Full Alphabet Trace-Over Practice Rows: Dotted Letters with Start Dots and Arrows

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

On a row for the letter 'o', the start dot is at the top and the arrow goes counterclockwise. A learner traces 'o' starting at the top but going clockwise, staying within the zone. Is the trace acceptable under the convention? Explain and give one next step.

Answer: Not acceptable as traced, because the direction does not follow the arrow. The zone fit is fine, but the convention requires following the arrow order. Next step: trace one more 'o' while saying 'counterclockwise' aloud, starting at the top dot.

Reason: The convention checks start dot, arrow direction, zone fit, and readability. This trace meets three of four checks but fails direction, so it is not yet acceptable.

Check: Point to the start dot, trace the arrow path with a finger, and compare the learner's stroke order to the arrow. Then have the learner trace once more and confirm the direction aloud.

Task 2

A row for 't' has a start dot at the top of the vertical stroke and an arrow downward, then a crossbar arrow left to right. A learner traces the vertical stroke from the bottom upward and then adds the crossbar left to right, staying in the zone. Is this acceptable? What should be adjusted?

Answer: Not acceptable, because the vertical stroke starts away from the top dot and moves opposite the arrow. The crossbar direction is correct. Adjust by starting at the top dot and moving downward for the vertical stroke, then adding the crossbar left to right.

Reason: Start point and arrow direction are both part of the convention. The crossbar meets the direction check, but the vertical stroke fails start point and direction.

Check: Cover the crossbar and trace only the vertical stroke with a finger from the top dot downward. Then uncover and repeat the full letter once.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

A learner traces 'm' twice. The first trace starts at the correct dot and follows the arrows but rises above the midline by a small amount. The second trace starts at the correct dot, follows the arrows, and stays within the zone. The independent 'm' in the blank space is readable and stays within the zone but starts slightly left of the dot. Using the convention, which attempts are acceptable and what is the next step?

Answer: The first trace is acceptable with a minor fit note about rising above the midline. The second trace is acceptable. The independent 'm' is acceptable in readability and zone but should be adjusted to start at the dot. Next step: write one more independent 'm' starting exactly at the dot.

Reason: The convention allows small style differences and treats slight zone deviations as fit notes, not wrong answers. The independent letter meets readability and zone checks but misses the start-dot check.

Check: Compare each attempt to the four checks: start dot, arrow direction, zone fit, readability. Mark the independent letter's start point and ask the learner to place the pencil on the dot before writing.

Task 4

A row for 'g' shows a start dot at the top, an arrow curving left and down, then a tail arrow downward. A learner traces 'g' with a closed tail instead of an open tail, starting at the dot and following the arrows within the zone. Is the trace acceptable? Explain using the convention and give one comparison step.

Answer: Yes, the trace is acceptable. The convention allows valid style alternatives, and a closed tail is a readable 'g' style. The start dot, arrow direction, and zone fit are all met. Comparison step: compare the traced 'g' to the dotted example and name one feature that matches and one that differs, such as tail shape.

Reason: The convention does not require a single universal letter shape. Readability, start point, direction, and zone fit are the checks, and this trace meets them.

Check: Ask the learner to point to the start dot, trace the arrow path with a finger, and confirm the letter is readable as 'g'. Then compare tail shape to the dotted example and note the difference as a style choice.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Starts at the marked start dot for each traced letter.
- [ ] Follows the arrow direction in order.
- [ ] Stays within the row's letter zone, using the baseline-to-midline x-height convention.
- [ ] Produces a readable letter, allowing valid style alternatives.
- [ ] Writes one independent letter in the blank space and compares it to the traced version.
- [ ] Names one specific match and one specific change after the independent attempt.

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