

# Year 4 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 needs more chance to practise letter shapes and words, or whether they're moving on towards developing their own handwriting style, there's plenty of Twinkl support and resources available to help.

**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 However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date.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 Important in Year 4 Handwriting?

By the end of year 4, children are expected to have developed fluid handwriting so that they are able to write with consistent letter sizes in the right proportions. Children are also expected to write at a sufficient speed so that they can write down their thoughts at a reasonable pace.

## What Is Cursive Writing?

Cursive writing is writing that joins up letters; by year 4, most children are making regular joins in their handwriting. Although many 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 a decision about which handwriting style to use. Some styles join all lower case letters including descenders (f, g, j, y) 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, though there are objectives in the national curriculum and teacher guidance for developing handwriting. Some schools offer a handwriting page or guide for parents and others offer a parent meeting or workshop to explain handwriting.

## Does Cursive Handwriting Help With Spelling?

There is some evidence that children's spelling is aided when their writing joins. As they practise the joins in common letter blends (such as words ending in -ough), the repeated action of the hand joining the letters supports the correct letter order and therefore leads to more accurate spelling. However, there is always a balance to be struck. For example, if your child has difficulty forming careful loops in writing, they may find it difficult to read back through their work and check their spellings.

## What Does the National Curriculum Say About Handwriting?

The national curriculum does not require children to develop fully joined writing; in fact, 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. When writing notes, it is acceptable to have writing that is less tidy than when writing a poem in best handwriting.

By year 3 and 4, the national curriculum expects that children will start to make judgements about which letters should be joined and which should be left unjoined. The reason for this is that children are expected to balance the speed and neatness of their writing as they start to write at greater length.

### Strike a Yoga Pose

Too much handwriting practice can lead to achy muscles and while twiddling your thumbs can help, it's not a fun distraction. Why not try a yoga pose together with your child to some gentle background music?

Putting weight through the hands uses different muscles to those used when writing, so you can both relax your mind, body and hands ready for more writing after.

### Rock, Paper, Scissors

If your child needs a break to stretch their hands in-between writing sessions, you could play a game of 'Rock, Paper, Scissors'. Why not play to decide which piece of homework your child should tackle next? This helps to stretch and relax the hand muscles in different ways after gripping a pencil for a while, so it can offer a fun break with the chance to stretch out the hand and wrist.

### Gift a Poem

Family members will love a gift written in your child's best writing. Choose a verse online together and use your child's favoured **Twinkl line guide**. You can use patterns to decorate the border of the poem before framing it or mounting it on a piece of card.

### Playing Pretend

Role playing and pretend games are a great way to practise important skills without having to sit down at a table and write. What real-life scenarios could your child play in order to practise writing? Could they pretend to be a teacher, doctor or shop owner? They could 'mark' a piece of work, write lists or pretend prescriptions or take note of their stock.



## Step 1

### Handwriting and Poetry

The main aim of handwriting in year 4 is to obtain the fluency and consistency of writing needed to ensure that children are writing at a good pace and level of neatness in their own independent writing work. **This pack** contains poems of different lengths to gradually extend the length of writing during the year. Your child can practise first by tracing the words of each poem in their neatest handwriting to form smooth, cursive letter lines before using the right line guide (see step 2) to write the poem in their best handwriting. If the poem is long, you needn't have your child write everything; perhaps one verse will be enough. If you're going to make a display piece out of the writing, then you could put a paperclip on white A4 paper over the top of the line guide so that the paper is less likely to move.

### Choosing the Right Line Guide

In year 4, children need to be working towards a size of writing that fits between 8mm lines. For a few children, this is too small to complete the necessary round-letter shapes and still fit in ascenders (the tall bits of lower-case letters). To help your child build confidence in writing, why not use **this pack of line guides** to work out which line guide works best for your child and encourage your child to use this at home. Over time, you may reduce the height of the lines as your child practises.

## Step 2

## Step 3

### Handwriting Practise

Here at Twinkl, we have our own handwriting scheme that is widely popular in schools and offers a choice of two different styles (cursive un-looped and continuous cursive looped). Why not try out **this free taster pack** and match the activities you use to the handwriting style that your child's school uses? It includes free fonts, animated letter formations and a variety of exercises and activities to support your child's handwriting development in the junior years. You can also read our informative **Twinkl Handwriting User Guide** to find out how schools use the scheme.

### Handwriting and Spelling

By year 4, children are joining words in varying degrees. **This bumper pack** contains all the year 4 spellings in a number of different handwriting stages so you can choose the best one for your child. Remember that not all children (or schools) use complete cursive script. However, evidence suggests that joining letters consistently aids spelling, as repetitive practise of certain word sounds (such as -ough) leads to greater retention.

## 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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twinkl  
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!