



# The Importance of Learning to Write in Cursive the Alphabet, Lowercase & Uppercase Letters

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In the modern world, writing by hand has seemed to lose its importance. Today, we use smartphones and computers to type messages to others and create important documents on a word processor. Students learn to type from a young age as some schools hand out Chromebooks or iPads to students for 1:1 learning. Writing out checks, which used to be a preferred method of payment, is almost completely replaced by bill pay services and online or card banking options. Given the stark ways our lives have changed over the years, why in the world would anyone need to know how to write in cursive?

That very question has been asked and pondered over during the past few decades, and as a result, many schools around the country have stopped teaching students this fancy and flowing version of the alphabet. In recent years, writing in cursive has been seen as a superfluous skill as districts move towards integrating technology into the curriculum.



But what happens when a student today grows into adulthood not knowing how to sign their own name on important documents like a mortgage application or the cover letter to their resume? Will adults in the future no longer be able to read the Declaration of Independence, which is written using calligraphy?

While these are important questions to ask, there are even better, more relevant reasons to teach cursive writing in early elementary classrooms. Educators know the cognitive value of teaching students to write by hand, particularly using cursive letters, which have been linked to higher levels of academic achievement, including on SAT scores.

Below we'll explore the fascinating ways learning to write in cursive can help your child both academically and in life before giving you awesome activities to get kids started today!

## The Importance of Learning Cursive Writing

Cursive handwriting is too often seen as a dying artform instead of an important method of writing. The problem lies in the fact that most people today rely on computers, and keyboarding classes have replaced cursive lessons in the elementary classroom. However, educational researchers have realized how important writing by hand is for learning and brain growth. The following are ways writing in cursive can assist students in their studies:

- It's important for the brain

Forming letters using a pencil and paper requires the brain to make a connection between the muscle movement of the hand and the visual information the brain takes in when seeing a letter. As kids learn to write, they learn to read what they write as well, and thus multiple processes take place from brain to hand that solidifies learning in a way typing just can't. Learning cursive offers children repeated practice, improving spelling and fine motor skills along the way.

- It improves fine motor skills

Toddlers learn gross motor skills as they learn to use their arms, legs, and feet for general everyday movement. Fine motor skills are different in that they are the much smaller precise movements that involve our fingers, hands and wrists. Fine motor skills are critical for professionals such as surgeons, electricians, artists, or engineers. Perfecting handwriting while learning to write in cursive can help kids develop these fine motor skills necessary for important professions.

- Cursive helps those with dyslexia and dysgraphia

People with learning disabilities like dyslexia or dysgraphia have a problem in their brains processing information they are reading or writing. Learning to write in cursive can actually be helpful because multiple brain processes are performing simultaneously, allowing one to move past the primary issue (for instance, in dyslexia, the problem consists of the inefficiency connecting sounds to letter combinations) to learn reading or writing using fine motor skills and muscle memory.

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## Getting Started: Learning to Write the Alphabet in Cursive

Once kids have gotten a firm grasp on printed letters, it's time to tackle cursive writing. The first and most obvious place to start is by reviewing the alphabet. There are some aspects of to take into consideration before beginning:



- The slant and slope of each letter
- How one letter connects to the next

- Uppercase letter shapes that are very different than the printed form

Because capital letters tend to vary in form and shape greatly from its printed counterpart, the easiest route to begin would be to start with lowercase letters. Start with these easy-to-learn letters:

a, c, h, j, l, m, n, p, r, s, u, w, y

The above letters are the easiest to learn because they are made with just one stroke and have minimal to no loops. Help your child or students study the letters using tracing worksheets and practice forming each. When these easy letters are mastered, move on to these more complex lowercase letters:

b, d, e, g, f, i, k, o, q, t, v, x, z

Once kids are able to recognize and write lowercase cursive letters, it's time to move on to the more challenging uppercase alphabet. Because some uppercase versions of a letter look vastly different than print, be sure to start with the following letters that look more like print:

A, B, C, H, K, M, N, O, P, R, U, V, W, X, Y

When kids feel reasonably comfortable writing the above letters, move on to those that look a little different from the usual printed versions, but still recognizable overall:

D, E, L, T

Last but not least, it's time to learn the letters that look the least familiar. Some practice will likely be needed to recognize and write these tricky cursive letter shapes:

F, G, I, J, Q, S, Z

Has your child mastered both uppercase and lowercase letters? If not, don't worry! Learning to write in language is almost like learning the alphabet all over again! Once kids are ready to move on from single letters, try the following activities for more practice using beautiful cursive writing!

## Activities for Practice by Topic

While some schools are bringing cursive writing back to the curriculum, many districts around the country no longer require students to learn or use it. So how can a parent keep a child's new skills sharp? With fun-filled games or arts and crafts activities of course! Try out the following kid-approved ideas to keep your child's cursive in check:



## Shaving Cream Name Writing

What kid wouldn't want to see their own name in fancy letters? Most kids want to learn how to write your name in cursive, but why stop there? Practice the following common names that may just be your child's classmates or cousins:

Elizabeth, Brianna, Isaac, Joseph, Kaylee, Mason, Megan, Nicholas, Noah, Emily, Sam, Samantha, Sarah, Smith, Steven, Tiffany, Victoria, Olivia

Using the above list of names, challenge your child to write names in a flat tub or container using shaving cream. Simply set up the container by supplying a large shallow tub and spreading the shaving cream around the tub. When ready, call out a name from your list and instruct children to draw out the name using their fingers. Check your child's work for accuracy and encourage your child along the way. Make it a game by challenging kids to compete against their friends or siblings for both speed and accuracy!

## Writing Names at the Beach

For a spin on the above idea, play a similar game by drawing in the sand on your next beach day! After settling in at the beach, grab a stick and follow the same procedure above by calling out names from the list. Participants draw out the name in the sand

using the stick. After mastering names or on subsequent trips, try writing large messages in the sand that parasailers might be able to see from the air!

## Send Holiday and Celebration Greetings Using iPhone

Did you know you can use your phone to send handwritten messages via text? Many smartphone users are not aware, but to write in cursive on iPhone, just click in the box to send a message and turn the phone horizontally. A button next to “return” looks like a cursive stroke of writing. Tap the button and use your finger to handwrite messages!

To practice with your child, send real holiday and birthday greetings using cursive writing and emojis! Your child will be amazed seeing the following festive days written in lovely loopy handwriting. Try writing practicing these celebratory messages:

Happy Valentine’s Day, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Birthday

## Clothespin Scramble Game Using Popular Kid Words

For this activity, you’ll need sticky notes, a marker, and plenty of clothespins! Carefully write cursive letters on the sticky notes, including one letter per note. Plan for enough letters to spell out multiple words and use a combination of lower and uppercase letters. You can even get your child in on the fun and help him or her prepare the sticky notes ahead of time!

Hang a clothesline along the mantel of your fireplace, or in any other accessible location in your home. Using the clothespins, hang each sticky note on the line, scrambling the order of the letters. Choose from the following bank of popular words kids love to use in their writing. Call out words and watch as your child selects the clothespins from the clothesline to spell each word! Then, practice writing each complete word in your child’s notebook or writing journal!

Word Bank: family, mom, dad, brother, sister, rainbow, angel, race cars, monster truck, love, heart, princess, Mickey Mouse, Paw Patrol

Keep your child’s cursive writing beautiful by practicing a lot and often. Make cards for loved ones, or use script for arts and crafts, and even when selecting fonts online! The more practice the better, as some kids today do not have the opportunity of learning this valuable skill at school.

