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## Blogs - 2019 - August

**2** Motivational Quotes

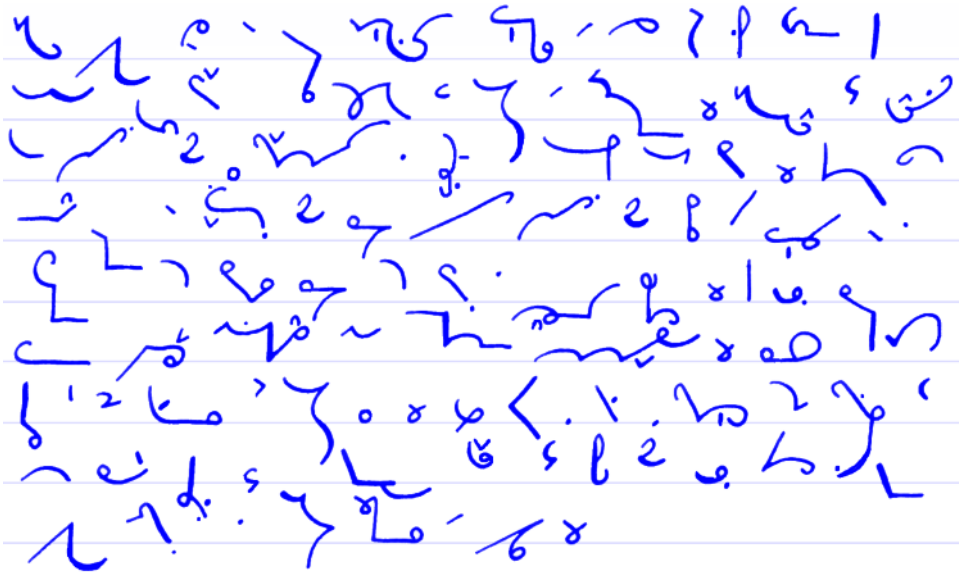
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PDF Date: 29 September 2019



**Motivational Quotes**

I have been reading lots\* of pages of motivational quotations, and most of them state that you can do anything if you apply yourself with enthusiasm and hard work. I have found that the foundation for learning shorthand is primarily a sustained interest in the subject. It may be more accurate to talk of "acquiring" shorthand skill rather than "learning" shorthand, as it is much closer to an athletic or sports skill, or playing a musical instrument. It needs speed, quick reactions and endurance, and not academic memorising. Success also

depends on what the focus of the enthusiasm is. If it is the job, the pay, the promotion or the prestige, that may soon dissipate when the beginner finds that the study of shorthand needs much more than\* book reading and remembering a handful of strokes and rules.

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

\* Omission phrase "much m(ore tha)n"

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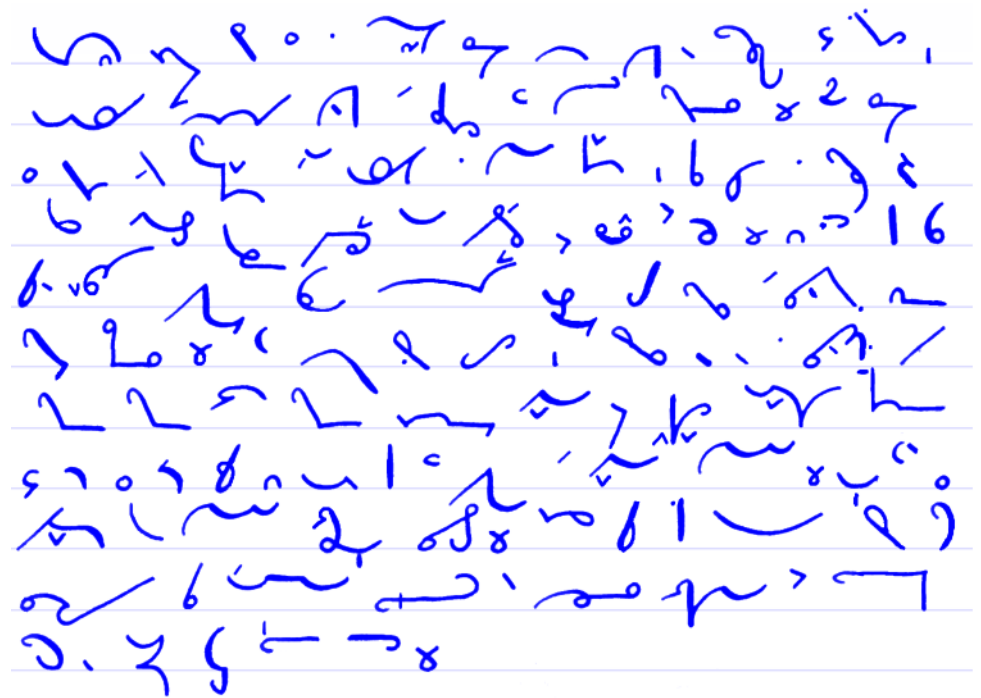
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**Motivational Quotes**

Failure to approach the subject as a manual skill may lead to frustration with the apparent, but unnecessary, memory load and disappointment\* with lack of progress. Shorthand skill is built up over time, not necessarily\* a long time, but it is still a process of building fast and instant physical reactions in response to the sounds of the words. You can't do this just silently reading the lesson material, understanding the general principles and hoping you can remember the strokes. That may be step one, but steps two to a hundred are practice, practice and more practice, to make the writing of each outline entirely automatic when the word is heard, just as you now do with reading and writing longhand. No thought is required for

longhand and there is no hesitation. I must just add another step there somewhere, which is ongoing correction of mistakes\* and drilling of the correct version, to ensure they do not occur again.

\* "disappointment" Contraction therefore on the line

\* "necessarily" Special outline with a downward L, for a faster outline. Normally after Ray it is upwards if a vowel follows the L (e.g. real, really) but this word it is not part of a pair that need distinguishing from each other.

\* "mistakes" Omits the T

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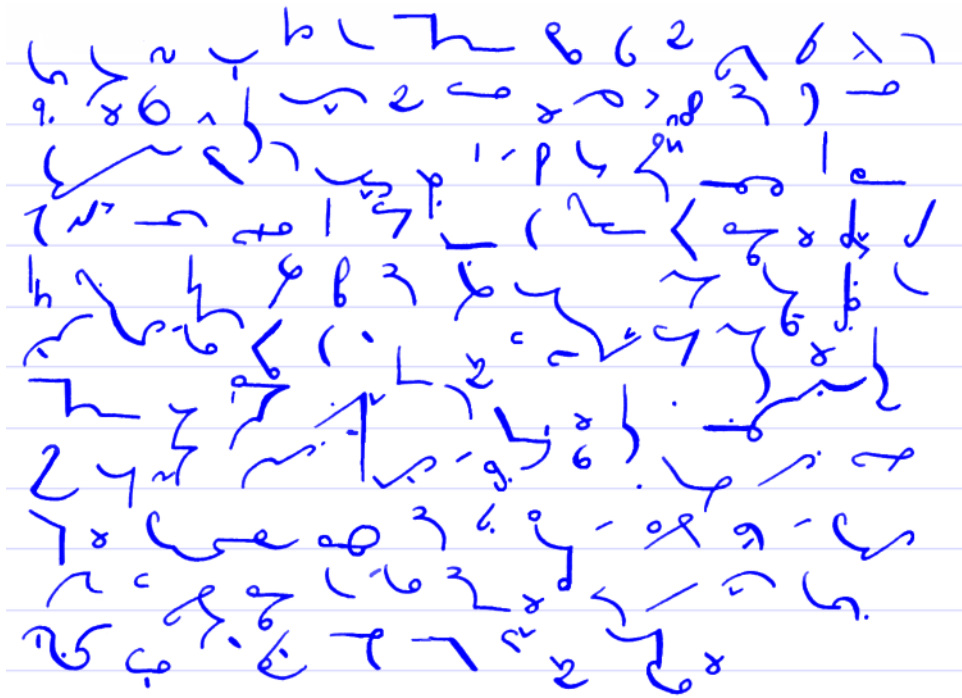
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**Motivational Quotes**

If you feel you have no talent for academic subjects, then shorthand will be just "up your street". This is how it was in my shorthand class. Most of the students were there because they were not able or inclined to stay on and study for the higher exams at school, and they joined the commercial course at college to give them practical job skills. Despite the general attitude prevalent at the time that such studies were vastly inferior and only for those destined for lowly office jobs, they all took to shorthand with great energy and enthusiasm. It was not academic, intellectual, scholarly, erudite or bookish. It was an exhilarating journey into learning to

run and sprint, that is, the pencil running across the pad. Ever-increasing successes were achieved, self-confidence\* and self-respect soared, and everyone left with useful skills for office work. Here are my favourite\* motivational quotes, all chosen because they can be applied to shorthand endeavours.

\* "self-confidence" Outlines starting "self" are all in second position, on the line, to accord with the vowel in "self"

\* "favourite" Distinguishing outline, compare "favoured" with a left VR stroke

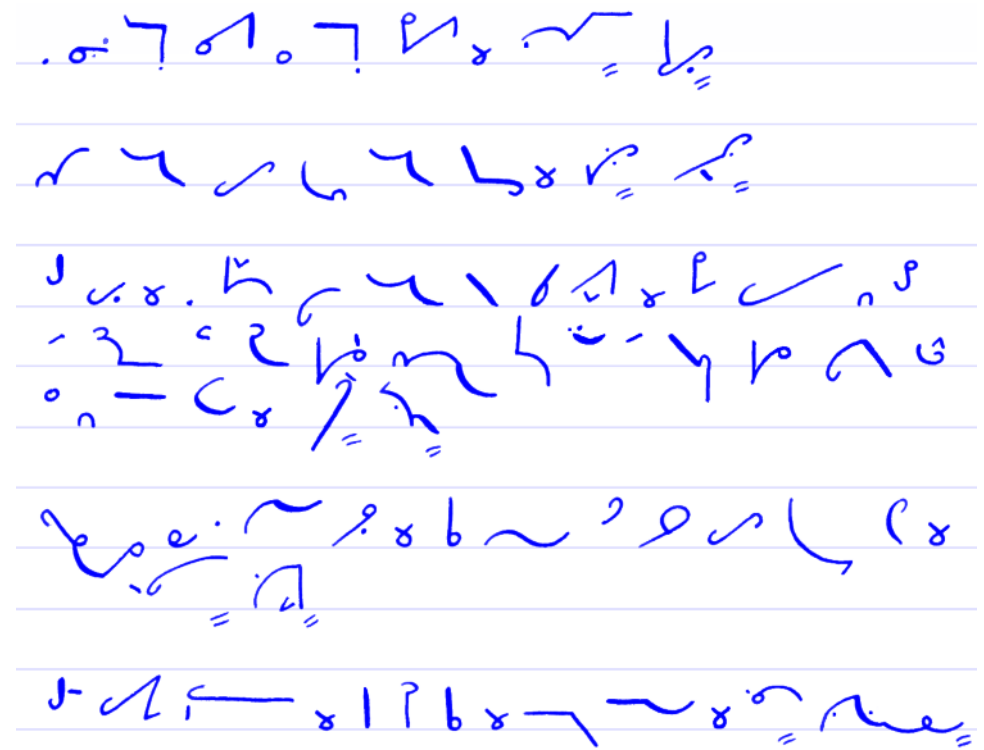
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**Motivational Quotes**

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. Mark Twain

You will never win if you never begin. Helen Rowland

Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right.' Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along. George Herbert

Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after the other. Walter Elliot\*

Don't watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going. Sam Levenson

\* "Elliot" Personal names often have full strokes to enable clearer insertion of vowel signs

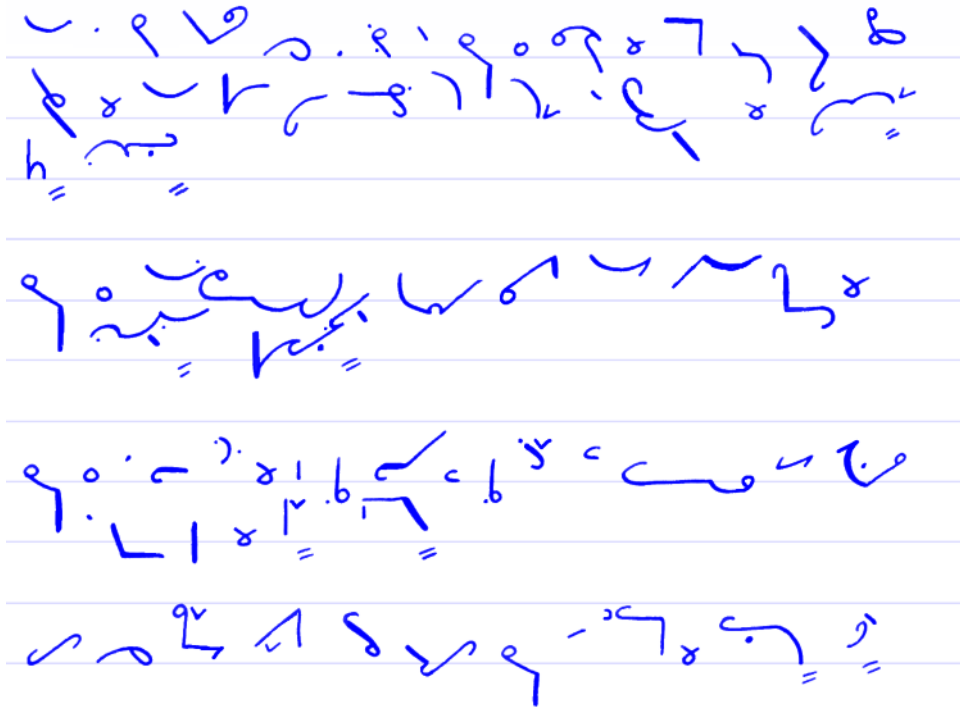
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**Motivational Quotes**

In a special operations mission, the concept of speed is simple. Get to your objective as fast as possible. Any delay will expand\* your area of vulnerability. William H. McRave

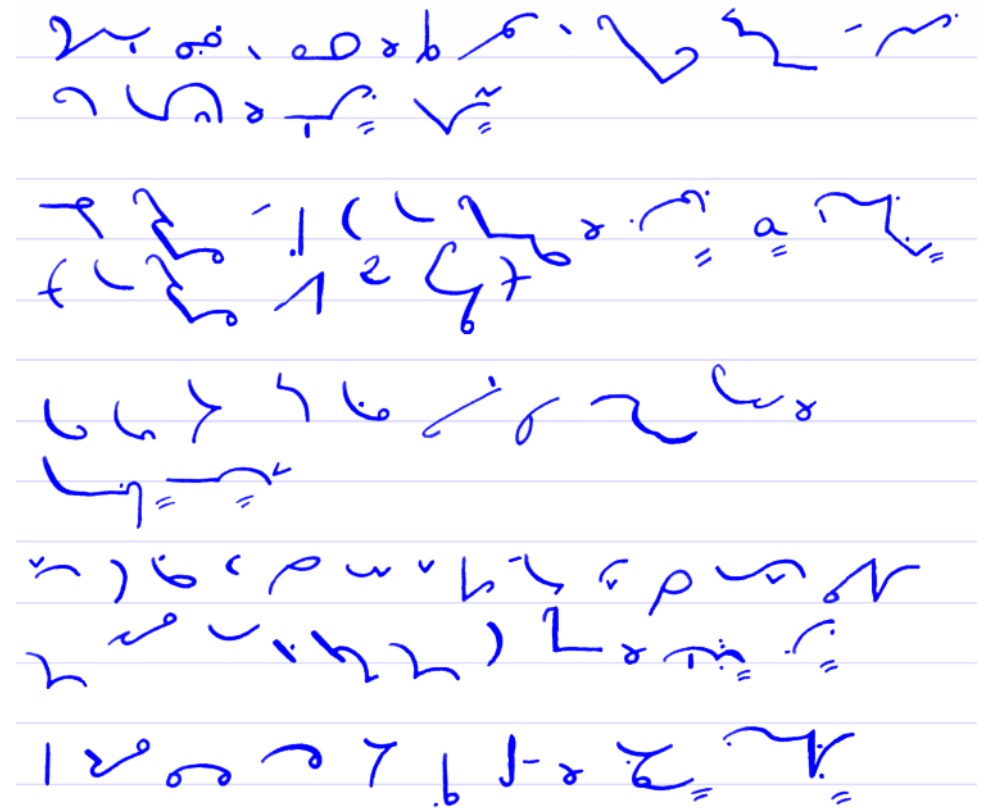
Speed is inconsequential\* if you are headed in the wrong direction. Matshona Dhliwayo

Speed is a great asset; but it's greater when it's combined with quickness - and there's a big difference. Ty Cobb

One must strike the right balance between speed and quality. Clare Short

\* "expand" Keep the P clearly sloping and insert the vowel, as "extend" is similar in shape and meaning

\* "inconsequential" The Ish stroke is the one that is in position, through the line, but this long outline is perfectly clear regardless of position



**Motivational Quotes**

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

Expect problems and eat them for breakfast. Alfred A. Montapert (For "problems" read "shorthand challenges")

Even if you fall on your face, you're still moving forward. Victor Kiam

I'm so fast that last night I turned off the light switch in my hotel room and was in bed before the room was dark. Mohammad Ali

It always seems impossible until it's done. Nelson Mandela (702 words)

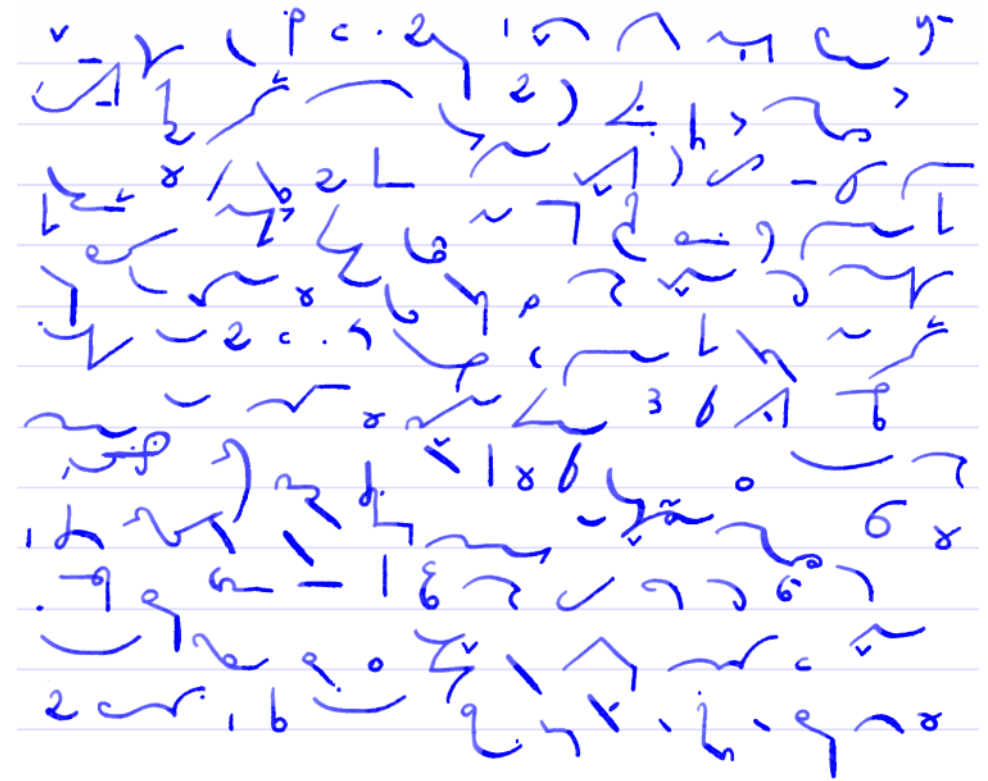


**There And Back**

We recently made a trip by car out of London. I was in the passenger seat, consulting the phone app that displayed our progress along the roads\*. In addition we had an ancient\* satnav that spoke the route\* announcements\*, to test whether it was still working. There were\* a lot of shorthand-related signs everywhere, at least\* for someone with that subject on their mind, such as Speed Limit, Variable Speed Limit, Average Speed Check, No Stopping, and various signs with numbers showing the maximum allowed for that section. Lastly\* there were\* two definitely not\* for the aspiring high speed writer, Slow Down, and Reduce Speed Now, although even that would be relevant if you were\* writing too fast and failing to get readable shorthand out of it. My favourites\* were the sign that said End Of Restrictions and the satnav telling us that "You have reached your destination" although with shorthand that is never the

end of the quest. Let's not mention the "Await Rescue" sign!

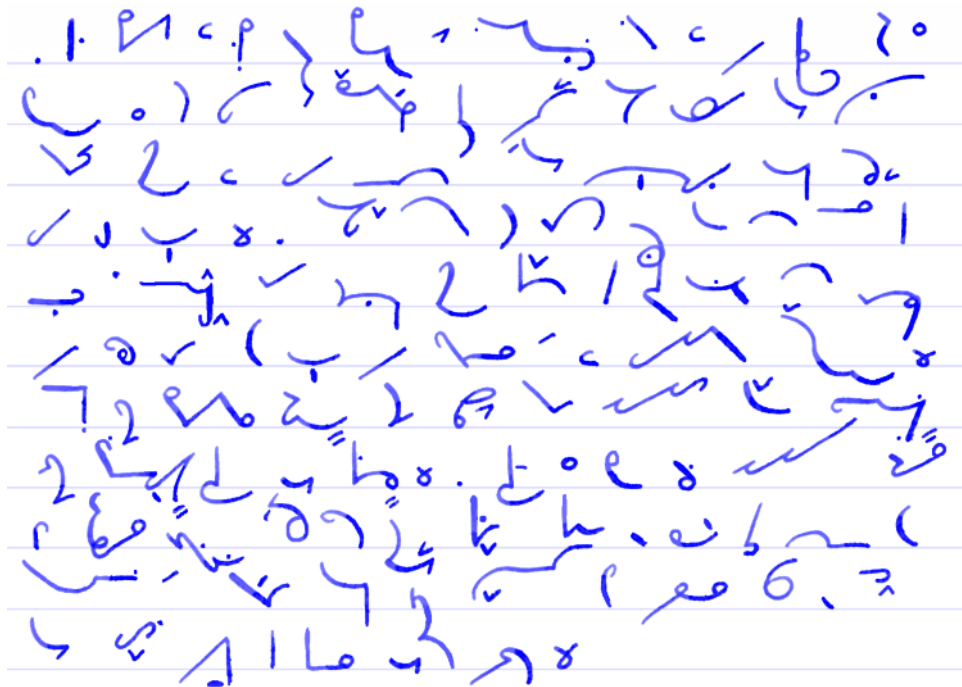
- \* "roads" "routes" May be helpful to insert the vowel signs, as these are similar
- \* "ancient" The sound is "shent" not "shun", therefore no Shun Hook
- \* "announcements" Using Halved N for the "-ment" ending
- \* Omission phrases "there (w)ere" "if you (w)ere"
- \* "at least" "at last" Always insert the vowel
- \* "lastly" Omits the lightly-sounded T
- \* "definitely not" N Hook and halving to represent "not"
- \* "favourites" Note that "favourite" has a right VR, and "favoured" has left VR



**There And Back**

I could easily have sat with a shorthand pad on my lap and noted everything I saw en route, and it would not really matter if the shorthand was shaky due to the movement of the vehicle. Each piece would not take long to write, so one could still look at the scenery and enjoy the changing views, and not get travel sick through looking at the pad for too long. Even better is the method of writing your own mental commentary in shorthand with a hard pencil, without looking at the paper, and not really making any mark. You are not

checking what you just wrote, because it is non-existent, and therefore you cannot be distracted by it. Just visualising is another method, but it is important and preferable to be making the hand movements as well. The extra speed that you can go at with this method, whether from your own thoughts or another person speaking, is unlikely to be repeated immediately when writing shorthand normally, but it is another "string to your bow" to contribute to speed improvement.



**There And Back**

The day started with setting both the satnav and the navigation app with our destination\*, although as everything is so well signposted, it was really only necessary for the later part of the journey when we came off the motorway into areas we did not\* know. The online map was also irresistible for me because it gave a countdown of our estimated journey time, which enabled me to message our friends to let them know our progress and when we would be arriving. Getting through the suburbs of London was the slowest part, and we went via Greenwich and through the Blackwall\* Tunnel under the Thames. The tunnel has several bends and we were always told that this was to prevent horses

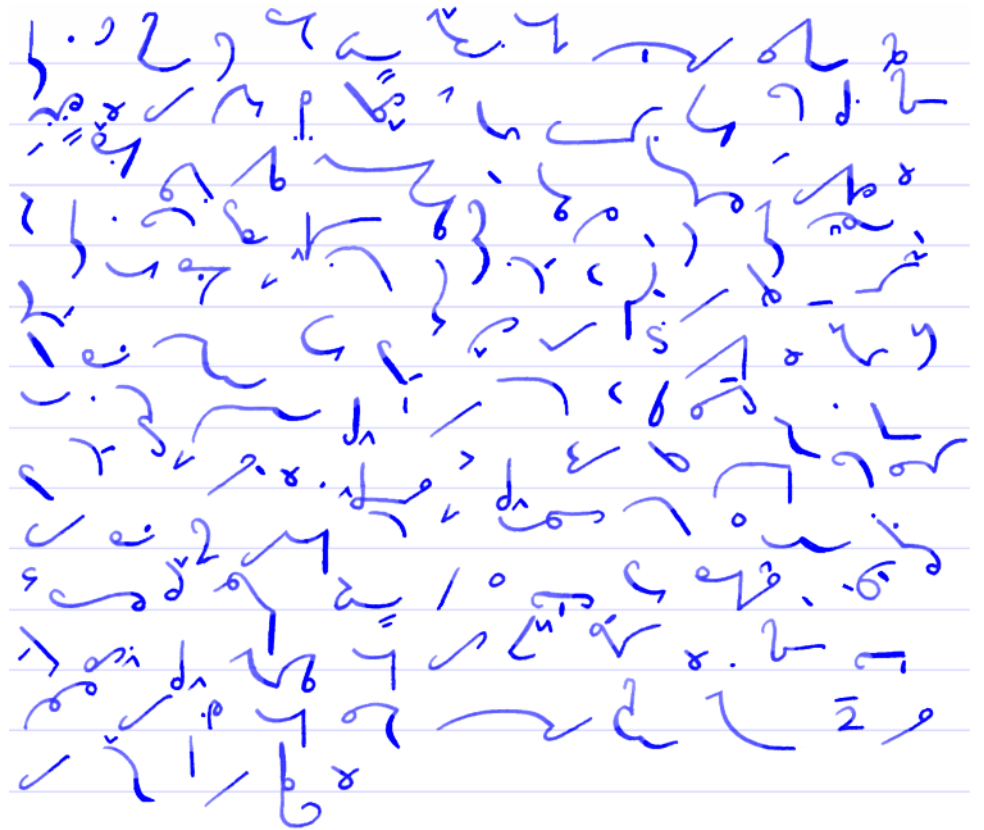
from seeing the daylight at the end too soon, which would make them panic and bolt for it, but there were\* likely other reasons as well to account for the winding route it takes under the river.

\* "destination" Full strokes to distinguish from "distinction"

\* "we did not" Not phrased, as that would look like "we do not"

\* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

\* "Blackwall" Using the Way stroke, as the Wel stroke does not join well here



**There And Back**

It was a short journey through north London and finally onto the motorway heading towards the Midlands. We left the city behind and the view quickly changed from dense traffic and signage, slip roads and interchanges, to fields, farms and woodlands. Although it was a more pleasant outlook, there was less to see and it was amusing\* to zoom in the scale on the map so that the arrow that showed our position could actually be seen moving along the blue line of our planned route. I felt I was in an airplane looking down on our car, that just happened to have a big blue arrow on the roof. The outskirts of the towns that we passed looked very small, whether seen through the window or on the

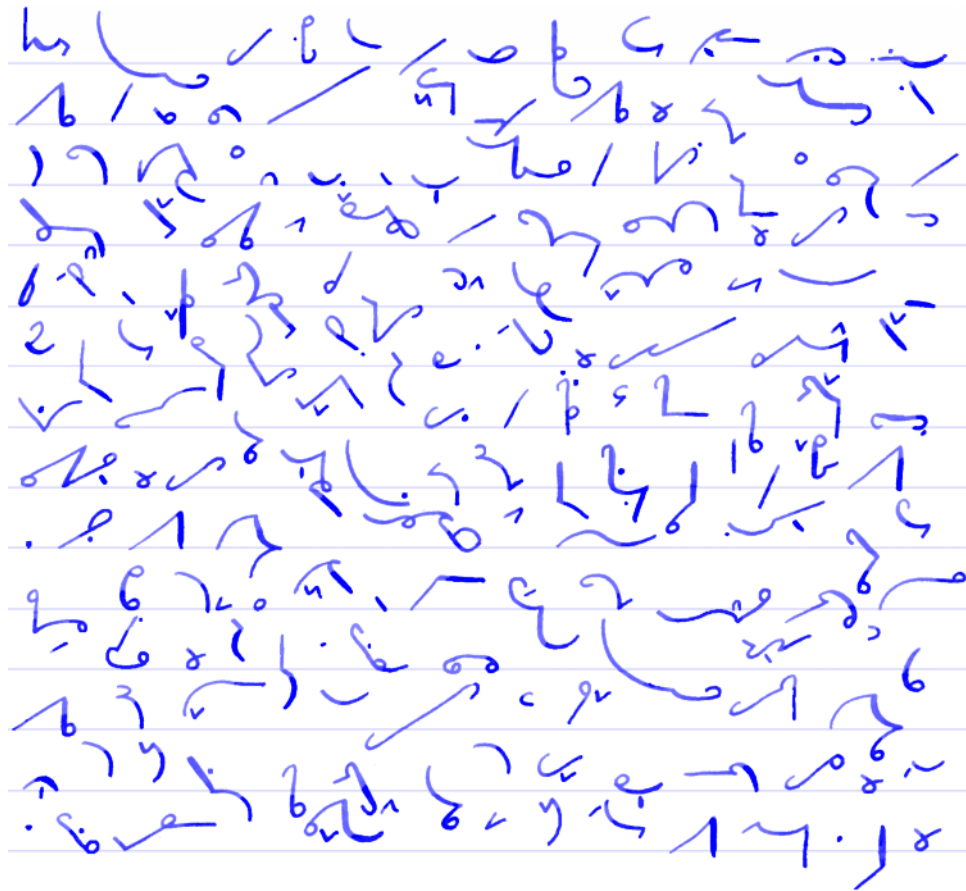
onscreen map, as nothing compares with the enormous size and spread of London, which has grown over the centuries to swallow up the surrounding towns and villages into one giant sprawl. The traffic grew less and less\*, we settled into smooth motorway travelling, and after two and a half\* hours we arrived at our destination.

\* "amusing" "amazing" Always insert the vowel

\* Omission phrase "less (and) less"

\* "two and a half" See the Theory website Vocabulary-Numbers page for quick ways to write fractions





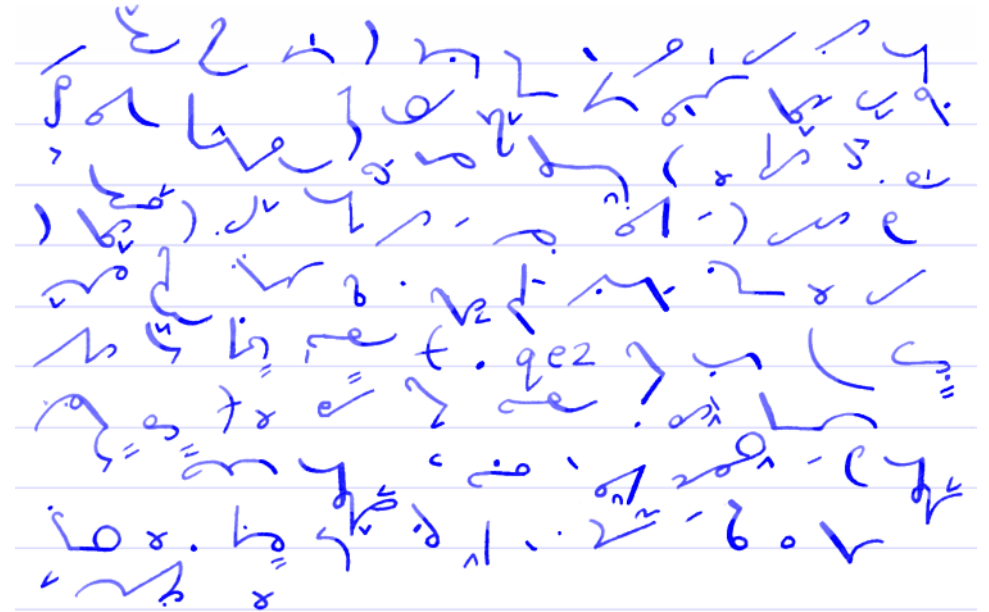
**There And Back**

At the end of the afternoon, we set off for our next destination, along the local main connecting roads, which to us seemed rather quiet country roads. Here the navigation app was very helpful as you need to know in advance which turning to take, as some of them\* are obscured by the hedges, and the signposts are very much\* smaller. One cannot just stop to decide and there may not be the chance to turn around for several miles: another good shorthand tip for the speed aspirant, stopping to think is not an option. We were surrounded by pale yellow fields of ripe wheat, which contrasted with the dark trees and bright green hedgerows. One noticeable feature here were the deep drainage ditches at each side of the road,

the raised road level in some places, and the many narrow bridges over the streams, as this area is liable to regular flooding from the numerous rivers, lakes and channels. Although it was a pleasant summer's afternoon, I wondered what these roads were like in winter, with high water levels, mud or ice, bare trees and brown fields, or white snow-covered ones. Not a place to risk sliding on the ice, off the road and into a ditch.

\* Omission phrase "some (of) them"

\* "very much" It is quicker to include the M than to make a pen lift, likewise "so much, how much"



**There And Back**

Our final journey home was estimated to take two hours, but we ran into sudden heavy downpours, and it was necessary to drive much more\* slowly behind the white spray of the vehicles in front, almost obscuring them. At one point the sun was behind us, shining onto the rain and mist ahead, and so we went several miles travelling apparently towards a brilliant double rainbow arc. We returned via the Dartford Crossing (the QE2 Bridge, named after Queen Elizabeth The Second\*). As we

approached the crossing, the surroundings became more and more\* industrialised, with acres of huge warehouses and other industrial complexes. The Thames here opens out to an estuary and all this is built on the marshland.

\* Omission phrases "much m(ore)" "more (and) more"

\* "Queen Elizabeth The Second" Normally this would be written Queen Elizabeth II



**There And Back**

As we glided over the high suspension bridge, I felt we were no longer on our travels but now on the "home stretch" and familiarity was growing by the minute. Finally we were at our front door, and the first thing I wanted to do was check on the fish in the pond. They had no idea that we had been absent at all, other than having

to wait longer than usual for their food. They were just ambling and lounging around as if nothing had happened, whereas we were full of the happenings of the trip, the journeys, the hours and mileage covered, the different sceneries and visits with friends. (1131 words)

Blank lined paper for notes.



**Short Letters 18**

Simon has been catching up with his letter writing, and getting the house, garden, outings and personal letters all sorted. By amazing\* coincidence, his letters end up being exactly 150 words long. You can get an idea of your speed by reading the shorthand out loud, whilst recording\* yourself on your phone, although you may want to give it a pre-read through to iron out any hesitations. Then write it from that recording\* and note\* how many minutes it took. One minute is 150 words a minute\*, 2 minutes is 75 words a minute, and 3 minutes is 50 words a minute. You may find the writing a little slower than the reading, as it is always easier to recognise

an existing item than to recall one from memory. It doesn't do to be always timing yourself, but a speed improvement on something short is a boost to shorthand confidence. (150 words)

- \* "amazing" "amusing" Always insert the vowel
- \* "recording" Helpful to insert the vowel to prevent misreading as "regarding"
- \* "and note" Not phrased, to help distinguish from "and know"
- \* Omission phrase "words (a) minute"

Blank lined paper for notes.





**Short Letters 18**

Dear Mr Brown, I am writing to ask you to give me a quotation for some repairs on my house. There are a few things that I would like to get fixed\* before the winter weather comes and I hope\* you can fit them in, possibly before November\*. They are small jobs so maybe they could each be done separately if that helps with your schedule. Some of the gutters are leaking in heavy rain, and there is a ground floor window latch that has become loose. The front brickwork needs a bit of repair, and there are a few loose roof tiles. Some repair work is also needed on the front paving where some of the stones have become loose. I can be in at any time that you wish to come and inspect the house. Please email\*

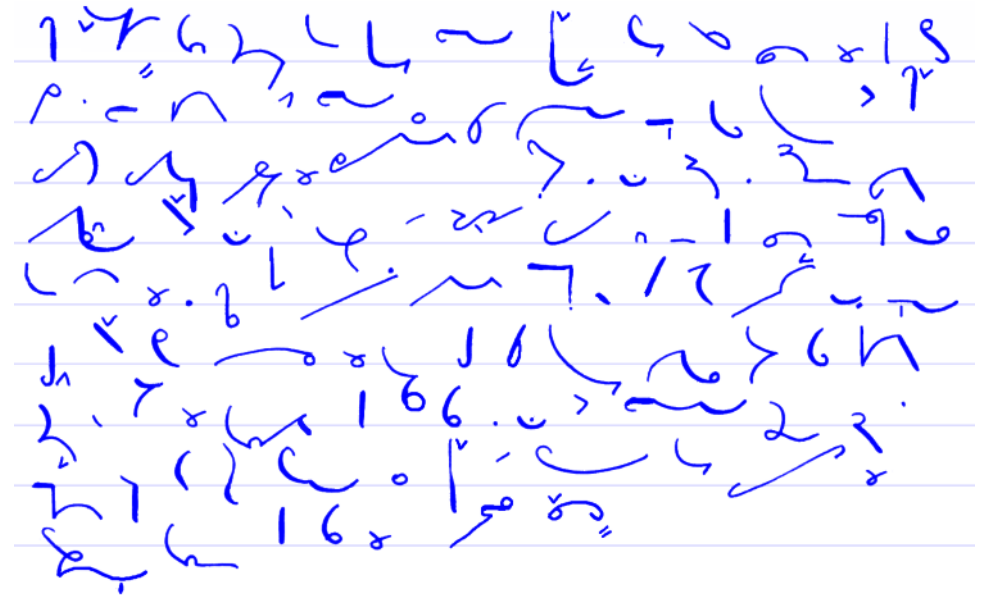
me if you are able to help. Yours sincerely\*, Simon Gray (150 words)

\* "fixed" "focussed" Always insert the vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning, although in this particular context it is unlikely to be misread

\* Omission phrases "I (h)ope you can" "yours (sin)cerely"

\* "November" Insert the cap marks, as it is the same outline as the contraction "never"

\* "email" Always insert the vowel to ensure it is not misread as "mail"



**Short Letters 18**

Dear Nigel, Thank you so much\* for doing the garden tidying over the past summer. It has been such a great help and the garden is still looking good, even after all the dry weather we have had recently. As we are now approaching the end of the year, the work will be reducing by the end of next month\*, and I wondered whether you could\* do some extra things for me. The trees at the rear are now getting too large and they really need cutting down by several metres. If this is done just after the leaves fall, then it will be easier to handle. If you are able to do this, the end of the gardening season would be a good time to do them, so that everything is tidy and in order\* for the winter. Please let me know\* if you can do this. Regards, Simon (150 words)

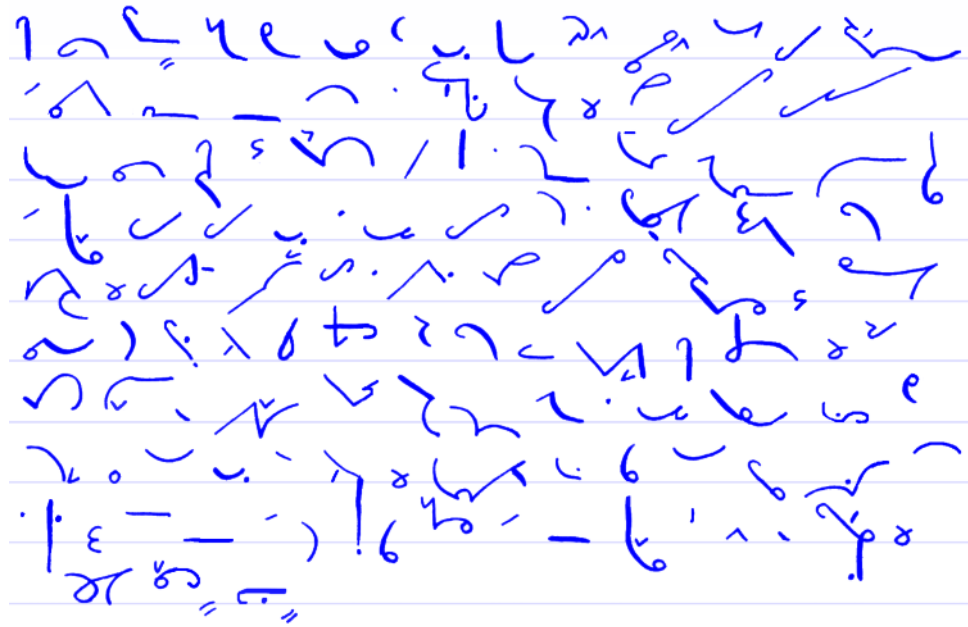
\* "so much" The M stroke is included to enable the phrase, which is quicker than making a penlift, likewise "very much, how much"

\* Omission phrase ne(k)s(t m)onth"

\* "you could" Not phrased, to help distinguish from "you can"

\* "in order" Doubling and R Hook to represent "order". Compare with the halved version, omission phrase "in ord(er to)"

\* "please let me know" Downward L to enable the phrase to be formed



**Short Letters 18**

Dear Mr Black, I have several things that need doing around the house in the way of plumbing and hope you can give me a quotation for them. Last winter we were having some trouble with the boiler, which had an irregular fault, and if you can look at this and advise whether we need a new one or an overhaul, that would be very helpful. We don't really want a repeat of last winter's problems, when the central heating was playing up just at the beginning\* of that very cold period during December. I would also like to re-tile part of the bathroom and have a new basin fitment, as that area is in need of updating.

If you are able to fit this in, please email\* me a date when you can come and see these items, and give advice on how to proceed. Yours sincerely\*, Simon Gray (150 words)

\* "at the beginning" Gn is the intersection for "beginning" and can also be written close up if necessary

\* "email" Always insert the vowel to ensure it is not misread as "mail"

\* Omission phrase "yours (sin)cerely"

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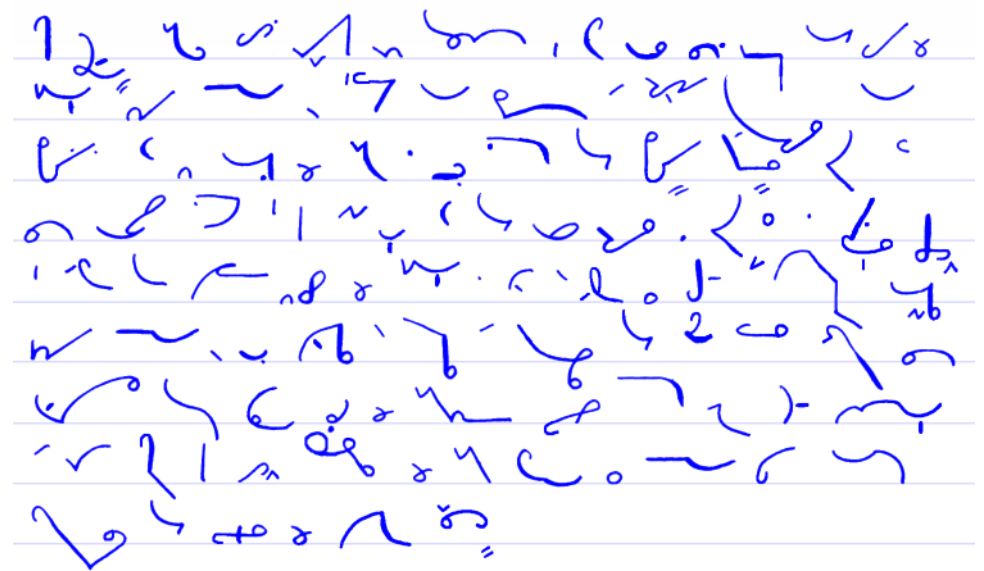
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**Short Letters 18**

Dear Susan, I have been wanting to write to you for some time, but other things seemed to get in the way. I know you are going to college in September and I wondered if there was any stationery that you needed. I have a gift card for the Stationery Box shop with some unused cash on it, and I note that for the next two weeks the shop has a generous discount on offer for local students. I know a lot of stuff is done on the laptop nowadays, but you are going to need loads of pads and pencils for the shorthand class, and probably some

folders for your lesson sheets. I hope you can use the card, and if so let me know and I will drop it round as soon as possible\*. I hope everything is going well in your preparations for the course. Love, Simon (150 words)

\* "for some time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

\* Omission phrases "two wee(k)s" "I (h)ope you can" "I (h)ope" "as soon as poss(ible)"

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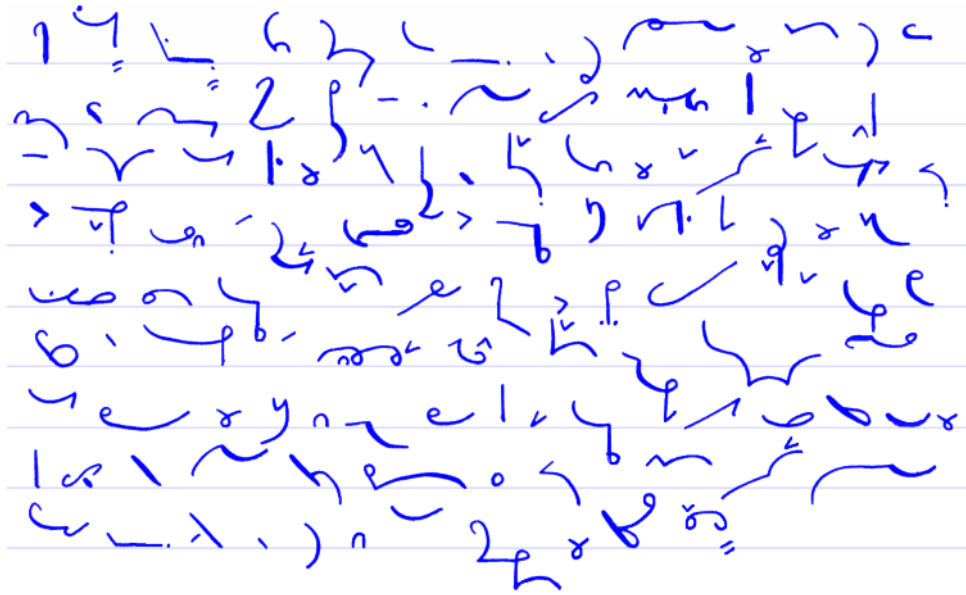
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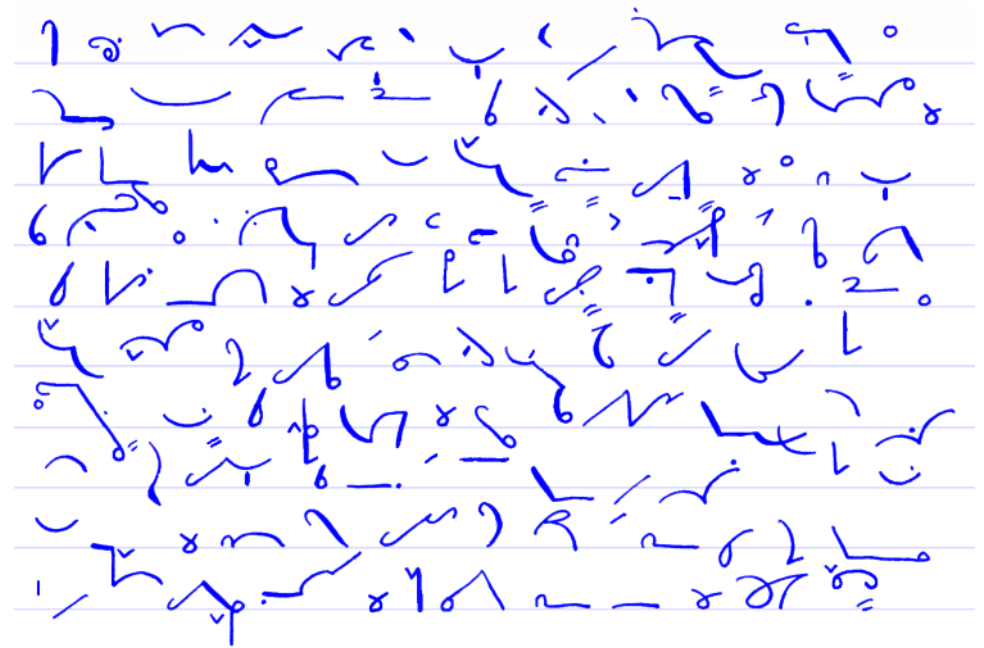


Short Letters 18

Dear Auntie Peggy, Thank you so much\* for coming to see us\* last weekend\*. I am so glad you were\* able to make the journey, as it was quite a long one and we know that you had to start out quite early in the day. I hope\* it was not too tiring for you. I really enjoyed hearing all the exciting news and seeing the photographs of the kids on their holiday at the seaside. I have enclosed some photos of my recent trip to the city, where I visited several places of interest and museums, and found time to visit the formal gardens in the centre. I wish you could have\* seen it but the photos are the next best thing. It won't be long before September is here and I am really looking forward\* to coming up to see you in three weeks' time\*. Best wishes\*, Simon (150 words)

- \* "so much" The M stroke is included to enable the phrase, which is quicker than making a penlift, likewise "very much, how much"
- \* "see us" Circle S for "us"
- \* Omission phrases "las(t w)eekend" "you (w)ere" "I (h)ope" "three (w)eeks' time"
- \* "you could have" Halved outlines "could" "note" "might" are not phrased, so that they are not misread as the full versions "can, know, may"
- \* "looking forward" This can be phrased by omitting the R Hook on the F
- \* "Best wishes" Upward Ish to enable the phrase

Blank lined space for additional notes or practice.



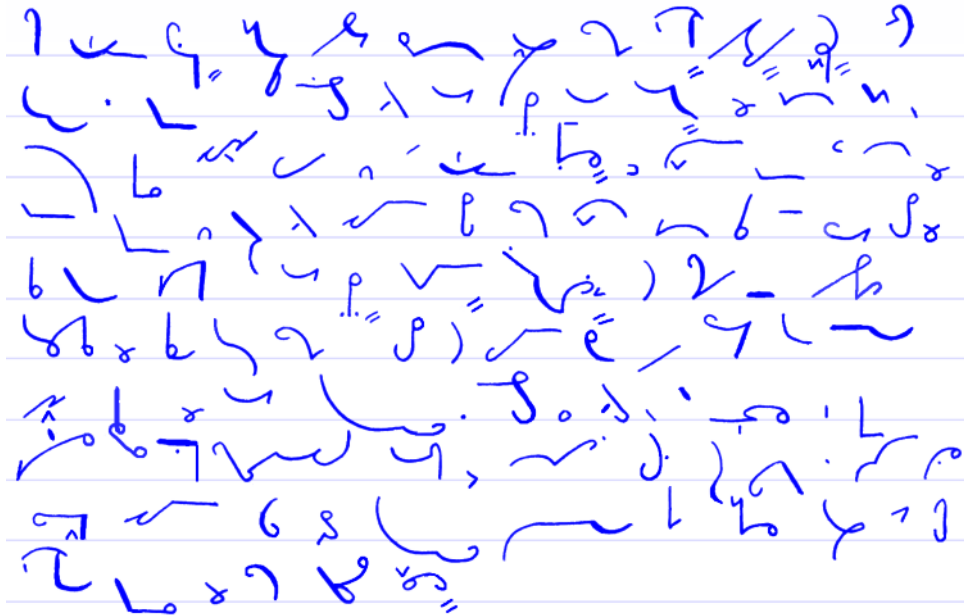
Short Letters 18

Dear Friends, I am writing to let you all know that our Rambling Club has organised another local walk, which is open to all members and their families. It will take place at the end of September in Five Acre Wood. As you know, this location is an elevated one, with great views of the countryside, and the trees will be just turning colour. We will start at the West Gate entrance, the walk is 5 miles through the woods and some open footpaths, and then we finish at the Carpenter's Inn just outside the village. Please return the

booking form or email\* me, so that we know who is coming and can book our meal at the Inn in good time. You may remember we went there last year and you can still see the pictures on our website gallery. I do hope you can come. Yours sincerely\*, Simon (150 words)

- \* "email" Always insert the vowel to ensure it is not misread as "mail"
- \* Omission phrase "yours (sin)cerely"

Blank lined space for additional notes or practice.



**Short Letters 18**

Dear Uncle Fred, I have just received the September newsletter from the Model\* Railway Society\* and they are having a big exhibition up in the city in November\*. I am about to order tickets and wondered whether you and Uncle Thomas would like to come with me. I can pick you both up and we can set off from my home, which is quite near the station. It is being held in the City Park Pavilion, so there are good restaurant facilities. It is not far from the station, so we can save our energy for going round the displays. In the afternoon, the exhibition is open to all comers, but ticket holders get preferential entry to the morning session, so that will be a little less crowded, and we can then spend the afternoon looking at the items for sale\* and the train modelling\* books. Very best wishes\*, Simon (150 words) (Total 1200 words)

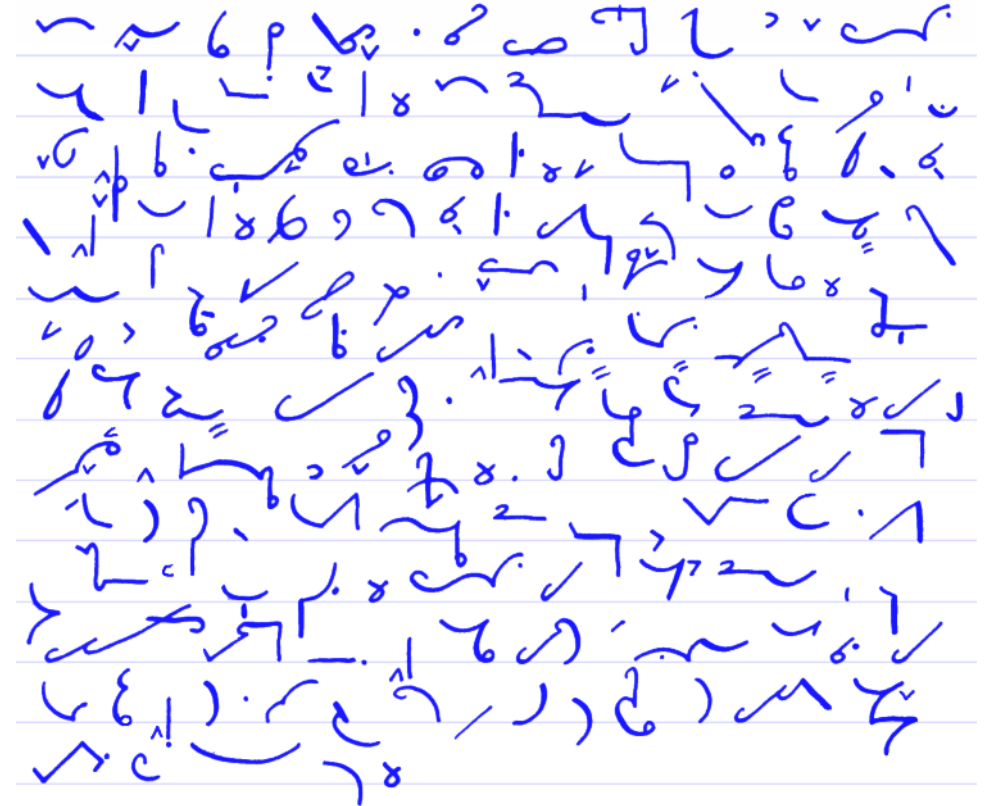
\* "model" "modelling" These are written with the hooked D stroke to enable the verb derivatives to be easily formed - modelled, modeller. Likewise "muddle" and derivatives. Words like "medal, middle, modal" are written with the halved and thickened Md stroke.

\* "society" This can also be written as an intersected S stroke

\* "November" Insert the cap marks, as it is the same outline as the contraction "never"

\* "for sale" Downward L to enable the phrase

\* "best wishes" Upward Ish to enable the phrase



**Too Hot**

I am writing this sitting behind a half closed curtain, and doing what I normally never do if I can avoid it. I am working on the computer for hours on end, while outside it is a gloriously sunny summer's day. But the fact is that it is just too hot to be out in it. This is the third very hot day we have had here in southern England, probably nothing at all to those\* who are used to such a climate, but highly unusual for us. Two days ago, on the first of the heatwave days, we went out to Lee Valley Country Park, just north of London, where there was a canal festival over the weekend. We did not\* realise how temperatures would rise during the morning. The train station where we got off was thirty to forty minutes' walk to get to the park, along a road full of

traffic, with no shade. Normally we enjoy walking but today we were beginning to regret coming out in this weather and, melting in the heat, we felt that this outing was a little too far\* from our usual easy travels, so we would be unlikely to repeat the effort another year.

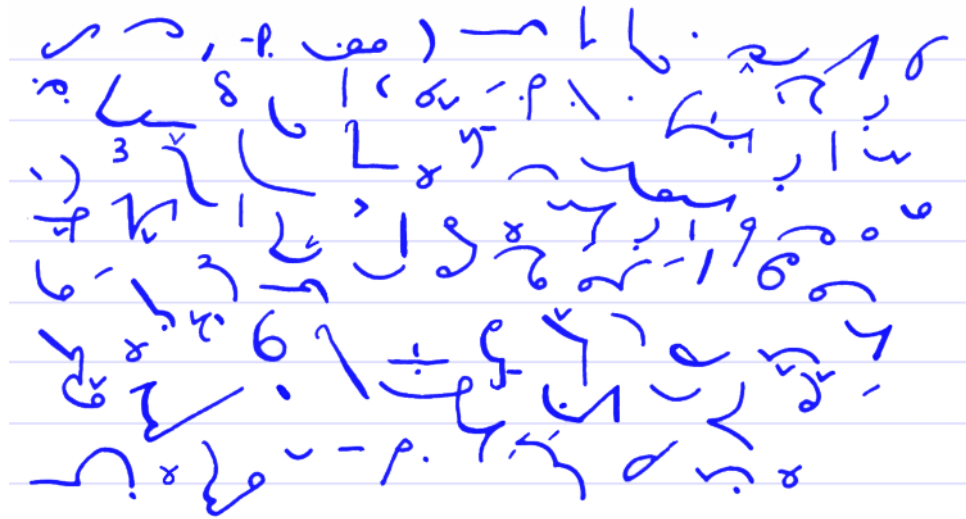
\* "to those" When out of position, "these" and "those" must have a vowel inserted

\* "we did not" Not phrased, in order to differentiate from "we do not" and "we didn't"

\* "too far" Note that "far" on its own is full strokes





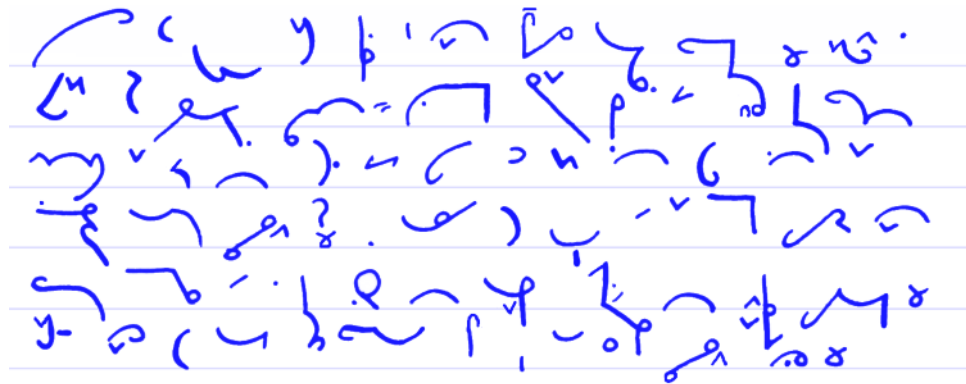


**Too Hot**

One man who studied insects was camped at the top of a mountain ridge, still amidst\* jungle plants even at that height, and set up an illuminated moth sheet, to see what would arrive after dark. I saw him investigating the sheet at night, excited and delighted at seeing all the different species. Not only the sheet but he himself, his hands, face and beard were covered in

moths small and large, as well as some butterflies. I thought this is probably OK as they don't bite or sting to my knowledge, and they were all interestingly varied in shape, size and colouring. So that was not quite such a horror story to me.

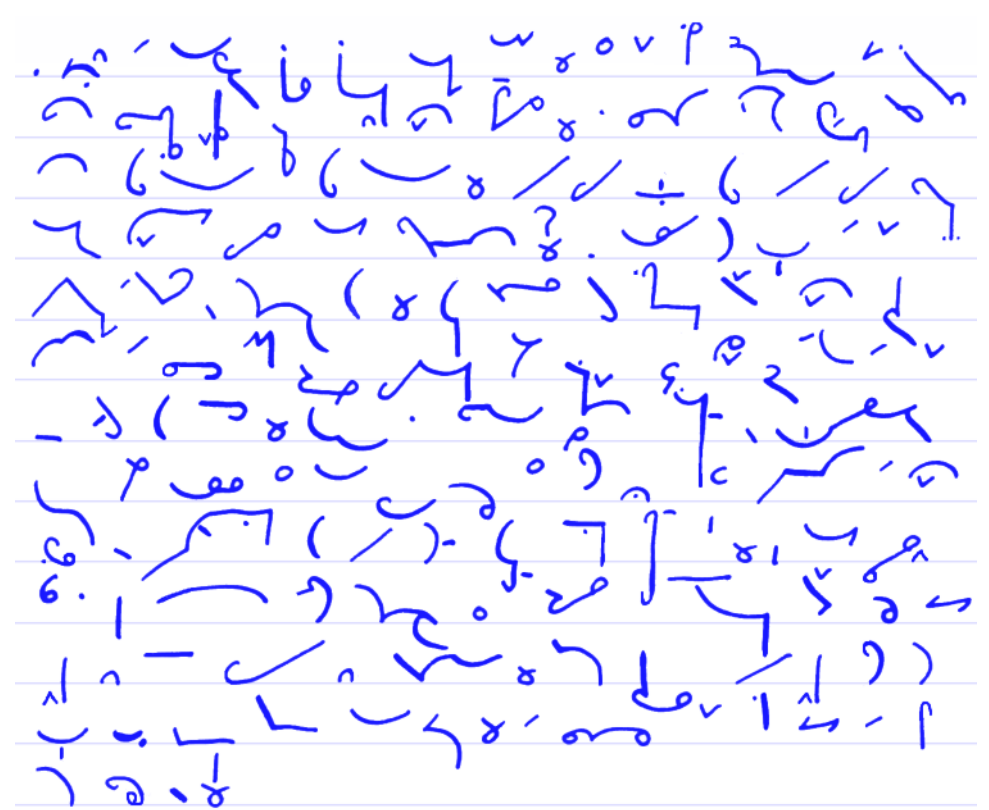
\* "amidst" There are few archaic/poetic words that have Stee Loop on a halved stroke "didst, bidst"



**Too Hot**

Later on that evening, I was tested on my tolerance for these creatures. I found a giant, although reasonably slim-legged, spider sitting on the door frame, and I am sure I heard him say, "Well, what about me then, am I acceptable in your house?" The

answer was, No, and I got one of my clear cups and a tissue, swept him inside and deposited him outside the window. I don't mind them in the garden at all, but not as house mates.



**Too Hot**

The humid and uncomfortable conditions continued into the night. As I sat working on the computer, more critters decided to test my tolerance. A small moth fluttered past me, then another, then another. "Are we OK then, are we pretty enough like the ones in the programme?" The answer was No, and I repeated the operation to remove them. They had of course been attracted by my table lamp and screen, and I had to close the window until bedtime, when the lights would be off and I could open them

again. Having a garden is the antidote to unreasonable fear of such insects, as in younger years, as they are met with regularly and my efforts to relocate them are so they don't get trodden on. But in the house, that is a different matter, and their removal is always accompanied by the words, "Out you go, where you belong. All your dinners are out there, so no need to come back in here." And sometimes I add, "And tell your friends, too!" (872 words)