

# The script of your life

*Ever wondered how exploring your handwriting could help you to make more effective life decisions?*

Not so many moons ago handwritten correspondence was the norm. Envelopes would land on the doormat, their faces offering immediate clues about the sender. A gloriously looped, flamboyant script signalled immediately it was from Auntie Kay, tight, neat and precise no-nonsense letters indicated much-loved cousin Margaret had got in touch, while a slant would bring news from old college friend Patrick. There were also the less-than-welcome missives from the bank or a lawyer, some recognisable, others strangers.

Today, few people put pen to paper. Even the most meaningful, carefully composed and heartfelt of messages are typed out on a keyboard or phone and sent off as an email, a comment, a text or a message. This makes it all the more strange on those rare occasions when you're required to pick up a pen and actually write – in a celebratory guest album at a friend's wedding or a remembrance book at a relative's funeral. Suddenly, your handwriting can feel unpractised, look strange and appear indecipherable. You might even think it's ugly and unfit for other people's eyes, especially at such pivotal moments in their lives.

Yet your script is part of you – some would say it *is* you. And just like features and abilities, it's there to be appreciated, not judged. This is where graphology comes in. The scientific study of decoding inky marks and symbols, it doesn't discriminate against the visual appearance of your script, but champions and treasures these genuine marks on paper. With this powerful tool, the appearance of your handwriting is irrelevant, the frequency or speed at which you scribble is neither here nor there and it doesn't matter that you no longer follow principles taught at school. Even more importantly, those awkward, scratchy penstrokes or the unpolished illegible scrawl could offer a far-reaching insight that makes a difference to your life. This is because graphology offers a way to uncover feelings and emotions, identify skills and explore core personality traits. In fact, exploring your natural written script could even enhance and influence other areas of your life, helping you to draw on information already to hand and use it to make decisions.

How? Well, when we write, there's a complex interaction going on between the eye, the brain and the hand. The pen

we hold is merely the conduit, a direct line to what's going on inside the head. In other words, handwriting reflects brain activity. What we're unconsciously doing is expressing our unique psychological profile, in symbols, on paper. And just as there are no two people in the world with the same DNA, there are no two people with exactly the same handwriting. That's why we recognise familiar scripts on an envelope or an annotated document in the workplace. We instantly know the sender or colleague from their handwriting.

Graphologists have long celebrated these quirks and markers that enable the writer's personality to step off the page and reveal itself. French abbot Jean-Hyppolyte Michon coined the term graphology in the 19th century from the Greek 'graph' meaning 'to write' and the suffix 'logos' meaning 'doctrine', 'science' or 'theory', but the practice is as old as the hills, with roots in Ancient China and evidence of its discussion in classical Greek. Many centuries later, the Italians brought it centre stage in the early 17th century, before the French laid the foundations of modern graphology thanks to 50 years of research by graphologist Jules Crépieux-Jamin. Its arrival in Britain in the 18th century is thought to have come via portrait and landscape artist Thomas Gainsborough, who reputedly kept his model's handwriting on the easel while painting their portraits. Since then, the discipline has been studied and tested by experts worldwide. Thanks to these efforts, subjectivity in handwriting analysis has been virtually eliminated and over the years, it's been used in commercial settings, as well as courts of justice, where graphologists have been called as expert witnesses.

For me, as someone who has spent many years studying the subject, its life-enhancing benefits and versatility cannot be overestimated. Ultimately handwriting analysis shines a light on the most ordinary everyday issues that resonate with us all – from self-discovery to dating and from job-hunting to understanding our ancestors. Imagine, for example, being able to help someone you've never met, who's in the throes of a midlife crisis, explore and confront their thoughts, feelings and anxieties so they can look at themselves objectively, see who they really are and identify any areas they'd like to change. I can







do this by looking at some handwritten notes on a partially tea-stained, creased and pre-lined A4 sheet of notepaper. Similarly, it's possible to pinpoint where someone's potential and motivation lies, so they can see more easily what drives them, and to recognise that a couple might be in for a roller-coaster relationship that requires compromise on both sides because they have different values and ways of dealing with things. The handwriting of a long-lost relative can even reveal the secrets of yesteryear to the family of today.

All this from the way a person forms their letters, spilling their DNA and leaving traces of psychological insights on the page. This is quite separate from any content – it's not what's included (or not) on a humdrum shopping list or what's said (or not) in a condolence card, it's the handwriting itself, and 'reading' the insight provided in the rhythm, pressure patterns, spacing and layout, and formation of letters. Every swirl and mark on the paper, irrespective of language, offers profound clues about the writer, telling their unique story. An analysis of this script can highlight or confirm positive attributes and also signpost areas for development. This might sound unbelievable, but it's true.

For example, imagine you're a chief executive trying to recruit a new regional manager. In front of you are two candidates with impressive qualifications and skills on paper but sharply contrasting styles in person. The first is monosyllabic and nervous, despite the fact their experience aligns perfectly with the job specification. The second is affable, easy-going and answers questions comfortably as you might expect from someone who on paper is fully conversant with their area. How do you choose?

I would look at their handwriting (as I have done previously). Then, without seeing, hearing, touching or talking to the person in question, I would be able to piece together from their handwriting and the interview scenario that the first candidate has the potential to perform brilliantly, focus on what they do best and work diligently, effectively and quietly in the background. The second, however, while excelling at client-facing roles, would be easily distracted, less inclined to

knuckle down and meet deadlines and more likely to get bored and quickly move on.

It's all in the script and that's why I can never resist the urge to analyse a piece of unique handwriting, and meet someone new on paper. Every time I hear the thud of a client's post landing on the doormat, I get excited at the prospect of discovering the truths inside each envelope in a non-invasive, unprejudiced and non-judgmental way. After all, there are no physical features to trip me up, no mannerisms or superficial props, no camouflage or fashion labels and no proxy selves. No clues beyond the requested information of which hand the writer uses (right or left), their gender (if they're happy to divulge) and age (so I'm aware of their maturity and evolution).

Of course, this leads into another area that often perplexes people. Handwriting rarely remains the same. Your script now will have changed from when you were a child. There are reasons for this. Rewind back to a time when you were taught to write – in any language and in any location in the world – and you were probably given a role-model template to copy and instructed the same way as your peers. Despite this, however, you all developed your own style of penmanship. Very few people's script looks alike, or stays exactly the same.

This is because handwriting is a living form of expression. It's organic and constantly changing, harmonising with the fluid mood swings and evolution of your core personality. Your writing is different now because you're not a robot, so everything that happens in your life affects you and has a direct impact on your natural script. This doesn't invalidate the analysis, but rather enhances it, because it's all those little deviations from the benchmark you once aspired to, and every variation that appears with the subsequent passing of the years, that collaborate to reveal your unique character – all there written on paper.

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ILLUSTRATIONS: SILVIA STECHER

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU WRITE

*Tracey reveals some of the telltale clues to analyse your personality with this easy-to-follow exercise*

*Take a clean sheet of paper. Write what comes naturally. Don't try to make it neat or beautiful. Don't worry about the content either – it could be the weekly shopping list, a set of reminders or a letter to yourself. Whatever is in your head, empty it. Write at least five sentences, without interruption.*

*Now see if you can identify with some of the movements listed below to give you an insight into your own character. Remember, for each handwritten movement (and there are more than 80) there will be many interpretations, so it's hard to be too prescriptive. For accuracy, you're looking for clusters of movements, rather than standalone features. Nevertheless, here are a handful of clues:*

**Slant.** The emotional barometer – are you compliant or defiant? The more the writing falls forwards, the more you want to express, cooperate and engage. Left slant or reclining letters uncover personal reserve. You may be family orientated, non-conformist and irreverent. Some people might find you difficult to get to know. A vertical slant is seriously cool, poised, objective and independent. Letters that flip-flop both ways are creative, but can reveal an unpredictable nature.

**Size.** This is your outer-shell appearance. Big writing denotes confidence and extraversion. Small letters indicate shyness, modesty, pragmatism and concentration skills.

**Pressure.** Feel the back of the paper for indentations. The heavier the pressure, the more intense and energised, involved and committed you are. Light pressure (you won't feel anything on the reverse) reflects a breezy, light-hearted attitude, mental energy, sensitivity and resilience. The lighter the pressure, the less tense and stressed you should feel.

**Connection.** Cursive or joined-up letters is a sign of sociability, logical thought processes, goal orientation and a desire to be uninterrupted. Disconnected letters indicate intuition, multitasking, a love of gathering information, creativity and humour.

**Form.** Rounded letters reflect gentle, personable, warm, nurturing qualities. Angles for tough, gutsy, smart, analytical, confrontational and ambitious attitudes.

**The zones.** These apply to sections of letters and reveal your inner character. All the vowels and letters c, m, n, r, s, v, w and x that sit on the baseline are in the 'middle zone' section and correspond with everything that relates to you personally. The larger the size, the more you strive for status, prestige and popularity in your emotional, social and working life.

The long downstrokes and loops of g, j, p, q and f fall into the 'lower zone', highlighting practicalities and earning power. The larger the size, the more importance you place on your creature comforts. The 'upper zone' (tall stems or extensions of the small letters – seen in b, d, f, h, k, l and t) reflects your desire for achievement, your imagination, ethics and cerebral needs. The biggest zone overall pinpoints your values and motivation.

**Baselines.** Synonymous with the ground you walk on, they indicate how you deal with difficulties in everyday life. Straight baselines reveal realistic, practical, commonsensical types. Bobbing baselines uncover a flexible, creative nature. Sentences that rise tell of an ambitious, upbeat, optimistic attitude, although overly rising is overcompensation and means you're putting on a brave face in adversity. Falling lines reveal exhaustion, pessimism or depression. Convex sentences (that rise and fall) mean you need a challenge so you don't get bored, and concave lines (that dip in the middle) reveal awakening enthusiasm.

**Personal pronoun, I.** This symbolises your self-worth, and your signature represents your image. Underlining and increasing the size of both enhances self-esteem.

*Ready to see the characteristics in your script? Turn the page for writing space*



## TRY IT OUT

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*Use this space to analyse your writing, using Tracey's interpretations from the previous page*

