

## Handwriting Speed Assessment

Name: .....

Male / Female (please circle)

Date of birth: .....

Age today: .....

Form: .....

School Year: .....

The results of this exercise will help to decide whether you need help with the presentation of work in exams.

For 2 minutes think about a chosen subject such as a holiday, sport, pet, favourite person or something you like or hate.

You will have 20 minutes to write about your chosen subject. Please use all the time, just as you would in an exam.

You can use this paper for making any notes, plans or spidergrams.

Thank you for your co-operation.

## **Group and Individual Assessment of Handwriting Speed**

### ***Instructions for Administration and Scoring***

Give out the introductory information sheet and two lined A4 sheets (with margins) to each student.

Make sure they all have a pen.

No rubbers are allowed, mistakes should be crossed through with one line only.

Read the instructions on the paper to the students, giving them time to choose their topic. (Suggestions may be needed)

Tell them they may write notes, plans, make spidergrams during the 2 minutes, about their chosen topic on their instruction sheet.

When they are all quiet, start the 2 minutes thinking/planning time.

When the 2 minutes are over, say clearly,  
"20 minutes writing time beings NOW."

**After 15 minutes please tell the students they have 5 minutes left.**

Make sure everyone stops writing as soon as the time is up.

Each sheet must have the student's name on and must be securely clipped together.

Counting words is very time-consuming so it would be sensible to instruct the students in a large group.

## ***Directions for Counting***

Include all crossed out words.

Record the total words in each line at the end of the line.

Initials acting as a name eg PC or GCSE count as whole words, but if there are full stops between, count as separate words.

Similarly for numbers, without punctuation count as one word, otherwise as separate words.

A dash joining two words or parts of words makes them a single word.

If two or more letters are crossed out, then count them as one word.

Abbreviated forms of 'and' all count as one word.

Two words written as one must count as one word eg *alot*.

Calculators may be required to add numbers to get total words for each section.

It may be wise to double check some scripts as counting can be difficult, or just the last straw!

## **HANDWRITING SPEED ASSESSMENT UPDATE September 2001: Testing Handwriting Speed**

From 1999 many members of Patoss have contributed timings of handwriting speed to given criteria for examination purposes. I am delighted to be able to publish the results from 2,701 students aged 11 – 16 years.

### **Exam Success depends upon:**

#### **Thorough subject knowledge and understanding.**

This depends on the tuition and revision methods and revolves around study skills.

#### **The ability to read and interpret the questions correctly in a limited time.**

This second component is the complex skill of reading and included accuracy, comprehension and rate.

#### **Lastly there is the composition and execution of the written evidence to prove that the candidate has subject knowledge and understanding.**

Slow handwriting speed is a major factor, which prevents many students achieving the success they deserve.

### **Slow Handwriting may be due to:**

- Delays in information processing
- Problems with spelling
- Motor co-ordination difficulties
- Labour intensive style, which results from lack of tuition in handwriting skills.

Students must first be identified, efforts made to improve their speed, raise their self-esteem and provide equal opportunity for achieving success. Ideally all students should be tested annually and this would provide evidence to support special arrangements in all written exams. It would also bring them to the attention of staff.

I tested almost 900 pupils in my own school, using the test that is published in Backhouse, G. (2000) and this formed the basis of my MA dissertation in 2000. A DfES Best Practice Scholarship has allowed me to continue to add data from other schools and I have included the results:

	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
<b>Average HW Speed – words per minute</b>	13.9	14.6	15.7	16.3	16.9
<b>25% slower (extra time)</b>	10.4	10.9	11.8	12.2	12.7
<b>40% slower (amanuensis)</b>	8.3	8.8	9.4	9.8	10.1

The test and the results are accepted as evidence to support applications for any students with slow handwriting speeds to be given adequate time to show subject knowledge. If only schools could be persuaded to regard this also as a problem in the classroom, affecting behaviour and learning, they will see that pupils who cannot keep up with writing in class might find ways to avoid feelings of failure by misbehaving.

My sincere thanks to everyone who supported me in the successful outcome of this research. I hope you will find it useful.

**Penny Allcock**

Backhouse, G. (2000) Providing for Candidates with Special Assessment Needs during GCE [A-level], VCE, GCSE & GNVQ A Practical Guide ISBN 9539315 0 1