

Diocese of Erie

Handwriting Scope and Sequence

HANDWRITING OBJECTIVES

- Legibility - Handwriting needs to be legible to the writer and intended reader.
- Fluency - Handwriting needs to flow so the writer can record thoughts without struggle.

BEST PRACTICES

- Allot 75 to 100 minutes per week to handwriting instruction in grades 1 through 4.
- Master one type of handwriting before a second style is introduced.
- Focus initially on learning the motor pattern rather than perfect legibility or size.
- Teach similarly formed letters together, and use an instructional sequence that takes into account both ease of formation and frequency in words.
- For children at beginning stages of reading and spelling, integrate handwriting instruction with instruction in letter sounds.
- Aim for speed as well as legibility.

Introduced - I; Review and Reinforced (R); Mastered (M)

Manuscript		K	1	2	3	4-8
	Pencil grip and paper position	I	R	R	M	M
	Letter Formation	I	R	R	M	
Cursive	Letter Formation			I	R	R

HANDWRITING BASICS

Effective handwriting instruction should focus on the three components of handwriting: letter formation (form and slant), size, and spacing. When teaching handwriting, teachers should focus on one component at a time -- first, letter formation; then, size; and then, spacing.

The **form and slant** of specific letters will depend on the style of handwriting being taught. Whatever style is being taught, children first must learn the starting and stopping point of each letter. That can be accomplished by having children trace the letters with their index fingers before they begin writing.

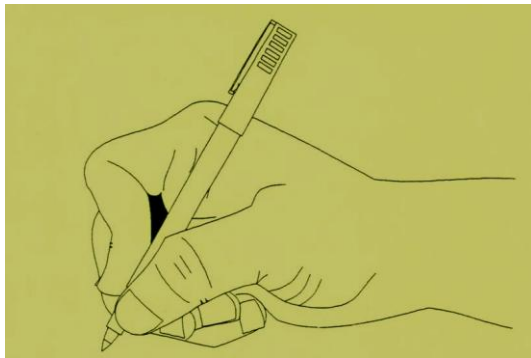
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Posture and paper position also are important to ensure correct letter formation and slant. Students should sit upright with both feet flat on the floor, placing the paper at a 45 degree angle toward the writing-arm side of the body and tilting it to conform to the position of the writing arm's forearm.

Letter **size** -- more accurately, letter proportion -- is fairly consistent across handwriting styles. Similarly-shaped letters should be the same height. For example, small letters (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z) should be half the size of ascenders (b, d, h, k, l, t) and descenders (g, j, p, q, y). Capital letters should be about the same height as ascenders. Proper proportion can be taught using handwriting paper with a dotted middle line.

Proper **spacing** includes both spacing between letters and spacing between words. The space between each letter in a word should be the same. The space between each word also should be consistent. Students can use their pinkies to measure the correct distance between words.

Proper grip of the pen or pencil is another important aspect of good handwriting. Instruct students to hold the pen or pencil close to the writing tip with the thumb and index fingers. The middle finger should be curved under the writing utensil, with the utensil resting lightly on the area between the tip and first knuckle. The fourth finger and pinky should be curved in toward the palm.



CURSIVE

At the beginning of grade 3, students should know how to form cursive letters and be able to write in cursive while referring to an alphabet chart for some assistance.

By the end of October, students are expected to be able to write in cursive without needing to check an alphabet chart. Some notes will need to be written solely in cursive.

By the end of grade 3, students should be able to read their own cursive writing without hesitation and be able to read well-written cursive writing from others.

Some of the important objectives for cursive writing are:

- speed
- correct letter formation
- reading & writing handwriting of others
- lettering

FLUENCY

Grade Level	Type of Handwriting	Benchmark Speed	Scores Needing Extra Attention
2	Print	25 letters per minute (lpm)	20 lpm
3	Print	45 lpm	30 lpm
4	Write	60 lpm	40 lpm
5	Write	70 lpm	50 lpm
6	Cursive or Manuscript-cursive hybrid	80 lpm	60 lpm
7	Cursive or Manuscript-cursive hybrid	90 lpm	70 lpm
8	Cursive or Manuscript-cursive hybrid	100 lpm	80 lpm

Works Cited

Graham, Steve. "Want to Improve Children's Handwriting." *American Educator*, (Winter 2009- 2010): 27. Print.

Star, Linda. "How to Teach Handwriting."
www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev110.shtml. Web. 10 January 2005.

Graham, Steve. "Want to Improve Children's Handwriting." *American Educator*, (Winter 2009-2010): 26-27. Print.