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Business Handwriting

By the Editor (EA Lupfer)

Most schoolteachers are today endeavoring to teach their students to write easily and legibly. If we may judge by the sales of textbooks and supplies, much more attention is being given to this important subject than most persons realize. Teachers by the thousands are taking training by correspondence and attending any classes available. The penmanship picture has greatly improved and we should do all we can to encourage this increased effort on the part of teachers and everyone.

The first duty a teacher has is to prepare to teach the subject intelligently and in an interesting way. The teacher should create in the student a desire to learn to write well by showing the importance of good handwriting in the daily lives of every student.

It is the teacher's duty to see that each student has the best possible equipment under the conditions. There is a great amount of handwriting material, some of which is good, and some not so good. Expensive material is not always the best, but usually very cheap material is expensive and unsatisfactory.

Steel pens and a finger-fitting holder is recommended for practice. Where fountain pens are used, select good ones with medium sized points and barrels which are not bunglesome and overbalanced. Use good ink and paper. If you have any problems about supplies, write The Educator.

ENCOURAGE GOOD POSITION

Penmanship can be done better and easier in a good position than in an awkward one.

1. Sit erect with the body neither touching the desk or the back of the chair nor too far from the edge of the desk.
2. Keep the feet flat on the floor.
3. Let the arms fall naturally on the desk with the elbows a trifle off the edge of the desk or evenly on the desk.
4. The left arm helps to support the body's weight and holds the paper in place. Lean on it so that the right arm may be free to work freely across the page.
5. Hold the pen lightly in a natural position. Do not grip the holder or let the arm fall over on the side, which would restrict freedom of motion.

We suggest holding the pen loosely, yet firmly between the thumb and index finger. Allow the pen to rest on the middle finger. It should be grasped not too far from, nor too close to the point of the pen. Guard against the pen falling down too low. It should rest near the knuckle.

The hand holding the pen should be curved as if holding a ball. The hand should glide on the nails or flesh part of the little finger. Study illustrations.

ACCURATE HANDWRITING

To become a very accurate writer it is necessary to study details so that you have a clear mental picture of the exact letterforms in every detail. The accompanying illustrations are given to help you to search for some of the small things that are important. It is accuracy of individual strokes and letters that make an accurate page.

BEGINNING AND ENDING STROKES Uniform and accurate beginning and ending strokes are essential in order to produce a pleasing page. They are formed by either an over or under curve. These curves are parts of an oval. Check through the alphabet and see how similar all the ending strokes are. Even the capital D and O end like the small i and n.

THE OVAL

All letters are formed from the oval, which is 2-3 as wide as high. See if your letters O, C, E etc., are on a basis of 2 spaces wide and 3 spaces tall. The letter M is a little wider because of the extra section. See how many letters fit inside the capital letter O. The effect should be that all letters appear the same proportion.

SPACING

Spacing is very important for easy reading as well as for beauty. The small u, a, and n have their down strokes the same distance apart. By studying the illustrations and good handwriting by various penmen you will have a better idea of what to aim for when you practice.

We think ideal spacing in handwriting as in lettering is where the spaces in letters appear the same as between letters. Avoid irregular sized spaces.

SLANT

Writing sloping forward has a dashing, attractive look, and most people prefer it to vertical or backward slanting handwriting. Madarasz said, "Slant is a big boy in attractive handwriting." He used more slant than many penmen, nearly 45 degrees. Perhaps 50 degrees is a good slant to aim at. Too much slant is not desirable. Measure the slant of various specimens of handwriting. Regardless of the exact slant you write try to keep it all even. Different slants in the same page is not pleasing. Uniform slant is secured by

using a regular motion. It is important to keep the paper directly in front of You if you are to secure regular slant. Pull all down strokes toward the center of the body.

TURNS

All turns at the top and bottom of letters should be the same in roundness and width. They are round because they come from a straight line and oval. We ordinarily think of turns at the top of n and m and at the bottom of u and w, however, the top and bottom of loops are turns and should be as wide as any turn. All small letters contain turns except the s, and in reality the bottom is similar to a turn.

Practice a line of u's and n's. Then turn them upside down to see how nearly the same they are in width and slant. Do not stop on a turn or your line will be broken.

ANGLES AND RETRACES

Study the points at the top of the i and u. You will see a very slight retrace. Unfortunately many persons retrace too far and get a crowded look. The retrace in n should be the same as in i. The retraces on t, d and p are long and should not be looped. Looped retraces make work look careless and often illegible. For legibility it is necessary, to give special attention to i and e. Dot the i, and do not get the slightest loop in it or it may be confused for the e which should always be looped and open. There are many angles or retraces in the letters of the alphabet and they should be uniform in appearance.

LOOPS

Ordinarily by loops we mean such letters as l, b, g, j, etc. There are also loops in other letters. Study the groups illustrated. Always keep the loops open and clear. Top and bottom loops should be the same length, size and slant. Loops like l, b, etc., for adult handwriting should be three times as tall as the i.

ALIGNMENT

Beautiful handwriting has the letters of uniform height and all resting on the line. Loops and capitals are about three times as tall as the small letters, a, i, etc. The t, d and p, are twice as tall as the a and i. Check the size of your work. Draw a line along the base to see how many letters extend through. A little of this practice will enable you to improve rapidly.

A uniform fluent movement aids in securing good alignment. Slow hitchhiking movement will produce slow and irregular height of letters.