

Tips for Letter Reversals

Letter reversal is relatively common in beginner writers. Most students at some point will reverse letters. However, some students continue to reverse letters long after their peers have sorted out the correct orientation and sequence of letters. These students may need extra visual stimulus and reinforcement to commit correct letter writing to long term memory.

The most common reversal errors tend to be **b** and **d** and also **p** and **q**. This occurs because the four letters **b**, **d**, **p** and **q** are essentially different orientations of the same shape. Letter confusion becomes easier to understand when you try this experiment.

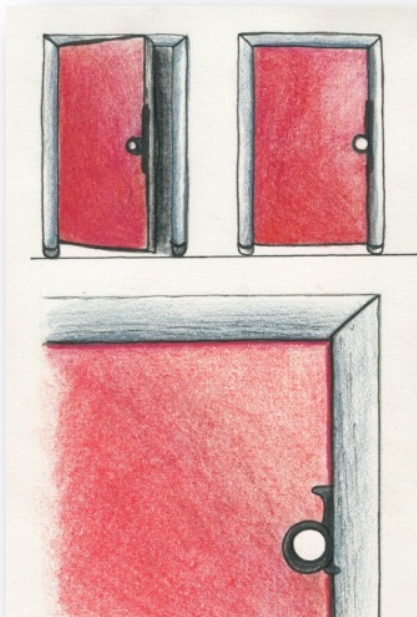
Write these words as quickly as you can **quip**, **pique**, **bead**, and **debbie**, but write them *upside down*. Write the words now.

What did you notice? By writing the words upside down, something you hardly ever do, you can no longer rely on the **motor programming** you have developed over long years of writing the letters in the *correct* way. Suddenly you have to think about the way the letters are formed, and it's likely you reversed *some* of the letters and had to make corrections or at least had to think about it for a while before writing the circle and stick combination of the letters **b**, **d**, **p** and **q**.

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The letter **b** can be likened to a baseball bat and baseball. Write the long edge of the baseball bat first followed by the ball positioned in front of the heavy end of the bat.

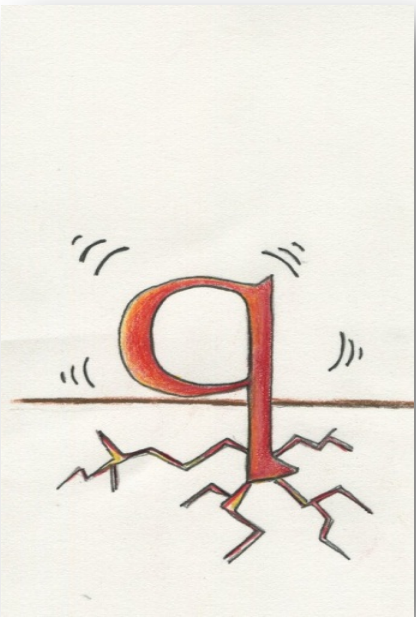


The letter **d** is the first letter in the word *door*. The round circle in the letter **d** is like a door knob and the long line is the door edge that opens towards you when you open the door.

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The letter **p** is the first letter in the word *plant*. As with all plants, the **p** has roots that go beneath the surface. The long edge of the letter **p** always goes under the surface line on the page.



The letter **q** is the first letter in the word *quake* or earthquake. The quake shakes the ground *beneath* the surface. The long edge of the **q** always goes under the surface line on the page.

