Pitman Ruled Shorthand Paper: Baseline and Stroke Guides

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Rule a practice row with a baseline, an upper guide 6 mm above, and a lower guide 6 mm below. Copy eight light downstrokes that start at the upper guide and end at the baseline. Count how many start within 1 mm of the upper guide and end on the baseline.

Answer: A completed row of eight light downstrokes with a recorded count of strokes meeting both position checks. The count depends on the learner's execution; a valid answer states the count and whether it is at least four.

Reason: The exercise checks baseline contact and upper guide position using a measured spacing. The count makes the check concrete without requiring a single perfect row.

Check: Compare each start point to the upper guide and each end point to the baseline. Count strokes meeting both within the stated tolerance and write the count beside the row.

Task 2

Copy a two-stroke outline three times: a light downstroke from the upper guide to the baseline, then a light upstroke from the baseline toward the upper guide. Use the direction cues at the start of the row. After each copy, note whether the second stroke returns to the baseline contact point of the first stroke.

Answer: Make three copies and record the START and END separately for each second stroke. The upstroke STARTS at the first downstroke's baseline contact point and then rises toward the upper guide; its END does not return to the baseline when drawn as directed. A correct endpoint-return note is therefore no. The shared join is the second stroke's start, not its end.

Reason: The first stroke ends on the baseline and the second begins there, so they join at the baseline. Because the second stroke is upward, its endpoint is near the upper guide rather than back on the baseline.

Check: Mark the first stroke's baseline endpoint. Check that the second stroke starts at that dot, then separately identify its upper endpoint. Record the join-start check and answer no to endpoint return; do not swap a stroke's start and end.

Pitman Ruled Shorthand Paper: Baseline and Stroke Guides

Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Create one row of six heavy downstrokes and one row of six light downstrokes using the same start and end points. Compare the two rows and write a short note on whether the heavy strokes are visibly heavier without spreading beyond the stroke path.

Answer: Two rows of six strokes each with a written comparison note. A valid answer identifies whether heavy strokes are visibly heavier and whether any heavy stroke spreads beyond the intended path.

Reason: The exercise separates thickness from position and direction. The comparison note focuses on the visible difference rather than a single correct appearance.

Check: Place the rows side by side and compare stroke width at the midpoint. Note any heavy stroke that crosses the lower guide or loses its direction cue.

Task 4

Rule three rows with the same measured spacing. In row one copy four light upstrokes; in row two copy four light downstrokes; in row three copy a four-stroke outline that alternates up and down strokes while touching the baseline at each change of direction. Record the spacing measurement and a count of strokes that follow the direction cue in each row.

Answer: Record the chosen measured guide spacing and the observed direction-cue counts for all three rows. The third row's two demands cannot both hold for nonzero strokes spanning baseline and upper guide: an upstroke followed by a downstroke reverses at the UPPER guide, not the baseline. State that conflict. A displayed up/down/up/down example may have direction count4 while explicitly failing the condition that every reversal touch the baseline; it is not a completed solution to that impossible extra condition. The first two rows can still contain four upward and four downward strokes respectively.

Reason: A nonzero upward stroke ends above the baseline. If the next stroke reverses direction there, their turning point is above the baseline. For example, guide heights0 and8 give successive endpoint heights0,8,0,8,0, so only some reversals occur at0.

Check: Measure and record guide spacing; count each row's direction matches. For the third row, mark every actual turning point and distinguish upper-guide turns from baseline turns. Do not claim all turns are baseline contacts or silently add a return stroke that changes the frozen four-stroke sequence.

Task 1 / checked example

1 

Chosen model / count 8 / record your own observed matches separately.

Upper and lower practice guides are 6 mm from the baseline. Arrows are direction cues, not shorthand symbols. Heavy/light width is a chosen visible demonstration, not a pressure or Pitman writing standard.

Task 2 / checked example

1



Each second stroke STARTS at the join; its END is at the upper guide.

Upper and lower practice guides are 8 mm from the baseline. Arrows are direction cues, not shorthand symbols. Heavy/light width is a chosen visible demonstration, not a pressure or Pitman writing standard.

Task 3 / checked example

1



Chosen model / count 6 / record your own observed matches separately.

2



Chosen model / count 6 / record your own observed matches separately.

Upper and lower practice guides are 8 mm from the baseline. Arrows are direction cues, not shorthand symbols. Heavy/light width is a chosen visible demonstration, not a pressure or Pitman writing standard.

Task 4 / checked example

1



Chosen model / count 4 / record your own observed matches separately.

2



Chosen model / count 4 / record your own observed matches separately.

3



Counterexample: upper turns exist. NOT every turn touches baseline.

Upper and lower practice guides are 8 mm from the baseline. Arrows are direction cues, not shorthand symbols. Heavy/light width is a chosen visible demonstration, not a pressure or Pitman writing standard.

The third question condition is impossible for four alternating nonzero strokes if every reversal must be on the baseline. Heights 0, 8, 0, 8, 0 show why; they are not presented as a compliant solution.

Pitman Ruled Shorthand Paper: Baseline and Stroke Guides

Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Baseline contact: strokes that should sit on the baseline touch it without crossing far below.
- [ ] Upper guide position: rising strokes stop near the upper guide within the learner's chosen tolerance.
- [ ] Lower guide check: downward strokes do not cross the lower guide unintentionally.
- [ ] Direction: each stroke follows the arrow cue at the start of the row.
- [ ] Thickness: heavy strokes are visibly heavier than light strokes without losing shape.
- [ ] Spacing: strokes within a row are evenly spaced and rows use the same measured spacing.
- [ ] Self-check: the learner records a count or note for each row and repeats rows that fall below the chosen threshold.

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