

Brief Handwriting Review

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Some of the best advice I've heard is to have young children make all their circles and ovals counterclockwise in order to prepare them for writing. If you think about it, though, it is much easier to teach, "like a c."

As I review letters with my children, I find myself often saying, "Start that with a c," which seems to help. Language-wise, I also have used a house analogy with young children. Many lowercase letters stay on the first floor, although some go up or down from the second floor. "Tails" go into the basement. Directional language, including "from the top," "from the bottom," and "from the middle" is helpful, too!

There are great handwriting courses and resources available. By all means visit sites to find and create all sorts of personalized handwriting worksheets online. At the same time, it is my hope that, following a long summer break, a few simple pages of strategically organized letters can help my children review letter formation with as much ease as possible.

*Also, because children are likely to ask: print exists because of movable-type printers. Cursive was standard writing because it lifted quills less, resulting in less ink lost to blots and drips. Both are equally as quick; however, parents want their children to be able to be understood (which requires neat, rather standardized writing) and parents want their children to be able to understand others, including generations who wrote in cursive. It is also worth noting that cursive exists in other languages. For example, when I studied Russian in college, I had to learn both Russian lettering systems. That would have been much more difficult if I hadn't already grasped cursive in English.)

PRINT

The initial "hook" of f helps to shape the c movement, while a c begins a, C/c, d, G/g, O/o and Q/q. In the cases of d, g, and q, one can say, "A c becomes an a with a tail."

Note that an e is a small, right to left, line plus a c, and S/s are formed with a small c over a backwards c!

A large downstroke begins l, t, h, k, B, D, E, F, H, I, K, L, T, P, R, and possibly M and N. (Lowercase p is also a large downstroke, starting from the middle.)

A small downstroke begins i, r, n, and m. It also leads into j/J.

A small, straight stroke to the right is used in e, E, f, F, H, L, t, T, I, and z, Z. English is written from left to right regarding strokes as well as words, sentences, and pages.

A diagonal stroke down toward the right is used in v, V, N, M, w, W, x, X, and sometimes y, Y.

U helps to form rounded forms of u, U, w, W, and y, Y.

There are also more unique letters, such as A and many of the cursive capitals. Still, practicing repetitive motion can be a substantial aid.

CURSIVE

There is a variety of cursive fonts, just as there are in print. The result is that there is a wide variety of initial movements, especially for uppercase letters. Still, a student only needs to be able to write one font in order to be understood and a passing awareness of variations (with clues from the text) may suffice for reading, as long as they remember that an uppercase cursive Q can look like a 2.

A small upward curve to a middle point begins to form a lowercase I, p, r, j, and a long upward curve (to the top) that comes to a point shapes a t. A lowercase u and w can also begin this way.

A small upward curve that is followed with another curve (rather than a point) leads into most joining strokes, including c. Then that cursive c movement also begins a, d, g, o and q. (You can also describe connectors like the tail of an a that leads on.)

A large upward loop serves l, which consists of two curved lines. A large upward loop consisting of one curved line and one straight one establishes b, h, and k. Speaking, I would say that a cursive lowercase f is a large upward loop with an extra long straight line that “bounces” back to the base line.

In a sense, the “hill” of a lowercase h leads into n and m.

A capital R can help practicing cursive k.

A v and an x have the same initial stroke, and a lowercase r is sort of in between a lowercase I and a v.

The difference between a capital S and capital G is that one swoops up, twirls, and goes to a side point before coming down to finish, while the other swoops up and “eights” down before finishing.

F and T tend to be similar within a style or font.

Especially dissimilar letters are G, I, J, Q/2, S, and Z, although Q/2 is similar to Z, depending on the style in use.

An uppercase I is sort of the oppose of a capital S,

but similar to a capital J.

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

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

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg

Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn

Oo Pp Qq (2q) Rr Ss

Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Cursive Punctuation

l l l n n t t p p

mp mp mp mp mp mp

Cc Cc Cc Cc Cc Cc Cc ccc

qu qu qu qu qu qu

l l l f f f b b b b b b b b b b

b b b m m m m m m m m m

w w y y w w w

R R R k k k

N N N N N N N N N N N N N

z z z z z z

F F F F F F F F F F F

a a a o o o

The quick brown fox jumps
over the lazy dog.

Print

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

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

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

f f f c c c o o o a a a d d

d g g g g q q q C C C O O O

O O O O O O c S S s s s

L L L L L L h h h k k k B B

B T T F F F I I E E E L

L L H H H N N N M M M

K K K P P P R R R t t t r

r r n n n m m m t t t j j j

J J c c e v v v M M V V

N N W W X x X x U U u

u u w y y A A D D Z z