
Professional Certificate in Forensic Document Examination

Handwriting Analysis and Identification

Acute Angle

Related terms: oblique angle, right angle

Definition: The angle formed by two intersecting strokes that open less than 90 degrees, often indicating a writer's pressure and pen tilt.

Example: A signature where the loop of the "g" meets the stem at an acute angle suggests a forward-leaning hand.

Application: Used to assess consistency of slant across a document.

Challenges: Variations in paper texture can alter perceived angle size.

Adhesion

Related terms: substrate, ink absorption

Definition: The degree to which ink bonds to the paper surface, influencing bleed-through and feathering.

Example: High adhesion ink on glossy paper shows minimal feathering, aiding in writer identification.

Application: Determines suitability of a document for microscopic analysis.

Challenges: Aging may change adhesion properties, complicating comparison.

Alphanumeric Sequence

Related terms: numeric block, character set

Definition: A series of letters and numbers written consecutively, often used to test a writer's consistency.

Example: The sequence "A1B2C3" written in a passport application provides a baseline for comparison.

Application: Helps isolate individual character traits from contextual influences.

Challenges: Writers may alter style when aware of being examined.

Baseline

Related terms: midline, text line

Definition: The imaginary line on which most letters sit; deviation indicates slant or tilt.

Example: In a typed memo, the baseline of the handwritten note is consistently 2 mm above the printed line.

Application: Baseline analysis assists in detecting "baseline drift" across a document.

Challenges: Curved paper surfaces can create false baseline shifts.

Bounding Box

Related terms: character outline, stroke envelope

Definition: The smallest rectangle that completely encloses a handwritten character, used for dimensional comparison.

Example: The bounding box of the letter "t" in a will differs by 0.3 mm from that in a deed.

Application: Quantitative measurement of size and proportion.

Challenges: Scanner resolution may distort box dimensions.

Bridge

Related terms: connecting stroke, ligature

Definition: The horizontal stroke that links two parts of a letter, such as the crossbar of "a" or "e".

Example: A shallow, rounded bridge on "a" suggests a relaxed hand.

Application: Bridge characteristics aid in distinguishing between writers with similar letterforms.

Challenges: Ink spread can obscure bridge shape on low-quality copies.

Carbon Copy

Related terms: duplicate, offset paper

Definition: A copy produced by pressure-activated carbon paper, retaining the original's handwriting characteristics.

Example: A carbon copy of a contract retains the same slant and pressure as the original.

Application: Provides a secondary source for verification when the original is damaged.

Challenges: Carbon transfer may alter pressure cues.

Character Height

Related terms: x-height, ascender

Definition: The vertical measurement from baseline to the top of a lowercase letter without ascenders.

Example: The "o" in a handwritten note measures 2.5 mm, matching the reference sample.

Application: Used to assess proportional consistency.

Challenges: Variations in pen tip wear can affect height.

Charcoal Sketch

Related terms: graphite, hand-drawn replica

Definition: A hand-drawn reproduction of a document using charcoal, employed when photographic imaging is impractical.

Example: A forensic examiner creates a charcoal sketch of a torn page to preserve its layout.

Application: Enables visual comparison of layout and spacing.

Challenges: Charcoal may introduce its own texture, complicating analysis.

Clarity

Related terms: legibility, visual acuity

Definition: The degree to which handwriting is readable, influencing the ability to extract individual features.

Example: High clarity in a notarized deed allows precise measurement of loop size.

Application: Determines suitability for detailed examination.

Challenges: Smudging reduces clarity, necessitating alternative techniques.

Co-author

Related terms: collaborator, joint signature

Definition: A person who contributes to a document's content and may also sign, complicating attribution.

Example: Two co-authors sign a research report, each with distinct signature styles.

Application: Requires separate analysis of each signature.

Challenges: Overlapping strokes can obscure individual characteristics.

Compression

Related terms: digital artifact, resolution loss

Definition: The reduction of image data size that can degrade fine details of handwriting.

Example: A JPEG of a handwritten note shows pixelation around the loops.

Application: Recognizes limitations of electronic evidence.

Challenges: Excessive compression may mask critical features.

Connector Stroke

Related terms: ligature, linkage

Definition: A stroke that joins two letters within a word, influencing flow and rhythm.

Example: The cursive "l-e" connection in "letter" is a smooth, upward-sloping connector.

Application: Connector analysis helps differentiate between similar scripts.

Challenges: Ink blot can obscure connectors in low-quality reproductions.

Contextual Influence

Related terms: environmental factor, task pressure

Definition: The effect of surrounding circumstances on a writer's style, such as stress or fatigue.

Example: A hurried note exhibits tighter spacing and increased pressure.

Application: Provides insight into why a particular sample deviates from a baseline.

Challenges: Isolating contextual influence from inherent style can be subjective.

Corner Stroke

Related terms: angular stroke, corner hook

Definition: A stroke that changes direction sharply, forming a corner in a letter like "k" or "y".

Example: A pronounced corner stroke on the "k" in a signature suggests a deliberate emphasis.

Application: Corner strokes are useful for distinguishing writers with similar cursive loops.

Challenges: Ink spread may soften corners, reducing discriminative power.

Cross-hatching

Related terms: shading technique, texture fill

Definition: The use of intersecting lines to create density, occasionally seen in decorative handwriting.

Example: A ledger entry contains cross-hatching to shade a numeral.

Application: Assists in identifying the same hand across multiple entries.

Challenges: May be confused with printer artifacts.

Cursorial Motion

Related terms: hand movement, stroke dynamics

Definition: The fluid, continuous motion of the hand while writing, influencing stroke smoothness.

Example: A writer with strong cursorial motion produces long, uninterrupted loops.

Application: Analyzing motion helps differentiate between natural and forged signatures.

Challenges: Requires high-speed imaging for precise assessment.

Dash

Related terms: short stroke, punctuation mark

Definition: A brief, straight line used as a separator or filler, often revealing pressure patterns.

Example: A series of dashes in a margin shows consistent pressure across the line.

Application: Dashes serve as quick reference points for pressure analysis.

Challenges: Inconsistent spacing may mislead conclusions.

Deliberate Variation

Related terms: controlled alteration, intentional disguise

Definition: A purposeful change in handwriting to evade detection, such as altering slant or letter size.

Example: A suspect writes a forged check with a slightly steeper slant than their usual style.

Application: Detecting deliberate variation is central to fraud investigations.

Challenges: Distinguishing intentional change from natural variability requires experience.

Density

Related terms: ink concentration, stroke saturation

Definition: The amount of ink deposited per unit area, affecting darkness and visibility.

Example: High density in the "e" loops of a signature produces a deep black appearance.

Application: Density measurements can be compared across documents using densitometry.

Challenges: Paper absorbency variations may alter perceived density.

Descent

Related terms: descender, lower loop

Definition: The portion of a lowercase letter that extends below the baseline, such as "g" or "p".

Example: The descent of the "p" in a note measures 1.2 mm below baseline.

Application: Descent length aids in confirming writer identity.

Challenges: Baseline tilt can skew descent measurements.

Diagonal Stroke

Related terms: oblique line, slanted line

Definition: A stroke that runs at an angle other than vertical or horizontal, common in letters like "k" or "v".

Example: A steep diagonal stroke on the "k" indicates a forward-leaning hand.

Application: Diagonal analysis helps assess overall slant.

Challenges: Paper grain may influence apparent angle.

Digitization

Related terms: scanning, image capture

Definition: The process of converting a physical document into a digital format, preserving handwriting for analysis.

Example: A high-resolution scan of a contract captures fine stroke details.

Application: Enables computer-assisted comparison and archiving.

Challenges: Low resolution or compression can obscure critical features.

Disguise Technique

Related terms: alteration method, forgery strategy

Definition: A method employed to mask a writer's natural style, such as using a different pen or writing speed.

Example: A forger uses a fountain pen to mimic the original writer's ink flow.

Application: Recognizing disguise techniques is essential for authenticating signatures.

Challenges: Skilled forgers may replicate many characteristics, making detection difficult.

Document Age

Related terms: paper dating, historical context

Definition: The time elapsed since a document's creation, influencing ink degradation and paper wear.

Example: A 50-year-old deed shows faded ink but retains original slant.

Application: Age assessment assists in establishing authenticity.

Challenges: Environmental exposure can accelerate deterioration unpredictably.

Document Layout

Related terms: formatting, page design

Definition: The spatial arrangement of text, margins, and spacing on a page, reflecting a writer's habit.

Example: Consistent left-margin indentation across pages suggests a single author.

Application: Layout analysis supports attribution when handwriting is illegible.

Challenges: Templates or printed forms may impose uniform layout.

Dotting Technique

Related terms: punctuation style, stroke termination

Definition: The manner in which a writer forms periods or i-dots, revealing pressure and speed.

Example: Small, precise dots on a legal affidavit indicate controlled hand movement.

Application: Dotting can differentiate between writers with similar letterforms.

Challenges: Ink spread may enlarge dots, reducing discriminative detail.

Downstroke

Related terms: vertical stroke, gravity-assisted line

Definition: A stroke drawn in the direction of gravity, typically darker due to increased pressure.

Example: The downstroke of the "l" in a signature appears bolder than the upstroke.

Application: Pressure differential between downstrokes and upstrokes aids in writer profiling.

Challenges: Pen type may minimize pressure differences.

Dynamic Pressure

Related terms: force variation, stroke intensity

Definition: The fluctuating force applied by the hand during writing, influencing line thickness.

Example: A writer's dynamic pressure creates a thick-to-thin transition in the "g" loop.

Application: Pressure profiling assists in distinguishing natural from forged writing.

Challenges: Low-resolution images may not capture subtle pressure changes.

Edge Artifact

Related terms: scan defect, border distortion

Definition: Unintended marks introduced at the periphery of a scanned image, potentially mimicking handwriting features.

Example: A scanning artifact near the top margin resembles a stray stroke.

Application: Identifying edge artifacts prevents false positive matches.

Challenges: Artifacts can be mistaken for intentional marks.

Elliptical Loop

Related terms: circular loop, oval stroke

Definition: A loop whose shape approximates an ellipse, common in letters like "g" or "y".

Example: An elliptical loop on the "g" in a signature is elongated horizontally.

Application: Loop shape analysis contributes to writer discrimination.

Challenges: Ink spread may round the ellipse, reducing distinctiveness.

Embellishment

Related terms: decorative flourish, ornamental stroke

Definition: Additional decorative strokes added to letters or signatures, often reflecting personal style.

Example: A flourish extending from the tail of a "y" in a signature.

Application: Embellishments provide unique identifiers.

Challenges: Inconsistent use may limit comparative value.

Engraving

Related terms: incised lettering, intaglio

Definition: The process of cutting letters into a surface, sometimes confused with handwritten signatures on seal impressions.

Example: An engraved seal bears a stylized signature.

Application: Differentiates between true handwriting and mechanical reproduction.

Challenges: Wear can obscure fine engraving details.

Examination Protocol

Related terms: standard operating procedure, chain of custody

Definition: The set of documented steps an examiner follows to ensure consistent, defensible analysis.

Example: The protocol mandates photographing the document before any handling.

Application: Guarantees admissibility of findings in court.

Challenges: Deviations may be challenged by opposing counsel.

Feathering

Related terms: ink diffusion, edge spread

Definition: The spreading of ink beyond the intended stroke boundary, creating a fuzzy edge.

Example: Feathering on a cheap ballpoint pen trace blurs the "t" crossbar.

Application: Feathering can mask fine pressure cues.

Challenges: Excessive feathering reduces measurement accuracy.

Figure Ground

Related terms: visual perception, foreground-background

Definition: The ability to separate handwriting (figure) from the paper's texture (ground) during analysis.

Example: High-contrast scanning improves figure-ground separation.

Application: Essential for accurate digitization and feature extraction.

Challenges: Low-contrast documents impede clear separation.

Filling Stroke

Related terms: solid line, continuous stroke

Definition: A stroke drawn without lifting the pen, often resulting in uniform thickness.

Example: The solid filling stroke of a capital "M" indicates a confident hand.

Application: Consistency of filling strokes can link multiple documents.

Challenges: Pen tip wear may cause thickness variation.

Formative Phase

Related terms: development stage, handwriting acquisition

Definition: The early period in which a writer's style is still evolving, typically during childhood.

Example: A child's early schoolwork exhibits irregular slant.

Application: Understanding formative influence aids in long-term attribution cases.

Challenges: Later documents may differ significantly from formative samples.

Forensic Comparison

Related terms: side-by-side analysis, expert testimony

Definition: The systematic evaluation of two or more handwriting samples to determine common origin.

Example: An examiner performs a forensic comparison of a disputed signature against a known specimen.

Application: Central to authenticity determinations in legal disputes.

Challenges: Subjectivity requires rigorous methodology and peer review.

Frequentist Approach

Related terms: statistical method, probability model

Definition: A quantitative method using large sample sets to calculate the likelihood of a match.

Example: Applying a frequentist model to 200 signatures yields a 0.02 % false-match rate.

Application: Provides objective support for expert conclusions.

Challenges: Requires extensive baseline data, which may be unavailable.

Friction

Related terms: pen-paper interaction, drag

Definition: The resistance encountered by the pen tip moving across the paper, affecting smoothness of strokes.

Example: High friction on rough paper produces jagged "e" loops.

Application: Friction analysis assists in identifying the writing instrument.

Challenges: Variable paper quality can confound friction assessments.

Glyph

Related terms: character, symbol

Definition: An individual handwritten symbol, encompassing letters, numbers, or decorative marks.

Example: The glyph for "ß" in a German document shows a distinctive double-loop.

Application: Glyph-level analysis isolates specific traits for comparison.

Challenges: Uncommon glyphs may lack reference samples.

Hand Pressure

Related terms: force application, stroke weight

Definition: The amount of force a writer exerts on the writing surface, influencing line darkness.

Example: Heavy hand pressure creates a dark, thick "h" stem.

Application: Pressure patterns are compared across samples to assess authorship.

Challenges: Different pens can mask true pressure levels.

Handwriting Baseline Shift

Related terms: baseline drift, vertical variation

Definition: A gradual upward or downward movement of the baseline within a single line of text.

Example: In a hurried note, the baseline rises by 0.5 mm over ten words.

Application: Detecting baseline shift can indicate fatigue or intentional disguise.

Challenges: Small shifts may be within normal variation.

Handwriting Graphology

Related terms: personality analysis, psychological profiling

Definition: The study of handwriting to infer personality traits, not a forensic identification method.

Example: Graphology claims a large "e" indicates extroversion, but lacks scientific validation.

Application: Occasionally cited in court, but generally inadmissible.

Challenges: Lack of empirical support undermines credibility.

Handwriting Sample

Related terms: reference specimen, control writing

Definition: A document provided for comparison, ideally written under controlled conditions.

Example: A notarized statement serves as a handwriting sample for later verification.

Application: Forms the basis of any forensic comparison.

Challenges: Sample may be contaminated by stress or disguise.

Hatch Mark

Related terms: cross-hatch, shading line

Definition: Small, parallel lines used to fill an area, often revealing pressure consistency.

Example: A series of hatch marks in a margin shows uniform ink density.

Application: Used to assess consistency of pen pressure across a document.

Challenges: Over-hatching can obscure underlying strokes.

Ink Blot

Related terms: smudge, stain

Definition: An unintended spread of ink beyond the intended stroke, potentially altering character shape.

Example: An ink blot on the "a" loop obscures the interior space.

Application: Ink blot analysis can reveal the direction of writing.

Challenges: Blots may be mistaken for deliberate embellishment.

Ink Fade

Related terms: color loss, light degradation

Definition: The gradual lightening of ink over time, affecting contrast.

Example: A fifty-year-old will shows significant ink fade, yet the slant remains observable.

Application: Fade assessment informs choice of imaging technique.

Challenges: Uneven fading can distort comparative measurements.

Ink Migration

Related terms: bleed-through, capillary action

Definition: The movement of ink into adjacent fibers, causing spread beyond the original stroke.

Example: Ink migration on cheap copy paper creates a halo around the "t".

Application: Recognizing migration aids in accurate stroke boundary definition.

Challenges: Migration may mimic deliberate variation.

Ink Saturation

Related terms: pigment density, color intensity

Definition: The level of pigment concentration within the ink, influencing darkness.

Example: High ink saturation produces a deep black signature on glossy paper.

Application: Saturation levels can be compared across documents to confirm consistency.

Challenges: Different pens may have varying saturation even from the same writer.

Ink Type

Related terms: ballpoint, gel, fountain

Definition: The classification of ink based on composition, each with distinct flow and drying characteristics.

Example: Gel ink shows less feathering than ballpoint on the same paper.

Application: Identifying ink type helps narrow possible writing instruments.

Challenges: Mixed-ink documents require careful segregation.

Inter-letter Spacing

Related terms: kerning, letter gap

Definition: The horizontal distance between consecutive letters within a word.

Example: Consistent narrow spacing in "bank" suggests a habitual hand.

Application: Spacing patterns are compared to detect forged alterations.

Challenges: Hand fatigue can temporarily widen spacing.

Italic Hand

Related terms: slanted script, cursive style

Definition: A handwriting style characterized by a forward slant, often used for speed.

Example: An italic hand shows a 15° slant on most letters.

Application: Slant measurement helps classify writing style.

Challenges: Intentional slant changes can be used to disguise identity.

Jitter

Related terms: hand tremor, stroke irregularity

Definition: Small, rapid variations in stroke direction, often caused by nervousness or fatigue.

Example: Jitter is visible in the shaky "i" dots of a nervous writer.

Application: Jitter patterns can link multiple samples from the same individual.

Challenges: High-resolution imaging required to capture subtle jitter.

Kappa Coefficient

Related terms: inter-rater reliability, statistical agreement

Definition: A statistical measure of agreement between two examiners evaluating the same samples.

Example: A kappa of 0.85 indicates strong concordance in signature analysis.

Application: Used to validate examiner consistency.

Challenges: Requires independent assessments and clear criteria.

Kerning

Related terms: spacing adjustment, letter proximity

Definition: The deliberate adjustment of space between specific letter pairs to achieve visual balance.

Example: Tight kerning between "l" and "i" in a signature may be a personal habit.

Application: Kerning patterns assist in writer identification.

Challenges: Printing artifacts can mimic kerning changes.

Letter Formation

Related terms: character construction, stroke order

Definition: The way a writer constructs a specific letter, including shape, size, and sequence of strokes.

Example: An "e" formed with a single loop versus a two-stroke approach.

Application: Detailed formation analysis differentiates between similar handwriting.

Challenges: Inconsistent formation may arise from time pressure.

Ligature

Related terms: connected letters, joined script

Definition: A combined form of two or more letters joined in a single stroke.

Example: The "fi" ligature in a cursive note creates a fluid connection.

Application: Ligature style can be a distinctive marker of a writer.

Challenges: Ligatures may be omitted in printed text, limiting comparison.

Linearity

Related terms: straightness, horizontal consistency

Definition: The extent to which writing follows a straight path, indicating control.

Example: Highly linear strokes in a legal contract suggest a careful writer.

Application: Deviations from linearity may signal disguise or fatigue.

Challenges: Paper curvature can affect perceived linearity.

Loop Ratio

Related terms: aspect ratio, loop proportion

Definition: The height-to-width proportion of a loop, used to compare similar letters.

Example: The "g" loop ratio of 1.2 matches the reference sample.

Application: Quantitative loop ratio aids objective comparison.

Challenges: Ink spread can alter apparent dimensions.

Margin Alignment

Related terms: edge consistency, page layout

Definition: The uniformity of text placement relative to page margins.

Example: Consistent left-margin alignment across a series of letters.

Application: Alignment irregularities may indicate multiple authors.

Challenges: Pre-printed forms enforce margin position, limiting analysis.

Medium

Related terms: writing surface, substrate

Definition: The material upon which handwriting is produced, such as paper, vellum, or electronic tablet.

Example: A carbon-paper medium retains pressure cues differently than plain paper.

Application: Medium selection influences the preservation of forensic features.

Challenges: Different media react uniquely to ink, complicating cross-medium comparison.

Micro-analysis

Related terms: microscopic examination, high-magnification

Definition: Detailed study of handwriting at magnifications typically above 100×, revealing fine details.

Example: Micro-analysis of a signature shows individual pen tip scratches.

Application: Provides evidence of instrument and technique.

Challenges: Requires specialized equipment and trained personnel.

Monograph

Related terms: handwriting report, expert dossier

Definition: A comprehensive written document presenting the examiner's findings, methodology, and conclusions.

Example: The monograph includes comparative images and statistical data.

Application: Serves as the official record for court presentation.

Challenges: Must be meticulously referenced to withstand cross-examination.

Multilingual Sample

Related terms: bilingual writing, cross-language comparison

Definition: A handwriting specimen containing text in more than one language, useful for broader trait analysis.

Example: A bilingual contract includes English and French passages written by the same hand.

Application: Allows assessment of whether language influences style.

Challenges: Different alphabets may exhibit distinct formation habits.

Negative Space

Related terms: void area, background

Definition: The empty area surrounding strokes, whose shape can be as informative as the strokes themselves.

Example: The negative space within an "o" reveals a perfectly round interior.

Application: Negative-space comparison supports identification when strokes are degraded.

Challenges: Scanning artifacts may distort empty areas.

Oblique Slant

Related terms: forward slant, backward slant

Definition: A slant that deviates from vertical, measured in degrees, indicating the writer's natural inclination.

Example: An oblique slant of 12° to the right is consistent across multiple documents.

Application: Slant measurement is a primary discriminant in signature analysis.

Challenges: Intentional slant alteration can be used to disguise handwriting.

On-Line Comparison

Related terms: direct analysis, side-by-side view

Definition: The simultaneous visual examination of two samples placed adjacent to each other.

Example: An on-line comparison of a disputed check signature with a known specimen.

Application: Enables immediate visual identification of matching traits.

Challenges: Human bias may influence perception; blind comparison helps mitigate this.

Orthographic Consistency

Related terms: spelling uniformity, letter usage

Definition: The consistency of a writer's spelling and letter choice, which can corroborate authorship.

Example: Repeated misspelling of "receive" as "recieve" across documents.

Application: Supports handwriting evidence with linguistic patterns.

Challenges: Spelling errors may be coincidental.

Over-lap

Related terms: layering, stroke intersection

Definition: The occurrence of one stroke crossing over another, providing insight into writing order.

Example: The over-lap of the "t" crossbar over the "i" stem reveals the sequence of strokes.

Application: Stroke order analysis helps differentiate genuine from forged signatures.

Challenges: Ink bleeding can obscure over-lap points.

Padding

Related terms: margin filler, blank space

Definition: Extra space added around a document during scanning to avoid edge artifacts.

Example: Padding of 5 mm around a scanned signature prevents cropping.

Application: Ensures complete capture of all handwriting features.

Challenges: Excessive padding may increase file size without benefit.

Pen Tilt

Related terms: pen angle, inclination

Definition: The angle at which the pen is held relative to the writing surface, influencing stroke width and slant.

Example: A pen tilt of 30° produces broader downstrokes.

Application: Pen tilt measurement assists in instrument identification.

Challenges: Hand fatigue may cause temporary tilt changes.

Pen Pressure Profile

Related terms: force curve, dynamic pressure

Definition: A graphical representation of pressure variation throughout a single stroke.

Example: The pressure profile of a "k" shows a peak during the downstroke.

Application: Profiles can be compared between samples to detect similarities.

Challenges: Requires digitizing tablets capable of pressure sensing.

Pen Type

Related terms: ballpoint, gel, fountain

Definition: The specific design of a writing instrument, each producing distinct stroke characteristics.

Example: A fountain pen yields smoother, more consistent lines than a ballpoint.

Application: Matching pen type strengthens attribution conclusions.

Challenges: Writers may switch pen types, complicating analysis.

Periodicity

Related terms: repeating pattern, regular interval

Definition: The occurrence of regular, repeating features such as spacing or line thickness.

Example: Periodic thickening of every fifth line in a notebook.

Application: Identifies habitual patterns that can link documents.

Challenges: Random variation may mimic periodicity.

Penmanship

Related terms: handwriting style, script

Definition: The overall quality and aesthetic of a writer's hand, encompassing legibility and form.

Example: Elegant penmanship with uniform loops suggests formal training.

Application: General penmanship assessment provides context for detailed analysis.

Challenges: Subjective judgments require objective criteria.

Phonetic Spelling

Related terms: sound-based orthography, spelling variation

Definition: The use of spelling that reflects pronunciation rather than standard orthography.

Example: Writing "nite" instead of "night" consistently across letters.

Application: May support authorship when combined with handwriting traits.

Challenges: Not all writers use phonetic spelling.

Pigment Migration

Related terms: ink diffusion, color bleed

Definition: The movement of pigment particles within the paper fibers, affecting line definition.

Example: Pigment migration causes a halo around the "t" crossbar.

Application: Recognizing migration helps isolate true stroke boundaries.

Challenges: Migration can obscure fine details needed for comparison.

Point-Size

Related terms: font size, stroke dimension

Definition: The measured size of a handwritten character, often expressed in millimeters.

Example: A point-size of 3 mm for the letter "a" matches the reference sample.

Application: Quantitative size comparison supports identification.

Challenges: Different pens may produce varying point-sizes even from the same writer.

Positional Variation

Related terms: spatial shift, placement change

Definition: The change in location of a character within a line, indicating inconsistency.

Example: The "e" moves upward by 0.4 mm in the second half of a paragraph.

Application: Detects accidental or intentional variation.

Challenges: Small variations may fall within normal limits.

Pressure Gradient

Related terms: force distribution, stroke intensity change

Definition: The change in pressure from the beginning to the end of a stroke.

Example: A pressure gradient that lightens toward the stroke's end in an "l".

Application: Gradient patterns can be compared across samples.

Challenges: Requires high-resolution imaging to capture subtle changes.

Printing Artifact

Related terms: mechanical imprint, digital noise

Definition: Unintended marks introduced by printing processes that may mimic handwriting features.

Example: A faint line from a laser printer appears near a handwritten note.

Application: Differentiates genuine handwriting from printed interference.

Challenges: Artifacts can be mistaken for deliberate strokes.

Quadratic Curve

Related terms: Bezier curve, mathematical model

Definition: A mathematical representation of a smooth curve used in digital analysis of handwriting.

Example: Modeling the "s" shape with a quadratic curve to calculate curvature.

Application: Provides objective metrics for curve comparison.

Challenges: Requires specialized software and expertise.

Radical Variation

Related terms: core change, fundamental alteration

Definition: A substantial deviation from a writer's typical style, often indicating disguise.

Example: A normally slanted hand producing a vertical signature.

Application: Alerts the examiner to possible fraudulent intent.

Challenges: Distinguishing radical variation