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Blogs - 2020 - November

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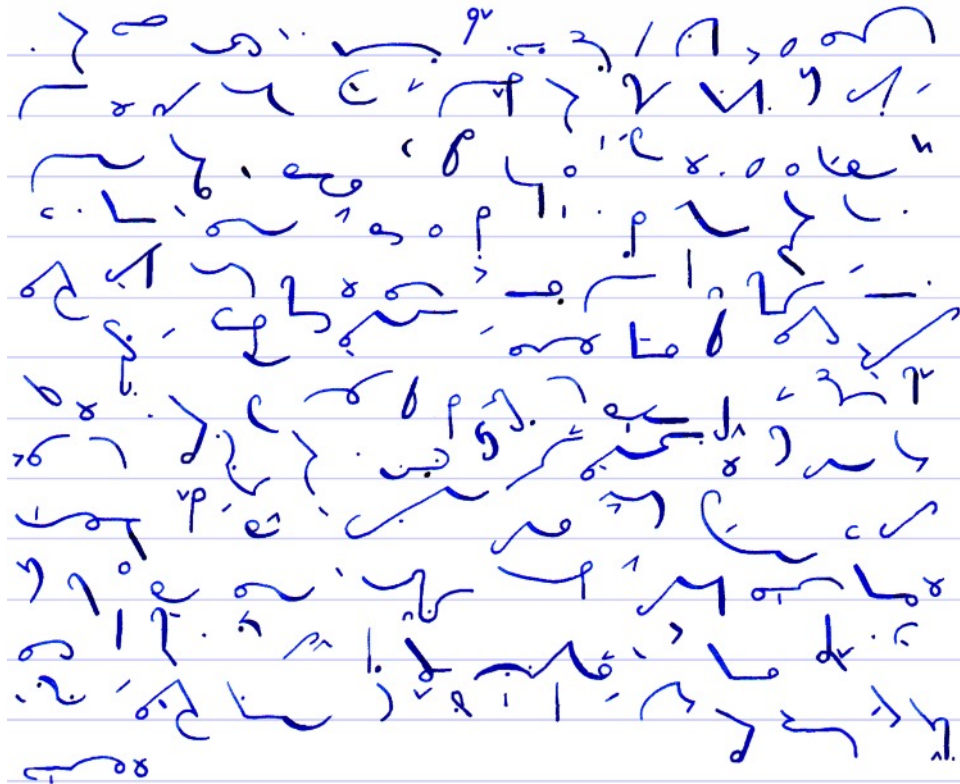
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PDF Date: 9 November 2022



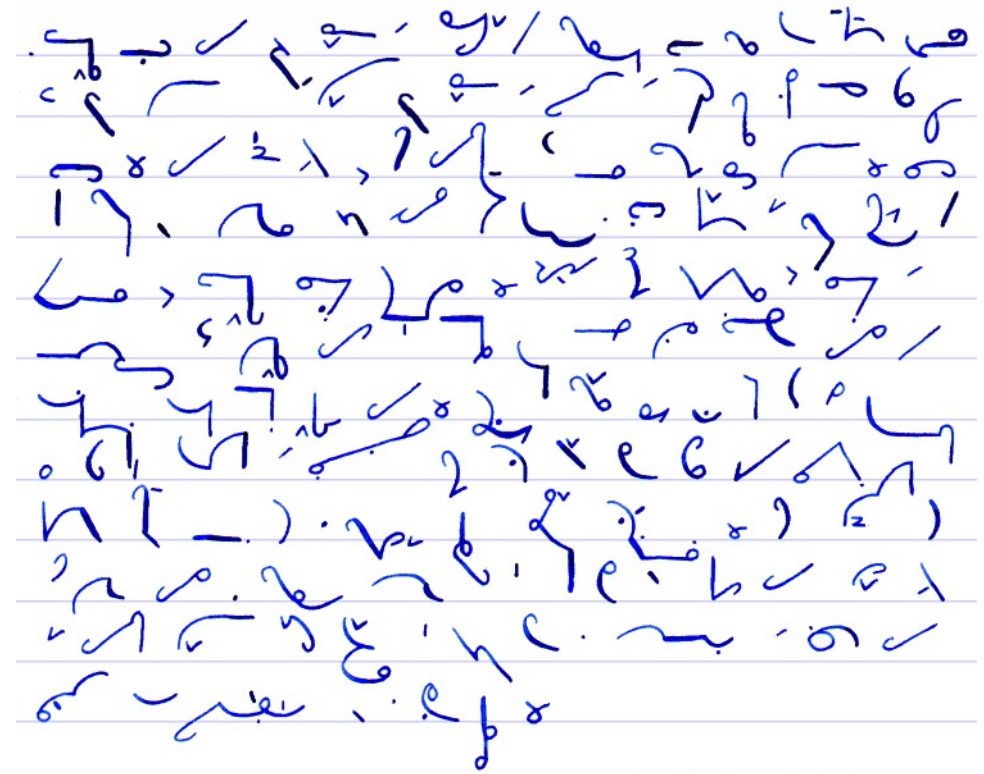
Autumn Park

The path crossed in front of a two metre high concrete weir which led to the first smaller lake. You are never alone on the lakeside path, there are birdy eyes watching and looking for those two signals that suggest food is on offer. The first is fussing about with a bag of something and the second is sitting on a seat and being available for a hopeful waddle in your direction. Some of the geese look at you directly and give a plaintive and questioning honk, and sometimes the ducks just "happen" to wander past. The pigeons, however, mostly* just sit and preen, or snuggle down on the warm dry soil or asphalt path. an indication that they

are not really hungry. They are waiting for the unmistakable sight and sound of whirring wings and noisy fluttering, when one of their number has seen something of nutritional interest and the winged scrum begins. Someone had dropped a hard round tea biscuit, impervious to all the beaks despite a lot of ardent and hopeful pecking*, so I stepped on it and left the pigeons to clear up the powdery crumbs.

* "mostly" Omits the T

* "pecking" Insert the vowel, so it is not misread as "picking"

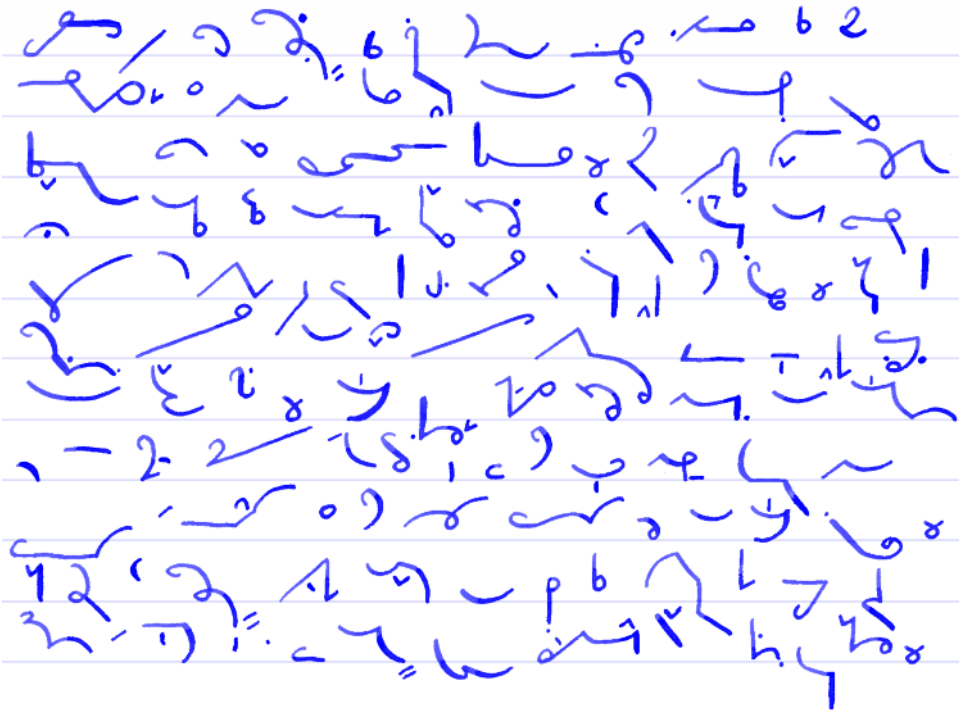


Autumn Park

The clouds gave way to blue sky and sunshine, which presented great opportunities for autumn photographs, with blue lake, lighter blue sky, and yellow and orange trees set against those still green. We walked up to the larger waterfall that comes from the second lake. Someone had brought two loaves of bread and was having a grand time on the bridge throwing large chunks to the crowd of screeching seagulls. I wondered what was the purpose of the screeching and came to the conclusion* that the loudest one gets the food because the less aggressive ones are

intimidated into getting out of the way. Seizing the prize is not the end of it though, as the victor is then followed and harassed through the air by several others who are hoping it will be dropped, giving us a brilliant display of high speed aerobatics. Their loyalty was short-lived once the person moved on, as they all turned away, lined up on the water like iron filings on paper over a magnet, and swam away slowly in unison to a safer distance.

* Omission phrase "came (to the con)clusion"



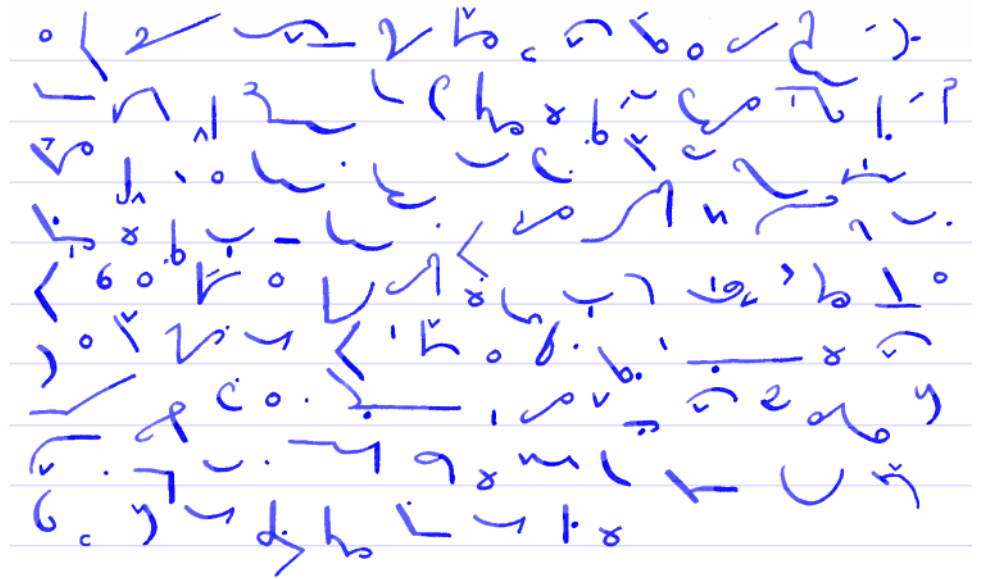
Fraser In The Kitchen

Once again* our friend Fraser, who has contributed so many excellent articles on his shorthand experiences, has written for us another very interesting piece describing more of his stenographic adventures. Sharp readers like yourself may notice that he has included the types of phrase that should be avoided in the crisp business letter* or report, but which people do tend to use to pad out their conversations. I think he had verbatim writers in mind rather than reporters who can cut out the clichés in their final draft. Unusual idioms and turns of phrase, and indeed any unfamiliar word,

can throw the shorthand writer *off balance, but when they are known and understood, they can be written quickly and accurately, as they are mostly* normal words in unusual combinations. I do suspect that Fraser wrote the entire thing sitting at his laptop at the kitchen table, warm and cosy on a cold November evening, surrounded by tempting food items.

* Omission phrases "wu(n)s again" "biz(ness) letter" "short(hand) writer"

* "mostly" Omits the T



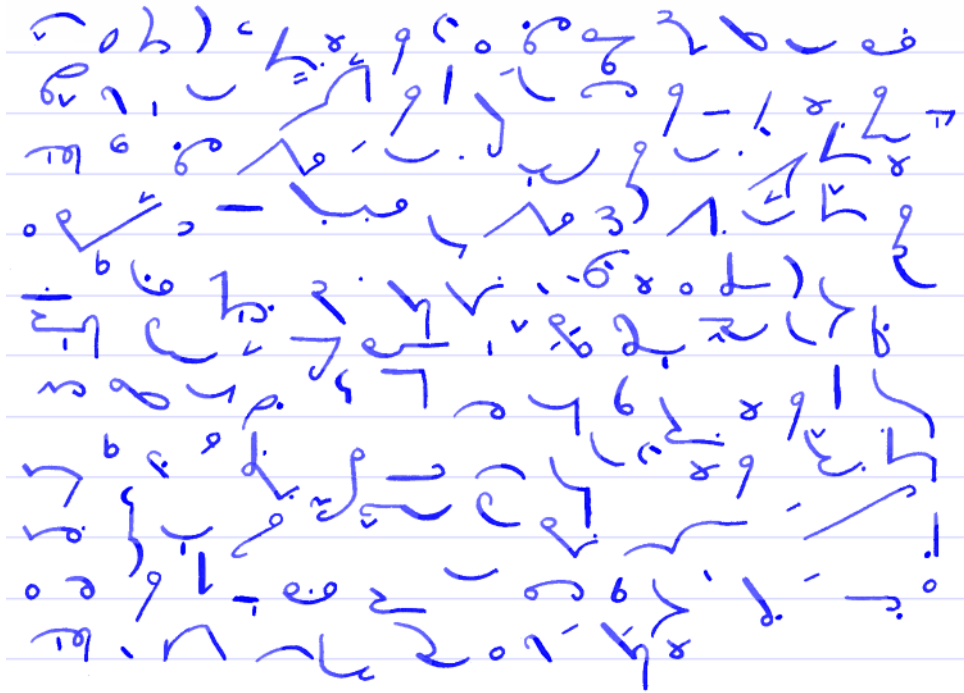
Fraser In The Kitchen

As top shorthand writer* in my company, there are times when my boss is away travelling and so I can help out working for other departments. It's not everyone's cup of tea and what it boils down to is having a finger in every pie in order to* bring home the bacon. It's no good having a chip on one's shoulder about lack of opportunity in a job that is as dull as dishwater. If you know your onions, all the assignments become as easy as pie, and turning in the

job on time is just a piece of cake*. My career used to be flat as a pancake but once I gained my shorthand certificates, I was like a kid in a candy store. I now have bigger fish to fry than when I was in the despatch department, back in the day.

* Omission phrases "short(hand) writer" "in ord(er to)" "use(d) to be"

* "cake" "cookie" Always insert the vowel

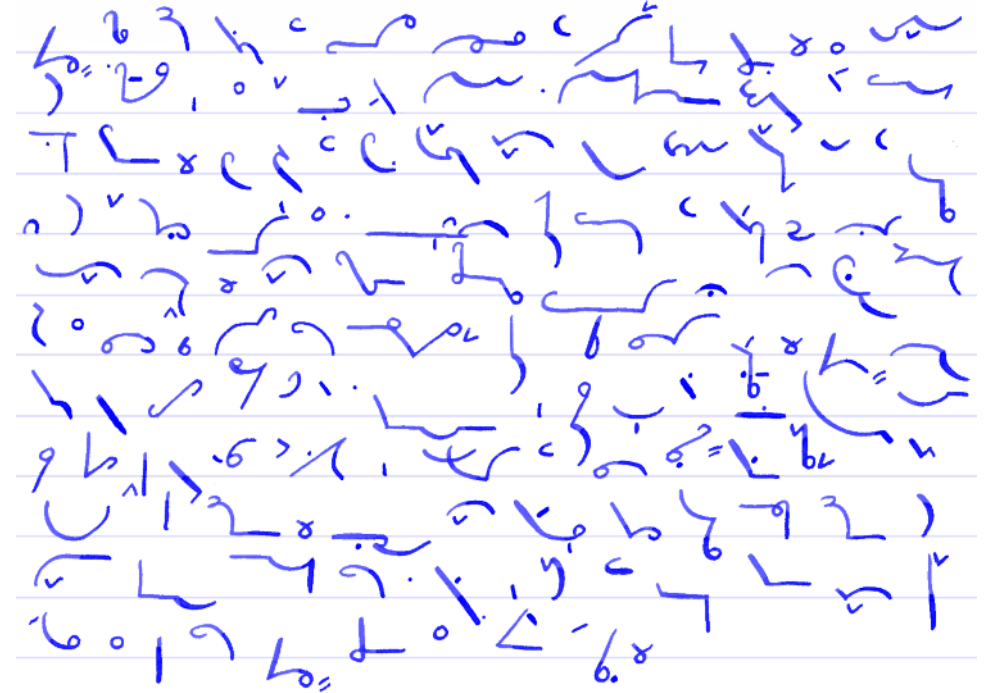


Fraser In The Kitchen

My first assignment was with Jim. He thought his sales skills were the best thing since sliced bread, but in reality he had bitten off more than he could* chew. He could not cut the mustard with his sales reports and, in a nutshell, he was in a real jam. His superior would go bananas if the reports were not ready in time, he would have egg on his face, and demotion would be a bitter pill to swallow. His desk was full of clutter, everything but the kitchen sink, but I suppose there is no accounting for taste, and I am not surprised in the least that he got himself into this pickle. He had far too much on his plate and his desperate situation gave him food for thought. He finally admitted to himself that it was no use crying over spilt milk, and rather than

eat his words he had the good sense to call in someone who is full of beans and keen as mustard, to help him continue earning his bread and butter.

- * "he could" Not phrased, so it does not look like "he can"
- * "ready" Insert the last vowel, as "read" (past tense) could also make sense
- * "too much" Includes the M in order to join the phrase
- * "himself" always insert the dot in "him" "himself" when the short form is in a phrase, in order to distinguish it from "me" "myself"

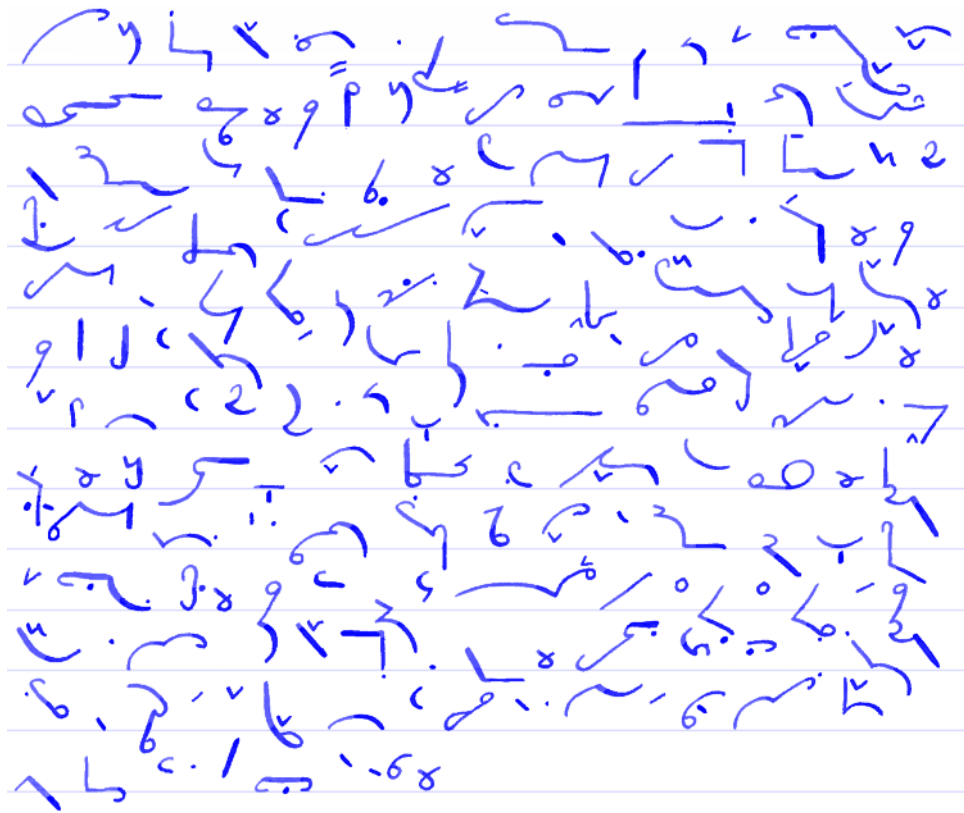


Fraser In The Kitchen

Jim's drafts were peppered with careless mistakes that really took the biscuit. His handwriting was atrocious but, as I gave up longhand a long time ago, that would be the pot calling the kettle black. However, I believe with every fibre of my being that you should not bite the hand that feeds you, so I remained cool as a cucumber and it was clear that butter would not melt in my mouth. My perfect transcripts quickly made me flavour of the month, although, as someone who has learned from experience, it was just small potatoes. Jim may have

appeared to be one sandwich short of a picnic but he was no bad egg after all, in fact* he turned out to be the salt of the earth, but unfortunately with some half-baked ideas about efficiency at work. Gaining my bonus payment for this extra work was like taking candy from a baby but I was glad to get back to my tidy office, as different from Jim's desk as chalk and cheese.

- * Omission phrase "in (f)act"

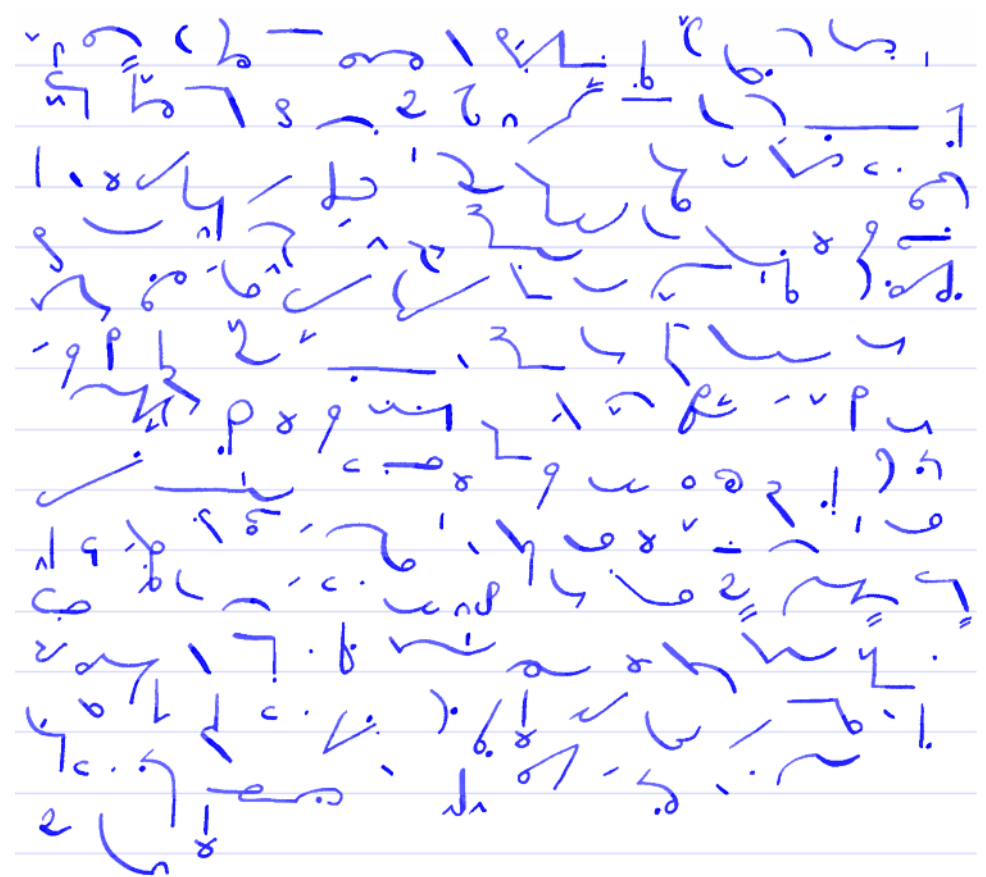


Fraser In The Kitchen

Later on I was contacted by Sam, a junior* clerk who had heard on the grapevine of my stenographic skills. He said I was one smart cookie* and very fortunate to be working for the big cheese. Over lunch we got talking about shorthand training and we discovered that we were like two peas in a pod. He wanted to change jobs but was wary of jumping out of the frying pan* into the fire. He had done that before and felt it was a case of once bitten twice shy. I told him that shorthand was not a hard nut to crack as long as you are not* a couch potato. I did not sugar-coat my description of the effort required for success. It would not be handed to him on a silver platter and this line of work would be no trip on the gravy train. He was glad to hear that the materials are as cheap as chips and he

would not be buying a lemon by getting the book. We agreed that you can't compare apples to oranges, and I advised him that stories of a long and slow learning time should be taken with a large grain of salt.

- * "junior" Diphone shown for learning purposes, but perfectly readable without it
- * "cookie" "cake" Always insert the vowel
- * "frying pan" Left FR stroke used in order to join the other strokes, "frying" on its own uses a right FR stroke
- * "you are not" This phrase does not use halving, as that would be too similar to "you will not"

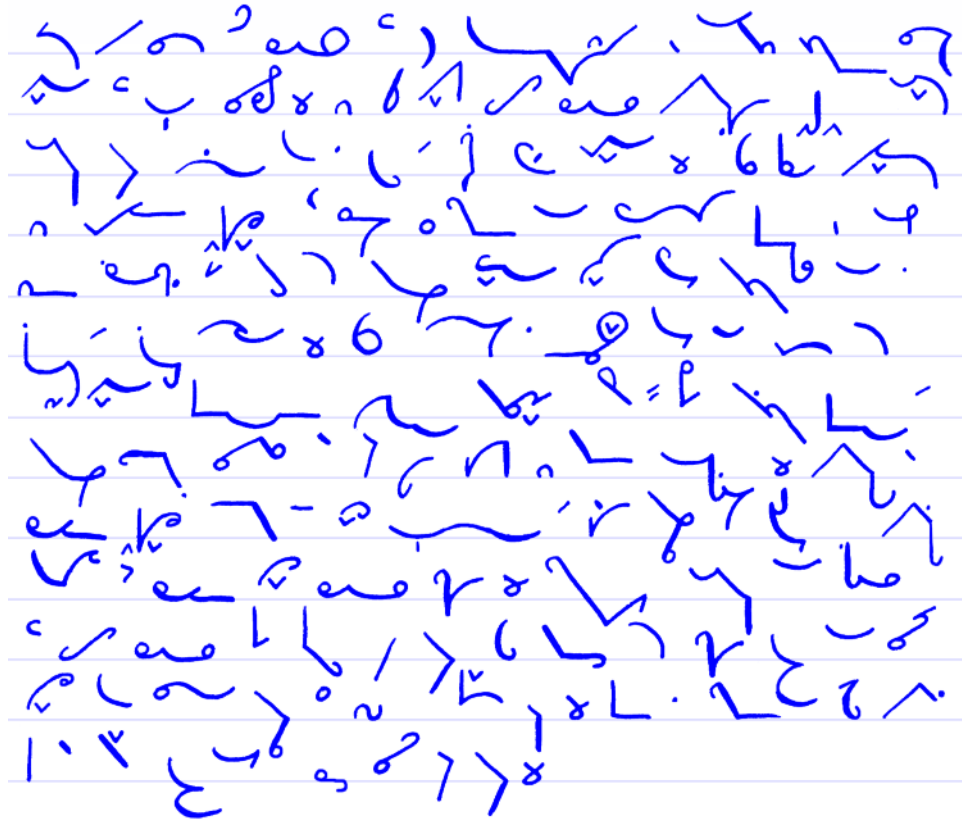


Fraser In The Kitchen

I told Sam that assignments can sometimes be sporadic, it's either feast or famine, but quiet times can be spent improving shorthand, and then you really can have your cake* and eat it too. We continued our discussion on earning potential for those not born with a silver spoon in their mouth, and how to avoid working for peanuts. He was eager to leave the sales office where they were packed in like sardines and he said it would be the icing on the cake to work for the top banana in the managerial suite. He intended to take up my suggestion and I said, now we're cooking with gas. He knew his friends would be eating their heart out when he upsets the apple cart and moves on to better things. I egged him on in his

quest for improvement, and with a new student for the company's Shorthand Lunchtime* Club, I would certainly be getting a taste of my own medicine. Before parting, I took a photo of us at the table, with a cheery "Say cheese!" and we finished our cups of tea with a hearty* exclamation of "Down the hatch and here's to a long shorthand future!" (1059 words)

- * "cake" "cookie" Always insert the vowel
- * "lunchtime" Halving to represent the T of "time"
- * "hearty" Special outline, to distinguish from "hardy"

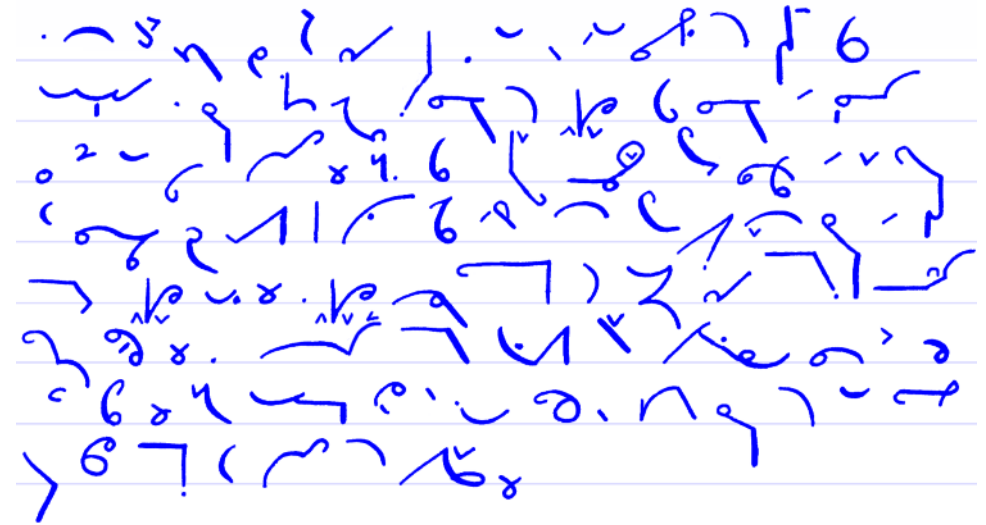


Phrase Sentences 1

Here are some short sentences with easy vocabulary, to enable you to practise smooth writing with no hesitations. You just write one sentence repeatedly down the entire notepad page, aiming for an even and controlled flow of writing. This does not require you to recall outlines, that skill is practised in normal dictations, but instead you can concentrate on the pen or pencil gliding lightly over the paper in a continuous and confident manner. This is mainly an exercise for the hand, to improve your writing technique, leaving behind the stop-start, paper digging and pencil gripping habits*, all of which will hold you back indefinitely. Repetition of single

outlines can be quite mind numbing, and whole passages do not have the repetitive value of the single line sentence drill. Prepare the notepad in advance with one sentence at the top of each page, then begin your drill, filling in half the lines for as many pages as you have time to do. Take a break and then repeat it all by filling in the second half of each page.

* "habits" "hobbies" Insert the vowel in these, as they are similar in outline and meaning



Phrase Sentences 1

An important point to remember is that, although you are teaching the hand to not hesitate or dawdle, this is in no way* a speed attempt, and if you scribble your outlines, then scribble and scrawl is what the hand will learn. I did this type of exercise over the summer months and I pretended that someone else would have to read it later, and this stopped me overreaching my speed and kept the outlines neat. The outlines must be correct, so ensure you are copying* accurately from your source. The material can be varied by

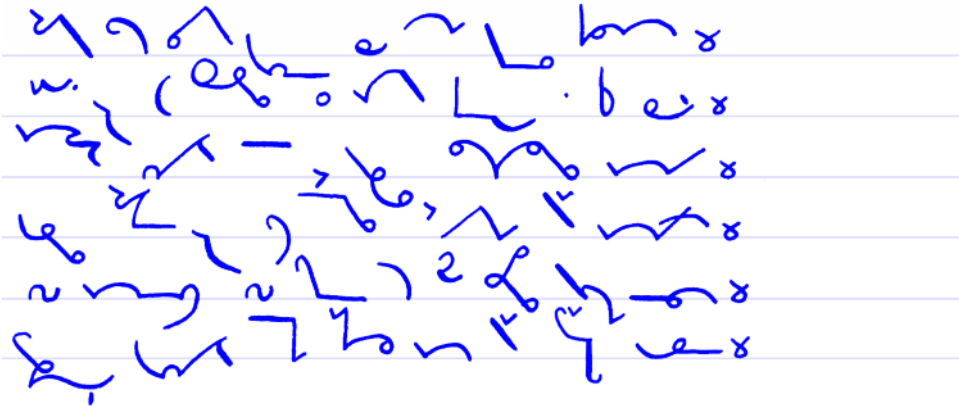
replacing some of the words with others. I have included lots* of common phrases to help speed your hand across the page, as well as getting them learned or revised.

* "in no way" Insert the vowel, to distinguish from "in any way"

* "copying" No diphone, as the I sound is deemed to be part of the Dot Ing

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

Blank lined area for handwriting practice.



Phrase Sentences 1

I would be very happy if you can send me the books at the same time*.
I need to have them as soon as possible* as I will be taking a test soon.

I am glad that you are able to go to the post office* as early as possible* tomorrow.

If it is possible*, I would like to have three copies of the report by tomorrow morning.

You have to make sure you have practised your shorthand as much as possible* before the exam.

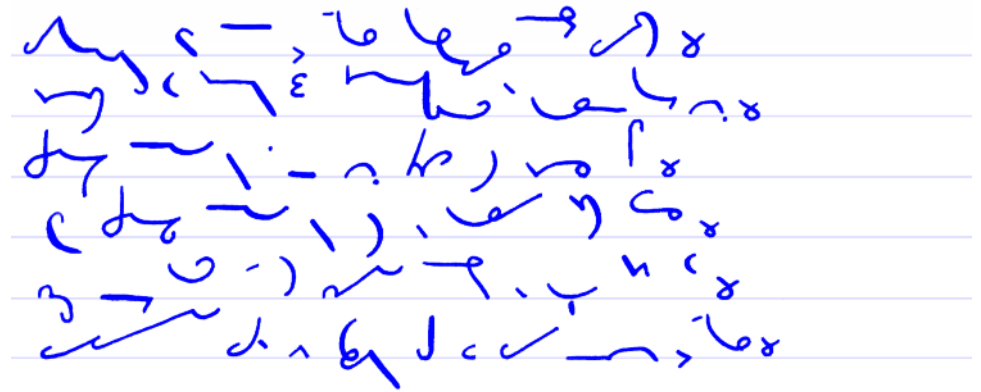
Please let me know* if you are able to get the items to me by Friday of next week.

* "at the same time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

* Omission phrases "as soon as poss(ible)" "pos(t) office" "as early as poss(ible)" "if it is poss(ible)"

* "Please let me know" Downward L in order to join the phrase

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 1

We have not been able to go to the office for several weeks* because of the weather.

I am sure that I can be with you on Monday afternoon* of next week* for the meeting.

It is certainly going to be a good meeting which you will not wish to miss at all.

However, it is certainly not going to be easy to answer all their questions*.

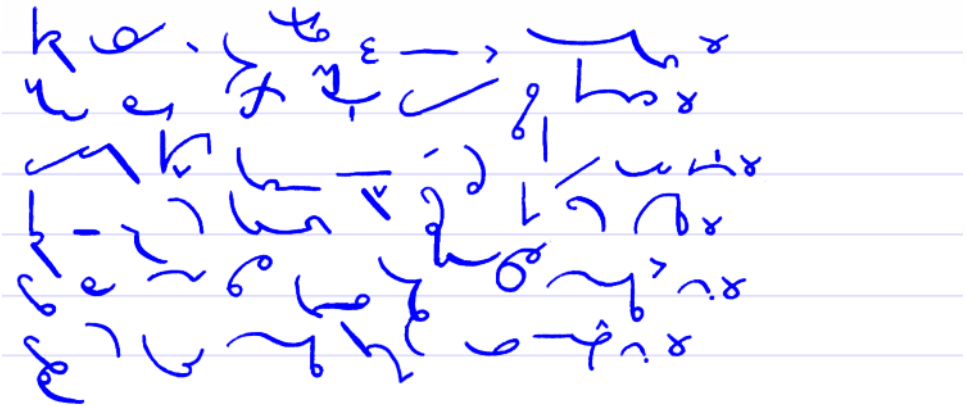
You were not given the information and so you are not expected to know about that.

We were not shown how this would be done when we came to the office.

* Omission phrases "for several wee(k)s" "Monday af(ter)noon" "ne(k)s(t w)ee(k)"

* "questions" Optional Contraction

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 1

It will not be necessary to fill in the forms when you come to the interview.

I have not seen the general manager and I do not know where he is at the moment*.

We would be delighted if you can come and see us at our new home.

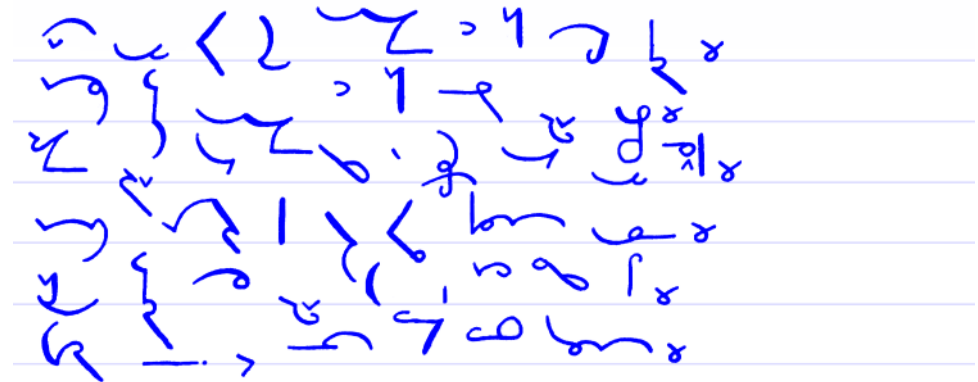
It would be good to have your financial report* by Thursday evening* at the very latest.

Please send me the sales figures for this month*, as well as the minutes of the meeting.

Please let us have* your finished minutes before the next council meeting.

* Omission phrases "at (the) moment"
 "financial (re)port" "Thursday eve(n)ing"
 "this (mon)th"

* "Please let us have" Downward L in order to join the phrase



Phrase Sentences 1

My new job was not anything like what I had imagined it would be.

I must say* that it was nothing like what I had expected to find under the circumstances*.

I would like to apply for the post of assistant manager in the new accounts department.

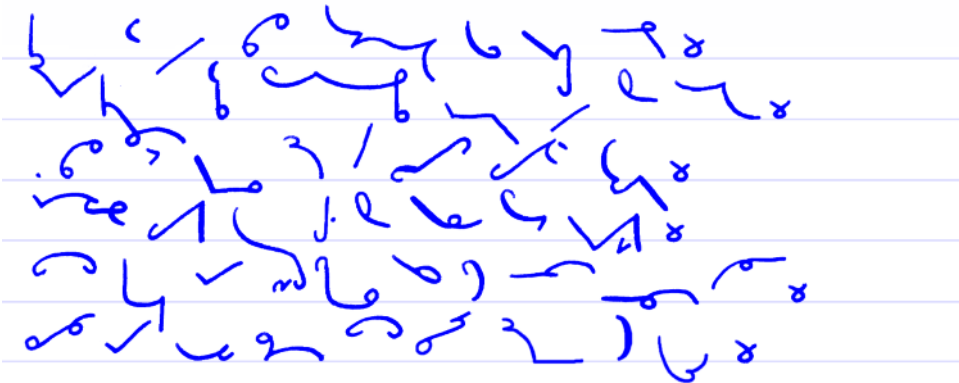
I am sure I will be able to do both jobs at the same time* next week.

I did not know that it would be impossible to find them but I am not surprised at all.

They will not be coming to the commercial college classes for some time*.

* Omission phrases "I mus(t) say" "under (the) circumstances"

* "at the same time" "for some time"
 Halving to represent the T of "time"



Phrase Sentences 1

It would appear that our sales for the month have been better than expected.

It appears to me* that it is in our interests to keep our staff informed.

The sales of the books were much greater than we thought they would be.

I am glad to say that* we had fewer than ten staff absent over the period.

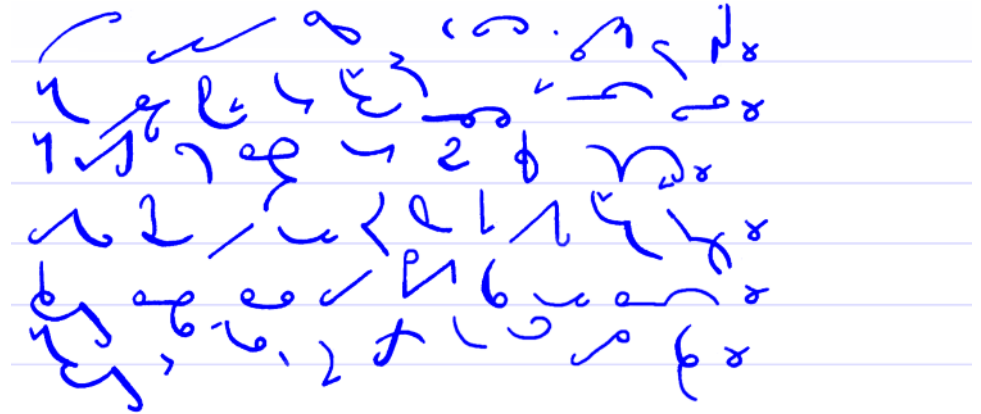
More than twenty of our trainees passed their commercial exam last week*.

As a result* of our new system more than half the work was finished.

* Omission phrases "it appears (to) me" "I am glad (to) s(ay) that" "last (w)EEK" "as (a) result"

* "ten" "eighteen" Always insert all the vowels

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 1

Later on we were surprised to hear that more than a hundred people attended.

I have recently been studying for the final exams on the commercial course.

I had already been very successful in the shorthand tests earlier on.

We have been training our new shop staff at the rate of five per month.

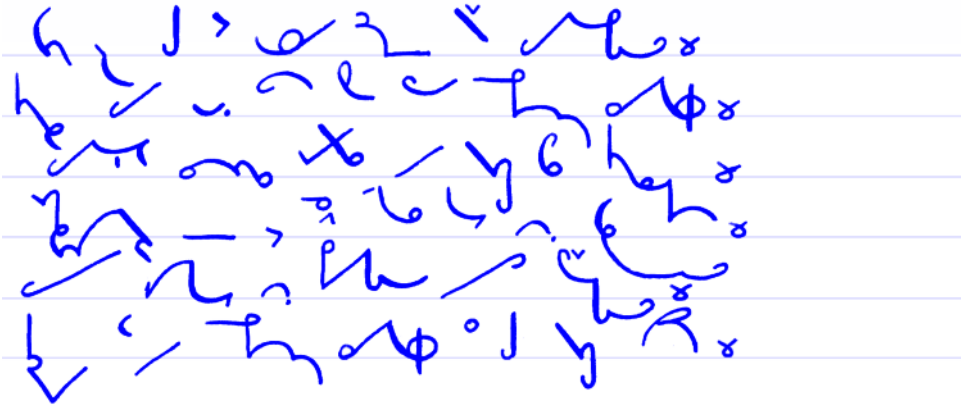
It has only* been six months* since we started this new scheme.

I have only* been to the office to see the general manager for information once this month*.

* Omission phrases "six (mon)ths" "this (mon)th"

* "only" This form is only used in convenient phrases, full strokes otherwise

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 1

They appeared to have done all the necessary work by Wednesday afternoon*.

It appears that we need more staff in our customer services department.

We know that some parts of our business are better than others at the present time*.

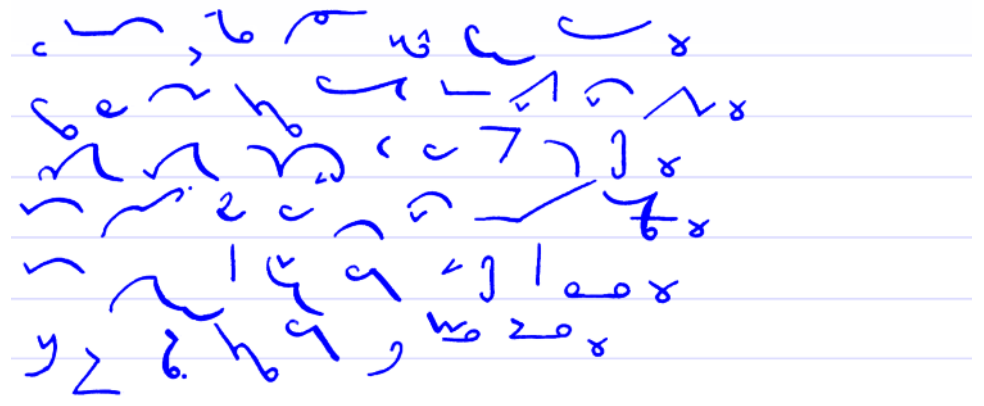
I trust that you will be able to* come to the accounts office for the meeting this afternoon.

We are holding the meeting Saturday evening* rather than Friday afternoon*.

It would appear that our customer services department has done better than last year.

* Omission phrases "Wednesday af(ter)noon" "at (the) present time" "I trus(t) that you will be able to" "Saturday eve(n)ing" "Friday af(ter)noon"

Blank lined area for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 1

When I came to the office last week* I found everything in order.

Please send me the papers, in order that I can write my report.

You will have to leave earlier than that, in order to* catch your train.

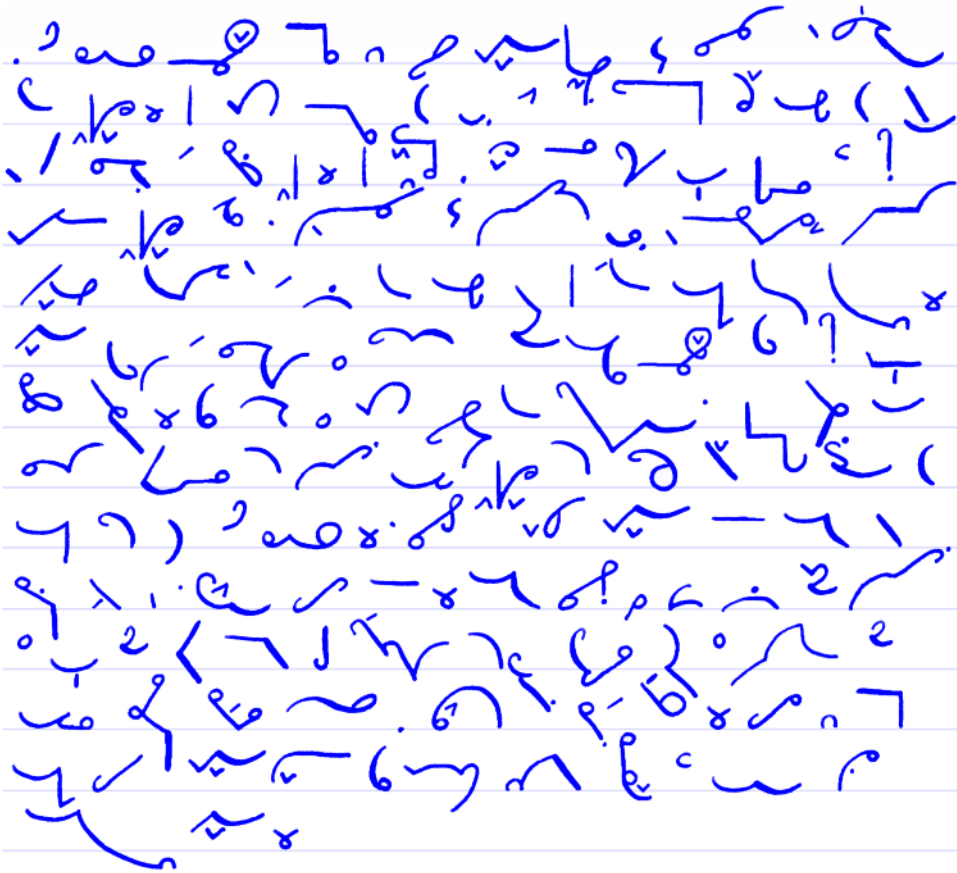
I am learning shorthand in order to* improve my career in this company.

I am leaving at five, in order to be* on the train at six.

I wish to check all these papers, in order to* be sure about the facts of the case. (1033 words)

* Omission phrases "las(t w)eeek" "in ord(er to) be" Note that the "be" does not need to go through the line, as the "to" is omitted

Blank lined area for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 2

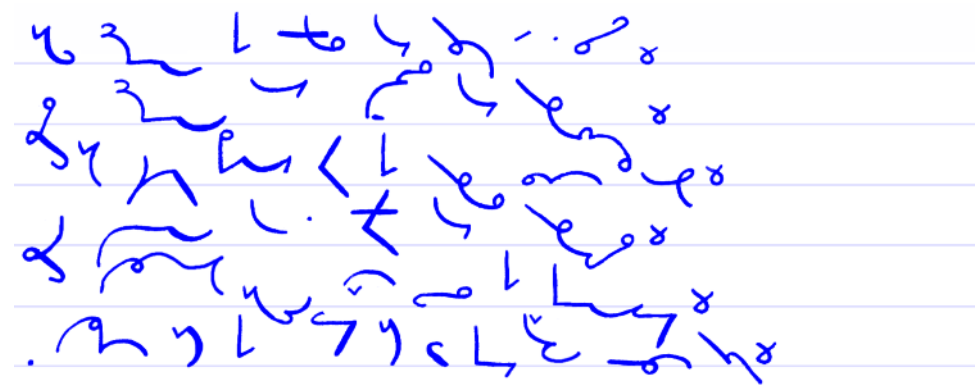
The short sentence exercise gets you used to writing continuously without the hassle of stumbling over outlines. It also keeps them neat and the correct size, instead of them becoming too large, scribbled and spaced out. It quietens the mind because there are no difficulties with trying to recall outlines, and that is a luxury that the learner needs to experience regularly, recognise the value of, and aim for, instead of pushing it off into the far future. Writing evenly and smoothly is more important in these exercises than trying to go as fast as possible. This method is also useful for preparing a dictation passage in small chunks, or learning new outlines or phrases by planting them into very easy short sentences. A hesitant style of writing can

never be sped up, but a flowing one can. Never hesitating is the ultimate aim of shorthand learning, as no shorthand job can be done properly* or comfortably otherwise, especially as real-life* shorthand includes high speed spurts amongst the slower speaking and pauses. Once you get into the way of writing like this, I am sure you will be satisfied with nothing less* in future writing.

* "properly" Insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately" as these are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrase "rea(l) life"

* "nothing less" Not phrased, keep that for phrase for "nothing else" with a downward L



Phrase Sentences 2

I have been working at the government office for the past year* and a half. He has been working in the law courts for the past few years*.

I think she will be starting the job at the post office* some time* next month*.

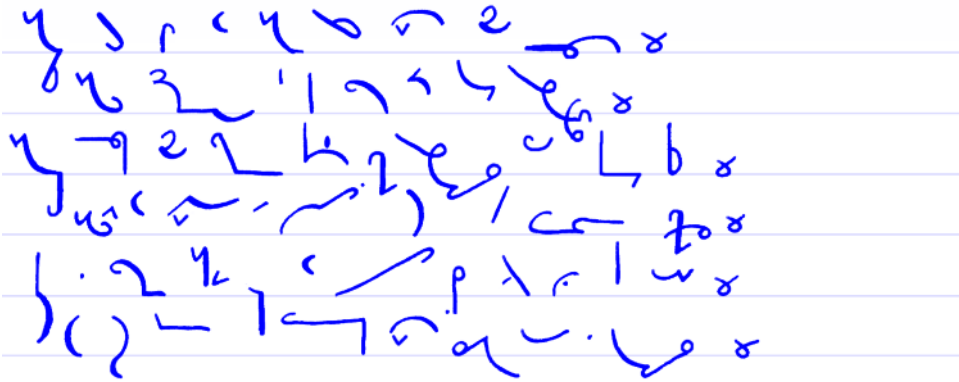
She has been looking for a government job for the past few weeks*.

Last month* I finished my course at the technical college.*

The last time* I was at the college I was able to take the final exam paper.

* Omission phrases "pas(t) year" "pas(t) few years" "pos(t) office" "ne(k)s(t mon)th" "pas(t) few wee(k)s" "las(t)month" "techni(cal) college" "las(t) time"

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



Phrase Sentences 2

I have just been told that I have passed my shorthand exam.

I have been working on it very hard for the past few months*.

I have done extra shorthand practice at home during the past few weeks** in order to* take the test.

I found that writing and learning was much quicker during the mornings.

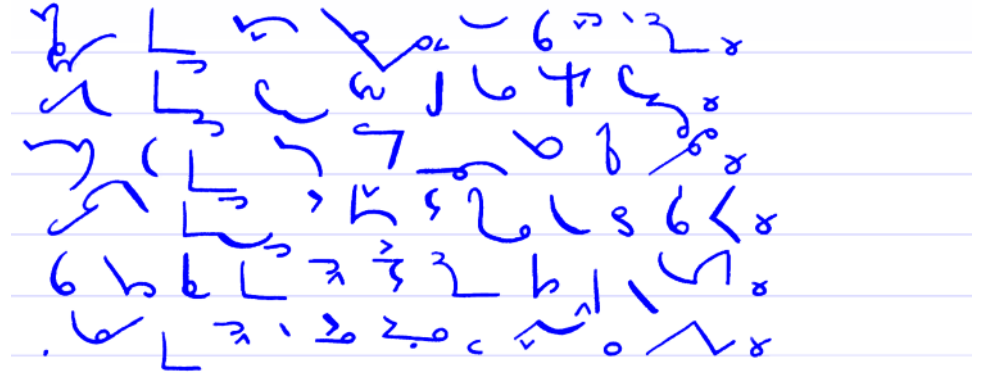
It was a very good idea to do that rather than sit* up late at night.

They say that I can collect my certificate in a few weeks*.

* Omission phrases "pas(t) few (mon)ths" "pas(t) few wee(k)s" "in ord(er to)" "few wee(k)s"

* "sit" "stay" Helpful to insert the vowel in these to prevent misreading for each other

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 2

I trust that you will* take into account* all my past experience* in this kind of work.

We have taken into account* everything that you have done for us in the department over the years.

I am sure they took into account* all your college exam passes and test results.

We will be taking into account* all the time that the trainees have spent on this job.

This payment does not take account of the fact that the* work turned out to be faulty.

The officer took account of all the facts* of the case when writing his report.

* Omission phrases "I trust(t) that you will" "take (into) account" "pa(st ek)sperience" "taken (into) account" "took (into) account" "taking (into) account" "of the (f)act that the" "all the (f)acts"

Note that "take account" are normal separate outlines

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 2

We do not as a general rule* take students on during the summer holiday period.

I am not as a rule* in the office on a Monday or Friday morning.

I could* tell at a glance* that this report was going to be difficult to read.

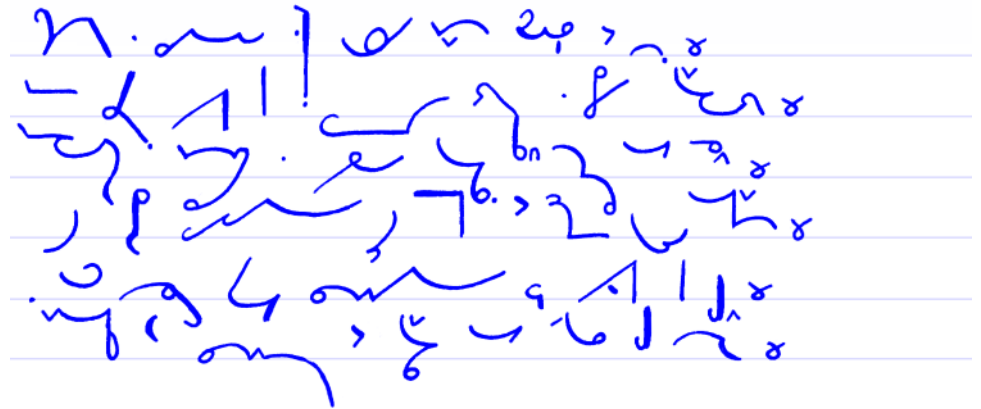
You can by all means use our spare office to write your report.

I thought I was going to have to write it by some other means.

I am glad that I will not have to find some other way of getting it finished.

* Omission phrases "as (a) g(eneral) rule" "as (a) rule" "at (a) glance"

* "I could" Not phrased, as that would be too similar to "I can"



Phrase Sentences 2

There will be a certain amount* of editing necessary of my shorthand notes of the meeting.

I can, generally speaking*, read it quickly and produce a satisfactory final report*.

I can only say that I am sure there is a reason for these* errors in the accounts.

She said that one way or another* she would get all the work finished in time.

The information must have been* changed somehow or another when he wrote it down.

I noticed that somehow or other all the files in the office had been moved.

* Omission phrases "certain (am)ount" "gen(erally) speaking" "final (re)port" "wu(n) way (or) another" "mus(t have) been"

* "for these" Insert the vowel in "these" and "those" when they are out of position in a phrase



Phrase Sentences 2

We are sure that this equipment will be sufficient for ordinary purposes.*

We think that the machine ought to have been* serviced at the end of last month*.

The revised rules have been listed in the new staff handbook.

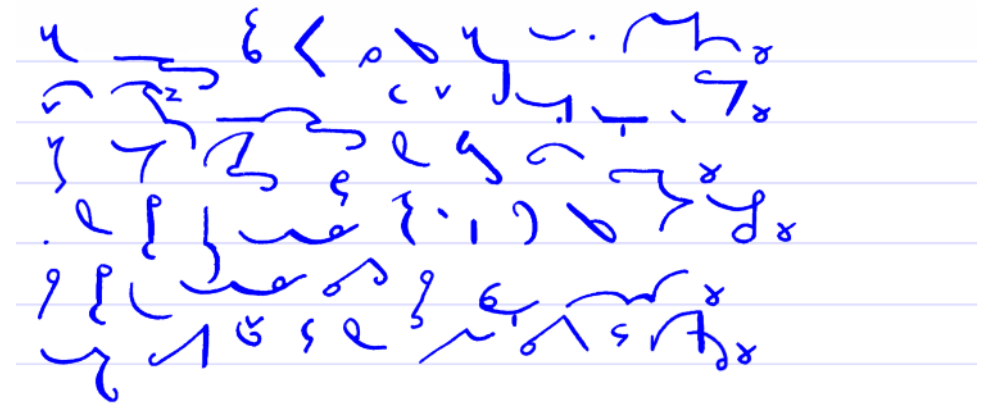
They will take effect* from the end of next month* at the earliest.

The new legislation took effect* from the beginning* of January last year.

It would appear that the person responsible will not be charged for the damage.

* Omission phrases "ordinary (pur)poses" "ought (to) have been" "ne(k)s (t mon)th" "from the (be)ginn(ing) of"

* "take effect" "took effect" Only in certain phrases, normal outline for "effect" is full strokes. Do not use for "different effect" as that would clash with "defect". This method is never used for "fact", see examples in Para 4.



Phrase Sentences 2

I have come to the conclusion* that this job is the best I have done in a long time.

My employer came to the conclusion* that I needed to go to college.

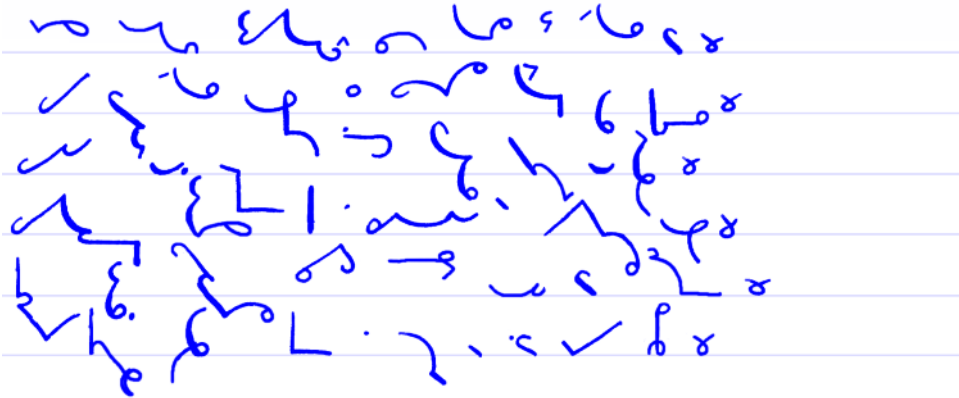
I think the only logical conclusion* is that the staff ought to have been* more careful.

The staff said that it was nothing of the sort* and that they all did their best in the circumstances*.

He said that if anything of the sort* happened, he would let us know immediately.

Now and then* we do find that the staff are not happy with the holiday arrangements.

* Omission phrases "come (to the con)clusion" "came (to the con)clusion" "logi(cal con)clusion" "nothing(of the) sort" "anything (of the) sort" "now (and) then"



Phrase Sentences 2

I must inform you that we have found some faults with the office building.

We believe that the office next door* has more or less* avoided these difficulties.

We would need to take action over this before the end of this month*.

We have concluded* that they must do a certain amount* of repairs next month*.

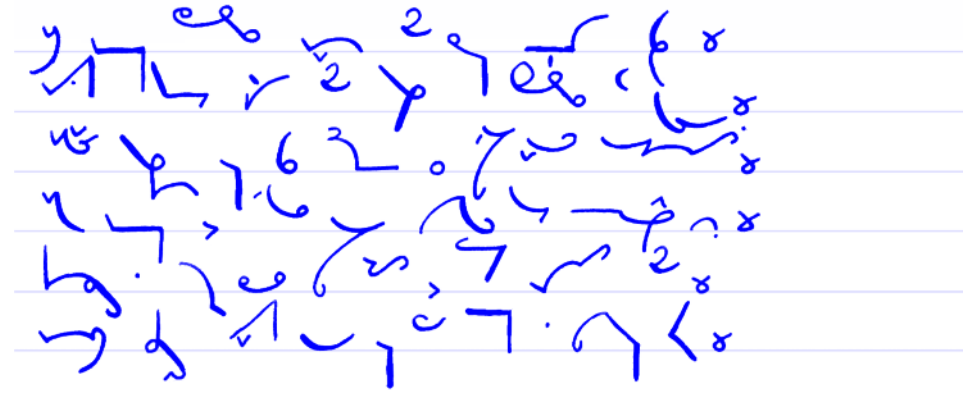
It would appear that these* problems happened because of the new building work.

It appears that this will take a year or two* to complete to our satisfaction.

* Omission phrases "ne(k)s(t) door" "more (or) less" "this (mon)th" "We have (con)cluded" "certain (am)ount" "ne(k)s(t) mon)th" "year (or) two"

* "for these" Insert the vowel in "these" and "those" when they are out of position in a phrase

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Phrase Sentences 2

I wish to get as near as possible* to my shorthand speed goal this month*.

I read back the whole shorthand passage as soon as possible* that evening.

I find the best time* to do this work is not later than* nine in the morning.

I have to get to the office no later than eleven for the council meeting.

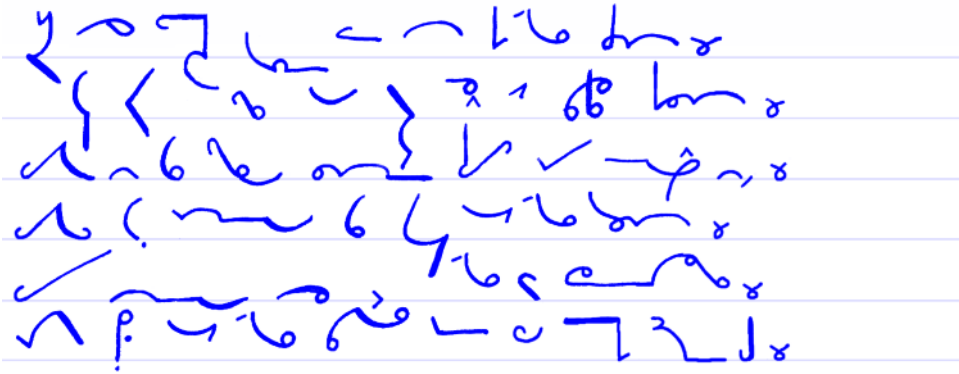
It must have been* a year or two* since I went to the college to learn shorthand.

I am sure it has been the right thing to do in order to* get a well-paid job.

* Omission phrases "as near as poss(ible)" "this (mon)th" "as soon as poss(ible)" "bes(t) time" "it mus(t have) been" "year (or) two"

* "not later than" Insert the vowel, to ensure it is not misread as "any later"

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Phrase Sentences 2

I shall be most grateful if you can call me at the office at some time*.

They had job opportunities in both the accounts and the sales departments at the same time*.

We have met this person some time ago* at one of our council meetings.

We have been thinking of making this change in the office for some time*.

We are making improvements to the office building as quickly as possible*.

I will be staying* in the office as long as I can in order to* get the work done.

* "at some time" "at the same time" "some time ago" "for some time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

* Omission phrases "as quickly as poss(ible)" "in ord(er to)"

* "staying" No diphone, as the I sound is deemed to be part of the Dot Ing. It is also helpful to insert the vowel in "sit" "stay" and their derivatives, to prevent misreading for each other



Phrase Sentences 2

It is most important* to get down all the facts* and names in order to* write a full report.*

It seems important* to mention that the managing director will be at the meeting tomorrow.

It seems to me* that this meeting will not be an easy one to make notes for.

Many times during the meeting they spoke too fast for the writer to keep up.

I think it is almost impossible* to write longhand at that fast rate of speaking.

It appears to me* that the staff member did a good job of taking the notes. (1188 words)

* Omission phrases "It is most important" "It seems important" "It seems to me" These three must be differentiated, so break the phrases as shown

* Omission phrases "almos(t) impossible" "all the (f)acts" "in ord(er to)" "full (re)port" "certain (am)ount" "it appears (to) me"