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Implementation

Here are some quick tips and suggestions on how to easily and effectively implement cursive writing instruction in the classroom.

Cursive Only!

While learning cursive can be combined with other content areas, it is also vital to set aside some classroom time specifically for cursive instruction. Students will need to learn, and routinely be reminded of, proper letter formation. Visual and verbal cues can go a long way in helping students learn the motions associated with cursive writing. For example, use an interactive whiteboard or the classroom board to demonstrate the proper formation of a letter while also verbalizing the instructions for that letter. This way, students who cannot learn the handwriting pattern simply by seeing it done on the board, will also be receiving verbal instructions.

Look Closely!

Be sure to watch students as they practice their cursive to ensure proper mechanics are being used. You may have students take turns coming to the board to practice writing letters, or you may wish to have small groups of students come to the back of the room and write letters while you observe. It is important to check student work on an individual basis so as to correct any handwriting inaccuracies.

Start Big!

When first learning cursive, it is best to make the letters big! This allows students to better see the motions it takes to learn proper letter formation. Have students write one letter per page, or practice writing large letters in the air with their fingers or outdoors using sidewalk chalk. Once students master the letters on a large scale, they will be able to transfer their knowledge of letter formation to the proper, smaller size.

Practice Makes Perfect!

Be sure students are practicing cursive daily! Find ways to weave cursive practice into your daily routines in the classroom. Here are some tips on how to do that!

Math

Have students write word problems in cursive. Or have them use cursive to explain the steps they took to solve a particular math problem.

Social Studies

Have students pick a favorite historical figure and write a journal entry in cursive from that person's perspective. Or ask students to imagine they witnessed a famous historical event. Have them write a first-person detailed account of the event in cursive.

Science

Have students record their scientific observations and findings in cursive.

Reading

Have students summarize the plot or main ideas and supporting details of a text in cursive.

Speaking and Listening

Have students take turns telling the class three things about themselves, one of which is not true. The students listening must write which one they think is not true on a sheet of paper. Students will have so much fun guessing which is not true that they will forget they are practicing their cursive!

Writing

Have students keep a daily journal. They may write about what they did that day, what they ate that day, what they read, watched, or saw that day. They can write about whatever they choose as long as it is in cursive.

Teacher Notes

When students are first learning how to write in cursive, it is important to devote time solely to practicing the basics. Frustration that often accompanies learning cursive can be avoided by teaching students the proper ways to produce the curves, waves, spikes, slants, and loops needed to form the letters of the alphabet.

Teaching by Letter Groups

Forget alphabetical order when teaching cursive! It is best to group the letters according to the way in which they are formed. The letters in this book are grouped into categories based on a specific letter characteristic they share. For example, lowercase *m*, *n*, *v*, *x*, *y*, and *z* have been grouped together because they all begin with a bottom line undercurve. There are five lowercase letter groups (see page 15).

Since lowercase and uppercase letter partners are not always identical in the way they are formed, uppercase letters are introduced separately (see page 16). They have been grouped according to their initial formation, referred to as starters. There are six uppercase letter groups. Students will practice each uppercase letter and write signatures beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

1

Distribute copies of the Alphabet Chart (page 9) for students to take home as a reference. Be sure to also have copies posted around the classroom for students to use as a guide when needed.

2

Start students off on the right track! Good posture will help when writing in cursive. Distribute copies of Preparing to Write to students (page 14), and walk them through the steps. Watch students closely to be sure they are gripping their writing instruments correctly. If students are struggling to hold the pen or pencil correctly, consider giving them shorter writing instruments. The decrease in surface area can help ensure a proper grip.

3

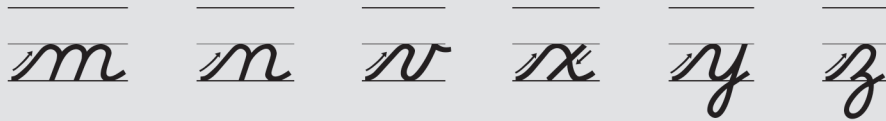
Distribute copies of Uppercase Letters and Lowercase Letters to students (pages 10–11). As you introduce a letter, model how to correctly form the letter. Ask students to try recreating the letter as you walk them through the process. Reassure your students that this is just to familiarize them with the letters. They will be practicing the letters in Letter Groups later.

4

Distribute copies of pages 12 and 13. Have students practice these basics of cursive writing until they are familiar and comfortable with the movements. Have students practice not only on paper but also in the air with their fingers. You may consider having them practice by using chopsticks in play dough, fingers in rice, or capped pens in salt or sugar!

Lowercase Letter Groups

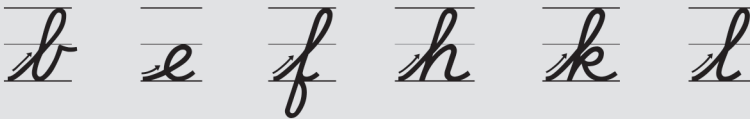
**Group
1**



These letters begin with a bottom line undercurve that makes a wave-like turn at the midline.



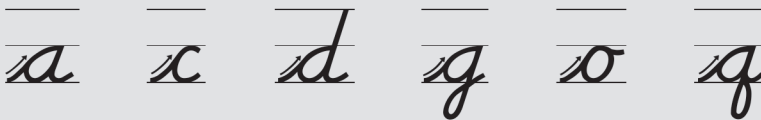
**Group
2**



Each letter in this group begins at the bottom line and slants upward into a loop.



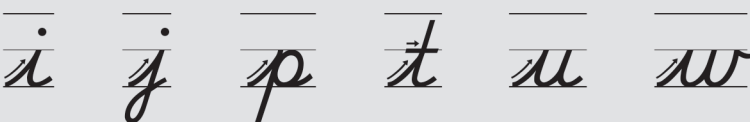
**Group
3**



These letters begin with a bottom line undercurve that curves back on itself at the midline and continues to form the rest of the letter.

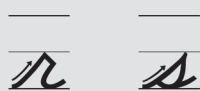


**Group
4**



These letters begin like Group 3 letters, but they slant up to form a spike at or above the midline. Then, they descend along the spike before continuing the letter.

**Group
5**



These letters begin like the Group 4 letters, but they do not form a spike. Instead, they each drop down in a unique way.



Teacher Notes

Learning how to properly form the letters in cursive takes patience and practice. Here are a few tips and tricks to help you create a comfortable environment for your students!

Plain Paper, Large Letters

Prior to using lined paper, have students practice writing the letters on blank sheets of paper. Have them create large letters first. Consider covering classroom tables or desks in butcher paper or chart paper and have students practice forming large letters. Once they are comfortable forming large letters, they can then transfer to lined paper and begin working on writing smaller letters.

Try Tracing!

Have students practice tracing the letters first with their fingers then with their writing instruments. After they have traced the letters a few times, have them create the letters themselves.

Slow and Steady

Be sure students have a firm grasp on one letter group before advancing to the next. Take it slow and steady so as not to frustrate students. Learning cursive can be like learning a new language for some students.

Learn and Link

Once students have learned two or more letters, be sure to have them practice linking the letters. The letters do not combine to form a word in these early stages. The focus should be on reminding students that in cursive, the letters link together or connect. They need to practice not lifting their writing instruments off the page between each and every letter!

Connect Home and School

Distribute additional copies of the letter formation activity sheets for homework so as to encourage students to continue to practice their cursive skills at home. Be sure parents are involved and helping. Have children write notes to their parents in cursive. Then, ask that the parents write replies (in cursive of course!).

Letter Groups: Lowercase

Name: _____ Date: _____

Group 3			<i>delicious</i> <i>dessert</i>
--------------------	---	---	------------------------------------

Directions: Trace each letter. Then write each letter as many times as possible. Circle your three best letters.

d d d d d

d

Group 3			<i>giddy</i> <i>gecko</i>
--------------------	---	---	------------------------------

Directions: Trace each letter. Then write each letter as many times as possible. Circle your three best letters.

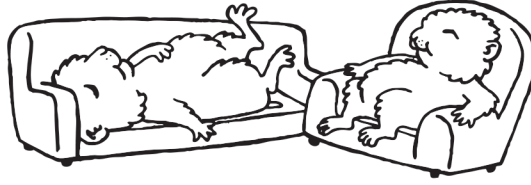
g g g g g

g

Letters to Words to Sentences

Name: _____ Date: _____

L l



Directions: Trace each letter. Then write each letter as many times as possible.

L L L

l l l

Directions: Trace the sentence. Then write the sentence.

Lazy lemmings love
lounging.

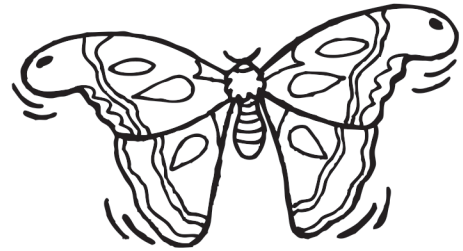
A-Z Thematic Writing Practice

Name: _____ Date: _____

Moths

Directions: Read the following paragraph. Then rewrite it using your best cursive.

Moths are insects. They are related to butterflies. Moths start as caterpillars. They make cocoons. When they come out of the cocoon, they are fully grown moths.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for cursive writing.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Months of the Year

Directions: Trace over the months of the year. Then rewrite them on the lines provided.



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December