

How the Alphabet is Evaluated

By Joel Engel



Each of the foregoing letters has something different in its form and, therefore, in the interpretation to be put upon it. Often the same meaning can be derived from several different letters in one person's handwriting. This is because the same characteristic form can appear in different letters. The reader should now be able to discern the meaning of any letter simply by knowing which form it should fit into.

Here are two examples of how it works:

Consider the letter A. This letter has two factors that we are concerned about. It is a capital, and it is quite thin. The capital letter reflects the ego of the writer, and because he "thins himself out," we say that he is shy. The same interpretation would be true of, say, a capital H: This thin capital also implies that the writer is shy.

Picture the lowercase a, the bottom is open and the letter is oval-shaped. Therefore, the rule that applies here applies to any oval-shaped letter with an open bottom--perhaps the letter o.

The letters a and o are both middle-zone letters, but upper zone and lower zone letters also belong to this category, providing that they have round parts in the middle zone; for example, the letter d.

Once you understand the principles, it should be easy to interpret all the possible variations in letter shapes.

What the graphologist is really seeking in analyzing handwriting are the writer's personality traits. A personality trait is usually composed of many different factors. For example, if the writing indicated a lack of self-control, passion, impulsiveness, and violence, the graphologist would sum up the personality trait as temper. Should self-control, passion, and violence be present, without impulsiveness, temper would still be indicated, but if violence were the missing element, the graphologist would hesitate to say flat out that the writer has a bad temper. He might admit, however, that the possibility of temper exists.

A similar situation exists in interpreting letters. Before the graphologist weighs the form of a letter into a total analysis, he looks for consistency. In other words, he must find the same form often enough in the writing to be significant before he includes its meaning in the total analysis. Here is the usual rule of thumb: If all the major components are present, we say that the personality trait most definitely exists. If all the major components but one are found, there is a strong possibility that the personality trait exists. If only one major component is found, the writer has a tendency toward this trait.

Small minimum letters (i.e., middle zone letters) show the concentrating, frugal, and masculine worker. Small and carefully executed minimum letters have been seen in the handwriting of first-rate research workers, teachers, scientists, and thinkers, who keep themselves under the strictest self-control so as to be able to accomplish what they undertake (Nietzsche, Einstein). However, it should be noted that inferiority feelings and temporary depressions also express themselves in small minimum letters.

A letter may not only be tall or small or deep, but also wide or narrow; it may widen itself in a left tending or right tending direction, or shrink from these directions; it also may widen itself to a reasonable extent or at the expense of its neighbors.

To judge, for example, the width of a letter in an individual handwriting, we must know the penmanship models on which this handwriting is based. In Palmer's models such letters as e, i, o, a, and s are supposed to be taller than they are wide, the m, n, and w wider than they are tall. Only deviations from these norms can be considered "wide" or "too wide," "narrow" or "too narrow."

The wide letter, the letter that takes up more than its "allotted" space as it moves to the right, is typical of the spontaneous, broadminded, and "large" writer, who is sociable and sympathetic, eager to share with you and willing to let you share with him; he is "extroverted." But if the letter is "too wide," if it seems to spread and unfold, as it were, at our expense, the writer is obtrusive, impudent, or simply an intruder.

The narrow letter, the letter that has surrendered part of its "allotted" space, is characteristic of the inhibited, uneasy, narrow-minded, economical writer, who is not sociable, who is prepared to share with you nor desirous of having you share with him; he is "introverted." But if a letter is "too narrow," then our subject is timid, seclusive, suspicious, and avaricious. A narrow initial letter of a word betrays particularly the socially timid.

We often see narrow letters widely spaced, or wide letters closely following each other. Obviously, this is a coincidence of two contradictory tendencies: narrow letters widely spaced reveal one whose sympathy and generosity are either simulated or forced upon him by circumstances. Wide letters narrowly spaced betoken the liberal and sympathetic person who simulates the economical and concentrated worker either voluntarily or because of circumstances.

The letters between the first and the last letter, the body of the word, so to speak, portray the process of thinking that leads the writer from an intention to an accomplishment, a decision, an act. A clear, well-proportioned last letter indicates a clear and trustworthy decision; an illegible, neglected, or omitted last letter is a warning. A disproportionately tall last letter is characteristic of the person who not only has an opinion, but insists on it because he has character, or because he is arrogant, opinionated.

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