Pre-Writing Stroke Tracing Plates: Build Control Before Letters

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

A horizontal plate has a start dot at the left edge of the band and an arrow pointing right. The learner traces three dotted paths and then fills a blank row. On two strokes, the learner starts at the right edge and moves left. Using the rubric, state the main error and the next step.

Answer: The main error is direction: the stroke begins at the wrong end and travels opposite to the arrow. The next step is to return to the model, point to the left start dot, say across, and trace one dotted path slowly before continuing the blank row.

Reason: The rubric separates start dot, direction and band containment. Here the start point and direction are both wrong, so the learner needs the model and cue again rather than more unguided repetitions.

Check: Check that each stroke begins at the left start dot and moves right. Count how many strokes follow the arrow. Accept slight height variation inside the band.

Task 2

A curve plate shows a model that bends to the right. A learner traces the dotted path with correct direction but makes the curve wider than the model on every repetition. The strokes stay inside the band. Is this a valid alternative or an error? Explain using the convention.

Answer: This is a valid alternative. The direction is correct, the start dot is used and the strokes stay inside the band. Curve width can vary. Record the variation on the rubric and continue to the blank row.

Reason: The convention judges direction, start point and band containment, not one exact curve width. Letter styles vary, so a wider curve is acceptable when the movement pattern is correct.

Check: Confirm the start dot and rightward bend on each stroke. Check that the widest point remains inside the band. Do not compare curve width to a single universal shape.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

A zigzag plate has a start dot at the top left and arrows that alternate down-right and down-left. A learner produces four peaks instead of the model's three, but each peak stays inside the band and the direction alternates correctly. What should the teacher record?

Answer: Record a valid alternative: the direction alternates correctly, the start dot is used and the peaks stay inside the band. The peak count differs from the model but is not an error under the stated convention.

Reason: Zigzag peak count can vary as long as the alternating direction and band containment are maintained. The rubric allows valid alternatives rather than a single universal answer.

Check: Count the peaks and check that each segment alternates direction. Confirm the start dot and band containment. Note the peak count for comparison, not as a pass or fail criterion.

Task 4

A circle plate has a start dot at the top and an arrow showing a clockwise path. A learner traces counterclockwise but keeps the circle closed and inside the band. Using the rubric, identify the error and describe a check method for the next attempt.

Answer: The error is direction: the path is counterclockwise while the arrow shows clockwise. The next attempt should begin at the top start dot and follow the arrow. A check method is to point to the arrow before each stroke and confirm the first movement matches it.

Reason: A closed circle inside the band does not compensate for the wrong direction. The rubric treats direction as a separate criterion, so the learner needs the cue and arrow again.

Check: Before each stroke, point to the start dot and arrow. After the stroke, confirm the first movement follows the arrow and the circle closes inside the band. Accept slight oval variation.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Start dot: the stroke begins at the marked start dot.
- [ ] Direction: the stroke follows the arrow and the stated cue.
- [ ] Band containment: the stroke stays mostly inside the baseline-to-midline band.
- [ ] Completion: the dotted path and blank row are attempted without skipping spaces.
- [ ] Valid variation: differences in curve width, circle roundness or zigzag peak count are accepted when direction and containment are correct.
- [ ] Independence: the amount of verbal or finger prompting is recorded for comparison across sessions.

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