



STABILO[®]



HAND



and
Brush

LETTERING

GUIDE

designed by:

Fluente
Rabenstein

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Foreword

With this hand & brush lettering guide, I would like to bring you one step closer to the wonderful world of lettering.

With a comprehensive material overview, valuable expertise, tips & tricks for starting out, a wide range of fonts and alphabets and a big dose of inspiration, I hope that you can have as much fun with writing as I do!

This guide is suitable for both beginners and experienced writers. One thing is particularly

important to me is finding your own style! Try new things, experiment, mix up your colours and writing tools.

Try to think outside of the box and take unusual paths. Don't be afraid of making what you think are mistakes- they're not they're just a part of the learning process. We learn from the 'mistakes' and it's also a way of developing your own style and even something that seems "wrong" to start with can have a charm of its own in the end. When it comes to creativity, there is no right or wrong.

So, I want you to be confident! The world of hand lettering is a beautiful, exciting cosmos – it's so much fun to dive into, challenge your own imagination and discover new things.

The most important thing is to have fun! So I hope you have fun, and I hope you like this guide and find it helpful.



Thank!
You!



Rabenstein

Materials

On this page I would like to start by giving you an overview of the pens and pencils that are perfect for hand and brush lettering. A short description next to each of the pens and pencils will explain its properties.



STABILO Pen 68 | 47 colours

This wide range of colours gives you plenty of opportunity to find the perfect colour combination for your lettering! Colour blending and watercolour techniques are easy with this pen.

monomachine!



STABILO pencil 160

A pencil is one of the essentials for sketching and drawing the outlines of your letters and layouts. You can also add guide lines and try out different styles.



STABILO woody 3 in 1 | 18 colours

This is a watercolour pencil, colouring pencil and wax crayon all in one. You can use it on almost all smooth surfaces: glass, metal, mirrors, blackboards, porcelain and of course, paper, card and cardboard!



STABILO point 88 | 47 colours

The universal fineliner for colourful writing, illustrations and sketches. Its fine tip is perfect for details and the wide range of colours offers something for everyone!



STABILO pointMax | 24 colours

Its sturdy nylon tip makes it perfect for block letters, thicker lines and faux calligraphy.





STABILO Pen 68 brush | 19 colours

This premium fibre-tip pen with a flexible tip makes brush lettering fun! Its water-based ink guarantees beautiful colour blending. The tip is robust and is particularly suitable for beginners as well as experienced writers.



STABILO SENSOR fine & medium | 8 colours

With its cushioned tip and smudge-proof ink you can use the STABILO SENSOR to draw up precise outlines and fine details. The STABILO SENSOR medium is suitable for thicker lines, for filling in smaller areas and for fine writing.



STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL | 19 colours

This highlighter is particularly suited to highlighting and shading. You'll be spoilt for choice with all the bright neon and fine pastel shades!



STABILO Pen 68 metallic 8 colours

Available in classic gold, silver, copper, blue, green, light green, purple and pink – these metallic colours really come into their own on dark paper!

Know-how

HAND LETTERING

At its very basic level, hand lettering is essentially handwriting. But its key characteristic is certainly the drawing of decorative, artistic letters and words.

The basis of hand lettering is typography, from which we get the wide range of fonts that we then draw by hand. Hand lettering is an art – because when paired with your imagination and a few of your own tricks and added elements the world of letters is virtually endless.



Writing tools:
STABILO BOSS Original Pastel (for “sea”),
STABILO point 88 (for faux calligraphy,
printed letters and details)

BRUSH LETTERING

As a subcategory of hand lettering, brush lettering is all about working with a specific tool: the brush pen. As the name suggests, it is designed to resemble a brush, i.e. the tip of the pen is like a paint brush. The fibre tip is flexible yet not as soft as a normal brush, so you have more control.

The most significant feature of the brush pen is that you can change the pressure you put on the tip: putting more or less pressure on the tip of the pen creates this popular writing style. With a little bit of practice, you’ll soon get a feel for the technique.



Writing tool:
STABILO Pen 68 brush

How to... do brush lettering

Positioning

The way you hold your brush pen and the angle of the paper is important when it comes to having fun with your writing.

A cramped hand or writing at an angle that is too steep or too flat will only make your work unnecessarily difficult. Holding the pen incorrectly can also damage the tip.

It's best to keep a 45° angle between the pen and paper but nobody expects you to measure it exactly – everyone has their own personal preference. With enough practice and a feel for brush lettering you'll quickly find a position and grip that is comfortable for you. Just remember there is no right or wrong, these are just ideas!



The teardrop test:
Slowly roll the tip of the STABILO Pen 68 brush from the front to the back. This should leave a teardrop shape. The tip of the teardrop will show you the direction the pen is pointing in.

The technique

We'll start with the simple basics that are essential for brush lettering. As I have already mentioned, working with a brush pen is all about changing the pressure.

Shown below are the first simple exercises to give you a feeling for this change in pressure. With numerous examples, tips, and expertise, I'll show you how to approach brush lettering!

↙ Generally you could say: downward strokes are made with more pressure, upward strokes with less. ↗

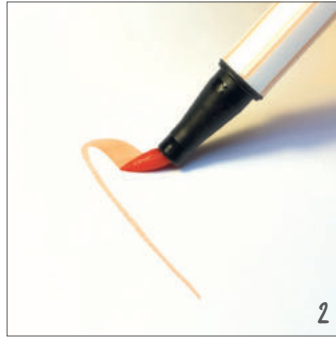
Downwards = more pressure Upwards = less pressure

● Starting point
↙ More pressure
↗ Less pressure

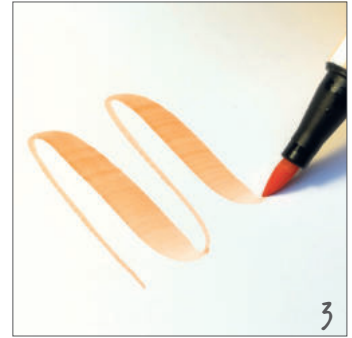
The word "minimum" is great for practicing the upward and downward strokes that are typical of brush lettering! You can find more exercises at: www.stabilo.com/uk/stories/handlettering-guide/



Upward stroke = less pressure



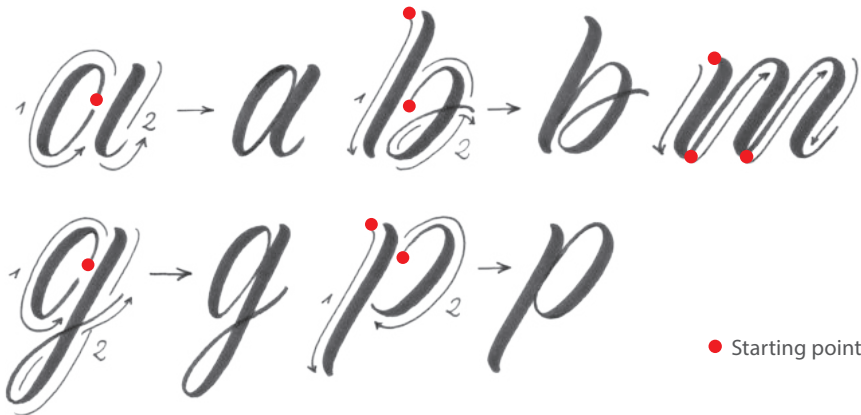
Downward stroke = more pressure



Sequence 1 + 2

The anatomy of letters

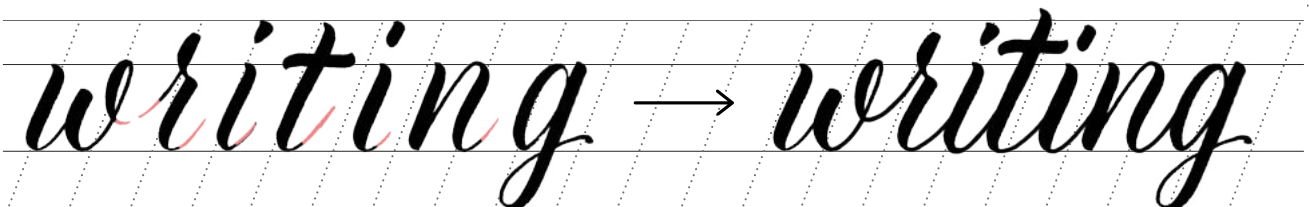
When brush lettering most letters are built the same way, they are made up of the stem (vertical stroke) and a counter (also known as a bowl, like in a, b, g, p) or an arcade (such as with m, n, w, u).



● Starting point(s)

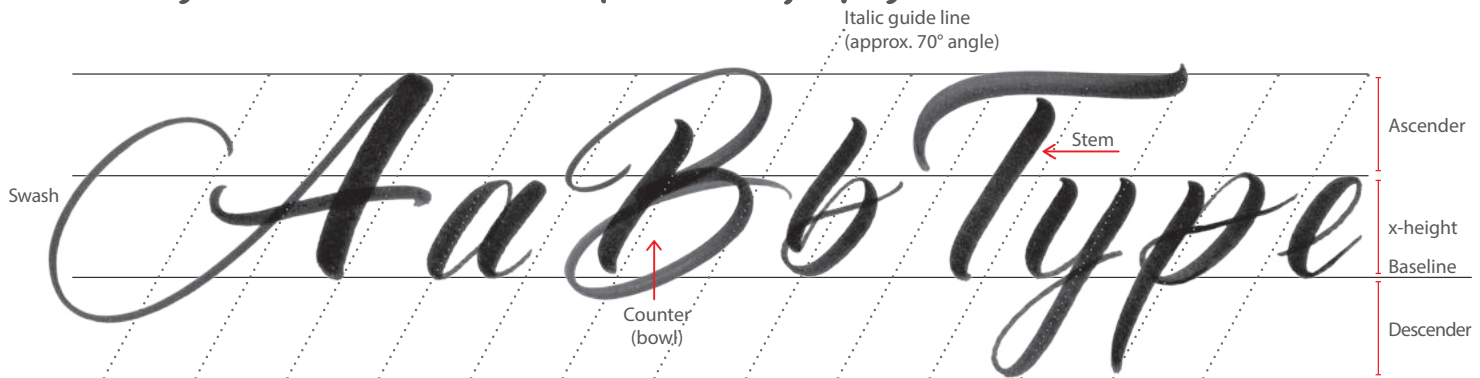
Words

We can use small upward strokes all drawn at the same angle to join up the individual letters and form words.



Brush lettering alphabet: To copy

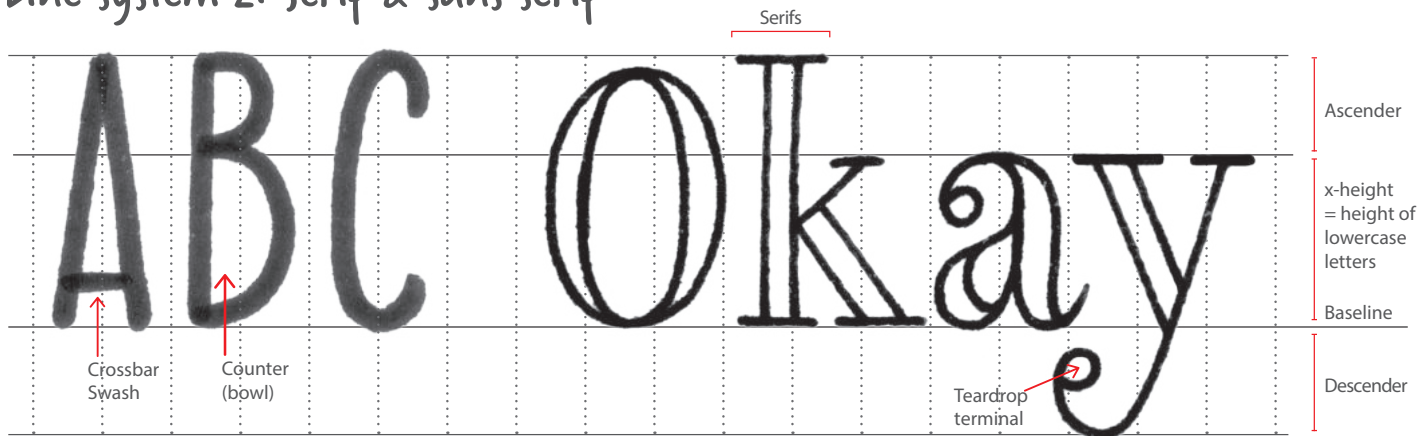
Line system 1: italic, brush, faux calligraphy



As a rule, drawing lines is tremendously helpful. Not just a baseline but also diagonal lines these are particularly helpful for brush lettering. They give you a feel for the angle and with a bit of

practice you'll be able to keep it consistent. An angle of approx. 70° is best for beginners approx. 50° is suitable for experienced brush-letterers.

Line system 2: Serif & sans serif



The line system for all upright fonts such as serif or sans serif might be simple, but it will help you draw vertical and horizontal lines as straight as possible. Because it's not easy in the

beginning. These line systems will help you get a feel for the arrangement, structure and correct position for the individual letters and fonts.

Basics & warm-up

Although we might not be doing exercise in the traditional sense of the word, you'll find that warming up your hand makes the work easier and more fun! With a few simple tips and tricks, it takes no time at all. But keep in mind it doesn't all have to be a work of art – quite the opposite! The point here is to warm up your hand.

Here are a few tips and exercises:

- Draw horizontal and vertical lines, circles, curves and ellipses in different sizes and widths with different writing tools.
- Write out the alphabet from A to Z several times. Doing this in different fonts and styles will give you a surer hand and you'll quickly get a feel for the shapes and structures of the letters.
- Lines from songs, names, words and even your own favourite quotes.

Speaking of paper!

As a rule I recommend trying out a variety of types of paper – experiment with them and find your favourite!

Normal printer paper is great for warming up but if you're using the STABILO Pen 68 brush I recommend that you use smooth paper to protect the tip. If you want a particularly clean result, e.g. for lettering with a lot of



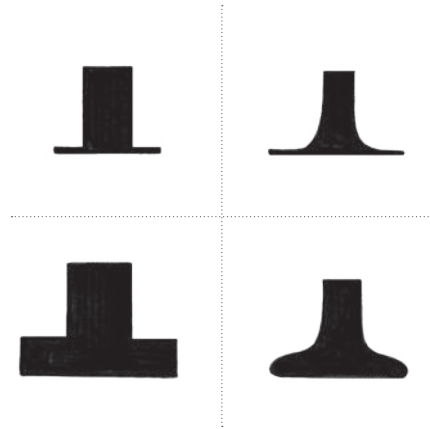
filigree details, I recommend using substantially thicker (from approx. 120g) coated smooth paper that will not cause the colours to “bleed” (also known as bleedproof paper). For example try experimenting with card in different colours, uncoated or recycled paper and with significantly rougher surfaces or textures. You can create unique effects and looks depending on your writing tool and paper!

Fonts

These examples should give you a quick overview of the best known fonts and their characteristics:

I like Serifs!

The small strokes at the foot or head of the letters are called serifs. This type of font is called Antiqua. Here I've drawn a very simple but classic serif font. Serifs can look very different:



BUT *of course* ALSO SANS SERIF!

“Sans” (“without”) serif is kind of the opposite of Antiqua and includes Grotesque fonts. We have quite a lot of freedom in our design – the letters can be very narrow or can have a greater distance between them or you can squeeze them or stretch them out... The most important feature: no serifs, no contrasting thicknesses, just linear writing.



Exaggeration is permitted: put the crossbar as high or as low as you like, make the letters extra narrow or extra wide. This way you will quickly develop a different look and style!

And I love some smooth curves.

A beautiful, unpretentious, linear script (known as “monoline”).

Creating Beautiful Flourishes

Here I have been far more elaborate with the italic handwritten script: a lot of pronounced swashes and little teardrop terminals at the ends give it a playful yet harmonious overall look.

hey, ^{*}no worries!

*The black line shows you what I wrote first; the grey line is the extra outline that I added in the second step.

One good trick if you're not so familiar with the brush pen: "faux calligraphy". The idea is to start out writing the letters or words normally in monoline and then widen all the strokes (all of the areas with more pressure) afterwards with an

extra outline.

Tip: do not write too close together! Otherwise the wider areas won't have enough space at the end.

BRUSH ^{OR} *Brush*

The STABILO Pen 68 brush can do more than just the upward and downward strokes that we already know.

An example is a style that is recreated from classic sign painting, known as a "sign painter" font.

It's a career that unfortunately has almost been forgotten but it's tremendously inspiring and exciting with regard to letter shapes and fonts! Sweeping swashes are always an option, in particular at word endings but don't overdo it!

Brush lettering styles

Here are some more styles written with the STABILO Pen 68 brush. You can practice directly on the page opposite.



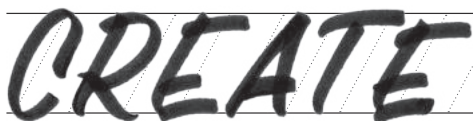
create

Very round letters that are written upright and are relatively narrow.



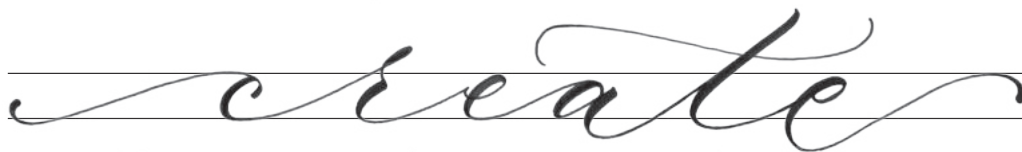
create

Very narrow, upright letters, not joined up.



CREATE

Very distinctive, bold uppercase letters that resemble the style of sign painting.



create

Significantly smaller letters that are very spread out. You can go ahead and ignore the baseline for this one.



Create

A truly classic handwriting style, loosened up with a few playful flourishes. Ligatures, the link between two letters, (here: C and the t-crossbar) can make a pretty, decorative element!



Create

For the brave: this style has a captivating, strong dynamic. It is set at a very steep angle, the letters are very close together and the sweeping swashes create an exciting overall picture!

create

create

CREATE

create

create

Create

Create

Alphabets - At a glance

After quickly going over various fonts and styles, I would now like to show you a few complete alphabets. They show all the letter structures, shapes and details at a glance. From page 20 onwards you will find several pages on which you can practice and copy letters directly into this guide!

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

STABILO Pen 68 brush
script alphabet,
lowercase letters

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

STABILO Pen 68 brush
script alphabet,
uppercase letters

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

STABILO Pen 68
sans serif alphabet,
uppercase letters

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

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

STABILO point 88
serifs (Antiqua) alphabet,
upper & lowercase letters

Brush lettering alphabet: To copy

A A A

B B B

C C C

D D D

E E E

F F F

GGG

HHH

III

JJJ

KKK

LLL

MMM

Brush lettering alphabet: To copy

N N N

O O O

P P P

Q Q Q

R R R

S S S

T T T

U U U

V V V

W W W

X X X

Y Y Y

Z Z Z

Brush lettering alphabet: To copy

aaa

bbb

bbb

eee

ddd

eee

fff

fff

g g g

g g g

h h h

i i i

j j j

k k k

l l l

l l l

m m m

Brush lettering alphabet: To copy

nnn

ooo

ooo

ppp

ppp

qqq

rrr

rrr

sss

t t t

u u u

v v v

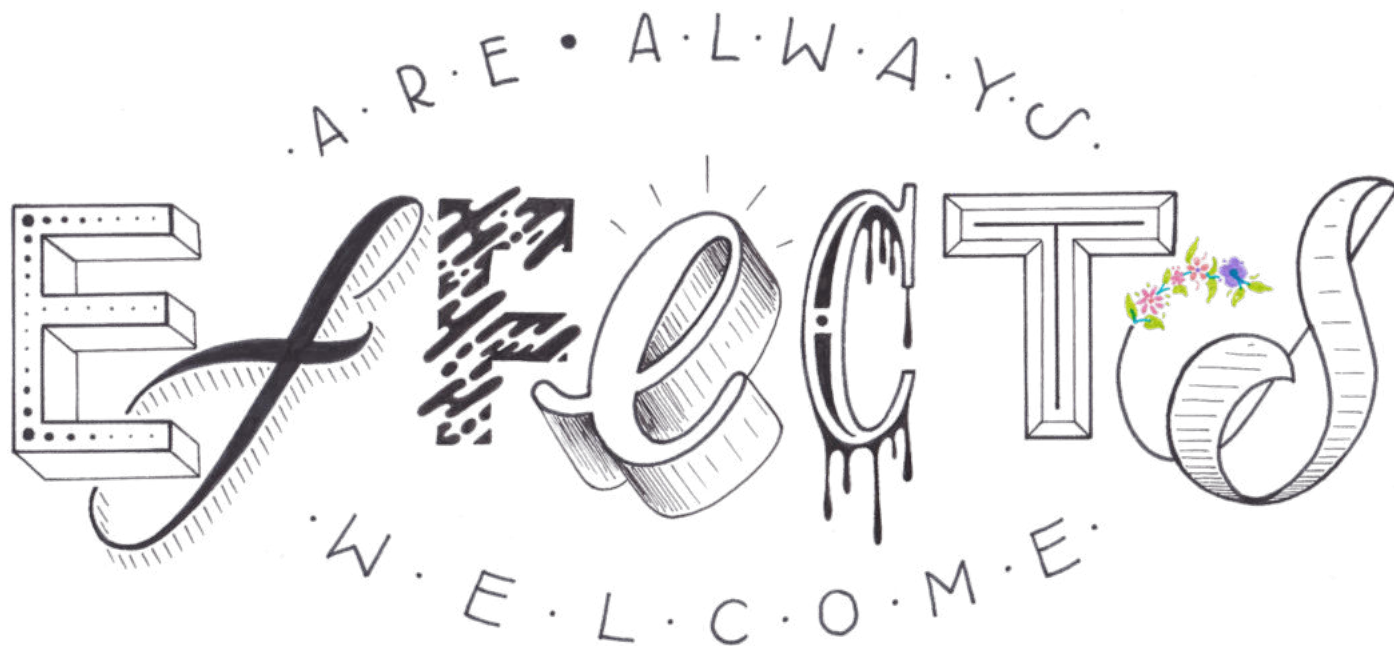
w w w

x x x

y y y

z z z

z z z



Effects & decoration

When you're hand lettering you can let your imagination run riot. By using various colours, illustrative elements, geometric shapes and other design details you can embellish, decorate and jazz up individual letters, words and even entire texts. But don't forget less is more!

On the following pages I will show you some possibilities.



YES

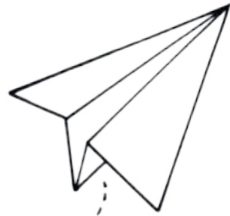
HOORAY

TRY IT!

LET'S celebrate!



FOR you



good night

HELLO

Effects & decoration

Here are a few more effects for you to try:

1 The STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL lets you create great, wide 3D effects on lettering written with the STABILO Pen 68 brush!



1

2 To go with the word “sparkle”, I have used the STABILO Pen 68 metallics in gold and copper to draw little groups of dots that thin out towards the top of the word. This effect also reflects the meaning of the word.



2

The word “floral” is practically crying out for flourishes and swirls! Here I’ve selected four colours from the STABILO point 88 colour family. To ensure the word doesn’t get lost in the embellishment I’ve made it slightly bolder. My tip: try to ensure your flourishes go with the flow of your letters, this way they appear harmonious rather than over the top.



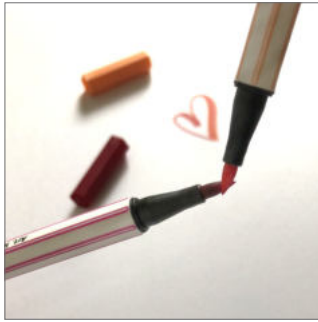
3

4 “Colour blending” is a popular technique and easy to do thanks to the water-based colours in the STABILO Pen 68 brush! Choose two pens, for example two from one colour family (here: light pink and dark red), hold the tips together so that the dark colour transfers onto the light tip. (See page 31)



4

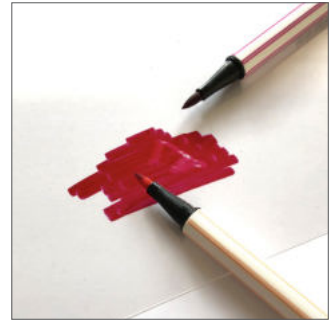
Colour blending technique:



Hold the tip of the lighter pen against the tip of the darker pen to transfer the colour.



Alternatively, use the darker pen to colour a small area on some foil or a clear plastic folder and then use the tip of the lighter pen to pick up the colour from the foil. The pens will automatically write themselves clean!



Watercolour technique:



You can use the STABILO Pen 68 brush to create beautiful watercolour effects. To create this technique you need to use watercolour paper. This book doesn't include watercolour paper.

Step 1: For this you need two or more colours, watercolour paper, water and a brush.



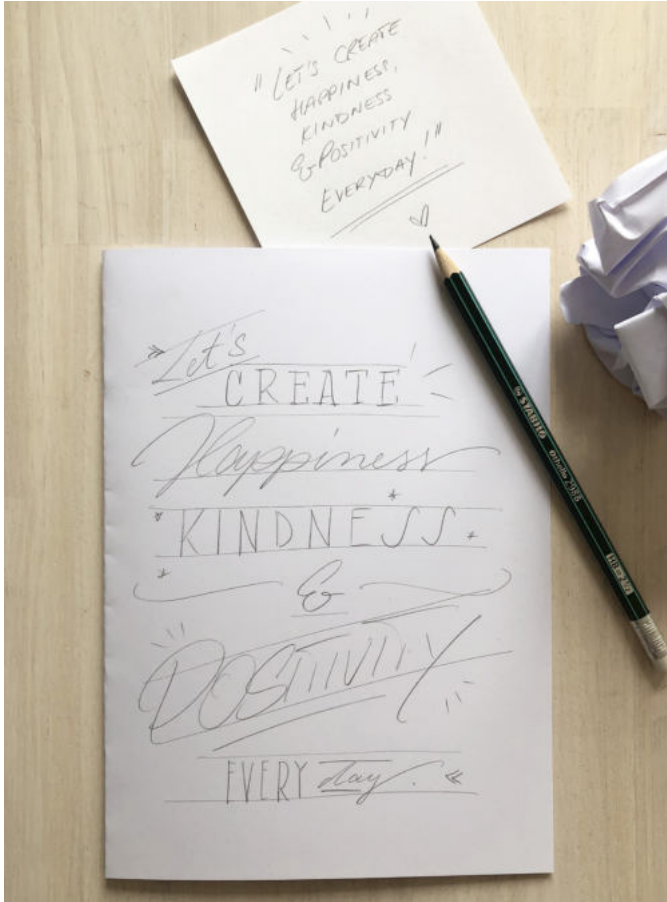
Step 2: Colour areas of different sizes with the pens.

Step 3: Now paint the areas with the wet brush.

Step 4: Let the paper dry well! Once dry you can add your lettering or a passage of text over the top.

Example lettering: structure

I'd like to use this motif to show you how to combine different fonts in a text.



1. Scribbling

Instead of going directly to drawing the letters I first write out the text by hand, one or more times. Here I determine a rough layout, arranging the individual words in the format.



2. Preliminary drawing

For this we need (jotting) paper, a pencil, a ruler and an eraser. One important question that you need to answer before you start: which words are particularly distinctive, important or need to be highlighted?

Every word has a meaning, look and feel that you can present wonderfully using certain fonts. Think about how the words could look to bring that across!



3. Final artwork

Now it's time to do the major work. First of all I erase the pencil lines until they are almost completely gone so that nothing shows through. I get a few pens ready for the final artwork and think about the colours I wish to use. Here I've decided upon colours from one colour family. I use them to highlight the three most important words; I keep the smaller filler words (the rest) in black.



4. Details

When the artwork itself is finished I can start with the details!

Here you can let your imagination run riot. If you're unsure, start by adding details in pencil so you can erase them if you don't like them or they don't match.

Example lettering: material

So you can see exactly which tools I have used for the example lettering on the previous page, I'll list them all here again.

In the description next to the tips of the pens you'll find all of their features and the things for which they are particularly good for.



STABILO Pen 68 brush
for brush lettering
and colour blending



STABILO point 88
for colourful writing,
illustrating and sketching

STABILO Pen 68
for colouring, sketching
and taking notes

STABILO pointMax
for headlines and
filling in smaller areas

STABILO SENSOR fine
for filigree lines and contours

STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL
pastel
neon and pastel colours for
highlighting and shading

STABILO woody 3 in 1
for creating
watercolour effects



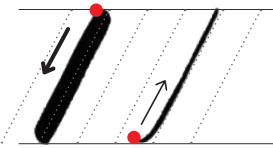
Inspiration

Finally, here are a few lettering examples to inspire you and to copy. Have fun!

Here's another reminder of brush lettering basics:

Downwards = more pressure

Upwards = less pressure



Create
Positivity

Amor

Hooray!

I
TO
Create

Eat
DRINK
and
be h.a.p.p.y!

» YOU
ARE MY
TYPE

ACTUALLY
YOU *can*

"HOW
ARE
YOU?"

HOLA
Ciao

good THINGS
TAKE *Time*

BONJOUR

HEY
Aloha

THINK
outside
-THE-
BOX.

"CREATE
DON'T
HATE!"

Mihao
• SELAMAT • DATANG •
Hello

Create...



Brushy
Brushy
Brushy

Let's
Celebrate
Tonight

Happy
New
YEAR.

Verily
VERIJOBT
Verheiment

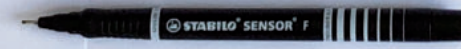
GIRLS
GIRLS
GIRLS

New
Year



THAT
escalated
QUICKLY.

YOU CAN DO
made





freiheit



Think
BIG

Comme ci
Comme ça

create
REPEAT...



Kind
people
are my
kinda
people.

Par Excellence

es.



In need
OF
VITAMIN



avec plaisir.



STABILO®

BYEBYE

Adios.♥

au
»REVOIR«

Adieu!

ARRIVEDERCI

Sayonara

"Ciao!"

Get your digital hand lettering
guide by Hannah Rabenstein:

www.stabilo.com/uk/stories/handlettering-guide