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## Blogs - 2019 - April

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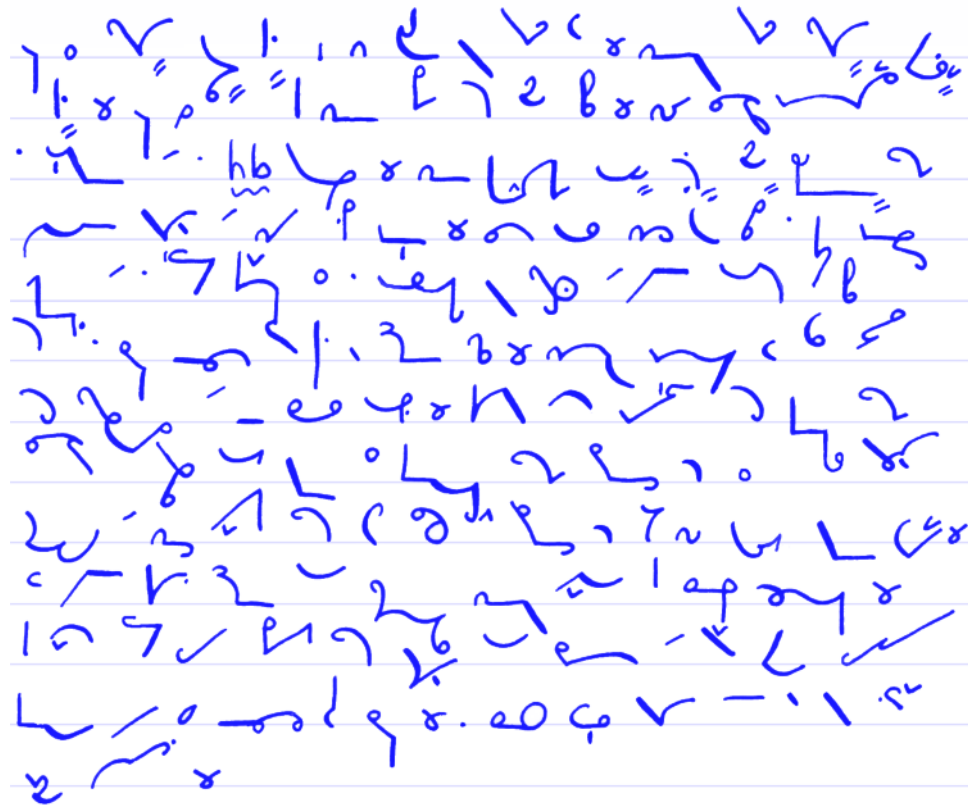
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PDF Date: 27 November 2020



**April Genius**

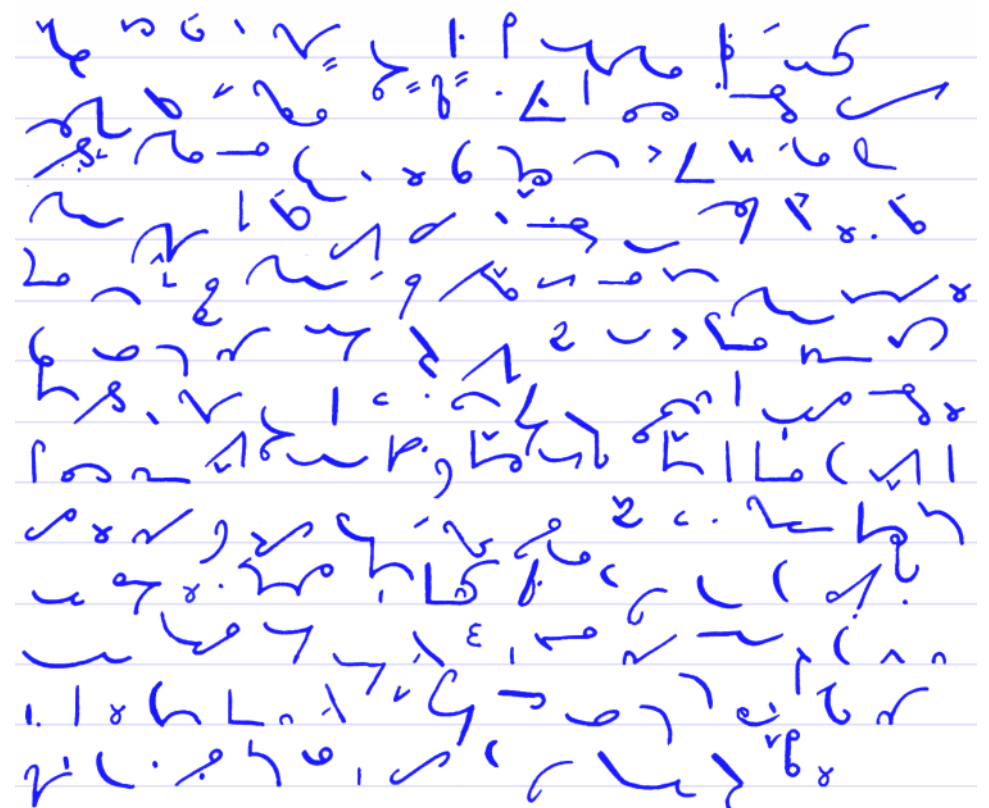
Today is April Fool's Day, but you do not have to be part of that. You can be part of April Genius Day. Today is the day you can start your shorthand studies. You have the simplest of materials, a notebook\* and an HB pencil. You can download the New Era Shorthand Instructor from the link below\*, and you are set to go. Some things you may not have, such as a teacher to explain and dictate, and a college timetable as an incentive to be persistent and regular in your studies, or a speed exam date to work towards. You may have to manage without those and use your own perseverance and good sense instead. It will be important to record your own dictations from the sample passages in the book, as taking down from the spoken word is absolutely essential,

and you cannot write from other sources of spoken word until you have finished the book theory. With regular daily work, in three months you can be writing at 60 words a minute\*. At my college we started from zero in September and by January we were taking our first exams at that speed. The success quotes below can all be applied to shorthand learning.

\* <https://archive.org/details/pitmansshorthand00pitm>

\* "notebook" Insert the vowel, so it is not misread as "handbook"

\* Omission phrase "words (a) minute"



**April Genius**

I have to say that\* I am not fond of April Fool's Day, as it involves deceit and intentional misleading, based on the person's trust, a joke at someone's expense where the recipient laughs because they have to. This reminds me of the joke about office staff laughing loudly at the boss's witty story, all except the young messenger boy. The boss asks him why he is not laughing and he replies, "Because I am leaving tomorrow". This time next year you will not only be able to read the shorthand in all the blogs, but you can also respond to April Fool's Day with a more gentle bit of humour at no-one's expense. Tell someone you can write anything at least three times in the time it takes them to write it once. You are sure to win every time, and prove the usefulness of

shorthand with a practical demonstration of your new skill; a harmless but educational\* jest that will have them searching the internet for ways in which to catch up with you, but of course you are going to tell them how you did it. They may take you up on the challenge again next year, or sooner, and then you will truly\* have a race on your hands, but one that will benefit both sides.

\* Omission phrase "I have (to) s(ay) that"

\* "educational" The diphthong is normally written outside the Shun Hook, but in this outline it can only be written inside

\* "truly, utterly" Always insert the vowel as they are similar in outline and meaning

Handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, consisting of several lines of cursive shorthand symbols.

**April Genius**

For true\* success ask yourself these four questions\*: Why? Why not? Why not me? Why not now? James Allen

Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement. W. Clement Stone

The very first\* step towards success in any occupation is to become interested in it. William Osler

There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure. Colin Powell

Great success doesn't come in short periods of time. J. B. Pritzker

That some achieve great success, is proof to all that others can achieve it as well. Abraham Lincoln

\* "true, utter" Always insert the vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

\* "questions" Optional contraction

\* Omission phrase "very (fir)st"

Handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper, consisting of several lines of cursive shorthand symbols.

**April Genius**

Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do. Pele

Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure. Confucius

Treat failure as a lesson on how not to approach achieving a goal, and then use that learning to improve your chances of success when you try again. Failure is only

the end if you decide to stop. Richard Branson

Challenge is the pathway to engagement and progress in our lives. But not all challenges are created equal. Some challenges make us feel alive, engaged, connected, and fulfilled. Others simply overwhelm us. Knowing the difference as you set bigger and bolder challenges for yourself is critical to your sanity, success and satisfaction. Brendon Burchard

The toughest thing about success is that you've\* got to keep on being a success.  
 Irving Berlin  
 My success has been something I've worked a long time at and it's been a gradual process. I compare it to the idea of someone losing a lot of weight over a period of a few years. You don't really notice the weight loss overall but if you compare photos from then and now there's a big difference. Ray William Johnson  
 Success requires first expending ten units of effort to produce one unit of results. Your momentum will then produce ten units of results with each unit of effort. Charles J. Givens

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The moment we believe that success is determined by an ingrained level of ability as opposed to resilience and hard work, we will be brittle\* in the face of adversity\*. Joshua Waitzkin

\* "you've" Apostrophied phrases are written phonetically, with the vowels always written in, and not using short forms

\* "brittle" Insert the vowel, so it is not misread as "brutal"

\* "adversity" Compare "diversity" which uses an F/V hook and Ray, to differentiate

Excuses destroy success every time. Jon Taffer  
 I attribute my success to this - I never gave or took any excuse. Florence Nightingale  
 Success unshared is failure. John Paul DeJoria  
 The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will. Vince Lombardi  
 Just remember, you can't climb the ladder of success with your hands in your pockets. Arnold Schwarzenegger  
 People think that at the top there isn't much room. They tend to think of it as an Everest. My message is that there is tons of room at the top. Margaret Thatcher (910 words)

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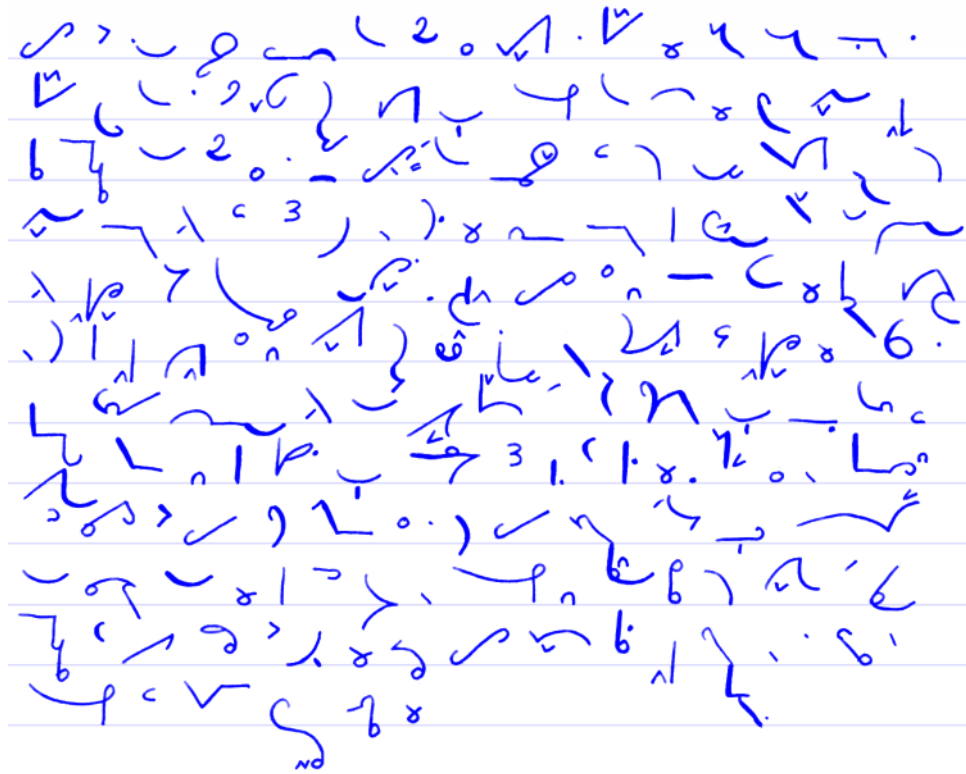
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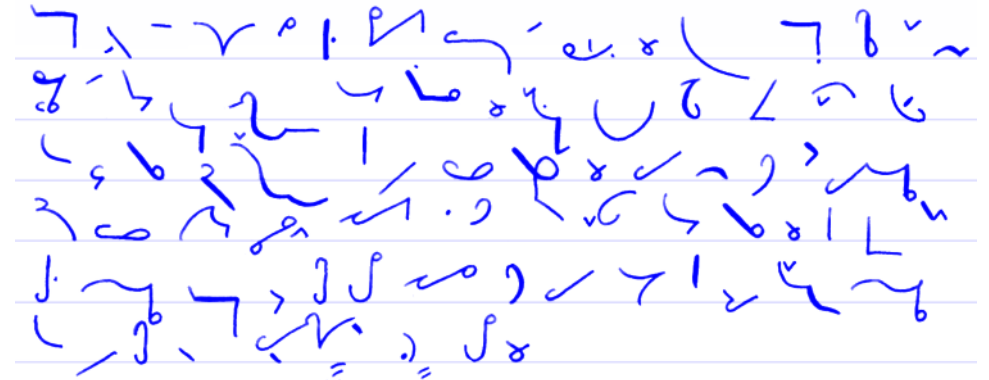
**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

One of the common uses claimed for shorthand is to write a diary. I have never kept a diary, even for a short while, so that would hold no interest for me. However, writing out the day's activities in shorthand is a good one-off exercise, with your new ability to have your writing keep up with what you wish to say. You can keep it flowing by not looking up outlines until afterwards, underlining\* the doubtful\* ones as you go along. It would be helpful to say it out loud as you write, so that the sounds continue to be associated with the outlines. This is a dictation that you are making up in real time, and although there will be no key for you when reading back, you do at least

know exactly what you did that day. The idea is to document what happened all the way there and back, as an easy way of producing off-the-cuff material in simple language. It cannot fail to interest you, as it is your life and chosen activities that are the stars of the show. Here is one of my days out, predictably to a place of interest with park, flowers and trees.

\* "underlining" Note that this outline is disjoined

\* "doubtful" Compare "dutiful" which has full D and T strokes, to differentiate



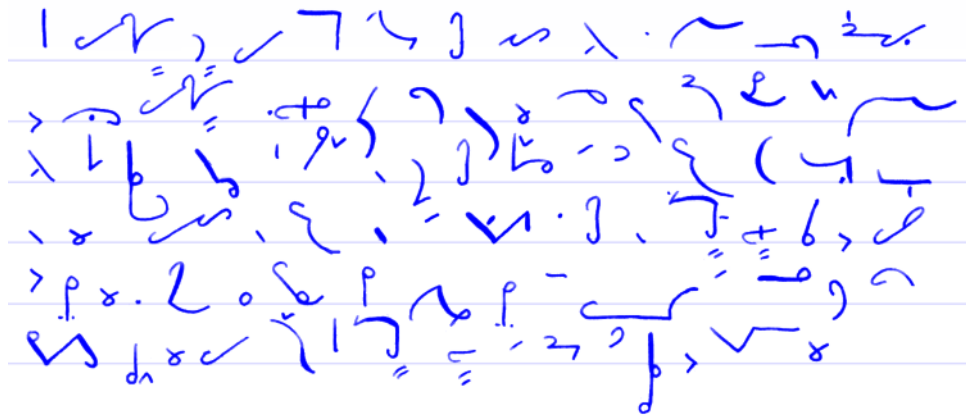
**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

I got up quite early, as the day started clear and sunny\*. After getting dressed, I made the sandwiches and packed the food and drink in the bags\*. I fed the fish and then checked my phone for when the bus would be arriving at our nearest bus stop\*. We made sure all the windows were closed, left the house and waited a short while for the bus. It took about ten minutes to get to the train station, and once there we only had to wait five minutes for our train to Waterloo East Station.

\* "sunny, sun, snowy, snow" Insert vowels, to differentiate

\* "bags" Insert the vowel in this, and in "box", so that are not misread for each other

\* "bus stop" Ses Circle to signify both S sounds, although they are barely sounded in speech

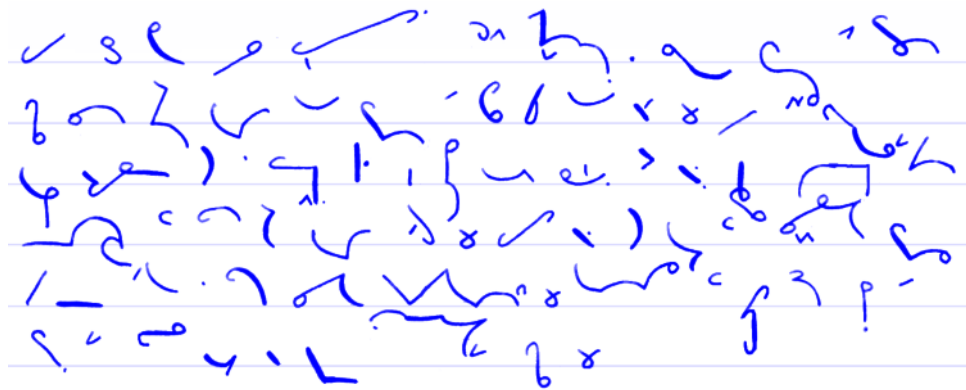


**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

At Waterloo East we got off the train and went up a long covered walkway to the main Waterloo concourse, which was very busy. Most people were standing about looking up at the destination boards on high, to see the train times and what platform\* they needed to go to. We went to Platform\* 2 and boarded a train to

Hampton Court which is to the west of the city. The journey is pleasant as it leaves the city quite quickly and goes through more suburban towns. We arrived at Hampton Court and walked the short distance to the park.

\* "platform" Optional contraction

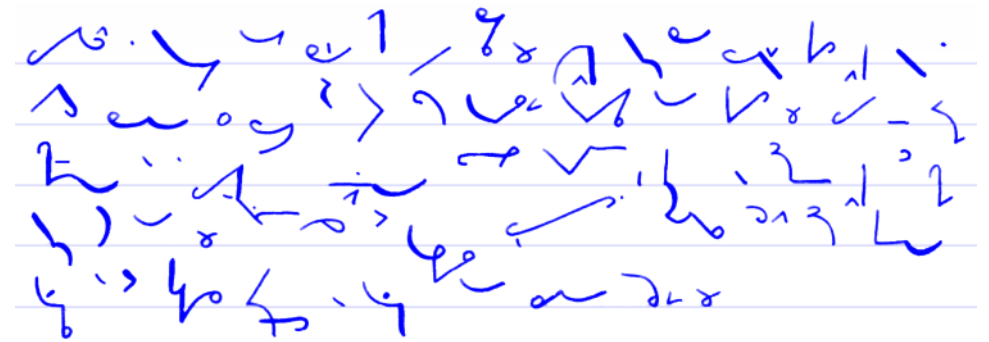


**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

We spent several hours wandering around and admiring the spring flowers and the blossom trees, some of which were\* fully in bloom and others just in bud. Our previous visit two weeks ago\* was a cloudy day but as it was now sunny, all the bedding displays looked much more\* colourful, with more of them fully open. One bed was filled

with hyacinth blooms, which give off a very heavy perfume. Families with children were sitting and playing on the grass under the two big magnolia trees.

\* Omission phrases "which (w)ere" "two wee(k)s ago" "much m(ore)"



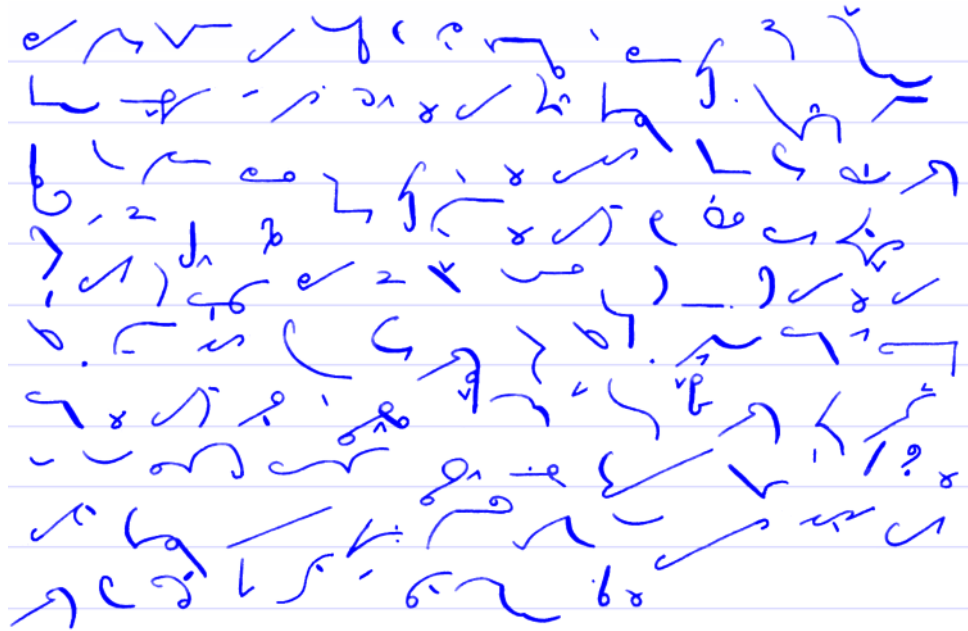
**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

We found a bench in the sun and had our sandwiches. Loud birdsong nearby turned out to be a robin, singing his ownership of that patch from various perches in turn. We could hear the drumming of a woodpecker echoing across the park but it was not possible to work out what tree the bird was in. Most of the visitors wandering around were taking photos\* of all the daffodils, which were beginning\* to fade in certain areas.

\* "photos" Helpful to insert a vowel in this, and in "videos", as they are similar in outline and meaning

\* "beginning" Stroke G-n to represent this word. It can be either intersected or written underneath, as convenient

Blank lined paper for notes.



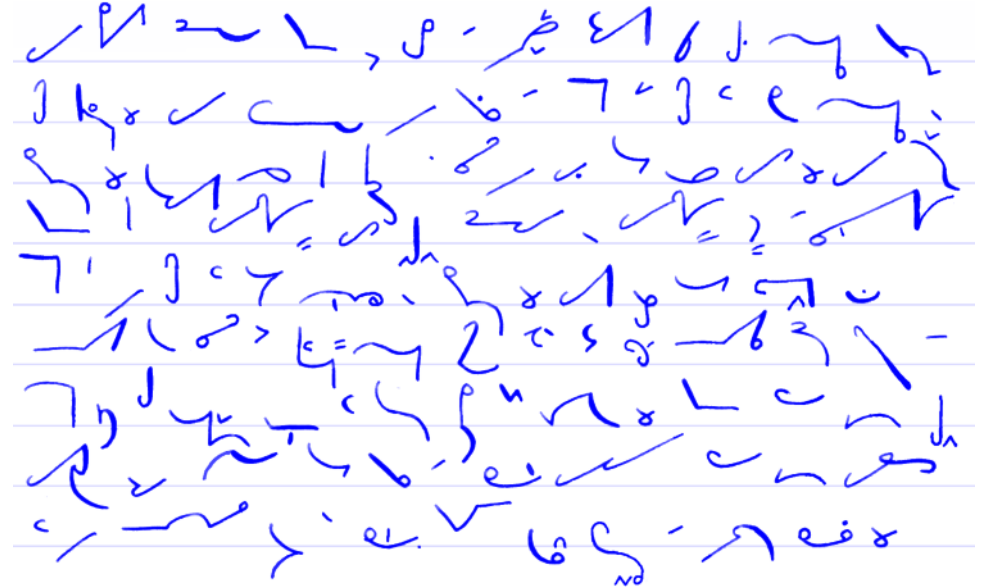
**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

As we left the park we noticed that lots\* of groups of school children were arriving, talking excitedly and running around. We assumed it must be\* a popular regular destination for local schools to take the children to. We went back over the stone river bridge and walked down towards the lock. We saw several swans near the shoreline, who watched us closely as we walked by, in case food was coming their way. We passed the lock and went further along the riverside path, past the rowing club and the cricket club. We saw rows of houseboats moored on the far side of the

river, which were\* really not any smaller than normal houses, except they were built on large rafts. We thought they must be\* rather chilly locations to live in winter and wondered whether the river ever froze at the shallow and slow-moving edges.

\* "lots" Insert the vowel in this, and in "masses", as they are similar in outline and meaning

\* Omission phrases "it mus(t) be" "which (w)ere" "they mus(t) be"



**Diary Day 1 - Hampton Court**

We started walking back to the station and realised that we had just ten minutes before the train departed. We quickened our pace and got on the train with several minutes to spare. If we had missed it, it would have been\* a half hour wait for the next one. We arrived back at Waterloo, went down the walkway to Waterloo East and hurriedly got on our train with only moments to spare. We had to stand in the crowded end carriage for half of the 20-minute journey, and thought that the front carriages were probably quite empty, but

there had been no time to go that far, as it was about to leave. Back in our home town, we did not have to wait long for the bus and soon we were in our home once again\*, with our cameras full of sunny\* park views, flowers and river scenes. (860 words)

\* Omission phrase "it would (have) been" "wu(n)s again"

\* "sunny, sun, snowy, snow" Insert vowels, to differentiate



**River Race**

Each year I like to watch the boat race, from the comfort of my armchair, between the Oxford and Cambridge men's and women's teams, as they row up the river Thames from Putney to Mortlake by Chiswick\* Bridge. I am not interested in the result one way\* or the other\*, although I do mentally egg on the losing team not to finish too far\* behind, so that they lose by only a few feet, and not the embarrassment of several boat lengths. My main interest though is to see how they conduct themselves before, during and

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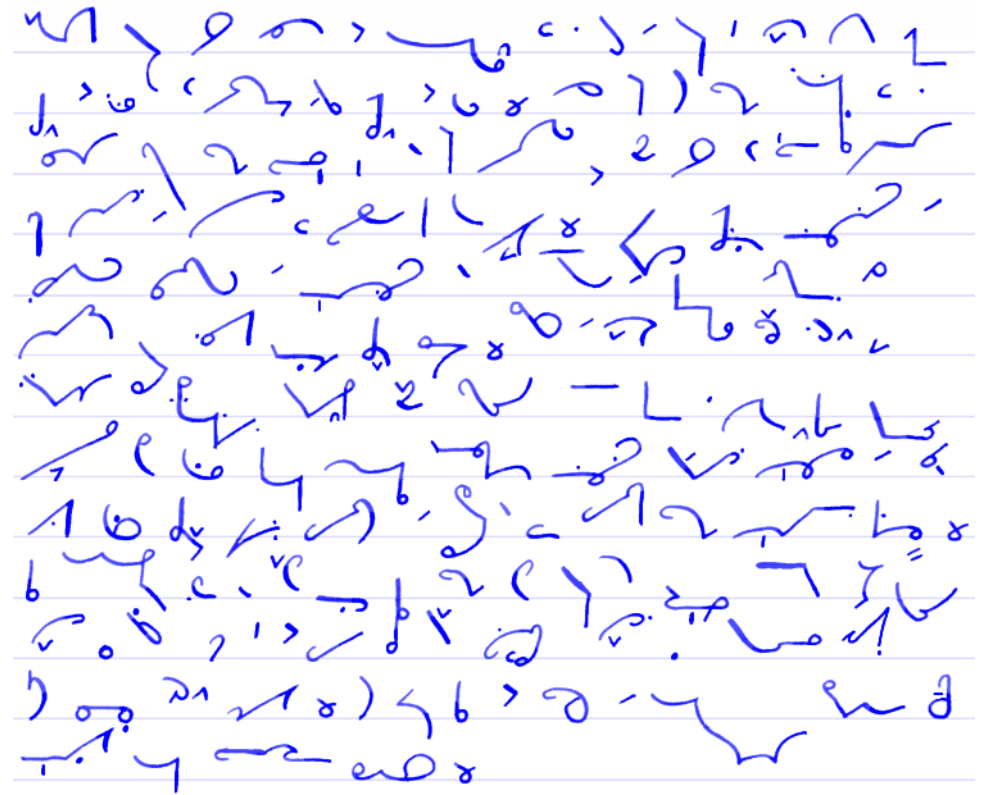
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after the race, and in the pre- and post-race interviews. I like to get pointers on the mentality and attitude needed to approach the tough job that they have taken upon themselves, as that is relevant to the difficulties and challenges of daily life.

- \* "Chiswick" Pronounced "chizik"
- \* Omission phrases "wu(n) way" "or the oth(er)
- \* "too far" On its own "far" has full strokes



**River Race**

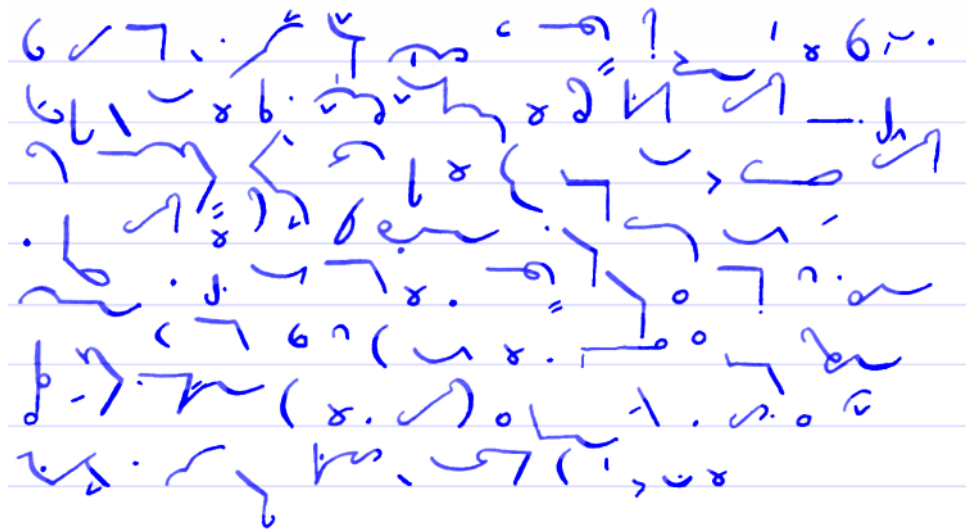
I followed both races and some of the interviews with a pen and pad on my lap, and took down all the comments that reflect the ups and downs of the event. Most of it was from the commentators with a small proportion from the crews, but all of it relevant to the shorthand races that occur regularly during learning, and later on when using it for real. Jubilation and dismay, exhilaration and consternation, celebration and commiseration, all accompany dictations and practising, as the learner pushes ahead to gain the desired skill. Surprises and mild frights abound but the apparently sedentary pursuit of shorthand proficiency can take a leaf out of the book of the rowers, as they face 20 minutes of extreme exertion, burning

muscles and hot red\* faces despite the chilly weather and splashes of cold water from the murky Thames. It is non-stop effort to either gain distance from the other boat, or to close the gap, until the finish line is passed, cheered on all the way by well-wishers\* lining the banks and watching on their screens around the world. So here it is, all the phrases and informal sporting utterances corralled into grammatical sentences.

- \* "red" Insert the vowel, as "ruddy" has the same outline and meaning
- \* "well-wishers" Helpful to insert the vowel, as "ill-wishers" is similar







**River Race**

Then we get to a really vital moment, with Oxford trying to cling on. This is not a fun condition to be in. It is an umpire's nightmare. There is dirty water coming down from Cambridge, choppy and more difficult. They have to get into the quickest water, the deepest water. They are just snaking\* a bit clear now, and making a dent in the gap. The Oxford boat is getting beyond a certain distance, to bridge that gap, that is beyond them now. The cox has

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**River Race**

They are digging towards the finish, looking tired and forlorn. Although there are cheers for the opposition, there is an empty and hollow feeling. Win or lose, that is what this race is about, as there is nothing to celebrate in second position. You want to have a win against your name. We hoped they would hold in there for a bit longer. It was not a race of great incident\*. They did have a nice clean start but then Cambridge just got into this rhythm. It is an amazing\* win for Cambridge and there is no second place\* in this event. It seems they all win when they start from the Surrey station. I wonder how that win will play out. Losing is

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to keep persuading and cajoling them. The weather is picking up, the wind is light and variable, a little bit of tail wind to encourage them on to the end.

\* "vital" See [www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm](http://www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm) "fatal/futile/vital"

\* "snaking" Insert the vowel, so it is not misread as "sinking"

very very hard to take. They were beaten\* soundly and they will be picking over the bones of the race.

\* "incident" Insert the first vowel, as "accident" is similar

\* "amazing" Always insert the vowel to distinguish from "amusing"

\* Omission phrase "seco(n)d place"

\* "beaten" Insert the vowel, as "bitten" could also make sense



**River Race**

We rowed the best race we could have\* done. The club keeps improving and the crew put in a terrific performance, although it is always hard to lose back to back races. There was lots of planning and different scenarios, and 99 percent of it nobody sees. There were\* late changes and it is difficult to put a positive spin on that. They were very diligent, putting all the little bits in place. This chap is absolutely unrelenting as an athlete. There are no big egos in the way and age is irrelevant. That is definitely a name to look out for and no-one is calmer than him, a very cool customer.

This was the start of my career when I started to win, and you end up performing at such a high level. The training is pretty savage, pretty daunting. Sports opens the door for kids who never ever thought it was possible to achieve that.

\* "could have" Keep the "could" outline unphrased from "we" so that it remains in its correct position, and therefore not misread as "we can have"

\* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

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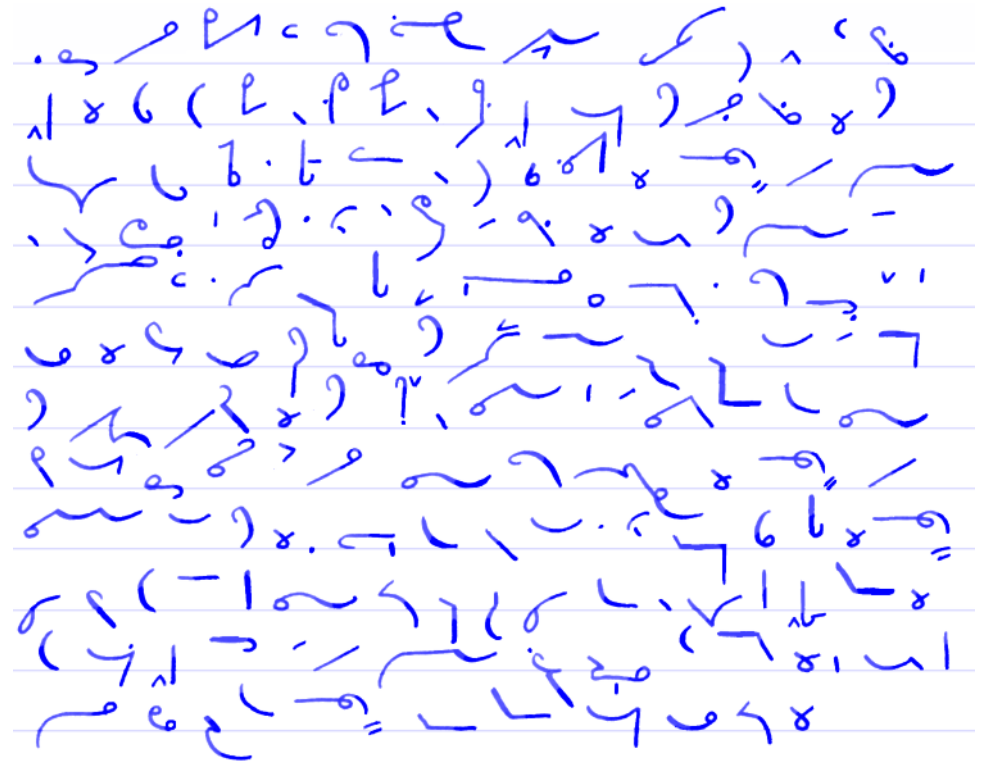
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**River Race**

The second race started with very aggressive rowing, we will see how that plays out. Then they start to settle and start to stretch out into their race pace. They are fairly even and it is a tough call to see who is ahead. Oxford are looking to put the squeeze on and there is a lot of splash and spray. Now they are looking quite relaxed with a little bit of advantage, but the cox is keeping a very keen eye on things. Over the next thirty seconds they are really going to have to dig in and get their rhythm re-established. They are trying\* to hang on and hope for something special in the second half of the race,

something very impressive. Oxford are hanging in there. The crew have put in a lot to get this advantage. Oxford still believe they can do something here today but they still have to pull it out of the bag. They inch out again and are looking comfortable, to close that gap. But now it looks as if it is too far for Oxford to come back into things here.

\* "trying" As Dot Ing includes the vowel sound, the diphthong remains and does not become a triphone

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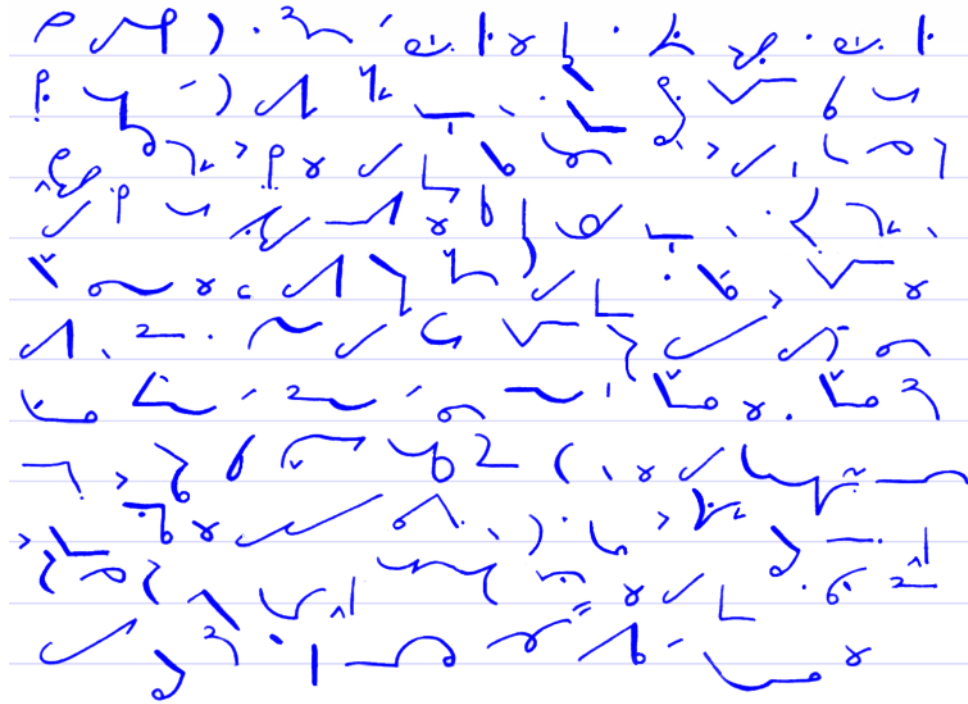
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**Simple 2**

Last Wednesday was a warm and sunny\* day. It would be a shame to waste a sunny\* day staying\* indoors and so we had the idea to go to a big spacious park which is in the south west area of the city. We took the bus for some of the way but for most of it we sat in the railway carriage. At first\* it was necessary to go to a shopping area to buy something. When we had bought the item we took a bus to the park. We had to walk a long way along the park path where we saw some folks jogging and walking, and some going on bikes. The bikes were keeping to the paths just like the notices ask them to. We eventually came to the big gates. We were happy to

see a few of the azalea bushes coming out, although most of them should be fully out in the month of May. We took a slow walk where the bushes were all different colours, mostly\* reds and pinks.

\* "sunny" Generally helpful to insert the vowels in "sun/snow, sunny/snowy"

\* "staying" No diphone, as the I sound is included in the Dot Ing

\* Omission phase "at (fir)st"

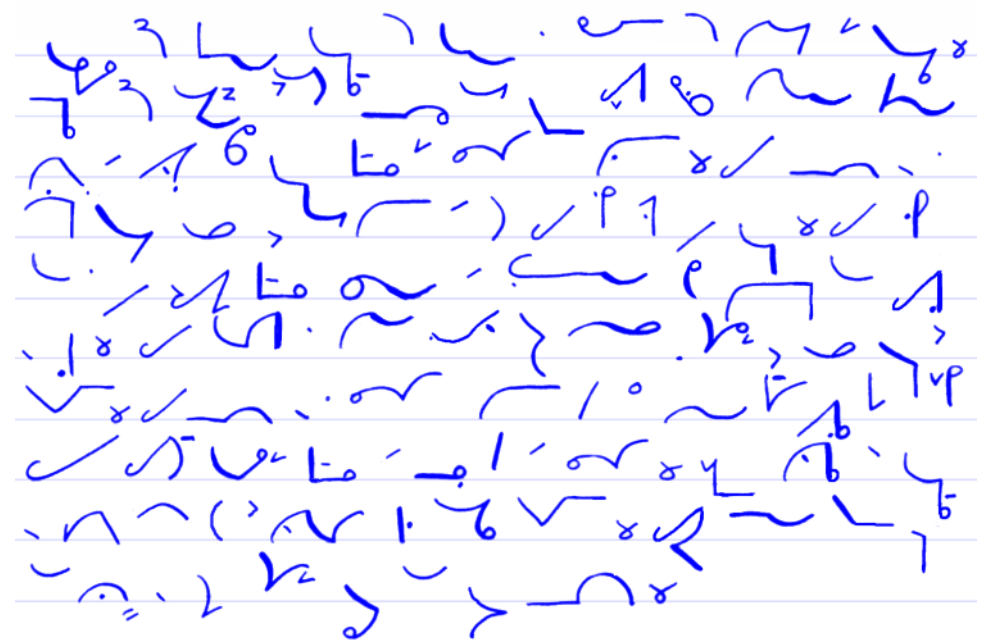
\* "mostly" Omits the lightly sounded T

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**Simple 2**

Visitors were taking photos\* or having a snack or lunch on the benches. Kids were enjoying noisy games in the big wide spaces, laughing, jumping, leaping and rolling, as well as feeding the ducks\* on the small lake. We came to an empty bench next to the lake and so we sat and ate our food. We stayed for an hour to watch the ducks swimming and quacking, as they looked for weed to eat. We followed a long narrow path amongst the azaleas to the next bit of the park. We came to a small

lake which has many tall reeds at the side, where we saw various ducks and geese, large and small. I took loads of photos\* to help me think of the lovely day in this park. We shall be going back to it in May to see the azalea bushes in full colour.

\* "photos" Helpful to insert a vowel, as this could look similar to "videos"

\* "ducks, geese" Insert the vowel, so they are not misread as "dogs, cows"

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