

## Handwriting rhymes

Teaching handwriting is a priority. Children need to learn to:

- Write with efficiency and speed, without having to think hard about how to formulate letters and join their writing.
- This enables them to concentrate on what to write.

### **Letter families**

Letters can be grouped into 'families' according to the basic pattern from which they are formed. Using the handwriting rhymes will act as a prompt to remind children about starting position, direction and flow of each letter. The rhymes use the images from the phoneme chart, again to act as a prompt for recall. Finally, the mention of 'starting up high', 'up the ascenders' and 'down the descender' will remind children on the necessary positioning with use of ascenders and descenders. These handwriting rhymes should be used by all staff members so that children are prompted in the same way, year on year. This consistency will allow for children to master and continue to develop their handwriting skills.

When the children are learning to form the letters and are familiar with the rhymes, a simple prompt like "hand starts up high..." from an adult, will be enough to remind them of the rest.

The handwriting rhymes will be used by adults whenever they are modelling writing with the children, both in adult directed teaching and in play. Adults using these with consistency will ensure children develop an effective strategy they can use independently in their writing.

### **Letter-Join**

As a school we use the Letter-Join online resources to support our teaching of handwriting and provide consistency of approach throughout the school.

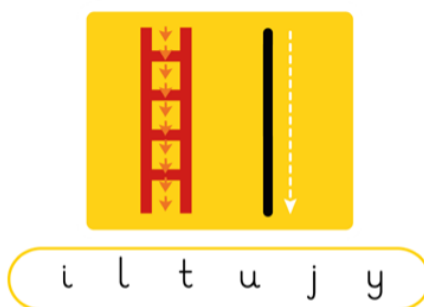
In Reception, when children are first learning how to form the letters, we will use the online games and animations as an additional tool to model to children, but our handwriting rhymes will be the primary strategy. For this, teachers will ensure the Letter-Join rhymes are on mute when being used in direct teaching and they speak over the top.

## Family 1: l, t, i, j, u, y

### Long Ladder Letters

Phoneme	Letter formation rhyme	Action
l	<b>L for Leg</b> starts at the top of the ascender/ladder, goes down to the ground and flick.	Tap your leg
t	<b>T for Tap</b> starts at the top of the ascender/ladder, goes down to the ground and round. Pen off and then across	Twist your hand as if you're turning on a tap
i	<b>I for Igloo</b> starts in the middle of the ladder, goes down to the ground and flick, then dot at the top.	Rub arms and shiver
j	<b>J for Jam</b> starts in the middle of the ladder, goes down the descender and hooks round, then a dot at the top.	Spread jam with two fingers like a knife on your hand
u	<b>U for Umbrella</b> start in the middle of the ladder, goes down to the ground, round and up, down and flick.	Put up an umbrella
y	<b>Y for Yawn</b> start in the middle of the ladder, goes down to the ground, round and up, then down the descender and hook round.	Yawn and stretch arms

### Long Ladder Letters



## Family 2: c, o, a, d, g, q, s, e, f

### Curly Caterpillar Letters

Phoneme	Letter formation rhyme	Action
c	<b>C for Cat</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, goes round and stop	Use fingers to show whiskers
o	<b>O for Orange</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, goes round like 'c' for cat and back to the top	Peel an orange
a	<b>A for Ant</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, go round like 'c' for cat, then up, down and flick	Walk fingers up your arm as though ants
d	<b>D for Dog</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, goes round like 'c' for cat, then up the ascender, all the way down and flick	Digging movements with hands like a dog
g	<b>G for Gate</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, goes round like 'c' for cat, up, down the descender and hook round	Swing arm like a gate opening
q	<b>Q for Queen</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, goes round like 'c' for cat, up, down the descender and spikes back up.	Put a crown on
s	<b>S for Sun</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, goes round like 'c' for cat, then back around and up.	Make hands into a circle shape in the air
e	<b>E for Elephant</b> stretches out, goes round like 'c' for cat and stop	Use arm to swing like a trunk
f	<b>Fish for Fish</b> starts at the middle of the ladder goes round like 'c' for cat but then stops, goes down the descender and hooks round. Take your pen off and across.	Wiggle hand like fish swimming



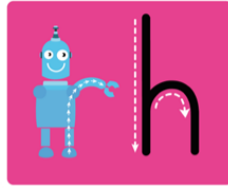
a d c o f e s g q

### Family 3: r, n, m, p, h, b, k

#### One Armed Robot Letters

Phoneme	Letter formation rhyme	Action
r	<b>R for Rain</b> starts in the middle of the ladder, goes down to the ground, bounces up and over	Use fingers to show rain drops falling
n	<b>N for Net</b> starts in the middle of the ladder, goes down to the ground, bounces up and over, then back down and flick.	Hold a fishing net and use to catch things out the water
m	<b>M for Mouse</b> starts in the middle of the ladder, goes down to the ground, bounces up and over, bounces up and over, then back down and flick.	Scurry fingers across a surface
p	<b>P for Panda</b> starts in the middle of the ladder, goes down the descender, bounces up to the top then over and round.	Circle fingers around eyes like a panda
h	<b>H for Hand</b> starts at the top of the ascender/ladder, goes down to the ground, bounces up to the middle then over and flick.	Wave a hand
b	<b>B for Bird</b> starts at the top of the ascender/ladder, goes down to the ground, bounces up to the middle then over and round.	Flap arms like a bird
k	<b>K for Kitten</b> starts at the top of the ascender/ladder, goes down to the ground, bounces up to the middle then over, round and kicks out.	Use hands to knock a ball of wool like paws

## One-armed Robot Letters



b h k m n p r

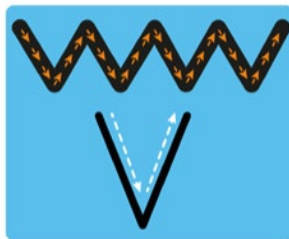
Letter-join

### Family 4: V, W, X, Z

#### Zig Zag Letters

Phoneme	Letter formation rhyme	Action
V	<b>V for Voice</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, slants down to the ground and spikes back up	Cup hands round mouth and say 'v for voice'
W	<b>W for Water</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, slants down to the ground and spikes back up, down and spike	With one hand pour water from a jug into a cup in the other hand
X (start with left to right line)	<b>X for X</b> starts at the middle of the ladder and slants down to the ground. Pen off to the top and slants down to the ground.	Cross arm in the shape of a 'x'
Z	<b>Z for Zip</b> starts at the middle of the ladder, runs away from the other letters, slants downwards and slides forwards again.	Zip up front of your coat

## Zig-zag Letters



v w x z

Letter-join