Groupings, Patterns, and Progress

For both manuscript and cursive handwriting, Zaner-Bloser presents the letters of the alphabet in groups. Each group shares common strokes, formation patterns, and visual attributes. When a child sees an individual letter, such as manuscript **a,** and attempts to write it, he or she may look at the letter and try to copy its shape. In many cases, this practice results in self-invented and inefficient methods for writing letters, such as starting the letter at the baseline instead of the midline or using a forward circle line instead of a backward circle line. By presenting **a** with other letters that contain backward circle lines, such as **o** and **d,** children are able to see patterns and learn to write letters correctly and efficiently.

Manuscript Groupings

Manuscript groupings are based on the strokes used to form the lowercase letter form (these are the letters most frequently used) of each lowercase/uppercase letter pair.

- Vertical and horizontal strokes: **l, i, t (L, I, T)**
- Forward circle and backward circle strokes: **o, a, d, c, e, f, g, j, q, u, s, b, p, r, n, m, h (O, A, D, C, E, F, G, J, Q, U, S, B, P, R, N, M, H)**
- Diagonal strokes: **v, y, w, x, k, z (V, Y, W, X, K, Z)**

Cursive Groupings

For grades 2–5, cursive groupings are based on the initial stroke used to form each letter.

Lowercase
- Undercurve letters: *i, t, u, w, e, l, b, h, f, k, r, s, j, p*
- Downcurve letters: *a, d, g, o, c, q*
- Overcurve letters: *n, m, y, x, v, z*

Uppercase
- Downcurve letters: *A, O, D, C, E*
- Curve forward letters: *N, M, H, K, U, Y, Z, V, W, X*
- Overcurve letters: *I, J, Q*
- Doublecurve letters: *T, F*
- Undercurve-Loop letters: *G, S, L*
- Undercurve-Diagonal letters: *P, R, B*