

Sequence for teaching the units

Gross and fine motor skills

In *Penpals: Foundation 1*, a series of units based upon developing gross motor skills, fine motor skills and basic letter movements is offered as a resource base. These will need to be taught and revisited at several stages throughout the Foundation phase. The shape of the *Foundation 2* lessons is generally assumed to be that of moving from gross to fine motor skills.

Teaching units

In *Penpals: Foundation 2*, 23 teaching units are provided for terms 2 and 3 (by which time most of the intake are in school). In subsequent years, 10 units have been provided for each school term.

Teaching sequence for a unit of *Penpals for Handwriting*

You will need:

- the relevant Teacher's Book page;
- the Big Book;
- water-based marker pens for annotating the pages.

Children will need:

- space for sky writing and movement;
- dry-wipe boards and marker pens* or pencils and paper;
- pencils and coloured pencils;
- the relevant Practice Book.

(*Remember that one of the crucial elements of ensuring good handwriting is good posture. If children are writing with dry-wipe boards on their knees or on the floor, good posture is more difficult to achieve.)

Whole-class session

1 Warm up In Foundation and Key Stage 1 materials, all lessons begin with warm-up activities. These are brief activities that are intended literally to prepare the upper part of the body and the hands for handwriting. They will help to develop both gross and fine motor control.

3 Unit focus and phonic link These are clearly identified for each unit.

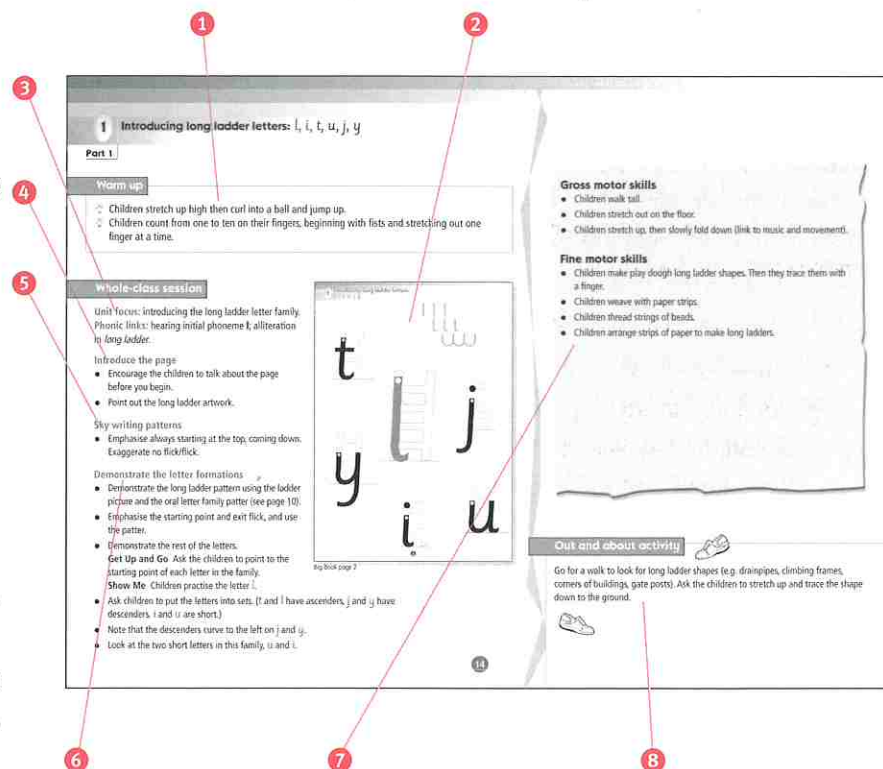
4 Introduce the page Talk about the page in preparation for teaching.

5 Sky writing patterns These activities are linked to the unit focus and involve children drawing patterns in the air.

They are an ideal way of introducing children to a particular gross motor movement before they have to refine it as a fine motor movement. Sky writing patterns are usually based on movement needed for letter formation, but sometimes they also predict the letter patterns and joins used in the unit. Stand with your back to the children when modelling sky writing.

6 Demonstrate the letter formation Notes on how to demonstrate the letter formation and then how to involve the pupils interactively. Use the **Show Me** and **Get Up and Go** activities along with dry-wipe boards. Children will also benefit from additional sky writing practice, tracing the handwriting pattern on their palms, on each other's back, on the table in front of them, etc.

2 Big Book page Every unit begins with a whole-class teaching session based on the Big Book page. This introduces the handwriting focus for the unit.



7 Gross and fine motor skills Additional activities (often linked to ideas from *Penpals: Foundation 1* Teacher's Book) for developing these essential skills.

8 Out and about activity An additional activity encouraging children to look for letter patterns and shapes in the environment.

Independent work

This session can follow on directly from the whole-class session. Ideally, the children's work should be overseen by an adult. Part 2 of the teacher's notes for each unit provides helpful advice on using the pupil's Practice Book page together and highlights some common errors to avoid.

In Foundation 2/P1, children record their work in write-in Practice Books (for terms 2 and 3). They should have a sharpened pencil for their writing, but may also need coloured pencils for pattern practice.

- 1 Practice Book Warm up** An optional warm up for use where there is a split between the whole-class session and the independent work.

The left-hand page of the Practice Book (with starting dot support)

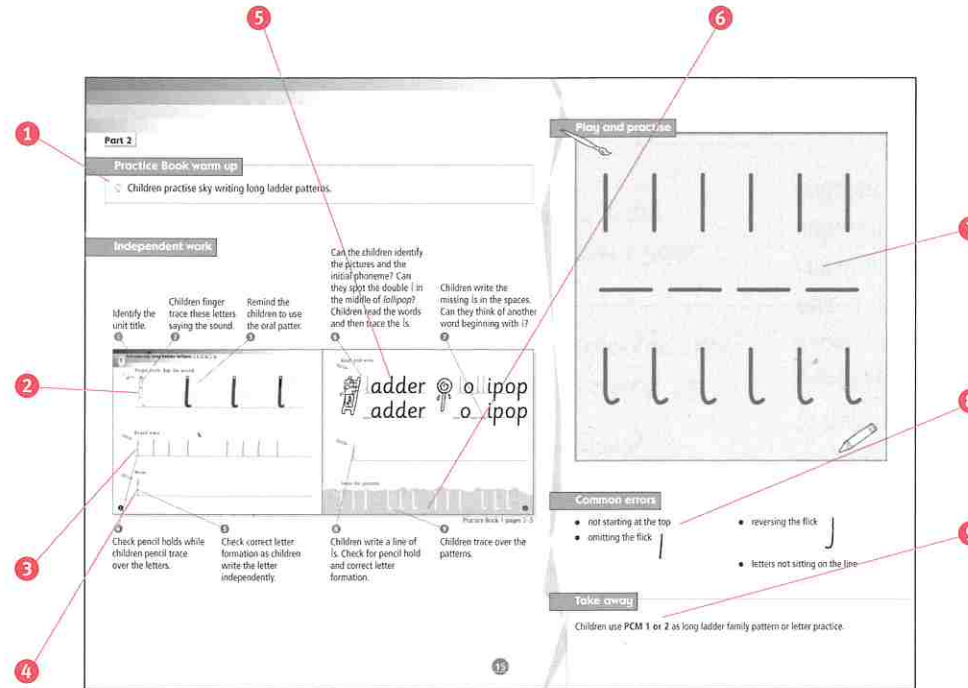
- 2 Finger tracing** The unit which introduces each letter family always begins with finger-tracing letters that incorporate the representative artwork (e.g. curly caterpillar, long ladder).
- 3 Pencil tracing** with starting dots to support letter formation.
- 4 Independent writing** with an initial pencil trace and dots to indicate the correct starting point.

The right-hand page of the Practice Book

- 5 Copying letters in context** Once the children have practised forming the letters, they should try to write them in a context (usually a simple phrase or sentence).

Familiarity with the correct formation of all patterns and letters is expected.

- 6 Pattern practice** Children will need to practise the patterns at the bottom of the page. These usually reflect the pencil movement of the main activity, but always enhance fine motor control as children keep within the white lines. These patterns can be made using coloured pencils. These patterns are artwork, not letters, and should be treated as opportunities to develop movement and control.



Also in the Teacher's Book:

- 7 Play and practise** In the Teacher's Book, additional pattern practice (for any medium) is suggested for those children who are not ready to put pen to paper in the Practice Books.
- 8 Common errors** Writing issues to look out for while pupils are working.
- 9 Take away** This is an additional activity which can be used for extra practice or homework. In Foundation 2/P1 these are mostly investigative activities. In addition, each unit introducing a letter family has two Photocopy Masters (PCMs) to provide pattern practice (for children who need reinforcement at a lower level) and letter formation practice (for more confident children). The second PCM may also be used in the unit that practises the whole letter family to give extra practice of the letter formations.