



Handwriting challenge for developing fluency in older children

You need to time yourself with a stopwatch.  
Copy out the sentence as neatly as you can in joined writing:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy black dog.

Now copy the same sentence as quickly as you can

Compare the time and compare the writing.

Now copy neatly again.

Motor skills challenge:

To be played in pairs or more...

How many pieces of pasta can you transfer from one bowl to another using  
ONLY the tweezers provided.

Need more challenge? Try the same with rice!

Finger and thumb coordination and muscle development.

Playdoh or plasticine challenge.

Who can roll the longest playdoh worm?

How many peas sized objects can you make in a minute?

Can you make a hedgehog?

Peg fun

Clothes pegs use the same finger muscles as handwriting and holding a pen.  
Using the clothes pegs provided how many things can you put a clothes peg on  
in the room?

Please collect the pegs afterwards....

Now open and close the peg with each finger on your writing hand in turn, can  
you do it without dropping it or making it snap?

Bread making

Making any kind of dough is great for developing coordination and hand  
strength.

Knead the dough as hard as you can for 3 minutes.

Thumb pot

Make a large ball of clay or modelling material now make a thumb pot using both hands. How smooth can you get the sides and edges?

### Outdoor fun.

Ideal for younger children or those who are struggling with handwriting or developing motor skills.

Make movements large then get smaller as the children enjoy the movement. You need a selection of paint brushes, a pot of water and some paving stones

Draw a large smiley face on a paving stone.  
Using the water paint your name on the stones

### Thumb wars

Again good for developing coordination and muscle strength.

The aim of the game is to pin your opponents thumb down.

One, two, three, four. I declare a thumb war!

The rule is you must concede when your thumb has been caught!

Use different apps for developing coordination and remembering letter shape but no good for pen grip.

### Jigsaws,

picking up pieces helps develop coordination and non verbal reasoning spatial skills.

### Calligraphy

Strictly for those that already feel quite confident to try.

Use a variety of pens to try different letter formations.

### Chinese writing

Use a brush and paint to try and copy some of the Chinese Script characters.

### Pens and pencil choice

We are all individual when it comes to writing but we do need to choose a writing implement that helps us.

For younger children pencils flow nicely across the paper but they do need to be sharpened regularly. HB or B are sometimes better than H as they can be too hard

For older children they need something that works with their handwriting style  
Handwriting pens with fibre tips can be very good when learning

Inks pens, sadly the cheapest ones are usually dreadful to write with as the ink does not flow smoothly.

Left handers may not get on with anything “smudgy” at all.

Gel rollers provide a smooth flow

Biros are not as helpful for developing handwriting

Spend some time in a shop trying them all out.

Mistakes. One neat crossing out is fine! Ink erasers are not needed.

#### Pen grip:

A tripod grip is the most effective and uses the muscles in the most efficient way. This holds the pen between your first finger and thumb and supports with your middle finger. Left handers may need to develop a slightly different style.

Paper should always be angled at a gentle diagonal on the desk to help your arm and wrist move freely.

#### So what the point of joined handwriting?

By the time you reach GCSE if your handwriting is neat and joined you can write about 1/3 more than those that print. So if you average 10 marks a page this could be the difference between an A and an A\*

Examiners like work they can easily read are more likely to understand what you have written.

If you doubt this... talk to an examiner or senior school teacher.

Mrs Brown September 2015