

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
Learn Hand Lettering

*5 Tips I Wish I Knew
as a Beginner*



1. WHAT PENS AND PAPER SHOULD I USE TO LEARN HAND LETTERING?

Paper: HP Premium 32

Brush pens: Crayola markers, Pentel Touch brush pens, Kuretake Fudebiyori brush pens

You want to use smooth paper so it doesn't fray your brush pens. If you use Crayola markers, they won't fray on regular paper. You can try all three of these pens or just start with one. Crayola is the most affordable, Pentel is for small lettering, Fudebiyori is for larger lettering. I get all of them on Amazon.

2. WHAT IS FAUX CALLIGRAPHY?

The most basic aspect of calligraphy is that the downstrokes are thick and the upstrokes are thin.

With faux calligraphy we are “faking it” by adding the downstrokes after writing the word. This way we don’t need to use a brush pen but we can still get the look.

You try:



Write a word:

Thicken the downstrokes:

Fill in the downstrokes:

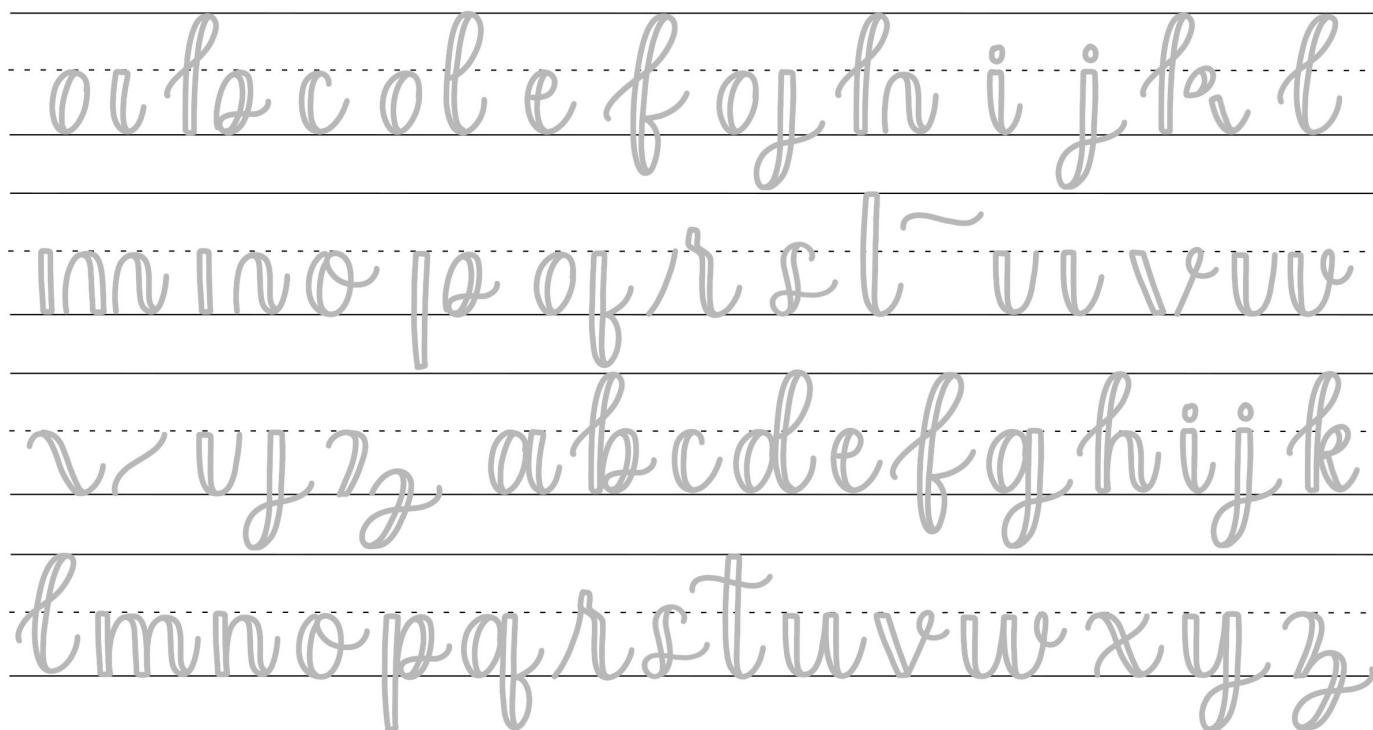
Practice:

3. HOW DO I USE THE BASIC STROKES TO FORM THE ALPHABET?

Unlike cursive, with hand lettering and calligraphy you lift your pen between strokes. Each letter is made up of basic strokes. Getting comfortable with the basic strokes will help you form letters and words.

I broke down each letter into their basic strokes for practice. I left it in faux calligraphy so you can practice with a regular pen or a brush pen.

You try:



4. HOW DO I HOLD A BRUSH PEN?

You can wrap your fingers around the pen however is most comfortable to you. It's mostly important to notice where your pen is in relation to the paper. When we hold it correctly, the brush pen will do the work. We just guide it and give it pressure on the downstrokes.

Correct:



Incorrect:



Angle your pen at about a 45-degree angle from the paper so you can get the full pressure of the pen.

Hold your pen perpendicular to the downstrokes so it doesn't drag in the wrong places.



You try:

45-degree angle vs. straight up:

Perpendicular to the downstrokes vs. random angle:

The secret to getting better at hand lettering is lots of practice! Allow yourself to make mistakes while you're learning.

Next, you may want to join a lettering challenge. There are lots of challenges on Instagram. You can check my Instagram (@ensigninsights) to see if I'm currently doing one.

This week, I challenge you to practice by lettering the alphabet each day for the next five days. You'll be five alphabets farther than where you were before!

This image shows a full page of handwriting practice paper. It features four identical sets of horizontal guidelines arranged vertically. Each set includes three lines: a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line, providing a structured space for practicing letter formation and alignment. The paper is otherwise blank, with no text or other markings.