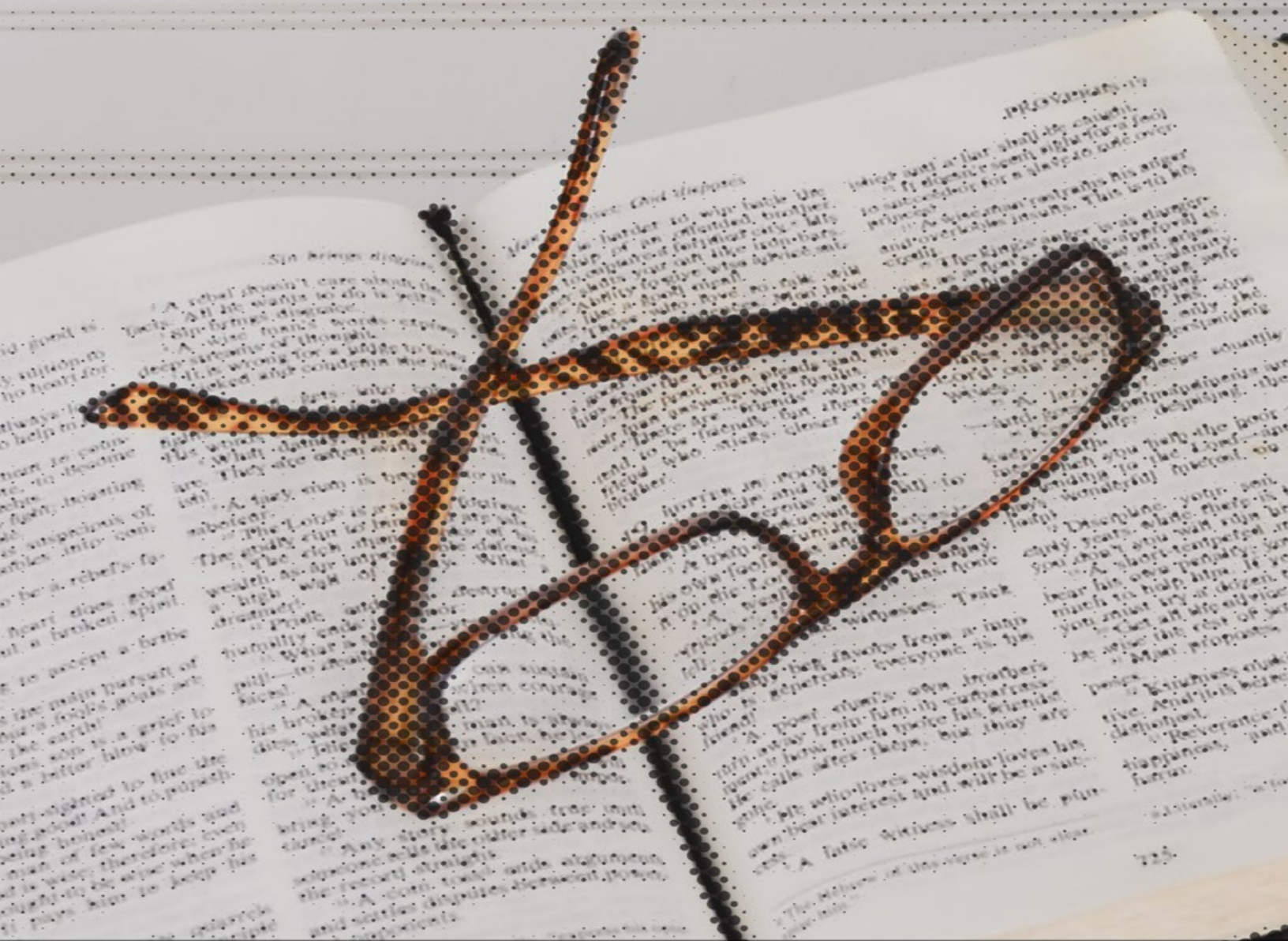


**A. N. Palmer**



*The Palmer Method  
of Business  
Writing*

**A. N. Palmer**

# **The Palmer Method of Business Writing**



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# **SOME PALMER METHOD FACTS—A PERSONAL TALK**

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Read and Carefully Consider Everything on These Three Pages Before Beginning the Study and Practice of the Lessons. Failing to follow These Simple Suggestions, You are Likely to Waste Many Hours, Weeks, and Months in Useless Practice.

The Palmer Method is a text-book on practical writing and should be studied as such—not treated as a copy-book. The printed instructions are the author's direct personal talks to pupils—the same things he would say to you from day to day were he personally to teach you. These instructions are of more importance than the copies. They tell you how to develop and use the muscular movement in writing. If you do not follow the instructions, you will fail.

Pupils who followed absolutely the Palmer Method plan have always learned to write well. Pupils who have not first studied the plainly printed directions and followed them absolutely, have partly or completely failed. Failure is unnecessary.

Thousands of young men and women have made the Palmer Method of Business Writing the stepping-stone to positions in business offices, where commercial advancement rewarded faithful service.

In hundreds of classes where the Palmer Method has been faithfully studied and completely mastered, periods devoted to written spelling, composition, examinations, and other written work have been reduced more than half. Time

thus saved has been put to very good use in other directions. In the beginning stages of the work, until good position, muscular relaxation, correct and comfortable penholding, and muscular movement as a habit in writing have been acquired, extra practice may be necessary; but the extra time will be saved many times over in all written work later.

Muscular movement writing means good, healthful posture, straight spinal columns, eyes far enough away from the paper for safety, and both shoulders of equal height. These features alone should be sufficient to encourage boys and girls to master a physical training system of writing such as is presented in the following pages, remembering that it is impossible to do good muscular movement writing in twisted, unhealthful positions, or with stiff and rigid muscles.

Straight line and oval drills are of no value except as they lead to writing. They are the means through which to gain the muscular control that will enable pupils to master an ideal permanent style of rapid, plain-as-print writing.

When pupils have learned good posture, correct penholding, and how to use muscular movement in making a good two-space compact oval, they are ready to begin to learn how to write well. Too many pupils think they have really learned how to write well when they are able to make some of the very simple drills in correct posture at the right speed and in correct rhythm. That is really the starting-point toward good penmanship, and should be followed immediately by the practice of words, and, indeed, by the use of the movement in all written work.

Study and practice go hand in hand in securing the best results in the shortest possible time. Keep the Manual open before you as you practice; study and make frequent and careful comparisons of your work with the drills if you wish to make rapid progress.

Your letters, words, and sentences should occupy the same amount of space they do in the Manual. Always, before beginning practice, the drill should be studied in every little detail until the correct picture is in your mind.

Just how and where does the first line in a letter begin; is it made with an upward or downward stroke; how high is the letter; how wide is each part; how much running space does it occupy; in what direction should the pen move in beginning, continuing, and completing the letter; and at what rate of speed should the letter or word be written? These are questions that should constantly occupy you as soon as automatic muscular movement has been established. In fact, as was said before, study and practice must go hand in hand, if good results are to be the outcome.

Blackboard copies, though written by expert penmen, are seen at many different angles, and at different distances, and do not give correct mental impressions.

It is highly important not only that pupils have copies of the Manual, but that they study the printed instructions and drills, closely and constantly.

The plainly printed instructions in the Palmer Method tell you step by step exactly what to do and how to do it, in order to progress steadily and surely toward the desired end.

Millions of American boys and girls have learned a permanent style of rapid, easy, legible, and beautiful writing by carefully and patiently following the printed directions found in the Palmer Method of Business Writing. Final results have then been delightful to pupils, teachers, parents, and school officials.

The first step is a correct understanding of the required position. Study the pictures on pages twelve, fourteen, and fifteen, of a pupil who has learned how to sit so as to use the large tireless muscles of his arms to the best possible advantage. Study every little detail of these pictures from the crown of the head to the shoes. Study particularly and closely the arms, the relation of one arm to the other, the position at the desk, the distance of the body from the desk, and the positions of the fingers preparatory to taking the penholder.

As progress is made in the more advanced lessons, you should refer frequently to these pictures and try to sit as this pupil sat when his photographs were taken for the Palmer Method. When writing, he always sits as shown in these photographs, and he knows that it would be physically impossible to use muscular movement writing in a cramped, unhealthful position.

There is an old saying, "Practice makes perfect." That is only partly true in relation to writing. Practice of the right kind leads toward perfection, but the wrong kind of practice leads just as surely in the opposite direction. It is not so much the exercise that is practiced as the manner in which it is practiced. Millions of pupils have wasted the time given to movement exercises because they thought it was the

exercise that counted and not the manner in which it was made.

There is no value in any penmanship drill ever invented unless it is practiced with correct positions of body, arms, fingers, penholders, paper, and with exactly the right movement, and at exactly the right rate of speed.

If you study the instructions in the Palmer Method, and follow them absolutely in daily practice, you will make steady progress and, within a short time, become a splendid penman. But, even should you spend a great deal of time practicing the drills in a poor position with cramped muscles and with the wrong movement, you not only will make no progress toward good writing, but will contract bad habits, or firmly fix those already established, and, under such conditions, the possibility of learning to write well will constantly become more and more remote.

It is a fact, that among the thousands of men and women employed in business offices who do longhand writing constantly, rapidly, and well, none can be found who do not use muscular movement, because it is the only movement through which penmanship embracing in the highest degree legibility, rapidity, ease, and endurance can be developed.

It is now generally conceded that systems of copy-books have inevitably resulted in a poor finished product of penmanship. Public school officials and teachers were satisfied with copy-books so long as they did not consider good posture, muscular relaxation, easy, tireless movement and reasonable speed, as important factors. Then the discovery was made that pupils were able to draw the letters slowly and very accurately in close imitation of

mechanically engraved copies, but that when rapid, continuous writing was required in the penmanship employed in written spelling, compositions, examinations, etc., the letter forms became dissipated in appearance and soon approached the stage of scribbling.

It must be conceded by everyone that any system of writing which does not lead to an automatic style embodying legibility, rapidity, ease, and endurance is a failure.

The term "Copy-book" has been applied for many years to sheets of paper bound together with a cover, containing at the top of each page, a line of writing or an exercise to be imitated by the pupils on the lines below. Sometimes the headlines are made from carefully penciled copies, mechanically perfected through a system of hand engraving.

There are also bound books, with copies at the top of the pages that were really written with some show of muscular movement and afterward photo-engraved, but the copy-book principles are involved in the publication of such books—principles which preclude the teaching of good writing through their use. The mental attitude of pupils who see before them the immaculate page upon which they must make reproductions, as nearly facsimile as possible of the copies at the top, is wholly unfavorable to the process.

Another recent copy-book system is the pad with the copy at the top, and sometimes at the top and center of each page, there being blank lines below for practice purposes. These modified copy-books are probably doing just as much harm to the cause of practical writing as the

former kind. Unless the mental attitude is right, physical conditions will be wrong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. N. Palmer". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

## **FIRST SPECIMENS**

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Beginning pupils should write three sets of first specimens on paper about 8×10½ inches. One set should be kept by the teacher, another retained by the pupil, and one set sent to the nearest office of The A. N. Palmer Company.

The value of these first specimens will be clearly apparent as the work of muscular movement development and application progresses and comparisons are made. Those sent to the publication office are alphabetically arranged and kept for future reference. When pupils have mastered the movement and become good business writers, their second specimens should be sent to be filed with the first. The improvement is often so great that the first and second specimens may be engraved and published with great credit to the schools, the pupils, and the Palmer Method.

In these specimens the following form should be followed: On the first line write the name, the age, and the grade; on the second line, the name of the school, city or town, and the date. Skip one line and make a set of capitals; skip a line and make two lines of miscellaneous figures; skip



a line and write, "A specimen of my best writing before I began to practice muscular movement writing from the lessons in the Palmer Method of Business Writing." The above was written in..... minutes and..... seconds.

## **CLOTHING FOR THE RIGHT FOREARM**

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As the muscles of the right forearm play an important part in the movement, it is necessary that they should be so clothed as to permit, at all times, unrestricted action. Many good writers consider this of such importance that they cut off the right undersleeve at the elbow. **To the Teacher:** See that pupils' arms are free of heavy clothing.

## **WRITING MATERIALS**

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Not much progress can be made with poor paper, poor pens, or poor ink. Good materials are a necessity. Do not use a penholder covered with metal where the fingers rest if another can be procured. Never use an oblique penholder in business writing. It is out of place and of no advantage whatever. Nothing equals an oblique holder for ornamental writing, but there its utility ends. Use paper of generous size for your practice, a medium coarse pen, and ink that flows well. Blue-black writing fluid is the best.

**Study the instructions; they are of more importance than the copies.**

# LESSON 1

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## CORRECT POSITIONS FOR CLASS ROOM WRITING

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In the following pages are reproduced photographs of a class of students who are experts in the Palmer Method writing. While they knew that their photographs were to be taken, they did not change their every-day penmanship positions in the least particular. It was not necessary, because they had all acquired the habit of sitting in positions that are comfortable and which at the same time permit muscular freedom and control.

In elementary schools in cities, space is so limited that the use of tables or desks large enough to permit the square front position for writing is usually impossible. If the desks are too small for the square front position the half-right side position may be used.

**Study these pictures closely; it will pay.**

In the first picture, notice that the right elbow rests on or near the lower right corner of the desk. This position may be occasionally modified to suit the needs of pupils. As an example, a very fat boy or girl may find it necessary to let the right arm rest over on the desk a little farther.

A good rule to follow in finding the correct position of the right arm on the desk for writing is as follows: Place the body at the desk in the correct square front position, raise the entire right arm a few inches, and withdrawing control,

let it drop. Wherever it strikes the desk it should remain. To draw the arm toward the side would force the right shoulder upward into an uncomfortable, unhealthful position, or would force the pupil to lean backward. On the other hand, to place the right arm farther over on the desk would force the body too far forward.

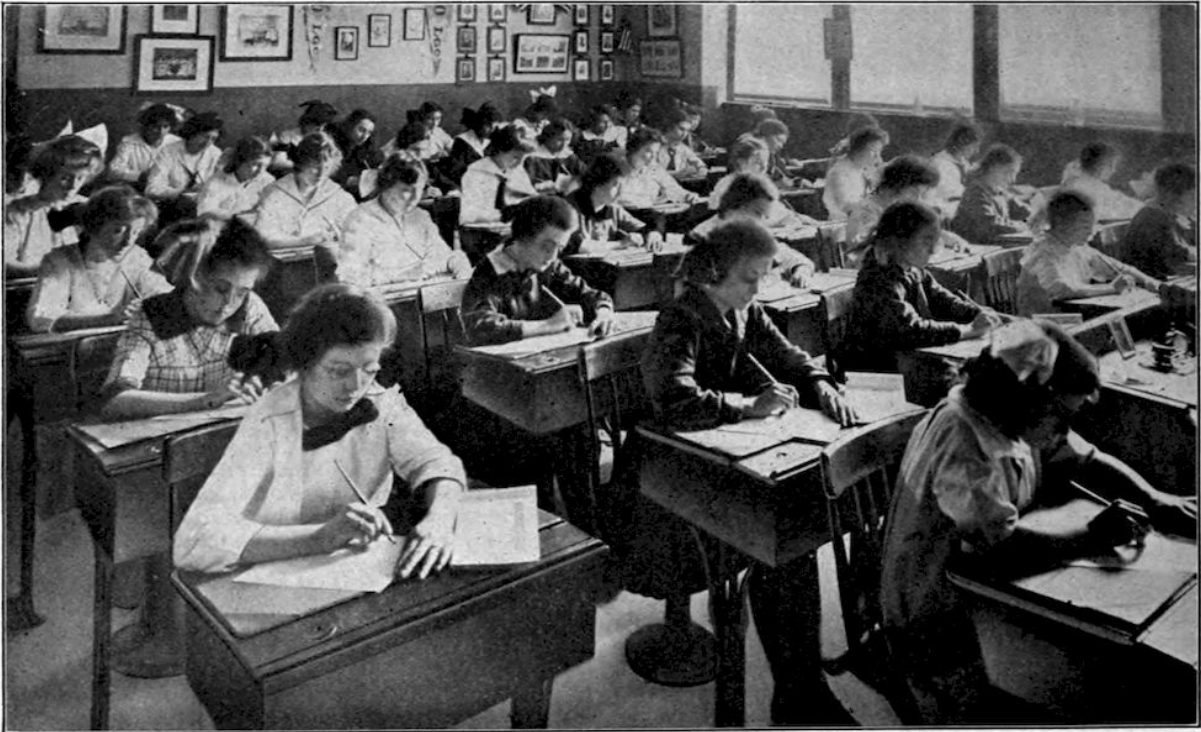
These photographs show that the pupils sit comfortably in the seats; that the upper ends of their penholders point a little to the right of their right shoulders—usually half way between the elbow and the shoulder; that the Palmer Method is placed at the upper left corner of the desk—being held open at the required drill with a rubber band; that the left forearm is on the desk in such a position as will keep the body upright, the left shoulder from drooping, reserving the free use of the left hand for changing the positions of the Manual and the paper as required.

In this position it is easy to push the sheet of paper forward as progress is made toward the bottom of the page; also to move the paper to the left when the writing has reached a third or half the distance across a line, and back into the first position for a new line.

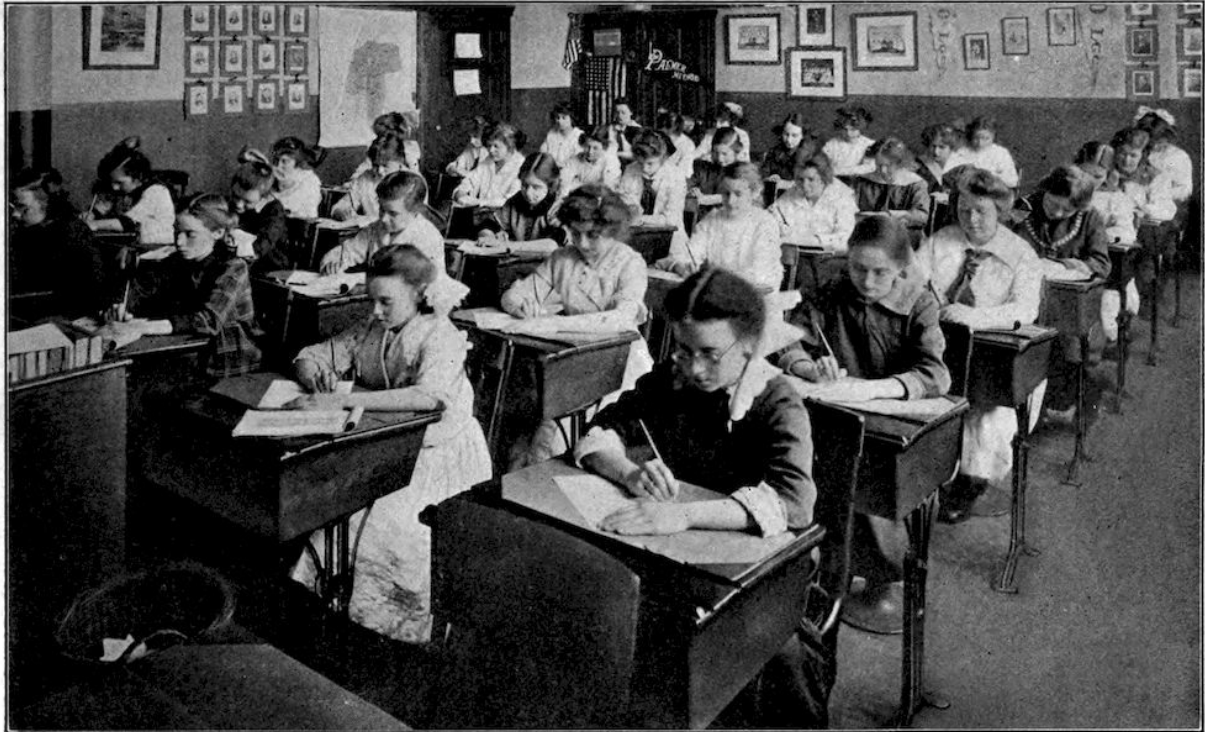
The exact position of the body at the desk and the relative positions of the left and right arms in writing are very clearly shown in illustration two, while the position of the left arm in its relation to desk, Manual, and paper, is best shown in illustration three.

No student who fails in the matter of position will master muscular movement writing. Correct position is of the greatest importance, and it should be studied and thoroughly mastered before the writing itself is considered.

**To the Teacher:** At this point, pupils should be required to close their Methods and show their familiarity with the preceding discussion of position by answering questions relating to it, and also to assume the position described several times, to prove their working knowledge of it.



Position illustration number 1. Read page [7](#) for instructions.



Position illustration number 2. Read page [7](#) for instructions.



Position illustration number 3. Read page [7](#) for instructions.

# LESSON 2

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## PHYSICAL TRAINING IN PENMANSHIP PRACTICE

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Correct Posture, Relaxing Exercises, Movement Practice, and Penholding, Taught in Pictures

No progress can be made in mastering good muscular movement writing until there is a correct understanding of the important steps and the order in which they must be taken.

No written or spoken words can explain these more fully and plainly than the fifteen accompanying pictures given as models. They tell all that could be told about the important beginning steps, and they should be studied with thoroughness now, and often during future practice periods.

**Step one**, illustration four: Position in seat with arms hanging limply at the sides. **Step two**, number five: Body turned a little to the left and arms extended above the desk, wrists and fingers limp. **Step three**, number six: After permitting both arms to drop to the desk, raise right arm as shown in the picture, withdraw control and let it drop, repeating the operation until the arm drops comfortably into the writing position, with a square turn at the elbow and fingers bent naturally. **Step four**, number seven: **Learn to run the writing machine.**

Notice the closed fingers making a fist, and the absorbed interest with which this boy studies his arm near the elbow.