

COPPERPLATE CALLIGRAPHY

2

ORNAMENTAL WRITING

Liberation

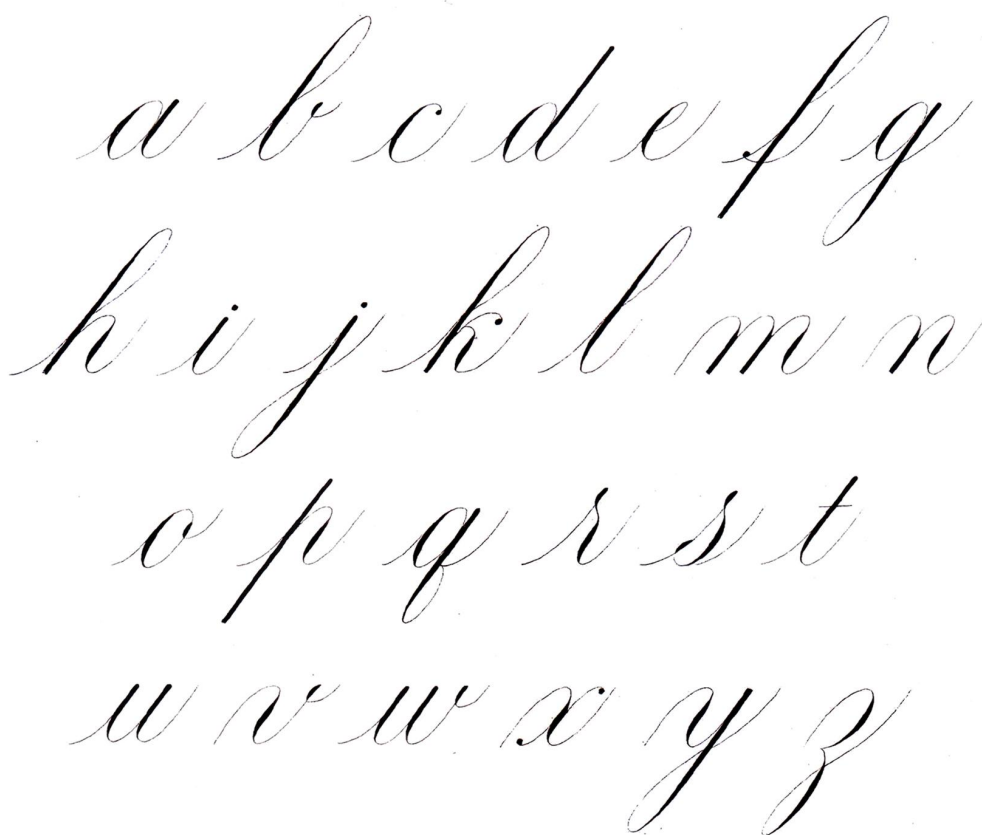
ORNAMENTAL COPPERPLATE

In Calligraphy, basic letters are the most fundamental elements when it comes to practicing; meanwhile, decorative ornaments are added as a way to highlight the content of the lettering. In simple terms, Ornamental Copperplate is the way we transform the shape of the basic letters by flourishing them. These flourishes are always designed based on certain rules such as the spiral rule, the infinite loop rule, etc. Also, flourishes should be combined in a balanced way to ensure the harmony of the whole work.

This material will focus on instructing how to create partial and complete letter variations, together with explaining flourishing rules and examples. The basic knowledge of Copperplate Script is mentioned in my previous study guide - “Copperplate Script | Vol I | Letter Construction”

Before going any further to letter variations, let's take an overall look at the Copperplate capital letters and lowercase letters alphabet.

LOWERCASE LETTERS



CAPITAL LETTERS

A B C D

E F G H

I J K L

M N O P

Q R S T

U V W

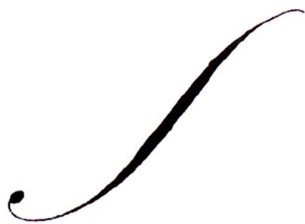
X Y Z

CAPITAL LETTER VARIATIONS

With their outstanding nature, capital letters are perfect for creating variations. Even though every letter has its own structures, there are some mutual rules for letters whose shapes are similar. For example, the serifs of 'R', 'B', 'P' share the same capital stems. We can rely on one rule to create variations for the serifs of these three letters.

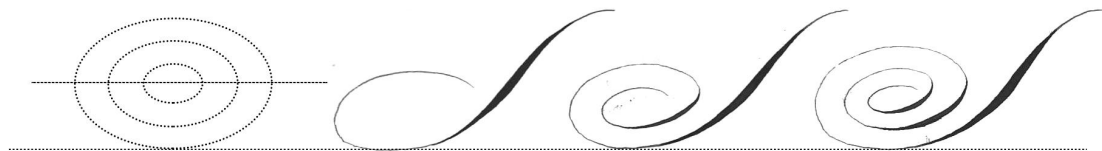
In the first section, we will learn about general rules to create partial variations. Other parts of the letters or special letters not following the general rules will be mentioned in the later section.

PART 1 | SERIF

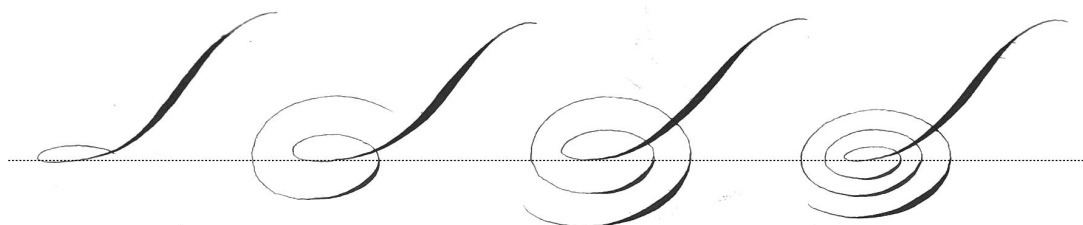


This is the basic stroke in writing capital letters, with the bold stroke being on the same axis as the letter inclination while the serif ends with a dot (similar to the shape of water drop). We will create variations for the end of this stroke.

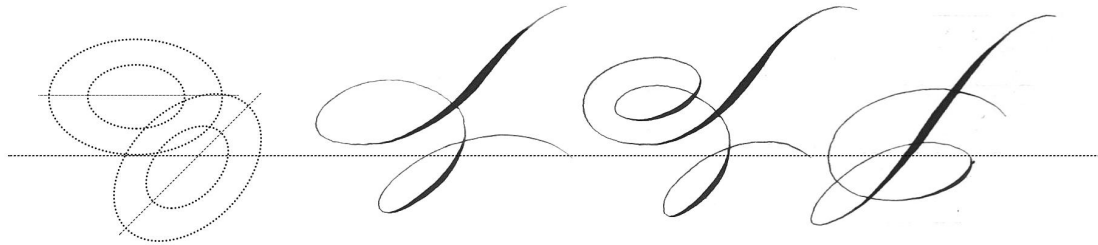
Basic serif



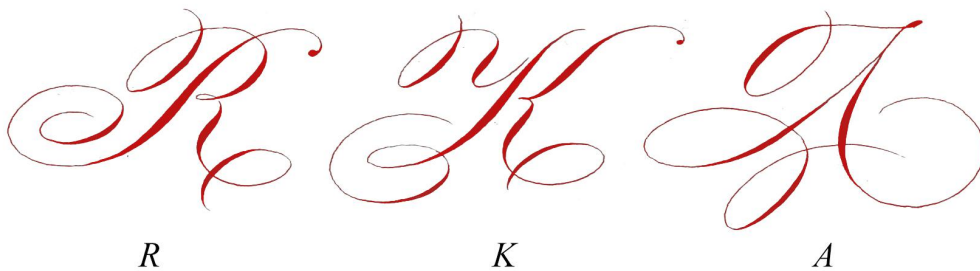
Based on the above description, the first rule we can apply is the spiral rule. According to it, the serif is extended to form a horizontal Oval shape, with the stroke orientating toward the center and following this rule: spacing between each loop is almost equal. Similarly, we can draw Ovals outwards from the center as the examples below.



Besides drawing single Ovals, combining different Ovals together is also a technique to attract more attention to the lettering. The most popular one is to combine horizontal Oval with Oval on 45-degree line.

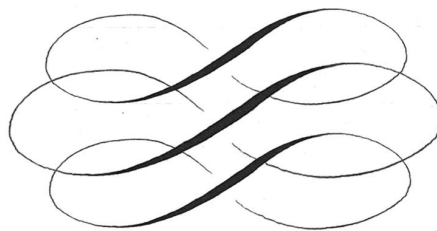


A few examples



PART 2 | THE INFINITE LOOP RULE

Infinite loop means two ovals intersect at one point where typically a bold stroke and a thin one meet up. These strokes are not on the same axis as the letter inclination. This infinite loop rule is applied in many cases which will be described in later sections.

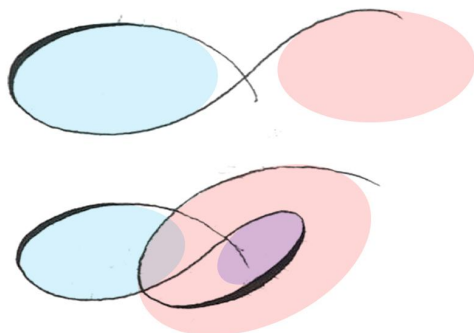


PART 3 | UPPER HEAD OF THE LETTER

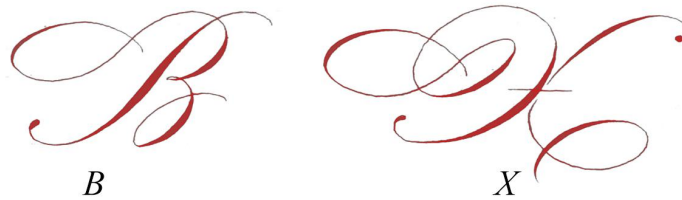
The basic upper head



Each letter has different upper head, so we will focus on creating variations for the upper head of the following letters: B, R, D, Q, etc. The first technique is using infinite loops and the second one is combining infinite loops with ovals on a 45-degree line to connect with the main part of the letter.



A few examples



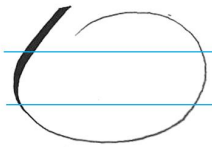
PART 4 | STROKE ENDING

All capital letters can be categorized in different groups according to their exit strokes; for example, the exit stroke of letter A is similar to that of letter H, K, etc. In order to practice effectively, we will divide exit strokes according to its ending direction.

Ending with Counter-clockwise stroke



On the left are some examples of the first group of exit strokes. These strokes may not look the same but they move in the same direction.



Technique I

Draw exit stroke inside a large horizontal Oval which embraces the x-height.

A few examples



Technique II

Draw exit stroke inside a smaller horizontal Oval which lies below the baseline. The last stroke is bold.

A few examples

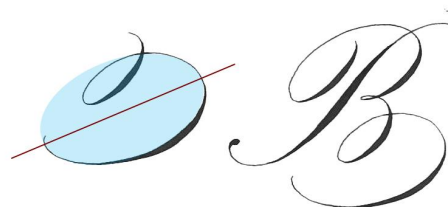


Ending with clockwise stroke



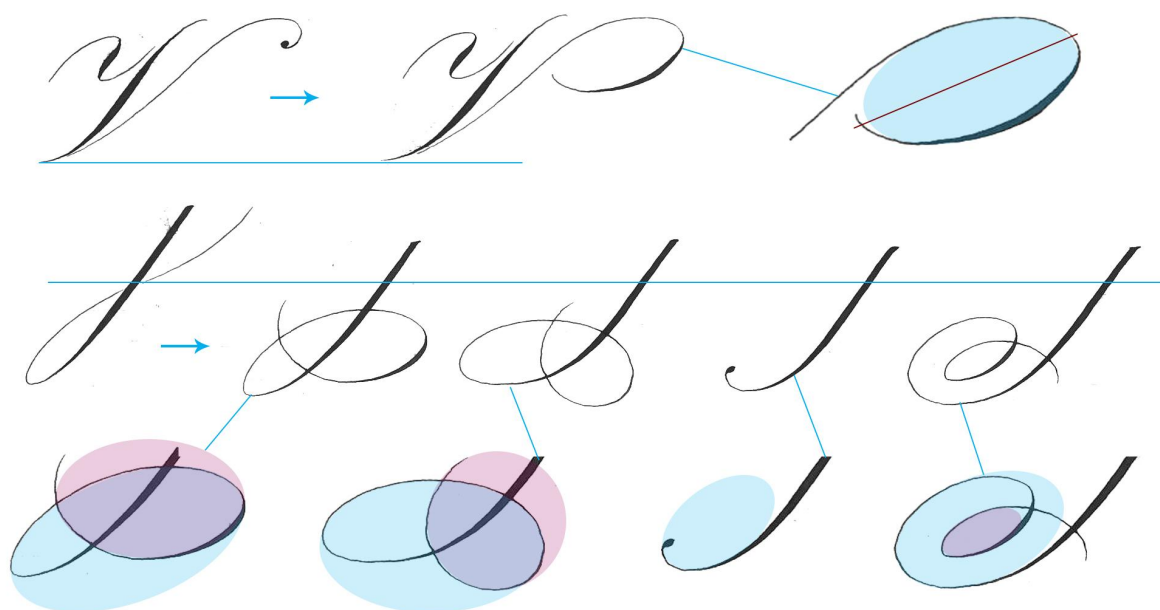
As I mentioned earlier, we can create variations not only for the counter-clockwise exit strokes but also for letters whose exit strokes move clockwise (refer to letter B on the picture beside)

With this group of exit strokes, the most popular technique to create variations is adding a big Oval to the outside of the tail as described here. This oval is drawn on a 25-degree line.

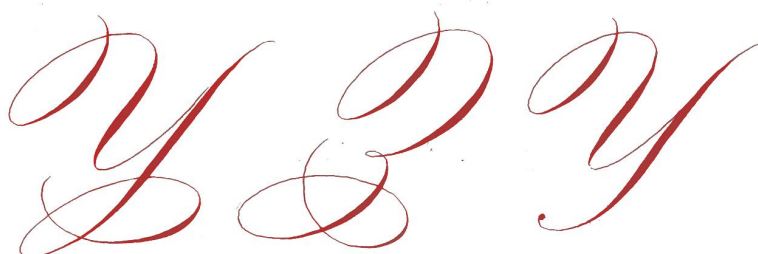


Other groups of strokes ending

In Copperplate capital letter alphabet, besides the above groups of exit strokes, there are some special exit strokes such as those in letter V, W and in letters with descender like G, Y, Z. Below are a few techniques to create variations from those letters.



A few examples



CAPITAL LETTER ALPHABET

In order to comprehend and practice partial variations, we should put all letters in certain groups according to their similar strokes. For example, the serifs of letter H, K, B, P, etc. are similar, so you can put them in one group to have an overall look. However, one letter usually encompasses several basic strokes which are different from those of others. For example, letter V contains the same lead-in stroke as that of letter H and K, but its exit stroke is similar to letter W's, so we cannot put letter V in the same group as letter H, K, and B, P, R, etc. For that reason, in this material, I will create letter variations in alphabet order from A to Z. Some of them have several variations while others have many variations; therefore, how to apply rules to make variations depends more or less on your creativity and personal style.

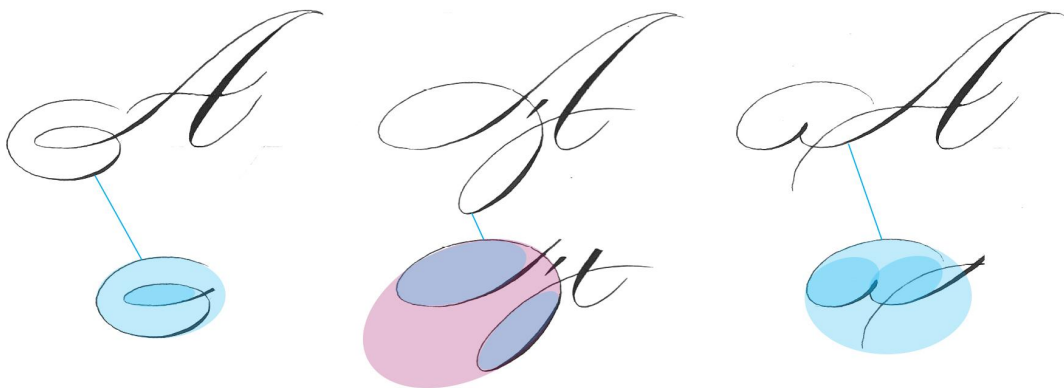
The following examples illustrate the techniques that I frequently apply to create variations that suit my personal style. You can use them as a reference.

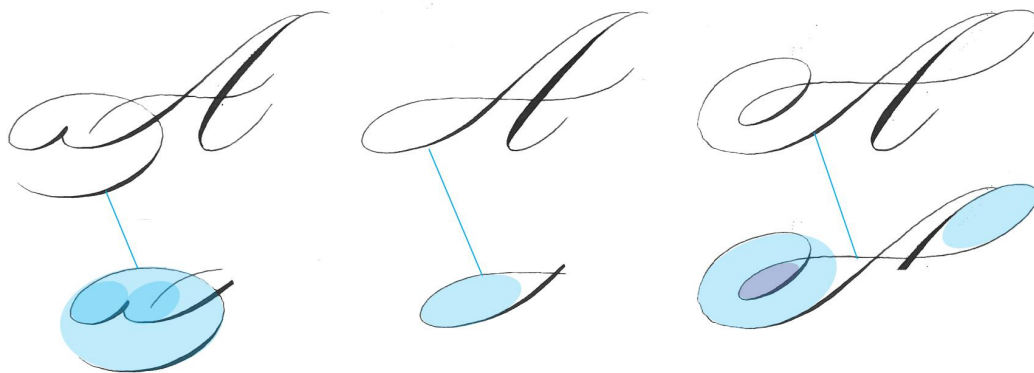
LETTER **A**

Serif Variations



The basic letter A

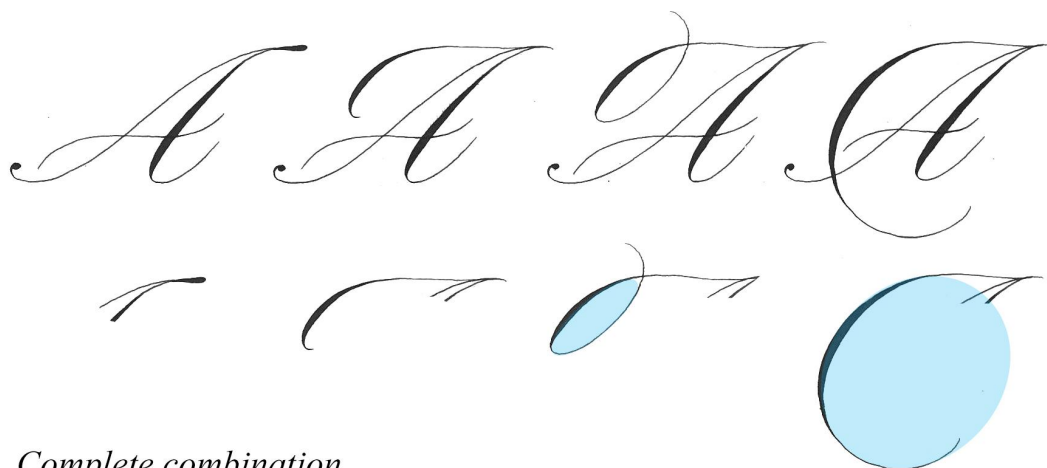




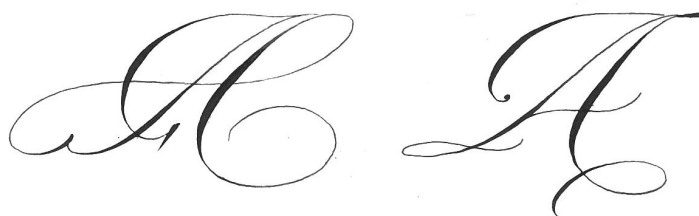
Exit stroke Variations



Upper head Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations



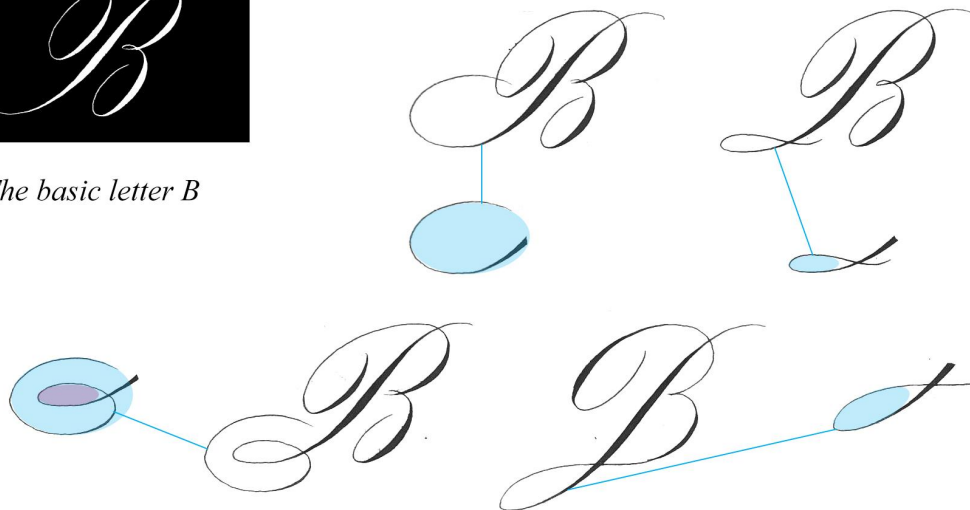
For better understanding, I have arranged variation techniques in a certain order as you can see from the examples of the letter A above. The techniques begin with partial variations (different letters encompass different strokes), then move to several complete samples which combine all previous partial variations, and finish with other types of variations (some of which do not follow any rules)

LETTER **B**

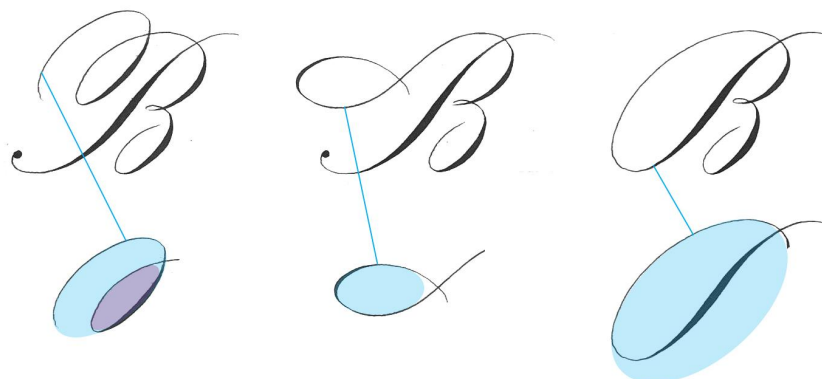
Serif Variations

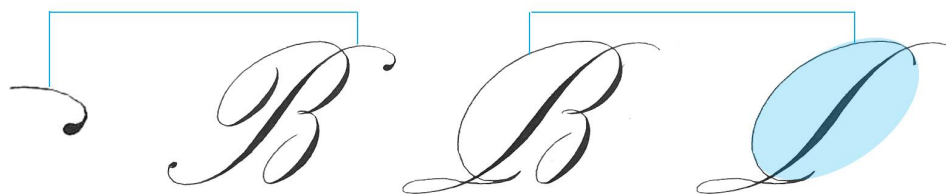


The basic letter B

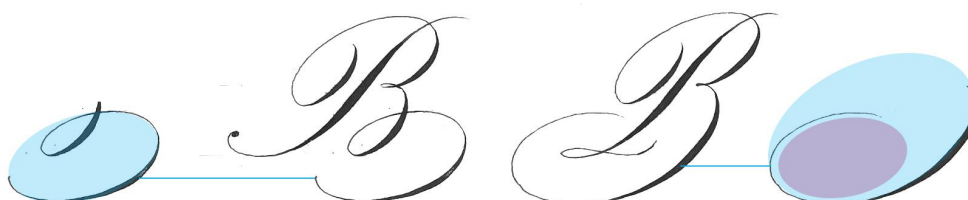


Upper head Variations





Exit stroke Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations

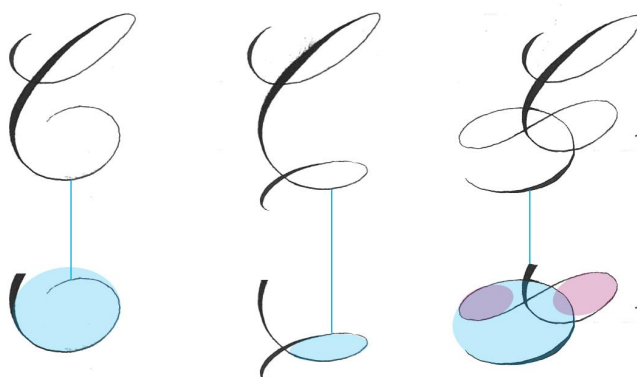


LETTER **C**

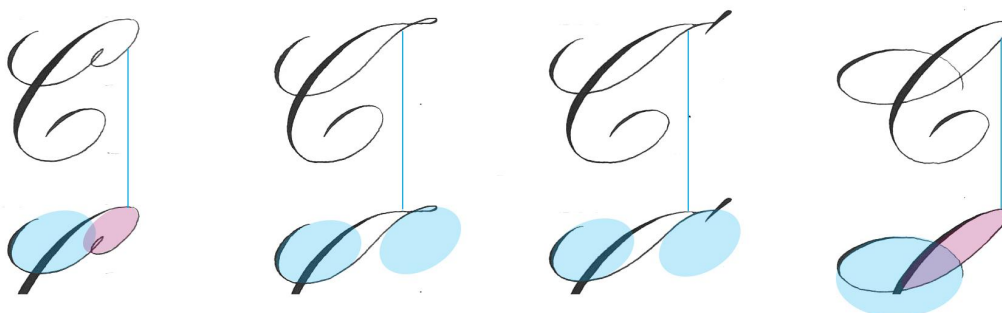
Exit stroke Variations



The basic letter C



Upper head Variations



Complete combination

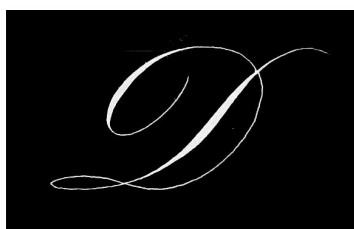


Other Variations

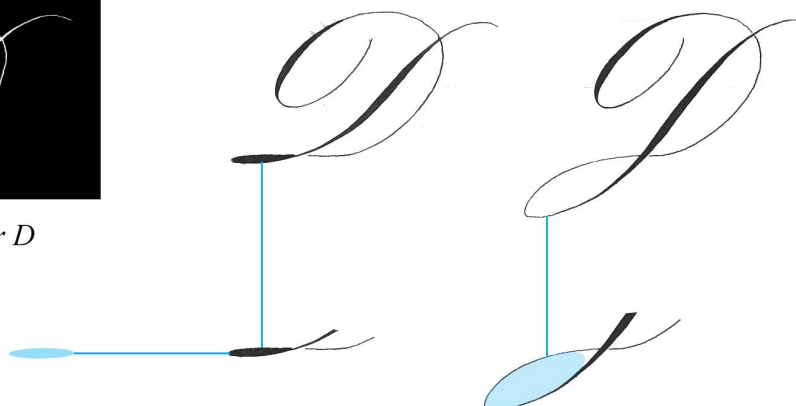


LETTER **D**

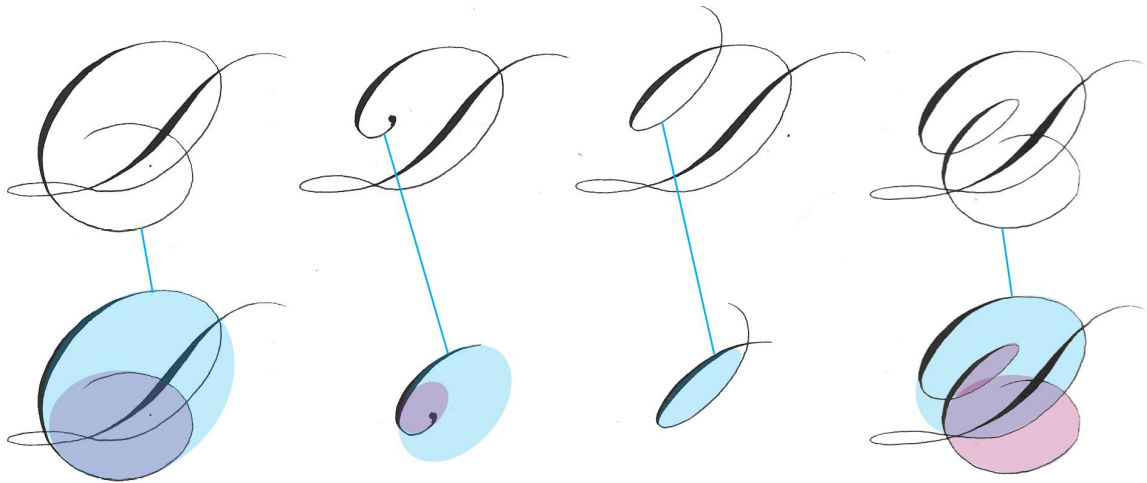
Serif Variations



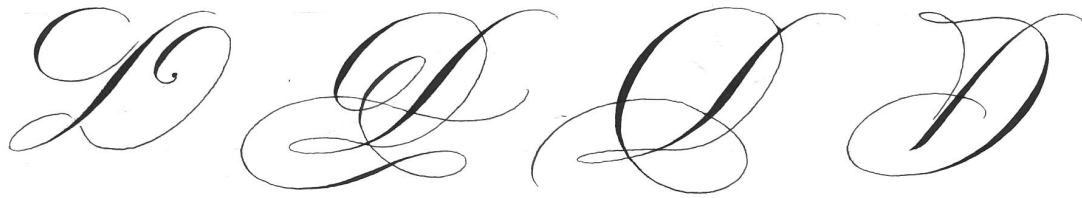
The basic letter D



Upper head Variations



Other Variations

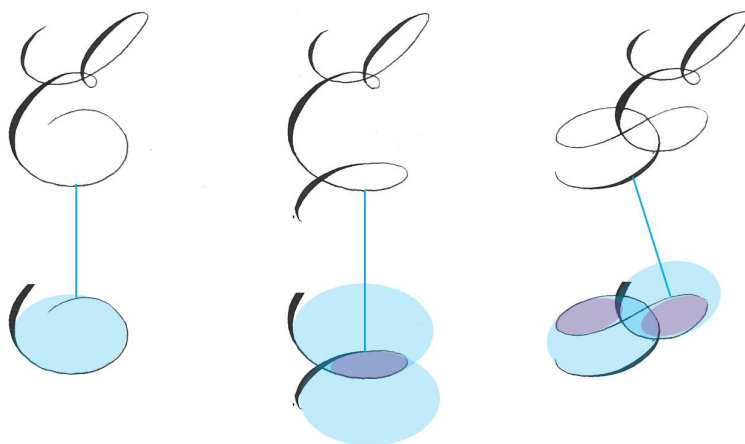


LETTER **E**

Exit stroke Variations

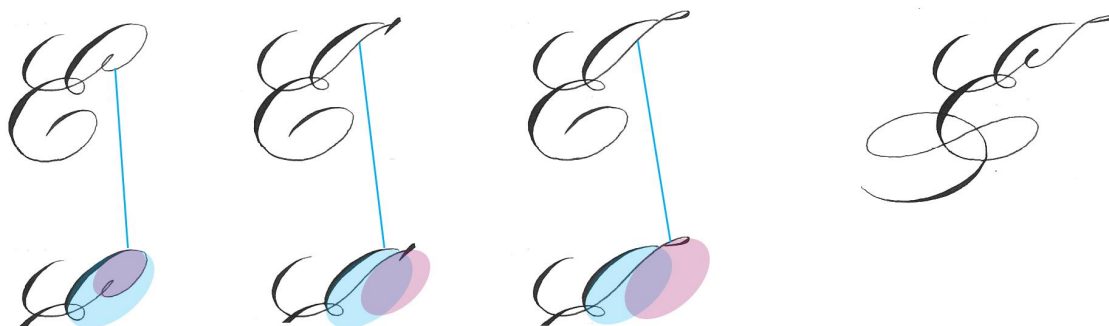


The basic letter E



Upper head Variations

Complete combination

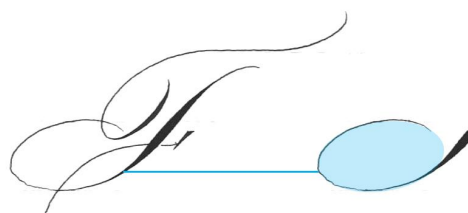


Other Variations

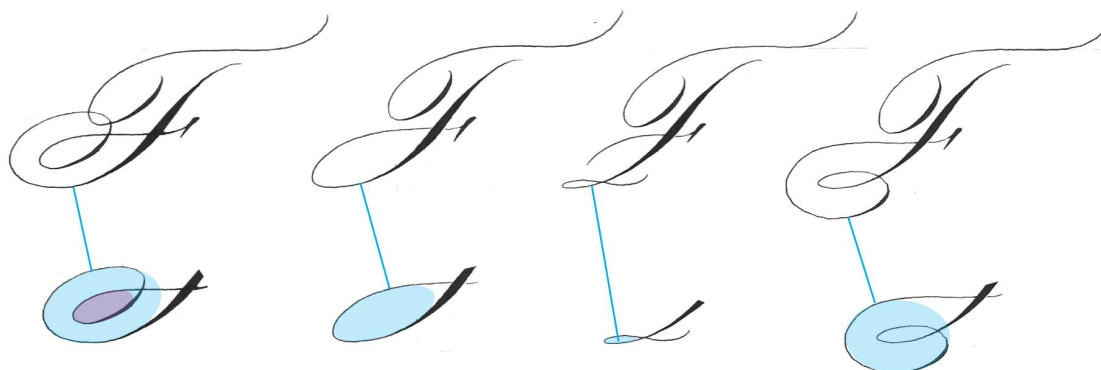


LETTER **F**

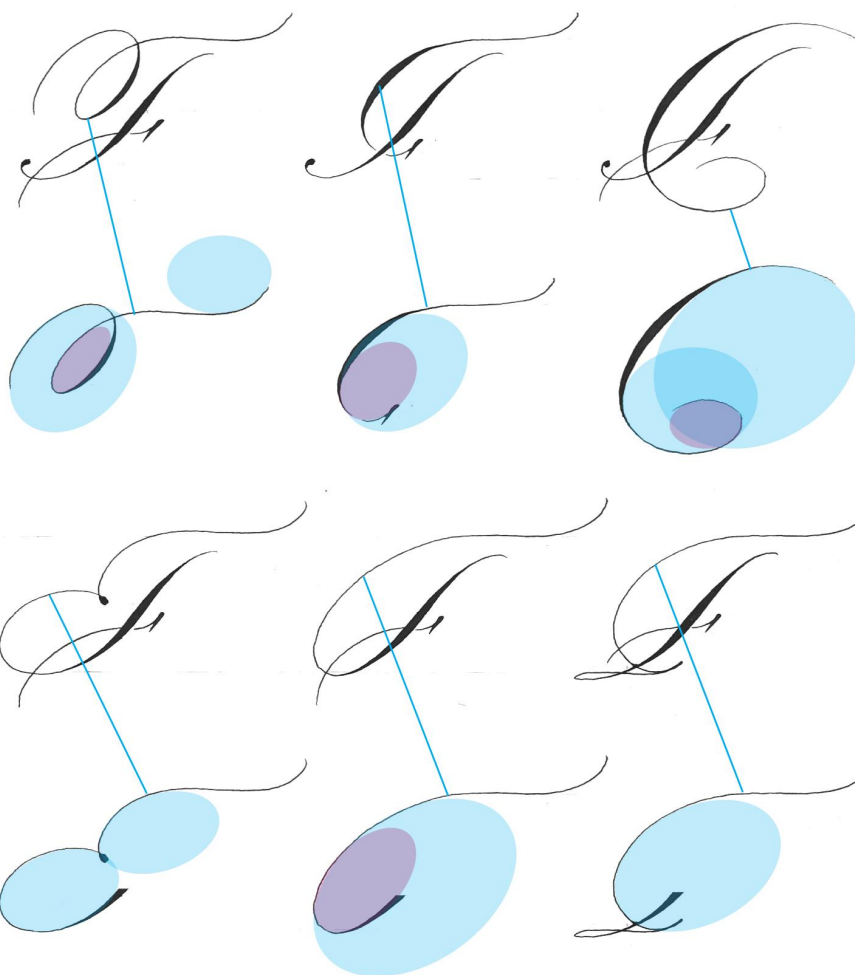
Serif Variations



The basic letter F



Upper head Variations

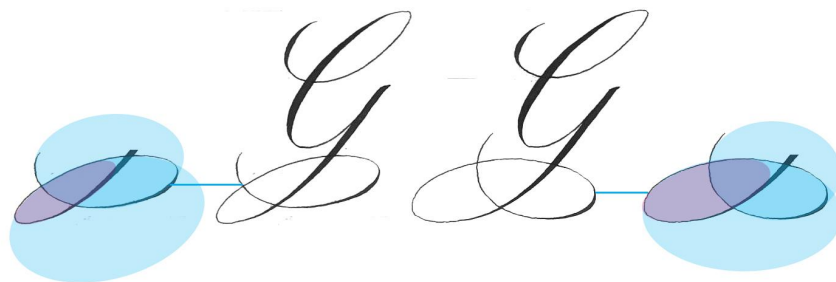


Other Variations



LETTER **F**

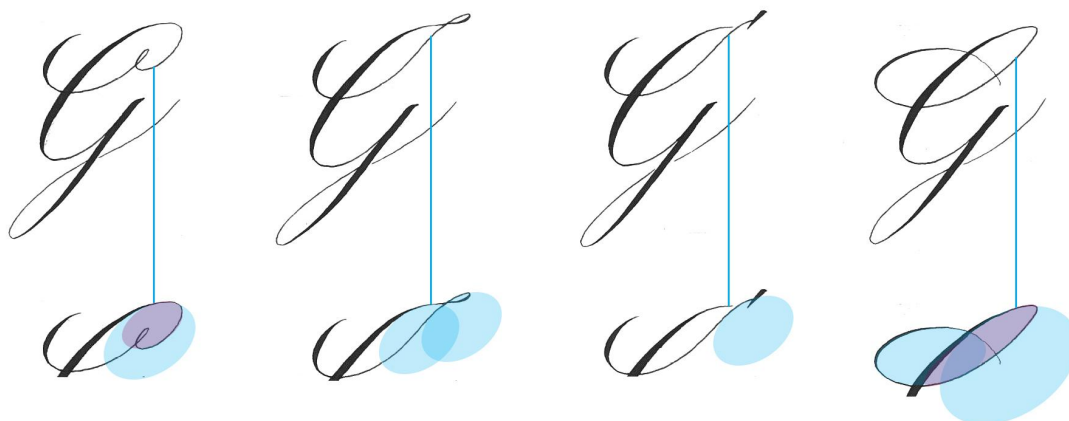
Tail variations



The basic letter G



Upper head Variations



Complete combination

Other Variations

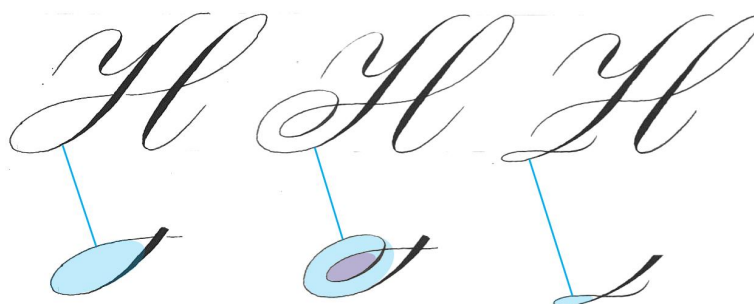


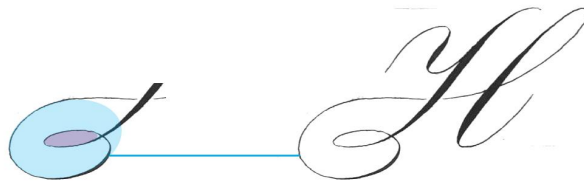
LETTER **H**

Serif Variations

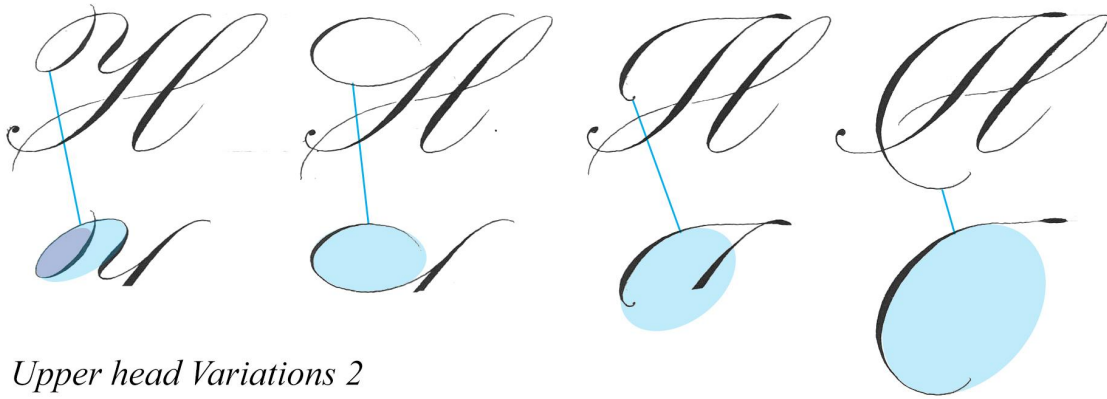


The basic letter H

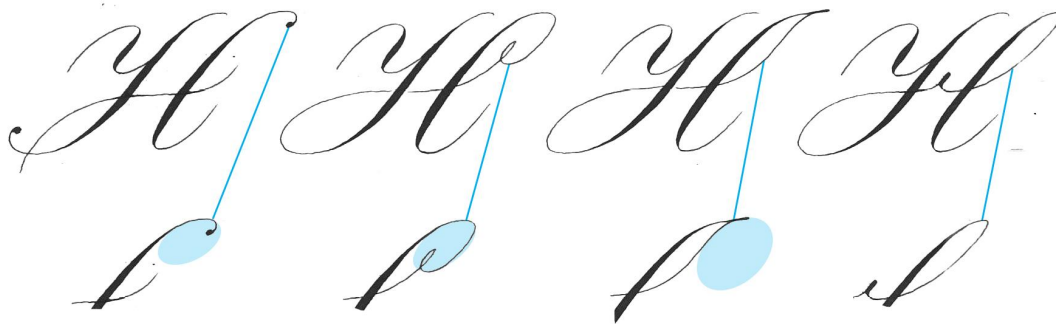




Upper head Variations



Upper head Variations 2



Exit stroke Variations



Complete combination

Other Variations



LETTER **I**

Serif Variations



The basic letter I

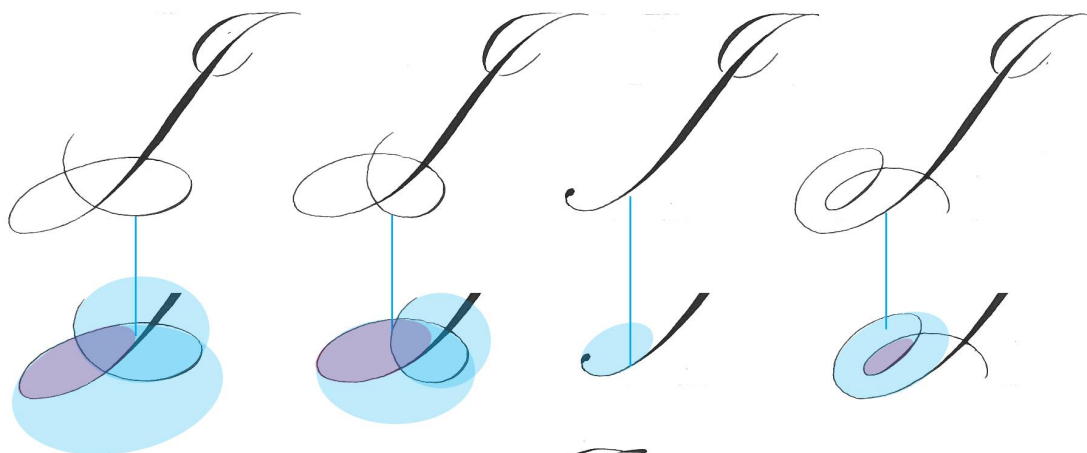


Upper head Variations

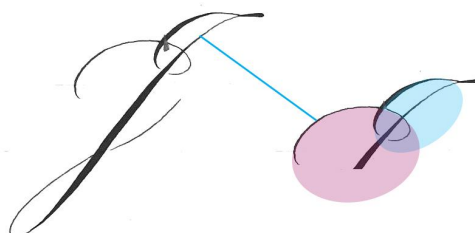


LETTER **J**

Tail Variations



Upper head Variations

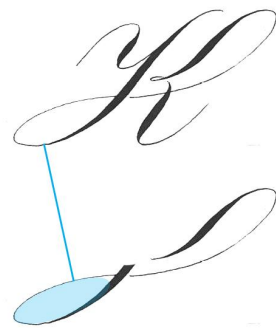
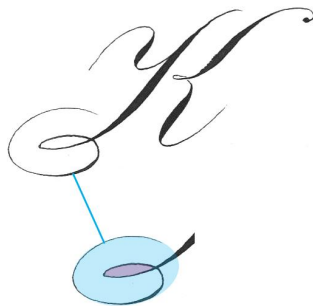
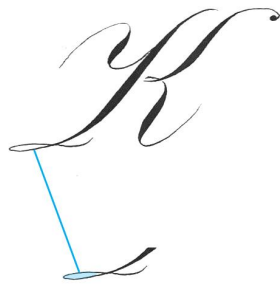


LETTER **K**

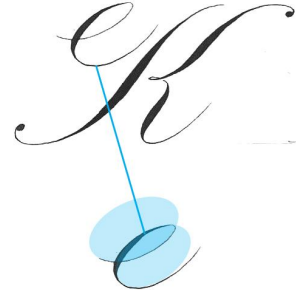
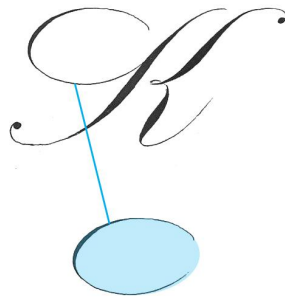
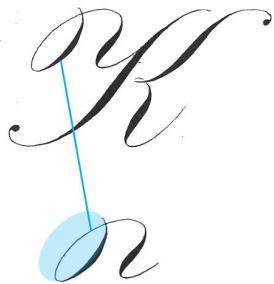
Serif Variations



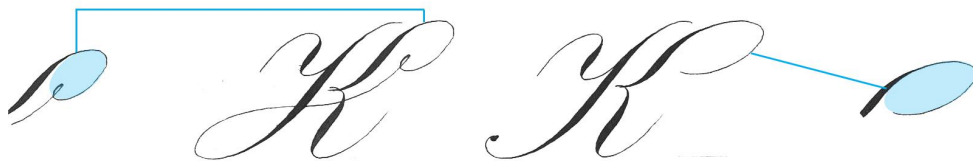
The basic letter K

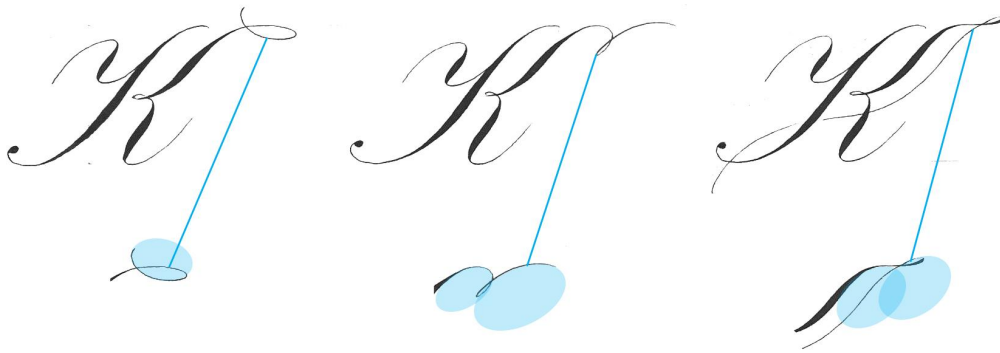


Upper head Variations



Upper head Variations 2





Exit stroke Variations



Other Variations



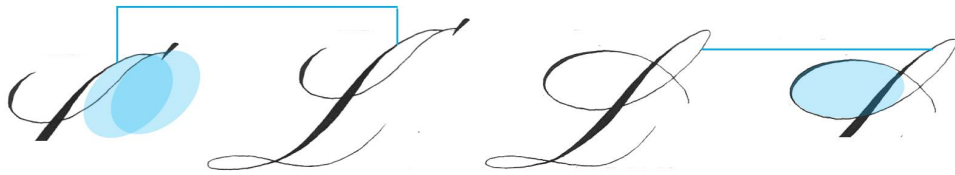
LETTER **L**

Upper head Variations

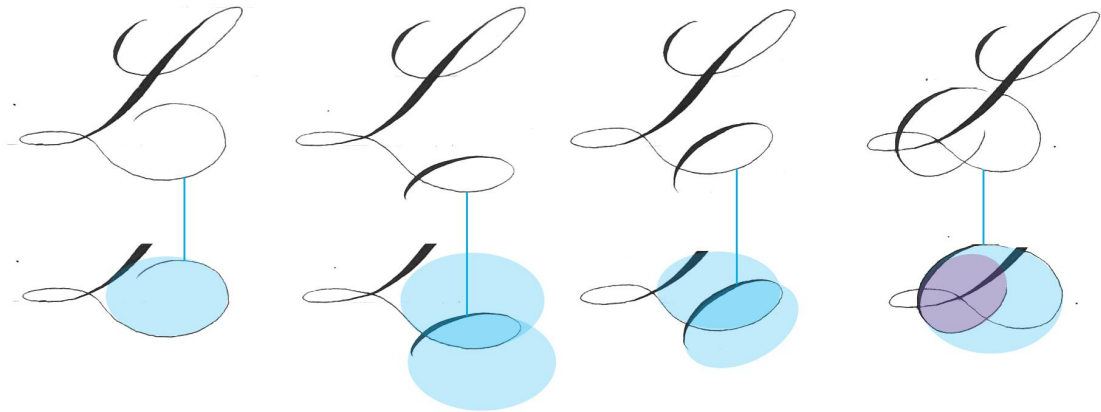


The basic letter L





Exit stroke Variations



Complete combination

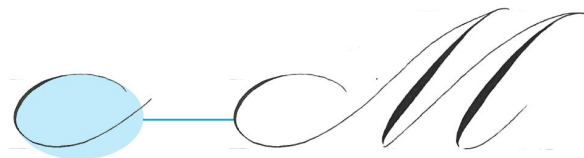


Other Variations



LETTER **M**

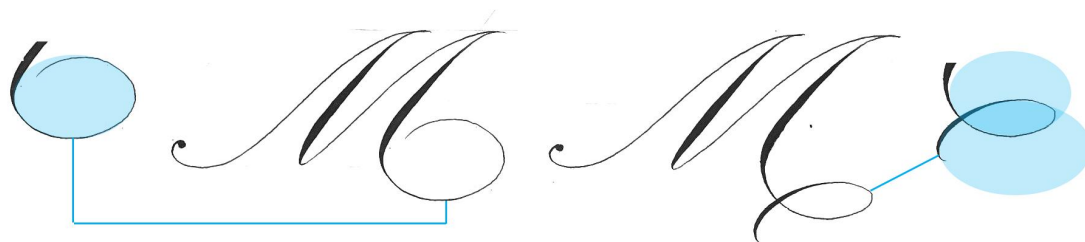
Serif Variations



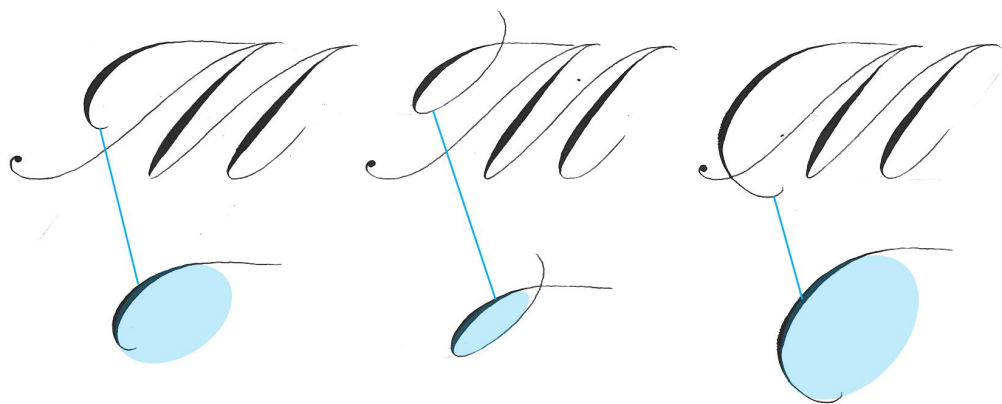
The basic letter M



Exit stroke Variations



Upper head Variations



Complete combination

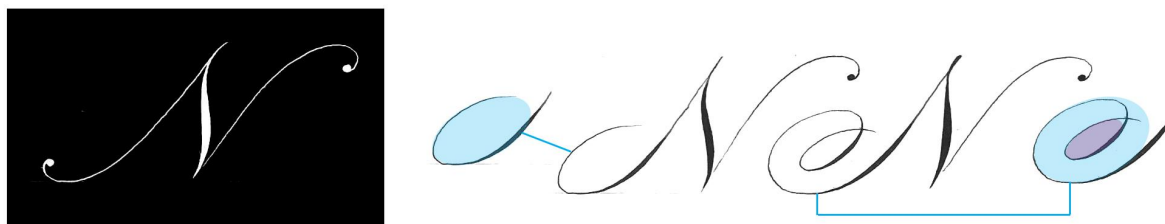


Other Variations

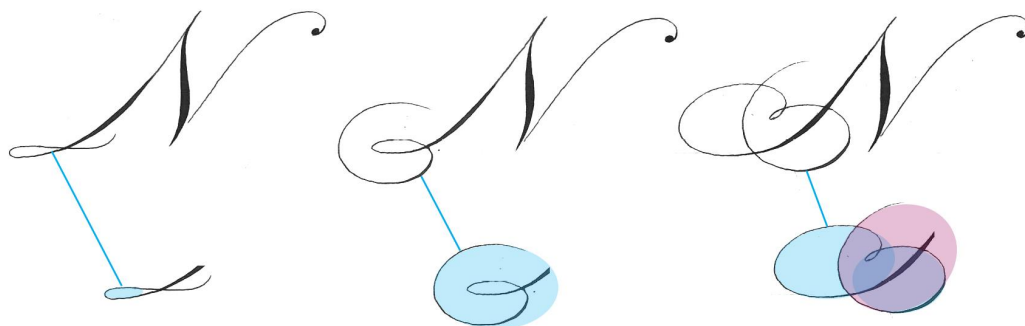


LETTER **N**

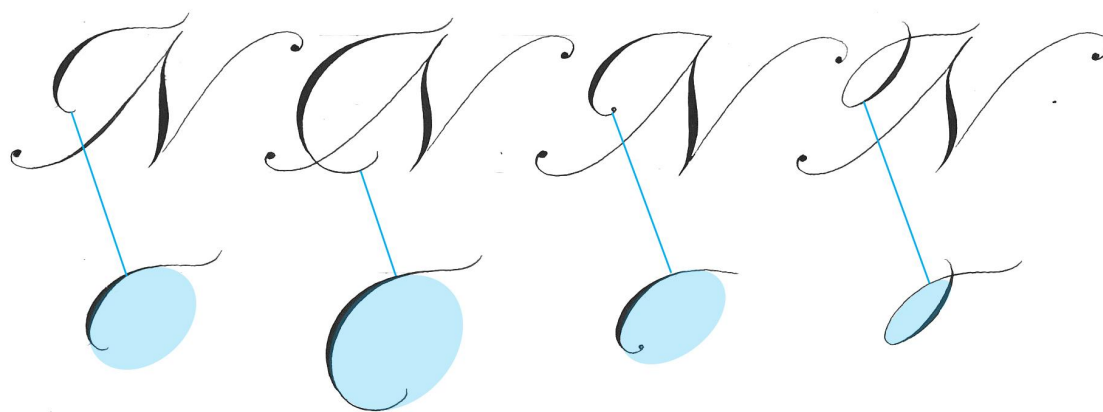
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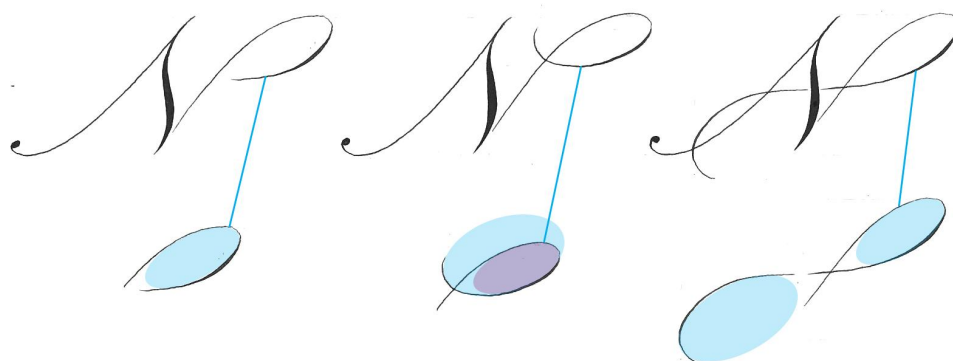
The basic letter N



Upper head Variations



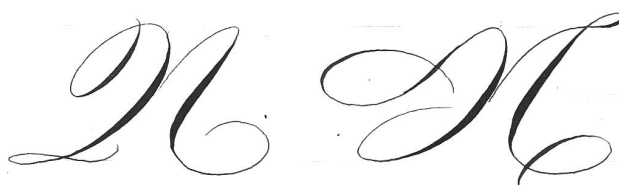
Upper head Variations 2



Complete combination



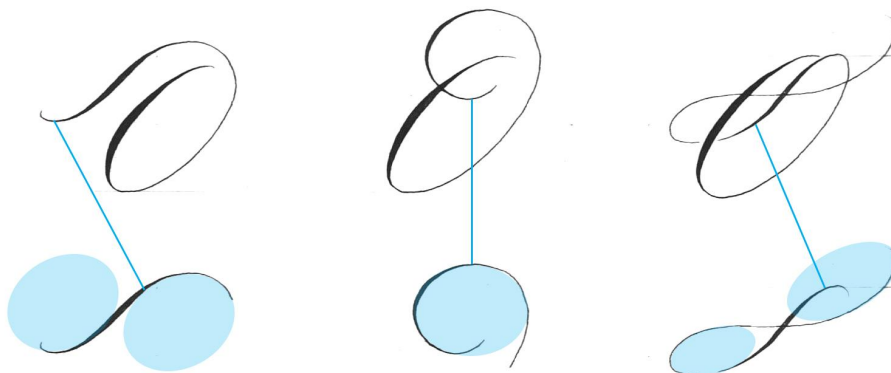
Other Variations



LETTER **O**



The basic letter O

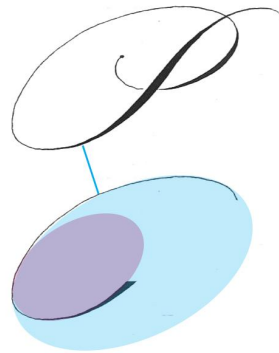
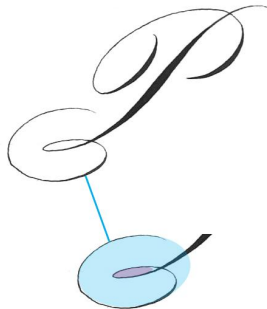
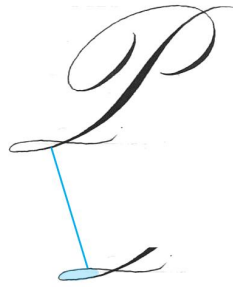


LETTER **P**

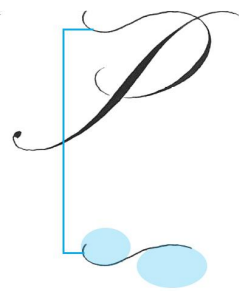
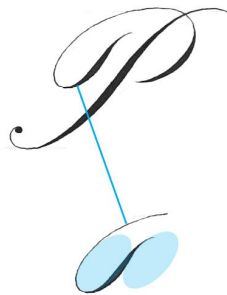
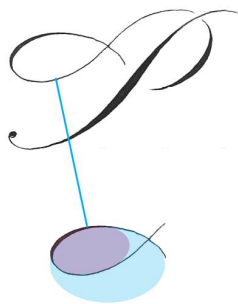
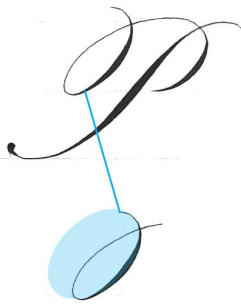
Serif Variations



The basic letter P



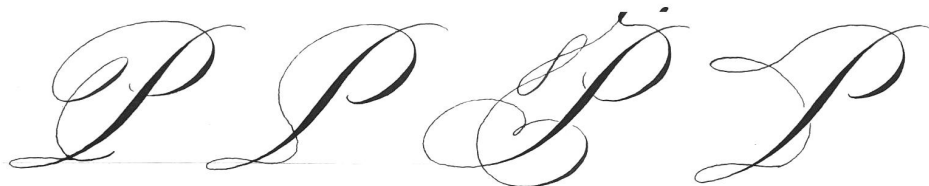
Upper head Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations

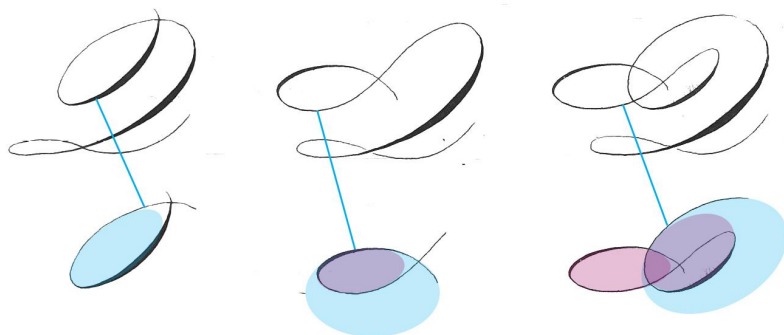


LETTER **Q**

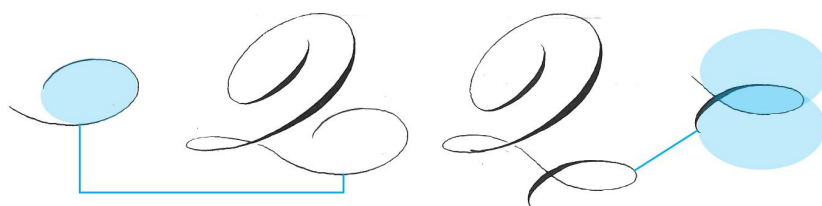
Upper head Variations



The basic letter Q



Exit stroke Variations



Other Variations

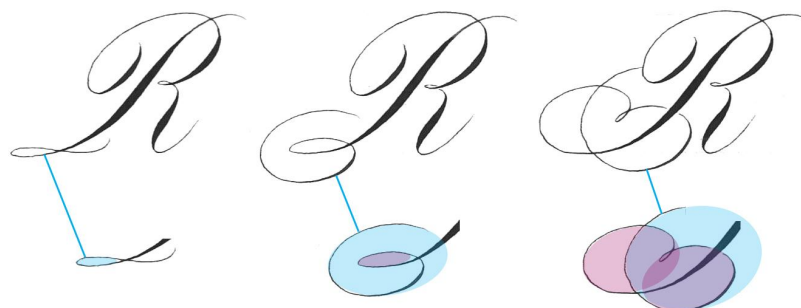
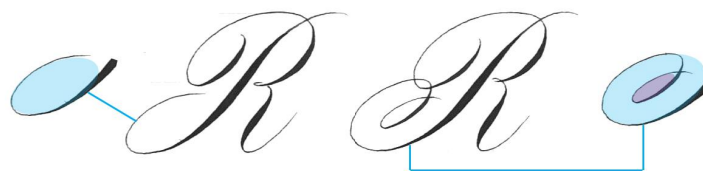


LETTER **R**

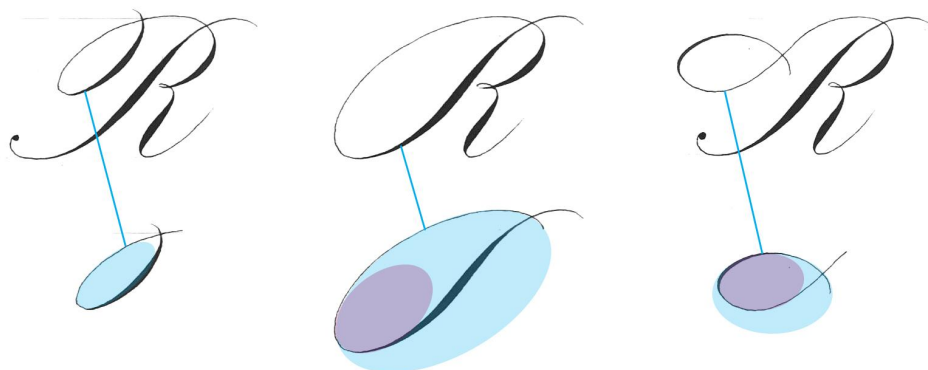
Serif Variations



The basic letter R



Upper head Variations



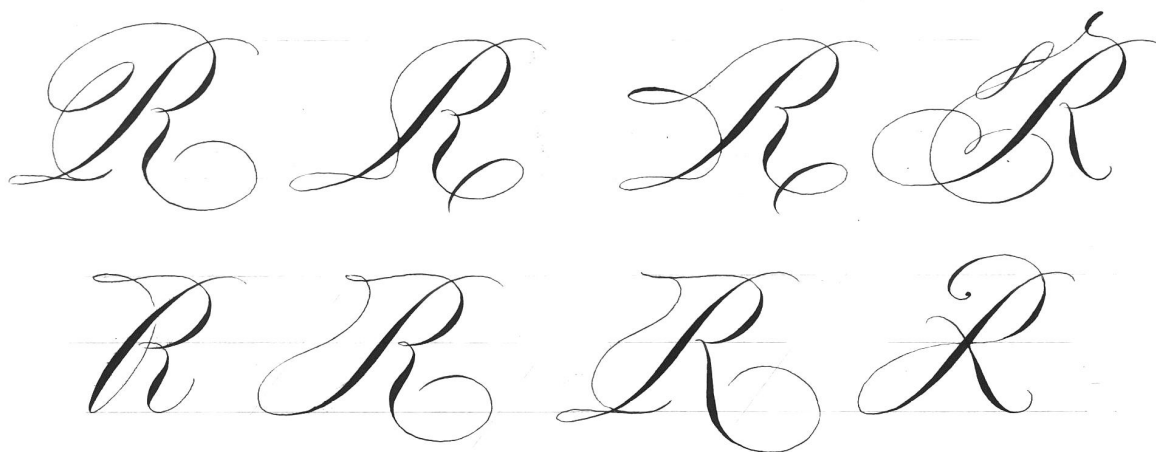
Exit stroke Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations

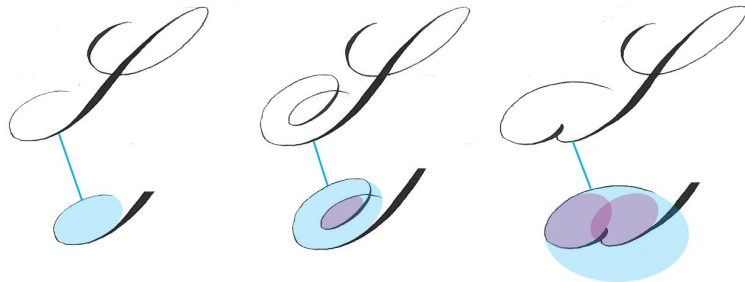


LETTER **S**

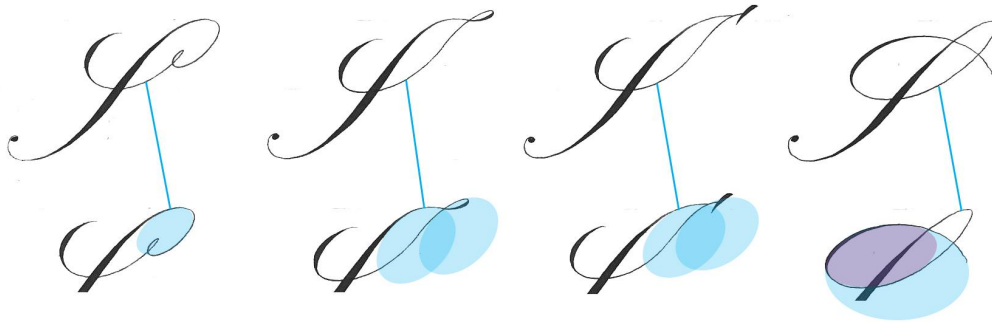
Serif Variations



The basic letter S



Upper head Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations



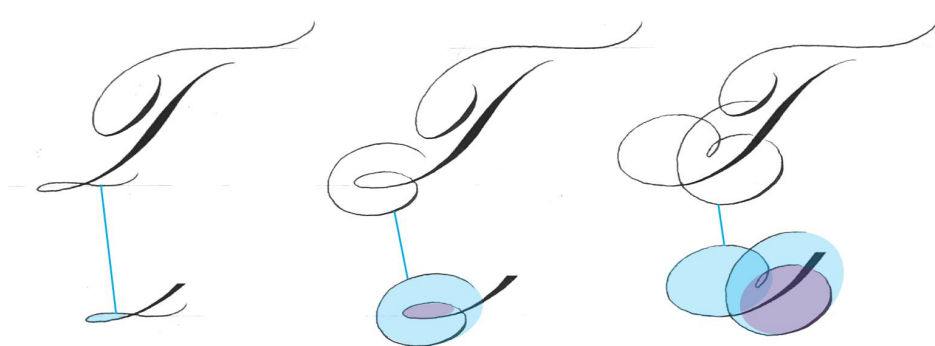
LETTER **T**

Serif Variations

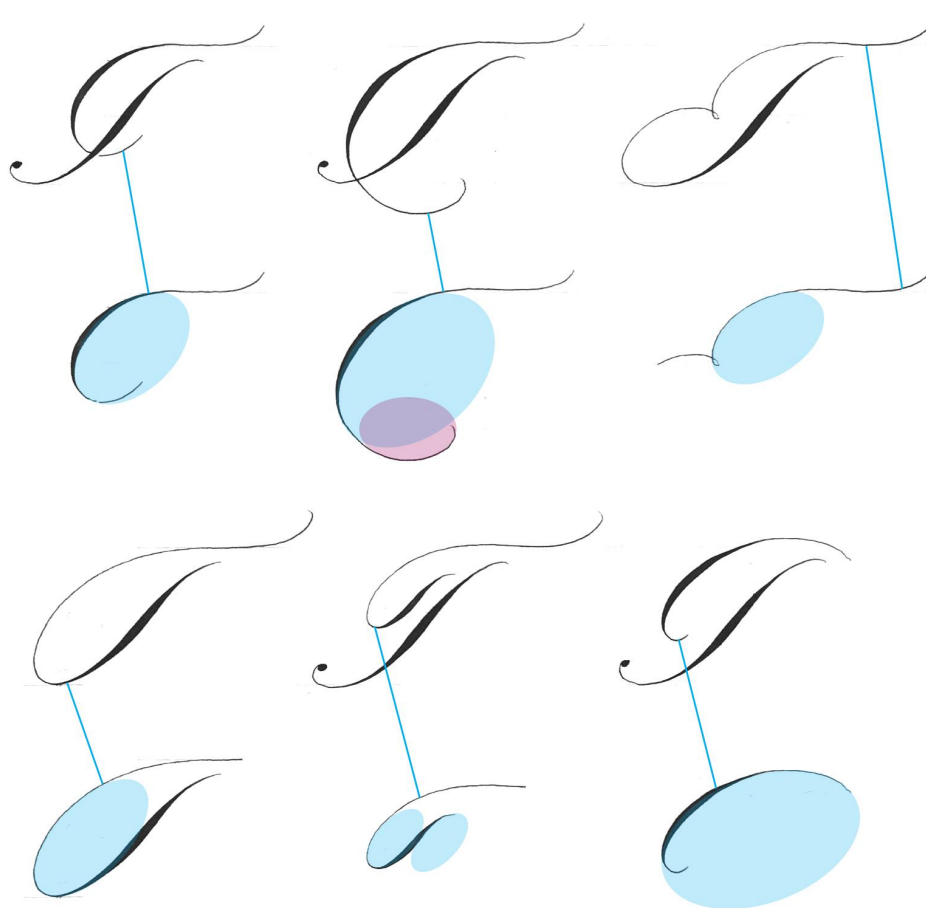


The basic letter T





Upper head Variations



Other Variations

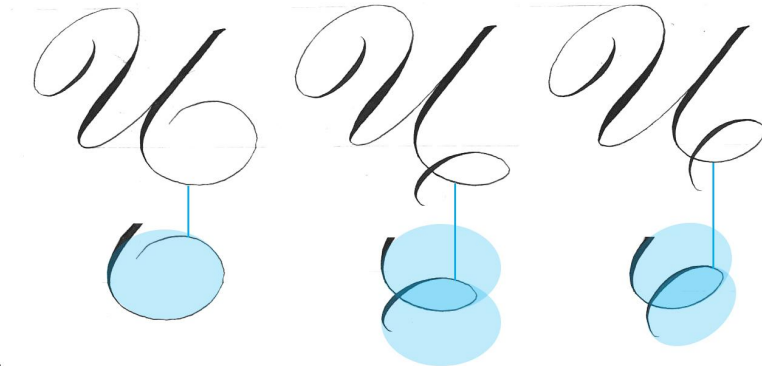


LETTER U

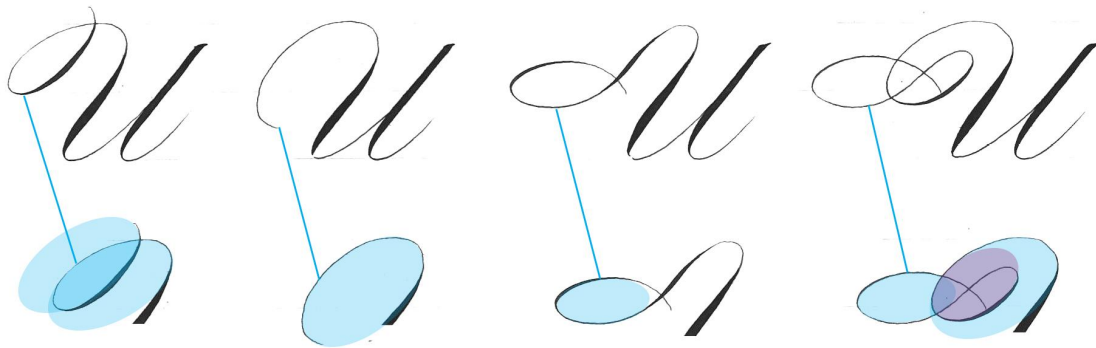
Exit stroke Variations



The basic letter U



Upper head Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations



LETTER V

Upper head Variations

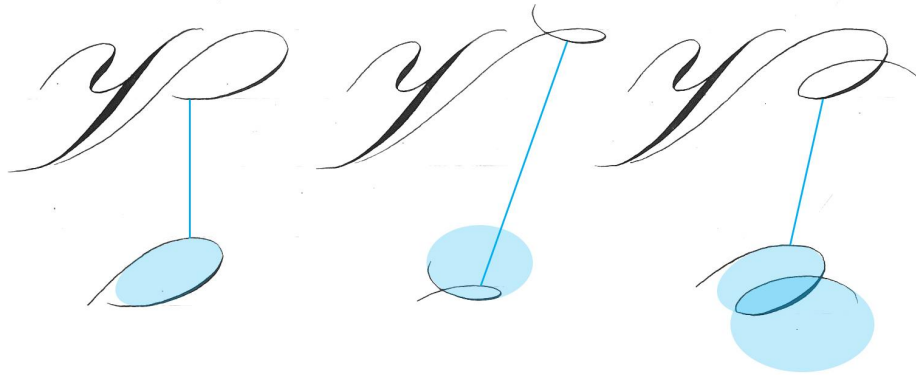


The basic letter V





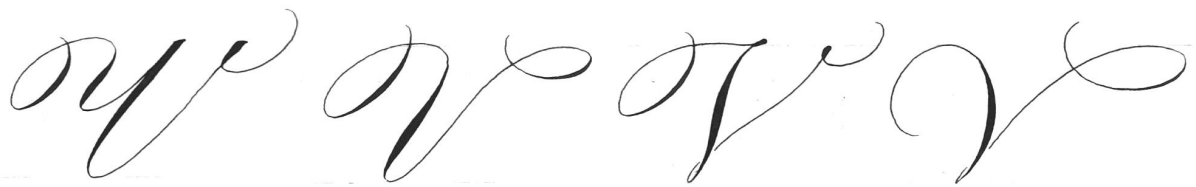
Upper head Variations 2



Complete combination



Other Variations



LETTER **W**

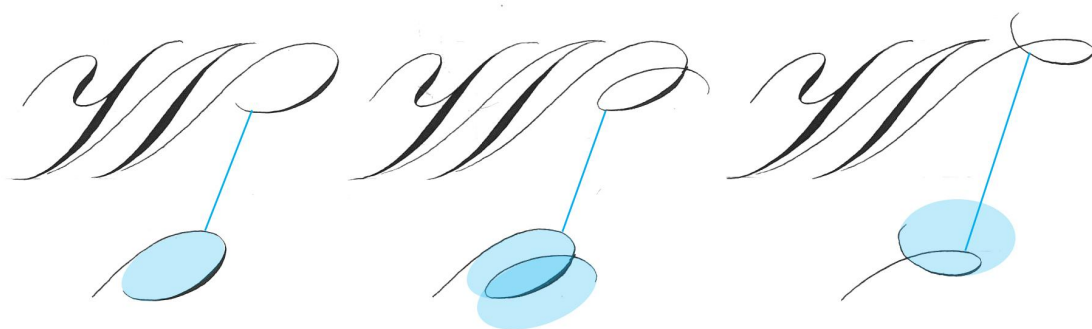
Upper head Variations



The basic letter W



Upper head Variations 2



Complete combination



Other Variations

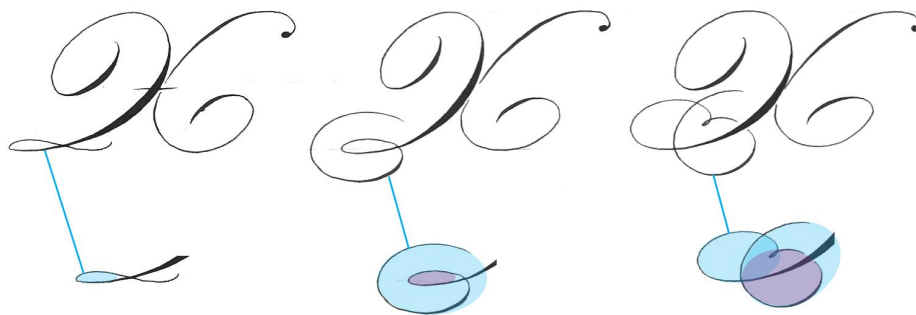


LETTER **X**

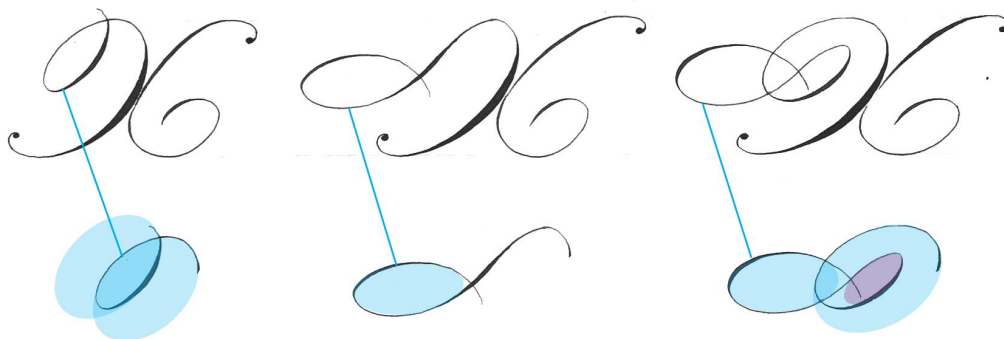
Serif Variations



The basic letter X



Upper head Variations



Upper head Variations 2



Exit stroke Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations

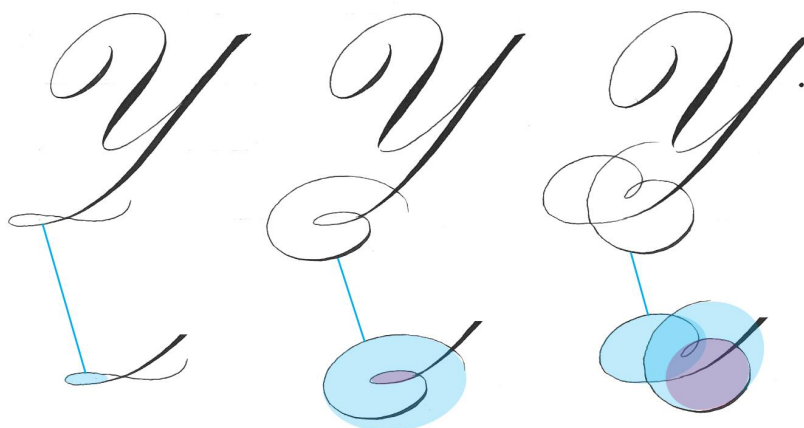
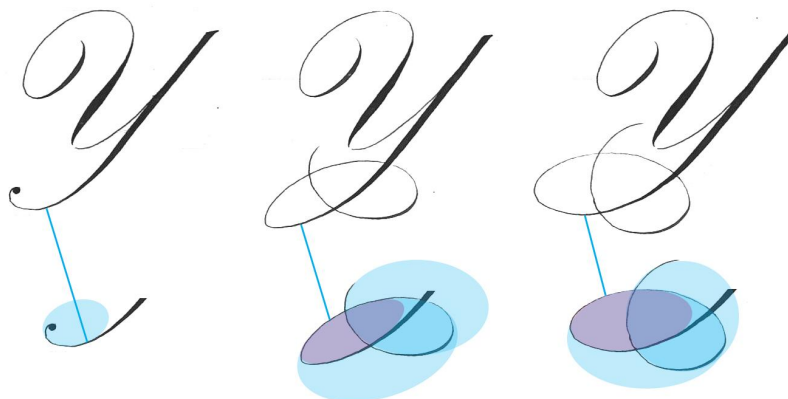


LETTER **Y**

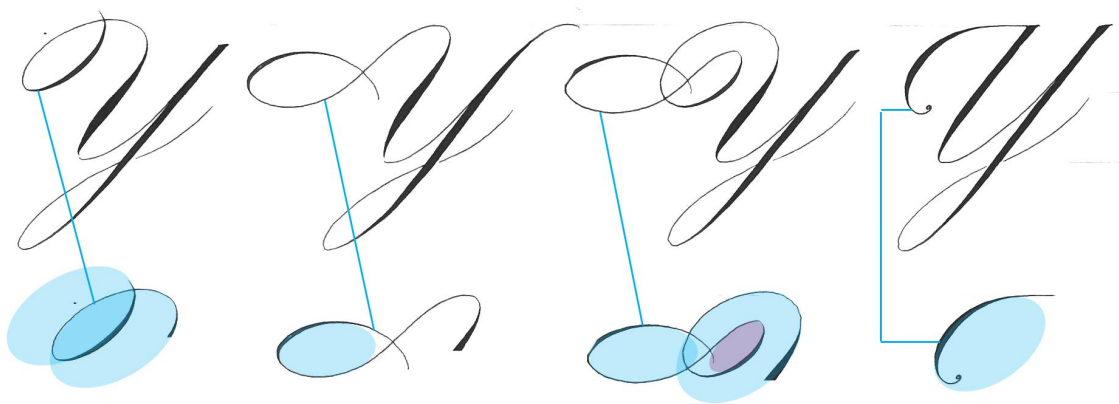
Tail Variations



The basic letter Y



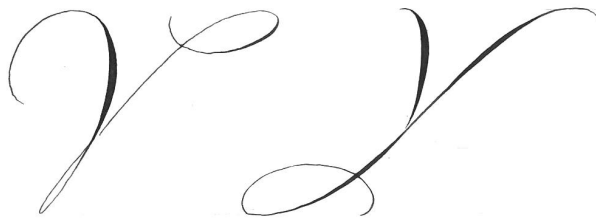
Upper head Variations



Complete combination

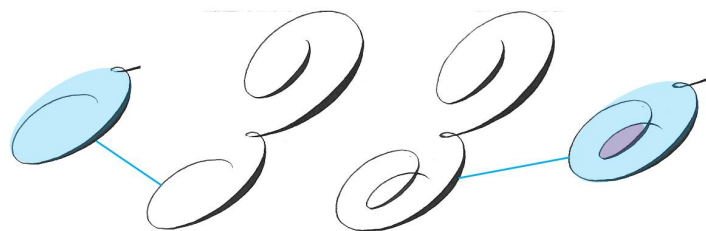


Other Variations

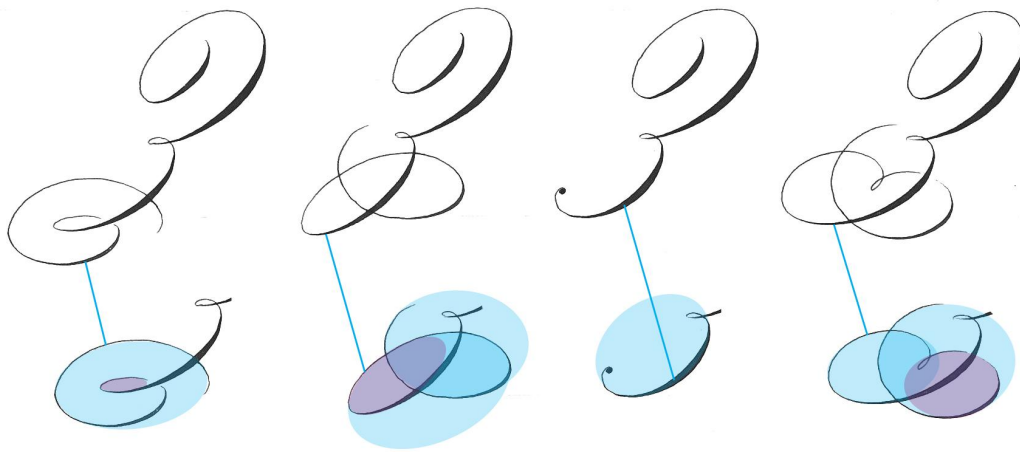


LETTER **Z**

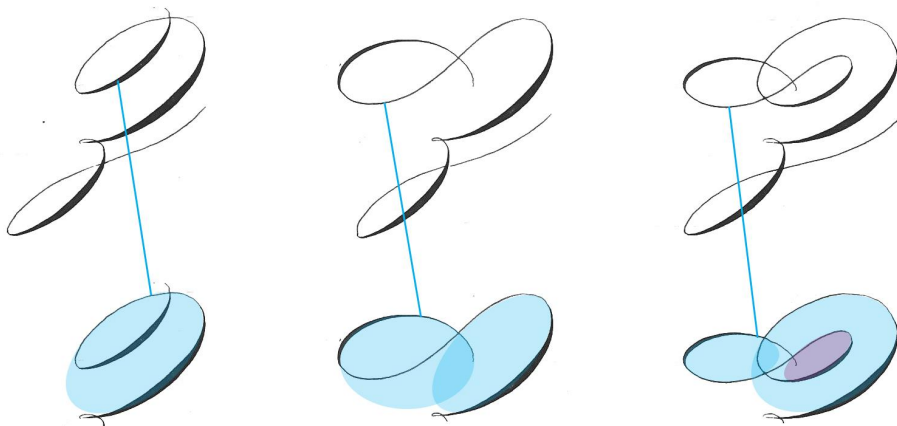
Tail Variations



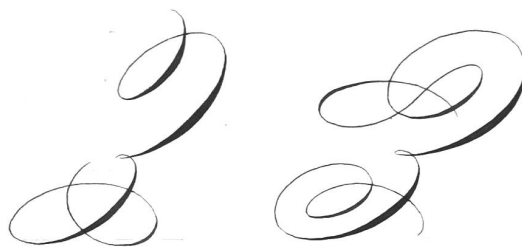
The basic letter Z



Upper head Variations



Complete combination



Other Variations



LOWERCASE LETTER VARIATIONS

Not only capital letters but also lowercase letters need decorative ornaments to ensure the harmony of the whole work. Moreover, it gives you freedom to express your own personality.

Lowercase letter variations need to be in harmony with capital letter variations. Therefore, we will put them in certain groups according to their similar shapes, which is also useful when practicing.

PART 1 | EXIT STROKE

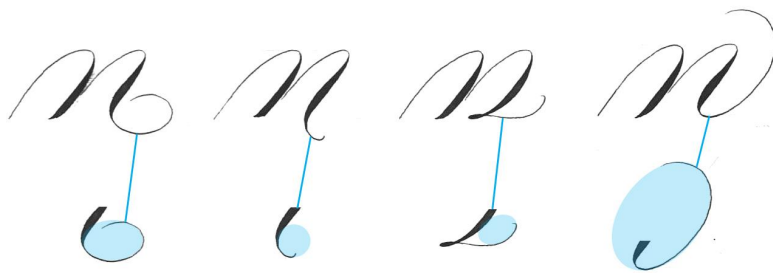


Group 1



Example

The first group of exit strokes is one of the most basic strokes in Copperplate Script with its ending tail being on the same axis as the letter inclination.

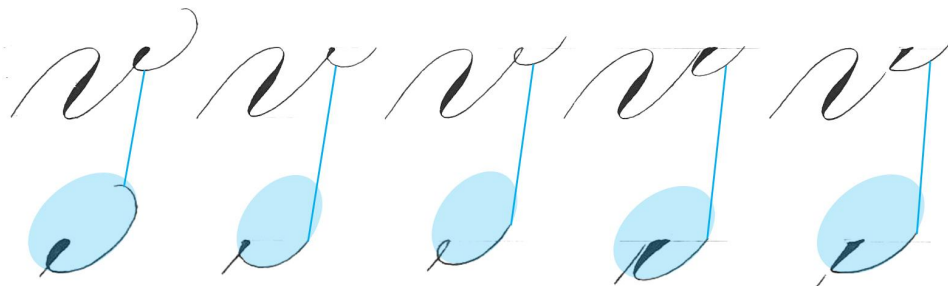


Group 2

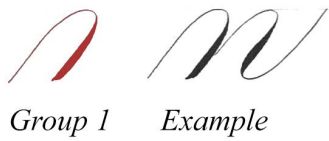


Example

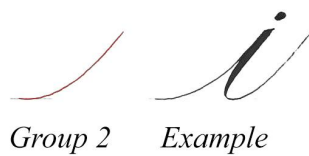
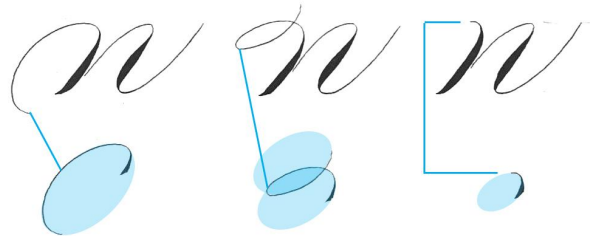
The second group is similar to the first one, but its size is smaller and can be found in letter v, w, b



PART 2 | LEAD-IN STROKE



The first group of lead-in strokes is a very important one which decides the position of the letter before writing; hence, some of the letters which originally doesn't contain lead-in stroke still need to encompass it.



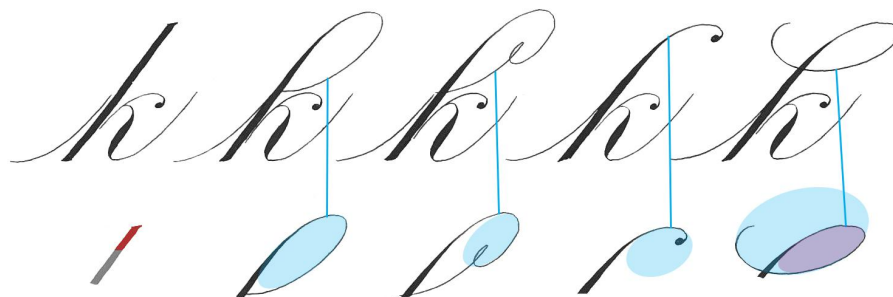
The second group has the same function. Its shape is similar to that of the first group, and its ending tail is on the same axis as the letter inclination.

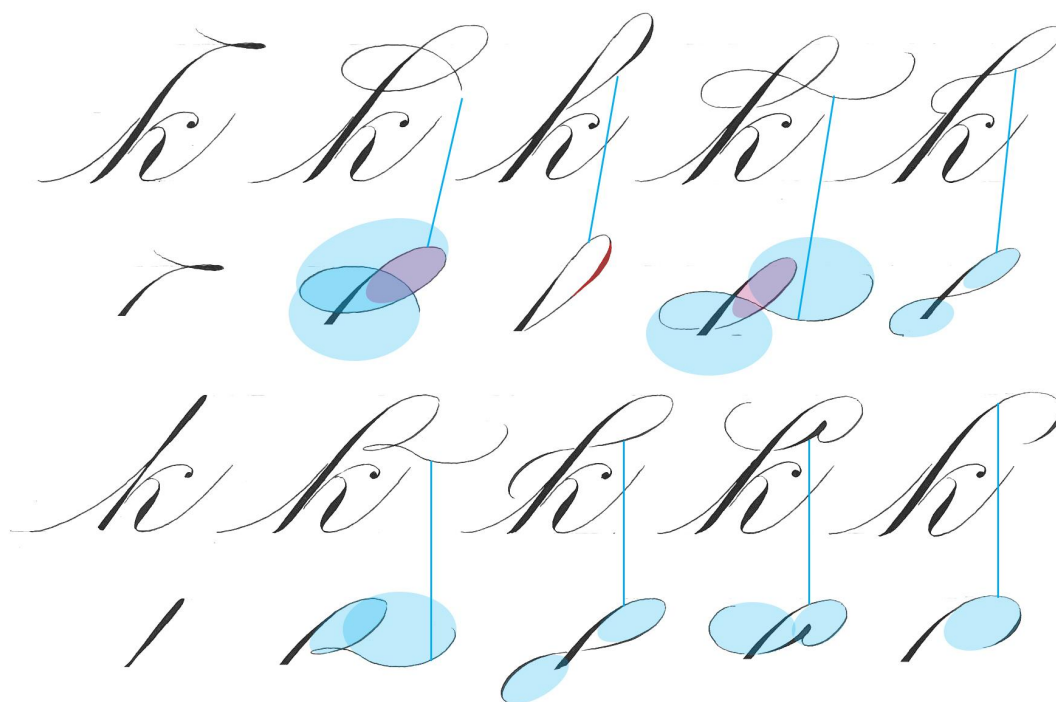


PART 3 | ASCENDING STEM



Ascending stem loop is a very popular stroke used in creating variations when it comes to lowercase letters. The following techniques can also be applied in other similar letters such as b, l, h, etc.



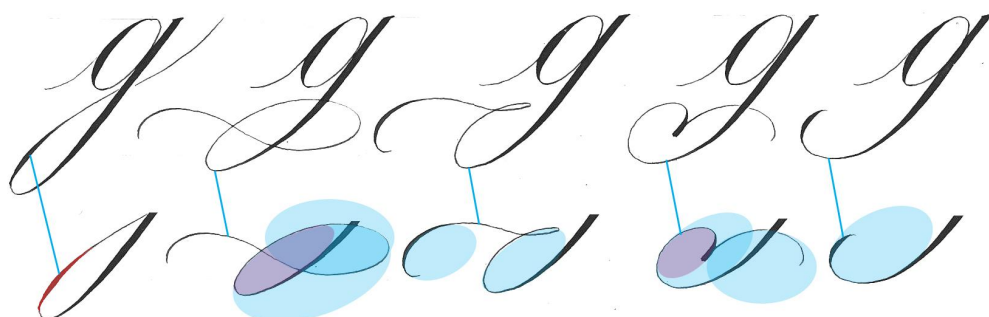
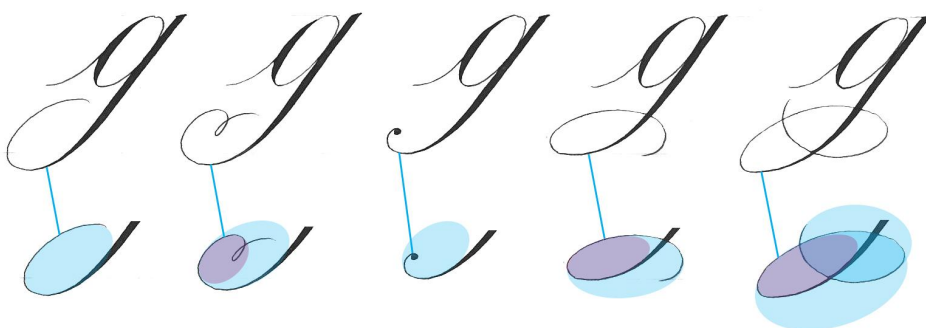


PART 4 | DESCENDING STEM



Descending stem loop also share the same techniques used in ascending stem loop. However, the following ones are not applied for letter q.

Example



VARIATIONS ONLY FOR y&q

y q y q

y q y q

OTHER VARIATIONS (from a to z)

a a a

c c c c

d d d d d d

f f f f

h h h h

g g g g

k k k k

o o o

p p p p p

q q

r r r r

r r r r

s s s s s

t t x x x x

z z z z z

EXAMPLES

Following are some of the examples I have written so that you can understand the combination of all variations described in the last section.

Astronomer

Destination

Harmony

Patience

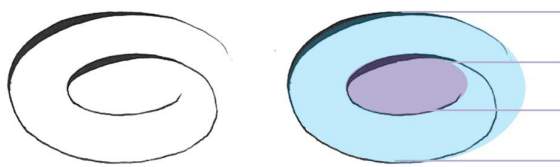
Saxophone

FLOURISH

When adding decorative ornaments to the lettering, we will not be able to avoid the imbalance among letters because capital letters encompass more complex details than the rest. Therefore, flourishing is very useful in bringing harmony to the whole work.

Flourishing is a technique to add some decorative patterns to the lettering in order to make it more attractive and harmonious. This technique can be used in a text, title, and signature. There are several basic rules to do calligraphy flourishing and develop it from simple to complex style.

THE SPIRAL RULE



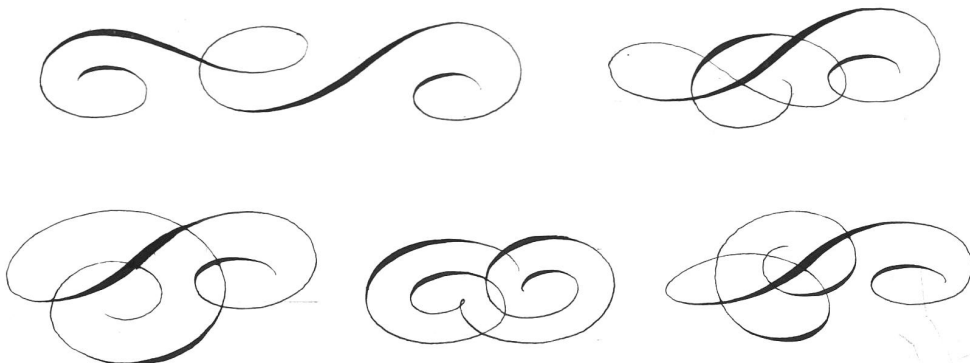
As you can see from the picture on the left, space between small loop and the larger one is equal. The Oval inclination depends on aesthetic sense of each individual.

THE INFINITE LOOP RULE



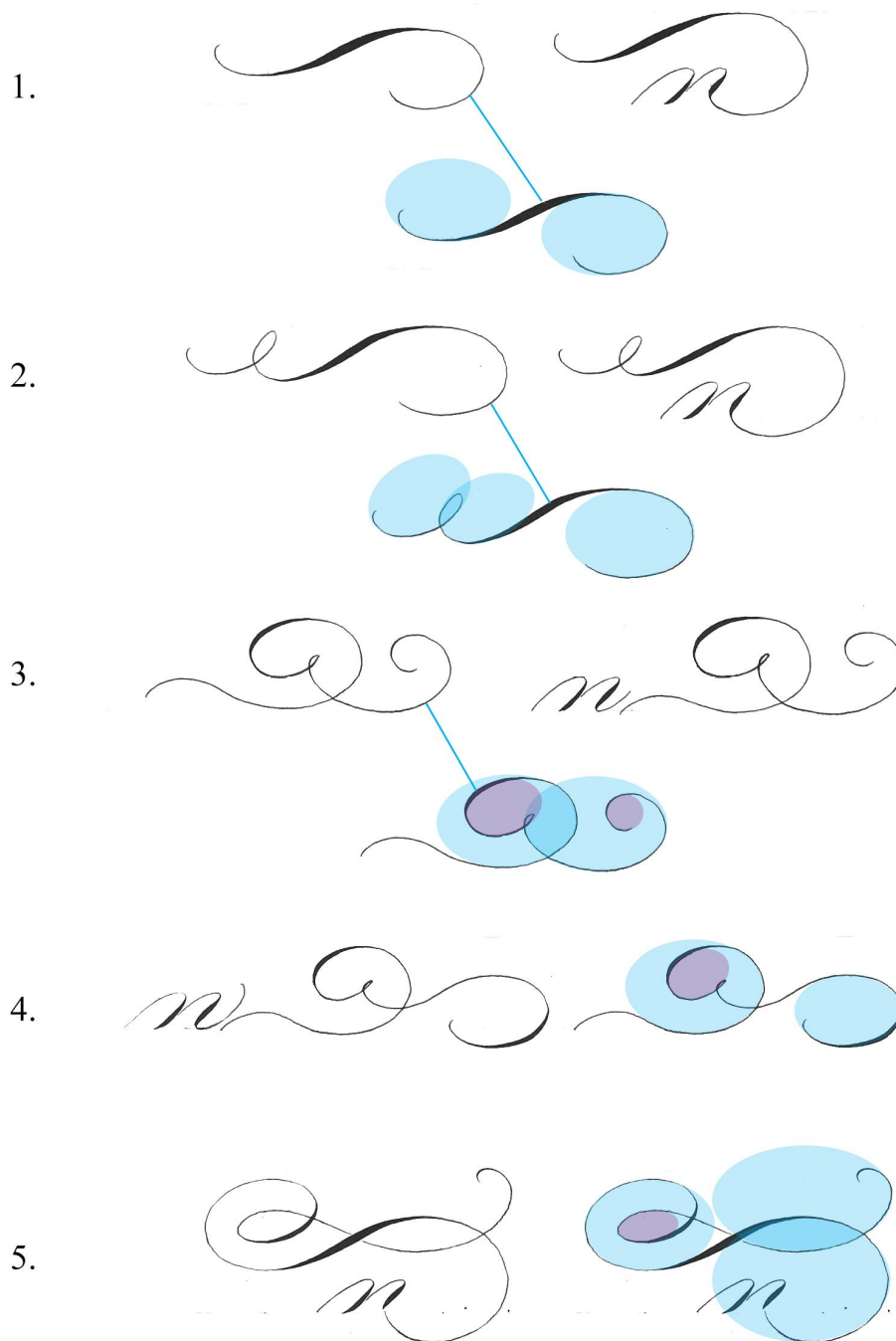
Two Ovals intersect at one point to form an infinity shape. Each Oval is drawn based on the spiral rule.

A FEW EXAMPLES OF FLOURISHING

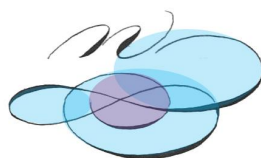


ADDING FLOURISHES TO THE END OF THE WORD

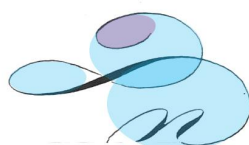
As we mentioned earlier, adding flourishes to the lettering can make the word look more balanced and harmonious. Flourishes can be added to different spots depending on your aesthetic sense and the overall harmony. One easy way to do flourishing is adding flourishes to the exit stroke of the final letter in the word or phrase based on the spiral rule and the infite loop rule.



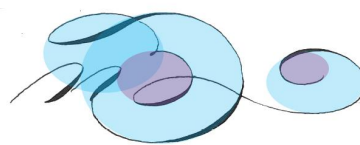
6.



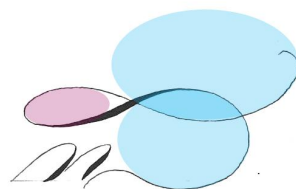
7.



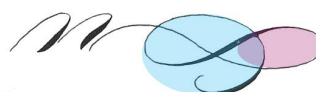
8.



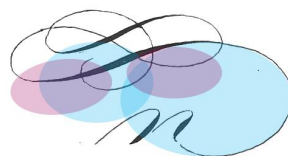
9.



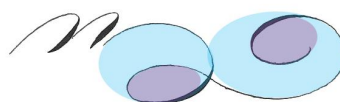
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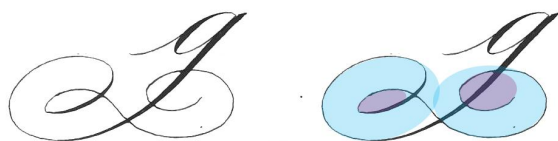
11.



12.



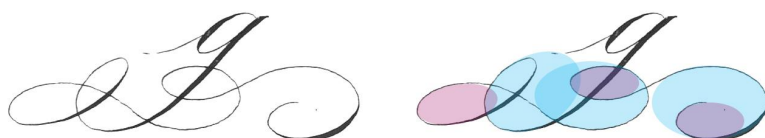
4.



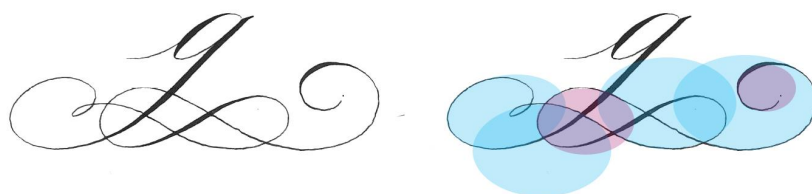
5.



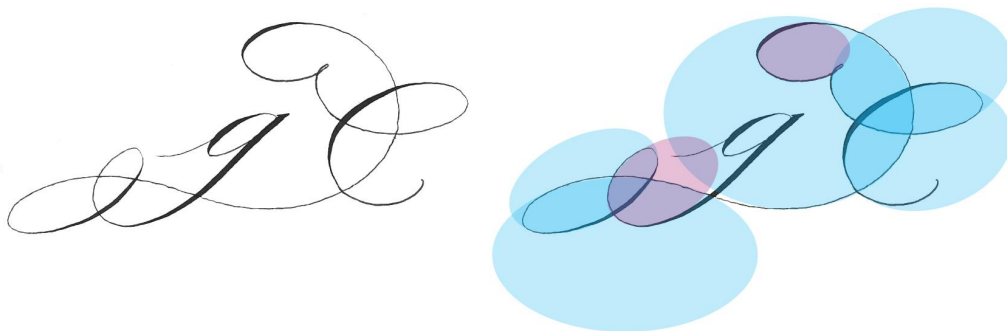
6.



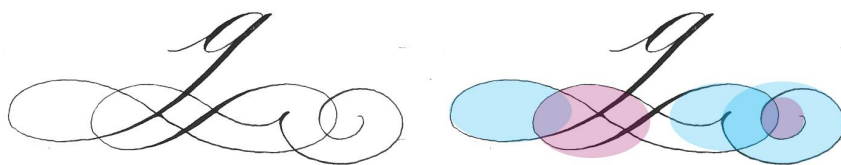
7.



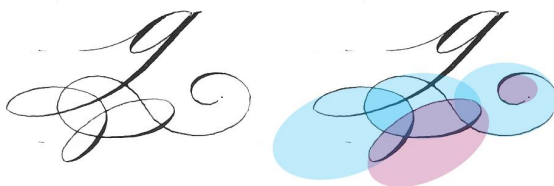
8.



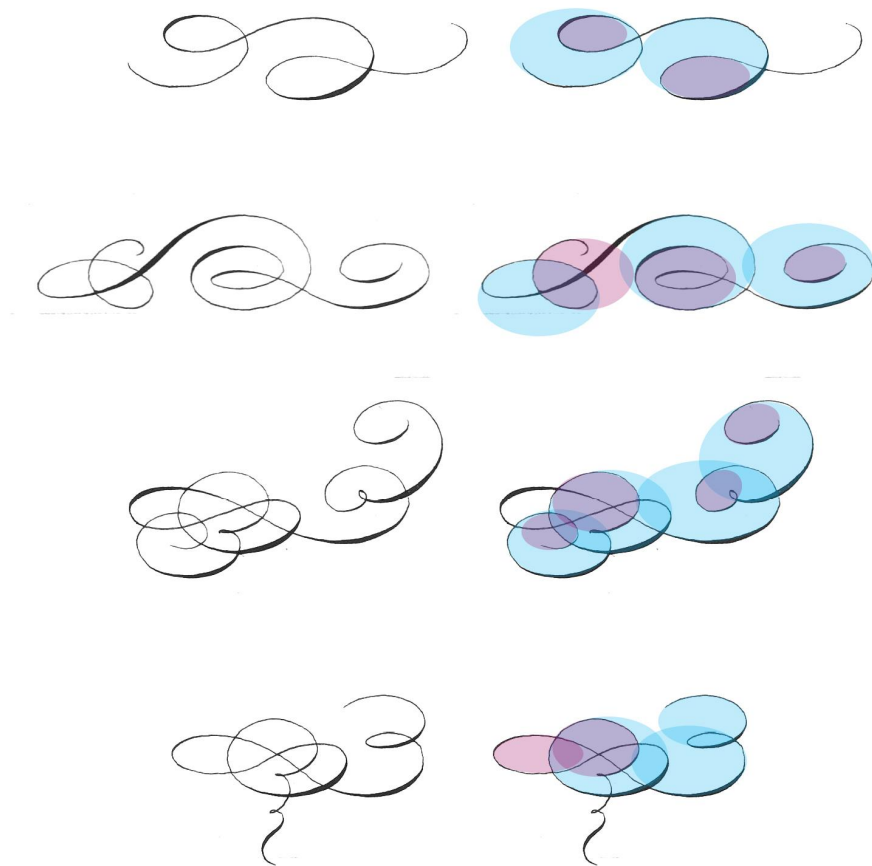
9.



10.



OTHER FLOURISHES



SUMMARY AND TAKE AWAY

We have already completed one of the advanced part of Copperplate Script. As you can see, all of the decorative strokes stay inside the Oval shapes; however, it is not necessary and effective to try to learn by heart all of the Ovals and their different axes. The most important thing to remember is the harmony of the whole work. For example, the inclination of horizontal Ovals can be changed a little bit as long as it creates harmony and aesthetic feeling for the whole work.

For that reason, practice drawing simple Ovals with different inclinations and combine several Ovals in a harmonious and natural way are the most effective method to master the technique of using Ovals.

SAMPLES

In this part, I will add flourishes to a few words. Each word will have 2 versions, one of which contains flourishes created naturally based on my feeling and aesthetic sense, the other contains flourishes which are designed, sketched and edited, then finished with ink.

1. NATURAL FLOURISHES

Liberation *Beauteous*

Knowable *Optimistic*

Qualitative

2. DESIGNED FLOURISHES

Liberation

Beautiful

Knowable

Optimistic

Qualitative