Charles & Mason Begin I. g Writing, Copy & Yr, and Beyond

8-8

AN OPEP AND-GO GUIDE FOR TEACHING CHILDREN TO WRITE BASED ON CHARLOTTE MASON PRINCIPLES

YEN CABAG

The first complete guide with materials for teaching children to write based on Charlotte Mason principles

Doors to Discovery

Charlotte Mason Beginning Virung, Copywork and Beyond

AN OPEN / AD-GO GUIDE FOR TEACHING CHIL, REN TO WRITE BASED ON CHIL, REN TO WRITE BASED ON CHIL REN TO WRITE BASED ON

Written by

Yen Cabag

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CONTENTS

Charlotte Mason Method Language Arts Overview	6
How to Use This Book	10
Starting to Write	12
A Note on Handedness	14
Phases in Writing	15
Phase 0.5: Identifying letters	16
Phase 1: Printing	17
Phase 2: Copywork: Copying beau 1 ha writing	28
Supplementary reading (on print of an oppywork)	32
Phase 3: Transcription	34
Phase 4. Prepared Dictatio.	39
Phase 5. The Company are Buck	42
Appendix 1: A Note yslexia	45
Appendix A Moor Dysgraphia	52
Appendix 3.1 Print'g Guide (Alphabetical Order)	56
Appendix 3.1 Printing Guide (Alphabetical Order)	57
Appendix 3.2 Printing Guide (suggested order of difficulty)	58
Appendix 3.2 Printing Guide (suggested order of difficulty)	59
Appendix 3.3 Printing Guide (Lined)	60
Appendix 3.4 Printing Guide (Stroke order)	64
Appendix 4: Sample printing practice	68
Appendix 5: Sample Copywork pages	79

Appendix 6. Sample Transcription Models	81
Till Next Time	82
About the Author	83



Charlotte Mason Method Language Arts Overview

Do you remember the lessons back in school of identifying the different parts of speech, and memorizing different rules in grammar? Unless you had a knack for it, chances are, you would be cringing at the memory of what seemed like hours of drudgery.

When I was in school, I had the seemingly uncanny ability or being able to tell if a sentence sounded right or not, even without really knowing. For rule I seemed to know, instinctively, whether the verb needed an -s at the end or not rever what tense to use.

When it came to spelling, I would also look at a word and thin the mm, that doesn't look right." Then I would try different spellings up it "looked" right, and that's the spelling I would raise on the contest board or look in the state.

It was only when I studied the Charlotte Manne thod that I found an explanation for what I felt, at that time, was an unusual ft.

It turns out it isn't so unusual, _____all. I___m__plain.

Maximizing exposition works on the page

In the Charlotte a son me od, language arts is not taught like we do in the traditional school system when in id to start by memorizing grammar, spelling and other rules from the car of car school career. Instead, it focuses on exposing the child to plenty of excellent in the care literature from an early age, so that he gets a grasp of what sounds and looks right, and even what sounds beautiful.

Living Books

First, the CM method emphasizes the importance of living books. These are books that are excellently-written by someone who is passionate about the subject, resulting in books that are engaging and can stir up the imagination.

We have at least two ways of using living books in a CM homeschool, detailed in the next page.

• Read-alouds

This is done for children who do not have the mechanical skills of reading yet. The parent is the one who reads the stories, but the child is, technically, "reading" through listening. For example, a 6-year-old may not be able to read through A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh by himself, but he can easily follow the story when read by someone else.

• Reading Independently

When the child learns to read by himself, the books are slowed arrest over to him to read. However, a child's listening comprehension tends to be how than his reading comprehension up to the age of about 12. This mean that during that stage, he may be able to understand more than he's able to reachingse. Some tarents use audiobooks, while the child reads along his book, to keep feed og" has a th ideas until he's strong enough to read his books all by himself.

Copywork

Part of the Charlotte Mason means the hing language arts is copywork. This refers to the child copying excellently-titten passages, whether from Scripture, hymns, poetry, or his school boot the string to a beautiful model.

The goal is exceed execution, so we only let him copy the passage once—a difference from many of the buck tork opying we did when we were in school!

Transcription

One step after copywork is transcription. One difference is this: in copywork, the child copies letter by letter from a model right above the line he's writing in. In transcription, he copies from a model, but writes down the words from memory, either one word at a time, or progressing to one phrase at a time.

Copywork and transcription both challenge his observation skills and teaches him to visualize in his mind's eye the correct spelling of words, the proper punctuation, and even helps incorporate grammar structure.

Oral Narration

Narration is a foundational tool in the Charlotte Mason education. For language arts, oral narration trains a child to listen or read attentively and then tell what he has heard or read.

This is not the same as summarizing, and instead we encourage children to tell everything they remember. They may use words from the story itself, or they can use their own words, putting their own individuality into their narrown.

In contrast to traditional school that requires children to wheness is from a young age, we don't ask children to write any narration before the soft. Instead, we strengthen their telling skills through oral narration, which also strengthen their writing and spelling before they are sected to write.

Written Narration: Foundation o^r Aritten Co. position

One thing that saddens me about students dish and English classes is that they usually develop that aversion from being asked of the expansion before they actually have a strong grasp of the language and magnice, the difficulty forming their thoughts in English (especially for students) and species quickly as they would like in order to form a coherent thought on pap

I have student a long from traditional school who shy away from any writing of any kind, possibly because bas experiences being required to write something when they did not have the long yet

In the CM method, we slowly introduce written narration after age 10, and only after the child has had at least a year or two of experience and growth in oral narration.

We believe this is a very strong foundation for written composition, because long before the child needs to learn the different parts of an essay, he already knows how to formulate his thoughts to tell about the books he's read.

Studied Dictation

At about 10 years old and older, we also introduce studied dictation, a step up from copywork, where the child studies a passage and then writes them down, as dictated by

a parent or teacher, one phrase at a time, with the spelling and punctuation from memory.

Poetry

In a CM education, we also expose children to the beauty of language through poetry. From the first year, we read one poem a day, and focus on letting them experience the musicality of words. We don't narrate poetry and instead read them once a day for appreciation purposes.

Shakespeare

Shakespeare is, without a doubt, known as the rester of Englise interature. From a young age, we give our children access to Shake are, up g tales rewritten for children for the first few years and eventually an eight to be actual plays.

Enjoying Language with the Char, Mason Method

If I were to summarize teaching lange vertex using the Charlotte Mason method, I would say that it helps child and the beauty of language, and gives them a strong foundation for expressing anse

In this age where so many as a moving to be heard, such as in blogs and videos, I believe that children edu the using the Charlotte Mason method are able to think analytically, down from the great ideas of higher minds before him, and produce something we have a difference in our world.

How to Use This Book

This little manual is intended as a parent's reference guide or resource on everything related to beginning writing or the technical part of writing. This includes the following:

- Printing
- Copywork
- Transcription
- Prepared Dictation
- Keeping a Commonplace Book

With that said, the scope of this book does not include how do atten narration and composition.

Overall Format for Each Section

Each section is laid out in the following

• Charlotte Mason Quotes Re.

We believe that implement a corlotte Mason homeschool is more than just following a list of things do portant that we as homeschooling parents unlearn our old views conclucation and understand the why behind what we do. Charlotte Mason's Home Education scores is an excellent place to start, and this is our main source for the recommendation of this book.

In each section, we indeavor to take a look at quotes from Charlotte Mason's Home Education series. In all our resources, when applicable, we may also quote some Parents' Review articles, a sort of magazine published during Miss Mason's time where parents and teachers contributed their own thoughts and recommendations, while still adhering to her principles.

From these, we then give our best shot at interpreting and applying these principles into the modern-day homeschool.

A disclaimer is in place: when it comes to writing, there have been plenty of resources that look into the mechanics of handwriting, and we don't claim to be the only right

way to do things. However, we simply tried to put into practical steps what we believe Miss Mason is recommending in her writings.

• Tips, Steps, Suggestions

From her writings, we gleaned the tips and steps into easy-to-understand bullet headlines that will make it easy for you to apply in a practical sense. That means we try to give recommendations and suggestions that may or may not have been explicitly expressed in Miss Mason's writings.

• Sample/Suggested Lesson

Then, we have added, as possible, samples of how these can low the example, in the concept of printing, we added images to show you different struckes for the different letters. These are intended to be used as the part of relevance

• Appendix

hat you may use in teaching your pag The Appendix section contains all pr son's day, they did not use printables, child to write. We understand at in in The New Handwriting book which she perhaps with the exception hopes that these printable pages may help recommended. However, we incluthis hooling parent, in that the images of the letters make things easier for z hon. ible and within reach. and copywork pages are hde

The Mechanical Act of Writing

If teaching our children to read is the number one worry of most mothers who think about homeschooling, possibly, teaching them to write is next on the list! We are very thankful that in the Charlotte Mason philosophy, Miss Mason also lays down guidelines for teaching beginning writing.

In this book, we hope to dig deep into what she says about printing, copywork, transcription, and prepared dictation. We will also have a she section on keeping a commonplace book.

The Goal: Perfect Execution

Now, perfection is clearly a daunting and unclassicable growth in the CM method, we strive for excellence, meaning, we aspire a our caldren to give their best effort. We push towards perfect execution, or the pest because can give to a specific process, not necessarily a perfect output.

Here is what Miss Mason has the vriting in a way that shows best effort:

Perfect Accomplishmen is can only fer a few hints on the teaching of writing, though much might be said. First, the indecomplish something perfectly in every lesson—a stroke, a pothook, a letter let the indicate glesson be short; it should not last more than five or ten minutes. Ease incoming comply practice; but that must be secured later. In the meantime, the thing to be avoided in the careless work—humpy m's, angular o's. (Vol 1 Page 233-234)

If, when we were tool, we were required to copy lines of text over and over until we fill an entire page, it's time to say goodbye to that practice. In the CM method, our goal is not quantity, but quality.

Some things to think about from this short passage that Miss Mason wrote:

1. Let the child accomplish something perfectly in every lesson.

Remember, the goal is to train our child in perfect execution. That means that we as parents also need to be aware of what he is capable of achieving in an excellent way.

2. Let the writing lesson be short.

She recommends writing lessons to be short, describing it as "not last[ing] more than five or ten minutes."

One way of keeping true to this would be to use a timer. Set a timer at the start of the writing lesson, either to five or ten minutes. And when the timer goes off, the lesson is over, whether or not your child was able to finish.

Actually, since our goal is perfect execution and not quantity e to ten minutes can be plenty of time to finish what we set out to do.

3. Practice comes later.

Perhaps one reason that we like the idea of compare a complication of letter A's is that we believe that practice makes perfect. But Miscalaso recomplications that the teaching our children to aspire to excellent execution from the teaching and this habit is more effective at securing good writing.

4. Avoid the habit of careless

One reason why CM leaves are key short is that, when a lesson drags on and on, the child has a greater tender where the kind slouch. In writing, especially, careless work is something that we are up do a mantly to avoid. So stick to the timer and work at a time when you can d is mer alert and cooperative.

A Note on Handedness

While Charlotte Mason did not specifically deal with the concept of right- or lefthandedness, we assume it's because this was not something that was prevalently studied during her time. She lived during the early 1900s, and historically, it was only in the later part of that century that left-handedness became more acceptable.

Research estimates that around 10-15% of the population is left-handed, and some consider it a form of neurodivergence. This word simply mean that someone is wired in a way that's different from the majority, or what we call photoprines. But we believe that one way is not better than another; it's just a natural here that we can embrace and appreciate.

When it comes to writing, handedness may affect to way a bild writes his letters. Before you start "officially" teaching your child to the write, the commend you to observe which one is his dominant hand.

If you find out that your child is a left of lerst of that the direction he writes may not necessarily be the same as somebody who height-handed. For example, a right-handed person will normally cross the same are to by harting from the left and moving to the right. Lefties, on the other hand, ave an shown to cross their letter "t"'s from the right and moving to the same are and userstandably so!

This book includes examples estreace order, and shows recommended stroke directions designed for the handed endets. If your child is left-handed, please use parental discretion in the wave of this type of directional difference, especially in writing horizo. Estroke

Another main difference is the way that the leftie tilts the paper; whereas a righthanded child would typically write slanting up towards the right, this position will be very uncomfortable for a left-handed child. Instead, the leftie will more likely slant his paper downwards so that he can write comfortably.

Phases in Writing

In this book, we organize the process of learning to write and copy text into the following phases:

Phase 0.5: Identifying letters

Phase 1: Printing

Phase 2: Copywork

Phase 3: Transcription

pos.

Phase 4: Prepare

We will delve into each phase as deep

S

? in the next section!

'tatı

15

Phase 0.5: Identifying letters

We add this as the first phase, because before a child can start to write letters with pen and paper, he or she starts by recognizing letters. Miss Mason describes this process as part of learning to read. Of course, writing is not a prerequisite for learning to read, and many children are able to read before their fine motor skills are developed enough to write well.

Take a look at the first phase for a child to learn to write lettersy

"But the learning of the alphabet should be made a mean of altivating the child's observation: he should be made to see what he looks at. Make big in air, and let him name it; then let him make round O, and crooked S, 1 T for Tomm, and you name the letters as the little finger forms them with unsternation in the ar...

Here we can see that long before the child sources to cold a pencil, he's already trained to pay attention to the shape of the letter. Not on the down let him form the strokes in the air, we also encourage him to write the sources how tray of sand, as described below:

To make the small letters thus, and y is a work of more art, and requires more careful observation on the shild's p. A tray of sand is useful at this stage. The child draws his finger boldly to u_8 to sand, and then puts a back to his D; and behold, his first essay in making a structure and a curve. (Vol. 1 page 201)

Let's take a lock of the results that these kinds of exercises can have on our child's learning.

- First, this power of observation will serve him in good stead when he finally starts to write, and all the way to the time he needs to learn how to spell.
- Next, the multi-sensory approach to reading and writing helps even students who may struggle with dyslexia to interact with the letters using all their senses; in this case, the eyes see the letters, the vocal cords speak the sound, the ears hear the sound, and the hands and/or fingers feel the shape as they draw and even from the texture of the sand in the tray.
- Being able to draw these letters in the air and in sand gives the child boldness because it does not require as well-developed fine motor skills as it does to hold a pen or pencil. Many children who are forced to learn to write do not have their fine motor skills fully developed yet and it may end up in a lot of frustration and tears!

Phase 1: Printing

Printing is the first phase of actually writing with pencil and paper. Here is what Miss Mason says:

Printing.—But the child should have practice in printing before he begins to write. (Vol 1 Page 234)

What is printing? Printing is being able to write each letter of any and from memory. We repeat what Miss Mason says here, that a child show nave fractice in printing before he's expected to write.

Printing Step 1: Teach capital letters firs

First, let him print the simplest of the capital let s who ingle oes and straight lines. When he can make the capitals and large letters, with s fireness and decision, he might go on to the smaller letters—'printed' as in the type stall set, only upright,—as simple as possible, and large. (Vol 1 Page 234)

Miss Mason advises us to teach the into write the capital letters first, since they are made up of the more simple success, in only single curves and straight lines.

For example, in teaching we le "you might teach the child to make the following strokes first: / / bond –

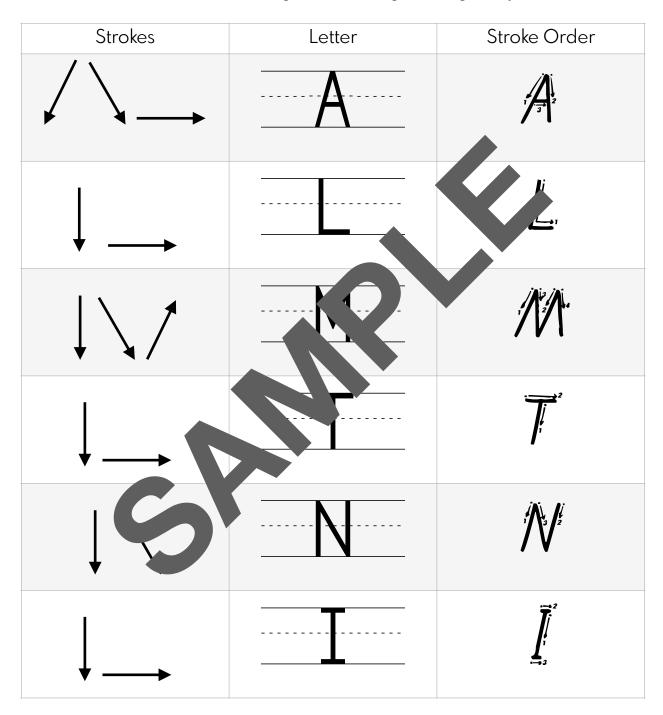
You might teached a lin order from A to Z, or you may want to arrange the letters in order of difficulty of forming the strokes.

If you prefer to teach printing the letters in order of difficulty of forming the strokes, a suggested order is as follows (suggestions mine, based on CM principles):

Letters with all straight lines: A, L, M, T, N, I, F, H, E, V, X, Z, Y, W, K Letters with all curves: C, S, O Letters with straight lines and curves: D, P, J, U, G, Q, B, R

In the next page, we show suggested strokes to teach, how the letter looks on lined paper, and suggested stroke order. (We used a font used for New Zealand schools; some of the strokes may not be what we use, such as the big letter G; please adjust as needed.)

You may choose to use the upright or the slanted letters based on parental preference. (Note: For a left-handed child, writing letters slanting to the right may not be feasible.)



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Phase 3: Transcription

The next phase is transcription. It is an important introduction to spelling, and usually happens between the ages of 7 to 8 years old.

However, this is not set in stone and every child develops a meir own pace, so do observe how your own child is progressing without being produced

What is Transcription?

Transcription, the next step up from copyver, reas to ging a text word for word and not by individual letters.

XI.—Transcription

Value of Transcription—The earliest practice coviriting proper for children of seven or eight should be, not letter writing or alliest conscription, slow and beautiful work, for which the New Handwriting is to be preferent thous, perhaps some of the more ornate characters may be omitted with advantage $Page \Delta$

Miss Mason save to transportion is the earliest practice in writing that is proper for a child between even and eight years old. She describes it as "slow and beautiful work." This tells us a function of the very onset, our goal for our children's writing is not just functionality, but also be aty.

How does transcription differ from copywork?

- In copywork, the child copies a word letter by letter, and in lines right below the model being copied
- In transcription, the child copies a sentence (or paragraph) word by word, or eventually, phrase by phrase, committing the word to memory before writing it down on his copy sheet.

Transcription and Spelling

Transcription should be an introduction to spelling. Children should be encouraged to look at the word, see a picture of it with their eyes shut, and then write from memory. (Vol 1 Page 238)

Transcription is a solid foundation for spelling, because the child starts practicing remembering how a word is spelled. Because he doesn't copy the word by letter, he actually takes a look at the whole word, takes a picture of it in his mind's eye, and then writes it down on his copy sheet from memory.

As the child progresses, he will soon move towards transcribing the text by remembering several words at a time, even towards transcribing at phrase by phrase.

How to do transcription

1. Let the child choose his favorite passages

Children should Transcribe favourite Passa, a certain sense of possession and delight may be added to this exercise if children a lower choose for transcription their <u>favourite</u> <u>verse in one poem and another</u>. This the that to write a favourite poem, an exercise which stales on the little people it is also <u>But a book of their own, made up of</u> <u>their own chosen verses, should</u>, <u>un</u> <u>leasure.</u> (Vol 1 Page 238)

crì

While copybooks are a feat of to make things easier for the CM homeschool, in reality, Miss Mason's rector production for transcription really is for the child to choose his favorite part 5. This vor, he would appreciate his output so much better than if it were the home choose on the coosing the passages for him to copy.

2. Start with using the re-ruled lines for small text.

Small Text-Hand—Double-ruled Lines—Double ruled lines, small text-hand, should be used at first, as children are eager to write very minute 'small hand,' and once they have fallen into this habit it is not easy to get good writing. A sense of beauty in their writing and in the lines they copy should carry them over this stage of their work with pleasure.

Because transcription begins at an age when the child is just improving his handwriting, Miss Mason recommends using double-ruled lines.

3. Keep lessons short.

Here we have again the principle of short lessons in a CM homeschool:

Not more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour should be given to the early writinglessons. If they are longer the children get tired and slovenly. (Vol 1 Page 238-239)

Miss Mason recommends ten to fifteen minutes for the transcribing lesson. Set your timer, and when it goes off, stop the lesson. Our goal is to keep the child from getting lazy and sloppy in his writing.

4. Pay attention to writing posture.

Position in Writing.—For the writing position children shoulent so at light reaches them from the left, and desk or table should be at a comfortable height. (Vou age 22)

Note that Miss Mason is writing this for the right orded studen. If you have a lefthanded student, feel free to adjust the recommendation with a light coming from the right side of the student!

Next, she talks about the proper way **blding** e pen:

n the first to hold the pen between the first It would be a great gain if childre vere tù b. This position avoids the uncomfortable strain and second fingers, steadying it holding a pen—a strain which causes writer's on the muscles produced by the usu vay cramp in later days whe is mu writing to be done. The pen should be held in a int, fingers and thumb somewhat bent, and the hand comfortable position, rathe 1ear resting on the pap .39) 'ol 1 I

Finally, she active the coursupporting oneself with the other hand:

The writer should a for allowed to support himself with the left hand on the paper, and should write in an easy position, with bent head but not with stooping figure. It would be unnecessary to say that the flat of the nib should be used if children had not a happy gift for making spider marks with the nib held sideways. (Vol 1 Page 239)

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Appendix 1: A Note on Dyslexia

If your child has dyslexia, prepared dictation may be more difficult than you anticipate. We hope this section can help you understand why, and we include it in this section right after Prepared Dictation because this is the of the areas of CM Language Arts that dyslexics may struggle the most with.

(This section is also included in *Doors to Discovery: Charlotte configuration on Summing Reading*, but we repeat it here for the benefit of families when nly purchases are e-book without purchasing Beginning Reading.)

Dyslexia is most commonly known as a knowing chability that makes it difficult for a person to learn to read. It's often port eved to cast, in movies) as a child who can't decipher the words because he tends to the cores that look alike, or these letters are "dancing" all over the place.

In the past, dyslexia was viewed a second prime that needed to be "fixed." Thankfully, with the increasing away pess of a clexia being a form of <u>neurodivergence</u>, we've slowly but surely started to be the uniqueness of this brain wiring. More and more studies have come up show prime but that dyslexia can be.

What is Drev

First, let's look at the word actually means. The word dyslexia comes from the Greek prefix "dys" which means malfunction or difficulty. The root word "lexis" means "language." This means that literally, the word dyslexia means "difficulty with language."

This in itself tells us that dyslexia is not just a struggle with reading, but with anything related to language. This may include oral communication, reading, spelling, understanding math terms, and anything else that can involve language.

From the book How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia by Philomena Ott, we read this quote from The Orton Dyslexia Society Research Committee: "Dyslexia is manifest by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to

problems with reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling."

When we understand this broader view, we can see more of how dyslexia can affect a person's daily life, not just his reading.

Secondly, more recent research has started to identify dyslexia not as an inherent "disorder" but a neurodivergent brain wiring. This means that it's not something to be fixed, but a part of a person's natural bent, which comes with both weaknesses to work around and strengths to celebrate. (If you want to learn more about neurodivergence, check out <u>NeurodivergenceHelp.com</u>.)

Myths and Truths about Dyslexia

Because dyslexia is one of the most compared k wp out just as commonly misunderstood—neurodivergence, we wan to unput a fear myths.

Myth #1. You can acquire dyslexia frequencies our ringing.

al.

No, dyslexia is not something a copet from a colack in your upbringing. Instead, it has been proven to be something the coperate born with. In fact, some research has shown a possible genetic link, with coslexia tending to run in families, and more often seen in males than in fellow

Myth #2. It's ju ____, chold

Some resource scrib dyslexia symptoms as showing up as a result of early experiences with shape a poor reading. While this is a common experience for children with dyslexia, it is not the cause; in fact, it is more likely an effect of the inherent struggle with learning to read.

More recent research has shown that dyslexia is a neurological condition, a natural brain wiring that results in this specific way of processing information.

Symptoms of Dyslexia

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Appendix 2: A Note on Dysgraphia

Dyslexia is perhaps the most widely known learning disability related to reading and writing. Its cousins, dysgraphia and dyscalculia, are lesser known. However, more and more parents and teachers are looking into these learning challenges, to understand it and learn how to help children who are diagnosed with it.

Dysgraphia a neurological learning disability that affects a charability to write. It is a common cooccurring condition for someone also diagnosed with the D, and may also co-occur with dyslexia.

What is Dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia is a form of neurodivergene or a set brain wiring, that affects a person's ability to write, both in the technical set of the dechanical sense. It occurs not just in children, but also in addition (1 are nore about neurodivergence in <u>NeurodivergenceHelp.Com</u>.)

Dysgraphia usually afference on's the motor skills. These challenges can impact the mechanical art of writing such a dearning to form letters correctly, the legibility of handwriting, are taking a correct sizing and spacing of letters.

Dysgraphia n _____oo af __t a person's processing skills, particularly related to putting one's thoughts down to aper. It may also affect the individual's spelling.

Research estimates between 5 to 20% of children have some form of dysgraphia. Most cases of dysgraphia are recognized when the child struggles to write past an age that is deemed "normal." However, because dysgraphia can also occur in the context of difficulty expressing oneself in written language, this type can be overlooked and undiagnosed even through adulthood.

Symptoms of Dysgraphia

Some of the most common symptoms of dysgraphia are detailed below. However, we note that people diagnosed with dysgraphia may or may not display all of the symptoms; some may struggle in one area but appear normal in others.

Fine Motor Skills

- Awkward pencil grip or one that's too tight and painful
- Difficulty forming letter shapes
- Slow handwriting
- Trouble tracing, drawing, or even finger-tapping

Spatial Perception

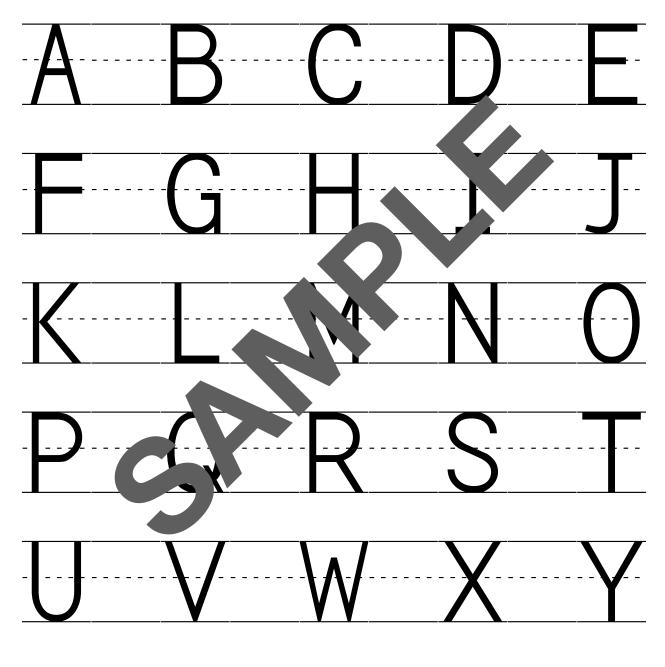
- Trouble following a line
- Difficulty staying within margins
- Difficulty estimating correct letter spacing

Linguistic Skills

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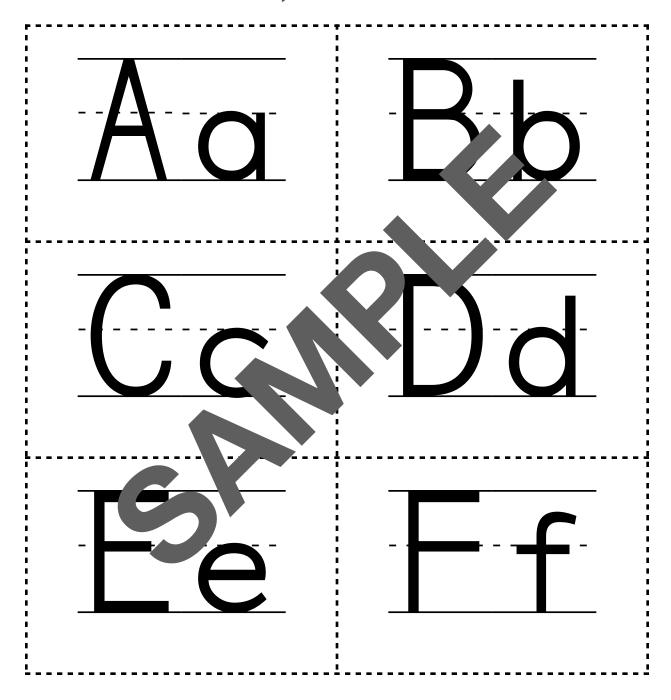






Appendix 3.3 Printing Guide (Lined)

(Printable on cardstock and cut into your own flash cards.



We hope you enjoyed this free sample.

To purchase the full 83-page PDF, please head on over to

CharlotteMasonPhilippines.com/Shop!



Are you interested in applying the Charlotte Mason philosophy to your homeschool, but don't have the first clue how to do teach your child to write or do copywork? We heard you!

The Doors to Discovery: Charlotte Mason Beginning Writing, Copywork, and Beyond is our launch-pad for a lifetime of enjoying words and writing, with suggested steps for lessons on *printing, copywork, transception, and prepared dictation*, where you can:

- Take the guesswork out of what Charlotte son says ab writing, copywork, and transcription lessons;
- Get started with a suggested list of best to schedule to write the different letters;
- Save time and energy instead ding research on handwriting;
- Get an overview of dyslexia and the poly and how to provide remediation and accommodation for
- Have the information on whing, plating, copywork, transcription, and prepared dictation our fine tips so you can start anytime, anywhere;
- Follow the easy in the practical steps you can apply easily;
- Go deepe eede
- Re-use e record over again for several children or over several years;
- and many m

