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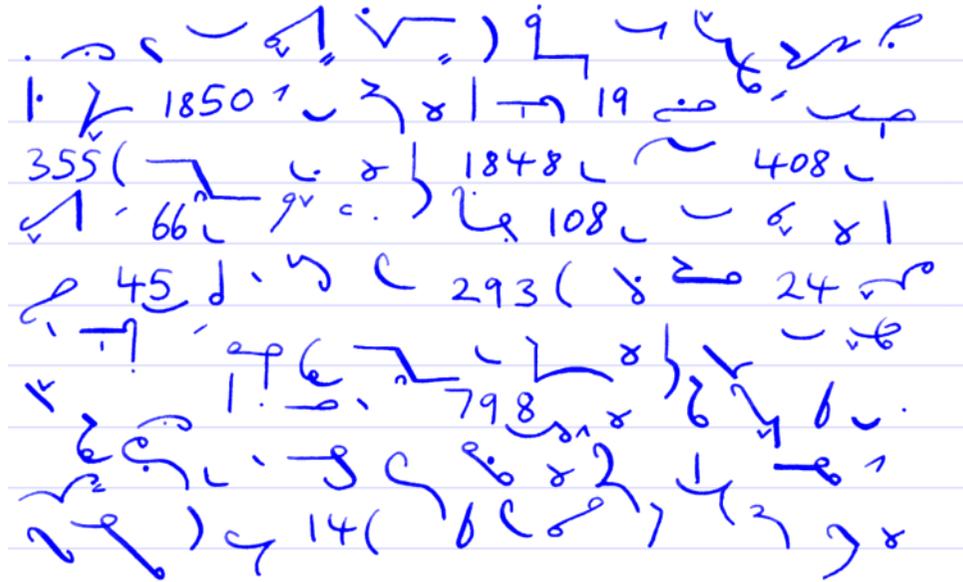
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PDF Date: 26 November 2020



Crystal Palace

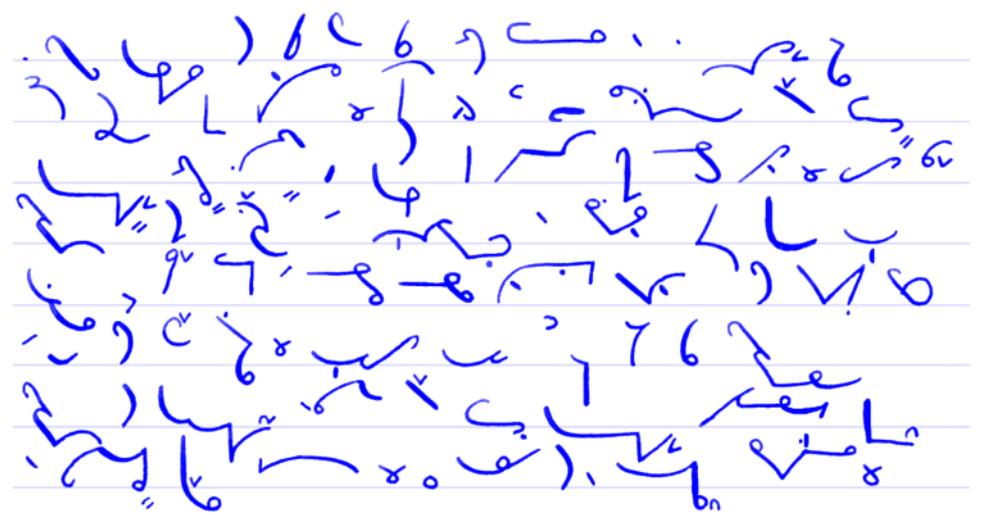
The main building in Hyde Park was constructed in the five months between the last day of July 1850 and the end of the year. It covered 19 acres and enclosed 355,000 cubic feet*. It was 1,848 feet long, 408 feet wide and 66 feet high, with a transept 108 feet in height. It used 4,500* tons of iron, over 293,000 panes of glass, 24 miles of guttering and 60,000* cubic feet of timber. It was built in nine months by 2,000* men, at a cost of £79,800*. All this provided just under a million square feet of exhibition floor space. There were 100,000 exhibits, and the number of exhibitors was nearly 14,000, just over half of which were British.

* "feet" Insert the vowel the first time, then omit for the subsequent ones. If "foot" was used that would need a vowel. "Foot" is often used when it is an adjective e.g. "a 50 foot bridge".

* "4,500" You do not need to write in the Ith stroke, but if you find you have already written it, just leave a small space, then write the 5 and its N stroke. Similarly with "79,800"

* "sixty" The outline is quicker than writing the numerals

* "2,000" A single outline/phrase is much quicker than writing numeral two and a separate Ith stroke



Crystal Palace

The number of visitors was just over six million, and three quarters* of a million of these were season ticket holders. It was opened with great ceremony by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who visited it regularly during the exhibition run. One slight problem was the arrival and multiplication of sparrows, which were doing no favours to the high quality and expensive exhibits located below their perching places and under their flight paths.

No-one knew what to do, until this perplexing problem was eventually solved by Queen Victoria requesting* the Duke of Wellington's advice on the matter*: his answer was to introduce sparrowhawks.

* "quarters" Optional contraction

* "requesting" Optional contraction

* Omission phrase "on (the) matter"

Crystal Palace
 1852
 1866
 1936
 1914

Crystal Palace

Profits from the exhibition were not great but they did fund the building of many of London's museums, including the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Science Museum. When the Great Exhibition closed, ownership of the structure reverted as agreed to the manufacturers Fox and Henderson. However, even while the exhibition was still running, Paxton had been hatching plans to reuse it as a Winter Garden. His proposal to keep it in Hyde Park was turned down, and so he formed a company to purchase the building and also a new site on which to

rebuild it. The building was relocated and re-erected at Sydenham, beginning in 1852, in a much larger form, as a "Winter Park and Garden under Glass" with extensive ornamental grounds and fountains. It hosted every sort of cultural and educational* event and exhibition, and was visited by two million people every year for the first 30 years.

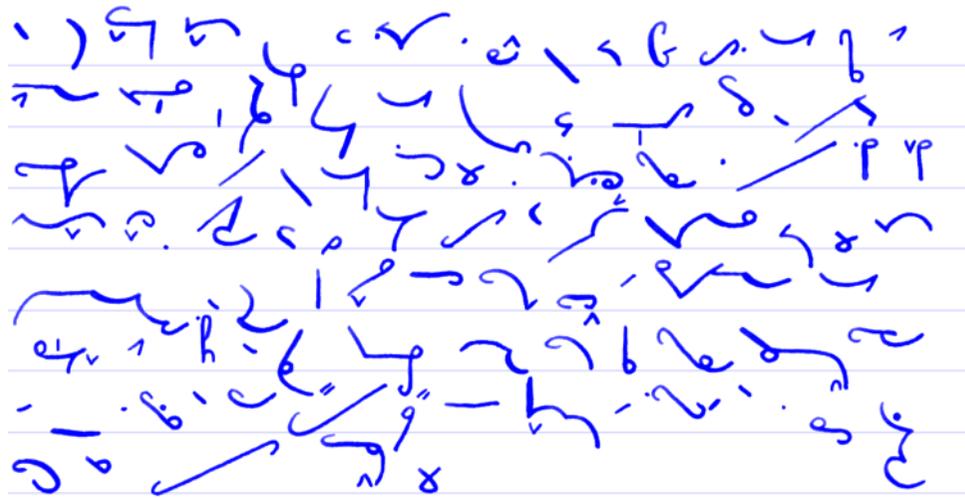
* "educational" The diphthong is normally written outside the shun hook, but here it has nowhere else it can be written

Crystal Palace
 1852
 1866
 1936
 1914

Crystal Palace

It remained in operation for 85 years, despite a fire in 1866 which destroyed the north transept and wing, which was never rebuilt. It declined in popularity in the later years and on 30 November 1936 it was completely destroyed by fire. The fire started in one of the staff toilets and rapidly spread to engulf the whole building, fuelled by the wooden floorboards and walls. Half of London's firemen turned out to fight the fire but their efforts were to no avail, and indeed were hampered by the crowds flocking to witness the conflagration.

Overnight the Palace became a giant heap of molten iron and glass. To many Victorians the Crystal Palace was a magnificent example of engineering innovation and a symbol of their desire for peace and prosperity, but these noble aspirations had already crumbled at the beginning of the 20th century with the Great War of 1914. Standing on the empty foundations, one not only tries to imagine the presence of the building, exhibits and people, but also the fire, noise and smoke.

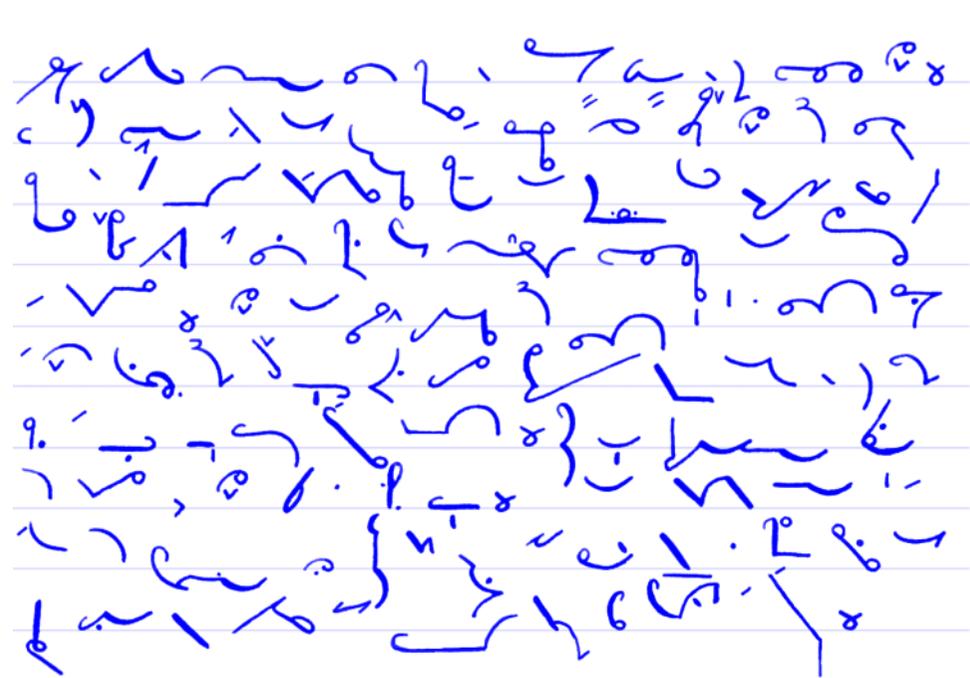


Crystal Palace

All was quiet on my visit, with hardly a sound to be heard other than the wind in the trees and the cawing of crows, but all this will change in the future when the current plans to rebuild the Crystal Palace are put into action. The remains present a rather sad sight and in my mind the original building is the only one that really

belongs here. I am looking forward to seeing it rise again from the ground and sparkling in the sunlight, and the statue of Joseph Paxton moved from its present obscure corner and given a place of honour where he can admire and approve of a second faithful version of his wonderful glasshouse. (1317 words)

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



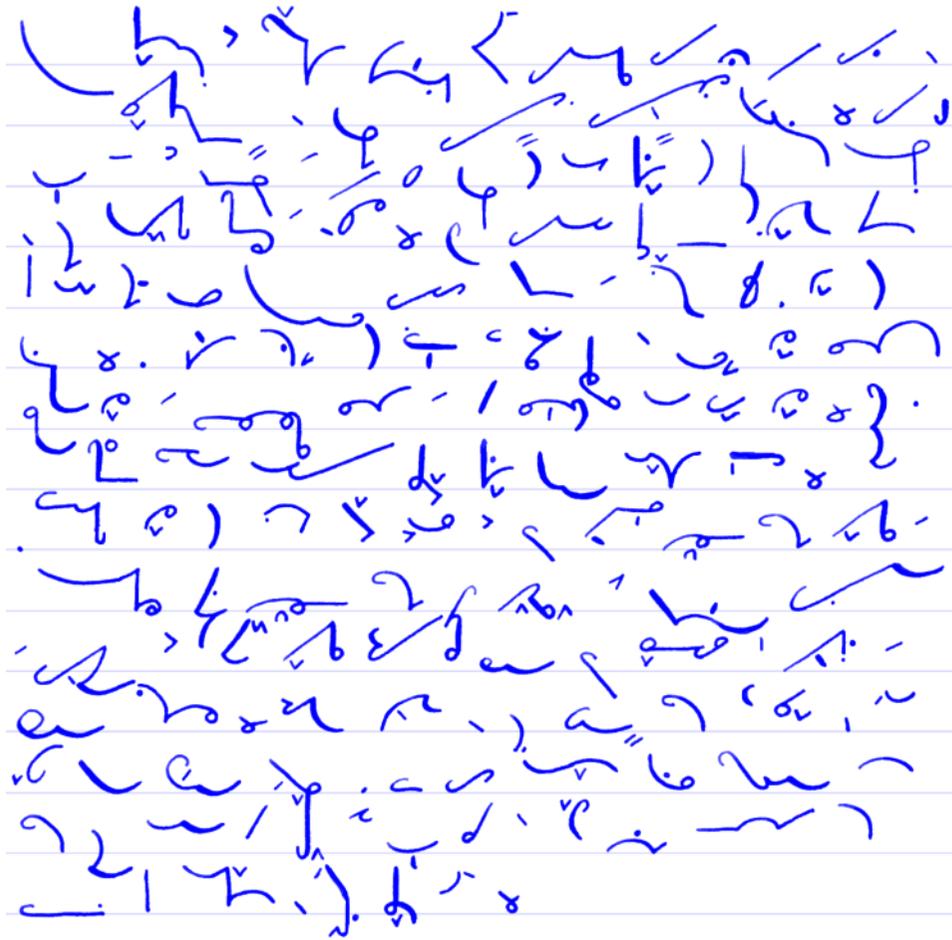
Christmas Lights

Recently we have been making some trips to central London to see the Christmas lights. When I was growing up in the fifties and sixties, most high street lights were simple strings of large coloured bulbs strung in zigzag* fashion between the buildings on each side of the road, and the same draped over the municipal Christmas trees in squares and parks. Lights in house windows were similar but on a smaller scale, and my favourites were the pine-cone shaped ones, as they were big enough to see from the street and gave good clear

blobs of colour. There was no twinkling, chasing or patterns to the lights, just a steady glow. Any bulb going on and off or flickering meant that it was about to fail and would soon become a dark space in the display, waiting to be replaced, quickly, before the others overloaded and popped.

* "zigzag" Z sound at the beginning of a word always uses stroke Zee, even if no vowel precedes it

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



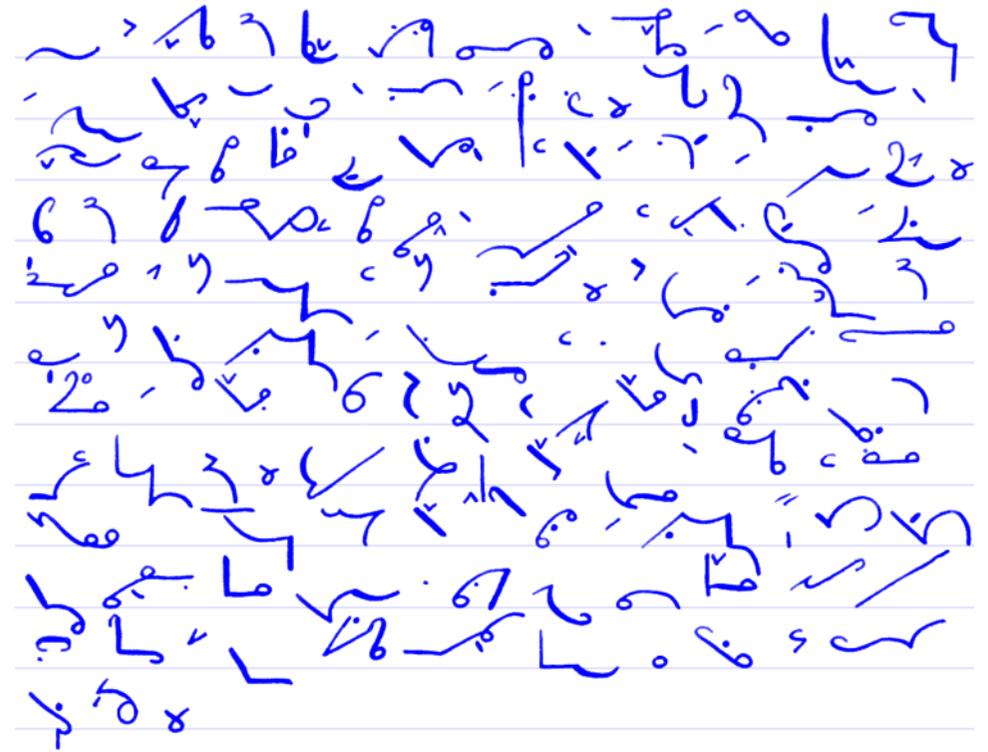
Christmas Lights

After admiring all the brightly illuminated shop windows, we made our way to Hyde Park to visit the Winter Wonderland* funfair. We did not know quite what to expect, and our first visit was in the daylight, so it was interesting to see the variety of attractions and stalls. However, we knew it would come alive much more* at night, so the next afternoon we went back and arrived just as the light was fading. The whole area was aglow with endless displays of neon lights, smaller string lights and Christmas trees small and large smothered in white lights. There was not a dark corner anywhere, despite the daylight having entirely gone. The quantity

of lights was matched by the noise of the people, raucous music from the rides and entertainments, gentler music from the children's roundabouts, and the booming, whirring and whooshing of the giant rides that were sending people skywards on rotating and swinging arms. I would have loved to see London from that height but not while being flung upside down, the cold wind in my face preventing me from seeing anything much and with no chance to either aim the camera or click it in time to obtain the desired shot.

* "Winter Wonderland" Best vocalised, as the two outlines are similar

* Omission phrase "much m(ore)"

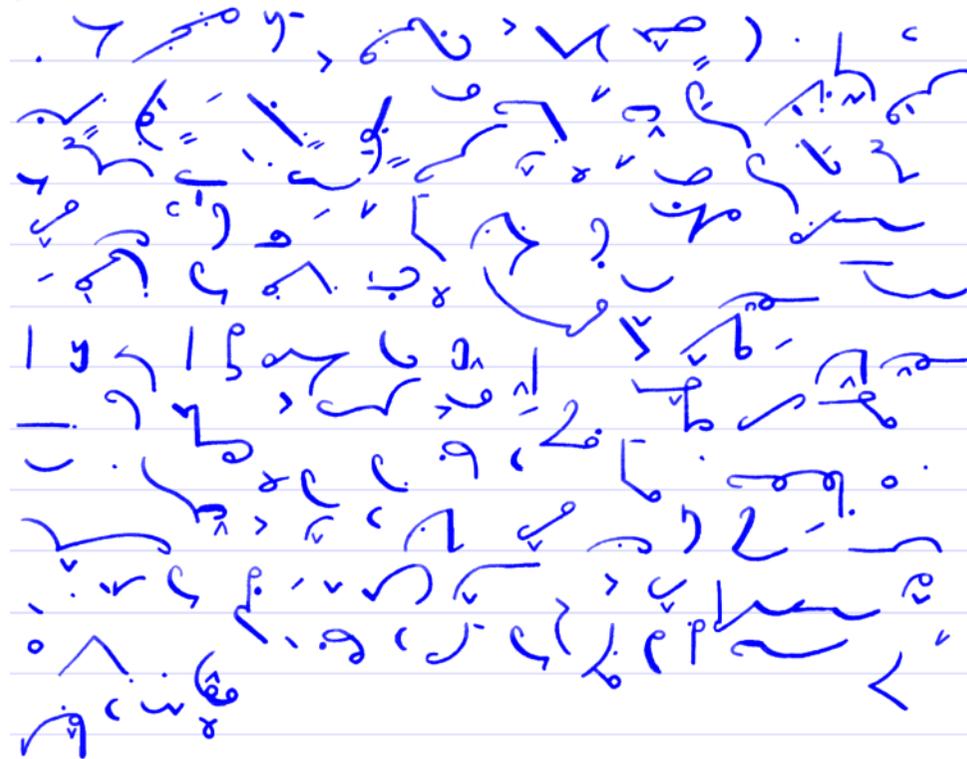


Christmas Lights

Most of the rides were designed to elicit screams of excitement and surprise, defying gravity and leaving behind any notion of calm and sedate comfort. In addition there were games of minor skill such as darts, shooting balloons with bow and arrow, and ring throwing. Others were just experiences such as house of mirrors with wobbly floors and shaking walkways, and the ice kingdom with ice carvings. All the themes and artwork were snow, ice, bears, reindeer and penguins, with a few scary characters, sharks and pirates as well, although I suspect that real pirates did not

celebrate peace or goodwill at any time of the year. They were vastly outnumbered* by the figures of Santas with sacks of presents, accompanied not only by sleighs and reindeer but also polar bears, husky dogs pulling a sledge and even some tigers, and one rather grand dragon on the big chargers carousel, taking his place with the normal painted horses.

* "outnumbered" Optional short dash through last stroke of contraction to signify past tense



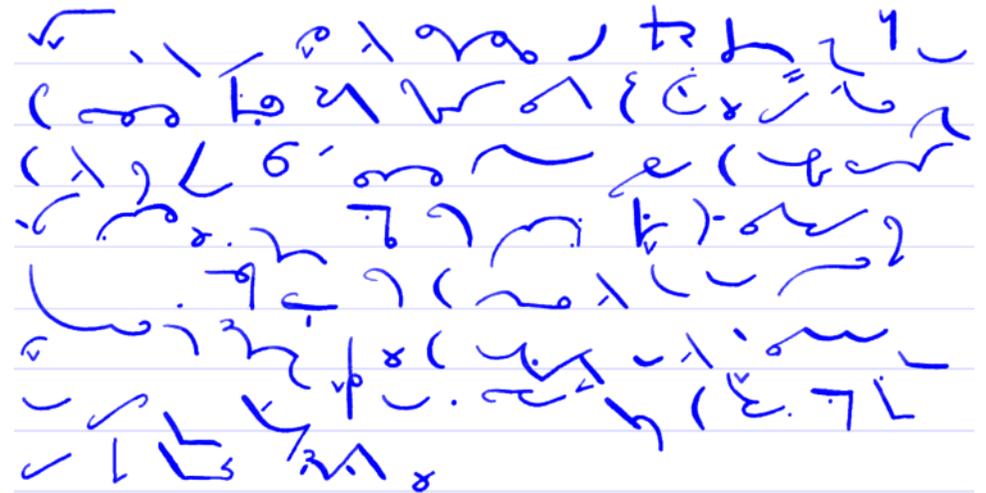
Christmas Lights

The only reference I saw to the celebration of the birth* of Christ was a tower with Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus in his crib on the ground floor, rotating slowly under the warm glow of a golden yellow light. On the next floor above were the wise men with their gifts, and on the top level three angels circling and hovering over the happy occasion. If there was* any music accompanying it, I did not hear it, as it would certainly have been drowned out by the rides and loud music coming from all directions, all the normal noise and shrieks of excitement one expects in a fairground. However, every star that tops a Christmas

tree is a reminder of the light that led the wise men on their journey and came to a halt over the stable, and I also like to think of the white twinkling lights as representing the thousands of stars that shone over the shepherds as they sat guarding their sheep on the hillside that night.

* "birth" Note that "burial" is written with upward L to ensure it does not look like "birth"

* "if there was" Only "if" is doubled or halved. The phrases "for there, for it" use full outline, to differentiate



Christmas Lights

I like to put our lights up as early as possible*, usually at the beginning of December, and if I had no other Christmas decorations, I would be perfectly happy with them alone. We often leave them up through January as well, and sometimes longer, using them instead of the normal wall lamps. The room gets very limited daylight, so halfway through the afternoon,

the extra glow from them makes up for any lack of light or warmth outside. They invariably end up all hanging together in one big bunch in a corner, before they finally get packed away at the back of the wardrobe. (1217 words)

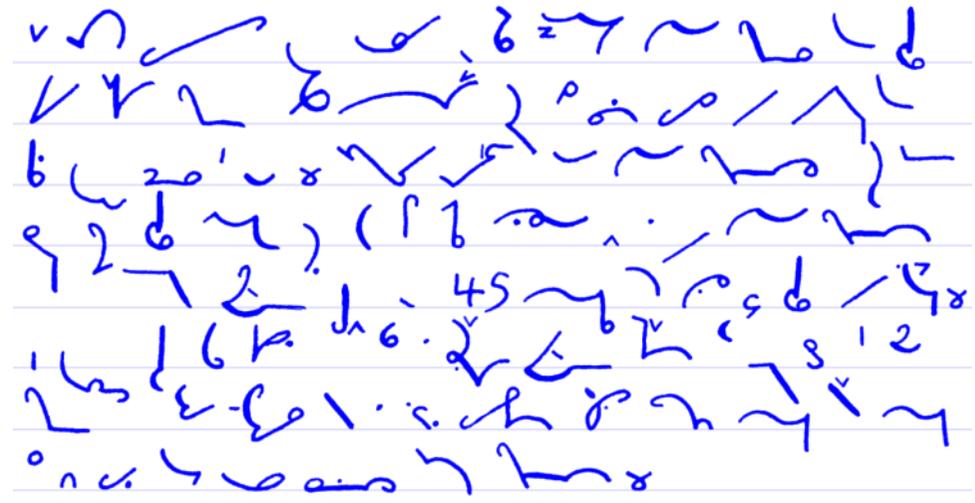
* Omission phrase "as early as poss(ible)"



Christmas Movie

If you have been spending the last few days celebrating Christmas, my guess is that the shorthand practice has taken a back seat. It would probably be too much to become engrossed in the story line and take down the dialogue at the same time*. You would have to be a true and dedicated shorthand enthusiast to sit in your festively-decorated living room, with drink and Christmas sweets by your side,

Blank lined writing area for notes.



Christmas Movie

I also wonder if this is the answer to all those annoyingly long breaks for adverts*, which are ideal practice material, especially as the same ones are repeated for days if not weeks on end. I prefer to record any long programmes, so that I can speed through the adverts and never see them at all, and it is amazing* how an hour long programme can be shrunk down to 45 minutes or less when the adverts are avoided. But if you cannot do that, then at least* that is a sizeable chunk of time that could be spent on shorthand practice that would otherwise be a complete waste of time*, stolen from you minute by minute

Blank lined writing area for notes.

watching your favourite programmes with the shorthand pad balanced on your knees. But if you have actually done this, then you truly* deserve the honour of that title.

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

* "truly" "utterly" Always insert the first vowel

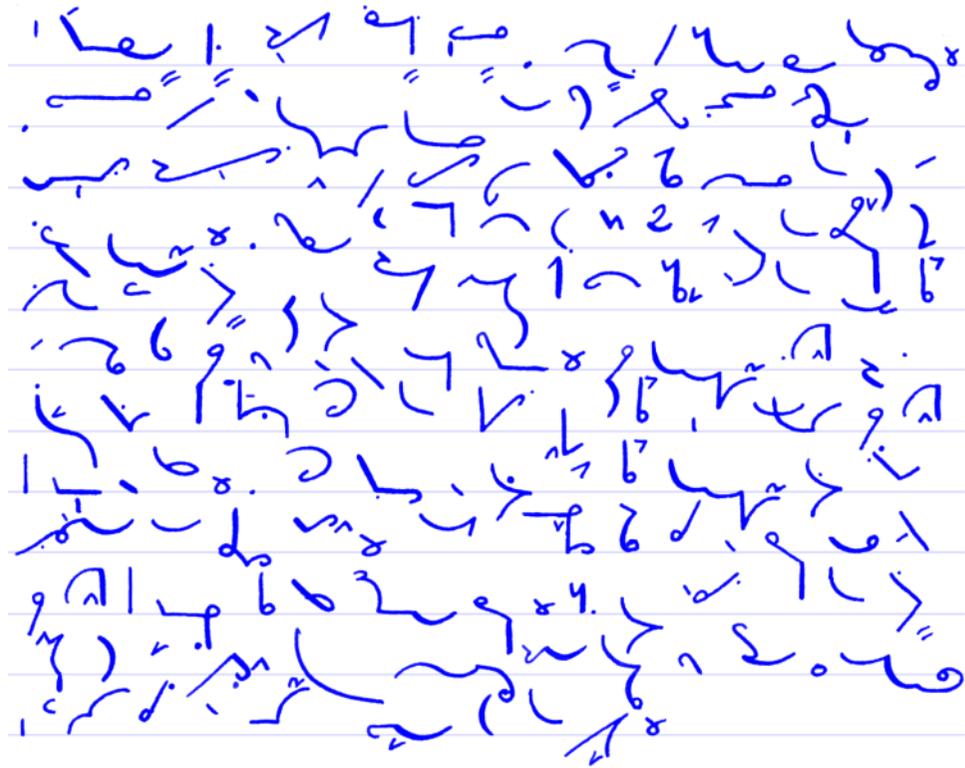
as you wait for the next segment of your programme.

* "adverts" This is a full outline, note the contraction D-Ver is used for advertisement/advertise/d

* "amazing" "amusing" Always insert the vowel

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

* Omission phrase "was(te of) time"



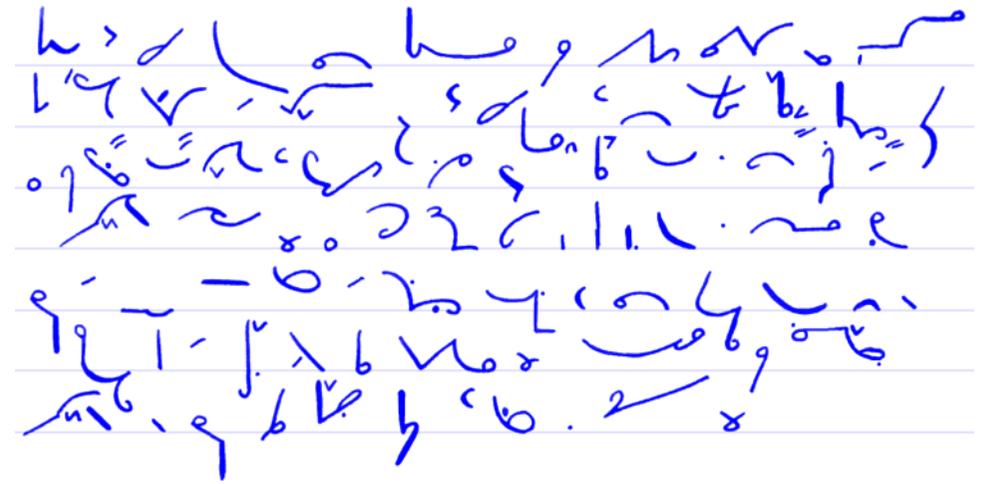
Christmas Movie

On Boxing Day, I watched "Santa Claus The Movie", which I have not seen for some years. The characters are all firmly fixed* in their respective categories, and there is no undercurrent of wondering how each one will behave, and this makes for easy and comfortable viewing. The person that got me thinking about shorthand and the push for high speed was the elf called Patch, who was full of energy and enthusiasm, and had more ideas for new toys and methods than he had opportunity to put into practice. He was eventually allowed to build a conveyor-belt automated machine for turning out the toys, but unfortunately* he allowed it to go too fast, the machine

began to fail and the toys eventually fell apart, resulting in disappointment all round. In the excitement of this chance to speed things up, he allowed it to exceed its best working speed. I did feel sorry for Patch and I think he was on the rebound after many years of waiting for this opportunity, planning his inventions but with little chance of actually creating them for real.

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

* "unfortunately" Optional contraction



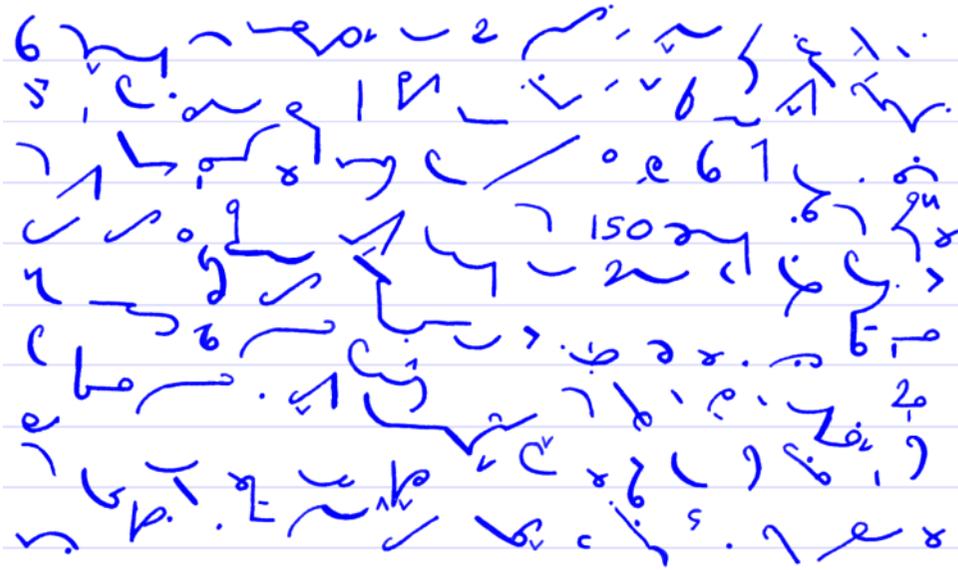
Christmas Movie

At the end of the story, after some adventures, he returned happily to his colleagues at the North Pole and I like to think that the story continues with him in charge of the Ideas Department, which was his true place in life, with everyone else building the toys in a more controlled and reliable manner. His machine worked well but it did have a maximum safe speed and

could not go faster and remain intact without some changes being made to strengthen it and tighten up its performance. In other words, he sacrificed reliability to speed, which is the direst danger that faces the shorthand writer*.

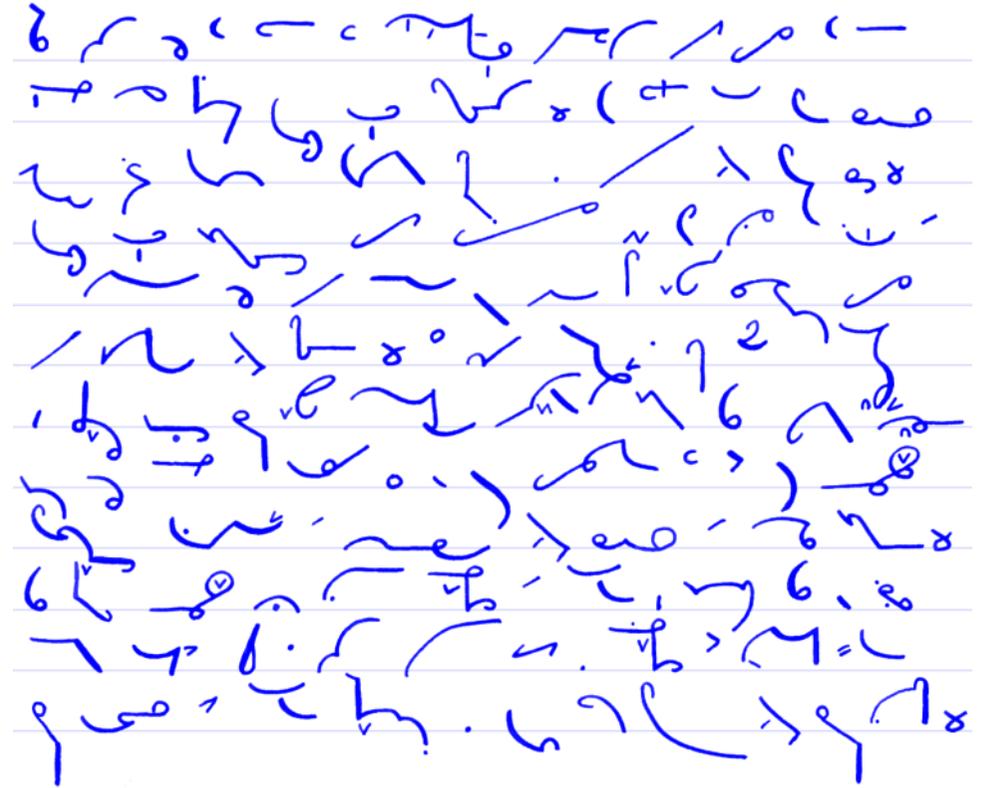
* Omission phrase "short(hand) writer"

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Christmas Movie

This reminded me of experiences in shorthand learning and writing, which was comfortable up to a point, but over a certain speed it started to come apart and I just could not write properly* or read back the scrawl. I am sure every writer has suffered this, and it feels the same whether one is struggling to reach 50 or 150 words a minute* or higher. I have come to the conclusion* that there is one bottleneck in shorthand writing* that vastly overshadows all the other difficulties and that is lack of fluency in all the commonest words. The main cause is not lack of a wide vocabulary or possession of lots of ingenious shortcuts, or even the inability to construct new



Christmas Movie

All those little words that occur with monotonous regularity are the ones that can cause the most damage if they are not known perfectly. They occur in every sentence, and if not completely familiar they will be tripping the writer up every other* second. If they are not known to perfection, one wonders how the other less common and longer words are going to be written at all, while the simpler ones are "holding up the traffic". As you are obviously a true shorthand enthusiast who desires to gain speed whilst maintaining reliability, I hope this will be music to your ears, because the answer is to busy oneself* with all the easy exercises over and over again*, varying and mixing up the

outlines on the fly. All these have their place but they are, to me at least*, a long way behind when compared with the principal reason.

* "properly" Always insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately" as they are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrases "words (a) minute" "come (to the con)clusion" "short(hand) writing"

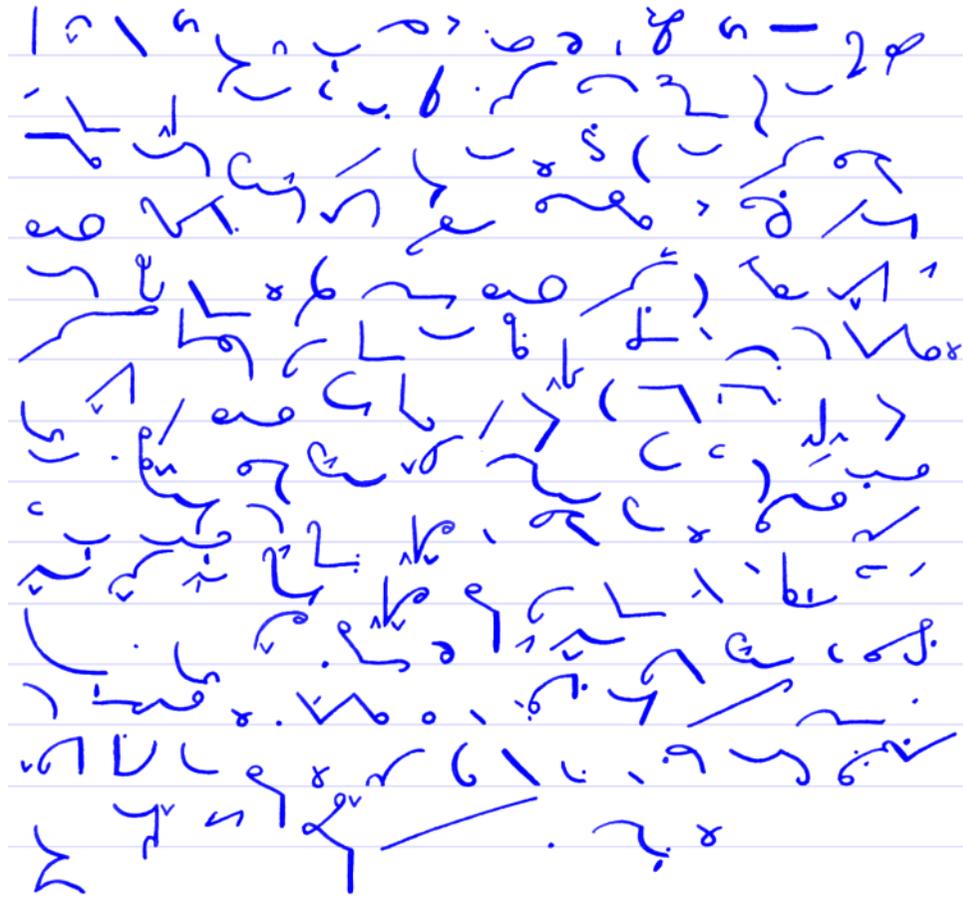
* "at least" "at last" Always insert the vowel

sentences and methods of practice. This type of exercise may lack excitement and novelty, but I am sure those two concepts can be enjoyed just a little later, the excitement of the longed-for* speed increase, and the novelty of admiring the view from further up the speed ladder.

* Omission phrases "every oth(er)" "over (and) over again" The second "over" is reversed in order to join the phrase

* "oneself" The N is omitted

* "longed-for" Ing cannot be halved

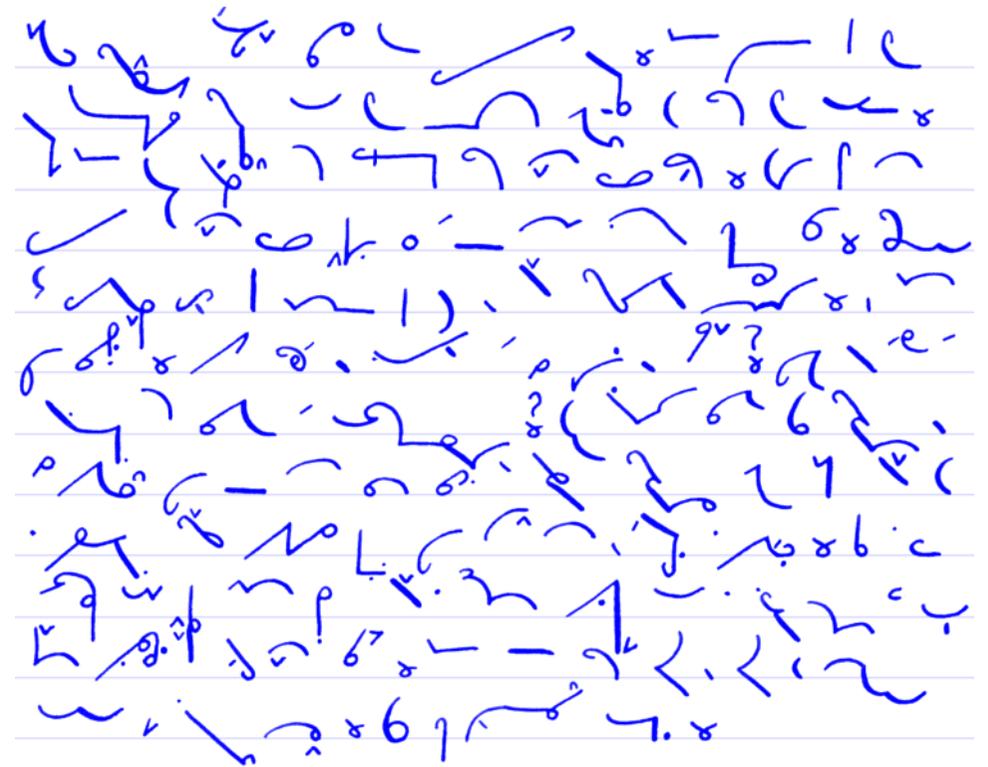


Christmas Movie

It might be that you feel you know most of the commonest words, but I would suggest that you go through the lists, and pick out any that need just a little more work, so that any gaps in your fluency are filled in. Plant them in really simple sentences, preferably also using as many as possible* of the phrases recommended in your instruction book. This will make the sentences really easy and pleasant to write, and the relaxed atmosphere will take any stress out of the task of improving your performance. If you write each sentence along the top of each page, they can be copied down the page, in a satisfyingly

smooth flowing style, moving along with ease and neatness, with no unknown or tricky outlines to stumble over. As long as you are writing lightly, and not drawing the outlines, speed will pick up of its own accord and after a few lines the spoken words and the writing will be flowing without hesitation or awkwardness. The purpose is to consolidate knowledge rather than make a wild dash for speed. You will then be fit to star in your own celebratory film entitled "High Speed Writer The Movie." (1037 words)

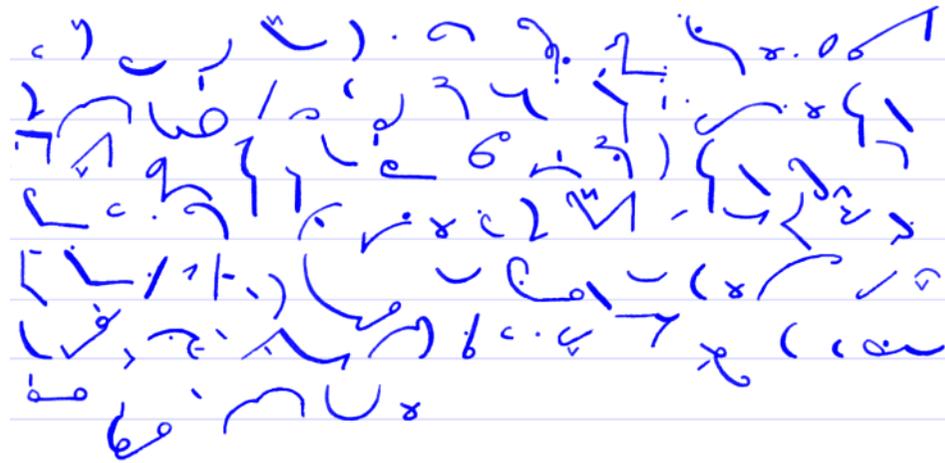
* Omission phrase "as many as poss(ible)"



New Shoes

I have been browsing the online sales for winter boots. I can look at every boot the factories produce, in every colour and view them from every angle. I can have them posted, or collect from my nearest store. They will tell me where my nearest outlet is and give me the map directions as well. There is nothing that the website won't do to make it easy to buy, preferably immediately. But I am still hesitating. Are the fronts too narrow and is the heel too high? Will they be soft and bendy, or heavy

and inflexible? They have partly solved this problem too, as the reviews will give me some hint of possible problems, and if I do buy them, a reasonably priced Returns Ticket will allow me to obtain a refund. It is a cold and frosty night outside, and I am sitting by a warm radiator, in a comfortable room, with no time restraints upon my choice. I can go from shop to shop without moving anything but the computer mouse. This is true luxury indeed.



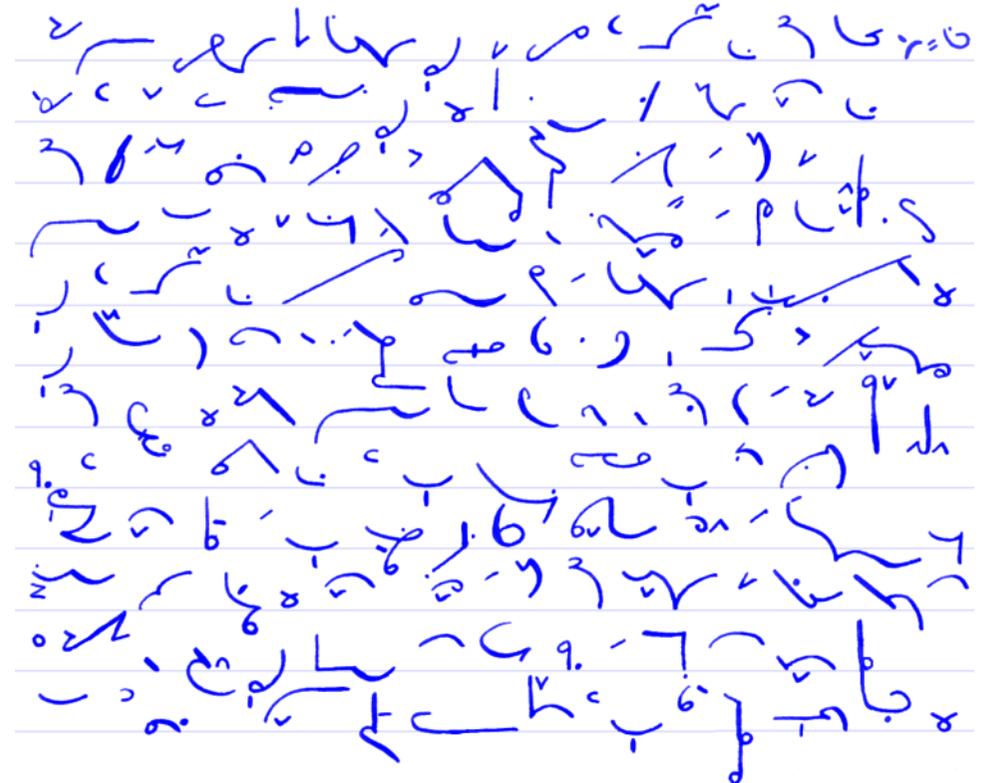
New Shoes

When I was younger, shoe buying was a more frustrating and tricky affair. The first hurdle was the limited finances*, which meant that shoes were never bought on a whim. They had to be got right first time and they had to do for school as well as home wear, so they had to be brown or black with a very low heel. Comfort was the priority and in the shop I would bend the

top back edge and the toe to see if there was any flexibility in them. Later on we might have to resort to the method of rubbing the leather edges with a white candle to soften them, without staining socks, but this was of limited efficiency.

* "finance" The modern pronunciation can also be with the diphthong "fye-"

Horizontal lines for writing notes below the text.

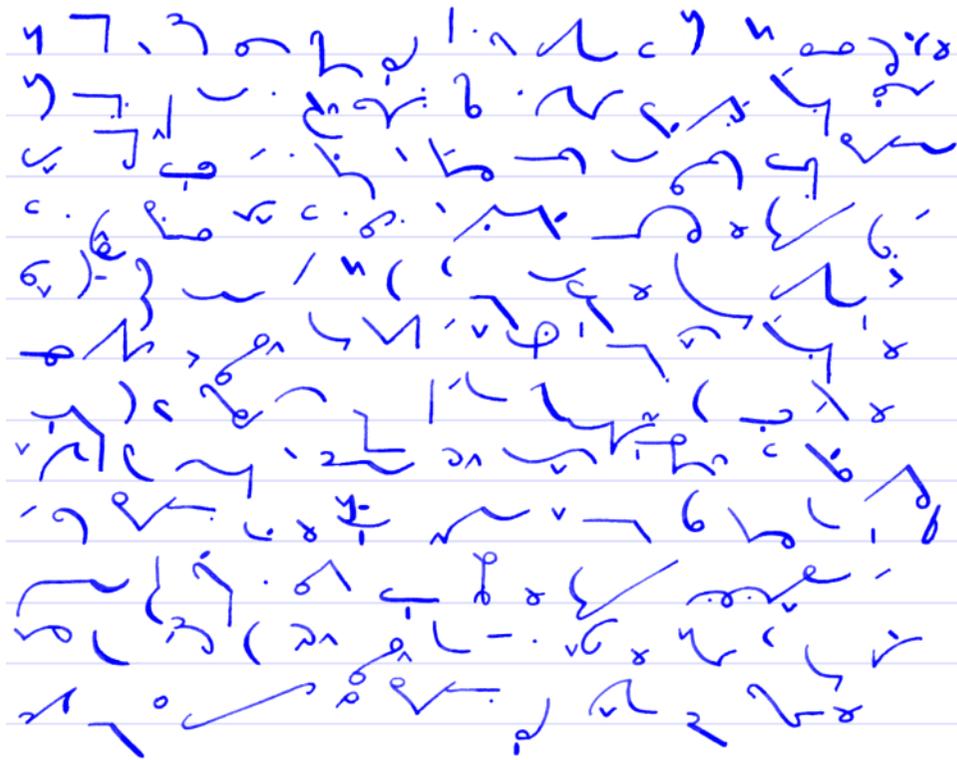


New Shoes

I would look wistfully at the fashionable shoes, but the ones that actually fit were often the old-fashioned sort that I called "granny shoes". At a young age I felt my feet were just not the same as the rest of the inhabitants of planet Earth and I was "on the outside, looking in". I ended up having to compromise and settle for a plain shoe that actually fit, rather than something special and fashionable but unwearable. Shoe buying was more of an obstacle course than a pleasure but occasionally all the requirements were

fulfilled. I would be looking for every opportunity to wear them, and I would stride down the street with "happy feet" with no pinched corners, no hard leather squashing my toes, and no insoles detaching themselves, sliding around and forming into annoying little folds. My mind and eyes were entirely on the pavement before me as I watched the two beautiful shoes taking me along the street and getting me to my destination in what seemed liked double quick time, with no thoughts of distance covered.

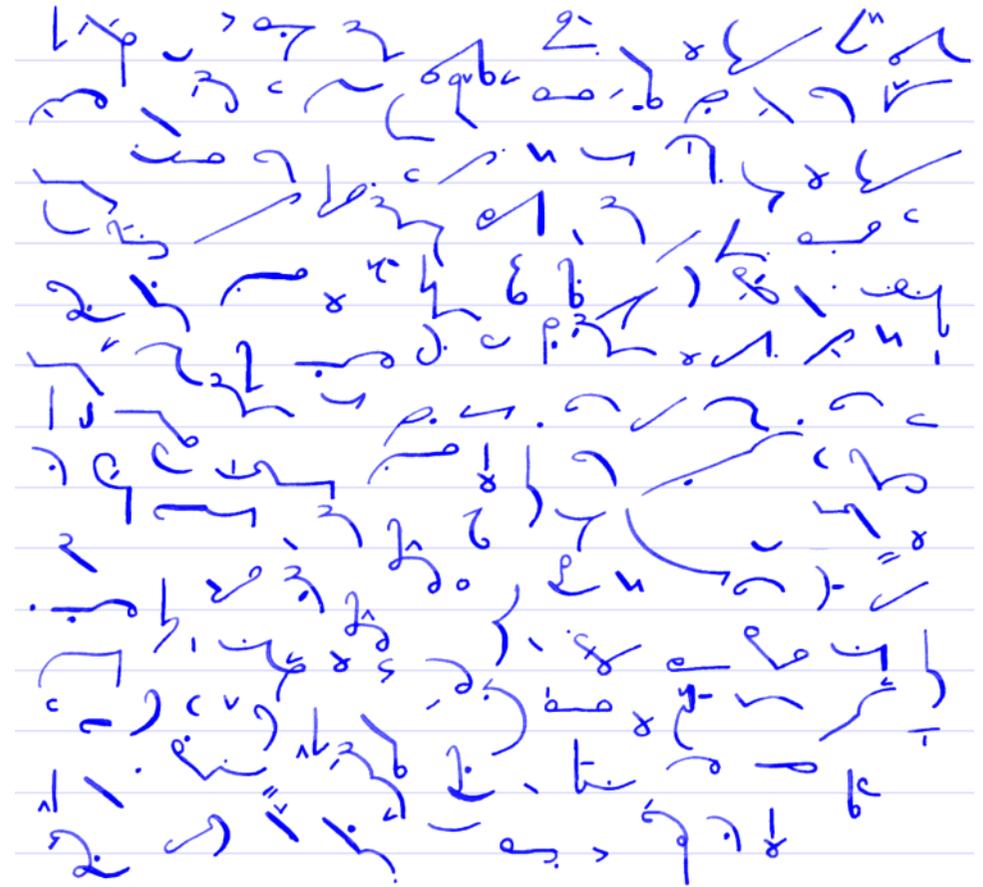
Horizontal lines for writing notes below the text.



New Shoes

I did get to wear some dream shoes at a particular wedding, when I was about six years old. I was kitted out in a beautiful frilly dress, a lovely blue ribboned bonnet, smart white cotton gloves and a pair of pumps covered in silver glitter, sparkling with a thousand specks of light, with a hint of rainbow colours. They were thin and slight, so there was nothing much about them that could be uncomfortable. After the wedding all the guests returned to the house for the party and I insisted on

keeping my bonnet on. Nobody was able to persuade me to take it off, and eventually they gave up. I loved every minute of walking around in my costume with bows, ribbons and very sparkly feet. I don't know how long I kept those pumps for, but just looking at them brought a happy glow of satisfaction. They were mesmerising and I must have worn them around the house for quite a while. I felt that if the whole world could be as wonderful as the sparkly shoes life would be perfect.

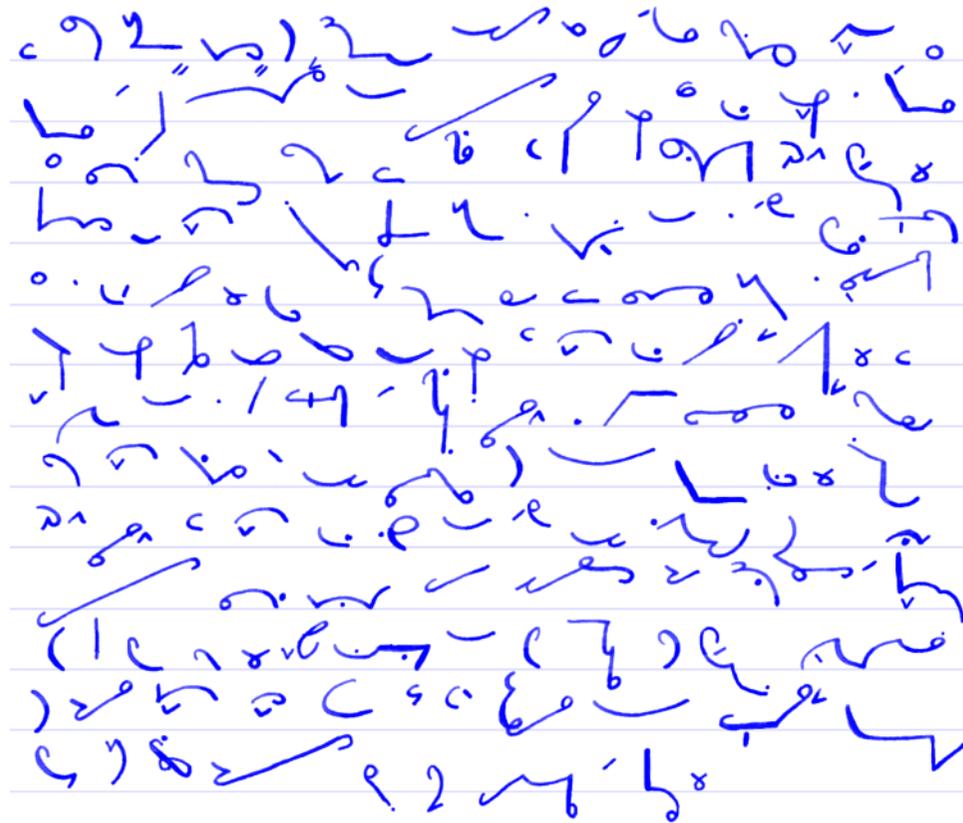


New Shoes

At the opposite end of the scale were the hideous hockey boots. They were giant heavy lumps, to be worn with long thick striped socks, and laced up very tightly to keep the ankles from twisting when running about in the muddy field. They were for protection rather than warmth, as we had to wear our gym skirts with freezing bare legs. I thought at the time that this dress rule was supposed to be an incentive to keep on the move during the games session in order to* stay warm. We did run about, but it did not keep us warm in the least, the more we moved, the more cold air flowed over unprotected legs! It was

very rarely that permission would be granted to wear trousers and then only after the end of October. The games teacher always wore trousers, as she was standing about more, so we looked on enviously. When the years of compulsory school sports ended, it was with great pleasure that I threw out the boots and harsh socks. I don't think I am really cut out to be a Spartan warrior training to toughen myself against discomfort and freezing weather by baring any skin to the frosty air!

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"

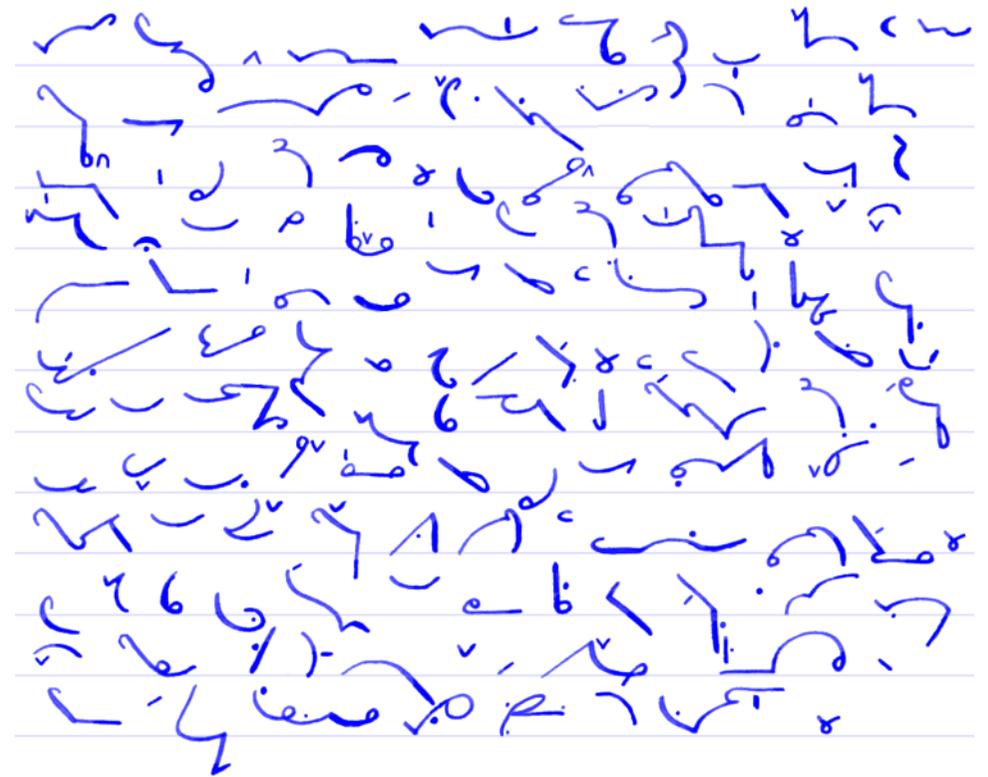


New Shoes

When Sir Isaac Pitman was working in one of his first office premises, writing his books and teaching materials, in winter he had to sit with his feet inside a box as some protection from the cold draughts that swirled around the floor. At the moment under my computer desk I have a pillow in a soft fleece cover as a footrest. Even though the room is not cold, sometimes I put a hot water bottle inside and it is the next best thing to sitting with my feet resting on the radiator. When I lived in a much colder and draughty house, the regular Christmas present from my

parents of new slippers was another big event. Padding around the house with my feet swathed in soft new artificial sheepskin made the winter seem to melt away, and once again* I would wear and admire them at every opportunity. Whilst engaged in other activities, their fluffy loveliness was always on my mind, along with the thought that this was another glorious victory over the icy blasts of winter seeping through the windows and doors.

* Omission phrase "wu(n)s again"



New Shoes

I learned over the years how to make all my own clothes, and there was no item that I could not* produce, given the materials and either a paper pattern or some item to copy, but shoes were impossible. Even house slippers could be knitted, although I never made any as the designs on offer were unattractive. I might* look back on some things in the past with affection but definitely not the everyday footwear* that was available to us and within our budget. When people say "Best foot forward" in encouragement, I feel that* this can only be* done properly* wearing the softest new white knee high socks, best shoes in the smartest style, and preferably in shiny bright red leather with gleaming silver buckles. However, I think this vision, formed in school days, ought to be updated a little to match my present age, so maybe I should revise the colours to black and change the fastenings to laces, elastic or velcro. (1219 words)

* "I could not" can be phrased, but "I could" should be written with separate outlines, so that it does not look like "I can"

* "I might" written separately, so it does not look like the phrase "I may"

* "footwear" Insert the vowel so it does not look like "knitwear" or "underwear"

* "properly" Always insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately", as they are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrase "I fee(l) that"

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