

welcome to

brush lettering
basics

part 1

the basic strokes and
lowercase alphabet

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the Basic Strokes

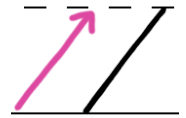
a step by step guide

Welcome to the Basic Strokes

The basic strokes are the building blocks that are used to form the letters in any brush lettering alphabet. You need to perfect these in order for your letters to look good. Start with the upstroke and downstroke to get your pen pressure right, and then move on to the other strokes. These notes have been designed for right handed people, but the direction of the stroke (see pink arrows) is the same for left and right handed people. Lefties sometimes just need to move the pen slightly differently to get the same results..

The Upstroke

The upstroke is a thin line and ALWAYS goes upwards. Use the tip of your brush, go slowly and apply only the lightest amount of pressure to create a lovely even thin stroke. Resist the urge to 'flick' the nib of the pen, and try not to drag it either.



The Downstroke

The downstroke is a thick stroke and ALWAYS goes downwards. Use the side of the nib to create this stroke. Go slowly and apply a fair amount of pressure - don't grind the nib into the page, just apply enough pressure for the nib to flex sideways and create a wide stroke.



The Overturn

The overturn is a combination of the up and down strokes. Make sure that your grip is light and that the pen can move over at the top to create a soft curve. If the curve is too pointy you may need to make your fingers more flexible to give the pen space to move.



The Underturn

The overturn is a combination of the up and down strokes. Make sure that your grip is light and that the pen can move around at the bottom to create a soft curve. If the curve is too pointy you may need to make your fingers more flexible to give the pen space to move.



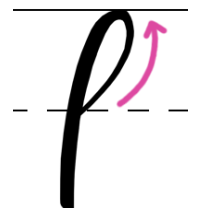
The Compound Turn

The compound turn is a combination of the overturn and underturn and is quite tricky to get right. Start in light pressure for the upstroke, then curve at the top and go into full pressure for the downstroke. Then transition to medium pressure towards the bottom of the downstroke and go into light pressure for the curve and upstroke. Try and keep the two curves consistent and don't flick out of the bottom curve too quickly.



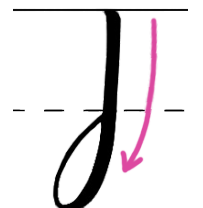
The Ascending Loop

The ascending loop is the 'top' for letters such as l, h, b, d, k and f. It starts in the middle with the thin upstroke, with a turn at the top and then down into a long downstroke in full pressure. Try and keep the downstroke straight, or very slightly curved towards the left for a soft look - if it is curving in towards the right then relax your grip and allow the pen to move away from your hand in a slight arc (see the trouble shooting video).



The Descending Loop

The descending loop is the 'tail' for letters such as j, g and y. It starts in full pressure for the downstroke, then moves into medium pressure 2/3 of the way down and into light pressure as you go into the curve and thin upstroke.



The Oval

The oval is a tricky shape to do and requires a very light and flexible hand. Start in the 2 o'clock position (see pink line) and NOT at the top of the shape. Do a light upstroke moving around into a curved full pressure downstroke. Continue down, move into medium pressure 2/3 of the way down, then curve around and up in light pressure making sure to join up where you started.



the Lowercase Alphabet

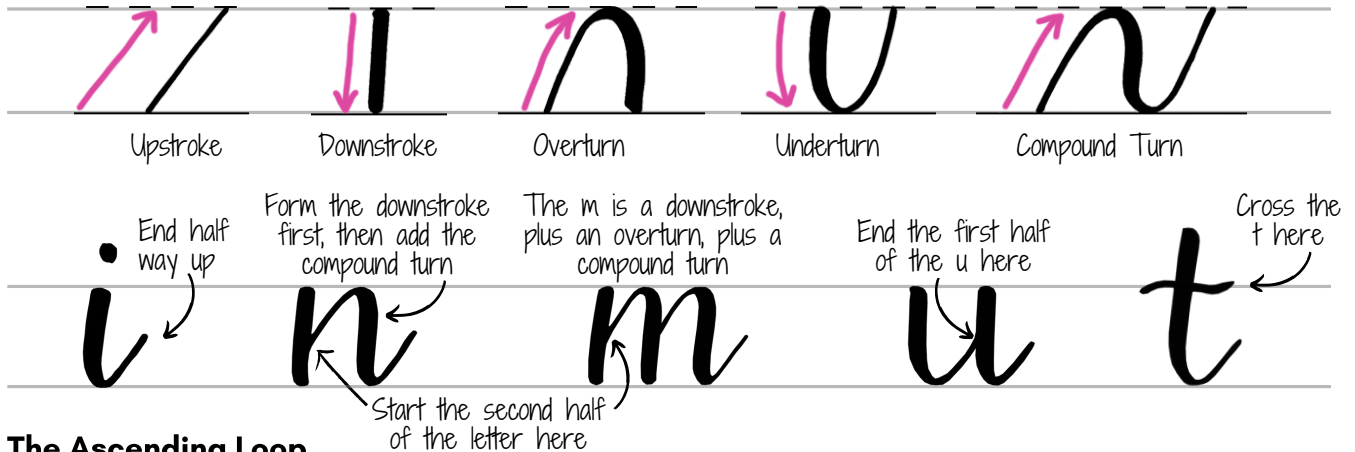
a step by step guide

Welcome to the Lowercase Alphabet!

The brush lettering lowercase alphabet has a lot of different combinations of strokes so I have broken it into groups that have similar strokes so that you are not continuously jumping between letters that are formed completely differently. We'll start with some easy letters and then move on to more difficult ones.

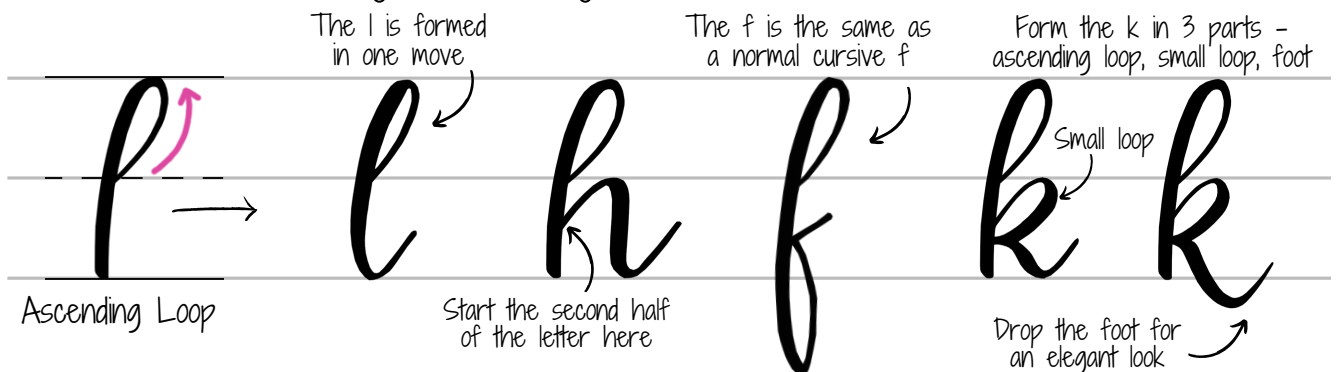
Letters using the Upstroke, Downstroke, Underturn, Overturn and Compound Turn

These strokes form the basis of several letters but we'll start with some easy ones like **i**, **n**, **m**, **u** and **t**.



The Ascending Loop

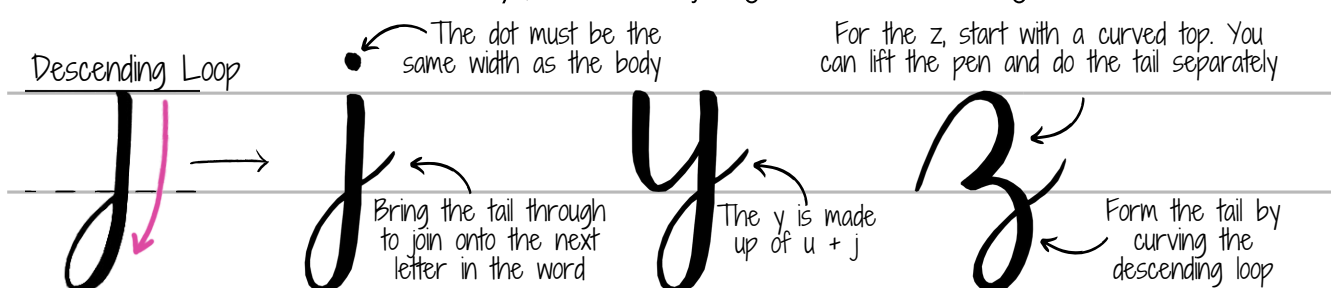
The *ascending loop* forms the 'top' for 6 letters: **b**, **d**, **f**, **k**, **l** and **h**. We'll start with some easy ones, and do the rest as you get more comfortable with doing a taller letter. Keep your pen grip light and your fingers flexible in order to flow through the entire length of the letter.



The Descending Loop

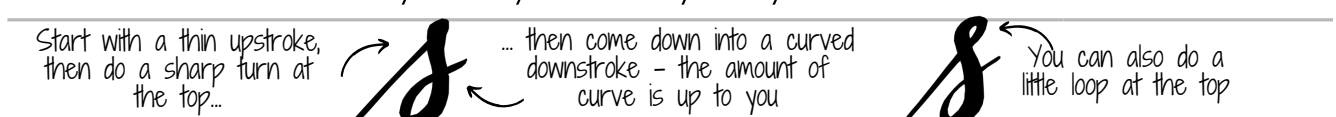
The *descending loop* forms the 'tail' for **j**, **g**, **y** and **z** (curve the tail for z).

We'll just do j, y and z for now as g is more difficult and can be found in the oval section of the notes. You can embellish the tails in all sorts of ways, but for now just get comfortable doing the basic version.



S

The **s** is one of those letters that you can be done in many different ways, so feel free to just add your own twist to it and do it similarly to how you'd normally write your s.



Letters using the Oval

The *oval* is used for several letters such as **a, d, g, q, c, e** and **o**.

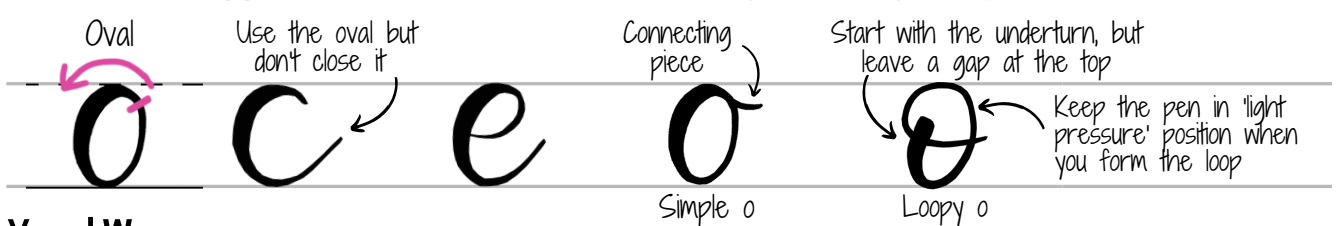
For **a, d, g** and **q** you need to first do the *oval*, making sure to close it! Then lift the pen and add on the relevant piece that you need to create each letter.



For the **c** you can start forming an *oval* and then curve it out at the bottom instead of closing it.

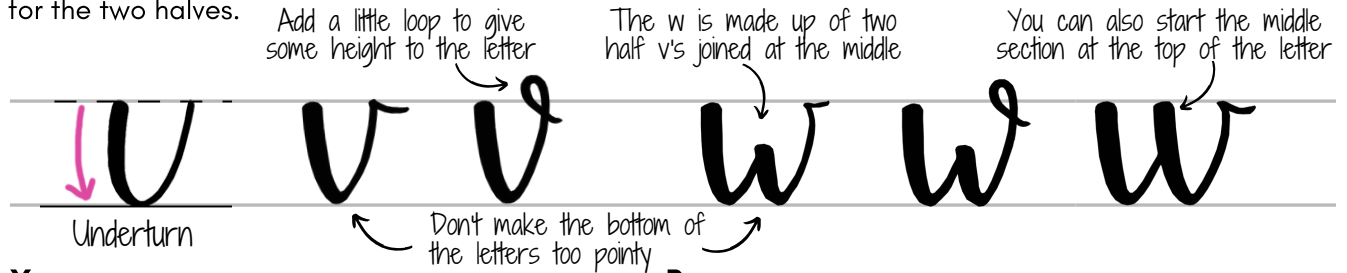
For **e** you start where you would normally start for an **e**, then form a loop and continue down and around as you would for a **c**.

For a **simple o** just do an *oval*, and then add a little connecting piece to join it to the next letter in the word. For the **loopy o**, start with an *underturn* and then loop all the way through the



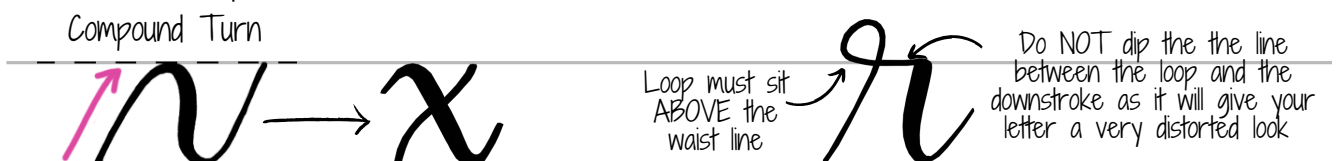
V and W

The **v** and **w** are formed using the *underturn*, but are sharper at the bottom as you go from *downstroke* (stay in full pressure) and up into the thin *upstroke*. The **w** can always be done in two separate moves for the two halves.



X

For **x** you can do the *compound turn* - but slanted and with much sharper turns at the top and bottom. The thin cross piece can be done from either the top or the bottom.

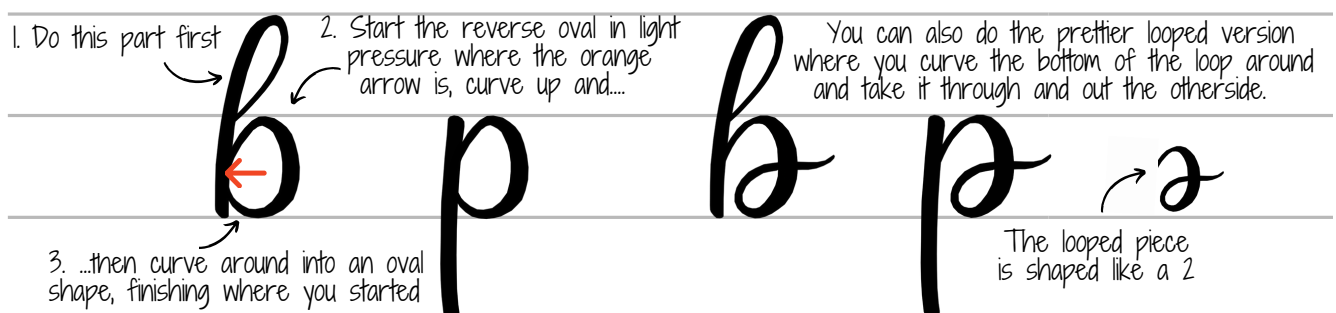


R

The **r** is done with a loop at the top, and it needs to sit above the waist line. Start with a thin upstroke, then form the loop, then do a thin horizontal line across to where the downstroke starts.

B and P

The letters **b** and **p** both use the same *reverse oval* shape. This oval goes the *opposite direction* to the one above. First do the *downstroke* (step 1), then lift the pen and follow step 2 and 3 for the *reverse oval*.



the Lowercase Alphabet

a quick reference

a = o + l Always close the oval first

m = l + 1 + 2

b = l + o b = l + 2

n = l + 2

c e These are both done in one move

o o These are both done in one move

d = o + l Always close the oval first

p = l + o p = l + 2

g = o + j Always close the oval first

q = o + f q = o + b

h = l + 2

r Loop must sit ABOVE the line t Cross the t with a thin wavy line

i j These are both done in one move... add the dot on afterwards

s = / + s You can break this s at the top s This s is done in one move

k = l + o + 2 Form the k in 3 parts

u = v + l y = v + j

l f These are both done in one move

The v is done in one move v v The x is done in two moves x = 2 + /

w w w These can be done in two moves

z = 2 + 2 Form the tail by curving the descending loop

How to create words

To achieve the joined 'cursive look' each letter needs to end halfway up the line so that the next letter can cross over it



the letters need to 'hold hands' with each other ↗