

Cursive Writing

Teacher manual

*From Beginning Drills
To Expert Skills*



**Learning and Perfecting Cursive Writing
for All Ages**



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CURSIVE WRITING
From Beginning Drills to Expert Skills™

by

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Dear parents and Teachers,

Welcome to “Cursive Writing – From Beginning Drills to Expert Skills.” This manual is a guide for helping students of all ages learn or improve their cursive writing. An accompanying workbook for each student is also available.

As most of us are aware, legible penmanship has almost become a thing of the past. Now that many public schools are no longer teaching this skill, and replacing it with computer keyboards, it seems that penmanship may be eliminated from our culture altogether.

The ability to write must not be abolished! In fact, research is now finding that writing is the key to proper brain function. Our culture depends on this skill being maintained. You will find articles that seem to prove this fact in the Appendix of this manual.

USING THIS MANUAL

1. Before you begin the teaching of cursive writing to the class, review the important information on “Preparing Students to Write.” Remind the students each day of how to be properly prepared to write, until it becomes second nature.
2. Simple drills are presented in the student workbooks. Previous classroom instruction may have skipped these simple drills. Even students who already know cursive would do well to practice these because repetition of these strokes actually enhances thinking and organizational skills. Permission is given for the practice pages to be copied for more practice.
3. Writing the letters in cursive is the next step. Each letter should be practiced until it becomes easy for the student to write. Parents and teachers will want to ensure that each letter is perfected before moving on to the next. Lower case letters are taught first, then Upper case.
4. Connecting the letters into words will flow naturally as the student progresses. The parent or teacher may wish to write a short proverb on the board at the beginning of class each day for the students to copy in a notebook. (The student could call this notebook “My Book of Proverbs.”) See the internet under “famous quotes” or Google quotes by the Founding Fathers, or find short scriptures to write on the board.
5. Using cursive writing for service is the main goal. Writing proper sentences in beautiful handwriting will build great confidence in the student, as he or she uses this new skill and applies it. Students can write short poems or axioms on a page for service projects such as cards, posters, signs, covers for binders, etc. Written school work will also be greatly improved.

There are many other opportunities for service that will open up, once students have mastered these basic skills of cursive writing. Students may wish to move on to using calligraphy in their service projects. They can make and illustrate beautiful cards, even selling their original work by commissioning it to a needed market. Encourage them to use their creative skills in every way possible to contribute positively to their families and communities.

ADVANTAGES OF USING CURSIVE WRITING

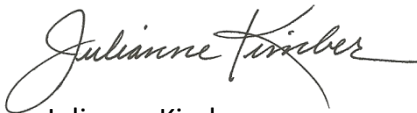
Some students may be resistant to writing in cursive. You may wish to share the following:

1. Cursive writing enhances the workings of both hemispheres of the brain, and the result is greater retention and learning ability.
2. Cursive writing teaches self-discipline and encourages excellent work in all areas of life. When a person is sloppy in their writing, he or she is often sloppy in other habits as well, such as dress, grooming and behavior.
3. If one cannot WRITE in cursive, one cannot READ cursive. Many personal letters, ancient documents and journals are written in cursive, and would be lost if no one knew how to read them. (And how else can you find out what is on Mom's secret Christmas list!)
4. Writing in cursive is easier than print and takes less time because it flows.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this manual, along with the student workbook, will begin a new era in our culture by teaching our children – who will one day be our leaders – to be the best servants of God on earth as they grow to adulthood. The discipline of this important part of their education will bring out their leadership abilities as they gain confidence in who they really are.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julianne Kimber". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Julianne Kimber

Author

Preparing Students for Writing

Most of the following information is common knowledge, but might be a good review for preparation and observation:

1. Make sure there is good lighting.
2. Students should have desks or tables at the right height so that they will be comfortable while writing.
3. The lined paper should be placed at an angle so that the lower right corner of the paper points just past the right elbow, almost parallel to the forearm.* The left hand should rest lightly at the top of the paper.
4. The student's posture should be fairly erect, or at least he/she should not be slouching in the chair. Feet should be flat on the floor. (Proper posture might seem unnatural, but it will cause the student to feel like performing more excellent work.)
5. A sharpened pencil with a good eraser can be used at first. Later on, the use of a fountain pen or ink pen tends to decrease mistakes. Colored ink pens or gel pens make the learning exercises more fun and appealing.
6. The student should hold the writing utensil properly, avoiding a cross-over of the thumb. The pen or pencil should never be placed between the second and third fingers. (Many supply stores sell soft finger-guides for pencils that can help with the correct finger position.) Students should be encouraged to hold their instrument lightly while they write, about one inch above the point for best control.

You may wish to gather and keep the students' practice sheets in a folder or file to observe progress in cursive writing.

** For left-handed students, the paper should face the opposite direction from right-handed students, with the right hand resting lightly at the top of the paper.*

Cursive Writing Readiness for Younger Children

In general, children are ready to learn cursive writing at about the age of eight, although some children may be able to make the change from print to cursive earlier. The children may have already had enough experience with manuscript writing to have acquired skill and practice in its use. However, teaching cursive right from the beginning (rather than manuscript) will be a great advantage in all their learning. Some are able to write excellent cursive at age five.

A student's readiness can be based on the following:

1. A knowledge of and recognition of all the letters of the alphabet.
2. Adequate coordination of the muscles of the arm, hand, and fingers.
3. A desire to learn cursive writing.
4. The ability to read the various simple sentences in their workbooks.

Teaching the differences in Manuscript and Cursive

When students have first learned manuscript (print), the differences between print and cursive should be explained to make the transition easier. These differences could be demonstrated on the board so they can begin to make that transition in their minds. Explain these differences:

PRINTING

- a. Letters are made separately.
- b. The pencil is lifted after each stroke.
- c. Writing is vertical.
- d. Letters resemble the printed page, and so are easy to read.
- e. Writing paper is placed straight on the desk or table.

EXAMPLE:

little

CURSIVE

- a. Letters are joined together.
- b. The pencil or pen is not lifted until the end of a word.
- c. Writing is normally slanted to the right.
- d. Letters are different than the printed letters.
- e. Upper case letters are often quite different from the same lower case letters.
- f. Writing paper is slanted.

EXAMPLE:

little

Legibility Check

The chart below may be used by parents, teachers or deans to assess the progress of student handwriting skills. (It is permissible to make as many copies as needed.) As shown, handwriting progress should be checked monthly. The chart can be marked with the appropriate letter grade as shown:

- E** – Excellent progress
- V** – Very Good progress
- S** – Satisfactory progress
- N** – No progress

Here are five additional important items to look for when checking student penmanship:

1. Proper letter formation (correct height and width)
2. Uniform slant
3. Uniform spacing within words
4. Uniform spacing between words
5. Proper alignment, with all the letters just resting on the base line.

HANDWRITING RECORD FOR YEAR _____

STUDENT NAME _____ DATE BEGUN _____

Checklist	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
Legibility									
Letter Formation (Height & Width)									
Consistent Slant									
Spacing Within Words									
Spacing Between Words									
Alignment (Resting on Base Line)									
Line Quality (When Using Ink)									
Margins and Arrangement									
Neatness									
Rhythm (Rate of Writing)									

PRINCIPLE #1

Writing in Cursive Organizes and Enhances the Brain

Explain to the class that the word “cursive” refers to writing words in a flowing motion. Writing in cursive takes less time and looks nicer when it is done correctly. It also organizes and enhances the brain—to think better, learn better. You may wish to share some of the information included in this packet about the advantages of writing in cursive.

Point out that – although everyone will have a different style -- writing in cursive is a beautiful way to express words. In order for those beautiful expressions to be understood, they must be legible! People must be able to read them!

Print a word such as “love” or “learn” on the board. Then show how the word is written in cursive. Point out how all the letters are similar to the printed version, but the letters are connected together. Slowly write “love” again to demonstrate the artistic flow of cursive writing, and how the writing utensil (chalk or marker) never lifts off the surface as you write.

Activity: Let the students choose an appropriate word and practice writing it on their workbook page in cursive. Tell them that they will be learning the various strokes so they can all learn how to write anything they choose beautifully and legibly -- with the principles of cursive writing.

Gather their papers and use them to compare their writing later on.

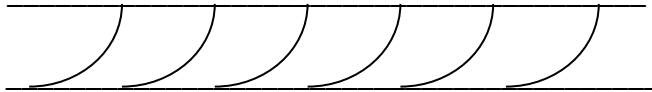


Continue to the next lesson and begin teaching the various strokes for learning or practicing cursive writing.

PRINCIPLE #2

Practicing Designs Prepares us for Cursive Writing

DESIGN #1 – Under-hand Swoops

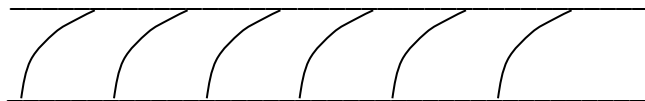


Demonstrate a row of under-hand swoops as shown. Instruct the students to copy the design. Tell them to begin on the line at the bottom, and lightly "swoop" up to the top line.

To help visualize the concept, they can pretend that the pencil lead is a tiny person throwing a ball, under-hand. The line you make with the pencil is where the ball is going to go. The top line is the net, and the "ball" must hit it "right on." It can't go "over the net" or "under the net." To score a point, the pencil line must touch the top line as well as the bottom line.

Have the students practice a line of under-hand swoops. Let them count how many "points" they scored. Then allow time for the students to do the under-hand swoops in their workbooks.

DESIGN #2 – Over-hand Toss



Demonstrate a row of over-hand toss as shown. Instruct the students to copy the design. Again, the pencil must begin on the bottom line and reach up to the top line, like "tossing" a ball. Continue the visualization by explaining that the tiny person on the pencil lead is now going to toss the ball "over-hand." It may be harder to get the "ball" right on the net (or to get the pencil line to stop right at the top line), so each score is worth two points.

Remind the students that the pencil line must touch the bottom line as well as the top line. Have them practice a line of over-hand swoops, and then count how many "two-point scores" they made. Allow time for the students to do the over-hand slings in their workbooks.