

# The New Generation Gap?



**DIRECTIONS:** Read the essay. Determine the author's point of view or purpose and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

When we think of a generation gap we usually think of conflicting tastes in music, or pastimes. But in states across the nation the generation gap is widening over the issue of handwriting. After one teacher in Tennessee discovered that she had students who couldn't read the assignments she was writing on the board in cursive, she took it into her own hands to introduce a bill mandating that cursive writing, termed by one journalist to be "a link to our human heritage" once again be taught in schools. Other states have followed suit.

Opponents claim that cursive writing has become obsolete in our modern world. Typed words have become a primary form of communication. Once a practical skill, cursive writing is no longer used by the vast majority of Americans. It is no longer taught in schools, and some claim that the time that it would take to teach it could be put to better use, for instance, by teaching the technical skills students need to get along and excel in an increasingly technological world.

But even in today's world there are still plenty of reasons to pick up a pen and apply it to paper. Many American institutions still require original signatures, for instance, signing for a registered letter and buying a house. And original signatures are much more difficult to forge than their digital counterparts. There is also strong evidence that writing by hand is good for the mind. It activates a different part of the brain, and improves fine motor skills in young children. People also tend to retain what they write by hand more than what they type, and the process of writing by hand has been shown to stimulate ideas. Not only that, studies have shown that kids who write in cursive learn to read and spell earlier than those that don't, and experts have theorized that this is because the act of physically linking the letters together in cursive writing helps children retain a sense of the letters cohering as words, rather than understanding them as a series of individual letters. Some people with brain injuries that make it impossible for them to decipher print can still read cursive letters, making handwriting a necessity as an accommodation for those with this particular disability. Not to mention, handwriting is aesthetically pleasing, as is evidenced by the fact that no one has ever typed a love letter. And calligraphy remains popular as an art form.

Yes we live in a modern world, but we live in a modern world that is based on fundamental values. Do we want to see an entire generation of children grow up who are unable to read the Declaration of Independence, or the Bill of Rights in its original form?