



www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand-lessons.org.uk

www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand-reading.org.uk

www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk

Images & Text © Beryl L Pratt

Blogs - 2020 - December

2 Not Responding

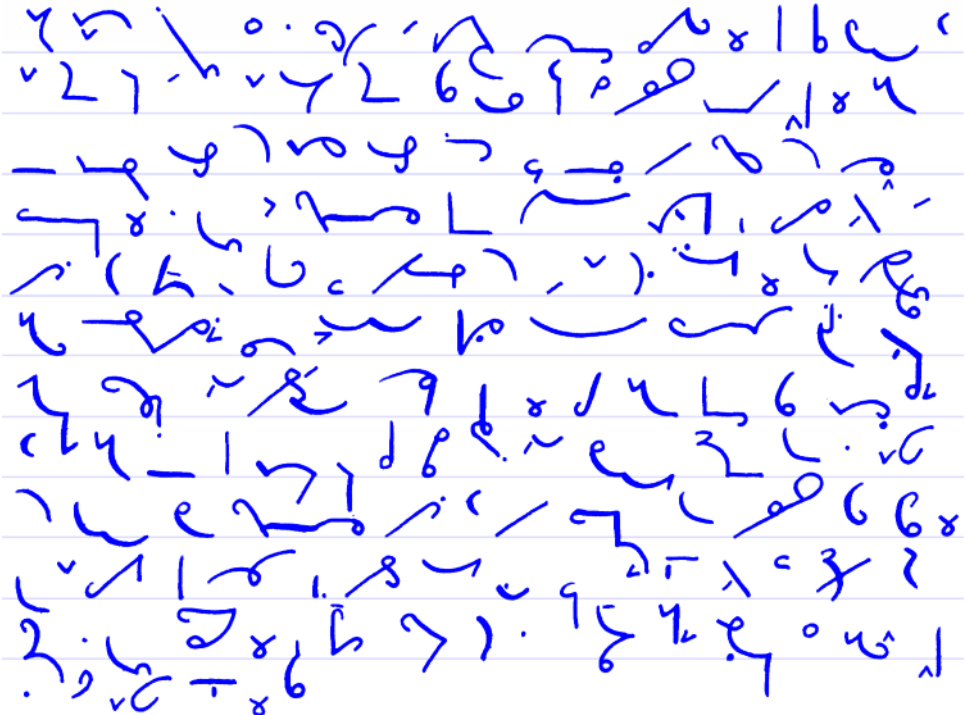
4 Paint Pots

8 Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

11 Dear Mr Christmas

All material is copyright Beryl L Pratt and may not be republished, or reposted online, in any form. This file is intended for non-commercial personal study use only. The only permitted download site for this file is <https://www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand-reading.org.uk>

PDF Date: 22 December 2020

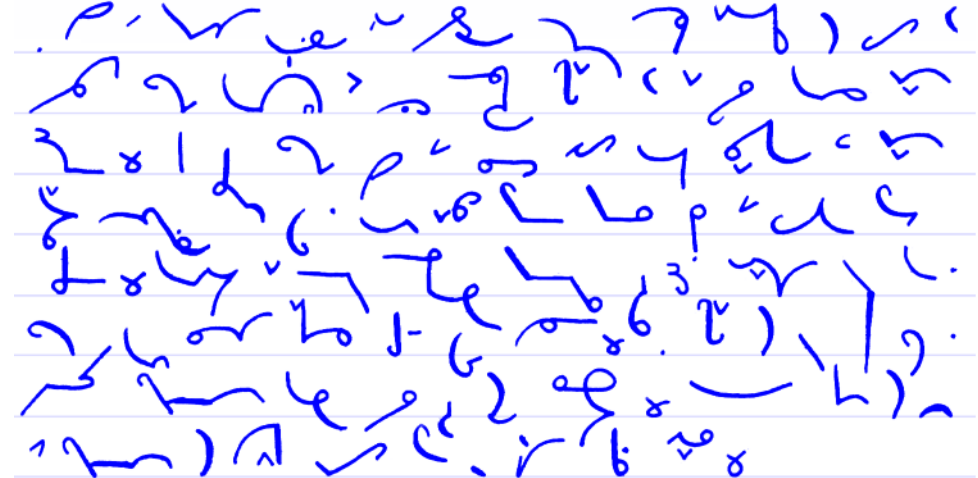


Not Responding

I think of my computer as a friendly and helpful mechanical servant. It does everything that I ask of it and I only ask those things that it has the resources to carry out. I have come to expect instant, or almost instant, action when the keys are pressed or mouse clicked. A few of the programs take longer to load, but once up and running they jump to attention when requested, or should I say commanded. For the last few months, I have been experiencing some annoying delays in their normal attentive obedience, and have had the frustrating "Not Responding" message

displaying. Generally I have taken this to mean that I have given it too much to do at once*, such as not saving the work for a while, or having several programmes running that are greedier for resources than others. If I waited, it mostly* did respond in the end, when it caught up with what was required, although there were a few crashes. But this tolerant approach was a false idea of safety, as I found out a short while ago.

* Omission phrase "at (u)ns"



Not Responding

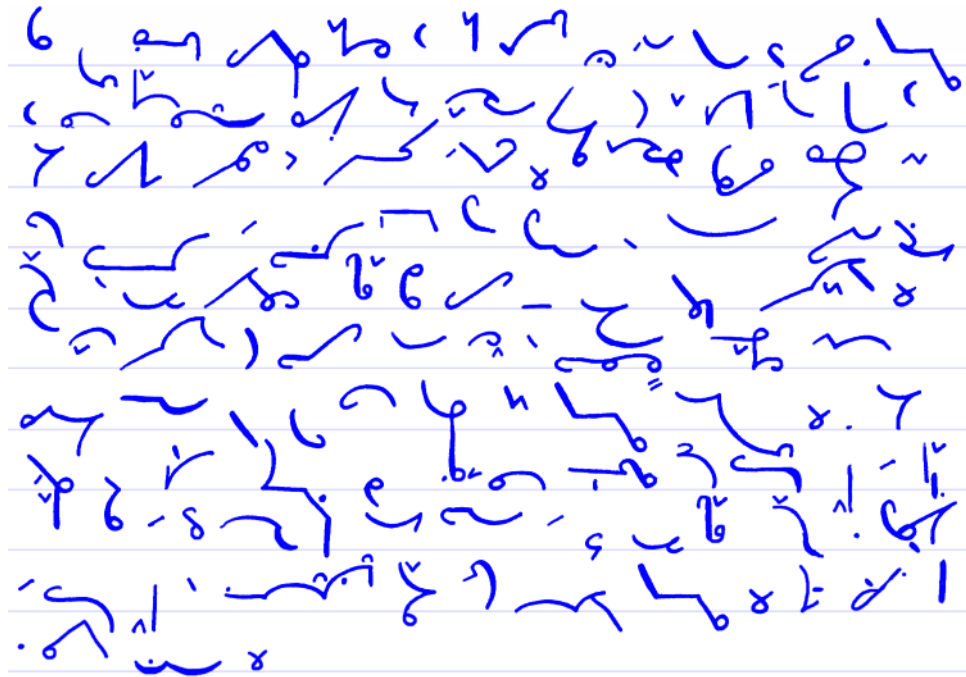
The last and apparently innocent* Not Responding error message I noticed was one that resulted from the failure of the main external drive that I use for most of my work. It disappeared from the list on the screen and went into hiding, with all my files imprisoned within a now silent black box sitting on the shelf over the desk. Fortunately I keep extensive* backups but these were not entirely up to date* for a very few small items done within the last week. The drive was put through a recovery programme for several hours but that was not successful. Another attempt

was made, and the programme was allowed to run over two whole days and nights.

* "innocent" "insane" These need the second vowel written in to prevent misreading

* "extensive" "expansive" Helpful to insert the vowel after the T or P, as these are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrases "up (to) date" "las(t w)EEK"

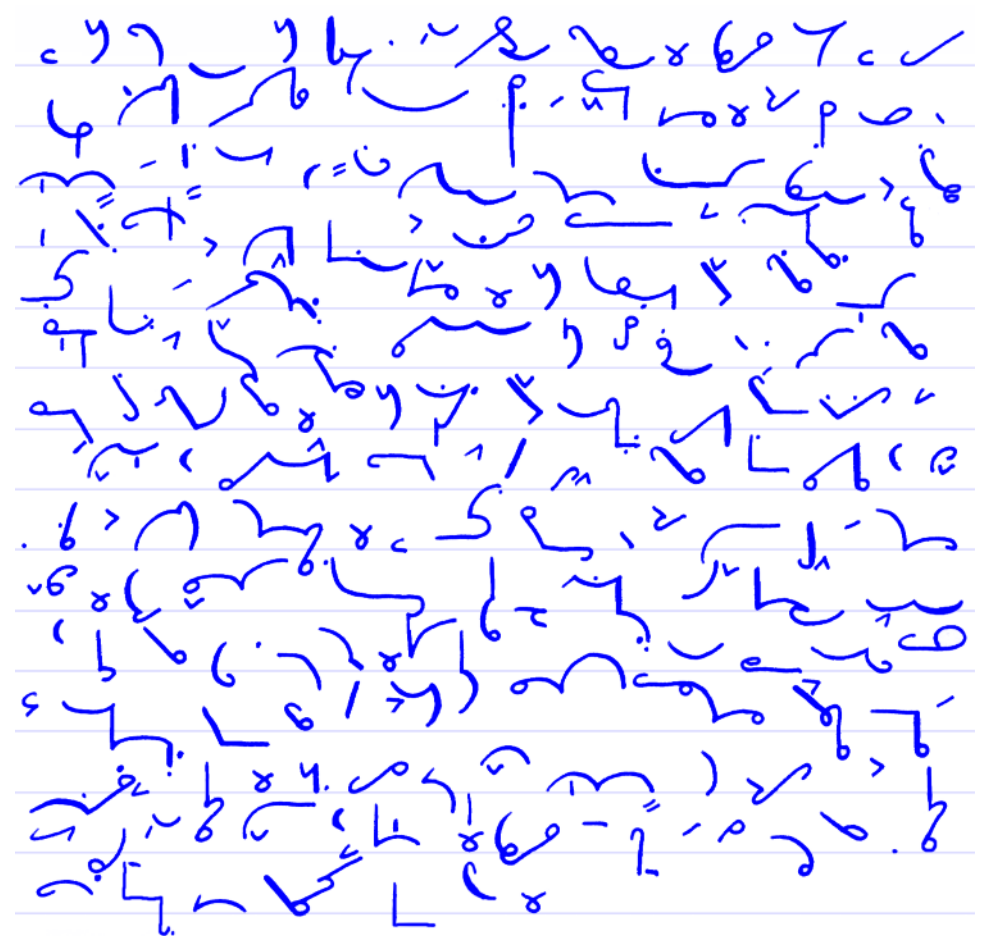


Not Responding

Those few scattered website items that I had altered meant not being able to use the backups without some time-consuming searching for the minor changes, so I held off doing that until we had the results of the recovery operation. I am glad to say that* this was successful and I very quickly and eagerly copied over everything to another unit, pending the arrival of new replacement drives, as this one could no longer be considered* reliable. My relief was greater than any amount of Christmas

excitement and I am certainly going to be even more fastidious about backups in future. The only upside to this whole escapade is that some cupboards were cleared out and tidied, and plants moved in the garden, and, when the new drives arrived, an overhaul and clear out of accumulated files and their multiple backups. So the story had a happy ending.

* Omission phrases "I am glad (to) s(ay) that" "be (con)sidered"

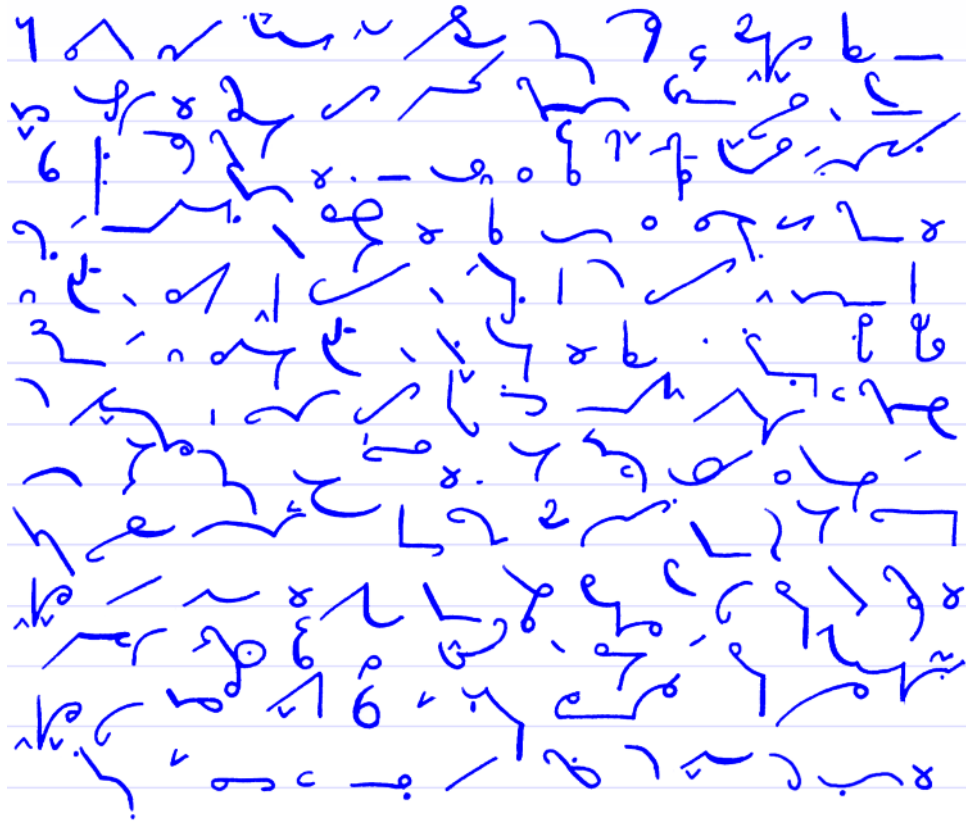


Not Responding

When I was very young I was definitely a Not Responding person. This was only when we visited older relatives in their sedate and quiet homes. I would sit next to Mum and Dad in the old-fashioned living room, vaguely listening to the conversations but paying more attention to the loud ticking of the ancient clock on the mantelpiece, with its occasional tinny and reverberating chimes. I was fascinated by the brass coal scuttle and the fireplace implements hanging on their stand, consisting of a little brass scoop, pan and brush. I was enchanted by the intricate wood block pattern on the lino that surrounded the carpet, and the large round

brass tack heads that lined the edges of the leather armchairs. When occasionally spoken to, I would look down and remain silent. They would smile affectionately at this cute and endearing shy demeanour, knowing that it would pass within a year or two. It was similar in school infant classes, with the intimidating big buildings, large noisy classrooms, boisterous kids and imperious teachers. I did once hear my Mum say to one of the teachers, "She's* not like that at home!" This was quite true, and as the years passed, the more talkative home behaviour took over.

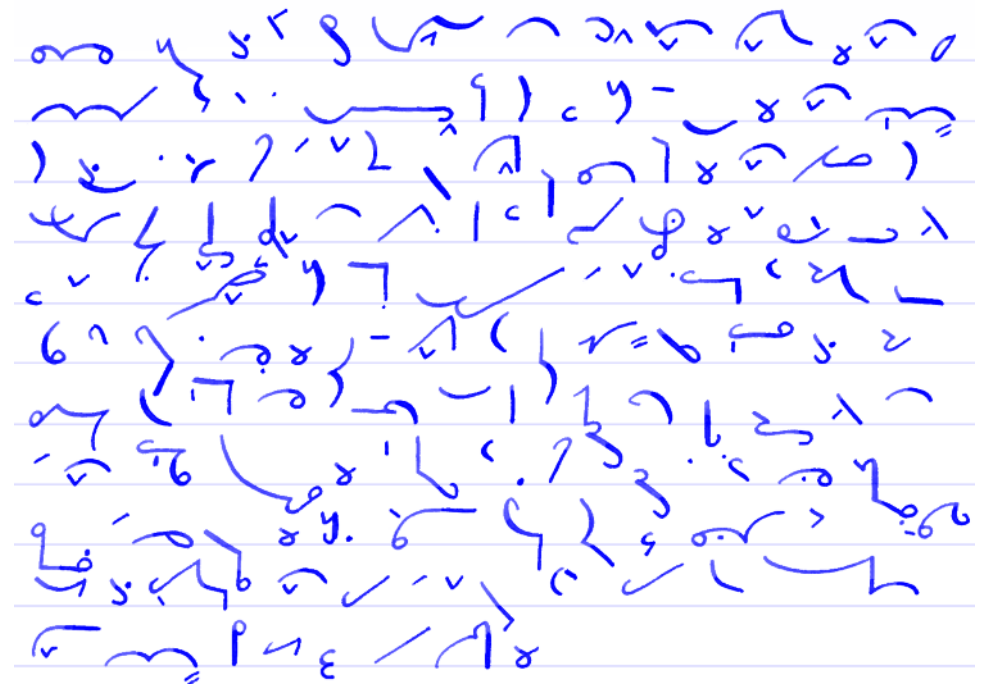
* "She's" Apostrophied phrases should always have their vowels written in



Not Responding

I do hope you are avoiding the "Not Responding" error message when the shorthand outline does not come to mind instantly. There is only one recovery programme that you can use to overcome this data access problem. The good news is that it is tried and trusted, virus and malware free and guaranteed to be successful. Its name is simply "Practice". You don't have to search out where to obtain it or wonder how to make it work, and you certainly don't have to pay for it. It is not a complicated set of instructions or requirements, but merely one type of

action carried out repeatedly, with progressive improvement until the error no longer occurs. The only hardware necessary is pencil and paper, using material taken from the shorthand learning book, so that only correct outlines are written. Reading book passages several times over will speed up the process. Regularity and persistence with this is the foundation of skill and speed, and eventually the outlines will almost write themselves on the notepad as quickly as the letters appearing on the screen when keys are pressed, or writing your own name. (848 words)

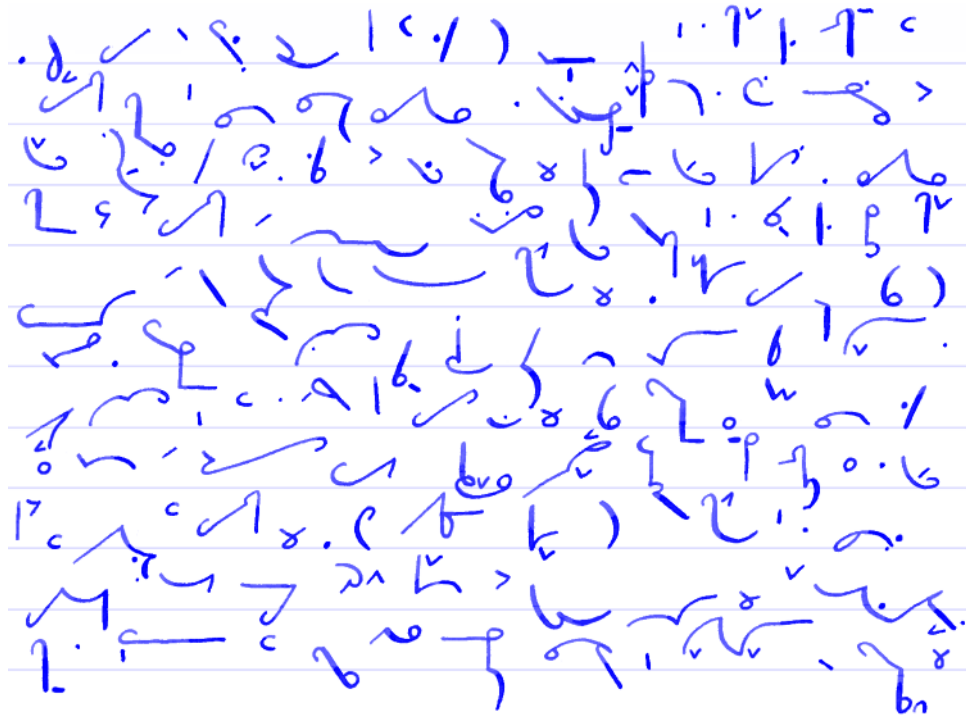


Paint Pots

Sometimes I feel that the* Paint Pot has been following me around all my life. My first memory of an encounter with it was when I was quite young. My mum was painting an old chair and I asked to be allowed to do some of it. My request was unfortunately gently declined, despite me repeating it with greater insistence. I soon gave up when I realised I was getting nowhere and I concluded that I would have to give this particular project a miss. She was quite right, though, it was oil-based gloss paint, I would certainly have got myself covered in it and it would have been* very difficult to clean up me and my clothes afterwards. On top of that, the chair would have been *a complete mess* of drips, streaks* and missed bits. I didn't*

sulk over it, especially when the smell of the solvent in the paint wafted my way, and I put the thought away for another time, like Mum said, "when you are older."

- * Omission phrases "I fee(l) that the" "it would (have) been" "would (have) been"
- * "that, the" Never phrase over a pause
- * "mess" "mass" Helpful to insert the vowel for this context
- * "streaks" "strokes" Helpful to insert the vowel for this context
- * "didn't" Apostrophied phrases always have their vowels written in

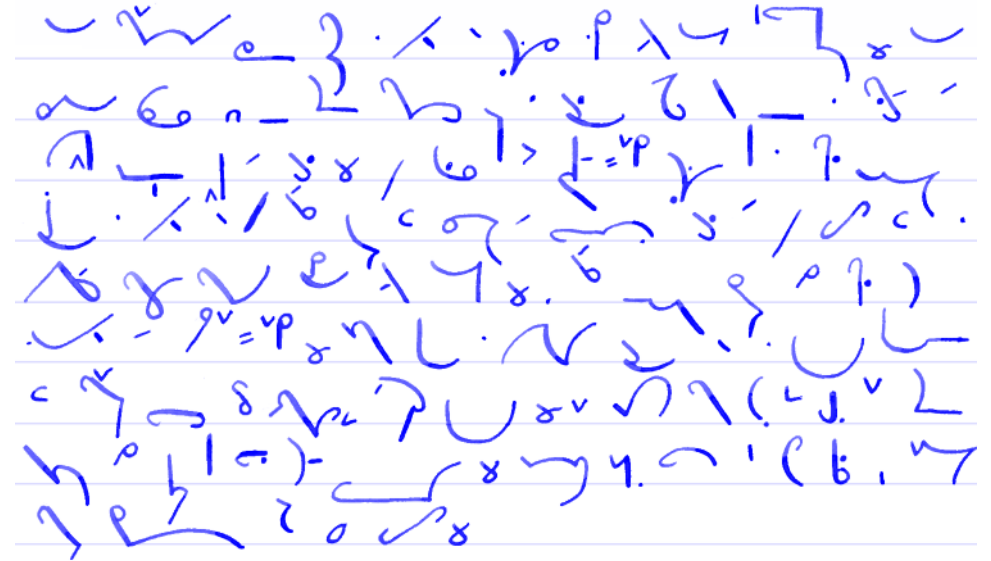


Paint Pots

The easiest way of playing painting at that age was to go outside on a dry day and draw with water drips* on some smooth surface, a paving stone or a flat expanse of the fine asphalt which lined the edges of the paved paths. It was great fun turning the surface dark with the water and making patterns, even better on a hot day, as it would dry quickly and be available for another drawing. The ideal way to do this was to use the plastic lemon juice container, which was made to look just like a real

lemon but with a stopper at one end. This product is about the same age as I am and I wonder whether the designers realised that it would be sought and treasured as a fun toy when refilled with water. The other artistic delight was drawing on a steamy window in the kitchen around the time of the evening meal. I invariably drew a clock with numbers and hands, because it was simple but lifelike to produce.

* "drips" "drops" Helpful to insert the vowel



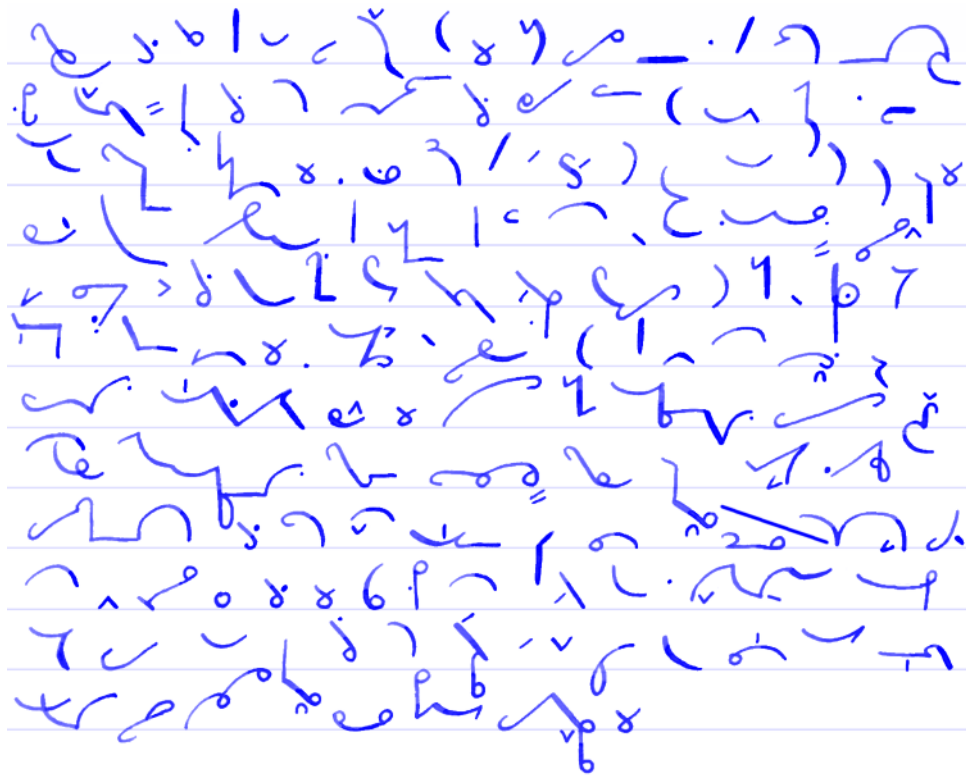
Paint Pots

In primary school there was a row of easels set up in the corridor. In certain lessons you could* ask permission to do a painting, and then be given an apron and allowed to go out and paint. Each face of the double-sided easel had a tray underneath containing a row of large pots filled with smooth and creamy* paint, and each one with a robust bristle brush standing up in it. The pots could not be spilled as the tray was narrow and high sided. I remember doing a lovely painting of a fish tank, with

bright green plants and brilliant orange fish. I also remember thinking, why didn't I ask before, as the teacher had agreed so quickly. I am sure I did more on other days, but I only remember the subject matter of that first one.

* "you could" Not phrased, so that it does not look like "you can"

* "creamy" Insert the final vowel, as "cream" could also make sense



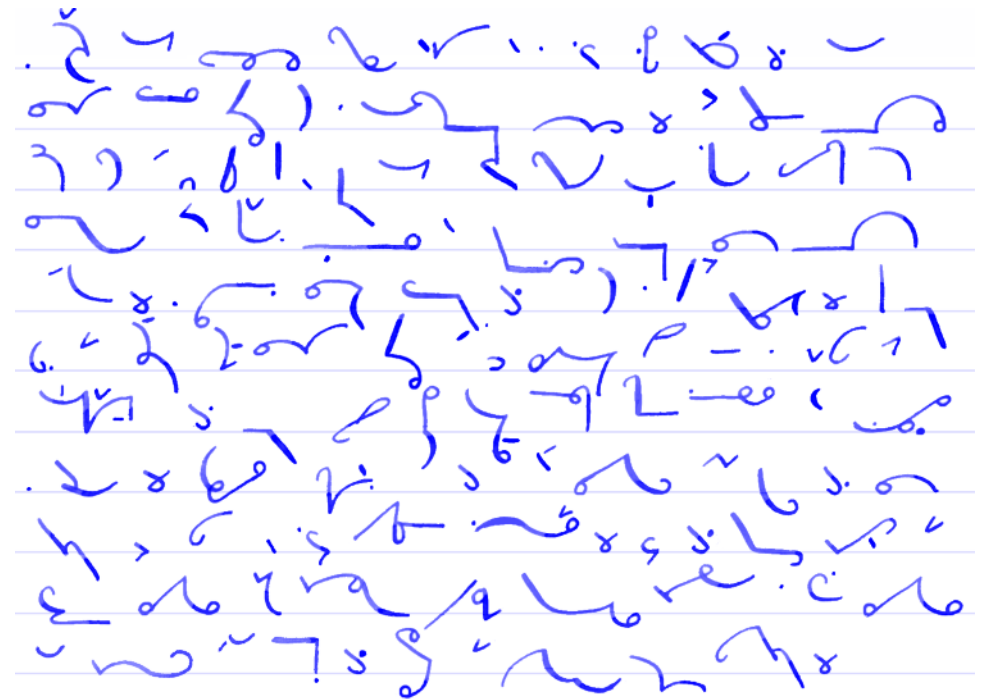
Paint Pots

Personal paint pots had not yet arrived though. I was once given a large and very colourful set of fibre-tipped pens, or marker pens as we call them now, and it was a great novelty product at the time. The ends were large and blunt, so filling in was easy to do. Soon after receiving it, I took it with me to Nanny's house, but the screeching of the pens being dragged over the paper upset everyone, so I had to desist until I got back home. The enjoyment of using them had made me immune to that normally unbearable sound. Later on I had the indescribably* wonderful, delightful, magnificent and fantastically perfect

Christmas present of tubes of real artist's watercolour paint from my uncle, who had some weeks earlier shown me how to use his paints. This set me up for a lifelong interest in them, whether in tubes, pans or bottles, and I still have some in the cupboard, unfortunately used less and less* since starting the websites.

* "indescribably" This contraction includes the "-ly" version in the basic outline, but in this case it is essential to differentiate and add the L stroke, as both could make sense

* Omission phrase "less (and) less"



Paint Pots

The arrival in the Christmas present haul of a complete set of poster paints in small glass jars was an unforgettable moment. All the basic colours were there, and you just had to dip in the brush, no adding water or scrubbing hard tiny cakes* of pigment to get some colour off. The silky smooth gloopy paint was a joy to behold*. It could be* thinned on the saucer, so the small jars would certainly last quite a while, and the undiluted paint could be used as it was, for those* extra dark accents that enhance* a painting. This was truly* paint pot heaven and I even pinned some paper to the wall, to complete the artistic ambience. When the paint began to run on the vertical surface, I think I must have* reconsidered the benefits of using a flat surface, not to mention not getting paint splashes on the living room wallpaper.

* "cakes" "cookies" Insert the vowel in these, although here not likely to be misread

* "to behold" Based on the short form phrase "to be", likewise "to behave" "to become"

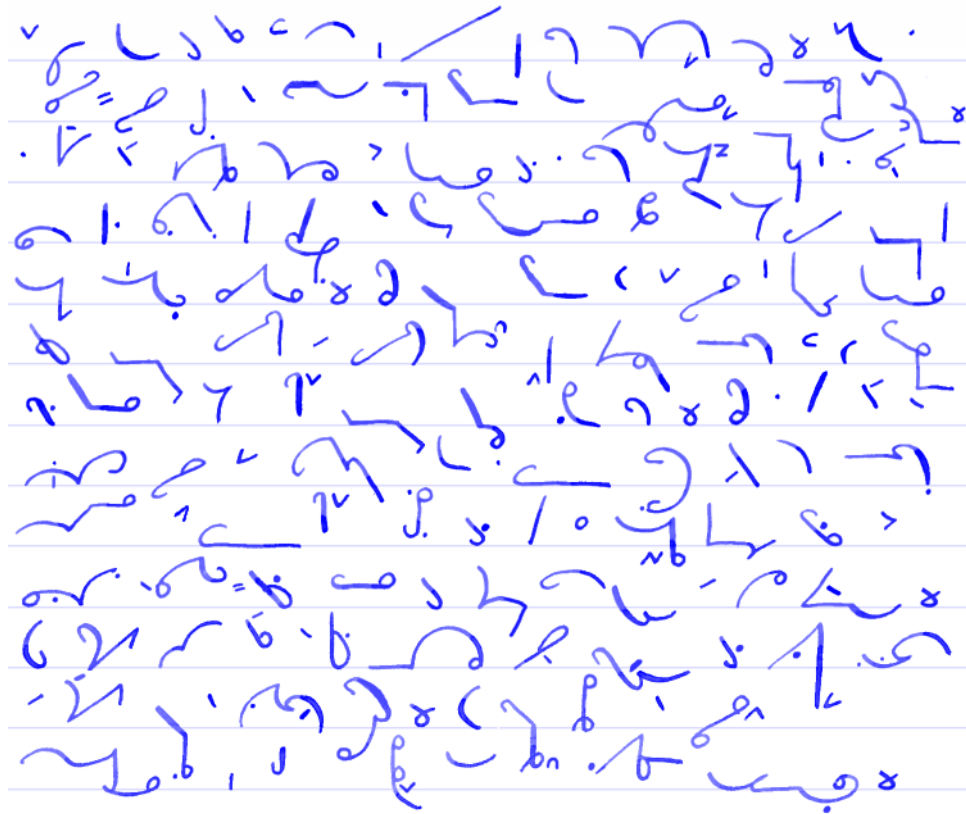
* "could be" Not phrased with the previous word, so it does not look like "it can be"

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

* "enhance" Note the clockwise circle of the Hay. An anticlockwise circle here would represent N + S + Ray.

* "truly" "utterly" Always insert a vowel, to prevent misreading

* Omission phrase "I mus(t) have"



Paint Pots

I still have paint pots with me, but rather different from earlier years. I have a half-used tin of garden gate black for miscellaneous external ironwork. A tall pot holds the remains of the fence paint, a very enjoyable activity on a hot summer day, slapping it generously all over the planks, as that is the only way to get it into the uneven surface. There is bitumen black that I use on top of the fence posts to keep the water and weather out, which must be* covered with old plastic bread bags until dry, to keep the birds safe from it. There is a large pot of emulsion used on the wallpaper for a quick freshening up or

paint which has nowadays taken the place of the smelly solvent based gloss paint, so much more convenient and less choking. Then there are the little pots of tester colours, rust proofing paint, radiator enamel and assorted bits of leftover varnishes. They produce the satisfaction of house maintenance but do not satisfy any artistic inclinations.

- * Omission phrase "which mus(t) be"
- * "so much" Includes the M stroke in order to join the phrase, likewise "very much" "how much"

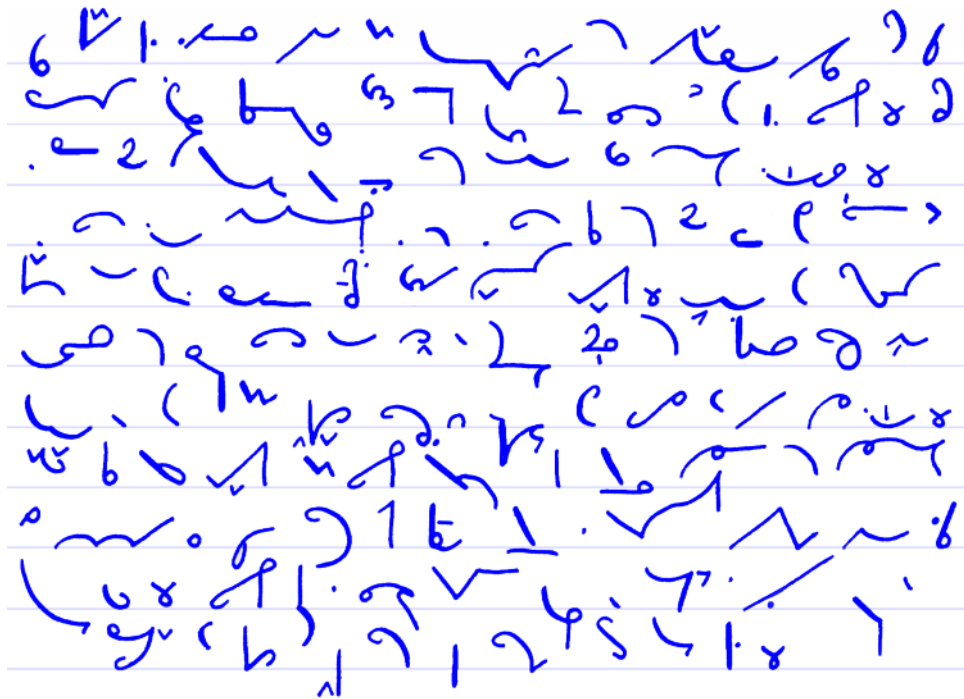


Paint Pots

My most enduring paint supply is the one in my painting programme on the computer and that can be done for fun when time permits, using the graphics tablet and its pen. The colours never run out, progressive versions can be saved, or none of it saved, and there is nothing at all to clean or clear away. It is the ultimate in convenience, but

can never replace the pleasure of dipping a brush into a paint pot and depositing the glorious pool of colour on the paper. Now you know why I use red, purple or green ink for the shorthand, as it is the nearest thing to playing with paint whilst doing the website material. (1111 words)

Blank lined area for notes or additional text.



Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

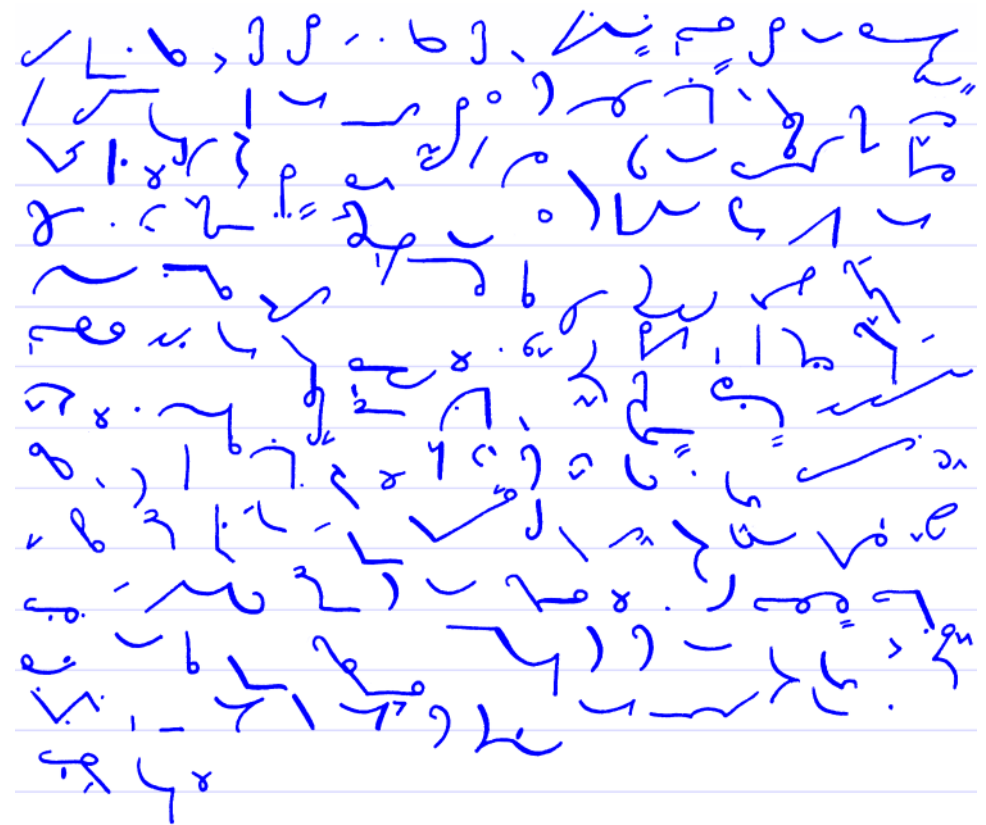
These Diary Day articles are not about vocabulary or revising rules, they are just normal conversational descriptions that you would get if you asked someone what they did yesterday. There is a significant shorthand benefit to be gained from anything that is mainly common words. The more common and uninteresting the word, the more it is your shorthand gold, as they occur all the time in every single utterance that you are likely to write. Knowing them perfectly increases your speed more than any amount of so-called short cuts or advanced phrases, and not having to think about the outlines frees you to deal with the other ones that are less common. I find it best to write about yesterday before it

becomes last week* or last month*, as the memory is still fresh and it doesn't* become a polished report ages after the event. Yesterday it was a simple park visit, to enjoy a rare bit of sunshine, that turned out very different from the plan for the day.

* "descriptions" The Contraction is used only in the singular, as adding a Circle S would look like "discourse" which is similar in meaning

* Omission phrases "las(t w)eek) 2las(t) month"

* "doesn't" Apostrophied phrases always have their vowels written in



Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

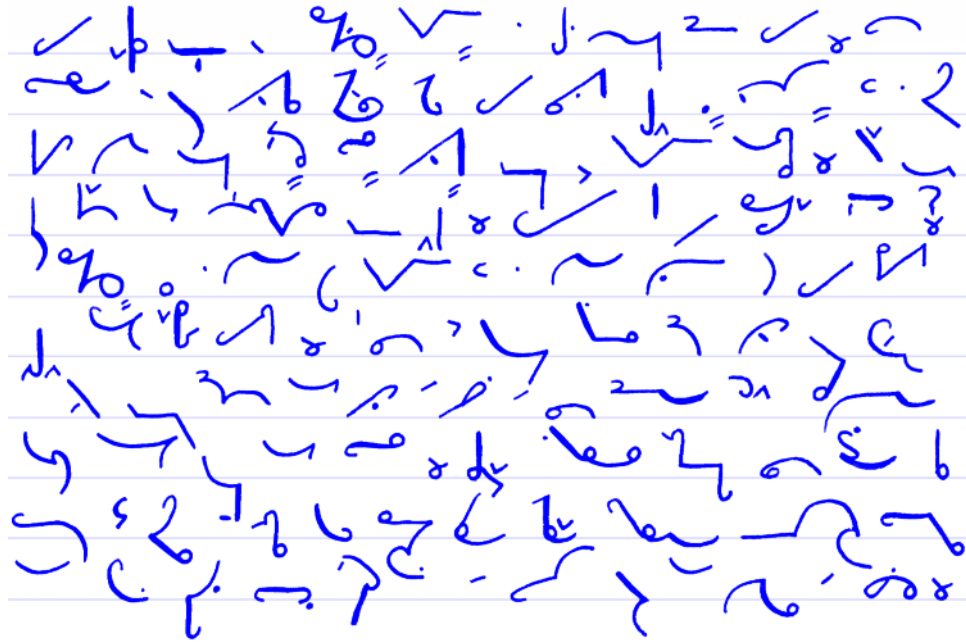
We took a bus to the train station, and a fast train to Charing Cross Station in Central London, which we can confidently do in the current situation as they are mostly* empty of passengers during the main part of the day. Although the City is now much less busy than in normal times, there is still* a lot of traffic, and there is no such thing as dashing over the road in the longer gaps between cars, it is still essential to use the proper* crossings and wait for the pedestrian signal. A slight shower started but it remained bright and mild. A minute's walk led to Trafalgar Square, and we were not surprised to see it empty of people. I had thought there might have been a few wandering around but the

steps were taped off, and big barriers had been put round both fountain pools, whilst cleansing and renovation work was in progress. The usual Christmas crib scene, in its big perspex cabinet, was there in full view of the higher parapet, but could only be enjoyed through zooming in the camera for a close-up photo.

* "mostly" Omits the lightly sounded T

* Omission phrase "there is s(t)ill"

* "proper" Insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriate" as they are similar in outline and meaning



Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

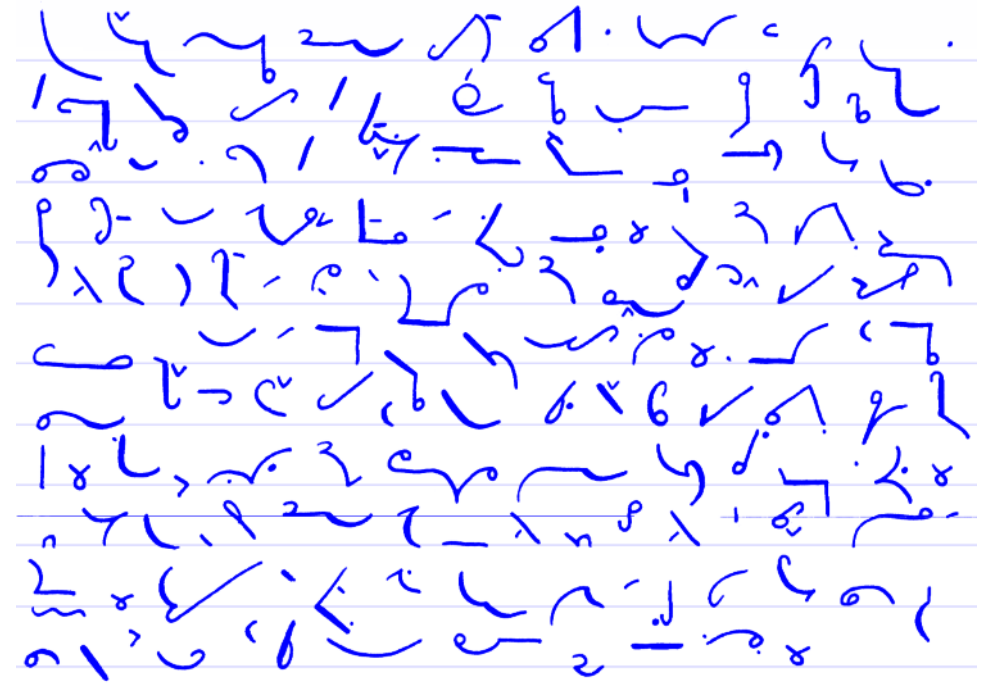
We decided to go to St James's Park, a ten-minute walk away. More crossing of busy roads and junctions, and then we headed down The Mall*, with a sharp turn left into Horse Guards Road to get to the park entrance. By now it was time for the umbrellas to come out. Where had our sunshine gone? St James's is a long thin park with a long lake, so we started down the north side of the water. On some of the bench backs were lone pigeons, fluffed up to keep warm in the rain and resting, and some walking around looking for their natural food* in the grass. Despite the

absence of attractive summer planting, it is clear that the shrubs and trees have been skilfully chosen and designed, presenting colourful groups in every shade of green, orange and yellow, both in leaves and stems*.

* "The Mall" Dot The is used, rather than Tick, as it is part of the name

* "food" "feed" Helpful to insert the vowel

* "stems" "stumps" Helpful to insert the vowel

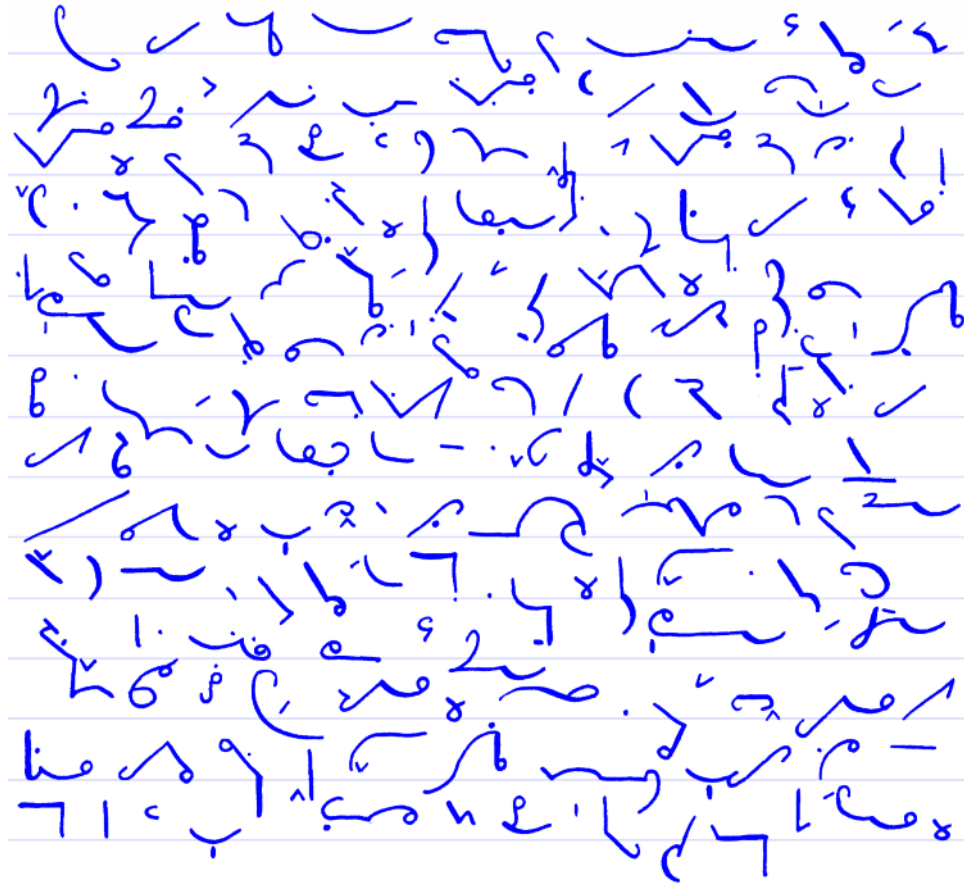


Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

After five minutes walking, we saw ahead a family with children feeding a large crowd of birds, one large juvenile swan with its neck stretched towards someone's hand, a very large gaggle of black coots gathered for the feast as it was thrown in, and various ducks and Egyptian geese. Pigeons were helping to clear up whatever was dropped, and lots* of seagulls were scouting around, who are always the quickest to dive in and get bits before anyone else. The gull that gets something cannot fly away without being chased by

others, who are hoping he will drop it. Adding to the melee were the squirrels looking for their chance to get a share. You only have to stop walking and they come up to you, stand up on hind legs and "ask". They were all chubby and fat, having lived and eaten well over the summer, but they seemed to be of the opinion that just another snack would not go amiss.

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



Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

Further on we noticed another group of people interacting with the birds and heard the shrill shrieks of the Ring Necked Parakeets that are becoming more common in our parks. People were standing around with their arm outstretched, and the parakeets were landing on them, eating either a handful of seeds or pieces of apple. It was fascinating to see the dainty way the parrots ate the apples, taking little bites and chewing on the juicy pulp. There was some squabbling over position, some landing on people's heads and one or two sitting* comfortably on shoulders, as it is a firm and easily gripped perch from which they cannot be toppled. We watched all this in fascination for quite a while, despite the

rain having become rather heavy. No amount of rain, colourful umbrellas or people walking by was going to put the birds off getting the food*. It was like a bird version of playtime at an infants school, with the shrieking, squawking and jostling, as well as the constant flutter of wings. Amongst the pigeons on the ground, wings are the defence weapons, spread out like shields to make sure no-one else can get in, with no qualms about standing on top of each other to get at the offerings.

* "sitting" Always insert the vowel in "stay/sit" and their derivatives

* "food" "feed" Helpful to insert the vowel



Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

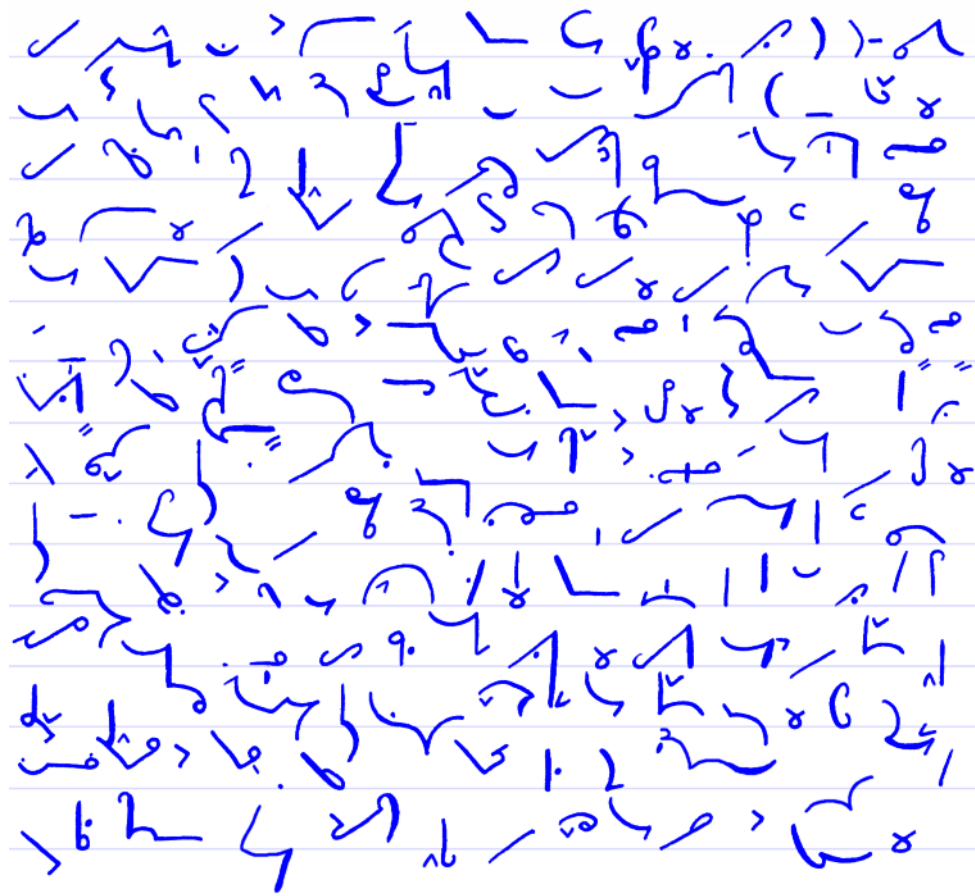
We moved on, making our way to the west end of the lake, with the roof of Buckingham Palace visible just ahead, as well as the gilded statue on top of the Victoria Memorial. We saw a group of runners come down the sloping side path, obviously army* personnel on a training exercise, running through the now even heavier rain. I felt like a delicate hothouse plant, protected from the weather, as I was wrapped in multiple layers of clothing, hat,

gloves and legwarmers, while they only had tops, shorts and trainers on. They did not join up merely to stay* comfortable and dry, and lounging about in the warm.

* "army" Insert the final vowel, so it is not misread as "armed"

* "stay" Always insert the vowel in "stay/sit" and their derivatives

Blank lined area for additional notes or corrections.



Diary Day 7 - A Royal Park

We rounded the end of the lake and continued back along the other side. The rain was so heavy now that the few people about were standing under any shelter they could find. We pressed on through the downpour, dodging the rivers of rainwater streaming off the muddy grass towards the lake. Our hopeful plan from this morning, of sitting* with our sandwiches in the park, was now well and truly* washed away. We left the park and cut through to Whitehall, past all the government buildings and the two guards on horseback in Horse Guards Parade, past Trafalgar Square again, and finally back to the station. Although the rain had let up slightly, it was a relief to get in the dry of the concourse, and onto our train. It was quite a challenge to have our sandwiches wearing masks, but we

managed it with some careful positioning of the bread under the lower edge! Back home it had not rained much at all, and once indoors the coats went straight onto the radiator. We had enjoyed our time out, despite the downpours, and fortunately it was fairly mild for the time of year. Other than seeing the antics of the parrots, the best part of the day was the warming meal, which really put the day's dramatic change of weather out of our minds for the rest of the evening. (1223 words)

* "sitting" Always insert the vowel in "stay/sit" and their derivatives

* "truly" "utterly" Generally these would need a vowel to prevent misreading, but not likely to be misread in this common English phrase



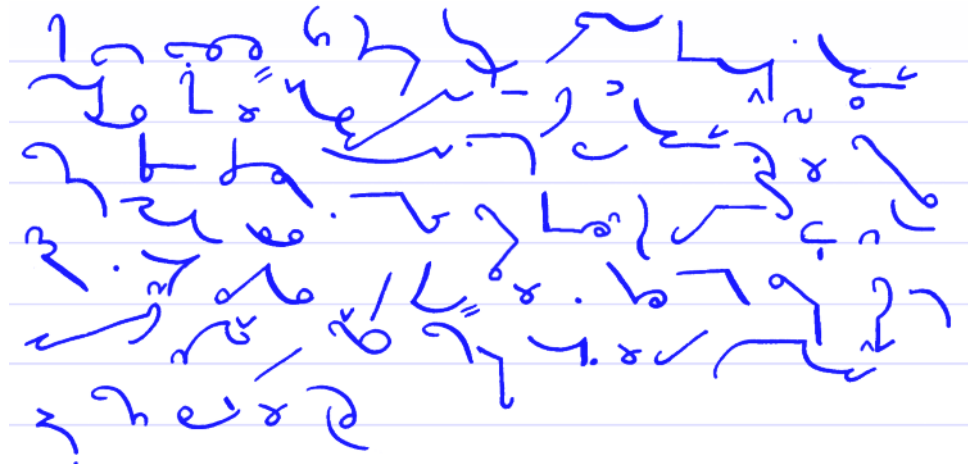
Dear Mr Christmas

All paragraphs are 100 words

Here are some hundred word letters to practise simple business words and phrases. They are short enough to be comfortable for speed pushing attempts and long enough to ensure writing from sound rather than memory. They provide the means of

speed increase, if each is prepared and then taken several times at increasing rates. I did once know a Mr Christmas at my place of work, but you will have to guess at the job that this one is engaged in. I hope this "gift" of practice material will "slay" hesitations and let you "fly" across the page this December.

Handwritten practice lines for the 'Dear Mr Christmas' letter, consisting of multiple horizontal lines for writing.



Dear Mr Christmas

Dear Mr Christmas, Thank you so much* for your enquiry regarding taking out a vehicle maintenance contract. I have to say that we are not* quite sure what vehicle you have, as from your description it seems to be neither car nor airplane. Perhaps you would be kind enough to send us a copy of the purchase documents so that we can quote you for an annual service each January. The payments can be spread

throughout the year and we are sure you will find our prices very competitive indeed. We look forward* to hearing from you soon. Yours faithfully

* Omission phrases "We look fo(r)ward" "I have (to) s(ay) that we are not"

* "so much" Includes the M stroke in order to join the phrase

Blank lined area for writing practice.



Dear Mr Christmas

Dear Mr Christmas, This is to confirm that we have now despatched our first consignment of animal feed* to you by special courier. We expect this to arrive within two days and you can track the container on our website, using the reference number above. We are confident this feed* will produce excellent results for your animals, with increased health and energy, especially important as you say

they are working over the festive period, and will also need special nutrition after the big event. We look forward* to supplying you throughout the year and thank you for your valued custom.

* "feed" Helpful to insert the vowel, as "food" also makes sense

* Omission phrase "We look fo(r)ward"

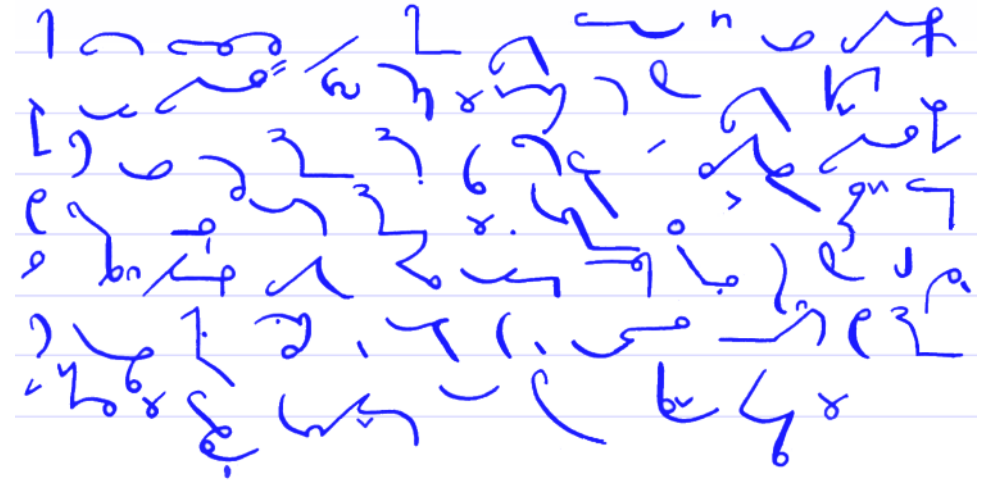
Blank lined area for writing practice.



Dear Mr Christmas

Dear Mr Christmas, We are writing to express our sincere thanks to you for your most generous gift to our postal* delivery team in your area, in consideration* of their impressive work of delivering so many letters this month*. It was truly* a huge task but our staff are well trained and we have very efficient sorting and delivery systems in place. As you say, it was a good idea to deliver one sack per country of origin, and this made it much easier for us and for yourself. We shall collect all ten thousand empty sacks after Boxing Day.

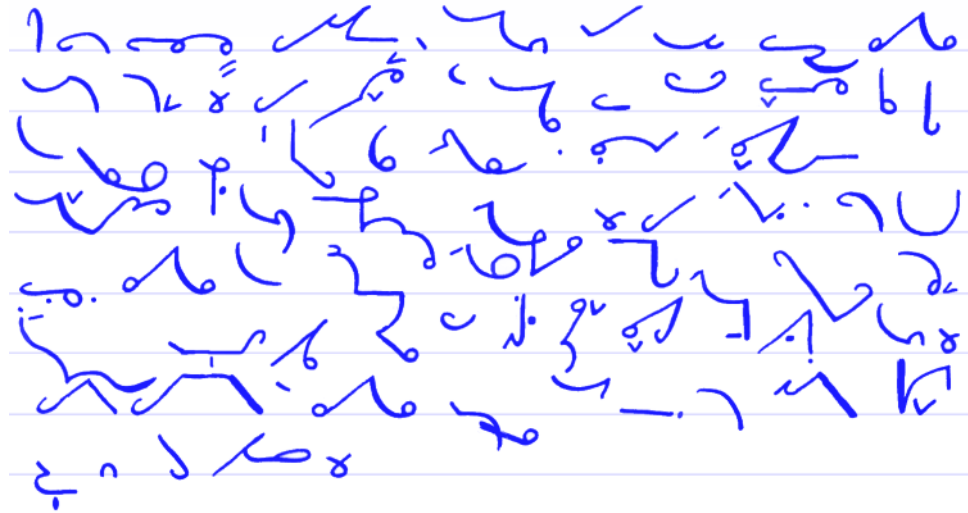
- * "postal" Omits the lightly-sounded T
- * Omission phrase "in (con)sideration" Keep the N stroke and position of the D clear, so it doesn't look like "under consideration"
- * Omission phrase "this (mon)th"
- * "truly" "utterly" Always insert the vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning



Dear Mr Christmas

Dear Mr Christmas, Our truck will be calling on you next Wednesday morning to deliver the new uniforms that you have ordered. I am sure your staff will be delighted to start their next year's work wearing these very comfortable and serviceable uniforms as they produce the goods in your workshops.

The fabric is of the highest quality and as requested we have included extra pockets so that staff do not lose their pencils and tape measures, to enable them to increase accuracy as they work on the items. Please let us know if you require any further design changes.



Dear Mr Christmas

Dear Mr Christmas, We would like to inform you of our new cleaning service in your area. We realise that in these cold northern climates* it is difficult for businesses to stay on top of this, and present a smart and hygienic environment for their customers and visitors. We operate a very efficient cleansing service for workshops, offices, accommodation and food preparation areas, conforming to current

hygiene rating for you. We hope* we can be of service to your business in the coming year, and would be delighted to quote you upon request.

* "climates" For the more unusual word "climes" put a wavy underline as a reminder

* Omission phrases "in ord(er to)" "we (h)ope"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Dear Mr Christmas

Dear Mr Christmas, Thank you very much* for your order for my photography services over the festive season. I have made many visits to your workshops in the last few months, and I will be present at your annual staff party on New Year's Eve. After that I can email* or post you a selection of photos* for your in-house magazine and private online community page, and then forward the high resolution files of your choice directly to both your publisher and webmaster. I was made very welcome and

I congratulate you on the enthusiasm and friendliness of your staff. (700 words)

* "very much" Includes the M stroke in order to join the phrase

* "email" Always insert the first vowel, to prevent misreading as "mail"

* "photos" Helpful to insert the last vowel, as "videos" is similar

Blank lined paper for writing practice.