



Conway Stewart

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## Fact Sheet on CS 18ct Gold Nibs

One of the delights of owning a fountain pen is the individuality that can be expressed by choosing the colour of ink you use, and the type of nib you select. Your personality will show through not just in the words you use, but the visual picture your words paint on the paper.

### 18ct gold nibs- available as 2-tone or single-tone

- Each nib is engraved with the Conway Stewart or Flag logo, and the nib style (EF,F,M, B), and “18K”.
- All nibs have an iridium tip for smooth writing and long life.
- The 2-tone 18ct gold nibs are partially rhodium plated.
- The nib description Extra Fine, Fine, Medium, or Broad is the width of the writing line:
  - **Extra Fine** produces approximately a 0.35mm -0.4mm wide line of ink
  - **Fine** produces approximately a 0.45mm -0.6mm wide line of ink
  - **Medium** produces approximately a 0.65mm- 0.8mm wide line of ink
  - **Broad** produces approximately a 0.85mm – 1.0mm wide line of ink

**Please note:** the thickness of the line depends on the pressure exerted on the pen, and the type of paper so the above is guidance only.

As a rule, a Broad nib suits large hand writing and flowing signatures, Fine nibs suit smaller hand writing and figure work. Broad nibs can tend to fill in the spaces in “b”, “d”, “e” if your hand writing is small. Medium nib is a good compromise, and selected by the majority of fountain pen users.

All our nibs can be custom ground to your specification, and the following explains what a *stub nib* or an *italic nib* or an *oblique nib* is, and why they are used.

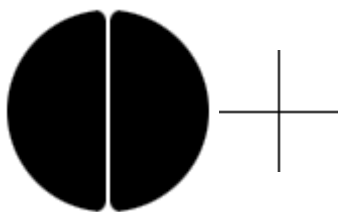


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There are three basic nib shapes or styles: *Round*, *stub*, and *italic*.

- **Round Nibs:** A *round* nib is ground and polished to have roughly a circular footprint, so that its line width is fairly uniform no matter what direction the nib is moving across the paper. Here is a magnified silhouette representing the basic shape of a round nib, together with a cross illustrating the uniform stroke width that this nib produces. **All our standard nibs are Round Nibs:**



- **Stub Nibs:** A *stub* nib is elongated sideways, to have a footprint that is somewhat elliptical. This makes it lay down a slightly broader line when moving up and down (in relation to the nib itself) and a narrower one when moving sideways (again, in relation to the nib). **The wider line is between 1.5 – 2.5 times thicker than the thinner line in our custom ground stub nib.** The eccentricity of the ellipse isn't too pronounced, and the nib is still polished to have nice rounded edges. This means that you can write with a stub just about as easily as with a standard nib. Here is a magnified silhouette representing the basic shape of a stub nib, together with a cross illustrating the slight variation in stroke width that this nib produces:





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- **Italic Nibs:** An *italic* nib is much more elongated. This makes the difference between its broad (up-and-down) strokes and its narrow strokes (sideways) much more pronounced than with a stub. **The wider line is between 2.5 – 3.5 times thicker than the thinner line in our custom ground cursive italic nib.** Here is a magnified silhouette representing the basic shape of an italic nib, together with a cross illustrating the more extreme variation in stroke width that this nib produces:

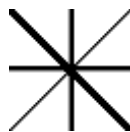


A traditional italic nib has a perceptible straight edge across the tip, and relatively less rounding to the edges than a stub nib. This results in a greater tendency to catch on corners and to skip if the nib is not held straight-on to the paper. This can make the nib feel “scratchy”. However, there is a compromise grind called cursive italic, which has more rounded edges than a traditional italic. When properly ground and finished, a **cursive italic nib** can produce stroke variation almost as strong as an italic nib while the writing feel is nearly as smooth as a stub of similar width. **All our custom ground italic nibs are cursive italics unless otherwise requested.**

## Why choose a Stub or an Italic nib?

To write text where the line width variation adds character and beauty to your writing, and resembles hand-writing of yesteryear.

When you write with an italic nib, you hold the pen with the nib generally away from your forearm (as with a stub or a round nib). When used by a right-handed person, an italic nib will generally make strokes that are of roughly equal width in both the vertical and horizontal directions; strokes from the upper right to the lower left will be thinner, and strokes from the upper left to the lower right will be thicker, as shown here:





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This is the stroke arrangement most commonly seen in **Old English** and in many italic and Chancery styles:

*This is Old English text.*  
*This is Gutenberg's Blackletter.*  
*This is a Chancery style.*

## What are calligraphy nibs?

*Calligraphy* nibs have the same shape as italic nibs (ie elongated), but might be even wider, and are finished with squarer edges. This square-edged grind and the wider footprint result in a greater tendency to catch on corners and a greater tendency to skip if the nib isn't held straight-on to the paper (i.e., when one side of the nib lifts away due to the nib's being rocked sideways). Writing too rapidly with a calligraphy nib tends to produce scratchiness and skips. However, by writing more slowly, calligraphy nibs give a very crisp and controllable line width, and with practice, some writers become very proficient with calligraphy nibs, producing beautiful text. **We can grind specialist calligraphy nibs on request.**



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## What are Oblique nibs?

An *oblique* is ground so that the writing tip contacts the paper properly when the pen is rotated in the user's hand. This suits some handwriting better.

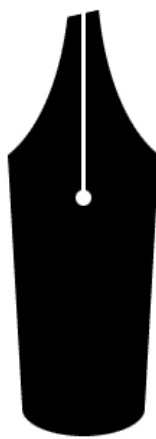


Straight

Rotated counter-clockwise



**Normal nib**



**Left oblique**  
Looks like  
a left foot



**Right oblique**  
Looks like  
a right foot



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## What is best for left-handed writers?

Left-handed writers use so many different writing styles, overwriting and underwriting, writing uphill, writing horizontally, and writing downhill, that it's not really possible to recommend any one nib. Experimentation on what works for you is the only answer! However, the traditional thinking is a Left Oblique is more suited for a right-handed person, and a Right Oblique is more suited to a left-handed person.