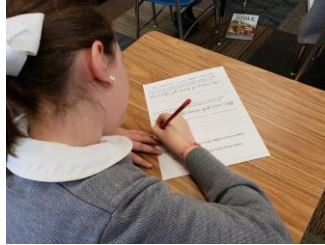


Sodalitas Homeschool Conference  
Simply Classical  
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# Penmanship and the Struggling Student

Iris Hatfield, Author  
*New American Cursive*® Penmanship Program



## Why Teach Cursive?

Learning cursive has many benefits.

1. **Mental development:** cursive has been shown to improve neural connections in the brain. The dynamic interplay of the left and right cerebral hemispheres helps build neural pathways, and increases mental effectiveness. It stimulates the brain in ways that improve spelling and reading.
2. **Physiological development:** cursive helps develop crucial fine motor skills that are necessary for our surgeons, dentists, watch makers, artists, etc. Handwriting in general, and cursive specifically, is a complex process that requires intricate communication between the neurological and muscular systems.
3. **Character development:** learning cursive can help a student develop a stronger sense of self-discipline. It requires concentration, practice, and persistence to develop a legible, expedient script.
4. **Practical benefits:** cursive is easier to learn and faster to write than printing. No need to pick pen/pencil up after forming each letter. There are fewer reversal letters in cursive than printing. It only takes 15 minutes a day with the *New American Cursive Penmanship Program*. Learning to write in cursive allows students to read cursive. In our age of technology, learning cursive still offers incredible benefits to children. Students can be taught to harness the power of technology, while embracing the value of cursive handwriting.

For more on the benefits of learning cursive see [www.NewAmericanCursive.com](http://www.NewAmericanCursive.com)



## *Your Pencil Friend*



"I am a pencil and want to be your special friend. For just pennies you can write thousands and thousands of words with me. I am one of the most useful, handy, efficient tools you will ever lay your hands on, and please do lay your hands on me. I feel useless when left alone.

Hug me correctly with the right pencil grip. I work best when you use just your thumb and first two fingers to write. If you grip me too tightly, it can cause your hand to hurt. But, if you hold me too loosely, you can drop me and break my point. If you grasp me too close to the lead, you can't see what you are writing because your hand is in the way. So give me some breathing room and allow at least an inch of space between your grip and my point. I also like a sharp point, so I can write neatly for you. Oh, and by the way, I prefer that you don't chew on me.

I like the smooth flow of cursive handwriting; it is faster and gives more personality to what you do. Together we can solve math problems, communicate all kinds of things, and create beautiful art work. Use me to express your thoughts and dreams on nice paper or in a journal. I can improve your memory; when you write something down in your own words you remember more.

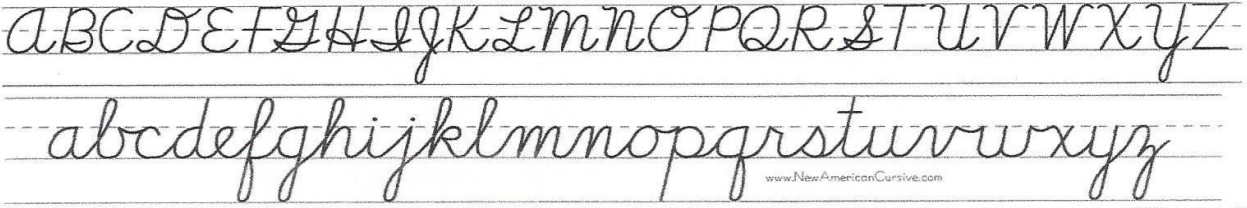
When you want to make something permanent, you can use my brother the ink pen. He can make your letters and thank-you notes look so much nicer and more personal than any keyboard ever can.

As a pencil, you can write freely with me and then go back and erase what you don't need. I am forgiving, like a good friend. Please use me often; I like being your friend and humble servant."

*Iris Hatfield*



[www.NewAmericanCursive.com](http://www.NewAmericanCursive.com)



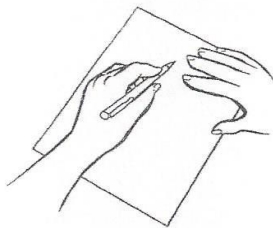
**The 3 P's of Penmanship: Correct Posture, Paper Position, and Pencil Grip**

Correct Posture

Sit up straight in your chair with both feet on the floor.

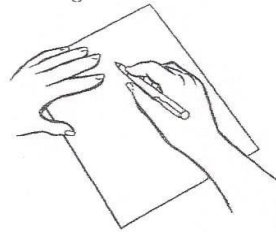
Correct Paper Placement

Left hand



Left corners of paper are up. Bottom right corner points toward your body.

Right hand

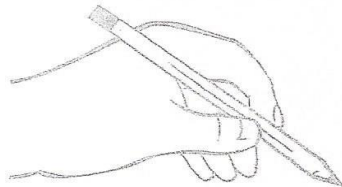


Right corners of paper are up. Bottom left corner points toward your body.

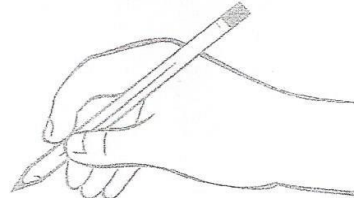
Pencil-Holding Position

1. Hold pencil with a light grip.
2. Thumb holds pencil.
3. First finger rests on top of the pencil.
4. Pencil rests against third finger.

LEFT HAND



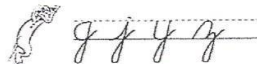
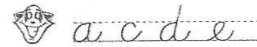
RIGHT HAND



Left-handers need a higher grip on the pencil, 1" to 1.5" above the point to be able to see what has been written.

NAC Lowercase letter connections come in three forms:

1. SMILES - Most letters end with a smile.  
The end strokes come up from the baseline.
2. GRINS - Four letters end with a grin. The end strokes have a high ending.
3. JUMPS - Four letters end with a jump.  
The end strokes jump up from the basement.



## Articles and Research Studies Relating to Cursive Handwriting

**Why Cursive Handwriting is Good for Your Brain** A new EEG-based study by researchers at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) reaffirms the importance of “old-fashioned” cursive handwriting in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century’s Computer Age <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/202010/why-cursive-handwriting-is-good-your-brain>

**What’s Lost as Handwriting Fades** As education passes over penmanship for a more rigorous content in school, many children continue to struggle in learning. Read about research that is being completed to bolster the need to continue handwriting for all ages. [https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html?_r=1)

**The Benefits of Teaching Cursive First** Dr. Phyllis Rand explains reasons to teach cursive first with numerous resources for further research. <https://www.abeka.com/Resources/Articles/TheBenefitsOfTeachingCursiveFirst.aspx>

**Bring Back Handwriting: It’s Good for your Brain** People are losing the brain benefits of writing by hand as the practice becomes less common. Markham Heid cites numerous studies to make his point in this excellent 4 minute read. <https://elemental.medium.com/bring-back-handwriting-its-good-for-your-brain-fe22fe6c81d2>

**Handwriting Improves Memory Retention** Many students are beginning to take notes on their computers in college, and even in some high schools. Read about the advantages of taking notes by hand verses on the computer. <http://outofthejungle.blogspot.com/2014/05/handwriting-improves-memory-retention.html>

**Printing, cursive, keyboarding: What’s the difference when it comes to learning?** As many states allow cursive to fall into the background, Indiana strives to keep it alive. Read about why IU neuroscientist Karin Harman James pushed to keep cursive writing in the curriculum. <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news-archive/20977.html>

**Biological and Psychology Benefits of Learning Cursive** There are many benefits to learning cursive such as hand-eye coordination, engaging both cerebral hemispheres, self-discipline, as well as emotional benefits of mastering the task. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/memory-medic/201308/biological-and-psychology-benefits-learning-cursive>

**Effects of Physical Rotational Movement Difference and Handwriting Position on Academic Achievement and Learning Disabilities** This research discovers a possible link between learning disabilities, such as dyslexia may cause phonemic problems. This paper looks at the relationship between the written letters and the pencil position. [http://file.scirp.org/pdf/PSYCH\\_2015021216594835.pdf](http://file.scirp.org/pdf/PSYCH_2015021216594835.pdf)

**Teaching Fluent Handwriting Remediates Many Reading-Related Learning Disabilities** This research stresses the importance of how the student holds the pencil when writing the letters. An incorrect hold can give a mixed signal to the brain making it challenging for the writer to duplicate the correct shape of the letter. Correcting the pencil grip could help correct the letter shapes. [http://file.scirp.org/pdf/CE\\_2015091615163758.pdf](http://file.scirp.org/pdf/CE_2015091615163758.pdf)

**The truth about cursive handwriting: Why it matters in a digital age** This is a compilation of the current arguments both for and against handwriting instruction. The paper goes through arguments against handwriting instruction, and then arguments for handwriting. As the paper progresses, the writers discuss the importance specifically of teaching and using cursive rather than just teaching manuscript in the classroom. <https://www.campaignforcursive.com/>

**Teaching of cursive writing in the first year of primary school: Effect on reading and writing skills.** This well-designed study researches the benefits of teaching cursive starting in the first grade, as compared to a control group of printers. They concluded that cursive was easier to learn, and improved reading, spelling, speed, and memory. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0209978>

# Penmanship Tips For My Child

1. Start each lesson with the Three "P's" Posture, Paper Position, Pencil grip.
2. Legibility is the goal.
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes