

Signature Comparison

Think about signatures at two levels: **quick analysis** of the general character of the signature, then **sharp focus** on individual details. No threshold of minor discrepancies should outweigh your judgment that the general character of two signatures is so similar that they must have been written by the same hand.

step 1



General Analysis

Type of Writing

Thomas Jefferson | *Thomas Jefferson*
voter record signature | *mail ballot signature*

Easy difference to notice and a sign the signature should be rejected for further review.

Speed of Writing

Gerald Ford | *Gerald Ford*
voter record signature | *mail ballot signature*

A forger will be more deliberate with forging a signature, leading to hesitation marks or a smoother looking signature.

Spacing Between Names

Franklin D Roosevelt | *Franklin ↔ D ↔ Roosevelt*
voter record signature | *mail ballot signature*

If the spacing between first and last name is not consistent, it may be a sign the signature should be rejected for further review.

Proportion + Size of Signature

Harry Truman | *Harry Truman*
voter record signature | *mail ballot signature*

A signature should have consistency in terms of the size and proportion. In the example above, the proportions are different between the two signatures.

Slant of Names

Cynthia | *Cynthia*
voter record signature | *mail ballot signature*

Another easy difference to notice. If the slant of writing is different, it is a sign the signature should be rejected for further review.

Incorrect Spelling

John Kennedy | *John Kenedy*
voter record signature | *mail ballot signature*

This is a very straightforward issue. If the name is misspelled, the signature should be rejected for further review.

step 2



Detailed Analysis

Letter Spacing

Andrew | *Andrew*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

If the spacing between letters is not consistent, it may be a sign the signature should be rejected for further review.

Other Distinguishing Features

Harold Washington | *Harold Washington*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

Differences in unique features, such as curves, loops, and cross-points, may be a sign the signature should be rejected for further review.

Size of Specific Letters

Steven | *Steven*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

If the size of a specific letter is not consistent, it may be a sign the signature should be rejected for further review.

Pen Lifts

Cleveland | *Cleveland*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

A forger will be more deliberate with forging a signature, leading to pen lifts not present in a normal signature.

Crossbars and Loops

Harold Washington | *Harold Washington*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

Beginning and ending strokes may change as a forger is more deliberate in their writing.

Acceptable Signatures



It can be difficult to know when a signature variation should or should not lead to rejecting a ballot envelope for further review. The presence of a signature variance does not mean a signature should be rejected. The following examples detail common signature variations that should be accepted.

Age / Other Factors ✓

Theodore Cuyon | *Theodore Cuyon*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

Signing with Initials ✓

Terry Jones Woods | *TJ Woods*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

Signing with a Nickname ✓

Isabella Jones | *Bella Jones*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature

Electronic Signature ✓

Michael Green | *Michael Green*
voter record signature | mail ballot signature