

Top tips for teaching

Skill 2: Letter Formation (Handwriting)

1. Correct Pencil Hold

- The correct pencil grip helps children to write more fluently.
- Ensure learners are using the correct pencil hold i.e. the tripod grip, that looks like 'froggy legs'.
- Learners that are struggling to do this could hold a scrunched-up piece of paper between their ring finger and little finger whilst writing.

2. Letter Sizes/formation

- Practice talking through the formation of the letter(s).
- Ask the pupils if it is a 'small, tall or fall letter'.
- Identify the letter's starting and finishing point.
- Talk through its shape (See separate tip sheet: 'Letter Formation').
- Is it part of a formation family? (Caterpillar 'c' or One-armed Robot 'r').
- Use guidelines on the board to help show size and position of the letter.

3. Practice

- Use a variety of methods for getting children to practice correct letter formation:
 - Use your finger to 'mirror-write' in the air (ensure you 'write' it with the correct orientation for your learners).
 - Learners can use their finger to write on the ground outside, on their desks, or in a tray of sand.
 - Learners can work with a partner and 'write' on their back with their finger.
 - Learners can use manipulatives like bottle tops, clay, or other locally available resources.
 - Rather than writing in the air with their fingers, learners could practice using different parts of their body (nose, elbow, foot etc.).
 - Learners can 'write' on their palm with their fingers. The folds on the hand can represent the middle and bottom lines of handwriting guidelines.
 - Ask a few learners to demonstrate the letter formation on the board (use guidelines to ensure they practice correct size and position).