

knuckle of the first finger. The third and fourth fingers must be kept together, and curved so the hand can rest and slide on the first joint, or end of the little finger, according to its length. The pen-holder should point at the right shoulder, but we often find it pointing at the ceiling, or across the room, and the child trying to write with the hand so cramped that a white streak appears along the lower joint of the first finger. To call attention to this, I sometimes ask the children if they think I am going to take their pens. Some such reminder is all that is necessary to correct the position when once the proper way has been learned. The right arm must rest only on the muscles just below the elbow, and on the little finger. The left hand is kept on the desk to hold and move the paper.

MOVEMENT.—With this position of body and pen, move the arm on desk, as if writing, until you get a uniform movement of arm, hand, and fingers. Let the children see that the little finger must write the letters just as the pen does. I usually illustrate here by writing on a black-board, dusty enough to show clearly the trace of my little finger, or by placing a small piece of chalk between the third and fourth fingers, so as to trace their movements on the board. At first, I usually find a tendency in the class to keep the little fingers rigid, and to help to overcome this difficulty, I have each pupil write several words, paying attention only to the writing of the little finger, while the pen does the tracing. This may not be a very important exercise, but it encourages the little fingers to move.

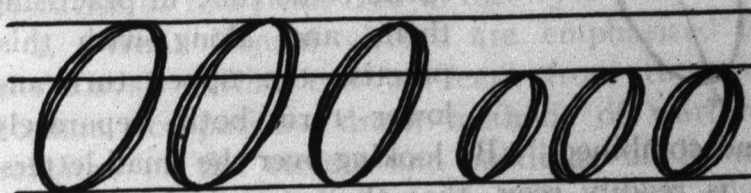
Many good movement exercises can be brought into use. Take the oval first. Roll the arm around on the muscle, making the little finger slide in an oval two-thirds as wide as it is long. Touch the pen-point lightly to the paper, and make about seven revolutions to an oval. If you start this exercise with large ovals, covering three spaces of ordinary-lined paper, you will find that they cannot be made with the finger movement, and the child is obliged to use the forearm muscular movement.

When the child has the position and form in mind, it is a good plan for the teacher to count aloud, neither very fast nor very slow, while the class make the revolutions. Counting is a means of securing uniformity of movement, of

keeping the class together, and giving an idea as to how fast to practise, and I find it always creates more interest and enthusiasm in the work. Tapping on a book-cover with a pencil answers the same purpose.

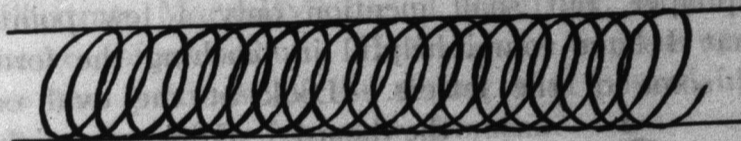
After three-space ovals, try two-space, and then one. Make rows of these across the paper,

1.



and when they are well done start again, but instead of retracing the ovals show the class how to work steadily forward as in illustration:

2.



Practise both the direct oval, and the reversed oval, for here we are laying the foundation for the capital letters.

The letters O, C, A, E, D, are made from the direct oval. L, T, F, P, B, R, S, G, are made from the capital stem, and the remaining thirteen are made from the reversed oval. (See diagrams in New Brunswick Copy Books, Inside Cover).

UNIFORMITY OF SLANT.—Uniformity of slant is absolutely necessary for plain writing. Keep all lines straight and parallel, by drawing them all towards the body. Be careful to see that each child starts with, say a one space straight line. Then count to fifteen or twenty, while the children make the strokes, and the slant of the last line will usually surprise the young writer.

A part of each writing period can profitably be spent in such exercises as these and we often practise them for a few minutes before a written exercise in grammar or history. Several good ones are to be found in the back of the Prescribed Writing Book, and the order in which these are used will depend upon the letter to be taught.

COMBINATIONS OF STRAIGHT LINES AND CURVES.—The elements of writing—the curve