

Santa Dash

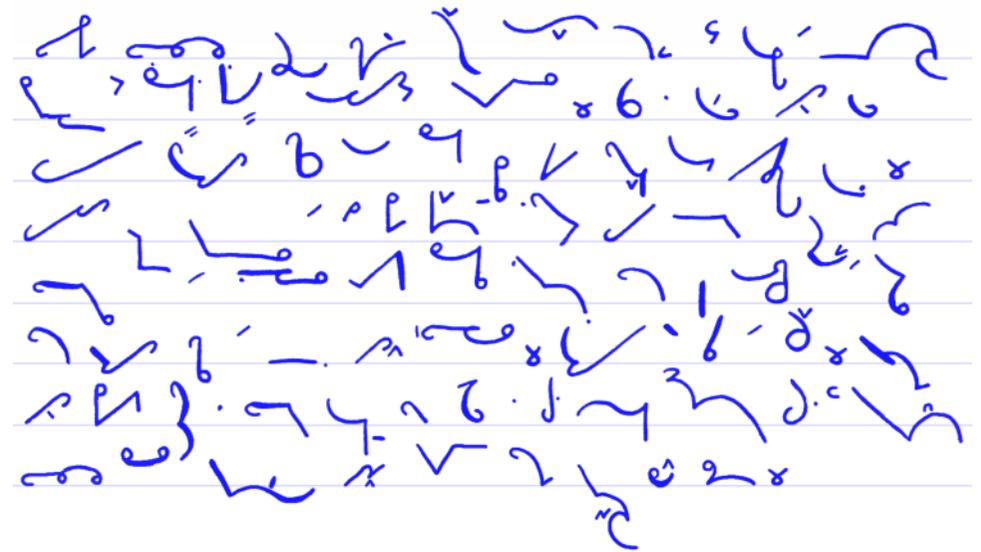
We have had our first little bit of frost and last week* a sparse offering of undersized snowflakes* fluttering down for half an hour. The periods of cold have been an incentive to finish off the garden jobs, replant a few items and clear the mud and leaves from the paths. All that is done now, and when we get much colder weather, ice, frost, snow and biting north wind, I will not be wishing I had done it all earlier. Whatever the weather is doing, it will not officially* be winter until the 21st of December, although I have always felt that winter begins with the onset of wintry weather, and the same with all the seasons. Although the weather may be playing games with us, the same cannot be said of

Christmas. During December it finally* gets underway after an uncomfortably long warm-up in October and November, muscling in before its due time.

* Omission phrase "las(t w)eek"

* "snowflakes" Note the FL hooked stroke is always normal left version when initial, i.e. it is not reversed for vowel indication like the FR stroke is. FL is only reversed medially or finally in order to make a good join

* "officially" "finally" Keep the Ish clearly vertical and the N horizontal. It is also helpful to insert the final vowel in these two



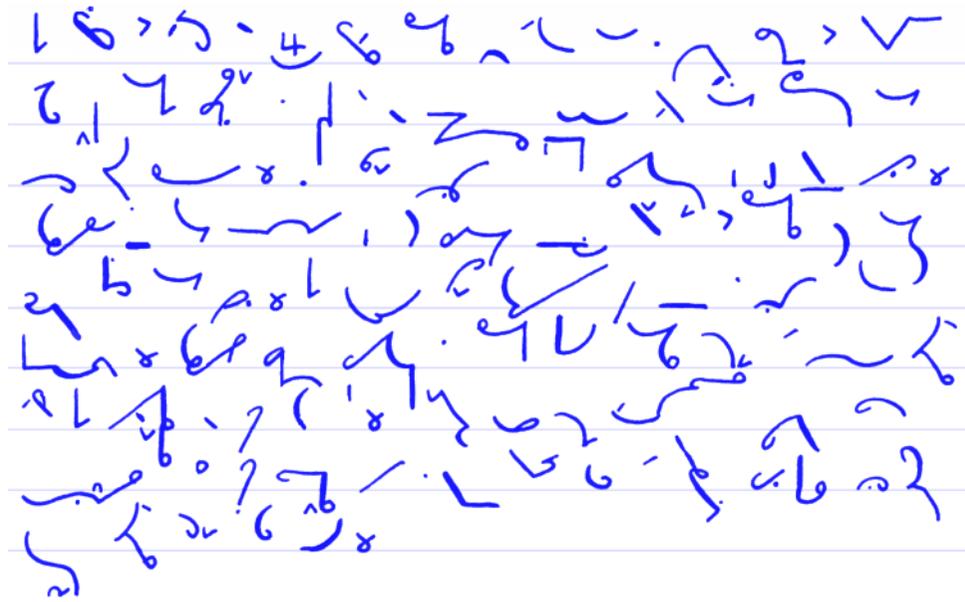
Santa Dash

Yesterday the Christmas season truly arrived in my area, with the festive and colourful spectacle of the Santa Dash* in one of the parks. This is a fun run event where everyone dresses in Santa suits, which are provided for the registration fee. We went to take pictures and as the start time approached we kept seeing little groups and gaggles of red Santas appearing from different entrances and paths, from between trees and coming round corners. They were all ages and sizes.

Before the run started, there was a group photo* opportunity, and then a ten minute warmup session, with popular Christmas songs booming round the park from the powerful sound system.

* "Dash" Ish is written upwards after D, and downwards after T, in order to provide extra differentiation

* "photo" Insert the last vowel, so it is not misread as "video"

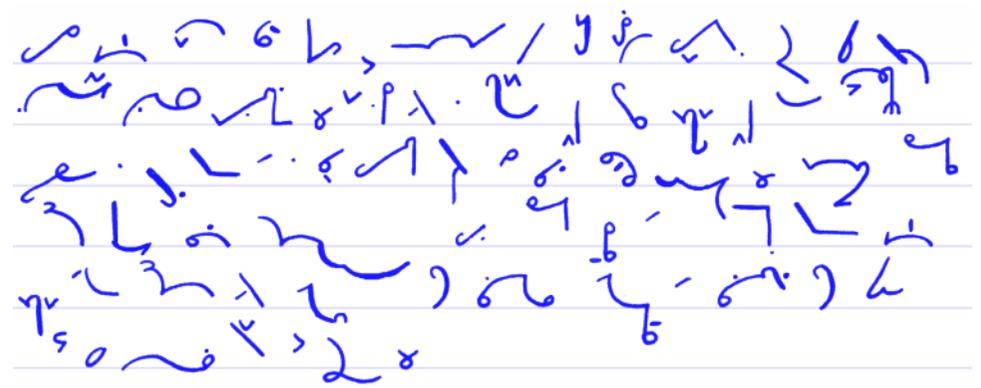


Santa Dash

At the blast of the horn all 400 plus Santas made off in a looping circuit of the park and then out onto the High Street, a total of 2 kilometres*, ending up in the square in the main shopping centre. The slight mizzle got heavier but did not become rain. This was not good for the camera, but was certainly ignored by all the Santas whose enthusiasm would not be dampened in the least. At the finish line they were each given a medal for taking part. This was the first time we have had a Santa Dash in this

area, and many shoppers stopped at the roadsides to cheer them on. I hope that next year the onlookers will be more numerous, as cheering crowds are a big part of the event, and possibly the wet conditions meant there were fewer shoppers around than usual.

* "kilometres" the L is downward in order to make a more compact outline, similarly "column"



Santa Dash

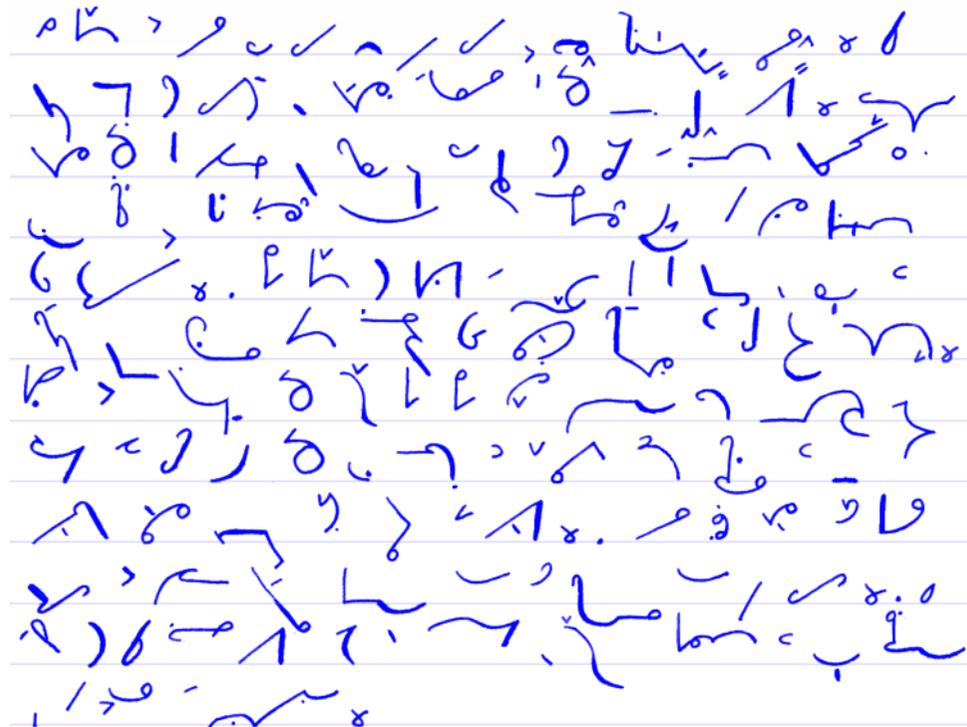
Once home, my thoughts turned to the camera, which I had been constantly wiping, especially just before allowing the lenses to retract. I set up a drying out place to drive out any moisture, using a bean bag* and a hot water bottle as the heat source underneath. I am sure the Santas were doing the same, removing their* wet Santa suits and getting back home to dry off, warm up and view their selfies and photos*, and celebrate their

achievement with the first mince pie of the season. (504 words)

* "bean bag" Insert a clearly thick dot for "bean" so it does not look like "bin bag"

* "removing their" Doubling of the Ing stroke for "their"

* "photos" Insert the last vowel, so it is not misread as "videos"



Pantomime Horse Race

As the time of the race neared*, we made our way to the grounds of Devonport House. Just before getting there, we saw two police officers on horses coming down the road. Clearly the police horses had requested to be present today, in order to display their intelligence and calm behaviour, as a fitting contrast to the daft humans* in their costumes showing much less decorum than they were. The start time was delayed and meanwhile it had begun to snow with proper* big flakes, much more acceptable than the slushy droplets that had been falling earlier. At last* all the panto horses arrived at the start line, looking very colourful and full of energy, and with larger than usual horses' feet, covering what I hoped were trainers with good rubber soles to grip the icy patches on the road. The race consists of lots* of short dashes between all the local pubs, taking in short drinks in each one. The first stop was just across the road, and they all managed to arrive at the same

time with no stragglings* but much noise and merriment.*

* "neared" Halved version of short form "near". Not thickened, as that is used for the "ing-gered/inkered" series of sounds

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"

* "humans" Special outline, above the line to distinguish from "humane"

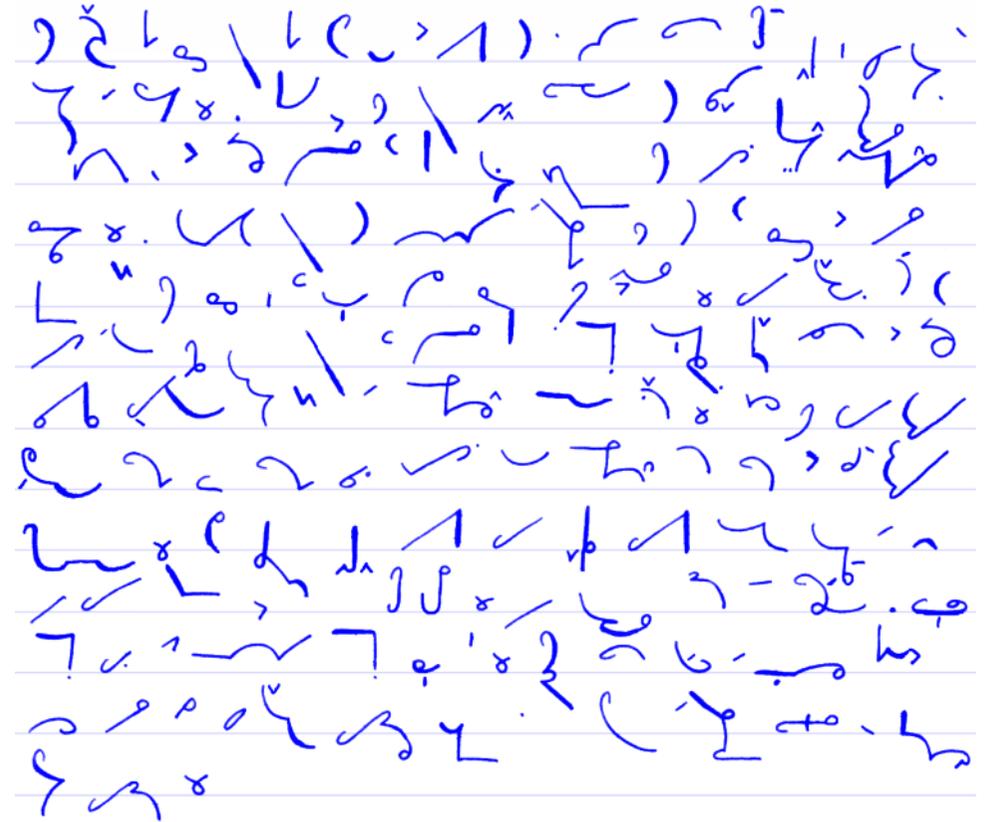
* "proper" Always insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriate" as theses are similar in outline and meaning

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

* "lots" "masses" Always insert the vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

* "stragglings" Helpful to insert vowel, as it could also make sense as "struggling"

* "merriment" Using "-nt" for the suffix where "-ment" cannot join



Pantomime Horse Race

Their arrival at the second pub at the other end of the road was a little more drawn out, but still full of enthusiasm and energy. The dash to the third pub round the corner was slightly downhill, so that was a help to all the horse legs that had failed to practise their running and endurance skills. The fourth pub was immediately opposite the third, so that section of the race took about three seconds, but with no less speed, cheering and noise. We finally saw them run off towards the fifth pub, with legs getting noticeably tired and some of the horses' heads wobbling about and costumes going awry. I am not sure whether they were suffering from the cold, from the heat of running in costume, or

from all the shots that they were drinking. As they disappeared down the road, we decided we had enough photos* and made our way back to the train station. Our fingers were quite frozen*, the gloves getting wet and the camera getting snowed on. There would be more fun and games at the end of the main race, as the first five winners undertook a further obstacle course to determine the overall winner.

* "photos" "videos" Insert the vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

* "frozen" "freezing" Insert the first vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

Handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper. The notes are dense and cover approximately the top half of the page. The shorthand appears to be Pitman's shorthand, with various symbols and strokes used to represent words and phrases. The text is written in a cursive, flowing style, typical of shorthand.

Christmas Bakery

It was very interesting to follow the history and gradual* introduction of our so-called* traditional Christmas fare that we have nowadays. Its beginnings seemed more like a midwinter feast, almost another harvest festival, to brighten up the cold dark days of winter. The most appealing to me was the iced Twelfth Night cake, a fruit cake covered in white meringue icing, and richly decorated with fruit, flowers and little figures and sceneries on top made of painted hard icing. I spent much of my childhood Christmas holidays making up snow scenes out of cotton wool*. Our own Christmas cakes had plastic snowmen, robins, holly* sprigs and fir trees spiked into the top, and a red frilly-edged ribbon tied around it. I was always careful to save them all for use in my snow scenes, and a growing collection of them would emerge each Christmas season, invariably with tiny

bits of last year's icing still attached. The all-out favourite was the tiny sledge and rider, because I could put it on some fresh icing and pull it through to make the track marks. This was the next best thing to having lots* of snow and a real sledge that ran down the hill leaving the same marks.

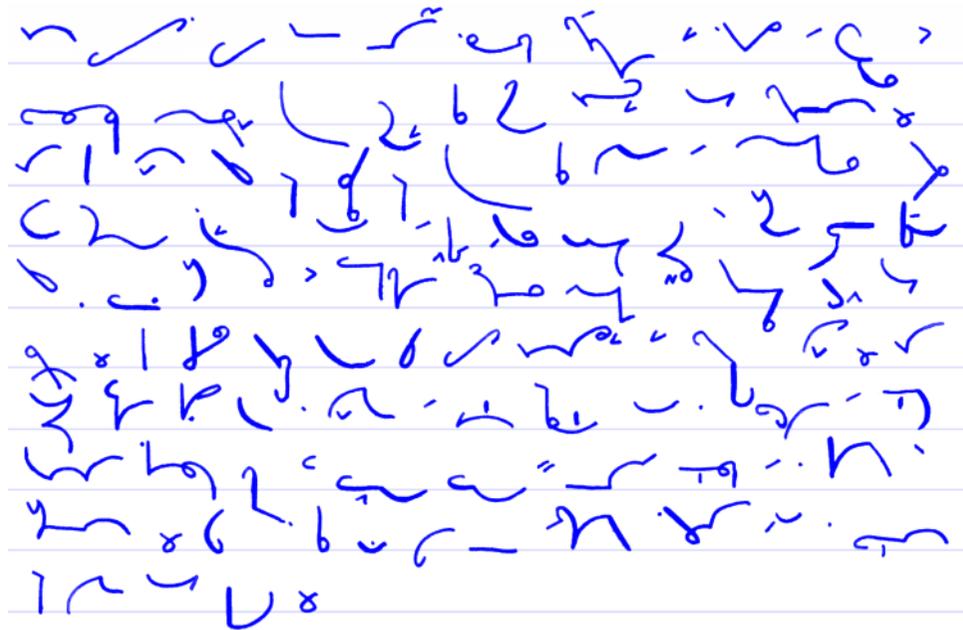
* "gradual" Note distinguishing outline for "gradually" to differentiate it from "greatly"

* "so-called" Full outline for "called" to enable the join, normally a short form

* "cotton-wool" Full strokes for "cotton" to enable the WL stroke to join, normally would have N Hook

* "holly" Helpful to insert last vowel, so it does not look like "whole"

* "lots" "masses" Always insert the vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning



Christmas Bakery

I am wondering whether I can actually concentrate properly* on the appearance and flavours of the Christmas day mince pie after seeing its journey of creation in the programme. I will do my best to do justice to it, after its long and monotonous passage along so many conveyors, in and out of ovens, underneath showers of icing sugar dusting, past the eagle eyes of the quality control workers and into the packages bound for the supermarket. It deserves better than being just one of millions on the production line. I will ensure that it will at last* have a life and home of its own, in a friendly and cosy family atmosphere, dripping with glowing golden*

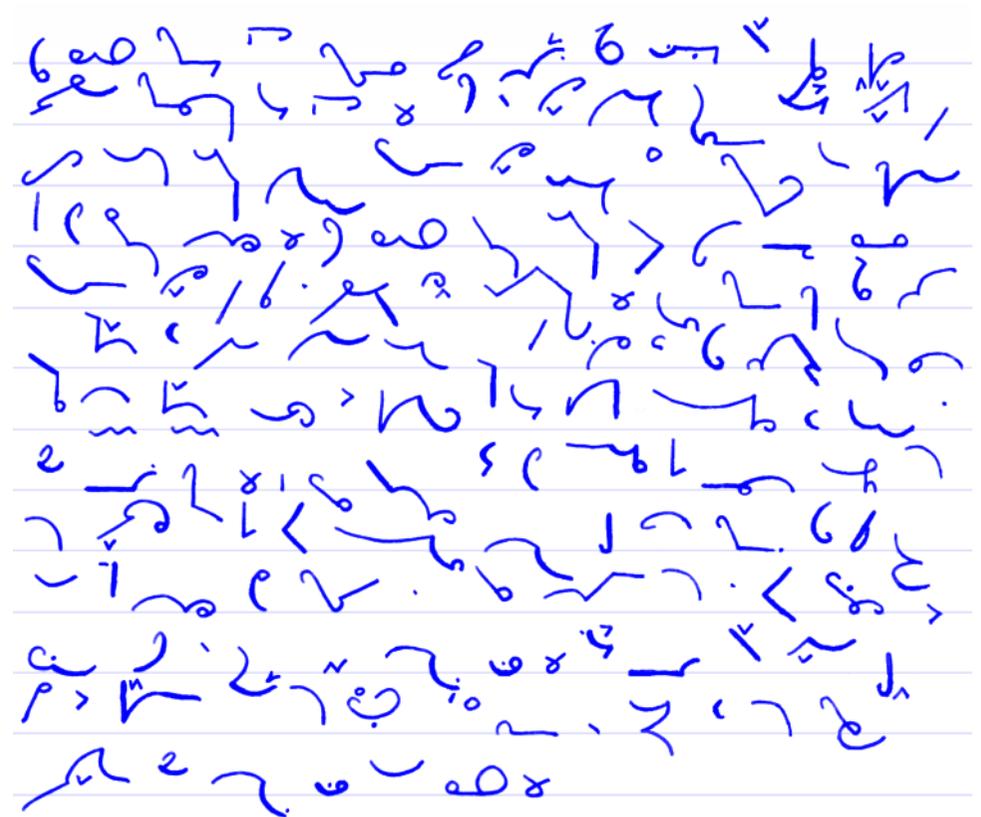
coloured custard and a dollop of ice cream. Then its end will come, and there will be absolutely not a crumb* of it left in the dish. (710 words)

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

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

* "glowing golden" Always insert the diphone in "glowing" to prevent misreading as "golden"

* "crumb" Helpful to insert the vowel, as "cream" also goes with mince pies



Con Prefix Medial

These sentences practise the "con" prefix used medially, and this is indicated by disjoining the outline and using proximity for the "con". They are all line length* so that you can write each one in your notepad, leaving blank lines underneath, as preparation for drilling at other spare moments. Three sentences per notepad page will give you six blank lines each, which is a reasonable amount of repetition. If you practise during all those little bits of time that are not long enough to do much else with, then you will be able to afford some "me time" in front of the television for the holiday entertainment, without having a shorthand guilt trip. But please bear in mind* that the other candidates at the exam institute or your rivals at the job interview may have done more practising than just filling in odd moments, as they

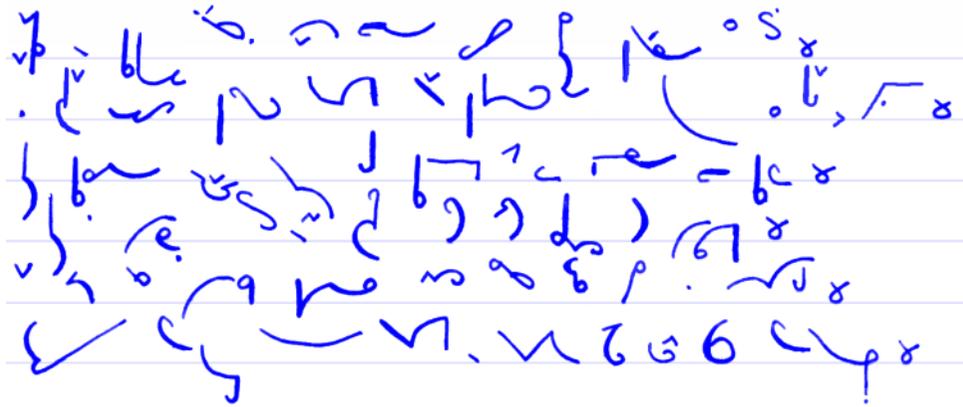
prefer a pass mark or a job placement to the fleeting pleasure of seeing how the movie ends. Avoid the guilt by writing down as much of the dialogue or narration* as you can, to ensure that your personal real-life* shorthand movie ends in success.

* They can be kept line length if you don't include a margin. In the facility drill of this article, the sentences run on.

* Omission phrase "bear (in) mind"

* "narration" The intervening vowel sign (circle) generally goes after the stroke, unless there is already a vowel sign there, as here, similarly "parallel"

* Omission phrase "rea(l) life" similarly "anima(l) life" "fami(ly) life" "political (l)ife"



Con Prefix Medial

I decided to discontinue composting my garden waste as it was not decomposing as planned.

The diver underwent decompression followed by decontamination after his dive to the wreck.

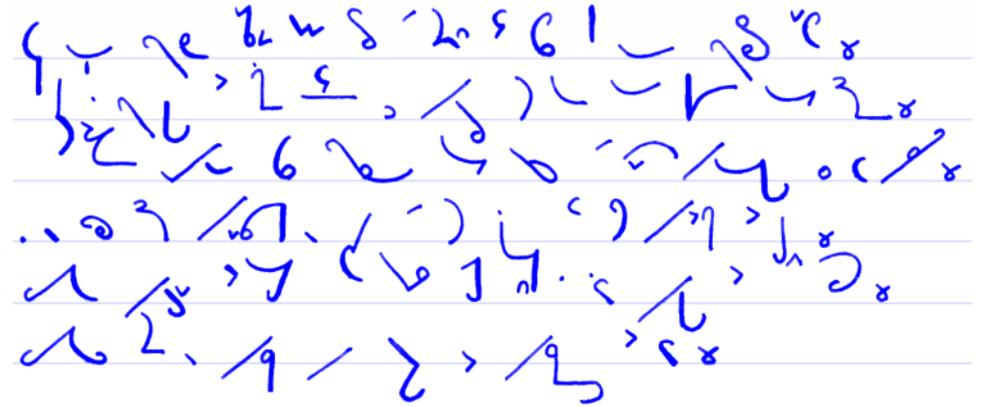
It was disconcerting to find the power had been disconnected and the cold causing great discomfort.

It was an ill-conceived plan to travel there and their disappointment was ill-concealed.

I heard of his ill-considered dealings and I am not surprised that he is such a malcontent.

They were overconfident in their ability* to perform and then found themselves overcompensating.

* "ability" You can also use a disjoined B for this word, as is used for the suffix "-ability"



Con Prefix Medial

They had no preconceived ideas about the plans and assumed that the others had no preconceptions either.

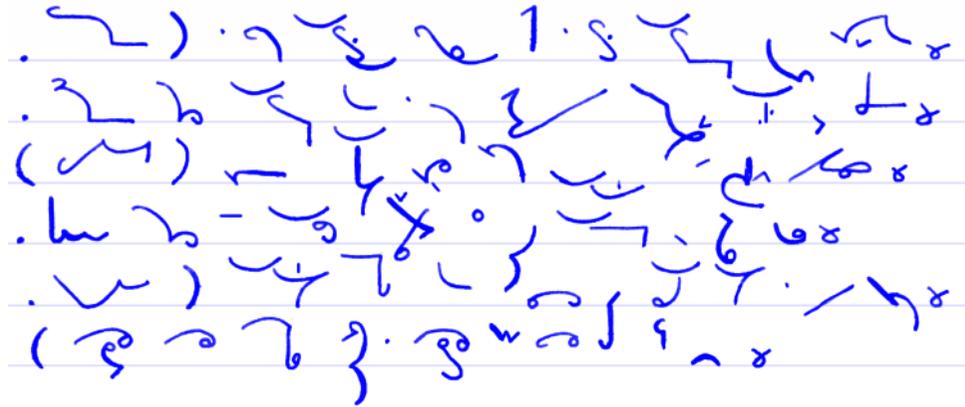
It was a precondition of the contract that the company would recompense us for any delay in the work.

I would like to recommend this person for the post and my recommendation is without reserve.

The two friends were reconciled to each other and so continued with their reconnoitre of the town.

We have recombined all the engine parts and done a complete recondition of the machine.

We have been asked to reconsider our objection to the reconstruction of the building.



Con Prefix Medial

The clerk was a very uncomplaining person and had a plain uncomplicated view of life.

The work remained uncompleted for a year and they were obviously uncommitted to the task.

They wanted us to agree unconditionally to lots* of very uncommon and doubtful* requests.

The defendant* remained quite unconcerned by the charges, as she was unconnected to all these events.

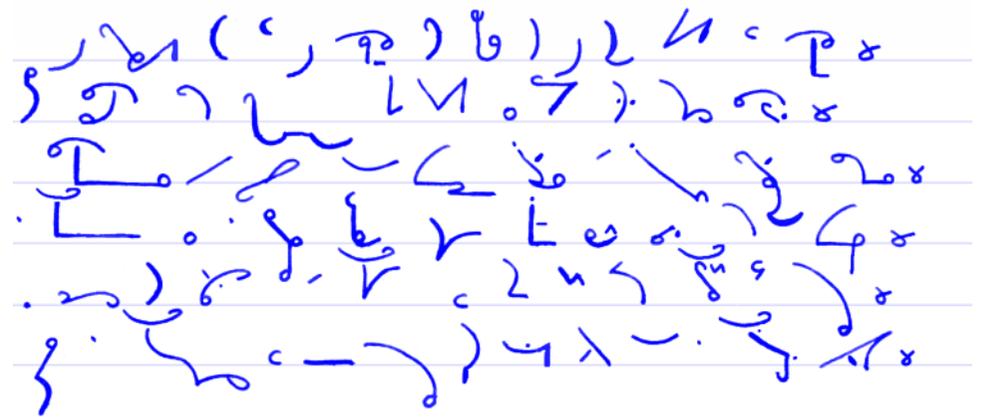
The patient was uncommonly active for someone who had been unconscious only an hour before.

They misconceived the man's motives and there was a misconception about the remarks that he made.

* "lots" "masses" Always insert the vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning

* "doubtful" Compare with "dutiful" which has full D and T strokes

* "defendant" The optional contraction for this, written as "deft", is best only used when the context is legal, and the same applies to other legal contractions, as they are generally quite severe in the degree of contraction/omission



Con Prefix Medial

She persuaded them that she misconstrued their instructions, so she was not charged with misconduct.

As he was semiconscious from drinking at the party, his college essay remained semi-complete.

Semiconductors are used in electronic* components and computer processing circuits.

A nonconductor is a substance that does not easily conduct sound, heat or electricity.

The woman was sullen* and noncommittal when asked about her noncompliance with the orders.

He was a nonconformist* when given orders so he ended up in a noncombatant role.

* "electronic" Contraction, note the N hook, and compare with "electrical"

* "sullen" Ensure the circle S is proper small size, so it is not misread as "swollen" with SW circle.

* "nonconformist" There is also an optional contraction "non-(con)f(orm)ist"