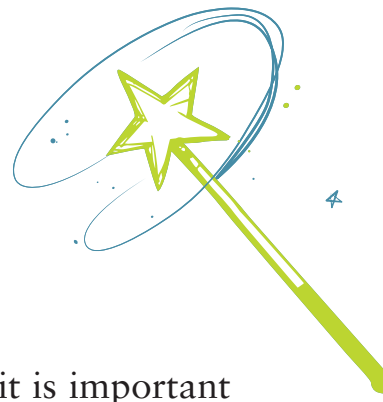


Handwriting Wizards

Cursive



Every child needs and deserves to have legible handwriting because it is important in order to communicate effectively. *Handwriting Wizards* is a program that teaches children to write letters automatically and legibly in cursive.

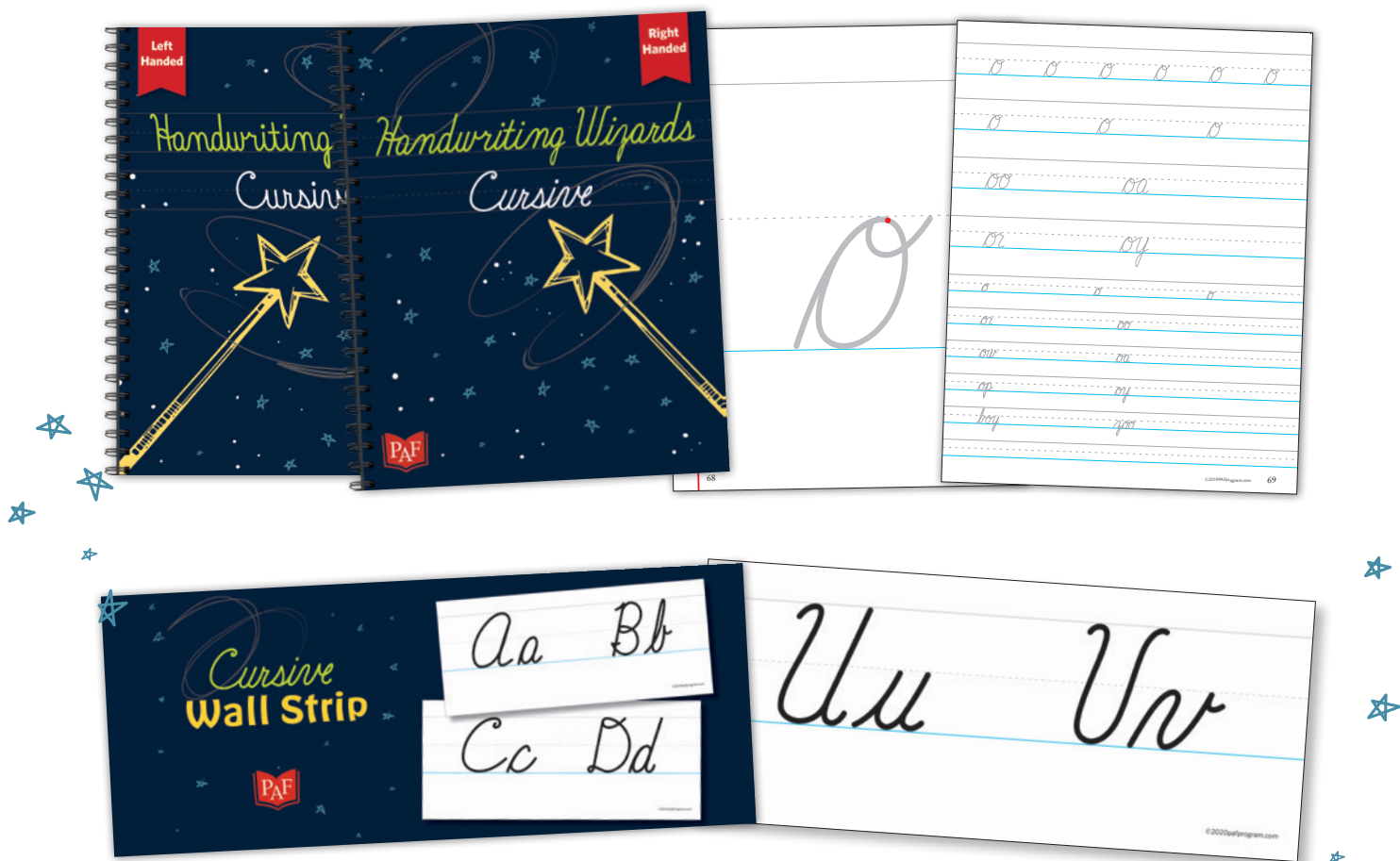
Basic Principles

There are five basic principles of handwriting instruction:

- 1. Handwriting is taught and practiced under the direct supervision of the teacher** who provides immediate feedback and models correct letter formation. Handwriting is never assigned as independent work or homework.
- 2. New letters are always introduced using a large model of the letter.** This helps the children feel the directional changes necessary to form each letter, and feel the subtle differences between some letters.
- 3. The instructional sequence to teach handwriting is trace, copy, and write from memory.** The children trace the letter, copy the letter, and then write the letter from memory, all under the direction of the teacher. On every instructional handwriting page, the last line has been left blank so the children can write words dictated by the teacher.
- 4. Letters are grouped according to motor patterns.** For example, one group of letters is referred to as *curvy letters* because the first stroke curves up to the red dot.
- 5. Language is used to teach and reinforce handwriting** by having the teacher verbalize instructions to form each letter. Children need to be told how to move their hands to produce the letter forms. Often children cannot learn the motor patterns for writing by simply copying letters. The lines have been given names to give children reference points when forming the letters.

Teaching Cursive

Arrange all the desks in your classroom facing forward, and be sure students use proper posture and pencil grip. Have them orient their papers at a forty-five-degree angle from the edge of their desks and parallel to their writing arms. Most right-handed children produce letters slanting toward the right-hand corner of the page;



most left-handed children produce letters slanting toward the left-hand corner. The direction of the slant of the letters is less important than its consistency: always to the right corner or always to the left. To accommodate the needs of both your left- and right-handed students, the Handwriting Wizards Cursive books are available for right- and left-handed students. The books are identical except for the slant of the letters.

The handwriting books begin by teaching the twenty-six lowercase letters. Once the students know all the lowercase letters, they should begin doing all their written work in cursive. The students can print the capital letters until they have learned the motor patterns.

The sequence in the cursive books is not in alphabetical order, but rather is organized into four groups: *Curvy*, *Tall*, *Rocket*, and *Hill Letters*. Each group represents the initial direction the hand moves to begin making the letter. Usually, all the letters within a group are taught together, with a few exceptions.

Lowercase Letter Instruction

The lines have been given names: black line, dotted line, and blue line. By teaching these names and referring to them in verbal instructions, you will help children form letters with proper size and placement. For example, you may instruct the students: *Swing up to the dotted line, pull down past the blue line, turn toward the red, close the loop just below the dotted line, around and down to the blue, close the circle, back out.*

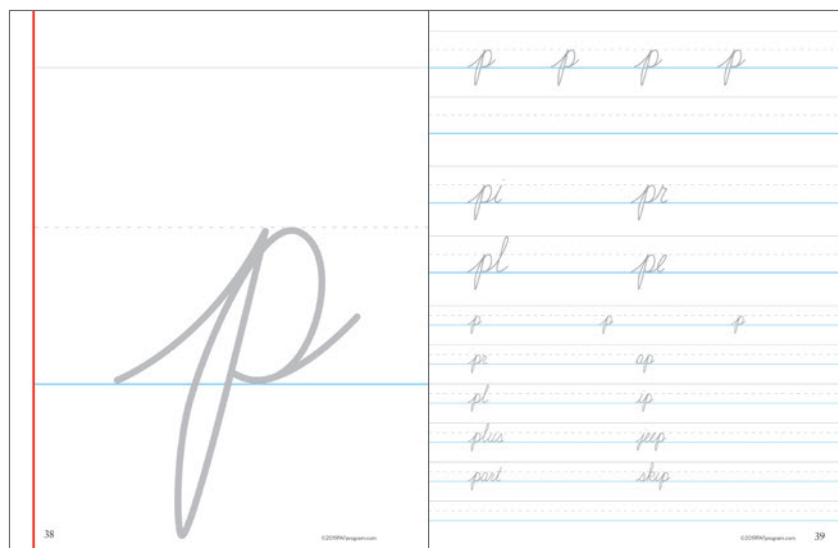


writing lines

To help give verbal instructions on how to form the letters, establish reference points in your classroom. First, have all the desks facing the board. Next, place a strip of red tape down the left side of each child's desk. In classrooms with group tables, give each student a 12-by-18-inch oak tag mat or a manila folder with a vertical red line on the left side. Then when giving verbal instructions, tell the students to move their hands to or away from the red tape, rather than to the left or right.



- 1.** Be sure that your classroom board is marked with the same three writing lines and with a red line on the left. By using the names of the lines and the red line as reference points, **the teacher will model the motor pattern** for each letter.
- 2.** **The students will trace the large model** of the letter in their handwriting books as the teacher provides the verbalizations. Then on the next page, children trace models of the letter that are smaller. Finally, they practice forming the letters on lines that are the same as their writing paper. Just use the verbal instructions when needed. Children do not need to say the verbalizations.
- 3.** **When children are forming their own letters, it is important to provide feedback before they complete the entire line.** Ask the students to write the letter one time to make sure it is formed correctly before they continue.



If any of the students have difficulty with the spacing between words, they can use the index finger of their non-dominant hand (one-finger-space) to help them space words properly. For left-handed students, the teacher will need to model how to place the pencil where their finger is, then lift their finger and continue with their writing.

Finally, it is important to set and keep expectations for neatly written work. Praise the children's good work. The students who are struggling with fine- or visual-motor organization need encouragement, as well as continuous modeling with immediate feedback to help produce better results over time.

Verbalizations for Cursive Letters

Below are suggested verbalizations for the lowercase cursive letters. Your students do not need to memorize these verbalizations, but they may find them useful as a reference.

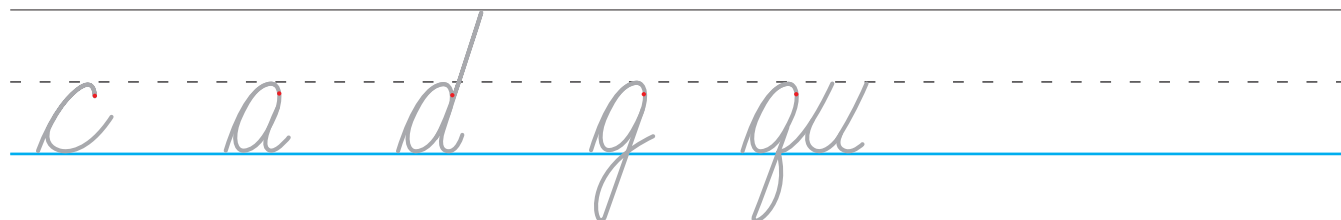
When it comes time to teach the capital letters, use your own verbalizations. Just remember to always emphasize the starting line and directional changes for each letter.

Lowercase Letter Groups

- All lowercase letters begin at the blue line except for letters that follow: *v*, *b*, *w*, or *o*. These letters end slightly below the dotted line and form a bridge to where the next letter will begin.
- Every letter should end with a short upward stroke to connect it to the next letter or as the final stroke.
- When students are writing words in cursive, remind them that they should never pick up their pencils until the end of the word. Then they go back to dot the i's, cross the t's etc.

Curvy Letters

Curvy Letters have a red dot to indicate when to stop and change direction to the red line.



c = curve up to the dot, stop, turn back toward the red line, sit on the blue line

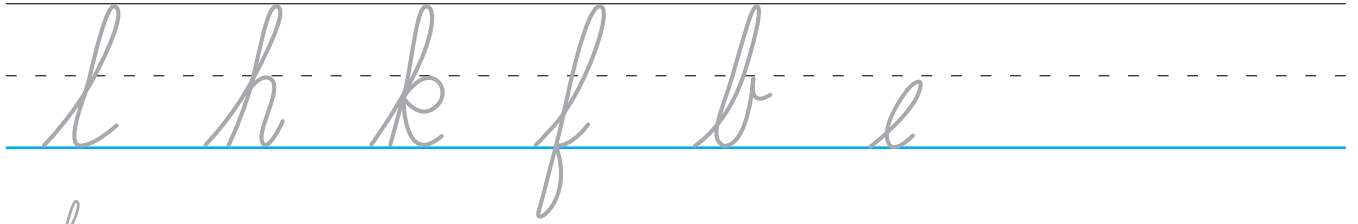
a = curve up to the dot, stop, turn back toward the red line, sit on the blue, close the circle, back down to the blue

d = curve up to the dot, stop, turn back toward the red line, sit on the blue, close the circle, up to the black line, back down to the blue

g = curve up to the dot, stop, turn back toward the red line, sit on the blue, close the circle, back down past the blue, turn toward the red, close the loop and cross at the blue line

qu = curve up to the dot, stop, turn back toward the red line, sit on the blue, close the circle, back down past the blue, turn away from the red and close the loop at the blue line, back out

Tall Letters



l = swing up to the black line, turn toward the red, pull down to the blue

h = swing up to the black line, turn toward the red, pull down to the blue, back up to the dotted line, around and down to the blue

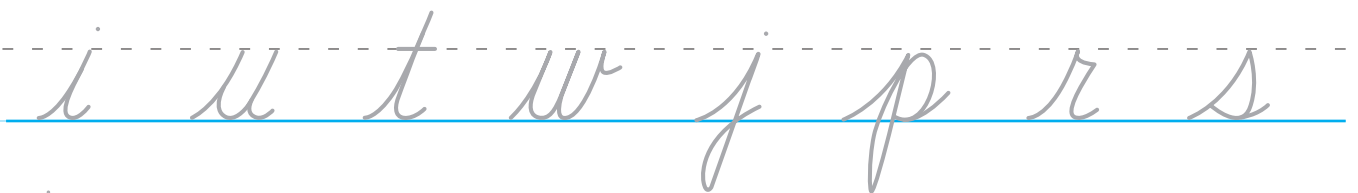
k = swing up to the black line, turn toward the red, pull down to the blue, back up to the dotted line, around, in and out

f = swing up to the black line, turn toward the red, pull down past the blue, turn away from the red and close the loop at the blue line, back out

b = swing up to the black line, turn toward the red, pull down to the blue, turn away from the red and up to the dotted line, bridge

e = (small *l*) swing up to the dotted line, turn toward the red, pull down to the blue

Rocket Letters



i = swing up to the dotted line, back down to the blue, dot

u = swing up to the dotted line, back down to the blue, up to the dotted line, back down to the blue

t = swing up past the dotted line, back down to the blue, cross at the dotted line

w = swing up to the dotted line, back down to the blue, up to the dotted line, back down to the blue, up to the dotted line, bridge

j = swing up to the dotted line, pull down past the blue, turn toward the red, close the loop and cross at the blue line, dot

- p* = swing up to the dotted line, pull down past the blue, turn toward the red, close the loop just below the dotted line, around and down to the blue, close the circle, back out
- r* = swing up to the dotted line, curve down slightly away from the red, pull down to the blue (only hit the dotted line once)
- s* = swing up to the dotted line, pull down and give it a belly, close it up, back out

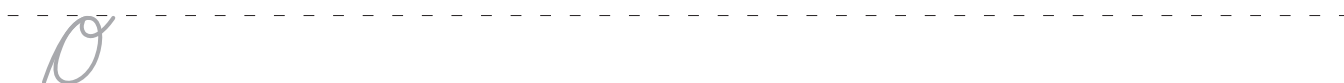
Hill Letters



In order to avoid any confusion, the numerals indicate the number of hills the letters *m* and *n* have.

- m* = swing up and around to the dotted line, down to the blue, back up to the dotted line, around and down to the blue (2 hills)
- m* = swing up and around to the dotted line, down to the blue, back up to the dotted line, around and down to the blue, back up, around and down to the blue (3 hills)
- n* = swing up and around to the dotted line, down to the blue, turn away from the red and up to the dotted line, bridge
- y* = swing up and around to the dotted line, down to the blue, turn away from the red and up to the dotted line, back down past the blue, turn to the red, close the loop and cross at the blue
- x* = swing up and around to the dotted line, down to the blue, lift pencil to dotted line, cross toward the red
- z* = swing up and around to the dotted line, down to the blue, back up, turn away from the red, little hill, pull down past the blue, turn toward the red, close the loop and cross at the blue

Oddball Letter o



- o* = swing up to the dotted line, turn back to the red, close the circle, loop and bridge

Capital Letter Groups

No specific verbalizations are provided for the capital letters, but modeling with similar language as used with lowercase letters is suggested.

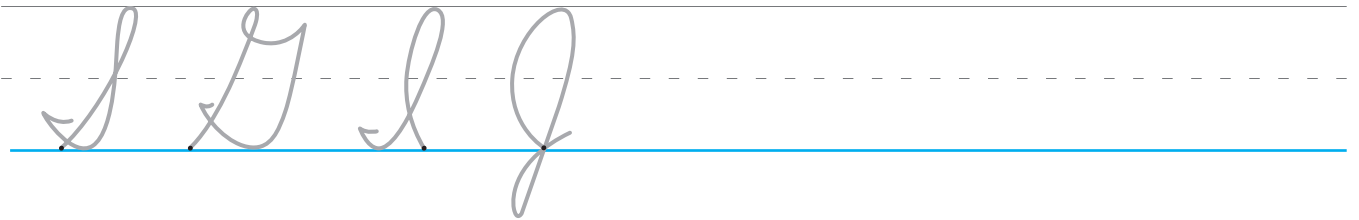
Each capital letter has a black dot to indicate the starting point.

All capitals are connected to the next letter except *D*, *O*, *P*, *U*, *W* and *X*.

Several capitals end like the bottom part of a boat. Demonstrate this association by saying *make a boat*.



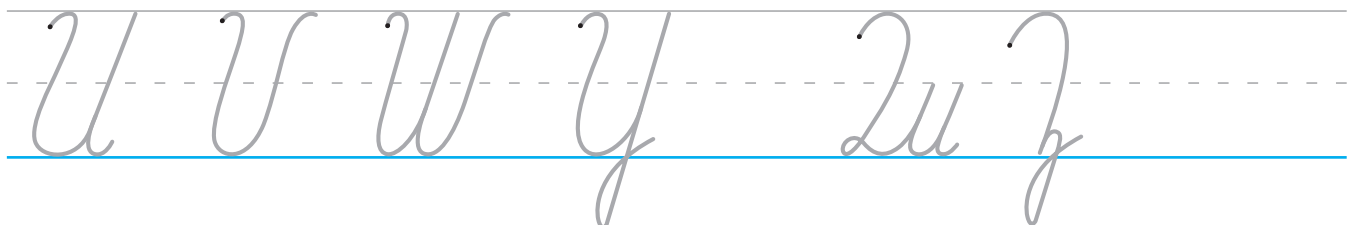
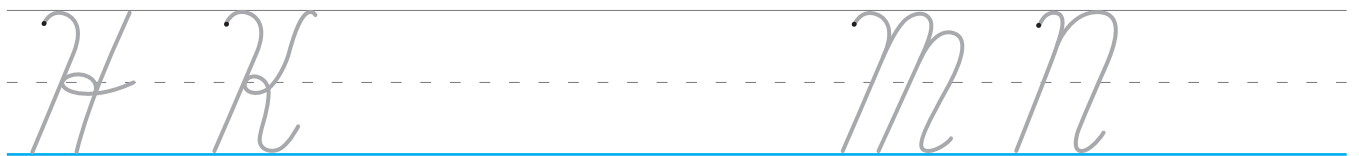
All capitals begin at the top except these:



These four letters have the same motor patterns as their lowercase partners.



The following letters are grouped by similar motor patterns.



Each of the remaining letters has its own motor pattern.

