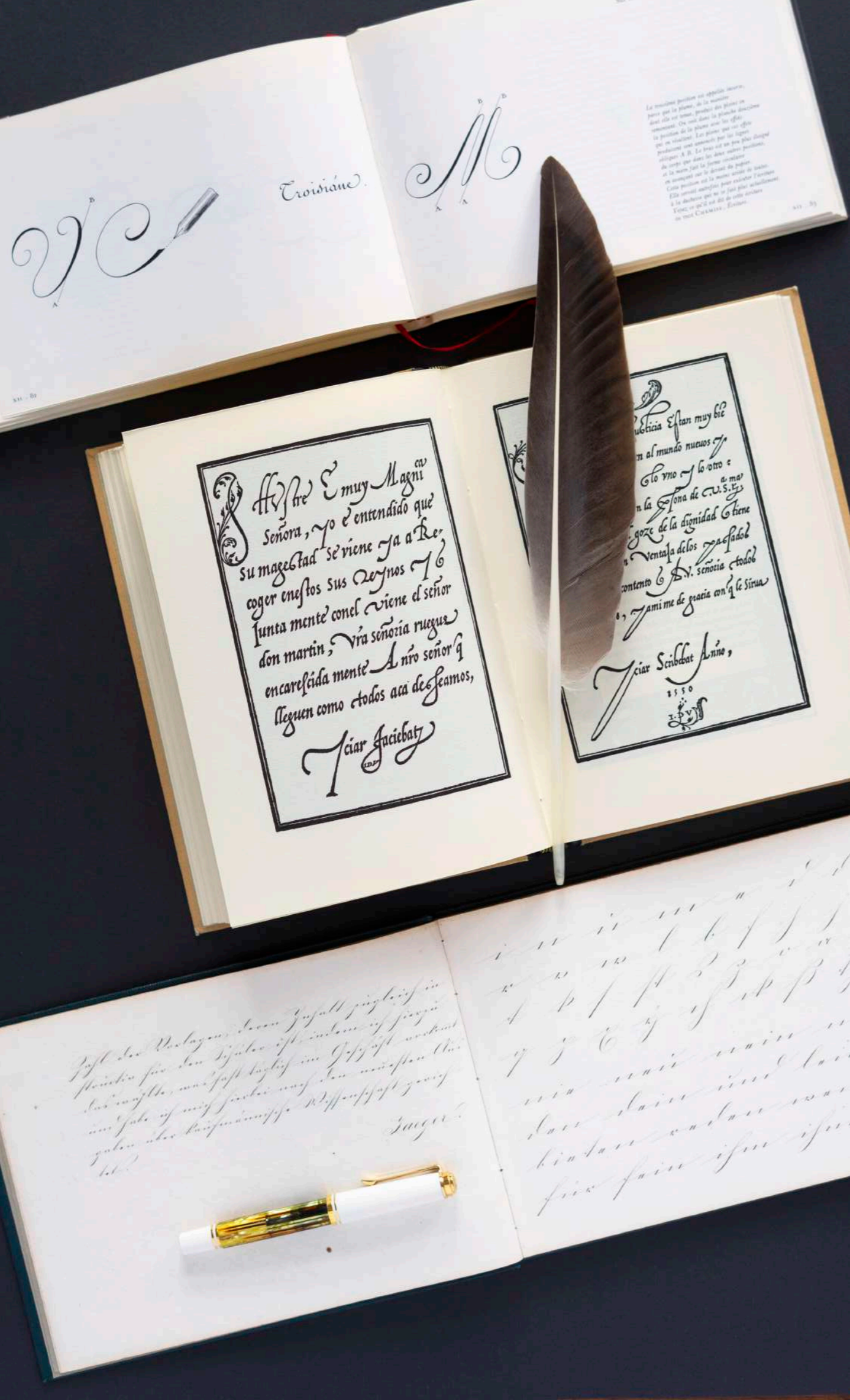


Copperplate Calligraphy

FROM THE FIRST STEPS TO MASTERING
POINTED PEN CALLIGRAPHY

Stefanie Weigele

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Fascination of Handwriting

In sketchbooks, letters, alphabet studies or applied in full in wedding calligraphy or on family trees - originally written pointed pen calligraphy and scripts inspired by it have become more and more common again in recent years. I find all forms exciting: whether wild handwriting, exquisitely classic scripts or modern interpretations with traditional roots.

THE DELIGHT OF THE ANALOGUE



BARBARA CALZOLARI & TIZIANA GIRONI – Family tree (detail)

Part of the fascination for pointed pen calligraphy is certainly due to the fact that many people are rediscovering how much fun it is to create something by hand with simple tools. (In the beginning you only need a pen, ink and suitable paper!) Interestingly, social media platforms make it much easier today than in the past to network with other calligraphy enthusiasts and learn from each other (however, comparing becomes tougher too!).



JOHN STEVENS – Free Work



JOI HUNT – Envelope calligraphy



Copy of a letter from Robert Schumann for Brigitte magazine (Photography: BORIS KUMICAK)

Beautiful handwriting = calligraphy? That's not so easy to answer. As explained previously, strictly speaking calligraphy is always deliberately formed, mostly after an existing exemplar. On the other hand, I find that there is indeed completely free and spontaneous handwriting with calligraphic elements – just as there is calligraphy with echoes from informal handwriting.

From a historical point of view, everyday cursives also found their way into the canon of book hands through formalization, which in turn were simplified and altered again to form new italics or, in the other direction, were transformed into fonts for printing.

If scripts had not influenced and changed each other, we would all still write Roman Cursive!

What does the term "Lettering" or "Handlettering" mean? Lettering means that letters are not written spontaneously, but drawn. Whether the design is planned or not doesn't matter – in many cases, a calligraphic design can or must be planned as well. What is decisive for the definition is the realization: in lettering, bold letters or shades are first drawn as a silhouette and then filled in, whereas in calligraphy they are created by pressure (swell strokes) or by the width of the tool.

Historical initials in medieval codices are thus strictly speaking lettering, since they were first drawn as contours, in some cases partially gilded and finally painted in colour(s). The actual text, on the other hand, was written calligraphically by the scribes (mostly men at the time).

Both handwritten, calligraphic and hand-lettered scripts can be used as design templates to create fonts – thanks to open type technology, it is easier today than in the days of lead type to create convincing script fonts.



Today, lettering is often done digitally – although the first drafts are still mostly created on paper and can sometimes stand on their own. (Lettering by CHRIS CAMPE)



Handlettering sketch

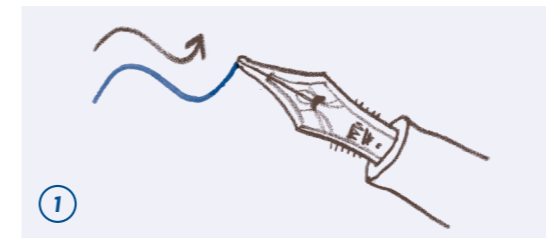


Lettering (vectorization)



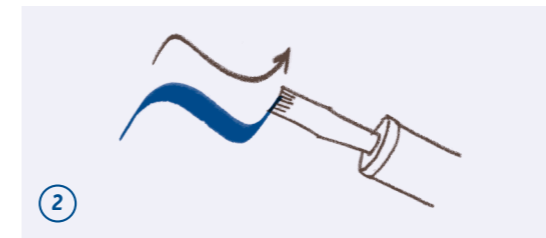
THE CALLIGRAPHIC STROKE

Basically there are three different tooltraces in calligraphy, which can be created with a variety of writing instruments: **1)** The most common stroke is the monoline of unchanging thickness which you create with a non-flexible pointed writing tool, used for normal handwriting, but also for drawing or for handlettering as an outline. In ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, rushes were used for a very long time which produced a more or less constant thick stroke.



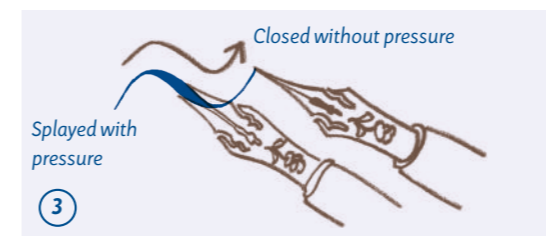
The **monoline** is a simple line of constant stroke width, here written with a fountain pen.

2) If you use a broad writing tool, you can create a modulated stroke of varying thickness. Its form and thickness depend on the width of the tip (which can be only half a millimeter, or ten) and of the angle at which you hold it in regard to the writing surface. This is the line that shaped the appearance of traditional Western, Hebrew and Arabic calligraphy for many centuries.



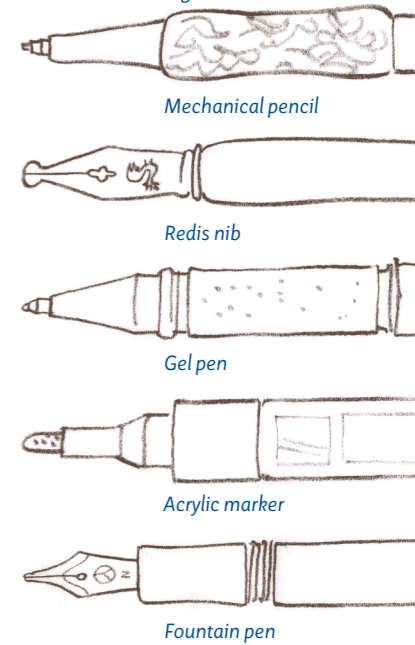
The **modulated stroke** resembles a ribbon lying on paper, here written with an automatic pen.

3) The name says it all: the swell stroke is a line that swells to thick shades and abbs away to a hairline. A swell strokes is achieved by pressing on a flexible, pointed writing tool. Depending on the flexibility of the nib or brush tip, you can create a more or less strong stroke contrast. Traditionally, we encounter this stroke in Asian calligraphy, where a brush is used. In Europe, master scribes used flexible pointed quills mainly for flourishing, before they were increasingly used for everyday writing, probably from the beginning of the 19th century onwards.

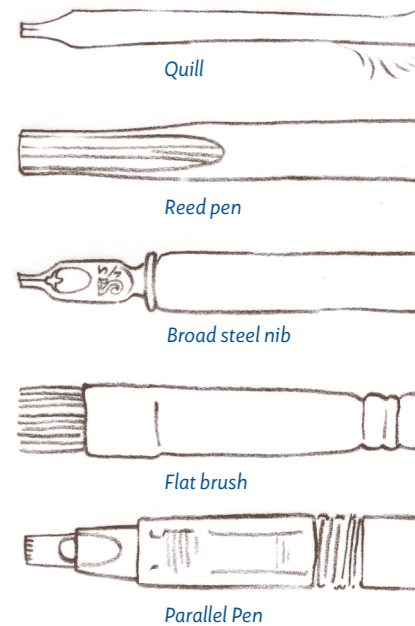


Pointed nibs can be used to create **swell strokes** of varying thickness, depending on the flexibility and pressure.

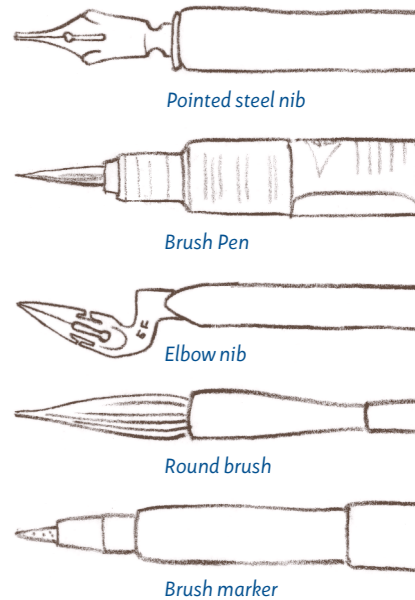
1) Some monolinear writing tools:



2) Typical broad writing tools:



3) Pointed & flexible writing tools:



Dipping In—the First Steps

On the following pages I would like to give you the practical tools you need to learn not only Copperplate, but also other pointed pen scripts. These methods and techniques are therefore independent of a particular script style. In the chapter “Alphabets” from page 189 you will find tips for further pointed pen scripts and personal variants!

YOUR BASIC CALLIGRAPHY KIT

To start with calligraphy, you only need a few, fairly inexpensive materials – this makes it very accessible compared to oil painting or skiing, for example. If you have ever followed online discussions about the prices of antique nibs, you can laugh out loud now – but in principle my statement is still true!

I suggest the following tools and materials as basic equipment – they have proven to be a guarantee for success in my workshops:

1) Oblique pen holder This kind of holder holds the nib at a slanted angle – I use it for all scripts which, like Copperplate, have an extreme script inclination. For a start, it makes it easier to achieve the correct script angle, but it has also a number of other advantages that I will go into in more detail in a moment. The simplest models are made of plastic, but there are also quite inexpensive oblique holders made of wood.

2) Straight pen holder With an elbow nib like the one on the left, this »normal« holder is an alternative to the slanted one. Sadly, modern elbow nibs like this aren't very flexible, but maybe you're lucky and can find some antique elbow nibs (there are some that are less stiff). And in case you realise that you just don't like oblique holders (there are quite some calligraphers who don't), you can simply use the straight holder with any pointed nib.

3) Pointed nibs for the start I recommend the nibs shown on the left because they are very beginner-friendly, i.e. not scratchy, and are also suitable for less optimal papers. They also fit into the simple plastic pen holder. Please buy all three nibs – they all differ a little. There will definitely be one that suits you better than the others! You just have to try it out.

4) Walnut ink or 5) Pelikan ink 4001 in blue black Unfortunately, like some of the more special supplies, walnut ink can mainly be ordered online. Pelikan ink 4001 in blue-black is also good for practicing, but as it is an acidic ink (iron gall ink) it is not as gentle on your nibs as walnut ink. This simply means that your nib becomes dull or scratchy a little faster.

6) Paper – very simple Most cheaper paper like copying paper is not well suited for calligraphy (or even writing with a fountain pen) – it tends to bleed and feather, which can be very frustrating. What works nicely is for example Clairefontaine »Smart Paper«. It comes in different weights, the lighter ones are very nice for fixing it on a grid (so you can see it through). Many calligraphers like Rhodia paper which is less transparent and therefore well suited for printing practice sheets with letter exemplars on it (using a copier or your own printer) and then writing directly on this.

A number of other utensils make everyday life easier for calligraphers (some of them you'll probably have already at home): removable adhesive tape (Washi-Tape) fixes the writing sheets uncomplicatedly on the grid sheets, small water glasses and cotton cloths serve to clean the nibs, small vials are useful to hold small amounts of ink. A pipette helps to fill them without spiling. Knife benches or chopstick trays are excellent for putting your holders down without ink accidents. And a pencil is essential!

You will find detailed information on all the materials described here and other suitable tools in Chapter VII (starting on page 211). See page 234 for information on where to buy calligraphy supplies.



An elbow nib (here by Mitchell) can be inserted into a straight holder.



Brause 361 (steno nib)



Gillot 404



Hiro Leonardt No 41 (crown nib)



Eight Strokes get you Twenty-Six Letters

To be honest, it was the wonderful capitals and ornamental flourishes which first attracted me to Copperplate calligraphy, not the lowercase letters which seem rather modest and unassuming. Nevertheless, they form the backbone which holds everything together. In this chapter I'd like to introduce you to the elegant minuscules of Copperplate. They're extremely simple and consist of a number of basic strokes which can be combined to form (practically) all of the letters. I'd also like to outline the formal properties of this script for you and explain how the letters can be joined to make words and sentences. Many useful exercises will help you to practice what you've learned.

- 40 **The English Look** — 40 Proportion — 41 Slant — 43 Speed
- 43 Learn the rules before you break them
- 44 **Historical Roots & Characteristics** — 44 Practical scripts versus book hands
- 44 From Gothic to the Modern Era — 45 To England via detours
- 46 A round script family — 47 From Goose Quill to Steel Pen
- 48 **Understanding and writing the basic strokes** — 48 The Beautiful Eight
- 49 lead-in stroke — 50 stem — 51 underturn — 52 overturn — 52 compound curve
- 53 loops — 54 small oval — 56 Writing words - two basic rules
- 58 **The simple minuscules:** l, i, u, t, b, w
- 62 **Compound curved:** n, m, h, k, p, r, v, w, x, z
- 70 **With loops:** j, y, z, l, b, h, k, f
- 76 **All about ovals:** a, d, g, q, o, e, c, x, s, ß
- 84 **Writing words & texts** — 84 Connecting Letters — 85 spacing
- 86 letter groups — 87 Ligatures & special cases — 89 Finally writing texts!
- 92 vary script size — 94 Mini Project "Wrapping Paper"
- 95 **Project 1:** "Quote" – Designing a short text

Compound Curved: n, m, h, k, p, r, v, w, x, z

The lowercase letters in this group each consist of an overturn and/or a compound curve as the main element. You will also need a few additional strokes, some of which you already know.

THE LOWERCASE n

The **n** is formed from two basic strokes without further additions: Write an overturn and connect it with a compound curve. I find this easiest if I start the compound curve a lowercase further down in the stem of the first stroke – so I can branch off in a flowing movement and form the curve.

Tips for practising Here, too, you need to write even curves and make the branching of the compound curve from the stem nice and smooth. Write “nut” – if you turn your page upside down, the counter spaces and curves should look identical.

nut

I will show you two typical slip-ups that pose a small challenge here: 1) The angle in the **n** is too acute, and so is the triangular counter space (remember the **l**? There we were talking about the white space at the base – this is exactly the same shape, just rotated 180 degree). The problem here is that the compound curve starts too far down in the

stem – so branch off further up. 2) Here, on the other hand, the compound curve starts too far up, creating an unsightly bend. So let the compound curve start further down to avoid this.



You can also use the „ruler trick“ to check if your overturns are even – just cover the lower two thirds of the letters.

THE LOWERCASE m

If you’ve mastered the **n**, the **m** is very easy – just repeat the overturn twice and then connect the compound curve, just like you did with **n**.

Tips for practising In general, the same applies as for **n**. Also make sure that both counter spaces within the curves are the same width – the second half of this **m** is too narrow. Stay within the grid. Also, the transitions in the compound curve between hairlines and swell are here too abrupt. Try out the exercise words *mit*, *mill* or *mull* – don’t write **m** in the middle or end of a word yet please.



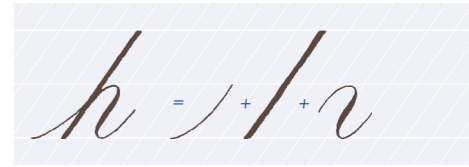
+ 1 + 2 = m

THE SIMPLE LOWERCASE h (WITHOUT LOOP)

An uncomplicated letter: combine entry stroke, stem and compound curve to form the **h** without a loop. When connecting the strokes, please pay attention to everything we have discussed in the previous letters – then you can’t do much wrong!

Tips for practising You can see below what can happen when you write several longer strokes: 1) Here the script slant says goodbye and virtually topples over, apart from the bouncing baseline which should also be taken care of. 2) These letters become more and more vertical, opposite to the previous example. That’s why I recommend using the grid in this learning phase – it reminds you of the slant and proportions and makes it easier to keep to it!

After you have practised the **h** separately, try writing words, for example *hub*, *hut*, *hit*.



You will find the lowercase **h** with loop on page 73.

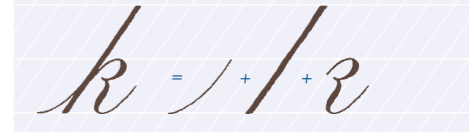
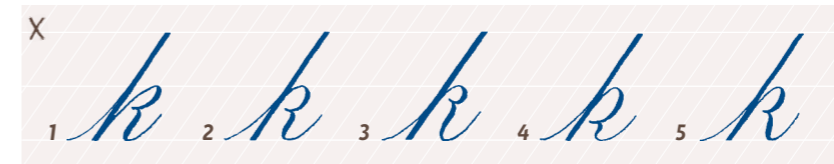
Remember to keep dragging your paper into your „sweet spot“ on your desk – where your hands naturally come to rest. This is also the best way to see the script slant!

THE SIMPLE LOWERCASE k

The **k** is also available in this simple version with a stem without loop. A new element – a curly bracket – follows the entry stroke with the stem (like in **h**).

Tips for practising Practice the curly bracket detached from the stem first. It is a form that resembles a majuscule **R**. Make sure that the loop in this “**R**” does not take up much more than a third of the x-height and that all strokes are parallel. If you pay attention to the following points, not much can go wrong: 1) The upstroke to the curly bracket is too slanting – this creates a large gap between the stem and the bracket, and the upper part of the bracket has become too pointed. 2) Here the opposite is the problem. 3) The lower part of the **k** is too big. 4) Here the upper part is too large. Pay attention to the proportion of the two parts of the bracket, as described above! 5) Another typical mistake: The leg of the **k** is too upright. This comes strongly from handwriting and because we “know” that a **k** has a leg that sticks out to the right. But please not in Copperplate ...

A suitable exercise word is *kitty* or *kin*.



You will find the lowercase **k** with loop on page 73.

The downstrokes are parallel!

Take special care with the placement of the hairline – please note: 1) This hairline crosses the stem too far up. 2) Here it crosses too far down – in both cases this results in an unbalanced letter.



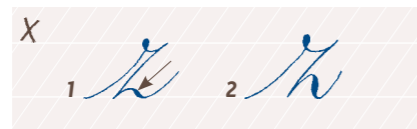
The hairline should cross slightly above the middle. 3) Here, the bold spot on the hairline was created by dragging ink from the downstroke up in the cross stroke.

You can avoid this by drawing the line into the stem in two strokes – similar to the cross stroke of the t. Exercise word: xi.

THE SIMPLE LOWERCASE Z

This version of z is inspired by the already mentioned Spanish calligrapher Valliciergo from the 19th century. Classically, the z used to be written with a flatter and bolder stroke at the bottom (sometimes also at the top), which comes naturally with a goose quill or a straight holder, but is hardly feasible with an oblique pen. Therefore here this alternative version.

Start an upstroke from the middle of the x-height, add a lying comma, and then pull the nib down diagonally in a very slightly curved line (without pressure!). Now make a tiny compound curve – it only goes up to half the x-height.



Tips for practicing Both the mini-compound curve and the diagonal hairline are new and may take some getting used to. Try to avoid the following: 1) This compound curve

is too flat and too thin. The flat shape is, as said before, historically not wrong, but if you use an oblique pen, you cannot draw a swell stroke in this direction. Thusly the letter gets a very weak base without some more boldness here. Also, the curve at the top is too narrow. 2) The diagonal line is too steep here, as is the swell on the compound curve, which is almost vertical. The letter is therefore generally too upright. – The diagonal line must be steeper than the script slant, while you should write the compound curve exactly at a 55 degree angle, as always.

You should first write the z individually or at the beginning of the word, for example zip. There is a little more to consider with the letter spacing before the z.

To Deepen Try this version with a loop on the baseline. It originates from the faster written Roundhand like the looser form of p. It is especially charming at the end of the word, where you can let the swinging line run out in a subtle flourish.

Z

Round Text Copies;

By Willington Clark,

of Christ-Church Southwark.

Aaabbccddeeffggghhijkkllmmm

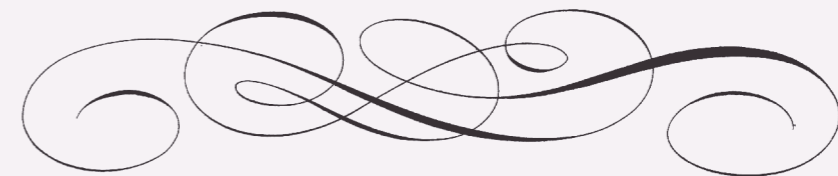
nnooppqrrrssstttuvmvwxxyyzzz.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z.

Authority. Barbarity. Centurions.

Demands. Encomium. Fraternity.



In the above alphabet exemplar by Willington Clark from the Universal Penman (ca. 1740) you can easily recognize the classic shape of the z – in three variations!

Ovals Everywhere: Basics

As with the minuscule letters, I would like to give you a solid foundation for the capital letters, which should enable you to first learn and then vary letters independently. The basis for this is an understanding of the underlying principles of form – and, of course, the internalizing and practicing of the basic strokes!

PROPORTION, SIZE, ETCETERA ...

The majuscules are based on a narrow-height basic form, which is about twice as high as wide – depending on the letter and the type of swashes, the proportions are less fixed here than in the minuscules, where everything is oriented to the width of an n.

The uppercase height (= size) of the letters usually corresponds to the ascender height – if you use minuscule letters with a loop, i.e. two and a half times the x-height of the lowercase letters. This is probably the most frequently used size, and you will also find it on the template sheets (3:2:3 grid). When using the simplified ascenders without loops and the corresponding reduced line spacing, the capital letters usually are only twice the x-height (1:I:I grid). If necessary, read the sections on line spacing on page <?> again!

The majuscules may be a little fatter than the minuscules – otherwise their size makes them look too light. The slant corresponds to that of the lower case letters – in our case it is at 55 degrees. There are a handful of special cases, which I will deal with in the sections about the corresponding letters.

OVALS – THE HEART OF THE MAJUSCULES

If you look at the majuscules in the overview on page III or the S on the left, you can see that – in contrast to the lower case letters – there are practically no simple, straight lines here. Every stroke swings and is in motion! This is the attraction that distinguishes capital letters for me. This swinging is based on a simple graphic principle: In every capital letter you'll find elongate ovals. This insight is decisive for understanding and for practical application.

Letters, which are based directly on an oval, are not even particularly many – so that may sound a bit abstract at first. Please note that the ovals are not always actually written: In the many cases they are hidden in the white space of the letters, which are enclosed by the actual lines.



In headings, at the beginning of a line, a paragraph or a single word, the capital letters can be much bigger than the minuscules, as you can see in the above example by Nathaniel Dove (1738).



In this S alone there are six ovals to find!



These exercises are shown reduced in size – you will find them in the download sheets in a suitable exercise size.

GETTING WARM WITH THE MAJUSCULES – HOW TO PRACTICE?

In the following sections you will find suggestions on how to prepare for the capital letters, what you should bear in mind regarding to the actual writing movement, as well as detailed descriptions and instructions for all the basic strokes. You don't always have to do all the exercises – as indicated in chapter 2, it's a good idea to adapt your warm-up to what you are about to learn. I recommend to practice the basic oval exercises carefully in any case, even if you may not like „drills“ so much ...

First lowercase letters, then uppercase letters? Whether it makes sense to start with the majuscules is rather controversial. From my point of view, however, there's nothing wrong with starting with the majuscules – graphically they're just so exciting! From my own experience and that of workshop participants, I can say that motivation is enormously powerful and often spurs more on than „regular“ learning.

Please do not write words or even texts in capital letters only! Unlike the Roman Capitalis Monumentalis, which was developed as a pure versal script, and some other historical hands like Uncialis, Copperplate is just not suitable for this because of the many swashes. There are exceptions – such as the use for monograms, for single words as a distinction within a longer text or as a heading – but this requires a lot of experience, sensitivity and skill (see the example on page <?>).

Start with pencil I recommend a series of exercises as warm-up for capital letters before you write the basic strokes, focusing on ovals which are so important. Practice them first with a pencil and larger than shown here: **1)** Narrow oval chains in the script slant – **2)** spirals – **3)** chains of eights – **4)** teardrop chains and **5)** the „ball of wool“ in different variations. This trains effectively the change of direction when writing curves, which is essential for many letters.

Try to perform these drills as accurately as possible, but not too slow (see also the box on the next page!). They are challenging, but will certainly make it easier for you to write the majuscules afterwards. Pay attention to balanced white space, parallel lines and try to see the ovals even where they are „only“ in the white space. These details will later contribute to an even, harmonious calligraphy.



5

The two examples on the left explain the respective writing direction, on the right one possible result. You can also write the ovals closer together or further apart!

If you want, for example, to concentrate on letters with the capital stem, select some of the exercises that contain it or the eights. Of course, you can also invent your own series of drills.

But in any case, I would like to encourage you to go through the second chapter on general pointed pen writing (from page <?>) first, if you have no previous experience, to get to know the basic techniques and skills.

THE UPPERCASE L



L1



L2

Similar letters: D & S.

L1) Begin in the ascender area with a horizontal oval that merges into the capital stem. Then write an elongated loop on the baseline. Continue this stroke in a graceful wavy line that touches the baseline again and ends at about half the x-height.

L2) The second basic shape begins with a simple counterclockwise spiral to the right of the stem, positioned in the script slant. When you arrive at the cap height, write the stem and a loop on the baseline. However, instead of the wavy line of the previous version, this loop continues in an oval curve that forms a tiny loop once it touches the baseline and ends in a hairline.

Tips for practicing If the L should cause you problems, look again in the tips for C & D on the pages <?> or <?>, where both the entry stroke with the lying oval and the horizontal loop are explained in detail. 1) The next letter can be joined directly to both basic shapes. 2) If you use an ornamental exit stroke as in L4, you must leave a small gap:

1 *Lavender* 2 *Lilavati*

In this beautiful historical example by G. Brooks (circa 1740) you'll see that you can leave a tiny gap between L and the following word even with an exit stroke like in L1:

L *Liberty.*

Similar to I, the L is structurally a very simple letter - a stem with a foot (the horizontal line on the baseline). As with all „simple“ letters, careful attention to the proportions is essential! Then you can vary it in many ways (see also right).

Here are some concrete tips to avoid running into the „traps“ that you might encounter when writing the L:

1) In both versions, the foot is too puny - thus the letter stands on a very shaky foundation. 2) These L's have too small entry strokes, and here 3) in addition, the foot is not big enough in proportion to the size of the letter.



To deepen - Letter Variations

There are, I think, a number of very attractive ways to vary the L - here are some suggestions that play with both the entry and exit strokes of the letter:

L3) You already know this flourished lying oval from C6 (see page <?>), here combined with an enlarged foot. The loop on the baseline gets more attention because of its size (and it reflects graphically the tiny loop in the entry stroke).

L4) You can also start L with a simplified entry stroke (see E3 on page <?>). I touched up the shading on the left. The exit stroke ends here in a lying oval, which swings out gently towards the baseline. Do you see how entry and exit stroke responds to each other?

L5) Begin this L with a pretzel, followed by the capital stem. In continuation of the horizontal oval the letter ends in a loop, which extends into the descender area.

L6) A rather dramatic exit stroke with a large loop that extends pretty far down in the descender space, should be counterbalanced by an equally bigger element in the entry stroke, here a simple curl. As always with such versions, think ahead - if one of the next letters has any loops, they might get in conflict with the very exuberant majuscule. In this and the previous two variants you should leave a small space to the next letter.

L7) You can also write a more opulent curl in the entry stroke! As always, be careful with the shades, otherwise it might look ambiguous (possible confusion with Z).

L3



L4



L5



L6



L7





Charming Elegance Flourishing

“And how do you do those pretty swirls?” is what I’m always asked at workshops. As complicated as these flourishes may seem, just as with the letters you can compile spirals, volutes and letter embellishments from a small handful of basic elements. So that it all looks good, there are a few basic rules which help you in your design. You can use flourishes to give your handwriting that certain extra opulence or lend it a nostalgic note (wedding calligraphy is just one of the perfect occasions for doing so). And apart from anything else, it’s fun! This chapter contains lots of practical tips and templates for practicing – and several examples from books of penmanship from various centuries to provide you with inspiration.

171 Flourishing – the basic elements

173 Line Magic – Analysis of Elements

174 Swinging instead of squiggling

175 Easier – with a plan

176 Do’s & Don’ts – Design principles

178 Using flourishes

178 Playground Majuscules

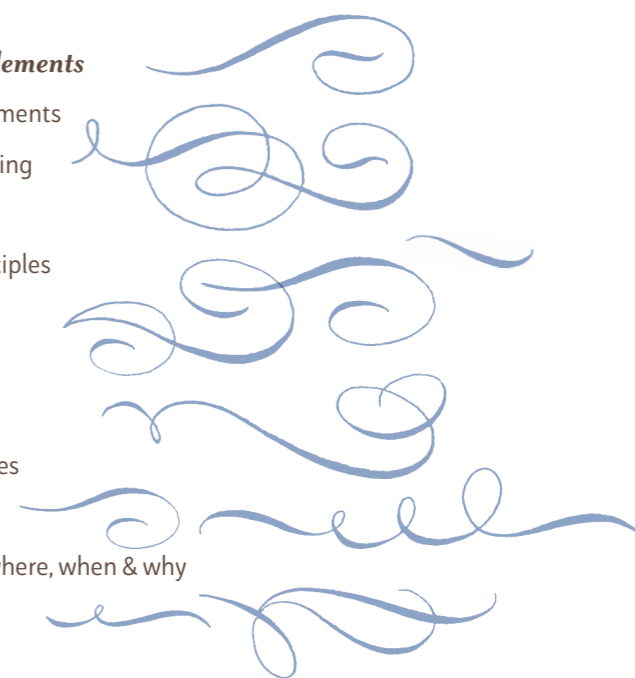
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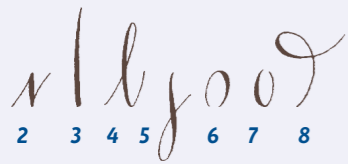
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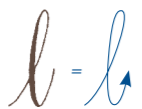
Kurrent is a true handwriting exemplar that you can (but don't have to) write mostly connected and rather fastly!



On the left n, on the right u. A long downstroke always starts with a hairline!



The e (modernized on the left, on the right the form common in the 19th century) is for me the biggest stumbling block in old documents when it comes to legibility...



v and w are also hard to read for modern eyes, so I invented new versions for them as well.

WITH GOTHIC ROOTS — MODERN KURRENT

In case that you have Germans or Austrians among your ancestors, you may have seen old handwritten documents that look familiar and yet strange, where individual words were readable but the majority of the text seems completely illegible? Most certainly it was one or the other variant of German Kurrent script, basically the handwriting form of Fraktur (more on the historical background on the next page). The best known Kurrent script is Sütterlin script from the beginning of the 20th century.

My personal Kurrent exemplar tries to give the impression of a Kurrent from the 18th century or earlier at first glance, but still remain legible. You can see the basic strokes for the minuscules on the left. Here the most important information about their characteristics:

È Form all u and n turns with sharp angles (upstroke 1) and angular compound curve 2)). Write a sort of lying comma above u in the ascender to distinguish it from n. This Kurrent version is perpendicular to the baseline, especially clear to see in letters with a long stem (downstroke 3)), such as f and ß.

È I have modernized (or latinized) some of the weirder forms of e, h, k, p, s, v, w and y, which make the original script difficult to decipher. To use the long s would be correct, strictly speaking, but not a must (I think ...). You'll find the "original" historical letterforms printed in blue on the right!

È Write the ascender loops 4) of b, f, h and l in one stroke, i.e. without the invisible "kink" as in Copperplate.

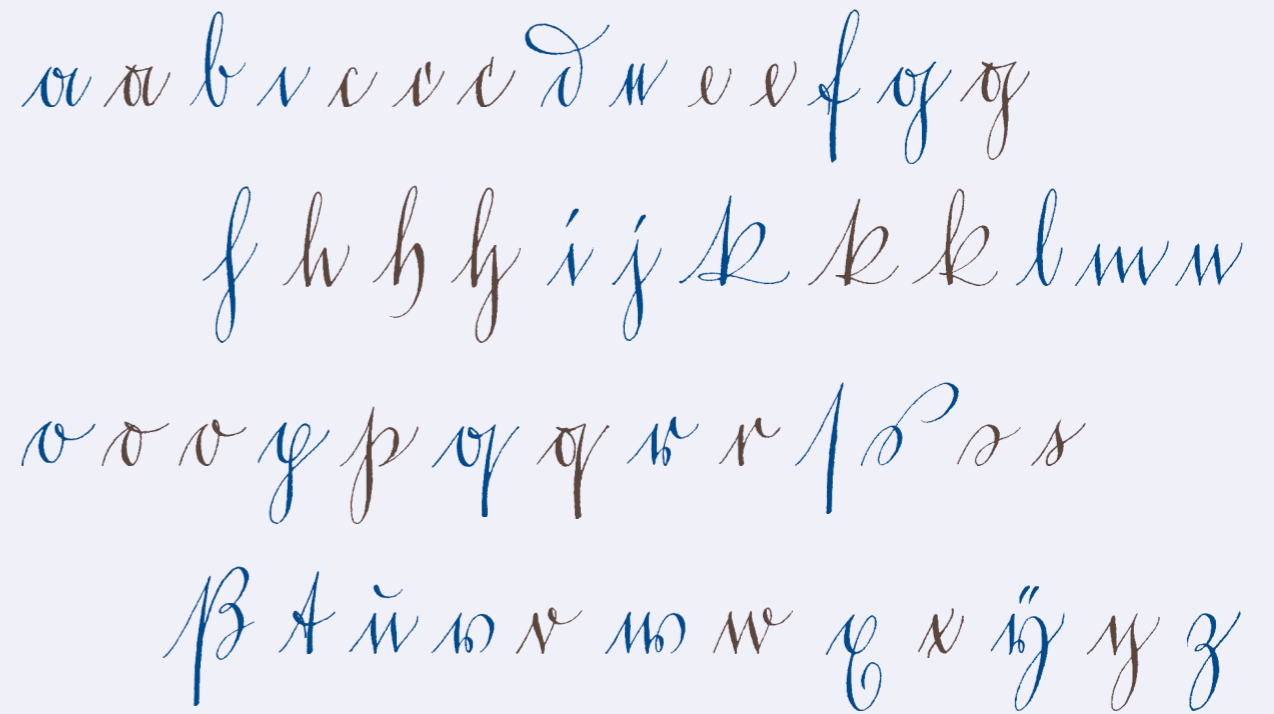
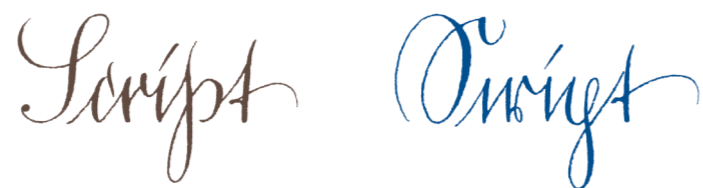
È All descender loops 5) are formed as curving swell strokes, starting with a hairline at or slightly above the x-height.

È Write the small oval 6) narrowly and end with an open or closed loop at the x-height, which forms the connection to the next letter. The clockwise inverted oval 7) appears in the historical v and w, among others.

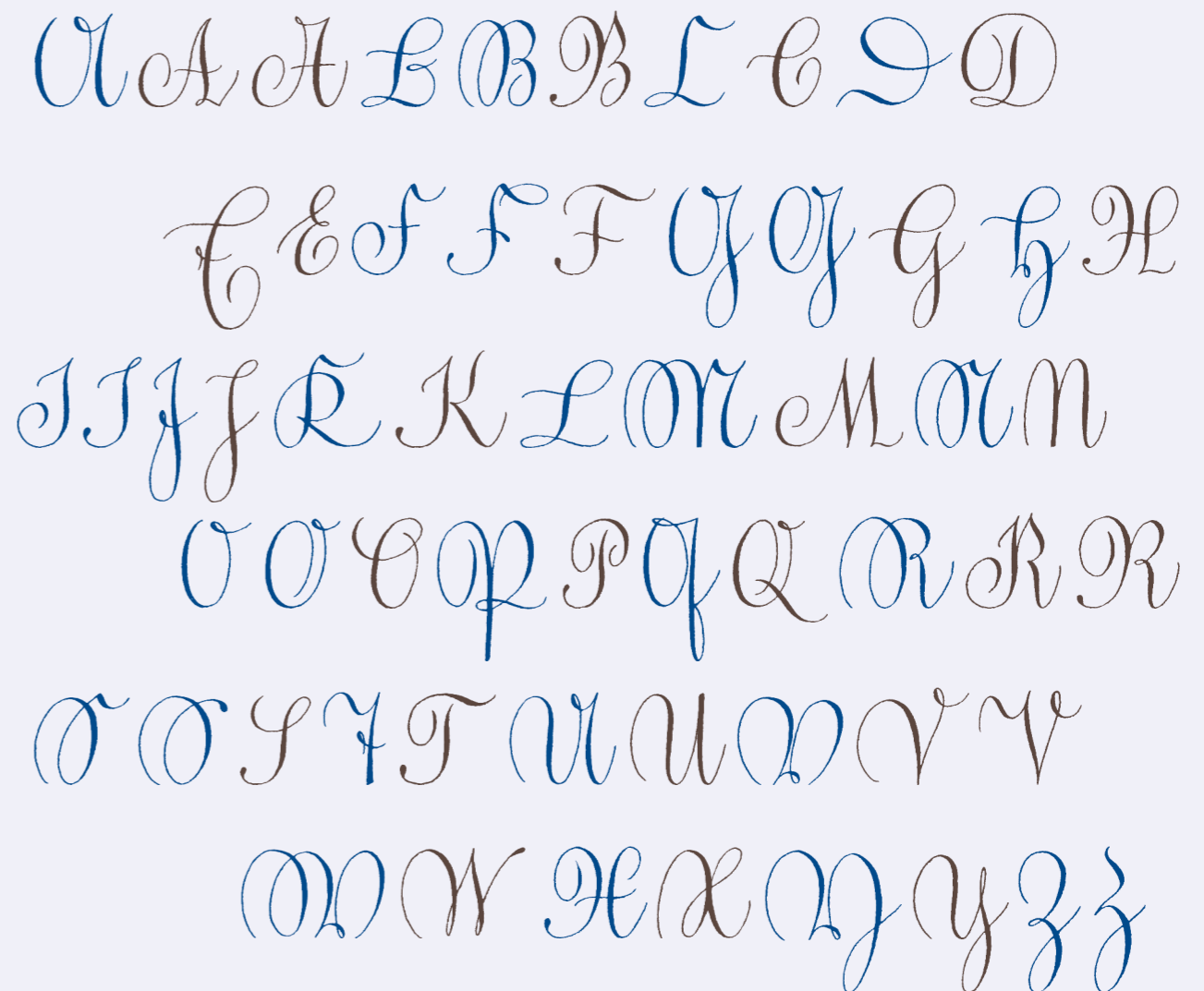
È You'll need the basic stroke 8) for d. It begins like an o, and then the upstroke is drawn to the left into the ascender area, so that it ends in a loop. Thus it does not connect to the next letter! The cross stroke of t, however, is connected directly to the next letter.

È I also adapted some of the majuscules - which are derived from Fraktur - to our modern-day visual habits. You'll easily identify their basic strokes to practice them separately if need be - you already know all the ovals, loops etc. in principle!

Tips for practising As a descendant of an everyday handwriting style, to my eyes Modern Kurrent looks best in small size when used for larger amounts of text! On page 8 you can see an example of use.



E, H and P possess descenders that do not occur in their „Latin“ script counterparts. I also find the original forms of B, C, K, S, V and W. need a bit of getting used to.



Beyond Pointed Pen

Carrying a calligraphy kit with inkpots prone to spilling and damageable nibs around everywhere is unfortunately not very practical. If you still like to do calligraphy in between and on the road, that shouldn't stop you: You can also work on your calligraphy skills with a fineliner, fountain pen or pencil. Either write monolinear, or retouch the thick-and-thins.

MONOLINE SCRIPTS

To write Copperplate, you do not absolutely need to use a pointed nib. Although its character changes when the line width is no longer variable, the basic structure and proportions can be created with a "normal", modern writing instrument – as you saw in the pencil exercises. The advantage of that is, of course, that you can also practice with everyday pencils on ordinary paper. For layouts I usually use a pencil, too, because I can sketch out design variations much faster than with a dip nib.

Such monolinear scripts are not only practical for practising and scribbling, but can also stand on their own. For me, they have a peculiar charm. They are a fine choice when you want to write on more problematic, more structured or coated coloured papers, or on non-paper stuff generally – use for example white or metallic gel pens or markers for special effects on wood, glass or whatever you fancy (see also the chapter on materials starting on page 211). I particularly like writing with a fountain pen – it looks very good, but is quicker than with a pointed nib.

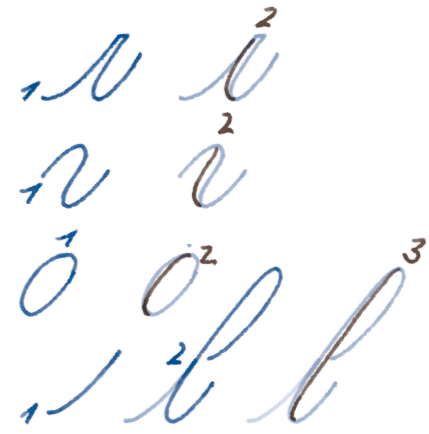
Tips for practising The close relationship between Copperplate and some typical school's handwriting styles cannot be overlooked if you write it without swell strokes. Therefore, peculiarities from personal handwriting quickly creep in (if you learned a cursive in school). This need not be a mistake – but if you want to achieve a more formal look, stick closely to the basic strokes, which are now sufficiently familiar to you. Try out other scripts such as Kurrent with simple monolinear strokes!

CALLIGRAPHIC LETTERING

You can create the look of calligraphic scripts like Copperplate, which are originally created with swellstrokes (or a broad pen ductus), with the help of a simple monolinear writing instrument. There are different names for this technique – "Faux Calligraphy" is quite common. I prefer to call it "Lettering", because first outlines of the letters are to be

drawn and then filled in if desired. This method, which is described in detail in Tommy Thompson's "Script Lettering for Artists", is also very suitable for large-format designs.

The basic technique is easy: write each "swell stroke" with a double line to create a stronger impression of the downstroke. The best way to achieve the proportions and spacing is not to add them at the end, but organically while writing as shown with the basic strokes (here, I've shown four basic strokes are used as an example – you'll get the idea). I find it grafically very attractive to leave the double lines open. You either need a rather fine pen or you must not write too small – it only looks really good if the open counters remain open throughout. If you



Isabella

write very small letters, some strokes tend to fill in, and that doesn't look consistent (the picture here is reduced to 50%).

Of course, you can also fill the white spaces with ink to give the exact impression of a pointed pen script. In this case, you should make sure that the connections are as clean as possible and flush with the lines you



Illustrative calendar entry with calligraphic lettering by ANNE ELSER in the styles "Open-Shaded Script" and "Cursive Crush".

Maximilian

wrote first – these small irregularities can look charming and lively in the first, open variant, but tend to look more like errors here.

Of course, you can also create such a calligraphic lettering with a vector program on your computer. In this way, the handmade charm is lost a bit, but you gain precision and finesse (see e.g. the T-shirt on page 12). This approach also forms the basis for script fonts (e.g. page <ÜS>, page 18). However, both techniques are beyond the scope of this book – see page <ÜS> for book tips!

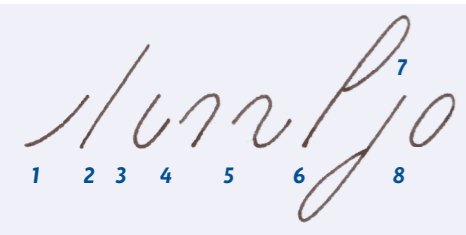
Tips for practising Practice the stroke sequences with the basic strokes to get a feeling for how to get the distances and proportions right.

"Beyond pointed pen" also means: There are many other writing tools that invite you to experiment and vary pointed pen alphabets: Try out brushpens as in the example below, test writing with balsa wood strips, brushes or special nibs, take a look at a Gothic script like Fraktur with pointed pen, or get inspired by a script font or one of the many historical master scribes' books – the possibilities are almost endless!



Above: Brush script by FOZZY CASTRO-DAYRIT

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



Majuscules and even flourishes can also be realized very nicely with monolinear tools.



If you like "real" cursives that can be written largely connected, I recommend to have a look at different school handwriting models, also in an international comparison – I personally like the American cursive particularly well, which is the "little sister" of Spencerian, so to speak.



Write the "swell stroke" as a separate line as shown here.

Of Pens, Inks, Paper, etcetera

Even if you are now getting on well with your basic calligraphy tools and supplies: Here you will find a larger selection of materials such as different types of nibs, pen holders, dye-based and pigment-based inks, artist's colors and pigments including instructions how to make them work for you. You'll also get information about different types of paper suitable for pointed pen calligraphy. Finally, there are recommendations for a number of practical tools to make your calligrapher's daily routine as smooth as it gets!

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