

Digital Lettering & Calligraphy — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into reps. Each section maps to one course module and mixes drills, fill-in worksheets, and checklists you complete on your iPad and in Illustrator. Work through it in order, keep every Procreate file, and use the templates to track practice, plan pieces, and prep files for delivery.

Setting Up Your Procreate Studio

Configure your hardware, canvas, gestures, and a trusted two-brush set so the tool never gets in the way of practice.

Checklist: Studio setup checklist

- iPad with Apple Pencil support confirmed and Pencil paired
- Procreate installed and updated
- Matte (paperlike) screen protector applied
- Two-finger undo and three-finger redo confirmed working
- QuickLine (draw-and-hold to snap straight) tested for guidelines
- A4 practice canvas created at 2480 x 3508 px, 300 DPI
- Monoline and brush-script brushes duplicated and renamed (My Mono, My Script)

Worksheet: Brush tuning log

Open each duplicated brush in Brush Studio and record the four key settings you land on. Keep this so you can recreate or compare your brushes later.

Brush name

StreamLine % (Stroke Path)

Maximum size

Minimum size

Pressure-to-size curve (light / medium / aggressive)

Taper amount

What this brush is best for

Exercise: Gesture and warm-up reps

Spend 10 minutes building reflexes before any lettering. Fill rows on your practice canvas and use only gestures (no menus) to undo, zoom, and rotate.

- Draw 3 rows of clean straight lines using QuickLine for baselines.

-
- Fill one row of loose ovals, rotating the canvas to keep your wrist comfortable.
-
- Undo and redo at least 20 times using gestures until it feels automatic.
-
- Write your first name once with My Mono and once with My Script to feel the pressure difference.
-

Strokes, Letterforms, and Brush Script

Drill the fundamental strokes, assemble a consistent lowercase alphabet, and connect letters into clean words.

Exercise: Seven-stroke daily drill

On a guideline layer (baseline, x-height, ascender, descender), fill one full row per stroke. Light pressure up, heavy pressure down. Hold a single slant of about 55 degrees throughout.

- Thin upstroke and thick downstroke: one row each, matched angle.
-
- Underturn and overturn: one row each, watching where thin becomes thick.
-
- Compound curve and oval: one row each, keeping counters even.
-
- Ascending and descending loops: one row each, matched heights.
-

Worksheet: Letterform diagnosis sheet

Letter the lowercase alphabet by stroke family, then use letter anatomy to name what looks off for the three letters you struggle with most. Diagnosis beats guessing.

Problem letter

Stroke family it belongs to

What looks wrong (slant / x-height / counter / weight / spacing)

Specific fix to try next attempt

Exercise: Connect-the-word reps

Practice joining letters on thin upstrokes only. Treat each word as one continuous ribbon. Re-letter each word at least five times.

- Letter your first name five times, connecting on thin strokes.
-
- Letter the words hello and thank you, keeping consistent spacing.
-
- Pick one word and add a single tasteful flourish to the first or last letter only.
-
- Compare attempt one to attempt five and note one thing that improved.
-

Checklist: Consistency check

- Slant is identical across every letter in the word
- Thick downstrokes share the same weight
- All connections happen on thin upstrokes
- X-heights line up across the word
- Any flourish added still leaves the word easy to read

Composition, Color, and Finished Pieces

Plan multi-line pieces with thumbnails and hierarchy, control bounce and negative space, then color and export a finished raster piece.

Exercise: Thumbnail sprint

Pick a short quote (5 to 7 words). Before any detailed lettering, produce small rough thumbnails to test layouts fast and ugly.

- Sketch at least 6 thumbnails, each only a few centimeters tall.

- In each, mark which one or two words are the emphasis (biggest, boldest).

- Demote filler words (a, the, of, and) to small supporting type.

- Circle your strongest thumbnail and write one sentence on why it works.

Worksheet: Piece planning worksheet

Lock decisions for your chosen quote before rendering, so layout time is spent executing rather than deciding.
Quote / phrase

Emphasis word(s)

Style mix (e.g., bold script + small monoline caps)

Bounce: yes/no and how much

Palette (3 to 5 hex or color names)

Color harmony (analogous / complementary / mono)

Final output use (print / social / product)

Checklist: Balance and export checklist

- Quick-pinned to fit canvas and squinted (or blurred a copy) to judge value
- No heavy dark clusters or awkward empty gaps remain
- Consistent spacing between words and lines
- Comfortable margins around the edges
- Lettering isolated on its own layer for recoloring
- Recolored via Alpha Lock or clipping mask, not redrawn
- Exported at 300 DPI in the correct format (PNG / JPEG / PSD)

Sketch to Vector in Illustrator

Export a clean source from Procreate, vectorize with Image Trace, refine paths by hand, and deliver the right file formats responsibly.

Checklist: Trace-ready export checklist

- Texture, shadow, and color layers hidden so only black lettering shows
- Lettering is large and sharp at 300 DPI
- Background is pure white or transparent
- Exported as transparent PNG or flattened high-res JPEG
- File transferred to the computer (AirDrop / cloud / Files)

Exercise: Image Trace and cleanup drill

Place your export in Illustrator and convert it to clean vector. The goal is the fewest anchor points that still describe each curve.

- Place the PNG, open Image Trace, and apply a Black and White preset.

- Tune Threshold until thin strokes survive but detail stays crisp; then click Expand.

- Run Object > Path > Simplify, then delete leftover redundant anchor points.

- Drag Bezier handles to smooth curves and recover clean thick-thin contrast.

Worksheet: Delivery and rights worksheet

Before exporting final files or selling, record the formats needed and confirm you have the rights to the words used.

Project / piece name

Master file kept (AI): yes/no

Delivery formats needed (SVG / EPS / PDF / PNG)

Words/quote source and rights status (original / public domain / licensed)

Usage agreed with client (sold outright / licensed use / personal only)

Strokes outlined and shapes united before export: yes/no

Checklist: Final vector handoff checklist

- All strokes converted with Outline Stroke so the file is fully scalable
- Overlapping shapes united with Pathfinder where intended
- Colors set with swatches; no stray paths or hidden objects
- Master AI file saved separately from delivery exports
- Correct formats exported for the destination (web / cut machine / print)
- Rights to all words confirmed before any commercial use

Your Action Plan

1. Set up your Procreate studio: A4 300 DPI canvas, gestures, matte protector, and your My Mono and My Script brushes.
2. Drill the seven fundamental strokes for 15 minutes a day for one week, saving every file.
3. Letter the full lowercase alphabet by stroke family and diagnose your three weakest letters using anatomy terms.
4. Practice connecting letters on thin strokes by lettering your name, hello, and thank you until they flow.
5. Choose a short quote and produce at least six thumbnails, then pick the strongest layout.
6. Render the quote as a full piece with clear hierarchy, controlled bounce, and balanced negative space.
7. Color the piece using a 3 to 5 color palette via Alpha Lock, then add a subtle shadow or texture.
8. Export a clean, high-contrast black-and-white version and move it to your computer for Illustrator.
9. Vectorize with Image Trace, then refine by hand to the fewest anchor points that hold the curves.
10. Export your master AI plus the correct delivery formats, confirm word rights, and add the piece to a portfolio.

