welcome to

HAND LETTERING

BASICS

with robyn anderson
calligraphy joburg

HAND LETTERING
introduction

WHAT IS HAND LETTERING?

Hand Lettering is where you *draw* your letters with a 'normal' pen (e.g. fineliner or felt tip marker) as opposed to writing them in a *calligraphy style* with a specific pen (e.g. brush marker or calligraphy pen) or *typing them on a computer* (typography) Hand lettering is a fun and easy way to add writing to hand made cards, art journals, bullet journals, scrap books, artwork, signage on mirror, glass or wood (e.g. for weddings).

Hello
this is hand lettering

MIXING YOUR FONTS

When you do hand lettering you can mix your lettering sizes, fonts and styles.. this gives you the freedom to do lots of different 'looks' for the same phrase. However, it can also be overwhelming when you don't know how to mix your styles or which styles to mix.
Any number of fonts can be mixed, but start off with 2 or 3 and try out some different looks.
For example, try mixing some blocky capitals with a more playful style like fake calligraphy.

BUT FIRST ~ coffee ~
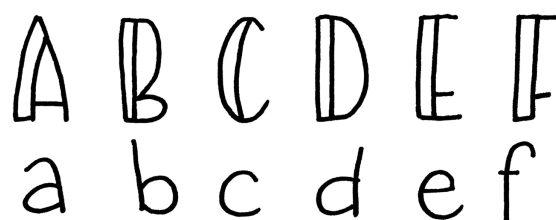
I LOVE you

HAPPY birthday

SERIF VS. SANS SERIF

There are two general categories of typeface: serif and sans serif

- **Serif** typefaces use small decorative marks (feet) to embellish characters.
  Serif means 'foot' in Greek – the letters have a foot, e.g. Times New Roman

A B C D E F
a b c d e f
serif (foot)

- **Sans serif** typefaces are composed of simple lines without embellishment.
  Sans means 'without' in Greek – the letters are plain, e.g. Arial, **Comic Sans**

A B C D E F
a b c d e f

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1

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CHANGING THE LOOK OF YOUR LETTERS

Height and Weight
Playing around with the height (length of ascenders and descenders) and weight (boldness) of your letters is an easy way to achieve different looks.

Height
Short chunky letters work well for landscape orientation, and tall elegant letters work well for portrait. Mixed heights work well for small wording.

chunky height   elegant height   mixed heights
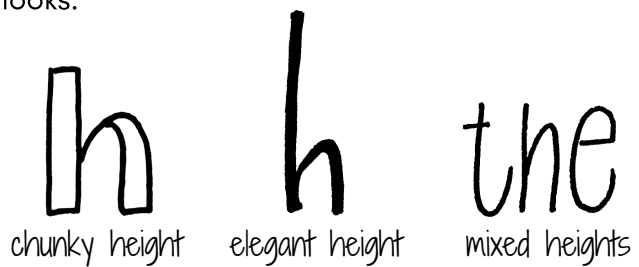
Weight
Light weight letters are great if you have limited space, or don't want a word to have too much impact. Heavy weight letters can dominate your design so use them carefully. Mixed weight letters are a perfect blend of the two.

light weight   heavy weight   mixed weight
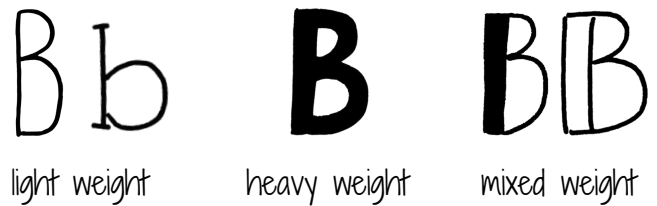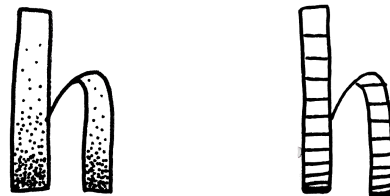
EMBELLISHING YOUR LETTERS

Shadows
Shadow is added to the *outside* of your letters – add shadow to your letters to create a 3D effect

adding a drop shadow   linear shadow   box shadow

Shading
Shading is added to the *inside* of your letters.
Add shading to create light and dark areas..
easy ones to start with are dots and stripes

LETTERING ON A DARK SURFACE

You can achieve a gorgeous effect by writing with a white, silver or gold gel pen or paint marker over a black or dark area. This is a great technique for cards, tags and gift bags.
If you are planning on doing signage on a chalk board, wood, glass, mirror or any similar surface, then start with fake calligraphy and fill it in afterwards, or leave it open.
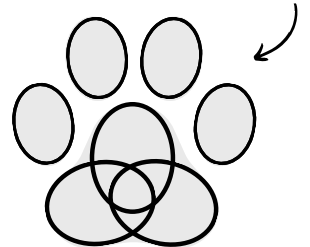
Welcome

happy birthday

welcome

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2

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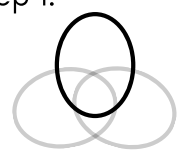
ADD IN SOME DESIGN ELEMENTS . . .

thank you

HOW TO DRAW A DOG'S PAW

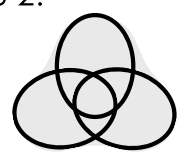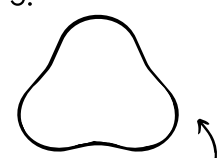A dog paw can be drawn using a series of ovals
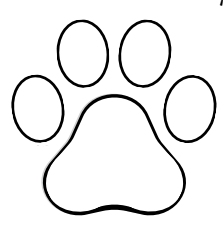
Step 1.
For the main pad, start with an oval

Step 2.
Then add 2 more ovals

Step 3.
Shape the pad around the ovals

Step 4.

Add 4 ovals for the toe pads

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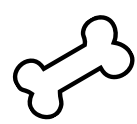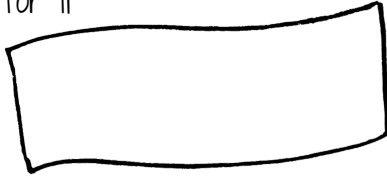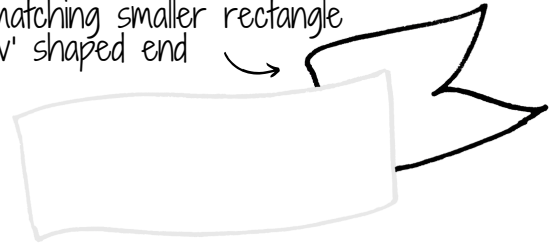
HOW TO DRAW A BANNER

Step 1

Using pencil, draw a wavy rectangle. If you are planning to add writing to your banner, then make sure to leave enough space for it

Step 2

Add a matching smaller rectangle with a 'v' shaped end

Step 3

Add in the connecting piece
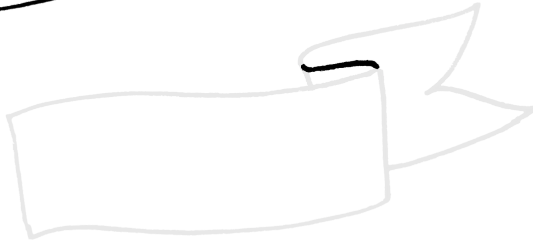
Step 4

Add a matching smaller rectangle with a 'v' shaped end
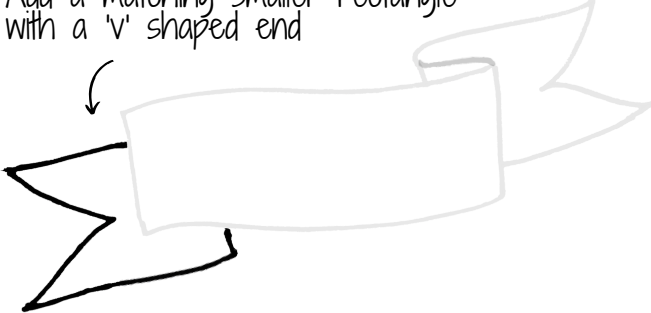
Step 5

Add in the connecting piece
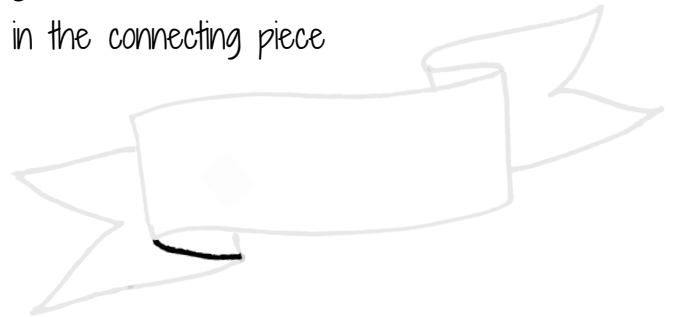
Step 6

Go over your pencil lines with fineliner
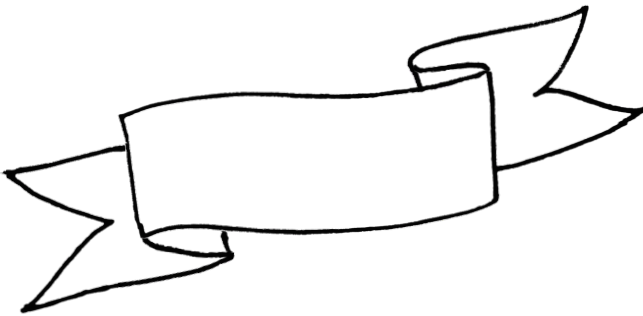
Step 7

You can add in some shading to give a 3D look, and then add in your text

thanks

HOW TO DRAW A PILE OF GIFTS

An easy little drawing that can be coloured in for an extra fun look - perfect for adding to tags

Start with some squares and rectangles
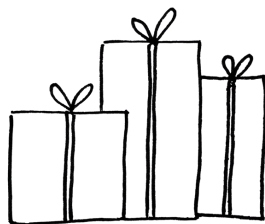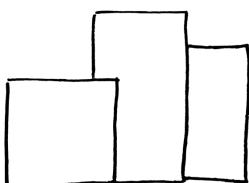
Add in two lines for a ribbon, and two 'ears' for a bow

Add in some patterns and a surface for the gifts to sit on

GIFT TAG EXAMPLES

·B·E·S·T· wishes

thank you

i love you

handmade for you with love

love

love

happy birthday

I LOVE YOU

happy birthday

thank you

love

love

PLANNING YOUR LAYOUT

This is a step by step guide to planning your layout and creating your hand lettered masterpiece.

Step 1

Choose a phrase, and write it out in your **normal** writing. This enables you to see all the words equally and objectively.

Select the **key words** in your phrase and circle those in pencil.

Examples: Be a (voice), not an (echo)

My head says (gym), but my heart says (cupcakes)

Your only limit is (you)

Step 2

- Decide on the **look and feel** for each <u>key word</u> in the phrase, *e.g. bold, feminine, playful..*
- Then decide on the **lettering style** that will suit your phrase and specifically your key words, *e.g. block capitals, small letters, serifs, no serifs, some fake calligraphy, etc.*
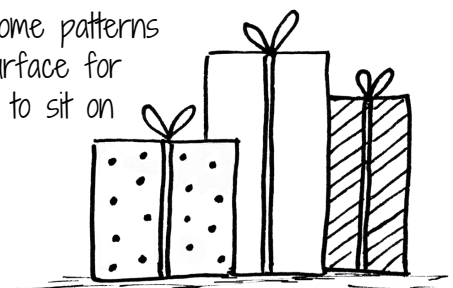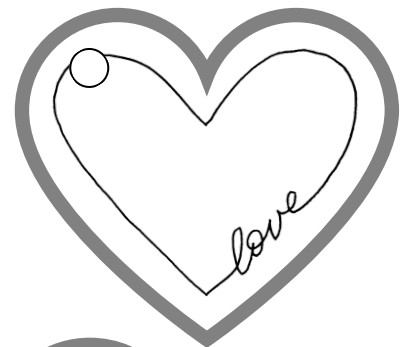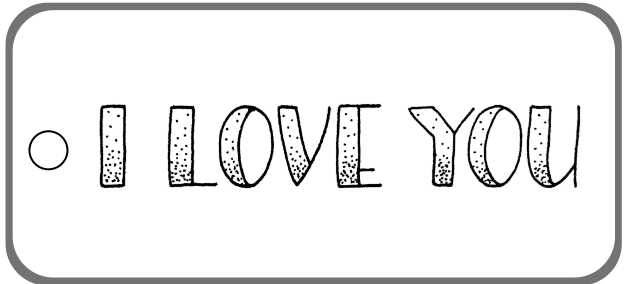- Write out the phrase in **draft form** in a few different styles on scrap paper. Try out various options – in this way you'll get an idea of which versions you like, and you can also make some notes regarding spacing, alignment, change of writing style, etc.
- Try adding some **design elements** such as a wreath, banner or some simple drawings – just draw them roughly in pencil to see if they work with your wording.
- Experiment with different o**rientations**, *e.g. portrait vs. landscape.*
- Decide if you want to add **colour**, e.g. writing some words in colour, or colouring in some of the letters.
- Try out some **effects** like shading, stippling, adding drop shadows, etc.

Step 3

- Once you've chosen your 'look', write out the final draft in pencil.
- Leave the design for a few minutes and then come back to it – you'll look at it with a fresh perspective and anything 'off' should jump out at you and you can make necessary changes.

Step 4

- Select your final piece of paper or cardstock and draw out your pencil lines (including banners or wreaths).
- Using pencil, write out the words in your chosen styles – DON'T press hard with the pencil!
- **VERY N.B. when using pencil..** *if you are writing your words in black fine liner you will be able to erase the pencil once the ink is dry. However, if you are using colour markers, they will often seal the pencil onto the page so use minimal pencil lines, and work as softly as possible so that you have very little pencil to erase afterwards.*
- Check spelling, spacing and alignment. Hold your design up at arm's length to look at it.

Step 5

- **Add the ink!!** This is both exciting and nerve wracking.. make sure that you use a blank sheet of CLEAN paper under your hand and work more or less from the top down. Turn your design as needed so that your hand is always at its most comfortable when drawing in the lines.
- WAIT FOR THE INK TO DRY before erasing your pencil lines – use tissue or roller towel to blot the ink to check. Use a very fine fine liner to touch up any imperfections in your lines.
- *Stand back and admire your beautiful design*!!

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6

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RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS

There are so many different pens out there, but these are some of the ones that I prefer...

Pencil
Any good quality pencil between HB and 2B (H pencils can be too scratchy)
HB pencils are fairly soft. H stands for 'hard' and B stands for 'black', so HB stands for 'hard black' which means 'medium hard'.

Eraser
Most good quality erasers will be suitable. Big, cheap ones are hard to work with and can damage your paper. Tombow MONO zero erasers have extremely small ends and are great for erasing very small areas. Faber Castell kneadable erasers are also fantastic for erasing larger areas of pencil, e.g. lines

Ruler
Clear rulers are better because you can see your work through them which is especially helpful when you are drawing lines and need to see other lines or words on your page.

Fineliners
Various sizes and colours, **preferably waterproof,** e.g. Pigma Microns, Tombow MONO, Faber Castell Pitt Artist Pens, Unipin, Copic Multiliner.
Its good to have a range of sizes, e.g. 01, 03, 05 and 08

Brush Markers
These are useful if you want to colour in your letters or add some brush lettering
- SMALL – Tombow Fudenosuke, Pentel Touch Sign
- LARGE – Tombow Dual, Koi, Faber Castell Pitt (B), Lyra

Gel Pens
These are great for adding white or metallic highlights to your letters or designs
WHITE – Gelly Roll white (size 08 or 10), Uniball Signo broad white, preferably the broad 1mm
SILVER & GOLD – Uniball Signo broad silver or gold
COLOUR – Gelly Rolls

Paint Markers
SILVER & GOLD – Artline or Pilot paint markers (size F)
BLACK, WHITE & COLOUR – Pilot Pintor, Karin Decomarkers, oil based Sharpies

Paper and Card
Although Bristol paper is the most recommended, there are various good quality smooth papers and cardstock available. For Bristol, the Canson XL Bristol 180gsm is perfect for practicing, and for small items such as gift tags, whereas Tombow Bristol 250gsm is perfect for cards and larger pieces. Watercolour (preferably hot pressed) is also lovely for lettering onto.

Use what you have at home...!
When you start off with hand lettering I would suggest that you just use whatever pens and paper you have at home. Once you gain more confidence and start showcasing your work, e.g. gift tags, cards, gift bags, etc. then you can always start building up a nice collection of good quality stationery for your hand lettering.

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FAKE CALLIGRAPHY

Fake (or faux) calligraphy is a style used to achieve a brush lettered look without using a brush pen.

Step 1

Write your word in a cursive style, leaving a bit more space between your letters than normal – this is so that you have space to add in the second line

Step 2

Identify your down strokes and then draw a second line into those areas.
Follow the rule of 'thin on the upstroke, thick on the downstroke'

Step 3

You can colour in the spaces using black or colour, or leave them open

love

love

love

FAKE CALLIGRAPHY - PRACTICE SHEET

the quick brown fox jumps

over the lazy dog

the quick brown fox jumps

over the lazy dog

the quick brown fox jumps

over the lazy dog

LOWER CASE ALPHABETS

You can draw the letters in your own style, but keep them consistent when it comes to the serifs and the widths of the letters. Letters like the 'a' can also be done differently to suit your style. Use the greyscale letters to practice on.

SERIF

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

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

thanks thanks happy happy

SANS SERIF

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

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

thanks thanks happy happy

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BLOCK UPPER CASE ALPHABETS

You can colour in the thick down strokes in black or colour, leave them open or add some patterns.

SERIF

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

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

SANS SERIF

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

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

NARROW UPPER CASE ALPHABETS

DROPPED CROSS BAR

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

keep the cross bars
at the same height
across all the letters

keep the middle bits raised for m, n, x, y

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

RAISED CROSS BAR

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

keep the middle bit dropped for w, but raised for all the other 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

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