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PDF Date: 6 February 2020

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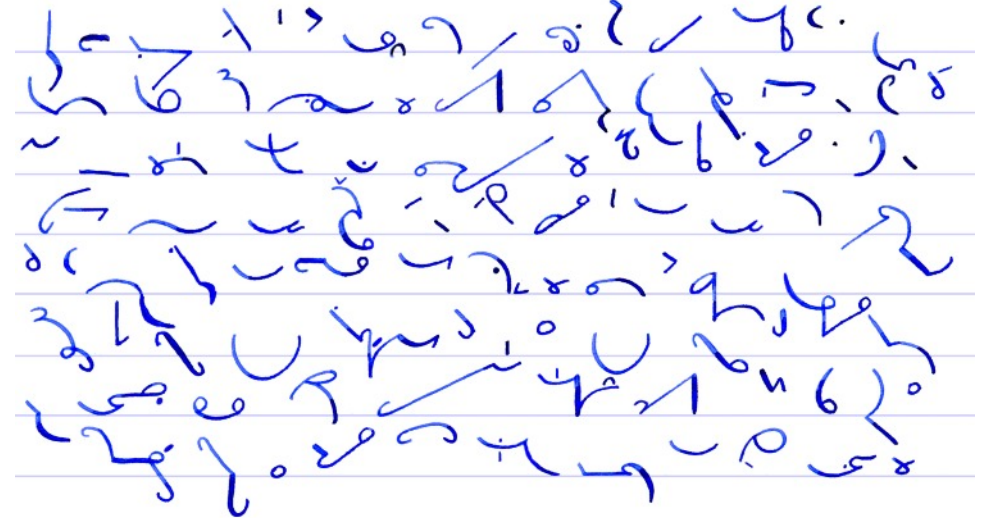
Frog Time

Well, it's that time of year again. The worst of the cold weather seems to have passed, spring has sort of begun, and we frogs have decided to return to the pond. There seems to be* more of us than usual and we think this is because last year's spawn laying was so successful. We are happy with our choice of pond, as there are many hiding places for the tadpoles and lots* of green algae for them to eat. If the gardener does not

tidy up the pond plants or cut them back too much, I think that this year will be equally successful for tadpole production, as they do not like open water at all until they grow bigger than a fish's mouth or get their legs so that they can move out into the surroundings.

* Omission phrase "there seems (to) be"

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



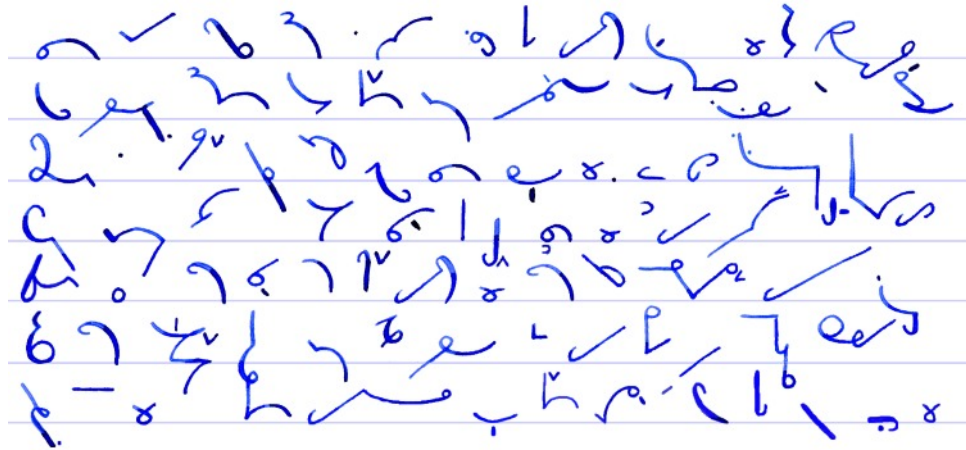
Frog Time

It was great to catch up on all the news from our friends, although we noticed that a few familiar faces were missing. We do hope that they have possibly gone to other ponds and not come to some unfortunate* end somewhere. On the other hand*, it is always a pleasure to welcome the many new arrivals, and to swap stories on any new or refurbished ponds that may have appeared in gardens in the area. Some of the first

time visitors were concerned* at the number of fish patrolling the pond, but as fish numbers do not appear to have increased since last year, we are not unduly worried about this, especially as frogspawn production is always more than enough to cover any losses incurred.

* "unfortunate" Optional contraction

* Omission phrases "on the oth(er h)and" "were (con)cerned"



Frog Time

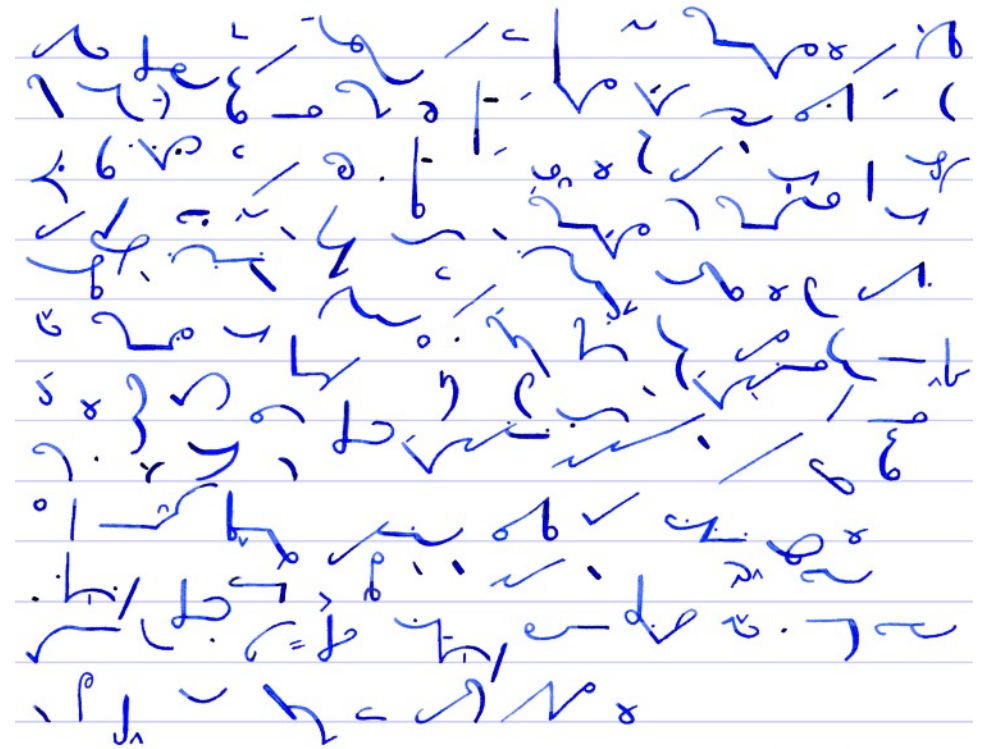
Some of our members were a little concerned at the weather forecast. Although the last few weeks* have been reasonably warm for the time of year, resulting in the commencement of spawning, there is now a high possibility* of frost and even some snow. The cold will not affect tadpole development* too much and will only slow it down somewhat. What we really don't want just now is very hot or dry weather. From

past experience we are confident that this is very unlikely at this time of year and that is the reason why we start our activities as soon as we possibly can. We know there is* no time to lose and every advantage to be gained.

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

* "possibility" "development" Optional contractions

* "we know there is" Doubling for "there"

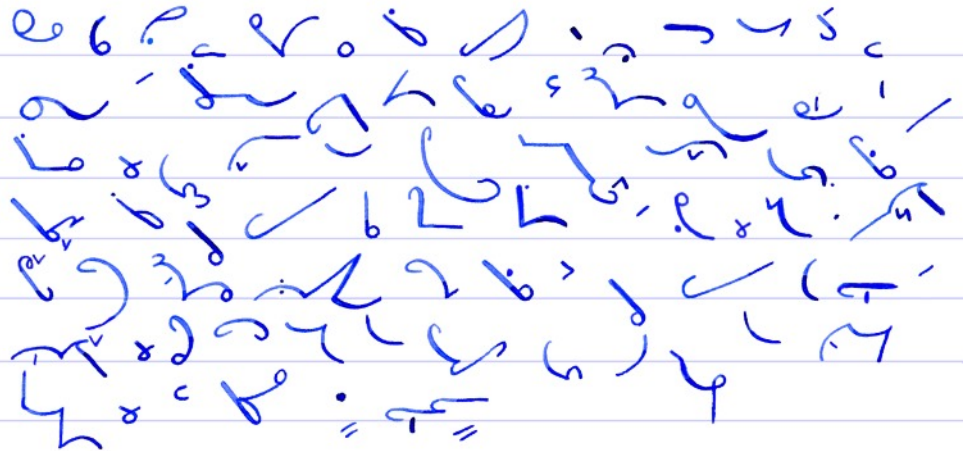


Frog Time

We have been discussing why our offspring are called tadpoles and not "frogpoles". Our oldest member informed us that this comes from the words "toad" and "poll" meaning head, and they share this appellation with our friends the toads and newts*. Although we all know the difference instantly, we generously agreed not to change the name to frogpoles or froglings, in the interests of amicable living with our amphibian neighbours. However we did find froglets in the dictionary as a proper term for them once they have come out of the

pond. There was also some discussion on their other name of pollywogs, which comes from an old English word "polwygle" and we were all rather pleased with this, as it accurately describes the wiggling heads of our energetic youngsters. The etymological discussion concluded to the satisfaction of all and we all dispersed around the garden to look for a well-deserved entomological snack and find a cosy corner to settle down in, before the cold weather returns.

* Young newts are "newtpoles"



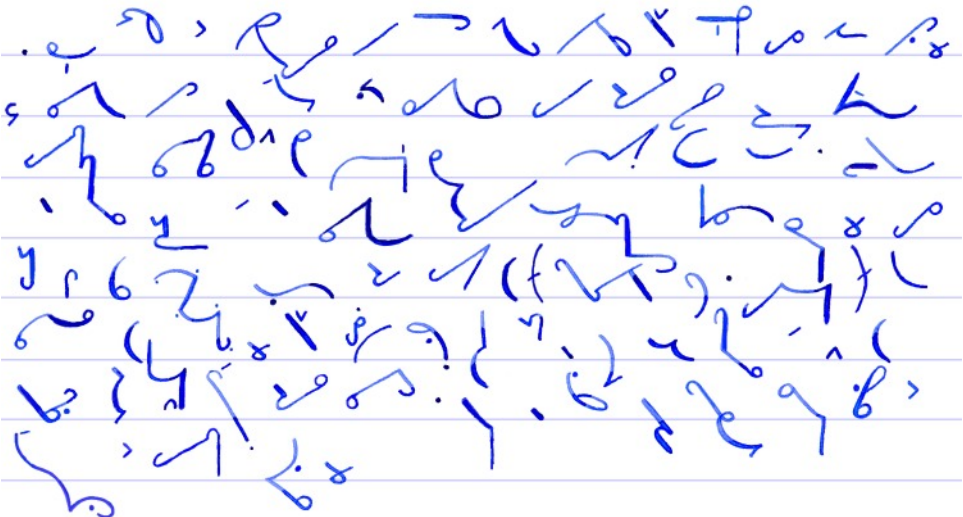
Frog Time

As soon as this last cold spell is past, we shall all meet again in the pond, when swimming and basking will be much more* pleasant with the warm spring sun on our backs. If you would like any further information*, I can be found in my favourite place behind the compost bins, where it is dark, damp and safe. I have a reliable supply of fresh worms emerging from the base of the bins

where they grow and multiply. There is more than enough for everyone if you wish to visit for lunch at any time. With best wishes*, A. Croaker. (652 words)

* Omission phrases "much m(ore)" "further (informa)tion"

* "best wishes" Upward Ish to make a convenient join



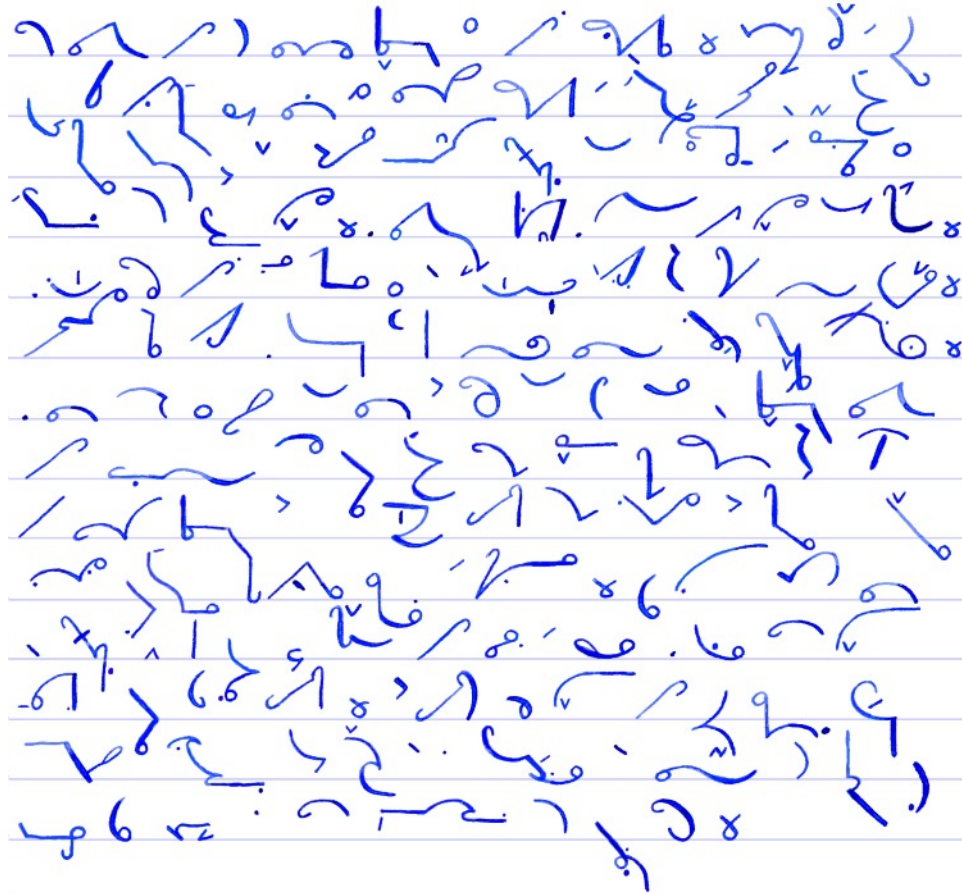
Winter Rain

The snow and frost of the last few weeks* are gone and have been replaced by gusty winds and cold rain. When the heavy rain bounces off the hard surfaces, we always used to call the jumping water drops "soldiers", as they looked as if they were marching along in a great company, all identical* and all heading in the same direction at the same speed. Once I had been told this imaginative name, I would watch them (preferably through a window)

for as long as they continued. By constantly staring at them, I tried to see the individual drops and how they behaved, although the plopping always happened a bit too fast to be able to perceive the separate stages of the formation of the water shapes*.

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

* "identical" Contraction, therefore on the line

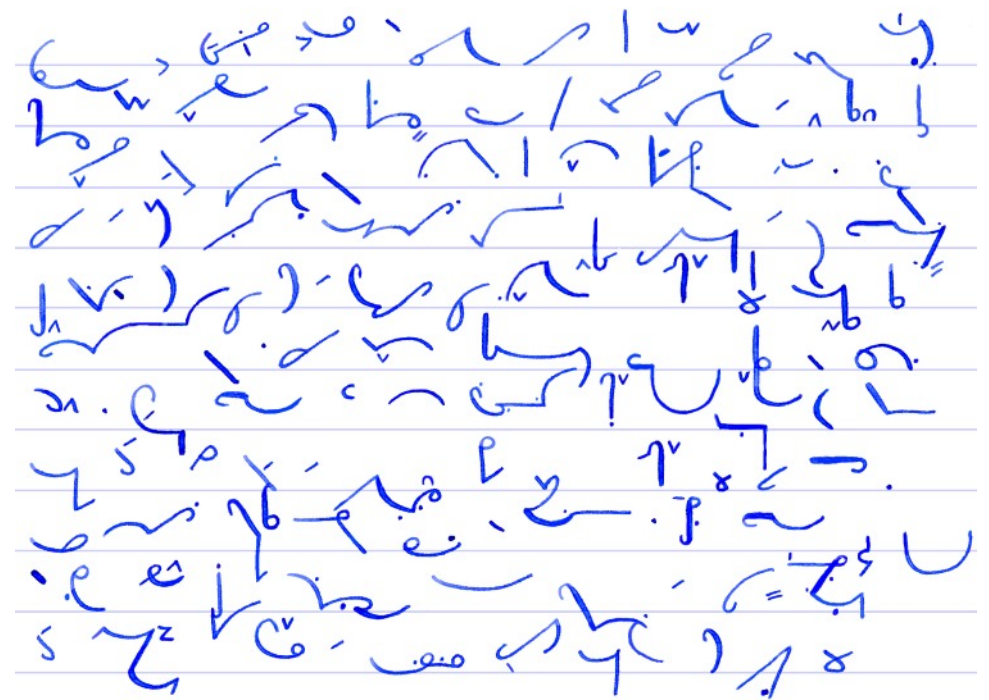


Winter Rain

Very heavy rain was sometimes described as "raining stair-rods". I am sure the size and shape of even the largest raindrop is not the same as the smallest stair-rod and obviously refers to how the falling drops appear to the eye, always accurately portrayed in cartoons and sketches as oblique or vertical lines. The heavier the deluge, the longer are the lines in the drawing. The common phrase "raining cats and dogs" is of unknown origin, although there are many theories. Regardless of its origin, the fact that it mentions something absurd* provides the required emphasis. The same method is used in some of the phrases in other languages to describe heavy rain, claiming impossible objects

falling from the sky during the storm, although the majority are merely descriptive of the gushing water or the appearance of the drops: pipes, mallets, pitchforks, ropes, strings and chair-legs. These latter also seem to portray how it feels when the driving rain hits and stings the face, more like solid objects than water. All the weather words like rain, shower, stream, flood can be used metaphorically for the arrival of an over-abundance of something, so it would be easy to extend this to create a more comical or bizarre* version.

* "absurd" & "bizarre" Helpful to insert the vowels, as the outlines and meanings are similar

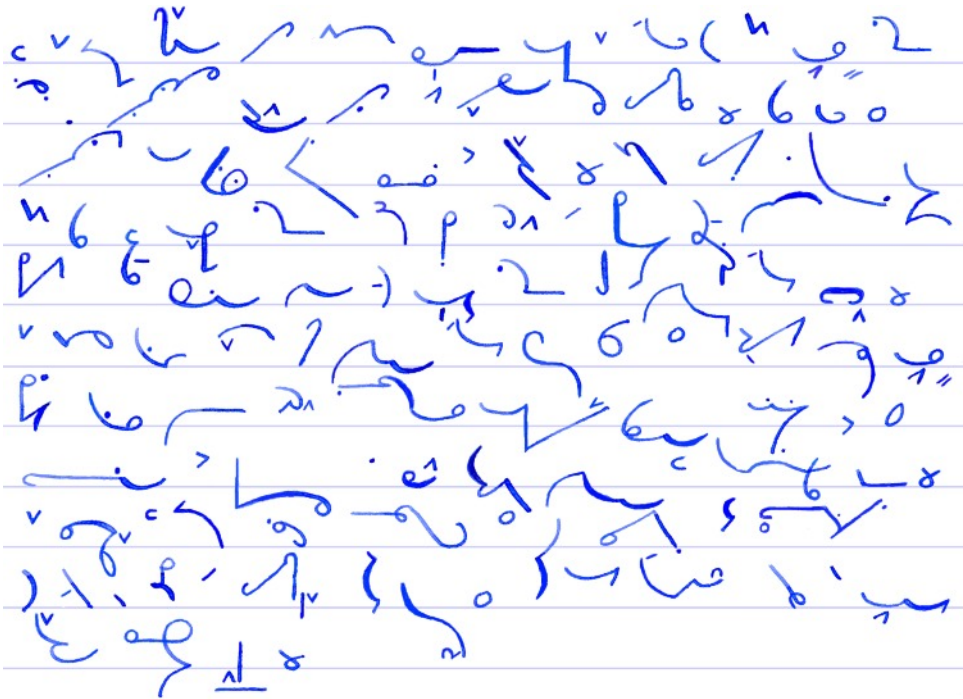


Winter Rain

Listening to the thunderous* noise of heavy rain at night used to produce uneasy dreams about the rising River Thames, near which I used to live, and how it would rise up the hill to be lapping at my doorstep, not a comfortable story, and I was relieved in the morning to look out of the window and see that Greenwich down below was still there and everyone still alive and dry! Nowadays it is more likely to be a story of my adventurous goldfish deciding to swim around a flooded garden, with me

frantically trying to get them back into the pond as the puddles and rivulets start to shrink and dry. Yet again, the next morning brought the expected scene of a sodden garden but with the fish all safe and sound, contentedly remaining in their brimful and well-oxygenated pond, and enjoying the flies and insects washed into their reach.

* "thunderous" Note that "thunder" uses doubling, similarly "wonder" and "wondrous"

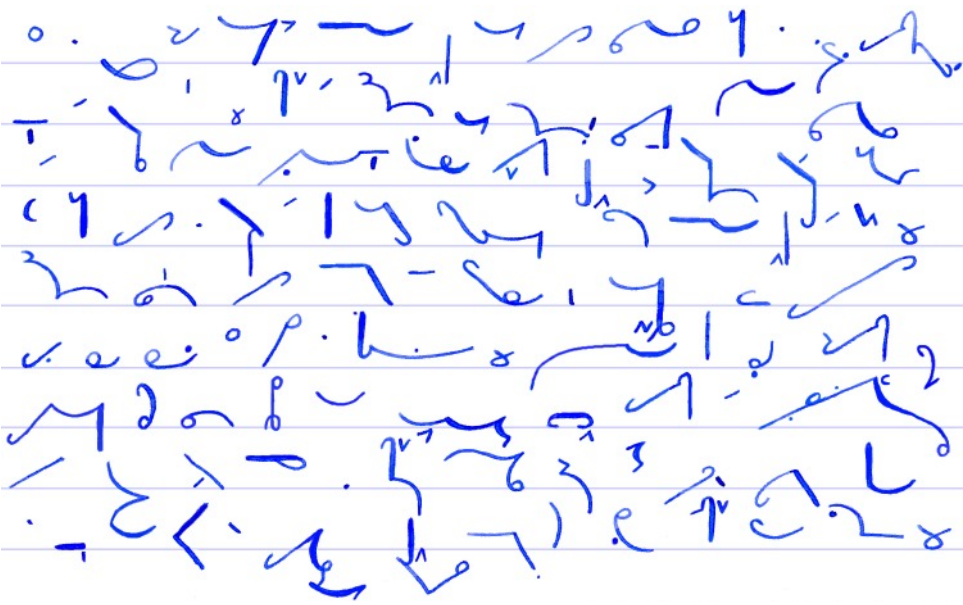


Winter Rain

When I hear the driving rain and I am snug indoors, I often think about Noah's Ark amidst the relentless pounding rain and the rising waters. This event is related in Genesis Chapter 6 of the Bible. I remember watching a feature film about this, when those inside the ark were sitting around and suddenly the suspended lamp started swinging, letting us know that the ark had been lifted off the ground. I almost felt my chair lifting off the floor as well, as I watched Mrs* Noah's startled face look

around the cavernous interior, listening intently to the first creaking of the timbers, a sound they would be living with for many months to come. I sympathised with her concerned expression, as she was hoping that the carpentry was up to standard and watertight, although the viewer is in the fortunate position of knowing the final successful outcome.

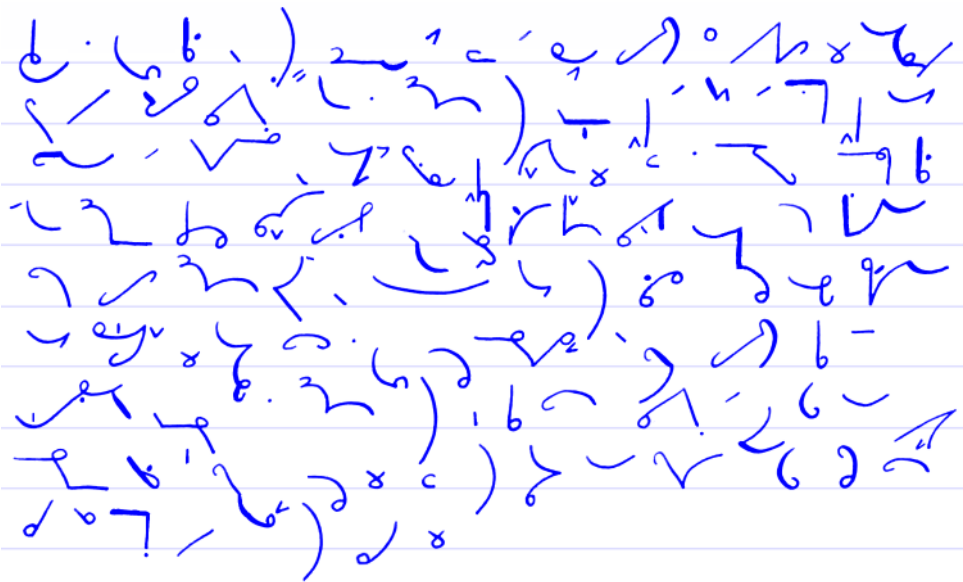
* "Mrs" Full strokes, to differentiate from "Misses" which uses Ses Circle



Winter Rain

As a youngster, I would enjoy going out in the rain as long as I had a completely waterproof coat and boots on. Dry and warm under the roomy hood, long sleeves and long raincoat fastened right down to the bottom button, I felt that I had won a battle and had not been prevented from going out and about. Warm summer rain can be quite pleasant, but nowadays the

cold winter wet is not seen as such an adventure. Looking at sheets of water through the window, there is some satisfaction in knowing that the groundwater and reservoirs are filling up against the drier months of the year, and that the roof will be doing a good job of withstanding the downpours, keeping us safe and dry in our "ark". (767 words)



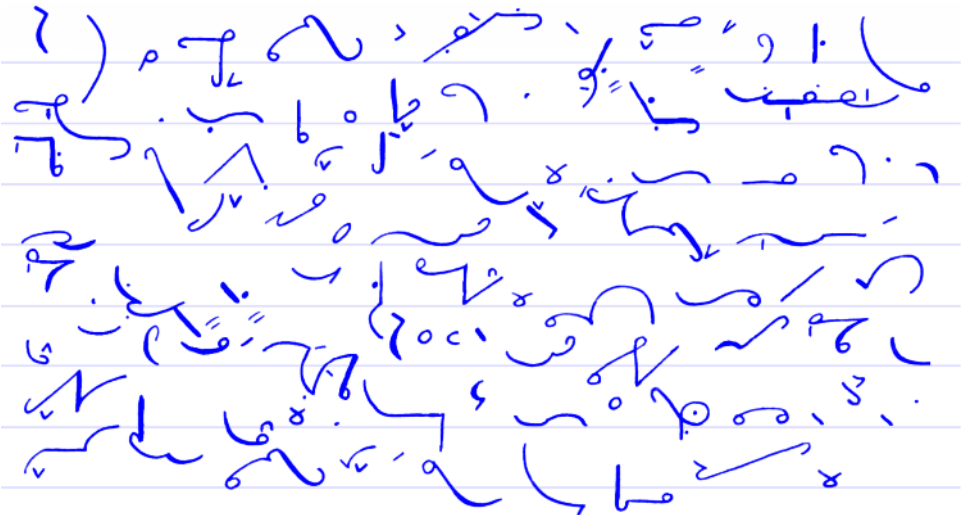
Easter

It is only* a few days to Easter weekend, and the cold and snowy weather has returned. In this country people are always hoping for a warm Easter to go out and about, and get out in the garden and parks to enjoy the pleasant outdoor life. With a couple of extra days off work, it seems slightly wasted to have to spend the whole time huddled indoors, or dashing from one warm shop to another for the Easter sales instead of strolling in the sunshine. For those who have more than a few years'

experience of British weather, it is quite unreasonable to expect a warm Easter, but it is more hoping and wishing than any real expectation* based on previous years. When Easter falls in April then there is more chance of us getting our Easter wishes.

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

* "expectation" Optional contraction

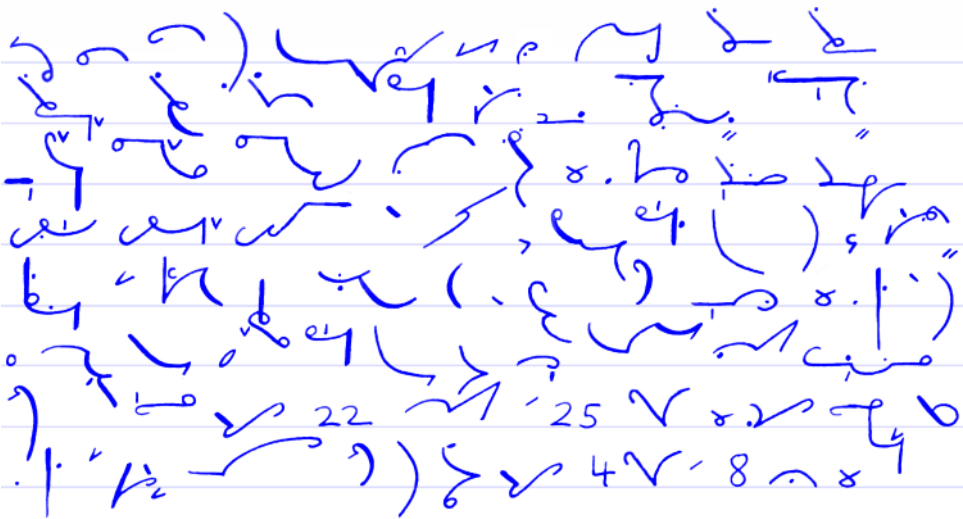


Easter

Although Easter is the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after his crucifixion, the name itself is derived from a pagan Anglo-Saxon goddess, probably representing light, dawn and spring. The name comes from a word meaning "shine" and was first mentioned by the Northumbrian monk and scholar The Venerable Bede in the 8th* century. Similar names are also found in other languages

and mythologies, although as with all ancient history modern scholars have widely differing views. The fact that the name has persisted seems to point to a likely celebration of light and spring after the difficulties of winter.

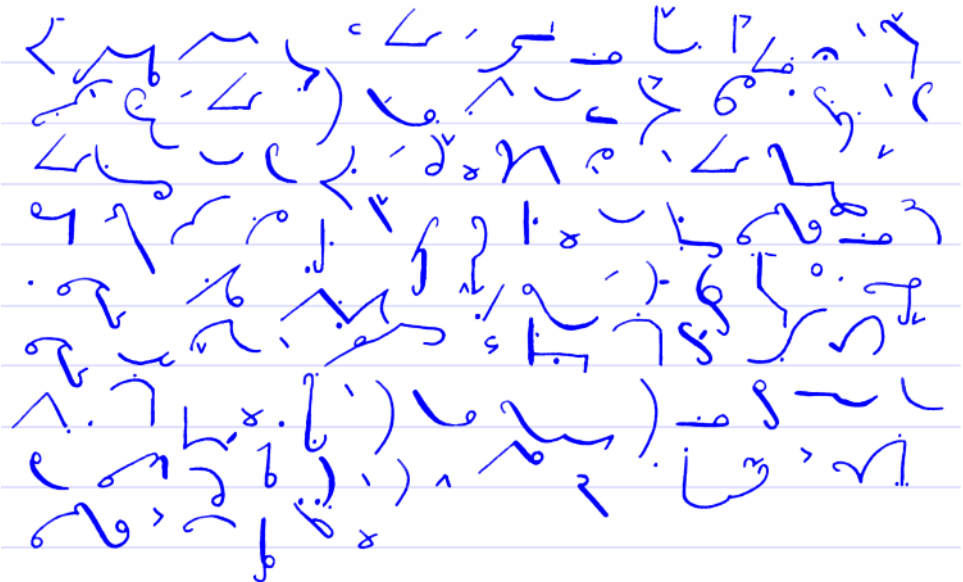
* "eighth, eightieth" Always insert the diphone in "eightieth" as otherwise the outlines are the same



Easter

Here is some more Easter vocabulary:
Lent, Lenten, Pasch, Paschal, Paschaltide,
Passover, Palm Sunday, Holy Week,
Gethsemane, Golgotha, Good Friday,
sacrifice, sacrificial lamb, Sabbath. The
terms Pentecost, Pentecostal, Whitsun,
Whitsuntide, Whitweek all refer to the
seventh Sunday after Easter when the Holy
Spirit descended on the twelve disciples,

enabling them to fulfil their commission.
The date of Easter is movable, being the
first Sunday after the full moon following
the March equinox, and therefore occurs
between 22 March and 25 April. Eastern
Christianity bases the date on the Julian
calendar and their Easter falls between 4
April and 8 May.

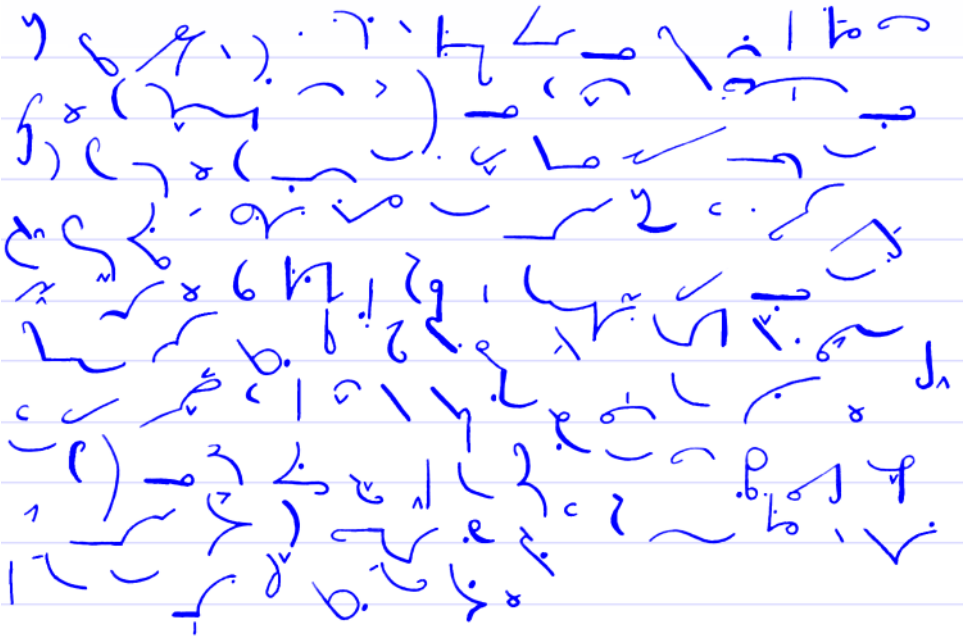


Easter

Shop windows are now filled with chocolate
and sugar eggs, tiny toy chicks made of
bright yellow fluff, and chocolate Easter
bunnies wrapped in gold foil, as well as a
plethora of other chocolate confections in
every shape and size. There will be lots* of
chocolate breakfasts on the Sunday, and
probably little else eaten by children
throughout the day. In pagan celebrations
eggs were a symbol of the earth's rebirth
each spring and so this has been adopted
as a Christian symbol of the new life of

resurrection, with the decorated empty
blown shell also representing the empty
tomb. The tradition of Easter bunnies
bringing the Easter eggs has been going for
several hundred years, and it is easy to see
how rabbits would be a continuation of the
fertility celebrations of the more distant
past.

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

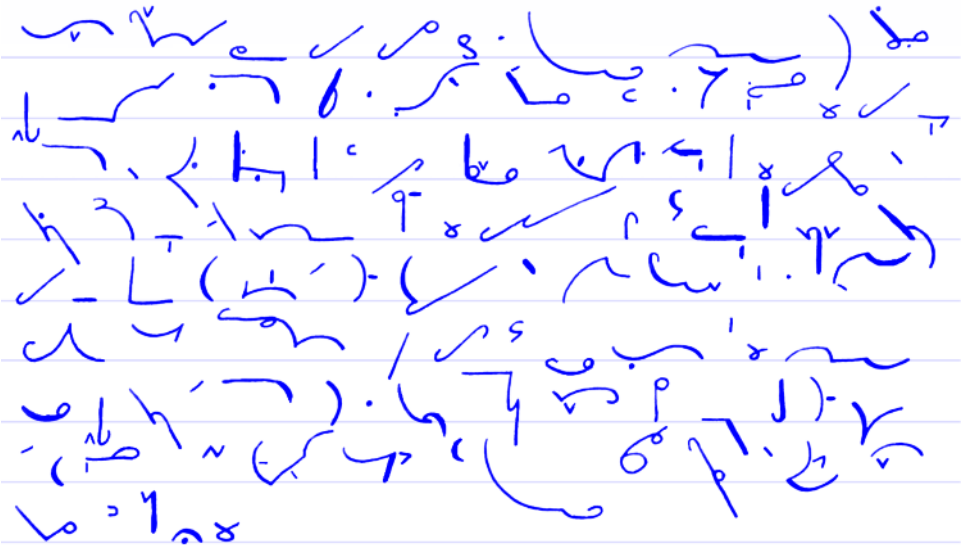


Easter

I was pleased recently to see an array of decorative chocolate eggs, probably aimed at adults more than children. They reminded me of the Easter eggs that my grandmother gave us every year. They came in a white box, and were covered in beautiful flower shapes and swirly patterns in coloured icing, with a yellow ribbon round the middle. This delayed the eating of them considerably, but eventually we gave in, breaking little pieces at first, and

then speeding up, followed by a slowing down when we realised that it might be better to save some for later. Any other Easter eggs were shaken to find out if there were* any more sweets hidden inside, and the coloured foil was carefully saved to play with, although many attempts to peel it off in goodly-sized pieces often failed.

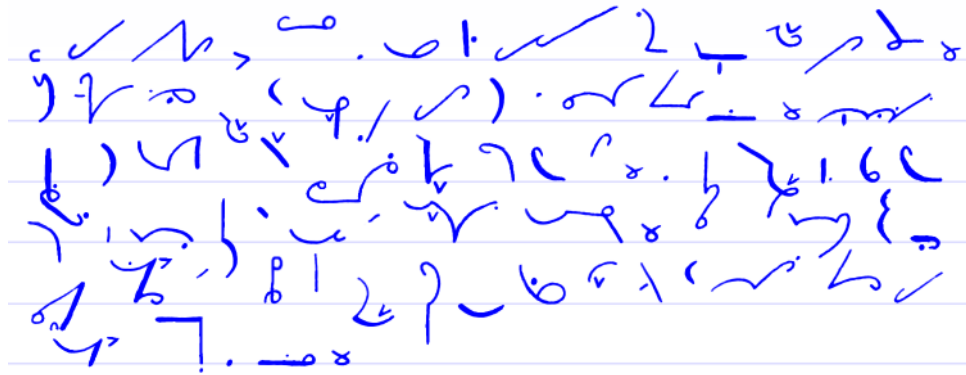
* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"



Easter

In my primary school we once spent an afternoon making Easter baskets out of coloured card, just a shallow box with a handle across. We cut the card to shape, decorated it with our own designs, and folded and glued it. Wisps of paper were cut up to make straw. We were told that the glue had to dry before we could take them home, and so they were all left

overnight on a long shelf in the classroom, each one with the owner's name on. Making things out of paper and card was a favourite activity of mine, as it could be done so easily and without cost, and I thoroughly enjoyed that afternoon, as well as the prospect of showing my parents what I had made.



Easter

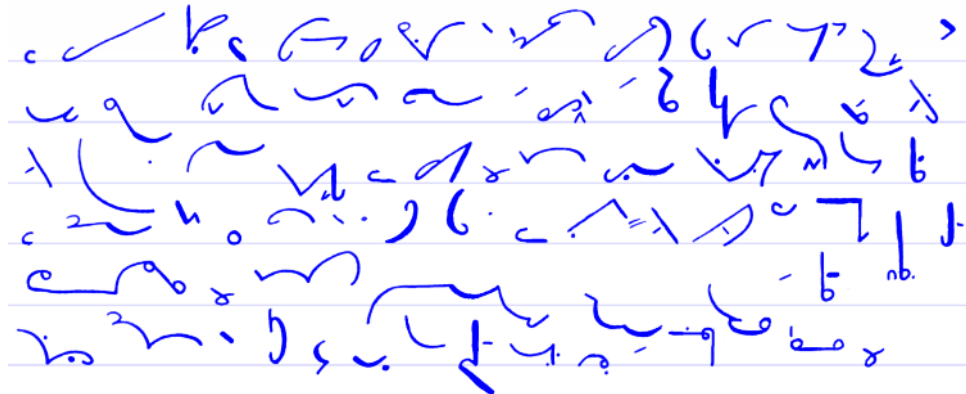
When we returned to the class the next day, we were asked to go and find our own basket. I was utterly* amazed* to find that inside each one was a small chocolate egg. Momentary disbelief was followed by squeals of delight from every child. The teachers obviously did this every year, but to me it was all new and entirely unexpected. I am sure that they gained huge enjoyment and satisfaction at seeing thirty young faces light up that morning,

much more than* we enjoyed getting the eggs.

* "utterly" Insert the vowel in this and in "truly" as they are similar in outline and meaning

*"amazed" and "amused" Always insert the vowel

* Omission phrase "much m(ore tha)n"

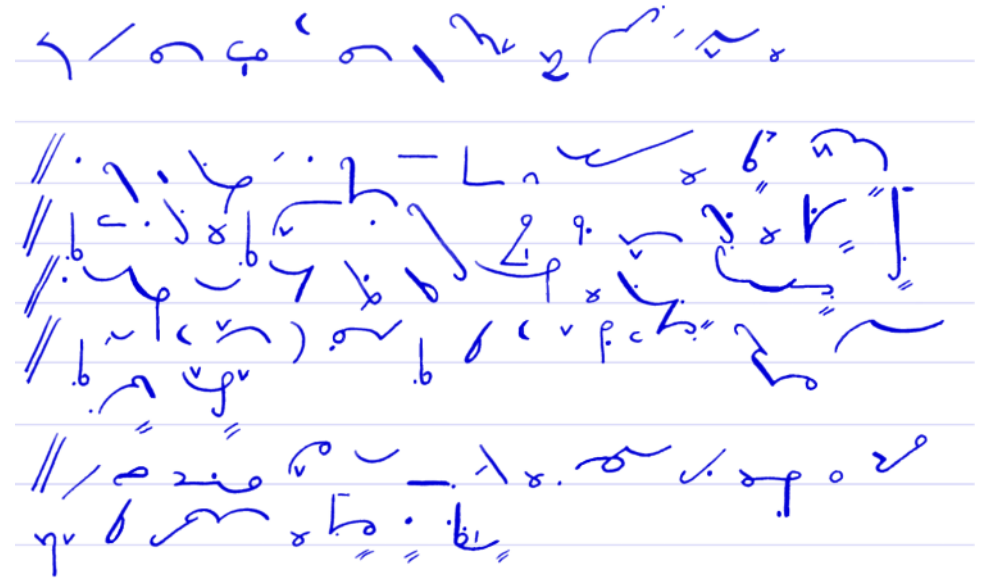


Easter

When we are at last able to welcome the first spell of warmer weather, then I will enjoy seeing all the new spring life in my garden and surroundings, and all those daffodil flower buds open up after a long period of "cold storage". I am waiting patiently for the days when walking about is more of a pleasure, than a cold wrapped-up rush in order to* get the duties done as

quickly as possible*. I am also looking forward* to having fingers and toes remain warm all on their own without the need for double knitted mitts and extra socks. (936 words)* "at last" and "at least" Always insert the vowel

* Omission phrases "in ord(er to)" "as quickly as poss(ible)" "looking fo(r)ward"



Quotes

Here are some quotes that seem to be appropriate* to shorthand learning and writing.

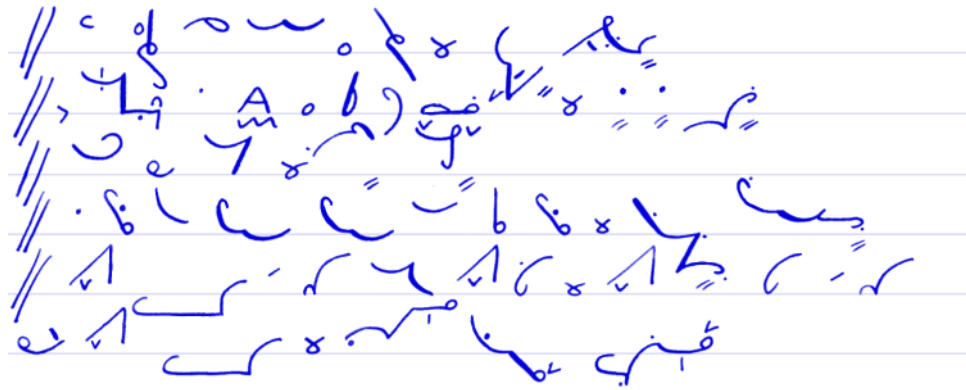
- A No. 2 pencil and a dream can take you anywhere. Joyce Meyer
- It's called a pen. It's like a printer, hooked straight to my brain. Dale Dauten
- An investment in knowledge pays the best interest. Benjamin Franklin

- It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer. Albert Einstein

- Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time*. Thomas A. Edison

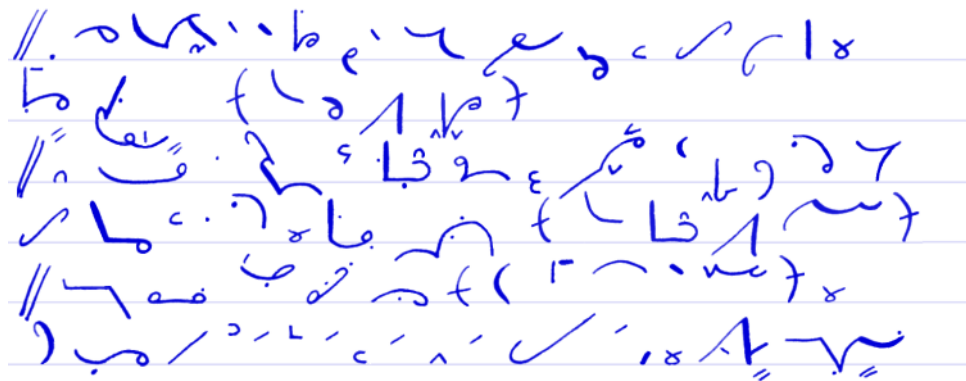
* "appropriate" Insert the diphone, and the first vowel in "proper", as these are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrase "wu(n) more time" using halving to represent the T of "time" "mos(t) certain"



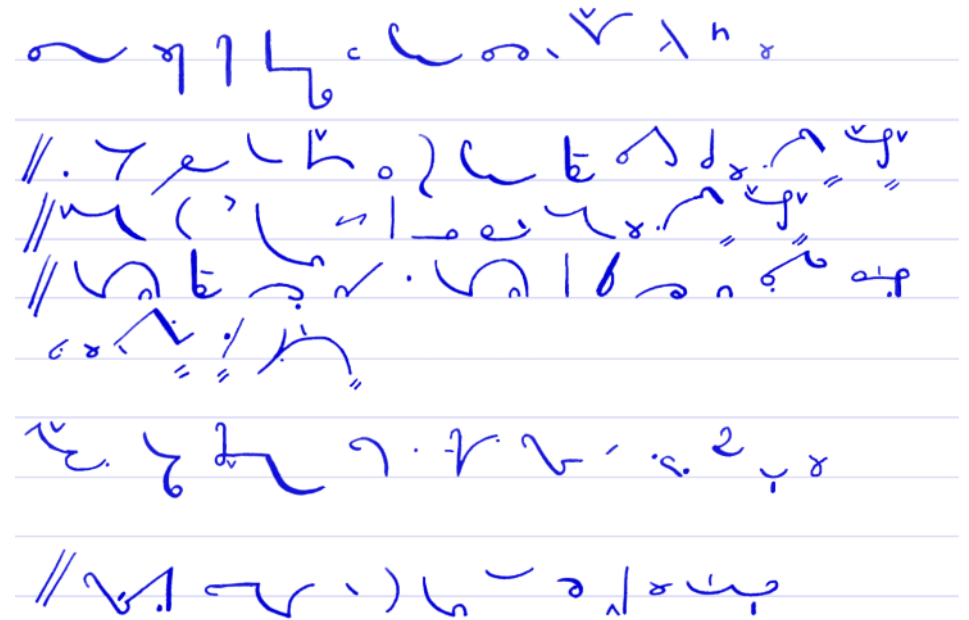
Quotes

- With self-discipline* most anything is possible. Theodore Roosevelt
 - To the uneducated, an A is just three sticks. A. A. Milne
 - Information is not knowledge. – Albert Einstein
 - A place for everything, everything in its place. Benjamin Franklin
 - Write quickly, and you will never write well; write well, and you will soon write quickly. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus
- * "self-" words always take second position, to accord with the vowel in "self".



Quotes

- The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do. Thomas Jefferson (For "words" read "outlines".)
 - I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew); their names are What and Why and When and How and Where and Who. Rudyard Kipling
 - You know there is* a problem with the education system when you realize that out of the 3 R's, only one begins with an R. Dennis Miller (For "education" read "longhand")
- * "know there is" Doubling to represent "there"



Quotes

Something to consider during dictations, when everything seems to pile up on you.

And finally, for those transcribing from an utterly perfect and complete shorthand note.

- The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once*. Albert Einstein
 - Proofread carefully to see if you any words out. Unknown (309 words)
 - I never think of the future, it comes soon enough. Albert Einstein
 - Failure doesn't mean you are a failure it just means you haven't succeeded yet. Robert H. Schuller
- * Omission phrase "at (wu)ns"