Lined Notebook Page with Red Margin Rule: Spacing and Margin Discipline

Complete worked example / separate answer key

A student measures a 10 mm baseline gap and draws a red rule 18 mm from the left edge. They mark a midline at 5 mm above each baseline. They write a sentence and find that the word 'jumping' would cross the red rule on line 2. What should they do, and how can they check x-height on line 3?

Answer: Move the whole word 'jumping' to line 3 instead of squeezing it across the red rule. On line 3, check that x-height letters such as u, m, n, and i reach the midline at 5 mm above the baseline, while j and p drop below the baseline and g may drop below. Use a ruler to confirm the midline height and the starting gap from the red rule.

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Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

A lined page has a 12 mm baseline gap. A student marks a midline at 6 mm above each baseline. They write the word 'minimum' and the tops of the letters m, i, n, u reach 7 mm above the baseline. Is the x-height consistent with the midline convention? Explain.

Answer: No. The midline is at 6 mm, but the x-height letters reach 7 mm, so they are 1 mm too tall for the stated convention. The student should lower the letter tops to about 6 mm or adjust the midline mark if they prefer a taller x-height, then label the chosen value.

Reason: X-height is defined as baseline to midline. If the midline is 6 mm above the baseline, x-height letters should reach about 6 mm, not 7 mm. A 1 mm difference is checkable with a ruler.

Check: Measure the midline height and the letter tops with a ruler. Compare the two values and confirm they match within about 1 mm.

Task 2

A student draws a red rule 15 mm from the left edge and starts each line 3 mm to the right of the rule. On line 4, the first word starts 1 mm to the right of the rule. What is the starting gap on line 4, and what should the student do?

Answer: The starting gap on line 4 is 1 mm, which is 2 mm less than the intended 3 mm. The student should rewrite line 4 starting 3 mm to the right of the rule, or adjust the intended gap and label the new value consistently.

Reason: The intended gap is 3 mm. A 1 mm gap is inconsistent. The fix is to match the intended gap or change the intended value and apply it to all lines.

Check: Measure the distance from the red rule to the first letter on several lines. Confirm the values are equal within about 1 mm.

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Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

A page has a 9 mm baseline gap and a midline at 4.5 mm. A student writes a line with the letters 'b, d, h, k, l' and finds their tops at 8 mm above the baseline. Is this acceptable under the convention? Explain.

Answer: Yes, this is acceptable. These letters have ascenders, which may rise above the midline. The convention only requires x-height letters to reach the midline. The ascender tops at 8 mm are below the next baseline at 9 mm, so they do not collide with the line above.

Reason: Ascenders are allowed above the midline. The key check is that they do not touch the next line. With a 9 mm gap and tops at 8 mm, there is a 1 mm clearance.

Check: Measure the ascender tops and the next baseline. Confirm the tops are below the next baseline by at least a small visible gap.

Task 4

A student measures a 10 mm baseline gap and draws a red rule 20 mm from the left edge. They write a paragraph and find that on line 5 the word 'notebook' would cross the red rule by 2 mm. They squeeze the word to fit. What is the mistake, and what should they do instead?

Answer: The mistake is squeezing the word across the red rule. The student should move the whole word 'notebook' to line 6 and keep the starting gap consistent. Squeezing breaks margin discipline and makes the left edge uneven.

Reason: The red rule is a boundary. A word that would cross it should move to the next line as a whole. Squeezing changes letter spacing and may cause the word to cross the rule anyway.

Check: Check line 5 with a ruler to confirm no letters cross the red rule. Check line 6 to confirm the word starts at the intended gap.

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Worked example, Task 1, Task 2, Task 3, Task 4 / Separate answer sheet: model responses, reasoning, and check methods for the four exercises

Text-only key for genuinely qualitative tasks; model words needed by the key are drawn in the diagram block.

Exercise 1 answer: No. The midline is at 6 mm, but the x-height letters reach 7 mm, so they are 1 mm too tall for the stated convention. The student should lower the letter tops to about 6 mm or adjust the midline mark if they prefer a taller x-height, then label the chosen value.

Exercise 1 reasoning: X-height is defined as baseline to midline. If the midline is 6 mm above the baseline, x-height letters should reach about 6 mm, not 7 mm. A 1 mm difference is checkable with a ruler.

Exercise 1 check method: Measure the midline height and the letter tops with a ruler. Compare the two values and confirm they match within about 1 mm.

Exercise 2 answer: The starting gap on line 4 is 1 mm, which is 2 mm less than the intended 3 mm. The student should rewrite line 4 starting 3 mm to the right of the rule, or adjust the intended gap and label the new value consistently.

Exercise 2 reasoning: The intended gap is 3 mm. A 1 mm gap is inconsistent. The fix is to match the intended gap or change the intended value and apply it to all lines.

Exercise 2 check method: Measure the distance from the red rule to the first letter on several lines. Confirm the values are equal within about 1 mm. 3. A page has a 9 mm baseline gap and a midline at 4.5 mm. A student writes a line with the letters 'b, d, h, k, l' and finds their tops at 8 mm above the baseline. Is this acceptable under the convention? Explain. 3. Yes, this is acceptable. These letters have ascenders, which may rise above the midline. The convention only x-

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] The red margin rule is drawn at a measured distance and labelled with that value.
- [ ] Body text begins just to the right of the red rule with a consistent starting gap.
- [ ] No word or letter crosses the red rule; whole words move to the next line when needed.
- [ ] X-height letters sit on the baseline and reach or nearly reach the midline.
- [ ] Ascenders may rise above the midline and descenders may drop below the baseline without touching the next line.
- [ ] Word gaps are consistent within about 1 mm when measured.
- [ ] The header line is used for a title or date and is separate from body text.
- [ ] Any numerical values are labelled as measured or hypothetical examples.
- [ ] The page is legible and follows the stated convention, even if letterforms differ from another writer's style.

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