

Boiling Spring Academy Virtual Fieldtrip

Video Three: Penmanship



Photo courtesy of Donna Vissman

Boiling Spring Academy Primm Historic Park Brentwood, Tennessee

Presented by



LESSON THREE - PENMANSHIP

Students will need paper and pencil

- Prepare for writing with good posture—feet flat on the floor & back straight.
- Practice holding pencil correctly
- Place 5 lines on a sheet of paper
 - Start with cursive e, l, i, t.
 - Do 10 of each letter—see further instructions in activities below.



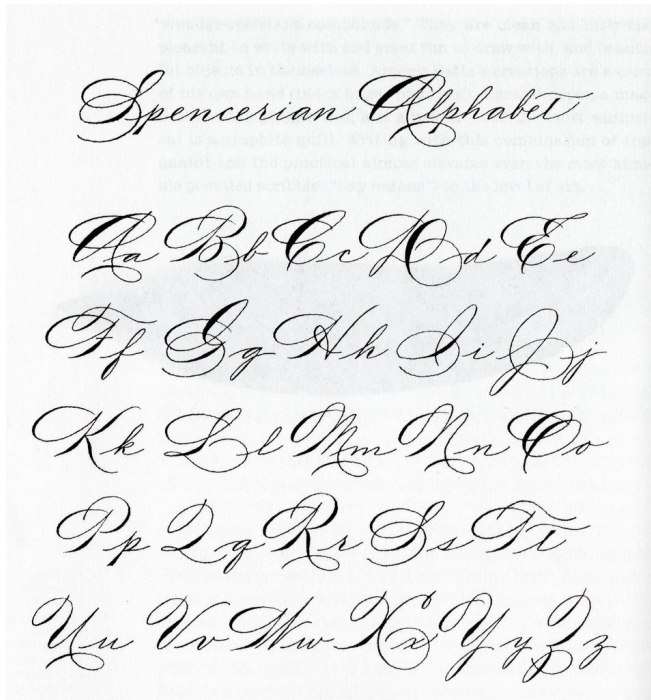
Penmanship-Writing

Penmanship was one of the most important subjects in early schools. Written and verbal were the main two types of communication available.

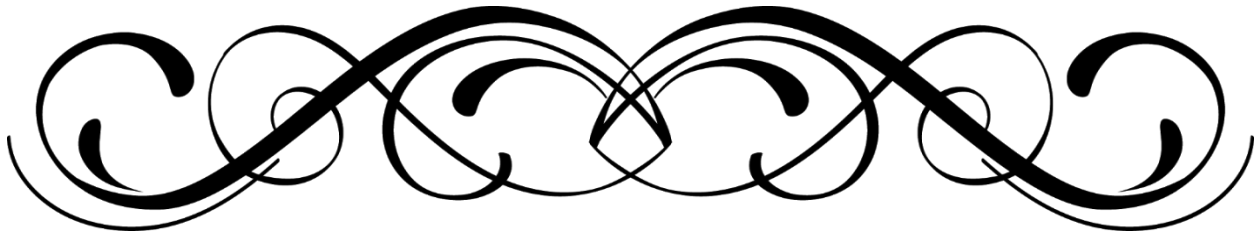


- Today's pens and pencils were not available in the 1800s. Students learned first using slate boards and slate pencils. When writing was mastered, they moved on to writing using quills and ink. These pens did not have ink already in them and had to be repeatedly dipped in ink. Quill pens were made from bird feathers and had to be regularly whittled to sharpen. They lasted about a week before they had to be replaced.
- Only cursive writing was taught in the 1800s.
- Speed doesn't count, Neatness does!
- 4 points of good writing criteria are:
 1. Size
 2. slant
 3. space
 4. alignment
- Did you know there was a lot of different writing scripts taught over time? The Spencerian was popular during the 1800s. It has lots of swirls.

Spencerian Writing Technique Popular during the 1800s



If you have not said a kind word to someone today, or you have not done a kind deed, consider it a day lost and do better tomorrow.



OPTIONAL STUDENT POST-VIDEO ACTIVITIES

Thought Questions

1. Is handwriting more or less important today compared to the 1800's?
2. How do we communicate today that is different from the 1800's?

Activities

1. Practice cursive letters (e l i t) using pencil and paper. Make 10 of each in a row. Circle the best one. Write as many words as you can that are spelled with only these letters.
2. Write the following maxim, or chose a different one from the enclosed list, 5 times. Remember the 4 points of good Penmanship and use those points as criteria to choose your best one. The 4 points are: Size, alignment, slant & space. Use proper capitalization and punctuation.

Honesty is the best policy.

A **MAXIM** is a concisely expressed rule of conduct, a statement of a general truth or saying. Maxims were an important part of passing down moral lessons to children and used in everyday conversation.

MAXIMS:

- Well done is better than well said.
- A fool and his money are soon parted.
- Waste not, want not.
- Lost time is never found.
- A penny saved is a penny earned.
- If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.
- A place for everything, and everything in its place.
- Birds of a feather flock together.
- One rotten apple spoils the whole barrel.
- A good name is far better than great riches.
- A stitch in time saves nine.
- The only way to have a friend is to be one.
- Better late than never, but better still, never late.
- Better to be alone than in bad company.
- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
- It is never too late to learn.
- Kind words cost nothing but are worth much.
- Speak well of your friends, of your enemies say nothing.
- Good, better, best-never let it rest until your better is your best.

3. Write a letter to a child in the Future-Throughout history, people have written letters and kept journals. Modern day historians can use letters and journals to tell us what life was like during different periods in history. These documents are called primary sources, which means a piece of information that was created by someone who witnessed or was part of a historic event. Now it is your turn to write a story to someone in the future. It can be anyone, a friend or maybe even your future child or grandchild! What is your life like during this unique time in history? How has everyday life changed? What are your thoughts and feelings? Write about whatever you'd like and imagine someone reading your words in the future. YOU are writing history!

4. Destroyed Documents-group activity

What happens to documents when we introduce the element of time? Chance takes a hand. There are many things that conspire to destroy documents: water, fire, war, carelessness etc. Watch one of the Boiling Spring videos. Divide students into 6 groups. Each group is to create a primary document by writing about what happened during the video lesson. Their written accounts are the only primary documents about the class happenings. The teacher 'speeds up time'. Students roll the dice and write the number rolled on the top of their primary documents. If a student rolled a:

1. The document was destroyed by water damage, perhaps it was stored in a damp basement or a leaky roof in the attic was the culprit.
2. The document was destroyed by fire
3. The document was destroyed by war
4. The document was lost by carelessness
5. The document was nibbled on by mice
6. The document was the only account of the class activities.

Read the surviving account out loud, and the class determines what details were lost.

(From: Teaching History, John Fines, Ed., Holmes McDougall Seminar Series, Edinburgh, 1983)