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Blogs - 2021 - May

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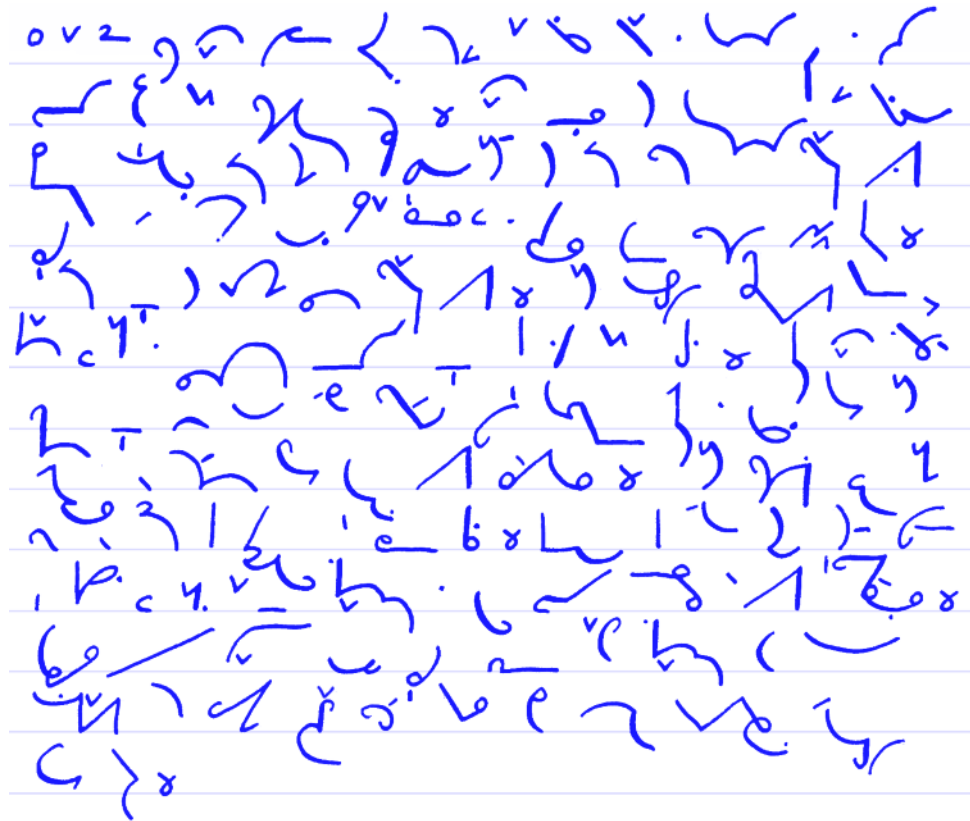
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PDF Date: 9 November 2022



Red Coat

As I walked through my local shopping area, I passed by a family who had a little girl with them, about three or four years of age*. My gaze was firmly on the paving, as it can be uneven here, so the first thing I saw was her very bright red shoes and matching knee high socks with a generous thick frill round the top. Her coat was also the same bright red. I was instantly transported back to the time when I had a similar coloured coat, at age about ten*. It was my absolute dream coat, made in soft brushed* wool fabric, and it was a feast for the eyes and fingers to roam over the vivid red surface. I was thrilled whenever I had the opportunity to wear it, which would not have been on school days. Taking it off was not so welcome, but at least* when I did I could* admire an even greater expanse of red gorgeousness. This was rather like new

shoes, you can either admire them in their entirety, or watch the delightful front parts as they move purposefully and confidently along the path.

* "three or four" See Theory website, Vocabulary Numbers page, for the range of these phrases

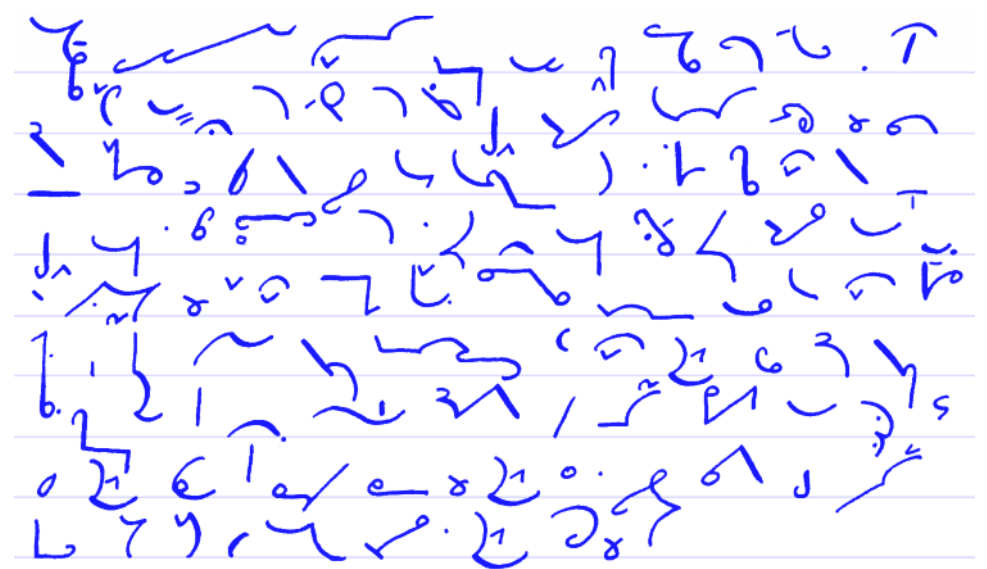
* Omission phrase "years (of) age"

* "ten" Always insert the vowels in ten, eighteen, tenth, eighteenth

* "brushed" The Ish goes upwards to balance the R Hook

* "at least" "at last" Always insert the vowel

* "I could" Not phrased, so as not to look like "I can"



Red Coat

In those days, we were not likely to get new outer clothes very often, the majority would be either hand-made, or swapped or passed down between family and friends. Some given items would just be used for the fabric, so an adult dress might be cut down into a child's garment, or a shirt made into aprons, which were always in need of renewal. I might* get the tiny scraps to make things for my dolls and teddies, but it was not long before I came to the conclusion* that my sewing efforts were better directed at improving my own* wardrobe, which actually started in secondary school. Sewing as a useful hobby did not really take off until I was old enough to use a sewing machine.

secondary school. Sewing as a useful hobby did not really take off until I was old enough to use a sewing machine.

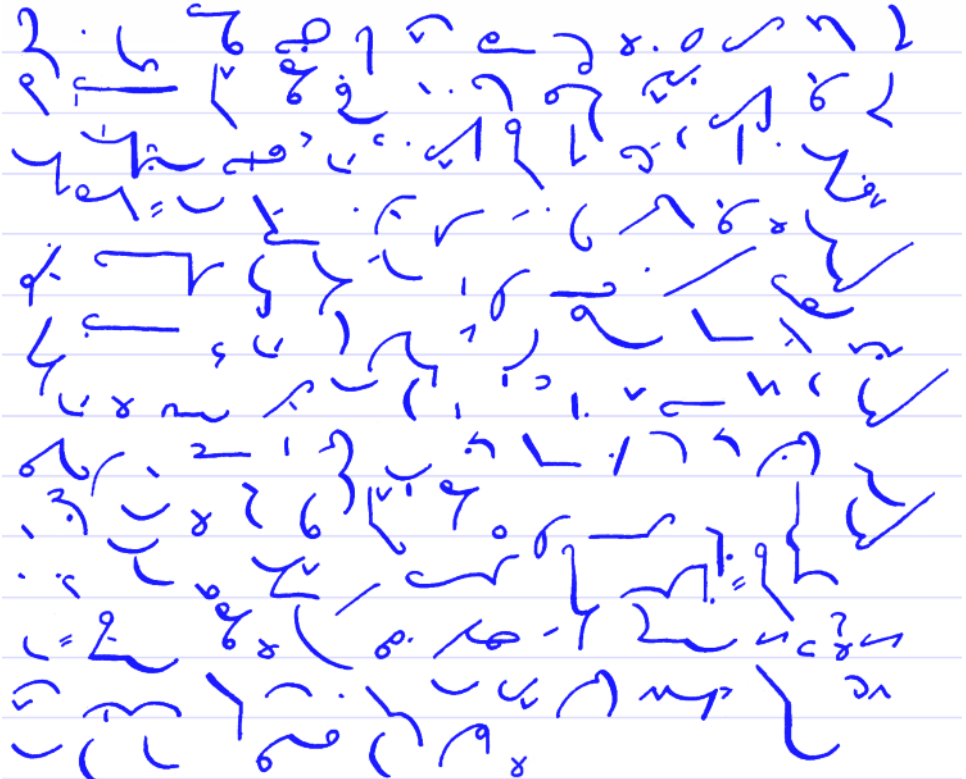
* "I might" Not phrased, so as not to look like "I may"

* Omission phrase "I came (to the conclusion)"

* "my own" Not using the N Hook, as that would be "mine"

* "earnest" Distinguishing outline, compare "erroneous" Ar + Ns

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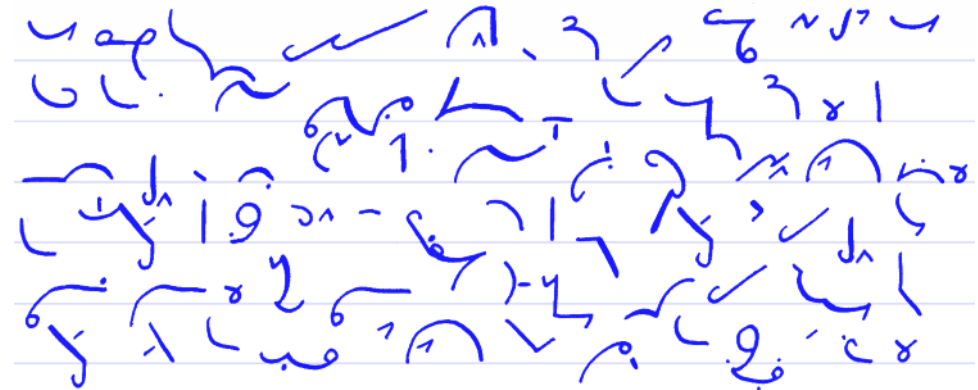


Red Coat

There were* a few clothes crazes during my school years. The first one I remember was the special clog type sandals, consisting of a very smooth lightweight wooden sole, shaped into the undulating curves of the foot, with a wide strap at the front, that had an ingenious snap-in buckle, a low heel and a thin rubber sole. If they were adjusted* correctly, they did not fall off, but still gave a rather pleasing gentle clack when the foot was lifted and the shoe sprang back up to meet the foot. You could not* run in them, but what did I care about that, they were heavenly to walk on and there was no hard back edge or hard leather to have to wear in. Although this

time they were a complete novelty to us, unlike our normal traditional multi-strap foot-hugging sandals. After hints, requests and asking "When?" my Mum bought me a pair in white leather, and I enjoyed padding around in them for as long as they lasted.

- * Omission phrase "there (w)ere"
- * "adjusted" Do not be misled by spelling, there is no D sound in the middle of this word
- * "You could not" This can be phrased, as "you cannot" is entirely different



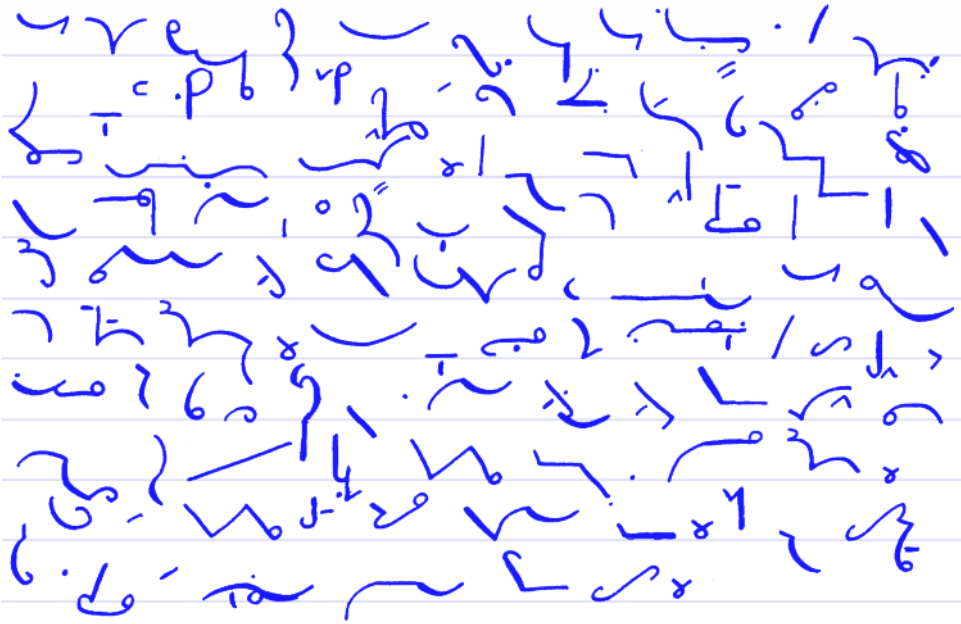
Red Coat

In the sixth form we were allowed to wear our own clothes and I joined in the fashion for a long sleeveless jumper coat, for indoor wear. It came down to mid-thigh and had a long woolly fringe round the lower hem. If unbuttoned, it swished around quite pleasingly*, or it could be buttoned all the way down for the sleek look. I was not sleek so I took the middle way of having the top buttoned up, for

neatness, and the lower part loose for swishiness and comfort.

* In UK schools, the sixth form are the two years of optional education, after the compulsory years are completed

* "pleasingly" Keep clearly through the line, as "pleasantly" is similar



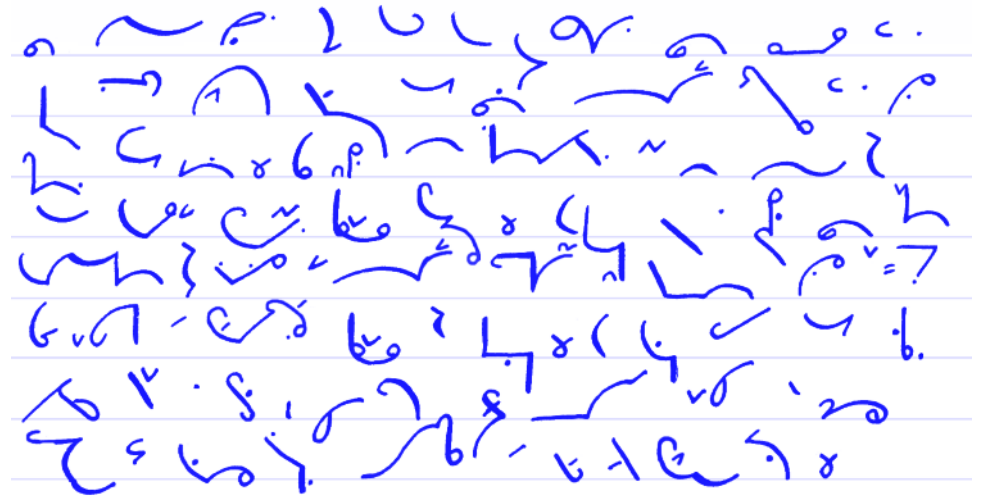
Red Coat

In the early seventies there was another brief fad for the Afghan, a large roomy sheepskin coat, with suede side outermost and very shaggy fur within, hence its nickname "Animal". It could have* kept out arctic blasts, being extra long, but as there were no buttons or toggles, it had to be worn hanging open, in order to be* fashionable without cooking in the spring or autumn warmth. Another coat craze was the maxicoat, which went down to the ankles, although this meant that there had to be a long opening up the back to allow

some movement, so that rather defeated the purpose of keeping the legs warm. But then fashion and purpose don't always belong together. I had to have one of those, a generous and imposing looking black one.

* "It could have" Not phrased, so it does not look like "it can have"

* "in order to be" The omission phrase "in ord(er to)" includes the "to", so there is no need to put the B through the line for "to be"



Red Coat

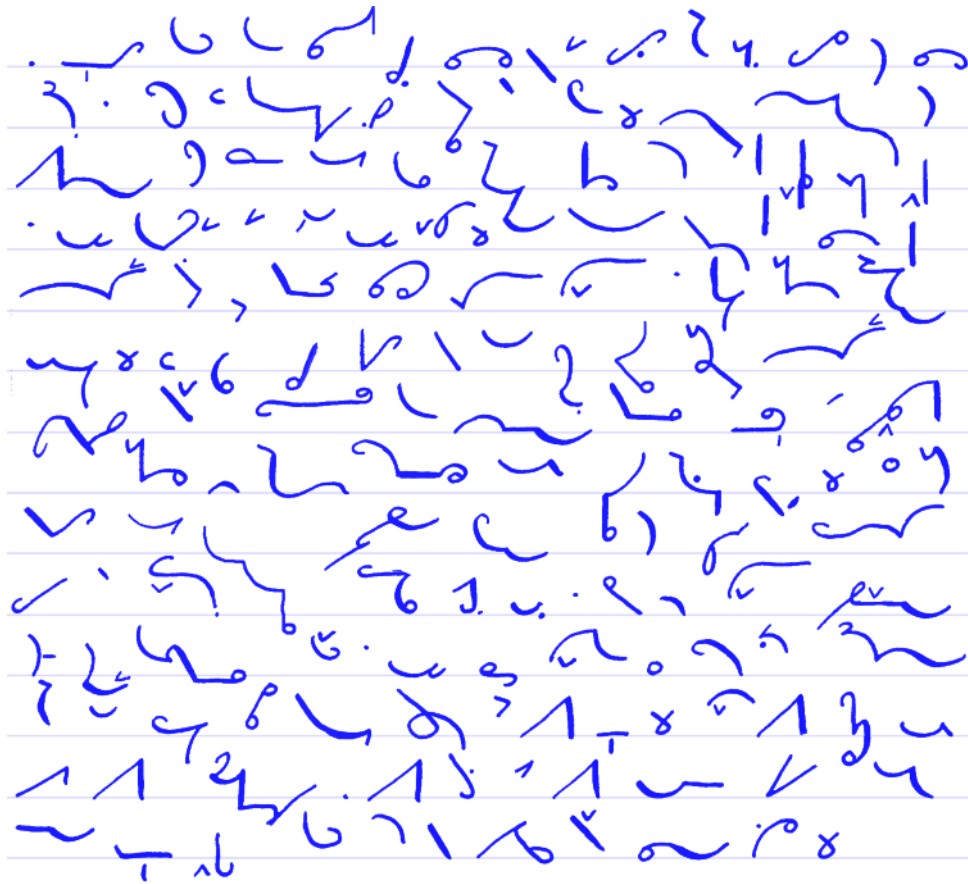
Somewhat longer lasting was the fashion for full swirly summer skirts with a deep gathered lower border in the same material, and perhaps with a lace trim along the hem. This suited me admirably and I made many of them* in various flowery designs over the years. They continued to be a staple summer item for a long time* although the patterns on the material gradually* became less eye-catching than the wild and floriferous designs of that decade. They faded away in the eighties, replaced by a

plain but still very boldly coloured style of women's clothing, with the famous padded shoulders and puffed up flowing hair.

* "many of them" Include the "of" sign; without it, this would be the omission phrase "many oth(er)"

* Omission phrase "for (a) long time"

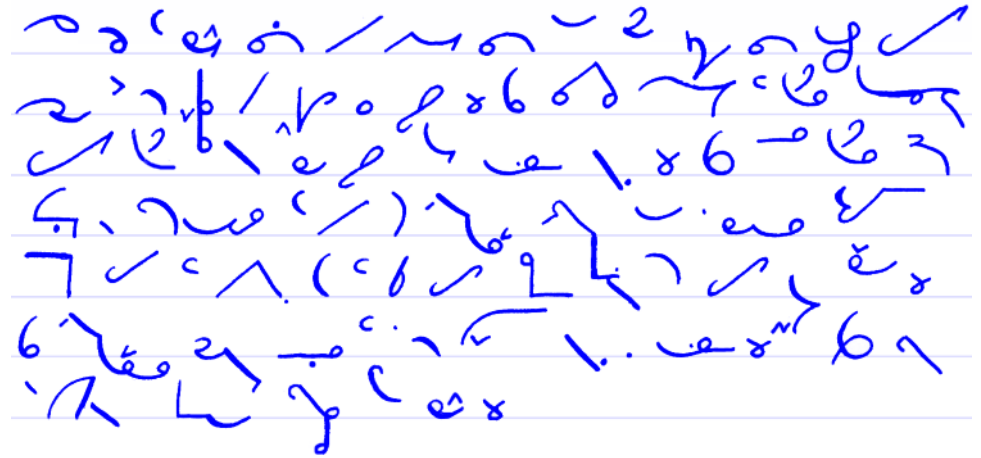
* "gradually" Uses full strokes, so it does not look like "greatly"



Red Coat

The current fashion for slashed jeans seems to be on the wane, although I did once see someone wearing a version with factory-stitched patches all over. Maybe the manufacturer was redeeming their stock in the face of changing demand, or had decided to try out a new variation on the "not new" style. Another pair had some different material patched to the back of the slashes to look like an additional item of clothing underneath. When these jeans turn up in thrift shops, I suspect the material will be used by crafters for making

bags, cushions and household items made of denim fragments in all shades of faded blue. As I was born in the fifties, reusing everything was still the normal way of acquiring clothes and did not need a special word like "recycling", so seeing fabrics find a new second life is very heart warming, although not nearly as much as being the possessor of the red coat. My red treasures now are the red shorthand dictionary, the red pen and the red ink, which are never going to go out of fashion or be replaced by something else. (1026 words)

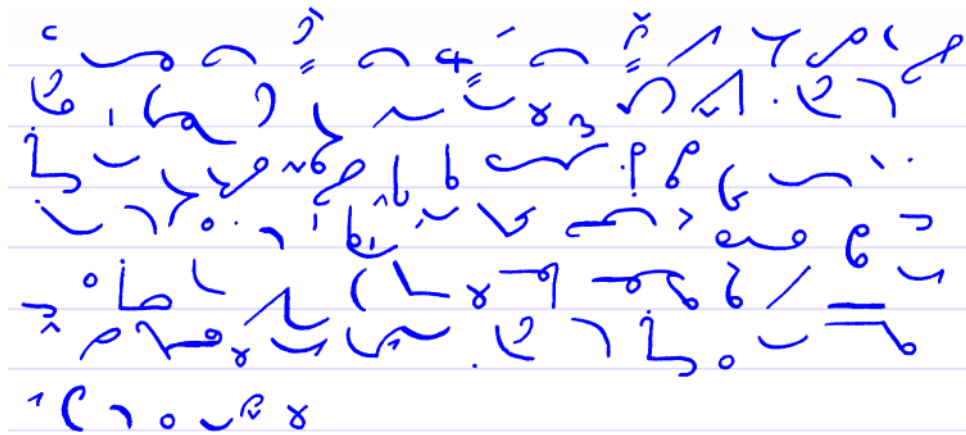


Same Sounds 4

Most words that sound the same are written the same in shorthand, but there are some instances where the meaning of the word decides which outline is used. This happens mainly with short forms, for example where the short form "be" is not used for the insect "bee". This is because short forms were allocated to very common

words that are so obvious and predictable in a sentence, that we can get away with representing them with just one stroke or one vowel sign. This obviousness would not be the case with a word like "bee" the insect. This is the principle of legibility taking precedence over sound.

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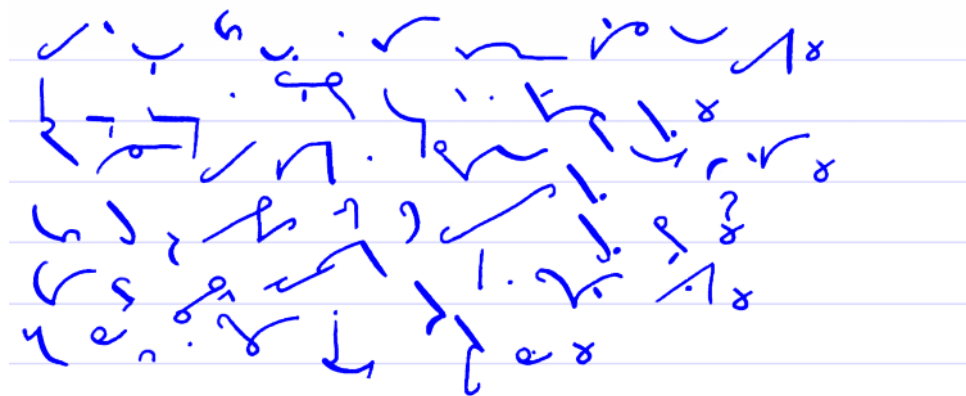


Same Sounds 4

With names, Mr Short, Mr Gold and Mr Child are the only ones that use the short forms, but they must have their vowels written in. You would also write a short form or contraction in full if it was used out of its normal setting, such as within the name of a company, or as a word on its own, not part of the grammar of the sentence, as

these cannot count as context* for reading them back. Extra examples of this are given in the last paragraphs. In the following, the short form or contraction is in caps and the other word is underlined.

* "context" Never use proximity for this "con", as it can easily be misread as "text"



Same Sounds 4

We ALL know that you need an awl to make holes in wood.

It would BE good to get a close-up photo of a bumble bee.

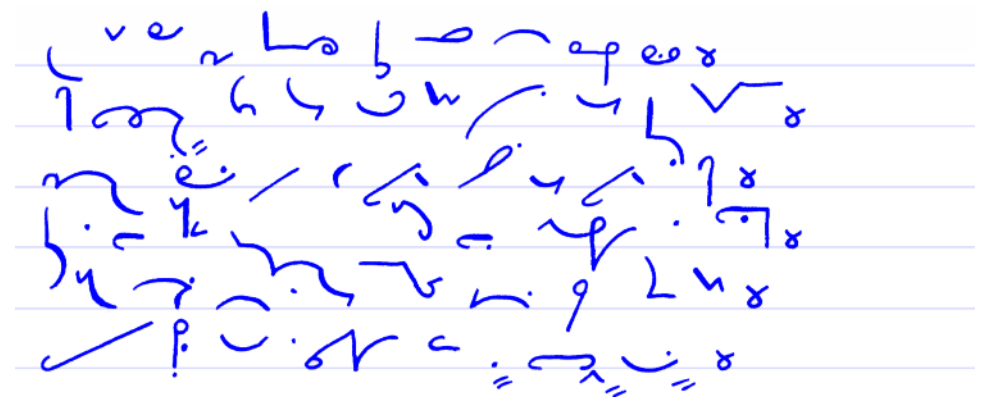
Last week* we held a Spelling Bee in the old hall.

Have you BEEN to that restaurant and tried their wonderful bean soup?

They will BUILD the house and we will be billed at a very low rate.

I have SENT you a parcel containing the bottle of scent.

* Omission phrase "las(t w)eek"



Same Sounds 4

If I sent you the documents, it would cost me sixty cents.

DEAR Mr Smith, thank you for the information about the litter in the deer park.

YOU may have seen our old ewe resting under the yew tree.

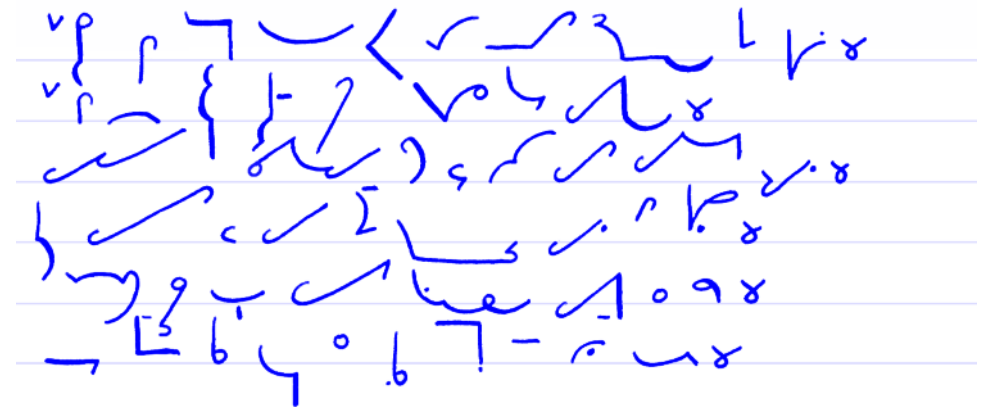
It was a GREAT idea to remove the iron grid and install a grate.

I have emailed* HIM a copy of the hymn he asked about.

We are staying IN a hotel called The* Crown Inn.

"emailed" Always insert the vowel, as otherwise it is the same as "mailed"

* "The Crown" Not using Tick The, as the word is part of the name



Same Sounds 4

I said that TILL* I get another job, I will carry on working at the till.

I TOLD him that they had tolled the church bells for the wedding.

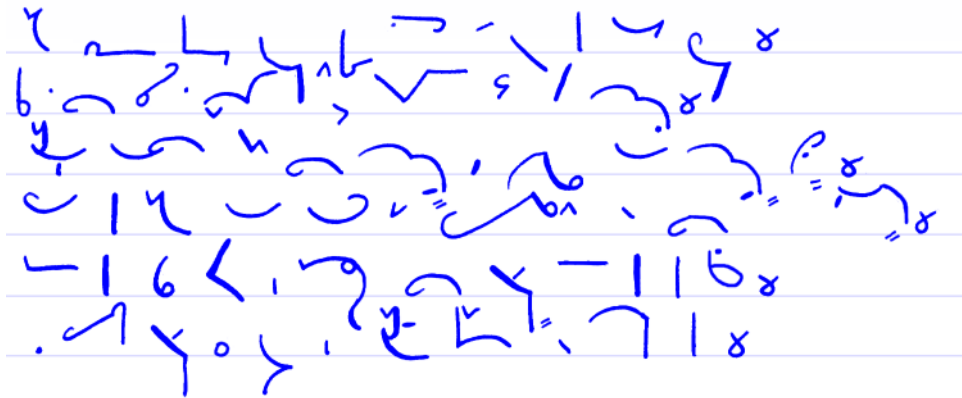
WE were halfway there when the little one wanted to wee.

It was wonderful when WE saw the picture of the wee child at last.

I am sure he WOULD know where the fencing wood is stored.

Give the dog ITS food, as it's getting quite late now.

* "till" This word means the same as "until" but it is not an abbreviation of it, therefore it does not need an apostrophe at the beginning



Same Sounds 4

I think you CAN take the food out of the can and put it in the fridge.

It is a MERE half a mile to the park with the large mere.

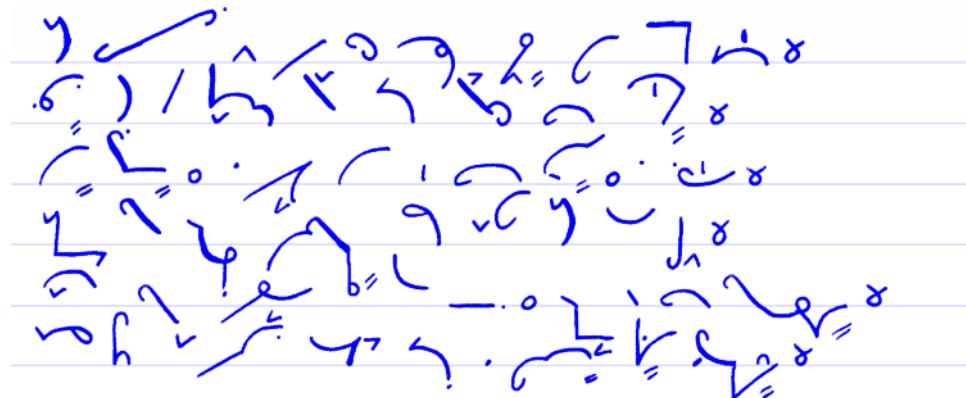
I don't know any MORE about Mr Moore who lives in Moor Lane.

NOR do I have any information on the whereabouts of Mr Knorr.

I can do this job BUT I must say that* Mr Butt can do it faster.

The water butt is full BUT I don't have time to empty it.

* Omission phrase "I mus(t) say that"



Same Sounds 4

I was wondering HOW our friend Mrs Howe will get home.

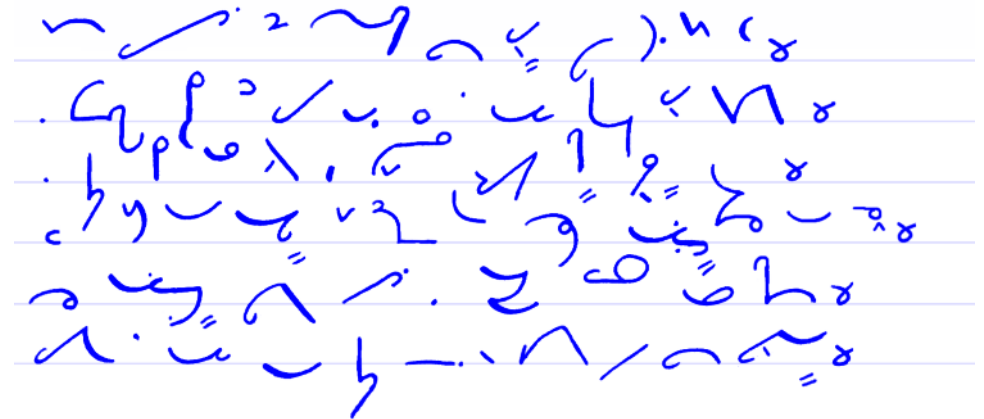
Sally was MUCH admired by her boyfriend Mr Mutch.

LORD Black is a real LORD, but Mr Lord is a commoner.

I took the LIBERTY of visiting Liberty's store while I was in town.

My PRINCIPAL reason for coming is to talk to Mr Principal.

I must TELL you, I really enjoyed hearing the William Tell Overture.



Same Sounds 4

I am wondering WHAT the manager Mr Watt will say about that.

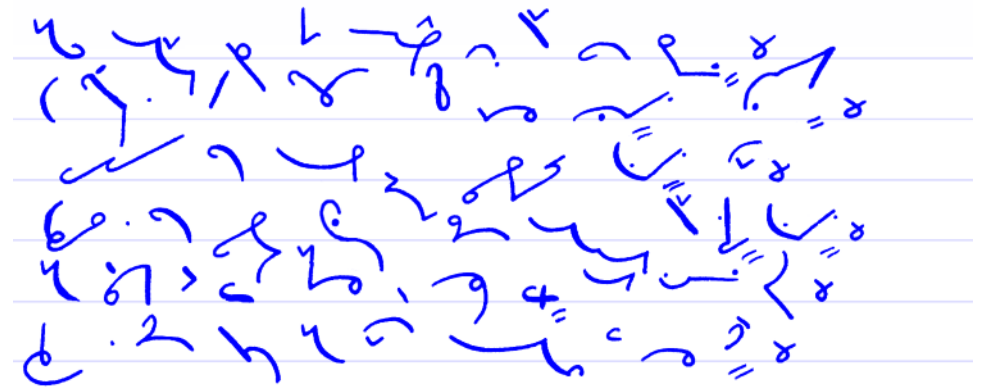
The electrician said that WHAT we need is a new twenty watt bulb.

The teacher said, hands up WHO likes to watch Dr Who films.

When I was in ENGLAND I worked for Mrs England in accounts.

Miss English will be running the ENGLISH language classes next term.

We have a new YOUNG teacher coming to help our Mr Young.



Same Sounds 4

I have been invited to SPEAK at the council meeting by Mr Speke.

They brought a LARGE parcel addressed to Miss Mary Large.

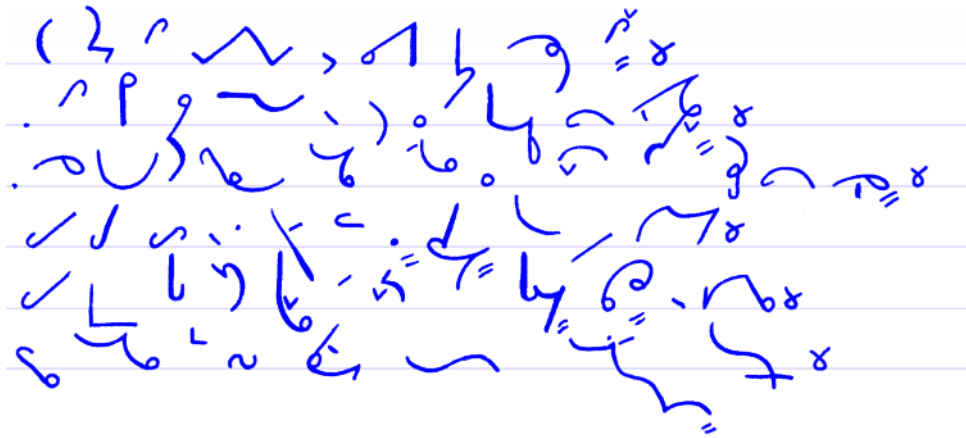
We were VERY interested to hear the history of the Very light.

This was a VERY useful flare system invented by Edward Very.

I have sold all the GOLD items to Mrs Gold in the antique shop.

It is only a SHORT time* before I have my interview with Miss Short.

* "short time" The halving is doing duty for both T's



Same Sounds 4

They asked the CHILD to report to the head teacher Mrs Child.

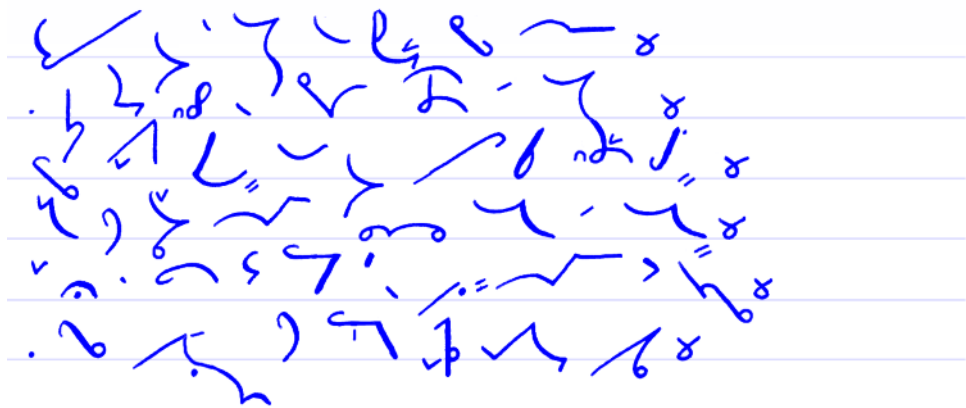
The CHILD said he was going to see his dentist Mr Rothschild.

The MOST efficient person in this office is my assistant Mr Most.

We GENERALLY went to a pub called The General for our lunch.

We took ADVANTAGE of their advice and hired Advantage Solutions to help us.

Please INFORM us why you have chosen the name "Inform" for your company.



Same Sounds 4

They were full of ENTHUSIASM for studying the subject of MAGNETISM.

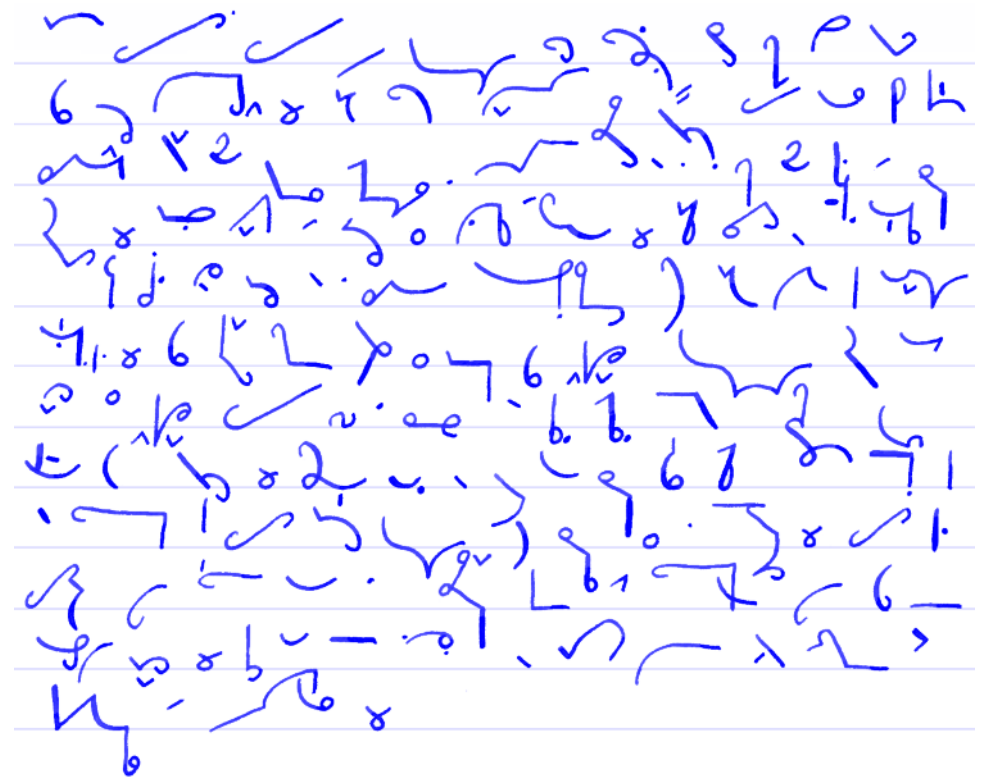
The teacher asked the students to spell "magnetism" and "enthusiasm"

Please write JANUARY in full, rather than just "Jan".

I have three files marked "Sometimes" "NEVER" and "NOVEMBER".

I made a REMARK that the college ought to re-mark all the papers.

The members re-formed their club and decided to REFORM the rules. (877 words)



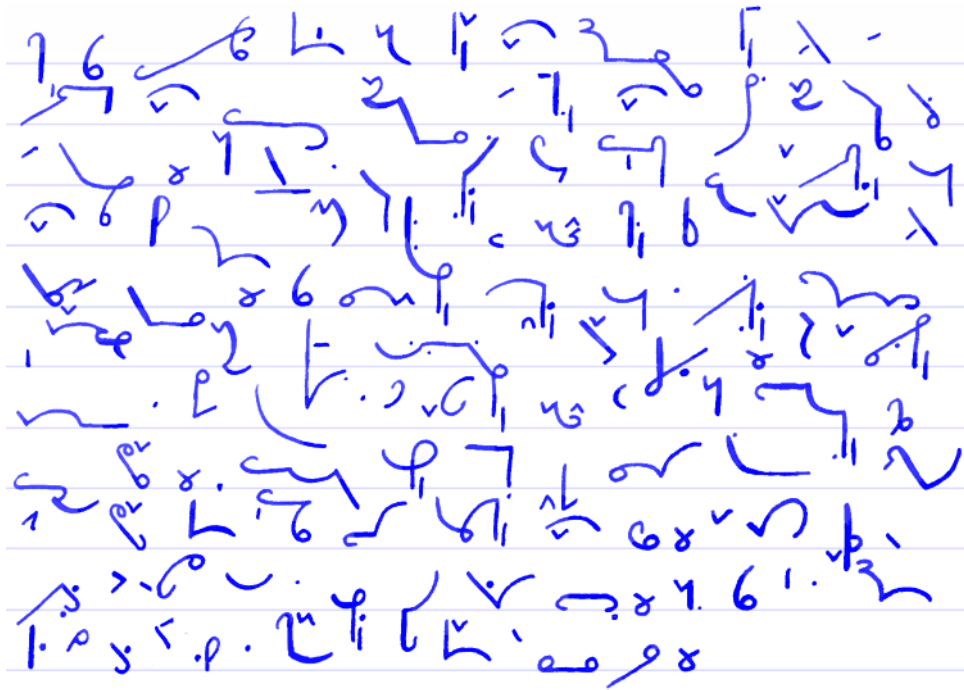
Fraser Unedited

I am wondering where our fictional friend Fraser has been during the last part of this year's lockdown. I think it very likely he has been beavering away in his study at home, surrounded by shorthand books and dictionaries, the mark of a true shorthand devotee and speed aspirant. I guessed right and here is his latest offering. I just happened to notice that it contains lots* of words of a certain interesting construction, therefore I have left it entirely unedited. This type of practice passage is to get these outlines firmly established in the mind, as outlines where you have a succession of T's and D's can be troublesome if you don't

know them beforehand*. There is no need to push for speed on this, and just getting it all correct at one of your own fairly easy speeds is an accomplishment. One day one of them will occur in a high speed take, and the correct form will then come instantly to mind. It would not go amiss to also look up and practise all the derivatives and related forms.

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

* "beforehand" Optional contraction



Fraser Unedited

During these winter months at home, I have tidied my work space, totted up and recorded my collection of shorthand books and audited my stash of shorthand pads, pens and pencils. I had become a bit agitated over the clutter whenever I retreated into my study room, and I was devastated when I found the dreaded dust piling up behind the books. This somehow mutated into an irritated frame of mind, but I am glad to say that* I was not totally* incapacitated by the disarray. Although I hesitated to make a start, after a short while I found that I had gravitated towards the cleaning supplies. The clean-up necessitated getting out the small vac and brush*, and the supply of damp cloths

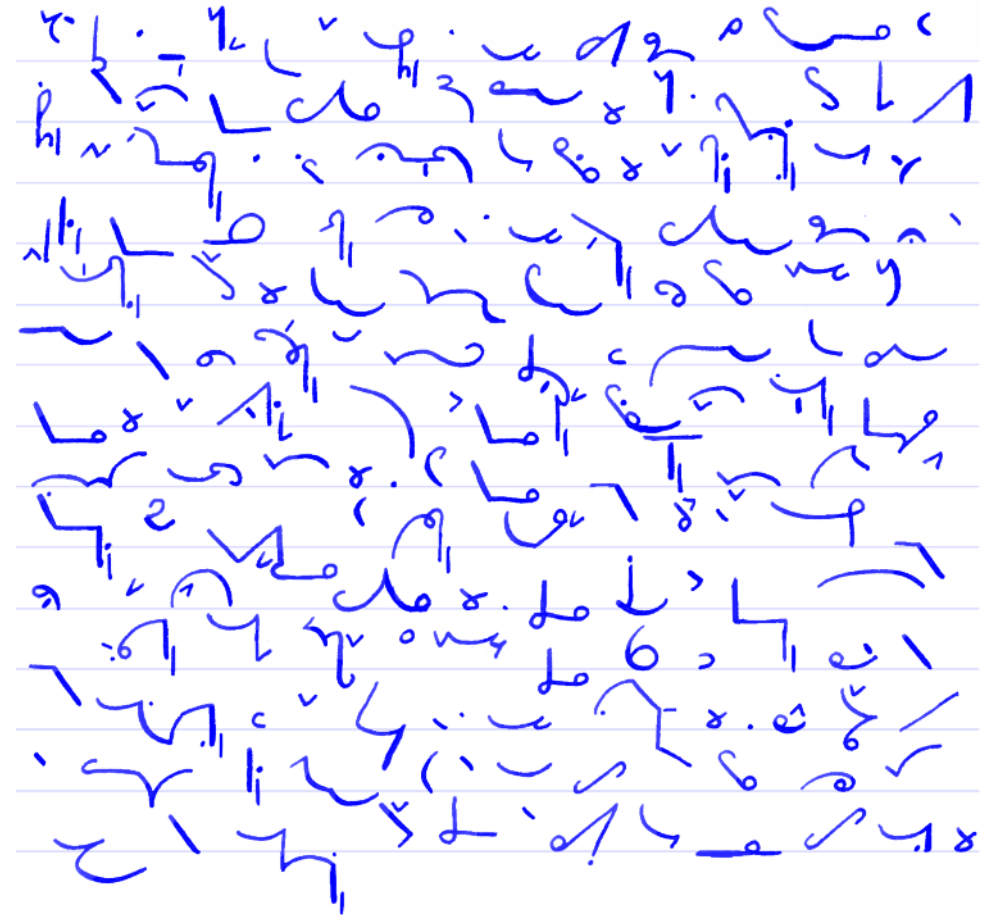
greatly facilitated my efforts. I also decided to repaint all the walls in an understated shade of pale green. I did this on a warm day, as the paint pot stated* a drying time of six hours.

* Omission phrase "I am glad (to) s(ay) that"

* "totally" Note that "total" uses L hook

* "brush" Upward Ish to balance the hook, "blush" has downward Ish

* "stated" Standing alone, this doesn't need any disjoining as the first T is part of the Stee loop



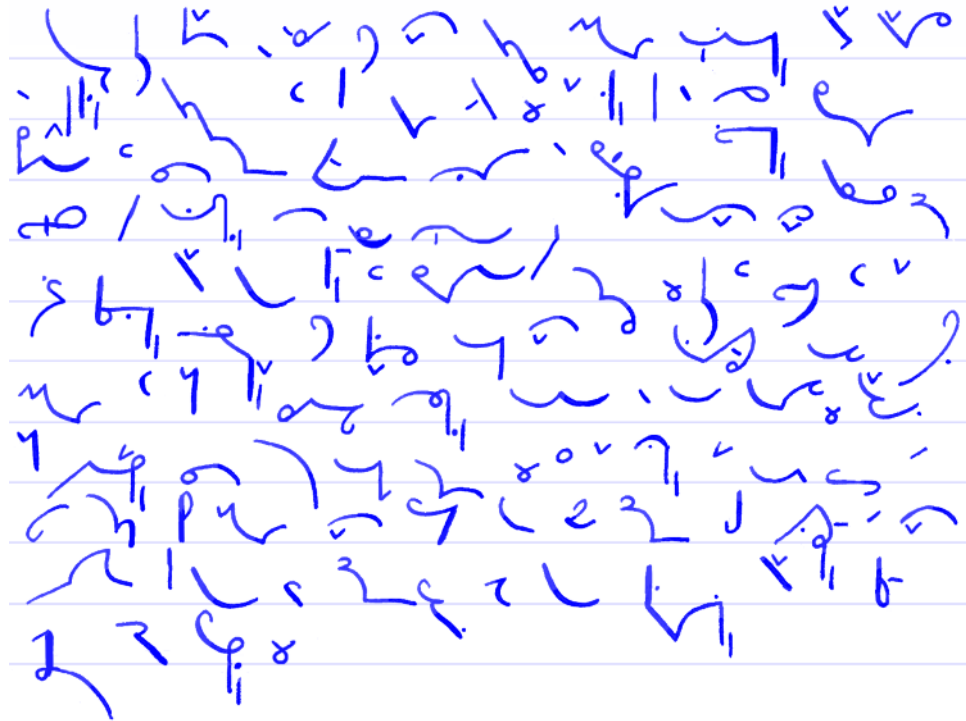
Fraser Unedited

I thought it would be a good idea if I instituted a new storage system, as the planks that constituted my bookshelves were sagging. I had a premeditated plan at the ready and I orchestrated a complete makeover for the space. I traded in the old outdated bookcases and treated myself to a new updated shelving system made of untreated pine. Having removed everything from its place, I knew I was going to be somewhat frustrated, not to mention disorientated, when looking for certain books. I rotated the order of the books, placing my annotated dictionaries immediately in front of me*. The other books could be accommodated to my left, and the backdated shorthand periodicals

that illustrated various points of interest could be stored on the lower shelves. The disks containing all the dictated matter could be consolidated onto the hard drive, as I knew the disks themselves would soon be invalidated when I change to a new laptop. The sound files are all clearly dated and having them all in one place means I will no longer be intimidated by the task of searching for the exact one needed.

* * "instituted" Omits the first T sound, i.e. ins(t)ituted"

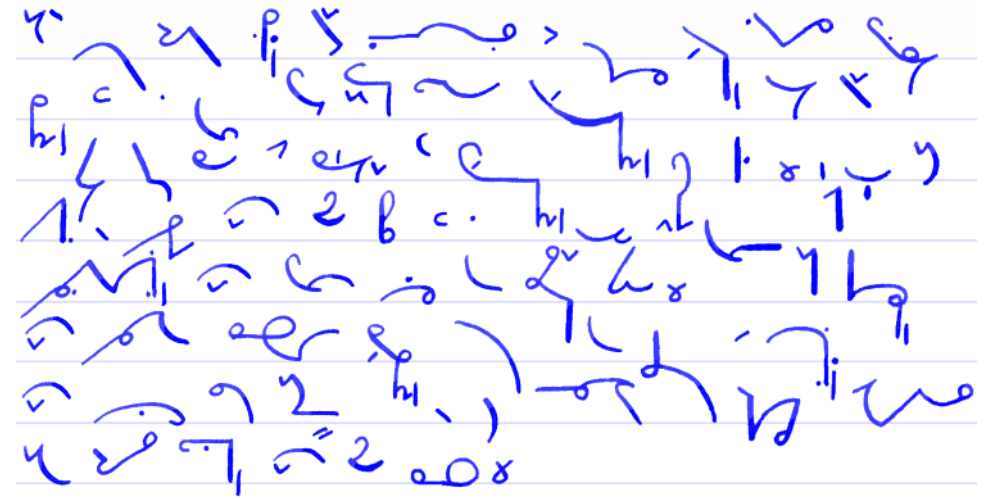
* "of me" Phrases with "me" are written as normal, and phrases with "him" should include a dot vowel



Fraser Unedited

After that it was time to sort through my papers, and I felt inundated by the piles of outdated paperwork that had built up. I edited it all most severely, starting with some junk mail of supposedly accredited business courses, which entreated me to send money, but which in my mind were completely discredited by being dotted with spelling errors. It was with great pleasure that I expedited their demise into my

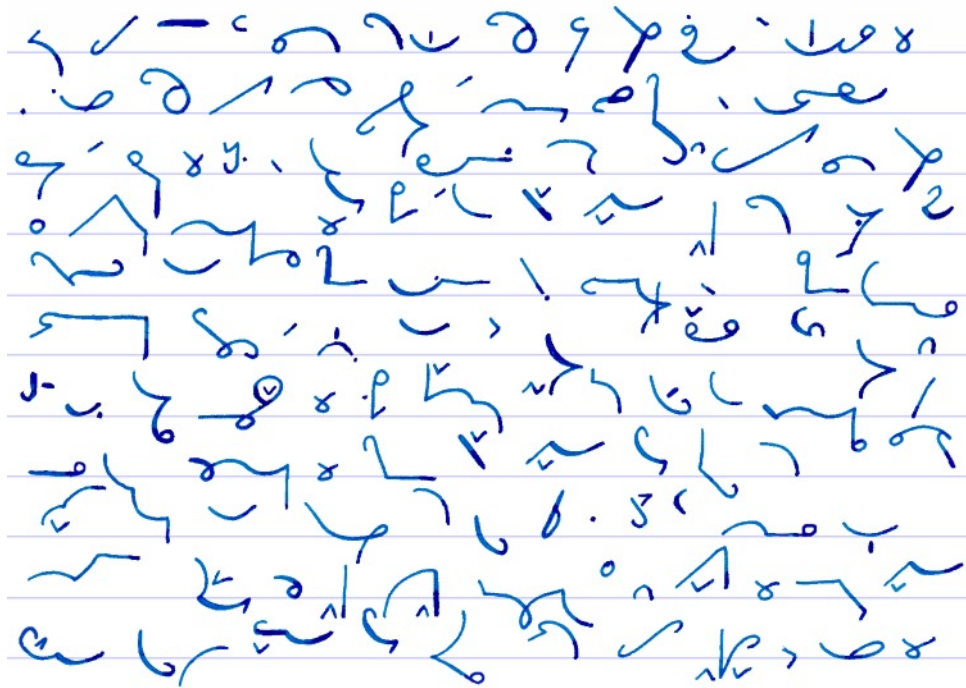
ferocious new shredder and I felt that I had certainly not mistreated anything of any value. Finally, I had reinstated some order into the room. As I meditated on the now clean and well-ordered study, I felt my energy for shorthand work had been resuscitated, and my relief at being able to work comfortably, and without being debilitated by dust and disorder, cannot be overstated.



Fraser Unedited

I thought maybe I would be sedated by the calmness of the room's updated appearance, pleasantly situated with a view over the quiet garden, punctuated only by gentle birdsong and the sunlight that fluctuated throughout the day. But no, I was ready to restart my shorthand studies with a new vigour and had rehabilitated my

former aims for high speed achievement. I had demonstrated my resolve, successfully substituted order for disorder, and imitated my mentor Sir Isaac, to whose example of diligence and thoroughness I have always credited my shorthand success. (760 words)



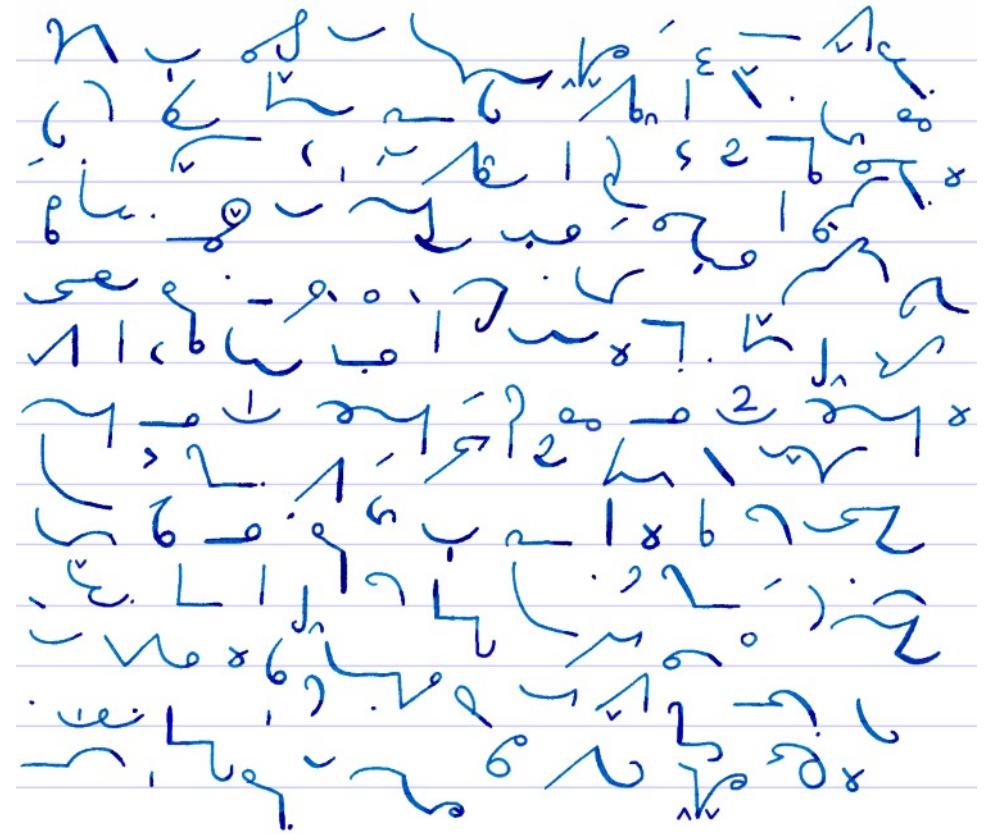
The practice paras are specially written with maximum phrases, more than would be found in normal matter

Phrase Paras 1

Here we go with some very common phrases, with each passage consisting of one hundred* words. The commonest phrases are the most useful and make the greatest* contribution to increasing skill and speed. I tend to favour the sneak method, where the same passage is repeated many times. Start off by writing out very neatly the shorthand paragraph in dark ink, paying careful attention to stroke thickness and correct placement, and

omitting any of the vowel signs that you feel you don't need for this exercise. Set the timer on your phone for 2 minutes, which gives 50 words a minute*. Practise by writing over the top of your sample lightly in pencil or even just a point that makes no mark, saying the words out loud to yourself as you write. Keep the writing flowing evenly, gliding over the shapes and from one outline to the next.

* "one hundred" If the speaker said "a hundred" that would be written in full outlines

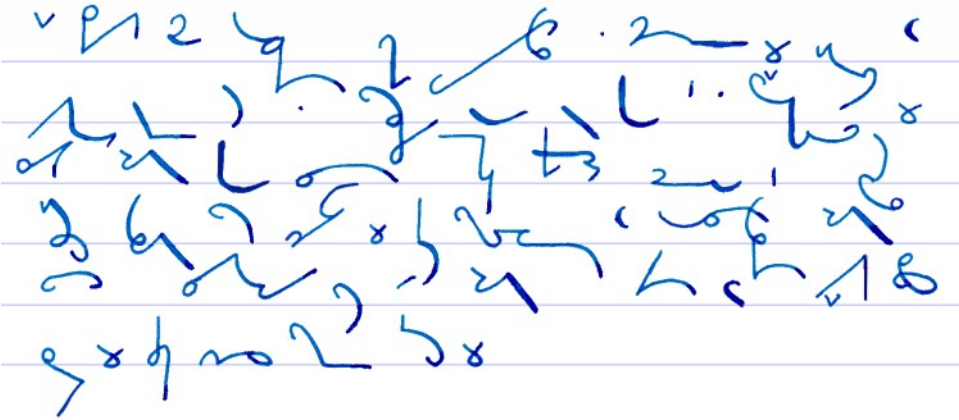


Phrase Paras 1

There will be no hesitation in forming the outlines and when you can write comfortably within your chosen timing, you can then reduce it by a few seconds, and continue like that, but not reducing it so far that the shorthand gets scribbly. As it is an exercise in maintaining neatness and smoothness at slowly increasing speeds, a good ruse is to imagine a fellow learner will have to read it without having to guess at anything. Getting the time down to one minute gives one hundred words a minute* and 30 seconds gives two hundred words a minute*. After all the practising, read and

record the shorthand, which should now be entirely familiar and this gives a speed that you know you can do. It is very encouraging to finally take it down from dictation, after a short break, and see an improvement in performance. These victories are not the same as managing an unseen dictation, but they are a step in the right direction, covering even, calm but speedy hand movements, as well as revision of outlines and phrases. (329 words)

* Omission phrase "words (a) minute"



Phrase Paras 1

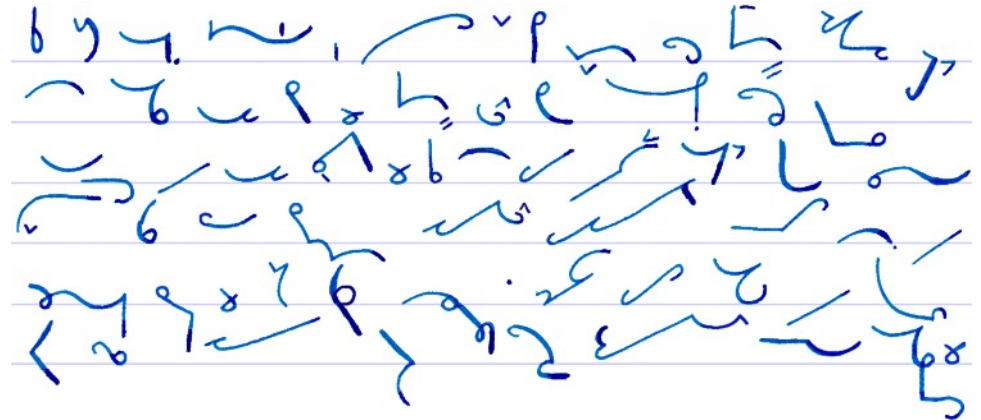
I started shorthand for the first time* during the winter months a short time ago*. I feel sure* that reading the book was a very satisfactory thing to be doing on a Friday afternoon*. As a rule* I would be doing some other* activity at the beginning of the weekend, but so far as I was concerned* this would be very worthwhile*. It was perfectly clear* that in some months' time I would be more than halfway through and I would be much more* able to write as fast as speech. It is true you must practise on your own. (100 words)

* Omission phrases "for (the) first time" "I fee(l) sure" "Friday af(ter)noon" "As (a) rule" "I was (con)cerned" "wor(th)while" "perfect(ly) clear" "much m(ore)"

* Omission phrase "short (t)ime ago" The halving is doing duty for both T's

* "some other" Doubling to represent "other"

Horizontal lines for handwriting practice.



Phrase Paras 1

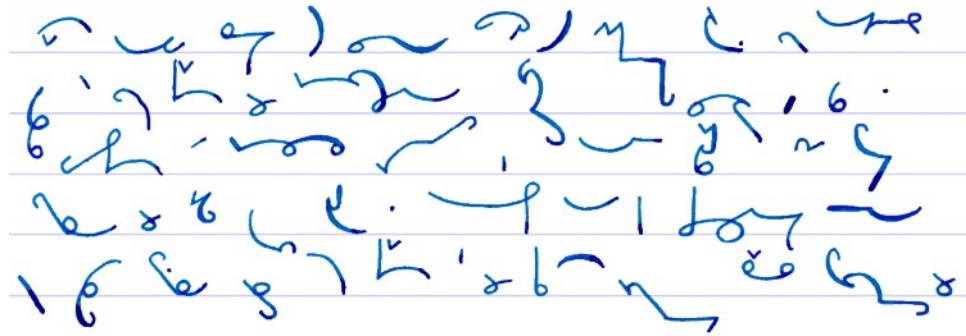
At first I was indeed on my own but later on I said to my friend Tom, I would like you to join me in this new subject. Tom found several interesting phrase books in connection with* our new hobby*. It is important we really enjoy doing something like this in our spare time* and we found we were able to carry on improving our words a minute* speed. I think this subject must be considered* a worthwhile* one in relation to* our future job opportunities and we are both very glad that we are now going in this direction*. (100 words)

* Omission phrases "in connection (with)" "words (a) minute" "mus(t) be (con)sidered" "wor(th)while" "in relation (to)" "in this d(ir)ection"

* "hobby" "habit" Insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

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

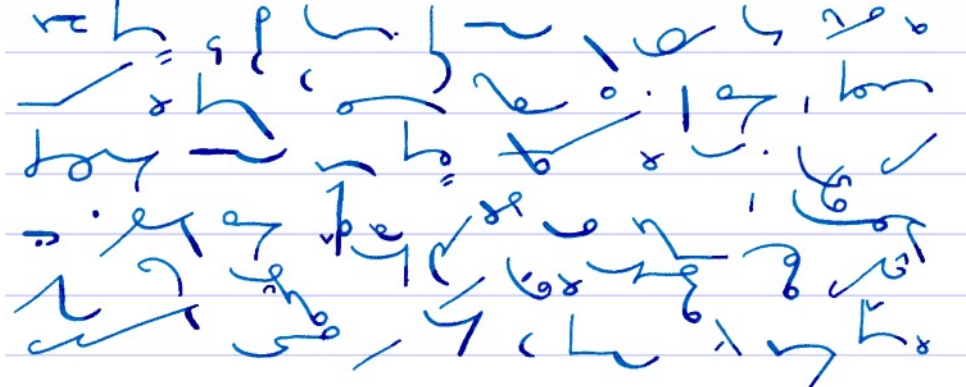
Horizontal lines for handwriting practice.



Phrase Paras 1

My new skill was something more than the usual and I took advantage of every opportunity in the course of these months* of free time*. I am very certain that there have been* some people who think it is* a waste of time* and almost impossible to learn, but in fact* I do not think it is beyond the average person. On the other hand* if you do not have an interest in it, it is most certainly going to be less than* pleasant* to spend your time on. It is important to practise the signs over and over again*. (100 words)

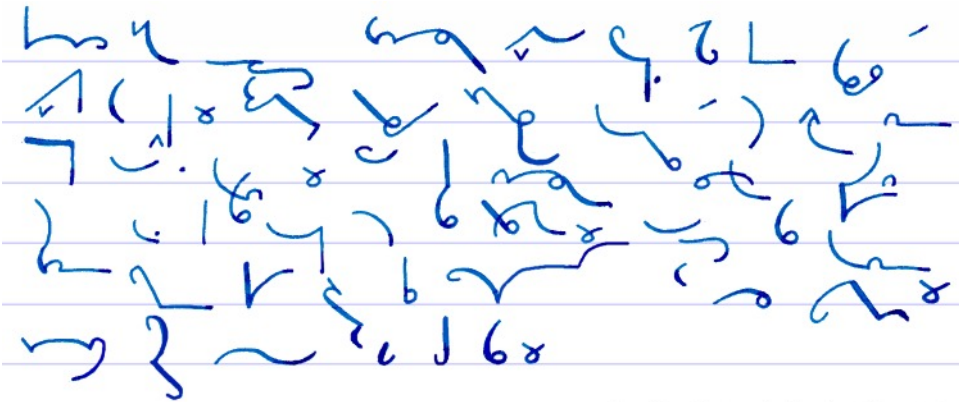
- * Omission phrases "these (mon)ths" "there (have) been" "was(te of) time" "in (f)act" "on the oth(er) hand" "over (and) over again"
- * "free time" Do not using the halving method to phrase this, as that would read as "freedom" which has almost the same meaning
- * "think it is" Halving to represent "it"
- * "less than" Downward L in order to join the phrase
- * "pleasant" "pleasing" Insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning



Phrase Paras 1

I agreed with Tom when he said that, for him, it was going to be necessary for the particular requirements of his career. It may be that some other person has a different skill but at the same time* it is most* certainly going to improve Tom's business career. In a few months we gained a reasonable skill and decided to send each other all sorts of things to practise on, for example reading from newspapers onto our phones. In the course of these messages, we found we were able

- to increase our knowledge without taking up too much* time. (100 words)
- * "at the same time" Halving to represent the T of "time"
- * Omission phrase "it is mos(t) certainly"
- * "too much" Includes the M in order to join the phrase, this is faster than doing a penlift and differentiates it from "too large"

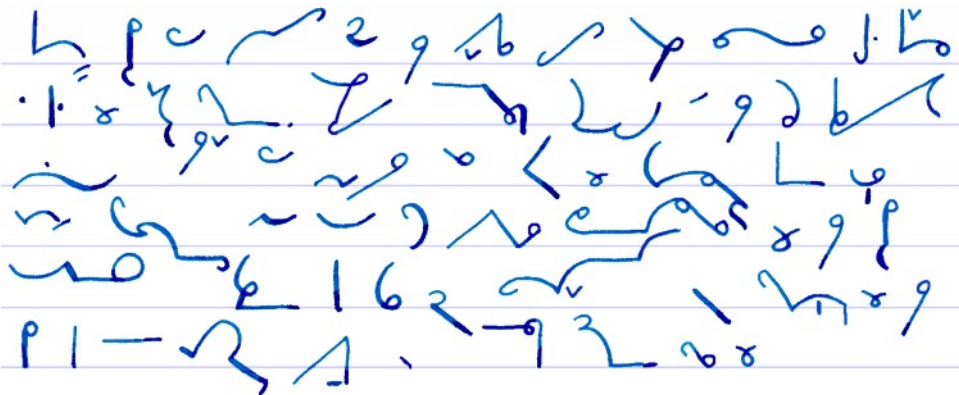


Phrase Paras 1

At the moment* I have come to the conclusion* that you must be* writing every day and then take these words and write them out. That would be the best way* of proceeding if possible* and see how far you can get in a few months. In order to* do this you must have* some form of* schedule so that you can fit it into your business life. In connection with* this,

if you can practise daily I believe that it is very likely that improvements will be made. I am sure there have been* many who have done this. (100 words)

- * Omission phrases "at (the) moment" "come (to the con)clusion" "that you mus(t) be" "bes(t) way" "if poss(ible)" "in ord(er to)" "you mus(t) have" "some form (of)" "there (have) been"

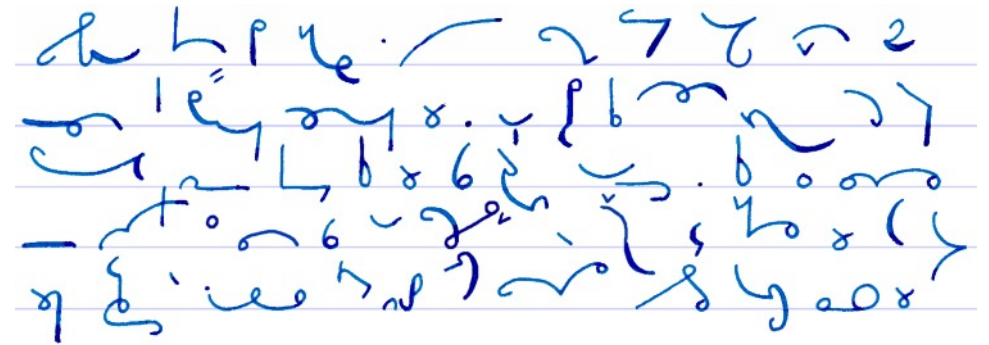


Phrase Paras 1

Tom said that in order to* learn shorthand, he writes one passage as many as ten times a day. I think that practising in such a way* can be considered* essential and he says it is worth aiming high in order to* meet the requirements of his job. They must be able to* take notes of meetings over and over again*, and hand in their reports as quickly as possible*. He said that in all cases those who can do this

would be more likely to be promoted*. He said it can also be the route to extra work opportunities. (100 words)

- * Omission phrases "in ord(er to)" "in such (a) way" "can be (con)sidered" "in ord(er to)" "they mus(t) be able to" "over (and) over again"
- * "promoted" "permitted" Always insert the second vowel, to differentiate these



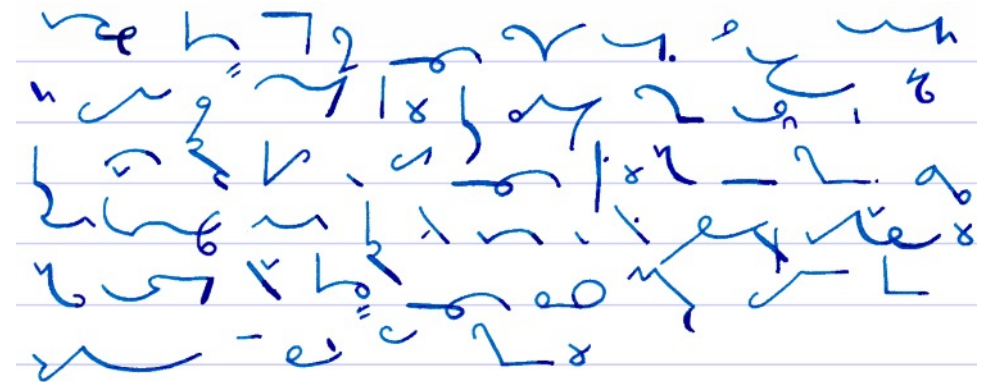
Phrase Paras 1

Yesterday evening* Tom said, I have received* a letter from the college in relation to* my shorthand exam at seventy words a minute*. The note said that it is most important to bring your own pad in order that you can take the test. This point of view* in connection with* the test is sometimes given little attention, as some think it is not very serious to arrive without the items. They fail to consider* that it is a

question* of common sense on the part of the* student and they are more or less* responsible for their own success. (100 words)

- * Omission phrases "Yesterday ev(en)ng" "I have (re)ceived" "in relation (to)" "words (a) minute" "mos(t) important" "point (of) view" "in connection (with)" "to (con)sider"

- * Omission phrase "that it is (a) question" using the Optional Contraction for "question"



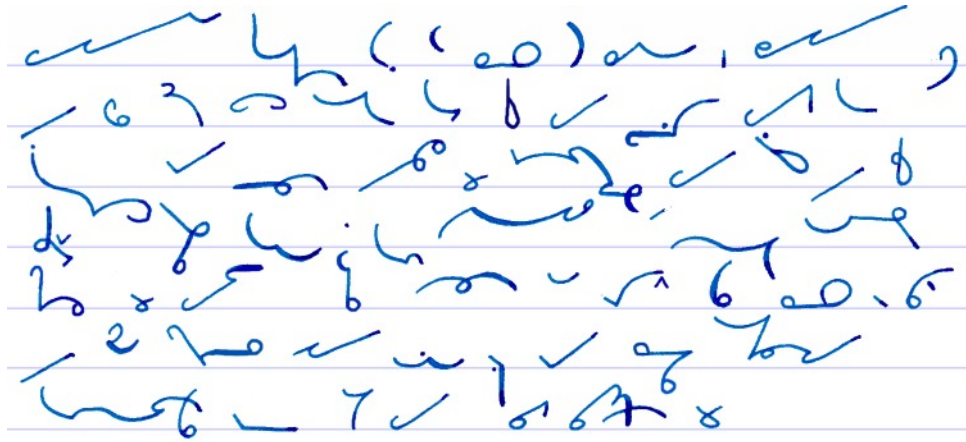
Phrase Paras 1

I am glad to say that* Tom got through the exam very well* indeed and is no longer in any doubt about whether or not* he would be able to manage it. It was certainly very good news but on the other hand* it was now my turn to await the exam date. I have given practising first place* for many months and now it would be up to me to pay reasonable attention to revising. I have been encouraged by Tom's exam success

and I hope that* we can talk to one another* quite soon in order to* practise. (100 words)

- * Omission phrase "I am glad (t) s(ay) that" "very (w)ell" "whether (or) not" "on the oth(er) hand" "I (h)ope that" "wu(n) another" "in ord(er to)"

- * Omission phrase "first p(l)ace" Likewise "second p(l)ace" "third p(l)ace"



Phrase Paras 1

We were not at any time thinking that success was certain but as we were sure our efforts were more than enough for the test, we eagerly waited for confirmation of our exam results. I am very glad to say that* we passed our tests, despite the passages having a few longer words and many other* unexpected terms. We agreed that it is most important* not to allow this

success to slow our shorthand progress and we intend to add to our skills in much the same way for many more months to come, until we hit the hundred mark. (100 words)
(Total 1229 words)

* Omission phrases "I am very glad (to) s(ay) that" "many oth(er)" "mos(t) important"

A series of horizontal lines for writing shorthand notes, corresponding to the text on the left page.