

First Strokes®

How to Use the First Strokes CURSIVE Program



The Handwriting Clinic™/First Strokes® Products

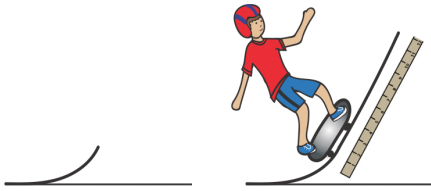
The First Strokes Cursive Program is designed to teach cursive using multi-sensory techniques.. The student should not immediately start using the workbooks without first learning the letter using kinesthetic or multi-sensory modalities.

Procedures for Using Workbook:

Terminology – The instructor should use the simple, consistent terminology outlined in the description of the sequence for each letter. When reviewing letters, it is only necessary to say the “first stroke” of the letter, ex, draw “skateboard ramp u”.

Learn the “First Stroke”: For the lower case letters, there are only 4 first stroke letter groups. Students should first learn the stroke, and then work to practice the letters in the stroke category. The stroke categories for the lower case letters are as follows:

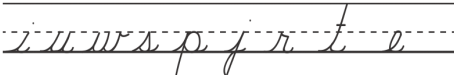
Skateboard Ramp Letters



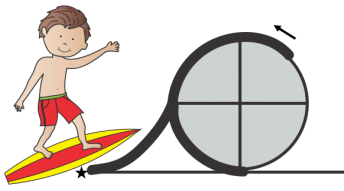
Trace writing line, then climb up the skateboard ramp by curving up, then shoot a straight, slanted line up.

Skateboard ramp = 3 strokes

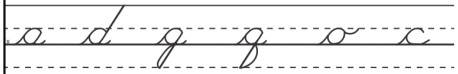
1. Trace 2. Curve 3. Slant



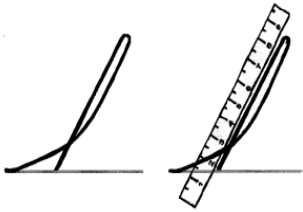
Wave Runner “C” Letters



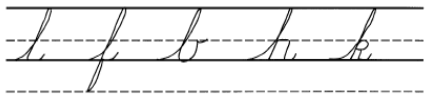
1. Curve up and over the wave.
2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the “c”.
3. Touch the writing line.




Tall and Thin Loop Letters



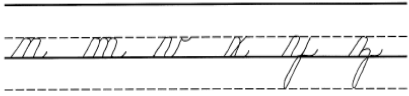
1. Swoosh up to the top line.
2. Make a thin “hook” (looks like the end of a paperclip).
3. Slant straight towards the writing line (this is a STRAIGHT LINE).



Finger Tip Letters



1. Slanted line up, round, slanted line down to writing line. Looks like a “finger tip”.

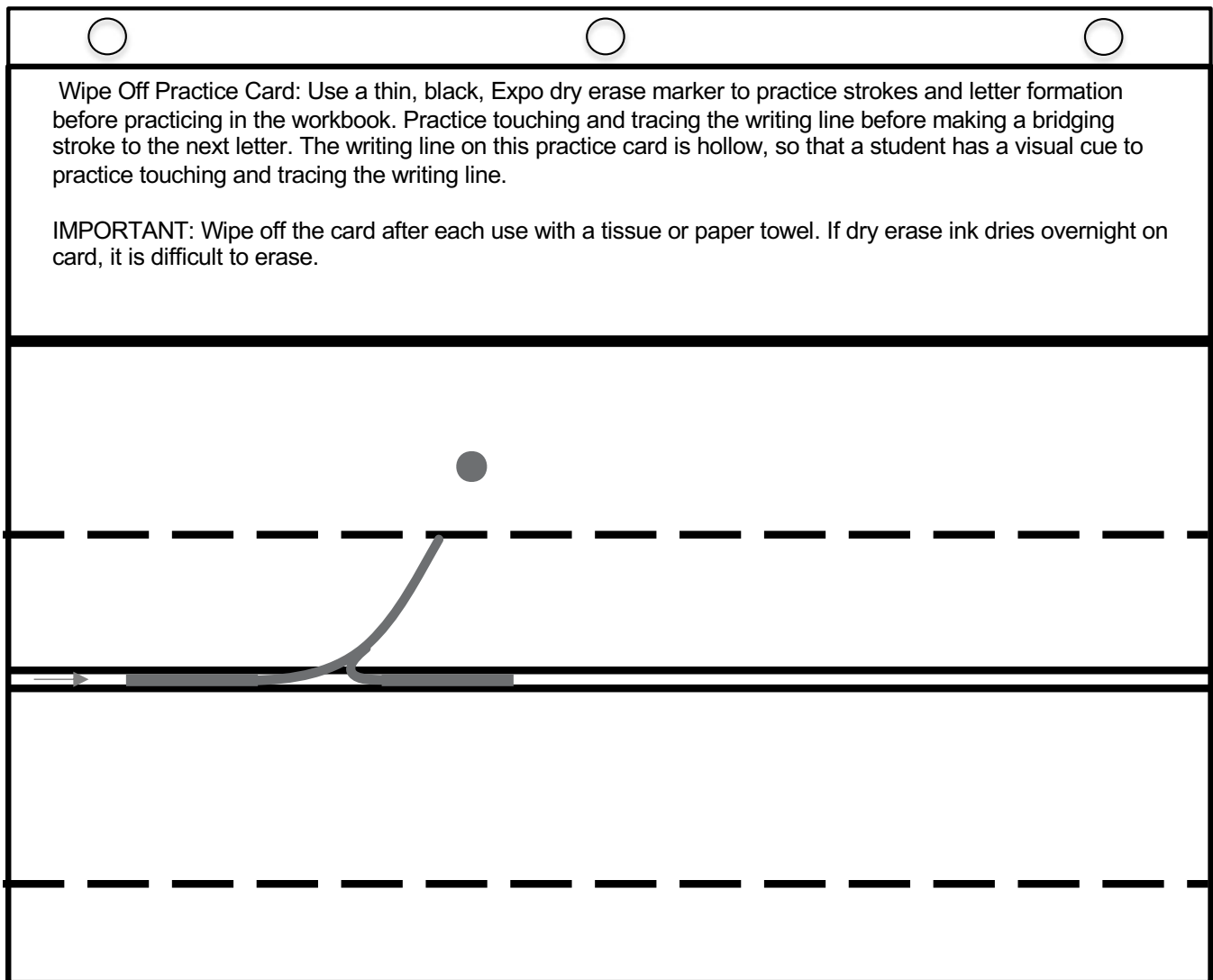


To begin, the student will start with the Skateboard Ramp Group. The instructor will teach the student how to do the skateboard ramp stroke. Then the student will learn to write the skateboard ramp letters using the following multi-sensory methods of learning.

Large motor learning - Student should be able to write the letter in the correct sequence and in the air with eyes closed before progressing to medium motor activities.

Medium motor learning - Student should be able to write the letter in large sized, 3 inch handwriting lines, before doing small motor activities. In a classroom, a teacher could do this with the entire class, or in small groups. Examples of medium motor activities:

- Use the wipe off template that is included with the First Strokes Cursive Program. An extra printable page is included at the back of this training document. Put the printable page into a sheet protector and give one to each student. The student will use dry erase markers to practice writing the strokes and letters.



Picture of wipe-off template: Skateboard ramp i

The student should be able to write the letter with correct sequencing, and with good touch points on the writing lines before progressing to small motor practice.

Small motor practice – Student should practice the letters:

1. In the First Strokes® Cursive workbook.
2. On the cursive ruled notebook paper that comes with the cursive kit.
3. Eventually transition to practicing with correct sizing on notebook paper. (Correct sizing would mimic the sizing of the writing on the cursive ruled notebook paper. Tall letters touch the top line, sinking letters sink below the writing line, and the body of the letter 1/3 space.)

Generalization activities - The student should immediately practice the letter on the cursive ruled notebook paper that comes with the cursive program.

Multi-sensory review -

1. One of the most important learning tools an instructor can use, is “scribble sheets” to work on visual memory of letters, as well as the motor pattern to sequence letters. It is recommended that scribble sheets be used multiple times to review each letter group. This is also a great activity for home practice as well. (See next page for scribble sheet description)

2. Students can also review letters by writing letters and words containing learned letters, in the air. Other activities might include:

Practice writing letters or words in:

- Fill baking sheet filled with sand or salt
- Write in shaving cream
- Cut off 12 inch pieces of a foam swimming noodle. Use the foam stick to write letters in the air.
- Instructor types words and letters in large font (in print), or write with dark marker in cursive. About 5 – 10 words per page. Tape a cursive letter cue chart to the bottom of each poster in case students may not remember a letter. Hang around the room, and have students divide up into groups at each poster to air write the words in cursive. After 2 minutes, switch to randomly move to another poster.
- Fill 12 inch balloons with air. Use a permanent marker to write words, or a – z in print or cursive. Then have the students tap the balloons up in the air, and write one letter. Ex. In the word “goat”, the student would tap “g”, retap the balloon and then write “o”, retap the balloon and then write “a, and then retap the balloon and write “t”. This is a fun activity for the entire cursive alphabet a – z, or A – Z once upper case letters are memorized. Circle the letters on the balloon that the student has difficulty remembering.

Module Outline

Suggested teaching modules – CURSIVE LOWER CASE

1. Work on strokes and the following letters through large motor, medium motor and small motor practice. Review letter groups through multi-sensory activities. Students should motorically sequence the letters in the correct pattern/letter formation.

Skateboard ramp letters		
Module 1	i u w s	
Module 2	r p j t e	
Module 1 and 2 Review		* Multi-sensory review of skateboard ramp letters on scribble sheet
Wave runner c letters		
Module 3	a d g	
Module 4	g q o c	
Module 1 – 4 Review		* Multi-sensory review of skateboard ramp and wave runner c letters on scribble sheet.
Tall thin loop letters		
Module 5	l f b	
Module 6	h k	
Module 1 - 6 Review		* Multi-sensory review skateboard ramp letters, wave runner c letters, and tall thin loop letters.
Fingertip letters		
Module 7	n m v	
Module 8	x y z	
Module 1 – 8 Review		* Multi-sensory review skateboard ramp letters, wave runner c letters, tall thin loop letters and fingertip letters.
Module 9		Lower case a – z review and multi-sensory practice
Upper case: Candy Cane Letters		
Module 10 H K M N U V W X Y Z		
Upper case: Leaning Line Letters		
Module 11 B D P R		
Upper case: Frowning Letters		
Module 12 A C E O		

Suggested teaching modules – CURSIVE LOWER CASE

1. Work on strokes and the following letters through large motor, medium motor and small motor practice. Review letter groups through multi-sensory activities. Students should motorically sequence the letters in the correct pattern/letter formation.

Loopity Loop L Two Cool Q Over and Under F and T		
Module 13	L Q F T	
Sailboat I Left Loop J Swing Right G and S		
Module 14	I J G S	
Multi-sensory review of upper case Letters		
Module 15		* Multi-sensory review of upper case letters A - Z
Module 16 Writing Projects		<p>Students can work on writing small paragraphs or spelling words in cursive. Place a cue card (copy from back of workbook), onto the students desks area or onto a piece of cardstock (laminated). Students can refer to the cue card if they forget how to write a letter.</p> <p>* Ideally students should be able to write a – z within 40 seconds and A – Z within 40 seconds either in the air, or on handwriting lines before doing large writing assignments. 60 seconds might be a target for a student to write smaller assignments. It is a clear indication that a student will need more multisensory practice before generalizing cursive to writing, if a student cannot write all the letters from memory within 60 seconds.</p>
Module 19 Writing with good sizing on regular notebook paper		Students should be able to maintain the sizing of the letters and words and transition from the adapted notebook paper that comes with the First Stroke® Cursive Kit, onto regular notebook paper.

* Multi-sensory review – see cursive workbook for multi-sensory activities, or refer to activities within the document, “How to Use the First Strokes Cursive Program Within a School Setting”.

MODULE INSTRUCTION:

For each module, go through the following steps to introduce the cursive concepts for each letter group.

Lesson 1: Introduce the stroke for the letter group. Student should practice the stroke on the large wipe off sheets with a dry erase marker. Once the components of the stroke are mastered, then the letters can be introduced a few at a time.

Lesson 2: Letter formation

- Practice medium motor – on dry erase sheet
- Practice large motor
- Workbook pages (small motor)
- Generalize letters to the cursive ruled notebook paper

Lesson 3: Word practice

- Practice the words in the workbook
- Practice the words on the cursive ruled notebook paper
- Scribble sheet practice (students use a piece of cardstock, and scribble all over it so that there is heavy crayon wax.). Student will practice writing letters/words as the instructor calls out the letters/words. Student should write “fast” and “large”. This helps the student develop speed and visual memory of the letter and motoric memory.
- Other multi-sensory activities

Video clips:

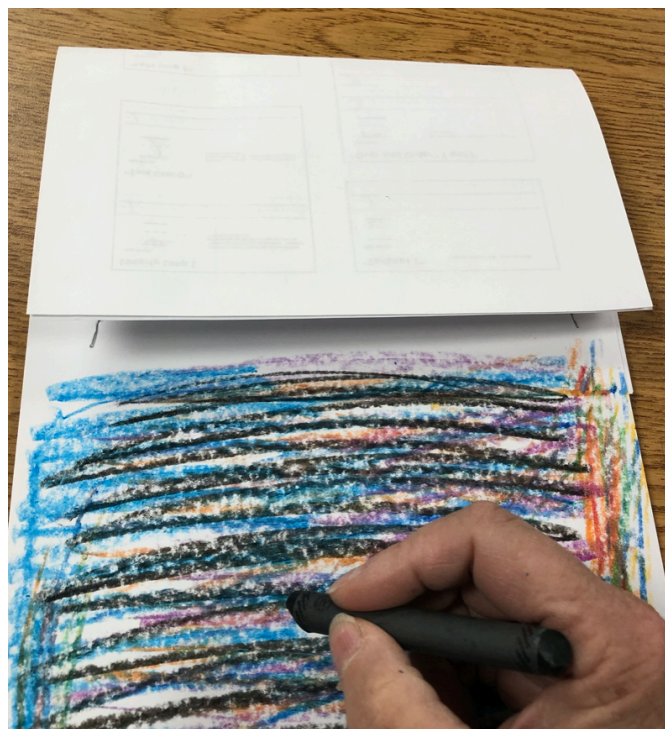
There are video clips of the First Strokes® lower case letters at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r7dqLIhaf0>

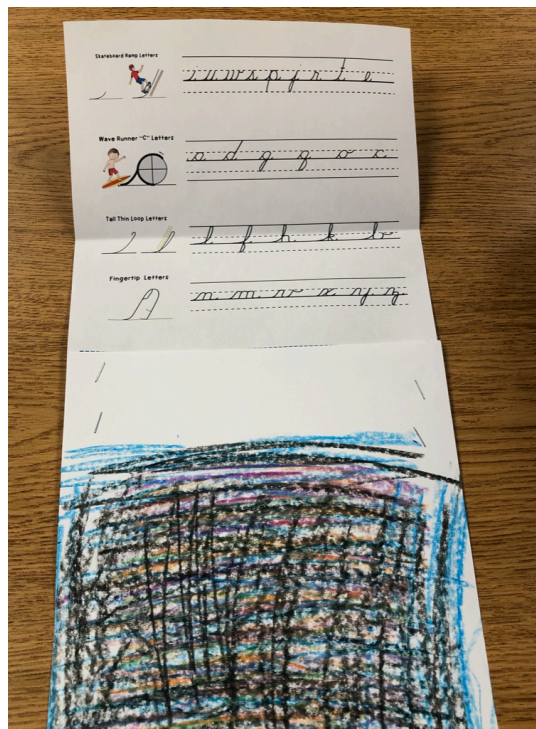
Search You Tube for “First Strokes Cursive”

Scribble Sheet Templates

Scribble sheet: A scribble sheet template is included with this program. The instructor glues the scribble sheet to the back of a piece of cardstock and folds the paper down. The student scribbles all over the cardstock with a crayon to where there is so much crayon wax, that further marks with the crayon will not show up. The template has all the letters, grouped by their "first stroke". The instructor calls out letters from a letter group, and the student writes the letters at a rapid pace. Students are instructed to write the letters large, approximately 4 – 5 inches tall. The cue to the students is to write the letters "fast and large". The paper with the visual template of the cursive letters, is folded down. The student has to motorically write the letters on the scribble sheet from visual memory. If a student does not remember how to write the letter, the student can open the page and look at template to refer to the letter. An instructor will notice if a student knows the letters well, does not remember letters, or if a student has a "think pause" before writing the letters. A "think pause" is when a student starts to write the letter, but the processing of how to write the letter is slow. The student may eventually draw the letter, but the letter is not yet in automatic memory. More practice will have the student quickly integrating the formation of cursive into their visual memory system. The scribble sheet practice for each letter group, plus review of all previous letter groups, is an integral part of the program!



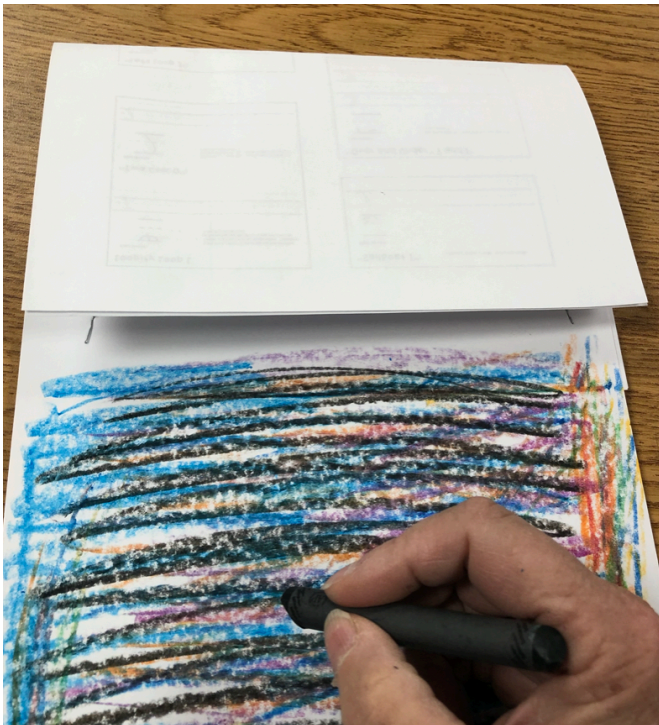
Scribble sheet folded down
(student draws letters from
memory)



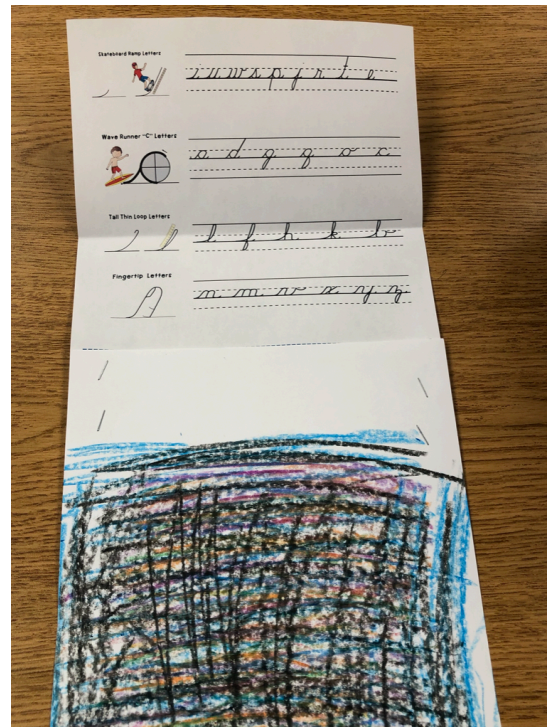
Scribble sheet folded up (student
can copy the letter)

Lower Case Letters Printable Scribble Sheets

Print the next page and attach to cardstock. Fold the cue sheets down. Scribble with a crayon on the cardstock to where there is heavy crayon. Use as an activity to practice visual memory of letter groups and a – z in Fort Worth ISD. Student should write the letters "fast and large". If a student does not have a letter memorized, the sheet can be folded up for a visual cue and the student can copy the letter. Use the scribble sheet to practice visual memory of letter groups til memorized.

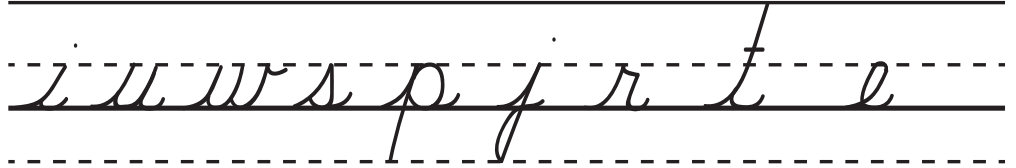
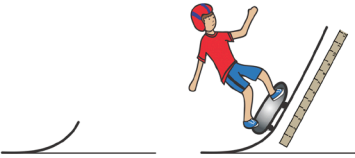


Scribble sheet folded down
(student draws letters from
memory)

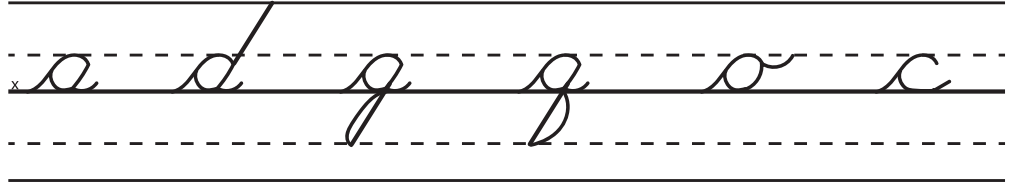
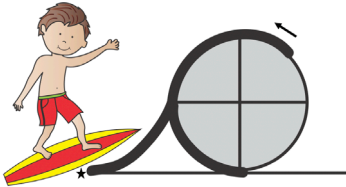


Scribble sheet folded up (student
can copy the letter)

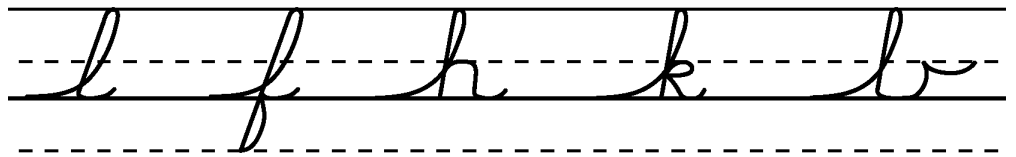
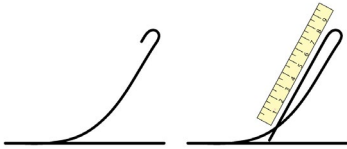
Skateboard Ramp Letters



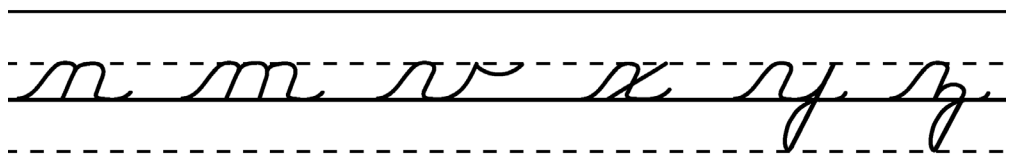
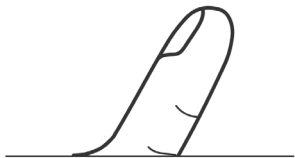
Wave Runner "C" Letters



Tall Thin Loop Letters



Fingertip Letters

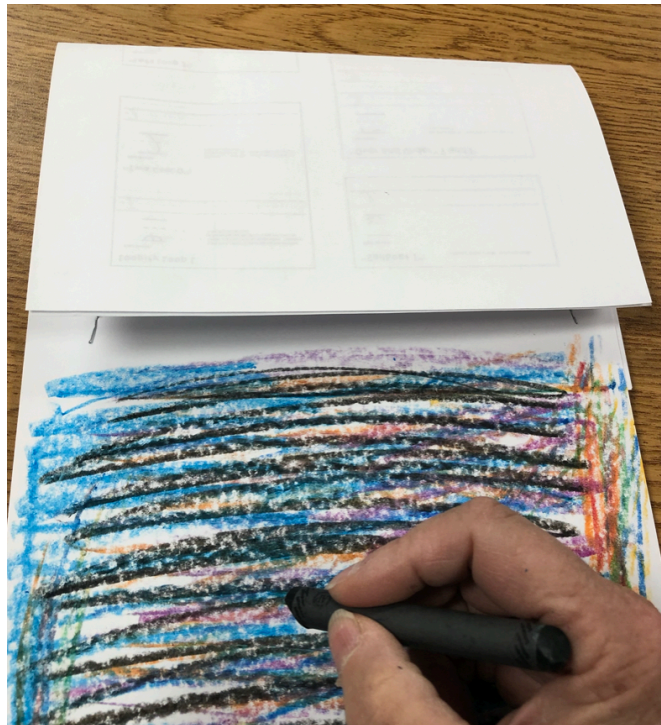


Attach to scribble sheet. Fold top down.

Capital Letters

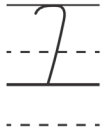
Printable Scribble Sheets

Print the next 2 pages and attach to cardstock. Fold the cue sheets down. Scribble with a crayon on the cardstock to where there is heavy crayon. Use as an activity to practice visual memory of letter groups and a – z in Fort Worth ISD. Student should write the letters "fast and large". If a student does not have a letter memorized, the sheet can be folded up for a visual cue and the student can copy the letter. Use the scribble sheet to practice visual memory of letter groups til memorized.



Candy Cane Letters:

First Stroke:



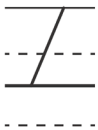
Start at the top and make a "candy cane" stroke

Handwriting practice lines for Candy Cane Letters. The letters shown are n, m, k, and h, each written on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dashed midline.

Handwriting practice lines for Candy Cane Letters. The letters shown are v, u, w, x, y, and z, each written on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dashed midline.

Leaning Line Letters:

First Stroke:

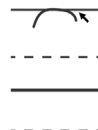


Start at the top and make a "leaning line" stroke by slanting down to the writing line.

Handwriting practice lines for Leaning Line Letters. The letters shown are B, D, P, and R, each written on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dashed midline.

Frowning Letters:

First Stroke:



These letters start like a "frown". Start on the right side and draw a "frown" to the left.

Handwriting practice lines for Frowning Letters. The letters shown are a, c, e, and o, each written on a set of three horizontal lines (top, middle, bottom) with a dashed midline.

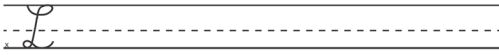
Attach to scribble sheet. Fold top down.

Loopity Loop L:

First Stroke:



Starts like a "smile". Start on the top line and draw "under and over" to make the first loop. Then draw to the writing line and draw "under and over" to make the second loop.

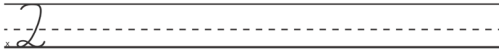


"Two Cool Q":

First Stroke:



"Two Cool Q" looks like a number two! It starts as a "candy cane stroke", then draw "under and over" to make the bottom loop.

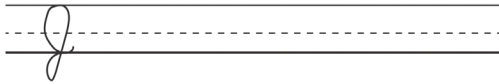


"Left Loop J":

First Stroke:



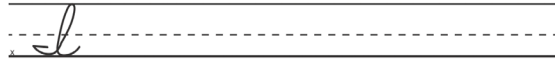
Swing to the left to make the top loop for "Left Loop J".



"Sailboat I":

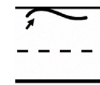
"Sailboat I" makes a "boat" as the first stroke.

First Stroke:

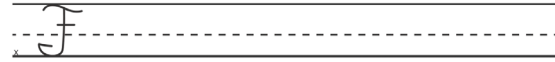
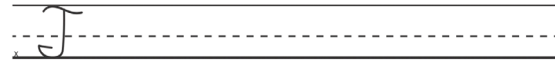


"Over and Under" T and F:

First Stroke:



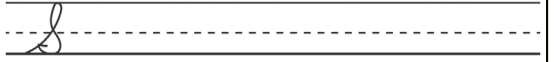
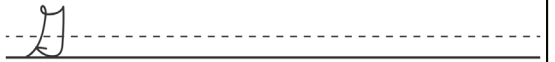
The first strokes for T and F starts as an "over and under" pattern.



"Swing Right G and S":

First Stroke:

Swing to the right to make the first stroke for "Swing Right G and S".



Attach to scribble sheet. Fold top down.

Printable Wipe-Off Sheet

- Photocopy onto cardstock. Put in sheet protector. (Or photocopy onto photocopy paper, and put in a sheet protector with a piece of heavyweight cardstock behind).
- Use this sheet for all instruction of strokes and letters.

Wipe Off Practice Card: Use a thin, black, Expo dry erase marker to practice strokes and letter formation before practicing in the workbook. Practice touching and tracing the writing line before making a bridging stroke to the next letter. The writing line on this practice card is hollow, so that a student has a visual cue to practice touching and tracing the writing line.

IMPORTANT: Wipe off the card after each use with a tissue or paper towel. If dry erase ink dries overnight on card, it is difficult to erase.



First Strokes Lower Case Terminology

Skateboard Ramp Letters

1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Retrace down to the writing line.
3. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.
4. Make a "dot" in the top space.

1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Retrace down to the writing line.
3. Make another skateboard ramp up.
4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

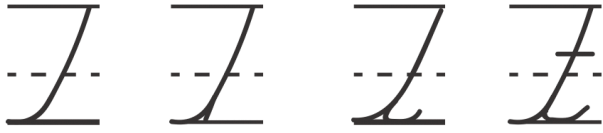
1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Retrace down to the writing line.
3. Make another skateboard ramp up.
4. Retrace down to the writing line.
5. Make another skateboard ramp up.
6. Make a high bridge stroke.

1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Draw straight down to the writing line.
3. Make a "boat".
4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Retrace down and sink below the writing line.
3. Make a point and a thin loop to the left.
4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Retrace down and sink below the writing line.
3. Make a point and a thin loop to the left.
4. Cross at the writing line. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.
5. Make a "dot" in the top space.

1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.
2. Retrace down slightly. Then make a line across.
3. Backslant line down to the writing line.
4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

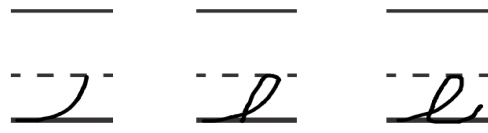


1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.

2. Retrace down to the writing line.

3. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

4. Cross the letter "t" with a small, horizontal line.



1. Climb up the skateboard ramp by tracing the writing line, curving and slanting a line up.

2. Make a thin loop at the middle divider and draw down to the writing line.

3. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

Wave Runner C Letters

1. Curve under and over to make a wave.

2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the "c" to make a "wave runner c" stroke.

3. Slant up and then retrace down to the writing line.

4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Curve under and over to make a wave.

2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the "c" to make a "wave runner c" stroke.

3. Slant up to the top line and then retrace down to the writing line.

4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Curve under and over to make a wave.

2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the "c" to make a "wave runner c" stroke.

3. Slant up and then retrace below the writing line.

4. Make a thin loop to the left (thinner at the ends, thicker in the middle).

5. Cross at the writing line. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.





1. Curve under and over to make a wave.




2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the "c" to make a "wave runner c" stroke.

3. Slant up and then retrace below the writing line.

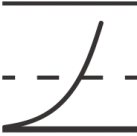

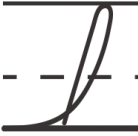

4. Make a thin loop to the right (thinner at the ends, thicker in the middle).


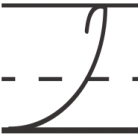



5. Cross at the writing line. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.






			
<p>1. Curve under and over to make a wave.</p>	<p>2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the "c" to make a "wave runner c" stroke.</p>	<p>3. Round up to the middle divider.</p>	<p>4. Make a high bridge stroke.</p>


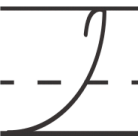



		
<p>1. Curve under and over to make a wave.</p>	<p>2. Retrace backwards to the bottom of the "c" to make a "wave runner c" stroke.</p>	<p>3. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.</p>

Tall and Thin Loop Letters

			
1. Trace, curve and slant towards the top line.	2. Make a hook	3. Draw a straight line down towards the writing line.	4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

				
1. Trace, curve and slant towards the top line.	2. Make a hook	3. Draw a straight line down below the writing line.	4. Make a thin loop to the right (thinner at the ends, thicker in the middle).	4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

				
1. Trace, curve and slant towards the top line.	2. Make a hook	3. Draw a straight line down to the writing line.	4. Draw a hill.	4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

				
1. Trace, curve and slant towards the top line.	2. Make a hook	3. Draw a straight line down to the writing line.	4. Retrace up to the middle divider and draw a "butterfly wing".	4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

Tall and Thin Loop Letters

1. Trace, curve and slant towards the top line.

2. Make a hook

3. Draw a straight line down to the writing line.

4. Retrace up to the middle divider and draw a "butterfly wing".

5. Make a high bridge stroke.

Fingertip Letters

1. Curve under and then slant up.

2. Go around the top and down to draw a "fingertip".

3. Draw another fingertip. Letter "n" has two "fingertips".

4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Curve under and then slant up.

2. Go around the top and down to draw a "fingertip".

3. Draw another "fingertip".

4. Draw another fingertip. Letter "m" has three "fingertips".

4. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Curve under and then slant up.

2. Go around the top and down to draw a "fingertip".

3. Curve under and then slant up.

4. Make a high bridge stroke.

Fingertip Letters

1. Curve under and then straight up.	2. Go around the top and down to draw a "fingertip".	3. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile).	4. Cross the letter.

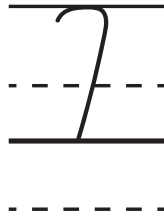
1. Curve under and then straight up.	2. Go around the top and down to draw a "fingertip".	3. Curve under and then slant up.	4. Slant a line down to the dotted line below.	5. Make a thin loop to the left (thinner at the ends, thicker in the middle).	6. Cross at the writing line. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

1. Curve under and then straight up.	2. Go around the top and down to draw a "fingertip".	3. Draw a smaller "fingertip".	4. Slant a line down to the dotted line below.	5. Make a thin loop to the left (thinner at the ends, thicker in the middle).	6. Cross at the writing line. Touch and trace the writing line (1/2 smile) before bridging to the next letter.

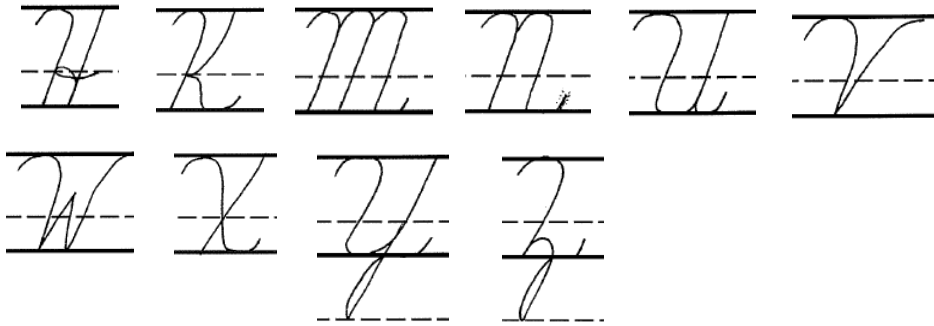
First Strokes Upper Case Terminology

Candy Cane Letters

First Stroke:

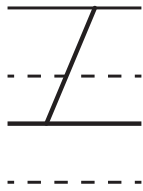


Start at the top and make a "candy cane" stroke

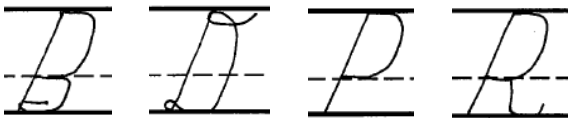


Leaning Line Letters

First Stroke:



Start at the top and make a "leaning line" stroke by slanting down to the writing line.

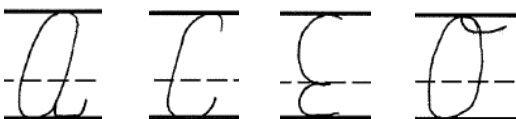


Frowning Letters

First Stroke:



These letters start like a "frown". Start on the right side and draw a "frown" to the left.

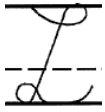


Loopity Loop L

First Stroke:

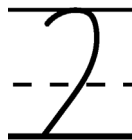


Starts like a "smile". Start on the top line and draw "under and over" to make the first loop. Then draw to the writing line and draw "under and over" to make the second loop.

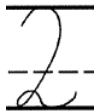


"Two" Cool Q

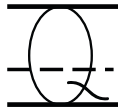
First Stroke:



"Two Cool Q" looks like a number two! It starts as a "candy cane stroke", then draw "under and over" to make the bottom loop.

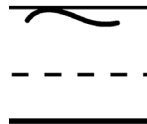


*Alternative Q:
Make Q as a
"Frowning Letter"*

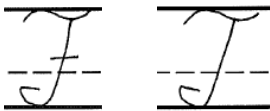


"Over and Under" F and T

First Stroke:



The first strokes for T and F starts as an "over and under" pattern.

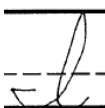


Sailboat I

First Stroke:

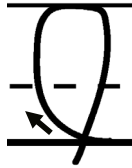


The first strokes for T and F starts as an "over and under" pattern.

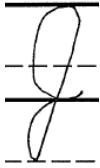


Left Loop J

First Stroke:

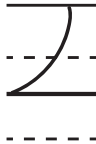


Swing to the left to make the top loop for "Left Loop J".



Swing Right G and S

First Stroke:



Swing to the right to make the first stroke for "Swing Right G and S".

