

The background of the entire image is a dramatic sunset or sunrise scene. The sky is a mix of deep blue, orange, and yellow, with large, billowing clouds. Hundreds of birds, likely seagulls or terns, are captured in various stages of flight across the sky, creating a sense of movement and scale. In the lower-left foreground, the dark silhouette of an elephant is visible, standing and facing right. The elephant's trunk is slightly raised. The overall composition is visually rich and evokes a sense of nature and wonder.

Alphabet Animal Friends

Letter Companions

Susan Govorko

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Compilation, layout and editing by Susan Govorko

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Vimala Rodgers



Letters live in families just like people, and, just like people, they live together, play together and work together. Each letter has an animal friend that expresses the personality of that particular letter. The animal friends in this book appear in order by family.

Alphabet Families:

Communication

a o d g q p

Learning and Evaluating

y u w v

Honoring and Expressing

m n h

Insight

l e i j

Creativity

f r s

Status

t k b

Trust and Inner Authority

c x

Grandfather Zed

z

Ligatures

Th ch cl æ œ st sh se si be bi
pe pi ge gi gh wi ph za ze er
Di ba em oi zi

"Animals are the bridge between us and the beauty of all that is natural. They show us what's missing in our lives, and how to love ourselves more completely and unconditionally. They connect us back to who we are, and to the purpose of why we're here."

Trisha McCagh

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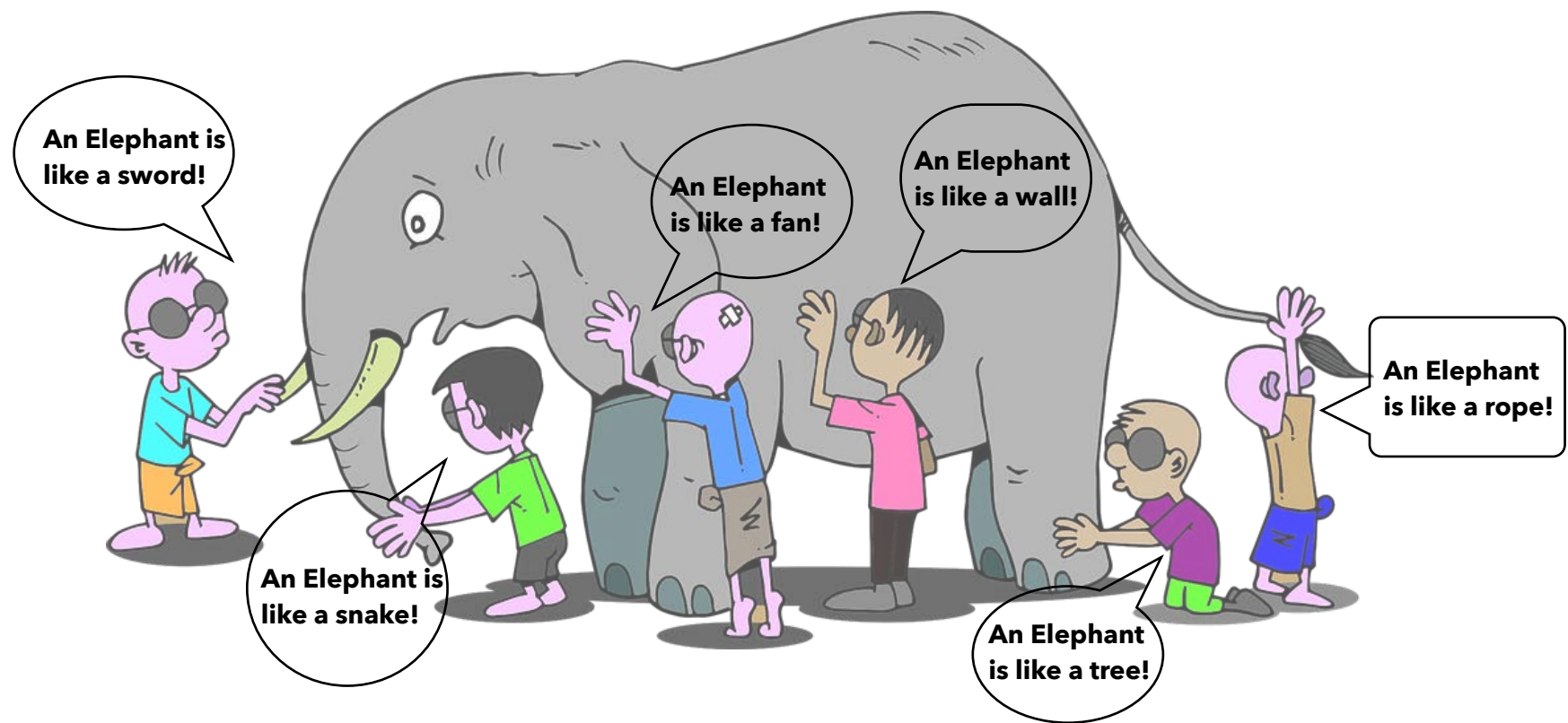
What is an Alphabet Animal Friend?

Our Alphabet has a rich history of symbolism. Each letter reflects certain qualities fundamental to our lives. We can use symbols to help us better understand these different aspects of a letter. One way to do this is to think about an animal species that is akin to the personality of each letter. Much as we associate people we know with what they do in their life or how they act or speak, each letter also has symbolic associations. Delicious snacks may come to mind when we think about the grandfather who is a gourmet chef; or when we see flowering plants, we think of our aunt who loves her garden; or our neighbor who brings an automatic smile because of her cheerful greetings whenever she sees us.

Just like people, every animal has its own unique personality, yet animals of the same species tend to have many traits in common. Birds sing, horses trot, eagles soar. Some animals are quick and constantly alert, others prefer to plod and nap. Some animals live alone while others prefer to be a part of a large group. It can be fun to associate an animal species with the intrinsic qualities of a letter, and we can personalize that animal as a 'friend' to that particular letter.

So this is a book about some deeper insights into the letters of our Alphabet. By exploring an 'animal friend' for each of the letters, we can glimpse some deeper meaning from them. It always comes back to how we honor each letter by how we write. We can begin to understand how our writing shapes our thinking and how our thinking shapes our attitudes and how our attitudes shape our life experiences and choices. For a more definitive approach for writing the Vimala Alphabet™ letters, I refer you to the first book, *Alphabet, pen and ink – the Letters of our Alphabet and how we write and think!*

In this book, each Animal Friend is pictured with an amusing sentence that includes words that have the letter associated with it. Try writing them or make up your own!



The Blind Men and the Elephant

An Elephant is so much more than the sum of her parts!

The Elephant and our Alphabet

Historically cultures around the world have created myths and traditions using animals as symbols in a tangible way for teaching moral principles. In ancient Greece and Rome, animals were associated with certain gods and goddesses as a sign of their protection or service. In the distant past, Egyptian culture considered animals sacred. Some of their gods and goddesses were actually depicted as half-human, half-animal.

In Eastern traditions, martial artists apply techniques and skills learned from observing certain animals. Tai chi, Taekwondo, judo, karate, and kendo all use styles that have been developed from studying the behavioral patterns of these animals. Mimicry and practicing the essential qualities of an animal build endurance, physical strength, and mental acuity.

In the Native American tradition, animals are honored for their unique attributes. This is often referred to as 'medicine,' not in the sense that we take medicine prescribed by our doctors, but in the sense of bringing their awareness into our lives. Totems are symbols of animals that are honored for their unique abilities and attributed certain spiritual significance such as courage, strength, power, protection, intelligence, resourcefulness, or insightfulness.

In our Alphabet tradition, the Elephant represents the Medicine Animal of the whole Alphabet. She is made up of so many very different parts that all blend together beautifully. Ears for fanning, a snake-like trunk for breathing and taking up water to drink or shower, a rope-like tail, round feet that carry her on tip toes. Just like the many letters that make up our Alphabet, the elephant is an amazing blend of mystery, familiarity, and practicality. She carries an ancient wisdom.



The Elephant

Mysterious and ancient, elephants are the largest land animals on Earth. There is an old adage that elephants have very long memories, and indeed it is true. The Matriarch is a gentle leader who relies on remembering where to go to find food and water through the seasons.



Elephant families consist mostly of females with the eldest, the Matriarch, being the leader of the herd. Male offspring stay within this family group until they mature, anywhere between ten and twenty years. Adult males tend to live alone though they may come together to form small groups, however these groups are not as close-knit as the Matriarchy and may vary in members over time or disband altogether.

Elephants reveal their emotions in playfulness, nurturing and in grief over loss. They are supportive and affectionate with one another, and especially protective of their young.

Elephants actually walk on tip toe! And one of the ways they communicate and navigate is through their keen sensitivity for ground vibrations they can feel with their feet. The sound of their trumpeting or rolling rumbles can travel underground and even stomping their feet reverberates tremors that humans cannot hear. They have a keen sense of hearing with their ears as well and may pick up oncoming storms over a hundred miles away.

Zoos no longer keep elephants on solitary exhibit; you will likely never see an elephant at a zoo anymore. Elephants live in herds; they need to belong together. The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee provides refuge for captive elephants to live out their lives happily and peaceably together. Elephants by nature are placid, yet wild; they belong to the Earth; they belong to each other; they teach us about the deep inner wisdom of belonging, of harmony, congruence, and mindfulness.



Amazing dolphins appear at appealing aquatic areas!

Dolphins are air breathing animals who make their home in the sea. Playful and free, dolphins have been known to help stranded sailors and to even protect them from sharks. They have a high pitched sonar system of communication, but their playful antics also speak volumes!

Aa

A is the letter of our natural self.

It's all about how comfortable we feel just being ourselves! It's communication with a smile; how we express ourselves through our body language.

The uppercase *A* begins with a Lincoln foot. When you see Abraham Lincoln's handwriting, you will see this little introductory garland. It rises from the baseline to the top of the upper zone of our ideas and dreams, then comes straight down to the baseline with a firm "I am" stroke. It's important not to lift the pen or pencil as you swing back and forward to form the persistence tie.

The lowercase *a* is a little oval with a tail. It's important to make this letter without lifting the pen or pencil, and to close the oval at the top of the middle zone. Also keep the oval clean – no inner loops or marks! Retrace the oval's upstroke down to the baseline and finish with a gentle garland to the right.

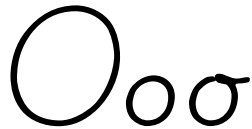
In mythology, the Hawk served
as the messenger to the gods.

Red-tail Hawk



Overhead, hawk overlooks our overflowing brook for food.

Hawks fly high, often circling, winging O's in the sky above. Ever watchful, they have a keen awareness for even the slightest movement below. Hawk is the skillful watcher who teaches us to observe attentively and speak plainly. The Hawk has served as a messenger and a bringer of truth in many traditions.



O is the letter of oral communication. It's our speaking self.

The uppercase O is very round with no inner loops or marks inside its circle. After all, it's not polite to talk with your mouth full! Beginning at the top of the upper zone, draw the letter clockwise, or moving in a rightward circle, without lifting your pen or pencil. It's important to close the circle at the top of the upper zone.

The lowercase letter can be written two ways: o or σ.

The stand alone lowercase is written just like the uppercase, clockwise, in one stroke, and with no inner loops. Lowercase fills the middle zone only. Again, without lifting the pen or pencil, close the circle at the top of the middle zone, and keep it clean with no inner loops!

The bridge stroke form can be drawn either clockwise or counterclockwise, closing at the top, then adding the little bridge stroke off to the right. This little horizontal stroke reaches out to connect, much like our words reach out to communicate. Remember as you bridge to the right, keep it clean with no inner loops!



Dogs daydream daily of devouring delectable delicious dinners!

Dogs have been named “man’s best friend.” So loyal and friendly, they give their all to their caretakers. Often they are sensitive to the moods and motives of people, and will draw boundaries to guard and protect their home.

Dd

D is the letter of sensitivity.

Careful **NOT** to make a loop in your *d*-stem:
Simply retrace:

Lowercase *d* begins as a lowercase *a*, then reaches up to the top of the upper zone like a periscope rising above the landscape to see how others might be viewing us; our thinking becomes sensitized to how we might be perceived by others. What impression do we make ‘out there’ in the world? How comfortable does that feel?

The uppercase *D* begins with an “I am” stroke, then lifting the pen or pencil, a broad curve is drawn from the top of the upper zone to the baseline, looping behind the “I am” stroke, then moving forward to finish to the right.

The lowercase *d*, with its periscope stem, is the first lowercase letter to reach up into the upper zone where our thoughts live. It’s important that the *d*-stem be retraced, no loops. Begin at the top of the middle zone to make an oval, then continue up to the top of the upper zone, and, without lifting your pen or pencil, pivot to draw a straight vertical line back down to the baseline and finish with a gentle garland forward to the right. As with all the communication letters, the oval needs to be clear and clean with no inner loops or lines.





Great elk herds are gathering on grassy green grounds!



Elk have amazing stamina. Native Americans named them Wapati, or 'light-colored deer,' and consider them to be noble and powerful. Elk are the noisiest of the deer family. Quite vocal, they bark, squeal and grunt. Males make a low bellowing sound called a bugle. Elk teach us to persevere through difficulty without complaint.

A large, handwritten uppercase 'G' and a lowercase 'g' in a cursive, calligraphic style. The 'G' is formed with a single continuous line that starts with a small curve, goes forward, and then loops back to the baseline. The 'g' is formed with a similar starting curve, but it dips down into the lower zone, forming a loop that closes at the baseline.

G is the letter of gratitude

There is no better way to attain a sense of well-being than by appreciating the people and the many good things that fill our lives. We learn how to play many roles in life, being a child, a student, a team player. With each role, we communicate in a different way, and we learn about different aspects of ourselves.

The uppercase  begins as a , then adds a separate softly drawn curve to the baseline. It's important these two lines do not touch, the open forward facing arc and the little curved line that resembles a cupped hand gently giving pats of comfort and appreciation.

The figure eight (8) lowercase  also begins as a , then dips down into the lower zone, forming a loop that closes at the baseline. It's important to keep the beginning c-shape open as you finish forward to the right.



Equestrians equip equines with quality tack, quieting their qualms.

The horse, more than any other animal, has contributed to people's way of life. Horses plowed fields to grow crops. They pulled wagons and buggies to carry goods and people. Horses made travel faster and easier. Mailing letters was first made commonplace by the Pony Express. Just like dogs, horses come in different breeds, colors, and sizes, yet all horses are beautiful and noble.

A large, elegant handwritten cursive letter 'Q' followed by a lowercase 'q'. The 'Q' has a long, flowing tail that curves back towards the letter. The 'q' has a distinct oval head and a small loop at the bottom, known as a persistence tie.

Q is the letter of self in service to others.

Q is the letter of the humanitarian. My teacher calls it the 'Mother Teresa Letter.' Notice how the lowercase's lower zone loop faces forward. It has a rightward lower loop and a persistence tie at the baseline.

The uppercase letter Q is a beautiful letter O with a tail! The tail needs to be soft and flowing. Keep it horizontal. Play with it.

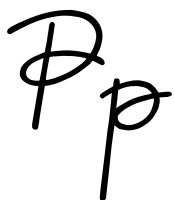
The lowercase letter begins as a lowercase a, but instead of finishing at the baseline, it descends straight down into the lower zone of relationships and movement. Looping to the right, it moves back up to the baseline, crosses back over the descending line and makes a little loop under the oval. Think of it as a little pillow under the q's oval head. This loop is the persistence tie that says, "Nothing can stop me!" Once made, the letter finishes to the right with a gentle up stroke.

As with all the communication letters, it's important to keep the Q circle and q oval clean and free of any inner loops or marks.



Porcupines pack spines for protection and prefer to plod!

Porcupine means “thorn pig” in Latin. Actually they are a peaceful rodent with sharp needle like quills that discourage predators. They can’t throw their quills, but they will come off easily if touched. Porcupines eat tree bark, leaves, and flower blossoms. They especially enjoy water lilies. Curious in nature, they are also superb climbers, sometimes clambering fifty or more feet above the ground.

The image shows the uppercase letter 'P' and the lowercase letter 'p' written in a cursive script. The 'P' is tall, starting with a vertical stroke and a large loop at the top. The 'p' is smaller, starting with a vertical descender and a loop at the bottom.

P is the letter of self-appreciation.

If it were rotated 180-degrees,
the lowercase *p* would resemble
the lower-case letter *d*: *p* *d*

Without a healthy sense of self worth and care for oneself, it isn’t possible to really respect and love others. The letter *P* reflects the letter of sensitivity, *D*. While the *d* is about our outer directed feelings, how we feel about other people; the *p* is about our inner directed feelings, our feelings about ourself.

The uppercase *P* begins as an “I am” stroke, then reflects the uppercase letter *D* in it’s upper zone. First draw a firm “I am” stroke, then, lift the pen or pencil and draw a broad curve from the top of the upper zone to the top of the middle zone, looping behind the “I am” stroke, then moving forward to finish right.

The lowercase *p* is a smaller replica of the uppercase. First draw a firm descender straight from the top of the middle zone down into the lower zone, then lift the pen or pencil and draw an arc that begins at the top of the descender and curve it to the baseline, touching the descender, then loop back through the arc, finishing forward, to the right.



Peahens sashay their fancy feathers of eye-like patterned beauty.

Beautiful and colorful, the Peacock spreads his tail feathers unabashedly in a magnificent display. A white variety has evolved in the safety of captivity. They are not albino, rather they are true white feathered birds with lovely blue eyes. Peahens protect their peachicks, covering them with their wings until they are old enough to wing their way into the safety of trees. The White Peahen personifies the Letter *Yy*. Her white coloring symbolizes her purity of intent. Peafowl feathers have amazing eye-like patterns. Groups are called a muster, sometimes a party!

Yy

Y is the letter of honoring our own unique talents and gifts.

So many times a 'thank you' is offered to someone, and they reply, "It was nothing." Neither gift or giver is honored in this way. Talent flows out of us naturally, and is meant to give us a feeling of deep satisfaction for a job well done. Pride is often thought of as boastful and wrong. Rather than a haughty prideful condescending better-than attitude, the *y* is about a conscious awareness of one's own worth and living with dignity knowing our gifts make a positive difference for others.

The uppercase *Y* is a cup with a loop in the lower zone. The cup holds our knowledge and experience and the lower loop puts these to use. Make the deep garland cup full and wide enough to hold all your ideas, and make the lower zone loop as wide as the cup. The lower zone loop is longer than the cup is high. Notice how the second side of the *U*-shape cup is slightly lower than the first side.

The lowercase *y* is a smaller replica of the uppercase with the cup filling the middle zone only.

In mythology, the Owl is associated with Minerva, Roman goddess of wisdom.



Owls surge upward into the uncharted umber murk.

The wise old owl personifies the letter of learning. Quiet and watchful, Owl questions, "Who?" Owl has a long and varied history in ancient myths, including it being a symbol of higher wisdom. Owls are nocturnal birds who rely on their remarkable hearing to locate prey. Their eyes are tube-shaped and fixed which provides them sharp focus in the dark as they rotate their necks as much as 270-degrees to pinpoint the source of any sound. A flock of owls is called a parliament.



U is the letter of learning and the love of learning.

The large garland is like a cup that holds new ideas and acquired knowledge. Whereas the *y*, with its lower loop, puts our own unique talents and knowledge into use, the *u* loves to gather information and ponder new ideas.

The uppercase *U* is a deep garland with a tail, another shallow garland that finishes to the right at the baseline. Make the deep garland cup wide enough to hold new ideas and ponder thoughts. It's important to keep the sides straight and unwavering. No loops or curls. The *U* slopes slightly downward, the first downstroke being a little taller than the final upstroke. Retrace the upstroke and finish with a gentle garland forward to the right at the baseline.

The lowercase *u* is a smaller replica of the uppercase, filling the middle zone only. Remember it's a rule-of-thumb, retrace the upstroke on the right side of the 'cup.' There are NO loops of any kind on either side of the letter *u*.



The entire ecosystem of Yellowstone National Park was transformed with the return of the wolves – supporting, enriching and creating a better life for all other species found there, both flora and fauna.

*Wolves howl while winds wail.
Wily wolves wander where The waters flow, ever watchful and aware.*

Playful and deeply devoted to family, the Wolf is known as 'The Teacher' in Native American traditions. They live in families with a Mom and Dad and pups. Often an older pup from a previous litter will stay with the parents to help raise the next litter. During the winter, several wolf families may join together, forming a larger pack to withstand the colder, harsher weather conditions and assist in the chase when larger prey must be hunted for food. Curiously, they will roam peacefully amongst herds of elk or deer who remain undisturbed until they sense the wolf pack is hungry and ready to give chase. In this way wolves cull the herds, taking only the weak, the sick, and infirm and thereby contributing to the overall health and strength of the herd.

Ww

The W is the letter of the Teacher.

The double-*u*, two deep garland *u*'s are cups of learning and knowledge, one for the love of learning, the other for sharing all that's been gathered.

The uppercase *W* flows slightly downward so that the first garland's downstroke is a little taller than the last garland's final upstroke.

The lowercase *w* with its equal sized cups has a flat top with a little bridge stroke that reaches out to the next letter, much like a teacher's words reach to connect with a student's understanding.

W's and *M*'s are like upside down twins who love to play together. The lowercase *w*'s and *n*'s also. Both reach out to others in a sharing, caring way, the double-*u* to share information and the arcaded letters to build timeworn friendships with shared experiences.

The American Bald Eagle is named for a word in old English, "balde," which means white because their head is white.

The Bald Eagle is the United States national bird. The Eagle is the emblem of freedom, strength and vision.

Considered sacred in Native American traditions, Eagle's feathers touch the Sun.



Eagles venture very high, veiled through clouds in vivid blue skies.

Eagles are so sharp eyed, they can see a rabbit move a mile away. The Bald Eagle can snatch up fish without even getting a feather wet. Their hearing is just as keen. They often glide, tracing figure-8 patterns in the sky as they peruse the landscape below, then quickly swoop down to capture prey. Eagles are one of the highest flying birds, soaring to heights of over 10,000 feet.

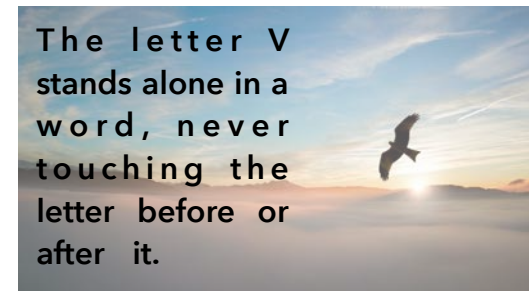
V v

V is the letter of discernment.

Discernment is about seeing all aspects of a person or thing without making negative judgments. It's like seeing how a baby sister or brother will make mistakes, and yet understanding that they will grow and develop beyond these. For instance, discernment considers the toddler's capabilities rather than assuming they are flawed as human beings because they may still be wearing diapers!

The uppercase V angles down diagonally from the upper zone to the baseline, then turns sharply and returns to the top of the upper zone with a slight bow, a gentle bend in the upstroke, very subtle. It's important that the v-shape be sharply drawn, no softness here! No garland shapes: *Vv*! No loops *Vv*! This letter is all about sharply focused thinking. Keen comprehension. Seeing clearly, and choosing wisely. A soft bottom v completely contradicts the whole meaning of the letter V. Make your angle sharp at the baseline.

The lowercase v is a smaller replica of the uppercase, filling the middle zone only.



Letters with arcades: m n h

An arcade is an archway shape. It's like a little hill, rounded on the top and followed by a pull-apart stroke at the baseline so that the downstrokes are not retraced. Can you see the little v-shapes formed by the pull-apart? Arcades are plentiful in the Family of Honoring and Expressing.

The Family of Honoring and Expressing

Lowercase *m* and *n*



The importance of

Flow

m's and *n*'s

Flow

downward like water
flowing downstream

m n

letters with arcades: *m n h*

In the Family of Honoring and Expressing, each arcade represents how comfortable we are interacting in our daily lives. For the letter *m*, the first arcade represents our own self, how comfortable we feel being on our own to read a book perhaps, or do a project independently. The second arcade represents another person, our one-on-one relationships, being with a friend or teacher perhaps. The *n*, with its two arcades, is the letter of friendship. The third arcade in the letter *m* represents a group or community of people, our interactions with our classmates or scout troop perhaps. The letter *h* also has an arcade preceded by a loop that fills both the middle and upper zones, the letter *l*. Can you find the hidden *n* within the middle zone of the *h*?

A cursive lowercase letter 'h' is shown. It features a large loop at the top that fills both the middle and upper zones of the letter. The letter is written in a fluid, connected style.

Arcades represent our relationships

m – self, self and another, self and others – our sense of community

n – self, self with another – friendships

h – our spirit, the letter *l*, brought joyously forward by the letter *n*



*Swans swim in summery sunbeams
and Autumn's many moonbeams.*

There have been many mythical stories about swans, including the fairy tale about *The Ugly Duckling*. Noted for their beauty and elegant long, often arched necks, these birds are able to feed on underwater plants without having to dive. They also graze on land, and will eat insects and some small invertebrates. Graceful birds, they are devoted parents and mates. Baby swans often ride on their parents' backs as they swim. They are called cygnets. Males are cobs, and females are pens. There are several species, even a black swan that lives in Australia and New Zealand.

A handwritten cursive uppercase 'M' and lowercase 'm' in black ink. The 'M' starts with a soft curve, goes down, and has two rounded arches. The 'm' is smaller, starting at the baseline, rounding up to the middle zone, and having two rounded arches.

M is the letter of Divine Grace.

Like the soft cupped uppercase *W*, the uppercase letter *M* flows slightly downward. The soft arcade *m* begins with a humor flourish. This little horizontal line at the top of the upper zone is softly curved. From the humor flourish it moves down into a straight vertical line drawn firmly to the baseline. Two rounded arcades follow, the second slightly shorter than the first. Can you see the *V*-formations that occur between the "I am" stroke and the two arcades? These form when the pen pulls away from the initial downstroke. It's a rule-of-thumb NOT to retrace downstrokes. The *M* finishes in a gentle garland forward to the right.

The lowercase *m* begins softly at the baseline rounding up to the top of the middle zone and back to the baseline to form an arcade, it pulls away from the downstroke to make a second, slightly shorter arcade, and pulls away again to make a third, shorter again, that finishes in a gentle garland forward to the right. Notice the little *v* formations that occur when the pen pulls away.



Entertaining chimpanzees are naturally inquisitive and full of fun.

Chimpanzees live in large groups and are very social animals. They spend lots of time playing and grooming each other. Loving and attentive parents, they form a strong family bond. Baby chimps are dependent on their mothers for their first five years and may stay close even longer, up to ten years or more. They use sticks and stones, and even nut shells as tools in getting their food and water. Chimpanzees are our closest relative in the animal kingdom.

The image shows the letters 'N' and 'n' written in a cursive script. The uppercase 'N' starts with a flourish, goes down to the baseline, and then curves back up to the top of the letter height. The lowercase 'n' starts at the baseline, goes down, and then curves back up to the middle of the letter height.

N is the letter of friendship

The uppercase soft arcade *N* begins with a humor flourish in the upper zone, a small, softly curved horizontal line that flows into a straight vertical, firmly drawn line to the baseline. Changing directions again, it rises to the top of the upper zone rounding to make a soft arcade that finishes in a garland at the baseline. Can you see the *v* formation that occurs between the 'I am' stroke and the arcade? This 'pull-apart' stroke forms when the pen pulls away from the initial downstroke. It's a rule-of-thumb NOT to retrace downstrokes.

The lowercase *n* begins softly at the baseline to form an arcade, it pulls away from the downstroke to make a second, slightly shorter arcade, that finishes in a gentle garland forward to the right. The little *v*-formations are called pull-apart strokes, and are very important! It's a rule-of-thumb not to retrace downstrokes.



Charming butterflies hover and hang in swarms for warmth.

Delicate, yet hardy, the butterfly has no resemblance to its former existence as a caterpillar. Butterflies are probably the world's most beautiful and colorful insects. They feed on flower nectar and help pollinate the plants that attract them. Some species migrate thousands of miles, navigating through harsh conditions. Sometimes their migration takes several generations to accomplish. Photographer Kjell Sandved traveled the world to find butterflies with the letters of the Alphabet on their wings. See the Resource list for his book and website.

The image shows the letters 'H' and 'h' written in a cursive, calligraphic style. The uppercase 'H' is formed by two vertical strokes connected by a horizontal tie at the top, with a loop at the bottom. The lowercase 'h' is formed by a single stroke that starts at the baseline, goes up to form a loop, and then comes back down to the baseline.

H is the letter of courage, enthusiasm, and joyous self-expression

When we are enthusiastic about something, our whole life feels lighter; we tingle with the excitement of new discovery. There's a sense of purpose to get it done! Like the sleepy little caterpillar determined to spin his cocoon, we may contemplate our life until one day we wake up with a whole new vision of who we are and what we want to do. The letter *H* moves us forward with that vision – it says “Be all you can be!”

The uppercase *H* is drawn with two ‘I am’ strokes joined by a persistence tie. Each ‘I am’ stroke is drawn firmly from the top of the upper zone to the baseline. First one, followed by the other directly to the right. From the second ‘I am’ stroke, and without lifting the pen or pencil, a leftward arc is drawn crossing the first ‘I am’ stroke, looping around and back to the right to cross the second ‘I am’ stroke in an upward, forward motion. This letter truly says, “I’m unstoppable!”

The lowercase *h* is drawn as a combination of *l* and *n*, the letters of nurturing our spirit and friendship respectively. It begins softly at the baseline with a gentle ascender that forms a loop that fills the middle and upper zones; returning to the baseline, it pulls away from the downstroke making a little v-formation as it draws the soft arcade that finishes in a gentle garland forward to the right.



Whales playfully leap and slap farewell with Their Tails.

Whales are air breathing mammals that live in the oceans. They breathe through a blow hole in the top of their head, so even though they dive deep, they must return to the surface periodically for air. They make sounds underwater that can be heard for many miles. These sounds are often long, complex, and can be beautifully melodious. Whales come in different kinds and different sizes. Blue Whales are the largest animals on earth, even bigger than the largest of the extinct dinosaurs. They travel alone, in pairs, or in small groups called pods.

Ll

L is the letter of nurturing our spirit

Each of us has a quiet place inside ourselves that whispers softly and silently when we are alone or when we are reflecting on circumstances in our life. It's important to give ourselves some moments each day to look and listen to what inspires us and to calmly reflect on our hopes and dreams.

The uppercase *L* begins softly at the top of the upper zone, curving slightly to the left and down to the baseline; it makes a leftward clockwise loop and comes forward to finish on the baseline to the right. It's important not to let this letter dip into the lower zone. It's all about our ideas and ideals, which live in the upper zone. It's equally important not to put a little loop in the upper zone; let the energy flow from the upper zone of ideas and ideals down to the baseline.

The lowercase *l* is a tall loop. Remember that loops are containers for things. This one holds our thoughts, ideas, ideals, and dreams. The beginning stroke rises from the baseline rounding leftward at the top of the upper zone so that the top of the loop is softly curved. Returning to the baseline, it's important to finish the loop at the baseline close to the beginning upstroke, and finish with a gentle garland forward to the right.

Humpback Whale breaching





photo credit: Zanskar - [iStockphoto.com](https://www.iStockphoto.com)

Endearing Baby Harp Seals keep an eye on the deep ocean waters.

Baby Harp Seals have pure white fur which helps camouflage them against the snow and ice of the cold Arctic where they must survive until strong enough to brave the ocean surf. Trusting and gentle, they are able to endure the harsh climate they are born into. Mother seals nurse them for only a couple weeks before returning to the sea. In that short time, the babies put on an enormous amount of blubber – fat that insulates them against the cold. Then the babies are abandoned and will lose about half of their weight before they are forced to take the leap into the ocean to begin to hunt and survive on their own.

Ǝ ε ℓ

E is the letter of tolerance.

People may have lots of ways of living and thinking that are different from our own. Just as we don't expect others to adopt any or all of our opinions, it's important to be respectful when we don't necessarily agree with any of theirs either. The letter Ǝ is all about a willingness to "live and let live." It's the golden rule of treating others as we would have them treat us – not according to our beliefs or opinions, rather from kindness, patience and acceptance of them for who they are.

The uppercase Ǝ is drawn as an epsilon with two soft C shapes. It's important that both these be drawn clean and clear, no hooks or loops.

The lowercase epsilon ε is a smaller replica of the uppercase filling the middle zone only.

The lowercase teardrop ℓ resembles the taller letter l. It begins softly at the baseline, rises to the top of the middle zone, then rounds back down, crossing the upstroke very close to the baseline, finishing in a gentle garland forward to the right. It's important to make the top of the loop soft and round. Remember loops are containers for things. This one holds what we hear, or think we hear people saying. It's important to keep the loop clean and clear, free from any marks or inner loops. Equally important, the loop needs to be balanced – neither too fat or round, nor closed so tight it looks like an x-stem.



Lions lie lingering in the sweltering heat of this sultry day.

Nicknamed 'king of beasts,' Lions are the second largest member of the cat family. They live in big families called prides where the females hunt and the males help in raising the cubs. Lions would rather roar than fight, and they are devoted family members and protectors. Lionesses work together using their shrewd prowess in a collaborative effort to bring down large prey.

Ii

I is the letter of insight.

Careful **NOT** to make a loop in your

i-stem: *e*

Simply retrace: *i*

I is all about seeing people and situations clearly, without adding our opinions or judgement into the picture. It's like getting a homework assignment and working through it without thinking it's dumb, or a punishment, or too hard, or a dozen other labels that have nothing to do with the actual task at hand. Being clear helps us accomplish our goals with greater skill.

The uppercase *I* begins as an 'I am' stroke. A bottom horizontal bar is added at the baseline, then a crossbar is drawn at the top of the 'I am' stroke, tilting slightly up. It's important to draw the crossbars from left to right.

The lowercase *i* begins with a gentle garland at the baseline and rises to the top of the middle zone, then retraces back to the baseline, finishing forward in another gentle garland to the right. A simple dot is placed right above the stem. It's important that the *i* stem is retraced, no loops! It's a rule-of-thumb to retrace up strokes! It's also important to place the dot just above the *i* stem, not flying off to the left or right. After all, insight and clear seeing depend on mindfulness.



Bears jump jauntily into jagged rock streams to fish.

Bears are great climbers and instinctively know how to find honeycombs hidden high. While they do eat meat, most eat more fruits and berries, except for the Polar Bear whose diet consists almost entirely of marine mammals. Most bears spend the winter in a state of semi-hibernation where they snuggle up and sleep most of the time. Mother bears give birth during this time and emerge from their den in the Spring with cubs ready to follow her on a journey to find food.

A large, elegant handwritten cursive letter 'J' followed by a lowercase 'j'. The 'J' has a long, sweeping loop that goes up and over the top of the letter. The 'j' has a similar loop that goes up and over the top of the letter, ending in a small dot.

J is the letter of inner knowing.

It's the *i* with a loop in the lower zone. *j* is about our intuitive sense. It's a feeling or an inkling like when the baseball comes flying in over home plate as it's done dozens of times before, but this time we know we're going to hit a homer! There's a certain feeling we 'just know' when a project comes together it's done! It's when we suddenly realize it's time to meet our friend without even looking at the clock.

The uppercase *J* begins at the baseline with a gentle leftward moving garland and moves up into the upper zone with a clockwise sweep that begins to form a large oval. At the top of the upper zone it drops straight down through the middle zone and into the lower zone, moving leftward again to make a full lower loop that swings up past the baseline with a forward stroke that crosses the introductory garland, forming a sideways *v* at the baseline. Remember *v* is the letter of discernment, making wise decisions. It lends its wisdom here.

The lowercase *j* begins with a gentle rightward moving garland at the baseline that rises to the top of the middle zone, then drops straight down into the lower zone to form a full loop finishing with a forward stroke at the baseline.



Fantastic spiders fashion orbs and fans of finely formed webs.

There are thousands of species of spiders found all over the world. Only one kind of spider lives only on plant food, the rest prey on insects and some even eat small lizards or birds! Many weave webs, spinning thread from their own bodies. These amazing creatures are highly adaptable, clever and cunning.

F f f



F is the letter of using our talents in service to others.

The uppercase *F* is a simple print script form that begins with a firmly drawn 'I am' stroke, then, lifting the pen or pencil, two horizontal bars are drawn: the first at the top of the 'I am' stroke, just touching it and moving to the right; and the second touches the 'I am' stroke halfway down and moves to the right. Both bars can be made to tilt slightly upward.

f is the only lowercase letter that fills all three zones of handwriting. There are five parts to the lowercase *f*. First it begins with a gentle introductory garland that flows into the upper zone forming a loop which then drops straight down into the lower zone with another forward loop that swings back behind the descender at the baseline to form the persistence tie, finally finishing with a forward stroke that lets it all go. The persistence tie says, "Nothing will stop me!" And the forward stroke says, "I give it all freely." It's important to keep both upper and lower loops facing forward. The lower loop moves rightward like the humanitarian letter *g*; and both letters have a persistence tie at the baseline. Both have to do with helping others. It's important that the lower zone loops move to the right and don't forget the persistence tie!

The fortissimo *f* is a fun, lyrical version that begins with a soft garland in the lower zone and moves diagonally up to the top of the upper zone culminating in a soft arcade; lifting the pen, it finishes with a cross bar at the top of the middle zone.



Silk caterpillars encircle themselves with one precious strand of silk.

The Silkworm is actually the white caterpillar that transforms itself into a beautiful silk moth. The little caterpillar spins a beautiful cocoon from a single strand of silk. All species are endangered, and managed by the cloth industries that use the silk for manufacturing garments. They feed exclusively on leaves from the Mulberry Trees.

R r r

R is the letter of innate creativity.

Each of us is born with our own unique gifts and talents. As we grow up, we learn that we are especially gifted at some things. We find that certain things hold great interest for us. We find things we are just naturally good at doing! We discover our inherent abilities. It's all part of who we are!

The uppercase *R* begins as an 'I am' stroke, then, lifting the pen, returns to the top of the upper zone forming a large left facing arc that fills the upper zone; touching the 'I am' stroke, it releases in a forward stroke diagonally to the baseline, filling the middle zone.

The creative writer *r* is wonderful for the writer! With a little ascender rising gently to the top of the middle zone, it forms a persistence tie followed by a bridge stroke before returning to the baseline and finishing forward in a gentle garland to the right.

The Tesla *r* is named for Nikola Tesla, a great scientist-inventor-engineer. It begins as an arcade followed by a pull-away stroke that forms a little *v* shape at the baseline and rounds at the top, *r*.



Snakes slither and slide, sometimes twisting up spiral passages.

Often you can see an \mathcal{S} formation in live snakes. Snakes have an amazing sense of balance, and are great climbers. It is remarkable what they can achieve without arms or legs! Long, thin reptiles, snakes use their tongues to smell, enabling them to find food or sense danger. They don't have eyelids so their eyes are always open, but protected by scales. Unhinging their jaws, they eat their prey of small rodents whole, taking many days to digest. As they grow, snakes must slough off their old skin so that a newer layer of scales can surface.

A large, elegant, handwritten calligraphic uppercase 'S' followed by a smaller lowercase 's'. The 'S' is formed with fluid, sweeping strokes, and the 's' is a smaller, more compact version of the same style.

S is the letter of balance.

As a member of the family of creativity, when we think of \mathcal{S} , we think of the harmony of shapes and colors, and esthetic sense of proportion and equilibrium, the pleasing rhythm of words and melodies. There is a feeling of flexibility as well as sturdiness, like the rungs of a rocking chair keep it from tipping over while, at the same time, allowing for a lot of movement. \mathcal{S} also has to do with our sense of fairness and issues of justice, the harmony of how we live our lives. And, it's about our own inner balance, too, how stable and calmly we are able to relate to the people and circumstances in our lives.

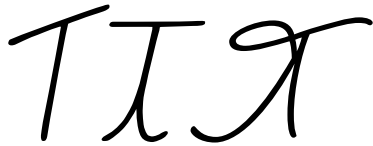
The uppercase \mathcal{S} is made from two stacked \mathcal{C} 's, one on top that's forward facing and the other, on the bottom, leftward facing. The letter finishes by rounding forward at the baseline to the right.

The lowercase \mathcal{s} is a smaller replica of the uppercase that fills the middle zone.



Tawny-eyed tigers take afternoon respite in trees.

Tigers prefer a solitary life, hunting, eating and sleeping alone. They love to nap in tall trees during hot afternoons, waking to prowl and hunt at night. They are stealth hunters, quietly sneaking up on their prey. Tigers, unlike other cats, love the water and will even soak in streams to cool off. Each individual has its own unique stripe pattern, no two are exactly alike. The Siberian species is the largest of the cat family.



T is the letter of status.

Careful **NOT** to make a loop in your

t-stem:



Simply retrace:



The crossbar right on top of the stem speaks to us of vision, seeing clearly how our goals will unfold. To get a clear picture of where we are, and where we want to be, sometimes we have to climb to the top of the tallest tree! It's all about our sense of purpose. Practicing *T*'s, especially the dancing *T* with it's persistence tie, brings in unstoppable energy.

The uppercase *T* is made simply with just two lines: the vertical 'I am' stroke and a horizontal crossbar. Make the crossbar tilt up slightly, like an upturned chin. Always cross from left to right.

The lowercase *t*-stem begins and finishes softly with garlands at the baseline. The *t*-stem needs to be retraced, no loops here! It's a rule-of-thumb to retrace upstrokes! The crossbar tops the stem with a straight, even, centered stroke. Always cross from left to right.

The lowercase dancing *T* is the most fun to make! It begins much like the uppercase *A* with a garland at the baseline, the Lincoln foot; next, a gentle ascending stroke to the top of the upper zone, then a firmly drawn vertical line down to the baseline. Without lifting the pen, change direction arcing leftward to the top of the upper zone and incorporating a persistence tie into the crossbar that finishes forward to the right.

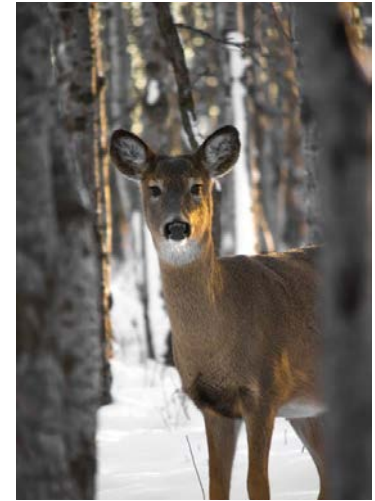


Kinesthetic deer kick up dust, as they quickly rocket through thickets.

Gentle Deer live in herds grazing on a variety of vegetation. The antlers are grown every year in the Spring, and shed in the Fall. Acute vision and hearing keep the herd alert to danger from predators. White-tail Deer communicate to each other by waving their tails, flapping their ears, or stomping.

K k

The letter K stands alone in a word, never touching the letter before or after it.



K is the letter of respect for authority.

K is about knowing when to lead and when to follow. How we live our lives depends greatly on the decisions we make each and every day. We abide by certain rules, respecting the authority of our parents and teachers to guide us; but ultimately, it is we, ourselves, who must decide when we will accept their guidance or choose to deal with the consequences, good or not so good, of doing things our own way.

The uppercase *K* begins as a firm 'I am' stroke. After lifting the pen, a sideways *V* is drawn so that it just touches the 'I am' stroke, filling both the upper and middle zones. It says, "I am my choices." "I choose for myself." Remember the letter *V* is the letter of discernment. It lends its perceptiveness for making wise choices here.

The lowercase *k* replicates the uppercase with a smaller sideways *v* that fills only the middle zone. It's important to draw the sideways *v* with a clear, sharp angle, no softness here! And no loops please!

*Camels bear bags for barter
in big caravans across barren sands.*



Camels have played an important role in the Arabic world where they were the only animal strong enough to carry goods long distances for trade and still be able to endure the desert's harsh, dry environment. When camels pace, they move both legs on one side of their bodies at the same time making a swaying motion similar to a ship at sea, thus they were nicknamed 'ships of the desert.' Bactrian camels have two humps while Dromedaries have only one. Whether one or two, the camel's humps are really a repository for fat that helps them survive without food or water for long periods of time.

Bb

B is for business, the business of living.

B is the letter of 'walking our talk.' It's all about being honest in our profession, having a calling, being true to our ideals in the way we are living. It's about playing fair.

The uppercase *B* begins as an 'I am' stroke. Lifting the pen, two half circles are formed, just touching the 'I am' stroke as the pen rounds to the right at the baseline and finishes forward through the bottom arc.

The lowercase *b* also begins with an 'I am' stroke, and has just one half circle in the middle zone that touches the 'I am' stroke, then rounds forward to the right at the baseline, finishing through the arc.

Flipping the lowercase letter *b* stem vertically down, it becomes a letter *p*, and, conversely, flipping the letter *p* descender vertically up, it becomes the letter *b*! So it is that *p*, the letter of our own self-appreciation reflects on how fair minded we are through all our dealings with other people. *b* has the spirit of a 'win-win' attitude.

b *p*



White Buffalo Calf carries a promise of peace.

The White Buffalo Calf is a symbol of peace in Native American traditions. For two thousand years Native Americans waited for this sign. Two white buffalo hides were reported in the 1800's, and in 1933 a white calf was born in Montana. They are rare, and very special. In 1994, a female buffalo white calf was born on the Helder family farm in Wisconsin. She was named 'Miracle' and considered a sacred symbol by the Sioux in the area. Several more have been born since 1994. Buffalo herds once covered most of North America providing food and clothing for the people who lived here. When Europeans came, they hunted them to near extinction. White Buffalo Calf Woman came in a vision to the Indian nations telling them to look for the white calf as a prophecy for future peace.

Cc



The Buffalo of America really aren't buffalo at all! They are really bison. Bison are actually a separate species that resemble their Asian and African cousins, the Water Buffalo and the Cape Buffalo respectively. Our American Bison have shorter, sharper horns, a shoulder hump and bearded faces. The name doesn't diminish the Legend of the White Buffalo (Bison) Calf however; White Calves are cherished as a promise of peace. The American Bison is the United States national animal.

C is the letter of complete trust.

C is open to the right, open to the next letter, open to the next moment. It's trusting the process of life by seeing its opportunities. Confidence is a C-word that trusts in solutions rather than fretting over problems.

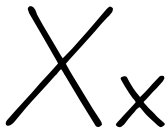
The uppercase C is an open, uncluttered half circle. It looks a little like a bagel cut cleanly in half. It's important that it be drawn simply and clearly, with no hooks or loops.

The lowercase c is a smaller replica of the uppercase filling the middle zone only.



An example of a gander named Alexander lived in Xanadu.

Migratory birds, Geese mate for life with both parents raising their baby goslings. A male is called a gander, and a female is called a goose. The V-formation of Geese in flight eases the strain of flying long distances for the birds further back, usually older, younger or weaker birds. And, the Geese share the responsibility of being in the lead, alternating the point place so no one bird becomes overstrained. If a bird tires and falls out of formation, another bird will follow it to the ground and stay with it until it recovers so that no one bird is ever left alone to attempt migration on its own.



X is the letter of inner authority.

X is that little voice inside that speaks to us about appropriate words and actions. The letter is made up of two simple lines that form four v's:

- ^ The bottom facing v-shape opens us to our feelings
- > The left facing v-shape opens us to our past experience
- v The top facing v-shape opens us to our ideas and ideals
- < The right facing v-shape opens us to our future possibilities

X

The letter X stands alone in a word, never touching the letter before or after it.

The uppercase X is written with two diagonal lines. The first begins at the top right of the upper zone and angles down to the left, finishing at the baseline, /. The second begins at the top left of the upper zone and angles down to the right, crossing the first diagonal, and finishes forward at the baseline, \.

The lowercase x is a smaller replica of the uppercase filling the middle zone only.



Zealous pelicans whiz over zigzagging fish in a feeding frenzy.

Noted for their distinctive beaks, Pelicans scoop up large amounts of water in their gular sac, a pouch that serves as a fishing net. Then they strain out the fish to eat. Brown pelicans will plunge and dive to scoop their dinner, while white pelicans work in a cooperative group effort to corral and scoop their fish in shallow water. These birds are quite buoyant in the water, floating easily in the roughest waves.



3 3

Z is the letter of contentment.

3 is often a letter of reflection, bringing us to a place of inner contemplation. Grandfather 3ed looks back on all the other letters of his extended Alphabet family with a happy heart, contented that all is as it needs to be. He has survived struggles, surmounted obstacles, and found the blessings disguised in difficulty. Every challenge brought a gift of understanding and appreciation. At last, he surrenders what seemed like a burden and, instead, delights in the abundant diversity of life.

The uppercase 3 begins at the top of the upper zone with a generous arc that faces left. The half circle completes left at the top of the middle zone, then moves right to form another soft curve that draws down into the lower zone rounding to form a generous loop that returns to the baseline in a forward upstroke.

The lowercase 3 is a smaller replica of the uppercase filling the middle zone and lower zones only.

We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. Remote from universal nature and living by complicated artifice, man in civilization surveys the creature through the glass of his knowledge and sees thereby a feather magnified and the whole image in distortion. We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate for having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein do we err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours, they move finished and complete, gifted with the extension of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings: they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth."

Henry Beston

The Ligature Th Th Th leads The Family of Ligatures

A ligature is a combination of two letters that flow together in such a way that an ending portion of one letter forms the beginning of the next. These are fun to practice. The one that is the most common is the ligature *Th*, which is a combination of the dancing *T* and the letter *h*.

Like the letters *Vv*, *Kk*, and *Xx*, a ligature stands alone in a word, neither touching the letter before or the one after it. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" is a truism that applies to ligatures. Just like combining two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, we get a completely different substance! A liquid, water! Similarly, each ligature has its own distinct flavor or personality – and each one has its own 'animal friend' as well.



The Thirsty hummingbirds gather nectar with a blur of feathers.

The tiniest of birds, Hummingbirds are in almost constant motion. They are the only bird that can fly backwards or hover like a bee. They live on flower nectar and are particularly attracted to red tubular flowers. With iridescent wings, these playful birds are a delight in any garden.



Th Th Th

Th is the letter of flexibility.

Th is the letter of flexibility, fluid thinking, and ease of movement. This ligature is all about moving easily through situations. The uppercase *Th* has an umbrella stroke. Can you see how the *Th*-crossbar bows upward and then flows down like a waterfall into the *h* stem?

There are two ways to make the lowercase.

The lowercase *Th* begins as a lowercase dancing *T*. Without lifting the pen, a little loop is formed to make the top of the letter *h*, then a descender down to the baseline, a pull-apart stroke (see the little *v* that forms automatically) and a gentle arcade to the right followed by a gentle garland that finishes forward on the baseline.

The lowercase *Th* begins as a lowercase dancing *T*. As it finishes, the cross-bar flows down like a waterfall to form an *h*-stem without a loop. The letter *h* finishes at the baseline with a pull-apart, soft arcade and garland forward to the right.



*"Animals are such agreeable friends –
They ask no questions; They pass no criticisms."*

George Eliot

Wings, fins, feet – bird, fish, mammal, insect – whether claws or paws, our animal friends can be some of our best teachers. A small bird may seem insignificant to some, yet placed in a wilderness where people do not know how to survive, the winged one will find a way to not only survive but thrive. Instincts, yes, and so much more. I encourage you to learn more about the animal that represents the first initial in your name. Read about them, but more importantly try to observe them in person. For a lion or chimpanzee you may need to visit a zoo or reserve. You can also find a lot of source material in documentary accounts through the internet or TV channels. Check out the Resource list on the next page. Use your imagination to picture an animal in your mind's eye; think about the natural environment where that animal lives and what kinds of situations it must cope with daily. How does it feel? What senses does it use? How does it nurture its young? For example, a turtle lays her eggs on a sandy beach, then returns to the ocean leaving her young to hatch and find their way into the world all on their own. Baby turtles need to be resourceful and follow their inner wisdom in order to survive. A chimpanzee baby is dependent on its mother for five years, and may continue to rely on her for up to ten years. Their bonding will continue long after the baby has reached adulthood. There are many ways animals grow and learn.

There are more ligatures, twenty-six in all, and each one does indeed have an animal friend, yet I leave that for another book if there is reader interest. My fondest wish is that the animals will encourage you to write the letters with mindfulness and that they will reveal some of their hidden meanings and you will find your life fulfilled with purpose and happiness.

Alphabetical blessings,
Susan

Resources

Read about the history of the White Buffalo Calves:

<https://allaboutbison.com/white-buffalo/>

and the White Buffalo Calf 'Miracle'

<http://whitebuffalomiracle.homestead.com/#>

The Butterfly Alphabet by Kjell Sandved

Visit Kjell Sandved online

butterflyalphabet.com

wingsabc@aol.com

The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee

<https://www.elephants.com>

Animal Speak by Ted Andrews

Zoo Books Magazine: zoobooks.com

Your Handwriting Can Change Your life

Visit Vimala Rodgers Online

vimalarodgers.com

Alphabet, pen and ink - the Letters of our Alphabet and how we write and think!

Visit Susan Govorko Online

alphabetpenandink.com

Glossary of Handwriting Terms

angle - V-formation - v-formations are pointed at the baseline *V v M m N n h*

arcade - an archway shape. *M m N n h*

ascender - a handwriting stroke that rises up from the baseline into the top of the middle or upper zone.

baseline - the imaginary line our handwritten letters sit or run upon, the foundation for our letters.

bridge stroke - a short horizontal rightward stroke at the top of the middle zone. At the end of certain letters it is used to connect to the next letter. *ω σ* This stroke enhances manual dexterity.

cross-bar - the horizontal stroke that crosses the *T*-stem and uppercase *I*.

descender - a handwriting stroke that dips into the lower zone.

downstroke - a handwriting stroke that moves downward; also a descender. See also descender.

epsilon - the fifth letter of the Greek Alphabet, transliterated 'ε'. Term for our Roman 'ε' that resembles it.

flourish - an added stroke to a letter or letters, usually artfully creative, or can be very elaborate. Also see humor flourish.

garland - a soft cup-like handwriting stroke, often occurring between letters within words or at the end of letters.

humor flourish - a soft, casual introductory stroke at the top of the upper zone: *m n*

'I am' stroke - a straight, vertical firmly drawn line from the top of the upper zone to the baseline.

ligature - a combination letter where an ending portion of one letter joins the next letter by forming its beginning stroke.

Lincoln foot - an introductory garland named for President Abraham Lincoln because he introduced his autograph with it. *A* and the dancing *π* and dancing *πh πh* ligatures.

loop - an elongated shape made by a curve that bends around and crosses itself near the baseline.

There are upper loops and lower loops. In handwriting, all loops are containers for things ... ideas, imagination, dreams, thoughts, creativity, etc.

midzone - another way of saying "the middle zone". Also see zones.

'Mother Teresa' - a great humanitarian who devoted her life to helping those in need. While she served as a Catholic nun, her missionary work was to feed, clothe, administer help to those in need and never proselytize. Her greatest gift was love. Her life embodies the Letter *Qq*.

persistence tie - a tie loop that reaches left, loops behind a letter, then flies forward. *f q T A H Th*
It says, "I can do anything I set my mind to do, nothing can stop me!"

pull-apart stroke - in the middle zone, this stroke pulls away from the downstroke of an arcade rather than retracing it. It makes a little v-formation at the baseline. *M m, N n, h* It's a rule-of-thumb NOT to retrace downstrokes!

rule-of-thumb - a generally accepted way of doing something.

tie stroke - see "persistence tie" *f q A H T Th*

upstroke - a handwriting stroke that moves upward; also an ascender. Also see ascender.

Vimala Alphabet™ - A writing system created by Vimala Rodgers that incorporates all the best aspects of the Roman letters.

wedge - an inverted v-formation found within letters or letter connections within words.

zones - The three sections in a line of handwriting:



upper zone: above the middle zone

middle zone: baseline to bottom of upper zone

lower zone: below the baseline

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Vimala Rodgers, PhD. is the architect of the Vimala Alphabet™. She is a handwriting expert, a pioneer in hand-brain research, and founder of The International Institute of Handwriting Studies. A rare and gifted teacher, she has engaged so many of her students worldwide in sharing the intrinsic spiritual qualities of the letters of our Alphabet.

Vimala has written several books on handwriting and the Alphabet:

Change Your Handwriting, Change Your Life. 1993

Your Handwriting Can Change Your Life. 2000

Character-building Through Simplified Handwriting. 2005

Ligatures: Accelerating Your Life Path. 2013

and taught these courses:

The Psychology of Written Expression

Sacred Symbols

The Alphabetical Life

and now offers Alphabetical webinars through her website.



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Susan wrote the first book in this series,
Animals, pen and ink - The Letters of our Alphabet and how we write and think!

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