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THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

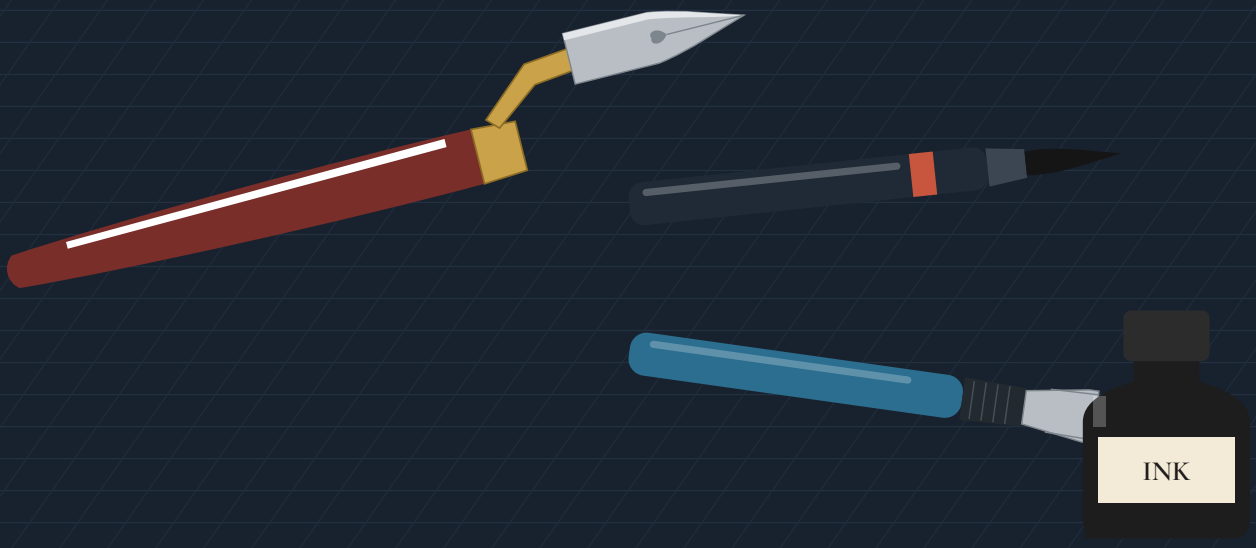
calligraphy

MADE EASY

Learn beautiful lettering step by step – from your very first stroke

hand	pen	INK	nib	love	joy
FOUNDATIONAL	ITALIC	UNCIAL	TEXTURA	COPPERPLATE	BRUSH

SIX CLASSIC HANDS · STROKE-BY-STROKE DEMONSTRATIONS · PRINTABLE PRACTICE SHEETS



History · Tools · Techniques · Projects · Practice

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome to calligraphy

Calligraphy is the art of beautiful writing – and it is far more learnable than it looks. If you can hold a pen and you have a little patience, you can do this.

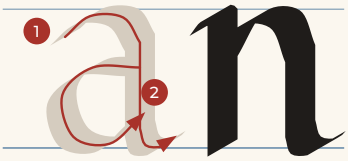
Many people look at a wedding invitation or an elegant quote and think, "I could never do that – my handwriting is terrible." Here is the good news: calligraphy is not handwriting. Handwriting is fast and personal; calligraphy is slow, deliberate and built from a small set of repeatable strokes. Once you learn those strokes, the letters simply assemble themselves. Your everyday handwriting has almost nothing to do with how good your calligraphy will become.

This book is designed for complete beginners. It explains *why* things work, not just what to do, and every technique is shown visually – stroke by stroke, with numbered arrows showing the order and direction of each pen movement.

How this book works

PART	WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
1 · Discover	What calligraphy is, where it comes from and all the ways you can use it – including earning money from it.
2 · Tools & set-up	Pens, nibs, brush pens, inks and paper – what to buy first, how to sit, hold the pen and set up your space.
3 · Foundations	The anatomy of letters, pen angle, nib widths, thick-and-thin strokes and warm-up drills.
4 · Six classic hands	Foundational, Italic, Uncial, Gothic Blackletter, Copperplate and Modern Brush – plus faux calligraphy with any pen.
5 · Make it beautiful	Spacing, layout, flourishes, colour, going digital and six finished projects.
6 · Keep practising	Troubleshooting, a 30-day plan, tool care, a glossary and printable practice sheets.

Reading the demonstrations



GREY LETTER	the finished shape you are aiming for
RED LINE + ARROW	the path and direction of the pen
NUMBERED BADGE	the order of the strokes – lift the pen between numbers
BLUE LINES	guidelines: baseline, x-height, ascender and descender

PRO TIP

Go slowly – slower than you think

The most common beginner mistake is writing too fast. Calligraphy strokes are drawn, not dashed off. A single letter can take several seconds. Speed comes naturally later; consistency comes from slowness.

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CHAPTER 1

What is calligraphy?

The word comes from the Greek kallos (beauty) and graphein (to write). Calligraphy is writing in which every letter is deliberately shaped to be beautiful.

A calligrapher builds letters from a set of planned strokes, using a tool that naturally creates contrast – a broad, chisel-shaped nib, a flexible pointed nib or a soft brush. The tool does a lot of the work: hold it the right way, move it in the right direction, and thick and thin lines appear by themselves. That is why calligraphy looks so different from normal writing, even when the letters are the same.

Calligraphy, handwriting, lettering or type?

These four are often confused. The difference is all in *how* the letters are made:



Handwriting

Fast, personal, made with a normal pen. Even thickness.



Calligraphy

Each stroke written once with a special tool that creates thick and thin.



Hand lettering

Letters are drawn, outlined and filled in – many passes.



Typography

Ready-made letters (fonts) arranged by a computer.

Hand lettering is usually a drawing: the artist sketches letters, outlines them and fills them in, often building one letter over many passes. Calligraphy is writing: each part of a letter is made with a single, confident stroke of the tool. Both are wonderful – and in this book you will learn real calligraphy, plus a lettering "cheat" called faux calligraphy that lets you fake the look with any pen.

GOOD TO KNOW

You do not need neat handwriting

Calligraphy is closer to drawing than to everyday writing. You are learning a new skill from scratch – which means everybody starts at the same place, whatever their handwriting looks like.

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The three families of tools

Almost all calligraphy in the Latin alphabet is made with one of three kinds of tool. Each one creates thick and thin lines in a different way, and each gives its own family of styles.



Broad-edge pen

A flat, chisel-shaped nib held at a constant angle. Thickness depends on the *direction* of the stroke.

STYLES

Foundational, Italic, Uncial, Blackletter



Pointed pen

A sharp, flexible nib. Press and the two halves (tines) spread to make a thick line. Thickness depends on *pressure*.

STYLES

Copperplate, Spencerian, modern pointed pen



Brush

A brush or brush pen. Press for a thick downstroke, lift for a thin upstroke – like the pointed pen, but softer.

STYLES

Modern brush lettering, East Asian calligraphy

Why learn calligraphy?

- It is calming. The slow, rhythmic strokes work like meditation. Many people use a short calligraphy session to unwind after work.
- It makes everything personal. A hand-lettered card, envelope or label means more than anything printed.
- It trains your eye and hand. You will start noticing letter shapes everywhere – on signs, logos and packaging.
- It can earn you money. Wedding stationery, place cards, signage, logos and live event lettering are all paid work (see page 14).
- It connects you to history. When you write Uncial or Blackletter you are using the same pen movements as monks over a thousand years ago.

How long does it take? With 20–30 minutes of practice most days, beginners usually write a whole alphabet confidently in three to six weeks, and produce work they are proud to give away within two to three months. Brush lettering and faux calligraphy give the quickest results; Copperplate takes the most patience.

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CHAPTER 7

Pen angle and nib widths

With a broad-edge pen, two numbers define every style: the angle you hold the nib at, and how many nib widths tall the letters are.

Pen angle

The pen angle is the angle between the edge of the nib and the baseline. Hold it steady and the pen does the rest: every stroke in the same direction will be exactly the same thickness. Change the angle and the whole character of the letters changes.



flat: heavy arches, thin stems — *Foundational* — *Italic & Blackletter* — *steep: thin stems, heavy bars*

Nib widths and the “ladder”

To find the correct letter height for your pen, turn the nib so its edge is horizontal and make a small square mark. Stack marks like a staircase, one above the other, touching corners. Each mark is one nib width. Rule your x-height line at the top of the last mark. Because the measurement comes from the pen itself, the letters always keep the same proportions whatever size pen you use.



too few: heavy & cramped — *Foundational: 4* — *Italic / Textura: 5* — *too many: thin & spidery*

TRY THIS

Measure your own pen

- Make a 4-step ladder with your broad-edge pen and rule a baseline and x-height line.
- Write a row of the letter *o* between the lines with the pen at 30°. Then try 5 and 3 nib widths. Which looks best to you?

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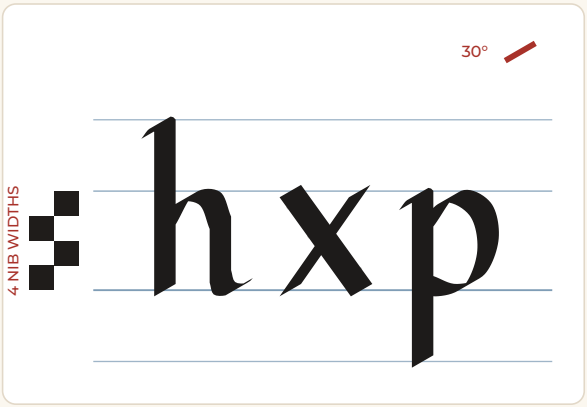
STYLE 1 OF 6 · BROAD-EDGE PEN

The Foundational Hand

Round, upright and wonderfully clear. Edward Johnston based this hand on a 10th-century English manuscript, and it is the best place to begin broad-edge calligraphy.

foundational

AT A GLANCE	
Tool	Broad-edge pen – a 3.8 mm parallel pen is ideal
Pen angle	30° (flattened for a few strokes)
x-height	4 nib widths
Ascenders / descenders	about 3 nib widths
Capitals	6 nib widths
Slant	None – upright
Key shape	The round o, based on a circle
Origin	Edward Johnston, early 1900s, based on the Ramsey Psalter (late 10th century)
Difficulty	★★☆☆☆
Best for	Learning; certificates, quotes, labels, menus



Proportions and guidelines for this style

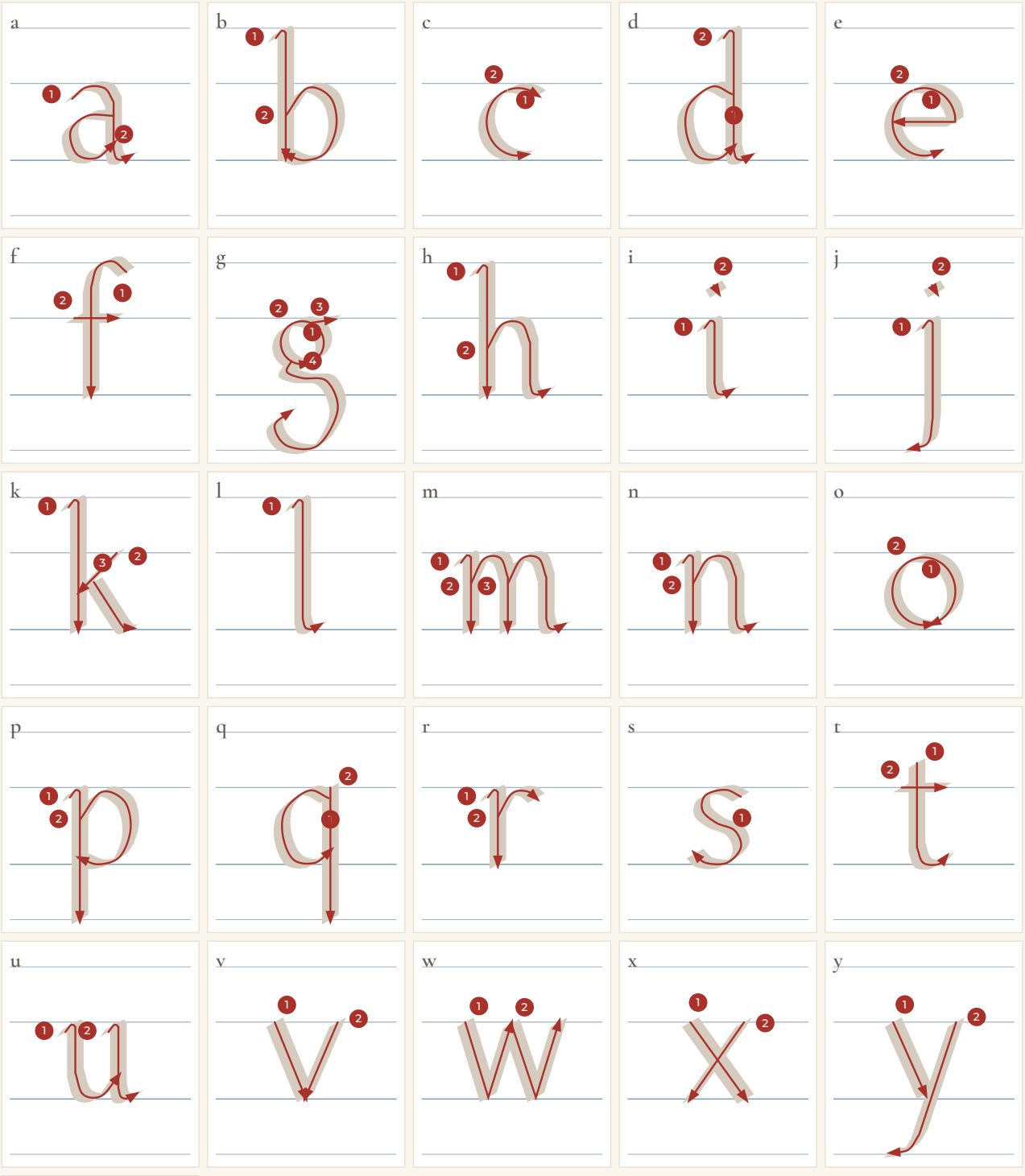
Everything in the Foundational hand grows from one shape: a round o made of two curved strokes. The arches of n, m and h follow the same curve, and the bowls of b, d, p and q are parts of the same circle. Get the o right and half the alphabet follows.

Each letter is built from separate strokes, lifting the pen between them. That makes it slow and steady – exactly what a beginner needs – and it teaches the habits that every other broad-edge hand relies on: a constant pen angle, an even rhythm and generous, round letters.

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Foundational lowercase: stroke order

Grey shows the finished letter. Follow the numbered strokes in order and lift the pen between numbers.



Foundational at a glance:
Pen angle: 30° (flattened for a few strokes)
x-height: 4 nib widths
Ascenders / descenders: about 3 nib widths

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BONUS STYLE · ANY PEN

Faux calligraphy

No special tools? No problem. Faux ("fake") calligraphy imitates the look of brush or pointed-pen script with an ordinary pen, pencil, chalk or paint marker.

The idea is simple: write your word in joined-up script with a normal pen, then go back and thicken every downstroke by adding a second line next to it and colouring in the gap. Because you add the thickness afterwards, you have complete control – which makes faux calligraphy perfect for chalkboards, glass, wood, cakes, cards and anywhere a brush pen will not work.

1 · Write the word in joined script with any pen. Keep the line smooth and even.



2 · Add a second line beside every downstroke, joining it to the first line at the top and bottom.



3 · Fill the gaps in. The result looks like brush calligraphy!



Which strokes get thicker?

Only the downstrokes – the parts where your pen was moving down the page when you wrote the letter. Trace each letter in the air if you are not sure. Upstrokes, connectors and loops going up stay thin.

PRO TIP

Make it neat

- Add the extra line on the same side of every downstroke – usually the left – so the letters look consistent.
- Keep the thick parts the same width throughout the word.
- Taper the thick line into the thin line at the top and bottom of each stroke, so it looks like a real swell of pressure.

Foundational – tracing

3.8 MM NIB · X-HEIGHT 15.2 MM (4 NIB WIDTHS) · PEN ANGLE 30° · UPRIGHT

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a b c d e f g h

i j k l m n o p

q r s t u v w x

y z quiet

minimum

Name: _____ Date: _____

enjoyed the sample

The full book has 112 pages:
six complete alphabets with stroke order for every letter,
tools and techniques, six projects, a 30-day plan
and 17 printable practice and guide sheets.

GET THE FULL BOOK WHERE YOU FOUND THIS SAMPLE