

# Administrator's Guide



## Table Of Contents:

Introduction	2	Design Of The Pupil Book	14
Objectives	2	Preparing Papers For Evaluation	14
Program Components	2	Why Slant Print?	15
Effective Consultant Visitations	3	When Should Cursive Begin?	16
Diagnostic Needs Analysis	3	Cursive Simplicity	17
Time-on-task Instruction	6	Observations Of Handwriting Lessons	18
Using The Internet	6	Word Challenge	19
Teaching For Transfer Of Learning	7	Spelling Correlation Project	20
Spelling Correlation Project	7	Suggestions for Handwriting Paper	22
Instructional Materials	8	About Pencils	23
Frequently Asked Questions	10	Material Requisition Form	24
General Suggestions	10	Testing Service Requisition Form	25
• Letterform Families	10	Consultant Visit Schedule Form	26
• Grade One	11	Web Resources	27
• Grade Two	11		
• Grade Three	12		
• Grade Four	13		
• Advanced Grades (5-8)	13		

Toll Free Support

800-541-6328

Fax: 724-836-4110

[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)

Email: [mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com](mailto:mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com)

# **Administrator's Guide**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Peterson Directed Handwriting has been serving schools since the company was established in 1908 by P. O. Peterson. With the exception of a period when it was owned and operated by a publisher in Dallas, Texas, the company has been operated directly by the Peterson family. Charles Trafford, a grandson of P. O. Peterson, reacquired the Peterson Directed Handwriting organization in 1985 and merged the Peterson organization with The Masters System of Correlated Handwriting, The Painter System, and the Hamer Method.

Dr. P. O. Peterson's philosophy of service and the scientific investigation of handwriting skill development established the model for instructional development that is still used in the conduct of Peterson programs today. Peterson has always been the leader in handwriting curriculum development.

The adoption of our program for your schools means that your teachers will have the best possible opportunity to become master teachers in the handwriting phase of the language arts curriculum. We are dedicated to providing you with the best services possible; thus, we solicit your questions, comments, constructive criticism and input at all times. The school administration has only to ask. We will respond. We are proud to be your handwriting company. The effective implementation of Peterson programs is directly correlated to the interest and support of the school administration. We appreciate your help and professional support.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Peterson programs are custom designed for individual client schools. We strive to develop combinations of material and service that will help your teachers reach two basic objectives:

1. To help pupils develop handwriting that is easy to read.
2. To help pupils develop handwriting that is fluent and automatic.

## **PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

Peterson offers four specific program components:

1. **Instructional Materials**. We supply materials for teachers and pupils to a growing list of schools and school districts. These materials are used in approximately 10,000 classrooms each year. Our basal series for grades one through eight is, **We Write To Read**. It has been in continuous use since introduction in 1972. Our research effort is also continuous and has resulted in occasional revision as science provides answers leading to improved techniques. The latest edition carries a 2001 copyright.
2. **Specialist Service**. Most districts employ Reading and Math specialists but not many could justify a full-time handwriting specialist too. By contracting with us you can have a handwriting specialist on a time-sharing basis. Our consultants visit schools, conduct teacher workshops, teach demonstration lessons, hold tutorials, and assist the classroom teacher in developing approaches to help pupils with problems as well as ideas to enliven handwriting classes for all.
3. **Diagnostic Analysis Service**. This service offers meaningful needs analysis and accountability. Periodically, teachers send us a sample of each child's handwriting. We examine these papers and provide teaching suggestions that are geared to the actual needs of the children. On the average we review approximately 500,000 individual handwriting papers a year.
4. **The Peterson Website**: We have a sterling presence on the internet. We provide teacher training animations for computer-assisted instruction in your classrooms. It also serves in conjunction with conference call service to provide distance learning seminar capability.  
<www.peterson-handwriting.com>

## Effective School Visitations

When a Peterson teaching specialist is scheduled to visit your district, the benefits of the visitation can be maximized by the support of the school administration. On page 26 of this guide you will find a **visitation scheduling form** that can be circulated to teachers prior to the visit.

Time is of the essence. If the consultant reports to your school and preplanning has not occurred, the consultant visit will be less efficient. If teachers are reluctant to ask for a visit by the consultant, consider scheduling the consultant to visit all the classrooms of one or two grade levels, if only for motivational reasons.

A ten-minute visit can have a marvelous motivational effect on the pupils. But, there is also a need to communicate with the teacher. Please feel free to schedule the consultant for special needs as well.

## Diagnostic Needs Analysis

This option is designed to provide diagnostic help for teacher and student while creating a simple framework for accountability. The direct and regular communication with administrator, teacher and student is accomplished via direct feedback each time samples are returned. The Diagnostic Report Sheet provides continuing communication as it travels back and forth with each set of samples.



### CONTINUOUS DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

Peterson Directed Handwriting  
315 South Maple Ave.  
Greensburg PA 15601-3218

TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN THIS REPORT SHEET WITH EACH SET OF PAPERS**

This report summarizes the unit-by-unit progress of your class as a team. It is intended to provide external support for the teacher's efforts to motivate pupils and help them improve handwriting skills. This is not an evaluation in the usual sense. It is diagnostic and analytical. Please write notes and give us suggestions regarding your needs. FOLD pupil papers in half if the child has special problems and attach a note regarding disabilities. We appreciate your interest and professional assistance.

---

**SECTION ONE - EVIDENCE OF HIGH STANDARDS - Emerging Pupil Responsibility**  
**KEY:** Plus (+) = Evident On Almost All Pupil Papers    Blank ( ) = About Average    Check (✓) = More Teacher Direction Needed

	Unit One	Unit Two	Unit Three	Unit Four	Unit Five
PROPER HEADINGS (using lines, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ARRANGEMENT / NEATNESS (margins, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
STANDARD PAPER (lines, size)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
AVOIDANCE OF ERASURES (smudges, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Since every teacher must read hundreds of papers each month the child's responsibility to prepare written communication carefully must be emphasized continually, in all subject areas. **NEATNESS IS A HABIT.**

---

**SECTION TWO - ACHIEVEMENT IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR ASSIGNED PERIODS**  
**KEY:** Plus (+) = Above Average    Blank ( ) = About Average    Check (✓) = Skill Area Needs Continued Teacher Direction

Legibility Subskill	Unit One	Unit Two	Unit Three	Unit Four	Unit Five	Term Progress or Unit Five
#1. LETTER FORMATION / SEQUENCE						
#2. DOWNSTROKE CONSISTENCY						
#3. SIZE / PROPORTION						
#4. SPACING						
#5. SMOOTHNESS / RELAXATION						
#6. LINE OR JOINING CONTROL						

Check marks suggesting continued teacher direction are **not** negative. They only indicate our desire to help students keep improving until they are the best that they can be. "Good - Better - Best, Never Let It Rest, Till Your Good Is Better, And Your Better BEST!"

The specialist uses a simple check and plus system to indicate general class performance. A quick glance at the report sheet provides you with a feel for what is happening with handwriting skill development in each class. Feedback is specific with regard to the six process subskills that contribute to the written language product. We are looking for process within the sample product.

The top section refers to classroom standards.

The bottom section refers to classroom achievement on the average.

Our We Write To Read series is extremely well organized and analysis is scheduled to coincide with units of instruction. Model tests in student books are specifically designed to illustrate unit objectives with the subskills. You should expect that following the daily lesson outline provided in teacher manuals will provide for at least average success for over 90% of the pupils in the class.

If you are participating in the testing process, please be sure to have the school secretary remind teachers a few days in advance that pupil papers are scheduled for evaluation. If consultant visitation is scheduled, papers should be gathered and ready for the consultant the day before the collection date. If papers are scheduled for mailing, please keep the schedule in mind. Instruction will continue and delay will result in obsolescence. We work for a ten day turn-around.

### **Communication and Cooperation - The Keys To Success:**

Please inform the Peterson consultant or our office of any special needs or problems that teachers may express regarding our examination of pupil performance. We intend our analysis of pupil papers to be as supportive as possible and therefore try to avoid communication problems with teachers by soliciting as much input from them as possible. Since our perspective is based on 500,000 papers each year, we judge pupil performance with great objectivity. Classroom teachers become accustomed to the writing product of the children in their rooms and tend to become less objective. Therefore we need input to be sure we assist your staff members as much as possible. Please refer to "Selecting Papers for Analysis" on page 14 of this guide.

Since we have three basic evaluation options and, in some schools a special process that was designed for that individual district, it is important that teachers know we are following a procedure contracted by the district. However, we are always happy to modify or change the style of service selected.

In our diagnosis we try to avoid making a teacher feel that we are evaluating him or her but that can become difficult when skill development indicates a lack of process instruction. Our program will get results when the teaching plan is executed. The samples provide graphic evidence, particularly when used by the teacher for comparative activities across time. Your interest in the process, and feedback to the teacher, is most helpful.

### **The Economy Plan: Teachers Eyes Only Diagnostic Evaluation**

This method of accountability is an old standard, used by Peterson clients to establish regular evaluations for minimal cost. With this plan our diagnostic department reviews each child's paper to identify common needs that are typical of the class as a whole and then prepares a diagnostic report for the teacher indicating the skill areas that deserve more teacher attention. Occasionally we will select three or four papers from the class that demonstrate the acquisition of the skill areas that the other children have not yet attained. If none of the papers are "good" (so to speak), we may "correct" a paper to illustrate how the target subskill can be improved. Any corrected paper is for teacher eyes only. This option does not include treatment and return of all student samples.

### **The Individual Plan: All papers addressed and returned**

This method of accountability is designed to provide the teacher with a report and guide for future teaching and to mark each child's paper for motivation and teacher support. We indicate the major skill improvement need for each child and try to compliment a subskill when it is well done. It costs more, but is still relatively inexpensive. The higher cost relates primarily to the cost of shipping and the special materials provided for this process.

### **Individual and Continuous Progress Testing:**

Grades 1 and 2 write samples on regular practice paper as in the coding process. An evaluation matrix is stamped on each paper and used to provide feedback. In grades 3-8 two special papers are provided - Term Progress Paper and Continuous Progress Testing Paper.

The Term Progress paper is used to collect a pre sample before instruction begins and, at the end of the year, a post sample. The resulting graphic illustration is very definitive.

The Continuous Progress page provides space for four consecutive samples. One is written after each unit of instruction. Specialist feedback helps the student and teacher select goals for continued improvement as the year progresses. The process offers a simple and sensible means for cooperative effort toward skill development for the student and the interested teacher. To review the layout of the papers, you may download a PDF file from our Resource Library on the web, <[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)>.

In addition to the teacher report, we send each teacher Teaching Suggestion sheets that are geared to the six legibility subskills presented in the teacher and pupil books. These sheets suggest techniques for helping pupils reach higher skill levels. Six Legibility Subskill Posters are provided for each teacher as part of the testing materials. These posters, when displayed in the classroom, make it easy to correlate specific skill suggestions to your language curriculum for application.

## The Legibility Subskill Posters

### # 1 Letter Formation

*Start letters in the right place.*

*Move in the proper direction.*

*Make basic strokes correctly.  
Build letters step-by-step.*

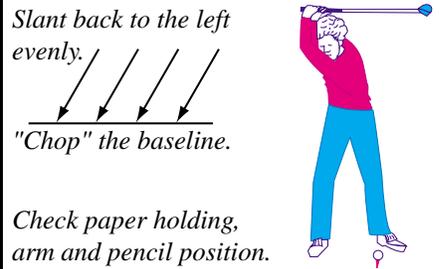


### # 2 Downstrokes

*Slant back to the left evenly.*

*"Chop" the baseline.*

*Check paper holding, arm and pencil position.*

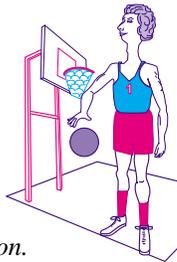


### # 3 Size

*Start letters correctly for better size.*

*Study the "tall" and "small" letters.*

*Check your pencil position.*



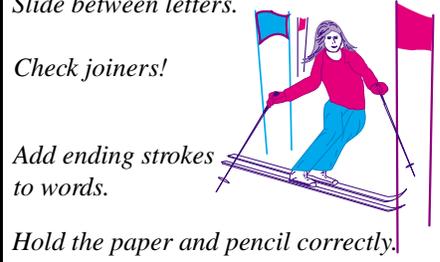
### # 4 Spacing

*Slide between letters.*

*Check joiners!*

*Add ending strokes to words.*

*Hold the paper and pencil correctly.*



### # 5 Smooth Rhythm

*Hold the pencil softly.*

*Study the beats for each letter.*

*Relax when you write!*



### # 6 Line Control

*Use lines for control.*

*Stop on the baseline!*



Instruction and correlation of skill development is greatly enhanced by this simple identification of skill areas. They each relate to process and can identify goals for coaching while providing an easy way for teachers to correlate lesson objectives into written classwork. When on display in the classroom the posters make it easy for the teacher to focus student critical thinking for self-analysis as well as to correlate specific lesson objectives, specialist feedback suggestions and student goals in minimal time.

Choosing one process from the static product on a pupil paper is not always clear cut. On any given day I might choose a different subskill on the same paper for emphasis. The real value is having the ability to focus the student on a specific concept. Thoughtful effort toward that one goal will have a positive effect on all. The teacher does not have to say, "You must improve your handwriting." Instead we can offer a specific suggestion that is easy for the child to understand. "You need to improve your skill with size." It is easy to show the specific goals for good size and to explain to the child how to achieve the goal. Process controls product. Over time an involved teacher will learn how to relate all subskills to specific goals for improved performance - particularly when he or she asks the questions that come to mind as they review sample returns.

### **Prescriptive Plan: Remedial Evaluation**

This accountability plan is priced by the paper, rather than the class. It is used by only 4% of our client schools because it costs more.

With this plan we prescribe practical methods for that child alone. Because of this, most schools using this option only send us papers from pupils who are having great difficulty. It is very helpful for children with learning disabilities and may qualify for subsidies from your state department support group.

## **CHECKING TIME-ON-TASK INSTRUCTION “Good Handwriting Doesn’t Just Happen - It Must Be Taught”**

Handwriting is a sensorimotor skill. The best results are realized when it is taught in precise teacher-directed lessons on an everyday time schedule.

The 2001 WE WRITE TO READ teacher handbooks for grades one through the advanced cursive level, provide a specific step-by-step lesson plan for daily skill practice. Ideally, we would recommend a daily 15-minute session. However, once teachers become skillful in using the nonvisual teaching methods that we offer, these lessons can be effective in ten-minute sessions. Ten minutes daily is better than one or two long sessions per week. Please see “Design of the pupil book” on page 14.

The investment of time in building skills for fluency will result in a much larger return in time for instruction. Chances are your teachers conduct a “spelling test” for a new-word list every week. How long does the process take and does the amount of time relate to student fluency? This common activity offers an easy opportunity to demonstrate successful skill improvement by recording the time needed to complete the test each week. As instruction builds fluency the record of time will illustrate success for the teacher and the students.

Please review the Scope and Sequence explanation of the written language task. The document can be downloaded in PDF format from our Resource Library on the web. The skill of “Transcription” is the general target of your handwriting program. A quick look at the explanations will show why new word practice should include transcription practice as well as verbal reiteration of spelling words.

If principals review teacher lesson plans, an occasional comment about handwriting instruction can be very helpful. See Appendix I for some classroom observation ideas.

### **Using the Internet:**

Use of the internet is increasing rapidly in our classrooms but offerings for elementary application have been limited. The result is that many elementary teachers have not looked to the computer as a gateway to resources for support of instructional activities - particularly for handwriting. We need your help to make teachers aware of our rather amazing support.

**Many of the offerings on our website can be used for computer-assisted instruction - even in Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms and particularly in a Learning Support environment.**

Over the last two years we have invested a huge amount of time to create animated learning activities for students and for teachers. You can use your computer lab for a handwriting lesson at all grade levels. The Information Directory offers links to animated presentations for teachers that provide information they can really use for coaching. We also offer teacher training by phone and internet, sharing presentations on the web site that translate motor control research into better understanding and specific suggestions for planning as well as executing learning activities. Distance learning solutions using the internet and telephone conference calls are efficient and effective. As many as 24 of your teachers could meet with a specialist simultaneously and never have to leave their school. Call for a free demonstration.

**[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)  
800-541-6328**

## TEACHING FOR TRANSFER OF LEARNING

Written student communication will not improve in daily work unless two things happen:

1. There must be student understanding of the skill in the first place.
2. Teachers must work for transfer by consistent effort to bring thoughtful, correct application to an automatic level.

Each succeeding grade level requires more extensive use of handwriting as a tool for learning. Because of this increasing need for handwriting, intermediate and middle school children need to improve fluency and automatic skill utilization.

This means that teachers must continue short daily skill practice sessions and then plan to emphasize how these skills can be applied in other subjects. It does very little good just to say “write nicely.” Intermediate grade students need help and teacher guidance to develop automatic skill application.

The Peterson program is the most successful handwriting method because it enables teachers to take handwriting into other subjects. We provide suggestions and methods of teaching for transfer. And, we make every effort to make this all-important objective time-efficient. Rather than arbitrary “content” practice on activity workbook pages, we teach and practice toward specific goals and establish a plan for application of target handwriting skills during subjects that require written communication. The result is instruction that is tailored to get results with a minimum of time on task.

When a supervisor visits a class, his or her comments about handwriting are important. Any expression of interest that you show is truly valuable. See “Handwriting Observations” in Appendix I.

## THE SPELLING/HANDWRITING CORRELATION PROJECT

*Has the word really been learned if it can't be written fluently?*

Research has shown that “transcription skill” (the brain must translate phonemes into physical movement patterns to create graphemes) is a complex and demanding process that needs to occur at the same time that the brain is needed for “Text Generation” (translation of ideas into words). The students, particularly at intermediate levels, should be able to write target words - as they spell aloud - creating each letter as it is called in the spelling sequence. It only makes sense that this process of written language would need practice. Cognitive *transcription* interferes with *text generation*. The proof shows in every classroom, every week, as students who can correctly spell all words aloud, misspell one or more on the written test.

In 1982 we acquired hundreds of spelling books from our client schools for grades 3-8. Spelling programs do not address the skills associated with writing the words. Because spelling word lists vary week to week from one edition to another, we were required to check copyright dates and analyze changes that each publisher makes from time to time. Over the years we have written special blackline masters for each of these weekly word lists from every major publisher in the United States. Our list is continually updated as requests for new editions are addressed.

We will furnish, for a minimal fee, one set of *Spelling Correlations* for grades 3 and up that your district can duplicate for teachers. Usually one set per district is sufficient, but additional copies can be purchased separately if necessary.

These reproducible correlated lessons are extremely helpful to your teachers and pupils. They do not detract from spelling objectives or the intent of your spelling publisher. They do make it easy for the teacher to correlate transcription skills into the spelling program. Simply stated, they have proven to be very helpful over several decades of use and we hope everyone will take advantage of the service. It is quite surprising to learn that, for whatever reason, many teachers do not assign written practice of new words. Yet, every week students are expected to write the words to demonstrate learning. Please call our office if you would like additional information.

## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Your district has many options to choose in the design of a comprehensive, unified course of study. Materials are available from grade K through grade 8.

**Basal Materials** - A minimum program usually includes:

- A. Teacher Handbooks, Grades K-8.** Each handbook provides a specific teaching sequence that, properly applied, will help teachers achieve the basic objectives. Kindergarten is a readiness year so the teacher handbook is geared to complement reading readiness processes. In grades 1-8 the handbook provides daily lesson plan suggestions.
- B. ABC's and 123's Kindergarten Student Books.** Gross motor patterns are presented for finger-tracing - a special focus on process skills revealed by computer digitizer research. The book is intended to be used as a nonconsumable and correlates with the Big Book.
- C. ABC's and 123's Big Book Flip Charts.** Helpful in Kindergarten and Grade One. The large flip chart is used to introduce letter formation patterns and direct gross motor rhythmic airwriting and fingertracing. Its presence allows a motor-patterning minute as often as the target letter is referenced during the school day. Like the student book it provides picture cues for letter sounds and for capital letter application. The simplicity of the concept offers powerful flexibility.
- D. Pupil Books, Grades 1-8.** Each pupil book presents skill and concept development facts that are directly correlated with the instructional lessons presented in teacher handbooks. The pupil books are very valuable despite their low cost. Peterson COLOR/RHYTHM alphabet sequences make teaching very precise and time efficient. Children learn the important process of writing.

### **Unique Advantages:**

Concept development is a unique feature of the program. Critical analysis of the WE WRITE TO READ series indicates that the books contain more explanations and skill development models than found in other handwriting books that rely on trace & copy practice instead of process skill instruction. Student books are a powerful communication device that enables a time-efficient lesson that easily includes the instruction of fluent movement. Movement instruction is also an objective that is unique to the Peterson method. A teacher who does not use the student text is missing out on a potent tool that maximizes learning while minimizing the time needed to communicate objectives for pupil skill development.

### **Unique Teaching Aids:**

**The Position Guide** is a surprising item that was created as a result of our extensive digital research in classrooms. Like the "Alphabet Desk Strips" that so many teachers purchase, the guide provides models on self-adhesive stock. The Guide is **not** however, a long "strip" of tape. It is a special triangular shape that also provides a guide for correct placement of the paper. Literally thousands of digital samples demonstrated conclusively that paper position skill was the most frequent inhibitor to fluent legibility. A huge percentage of students at all grade levels held the paper in *reading position*, putting the writing hand at the side of the page where it blocks efficient left-to-right movement. The guide makes it easy to teach and correlate this ergonomic skill. While it costs a little more than the *desk strips* you are probably already buying, it offers a tremendous advantage.

**The Animated Letter Cards CD Rom** is another item that comes from our digital research. We measured the difference between the movement used by fluent writers and those who had to draw carefully to create legible characters. The difference turned out to be quite simple. Fluent writers consistently executed *rhythmic* movement sequences while the others did not. The animations present each of the letters as if written by an invisible hand and do so with consistent rhythm. Write in the air with the animation to practice rhythmic letter building. The files run with web browser software but you need not be online. Do you have machines sitting around because they don't have a network card or because they do have an outdated processor? If they have a CD drive each could become a handwriting workstation.

**Handwriting, A Complete Guide To Instruction** - College methods courses offer us little in the way of background or specific techniques for teaching written language skills. This guide is the most comprehensive we have ever offered. It is a suitable textbook for any methods course addressing all phases of physical language instruction.

**Take advantage of the electronic age with this unique offer.** We are offering the manual in manuscript form along with a building site license that allows you to copy the manuscript for all of your teachers. You have thirty days to evaluate the guide and can return it if you find it lacking. Incidentally the license also extends to your student teachers. The cost, including the building site license is \$38.95.

**The font** - The Peterson Method Font provides vertical and slant manuscript and cursive. Teachers can create correlated activities easily at school or at home with their computer. It is available with an individual or a building site license extending to both home and school computers.

### **Supplemental Instructional Aids**

We publish a wide variety of ancillary materials. They are largely nonconsumable so their cost-benefit ratio is very high. Use this checklist to record the supplemental materials that you want to order in addition to basal items included in your contract:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wall Alphabets (COLOR/RHYTHM)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Subskill Charts for bulletin board (included in Diagnostic Service)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> K/1 levels, Big Books for effective letter building patterns              | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-evaluation Kits (if you do not contract Diagnostic Service)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animated Letter Card CD   | <input type="checkbox"/> Reproducible Blackline Lesson Plan Sheets (Correlated with Teacher Guide) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Position Guides (self-adhesive triangles with alphabets)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Slant Reminder Cards  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Correlated Spelling Word Masters  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil Grippers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neatest Writer Charts for bulletin board (included in Diagnostic Service) | <input type="checkbox"/> School Pens and Pencils   |

A current order form in PDF format can be downloaded from the Resource Library on the web.  
<[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)><Information Directory><Resource Library>

**an easy way to get started. . . .**

### **WRITE WAY Classroom Kits**

Many schools use our unique and cost-effective classroom material storehouses titled "THE WRITE WAY." This is a kit that includes the basal materials and our most popular supplemental materials making it easy to get started with the program. The kit also serves as a storehouse so that teachers can manage the nonconsumable materials to ensure effective, year-to-year use.

Since Peterson is a professional organization we are able to provide any type of program needed by schools. If and when "change" is deemed a necessary alternative, you can "change" our program components and services to create a new excitement among your teachers and pupils! Specialist support, staff development, and our constant evolution of teaching alternatives based upon current research makes Peterson the absolute leader in instructional development for the written language phase of your curriculum. We are far more than a publishing company. Our support service offers easy accessibility and convenience for all of your teachers. When you find teachers and students having trouble with written language, we can help!

**800-541-6328**  
724-837-4900

## **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

All teachers who require children to use pencils (or crayons in some situations) can influence pupil performance in written communication. Teachers must therefore be aware of how the child attempts to write and the way the child approaches the chalkboard, paper, workbook, etc.

Handwriting “attack skills” - pencil holding, paper placement, desk position - are vital if children are to develop the ability to write automatically. Skill instruction should be reinforced throughout the day, not just in skill development classes. How many of your teachers feel they “don’t teach handwriting”? Departmental teachers are important because their standards and interest are crucial to transfer of learning.

**MODELING.** The teacher should be aware of the negative influence poor writing on the chalkboard has on children. Each teacher, on all levels, should make a definite effort to provide a good example for the students.

The handwriting services available to teachers and children can be very meaningful. The specialist is dedicated to helping you! So please, be relaxed and participate fully when she/he has the opportunity to visit with you and your students. Observing a handwriting lesson, tutorial, etc., can be most enlightening. You will learn a great deal about your students by actively involving yourself in the specialist’s work with them. Take the time to watch the children as they react to the model lesson!

**HANDWRITING FACTS.** The teacher manuals present objectives, process information, and a specific time sequence for teaching. Most children do not know why you are teaching in this sequence. Be sure to teach the concepts that provide the foundation for skill. Children need to know how and why practice is organized this way.

- What is the COLOR/STROKE/RHYTHM alphabet? (Step-by-step strokes and sequences.)
- In printwriting, why are the letters made left-to-right? (Reading and Writing are partners!)
- Why do we slant the paper? (To keep our writing arm at the bottom of the paper - the table top forces elbows and arms out to the side where they will block fluent left-to-right movement when the paper remains in reading position.)
- Why are the letters grouped this way for practice? (Basic stroke families make learning easier.) The physical movements used to produce the symbols are related, thus patterning is more efficient.
- Why do we pause between letters when we practice new words in cursive? (Control pauses, just before joining, improve Form-Slant-Size-Spacing and **Rhythm!** Peterson is the only program that includes fluent movement as a teaching objective. Automatic, fluent movement is rhythmic. Visually guided movements are not rhythmic and cannot be “scaled” to different speeds needed for automatic application. The pause emphasizes the rhythm of the letter and translates to improved control of the movement that will create the first top of the next letter. Letter tops create legibility.



## **General Suggestions and Information**

### **LETTERFORM FAMILIES.**

Be sure to teach the children the overall design of letterform families. Children will develop stronger visual discrimination skills and visual memory if they really know the “science” behind the letterform families as they are presented in the suggested lesson plans and pupil books. All of the research in teaching reading as decoding indicates that family presentations actually help reading processes.

## **HANDWRITING EVALUATIONS.**

See "Selecting Papers for Analysis" page 14. Each time a handwriting test is scheduled, avoid having the children laboriously draw or recopy the papers over and over again.

### **GRADE ONE**

1. **COPYING FROM THE BOARD** requires very sophisticated eye-hand coordination. Many children will have great difficulty and may reinforce bad habits when expected to copy without close teacher supervision. Board copying should be introduced gradually and supervised regularly to determine individual needs. Be sure to use any board copying activities as an opportunity to check on the way the child makes letters. Identify movement reversals so that daily instruction really meets needs. Please have all pupils face their desk toward the chalkboard demonstration.
2. **SIZE OF PAPER AND LINES.** Writing practice is easier for the first grade child if the paper is 7 x 8-1/2" ruled the long way with 1/2" ruling. Children who have difficulty with spatial relationships may need specially lined paper using color keys for top-middle-base lines. (See the memo regarding paper that appears in the appendix.)
3. **EXPERIENCE PAPER.** The size of experience paper, like the size of most workbooks, makes it virtually impossible for a child to use good position. If a class activity calls for experience paper, you may find greater success if the paper is folded down the center, making two pages. Children like this because "it's like writing my own book!" The folded paper fits on the desk and permits good arm entry position.
4. **THE "NO-LIFT" TECHNIQUE.** As explained in the teacher handbook, the paramount performance objective is rhythmic left-right sequence of strokes in forming letters. The "no-lift" technique is very helpful for the child with poor eye-hand coordination, etc., but the no-lift technique is not mandatory. In fact, you can teach the traditional and the "new" together, showing the children that there is really no difference except for keeping the pencil on the paper for the new process. The "less visual" nature of no-lift will seem to produce "sloppy" papers without your direction.
5. **CHALKBOARD PRACTICE.** Gross-motor patterns are extremely important. You would be surprised by the number of pupils who are not able to create a letter image larger than one or two inches. Once a week try to give each child the opportunity to practice on the chalkboard.
6. **BEGINNER PENCILS.** A larger barrel pencil helps overcome poor pencil grip problems because it enables the larger muscles to participate. Regular adult pencils cause "pinchitis"! We strongly recommend our Jumbo triangular pencil for all students who show bizarre approaches to pencil holding. Our intermediate size triangular pencil is adequate for most first and second grade pupils.
7. The handwriting of developmentally maturing first grade pupils may begin to evidence slanted downstrokes, since the slant movement is more efficient at working speed. You need not discourage this development as long as the symbols lean toward the right. Backslant indicates movement blockage.

### **GRADE TWO**

1. **PENCIL, PAPER, AND POSTURE.** Good position must be reinforced in all writing situations. The concerned teacher has to repeat instructions over and over again.
  - a. Sit so that one's eyes are 12 inches above the paper.
  - b. Slant the paper at all times, use the Peterson Desk Triangles or masking tape.
  - c. Emphasize "pointer on the paint - thumb on the side - keep your middle finger hanging down beside." "Watch out for the Squeezles, they're worse than the Measles."

2. PENCIL TRACING. Computer-assisted research has revealed that we should **not** trace with a pencil. Directed tracing **is** very valuable if you use your pointer finger rather than a pencil. Trace & copy is a visual-feedback activity and can fix bad habits. Our digital data indicates that pencil tracing may actually block integration of rhythm information needed later for fluent application.
3. SLANT PRINT. Many second grade teachers reject “slant print” and insist that students need more review of print letters. It is true that the most important objective at the second print level is to use correct sequences and rhythmic movement. However, if the child holds the pencil well, slants the paper properly and uses arm muscles needed for fluent left-to-right progression, slant will develop automatically as the child matures. Instruction should emphasize downstroke consistency and proper arm/paper position. Please see “WHY SLANT PRINT?” on page 15.
4. REDUCING PRINT SIZE. Many workbooks provide limited space for pupil answers. Size reduction poses a problem for pencil holding and relaxation. You will also notice that with size reduction right-handers begin to hook their wrists. We suggest that teachers avoid reducing print size in handwriting until after cursive readiness instruction begins.
5. WHEN TO BEGIN CURSIVE. Interest in cursive is the first sign of readiness. As soon as all print letter sequences are reviewed you may begin cursive. If you begin cursive six or eight weeks after the beginning of school, be sure to extend gross motor activities that lead to basic strokes and left-right movement. If you think your group needs more time to establish print sequences, check with the writing specialist. Sometimes cursive is the best choice for children who have difficulty in printwriting! See “WHEN SHOULD CURSIVE HANDWRITING BEGIN?” on page 16.

### GRADE THREE

1. TRANSITION TO CURSIVE. Although cursive may have been introduced prior to the 3rd level, the range of individual competencies will be great. Third grade is really the transition period. It will usually take two to four months for all children to become skillful enough to feel comfortable using cursive for daily work.

Most teachers make the transition in spelling and vocabulary practice first, gradually increasing pupil use of cursive daily work. Use the “print and cursive” cousin letters (**a, c, d, g, h, i, j, l, m, n, o, p, q, t, u**), then relate other letters in cursive to the cousin letters according to family characteristics. Unconnected **“cursive print”** can be extended for days or weeks to assure motor patterns that include control. This developmental step toward fluency is unique to the Peterson Method.

2. SIZE OBJECTIVES
  - a. Vowel sized cursive small letters (**i, s, u, r, c, e, x, n, m, a, q, w, v, o, j, y, z**) should be taught almost a half space tall.
  - b. The traced-top letters should be almost a full space tall (normally twice the size of vowel-sized letters: **(t, p, d)**).
  - c. Loop top letters (**l, f, h, k, b**) are a full space tall. (All capitals are also a full space tall.)
  - d. Lower loop letters (**j, g, y, z**) should descend a half space below the baseline.
3. JOINING CAPITAL LETTERS. In practice sessions make capitals separate. However, point out the letters that join easily (those with baseline end points) and permit joinings as soon as the child can control them. Usually capital joinings start with names and dates.
  - A. Capitals that join easily: A, M, N, K, R, U, X. Capitals C and E are also baseline letters but need a little more skill to manage smooth flow to the next letter.

- B. Capitals that may look good joined but are more difficult from a control standpoint:  
B, C, E, H, J, S, Y, Z
- C. These capitals should never join: D, F, L, O, P, Q, T, V, W,
- D. The following letters can be joined by skillful writers without detracting from legibility but there is little reason to encourage the practice for children. (B, G, H, I, J, S, Y, Z)

### **GRADE FOUR**

1. **SIZE OF WRITING.** Paper that is ruled 3/8" is recommended. Children should be aware that sizes are developed by thirds - 1/3 of a space for lowercase vowel sized letter, 2/3 of a space for the traced top letters, and 1 full space for upper loop letters. Self-help pages for the subskills are provided in the pupil books.
2. **DAILY WORK.** Be sure to set standards - the children should know that you expect them to do their best in all subjects. When pupils show problems with transfer, use "cursive print."
3. **ENCOURAGE SUSTAINED WRITING IN CURSIVE.** Sustained writing is defined as handwriting that continues for more than a few minutes at a time. Sustained writing practice helps children develop good transfer of learning only if teachers establish clear objectives and standards.

Cursive writing is far less "visual" than printing since cursive offers better rhythm patterns. It should be a better tool for automatic, sustained writing tasks. If children ask to print it is an indication that rhythmic cursive patterns have not been integrated. More daily use will help. Use print only when it is more appropriate (maps, charts, graphs, etc.). Using "cursive print" for application helps to establish and improve the rhythmic control patterns that are so vital to fluent cursive. When they ask to print we suggest this answer, "If you must. But, print the cursive letters." The result will be diagnostic. You will quickly spot misunderstandings.

### **ADVANCED GRADES (FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, AND EIGHT)**

1. **MOTIVATION.** At this level the teacher finds more motivation problems! Children will exhibit more "fads" and attempts to be "different" will be prevalent. Try to use emerging self-interest as motivation:
  - a. Have students review historical aspects of writing (Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, etc.).
  - b. Have students collect autographs, discuss individual differences.
  - c. Look at the "pseudoscience" of graphology - what does backhand writing reveal about personality? Pupils always demonstrate great interest in personality analysis.
  - d. Direct a word challenge each week. It will serve to diagnose integration and create a motivating challenge leading to interest in continued skill improvement. The process will involve a few minutes when conducted as part of spelling/vocabulary activity. See Word Challenge in the appendix.
2. **SET STANDARDS.** Require rewriting of classwork papers that are not up to par. Require standard headings and margins.
3. **SIZE OF WRITING.** The smallest size permitted should be in quarters of 3/8" ruled lines. One-quarter of a space for the smallest letters, 1/2 for traced tops, and 3/4 for upper loops and capitals. Some pupils may not have matured to the fine motor level needed for the smallest size. They will do a much better job if allowed to write a little larger for applied work. Larger writing is fine if proportions are maintained. Work toward the adult minimum size in practice sessions.

4. **SUSTAINED WRITING.** Require cursive writing as much as possible. Be sure to establish high standards for neatness and understanding of the skills for legibility. The student should learn how to think critically and then set goals for improvement.

## **THE DESIGN OF THE PETERSON PUPIL BOOKS**

The Peterson pupil books are not “copybooks.” They are designed to help you teach concepts and to use the vocabulary and language development materials from other subject areas such as Reading and Spelling. COLOR/RHYTHM alphabet developmental sequences will help you teach both good visual memory and muscle memory. The pages provide for concept instruction and models for efficient communication of practice goals along with movement models for rhythm integration. In short, teachers should be using the pupil book. They are a powerful aid to integration.

The goal is efficient use of lesson time. The books will help you get the most from the time you can spend on skill development. If you have not already done so, please work through the animated presentation of the Peterson method that is available through the Information Directory on our web site or the “Extras” provided on the Animated Letter Cards CD.

**[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)**

## **PREPARING PAPERS FOR ANALYSIS**

Our diagnosis is based on the positive premise that everyone wants to improve. Model Test or Unit Test samples can look different from classwork. The program goal is to close the gap between the two. The transfer of skill necessary to reach that goal is dependent upon two things:

1. Cognitive understanding of the concept to be applied,
2. Thoughtful practice of the concept during all written work until good patterns become automatic.

Model Test or Unit Test samples are designed to demonstrate understanding and application of the concepts of form, slant, size, spacing, smoothness and control - even if only on a cognitive level. Control and smoothness should show skill developing toward automatic. Samples should be “written” not laboriously drawn. Understanding must come first. Smooth, easy application can only come with practice. It is a good practice to “direct” the writing of a model test sample.

Our first priority centers on identification of needs based on concept understanding. All concepts understood, our focus shifts to identification of the more subtle needs associated with improving application skills.

We do not compare individual papers or class sets one to another. A paper or class set that looks terrible may be checked for form and size, and another that looks beautiful may be checked the same. The teacher should be expected to understand the difference between subtle application needs and blatant concept needs. We do not grade the papers - we analyze them.

Since our objective is to help individuals improve personal skill, a check mark is not to be considered negative. We try to encourage good writers to become better - and better writers to be their best!

Good - better - best,  
Never let it rest  
‘Til your good is Better!  
And your better Best!

The successful teacher may occasionally wish to self-evaluate test samples and substitute classwork papers for diagnosis (pupils not aware they will be submitted). This is encouraged provided the teacher includes a note delineating expectations.

## WHY SLANT PRINT?

Because most second grade students will have some visual and motor memory of the correct sequence of strokes necessary to create the manuscript letters, we use manuscript letters to introduce the more efficient movements of slanted forms so the child can focus on the physical attack skills (pencil holding, hand/arm/paper position, and posture) with less interruption for “how-to-make-the-letter” thinking processes. The real goal is good ergonomics that will afford fluency later on.

Some teachers dislike teaching slant print for two reasons: 1) it looks funny, and 2) pupils often have trouble doing it - particularly when they resist ergonomic instruction and the use of arm movement. Both objections are understandable. The fact that students have trouble doing it is precisely the reason we recommend the introduction of slant at the second level. Students have trouble doing math, spelling, and reading, but teachers, administrators, and even parents understand the reason for learning them. Few people realize the reasons for teaching slant, or for that matter, the reason vertical manuscript is the best way to start.

Slant print is **not** product oriented. It allows the pupil to learn, practice, and apply the most efficient position skills within his or her current realm of language without the need to think about how to make new letterforms. It is quite simply, a series of activities that allow the child to learn how to accomplish rhythmic lateral movement, with the correct muscle group and use the necessary position skills prior to the cognitive challenge presented by new movement patterns needed for cursive forms. We are providing opportunity to use rhythmic movement and cursive muscles with print letterforms.

If pencil holding, hand/arm/paper position and posture are fair or better, slant may just happen, even in first grade, as language prowess allows more speed moving rightward. Fluid left-to-right movements easily create symbols that lean or slant in the direction of movement. It follows that learning to slant will allow more speed as language prowess improves.

The old cliché “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” applies, but has little to do with our recommendation of slant print instruction. We review many “beautiful” slant print papers but our “eye” is seeing a relaxed, smooth process evolve. Slant print instruction is recommended because it helps pupils acquire more efficient movement patterns, not because it looks pretty or makes our books more saleable.

**WHY NOT START WITH SLANT?** Easy legibility is at least ninety percent physical once language skills are adequate. As evidence we offer a fact supported by first grade teachers everywhere - “My best writers get sloppy in the second semester.” This “sloppiness” indicates their work is becoming less visual and is really a sign of integration and successful language instruction.

Because children initially are very “cognitive” about letter building they seem to ignore teachers’ pleas for good pencil holding, paper position, etc. They **are** interested in making “pretty letters” and **are not** much interested in the “how.” Some children will adjust the paper position and their posture several times in the process of building one letter.

Strong predisposition to the vertical/horizontal orientation of paper is widely recognized. Visual properties of symbols must be satisfied to establish initial visual memory for reading and writing. For reading activities the alphabet is presented in the same vertical/horizontal perspective. Initial writing attempts are very stilted, visually dependent and artificial. The developmental objective of fluid handwriting legibility requires integration **and** more ergonomic physical position skills. Our experience shows that this is best accomplished in steps - pattern mastery then ergonomics. Over the decades we have tried to do both at once on many occasions at the request of many schools. The percentage of success has always proven to be far too low. Like the stages of reading skill acquisition, mastery of stage one should precede stage two.

Please approach slant print instruction with process objectives in mind. It can really help to achieve better transfer of learning. More of your students will discover an efficient physical process that will make handwriting a much easier tool for them to use.

## WHEN SHOULD CURSIVE HANDWRITING BEGIN?

“Readiness” for cursive handwriting is a relative term. The Peterson program suggests that the best time to prepare for the eventual transition is at the second grade level.

Our recommended procedures result from:

- long-term analysis of pupil performance in manuscript writing
- pupil interest in cursive, and the resulting rates of pupil experimentation with cursive
- a study of teacher practices in schools that delay the formal introduction to cursive until the third grade.

### 1. **Manuscript Writing**

Because manuscript writing is a letter-by-letter process the child must use an almost exclusive downstroke movement process. This forces the child to constrict the muscles. Consequently, as children are required to write more in daily communication the child overuses small muscles. At the same time, some teachers feel obligated to reduce the size of writing in order to fit more on the paper! This also multiplies the harmful effects of small muscle use. If one believes that young children are ready to reduce printing size, it must follow that they are ready to be introduced to the readiness for cursive lesson plans. If we delay the introduction of the lateral movement patterns used for cursive writing, the bad habits caused by overburdened small muscles used in printing may well become habit and will retard the learning of cursive movement patterns.

On the other hand, if we introduce the easy movements that are used for cursive handwriting before reducing print size, it is very possible to overcome the tension problems created by reduced-size printwriting. Peterson recommends that we treat the introduction of cursive as a gross-motor readiness process. Cursive skills are introduced slowly as children continue to use printwriting for daily work. No pressure to use the new process for daily work is applied. This slowly-paced addition of cursive writing skills enables all children to learn the new physical skills used for cursive and the decoding process for reading cursive. The instruction is based on careful, unhurried teacher direction.

### 2. **Pupil Interest in Cursive Writing**

Research shows that approximately 95% of second grade pupils experiment with cursive writing prior to the end of the first month of school. Unfortunately this experimentation is haphazard and undirected, so pupils are already developing improper movements and poor physical approach skills. If the teacher ignores this interest in cursive, or even if the teacher represses it, pupils will continue on their own to try cursive again and again. Then, coupled with the overuse of small muscles that results from reducing print size, the fluent use of handwriting in later grade levels will be retarded.

It is far better to begin cursive handwriting direction as proposed in the Peterson teacher books between 6 to 12 weeks after school begins at the second grade level. Adding the cursive movement patterns in a leisurely fashion satisfies pupil interest and makes it possible to teach good physical skills that will make cursive function properly! Continued use of printwriting as a tool of communication will continue to emphasize reading reinforcement of the printed matter used in textbooks as children also learn the new visual imagery of cursive writing.

If one waits until third grade the pressure of the daily communication needs at that level will cause transition stress. Handwriting (any style) is always a cognitive process while pupils are learning new words in all subject areas. We need to help pupils move to a semiautomatic level as soon as possible. Properly applied, the Peterson cursive readiness program in second grade is the most reasoned, successful course of study.

### 3. **Grade Three Cursive**

Using the Peterson course of study the third grade teacher should expect pupils who started with Peterson’s readiness program at the second grade level to be ready for the transition to cursive after 6-12 weeks of practice and review. Thus the Peterson course of study actually calls for a third grade transition.

In the event that you have new students at the third grade level who had no formal instruction before coming to you, the transition should take about 24 weeks. These pupils will require some extra gross motor patterning and will need to continue using printwriting for daily work longer. It will also be harder to overcome bad habits because pupils haven't had the benefit of lateral movement practice.

In schools where cursive is delayed as a formal teacher-directed process until third grade, the children learn simple letterforms easily but have difficulty in developing relaxed pencil holding and controlled speed as letters are used in words. This lack of fluency results in slowing down the acquisition of vocabulary/composition related writing.

### **Cursive Simplicity**

Scientific analysis of the developmental cursive alphabet as presented by the Peterson program indicates that the complexities of cursive handwriting are minimized by directed teaching in the basic strokes. Controlled lateral movement produces two stroke patterns: **Rainbow-Rollers** and **Rocker Rocks**:



This illustration exemplifies the single important difference between printwriting and cursive - sliding the pencil to the right. Otherwise letter formation, size, and spacing in cursive cannot be developed. If a teacher has difficulty teaching cursive it is usually because a visual/tracing (or copying) approach is used as the primary teaching strategy. The secret to learning good cursive skills depends completely on teaching handwriting as a process skill and providing sequential instruction based on controlled lateral movement.

Using "Rainbows" and "Rockers" with a slant, the lowercase cursive alphabet can be easily understood by forming a total of four basic strokes which are actually letter parts:



Mastery of these four basic rhythmic movement sequences will make the teaching of handwriting extremely successful. When children understand the design of the cursive alphabet, success is available to each child. Integration of rhythmic patterns and a continuing practice effort will put fluent legibility within the reach of virtually all pupils as related language skills develop.

Since our methods are based on this systemized approach, basic printwriting skills need not be discarded or replaced. Rather, the child is able to use both skills for appropriate tasks. If cursive skills are learned, cursive writing has the potential to improve writing speed, consistency, and requires less hand-eye coordination. Over the long period of years handwriting is required for communication in school, cursive can make a big difference in the efficiency of written communication.

The Peterson method utilizes the natural compatibility between print and cursive while enabling both skills to contribute to language development needs throughout the curriculum.

The first stroke of each lowercase letter creates legibility. You will note that most problems with formation are a result of poor beginning strokes (or joining strokes within words).



The first step in improving lowercase forms is to understand the way basic strokes are put together to create each letterform. The second step is to practice physical position skills that will make it possible for the hand to move easily, with rhythm, from left to right along the baseline.

## OBSERVATIONS OF HANDWRITING LESSONS

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Casual Observations:** The following items represent general awareness of and attention to good handwriting instruction and its application.

- a. Hall displays of student classwork evidence well-written sentences, words, or even names on art work.
- b. Standardized paper with correct ruling for the grade level is used for daily work.
- c. Student papers displayed for recognition in all subjects show evidence of attention to handwriting standards such as good margins, headings, and perhaps grading penmanship quality as well as content grades.
- d. Good handwriting is encouraged and rewarded for all classwork and homework.
- e. Good physical approaches (Posture, Pencil Position, Paper Position) are emphasized during written communication for other subjects.
- f. Chalkboard space is available for teacher and pupil demonstrations.
- g. Classroom seating arrangement affords students a direct, comfortable line of sight to teacher demonstrations.
- h. Student desks and chairs have been "fitted" to the pupils (by adjustment or trading) as much as possible.
- i. Left-handed pupils are seated on the right side of the room as they face the demonstration.
- j. Teacher models provide pupils with good examples to encourage neatness and high standards.

**Formal Observations:** Handwriting Lessons: The following items indicate effective teacher direction in formal handwriting skill development classes.

1. Pupils use handwriting folders containing instructional materials and paper to reduce "get ready time," or other procedures have been initiated to make the most of the time allowed.
2. Teacher explains lesson objective, focuses activities to meet that objective and summarizes the lesson to help pupils retain the information presented.
3. Teacher demonstrates correct position (Paper Holding, Posture, Pencil Holding, etc.).
4. Teacher utilizes chalkboard or overhead projector along with printed materials to be sure pupils understand the skill process presented.
5. Teacher presents the skill concept (such as Slant, Spacing, or Size) as well as the physical process the lesson is intended to improve.
6. Teacher explains the rhythm/fluency process and monitors pupil performance (uses COLOR/RHYTHM alphabet models, counting, "rock and roll" rhythm, etc.).
7. Teacher directs the use of eyes-closed practice to help pupils understand visual/muscle memory factors.
8. Teacher has pupils use gross motor activities (such as chalkboard writing, large unlined paper, air writing) while emphasizing the step-by-step development of handwriting strokes.
9. Teacher explains how good physical position helps children develop better handwriting skill.
10. Teacher explains importance of handwriting in other school subjects and leads pupils in self-evaluation exercises.

**Danger Signals:** These types of activities should be reduced or avoided completely:

1. Practice sheets (or dittos) are passed out to pupils for independent seatwork, but teacher attention is diverted to other activities. Pupils tend to rush and finish the paperwork without regard to physical position (Paper Position, Posture, Pencil Holding) and other skill needs.
2. Pupil book pages are assigned for completion as independent seatwork, but teacher attention is diverted to other activities. Pupils tend to rush without regard to physical position or other skill needs.
3. Teacher provides chalkboard or overhead model for pupils to copy but does not adjust seating arrangements to provide a direct line of sight.
4. Practice exercises are copy/trace oriented. Little, if any, instruction in how to write is presented.
5. Left-handed writers use a twisted arm/elbow position.
6. Teacher inadvertently rewards hurried completion of assignments (with extra playtime).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

## Word Challenge - a directed word integration activity.

The task of putting thoughts onto paper is the most complex form of symbolic use. The brain must juggle multiple processes simultaneously. Dr. Louisa Moats of the Houston Health Science Center describes two general processes to help us picture the complexity. Text Generation is the process of choosing words - translating ideas into words. The second process is called Transcription and must occur simultaneously if fluent production is to occur. Using pencil, pen or keyboard transcription demands that the brain must translate phonemes into the physical movement patterns needed for the production of the desired symbol sequence for each word.

From this improved perspective it makes sense that transcription would require practice. Word Challenge is a simple activity designed to provide the practice and hopefully allow integration and automation for fluent processing in applied work.

The challenge is to write the word legibly as it is spelled aloud. Each letter is created as it is called in the spelling sequence. Add another level of fun by writing with the eyes closed\*.

1. Display the target words on chart or chalkboard at a size that is visible to all from their seat.
2. The words are attacked one at a time using the following sequence of commands to direct the challenge:
  - A. Students chant aloud the letters in a target word as the teacher points to the letter. This step should be repeated to establish a rhythm for the chant. Pace the rhythm to accommodate the group. Start at a slow pace. Speed is a secondary objective to rhythm and until a rhythm pattern is internalized, increased rate of production will usually result in chicken scratch or silence. When rhythmic movement stops voices will quit.
  - B. Once the verbal rhythm is established (usually two or three repetitions) move to airwriting. Pupils write each letter in the air as they spell aloud. Repeat at least twice.
  - C. Move to paper. Unlined will be best at first. As skills improve lined paper can be introduced as a new challenge\*. The goal is to keep the voices working which results in rhythmic movement. Use the command sequence: On your mark, get set, spell. At the spell command the chant begins and so should the writing. When the chant stops, the writing must stop.
  - D. Concentrate on the verbalization at first. When everyone can get the word on paper with the chant, evaluate the word for legibility.

Divide your word list into groups and attack one group each day as part of your spelling/vocabulary effort. You want to complete all of the words prior to test day but initial trials may prove too demanding. Until skills improve, you may not be able to get through the whole list. Track the results of this effort. Note the time it takes to complete the dictation and writing of the words on test day. Track the time required for the test for at least six weeks. As skills improve the time required for the test will decrease. You will have a record of the teaching time gained from this one application of written language. The time gain will be realized from each classwork activity - a true multiplier. You will have to invest extra time in the beginning but will gain much more as student abilities improve.

### \* Eyes-closed practice:

Students must learn how to use the internal model for movement guidance. Hopefully this has been accomplished during the training of letter patterns, but word writing adds a new level of difficulty. You rely on the vocal as the indicator. When the student can maintain the vocal it shows that the internal model is involved. When the voices stop it means that the student has switched to external, visual-feedback guidance rather than relying on the internal model. This happens because rhythm is lost. The internal system guides rhythmic movement. The external system cannot move with rhythm. Eyes closed will elicit the use of the internal model because the external visual system has been removed from the process.

### \* Lined and unlined paper:

The Word Challenge activity is designed to demand use of the internal model. Unlined paper makes this easier. Using lined paper creates a different type of demand because the brain must coordinate internal model and the external visual feedback systems to successfully align the movement sequences with the lines on the paper. We want the brain to develop this ability as the long term goal.

## **Peterson Directed Handwriting, Spelling Correlations (5/23/02)**

Peterson has prepared cursive handwriting models of commercial textbook word lists utilizing a technique validated by extensive process research that used an digital computer tablet that measures human muscle patterns of movement and control. These blackline masters focus on joining stroke patterns so that students may reinforce learning with meaningful application of process skills.

<b><u>Publisher</u></b>	<b><u>Grade or Level</u></b>	<b><u>Series Copyright Date</u></b>
Harcourt, Brace & Co. (Treasury of Literature)	3, 4, 5	1995
Harcourt, Brace & Co. (Signatures)	3, 4, 5, 6	1999
Harcourt, Inc. (Collections)	3, 4, 5, 6	2000, 01, 02
D. C . Heath	3, 4, 5, 6	1990
	3, 4	1990, 1994
Houghton-Mifflin Spelling	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1988
	4	1990, 1993
	2, 3, 4, 5, (6?)	1990, 1998
Laidlaw	2, 3, 4, 5	1987 (1989 Impression)
	4, 5, 6	1987
Macmillan	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1983, 1987
Macmillan/McGraw-Hill	4	1993, 1996
	3	1996
McDougal, Littell	2, 3, 4, 5	1990, 1998
	4, 5, 6	1994
McGraw-Hill	3, 4, 5, 6	1988
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1990
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1998
	3, 4, 5	2000
McGraw-Hill Sch. Division Reading Spelling Practice	3, 4, 5	1999 ?
Merrill	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1987
	3, 4, 5, 6	1990
Modern Curriculum Press	C, D (3, 4)	1994
Riverside	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1998

Scott, Foresman	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8	1984, 1986
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1988
	3, 4, 5	1993
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1995
	4	2000
Silver Burdett	4, 6	1983, 1986
	2, 3, 5	1986
	3, 4, 5	1997
Steck-Vaughn Co.	2, 3, 5, 6	1990
	4	1989
Zaner Bloser	2, 4, 5, 6	1988
	3, 4, 5, 6	1998

### **Special Lists**

Bob Jones (Grade 4, 1990 & 1984 Grade 5, 1985, and Grade 3, 1984, 1996)  
Commonwealth of PA High Frequency Word Lists (1000 words)  
Common Misspellings (submitted by Trinity S.D.)  
Compiled Grade Level Spelling Words for Hillside School, Keystone Oaks, Gr. 4, 5, 6  
Holt Basic Reading Vocabulary Words (1973, 1980, 1983 Levels 11-15)  
Houghton Mifflin Reading, Invitation to Literacy (Grade 4, 1993) (Grade 3, 1996) (Grade 4 & 5, 1999)  
Open Court Reading Words (Grade 2) for Camp Hill  
Open Court Reading & Writing (Grade 4, 5) for Greensburg Salem  
Perfection Form Co. (The), Vocabu-Lit, Grade 5, 1987, 1977  
Rebecca Sutton Word Lists, Grade 4, 1998? Compiled for Gateway SD  
Silver Burdett & Ginn, Co. (Glossarys) Whole Language (Level 11(5) Dream Chaser & 12(6) Wind by the Sea  
Silver Burdett (Grade , 1993)  
Special List compiled for Highlands School District (1989), Grade 6  
Special List compiled for Newport (Grade 2, 1989)  
Special List compiled for Riverview (Levels 1-16)  
Supplementary Word List for Derry Twp., Gr. 2, 3, 4, 5

If you have word lists that you would like to have us prepare for correlated practice utilizing our joining stroke muscle control pattern process, please send us a copy of the actual textbook. Allow approximately 60 days for preparation if requested during school months (Sept.-May). Check our catalog price list for the fee required....or call our toll-free number - 1-800-541-NEAT - to discuss your needs.

## School Practice Paper Available from Kurtz Bros.

Generally teachers will need paper for handwriting lessons (patterning sessions) and would probably prefer to have another type for use in classwork. The recommendations below provide suggestions for both applications.

### **Kindergarten - Initial Practice Paper for letter patterning.**

Any Unlined paper, such as: 8" x 10" Kurtz Code #02304.443U

### **Kindergarten and First Grade - Initial Introduction to Lined Paper -**

"Ready Write" Paper (Dragon Logo): 8-1/2 x 11 (long way ruling) Kurtz Code #02150

### **First and Second Grades -**

- 8 x 10 (long way ruling green newsprint) Kurtz Code # 02129. G163  
This paper is ruled in Top-Mid-Base configuration at 1/2 inch intervals.  
Provides a "skipping space" between line sets. For general class use.
- "Testing" Paper for use with model tests provided in the Peterson Methods books:  
7 x 8-1/2 (long way 1/2 inch ruling) Kurtz Code #02001.3. **For patterning and testing.**  
You can also use the green newsprint listed above for testing but should cut it to 8.5" width in order to maintain spacing objectives.
- Beginning Cursive for Grade Two -  
We recommend "Ready Write" Paper (Dragon Logo) **For initial patterning work.**  
8-1/2 x 11 (long way ruling) Kurtz Code #02150.  
Red baseline helps emphasize importance of base line control.  
Use the green newsprint for general class work #02129. G163 (listed above)  
Use the testing paper for model tests, Code #02001.3 (listed above). Here again, You could use the green newsprint listed above for testing but should cut it to 8.5" width in order to maintain spacing objectives.

### **Grade Three**

For the initial cursive Size reduction - Recycled white newsprint (Red Baseline, 1/4 inch mid line) 8 x 10-1/2 ruled the long way, Kurtz Code #02123. W2123. The "midline" is a helpful "crutch" for initial instruction of size reduction and proportion. After the initial introduction children should learn to apply good proportions without the aid of the midline. For this transition to regular lines and for the "testing" use: 7 x 8-1/2 (long way ruling, 1/2 inch) Kurtz Code #02001.3. Note that this is the same paper listed above for grades one and two testing.

Teachers may want to have a "larger" page for classwork. Unfortunately, there is no paper offering half inch ruling on a composition-size page. A move to 3/8" ruled paper will increase demands for fine motor control. We recommend that this change not occur before the second semester and that students showing signs of fatigue and poor legibility be allowed to continue with 1/2" ruled paper for applied work. Regular composition paper with 3/8" ruling is recommended.

### **Grades 4-8**

Use any 3/8" ruled "composition" paper for general applied work.

Testing Pen Ink: White Writing Paper 7 x 8-1/2 inch the long way Kurtz Code #02085. 127. **We recommend ball point pens be used for patterning and for testing.**

Testing Paper: Pencil - 7 x 8-1/2 (longway ruling 3/8 inch) Kurtz Code #02004.37

We suggest the use of a pen for practice and testing. In grade four, teachers may want to use pencil initially and move to pen for the second or third unit. Students need to learn how to use a pen effectively and gain confidence in their ability. A ball point is more difficult to control than a pencil. If practice sessions bring the pen under control, pencil work in class activities will benefit greatly.

Kurtz Bros.  
400 Reed St., PO BOX 392  
CLEARFIELD PA 16830-0392

Phone: 800-252-3811  
FAX: 814-765-8690

## About Pencils

We offer special triangular pencils in several varieties. Our experience demands a strong recommendation for their use in primary grades for all of the following reasons:

1. The triangular shape makes it much easier for youngsters to learn the best grip. The three sides offer a broad contact (better feel) for each of the three contact points; pointer finger, thumb and middle finger.
2. The thickness of the pencil barrel helps with relaxation - even with older children. A pinched grip results in writer's cramp once sustained writing begins.
3. The "lead" is also thick compared to standard pencils and offers significant advantages. The pencils last much longer, particularly if teachers understand that a dull point is preferable to a sharp one. A sharp point makes a fine trace that is difficult to see unless pressure is applied to darken it. This pressure quickly dulls and often breaks the point leading to repeated sharpening. A dull point produces a broad trace that is visible without pressure. It is also easier for a child to "touch the lines" with these broad traces. Try touching the lines on a piece of paper with the tip of a straight pin. Try again with a crayon to feel the difference between the two eye-hand coordination tasks.
4. The thick pencil is offered in two versions - one with and the other without an eraser. The eraser is an advantage for the teacher during classwork but distracting during directed handwriting lessons. When they have the eraser, children are constantly stopping to erase and patch miscues which blocks integration of the rhythm pattern. The version without an eraser is best for handwriting lessons. The rule is no erasing. We want to compare several iterations and choose the best. Then we try again as we continue with rhythmic production and work to improve consistency.

The only disadvantage is the fact that a "school pencil sharpener" is needed. The electric sharpeners used by so many teachers will not accept the thick pencils. It is a small irony that many teachers don't see. They spend big bucks for the electric machine because the kids are constantly sharpening. It results in even more frequent sharpening and pencils seem to disappear overnight.

There is another subtle advantage to the hand crank sharpeners. They cut the pencil at a better angle. The amount of "wood" showing between point and paint is much longer than when an electric machine is used. This tends to promote a grip position that is a little farther from the point resulting in less pinch and more relaxation.



P.O. Box 249  
Greensburg, PA 15601-0249

# Material Requisition for Peterson Directed Handwriting

A division of Educational Self-Development, Inc. (724) 837-4900  
Our Email address is mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com

Use this form if your district has a **contract** for materials and service.

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Building \_\_\_\_\_

School Opens On \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Shipping Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_

Fed Ex \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery \_\_\_\_\_

**LIST DELIVERY ADDRESS FOR LOCATION AND RECEIPT VIA Fed Ex SERVICE.**

Please indicate projected enrollment figures for each grade level in section below. The materials we ship will be based on those included in our handwriting contract.

Would you like to FAX this information to us?  
Dial (724) 836-4110.

We are offering extensive support via the internet.  
**www.peterson-handwriting.com**

**NOTE:**

Please list buildings if more than one is included in these figures:

\_\_\_\_\_

**PETERSON** offers a wide variety of supplementary instructional materials. This sheet is for your contracted items. If you need to order additional materials such as wall alphabets, pens, pencils, etc. please call **1-800-541-NEAT** and ask for Order Department, or check our web page for ordering over the internet.

ENROLLMENTS	Number of Teachers	Number of Classrooms	Number of Pupils
Kindergarten			
Grade 1			
Grade 2			
Grade 3			
Grade 4			
Grade 5			
Grade 6,7,8			
Special Ed. PRIMARY			
Special Ed. INTERMEDIATE			

**PLEASE FORWARD A TEACHER ROSTER AS SOON AS ASSIGNMENTS ARE SET.**

**ATTENTION:  
DIAGNOSTIC DEPARTMENT**

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION - for Peterson Use Only

Completed forms received: \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnostic Support Materials

S \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ CP \_\_\_\_\_

R&A \_\_\_\_\_ CP \_\_\_\_\_ TP \_\_\_\_\_

SC \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ NW \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** *If a teacher instructs more than one class, please indicate number of classrooms (6A, 6B = 2, etc.)*

REMARKS: **REMINDER:** *Have you attached next year's tentative or adopted calendar?*

Shipped: \_\_\_\_\_ Packed by: \_\_\_\_\_ # Cartons: \_\_\_\_\_

Please feel free to make a copy of the completed form for your file.



# Service Registration Form

## Peterson Directed Handwriting

A division of Educational Self-Development, Inc. (724) 837-4900  
Our Email address is [mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com](mailto:mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com)

Use this form if you purchase order diagnostic evaluation service or if your contract does not include teaching materials. The information guides our packing of grade specific testing materials.

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_

School Opens On \_\_\_\_\_ Building \_\_\_\_\_

Your district or school has purchased our Diagnostic Evaluation service as an option. To provide the proper materials we need figures for teacher stations in order to ship those materials prior to the opening of school. We must also create a schedule for the evaluations. A copy of your calendar will be very helpful.

Delivery \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
for \_\_\_\_\_  
Fed Ex \_\_\_\_\_  
Delivery \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and return forms as soon as possible. Use a central delivery address if possible. We will pack and label each building when shipping to a central receiving address.  
Thank You.

Would you like to FAX this information to us?  
Dial (724) 836-4110.

**NOTE:**

List buildings if more than one is included in these figures.

We are offering extensive support via the internet.  
**[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)**

Our Email address is [mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com](mailto:mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com)

**PETERSON** offers a wide variety of supplementary instructional materials. This sheet is for evaluation support materials - if you need to order any instructional materials such as pupil books, teacher manuals, wall alphabets, etc., please call **1-800-541-NEAT** and ask for Order Department, or check our web page for ordering over the Internet: **<http://www.peterson-handwriting.com>**

ENROLLMENTS	Number of Teachers	Number of Classrooms
Kindergarten		
Grade 1		
Grade 2		
Grade 3		
Grade 4		
Grade 5		
Grade 6,7,8		
Special Ed. PRIMARY		
Special Ed. INTERMEDIATE		
<b>NOTE: If a teacher instructs more than one class, please indicate number of classrooms (6-A, 6-B = 2, etc.)</b>		

**PLEASE FORWARD A TEACHER ROSTER AS SOON AS ASSIGNMENTS ARE SET.**

**ATTENTION:  
DIAGNOSTIC DEPARTMENT**

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION - for Peterson Use Only

Completed forms received: \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnostic Support Materials

S \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ CP \_\_\_\_\_  
R&A \_\_\_\_\_ CP \_\_\_\_\_ TP \_\_\_\_\_  
SC \_\_\_\_\_ NW \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Shipped: \_\_\_\_\_ Packed by: \_\_\_\_\_ # Cartons: \_\_\_\_\_

# Peterson Handwriting Visitation

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time frame scheduled for our building: \_\_\_\_\_ Workshop time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

The Peterson consultant will be pleased to provide classroom demonstrations, motivational visits, tutorials, conferences with teachers individually or in small groups, and workshops for teachers. When model lessons are scheduled the classroom teacher is given a unique opportunity to observe pupil learning behaviors and to acquire new teaching methods. Teacher observation and participation assures good follow-up. Otherwise the visit is only cosmetic.

**Maximize the visit - be ready.** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please coordinate schedules with other buildings in your district.
2. Please allow time for comfort breaks and driving time between schools. The schedule below allows time for a lesson with a teacher conference.
3. Demo lessons will be directed. Please have chalkboard space available and seating adjusted to afford direct student viewing.
4. Please have paper and pupil books ready.
5. Feel free to request specific help.
6. Provide audio tape recorder for tutorial

<b>A.M.</b>	Room #	Teacher Name	Grade	Special Requests or notes
9:05-9:25				
9:30-9:50				
9:55-10:15				
10:20-10:40				
10:45-11:05				
11:10-11:30				
<b>P.M.</b>	Room #	Teacher Name	Grade	Special Requests or notes
12:30-12:50				
12:55-1:15				
1:20-1:40				
1:45-2:05				
2:10-2:30				
2:35-2:55				

Teacher support is available by telephone: 800-541-6328  
 And on our web site: [www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)

# Web Resources

[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)

- 1. The Peterson Method - teaching the skills needed for fluency is easy.**  
Learn how to use the Peterson method of instruction in ten minutes at this link. This method presentation will help you to gain a ton of teaching time. Learn how to coach fluent movement.
- 2. Animated Letter Cards - Now available on CD Rom!**  
Airwriting with these web animations provides an exciting way to establish and improve patterns for letterform production. Students see the letter written right before their eyes. They learn the action words and how to write the letter in just a few minutes. Have you ever imagined using the computer for handwriting lessons?
- 3. Help Your Left-handed Students - Also see, helping a preschool child.**  
Understand left-handed process. Help parents understand how to get a little one started correctly.
- 4. Enlist Parent Cooperation**  
When a parent understands, support is much easier to organize and much more helpful. Our web presentations help parents to understand providing a fun way to help their child and support your efforts in the classroom - from home, with their own computer.
- 5. “John and Jane are bright. Why can’t they write?”**  
Learn why so many intermediate students want to print. Learn reasons why time-consuming activities in expensive workbooks don’t help the majority of your students to develop fluent cursive skill. Learn a research-based strategy for application of cursive with the fluent type of movement.
- 6. Reduce your paperwork with The Peterson Web Store.**  
Putting together materials requisitions is easy using the store. You enter only the quantity and click on the “Add To Cart” button. The program automatically presents you with a materials list consisting of the quantity, item description and correct order code. You can print this list from your browser and clip it to your internal forms for school processing. If you already have a purchase order number you can go on to the check out and submit the order electronically.
- 7. How do your students choose goals for improvement?**  
What should we expect from pupils at the various grade levels? What does superior skill look like? Samples from top students entering the contest are available on the web. Follow links to the winners and print the samples for comparison. Select goals for skill development and work toward those goals. Use the Peterson subskills to focus on specific process objectives: *Form, Slant, Size, Spacing, Rhythm, Control*.
- 8. Peterson Distance Learning Service**  
The internet erases geography and allows us to meet with you at times that are convenient for your schedule. We use the web for presentations that are moderated live via a conference call to a toll free number. Up to 24 separate locations can participate simultaneously. In fact, if your classroom has web access through your LAN and a speaker phone for the conference call, we may be able to visit with your students! If you would like to try this distance learning solution, please give us a call: 800-541-6328.
- 9. Resource Library**  
This service provides access to a wealth of information. There are many documents available for download in PDF format including this Administrator’s Guide, a Scope and Sequence, Teaching Ideas and articles designed to keep teachers up to date with the research. Several items will be useful for inclusion in your kindergarten registration packet. We will continue to add to this library. Please visit periodically. You will find a link to the library on the Information Directory page.



**Peterson Directed Handwriting**  
**315 South Maple Ave.**  
**Greensburg PA 15601-3218**

Toll Free Teacher Support: 800-541-6328  
Local Support: 724-837-4900  
Fax: 724-836-4110

Visit us on the world wide web:  
[www.peterson-handwriting.com](http://www.peterson-handwriting.com)  
Email: [mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com](mailto:mrpencil@peterson-handwriting.com)