



Caldecote Community Primary School

Handwriting and Presentation Policy

‘Care, Challenge, Persevere, Succeed – we are Caldecote!’

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At Caldecote Community Primary school we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards as the pupils take pride in and have a sense of ownership of their work. As a school we are adopting the fully cursive method of handwriting.

There are four main purposes to this policy:

- To establish an entitlement for all pupils.
- To establish expectations for teachers of this subject.
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school.
- To state the school's approaches to this subject in order to promote public and parents' and carers' understanding of the curriculum.

Background

Why is a handwriting policy important for a primary school?

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Given effective teaching, handwriting can be mastered by most pupils by the time they are seven or eight years old enabling them, with practice, to go on to develop a faster and more mature hand ready for secondary school and adult life. The surest way to ensure consistent teaching and the development of legible, fluent joined handwriting throughout the school is to have a written policy agreed and put into practice by all staff.

Handwriting is a movement skill; children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often. The first handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that the children we teach learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning. The correct formation of all letters needs to become quite automatic and may require a lot of practice.

Suzanne Tiburtius of the National Handwriting Association

Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

The 2014 National Curriculum, English Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets

Aims:

- To raise standards in handwriting across the school.
- To have a consistent approach across all key stages when teaching handwriting and presentation of work throughout the school.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays / resources.

For pupils to:

- know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively;
- achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive and printed handwriting;
- develop flow and speed, so that eventually they are able to produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing;
- have a correct pencil grip;
- know that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle;
- form all letters correctly; know the size and orientation of letters;

Model used

Caldecote Community Primary school uses the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme with the following letter formation:

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capital letters

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

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

- 1) to letters without ascenders
- 2) to letters with ascenders
- 3) horizontal joins
- 4) horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The break letters (letters that aren't joined **from**) are: b g j p q x y z s

See appendix 3 for examples of the break letters

Children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units **BEFORE** learning to join.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is taught regularly through short, focused sessions during Literacy and Phonics sessions and may be linked with spelling, grammar or phonics objectives.

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet.

Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned.

The role of the teacher:

- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling.
- To provide resources and an environment that promotes good handwriting.
- To observe pupils, give timely and precise feedback, monitor progress and determine targets for development.

Continuity and Progression

Foundation Stage

The emphasis at this stage is with movement rather than neatness. Letter formation (starting at the right entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of the writing space. Teachers are vigilant to ensure that bad habits do not become ingrained and that the specific needs of left-handed pupils (for example, additional tracking and tracing of letters at the pre-writing stage) and those with special educational needs are met.

In the pre-communicative stage pupils play with writing and these experiments are recognised and praised as an important stage in the child's understanding that marks on paper convey meaning. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand.

Key Stage 1

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style and begin to join their letters in Year 2. This is dependent on ability not age/year band of a child.

In Year 1 handwriting is developed by teaching a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's agreed handwriting style. This continues in Year 2.

Year 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Year 2

Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another

- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjointed
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Key Stage Two

The target for children in Key Stage Two is to produce a fluent, consistently formed style of fully cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words.

- Children will have regular handwriting sessions using appropriate prepared resources, in the agreed handwriting style, or specialist handwriting books.
- Children in Year Three, Year Four and Year Five will write with pencils until the class teacher assesses that they are joining competently and consistently. They will then be given a handwriting pen.
- In Year Six most children will use a handwriting pen.
- Children will use a pen to complete the majority of class work, where appropriate and using a fully cursive style.
- Pencils will be used in Numeracy or for drawing and completion of diagrams.

Year 3

Pupils should be taught to:

- increasingly use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjointed
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

Year 4

Pupils should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjointed
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

Year 5

Pupils should be taught to:

Write increasingly legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Year 6

Pupils should be taught to:

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

All children should be allowed to use unlined paper from time to time so that they can practise to apply skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

Progression

- Arm, hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words - write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence

Fundamental requirements which must be taught to children:

- A tripod pencil grip.
- Pencils must always be sharp before use.
- Tiny pencils, less than 8 cm long should be discarded.
- How to sit on a chair properly (not slouch), sitting up, with a straight back, the chair pushed in a comfortable amount and both legs under the table. The children's thighs should be parallel and their feet flat on the floor.
- All four chair legs must be on the ground - children should not be rocking.
- The fact that the non-writing hand (left for right handers; right for left handers) should be on the table in front of the child in a supportive position.
- When writing, books should be fully open, not folded over. Children should be sitting in such a way that their books are not overlapping when they are writing.
- Right handers can tilt their book to the left. Left handers can tilt their book to the right. In each case the amount of tilt should be no more than 45 degrees. Quite simply, children should not be allowed to write at a 90 degree angle.
- To assist a child who has a problem with the amount of 'tilt' a right angled corner of tape can be stuck onto the desk where he sits so that he can see where to put the corner of his book.
- A clutter free table is required with adequate space for a number of children to write.
- All small letters start at the top with the exception of d and e (which conveniently happen to be next to each other in the alphabet). These two letters start from the middle.
- Capital letters can start from anywhere: the most economically efficient starting point should be found: for most people this is at the top.

Above all, avoid the creation of the following four ingrained habits:

- Faulty pencil grip
- Poor posture
- Poor book/paper positioning
- Incorrect letter formation (e.g. starting letters at the bottom)

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SEN coordinator. Thicker triangular pencils, pencil grips and wider lines will be used by children experiencing problems writing alongside other activities to develop their fine motor skills.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child, so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically;

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right-handed teacher. Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

A few technical terms to teach children

- The word **cursive** means joined.
- The correct name for the joining bits between letters is **ligatures**.
- The technical name for a tail is a **flourish**.
- The technical word for handwriting is **calligraphy**.
- The letters b, d, h, k, and l are called **ascenders**. The top of the letter should reach very close to the top of the line (it shouldn't touch!). The letter **t** is **not an ascender**.
- The letters g, j, p, q and y are called **descenders**. The flourish these letters have goes below the line.
- **t** is an unusual letter - a three quarters letter, rather than an ascender

Other vocabulary children should be taught:

- clockwise
- anticlockwise
- vertical
- horizontal
- diagonal

- parallel
- consonant
- vowel
- joined
- sloped
- loop

Key points about joining letters (the Nelson handwriting scheme)

- Letters that end at the top join horizontally: f o r t v w x
- Letters that end at the bottom join diagonally: a c d e h i k l m n u
- Letters that are traditionally not joined: b j p s q y z. These are not joined because they end in the opposite direction (left) to the direction of writing (right).
- The letters g and y can be looped, but these letters end to the left so it is therefore more consistent for them not to be joined. Children who loop these letters often then contrive other unsuitable loops, such as for the letter s.
- Capital letters should not be huge. They should be no higher than ascenders.

For the order of teaching letters and joins see Appendix 2

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in platicine
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

Getting ready to write

Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter

- Rooms should be well lit
- Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners See **appendix 1 for warm up exercises**.

Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced in Y6) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB: It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left-handed child as their elbows will collide!

Please refer to Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p10 for further information

Assessment

Phase leaders in team meetings and senior leaders monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (weekly and not less than half-termly). When monitoring handwriting, the following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the age related expectations in the National Curriculum?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons - the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?

- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the the age related expectations in the National Curriculum?

Links to spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Remember to use **Look - Say - Cover - Write - Check** as follows: the child

- Looks at the word carefully
- Says the word
- Covers the word so that it can't be seen
- Writes the whole word from memory
- Checks the word is written correctly
- If not, repeat.

Resources

To aid pupils' handwriting we have purchased a site license for the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme - Nelson Thornes Handwriting Teacher's Book and Nelson Thornes Handwriting CD Roms. This is loaded on to the School Improvement drive that can be accessed from all computers at school.

The learning environment

A dedicated writing area is established in all classrooms at Foundation and Key Stage 1. Writing areas/boxes are equipped with a range of writing implements and materials. In KS2 suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Throughout all Key stages teachers display both handwritten and word processed work to give a high profile to developing a neat, legible cursive style.

The role of parents and carers

The Foundation Stage teachers play an important role in communicating this at an early stage, for example, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their pupils by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names, practising drawing patterns together, and playing joining up games which encourage left to right directionality. The Foundation Stage teachers, in partnership with the English subject leader, are expected to communicate with Nursery and pre-school agencies to encourage good practice.

All members of staff (including teaching assistants, supply teachers and students) are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

Parental workshops are regularly offered to advise parents on the curriculum and these include the school policy for the teaching of handwriting.

Presentation guidance

It is essential that all children should have pride in their work and that it is set out well.

From Year 3 pupils must be encouraged to use a neat, cursive style in all written work.

- All work must begin with the date. In Literacy this must be written in the following way: Tuesday 10th September 2022. In all other subjects the short date can be written in the following format: 10.9.14
- The date should be written on the top line and underlined (not in the margin). The next line should be missed and an appropriate title should be written. This should be underlined in Key stage 2.
- Underlining should be completed with a ruler.
- Children should write from the margin to the edge of the page.
- Children will be encouraged to improve their work and use the following codes: CI (collaboratively improved) and VS (visualiser stop). Children use pink pens to edit their work. When writing, one line is dropped to allow space for editing and improvement.
- In maths rubbers are used for mathematical drawings only; in writing an eraser can be used at the teacher's discretion.
- Criteria for presentation of work will be discussed prior to commencement of work.
- When squared paper is used for Numeracy 1 digit is written in each box for calculation methods, and one square is left between each sum.

Display

- There should be an appropriate emphasis on current literacy and numeracy work on display in the classroom.
- Displays should have clear titles and children's work should be named.
- A range of borders, colours and styles is to be encouraged e.g. a balance of handwritten and computer fonts for titles.
- Displays should celebrate and reflect recent work. Teachers should ensure that displays are changed regularly.
- Classes will be responsible for some boards in communal areas of the school.
- Corridors should display a range of work from different year groups.
- All subjects of the curriculum should be represented in displays.
- Where display space is limited, e.g. classrooms, displays in teaching areas should be used as tools for teaching and learning.
- Boards in corridors and halls can be used for celebrating completed work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- This will be undertaken by the class teacher and will also be assessed as part of each term's literacy writing assessments.
- When undertaking scrutiny, leaders will monitor all subjects for neat presentation and following the school's handwriting policy.

Here's a warm up that's great for posture and a positive attitude. Use it before cursive handwriting lessons and during the refreshing and can be done even in a crowded class. If it's manageable, let your students jump in place first.

APPENDIX 1



Push palms



Pull hands

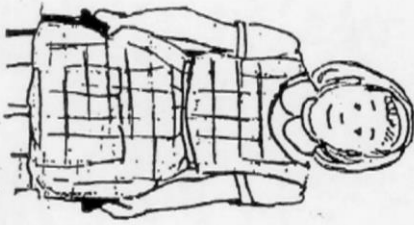


Hug yourself tightly

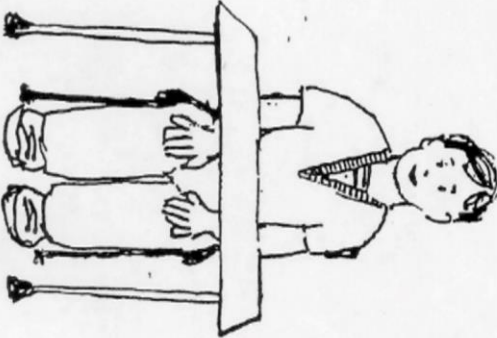


Reach high, one hand, then other
Reach - make circles in the air

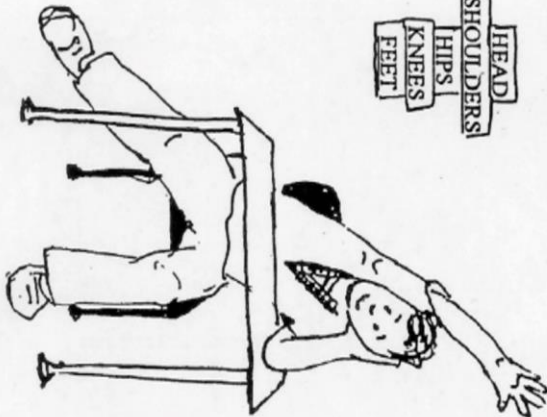
* BLOCKS



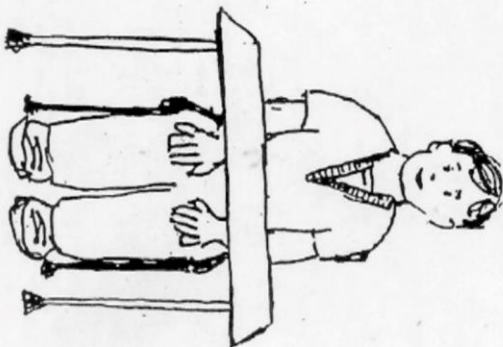
Pull up on chair



* Stack your blocks



Assume an outrageous posture



Stack your blocks again!

APPENDIX 2

Order of teaching

Single letters (YR and Y1)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• c a d g q o• e s f• i l t• u y j k• r n m• h b p• v w x z	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Long Ladders (down and off in another direction) - l, i, j, t, u, y2. One armed robots (down and retrace upwards) - b, h, k, m, n, p, r3. Curly Caterpillars (anti-clockwise round) c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s4. Zig Zag letters - v, w, x, z <p>Supporting activities: tracing patterns, tracing, copying over (letters, numbers and words), copying under (letters, numbers and words)</p>
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Joins Y2 (going into Y3)

<p>Introduction of the four handwriting joins:</p> <p>First join: un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung</p> <p>Second join: ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti ink unk</p> <p>Third join: od pg re ve oon oom</p> <p>Fourth join: wl vl of ff fl flo</p> <p>Practise the break letters: b p g q y j z</p> <p>Practise capital letters</p> <p><i>See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p30 for learning outcomes and further information</i></p>	<p>Supporting activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Match and copy captions• Trace and copy patterns• Copy words• Copy sentences• Write out menu• Copy poem• Alphabetical ordering
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Joins Y3 (going into Y4)

<p>Revision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practise the break letters b p g q y j z• Practise capital letters <p><i>See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p30 for learning outcomes and further information</i></p> <p>Supporting activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• copy words• copy sentences• copy poems• match questions to answers• copy jokes• make and copy compound words <p><i>See Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p54 for learning outcomes and further information</i></p>	<p>Further practice of the four handwriting joins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in ine• ut ute• ve vi• ok oh• sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s)• ri ru ry (practising joining from the letter r)• oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)• ee ea ed (practising joining from the letter e)• ow ov ox (practising joining from the letter o)• ky hy ly (practising joining to the letter y)• ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)• od oo og (practising joining from the letter o)• er ir ur (practising joining to the letter r)• ai al ay• you oi• re oe fe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)• fu wu vu (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)• ot ol ok (practising joining to ascenders)• ai al ow ol (practising all the joins)
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Year 4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• ning ping ting •• oc od oo •• ake ome are •• fla flo fle •• who wha whe •• ie in il inly •• ky ny ap •• ar an ick •• uck ack •• practise writing with a slope •• he • we • re fte • fir fin wra wri kni (silent letters) ii ll tt rr nn mm cc oo dd ss ff ee ew ev ex (spacing) th ht fl (proportions) ac ag af Capital letters Decorated capital letters Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ “ , ‘ 	<p>Supporting activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy words, sentences, poems • Trace and copy • Copy tongue twisters • Copy instructions <p>See <i>Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p78</i> for learning outcomes and further information</p>
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Years 5 and 6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise consistency and size of letters • Practising using a diagonal joining line • Practising leaving an equal space between letters • Practising joining to the letter y • Practising using a horizontal joining line • Practising the size and height of letters • Practising joining from the letter i • Practising joining to and from the letter v • Practising consistency in forming and joining letters • Practise speedwriting • Practising crossing double tt • Practising joining to and from the letter e • Practising joining to and from the letter w • Practising printing • Practising drafting and editing • Practising joining to the letter t <p>See <i>Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p102</i> for learning outcomes, activities and further information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring letters are consistent in height and size • Practising with punctuation • Practising break letters • Practising joining from the letter m • Ensuring the ascender on the letter t is the correct height • Practising spacing within words • Developing fluency • Practising printing • Practising forming and joining the letter f • Practising presentation • Practising printing • Practising speed writing • Revision • Looking at different handwriting styles <p>See <i>Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p126</i> for learning outcomes, activities and further information</p> <p>Revision of all skills</p> <p>See <i>Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p150</i> for learning outcomes, activities and further information.</p>
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APPENDIX 3

Examples of the break letters

big

green

jelly

happy

unique

xylophone

zebra

swans

APPENDIX 4

Examples of the joins

I fell asleep in class

today

as I was awfully bored

I laid my head upon

my desk

and fell asleep and snored