

APPENDIX B

Guidelines for Obtaining an Ideal Sample of Handwriting

1. Sample should be written on unlined paper, 8 ½ x 11, 20-pound bond paper is ideal.
2. Write “naturally,” under relaxed conditions, using the writer's choice of writing instrument (preferably not pencil or a felt tip pen), seated comfortably at a table or desk with plenty of room and a smooth surface.
3. Caution the client not to prepare the sample after drinking alcoholic beverages.
4. Copying disturbs the writer's natural rhythm and may not give a good representation of the mind at work. Therefore, the sample should be spontaneous.
5. The sample may be printed if that is the writer's normal style. However, in that case, ask the client to also include a few lines of cursive.
6. The sample should be signed and dated.
7. Several samples from different dates will help the analyst separate indicators of mood from ingrained personality traits, as well as providing more material from which to prepare an accurate analysis.

Additionally, the following information is helpful, as the answers may affect the handwriting:

1. Age, gender, and handedness.
2. Type of pen used, e.g., ballpoint, fine, medium, wide, felt tip, fountain pen. Knowing whether the writer has a favorite writing instrument may be helpful.
3. Note any irregularities on writing surface that might cause pen “jumps,” etc. For example, writing on a wooden picnic table would affect the writing.
4. Physical disabilities or recent trauma, major illness, or chronic illness, such as arthritis, or mental or emotional conditions that may affect handwriting. Medications used that may affect motor control or central nervous system.
5. Language in which the writer learned to write, as well as the age when the writer learned to write in English, if he originally learned in a language other than English.
6. Frequency of writing. Does the writer write daily, several times a week, a few times a month, or rarely, except to sign his name? We ask this because writing frequency may affect rhythm and ease of writing.
7. Education level.
8. Occupation.