

# Handwriting Assessment

## Instructions

This assessment can be used when an in-depth look at the components of handwriting is required. It is intended to be a quick assessment of typical performance of students, first grade through high school. Following a review of student records (psychoeducational and/or academic) and work samples, observe the student during a typical activity that is appropriate for his/her age and/or developmental level. For young students appropriate activities may include coloring, tracing, drawing in paths, dot-to-dot, pictures, etc. (Asher, 2006; Beery, Buktenica, & Beery, 2006; Graham, 2009; Olsen, 2005).

Administering the assessment:

- Observe the student during a handwriting activity within the classroom, scoring as many items as possible.
- Indicate whether the student's performance is functional or nonfunctional.
- Use the Comments section to record the difficulties noted in the student's performance. Those items not observed within the classroom will be assessed in an individual testing environment.
- Record any significant differences in performance or behavior between the two environments (classroom and individual testing session).

## Definitions:

**Functional performance:** The student's performance is considered functional when it is appropriate for his/her developmental age, physical limitations, or cognitive ability.

**Nonfunctional performance:** The student's performance is considered nonfunctional when it is below his/her developmental age, physical limitations, or cognitive ability.

## Examples:

- A sixth grade student whose developmental level is at third grade would be expected to complete third grade work. If this student completed work at a first grade level, his/her performance would be scored as nonfunctional.
- The performance of a student with decreased motor control and/or endurance would be considered functional if he/she completed a majority of his/her modified assignments. This student's performance would be nonfunctional if so much effort went into the actual writing that he/she was unable to complete assignments per the teacher's requirements.
- A student with learning disabilities with an average IQ would be expected to perform at or close to his/her chronological age. However, this student's performance would be nonfunctional if the majority of the work he/she completed was below grade level.

Summarize each component by indicating whether the student's performance is functional or non-functional in that area.

- Note how the student's handwriting skills are interfering with the ability to access the learning environment and how occupational therapy services can address the difficulties.
- Document any suggestions provided to the student's teacher(s) and/or parent or guardian.

## Handwriting Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ ESE Services: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check to indicate whether the student’s performance is functional or non-functional:**

FUNCTIONAL	POSTURAL COMPONENTS	NON-FUNCTIONAL	COMMENTS
	Chair size appropriate (feet fully supported and hips at back of chair)		
	Desk height/writing surface distance (1–2” above bent elbow)		
	Upright sitting posture		
	Posture maintained for duration of activity		
	Posture maintained with increased activity demands		
	Posture adjusted during activity		

**Component summary:**  **Functional**  **Nonfunctional**

FUNCTIONAL	FINE MOTOR COMPONENTS	NON-FUNCTIONAL	COMMENTS
	Demonstrates a skilled hand		
	Stabilizes paper with nondominant hand		
	Positions the writing instrument in preparation for drawing, coloring, or writing		
	Demonstrates functional pencil grasp (dynamic grasp of any style)		
	Stabilizes side of hand, wrist, and forearm on writing surface		
	Maintains grasp with adequate strength for duration of the activity		
	Maintains functional grasp with increased activity demands		
	Turns pencil around to erase without assistance from the other hand or another surface		
	Demonstrates adequate control of the writing instrument (dot-to-dot activities, mazes/pathways)		
	Moves an object from palm to fingers		

**Component summary:**  **Functional**  **Nonfunctional**

FUNCTIONAL	VISUAL-PERCEPTUAL COMPONENTS	NON-FUNCTIONAL	COMMENTS
	Recognizes strokes (l, —, O, +, /, \, X, ) and forms (□, ◇)		
	Recognizes numbers		
	Recognizes letters		
	Stays within the boundaries of the paper for activity		
	Stays within the boundaries of the coloring/drawing area or writing line for activity		
	Uses uniform sizing of shapes, numbers, letters, or words		
	Uses uniform spacing between shapes, numbers, letters, or words		
	Orients and places written information per teacher requirements		
	Maintains place when copying		
	Copies entire word or multiple words without frequent glancing at model		
	Positions ascenders properly above the writing line		
	Positions descenders properly below the writing line		
	Uses capital and lower case letters appropriately (not secondary to academic level)		
	Aligns math work adequately		

Component summary:  Functional

Nonfunctional

FUNCTIONAL	SENSORY PROCESSING COMPONENTS	NON-FUNCTIONAL	COMMENTS
	Focuses on task		
	Completes task (independently or with minimal cuing)		
	Completes task within the allotted time		
	Utilizes appropriate crayon, pencil, or eraser pressure		
	Draws shapes, numbers, letters, or words with vision		
	Draws shapes, numbers, letters, or words with vision and then with vision occluded		
	Knows right from left and top from bottom		

Component summary:  Functional

Nonfunctional

FUNCTIONAL	VISUAL MOTOR COMPONENTS	NON-FUNCTIONAL	COMMENTS
	Tracks/scans smoothly horizontally and vertically		
	Imitates basic strokes/forms		
	Draws recognizable pictures		
	Copies basic strokes/forms, numbers, letters or words from near point		
	Copies basic strokes/forms, numbers, letters or words from far point		
	Writes numbers or letters sequentially from memory		
	Writes numbers or letters upon request (sequentially or randomly)		
	Draws/writes without reversing direction or order		
	Draws or writes smoothly (without frequent stops and starts within a form, number, letter, or word)		
	Demonstrates legibility representative of speed of performance		
	Demonstrates adequate signature		

Component summary:  Functional

Nonfunctional

Summarize how the student's handwriting skills are interfering with his/her ability to access the learning environment. List any suggestions provided to teacher(s) and/or parent/guardian:

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Therapist's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_