

**Penpals for Handwriting: Foundation 1 (3-5 year olds) Information**

Preparation for handwriting involves developing four key areas:

- Gross motor control: the ability to control the body.
- Fine motor control: the ability to fine-tune the movements of the arm, hand and fingers.
- Visual control: the ability to co-ordinate hand-eye movements.
- Spatial control: the awareness of oneself in space, an awareness of direction (left/right) and plane (horizontal/vertical) and how to transfer that on to paper.

Here are some things you can do at home to develop these key areas:

- Play with a ball: kick, catch, throw, bounce, etc.
- Play with hoops, frisbees and stilts (the upside-down flowerpot kind).
- Encourage play on large climbing frames in parks.
- Encourage football and dance-type activities.
- Play with large-scale building kits.
- Enjoy finger rhymes.
- Encourage your child to make things and model things (cutting, sticking, moulding, cooking, sewing, threading, etc). Using a range of materials (play dough, Plasticine, wood, etc).
- Encourage your child to experiment with a range of tools and equipment (pens, pencils, crayons, felt tips, scissors, hole punches, tweezers, etc).
- Share jigsaw puzzles and board games.
- Provide opportunities for painting, colouring and ‘making marks’ on different sizes of paper.

As part of developing confidence in these key areas the children begin to explore patterns and basic letter shapes. We experiment with the following seven basic patterns, which are excellent preparation for more formal work on letter formation.

1) Straight lines



2) Upward loops



3) Downward loops



4) Circles



5) Zig-zags



6) Eights



7) Spirals



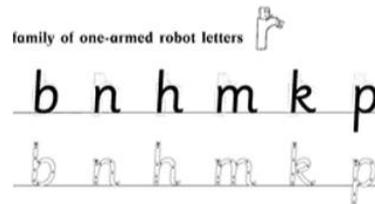
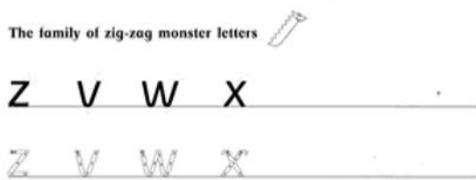
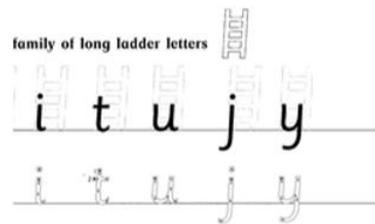
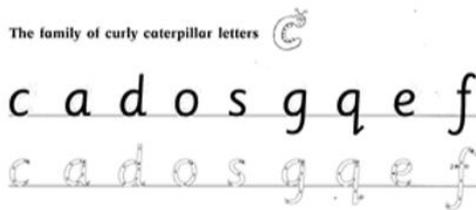
8) Enjoy exploring these patterns at home in as many different ways as possible. Make patterns using paint, water, sand, flour, etc. – don't always rush to find a pencil.

**Penpals for Handwriting: Foundation 2 (3-5 year olds) Information**

Pattern practice and 'play' writing are an important part of handwriting development. Your child will be practising letter formation in a number of exciting ways; in sand, using paint, in the air, on the interactive whiteboard as well as on paper with a pencil. When your child is ready for letter formation, ask these questions:

- Where does the letter start?
- Is it a short letter? (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z)
- Does it have an ascender? (b, d, f, h, k, l, t)
- Does it have a descender? (f, g, j, p, q, y)

The lower case letters are introduced in the following order in four family types:



**Penpals for Handwriting: Year 1 Information**

Letter formation should now be becoming familiar and secure. As a reminder, correct letter formation for lower case letters is as follows:

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

Capital letters are formed as follows:

*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*

During this school year, children will begin to join some pairs of letters within a word.

They will be introduced to two main join types:

- Joins from the baseline, known as diagonal joins.
- Letters which can come before diagonal joins: *a, c, d, e, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u.*

| Diagonal join to short letter    | Diagonal join to an ascender                | Diagonal join to an anticlockwise letter  |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>e.g. am, un,<br/>jam, fun</i> | <i>e.g. at, th, ck,<br/>bat, with, duck</i> | <i>e.g. ag, nd, if,<br/>bag, bend, if</i> |

Joins from the top of the letter or the cross bar, known as horizontal joins.

Letters which can come before horizontal joins: *o, v, w*

| horizontal join to short letter    | horizontal join to an ascender            | horizontal join to an anticlockwise letter    |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>e.g. on, wi,<br/>pond, with</i> | <i>e.g. ot oll wh<br/>dot, doll, when</i> | <i>e.g. og, oc, oo,<br/>frog, clock, look</i> |

Letters which are not joined from at this stage are known as break letters and include:

*b, f, g, j, p, q, r, s, x, y, z*

### Penpals for Handwriting: Year 2 Information

The main aim during this year is for children to begin to develop an easy and clear handwriting style which can become fluent and automatic. This will help to prepare children for writing and spelling tasks during the school year.

Letter formation of capitals and lower case letters should now be familiar and secure.

Children have been introduced to the two basic join types:

- Joins from the baseline, known as diagonal joins, including:
  - Diagonal join, no ascender: *am, un, lp*
  - Diagonal join to an ascender: *at th ck*
  - Diagonal join to an anti-clockwise letter: *ag, nd, if*

Joins from the crossbar, known as horizontal joins, including:

- Horizontal join, no ascender, e.g. *op, wi*
- Horizontal join to an ascender, e.g. *ot, wh*
- Horizontal join to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *oo, wa*

Break letters (i.e. letters which are not joined from at this stage) include: *b, g, j, p, y, x and z*.

New joining letters introduced during this year are:

- Join from q: *quick quiet queen*
- Joins to and from r: *ran her hurry*
- Joins to and from s: *has sent class*
- Joins from f: *far fluffy*

So far, children have only tried joining one pair of letters in a word. This year they will gradually learn to join more letters in a word, using all the different joins: e.g. *calculator, kitten, handwriting*.

To begin with, however, children will focus on joining letters that combine to make a common letter pattern (e.g. *ee* as in *feet*; *oi* as in *foil*; *oa* as in *boat*). Learning to combine letters in this way links handwriting with spelling and helps children to become more confident spellers.

### Penpals for Handwriting: Year 3 Information

The main aims during this year are for children to refine their handwriting and to make sure that the size and proportions of all letters, and the spaces between letters and words, are consistent and even.

Formation of capitals and lower case letters should now be familiar and secure.

Children have been introduced to the two basic join types:

Joins from the baseline, known as diagonal joins, including:

- Diagonal join to a short letter, e.g. *am, un*
- Diagonal joins to an ascender, e.g. *at, th, ck*
- Diagonal joins to an anti-clockwise letter, e.g. *ag, nd, of*

Joins from the cross bar, known as horizontal joins, including:

- Horizontal join to a short letter, e.g. *wi, fr*
- Horizontal join to an ascender, e.g. *out, wg, fl*
- Horizontal join to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *oo, wa, fa*

Break letters (i.e. letters which are not joined from at this stage) include: *g, y, j, x, z*

New joining letters introduced during this year are:

Joins from p and b to a short letter, e.g. *pi, be*

Joins to an ascender e.g. *ph, bb*

Joins to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *po, ba*

By this stage, children should be secure at joining and able to use joined-up writing for most of their work. Opportunities will also be provided for children to practise writing at increased speed so that they can produce longer pieces of writing with greater ease.

There is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns.

### Penpals for Handwriting: Year 4 Information

The main aims during this year are for children to begin to slope their handwriting and to make sure that the size and proportions of all letters, and the spaces between letters and words, are consistent and even. Attention is also given to keeping ascenders and descenders parallel.

Formation of capitals and lower case letters should now be familiar and secure.

Children have been introduced to the two basic join types:

Joins from the baseline, known as diagonal joins, including:

- Diagonal join to a short letter, e.g. *mm, nn*
- Diagonal join to an ascender, e.g. *tt, ll*
- Diagonal join to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *ic, ss*

Joins from the cross bar, known as horizontal joins, including:

- Horizontal join to a short letter, e.g. *ou, on*
- Horizontal join to an ascender, e.g. *ot, wh, fl*
- Horizontal join to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *oo, wa, fa*

Break letters (i.e. letters which are not joined from at this stage) include *g, j* and *y*. Letters which are never joined to or from are *x* and *z*.

By this stage, children should be secure at joining and able to use joined up writing for most of their word. Children will be beginning to practise writing in ink.

Opportunities will also be provided for children to practise writing at increased speed so that they can produce longer pieces of writing with greater ease.

There is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns.

Children will be introduced to the print alphabet for purposes such as captions, headings, labels and posters.

### Penpals for Handwriting: Years 5 and 6 Information

Letter formation of capitals and lower case letters should now be familiar and secure. Children have been introduced to the two basic join types:

Joins from the baseline, known as diagonal joins, including:

- Diagonal join to a short letter, e.g. *mm, nn*
- Diagonal join to an ascender, e.g. *th, ll*
- Diagonal join to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *ic, ss*

Joins from the crossbar, known as horizontal joins, including:

- Horizontal join to a short letter, e.g. *ou, on*
- Horizontal join to an ascender, e.g. *ot, wh, fl*
- Horizontal join to an anticlockwise letter, e.g. *oo, wa, fa*

By this stage, children should be secure at joining and able to use joined up writing for most of their work. Children will be experimenting with sloping their writing and using different joins for a more mature and comfortable style and will be writing mostly in ink.

At the end of the primary phase, handwriting will be assessed in the context of general writing. It is therefore important that in Years 5 and 6 children become confident with writing appropriately in different situations.

The Penpals handwriting materials let children develop speed and fluency in writing. They also allow them to assess and improve their own handwriting.

There are also opportunities to practise handwriting for different purposes in projects. These include:

- Note-making – quick writing.
- Fast and fluent writing – neat and legible to all readers
- Best writing – writing for presentations.

The projects allow for the use of print letters (e.g. for labelling) and capital letters (e.g. for posters). There are both fiction and non-fiction projects.