

There are two types of specimen handwriting, each of which needs to be obtained to maximise the possibility of obtaining a useful conclusion:

Request – Specimen taken by you specifically for the case.

Non-request – writing produced by the client on some other occasion, during the course of his/her business.

Request specimens:

1. The client should **not** be shown the questioned document when producing the specimens; rather, the specimens should be **dictated** at a speed which allows the client to produce their normal handwriting. So, for example, ask the client to: “make this cheque out to Mr Smith for ten pounds and fifty-two”; or “sign your normal signature in the box”.
2. Handwriting examiners compare **like with like**, so if the questioned handwriting is written in block capitals then the specimens also need to be in block capitals, and if the questioned handwriting is in cursive (joined up) writing then the specimens need to be in cursive writing. The client should be asked to produce specimens in their **normal** handwriting.
3. Wherever possible, specimens should be taken on separate **documents similar to those in question**. For example, if the questioned handwriting is written on a cheque then the specimens should be taken on blank/mock cheques.
4. Take **as many specimens as possible**, and at least twelve. Remove each specimen from sight as it is completed and if possible, obtain specimens at different times.
5. Try to obtain the specimens with a **well-used ballpoint pen**, as this will allow examination of the fine stroke detail within the handwriting. If the questioned handwriting is written with another types of implement, such as a pencil, then ask the client to write some further specimens using this too.

Non-request specimens:

These are writing made by the client during the course of their everyday life. The same **like with like** principles apply for these. Suitable sources of request specimen writing include:

For handwriting samples:	For signatures:
Letters, diaries, address books, employment documents, application forms	Passport, driving licence, Legal Aid forms and witness statements

For further information please contact:

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