competency and areas for improvement.

A whole-school approach to teaching, learning and evaluation is the most effective way to plan and implement curriculum. Each educator can then plan programs for each learner, making sure that there are ways of checking a range of behaviour, attitudes and skills depending on development, year level and complexity of tasks.

The following questions may be used to guide the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of the site's handwriting program:

- Is there a site policy on the development of handwriting? For example, is the year level for introducing links or for encouraging learners to use cursive for all writing clearly identified?
- Is there general acceptance by educators about the types of writing implements and writing paper that are best used at different stages of handwriting development?
- Is the teaching of letter formation and linking related to hand movements required for letter formation?
- Are learners provided with desks and chairs of correct height?
- Do educators use a common metalanguage when talking with learners about handwriting?
- Do educators provide learners with models of effective handwriting?
- What access do parents/caregivers have to information about their child's progress in handwriting? How is this reported?
- What resources are available at the site for the teaching and learning of handwriting?
- Are resources available and accessible to educators?
- How is information collected for evaluation of the handwriting program?
- Do learners have an audience for their handwriting?
- Do educators focus on handwriting in curriculum areas other than English?
- Is there a support structure established for learners with difficulties in handwriting?

