



Reading Between the Lines

Linda Hunting meets the UK's leading handwriting analyst, Emma Bache, to learn about the art of graphology and uncover the secrets behind the handwriting of three major world figures who currently dominate much of the news: Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Zelenskyy is fighting off Putin while JD Vance is biting his leg. Trump is swooning over his beau while wearing a dress, not getting involved. Involved, 27 April 2025. © CaroonBoner

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EMMA BACHE ON TRUMP

Putting pen to paper, according to Emma Bache, means much more than a form of human communication. The fine-motor coordination between the brain and the hand captures the nuances of our personality, health and mood. In effect, handwriting is an extension of our body language and reveals a plethora of information about the writer, both long established character traits and transitory emotions and behaviour, providing invaluable clues to our inner motivations.

“Our personality is there in every stroke and mark we make,” she says. So whether it be the curliness of a ‘g’, the spaces between the letters or the pressure of the pen, much can be discovered about the scribe. Handwriting, Bache explains, can be described as “the X-ray of the mind, so no two are the same and they are as unique as a fingerprint”.

For centuries, the art of graphology, an “inexact science”, as Bache calls it, has been used by academics and historians to decode personalities. A unique profile can be gathered by analysing someone’s handwriting, outlining an individual’s style and creativity, drive and work ethic, physical energy, sociability and talents, emotional intelligence, honesty and intellectual ability.

In these uncertain times, we may increasingly feel that our futures rest in the hands of those in power who are battling to control supremacy or

the status quo during peace and war. My discussion with Bache explores the handwriting of Trump, Putin and Zelenskyy, and what it reveals about their motivations and relationships with each other.

Here are her findings.

DONALD TRUMP

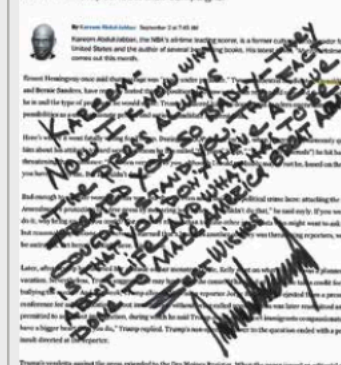
“Trump appears to choose a trademark thick black marker to write with, which in itself shows a boldness, a desire to literally make his mark but also a confidence that few

leaders would dare to risk confronting,” says Bache. What she reads from the sample has been seen several times with the American president; writing diagonally across the page. Printing his words is also common for him. She elaborates, “He certainly feels a need to come across as upbeat, enthusiastic and not one to dwell on uncertainty or to exercise undue caution.”

The self-imposed invisible baseline that Trump has chosen to rest his letters on is so rigid as to appear written with a ruler. Despite his reputation for recklessness, Bache believes that “his true character is one of utmost control and stubbornness, appearing to enjoy routine and order. There is a desire to be taken seriously and above all to be heard without interruption.”

Bache explains that the pen strokes have been made with certainty and conviction, mirroring the extremely vertical slant of the writing. She says that Trump believes at all times that he is logical and reasonable as opposed to emotional or irrational. The spaces between the words are small, indicating that he enjoys an audience and needs others to validate his convictions. “He is no loner in his professional or private life. His signature, which is a series of thick, retraced angles, visually more like a cardiogram than an autograph, serves as his window to the world and this one is uncompromising, analytical and extremely critical. The final long down stroke extending below the baseline is a reminder of his inability to be swayed by others.”

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: This is the difference between Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Watch how they conduct their campaigns.



A handwritten note from Donald Trump to journalist Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Courtesy of Mark Davis.



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С номинированием
государства
нашлось промисла.
Владимир Путин

“The indication is that the writer is restless, physically active, needs to be on the move.”

EMMA BACHE ON PUTIN

VLADIMIR PUTIN

This sample of Putin's writing is in Cyrillic, the alphabet used by many Slavic people, chiefly those with a historical allegiance to the Orthodox Church. This, states Bache, “poses no problems for a graphologist as the same hand-eye coordination and mental processes are made by the author whatever the language or script”.

Putin has an upward slant to his writing in the same vein as Trump, conveying a buoyant spirit and self-confidence.

However, Bache clarifies that “unlike his American counterpart, Putin has chosen a finer nibbed pen and although there are angles in his writing, there are also plenty of retraced arcaded formations”. This indicates that Putin is motivated not so much by raw power but by the passion of an intensely loyal love for the motherland.

His letters are very joined together and, in some instances, connected by a horizontal and high stroke. The indication is that the writer is restless, physically active, needs to be on the move, and is not afraid of change. Bache explains, “He is

intelligent but not modest and enjoys the opportunity to show off his prowess and his knowledge given any opportunity.”

His signature is quite different from Trump's; a series of joined circular strokes. Putin wants to inspire through emotional – not analytical – leadership and the strong right slant of his handwriting underlines his ability to communicate.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

According to Bache, Zelensky has a careful but heavy pressured handwriting,

am 14. Mai 2023
In the most challenging time in the modern history of Ukraine, Germany proud to be our true friend and reliable ally, which stands decisively side-by-side with the Ukrainian people in the struggle to defend freedom and democratic values.
Together we will win and bring peace back to Europe.
Thank you, Mr. Federal President, for your personal support of Ukraine and hospitality and the German people - for fantastic solidarity.
Glory to Ukraine!
Danke Deutschland!
Volodymyr Zelenskyy
14 May 2023

© Picture Alliance / DPA | Jörg Blank

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which shares many characteristics with a copybook style. Strong energy levels are present, and Bache explains that he was under more than a normal amount of stress when he wrote this note. “The plethora of loops, both in the lower and upper zone of the handwriting, indicates an excess of emotion and the strong right slant emphasises his ability to reach out to others.”

Bache even perceives that his communication style is not straight-forward, given the many loops within loops and the small ovals of ‘a’ and ‘o’ that have been knotted tightly. “He can be secretive and unwilling to show his true feelings or play his hand in public. There is much conflict between his need to garner support and alliance with his desire to keep his cards close to his chest. There is also some tangling of the lines, which suggests that he can be an over-thinker and not the best at planning or tactics.”

His signature is a much lighter pen pressure compared to the main text and the structure is looser and more relaxed. Bache believes that this reveals “a need to keep his fieriness in check and portray a subtly sensitive side along with a steelier approach”.

Despite Zelensky's more conservative style of leadership, Bache thinks that Trump and Putin are likely to have a more tactical approach in an argument compared to

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EMMA BACHE ON ZELENSKY

the Ukrainian leader. She concludes, “These three men are equally strong in their ability to win over the hearts of their respective nations but in opposition all three can be intractable and stubborn. Trump and Putin are opponents but also in an apparent and likely fleeting ‘bromance’; their relationship appears to be both conflicted and changeable.”

Despite modern technologies, handwriting will never completely go away. We are still taught to write in our formative years, and we are still the only species on the

planet that can communicate our feelings with writing and symbols. Handwriting is a unique form of identification, and without it, our ability to judge ourselves and others will die. Bache says, “as we become less able to use our innate human skills to analyse people, we become more and more vulnerable to criminal activity”. We live in a fast-paced world, therefore embracing different forms of psychology and remaining emotionally empowered will become more important in the future as we struggle to navigate the real world around us. “The way we write can tell the world a huge amount about us; sometimes more than we might want the world to know.” ■

Emma Bache has worked as a graphologist since 1989, analysing personality through handwriting for companies such as Google and Montblanc, as well as royalty and celebrities. Her TV and radio appearances include BBC Breakfast, Loose Women, The Today Programme and This Morning. She is also frequently an expert on true crime documentaries and has helped to give insights into the criminal mind. Bache has written a book, Reading Between the Lines and has been a contributor to From Woman To The World.

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