

# Writing by Hand

Kate McBarron

March 2021



(© The Trustees of the British Museum)  
CLAY TABLET. FOUND: Ur, Iraq. CULTURE:  
Old Babylonian. DATE: 1750 B.C.  
LANGUAGE: Akkadian.

**Among the thousands** of Mesopotamian tablets containing both official and personal letters, one example stands out as the first recorded customer complaint and evidence of a business relationship gone very sour. Nearly 4,000 years ago, a man named Nanni expressed his extreme displeasure to the merchant Ea-nasir about a recent copper shipment:

*When you came, you said to me as follows: "I will give Gimil-Sin (when he comes) fine quality copper ingots." You left then but you did not do what you promised me. You put ingots that were not good before my messenger (Sit-Sin) and said: "If you want to take them, take them; if you do not want to take them, go away!" What do you take me for, that you treat somebody like me with such contempt... Take cognizance that (from now on) I will not accept here any copper from you that is not of fine quality. I shall (from now on) select and take the ingots individually in my own yard, and I shall exercise against you my right of rejection because you have treated me with contempt.*

**By 1200 BCE, an alphabet of 22 letters emerged with the Phoenician traders and evolved over time into the Roman letters. This syllabic system was efficient for commerce. It also remained a magical portal linking the inner voice with the outer world, bringing thoughts into form through the movement of the hand and stylus on the page.**

Barbara Bash – calligrapher, illustrator and teacher

Mindful Magazine, April 2016



## Practice: Put Pen to Paper

Sit down with a couple sheets of paper in front of you and a pen that you like to write with. Feel your body, your fingers holding the pen, your hand resting on the paper, your arm ready to guide, your feet on the floor or your back resting on the seat. At the top of the page write the words, “When I write by hand,” and then notice what shows up in your mind next. It could be a memory from childhood of learning to write—or an aching in your fingers in this moment—or something about the sound of the pen touching, pausing, moving along on the page. Describe whatever it is, following the associations until you come to a pause in your thoughts. Write the prompt again, “When I write by hand . . .” and head off, letting the words tumble forth, not concerned with making full sentences or perfect punctuation or spelling. Sit stable. Let your writing slow down. See how the forms change with this shift of speed. Notice how you’re feeling. Fill up two sheets of paper, or write for 10 minutes, then read what has come through. Where did you start? Where did you end up? You’re involved in an age-old act of bringing the loftiness of thought—what the ancient Chinese called “heaven”—down to the practicality of “earth.” Joining “heaven and earth” through human expression is the essence of art.

Barbara Bash – calligrapher, illustrator and teacher

1.

---

*Brief Report*

---

## **Effects of Mode of Writing on Emotional Narratives**

**Chris R. Brewin<sup>1,2</sup> and Hayley Lennard<sup>1</sup>**

1999

---

*The authors hypothesized that writing longhand about a stressful experience, compared to typing, arouses greater negative emotion. Eighty college students were randomly assigned to describe either a neutral or stressful topic by typing or writing longhand, in a 2 × 2 factorial design. Students describing the stressful topic, compared to the neutral topic, wrote for a longer period, used more words, and reported greater negative and less positive affect. Consistent with prediction, writing about a stressful experience longhand induced greater negative affect than typing, and led to more self-rated disclosure. These findings suggest a method whereby therapists can help patients control their levels of negative affect when producing a trauma narrative.*

---

**KEY WORDS:** trauma; disclosure; affect; narrative writing.

Writing about a stressful experience for 15–30 min a day over 3–5 days has been shown to have a number of beneficial effects on health, including reductions in physician visits, autonomic activity and distress, and improvement in immune function and work performance (Pennebaker, 1997). These effects have been demonstrated in numerous samples of ordinary individuals who may be encountering stressful events (e.g., Greenberg & Stone, 1992; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986;



2.

[Books](#) [Publish](#) [About](#) [News](#) [Contact](#)



[Author Panel Sign in](#)



*Open access peer-reviewed chapter*

# Digitizing Literacy: Reflections on the Haptics of Writing

By Anne Mangen and Jean-Luc Velay

Published: April 1st 2010

DOI: 10.5772/8710

[Home](#) > [Books](#) > [Advances in Haptics](#)

Source: <https://www.intechopen.com/books/advances-in-haptics/digitizing-literacy-reflections-on-the-haptics-of-writing>

### 3.

## Article Menu

Close ^

Access Options 🔒

Full Article

### Content List

Abstract

Study 1

Study 2

Supplemental Material

Figures & Tables

Article Metrics

## The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking

Pam A. Mueller, Daniel M. Oppenheimer

First Published April 23, 2014 | Research Article | [Find in PubMed](#) | [Check for updates](#)

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581>

[Article information](#) ▾

Altmetric 3938 🔒

A correction has been [Corrigendum: The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking](#) published:

### Abstract

Taking notes on laptops rather than in longhand is increasingly common. Many researchers have suggested that laptop note taking is less effective than longhand note taking for learning. Prior studies have primarily focused on students' capacity for multitasking and distraction when using laptops. The present research suggests that even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing. In three studies, we found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. We show that whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers' tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.

Source: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797614524581>

## 4. RESEARCH VIDEOS

### Evidence-Based, Developmentally Appropriate Writing Skills K to 5: Teaching the Orthographic Loop of Working Memory to Write Letters, Spell Words, and Express Ideas



#### About The Video

##### **Evidence-Based, Developmentally Appropriate Writing Skills K to 5: Teaching the Orthographic Loop of Working Memory to Write Letters, Spell Words, and Express Ideas**

Virginia Berninger, Ph.D., presents the results of assessment, instructional, brain, and genetics research on writing instruction and describes an approach to instruction and standards that takes into account individual differences in teaching and learning handwriting for spelling, a morphophonemic orthography, and composing.

[View](#) researchers' biographies.

[Download](#) slides from this presentation.

[View](#) research abstract.

Virginia Berninger presenting at 'Handwriting in the 21st Century?'  
An Educational Summit, Washington, D.C., January 23, 2012

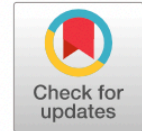
Source: <https://www.zaner-bloser.com/HW21Summit/research-berninger.html>



5.

**ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Front. Psychol., 28 July 2020 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01810>



# The Importance of Cursive Handwriting Over Typewriting for Learning in the Classroom: A High-Density EEG Study of 12-Year-Old Children and Young Adults

 [Eva Ose Askvik](#),  [F. R. \(Ruud\) van der Weel](#) and  [Audrey L. H. van der Meer](#)\*

Developmental Neuroscience Laboratory, Department of Psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

Source: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01810/full>



Write from the perspective of a writing implement – such as a pen, stylus or laptop. Where are you? Who do you belong to? What do you write about?

**OR**

Write in response to this quote:

*“It’s not just a question of writing a letter: it also involves drawing, acquiring a sense of harmony and balance, with rounded forms ... There is an element of dancing when we write, a melody in the message, which adds emotion to the text. After all that’s why emoticons were invented, to restore a little emotion to text messages.”*

Roland Jouvent, head of adult psychiatry at Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital in Paris

Source: <https://theguardian.com/science/2014/dec/16/cognitive-benefits-handwriting-decline-typing>

Thank you!