Sunshine

Scripting Systems

developing fine motor skills

Contemporary Cursive

Teacher's Guide

and

Printing Instructions

for

Cursive Handwriting Curriculum

printed in Sunshine Script font

Jacqueline Sund, EdD
Concept Author/Designer

Bon Vernarelli, MBA
Designer/Illustrator

Table of Contents

Scripting Systems
developing fine motor skills

Teaching Guide to Sunshine Script Cursive

Sunshine Script Contemporary Cursive

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

The Case for Cursive

"You know those birthday letters you always write us? Well, we can't read cursive." – this from a twenty-five-year-old Ph.D. candidate at MIT.

"I attended a graduation party for my niece recently. She was opening her cards and reading the greetings. Some she just passed over. After this happened several times she said, 'I can't read the ones written in cursive'."

How often have we heard similar laments – what has happened to cursive? Is it to become a victim of the digital age? Is it just a relic of the past?

The debate is endless. Some say cursive is necessary because it makes writing faster (we will discuss this later). Others say cursive makes forgery more difficult. Still others are concerned the treasury of historic handwritten documents and family memorabilia will be impossible for future generations to read if they have not been schooled in cursive handwriting methods.

On the opposite side of the debate is the fact that manuscript print is often easier to read and subject to fewer errors of interpretation than cursive. No wonder most forms have the admonition to 'please print'.

A History Lesson

Cursive writing is a dynamic form of handwriting. It has often been subject to design revision for social, cultural, political, mechanical, architectural, and even religious reasons.

In eras of elaborate ornamentation in dress, architecture, and lifestyle, the same degree of embellishment found its way into scripting styles. These florid scripting elements were an abomination to the more severe religious communities of the past, and the handwriting styles they affected were plain in the extreme.

Tracing the history of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, with the advice of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman, produced the draft copy of the document in a "fair copy" – in other words, in his own handwriting – for presentation to the Continental Congress. When the wording of the resolution was approved (after some further revision) it was sent to the engrosser, a clerk by the name of Timothy Matlack, for the final parchment copy that was signed by the members of the Continental Congress.

Examining the Declaration of Independence today requires some imagination — an 's' looks like an 'f' to the modern observer. Other letters have similarly undergone transformations that cause us to puzzle out what they are.

In the Victorian Era, with its fussy styles, handwriting rose to an art form. Handwriting academies were common. It was a sign of a person's stature in life if he/she could script in an elegant hand. Practice and perfection of technique were the goals as reflected in old letters and public documents.

Professional penmen (and women) made their careers around producing these highly-styled missives. When Remington began manufacturing the first typewriters in 1873 it became apparent that handwriting styles would have to change to keep up with the faster typewriter.

Several handwriting academies redesigned their scripting models to a simpler, more efficient style. Modifications have continued to the present.

So the long and the short of it is, handwriting will continue to undergo transformations and improvements to suit the times.

Common Core Standards

The new national Common Core Standards set the goals children are expected to meet at each grade level. Ultimately, it is to prepare each student to be ready for college or the job market. Emphasis is shifting away from the rote learning and repetition associated with handwriting to computer and keyboarding skills.

It is recommended that in third grade keyboarding instruction should commence, and, according to the CCS, students should demonstrate sufficient command of the keyboard to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

Cursive handwriting may be and is being replaced by keyboarding instruction as teachers struggle to find time for each discipline.

While the Common Core does not dictate how to teach the knowledge and skills expected of cursive writing, or even if it is to be required in the curriculum, it is left to districts and teachers to accomplish the goals.

Many states have removed the requirement for cursive instruction entirely while others continue to support it. Indeed, some states (California, North Carolina, Georgia, and Idaho to name a few) have passed legislation requiring cursive be taught beginning in third grade and continuing through the fifth grade. So whether cursive handwriting survives will depend on the philosophical will of individual school districts and states.

Regardless of the educational climate, there are those who will still embrace cursive instruction as the transition from primary school skills to elementary school skills and beyond.

Surprisingly, we have found it is the young students themselves who want to learn cursive. How often have we heard, "can you show me how to write this in cursive?"

Is Cursive Faster?

The fact is, despite common impressions, cursive writing is not faster than manuscript.

Informal timed tests were conducted with fifty adult participants. Each was asked to write the phrase, "The quick fox jumps over the lazy brown dog." The participants wrote the phrase ten times in manuscript and ten times in cursive at a normal pace. Over all the timed tests, manuscript showed a slight advantage over cursive.

One could surmise the advantage to be in the fact that a 't' is crossed and an 'i' is dotted as a person writes those letters in manuscript, while it is necessary to return to complete the letter within a cursively written

word. Another explanation might be that more people are less practiced in full cursive and therefore slower. In fact, most participants reported that they typically use a combination of manuscript and cursive, finding some cursive letters, especial the uppercase, to be too cumbersome while others flow more easily from one to another than with manuscript. We took this phenomena into consideration in designing our Sunshine Cursive model.

Is a Printed Signature Legal?

Some argue that children need to be taught cursive so they can sign their names. But a printed signature is as legal as a cursive signature. Think back historically when many who were illiterate signed their names with a simple X.

Designing Contemporary Cursive

As with our manuscript model, we set about looking for ways to make cursive writing easier for teachers to teach and students to learn.

We also asked the question - why replace perfectly good manuscript letters for the more elaborate cursive forms? The answer was the same as we found in designing the Sunshine Script manuscript model— it is only tradition.

We observed the cursive idiosyncrasies of adult handwriting examples for clues to how adults practice their own handwriting styles. Most adults used a combination of joined and separated letters within a word. Few employed exclusively joined letters. Only older adults, those who were well schooled in the traditional handwriting discipline, retained the more formal styles of the Zaner-Bloser, Palmer or Rice cursive models with all letters joined in each word.

Over twenty contemporary cursive models were reviewed; each letter was examined to determine its simplest form and how best to script each one so that fluidity and ease of motion is maintained when connecting common combinations into words.

<u>Uppercase:</u>

There was an inherent advantage in our design in that six cursive uppercase letters were already introduced in our manuscript model and needed very little modification:

a ε m n w y
a ε m n w y

Likewise, only the connecting tails were needed for:

B C D H J K Q R S U X Z
B C D H J K Q R S U X Z

We deemed it unnecessary to introduce completely new strokes to form traditional cursives of J, Q, S, Z when the manuscript form needed only a simple modification to be fluid and recognizable.

We maintained the traditional fluid loop at the bottom of the 'L' stroke (L) to distinguish it from its lowercase, but found no need for an extra loop at the top.

We questioned the practice of replacing manuscript letters with complicated loopy, back-stroking, traditional cursive forms. A break in connectivity is less cumbersome than a fanciers form, and we found these were the

manuscript exceptions that many adults used who combine cursive and manuscript writing:

F, O, P, T, V rather than *F, O, P, T, V,*

Only two letters were substantially changed from traditional cursive models:

G, I

The 'G' we selected is found in the Getty-Dubay, Bob Jones University, and Queensland cursive models and is reminiscent of the manuscript model with minor modification. The 'I' follows the traditional cursive models.

Lowercase:

Few changes were required to bring the manuscript lowercase letters to the cursive form. The manuscript 'b' was retained as in Getty-Dubay, Bob Jones University, and Queensland models:

b

The lowercase manuscript 's' was retained as in Getty-Dubay only, but was commonly observed in individual handwriting samples:

s

Lowercase f, k, and z were changed to their traditional cursive forms, as nearly all cursive models followed these patterns:

f, k, z

Lowercase 'r' presented several options within the twenty models. Most used those similar to Zaner-Bloser and Palmer models. Getty-Dubay, Queensland and Palmer had letter styles that were similar to the manuscript

letter. We selected the letter form that most closely replicated the manuscript:

r

Sunshine Script Contemporary Cursive looks like this : The quick red fox jumps over the lazy brown dog. Easy to read and to write.

To Slant or Not to Slant

Many handwriting models suggest that the rightward slant is more natural, but slant is merely a matter of preference of the writer. We observed many right-handers whose writing had a leftward slant. Many had a near vertical orientation. So judging a person's handwriting by whether or not there was a slant to it is of no consequence. As in other instances, the claim that it is more natural is just repeating old theories and, in fact, is not based on any real, scientific evidence.

We agree that while a slight slant to the right can be efficient and creates the same slope to the body of the letters as to the connecting portion, we leave slant up to the individual. When students are first learning Sunshine Script's Contemporary Cursive, the letters are started and formed very similarly to the manuscript they have already learned and practiced. As they gain speed and automaticity, a slant may develop. But most often teachers will be instructing both left and right handed students, and the lack of slant will not further disadvantage left handed students.

How to Teach Contemporary Cursive

When beginning to learn cursive, it is important that students have a firm foundation in top-to-bottom scripting. Anything else will have to be overcome and new motor memory formed in its place.

Because Sunshine Script manuscript already incorporates some cursive uppercase forms, A E M N W and Y, the transition to cursive in Sunshine Script is quite easy.

Cursive Wall Cards posted in the classroom serve as a reference for students. Each letter has a dot and arrow as a reminder of where to begin and in which direction to head.

Cursive Workbook 1 (lowercase)

We begin by reviewing the manuscript form of each letter and then show the change needed to make the letter connect to the next to form cursive words. Instead of the traditional way of beginning cursive letters at the bottom line and adding a lead-in stroke and out-going tail, we begin cursive letters just like manuscript letters, eliminating the lead-in. At the end we return to the middle line to begin the next letter. This is an important point of efficiency. Not only does it eliminate an unnecessary stroke at the beginning of every word, but having practiced top-to-bottom scripting in primary grades, student do not have to develop a new motor memory for where to begin each letter. Letters - both manuscript and cursive - begin in the same place. (Most adults we observed drop the lead-in at the beginning of each word for the sake of natural efficiency.)

Each letter is traced a few times, then written continuously. After several repetitions students are guided to trace and then write groups of letters and then words.

Letters are grouped in lessons by their common stroke and general direction. This concept is not stressed as strongly as it is in the manuscript model, because cursive forms do not fall neatly into 'teams'. By now students will have formed enough motor memory to move easily between curved and straight lined letters, and above and below the lines. Some letters are reviewed as preparation for introducing more complex letters, for example 'u' is introduced with 'i', 't', and 'l' for its similar stroke, then reviewed before 'y' and 'w'.

As much time as possible should be spent writing actual words and sentences. There is no point practicing connecting letters that do not occur in real words, but the most common letter combinations should be practiced repeatedly.

Cursive Workbook 2 (uppercase)

While uppercase letters are used much less frequently in writing than lowercase, more pages are devoted for their practice in Cursive Workbook 2 (uppercase) simply to create more opportunity to practice every letter combination and to familiarize students with sentence form and proper names. We add a drawing component to encourage creative writing and story-telling - important parts of language learning.

Teachers feel pressured to spend little time on handwriting in order to have more time for 'important' subjects, but we know from research that incorporating writing into other subjects will enhance the learning of those subjects, so it is not necessary to spend a lot of time on handwriting as a separate subject, but to assign writing activities as part of learning of other subjects whenever possible.

Contemporary Cursive

Features:

1. Letters are unique for easy reading.
2. No unnecessary embellishments.
3. As little change from manuscript as possible for ease of learning.
4. Letters maintain a left to right scripting motion.
5. Lack of slant avoids difficulties for left-handed students.

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

Contemporary Cursive Sample

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Jacqueline Sund, EdD

Dr. Sund holds under-graduate and graduate degrees from the University of Washington and a doctorate in educational leadership from Seattle University.

While her training is in the design field, she is an educator by profession. Before her retirement, Dr. Sund held faculty positions at Western Washington University and the University of Washington.

"It was during my volunteer work at an elementary school that I became aware of the problems young children were having learning to write. It has become my mission to revitalize handwriting education. To that end I established Sunshine Scripting Systems with my colleague, Bon Vernarelli, as a center for research and development of handwriting techniques."

Bon Vernarelli, MBA

Bon Vernarelli holds a B.A. in design from Western Washington University and an M.B.A. in organizational leadership from City University of Seattle.

As an artist, designer, metalsmith, and musician, Ms. Vernarelli fully appreciates the value of fine motor skills.

"Handwriting is the foundation for all fine motor skill development and is essential for success in other learning, creative expression, and many rewarding careers. When Dr. Sund alerted me to the trend away from handwriting education in public schools, and introduced her model and method emphasizing motor memory, I had to get involved."

Wall Cards - Cursive B&W, A-Z

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
8.5 x 11, landscape, 26 pages

Printing Instructions:
Print on card stock in black and white. Laminate if desired for more durable cards.

Related Resources:
On the classroom wall, these cards can be referenced in many ways and used with all other Sunshine Script Cursive resources.

Teaching Recommendations:
These alphabet cards can be posted along classroom walls and used as reference for cursive forms and where to begin scripting them.

As giant flashcards, Cursive Wall Cards can be used for class-time demonstrations.

Sunshine
Scripting Systems
developing fine motor skills
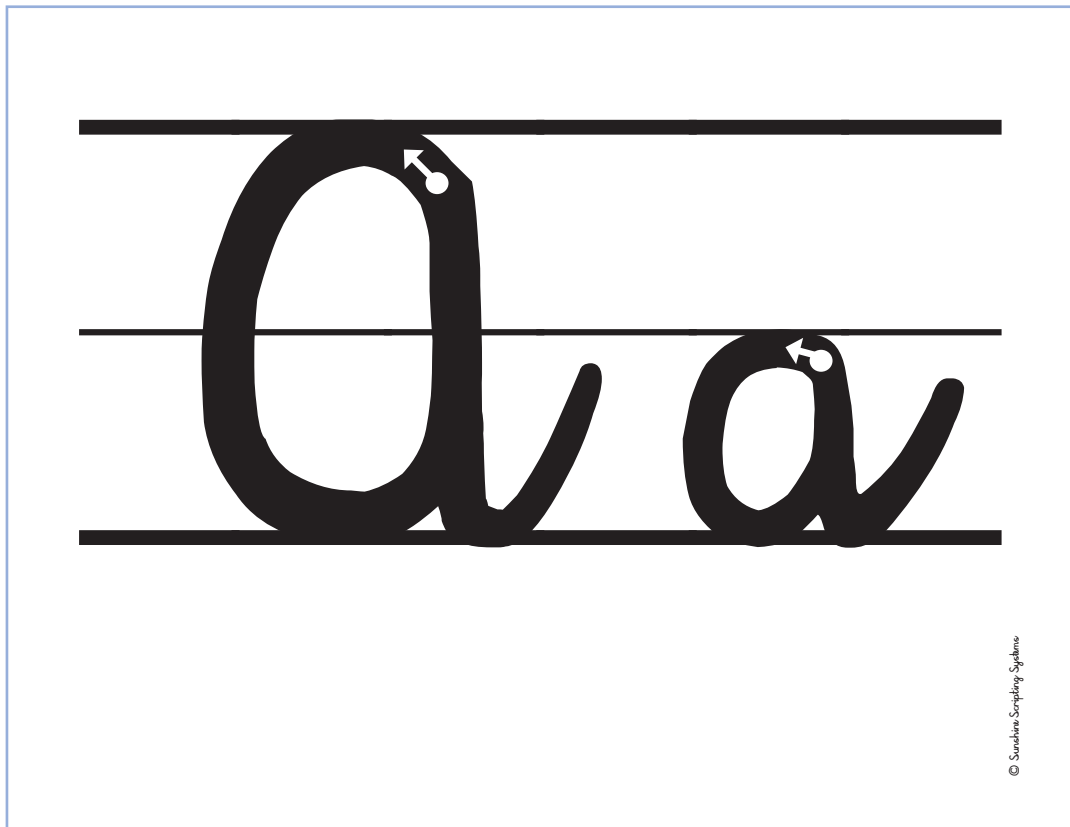
Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
PDF fill-able form file, 8.5 x 14, landscape, makes two strips. Type students names in the form field before printing, or mail merge with class list to produce individualized strips. Names will appear in Sunshine Script Cursive font.

Printing Instructions:
Print in black and white on plain paper or card stock, 8.5 x 14, one side. Laminate if desired. Cut into two strips.

Related Resources:
n/a

Teaching Recommendations:
As a place card for student seating, the Desk Strip will also help teachers learn student names. Use as a guide for name-writing practice in the first days of school and as a general desk top reference.

Name

Aa Bb Cc
Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

© Sunshine Scripting Systems

Name

Aa Bb Cc
Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

© Sunshine Scripting Systems

Write-My-Name
in Cursive

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
8.5 x 11, landscape

Printing Instructions:
Print in black and white.

Related Resources:
Lines are the same scale as the Cursive Workbook and the Cursive Writing Mat.

Teaching Recommendations:
Writing-My-Name worksheet is a PDF form. When opened in Adobe Reader, you can type the student's name in the field, and it will appear in Sunshine Script Cursive font, guiding the student to form the letters in his or her own name.

There are two lowercase 'e' keys when typing in Sunshine Script Cursive font. When typing an 'e' following o, r, v or w, use the equals sign instead of the e-key for the correct connecting form (as shown in the word, 'there').

Write-My-Name Cursive Worksheet

© Sunshine Scripting Systems

Sunshine

Scripting Systems

developing fine motor skills

Cursive Workbook 1 lowercase

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:

8.5 X 11, landscape, 15 pages.

Printing Instructions:

Print in black and white on standard copy paper. 3 hole-punching and a report cover or three-ring binder will be needed to make a workbook.

Related Resources:

Use Cursive Writing Lines and Cursive Writing Mat for more scripting practice on the same line scale.

Teaching Recommendations:

Appropriate for students who have worked through all Sunshine Script manuscript workbooks, or 3rd grade traditionally, or for any student who needs more practice to refine skill and gain speed in cursive scripting. Letter size is scaled down with emphasis on repetition and speed, connecting letters in real-word usage, and encouraging refinement and automaticity.

While it is important that students associate upper and lower case forms of the same letter, at this stage, we focus on lowercase first due to more frequent use in writing. Sunshine Script Contemporary Cursive presentation order suspends the usual A-Z and instead groups letters and numbers by their similar forming patterns.

Sunshine
Scripting Systems
developing fine motor skills

Cursive Workbook 2
uppercase

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
8.5 X 11, landscape, 53 pages.

Printing Instructions:
Print in black and white on standard copy paper. 3 hole-punching and a report cover or three-ring binder will be needed to make a workbook.

Related Resources:
Follows Cursive Workbook 1 (lowercase). Use Cursive Writing Lines and Cursive Writing Mat for more scripting practice on the same line scale.

Teaching Recommendations:
Appropriate for students have completed Lowercase Cursive Workbook 1.

Trace then script uppercase letters and the letters that follow them in real words. Students learn about capitalization and punctuation in complete sentences and proper names as well as story-telling and illustration to further develop language and fine motor skills.

Sunshine Script Cursive presentation order suspends the usual A-Z and instead groups letters and numbers by their similar forming patterns.

Review manuscript. | For cursive, return to the middle line. (Extend to the top line to lead into tall letters.) | Trace then script the letters. | Name:

CC C CCCC

Trace words with a single continuous line.

Cat   Gent   Child   City   Clock

Script words on the blank lines.

Cold   Can   Cry   Cut   Cycle   Circle

Carolina   Connecticut   Colorado

© 2013 Sunshine Scripting Systems   Cursive Uppercase Letters - C   3

Name

Cursive C

Script the sentences in cursive on the blank lines below.

For words with i + j and x, remember to add dots and crosses 'at the end of each word.

Begin each sentence and proper noun with an uppercase letter.

End each sentence with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

Draw a picture in the box inspired by one of the sentences.

Can Carlos cook Cajun chicken?

Can Cory come to Colorado?

© 2013 Sunshine Scripting Systems   Sentence Practice - C   4

Cursive Writing Lines
landscape or portrait

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
8.5 x 11, landscape or portrait (See file name for which is which.)
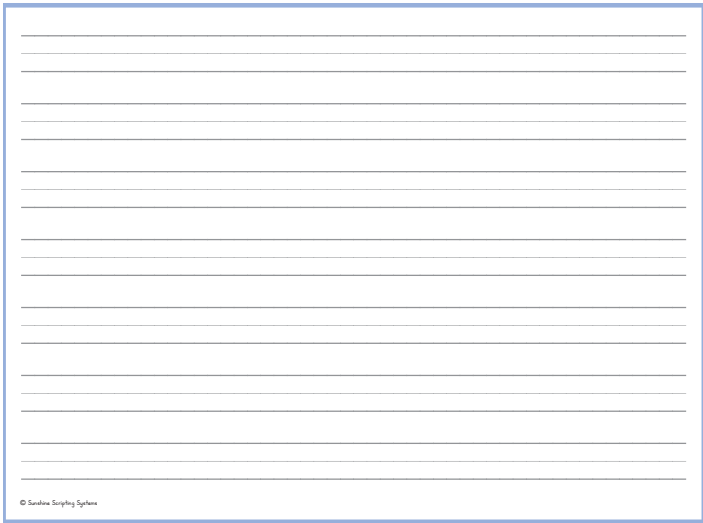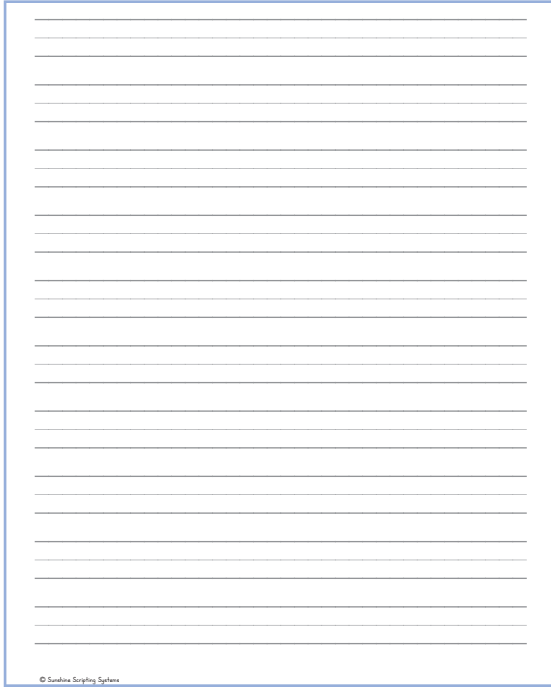
Printing Instructions:
Print in black and white.

Related Resources:
Lines are the same scale as the Cursive Workbook and the Cursive Writing Mat.

Teaching Recommendations:
Cursive Writing Lines can be used for all formal and informal writing assignments.

Sunshine
Scripting Systems
developing fine motor skills

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
OVERSIZE, 11 x 17, landscape, color.

Printing Instructions:
Unless you have an oversize printer, you will need to take (or send) this file to a printer or copy shop for color copying and laminating.

Related Resources:
Cursive Workbook for letter forming.

Teaching Recommendations:
The Cursive Writing Mat allows student to advance from forming letters to composition. The beginning story lines will help them think of what to write about. The colorful letters are there as helpful reminders. Handwriting must become automatic before composition can flow. The ease of erasing this mat removes the fear of making mistakes.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm

Once upon a time...   I remember when...   I wonder why...   I am excited because...

When I grow up I will...   The thing I like best is...   Knock, knock...   Sometimes I wish...

Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

© Sunshine Scripting Systems

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:
8.5 x 11, landscape or portrait.

Printing Instructions:
Print in black and white.

Related Resources:
Lines are 60pt. the same as the Cursive Workbooks and the Cursive Writing Mat.

Teaching Recommendations:
Type-Your-Own worksheets in manuscript or cursive, landscape or portrait, 60 pt font. These are PDF fill-able forms and as such is quite versatile. Open in Adobe Reader and type anything in the full-page field. Use your imagination and create exercises, forms to accompany other lessons, personalized notes, or create customized sheets for individual tutoring.

For cursive, there are two lowercase 'e' keys when typing in Sunshine Script Cursive font. When typing an 'e' following o, r, v or w, use the equals sign instead of the e-key for the correct connecting form (as shown in the word, 'there').

Name: _____

Sample cursive exercise:

red   orange

yellow   green

blue   purple

circle   square

triangle

rectangle

Erase and type your own.

© 2013 Sunshine Scripting Systems

This is a fillable form. Delete this text and type your own. Use the space bar or the underscore key to create blank lines. There 2 lowercase 'e' keys. Use the equal sign for 'e' instead of 'e' after o, r, v, and w, as shown in the word, 'there'.

© 2013 Sunshine Scripting Systems

Sunshine
Scripting Systems
developing fine motor skills

Instructions for Printing & Use

Format:

8.5 x 11, landscape (2 labels per sheet) or portrait (4 labels per sheet).

Printing Instructions:

Print in black and white, two, four, and eight labels per page - manuscript and cursive, plus two-column, continuous list, in cursive only. Back with construction paper to make colored frames.

Related Resources:

All Contemporary Cursive resources.

Teaching Recommendations:

These PDF fill-able forms will allow you to make classroom labels in several sizes. Labels Manuscript-Cursive.pdf (pictured below) helps students make the transition to reading in cursive.

Open in Adobe Reader, delete existing text, and type in the fields. The manuscript font is 75 pt. The cursive font auto-adjusts for the length of the word. Typing more spaces will also shrink the font size.

For cursive, there are two lowercase 'e' keys when typing in Contemporary Cursive font. When typing an 'e' following o, r, v or w, use the equals sign instead of the e-key for the correct connecting form as shown in the word 'there':

there instead of *there*

More labeling options can be found in the Sunshine Script Manuscript section.

drinking fountain
drinking fountain

pencil sharpener
pencil sharpener

drinking fountain
drinking fountain

plastic spoons
plastic spoons

pencil sharpener
pencil sharpener

white board
white board