

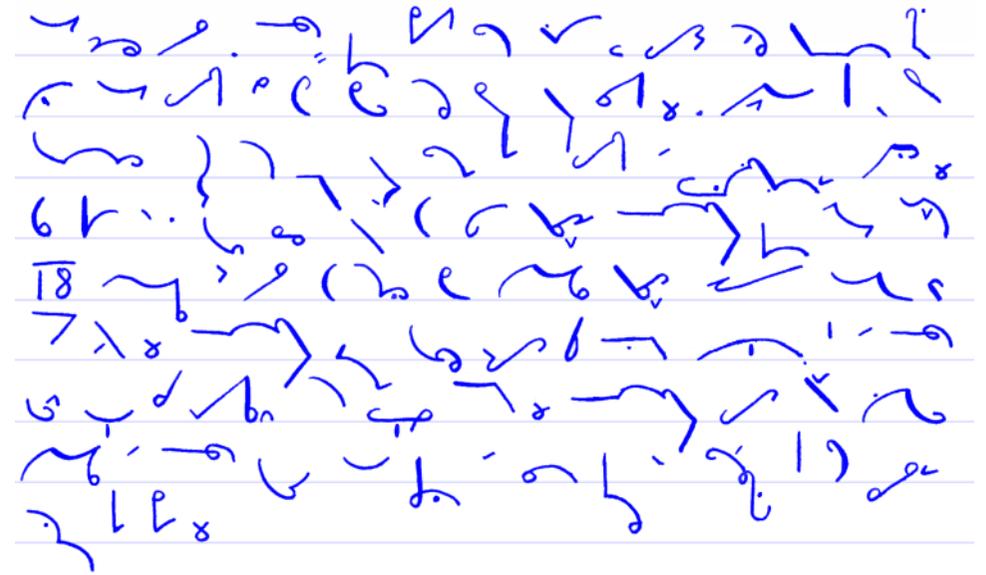
Boat Race Lesson

A week ago I saw the televised version of the UK Boat Race where the Oxford and Cambridge University teams row from Putney Bridge to Mortlake on the River Thames, going upstream with the incoming tide. We were not at home at the time of the race and so had to record the programme to view later. This meant we had to avoid seeing the news or accidentally coming across the result online,

so it was "news blackout" for us until the evening, when we sat down with our dinner trays on our laps, to watch the women's race, followed by the men's race. Not quite as good as seeing them on the live programme, but we were able to fast forward* through an hour and a half of background information and interviews, and get to the real action.

* Omission phrase "fas(t) fo(r)ward"

Handwritten practice lines on lined paper, mostly blank.



Boat Race Lesson

In the women's* race the Oxford team started very badly, when one of the oars became trapped low in the water as the other seven oars sped the boat ahead. The rowing had to stop for a moment* so that the oar could be pulled from the water and equilibrium regained. This delay of a few seconds put them well behind the Cambridge team, and for the entire eighteen and a half* minutes of the race they remained several lengths behind and were never able to catch up. Cambridge, who were the favourites to win, just kept motoring on and Oxford found no chance to reduce or close the gap. Cambridge won by 11 lengths, and Oxford finished in dismay

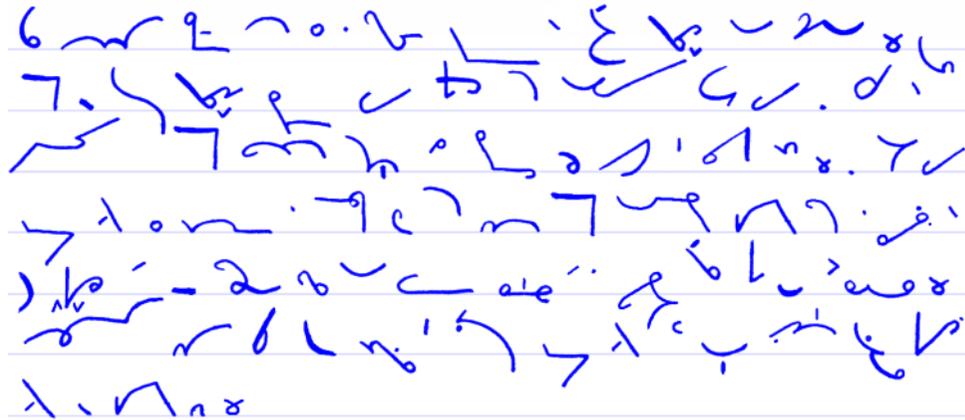
and some tears of frustration at their serious error at the start.

* "women's" Note that "woman" is written above the line, following the last vowel, to distinguish between these two

* Omission phrase "for (a) moment". Note that "for the moment" is phrased in full.

* "eighteen and a half" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/vocabulary-numbers.htm#fractions

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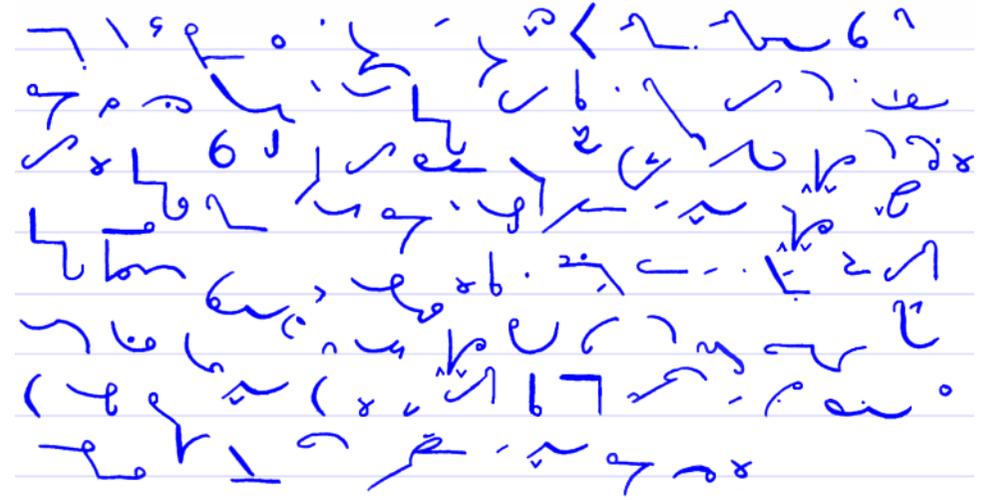
Boat Race Lesson

This immediately struck me as a perfect picture of falling behind in shorthand writing*. If you get too far behind the speaker, whether at the beginning or anywhere along the way, the chances of recovery get more and more* remote, as the spoken words rush on ahead of you. The only way to catch up is to make an extra effort, or you may get unexpected

help from a series of easy outlines and good phrasing opportunities in quick succession, and a useful pause at the end of the sentence. Most likely* you will just have to press on harder to catch up, with no random favours turning up to help you.

* Omission phrases "short(hand) writing" "more (and) more" "mos(t) likely"

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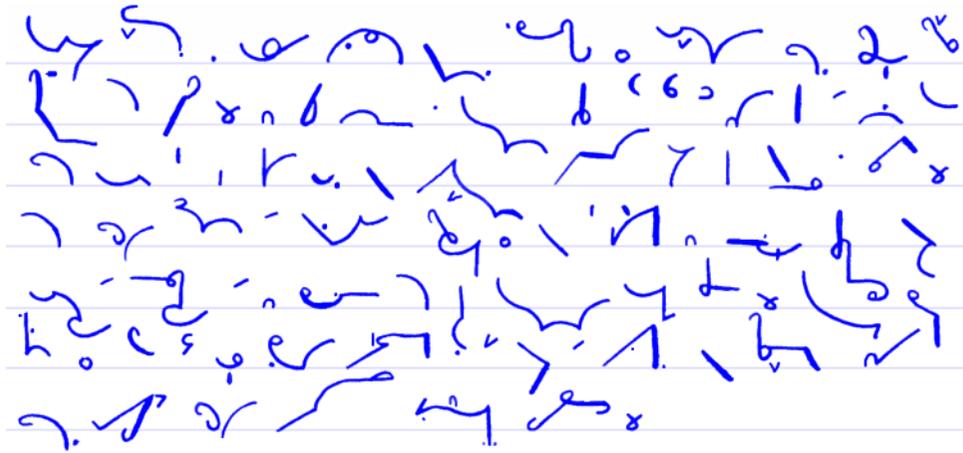
Boat Race Lesson

Keeping up with the speaker is a full time* and "full mind" job, and practising and perfecting this particular skill is the main benefit of any dictation, whether it is a prepared one or an unseen one. Dictations themselves do not teach one single bit of shorthand theory, revision, outline or phrase. Dictation gives practice in the skill of instant recall and writing of outlines, whilst at the same time listening to the next few words*. It is a wake-up call and a bucket of cold water in your face if you thought you knew the outlines sufficiently* well or you have been carefully drawing

them instead of speedily writing them. But the water does get warmer and less stinging as expectations* become more realistic and writing skill improves.

- * "full time" Halving for the T of "time"
- * Omission phrase "ne(k)s(t) few wo(r)ds"
- * "sufficiently" The contraction includes the "-ly" version as well, but it is always in order to add an L stroke to such contractions, if greater clarity is required
- * "expectations" Optional contraction

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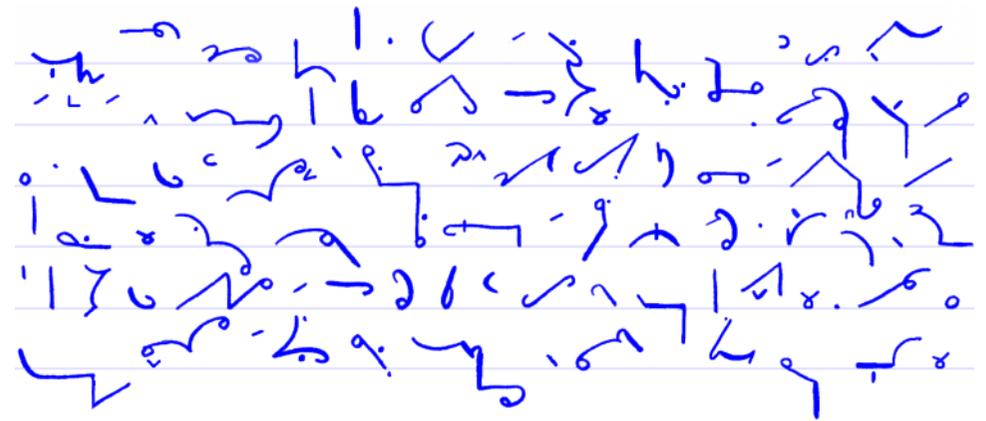
Boat Race Lesson

Fortunately, acquiring the necessary laser beam concentration is entirely free, there is no price, drawback or shortage. You just make a firm decision that that is what you will do and aim for, from now on, but it will need to be reaffirmed regularly until it becomes a habit*. Your friendly, warm and patient personality is put on hold, you ignore distractions, both internal and external, and you sink your teeth firmly into the task. After the speed attempt is over, with the notes safely recorded on the

page and ready* to be transcribed, you are free to re-join friendly relaxed humanity once again*.

- * "habit" "hobby" Helpful to insert the first vowel to prevent misreading
- * "ready" Advisable to insert the last vowel, as it could be misread as "read" in this context and so upset the correct reading of the following words
- * Omission phrase "wu(n)s again"

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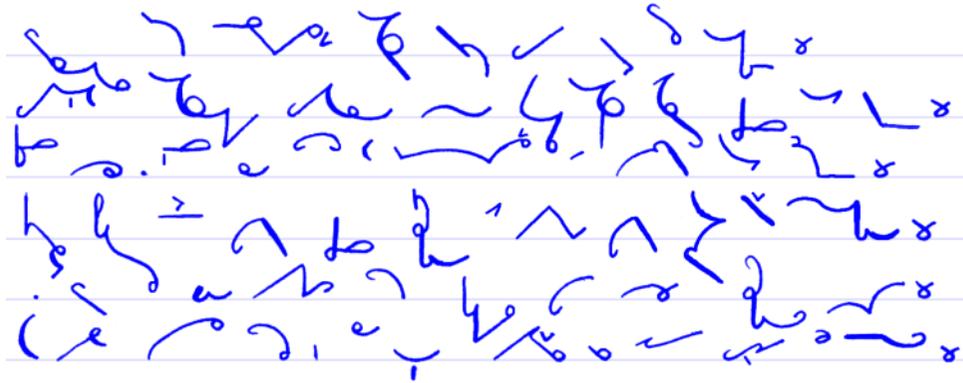


Boat Race Lesson

No doubt the Oxford women's team had a thorough and painful debrief, to discuss what went wrong and why, and how to make sure it does not happen again. The University Boat Race is a big event with millions of spectators around the world watching on their screens, and reputations are at stake. Errors must be corrected and

strategy improved, and there is a whole year to work on it until the event returns and again there is just that one opportunity to get it right. The result is victory, smiles and champagne spraying in all directions to celebrate achieving the speed goal. (719 words)

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Instructor Phrases Section 2

These sentences practise the phrases in Section 2 page 196 of the Instructor, Circles, Loops and Hooks.

Please inform us of your experience in this subject before we put the plans into effect.

We know that* in this century we have seen many changes in this city and this has been discussed in the book.

At first cost means the cost is not more than that of materials and labour for the work.

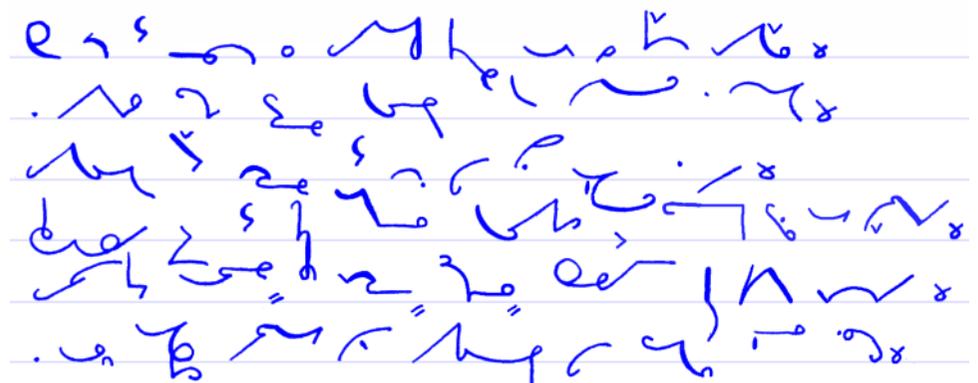
It appears that the state of affairs of the company will be discussed on Thursday

evening and the report will be available by Monday evening.

The people who have not returned from out of doors will miss the Thursday afternoon meal.

They received letters from us but sent no replies to us and we wondered what is going on.

* "we know that" Always avoid phrasing the halved version of a pair, e.g. know/note, may/might, can/could, to provide extra differentiation



Instructor Phrases Section 2

As we have heard that the exam is Wednesday next, it appears that now is the time to revise.

The reports from the political association have been expected for longer than a month.

We have been informed by the medical association that the meeting will last no longer than an hour.

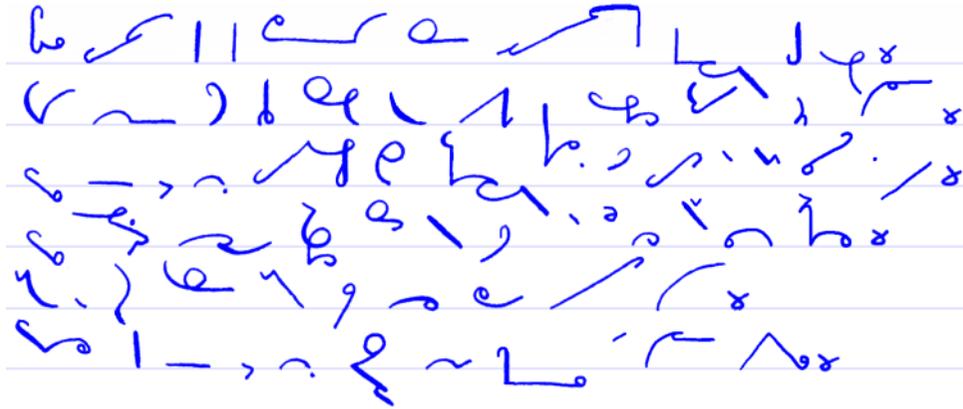
It is only necessary* to check that the traders' association* handbooks have been returned to the correct place in the library.

We will contact the Incorporated Association of Medical Workers as soon as we can do so, which will be tomorrow.

The news in this statement regarding the low rate of interest will in our view cause concern.

* "it is only necessary" On its own, "only" is written with full N and L strokes

* "traders' (associa)tion" This misses out one of the S sounds, but is still clear what is meant



Instructor Phrases Section 2

At all events we will do it as quickly as we can, and we regret it can only be done next month*.

They will make their decision as soon as they have read the details in our statement that we issued last week*.

Please come to the meeting Wednesday next, as we think that it may only be a short one of about half an hour.

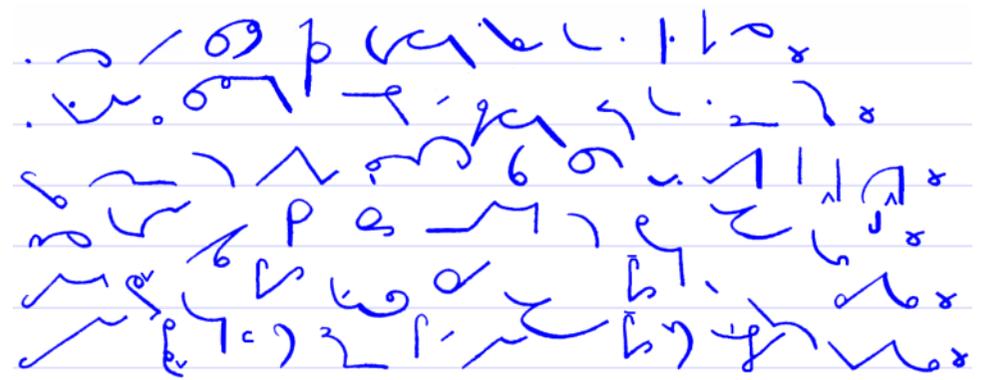
Please explain the meaning of this statement, as we cannot be sure of what is meant by some of the terms.

I have to say that for his sake I hope he improves sooner rather than later.

By all means do come to the meeting, as we shall be able to meet the directors and local representatives*.

* Omission phrases "ne(k)s(t mon)th" "las(t w)EEK"

* "representatives" If the speaker says "reps" then insert the vowel, to ensure correct reading



Instructor Phrases Section 2

The men are as well as usual and it is said they will only be absent for a day at the most.

The patient is as well as can be expected and he will only be here for a week or two.

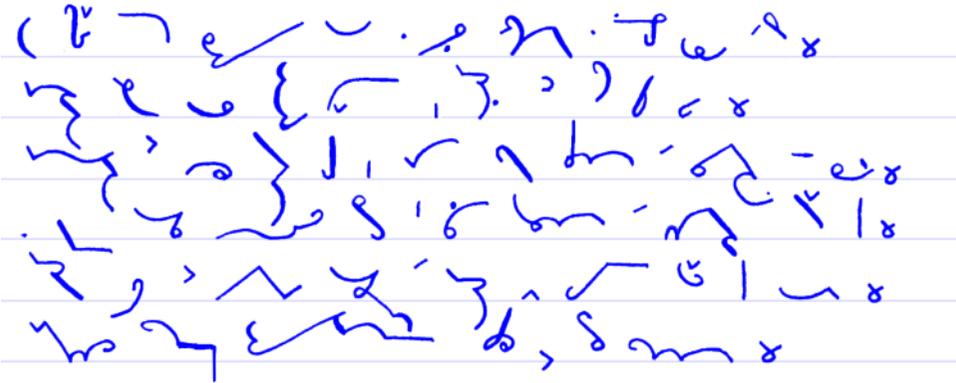
Please make your report smaller than this, as we may need to read it out loud.

You must follow the rules as we do, as we cannot guarantee your safety any longer if you do not.

We now supply the food at all our own* functions, as we are no longer tolerant of poor service.

We are not satisfied with their work at all and are not tolerant of their unsatisfactory performance. (461 words)

* "at all our own" is similar to the outline for "tolerant". You may prefer to write "at" and "all our own" separately.



Instructor Phrases Section 3

These sentences practise the phrases in Section 3 page 200 of the Instructor, Halving.

They drive the car as if it were in a race and there will be an accident if it is not stopped.

I am able to think of several things that they would like but I cannot say* what they are just yet.

I am unable to think of the means by which it was* done, but I will remember at some time and hopefully quite soon.

The book in which it is mentioned has been on sale for some time and you will be able to buy it.

I cannot be sure of the report in which it has appeared and I cannot see* how we can find it now.

I hope you will not forget that we are able to make adjustments* to the plans from time to time.

* "I cannot say" Insert the vowel in this and in "I cannot see", as the former is unlikely to remain entirely on the line

* "by which it was done" Do not allow the halved Chay to be too short and looking like a Tick The

* "at some time" Compare the phrase "at the same time" which includes the Tick The

* "adjustments" Omits the lightly-sounded first T



Instructor Phrases Section 3

I sent them a few words on the matter* some time ago so they would be aware of this change.

They would not be happy with this answer and if it were possible they would change it immediately.

You will not be surprised to hear that you must not* go into that building and must stay outside at all times.

I wondered if it would be possible to see both the staff at the same time, as I may not be* here tomorrow.

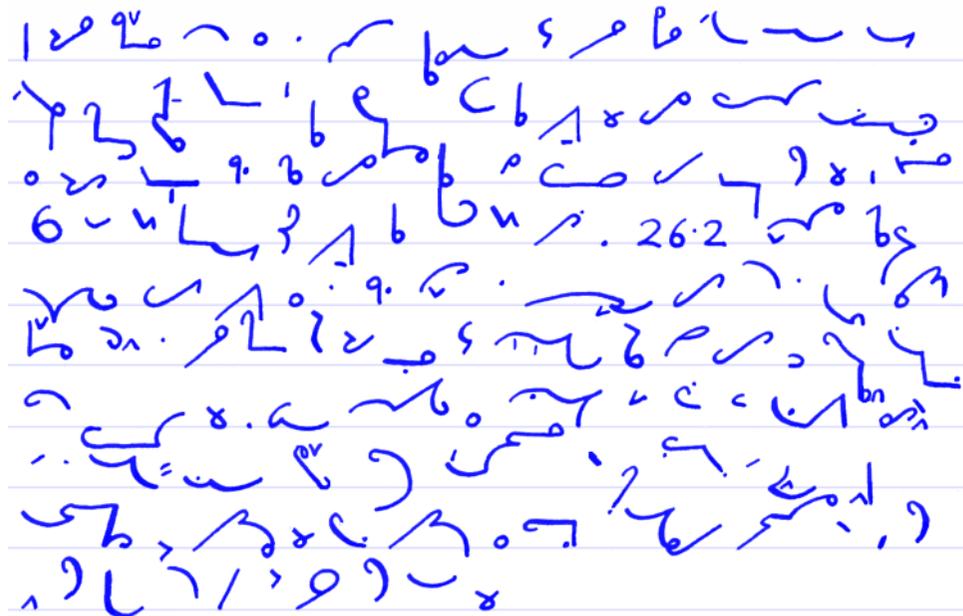
This is a book of which it has been said that it is able to make a big difference to the reader's opinion*.

This is a problem of which it must be said that no-one is able to think of the right answer.

* Omission phrases "on (the) matter" "you mus(t) not"

* "I may not" and "I am not" are the same outline, insert the vowel in "may" if necessary

* "opinion" This short form is on the line, to ensure it is not misread as "information" which is above the line



Marathon Effort

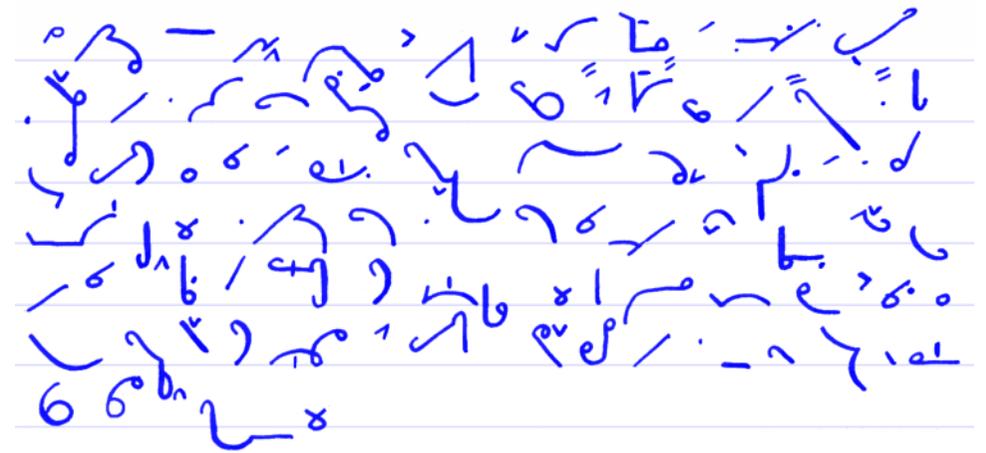
It always strikes me as a little disconcerting that the race starts off going in the opposite direction, and doubles back on itself several times along its route*. One's normal inclination is to want to go straight towards one's destination, as the quickest way to get there. But of course this is not about taking the shortest route, it is about running the 26.2 miles and it is completely irrelevant* whether the route is a straight line, a meandering one, or a few hundred times around a racetrack, although I would guess that the monotony of this last one would produce fatigue more quickly. The London Marathon is mainly on the flat, with varied surroundings and a never-ending supply of fresh onlookers*, all cheering, clapping and shouting out encouragement

to the runners. Every runner is greeted in this way, regardless of who they are, how they are doing or which of the races they are in.

* "route" Helpful to put the vowels in this and in "road" as they are similar in outline and meaning

* "irrelevant" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/theory-15-R-forms.htm#prefix-irr for examples of words beginning "irr-"

* "onlookers" L after N is normally downwards, but has to be upwards here in order to be able to join the Kr stroke



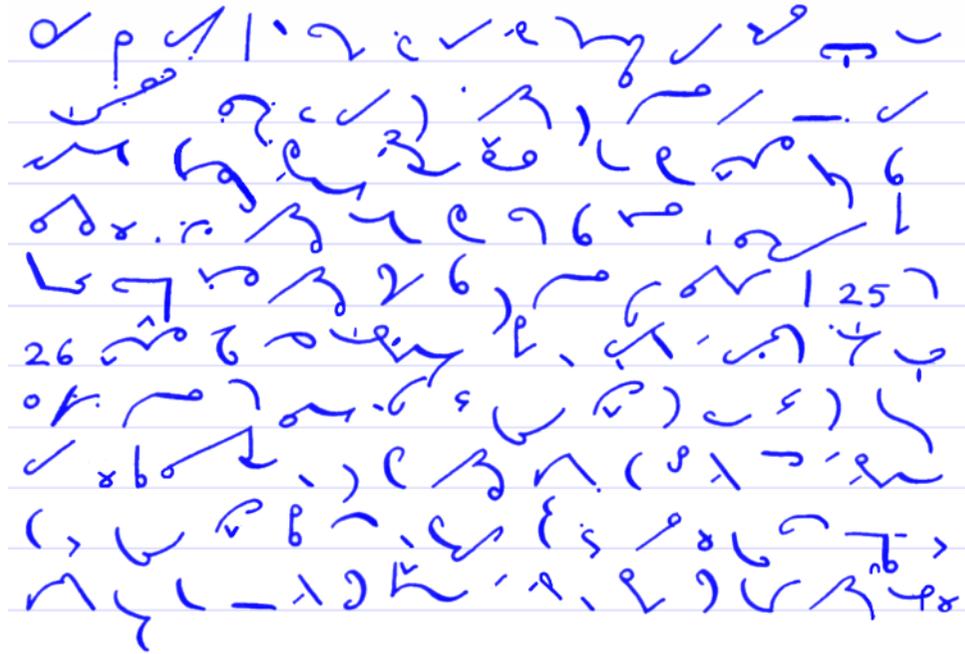
Marathon Effort

As the runners go round the loops* of the route on the Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf, the bystanders are a little more sparse in places, and the tall buildings are probably an advantage if the weather is hot and sunny, providing longer areas of shade* and a chance to cool down. A runner from a very hot country might disagree and find even our hot days much colder than their home conditions. It looks to me as if all the heat is being produced by their muscles, and the water supply stations are a good

opportunity for them to soak themselves as well as drink.

* "loops" Keep well through the line, as "laps" would also make sense in this racing context

* "shade" Insert the vowel, and the second vowel in "shadow" to ensure clarity, as these would both make sense in most contexts



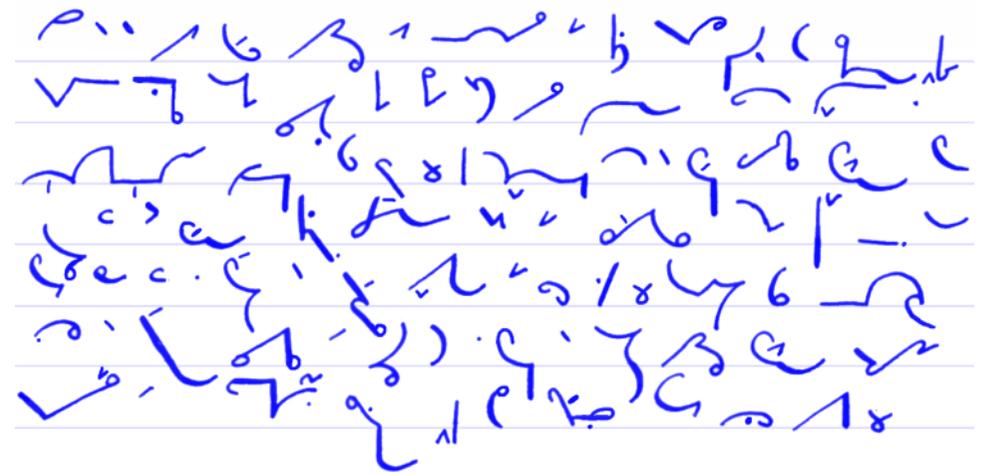
Marathon Effort

As we are sitting watching it all from the comfort of our soft armchairs, we always groan in unreserved sympathy when we see a runner whose legs are giving way, and we know that they must have been* suffering the warning signs for several miles before this happens. The elite runners never suffer from this, of course, but somewhere at the back of the crowd of mass runners there are those whose legs will happily do 25 or 26 miles, and then most unsportingly start to wobble and waver*, commonly known as jelly legs or hitting the wall, with the finish line so near, and yet so far away. It is heartening to see

other runners helping them stand up again and supporting them to the finish line, as it is important to everyone that they complete the race. Even more kudos to the helper if they have given up their own timing and stopped to support their fellow runner instead.

* Omission phrase "mus(t have) been"

* "waver" This means to hesitate or falter. The verb "to waive" means to put aside or defer, and a "waiver" is the spoken or written statement of this intent. The pronunciation and outlines are identical.



Marathon Effort

Last of all are the fun runners and the cameras on the tethered balloons showed them streaming out of the park gates onto the heath at the start of their race, looking more like a multi-coloured liquid than people. It reminded me of flood waters flowing over fields, with all the floating debris jostling about on the surface, or the

tide coming in over the sand, with a froth of bubbles riding on the front edge. Fortunately this colourful mass of bobbing heads and shirts was a flood of enthusiastic runners, flowing between the barriers and gradually spreading out as they progressed along the main road.

