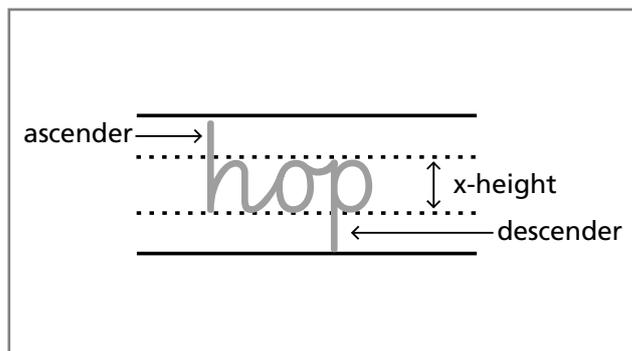


THE JOINS

Joins between letters increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility. In *Nelson Handwriting*, the 26 lower case letters have been divided into five joining groups (which are not the same as the letter sets/families), according to the nature of the joins they require. There are four types of join and a set of 'break' letters after which joins are never made. (See pages 8–9 for details of the joining groups and letter sets.) The joins are taught in Pupil Book 1B and practice is provided in all subsequent books.



Joining

Joining letters is introduced midway through year one, and/or once children can confidently form and write letters correctly. This helps with spelling, as research tells us that seeing words as a whole, rather than a series of isolated letters, helps us memorise and spell words correctly. Joined writing also helps pupils write more, increasing the speed of writing and fluency. *Nelson Handwriting* teaches the four joins at the same time as teaching the letter sets/families.

The first join

The join from any member of joining group 1 to any member of joining group 2 is made with exactly the same movement as a diagonal join from one letter to the start of the next.

in

Teaching the first handwriting join is linked to the letter sets/families:

- When the first diagonal join is introduced, from the bottom of a small letter to the top of the next, we teach the diagonal join to Set 1 letters first, e.g. *ed, eg, ac, as*.
- This is followed by the diagonal join to Set 2 letters e.g. *iu, ig, iy*.
- Then diagonal joins to Set 3 letters e.g. *ar, an, am, ap*.
- Finally the diagonal join to Set 4 letters e.g. *aw, ew, ex, ux*.

The second join

The join from any member of joining group 1 to any member of joining group 3 is the same as the first join except that the join meets the ascender halfway up the letter and then continues to the top of the ascender.

il

Teaching the second handwriting join is linked to letter families too:

- The second join, a diagonal join from the bottom of a small letter to the top of an ascender, is taught using Set 1 letters first, then Set 2, 3 and 4.
- For example to Set 1 letters *if, ef, wf*; to Set 2 letters *il, it*; Set 3 letters *ck, ch*.

The third join

The join from any member of joining group 4 to any member of joining group 2 is a horizontal curve because the join is from the x-height of one letter to the x-height of the next.

og

Teaching the third join, the horizontal join from the top of one letter, across and to the top of the next, is also taught using letter families:

- The third join to Set 1 letters e.g. *wa, wo, fo*; to Set 3 letters *on, om*; Set 4 letters *ow*.



The fourth join

The join from any member of joining group 4 to any member of joining group 3 is the same as the first join except that it goes from the x-height of one letter to the top of the ascender of the next.

ob

The fourth join is the join from the top of a small letter to the top of an ascender.

- To Set 1 letters e.g. of, ff; to set 2 e.g. wl, rl; Set 3 e.g. ob, oh, ok.

The break letters

Joins are never made after the letters in this group. No join is ever made to or from the letter z. A small space should be left after each break letter so that it is spaced as evenly as the joined letters.

The letters e and s have slightly varying forms because their shapes depend on the nature of the preceding join. Attention is drawn to these special cases in Pupil Books 1A, 1B and 2.

As the size of writing decreases, children should be encouraged to decrease the space between words. By the time children are using Pupil Book 1A this space should be the width of a lower case letter a, and the space between two lines of writing should be about twice the height of this letter.

Teaching the joined style

- In the early stages the correct movements are more important than the appearance of the writing. Children should be discouraged from forming writing with incorrect movements, even if they manage to achieve results that appear satisfactory. However, in later stages a more individual style based around *Nelson Handwriting* is encouraged.
- As joined handwriting is a movement skill, it is essential for teachers to provide demonstrations. The *Nelson Handwriting* online teaching software is useful for this; you can also use whiteboards or flipcharts.
- Observe individuals as much as possible while they practise. This enables the teacher to recognise and correct bad habits as they arise.
- Talk the children through the process, using appropriate language.
- Encourage children to verbalise what they are doing from time to time. This gives a window into the thought processes they are using as they write.
- Most children will need extra practice with making the joins. The Pupil Books and Resources and Assessment books provide ample material for this.
- Encouraging children to use the basic handwriting patterns both for practice and for decorative purposes is a valuable technique.

