

# UNCIAL CALLIGRAPHY

BASIC LETTER STRUCTURE



## FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS

Uncial script is one of the typefaces that, at the basic level, doesn't require too many techniques to perform. Fundamental elements of Uncial typeface include: height, height ratio, pen angle, etc. These elements will be described in detail in the following sections.

### Letter Height

Generally, the height created when using square-cut nibs is measured according to the nib-width. By placing the nib horizontally to the writing line and creating consecutive squares, writer can determine the height of letters. The height of main letters in Uncial script is around **4 nib-widths**.

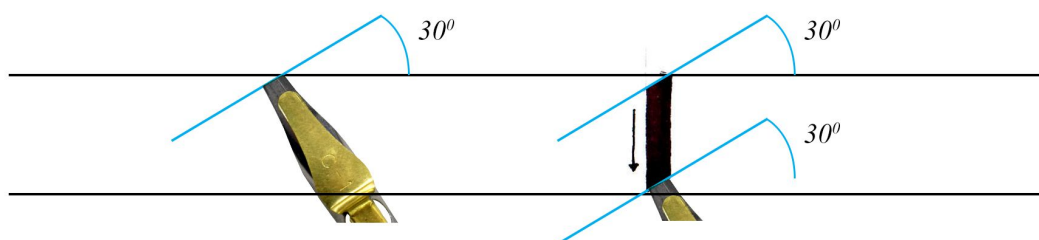


Besides main letters with 4-nib-width height, others that have a higher head (H, K, L, etc.) or a lower tail (R, P, Q, etc.) will be in the height of **5.5 - 6 nib-widths**.



### Pen angle

When the nib is placed on the paper, its point will create a thin line. This line, when combining with the horizontal line, will create an angle called the pen angle. Uncial is commonly written with the pen angle of **30°** to the writing line.

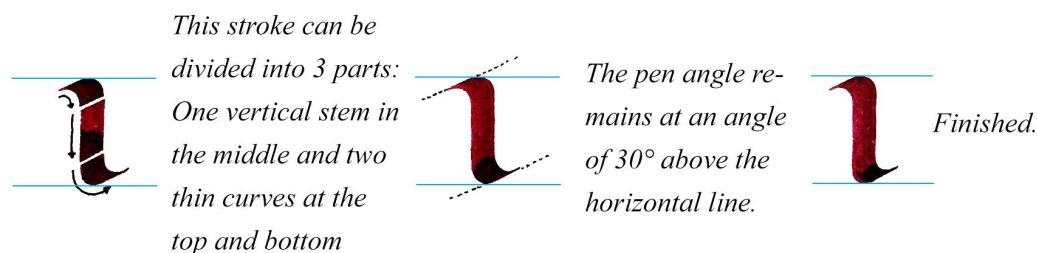


## BASIC STROKES

To all types of calligraphy, basic strokes are always the most important fundamental. Practising them will help us understand the connections among letters. As a result, we know how they formed and eventually master the art of stroke controlling.

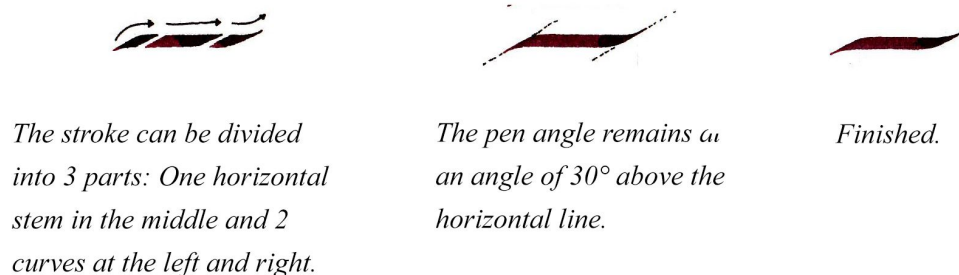
### Vertical stroke

The first basic stroke in Uncial is a vertical stroke with curved head and tail. Please note that your pen must be kept diagonally at a 30° angle.



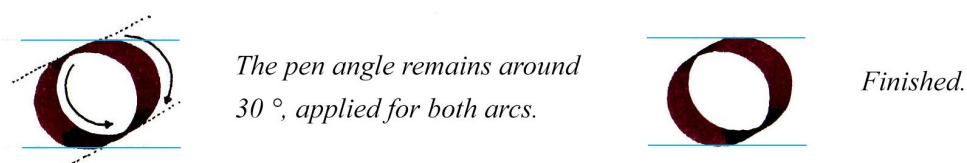
### Horizontal stroke

Similar to the vertical stroke, the horizontal stroke is written with the same mentioned pen angle. However, its direction is from the left to the right and parallel to the horizontal axis.



### O-shape stroke

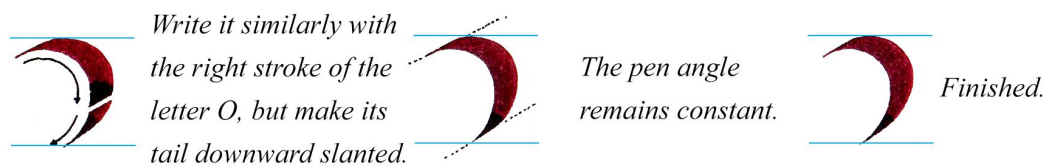
The O-shape stroke is framed by 2 separate arcs linked together to form a circle.



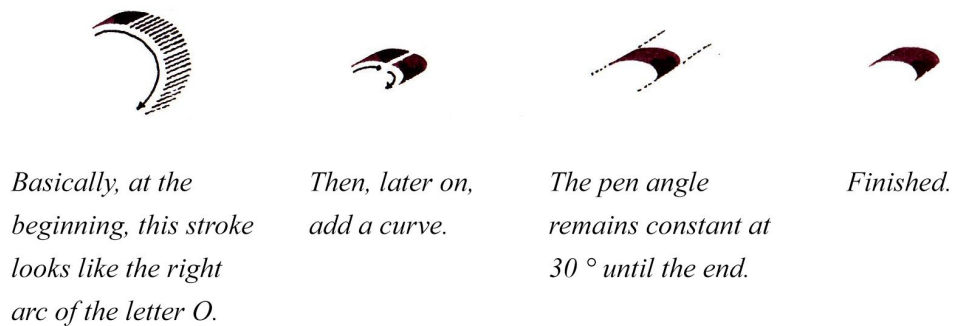
## Curved strokes

The Uncial curve has many variations e.g. in the H, the head of the C, the left part of the M, etc. Here are descriptions of some Uncial curve styles.

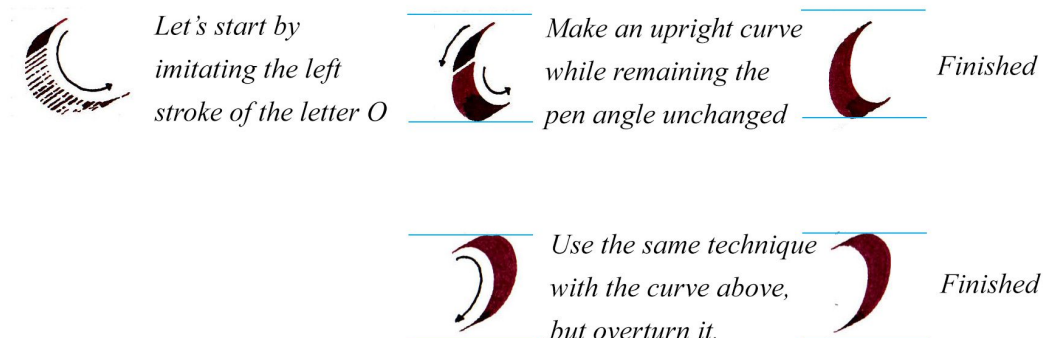
### Style 1



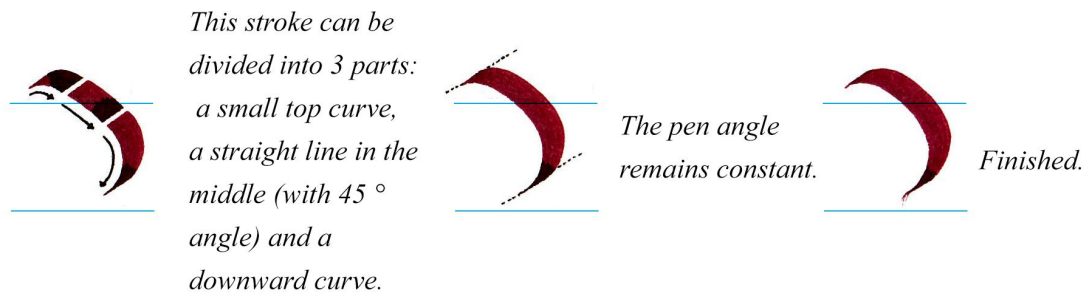
### Style 2



### Style 3

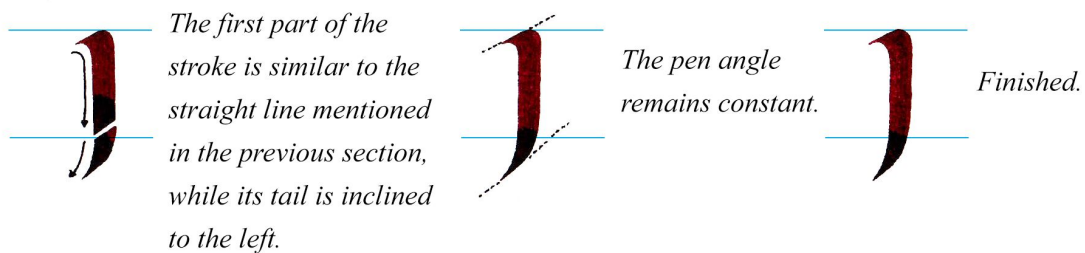


### Style 4



### Vertical stroke (Second style)

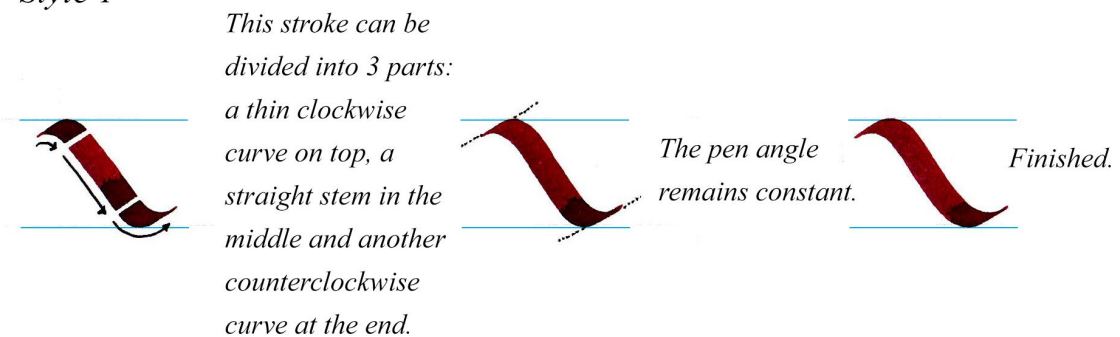
The vertical stroke in the 2nd style is extended longer, compared to others. This type is used in letters like F, J, P, R, etc.



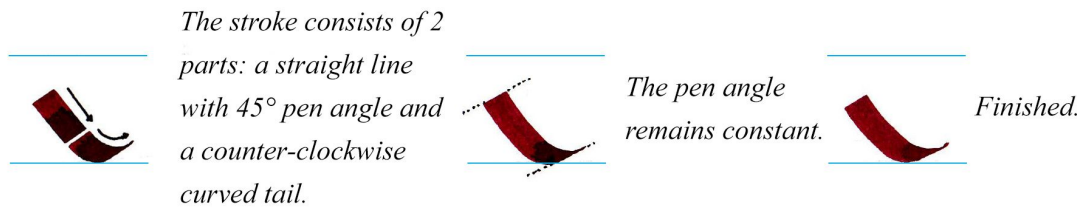
### Diagonal stroke

Diagonal strokes are within letter A, K, R, V, etc. The pen angle remains constant, at 45° to the horizontal line.

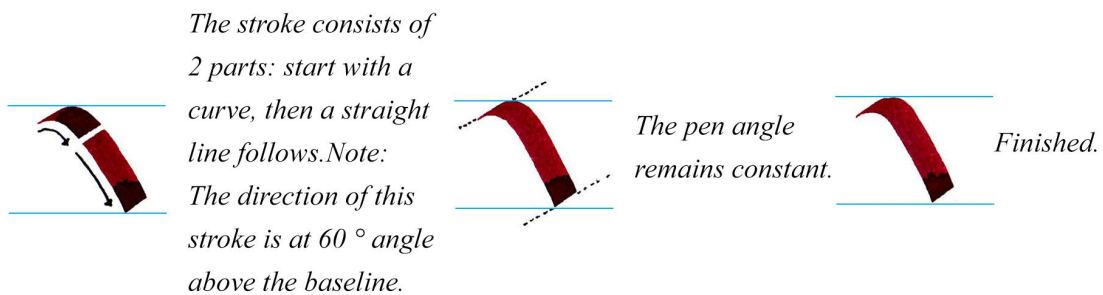
### Style 1



## Style 2



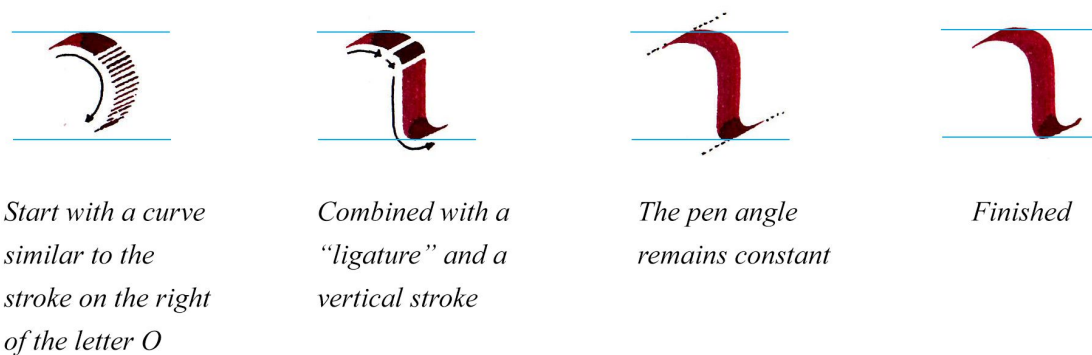
## Style 3



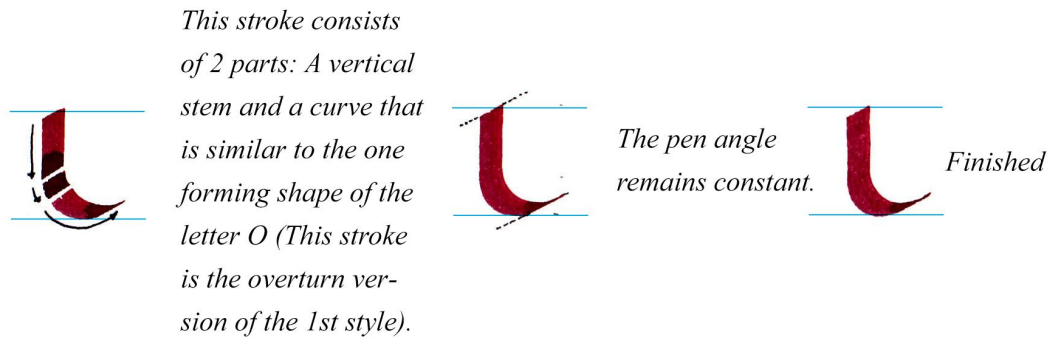
## Strokes combination

Compound strokes are formed by two or more basic strokes that are mentioned in the previous section.

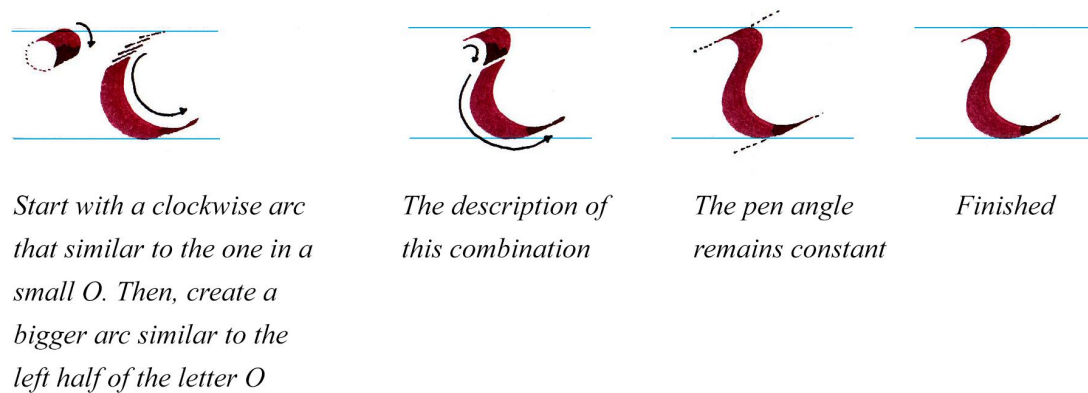
## Style 1



## Style 2



## Style 3



## THE UNCIAL ALPHABETS

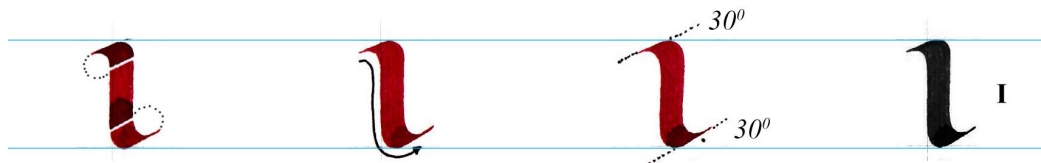
After finishing basic strokes of the Uncial script, we will learn about the Uncial alphabet in detail as well as how to write them, based on fundamental elements. In this alphabet, since some letters share similar shapes, they are listed into groups. Practicing groups of letter will help us differentiate their shape better to be capable of developing other forms later.

### Group 1: I, J, T, F, L

The first group in the Uncial alphabet consists of the letter I, J, T, F and L. These letters all share the same characteristics which would be suitable for beginners e.g. simplicity, formed by straight lines and curves.



## Letter I



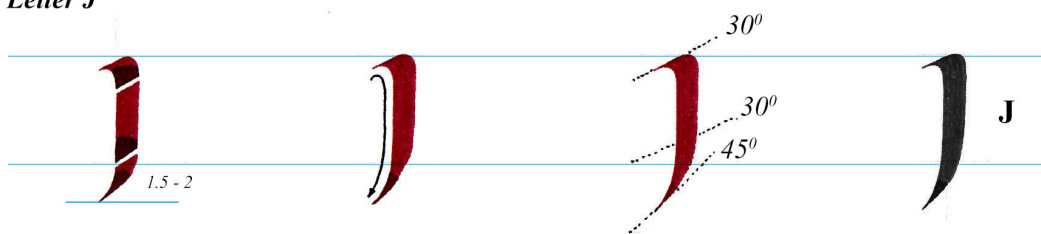
The letter I consists of 3 strokes: 2 curves on top and at the bottom, connected by a straight stem

The nib direction of the letter I

The pen angle remains constant

Finished

## Letter J



The letter J has the first stroke similar with that of the letter I. Meanwhile, its tail is inclined to the left and is about 1.5 - 2 nib-widths.

The direction of the stroke of the letter J.

Different from others, its tail required around 45° angle.

Finished

## Letter T



The first stroke of the letter T has a horizontal line

The second stroke is similar to the letter I

The pen angle remains constant

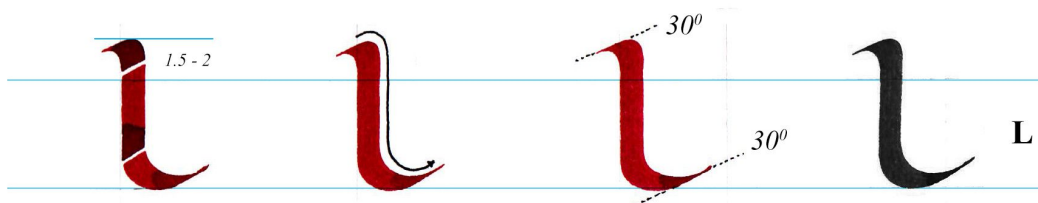


Combine simple strokes to make a T-shape

Finished



## Letter L



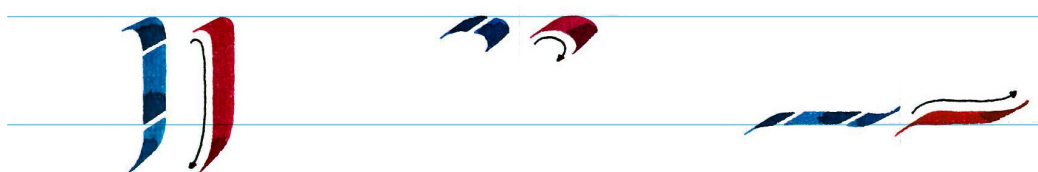
The letter L consists of 3 parts: The tip is similar to that of the letter I, around of 1.5 - 2 nib-widths; a straight stem and a O-shape tail

The direction of the letter L

The pen angle remains constant

Finished

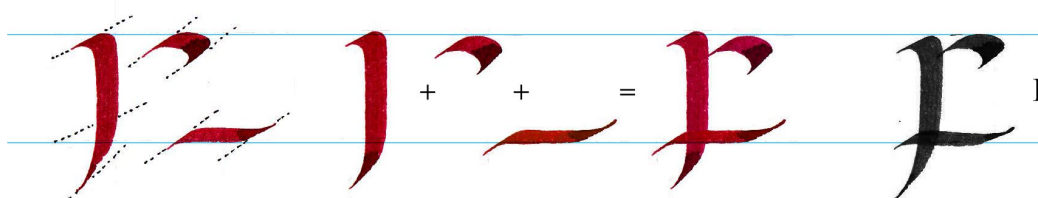
## Letter F



The first stroke of the letter F has the same shape as the letter J

The second stroke is a small curve in basic strokes

The third stroke is a horizontal line similar to the head of the letter T



Pay attention to the pen angle

Combine single strokes into the letter

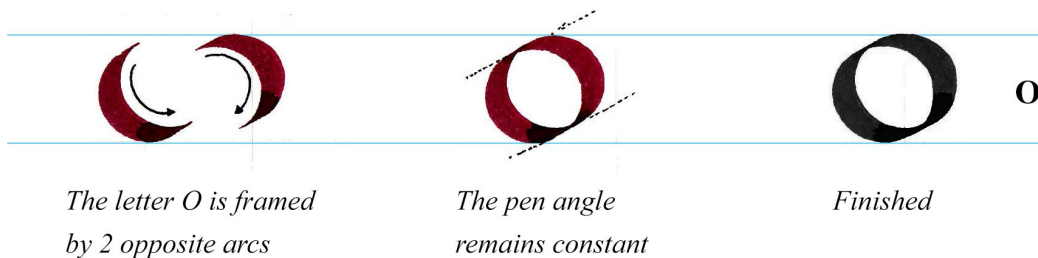
Finished

## SUMMARY OF THE GROUP 1

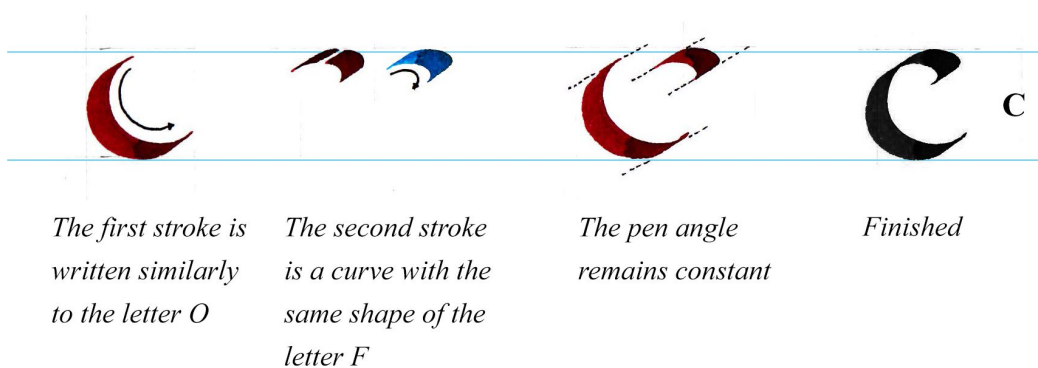


## Group 2: O, C, E, G, D

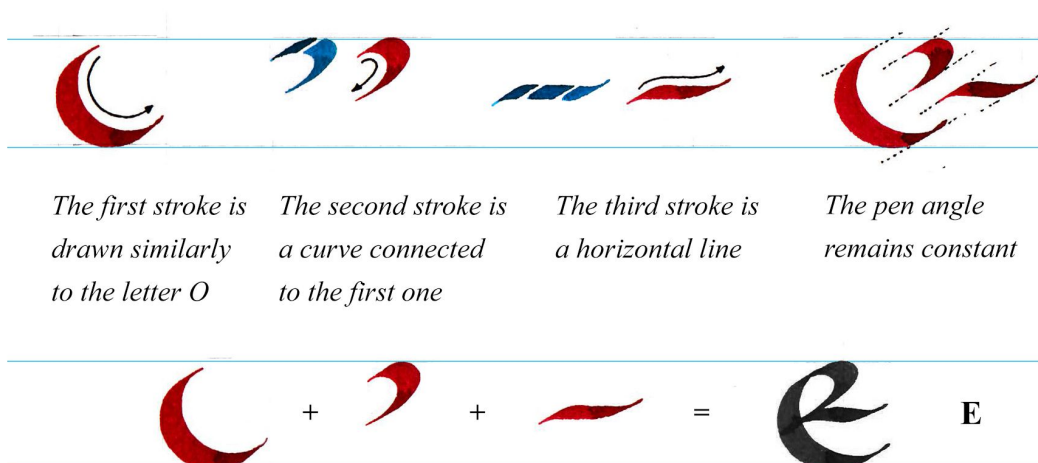
### Letter O



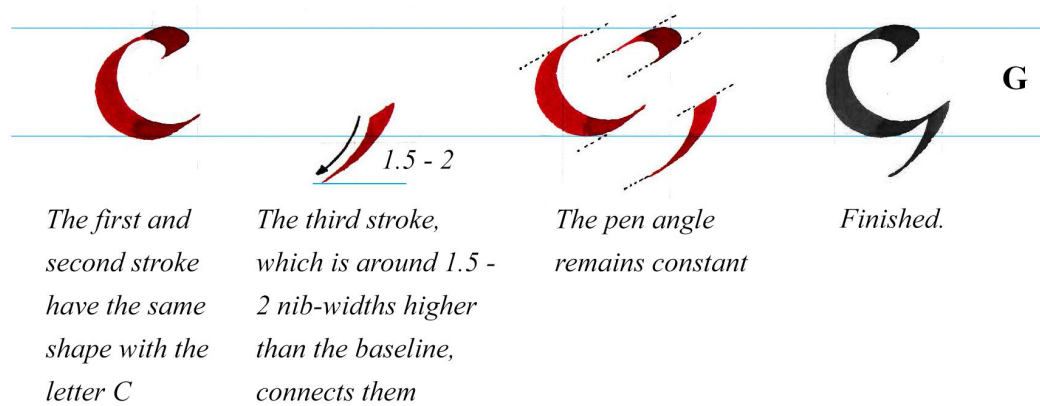
### Letter C



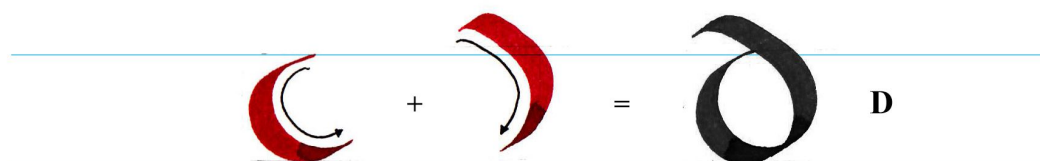
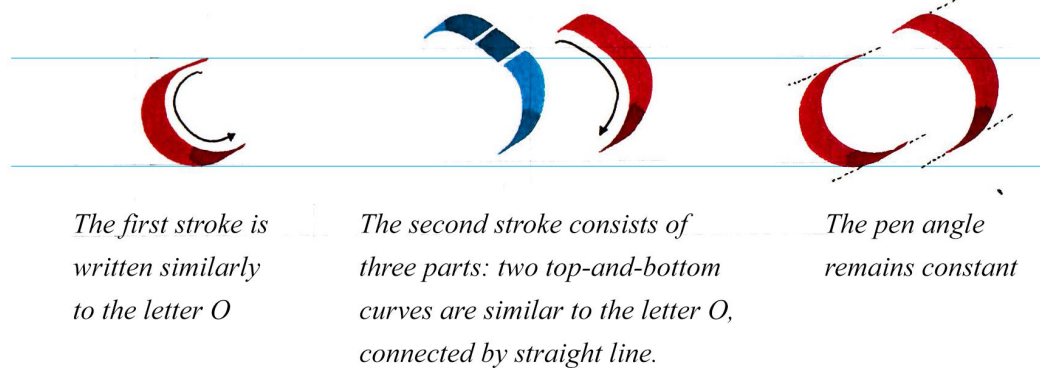
### Letter E



## Letter G



## Letter G

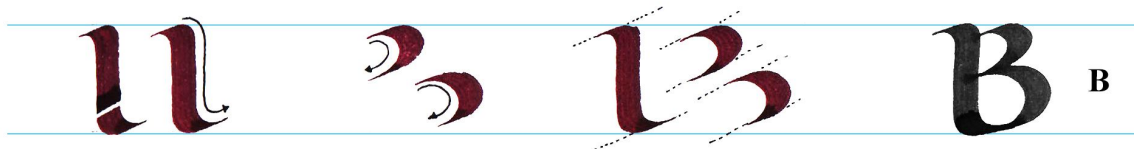


## SUMMARY OF GROUP 2



### Group 3: B, H, M, P, Q, R, U, W & Y

#### Letter B



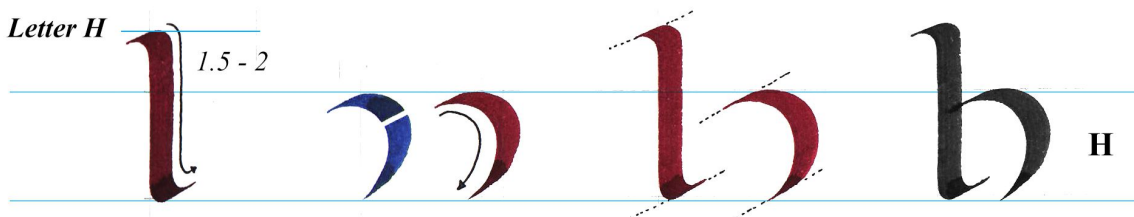
*The first stroke has a similar shape with the letter I*

*The second and third strokes have a curved shape. The lower one is wider*

*The pen angle remains constant*

*Finished*

#### Letter H



*Start the first stroke just like when writing the letter I, but make it 1.5 - 2 nib-widths higher*

*The way we write the second stroke is similar to the letter O at first, then, make it a bit straight Touch the baseline*

*The pen angle remains constant*

*Finished*

#### Letter M



*While the first stroke is similar to the shape of the letter O, the other part should be written downward to touch the baseline*

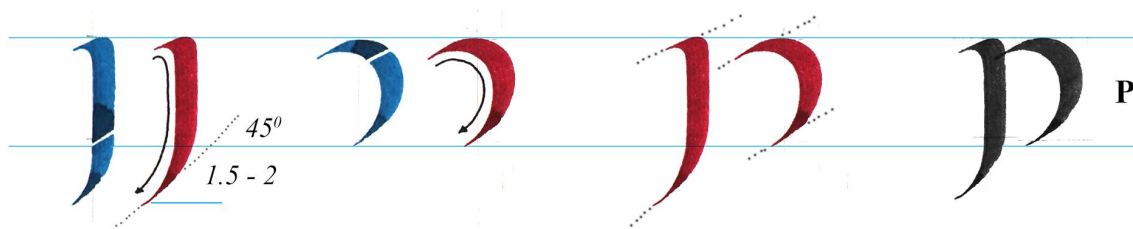
*The second stroke is written similarly to the letter O at first, then combined with the stroke of the letter I*

*The third stroke is similar to the backstroke of the letter H*

*The pen angle remains constant*



## Letter P



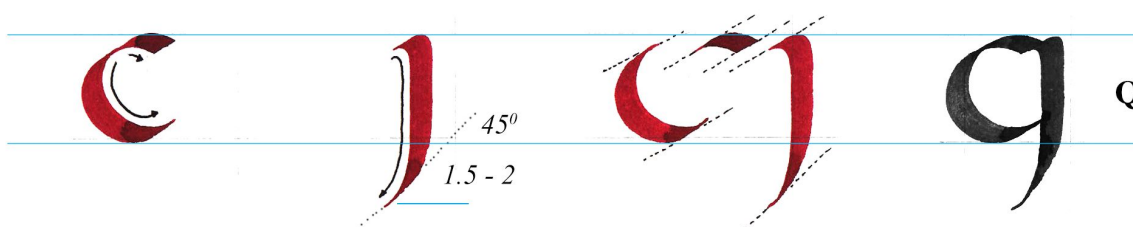
The first stroke begins like the letter I with its tail inclined to the left and pen angle changes to 45°

The second stroke is similar to the backstroke of the letter H and M

While, the pen angle at the end of the first stroke is 45°, others remain at 30°

Finished

## Letter Q



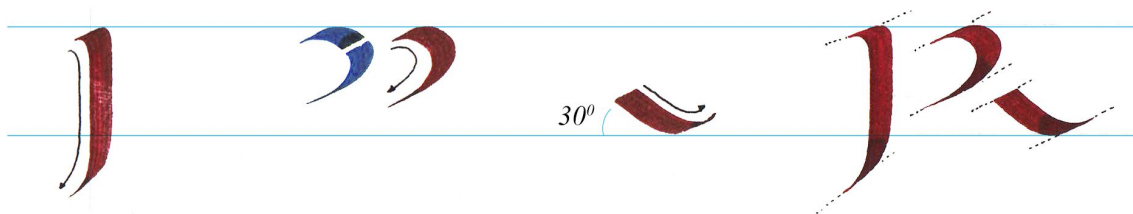
The first two strokes of the letter Q have the same shape as the letter C

The Q third stroke is similar to the P first stroke but extended 1.5 to 2 nib-widths below the baseline

The pen angle at the end of the third stroke is 45 ° while that of other strokes still remains unchanged

Finished

## Letter R

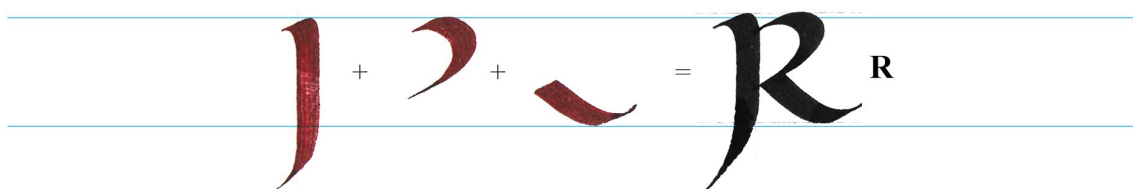


The first two strokes of the letter R are similar to the shape of the letter J

The second stroke has the first part similar to the letter O. Later, it combines with an inward curve

The third stroke has an angle of about 30 ° to the horizontal line

Except for the first stroke that changes the pen angle at the end, keep the nib constant until you finish the letter



## Letter U



The first stroke of the letter U is a combination of a small curve at the beginning and a part of the O-shaped stroke at the back

The second stroke has a shape similar to the stroke of the letter I

The pen angle remains constant

Finished

## Letter W



The first stroke of the letter W is similar to that of the letter U

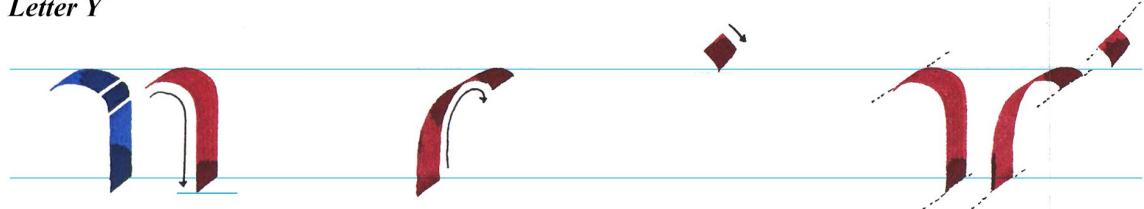
The second stroke has a similar shape to the letter I at first. However, its tail look like the letter O stroke

The third stroke is the reverse version of the M first stroke

The pen angle remains constant



## Letter Y

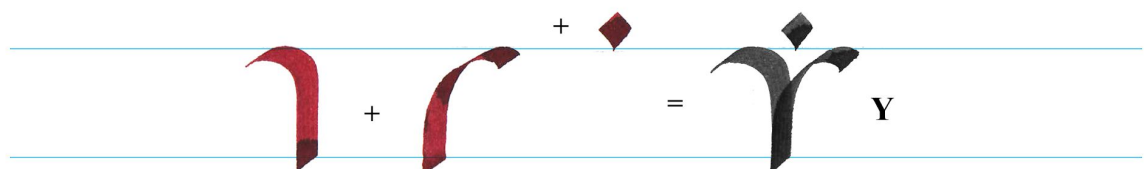


The first stroke is a combination of a vertical stroke and a curve in the letter O. Please note that its stem should end below the baseline.

The second stroke is written upward, combining a straight line and a clockwise curve.

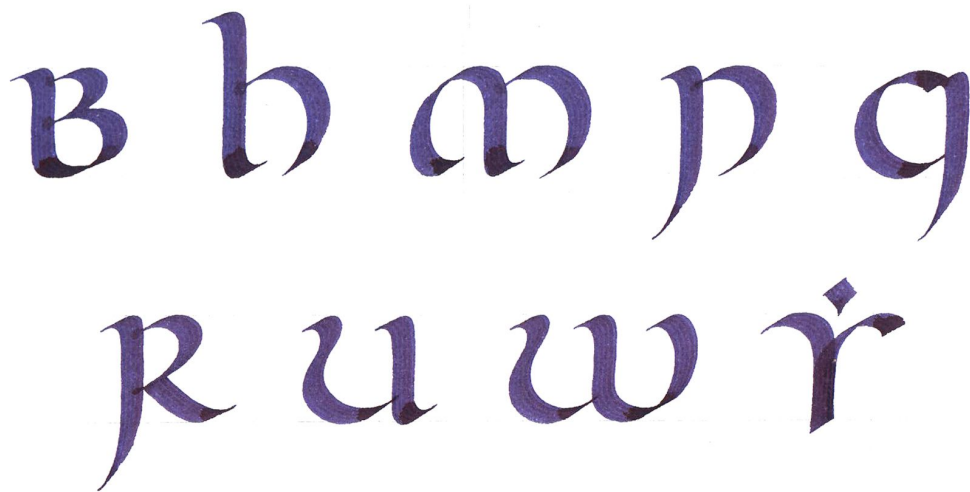
The third stroke is a diamond shape written at a 45 ° pen

The head strokes retain the basic pen angle while the bottom has a 45 ° angle





## SUMMARY OF GROUP 3



### Group 4: A, K, N, V, X & Z

#### Letter A



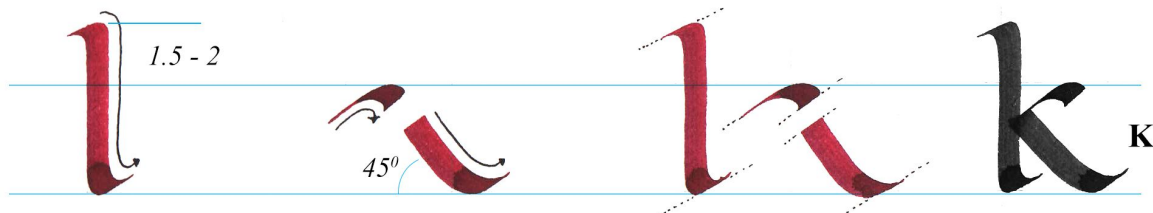
The first stroke has an angle of  $45^\circ$  horizontally, which is a combination of two head strokes and a straight line.

The second stroke is a counterclockwise arch

The pen angle remains constant

Finished

#### Letter K



The first stroke is similar to the straight line contained in the letter H

The second stroke is similar to the head of the letter C, but thinner and longer.

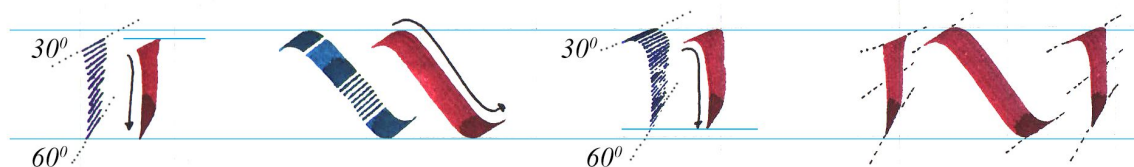
The third stroke is similar to the oblique stroke of the letter A.

The pen angle remains constant

Finished



### Letter N

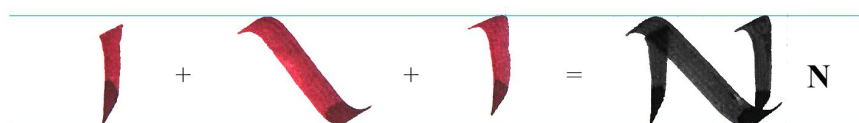


The first stroke of the letter N requires changing the pen angle. Start with an angle of 30 ° then write the vertical stroke and end with an angle of 60 °

The second stroke is similar to the A stroke

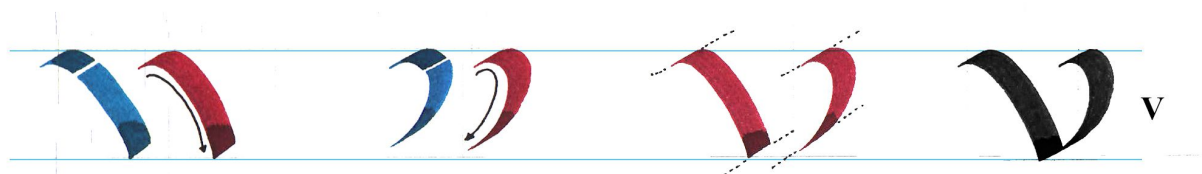
The third stroke is similar to the first, but it has a slight curve on top

The pen angle remains constant



Finished

### Letter V



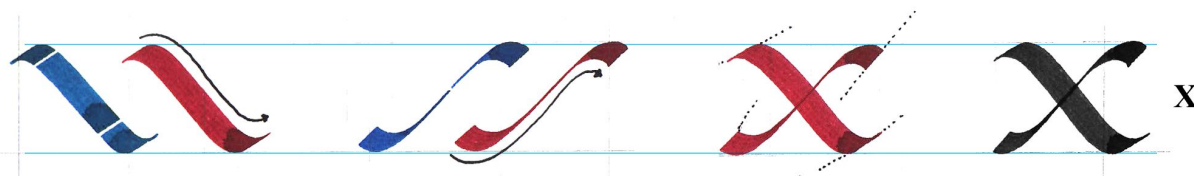
The first stroke has a shape similar to the letter A. However, while not changing the nib direction, do not make its body completely straight

The second stroke is a curve connected to the first one. Please note that the beginning and ending points of the stroke are on a straight axis

The pen angle remains constant

Finished

### Letter X



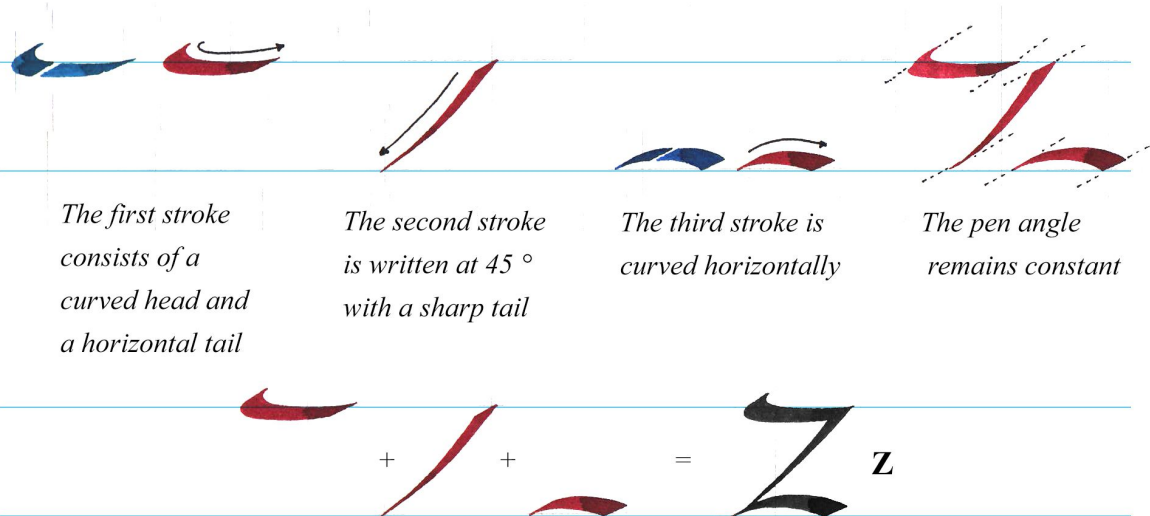
The first stroke has a shape similar to that of the A

The second stroke has a angle at 45. The wavy shape is curved at the beginning and the end. Keep the center part as a hairline

The first stroke is written at a basic angle while the latter at 45 °

Finished

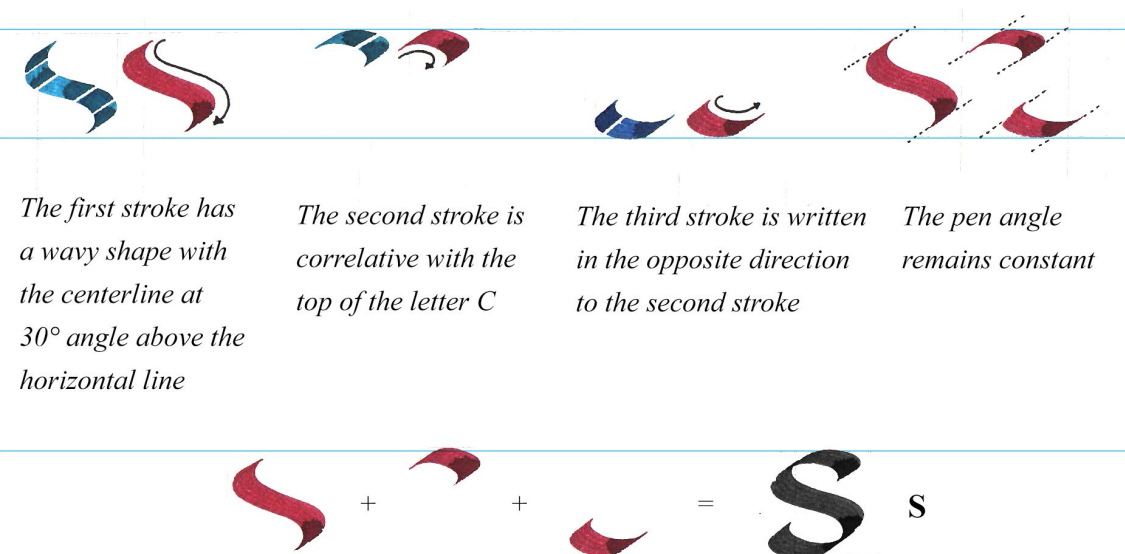
## Letter Z



## SUMMARY OF GROUP 4

a k n v x z

## Letter S



## UNCIAL 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