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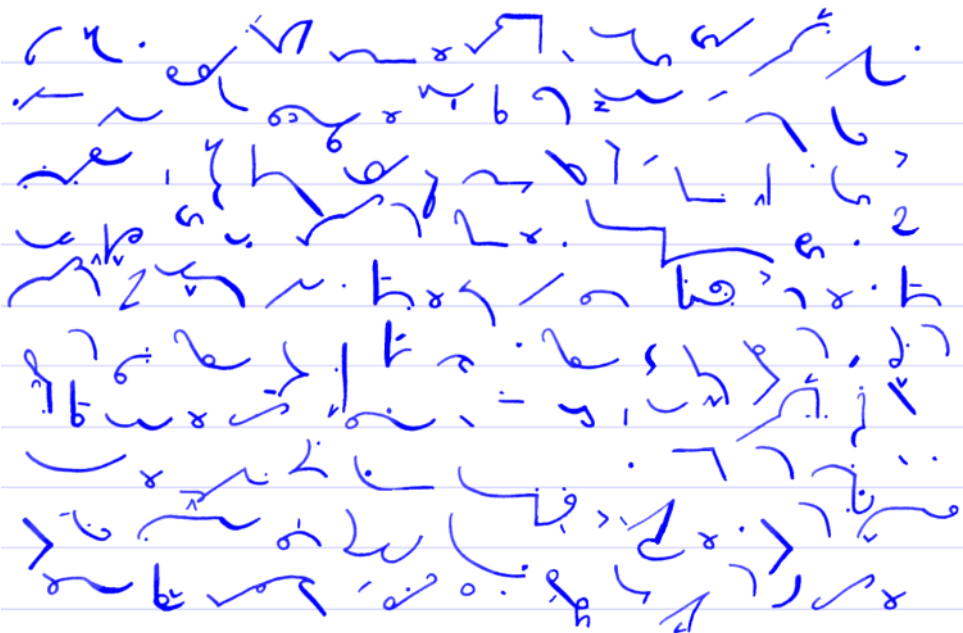
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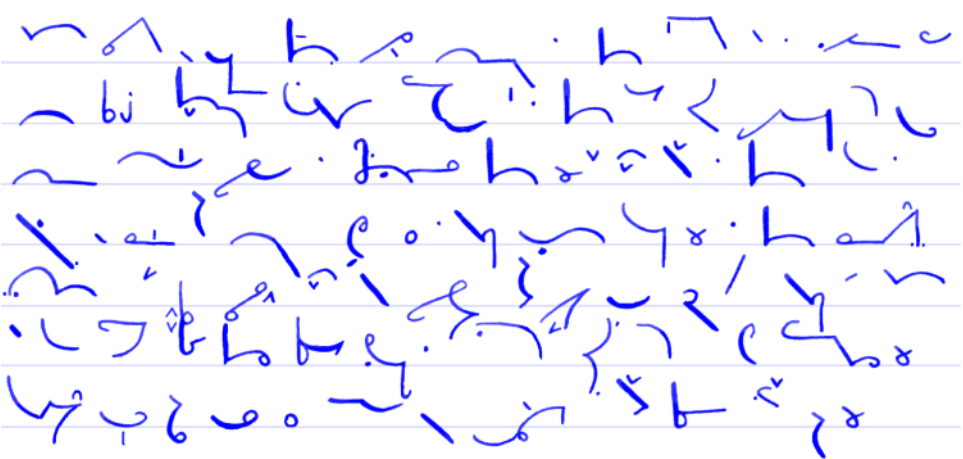
Shorthand For Dummies?

Well, I have a sincere apology to make. I regret to inform you that you are really reading an article written for someone else. I know it is very annoying, and maybe even embarrassing, but I think that it may be necessary to just make the best of it and pick out a few of the new outlines that you need to learn or practise. The fact of the matter* is that you, the shorthand learner/enquirer, are not a dummy. Here are some definitions of the word: A dumb, stupid or silly person, fool, idiot, dolt, mute, a person without the power of speech or who says or does nothing. One seeming to act independently but in reality controlled

by another. Counterfeit, sham, fake, fictitious, a copy or imitation of an object often lacking some essential feature of the original. An object or likeness of something designed to resemble and serve as a substitute* for the real or usual one.

* Omission phrase "fact (of the) matter"
See more ways to abbreviate "fact" phrases at www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing4-omission.htm#OmittingConsonant

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



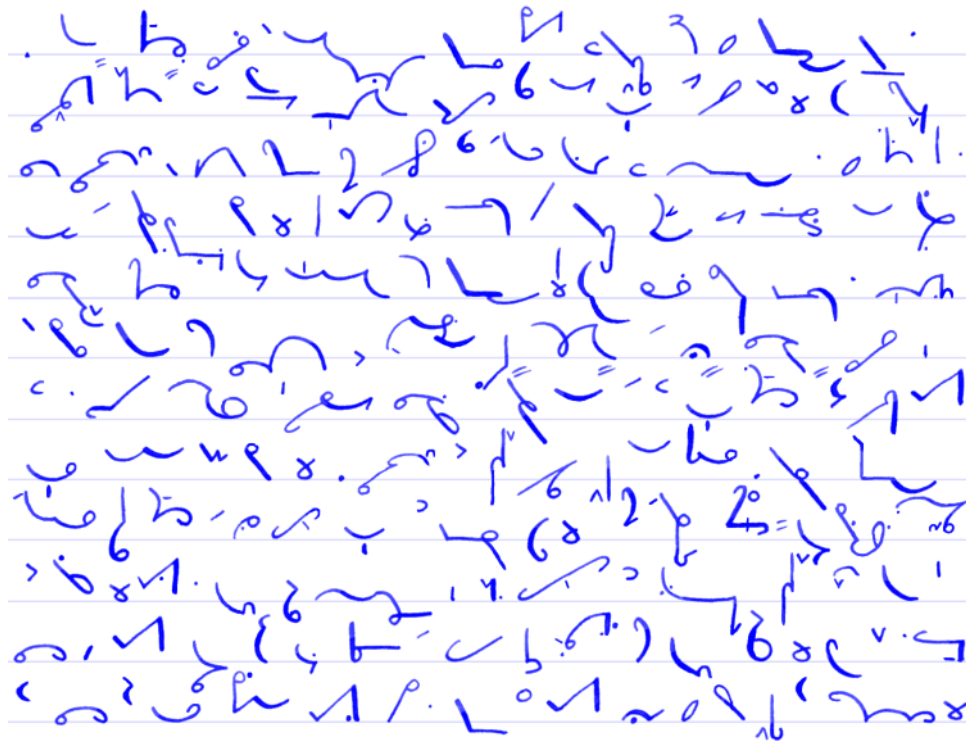
Shorthand For Dummies?

I am happy to undertake dummy runs, make up a dummy copy of an article in order to* improve its content, admire fashionable clothing on a dummy in the shop window or even make my own using a dressmaker's dummy. I might buy a dummy for a baby to suck, although maybe soother is a better name for it. A dummy security alarm on the outside of the house might be useful, although the real thing would be much better, and I am all for crash dummies testing the safety of a car

chassis or other equipment. Fortunately none of these things is going to be insulted* by the description applied to them.

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"

* "insulted" It would generally be downward L after N or Ns, as in "insult, insulate, noisily, only" etc, but here needs to be upward in order to join the T stroke



Shorthand For Dummies?

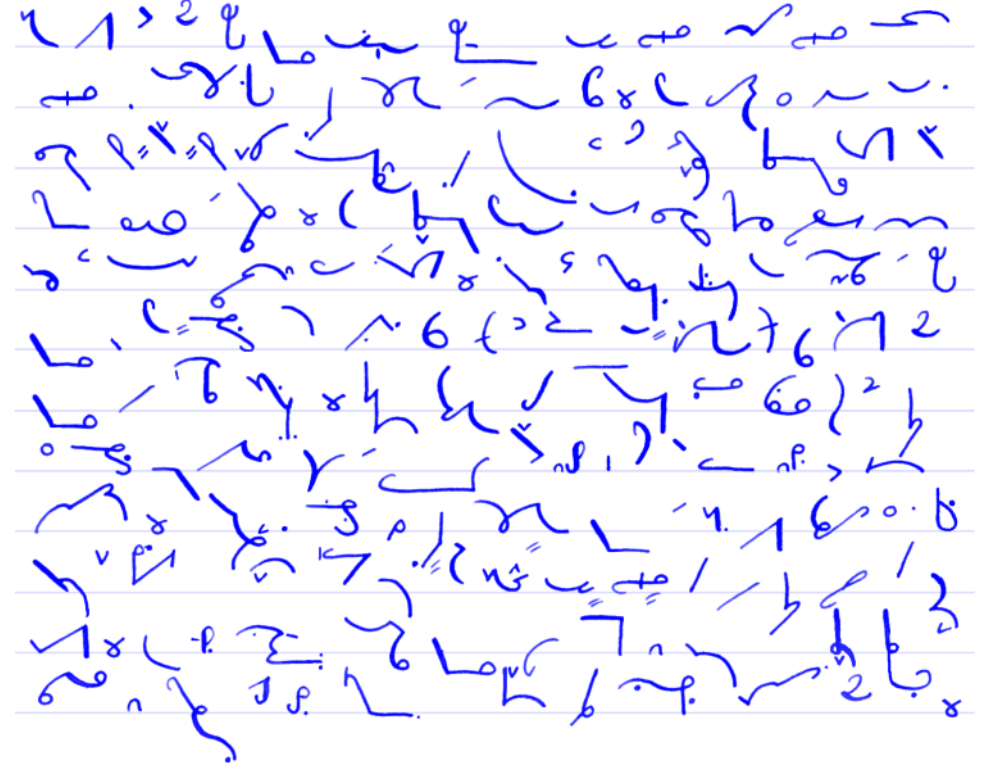
The "For Dummies" series of informational books started when computers were first beginning to become a household item, in order to* overcome the gulf between those in the know and "the rest of us". They provided some humour to help break through the resistance that is often felt when making a first attempt at a new and possibly complicated subject. It also fits the cover much better than saying "Explained in vastly simplified terms for the uninformed or beginner"! They have since spread to cover a multitude of subjects, being very similar to the long-standing "Teach Yourself" and "Made Simple" series, but with a greater emphasis on using the simplest possible language and with no assumption that the reader already knows anything about the subject. The humour of the title rules out in advance the possibility* of taking offence at this

assumption and lets one know what to expect within. They are the opposite of the jargon-filled specialist* manuals of the past. I read a few of these many years ago but I did wonder what effect the title might have on someone who already feels that they fit the description, and whether it would consolidate their view of themselves. However, I concluded that someone of that opinion starting to read such a book has already made the first step out of that frame of mind*.

* Omission phrases "in ord(er to)" "frame (of) mind"

* "possibility" Optional contraction

* "specialist" Essential to insert last vowel, to distinguish from "specialised"



Shorthand For Dummies?

I have read all the shorthand instruction books, including Instructor, New Course, Modern Course, Commercial Course, the Anniversary Edition, Teach Yourself, and many others. Every one of them is written in a simple step-by-step* style, introducing each feature with short and precise descriptions*, followed by practice sentences and passages. They describe everything in the simplest terms using the minimum of words, with neither humour nor apology. Compared with the present-day tendency for manuals and instruction books to over-explain or repeat themselves (what I call hand-holding), these older shorthand books are models of brevity. At the time they would have generally accompanied class lessons, so that what the teacher has explained could be reviewed easily and quickly by the student but they are all equally* suited to the home learner. Obviously, the exception is the Teach Yourself book and I did read this one

as a taster before I started my college year, although I found the New Course, which our teacher used, much easier to read. If studied methodically, any of these books will get you to your desired destination, as long as you persevere and do not stint on practising time, which is the mainstay of learning shorthand.

* "Step-by-step" can also be written as an omission phrase, see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing5-omission.htm

* "descriptions" The singular "description" is a contraction, but the plural has to be full outline, so it doesn't look like "discourse" which is similar in meaning

* "equally" The short form does not have a dot for the ending, but you could insert one if necessary



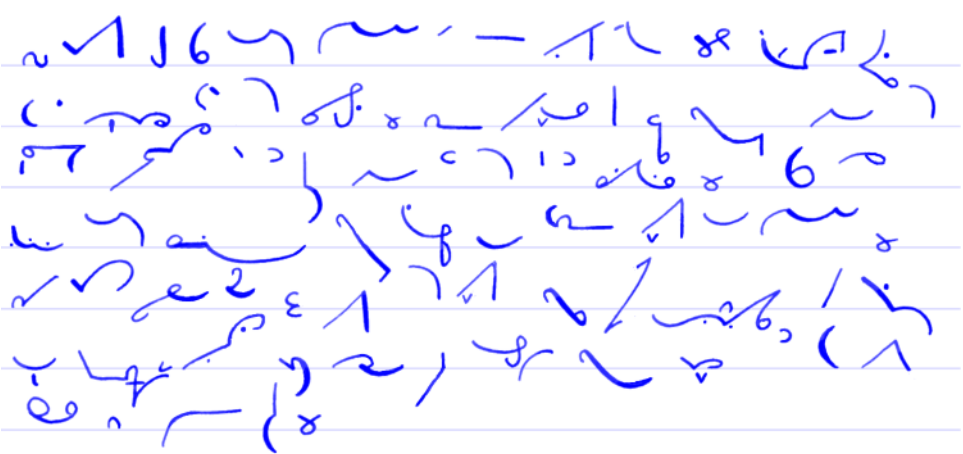
Shorthand For Dummies?

Some people feel that they are unintelligent or dull because they failed at academic subjects. I like the quote by Albert Einstein, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." Learning shorthand is completely unlike academic subjects. There is nothing to really "understand". Just like ordinary alphabets, all the marks have no meaning other than that ascribed to them by the inventor. There is structure, purpose and a clear rationale behind the way the marks

are grouped by sound, and how they are combined, but beyond this it is only* a question* of learning them in an orderly manner and practising until they become automatic. Eventually the mere sight of them brings instant recognition without any struggle.

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

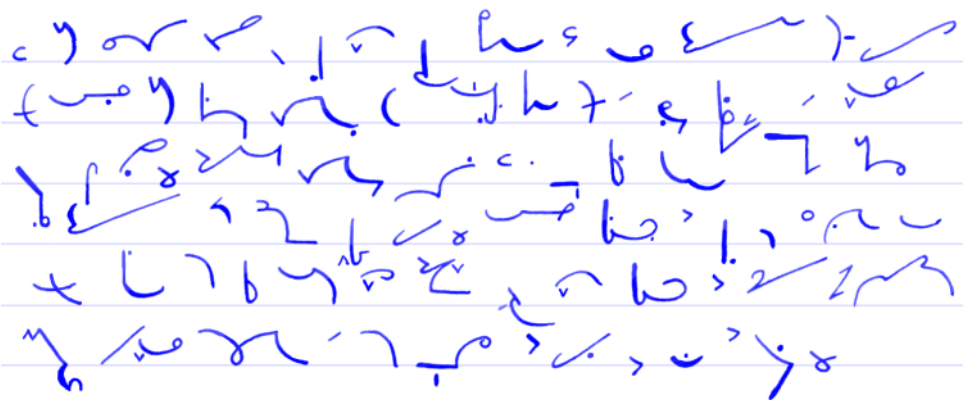
* "question" Optional contraction



Shorthand For Dummies?

You have already done this in your longhand, and can rattle off all sorts of convoluted shapes without a moment's thought or hesitation. You can recognise it when it is printed, written or scrawled, regardless of what it was written with or on what surface. This is most evident in your

signature, probably the fastest thing that you can write in longhand. You are also using shorthand when you read or write numbers/numerals, which bear no pictorial relation to their meaning, but which instantly bring to mind what they represent as soon as you look at them.



Shorthand For Dummies?

When I was small, I used to eat my dinner starting with the things that were not so wonderful (in case I was tempted to leave them uneaten at the end) and saved the tastier and nicer bits till last. I wanted to leave the meal with a good taste, having got the items that were "hard work" out of the way. In case the definition of the "D" word has left any unfortunate* tang or taste in your mind, I would like to offer my

definition of the shorthand writer*/learner, and I hope that you* recognise yourself and your goals, all the way to the end of the page.

- * "unfortunate" Optional contraction
- * Omission phrases "short(hand) writer" "I (h)ope that you"



Shorthand For Dummies?

Shorthand devotees have a bright and enquiring mind, full of endless fascination for a beautiful and efficient method of notation that combines pleasure in writing with usefulness in employment. They are full of enthusiasm and interest for a subject that will, when mastered, allow them to leave behind the laborious and slow longhand. They back up their initial decision to learn by obtaining all the

materials and equipment that they can, in order to* be able to write and practise as extensively as possible. Some may have piles of pads and wonderful pens, others may have less plentiful materials but they make up for it with ingenious ways to use and reuse what they have.

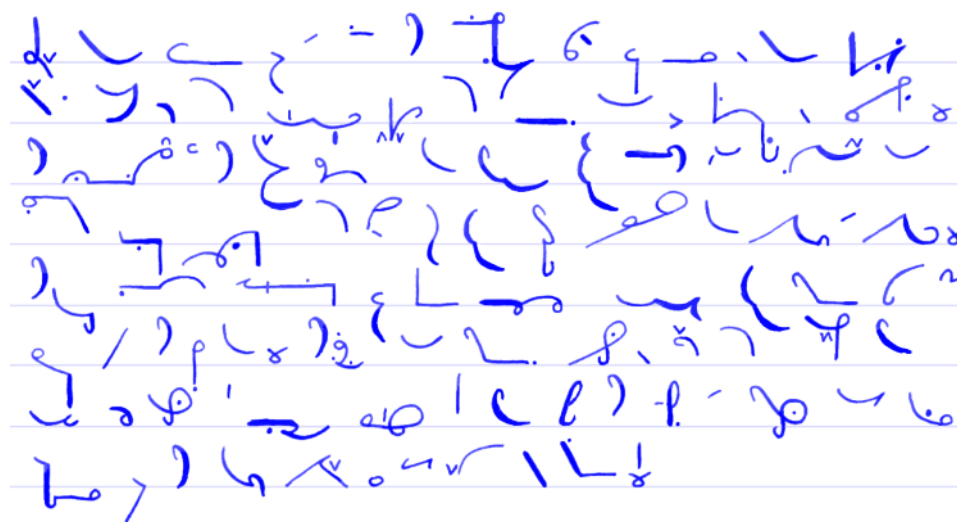
- * Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"



Shorthand For Dummies?

They are intelligent and inventive which enables them to improvise ways of practising even when they do not have their pencil and paper with them. They think of outlines all the time, on the bus, in a queue, watching television or listening to the radio or nearby conversations. They are

smart, sharp, alert, quick-witted and industrious in the extreme, and their determination alarms some of their friends who would prefer to lounge about and waste time. They leave no stone unturned in seeking out extra shorthand books, study materials and practice opportunities.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

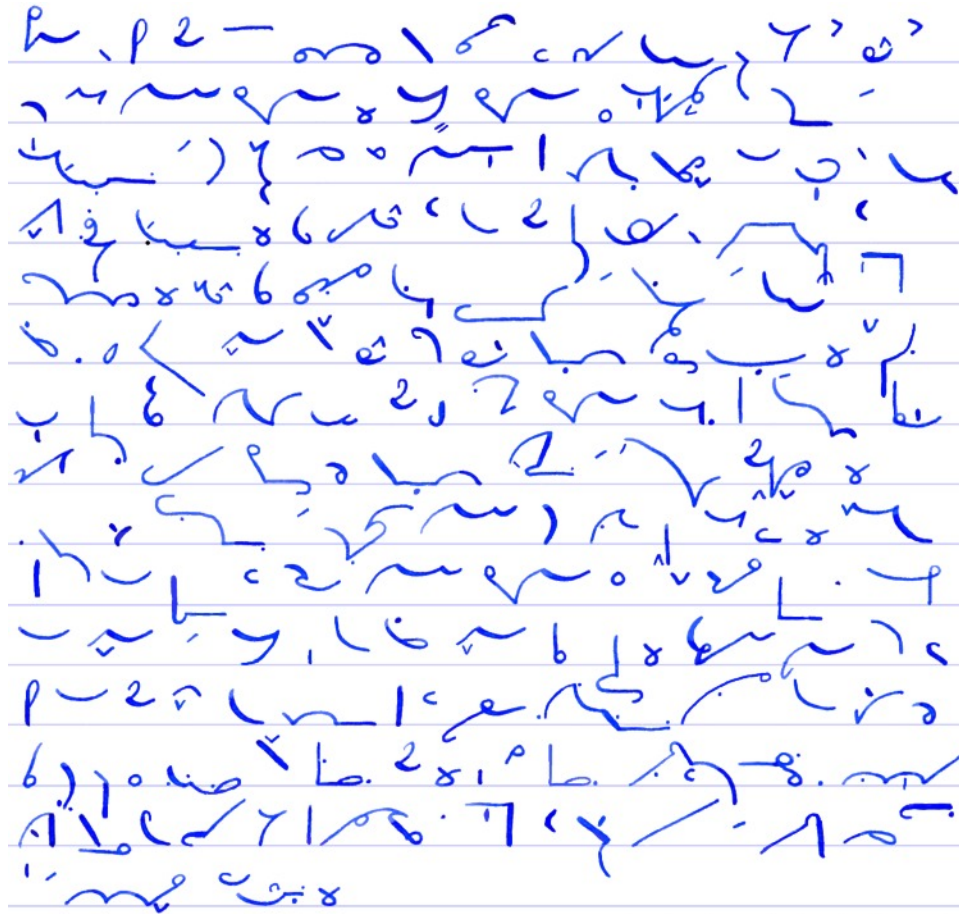
Shorthand For Dummies?

Despite being quick to think and act, they are exceedingly slow when it comes to being derailed by an unusual word or unknown outline, or giving in to the temptation* to hesitate. They are meticulous with their filing system for everything that they have gathered, not allowing any scrap to get mislaid or lost, so that they have plenty of resources for review and revision. They are confident, calm and collected when they take exams,

knowing that they have practised well beyond the speed which they are sitting for. They are consistent in practising, resistant to fright or anxiety over new words, insistent on gaining successes at every stage of their study, and persistent in the face of difficulties, to which their favourite reply is "I'll be back!" (1377 words)

* "temptation" Omits the lightly sounded P, so M stroke, not Imp

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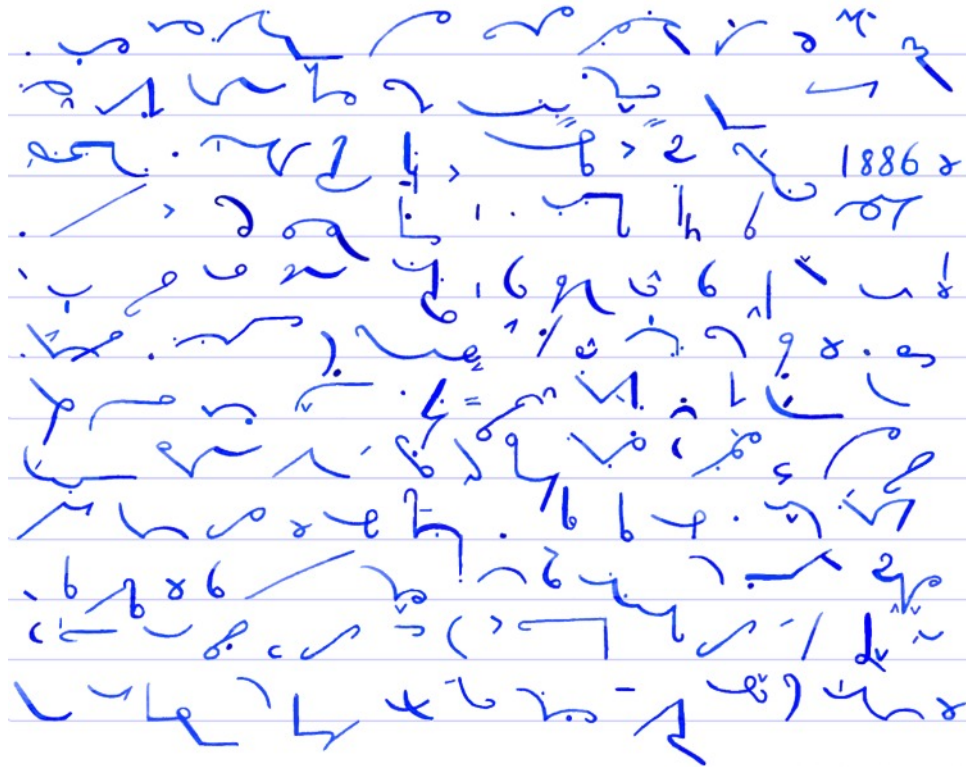
Eezee Alphabet

Starting to study shorthand can sometimes be hampered when you are having to think only of the sound of the word, and not the longhand spelling. English spelling is notoriously irregular and unphonetic, and so I think that most of us long ago had to leave behind any notion* of being able to write consistently phonetically. Then we found that for shorthand it was necessary to recapture that frame of mind*. I found this hindrance faded quickly and painlessly, and, having got past the first chapter, writing by sound very soon became second nature. I shed no tear that this lovely new shorthand did not match the spelling, indeed it formed its own world where spoken words became logical and orderly shorthand outlines. The poor old quirky and irrational longhand was left out in the cold. I never had any difficulty with ordinary

longhand spelling, as I always took an interest in writing and English, but for fast writing it is out of the question*. Those who are not willing or able to study any shorthand might have to make do with using alphabetic letters for whole words, which is easy to do, as evidenced by texting "shorthand". But as the texting repertoire expands, the memory load becomes ever greater, until it resembles a code that both writer and reader must agree on and memorise in order to* communicate.

* "notion" Insert the vowel in "notion" as it is similar to the short form "information" and the short form "opinion" all of which could make sense in the same sentence

* Omission phrase "frame (of) mind" "out (of the) question" "in ord(er to)"



Eezee Alphabet

The names of most alphabetic letters more or less* resemble whole words and I thought you would be amused* to read the following items from the Internet Archive book "Stenography: A Monthly Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Shorthand Profession (1886)". The writer of the verse seems to have* taken on a negative attitude which is most certainly of no use in his shorthand writing* endeavours, but then he will have found this out by now! The poem requires the American Zee pronunciation and the H sound omitted from "he". The second passage looks to me* like a gentle-humoured parody aimed at the vogue for phonetic spelling reform, and plays upon the strange appearance that results when the letters used are not the familiar ones. Instead of trumpeting the advantages, it is instead an entire apology to its readers. This rather reminds me of those inventive or garbled shorthand outlines that occur in haste when one

cannot think of the correct one, and which, despite not being in the textbook* or dictionary, nevertheless often remain quite readable in spite of their unfamiliarity.

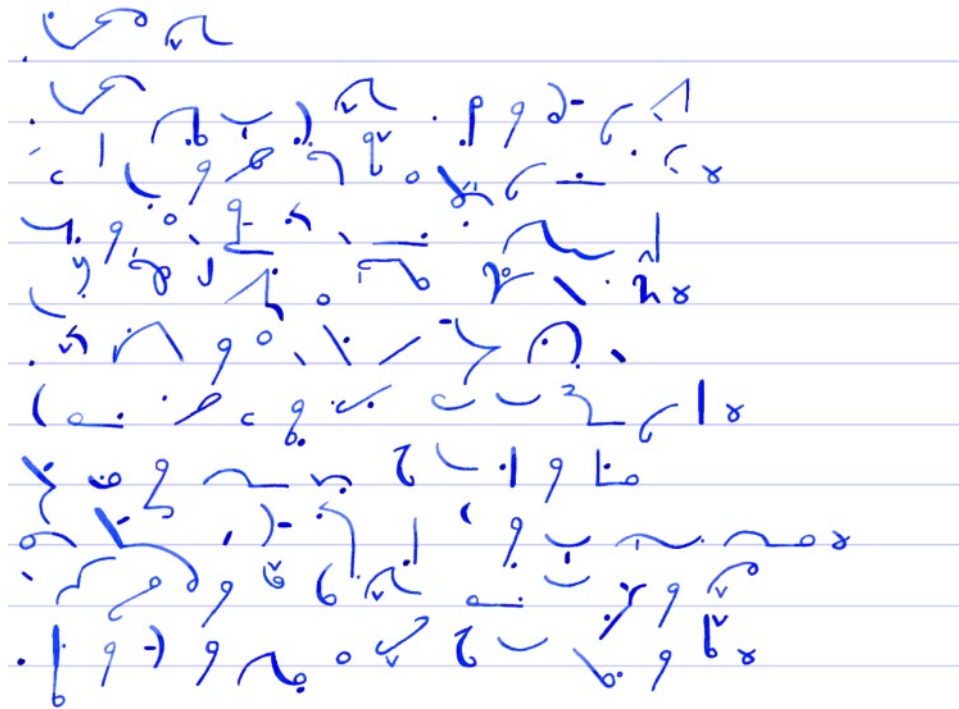
* Omission phrases "more (or) less" "seems (to) have" "short(hand) writing"

* "amused" and "amazed" Always insert the second vowel sign in these and their derivatives

* <http://archive.org/details/stenographyamoon00bealgoog/pages/83/88>

* "me" Helpful to insert the vowel in this and in "him" in phrases"

* "textbook" Omits the lightly sounded second T



Eezee Alphabet

THE FARMER'S* LIFE

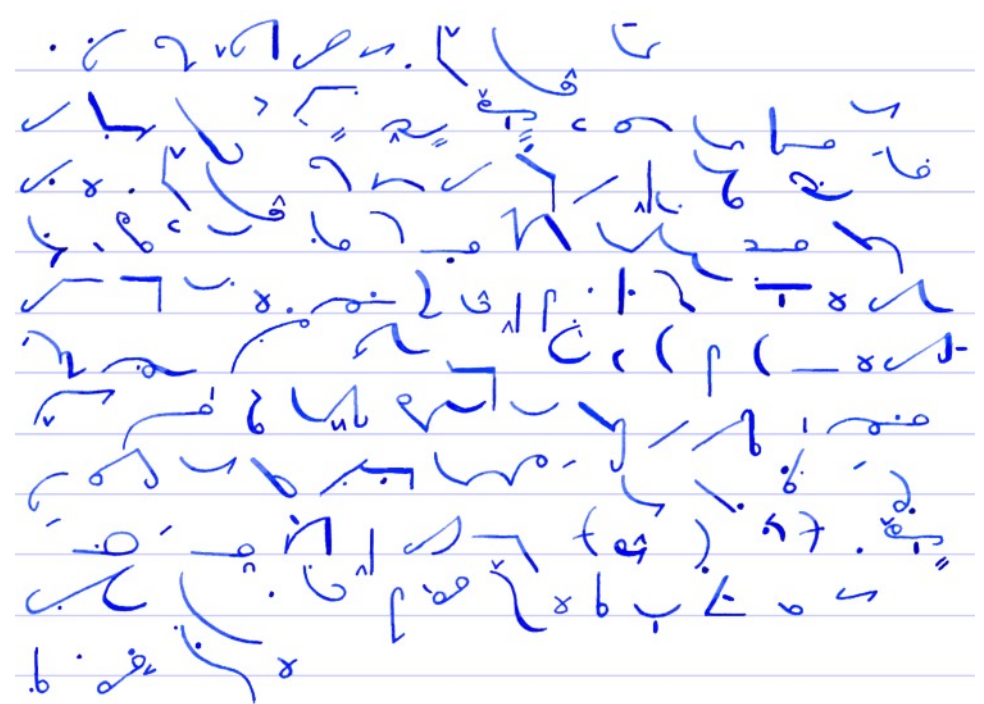
The farmer leads no E Z life,
The C D sows will rot,
And when at E V rests from strife,
His bosom will A K lot.
In D D has to struggle hard
To E K living out,
If I C frosts do not retard
His crops, there'll* be a drought.
The hired L P has to pay
Are awful A Z too;
They C K rest when he's away,
Nor any work will do.
Both N Z cannot make to meet,
And then for A D takes,
Some boarders, who so R T eat,
That E no money makes.

Of little U C finds this life,
Sick in old A G lies,
The debts he O Z leaves his wife,
And then in P C dies.

* "farmer" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "former farmer"

* "there'll" Insert the intervening circle vowel, otherwise it would read as "there will", see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing7-misc.htm#contractedapostrophe

THE FARMER'S LIFE The farmer leads no EASY life, the SEED HE sows will rot, and when at EVE HE rests from strife, his bosom will ACHE A lot. InDEED HE has to struggle hard to EKE A living out, if ICY frosts do not retard his crops, there'll be a drought. The hired HELP HE has to pay are awful LAZY too; they SEEK A rest when he's away, nor any work will do. Both ENDS HE cannot make to meet, and then for AID HE takes, some boarders, who so HEARTY eat, that HE no money makes. Of little USE HE finds this life, sick in old AGE HE lies, the debts he OWES HE leaves his wife, and then in PEACE HE dies.



Eezee Alphabet

A WAIL FROM THE WILD WEST – THE TYPE PHOUNDER'S PHAULT

We begin the publication of the Rocay Mountain Cyclone with some phew diphphiculties in the way. The type phounders phrom whom we bought our outphit phor this printing ophphice phailed to supply us with any ephs or cays, and it will be phour or phive* weex bephore we can get any*. The mistaque was not phound out till a day or two ago. We have ordered the missing letters, and will have to get along without them till they come. We don't lique the loox ov this variety ov spelling any better than our readers, but

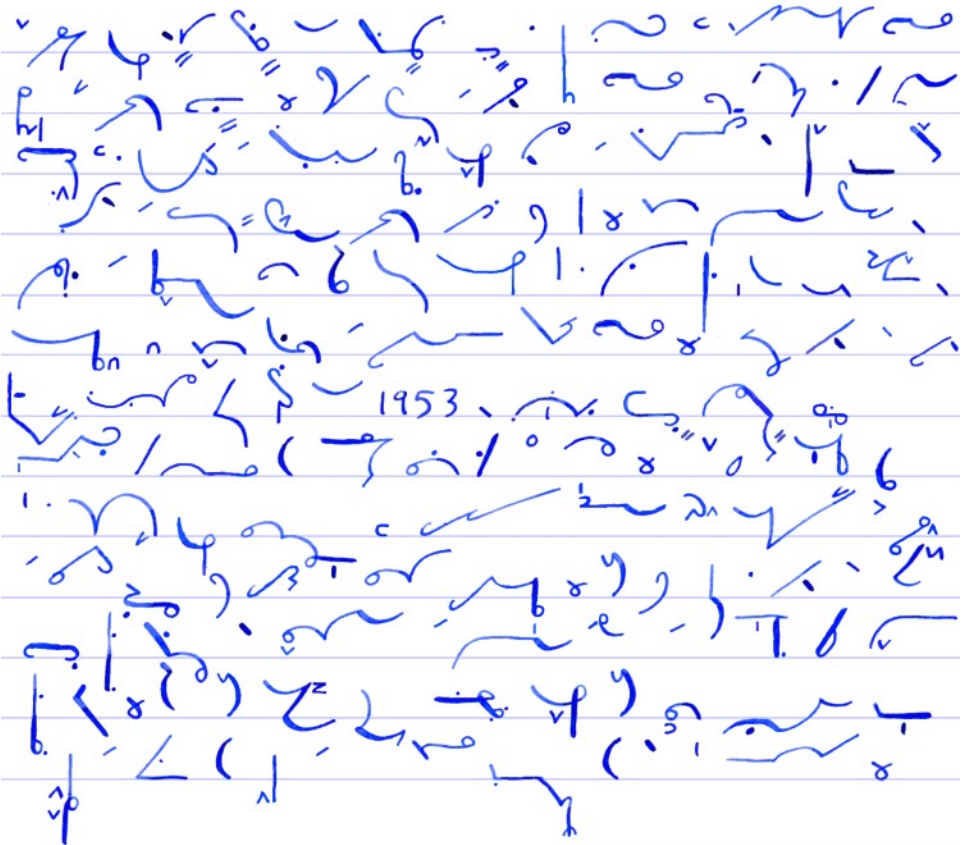
mistax will happen in the best regulated phamillies, and iph the ph's and c's and x's and q's hold out we shall ceep (sound the c hard) the Cyclone whirling aphter a phashion till the sorts arrive. It is no joque to us – it's a serious aphphair. (692 words)

* Omission phrase "four (or) five"

* "any" This short form is also "in" and as the context here does not help, it is best to insert the final vowel sign for clarity

A WAIL FROM THE WILD WEST - THE TYPE FOUNDER'S FAULT

We begin the publication of the Rocky Mountain Cyclone with some few difficulties in the way. The type founders from whom we bought our outfit for this printing office failed to supply us with any f's or k's, and it will be four or five weeks before we can get any. The mistake was not found out till a day or two ago. We have ordered the missing letters, and will have to get along without them till they come. We don't like the looks of this variety of spelling any better than our readers, but mistakes will happen in the best regulated families, and if the p-h's and c's and x's and q's hold out we shall keep (sound the c hard) the Cyclone whirling after a fashion till the sorts arrive. It is no joke to us – it's a serious affair.

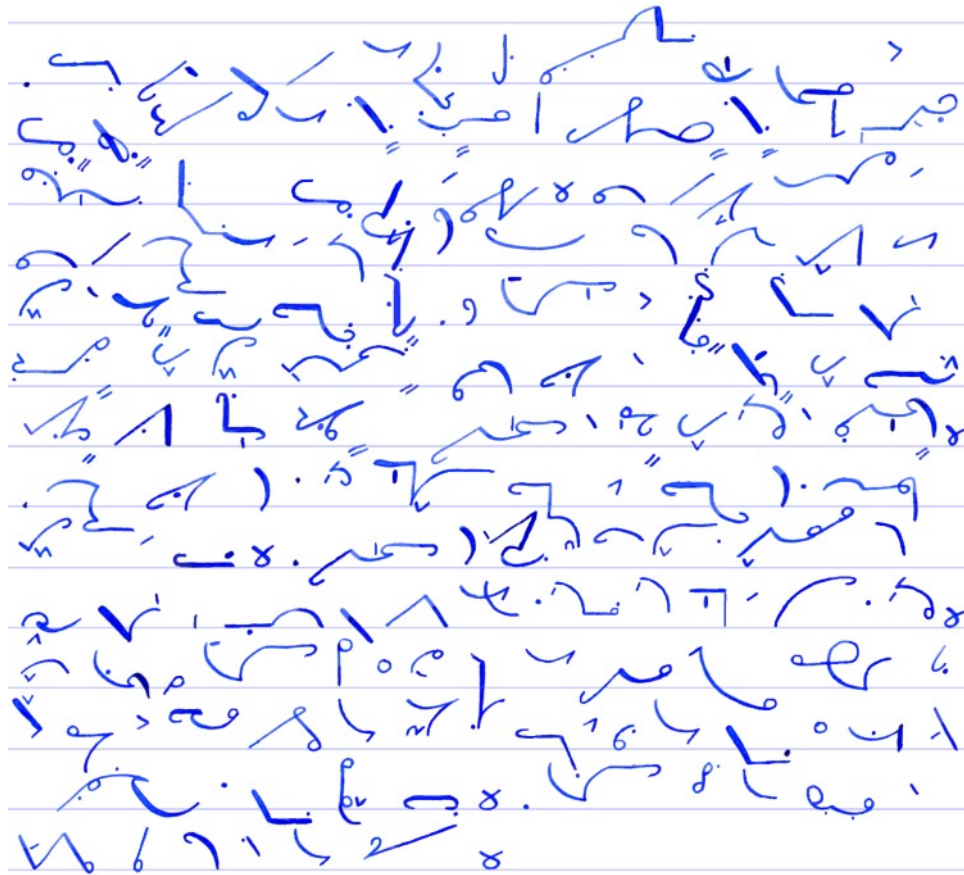


Queen's Beasts

I recently visited Hall Place in Bexley, Kent, a Tudor mansion with ornamental gardens situated on the River Cray. There are flower and rose gardens, fruit orchard, a large long greenhouse with a fishpond and banana trees inside, lawns and parkland, all tied together by the shallow and clear flowing river running through it. I am looking forward to illustrating and describing more of this for your interest at a later date, but for now I would like to introduce you to my favourite and unique part of the gardens. Here is the row of yew topiary animals which were planted in 1953

to commemorate Queen Elizabeth The Second's coronation, which makes them exactly the same age as myself. I first noticed these on an earlier visit some years ago when we were walking around the interior of the house and happened to glance through one of the small windows. I was sure it was a row of giant green teddy bears, all smiling and looking soft and cuddly, just like teddies ought to be. Although I was enjoying seeing the exhibits inside, I was somewhat impatient to go outside and check them out, and of course to capture them all on camera.

A series of horizontal lines for writing, spanning the width of the page. The lines are evenly spaced and cover the majority of the page area.



Queen's Beasts

The clipped yew bushes are in the shape of the ten* heraldic stone figures of the Queen's Beasts that were in the Abbey Annex at Westminster Abbey at the coronation ceremony, depicting the Queen's genealogy and history. Some are real animals and some are mythical and here they are in order* from left to right: Lion of England, Golden Griffin of Edward* The Third, Falcon of the Plantagenets, Black Bull of Clarence, White Lion of Mortimer, Silver Yale of Beaufort, White Greyhound of Richmond, Red Dragon of Wales*, Unicorn of Scotland, White Horse of Hanover. The mythical yale was a horned goat-like creature and the griffin was a mixture of lion and eagle. The unicorn was originally more like a rhinoceros or mountain bull but came to be represented in the form of* an oryx or goat, and later on a horse. My favourite is the falcon, as it has lots* of detail in the wings and feathers, successfully achieved by the skill of the gardeners responsible for the annual clipping, and the slit for the beak has

ended up resembling a big satisfied grin.
The falcon stands for swiftness of purpose,
which is very apt for the shorthand writer*.

- * "ten" and "eighteen" Always insert the vowels

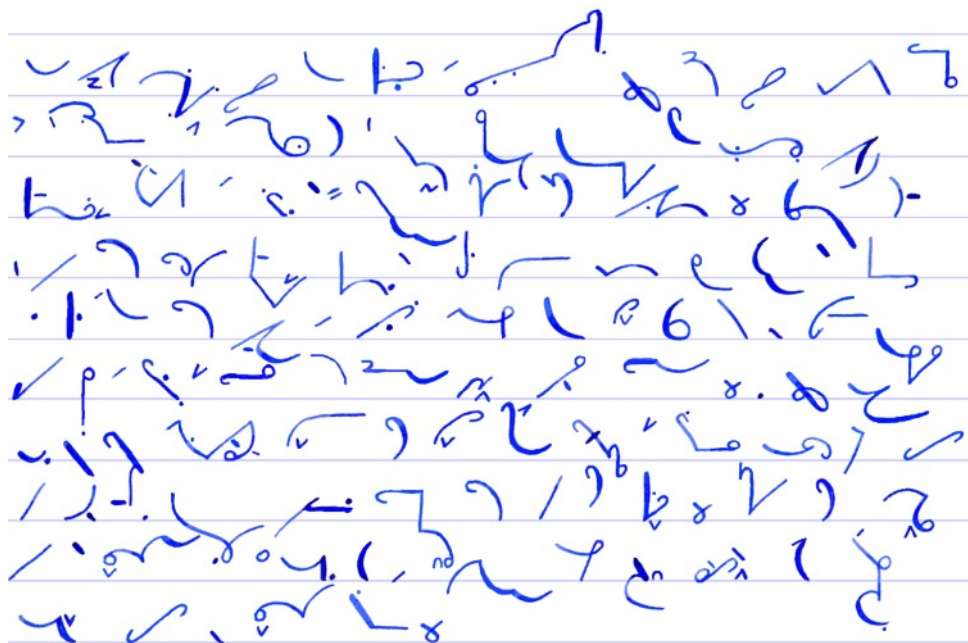
- * "in order" R Hook and doubling to represent "order"

* "Edward" A halved way is generally used for "-ward", thus omitting the R

* "Wales" Distinguishing outline, see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "Wells Wales"

- * Omission phrases "in the form (of)" "short(hand) writer"

- * "lots" and "masses" Always insert the vowel as they are similar in shape and meaning



Queen's Beasts

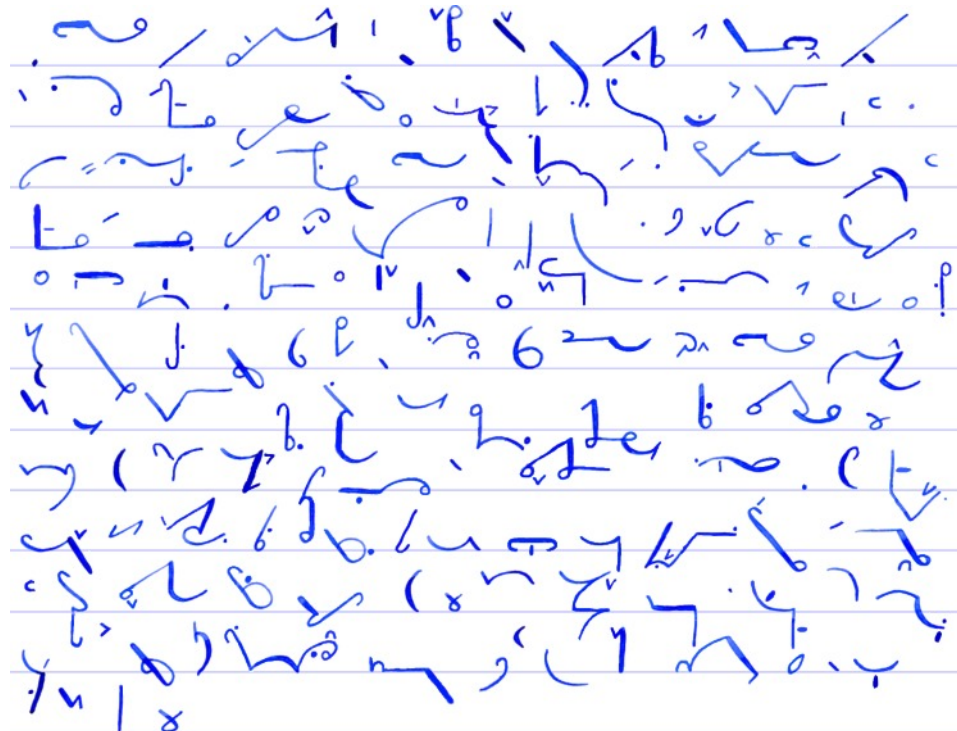
In royal imagery used for decoration and heraldry*, beasts were used to represent qualities of the monarchy and the emphasis was on power, strength, victory over enemies, rulership, dominion, authority and complete all-pervading control of their realm. This may be so, but our very friendly topiary team of ten* look to me as if they have all taken a day off from ruling and reigning, and instead have lined themselves up to welcome visitors who are sitting and playing on the grass or walking round the rose garden. The beasts no longer need to be brutal and ferocious like their line drawing portraits on the plaques

in front of each one, which show the fiercely regal creatures from which they are derived. On the contrary*, their mouths are all smiling, as indeed they should, living in such beautiful surroundings, and they positively invite one to smile back.

* "heraldry" Three upstrokes (or downstrokes) is generally avoided but necessary here

* "ten" and "eighteen" Always insert the vowels

* Omission phrases "on (the) contrary"



Queen's Beasts

The gardens are surrounded on two sides by busy roads and the background roar of cars and trucks whizzing past is unavoidable* at the far end of the park, but with a well-maintained and extensive garden to admire, and a sparkling river with ducks and geese, one's mind filters it out after a short while. When everyone has gone home, the traffic has died down, all is quiet and calm, and the sun is setting, I think that perhaps the ten* beasts then start to amuse* themselves, walking around the gardens, lounging about under the park trees, paddling in the stream, and discussing the day's happenings. I am sure they particularly enjoy the children's games of hide and seek* amongst the other topiary nearby, originally chess pieces which have now grown into

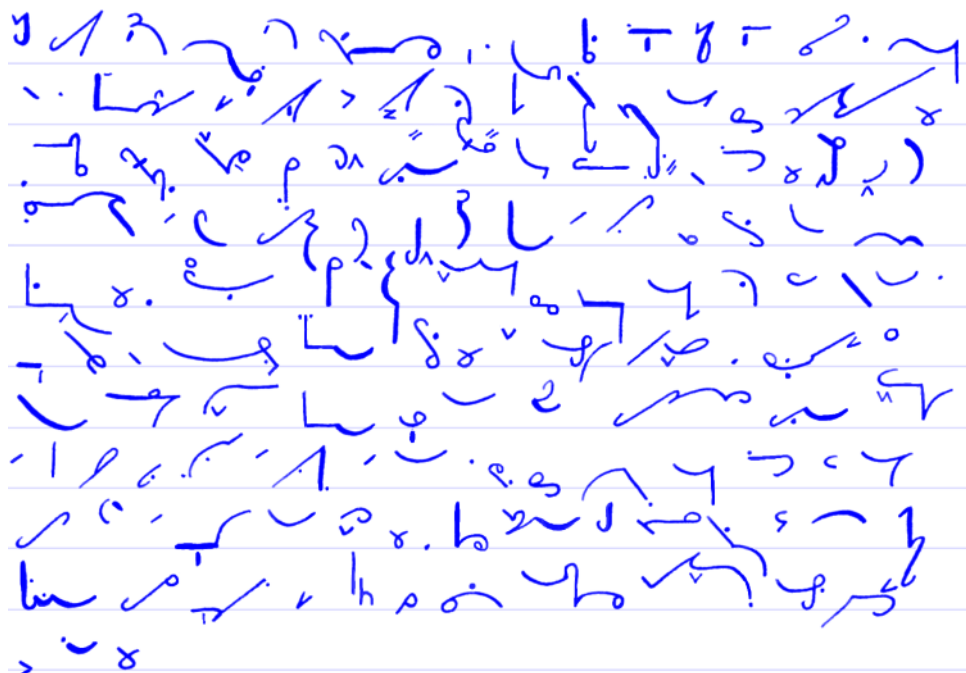
geometric blobs and cubes, with plenty of hiding places between them. I am unlikely to get a photo or movie footage of the beasts on their perambulations, but you can be sure that if I do, you will be the first to know about it. (727 words)

* "unavoidable" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-2-rule.htm "unavoidable inevitable"

* "ten" and "eighteen" Always insert the vowels

* "amuse" and "amaze" Always insert the vowel in these and derivatives

* Omission phrase "hide (and) seek"



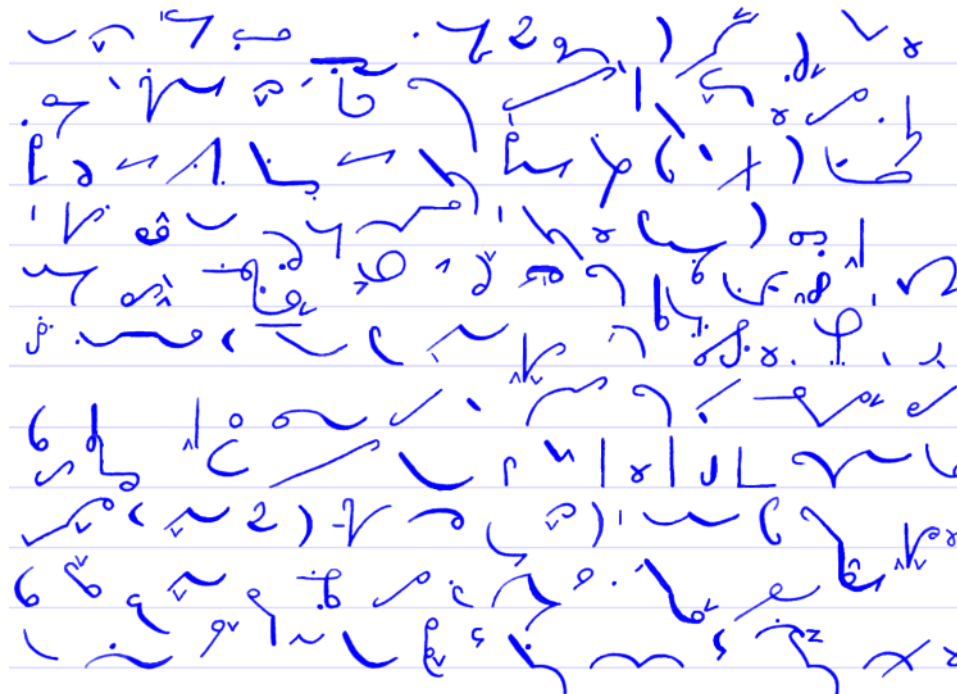
Scramble!

I do not watch war movies or programmes but a few days ago I just caught half a minute of a documentary on the role of the Royal Air Force at the Battle of Britain in the Second World War. The actors portrayed pilots sitting around waiting for the call to action. All of a sudden* shout was "Scramble!" and every one of them threw down what he was doing and ran to his plane for immediate take-off*. The narrator said that they had 90 seconds to get into the air, in order to* be in a good position to intercept the attacking planes. I instantly recognised the scenario as being exactly like taking notes in shorthand, one moment waiting quietly and at rest, yet alert and ready, and in a split second

leaping into action with only one thought and goal in mind. The demands of shorthand writing* do not of course compare with the importance and danger of defending one's country, but the attitude is the same in terms of requiring instant reaction to the command.

* Omission phrases "all (of a) sudden the" "in ord(er to)" As the "to" is part of this phrase, you do not need to write the B stroke through the line for "to be". "short(hand) writing"

* "take-off" the noun is written in full, but the phrase "take off" uses the hook



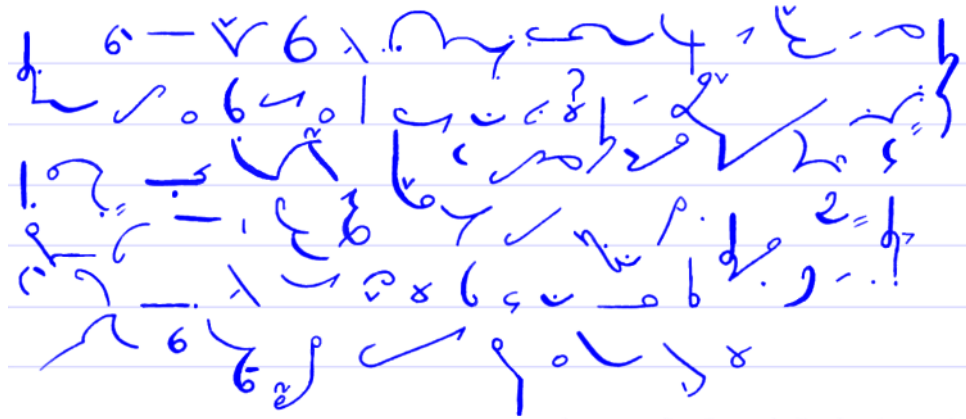
Scramble!

In my college class, gaining a knowledge of the shorthand system was really the easiest part. The skill of controlling the mind and attention from their wanderings had to be acquired. Once the teacher said the words "Ready, begin" before starting the passage, then all our attention was focused* on turning sounds in ears into marks on paper. Everything else was screened out, not only surroundings, extraneous noises, and the sighs and grunts* from discomfited fellow students, but also the constant naggings that accompany every wrong outline or hesitation. The necessity to shut these distractions out is something we all learned from raw experience as we went along,

rather than being told about it. It did not take very long for us to realise that writing shorthand was utterly impossible if the mind was on anything other than producing the outlines. This applies whenever writing speed exceeds one's comfort level and is an obvious reason for aiming high and not being satisfied with the bare minimum that the employer may require.

* "focused" and "fixed" Insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

* "grunts" Keep the stroke clearly halved, so it does not look like "groans"



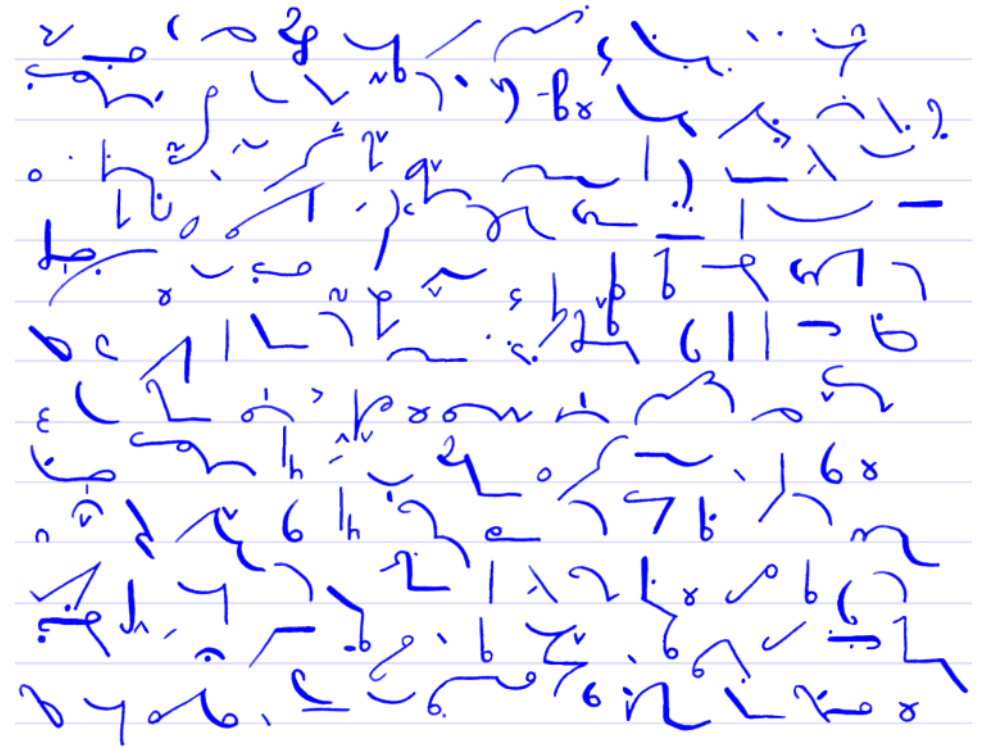
Scramble!

Distracting thoughts can pile themselves up alarmingly, clamouring for attention, and the final and most dangerous* one is this: is it near the end yet? Teacher and high speed writer Emily D Smith gave the valuable advice that one must always assume that the speaker will go on forever and that this is the only way to prevent such a disastrous* shorthand-destroying thought from coming up in the mind. Then

when the end comes it is a pleasure and a relief, that is, for those situations where the speed is being pushed.

* "dangerous" Has a full stroke S so that it does not look like "dangers"

* "disastrous" Note that the outline for "disaster" uses a circle S + doubled S stroke



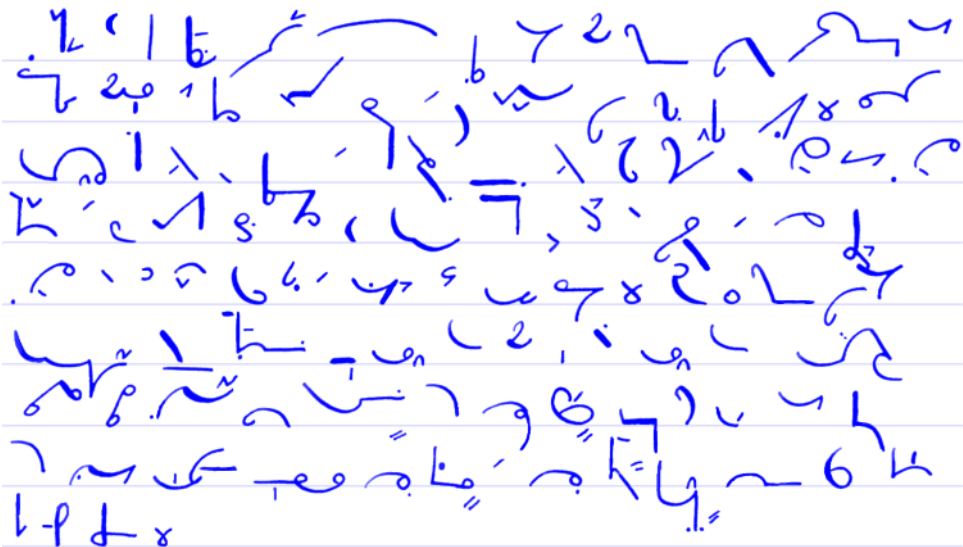
Scramble!

I would guess that most shorthand students nowadays are learning without the benefit of a communal classroom situation, for part or all of their studies. Being able to replay the MP3 is a temptation to not really try the first time, making it easy to give up in disgust at the first hurdle, and assuage yourself that you can give it another go later. In class you have to start writing when the teacher decides, and it is expected that you will do your best effort, read it back or make a complete transcript, then do it again faster when you have practised some of the outlines. Somehow the home learner must acquire the

focused* classroom attitude and no shorthand book is really going to teach this. You might be able to revive this attitude from your school or college days, or you may have to reach down into your boots and drag it up from the depths. Once it is within your grasp and made regular use of, it is unlikely to slip away again and it can be pressed into service to overcome any slackness that is holding back progress.

* "focused" and "fixed" Insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

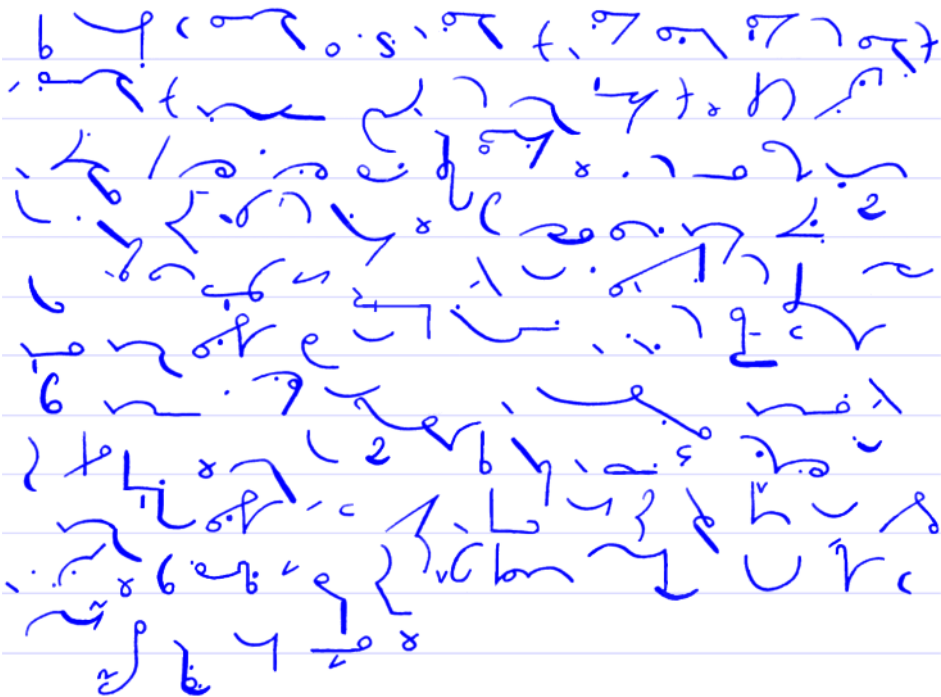




Scramble!

The idea that "It doesn't really matter, it's only shorthand practice" will be reflected in the quality of the shorthand notes, and the attainment of greater speed and ease of writing will drift out of reach. Small failures add up to discouragement and possibly giving up, and then there are two losses: the loss of time and effort already spent without having got to the point of usability, and, most disappointingly, the loss of what

might have been achieved and enjoyed with the new skill. Whatever is practised will eventually become automatic, good news for shorthand, but bad news for unhelpful habits such as allowing Mr Panic or Mrs Fluster to get their foot in the door, or letting the unwelcome cousins Miss Takes and Miss Topper-Tunity make themselves at home at the study desk.



Scramble!

It is interesting that "scramble" is a blend of scrabble (to scratch, scrape, scrawl or scribble) and scramble (to mangle, shuffle or move awkwardly). It is also related to shambles, which means a mess, scene of destruction, carnage. The word comes from the name for a butcher's shop, stall or bench. Other meanings seem to match shaky shorthand even more closely: to collect up in a hurried or disorderly manner, to cause to move hastily as if in panic, to compete or struggle with others, to make a

message incomprehensible to interceptors, to mix up so that it requires decoding. Maybe for shorthand it is better to stick with the airmen's command "to move hastily and with urgency, to take off in the shortest possible time in response to an alert". This concentrates on the speed aspect while at the same time maintaining efficiency and control without allowing the situation to descend into chaos. (923 words)
