

## **Here are some frequent question concerning handwriting:**

**What is the link between handwriting and literacy development?** By learning vertical manuscript, children learn to write the same letters they see in books, strengthening the reading-writing connection. Learning to print focuses the student's attention on the distinctive shapes and features of letters, leading to improved letter recognition.

**Does handwriting instruction support proficient creative writing skill?** Students who have developed the mechanical process of handwriting have a big advantage when it comes to writing stories or essays. These students are able to devote more concentration to the content of the writing and the way ideas are expressed.

**Is the Zaner-Bloser vertical alphabet developmentally appropriate?** By age three, children produce drawings that are composed of the same basic lines that constitute manuscript letters: vertical lines, horizontal lines, and circles. Because of such early experience, most 6- and 7-year-olds can create these vertical and horizontal lines more easily than the relatively complicated connections associated with slanted manuscript or cursive handwriting.

**Why is the Zaner-Bloser alphabet easier to write?** The popularity of the vertical manuscript alphabet is a direct result of it being an easily learned system that relates closely to initial learning. Because there are only four simple strokes that make up the vertical manuscript alphabet, writing the letterforms is quickly mastered by young children.

**Is the Zaner-Bloser vertical alphabet easier for students to read?** Yes. This is why highway signs and other public signs are most often printed in vertical letter styles. Newspapers, novels, textbooks, computers, and television also make use of vertical manuscript letters because people must be able to read the messages quickly and without confusion. Indeed, advertisers and designers who use type for visual communication favor manuscript and avoid italic because italic is difficult to read. Wherever readability is important, vertical manuscript letters are used.

**Why is the Zaner-Bloser vertical alphabet easier for educators to teach?** Before starting school, many children learn how to write traditional (vertical) manuscript letters from their parents, preschool teachers, or by modeling from their storybooks and environment. Children who are introduced to a slanted alphabet in school have to relearn many of the

letters they can already write. Children are already familiar with vertical letterforms as they have learned them at home and in their environment.

**Does slanted manuscript help with students' transition to cursive?**

Proponents of modified italic letterforms say that initial instruction in their alphabet will facilitate the transition from manuscript to cursive writing, but there is no research available to support this claim. In fact, in an extensive study of the available research, Graham (1992) finds no evidence substantiating claims that using a slanted manuscript alphabet enhances the transition to writing cursive letters.

**Why is handwriting important?** We expect students to master the writing process and to demonstrate their proficiency on a variety of district and statewide tests. If a student is having difficulty creating the characters needed to produce the next word, some of the ideas and writing plans he or she is trying to remember will undoubtedly be lost, as most of the student's attention is consumed by trying to transcribe words to text.

**Is good handwriting linked with good thinking?** The mental processes involved in handwriting are connected to other important learning functions such as storing information in memory, retrieving information, manipulating letters, and linking them to sound when spelling.

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