

# STEP 1: Getting Ready to Write

**Before anyone begins to write you must follow these steps:**

## Getting the Right Pen/ Pencil

Pencils should be of a standard width and triangular in shape preferably with a soft lead. Pencils must always be relatively long (over 15 cm) as a short pencil will be difficult to control and adversely affect neatness.

Pencils, preferably HB (#2) or 2B, should be sharpened regularly, as children frequently forget to do this.

The pen should also have a triangular shape if possible. This encourages a comfortable tripod grip, which will promote neatness and speed. Any pen lids should be placed on the table, not on top of the pen. Doing this keeps the pen lighter and writing will be faster.

**Examples:** Please see pens/pencils on: [www.magiclinkhandwriting.com](http://www.magiclinkhandwriting.com)

Faber Castell Black-lead Grip 2001 2B



Maped Black'Peps HB 2 Pencil



Staedtler Noris Ergosoft 152 Pencil HB2



Pentel Wow! Mechanical Pencil



Pentel Gel K437CR



Lamy Safari Fountain Pen



Staedtler Triplus Ball M Pen



Staedtler Triplus Fineliner 334



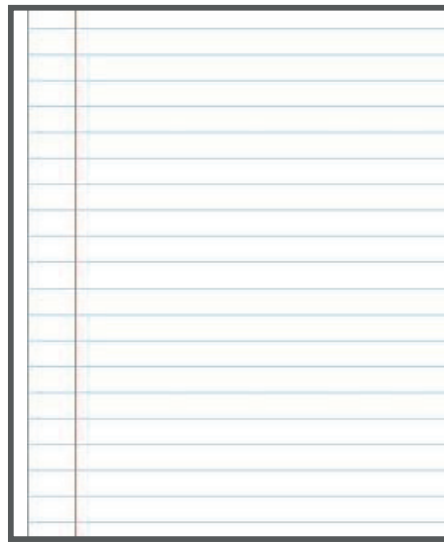
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## Paper

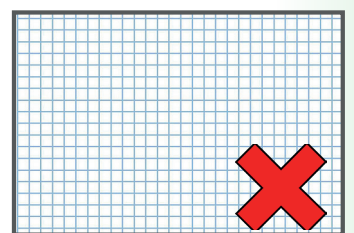
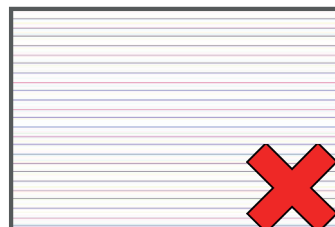
The Magic Link Handwriting Programme teaches joined-up writing on A4 size, white, wide-ruled (8mm) paper.

It is important to use paper that has a margin. This reflects the same measurements/ dimensions as found in school exercise books and standard wide-ruled file paper. When following this programme please avoid using any other paper, such as plain paper, 'handwriting' paper, coloured paper, thin lined paper, creased paper or paper without a margin. Do not use spiral bound books as the binding may get in the way of the handwriting.

## Examples:



## Do not use:

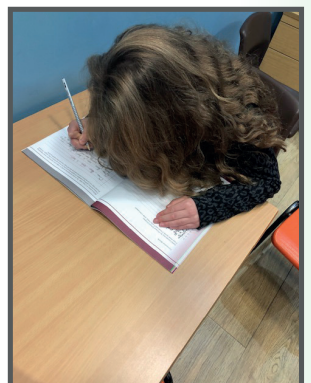
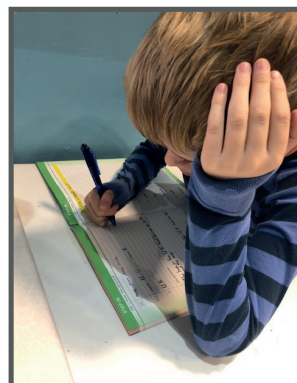
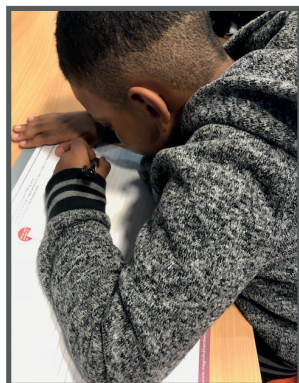
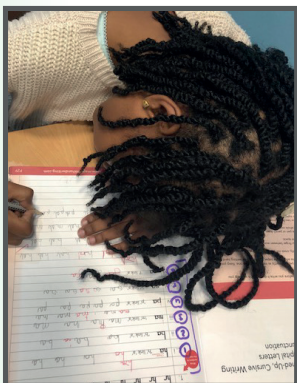
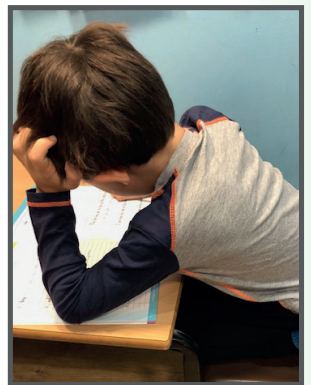
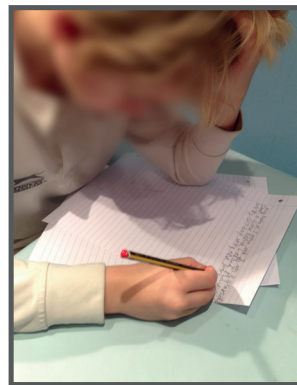
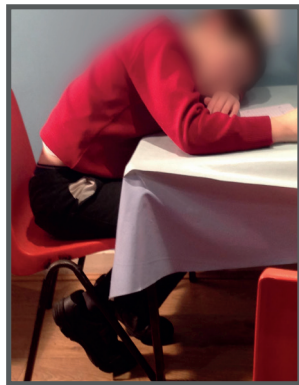
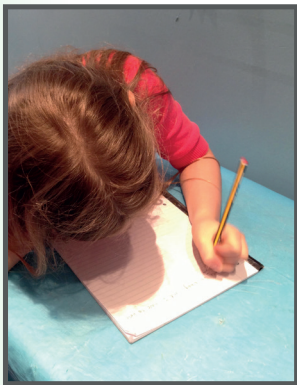


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## Correct Body Posture

1. Back and shoulders should be upright. Never place your head too near to the paper.
2. Table height must be at a comfortable level, usually just above the waist. Paper can be slightly slanted if this feels comfortable. Often left-handed people find writing more comfortable with the paper slanted.
3. Sleeves must be folded or rolled back and hands should be clean.
4. Nails of the writing hand should be short because long nails may prevent a good pencil grip.
5. Feet should be on the ground if possible. Legs must not be crossed. Do not lean back on the chair whilst writing. There must be no foot tapping.
6. Chairs should be at the right height so the table top is just above waist level. Do not swivel or lean back on your chair. If needed, cushions can be placed on low chairs or the height of office chairs can be adjusted.
7. Long hair must be tied back as it is sometimes a distraction and can obscure vision.

## How NOT to Sit



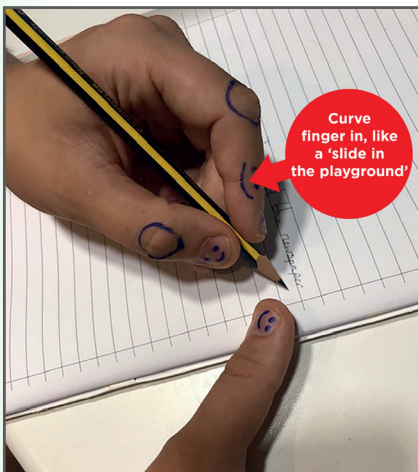


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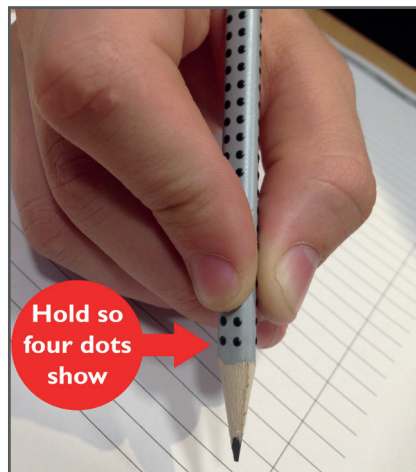
## How to Hold a Pen/Pencil

1. Slant the pencil towards the shoulder of the writing hand. To help achieve the correct angle, the pencil should land on the crease of the hand between thumb and index finger (I call this the "helicopter pad"). Pens/pencils should NOT be held upright.
2. No crossover thumb! A crossover thumb will hide much of what is written and prevent fine motor movements. Instead make "frog's legs" fingers. The index finger and thumb MUST be bent. Do not allow the fingers to touch and always try to let a small strip of the pencil show between the fingers, as this will keep your fingers separated.
3. Keep index finger curved in like a "slide in the playground". This may feel uncomfortable at first, but after a few days the grip will become more natural and second nature. It is often usual for finger muscles to ache. This is because you are not used to this grip but the ache should disappear as your finger muscles adapt.
4. Both fingers must be held about 1-2cm above the paper, so as to keep the letters visible and not hidden. A small face can be drawn on both nails and it is important to always show the lower part of the pencil.

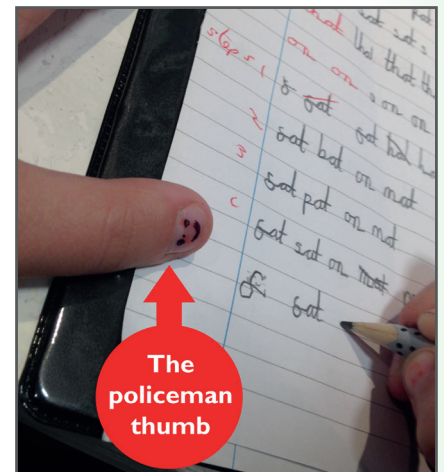
Left-handed grip



Right-handed grip



Policeman thumb



5. The non-writing hand (which has a "policeman thumb") must always be kept on the edge of the paper to stop the paper from moving (see picture above).
6. Try not to press too hard on the paper when you write, as this makes writing slower and your finger muscles may ache. A padded clipboard is useful to support paper, as it provides a distraction-free surface for writing and helps to keep paper in place.