

NSW Foundation style handwriting

Brief background:

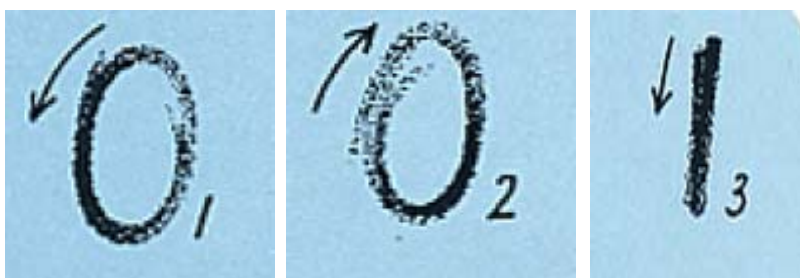
NSW Foundation Style handwriting is the style of handwriting taught in all schools in NSW. The Board of Studies produces the syllabuses that prescribe the curriculum for all NSW schools. The *NSW Board of Studies English K-6 Syllabus* states:

Students should be taught the NSW Foundation Style, which has one basic set of letter shapes that are the same for young students using manuscript handwriting (unjoined letters) and for older students using cursive writing (joined letters). (BOS English K-6 Syllabus 1997, page 77)

Whilst the NSW Board of Studies English K-6 Syllabus identifies what handwriting style is to be taught, the NSW Department of Education has used this style since the late 1980s (*Writing K-12*, NSW DET, 1987).

The NSW Foundation Style is based on research related to children's motor skill development. The Foundation Style emphasises in the early years the gross motor movement of left to right direction across the page and then in later years focuses on finer fluent movements. The movements involved in Foundation Style are ergonomically efficient for both wrist and arm movement and suit both right and left-handed students.

All letters in Foundation Style are based on three basic movements: clockwise ellipse, anti-clockwise ellipse and downward diagonal stroke. These simple movements are combined and repeated to form letter shapes. Rather than the 'bat and ball' style, these patterns assist students to 'pick up' and 'put down' the pencil as little as possible. This way, students can maintain consistency of size and slope. Curves or 'wedges' are also used to assist students to develop a flow. The aim is that by practising these basic movements in both manuscript and cursive writing, students will gradually develop their own fluent and legible style.



The three basic movements:

1. clockwise ellipse
2. anti-clockwise ellipse
3. downward diagonal stroke

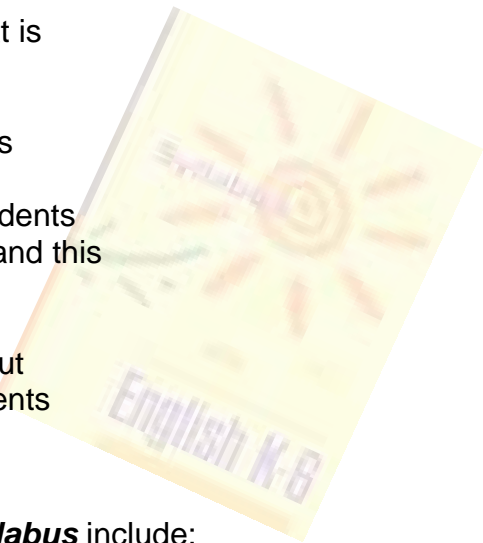
There are several developmental stages of the NSW Foundation Font and individual differences in style are encouraged as students become more proficient writers. By high school, students should have their own fluent and legible style which will serve them well for writing quickly both in lessons and for assessment tasks and examinations.

For more information:

Page 101 (last page). This is a one page overview that is handy for parents, carers and community members.

Pages 42 and 43. These are the handwriting outcomes that provide an overview of what is expected at each stage of learning. (It is important to remember that students will develop their handwriting style at different paces and this is a guide only).

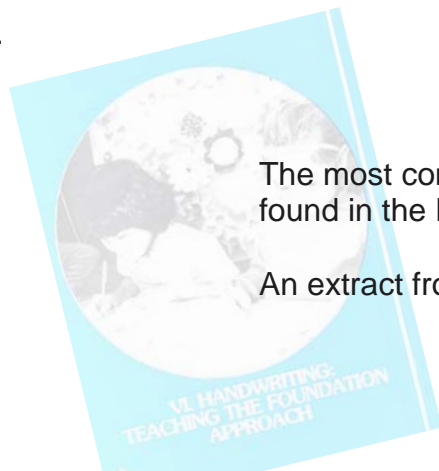
Pages 77 to 83. These pages provide more detail about stage expectations. Page 77 shows the basic movements which are the cornerstones of this style



References to handwriting in the **NSW English K-6 syllabus** include:

An electronic copy of the NSW English K-6 syllabus can be downloaded:
http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/english/pdf_doc/k6_english_syl.pdf

Additional support for parents, carers and community members on writing generally can be downloaded from:
<http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/k6writing.html#support>



The most comprehensive resource on handwriting teaching can be found in the NSW DET publication, **Writing K-12**.

An extract from this document (Pages 148-200) is available at:

Handwriting: V1. Handwriting: Teaching the Foundation Approach (extract from *Writing K-12*, NSW DET, 1987.pdf)

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/primary/english/bank/index.htm>

NSW Foundation handwriting font as a computer font:

Using the NSW Foundation style handwriting font as a computer font is a useful way of exposing students and school communities to the style of handwriting used in primary schools. Teachers may choose to use this font to make up information sheets and home-work or worksheets. Students may also publish their own writing on the computer using NSW foundation style handwriting font.

It is important to note though, that as a teaching tool, computer generated fonts have their limitations. Computer fonts are not designed to account for developmental variations, for example in the later years when students are joining letters. Once letters are joined or looped they vary greatly with different letter combinations.

For example, a joining line or loop is not necessary unless there is something to join it to, e.g.



With yesterday, the first 'y' could be joined, but the second does not need a loop. With computer fonts you only have one 'y' to choose from.

Also, limitations of these computer fonts are more obvious when they are enlarged (i.e. on an interactive white board).

Examples of computer font packages that you can purchase are:

New Horizons - Aussie School Fonts Deluxe:

Includes print, pre cursive, cursive and speed loops, solid, dotted, outlined and guidelines display.

www.nh.com.au

School fonts

Handwriting sets come with seven fonts: Bold, Dots, Cursive, Outline, Regular, Numbered Dots and Numbered Outlines. Lined and dotted thirds are included with the fonts. Site licences are available. All numerals or numbers are included. There is also a NEW Primary Maths Font set available. All fonts are TrueType and scalable to any size, available for both Macintosh and IBM compatible computers (PCs).

<http://www.schoolfonts.com.au>

Ready-Ed Publications

Foundation handwriting in print, cursive, outline, numbered and mathematical symbols.

<http://www.readyed.com.au/books/software/handwriting1.html>

Dominie Educational Resources

Search for English – handwriting to find PC and Mac versions.

<http://www.dominie.com.au/>

(Note: the NSW Department of Education and Training does not endorse any particular commercially produced products. There may be other computer fonts available for purchase.)