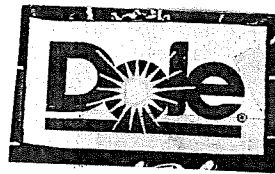# Creative Lettering

The following suggestions should help your cards and scrapbook pages to have a more professional look. However, creative lettering means that there no set rules. Your finished designs will be as unique and special as you are! Practice, experiment and have fun! Before you know it, you will be amazing yourself and impressing others!

A few tips before you begin
1) Use a pencil and ruler to "lay out" your designs before using markers. In some cases, especially if you are writing in a tight space, you benefit from making a rough draft on scrap paper. Then, when you have a design that will fit in the desired space, use this as a guide to lightly pencil the letters/words onto your scrapbook page or card.
2) If you are fitting a word into a small area, start by penciling the middle letter in the center of the area, and build to the left and right of that letter. Do the same when fitting a phrase into a specific area. Start with the middle word and build around it.
3) Try to use a light touch, keeping a round and open feel in your lettering, and don't be afraid to use a lot of space.
4) Don't hold your pen in a death grip. This will cause your letters to be shaky and, in time, will ruin your pen "nibs." If you find yourself getting tense, relax by taking a few deep breaths, roll your shoulders, shake out your arms, stretch your fingers, and practice a bit on scrap paper. Remind yourself that if it's not right, you can do it over! (Note- If your penmanship is usually very small, narrow, or pinched in style, it will take time for you to attain a smooth, casual flow in your lettering. Be patient and practice, practice, practice!)
5) Design layout- Remember, simple is best. Choose only a few main areas for bold or decorated text. This will add strength to your layout and make it easier to read. If you mix too many sizes and styles of letters, they will compete with each other for attention.
6) Experiment with different types of pens and different embellishments. Punches, stamps and stencils will add variety and interest to your design. (Details follow!)
7) Pen storage Tips- Store brush markers and dual-tip pens flat.
   Store single tip pens in a cup (vertically, nib side down) to keep ink in the pen tip.
8) Watch newspapers and magazines for lettering styles and designs that appeal to you. Keep a file of these for inspiration.
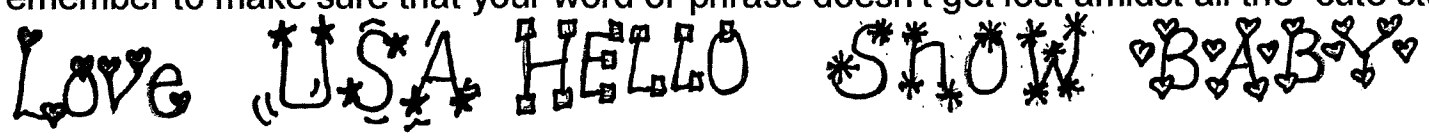
Created by Kathy Asper @ 1998

1

Dot Lettering

Dot lettering is probably the most commonly used lettering style. It is a fast and easy way to add an embellishment to your words. A dual-tip marker works great for making these letters. (PS If you ever write out a not-too-perfect word, you might be able to "save" it by adding these kinds of embellishments. Give it a try!)

Step 1- Use the narrow tip of the marker to write the whole word or phrase.
        (You can sketch the word out in pencil first, if you desire)

Step 2- Now, using the bolder tip, go back and dot all the letters. I usually dot just the ends of
        the letters. (You can also dot all the intersecting lines, too, but make sure that your
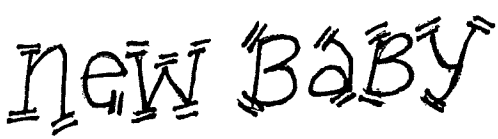   words don't get "lost" in all the dots)

Variation- You can "dot" the ends of your letters with almost anything. Draw open dots, hearts, squares, flowers, stars, or arrows; glue on punched out hearts or stars, stamp on snowflakes or squiggles.... The possibilities are endless. Let your imagination go. Just remember to make sure that your word or phrase doesn't get lost amidst all the "cute stuff"!

Love USA HELLO SNOW BABY

Serif Lettering

Serif lettering is another commonly used lettering style. Follow the same steps for making the dot letters, except replace the dot with a narrow slash (serif). Once again, a dual-tip marker works well, helping you to keep the width of your serifs consistent.

Variations- Use double serifs and your
letters will look like they are vibrating!   new BABY

Give your words a formal feeling
By drawing the serifs at straight   GRADUATION
horizontal and vertical angles.

Or, they can take on a more casual
Feeling if you draw them perpendicular   GRADUATION
to the line on which they are placed.

OUTLINE LETTERS

Outlining will help to make your words look finished, and your phrases look connected.

Outlining Letters-
Step 1- Using a medium tipped marker (or pencil) write a word
(Space the letters further apart than you normally would.)

Step 2- Use a fine tipped (or different colored) marker to outline
each letter of the word. Try to leave even spacing all around.

Outlining words-
Follow Step 1 above.
Step 2- Use a fine tipped (or different colored) marker to outline
the word as a whole. Try to leave even spacing all around.

Outlining Phrases-
Step 1- Using a medium tipped marker (or pencil) write a phrase
(Space the letters further apart than you normally would.)

Step 2- Use a narrow tipped (or different colored) marker to draw
around the phrase, connecting the words together.
Variations- You can also outline your words or phrases with shapes.

BLOCK Letters

Making these popular block letters is easier than you think! (With practice you'll be able to draw these without even using a pencil!) For a connected look, make your letters overlap.

Step 1- Lightly write your word in pencil. (Space the
letters further apart than you normally would.)

Step 2- Use a pencil to draw around each letter.

Step 3- Erase pencil marks (inside of shapes.)
And draw over remaining pencil lines with marker.

Step 4- Fill in the shapes with solid color or with designs
(stars, snowflakes, music notes, etc.)

3

If you want a modern look, deco is the style for you! These letters can be solid or decorated.

Step 1- Using a narrow tipped marker (or pencil) write a word (Space the letters further apart than you normally would.)

Step 2- Use a pencil to draw a "box" on the inside left line of each letter.

Step 3- Fill in these boxes with color or designs (stars, hearts, stripes, flowers, dots, etc.)

LOVE   FARM JULY

Here is a sample deco alphabet to help you get started-

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ abcdef
ghijklmnopqrstuvwx
yz1234567890

A special tip- You can make these, and other types of letters, look like they are moving, by just drawing in a few lines here and there just outside of the the letters edges.
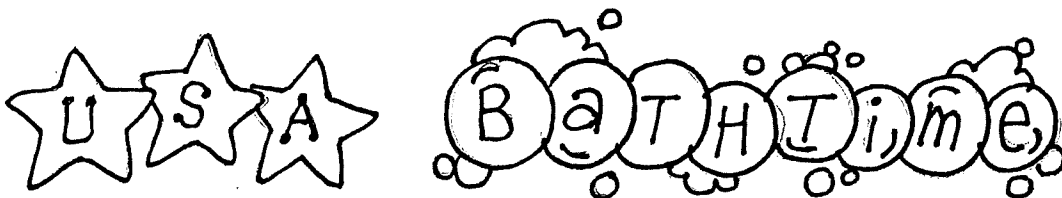
'Kite   'Hockey'   'BABY'

Use Letters Inside of Shapes

To add interest, you might want to place letters inside of shapes.

Step 1- With a pencil, draw the desired shapes
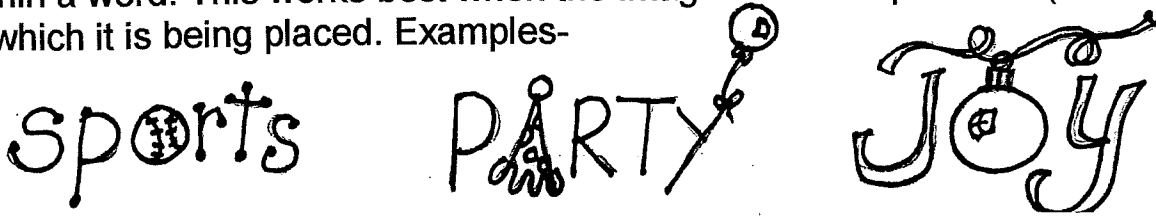   on your page. (Or use templates.)
Step 2- Write letters inside of the shapes.
Step 3- Go over pencil lines with markers.

USA   Bathtime

4

Use an Image Instead of Letters

Another way to add interest is to use a cutout shape or stamped image in place of a letter within a word. This works best when the image used is represents (or is related to) the word in which it is being placed. Examples-

sp⚾rts   PARTY   JOY

Mixing Upper & Lower Case Letters

If you mix upper and lower case letters within a word, making them all the same height, a good "rule of thumb" is to make the vowels lower case and the consonants upper case. For the best look, try to be consistent.

CELEBRATE   KATHLEEN   EASTER
CeLeBRaTe   KaTHLeeN   easTeR

Using Different Pen Tips

Scroll Tip Pen-

This pen creates a shadow automatically as you write. Because of it's unique tip, you handle it a bit differently than other pens.

Tip #1- Hold the pen vertically in your hand to make sure that both sides of the tip are in contact with the paper.

Tip #2- Until you get used to using this type of pen, you might get confused by the double lines as you write. If this happens, concentrate your focus on one line only and ignore the other.
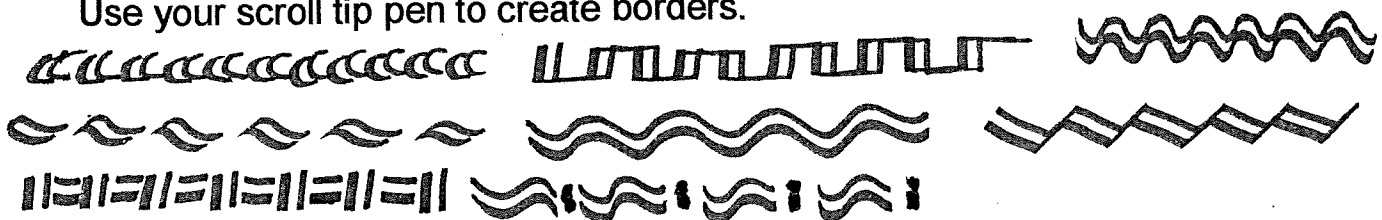
Hello

Variations-
Letter ends can be left open, or you can close them by using the corner of your pen.

Hi Hi Hi

To add interest to your letters, you can fill in the space between the lines with color or designs.

Hello!

Use your scroll tip pen to create borders.

5

Brush Tip Pen-

This pen creates a casual, free flowing lettering style. The amount of pressure that you place on its flexible tip is what regulates the width of your letters. As with the scroll tip pen, you'll get the best results if you handle it a bit differently than other pens.

Tip #1- For the best results, make the pen strokes with the side of the brush tip. The easiest way to do this is to hold the pen horizontally, grasping it further down the barrel than you normally do. This grip will allow you to more control as release pressure on the tip to create finer lines.

Tip #2- Use your brush tip pen to fill in scroll tip letters and block letters.
Or to fill in stencil shapes (with solid color or with scribbled or crosshatched lines.)

Shading Your Lettering

Shading will give depth, a 3-D look, to your words. It works with either block or plain lettering styles. To create shading on your designs, pretend that there is a light source shining on your letters. This light source will cast a shadow along the edges of the letters. This shadow will always appear on the surface opposite from where the light is shining.

Shading Simple Letters-
Step 1- Write our words/phrases.
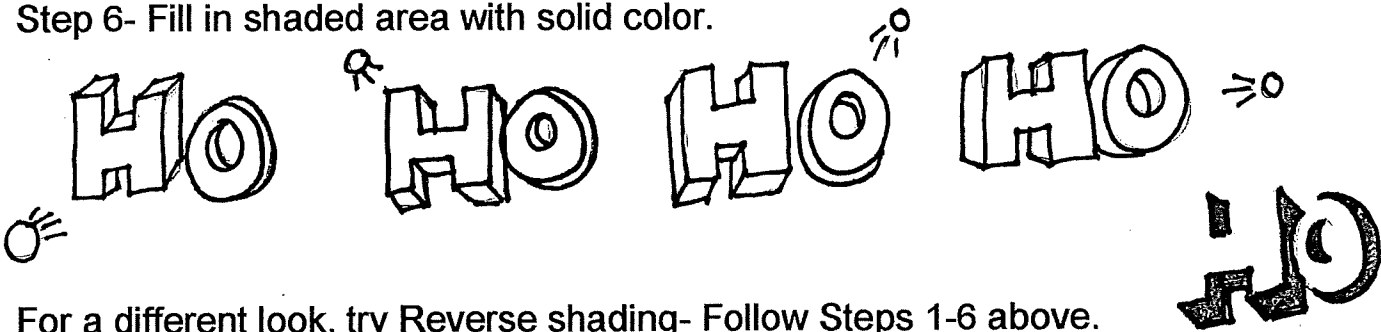Step 2- Determine location of light source and lightly sketch in shadows.

Shading Block Letters-
Follow Block lettering, steps 1-4.
Step 5- Determine location of light source and sketch in shadows.
Step 6- Fill in shaded area with solid color.

For a different look, try Reverse shading- Follow Steps 1-6 above.
Then erase outline of letter, leaving only the shadow.

6

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR

STUVWXYZI234567890

Your dual tip markers will work great with these styles-

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZa
bcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUV
WXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrs
tuvwxyz 1234567890

Try your hand with a calligraphy pen for a beautiful flowing script-

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRST
UVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890