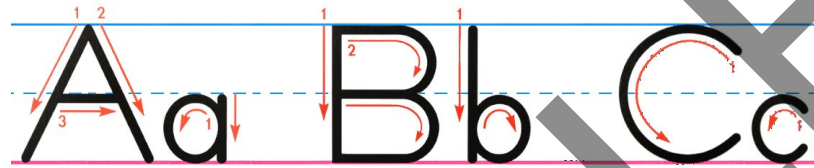


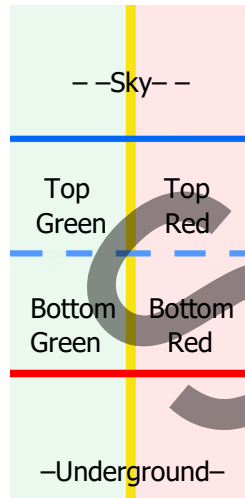
The Color Block Tour

You may have already seen this type of lined writing paper, with the dashed line in the middle.



- The red line on the bottom is the ground that the letters stand on.
- The blue line at the top is the sky, and they must not reach above it.
- The dashed line in the middle is a target, to help them stay on track.

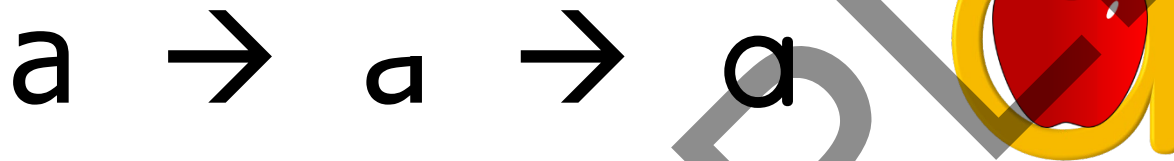
That is a very good arrangement once we know how to form the letters. However, we will add just little bit “more” to help us with that.



- The yellow line in the middle gives upright letters a place to stand.
- The sky and underground are expanded above and below the line.
- The left side of the block is green.
- The right side of the block is light red.
- The two boxes above the dashed line are the top boxes.
 - Top green box
 - Top red box
- The two boxes below the dashed line are the bottom boxes.
 - Bottom green box
 - Bottom red box

Lowercase *a*

There are many ways to describe this letter, just as there are many ways to print it. Look at the letter *a* in this page's title, and you'll see that the standard typeface is not how students are trained to write the letter. It is important for students to recognize the typeface letter *a*, even as they learn to write the simplified version (the bottom half of the font).*



There is also a lot of variation in how slanted or circular the curved part of the letter should be. The student should aim for a circle at this beginning stage. (The skill of filling a square with a circle will also serve them well in future geometry studies.)

Meanwhile, the round shape of the letter lends visual credibility to the slogan "A is for apple."

Verbal Instructions

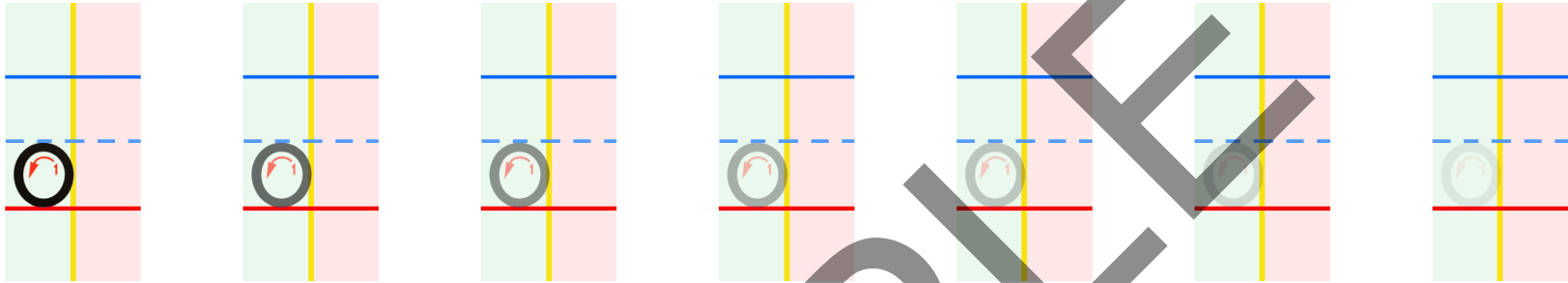
To make the circle in the bottom green box, start in the middle of the yellow line, curve up to the dashed blue line, curve around to the left side of the green box, curve down to the bottom red line, then curve back up to the middle of the yellow line where you started.

To make the line (sometimes called the stand of the *a*), you don't need to lift your pencil. Continue up from the circle, following the yellow line. Stop at the dashed line and come straight down to the ground (but don't go below the line).

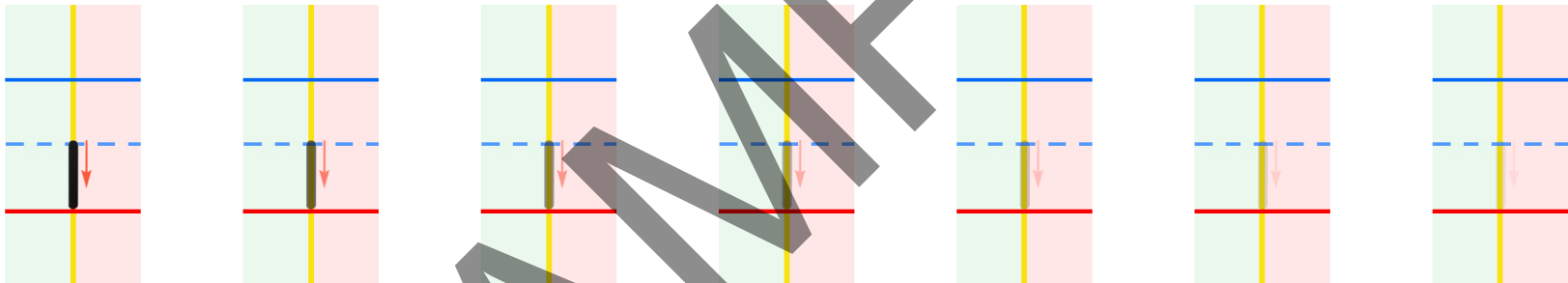
**Note: Font and typeface both refer to a set of characters used in printing.*

Learn the parts of the letter *a*.

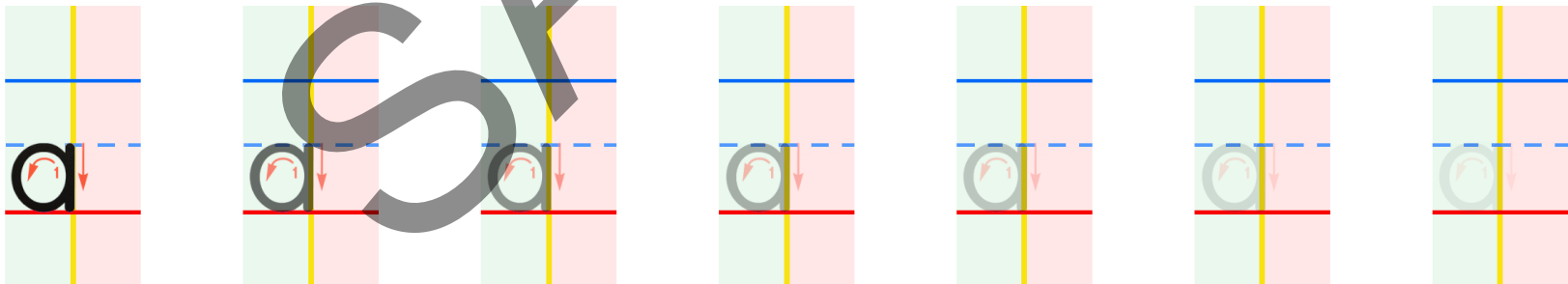
Make a circle.



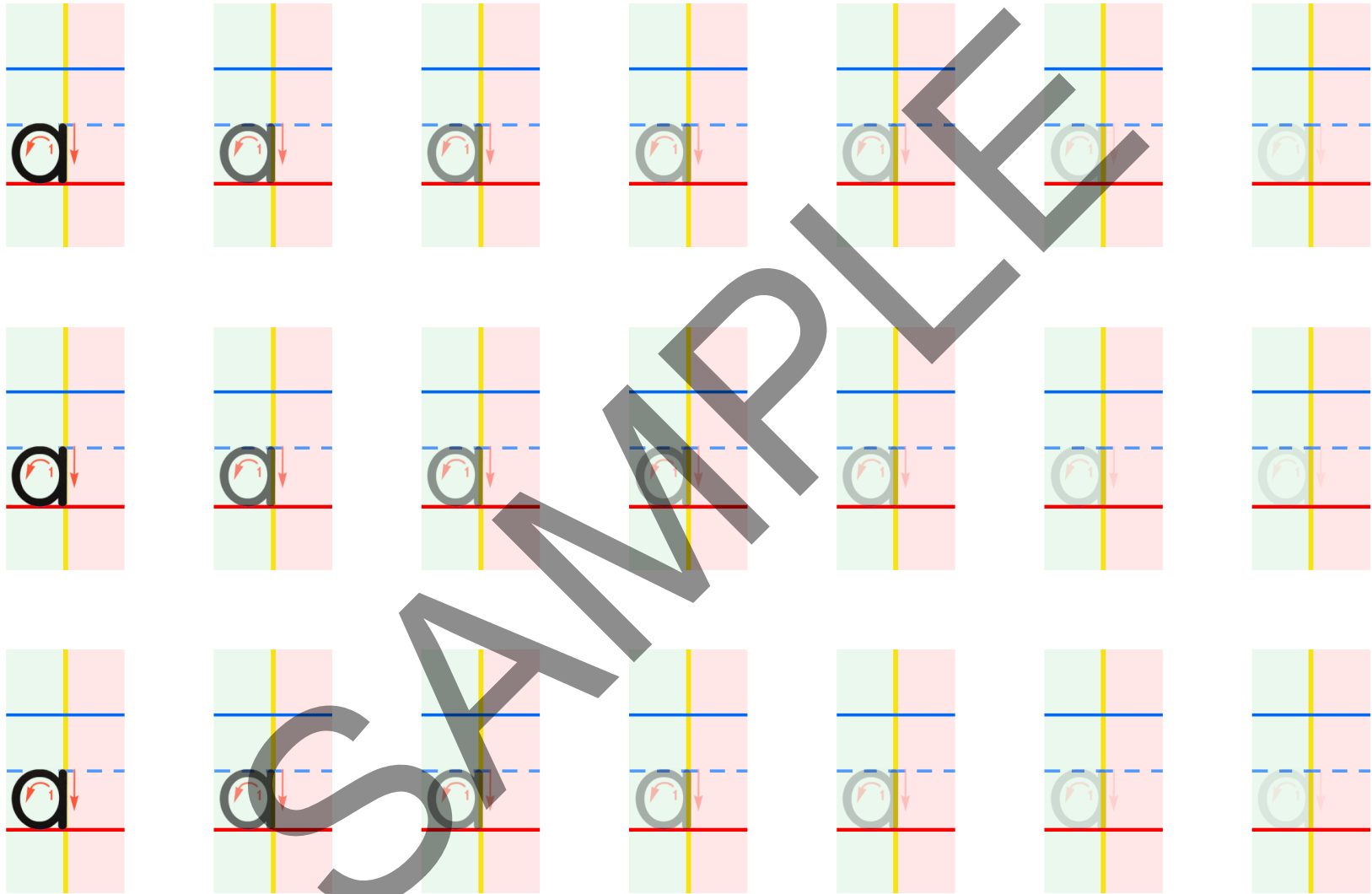
Make a stand.



Put them together. Make the circle first, then the stand. You don't need to pick up your pencil between.



Practice the lowercase *a*.



Practice every other one. Trace each color block letter, then make one of your own on regular lines in the space after each color block. The first one is done for you.

The image shows three rows of handwriting practice. Each row consists of six vertical color blocks: a green block on the left, a yellow vertical line in the center, and a red block on the right. Horizontal lines are drawn across the page: a blue top line, a dashed blue middle line, and a red bottom line. In the first row, the first 'a' is solid with a red arrow showing the counter-clockwise stroke direction and a red arrow pointing down for the vertical stroke. The second 'a' is dashed for tracing. The remaining four 'a's are solid with stroke direction arrows. The second and third rows each contain five solid 'a's with stroke direction arrows. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'SAMPLE' is overlaid across the center of the page.

Practice without color blocks.

a a a a a a a

a a a a a a a

a a a a a a a

SAMPLE



Practice smaller letters.

a a a a a a a a

a a a a a a a a

a a a a a a a a

a a a a a a a a