

Year 2 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 and sentences, 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.

 

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 However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date.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 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 help a child to 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 words.

What is Cursive Writing?

Cursive writing is writing that joins. Many people believe that cursive writing involves joining all the letters in a word and looks like 'loopy writing'. This is not the case. Each school will have made an agreement about what handwriting style they use. Some styles join all lower case letters including descenders (g, y, q etc) using a loop. However, many cursive styles do not join every letter and some do not join letters that end on the left-hand side, such as b, p and s.

Many countries have a style that is consistent across the country or region. In English schools, handwriting style is determined by individual schools. Some schools offer a handwriting page or guide for parents and others offer a parent meeting or workshop to explain handwriting.

My Child's School Uses Strange Lower Case Letters in Infants. Why Is This?

In UK schools, the tradition was to teach children to print words neatly in a simple, straightforward letter pattern and perfect writing this way. Later, usually in the junior years, children were introduced to new letter shapes as they learned 'joined handwriting'. Some schools still follow this pattern. However, many schools that separate letters at the infant stage use the letter shapes that children will use when they join their writing. Your child's school may put 'kicks' on the end of letters and some may also start letters on the line if they are on the journey to fully cursive writing. It is important to know where your child's school starts each letter. For example, a letter h in many schools starts at the top, but in other schools the letter starts at the bottom and goes up and down before completing the letter. At Twinkl, we have templates, worksheets and activities for both approaches, so once you know, there'll always be plenty of material you can use!

What Does the National Curriculum Say About Handwriting?

The national curriculum does not require children to develop fully cursive writing and, in fact, in the upper junior years, some of the learning objectives require children to determine which letters they will join and which they won't. By the end of primary school, children are expected to adjust their writing speed and pattern according to the task and purpose of writing.

Many schools adopt a separated-letter start to writing, sometimes using the separate cursive letters and sometimes using a 'printing' style. Other schools start with joined writing straight away. There are some spelling benefits of joining writing early and some cosmetic benefits in joining later, but there are good reasons for using each model. As a parent helping your child, it is sensible to check what your child's school does and work in a similar way. It is likely that your child will be expected to develop all the techniques of cursive writing and then to ultimately find, by the end of primary school, the joined style that works best for them.

Mindfulness Colouring

Being tense when writing can really affect pencil grip and writing flow. Finding a way to relax could really improve your child's perspective and practice. Why not use some age-appropriate **colouring pages** to combine a restful activity with fine motor practice? Your child will also be practising pencil grip at the same time!

Letters in the Air

There are ways that you can practise writing anywhere, even without pen or paper. Play a guessing game where your child draws a letter in the air. What about three letter words? Can everyone guess? Practising the exact up, down and round movements in the school's style gives large-scale practice and helps your child's brain to rehearse the connections between letters.

Whose Shower Writing is Neater?

Writing letters in the condensation of a shower cubicle is a great way to practise joined (cursive) writing. The surface is smooth and has low-friction which can help your child to neatly join letters. Always take care not to slip!

Take a Break

Sometimes, writing at length can feel like a tiring chore and can discourage your child from writing. Encourage them to take regular breaks with finger exercise or yoga to stretch and rest their mind. Why not play 'rock, paper, scissors' or have a quick thumb war?



Step 1

Improving Fine-Motor Skills

Mindfulness colouring is a great way to refine your child's fine motor skills (hand and finger strength and coordination) in the upper infant year. Many children still find even control of the pencil for shading areas and staying within narrow lines quite a challenge and starting here allows your child to relax with a non-threatening activity, practise their pencil grip and improve the evenness of pressure on the page - all basic ingredients of confident, tidy handwriting.



Pencil Control Pattern Workbook

In year 2, children will begin to use narrower lines where they are able to. This means that it becomes increasingly important to be able to stop on the line, to change pencil direction and to make both curved and sharp changes of direction with your pencil. Use these colourful **pencil control worksheets** with your child, making connections between the dots to make patterns.

Step 2



Step 3

From Pencil Control to Cursive Writing

Most schools introduce some forms of joined writing during year 2 or year 3. This depends on an individual school's choice and sometimes on the progress of individual children. **This cursive writing pack** helps to bridge the journey from pencil control patterns (in step 2) towards joined writing. Your child can trace along the dotted lines to form the letters.

Practising Sentences and Phrases

Some children find it useful to use 'handwriting lines' and larger writing to practise the shapes that joined (cursive) writing requires. **These helpful sheets** get children into the habit of creating letters in proportion, which can be tricky at the infant stage. In this pack, all letters start on the line. Many of our lovely Twinkl handwriting sheets are available in a range of styles that are listed underneath a resource in a section called 'alternative versions'. These might include 'no lead in' for schools where children don't start every letter on the line, 'precursive' for the writing period before children join their letters and 'cursive' for the joined script.

Step 4



Explore and Discover More

Twinkl Go! is a digital platform, hosting interactive content such as videos, games, audiobooks and more. Twinkl Go! enables digital content to be streamed to your computer or mobile device.



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Book Club

Twinkl Book Club is our book subscription service. Enjoy our original works of fiction in beautiful printed form, delivered to you each half-term and yours to keep!



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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!