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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that students who write fluently and legibly have:

1. A clear understanding of how each letter is formed.
2. Rhythmic handwriting which pauses only at the natural stopping points.
3. Automatic muscle memory for each letter.

The explicit instruction and rhythmic language in *The Rhythm of Handwriting Series* aids students with each of these points, fostering the development of beautiful and consistent handwriting.

In order to most efficiently develop muscle memory, letters are organized by their initial strokes, rather than alphabetically.

Before beginning, introduce the lines using the Handwriting Chart on page 17 or the *Logic of English Whiteboard*. Show the students the baseline, top line, and midline. Ask the students to repeat back the name of each line.

Teachers may choose whether or not to teach the strokes needed to form each letter. Some students benefit from isolated stroke instruction, whereas other students prefer to see how all the pieces fit together. The strokes needed for each letter are listed at the beginning of each section.

STEPS TO TEACHING HANDWRITING

1. Show the students the *Phonogram Flash Card* for the targeted letter. Say the sound(s) found on the back of the flashcard.
2. Ask the students to repeat the sound(s). (Correct errors in pronunciation.)
3. Show the students the targeted letter in the workbook. Discuss how the cursive letter is the same as or different from the bookface form. Point out the connector strokes and how they make it easier to write the letter and connect it to other letters.
4. Using your pointer finger, demonstrate how to write the letter while saying the full directions aloud, followed by the sounds of the phonogram. (For many students, it is beneficial to teach step one, ask the students to demonstrate, then reteach step one and add step two, ask the students to demonstrate, etc.)
5. Ask the students to write the letter with their pointer fingers while saying the full directions aloud followed by the sounds.
6. Model writing the letter using the shortened, bold instructions. Emphasize the rhythm. End by saying the sound(s) made by the letter.
7. Ask the students to model correct formation 3-5 times with their pointer fingers while repeating the rhythmic directions, followed by the letter's sound(s). Check that the students are developing fluid and rhythmic motions.
8. **Optional:** Direct the students to trace the enlarged letter in the workbook with their pointer fingers, or practice with the *Rhythm of Handwriting Tactile Cards*.

STUDENTS WITH WEAK FINE-MOTOR SKILLS

9. Practice the letters using large-motor motions on the *Logic of English Whiteboard*, a chalkboard, or in a sensory box. Continue to develop fine-motor skills by coloring, stringing beads, playing with building toys, and other activities. When the students' motor skills have developed, move on to Step 10.

STUDENTS WITH STRONG FINE-MOTOR SKILLS

10. Practice writing the letter with a pencil. Allow students to choose the line size that is most comfortable for their hands.

HANDWRITING TIPS

TEACH LOWERCASE LETTERS FIRST

Lowercase letters comprise more than 90% of all that we read and write. Uppercase letters are used only at the beginning of sentences and with proper nouns. Teaching lowercase letters first provides students with the most vital information they need to be successful in writing. Once students have mastered the lowercase letters, they should be taught how to write the capital letters and when they are used.

TEACH HANDWRITING USING ALL FOUR LEARNING MODES

When teaching students how to write, always use all four learning modalities: seeing, hearing, doing, and speaking. Show the students how to form the letter (seeing) while providing explicit spoken directions (hearing). Then ask the students to repeat the action (doing) while repeating the directions aloud (speaking).

TEACH EACH LETTER WITH LARGE-MOTOR MOVEMENTS

Teach letter formation using large muscle movements originating from the elbow. Demonstrate the motions using your pointer finger on the large handwriting charts or the *Logic of English Whiteboard*. Students should then imitate the motions using their pointer fingers and movements that originate from the elbow. Once the motions have been learned, students should practice the sequence of movements writing with a marker on the *Logic of English Whiteboard*, on a chalkboard, in the air, in sensory boxes, with sandpaper letters, or with tactile letters.

PROVIDE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS

Some students who have poor handwriting are unclear about how to form the letters and how they relate to the lines on the page. When teaching, it is important to provide students with full, explicit directions on letter formation, leaving no room for confusion. *The Rhythm of Handwriting Series* includes explicit directions for introducing each letter. Students who are sensitive to too much auditory input may learn each letter using only the rhythmic, bold instructions.

EMPHASIZE THE RHYTHM OF HANDWRITING

Fluent handwriting is rhythmic, pausing only at the natural stopping or reversal points in the letters. Other than the natural stopping points, the pencil should continue in a steady motion. The bold keywords in *The Rhythm of Handwriting* materials provide students with abbreviated directions which accent the natural rhythm of each letter.

STROKES OR NO STROKES?

Some students benefit greatly by learning the strokes in isolation before learning how to write each letter. These students see each letter as a puzzle that is formed by putting the pieces of the strokes together. Other students feel confused by learning the strokes in isolation and have the greatest success by learning how to write each letter as a whole. Experiment to find your student's learning style by teaching the relevant strokes before teaching a letter. Practice writing the strokes with the pointer finger on the handwriting chart provided. Ask the student if it was helpful. If the student finds this helpful, continue in the same manner with the following chapters. If the student was confused by learning the strokes individually, then skip the strokes page and move straight into teaching the letters.

CROSSING T'S AND F'S

Students should cross the lowercase "t" and "f" in the direction of reading and writing, i.e. from left to right. In cursive, write the whole word before picking up the pencil to cross or dot a letter.

PROVIDE SUPPORT

Until students have mastered how to form the letters with ease, they should not practice alone. Students who are asked to copy letters without direct instruction tend to focus on the visual image rather than the motions needed to write the letter. This detracts from building the muscle memory needed to write fluidly. In addition, without clear instruction, some students will reverse the image, making it more likely for them to struggle with reversals in both handwriting and reading. Clear, explicit teaching using all the learning modalities will eliminate confusion and reversals.

In addition, careful guidance from the beginning will prevent bad habits from forming. Investing time now to ensure that each student develops correct muscle memory for each letter and understands how each letter is formed will save you much time and frustration in the future for both writing and reading.

LIMIT COPYWORK UNTIL THE STUDENT CAN READ

Students should not be asked to copy letters, words, sentences, or paragraphs until they are able to read the sounds and words they are copying. When asked to do so sooner, the task is akin to art, and void of any language learning value.

Once students have mastered writing and reading several of the single-letter phonograms, they may begin to combine the single-letter phonograms into words. When students begin to write words in *The Rhythm of Handwriting Series*, they should read the word aloud and then write the word, saying the sound of each letter while they write.

ENCOURAGE MASTERY

It is only through abundant practice that students learn to write fluently. Require daily handwriting practice until all the letters have been mastered. At the end of a practice session, ask the students to evaluate their own writing by picking the letter or word on the page that is written the most neatly. Ask the student to explain why it is the best. Then, as the teacher, choose the letter that you think is written the most neatly and explain why.

For some students a letter may need to be retaught a second or even third day before all motions are mastered. This is particularly true after a weekend or break. Simply repeat the steps. Always provide clear, explicit instruction. Require students to model the motions correctly while repeating the directions aloud.

TRANSITIONING TO PENCIL AND PAPER

The decision to transition to pencil and paper should be based upon the age, development, and prior experiences of the student. Many older students will find great success in learning to write a letter using large-motor motions with the handwriting chart, then immediately writing the letter with a pencil.

Students with less developed fine-motor skills benefit from extended large-motor practice. By learning letter formation with movements that originate from the elbow as opposed to the fingers, students are programming the motions and rhythms into their brains. The muscle memory which is formed using large-motor movements will translate into fine-motor motions once the student has developed fine-motor skills. If a student is lagging with fine-motor development, writing exercises may continue with large-motor practice using a whiteboard, chalkboard, sandpaper letters, tactile letters, and sensory boxes until his fine-motor development is sufficient for writing with a pencil.

During this time students should also be engaged in fine-motor activities on a daily basis. Many of the examples below require adult supervision.

- Color with markers, chalk, crayons, and other media.
- Provide an eyedropper and small paper cups. Fill one cup with water. Direct students to transfer the water with the eyedropper. For added fun, use a few drops of food coloring in each cup and allow students to experiment with mixing colors.
- Make necklaces and bracelets with plastic beads.
- Use tweezers to move beads from one cup to another.
- Provide students with small colored pom-poms and direct them to sort them by color.
- Provide clothespins that pinch. String a rope between two chairs and allow students to hang up doll clothes, socks, or pictures to display.
- Use child-safe scissors.
- Provide students with bolts, nuts, and washers of varying sizes to sort and screw together.
- Play with building toys.

Many students will benefit from some or all of the following tips when transitioning from large-motor movements to writing on paper. Clear and explicit teaching can prevent unnecessary confusion and provide students with the support they need to succeed.

PENCIL GRIP

Instruct the students how to hold the pencil with the thumb and the first finger so the pencil rests gently on the middle finger. If the student struggles to hold the pencil correctly, provide a pencil grip.

PAPER POSITION

Demonstrate how to place the paper at an angle so the arm naturally sweeps from the elbow rather than needing to tense the shoulder or twist the wrist. Ask the students to make curved sweeping lines along the paper, using motions from their elbow. Then position the paper so the student's strokes follow the lines of the paper.

LINE SIZE

The Rhythm of Handwriting Cursive Student Book provides a variety of line sizes for each exercise. Allow the student to experiment. Discuss: which line is the most comfortable? On which size does the student write the most neatly? Which line size is a better fit for the student's hand? In future exercises allow the student to choose the line size that is most comfortable and results in the most legible writing.

Despite conventional wisdom that young students should use paper with giant spaces between the lines, many beginning writers benefit from much smaller lines. Because they have small hands, smaller lines encourage students to use fine-motor movements originating in the fingers without stretching uncomfortably.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULES

STUDENTS AGES SIX AND UNDER

Students six and under should learn one letter per day. Each lesson should include:

- Introduction to a new letter, including its sound(s) and how to write it.
- Practice matching sounds to previously learned letters.
- Practice reading previously learned letters.
- Practice writing previously learned letters.

Logic of English, Inc publishes *The Phonogram and Spelling Game Book*, which may be used to enhance review.

STUDENTS AGES SEVEN AND UP

SCHEDULE 1

Learn two letters per day starting with the lowercase letters.

SCHEDULE 2

Learn four letters per day starting with the lowercase letters.

SCHEDULE 3

Each day, learn all the letters based upon one initial stroke. Begin with the lowercase swing letters.

IDEAS FOR HANDWRITING PRACTICE

LETTER DICTATION

Provide students with a whiteboard, chalkboard, sensory box, or paper. Say the sound(s) of one of the letters. Direct the students to write the letter.

BLIND WRITING

Direct the students to close their eyes and write the letter five to ten times without looking. Without visual cues, the students must rely on muscle memory. Instruct the students to open their eyes and choose the letter that is written the most legibly.

SPEED WRITING

Set a timer for 20 seconds. Direct students to write the letter as many times as possible before the timer beeps. Instruct the students to choose the letter that is written most legibly.

TREASURE HUNT

Hide the *Rhythm of Handwriting Tactile Cards* around the room. Direct students to find the letters and bring them back to you. When they find a letter they must read the sound(s) and demonstrate how to write it.

LETTER STATIONS

Set up stations of whiteboards, chalkboards, or sensory boxes around the room. Students will rotate between the stations. Call out the sound(s) of a letter. The students must write the letter at their station. Every two to three letters, rotate to the next station.

SKY WRITING

Call out the sound(s) of a letter. Direct students to write it in the air using their arm and pointer finger.

SIMON SAYS

Appoint one student to be “Simon.” Provide the student with a set of flash cards containing all the letters that have been learned. “Simon” draws a card and reads the sound(s). The other students must write the letter on small whiteboards.

FOOT WRITING

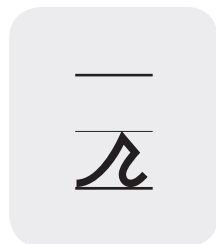
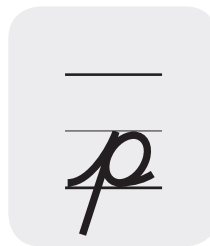
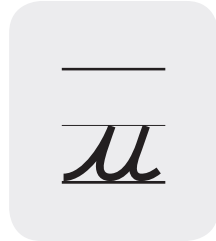
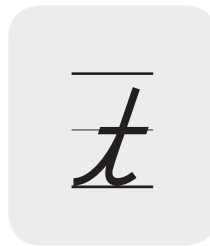
Direct students to lie on their backs on the floor. Call out the sound(s) made by one of the letters. Direct students to write the letter in the air using their foot.

WRITING GAME

Direct two students to sit back to back. Each person will need a small whiteboard. The first person writes a letter on the whiteboard, then tells the other person the directions for writing the letter. The other person then writes the letter. If both people have written the same letter they get one point.

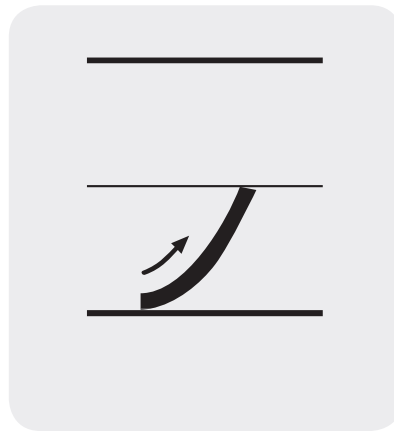
SWING LETTERS

Each of the lowercase swing letters begins on the baseline with an upward swinging motion toward the midline.

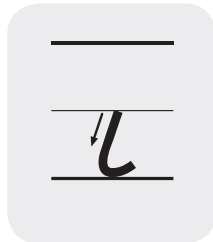


STROKES

SWING



DOWN



CIRCLE



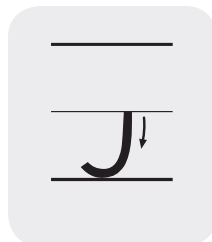
GLIDE



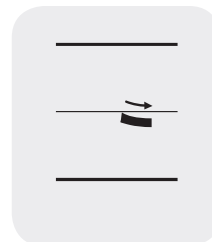
DROP-SWOOP



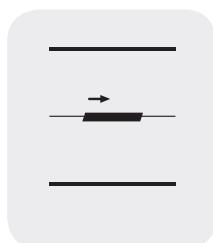
SCOOP



DIP



CROSS

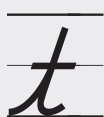






① **Swing** up to the midline, ② **down** to the baseline,
③ pick up the pencil, ④ **dot**.

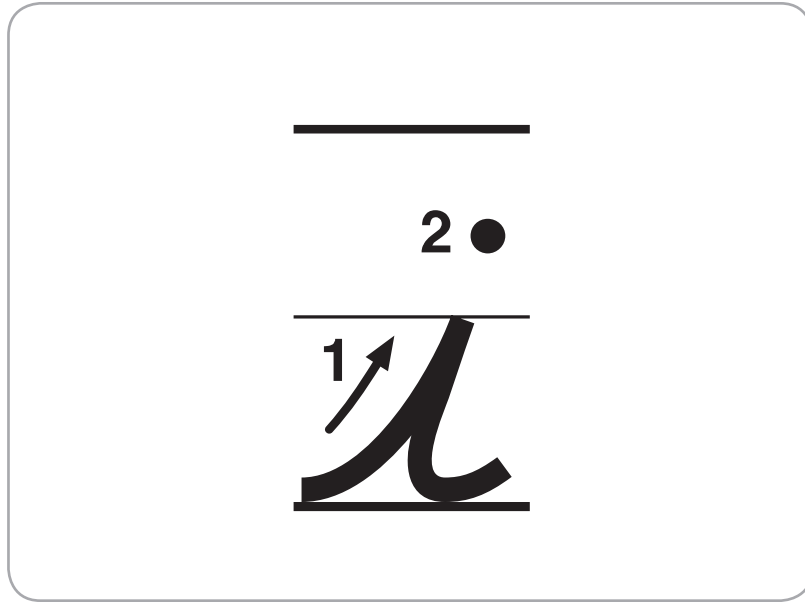
/ĭ-ī-ē-y/



① **Swing tall** to halfway between the midline and the top
line, ② **down** to the baseline, ③ pick up the pencil, ④ **cross**
at the midline.

/t/





i

i

i

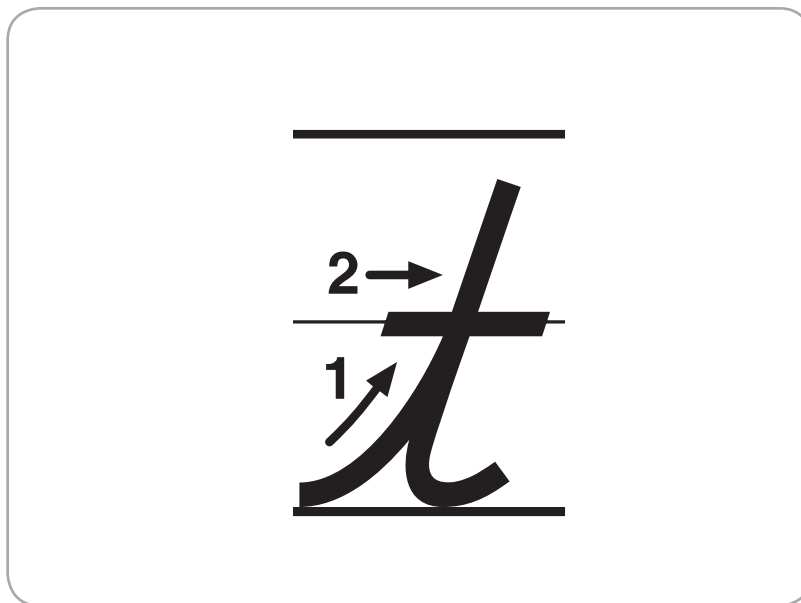
i

i

i

i

i



t

t

t

t

t

t

t

t

PRACTICE 4

a

d

g

qu

c

o

w

r

u

s

j

p

LETTERS THAT CONNECT AT THE BASELINE

Letters that end on the baseline connect from the baseline to the next letter. Read each word, then practice writing it with your pointer finger. Try to write each word with smooth, rhythmic motions. Finish writing all the connected letters in a word before crossing a t or dotting an i.





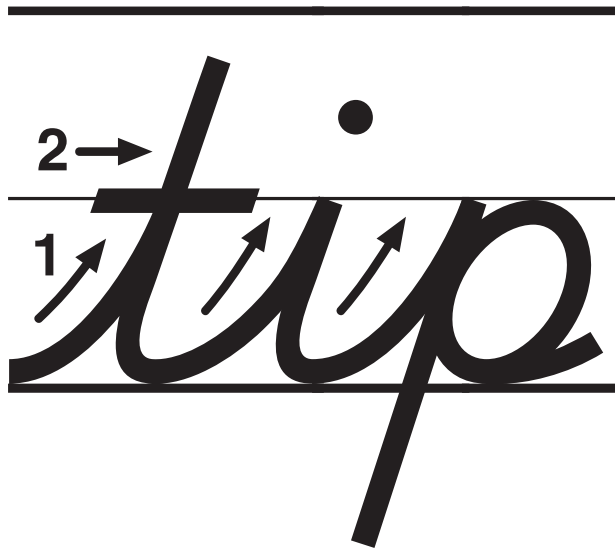
The word "dad" is written in a cursive script on a set of three horizontal lines: a top line, a middle line, and a bottom line. The letter 'd' is tall, starting from the middle line and reaching the top line. The 'a's are smaller, starting from the middle line and ending at the bottom line. Three small arrows point upwards and to the right, indicating the direction of the pen strokes for the first 'd', the first 'a', and the second 'a'.



The word "rug" is written in a cursive script on a set of three horizontal lines: a top line, a middle line, and a bottom line. The letter 'r' is tall, starting from the middle line and reaching the top line. The 'u' and 'g' are smaller, starting from the middle line and ending at the bottom line. The 'g' has a long descender that goes below the bottom line. Three small arrows point upwards and to the right, indicating the direction of the pen strokes for the 'r', the 'u', and the 'g'.



The word "cat" is written in cursive on a set of three horizontal lines. The letter 'c' starts with an upward arrow. The letter 'a' starts with an upward arrow. The letter 't' starts with an upward arrow and has a horizontal crossbar with a rightward arrow. The letters are connected at the baseline.



The word "tip" is written in cursive on a set of three horizontal lines. The letter 't' starts with an upward arrow labeled '1' and has a horizontal crossbar with a rightward arrow labeled '2'. The letter 'i' starts with an upward arrow. The letter 'p' starts with an upward arrow. A dot is placed above the 'i'. The letters are connected at the baseline.

PRACTICE 6

sat

us

rip

sad

gap

rust

PRACTICE 26

land at flag

flip a map

jam and eggs

fix van

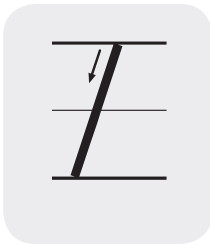
cliff jump

zap bugs

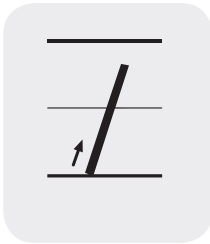
STROKES

CURVE

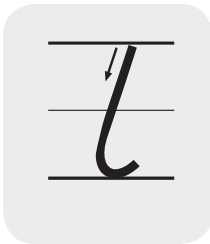
STRAIGHT



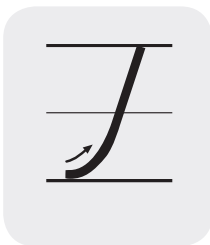
UP



DOWN



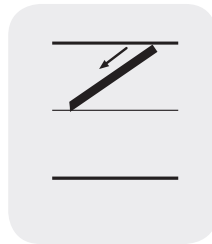
SWING



GLIDE



SLASH



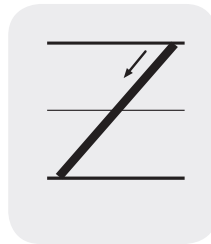
DROP-SWOOP



KICK



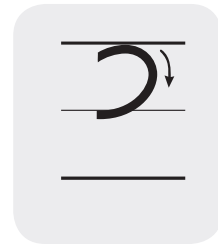
SLASH



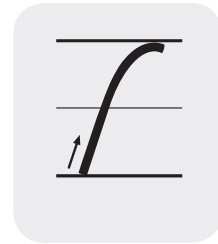
DIP



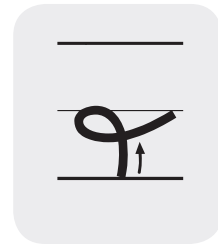
CIRCLE



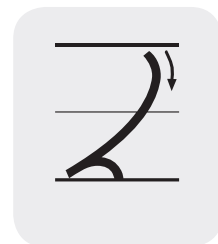
BUMP



SWIRL



TUCK



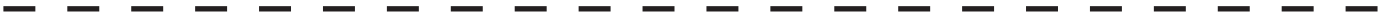


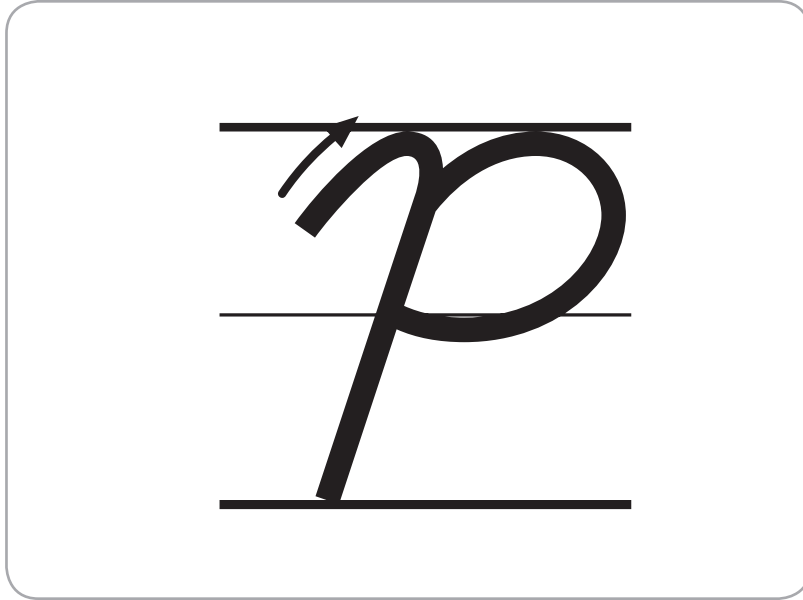


Start halfway between the midline and the top line. ① **Curve** up to the top line, ② **straight** to the baseline, ③ slide **up** to the top line, ④ **circle** around to the midline.



Start halfway between the midline and the top line. ① **Curve** up to the top line, ② **straight** to the baseline, ③ slide **up** to the top line, ④ **circle** around to the midline, ⑤ **circle** around past the baseline, ⑥ **touch**, ⑦ **glide** across.





p

p

p

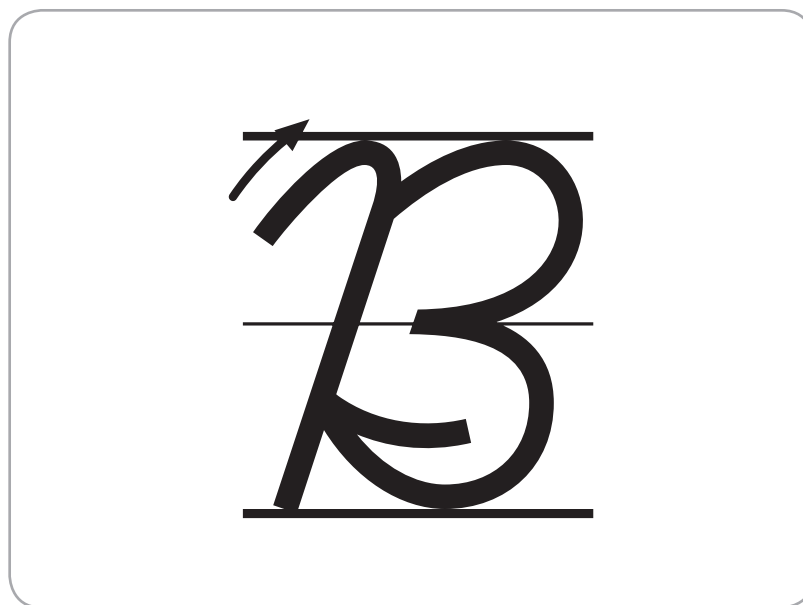
p

p

p

p

p



B

B

B

B

B

B

B

B

PRACTICE 44

Grass

Swim

Pen

Went

Bond

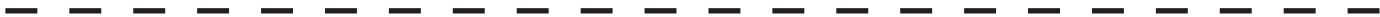
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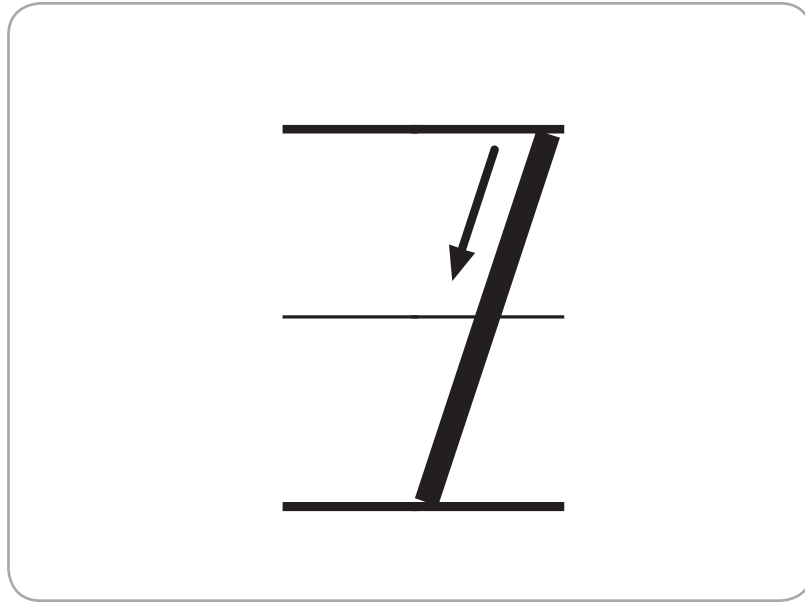


Start at the top line. ^① **Straight** to the baseline.

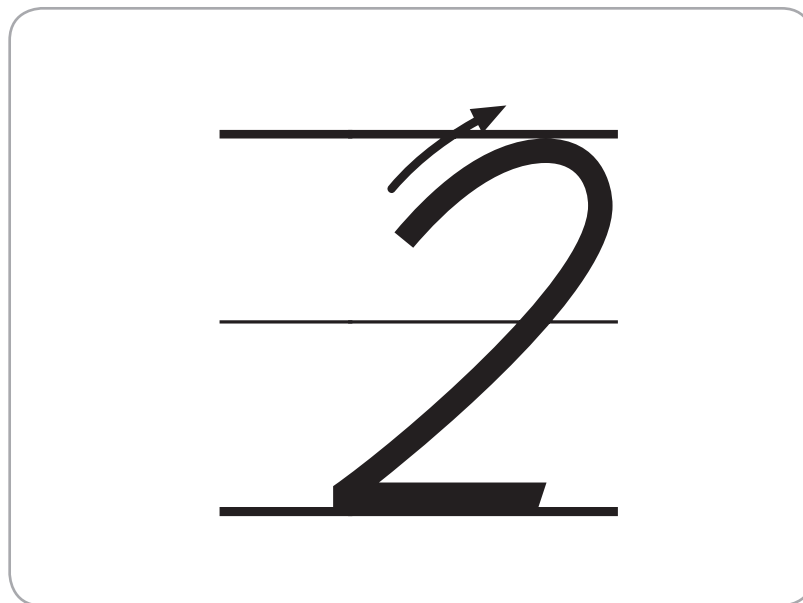


Start halfway between the top line and the middle line. ^① **Circle** around to the middle line, ^② **slash** down to the baseline, ^③ **cross** at the baseline.





Handwriting practice lines for the number 7. Each line consists of four horizontal lines with a short diagonal line on the left side, serving as a guide for the number's placement and orientation.



2

2

2

2

2

2

2

2