

What *Handwriting* Tells You About Bush, Kerry, Cheney, and Edwards



By Sheila Kurtz, Mga., President, Graphology Consulting Group, New York, and Chief Graphology Officer, Pilot Pen Corporation of America, Trumbull, Connecticut



Sheila Kurtz

EDITORS' NOTE The author and coauthor of five textbooks on the science of handwriting analysis, Sheila Kurtz is a renowned expert on medical and forensic graphology, regularly teaching and speaking on the subject in a variety of forums around the world. The clients of her Graphology Consulting Group include business leaders, intelligence agents, law officers, major sports executives, medical doctors, trial lawyers, and individuals. For information, visit www.graphologyconsulting.com.

We wish our top politicians to be natural born leaders, clever as Alexander the Great and as wise as Solomon, yet not all of them are.

The handwriting of U.S. presidents, going back even to the Founding Fathers, reveals assorted traits and characteristics that range from the studied elegance and grace of George Washington, to the sarcasm and self-consciousness of Franklin Roosevelt, the forlorn depressions of Richard Nixon, and the well-thought-out decisions of Ronald Reagan.

Today there are four major party candidates for president and vice president of the United States, and from the perspective of graphology – the science of handwriting analysis – their thinking patterns, emotional states, achievement

skills, levels of stress, goals, and communications skills are strikingly clear.

The forms and shapes of handwriting can be best thought of as mechanical and psycho-neurological indicators, like the gauges on the dashboard of a vehicle. They are not intrinsically “good” or “bad,” merely informative.

The indications of physical and mental status that we report on here neither carry nor imply moral judgments. These

data can be useful because they will assert themselves in the context of the person’s life. Citizens who decide on who sits behind the desk in the White House Oval Office may best draw their own conclusions as to how the traits these men display in their handwriting may qualify or hinder them in the job of chief executive of the federal government and commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed forces.

PRESIDENT GEORGE WALKER BUSH

The main document used for this analysis is a note dated November 23, 1999, on the letterhead of the governor of Texas. The letter reads: “Alan, I understand that you have volunteered for my campaign. I am grateful to have you on my team. Your state is very important to winning back the White House. I am working hard to build a strong grassroots organization to carry MI. I hope you will continue working hard. Together, I am confident we will win. Sincerely, George Bush” Also used was a letter on the same letterhead dated December 18, 1998, beginning “Dear Roger and friends.”

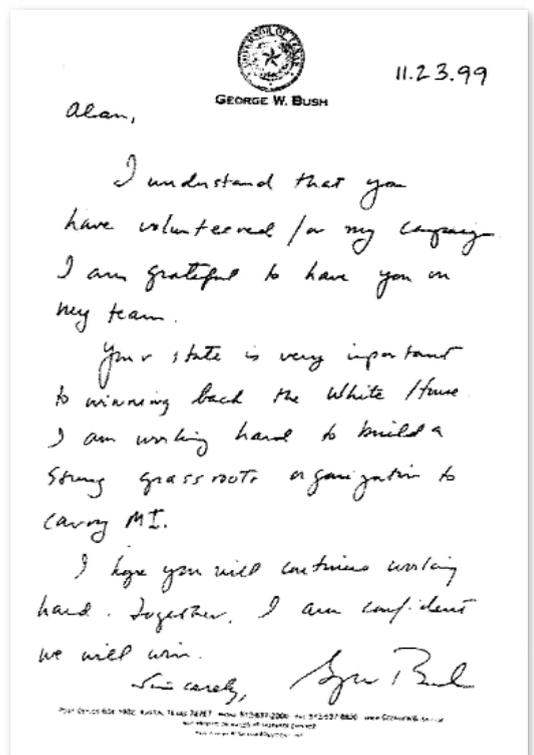
The obvious, and probably the most significant, characteristic of President Bush’s handwriting is that it teems with tenacity hooks. Hooks appear on many of his letters, even his exclamation mark!

Once the president’s mind is made up, his handwriting indicates that he will hang on to the mindset through turbulence and troubles. He is so tenacious that psychologically he may be unable to let go of established ideas, even if a better set of ideas appears. He may frequently find himself caught by the “tar baby” he embraces.

When coupled with a tendency toward “narrow vision” (notice the tightly closed loops in his round letters, like the e’s and a’s), his mind is shuttered almost completely to “off the program” ideas. President Bush may seem to listen affably, but he is constrained from hearing what is said.

There is a smattering of needle-pointed m’s in his writing that indicate he can pick up information and digest it rather quickly, and on occasion, he will experience brief dawns of discovery and clarity. However, his remarkable

The Pilot Vanishing Point pen (top)



single-mindedness will soon draw him back into the tunnel again.

There are signs in the softly tapering endings of some of his words that President Bush may be diplomatic in his interactions with certain people, a diplomacy which masks his natural bluntness of thought and expression.

The lower loops of his g's and y's are often full and clean – a sign that his imagination is capable of generating original ideas, and if one or more of them passes muster, he has the ability to bring the ideas to reality. There is also fluidity about his writing that may indicate a tendency to express himself better on paper, perhaps, than orally.

In his approach to most ideas and problems, he can be best described as a “surface rider” – neither deep nor probing. He will sometimes grab on to a new and appealing notion and gulp it down without full consideration. President Bush has recalled in public that his mother used to warn him frequently at the dinner table, “George, chew before you swallow!”

He is capable of making decisions, but he prefers to disperse the responsibility for final decisions among those he has been taught to trust. The very-slightly-to-the-right slant of his letters indicates that he does not let his emotions get in the way of making decisions he'd rather not make.

There are signs of initiative in several breakaway strokes, as seen at the end of the t's and n's, and in other places too. These strokes may also signal aggressiveness when associated with President Bush's small slashes for i dots, which are called “temper tics.”

In order to survive in an environment full of people whose thinking is naturally swifter than his, the president has learned to use his intuition, to “go with his gut.” (Spaces between letters within a word are signs of intuition.) The use of intuition speeds up one's thinking, and people who employ intuition successfully must keep close track of how often this cognitive shortcut results in the intended conclusions. To rely on wrong intuition just to appear swift is a mistake some slower thinkers make, and pay for.

There is a recurrent smudginess in the president's writing that indicates a personality prone to habitual dependencies that may be broken only with enormous difficulty. Additionally, in samples of writing from years before his presidency, there are signs that he was at times a daydreamer. But since 1999 or so, much of the daydreaming has been capped.

The president is a man who requires change and variety and people to talk to in order to be happy. His bluntness, however, may interfere with relationships that are outside the boss/employee realm.

VICE PRESIDENT RICHARD CHENEY

The sample of Vice President Cheney's handwriting that we examined purports to be a note written on May 31, 2002, on the letterhead of the vice president to a person named Keith. The letter says: “Keith – Thanks for your letter. It was good to hear from you. Sounds as though you and your family are prospering. Our forces performed magnificently in Afghanistan. Much of that was made possible by what you and your colleagues did 10 years ago in the Gulf! – Best Wishes – Dick Cheney”

The handwriting of Vice President Cheney indicates that he is primarily a man of strong emotions with an optimistic point of view. His writing slants quite far to the right, a signal that his feelings may be passionate and perhaps disturbing, but not hysterical.

The intertwining of letters from one line of writing to the next is a sign of some confusion. Yet his writing exhibits a good rhythm and the lower loops of the y's and g's are full, a sign of an active imagination.

The vice president, like the president, sees the world narrowly. The attention he pays to matters he concludes are off the point is minimal. His mind is made up. Contradictions and outside opinions are routinely dismissed by him.

He is a methodical, mildly investigative, analytical thinker, and unlike President Bush, he relies not a wit on intuition. He

goes by equations that he trusts. His “gut” reactions, if any, are strictly suppressed or subjected to a fairly rigorous logic.

The fatness of the upward loops in his t's, d's, and l's indicate that Vice President Cheney is sensitive to criticism (far, far more than President Bush) and cares what others think about him, particularly if they don't much care for him and say so. He also exhibits full and complete lower loops in his g's and y's, which indicate an active imagination. When taken together with his sensitivity to criticism, this suggests a likelihood that the vice president,

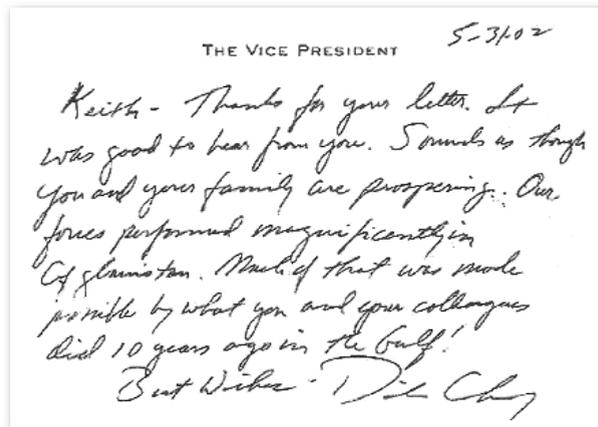
on occasion, will blow ideas and situations out of proportion.

His determination is mild, his drive reasonably strong. He has more energy than the president and moves more quickly to put matters into motion. He, too, is fond of change and variety. He listens more carefully than the president, but he also likes to dominate the floor whenever he can.

Although Vice President Cheney has a tendency toward impulsiveness, his disciplined thinking patterns act as a control. His moods are a mixture of highs and lows, often starting off with optimism and sink-

ing into vague depression, then struggling back again.

He is a man with personal dignity and pride and, perhaps, a discreet sense of defiance toward those who may presume to hold authority over him. But although the vice president is an independent thinker, he will yield to others when his analysis of the situation seems to call for it.



SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY

Two samples of purported adult handwriting from Senator Kerry were examined. One is a salutation and signature on a book jacket. The other is a note purportedly penned in 2002 on a gold-eagle embossed Senate staff card to the late Senator Patrick Moynihan. The card to Senator Moynihan was purchased from the Moynihan estate and was recently auctioned on eBay. It says: “Dear Pat – Your note was very thoughtful and your thank you is especially meaningful. I am grateful for both. John” A third sample, said to have been written by the young Kerry when he was about 13, appears to be much in the same vein as his more mature inscriptions.

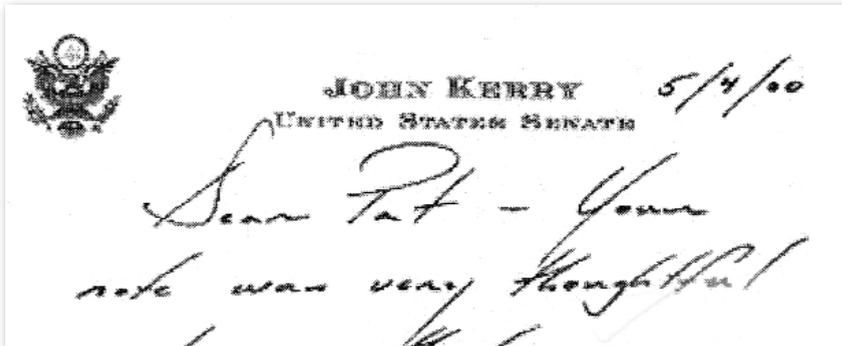
The slant of Senator Kerry's handwriting is quite far to the right. “Right” in this case is not a political description but a directional one. The further a handwriting slants to the right, the more powerfully emotional the writer is likely to be. In this case, “emotional” means a tendency to base decisions on impulses. In the vernacular, Senator Kerry's heart may at times rule his head.

When one sees a far-right slant in handwriting, one looks for signs of controls that may mitigate the impulsiveness. In the case of Senator Kerry, the control may be in his better-than-average ability to concentrate, which may slow his decisions down a little because the strong focus of attention dampens impulsivity.

Concentration is indicated by the relative smallness of his writing.

The extra tallness of his t's and d's (more than three times the size of the small letters) is an indication of vanity, which is more excessive even than pride. This is the sign of an overinflated self-esteem, the lofty mindset of a person who keenly desires the approval of others. He may give almost boastful signs, expressed in word and deed (personal appearance, an aura of high dignity), that he deserves the approval he gets.

He is a man of unusually strong determination and follow-through, as indicated by the straight, firm down strokes of the y's



and g's. His self-starting ability may be scattered by confused thinking. His lines of writing occasionally touch or intermingle, usually a sign of a person with too many irons in the fire. He may at times require a jump-start to get him focused. Once he's on track, however, he sees the matter through.

His goals at the time of the examined writing (2000) were mixed, but were mostly quite low. (Notice the height of the t-bars on the t stem. The higher the t bars tend to be, the higher the goals, and vice versa.)

His thinking pattern overall may be occasionally analytical, but often he will come to conclusions without the benefit of his own analysis or investigation into the facts. He is ultra-direct

about any subject he is involved in. He wants to move quickly and get on to the next matter at hand. Yet sometimes there are so many matters on hand that he becomes discombobulated and must pause to take stock or be guided into going on.

He exhibits above-average intuition, which means that he will "go with his gut." Senator Kerry seems to rely on his intuition to reach conclusions and to take actions that may not seem to be supported by a step-by-step assessment of the facts. Nonetheless, he may often choose the correct course without a rigorous analysis of the situation.

He shows a very strong desire to take on moral, legal, and mental accountability. This trait is indicated by the oversized loops in the capital D in "Dear," the P in "Pat," and the big J loop in his signature.

Senator Kerry comes to most situations with small-caliber input portals, which act like funnels to impede all but a narrow flow of new information and novel ideas. Senator Kerry's mind is often pre-made up, and only stark proof (in the American South they say "a two-by-four upside the head") is likely to change it. There is an implication in Senator Kerry's handwriting (because of the far forward slant and closed

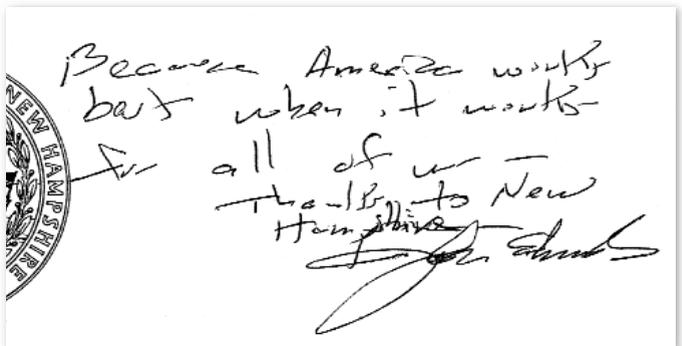
loops) that he is likely to seek the company, companionship, and counsel of people much like himself, to the exclusion of others.

Unless he gets scattered, his thinking flows rhythmically and consistently without many flubs or hesitations. The hook-like strokes at the top of his f's indicate a moderate desire to come into possession and control of "stuff" of one's own. The stuff might be money, knowledge, or, considering his drive for responsibility, power.

There is the sign in his flat-topped r (in the words "four" and "your") that he can work well with his hands. With his powers of concentration, he might make a competent craftsman.

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS

The sample of Senator Edwards's writing under examination is from a document in the New Hampshire secretary of state's office in Concord, where Senator Edwards and several other candidates for the 2003 New Hampshire Primary wrote personal notes on a "Notice to Voters" form as a favor to the secretary of state, whose office kindly copied and sent us the form. Senator Edwards wrote: "Because America works best when it works for all of us - Thanks to New Hampshire - John Edwards."



The letters and words in Senator Edwards's handwriting slant in different directions - from moderately to the left through straight up and down to slightly to the right. Slant is an emotional indicator. His range of private emotions may swing from mildly withdrawn to mildly responsive. However, with his bigger-than-he-is signature, Senator Edwards wishes to be seen by the public as very emotionally responsive and "out there."

His signature's practiced emotionality is contradicted by his use of many and various dashes, which are strong indications of an innate cautiousness. He shows signs of defiance of established authority, yet he is extremely careful to think matters through before he plunges on.

The senator is open to new ideas, although he likes to talk more than he likes to listen. He expresses himself well in prose (the Greek e in his last name, which looks like a backward 3, is a mark of literary abilities or interests). He can also take the initiative (there are breakaway strokes in his signature and elsewhere).

He wants to acquire, and to hang on to what he has acquired, be it money, possessions, or power. (There are acquisitive hooks on the t bar and the t stem of "best." There are tenacity hooks on the final stroke of the w in "when" and a similar hook on the big k in "works.")

Senator Edwards is enthusiastic (see the flying t bars) and his zest and excitement will lure others to hop on his bandwagon. However, his goals and emotional slants are inconsistent: high, low, and practical, past to present to future. Inconsistent goals, when taken together with an inconsistent slant, indicate that his mind regularly executes many swings and gyrations, and what keeps him from riding off in all directions at once is his cautiousness, which may serve to keep him on a balanced course.

The senator's thinking patterns are essentially analytical. He sifts and weighs the information he receives before coming to a conclusion. He also has come to rely on his intuition, which bypasses ordinary logic and increases the speed of his thinking. His drive is strong, and he may be seen as a "cheerleader," yet his caution (those dashes) slows everything down. He is direct in his approach to others and has learned to temper his tongue and actions with tact and diplomacy. ●