

A COLLECTION of COPYBOOK STYLES

Diane Simpson

The following examples and extracts of text from Diane Simpson's book 'The Analysis of Handwriting' (1985) are reproduced here with her kind permission.

It is not possible to chronicle exactly the order in which writing styles came into popular use, as they tended to overlap and also to appear in a variety of forms. The following pages contain examples of writing trends which will serve as signposts to the norm of the day. For example, greatly elaborate writing in the 1980s, unless an art form, may be deemed to be the result of a certain affectation on behalf of the writer and certainly not a reflection of the way the writer in question was originally taught to write. Whereas seemingly extravagantly embellished writing from the eighteenth century could very well be the exact form learned at school.

When analysing any sample of writing it is advisable to check the likely 'Copybook' script. This is especially the case when the writing under scrutiny is from a different country or age from that of the analyst.....

[O]ne has only to compare present day British writing with that of fifty years ago or with today's American writing to realise the immense difference teaching methods can and do make to the appearance of writing. Therefore, a knowledge of the way a writer was actually taught to write provides an invaluable aid to accurate analysis. To this end I have designed the following chapter as a safety net for people who wish to analyse writing which was learned in a time or at a location different from their own. A simple check on the idiosyncrasies of the writing style learned by the writer will ensure that any deviations from the analyst's writing norm will not be erroneously classified as emanating from within the writer's personality.

The following collection of writing styles illustrates the major changes that have occurred in writing styles and, deliberately, is not totally comprehensive. Fads rose and fell within the writing world with the speed and regularity of the proverbial fiddler's elbow. To chart them all would be an extremely time-consuming task that would achieve little for graphology and would be practically impossible to complete. My collection can certainly be added to by the avid collector, but in itself provides a most adequate tool for any graphologist.

1400s - present day

I really must give pride of place to *italic*...if for no other reason than for sheer endurance under the strain of so many copyings! In the 1400s italic began to be used for the writing of papal briefs. It was soon used in royal circles and was widely adopted. The first book to teach italic was published in Rome in 1552 by the writing master Arrighi.

Italic in all its many versions has appeared and reappeared throughout the centuries, sometimes learned as a schoolroom norm and sometimes as a self-taught attempt to improve writing style. Beloved of calligraphers throughout the ages, italic is still taught, albeit at the calligrapher's elbow rather than in the schoolroom.

1400s - present day

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR
STUVWXYZ 1234567890

It should not be forgotten that the Copybook models were usually engraved, so writers' attempts with a goose quill made rather scrappy copies.

1500s

The writing masters held sway. The educated classes wrote, the masses did not.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuwxz r st st ff ff ß

Arrighi - Italian, 1520.

A abcdee'fggbiklmnopqrstuxyz

AABBCCDDDEE'FFGGHHJJLLMMNNOPQRRR
SSTTUVVXXYZ

Ludovico Vicento - Italian, 1523.

ABDEFFJJLLMOPTQRSTX
abcdffghhllmnopppqrstvuxyzz

Francisco Lucas - Spanish, 1577.

Aabcdefghijklmnopqrstuwxyz
ffffbbllppq ß st st

Andreas Brun - Spanish, 1500s.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuwxgzyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPQ

RSTUWVXYZ

Gothic - German, 1500s.

(There were subsequent revivals of Gothic lettering and it is still turned to when a quaint or medieval 'look' is required.)

1600s

A B C D E F G H I K L M
N O P Q R S T V W X Y Z

abcddeffghhhiykkklmnopppqqrrsststuv
vwxyz &

Martin Billingsley - British, 1618.

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P R S T V W X Y Z

abcdefghijklmnoprrsstuvwxyz

Richard Gething - British, 1642.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T V W X Y Z

A b c d e e f g h i k l m n o p q r s t v u w x y z

William Elder - British, 1691.

1700s

A B C D E F G H I J K L M M N N O P Q

R S T U V W X Y Z Z.

a b c d e f f f g h i j k k l m n o p p q r s f o t t u v w x y z z.

Joseph Champion - British, 1760s.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Z
a b c d e f f f g g h i j k k l m n o p q q r r r s t u v w x y z z

George Shelley - British, 1709.

A B C D E F G H I J
K L L M N O P P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z
A a m b m c m d m e m f m f f m g m h m i m j m k m l m l l m m m
n m o m p m p m q m r m s m s m f m t t m u m v m w m x m y m z m

George Bickham - British, 1743.
(This style is known as Copperplate or English round-hand.)

A A B C D E E F G H I J K L M N O P R S
T U V V W W X Y Z
a b c d e f f g h i j k l l m n o p q r s f s t u v n w x y z &

Thomas Weston - British, 1726.

1800s

0 1 B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S
T U V W X Y Z
u v t d n f o j i j k l m n u v p o q r s t u v w x y z

Schreibschrift (the name of the script, not the inventor!) – German.

A B C D E F G H I L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z & & &

Thomas E. Hill - USA, 1870s.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Vere Foster - British, 1898.

This style heralded the introduction of the 'Civil Service' hand.

It should be noted that a cheap metal nib became available for the first time in 1830; hitherto the quill was the most commonplace writing implement.

In the mid eighteenth century 'The Ladies' Hand' was introduced, presumably because it was thought that the female, being a weak and genteel creature, was unable to meet the demands of the ordinary writing of the day. The Ladies' Hand was small, rather spiky and contained no difference between thick and thins. The upperarm was not employed in the writing movement, which resulted in a rather 'prissy' hand. Extremely small writing came into vogue and also Cross Writing (filling the page horizontally and then beginning all over again by turning the page a quarter turn and writing across the already written lines creating a 'lattice' pattern). Fortunately the Victorian 'Ladies' Hand' passed away along with the frilled table legs, and only remains in our memories in the form of the oft held and *erroneous* conviction that the sex of writers can be determined by their writing.

1900s

Today's trends are towards simplicity, although glimpses of the past can still be traced in some of the current scripts.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Marion Richardson - British. Introduced in 1935, this style was intended to simplify the writing process and started a trend which resulted in:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R
S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Print-script - British, 1980s.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U
W V X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t
u v w x y z

Dutch, 1980s.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p r s t u v w x y z

German, 1980s.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Palmer script - USA, 1980s.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

French, 1980s.

This is sometimes taught with a slight slant to the right.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V
W X Y Z ¿ ? !
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Spanish, pre-1970.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V
W X Y Z ¿ ? !
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v x y z

Spanish, 1980s. Take note of the inverted question and exclamation marks which are placed *before* the sentence.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V Z Ch Gm Gl Sc Gh Hb
a b c d e f g i l m n o p q r s t u v z h

Italian, 1980s.

Aa Ъ ѡ Bbb Тг Dg Ee Eë Mmх Zz Uu Ўў
Kk Ll Mm Hh Oo Пп Pp Cc Tt m Yy Pp
Xx Уу Чч Uu Ууу ь ы ь Ээ Юю Яя

Russian, 1980s. This is a somewhat different alphabet, comprising 34 letters, but it is the way that Russian children are taught to write. The rules of analysis can be applied in the usual way.