



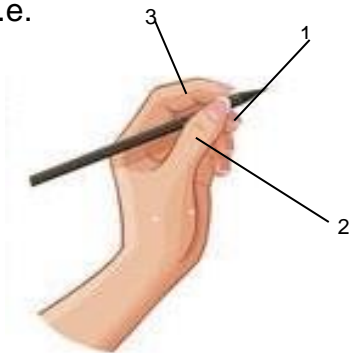
**Education
Taking Part in Class Work
Writing and Drawing**

Handwriting Advice for Left Handers

Writing Tool and Grip

In order to see as they write and to prevent smudging the lefthander should hold pencil/pen at least 3 centimetres from point. This can be indicated by a small elastic band around the desired area for grip which can be removed once the child is familiar with position.

Aim for tripod grip: i.e.

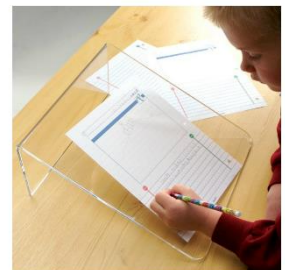


1. Tall Finger (side)
2. Thumb (pad)
3. Pointing Finger (tip)

All fingers are slightly bent.

This grip, taught in early stages along with sitting and paper position should eliminate need for 'hooked' hand. If this hasn't developed it can be remedied in the following ways:

- Vertical blackboard writing using handwriting patterns. This encourages a full arm movement with greater freedom and a less cramped position.
- Frequent practice of large writing on paper should be provided.
- Sloping desk top board.
- Attention to correct sitting and paper position.
- Use of thick barrel pen, crayons, felt tip for writing patterns.



Seating

- Check that a left-hander is not sitting too close to the right of a right-hander. This will avoid their arms colliding. Some, but not all, left handers will find writing easier if they can sit on a higher chair BUT that their feet are still firmly on the floor.
- When copying a word, numbers, letters, writing patterns etc a left-hander is helped if these are placed down the right hand side of page.



Strategies

Writing Implement

- It can be harder for a left handed writer to write with a very fine nib. Offer pens and pencils with broader and more flexible nibs.
- When using pens, avoid ink which appears very “wet” as this can be easily smudged. Do use ink which flows freely, to help reduce writing pressure which can lead to pain over longer pieces of written work.
- Use softer leaded pencils e.g. 2B rather than HB to reduce writing pressure.
- Try pens and pencils with a differentiated barrel.



Grasp

- Ideally left-handers should hold the pen or pencil 2-3cm from the point to enable them to see round their fingers and avoid “hooking” with the writing hand or adopting an awkward neck posture when writing.
- Try marking the distance with stickers, a line of nail varnish (clear works well if children are self-conscious) or a small elastic band wrapped round several times.
- “The finger rule” – If the child places his index and middle fingers at the end of the sharpened part of the pencil, and then grasps the pencil ready to write above this, his fingers should be an appropriate distance from the point.

Paper Position

- Allow the child to tilt the paper slightly to the right. Around 45° is usually appropriate but allow the child to experiment until comfortable.
- Left-handed writers may require more space at a shared desk or prefer to sit on the left of a shared desk so they do not bump arms with their peer when writing.

