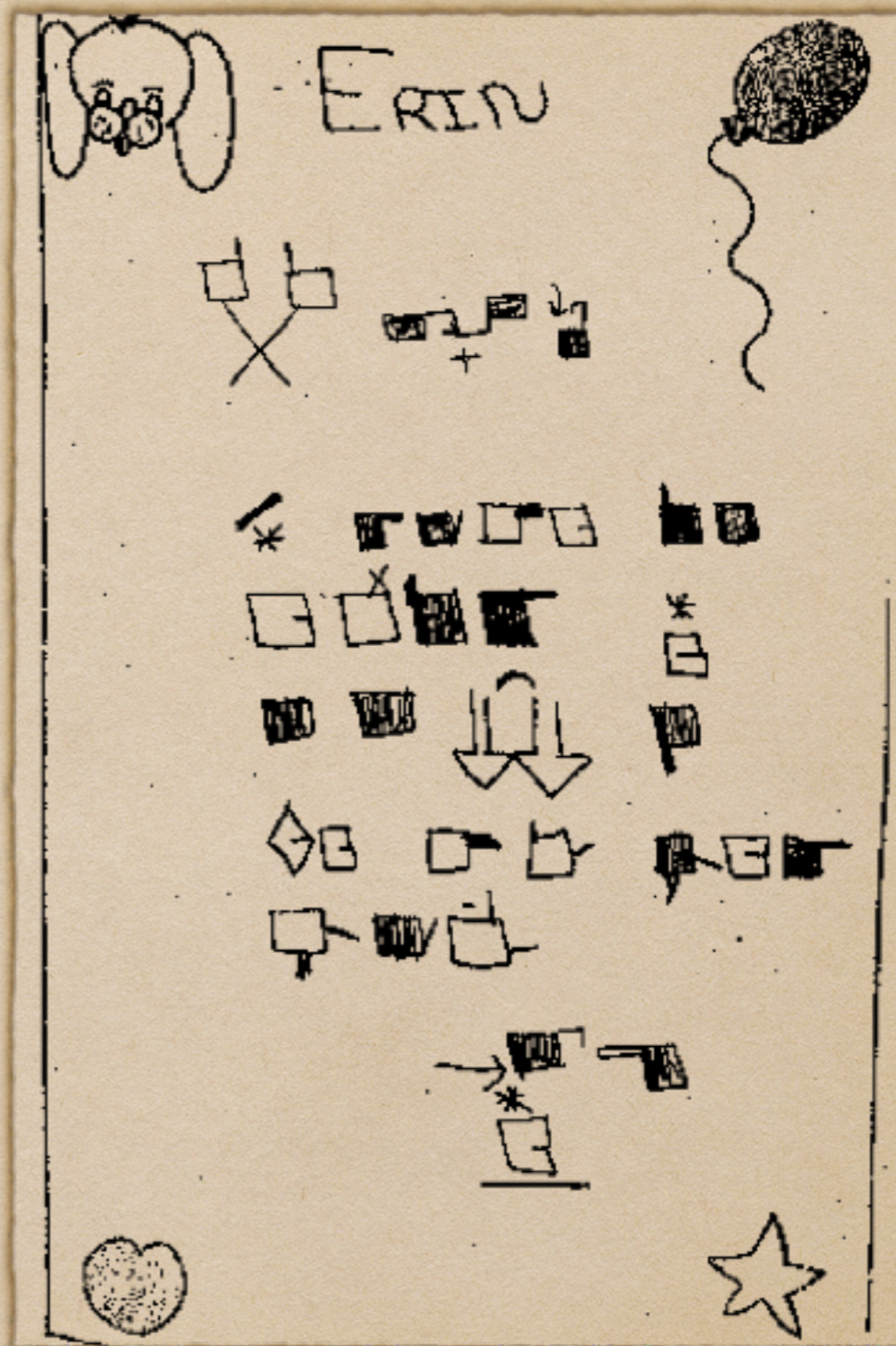


Ways to Write Sign Languages
by Hand with SignWriting

Adam Frost

When did writing by hand
start (for SignWriting)?

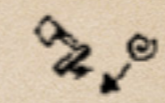
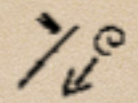
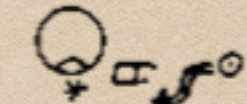
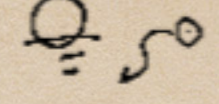
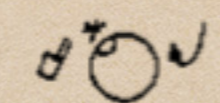
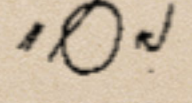
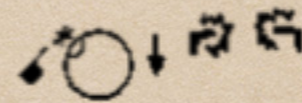
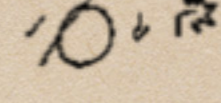

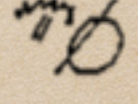
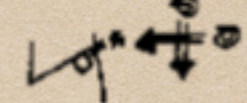
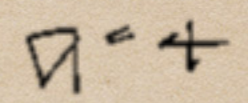
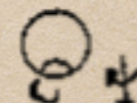

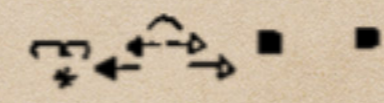
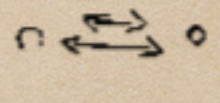

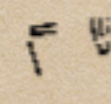
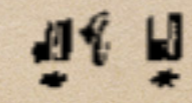
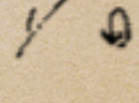
Deaf child, age 7 or 8,
after a
45-minute introduction
to SignWriting
1984
LaFayette Elementary
School, San Diego



Example of two forms of writing by hand

1982

Left: Handwriting
Right: Shorthand

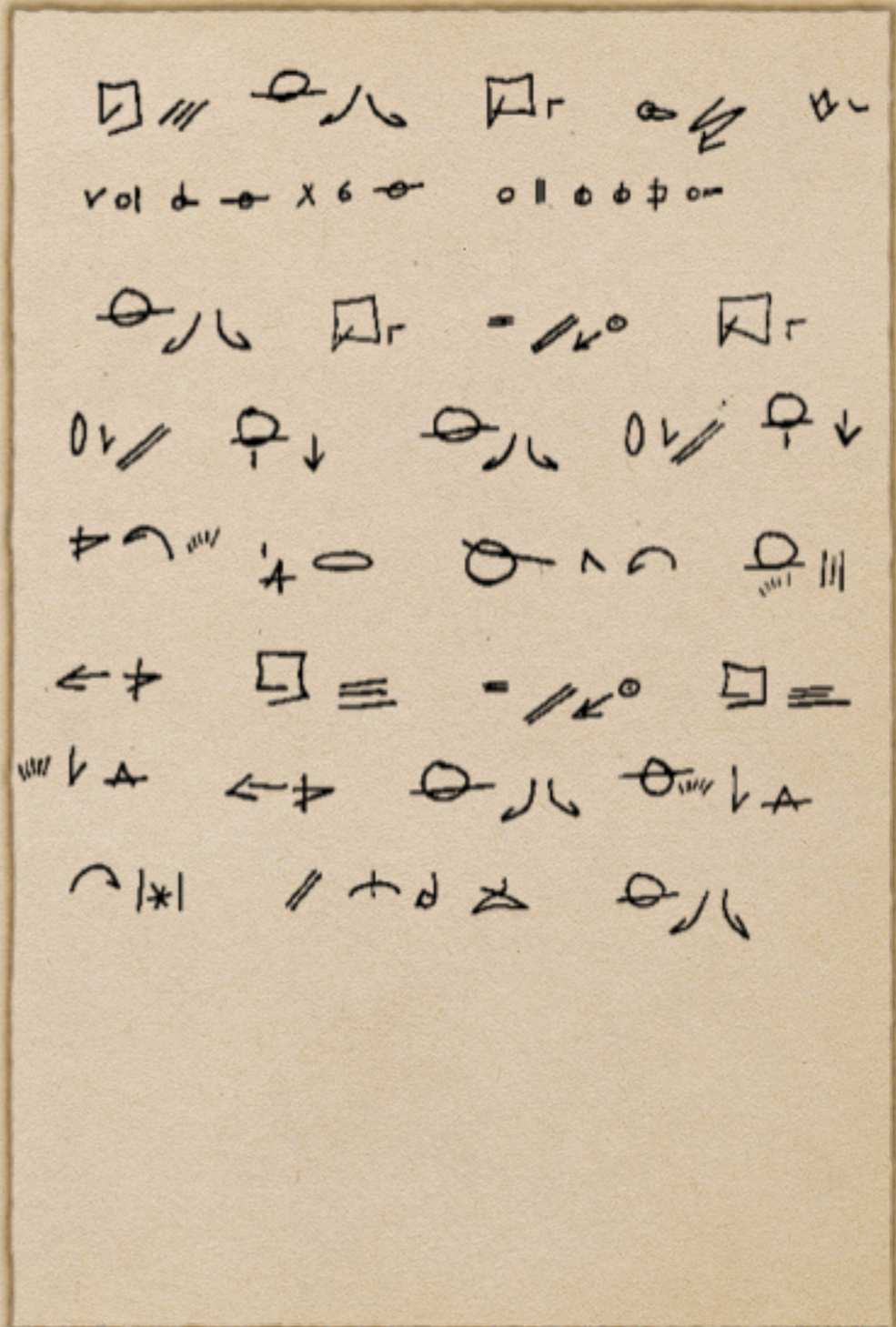
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	

"Silent Night"

written in
shorthand

1982

by Valerie Sutton



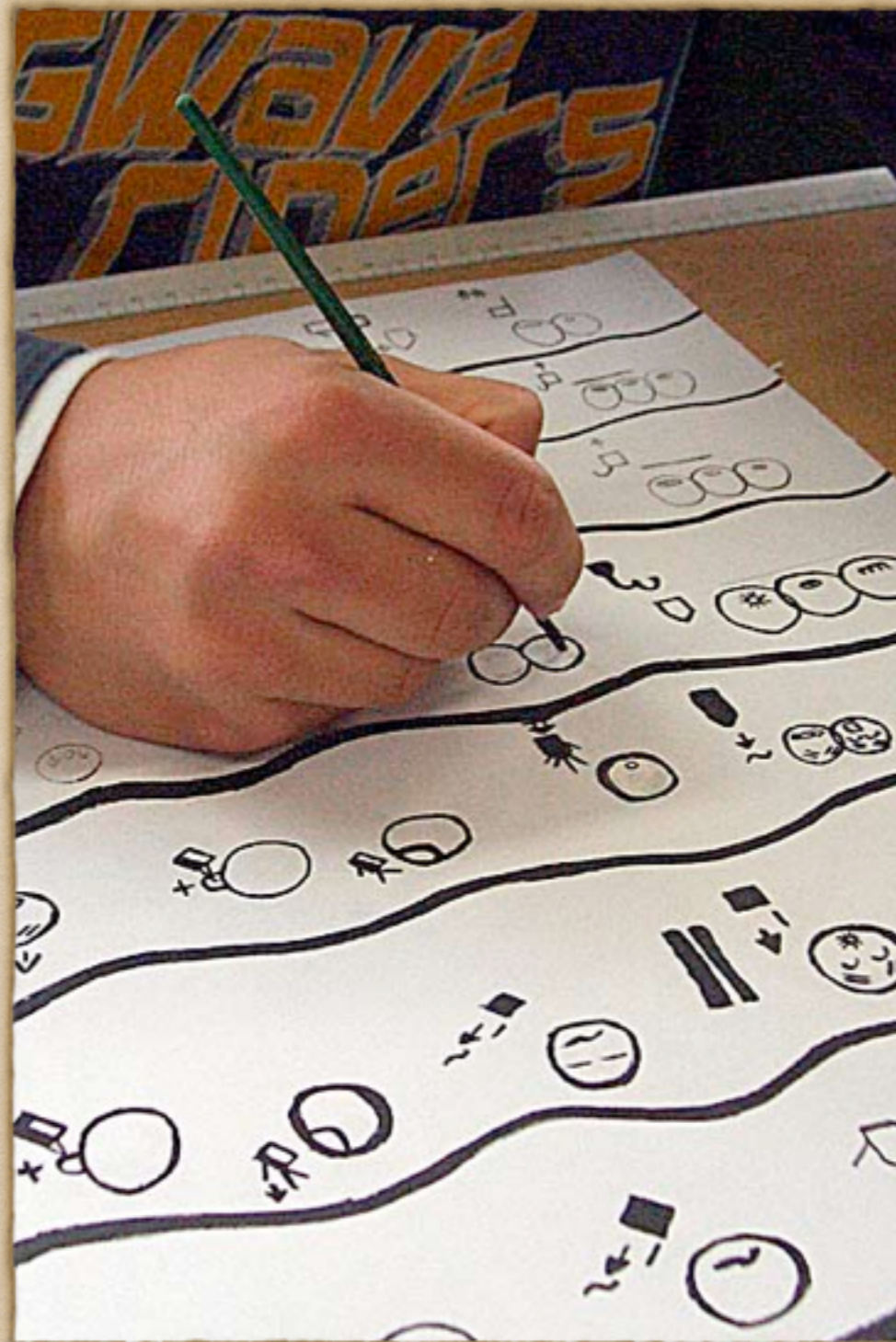
But that was before
computers

No one writes by hand
anymore, right?

Creating
SignWriting
Art Mural

2008

Osnabrück School for the
Deaf, Germany



Artist: Deaf
Student Eduard
Schmidt

2008

Osnabrück School for the
Deaf, Germany



Deaf Student
Eduard
Schmidt writing

2008

Osnabrück School for the
Deaf, Germany



Handwriting in the bathroom

2008

Osnabrück School for the
Deaf, Germany



Some from my phone

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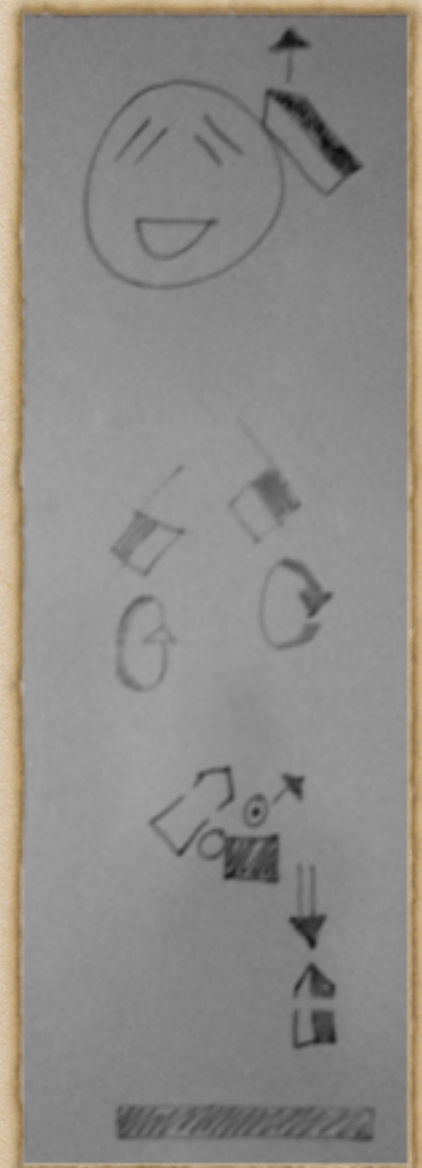
*Lines added for readability

Different Types of Writing by Hand

- Block Printing: looks like how a computer would print it
- Handwriting: looks close to print except it is simplified to be easily written by hand
- "Cursive": further reduces to make writing faster
- Shorthand: a system for writing at expressive speed (rarely used anymore due to computer inputting)

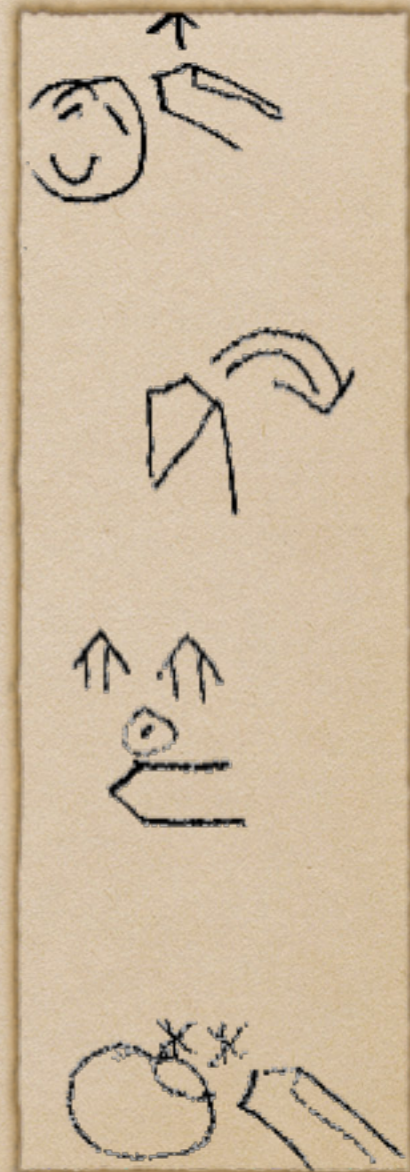
Block Printing

- The most common
- Takes time to write
 - Mostly due to fill-ins
 - Probably why people think writing by hand is cumbersome



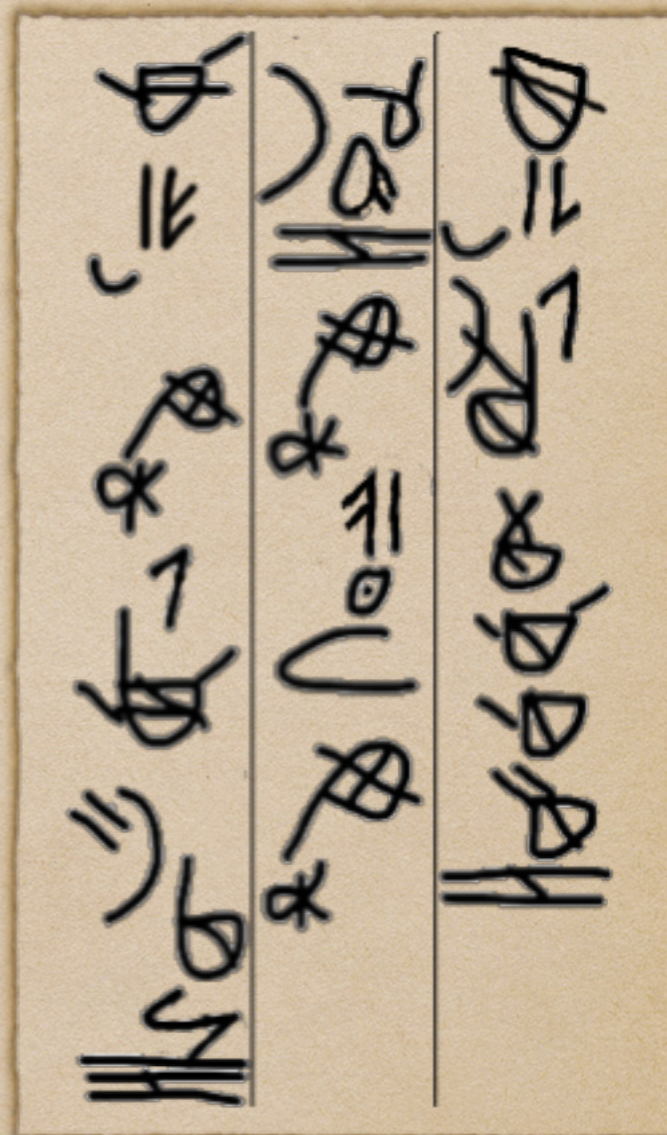
Handwriting

- Very close to Block Printing
- For this reason, a student must learn Block Printing before learning Handwriting
- Once Block Printing is mastered, Handwriting can be learned quickly
- There are several variations among experienced SignWriters just as there are variations in handwriting in other languages



"Cursive"

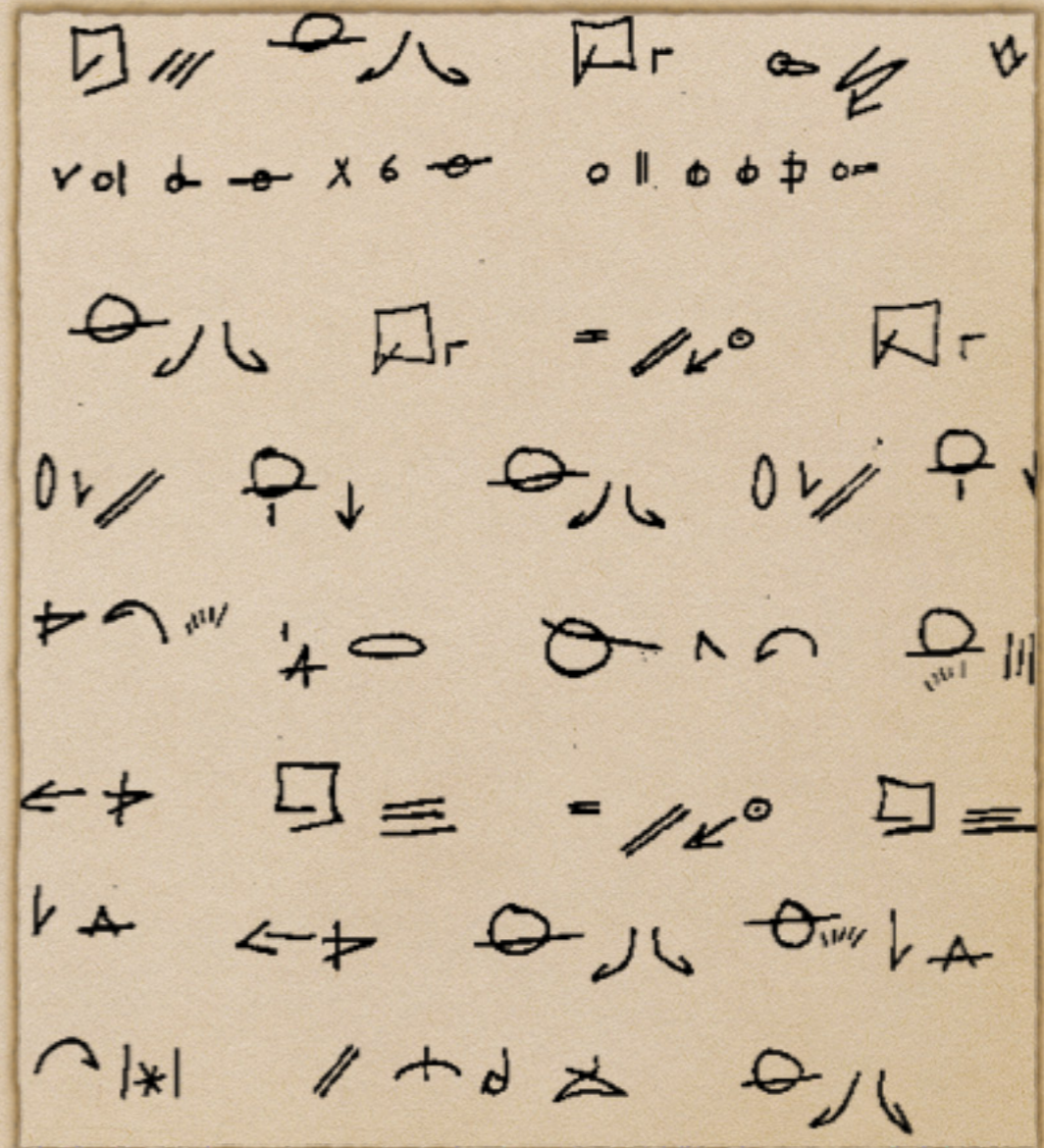
- My own personal simplified handwriting
- Use some handwriting variations from other writers as well as my own
- Only the dominant hand is written
- Timing symbols are used to signify non dominant hand



*Lines added for readability

Shorthand

- Started in the 1980's
- Most documents were written in that time
- Mostly used for transcription
- Very language-specific
- Often for a quick writing of something for later use



Let's learn how to use
Handwriting

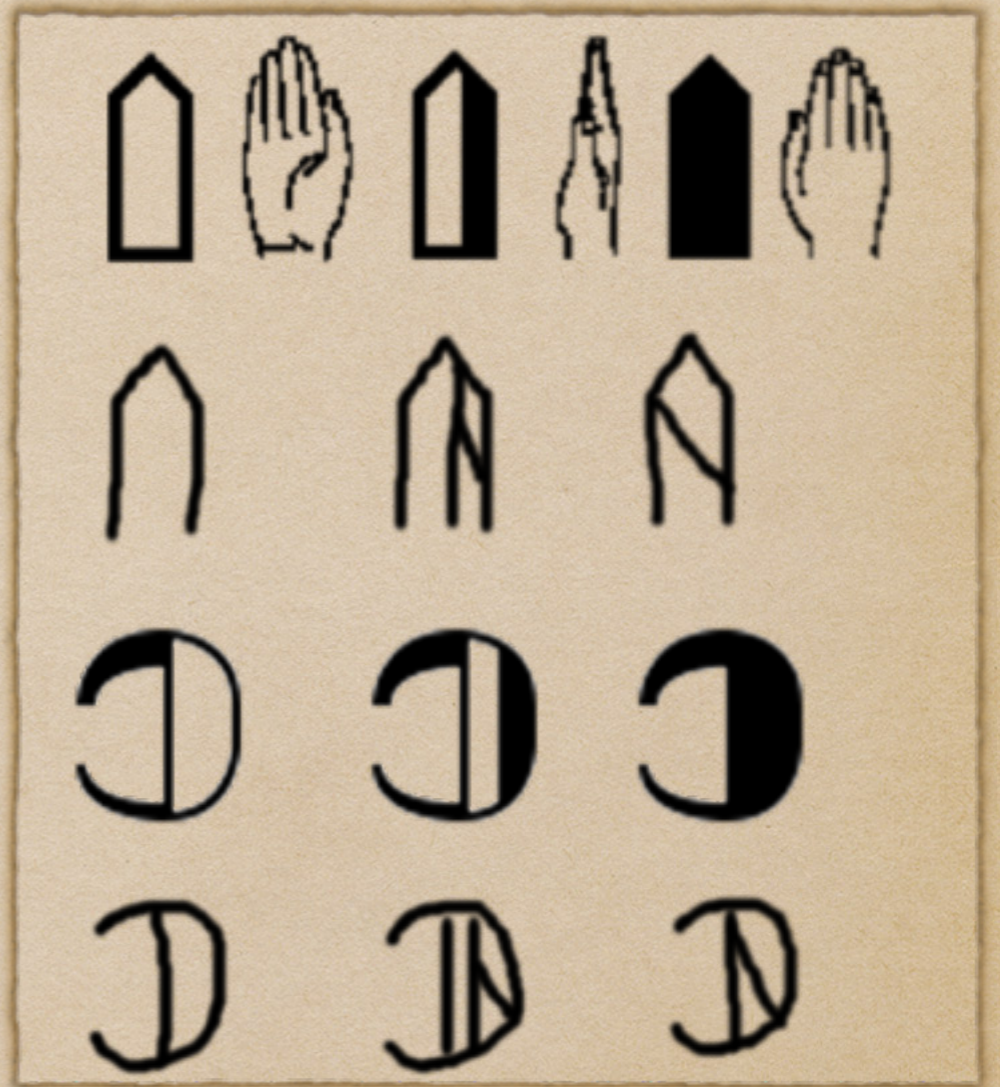
Root Shapes

- There are 8 basic root shapes
- Make sure that thumb lines crosses
- Make sure angle and hinge roots are thinner than the square roots



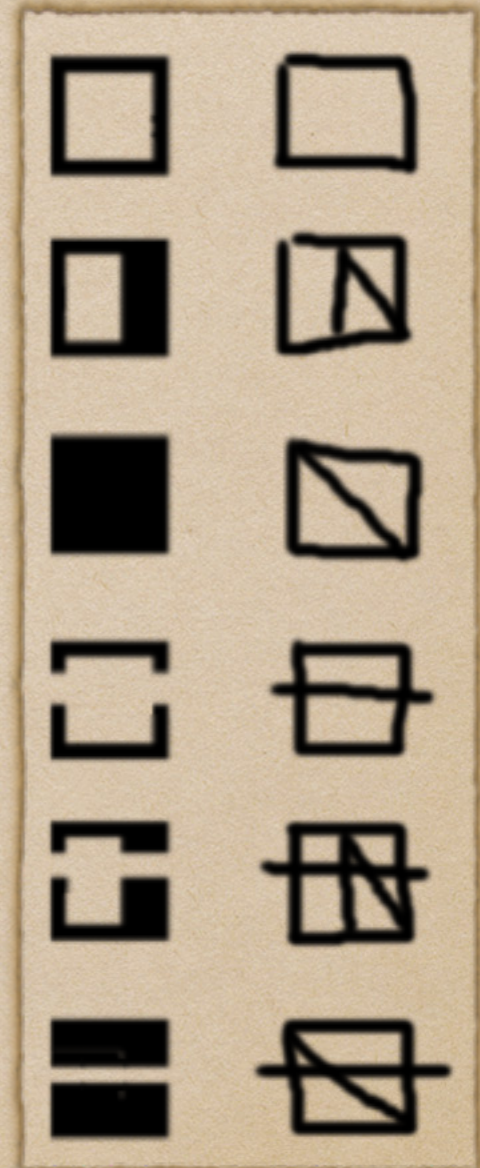
Palm Facings

- Palm shadings are written with a diagonal line
- Take care that the line is truly diagonal



Palm Facings

- The Top View is written with a line striking through the root shape
- Make sure that it is crossing outside of the shape on both sides



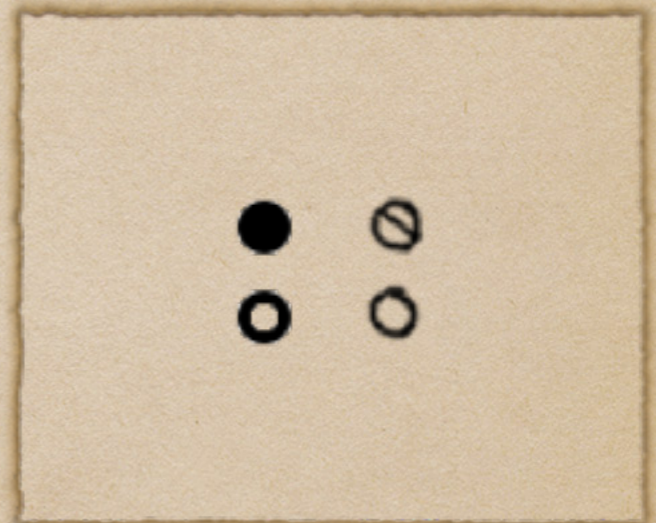
Palm Facings

- Squares with thumbs lines across have a little different approach to the Top View
- Top Views are written without the top of the root shape written



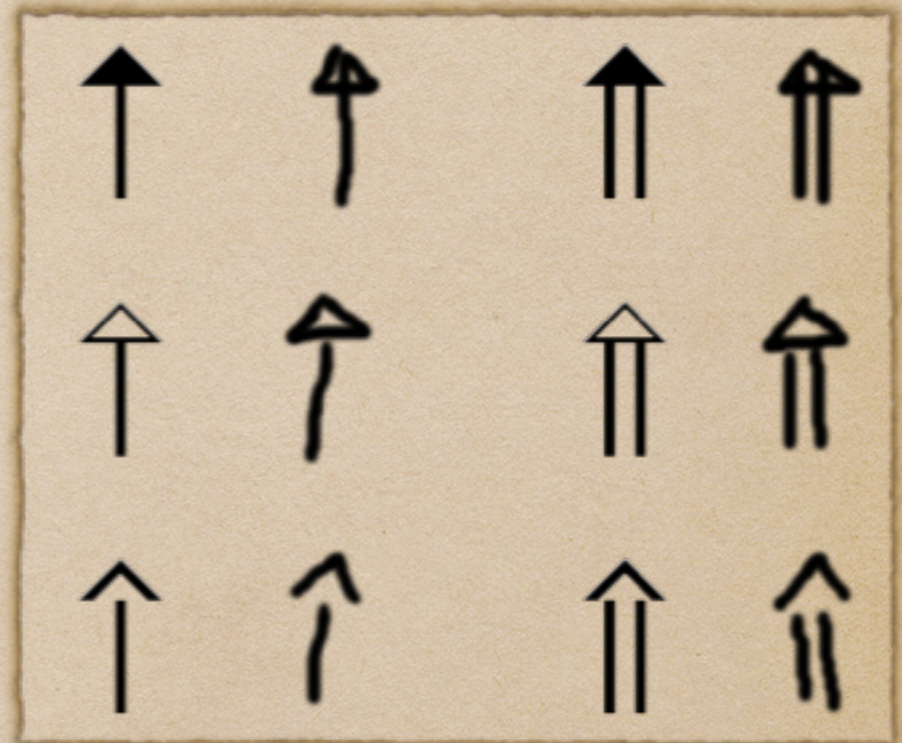
Finger Movements

- Just like shading is done with a diagonal for handshapes
- Be careful to write so the size isn't the same as a circle root shape



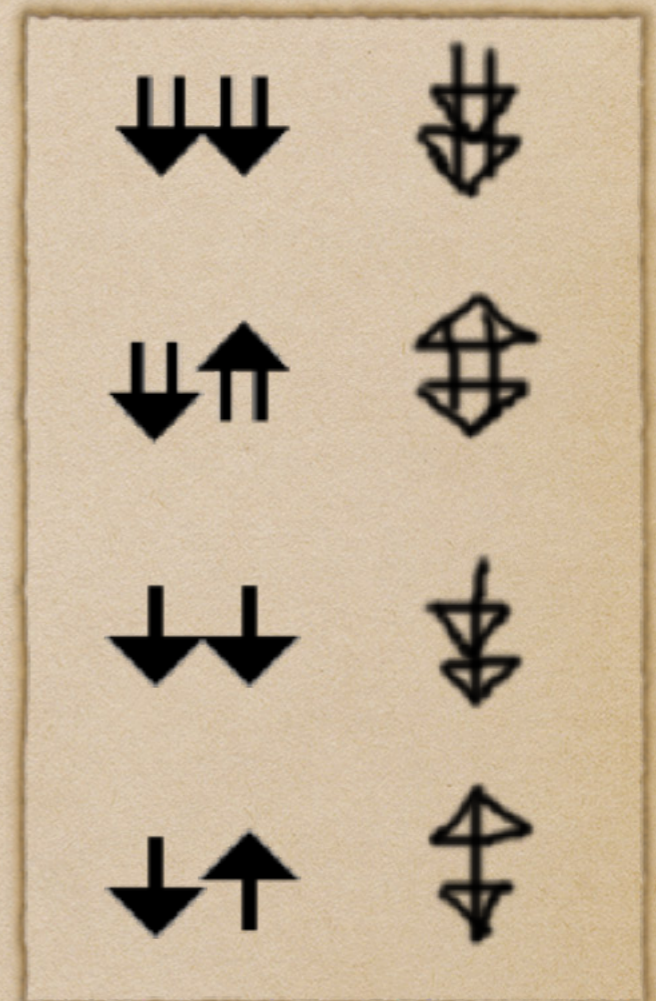
Arrowheads

- Filled in arrowheads must have a line going through it
- Draw the stem through the arrowhead for filled in arrowheads



Arrowheads

- Double movements are written as double arrowheads on the same stem
- Back and forth movements are written with the arrowheads on the ends of the stem
- Details of order are lost, but I personally haven't noticed any meaning lost as a result



Arrows

- Stems with gradual thickness have their outlines written, but no shading in



Punctuations

- Punctuations do not have a “closed” shape
- Thin lines are written as a thin line
- Thick lines are written as two thin lines with a diagonal line to “shade-in”



You now know the basics
of how to Handwrite

Now, let's move on to what
I call "Cursive" writing

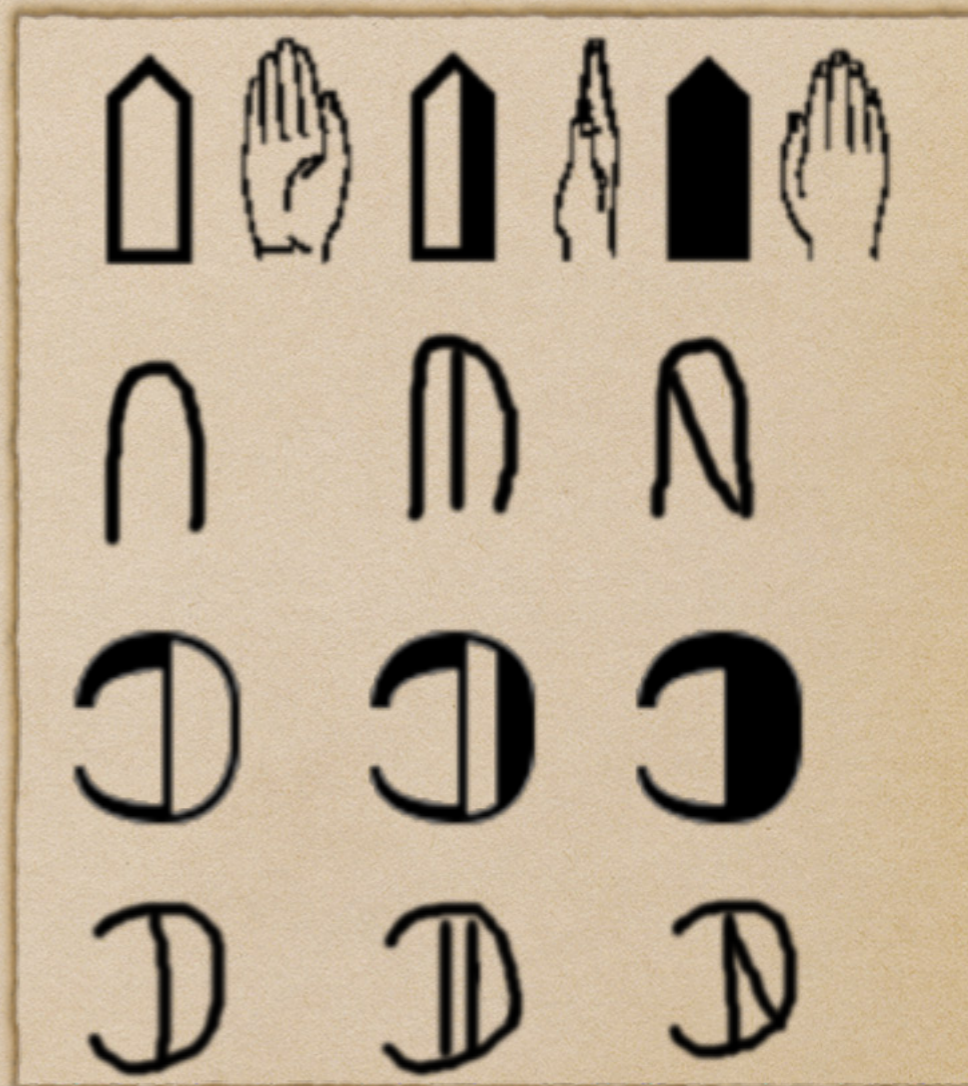
Root Shapes

- Slight differences have been made to some of the shapes to make them easier and quicker to write
- Note the rounding of root shapes make it easier to write than the shapes from the handwritten forms



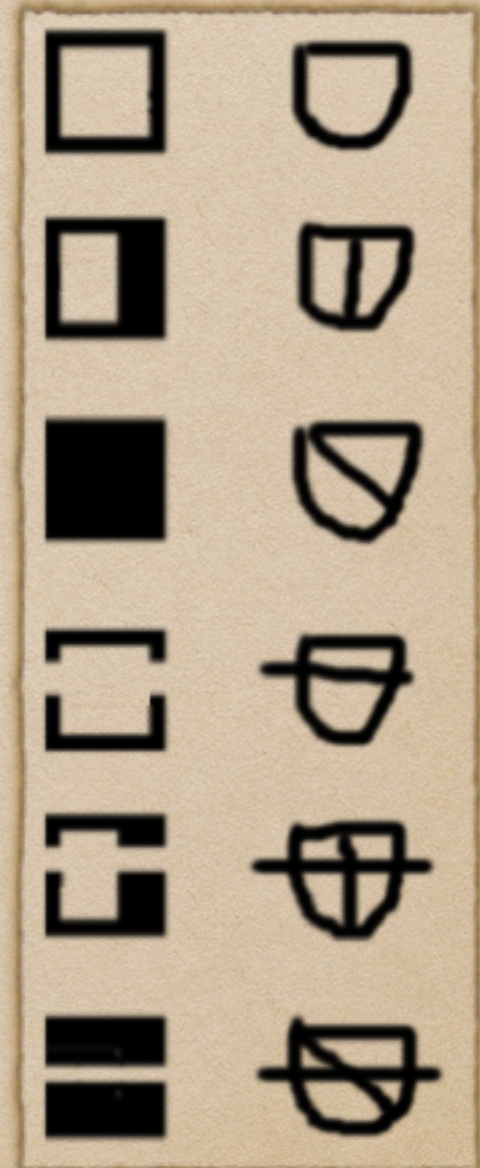
Palm Facings

- Palm shading is still done with a diagonal line
- Side facing only have one vertical line without a diagonal line
- The side facing diagonal is reserved for when the palm is facing outward from the body



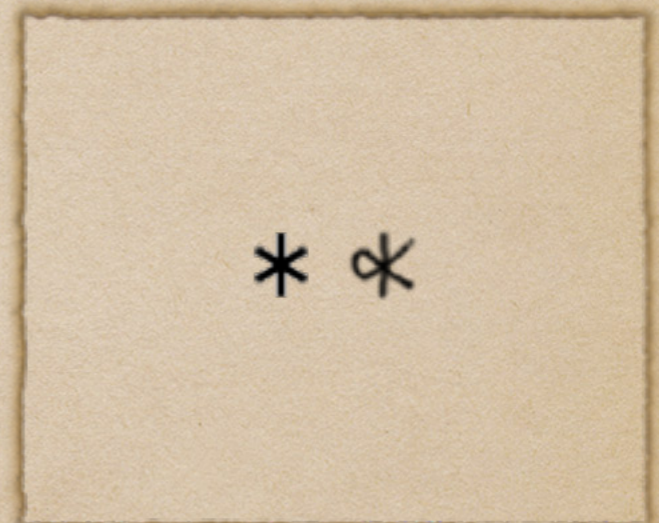
Palm Facings

- The Top View is written with a line striking through the root shape
- This is the same as the handwritten form



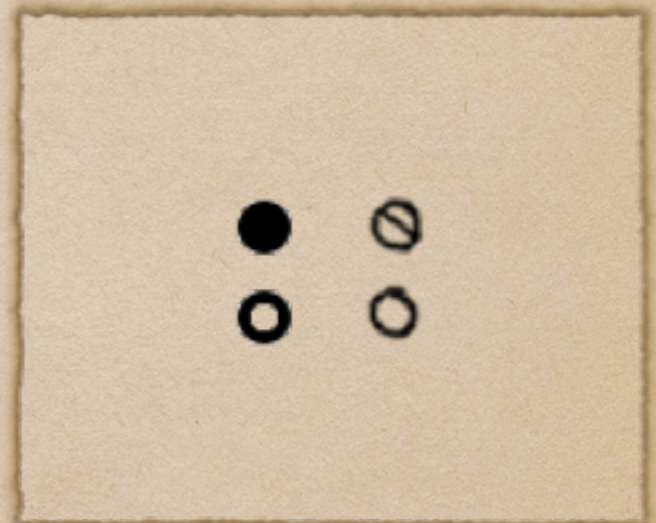
Contact Star

- This is the only contact symbol that is different from the printed form
- The connecting line makes it so it is quicker to write compared to the printed form



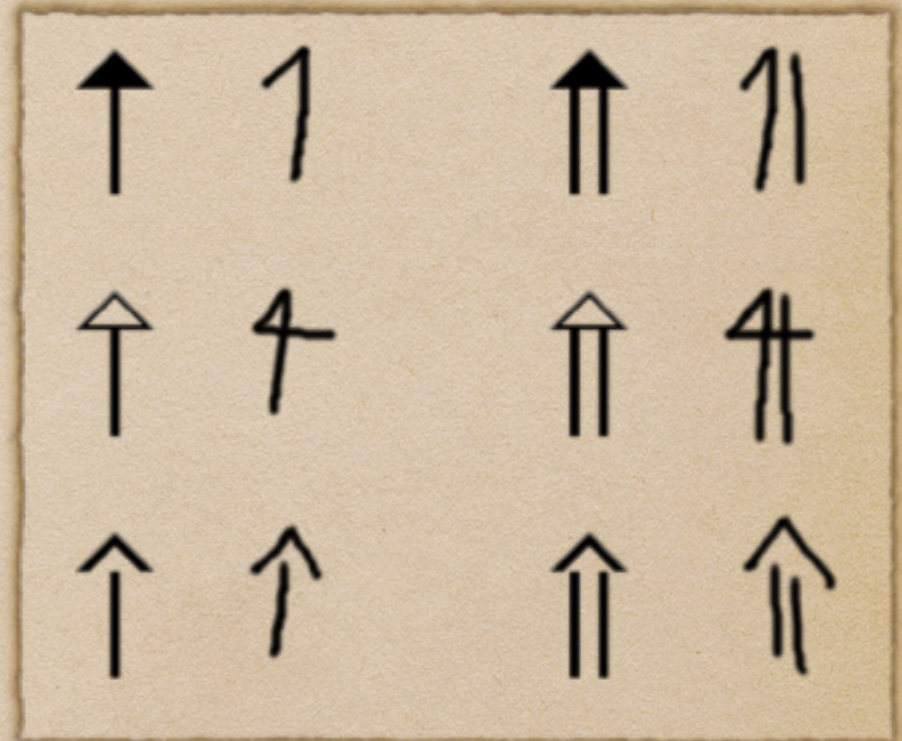
Finger Movements

- Just like shading is done with a diagonal for handshapes
- Be careful to write so the size isn't the same as a circle root shape



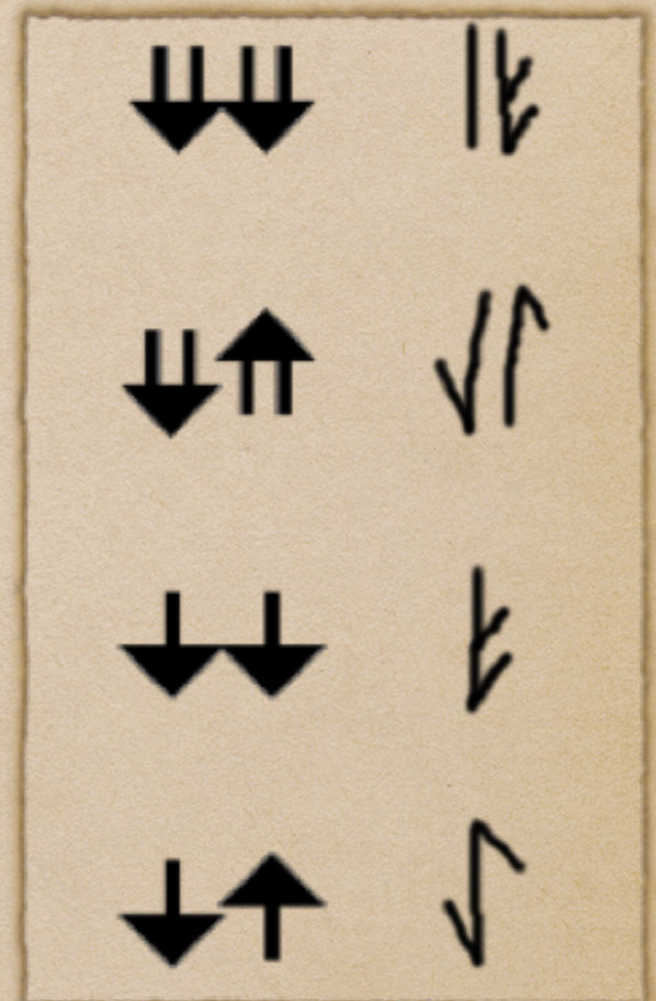
Arrowheads

- A diagonal line is used to represent where the arrowhead is
- It doesn't matter which side the diagonal line is on
- While it is true that only the dominant hand is written, the line crossing the stem represents the left hand



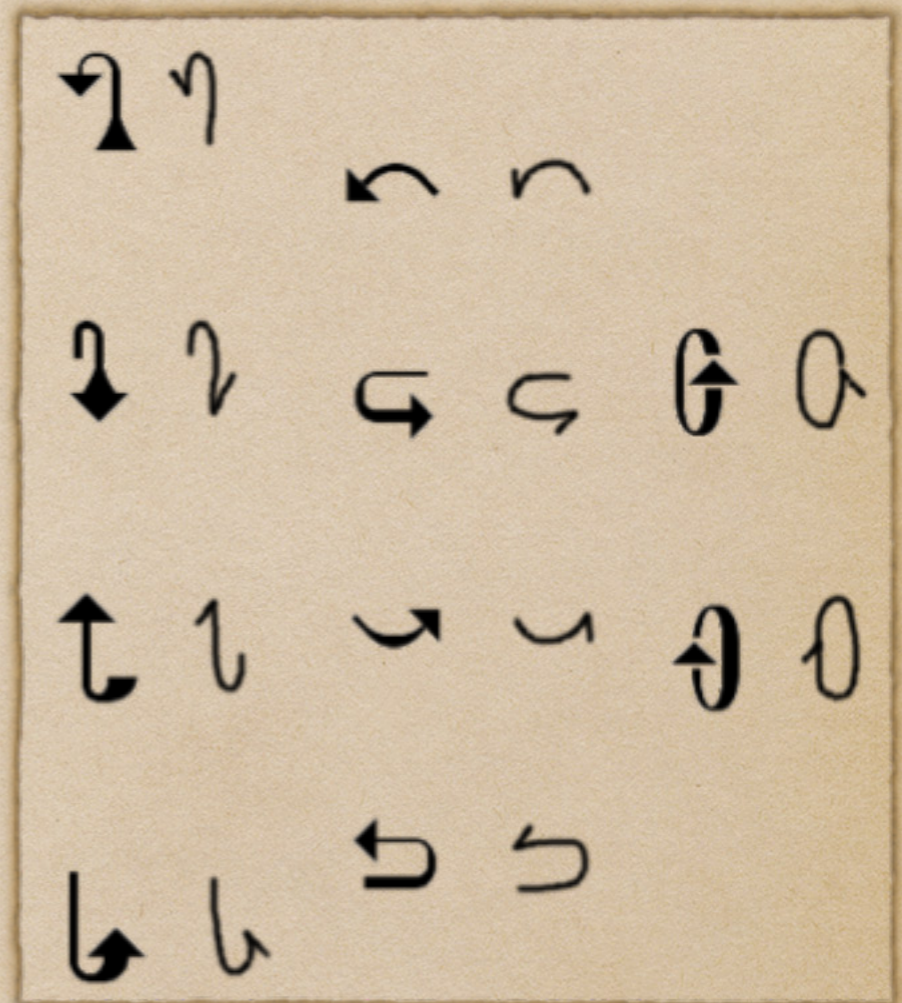
Arrowheads

- Double movements are written as double arrowheads on the same stem
- Back and forth movements are written with the arrowheads on the ends of the stem
- The side the arrowhead is on indicates which back and forth movement is first



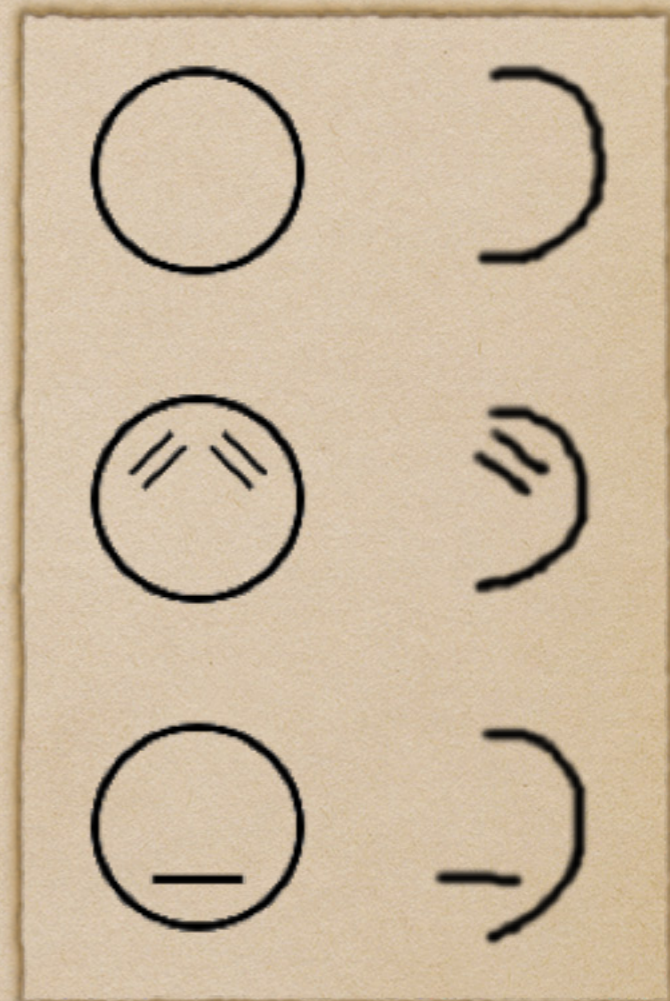
Arrows

- Stems with gradual thickness do not have their outlines written, but the general shape is
- The thickness is always assumed to be on the “outside” and bottom
- Meaning if the right hand’s movement is written, the right side of the stem is the thicker side



The Head

- Only the dominant half of the head is written
- This means that only one eye is also written
- Since there is only one mouth, there is no dominant half that can only be written



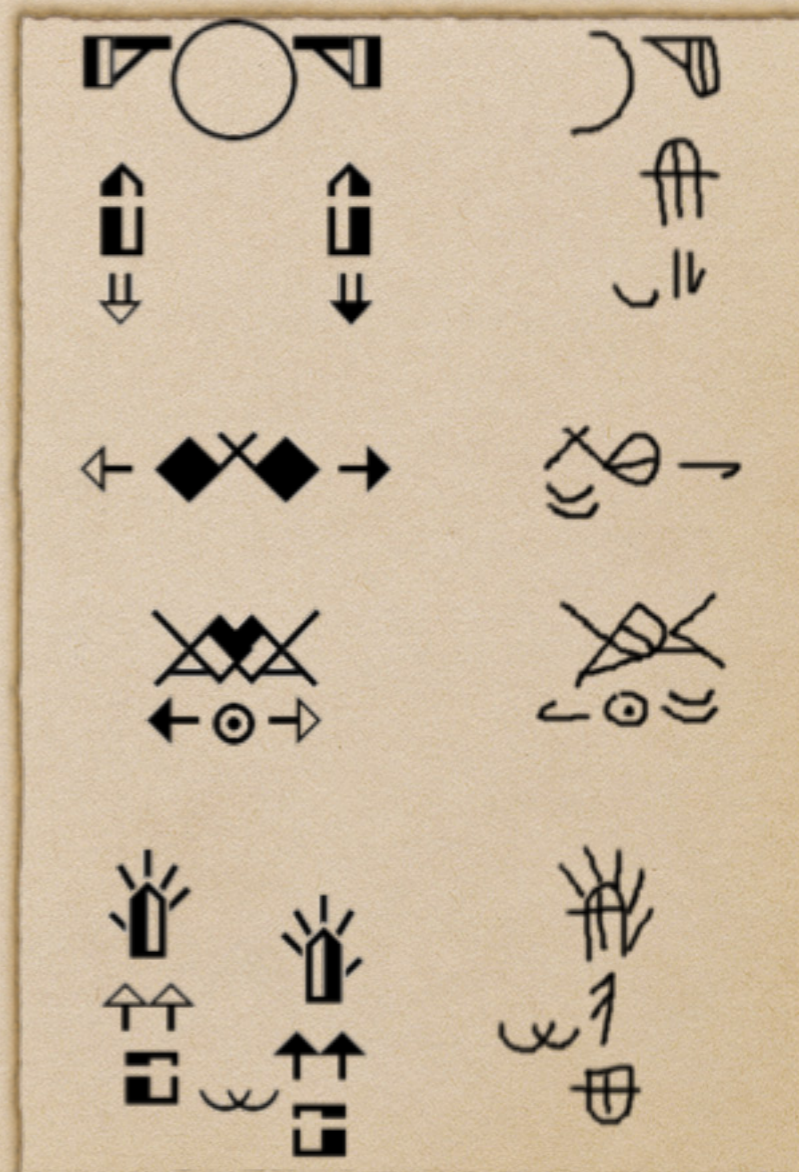
Punctuations

- Punctuations are also the same as handwritten forms
- Thin lines are written as a thin line
- Thick lines are written as two thin lines with a diagonal line to “shade-in”



Some Final Notes

- As mentioned before, "Cursive" writing is only writes the dominant hand
- Timing symbols are used for when both hands are doing the movement



Non Dominant Base Hands

- If the non dominant hand is a root handshape, the symbols on the right are used
- Otherwise, the active fingers can be written

□	—
⊞	┴
○	○
⊖	∪
⊞	∩
∇	∇
⊞	—
⊞	┴

Some Examples

- Non dominant base hands are not completely written
- It is possible to write them if the palm facing is important, but I have found it usually isn't

