

Writing Analysis among Senior and Ninth-graders:

In this study, we examined 20 writing samples from ninth-grade students (50/50 males and females) and the same from seniors. Our hypothesis was that there would be consistent differences in natural variation within each group but that each group would have more in common within the group than between the groups.

We found that it was too much to look at all the variations so we centered on three. We looked at the variation in the letter s in the middle of a word and at the end of a word. We looked at the lower case letter t to see how it was slanted, and we looked at the capital letter P to see how it was constructed.

The variables we controlled included:

- the sample paragraph the subjects were asked to write
- all subjects were right handed
- the paper and pen the subjects used
- the desks were all flat

Cursive letter s (s)

<i>Sample = 10</i>	<i>Cursive (middle of word)</i>	<i>Cursive (end of word)</i>	<i>Block(middle of word)</i>	<i>Block(end of word)</i>
Ninth-grade girls	6	9	4	1
Ninth-grade boys	5	8	5	2
Senior girls	1	1	9	9
Senior boys	0	1	10	9

Slant of letter t (t)

<i>Sample =10</i>	<i>Slant left</i>	<i>Slant right</i>
Ninth-grade girls	9	1
Ninth-grade boys	8	2
Senior girls	10	0
Senior boys	7	3

Capital P (P)

<i>Sample =10</i>	<i>One stroke</i>	<i>Two or more strokes</i>
Ninth-grade girls	8	2
Ninth-grade boys	10	0
Senior girls	9	1
Senior boys	6	4

Error Analysis:

We did not ask the kids if they could write with either hand. All the subjects said that they wrote right handed, but some could write with either hand. We made them write with their right hand, but we wondered if that would make a difference.

We did not control the time, and some took longer by a factor of about 2 minutes to do the writing. Some people may have been more careful about writing. That may make a difference. We would give them a limited time next time.