

Notes for parents and carers

Topic	Teaching tip	Key vocabulary	Extension activity
Straight lines page 4	Do some body and finger warm-ups. Motor skills are crucial to handwriting development.	mark, line, straight, up, down	Encourage making straight lines in different ways – in the air, in steam on a window, in mud.
Curvy lines page 5	Encourage mark-making with different writing implements. Let your child decide which hand they prefer to write with.	curvy, loopy, wavy, round, bumpy	Give your child coloured finger paints and a large piece of paper to create their own curvy lines.
Zigzag lines page 6	Model the correct pencil grip between thumb and forefinger, resting on the third finger. This will take practice.	zigzag, sloping, thick, thin, pattern	Role-play witches and wizards together. Cast spells by drawing zigzag lines in the air with a wand.
Mixed lines page 7	Make sure your child is sitting comfortably with feet flat on the floor, back straight, forearm on the table and a fist's distance between body and table.	pencil, line, straight, wiggly, bendy	Draw different kinds of giant lines together on the ground outside in chalk. Then both try walking heel-toe over the lines.
Print around us page 8	The focus in Reception is on lower-case letters, but it's important for your child to be aware of capital letters in the world around them.	sign, notice, print, capital letter, lower-case letter	Go on a 'print walk' together. See how many signs your child can spot, read them aloud and talk about what they're for.
Names page 9	If your child hasn't learnt to write their name yet, write it for them to copy. Point out the capital letter.	name, my, your, her, his	Help your child to make a real name sign for their bedroom door.
The straight-down team: l page 10	Say "all the way down and flick". Encourage your child to practise in the air, to get a feel for the movement.	straight, long, lion, leg, lobster	With your child, make a set of 'l's out of pipe cleaners.
The straight-down team: t page 11	Say "all the way down and flick, pencil off and line across". Explain that 't' is like 'l' with a line across.	across, trace, tall, train, tiger	Challenge your child to make some 't's out of play dough.
The straight-down team: i page 12	Say "down and flick, pencil off and dot on top". Encourage writing the dot carefully, but not too big.	flick, dot, above, ink, insect	Write letters on each other's backs with a finger. Take turns to guess when one of you has written an 'i'.
The straight-down team: j page 13	Say "down and a tail, pencil off and dot on top". Explain that 'j' is like 'i' with a curved tail, not a flick.	tail, down, top, jungle, jug	Ask your child to write a 'j' on a sheet of paper. Take it in turns to draw 'j' animals or objects around it.
The straight-down team: u page 14	Say "down, curve under, up, down and flick".	write, short, up, umbrella, underpants	Help your child to write 'u's in the air outside using a closed umbrella.
The straight-down team: y page 15	Say "down, curve under, up, down and a tail". Explain that the tail sits below the line and the body sits on the line.	sit, below, position, yum, yak	Help your child to write huge straight-down team letters on the beach or in a sandpit, using a stick.
The roundabout team: c page 16	Say "round the roundabout and stop at the curl". Show how this team's letters start at 1 o'clock and go anticlockwise.	1 o'clock, round, curl, caterpillar, cat	Make some 'c's together by arranging lots of small buttons to form the letter.
The roundabout team: o page 17	Say "round the roundabout and back to the start". Encourage making the 'o' flow in one motion.	start, finish, back, orange, octopus	Ask your child to draw some 'o's as eyes and to create different faces around them.
The roundabout team: a page 18	Say "round the roundabout, back up, down and flick".	round, back, flick, apple, ant	Together, see how many correctly formed 'a's you can write in 1 minute.