RHYTHM IN HANDWRITING

BY

IRENE MAGUINNESS

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Position for cursive writing (at a slightly sloping desk).

RHYTHM IN HANDWRITING

By

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British Painting

CAMBRIDGE

W. HEFFER & SONS LTD

1928

MESTON TRAINING COLLEGE
9947
421
MADRAS-14

PRINTED IN ENGLAND

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Preface

THE beliefs expressed in the following pages have been arrived at during the practice of teaching. The method advocated has been considered to be justified by the results obtained.

The writer recognises the value of a broad nib or of a copy book as a corrective for an adult's poor writing, but wishes to demonstrate that any method suitable for such correction is not necessarily one desirable for a child's early efforts to learn to write.

The publication of this little book is prompted by a wish to let every child have the chance to learn a swift serviceable style of writing. It is offered to all those who are interested in writing as a means of pleasure, specially to those who regret their own incapacity to write well and easily, and who feel that children should have the chance they themselves missed.

Grateful thanks are offered to those who gave permission for the photographs to be taken and reproduced, also to those who so kindly have helped in the reading of proofs.

I. M.

I. Introduction

I. Introduction

1. The clue to a suitable style for beginners

Few educationists would deny that study of the growth of nations is suggestive of methods for the school. It is admitted that primitive man had something in common with the modern child.

Particularly in teaching handwork and crafts are primitive ways and tools resorted to in the schoolroom.

When one form of hand work, writing, came to be noticed after a period of neglect, any style or tool which was advertised as "the good old way" or "the tool that was chiefly concerned in the evolution of the Roman alphabet," was regarded as an educational reform founded on a sound basis.

Unfortunately neither the way nor the tool was challenged, and both were adopted in all good faith as if they were indeed the way and the tool responsible for the Roman alphabet.

Certain salient facts in the history of writing were seldom mentioned, or if mentioned, were not dwelt upon, when some variant of an historic style of writing was offered, or recommended, as suitable for children to copy.

During the last hundred years, writing, as one of the three "R"s, has certainly played something of the part of Cinderella.

Cinderella had her time of careful upbringing, then she suffered under the stepmother's régime

because of attention given to the two sisters, then the fairy godmother gave her the glass slippers and sent her to the ball. Cinderella met the Prince, but some time elapsed before there was a happy ending.

About a century ago no care was too great to lavish on "penmanship." Then came a period of neglect: writing was banished to the meanest place in the curriculum, sometimes flung out entirely to take care of itself, in order to make way for other subjects. Then came the fairy godmother, with the offer of historic examples, and some time has elapsed, and there has not yet been a happy ending.

Cinderella lost her slipper and the fact is the right historic style for beginners has been overlooked. Some have thought to find it in the time of the Renaissance, others in the time of the Reformation, whereas we ought to go back two thousand years to search for our model.

2. Brief review of some historic styles

In Greek manuscripts capital letters, square in character, were used: those were gradually modified to a partly curved style, called uncials. Both these styles of alphabet were upright. Early manuscripts were written without distinct difference between thick and thin strokes.

The cursive hand arose from writing capital or uncial letters rapidly for everyday purposes, such as accounts and correspondence. As the cursive hand developed it became more unlike the uncials and was

the origin of a new formal bookhand. Letters were linked and were upright in character. This literary hand took the place of uncials, and was the origin of the Greek hand in present use.

In Latin manuscripts also, capital letters were first square in character as in inscriptions. These letters were modified into uncials, from which the cursive hand originated. Some of the forms of letters in the cursive hand were introduced amongst uncials, and the result was a style called half-uncial. It was from this form of Roman alphabet that the Irish style was developed and from that the Anglo-Celtic style had its origin. From the Roman cursive hand grew the minuscule, which was the foundation of the "lower case" type in modern print, and which was the foundation for the finest types employed by early printers.

Throughout the history of writing the periods of recognised excellence are those of round upright characters, the sloping compressed styles belong to periods of decadence, or to periods approaching decadence. It is interesting to note that periods distinguished for beautiful script are usually periods of great achievement in national history.

Though distinct differences between thick and thin strokes were at times used in a hand of distinction, some of the most beautiful writing has been fine and delicate.

The use of decided thick strokes is apt to degenerate into a clumsy hand, and such a hand rapidly written soon becomes almost undecipherable, as in black letter styles of different nationalities.

When printing was invented some of the most beautiful types were fine and delicate, and again the best styles were round and upright.

In following the evolution of any practice it is necessary to distinguish between a true development and a premeditated alteration. Matter and method should be scrutinised to discover at what points the practice improves and at what points it deteriorates.

The gradual development of curved strokes from a series of straight strokes was a natural one, arising from the use of the pen; the adoption of circular forms in place of angular ones is a good simplification of movements necessary. It is a true development, not a premeditated alteration.

The compressing of letters for the sake of economy is otherwise, and is not therefore to be recommended as a good historic example in the evolution of writing. The cursive hand, arising out of writing uncials rapidly, was a natural development and is, therefore, a safe guide in learning to write. Further, the use of a fine pen in cursive writing is a safe guide to follow.

This last point is emphasised when it is noted that Greeks and Romans used a pointed "stylus" with which to write on wax tablets, and Greek children learnt to write with style on wax. Another significant fact is that our word "write" means literally to scratch or score. The implication is that the true nature of writing is something finely done.

From this brief consideration of facts in the history of writing it will be more readily seen that the

suggested course for children that follows, has a close parallel in the true evolution of writing, apart from passing fashions and periods of decadence.

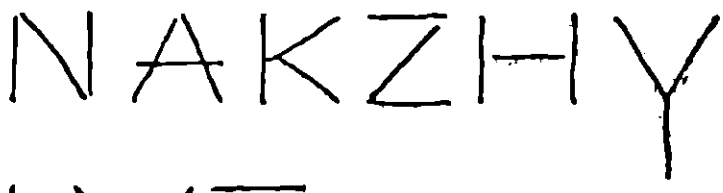
3. Course suggested for children.

Primitive man scratched his picture-writing on bones, but before he did this he had learnt some muscular control in ordinary occupations.

Let the child learn some muscular control with similar occupations, namely, handwork, dances and games. Next let the movements be more definitely ordered, as in freely made brush-drawn patterns on a large scale, composed of the elements of the Roman capitals

[The O should be practised clock-wise, and anti-clockwise.]

Given a set of sticks of equal lengths with which to make patterns, the probability is that the majority of children will, after a short time, lay a pattern of

3 sticks to form 

2 sticks to make 

4 sticks to make 

amongst their other trials of the possibilities.

Next a set of sticks of different lengths can be tried for

AFKELI

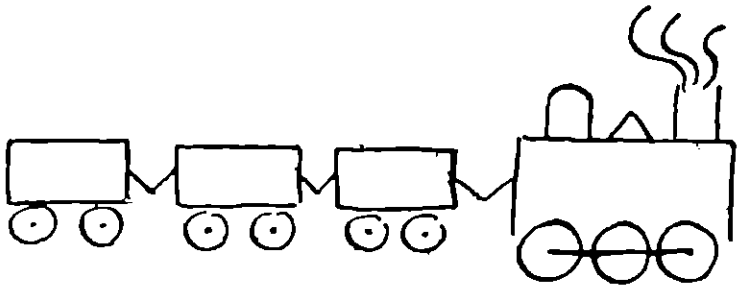
Patterns can be laid in curves with necklaces of beads, melon seeds, etc., for

OCGSJQUDBPR

Drawings can be made of these and of similar patterns.

Drawings of common objects which introduce straight lines and circles in different proportions can also be used as a preparation for making the letters. If the work is sufficiently large and done with a free arm, a child will find little difficulty in producing straight lines.

A drawing of a worm, a rope or a streak of steam can be the foundation of the curves ∼, a railway signal can be ⊢ or ⊢, a sign post ⊤ A railway train, with coupling bars relaxed, introduces all the lines needful for the formation of capital letters, and can be made to include even a full stop!



The arm control gained in making these large-sized pictures in the symbolic manner, which satisfies children, is a natural preparation, as was the picture

writing of Egyptian people, for characters made in Roman "style."

The inference is obvious. The natural tool for the child's first attempt at writing, that is at "scratching" or "scoring" letters, is something in the nature of a stylus.

First the child learns to recognise the essential form of the Roman capitals as seen on trams and buses in the indication of destination, on railway engines and nameboards of stations, in large advertisements and in motor car numbers.

With finger in sand, with pointed stick (such as a wooden skewer) in wet sand or clay, in plasticine or wax the child should learn to "inscribe" the skeleton form of the Roman capitals. This form of letter should suffice for the child's signature and the slight amount of written work done before he can read. When he can do this kind of inscription easily he can learn to form the same kind of letter with brush or chalk on paper or washable board at an upright desk or on a wall.

Directly from the Roman capitals can a simple running hand be learnt. Children are quite capable of seeing how the running letter grows from the capital. Signatures of many artists in pen and ink, who use Roman capitals, clearly show that those letters, written frequently and rapidly, easily turn into an ordinary cursive form.

From the beginning the child should learn to use gently all implements employed for paper work. This is one reason why a brush is such a valuable tool for the initial stages both in preliminary

practice of arm movements in pattern, and in the practice of writing in capital letters.

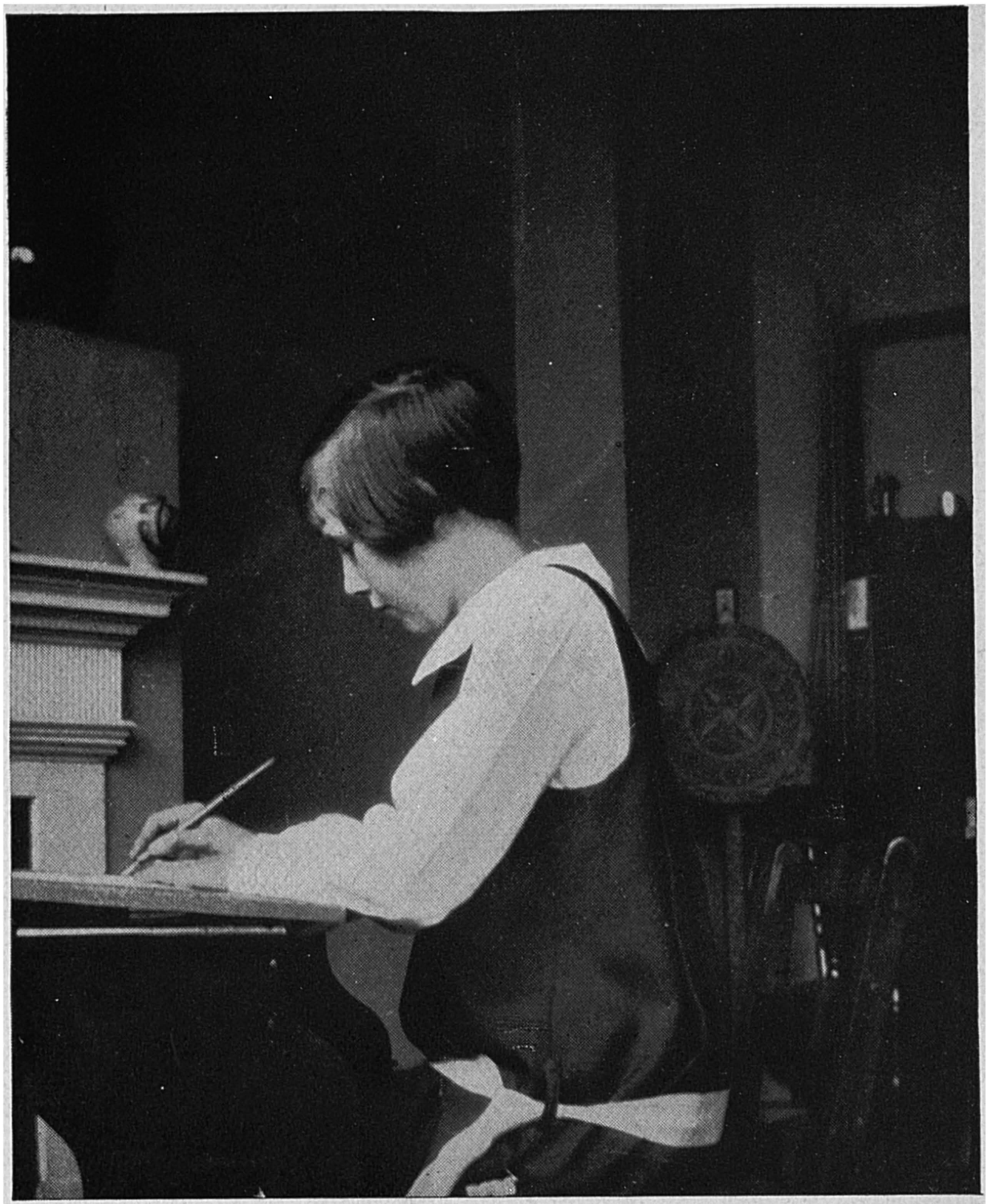
When the need is felt for smaller work than is done on wall or upright desk, no better tool can be used for capital letters on paper at an ordinary school desk than the tip of the brush.

When the form of cursive letters is familiar to the children, probably at the age of about 6 or 7, this running writing can be practised in pen and ink at an ordinary desk. Throughout the school career linked letters should form the normal hand for all ordinary written work.

When the child can write these characters regularly he should learn gradually to increase the speed without changing the form. When he is able to write the normal form rapidly, without deterioration of style, he should be permitted to allow his writing to develope on the lines which seem to suit him best, provided that he commits no serious errors of taste and does not let his writing become illegible.

By choosing letters composed of upright straight strokes and circular curves for the normal hand of the beginner, we leave him scope to deviate somewhat from the normal, without a risk of his hand becoming abnormal. If the normal hand for beginners is a "stylist" one there is little scope for personal development.

Children taught the upright round hand have much more chance to develope individuality without loss of beauty and legibility than have children who are taught a hand which is an individual one to begin with.



II.

Relative position of the pen to the paper for cursive writing (on a slightly sloping desk).

Those who have not attempted to teach young children to use pen and ink with the first use of paper are sometimes prejudiced against the trial of its possibilities.

If the pen is regarded as a tool and its proper handling is analysed and explained and a little drill instituted, there need be no difficulty at all, if children have not been allowed to acquire bad habits.

Ink wells should be shallow for young children, and not have a greater depth of ink than about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, so that there is no risk of ink becoming smeared on the holder as it is used in the ink well. Whenever the pen is not in use, between exercises, it should be put down so that the nib is over the ink well in a desk, or a proper tray for the pen should be provided on a table. A pen wiper should be a part of equipment for each child in a writing lesson, just as a paint rag is in a brush work lesson. Throughout the first stages of this course the pen nib used should be moderately fine.

At the stage when the child is permitted to let his writing develop in his own way, a rather broader nib such as a "J" should be permitted. Some children will be ready for this at about 12 years or younger, others not until 13 or 14.

Not until the child is really fluent with the first nib should decorative writing with a "manuscript" nib be attempted. Unless the writing teacher is also a craftsman it is a mistake for broad nib work to be done in the writing lesson. It is wise to reserve broad nib writing until it can take its proper place amongst crafts taught in the art lessons.

Before this is done, writing lessons can be varied by the use of capital letters for certain exercises, and by the use of the letters in the running hand as unlinked ones for such purposes as maps and diagrams. This use of the running letters unlinked prepares the way for the use of print form small letters, from which various book hands can be developed in due course.

II. Movement in Writing

1. A method of teaching a fluent hand
2. Points to be noticed in styles offered for emulation
3. Contrast between work of copyist and "author"

II. Movement in Writing

I. A METHOD OF TEACHING A FLUENT HAND

"It still remains for somebody to analyse in the same way the movements involved in writing and to demonstrate which movements make for efficiency and which movements impede it.

These words of Dr. Ballard in the chapter on "Script Writing" in his book *The Changing School*, refer to analysis by the cinematograph, and such an analysis would indeed be helpful: but without the aid of the cinematograph the movements involved in writing may be analysed in a way which should be useful in determining a suitable method of teaching handwriting.

At the outset, before any analysis is begun, it would be well to consider what is meant by "efficiency" in writing. Of what is the writer to be capable?

Handwriting may be used in two ways: by an author as a means of expressing verbal thought; by a transcriber as a means of making a more or less permanent record of an existing composition.

If we use the word "author" in the liberal sense, "a person who originates what he is writing," we may say that the English handwriting of to-day in need of attention is the free writing of "authors."

The transcriber's use of writing is vocational. This use can be divided into two main classes: that of

the clerk, the professional penman who copies matter in a formal running hand; and that of the scribe, the professional craftsman who transcribes in a book hand.

The book hand has been ousted by the printing press, the formal running hand has been ousted by the typewriter.

Handwriting is now the concern of the man who uses a pen for his own personal needs. The style of his writing should be chosen for its fitness for this purpose. Neither the book hand nor the formal hand are suited to his need: an informal fluent hand will serve him best.

The urgent question is, how can a fluent hand be acquired?

One answer to this question is: treat writing not as a craft, but as a game of skill, teach children to write as you would teach them to play. Let them learn the essential movements involved and the necessary combinations of these movements, so that the movements are made by the feel of them and not by the look of them, until they can be made easily when the writer is blindfold.

To learn the essential movements with the whole body loose and limber, before chalk touches blackboard or pen finds paper, is an encouragement to a truly fluent handwriting.

The light hold of the pen should be as carefully taught as is the grasp of a putter, this is a most important matter in cultivating adroitness.

As in so many games the "follow through" of a stroke is the main secret of success, so in hand

writing the linking of letters in a word is a great help to maintaining speed with control.

There should be no check in the stroke of the club or bat, its rhythmic movement should be complete. There should be no check in the flow of the pen, each word should be complete.

The rhythm is a changing one, but rhythm there must be—i.e. ordered movement—a cut may follow a drive, a short word follow a long word, the hand must be nimble to follow the brain's bidding, there must be no hesitation before, no halting during the stroke; therefore, in teaching young children to write, be sure that all words to be written are ones of which the spelling is known.

When the child has adopted a favourable" stance," that is, position suitable for writing, and has had practice in making free easy movements, he can learn the essential shapes of the letters and of combinations of letters in short words, and he can realise that good, comfortable movements leave a pleasant trace in sand, on board or on paper.

In a game there is a right or a wrong place for contact between bat and ball, which it is well for the beginner to learn from the start. In writing there is a right or a wrong place of contact between pen and paper, which it is preferable for the beginner to learn from the start by writing with a pen[1] and not with a pencil. Writers who use a pencil do not learn to keep the correct grasp of the penholder as a constant position. Writers who use a pen from

[1] To write with a pen encourages clear thought—to use a pencil and rubber encourages inaccurate thought and "touching up."

the beginning are warned by the pen if the position is altered. It seems trite to say that bad habits are difficult to get rid of: the bad habits fostered by the use of pencils for beginners are amongst the worst that have to be corrected before a good hand can be acquired.

When the essential forms of letters and combinations of letters are familiar to the child, through his having learnt to leave a trace on paper or black board or clay slab, of the essential movements and *not* through his having learnt to copy the *look* of letters in a copy book, the next step in his practice is to learn to write words in combination, and after that to write lines of words.

For all this it is better to use unlined paper so that the child learns to *feel* straightness across the sheet, rather than to see it.

The next exercise is to increase the speed at which the movements are made, bearing in mind that the line of writing is one linked movement *across* the sheet, even though the link between the words is not visible. This manipulative skill in "phrasing" can be learnt by the child in writing, and should be learnt.

While speed is being learnt the most useful form that the writing lesson can take is transcription from a printed book. The mental exercise of turning print into running hand is educational in itself. The child can exercise some choice in what he writes, there is endless variety possible in prose and poetry. In copy books the child has no choice in the subject matter. In transcription, as soon as

the child can write easily he can enjoy what he reads as he writes, and his wish to read further may encourage him to increase his speed. This occupation of the mind while writing is one of the best ways of helping the child to compose while he writes.

Another advantage of transcription with a running method of writing is that the child is learning to spell a much larger vocabulary than is possible with copy books. To write the running hand he must observe and memorise the whole word first, and then the actual writing stamps correct spelling on his mind.[1]

All devices for making the writing lesson interesting and varied should be used. Any event of moment can be taken as the subject of a few sentences in a junior lesson, later, paragraphs can be chosen from literature to illustrate character study, description of scenery, or humour. The early method of making movements to music can be used at a later stage. If a singing lesson in another class can be heard during the writing lesson, the time for the writing speed can be taken from the song. A child who writes at an average speed can say aloud each word as he writes it, after the class have selected the passage which all are to write simultaneously. Many ways can be found to keep the class alert and interested in gaining speed.

[1] Some authorities claim that spelling is more accurate in writing print form characters. That may be so in the early stages when words are copied slowly letter by letter, but at the later stages of free composition accurate spelling is more likely to prevail amongst children who have been trained to memorise the *complete* word before it is written, and to write it with continuous movement.

2. Points to be noticed in styles offered for emulation

Copy books are to be deprecated, but when the child has some skill in writing rapidly a page or two on end it is time to give him opportunity to see examples of good writing, not so that he may mimic the details of it, but so that he may appreciate the principles of good writing.

Now any examples, as such, should be chosen with discrimination. Though "character" in a hand is a desirable quality, it is the last thing in a hand which should be mimicked.[1]

Where the "character" in the hand constitutes its chief charm, there may be a lack of the qualities which the child should be encouraged to strive for in his own hand.

Show the child hands that are good all round, and not ones that have serious faults.

If one wishes a child to speak well, without asking him to mimic a voice, we would let him listen to one which was good all round. For an example: we should not ask the child to listen carefully to a man who stammered or who did not trouble to articulate, because the man had a voice with an interesting timbre, or was himself a master of gesture.

[1] Writing is something like behaviour. Manners, conduct, behaviour are the trace, as it were, of good feeling. Manners, which are produced by right feeling, cannot be copied successfully by others, who do not understand the feeling behind. So good writing can not be copied successfully, unless the feelings which produced the writing are understood.

Points that are worth considering in providing examples of good speech might be summarised as

Pros.		*Cons.*
Timbre pleasant.		Harshness.
Sonority suitable.		Too large.
		Too small.
Good breathing.		Jerkiness.
Easy production of sounds in the right place in the mouth.		Mouthing. Stammering. Stuttering.
Correct pronunciation.		Mumbling.
Clear enunciation.		Muttering.
Pitch in relation to Stress	Variety.	Monotony.
Pitch and Stress in relation to Subject matter	Expression	Lack of unity.

A parallel to these may be looked for in a writing, which is scrutinised in order to find out whether it is a suitable example for emulation.

	Pros.	*Cons.*
Continuity	Character.	
	Legibility.	
	Good position of writer.	Jerkiness.
	Easy movement of hand.	Redundant strokes or flourishes.
	Pen loosely held.	Unnecessary checks.
	Pen in right relation to paper.	False starts.
	Essential forms of letters kept.	Confusion between pairs of letters.
	Good spacing of lines in relation to page and to each other	Essential forms not clear.
	Good spacing of words in relation to page and to each other	Superimposed strokes.
	Good spacing of letters in relation to page and to each other	
	Good proportion between capitals and small letters and between parts of letters.	Undue narrowing. Letters omitted. Writing too large or too small.
	Nib suitable width for size of writing.	Pen too thick or too thin.
	Feeling of unity with pleasant variety.	Inconsistency.
	Stability—equilibrium.	Unbalanced form.

Though the analogy between these two means of human intercourse is not exact at every point, to compare desirable qualities in speech with those in writing may be of use to the student and teacher of handwriting.

In offering models for imitation it is well to choose specimens which can be justified by sound reason, not merely by personal bias. Legibility is a necessity in writing as audibility is a necessity in speech. Deciphering means "turning into ordinary writing" or "making out meaning of (bad writing, etc.)" (*Pocket Oxford Dictionary*).

Legibility means "easily read." The running eye should be able to read handwriting, the eye should not be brought to a halt to decipher a word—or a phrase. Any writing which requires to be deciphered —or decoded, clever as it may be from the palaeographical point of view, interesting as it may be from the humanistic point of view, is not a suitable model for a *legible* running hand.

One method of determining the legibility of a hand, either a book hand or a running hand which is in English characters, is to note the ease with which it could be transcribed by a man who did not know the language in which it was written. This may be regarded as an extreme test, but it is a valuable one if we are to weigh the merits of hands as models for emulation.

Two causes may render hands unsuitable as models for a legible running writing. In one case for some reason the work has been scamped. In the other case its degree of excellence has been attained by a

professional scribe, and that only after years of apprenticeship to his craft.

The work of a master scribe who devotes his life to his craft will be a joy and an inspiration to those who can appreciate it. Appreciation is not best shown by "unschooled imitation," nor by perverting, i.e. turning to wrong use—a medium or a tool.

3. Contrast between work of a copyist and an originator

At this point it might be well to consider the different conditions under which the copyist and the author work.

We must remember that attention can be of two kinds, we can call them conscious and sub-conscious, chief and secondary. Any new action demands conscious attention, with practice the action can be left to sub-conscious attention, and can be performed almost, if not quite, automatically at the same time that some new action demanding the whole conscious attention is performed.

In the case of the copyist all his conscious attention is available for the actual script, not so with the author, in his case all his conscious attention is needed to compose his sentences, and only his sub-conscious attention is available for the handwriting.

It is not an easy matter to use both the actual eye and the so-called mind's eye at the same moment on different subjects. Though a musician in playing an instrument may *see* his fingers, he may do so without looking at them. An author may *see* his

hand writing without looking at it; his mind's eye, his mind's ear are too much occupied for him to watch his hand. Hence all the material conditions for the author should be simplified to the last degree.

The book hand of the scribe involves the use of a special pen with which to produce the thins and thicks, and of a desk with a slope nearer the vertical than the horizontal. To use a broad nib at an almost upright desk, to make many strokes for a single letter are neither difficult nor irksome matters when copying. But to use a broad nib at an almost horizontal desk and to make many strokes for a single letter are both difficult and irksome matters when composing. The author should be spared fatigue; this can be done by minimising the strain of writing.

Some people aver that the so-called "script writing" can be done as rapidly as an ordinary cursive writing. Even if this could be proved there still remains the fact that the so-called "script-writing" calls for more exertion on the part of the writer than does an ordinary cursive hand.

The movements made in writing a book hand are in two planes, i.e. the stroke made on the paper and the movements to and from the paper—so that for every stroke which is left on the paper there have been two other movements made of which no trace is left on the paper.

Now, with the upright desk the movement to and from the paper is not an unpleasant one, but at a horizontal desk the resultant up and down action is tiresome.

III.

Relative position of the pen to the paper for book hand (at an almost upright desk).

With practice one could learn to hop as quickly as one could walk a given distance, but would hopping leave the mind as free as walking would do?

To use a flowing hand at a horizontal desk is to make practically all movement in one plane only, and every movement made leaves its trace. In very rapid writing the space between words tends to increase because the infinitesimal raising of the pen across a wide space is less tiring than a greater raising over a narrow space. At times of extra fatigue or hurry a writer will join words to avoid even the slight raising of the pen, which is all that is necessary so as to leave no trace on the paper.

This linking of words in a very rapid hand should not be severely criticised, as it is no hindrance to legibility, whereas in a book hand,[1] in which words are placed much nearer to each other, words joined together would be difficult to read.

In comparing the equipment of the scribe and the author, their pens should be considered in relation to the writing surface used, as well as in relation to the slope of the desk, also the nature of the pen should be noticed as well as the breadth of the nib.

A quill pen, cut to a broad chisel edge, is less likely to cause some of the errors which arise from the use of a broad metal pen, but a quill pen needs too much attention to be recommended for a rapid running hand.

[1] A scribe has to use vellum with economy because of its costliness and bulkiness. Letters were compressed, words "packed" into a line, and lines on to a page. The writer of a running hand need not exercise the same economy with paper.

Another point to be noticed is the quality of the ink and its course from pen to paper and on the paper. The flow of ink from an almost horizontal pen to an almost upright paper is different from the flow from a pen held at an angle of about 45° to the horizontal sheet.

The course of the ink traced on an upright sheet is literally a "down stroke," practically no "up strokes" appear—all up strokes are made in the air, without contact between pen and paper.

In the book hand written in this way the minimum quantity of ink to effect the down stroke is brought into use. A quill or a rigid broad steel pen may be used with impunity.

What *appears* as a similar down stroke in a hand written at a horizontal desk is not an actual down stroke, and by reason of the relation of the slope of the pen to the horizontal, the flow of ink is not kept to the minimum to effect the width of the stroke as made on a vertical sheet, the ink is therefore difficult to control if a broad nib is used.

In a running hand on a horizontal sheet there are not actual down strokes, there are not actual up strokes. The pen is driven to and fro.

For this process a gold nib in a fountain penholder is ideal for comfort and speed. Without any intentional pressure the strokes *towards* the writer are given an appearance of the strength of *down* strokes by reason of the arrangement of the flow of the ink under the nib. To use the nib on a stroke towards the writer is *with* the flow, on a stroke away from the writer is *from* the flow.

III. Aesthetic Values

1 Function of writing in relation to verbal thought

2. Writing used by an author to convey his thoughts

3. Reasons for the choice of an upright roundhand

III. Aesthetic Values

I. Function of writing in relation to verbal thought

Should the aesthetic value of differing styles of handwriting be under consideration it is well to revise certain principles. Foremost amongst these is the real function of writing in relation to verbal thought, that is the part writing takes in expression and impression by means of words.

An artist from impressions creates expressions. To deliver these to the world an instrument is needed. In order that the artist's expressions may make something like the intended impression on the minds of others, the necessary technique must be at his command.

Different arts may demand different instruments, or it may be that different arts use the same instruments, while the technique employed is varied. The instrument may be another artist, such as an actor, a singer or a dancer, who, at the same time that he is being used as an instrument, is also creating some expression of his own. Yet this creative interpretation must not be confused with the original conception.

The instrument may be the author's own voice in speech or song, it may be a musical instrument touched by the composer's hand, it may be a picture completed by an artist.

Yet, an author or a musical composer, though without an instrument which will render his creation in its entirety, has in the printed page a vehicle which will convey the substance of his meaning.

Now if a change from one instrument to another is made in representing a creation, the impression given is likely to be changed also, it may be changed in quantity or quality. For instance, a musical composition may be changed in quantity or quality according to whether it is rendered by means of a piano, organ or orchestra. Again a picture may be changed in quantity or quality according to whether it is rendered by means of a pencil sketch, an engraving or an oil painting. But if a change from a printed to a handwritten page be made, or from one style of type to another, there is no corresponding change in either quantity or quality of the substance of the meaning conveyed. Print or manuscript is each merely a vehicle. It may convey thought more or less smoothly, but it has not the power to alter the substance, unless it jolts the matter beyond recognition.

In ordinary life the first essential of a vehicle is its suitability for its special purpose, the owner-driver makes use of a run-about when a saloon car would not serve his need, and, except as a hobby, he does not attempt to drive a train. The vehicle can be studied from the point of view of the passenger, too, and is selected by him according to his particular needs.

Trains and motor cars have both been developed from horse-drawn coaches or carriages. So long as

trains and cars merely substituted an engine for a horse, they were ugly inventions. Now that each has been evolved on the lines of its own utility each holds a resultant beauty of its own. If a more beautiful run-about car is needed, we are not likely to design one by copying a carriage of the middle ages, or a railway train of modern times. If we wish to appraise the beauty of one car or another we should compare it with other makes of the same class. We should not compare a two-seater with a family touring car, still less with an omnibus.

Handwriting can be a vehicle of many kinds, the two important divisions are: handwriting used by an author (in the liberal sense of "originator") and handwriting used by a transcriber. The latter division can be sub-divided into what may be called the formal hand of a clerk and the bookhand of a scribe.

Neither the clerk nor the scribe (using these terms in this special sense) is composing the matter as he writes, though either may be transcribing from a similar or different hand to his own. The author, at times, may act as his own clerk or as that of another author, the style of his writing will then be different from what it is when he is originating.

The author may use handwriting when originating, in order that he may keep a record of his own thought for his own use in the future.

He may use handwriting when originating, in order that he may pass on his work to a clerk to have a fair copy made.

These two uses are in a sense private and need not

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now be considered in detail. However it may be worth noting that an author, who does any great bulk of work for publication, would be saved the expense of a typescript and the trouble of typescript proof reading if his own manuscript was acceptably legible to the compositor at the printers.

A truly legible hand can serve the double purpose: to indicate the sequence of letters and of words, [as if a script in French were to be set up in type by a man who does not understand French] and to convey the author's meaning to anyone who does understand the language in which it is written.

2. Writing used by an "author" to convey his thoughts

The handwriting which is of real moment to discuss is that used by an author as the means of conveying his thoughts to some other person, who will read that writing in order to receive the writer's thoughts.

This form of handwriting should have certain properties for it to fulfil its purpose in the best way. It should be a running hand, easy to control, economical of energy expended and pleasant to read. In other words it should be the trace, left on paper, of easy movement made with a suitable implement, held in the best position for the purpose of travelling rapidly across a horizontal plane, and this trace left should be pleasant for the eye to follow when reading what has been written.

This form of writing should not be judged as static, but in action.

Therefore to criticise a style of running handwriting aptly it is necessary to run the eye across the lines of writing. To regard the whole page as if it had been decorated with a linear design for the sake of beautifying its area is as much an error in criticism as it would be to judge conversational speech by the standards of oratory.

A running hand does not partake of the qualities of the graphic arts which produce works that can be looked at in a moment of time, so much as of the continuous arts whose harmonies are consecutive.

The progressive nature of a running hand demands that it should not be considered as a stationary pattern, but that it should be considered as moving on suitable tracks across the ground at the disposal of the writer.

The running hand, used while the writer is composing what he writes, receives only his sub-conscious attention, i.e. it is a matter of habit. The writer does not consciously select this or that form of any particular letter in any particular word, as he may do if he is transcribing a fair copy

In the running hand there is no deliberation, in the formal hand there may be deliberation. The running hand might be described as built up on synthetic lines, and the formal hand on analytic lines. A good running hand is not derived from a good copying hand, these two should not be confused. It is as useless to compare their aesthetic values as it would be to compare the aesthetic values of a bell

tent, pitched for a week, and a house, built for a life time.

It is of little avail to try to reform handwriting by going back to methods of the middle ages. Present-day needs may better be filled by modern methods.

3. Reasons for the choice of an upright round hand

The choice of an upright round-hand as the standard style for running writing can be supported by artistic reasons.

The upright character gives stability and balance. It is in harmony with the boundaries of the page, and it is in harmony with the essential forms of the alphabet.

The round character gives grace and tangential junction. It is in pleasant contrast to the straight edges of the page, and it is in harmony with the essential forms of the alphabet.

To write whole words without raising the pen in each word gives a feeling of repose. Words thus written give a look of unity and power.

Historical precedent for upright writing is abundant. The most beautiful pen forms in periods of great achievement in manuscript have been made with what is termed "the straight pen. Since the invention of printing the best type has been round and upright. To have mastered upright round writing in a cursive hand fits the writer to attempt to do work in the style of any period of excellent

lettering—when he is so minded—for the purpose of making a fair copy.

When we consider the historical precedent for upright round pen-made letters, it is well to remember the widespread use of a general upright style of writing through the centuries. Upright writing seems to come as naturally to man as does upright building, uprightness has been an intrinsic characteristic in Greek, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and other styles. Uprightness is common to styles which in other respects are very diverse.

Another characteristic of writing which is seldom mentioned is the use of the horizontal line. This prevails through the centuries, and appears to be as natural to man in the West as the upright style of letters.

One more characteristic, roundness, has remained constant through the ages, except at certain places or at certain times when excessive economy cramped the natural feeling for form which shows itself in the choice of a full round curve.

To return to the figure of the vehicle—throughout the ages there have been certain constants—wheels, axles and general upright character have been maintained through centuries. Round letters, horizontal lines and general upright character have stood the test of time. If we teach children to write upright round hand we are carrying on the tradition of the highest civilisations of the western world.

The choice of an italic hand is not advisable. First, because the slope is not in harmony with the edges of the sheet, nor with the lines of writing, nor

is it sufficiently in contrast to either. Second, because it was one of the styles used for the sake of economy of bulk in books; though it became popular because by its use the size of books could be reduced, it soon became neglected except as a substitute for rubrication. The attempt to revive italics for general use either in cursive handwriting or in printed books is an attempt to go against the innate feeling for upright construction, which is an instinctive artistic sense in man.

The Aldine italic type filled a definite need at the time at which it was used. It was suited to its purpose, namely of the reduction of the cost of production consequent on the reduction of material used. To advocate a return to the general use of this type is to deserve to be called "precious." Its revival has usually been instituted at a time when affectation was rife, or it has been suitably employed for reprints of works of a somewhat artificial style.

The beauty of fitness can be considered from another point of view. While British painters aped the Italian style of painting they had little success. When British painters find their own style they become great. British people will not find their best outlet in copying a hand of a small section of a short period in Italian writing. They are more likely to find inspiration in a style of their forbears—a style such as that of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, downright and sturdy.

The suitability of a choice which expresses national qualities may reasonably be urged from an artistic point of view.

IV. Educational Values

1. Hygienic
2. Ethical
3. Correlative

IV Educational Values

1. Hygienic

The teaching of upright round hand writing has been advocated for artistic reasons. Hygienic reasons can also be urged.

Upright writing can best be done when the whole body is in a good position. When one considers the number of hours which a normal child spends in writing during his school life, it seems impossible to lay too much stress on the importance of training him to maintain a healthful position whenever any writing is done.

The human body is symmetrical from side to side, and balanced from back to front. Therefore to avoid strain in any position which has to be kept for any length of time, the body should be as nearly as possible symmetrical from side to side, and at the same time balanced from back to front. A body out of balance is losing nerve force by being in a state of opposition to the strength of gravity, and a body out of symmetry is injuring one or more organs, if the distorted position becomes habitual for any occupation.

When a child is at work at the blackboard or easel all writing and drawing should be done at half arm's length, and should be entirely arm work. The board should be within easy reach of the child; over-stretching is a source of ill, and is extremely apt to produce curvature. The line of the child's writing

should be below the level of his heart—it is fatiguing to work with the hand above the heart level.

The weight of the body should be supported equally by both feet, the heels should be free from pressure against the ground. If the feet are slightly astride, there is greater freedom of movement in the whole body to harmonise with free arm work.

The eyes, shoulders and hips should be level and parallel to the line of writing. The child must be directly in front of the work done so that his view of it is not fore-shortened.

All muscles should be flexible and in no way strained or rigid, the chalk should be lightly held approximately vertically inside the hand between thumb and two fingers, so lightly held that it could easily be withdrawn without a loosening of the grasp.

In this position a downward movement with chalk in contact with the board leaves a trace in an upright line—a circular movement leaves a trace of a circular line—upright round hand is the natural outcome of a good standing position.

Symmetry in a sitting position is as essential as in a standing position, and is no more difficult to maintain if habits of bad posture have not been formed before the child is taught to write at a desk.

The child should sit on the middle of the chair seat, the head with the trunk should be in a slightly "forward bend" position. The eyes and shoulders must be level and parallel to the front edge of the desk, the shoulders must be back and down, the chest capable of expansion and free from the front of the desk.

Both forearms should be supported on the muscular part just below the elbow, so that there is approximately a right angle between the two forearms. The feet should be placed on the foot rest only if it can be reached easily—otherwise they should dangle to avoid pulling the base of the spine forward on the seat of the chair. The balance of the body should be maintained by the opposing inclinations of the trunk and the upper arms.

All muscles should be unstrained, those of the fingers, wrist and arm should be specially limber. To ensure this the penholder should be of a suitable thickness and without a slippery surface. A comfortable grasp of the pen can be found by dropping the writing hand at one's side as in a "stand at ease" position. With the hand in this position, put a pen vertically between the thumb and two fingers, bend the elbows without moving the wrist or fingers, then bring the two wrists together in front, with trunk at "forward bend" position, the hands are thus brought into the easy natural posture which produces upright writing.

Both points of the nib should be used equally without any variety of pressure on the down strokes or up strokes, and the pressure should be a minimum so that the nib does not much more than graze the paper. A gold nib is ideal because of the lack of friction between it and the surface of the paper. The left hand should steady the paper, and between each line of writing should raise the sheet so that by the time a whole page is written the bottom line of writing is in the place on the desk where the first line

was started. When a book is being written in, that page which is in use should be in the middle of the desk.

The natural writing to result from the position described is upright. An upright hand is the least possible strain on the eyes in writing; and, just as upright printing in a book is much less tiring to read than italics, so upright writing is much less fatiguing to read than a sloping hand. Moreover, as upright is an absolute term it is easier for a child to judge of the correctness of his work than if a certain arbitrary slant be insisted upon—a uniform upright appearance is easier to maintain than a uniform slope. The adoption of a sloping hand always tends to cause a lapse from a symmetrical posture. A lapse generally results in eye strain or in spinal curvature: if the back is kept straight, the head is turned on one side, so that the eyes shall look up the slope of the writing, then the eye which is nearer the paper is being used unequally with the other eye, indeed in cases of extreme slope the other eye may see nothing of the writing because the nose is in its line of vision. If the eyes, looking up the slope of the letters are to be used equally, then the spine is pulled out of the straight.

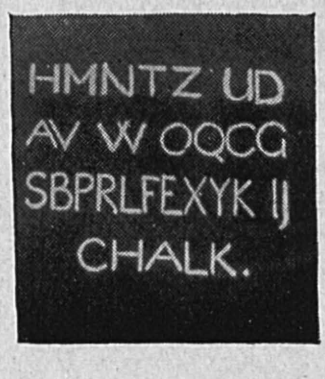
The clear definition of letters in a round hand prevents a strain on the eyes that is present when reading a pointed hand.

Cramped, ugly, wasteful and disorderly arrangements positively hurt a sensitive eye, and are disagreeable even to an untrained eye. Either consciously or unconsciously a bad effect is experienced

IV.

Position of hands for cursive writing (on an ordinary table).

1



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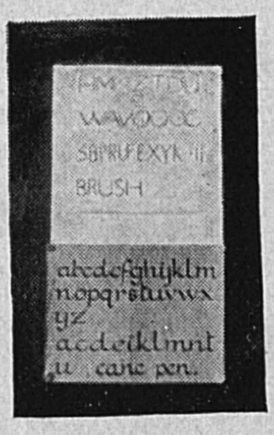

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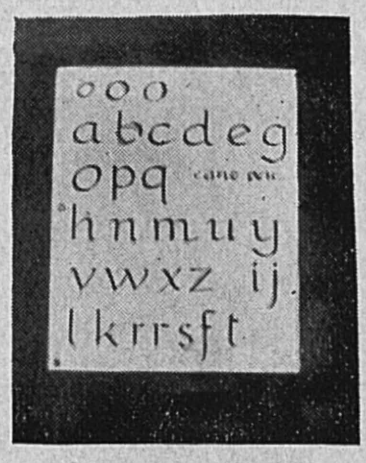


Examples of letters used in Art Lessons written with (1) Chalk; (2) Brush; (3 and 4) Cane Pen;

(at an almost upright desk.)

(*Much reduced.*)

when reading ugly writing—even though the irritation be only slight, it is better avoided.

Defects of writing are frequently due to errors in posture. The need for a good position cannot be too strongly advocated. The hygienic advantages can perhaps be more readily appreciated if given in a summary:

Eyes used equally—	Sight not injured by faulty focus—headache avoided.
Lungs and abdomen—	Free for deep breathing.
Shoulder blades flat—	"Wings" avoided.
Spine straight—	Curvature avoided.
Internal organs and digestive organs—	Free from pressure.
Circulation free.	
Nerves—	No undue pressure or irritation.
Arm supported on the fleshy part where arteries and nerves are deep seated. Fingers slightly flexed.	Writer's cramp avoided
Weight of the body on the thighs	Vibration of spinal cord avoided.
The whole body in balance, with the muscles loose throughout.	Fatigue avoided.

2. Ethical

Good posture is an important matter for the physical well-being of the child, it is also an important matter with regard to his conduct. An upright and healthy body tends to help character to be upright and healthy. Physical exercises are known to

help a person to keep moral; an upright carriage at all times should help in this direction. It is often noticeable that the slouching child is the one with a tendency to be dishonourable, and that the person with no real backbone is liable to have no moral backbone. The effort made to control the body ought to help the child in general control, the actual level-headed position should tend to make him "level-headed" in the figurative sense too. It is interesting to notice how many terms used in describing a person's character are borrowed from physical characteristics. Surely it points to the fact that straightness of body makes for straightness in personal character. An upright carriage must help a child to be fearless, courageous and true.

To learn to make the correct movements to produce good writing with the least possible expenditure of energy calls for will power. Such an exercise of will power is valuable morally.

Having learnt to write well and neatly, to continue to do so calls for will power. To acquire a habit of writing well and rapidly calls for concentration, which is of great value at the age at which speed should be learnt. Habitually to write illegibly or untidily amounts to positive discourtesy: it is only common courtesy to write so that others may read without undue strain of eyesight or temper, and without more time and trouble than is necessary. Children should learn to be considerate in this respect.

Writing is a form of hand work, and as such is a most valuable training. To learn to write in the

method here advocated is to learn exactness, precision, proportion, neatness and orderliness. Habitually rapid judgments are made. All the discipline of hand reacts on the mind.

Though good matter well expressed, but untidily written is of value, the same well written and well-spaced is of much more value. To write neatly helps people to think "neatly." Orderly arrangement on paper leaves an orderly arrangement in the mind, so that every piece of work neatly written and suitably spaced should enhance knowledge in the subject of the exercise, as well as advance the general mental development of the child.

This advance gives the child a feeling of power which increases his self-respect in a wholesome way. At the same time the care taken to make his work as pleasant as possible for others to read is fostering consideration for others' comfort and is tending towards making him unselfish.

3. Correlative

Writing as a means of both impression and expression plays such a leading part in a child's school life that it is worth careful cultivation.

Command of an easy style of writing is a great asset. In every subject which requires writing, progress can be more rapid when the act of writing is accomplished readily, and when proof of ability in the subject is required by written test in examination the candidate who writes well and quickly can do himself the best justice.

At the end of the school career when examinations are over, good writing is of value when application is made for some desired post, and in after life, though handwriting may not enter into the vocational work, it is a rare case indeed if handwriting does not sometime or another serve personal needs. To be able to write well and quickly can be not only a great convenience, but a real pleasure in one's leisure as much as in one's work.

The manipulative skill which is gained by learning to write on the method advised here is of definite use in subjects into which actual writing does not enter. All the physical control practised during writing is related to physical exercises in drill, the ideal of posture corresponds to the ideal of posture in physical training. The type of movements employed are such as to aid the quick acquirement of the necessary movements for skill in games.

In a girls' school in which this method of teaching writing was used with conspicuous success, it was observed that, with very few exceptions, the girls who wrote best were also best at games and best at drill; these same girls were also best at art. The initial training of the motor muscles to respond to the judgment of the eye in forming letters and words and in spacing words and lines of writing appropriately on unruled paper is of incalculable value in almost every ordinary occupation as well as in games of skill, in crafts and in art. The further training in habitual dexterity, while the child is learning to gain speed at the same time retaining complete control of good shape and good spacing,

is of immense value in aiding the child to learn to play a "brainy" game, the while his movements are immediately responsive to his wishes. This habitual dexterity, when acquired, is also felt to be a gain in later years, sometimes in a form of handwork which had never been contemplated, such as the making of microscopic slides or dissections.

While still at school, the manipulative skill gained is useful in science lessons in the management of apparatus, and in domestic science it is useful in many ways. In needlework the influence of precision and neatness learnt in writing is obvious.

Altogether the system of teaching writing on the method here described makes for unity in education. The actual writing enters into all the academic subjects, whatever be the system employed in teaching writing. But in no other system than the one here urged does the method so completely accord with the ideals of teaching the arts and the practical subjects which are to be the main part of the vocational life of a great proportion of the children who pass through school.

To learn to write with this method is to acquire no bad habits of posture, of stiffened muscles, awkward grip or jerky movements. One of these bad habits almost always prevails in a majority of pupils taught to write on any other system, or left to teach themselves to write.

Any one of these bad habits may be an infinite waste of time and energy to the pupil in acquiring skill in fine or applied arts or in instrumental music. It is with the greatest difficulty that a child who

has ill-used a pencil as a writing tool can learn to use it as a sympathetic instrument for drawing. The child who has used a writing implement from the first with easy skill comes to learn to draw and paint with no physical handicap.

Another bond of unity between this writing method and the arts is the basis of rhythm. And the bond of unity goes further—it is a bond to the whole of life. The rhythm is in sympathy with the very pulse of life—our whole being is due to beat—to pulse—to rhythm. Is not man's natural love of dance, music, poetry, in some way accounted for by the pulse, the beat—which constitutes the rhythm?

To learn to write through rhythmic movements is to work in sympathy with man's nature and child's nature. To practise writing in this way is to aid in cultivating a feeling for pattern—pattern in a liberal sense of the word, pattern in poetry, pattern in dance, pattern in music, pattern in pictorial art as much as pattern in decorative art. Not that writing itself *is* pattern, but that its relation to pattern helps the appreciation of true pattern in the arts.

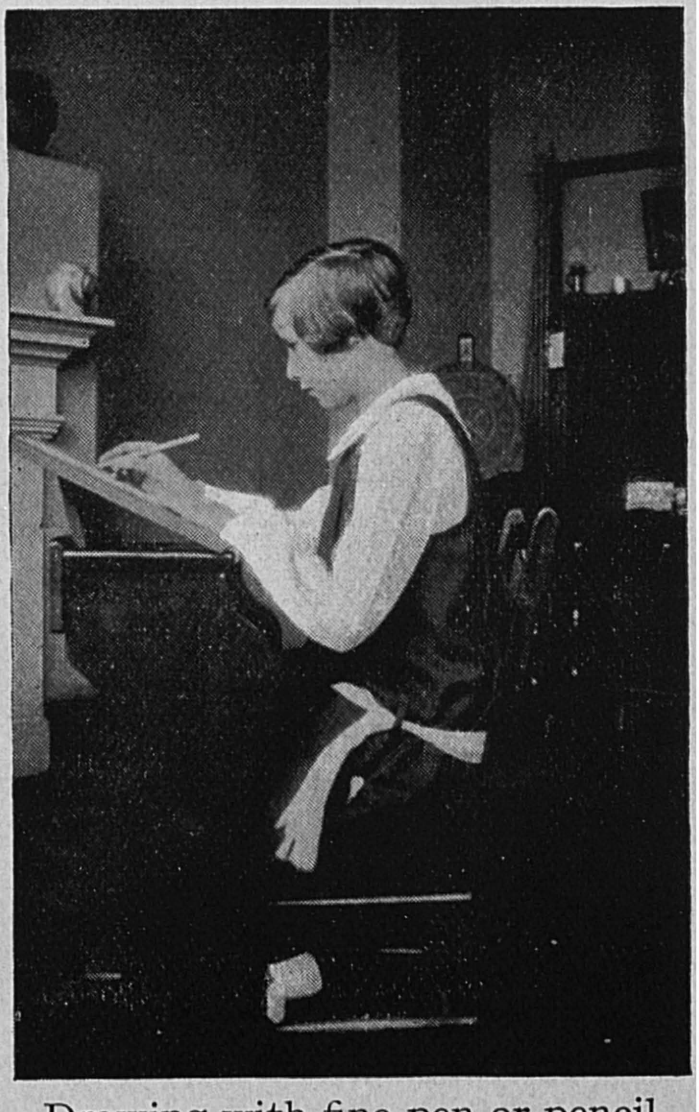
Naturally the correlation between writing and drawing is most intimate. It is so close that the two subjects overlap in many respects. For this reason it is an admirable arrangement if the art teacher can also be the writing teacher.

To begin with, the standing position described is the same for free arm work, whether writing or drawing or painting is undertaken; moreover, this is the case whether the work be of the most elementary

Free Arm Brush Drawing.

Free Arm Charcoal or Pencil Drawing.

Book Hand written with cane or broad steel pen.



Drawing with fine pen or pencil.

V. Positions in Art Lessons.

nature done by a little child, or of the most skilled order done by a mature artist. The sitting position used in writing is a suitable one for art work that is done at a desk, such as designing. A child who has learnt in either position squarely to face the work done has a great advantage when he comes to draw objects and figures in perspective. Inaccuracy in relative directions of lines in drawing can often be traced to the faulty position of the child when viewing the objects to be drawn. Here is a simple illustration of what is meant. Put the head on one side and look steadily at the cross formed by the horizontal and vertical bars between window panes. Then shut the eyes, at the same time holding the head level, and notice that the image of the cross that becomes visible on the closed eyelids appears like a multiplication sign ×. If the same cross in the window had been looked at steadily with level eyes, the resulting image with closed eyes still level, would have appeared like the addition sign +.

To learn to work with level eyes is a help to every kind of observation which involves a judgment of horizontality or a deviation from the same. A true judgment of the appearance of things can only be formed when they are directly faced with eyes level.

The habit of seeing a line of writing without any fore-shortening, so that the horizontal line of writing also *appears* horizontal to the child, is very useful in drawing. He then is, from the first, accustomed to face his work directly; and thus avoids all the errors of proportion between widths and lengths and

between one part and another which inevitably occur if the child gets a fore-shortened view of his drawing while he is making it.

Any habit of turning the writing paper from the straight, across the desk, or of turning the head sideways so as to get the line of vision in sympathy with sloping letters, is vitiating the child's capacity to make correct judgments and to record them accurately by means of drawing. In a school in which writing is not taught or is taught badly, the majority of children acquire a rooted habit of sitting otherwise than facing fairly with level eyes the work done. A teacher of drawing in such a school has a disheartening task, the handicap against him is enormous.

Another point where drawing and writing coincide is in the memory work involved in the initial stages of learning the forms of letters, their likenesses and their differences. The training in recognising a mental picture of the forms is useful in memory drawing. This cultivation of the power of visualisation is in close correlation with imaginative work in literature and in science and is indirectly correlated with imaginative work of all types. It is particularly helpful to children in learning to read and to spell, and it has also a close connection with mental arithmetic in its initial stages, and later on with more advanced mathematical work.

Mathematics can be made a much more attractive subject than this subject usually is, and can be taught and learnt much more readily and easily when the imaginative side of the work is insisted

upon. Children who cultivate visualising in learning to write can be taught to enjoy thoroughly mathematics presented in a fashion which gives play to the imagination. Problems are attacked in a new spirit and algebra and geometry are found to be quite entrancing lessons. The visualisation necessary in tackling scientific research is undoubtedly allied to this elementary visualisation employed in learning to write without a copy book.

We sum up the correlation which consciously or unconsciously is present when our method of teaching writing is adopted.

Visual, aural, motor concentration	Reading and spelling.
Position (standing)	Drill, Elocution, Singing, Art.
Muscular control in action	Games, Drill, Art.
Rhythmic movement	Music, Dance, Poetry, Pattern.
Analysis, comparisons	Every subject dependent on accuracy and memory.
Visualisation	Every subject requiring imagination.
Rapid judgment in arrangement and spacing	Games. Art.
Eyes level, squarely facing work done	Perspective drawing, Crafts, experimental work.
The actual writing	Every subject in which written work is done.
Lettering	Maps, Charts, Diagrams Lists, Crafts.
Transcription	Stimulates appreciation of literature, prose and poetry.
Technique with speed	Arts, Music, Crafts, especially Needlework.

Appendix

Summary of the points open to criticism in other methods of teaching writing.

1. CONCERNING THE USE OF PAPER PLACED DIAGONALLY ON A DESK
2. CONCERNING THE USE OF COPY BOOKS
3. CONCERNING WRITING WITH A BROAD NIB
4. CONCERNING SO-CALLED "SCRIPT WRITING"

Appendix

BRIEF reference should perhaps be made to American methods which involve a habit of keeping the sheet written on at an angle of 30° to the front edge of the desk, in order to produce a slanting style of writing.

This is essentially contrary to natural feelings of fitness—it is an artificial method, unpleasant to work, and the results obtained are far from beautiful.

CONCERNING THE USE OF COPY BOOKS

Any copy book, whether the style of writing is desirable or otherwise, is to be avoided for many reasons. Writing is a form of drawing, the Greeks used the same word for "write" and "draw." This is significant, since they were not wont to use one word with ambiguous meaning. If then, to write and to draw be regarded as similar actions, it might be sound sense to attempt to teach the two on the same method. We have ceased to try to teach drawing by means of free-hand copies, let us cease to try to teach writing by means of copy books. The use of a copy book is against all the principles of true education. At the moment when concentration on the actual writing is desirable, it is lacking because the child is constantly glancing up at the copy. The idea, that if the bottom line is written first, all will be well, gives the teacher a false feeling of safety: though the child is not glancing up at its own immature writing, he *is* glancing up, and the fact

that concentration is broken is against true education. When so-called "script" was substituted for linked letters, when a reproduction of hand-written words was substituted for copper plate engraved examples, the psychological error of trying to let the child teach himself by means of a copy book remains.

On the face of it the teacher might think it would be easier to teach writing with a copy book. Some good work with pains taken may be produced in the copy books. But does the same standard of accuracy appear in every other exercise book?

It is as hopeless to succeed in teaching a child to be a writer for ordinary purposes by means of a copy book as it would be to teach him to do accounts by means of copying sums. To substitute Roman figures for the more convenient Arabic forms would in no way help the matter, probably it would confuse the child still further. It is futile to hope that one copy or another, copperplate or "script," put before the child will teach him to write a useful presentable style of writing.

As for every other school subject the teacher should himself know the subject, he should be able to write in a suitable style, he should know how to teach the subject without a copy book.

Instead of trying to bring out a new copy book we should aim at teaching a sound method on a reasonably psychological basis to students in elementary and secondary training colleges. Whatever the students' general or special subjects, writing enters into them so vitally that even if when a

teacher he does not actually teach writing, he should know the possibilities of giving helpful hints and criticisms to pupils who have any difficulty. Some study of the history of writing should form a part of every would-be teacher's course of training, perhaps specially so in the case of the teacher who is least likely to be a specialist in the teaching of writing, because it is probably such a one who will become head of a school and have the power to decide what style of writing the thousands of children who pass through the school shall be taught.

After even a brief study of the history of writing, which would include study of reproductions of manuscripts (if it were not possible to see the originals in a museum), a teacher would be in a position to weigh the arguments for and against one style of writing and another. If the teacher had also had a short course in practical work, including black board writing, lettering in pen and brush work, and writing in different historic styles, he would be in a still better position to judge the merits of one style of writing or another for the use of children.

In the next section are some of the points that the student would learn from the history of writing and from some practice in writing with a reed and quill or with a so-called "manuscript" pen nib of steel.

Concerning writing with a broad nib

The writer who ceases to join letters in a word in order to rest himself must be in some way cramping his muscles. The linking of letters in itself is in no

way fatiguing; if links are omitted it is neither to gain speed nor to obtain rest through their omission, but to seek relief from some mishandling of the pen or some error of posture. The broad pen no more "dispenses with a continuity of connecting string" than may a fine pen. Movements of the hand cause the continuity, whether the tool be a broad or narrow nib or a stylus.

The pen is not responsible for loops and flourishes. Movements of the hand and arm are responsible for flourishes. The hand can produce flourishes with a broad or fine pointed nib, or with a brush, and has done so, before ever printing was invented. A mere cursory survey of old MSS. will discover "swash" letters and flourishes which will make any writing done with an ordinary modern pen look restrained by contrast. So far from hindering flourishes a quill pen positively encourages them The fact that a quill pen driven away from one splutters makes the user lift the pen from the paper at the end of the downward stroke, and this lifting action easily is developed to form flourishes.[1]

That "the modern pliable pen" was not responsible for the flourishes can be proved in a very wonderful exhibit in the Greg Collection of Handicrafts of Bygone Times (City of Manchester Art Gallery) No. 144. "Examples of Early English Penmanship and Curious Writings, 1670."

[1] Interesting examples of flourishes can be seen in the signatures of some artists, Jan van Eyck's, Jan van Huysum's or Jan van de Velde's on their pictures now in the National Gallery, dated 1434, 1736, 1656. "The modern pliable pen" was not responsible for these flourishes!"

The statement "It is the pen and not the forms that really matter," is to be challenged. If such a form as italics or italianised gothic is given to children for their form of every day hand, it is almost sure to degenerate into an undecipherable zig-zag scrawl across the page when rapidly written.[1]

At best, italics were invariably "fine," written with a pen which produced inappreciable thicks and thins, and this style of fine writing was reproduced in printed type.

A broad nib with black down strokes was not used in the best examples of this style.

This symbol "X" given to a child to indicate the position of the pen in relation to the paper is psychologically wrong, for if the child traces this cross at the beginning of every line he writes, the suggestion to him is, that down strokes slant down from left to right, whereas he is expected in an italic hand to slant down from right to left. As if a notice "Keep to the left" were posted on a moving staircase from which one must alight with the right foot first!

Uniformity of down strokes does not depend upon the pen, but upon the movements made. Uniform down strokes with a thick pen are only made by uniform movements, uniform down strokes can equally well be made with a fine pen if movements are equally uniform.

[1] *A New Handwriting* for teachers by M. M. Bridges was an attempt to provide models for "slow writing." it is distinctly stated in the introductory remarks (page vii) that whether the hand shown lends itself to the development of a quick useful cursive is not known.

A shoe with wide welts leaves no more uniform footmarks in wet sand than does a shoe with a narrow sole—the uniformity depends on the foot movements.

The "everyday" hand of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was not written with the broad nib: the broad nib was used by the professional scribe. Considering that the professional scribe served an apprenticeship of some six years in the craft, it is not surprising that the non-professional wrote in another style.

It is not reasonable for a modern teacher to expect school children to use a "book" hand as an ordinary means of expression. The pains with which copying was done by a scribe was described in verse by Thomas Hoccleve. The words of another professional scribe are worth quoting, "Three fingers write, yet the whole body is in travail; they who know not how to write deem it no labour."

The book hand written with a broad nib took years to perfect. Is it wise to let a child attempt to "skip" whole stages in the development of such a finished hand? To expect children to use a broad nib for learning to write is like attempting to put French polish on rough unseasoned wood.

To teach a mannered style is to allow no scope for the child to develop naturally.

Concerning so-called "script writing" or print form writing

Almost at the other end of the scale from broad nib book-hand style is the "print form" style which

is recommended by the two arguments that it saves the learning of the double series of symbols in printed and written words, and that a running hand is a lazy hand.

These arguments will not bear scrutiny. A running hand has never been a book-hand lazily written, any more than walking is marching lazily. The running hand was the one from which the book-hand was developed. Marching has been developed from walking.

At the stage that children learn to march, learn to sing and learn to write they are intensely interested in likenesses and differences, they love repetition, they love mimicking movement, so they are interested in the walking and marching movements, the speaking and singing movements and the running writing and the print form movements.

To attempt to teach on the line of least resistance is not to advance far in education.

When a cursive everyday hand has been in use for everyday purposes for centuries it is scarcely fair to deny children the opportunity of learning it to-day.

It is false economy to make one tool serve many purposes, it is a false economy to make print form serve the purpose of a running hand. Print form writing may be done more rapidly than writing in the copper-plate copy-book style, but it certainly cannot be done nearly as rapidly as free linked round hand. When it is seriously stated that "recent researches in the pedagogy of writing have served to show that a frequent lifting of the pen

greatly relieves the strain of writing, that the up strokes take more time than the down strokes" as an argument in favour of "script writing," one begins to wonder if research will show that a frequent closing of the mouth in speaking greatly relieves the strain of speaking, and that indrawn breaths take more time than outward breaths.

In learning a new language the beginner is taught the right movements for producing the required sounds; at first the words are learnt sound by sound, by being correctly "shaped," but once learnt they are run together as words or as phrases.

Because professional reciters and actors sound letters and words with specially careful "shaping," ordinary folk are not accounted lazy because they use a less formal style.

In learning a foreign language, in addition to learning correct pronunciation, one must learn to be fluent. To do this, help is needed so that combinations of sounds be correctly practised

Thus children need help in learning to link letters; it is too much to expect them to find out the best way of linking without instruction.

Opportunity should be given to children to learn to be truly fluent in writing.

When a child is learning to walk upstairs he may go more quickly in the end, by moving a step at a time with a pause between each step, than by attempting to dash up the whole flight; but we should not keep him at this method of going up and down stairs, a step at a time, when he is quite capable of learning to take the flight at a running speed. If

"a frequent lifting of the pen greatly relieves the strain of writing" there must be something radically wrong with the method of writing.

When a child is learning to thread beads he begins by picking up a bead at a time with the needle, passing it separately along the thread. Soon he finds it is pleasanter and quicker to pick up a unit of pattern on the needle, rather than every separate bead, before pulling the thread through. So in rapid work it is pleasanter to "thread" a word as a unit. The word as a unit is less likely to be lost in linked writing than in unlinked. If writing is taught on a progressive plan there is no need for children to find the process of learning anything but an enjoyable one, differences of printed type and written characters are easily mastered if taken in logical sequence.

In testing the economy of speed the real test is in what the children can do when they have left school and are no longer under supervision, for after all education in school is to fit children as far as possible for their vocations and hobbies in after life.

To suggest that the position for holding a "straight" pen is strained and unnatural is a mistake. Is not "that comfortable angle which all beginners spontaneously adopt" usually in any game of skill or in any art the very one which proves least likely to afford the best results? In writing, as in games of skill and in practice of the arts, a much more limber wrist is required than the beginner brings spontaneously to the work. If the wrist is slightly flexed the balance for writing is improved and the

hand is brought into the right position for the easy use of the straight pen.

If only as much attention were paid to the relaxed flexible bearing of the whole body, arms, wrists and fingers during writing, as is paid to this matter during playing the piano, writing need not be in the least a tiring or an irksome occupation—rather should it be a joy, pleasant in the doing.

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