

Writing

IMPORTANT Parent or Carer –


Check that you are happy with any weblinks or use of the internet.

NB New activities are being added at the top of each document.

Writing is hard for young children. Scroll down for important dos and don'ts and for guidance when you are helping them.

Activity 8 – Letter formation

Write letters using paint brushes and water

<p>What to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Set your child up with brush and a pot of water. Ask them to hold the brush as they would a pencil with a pincer grip.○ Get your child writing letters with the brush as if painting them with the water. Can they cover the surface?○ Things to try:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– You could write some letters in chalk to remind your child of letters they could write.– You could prompt them with phrases such as 'Write the letter which starts the word <i>apple/ball/dog</i>' etc. <p>Tip: Don't worry if they end up drawing or doodling. They are practising pencil grip and fine-motor movements!</p>	<p>What you need</p> <p>Outside surface, paintbrush, a pot of water</p> 
<p>Extension</p> <p>Play guessing games. Your child thinks of an animal, colour or food. They paint the first sound. Can you guess it?</p> <p>Challenge your child to write familiar words that they know, including family names.</p> <p>Try painting shapes such as spirals, wavy lines, zigzags and dots.</p>	<p>Questions to ask</p> <p>Do you know to hold a pencil?</p> <p>What happens if you paint with water on the patio?</p> <p>What letters do you know how to write?</p> <p>Can you write the sound which <i>snake</i> begins with?</p> <p>Can you cover that paving stone with 'e's'?</p> <p>What letter could you write which has zigzags?</p>

Activity 7 – Letter formation

Write letters and identifying them by ‘feel’

What to do

- Choose a letter and write it on your child’s non- dominant hand as they watch, using your finger like a pencil. What letter is it? Can they tell? *You can identify it by the letter name or the sound it makes – either is fine.*
- Ask your child to write the same letter on your hand. Praise their formation or help them if they are not forming the letter correctly (*see below for guidance*).
- Now for a trickier task. Say you are going to write a new letter and they will try to work out what it is just by feeling it. This time, ask your child to shut their eyes as you write. Can they guess it by feeling the formation?
- When they guess the letter, get them to try writing it on your hand. You can show them with their eyes open first.

Extension

Play the guessing game, taking turns to write a letter while the other guesses it through touch.

Try ‘sky-writing’ in the air with fingers or on backs.

What you need

See below for [Guidance for writing](#) and [Handwriting Letter Groups](#) for formation help

Letter Groups

<p>Group 1 – Long Ladder Letters</p> <p><i>Start at the top and come down the ladder and go off into another direction.</i></p> <p>i j l t u</p>	<p>Group 2 – Bouncing Ball Letters</p> <p><i>Start at the top, go down and then re-trace upwards.</i></p> <p>b h k m n p r</p>
<p>Group 3 – Curly Caterpillar Letters</p> <p><i>Start at the top and go anti-clockwise round.</i></p> <p>c a d e g o q f s</p>	<p>Group 4 – Zigzag Letters</p> <p><i>Start at the top and zigzag down and up again.</i></p> <p>v w x z</p>

Questions to ask

Can you see what letter I am writing?
What does it feel like? What if you close your eyes? Can you feel which letter it is?
Can you write on my hand? How/where does the letter start? Can you think of a new letter to write on my hand?

Activity 6 – Writing to share ideas

Invisible writing

What to do

- Write some letters, words or sentences in white crayon on a sheet of paper without showing your child.
- Explain that you have written them an invisible message and show them the apparently blank sheet.
- Ask them to dip a brush in the paint and sweep it over the paper. Once they spot some lines made by the wax, they will brush more to reveal the message. Read it together.
- Show them your secret so they can have a try. They can then paint over to read their writing. Children will often want to try this many times.

What you need

White crayon or a white wax candle
Paper, mixed/water colour paint and a brush



Extension

Use different coloured paints and display the dry messages with writing revealed. Enjoy tricking another adult by giving them a 'blank' piece of paper and asking if they can read it? Allow your child to teach them the trick.

Questions to ask

What does invisible mean?
Can you see my invisible message?
Can you paint a line on the paper?
What can you see? How could you see more?
Can you read my writing now?
What will you write in invisible crayon?
How will we read it?

Activity 5 – Writing to share ideas

Write rules for my room

What to do

- Discuss the different rules we have in different situations: crossing the road, water safety, cooking, school rules. Why do we have rules? What are they for?
- Discuss rules in your home. These are sometimes less obvious as they are not usually written down like they might be in school or at the swimming pool.
- What rules does your child think they could have for their own bedroom? Do siblings borrow toys without asking or do parents throw away art projects?
- What about rules to make the bedroom a nice place to be? Could there be rules about dirty laundry, scrap paper or switching off lights.
- Create a list of rules together by saying them aloud to build each sentence verbally before writing each down together. You can number the rules and display them.

What you need

Paper, pens and pencils



Extension

- Make some positive house rules, decorate and display them.
- Make rules for story characters, dolls house people or cars in a garage.
- Spot rules on posters and on manuals.
- Make up silly rules which are impossible to follow.

Questions to ask

- What rules are there in school/swimming/rainbows?
- Why do we have rules?
- Do we have any rules at home?
- What rules would be good for your bedroom? What problems could they avoid?
- Who should follow the rules?

Activity 4 – Writing to share ideas

Write a letter or card

What to do

- Talk about the people you know who you haven't seen for a while. Explain that we have lots of ways to communicate when we can't visit people, but one lovely way is to send a letter or card. Who would love to hear from us/has a special day coming up?
- Spend some time talking about the person you are going to write to and the sorts of things they would like to read about.
- Write the letter or card together, taking turns to write. Don't worry if your child only writes a few words; they can dictate more ideas for you to write for them.
- Read the letter together and talk about how the receiver will feel when they get the letter.

What you need

- Pens and pencils
- Paper or special writing set or card



Extension

- Post your card or letter, writing the address on and explaining what the stamp is for. (Photograph it before you send it if your child wants to 'keep' a copy.)
- Write and send letters between people in your house or toys or pets. Appoint your child as the postman/lady.
- Set up a letter-writing box, with paper, pens and envelopes for your child to play with and explore independently.

Questions to ask

- Who could we send a letter or card to?
- When do we get cards?
- How will our letter get to them?
- How do we start a letter/card?
- What will they like to hear about? Can we put it in a sentence to hear what it sounds like?
- What questions could we ask them?
- Is there a greeting we should use?
- How should we end the letter? Can you sign your name?

Activity 3 – Writing to share ideas

Write a book

What to do

- Make paper books made by fixing sheets together (hole punch and string, staples, ribbon) or by folding – *see the website below for step-by-step instructions.*
- Show the blank book. Explain that this is a special book as you are going to write it together. Discuss what sort of book it might be? Share ideas. Will it be a story book or a book about trains or full of jokes or poems?
- Once you have decided, taking turns as to who will write, write the book together, your child dictating some of the words and writing others.
- When finished, share and enjoy the book together. Consider adding some illustrations. Make sure to give the book a title and write the authors names on the front cover.

Extension

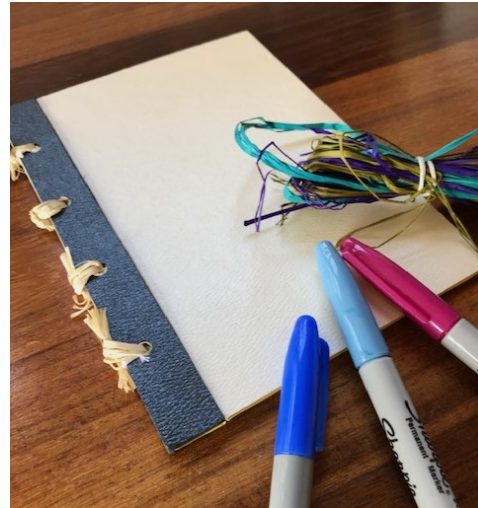
Provide blank books of different sizes and writing materials. Leave your child to independently explore and create their own books.

Write a book for a particular reader.

Build a library of made books by your child and other members of the house. Celebrate the variety and imagination which has gone into them.

What you need

Paper, pencils, pens
(optional) ribbon, tape, string, hole punch, stapler



Questions to ask

What could this book be about?
What books do you like?
Will it be a fact book or a fiction/story one?
Who will the authors be?
Will we need pictures/illustrations?
What will go on the front cover/first page?
How will we start the story?
What will the first page be about?
Who will enjoy our book?

Three ways to make a paper book with minimal resources:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Paper-Book>

Activity 2 – Writing significant words and phrases

Learn to write own address

What to do

- Talk about what an address is. If possible, look at the number on your front door and walk to where your road has its street name. Read the name together and notice if it ends in Street, Road, Close or something else. (If you are stuck inside, use Street View.)
- Now look at how your address appears on the post. Look at what comes at the top, the second line and so on.
- Explain that knowing your address is a useful skill. You need it to find where you live and so that people know where to send letters and parcels!
- Does your child think that they can remember any of their address? Let them have a go at saying it, giving clues and filling in to keep things fun.
- Together, practise writing your address, asking your child to dictate what they remember. Read it back together.
- Repeat the practise over several days, seeing what parts your child can write.

Extension

When post arrives (observing government guidelines) look at how the address is written. Write your address on an envelope and cut it up to make a puzzle (keeping words intact). Increase the number of pieces by cutting them into smaller parts as confidence grows. Provide your child with blank envelopes, pens and paper. They can write real and imaginary addresses and 'post' them. Send a postcard to a someone at your address.

What you need

Paper, pencils, a photo of some post with your address on it (or write it out beforehand)



Questions to ask

Do you know what our house/flat number is?
What road do we live on? Does the name end in road, street, close or another word?
What goes after the street name? What is the name of our town/city?

Activity 1 – Writing significant words and phrases

Writing names of family and or friends

What to do

- Set up a reason to make name cards – this could be place cards, door signs or name badges.
- Discuss which names your child knows how to write already, beginning with their own.
- Encourage your child as they write names carefully. Help them use their knowledge of sounds to write and praise letters formed the correct way. Don't worry if you can't read every word – the process is more important than the finished product.
- Encourage your child to try to spell their own name correctly but it is fine for other names to be spelt how they sound.

What you need

Paper, pens, pencils



Extension

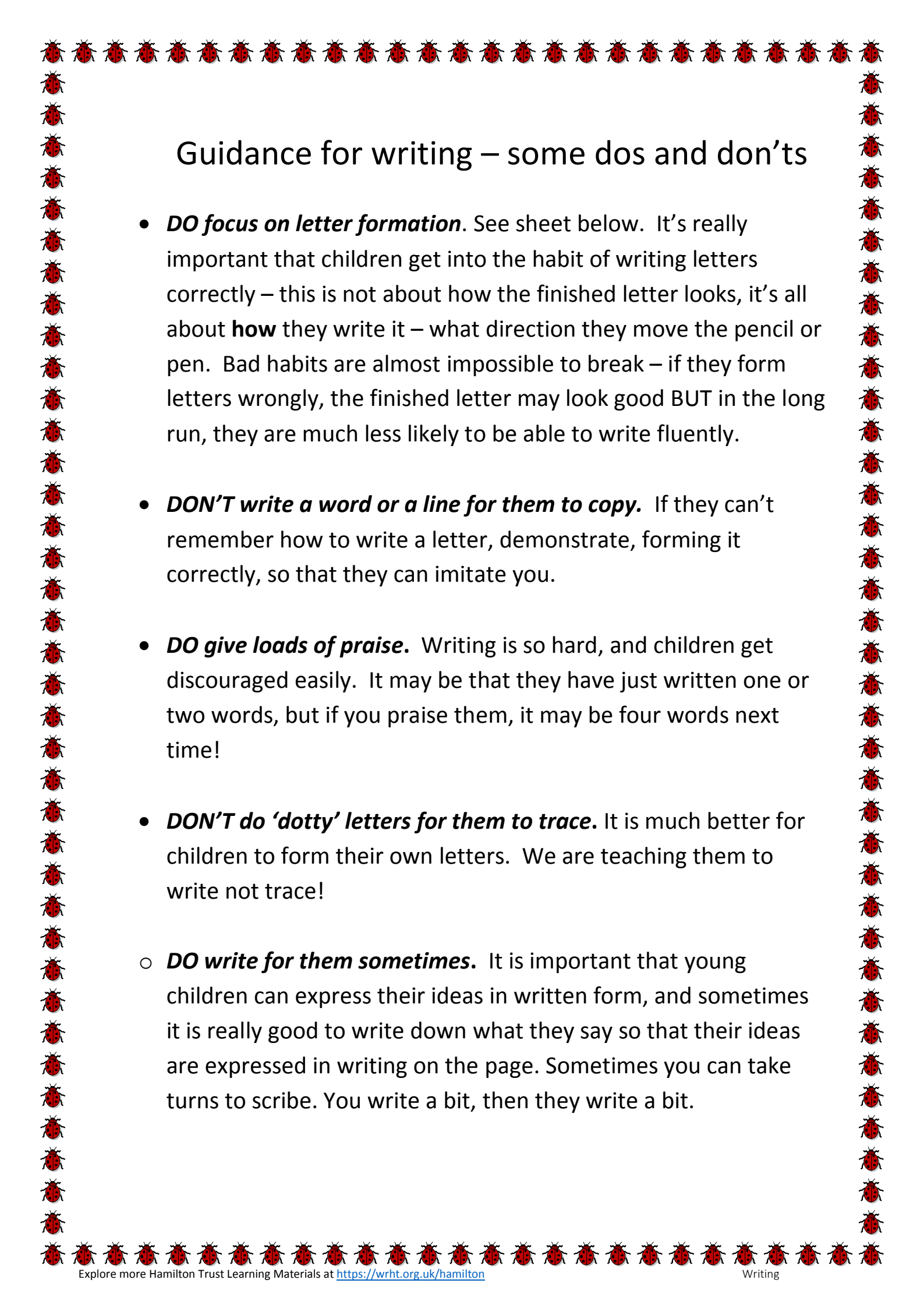
Present or display decorated name signs or badges.

Make a register using names of family, friends, pets and/or toys. Write each name and find out who is present.

Create a photo book by sticking photos of significant people onto folded paper and writing their names below.

Questions to ask

Which names will we write?
How do you spell your name?
Can you remember how to start writing that letter? Do we know a rhyme for the letter formation?
What sound does the name begin with?
Can we sound out the name?
What is the last sound?

A decorative border of small red ladybugs with black spots, arranged in a grid-like pattern around the page.

Guidance for writing – some dos and don'ts

- **DO focus on letter formation.** See sheet below. It's really important that children get into the habit of writing letters correctly – this is not about how the finished letter looks, it's all about **how** they write it – what direction they move the pencil or pen. Bad habits are almost impossible to break – if they form letters wrongly, the finished letter may look good BUT in the long run, they are much less likely to be able to write fluently.
- **DON'T write a word or a line for them to copy.** If they can't remember how to write a letter, demonstrate, forming it correctly, so that they can imitate you.
- **DO give loads of praise.** Writing is so hard, and children get discouraged easily. It may be that they have just written one or two words, but if you praise them, it may be four words next time!
- **DON'T do 'dotty' letters for them to trace.** It is much better for children to form their own letters. We are teaching them to write not trace!
- **DO write for them sometimes.** It is important that young children can express their ideas in written form, and sometimes it is really good to write down what they say so that their ideas are expressed in writing on the page. Sometimes you can take turns to scribe. You write a bit, then they write a bit.

A decorative border of red ladybugs surrounds the page. The ladybugs are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with one row at the top, one row at the bottom, and vertical columns on the left and right sides.

Handwriting Letter Groups

There are basically 4 groups of letters – in terms of how we move the pen to write these.

1. **Long Ladder Letters:** Start at the top and go down and then off in another direction, e.g. i, j, l, t, u
2. **Bouncing Ball Letters:** Start at the top, and go down and retrace upwards, e.g. b, h, k, m, n, p, r
3. **Curly Caterpillar Letters:** Start at the top and go anti-clockwise round, e.g. c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s
4. **Zigzag letters:** Zigzag from top then down, e.g. v, w, x, z

Scroll on down

Letter Groups

Group 1 – Long Ladder Letters

Start at the top and come down the ladder and go off into another direction.

i j l
t u

Group 2 – Bouncing Ball Letters

Start at the top, go down and then re-trace upwards.

b h k
m n p r

Group 3 – Curly Caterpillar Letters

Start at the top and go anti-clockwise round.

c a d e
g o q f
s

Group 4 – Zigzag Letters

Start at the top and zigzag down and up again.

v w
x z