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## Why Teach Handwriting?

Handwriting is still an important life skill. Writing by hand ties in closely with the skills of reading and comprehending. Handwriting personalizes communication with others in a way that technological devices cannot. Neat, legible writing is a skill that students can take pride in throughout their lives.

## Teacher Tips

- In small groups, teach the formation of letters in modeled cursive writing sessions.
- Show students some words in both printing and cursive writing. Ask them to describe the similarities and differences. For example, in cursive writing the letters of a word are joined together, whereas in printing the letters of a word are separated.
- Point out that, in cursive writing, there is usually a beginning “tail,” and an ending “tail.” These “tails” are what join the letters of a word together.
- Demonstrate for students how, during cursive writing, the pencil should not be lifted from the paper until the word has been completed. Only a few letters, such as capital “T,” do not connect to the rest of a word when cursive writing.

- Teach letters with a similar formation in clusters. For example,

<i>a c d g</i>	<i>h k</i>	<i>e f l</i>	<i>i j t</i>
<i>r s u v</i>	<i>b o v</i>	<i>m n x</i>	<i>p q y z</i>

- On chart paper or whiteboard, demonstrate the formation of the cursive letter being taught in writing. Describe your movements out loud as you write. Focus on the proper alignment, shape, and slant of your writing.
- Invite students to “write” the letter in the air with big arm movements.
- Use the practice sheets found in this resource as immediate follow-up to each lesson. Have students circle their best letter on each line as a form of self-assessment. Encourage students to express why they chose their best letter.
- As students are practicing their cursive writing skills, make sure to reinforce good posture habits. Slouching will create unnecessary strain on students’ young spines.
- You may wish to play classical music to create an inspiring atmosphere as students practice their cursive writing skills.

## Motivation

Consider these ideas to motivate students to practice their cursive writing skills, see progress, feel pride in accomplishment, and have a product to show for their hard work:

- Keep students’ work organized in a portfolio, folder, or scrapbook, or bind practice pages into a book for each student.
- As students successfully complete cursive writing lessons (pages 6–83), have them color in their personal completion chart provided in this resource.
- For proficient cursive writers, provide short poems and nursery rhymes to copy. Encourage students to illustrate their pages and bind them together to make a book.

## General Support

The classroom environment, and your attention to individual needs, can promote the development of good handwriting. Here are some tips and suggestions for helping students learn to write legibly:

- Display the cursive alphabet in the classroom where all students can see it. Consider attaching photocopies of the alphabet, with letter formation, to desks or tables for students who may need it.
- Model legible writing at every opportunity.
- Remind students to hold their writing tools properly.
- Ensure that pencils are sharpened before use.
- If you notice some students having difficulty with specific letters, call them together for small group or individual instruction or review.

## Encouraging Fine Motor Control and Finger Muscle Strength

Provide activities that increase fine motor control and finger muscle strength, such as

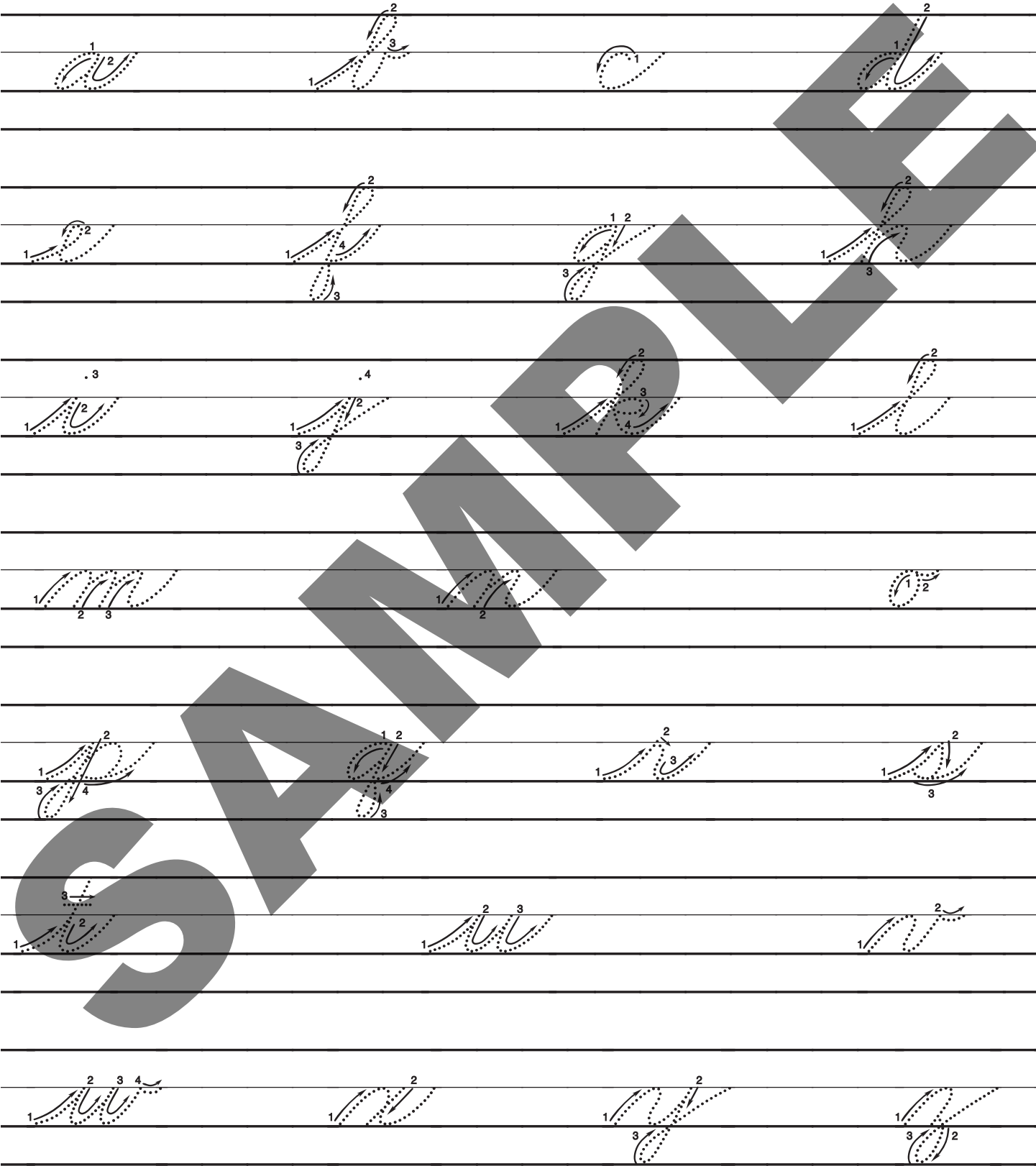
- modeling clay to roll small balls, or create sculptures with details
- art projects that involve using crayons, finger paints, scissors, or tearing paper
- building blocks that snap together
- stringing paper clips together
- completing puzzles
- practicing lacing, or stitching
- cutting, pasting, and folding paper

## Monitoring Progress

- Use the rubric in this book to assess students' learning. Encourage students to self-assess their cursive writing according to the rubric provided.

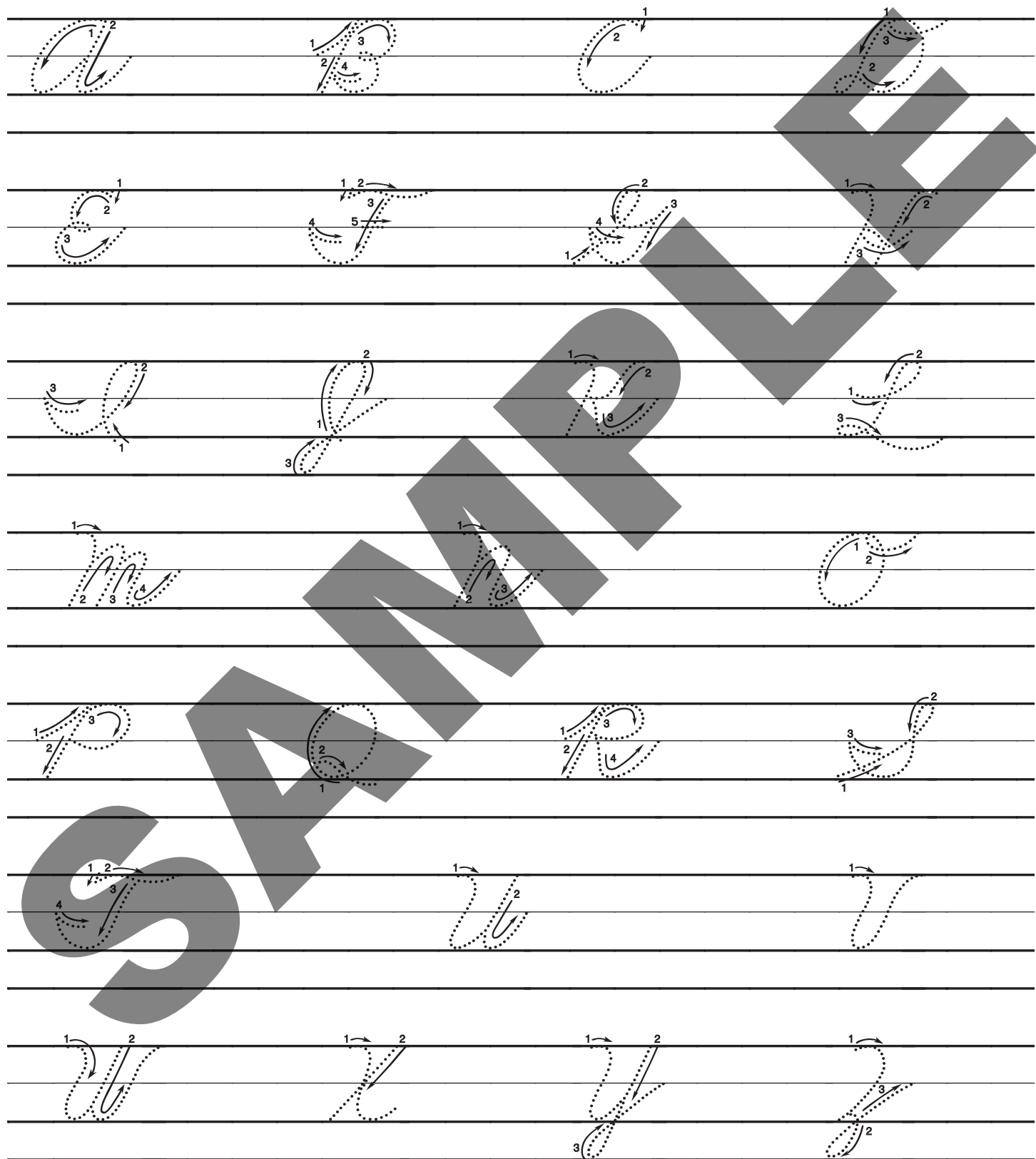
# Cursive Alphabet—Lower-case Letters

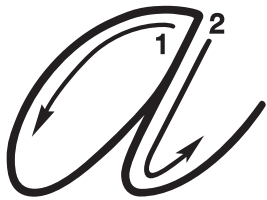
Trace the lower-case letters.



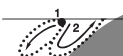
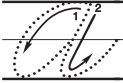
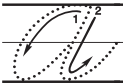
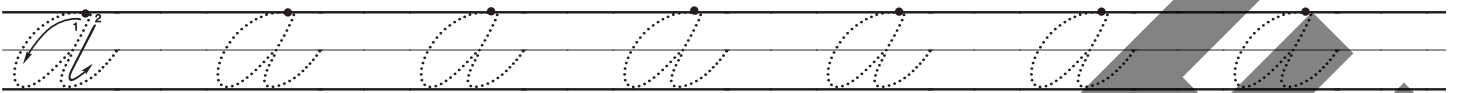
# Cursive Alphabet—Upper-case Letters

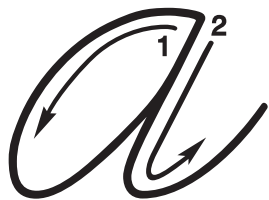
Trace the upper-case letters.





Trace and write. Circle your best *A* or *a* on each line.





Trace and write. Circle your best *A* or *a* on each line.

*A A A A A A A*

*A*

*A*

*Ashley*

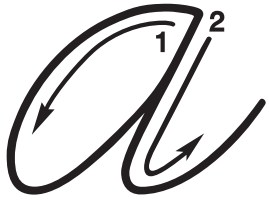
*a a a a a a a*

*a*

*a*

*ace*

*ape*



Trace and write. Circle your best *A* or *a* on each line.

*A A A A A A A A*

*A*

*A*

*Allosaurus*

*a a a a a a a a*

*a*

*a*

*add*

*art*