



# Handwriting at HBN





## **Why is handwriting important?**


Becoming fluent with handwriting helps your child in a variety of ways, perhaps, more than you would think.

- ☑ When the formation and placement of letters becomes automatic, it frees up space in the working memory.
- ☑ Confidence can be built through good handwriting as it creates a sense of pride.
- ☑ Fluent handwriting can improve creativity as it allows the brain to concentrate on content.
- ☑ Reading and writing are reciprocal skills, so improvement in one, helps the other.
- ☑ Legible handwriting means children can read their work easily and correct things such as spellings.

## **Handwriting at HBN**

### **Warming Up**

When writing, we use a large array of muscles, not only in our hands and arms but also throughout our core. To help the development of handwriting, particularly in the early stages, it is important to build strength in these areas. In addition, it is important to practise fine (those that require a high degree of control and precision in the small muscles of the hand) and gross motor skills (those that use the large muscles in the body to allow for balance, coordination, reaction time, and physical strength so that we can do bigger movements). At the beginning of handwriting lessons, we do activities that support the children in building strength and coordination.

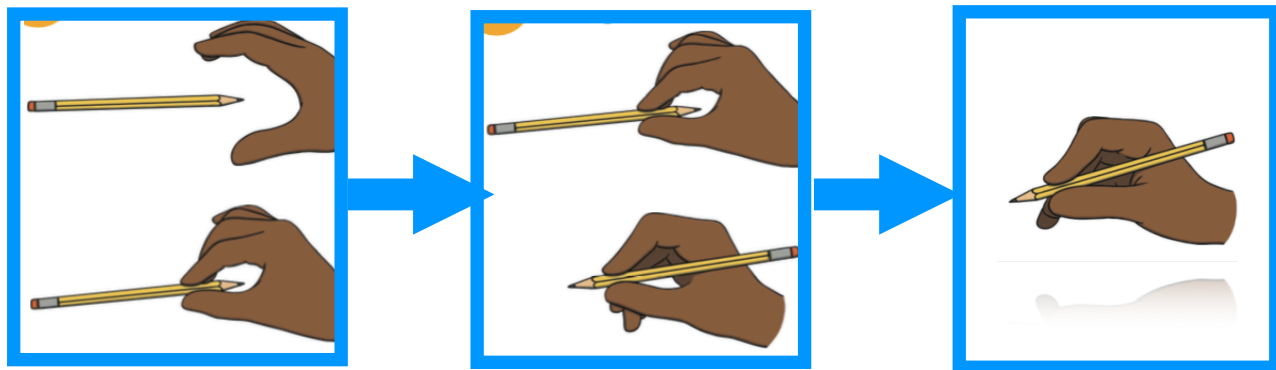


## Before writing

There are several things we remind the children of before they begin writing in all lessons.

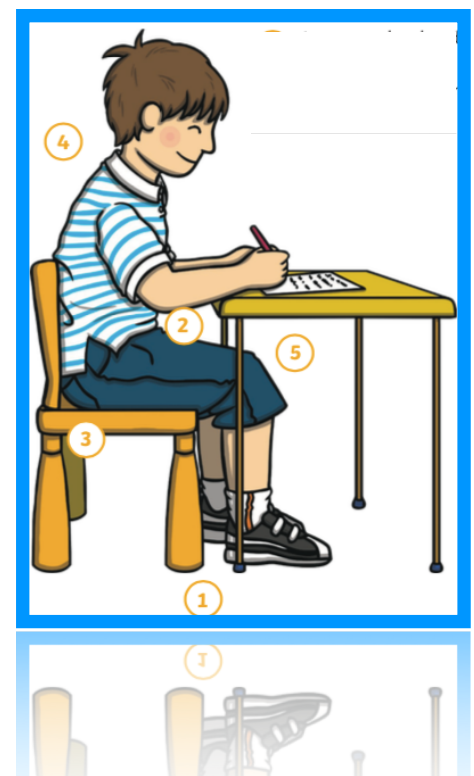
- **Pencil Grip** - we teach the children to nip, flip and grip (see diagram).

- (1) Choose the writing tool that is best suited to the task. **'Nip'** it towards the end.
- (2) **'Flip'** the writing tool around so that it is resting on your hand.
- (3) **'Grip'** the writing tool. Make sure it is pinched between the ball of the thumb and the forefinger, supported by the middle finger with the other fingers tucked away.



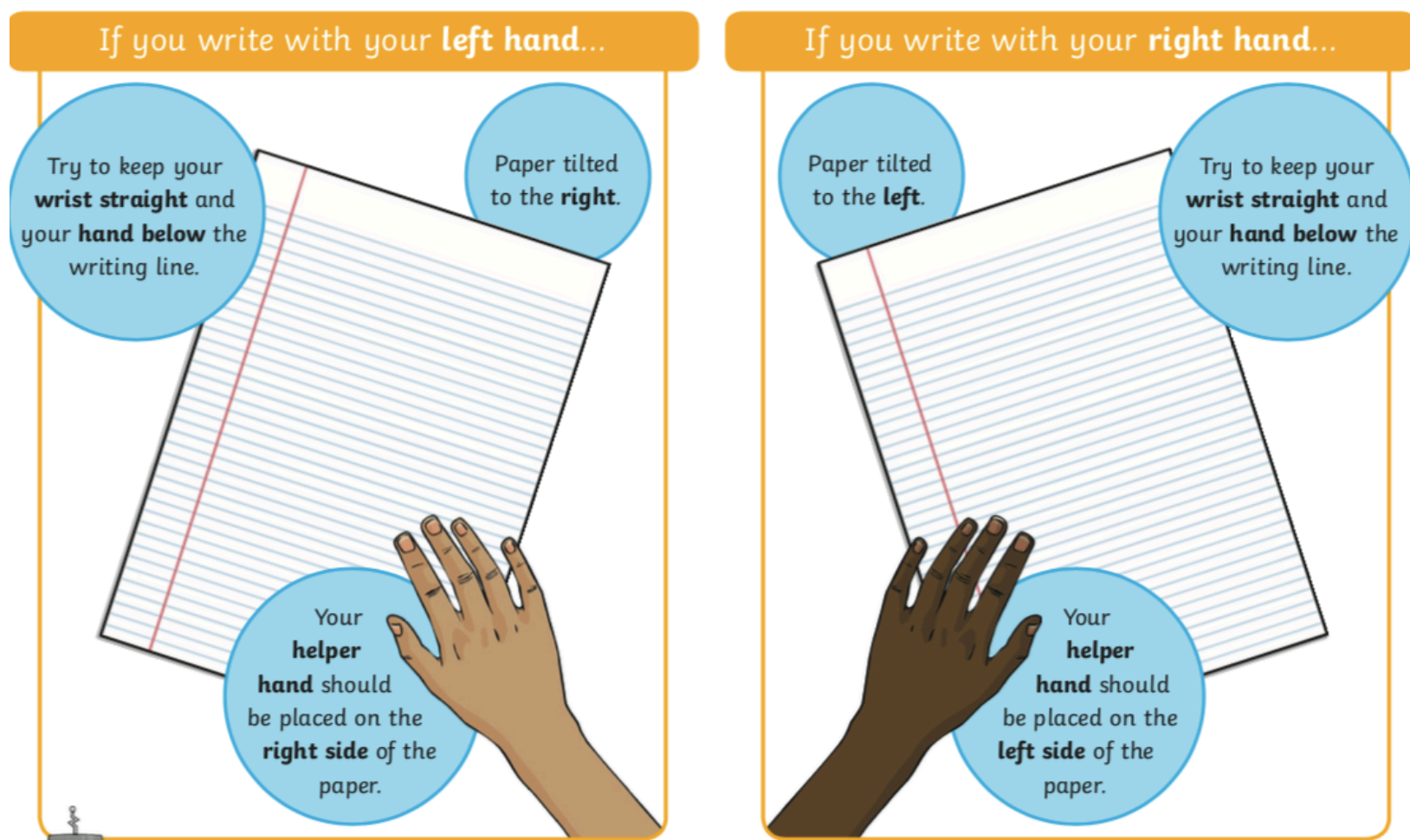
- **Sitting position** - it is important that children sit in a position that supports their writing (see diagram).

- (1) Place both feet flat on the floor.
- (2) Move your elbows so they're resting off the edge of the desk.
- (3) Move your bottom to the back of the chair.
- (4) Lean your head and shoulders slightly forward.
- (5) Bend your knees bent at a 90° angle.





- **Paper position** - placing paper in different positions changes depending on the hand a child write with. The position of paper is important to help children feel comfortable when they are writing (see diagram).



## Letter Formation

At HBN, we currently teach cursive letter formation (see below).



Letters are taught in groups that have similar formations. We refer to these groups as 'Letter Families'.

### The ladder family (l, i, u, t, y, j)



- l** down from the top
- i** down, lift and dot
- u** down, round, up and down
- t** down from the top, curve, lift and across
- y** down, round, up, down and round
- j** down to the bottom, around, lift and dot

### The one-armed robot family (n, m, h, k, b, p, r)



- n** down and up, around, down and stop
- m** down and up, around, down and up around, down
- h** down from the top, up, around and down
- k** down from the top, up and right round, kick
- b** down from the top, and around
- p** down from the top, up and around
- r** down, up, around and stop

### The curly caterpillar family (c, a, d, e, s, g, f, q, o)



- c** curve around and stop
- a** curve around, up and down
- d** curve around, up to the top and down
- e** up and diagonal across, curve round and stop
- s** curve around, curve around
- g** curve around, up, down to the bottom and around
- q** curve, down and cross
- o** curve around, up, down to the bottom and flick
- f** curve around and up around



### The zigzag monster family (z, v, w, x)



<b>z</b>	across, diagonal down, across
<b>v</b>	diagonal down, diagonal up
<b>w</b>	diagonal down, diagonal up, diagonal down and diagonal up
<b>x</b>	diagonal down, lift, diagonal down

In the early stages of learning to write children will not necessarily focus on letter formation right away but instead activities that will support pencil control. When children are beginning to learn how to form different letters there are various methods such as air writing or tracing with their fingers in sand that teachers will use to support their learning.

## How can you help at home?

- Play games or do activities that will help improve hand, arm and core strength and fine and gross motor skills.
- Practise getting ready to write - use the information in this leaflet about pencil grip, sitting position and paper position.
- Make time to write - create opportunities for your child to practise handwriting. For example, ask them to write a message in a greetings card or suggest that they add words or labels to their pictures. As children get older, create opportunities for extended piece of writing - they could write stories, information posters or letters to members of the family, for example.
- Get creative - encourage your child to draw, colour, paint, and do crafting activities at home using a range of different materials. These activities all provide opportunities to develop control, fine motor skills, and hand-eye coordination. Look for opportunities on days out, for example, on a trip to the beach, write in the sand.
- Incorporate with spelling practise - copy the words your child is learning in class.