

Mastering Joined Handwriting with Max and Zara

Learning objective: To practise consistent letter formation and develop fluent, joined-up handwriting, ensuring ascenders and descenders are correctly positioned.

Follow the guidance from Max and Zara to improve your handwriting. Remember to sit up straight, keep your paper steady, and focus on your letter joins.

Max the monkey says: 'When you write, imagine each letter is a maths puzzle that needs to fit perfectly on the line!' Zara the zebra adds: 'Look for the patterns in the shapes and let your pen dance across the page with a smooth, joined flow.'

Word bank: ascender · descender · flick · baseline · flow · consistent

1. Max says that letters like 'b', 'd', 'h', and 'k' are called 'ascenders' because they reach high above the middle line. Can you write three words that contain an ascender, ensuring the tall letters are clearly taller than the others? (2 marks)

2. Descenders are letters that drop below the baseline, like 'g', 'j', 'p', 'q', and 'y'. Write a sentence using at least two words that have a descender. (2 marks)

3. Zara loves patterns. Practise your joins by writing the following letters in a continuous string without lifting your pencil: a-i-r-e. Why is it important to keep your pencil on the paper during a join? (2 marks)

4. Look at the word 'monkey'. Identify which letters are ascenders and which letter is a descender. Write them in two separate lists. (2 marks)

5. Rewrite this sentence in your neatest joined handwriting: 'The quick fox jumps over the lazy dog.' Pay close attention to the size and spacing of your letters. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of Max the monkey using a giant fountain pen to write a poem on a long, scroll-like piece of paper, while Zara the zebra watches to check his handwriting patterns.



Extension challenge: Choose a favourite short poem or a paragraph from your reading book. Copy it out carefully, focusing on keeping your size and spacing consistent across the whole page. Can you spot any letters that are tricky to join?