

## OBJECTIVES

**Students will be able to:**

Sign their name using a quill pen and ink.

Understand the long history of the quill pen and how it was used.

Understand the importance of literacy and penmanship.

Define the provided vocabulary terms.

### KENTUCKY STATE STANDARDS

SS-5-CS-U-2  
SS-5-CS-U-3  
SS-5-HP-U-1  
SS-5-HP-U-3



## INTRODUCTION:

**What is it?** The quill pen was the most popular writing utensil for a thousand years, and is likely the most emblematic writing implement in history. Quills were used as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century to create great works of literature, books, daily correspondence, and important historical documents. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were both written, and signed, by a quill pen.

## ACTIVITY:

### Write with Quill Pen and Ink!

Students will have the opportunity to sign their names using a quill pen and ink. **After instructing the students using the provided outline/script containing the brief history of the quill pen**, divide the students into groups. Remember to tell them to roll their sleeves up or remove jackets. It may also be a good idea to provide smocks or tell the participants to tie back any long hair. You will need quill pens, ink wells, colored construction paper and white labels. The number of these items will depend on the group size. Before you begin the activity, prepare "signature cards" for the students' final product. The signature card will be the white label glued onto a cut piece of construction paper, approximately 5x8 inches.

1. Provide each student with one quill pen. Have extras on hand, in case it does not write properly. Be sure to stress to the students that each of the pens write differently, so they may not work perfectly the first few times they try it.
2. Give the students **time to practice**. 5-10 minutes should be enough. Provide ample amounts of scratch paper.
3. After the students practice, give them **one** signature card. The students then sign their name.
4. After drying (takes about a day or less depending on room temperature) the cards will be ready for display!



## **INK**

### **Colonial America**

- Use of colored fluid for drawing characters on parchment, hide, cloth, common in ancient Egypt 7 China, least as early as 2000 BC
- One method – use soot from burnt lamp oil mixed with a solution of gum or glue and molded into sticks. Allow to dry before use, mix with water to form ink for their quills
- Other inks made from indigo from the galls (swelling on tree or plant caused by insects, fungi, bacteria or external damage) of oak & nut trees, from berries, ink fluids secreted by octopus, cuttlefish, squid.
- Color first applied to paper, bluish, black, rapidly turns into darker black and over years fades to dull brown like old documents
- Ancient writing still preferred, used inks based on lampblack(carbon black) finely ground pigment dispersed in water or oil, then settled with settled with vegetable gum or glue. Allow to dry & mix with water to form ink.
- Carbon black not affected by moisture or light

### **History of Quill Pens for Writing**

- Word pen come from Latin “Penna” means feather
- Replaced the reed pen
- First choice in writing tools for over 1,000 years, longest pd. of history
- Early as 6<sup>th</sup> century feathers provided quills for writing
- Quill used to create great works of literature, books, daily correspondence, historical documents, Declaration of Indep. & Constitution both written and signed by quill pen
- Until 19<sup>th</sup> century & invention of steel nib, quills main writing tools of modern communication, written on parchment / paper (medieval times)
- Crow quills very good for fine lines
- Ordinary script, swan quills preferred but most people used goose
- Only 3 – 5 (primaries) outer wing feathers suitable for writing
- Preference given to left wing – curve outward & away from the writer

- Quills obtained from living birds in spring best for writing
- Even after invention of metal nibs, quills 1<sup>st</sup> choice, flexibility, writing excellence.

### History of Quill Pens for Writing

- No 2 quills write the same, development of wing shaft & carving of quill maker
- Historic books handcopied by monks with quills, 1 book may take years
- Wars, started, lost or avoided by the stroke of a quill pen
- Cut quill, a sharp knife needed, so you got “penknife”
- Scribes & stationers carved, sharpened, slit point (nib) for writing, you get “stationary”
- Each pen is unique to the writer
- Quill pens lasted only 1 week before you had to replace them
- Disadvantage, lengthy preparation time
- Beneath writer’s high top desk, coal stove to dry ink ASAP
- Very time consuming art to select, clean, trim & carve each writing quill
- Paper not widely used in Europe, paper mills were built in 14<sup>th</sup> century
- 1436 - Major invention that affected writing was Johannes Gutenberg who invented the printing press with replaceable wooden / metal letters
- New writing instruments permitted increased speed
- 1495 AD Aldus Manutius of Venice invented Italian “running hand” or cursive handwriting, Roman capitals & small letters. Before hand writing looked like printed letters

### Use of Quill Pens

- Always clean the ink off of nib after use (dip in clean water & wipe dry)
- When writing use a light touch & slanted hand
- Regular use & practice help quill write its best
- Entire pen completely washable
- Put whole pen in warm soapy water, rinse, dry. Return to natural state (each feather millions of interlocking barbs with light sheen of oil causes feather to return to natural state) Birds in the lake, see in action



# **Signing George Washington's Birthday Card**

## **Educational Focus**

### **Quill Pens for Writing**

- Word pen comes from Latin "Penna" means feather
- Replaced the reed pen
- First choice in writing tools for over 1,000 years, longest period of history
- Early as 6<sup>th</sup> century feathers provided quills for writing
- Quill used to create great works of literature, books, daily correspondence, historical documents, Declaration of Independence & Constitution both written and signed with a quill pen.
- Until 19<sup>th</sup> century & invention of steel nib, quills main writing tools of modern communication, written on parchment / paper (medieval times)
- Crow quills very good for fine lines
- Ordinary script, swan quills preferred but most people used goose
- Only 3 – 5 (primaries) outer wing feathers suitable for writing
- Preference given to left wing – curve outward & away from the writer
- Quills obtained from living birds in spring best for writing
- Quills from eagle, owl, hawk and turkey are also used as writing tools
- Even after the invention of metal nibs, quills 1<sup>st</sup> choice, flexibility, writing excellence.
- No two quills write the same, development of wing shaft & carving of quill maker.
- Historic books hand copied by monks with quills, 1 book may take years
- Wars started, lost or avoided by the stroke of a quill pen
- To cut quill, a sharp knife is needed which became the "penknife"
- Scribes & stationers carved, sharpened, slit point (nib) for writing, that's how the word "stationary" came to be.
- Each pen is unique to the writer
- Quill pens lasted only 1 week before you had to replace them
- Disadvantage, lengthy preparation time
- Beneath writer's high top desk was a coal stove to dry
- Very time consuming art to select, clean, trim & carve each writing quill
- Paper not widely used in Europe, paper mills were built in 14<sup>th</sup> century
- 1436 – Major invention that affected writing was Johannes Gutenberg who invented the printing press with replaceable wooden / metal letters
- New writing instruments permitted increased speed
- 1495 AD Aldus Manutius of Venice invented Italian "running hand" or

# **Signing George Washington's Birthday Card**

## **Educational Focus**

### **Ink In Colonial America**

- Use of colored fluid for drawing characters on parchment, hide, cloth common in ancient Egypt, China, least as early as 2000 BC
- One method – use soot from burnt lamp oil mixed with a solution of gum or glue and molded into sticks. Allow to dry before use, mix with water to form ink for their quills
- Other inks made from indigo from the galls (swelling on tree or plant caused by insects, fungi, bacteria or external damage) of oak & nut trees, from berries, ink fluids secreted by octopus, cuttlefish, squid.
- Color first applied to paper, bluish, black, rapidly turns into darker black and over the years fades to dull brown like old documents.
- Ancient writing still preferred, used inks based on lampblack (carbon black) finely ground pigment dispersed in water or oil, then settled with vegetable gum or glue. Allow to dry & mix with water to form ink.
- Carbon black not affected by moisture or light



## The Articles of Association (20 October 1774)

We, his **Majesty's most loyal subjects**, the Delegates of the several Colonies...find that the **present unhappy situation of our affairs** is occasioned by a ruinous system of Colony Administration, adopted by the *British* Ministry about the year 1763....

...the inhabitants of the several Colonies whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the **sacred ties of Virtue, Honour, and Love of our Country**....

2. That we will **neither import nor purchase any Slave** imported after the first day of *December* next; after which time we will wholly discontinue the Slave Trade....

5. ...if any Merchant residing in *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, shall directly or indirectly ship any Goods...it **ought to be made publick**; and, on the same being so done, we will not from thenceforth have any **commercial connection** with such Merchant.

8. That we will, in our several stations, **encourage Frugality, Economy, and Industry**, and **promote Agriculture, Arts, and the Manufactures** of this Country, especially that of Wool....

10. In case any Merchant, Trader, or other person, shall import any Goods or Merchandise... [ought] to be **either re-shipped or delivered** ...or be sold under the direction of the Committee...the profit, if any, to be applied towards relieving and employing such poor inhabitants of the Town of *Boston* as are **immediate sufferers by the Boston Port Bill**....

11. ...that any person within the limits of their appointment has violated this Association...be published in the Gazette, to the end that **all such foes to the rights of British America** may be publicly known, and universally contemned as **the enemies of American Liberty**; and thenceforth we respectively will break off all dealings with him or her.

13. That all Manufactures of this country be **sold at reasonable prices**, so that no undue advantage be taken of a **future scarcity of Goods**.

14. ...that we will have no Trade, Commerce, Dealings, or Intercourse whatsoever with any Colony or Province in *North America*, which shall not accede to, or which shall hereafter **violate this Association**, but will hold them as **unworthy of the rights of freemen**, and as inimical to the **liberties of this country**.

And we do **solemnly bind ourselves** and our constituents, under the ties aforesaid, to adhere to this Association....

## **The Declaration of Independence (4 July 1776)**

When in the **Course of human events**, it becomes necessary for one people to **dissolve the political bands** which have connected them with another....

We hold **these truths to be self-evident**, that all men are **created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, **Governments are instituted** among Men, deriving their just powers from **the consent of the governed**....

**Prudence**, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should **not be changed for light and transient causes**....

...it is their right, it is their **duty, to throw off such Government**, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and **necessary for the public good**.

He has **dissolved Representative Houses** repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his **invasions on the rights of the people**.

For **cutting off our Trade** with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us **without our Consent**:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of **Trial by Jury**:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be **tried for pretended offences**....

He has **plundered our seas**, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and **destroyed the lives of our people**.

He is at this time transporting large **Armies of foreign Mercenaries** to compleat the works of death....

Our **repeated Petitions** have been answered only by **repeated injury**.

We have **appealed to their native justice** and magnanimity....

They too have been **deaf to the voice of justice** and of consanguinity.

...as **Free and Independent States**, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce....

And for the **support of this Declaration**, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, **we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor**.