

School Handwriting Policy

Date of last Review: Spring 2026
Review in: Spring 2027

Kirk Ella St Andrew's Community Primary School
Handwriting Policy

Aims

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
    - Having a correct pencil grip
    - Knowing that all letters start at the top, except d and e which start in the middle
    - Forming all letters correctly
    - Knowing the size and orientation of letters

Model used

Since 2021 children in Foundation Stage and Year One are taught letter formation using the "Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Formation Phrases". This formation gives the children a starting point to then move on the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme. The Little Wandle Scheme has been adapted to incorporate the Nelson style **k**.

Since January 2019, starting with FS and KS1, the use of the fully cursive style has been phased out and the Nelson Thornes Handwriting Scheme has been introduced. This is being phased in as the pupils move through the school.

Lower case letters



Capitals

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

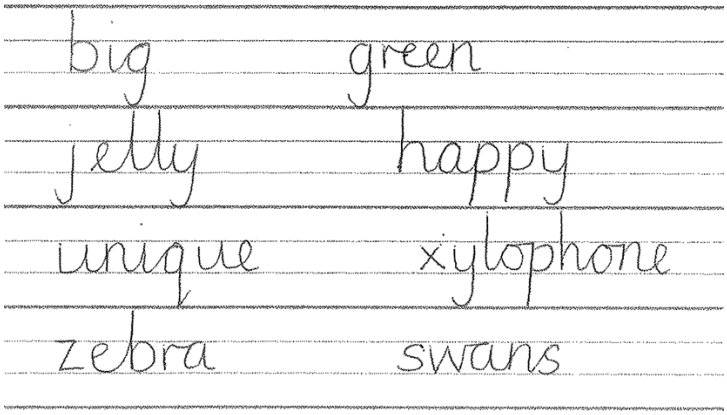


The Four Joins

1. to letters without ascenders
2. to letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders



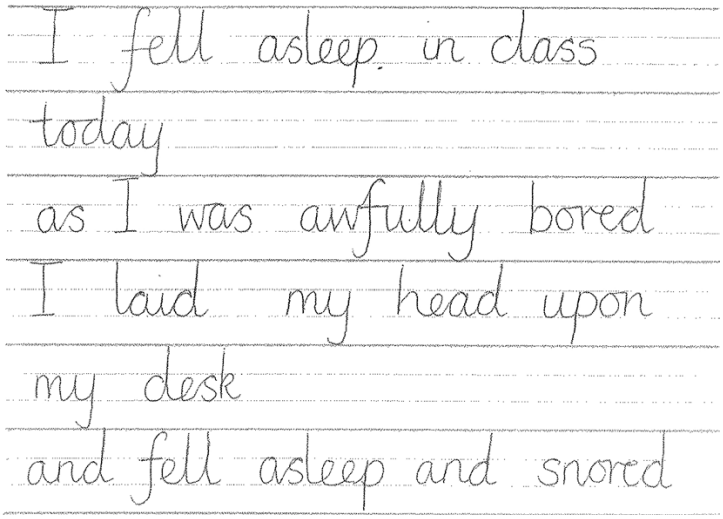
The break letters (letters that aren't joined **from**) are: b g j p q x y z s



NB – Once children are able to form all letters correctly and are beginning to develop fluency with their joins, they may be taught how to join from the break letters.

NB children must be taught individual letters first so that they see them as individual units **BEFORE** learning to join.

Examples of joins



Pencil

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil
- Children with poor/incorrect pencil grip will be given resources to improve their grip.
- The pencil should be held lightly in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle fingers.
- For right handers 1cm-1.5cm above the sharpened area of the pencil.
- For left handers 1.5-2.5cm above the sharpened area of the pencil.

Paper

For right handers

- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left handers

- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.
- Teachers should model letters to copy on the right hand side of the page to ensure that they are visible to the child.

NB - It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

After children in Foundation have developed good gross and fine motor control using techniques and resources such as Squiggle while you wiggle, Dough Disco, weaving, tweezers, chalks, large scale painting, construction, yoga etc, they will be introduced to letter formation workbooks, followed by handwriting in books (no guidelines).

Exercise books with guidelines are used for most curriculum subjects in KS1. The school will provide different size guidelines for teachers to use their professional judgement to give children the size to best match and develop neat and correctly formed handwriting. (Please see Appendix 1)

All children should be allowed to use unlined paper *from time to time* so that they can apply skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

Posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

Foundation Stage

Core Strength

Children take part in activities to improve their core strength to support sitting appropriately at the table when writing. These activities include climbing, swinging, yoga and daily movement.

Fine & Gross Motor Activities

In Foundation all children have opportunities to develop their fine and gross motor control as part of continuous provision both inside and outside. Resources such as weaving, tweezers, chalks, large scale painting, construction, play doh, cutting, woodwork, crafting and sewing are all available to support early handwriting control.

Daily sessions take place with all children to improve gross motor skills (Squiggle While You Wiggle) and fine motor control (Dough Disco)

All children can access mark making activities during continuous provision. They are exposed to a wide range of writing tools to practise patterns, drawing and writing.

Pencil Grip

- Children will be encouraged to hold their pencil and other writing implements correctly and comfortably using a tripod grip.
- Children can choose from a variety of pencils and pencil grips to find a style that feels comfortable to write and promotes good pencil grip.
- Children with poor/incorrect pencil grip will be given resources to improve their grip.
- Staff will closely monitor all children's grips and provide frequent guided practice with and without pencil grips.

Letter & Number Formation

- Letter Formation is introduced during Phonic lessons from the start of the year as each letter is introduced.
- Little Wandle letter formation rhymes are used to support letter formation in phonics lessons. Children will be encouraged to verbalise the process and form letters with gross motor movements such as, in the air on the carpet during the lesson. During continuous provision in sand, with brushes, chalk etc
- Children are shown and taught how to write letters and numbers correctly using the interactive whiteboards or 1 to 1 demonstration.
- Autumn 1 - Children complete pencil control activities (pre handwriting shapes). They are taught formation rhymes during phonics and practise these in and out of lessons.
- Autumn 2 - Children begin to complete LW Letter formation booklets in a discreet handwriting lesson (as a whole class or in small groups)

Handwriting Sessions

- In the Spring Term (or earlier if appropriate) children participate in formal handwriting sessions recording work in the back of their English Exercise Book with the aim of letters sitting on a line (these books do not have handwriting guidelines).
- During this session children will revisit and practise previously taught letters. Teachers will target letters that children have difficulty forming.
- The correct formation, pencil grip and posture should be modelled as part of everyday practice.

Assessment

- Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation; handwriting informs part of this.
- Children should be observed as they write during phonic/writing/handwriting lessons – the teacher and support staff must circulate, monitor and intervene.

Intervention

- Children with poor gross and fine motor control will take part in targeted intervention.
- Children with poor letter formation will be closely supported during lessons and take part in targeted daily intervention to practise their letter formation. This can be small- and large-scale practise.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process (LW Formation Phrases)
- Children form letters in the air
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard

Key Stage One

Pencil Grip

- Children will be encouraged to hold their pencil and other writing implements correctly and comfortably using a tripod grip.
- Children with poor/incorrect pencil grip will be given resources to develop a comfortable and correct grip.
- Staff will closely monitor all children grips and provide frequent guided practice with and without pencil grips.

Letter & Number Formation

- Little Wandle Letter formation rhymes used to support letter formation in phonics lessons.
- Children are shown and taught how to write letters and numbers correctly using handwriting lines on the interactive whiteboards and in their books.
- Children practise letter formation in their Phonic Exercise Books during each Phonic Lesson as each grapheme is taught. E.g. Phase 3 **oa** Phase 5 **ay**
  In **Year 2** handwriting is linked with phonics and spellings, when digraphs, trigraphs, suffixes are taught, they are taught as joins.

Daily Handwriting Sessions

- Children participate in formal daily handwriting sessions recording work in the back of their English Exercise Book with guidelines.
- Teachers will also target letters that children have difficulty forming.
- The correct formation, pencil grip and posture should be modelled as part of everyday practice.

Year One

Children will revisit and practise previously taught letters following the Nelson Handwriting Scheme Units 1-14.

- c a d g q o - e s f - i l t - u y j k - r n m - h b p - v w x z
- capital letters

Year Two

Children will be introduced to the four handwriting joins though the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

- Practise all lower case letters
- Practise all capital letters
- First join - Units 15-18; ed, eg, ac, id, iu, ig, iy, ar, an, am, ap, aw, ew, ex, ux
- Second join - Units 19-21; if, ef, ief, il, ai, ail, ck, ch, tch
- Third join - Units 22-24; wa, wo, fo, fa, oon, oom, or, ore, orn
- Fourth join - Units 25-26; of, ff, wl, vl, rl
- Practise the break letters – Unit 27 b p z j g q y
- Re cap of all joins - Unit 28

Links to Spelling

- Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.
- One spelling strategy that links particularly well to handwriting is:

  Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check
  The child:
  Looks at the word carefully
  Says the word
  Covers the word so that it can't be seen
  Writes the whole word from memory
  Checks the word is written correctly
  If not, repeat.

Assessment

- Children should be observed as they write during all lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor, and intervene.
- Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:
  - Is the posture correct?
  - Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
  - Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
  - Are any letters reversed or inverted?
  - Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
  - Is the writing easily legible?
  - Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with age related expectations.

Intervention

- Children with poor gross and fine motor control will take part in targeted daily intervention.
- Children with poor letter formation will be closely supported during lessons and take part in targeted daily intervention to practise their letter formation. This can be small- and large-scale practise.

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process (LW Formation Phrases)
- Children form letters in the air
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick /Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Copying over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Copying under teacher's writing directly under words

Key Stage 2

Discrete Handwriting Sessions

- In Years 3 and 4 all pupils will have access to a minimum of 1 x 15-minute discrete session to develop handwriting.
- In Year 5 and 6 discrete handwriting practice will be delivered to children who require further practice.
- During this session children will use the back of their English exercise book with guidelines.
- Teachers will also target letters that children have difficulty forming.
- The correct formation, pencil grip and posture should be modelled as part of everyday practice.
- Please see **Appendix 3** for further details on handwriting joins taught in KS2.

Links to Spelling

- Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.
- One spelling strategy that links particularly well to handwriting is:

  Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check
  The child:
  Looks at the word carefully
  Says the word
  Covers the word so that it can't be seen
  Writes the whole word from memory
  Checks the word is written correctly
  If not, repeat.

Pen Licence

- When a child can write neatly, with correct letter formation and with confidence in all books, they get a pen licence. They will be provided with a special handwriting pen.
- This licence can be removed if handwriting deteriorates in the future.
- Pen licences will be assessed and given out at any time.
- A pencil is always used within maths regardless of whether children have a pen licence.

Assessment

- Children should be observed as they write during all writing lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor, and intervene.
- Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:
  - Is the posture correct?
  - Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
  - Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
  - Are any letters reversed or inverted?
  - Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
  - Is the writing easily legible?
  - Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with age related expectations.

Intervention

- Children with poor gross and fine motor control will take part in targeted intervention.
- Children with poor letter formation will be closely supported during lessons and take part in targeted intervention to practise their letter formation.
- To develop independence the following teaching technique would be seen across Key Stage Two.
    - Copying over teacher's writing (highlighter)
    - Copying under teacher's writing directly under words

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process (LW Formation Phrases)
- Children form letters in the air
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard

Monitoring

Teachers and Senior Leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly).

The following should be considered:

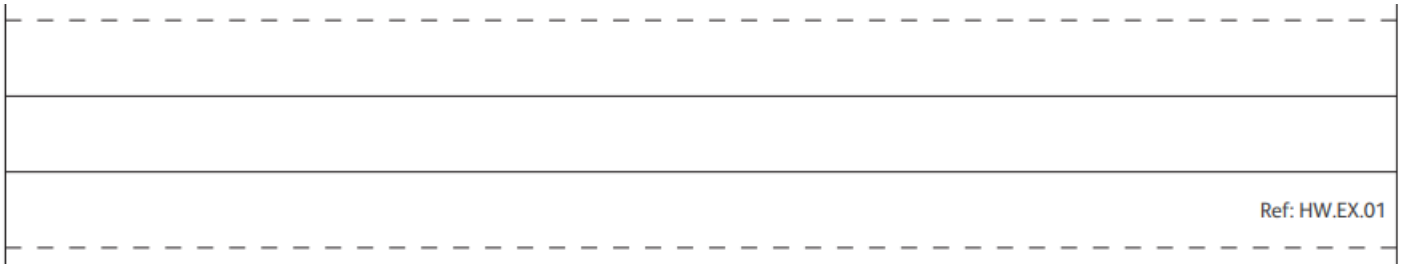
• Is the writing generally legible?
• Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
• Are the joins made correctly?
• Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
• Is the size of the writing appropriate?
• Is the writing properly aligned?
• Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with age related expectations?

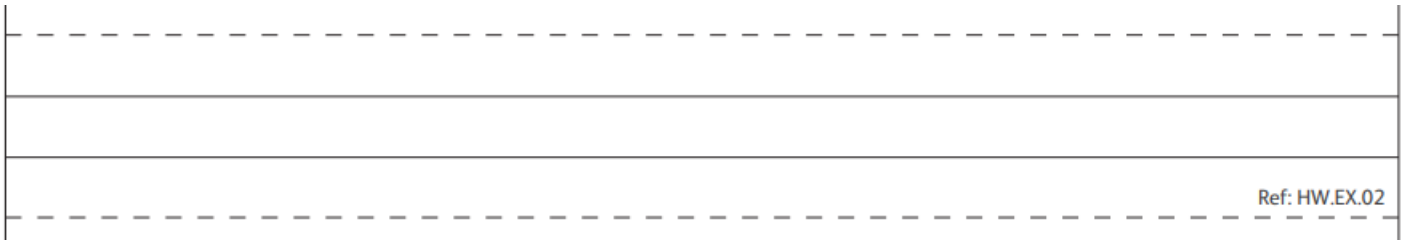
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

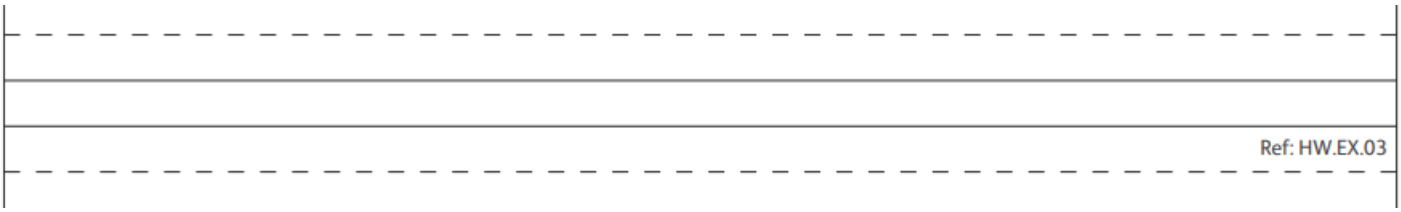
- All children must have the opportunity and the encouragement to reach their full potential.
- Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider ruled lined paper.
- Children will also have the opportunity to use iPads to rehearse specific skills on a more regular basis.
- Intervention is available for children who experience significant difficulties to practice prewriting skills and fine motor coordination.

APPENDIX 1

Handwriting Guidelines





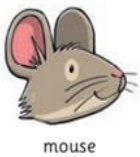




APPENDIX 2

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds – Letter Formation

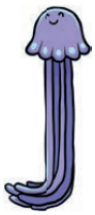
Phase 2 grapheme information sheet — Autumn 1

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
s s	 snake	Show your teeth and and let the **s** hiss out **ssssss ssssss**	Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
a a	 astronaut	Open your mouth wide and make the **a** sound at the back of your mouth **a a a**	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
t t	 tiger	Open your lips; put the tip of your tongue behind your teeth and press **t t t**	From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.
p p	 penguin	Bring your lips together, push them open and say **p p p**	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
i i	 iguana	Pull your lips back and make the **i** sound at the back of your mouth **i i i**	Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot [on the leaf] at the top.
n n	 net	Open your lips a bit, put your tongue behind your teeth and make the **nnnnn** sound **nnnnn**	Down the stick, up and over the net.
m m	 mouse	Put your lips together and make the **mmmmm** sound **mmmmm**	Down, up and over the mouse's ears

 k	 kite	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say **k k k**	Down the kite, up and loop around, then down to the corner.
 ck	 sock	Open your mouth into a little smile, make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say **c c c**	c Curl round the heel of the sock. k Down the sock, up and loop around, then down to the corner. **Catchphrase:** Rock that sock!
 e	 elephant	Open your mouth wide and say **e e e**	Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 u	 umbrella	Open your mouth wide and say **u u u**	Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom
 r	 rainbow	Show me your teeth to make a **rrrrr** sound **rrrrr rrrrr**	From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.
 h	 helicopter	Open your mouth and breathe out sharply **h h h**	Down, up and over the helicopter
 b	 bear	Put your lips together and say **b** as you open them **b b b**	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.

 f f	 flamingo	Open your lips a little; put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound **fffff fffff**	Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.
 l l	 lollipop	Open your mouth a little; put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press **llllll llllll**	All the way down the lollipop.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase
 j	 jellyfish	Pucker your lips and show your teeth use your tongue as you say **j j j**	All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.
 v	 volcano	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing **vvvvv vvvvv**	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 w	 wave	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say **w w w**	From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.

 x	 box	Mouth open, then push the **cs**/**x** sound through as you close your mouth **cs cs cs** (**x x x**)	Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.
 y	 yoyo	Smile, tongue to the top of your mouth, say **y** without opening your mouth **yyy**	Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.
 z	 zebra	Show me your teeth and buzz the **z** sound **zzzzz zzzzz**	Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Picture card	Pronunciation phrase	Formation phrase Catchphrase
 qu	 queen	Pucker your mouth, then open it as you say **qu qu qu**	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. qu Quick, it's the queen!
 ch	 cherries	Pucker your lips and show your teeth; use your tongue as you say **ch ch ch**	ch Chew the cherries, children.
 sh	 shells	Show me your teeth and push the air out **shshshshsh shshshshsh**	sh Share the shells.

th th	 thumb	**Voiced:** Tongue on your teeth, teeth almost closed to make a 'buzzing' **th th th** **Unvoiced:** Tongue on your teeth; push the air out **th th th**	th Thumbs up, we're having fun.
ng ng	 ring	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say **ng ng ng**	ng Bling on a ring.
nk nk	 pink panda	Open your mouth a bit and then use your tongue at the back of your mouth to say **ngk ngk ngk**	nk I think I am pink.

APPENDIX 3

Joins Y3 (going into Y4) Revision

- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters

- in ine
- ut ute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s)
- ri ru ry (practising joining from the letter r)
- oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)
- ee ea ed (practising joining from the letter)
- ow ov ox (practising joining from the letter o)
- ky hy ly (practising joining to the letter y)
- ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)
- od oo og(practising joining from the letter o)
- er ir ur (practising joining to the letter r)
- ai al ay

• oy ou oi
• re oe fe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)
• fu wu vu (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)
• ot ol ok (practising joining to ascenders)
• ai al ow ol (practising all the joins)

Year 4
• ning ping ting
• oc od oo
• ake ome are
• fla flo fle
• who wha whe
• ie in il
• in ly ky ny
• ap ar an
• ick uck ack
• practise writing with a slope
• he
• we
• re
• fte fir fin
• wra wri kni (silent letters)
• ii ll tt rr nn mm cc oo dd ss ff ee
• ew ev ex (spacing)
• th ht fl (proportions)
• ac ag af
• Capital letters
• Decorated capital letters
• Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ “ , ‘

Years 5 and 6
• Practise consistency and size of letters
• Practising using a diagonal joining line
• Practising leaving an equal space between letters
• Practising joining to the letter y
• Practising using a horizontal joining line
• Practising using a horizontal joining line
• Practising the size and height of letters
• Practising joining from the letter i
• Practising joining to and from the letter v
• Practising consistency in forming and joining letters
• Practise speedwriting
• Practising crossing double tt on completing the word
• Practising joining to and from the letter e
• Practising joining to and from the letter w
• Practising printing
• Practising drafting and editing
• Practising joining to the letter t