
Manual of Free-Hand Penmanship

Dunton Alvin R

Title: Manual of Free-Hand Penmanship

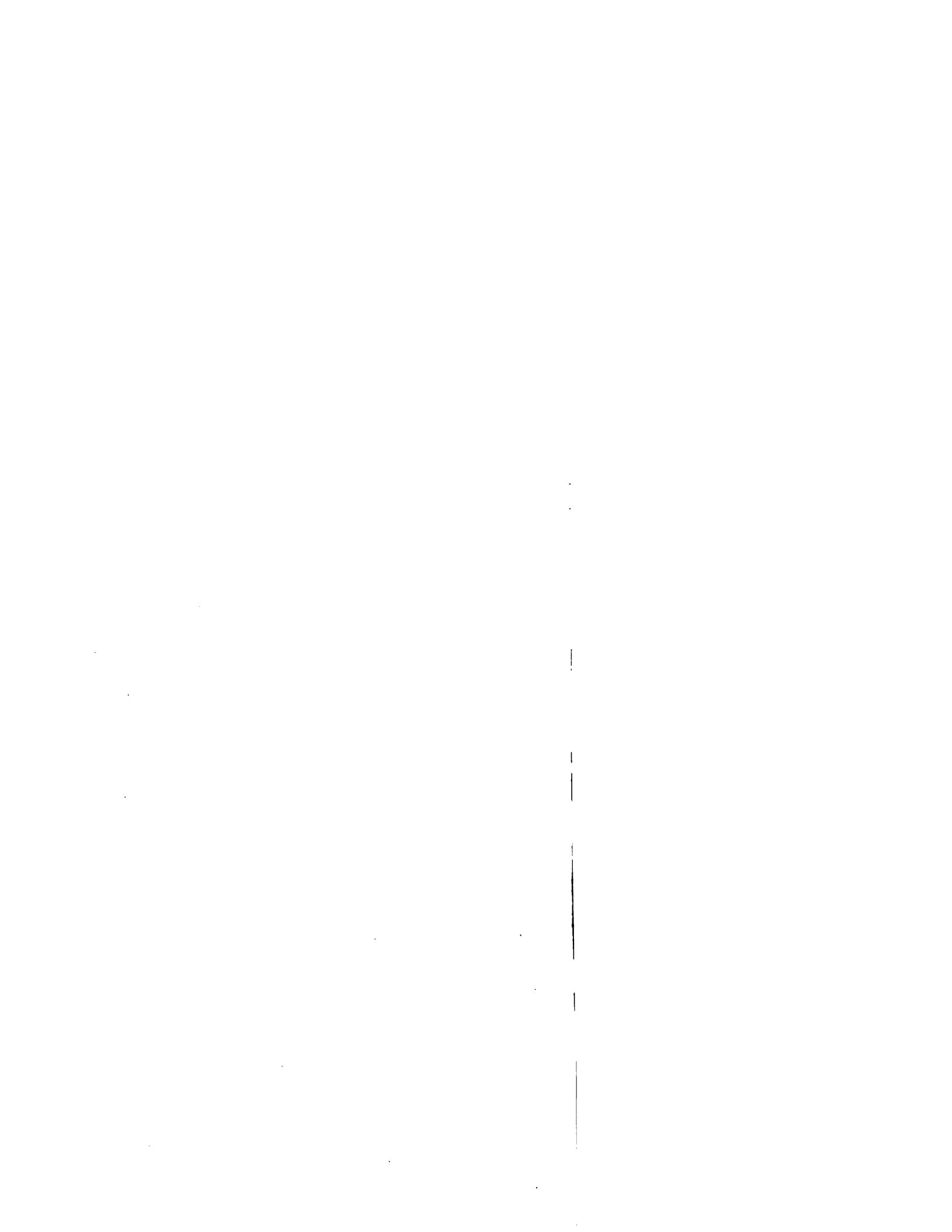
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MANUAL

OF

FREE-HAND PENMANSHIP.

Authors of the Free-Hand Penmanship Series.

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PREFACE.

IN this little Manual we have sought to give in very brief compass the best method of teaching writing. Other manuals have their excellences; but they are generally so scientific and elaborate, that the practical teacher is discouraged, and soon throws them aside. In presenting this, we presume on the teacher's knowledge of the art of teaching, and only give what is needed for this special branch. We have condensed in it the results of years of practical experience in the public schools; and have endeavored to put it in such a simple, practical, and convenient shape, that the teacher can take it in his left hand, and illustrate with his right on the board.

The art of teaching writing is no mystery: it is simply about the hardest work the teacher has to do; and for this simple reason, that the results are visible and permanent. If the teachings of this little book are followed, we will warrant the most satisfactory results.

We might apologize for the homely character of the language used in the description of the letters. Some may mock at it; but remember that it is meant for little children between eight and nine years old. If you have hitherto been using a complicated, scientific, abstract system of elements and principles with them, all we can say is, Try this method, and we are satisfied to abide by your verdict. There is an old proverb, "Let those laugh that win."

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FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS.


In teaching Penmanship, as in every other branch of instruction, it is necessary to have clear and definite ideas of the work to be done, and of the method of accomplishing it. We must try to seize the absolutely essential points, and keep them constantly in view, that our instruction may have a definite aim, and not be frittered away and lost in a multitude of comparatively unimportant details.

HABITS OF MOVEMENT.

First, then, writing is simply the result of certain *habits*. We must teach the scholars to make certain movements until they become habitual. As soon as this is done, fresh sets of movements are taken up and acquired until the alphabets and the combinations of letters are completed.

Secondly, these movements can be classified, and must be thoroughly understood. The first is the side movement, from left to right, by which the hand passes from letter to letter, and from word to word, along the line of writing, thus:



The second, the straight slanting down-stroke from right to left, thus:
The third is the combination of these movements, up with a very slight curve, and down with a straight slanting line, making a very short turn at the foot, and an angle between the two lines; 
that is, the up-stroke has more slant than the down-stroke. Take

your pen and try this, the simplest form of what may be designated the writing-movement.



EXECUTION OF FORM.

Your teaching of form begins here. Determine that your scholars shall acquire this habit of making a straight slanting line, a very short turn, and an up-stroke with increased slant, having a very slight curve. An up-stroke and this form repeated makes the letter *u*.

The next combination required is the up-stroke with the slight curve bowing over, a very short turn, and the straight slanting down-stroke. The slants are the same as before: hence the resulting form is again angular. Again: make the form just described; but at the bottom of the straight slanting line make a very short turn, and add the up-stroke of *u*.

One of the former and one of the latter make *n*; two of the former and one of the latter, *m*.

Notice, then, the essential points: the one absolute necessity is the *straight slanting line*, then the short turn, lastly the angular form.

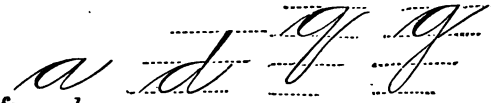
We will call this the Angular Habit, when the up-stroke has more slant than the down-stroke, the two being joined in a turn or a point, thus:

Thirdly, having taught this habit, which gives the letters *i*, *u*, *n*, *m*, the next step is to lead the scholars to the acquisition of the Parallel Habit. The *o* is a parallel form on the down-slant; the oval of *a*, on the up-slant.

In the letters *v*, *w*, the left side of the down-stroke is angular, the right sides are parallel. The up-strokes and down-strokes are the same as before; but the turn is made a little broader, and *the up-stroke is carried up parallel to the down-stroke*.

The only difficulty will be from the influence of the former habit. The curves are similar, the down-strokes are straight and slanting, the turns a little wider; but the former habit will lead to the angular form. The teacher must therefore concentrate his attention on the formation of the new habit required.

But a new habit is also to be formed of curved down-strokes. The curve, however, is very slight; and attention to the special directions given for these letters will easily secure it. In the *a*, for the first part, a special habit is needed, as will be seen from the directions for this letter, of carrying

 the up-stroke over and forward. The same habit is used for *a*, *d*, *q*, *g*.

Special habits are needed for *c*, *e*, *r*, *s*, each of which is peculiar, and requires its own method, which will be found clearly stated in the directions for the different letters.

The special habit required for all the letters extended upwards is to change the slant of the up-stroke from the up-slant to the down-slant at the point where it goes above the height of the short letters. This is a very important rule to prevent the too great inclination of the upper loops and stems, which is so commonly seen.

The essential habit for the capitals is the Direct and the Inverted Oval Movements. Special directions will be given for each in the section on the alphabet.

If, now, we have succeeded in making our meaning clear, you will perceive that the successful teaching of penmanship to a large class in school depends on your having a *definite aim*. For instance, the first thing required is the movement from left to right. You get the class into position, and have them trace the copy with dry pens. You show them on the board what you want; you illustrate with a pen on a geography held in your left hand; you count for each movement; you require the most absolute promptitude and