EARLSMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

SUCCESS *for* ALL

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Mission, Vision, Motto & Values

Mission

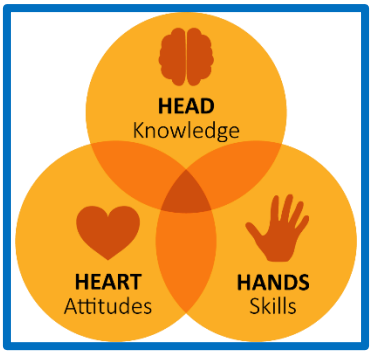
At Earlsmead Primary School, our mission is to empower every child through *Head, Heart, and Hands*. We cultivate curious minds (Head), nurture compassionate spirits (Heart), and develop the practical skills (Hands) needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Vision

Everyone achieving to their full potential.

Motto

Head, Heart and Hands



Values

Head:	**1. Curiosity**	**2. Achievement**
Heart:	**3. Integrity**	**4. Care**
Hands:	**5. Collaboration**	**6. Creativity**

At Earlsmead Primary School, we recognise that clear, legible handwriting and consistently high standards of presentation are essential skills that support pupils' learning across all subjects. This policy sets out our approach to teaching, modelling, and assessing handwriting and presentation, ensuring that all pupils develop pride in their work, accuracy in their writing, and the confidence to communicate effectively. By embedding consistent expectations throughout the school, we aim to foster a culture where high-quality presentation is valued and celebrated.

AIMS

In order to raise writing attainment for all pupils, we have a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting (Nelson Scheme) throughout the school. It should be the aim of every teacher, TA and volunteer to encourage all children to use a well-formed cursive style of handwriting. Teachers and TAs will lead by example and use a cursive script when writing on the whiteboard, flip chart or in children's books when giving feedback. The aim for children is to produce a fluent, consistently formed style of cursive handwriting with equal space between the letters and words as cited in the teaching resource books that are used across the school.

The aim of this policy is to give guidelines that will be helpful to teachers, TAs, and pupils throughout a pupil's journey at Earlsmead Primary School.

RATIONALE

Within this technological, computer-literate age, good handwriting remains fundamental to children's educational achievement. If children are to achieve comfortable, legible handwriting styles, they need to be taught to form and join each letter efficiently in order to meet the age-related writing expectations by the end of key stage two. Children need good models to copy, lots of practice and feedback to help them fine-tune their performance.

PROVISION

At Earlsmead Primary School, children are taught to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed. Pupils are taught to write using the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, developing correct letter formation and progressing towards a fluent, joined style.

Handwriting is explicitly taught and practised at least three times a week from Reception upwards. In KS1, daily handwriting opportunities may also be provided, with a particular focus on correct letter formation, pencil control and developing good handwriting habits.

From Year 1 onwards, every child has a separate, designated handwriting book in which to practise and develop their handwriting. Handwriting sessions should focus on letter formation, appropriate joins and spelling patterns, supporting children to develop accurate, fluent and confident handwriting.

RECEPTION / FOUNDATION STAGE

In Reception, children develop the gross and fine motor skills, strength and coordination needed for successful handwriting. They take part in a range of activities including Dough Disco, threading, construction, malleable materials, tweezers, nipping tools and peg activities to develop hand strength, dexterity and pencil control.

Children are explicitly taught how to hold a pencil using a tripod grip. Adults model and reinforce correct pencil grip, posture and paper position during mark-making and writing activities.

Letter formation is taught and reinforced regularly, particularly through daily phonics and writing opportunities. Letters are taught systematically using letter families, grouping letters with similar formation and movement patterns (see Appendix). The ELS (Essential Letters and Sounds) Handwriting Rhymes are used alongside this to teach and reinforce correct letter formation and provide children with memorable prompts when writing independently.

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Children are encouraged to form letters correctly from the outset so that good handwriting habits are established and consistently reinforced.

Children have regular opportunities to practise pre-writing patterns and letter formation using a variety of materials and resources. As their control develops, they are supported to apply correct letter formation when writing letters, words and simple sentences.

Children who require additional support receive targeted small-group handwriting and fine motor activities, focusing on pencil grip, letter formation, pencil control and fine motor development.

As children progress through Reception, they are supported to develop increasing control, fluency and confidence in their mark-making and writing, providing a strong foundation for the handwriting expectations in Key Stage 1.

KEY STAGE 1 & KEY STAGE 2

From Year 2, once children can form individual letters correctly and consistently, they are introduced to joining letters through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. The scheme supports a progressive and consistent approach to developing clear, fluent and legible handwriting, including the appropriate joining of letters.

All staff are expected to use a consistent approach to handwriting and to model high-quality handwriting across the curriculum. Handwriting lessons include explicit teacher modelling and guided practice, with handwriting linked to the teaching and consolidation of spelling patterns where appropriate.

Handwriting is modelled in a variety of ways to ensure children can clearly see and understand correct letter formation and joins. This includes:

videos from the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to demonstrate letter formation and joins;
the Nelson Handwriting Repeater to provide clear, repeated modelling;
teachers modelling handwriting under the visualiser, allowing children to observe the writing process closely;
an example handwriting book used by the teacher to model the expected presentation, letter formation, size, spacing and joins.

Children are given regular opportunities to practise and apply these skills, with teachers providing feedback and addressing incorrect letter formation or joining patterns promptly.

PROGRESSION

At Earlsmead Primary School, handwriting follows a progressive approach from Reception to Year 6. The Nelson Handwriting Scheme is designed as a whole-school handwriting programme covering Reception to Year 6.

The progression is as follows:

Reception – Nelson Handwriting Starter level, alongside ELS (Essential Letters and Sounds) Handwriting Rhymes, with a focus on developing fine motor skills, pencil control, correct pencil grip, pre-writing patterns and accurate letter formation. The Nelson Starter level specifically includes fine motor development, pattern practice, pencil control and individual letter forms.

Year 1 – Nelson Handwriting Books 1A and 1B: Units 1–28
Year 2 – Nelson Handwriting Book 2: Units 1–28

Year 3 – Nelson Handwriting Book 3: Units 1–28
Year 4 – Nelson Handwriting Book 4: Units 1–28
Year 5 – Nelson Handwriting Book 5: Units 1–28
Year 6 – Nelson Handwriting Book 6: Units 1–28

In Reception, the emphasis is on establishing the physical foundations for handwriting and developing correct letter formation from the outset. From Year 1 onwards, children build progressively on these skills through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, developing increasing accuracy, consistency, fluency and appropriate letter joins.

We do not join the letters: b g j p q x y z

DIFFERENTIATION AND SUPPORT

The Nelson Handwriting Scheme provides opportunities for differentiation so that handwriting teaching and practice can be adapted to meet the needs of individual children. The scheme includes three levels of differentiation, alongside additional teaching resources and handwriting worksheets.

Differentiation may include:

- Children who require additional support working individually or in a small group with a teacher or teaching assistant, with additional opportunities to practise letter formation and joins.
- Using Nelson Handwriting resources and additional practice materials matched to children's needs.
- Providing additional practice using dry-wipe boards, the Nelson Handwriting Repeater or teacher modelling before children practise independently.
- Children who are not yet joining letters securely receiving additional modelling and practice of the appropriate joins.
- Providing guidelines or appropriately lined paper to support children with letter size, positioning and consistency.
- Where appropriate, providing supportive equipment such as pencil grips, thicker pencils or wider lines for children experiencing difficulties with handwriting.
- Providing further challenge for children who have secured letter formation and joins by focusing on consistency, proportion, spacing, fluency and speed, while maintaining legibility.
- Using assessment and observation of children's handwriting to identify areas requiring further modelling, practice or intervention.

The aim of differentiation is to enable all children to make progress through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme at an appropriate level, while maintaining a consistent whole-school approach to letter formation, joins, presentation and handwriting expectations.

PENCILS AND PENS

Children will initially use pencils for handwriting and written work. From Year 3 onwards, when a child demonstrates consistently accurate letter formation and joins and is developing a fluent, cursive style of handwriting, they will be awarded their Pen Licence.

Pen Licences are celebrated during Achievement Assemblies, where children receive a physical Pen Licence award to recognise their achievement and progress in handwriting.

Once awarded a Pen Licence, children are expected to maintain a consistently high standard of legibility, letter formation, joins, spacing and presentation when using a pen.

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Reasonable adjustments may be made for individual children where appropriate.

POSTURE

Children should be taught and regularly reminded to adopt the correct posture for handwriting. They should:

- Sit upright with their feet flat on the floor where possible.
- Sit comfortably with their body facing the table.
- Use their non-writing hand to steady the book or paper.
- Position their book or paper comfortably to support effective handwriting.
- Maintain a comfortable and controlled writing position.

Adults should model and reinforce good posture during handwriting sessions and across the curriculum.

PEN AND PENCIL GRIP

Children are taught to hold their pencil or pen using a comfortable tripod grip. The pencil or pen should be held securely between the thumb and forefinger, resting on the middle finger.

Correct pencil grip should be explicitly taught, modelled and reinforced regularly, particularly during handwriting lessons and writing activities across the curriculum.

Children who experience difficulty maintaining an appropriate pencil grip will be provided with pencil grips to support them in developing a comfortable and effective grip.

LEFT-HANDED WRITERS

Left-handed children should receive appropriate support to develop a comfortable and effective handwriting technique, in line with the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

- The pencil should be held comfortably in the left hand, using an appropriate grip.
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right to support comfortable writing.
- The right hand should be used to steady the paper.
- Children should be encouraged to keep their writing hand below the line of writing, helping them to see what they are writing and reducing the likelihood of smudging.
- Teachers should model and reinforce appropriate pencil grip, posture and paper positioning for left-handed children.
- Where a child has already developed a hooked pencil hold, they should be supported rather than forced to change their established grip.

Nelson provides specific guidance and resources for supporting left-handed pupils, including guidance on grip, posture and paper alignment.

RIGHT-HANDED WRITERS

Right-handed children should be taught and supported to develop a comfortable and effective writing position.

- The paper should be positioned at a comfortable angle to support fluent writing.
- The left hand should be used to steady the paper.
- Children should maintain good posture and an appropriate pencil grip.
- As children write down the page, they should be encouraged to adjust the position of their paper as needed to maintain a comfortable writing position.

- Teachers should regularly model and reinforce appropriate posture, pencil grip and paper positioning during handwriting lessons.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

All teachers and TAs should maintain high expectations for handwriting and presentation across all areas of the curriculum, encouraging pupils to take pride in their work.

Assessment of handwriting should be ongoing and should consider pupils' handwriting across a range of exercise books, rather than solely within handwriting lessons or handwriting books. Staff should identify and address difficulties promptly, particularly where letter formation, pencil control or joining may affect the development of legible, fluent and efficient handwriting.

When assessing handwriting, staff should consider the following:

- Legibility – Can the writing be read easily and clearly?
- Letter formation – Are letters formed correctly, clearly and consistently?
- Joining – Where pupils have been taught to join, are appropriate joins used accurately and consistently?
- Spacing – Are spaces between words and letters appropriate and consistent?
- Size – Are letters appropriately and consistently sized, with clear differences between ascenders, descenders and smaller letters?
- Alignment – Do letters and words sit appropriately on the line?
- Fluency – Is the pupil developing a comfortable, smooth and efficient handwriting style appropriate to their stage of development?

REQUIREMENTS

In line with the National Curriculum, pupils should develop clear, legible and fluent handwriting, with secure letter formation forming the foundation for progression towards accurate joining and increased fluency.

At Earlsmead Primary School, pupils are expected to:

- form lower-case and capital letters correctly, with appropriate size, orientation and proportion
- position letters accurately on the line, demonstrating appropriate ascenders and descenders
- use appropriate and consistent spacing between words
- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes required for joining as these are introduced through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme
- apply the joins they have been taught accurately and consistently
- develop increasing fluency, consistency and speed as they progress through the school
- apply their handwriting skills across the curriculum and take pride in the presentation of their work.

Accurate letter formation should be secure before pupils are expected to join consistently. As pupils progress through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme, they will be taught the appropriate joins and encouraged to apply these increasingly independently within their everyday writing.

Handwriting should not be viewed solely within discrete handwriting lessons. Pupils should demonstrate the handwriting skills appropriate to their stage across a range of work, including their English and wider curriculum books.

Teachers and TAs should consider a range of pupils' work when assessing handwriting to ensure that taught skills are being transferred and applied consistently. Difficulties with letter formation, size, spacing, alignment or joining should be identified and addressed promptly to support the development of a legible, fluent and efficient handwriting style.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

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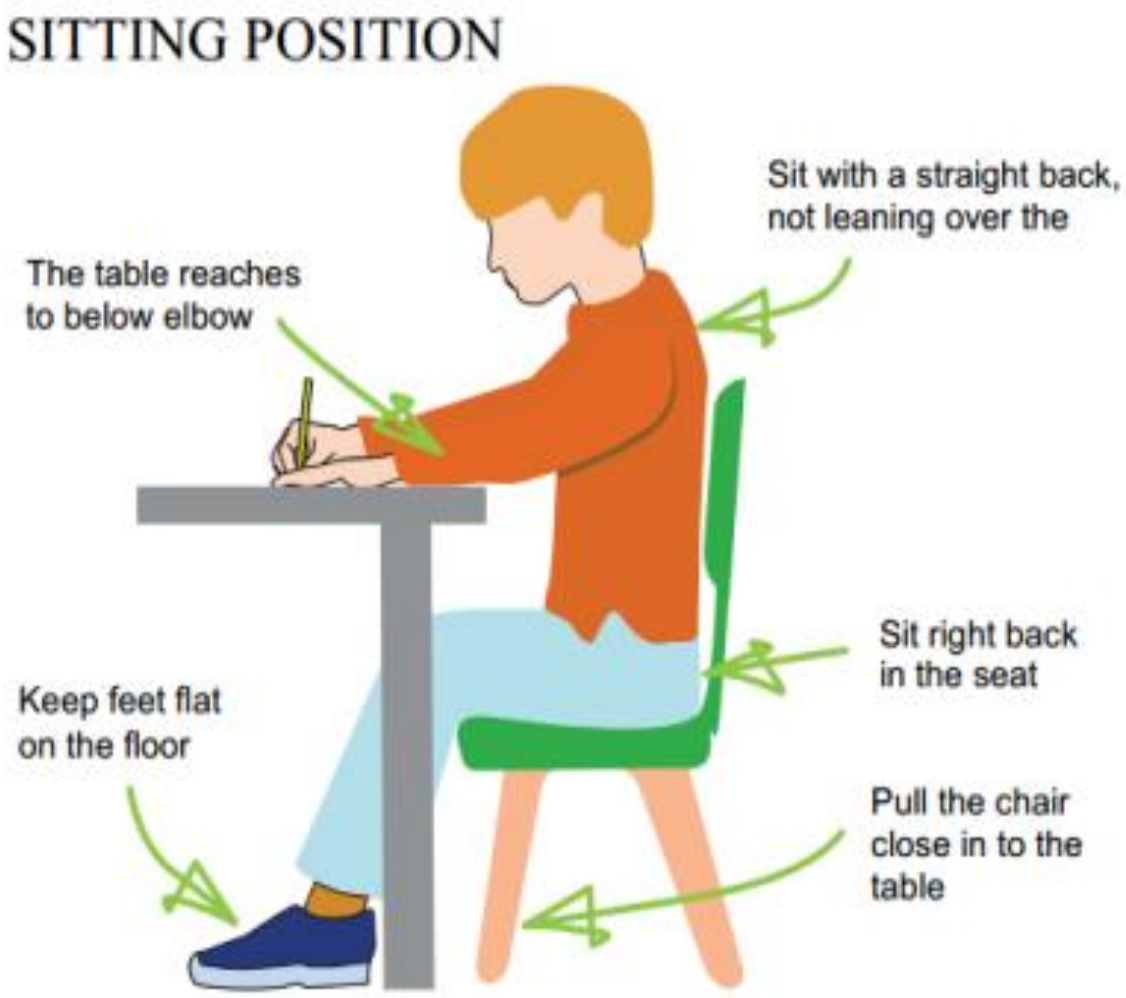
Handwriting and presentation will be monitored regularly across the curriculum. Teachers and TAs will identify pupils who require additional support with letter formation, spacing, joining, legibility or fluency and provide appropriate support.

Pupils will be encouraged to apply the skills taught through the Nelson Handwriting Scheme consistently across all written work.

HANDWRITING BOOKS

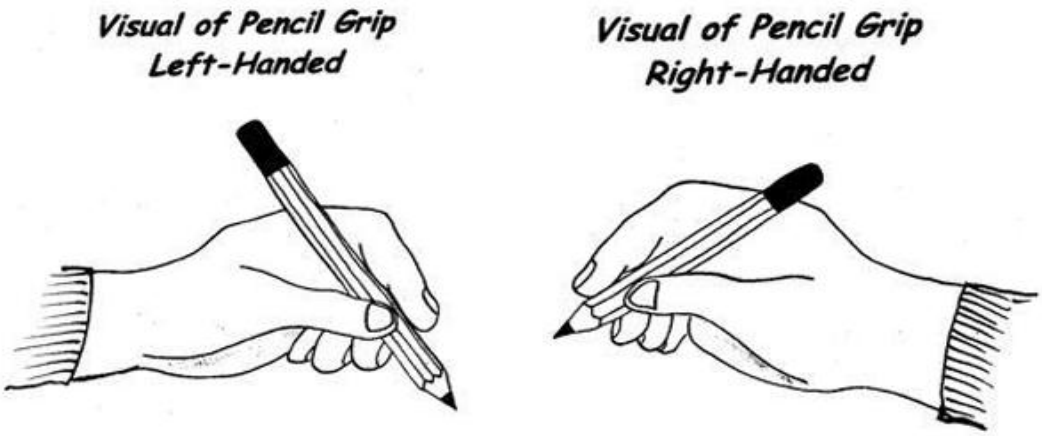
From Year 1 - Year 6, handwriting is practised using A4 Pink Exercise Books, 8mm Lined. These books are used to support children with their handwriting across all subjects as they replicate the lines in the Writing books. Children who require further scaffolding will use the ‘four-line red books’. These books will secure letter formation, joins, sizing and spacing.

Appendix 1: Correct Sitting Position for Handwriting



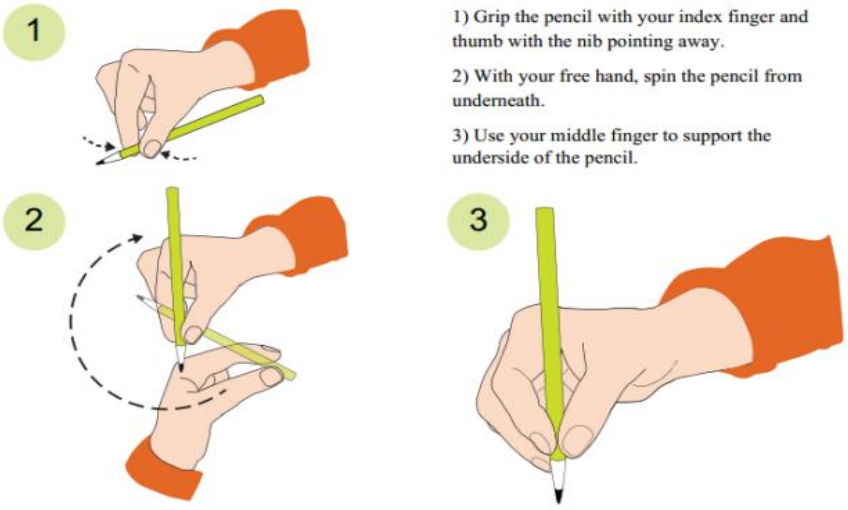
Appendix 2: Correct Pencil Grip for Left- and Right-Handed Writers

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



Appendix 3: Pre-cursive printing of letters

Appendix 4: The break letters (9 letters that aren't joined from) are: b g j p q x y z s



Appendix 5: Letter families

b g j p q x y z s

Letter families set 1- c o a d g f s q e

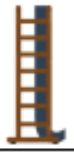
letter families, Set 2 (i l t j u y)

letter families, Set 3 (b h k m n p r)

letter families, Set 4 (v w x z)
capital letters: 'E F H I T L'
capital letters: 'A K M N V W X Y Z
capital letters: 'B D C G O Q S P R U J

formation of numbers 1-10

Appendix 6: ELS – Handwriting Rhymes

	Swerve around the snake		Around the ostrich's body		Down the long ladder
	Around the head, down the body		Curl around the camel's back		Swoop down the tentacles and dot the head
	Down her body and cross her shoulders		Down the body, up the arm, down the leg		Down the tongue, up the tongue
	Down his body, around his face		Around the head and down the trunk		Hop to the top, land and hop, land and hop
	Down her body, spot her idea		Under the umbrella and down to the tip		Criss-cross the kiss
	Down the bird and over the nest		Down her body, up over the arm		Under the hull and down to the anchor
	Meerkat, mound, mound		From his head to his feet, up and over his back		Zig and zag
	Over his back and around the tail, up his neck and down to his feet		Down the person and around the wheel		Around the feather and down the pen
	Start at his ear, around the face and down the beard		Over the ear, down to the tail and across the jaw		

Presentation

It is important to ensure consistency in the presentation of work across the school so that children are clear about expectations as they move through each year group. The SENDCo can provide pencil grips and other appropriate resources to support identified children. Where appropriate, staff may also use strategies such as highlighting writing lines, making lines darker, or leaving alternate lines to support pupils with handwriting and presentation. All staff should follow the guidelines below to ensure consistency, while taking into account the age and individual needs of the children.

AIMS

To ensure a consistent high standard of presentation across the school in exercise books, in order to raise children's self-esteem and pride in their work.

WRITING EQUIPMENT

Children will write in pencil until they demonstrate sufficient ability to write fluently and legibly, at which point they may use a handwriting pen as supplied by the school. Children should write in black ink, ideally with a Manuscript or Berol Handwriting Pen. Gel pens, fineliners and biros are not permitted.

LAYOUT OF WORK

Where children are starting work on a new page of their exercise book or on lined paper, they should write the date on the top line (the gap at the extreme top of the page), miss a line, followed by the learning objective, and then miss another line before starting their work. These should be aligned on the left side of the page, against the margin.

- The date should be written in long form in all subjects apart from mathematics e.g. Monday 5th September 2021, Friday 18th April 2022.
- The short form date should be written as 5.9.21, 18.4.22
- Errors should be neatly crossed out with a single line using a ruler, e.g. ~~recieve~~ receive

BOOKS

Children should be expected to keep their books well presented. They should not 'doodle' on the front cover, or indeed on pages inside. Books which are not kept well-presented may be sent home to be covered, or children may be asked to re-write work on paper to be stuck over messy work.

DIAGRAMS AND PICTURES

Pencils should be used in all subjects to draw pictures and diagrams, along with rulers if necessary. Gel pens, fineliners and felt tips are not permitted in exercise books, as these can smudge or bleed through paper. Crayons and coloured pencils should be used instead.

Glossary of Handwriting Terms

- **baseline:** the line on which most letters rest.
- **x-height:** also called the midpoint, it is the height of all letters that are not ascenders or descenders. Letters that do not go above the x-height are: a c e m n o r s u v w x z
- **ascender:** a letter that goes above the x-height. Letters that go above the x-height are: b d f h k l t and all CAPITAL LETTERS.
- **ascender line:** the line that ascenders go up to. If there were a line across the top of b d f h k l, that would be the ascender line.
- **descender:** a letter that goes below the baseline. Letters that go below the baseline are: f g j p q y. The part that goes below the baseline is called the tail.
- **descender line:** the line that descenders go down to. If there were a line across the bottom of f g j p q y, that would be the descender line.
- **upstroke:** any movement upward with the writing instrument.
- **downstroke:** any movement downward with the writing instrument.
- **stem:** the vertical line in a letter: B b D d F f g H h I i J j K k L l M m N n P p R r T t u Y
- **crossbar:** the horizontal line through these letters: A E F f G H T t

- **counter:** the white space inside a closed letter like these: A a B b D d e g O o P p Q q
- **flourish:** an ornamental stroke, also called a swash.
- **hook:** a tiny flourish, usually on the end of a letter.
- **slant:** to left or right in comparison to vertical angle, also called gradient.
- **weight:** the thickness of the lines