

festive ✦ ✦ hand lettering ✦ ✦

activity booklet



frankie x SPOTLIGHT

festive lettering to add a handmade touch

Below is some inspiration on how hand-lettering with a brush pen can add some handmade charm to your festive season! In the webinar, we'll be going through some lettering basics to apply on craft wrapping paper and/or paper cards. Fun!



brush lettering basics

casey's tips for getting started...

What is Brush Lettering? It's an expressive and dynamic style of hand-crafted type. The style itself was first popularised in 1950s America during the booming era of advertising and has resurged once again to be extremely popular today. It's characterised by brush-strokes that show a contrast in weight; creating a pleasing visual rhythm. It also doubles as a fun hand-drawn skill to impress your pals!

How does it work? It's essentially a repeating pattern! Each letter of the alphabet is built using a combination of fundamental strokes (shown on the right). Once the basic strokes are mastered in their own right, it's a matter of combining them in different ways to create each letter and then naturally, words.

Remember, brush lettering is characterised by the *contrasting weight* of strokes. The two most important factors in creating contrast are: the angle of the brush pen and the pressure applied as you draw. It's tricky to balance both of these skills at first, but it very quickly becomes muscle memory. There's no wrong or right stroke thickness or weight, as long as there's some visible contrast to ensure your words are nice and readable.

How do I use a brush pen? To achieve the proper look and feel of brush lettering, the pen needs to be held on an angle—think facing towards 10 on a clock (or towards 2 for lefties!). As you draw, alternate between using the side, and the tip of the nib to create a nice contrast in your strokes. Aim to keep the pen fairly flat and on the same angle to achieve consistency. The pressure you apply to the brush further effects the weight and contrast of the strokes. A primary school style 'tripod' grip is best (for comfort and control) but feel free to grip the pen in any way that works best for you.

My handwriting isn't great. Is that a problem? Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to have great handwriting to master brush lettering (or any kind of lettering for that matter). *Brush lettering is closer to the act of drawing than writing.* Each stroke is drawn individually; and there's a surprising amount of stop-start during the lettering process. Despite appearances, brush lettering is not done in a single, completely fluid motion (like script style handwriting is). Once you gain confidence in using the brush pen, you can add more fluidity to your letters by increasing the speed of your strokes—but even still—there's a small pause between each drawn stroke to change the pen angle ever so slightly.

How can I take it further? Once you get a grip on the basics, you can experiment further by changing up things like the letter proportions, amount of contrast, or the angle of your letters. With different treatments, you can quickly achieve countless variations. The possibilities are pretty endless!

please note!

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different strokes

These strokes make up the entire alphabet, huzzah! The arrows show the direction of your pen from start to finish to draw each one.



THE DOWN STROKE

The most important stroke there is! This stroke is the backbone of the majority of letters.



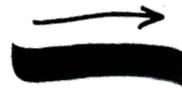
THE UP STROKE

This stroke connects all your letters and gives the appearance of a fluid script. It's also the lightest in weight.



THE CURVED STROKE

This stroke forms all your rounded shapes, such as 'a', 'o', 'c'. It's also drawn backwards for some letters.



THE HORIZONTAL STROKE

This stroke is commonly used as the 'crossbar' in letters across lower case and upper case. Eg: 't', 'H'



THE S STROKE

The body of the 's' is a tricky stroke to master and is different from the rest.



THE TAIL STROKE

The tail stroke appears in the descenders of 'g', 'j' and 'y'. It's much easier than it looks!

lettering exercises

Below is a series of exercises to practise the most used strokes in brush lettering. As basic as it seems, practising the down-strokes and up-strokes is the best way to quickly develop your skills. At first your lines might be wobbly and uneven—don't worry, this is how everyone begins!



EXERCISE ONE Practise down-strokes and up-strokes separately and repeatedly. Down-strokes should be drawn from top to bottom, using the side of the nib. Put some pressure on the pen whilst making the downward motion to get a thicker line. For the up-stroke, use the tip of the pen and draw from the bottom upwards, using less pressure to achieve a finer line.

THE AIM The main things to focus on here are:

- Getting used to the brush pen and how it works.
- Learning to create contrast with your strokes.
- Through ongoing, deliberate practise begin to develop consistency in line thickness, spacing and stroke weight.

EXERCISE TWO Start to combine the two basic strokes above to create a zigzag pattern. Go slowly at first while you get used to changing the pressure and angle of the brush pen. Remember, these are separate strokes and there should be a pause between finishing the down-stroke and beginning the up-stroke. *Lift your pen!* By starting the up-stroke from the bottom corner of your down-stroke, you can create a seamless join that tricks the eye to thinking this was done in one fluid motion.



minimum

EXERCISE THREE Next, it's time for your first word! 'Minimum' consists of only up and down strokes, so it's the perfect word to start with. Take your time, and dot your i's last. As you gain confidence, try adding a slight curve as you draw each stroke to make it easier to read.



ace

EXERCISE FOUR The curved stroke is the hardest of them all. Try it alone at first, as pictured above. Start at the top, and slowly complete your stroke downwards, with a slight curve. Imagine you're drawing half an oval and follow the perimeter of it to create a smooth, even shape. You can draw ovals in pencil first, then trace them with the pen if it helps.

EXERCISE FIVE Once you're comfortable with the curved stroke, practise adding your up-stroke to complete the oval shape. From here, you can try the ultimate challenge of multiple rounded shapes, like above. Spacing is especially hard when drawing several rounded letters together, so aim for the best shapes first and focus on spacing later. One thing at a time!



upper case brush alphabet



STROKE ORDER Each letter has accompanying arrows and numbers to assist you in recreating it. The numbers refer to the stroke order and the arrows hint at which direction your brush pen should draw to create it.

TRACE FRIENDLY If visual reference isn't enough to begin with, use this alphabet to trace! Print it off and place it below the practise paper and follow along with each letter for the best outcome.



lower case brush alphabet



ALTERNATES Many of the lower case letters have alternate versions to highlight a different way of forming the letter. Try both and see which works with your style best!

festive words for tracing

PRINT
ME!

Christmas
JOY

Season's
Greetings

'Tis the
Season

Merry Xmas

From my
family