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Does it matter how you hold a pen? If you're comfortable, and your writing is all right, hold it any way you want. But if your middle finger is callused and your hand aches, you may be ready for a change.

Gripping your pen hard invites trouble. Don't hold it in a vise-like grip between your thumb and index finger. That's how writing cramp starts. Put your thumb and middle finger together instead.

The first penhold

Children don't know by instinct how to hold a pen. We have to teach them. The primary grip is a good start.



First, join the tips of the thumb and middle finger.



Then put the pen in the cleft between them.



Finally, lay the index finger on top of the pen.

To your adult hand, the primary grip may feel inflexible. It is meant only for children who don't yet have highly-developed motor skills.

How to form the primary grip

Relax your hand. Join the tips of your thumb and middle finger comfortably. Put the pen in the cleft between them so that the barrel is close to the knuckle of the index finger. Then lay the index finger on the pen. This way, the index finger pushes against the thumb and middle finger. It's much better than the thumb and index finger pushing on either side of the pen.

Writing cramp is probably the most serious consequence of a bad grip. In our approach to pen hold, it comes first.

Your hand should lie on its side and on your half-curved little finger. Keep your wrist more or less straight. Your hand should never be above the writing line and write downwards, as left-handers often do. We come to that problem on the page about [left-handedness](#).

A grip for grown-ups

As children grow, the proportions of their hands change. The children also write faster and should hold the pen differently.



In the grown-up grip, the thumb pushes against the first and second fingers.

The grown-up grip is different from the primary grip. The thumb

