

Foundation movements and letter groups

Depending on motor skill similarities, we can divide the letters into groups. An overview is given below together with various exercises. The letters emerge from the foundation movements, which may serve as a warm-up in preparation for writing. At the same time, they are a didactic tool teaching us how letters relate and how they differ, too. See also Letters A to Z.

We will first practice these activities on a large surface. See page 22 for more practice suggestions.

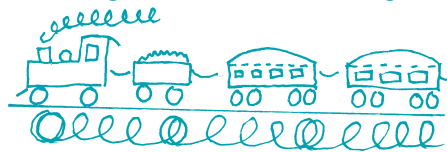
Note: Letters can belong to several groups, either extending across several zones, or according to different styles of writing for one particular letter.

1. Looped garlands

middle zone

e o

Note: the middle zone of garland letter b also belongs to this letter group *b*



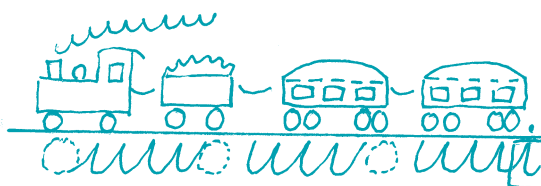
Exercise: The Express Train

We make the garlands roll like an express train. First fill a couple of lines with garlands. Then look for the letters *o* and *e* and trace over them.

2. Unlooped garlands

middle zone

i j u y



i j u y

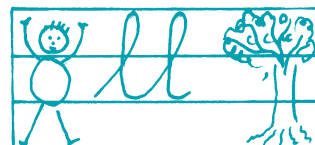
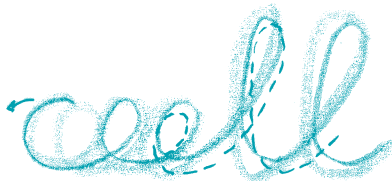
Exercise: The slow train

We draw a couple of circles which will serve as stations. Slowly, while making puffing sounds, we start and stop the train. Next we look for the letters *u* and *i* in the line with unlooped garlands and trace over them. We can extend the letter *i* downward into a *j* and we can extend the letter *u* into a *y*.

3. Garlands, extended upward

upper zone

b d h k l t



If we extend looped garlands upward, they become looped ascenders in the upper zone.



If we extend unlooped garlands upward, they are given straight ascenders in the upper zone.



Leo's furrow may be looped...



or unlooped.

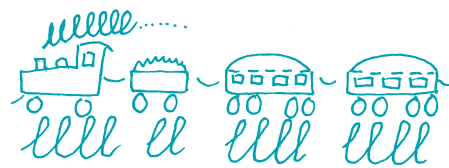
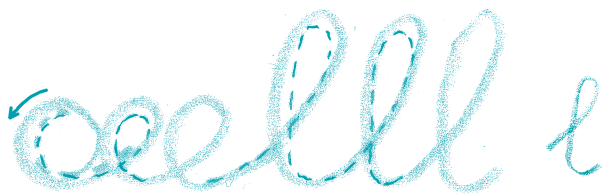
Exercise: Leo the Thinker, see page 30



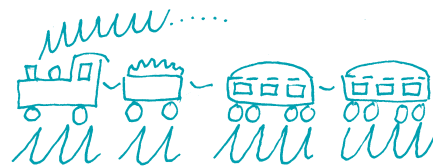
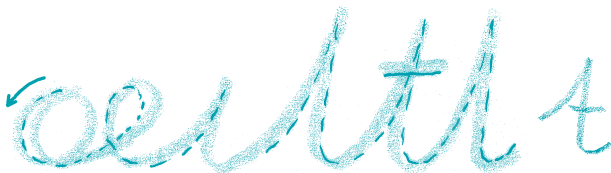
It can be expanded into handwriting practice on lined paper.



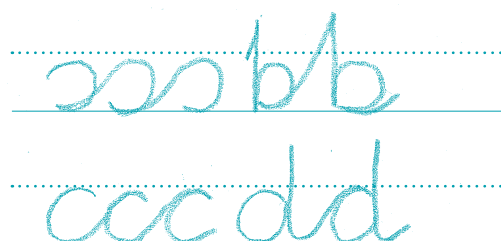
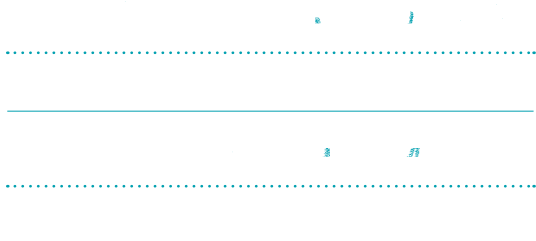
In the looped script, the letters **b**, **h**, **l** and **k** are written with looped furrows (or with the long ears belonging to cartoon figures Crinklina and Lapino, see page 48/49).



The looped **l** consists of an express train, extending upward.



The unlooped **l** and the letter **t** emerge from the slow train, extending upward (see also Sailing Boat).



However, for the letters **b**, **d**, **h** and **k** we need another kind of foundation movement for the middle zone.

If a letter consists of different foundation movements, we could first practice them separately in a warm-up, and then combine them by tracing the relevant letter over them.

4. Looped arches

preparatory exercise for the beach wave



Exercise: Rolling ball

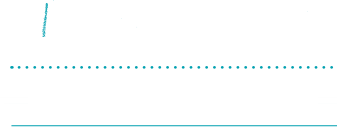
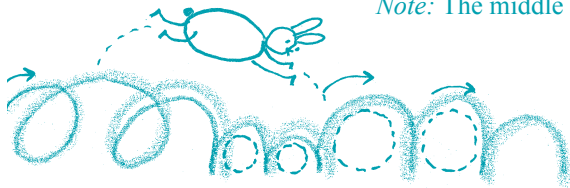
First we allow the ball to roll and bounce freely, then we draw netball posts and throw the ball into the net!

5. Unlooped arches

middle zone

h m n r

Note: The middle zone of the open letter **p** also belongs to this letter group 



Note: Another style of writing for the letter **r** is the wave letter **r** 

Exercise: Hare hop

First draw a couple of large and small stones and make the hare (or Lapino, see page 49) do large and small jumps (wide and narrow). We trace the letters **m** and **n** and **r** and **h** over them.

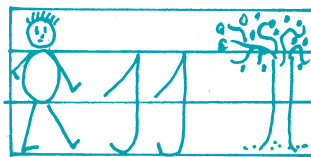
6. Arches extending downward

lower zone

g j p q y



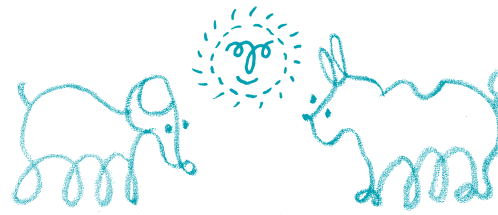
If we extend looped arches downward, they become looped descenders in the lower zone.



If we extend unlooped arches downward, they become poles or hooks downward.



This can be expanded into handwriting practice on lined paper.



In the looped script, the letters **g**, **j** and **y** are written with looped noses (or with looped toes belonging to the cartoon figures Ellybelly and Crinklina).

The open **p** is an immediate result of unlooped arches, extending downward.



However, for the letters **g**, **j** and **y**, and the closed letter **p**, we need another kind of foundation movement for the middle zone.

7. Ocean waves

middle zone

a c d g q



Exercise: Cats/ocean waves (see page 27)

First practice the movement over your head: place your hand(s) at the back of your neck, move them over your head, down to your nose, give it a pinch and say 'Meow!'. And then move your hand(s) back to your neck. Repeat this movement several times. Then fill a couple of lines with ocean waves (open to the right). Trace the letters **a**, **c**, **d**, **g** and **q** over them.

8. Beach waves

middle zone

b k s p



Note: the curved letter **x** is a beach wave next to an ocean wave **x x**



Exercise: Beach Waves (see page 28)

When the ocean waves reach the beach, they turn back and become beach waves (open to the left).

First do the movement over your head: Place your hand(s) on the back of your head, slide them over your head down to your throat and carefully place your hand(s) on your throat. Then move your hand(s) over to the back of your head again. Repeat this movement several times.

First draw a line of ocean waves. Then reverse the paper, or move to the other side of the desk. First do some finger dancing, and then draw a new line of beach waves below. Trace the letters **b**, **k**, **s** and **p** over them.



It is a difficult but challenging exercise to alternate ocean waves and beach waves.

Note: Two possibilities for the letter **s**:

with an angle
with a dash as a tiny extension



9. Standing eight

upper-middle-lower zone

f s



Exercise: Propeller

Write a couple of lines with individual vertical eights, and joined eights. (Finger dancing and consolidation!)
Trace the letters **s** and **f** over them. The letter **f** is the only letter that extends to the upper as well as the lower zone.

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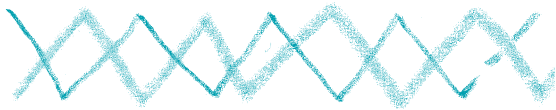
Note: There are various options for the letter **f**, looped and unlooped.

10. Crosses

middle zone

X Z

Note: the angled letter **y** also belongs to this letter group **y**



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Exercise: Cross x and Zoo z

First make a line of crosses: we count out loud 1-2-1-2. Then trace the letters **x** and **z** (and if you like, angled letter **y**) over them. For the letter **x** we count out loud 1-2-1-2, for letter **z** we count 1-2-3-1-2-3, and for the angled letter **y**, we say: short-long-short-long.

Note: Another style of writing for the letter **z** is the wave letter **z** and the lower loop **z**: **z z**

11. Ovals

middle zone

V W



Exercise: Victor and his twin brother

Support your chin between your hands, forming a straight letter **v**. Feel the curve of your chin.
Now draw Victor's oval-shaped head, held between his hands. Draw Victor's beard, with light pressure. Next trace the oval-shaped letter **v** over Victor's beard.



Victor and his twin brother are sitting closely together, both holding their heads in their hands. And both of them have beards.
Trace the oval letter **w** over the twins' beards.