

Landscape Graphics

Grant W. Reid ASLA



From concept sketch to presentation rendering

Lettering

MOST LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS USE A SIMPLE UPPER CASE (CAPITALS) STYLE WITH NO SERIFS AS SHOWN HERE. KEEP LETTERS VERTICAL AND CONSISTENT IN SHAPE. THIS UNIFORM STYLE IS EASY TO READ.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S S T U V W
W X Y Z. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7 8 9 0

lower case letters are less formal and are suited for use on concept plans, preliminary sketches and plant lists.

a b c d e f g g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Pencil Lettering

Shape and Spacing

Most letters should fit within a slightly narrowed square. Spacing between words should be the equivalent of the letter N.

Size

Always use guidelines to obtain correct size and uniformity. The Ames Lettering Guide, shown here, will help. It has a rotating disc which allows quick set-up of guidelines of any size.

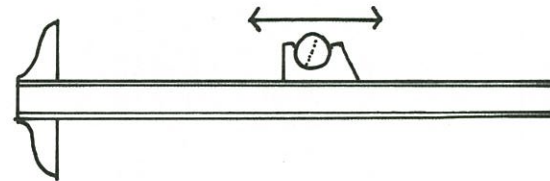
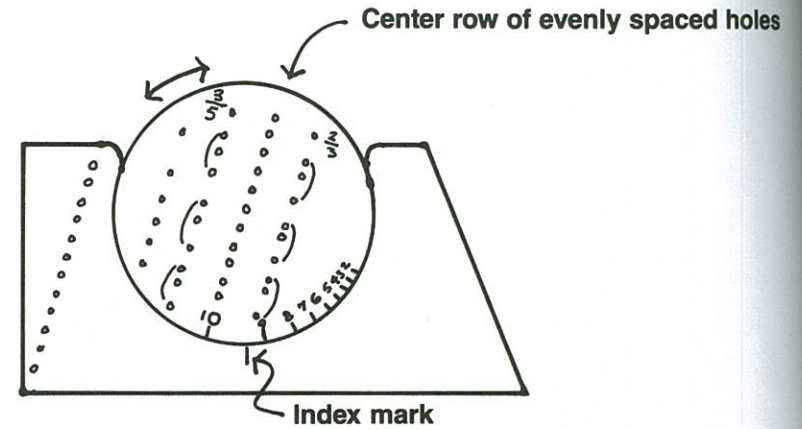
Running through the center of the disc is a row of evenly spaced holes. At the end of this row is the number ten. Rotate the disc so that the ten lines up with the frame index mark near the base of the frame. Insert a needle-sharp 4H pencil into the top hole. Move the pencil lightly across the paper, keeping a slight pressure toward the straightedge. Shift the pencil down to the next hole and repeat the back-and-forth motion until there are enough lines for the purpose. If you want closer lines, rotate the disc to a lower number.

SETTING 10 CENTER ROW
GIVES LINES WITH EQUAL
SPACING AT THIS SIZE

The rows of holes on either side of the center row produce sets of three lines (between the brackets) which have the middle guideline slightly above center. A middle guideline is helpful to obtain consistency of shape for upper case letters such as B, E, F, H, and P. This is particularly true for larger letters ($\frac{3}{16}$ -inch or more).

Several different lettering sizes and their applications are shown on the next page.

TOO NARROW TOO WIDE
ABOUT RIGHT



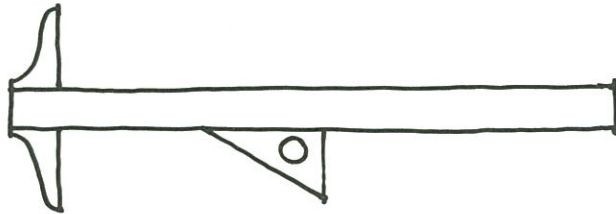
LEFT OF THE CENTER ROW
IS THE $\frac{2}{3}$ ROW WHICH GIVES
A SLIGHTLY RAISED MIDDLE
GUIDELINE

Letter Sizes and Applications

HEIGHT	LETTER GUIDE SETTING	EXAMPLE
$\frac{1}{16}$ "	CENTER ROW SETTING 4	TOO SMALL FOR HAND LETTERING
$\frac{3}{32}$ "	CENTER ROW SETTING 6	GOOD FOR SMALL LABELS & BLOCKS OF LETTERING. CAN WRITE A LOT IN A SMALL SPACE ALWAYS LEAVE A GAP BETWEEN LINES OF LETTERING
$\frac{1}{8}$ "	CENTER ROW SETTING 8	A VERY COMFORTABLE SIZE FOR MOST LABELLING
$\frac{3}{16}$ "	$\frac{3}{5}$ ROW SETTING 6	GOOD FOR SUB TITLES. USE A CENTER GUIDE LINE.
$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{3}{5}$ ROW SETTING 8	UPPER LIMIT FOR PENCIL LETTERING.

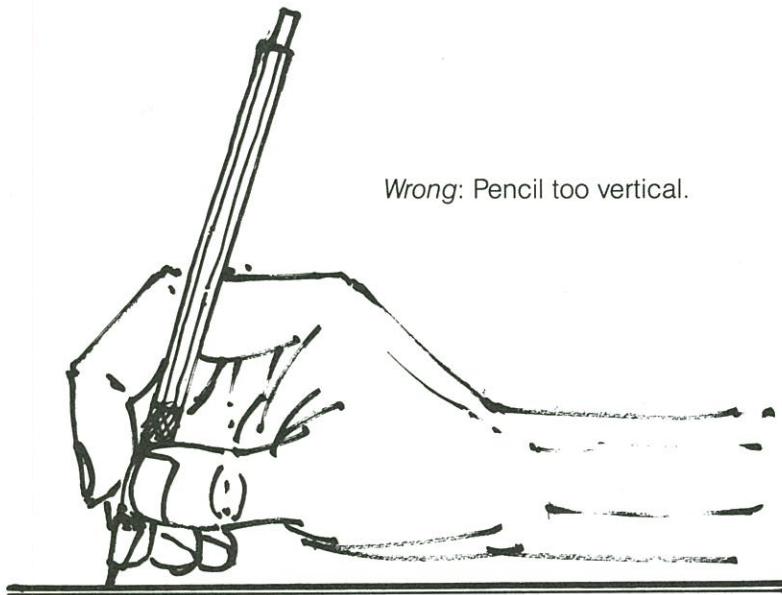
Technique

After setting up guidelines and lightly dusting the surface with the dry cleaning pad, begin with a small triangle on the lower side of the parallel rule.

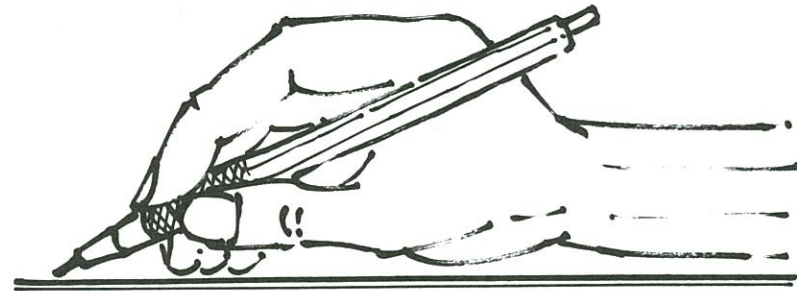


A 0.5 mm pencil with H or HB lead is ideal because you never have to sharpen it. Regular lead holders are better for large letters ($\frac{3}{16}$ -inch) but the lead must be periodically sharpened. For Mylar, use a harder lead (2H) or plastic leads.

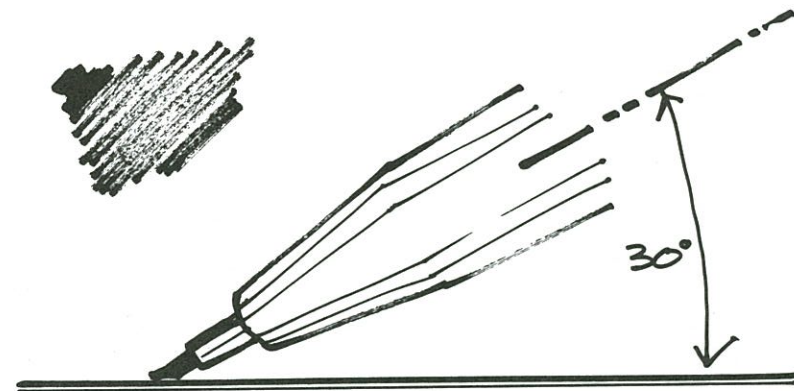
The Lettering Grip



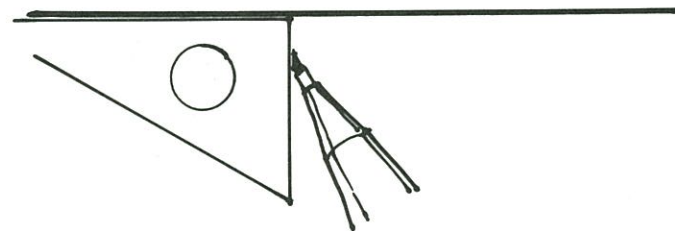
Right: Pencil held at a low angle.



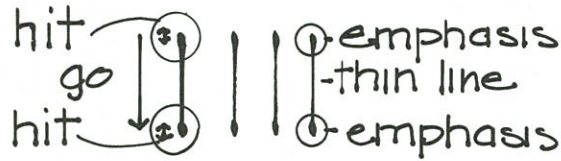
Flatten the end of the lead on a scrap sheet or with a sandpaper block.



Rotate the pencil slightly, so that the flattened edge is against the vertical guide.



Draw verticals as thin lines with strong, dark ends.

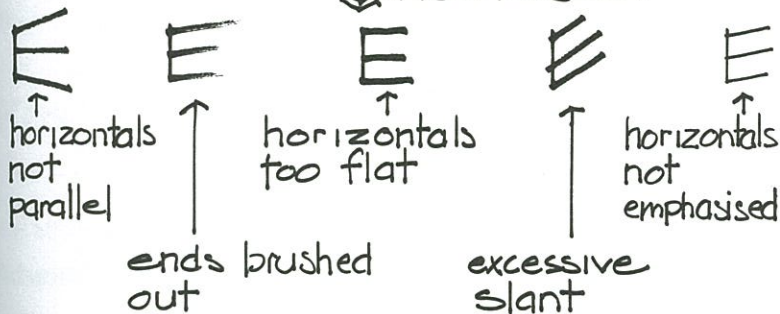


Watch the guidelines, keeping the verticals a consistent size.

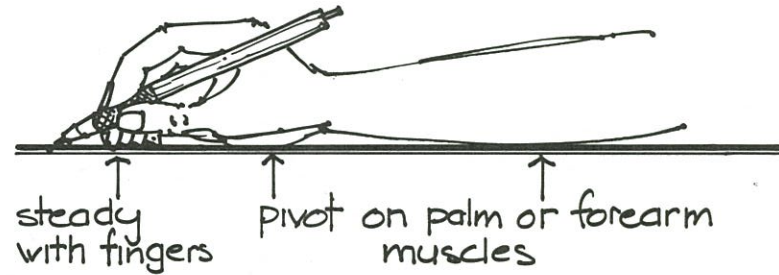
The horizontals should be drawn as thicker, darker lines. Maintain a firm pressure throughout. Avoid brushing off the ends. A slight upward slope is acceptable.

EEEE E ← CORRECT

↓ INCORRECT



Do not move the fingers. Pivot on the palm or forearm muscle and let the fingers slide and steady the hand.



A small wrist movement may be necessary for horizontals. Remember: Make thin verticals with strong ends and thick, dark horizontals. As the lead wears down, simply rotate the pencil slightly to place the new chiseled side against the vertical guide and thus maintain the narrow verticals.

E F H I L T

Diagonal strokes and circular strokes are done with an even pressure. Some variations of line width will occur as a result of direction change. Do not move wrist or arm position. Move the vertical guide away and use quick, confident strokes with adequate pressure.

A K M N V W X Y Z
B C D O P Q R R S S

More Hints for Better Lettering

- Letter a drawing last to avoid smudges and overlapping with other areas of the drawing. This will enable you to space out your lettering and to avoid lettering through important details.
- Don't try to develop speed at first. Make each stroke quickly, but take your time between letters and between strokes until you have mastered each letter. Then gradually increase your speed. You will soon be able to letter almost as fast as you can write script.
- Organize lettering in logical blocks. Wherever possible, align notes down a vertical guideline. Place notes where they will not obscure other messages.
- Relate the size of the lettering to the importance of the labeling.
- Choose a style of lettering that is compatible with the character of the presentation and maintain that style consistently.
- Make letters bold and distinctive. Avoid a delicate, fine touch. Try emphasizing the beginnings and ends of strokes.
- Form the habit of lettering whenever possible—as you take notes, address envelopes, write letters, and compose memos.

Lettering Evaluation Guidelines

Check your pencil lettering against these criteria:

- All letters are dark with no fuzzy gray lines. (Test by running a blueline print.)
- The shapes are similar to the example alphabet and are consistent throughout.
- There is a uniformity of size, with all letters meeting the guidelines.
- The verticals are thin, dark lines with strong ends.
- The horizontals have a slight upward slant and are thick, dark, and parallel.
- The sheet has a neat, clean appearance with no smudges.