

The New Zanerian Alphabets

An Instructor in Roundhand, Engrossing, Designing, etc.

By C.P. Zaner

Published by

Zaner and Bloser Co.

Columbus, Ohio (1895)

ROUNDHAND OR ENGROSSER'S SCRIPT.

Materials for Roundhand or Engrosser's Script

Any good writing ink will do for practice, but it is not best, neither will it answer for engrossing. Ink should have enough body to produce a black shade without retouching, but it need not be glossy Arnold's Japan will do. India ink is better. Prepared Liquid India (Zanerian brand) is best. This ink diluted with five parts water and one-half part of powdered gum Arabic to one part of ink, makes a fine ink at a low price. Ink needs enough gum to keep it from flowing too freely but not enough to produce heavy light lines.

Use an oblique holder with the point of the pen well elevated. For general engrossing use Zanerian FineWriter pens. For fine work use Spencerian Epistolare. For real small, dainty work use Gillott's No. 290.

Paper should be of a fine letter quality, bond, wedding, or cardboard. Thin, cheap, soft paper should be avoided.

INSTRUCTIONS.

Roundhand is the highest art in the matter of script forms. It is essentially decorative in character and partakes largely of fine arts. It is specially adapted to the engrossing of resolutions, Diplomas, certificates, policies, valuable documents, records, etc., as well as for display advertising, letter, note and bill heads, calling and professional cards, announcements, etc.

No style is so widely admired by educated people as roundhand. It has continued in use with but slight modifications for three centuries. It will continue to be used for many years to come, and there is a constantly increasing demand for those who can execute it creditably. You will therefore do well to acquire it. It is within the reach of perseverance and talent. It is many times more rapid than lettering, and frequently more fitting. Nothing is more suitable for resolutions and important state papers.

The forms given are such as are used by the best engrossers in the world. As will be seen, they are unlike ordinary light-line script forms, and must be executed on an entirely different basis or plan. The freedom and lightness of movement usually employed in ordinary writing cannot be employed to advantage here. Instead, a movement that is more firm and sure is needed. The little finger should serve as the chief center of control. The

first and second fingers must act some, but not much nor exclusively. Too much finger action will make it tiresome, as will too much arm movement make it unmanageable. Use mainly the hand and forearm. Raise the pen often; as often as indicated. These plates were prepared for the purpose of revealing rather than concealing pen liftings and joinings. For that reason they appear broken and unfinished, but they tell the truths of execution. Study the forms closely. See that down-strokes are slanted, shaded, and spaced uniformly. Notice how the shades increase and diminish at the tops and bottoms of letters and how delicately the shaded strokes bend as they near the line to assist in making a rounding curve. The c, e, o, and a all begin alike, and the oval part of the a is the same as the o.

Practice the forms herewith in the order given. In the first three lines aim to secure uniformity in heft, slant, and spacing. Upper and lower turns should be the same in rotundity. Raise the pen every time at the base line. Learn to raise the pen often and to replace it skillfully. Retouch the ends of the heavy strokes if you wish them square as in the copy.

Use pencil head and base lines for small letters. Study carefully the shapes of letters and how the shades increase and diminish at the tops and bottoms of letters. Make small loop stroke of e downward. Learn to make the letters large at first and then gradually reduce them in size until they are as small as desired. Be content to make them slowly at first and then increase the speed, if that is required.

Notice the fact that there is no connective slant as in the semi-angular forms, but that up strokes are on the same slant as the down strokes. The tendency with beginners is to slant the s and oval part of the 'a' too much. The tendency is to slant the up or connecting strokes too much, especially between such letters as u and n. etc.

Do not become discouraged if you fail to secure as smooth lines at first as desired. Be patient as well as persevering and painstaking. Remember that ink, paper, pens, and holders are important factors in quality of line. Of course, skill of hand is all important. And skill in this sense means not only propelling and controlling power, but it also includes touch or the quality of pressure necessary for smoothness and strength.

Your greatest difficulty will be to secure uniform slant and spacing, and smooth lines. Constant, persevering practice will overcome the first. Careful, analyzing study in the second will reveal that spacings are a trifle wider between letters than in them, and that some are wider than others. When i is joined to n there is a long compound curve which should not be made to extend diagonally (obliquely) across the intervening space, but it should go up on the main slant, and not on the connective, as in ordinary script. When n follows o, the tendency is to make the spacing too wide. Aim to so space that at a considerable distance all shaded lines will appear equally distant, but near at hand each letter will be distinct. Words must be spaced more widely than letters.

To secure smoothness you must hold the pen properly and have a holder that is adjusted scientifically. Besides, you must learn to make each stroke with a quick, snap-like action,

not quite spasmodic, but quickly enough to secure strength and smoothness. This will come by practice. But it is better to have well proportioned forms that are slightly rough than poorly proportioned forms that are smooth.

Learn to depend largely upon the little finger rest as a means of control. Let it serve as the chief center of action, around which the various movements act. Let the movement be slow and sure at this stage of progress, at least True in long lines and many short ones the movement comes from the elbow and above, but it is restricted to a large degree by the hand rest. You must not let your prejudice against finger movement prevent you from using it in this kind of writing. If the fingers were not intended for action they would have no joints or corresponding tendons and muscles.

Raise the pen nearly every time you come to the base line, as indicated by the little openings. Endeavor to secure round, full turns at the top and bottom of letters by making the up strokes on the same slant as the down strokes, and by turning to the right before you come to the base line. Make both sides of the loop downward, the heavy side first. Retouch the ends to make them square, but in practical engrossing they can be made square enough without the retouching.

It takes a good, strong, firm action of the fingers, hand, and forearm to produce smooth, heavy, long shades quite unlike that used in light-line writing. At the same time a certain quickness and elasticity of action may be cultivated and utilized to advantage in this kind of work. Experiment. Do good work in your own way, learning as much as possible from this and other sources.

The line of beauty, the compound curve forms a very considerable part in these forms. And to be a real line of beauty it must be delicately curved, smoothly shaded, and swelled well near the center. You will see also, that the heaviest part of the shade is at half the height. Some of the light-line ovals will be difficult to execute without showing nervous kinks. But kinks are better than reckless, meaningless scrawls. Secure an artistic effect, it matters but little whether you use the fingers or the arm. See that your heavy strokes are uniformly shaded, spaced and slanted; that your lines are graceful and smooth; and that your spacing between letters and words are proportioned so as to be distinct but not detached.

You will do well to master the exercise at the top of the accompanying plate before proceeding to practice the letters. It is an important exercise because it contains the strokes used in so many letters. Raise the pen at the top and bottom of the exercise, or at the bottom only, or not at all as you prefer.

Do not waste time and effort by attempting to make these letters as quickly as in the ordinary ornamental hand.

Slow but sure is the best rule to follow here. Draw the forms rather than write them. Use the fingers and hand most. Let the hand rest securely upon the side of the little finger, which should slip but slightly.

The round, full ovals will be found quite difficult, but careful, painstaking study and practice will win. Raise the pen whenever you can do so to advantage, The slight shade on the upward stroke of the oval of T, P, etc. is made by retouching. Usually this stroke is apt to be somewhat nervous and broken where they are shaded, and the shade is added to strengthen and smooth the line.

Remember that your forms may slant more or less than the ones here given that is a matter of individual preference. The turns may be more rounding or less rounding, etc., but to begin with it will be well to learn to copy the forms given, and then you will know better in what manner you shall desire to modify them.

Don't be in a hurry, but be in earnest. Be careful, be observant, be persevering. If shades are rough on one side your holder or paper is not adjusted properly. The latter should be held much the same as in writing the bottom of the paper at about an angle of twenty degrees with that of the edge of the desk.

No other style of writing is so widely admired by educated people as roundhand. No other style is more easily learned. And no other style is so well suited to the engrossing of resolutions, diplomas, valuable documents, etc., as this. After proper practice it can be written quite rapidly, nearly as rapidly as the usual ornamental light-line forms. If you wish to do fine art engrossing you cannot afford to ignore nor neglect this appropriate style of writing. It is many times more rapid than lettering, and oftentimes more beautiful and fitting.

Reviving interest in Round or Engrossing Script means that some things are good even if they are old. This style of writing attained a very high degree of perfection in beauty and skill in the seventeenth century. During the first half of the present century it was superseded by our light-line, semi-commercial hand. But the latter proved too weak for true ornament and too difficult for practical purposes, so today, the tendency is toward something simple, easy, and rapid for business and something truly ornamental and substantial for art.

Roundhand is easily read when framed and hung upon the wall (which our light-line systems of writing are not); it is graceful and artistic; and it is not so uncertain in execution. It is not rapid, but fine arts (arts for their decorative and graceful qualities) are not judged so much by their quickness as by their quality. Beauty is the chief essential.

The regularly spaced heavy down strokes contains an element of repetition and rhythm which are characteristic of music, decorative art, etc. It is well, therefore, to see that the spacing is approximately even, neither very wide nor narrow, and that the shades are about the same in thickness. Turns should be rounding and graceful, angles should be tangential, and ovals full and graceful.

Study these essentials more and you will need to practice less. Good, clear, definite, tangible concepts are the secrets of superiority, in this art, the same as in painting,

sculpture, music, etc. The hand soon learns to do anything that the mind clearly perceives and the will dictates.

The following plates are given for review and variety of forms.

FREE STYLE ROUNDHAND

The capitals in the four pages following were made off-hand with the arm movement, some with the elbow raised from the desk and some with it resting. The aim is to secure forms that are at once symmetrical, graceful, artistic, and spirited.

The small letters must be executed with deliberation and retouched with care. The fingers and hand are employed principally in the small letters-the little finger serving as the center of control. Raise the pen often in the small letters, usually after every downward stroke.

This style of script is attractive, but too uncertain for engrossing purposes. The capitals being made offhand, the risk regarding pen breaking, flipping of ink etc., is too much to employ them on elaborate specimens of engrossing. But where dash and grace are desired, this style is desirable. If you are a fine light-line penman, or are a skilled Engrosser, this style is easily acquired.

The capitals are the very essence of that kind of skill which comprises accuracy and boldness. It cannot be secured in a day, nor for the asking, but only by intelligent practice.

The pen should be fine and flexible, and the holder should be oblique. Some of the flourished strokes were made with a straight holder held as in flourishing.

Writing of this character requires more or less retouching. And as it takes skill as well as judgment and patience to do this, you will do well to learn to do it well. By so doing you will learn the secret of converting failures into successes.