

# Year 1 Handwriting: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to handwriting can help you support your child's learning at home. Each subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing you with a simple guide to follow when exploring writing, letter formation and pencil control together, either as part of homework or if you decide to give your child some extra support. Handwriting is a skill that develops at different rates for different children and there are plenty of fun activities you can do to support your child. Whether your child is just mastering the basic hand movements and pencil holding techniques needed to form letter shapes or they are already forming legible words, there's a step that'll match your child's needs.

**Within this area of the website**, you will find a selection of resources intended to help your child learn about each step of this guide. Each step also contains a keyword or phrase that you can use to search the Twinkl site for more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together.

developing fine motor skills



Click here



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. The contents of this resource are for general, informational purposes only. This guide is intended to offer parents general guidance on what subject areas tend to be covered in their child's year group and where they could support their children at home. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. There are some subject areas that we have intentionally not covered due to the nature of how they are taught or because a trained professional needs to teach these areas. We try to ensure that the information in our resources is correct but every school teaches the national curriculum in its own way. If you would like further guidance or are unsure in any way, we recommend that you speak to your child's teacher or another suitably qualified professional.

# Handwriting

## What Is Pencil Grip?

The way that a child holds a pencil can make a huge difference to how easily they can make accurate shapes. The best way to get maximum stability and writing speed is to use the hold known as the 'dynamic tripod grip'. Their technique gradually develops from using their whole fist to using their thumb and forefinger.

## What Is the Dynamic Tripod Grip?

The dynamic tripod grip involves holding a pencil lightly between the thumb and the index finger and middle finger, with the ring and little finger curling gently into the palm of the hand. Children are likely to work through different gripping patterns as they develop a secure and strong pencil grip for writing and drawing. **This guide for parents** outlines the different pencil grip techniques commonly used by children as their grip develops naturally.

## What Is Pencil Control?

Pencil control is a term teachers use to describe how a child moves the pencil over paper, creating turns and shapes. Pencil control begins even before a child gets a pencil: making shapes in sand, salt or flour can help your child make larger movements that can be refined into pencil control later on. As children move through the infant years, they need to become increasingly able to make letters and shapes join, to stop and turn where there are lines on paper and to gradually make smaller shapes that are accurate. Pencil control is often improved through work with patterns, rather than always by forming letters or words.

## Is My Child Left-Handed?

Most children will have settled on which hand they write with by the age of five. Children that write with their left hands tend to achieve writing fluidity slightly later than right-handed children. You can help your left-handed child by encouraging them to turn the paper slightly clockwise and bring their elbow in towards the waist so their hand moves below the line of writing. By doing this, your child may find it easier to monitor what they are writing and have more control over their hand.

As well as using the resources in this category and the keyword searches to help your child with pencil grip, a few ideas for games and activities to help your child develop their pencil control at home are outlined below.

### Dot to Dots

Basic children's dot to dot puzzles are great for pencil control. Children need to draw lines with care, reach fixed points on the page and change the pencil's direction.

### Kitchen Fun

Cooking activities offer lots of opportunities for children to form letter shapes and patterns with different instruments in ingredients. From making swirls in cake mixture to writing their name with their finger in a pile of flour, it's fun and can help your child with instrument grips, hand movements and letter shapes.

### Tongs and Tweezers Games

Opening and closing tweezers uses a tripod-style grip. Why not have fun challenges timing how long it takes to pick up ten objects and put them in a bowl? Perhaps start with tongs and dry pasta and move on to tweezers with frozen peas, sweetcorn or even rice.

### Playdough Letters

Encourage your child to think about the shapes of letters by forming them with playdough. Help them to roll out long, thin sausages of playdough, then place in it the shape of letters, e.g. a circle and a stick for the letter 'd'.

## Step 1

### Developing Fine Motor Skills

Before developing letter shapes as they learn to write, children need to continue to develop fine motor skills. These are the smaller movements that children make with their hands, fingers and wrists (e.g. when they thread beads, hold crayons or lift a toy from its box). These handy cards can help your child practise fine motor skills as fun challenges with everyday materials. It's a great first step for getting hands and muscles to work with small movements, making pencil grip and drawing patterns easier.



### What About Pencil Grip?

This helpful guide includes information about pencil grip and includes ways to encourage and promote development, such as methods for building hand muscles and activities to do at home. Use chunky triangular pencils to try to encourage a natural progression of pencil grip; build confidence by letting your child continue to use a range of instruments to make marks, whether it's twigs on muddy pathways, wax crayons on construction paper or when painting. Each activity uses different muscles and this helps to make grip development a more instinctive step.

## Step 2

## Step 3

### Pencil Control

Practising handwriting and pencil control activities can help your child to develop their fine motor skills, pencil grip and handwriting style. This colourful booklet is full of entertaining fine motor activities and pencil control challenges that can be done at home. You can find plenty of themed colouring pages on the **Twinkl Parents site** that can also help to develop pencil grip and fine motor skills.



### Practising Handwriting

This amazing handwriting pack is a specially-devised pack to support parents. As your child's pencil grip develops, it's time to move onto letter shapes and continue to practise the patterns that help your child to strengthen the fine motor movements needed to make tidy writing.

## Step 4



# Explore and Discover More

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Boost

Twinkl Boost is a range of intervention resources, created to support and lift learning with children at every level. These include our easy-to-use SATs and Phonics Screening resources.



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imagine

Imagine resources are designed to help your children to think creatively, question and imagine. Every week, a new topic consisting of five photos, each with related activities, is created.



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ORIGINALS

Twinkl Originals are engaging stories written to inspire pupils from EYFS to KS2. Designed to encourage a love of reading and help curriculum-wide learning through accompanying resources.



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KIDS' TV

Twinkl Kids' TV is our wonderful YouTube channel dedicated to fun and informative video-style resources full of new and creative activities you can try at home!