

Step 1: Learn the Symbols

1.1: Uppercase & Lowercase Letters

1.2: Vowels & Consonants

1.3: Learn the Letters by Writing Them

1.1 Uppercase and Lowercase Letters

Each letter of the alphabet has two shapes. The larger shape is called “**uppercase**,” also known as a “capital letter.” Uppercase letters are used for the first word in a sentence, proper names, and other usages. Below are the uppercase letters of the alphabet. It’s good practice to say the alphabet as you point to the letter.

A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z

The second form of each letter is “**lowercase**.” They are used everywhere that doesn’t require an uppercase, or capital, letter. Therefore, they make up most of the letters on any page of type. Here are the lowercase letters of the alphabet. It’s good practice to say the alphabet as you point to the letter.

a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v
w x y z

1.2 Vowels and Consonants

The letters in the alphabet divide into two types of sounds—vowels and consonants. When we speak, we force air over the vocal cords and through the mouth. Depending on the particular sound we wish to make, we change the flow of the air in different ways using the tongue, teeth, or lips.

VOWELS depend on the *unrestricted* flow of air over the vocal cords and through the mouth. Because the mouth is open, vowel sounds can last as long as there is breath. Vowel sounds are the foundation sounds in a word or part of a word. They are also the most versatile letters in the alphabet, combining in different ways to create 16 of the 44 sounds in English. Plus, a vowel can form a word by itself, such as the words, “I,” “a,” or “O.” As you learn to translate symbols into sound, you will understand the role of vowels and how they change in different combinations. For now, just know that these 5 letters are our always vowels:

Aa Ee Ii Oo Uu

CONSONANTS, for the most part, are the opposite of vowels. Remember, vowels depend on the unrestricted flow of air. Consonants, however, depend on *restricting* the flow of air through the mouth using the tongue, teeth, or lips. Whereas certain vowels can stand alone as a word, consonants do not function on their own in our language. They always join with one or more vowels. However, consonants do have some tricks of their own. Consonants can combine with other consonants, sometimes creating new sounds. There are also a few consonants that occasionally act as a vowel, as we will see in Step 2.

Because consonants restrict the flow of air, they restrict the flow of sound. In this way, they provide clear beginning and ending points for words and parts of words. Some, in fact, don’t even use the vocal cords. We call these “voiceless” consonants. They rely on just a puff of air. Those that require the voice to make their sounds are called “voiced consonants. For now, just remember that the 21 letters that are not vowels function as consonants:

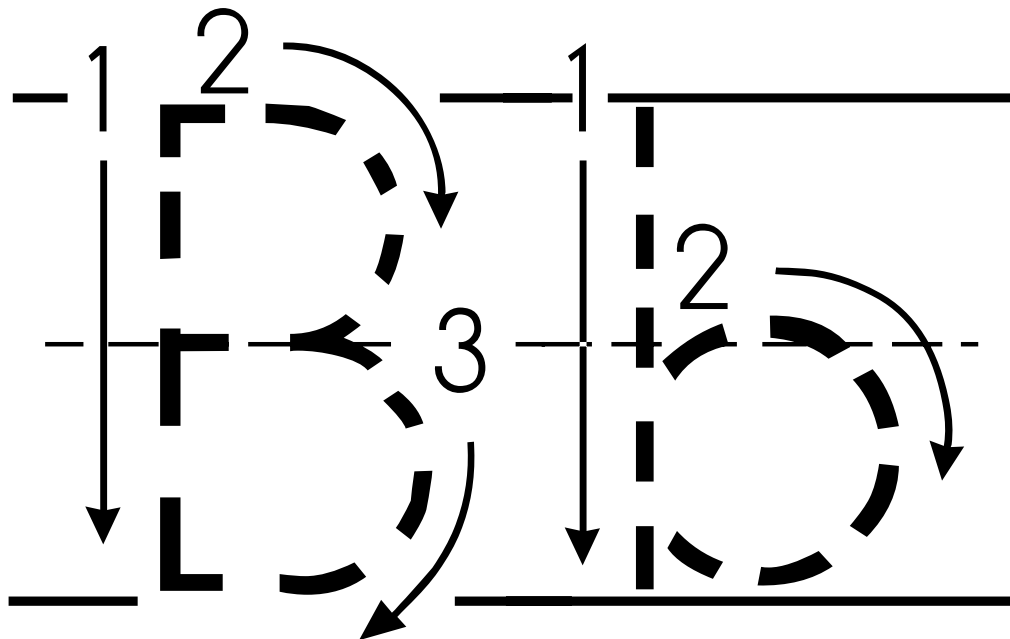
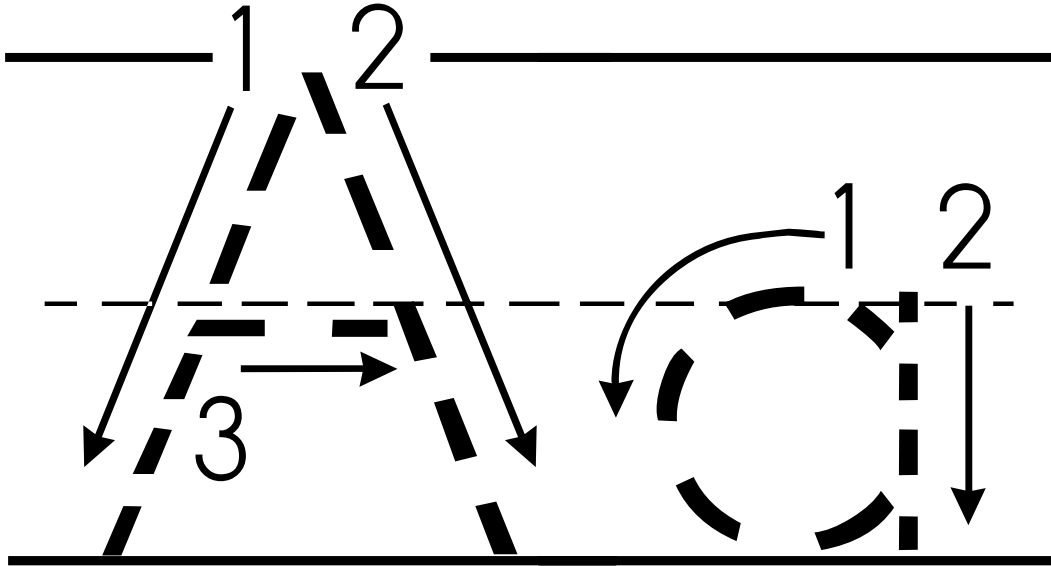
Bb Cc Dd Ff Gg Hh Jj
Kk Ll Mm Nn Pp Qq Rr
Ss Tt Vv Ww Yy Zz

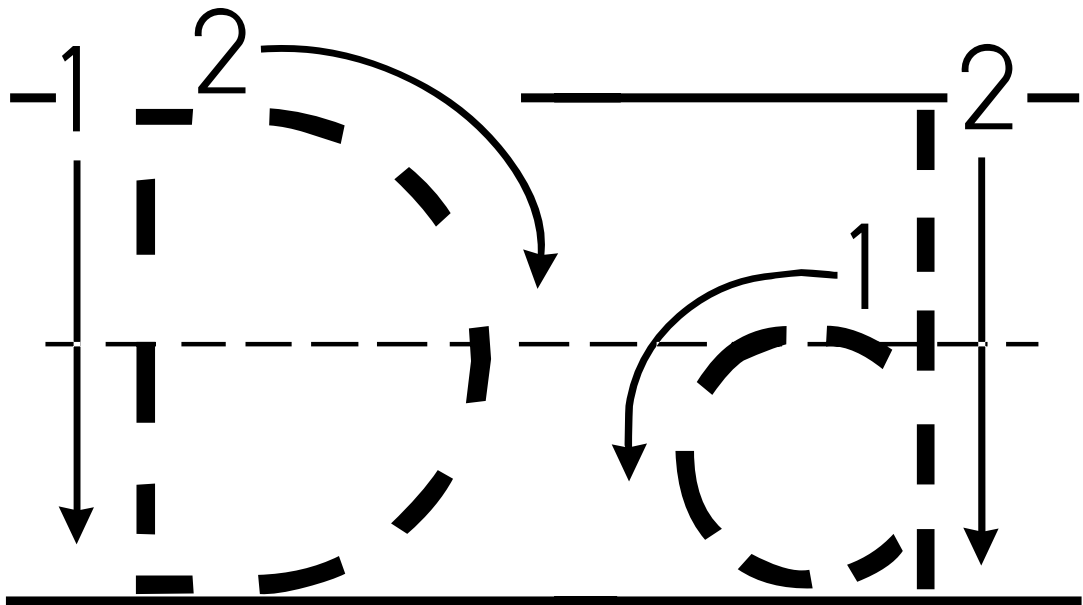
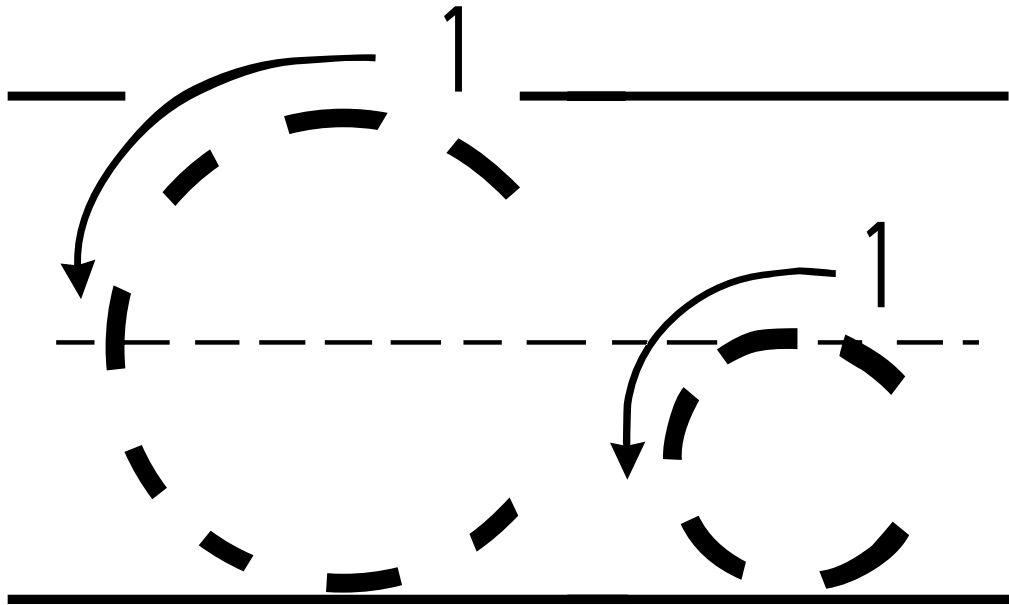
You can demonstrate the difference between vowels and consonants for yourself. Say the name of each vowel one more time and notice that your mouth is completely open. Next, say the names of these consonants—Hh, Mm, and Ss—and notice how your tongue, teeth, and lips participate in starting and stopping the sound.

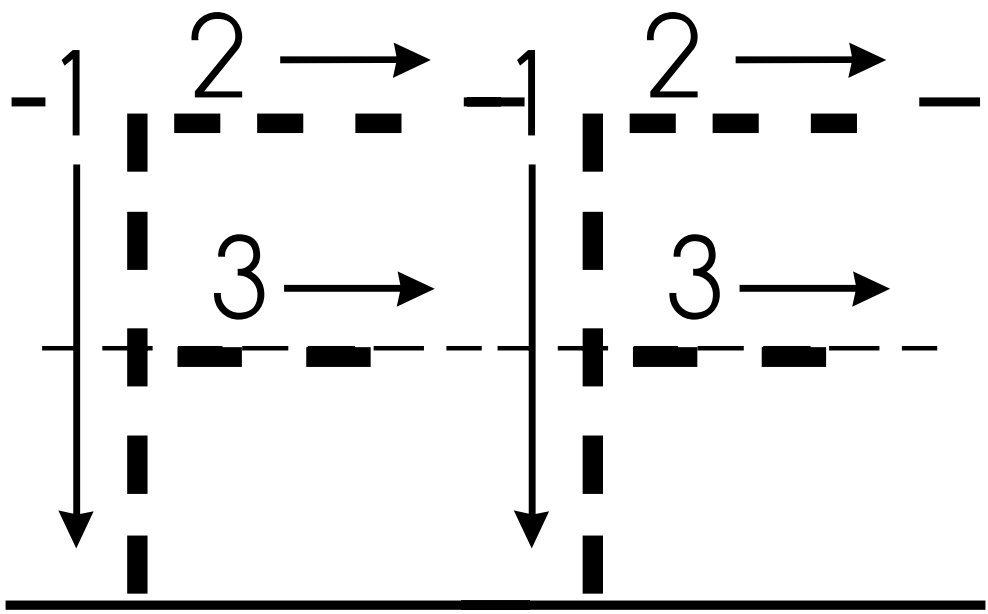
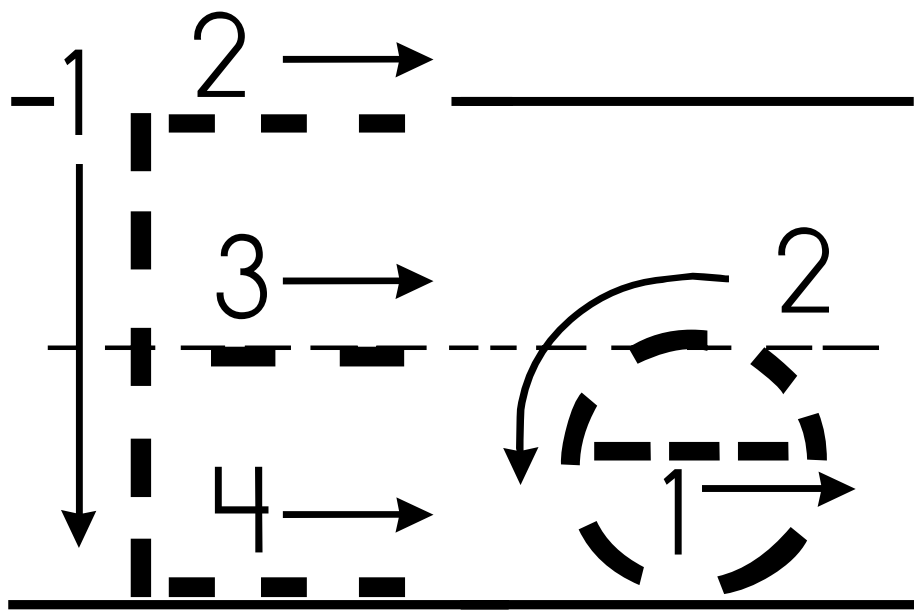
Your goal for this part of Step 1 is to learn the difference between a vowel and a consonant. You should also be sure that you know the five primary vowels before moving on to Step 1.3.

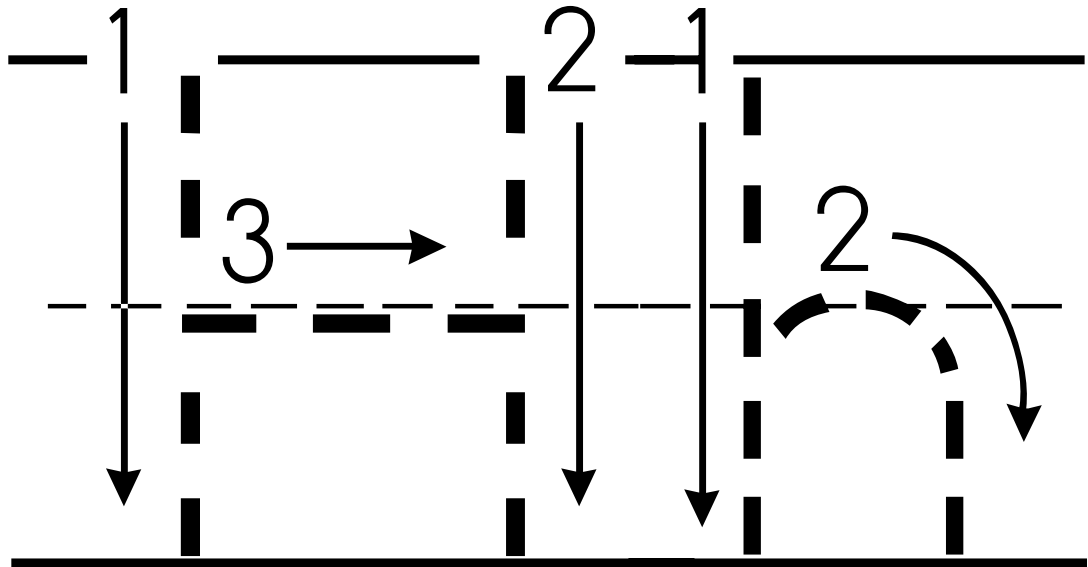
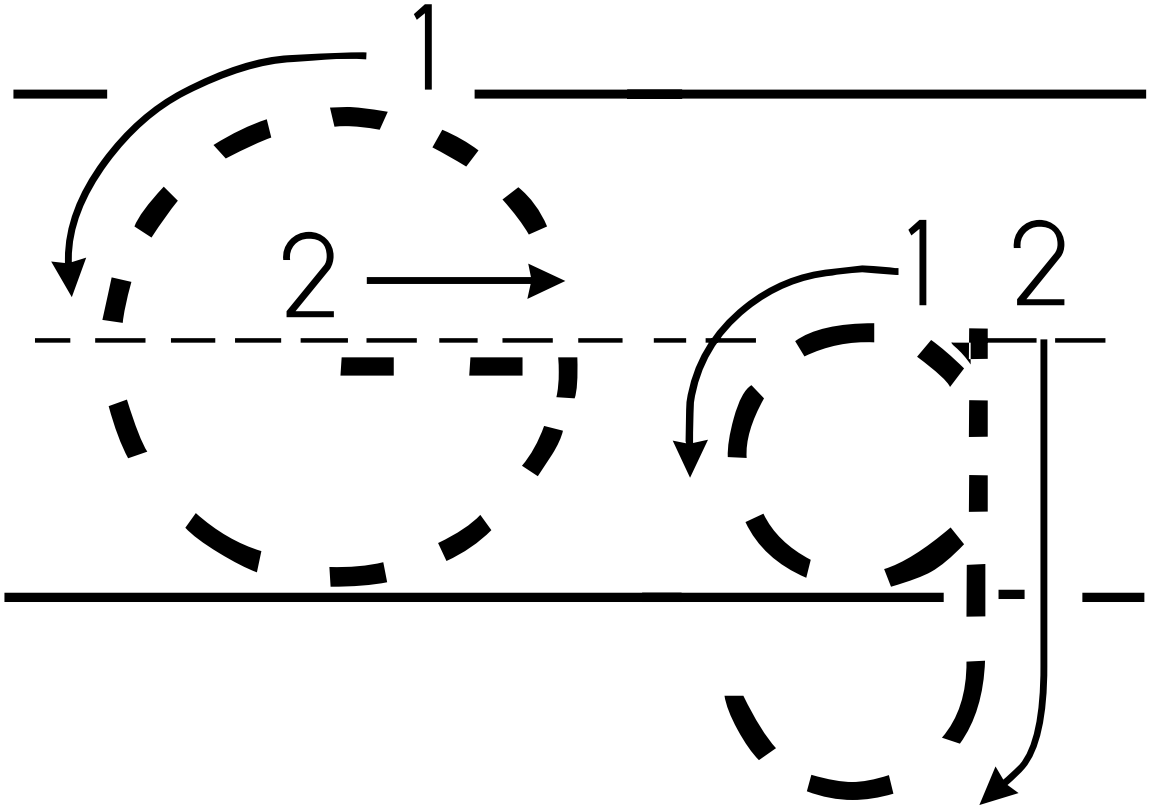
1.3 Learn the Letters by Writing Them

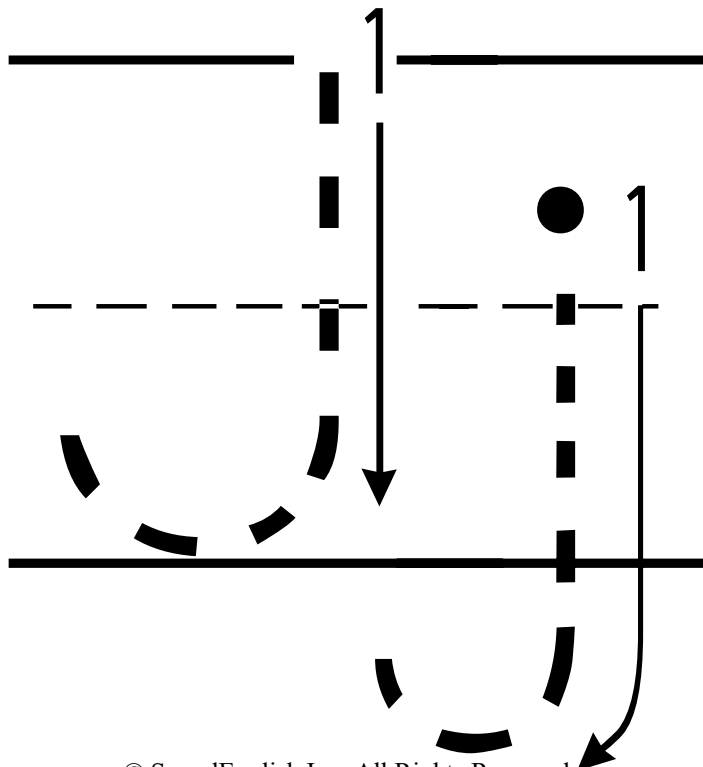
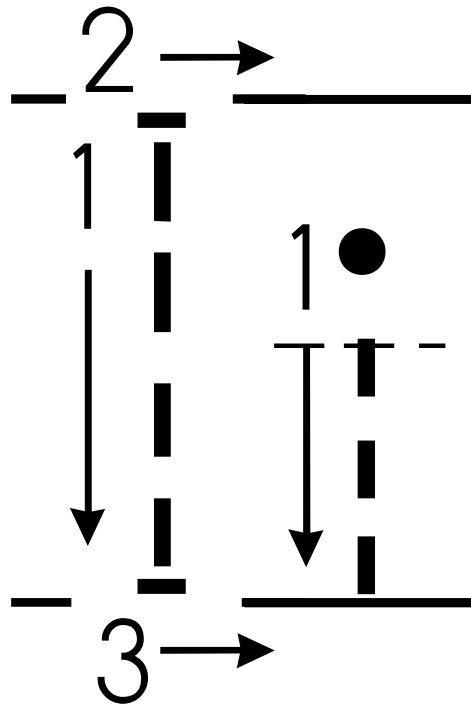
On the following pages, you will find each letter of the alphabet in a large, traceable format, both in uppercase and lowercase. Following the numbers, practice tracing each letter correctly. Begin each letter at number one and trace in the direction of the arrow; then number two, and so forth. The letters are deliberately large to maximize learning. Say the name of each letter as you trace.

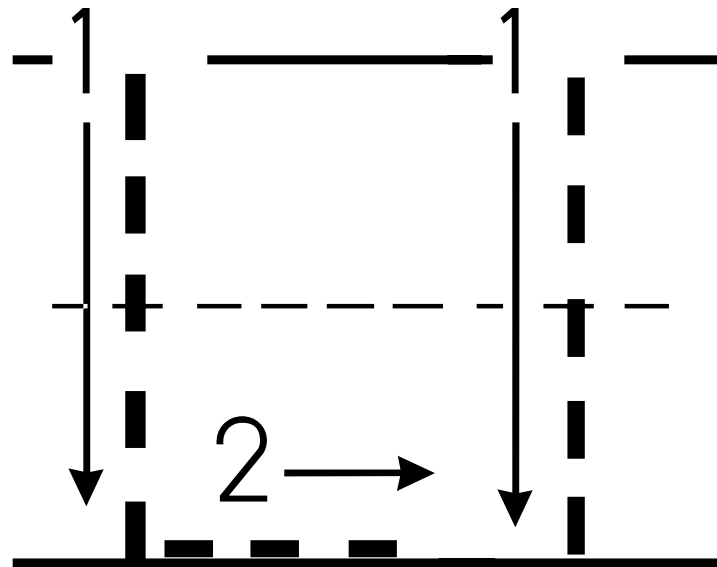
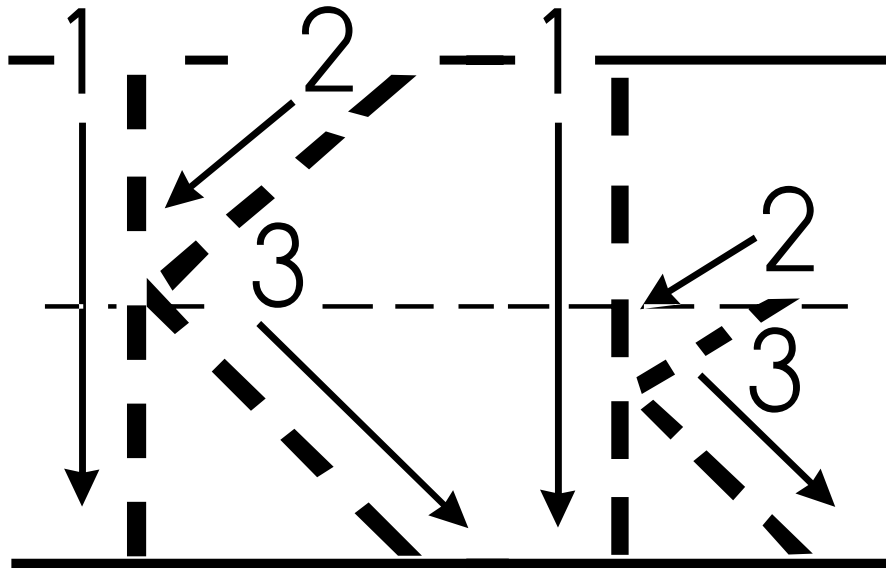


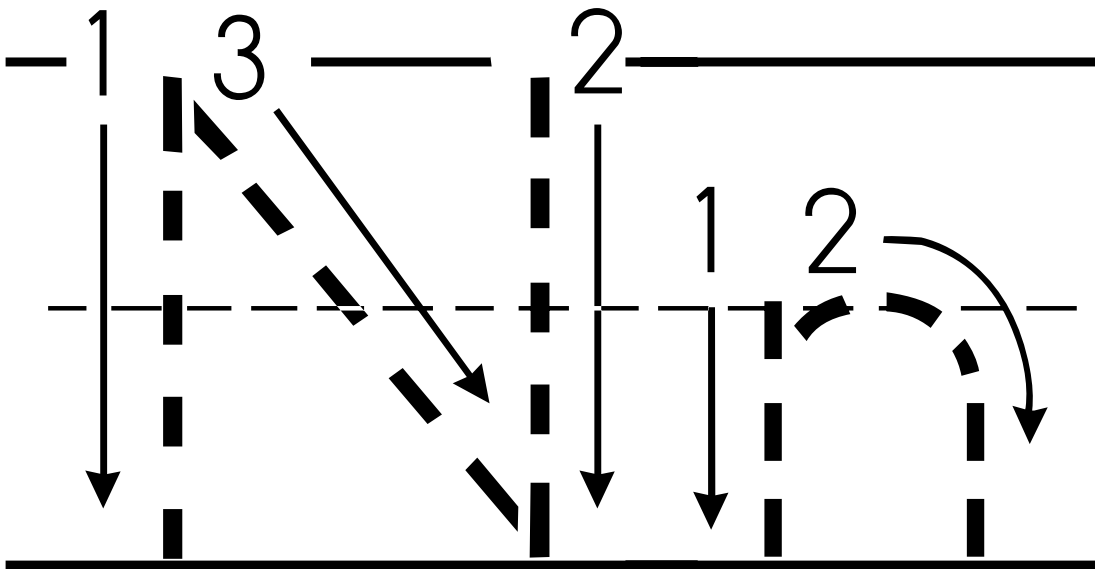
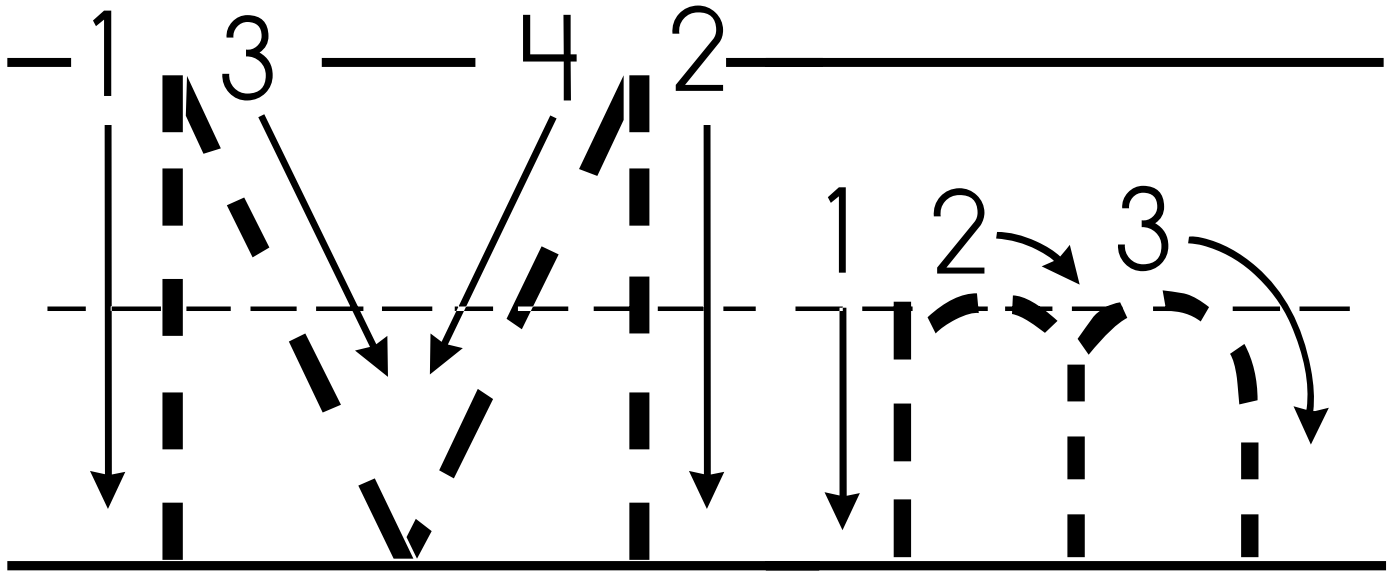


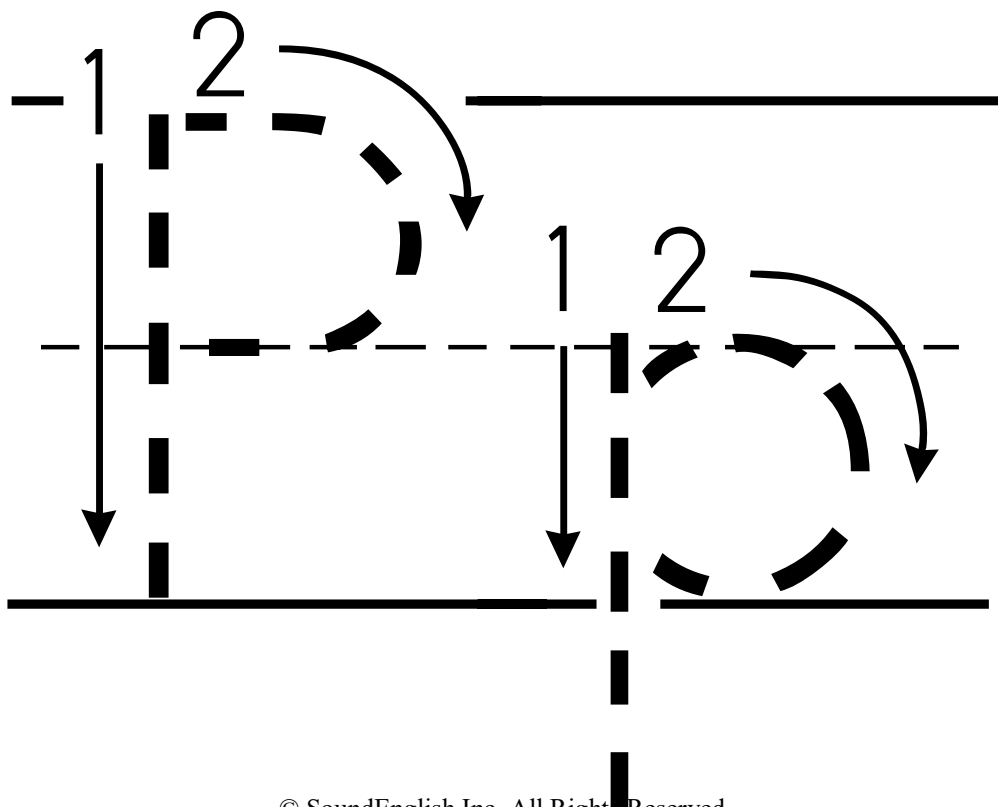
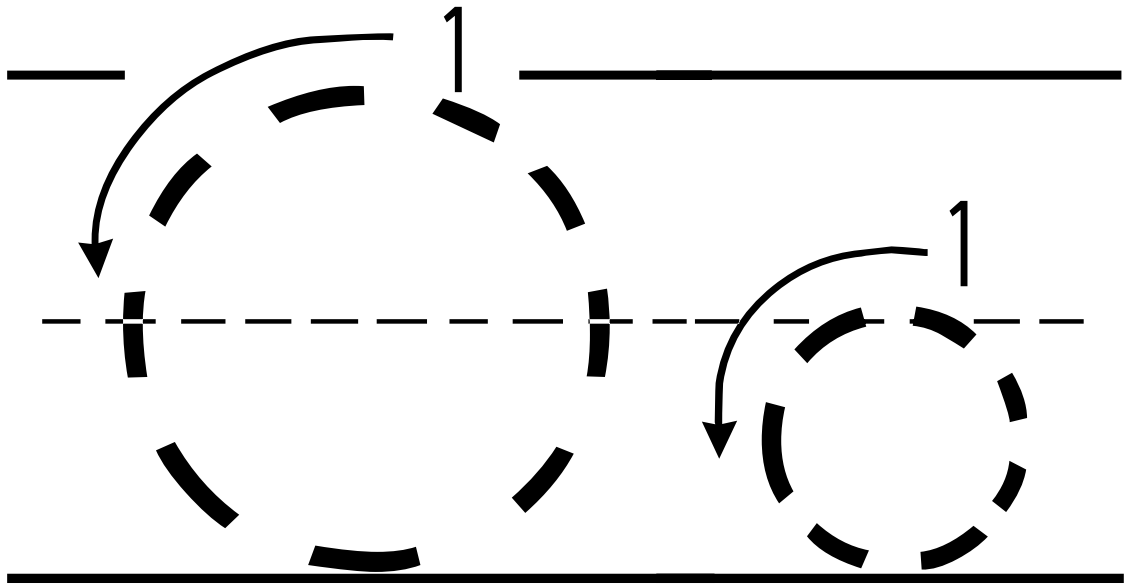


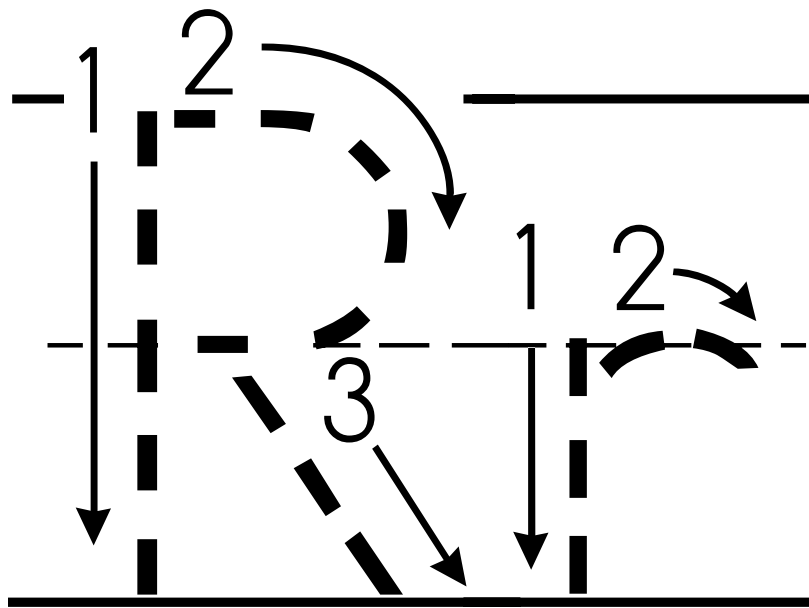
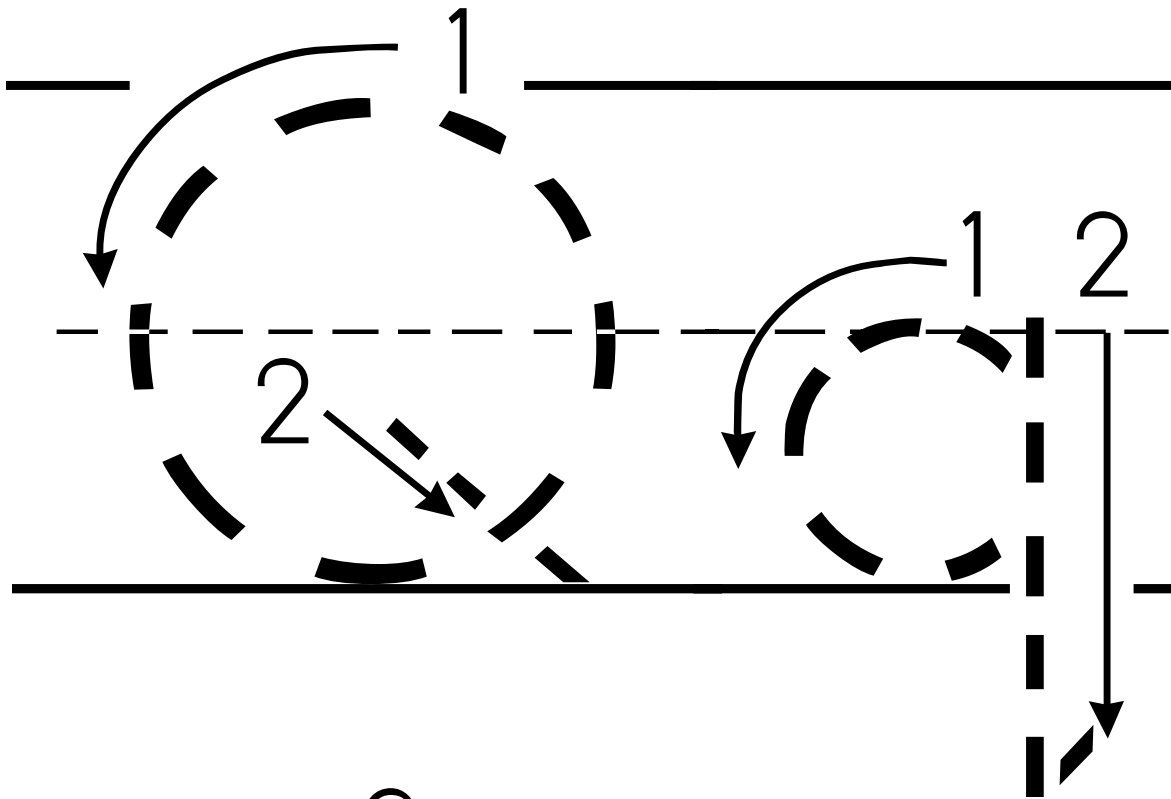


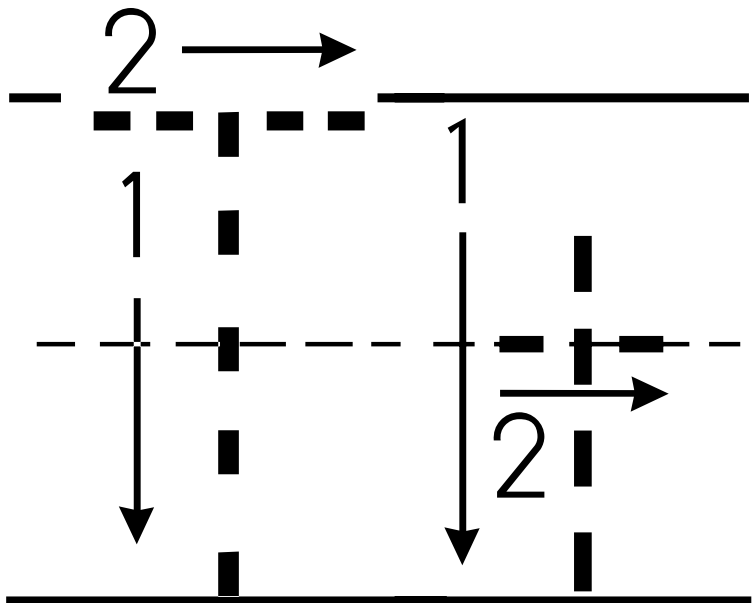
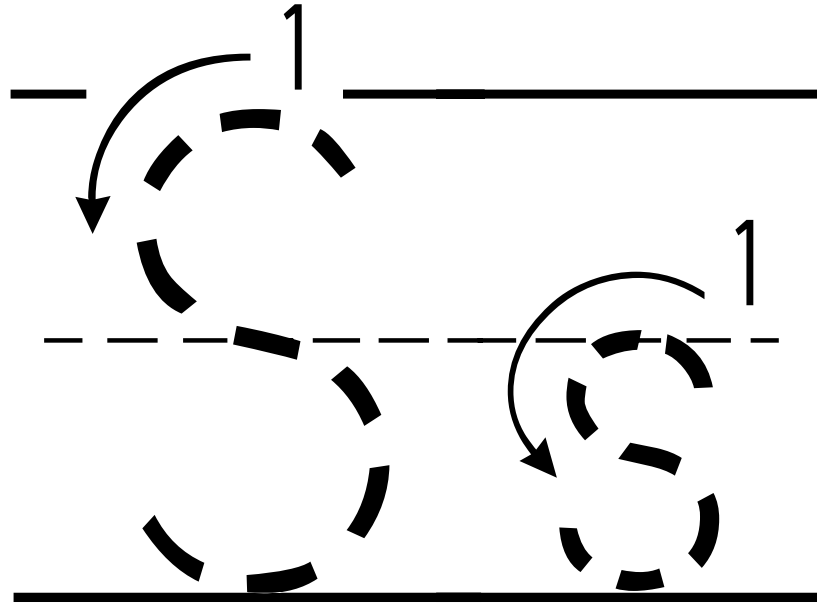


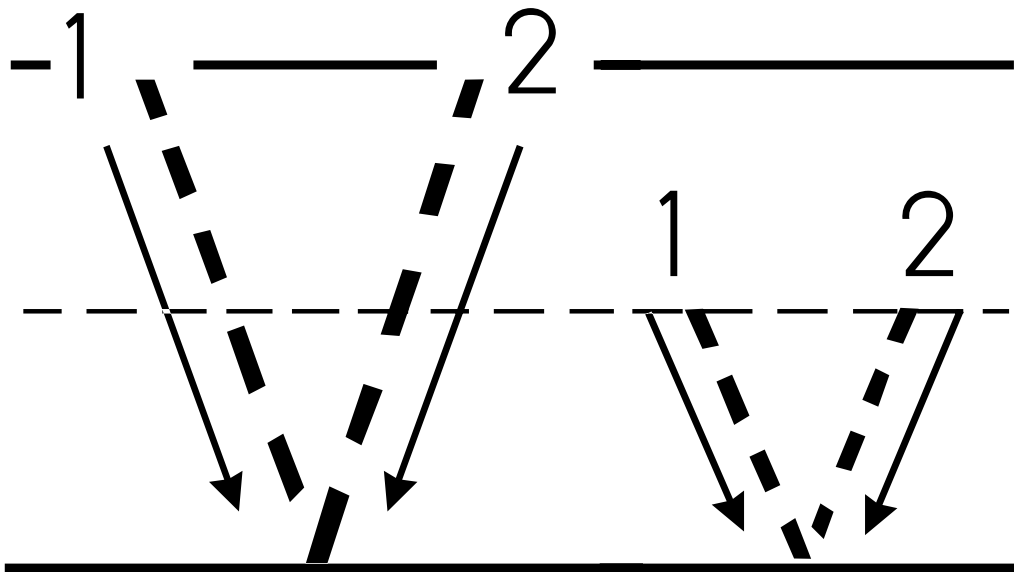
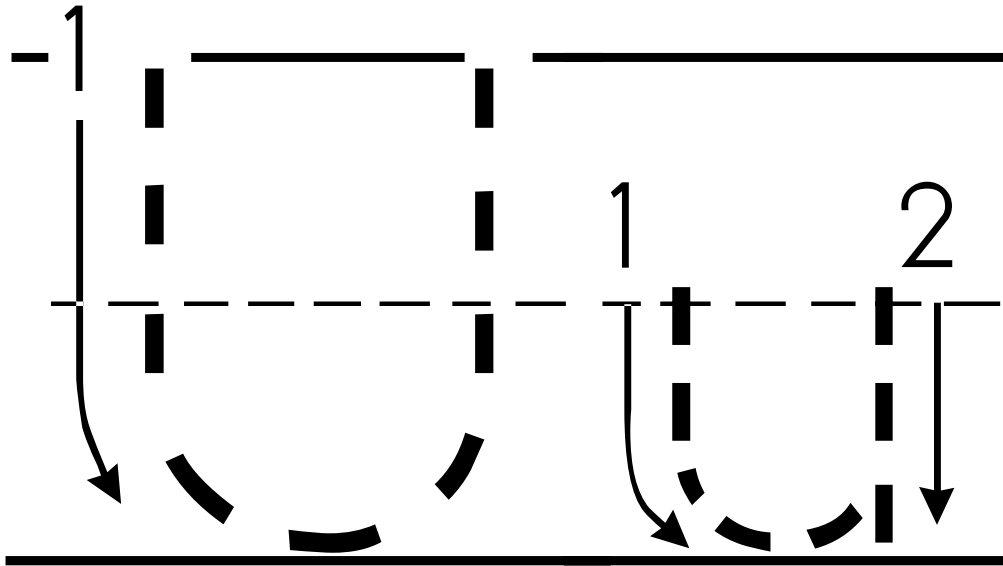


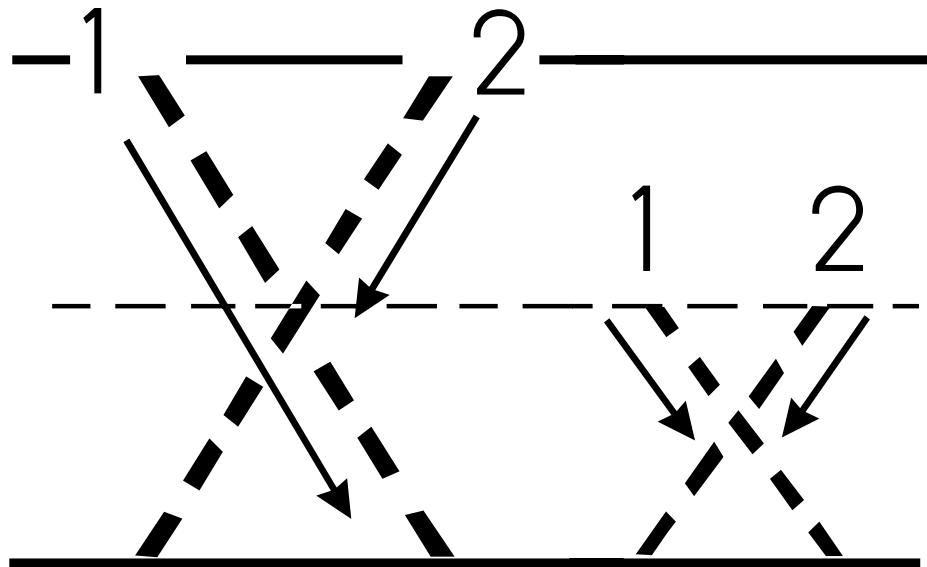
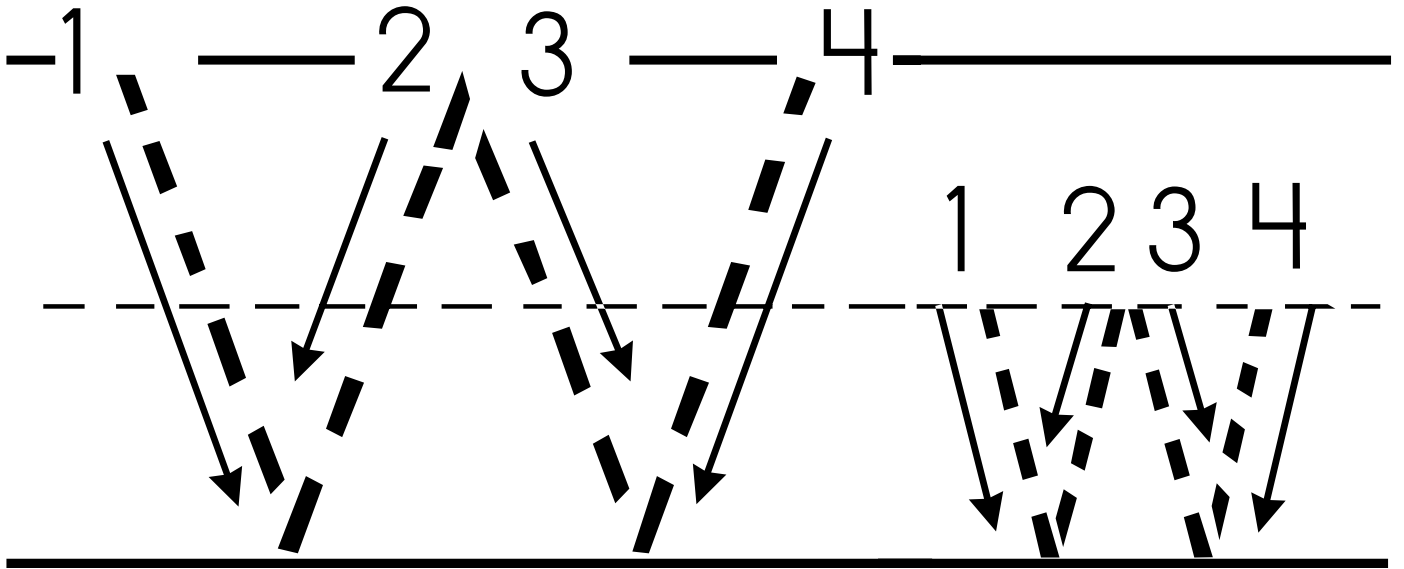


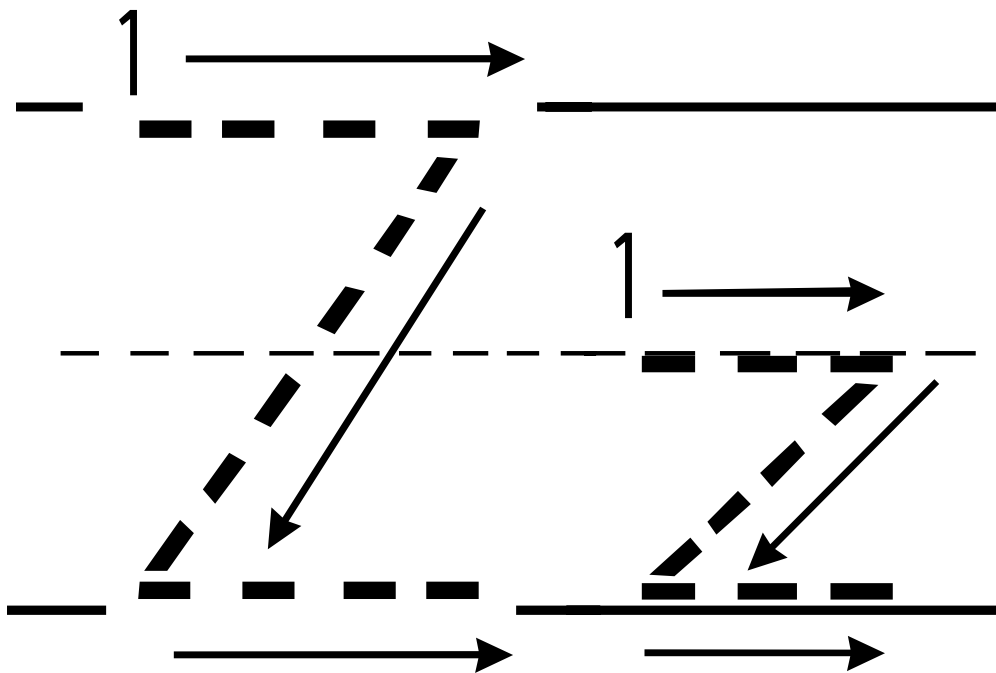
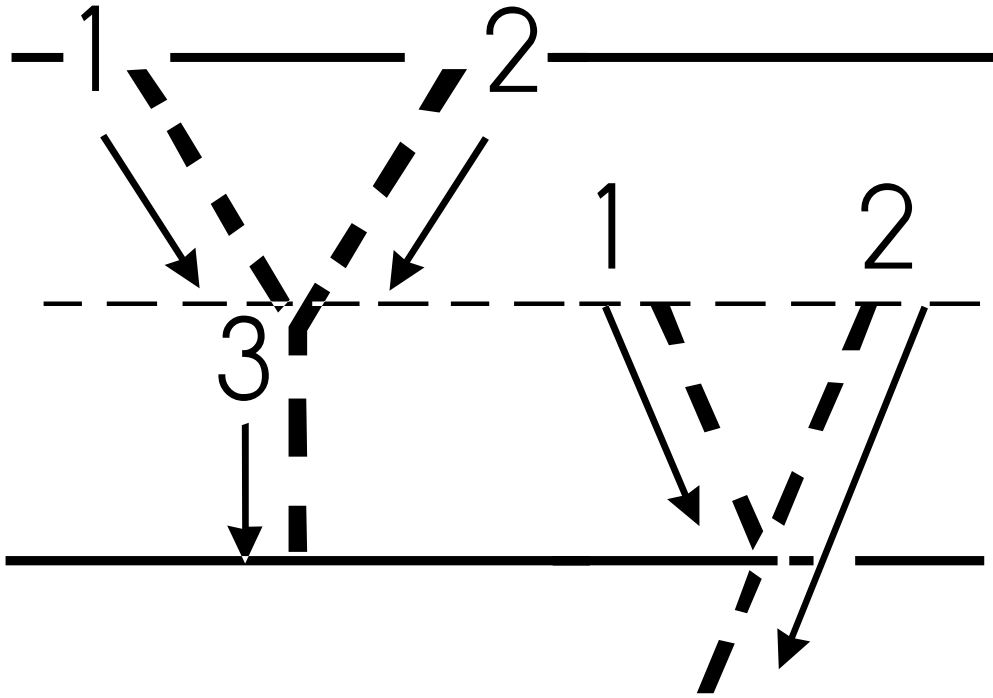












1.4 Review the Letters

Here is quick review of all the letters of the alphabet together. You can use this page for writing practice whenever you feel you need it.

