

# Dishforth CE Primary School

## Handwriting Policy

### Introduction

At Dishforth C of E School, we recognise that being able to write legibly and fluently is an important skill in being able to communicate language to readers. The National Curriculum 2014 contains statutory information and additional guidance on how this should be done, and we implement this throughout the year groups and key stages.

**“Writing also depends on fluent, legible and eventually, speedy handwriting.”**  
(National Curriculum 2014)

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum.

### Aims

- Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.
- Our aim is that the children will be able to write clearly, fluently and quickly so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school.
- We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.
- We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

### Objectives

Handwriting is a movement skill and as such, should be taught directly by **demonstration, explanation and practice.**

In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught (National Curriculum guidelines):

- How to hold a pencil/pen
- To write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
- To start and finish letters correctly
- To form letters of regular size and shape
- To put regular spaces between letters and words
- How to form lower and upper case letters
- How to join letters
- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning effectively.
- Write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed
- Use different forms of handwriting for different purposes.

## Key Factors for Good Handwriting

It is recognised that these factors are essential elements of writing across the school:

### Pre-writing skills

Gross motor skill development is vital to re-inforce concepts taught. Sensory media is used imaginatively and direction and correct letter formation are more important than neatness initially.

### Knowledge of letters

Pupils need to have knowledge of phonemes and letter names.

### Perception

We recognise the need to explain how to use the page, print concepts, left to right, top to bottom etc.

### Sitting position

The pupil must be sitting comfortably with feet flat on the floor and the body upright, leaning forward slightly. The non-writing hand should rest on the paper, supporting the upper body, facing slightly to the dominant side. The eyes should be approx 30 to 40 cms from the paper. If pupils copy from the board, they should be facing it.

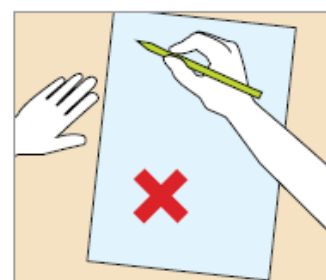
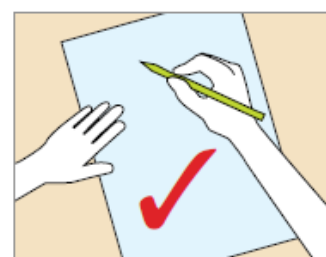
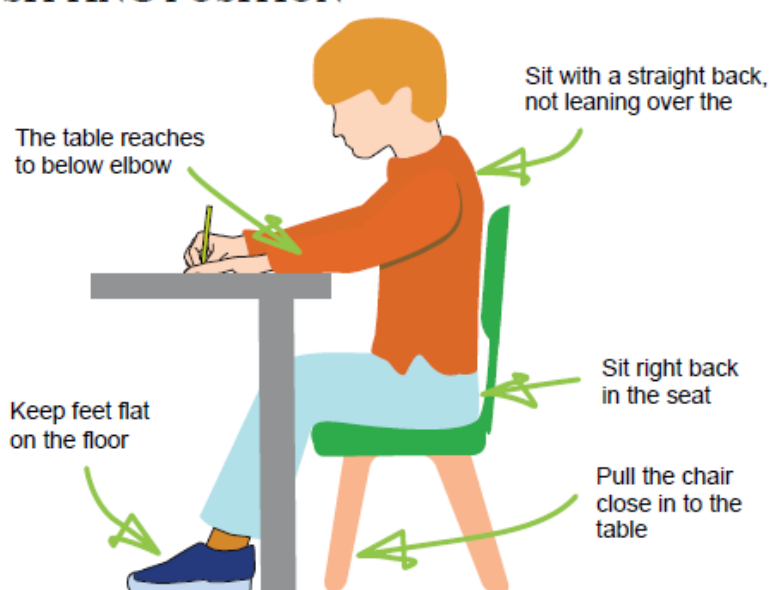
### Position of paper

Paper position should be adjusted to suit the writing hand. The paper should be placed slightly to the writing hand side of the body. The writer should move the paper up rather than lower the arm.

## Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

### SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children

## Grip

If children are to develop a fluent and fast handwriting style, they must learn to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed, but allows for efficient control of the pencil. Care should be taken that children do not grip too tightly as they will be unable to develop a free flowing movement and will tire quickly. Children should be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements required for writing are possible. Pencil grip is recognised as of paramount importance and is highlighted as a key school focus as it is very difficult to change after a year or two. Commercial pencil grips may be used to correct grip in class 1 but should only be used in class 2 or 3 if a grip is unconventional and writing fluency is being impaired.

### THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

1

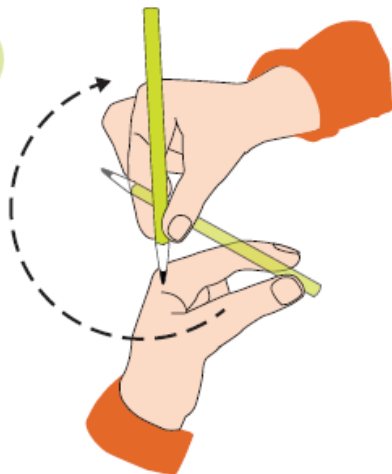


1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.

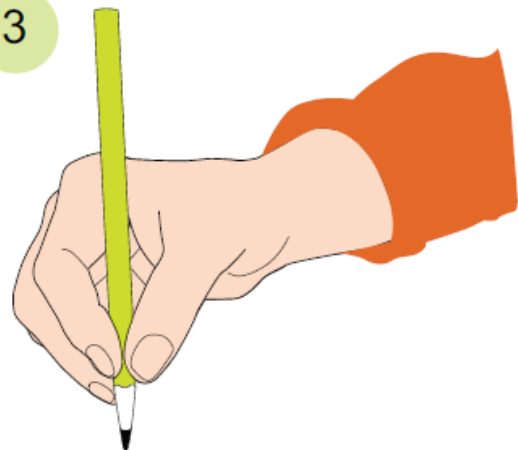
2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.

3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

2



3



## Hand dominance

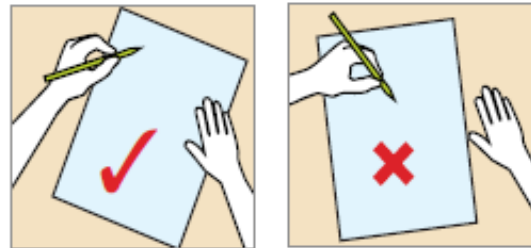
This is usually well established by age 5, but preference may appear earlier and hand dominance must be taken into consideration in teaching tasks.

## LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow right-handed teachers as they demonstrate letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.



- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.



Paper position for left-handed children

### Letter formation

Most LHL naturally draw a circle in a clockwise direction, which has implications for letter formation. Extra time and attention is given to ensure they are able to form letters as right handed people do.

### Paper

LHL need to have the paper to the left side of the mid-line of the body and tilted at an angle of 30 degrees clockwise so the pupil can see what is being written.

### Writing tool

It is important to have a free-flowing implement as the implement is being pushed rather than pulled across the paper. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide variety of implements including left handed nibs.

### Grip

Pupils are encouraged to hold the pen further from the point than right handers (approx 1.5cm from end of writing implement) so that the writing is not obscured. The wrist

should be straight and any hook grip should be corrected with paper angle and formation guidance.

### **Seating**

LHL sit on the left of right handed children to avoid arms clashing. Some children will benefit from a higher seating position to see their work more clearly.

### **Furniture**

All pupils need a chair that enables them to sit with their feet flat on the floor and their knees at right angles. Tables should allow space between the knees and underside of the table.

### **Lighting**

Good lighting is essential. Pupils should not write on paper in their own shadow.

### **Transition through the stages of handwriting**

The acquisition of good handwriting skills follows a pattern, as recognised in the National Curriculum, but we realise that children will become competent in these skills at different rates. Children will move from printing, to joining 2 or 3 letters, to fully cursive handwriting depending on a range of factors, including maturity and fine motor control. Therefore, we aim generally to follow the yearly programmes in the National Curriculum but adapt this to the needs of different children



**The most important stage in the acquisition of fluent and legible handwriting is the correct formation of letters, and this necessarily falls within Early Years and KS1.**

### **Inclusion**

It is the responsibility of class teachers, in liaison with other staff e.g. SENCO, Literacy Leader, to ensure that differentiation is dependent on each child's skills and abilities, and that appropriate interventions are put in place to support children if necessary. Teachers will need to be sensitive to the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and to genuine developmental needs.

Pencil grips, tracing, ball bearings in plastic letters, slopes, hand exercises, hand eye co-ordination games and exercises to improve fine and gross motor skills are all used when deemed appropriate to the pupil.

### **Progression from EYFS to End of KS2**

### **By the end of Foundation Stage 1 children will**

- Be given opportunities to develop pre-writing skills with an emphasis on gross motor skills.
- Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement.
- Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing pre-cursive patterns in a variety of writing materials such as modelling clay, air writing, sand trays, felt pens, crayons, pencils, IWB, iPads/tablets.
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation.

### **By the end of Foundation Stage 2 children will**

- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature.
- Understand that letters are written on a base line
- Securely form some recognisable printed letters, capital letters and numerals.
- Have an understanding of writing their own name.
- Understanding different shaped letter families.

### **Key Stage 1**

Write legibly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins.

- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are to be used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.

## **Handwriting in the National Curriculum 2014**

### **Year 1**

#### **Statutory requirements**

#### **Pupils should be taught to:**

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9 correctly
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### **By the end of Year 1 children will**

- Be expected to form some lower-case letters in pre-cursive script.

## **Year 2**

### **Statutory requirements**

#### **Pupils should be taught to:**

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

### **Key Stage 2**

Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

- **Quality:** Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- **Speed:** Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- **Stamina:** Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.

Have full knowledge and ability of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes:

- Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters.
- Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.
- Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as + instead of 'and', can be used.

## **Year 3 and 4**

### **Statutory requirements**

Pupils should be taught to:

use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined  
increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

Children in Year 3 will be taught to use diagonal and horizontal strokes.

Children in Year 4 will begin to use diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters.

## Year 5 and 6

### Statutory requirements

Handwriting and presentation

Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

### Handwriting Implements

- Reception-Variety of suitable implements e.g. crayons, large felt pens, chunky crayons, hand-hugger pencils.
- Years 1 & 2- Pencils
- Years 3 & 4- Pencils in all books
- Years 5 & 6-When ready, all writing completed in pen, except work in numeracy books..

### Handwriting Frequency

**Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons.**

Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systemically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

For simplicity, the letters of the alphabet can be sorted into 4 main movement groups:

The four groups are:

- **Long ladder:** down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l  
**i j l t u**
- **One-armed robot:** down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r  
**r b n h m k p Numbers: 2 3 5**
- **Curly :** anti clockwise round, exemplified by the letter c  
**c a d e g o q Numbers: 0 6 8 9**
- **Zig-zag letters:** **v w x y z Numbers: 1 4 7**
- **Reception** will be continually practising manipulative skills (including fine and gross motor skills) and letter formation. This will include movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing as well as exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets. Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary. Letter formation taught in daily RWI sessions.
- **Years 1 and 2:**



- Three 10 minute sessions taught and modelled hand writing sessions each week
  - RWI daily modelling
  - Through adult modelling or correct letters formation in books and on the board
- Years 3 and 4:
    - Three 10 minute session taught and modelled hand writing sessions each week
    - Through adult modelling or correct letters formation in books and on the board
- Years 5 and 6:
    - Pupils continue to practise handwriting through dictation exercises (3 times per week)

### **Inclusion**

**Where appropriate, interventions supporting gross and fine motor skills, correct letter formation, joins and legibility and fluency will be implemented.**

### **Staff Handwriting**

Staff handwriting is the model for the pupils. **All staff** should produce quality handwriting in the script that is taught in the class they are working in, both when modelling and writing feedback in children's books and on the whiteboard.

### **INFORMING PARENTS OF THE SCHOOL HANDWRITING STYLE**

Parents will be given a copy of the school handwriting style and an explanation of handwriting progression for pupils will be given at the open evening for new parents. Parents will also be given a reminder copy of the style as their child enters a new class.

**Policy agreed on: September 2024**

**Policy to be reviewed: September 2026**

### **References:**

National Handwriting Association

### **Useful Resources:**

<http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/continuous-cursive-letters-beginners.html>

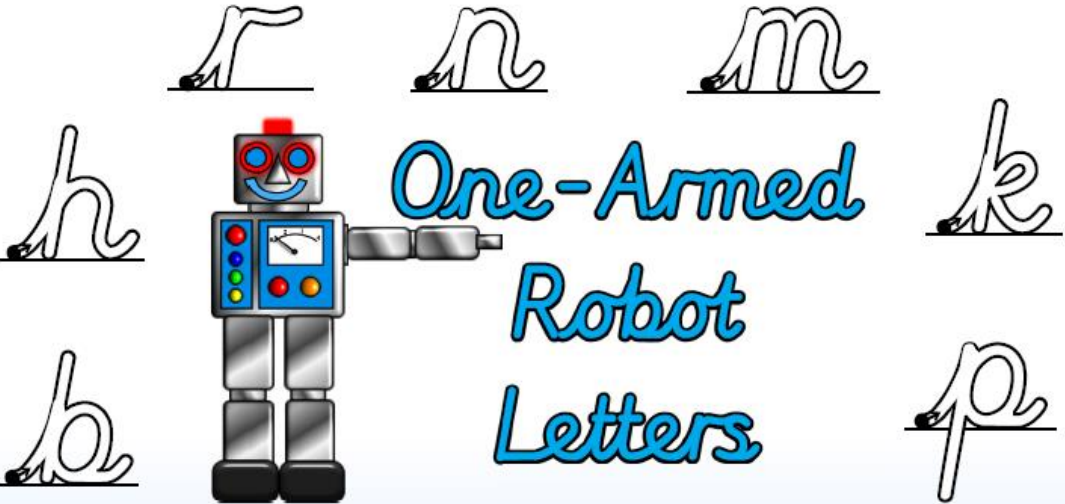
[www.communication4all.co.uk](http://www.communication4all.co.uk) – number formation rhymes (see appendix 2)


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

A B C D E F G H  
I J K L M N O P Q R  
S T U V W X Y Z

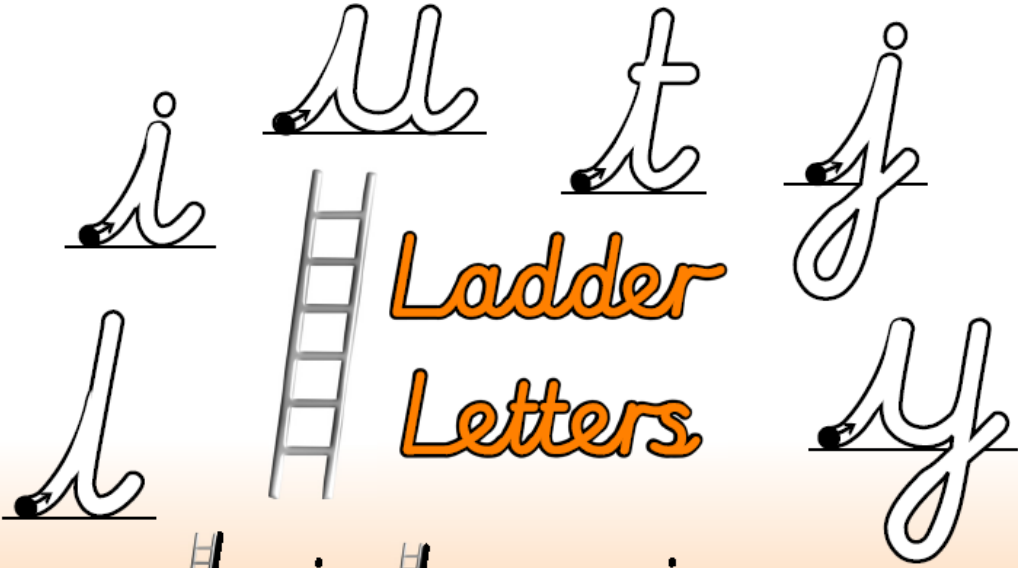
**Appendix 1:**


Copy of letter formation to be followed in school


  
**One-Armed Robot Letters**

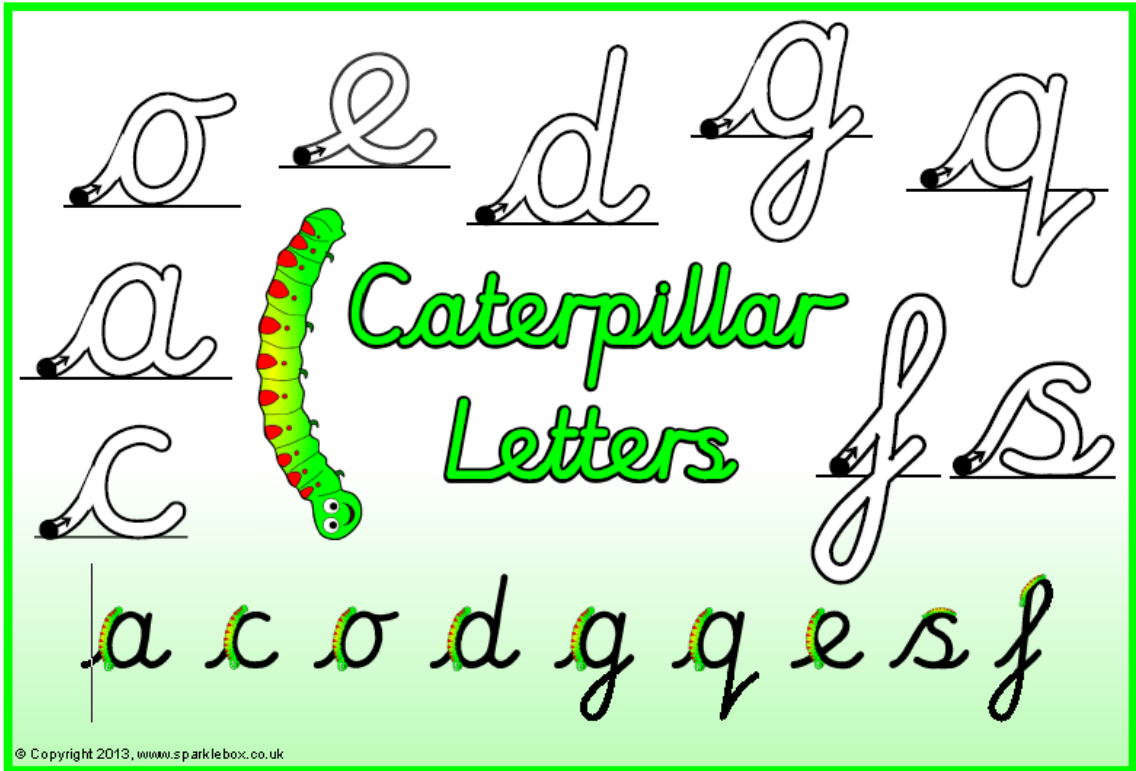


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**Ladder Letters**



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o e d g q

a c

Caterpillar Letters

f s

a c o d g q e s f

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This worksheet is titled "Caterpillar Letters" and features a central illustration of a green caterpillar with red spots. The letters 'o', 'e', 'd', 'g', 'q', 'a', 'c', 'f', and 's' are presented in a cursive font. Each letter is shown with a pencil icon at its starting point and a line indicating the direction of the stroke. The letters are arranged in rows: 'o', 'e', 'd', 'g', 'q' in the top row; 'a', 'c' in the second row; 'f', 's' in the third row; and a final row containing 'a', 'c', 'o', 'd', 'g', 'q', 'e', 's', 'f' with small caterpillar icons integrated into the letters. The title "Caterpillar Letters" is written in a green, cursive font. A copyright notice for 2013 is located at the bottom left.



x w





Zigzag Monster Letters

n z

x w x z

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This worksheet is titled "Zigzag Monster Letters" and features a central illustration of a red, triangular monster with a jagged top, large eyes, and a lightning bolt on its head. The letters 'x', 'w', 'n', and 'z' are presented in a cursive font. Each letter is shown with a pencil icon at its starting point and a line indicating the direction of the stroke. The letters are arranged in rows: 'x', 'w' in the top row; 'n', 'z' in the second row; and a final row containing 'x', 'w', 'x', 'z' with small monster icons integrated into the letters. The title "Zigzag Monster Letters" is written in a red, cursive font. A copyright notice for 2013 is located at the bottom left.

<p>Around and round and round we go,</p>  <p>When we get home we have a zero.</p> <p><small>www.aminatutahid.com</small></p>	<p>Start at the top and down we run,</p>  <p>That's the way we make a one.</p> <p><small>www.aminatutahid.com</small></p>
<p>Around and back on a railroad track</p>  <p>Two, two, two</p> <p><small>www.aminatutahid.com</small></p>	<p>Around the tree and around the tree,</p>  <p>That's the way we make a three.</p> <p><small>www.aminatutahid.com</small></p>

Down and over, down  
some more



That's the way we  
make a four.

Down and around  
then a flag on high



That's the way we  
make a five.

Down we go and make  
a loop,



Number six makes a  
hoop.

Across the sky and  
down from heaven,



That's the way we  
make a seven.

Make an 's' and do  
not wait



When it's joined up  
you have an eight.

[www.commissionerforlifed.co.uk](http://www.commissionerforlifed.co.uk)



Make a loop and then  
a line,



That's the way we  
make a nine.

[www.commissionerforlifed.co.uk](http://www.commissionerforlifed.co.uk)

