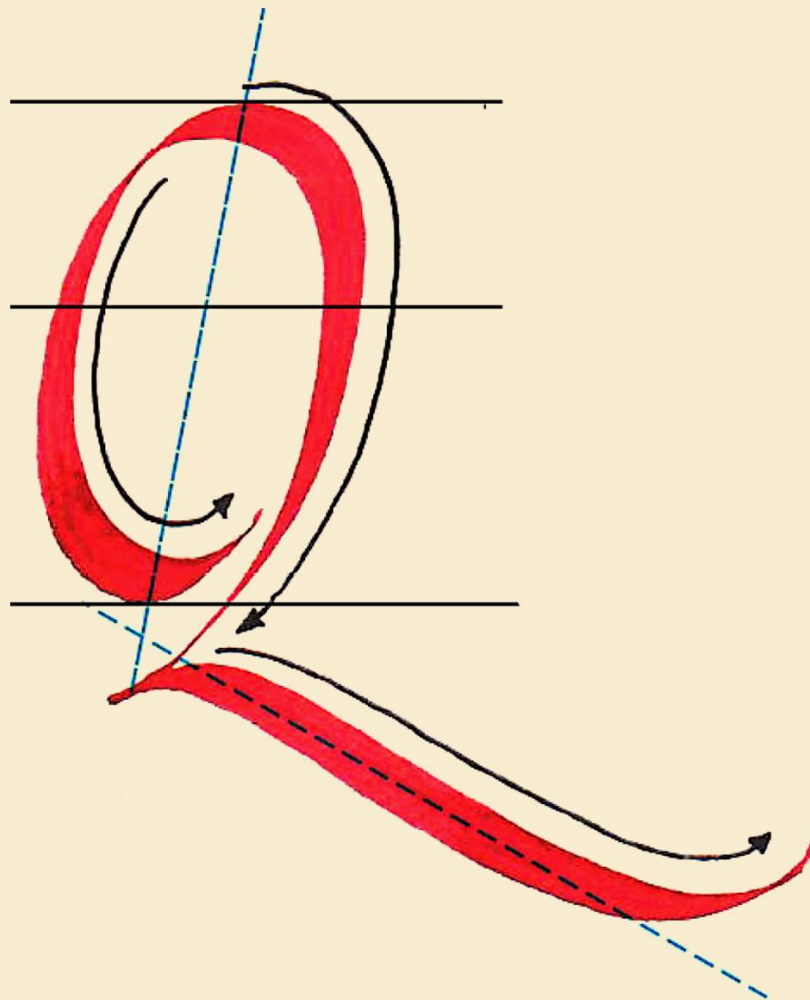


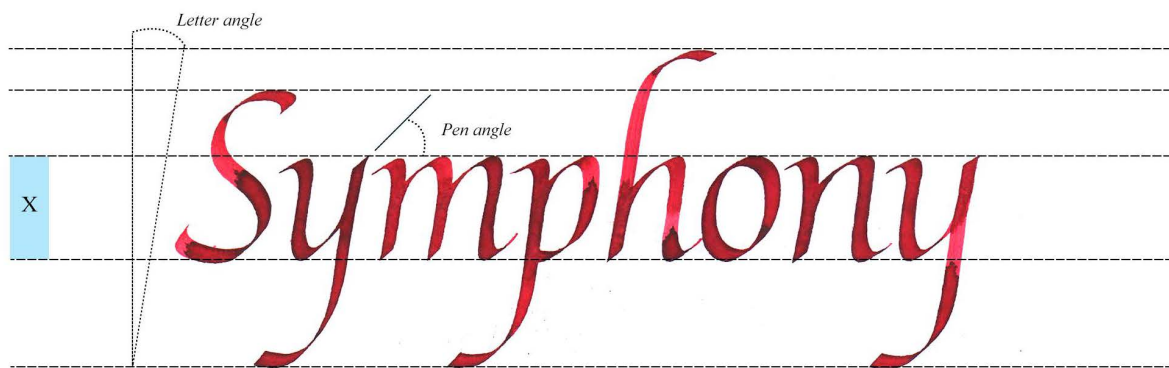
ITALIC CALLIGRAPHY

BASIC LETTER STRUCTURE



FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS

For Italic in particular and broad-edged nib in Calligraphy in general, the fundamental factors below are crucial concepts that need to be comprehended to apply in the practice process.



Letter height and its proportion

According to the general structure of letters, including majuscules and minuscule, letter height are divided into 3 parts, the middle part is called X-height, the rest is calculated according to X

In Italic and broad-edged nib Calligraphy, letter height is based on the width of the contiguous strokes, basic Italic height proportion is 5: 5: 5 (unit is one stroke). Particularly in capital letters, to create the overall harmony, the height of capital letters is usually in the range of 8 strokes.

Pen angle

Pen angle is the angle of the nib relative to the baseline; in basic Calligraphy, pen angle is consistent in the entire process

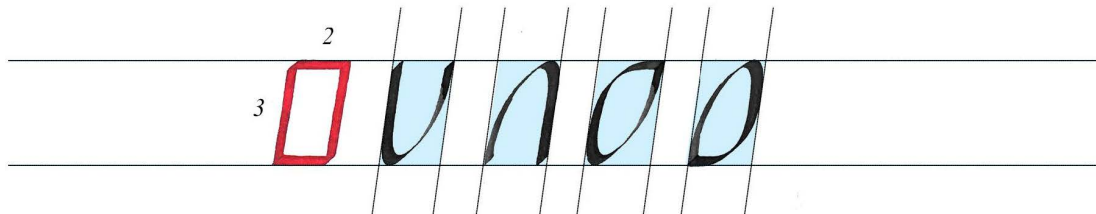
Italic has the pen angle of 45 degrees.

Letter angle

Only italic typefaces like Italic have this factor, its angle is ranged from 5 to 10 degrees relative to the vertical straight line.

OVERALL LETTERFORM

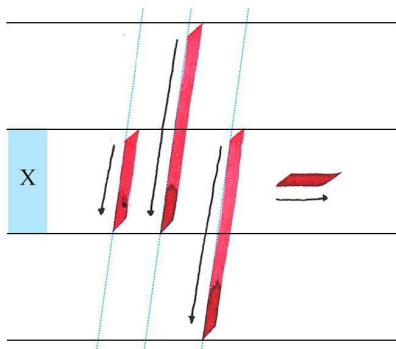
To understand more about Italic, its overall form is an important factor. Letters in Italic are generally contained in a parallelogram with a horizontal: vertical ratio of 2 : 3



BASIC STROKES

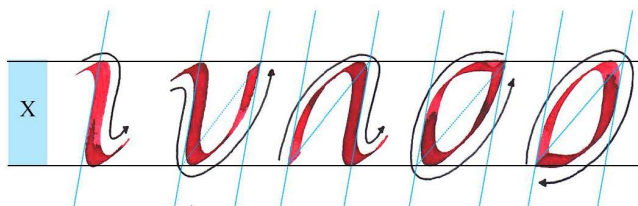
Lowercase alphabet

Practicing basic strokes is the first step in the process. Letters in Calligraphy are formed in groups of similar shapes; practicing basic strokes give us a better overview of the entire alphabet. Below are the basic strokes with notes of the directions of the pen and structure that make practicing more effectively and simply.

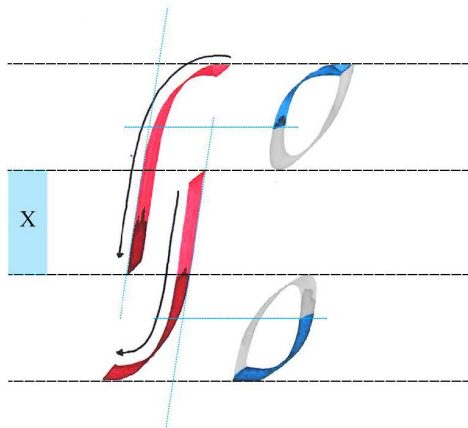


WARMUP STROKES

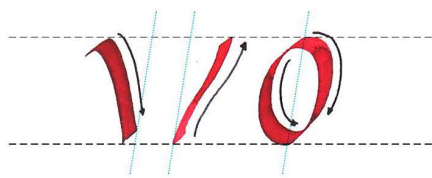
On the left are the simplest strokes that help us control the pen angle, letter angle as well as letter height proportion. Strokes are written from top to bottom and from left to right, try to maintain the pen angle to ensure the thickness of the strokes.



The next strokes we need to practice are very important ones in most of the lowercase letters. As mentioned in the Overall Letterform section above, these strokes are contained in parallelograms with a ratio of 2: 3, it is best to write with a single stroke to ensure the coherence and nature of Italic letters.



Letters such as h, k, l,...or g, y, j,...are formed based on these 2 basic strokes, if we pay attention we will see that the head of the first stroke and the tail of the second stroke are separated from 2 basic strokes in the previous group.



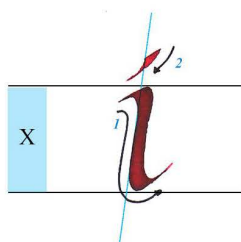
Oblique strokes (stroke 1 and 2) form the structure of letters v, u, x and letter 'o' representing: o, c, e. Note: Oblique stroke is written slantingly compared to the letter angle, the angle of these strokes is about 60 degrees to the baseline; letter 'o' has the same axis as the letter angle.

LOWERCASE ALPHABET

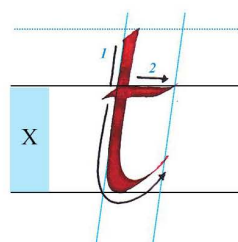
After practicing the basic strokes, next we begin to combine the strokes to form letters. As noted in the previous section, letters in the alphabet always belong to groups of similar shapes, so we will not practice from a-z. Below are the letters listed in groups along with the directions and orders when writing.

Group 1: i & t

The first group consists of letters i & t, these letters are formed from basic straight strokes and are normally single strokes. Take note that the straight strokes are written from top to bottom and horizontal strokes are written from left to right as the described arrows.



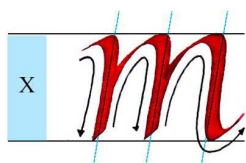
Letter i is formed from the basic stroke.



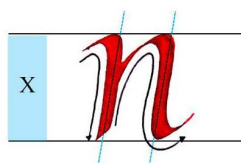
Letter "t" is 1/2x higher than x-height, the crossbar on the right part is longer than the left one.

Group 2: m, n, u & r

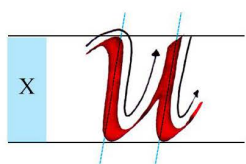
The second group consists of letters: m, n, u, r, these are letters contain the basic strokes *vn*. As mentioned above, this basic stroke is contained in a parallelogram with a horizontal: vertical ratio of 2: 3, and the stroke which is not in the same angle as the letter angle is the linking stroke of two corners of the parallel-



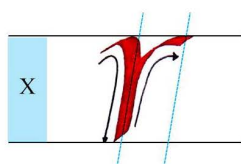
Letter 'm' shows the flow of basic strokes



Letter 'n' is similar to letter 'm', eliminating the middle stroke



Letter 'u' is letter 'n' written upside down



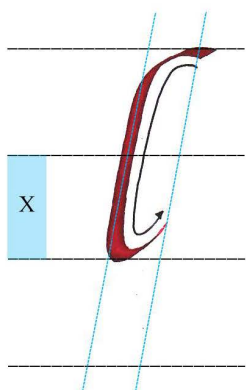
Letter 'r' is written based on the form of letter 'n'

Overview of group 1 & 2

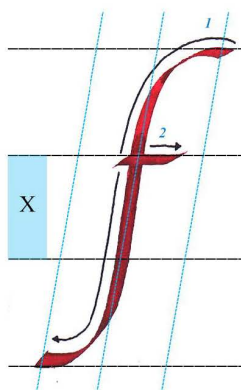
i t m n u r

Group 3: l, f, h, d, b, i, g, q, p & y

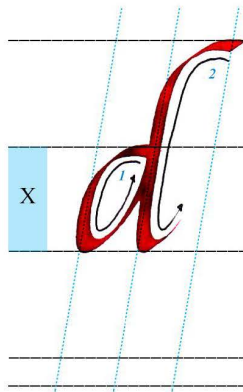
Letters listed in group 3 include: l, t, h, d, b, j, g, q, p & y. Letters in this group include letters with ascenders such as: h, l, b, ... and letters with descenders such as j, g, y, etc. Particularly, letter 'k' is not grouped because it does not only contain basic strokes and is listed in the special group below. The characteristic of this group is the head and the tail *∫*, which are separated from the basic strokes (described in the previous section).




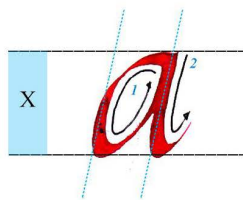
Letter 'l' has the tail end like letter 't'



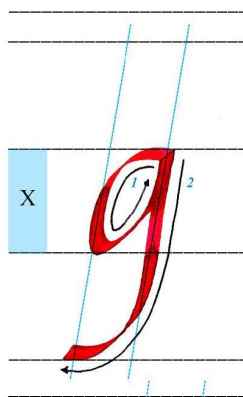
Letter 'f' has the head and the tail, which are the two basic strokes that come together, the crossbar is the same as letter 't'



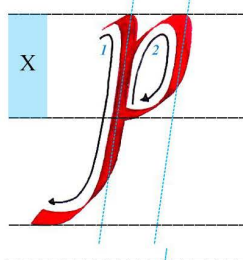
Letter 'd' has the first stroke which is the basic stroke ; if the head is separated, we have letter 'a'



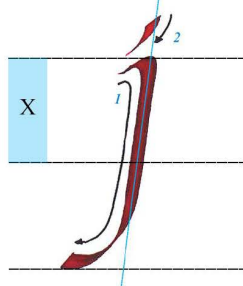
As mentioned above, letter 'a' is similar to letter 'd', 'a' should be written with a seamless stroke



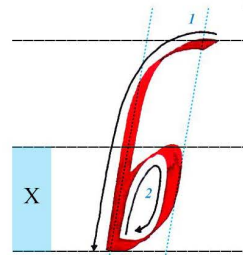
Letter 'g' is letter 'd' written upside down, the bowl of letter 'g' is like 'a' & 'd'




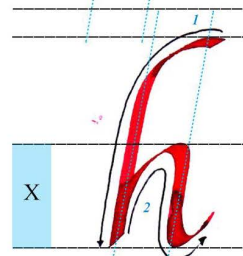
Letter 'p' is the reverse 'd', the ending stroke is similar to 'b'



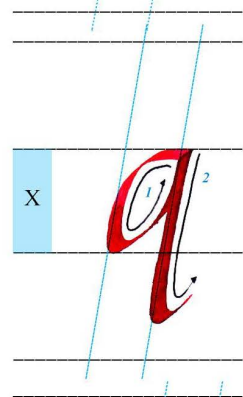
Letter 'j' has the same stroke as the first part of letter 'p' and the dot is the same as letter 'i'



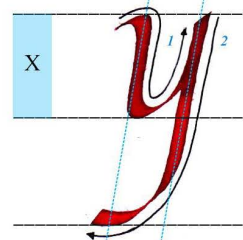
Letter 'b' is formed by the combination of the letter-head and the basic stroke  letter 'g' is the reverse version of 'd'



The first part of letter 'h' is like letter 'b', but the following part ends with a basic stroke similar to 'm' and 'n'



Letter 'q' has a more distinctive tail than the other letters in the group, with a length of about 3/5x and point to the right

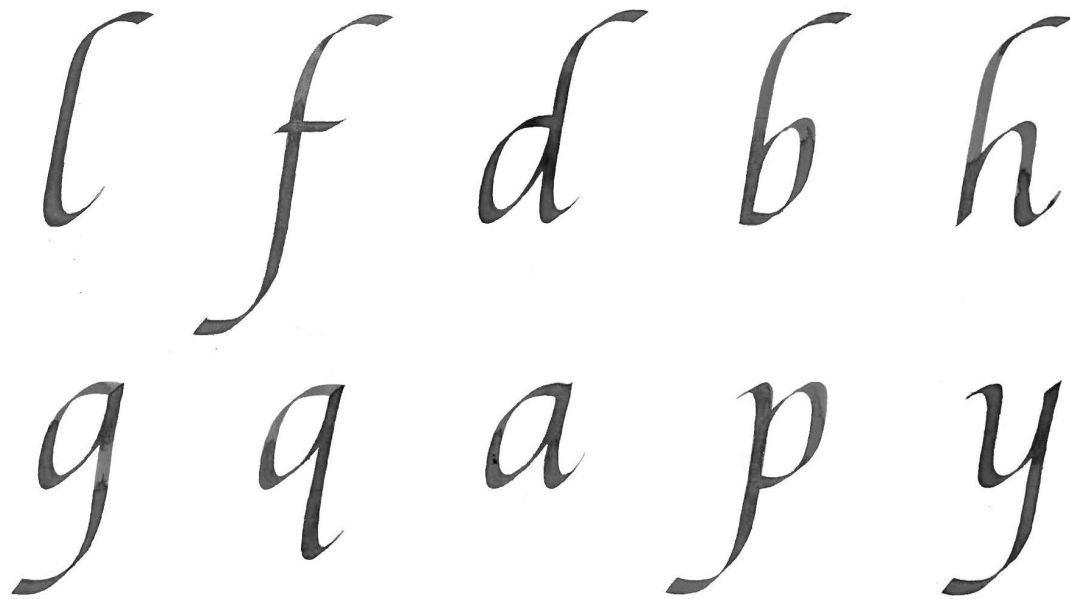


Letter 'y' is the reverse 'h', the beginning stroke is similar to 'u'

Note about group 3

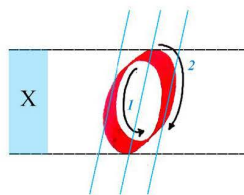
Letters in group 3 require a higher degree of coherence in writing; avoid writing ascenders and descenders unsmoothly.

Overview of group 3

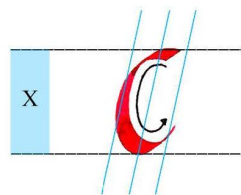


Group 4: o, c, e

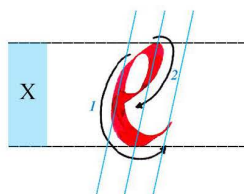
In most alphabets of Calligraphy typefaces, letter 'o' is normally harder to control than the rest, regular practice is the best way to create the most harmonized and balanced 'o'. This group consists of letters that are similar to 'o' including o, c & e.



Letter 'o' is written in 2 opposite directions



Letter 'c' is embodied in the 'o' shape and is written with a single stroke



Letter 'e' is similar to 'c' but is written with 2 strokes, the bowl on top equals 1/2x

Note about group 4

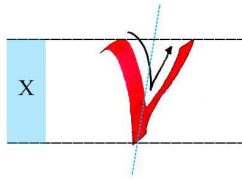
To control the "o" shape well, we need to take note that the axis of letter "o" is parallel to the letter angle.

Overview of group 4

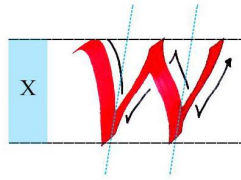


Group 5: v, w & x

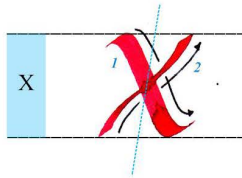
The fifth group consists of letters containing oblique strokes (60 degrees to the baseline). In other words, those strokes are combined to form the triangular shapes of letter v, w & x



In order to create smoothness in shape, letter 'v' should be written with one stroke only



Letter 'w' is a double spelling of 'v' and is also written with one stroke



Letter 'x' is formed by two strokes, take note that letter 'x' slants more than 'v' and 'w' to create the appropriate width

Note about group 5

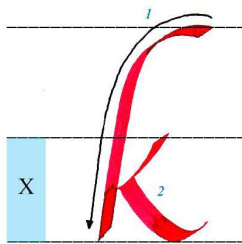
Letter angle is always the bisector of the angle created by two oblique strokes.

Overview of group 5



Group 6: k, s, z

The last group of the alphabet is usually the group of special letters that do not contain basic strokes: k, s & z. Follow the description below to practice letters in this group and we complete the lowercase alphabet section.



Letter 'k' has the same height and ascender as letter 'h', the last stroke slants 45 degrees compared to the baseline

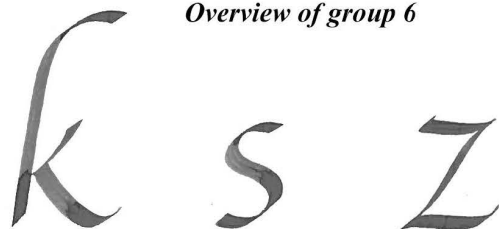


Letter 's' is developed from a spine in the middle which slants 45 degrees to the baseline



Letter 'z' is formed by two horizontal strokes and a slant linking stroke in the middle, take note that the middle stroke has the same direction as letter 'x'

Overview of group 6



LOWERCASE ALPHABET

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

NUMBERS AND SYMBOLS (Reference)

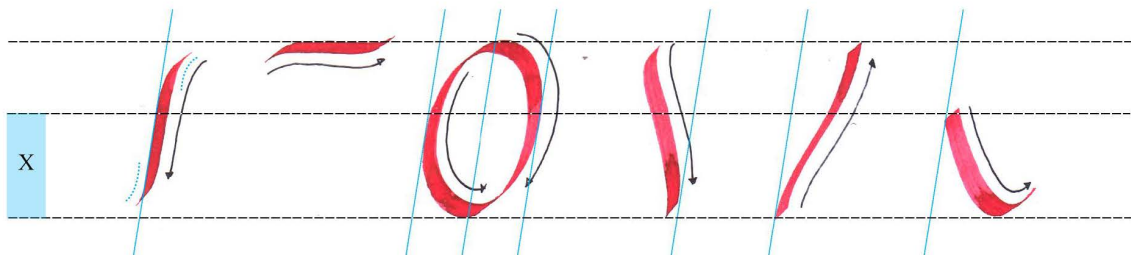
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 0
! ? @ &

CAPITAL ALPHABET

We have just completed the lowercase alphabet. In uppercase letters, the method of practicing basic strokes and combining strokes together will also be used. As we shared in the foundation section, uppercase letters height contains about 8 strokes; letters with descenders like G, Y,... contain tails that equal 3 more strokes (described in detail below).

Basic strokes

In uppercase letters, basic strokes are not too different from lowercase letters. However, the strokes are increased in term of size, so controlling longer strokes may be more difficult. Follow the section below to start practicing basic strokes



The straight stroke of uppercase letters has a curved stroke at the beginning and the end of the stroke, the main part in the middle is a straight stroke parallel with the letter angle

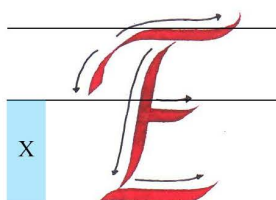
Letter 'O' is similar to the lowercase 'o', the axis is the same as the letter angle, The horizontal : vertical ratio of letter 'O' is about 2: 3

Having no difference from the lowercase 'v', 'w', strokes in uppercase letters also creates a triangle shape of 'V' and 'W'

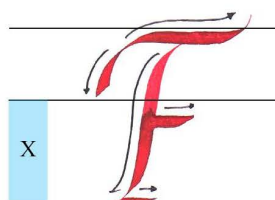
This oblique stroke is used in letters such as R, K, ... It is similar to the one in letter "k" of lowercase alphabet we have discussed above

Group 1

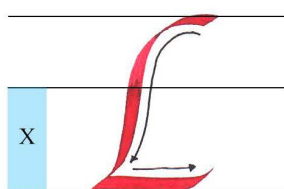
The first group of uppercase letters includes straight strokes in the same direction as the letter angle together with horizontal strokes.



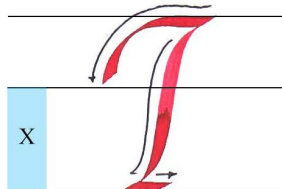
Letter E is made up of 1 stem and 3 horizontal bars, in which the middle bar is the shortest



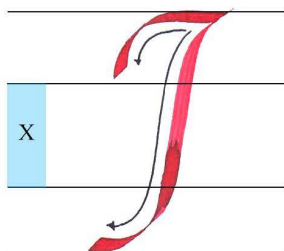
Letter F is similar in shape to letter E and the last bar is shortened into a small stroke



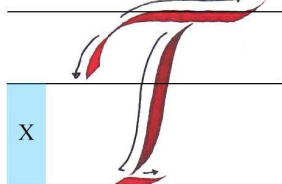
The beginning of the letter L is similar to lowercase letters with ascenders (h, k, l,...) and the bar is similar to the capital E



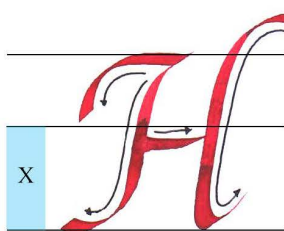
Letter I is identical with F without the strokes on the right side



Letter J has the beginning stroke similar to I, the ending stroke is similar to lowercase letters that have tails (g, y, j, ...) However, to balance the uppercase letter, the tail equals about 3 strokes



Letter T is identical with F without the lower bar

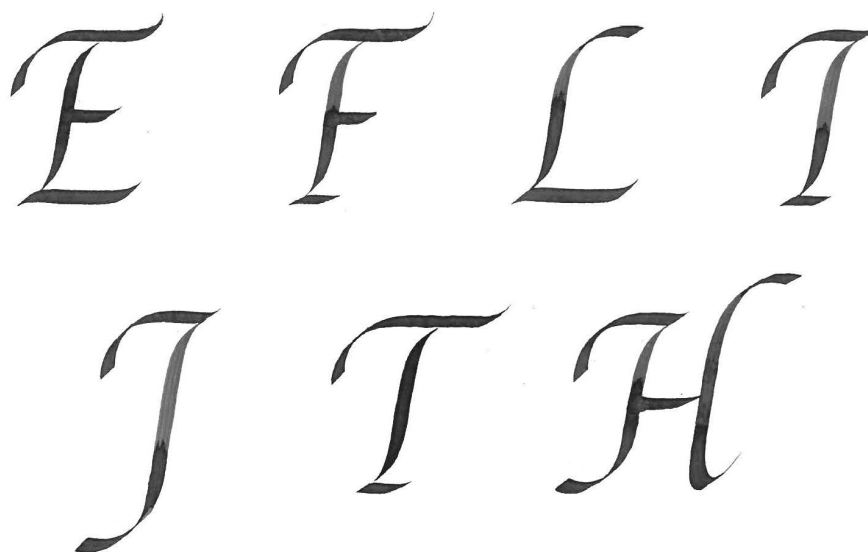


The characteristic of H is the right stroke is as high as lowercase letters with heads (such as letter 'l') and the middle cross-bar creates width for H (1: 2)

Note about group 1

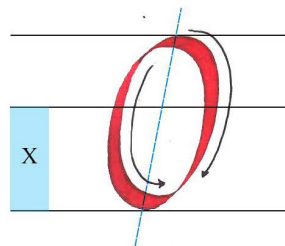
Although the first group is the simplest and easiest to control among the uppercase letters, keeping the letters steady and balanced is the key factor.

Overview of group 1

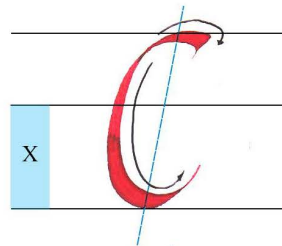


Group 2

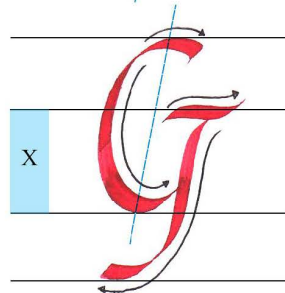
The second group includes letters that contained in the O shape



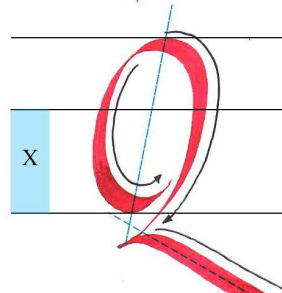
Letter O has the same axis as the letter angle



Letter C has the first part similar to letter O, the latter part is similar to lowercase 'c' but larger



The head of letter G is written like letter C, and the latter part consists of a cross-bar and a tail like letter J



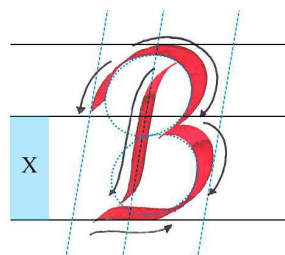
Letter Q has the same shape as letter O. However, the second stroke does not link with the first stroke and head down to link with the tail whose angle is about 35 degrees to the baseline.

Overview of group 2

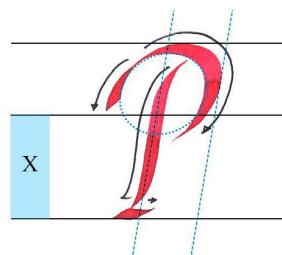


Group 3

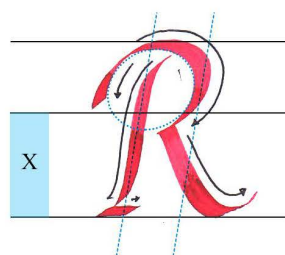
The third group includes letters that combine straight strokes and arc strokes (curved strokes) such as B, D, R, ...



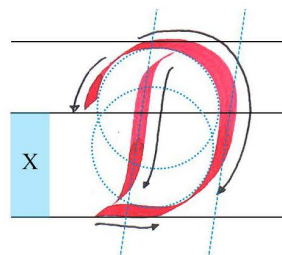
Letter B consists of two curved strokes, the lower stroke creates a wider space than the upper one



Letter P is the same as letter B without the lower curved stroke, and the foot is the same as letter F's foot.



Letter R has the first part like letter P, the tail is the basic oblique stroke like the lowercase 'k'



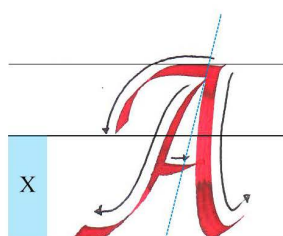
Letter D has the largest width among the letters in this group, it includes a large curve.

Overview of group 3

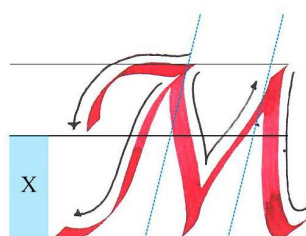
B P R D

Group 4

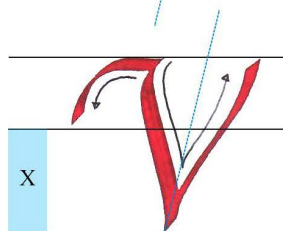
Group 4 consists of oblique strokes that form the shapes of V, W, ...



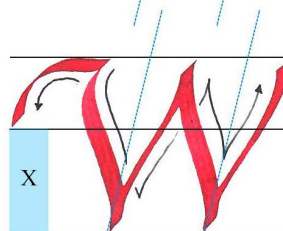
Letter A is formed from 2 oblique strokes written in different angles compared to the letter angle



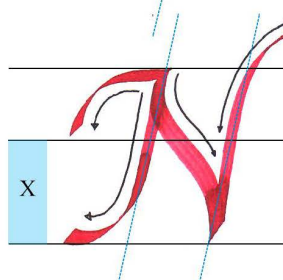
Letter M is similar to the letter A, although the 2 strokes in the middle have opposite directions



Letter V is identical with the middle strokes of letter M above



Letter W is made up of 2 strokes of the letter V



Letter N has the middle stroke that slants more than other letters in the group, the last stroke is like letter H

Note about group 4

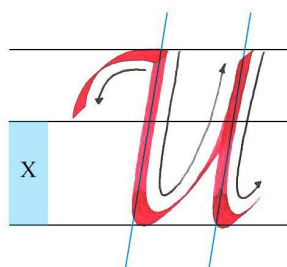
To create a seamless stroke, similar to lowercase letters, the letters in group 4 should be written with a single stroke.

Overview of group 4

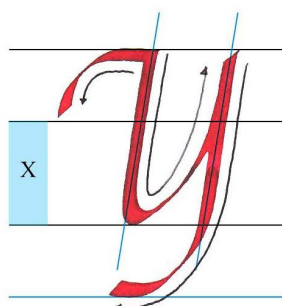
A M V
W N

Group 5

Group 5 consists of U, Y that are similar in shape to u, v in lowercase alphabet, the difference is that the size of the letter is increased and the swash on top is added to create balance for the letter.



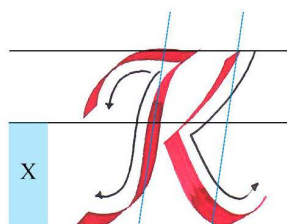
Like a lowercase letter, U is contained in a parallelogram whose sides are the same as the letter angle



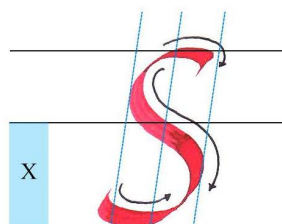
The first part of letter Y is similar to letter U and the following part is similar to the letter J

Group 6

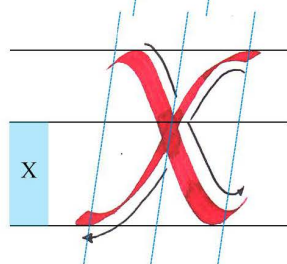
The last group in the capital alphabet contains special letters, including K, S, X, Z. Follow the description below to complete the alphabet.



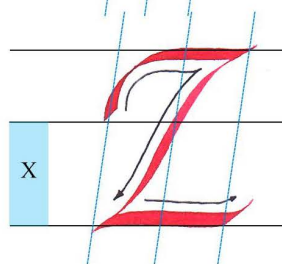
Letter K has the first stroke similar to letter H, the following part is like lowercase 'k' yet larger



S is similar to the lowercase 's' and is larger in size, the upper horizontal stroke is smaller than the lower one

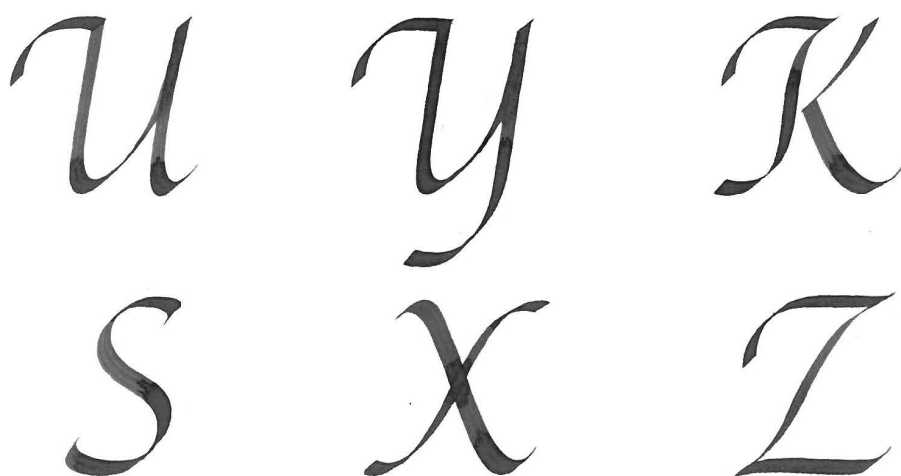


Letter X consists of two separate criss-cross strokes; the angle is the same as the latter part of letter K, as described above



Letter Z is identical with the lowercase one and a swash is added to create harmony

Overview of group 5 & 6



CAPITAL ALPHABET

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

KERNING

Kerning is the spacing between letters; balancing letter spacing helps create a harmonized overall

spacing
Good thing takes time

CHANGE OF FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS

We have completed the main and most important part in practicing a typeface: Comprehend letterform and the alphabet. Although there are rules such as pen angle, letter height, letter angle, writing direction, etc. However, to create liberty in making the artwork later, we can definitely adjust those fundamental factors



Change of height and its proportion

In the example above, all of the 'a' is written by the same nib size. According to the common basic size, the usual X height is 5 strokes; however, we can still adjust the height into 6 strokes, 8 strokes depending on the individual's vision.



Change of pen angle

The three 'a' above, their height and the height proportion remain the same, using the same nib size, but the change of the pen angle leads to the change of the correlation between strokes. The first 'a' is written with the pen angle of 45 degrees and decreasing in the other two. The smaller the pen angle is, the larger the downward stroke is and the thinner the horizontal stroke is.



Change of letter angle

The final fundamental factor can be adjusted is the letter angle. However, to ensure the essence of Italic typeface, we should not write it upright (not italic) or slant too much that may lead to breaking its structure; the maximum angle can be about 52 degrees relative to the baseline.

SAMPLE WORDS (A-Z)

Anatomy Beauteous

Courage Desirable

Elegant Friendship

Gentle Hungarian

Impressive Jupiter

Kindness Landscape

Meaning Noticeable

Original Penmans

Quality Responsible

Simplify Transparent

Universal Vision

Wisdom Xylography

Youthful Zealous

VARIATIONS

h h h h g g g

n n n n n n p p

d d d g g g

f f g k s

x z v v v