



Help at Home: Writing

As children get older, they are asked to write at school more and more and likely in all subjects like math, science and social studies. Writing can be hard for children for many reasons. Children need to brainstorm an idea (initiation or getting started), organize their thoughts and ideas (organization and sequencing), and use spelling and handwriting skills. All of this requires a lot of attention and focus (also task persistence) which can be hard for students with chronic medical needs and/or disabilities that effect thinking and learning skills. Here are some ways you can help your child at home with writing.

Initiation or Getting Started

- **Graphic organizers and thinking webs.** Your child is used to having these at school. They help a student get ideas out of their heads and onto the paper. Students can use single words, phrases, or short sentences during planning, they do not need to use complete sentences. These tools can be found online by searching “free printable graphic organizer”. Enter your child’s grade level (might be different than their actual grade) in the search. **These are also super helpful with reading comprehension**
 - <https://www.superteacherworksheets.com/graphic-organizers.html>
 - https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/story_maps
- **Word Bank.** Giving your child a word bank can help them come up with ideas for an open-ended writing prompt from teachers (ie. *Tell me about a vacation you took with your family* or *Write about your favorite animal at the zoo*). Based on the topic your child is asked to write about, you can draw a rectangle at the top of the paper and write some words related to the topic. This can help plant ideas for your child AND can get rid of any anxiety around spelling harder words correctly. Here’s an example.

Prompt: Tell me about a vacation you took with your family.

Road trip	airplane	beach	museum	camping
National Park	favorite	picnic	sister	mountains

- **Sentence Starters and Frames.** Much like a word bank, sentence starters and frames help children get started and keep going when asked to write. Also like sentence starters they can help plant ideas and decrease anxiety. Here’s an example.

Prompt: Write about your favorite animal at the zoo.

My favorite animal is _____ because it _____. Some things the _____ likes to do are _____. The most interesting fact about the _____ is _____.

Spelling and Handwriting

- **High frequency word lists.** Printing Dolch and/or Fry sight words lists for your child to use when writing is helpful. In elementary classrooms teachers usually have a Word Wall where they show commonly used words. Students are encouraged to look at this wall before asking the teacher how to spell a word. They are found online and are listed by grade level. *you can also use these lists to make sight word flash cards for sight word reading*
 - <https://sightwords.com/sight-words/dolch/#lists>
 - <https://sightwords.com/sight-words/dolch/#lists>
- **Sounding out words (phonics).** Helping your child spell words can be super tricky because the English language has so many rules and rule breakers. *In general, encourage your child to try his/her best and that it's okay to spell a word wrong.* Special teachers who help children at school with phonics often use a certain program that follows a plan very closely and they have a lot of training. If the word is a regular word (follows rules) it's ok to help your child sound out the word part by part. Here are some things you can do.
 - If there is a picture, ask your child to look at the picture and the word. The beginning sound in the picture might help them start reading the word.
 - For regular words your child can stretch or slide their finger under the word and say each sound or part
- **Bold lined paper, textured paper, and tracing.** Bold lined paper provides help with uppercase letter and lower-case letter placement. Textured paper can be helpful because your child's pencil "bumps into" the raised lines when writing. To make textured paper, print bold lined paper and place a small line of glue across the top and bottom lines. After it dries it's ready to use. Tracing can be helpful for fine motor skills in general.
 - https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/2HMXgXyKbZlW2L9OkIueE4/ec82111c34c5cebb300fa3f7820e0d13/Bold_Line_Paper_Understood.pdf
 - https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/39rFEmvTJltIxsMiVSgYn/6b91a1ca270deb70f04ad59f0584b1dc/Shapes_and_Mazes_for_Tracing_Understood.pdf
- **Pencil grip.** These are not expensive and available at most stores with office supplies. They build up the size of the pencil where your child's fingers go and help when children have weaker hand strength that makes holding a pencil hard.
- **Spaceman for spacing in between words.** If your child has trouble putting spaces in between words, his/her writing can be hard for you to read and can be frustrating for your child as well. You can use the template below to create a "Spaceman" for your child to place in between words when writing.
 - https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/6WoWqeKwq02CpA3XtRxqFs/7d8436857095584f03d238868dd14c46/The_Spacekid_Understood.pdf

Assistive Technology for Writing

For longer writing assignments or for students with a high level of need, assistive technology may be best. Most smart phones and devices have built in technologies to help with writing. These usually include speech to text and word prediction. https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/assistive-technology/assistive-technologies-basics/assistive-technology-thats-built-into-mobile-devices?_ul=1*959shk*domain_userid*YW1wLVRDNEVSTHRQNYlINTdKMmNteHl4aEE.

For more information: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/assistive-technology/assistive-technologies-basics/assistive-technology-for-writing>

Name _____ Date _____

Story Map 1

Write notes in each section.

Setting:	Time:	Place:
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Characters:



Problem:



Plot/Events:

Resolution:

Story Map

Instructions: Fill in the boxes to show how your story developed.

Name: _____

Characters:

Setting:

Problem:

Title:

Author:

How the Characters Tried to Solve the Problem:

Solution:

Dolch Sight Words

Pre-Kindergarten (40 words)

a
and
away
big
blue
can
come
down
find
for
funny
go
help
here
I
in
is
it
jump
little

look
make
me
my
not
one
play
red
run
said
see
the
three
to
two
up
we
where
yellow
you

Dolch Sight Words

Kindergarten (52 words)

all
am
are
at
ate
be
black
brown
but
came
did
do
eat
four
get
good
have
he
into
like
must
new
no
now
on
our

out
please
pretty
ran
ride
saw
say
she
so
soon
that
there
they
this
too
under
want
was
well
went
what
white
who
will
with
yes

Dolch Sight Words

First Grade (41 words)

after
again
an
any
as
ask
by
could
every
fly
from
give
going
had
has
her
him
his
how
just
know

let
live
may
of
old
once
open
over
put
round
some
stop
take
thank
them
then
think
walk
were
when

Dolch Sight Words

Second Grade (46 words)

always
around
because
been
before
best
both
buy
call
cold
does
don't
fast
first
five
found
gave
goes
green
its
made
many
off

or
pull
read
right
sing
sit
sleep
tell
their
these
those
upon
us
use
very
wash
which
why
wish
work
would
write
your

Dolch Sight Words

Third Grade (41 words)

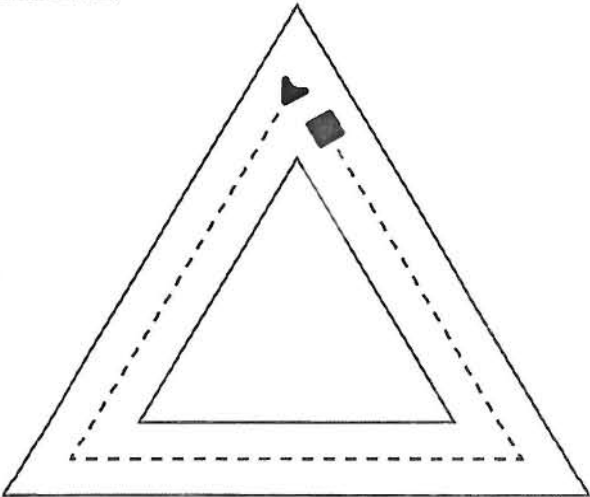
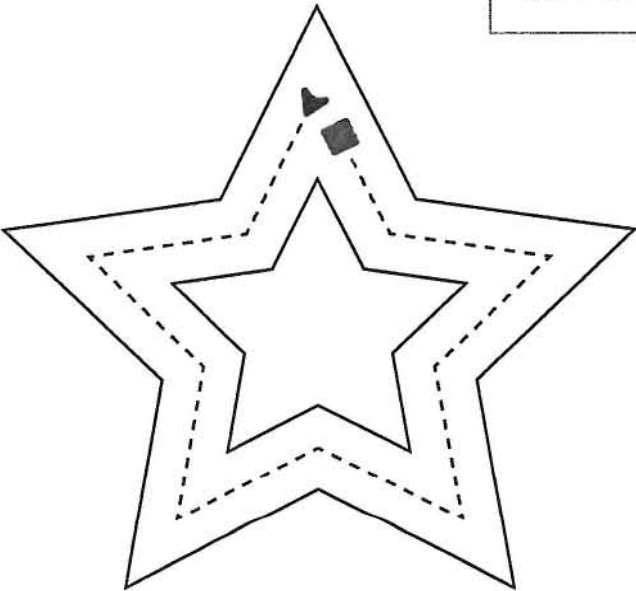
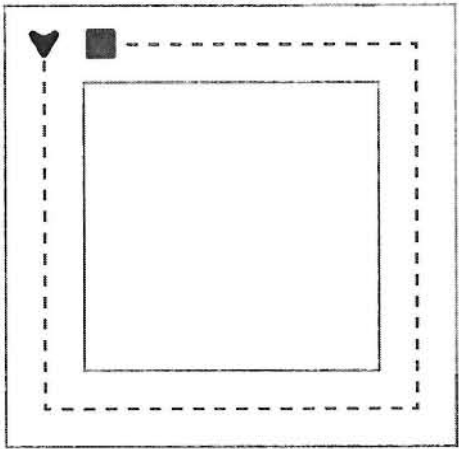
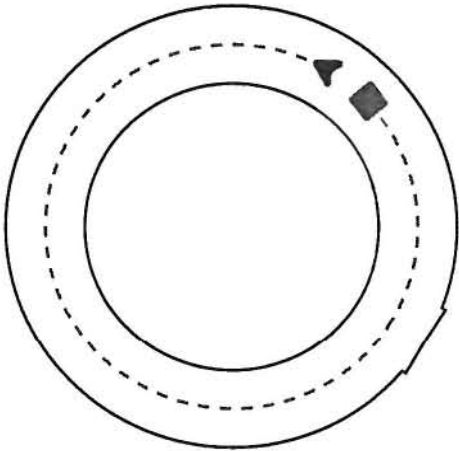
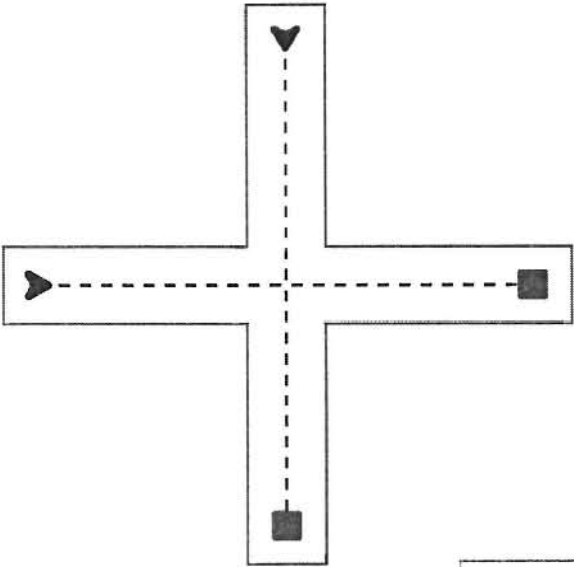
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eight
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far
full
got
grow
hold
hot
hurt
if
keep
kind

laugh
light
long
much
myself
never
only
own
pick
seven
shall
show
six
small
start
ten
today
together
try
warm

Shapes and mazes for tracing

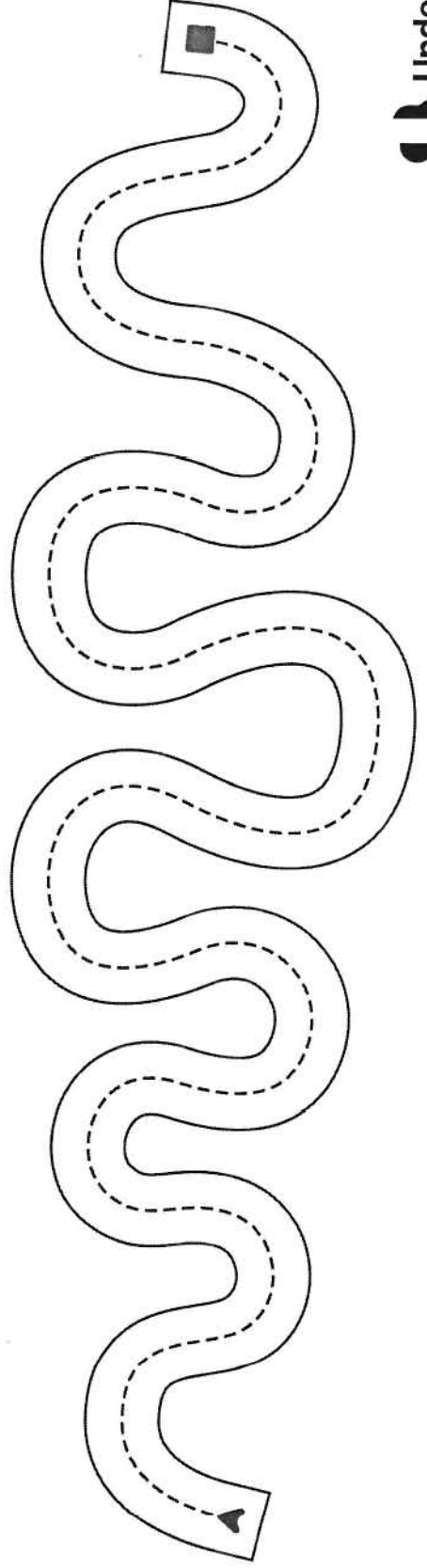
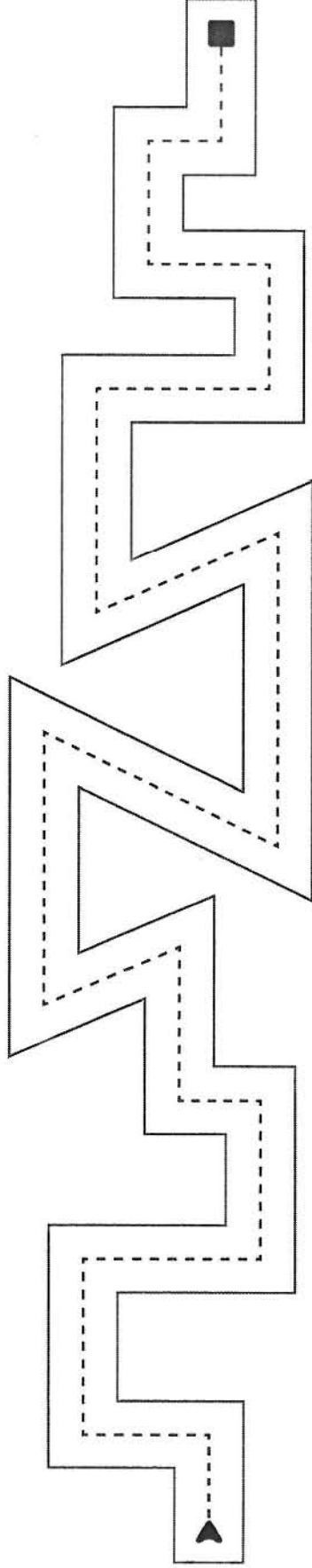
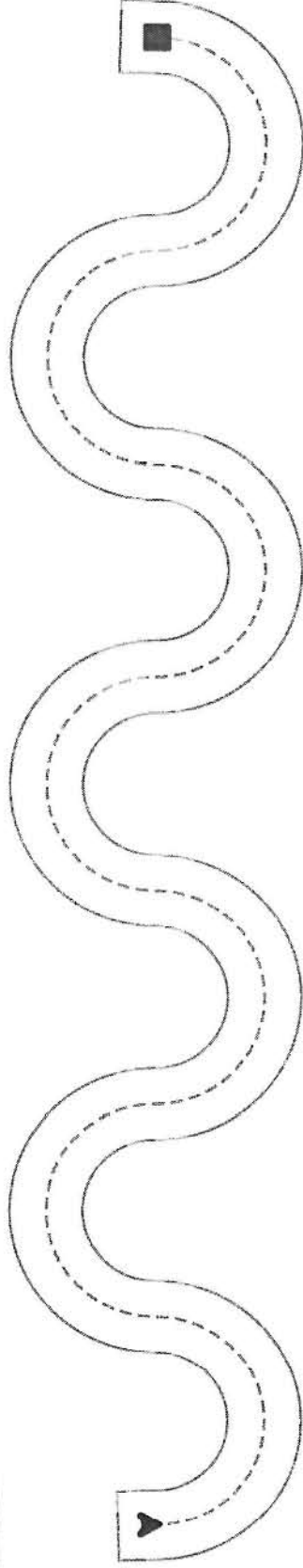
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Shapes and mazes for tracing

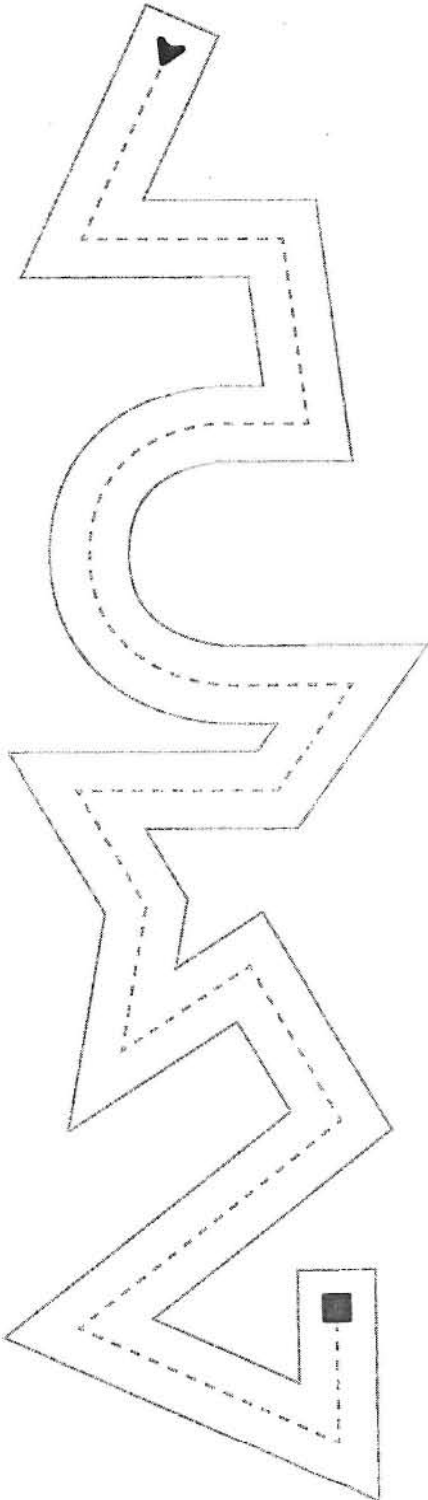
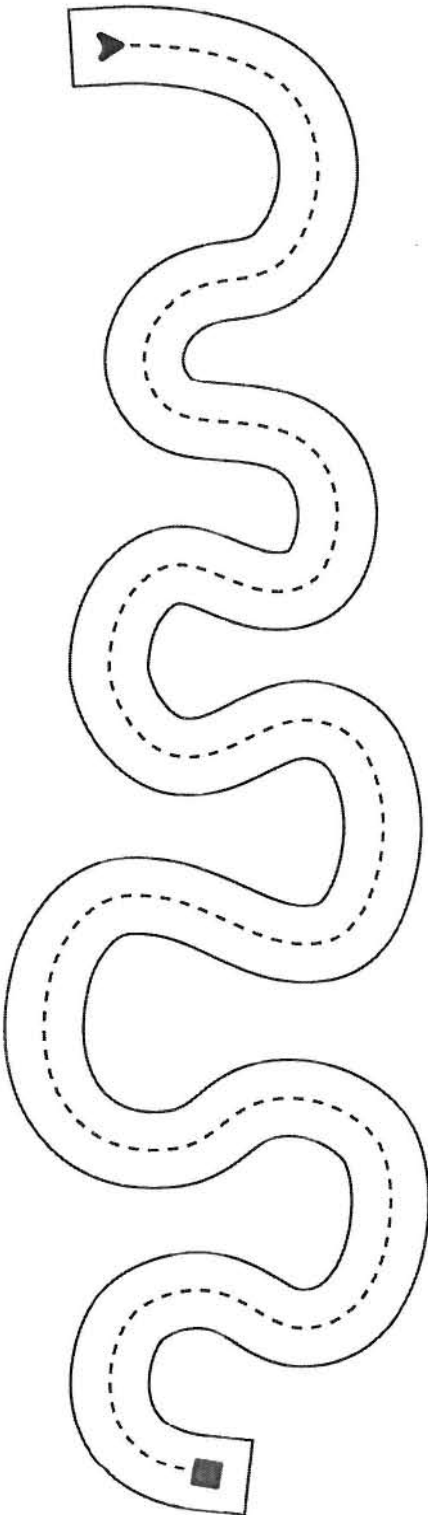
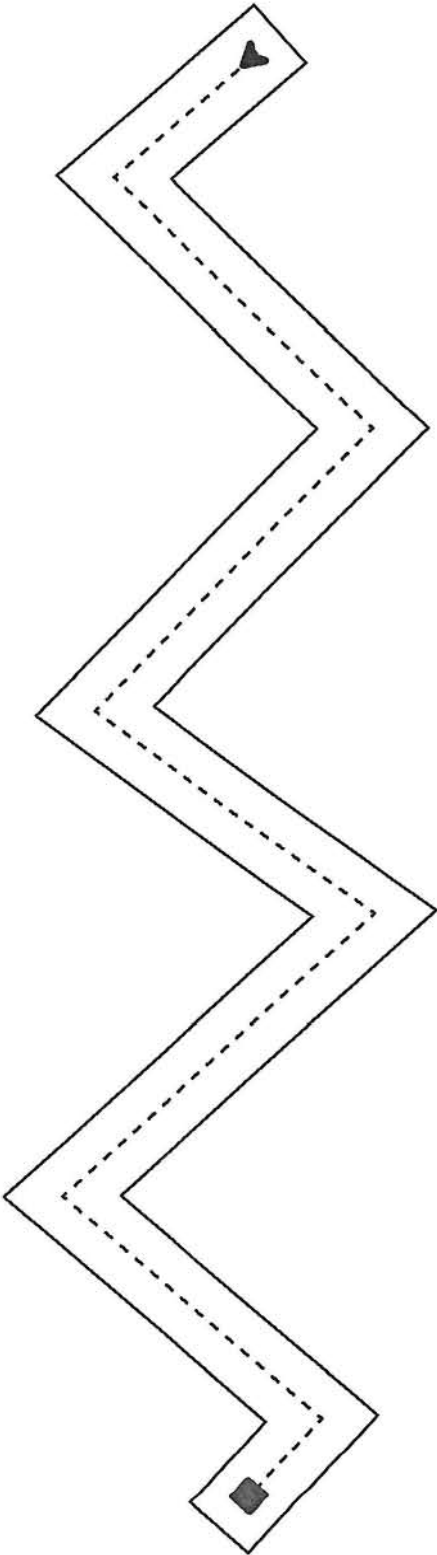
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Shapes and mazes for tracing

► Start

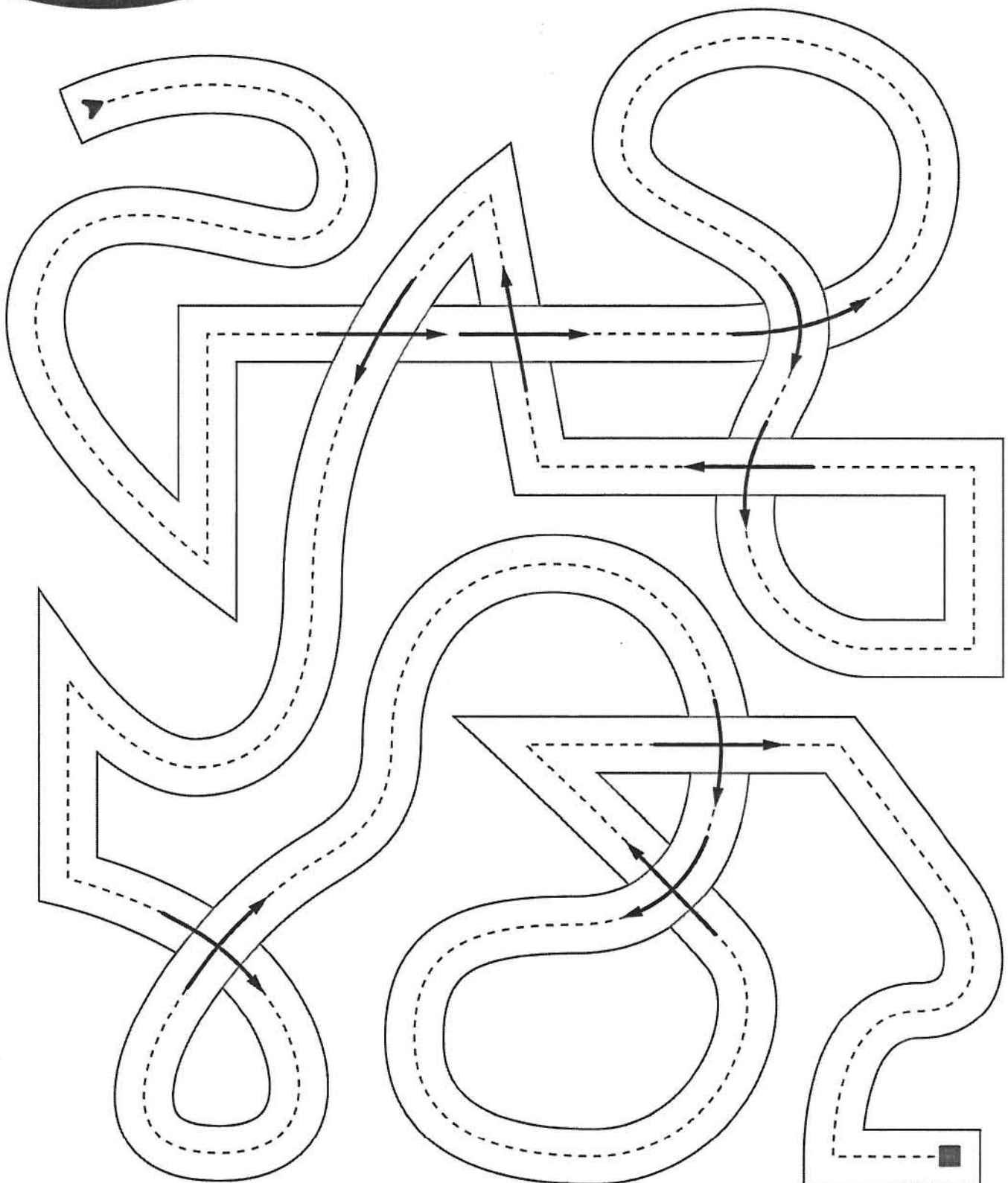
■ End



Shapes and mazes for tracing

► Start

■ End



Bold line paper

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated across the page.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

The "Spacekid"

Print this page on heavy paper.

Kids can choose their favorite spacekid and decorate it using crayons, markers, and other art supplies.

Supplies you will need:



Scissors

Glue



Art supplies



Pencil, craft stick, or spoon



For spacekid figures:

Cut out and glue to a pencil, a craft stick, or the handle of a plastic spoon.

To use the spacekid, have your child place it between words when writing. This helps kids leave enough space between each word.

