

# Headline English

2011, week 44 *Learn English through reading on current world affairs*

1 **Kitty Burns Florey**

2 **Is handwriting still a useful skill?**

3 original at

4 <http://moreintelligentlife.com/story/script-scribble-kitty-burns-florey-defends-pen>

5 When I found out about how learning handwriting in school is being  
6 replaced by keyboarding instruction, my first reaction was the predictable  
7 horror of someone who has been extensively taught to write with her  
8 hand. If handwriting is over, is that really so terrible?

9 I began writing books back in the late 1970s by hand or using a  
10 typewriter. How difficult was editing then! When the computer came along  
11 and made cutting and pasting virtual instead of messy, it made my life a  
12 lot easier. Almost everything I write now, from a long book to a short  
13 email, is done on the computer

14 My handwriting of course has suffered. But so what? Who needs it? Can't  
15 we say goodbye and good riddance?

16 I was surprised to find that the answer is: Not so fast!

17 Kids certainly need to learn to type on a keyboard, but they also need  
18 legible handwriting—for taking tests, writing reports, working at the  
19 chalkboard. Many schools have adopted some version of technology for  
20 these tasks, but far more haven't the resources for it. Children are judged  
21 by their handwriting; if they produce indecipherable chicken-scratching, a  
22 teacher will not be sympathetic.

23 Also, in an emergency – when the computer crashes or the electricity  
24 fails, it is very useful to be able to produce handwriting that is legible at  
25 decent speeds.

## Questions

- 1) Why was the author of the article shocked at discovering that handwriting classes are being replaced by typing classes?
- 2) Paraphrase 'If handwriting is over...' (line 8).
- 3) What are, according to the author, the advantages of writing on a computer over writing with your hand or writing on a typewriter?
- 4) What was the impact of the advent of computers on the author's handwriting?
- 5) Does the author think that teaching children to write with their hands in a quick and legible manner is largely superfluous?
- 6) What word is the *antonym* (exact opposite) of legible?
- 7) Paraphrase 'haven't the resources for it' (line 20).
- 8) What arguments does the author give in support of her opinion on the importance of handwriting?

## Vocabulary

**come along** (line 10) – to appear; emerge as a factor or possibility

**paste** (line 11) – to insert (copied text, images, etc.) into a file

**sympathetic** (line 22) – feeling sympathy; sympathizing; compassionate or acting or affected by a special affinity or mutual relationship; congenial:

**emergency** (line 23) – a sudden, urgent, usually unexpected occurrence or occasion requiring immediate action.

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček:

