HANDWRITING HEROES!

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Instructional Manual

Print Edition

Lowercase · Numbers · Print Practice · Uppercase · Sentence Practice

www.handwritingheroes.org

2026

Contents

01	Program Overview	3
02	Getting Started	4
03	Scope and Sequence	5
04	AlphaTool	6
05	Proper Positioning	7
06	The Writing Lines and Letter Formation	9
07	General Guidelines	11
08	Air Writing	12
09	Action Words	13
10	Multisensory Activities	14
11	Lowercase Letter Lessons	15
	Week 1: Skydivers	15
	Week 2: Bouncers	18
	Week 3: Cannon Pops	21
	Week 4: Skiers	24
	Week 5: Surfers	27
12	Lowercase Error Correction Guide	30
13	Number Lessons	32
14	Print Practice	33
15	Uppercase Letter Lessons	34
16	Sentence Practice	38
17	Differentiation	40

Teal italic marks digital activities on the online platform.

01

Program Overview

Handwriting Heroes teaches handwriting through letter groups that share a common stroke, with stories, songs, and action words that explain how each letter is formed. A digital subscription gives teachers and students access to the online platform, including the Guided Lesson Platform, on-demand videos, The Quick Handwriting Assessment, and a resource library of downloadable workbooks and teacher materials.

Guided Lesson Platform

The Guided Lesson Platform is designed as an island adventure. Each stepping stone corresponds to a different letter and includes stories, songs, and games. Teachers can move from one island to the next, using the structured progression to plan their lessons. The pathway provides ample practice and review opportunities to build fluency.

The platform follows a sequential structure but allows for flexibility. Adjust daily activities to match your students' pace and learning styles. Lessons include integrated videos, letter animations, self-evaluation questions, Get Ready to Write videos, and digital whiteboard templates with color-changing pens.

What's Included

Component	What's Included
On-Demand Videos	Lowercase letter groups, lowercase letters, uppercase letters, numbers, letter songs, starting points, The Alphabet Song, The Writing Lines, Sky, Grass, and Dirt Letters, b and d Can't Trick Me, and Get Ready to Write.
Student Platform	The Writing Lines Puzzle, integrated letter formation videos, guided letter formation practice, the Letter Hockey and Name the Letter games, and Treasure Island word practice activities.
Assessments	The Quick Handwriting Assessment, Alphabet Writing Speed, Assessment and Progress Tracking, and the Line-Picker Assessment.
Resource Library	**Workbooks (PDF downloads):** Pre-K, Super Shapes, Draw-a-Doodle, Lowercase, Especially for Lefty, Treasure Island, Print Practice, Uppercase, Tiny Tales, Ready, Set, Alphabet, Numbers, and Rollercoaster Cursive. **Guides:** parent letters, handwriting goals and objectives, letter formation guide, instructional course, quick start guide, teacher script, and scope and sequence. **Classroom materials:** Handwriting Heroes fonts, three-lined and editable paper, graphic organizers, wall cards, desk strips and name plates, and support tools such as finger puppets, letter cards, and the Writing Lines Puzzle.
Worksheet Maker	Create custom handwriting practice pages.

02

Getting Started

- Review The Art and Science of Teaching Handwriting course (optional): handwritingheroes.braincert.com
- Plan for five 15–20-minute lessons a week.
- Assess students' handwriting skills using The Quick Handwriting Assessment (optional) at the start, middle, and end of the year to track progress. For kindergarteners, begin at mid-year.
- Check students' desk and chair for appropriate height (see Proper Positioning).

Digital Subscription (optional)

- **Set Up Teacher Accounts**
- Access the Teacher app via:
  - Web (laptops, desktops, Chromebooks): subscriptions.handwritingheroes.org/login
  - iPad app (App Store): apps.apple.com/us/app/handwriting-heroes/id1624248315
- **Set Up Student Accounts:** In your Teacher Account, go to My Class tab > Create New Class > Add New Student. Access student accounts through the same web and app download links.

Materials Checklist

Essentials

- [ ] Workbooks
- [ ] Dry-erase surfaces and markers
- [ ] Digital subscription (optional)

Extras

- [ ] Assorted pencils, markers, and crayons
- [ ] Magnetic drawing board or doodle board
- [ ] Organizer for storing materials
- [ ] Laminator or packing tape for the AlphaTool
- [ ] Poster tack to hold the AlphaTool in place
- [ ] Cotton swabs
- [ ] Ink pads
- [ ] Cork board
- [ ] Large push pin

03

Scope and Sequence

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
l t k i j	h b r n m p	c a d o g q	v w x y	s u f e z
Week 6	**Week 7**	**Week 8**	**Week 9**	**Week 10**
three-letter words		two-word phrases		three-word phrases
Week 11	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**
four-word phrases		C O S V W	X Z B F H	I J K L P
Week 16	**Week 17**	**Week 18**	**Week 19**	**Week 20**
T U Y A D	E G M N Q R	Review	Sentence Practice	
Week 21	**Week 22**	**Week 23**	**Week 24**	**Week 25**
Sentence Practice				
Week 26	**Week 27**	**Week 28**	**Week 29**	**Week 30**
Sentence Practice				FINISH

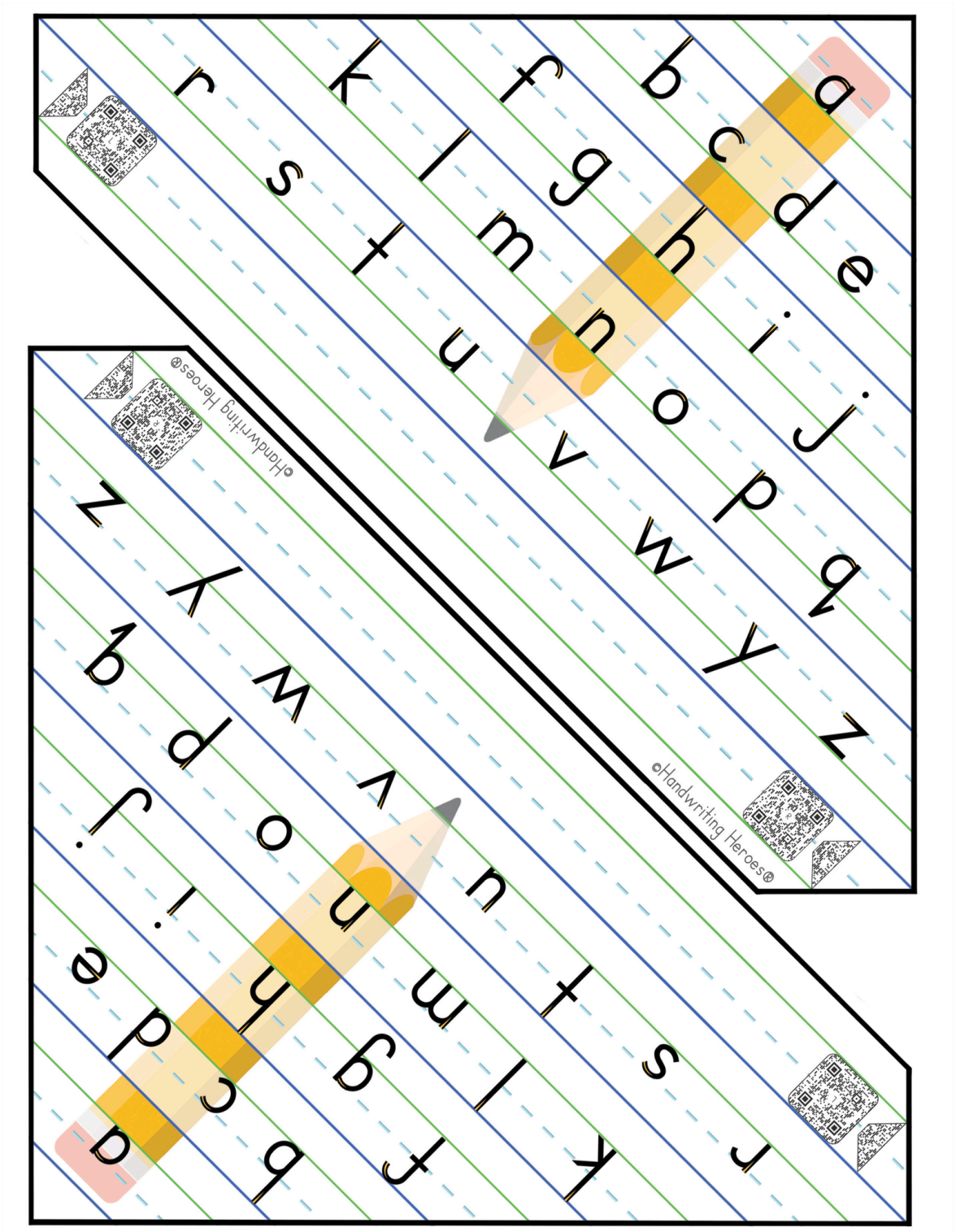
Note: *The Scope and Sequence is a general overview. See each lesson section for the exact lessons and letters taught each week.*

Note: *Tiny Tales (Sentence Practice, Weeks 19 to 30) is a printable download.*

04

AlphaTool

Print, laminate and cut out the AlphaTool below.



05

Proper Positioning

Posture



- Feet flat on the floor
- Hips against the back of the chair
- Shoulders slightly forward
- Hands and forearms resting on the desk

Paper



For right-handers:

Place the AlphaTool in the top left corner of the desk.



For left-handers:

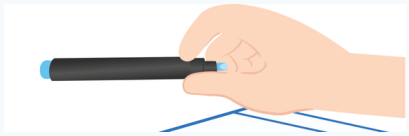
Place the AlphaTool in the top right corner of the desk.

- Position the writing paper parallel to the edge of the AlphaTool.
- Hold the paper in place with the non-writing hand.

Pencil Grip: The "Pinch and Flip" Trick



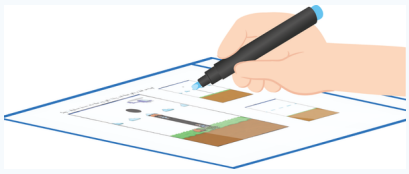
1. Place the marker on the AlphaTool.



2. Pinch it right above the tip.



3. Flip it over into the thumb web space, between your thumb and pointer finger.



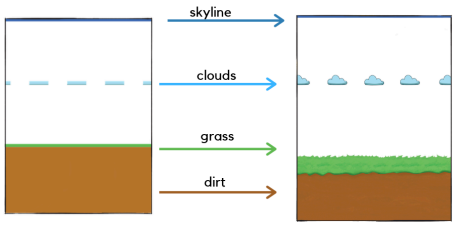
4. Hold the marker with your thumb and pointer finger, and rest it on your middle finger.

06

The Writing Lines and Letter Formation

The Writing Lines Key

Child-friendly, three-lined paper provides an essential structure for young writers. This "landscape" provides a backdrop for the letter stories.

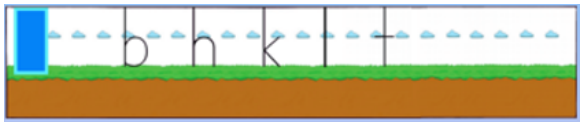


Line	Description
Sky line	The top line. Tall letters start at the sky line.
Clouds	The dotted middle line.
Grass	The solid bottom baseline. Letters must sit firmly on the grass.
Dirt	The space below the grass line where "dirt" letters dig down.

Letter Size

Letters can be defined by their size and placement on the writing line:

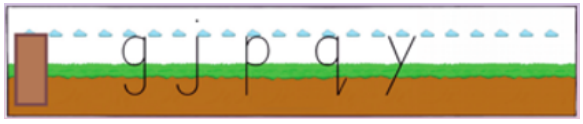
Sky letters are tall. They move from the sky line to the grass.



Grass letters are small. They move from the clouds to the grass.



Dirt letters move from the clouds to the dirt.



Note: The letters d and f are intentionally excluded from the sky letters. Although both are tall letters, neither starts at the sky line: d starts at the clouds like the other cannon pops, and f starts just below the sky line.

Note: 20 letters start at the clouds, so when in doubt, start at the clouds!

Letter Formation

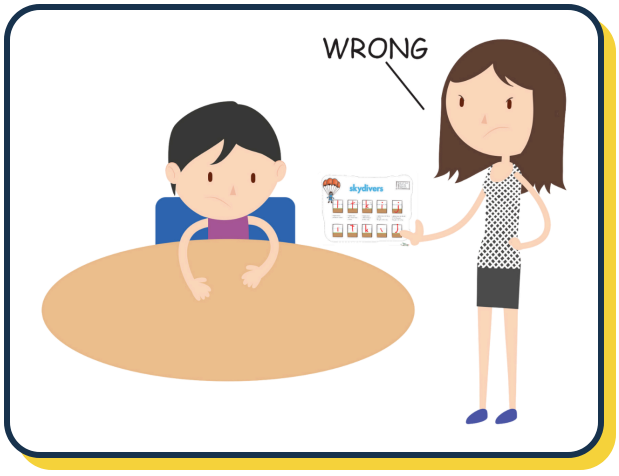
Forming letters and numbers systematically from top to bottom and left to right is the most efficient way to write.

- It allows for more **fluid movement** of the pencil, which can lead to **faster writing** and better **legibility**.
- Correct letter formation helps prevent **letter reversals** by using distinct motor movements for each letter. For example, "b" starts with a vertical stroke whereas "d" starts with a rounded stroke. Forming these letters differently helps children to tell them apart from one another.

07

General Guidelines

- Introduce all letters within a group at the same time to emphasize the shared stroke pattern. Repeating the same movement across letters strengthens motor memory and promotes rhythmic writing.
- Air write and finger trace letters before pencil-and-paper practice.
- Encourage students to form letters with minimal lifting of the pencil from the paper.
- Focus on accuracy over speed.
- Remain flexible with activities and lesson pacing, focusing on different skills as needed and as time permits. You do not need to complete every suggested learning concept in each lesson; instead, prioritize the **Letter Stories** and **Letter Writing**.
- Teaching handwriting in a **small group** is preferable. However, if this is not possible, be sure to walk around the room in order to observe students while they are writing.
- When students repeatedly practice incorrect letter formations, inefficient motor patterns become habitual. Remember: only **precise** practice makes perfect!
- Provide **immediate feedback** to correct errors as they occur. Giving feedback after the work is completed is not as effective.



08

Air Writing

Benefits

- Large, exaggerated movements engage **multiple memory paths**.
- Using both hands promotes **crossing the midline**, which may support physical and cognitive development.
- Students can **practice letter forms** without the visual-motor demands of paper.
- Teachers can quickly **assess** letter strokes, even with large groups.

How to Air Write

- Stand up tall.
- Use one hand: Point the finger of your writing hand forward. Place your other hand on your hip.
- Or use both hands: Clasp your hands together. Point your index fingers forward.
- For letters that start at the sky line, start at eye level.
- For letters that start at the clouds, start at shoulder level.
- Trace the letter in the air.



Using One Hand



Using Both Hands

09

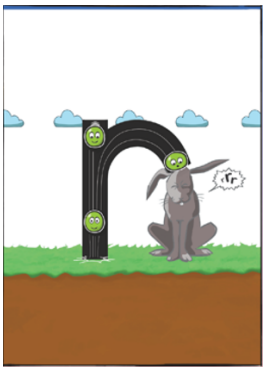
Action Words

The stories or action words explain **why** the letters are formed the way that they are.

- Having students retell the story as they make the letter helps them plan and sequence the order of the strokes.
- If a child cannot say the action words while writing, say them for the child.
- Another effective technique is to have the student narrate the story while you or a fellow student writes the letter.

Adjusting the Level of Prompting

Increase or decrease prompting relative to how much support the student needs. Example: the letter r.

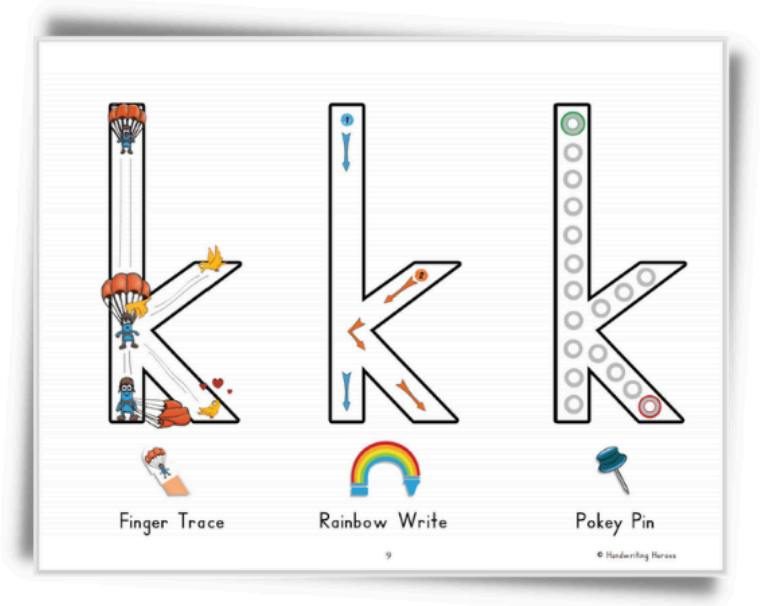


Level of Support	What to Say
Say the whole sequence.	r drops down, bounces back up and onto the rabbit's head.
Split it into segments.	r drops down. bounces back up. and onto the rabbit's head.
Split it into segments and provide line placement cues.	r drops down **onto the grass**. bounces back up **to the clouds**. and onto the rabbit's head.

10

Multisensory Activities

The following multisensory activities, from the *Pre-K Printing* digital workbook, provide a structured and playful way for kids to learn their letters. They also work well for extra practice with older students who need additional support.



Activity	How to Do It
Finger Tracing	After demonstrating the letter form and explaining the story of how the letter is formed, say: "Finger trace the letter and tell me the story." Tape the finger puppet to the student's pointer finger, then have them trace the letter.
Rainbow Writing	Students follow the numbers and arrows to complete the letter using rainbow colors, such as red, orange, yellow, and blue. Provide an assortment of writing tools, including markers, crayons and colored pencils. Remind them to pinch their pencil!
Pokey Pin	Place the worksheet on a foam, cork or carpet square. Use a push pin to punch a hole into each dot along the letter path, starting at the green dot and ending at the red dot. Dots with two circles get poked a second time when that part of the letter is retraced. Pin punching is great for building fine motor strength and for improving visual motor accuracy.
Q-Tip Flips	As an alternative to Pokey Pin, dip each end of a Q-tip in a different paint color. Dot along the letter path, flipping the Q-tip with your fingers so the dots alternate between the two colors.

11

Lowercase Letter Lessons

Week 1: Skydivers

Lessons 1 to 5

COMMON STROKE

All the skydivers **skydive down!**

OBJECTIVES

- Identify parts of the writing line
- Form letters l, t, k, i, j
- Identify how the skydiver letters are connected
- Distinguish between sky (l, t, k), grass (i) and dirt (j) letters
- Identify beginning letter sounds

SONG

Skydiving down, down, down. Skydiving down.
l, t and k dive down from the top
Land on a lemon, get teased by a toucan and kissed by a cuckoo.

Skydiving down, down, down. Skydiving down.
i and j dive down from the clouds,
Get an itch from the ivy and dig up some jewels.
Skydiving down, down, down,
Skydiving down.

ACTION WORDS, TEACHER SCRIPT, AND SELF-EVALUATION

Letter	Action Words	Teacher Script	Self-Evaluation
l	**l** skydives down and **l**ands on a **l**emon!	Which line does l start at? (**the sky line**) Which line does l land on? (**the grass line**) What does skydiver l land on? (a **lemon**) The first sound in lemon is /l/. The letter l says /l/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your l...* start at the sky line land on the grass
t	**t** skydives down, then a **t**oucan **t**osses a **t**omato!	Which line does t start at? (**the sky line**) Which line does t land on? (**the grass line**) What does the toucan toss onto skydiver t's head? (a **tomato**) The first sound in tomato is /t/. The letter t says /t/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your t...* start at the sky line land on the grass make a line across the clouds
k	**k** skydives down, a little bird **k**isses **k**, and flies away!	Which line does k start at? (**the sky line**) Which line does k land on? (**the grass line**) Which line does the little bird start at? (**the cloud line**) What does the little bird give to skydiver k? (a **kiss**) The first sound in kiss is /k/. The letter k says /k/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your k...* start at the sky line land on the grass start back at the clouds glide to the left glide down to the grass
i	**i** skydives down into the **i**vy, gets **i**tchy, then gets a dot on top!	Which line does i start at? (**the cloud line**) Which line does i land on? (**the grass line**) What does the skydiver land in? (**ivy**) The first sound in ivy is /i/. The letter i says /i/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your i...* start at the clouds land on the grass get a dot on top
j	**j** skydives down into the dirt to find the **j**ewels, then gets a dot on top!	Which line does j start at? (**the cloud line**) Where does j end? (**in the dirt**) What does the skydiver find? (**jewels**) The first sound in jewels is /j/. The letter j says /j/. Say the sound with me. If a student turns j's tail to the right instead of the left, say, "j turns toward i to say 'hi!'"	*Did your j...* start at the clouds fall into the dirt turn to the left get a dot on top

LESSON ROUTINE: LESSONS 1 TO 5

Concept	Instruction	Resources
The Writing Lines *Lesson 1*	The sky line is at the top. The clouds are in the middle. The grass line is at the bottom. The dirt is below the grass.	Wkbk pp. 1–2 *The Writing Lines video*
Letter Placement on the Writing Lines *Lesson 1*	Tall letters l, t, and k start at the sky line and skydive down to the grass. Small letter i starts at the clouds and lands on the grass. Dirt letter j starts at the clouds and dips down into the dirt.	Wkbk pp. 1–2 *Sky, Grass, and Dirt Letters video*
Letter Stories	Identify the common stroke: all the letters skydive down. Students air write the letters while saying the action words aloud. Students finger-trace each letter while saying the action words aloud.	Wkbk pp. 1–2 *Skydiver Island: Theme Song + Letter Story videos*
Positioning *Lessons 2–5*	Ensure correct sitting position, pencil grip, and paper placement.	Proper Positioning *Get Ready to Write video*
Letter Writing	Students copy the skydiver letters.	Lesson 1: Wkbk pp. 3–4 Lesson 2: Wkbk pp. 5–6 Lesson 3: Wkbk pp. 7–8 Lesson 4: Wkbk pp. 9–10 Lesson 5: Wkbk pp. 11–12
Self-Check *Lessons 2–5*	Guide students to check their work.	Self-Evaluation: Skydivers *Self-Evaluation activity*
Multisensory Activities *Lessons 2–4*	Explore the letter sounds and sign language symbols.	*Sing with Shannon video* Multisensory Activities (Finger Tracing, Rainbow Writing, Pokey Pin)
Name the Letter *Lesson 5*	Identify the correct letter before the animation ends.	*Name the Letter game*

Week 2: Bouncers

Lessons 6 to 10

COMMON STROKE

All the bouncers **drop down, bounce back up, and over!**

OBJECTIVES

- Form letters h, b, r, n, m and p
- Identify how the bouncer letters are connected
- Distinguish between sky (h, b), grass (r, n, m) and dirt (p) letters
- Identify beginning sounds
- Improve fluency for the previously-learned letters

SONG

Bouncing down, up and over, down, up and over
Down, up and over
It's how balls bounce
Haunted houses, flying bats, angry rabbits too.

Bouncing down, up and over,
Down, up and over
It's how balls bounce
Take a nap, play with a pig, catch a mouse or two!

ACTION WORDS, TEACHER SCRIPT, AND SELF-EVALUATION

Letter	Action Words	Teacher Script	Self-Evaluation
h	**h** drops down, bounces back up, and over the **h**aunted **h**ouse.	Which line does h start at? (**the sky line**) What does h bounce over? (a **haunted house**) The first sound in haunted and house is /h/. The letter h says /h/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your h...* start at the sky line go down to the grass go back up to the clouds and over land on the grass
b	**b** drops down, **b**ounces **b**ack up, and around the **b**ats.	Which line does b start at? (**the sky line**) What does the b bounce around? (**bats**) The first sound in bats is /b/. The letter b says /b/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your b...* start at the sky line go down to the grass go back up to the clouds go around
r	**r** drops down, bounces back up, and onto the **r**abbit's head!	Which line does r start at? (**the cloud line**) What does the r bounce onto? (a **rabbit**) The first sound in rabbit is /r/. The letter r says /r/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your r...* start at the clouds go down to the grass go back up and over
n	**n** drops down, bounces back up, and over to take a **n**ap.	Which line does n start at? (**the cloud line**) What does the n do? (**takes a nap**) The first sound in nap is /n/. The letter n says /n/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your n...* start at the clouds go down to the grass go back up and over land on the grass
m	**m** drops down, bounces once, then twice to catch the **m**ice.	Which line does m start at? (**the cloud line**) What does the m catch? (**mice**) The first sound in mice is /m/. The letter m says /m/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your m...* start at the clouds go down to the grass go up and over, up and over land on the grass
p	**p** drops down into the dirt, bounces back up, and around the **p**ink, **p**orky **p**ig.	Which line does p start at? (**the cloud line**) What does the p bounce around? (a **pig**) The first sound in pig is /p/. The letter p says /p/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your p...* start at the clouds fall into the dirt go back up to the clouds go around

LESSON ROUTINE: LESSONS 6 TO 10

Concept	Instruction	Resources
Letter Stories	Identify the common stroke: all the letters drop down, bounce back up and over. Students air write the letters while saying the action words aloud. Students finger-trace each letter while saying the action words aloud.	Wkbk pp. 13–14 *Bouncer Island: Theme Song + Letter Story videos*
Positioning	Ensure correct sitting position, pencil grip, and paper placement.	Proper Positioning *Get Ready to Write video*
Letter Writing	Students copy the bouncer letters. Students review the skydiver letters. Lesson 10: Students fill in the missing alphabet letters.	Lesson 6: Wkbk pp. 15–16, p. 17 Lesson 7: Wkbk pp. 18–19, p. 20 Lesson 8: Wkbk pp. 21–22, p. 23 Lesson 9: Wkbk pp. 24–25, p. 26 Lesson 10: Wkbk pp. 27–28, p. 29, p. 30
Self-Check	Guide students to check their work.	Self-Evaluation: Bouncers *Self-Evaluation activity*
Multisensory Activities *Lessons 6–9*	Explore the letter sounds and sign language symbols.	*Sing with Shannon video* Multisensory Activities (Finger Tracing, Rainbow Writing, Pokey Pin)
Name the Letter *Lesson 10*	Identify the correct letter before the animation ends.	*Name the Letter game*

Week 3: Cannon Pops

Lessons 11 to 15

COMMON STROKE

All the cannon pops **tap 2 clouds and curl around!**

OBJECTIVES

- Form letters c, a, d, o, g and q
- Identify how the cannon pop letters are connected
- Distinguish between sky (d), grass (c, a, o) and dirt (g, q) letters
- Identify beginning sounds
- Improve fluency for the previously-learned letters

SONG

All the cannon pops start like c, that's the secret key!
Tap 2 clouds and curl around;
Touch down on the grass
All the cannon pops start like c, that's the secret key!
Leaping up and tumbling down
'Til someone lost their crown!

ACTION WORDS, TEACHER SCRIPT, AND SELF-EVALUATION

Letter	Action Words	Teacher Script	Self-Evaluation
c	**c** taps two clouds, **c**urls around, and gets **c**aught by a **c**actus.	How does c start? (**it taps two clouds and curls around**) What does c crash into? (a **cactus**) The first sound in cactus is /k/. The letter c says /k/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your c...* tap two clouds touch down on the grass
a	**a**stronaut **a** taps two clouds, orbits around, blasts off, then goes back down.	How does a start? (**it taps two clouds and curls around**) What is Cannon Pop a? (an **astronaut**) The first sound in astronaut is /a/. The letter a says /a/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your a...* tap two clouds touch down on the grass go up land on the grass
d	**d** taps two clouds, curls around, leaps to the top, gets **d**izzy, and goes back **d**own.	How does d start? (**it taps two clouds and curls around**) What happens to d? (it gets **dizzy**) The first sound in dizzy is /d/. The letter d says /d/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your d...* tap two clouds touch down on the grass leap up drop down onto the grass
o	**o** taps two clouds, then **o**rbits around.	How does o start? (**it taps two clouds and curls around**) What does o say? (**oh no**) The first sound in oh is /o/. The letter o says /o/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your o...* tap two clouds touch down on the grass orbit around
g	**g** taps two clouds, curls around, leaps up, then way down to **g**et the **g**old.	How does g start? (**it taps two clouds and curls around**) What does g find in the dirt? (**gold**) The first sound in gold is /g/. The letter g says /g/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your g...* tap two clouds touch down on the grass go up go into the dirt turn to the left
q	**q**ueen **q** taps two clouds, curls around, leaps up, then way down, and tosses her crown!	How does q start? (**it taps two clouds and curls around**) What does q say? (I **quit**) The first sound in quit is /kw/. The letter q says /kw/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your q...* tap two clouds touch down on the grass go up fall into the dirt toss her crown

LESSON ROUTINE: LESSONS 11 TO 15

Concept	Instruction	Resources
Letter Stories	Identify the common stroke: all the letters start like c. Students air write the letters while saying the action words aloud. Students finger-trace each letter while saying the action words aloud.	Wkbk pp. 31–32 *Cannon Pop Island: Theme Song + Letter Story videos*
Positioning	Ensure correct sitting position, pencil grip, and paper placement.	Proper Positioning *Get Ready to Write video*
Letter Writing	Students copy the cannon pop letters. Students review the skydiver and bouncer letters. Lesson 15: Students fill in the missing alphabet letters.	Lesson 11: Wkbk pp. 33–34, p. 35 Lesson 12: Wkbk pp. 36–37, p. 38 Lesson 13: Wkbk pp. 39–40, p. 41 Lesson 14: Wkbk pp. 42–43, p. 44 Lesson 15: Wkbk pp. 45–46, p. 47, p. 48
Self-Check	Guide students to check their work.	Self-Evaluation: Cannon Pops *Self-Evaluation activity*
Multisensory Activities *Lessons 11–14*	Explore the letter sounds and sign language symbols.	*Sing with Shannon video* Multisensory Activities (Finger Tracing, Rainbow Writing, Pokey Pin)
Name the Letter *Lesson 15*	Identify the correct letter before the animation ends.	*Name the Letter game*

Week 4: Skiers

Lessons 16 to 20

COMMON STROKE

All the skiers **ski diagonally down!**

OBJECTIVES

- Form letters v, w, x, and y
- Identify how the skier letters are connected
- Distinguish between grass (v, w, x) and dirt (y) letters
- Identify beginning sounds
- Improve fluency for the previously-learned letters

SONG

It's fun to ski, it's fun to ski
Oh you will see, it's fun to ski.
Down a valley
Through the snow.
That's the way to go.

It's fun to ski, it's fun to ski
Oh you will see, it's fun to ski.

Take a tumble
Get an x-ray
Don't let that ruin your day!

ACTION WORDS, TEACHER SCRIPT, AND SELF-EVALUATION

Letter	Action Words	Teacher Script	Self-Evaluation
v	**v** skis down into the **v**alley, then **v**aults up.	Which line does v start at? (**the clouds**) What does v say? (**vavoom**) The first sound in vavoom is /v/. The letter v says /v/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your v...* start at the clouds ski diagonally down ski diagonally up
w	**w** skis down, up, down, and up again through the **w**inter **w**onderland.	Which line does w start at? (**the clouds**) What does w say? (**weeee**) The first sound in weeee is /w/. The letter w says /w/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your w...* start at the clouds ski diagonally down ski diagonally up ski diagonally down ski diagonally up
x	**x** skis down one slope, then down another to get **x**-rayed.	Which line does x start at? (**the clouds**) What does x get? (**an x-ray**) The first sound in x-ray is /x/. The letter x says /x/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your x...* start at the clouds ski diagonally down to the right ski diagonally down to the left
y	**y** **y**odels down a short slope and **y**elps down a long one too.	Which line does y start at? (**the clouds**) What does y say when it falls into the dirt? (**yelp**) The first sound in yelp is /y/. The letter y says /y/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your y...* start at the clouds ski diagonally down a short slope start back at the clouds ski down a long slope into the dirt

LESSON ROUTINE: LESSONS 16 TO 20

Concept	Instruction	Resources
Letter Stories	Identify the common stroke: all the letters ski diagonally down. Students air write the letters while saying the action words aloud. Students finger-trace each letter while saying the action words aloud.	Wkbk pp. 49–50 *Skier Island: Theme Song + Letter Story videos*
Positioning	Ensure correct sitting position, pencil grip, and paper placement.	Proper Positioning *Get Ready to Write video*
Letter Writing	Students copy the skier letters. Students review the skydiver, bouncer, and cannon pop letters. Lesson 20: Students fill in the missing alphabet letters.	Lesson 16: Wkbk pp. 51–52, p. 53 Lesson 17: Wkbk pp. 54–55, p. 56 Lesson 18: Wkbk pp. 57–58, p. 59 Lesson 19: Wkbk pp. 60–61, p. 62 Lesson 20: Wkbk pp. 63–64, p. 65, p. 66
Self-Check	Guide students to check their work.	Self-Evaluation: Skiers *Self-Evaluation activity*
Multisensory Activities *Lessons 16–19*	Explore the letter sounds and sign language symbols.	*Sing with Shannon video* Multisensory Activities (Finger Tracing, Rainbow Writing, Pokey Pin)
Name the Letter *Lesson 20*	Identify the correct letter before the animation ends.	*Name the Letter game*

Week 5: Surfers

Lessons 21 to 25

COMMON STROKE

None, they **ride the wave.**

OBJECTIVES

- Form letters s, u, f, e, z
- Distinguish between sky (f) and grass (s, u, e, z) letters
- Improve fluency for the previously-learned letters
- Identify beginning sounds

SONG

Just surf, surf, surf the wave
If you're running from a fight
Or zipping right to catch a bite
Just surf, surf, surf the wave.

Just surf, surf, surf the wave
If you're falling upside down
Or a pirate makes you want to frown
Just surf the wave. Surf the wave.

ACTION WORDS, TEACHER SCRIPT, AND SELF-EVALUATION

Letter	Action Words	Teacher Script	Self-Evaluation
s	**s** taps two clouds, then **s**urfs away to escape the **s**hark!	Which line does s start at? (**the cloud line**) How does s escape the shark? (**surfs away**) The first sound in surfs is /s/. The letter s says /s/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your s...* tap two clouds curl back
u	**u** surfs down, **u**nder the wave, and **u**p, then falls **u**pside-down.	Which line does u start at? (**the cloud line**) Which way does u fall? (**upside-down**) The first sound in upside-down is /u/. The letter u says /u/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your u...* start at the clouds go down curve up fall back down
f	**f** flips over, then surfs down to **f**lee the **f**ighting **f**ish!	Where does f start? (just below **the sky line**) What does f escape? (a **fighting fish**) The first sound in fighting and fish is /f/. The letter f says /f/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your f...* start just below the sky line flip over make a line across the clouds
e	**e** walks the plank, then surfs around to escape the **e**vil pirate.	Where does e start? (below **the cloud line**) Is the pirate good or evil? (**evil**) The first sound in evil is /e/. The letter e says /e/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your e...* start just below the clouds go across to the right curl 'round
z	**z** zips to the right to catch a bite, **z**aps across, and **z**ooms away.	Which line does z start at? (**the cloud line**) Why does he go to the right? (**to catch a bite**) How does z move? (**zip, zap, zoom**) The first sound in zip, zap, and zoom is /z/. The letter z says /z/. Say the sound with me.	*Did your z...* start at the clouds go across to the right go diagonally down to the left go across to the right

LESSON ROUTINE: LESSONS 21 TO 25

Concept	Instruction	Resources
Letter Stories	Students air write the letters while saying the action words aloud. Students finger-trace each letter while saying the action words aloud.	Wkbk pp. 67–68 *Pirate Ship: Theme Song + Letter Story videos*
Positioning	Ensure correct sitting position, pencil grip, and paper placement.	Proper Positioning *Get Ready to Write video*
Letter Writing	Students copy the surfer letters. Students review the skydiver, bouncer, cannon pop, and skier letters. Lesson 25: Students fill in the missing alphabet letters.	Lesson 21: Wkbk pp. 69–70, p. 71 Lesson 22: Wkbk pp. 72–73, p. 74 Lesson 23: Wkbk pp. 75–76, p. 77 Lesson 24: Wkbk pp. 78–79, p. 80 Lesson 25: Wkbk pp. 81–82, p. 83, p. 84
Self-Check	Guide students to check their work.	Self-Evaluation: Surfers *Self-Evaluation activity*
Multisensory Activities *Lessons 21–24*	Explore the letter sounds and sign language symbols.	*Sing with Shannon video* Multisensory Activities (Finger Tracing, Rainbow Writing, Pokey Pin)
Name the Letter *Lesson 25*	Identify the correct letter before the animation ends.	*Name the Letter game*

12

Lowercase Error Correction Guide

Simple, playful prompts to help students form letters correctly.

When students struggle with letter formation, a short, memorable verbal cue can often be more effective than a lengthy explanation. The goal is to help students recognize the error, understand the correct movement, and immediately practice it.

A Simple Correction Routine

1. **Notice:** Identify the specific part of the letter that needs correcting.
2. **Cue:** Give a short, playful reminder using familiar Handwriting Heroes language.
3. **Model:** Demonstrate the correct movement if needed, saying the action words aloud.
4. **Air-Write:** Have the student air-write the letter using large arm movements while saying the action words.
5. **Retry:** Have the student immediately form the letter again on paper.
6. **Reinforce:** Praise the specific improvement (e.g., "Great! You landed right on the grass!").

General Tips for Effective Error Correction

- **Use familiar Handwriting Heroes language.** Rely on the stories, action words, and visual cues they already know.
- **Be specific, and correct one feature at a time.** Say exactly what needs to change (e.g., "Go back up the same line") rather than "That's not right."
- **Encourage self-correction first.** Ask "Did your letter land on the grass?" before pointing out the mistake yourself.
- **Watch the movement, not just the result.** A letter might look okay but be formed inefficiently. Keep your eyes on their pencil path.
- **Prioritize quality over repetition.** A few perfectly formed letters are better than a whole line of incorrect movement patterns.
- **Keep it short, playful, and encouraging.** The goal is building automatic, efficient movement patterns over time, not instant perfection.

Common Letter Formation Errors and Corrections

Target Issue	The Error	What to Say (Verbal Cue)	What to Do (Physical Action)
1. Not Landing on the Grass	Letter extends below the baseline into the "dirt."	"Oops! You landed in the dirt! This letter likes to stay clean!"	Point to the grass line. Model stopping on the grass. Draw a small line as a visual target if needed.
2. Not Digging Deep Enough	Descending stroke stops at the grass line.	"Don't be afraid of the dirt! This letter loves playing in the mud!" (g: get the gold, j: get the jewels)	Draw a little hole in the grass line. Have the student finger-trace the descending stroke below the line before using a pencil.
3. Cannon Pops Missing Clouds	The rounded part fails to touch both "clouds."	"Tap-tap! Touch both clouds!"	Have the student say "tap-tap!" as the pencil touches each cloud. Place a dot on each cloud to show where the stroke should touch.
4. Bouncers Not Retracing	Student draws the bump without retracing the downstroke.	"Down, BACK UP, and over!" For m: "Close that gap! We don't want mice hiding in there!"	Exaggerate the "back up" movement. Model tracing back up the same path. Have the student trace the down-and-up movement while speaking the cue.
5. Dots Becoming Circles (i, j)	Drawing a small circle or loop instead of a dot.	"The helicopter makes a quick puff of smoke and then flies away!" or "Make a dot, not a circle!"	Demonstrate drawing a circle vs. tapping a dot. Have students practice quick pencil taps. Remind them to finish the letter before dotting.
6. Skiers Going Straight Down	Forming a vertical stroke instead of a diagonal one.	"Ski down the slope, not straight down!"	Draw a square to show vertical (down the side) vs. diagonal (corner to corner). Place dots on opposite corners and have them connect the dots.
7. Starting at the Bottom	Beginning the letter at the bottom line.	"Only trees and plants grow up from the grass!"	Skydivers: Reach up high and pretend to dive down. Bouncers: Drop a ball on a table to show it must go down before it can bounce back up.
8. Reversing Letters (b vs. d)	Writing a mirror image of the letter.	"Remember, b is a Bouncer and d is a Cannon Pop! They have very different moves!"	Focus on motor patterns, not just visual tricks. Have students say the action words aloud while forming each letter to reinforce the feeling of the distinct starting strokes.

13

Number Lessons

The numbers are taught in three groups, Trains, Sailboats, and Racecars, followed by a Number Review. Each group follows the same routine. Number Lessons can be taught at any time and can overlap with the other lessons.

Number Groups and Action Words

Group	Common Stroke	Action Words
Trains 1, 4, 5	All the numbers chug down.	1 chugs down into town. 4 chugs across the ridge, then over the bridge. 5 chugs down and around to the stop. Then blue train chugs across the top.
Sailboats 2, 3, 7	All the numbers sail to the right.	2 sails round the bend, then right to the end. 3 sails round and round, till he is found. 7 sails across the lake, then turns to flee the sneaky snake.
Racecars 0, 6, 8, 9	All the numbers curl to the left.	0 is our hero! Around the track and back! 6 curls, then swirls round. Faster than sound! 8 makes an "S" to get the shack. Then races back! 9 circles round to keep his place. Then down to win the race!

Lesson Routine

Concept	Instruction	Resources
Number Stories	Identify the common stroke: • **Trains:** all the numbers chug down. • **Sailboats:** all the numbers sail to the right. • **Racecars:** all the numbers curl to the left. Students air write the numbers while saying the action words aloud. Students finger-trace each number while saying the action words aloud.	Trains: Wkbk p. 85 Sailboats: Wkbk p. 87 Racecars: Wkbk p. 89
Positioning	Ensure correct sitting position, pencil grip, and paper placement.	Proper Positioning
Number Writing	Students copy the numbers. Number Review: Students review the numbers.	Trains: Wkbk p. 86 Sailboats: Wkbk p. 88 Racecars: Wkbk p. 90 Number Review: Wkbk p. 91

14

Print Practice

Print Practice follows the Lowercase Letter Lessons. It includes 35 lessons over 7 weeks (Weeks 6 to 12) that build from three-letter words to two-, three-, and four-word phrases.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Lessons	Writing Activity	Wkbk Pages
6	1 to 5	Three-letter words (short a, e, i): write each word next to its matching picture.	pp. 1–10
7	6 to 10	Three-letter words (short i, o, u): write each word next to its matching picture.	pp. 11–20
8	11 to 15	Two-word phrases, using the Spacer tool.	pp. 21–30
9	16 to 20	Two-word phrases (16 to 18), then three-word phrases (19 and 20), using the Spacer tool.	pp. 31–40
10	21 to 25	Three-word phrases, using the Spacer tool.	pp. 41–50
11	26 to 30	Three-word phrases (26 to 28), then four-word phrases (29 and 30), using the Spacer tool.	pp. 51–60
12	31 to 35	Four-word phrases, using the Spacer tool. Lesson 35 ends with the whole alphabet in order (final review).	pp. 61–71

Lesson Routine

Each lesson uses two workbook pages: a letter warm-up, then a writing activity. For example, Lesson 3 uses pp. 5–6. Lesson 11 starts with the Spacer tool instead of a warm-up, and Lesson 35 adds a final alphabet review (p. 71).

Part	Instruction	Lessons
Letter Warm-Up	Copy the letters in each letter group.	1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27
	Write the letters in each letter group.	29, 31, 33, 35
	Write all the letters of the alphabet in order.	2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34
Spacer Tool	Learn how to use the Spacer tool to remember spaces between words.	11

15

Uppercase Letter Lessons

Uppercase Letter Lessons follow Print Practice and run 6 weeks (Weeks 13 to 18), with one letter per lesson. The *Uppercase* workbook pairs each capital letter with its lowercase partner and sorts the 26 letter pairs into three groups by how alike the two forms are.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Lessons	Letters	Wkbk Pages
13	1 to 5	C, O, S, V, W (Double Trouble maze with C)	pp. 1–12
14	6 to 10	X, Z, B, F, H (Super Similar maze with B)	pp. 13–24
15	11 to 15	I, J, K, L, P	pp. 25–34
16	16 to 20	T, U, Y, A, D (Dangerously Different maze with A)	pp. 35–46
17	21 to 25	E, G, M, N, Q	pp. 47–54
18	26 to 30	R, Fill in the Blanks, review (Lessons 28 to 30)	pp. 55–57

Lesson Routine

Each letter has two workbook pages: a tracing page followed by a story page.

Part	Instruction
Group Maze	Introduce the letter group in its first lesson. Follow each path to match the letter pair to its character.
Theme Song	Play the group's *Theme Song* on its island: Double Trouble Island, Super Similar Island, or Dangerously Different Island (digital).
Letter Rocks	Trace each letter on the *letter rocks* on the group's island (digital).
Tracing Page	Trace the large uppercase and lowercase letters. Copy each letter on the writing lines, starting at the dots.
Story Page	Say the action words for each letter. Read the sentence aloud, then copy it on the writing lines. Find the plants, fruits, or other items in the picture that start with the letter.
Fill in the Blanks	Write the letter that matches each character (Wkbk p. 57).

Double Trouble

The uppercase and lowercase letters have the same shape. Only the size changes. Group maze: Wkbk pp. 1–2.

Letter	Action Words	Sentence	Find in the Picture	Wkbk Pages
Cc	C: Big curl. c: Small curl.	Cats can catch.	Cactus	pp. 3–4
Oo	O: Big curl around. o: Small curl around.	Otters order olives.	Oranges	pp. 5–6
Ss	S: Small curl, small curl. s: Tiny curl, tiny curl.	Snails smell socks.	Spinach, strawberries	pp. 7–8
Vv	V: Long slide down, long slide up. v: Short slide down, short slide up.	Vultures visit Venice.	Violets (purple flowers)	pp. 9–10
Ww	W: Long slide down, long slide up. Long slide down, long slide up. w: Short slide down, short slide up. Short slide down, short slide up.	Worms wink well.	Watermelon	pp. 11–12
Xx	X: Long slide down, long slide down. x: Short slide down, short slide down.	X-ray the foxes.	Xmas tree	pp. 13–14
Zz	Z: Across, long slide down, across. z: Across, short slide down, across.	Zebras zigzag.	Zucchini	pp. 15–16

Super Similar

The uppercase and lowercase letters share most of their strokes, with small differences. Group maze: Wkbk pp. 17–18.

Letter	Action Words	Sentence	Find in the Picture	Wkbk Pages
Bb	B: Long line down, long line up, small curl, small curl. b: Long line down, bounce around.	Bees balance bananas.	Blueberries	pp. 19–20
Ff	F: Across, long line down, across. f: Hook, long line down, across.	Frogs fly fast.	Forest	pp. 21–22
Hh	H: Long line down, long line down, across. h: Long line down, bounce.	Hens hop home.	Herb garden	pp. 23–24
Ii	I: Long line down, across, across. i: Short line down, dot.	Iguanas invent ice cream.	Ivy	pp. 25–26
Jj	J: Long line down, hook, across. j: Long line down, hook, dot.	Jellyfish juggle jam.	Jungle rice	pp. 27–28
Kk	K: Long line down, long slide down, long slide down. k: Long line down, short slide down, short slide down.	Kangaroos kiss kittens.	Kale	pp. 29–30
Ll	L: Long line down, across. l: Long line down.	Lions lick lemons.	Lettuce	pp. 31–32
Pp	P: Long line down, long line up, small curl. p: Long line down, bounce around.	Pigs play ping pong.	Pumpkin, palm tree	pp. 33–34
Tt	T: Long line down, across. t: Long line down, across.	Tigers try tennis.	Tomatoes	pp. 35–36
Uu	U: Long line down, hook, long line up. u: Short line down, hook, short line up, short line down.	Unicorns use unicycles.	Ugli fruit	pp. 37–38
Yy	Y: Short slide down, short slide down, long slide down. y: Short slide down, long slide down.	Young yaks yodel.	Yellow flowers	pp. 39–40

Dangerously Different

The uppercase and lowercase letters look different and are formed with different strokes. Group maze: Wkbk pp. 41–42.

Letter	Action Words	Sentence	Find in the Picture	Wkbk Pages
Aa	A: Long slide down, long slide down, across. a: Small curl around, short slide down.	Ants are athletic.	Apple tree	pp. 43–44
Dd	D: Long line down, long line up, curl. d: Small curl around, long line up, long line down.	Dogs daydream.	Dandelion	pp. 45–46
Ee	E: Across, long line down, across. e: Across, small curl.	Eels eat eggs.	Elm tree	pp. 47–48
Gg	G: (to be added) g: (to be added)	Gorillas get glum.	Grapes	TBD
Mm	M: Long line down, long line up, long slide down, long slide up, long line down. m: Short line down, bounce, bounce.	Mice make music.	Mushroom	pp. 49–50
Nn	N: Long line down, long line up, long slide down, long line down. n: Short line down, bounce.	Narwhals nab nuts.	Nut trees	pp. 51–52
Qq	Q: Big curl around, short slide down. q: Small curl around, long line down, short slide up.	Quails quit quizzes.	Quince tree	pp. 53–54
Rr	R: Long line down, long line up, small curl, short slide down. r: Short line down, bounce.	Rats race rafts.	Raspberries, river	pp. 55–56

16

Sentence Practice

Sentence Practice follows the Uppercase Letter Lessons (Weeks 19 to 30) and uses *Tiny Tales*, 20 short stories for copying sentences. The stories are short and simple, so students can focus on legibility and spacing. Students copy from a Story Tent placed in front of them (near-point copying), and alternate sentences are shaded gray to help with visual scanning.

Setup

Item	How to Assemble
Student Booklet	Print the pages double-sided. Fold the pages along the midline so the title page and "Page 1" are on top. Insert "Page 1" into the other folded page.
Story Tent	Fold the story page in half. Stand it upright to make a tent.

Pacing

Start with one sentence per lesson, then move to two. Gradually increase the number of sentences as students are ready, adjusting for visual tracking, reading level, and other support needs. A single story may span several lessons.

Lesson Routine

1. Place the Story Tent in front of the student.
2. Copy the story title on the top two lines of the booklet cover.
3. Write your name on the bottom two lines.
4. Turn to Page 1 and copy line 1 of the story.
5. Copy each remaining line, one page per line.
6. Draw pictures to illustrate the story.

Differentiation

- For students who struggle with copying, cut the sentences into strips and present them one at a time.
- For students ready for a challenge, project the story onto a whiteboard for far-point copying.

Stories

Story	Title	Story	Title
1	The Cat and the Rat	11	Sam and the Jam
2	Pam's Red Hat	12	Kim's Big Box
3	Bob's Big Dog	13	Tom's Toy Top
4	Tim's Hot Pot	14	Gus and the Bus
5	Meg's Fun Run	15	Nan's Yellow Fan
6	The Fox and the Hen	16	Jack's Big Box
7	Ben's New Bag	17	The Quick Fox
8	Liz and the Zip	18	Vic's Red Van
9	Pat's Pet Pig	19	Jen's Jet Toy
10	Dan's Wet Van	20	The Cat and the Yak

17

Differentiation

Handwriting Heroes is a **versatile** program that can be adapted for students who need extra support as well as those ready for more advanced instruction. Its visuals, music, animations, and humor are designed to appeal to a wide range of learners, including students with special needs, English language learners, and older students.

Educators should **adapt the pace and instructional supports** to meet the needs of their students.

- Teachers can use their judgment to omit worksheets for more advanced or older students.
- Action words can be adjusted to fit the student's ability to grasp sequencing and spatial concepts.
- For students with visual-motor difficulties, a scaffolded approach can be implemented. They can begin by air writing the letters, and gradually transition to writing with a marker, thereby building confidence and skill over time.

MTSS Alignment

Handwriting Heroes can be used across all three tiers of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

Tier	Who	How to Use Handwriting Heroes
Tier 1: Universal	All students	Whole-class lessons following the weekly Lesson Routine. Use The Quick Handwriting Assessment to identify students who may need more support.
Tier 2: Targeted	Students who need additional practice	Small-group instruction with immediate feedback, extra air writing and finger tracing, the Error Correction Guide cues, and the Multisensory Activities.
Tier 3: Intensive	Students who need individualized support	One-on-one instruction with adjusted pacing, simplified action words, and a scaffolded progression. Consider an OT referral if difficulties persist.

Frequently Asked Questions

Instead of introducing 5 or 6 letters at once, can I present one or two letters at a time?

Preferably not. The letter groups help students connect letters that share a stroke. If needed, you can spend extra time reinforcing each group, for example, two or more weeks on the Skydivers group. Another way to differentiate the lessons while keeping the letter group intact is to air-write all the letters in the group at the beginning of the lesson and then focus on one letter.

Is it necessary to spend time on handwriting for students who will ultimately keyboard?

Handwriting is an important early literacy skill for all children. As a motor activity, it teaches the structure and placement of each letter and can play an integral role in early literacy. Students can learn letter formation without ever holding a pencil, and by learning the letter form they develop a greater understanding of its physical and visual properties. Kinesthetic learning can take the form of writing the letters in the air, stamping along the letter path, or following the motion with one's eyes.

Should students practice on dry-erase surfaces?

Yes, especially students who struggle with visual motor tasks. These students are often anxious about putting pencil to paper. Dry-erase surfaces remove the fear that their work is permanent and will be judged, so students are more willing to try, erase, and try again. It is helpful to practice writing each letter on a dry-erase surface before writing it on paper.



www.handwritingheroes.org
cheryl@handwritingheroes.org · 240-678-9076

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