National Aphasia Association



NAA’s Lunch and Learn

Writing with Aphasia: Why It's Hard and What Can Help

Visit the NAA Website
aphasia.org

Contact the NAA
answers@aphasia.org

Why talk about “Writing” ?

Aphasia is a communication disorder.

It impacts all of the language modalities.
Some more than others...everyone is different



Speaking



Understanding

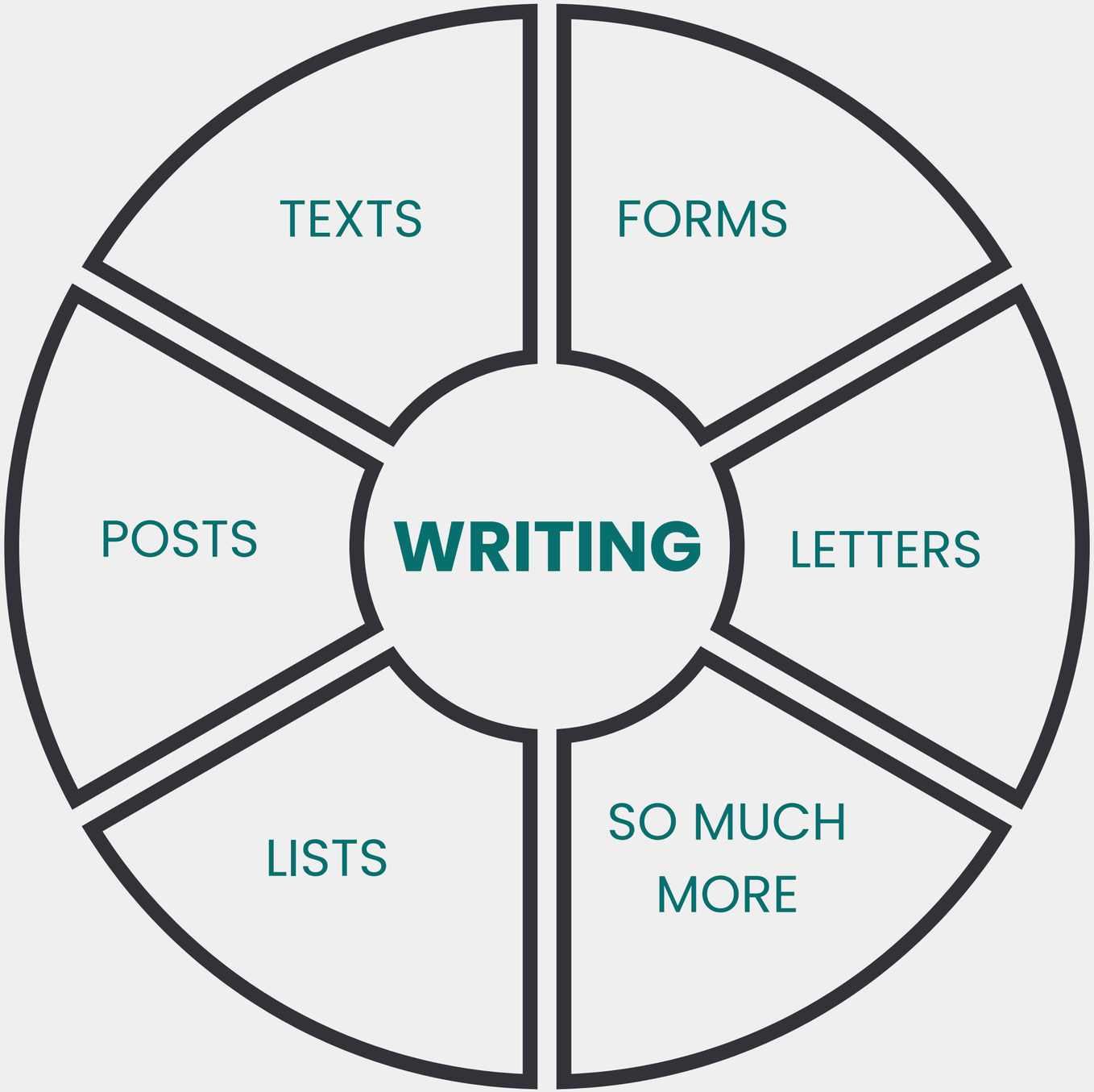


Reading



Writing

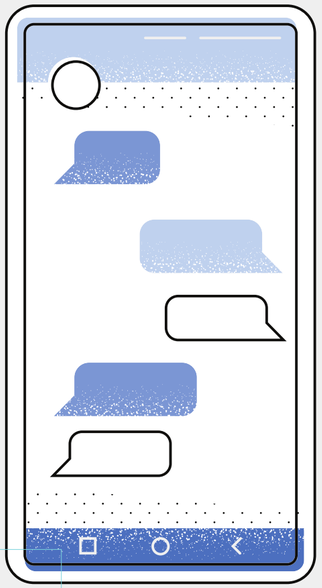
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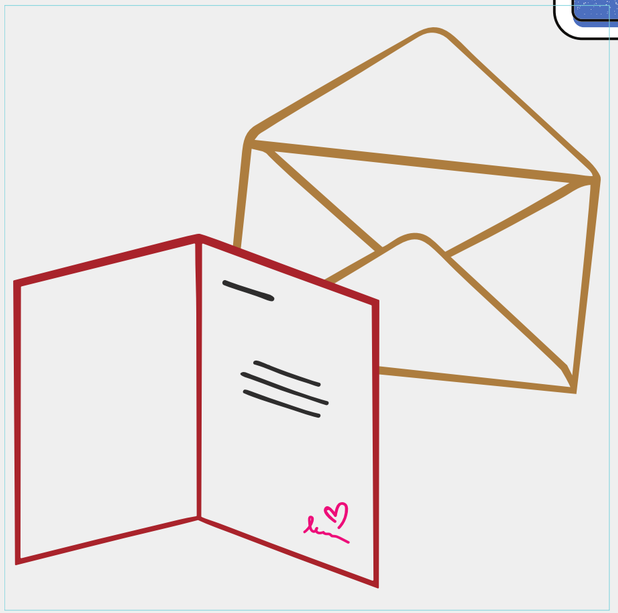
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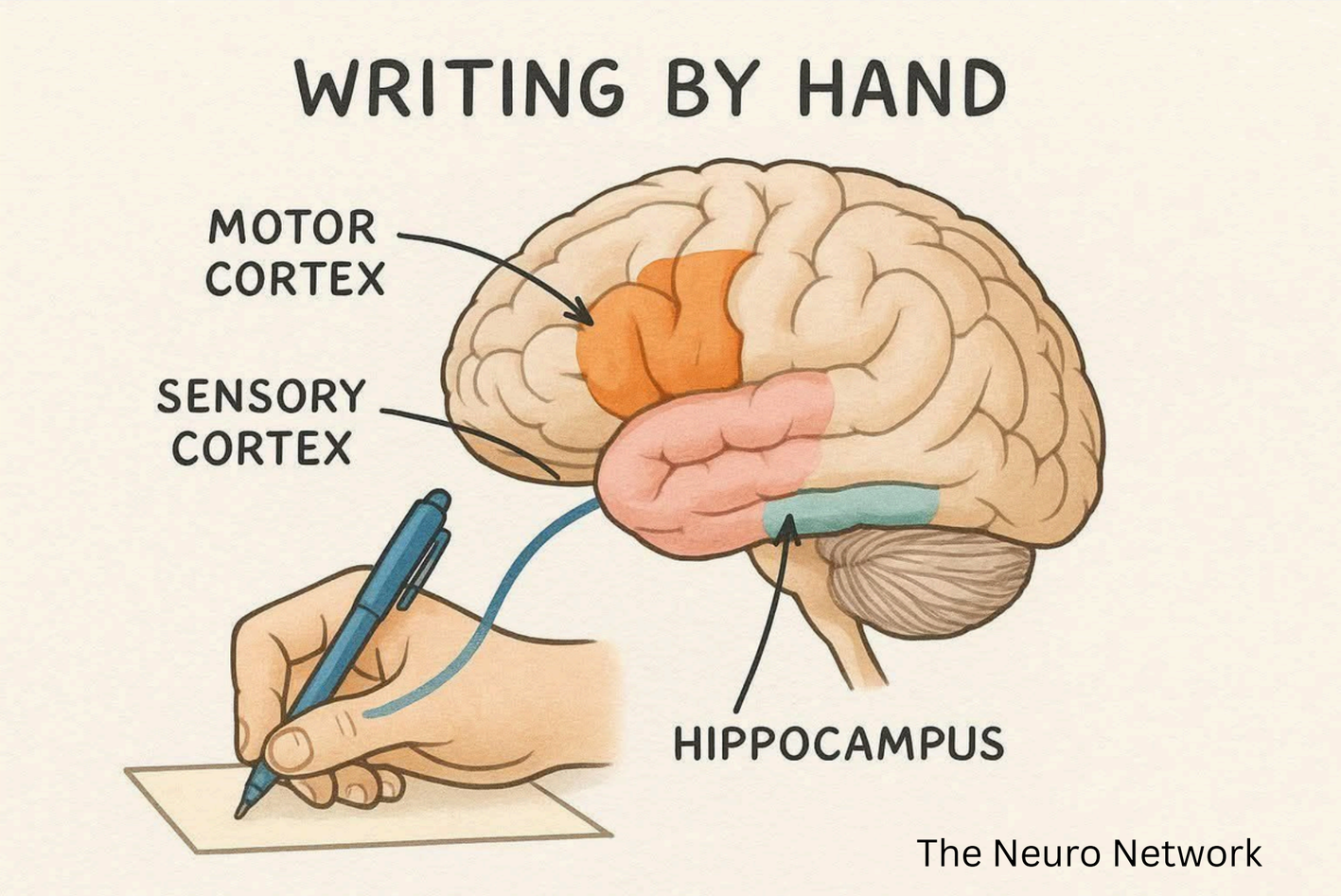






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Writing impairment = **dysgraphia**



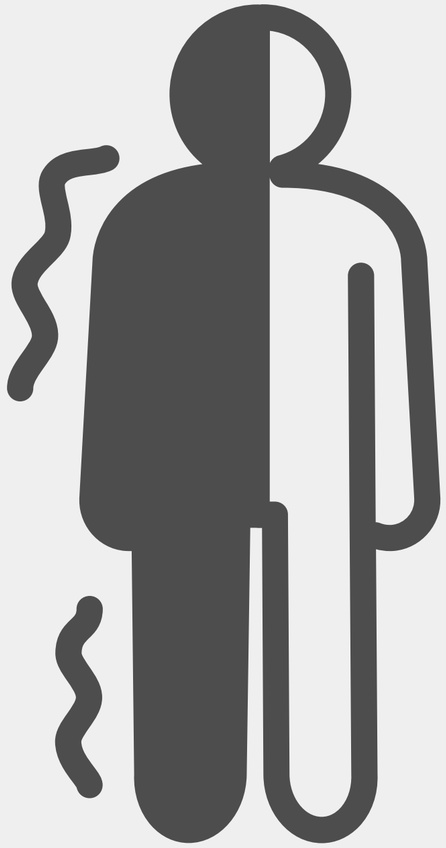
Dysgraphia is a neurological condition and learning difference in which someone has difficulty with writing for their age level.

- **thinking,**
- **sensing**
- **moving,**
- **remembering**

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Agraphia ...

What complicates “acquired” dysgraphia?



- Hemiparesis/paralysis
- Weakness
- Spasticity
- Handedness
- Visual field deficits
- Spatial Orientation
- Visual Discrimination

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Categories of Dysgraphia:

CENTRAL DYSGRAPHIA



Mind & Language Problem →



PERIPHERAL DYSGRAPHIA



Movement & Writing Problem →



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Central “Linguistic/Language” Dysgraphia:

- **Surface Agraphia:** loss of whole-word visual spelling memory. May spell irregular words phonetically (e.g., writing "bake" for "break").
- **Phonological Agraphia: (Sound-to-letter route damage).** Does well with memorized words, but challenged in spelling unfamiliar words.
- **Deep Agraphia: (Severe combination of phonological and surface impairments).** Semantic spelling errors (writing "boat" instead of "ship") and struggle with abstract words.
- **Graphemic Buffer Impairment: (working memory issue)** letters are dropped, added, or transposed in the middle of words.

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Evidenced Based Treatment

Central “Linguistic/Language” Dysgraphia:



- Anagram and Copy Treatment (ACT) - scrambled letters
- Copy and Recall Treatment (CART): Continuation of ACT. Copy multiple times from memory
- Phonological Retraining (Grapheme-Phoneme Mapping): -rebuilds the translation of phonemes (sounds) to graphemes (letters)
- Sentence-Level Structural Therapies

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Peripheral (“Motor”) Dysgraphia:

- **Apraxic Agraphia**: Motor planning issue / damage to the brain's ability to plan the motor movements needed to form letter shapes.

- **Visuospatial (Afferent) Agraphia**: (generally right brain injury) -writing may drift upward/downward, double-write strokes, or misgroup parts of words (e.g., "I a msomeb ody").

- **Motor Nonapraxic Agraphia**: Direct weakness or tremor in the hand, arm, or fingers impairs the physical output of writing.

- **Reiterative (Repetitive) Agraphia**: A neurological glitch causing the person to repeatedly stroke, loop, or duplicate letters, syllables, or words uncontrollably / may also be perseverative from aphasia.

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Evidenced Based Treatment

Peripheral “Motor” Dysgraphia:

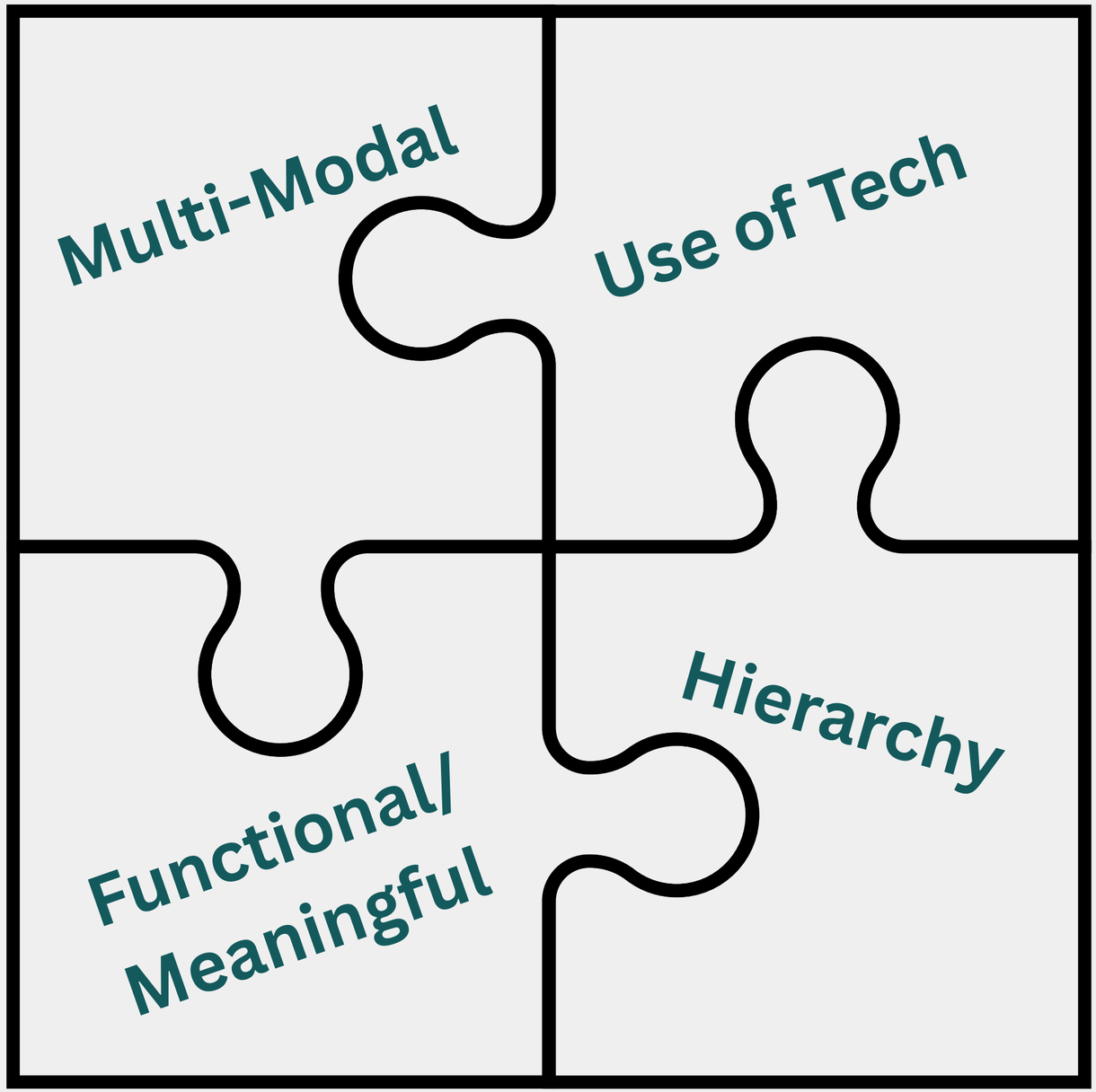


- Graphomotor and Explicit Instruction: letter-formation instruction; like tracing, speaking the sequence of hand strokes.

- Kinesthetic and Muscle Memory Training: Completed mainly by OT to focus on hand/arm movement, strengthening, etc.

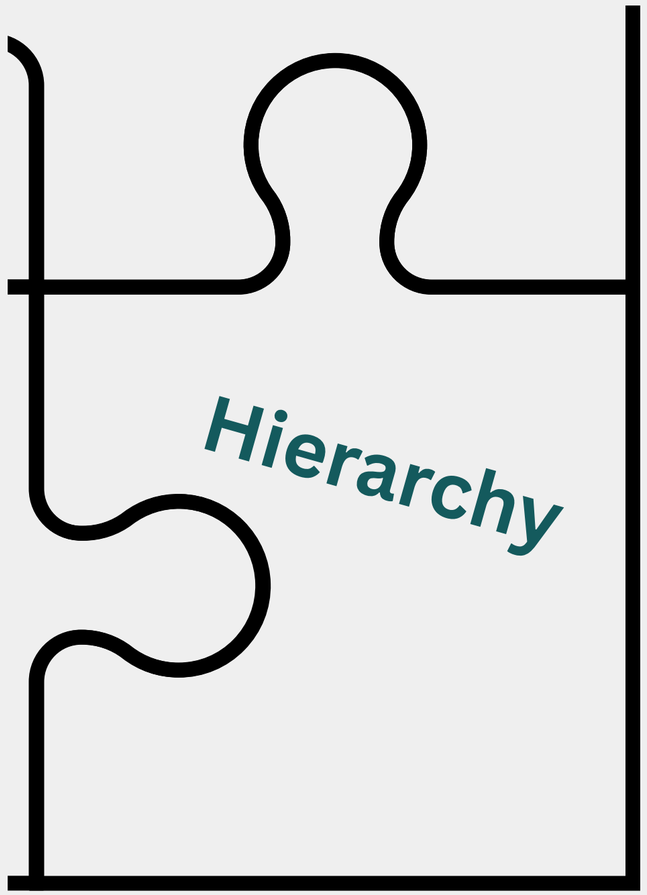
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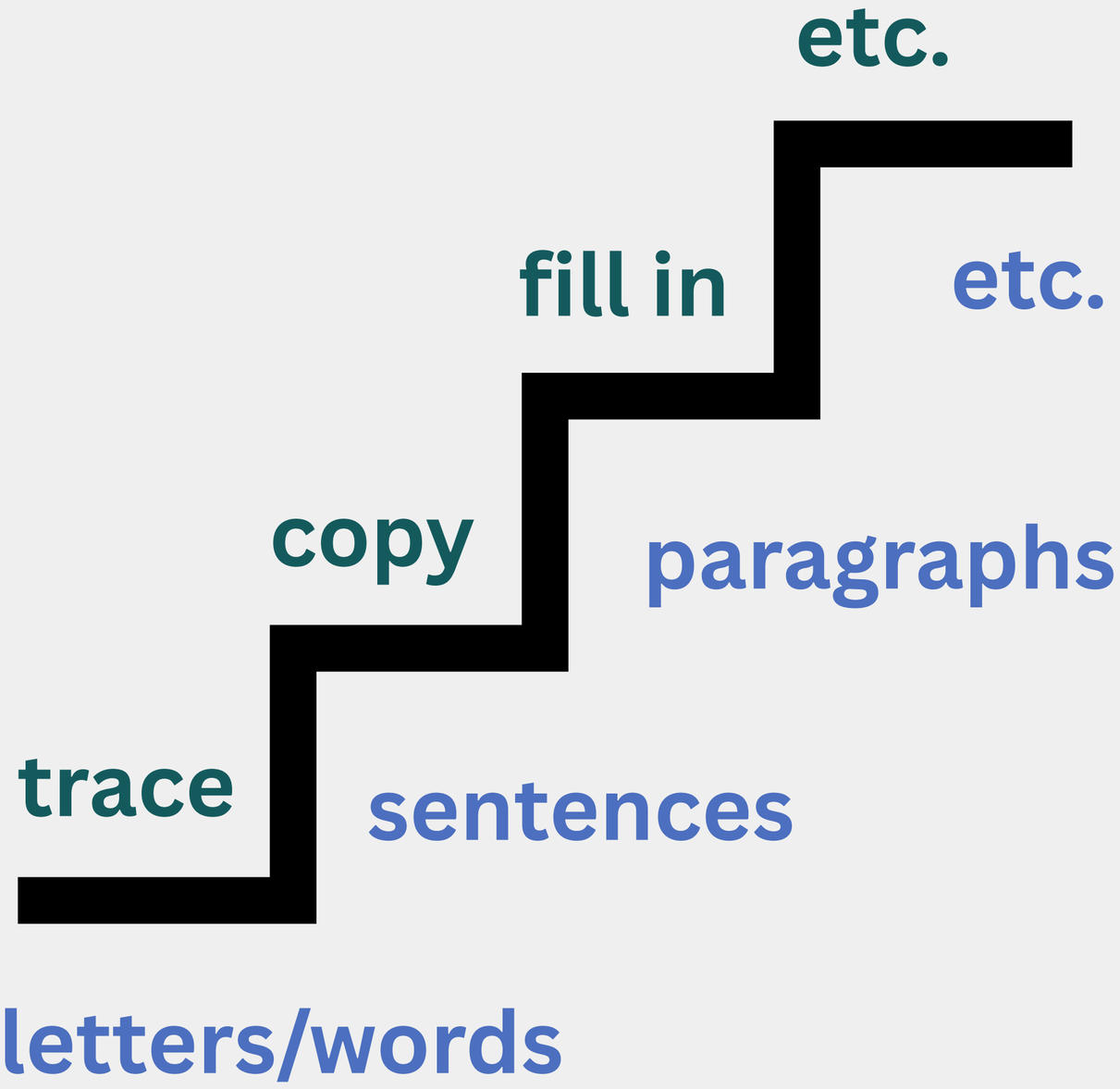
The real deal...



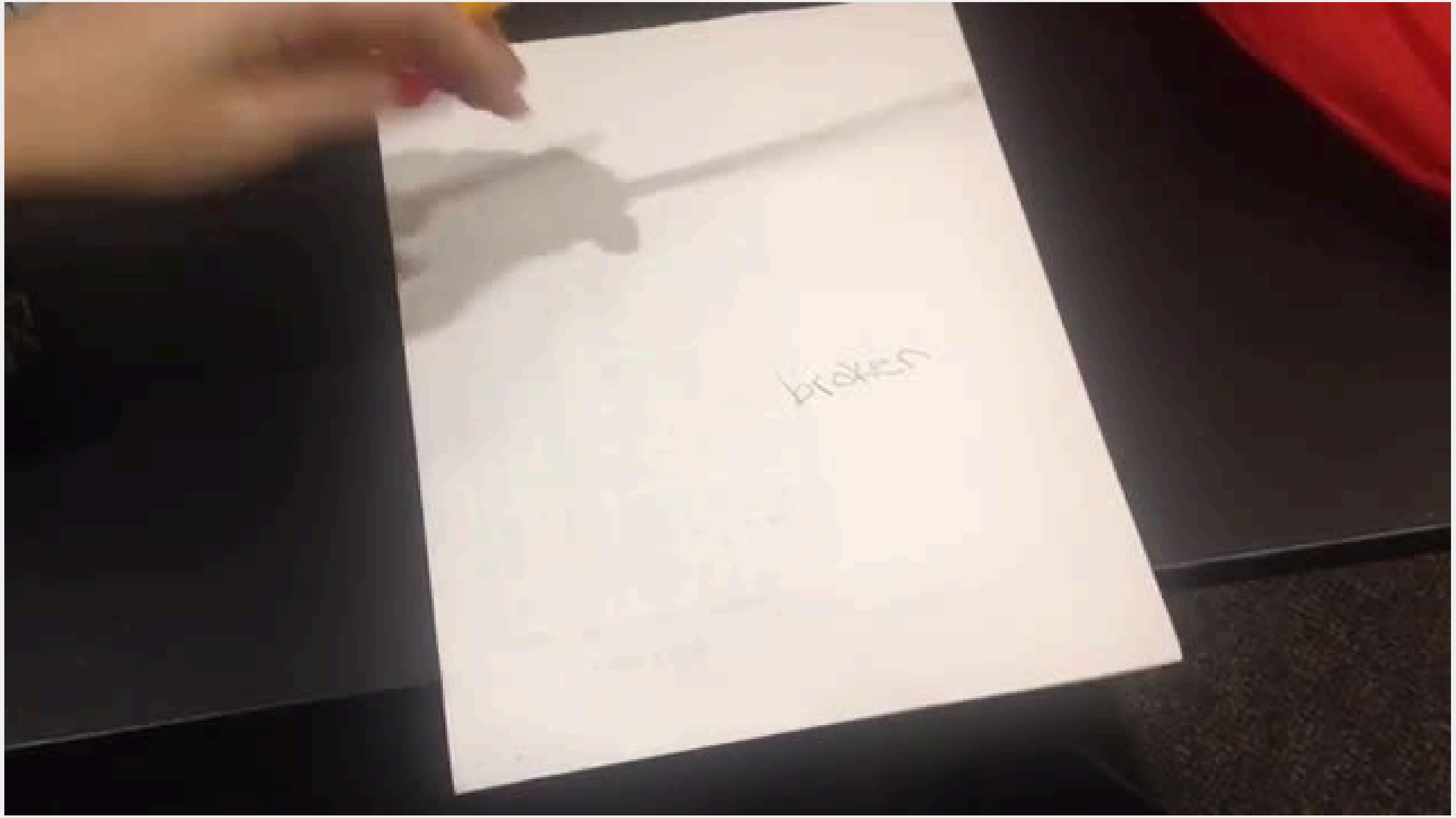
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A cautionary note...





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FEEDBACK IS CORE TO CONNECTIONS

Shall we work on...

- name
- address
- alphabet



or...

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Consider IMPACT of writing deficits



WHAT IS CHALLENGING?

WHAT DOES SOMEONE ELSE NEED TO DO FOR YOU?

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