

## 12 Handwriting Characteristics

In forensic handwriting analysis, there are twelve characteristics to be considered when analyzing a handwriting match.

**Line quality** is the thickness, strength, and flow of the letters. Some factors are if the letters are flowing, shaky, or very thick.

**Letter spacing** is the amount of space put between letters. The letters could all be connected or spaced drastically.

**Height, width, and size of the Letters** is very self-explanatory; this simply analyzes the proportions of the handwriting. Is one letter unusually tall or short?

**Pen Lifts and Separations** is the way the person writes. Do they stop before writing a new letter, or do they connect the letters? People usually use the same pen lifts, and so a forgery may stand out if all the letters are separated when the real signature connects them.

**Connecting Strokes** is similar to pen lifts and separations. This analyzes whether or not the capital letters are connected to lowercase letters and if words are connected.

**Beginning and Ending Strokes** looks at how the writer begins and ends their words. Do they end with a curl, and on an upstroke or a downstroke?

**Unusual Letter Formation** takes note of any peculiar, unique capital or lowercase letters. Does the writer add any extra curls or loops where the average author would not?

**Shading (Pen Pressure)** analyzes where the writer presses their writing utensil down the most, either on the upstroke or the downstroke. Where the most pressure is applied is where the script is thickest.

**Slant** looks at which way the letters tend to slant, either to the left, right, or no slant at all. The most average slant is to the right.

**Baseline Habits** is where the writer tends to write. It could be above the line, below the line, or on the line.

**Flourishments and Embellishments** are large loops and swirls in handwriting. The most common flourishment is on letters such as lowercase "G", "J", and "F" - anything that involves a loop!

**Diacritic Placement** is the way the author crosses their t's and dots their j's and i's.