



Standard for Analysis of Handwriting

1.0 Scope

This standard provides procedures that should be used by handwriting analysts for the purpose of analyzing handwriting and interpreting the results for personality characteristics.

- 1.2 These procedures apply to analysis for any type of psychological application. For example, pre-employment screening, personality analysis, compatibility analysis.
- 1.3 These procedures include evaluation of the amount and quality of the writing sample to be examined.
- 1.4 This standard may not cover all aspects of unusual handwriting samples.

2. Referenced Documents

- 2.1 *AHAF Standards:*
Standard for Scope of Work of Handwriting Analysts
Terminology for Expressing Conclusions for Handwriting Analysts

3. Terminology

- 3.1 For definitions of terms in this standard, refer to Terminology for Reporting Results of Handwriting Analysis.

4. Significance and Use

- 4.1 The procedures outlined in this standard are grounded in the generally accepted body of knowledge in the field of handwriting analysis. By following these procedures, a handwriting analyst can reliably reach a conclusion regarding the personality traits of the writer under consideration.

5. Limitations

- 5.1 Handwriting samples submitted for analysis may have limitations that could potentially interfere with the procedures in this standard. Those limitations should be noted and referenced.
- 5.2 Limitations may be categorized as limited in quantity or quality of the sample writing. For example, a few words of writing written on a scrap of paper, or a photocopy that is either faded or very dark, limits the analyst's ability to achieve an accurate result.

6. Equipment and Requirements

- 6.1 Light source(s) should be sufficient to display details that may not at first be obvious. Natural or fluorescent lighting may be utilized, and if necessary, transmitted lighting.
- 6.2 Magnification great enough to display the fine details that may not be seen with the naked eye alone. Generally, magnification between 2x and 10x is sufficient.
- 6.3 Measuring tools.
 - 6.3.1 A ruler using millimeters, callipers, or other measuring guides.
 - 6.3.2 A compass or other guide to measure slant.

7. Procedures

- 7.1 The following procedures need not be performed in the order given.
- 7.2 First determine whether the materials are sufficient in quantity and quality to provide a professional opinion regarding the handwriting.
 - 7.2.1 *Style of writing*—if more than one writing style is submitted, group similar styles together. For example, if some of the sample is printed and some is cursive.
 - 7.2.1 If writing done over a period of years is submitted, group the samples according to date of execution.
- 7.3 Evaluate the writing space for the following:
 - 7.3.1 *Organization*—Determine how well the writing is organized on the page. Determine whether there is sufficient white space on the paper. (i.e., are the margins balanced, is there sufficient space between letters, words, lines? Or does the page look crowded?)
 - 7.3.2 *Margins*—are the margins balanced all around, or is one or more margin too broad or too narrow?
 - 7.3.3 *Spacing*—is there appropriate space between letters, words, lines?
- 7.4 Evaluate the writing form for the following:
 - 7.4.1 *Style*—Determine the overall writing style (e.g., copybook, simplified, elaborate, printed, etc.)
 - 7.4.2 *Naturalness*—Does the writing appear to flow naturally, or is it carefully drawn?
 - 7.4.3 *Simplification*—Determine whether the writing contains simplifications and if so, where they appear.
 - 7.4.4 *Originality*—Determine the degree of originality (i.e., type and degree of departures from copybook style).
 - 7.4.5 *Copybook writing*—If the writing is generally copybook style, how closely does it conform to copybook?
 - 7.4.6 *Persona*—If the writing is carefully drawn, does it fall under the category of “*persona writing*?”
- 7.5 *Initial and final strokes*—Determine degree to which initial and final strokes appear and their type.
 - 7.5.1 Determine whether the overall writing style is more linear or more curved or a balance of both forms.
 - 7.5.2 Determine the degree and balance of garland/arcade/angle/thread forms.
- 7.5 Evaluate the writing movement:
 - 7.5.1 *Rhythm*—Determine the proportion of contraction/release.
 - 7.5.2 *Size*—Determine the overall size of the writing: small, medium, large.
- 7.6 *Zones*—Determine zonal proportions and balance.
 - 7.6.1 *Pressure*—Determine primary and secondary pressure.
 - 7.6.2 *Primary Pressure*—Check the depth component.
 - 7.7 *Secondary Pressure*—Check upstrokes and downstrokes for light/dark pattern.
- 7.8 *Speed*—Determine overall speed.
- 7.9 *Slant*—Measure degree of slant.
- 7.10 *Baseline*—Measure baseline alignment and consistency.
- 8.0 *Personal Pronoun I*—Check the PPI for size, space, and form.
- 9.0 *Signature*—Check the signature for congruence to the balance of the text. Check form, size, placement, embellishments.

- 10. *Numbers*—Evaluate numbers for congruence with balance of text.
- 11.0 *Miscellaneous letter forms*—unusual letter forms that stand out from the text.
- 12.0 *Red flags*—Additional items that may point to pathological behavior (e.g., extremes in any area).

13. Reporting Opinions

- 13.1 Refer to the Standard for Expressing Conclusions for Handwriting Analysts