

The Word Masters Fluency Project

The project is focused upon using new knowledge of the motor system. We will create a movement challenge which should cause changes in the way the student processes and controls the movements used to create cursive letters. The goal is to enable more fluent production with legibility.

The Challenges

The primary challenge is to execute the sequences with rhythmic movement. To create a rhythm for the writing of the word, we will count out loud as we write. To do this, and maintain the verbal chant to word completion, the student must know where each letter ends. Confusions as to end point or stroke sequence will result in silence. The student will not be able to count aloud beyond the point of the first dysfluency. The discovery and elimination of these confusions will result in improvement and reduce time on task as the work progresses.

It is very much like learning a line dance. You cannot keep up with other dancers - move to the beat - until you have internalized each move in the sequence. If you must look at the others for guidance on one step or another, or if you put a step in the wrong place, you immediately fall behind.

The secondary challenge is to understand the joining concept. There are two ways to write cursive letters. One way includes an ending stroke - as if the letter were a word. The second sequence ends before an ending stroke because we will join the letter to another. The beginning/joining stroke of the next letter replaces the ending stroke. To ensure understanding of the concept we will exaggerate by “printing” cursive letters. That is, we will lift the pencil at the joining control point as if we were writing print letters. We at Peterson call this technique “Cursive Print.”

*Cursive does not
work like this.*

It does work like this...

and also like this.

The line above shows “printed” cursive letters. Lifting the pen at the spot where each letter ends is a simple way to exaggerate the control point concept and make sure that the student knows how to practice and apply the concept correctly. We want the child to discover problematic process - and how to “fix” it.

Change *this* to *this*
Change *boat* to *boat*

Because of the way cursive letters are presented by most publishers, many students never learn that there are two ways to write each of the lowercase letters.

Only Peterson presents cursive letters with a focus on the automatic/fluent movement process. Only Peterson shows both ways to write the lowercase letters. Virtually all other publishers show lowercase models like these:

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

or perhaps like these:

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

What process do your wall alphabet cards show? When do your students need those cards the most? Peterson presents the lowercase alphabet in three families: letters that end on the baseline, letters that end above the baseline and letters that end below the baseline.

Baseline Family

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n p q r s t u v

Above Line Family - The "Tarzan" Letters

b b- o o- v v- w w-

Below Line Family - The "Submarine" Letters

j j- g g- y y- z z-

The Concept Simplified

There are two ways to write each lowercase letter. They are written with a spacing/finish stroke when written alone. But when written for joining to another letter in a word, the letter ends in a new place. The ending stroke is replaced by the beginning stroke of the next letter.

a) + n) = an Note that we must drop the finish stroke of the a and begin the n at the new end point/control point.

b- + e) = be Note that the e begins in a new place - at the joining control point of the b.

y + o = yo Note that the o begins in a new place - at the joining control point of the y.

Tracking Fluency

Gains in fluency can be hard to judge. Many teachers and students are never confident that efforts to improve handwriting are making a difference. This simple tool provides an easy strategy for gathering some data for your class as a team or for individual students.

The Word Masters Fluency Project work sheets each present sixteen target words. Best results will be achieved by shorter, sessions each day. The intent is to master four of the words each day and conduct the “spelling test” on day five.

The number of letters needed to write the words varies from list to list. That number is provided on each of the work sheets and is also already in place on the tracking form. We will use the number of letters to arrive at a “fluency quotient” by dividing the number of letters by the number of minutes needed to complete the test. The fluency quotient will be letters per minute. Please round the quotient to two decimal places when necessary.

Example:

List Test Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Time <i>End Time - Start Time</i>	# of Letters	Letters/Minute
Week 1 <i>1/13/06</i>	<i>9:00</i>	<i>9:18</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>3.61</i>
Week 2				<i>58</i>	

Project Timetable

We hope to accumulate data each week for twelve weeks. Twelve work sheets are provided. Please add the data for each weekly list and then fax the new version of the Tracking Data Form to:

Rand Nelson

Peterson Directed Handwriting

Fax: 724-836-4110

Email: “Rand Nelson” <mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com>

It would be helpful if you could fax an updated list each week. That will allow me to compile the data for all participants as the project progresses.

It is also a good idea to save the test papers for comparison periodically. They should provide graphic evidence of improvement over time. You might want to collect a sample of the students writing before starting the work also. These samples should be helpful for targeting specific skill goals and for building confidence in a fluent handwriting process.

Please note the suggested procedure for conducting the “spelling test” on the following page.

Conducting the Spelling Test

Because we are attempting to track fluency for your class as a team, you will need to teach the students how to participate in the testing process. Explain that you are measuring the time needed to conduct the test. Therefore, when each word is written the student should raise the writing hand and keep it raised until all hands are up. At that point you will dictate the next word. The process will continue until all sixteen words have been written by all students. When the last hand goes up to indicate completion of the final word, note the time and add the number to the tracking form.

Step One

Have students write name and the date on the test page. Ask if all are ready.

Step Two

Note the start time on the form and immediately dictate the first word. Proceed as described until you can note the end time.

Step Three

Have students subtract to find the number of minutes needed for the team to complete the test.

Step Four

Have students divide the number of letters by the number of minutes to find the fluency quotient for the team and add that number to the tracking form.

FYI

The data would be much more powerful if the tracking could be done on an individual basis. This might be something for you to consider for your own information. It would demand an investment in time but might be worth the effort. Tracking the team fluency offers a different advantage. It should create a bit of team spirit and great motivation to improve the score as the weeks progress.

For this reason, please note that the lists contain a wide variety of words. The words are not sequenced according to frequency, ease of writing or length. Some lists contain words that are easy to spell - but they are more difficult to write legibly because of the joining patterns demanded. Lists that contain those difficult words may result in a higher fluency quotient. Be prepared to explain that to the students. The learning we hope to stimulate is improved understanding and control as well as improved fluency. Be prepared to emphasize the need for legibility also. Explain that it doesn't help to write faster if the outcome is barely legible.

Many teachers have asked if we had an average number that students should be able to achieve. That is one of the goals of this project. The data from many groups will be combined to provide us with reasonable expectations. The data will become more valuable as the number of groups participating grows. Please do not hesitate to invite fellow teachers to participate and to provide them with the files. The more the merrier!

Thank you for your interest and effort. Please don't hesitate to contact me as questions arise.

Sincerely,
Rand Nelson
Peterson Directed Handwriting
<http://www.peterson-handwriting.com>
Office Phone: 800-541-6328
Email: "Rand Nelson" <mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com>

Your Fax # _____ School _____

Instructor _____ Street _____

Grade _____

of Students _____

City State Zip

our Email Address _____

Fax To: 724-836-4110
 Rand Nelson
 Voice: 800-541-6328

Peterson Directed Handwriting
 315 South Maple Ave.
 Greensburg PA 15601

List Test Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Time <i>End Time - Start Time</i>	# of Letters	Letters/Minute
Week 1				65	
Week 2				58	
Week 3				91	
Week 4				48	
Week 5				67	
Week 6				96	
Week 7				78	
Week 8				76	
Week 9				87	
Week 10				83	
Week 11				96	
Week 12				63	

Directions:

Your goal is to write each of the example words as you count out loud. The count sequence is provided with each example. Legibility is important. Count at a rate that lets you maintain control. You will increase the count rate naturally as your muscle memory learns the movement control sequence. It is critical to count aloud moving your pen with your voice. Keep trying until you can count and write each of the words easily. Use the first space to write your name and the date. Add dots and crosses after the count is finished.

1 • 2 3 1, 2 3 4 1, 2 3 4 1, 2 3, 4 5, 6 7 1, 2 3 4 5 1, 2 3 • 4 5 1, 2 3 4 5
it at as add ate air all

1, 2 3 4 5 1, 2 3, 4 5 • 6 7 1, 2 3, 4 5 6 7 8 1, 2 3, 4 5 6, 7 8 • 9, 10 11 1, 2 3, 4 5 6, 7 8, 9 10
art fair after afraid ahead

1, 2 3 4 • 5, 6 7 8 1, 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1, 2 3 4 5, 6 7 8, 9 10 1, 2 3, 4 5, 6 7 8 9 10 11
alike arrest attach address

Record problem letters in this space.

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1 2 3 4 1 2,3 4,5 6 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8,9 10,11 12 13 14 15 1,2 3 4 5
jet job- and anywhere are

1,2 3,4 5 6 1,2 3 4 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 8 1 2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 1 2,3 4 5 1,2 3,4 5
box be boat could car do

1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8 1 2,3 4,5 6 7 1 2,3 4 5 1,2 3,4 5 6 1,2 3 4 5 6,7 8
dark eggs eat fox green

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1 2,3 4 5 1 2,3 4,5 6 7 1 2,3 4,5 6 7 8 1 2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 1 2,3 4,5 6,7 8 9 10
car same chair chain chance

1 2,3 4 5 6,7 8 1 2,3 4 5 6,7 8 1 2,3 4 5 6,7 8 1 2,3 4,5 6 7 8,9 10
check sheif child church

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2,3 4 5 6,7 8 9 10,11 12 1 2 3 4 5,6 7 8,9 10 11 1,2 3 4 5 6
circle children circular here

1,2 3,4 5,6 7 8 9 1 2,3 4,5 6,7 8 9 10 11 1 2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 11 12 13
house chapter character

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^{1,2 3,4 5,6,7 8} ^{1, 2,3 4} ^{1, 2,3,4} ^{1 2, 3,4 5 6} ^{1,2,3 4 5} ^{1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8} ^{1 2,3 4}
ham in if like me may so

^{1,2 3,4 5,6} ^{1,2 3,4 5} ^{1,2 3 4} ^{1 2,3 4 5,6 7} ^{1 2,3 4,5 6} ^{1 2 3 4}
not on or rain say see

^{1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8 9 10} ^{1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8} ^{1,2 3 4 5+ 6}
mouse bulk belt

Record problem letters in this space.

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^{1,2,3 4,5 6,7 1,2,3 4 5,6,7 8 1,2,3 4 5 6 7 1,2,3 4 5,6 7 1,2 3 4 5}
that them these they tree

^{1 2 3,4 5,6,7 8 1 2 3,4 5 1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9,10 11 1,2,3 4 5 6 7}
train try thank would will

^{1,2,3 4 5,6,7 8 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9}
with you goat good

^{1,2 3,4 5,6,7 8 9 1,2 3,4 5 6 7}
gulps fuzzy

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^{1,2} ponds, ^{3,4} ^{5,6} ^{7,8} ⁹ ¹⁰, ^{1,2,3} ^{4,5} ^{6,7} ^{8,9} ¹⁰ ^{11,12} ¹³ ¹ ^{2,3} ^{4,5} ^{6,7} ⁸ ^{9,10} ¹¹

^{1,2,3} ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ⁸ ¹ ² ^{3,4} ^{5,6} ⁷ ^{8,9} ¹⁰ ^{1,2,3} ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ⁸ ^{1,2} ³ ⁴ ^{5,6} ⁷ ⁸ ⁹

^{1,2} ^{3,4} ^{5,6} ^{7,8} ⁹ ^{10,11} ¹² ¹ ^{2,3} ⁴ ^{5,6} ⁷ ⁸ ⁹ ^{1,2,3} ⁴ ^{5,6} ^{7,8} ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹

^{1,2} ^{3,4} ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ^{8,9} ¹⁰ ^{1,2} ^{3,4} ^{5,6} ⁷ ⁸ ^{1,2,3} ^{4,5} ⁶ ^{7,8} ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹ ^{2,3} ⁴ ^{5,6} ^{7,8} ⁹

^{1,2} ^{3,4} ⁵ ^{6,7} ⁸ ^{9,10} ¹¹ ^{1,2} ³ ⁴ ^{5,6} ⁷ ^{8,9} ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹²

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1 2,3 4 5 6 1,2,3 4 5,6 7 8 1,2,3 4,5 6 7 8,9 10 1,2 3,4 5 6 7,8 9
jazz wept whisk notch

1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8 1,2 3 4,5 6 7,8 9 1,2 3 4,5 6,7,8 9,10 1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8 9
glad block brawl grunt

1,2 3 4,5 6,7,8 9,10 11 12 1,2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9 1 2 3,4 5 6
prompt bitter pond slot

1,2 3 4 5,6 7,8 9 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9 1 2,3,4 5 6 7 8,9 10 1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8 9,10 11
blink gang switch branch

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1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8 9 1,2,3 4,5 6 7 8 9 1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10,11 12 1,2 3 4,5 6 7 8
gulps moist ground beast

1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9,10 11 1,2,3 4 5,6 7,8 9 1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 8
bound mend monk bugs

1,2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 1,2 3 4,5 6,7,8 9,10 11 1,2 3 4,5 6,7,8 9 1 2,3,4 5 6 7 8
wheat drawn beam sweet

1,2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 1 2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9 1 2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9,10 11
moth crook spook hound

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1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9 10 1,2 3 4,5,6 7,8 9,10 11 12 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 8,9 10 11 12 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9
above always another yank

1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8 9,10 11,12 13 1,2 3,4 5,6,7 8,9 10 11 12 1,2 3,4 5 6 7 8 1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8
nothing bumper boxes high

1,2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 11 1,2 3,4 5 6 7,8 9 10 11 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 8 9 1,2 3 4 5,6 7
mother butcher baker zero

1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8,9 10 11 12,13 14,15 16 17 1 2 3 4 5 1,2 3 4 5 6 1,2 3,4 5 6 7
knowledge jell yell gate

Record problem letters in this space.

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^{1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 1,2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 1,2,3 4,5 6 7 8 9 1,2 3,4 5 6 7}
what when where tiger

^{1 2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10,11 12,13 1 2 3,4 5,6 7 8 1,2 3 4 5,6 7,8 9 10 1 2,3 4,5 6,7 8 9}
thought tight height spout

^{1,2,3 4 5 6,7 8,9 10,11 1,2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10,11 12 1 2,3 4 5 6 7,8 9 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9,10 11}
weight quench sketch young

^{1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8 1 2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9,10 11}
proud ouch sound pound

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^{1,2 3,4 5,6 7 1 2,3 4,5 6 7 8,9 10 11 12 1,2 3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8 9}
add subtract divide grunt

^{1,2,3 4,5 6 7 8,9,10 11 12,13 14 1,2 3,4 5,6 7,8 9 10 11 1,2 3 4,5 6 7 8 9}
multiply gander gentle

^{1,2 3 4,5 6 7 8 9,10 11,12 13 1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8 9 10 11 12,13 14 1 2,3,4 5,6 7 8 9 10 11}
yearling yardstick squeeze

^{1 2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 11 12 1 2,3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 1 2 3,4 5 1 2,3 4,5 6 7}
juvenile jovial zip zone

^{1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8 1,2,3 4,5 6 7 8,9 10 11 12 13}
grab-whiskers

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1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 11 1,2 3,4 5 6,7 8,9 10 1,2 3,4 5,6 7 8,9 1,2 3,4 5 6 7,8
vendor vacate boost burst

1,2,3 4 5,6 7,8 9 10 1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8,9 10 11 12 1,2,3 4 5 6,7 8 1,2,3 4,5 6,7 8 9,10 11
winter wonder week whack

1,2 3 4,5 6,7 8 1 2,3 4,5 6 7 1 2,3 4 5,6 7,8 9 1,2 3,4 5 6 7 8 9
glad edge enjoy puzzle

1,2 3 4,5 6 7,8 9 10 1,2,3 4,5 6 7 8 9 10,11 12 1 2,3 4 5 6 7,8 9 10
violin mystery russia

1,2 3 4 5,6 7,8,9 10 11
arrows

Record problem letters in this space.