Joined-Up Letter Joins: Stroke-Order Rows for Handwriting Practice

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

On a blank row with a baseline and midline, write the pair o–a five times. Use a starting dot for the o. Check each join against the midline.

Answer: Five o–a pairs with joins that stay below the midline and both letters legible.

Reason: The o exits near the baseline on the right; the a enters near the midline on the left. A shallow upward join keeps the connection in the x-height zone.

Check: Count how many joins cross above the midline. If more than one does, repeat the stroke-order row for o–a before trying the blank row again. A join that touches or ends at the midline is acceptable.

Task 2

Draw a stroke-order row for e–l. Mark the exit point of e and the entry point of l. Describe where the join should start and end.

Answer: The join starts at the midline exit of e and ends at the l entry at or below the midline, staying within the join zone without crossing above the midline or dropping below the baseline. If your letter style places the l entry at ascender height, that entry is above the join zone and is outside this guide's rule.

Reason: e exits at or near the midline and l enters at or below the midline in many styles, so the join stays at or below the midline between the two points without crossing above it or dropping below the baseline. An ascender-height l entry would sit above the join zone, so choose a style whose l entry is at or below the midline.

Check: Measure the join stroke's vertical position at three points relative to the baseline and midline, recording signed values with below-baseline as negative. If any point is negative or exceeds the midline, adjust the exit angle and trace the stroke-order row again. A join that touches or ends at the midline is acceptable; only joins crossing above it count as out of zone.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Write the pair a–c three times on a blank row. Then read each pair aloud. Circle any pair where the a or c is unclear.

Answer: Three a–c pairs with no circled letters, or circled letters that are corrected on a second row.

Reason: Legibility is the final test of a join. If the join hides the letter shape, the join is too high or too curved.

Check: Ask a partner to read the row without seeing your intention. If they misread a letter, adjust the join and repeat.

Task 4

Set a hypothetical x-height of 4 mm and a gap of 8 mm between pairs. Write five o–a pairs on a blank row. Measure the height of three joins and record the largest difference.

Answer: Five o–a pairs with recorded join heights; the largest difference should be small enough that all joins stay in the zone.

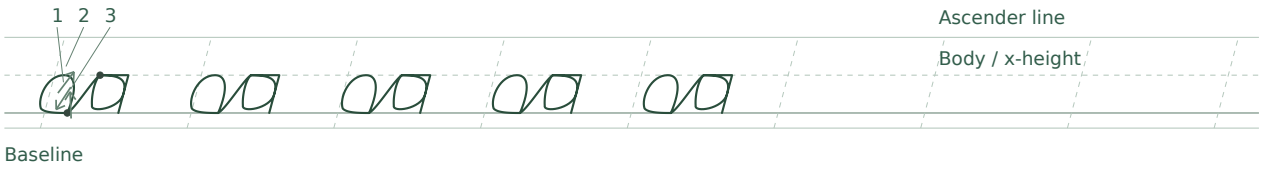
Reason: Measuring makes consistency visible. The numbers are examples; use your own paper and pen to choose values.

Check: Subtract the smallest recorded height from the largest. If the difference is more than the chosen tolerance (for example, a hypothetical 2 mm), slow down and repeat the stroke-order row. The 4 mm x-height, 8 mm gap, and 2 mm tolerance are hypothetical examples; measure your own paper and pen and record the actual values you observe. A join that touches or ends at the midline is acceptable; only joins crossing above it count as out of zone.

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Task 1 / answers

Joined pen paths / 5 mm actual practice body zone / numbered arrows follow owned motion





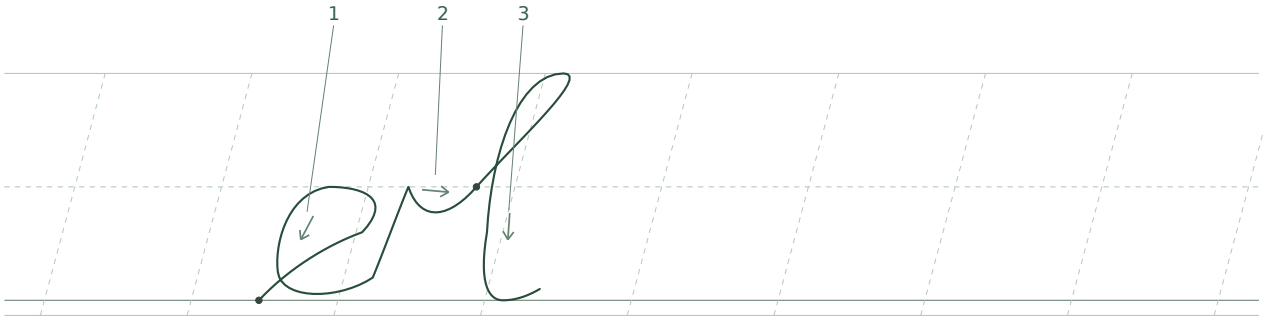
One possible correct row has 5 legible o-a pairs, all connected. The join finish is at the next letter entry and may touch the midline; the pen continues through letter2 without a lift. Real learner readings and corrections still use the original rubric.

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Task 2 / answers

Joined pen paths / 5 mm actual practice body zone / numbered arrows follow owned motion

Stroke-order DISPLAY 3:1 / source example body zone 5 mm; actual-size recall rows below

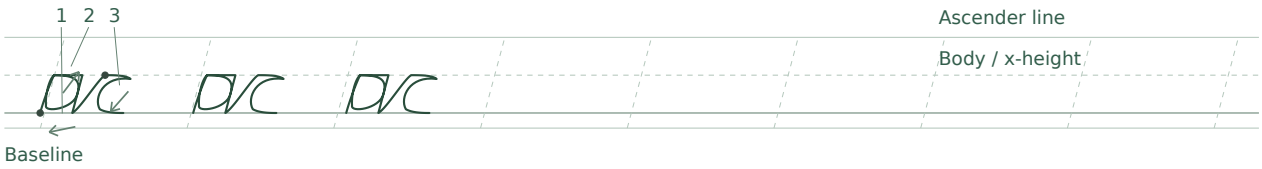


1: e / 2: connecting stroke / 3: l. The e exit and l entry are on the midline in this selected style. The connecting segment stays within the body zone; the l ascender loop is a letter stroke, not the join. Arrows follow actual ordered-path tangents. These are one valid pen style, not font-outline stroke-order claims.

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Task 3 / answers

Joined pen paths / 5 mm actual practice body zone / numbered arrows follow owned motion

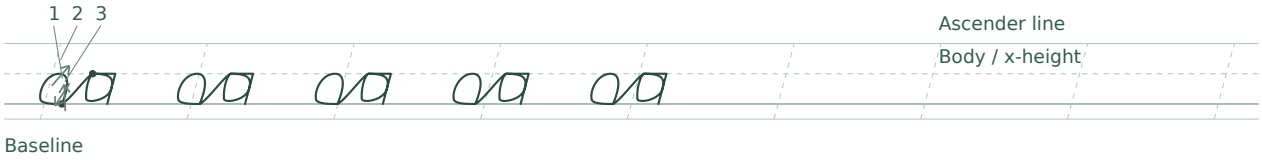


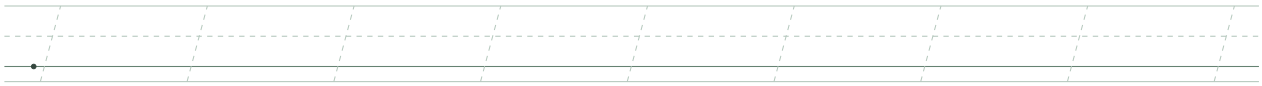
One possible correct row has 3 legible a-c pairs, all connected. The join finish is at the next letter entry and may touch the midline; the pen continues through letter2 without a lift. Real learner readings and corrections still use the original rubric.

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Task 4 / answers

Joined pen paths / 4 mm actual practice body zone / numbered arrows follow owned motion







Chosen model: five o-a pairs at 4 mm body height, with actual 8 mm ink-to-ink gaps. First three connector peaks are 4, 4, 4 mm; range is 0 mm, on the inclusive midline. Those are model-path measurements, not fabricated learner or printer observations. Record your own three heights below.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The join starts at the first letter's exit point and ends at the second letter's entry point.
- [ ] The join stroke stays between the baseline and the midline.
- [ ] Both letters remain legible after the join is added.
- [ ] The stroke order follows the numbered arrows or a documented valid alternative.
- [ ] The writer can explain why a join is ticked or crossed using the join-zone check.

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