

# HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

## QUICK PEEK

*In this lesson, students become graphologists as they work in groups to study and analyze handwriting.*

**SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS:** 3–6

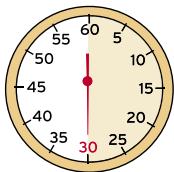
### ILLINOIS STATE LEARNING GOALS

**SCIENCE**  
11.A, 13.A

**LANGUAGE ARTS**  
4.A

### OBJECTIVES

- ★ Students will understand the process of handwriting analysis.
- ★ Students will demonstrate effective communication skills while working in a group.



**PACE YOURSELF:**  
30 MINUTES



## PREPARE YOURSELF

Make student copies of the Blank Check.



## MATERIALS

### Per Student:

- One colored pen (all students must have the same color)
- Copy of the Blank Check
- One sheet of lined paper



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

Graphology is the study and analysis of handwriting.

Investigators use handwriting analysis techniques to identify the author of a document and to determine forgery or authenticity. Handwriting analysis is not done by point by point comparison as in fingerprint or footprint comparison because even the same person writing their name 20 times may not make each one exactly alike. Instead, a document examiner will focus on the general features and forms of letters that may be valuable in individualization. When forgers attempt to duplicate unfamiliar writing they often include characteristic defects such as hesitations, unnatural pen lifts and tremor.

Document examination depends on the quality of the “known” writing called exemplars. Exemplars can be collected from previous writing or they can be requested of the suspects.



## WARM UP!

Ask students if they can think of examples of documents or signatures that might be forged. What do they think a forger does to make their signature look similar to the original?

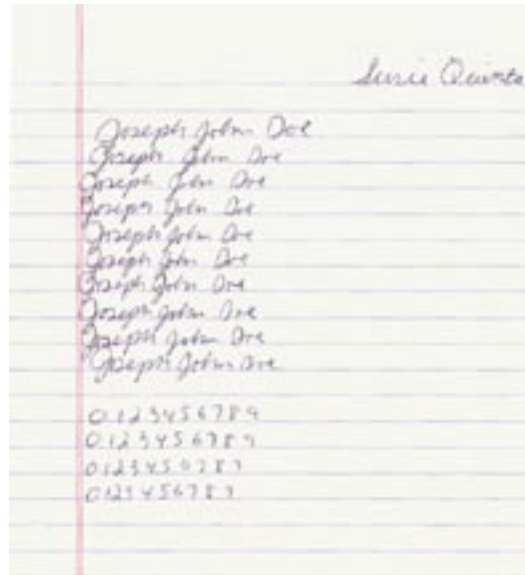


## THE “HOW TO”

1. Students will prepare the exemplar document from the teacher’s verbal directions. (Make sure all students use the same color pen for this activity.) Each student should write the name “Joseph John Doe” ten times in cursive on a lined sheet of paper. Underneath this they should write the numbers zero through nine four times in a row. Students should write their name on the top of that page.

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## SAMPLE EXEMPLAR



In the medical field, graphology can be used as an aid in diagnosis and tracking of diseases of the brain and nervous system.

2. Students create the forged document using copies of the prepared check. On the check they should write pay to the order of “Joseph John Doe.” The amount should be made out for \$1,400.00. The check should be signed “Joseph John Doe” and also endorsed on the back “Joseph John Doe” with the account number 202222842 written below the endorsement. Each student should make up a code and write it in the lower left portion of the back of the check. They will need to remember their codes. Then the students should turn the forged check into the teacher.
3. Students will match forged checks to exemplars. Each student will be handed another student’s forged check and will try to determine a match with the forged documents and the exemplars. Students will work in small groups of two to four people to try to match the “forged” check to the exemplars they are given. (Make sure you give each group the matching forged checks and exemplars from another group).
4. Students will share their results. Students will share who they have determined forged each check and why. Did they notice characteristic loops, indentations or pen lifts? It is fun to keep score of how many the class gets “right.” You will be surprised at how accurate these student examiners can be!



## WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

Forging is actually more difficult than it seems! Forgery is a two-step process. The forger must discard his/her own handwriting habits while at the same time assuming someone else's unfamiliar writing characteristics. The complicated mental and physical task is rarely successful.



## DID THEY GET IT?

Create a rubric for students to grade themselves on how successful they were in meeting the objectives of the lesson.

### SUGGESTED RUBRIC:

Please Rate Yourself on a Scale of 1–5

**1** = Could have done better    **2** = I did okay    **3** = I did pretty good  
**4** = I did great    **5** = Couldn't have been better!

- A.** I followed all of my teacher's directions the first time. \_\_\_\_\_
- B.** I was respectful and supportive of my group members. \_\_\_\_\_
- C.** I stayed on task during the whole lesson. \_\_\_\_\_

**POSTLESSON QUESTIONS** (*can be answered in a whole group discussion or individually*):

- 1.** When might handwriting analysis be useful?
- 2.** What is one thing that you compared between signatures?
- 3.** What is one way you could tell if a document had been forged or is authentic?



## ET CETERA

- 1.** Some people believe that handwriting can reveal clues about a person's personality or character. Have students become graphologists and analyze their own handwriting! Give students an unlined sheet of paper and have them write their first and last name. Next, have them look at the baseline, or the imaginary line under what they just wrote. A steady, straight line of text denotes a calm and confident person who feels very secure in their life. If their signature fluctuates up and downhill, this wavy baseline expresses a personality that is possibly moody and temperamental. An upward baseline is a sign of cheerfulness and hope for the future.
- 2.** Look for a characteristic of each signature (loop, pen lift, slant, etc.) and construct a bar graph as a class. It can be interesting to see how many students have similar handwriting!
- 3.** If you have access to computers and mice, have students go to this site where they can analyze their writing using the mouse on their computer.  
**<http://handwriting.feedbucket.com>**

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7676

Joseph John Doe  
20222842

Joseph John Doe      Date 10/13/06      2842

Pay to the order of Joseph John Doe      \$ 1,400.00

One thousand four hundred      Dollars

ONE BANK USA

for 20222842      Joseph John Doe

0122202220222022202220214      2842

Joseph John Doe      2842

Pay to the order of \_\_\_\_\_      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_      Dollars

ONE BANK USA

for \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

0122202220222022202220214      2842

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