

## Handwriting experts see confidence, pride in Barack Obama's signature

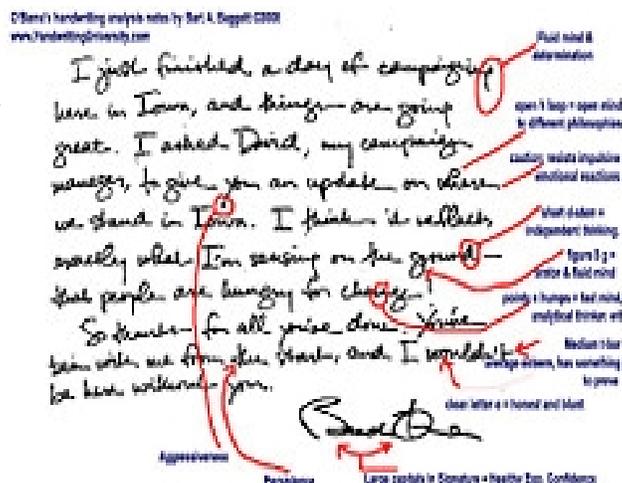
BY DAVID SALTONSTALL  
DAILY NEWS SENIOR CORRESPONDENT  
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Barack Obama may style himself after Abe Lincoln, but it's really his John Hancock that reveals his inner-most character - at least according to handwriting experts.

The new president has a bold, decisive signature that is getting a workout these days as he signs one executive order after another, giving graphologists — as handwriting experts like to be called — something new to mull.

"There's a lot going on in his signature — you've got intelligence, fluidity, fast thinking, you can actually read most of his letters," said Bart Baggett, atop handwriting expert.

It's all there in black and white, says Baggett, who in addition to Obama's signature has mined a handwritten note the future president wrote from Iowa last year for additional clues to his character.



The large capital letters in Obama's signature show a healthy ego befitting the leader of the free world, he says. The short stem on his d's reveals an independent thinker, while his figure-8 shaped g's designate one with fluid thinking, Baggett says.

Most other experts agree with those basic outlines, but there remains a raging debate over the distinctive slash that the left-handed Obama puts through the "O" of his last name.

(Curiously, many recent presidents — including Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan — have all been left-handed.)

**Arlyn Imberman, author of "Signature for Success," sees Obama's habit of bisecting the "o" in his last name as an un-conscious sign of his own divided heritage.**

**"One could say it shows his ability to transcend different worlds — the worlds of black and white, the worlds of generation X and Y," Imberman said.**

Nonsense, say others, who believe the slash is really just a bold downstroke on the "b" that follows the "o".

"I just see it as his need to get going and not spend too much time on the finer details," said Sheila Lowe, author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Handwriting Analysis." "But he also crosses his t's and dots his i's, so he does take care of details."

Mostly, Lowe sees in Obama's stylized script what others have long seen in his character — a quick thinker, unafraid to announce his arrival, always brimming with confidence.

"His writing is not totally regimented and consistent," she said of his fluid but basically legible writing. "It has got some unevenness, which shows a person who is able to make quick changes of directions. And his tall capital i's are like roman numeral 1, which shows great confidence and pride and a willingness to be accountable."