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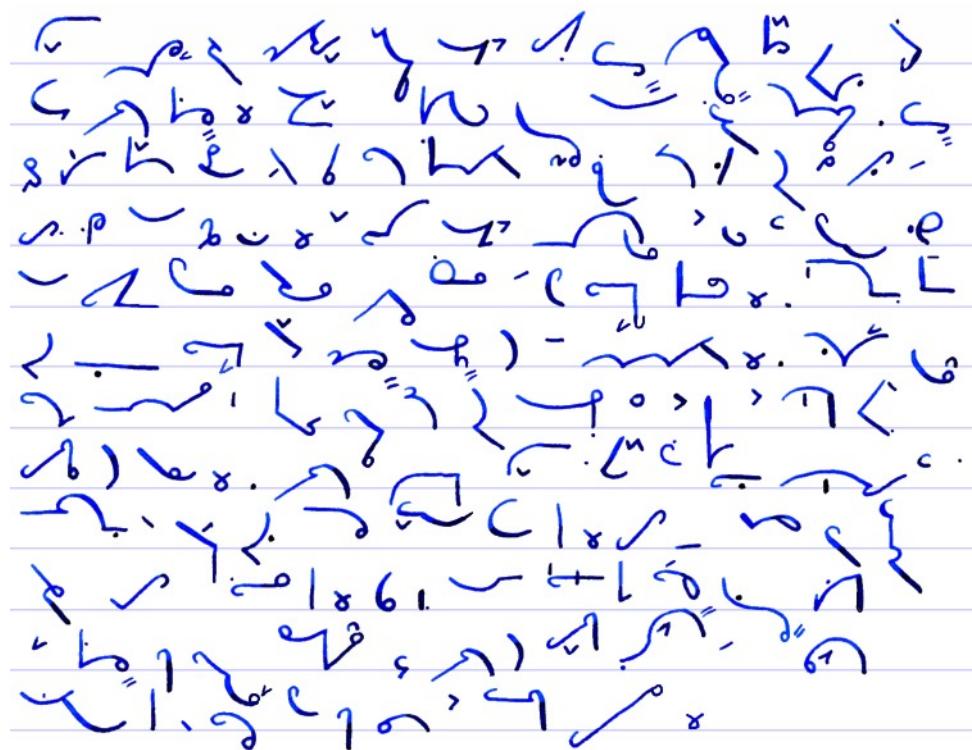
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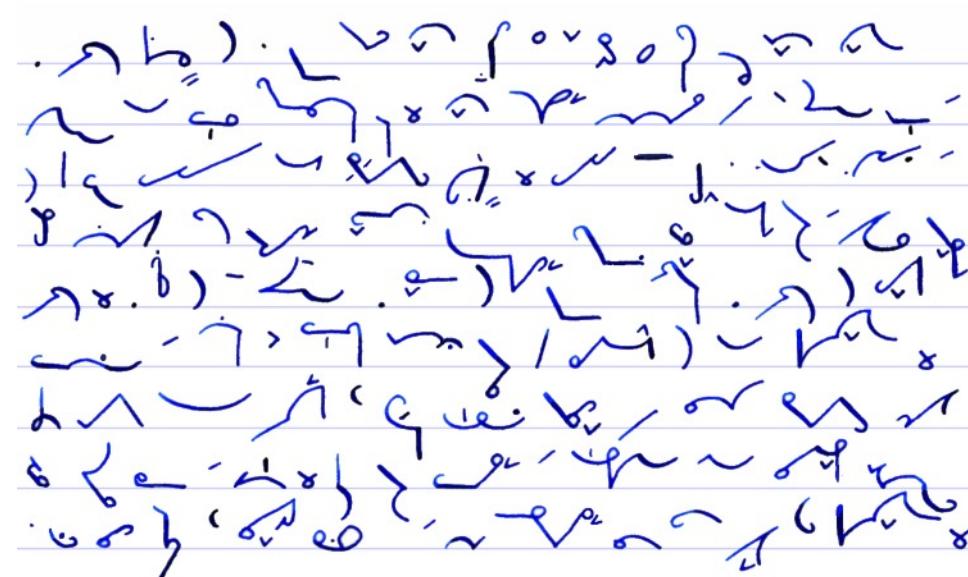
Thames Pageant

Like millions of people worldwide, I have just enjoyed watching Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee Pageant along the River Thames. Unlike television viewers in their comfortable armchairs, the Queen spent the whole time standing up, which is very admirable considering her age, especially as the rain and wind settled in towards the end. I greatly enjoyed the colourfulness of the event, with everything swathed in Union Jack* flags, banners, ribbons, swags and other creative decorations. The corgi dog shaped cake created by the Women's Institute* was quite memorable. The aerial views from the cameras on top of the bridges were especially interesting, as all the detail of the muddy choppy waters was

absent. The river looked like a giant flat grey motorway with a cavalcade of boat shaped cars gliding along it. One could almost believe that it would be possible to run across it. This did in fact* occur at the Frost Fairs held on the Thames during previous centuries, when the river was wider, shallower and slower, enabling it to freeze over during some of the colder winters.

* Omission phrases "U(nion)-Jack" "in (f)act"

* "Ins(t)itute" Omits the first T

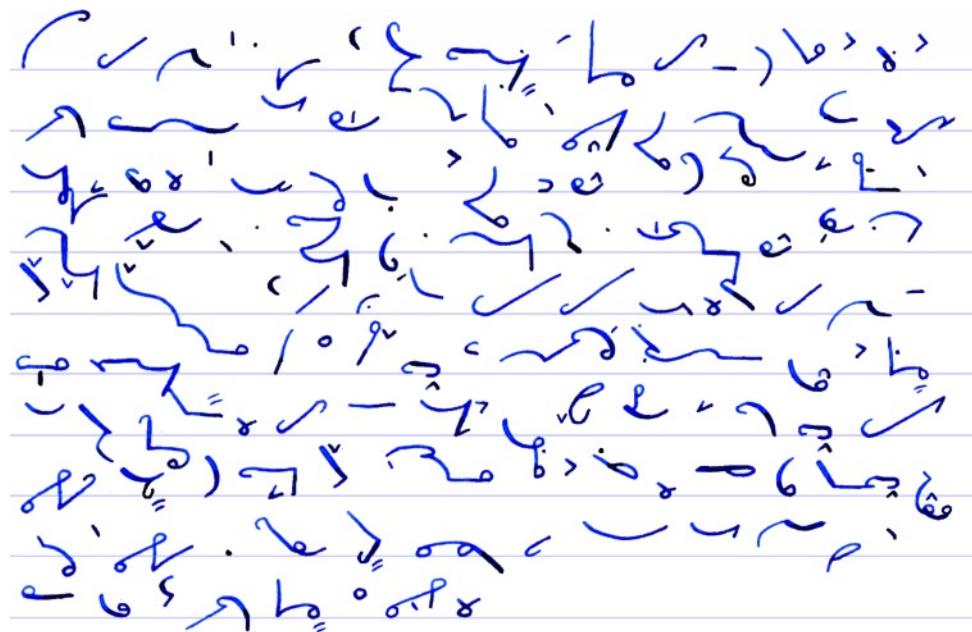


Thames Pageant

The River Thames was a big part of my childhood as I spent the first thirty years of my life living in close proximity to it. My earliest memories are of asking to go and see it whenever we were in the suburb of Woolwich. We would go down a narrow alleyway and all of a sudden* emerge from between the grimy Victorian brick buildings onto the path and railings beside the river. The contrast was quite shocking, the sky was big and bright, the river was wide, gleaming and empty of the clutter of

manmade objects which surrounded us in daily life. It seemed to represent another reality that flowed unseen behind our small suburban world of buildings, shops, school and home. It was both glorious and unsettling, and in hindsight I think it may have been a faint hint of danger that heightened the senses and made the experience seem more real than daily life.

* Omission phrase "all (of a) sudden"



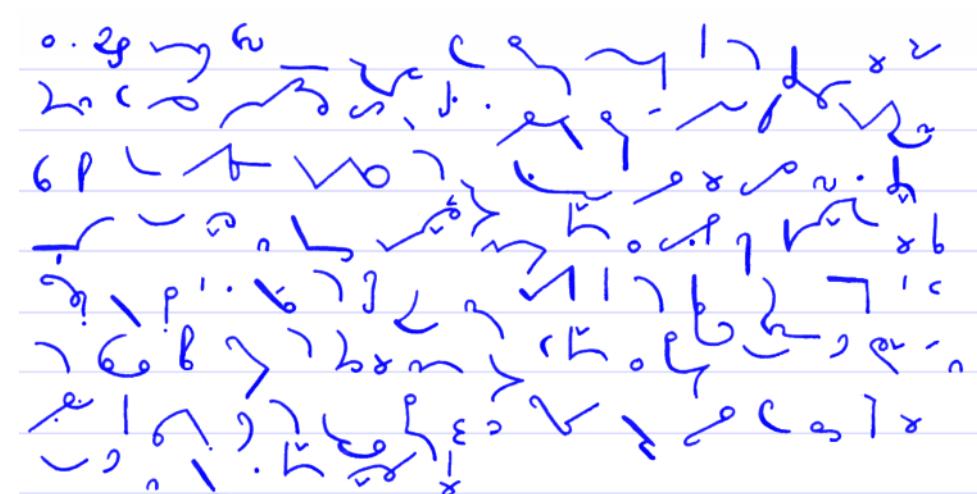
Thames Pageant

Later on we lived on a hill that overlooked Greenwich and at times one could see parts of the bends of the river gleaming in the sun, or the tops of huge ships moving along between the industrial buildings. On New Year's Eve all the ships would sound their horns on the stroke of midnight, rising to a crescendo within a minute or two, an unforgettable sound that is not matched by the fireworks that are let off where we are now. We lived quite close to Greenwich Park which has high ground with marvellous panoramic views of the Thames in both directions. One can enjoy the vistas* whilst standing on the

very ground where the history of England was created by the monarchs of the past. Against this background of thousands of years of history, the present Pageant seems to be yet another in the long list of significant events that the River Thames has hosted. (493 words)

"unforgettable" Not using halving for the T sounds, see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-1-vowel.htm forget forgive forgo forego"

* "vistas" Helpful to insert vowel, to prevent misreading as "visits"

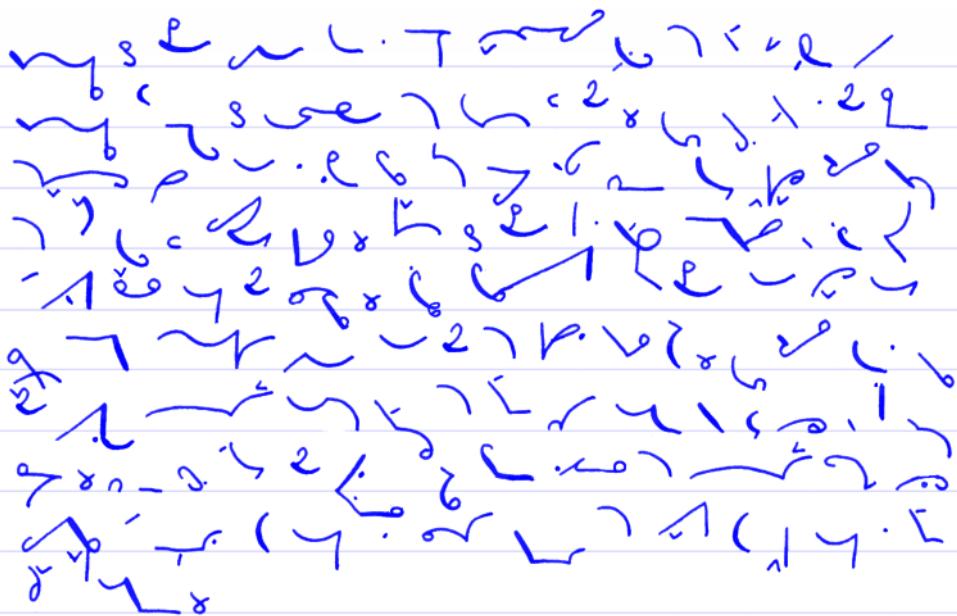


What Are You Waiting For?

As a shorthand student*, I am sure that you have come to value every spare minute at your disposal. I would assume that most learners want to attain a reasonable speed and are not just pursuing this study for artistic reasons or to fill vacant hours. Once you have a desired goal in mind, you begin to realise how much time is wasted during daily life. It is frustrating to be sitting on a bus or train wishing you were* already at

your destination, so that you can get on with your lessons, studies, project or assignment. You may feel that time is suddenly in short supply and you resent it slipping through your fingers, as it were*, when you would prefer to be able to use every second of it. In short, you become a time miser!

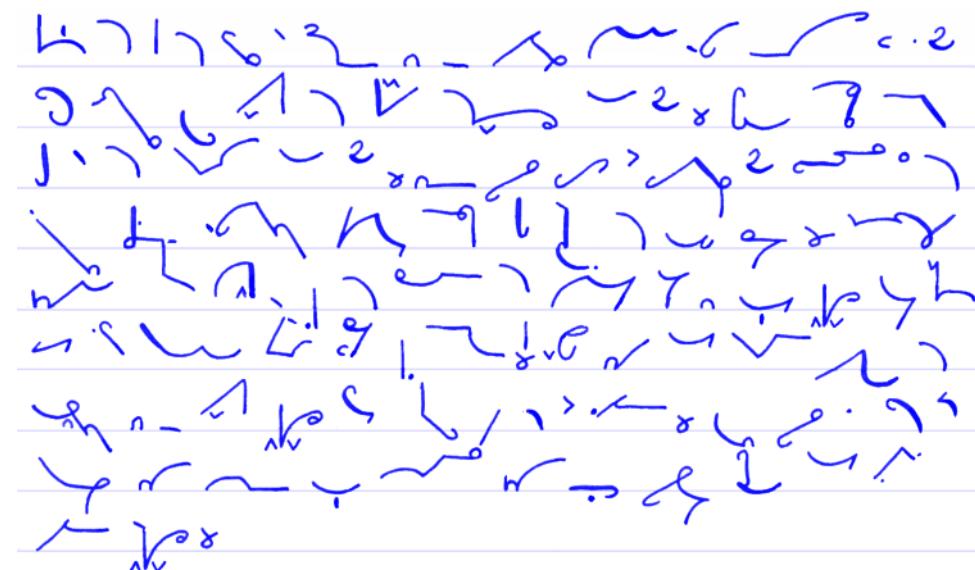
* Omission phrases "shorthand s(t)udent" "you (w)ere" "as it (w)ere"



What Are You Waiting For?

Two minutes spent standing waiting for a kettle, microwave oven or pot on the stove are two minutes that could have been spent increasing your familiarity with shorthand. If you pin up a shorthand stroke reminder list in a safe place on your kitchen wall, you can have the outlines always before your eyes, even when washing the dishes. Time spent standing at a bus stop can be used to convert shop and road signs into shorthand symbols. Conversations

overheard standing in line in the supermarket can be mentally written in shorthand, or at least parts of them. If you always have a piece of shorthand reading material in your purse or pocket, you will never be without the means to add to your skill. You could print off the shorthand jpg's of these blog articles or material from the main website and collate them into a small booklet, or write them out into a pocket-sized notebook.

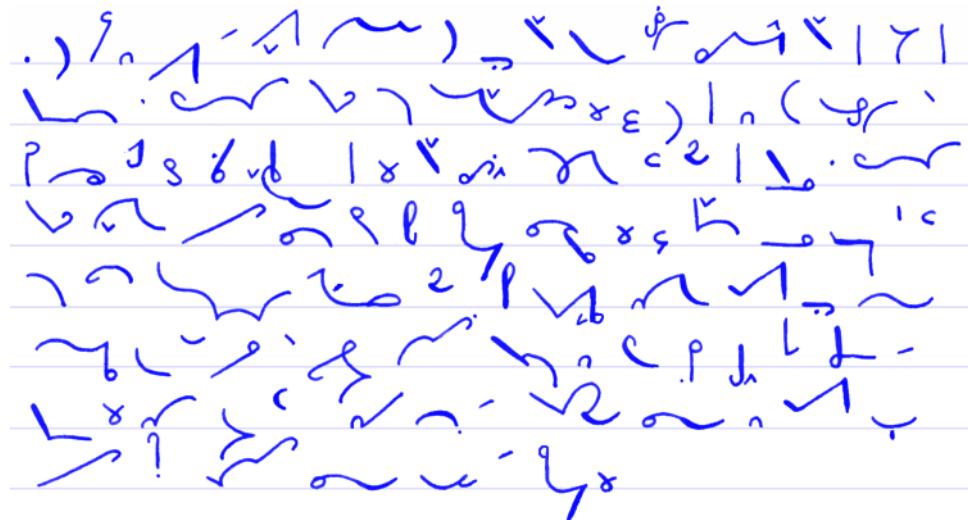


What Are You Waiting For?

At home or at your place of work you could replace the longhand wall calendar with a shorthand version* and perhaps even write your diary reminders in shorthand. Telephone messages can be done all or partly in shorthand. You can use one of the website shorthand graphics as your computer desktop wallpaper, which will have the extra advantage of advertising your new skill. I am very sorry, but you are not allowed to eat your snack or lunch until you know the shorthand outline for each

item, apple, banana, chocolate, sandwich, tea, coffee! Whilst you are in the park reading your newspaper, you could write outlines over the top of each word of the article. If you use a very hard pencil you will make no marks, but you will gain useful training in the rapid recall of outlines.

* Download from www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/downloads.htm#shorthand-perpetual-calendar

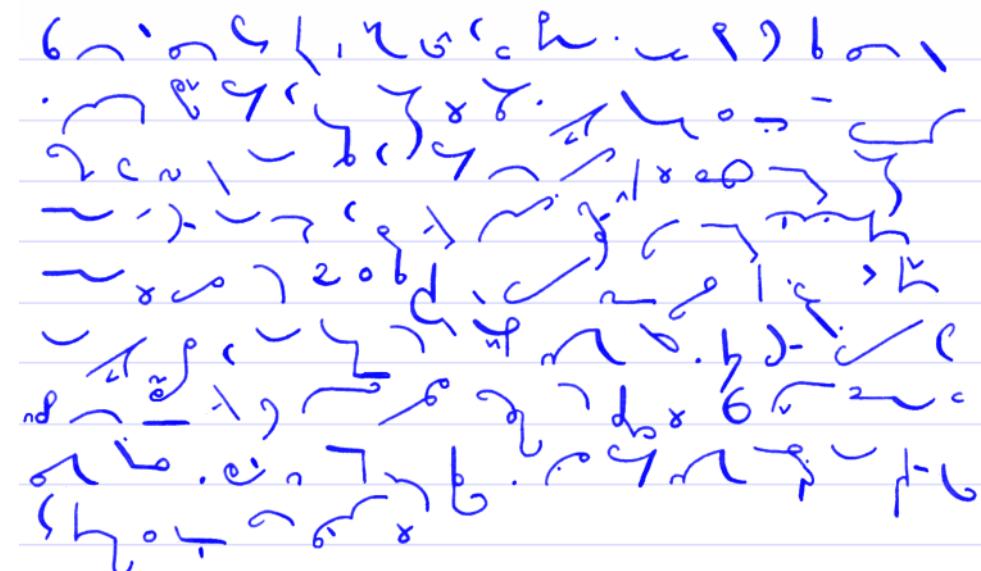


What Are You Waiting For?

The ease with which you read and write longhand was gained by being constantly surrounded by it, until it became a normal part of your environment. When you see it, you think instantly of what it means and do not spend ages deciphering it. By surrounding yourself with shorthand, it becomes a normal part of life, rather than some special study of strange symbols. When the time comes to get on with your more formal and focused* shorthand study

periods, you will have already gained many minutes, if not hours, of useful learning before you ever sit down at the desk and book. You will feel that you are improving and polishing something you already know, rather than trying to learn something new and strange.

* "focused, fixed" Always insert the first vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning



What Are You Waiting For?

This may all seem over the top but I have found that when starting a new subject there does seem to be a limited supply of energy that feeds the enthusiasm. Unless a real benefit is gained quite quickly from the effort you have put in, that energy may run out. Successes keep the enthusiasm going, and so any method that speeds up the learning process will keep the momentum going. Once your shorthand has developed to where you can use it comfortably all the

time in real situations, without any fatigue or anxiety, you will have passed the danger zone where other students may give up through lack of results, frustration or disappointment. This is like walking with heavy bags, the sooner you get to your destination, the less energy you will have expended in total, even though the temptation* is to go more slowly.

* "temptation" Omits the P sound

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What Are You Waiting For?

This greedy attitude towards time, the desire to get benefit from every minute spent waiting for something else, increases the total time you have available for your studies, without you having to cut out any other* activities. With intelligent and dedicated time management, or should I say time redemption*, the committed student can easily learn Pitman's Shorthand

within a three-month period, to a speed that will be faster than longhand. As a matter of fact*, I myself would like the satisfaction of writing faster shorthand, so, what am I waiting for? (796 words)

* Omission phrases "any oth(er)" "as a matter of (f)act"

* "redemption" Omits the P sound

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In The Garden

Here is my favourite part of my suburban garden. There are many trees surrounding it and as the subsoil is clay, the ground is always very dry. Seasonal flower beds are not possible as the ground becomes very hard and solid during the summer and the cracking clay can break any shallow plant roots. Over the years I have found it easier to concentrate on flowering shrubs and evergreens which become maintenance free once they are established. Any seasonal flowers are grown in pots, daffodils and tulips in the spring, and fuchsias and pelargoniums during the summer months. At the end of the year the spent soil in the pots can be spread around the garden. There are several small fruit

trees, the most prolific being Spartan which is a very dark red apple with fragrant white flesh, and even on a small tree the apples are large, and disease and pest-free. This tree is planted next to the pond, so maybe it is benefiting from the occasional overflow of nutrient rich water. The Conference Pear tree is also a very good fruiter. The most important* point when buying a fruit tree is to check the root stock onto which the named variety has been grafted, as it is that which determines the final size of the tree. It would be a great shame to have to chop back a fruit tree growing too large for its allotted space in a small garden.

* Omission phrase "mos(t) important"

A sample of Pitman's New Era Shorthand handwriting in blue ink on white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The script is fluid and cursive, with various ligatures and unique symbols used to represent different sounds.

In The Garden

This paved part is just beyond a fishpond which is home to goldfish of all colours, orange, pink, black and mottled. In spring it is a magnet for frogs who lay their spawn on the shallow shelf at one end. This shallow end is a great favourite with the fish on a sunny day and they like to lie in the weed and enjoy the warmth. On a really hot day they will line up at the filter outlet for the freshly oxygenated water, and then we know it is time to thin out the water lily leaves which are blocking the

water surface from the necessary contact with the air. When the water lily leaves grow really thickly, we have sometimes seen sparrows having a bath in the watery* patches, totally unaware of the great depths and strange scaly creatures gliding beneath them.

* "watery" Essential to insert the final vowel, as "water patches" would also make sense here

A sample of Pitman's New Era Shorthand handwriting in blue ink on white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The script is fluid and cursive, with various ligatures and unique symbols used to represent different sounds.

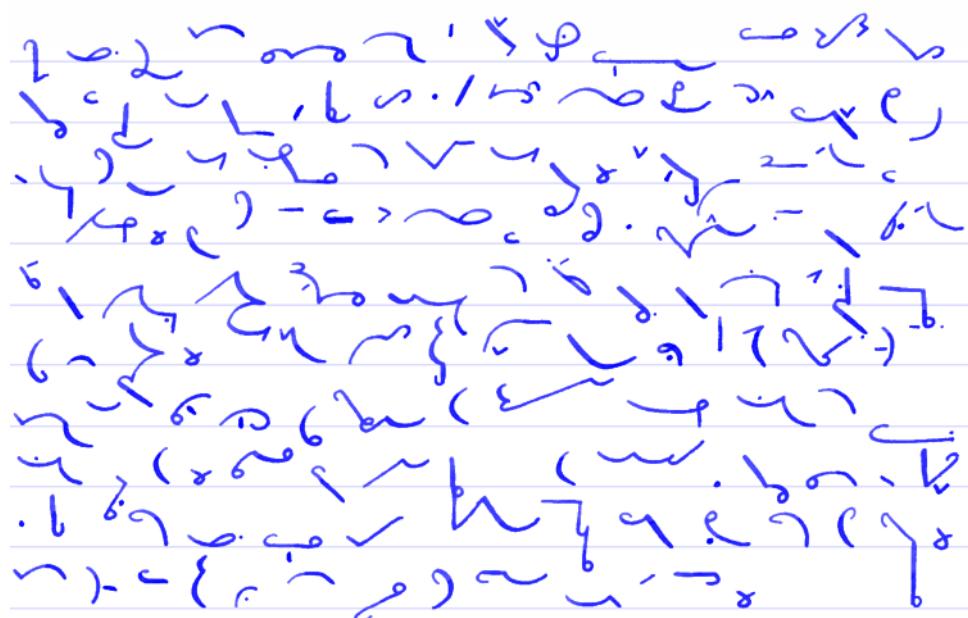
In The Garden

There are lots* of bird boxes around the garden and most years we have bluetits nesting. We always see pairs of robins but sometimes they are just collecting food in our garden and do not always nest here. They are particularly attentive when someone is gardening. Even just walking over a damp lawn will drive worms to the surface with the pressure and vibration, and the robin is always quick to dive down and investigate, as long as I pretend to ignore him, all the while sneakily and furtively angling the camera in his direction.

In the evergreens* against the fence the blackbird may nest occasionally. The garden is relatively safe for the young birds as there are no pets or children, and there are plenty of hiding places and open soil for their food supply.

* "lots" and "masses" should both have vowels put in, as they are similar in shape and meaning

* "evergreens" Helpful to insert the last vowel and also in "overgrown" as they are similar in outline and subject matter



In The Garden

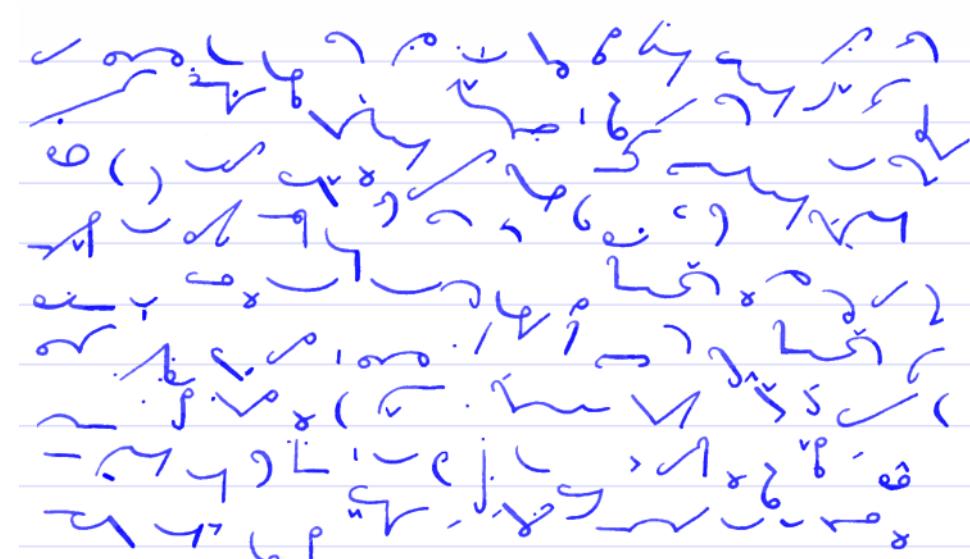
During the nesting season, I am sometimes "moved on" by the insistent clucking calls of one of the parent birds, with dinner in beak, who does not want a large human* monster standing around nearby, as they wish to feed their young in the nest box* or parked in the bushes. I obediently walk off when requested. However, they are quite glad of the "monster" when there is a prowling cat to be chased off, pots to be lifted revealing the worms underneath, or compost bins to be emptied and the edible goodies within made available. I have learned that they do not like being stared at, and they prefer us to move in slow motion, thus persuading them that we are

not interested enough or quick enough to chase them. As long as people are not disturbing them in any way, the birds seem to derive an advantage from nesting close to our activities, in order to be* safe from other predators. I am so glad that they let me use their garden now and again.

* "human" Above the line to accord with the second vowel, in order to differentiate from "humane" on the line

* "nestbox" Omits the lightly sounded T

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to) be" Not using the third place phraseogram "to be"



In The Garden

We sometimes have visits from less common birds such as chaffinch, goldfinch, wren and very rarely wagtail, bullfinch and firecrest, but all these are very shy and will disappear as soon as they see anyone nearby. Winter brings the occasional greenfinch in from the countryside in search of extra food and they are more heard than seen, with their prolonged* single-note calls. Another intermittent visitor is the dragonfly. Most years we see the small iridescent blue ones but sometimes a much larger green or brown dragonfly will make a sudden appearance. They like a prominent* perch by the pond where they can launch into their attack on

any other* contender for ownership of the water. All these sights and sounds can only be* enjoyed if you sit quietly and observe, camera in hand, of course. (835 words)

* "prolonged" Stroke Ing cannot be halved

* "prominent" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "prominent permanent pre-eminent"

* Omission phrase "any oth(er)"

* "can only be" On its own, "only" is written with full N and L strokes.

This block contains handwritten shorthand in blue ink on lined paper. The text discusses the return of ducks to Priory Gardens after ponds were dried out, mentioning new ducklings and the need for fresh water. It also refers to the gurgling of a weir and the diet of salad and insects.

Letter From The MD

My Dear Friends and Supporters, I would just like to thank you all for looking after all us ducks while our three ponds in Priory Gardens have been dried out in recent months, although some of us did make a few expeditions to investigate the water situation further downstream. We were delighted with the response* from our generous sponsors and loyal devotees in providing lots* of bread to make up for the shortage of pond weed. The heavy rain has replenished the underground springs and it is wonderful to hear the gurgling of the weir again. We are now back on a salad* and insects diet, which I think will do wonders for our health, although the bits of wholemeal bagel the other day were absolutely delicious. You may have noticed that we have been able to construct our twiggy* nests, now that we have the

protection of a reasonable depth of fresh water, and I would like to invite you all back in a few weeks' time* to admire our new ducklings.

* "response" Advisable to always insert the vowel after the P, to ensure it is not misread as the short form "responsible/responsibility"

* "lots" and "masses" Insert vowels in both, as these are similar in shape and meaning

* "salad" Insert the vowels, as this could be misread as "solid"

* "twiggy" Insert the last vowel, as "twig" could also make sense here

* Omission phrase "few wee(k)s time"

This block contains handwritten shorthand in blue ink on lined paper. It continues the letter from the Mallard Drake, discussing the drakes' behavior, particularly their quacking and fights, and expresses thanks to the volunteer pigeons for keeping the area clean.

Letter From The MD

We are really enjoying being able to swim around rapidly, instead of the slow and exhausting waddling that we have had to put up with. Please don't be offended if we swim away from anyone very noisy, as you just can't be too sure nowadays whether it is exuberance and delight at seeing us, or maybe something a bit more boisterous, which we don't really enjoy that much. We would like to extend our grateful thanks to the volunteer pigeons who have cleared up the excess crusts, so that the area is always clean and wholesome each day when people come with more bags of the "white stuff". I have had reports of some of

the drakes indulging in one or two* fights in front of the ladies, but I have had words, or more precisely quacks, with them and they have promised to behave* in future. If you have any further concerns about us or our ponds, I will be glad to answer your queries, if you care to introduce yourself to me next time* we meet. Yours sincerely*, A. Quacker, Mallard Drake, Priory Gardens Pond Users' Supervisor. (362 words)

* "to behave" based on the short form "to be" which is written through the line

* Omission phrases "one (or) two" "ne(k)s(t) time" "Yours (sin)cerely"

A page of handwritten shorthand in blue ink on lined paper. The script is fluid and cursive, using various symbols and strokes to represent words and sounds. There are several horizontal lines of text, with some punctuation like periods and commas.

Hang On A Minute

If you are cycling with a friend and get left behind, you might say "Hang on a minute!" If the car starts to pull away with your shopping bag trapped in the door, you might say this rather loudly. If the doorbell rings while you are on the phone, you might say this a bit more softly. If someone claims to write shorthand at 300 words a minute* after only a week's study, you will

certainly say this, or something like it, with more than a hint of disbelief in your voice. I hope you have resolved never to allow such words to form in your mind or mouth when the going gets bumpy during shorthand writing*.

* Omission phrases "words (a) minute" "I (h)ope you have" "short(hand) writing"

A page of handwritten shorthand in blue ink on lined paper, continuing from sample A. The script is consistent with the first sample, featuring a variety of symbols and fluid strokes.

Hang On A Minute

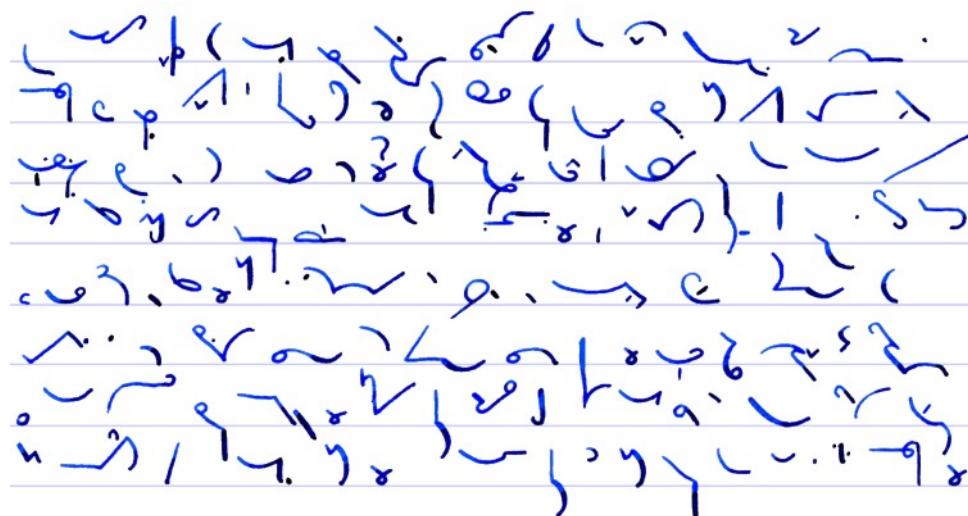
When I first began to use shorthand in an office situation, it was the norm to take dictation of reports and letters from a variety of personnel*. There were* no computers then for them to type their own. Right from the beginning I made my mind up never to ask anyone to slow down. It would have damaged any shorthand reputation that I could build up. If I could not manage, it was up to me to improve my speed (which I did later on at evening classes). I cannot claim to have always avoided* using some ploy to gain time, because if I was getting well behind and in

danger of missing a chunk, the priority would always be to get a full and accurate note rather than worry about my shorthand reputation. But resist I did, because if it became a habit, that would be the proverbial slippery slope to ever-increasing failure.

* "personnel" Compare outline for "personal" which has N with L Hook

* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

* "avoided" Always insert the diphthong, as "evaded" is similar in outline and meaning

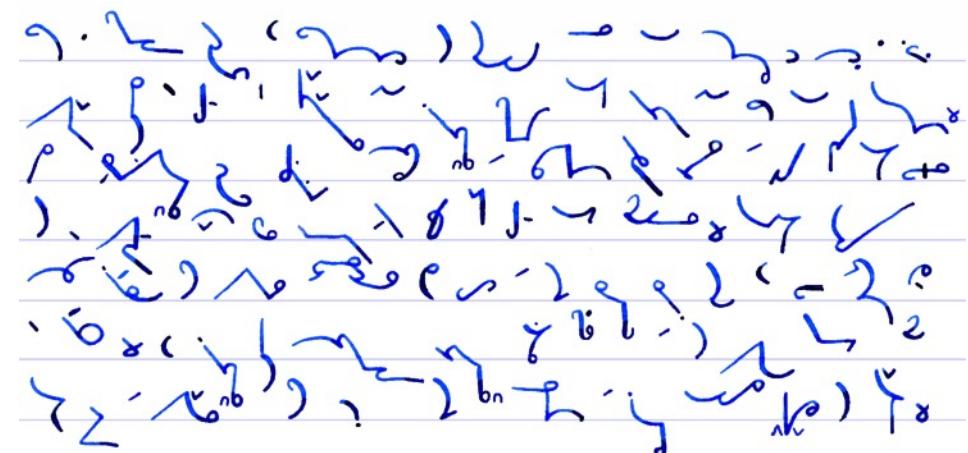


Hang On A Minute

If anyone decided they needed to speak painfully slowly just for my benefit, I would make an extra effort to stay right on top of their words, so that as soon as they had finished speaking, I was ready to look up innocently, as if to say "Next word?" They had obviously found it necessary to do so for another writer in the past, and I did not want to get stuck in that category. But I also had to have a plan of action when things were too fast. I had an armoury of ruses to interrupt the flow, asking them to

repeat a word, spell something or checking some detail. None of these imply that the problem is any lack of speed capability. On the contrary*, it was always done in the spirit of being particularly fussy about accuracy, which indeed I was, in fact* it was what I was paid for, not an added extra.

* Omission phrases "on (the) contrary" "in (f)act"



Hang On A Minute

From a practical point of view*, that frame of mind* was essential, because any errors would mean a complete retype, as it was all done on typewriters and not computers, directly onto paper and not stored in digital form. Such subterfuges would have been desperate measures and seldom possible to use, and generally the only course was to redouble my efforts to keep up, just as I had done in the shorthand class. Fortunately they were mostly composing their reports and correspondence as they went, and so the speed of speaking was not that great and there were* lots* of pauses. Without computers, it was impractical to

produce endless drafts and so reading back the shorthand for them to check and revise their wording was the custom, and confidence in one's outlines was vital*.

* Omission phrase "point (of) view" "frame (of) mind" "there (w)ere"

* "lots" and "masses" insert the vowels to prevent misreading these two

* "vital" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-5-care-e-n.htm "fatal futile vital"

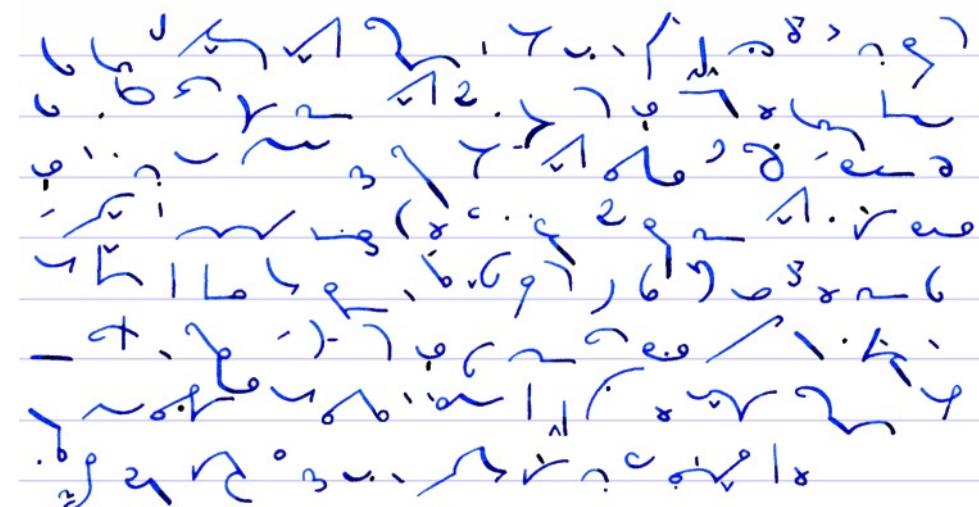


Hang On A Minute

The days of the shorthand typist taking direct dictation may be long gone now, but the desire to maintain your skill and reputation for fast and reliable shorthand writing* is one to be encouraged. Whatever you are using it for, you want to be writing comfortably and neatly, with the confidence

that you can read back fluently, even from cold notes. Having speed in hand makes this possible and ensures that your shorthand is dependable, devoid of gaps or indecipherable outlines, and a pleasure to use.

* Omission phrase "short(hand) writing"

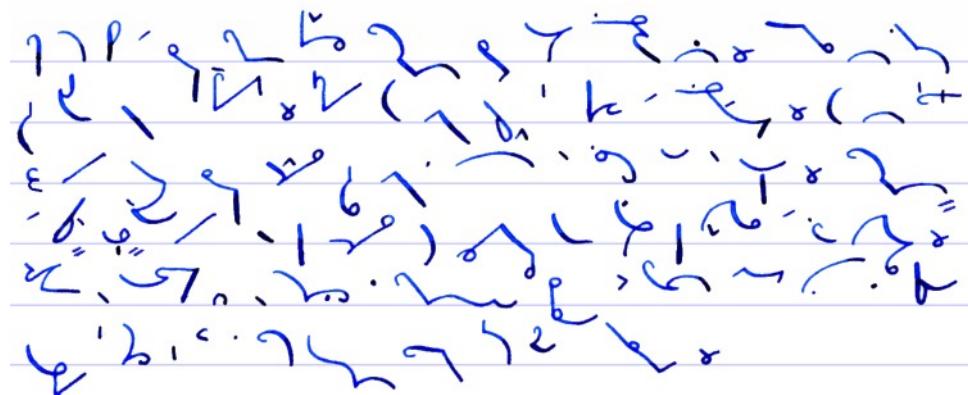


Hang On A Minute

Even if you do not require to write verbatim, but only need to jot down the main points of the meeting, speech or event, the faster and more easily you can write shorthand, the fuller your notes can be. If you were* taking notes of a meeting in longhand, you would probably only write headings, short phrases and single words, and rely on memory to expand them. With a comfortable shorthand speed, you can write a whole sentence in the time it takes for the speaker to pause while he or she

thinks of their next point. You can then give more attention to proceedings and so your notes will make more sense, rather than be a jumble of bits written hastily in the hopes of sorting it out later. Entirely verbatim in such a situation would not be helpful, as you would need to reread the whole meeting in order to* summarise it.

* Omission phrase "if you (w)ere" "in ord(er to)"

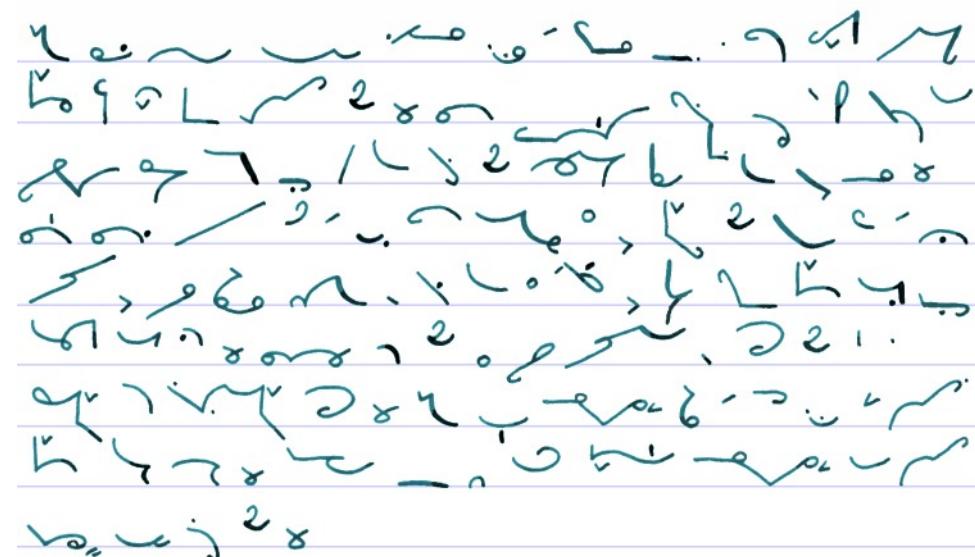


Hang On A Minute

During your study and speed practice times, verbatim has to be the only acceptable aim. Gaps may appear but they do not have to be tolerated. On the contrary* they should be pounced on, dealt with and expunged. They may occur when you are pushing the speed boundaries, but this should be a matter of concern, not of indifference. "Verbatim" and "Just Notes" are two different countries whose inhabitants have vastly different lives and comfort levels. I would like to encourage you to remain a permanent citizen of the former, and in the latter a distinguished visitor on assignment, but with a very firm grip on your shorthand passport. (912 words)

- * Omission phrase "on (the) contrary"
- * "vastly" Omits the lightly sounded T
- * "permanent" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "prominent permanent pre-eminent"

(Verbatim here is used in its basic sense of "word for word", although the term can also be used to describe a stenographer who can write word for word at any required speed.)



How Long To Learn Shorthand?

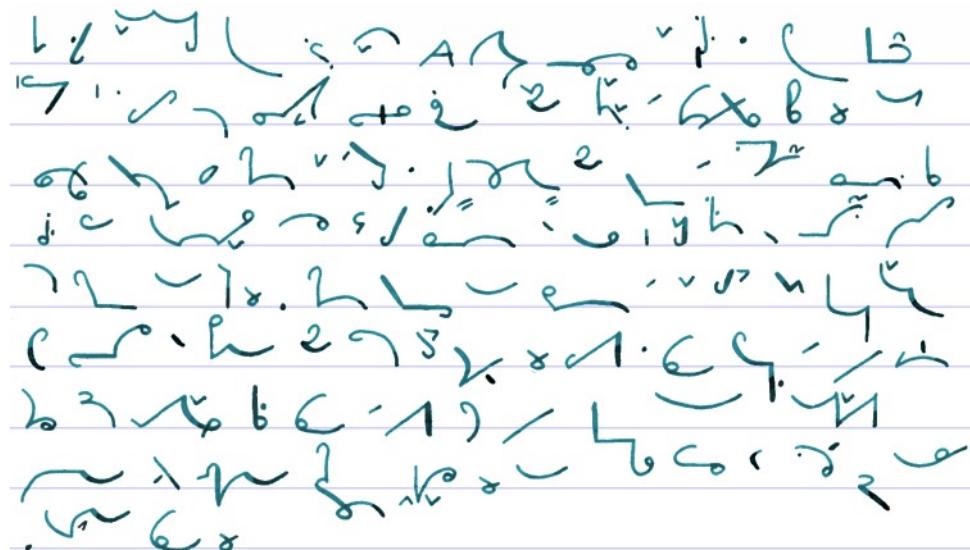
I have seen many internet articles, comments and blogs giving a very wide range of times that it might take to learn shorthand. Some gloomily predict* years of study before any usable skill can be gained, which for pen shorthand most certainly* does not have to be the case. Some seem rather short and need more investigation as to the type of shorthand being offered and may refer to the hours of lessons you will have to pay for as opposed to the additional practice time needed to gain facility in the art. Sometimes the word shorthand is used referring to machine shorthand on a stenotype or palantype machine. I have no

experience of this and cannot comment on the learning time for that method. I can only* give you information on my own experience in learning Pitman's New Era Shorthand.

* "predict" Compare with "protect" which has a halved P, in order to provide a differentiation

* Omission phrase "mos(t) certainly"

* "I can only" On its own,, "only" is written with full N and L strokes



How Long To Learn Shorthand?

At the age of 19, after completing my A-Level exams, I attended a Further Education college on a one-year secretarial course consisting of shorthand, typewriting* and elementary business studies. In the summer months before the first term, I obtained a Teach Yourself Shorthand book and casually* skimmed its contents, in order to* familiarise myself with the general scheme of things, but I did not attempt to actually learn or practise any of it. The term began in September and I joined about 25 other girls, all starting shorthand from point zero. We had a lesson every day and our home assignments were to revise the day's lesson

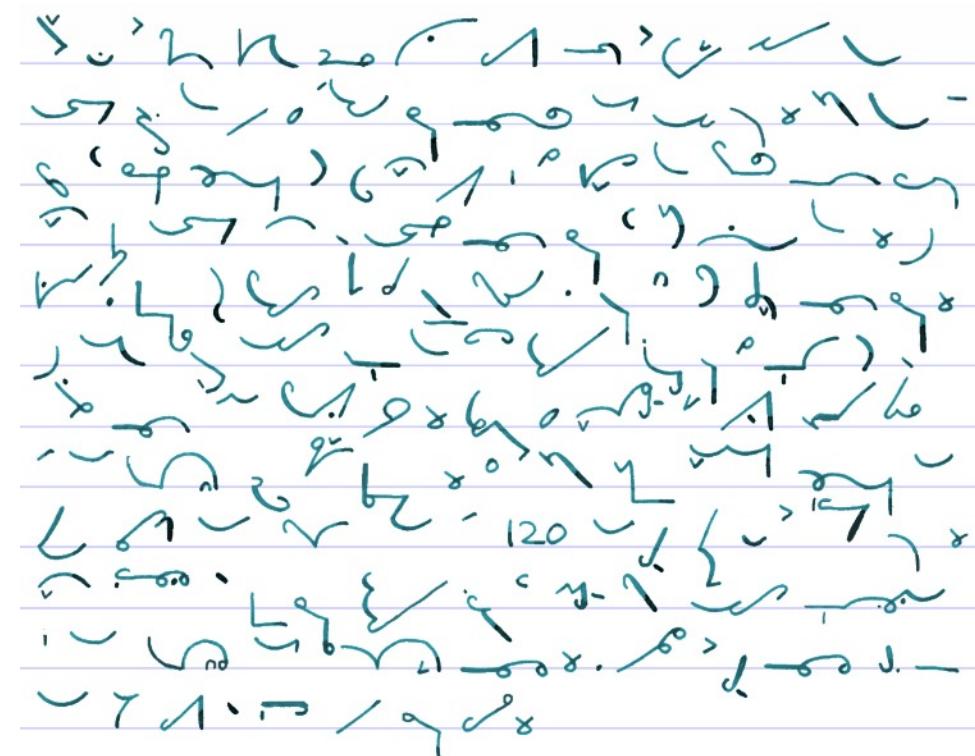
and read through our dictations in their entirety, looking up and drilling troublesome outlines. Any questions* that arose would be answered the following lesson.

* "typewriting" Shorthand generally keeps the syllables separate to aid legibility but here convenience of outline outweighs that: "ty-priting"

* "casually" Note that "casual" is a contraction

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"

* "questions" Optional contraction

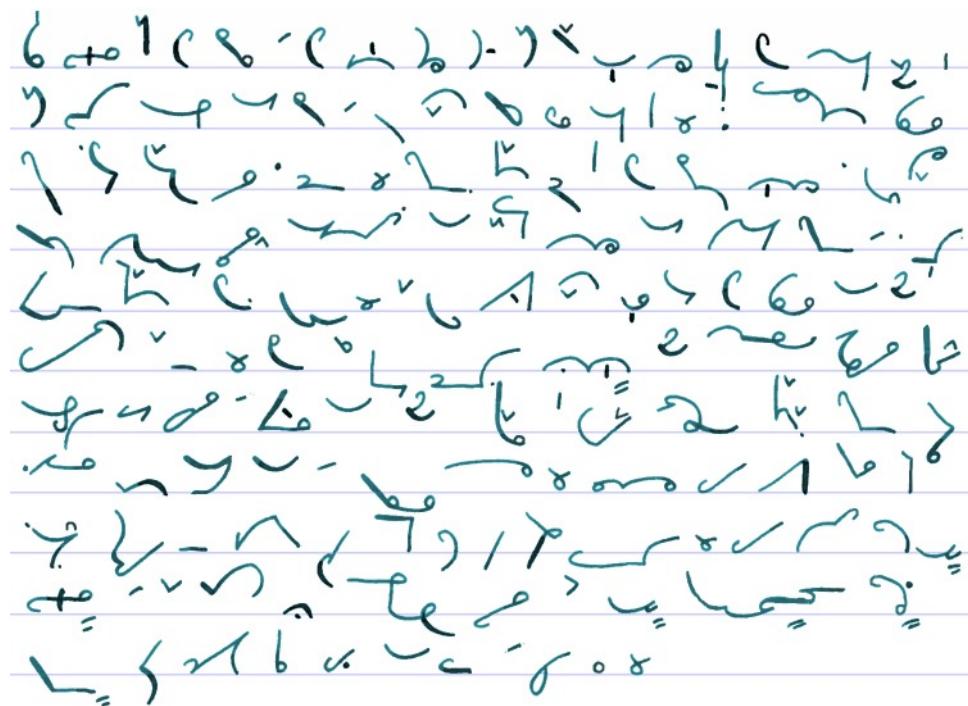


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By the end of the term, twelve weeks* later, we had covered all the theory and were being encouraged to plan for our first official speed examinations in the New Year. I remember being quite pleased that 60 words a minute* was within my reach, but as the deadline for applications came nearer, my teacher encouraged me to increase the exam speed that I was aiming for. She tailored the dictations so that everyone had the chance to become proficient a bit beyond their desired exam speed. She never pushed anyone to go for more than they were confident to do, as the goal was to pass the exam and not

overreach ourselves. This would be the first milestone on the road to greater achievements and any failure would have been highly discouraging. As I remember, I took 90 words a minute* in January, 100 in April and 120 in June, which was the end of the college year. My classmates all took speeds that they were comfortable with and I don't remember anyone commiserating on any failures in the earlier exams. The results of the June exams did not come in until we had all gone our separate ways.

* Omission phrase "twelve wee(k)s" "words (a) minute"

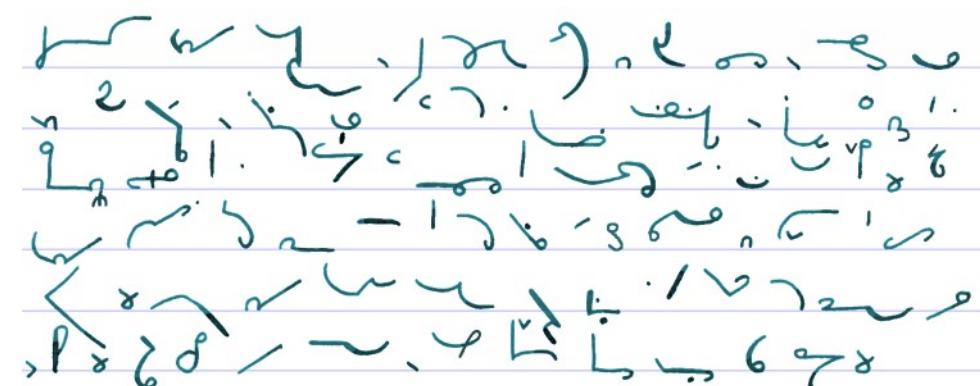


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On this course I had other subjects and other home assignments, so I was by no means devoting every minute to shorthand, but I was greatly interested in the subject and put my best efforts into it. The classroom lessons probably averaged five hours a week. Practising time would be at every spare moment, a few lines before leaving the house in the morning, in quiet moments in the lunch break and a goodly chunk of time every evening. I even wrote my notes for the other lessons in shorthand wherever I could. Several of us took the weekly "Memo" shorthand magazine and this was devoured

instantly, stories and jokes in shorthand, advice on theory and phrasing, typewriting practice pages, articles to improve English language and business matters. Sometimes we read parts of it communally so that we could help each other get through each passage quickly. We learned from "New Course" and I also made extensive use of the "New Phonographic Phrase Book" which was worth its weight in gold, and still is.

("Guide To Phrasing" by June Swann is the 1975 revision of the above book)



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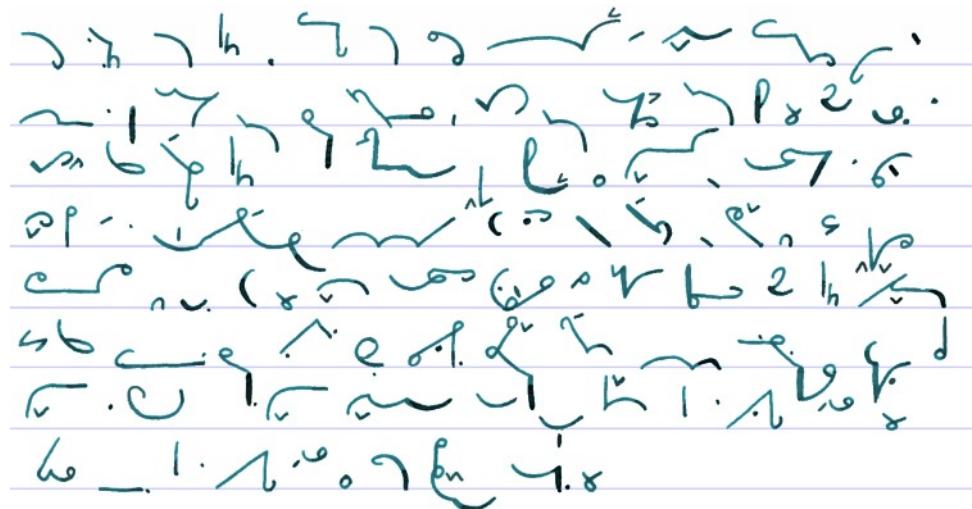
It is likely that you are endeavouring to teach yourself, and therefore you do not have someone to explain things to you, shorthand buddies to compare notes with, or a fixed* incentive to continue, as you would on a structured course at a college with exams at intervals and an end in sight. On the other hand*, if you are learning on your own, you can go at your own pace and spend as long as you like on one chapter. Maybe you are fortunate enough to be able to dedicate a

large part of your waking hours to the study. All these circumstances are going to influence the time taken to gain this skill.

* "fixed, focused" Always insert the first vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrase "on the oth(er h)and"

* "dedicate" Helpful to insert the last vowel, as it is similar to "deduct"

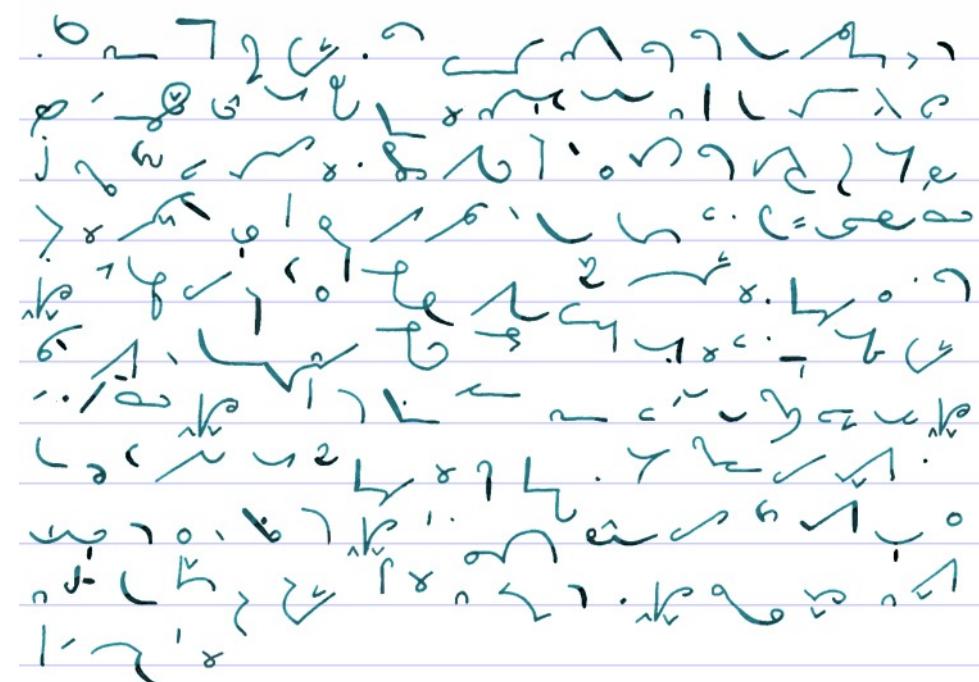


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Your own aptitude, your attitude, the quality of your source material and writing equipment will all make a difference not only to your speed of progress but also to your enjoyment of your study. Shorthand needs an all-round fast positive attitude, and dragging out the studying is likely to encourage a slow mindset and an unresponsive* memory that can't be bothered to supply you with the outlines as quickly as you need them. My on-screen

thesaurus has the ideal description of shorthand attitude required: fast, quick, speedy, rapid, swift, hasty, high speed, prompt, immediate, expeditious, without delay, at once, like a flash, like lightning, in no time, at a rate of knots. Achievements coming at a rate of knots is very satisfying indeed.

* "unresponsive" The outline is clearer if you have a slight angle between the N and Ray



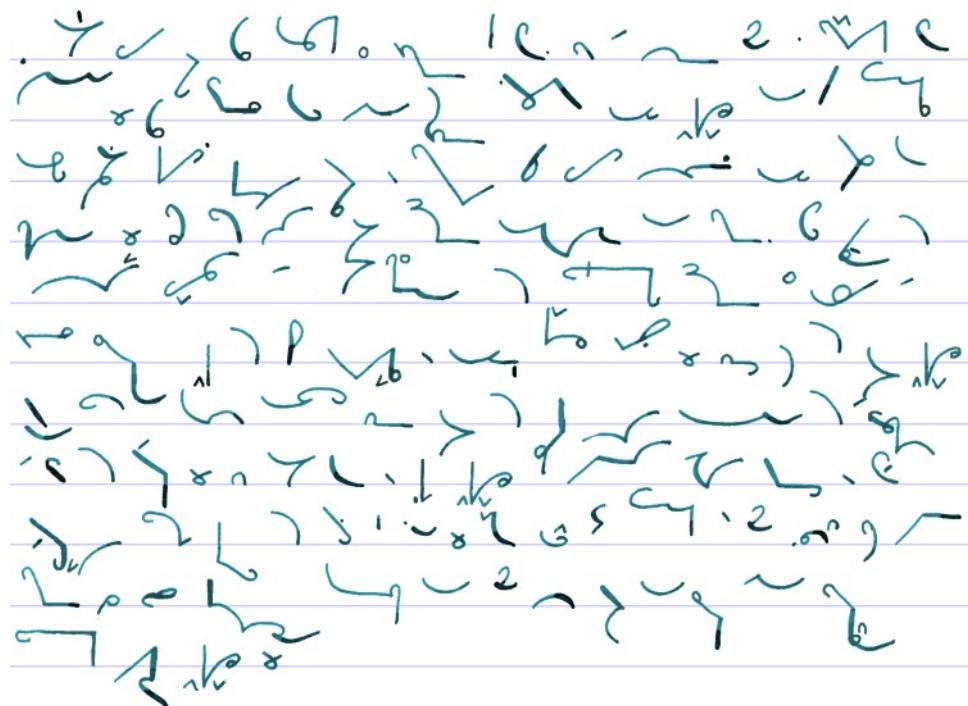
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The faster you can get through the theory, the more quickly you will be free from being restricted to the word lists and exercises found in the instruction book. You will know that* anything you do have to look up will not contain principles that you have yet to learn. A subsequent revision of it all is also very helpful, so that knowledge is not patchy. Reliable notes at speed are the result of being familiar with an ever-increasing stock of outlines, and the fastest way to do that is extensive reading of shorthand material. The dictionary is a very slow route to vocabulary extension, because of the quantity needed. With a good knowledge of the theory and a large stock of outlines at your beck and call*, you can, when not under pressure, create new

outlines for words that are not in the shorthand dictionary. During dictation, the only practical way to write an unknown word is to base your outline on a similar-sounding one that you already know, as you don't have time to think of theory at all. You hear the word, the outline springs to mind, you write it and move on.

* "You will know that" To differentiate between "know" and "note", always break the phrase before "note" and other halved versions e.g. "may" & "might" "can" & "could"

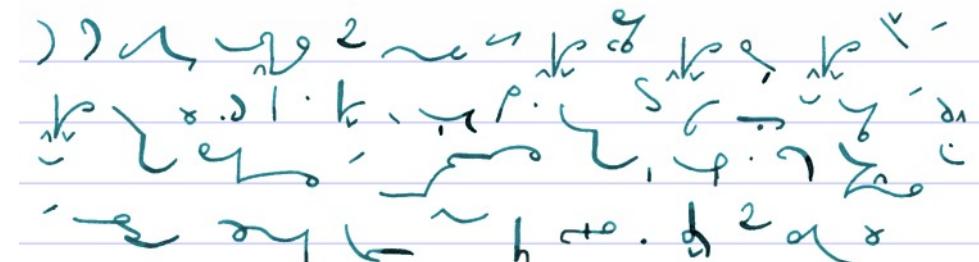
* "beck and call" Note that this English phrase does not use the word "beckon", although "beck" (which means a gesture to call or summon someone) is derived from it



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The only way to achieve this facility is to practise at every opportunity and make shorthand a priority over longhand. These blogs have been written so that you can absorb new outlines in large quantities, instead of endlessly turning dictionary pages to prepare just one meagre new passage for drilling. There is very little intellectual work involved in practising, other than choosing your material wisely and targeting your corrective work as necessary, and of course spreading out your study periods to include

times of rest. You cannot see or feel the outlines becoming more familiar, any more than you can feel your digested meal entering your bloodstream and building your body. You only have to "eat" the outlines regularly and they will begin to flow obediently from the tip of your pen on command. I have found that the quantity of shorthand "consumed" through regular practice is the greatest determining factor in shorthand improvement, both in speed and in producing correct readable outlines.



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So there we have the nutritious shorthand menu: outline sandwiches, outline soup, outline pie and outline pudding. Isn't it a delight to know that such a feeding plan will gain not inches and pounds, not centimetres and kilograms, but instead a very voluminous,

fat and expanding "words a minute" figure and, in due course, the desired shorthand certificate. (1301 words)

* Omission phrase "words (a) minute"