



INTRODUCING

PM *Handwriting*

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PM *Handwriting* is a carefully sequenced program of handwriting instruction for Foundation to Year 6. It is designed to support students in developing a fluent, legible and automatic handwriting style.

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WHAT EVERY TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE TEACHING OF HANDWRITING

Why is the teaching of handwriting important and relevant today?

Studies have shown that:

- Learning how to handwrite improves students' concentration as it engages their attention and ability to focus.
- Good fine-motor skills lead to better performance in both reading and writing.
- Using pen and paper to write boosts memory.

Despite our increasingly screen-based lifestyles, handwriting is still a part of everyday life.

About the Victorian handwriting style

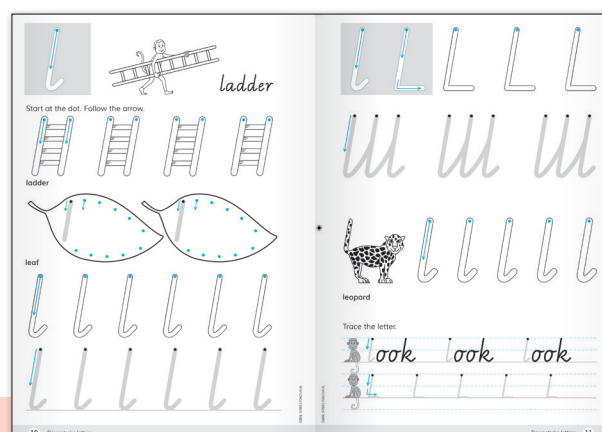
- The name of the handwriting script for Victorian students is Victorian Modern Cursive.
- The basic letter shapes are the same for both unjoined and joined letters, so this handwriting style does not require students to learn a completely new script when transitioning from unjoined letters to cursive handwriting.
- Students are progressively guided through a number of joins that connect the letters together.



VICTORIAN HANDWRITING: THE ESSENTIALS

Why are pre-writing and patterning exercises (even up to Year 6) so important?

- Young writers need to internalise two simple movements: top to bottom, left to right. Regular pre-writing and patterning exercises help students to master these movements and ultimately achieve automaticity.
- Patterning exercises help to free up students' hand movements and build their confidence towards cursive writing.
- By focussing on patterns instead of writing, the pressure of trying to spell correctly is removed.



What is the rationale for the letter groupings: why aren't the letters presented in alphabetical order? How are the letters grouped and named?

- The letters are grouped according to their basic movement rather than alphabetically.
- In *PM Handwriting for Victoria*, the four letter groups are:



downstroke letters:
l, i, t, j



closed anti-clockwise letters:
a, d, g, q, o



open anti-clockwise letters:
c, e, s, f, u, y, v, w, b



clockwise letters:
n, m, p, r, h, k, x, z

What is the rationale for the sequence of letters presented?

- Each letter group comprises letters with some shapes in common. Within each group, the letters are ordered according to logical progression – one letter shape can be seen to arise naturally out of and lead to the shaping of others.
- Repeated practice of correct letter formation separately and in context is essential in achieving fluency and automaticity.

What is the purpose of the 'head, body and tail' character?

The 'head, body and tail' character is useful as a means of introducing students to writing lines, and correct letter placement within lines and in relation to each other.



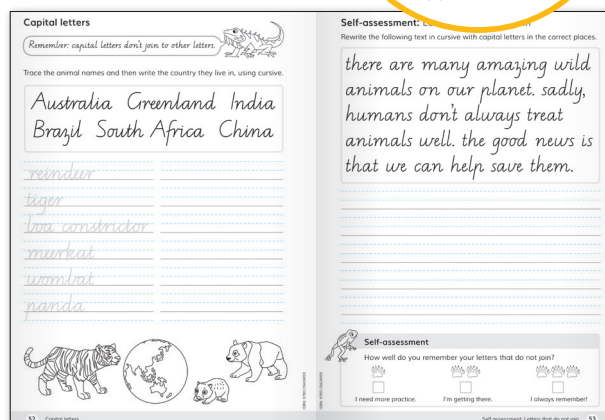
What is the role of verbal rehearsals and self-assessments in handwriting instruction?

Verbalising the basic shapes and movement of letters is essential for scaffolding very young students learning to write letters for the first time.

Self-assessment gives teachers valuable insight into students' understanding of what constitutes legible handwriting. It encourages students to self-correct, and can be used as a basis for setting corrective exercises.

What are the two main join types?

Diagonal and horizontal joins are the two main join types in the Victorian Modern Cursive script.

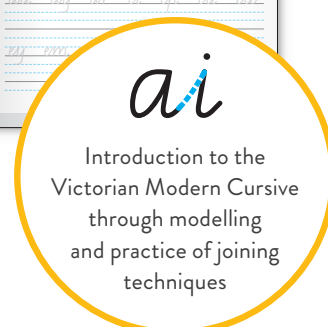
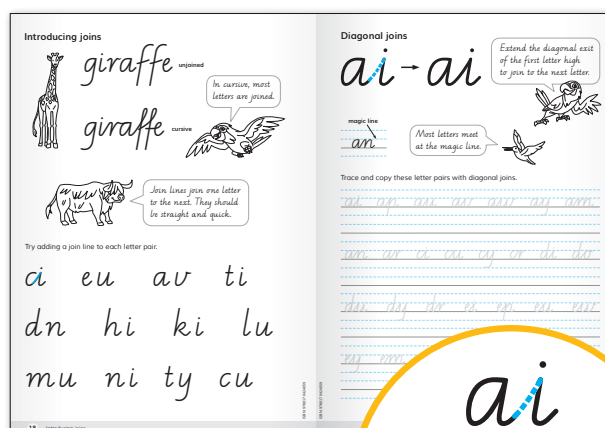


What is the rationale for the sequence of joins taught in PM Handwriting? Why is the diagonal join introduced first?

Many of the letters in the Victorian Modern Cursive script feature exit flicks and entries. This means that, once the basic letter formations are mastered, it is natural progression for students to transition from unjoined letters to cursive handwriting.

In *PM Handwriting* joins are introduced according to their complexity. The diagonal join is the easiest join to write correctly, so this is taught first.

In *PM Handwriting*, all joins are introduced in Year 3, and revised up to Year 6.



What is the rest of the sequence after diagonal joins?

The rest of the sequence is touch joins, horizontal joins, letters that do not join, and tricky joins: to and from 'e', 's', 'f', 'x' and 'z'.

Why should I spend valuable time on handwriting instruction?

While we juggle the competing demands of an increasingly crowded curriculum, there is no doubt that, for the reasons outlined above, regular handwriting instruction pays off, especially for students in Foundation, Years 1, 2 and 3. Integrating handwriting instruction into a literacy block may make it easier to find the time to pay attention to this essential skill.

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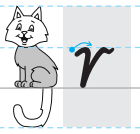
... we must continue to teach students how to write efficiently and automatically by hand, so that they can express themselves meaningfully in written language and fully engage in the learning opportunities provided at school ... That means teachers and teacher education students need to receive a clear message about the importance of continuing to teach handwriting to young children.

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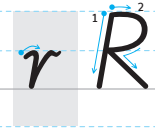
Dr Noella Mackenzie, Senior Lecturer in Literacy Studies at the School of Education at Charles Sturt University

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PM HANDWRITING IN PRACTICE



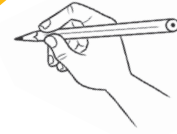
Shaded 'head, body and tail' character



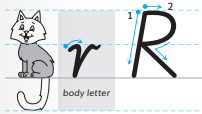
Large-format models to demonstrate accurate formation of letters in the Victorian Modern Cursive script.



Illustrations featuring favourite characters from the PM series



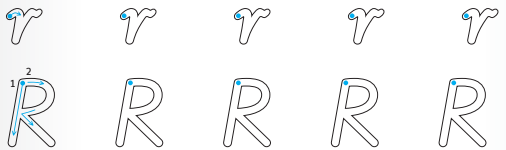
Posture, paper position and pencil grip instruction



Start at the blue dot. Follow the arrow.



Track the letter.



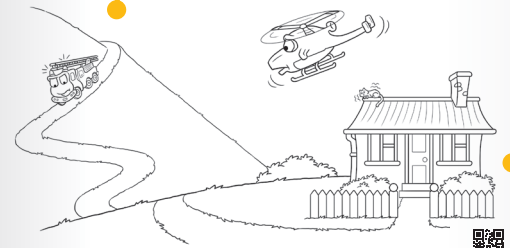
Find 'r' and colour the wedge.



Trace and copy. Complete the lines.



Trace and copy.



Trace and copy.



Purposeful literacy extension activities accessible through QR codes



Patterning exercises to find the letter and colour the wedge



Frequent track, trace, copy and colouring-in opportunities



Sentences incorporating PM high-frequency words to trace and copy



Alignment with Victorian Curriculum: English and Australian Curriculum: English

A comprehensive handwriting program for Victoria



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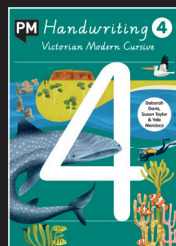
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