Cursive Handwriting
HOME USERS’ GUIDE
HOME USERS’ GUIDE

Welcome to Letter-join!

Inside this guide you’ll find all the help your children need to get the most out of Letter-join at home.

Schools that subscribe to Letter-join are able to provide their pupils with log-in details to use Letter-join at home. Inside this guide you’ll find Letter-join’s resources matched to each Key Stage to help improve your child’s handwriting.

Letter-join

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Log in and get started with Letter-join at home

Schools with a Letter-join subscription will issue you log-in details to use at home.

Letter-join is an advanced web site that is compatible with most Internet browsers on desktop computers as well as on iPads, Windows and Android tablets. We recommend Google Chrome, Firefox and Safari.

Because of issues with script fonts please do not use Internet Explorer.

Your school will have chosen their preferred letterforms for f, k, w, x and z which will be used when you log in to the Home Edition.

TIP! Always ensure that you practise writing the same letterforms that your school has chosen.

At a glance: the Letter-join menu

You can access Letter-join on PCs and tablets.

Touch-screen activities for iPads and tablets.

Watch animations with spoken instructions.

Practice worksheets accompany all sections.
Early Years, Foundation Stage

Patterns and pre-cursive shapes can be challenging for young children. To support what children are learning at school, Letter-join has all the resources parents and children will need to continue practise at home.

Letter-join’s animations present pre-cursive patterns with fun sounds that can be copied by air-writing or by tracing on tablets and, most importantly, by practising with a pencil on printed worksheets.

This naturally leads on to the introduction of real letters, reinforcing at home what your children are learning at school.

Watching and copying the shapes of letters and the various joining techniques as presented on the Letter-join animations, will enable children to learn to write simple words in the correct cursive style at this early stage.

Why not try...

DRAWING PATTERNS ON SCREEN AND PAPER
You can practise Letter-join touch-screen activities on iPads and tablets. Back up formative fun on screen with print-out sheets for real handwriting practice. This chapter will show you lots of ideas for younger children.
Early Years, Foundation Stage

Develop writing skills with Pre-cursive Patterns

Choose interactive/touch-screen activities and printed worksheets as a foundation to handwriting.

Letter-join provides a selection of fun pre-cursive patterns for EYFS children that cover all handwriting movements. These encourage fine and gross motor skills as a foundation to cursive handwriting.

Letter-join's pre-cursive patterns are grouped into logical sets of similar shapes, and each pattern is animated, accompanied by exciting sounds.

Fine motor control can be gained by finger writing on tablets or with a pencil using the worksheets. Worksheets consist of lines of patterns for tracing using a pencil or crayon and a simple drawing which can be ‘coloured-in’ using the patterns of that group.

Pre-cursive patterns cover all writing shapes.

Watch patterns, such as jellies, with fun sounds.

Practise tracing patterns on IWBs or tablets.

Fun worksheets are available for all the pattern sets for handwriting practice using pencils and crayons.

Letters and Words made simple

Watch, practise, trace and copy - the easy way to learn cursive handwriting.

Magic Words palettes

Word animations cover all the joining methods between characters.

Watch how each of the letters are written and joined.

You can control the speed of ‘word’ animations.

Example of an Easy word typed into the Magic Words section. Letter-join uses the correct joins between letters ready to be practised on a tablet or printed out for real handwriting practice.

Rainbow

Blackboard

Magic Words includes colourful palettes where words can be typed onto the screen and then written over using a finger or a stylus for practice and fun. For more interaction it also features a simple star rated scoring system.

Tailor-made Worksheets

Use the Worksheet Generator to create cursive worksheets quickly in different formats. See page 18.
Key Stage 1

At home, Letter-join is the perfect handwriting companion for KS1 children with easy access to the same resources as school.

With gentle encouragement children will be aiming to produce neat handwriting with consistent spacing and letter sizes.

Practicing handwriting exercises both on tablets and with pencils on worksheets can be fun with real improvements achieved surprisingly quickly.

The following KS1 pages cover a variety of Letter-join resources to achieve this including speedy ‘on the go’ iPad activities and a multitude of worksheets for real handwriting practice. When using Letter-join at home parents can be sure that they are using the same letterforms and resources as chosen by school.

Why not try...

NEW CHARACTERS

KS1 is the time to introduce new characters; capital letters, numbers, printed letters, mathematical symbols and punctuation. Letter-join animates all of these to show the correct formation and provides ready-made worksheets. This chapter covers a large array of Letter-join activities to give a real boost to children’s handwriting skills.
Developing children’s handwriting skills

Use Letter-join to teach harder letters and words to help children gain confidence in their handwriting.

Letter-join’s animations of letters and words make it easy to learn and write the letters of the alphabet. The words used in the examples have been carefully selected to cover all cursive joining methods enabling children to quickly become more natural with the variety of strokes between different letter shapes.

At school KS1 children will be learning:

- The correct methods for writing upper and lower case letters with the correct joins.

Try Letter Families worksheets

Help children familiarise similar letter shapes and become confident at writing differently formed characters.

Capital and Printed Letters, Numbers and Punctuation - all have animations and practice worksheets at the ready!

Practice worksheets

Letter-join’s worksheets for KS1 include practice sheets for all of the animated letters and words, word lists, high frequency words and sequencing sentences. See page 18 for a full listing of Extra Resources.

Try Letter Families worksheets

Help children familiarise similar letter shapes and become confident at writing differently formed characters.

Using the familiar format of long ladders, curly caterpillars, one-armed robots and zig-zag letters, Letter-join’s worksheets can be printed out for tracing and copying the different letter families.

Vibrant graphics add to the recognition of each letter family and your school’s alternative letterforms are automatically used.

Letters and Words cover all the joining techniques between cursive characters.

After watching the animations, it’s easy to use an, iPad or tablet using a finger or stylus to familiarise and practise the letter shapes and joining techniques. The pre-prepared worksheets, which are available in three different sizes, can be easily printed for that all too important real handwriting practice.

100 High Frequency Words

This water people which

Printable worksheets in three sizes in trace and copy format

New worksheets are regularly added to the Letter-join web site.

Animations for Capitals, Printed Letters, Numbers, Punctuation and Symbols can be found under the ‘More Letters’ menu tab.

Times tables worksheets are available in the Extra Resources section to help with number writing.

Letter Families worksheets can be found under Extra Resources → Printouts, Handouts and Posters → Supplementary Worksheets.
Letter-join’s Magic Words – touch-screen activities

The Magic Words section is a great way for Key Stage 1 children to type in their own words and practise handwriting using the touch-screen capabilities of iPads and tablets. With five exciting backgrounds to choose from and a simple star reward function, children will enjoy using Letter-join on their tablets at school and at home.

Practise number writing with times tables printouts

Letter-join includes a full set of times tables worksheets from 2 through to 12 times tables which are great for practising number writing. They are provided in look, trace and copy format which are ideal for homework sheets!

Introduce form-filling

Children can learn how to write within the constraints of a form using printed and capital letters. Letter-join includes a selection of forms for Key Stages 1 and 2.

Handwriting worksheets

Handwriting and spelling go together and Letter-join provides many spelling worksheets for practising cursive handwriting. These include:

• Pangram sentences using all the letters of the alphabet.
• High frequency words for Key Stage 1.
• Sequencing sentences.
• Cloze exercises.

Practise Speedy Writing with Dictation Exercises

Letter-join’s Dictation Exercises are a great introduction to speedy writing and help build up writing stamina. They also help in learning how to produce a first draft, proof checking and writing out a final copy. The dictation exercises for KSs include a simple spelling list, a list of 2 digit numbers and an easy poem.

Pangram sentences using all the letters of the alphabet

Example: 'The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.'

High frequency words for Key Stage 1

Example: 'The, and, is, are, to, of, in, that, had, has.'

Cloze exercises

Example: 'The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.' With words missing and children have to fill in the gaps.

Handwriting worksheets

Times tables worksheet example

A dictation list written out as a first draft and a final copy. See page 18 for more information about Dictation Exercises.

Key Stage 1

Letter-join’s Dictation Exercises are a great introduction to speedy writing and help build up writing stamina. They also help in learning how to produce a first draft, proof checking and writing out a final copy. The dictation exercises for KSs include a simple spelling list, a list of 2 digit numbers and an easy poem.
Key Stage 2

Longer passages of text, written speedily and neatly are the aims of KS2.

Ready for the final round of handwriting challenges? When children practice these they’ll be true handwriting champions!

Building on KS1 skills, children will be writing passages of text neatly and speedily, labelling diagrams using printed letters appropriately and filling in forms using legible writing.

Letter-join’s resources will help children acquire a feel for neatness and quality in their final handwritten work.

Why not try...

SATS WORKSHEETS
A series of worksheets to help with SATs revision as well as reinforcing cursive handwriting. Titles include Synonyms, Antonyms and Prepositions, all topics that will have been taught at school.

Challenging dictation exercises
These exercises will help with speedy note-taking, stamina and encourage proof-checking.

Extra animations and practice sheets for KS2
Try to reinforce other characters such as numerals, punctuation and mathematical symbols in the ‘More Letters’ section.

Practice worksheets

Word lists
Letter-join combines handwriting practice with other KS2 tasks such as recommended word lists.

French positioning vocabulary
Good for handwriting practice as well as introducing new French vocabulary.

Advanced form-filling
Promote accuracy and neatness of printed and capital letters with advanced form-filling worksheets.

Accomplishing neat handwriting

Use Letter-join’s advanced handwriting exercises for KS2 to gain quality, speed and stamina.

‘All about me’ is a short length spoken word passage for children to listen to and practice dictation.

These worksheets can be found in the “Extra Resources” section of Letter-join.
Extra Resources

Find your way around Letter-join’s ever-growing list of worksheets and handwriting exercises.

Letter-join contains a large variety of worksheets and printouts to help with learning and practising handwriting. These will all use your school's preferred letterforms for cursive f, k, w, x and z.

Worksheets, handouts and posters

**CURSIVE WORKSHEETS**
- High frequency words
- Letter families
- Sequencing sentences
- Simple for years 1-2 and harder for years 2-3

**WORD lists**
- Lists for years 3-4 and years 5-6

**CLOZE sentences**

**PANGRAMS**
- Worksheets of sentences using all the letters of the alphabet

**PRINTED WORKSHEETS**
- Labelling exercises
- Topic worksheets for labelling using printed letters
- Form-filling exercises
- Easy form, harder form and a form with boxes
- Times tables
- For number practice

**POSTERS AND HANDOUTS**
- Alphabet printouts
- Classroom banner
- Lined writing paper

**DICTATION exercises**
To help promote neatness, speedy handwriting and proof-checking

**EASY PRACTICE**
- Word list, number list and simple poem

**HARDER EXERCISES**
- List of simple phrases, simple additions and a harder poem

**MORE CHALLENGING**
- Shopping list, challenging numbers and a written passage

Worksheet Generator

Create your own cursive handwriting worksheets for spelling lists, sentence sheets and posters.

**Worksheets with lead-in lines**
The on-screen Worksheet Generator with lead-in lines uses your internet browser to publish your own fully-cursive worksheets using the Letter-join typeface. There are options to include guidelines or just print the baseline. Your school's choices of preferred letterforms for f, k, w, x and z will be used.

**PDF Worksheet Generator (with no lead-in lines)**
Initially, some schools prefer to teach their children to write their cursive letters with a lead-out line, but no lead-in line. The PDF Worksheet Generator allows you to create worksheets using this format.

What is a lead-in-line?
Most schools will teach cursive handwriting with lead-in lines and we advise using them when practising at home. Pupils will be able to confirm the preferred option with their school.

A spelling list showing days of the week created on the Worksheet Generator with lead-in lines.

A4 alphabet printouts
Classroom banner
Lined writing paper
Correct Posture for Handwriting

Sitting comfortably and holding the pencil correctly will aid neater handwriting and help children write for longer periods.

How to sit comfortably

- Sit with a straight back, not leaning over the page
- Pull the chair close in to the table
- Keep feet flat on the floor
- Sit right back in the seat
- The table reaches to below elbow height

How to hold a pencil correctly using the tripod pencil grip

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

Seating and handwriting positioning for left-handed children

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow right-handed teachers as they demonstrate letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

Inclusion

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, should be given one-to-one tuition to help achieve their optimum handwriting level.

Pens and pencils

Children are encouraged to start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used. More competent children can use a ballpoint pen.
LOGGING IN TO LETTER-JOIN

I have forgotten/lost my home log-in details.
Please contact your school for confirmation of your school's home user name and password.

I would like Letter-join to remember my User name and Password.
Most browsers have an option where user names and passwords can be remembered. Please see your browser's preferences.

PRINTING WORKSHEETS

The worksheets are printing very faint and the guidelines are not showing.
Some laser printers can struggle to print from a web page. Save the worksheet as a PDF (see above) and print from the PDF.

The tracing words are printing in black when I generate a worksheet.
If you are using Firefox as your browser, in order to print the tracing words in grey you need to select the 'Print Background' option from Page Setup.
Firefox: File > Page Setup > tick Print Background.

WORKSHEET GENERATOR

The font is not joining correctly on the Worksheet Generator.
Do not use Internet Explorer for Letter-join! The Worksheet Generator will produce the font correctly if using Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari internet browsers. Internet Explorer, as yet, does not have the advanced font features for cursive script. If using Internet Explorer you can use the PDF Worksheet Generator but this will not show the lead-in lines.

How do I save worksheets created using the Worksheet Generator?
The Google Chrome browser has a facility to save pages as PDF files. Create your worksheet as normal using Google Chrome and select Ctrl P then change 'Destination' to 'Save as PDF'.

The lines are over-running when I print a generated worksheet.
We recommend a maximum number of letters/words/lines for each character size on the Worksheet Generator. If you reach these recommendations the lines may over-run. Try reducing the number of words per line.