

Handwriting

There are regular timetabled slots for handwriting to ensure that children build up their handwriting skills every day.

We make the *physical* process of writing – handwriting – enjoyable from the start, so children see themselves as ‘writers’. We use mnemonics – memory pictures – to help children visualise the letter or join before they write it down. Children need to practise handwriting under the guidance of a teacher so they do not develop habits that will be difficult to undo later.

Please don’t ask children to copy letters or words. We need their attention to be focused on their own formation of letters and joins.

Please ensure you allow 5 to 10 minutes for every handwriting session marked on the timetable.

There are three handwriting stages.

Stage 1

These lessons are taught while children read the Red, Green, Purple, Pink and Orange Storybooks. The online ‘checklists’ for each letter are in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

Stage 1a: Children practise correct letter formation.

Stage 1b: Children learn where to place the letters on the writing line.

Stage 2

These lessons are taught while children read the Yellow, Blue and Grey Storybooks. The online ‘checklists’ for each letter are in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

Children learn a mature style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing.

Stage 3

These lessons are also taught while children read the Yellow, Blue and Grey Storybooks. The online ‘checklists’ for each letter are in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

Children learn the two basic joins: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal) and the two variables for each join.

Handwriting position

Teach children that when you use the handwriting signal they automatically go into the perfect handwriting position:

- feet flat on the floor
- bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist from the table
- shoulders down and relaxed
- back leaning forward slightly
- left/right hand holding the page
- left/right hand ready in a tripod grip.

Handwriting Stage 1a: Letter formation

Children learn correct letter formation using the same picture mnemonics they have already learnt in the Speed Sounds Set 1 Lessons.

These letters are now taught in handwriting groups:

- ‘Around’ letters: **c a o d g q**
- ‘Down’ letters: **l t b p k h i j m n r u y**
- ‘Curly’ letters: **e f s**
- ‘Zig-zag’ letters: **v w z x**.

Children write on plain paper.

See the file named ‘Handwriting Stage 1a’ in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

The lesson plan

Practise the letters in the handwriting order. (See ‘Handwriting Stage 1a’ in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*).

Use the following routine for every lesson. (This is an example lesson for the letter g.)

Demonstrate

1. **TOL** as you use your mental checklist to write the letter g.

- ✓ start at her hair bobble on top of her head
- ✓ round face
- ✓ back to bobble
- ✓ very straight hair
- ✓ round curl to finish.

Repeat a few times using **MTYT**.

2. Ask the children to **TTYP** to say the mental checklist.

3. Take feedback.

4. Ask two partners to tell you how to write the letter g.

Repeat a couple more times until the children can say the mental checklist to each other.

Practice

1. Check that the children are still sitting in the perfect handwriting position.
2. Rub out the picture and any letters from the board – the children must not copy.
3. Ask the children to write one letter, slowly and carefully. (Do not ask them to draw the handwriting picture.)
4. Model again how you repeat writing the letter, getting a bit quicker each time.
5. Go round the room praising what you see so others can hear. Don’t sit with one child. For example: *“Nice round chin there! Love the long straight hair. What a great curl.”*

Review

1. Write the letter on the board and make one error, drawing on children's common errors.
2. Ask the children to **TTYP** to find your 'two best bits', for example, you remembered to start at the bobble. Then ask children to **TTYP** to find 'one to fix'.
3. Rewrite the letter perfectly, correcting using children's feedback.
4. Ask children to practise again.

On the next day, choose a new focus letter, and review one or two previously taught letters.

Note: Help children learn to visualise the letter as a picture and not the written checklist. Do not write the list on the board, though you may need a sticky note to help you remember to start with.

Handwriting Stage 1b: Relative size of letters

Once children can form the letters correctly, they learn how to place the letters on the line. Picture mnemonics help children to visualise the size and placement.

- Some small letters are called 'boat letters': **a c e i m n o r s u v w x z**.
- Letters that are written below the line are called 'water letters': **g j p q y**.
- Tall letters are called 'sun letters': **b d h k l t f**.

Children should write on wide-lined paper.

See 'Handwriting Stage 1b' in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

You will need wide-lined paper or books for the children to practise.

Explain that:

- Some letters are the same size as the boat and are called 'boat letters': **a c e i m n o r s u v w x z**.
- Some letters go below the water line and are called 'water letters': **g j p q y**.
- Some letters are as tall as the sun and are called 'sun letters': **b d h k l** (**f** and **t** are just a little bit smaller).

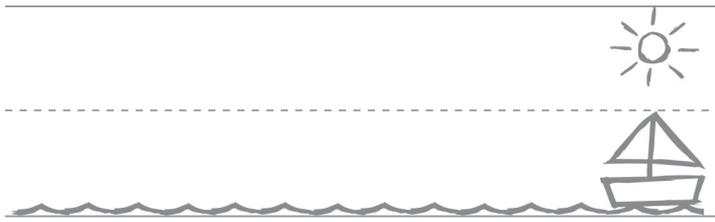
The lesson plan

Use the following routine for every lesson. (This is a sample lesson for the word **and**.)

See 'Handwriting Stage 1b' in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online* for the other words to practise.

Demonstrate

1. Draw the sun, boat and water pictures in the correct position on the line.



- Show children where to start **a** – level with the top of the boat. Recall the Checklist for **a** as you write the letter.
 - Show children where to start **n** – level with the top of the boat. Use the Checklist for **n** as you write the letter.
 - Show children where to start **d** – level with the top of the boat. Use the Checklist for **d** as you write the letter.
2. Ask children to **TTYP**: What size is each letter? (Choose from boat, water or sun.)
 3. Take feedback.

Practice

1. Check that the children are still sitting in the perfect handwriting position.
2. Rub out the word from the board – the children must not copy.
3. Ask the children to write each letter, slowly and carefully.
4. Model again how you repeat writing the word, getting a bit quicker each time.
5. Go round the room praising what you see so others can hear. Don't sit with one child. For example:
"a is sitting on the line – good. You've made n into a boat letter."

Review

1. Write the word on the board and make one error, drawing on children's common errors.
2. Ask the children to **TTYP** to find your 'two best bits'. Then ask them to **TTYP** to find 'one to fix'.
3. Rewrite the word perfectly, correcting using children's feedback.
4. Ask the children to practise again.
5. Now ask them to find 'two best bits' and 'one to fix' in each other's work.

Handwriting Stage 2

Explain to children that they are going to use new characters to help them develop a grown-up style of writing that will lead to joined-up writing. New pictures will help them to visualise the new shapes.

See 'Handwriting Stage 2' in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

Introduce the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.

The six sisters – Annie, Dina, Gabi, Olivia, Carina and Queenie – all look the same. Their mother tells them that they must all have a different haircut so people can tell them apart!

The uncles – Uncle Umberto and Uncle Yaseen – look just like the sisters, except they are bald on the top of their heads.

The family have a dog and a bunny whose faces are very similar too, but they have long ears.

The lesson plan

Practise the letters in the handwriting order. (See 'Handwriting Stage 2' in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.)

Use the following routine for every lesson. (This is an example lesson for the letter **d**.)

Demonstrate

1. **TOL** as you use your mental checklist to write the letter **d**.

- ✓ start at her hair bobble on top of her head
- ✓ all the way over the top of her head
- ✓ curve down her face
- ✓ round chin
- ✓ join the chin by her ear
- ✓ up to the bobble
- ✓ straight tall spiky hair – up and down
- ✓ curve at the line and draw small flick (not curvy)

Repeat a few times using **MTYT**.

2. Ask the children to **TTYP** to say the mental checklist.

3. Take feedback.

4. Ask two partners to tell you how to write the letter **d**.

Repeat a couple more times until the children can say the mental checklist to each other.

Practice

1. Use the handwriting signal to check that the children are still sitting in the perfect handwriting position.
2. Rub out the picture and any letters from the board – the children must not copy.
3. Ask the children to write one letter, slowly and carefully. (Do not ask them to draw the handwriting picture.)
4. Model again how you repeat writing the letter, getting a bit quicker each time.
5. Go round the room praising what you see so others can hear. Don't sit with one child. For example: *"Nice round chin there! Love the long straight hair. What a great curl."*

Review

1. Write the letter on the board and make one error, drawing on children's common errors.
2. Ask the children to **TTYP** to find your 'two best bits', for example, you remembered to start at the bobble. Then ask children to **TTYP** to find 'one to fix'.
3. Rewrite the letter perfectly, correcting using children's feedback.
4. Ask children to practise again.
5. Ask children to find 'two best bits' and 'one to fix' in each other's work.

On the next day, choose a new focus letter, and review one or two previously taught letters.

Handwriting Stage 3

Explain to children that there are two basic joins:

- the arm join (diagonal)
- the washing line join (horizontal).

The arm join has three variations:

- arm to boat 
- arm to sun 
- arm to sister. 

The washing line join has three variations:

- washing line to boat 
- washing line to sun 
- washing line to sister. 

See 'Handwriting Stage 3' in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online*.

The lesson plan

Use the following routine for every lesson. (This is a sample lesson for joining **a** to **i**.)

See 'Handwriting Stage 3' in the Handwriting files in *Read Write Inc. Phonics Online* for the joins to practise.

Demonstrate

1. Demonstrate how to write the letters.



- **TOL** about where to start **a** – level with the top of the boat. Recall the checklist for Annie as you write the letter.
- **TOL** as you write the join – not too spiky, not too round, not too squeezed, not too spaced.
- **TOL** as you write **i**. Recall the checklist for **i**.

2. Ask children to **TTYP**: What size is each letter? (*Boat, sun or water.*) What is good about your join?

3. Take feedback.

Practice

1. Use the handwriting signal to check that the children are still sitting in the perfect handwriting position.
2. Rub out the joined letters from the board – the children must not copy.
3. Ask the children to write each letter and the join, slowly and carefully.
4. Model again how you repeat writing the letters and join, getting a bit quicker each time.
5. Go round the room praising what you see so others can hear. Don't sit with one child. For example: *"I love the spacing of your join and the join is not too spiky or too round."*

Review

1. Write the letters and join on the board and make one error, drawing on children's common errors.
2. Ask the children to **TTYP** to find your 'two best bits'. Then ask them to **TTYP** to find 'one to fix'.
3. Rewrite the letters and join perfectly, correcting using children's feedback.
4. Ask the children to practise again.
5. Now ask them to find 'two best bits' and 'one to fix' in each other's work.