

# Tricky joins

## Objective

To practise tricky joins with the letter groups 'ss', 'ee' and 'x'.

## Background knowledge

Double 's' and 'e' are considered tricky as the second letter (and often the first as well) is formed in a different way for ease and acquisition of speed.

For 'ss', teach children that they do not need to go over to drop on. Instead, end low, curve up (like the curve in end-high diagonal joins) and stop when they hit the top of the body. Draw their pencil slightly back down the stroke they have just made before forming the bottom curl of the 's'.

For 'ee', make sure the children curl all the way back from the writing line end-low exit, curve up (like the curve in end-high diagonal joins) and to the middle of the letter before going up, backwards and around (anticlockwise).

The letter 'x' is particularly tricky. To make the join the pen should be taken to the top of the 'x' and then down towards the right; the pen is then taken off the page to complete the other part of the 'x' (top right to bottom left), before going back to the end of the first line to join from there to the next letter. You can draw a rectangle around this letter to check it is correct. The tips of the 'x' should touch each corner of the rectangle.

Left-handers may wish to lift their pen from the paper while travelling through the join, avoiding having to push awkwardly across the page. If the ink or pencil trace disappears, ensure they are attempting the join movement just above the paper.

## Activities

### ● Photocopiable page 41 'A good guess'

Encourage the children to keep the body parts of the letters even in size, both in height and width, to ensure neat handwriting – this may prove particularly difficult for some with the double 's'. Reassure them that they can decide for themselves whether the statements on the sheet might be possible or impossible – this could lead to some interesting discussions.

### ● Photocopiable page 42 'Can you see the trees?'

Tell the children to try to keep both letters in the double 'e' pattern the same size. To complete the table, remind them that nouns can be prefaced with the definite article and adjectives are used to describe nouns. Draw attention to the use of the first style of 'e' after the letter 'r'.

### ● Photocopiable page 43 'Xciting X!'

Reassure the children that while joining to the letter 'x' is relatively easy, joining from it is tricky, because they do have to lift the pen from the paper. Some children may need extra practice with this activity in order to become fluent in their use of the letter. If children struggle with this join, then do not force them to use it.

## Further ideas

● **Possible/impossible:** Allow the children to post their own statements on a wall display and invite others to write whether they think the ideas are possible or impossible. Use the results for a class discussion. Might some things that are currently impossible be possible in the future due to technological changes?

## What's on the CD-ROM



On the CD-ROM you will find:

- Animations of the joins.
- All of the photocopiable sheets.