

# Five reasons kids still need to learn handwriting

June 7 2023, by Lucinda McKnight and Maria Nicholas

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The world of writing is changing.

Things have moved very quickly from keyboards and [predictive text](#).

The rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) means bots can now write human-quality text without having hands at all.

Recent improvements in speech-to-text software mean even human "writers" do not need to touch a keyboard, let alone a pen. And with help from AI, [text can even be generated by decoders](#) that read [brain activity](#) through non-invasive scanning.

Writers of the future will be talkers and thinkers, without having to lift a finger. The word "writer" may come to mean something very different, as people compose text in multiple ways in an increasingly digital world. So do humans still need to learn to write by hand?

## **Handwriting is still part of the curriculum**

The pandemic shifted a lot of schooling online and some major tests, [such as NAPLAN](#) are now done on computers. There are also calls for cursive [handwriting](#) to be phased out in [high school](#).

However, learning to handwrite is still a key component of the literacy curriculum in primary school.

Parents may be wondering whether the time-consuming and challenging process of learning to handwrite is worth the trouble. Perhaps the effort spent learning to form letters would be better spent on coding?

Many students with disability, after all, already learn to write with [assistive technologies](#).

But there are are a number of important reasons why handwriting will still be taught—and still needs to be taught—in schools.

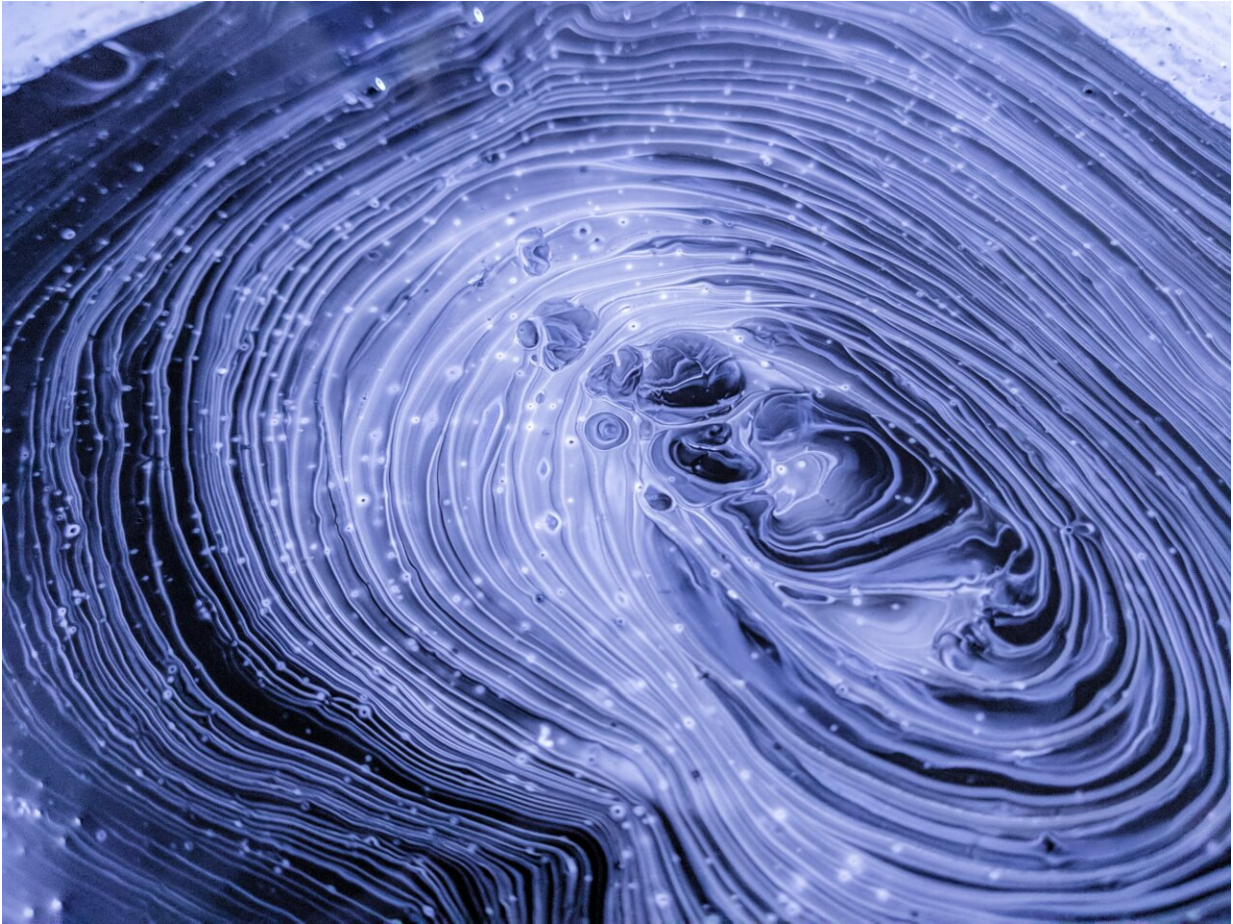
## 1. Fine motor skills

Handwriting develops critical [fine motor skills](#) and the coordination needed to control precise movements. These movements are required [to conduct everyday](#) school and work-related activities.

The refinement of these motor skills also leads to handwriting becoming increasingly legible and fluent.

We don't know where technology will take us, but it may take us back to the past.

Handwriting may be more important than ever if [tests and exams return to being handwritten](#) to stop students using generative AI to cheat.



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## **2. It helps you remember**

Handwriting has important cognitive benefits, [including for memory](#).

Research suggests traditional pen-and-paper notes are [remembered better](#), due to the greater complexity of the handwriting process.

And learning to read and handwrite are [intimately linked](#). Students become better readers though practicing writing.

### 3. It's good for well-being

Handwriting, and related activities such as drawing, are tactile, creative and reflective sources of pleasure and wellness for writers of all ages.

This is seen in the popularity of practices such as print [journalling](#) and calligraphy. There are many [online communities](#) where writers share gorgeous examples of handwriting.

### 4. It's very accessible

Handwriting does not need electricity, devices, batteries, software, subscriptions, a fast internet connection, a keyboard, charging time or the many other things on which digital writing depends.

It only needs pen and paper. And can be done anywhere.

Sometimes handwriting is the easiest and best option. For example, when writing a birthday card, filling in printed forms, or writing a quick note.

### 5. It's about thinking

Most importantly, learning to write and learning to think are intimately connected.

Ideas are [formed as students write](#). They are developed and organized as they are composed. Thinking is too important to be outsourced to bots!

Teaching writing is about giving students a toolkit of multiple writing strategies to empower them to fulfill their potential as thoughtful, creative and capable communicators.

Handwriting will remain an important component of this toolkit for the foreseeable future, despite the astonishing advances made with generative AI.

Writing perfect cursive may become less important in the future. But students will still need to be able to write legibly and fluently in their education and in their broader lives.

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