



Improving handwriting

Although word processing may be used in many situations, we do sometimes need to write by hand, at home as well as in the workplace. For example, we may need to write notes, letters, forms, care plans or sales orders by hand.

When writing words, some people print individual letters and others use joined up (cursive) writing. Joined-up writing may be best when you need to write a lot, and it also looks better when you're sharing your writing with other people. When the letter patterns are formed correctly, joined-up writing can give your writing a rhythm or flow that makes it easier to read. This is your own unique handwriting, whether your writing is small or large, angled or rounded, curly or plain. Some people prefer to slope their writing to the right or left, others have a more upright style. As long as the letters are clearly formed, you can choose your own style.

Here are two handwriting samples. The statement is believed to have been said by Rosa Parks, the African American civil rights activist.

Stand for something or you'll fall for anything.

Stand for something or you'll fall for anything.

Is there one sample you prefer? If so, why do you like it?

How to improve handwriting

It's important to sit in a good light so that you're not straining your eyes and so that your writing is not in shadow. If you're right-handed, make sure light is coming from the left. If you're left-handed, it's best to have light coming from the right.

Try a selection of pens and pencils. If you're left-handed, you'll 'push' the pen across the paper, rather than pulling it as right-handed writers do. Left-handers need to make sure that they have a pen that flows well and does not dig into the paper.

Do you have to think about how to form letters and words? Some people find it difficult to remember the best way of forming letters. If this is difficult for you, practise forming letters for ten minutes each day. This can help to make your handwriting more automatic so that you can concentrate on what you want to say in your writing rather than worrying about what your handwriting looks like. Improving your handwriting may also help you to practise spellings, particularly if you use joined-up handwriting.

Do you get very tired when handwriting a text? Do you find handwriting very slow? Does your writing look messy with lots of crossing out and misspellings? Some people find handwriting especially hard, even with lots of practise. If that is the case for you, it may be useful to ask for a dyslexia assessment in your local area - if you're diagnosed as needing specialist support, it can often be very helpful.