Mr. Potter's Cursive Handwriting Fluency Development Exercises

Name:	Date:		ate:
Instructions: Write Do this everyday u	te the short alphabet strings in cu intil you can write the entire conr	rsive two times with your eyes open an nected alphabet in cursive with your ey	nd one time with your eyes closed . res open and closed.
abcd	·		
efg			
hÿk			
lmnop			
grs			
tur			
WXW			

Notes on the Use of the Cursive Alphabet Fluency Exercises

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The Goal: The goal of these Exercises is to develop accuracy and speed - without sacrificing legibility - in cursive handwriting as a tool of thought and expression.

Sing and Say: The letters are presented in groups following the well-known Alphabet Song. The goal is to develop "batch movement skills" on the short composite units and to later unite the units into a single Alphabet String of connected cursive letters from α to β . "Batch movements" are movements that are preplanned and can be executed fluently with a minimum of conscious thought. This is mostly for very young beginning cursive handwriting students, but can be used by anybody new to cursive.

One Letter Group at Time: Teach only one group at a time and practice daily it until the students can write the letters legibly without minimal conscious thought. The first two lines are for visual writing, the last for blind writing. The last is very important to make sure the students are developing an "internal model" of the movements (ballistics) for each letter and their connecting strokes.

Practicing with Planned Distractions: It is also good to have the student at first say the letter names while writing them. Later they can say nursery rhymes or sing tunes while writing the letters to further establish automatic - which involves the ability to perform the task while distracted.

Attention to Connecting Strokes: Far too often, the connecting strokes are ignored in cursive instruction. This lack of attention to details leads students to develop poor connecting strokes. Special attention should be paid to the connecting strokes to assure that the students are executing them correctly. First establish accuracy, and then let speed develop over time through daily focused practice. Cursive methods that do not use an over-curve for α , α , α , α , α , and α need special attention. I teach the kids to use a "hook" when these letters follow another letter. Midline joining strokes also require special attention: β , α , α and α .

Continual Improvement: The motor skills necessary for cursive are subject to endless improvement. This is not true of manuscript. Daily cursive alphabet writing practice should be a part of the student's everyday routine through at least third or fourth grade. Once cursive is mastered, all written work should be in cursive.

Suggested Variations: Two interesting variations can be added to the practice for advanced students. There is suggestive evidence that learning to write with the non-dominant may be beneficial to dominant hand performance. Another variation is mirror image writing, which can be done with both dominant and non-dominant hand. I am right handed, but mastered left hand writing to help my left handed students. I also mastered mirror writing to increase my versatility. Several of my young advanced students have also mastered one or both practice variations.

PRACTICE WORDS

FOR DEVELOPING CURSIVE HANDWRITING FLUENCY

EACH GROUP USES ONLY LETTERS PREVIOUSLY TAUGHT

Group 1: a, b c, d: cab dab dad bad cad add

Group 2: e, f, g: be bee bed bead deed ace ebb, fed feed fade deaf beef face, bag bagged gab age caged gaff egg badge

Group 3: h, i, j, k, had head heed hedge, big hid hide if fib-ice dice chief fife, jag jig jab-jade, kid back kick deck khaki

Group 4: l, m, m, o, p. lad led lid black bell fled ball ill bill glad lake lace lilac hail eagle, mad made ham lamb blame, mame hand fan fine knee glean mine, on mom of off ok oh coal goad goal old hole cob job joke odd oil, foil hoe book ocean log local, pan pen pig pond lamp happen lip pill phone hope mapped, plane opened pal

Group 5: q, r s: ran brand grand friend car rag red for from form hard error, roar, sad sadness mass hose glass labs flags

Group 6: t, u, v tan tape past potter other fit bright get giant taste tattle debt, ghost projector, up but rubber putter tube blue outside use bud suit judge guard, quick quack quit, quiet unplugged, vat van love vine valve vote vacuum

Group 7: w, x, y, z. we wet walk write cows saw was lawn woke work strewn what, swinging whole, ax axes tax taxes wax waxes box boxes fox foxes, yown yes by buy bylows cry baby many yearly you yip vinyl, jazz zoo zebra lazy crazy buzz puzzle cozy zucchini zephyr

Comprehensive Inventory of Lowercase Connecting Strokes

Letters Classified by Beginning Strokes

Downcurve: a c d g q

Overcurve: m m o v x z

Undercurve: befhljklprstuwy

Letters classified by Midline Joining Strokes

ba be bi bo bu bl br bs bt bc

oa oe oi ou our oy ob oc od of og oh oj ok ol om on oo op or os ot ov ox oz

we wi wo wh wr ws -wn wx

va ve vi vo vu vy

Letters Classified by Below-Line Joining Strokes

ja je ji jo ju qu ga ge gi go gu gl gr gs gg gh ya yi ye yo yu ys yl yr za ze zi zo zu zy zz

All midline joining strokes and below-line joining strokes are represented at least once in the Practice Words on page 4. It is important to teach ALL beginning cursive students explicitly and directly all the joining strokes to avoid any possibility of confusion. This is a very useful chart to use for teaching and diagnostic purposes.

Thanks to Mr. Randy Nelson of Peterson Directed Handwriting for sharing with me a similar catalog of connecting strokes. I highly recommend the Peterson Directed Handwriting cursive program.

The cursive in this document was on typed software by Educational Fontware, Inc. www.educationalfontware.com