

## Letter reversals

The term letter reversals refers to several things related to reversing letters in reading or writing:

- Writing a specific letter backwards, when they replace a letter with another such as forming a letter b as a d or a letter p as a letter q
- Writing a letter upside down or flipped, such as forming a u as an n
- Reading a letter backwards, as when kids replace a d with a b
- Writing letters backwards as when kids write letters h, n, s, z, in a mirror image
- Transposing letters or switching the order of letters when writing
- Reversing or writing numbers backwards

Reversals are age appropriate up until 7-8 years of age, but early recognition and correct practice will make it easier to correct.

Some letters are often transposed or mixed up because they have similar pencil strokes:

b and d	w and m	3 and E	s and 5
n and u	s and z	2 and 5	

Some letters are often written backwards because they start at the top, and have to go in a different direction:

b	e	j	q	u
c	f	k	r	z
d	h	p	s	

Finding many ways to practice recognizing the letters printed correctly or practicing printing them error-free will help build muscle memory.

- Use different colours to see how the pencil moves.
- Use multi-sensory practice opportunities – tracing over sandpaper letters, printing in pudding or shaving cream in a bag, trace pipe cleaner letters.
- For some students with many reversals, learning cursive writing is more successful, it is almost impossible to write a letter backwards.
- Practice matching letters – use foam or magnetic or plastic letters and match on a lined paper to already written letters.
- Letter searches – finding and circling the letters properly drawn out of a row or several rows of mixed-up letters.
- Play tic tac toe with commonly transposed letters (b/d instead of x/o)
- Provide visual cues.

