

# The Journey to Continuous Cursive: The Letter 'y'

## Suggested Order

The letter 'y' should be taught as part of a series of lessons, which links to the family it belongs to - the 'ladder' family. Ideally, it would be taught as the fifth letter in the series of six (l, i, u, t, y, j).

## Gross Motor Warm-Up

**Chair Leg Lift:** Children stand sideways holding onto their chair back with their left hand. Children bend their right knee at a right angle and raise their leg/knee to hip height. Repeat five times before swapping around and changing legs. Extend the activity by encouraging children to let go of the chair back and raise their leg by balancing and holding their core muscles.

## Fine Motor Warm-Up

**Finger Rhymes:** Children work in pairs or small groups to sing/play a range of finger rhymes and games. Use the [Finger Rhymes and Games: Adult Guidance](#) for ideas (these rhymes are also shown on the [Lesson Presentation](#)). Older children could also make up their own rhymes to teach to the rest of the class.

## Let's Get Ready to Write!

**Early Learning Goals - Children handle equipment and tools effectively. Children safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.**

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements.

**Playdough Play** - Children use playdough to practise a variety of exercises to develop their hand strength and manipulation skills.

Use the [Time for Playdough Song Sheet](#) (or the song lyrics on the [Lesson Presentation](#)) to model and demonstrate how to complete a series of fine motor exercises. Give support to children as and when required.

## 2 Forming Letter Families

**Year 1 - Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. Begin to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.**

Introduce the letter name and the sound (phoneme) of the letter 'y'. Also, discuss how 'y' can make different sounds within other words. Show the animation of how to form the lower case letter 'y'. Ask children if they know which letter family the letter 'y' belongs to? Explain that this letter belongs to the ladder family (l i u t y j). Children practise air writing the letter shape 'y' with their preferred hand. They could also practise air writing on the table, on body parts or on a friend's back, where appropriate. Make large and small letter shapes. Remind children of the correct pen/pencil grip using the [Lesson Presentation](#) prompts or the [How to Grip a Writing Tool Poster](#). Remind them of the

appropriate seating position and posture for good handwriting using the visual prompt on the [Lesson Presentation](#) or use the [Let's Look Ready to Write Poster](#).

Remind the children how to position their paper correctly. Model how to complete the first part of the [Letter 'y' Activity Sheet](#).

Children practise writing the letter 'y' using the [Letter 'y' Activity Sheet](#).

The children could also complete the [Letter 'y' Extra Practice Activity Sheet](#).

## 3 Positioning & Pre-Cursive

**Year 2 - Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another.**

Explain to the children that they are going to be looking at the letter 'y' and they will learn how to place it correctly on a line. Show the children how to correctly form the letter 'y' and how to position it on a line using the [Lesson Presentation](#). Ask the children to talk about other descenders that have a curly tail (f, g and j) and how all of these letters need to go below the baseline for their curly tails to touch the bottom line before swooping around ready to join to the next letter. Ask the children to practise these letters on

mini whiteboards. Remind the children of the correct seating position, pen/pencil grip and how to position their paper correctly using the [Lesson Presentation](#).

Use the [Lesson Presentation](#) to discuss positioning 'y' next to other descenders, next to ascenders and next to letters that sit between the baseline and midline. Children practise writing letter patterns containing the letter 'y' and other letters using the [Positioning the Letter 'y' Activity Sheet](#).

## 4 Joining Letters

**Year 3 and 4 - Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined.**

Explain to the children that the letter 'y' is a long letter (descender) that will join on to other letters using a descender join.

Remind the children of the correct seating position, pen/pencil grip and how to position their paper correctly using the [Lesson Presentation](#). The children

then complete the [Joining from the Letter 'y' Activity Sheet](#), which practises joining from the letter 'y'.

The children can then use the [Letter 'y' More Joining Practice Activity Sheet](#) to practise writing that use a 'y' as to make a short /i/ sound.

## 5 Increasing Fluency, Style & Speed

**Year 5 and 6 - Children should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task.**

Explain to the children that they are again going to be looking at the letter 'y' - a letter that joins to other letters using a descender join. Ask the children to think about why a clear, legible style of handwriting is so important. What would happen if you could not read your own handwriting back? Remind the children of the correct seating position, pen/pencil grip and how to position their paper correctly using the [Lesson Presentation](#). Children then complete the [Diary Dilemma Activity Sheet](#) where they turn some virtually illegible notes back into a neat, joined style.

Remind the children of the correct seating position, pen/pencil grip and how to position their paper correctly using the [Lesson Presentation](#).

The children could also complete the [Fluency, Style and Speed Practice: The Letter 'y' Activity Sheet](#).

## Assessment Activities

**Step 1** - Can children explore the playdough and complete the different activities (with support/independently)? Can they make their own playdough shapes?

**Step 2** - Can the children form the letter shape 'y' appropriately, starting and finishing in the correct place? Ask the children to put a ☺ next to the favourite letter 'y' shape that they have written?

**Step 3** - Are all of their letter 'y's touching the bottom line? Are all of the pupils' other letters positioned next to their 'y' of a relative size and shape?

**Step 4** - Can pupils join from a letter 'y' using a descender join?

**Step 5** - Can the children discuss the importance of a legible handwriting style?

