

# Handwriting Guide and Testing

There is nothing mystical or secret about tidy handwriting...the secret is simply **“sameness”**: **same sized** letters, **same shaped** letters, **same sloped** letters, **same height** of letters such as h, t, and f, and **same length** of letters such as g, y and j. (Just don't slope to the left as that is harder for the eye to follow.)

That is all. These broad guidelines give students total freedom to express their individual style. So long as they make sure they are ticking off each of those requirements, we can almost **guarantee** that their handwriting will be very presentable indeed. The only people who cannot meet these expectations are those with some form of fine motor skill issues, and if that is the actual problem, please discuss things with us.

However, most students with poor handwriting will need help to improve. It is not enough to just say to them, “Write more neatly!” without telling them exactly what changes they need to focus on.

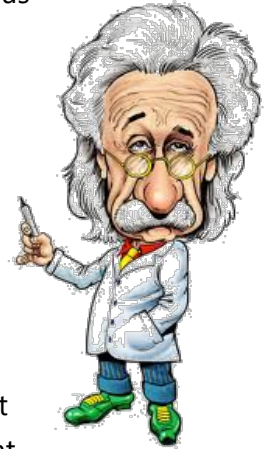
Therefore, take a sample of their handwriting and simply analyse it against the following criteria.

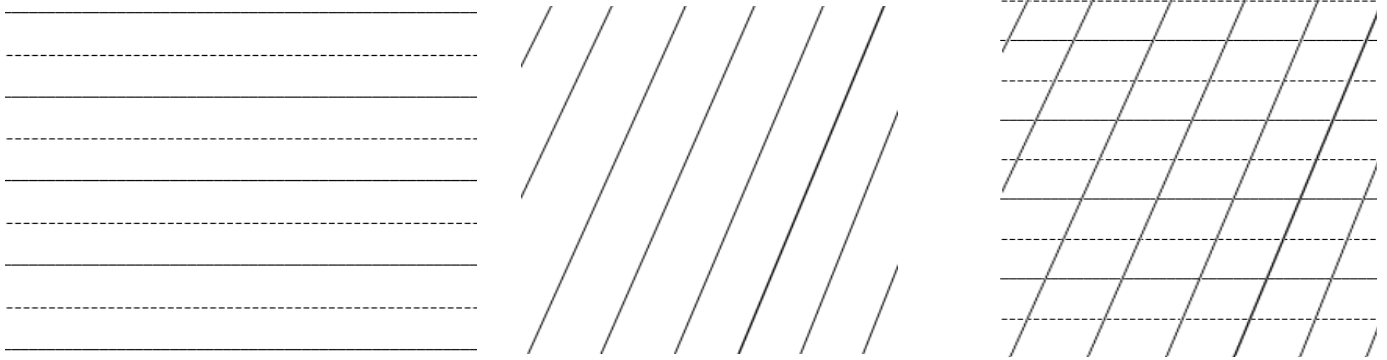
	<b>Consistent</b>	<b>Not Consistent</b>
<b>Size of letters</b>		
<b>Shape of letters</b>		
<b>Slope of letters</b>		
<b>Tops of letters</b>		
<b>Tails of letters</b>		

Once you have analysed the results, you will see the specific areas that your student needs to work on. Make sure they can see that too.

Tackle each area on its own (i.e. tackle one aspect at a time).

Below are some guidesheets that may help. It takes about two minutes to produce your own full sized sheets like these on a computer. Print them off using bold, black print. If you stick the first one behind the page the student is working on, it will help them get all of their letters the same size. The second one placed behind the page the student is working on will help them make all their letters slope the same direction, while the third will provide a framework so that they can get both the height and the slope sorted.





Also, watch how your student is forming each letter when they actually write. Because most schools no longer actually teach handwriting, many students have never been shown how to actually form letters correctly (i.e. where to “start” the letter). At the end of this document is a guide to show how letters are correctly formed.

Remember, the end goal is not “beautiful handwriting”. The end goal is handwriting that is consistent, and which is both legible and presentable.

### **How to test handwriting**

On a regular basis, repeat the procedure below. By dating and keeping each individual assessment, you will clearly be able to track and evidence progress.

1. Give the student a lined sheet of paper and have them write on it three times the following sentence in their neatest handwriting:

***The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.***

(This sentence contains all the letters of the alphabet.)

2. Underneath that, ask them to write it out as many times as they can within a timed, two minute period, but keeping an eye on it so that it is not too untidy.
3. Underneath that, ask them to write it out as many times as they can within a timed, two minute period, irrespective of how it looks.
4. Sit with your student and analyse their handwriting against the criteria in the guide above. Have them set a target for improvement for the coming period of time.
5. We suggest you repeat this testing procedure at the end of every term. From the second set of testing onwards, you will be able to bring out your folder of previous tests and compare to see how much improvement has been made. (Do that after each test has been completed – not before.)

# Beginning Points and Directions of Movements for Handwriting

a b c d e f g h i

j k l m n o p q

r s t u v w x y

z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 9 0

a b c d e f

g h i j k l

m n o p q r

s t u v w x

y z