
Beginning Calligraphy with Maybelle Imasa-Stukuls

Chapter 1 - Beginning Calligraphy: Getting Started

Calligraphy Series Overview

- [Interviewee] My name's Maybelle Imasa-Stukuls and I consider myself a modern calligrapher. Modern calligraphy is, it's an interpretation of a traditional art form. In modern calligraphy, you can see the individual artist's hand coming through using the same techniques or tools that was used in traditional calligraphy. In this series, we'll learn the basics using the pointed pen. I'll show you how to hold it, creating thick and thin lines. I'll share with you my favorite warmup exercises. You'll learn the upper and lowercase alphabet. In this class we will be switching it up with white ink on black paper. Why I love white ink so much on black is because it's so magical. I'm going to show you how to put all of your skills together into two projects. When I started, I strived for that perfection. I wanted so badly to have this historically accurate, perfect ascenders and descenders that you see in Copperplate. But when I tried it myself it was very hard and I almost gave up. And what I found is that there's nothing more beautiful than an imperfect line. It's very human and it's very much from the soul.

Part 1: Getting Started

Part 1 Overview

(bouncy music) ^- Hi, I'm Maybelle Imasa-Stukuls, and I'm a calligrapher. ^I teach my classes all over the world, and I consider my ^calligraphy style to be a modern style, which is my ^interpretation of a traditional art form. ^I'll show you my favorite materials to use, ^the way to hold the pen, some practice warmups, ^and the alphabet. ^Using the practice sheets that you'll make in this class, we will wrap a small gift, and learn how to make my favorite origami folded envelope. (bouncy music)

Materials

- When I was a beginner I purchased every kit that was probably on the market and I was still frustrated at the results that I was getting. So I've designed this kit with you in mind to get you there sooner. In the kit, I've included a letter press exemplar with the sequence in which I write my letter forms, a practice booklet, straight pen holder, which is wooden, Nikko G pointed pen nibs, black ink which is Sumi ink, and Sumi ink is used in Japanese and Chinese calligraphy, as well as traditional and modern calligraphy. A bottle for mixing, white ink, a wooden pen rest with white and black ink, a travel practice sheet for you to practice on the go, 10 sheets of black paper, a lined guide sheet, 10 sheets of vellum, card stock, envelopes, and vellum envelopes for our card project. What's not included in the kit that you will need are a lint free rag, pen cleaner, which you can pick up at your local art store, and if you don't have access to that you can just use water. You don't have to buy this kit, however, it might require a little bit more legwork to find each and every material that I've included for you by going online or at your local art store. The calligraphy style that I'm going to show you uses a pointed pen. We use a straight pen holder, now this one happens to be wood, but you can also, if you have a plastic that's fine, as long as it's straight. You may have seen an oblique holder like this, and this just holds the nib at an angle that your hand cannot naturally do. This is the kind of nib that's similar to what we'll be using, just as long as it's pointed

and flexible, this will be ideal for what we're using. This is a flat tip, which is not going to work for this style. Here are some other pens that may not work for our class. This is a fountain pen, this may not work because it may not have the flexibility that a pointed pen would have. This is a pen used for italics, and you'll notice at the very tip it's just slightly flat as well as this one, this one is more pronounced. You may have some other things in your studio lying around, such as this mapping pen, this is the pen I learned on. As well as, maybe nibs that you've picked up at a flea market. These may all possibly work, you just might have to keep in mind that there's a little bit more trouble shooting to go with, but as long as it's pointed, you should be fine, and we can help get you there. When you're first starting out, you may not realize that your pen, paper, and ink need to work in harmony for you to get a smooth line. You may notice that your pen is catching on a textured paper and that's really frustrating. Some of these inks are designed for other pens such as fountain pens, and they're a bit thinner than the Sumi ink so they don't have the opacity that the Sumi ink will have on the vellum paper. Certainly you can purchase all of these items from separate places, it's just going to take you a little bit of legwork to get there.

Setting Up and Practicing Exercises

- Whenever I tell people that I'm a calligrapher, the image that they have in their mind is of those fat, felt-tip markers from the '80s and somewhat dated. Then when they see my work, they say, "Well, I knew you were a calligrapher, "but I didn't know you were that kind of calligrapher." And I asked, "What do you mean by that?" And when I explain my work, it's sort of an extension of my soul, and it's an artistic interpretation of handwriting, that's all. So I want to show you my very beginning attempts at calligraphy, just using the mapping pen that I showed you earlier. And I think you should see this because, you know, calligraphy does take a lot of practice. I saved it just so that I could show my students one day. This was 10 years ago, and I was an adult when I created this. Today, we're gonna get you there much faster. When I started teaching my classes, I realized that not everybody could hold the pen that I learned with. First of all, it's very thin, and it's like holding a skewer. So then I sourced the straight pen holder, and I like this because it's wood. I'm gonna show you how to load it. When you're looking straight on at this pen holder, you see four prongs. When you're first starting out, you may not realize it, but you'll place this directly in the center, and that's not going to provide enough support for your nib. It will pop out, and when you have ink filled in it, it's not ideal. The correct way to do this is to find one or two of those prongs and tuck the nib behind it. Don't go in too far, because then you'll crack the holder. You want to place this in just far enough so that the nib is not wiggling. And you'll test with your finger like this. When you're looking at the pen straight on, you see a hole, the reservoir that holds the ink. When you're writing with this and it's filled with ink, you will not see that hole. The only time you'll see it is when your pen is running out of ink. This pen nib is flexible so that you can create thick and thin lines. Thin lines are done by barely pressing onto the paper, and thick lines are done with the pressure down. You won't see this happening when you are writing with the ink. It's also important when you're starting to know how to hold the calligraphy pen. The way that you hold a pencil or pen for regular handwriting may not be ideal for writing with a calligraphy pen. I'm just gonna show you, for some of you that tend to write with your pen or pencil completely perpendicular like this. That's going to be problematic to get the strokes that we want to create the thick and thin lines. Sometimes, people have odd ways of holding a pen or pencil. So just keep in mind that the best way to do this is to grip the pen as close to the edge of the holder as possible without gripping too tight. You don't want to be far out here, like this, because that's not gonna give you the control that you need. So, when I'm

writing, my hand is placed down, anchored. I'm not writing with my entire arm, but I am anchored, and my pen is angled back somewhat, and I have a relaxed grip. If you happen to be left-handed, the only thing that you'll need to really adjust is the position of your paper. I've seen students turn their paper as drastic as completely horizontal, or they're able to somehow manage by just adjusting this. But the straight pen holder is ideal for both left- and right-handed. So we're gonna get started. And to do this, you're going to need your vellum sheets, the guide sheet, and I like to put a few extra sheets underneath just for extra padding. We're gonna have that set here. It's ideal if your tabletop is smooth. If you have a French farm table that has a lot of texture, that's going to affect the surface, so just keep that in mind. I've chosen this vellum, and it's because what I usually work with is a light box, and not everybody may have a light box. So you can see through the vellum. It's smooth, and it works well with the sumi ink. If you're working on an opaque paper, you're going to need to purchase a light box in order to see through, and obviously, you cannot see through black paper, so in that case, you would line your sheet if you wanted straight lines. I'm gonna show you how to load your nib with ink. And I fill just enough of ink in here for you, so that you're not dipping too far in. You just want to dip enough so that you're going to cover that hole that we saw earlier. Don't worry that the entire nib is not coated with ink. Just as long as that hole is filled with ink, you should be fine. So I'm gonna show you a few exercises that I like to do. The first one is called the compound curve. This is a thin and thick line, and the thin line is created with very little pressure on the paper, and pressure down to create that thick line. I've just run out of ink there. I wanted you to see that because, remember when I was showing you how this pen comes back? Don't worry, just load more ink. I always like to tap so there's no excess drip. So I pick up where I've left off. Go back a little bit, and then carry on. So as you notice, this is a very light touch onto the paper. You don't hear any, you don't feel any resistance or hear any scratching at this point. So it's, again, it's barely touching, adding pressure down. As you'll notice, my hand is planted, and all the movement is coming from my fingers. Dipping when I need. This angle is in the same direction as the lines on your guide sheet. You'll want to practice this one because you'll see it coming up in all the letter forms, B, D, T, P. I'm gonna show you a few things that I see that come up in my workshops that I see my students doing, I'm able to help correct. First, they go really fast. Obviously, that's not gonna give you this thick and thin. It's not a gestural mark, it's very slow, like this. Another one is, it's more of a meander. It's not a hard-angle S like this. And it's definitely not the letter form S. I see a lot of this. Although that is thick and thin that we're practicing, it's more of a wave. I've also seen students trying to create this same stroke in the opposite direction, from the bottom up, and watch what happens when I try this. First, my pen is resisting this motion. You cannot get a thick line in the upward direction. It's just not, I'll just mark X's. So, again, it's top to bottom. As you'll notice, my pen is in the general angle as the dotted lines, and I try to keep it in this direction. So I'm just gonna draw the angle that I'm talking about so you can see this. This is my nib. Here's the reservoir, and this is the dotted line, in that general direction. When I'm writing, this never turns as I'm moving. Once you get that stroke, you're gonna keep it at that same angle. If you are not getting a thick and thin line, it might be just an adjustment of your nib. Maybe it's too much turned like this. Yeah, I'm not able to get any kind of line. You're going to want to practice this compound curve over and over until you feel that you've warmed up and you have a good sense of this stroke. And... (scratching) You're gonna hear some scratching when you're doing this. There is a, I already know when I hear it what a good scratching sound is and a bad scratching sound. If you have a scratching noise accompanied by splatter and ink everywhere, that's not good. I'm just gonna do it once so that you can hear this, and I'm gonna show you the angle. This is not the right

angle. It's completely perpendicular. (popping) But do you hear that? (popping) And see? I'm not getting, when you're writing and you're hearing this, just adjust, you know, pull back, pen in the same angle as the direction you're writing. And you'll still hear a little bit of a scratching, but it's something you cannot avoid. It's steel on paper. Maybe turn up some music for the background. So I'm just gonna fill up this page because I need to warm up today. Again, it's very slow, not rushed. Should not be doing this when you're just to go out the door. I'm dipping when I need. Somebody asked me once, you know, "How often do you need to dip? "Is there a timed way?" And you really just need to dip whenever your pen is running out of ink. You'll see this happen. I'm gonna show you in just a few strokes here. When is it going to run out? Oh, here it is. Do you see that? I just created the rest of that line so you could see, if it were filled with ink, that would have created that stroke. Now I have to dip again. (scratching) So now that we've almost filled the entire page, we're gonna leave this off to dry. And... lining up to the guide sheet. So the next exercise that I'm gonna show you is called the ovals. Again, it's practicing thin and thick, but this is joining all together. In this case, the thin line is going to be created with a very, in the upstroke, very light touch on the paper, with pressure down. Thin. Thick. (scratching) This oval is going to look, it's getting gradually smaller. It's going to look more like a tornado. Anyway, this is just getting used to thin and thick. I'm going, oops! Better slow down. The way I'm creating these lines, thin upstroke, pressure down here at right about two o'clock, and then this is a parallel line that you're tracing with the downstroke. Again, this is just a warmup exercise. We're not going for perfection. We're just getting to really know how this pen works. So I see this a lot in my workshops where students are creating this oval shape. Their shapes are really pointy, and I'm gonna show you what happens. When you apply pressure, you're gonna start from right about here, around two o'clock. What happens is that they start their pressure way up here, and you get these peaks at the top. See, if I apply pressure there, it's really pointy. That's okay. I just want you to know that that's what's happening. So, again, thin upward stroke, thick downstroke. Thin upward stroke, thin downstroke. I'm not really going for perfection in any of these exercises. I just want you to get a nice mark on the page. Someone asked me about tracing. Tracing hinders your fluidity when you're writing, and you can tell when something's been traced. So I want you to really learn these strokes because these will come in handy. It's like learning a whole new, you know, like that muscle memory at the gym. Your body hurts, and you go back, and you go back, and then later on it doesn't hurt anymore, where you're using a whole new set of muscles, I guess, in your hand. When I am trying to do this practice with, I'm gonna hear that scratch noise again. (scratching) I'm not getting the varied thick and thin. I can't really press down, because (scratching) if I do, you hear more of that. If you continue this way, you'll eventually ruin your nib, and you'll have to replace it. So what you're gonna want to do, again, is pull back, angle the pen towards you and not up at the ceiling. Remember the drawing that I did earlier? The noise has gone away, and I'm able to get the thick and thin again. Okay. So, I've run out of ink. Do you see? That's okay. This is how you do it. Dip again. Go up a little bit past where you left off when you ran out of ink, and continue on. (scratching) (scratching) I'm purposely making these gradually smaller, so you can get the idea. You can see I've warmed up really well with this ovals exercise. In the beginning you could see that I'm not quite there. This was the demonstration. But now that I'm here towards the bottom, I notice my hand is flowing a little bit more, and it's coming more naturally for me. So now we're going to do my third and most favorite exercise, and you'll see why in a minute. It's called the figure eight. So in the figure eight, imagine an ice skater on ice. That's what I like to think about when I'm practicing this motion. It's going to be different than what we've just done. It's a side-to-side motion, and when this fills up an entire page, it's really beautiful. It's my favorite. So to

do this, you're gonna start with the left, from the left to the right, and this is really crucial because if you start from the right to the left, in the other direction, your hand is going to learn a different way to form the downstrokes, and you'll get a little bit of trouble. We can fix that, but I'm just gonna show you now. So the left-to-right is a thin stroke. My pen is barely touching the paper. Right-to-left is now a heavy downstroke, and I release, so that's... Pressure down, I'm really just gliding (scratching) over the paper. (scratching) I'm gonna end at the bottom. (scratching) I see a lot of problems when students are doing this exercise. They forget that it is, your hand is planted down, and the movement is coming from your fingers. And what I see, and this is much like driving, is this. They do this, and they say, "I don't understand why my lines are not doing." What's happening is that their whole arm is moving, and you can see it's happening to me too. My wrist is planted down, and all the motion is in my fingertips. Let's try that again. (scratching) And very slow. (scratching) (scratching) And if you think of it that, you know, that you're drawing these lines sort of parallel, you just follow the first line that you did, they'll look somewhat parallel. Again, we're not going for perfection. I just want you to know the motion and help you warm up. Okay, so this is gonna be a little bit tricky because you're still keeping the pen in that motion, that same position as the drawing earlier, but you're really just pulling ink back and forth with applied pressure in only one area, and I'm gonna show you this here, what I'm saying, what I mean. So this is just gliding, barely touching the paper. At this point here is where I'm applying the pressure, and then I'm just gonna drag the ink across. Applying pressure, dragging the ink, pressure. (scratching) Again, left to right. I'm gonna show you. Watch what happens when I try to drag my pen (scratching) with pressure. Do you feel that resistance? Any time you feel this resistance or see it, just release the pressure, and then you'll get the fluidity again. (scratching) So, and again, with the hairline, you're not gonna be dragging it across because what's gonna happen is this. So just... (scratching) (scratching) Again, there's a little bit of the scratching noises, but I'm not seeing any splattering happen, so we're okay. (scratching) So I notice that my pen here picked up a little bit of fiber. Even though this is a very smooth paper, I must have been pressing down quite hard because, as you can see, you compare this thin line, and this line picked up a little bit and created that thicker line there, where normally a thick line would not occur. So as you can see, I'm using the guide sheet to create these warmup exercises. So, eventually, you'll get to a point where you're wondering where to stop with our warmup exercises, and pretty soon you might not need these guide sheets. I want you to get to a point where you're comfortable making these lines, and you're feeling like you're getting the hang of the way the pen is moving, and you'll know you're ready then.

Uppercase Alphabet

- So now I'm gonna show you how to create the capital letters the way I write them, and I want to show you the exemplar, and if you'll notice they're numbered in the sequence that I would write them and I could do these with my eyes closed probably. I want you to be focused on the area that you're writing and not on the exemplar. And the reason why we're starting out with the capital letters is because we've warmed up with the strokes that you'll use in all of the letter forms. So we'll start from A to Z and go in order. A starts here with a light stroke up, heavy stroke down, and really finish your letters through. Don't rush off. B is a little awkward. Heavy stroke down, hairline up, another hairline up, and pressure down. C starts right about here. Goes up in a hairline, downstroke heavy, light upstroke. D starts here. It's like a compound curve down. It curves around and it's a hairline up, and heavy stroke down and coming around. E starts right about here. It's a hairline going up. Heavy downstroke to the right. Heavy downstroke ending up. F starts right about here at this

line. It goes up in a hairline, heavy downstroke, finial and across. G starts in the middle between these lines. It starts right about here. It goes up and around, crosses that first line, going up to this line here, and then downstroke. H starts here, it goes up. Heavy downstroke, hairline up, heavy downstroke, hairline and end. I starts right about here for me. It goes up, heavy downstroke, and finishing there. J starts at the baseline and similar stroke to I hairline up, heavy stroke down, and the tail comes and crosses over. K starts right about here. It's a hairline up, heavy stroke down. You lift your pen starting from about here. Heavy stroke down. It's run out of ink. So when this happens I could just touch it up. Only the trained eye will really know that you touched that up. L starts here, little hairline up, heavy downstroke crossing up. M starts right here. Hairline up, heavy stroke down, hairline up, and down and finish that off. N starts here. It goes around in a very light stroke up, heavy stroke down, light stroke up, coming around. O is a downstroke and around, joining up at the end. P is a heavy downstroke. That's the compound curve right there. Light stroke, heavy downstroke, light upstroke. Q starts here. It's a hairline up, crosses down, and around. R is heavy downstroke ending here. Pick up the pen, it goes around, heavy downstroke. S is a hairline up and around, heavy downstroke, hairline up. T is a hairline from left to right, up, downstroke, finishing up. U is hairline up, heavy downstroke, hairline up, finish there. V is a hairline up, heavy downstroke, hairline up. W is similar. It's a light upstroke, heavy downstroke, light upstroke, almost in a parallel line downstroke, W. X, light stroke and then heavy downstroke, and crossing with a hairline stroke. That's never going to be a heavy downstroke. Y starts here with a light upstroke, heavy downstroke, light up, heavy downstroke coming up and crossing and ending here. Z starts at this line then heavy downstroke, second heavy downstroke, and crossing and end. I've just shown you the entire alphabet from A to Z, but now I'd like you to really just practice each letter form. Maybe practice an entire row of A's, Bs, and so on and so forth until you're comfortable with each and every letter form.

Refilling the Inkwell and Cleaning the Pen

- I've just noticed that I've used a lot of ink and I'm just gonna show you how to refill. This bottle includes a dropper that you can replenish your ink vial with. Just fill it so it's almost full and just ensure that you're able to dip and get ink into the well. When you're ready to put your items away or if your ink has dried on the pen, you're going to need to clean it. In order to do that, you'll need your pen cleaner. Submerge your nib just enough to coat the metal portion and be careful not to soak this pen holder which is wood. With a lint-free rag, wipe in the direction toward you. The nib is pointing away from you. I would hate for you to get hurt while doing this. You might get an inadvertent tattoo. You're gonna wanna pull this out of the holder. Make sure there's no water in there and then store it. If you don't have pen cleaner, you can just use water with the same steps that I've showed you. You're just gonna need to scrub a little harder with the cloth. When storing your pens, keep in mind that if you store it in an upright position like a paint brush, you might accidentally reach and grab and you might hurt yourself. I also want to talk about the replacement of your nib. How will you know when it's time to replace it? Well first of all, you'll notice when the tines no longer come back into a point. When you are writing this and you're just getting fibers picked up or scratching noises or you're not able to get the thick and thin lines that you once were getting, that's another time when you'll know to replace it. With proper care for your materials, these really will last you quite a long time.

DIY Projects

- Once you've been bitten by the calligraphy bug, you're going to end up with lots of sheets with all your flourishes and your practice. And you don't have to just recycle them, and you don't want to keep them necessarily, you can use them to wrap a gift or make a small envelope, which I'm going to show you. When it's dried, you'll feel this lovely texture, and you'll know it's an original. Just flip it over. Place this diagonally, somewhat in the center. Bring the corner closest to you and fold that. Tuck this in. (paper crinkles) Tuck in any corners that may look sloppy. (paper crinkles) The final fold, tucking in like this. And secure it with a piece of tape. The next thing I like to do with the recycled practice sheets is I like to make to envelopes. And the reason why I like this one in particular is because it uses no tape, and folding, and when it's done, it's just really beautiful. To do that, flip this over. I'm gonna fold it in half. You can get it as close to exact as possible, that would be great. No big deal if it's not. You're gonna take the next fold towards the edge. We are creating guidelines. Fold this up, and then one more back down. And these are all available on the PDF, the diagram is available. So, now I've created these folds. These are all guideline folds. I'm going to now take it and fold the corners in. And this gets folded one more time, and try to match this edge as well, so that you get a, a straight edge there. And this one gets matched up. Okay, we've just created the guideline folds for this envelope, what we're gonna do now is open it up. (paper crinkles) And this is the tricky part. And we are going to create an open fold here. And each end, you're going to make, I'm calling this a house. It looks like a house. Open that up. And then the folds that we created earlier are gonna come into play here. Fold up. Down. And then the house gets folded in, on either side. This gets tucked underneath. Do the same to the other side. You see the envelope taking shape, and there's one more step. This fold matches to the line here. And these just get tucked in. (paper crinkles) This is the trickiest part, the end. Okay. So, right there. This flap just tucks into this bar here. And there you have somewhat perfectly imperfect envelope. I made a tag using the initials for the recipient, that you could just stick on. In the next class, we will learn the lower-case alphabet, and I'll show you how to combine what we've learned already to form words and phrases.

Chapter 2 - Beginning Calligraphy: Letters, Words and Phrases

Part 2: Letters, Words and Phrases

Part 2 Overview

(cheerful music) - Welcome back. In this class, we'll do a recap of the uppercase letters, you'll learn the lowercase letters, I'll show you how to write some useful words and phrases, and we'll end with one of my favorite greeting card projects. (cheerful music)

Lowercase letters

- We're gonna do a recap on the capital letters, and we're gonna dive into the lowercase. This is a different guide sheet than we used last time. As you can see on the top that there's a reminder to do your warmups, which I've already done. And, the capital and lowercase letters in relation to the size on the guide sheet. Place a sheet of vellum over the guide sheet. As a reminder, we're not going to be tracing the letter, but we're just looking to see how it's formed over the guide. So again, the letter A. Hairline up. Pressure on the downstroke, and really follow through with this tail on the A. Cross your letter with intention. And the lowercase A is pressure down, light upstroke. And pressure down. This tail is gonna connect to another letter, so I'm just going to leave it like that. Something

that I notice in most of my workshops with beginning students, is that they don't follow through with the letters. And I'm going to show you an example of what I mean. They're doing it quite too quick. They're doing this, but then they just leave off like that, and then they cross like this. Just really follow through with your letters, and what I mean is, create them with intention, follow through up. It's a slow motion. Heavy stroke down. Whoops, just ran out of ink. When you do this, go up a little bit past, because the paper is already scored with the tines of your nib. Just go up a little bit past. And finish, pretend as if nothing happened. It looks hand done. Lowercase A again. So I'm just going to do this entire line, and I'm gonna finish it through. I'm gonna show you the letters, each letter at a time, but I want you to practice the entire line. But I'll just show you each individual one. So B starts up here. Pressure down. Heavy stroke up. I realize that this line here is an awkward line to write. It's a hairline in the upward direction. You can pause right here, so that it's not so difficult to do in one fell swoop. Pressure down. Lowercase B. These tails that I'm leaving, they're going to be eventually joined up with another letter, so just know that that's where that ends, and the next letter will connect. Letter C is a hairline up, pressure down. And following through with that end bit there. Lowercase C, hairline up. Very similar to the uppercase. I realize that this is gonna look like the letter E, but when it's joined up with other letters, it's going to make sense. The letter D, pressure down. Hairline up, and this is a really tough move to do. And don't stop, like I just did there. Pressure down, and follow through. So the lowercase D starts here. Heavy downstroke. Hairline up, pressure down. When you're practicing your letters, just keep in mind that your grip should be really relaxed. I'm not gripping too hard, and I'm not pressing down. When I say pressing down really hard, if you are seeing spots underneath onto your guide sheets and your paper's ripping, then you know that you're pressing too hard. But, when I say pressure down, it's just applied pressure ever so slightly, and then a hairline up. The letter E starts at about here. It's a hairline up, pressure on the downstroke. Pressure on the downstroke. Okay, that E is not so good. It's sort of perfectly imperfect, but if this were for a client, I would probably redo it. I'm gonna show you another letter that looks more balanced. E, ending about here. And the lowercase E is a hairline up, heavy downstroke. And the way you can differentiate the E and the C, is that the E starts at the bottom. The C starts somewhere in the middle. When you're connecting them, again, they're gonna make sense. The letter F is a hairline in a sideways motion. Pressure down. And cross, F. The lowercase F is a hairline up, pressure down. Hairline and, this is going to eventually connect to the next letter. So G is tricky. It starts here in the middle. It goes around, all the way up. And this is a hairline. This is pressure down. And finishing off. This looks a little bit larger than what I have on the guide sheet, and my letters are always different. No letter will ever be the same. The lowercase G starts here. This mid line. A little bit pressure down. Upstroke, pressure down. Hairline up. The letter H is a hairline up. Pressure down. Hairline up. I'm gonna intersect with the tail of my G, but you know what, that's okay. We're just practicing. H is a hairline up, pressure down. Hairline, pressure down. Okay, so we're gonna let this dry. Remember you're gonna do an entire row of practice. And we'll continue on with the rest of the alphabet. I have my new guide sheet and vellum over. Adjust it so that you're comfortable. And letter I is a hairline up. Applied pressure down. Finish off the I. Lowercase I is hairline up, a little bit of pressure down, and you dot your I. When I dot my letters, I like to just draw a tiny circle. That's all I'm doing. And I'll show you what I mean. Some people do a lowercase I. And then they just do a little tick like that. It's nice if you like that style, but it won't show up as clean. So, mark an X there. J starts from the bottom line. Hairline up, pressure on the downstroke. The tail with a hairline up. Lowercase J starts here, with a hairline up. Heavy pressure down. Light pressure in the upstroke. And dotted J. You're gonna need to lift your pen a little bit for this letter K, but I'll show

you. Hairline up, pressure down. Follow through. This is where you lift. K starts here. And pressure down, tail. Lowercase K starts right about here. It's a hairline up, pressure down. And slight pressure down as well. L starts at the top mid two lines. It's a light stroke up. Heavy pressure down. And a light pressure crossing. Lowercase L starts here. Light stroke up, pressure down. Light stroke up. M is my favorite letter. M goes here. Light stroke up. Heavy stroke down. Light stroke up. Another heavy stroke down to follow through. Do you see that little finial there at the tip? I like to add, they're like earrings. The lowercase M starts here, with a light hairline up, pressure down. Light stroke, pressure, light stroke, pressure. So when you're forming your letters, just keep in mind that the lines on the guide sheet are the general angle that I'm writing my letter forms. Anytime I'm doing a downstroke, for instance in the letter L, M, K, you'll notice that they fall somewhat along that guideline. So we're gonna do N. N starts with a hairline, slight pressure. Hairline in the upstroke. Pressure down. Light upstroke, and applied pressure, and following through with that tail. N, lowercase, hairline up. Pressure down. O is a little bit tricky. The way we did our ovals is sort of in the other direction that you'll be writing this letter. So just keep in mind that the downstroke is the heavy stroke coming this way, towards you. Pressure down, and meet at the top. If you think of the O, and you keep in mind that it should somewhat have an oval shape, and you strive for this shape, you'll get there. It's just a bit of practice. Same to the lowercase letter. In the letter P you'll see that the compound curve exercise that we did in the warmups, you'll see it right here. P, hairline, applied pressure. And this one I'm gonna finish with a finial. The letter P is a hairline up here. Descender goes pressure down with a light upstroke. Pressure down. And this P is usually gonna connect to another letter, so you can bring that line there. Q's tricky. It starts right about here. Keep in mind it should have somewhat of an oval shape in the hairline up, applied pressure down. Crossing over, and ending. The lowercase Q is pretty straightforward. Applied pressure here. Pressure in the tail, and up. We're gonna let this dry. So now we're onto the letter R, and maybe it's been a few minutes, or maybe a few hours since you've stretched. It's always a good idea to take a break every 30 minutes or so, so that your hand doesn't get cramped, and that you do not start to feel fatigue. Letter R. Hairline, pressure down. Hairline up. The R's pressure in that loop. And tail up. I hope you'll notice the pace that I'm going at. It's quite slow. If you're going any faster than what I'm doing, then your letters are really going to look really expressive, and sometimes the nib might catch. Even on a very smooth paper such as vellum. The lowercase R, hairline up, pressure down. Tail connects. The letter S for me has changed over time. In the beginning my S looked completely different than what I like now. And it'll change from time to time. So, you'll get used to a certain style, and maybe that'll be your signature style. S for me is pretty basic. Hairline up, pressure down. And come back in. Lowercase S is very similar. Hairline up. Now end it here, but if you're going to connect the S to another letter, which happens quite often, this will come out, and then you'll have a tail there. I just noticed that my pen has picked up a little bit of fiber. Maybe I was pressing too hard. You can't see it right now, but I'm gonna show you what I mean. You can have a scratch piece of paper and do a little tick like that, just to get this out. And then when you write your next letter, just see if it's cleared. S, that looks better. And I'm looking at the pen. There's nothing there. So we're gonna do a few troubleshooting techniques. I want you to look at the way that you're holding your pen. Make sure that it's pointing in the direction of these guidelines. Again, notice the way you're holding the pen. If your pen position is upright like this, you're not gonna get the thick and thin lines. Also, the way that the nib is turned. If it's too much of an angle like this, and the tines are splitting, like your doing the splits, watch what's gonna happen here. I'm not able to get any mark at all. No thin and thick at all. So it's just a minor adjustment. Just a slight turn of the nib will get you back there. Not

like this. But just a slight turn. Once you find that sweet spot, where you're able to get thick and thin lines consistently in all your letter forms, remember that position and look at the way your hand is writing this. And you'll have a lot less trouble with your letters. T is a hairline crossing up, pressure down. Just ran out of ink. Didn't get very far with that one. The lowercase T starts at the bottom. Hairline up, pressure down, crossing. The U. With this letter U, I noticed that my pen has picked up a little bit of fibers from the paper, and I can only see this because I've done this so many times. If you are seeing that your letter forms look kind of blobby, and not crisp like they once were, you might wanna just have a scratch piece of paper nearby and really just clean it. And if you're still noticing this, you're gonna want to clean your pen and start over. U, hairline up, pressure down. The letter V again starts here, with a hairline up. Pressure down, hairline up. Hairline up with the lowercase, pressure down. The W is a hairline up. Pressure down, hairline halfway up. Pressure down, hairline up. The W, pressure down, hairline up, pressure down. Tail that's gonna connect to the next letter. The X. Lowercase is just the same step, tiny. The Y is a hairline up, pressure down, hairline up. The tail drops down, and hairline up there. The lowercase is hairline up, pressure down. Hairline up, pressure down. I just noticed that on this letter form, there was too much ink. And the way I can tell is that it's beading up here. The letter form looks kind of blobby. Again, if this was for a client, I probably would redo it. I'm gonna show you what I mean. I'm gonna take off excess ink by just lightly tapping on my ink bottle. And you'll see in this letter Y, it's a little bit more crisp. Do you see the difference? So, when you get letters that have too much ink like that, there's really nothing you can do. It's part of the charm of handwritten anything. The letter Z starts at this bottom mid line. Hairline up, pressure down. Light pressure up, pressure down. Tail drops down and up. The lowercase Z, hairline up, light pressure down. Slight pressure down, and hairline up. We've practiced the upper and lowercase alphabet, and next we will write the entire lowercase alphabet all connected.

Connecting letters to create words

- In one fell swoop, we are going to write the entire lowercase alphabet and this will give you a sense of how I join my letters. So let's do another one and this time I'm gonna walk you through what's going on in my head as I'm writing this. B. C, this is going to seem a little bit faster than what you've been practicing. And you wanna have this flow going as you're writing. You don't want it to look like you're trying so hard. So, E. F, just go with the motion. And you will maintain this rhythm throughout the whole alphabet, stopping only when you need to re-ink. When I stop to re-ink, I try to choose ideal places that you wouldn't notice where the letter would stop and end. You wouldn't be able to tell anywhere in this alphabet where I've picked up. So here I'm doing the letter H, won't know that I stopped right here. So now I've run out of ink and I need to re-ink this. Dip, I'm gonna start just past where I left off and carry on like nothing's happened. O. Q, R, S, T, U, V, this is where I get lost. Oh my goodness, where am I? W. X, Y, Z. I usually wait until the end to cross my Ts, dot my Is and Js and cross the X. And there you have it, the lowercase alphabet. So now we're going to start with phrases and I'm going to show you how I join my capital to the lowercase letters. In some cases, you might want to join the letters. I never do, it's just not my style. And some cases, it does make sense that you would connect it but for my style, I just leave them separate. And I'm gonna show you how I do that. So we'll start with I love you 'cause it's practical. You'll write this in a message. So capital I. The L. O. V, E, and you know, I'll talk about the spacing too. In this case, I'm not crazy about the way it space. There's a little bit too much space between the capital and lowercase. My Y there is not inked all the way. Obviously, you'll practice this until you get to where

you want it. So I'm gonna do that once more and with the letter L 'cause I know it's going to touch the next letter if I just leave it as is. I'm gonna drop the tail of the L. A little bit. And start the lowercase closer. When I was starting, I would practice this and I would fill an entire page with just I love you, I love you, I love you and I would pick and choose which one mark, which one I liked, and then when I was writing the card to somebody, I would say, "Okay, I'll strive for this one." And then you see what happens. So what's another practical one? Thank you. So here again, the Y is disconnected from the O and the U but if you wanted to, you could join them. I typically don't but it just happened. No, let's do that again. Thank you. I'm gonna practice some other phrases but let's start with a new page. Happy birthday. So sometimes you would write it just as is. Sometimes you might wanna stack happy birthday. You can practice doing that way. Let's just do a variation here. Okay, then I'm going to see where birthday might fit. Maybe some of the letters might intersect and that's okay. You might like how it looks, you may not. As you notice, I just did that without lining up the guidelines. If you are really particular, you could probably just slide the paper slightly so that you're writing in that space. I just happen to know in general how they would relate. Remember, you're not always going to have a transparent paper and guide sheet at all times so when the lines go away and you're writing on a real card, you might wanna pencil in the lines. I'm happy with this perfectly imperfect look. I know for you it might look perfect because I've done this before. However, if you were to look at every line, not every letter is falling on that angle that I showed you on the guide sheet but I want you to explore. Discover what you like about your own script. Let's practice thinking of you. Sometimes if I'm too distracted, I will misspell words. So I'm trying not to talk and write. So thinking. Thinking of you. Let's try that one more time. I'm just gonna write without thinking where my pen is going to land. Let's see. Okay so if I wanted this to be so much straight, I'm gonna start on this next line here but just adjust the guideline. So now I notice that this is looking just a little bit off centered and maybe you're thinking of them dot dot dot. That sorta balances that composition. Congratulations. So in general, I tend not to flourish too much in my style. You can if you wanna go to town and practice. You know, just apply the same thick and thin rules and see what you like and don't like. I just like the simplicity of very, very basic letters. So let's do another common one, happy holidays. I don't know if you can see this but my letter D is missing a hairline. I wrote that a bit too quick. There are two things you could do. You can very carefully go in and just touch it up. Oops. Okay or you could just write it again. On an actual card, that might just be something that part of the charm of the handwritten but if this were going to be a scan, I would want to make sure that it was picked up. I would just go back and write it again. I don't know if you've noticed this along the way but my letters are not staying in the lines. It's just a general guide. And now we are going to get rid of all the lines and just practice. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Over and over so get rid of the guide sheet. I know this is going to be scary. Don't worry, it's going to be part of the project that we're doing later. So we're going to write thank you as many times as possible but in a smaller scale. I know you've been use to writing quite big according to the guidelines and you can also print the guide sheets so that it's at 50% or 80%. Whatever size you like if you need to practice at that scale. But right now, you're going to go in and write thank you. It seems quite fast but I need to slow down. Again, let's slow down. Again, even though I'm writing at a smaller scale, I'm still keeping in mind the thick and thin where it curves in my letter forms. Try joining the letters if you wanna try that. The uppercase and lowercase. Oops, ran out of space there. It's okay. This will all make sense when I show you the card. When I first started and I would practice into the wee hours of the night, I would fill up pages and pages and pages of just writing and I love the way that the layered look of the letters intersecting each other and all the white spaces was

filled with beautiful script. It's also nice if you have some music to listen to while you're doing this. Maybe you follow the rhythm of the piece that you're listening to. I want you to continue writing thank you over and over until you've finished about half a page. And then I'm gonna show you how to make my favorite mini thanks card.

Create the "Many Thanks" greeting card

- I'm always looking for ways to incorporate my practice sheets into my artwork, and one of the ways I like to show a true heartfelt thanks is to make a many-thanks card. To do this, you will cut up strips of your practice sheet into maybe a handful or so of these, a glassine envelope, double-sided tape and a card. I've included a few cards in the kit. However, any four-by-six card when folded will be fine for this project. So we're gonna lay our card flat. And we're going to write, "Many thanks," just any way it comes out on the card. I've already tested this type of paper. It's got quite a bit of a texture, so you'll want to test before you actually write on the card to make sure that your ink is going to work with that type of paper. So before I start writing, I just want a general sense of where I want the words to lay on the card. You can take your glassine envelope, center it. Okay, that's probably where I want it to be, and just go ahead and write. So I notice when I wrote this, a few of the hairlines didn't come through. You know, I'm just gonna go in and touch up if you want it to look finished. I'm fine with the little nicks because it shows that it's got a human touch to it. We're gonna set this aside and let it dry, and assemble our glassine envelope. You're gonna stuff your miniature glassine envelope with as many of these as you desire. Maybe you're making a few at a time. Then, kinda position it so that they can read through what it's actually saying. You can arrange it to make sure the message is clear, that there are lots of them in there, okay. That looks good. So then you're gonna take your double-sided tape. Oops. (tape crackling) Just add a little bit there to seal that. (tape crackling) It's tricky. On all four sides is okay. One more for the middle, just for good measure. And then, by now, your card has dried, so you can play with putting this onto the card. And there you have a very sweet, heartfelt, handmade, thank-you card. If you wanted to, you could include a personalized message on the inside. You can make many of these at a time. And it's a great way to reuse your practice sheets.

Chapter 3 - Beginning Calligraphy: White Ink on Black Paper

Part 3: White Ink on Black Paper

Part 3 Overview

(cheerful music) - So far, we've been practicing with black ink on velum and this week we're going to switch in up to a white ink on black. We'll start with the warmup exercises, I'll show you the numerals, punctuation, and we're going to create an alphabet chart from A to Z. ^Finally, I'll show you how I like to address an envelope. ^ (cheerful music)

Mixing white ink

- So I'm gonna show you how to mix the perfect consistency for white ink on black paper. You'll need water. Black paper. Small paintbrush. Miniature spatula. Dr. Ph. Martin's Bleedproof White. An empty jar. Distilled water. A label if you wish. And your pen. So when you open up your bottle of Bleedproof White the consistency of it is like a paste. Obviously if you were to stick your nib right into it you would, it would be very hard to get a smooth line out of it. So I'm gonna show you how

to mix it to the consistency that I like to work with. With your spatula add a little bit to your jar, I'd say maybe a tablespoon or so, start with that. Drop that right in. You're gonna add water to it. And just a little bit at a time so that you can mix as you go and then we're gonna be testing this mixture as we go. So I like to mix it so that it's a the consistency of say a heavy cream. If you add too much water you can always add more of the pigment. But once I have a nice I think this is gonna be too thin but we'll do a test. When I'm testing this I'm gonna paint on to my nib which I've cleaned thoroughly. There's no residue of the black left. So I'm just gonna paint a little bit of that on get any, get rid of any the excess and then see if I'm getting a nice flow. That seems to be a good consistency. The way you can tell is if you're able to get the same smooth strokes that you were able to achieve with the black ink on the vellum. The way I'm gonna really know if it's perfect is once it's dried I'll see the opacity of the white. If not I'll continue to mix until I achieve this. I'm just gonna go ahead and practice a few more strokes to see how the letters will look. So I'm gonna do a few more practice strokes. Okay, so now I'm finding that the hairlines might be a little bit hard to see. There's something so nice about the white on black that you'll, you'll see in your strokes it's really magical. We're gonna see how that dries and do a few more tests. During this process I'm going back and forth to see the fluidity of the white ink on the black paper. Sometimes I'm noticing that I'm not getting any of the hairline marks. This could be two signs; it could be that, you know my working time is much quicker meaning I'd have to clean more often with the water. Or that my mixture is too thick. Right now I'm guessing that it's just drying on the nib. So I'm gonna dip just the tip into the water just like that, just to lubricate that edge and lightly tap to see if I'm able to get those hairlines. Looks like that did the trick so let's continue to practice. And as I'm doing this I'm somewhat warming up I'm seeing where it's dried and I'm looking to see it's not as opaque as I'd like. So just add in a little bit of this I'm gonna mix it again. So it's always good to start with just a little bit because you know you don't wanna have too much of a bad mixture. So again we're gonna test this. Oh, it's dried a little bit so I'm gonna dip just the the tip again into the water to lubricate that. That's a good hairlines. And I'm gonna write a letter, just M just to see how that one look. Ah, well, let's see, maybe it will be okay. Really can see those hairlines. So the working time with this is a lot slower than with the blank ink. I think it's quite nice to slow down a little bit so this is really gonna force those of you who have been wording too quickly with your pens to really slow down and really focus on your letter forms. Think it's gonna be fun. So that's looking like the right consistency. So once you've achieved the right consistency you're gonna want to store this with the cap on because it's distilled water it'll last quite a while until you run out actually. I love to find any excuse to add a label to items. In this case I've written out White Ink Number One.

Working with white ink on black paper

- In this class, we will be switching it up with white ink on black paper which you've already mixed. Why I love white ink so much on black is because it's so magical, and it adds a quiet elegance to a blank page. If your ink has been sitting for awhile in this vial, you're gonna want to just shake it up just a little bit by rubbing it in your hands and giving it a gentle shake. If you're using it in the bottle that you've mixed, you're gonna want to stir that with a paintbrush. If you are not using the ink in the small vial, you're going to want to paint the white onto the nib versus dipping it. The reason why is because if you've dipped in all the way, you'll get white ink all over the holder, and that's not gonna be good. You'll get it all over the page. We're gonna start with the warmup exercises. Again, the compound curve is a hairline followed by pressure down, hairline up. And we're not using any guidelines now so it's more of a freeform. I feel that it is freeing for you 'cause maybe you've been

too constricted by those lines, and now it's not going to matter. I'm getting nice flow with this ink mixture. Compound curve. We're gonna do a few ovals. You might notice that I'm going at a even slower pace than I was with the black. It really does force you to slow down. I had a little bit too much ink on that. It's okay, let's try that again. Okay, so I just noticed as I was doing this that I have too much ink, and it's about to drip on there. Do you see that? That's too much ink. I know that once I head to my paper that that is going to add a big blob right there. So, I'm gonna just gently tap. That looks good. Again, you're hearing the gentle scratch. Not an irritating scratch followed by splatter, but you still here it. Okay, that's a nice flow. We'll do the figure eights. Side... Pressure down, whoops. Barely touching the paper, pressure down. Okay, this is nice except when I'm doing these side strokes here. I tend to run out. That's okay. I feel like I'm warmed up, and on to numerals. The same rules apply. Thick downstroke, hairline upstrokes. And we'll start with zero to nine. Zero, one, two, three. I like to cross my number seven, especially when I'm addressing an envelope, so that someone can differentiate the number one from the seven. The same rules apply to your numbers with the thick and thin strokes. Once you have the hang of the thick and thin lines, you can apply these to all the numbers, or you could follow along the way I write them on the guide sheet. Next, we're gonna do punctuation. I have two ways that I do the ampersands. Sometimes, it's like this. And another way is like this. If you're following along on the guide sheet, you'll see this order. Percent. Dollar sign. Exclamation point, question mark. Quotation marks. Brackets. Period. Comma. You'll get the hang of it. What I notice in most of my workshops is that my students are too focused on the guide sheets and too constrained by following within the lines and the angle. When I see this, I recommend that we switch to black paper with white ink. And what this is is that it frees you from thinking about these angles and just working on the form. So, now we're gonna write the alphabet with white ink, and we'll see what happens. So, here we go. So, thin upstroke, heavy downstroke. I want you to do this without thinking too much about it. Just do the alphabet like you've been practicing. Don't think too much about where things are gonna land, what the spacing is going to be. C. Heavy downstroke, whoops, I ran out of ink there. Go back past where you left off, continue the form. So, you never know where you're going to run out of ink. It's just a matter of carrying on as if you weren't interrupted. F, I'm not paying attention to this size of the letter in relation to the one I just wrote. I'm just doing A to Z, and it's a good practice. H, heavy downstroke, light upstroke. So, what you'll notice when you're practicing with the white ink is that this is going to slow you down quite a bit which is what I want because maybe some of you have been writing too fast. When you slow down, you'll notice that you're really focusing on the form. Okay, I'm gonna clean up this letter H because I was talking. Talking and writing at the same time is very hard. Letter I. I like the way I've mixed this particular batch of white ink. I'm getting a nice flow of the thick and thin lines. You can see... I'm running out quite a bit, but that's okay. That's what it's supposed to do. J. K. Thin stroke up, heavy stroke down, thin stroke up, oop. Start again a little bit before where you ran out of ink. I like to add these little finials. N. R, oops, that's too much ink there. That's okay. You can tell in that letter S that I've had a little bit of coffee. Do you see? T. U. V. And there you have it, A to Z, without even thinking about the placement. As I'm looking at this, I notice that some of my letters are larger than others. That's okay, that's part of the perfect imperfect. If I had a friend who just had a baby, I think this would make a great gift. Just pop it in a frame and give it as is.

Addressing an envelope

- I'd like to show you how I would address an envelope. You can find these envelopes at any stationery supply store. Today, I'm using charcoal with white ink. Gonna start with the return

address. I like to go ahead and write the address straight across the top, that way if the envelope is flipped around, the mail carrier doesn't get confused, which has happened before. Remember to always clean off your nibs when you're done. In this case, we're still using water. I found these really cool Love stamps. With vintage stamps, you might need to leave a lot more space, depending on what the postage rate is. Continue to practice with white ink, and feel free to experiment with different colors of paper. Maybe this will inspire you to write a long-lost friend, or write that thank you note that you didn't send. Next week, I'll show you how to put this all together in a final project.

Chapter 4 - Beginning Calligraphy: Putting it all Together

Part 4: Putting it all Together

Part 4 Overview

(light exciting music) - Welcome back. By now you've had a lot of practice and you've probably come a lot farther than I did when I was first starting. In this class I'm gonna show you how to put all your skills together into two projects. I'll show you how to transfer your design onto your final piece of paper. And then create a quick and easy frame that you could display in your studio. In the second project I'll show you how I like to create a calligraphic illustration. We'll take a basic shape such as a bird silhouette and I'll show you how to write within it to fill the form. With these skills these will take you way beyond the practice sheets.

Additional materials

- In addition to the calligraphy kit, you'll need a few additional items. Black tape, two pieces of glass, assorted papers that we will test, scissors, a white eraser, possibly a kneaded eraser, a pencil, a paintbrush, a quote that you'd like to use. You can use any shape or the bird on the downloadable PDF. And I'm going to show you a troubleshooting technique using gum arabic.

Create a frameable quotation

- Even after so many years at this, I still like to warm up before each project. Today I'm using black ink on vellum, and my favorite, the figure eight. So at this point, if you're feeling like you still are struggling with the thick and thin lines, you might want to check a few things. What I notice in a lot of my workshops is that the muscle memory in your hand sometimes reverts to the way you write, in this position. And just look at the way you're holding the pen, and guide it back into the way I showed you in the first class. Again, it's pulling towards you, thick and thin. If you're still hearing scratching noises and splattering, again, check the angle, make sure it's not perpendicular to the paper and it's angled back. We don't have guidelines today, so it's hard to see. But, you're getting there. Another thing to remember is that your pen should never rotate as you are writing, and your wrist is planted, and all the movement is from your fingertips. This is going to be important to remember in the project where we're going to be writing in a shape, and not necessarily in a straight line. I feel like I've really warmed up already, and so now we're going to go ahead and start with the quote. You can pick any quote you like, but we're going to do my favorite by Rumi. "Let the beauty of what you love be what you do." Now, I'm just gonna go ahead and write this out in a straight line, as, well, fairly straight as possible. Remember, I'm not really worried about the spacing at this point, just worried about getting it written out. I ran out of space, so that's okay, I'm just gonna continue on in the bottom. I'm just gonna write, "Rumi," here, just in case I use it in the quote. I may or may

not. Now we're gonna let this dry, and you're gonna wanna grab some scissors and tape.

Finalize composition

- This is my process for any project that I start. Whether it be an invitation or a quote, I like to use cut and paste, the actual cut and paste. Take your paper, go ahead and cut out each and every word. It's actually quite nice to see it on a somewhat transparent paper. That way you can really adjust if you want some words to be closer or farther away, you can really see the layers. Now, what I'm going to do is just play with this composition, see what I like and I have it going into an 8.5 x 11 frame, so I'm keeping this in mind. I like a lot of white space around my words, so I'm just going to play around for a little bit and I hope you'll do the same. When I think about this, let the beauty of what you love, like where should you pause, maybe that should make sense in the way you compose this. Let the beauty of what you love be, maybe be is by itself, be what you do. I want to make sure these are all in order. Let the beauty of what you love be what you do or let is by itself, let the beauty stand by itself, let the beauty ... Of is here, maybe it's more of a vertical shape, something like that. I've decided that there's no space for roomie to be included in the quote, so I'll just tell my friend that that's where the quote came from. I like this sort of vertical composition. Now, I'm going to tape each word down in this layout. This way, you can see some of the letters intersecting, like I almost like how that crosses with, maybe I'll just leave it like that. That looks nice from here. I'm going to grab my pencil and we're going to go ahead and transfer this to the final sheet. To do that I'm going to create a makeshift carbon copy, using a pencil scribble the back. I'd like to do this on craft paper or tea stained paper, but I'm going to show you how I test before I create the final project. This is my process for testing any paper. Remember that handmade papers have more fibers and are more likely to get picked up in your nib and also the ink can bleed. I'm going to test now with my sumi ink to see if I were to write on this directly what would happen. Let's test the letter L. Okay, so as you can see this paper is bleeding and the way I know this is first I saw a long fiber stuck in my pen. It's probably too small to see, but I saw that drag and take a look at this line here, see that fuzzy edge. On the vellum paper, it's really smooth, but on this, I can tell it's bleeding. In the hair lines, you don't notice it as much because the nib is barely touching the paper. This is where gum arabic comes in handy. We're going to mix a few drops into our sumi ink mixture. You'll need a clean jar, sumi ink. Since this is a quote, I'm not going to need a lot of this, but you might want to mix just a little bit extra in case you'll use it again. I'm going to add just enough, so that I'm able to dip into this mixture without having to pick up the jar. That looks like about right. With a dropper, add a few drops at a time. Keep in mind that adding too much of this could possibly clog your nib. You'll need a paintbrush to mix it and then we're going to do a little test. Did you see that? That's still happening, so now I know I'm going to need a little bit more of the gum arabic. Little better. You'll continue to add a few drops at a time of the gum arabic until the bleeding stops. I've already tested my paper, so I'm going to go ahead and use it. I'm going to mark that I've added some gum arabic to this mixture, sumi with gum arabic. I'm going to go ahead and use this mixture because it does not hurt. Now, we're going to transfer the design onto our final sheet. In this case, I've chosen craft paper. Take your pencil and trace down on every letter, taking note if you like a particular way it's cross, go ahead and do that. This is your time to change anything if you want to the final design. Remember this is just placement only because I never trace over my letters. I just want to know generally where each word will fall in the composition. I'm writing a lot faster than I would with a pencil than I would with a pen. I'm going to lift this paper to make sure that the design is transferred and that I can see. If you can't see the lines, it's okay to take a pencil and go ahead

and lightly fill in where you'll write. You have to be very careful when you're working with a deeper jar like this because there's a potential for your pen holder to get a little bit of ink on it. Also, keep in mind that your working time with this is going to be a lot quicker, meaning you'll have to clean the nib because the gum arabic clogs your nib. We're going to carefully letter this. As you can see, I'm not really tracing the line, but I'm just using the pencil transfer as a position. When you compare this to my layout, it's not going to be identical, but the layout will be somewhat similar. I noticed with this craft paper that my nib is picking up a little bit of the fibers. You're going to want to take a close look each time you dip your pen into the ink just to make sure. It's always a good idea to keep a scratch piece of paper just to make sure you can clean that out. If your pen is sticking up a lot of fibers, you'll find that you'll have to clean with a pen cleaner during this process. I'm being very careful here not to pick up any fibers. Sometimes, we might not be so lucky, so what do you do? Let's hope that doesn't happen. Let's see if I can get through this whole thing. I think it looks fine, but what happens when you actually have a fiber get stuck? I do see a little bit here with the hairline on this W and I just made it worse, oops. Now, I do see that there is a fiber stuck here in my nib. Before you do anything to this, you're going to want to make sure that it is completely dry. I'm going to set this off to the side and I'm going to show you my process is similar with invitations. These are two letterpress invitations that I designed. I cut out each phrase instead of words as we did in the quote and I went ahead and I laid it out into the final design. From there, I created the final artwork as we did in the quote. Because this was going to be letterpress printed, I scanned it and sent it to the printer. I try to use the computer as a little as possible in my work. I think the quote is dry now, so I'm going to set these off to the side. Take a look, I'm going to touch it, yeah it seems dry. For this trick, you're going to need an X-Acto knife and if you're not comfortable with an X-Acto knife, you can just leave it as is in the perfectly imperfect look. Take an X-Acto knife and you're going to want to make sure that the blade is very sharp to do this. I'm essentially scraping away that little bit with the blade. Now, this is completely dry. We fixed that little mark and now we're going to erase the pencil lines. For this, you could use a white eraser, but I prefer a kneadable eraser. This kneadable eraser comes in quite handy because you can shape it into point. I'm going to try not to erase any of the ink marks as much as possible. I'm going to go in. I am lightly taking away any visible pencil lines, taking care not to press too much on the ink. As you can see, when you feel it, there's like a little bit of a raised texture to it. My palms get really sweaty sometimes and because of this, I'm trying as much as possible not to touch the ink because I know it's not going to smear, but you never know. This process will work with any quote that you had in mind or invitation.

Frame the quotation

- I like to let the work speak for itself. So, a simple and understated frame seems to make the perfect gift for the person who has everything. To do this, we are going to sandwich the quote between two pieces of glass. I've trimmed this so that it meets the edges. I'm using black masking tape. I'm going to just tape half the edge to it because the other half will be wrapped on the other side, placing it as straight as possible, and as I'm pressing down here, I can see it's gonna be just a little bit crooked. So I'm gonna reposition before really sealing this in. I notice it a little bit on this side. You're gonna do this to all four sides. On these shorter edges, we are gonna cut this flush to the glass. I am just sealing the back edge. If you wanted to write a special note on the back before you went ahead and did this, you can do that. Obviously, let it dry. Now we're gonna do the top edge, and on the back, I'm pressing to just ensure that these are sealed. So this is just going in my studio. So, for me, it doesn't have to be exactly perfect. So I'm gonna place this down, and I'm gonna fold it at the

corner, and where this makes a V, that's where I'm gonna snip. So you might have to lift it a little bit, and do the same thing to the other side. Lift and trim, and then really press down and secure that. Wrap it around to the other side, and you're gonna have this little bit left that you're gonna snip off. For the back, you're gonna wanna tuck this in the way you do when you're wrapping a present, and then go ahead and press on the back end. Press it down as much as possible, 'til it's all the way flat. Now, if you were worried at all that this was not enough support, since it's the backside, you could add another piece of tape, but I think that should be okay, and you're going to do the same thing to the final side, and there you have a beautiful and simply framed quote.

Create a calligraphy illustration

- We're going to create a calligraphic illustration. You can really choose any shape, but I chose a bird, which you can find in the PDF. I also chose some really fun lyrics to practice. We're going to use the same technique that I showed you in the quote to transfer the image of the bird on to the final piece of paper. You're going to want to cover the image of the bird. If you can't see through it, you can look, hold it up to the light and you're just getting a general sense of where the image is. I'm using pencil because if you were to use something like carbon, obviously that would not be easily erasable. I think I missed part of the leaves here. When in doubt, always good to just go over so you can make sure that the lines will show up. I think I got most of it, maybe this leaf shape here needs to come in, and that's it. We're transferring this onto a sage green card stock, which I've already tested and it's compatible with my ink. This here gives me a sense of where it's going to be placed on the page, and keeping in mind any white space. So position it to where you think you'd like it. That looks good to me. And then you're going to go ahead and trace the major outlines of the bird, noting any distinct features such as his eye, his wing ... his foot. And if you're not sure where you've already traced you can also just take a peek, hold it in place, carry on. Obviously you're gonna see the pencil lines, but if there is anything distinct that you want to make sure you get onto this final, you need to check. Here are the leaves, and I'm only tracing this for placement. I'm not tracing the artwork, if that makes sense. I'm not crazy about this part of the branch, so I'm not gonna bring that in, and then this leaf, branch I mean. Leaf, this one sort of curls around, it's interesting. Okay, so I think, oh I forgot the eye, most important part, this eye if not placed correctly, could look odd in the final piece. I'm gonna check, let's see one part here. I think that looks about right. You're not really gonna see the exact shape of the bird, but you'll get a sense of the bird shape within the pencil marks. You're gonna remove the image off. I'm gonna see, you know, I did miss a line. I'm just gonna trace where I think that should go. That's pretty, reads bird. It's positioned on my page the way I want it to be. I'm just gonna take note of areas that I want to highlight. For instance, this wing here is an opportunity to create a larger word, so it's more of a focal point. You get a sense of a distinct shape of this wing. If you'd like to, you could lightly sketch where you want to highlight any text. I'm just gonna see how this fits in, bird. So my lyrics are the surfing bird. Bird is the word, have you heard, bird is the word, and it repeats, and it repeats, and it repeats. So I think that would be nice here with some of the lines that repeat. You know, you can accentuate some of this, the detail on the wing. For the branches, I'm planning to add texture to contrast. So I'm thinking of this composition in terms of drawing. Obviously, I can't write this word in, and then be able to come over here. I'm gonna need to turn this as I'm working and allow certain areas to dry. So I'm gonna pick a point where it's practical to start, and let that area dry. Since I'm going to be working on the word bird and around it, I'm gonna go ahead and start with that ink and then go from there, starting with the focal point word, bird, that occurs in the wing. Turn this so that you're comfortable in the

direction that you're writing. At this point, I'm not really worried at how everything's gonna lay out. I just feel like at the end, it should read bird. I'm gonna do this with different textures and text. So bird, have my lyrics handy, well everybody's heard about the bird. Now while that part's drying, I'm gonna go over here to the beak area. Let's turn this around. In this area here, do you remember those ovals, the warmup exercises that we did? I'm going to just lightly add a few because I want to highlight the beak. Moving on to the eye because it's another focal point, this is a miniature figure eight. I'm not concerned if it's connecting. I mean, it's gonna read as the eye eventually. Once we've mapped out the main focal points, we're gonna let this dry and come back in with pencil.

Finish the illustration

- I'm not sure how this is going to look in the end. However, I want to make sure that once these pencil lines are erased, I want to make sure they read as a bird. So, I'm just going to go ahead and write in where I think I should really fill in, and then we'll go from there. This is a good way to get your capital B practice in. So, it's "bird, bird, bird, bird is a word." I'm not too worried how this is going to layer and overlap. I think it's kind of nice to see. Then, I'm gonna continue on down the wing here. So, here it says "don't." "Don't" can really fill that space there. "Don't you know "about the bird." That fits nicely into that, into the wing. Do you see this open space here? I'm gonna determine later if I need to fill that in. So, I'm looking at this, and my text is going everywhere. I'm not sure how it's all gonna fit in, but I think it'll read well. So, I have some text going in this direction, and some in this direction. I really think it adds to the overall beauty of the overlapped lines. I've pretty much filled up the entire shape of the bird just because I want to know where I need to really define. The fun part's really gonna happen here when I get to the branches, and I'm gonna use calligraphic flourishes. Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na. N's another nice letter. Na, na, na, okay. Alright, well it's a really fun song. I think this looks good. We're gonna move to ink, and go from there. So, when I'm drawing these forms, I'm gonna come out and if a, whoops, the B. There I just tried to fill in that space. I don't really know what's gonna happen. It's kind of a neat discovery. It is quite possible that this might not turn out the way I want it in the end, but we'll see when we get there. So here, I'm really going in and trying to fill in all that space as much as possible. And where I'm heading to the outline here of the bird, my text gets smaller, and I'm not worried about the scale, like this is a miniature D compared to this B. These lyrics are really at this point nonsensical. It's just repeating, but I think I like seeing bird, bird, bird in different variations and textures. Okay, so right there, I crossed into this main, large word. I think it's fine. I'm not gonna worry too much about that. Something's gonna fit right in there. Here I'm at the edge. There are lyrics in this part. It says, "Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na," and I think it's really nice here in the bird's tail, this texture of the "na, na, na, na." I've been letting this dry for a little bit, and so now I can really go in and add the detail to the branches. This is a familiar exercise. It's miniature figure-eight, and I'm just coming in to span that branch. When it's done, it's gonna create this texture that gives you the idea of the branch here. You might not be used to drawing this small, so you can practice before you do this. And feel free to turn it if you need to so that it's comfortable for you. In the leaves here, I'm imagining it to be a larger figure-eight flourish. I'm really going to the edges here just to define that shape. So, as I'm looking at it, I'm gonna make sure that this is connecting here somehow, just tiny squiggles for the stem. And now we're gonna finish the last branch. So, I'm here to the first leaf. I'm going to go ahead and, you know, this time I'm gonna try a graduated flourish figure-eight. I'm get gradually bigger and then smaller. Might need to fill in here. This leaf comes around a little bit. I'm just gonna look at this composition for a while and see what's really working, get in some of the detail that I

really want to accentuate. For instance, right here where his foot is holding onto the branch, I really want to define that, and I think I'm gonna use what I used in the beak, the ovals exercise. When I look at this, I really do see the defined bird shape throughout. The branches are pretty distinct. However, I remembered creating this flourish in the eye in the very beginning, and now it's starting to bug me. So, I feel that I really need to make that a focal point. So, I think I'm gonna fill this eye in. I'm just gonna do that by coloring it in. That's much better. Now, we're gonna let that dry, and then we're gonna erase all the lines. Okay, that's all erased now, and I found one spot right here that I'm just gonna add the letter A. I feel like this is really finished now, and you can apply this technique to any shape. So, feel free to experiment. With everything that you've learned, thick and thin, the alphabet, mixing ink, playing with scale, composition, and even troubleshooting, I feel that you're ready to take this and make it your own.