Handwriting and Writing Skills Checklist with Annotated Samples

Original tasks 1, 2 / complete keys

Task 1

Write the lowercase letters a, c, e, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z on unlined paper. Mark a baseline and a midline one x-height above it. Measure the x-height of five letters and record the values in millimeters. Identify any letter that does not sit on the baseline.

Answer: A complete response lists five measured x-height values, marks any letter not touching the baseline, and notes whether the values are consistent within about 1 mm. Valid alternatives include different letter styles as long as baseline contact and consistency are checked.

Reason: The task applies the x-height convention and baseline check from the letter formation section. Measuring actual letters makes the criterion concrete and checkable.

Check: Use a ruler to verify each measurement and confirm that the baseline and midline are marked correctly. Check that the response names at least one letter and one measurement.

Task 2

Write the sentence 'we can read this line' twice on unlined paper. In the first version, use a word gap about the width of a written o. In the second version, use a word gap half that width. Measure three word gaps in each version and compare them to the written o width. State which version better meets the spacing checklist and why.

Answer: The first version better meets the spacing checklist because its word gaps are closer to the written o width and are clearly larger than letter gaps. The second version has smaller gaps that may make words run together. A valid alternative is to accept the second version if the writing remains legible and word gaps are still consistently larger than letter gaps.

Reason: The exercise tests the spacing criterion using a simple, measurable comparison. It also shows that the o-width guide is a convention, not a fixed rule.

Check: Measure the gaps with a ruler and confirm that the response compares at least three gaps in each version to the written o width.

Handwriting and Writing Skills Checklist with Annotated Samples

Original tasks 3, 4 / complete keys

Task 3

Write three lines of text on unlined paper. Place a straight edge along the baseline of each line and measure how far the line drifts from start to end in millimeters. Mark any line that drifts more than one x-height. Then rewrite one drifting line so that it stays within one x-height.

Answer: A complete response records drift measurements for three lines, marks lines exceeding one x-height, and provides a rewritten line with reduced drift. Valid alternatives include different text content as long as the measurements and rewrite are shown.

Reason: The task applies the alignment criterion and requires a concrete fix. Measuring drift makes the check objective.

Check: Verify the drift measurements with a straight edge and confirm that the rewritten line stays within one x-height of horizontal.

Task 4

Write a short paragraph of three sentences about a familiar object. Underline the topic sentence, circle two transitions, and check that each sentence has a subject and a verb. Then score the paragraph on ideas, organization, sentence fluency, and conventions from 1 to 4, and state one improvement for each category.

Answer: A complete response includes a three-sentence paragraph with an underlined topic sentence, two circled transitions, a subject-verb check for each sentence, four scores from 1 to 4, and one improvement per category. Valid alternatives include different topics and scores as long as the evidence supports them.

Reason: The exercise applies the composition checklist and rubric categories. It requires evidence for each score, which supports self-assessment.

Check: Confirm that each sentence has a subject and verb, that the topic sentence is underlined, and that each score is accompanied by a specific improvement.

Handwriting and Writing Skills Checklist with Annotated Samples

Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Letter formation: letters are legible, consistent in size, and correctly oriented; x-height is measured from baseline to midline.
- [ ] Spacing: letter gaps and word gaps are distinguishable; word gaps are clearly larger than letter gaps, using the written o width as a guide.
- [ ] Alignment: lines stay within about one x-height of horizontal across the page; margins are consistent.
- [ ] Composition: ideas are clear, sentences are complete, paragraphs have topic sentences, and conventions are correct.
- [ ] Self-assessment: the learner identifies specific strengths and adjustments and applies at least one fix.

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