Dotted-Thirds Handwriting Paper: Ascender and Descender Zones

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

On a page with baseline at 0 mm, midline at 4 mm, and top line at 8 mm, write five x-height letters and five ascender letters. Count how many x-height tops touch the midline and how many ascender tops reach the top line.

Answer: A complete answer gives two counts, for example 4/5 x-height tops at the midline and 5/5 ascender tops at the top line, with the fractions written beside the rows.

Reason: The task checks zone contact using the stated measurements. Counts are simple arithmetic and do not depend on a particular letter style.

Check: Recount each row and confirm the fractions match the visible contacts; measure the midline height at both ends to confirm 4 mm.

Task 2

A writer's descender tails stop at the baseline in a row of six letters. Two tails enter the shaded band. State the fraction of correct descenders and describe one correction to the page or to the writing.

Answer: Correct descenders are 2/6. Correction: check that the shaded band below the baseline is visible and at least one zone tall, then rewrite the row slowly, letting each tail enter the band.

Reason: The fraction is a direct count. The correction addresses either unclear shading or rushed formation, both checkable by looking at the band and the tails.

Check: Count tails in the band again after rewriting; confirm the band height equals the x-height zone.

Task 3

Design a sample guide strip for four letters: a, l, g, and t. State the zone each letter occupies and give one check a reader can perform without seeing the strip.

Answer: a occupies the x-height zone; l occupies the ascender zone; g occupies the x-height zone and descender zone; t occupies the x-height zone and a partial ascender height chosen by the writer. Check: the reader writes each letter on ruled paper and confirms a stays between baseline and midline, l reaches the top line, g's tail enters the shaded band, and t's top is consistent across the row.

Reason: The answer defines zone use explicitly and provides a text-only check, so no image is required.

Check: Compare the written letters with the stated zone descriptions and confirm t's height is the same in every repetition.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

Measure a ruled page at three points: left 3 mm, middle 4 mm, right 3 mm between baseline and midline. State whether the page passes a 1 mm variation check and give one action.

Answer: The variation is 1 mm, which passes a check that allows no more than 1 mm difference. Action: keep the page, but redraw if a later measurement shows more than 1 mm variation.

Reason: The largest difference is 4 minus 3 equals 1 mm. The rule is stated in the rubric, so the decision is checkable.

Check: Subtract the smallest measurement from the largest and compare with 1 mm; repeat at two other line pairs.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] X-height letters sit between baseline and midline, with tops near the midline and bottoms on the baseline.
- [ ] Ascender letters reach the top line or a consistently chosen height for t.
- [ ] Descender tails enter the shaded band below the baseline without touching its lower edge.
- [ ] Zone labels and shading are clear and do not overlap the writing area.
- [ ] Letter style may vary; consistency of zone use and spacing is what is scored.
- [ ] Measurements are recorded in millimetres and zone heights vary by no more than 1 mm across the page.

Reflection: What did you check, what did you change, and what will you try next?