Drawing Words on Lettering Plates: Guided Letterform Construction

Worked example / complete source key

Describe how a guided plate for the word CAT should specify stroke construction and spacing, and note where stroke order may vary.

Answer: The plate should state cap height and baseline, then give a construction path for C, A, and T. For C, one valid path is a single open curve from upper right around the left to lower right. For A, two diagonals meeting at the top plus a crossbar; the crossbar may be drawn before or after the diagonals. For T, a horizontal top bar and a vertical stem; the stem may be drawn before the bar. Spacing should be checked pair by pair: C–A and A–T, with a provisional gap marked on the spacing guide or defined relative to a reference letter width, such as the width of an I. The plate should state its overshoot rule rather than assume one. Check the result by confirming cap height and baseline are consistent, each stroke matches the stated construction path, and each gap was compared to the previous pair.