

Rationale for AVKO's Concept of Teaching Reading, Writing, Keyboarding and Spelling AS the Alphabet is Being Taught – **NOT AFTER**

When students start school (even home school) it is normal for them to want to learn to read and write – right **NOW**. Many students don't want to wait and wait and wait and wait while the alphabet is being taught to them. They want to read right now. But no, traditional methods dictate that they must wait. Right now is not the time. First they must be taught the names of the 26 letters of the alphabet. This seems reasonable enough until we remember that each letter of the alphabet has many different appearances.

Not only is there the upper case **A** and the lower case **a**, but there is the italic *a* and **a** as well as the D'Nealian manuscript *A* and *a*, the D'Nealian cursive *A* and *a*, or the stick-ball **A** and **a** and as well as more than a hundred different printed fonts and as many different handwritten styles as there are writers.

So when you get down to the exact number of different written symbols for the 26 letters of our alphabet, there are well over 300 that must be learned. Now, that's quite a chore. It's no wonder that so many students have trouble learning to read and write when they enter school. What AVKO proposes is a very simple common sense approach. Let's teach the alphabet slowly and as we teach the names of the letters, **teach the sounds** they make and **how these sounds make words**. We can teach the concept of reading words left to right and top to bottom **AS** we teach the alphabet.

What we want the students to learn is that it is the **letters** that **make the sounds** that make the **words** – not the "picture" of the word.

Teachers who employ the sight method of teaching reading often create problems unintentionally. For example the word **PROBLEMS** written in caps does not have the same picture as **problems** in lower case (Notice that only the letter **o** has the same shape in both upper and lower case) and the word *problems* looks entirely different in cursive.

PROBLEMS, problems, *Problems*, problems

But since as an educated adult you can read these words, let's put you in the position of a student learning to read with sight methods. Assign any meaning you wish to the following scrambled words, three of which are real words and one is not: Rpbalbeo could be carrot. Rpbilmseo could be horse. Rpnatesed could be barn. Rpbilmaeo could be garage. All you have to do is see how fast and accurately you can teach yourself using sight methods to respond correctly to these words.

These mean carrot	These mean horse	These mean barn	These mean garage
RPBALBEO	RPBLMSEO	RPNATESED	RPBLMAEO
rpbalbeo	rpblmse0	rpntesed	rpblmaeo
rpbalbeo	rpblmse0	rpntesed	rpblmaeo
<i>Rpbalbeo</i>	<i>rpblmse0</i>	<i>rpntesed</i>	<i>rpblmaeo</i>

Now that you know these words, match them quickly. Color all the carrots orange, the horse brown, and the barn red in the grid below.

rpblmaeo	RPBLMSEO	<i>Rpbalbeo</i>	rpblmse0
<i>rpblmse0</i>	<i>rpblmaeo</i>	rpblmse0	RPBLMAEO
<i>rpntesed</i>	<i>rpbalbeo</i>	RPNATESED	<i>rpntesed</i>
<i>R.PBALBEO</i>	rpntesed	<i>rpblmaeo</i>	Rpbalbeo

We'll bet you didn't even try. Too frustrating, perhaps?

The basic rationale remains the same for teaching remedial reading or teaching English as a second language. What many teachers fail to realize is that the names and the sounds of the letters in our

alphabet are often not the same in other languages that use the Roman alphabet. For example, the name of the letter A can be "AH" and the name of the letter E can be "AY" and the name of our letter "EYE" can be "EE!"

Rationale for AVKO's Sequence of Letters to be Taught Beginning with ABCD (RST Y) EFGH (W) I (N) JKLM_ OPQ_ _ _ U V _ X _ Z.

Because knowledge of alphabetic order is essential in using dictionaries, telephone books, and filing cabinets, we feel that the learning of alphabetical order and sequencing should be taught **AS** we learn the alphabet. Mastering the lyrics to the alphabet song may be a fun activity but it isn't much help if we must sing the song almost all the way through at least three times to have some idea where the name Smith is to be found in a phone book.

We do take a few of the very common letters out of order deliberately. Those are RSTYWN. This is to help increase the number of available common words to be read and written. If we followed strict alphabetical order, we couldn't have plurals of any word or the sh digraph or the words *is* or *was* until 19 letters have been taught. We couldn't have words like *at* and *cat* until 20 have been taught. And we wouldn't be able to write *by* or *baby* until we have taught 25 letters.

The letter **A** gives us the word "uh" as in *a* house, *a* car, *a* home, *a* dog, *a* cat, etc.

The letter **B** gives us the word "BAA" as in "*Baa, baa*, black sheep have you any wool?"

The letter **C** gives us the words **CAB** and *cab*.

The letter **D** gives us the words **DAD, dad, BAD, bad, DAB, dab, CAD, and cad.**

The letter **R** gives us the words **CAR, car, BAR, bar, BARD, bard, CARD, card CRAB, crab**

The letter **S** gives us the words **CABS, cabs, SCAB, scabs, CARS, cars, SCARS, scars, DADS, dads, SAD, sad, CADS, cads, DABS, dabs, CRAB, crabs, BASS, bass, CASS, Cass, CAST, cast.**

The letter **T** gives us the words **AT, at, TAT, tat, TATS, tats, TAB, tab, TABS, tabs, STABS, stabs, BAT, bat, BATS, bats, RAT, rat, RATS, rats, TAR, tars, STAR, stars, TART, tarts, START, start, STARTS, starts, CART, carts, BART, Bart, DART, dart, DARTS, darts,**

Have you noticed that all these letters and words involve **left-hand** keystrokes?! If you teach keyboarding as you teach handwriting as you teach spelling and reading you will be actively involving both hemispheres of the brain. Up until the letter y, the only right hand keyboarding is the space bar, comma, period, and enter.

The letter **Y** gives us the words *bay, day, ray, bray, tray, batty, catty, tarry, starry, Cary, carry, Bary, Barry, yard.* Notice that all the words are phonically regular. All the initial consonants (onsets) are regular. All the word families (rimes) are regular.

The students quickly learn that the letter a, however, has no sound of its own.

The sound of the letter **a** depends upon its neighboring letters. If it has none (as in the case of the word *a*) its sound is "uh." If the letter *a* is followed by the letters, *b, d, s,* or *t,* it is a SHORT A (CVC rule). If the letter *a* is followed by the letter *y* or its identical twin the letter *i,* it is a LONG A (Two vowels walking rule). If the letter *a* is followed by the letter *r* it is pronounced "ah" (The R Control rule). The word "carry" only appears to violate the R Control rule. *Starry* and *carry* do not rhyme. Why? Look at the base word in *starry*. It's *star*. But there is no single syllable base word in *carry* so it's an "airy" word as in *marry, Harry,* and *Larry*. See more about that later on. Or see the chapter "The Mechanics of English Spelling" in *The Teaching of Reading and Spelling: a Continuum from Kindergarten through College*. This book is available from the AVKO Foundation.

The letter **E** opens up the suffixes *ed* and *er* plus words with the *ea* and *ee* vowel digraphs plus the *eb,* *ed,* *ert* *ess,* *est,* *et* families.

The letter **F** gives us the words starting with **F** and **FR** and the *aff,* *eff,* *aft,* *eft* families.

The letter **G** gives us words such as *gas, gab,* etc. along with the *gr* words *grab* and the *ag* and *eg* families.

The letter **H** gives us the words that start with H, CH, CHR, SH, SHR, TH, THR and the atch, etch, ath, eth, ash and esh families.

The letter **W** gives us the words that start with W and WH as well as the AW and EW vowel digraphs. It also gives us the W Control over the letter A. Note: According to the CVC rule wad should rhyme with dad, but it doesn't. The WControl also fights with the R control over the letter A. **War** does not rhyme with **car** nor **ward** with **card**.

The letter **I** gives us the ib, ibe ick, ice, ide, iff, ife, igh, ight, eight, ir, ird ire, irt, is, iss, ise, it, ite, ith families as well as the ai digraph for the aid, aif, air, aise, ait families.

Over 5,000 words are now available with only 14 letters, all of which get daily reviews of their names, sounds, and patterns.

The letter **N** now allows us to add the ing ending to all the families we have already learned. The letter **N** also gives us the n, gn, kn, and sn onsets plus the ain, an, and, ander, ane, ang, ange, ank, ant rimes plus the en, end, ender, ength, ent, ean, ien, in, ind, inder, ing, ink and ine equivalent rimes.

And on we go. Each new letter now opens up new sounds which make new words while we review automatically the earlier letters and sounds that we can now use to make even more new words.

The letter **J** gives us the words beginning with J which combines in one way or another with most of the previous letters.

The letter **K** gives us the words beginning with k plus the ack, ake, eck, eek, eak, eke, ick, ike, iek families.

The letter **L** gives us the L, BL, CL, FL onsets and the al, ald, ale, alf, alk, all, alm, alt, awl, el, eal, eel, eil eld, elf elk ell, elm, elt, ewel, il, ild, ield, ilf, ilk, ill, andle, indle, ankle, inkle rimes.

The letter **M** gives us the words beginning with m and the sm blends plus the aim, alm, am, ame, arm, eam, eem, elm, eme, im, ime, ilm, rimes.

The letter **O** gives a review of all the ending consonants and consonant blends cited above but with the vowel o, oa, and the oo digraphs to make new rimes and rhymes. It also gives us a review of the w-control which operates on the letter o as well as on the letter a as in won, wonder, wool, and wood.

The r control also comes into play with the letter o as in for, ford, cord. And we have the war between w and r over the o. Note that the only way we spell the sound "wur" (except in the word **were!**) is **wor** as in word, work, worth. Notice the normal r control is affected. Word does not rhyme with ford, nor work with fork, or worth with north.

The letter **P** opens the p, sp, pr, spr, pl, spl ph phr sph onsets as well as the p, pe, rp, pt, rimes using the a, e, ea, ie, ee, ea, i vowels.

The letter **Q** is taught simultaneously with the letter **u** as the consonant digraph with the "kw" blend sound as well as the squ onset.

Then the **U** is taught as part of the previous rimes with the addition of the eu, ue, and ui vowel digraphs and the un prefix.

The letter **V** gives us the v onset plus the alve, ave, eave, eeve, eve, ive, ieve, ceive, ove, oave rimes.

The letter **X** gives us the silly x onset for the sound of "z" as in xylophone and the ax, ex, ix, ox, and ux rimes and the ex prefix.

The letter **Z** gives us the z onset plus the ending z rimes altz, azz, aze, azzle, eltzer, ez, ezz, ezzle, iz, izz, izzle, oz, ozzle, uzz, uzzle and the -ize verbs such as specialize which most frequently are -ise verbs in British English as is the word specialise.

AVKO Techniques for Teaching Phonics

AS manuscript and cursive is taught

AVKO recommends that you make sure that your students know the difference between the **NAME** of the letter and the different **SOUNDS** they make. The following are statements that you can make **WHEN** (and only when) you get to teaching each of the letters. Do **NOT** do all of these at one time! As each letter is introduced, you will be referred to this page.

A The **NAME** of this letter is "AY." When it's a word it is pronounced "uh" as in a house, a dog, a cat, a cup, etc. In all other cases, how the letter A is pronounced depends upon its neighbors.

- B The NAME of this letter is "BEE." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning and ending of the words Bob, Bib, and Bub. (or "buh") You may want to use the techniques developed by Lindamood Bell or other techniques that you know from experience will work with your students.
- C The NAME of this letter is "SEE." Its sound is usually "kuh" when followed by a, o, or u as in cap, cop, or cup. It can also sound as "s-s-s" when followed by e or i as in city or cent.

Special Note: In big words ("FANCY") when the letter c is followed by i and endings -al, -on, and -ous, the letters ci are pronounced "sh-h-h" as in special and suspicion and preccious.

- D The NAME of this letter is "DEE." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning and ending of the words dad, dead, deed, died, did, and dud. (or "duh")
- R The NAME of this letter is "AH'R." When a word starts with the letter r its sound is what you hear at the beginning of the words, rat, rip, rot, rug, and room. (or "ruh"). When a word ends in r its sound is what you hear at the end of car, bear, cheer, and sir. (or "ur") Note: Some dialects drop the "R" sound at the ends of words so that the word car is pronounced "KAH" instead of "KAH'r. They also sometime stick in an "r" sound where it doesn't belong as in America being pronounced "uh MAIR uh kur.
- S The NAME of this letter is "ESS." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning and end of the words sis and sass (or "s-s-s").
- T The NAME of this letter is "TEE." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning and ending of the words tat, tot, toot, and tote. (or "tuh")
- Y The NAME of this letter is "W'IE." When it starts a word its sound is what you hear at the beginning of the words yes, yet, yell, yip, yam, yacht, and yummy. When it is at the end of a one syllable word it is pronounced "IE" or EYE as in by, cry, try, sly, fly, and dry. However, if the word has more than one syllable and it ends in y it is pronounced "EE" as in baby, pantry, and laundry. There are linguists and phoneticians who will insist that the sound is that of a short i, but we find it easier to teach both reading and spelling when we call it a long e. As you are the teacher, take your pick.
- E The NAME of this letter is "EE." Its sound (if any) depends upon its neighbors.
- F The NAME of this letter is "EFF." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning of fee, fi, foe, fum, fit, five, fingers, fast, for fun or at the ending of calf, Jeff, stiff, off, and stuff. (or "fuh")
- G The NAME of this letter is "JEE." Its sound is either soft or hard. When it's hard it's the sound you hear at the beginning and ending of the words gag and gig. (or "guh") When it's soft it's the sound you hear at the beginning of words such as gym, gee, George, gem, and gentle. (or "juh")
- H The NAME of this letter is "AY'ch." Its sound is usually what you hear at the beginning of words such as hat, hard, hot, ham, his, and hut. (or "huh") When h is preceded by c, g, s, t, or w it becomes part of a digraph. See digraphs below. When the letter h follows a vowel and ends a word it is silent but functions as a signal letter for the "AH" or "OH" sounds as in bah and oh.
- W The NAME of this letter is "DUBBLE YOO. AVKO considers the single u and the double u (w) to be like naughty identical twins who like to switch identities just as the I and Y do. Sometimes the vowel u takes on the role of the consonant w. Sometimes the consonant w takes on the role of the vowel u. When the w is a consonant its sound is what you hear at the beginning of words such as water, wall, win, will, and was ("wuh"). When the letter u is a consonant it has the same sound. Examples are suite ("sweet") and suede ("swayed"). When the double u (w) is at the end of a word it is always part of a vowel digraph such as aw, ew, and ow.
- I The NAME of this letter is "AH'ee" or EYE. Its sound (if any) depends upon its neighbors.
- N The NAME of this letter is "EN." Its sound is what you hear in front and back of the words Nan, nine, and nun (or "nuh").
- J The NAME of this letter is "JAY. Its sound is what you hear at the beginning of words such as Jim, June, Judy, joy, and jump (or "juh"). Note: If the word has a Spanish derivation, it's sound is "huh" as Jose ("hoh ZAY"), Jesus ("Hay Zoo-ss") and La Jolla ("luh HOY yuh").
- K The NAME of this letter is "KAY". Its sound is what you hear in front of the words kick, Kate, and kin and what you hear at the end of words such as back, sick, tock, and stuck. (or "kuh")
- L The NAME of this letter is "ELL." Its sound is what you hear in front of words such as lip, lot, little, Lulu, lone and loon and what you hear at the ends of words such as ball, tell, still, gull, and coal (or "luh").
- M The NAME of this letter is "EM." Its sound is what you hear in front and back of mom and mum (or "muh").

- O The NAME of this letter is "OH." Its sound (if any) depends upon its neighbors.
- P The NAME of this letter is "PEE." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning and ending of pop, pope, and pup (or "puh").
- Q The NAME of this letter is "KYOO." It's sound is what you hear at the beginning of words such as cat, Kate, and quick (or "kuh"). Q almost always is followed by the letter **u** which in this one case almost always has the sound of "double u" (w) as in beginning sounds of the words wit, wad, walk, win and won. There are no words in the English language that use the letters **kw**. But there are lots of **qu** words with that sound as **kw** such as quit, quite, quack, quiz and quarrel. In words straight from Arabic the **q** is pronounced as /k/ as in Iraq.
- U The NAME of this letter is "YOO." Its sound depends upon its neighbors.
- V The NAME of this letter is "VEE." Its sound is what you hear at the beginning of the words van, very, voodoo, and voice and at the ending of the words have, cave, stove, love and live (or "vuh"). Notice that we just don't like to end words with the letters u and v.
- X The NAME of this letter is "EK-ss." When it starts a word other than X-ray, its sound is what you hear at the beginning of words such as xylophone xylocaine, and zoo. Most of the time it has the same sound as a k followed by an s and the ends of words such as mix, (Mick's), tax (tacks), and lox (locks).
- Z The NAME of this letter is "ZEE." When it starts a word, its sound is what you hear at the beginning of the words, zip, zap, and zoo. When it ends a word it sounds like what you hear at the ending of fuzz, does, and was!

There are a number of good ways to teach the sounds of each letter. If you want to use the traditional concepts of short vowels (a, e, i, o, u), long vowels AY, EE, YH (eye), OH, and YOO, it shouldn't hurt too many students, but... Technically, one of the long vowels does NOT say its name, and that is the long u. The long vowel is OO as in "**Ooh**, I **knew who** was singing that **tune** in the **Blue Moon**." When we have words like **cute** ("kYoot"), **few** ("fYoo"), and **beauty** ("bYOO tee"), the vowel does say its name ("YOO") only because there is what we like to call an "invisible y." If we can have silent letters, why not invisible letters? (See "The Case of the Invisible Y" in *The Teaching of Reading & Spelling: a Continuum from Kindergarten through College*)

AVKO also would prefer that you teach vowels as **sounds** and not just as the names of letters. Teachers and books normally say A, E, I, O, U, and sometimes Y and W are called vowels. But that is NOT quite true. Check your dictionary as to the real definitions of vowels and consonants. After you've done that and got yourself confused with all the linguistic jargon, here is a translation into plain simple English: **Vowels are grunts**. When man first developed a form of speech it was from simple grunts. Aaaaa, ahhhh, ohhhhh, ooohhhh, Ayyyyyy, etc. **Consonants are shapers**. Put a **t** shaper at the end of the aaaaa grunt and you get the word **at**. Put an **m** shaper in front of **at** and you get the word **mat**. Depending upon the linguist you are talking to, you will get different answers to the question, "How many vowels are there in English?" Some will say 13, others will say 21 or more. AVKO uses a pragmatic fiction of 14 because we found it quite convenient for arranging words by patterns. AY, EE, IE, OH, OO are the long vowels; a, e, i, o, u (and the schwa) are the short vowels. AW, OW, OY, and UU (as in put) are the other vowels that are neither long nor short. As the r-controlled vowels can easily be handled within the fourteen vowel structure, we do it that way. There are some teachers who feel they must teach **-are** as in **care** separately from the LONG A families, because in truth the **a** in **care**, **stare**, and **mare** does not say its name. The sound is precisely a SHORT E. Ouch! That's a bit confusing. It may be technically incorrect, but it's more understandable to young students to treat the **-are** as a member of the VCe family. The same is true with the E, I, O, and URE families. As there are so many English dialects, we have tried to stay as close to the Standard American TV dialect as possible. Perhaps the most noticeable differences in dialects are in the vowel sounds. We know that there are even distinguished professors of phonics such as Professor Patrick Groff who has claimed in a personal letter to the author that *Don* and *Dawn* are homonyms (homophones) as well as *dock* and *dark*! We respectfully disagree. We respect his dialect but not his assumption about Standard American TV dialect. Except in a very few dialects such as the Cockney dropping of h's and the Limerick substitution of /t/ for /th/, the consonant (shapers) are nearly identical. That is why we at AVKO do not spend a great deal of time on individual sounds of vowels but a great deal of time on the **vowel sounds in patterns** which include the highly consistent consonants (shapers).

Examples of just the letter **a**'s consistency and supposed inconsistencies.

The word "**a**" is pronounced "uh" (the ubiquitous schwa) as in "a house."

The letter **a** in ALL small words ending in the letter **a** such as **ma, pa, spa, ha, fa, la, ta-ta, cha-cha** and **Zha Zha** is pronounced "AH." In some dialects it is "AW", especially in those dialects that do not discriminate between "ah" and "aw" as in Don and Dawn.

The ending letter **a** in almost ALL big words is pronounced "uh" as in **mama, papa, Cuba, America, Asia, Indonesia, Alexandria, pasta**, etc. Big or Fancy Words are those words that cannot be reduced to one meaningful syllable. Fisherman can be reduced to "fish" but official cannot. Hence fisherman which has 9 letters we consider to be a small word ("simple") and official which has 8 to be a big or fancy word. In some dialects the ending letter **a** ("uh") is pronounced "ur" as in "Hah' vud's" pronunciation of Cuba as "kyoo bur."

The letter **a** in ALL small words (CVC) ending in **-ag** is a "short a" and so all **-ag** words rhyme. Examples: **bag, rag, brag, lag, flag, gag, hag, shag, nag, snag, tag, stag, sag, wag**, etc.

The letter **a** in ALL small words (CVCe) ending **-age** is a "long a" and so all small words ending **-age** rhyme with **cage, page, rage, stage**, etc.

The letter **a** in ALL big words (FANCY) ending **-age** is pronounced as a "short i" or as "AH". Big words ending **age** either rhyme with **bridge** as does **message** or **Taj** as does **massage**. They never rhyme with **page**.

The letter **a** in ALL small words (CVVC) ending **-ain** is a "long a" and so all small words ending **-ain** rhyme with **pain** such as **do rain Spain main plain**.

The letter **a** in most big words (FANCY) ending **-ain** is pronounced as a "short i" and big words ending **-ain** usually rhyme with **tin** as in **mountain, certain, fountain, captain**, etc.

The letter **a** in ALL small words ending **-ace** is a "long a" and so small words ending **-ace** rhyme with **chase** as in **face, space, lace**, etc.

The letter **a** in almost ALL big words ending **-ace** is pronounced as a "short i" and big words ending **-ace** usually rhyme with **miss** as in **palace, furnace, menace**, etc.

The letter **a** followed by double **l**'s in ALL small words is pronounced "AW" and words ending **-all** rhyme with **crawl** as in **all, small, tall**, and **wall**.

The letter **a** in Almost all OA words is silent (a signal letter) making the **oa** sound as "OH" as in **boat**.

The letter **a** in EA words is silent (a signal letter) making the **ea** sound as "EE" as in **meat** or "AY" as in **steak** or "EH" as in **sweat** or **swear**. Note: The letter **e** is often sounded "AY" and in fact that is its name in French, Spanish, and German.

The letter **a** in AU and AW words is pronounced "AW" as in **taught** and **crawl**.

The letter **a** in EAU and EAUx and AUX words has no sound of its own. These letter combinations produce "OH" except in the words **beauty** and **beautiful** in which case the letters **ea** sound as /y/ and the **u** as /oo/.

The letter **a** when followed by the letter **r** (R-Control) has the "AH" or "AW" sound depending upon one's dialect. In other words, words such as **car, far, jar** rhyme with the name of the letter **R** with one exception. **See W-Control 2.**

W-Control 1: Whenever the letter **w** precedes the letter **a**, the **a** is pronounced "AH" as in **wad, swaddle, waft, waffle, wallow, swallow, Guam, wan, swan, wand, want, swap, wasp, water, squad, squat, swat, swatter**, etc. (Note: The letter **u** usually becomes the consonant /w/ when it is followed by the letter **a**.)

W-Control 2: Whenever the letter **r** follows the letters **wa-** we have a "**WAR**" between the **W-** and **-R** controls and a compromise is made. **War** words rhyme with the word **OR** as in **war, wart, ward, warm, swarm, quart**, etc.

This should be sufficient to demonstrate that the letter **a** does not have "one" consistent sound within all words but does have consistent sounds depending upon the word pattern (or its **neighboring** letters).

Rationale for Exposing Students Immediately to a Variety of Fonts—Including Cursive

Since AVKO's beginning in 1974, we have dealt almost exclusively with older students and adults who, despite the best of traditional teaching methods and materials, had severe reading and spelling problems. It was from analyzing how these problems came about and from analyzing what we did to overcome them, we have come to the conclusion that all students should be taught to quickly and automatically respond to letters (or combinations of letters) as sounds that make up words that have meaning.

We feel that both sight methods and analytic phonic methods can create problems. We have had students who could read the Dolch word **goes** when it was flashed to them on a card but could not read the word **goes** when it was in a sans serif font such as Arial or hand printed *goes* or written in cursive as *Does*. Often the word was misread as does. Does **goes** look like **does** or **GOES**, *goes*, *goes*, *goes* and *goes*? See what we mean?

Here at the AVKO Reading Clinic we have conducted simple demonstrations that clearly show that fonts make such a difference that poor readers or non readers can not successfully handle a very simple word recognition test such as the following: Because you are a good reader, you can circle the two words that are the same in each line. But give this to one who is not a good reader and watch what happens!

NEXT	<i>Nest</i>	NEXI	Nest	NETS
STAMMER	<i>stammar</i>	SLAMMER	Slammer	SHEMMER
LADLES	<i>Ladz</i>	LADIES	ladus	<i>ladies</i>
FLICEKR	<i>Flicker</i>	FLCIKER	Flicker	FLICKRE
FASTER	<i>Easter</i>	FASTFR	FASTEN	EASTER

The following was copied directly *with permission* from Bill Morelan's website for one scholar's points of view concerning different handwriting systems: These are *his* opinions.

HANDWRITING OVERVIEW

Introduction

Those who work with young students just learning to write face an increasingly difficult task—how to choose an effective handwriting curriculum from a wide variety of methods and styles. Complicating this process is the fact that today's highly persuasive sales campaigns do not necessarily go hand-in-hand with solid, researched-based curricula!

The importance of choosing an effective handwriting curriculum cannot be underestimated. It's a choice that will shape a student's habits and abilities for life. This site is dedicated to helping teachers, parents, and curriculum committees make accurate, informed assessments of handwriting curricula and their claims. (The author acknowledges in advance a definite bias toward programs based on research rather than rhetoric.)

In order to simplify style comparison, the various programs have been divided into categories. However, each program should be evaluated on its own merits rather than its inclusion in any particular group. Groupings are as follows:

Traditional Handwriting:

Palmer • Zaner Bloser® • A Reason For® • McDougal-Little® • Harcourt Brace®

Italicized Handwriting:

D'Nealian® • Getty-Dubary™

Other Programs:

Abeka® • Peterson Directed ®

This site concludes with a Reference Section listing major articles and pertinent research related to evaluating handwriting instruction. This site also includes a Style Comparison Sheet which allows users to print a comparison of the various handwriting styles.

Traditional Handwriting

Palmer Handwriting

There's a good chance that your grandparents learned to write using "the Palmer method." It was popularized by Austin Palmer in the early 1900s, and almost every handwriting program in existence today is a direct descendent of this style—either as an enhancement of the method, or as a reaction against it.

Strength: traditional alphabet formation, historical foundation

Weakness: archaic style, somewhat outdated methodology, minimal commercial support.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Zaner Bloser® Handwriting

The number one selling handwriting program in America. Based on the Palmer method with numerous improvements and enhancements. Zaner Bloser currently offers both their old style (traditional) alphabet, and a new more contemporary version (simplified). More information on Zaner Bloser handwriting can be found at www.zaner-bloser.com

Strength: traditional alphabet, easy-to-use materials, strong support

Weakness: tendency to use meaningless or silly sentences for practice

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

A Reason For® Handwriting

Using an alphabet very similar to Zaner Bloser's "simplified" style, this curriculum is based on content taken from Scripture verses. It also includes a strong outreach component, giving students a practical "reason" for using their very best handwriting. An informative, well-designed website with downloadable curriculum samples can be found at: www.areasonfor.com

Strength: traditional alphabet, easy-to-use materials, highly motivational

Weakness: unsuitable for public school use due to Christian content.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

McDougal, Littell© Handwriting

Similar to Zaner Bloser with minor variations in style and teaching methodology.

Website: <http://www.mcdougallittell.com>

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Harcourt Brace® Handwriting

Similar to Zaner Bloser with minor variations in style and teaching methodology.

Website: www.harcourtschool.com

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Italicized Handwriting

Author's Note: Italicized styles are somewhat controversial. Proponents cite easier transition, student satisfaction. However, at least one major study (Graham, 1992) finds little to substantiate these claims. In addition, other studies have raised questions regarding specific liabilities associated with teaching italicized alphabets (Kuhl and Dewitz, 1994; Hackney, 1991; etc.) That having been said, there are still thousands of schools nationwide that embrace this style.

D'Nealian Handwriting

Developed in the 1960's by Don Neal Thurber (Don Neal = D'Nealian) in an effort to ease the transition from manuscript to cursive. It features a unique manuscript alphabet that reflects the cursive forms of each letter. More information can be found at www.scottforesman.com

Strength: strong corporate support, easier transition (see author's note above), historical foundation

Weakness: some studies suggest various problems associated with learning a separate alphabet for reading and writing.

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

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

D'Nealian Manuscript

Arrows and stroke numbers offer guidance in direction and sequence

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

Where is the transition? With D'Nealian manuscript, there's hardly any transition. That's the feature that has made this handwriting method the favorite of teachers from coast to coast. All you do is add a few simple joining strokes and—presto—you're writing in D'Nealian.

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 Beka® Handwriting

A “cursive only” handwriting curriculum designed for use with the A Beka language arts curriculum. Popular with many homeschoolers. A Beka handwriting can be found at: <http://www.abeka.com/ABB/Catalogs/HSCat/Catalog.html>

Strength: No transition necessary since only cursive handwriting is taught.

Weakness: Same as D'Nealian. Also, some studies cite concerns about requiring fine motor skills prior to physiological readiness. (Kuhl and Dewitz, 1994).

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
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

HANDWRITING AND THE BFH PROGRAM

Good handwriting has a powerful affect on academic achievement. Barchowsky Fluent Handwriting is devoted to developing maximum legibility with maximum speed. Benefit to students is the paramount concern always.

The BFH program grew out of elementary classroom experience. The program evolved as the author taught students from age four to fourteen, observed their capabilities, and listened to their ideas.

Fluent handwriting depends on rhythmic movement and good posture. One is as critical as the other. Think, if you will, about other physical activities. All demand a specific posture and movement to work with well, whether to swing a baseball bat, hit a nail with a hammer, play a piano, or write.

ONE MODEL ALPHABET

The BFH program has one model alphabet only. It serves as the starting point for the youngest students. With no changes in letter formations, it evolves into a suitable hand for older students, and adults.

Most lowercase letters of the BFH model include entry and exit strokes to encourage flowing movement. The youngest students learn these characters. Once they learn to recognize characters, write them, and put them into words, they are ready to move on to joined writing, true cursive. (The word “cursive” is often applied to a method of writing that employs undercurves, overcurves, and loops to make characters join. The derivation of the word cursive is Latin. It means running, as in a flowing, fluent movement.)

PRINT AND CURSIVE ALPHABETS

Fine motor skills suffer if two different alphabets are presented in a handwriting programs. (Some educators believe..., AVKO's editorial correction.) Many educators believe it best to teach print-script first, and cursive later. (But there are those who believe it best to teach cursive first and manuscript later. Again, AVKO's editorial insertion) Print-script appears to be simple because it resembles the type from which students learn to read.

Print-script models are frequently composed of circles and lines. The characters are drawn slowly, rather than written freely. Rhythm suffers because most print-script models lack the design elements that allow them to flow. Many students confuse the placement of the lines that form letters. Reversals become a problem. The BFH model will not produce reversals, because of the easy character formation, and conformity to natural rhythmic movement.

In most schools conventional cursive is introduced after two to three years of learning print-script. It is confusing. Letters whose strokes used to start at the top now start at the baseline. Some letter shapes are modified, and some change altogether. Barchowsky Fluent Handwriting letters are always formed in the same direction that we read, top-to-bottom and left-to-right.

Here are two generic samples of print-script:

First Sample (stick ball)

Second sample (D'Nealian manuscript)

Third sample (D'Nealian Cursive)

***This is the model for the BFH
program.***

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz**

Cursive models in common use today are reruns from the nineteenth century. There have been many cursive alphabets throughout the ages. Usually letterforms change as cultural changes occur. Nineteenth century handwriting methods are ill suited to our present culture. They do not work with today's tools, technology, and need for rapid writing. Most current, cursive models are based on alphabet designs by scribes who cared more for virtuoso flourishes than for efficient, running hands. Scribes of the past emulated the curls and swirls that adorned copperplate prints that date to the sixteenth century. Letter shapes varied over the years, but the curlicues have long been admired, although to master them requires many hours of practice.

The introduction of a second model for cursive writing is unnecessary if students have already learned to write characters that can be joined with their entry and exit strokes.

SAVE TEACHING TIME

Valuable time is saved when only one method is taught. Handwriting instruction takes place in the early years. The BFH program recommends about 15 to 20 minutes a day in the beginning. Sessions for very young students should not be devoted solely to letter formations. This is an opportunity to play, and to learn left from right, top from bottom. Students can have fun pretending to lead an orchestra, or to trace a bird or helicopter in flight.

First and second grades (ages 5 to 8) can allot about four 20 to 25 minute handwriting sessions per week. Principles of good handwriting should prevail throughout all written assignments. Joins should be taught in first grade, and just as soon as possible. Each class should start with a five-minute warm up exercise that relates to the letters that students will practice.

Handwriting is a small motor physical education, and just as for all serious sports, a warm up period precedes the game. All warm up patterns in the BFH program relate either to characters, or to joining them.

As soon as students can construct characters satisfactorily, formal handwriting classes should be gradually phased out, with good handwriting practices integrated into all written work, science and math, etc. Do we sometimes forget that numbers must be well formed and placed? A crooked column of numerals, inconsistent in size is hard to add up. Spelling and reports are good places to look for legibility. Note-taking is good for both legibility and speed.

YOURS FOR LIFE

The BFH program grows with the student. Beginners start with a one-model alphabet. As soon as the basics are learned, the emphasis is on developing a legible, rapid, individual hand. Handwriting cannot be ignored during the years of physical and intellectual development.

It is important to monitor students as they grow and develop fine motor skills. With little time invested, the BFH program will help instructors understand the elements of handwriting that need attention through the age of about 14. You will find diverse and engaging activities for older students on the CD-ROM.

It is reassuring to know that students who were taught with the BFH program are now adults who can take legible, rapid-fire notes, as well as impress a client with a personal memo, or a potential employer with a job application.

Getty-Dubay Handwriting

A relative newcomer to italicized handwriting programs. Developed by Barbara Getty and Inga Dubai at Portland State University. While D'Nealian tends to make manuscript letters reflect cursive letters, Getty-Dubay tends to make the cursive alphabet reflect manuscript formation. Some reviewers have referred to Getty-Dubay as "calligraphy style" handwriting. More information on Getty-Dubay handwriting can be found at: <http://extended.pdx.edu/press>

Strength: easier transition (See note above)

Weakness: Same as D'Nealian. Too new for longitudinal studies

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
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

Specialized Handwriting

A Beka® Handwriting

A "cursive only" handwriting curriculum designed for use with the A Beka language arts curriculum. Popular with many homeschoolers. A Beka handwriting can be found at:

<http://www.abeka.com/ABB/Catalogs/HSCat/Catalog.html>

Strength: No transition necessary since only cursive handwriting is taught.

Weakness: Same as D'Nealian. Also, some studies cite concerns about requiring fine motor skills prior to physiological readiness. (Kuhl and Dewitz, 1994)

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
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

Peterson Directed Handwriting®

Another handwriting program popular with homeschoolers. Peterson uses a unique alphabet, and the major emphasis is on the teaching methodology. More information on Peterson Directed Handwriting® can be found at: <http://www.peterson-handwriting.com>

Strength: Very structured teaching methodology.

Weakness: Same as D'Nealian due to unique alphabet shapes.

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
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

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Author's Note: While by no means comprehensive, the following list provides a good overview of the topic. Included are some classic research studies, articles, and books (some dating as far back as 1923) that are often overlooked in the attempt to get the "latest" research spin.

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Final Comments & Fine Print

All font samples on this site are courtesy of the fine folks at Educational Fontware. They offer fonts and font variations for most major handwriting styles. Visit their website at:

www.educationalfontware.com

This was created in partial fulfillment of the requirements related to a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership (Curriculum & Instruction emphasis). Comments should be directed to Bill Morelan at author222@aol.com

Teaching Letters, Single Words, Phrases with Flashcards

Using flashcards to teach has been around for ages. The technique works. Sometimes it works too well. Why? Because students want to please their parent or their teacher by getting the correct answer. So their minds sometimes use shortcuts. For example, when a student is being quizzed with a typical set of ten flashcards, the student may seize upon the fact that the word **elephant** is the only long word in the group and it starts with the letters **el**. So now when he reads "Jack got on the **elevator** to go to the fourth floor," he reads it as "Jack got on the **elephant**!"

So too, if a student sees only ball and stick letters the student may have a difficult time recognizing and reading other styles. Notice the difference in these letters: *a a a A A a A*. They are not alike. Yet the student must learn to respond automatically to all of them in order to become a good reader.

That is the main reason why we suggest that you make your own flash cards. Use your computer and its ability to change fonts, copy, and paste to make sure that as your student learns to read they won't be dependent on seeing a letter or a word in just one font. We also suggest that you have at the top of your dry erase board an alphabet strips such as:

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

This happens to be D'Nealian® but it could just as well be Getty-Dubay Italic or whatever handwriting system you intend to teach. We do hope that is not a stick and ball type system. The important thing to do WHEN you first start to teach is to cover ALL the letters except the letter A so that it looks like this:

A																									
<i>a</i>																									

Then, when you get to the letter B you uncover the B so that the chart looks like this:

A	B																							
<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>																							

Then, when you get to the letter C you uncover the C so that the chart looks like this:

A	B	C																						
<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>C</i>																						

Then, after teaching the D, the R, the S, and the T, when you get to the letter Y you uncover the Y so that the chart looks like this:

A	B	C	D													R	S	T						Y
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	---

Teaching with Sentences

At AVKO we don't believe in starting the learning-to-read process by giving the student Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* to read. We believe in crawling before we walk and walking before we run, and running before we do the high hurdles. So it is that we teach sentences before we teach paragraphs and paragraphs before short books, and short books before chapters and chapters before long books:

There are lots of grammar books on the market. Some good, some dull and boring, and some that are utterly confusing. Use whatever works for you and your student. But before you get to teaching grammar formally as such, you can create sentences from the words you have taught to your students.

You can really have fun creating silly sentences once your alphabet strip looks like this:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I								R	S	T			W	Y
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i								r	s	t			w	y

You can have:

<i>Gee, is dad a bee?</i>	<i>Gee, is dad a bee?</i>	Gee, is dad a bee?
<i>Is he a bee?</i>	<i>Is he a bee?</i>	Is he a bee?
<i>Is he a tree?</i>	<i>Is he a tree?</i>	Is he a tree?
<i>Is that dad's car?</i>	<i>Is that dad's car</i>	Is that dad's car?
<i>Are there trees here?</i>	<i>Are there trees here?</i>	Are there trees here?

Whatever sentences you and your students create, you can constantly put them into different fonts so that they are learning to respond to the letters and not the appearance or "sight picture" of the words.

Decodable Words by Units an Overview

Unit Objectives you may choose to read to your students:

Unit 1 ABCD

At the end of this unit you will be able to name the first four letters of the alphabet, recognize them whether they are in upper case or lower case, in Times Roman Font, Aerial Font, Manuscript or Cursive.

You will know the sounds that B, C, and D make and be able to say them and write them (and keyboard, hopefully) as well as to be able to read and spell all the words that can be made with the letters ABC and D.

You will also be able to put the letters in alphabetical order.

Unit 2 RST

At the end of this unit you will be able to name the three very important letters of the alphabet (R,S,T) and recognize them whether they are in upper case or lower case, in Times Roman Font, Aerial Font, Manuscript or Cursive.

You will know the sounds that R, S, and T make individually and as consonant blends such as BR, CR, SCR, DR, ST, STR and the ending CT and be able to say them and write them (and keyboard, hopefully) as well as to be able to read and spell all the words that can be made ABCD_RS and T.

Unit 3 The letter Y as Consonant and Vowel

At the end of this unit you will be able to name the letter Y, recognize it whether it is in upper case or lower case, in Times Roman Font, Aerial Font, Manuscript or Cursive.

You will know the sounds that the letter Y makes and be able to say them and write them (and keyboard, hopefully) as well as to be able to read and spell all the words that can be made with the letters ABCD_RST and Y.

Unit 4 E

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter E and know the sounds that it makes when it is part of a digraph such as EE, EA, and EY and the ER and ED endings. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDE_RST and Y.

Unit 5 F

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter F and know the sounds that it makes when it is alone or part of a beginning blend such as FR or an ending blend FT. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made ABCDEF_RST and Y.

Unit 6 G

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter G and know the sounds that it makes when it is part of a beginning blend GR or the digraph GE. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFG_RST and Y.

Unit 7 H

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter H and know the sounds that it makes when it is by itself or part of a digraph such as CH, SH, TH or the CHR, THR, and SHR blends. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGH_RST and Y.

Unit 8 W

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter W and know the sounds that it makes when it is part of a consonant digraph such as WH or the vowel digraphs EW and AW. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGH_RST_W and Y.

Unit 9 I

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter I and know the sounds that it makes and how it may act as a silent signal letter to tell you how to pronounce the A when followed by a consonant and the E. You will recognize the ai, ie, and ei digraphs and will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHI_RST_W and Y.

Unit 10 N

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter N and know the sounds that it makes when it is part of a digraph such as KN, GN, NG, part of the ending blends ND, NDS, NT, NTS and the ING ending. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHI_N_RST_W and Y.

Unit 11 J & K

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letters J and K and know the sounds that they make alone or when the K is part of a CK digraph or the SK blend. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJK_N_RST_W and Y.

Unit 12 L

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter L and know the sounds that it makes alone, when it is part of a digraph such as LL, an initial blend such as BL, CL, FL, GL, and SL and the ending blends LD and LT. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJKL_N_RST_W and Y.

Unit 13 M

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter M and know the sounds that it makes alone and when it is part of a digraph such as LM, MB and the beginning and ending blend SM. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJKLMN_RST_W and Y.

Unit 14 O

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter O and know the sounds that it makes alone when it is part of a digraph such as OE, OA, OO, OY. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO_RST_W and Y.

Unit 15 P

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter P and know the sounds that it makes when it is part of a beginning blend such as PL, SPL, PR, and SPR and ending blends LP and PT. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP_RST_W and Y.

Unit 16 Q and U

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letters Q and U and know the sounds that each letter makes alone and when it is part of the initial blends such as QU and SQU and ending blends SQUE and the vowel digraphs EU, UE, OU, OUGH, and UI. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTU_W and Y..

Unit 17 V

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter V and know the sounds that it makes. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ.

Unit 18 X

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter X and know the sounds that it makes. You will be able to read and spell all the words that can be made using all the letters of the alphabet except the letter Z.

Unit 19 E

At the end of this unit you will be able to recognize the letter Z and know when it is part of a digraph such as EE, EA, and EY and the ER and ED endings. You will be able to read and spell all the regular words in the English language.

Notes: Words in **reverse** are words that defy phonic analysis and must be learned by sight. We call them "insane." Some teachers call them outlaws who refuse to follow the rules. Words highlighted are homophones. **Some** scholars still use the outdated word homonyms. Notice that lessons now can be rather lengthy and may take many days to complete. Mastery is what we are looking for. Automatic responses to the phonic patterns are essential for good reading.

General Lesson Plans with Measurable Behavioral Objectives

Each Unit will have its own objectives that can be measured. Within each unit there will be lessons with their own behavioral objectives. As you are the teacher, you can determine for yourself whether your students should be told at the very beginning of each unit and each lesson just what the objectives are and just what they are expected to learn. You may, if you wish, give each student a pre-printed slip on which it says: TODAY I LEARNED and have your students write at least one thing that they were taught.

Today I learned:

That is our way of helping the students have an answer when their father or mother gets home from work and asks, "What did you learn in school today?" These are really great for the kindergarten, first and second grade students. If this course is being used for remedial purposes, as it certainly should be, please no bunny rabbits or balloons for older students and adults.

Spelling and handwriting are used as multi-sensory techniques to give the maximum amount of repetitions with the least amount of copy, copy, copy, copy, copy that becomes brain numbing. For example, a student could be asked to write the word *in* 50 times. We know that after a while the student is just going through the paces. But if the student is asked to write the word *in*, then change the word *in* to *sin*, then change *in* to *pin*, and then to *in* to *spin*, the student's mind keeps focused. By building *in* words from *in* to *inns* to *inner*, *thinner*, *spinner* and even *beginners* a great amount of focused repetition is accomplished. Even though each word is only written once, the student will be writing the phonogram *in* well over 50 times because it is imbedded in the different words.

If you examine closely the words given in each lesson that can be used to lock in a pattern you will notice that there can be a tremendous amount of systematic vocabulary development as well as practice in sounding out names. Many teachers, even teachers who teach phonics, sometimes have problems pronouncing names. My name has been mispronounced by college professors at Michigan State University who have doctorates in the teaching of reading! Don pronounced as Dawn isn't quite right. And it's a shame college professors of reading have mispronounced McCabe as Mick Cobb, Mac a bee, or McKay bee. This is a sign that our teachers of teachers have never really been taught simple phonics. **Abe**, **babe**, and **McCabe** should offer no problems for anyone.

Possible Regular Daily Activities—You choose the ones you feel will work for you. Feel free to add your own.

1. Writing the Manuscript Letter, Upper Case and Lower Case. You may use the scripted directions (See p. ***) or **use your own**. You're the teacher. You know your students or your students as the case may be. Use the directions for making the letters according to the method you are using.

You can use fonts from <http://www.educationalfontware.com/> and find links to all the major publishers of handwriting systems.

2. Keep the accent on legibility. If, for example, you decide to use D'Nealian and your student finds it difficult to make the start of a "monkey tail" or "hook" at the end of a letter, don't make a scene. Just have it end straight down at the line just as it does in Getty-Dubay Italic. If you or your student don't like the Capital Q in the system you're using because it looks too much like the number 2, don't use it. There is no law that says if you teach Palmer that you can't slip in a letter formation from Getty-Dubay Italic, Barchowski, Peterson, or D'Nealian.

3. Search and destroy "game" revealing real words between the letters searched for. You can use this for any lesson.

For example: For the letter J Circle the j's and underline the real words inbetween.

AJBATJSTARJSTARTJHIGHJSADDESTJTEASEDJ

You can put them in lower case cursive: *jbatjstarjstartjhighjsaddestjteasdj* or in any fonts you wish. The more the merrier.

4. Reading and reviewing words using word flash cards. The difference is in the type of cards used. Rather than using only one font, one size, all lower case we believe in using different fonts, different sizes, and upper and lower case as in:

<i>day</i>	bay	say	Ray	<i>stay</i>
DAY	<i>bay</i>	<i>say</i>	Ray	stay

5. Decodable Sentences suitable for

- a. reading exercises,
- b. dictation writing exercises,
- c. copying exercises,
- d. keyboarding

Decodable Sentences available at the end of Unit 3 after 8 letters (abcd rst y) have been taught: A sample sentence:

1. Say, Stay, Ray. Stay a day.

By using the magic of computers and their ability to change fonts you can make them all capitals as in:

1. SAY, STAY, RAY. STAY A DAY.

1. Say, Stay, Ray. Stay a day.

1. Say, Stay, Ray. Stay a day.

Making Decodable Sentences By sorting the word cards in piles as nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, you can have the students create their own silly sentences. The sentences should be created using only the letters they have already been taught. In this case, the letters taught have been abcd rst y. Using just those eight letters, 29 different basic words are decodable. There are 94 POWER words available that are decodable, words such as act and cast. There are also 20 different names that are decodable. So, in just teaching 8 letters, if the phonics involved are mastered, then there are at least 143 words that can be used. After the addition of each new letter the number of decodable words goes up exponentially.

Practicing Alphabetical Order. We believe that alphabetical order should be taught as we teach the alphabet. Students can be given practice putting the letters they have learned in alphabetical order. What comes before d? Answer c. What comes after s? Answer t. What comes before r? If we use alphabetical order for just a minute or two each day, it helps making the use of alphabetical order an automatic process long before they will really, really need it in personal life.

Length and number of sessions: We believe that three separate fifteen-minute sessions will produce more learning than one sixty-minute session. By separate, we mean that at least two hours must be in between the sessions. If you wish, you may use 10 minute sessions. You may use 20 or 25 minute sessions. You are the teacher. You know your students.

Keyboarding (Optional):

Set your timer for 15 minutes. When it dings, stop. Do something else. Return to the lesson later on during the day. Please never do more than 4 15-minute keyboarding sessions during one day. This notice will not be repeated.

If you teach keyboarding along with handwriting, there should be at least one-half hour between a twenty-minute handwriting session and a twenty-minute keyboarding session. Always make certain your student rests his hands lightly, gently, on the keyboard with the little finger left hand on the letter A and the little finger right hand on the ; key.



The letters G H should appear between the index (pointer) fingers. If you are using a computer, feel free to keep changing the font that is being used from lesson to lesson, and even during a lesson if you so choose. If you are using this for either learning to read and spell or for remediation purposes, you might consider reading the words to your student as he types them. He will hear the word (A = Audio). He will see the word and its letters (V=Visual). He will be using the same finger strokes in his muscle memory (K=Kinesthetic). And he will be subvocalizing as he is keyboarding (O=Oral). And that's where AVKO gets its name which means multi-sensory.

Show your student how to place their hands gently on the keyboard so the little finger left hand is on the A key. Make sure the letters g h are uncovered. The right hand is placed gently on the same row. The space bar is to be struck by the right thumb. The Enter Key is to be struck by the little finger on the right hand stretching over the apostrophe key and then returning to the semi-colon key. The B key is struck by the pointer (index) finger of the left hand reaching out and down to the b key and then returning to its proper position gently resting on the "F" key.

Have your student type as many rows of **baa baa baa** saying the word and then spelling it: "BAA (BEE AY AY SPACE) BAA (BEE AY AY SPACE) BAA (BEE AY AY SPACE) ENTER" as you feel are necessary to lock it in.

You can show your student the "CAPS LOCK" key. Have your student type as many rows of BAA BAA BAA as you feel are necessary. Remember to say the word BAA and then spell it and say "Space" between each word and "ENTER" when you come to the end of a line.

Unit 1 ABCD

Lesson 3. The letter c is made with the middle finger left hand and returns to rest above the "D". A new line is made by the little finger right hand reaching over to strike the Enter key and immediately returns to rest over the ;: key. Capital letters are made by pressing down and holding the Shift key with the little finger of the opposite hand from the one striking the letter.

ccc abc abc abc ccc aaa bbb abc abc ccc (This line three times. Return to p. ***)

Lesson 4. The letter d is made with the middle finger left hand.

The comma is made with the middle finger right hand and returns to rest above the “K” key.
ddd, abcd, ddd,abcd, ddd, ddd, abcd, (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 2 RST

Lesson1. The letter r is made with the pointer finger left hand. Returns to rest above the “F”
The period is made with the ring finger, right hand. Returns to rest above the “L” key.
rrr, abcd. rrr, abcd. rrr, abcd. rrr, abcd. rrr. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Lesson 2 The letter s is made with the ring finger left hand.

sss. abcd, rs, sss. sss, abcd, rs, sss, abcd, rs, sss. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Lesson 3 The letter t is made with the pointer finger left hand.

The apostrophe (') is made with the little finger right hand reaching to the right one key.

ttt's, ttt's. aaa's. bbb's. ttt's. ccc's. ddd's. ttt's. rrr's.

ttt, abcd, rst, ttt. ttt, abcd, rst, ttt. ttt, abcd, rst, ttt. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 3 Y The letter y is made with the pointer finger RIGHT hand. The quotation marks are made with the little finger right hand while the little finger left hand holds down the SHIFT key. An exclamation point (!) is made with the little finger left hand while the little finger right hand holds down the SHIFT key.

“yyy.” “yyy,” “yyy,” “yyy.” “abcd,” “rst,” “yyy.” (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 4 E The letter e is made with the middle finger LEFT hand.

“eee” abcde, rst, y. “eee” abcde, rst, y. “eee,” (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 5 F The letter f is made with the pointer finger left hand.

fff, abcdef, rst, y. “fff” fff, abcdef, rst, y. fff, (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 6 G The letter g is made with the pointer finger left hand.

ggg abcdefg rst y ggg. ggg abcdefg rst y ggg. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 7 H The letter h is made with the pointer finger right hand.

hhh abcdefgh rst y hhh abcdefgh hhh abcdefgh hhh (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 8 W The letter w is made with the ring finger left hand

www abcdefgh rst y www abcdefgh rst y www (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 9 I The letter i is made with the middle finger right hand

iii abcdefghi iii rst iii w iii y iii abcdefghi iii rst w y iii (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 10 N The letter n is made with the ring finger RIGHT hand.

nnn abcdefghi nnn rst nnn w nnn y nnn ing ing (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 11 J and K The letter j is made with the index finger right hand and the k is made with the middle finger right hand.

jjj kkk abcdefg jjj kkk hijk n rst y w jjj kkk abcdefg jjj kkk hijk jj kk rst w y (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 12 L The letter l is made with the ring finger right hand.

lll abcdefghijkl n rst y w lll abcdefghijkl lll n rst y w (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 13 M The letter m is made with the index (pointer) finger right hand.

mmm abcdefg mmm hijklmn mmm rst w y mmm. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 14 O The letter o is made with the ring finger right hand.

ooo abcdefg ooo hijklmno ooo rst ooo w ooo y ooo. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 15 P The letter p is made with the index (pointer) finger right hand.

mmm abcdefg mmm hijklm mmm rst w y mmm. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 16 QU The letter q is made with the little finger left hand. The letter u is made with the pointer finger right hand.

qqq uuu qu qu qu abcdefghijklmnopqrstu w y qu qu. (This line three times. See p. ***)

Unit 17 V The letter v is made with the index (pointer) finger left hand.

vvv abcdefg hijklmnop qrstuvw vvv y vvv. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Unit 18 X The letter x is made with the ring finger left hand.

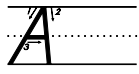
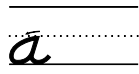

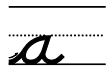
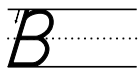
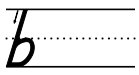
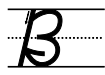

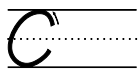
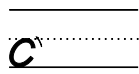
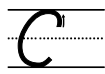
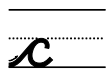
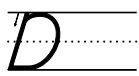
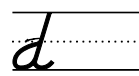
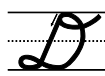
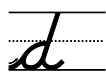

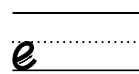
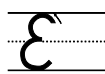
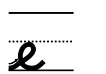
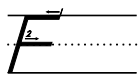
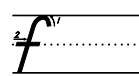
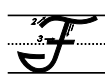
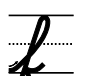



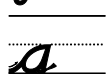
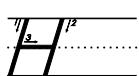
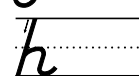
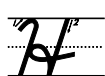
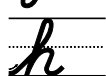
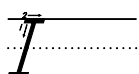
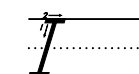
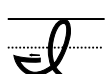
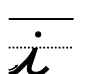
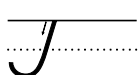
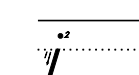
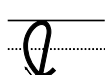
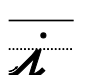
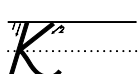
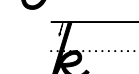
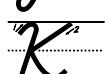
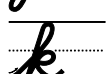
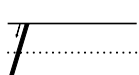
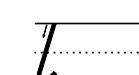
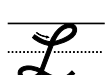
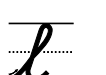
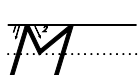
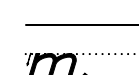
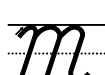
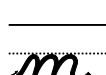
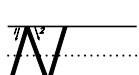
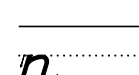
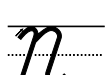
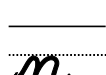
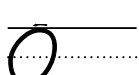
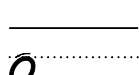
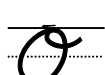
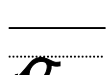
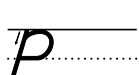
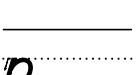

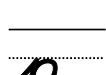
xxx abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz xxx y xxx (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

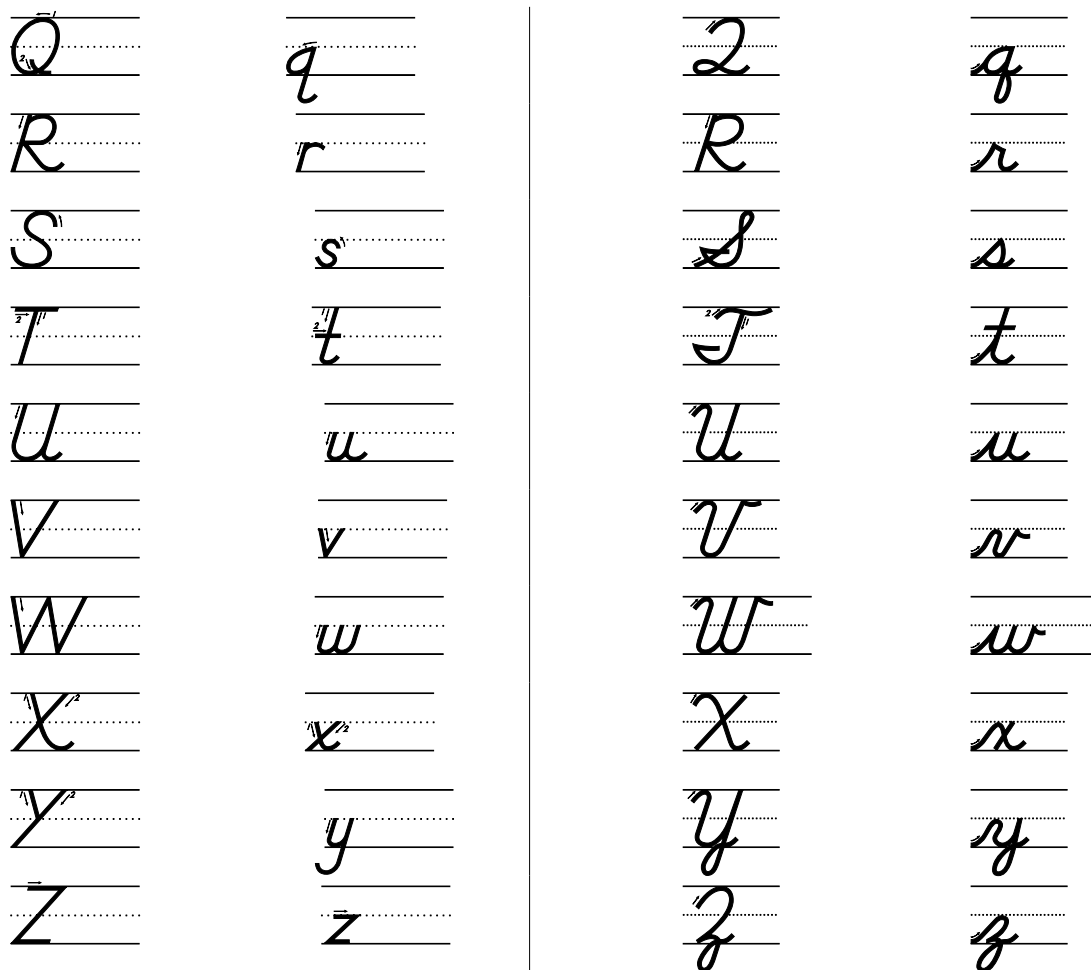
Unit 19 Z The letter z is made with the little finger left hand.

zzz abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz zzz. (This line three times. Do sentences on p. ***)

Flash Card Drills: Ten minutes per drill should be sufficient. Again, these drills should be at scheduled times during the day, at least two hours apart. What other elements do you believe should be in the everyday lesson plan? Add them, please. And be sure to add "fun" times and fun activities.

Directions for making the letters
manuscript and cursive



Remember that these letters represent just one system of handwriting that is taught. We have found that no matter what system a child is taught, by the time they have reached adulthood their handwriting only vaguely resembles that which was taught.

So, if your child thinks that the Cursive Capital Q looks too much like the number 2, let him print the Q. Remember what is important is that the letters are made automatically, rapidly, and above all legibly.

If you want to use A Beka, BFH, Palmer, Peterson, Getty-Dubay Italic, or any other standard handwriting system or any combination thereof, that is fine with us.