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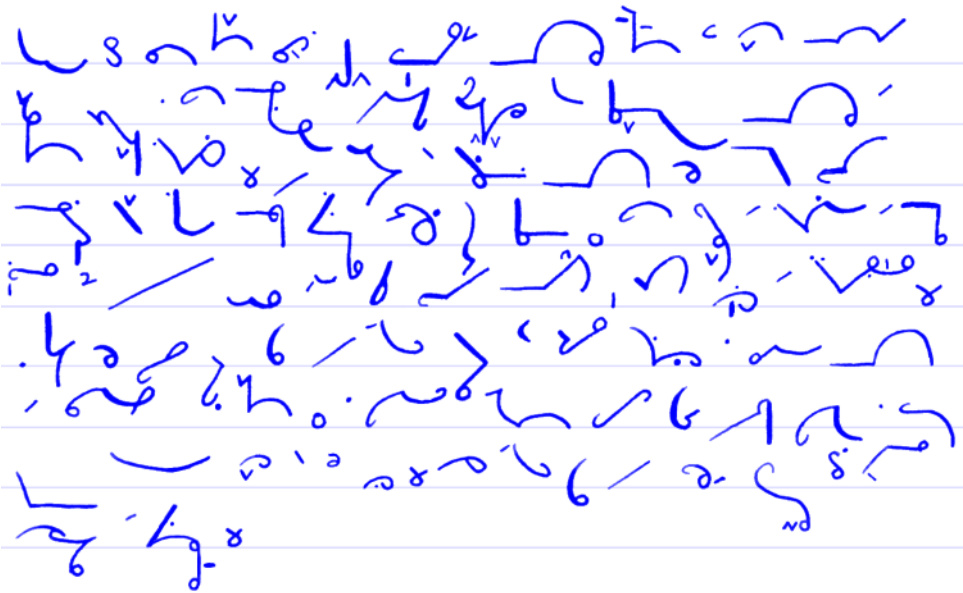
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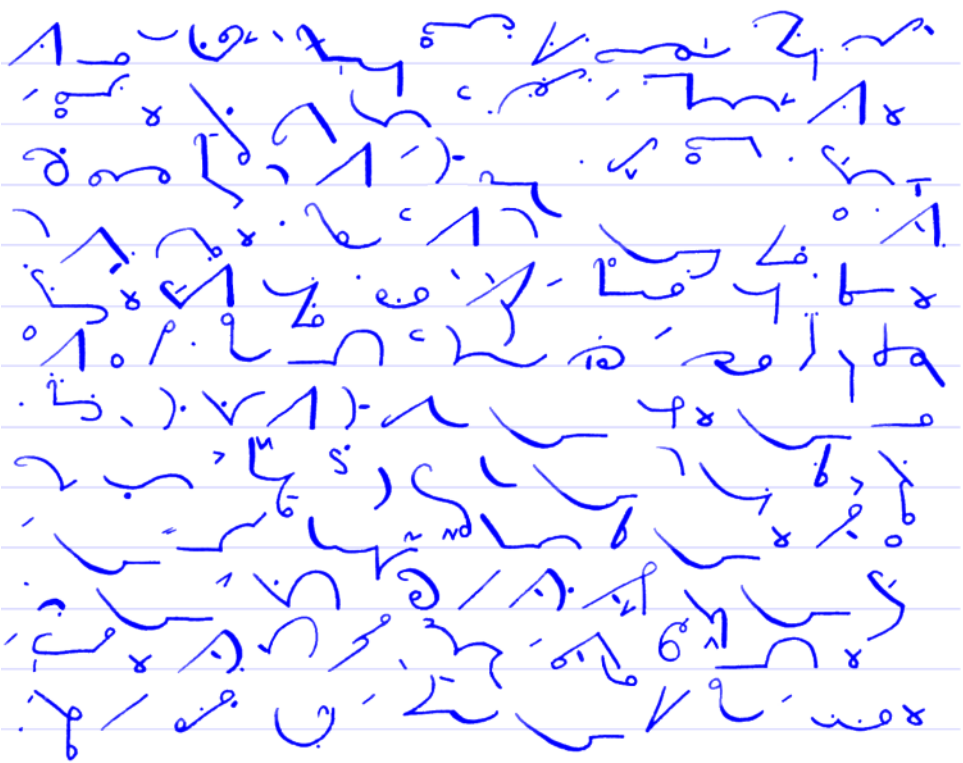
Colours

Having spent some time hunting down the glorious colours of autumn with my camera, I think it is time to provide a more extensive* range of shorthand outlines for describing colours and appearances. Our handful of basic colour words can be greatly expanded* by adding extra adjectives and phrases, so that the description* is more precise and appealing, and gets across what the writer intends, not just greater accuracy but also emotion and comparisons. The additional words used to achieve this are often objects that always remain a certain colour, and as long as the item is a well-known and familiar

one, then the reader will have a clear picture in their mind of what is meant. Most often these are fruits, flowers, plants, rocks, minerals and gemstones.

* "extensive" & "expansive" Insert dot for the second vowel to help with reading back, and also emphasise the P stroke's low angle

* "description" Contraction only used for the singular, the plural is a full outline, as if you add a circle S to the contraction it could be mistaken for "discourse"



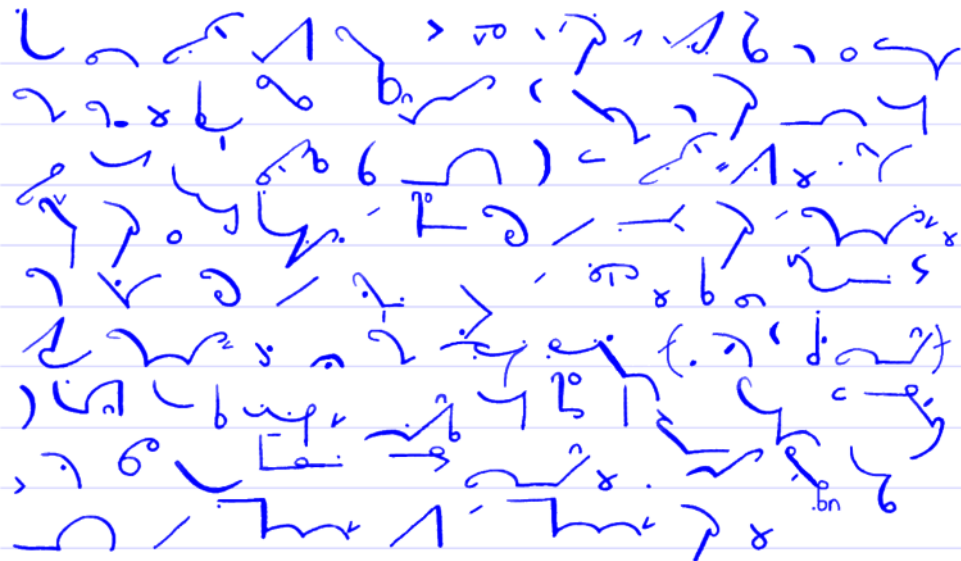
Colours

Red comes in variations of burgundy, carmine, cherry, crimson, magenta, maroon and scarlet. Painters will be familiar with alizarin and cadmium red. Phrases sometimes drop the word red and so you can have a wine carpet, a plum coat or ruby lips. A person with red or pinkish cheeks has a ruddy complexion. Blood-red injects a sense of urgency and darkness into a description. As red is such a strong colour with so many emotions and meanings attached to it, it seems to be* a contradiction* to say pale red, so we have pink instead.

Pink comes from the name of the dianthus plant whose flowers have pinked, or pinched, edges to the petals, and "pink-coloured" eventually became just pink. Rose is a mid pink, and the paler versions are rosé, roseate, powder pink, blush and quartz. Rosy also refers to warmth and hopefulness as well as the colour. The opposites are cerise, fuchsia and shocking pink which are strong and intense.

* Omission phrase "it seems (to) be"

*It is prudent to insert the last dot vowel, compare "contraction"

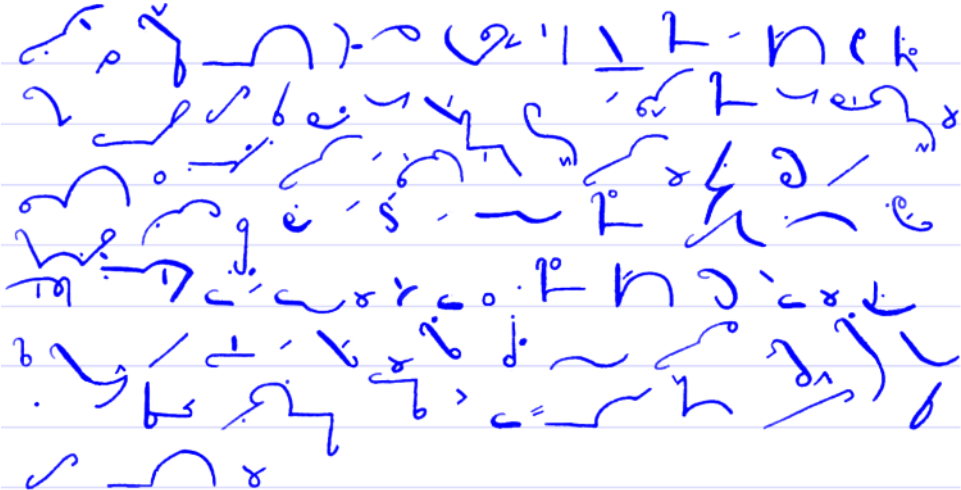


Colours

Adding some yellow to red produces all the kinds of orange and the origin of this word is clearly from the fruit. It is no surprise to learn that before the word orange came into use in the 1500's, this colour was called "yellow-red". A particularly bright orange is tangerine and darker versions are carrot orange and vermilion. Very pale versions are apricot, peach and salmon. It is somewhat ironic that the original

vermilion paint made from the mineral cinnabar (the ore that contains mercury) was valued for its intensity but the impurities in it darkened it to black over time with exposure to the air, as well as being toxic because of the mercury. The modern substitutes* for this colour are cadmium red and cadmium orange.

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



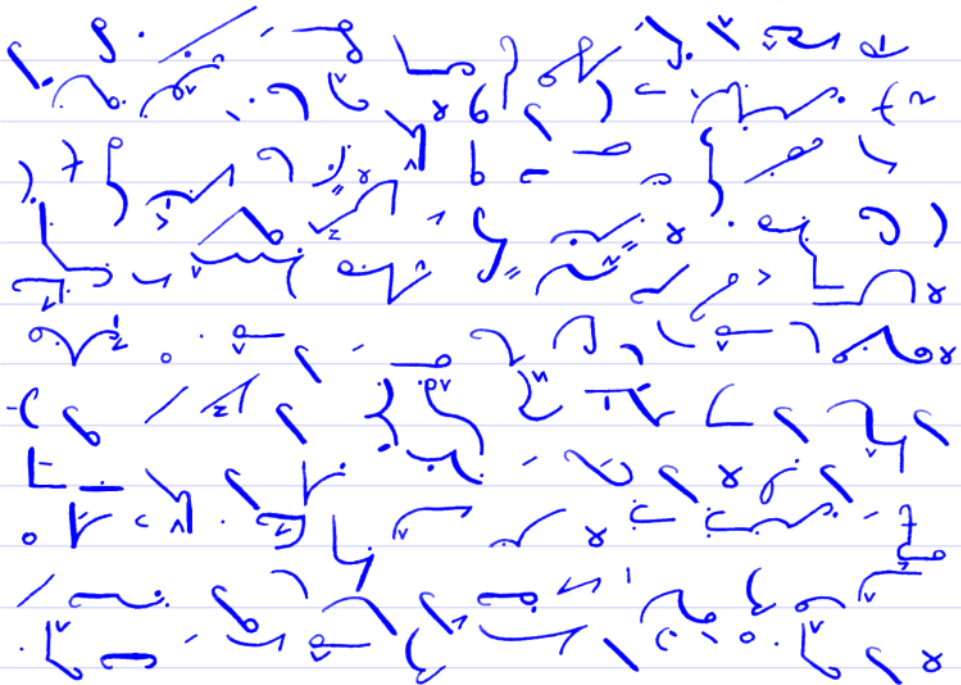
Colours

Yellow is the brightest colour, so most variations on it become darker and duller as they depart from the clearest one, which is seen in the buttercup flower and slightly darker in the sunflower*. Similar is canary yellow and sulphur yellow. Gentler versions are primrose, lemon, citrine, sand and blond, and going darker we have amber, saffron, mustard, gamboge, gold and golden*. Old gold is a darker duller version of gold. Tending towards brownish are ochre and buff. Brass contains many

yellows and browns, brassy being a description of the reflective qualities of the gold-coloured item rather than just one colour.

* "sunflower" The Fr stroke is reversed in order to join the N

* "golden" Always insert the diphone vowel in the outline for "glowing" as it is similar to "golden"



Colours

Blue has been a rare and expensive pigment throughout history, obtained by grinding the stone lapis lazuli to a very fine powder. This blue was called ultramarine – "beyond the sea" as it was imported from Asia. Its great cost meant that it was reserved for the depiction of the robes of royalty and the Virgin Mary. A synthetic version was created in the nineteenth century, allowing greater use of the colour. Cerulean is a sky blue and comes from the Latin word for sky or heavens. Other blues are Royal blue, azure, sapphire, cyan, cobalt, electric blue, midnight blue, duck

egg, powder blue, teal, navy and Prussian blue. Steel blue is dull with a greyish tinge like the metal. Aqua, aquamarine and turquoise* are greeny blues, or maybe bluey greens – on leaves they would seem like a type of green and in the sky they would naturally be thought of as a type of blue.

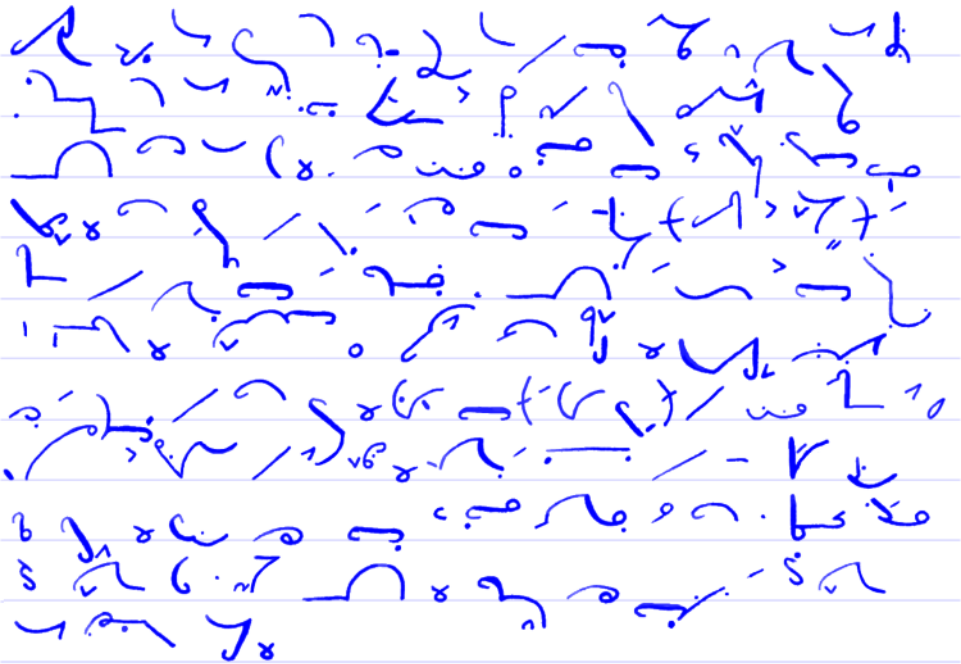
* "turquoise" Showing modern pronunciation, the dictionary outline gives the "-koiz" pronunciation, using plain G stroke and OI diphthong sign



Colours

The violet family is between blue and red, variants being mauve, magenta, amethyst and puce. Tyrian purple or Imperial purple was an expensive pigment in antiquity, being made from the secretions of the murex sea snail, from which the much darker indigo was also obtained. Violet is a

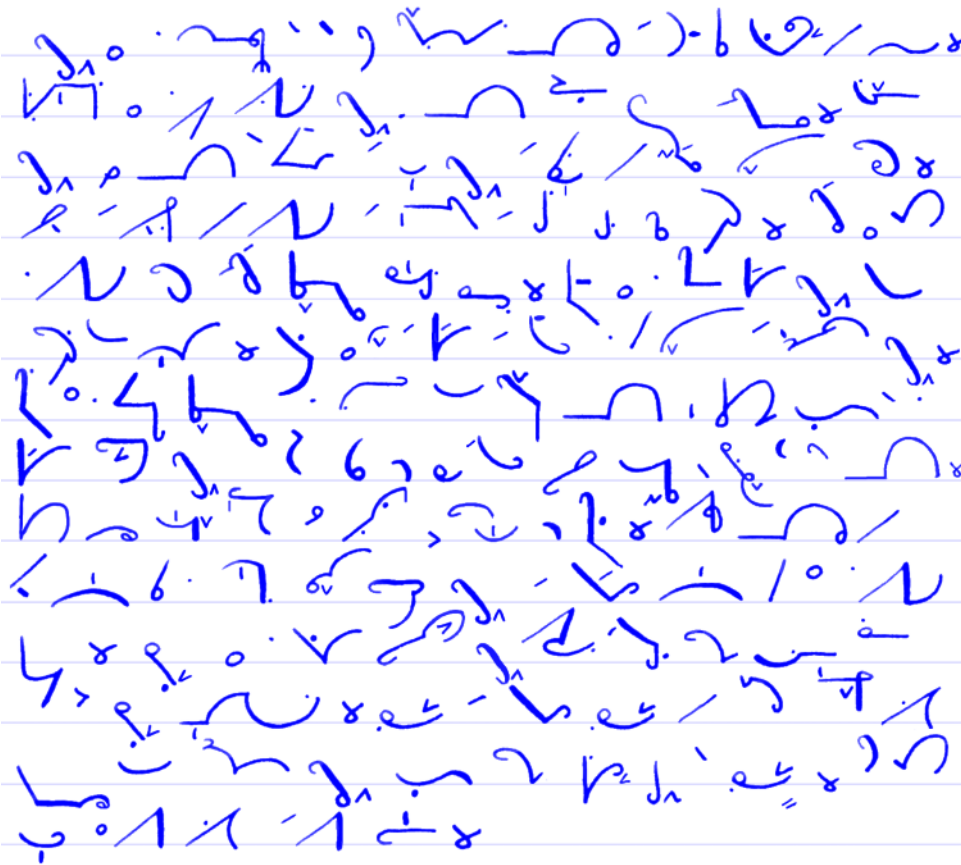
true optical colour and is closer to blue, with purple being closer to red. Lavender and lilac are pale versions. Plums and certain grapes are dark red but the wax bloom on their skins gives a pale purplish or greyish mottling.



Colours

We do not have to wait for the flowering or fruiting season for our greens, and unless you live in the desert, the arctic, or in the "concrete jungle" of the city, you are probably surrounded by this colour more than any other. The most intense is grass green, with the brighter apple green close behind. More subdued are pea and moss green, and eau-de-nil ("water of the Nile"), and darker are leaf green and verdigris, the colour and name of the green patina on

copper. Lime green is yellowy and more strident. Viridian, emerald, mint and sea green are more bluish. Phthalo green (and phthalo blue) are intense and dark, and the first two letters of the spelling are silent. Olive and khaki are quite dull, tending towards brown. Verdant means "green with grass and leaves" and is more a description of the abundance of plant life than an actual colour. Verdure means greenery and plant life in the landscape in general.

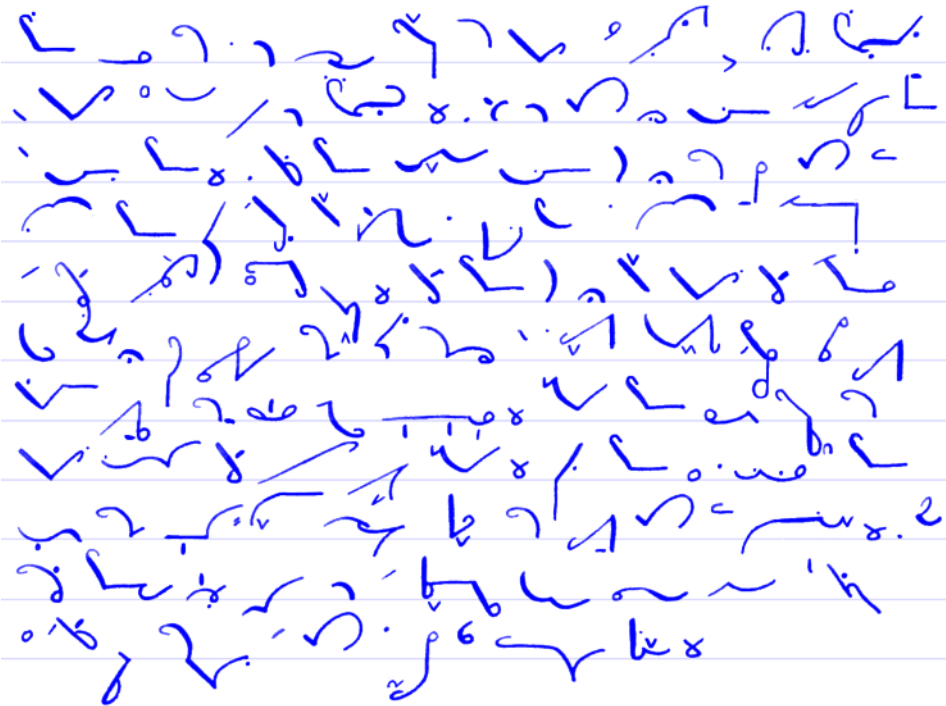


Colours

Brown is a mixture of all three primary colours and so its variations are many. Terracotta is a rich reddish brown, the colour of clay flowerpots and bricks. Vandyke brown is the colour of chocolate, and nut brown and chestnut are lighter versions. Rust and russet are reddish, and copper and tan tend towards orange. Bronze is also a reddish version and bronzed describes suntanned skin. Taupe is a dark dull brown, being French for "mole". Beige is light and dull, and fawn a much lighter and warmer brown. Drab as an adjective describes a lack of any bright colour but it is also the name of a dull greyish brown, although this word is not often used nowadays to specify that

particular colour. It also means undyed cloth and is related to the more common word drape. Artists colours are raw umber, which is a muddy slightly greenish brown and burnt umber which has a reddish tinge. Sepia is a pale yellowish brown, originally obtained from the ink sac of the sepia cuttlefish*. Sienna and burnt sienna are iron oxide earth pigments in warm browns, named from the Italian town of Siena. They are also known as red earth and red ochre.

* "cuttlefish" Uses halving and stroke L to obtain a join with the F, compare the outline for "cattle" which is Kay + Tee with L Hook

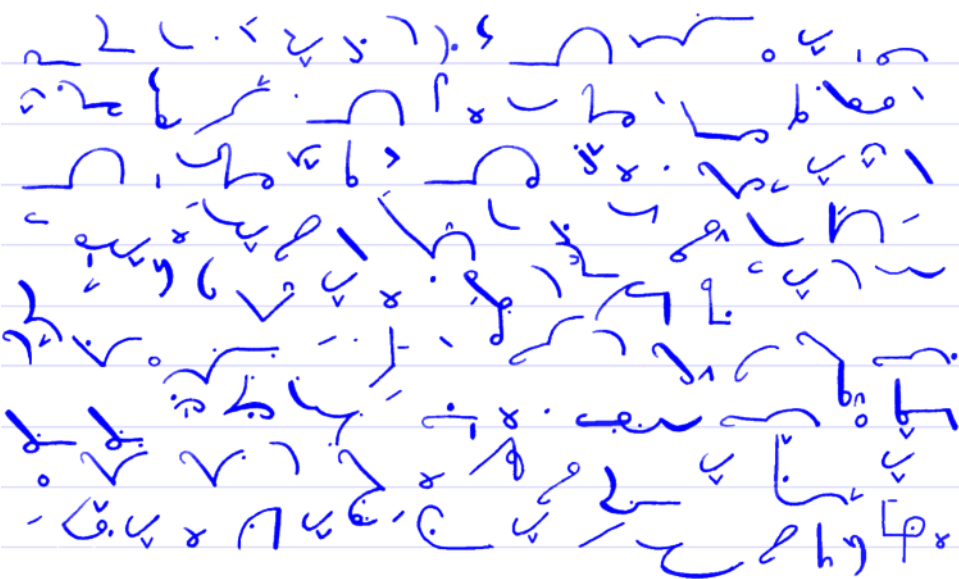


Colours

Black comes from a word meaning bright or burnt and is related to the Latin "flagrare", to burn, as in our word conflagration. The old word also meant ink and we still talk of inky black. The best black handwriting ink was made from soot, also called lamp black, which was obtained by holding a dish over a lamp, and collecting and processing the resultant carbon powder. Bone black was made by burning bones and blacks have been made throughout history from the charred remains of a wide variety of substances, such as wood, bark, roots, fruit

stones, and even coconuts. Ivory black is now produced from burning animal bones rather than real ivory. Jet black is an intense black, named from the coal-like mineral derived from wood, also called lignite. The shorthand phrase "black and white*" omits the middle word, and describes having something written on paper, as opposed to just verbally, and also a situation that is clearly defined.

* Omission phrase "black (and) white"

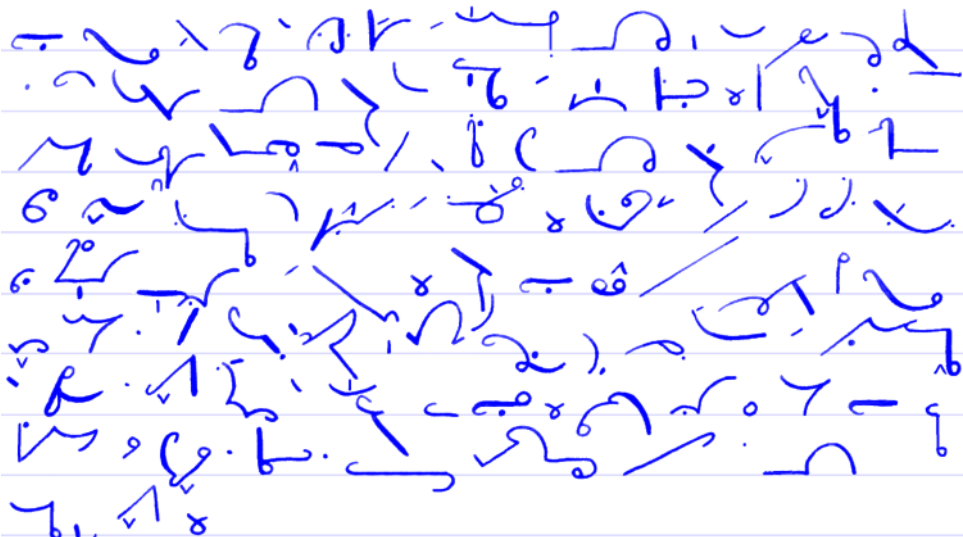


Colours

You can ask for a pot of white paint or say that the colour of milk is white, but some might argue that it is not really a colour at all. In terms of pigment it is the absence of colour but in terms of light it is all the colours combined. A brilliant white might be called snow white. Off-white used to be popular for paintwork in the house, being duller and easier on the eyes than pure white. A substance or liquid streaked with white or anything very pale is milky and a

touch of yellow or brown will produce cream, bisque, biscuit, almond, champagne, vanilla and ecru. A glistening cream is described as pearl, pearly or pearly*. Artists use zinc white, titanium white and Chinese white. Lead white and flake white are no longer used due to their toxicity.

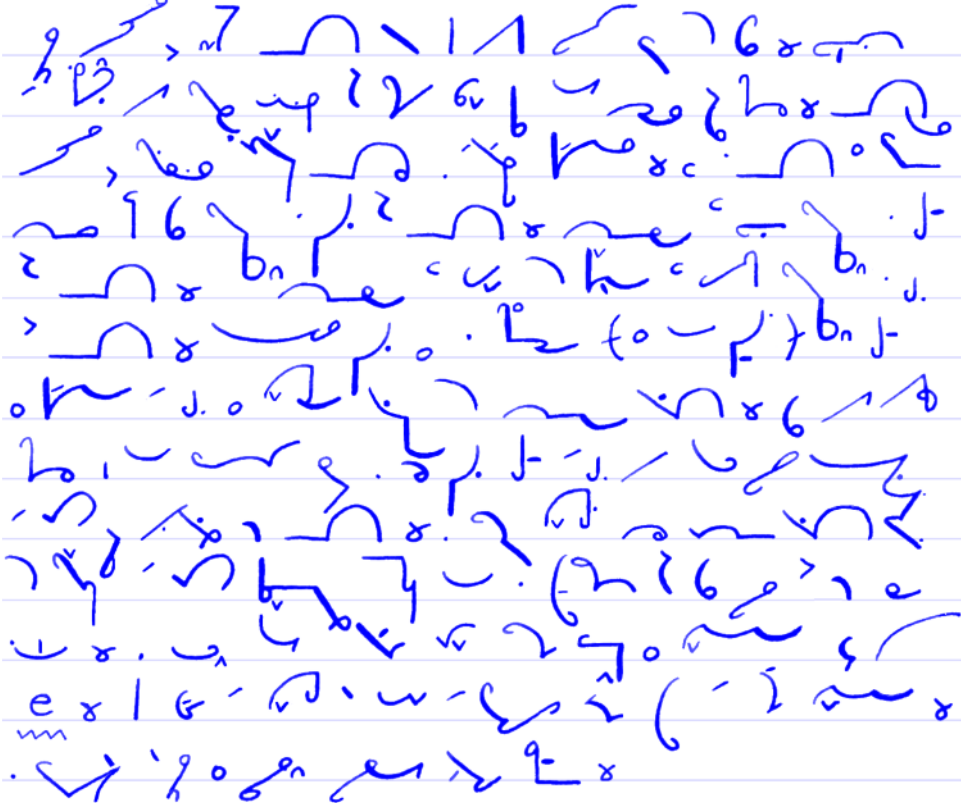
* Not in dictionary, outline based on "coalescent"



Colours

Grey brings up images of leaden, dull and uninteresting colours, but in recent years it has become a more fashionable colour, both for clothes and home decoration. It provides a range of neutral backgrounds against which to contrast other colours, both lighter and darker, as well as lighting effects or jewellery and accessories. Variations are ash, ashen, ebony, slate,

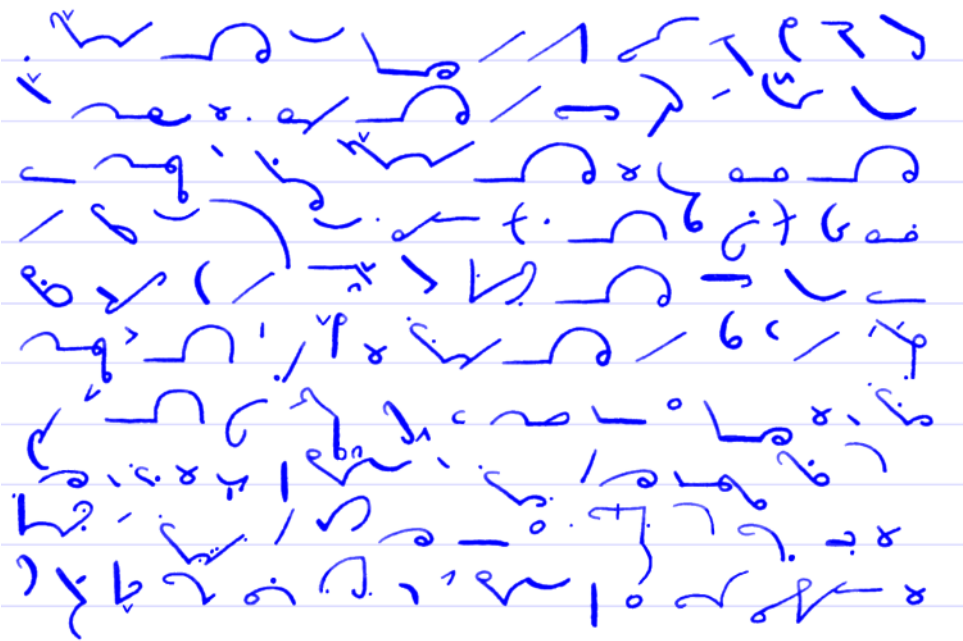
charcoal, gunmetal and pewter. Battleship grey sounds rather miserable, as it brings to mind not only a large forbidding warship but also the freezing sea, mist, fog and rain clouds, all suggesting a wide assortment of uncomfortable cold greys. Silver is only grey when it is tarnished and is otherwise a description of a collection of reflections rather than a colour in its own right.



Colours

Hue refers to the actual colour, be it red, yellow, blue or others. Chroma and saturation are the perceived intensity, although there are slight differences in the meanings of these terms. Colourfulness refers to the presence of bright colours, the opposite of dullness. When a colour has black mixed with it, this produces a shade of that colour. Mixing with grey produces a tone of that colour. Mixing with white or diluting with water produces a tint of the colour. In other words, shade is a darkening (as in shadow), tone is dulling, and tint is lightening, fading or making

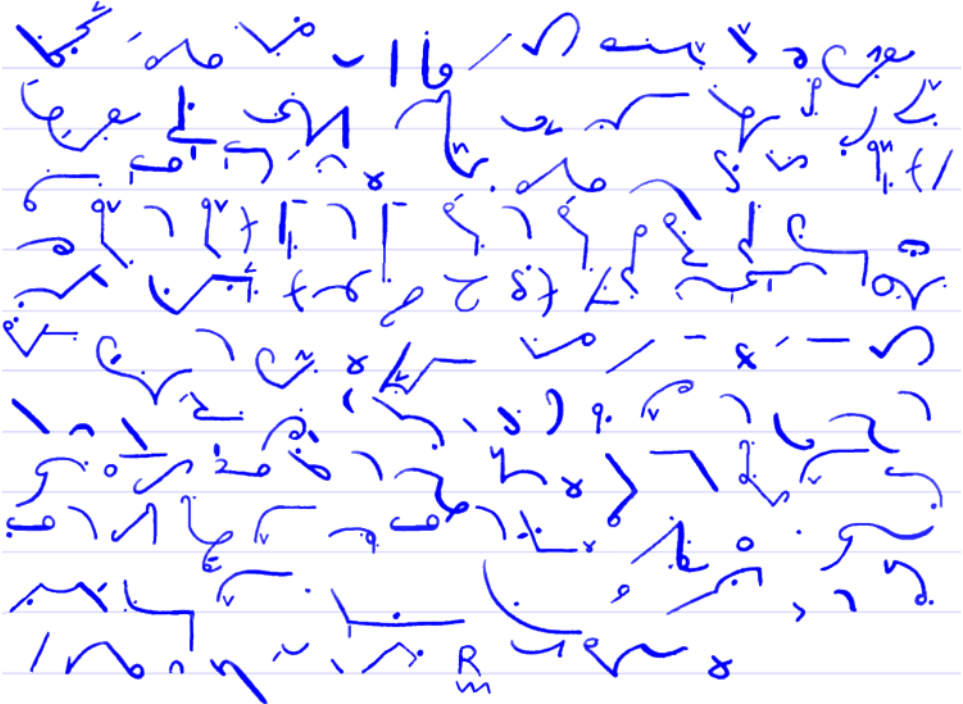
paler. These are the artist's terms, but in normal speech the words shade, tone and tint are often used interchangeably and also to just replace the word "colour". The verb lighten means to make paler or brighter and also describes the activity in a thunderstorm, although this use of the word is not common. The noun for the bolt of light from the cloud is lightning, without the letter E. "It thundered and lightened all night, and everyone heard the thunder and saw the lightning." The plural of hue is hues, using the upward stroke.



Colours

The primary colours in pigments are red yellow and blue as they cannot be obtained by mixing. The secondary colours are green, orange and violet, being equal mixtures of pairs of primary colours. If these six colours are placed in order in a circle (a colour wheel), then the six spaces between them are occupied by the tertiary colours, again being equal mixtures of the colour on each side. Complementary colours are

those that are opposite each other on the colour wheel and produce brown when mixed together as pigments. To complement means to complete. Note the different spelling of "compliment" which means to express praise or admiration and "complimentary" which also means given as a courtesy or free gift. They are both derived from the same Latin word and the spelling difference is merely historical.



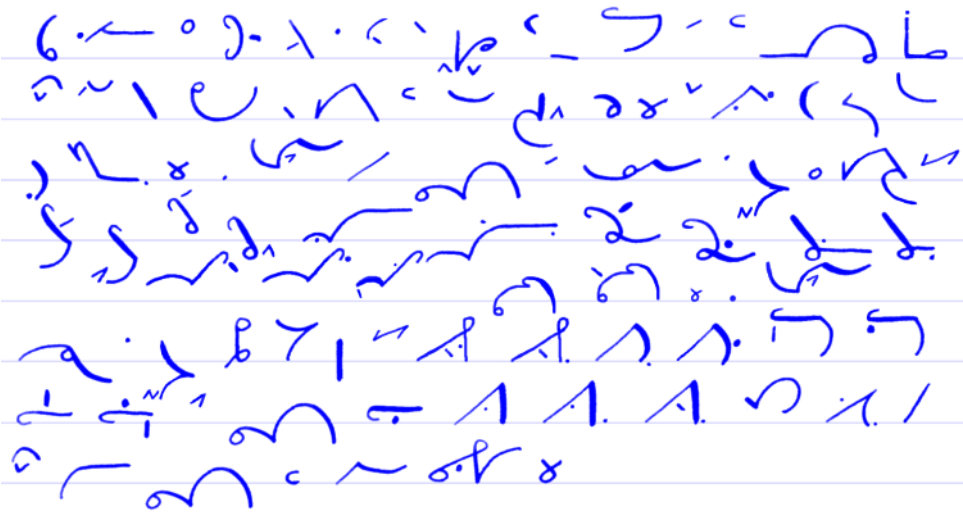
Colours

Behaviour and surface appearance* under different conditions are also signified by the words fluorescent, phosphorescent, dayglo, infra-red, ultra-violet, neon, metallic, pastel, satin, sheen, shiny, silky, gloss, glossy and matte. The surface may be plain, patterned, striated (which means stripy or striped), dotted or dotty, spotted or spotty, stippled, speckled, dappled, flecked, grained, marbled, variegated (mostly used in relation to* plants), chequered, monochrome, swirly, sparkly, floral or flowery. Geometric patterns* are quite bold and can also be made to become optical illusions that appear to bend their straight

lines or even move or shimmer as one walks past or moves the item. Objects can be transparent like clear glass or water, translucent like misted glass, or opaque. Iridescent is a shimmering rainbow effect, like a peacock feather, and is related to the word iris, which helps you to remember not to repeat the R in the spelling.

* "appearance" "patterns" Always insert the first vowel so that these are not misread for each other

* Omission phrase "in (re)lation (to)"



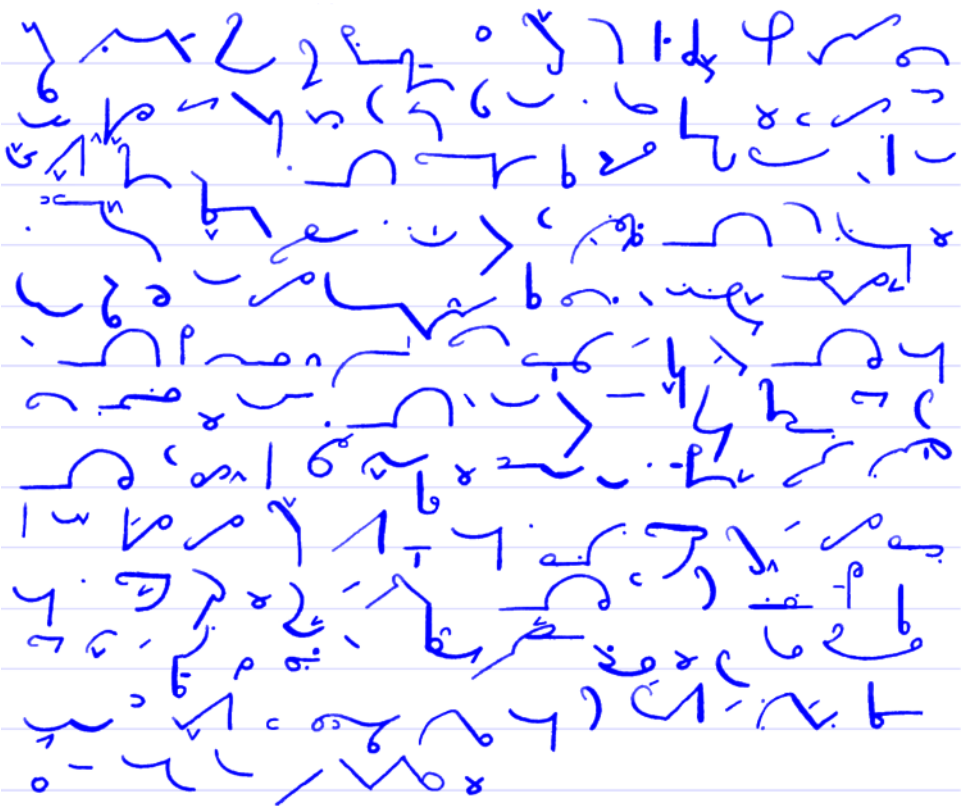
Colours

This article has thrown up a lot of outlines that could clash, and with colours context might not be sufficient to help with any doubtful* words. I repeat them here for ease of practising. The following are similar and inserting a vowel is helpful – blush bluish, bronze browns, metallic milky, frozen freezing, bisque biscuit, maroon marine modern, silver sulphur. The following must have* a vowel as it is the

only difference – russet rusty, rosy rosé, glossy glassy, ochre ecru and the similar grey, red reddy ruddy, also earthy which might look similar when written hastily.

* "doubtful" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-4-care-c-d.htm "dutiful doubtful delightful"

* Omission phrase "mus(t) have"



Colours

I hope this rainbow journey through the spectrum has brightened your day despite the necessity to learn some new outlines – better to meet them here than in a fast dictation. When one cannot find the right term to describe a colour correctly, it is always in order to* add in a qualifier, using a common object that illustrates the colour or effect. Having all these words in one's vocabulary does seem to intensify the experience of colour, as it makes you look more closely and divide up the colours into more categories. In fact*, the colour of any object can change dramatically according to the other colours that surround it as well as the lighting conditions. Walking under a sodium yellow lamp-post* at night turns one's bright red coat into a sickly greenish brown and one's skin into a greyish orange. Seeing and reproducing the colours with their exact subtle differences according to the* light and shadows is the secret of

realistic paintings. However, for us shorthanders*, knowing what to write when someone else leaps into their florid and elaborate description is quite enough for our purposes. (2313 words)

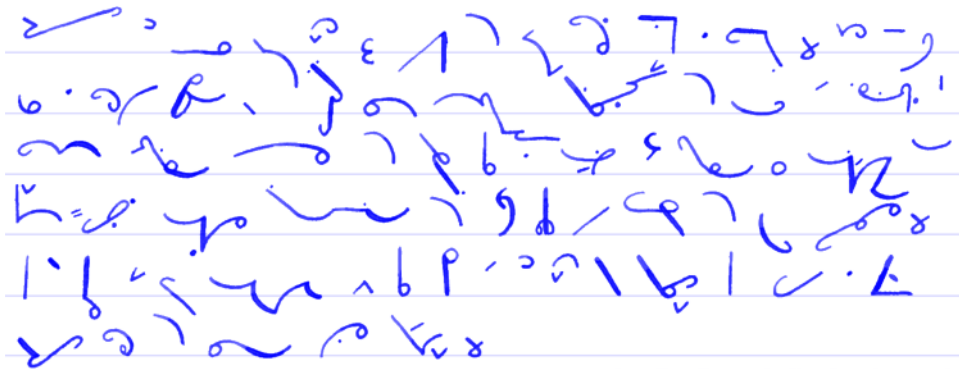
* "in order to" Not using the short phrase (Nr halved) because only the words "in order" belong together (an adjectival phrase), this helps with reading back and making sense of the sentence

* Omission phrases "in (f)act" "according (to) the"

* "lamp-(p)ost" Omits the second P but you could write it as two outlines

* "shorthanders" The D sound is included in the doubling, so do not thicken. A thickened N would signify a doubled Ing = ang-ger or ang-ker

sulphur/sulfur, ochre/ocher, grey/gray, jewellery/jewelry

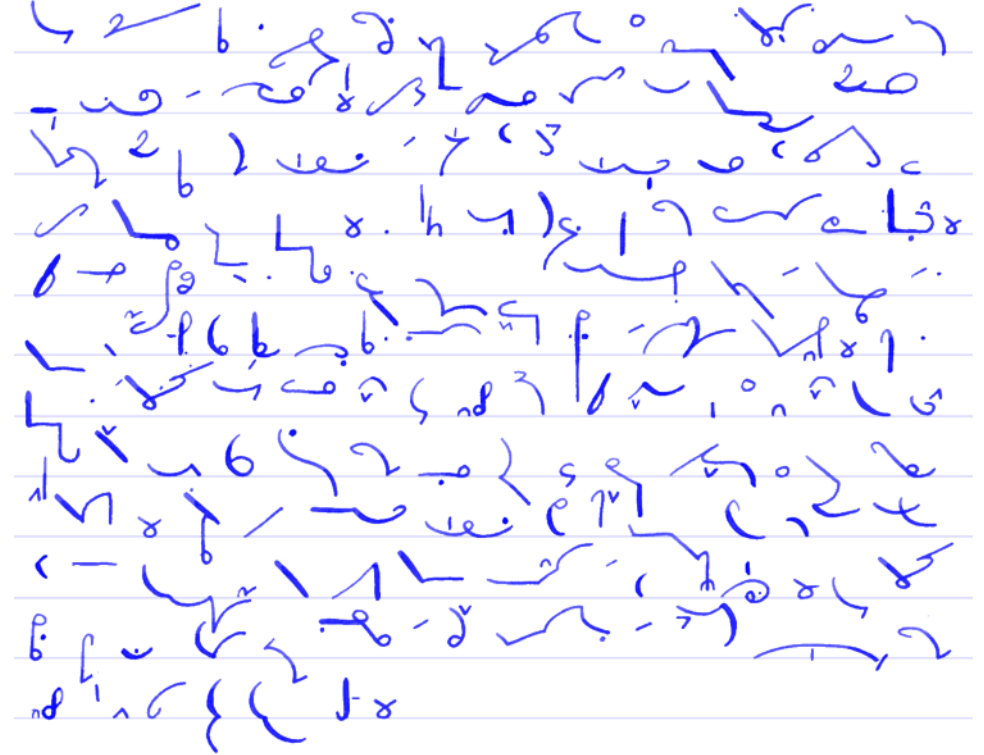


Get A Grip

I wonder what comes to your mind when you read or hear the phrase "Get a grip". I am not quite sure if it is a friendly suggestion to abandon some impractical behaviour or opinion, and concentrate on more important and pressing matters, or possibly it is an insult, that the person is indulging in time-wasting, needless* panicking or that their decisions are

questionable or even useless. It all depends on the people involved, how it is said and what might be behind it, whether a joke between friends or something less polite.

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

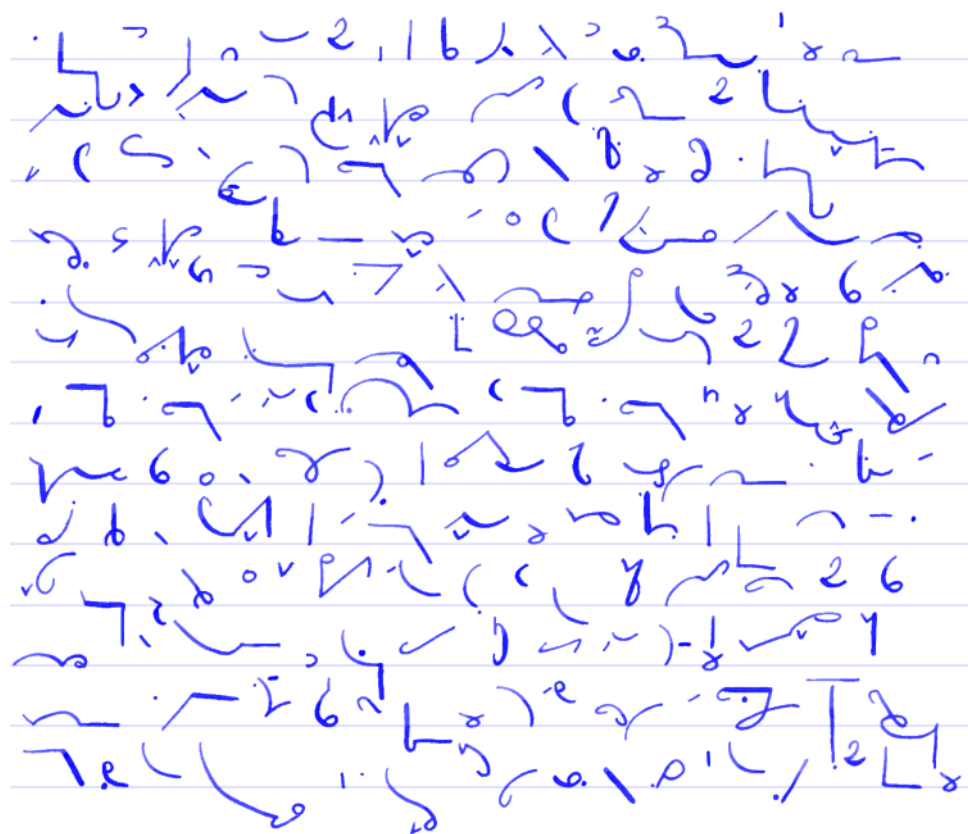


Get A Grip

For the shorthand writer* it is a useful phrase to direct to oneself, as you can be absolutely certain of your good intentions and manners! One of the first things I learned in beginning shorthand classes, apart from the shorthand itself, was the unseen and, until that point, unknown things that happen when one begins to take dictations. The attitude needed was completely different from normal school education. Just because the situation consists of a comfortable room, uninteresting paper and pencils, and a book to study, this does not mean it is a calm, quiet, sedate and leisurely pursuit. During a dictation, an observer in the class might think the students were "just writing" but,

as you may have found out by now, this is far from the case, especially when the speed required is pushing present ability. Battles are going on unseen, as they try to capture every word, in a form* that can eventually be read back accurately and without omissions. If the observer stays till the end, they will hear the gasps and sighs of relief, and noisy mutterings from the students on how well they think they have done.

* Omission phrases "short(hand" writer" "in (a) form" If you put a tick "the" on the N, this would then be the omission phrase "in the f(orm of)"



Get A Grip

A dictation cannot teach you any shorthand but it does show up what needs working on. You can ring all the wrong or doubtful* outlines, learn them and practise shorthand ad infinitum, but the other question*, of "losing your grip", must also* be addressed. There is a temptation to freeze when the outline does not come to mind, and as ever larger chunks are being missed, the fear that you cannot now catch up makes the situation even worse. This "rabbits in the headlights" effect must be* attacked as soon as possible* in your shorthand journey, as it should be you who gets a grip, and not that alarm that gets a grip on you. I have found the best way* of dealing with this is to firstly* see it happening and then instantly make a definite and conscious decision to override it and keep writing. I must admit it took me quite a while to get to that position, as I started off

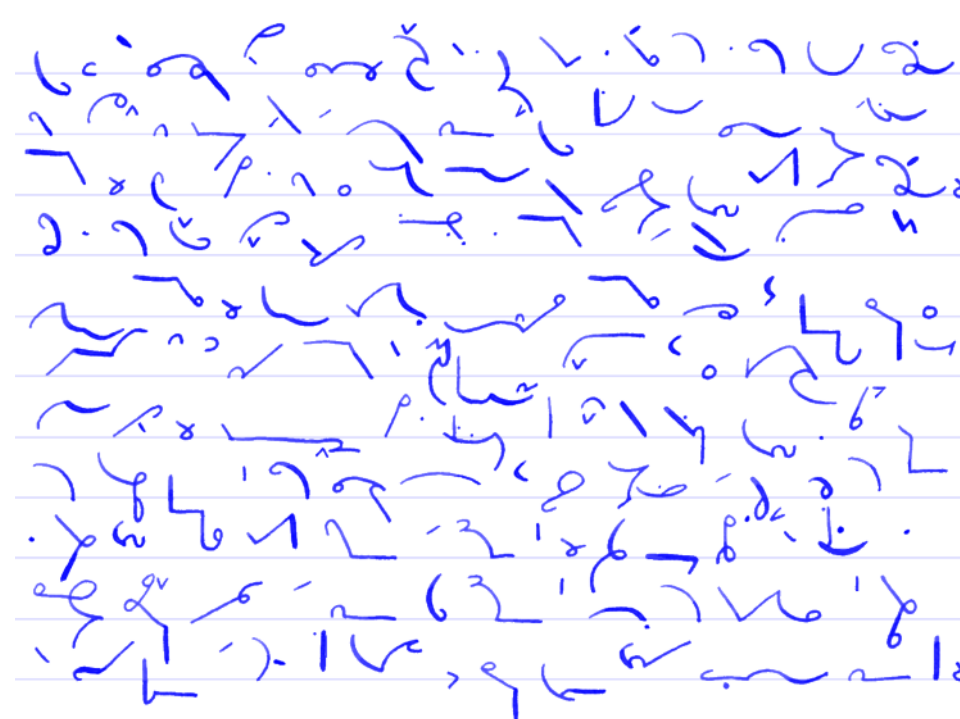
thinking that if I just learned more shorthand, those moments of panic would fade away on their own – not so! I realised I had to make a regular assault on this particular difficulty. Your soft, friendly and graciously accommodating personality can be saved for afterwards, but a fierce iron will needs to be switched on for each shorthand take.

* "doubtful" See www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/distinguishing-outlines-4-care-c-d.htm "dutiful doubtful delightful"

* "question" Optional contraction

* Omission phrases "mus(t) also" "mus(t) be" "as soon as poss(ible)" "bes(t) way"

* "firstly" Omits the T



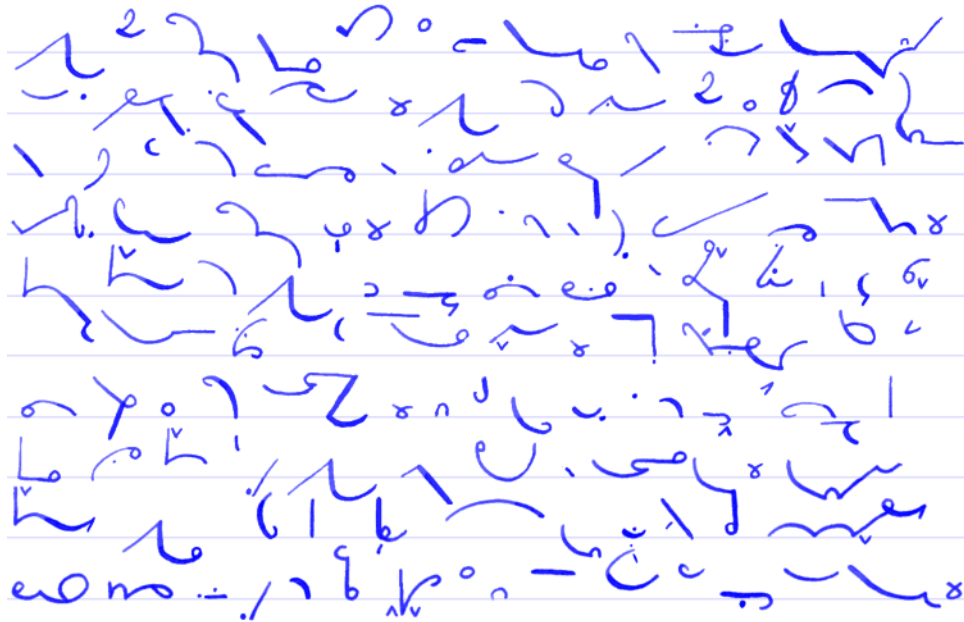
Get A Grip

Even when all seems to be* lost, sometimes the arrival of an easier part, a pause, or a very efficient phrasing opportunity allows you to catch up and maybe you can even dash in something to fill the offending gap. However, such an opportunity is never going to be useful if you have already frozen. There is a very fine line between accepting a gap, and becoming lax about leaving gaps. Having to leave numerous gaps means that the dictation speed is regularly beyond what you are capable of, and I do not think continuing like that is helpful in the long run. To counteract such a tendency, it

might be better, if you have the choice, to take your fastest dictations on very simple matter that uses only the commonest and easiest words, or a passage that you have already practised and worked on. This will* give the satisfaction of attaining a successful high speed result, and you can then work on improving your performance on passages of greater difficulty and so add value to the speed figure that you are claiming you can do.

* Omission phrase "seems (to) be"

* "this will" Downward L in order to join



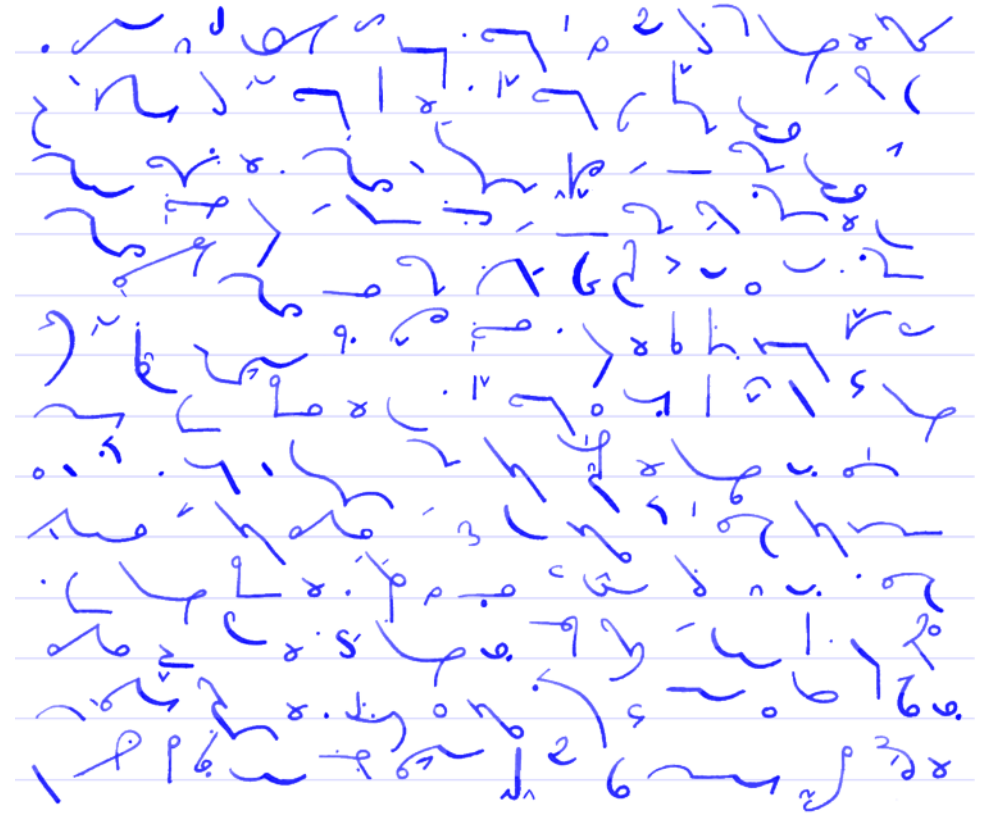
Get A Grip

Reading shorthand from your books also has great benefits, principally extending vocabulary in a reasonably comfortable manner. Reading your own written shorthand is just as important, so that you can be sure that your claims to a certain speed are matched by the ability to retrieve everything from your notes. It is also an opportunity to see where improvements can be made. It may be that timing your reading would give you the same sense of high-speed achievement, but without the slight panic element that accompanies writing. Getting progressively faster on the same passage is very encouraging. You do not even need a word count, and the mere

fact* that it takes less time on each reading should be sufficient to increase confidence. If you are not* timing the readings, then it does not matter if you end up memorising the sentences, but you must connect each word with its outline as you go along, in order to* gain any benefit.

* Omission phrases "mere (f)act that" "in ord(er to)"

* "you are not" Use full strokes, and use N hook and halving for "you will not", so that these two phrases cannot be misread for each other



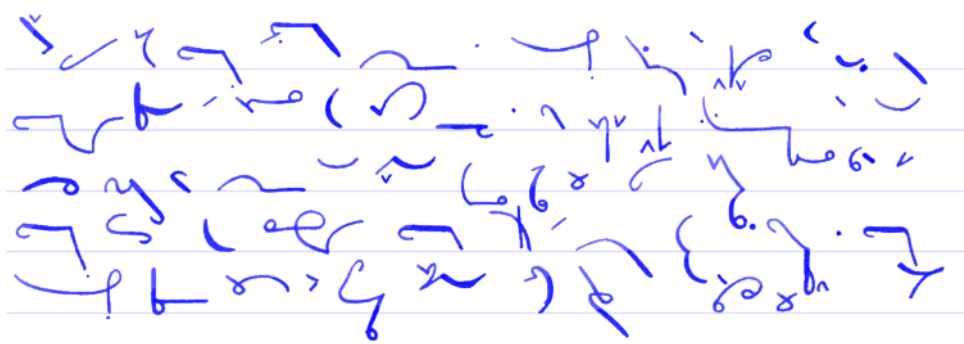
Get A Grip

The one thing* you do not necessarily* want to get a grip on is the shorthand pen or pencil. I prefer to think of holding the pen, not gripping it. A tight grip will tire the fingers and stop them moving freely. The movement to form the outlines should come from the fingers, and the movement across the page and back again should come from the upper arm. If horizontal movement comes from the elbow, then the travel of the hand is in an arc, and therefore not conducive to following straight lines across a page. It is tempting to grip tightly in order to* make the thick strokes. If a tight grip is needed, it might be that the pencil is too hard, the nib too firm, or the paper unsuitable. Pencils need some roughness on the paper surface, and you would have to press hard on smooth

paper to make a thick pencil stroke. The opposite is the case with fountain pens, you need a smooth surface to glide over. A blunt pencil needs extra pressure and having it a bit sharper may solve the problem. The tendency is to press harder when the going is fast and this needs to be resisted, as it achieves nothing except slowing down the shorthand, thus making the situation worse.

* Omission phrase "wu(n) thing" "in ord(er to)"

* "necessarily" Downward L to follow the anticlockwise motion of the Ses circle, and also keep the outline compact, despite the final vowel



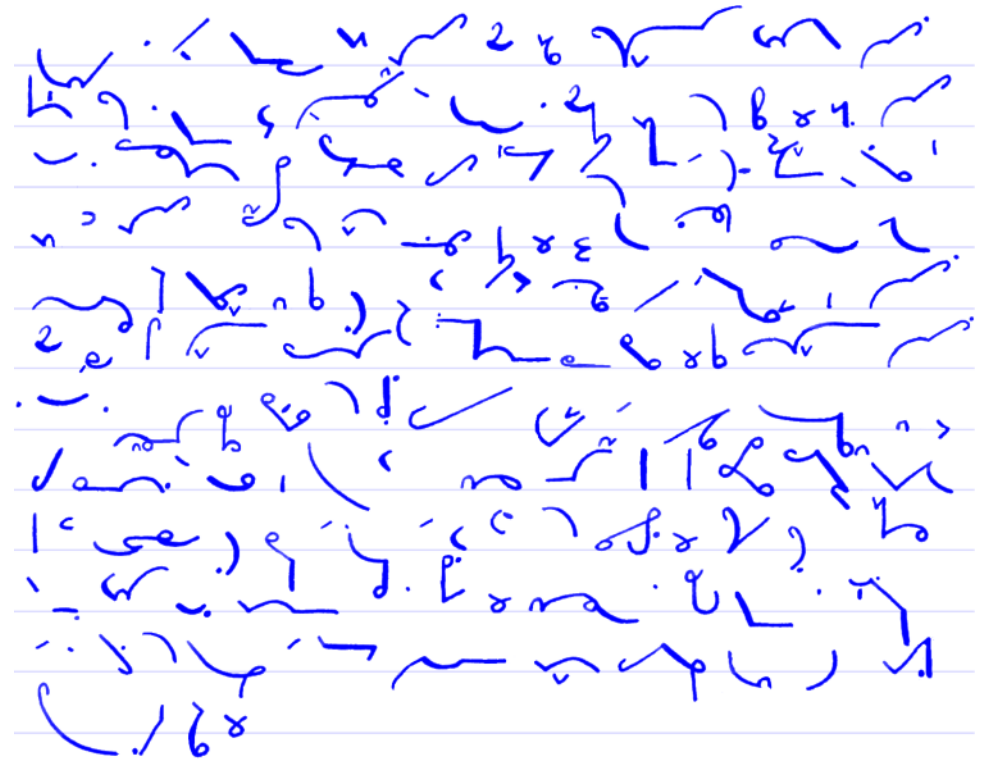
Get A Grip

By the way, I think grip and grab make an interesting pair of outlines that need to be carefully distinguished and of course they also give you an opportunity to try out the effectiveness of any improvements you have been able to make in writing thicks and thins. Well, I hope these thoughts on the gripping question* have successfully gripped your attention, and maybe they

have produced a grippingly interesting description of some of the challenges of shorthand writing*, and their possible solutions. (1158 words)

* "question" Optional contraction

* Omission phrase "short(hand) writing"



Raw Beginners

If you are a raw beginner about to learn shorthand, I think it is very likely that you will be learning at home from a book, without the luxury of having a shorthand teacher to direct your studies. I did learn in a classroom situation, over the course of one college year, and so I would like to pass on to you what I learned from my excellent teacher. When you have mastered something and have many years of it behind you, it is easy to think that all the methods are obvious, but learning shorthand is not at all like normal academic school subjects. It is more like learning a language, a musical instrument, sports or dancing, where theory and rules introduce you to the general scheme of things, but after that you must actually do it as much as possible* in order to be able to* perform it with increasing ease, speed and confidence, and without thought or

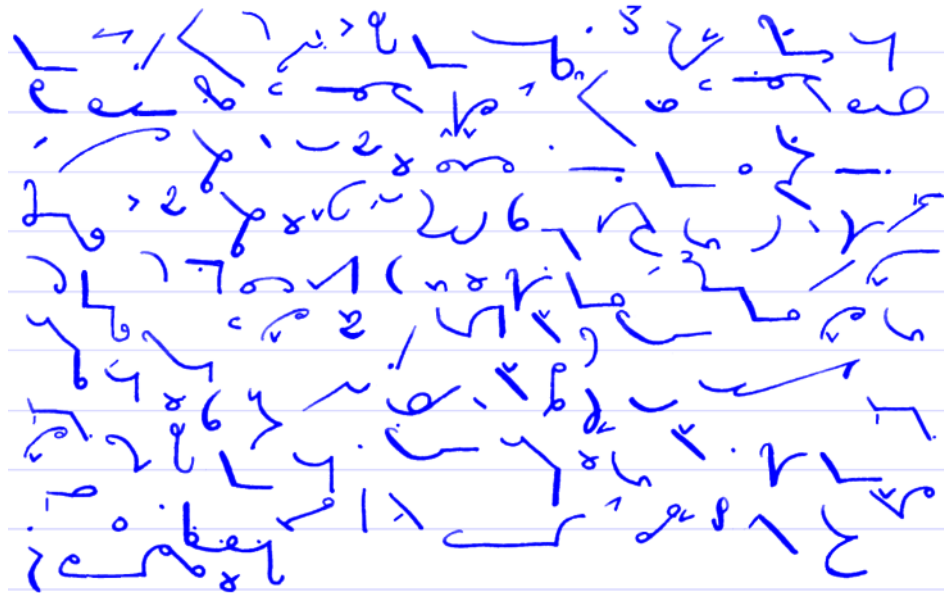
hesitation. There are three items of kit that you will need to make a start. You must have* an instruction book, a notepad and a pen or pencil and I give* the link to my website if you wish to read further on each of these.

* Omission phrase "as much as poss(ible)"
"in ord(er to) be able to" Not using the third place short form phraseogram "to be"

* Omission phrase "you mus(t) have"

* "I give" Insert the vowel in "I go" which would otherwise look the same

www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk
Website contains all the theory, but not in graded form, so use for revision and clarification, not for initial learning

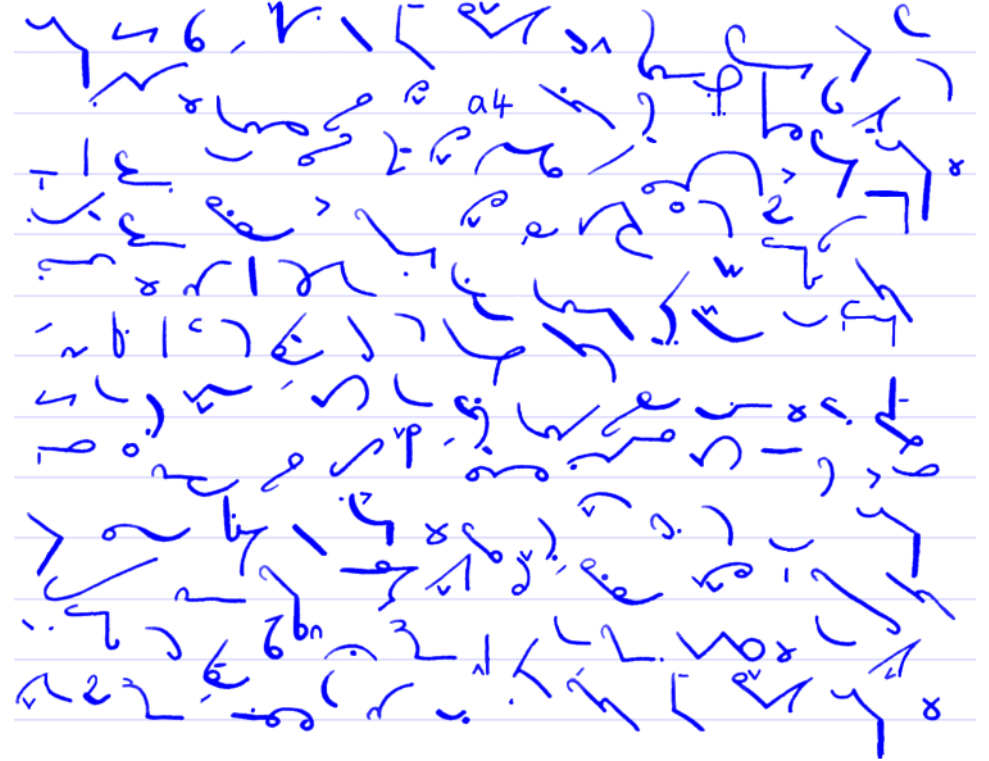


Raw Beginners

BOOK – Each chapter or unit of the instruction book introduces a point of theory, broken into several single steps with example outlines, and the chapter ends with example sentences and, later on, passages all in shorthand. Sometimes a key book is available, giving transcriptions of the shorthand passages. While not essential, this could be helpful if you wish to easily record your own dictations or get someone to read them to you. Drill books and workbooks are like notepads, printed with lines of shorthand, each followed by

three blank lines for you to copy onto. These I feel are not necessary to buy, as it is the easiest thing in the world* to copy lines from the instruction book into a blank notepad. If you buy a drill book, the cost is a disincentive to use it up quickly, and the serious student should be filling piles of them as quickly as possible*.

* Omission phrases "in (the) world" "as quickly as poss(ible)"



Raw Beginners

NOTEPAD – This should ideally be top spiral bound, so that you can flick the page over rapidly. If you must use lined A4 paper through necessity at times, then rule or cut it vertically in half, so the line lengths are similar to the average notepad. Narrow vertical spacing of the printed lines is not helpful, as your shorthand will get cramped. You will do yourself a favour if you can be choosy about the quality of the paper and you should test it with your chosen pen or pencil before buying in quantity – for ease of writing, and also for bleed-through if you are using ink. Bleeding doubles the cost as you can only* use one side, and sometimes marks also go through to the next page, something definitely to be avoided. Please see my Print Your Own Notepad,* where you can produce exactly the right size and

spacing of lines on printer paper of a quality of your own choosing, and this may work out cheaper for practising purposes. For real life shorthand work and exams, though, you will need a proper* top spiral notepad.

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

* Print Your Own Notepad
www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/downloads.htm#print-your-own-shorthand-notepad

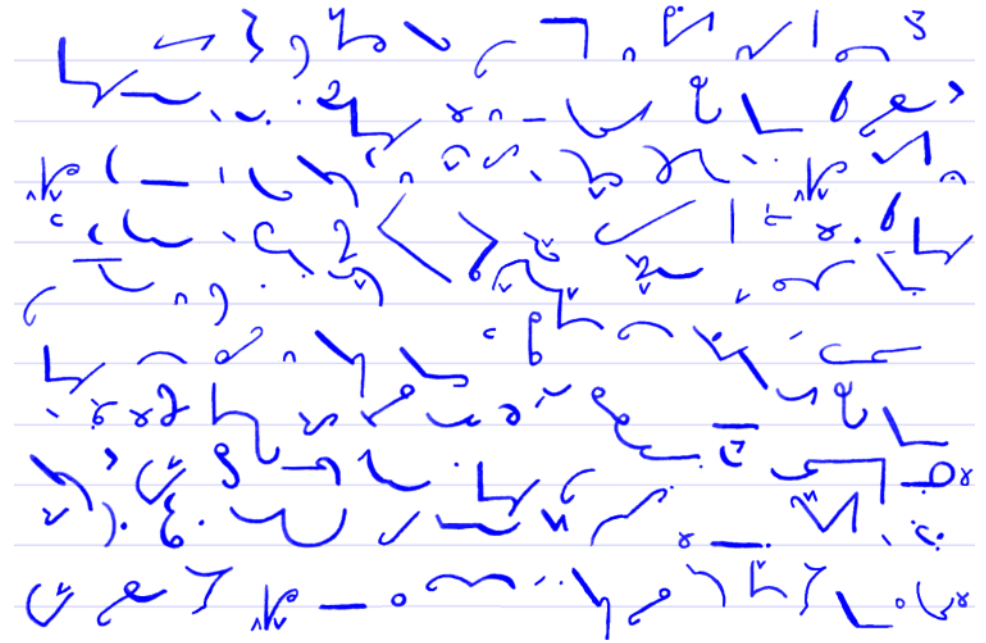
* "proper" Insert the vowel, and the diphone in "appropriate", to distinguish between these two which are similar in outline and meaning



Raw Beginners

PEN OR PENCIL - An HB or B pencil will serve well, and if any harder than these it will not produce the thick strokes without serious digging of the paper which slows you down. Softer leads will wear down far too quickly. The best implement is a fountain pen with a flexible nib, and using

ink will make a big difference to speed of writing and ease of reading your notes. There is no time during dictation to sharpen a pencil, advance a worn-down or snapped lead, or change a cartridge. However, a manually filled fountain pen can see you through many hours of continuous writing.



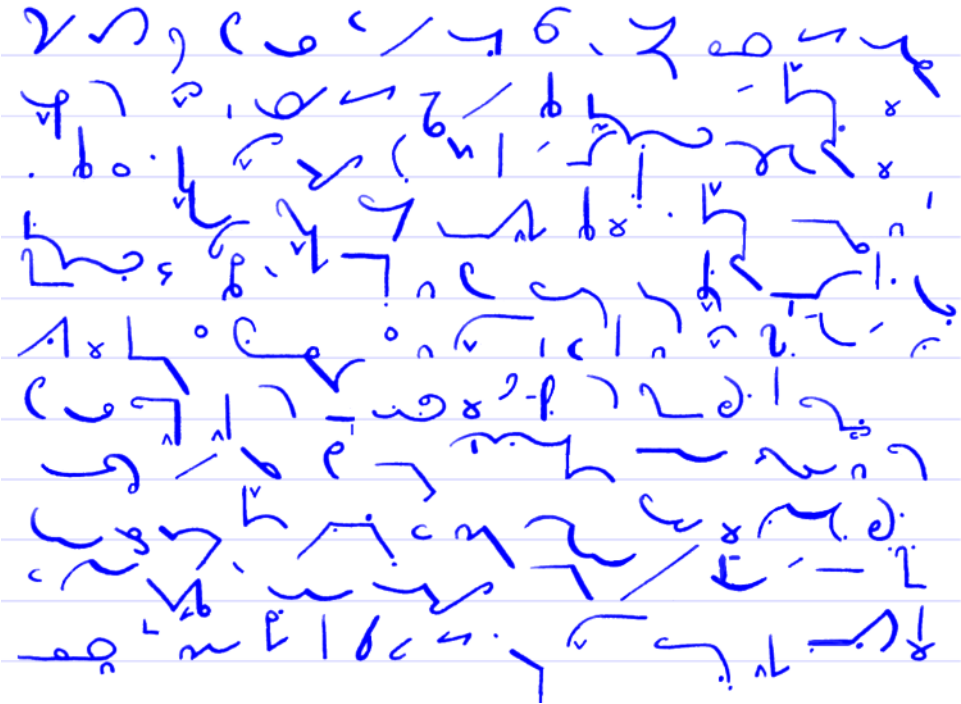
Raw Beginners

DICTIONARY - Although the three items above will get you started, you are at some point going to need a shorthand dictionary. You could finish the instruction book just using all the outlines they give, but even before that you might want to remind yourself of an outline already met with, without having to flip through the chapter pages to find where it occurred. The largest dictionary will accompany you through an entire lifetime of shorthand writing*, but the small pocket dictionary may serve you better to begin* with, as it is more portable and quicker to consult. There is the temptation to want to use new words not

specifically given in the instruction book before all the theory has been covered, and having a dictionary will avoid incorrect guesses. I would say that this is an inefficient way of going about learning. Giving priority to completing theory, using only the outlines given, is more important and a better use of your time until the book is finished.

* Omission phrase "short(hand) writing"

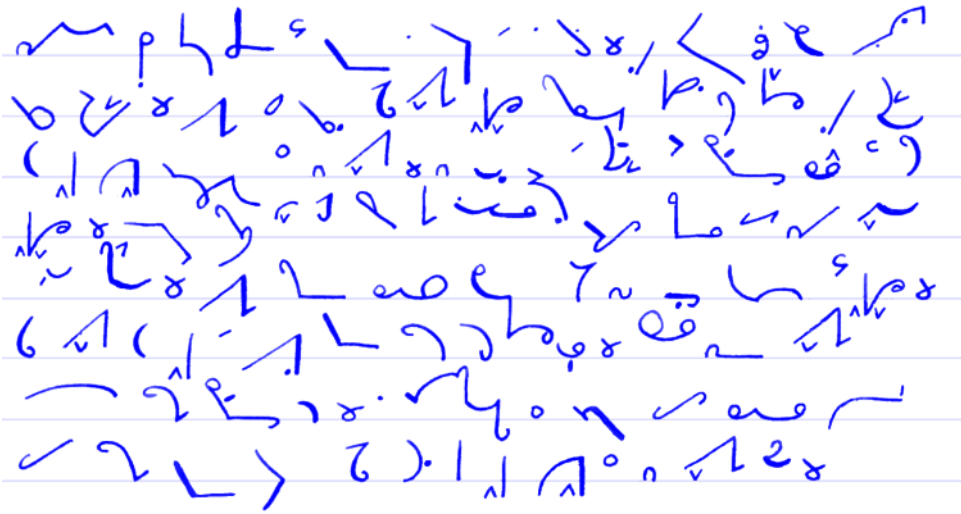
* "to begin" Written through the line, based on the short form phrase "to be"



Raw Beginners

There are also three other things that are needed as well to ensure success – invisible inside your mind, but necessary – and these are Decision, Determination and Timetable. The decision is a dividing line between thinking about it and actually committing yourself. Determination will provide the energy to carry out the decision. A timetable keeps you on track, with the satisfaction of getting you ever nearer to your desired goal at an even rate. It can be as flexible as you like, but without it you

might drift off and let other things crowd out your good intentions. Short study or practice sessions at frequent intervals are best, as they keep the momentum going and prevent you from having to spend too much time recapping when you should be moving forward. Lengthy sessions with long periods of nothing in between can be rather daunting and can attract excuses why you should not start it just yet – a bit like clearing out the garage!

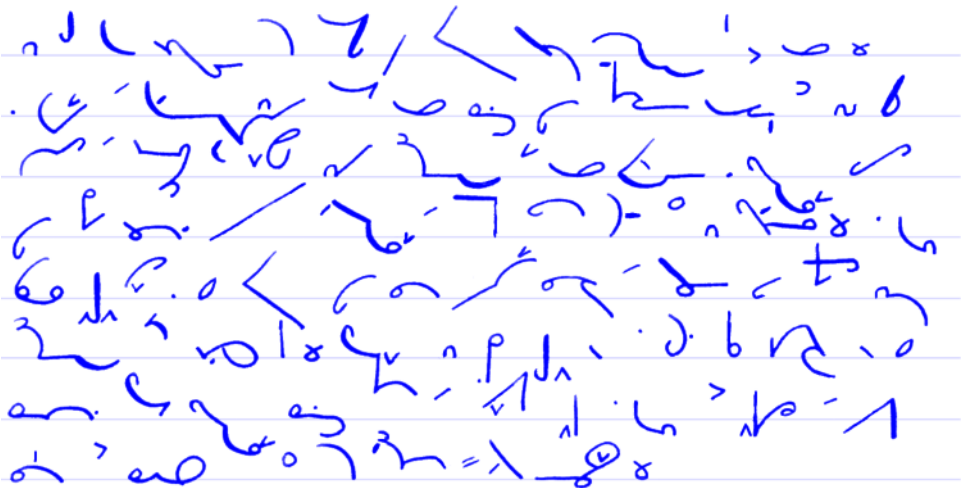


Raw Beginners

You are now sitting at your desk with the book, a pad and a pen. Each chapter consists of several related pieces of theory. Read the first piece and then write the outlines presented, at least* three times each, saying them out loud to yourself as you write. You need to hear and associate all the spoken sounds with their outlines. Keep the pressure light and do not stop at the angles between strokes – you are writing, not drawing. Read the practice

sentences several times until you have gained familiarity with the outlines. Then write them out, and read back from your own notes. As soon as you can, write the matter from the spoken word. An alternative is to remember one sentence, look away from the book page, and then say it out loud as you write the shorthand.

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

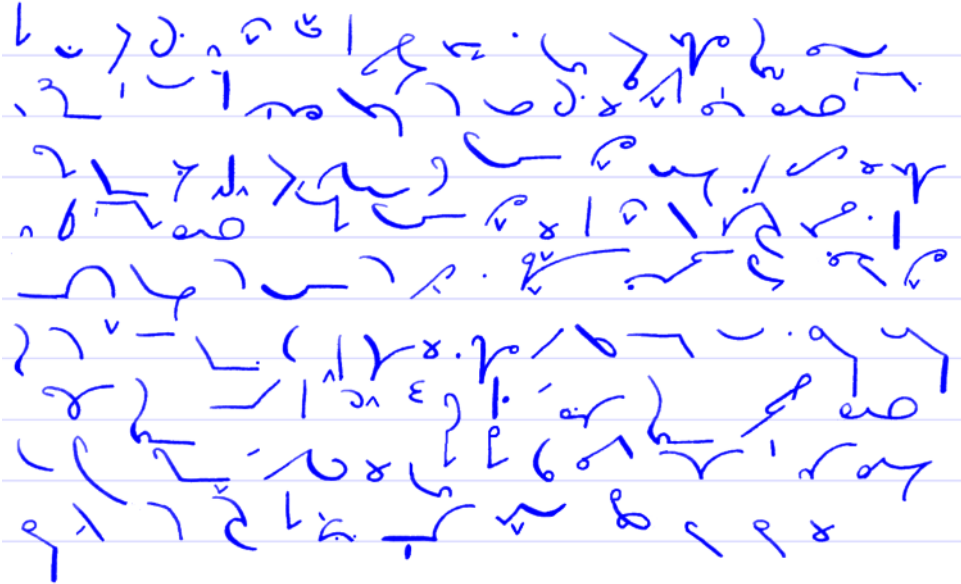


Raw Beginners

You do not have to perfect your knowledge of each chapter before moving on to the next. The theory and vocabulary in the next section will automatically include what you have just learned, and I can assure you that whilst you are working on the next chunk, the previous one will start to seem rather obvious and get more so as you progress. A few lessons down the line, the

first chapter will seem really simple and basic, yet at the beginning you were* working hard to master it. Every time you sit down to a session, it is helpful to first skim over the previous section and write out a few of the outlines and read some of the sentences, as your warm-up exercise.

* Omission phrase "you (w)ere"

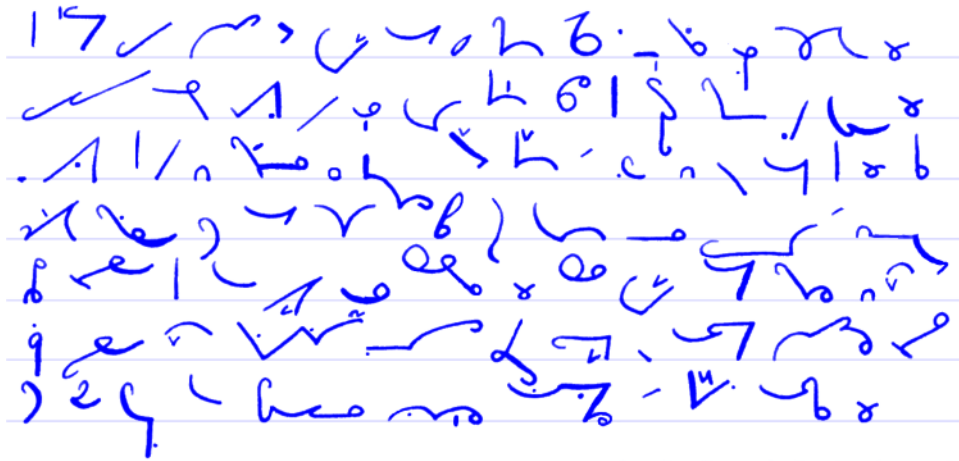


Raw Beginners

At the end of each session, you might find it useful to create a few pages of drills, so that you have something to work on in odd moments before your next session. Write some sentences copied from the book neatly down the page, leaving three blank lines underneath each one. To drill you just copy the sentences onto the blank lines. It might be helpful to use a different colour pencil or ink or run a highlighter marker over the sample lines, so that your eye can

pick them out easily. The drills are best kept in a separate notepad, firstly* so that you can carry it around with you throughout the day and secondly so that you can reuse the sentences for further practice and revision. If you start this habit early on, you will certainly speed up your arrival at the ultimate goal of writing as fast as people speak.

* "firstly" Omits the T



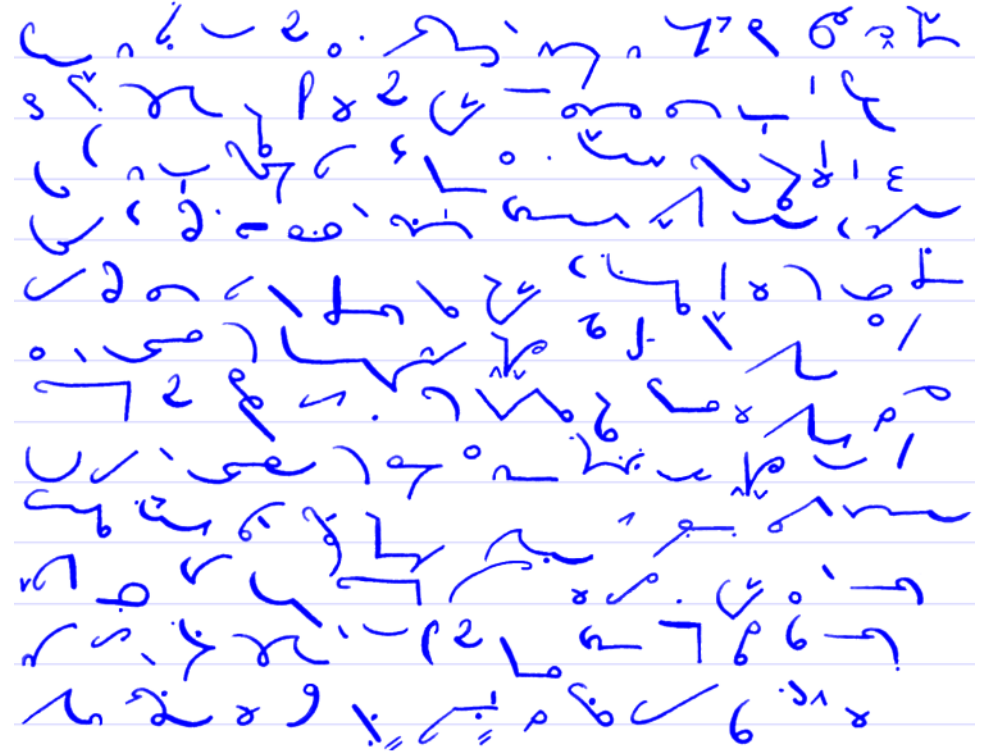
Raw Beginners

At college we learned all the theory in the first term, and this is a good pace to set yourself. We were expected to read our notes fully at home*, as well as do plenty of practice each evening. The rate at which you progress is determined by the time and effort you put into it. It is worth pressing through in the early stages, so that familiarity comes quickly and you can have the satisfaction of using it for real things as soon as possible*. As soon as theory knowledge permits, you might consider

using my Perpetual Calendar* which has been created to encourage learners to use their shorthand every day for telephone calls, memos, engagements and diary entries.

* Omission phrases "at (h)ome", include the vowel sign; "as soon as poss(ible)"

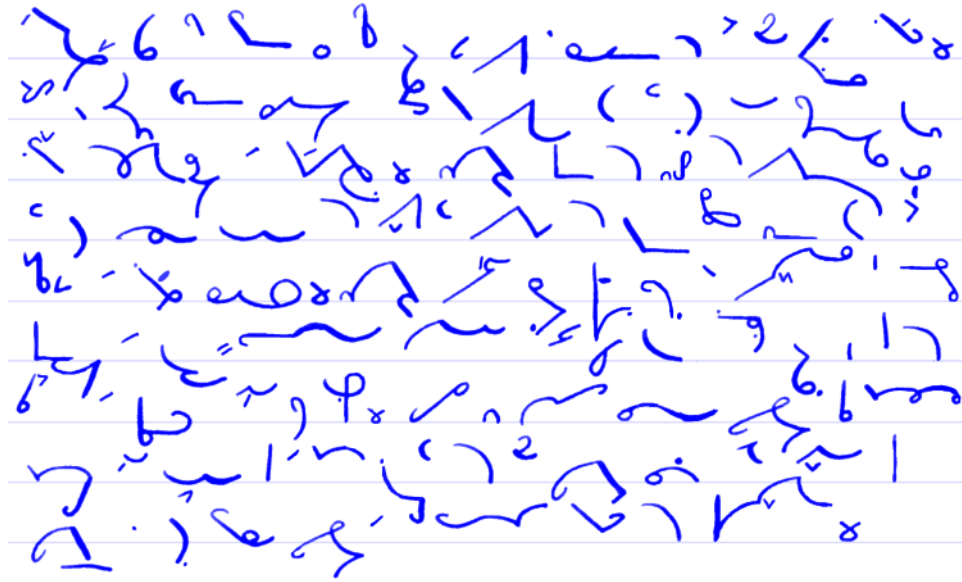
* www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/downloads.htm#shorthand-perpetual-calendar



Raw Beginners

Everything you achieve in shorthand is a reflection of how much you enjoy the subject, as well as the amount of time spent applying yourself to its study. Shorthand theory can sometimes seem to go on forever, even though you know perfectly well that the book has a finite number of pages! But when you finish that, there is a great sense of freedom that you can now write anything without worrying whether there is some yet-to-be-discovered piece of theory that affects it. Your next task is to increase your vocabulary of outlines and that is done by reading as

much correct shorthand as possible - the very purpose of these blogs. Reading is the most efficient way of increasing your skill, as you can assimilate new outlines in large quantities, avoiding the slow process of dictionary leafing and the risky habit of making wild guesses that will have to be corrected later on. Once the theory is all covered, you will want to avail yourself of any other shorthand books that you can get, such as those covering review and phrasing. As usual Ebay UK is the place where these abound.



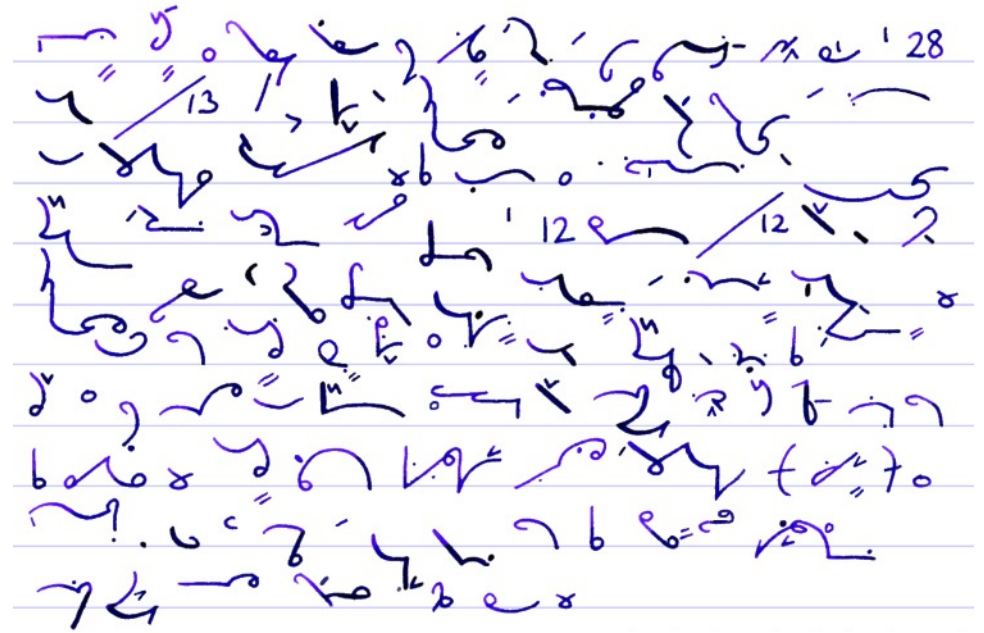
Raw Beginners

Obviously this particular blog is addressed to those who cannot yet read a single word of the shorthand JPGs above. I want to assure you that you can certainly be reading them with ease in three months, if you apply yourself consistently and purposefully. You will be able to take your student or reporter notes with ease, missing nothing, or write that report or book as fast as you can think of the ideas and compose the sentences. You will be able to record speech totally free of reliance on expensive technology and finger-cramping longhand, and yet still have access to these, but at your choice

and discretion, and not through necessity. Once you learn something useful, it is almost impossible* to imagine not knowing it, and I am confident that your shorthand will be the same, and that writing it will become an easy, pleasant, useful and normal part of your daily life. (1867 words)

* "JPGs" If the letters can be pronounced as word e.g. "jaypegs" create an outline. If not, then use lower case longhand for each letter.

* Omission phrase "almos(t) impossible"



Comet Ison

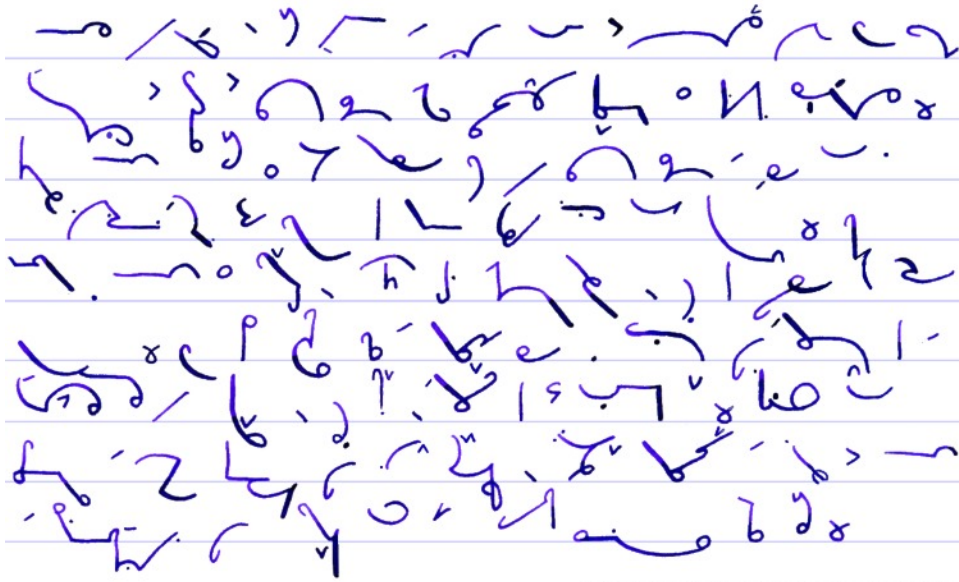
Comet Ison is presently passing through the earth's orbit and will slingshot round the sun on 28 November 2013*, much to the delight of astronomers and stargazers, both professional and amateur, in observatories all over the world*. Its name is an acronym of International Scientific Optical Network and was discovered on 12 September 2012* by two Russian astronomers using that establishment's telescope, Vitali Nevski and Artyom Novichonok. Information from Nasa's Swift satellite has enabled scientists to estimate its size as 3 miles in diameter, calculated by measuring the amount of ice and dust emitted* from its surface. Nasa's Solar

Terrestrial Relations Observatory (STEREO) is monitoring the event, with images and video beamed from its spacecraft's Heliospheric Imager showing the comet's progress towards the sun.

* "2012, 2013" Long slash representing current century, arbitrary sign with no phonetic value

* Omission phrase "all over (the) world"

* "emitted" Helpful to insert the first vowel, so it is not misread as "omitted"



Comet Ison

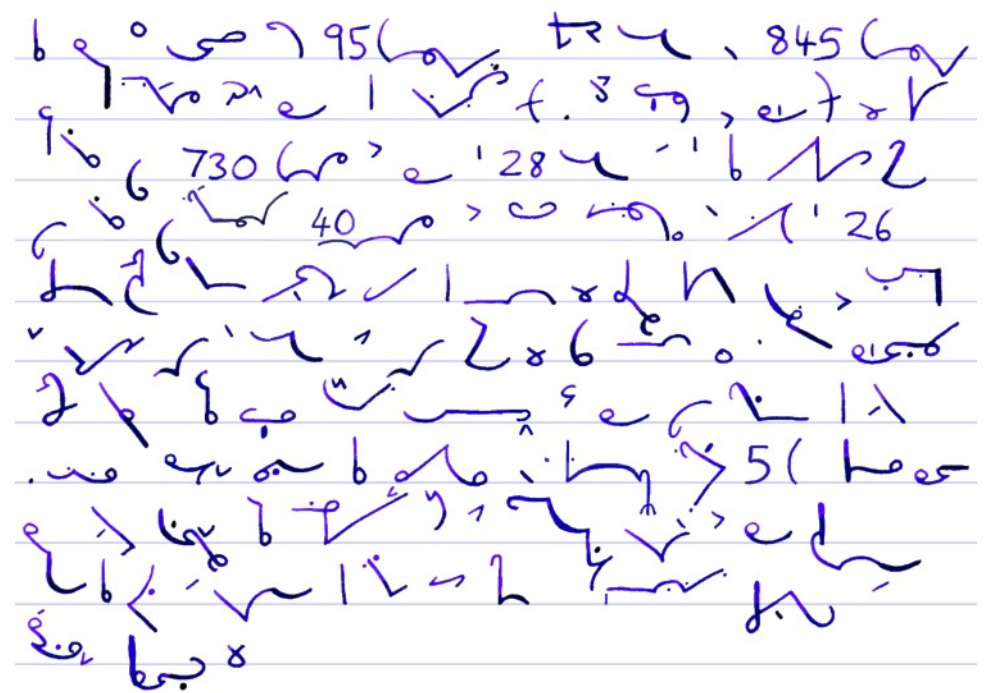
Comets are composed of ice, rock and metal, in fact* all the materials left over from the formation of the planets of the solar system, and have been humorously described as "dirty snowballs". It appears that* Comet Ison is only passing through our solar system, and is not in an elliptical orbit that would bring it back this way again in the future. During the month of October the comet has brightened to magnitude 10*, and it may be possible to see it using ordinary binoculars. However, as it travels towards and behind the sun, the glare will obscure it and followers are advised to cease trying to observe it with the naked eye. Advances in telescopes and

imaging technology will allow scientists to analyse the behaviour and composition of the comet, and spectrometry will provide information on the water signature of its ices.

* Omission phrases "in (f)act" "during the (mon)th"

* "it appears that" Note that the full outline for "appear" is P + Ar

* "ten" Always insert vowels in the outlines for "ten and "eighteen"



Comet Ison

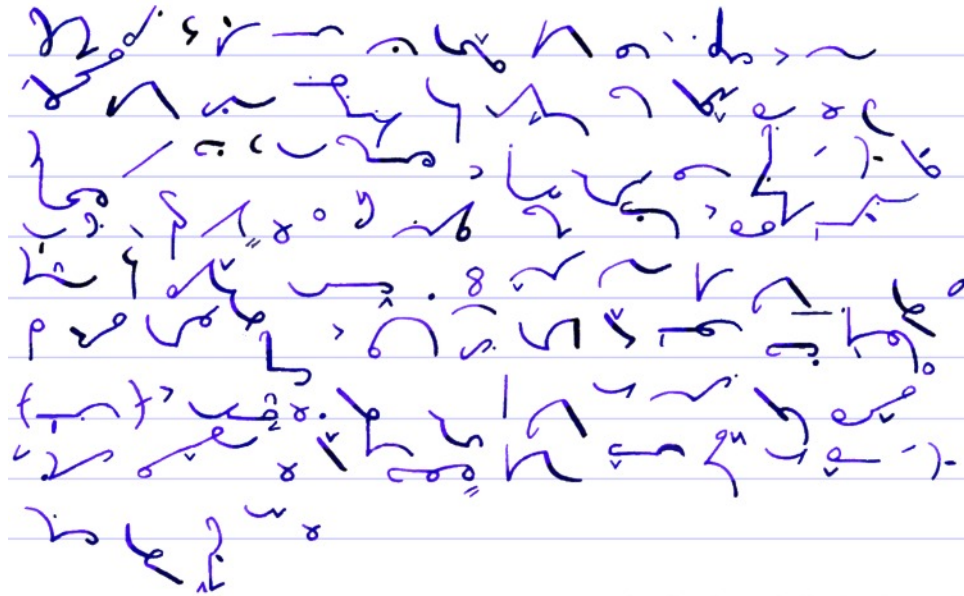
Its speed has increased from 95,000 mph at the beginning of November to 845,000 mph when it catapults around the sun at perihelion (the point closest to the sun). It will pass within 730,000 miles* of the sun on 28 November, and on its return journey will pass within approximately 40 million miles of the northern hemisphere of earth on 26 December, and travel back roughly the way it came. It is possible that* it will be visible to the naked eye between the middle of November and the middle of January. This comet is a "sungrazer" and there is the possibility* that its close fiery encounter with the sun will break it up, the intense sunlight heating its surface to a

temperature approaching 5,000 degrees Centigrade, speeding up the vaporisation of its exterior ice and the gravitational pull of the sun deforming its shape and pulling it apart – termed cometary disruption and spontaneous disintegration.

* "miles" Always write "miles" in full, never shorten it to just M, as that would mean "million"

* Omission phrase "it is poss(ible) that"

* "possibility" Optional contraction



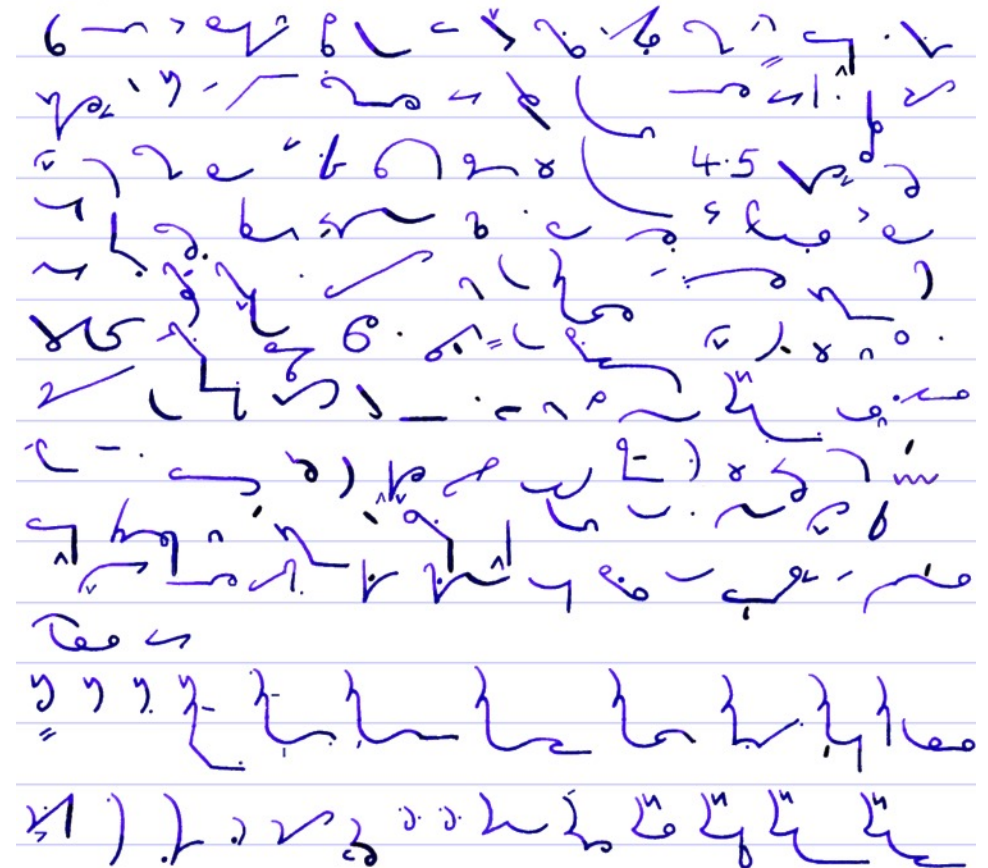
Comet Ison

There is also the chance that the whole comet may vaporise, which will be somewhat of a disappointment to the many observers who will be waiting expectantly for it to reappear from behind the sun. However, astronomers are agreed that any fragments would continue to follow the same trajectory and so pose no threat to planet earth. As Ison emerges from the glare of the sun's corona, assuming that it survives the encounter, the 8 million mile long tail will become visible first, as it always follows the direction of the solar

wind, followed by the gossamer green atmosphere (coma*) of the nucleus. The best time* to view it will be in the morning before sunrise on the eastern horizon. By Christmas it will have climbed higher in the sky and so remain visible throughout the night.

*Insert the first vowel, so it is not misread as "comet"

* Omission phrase "bes(t) time"



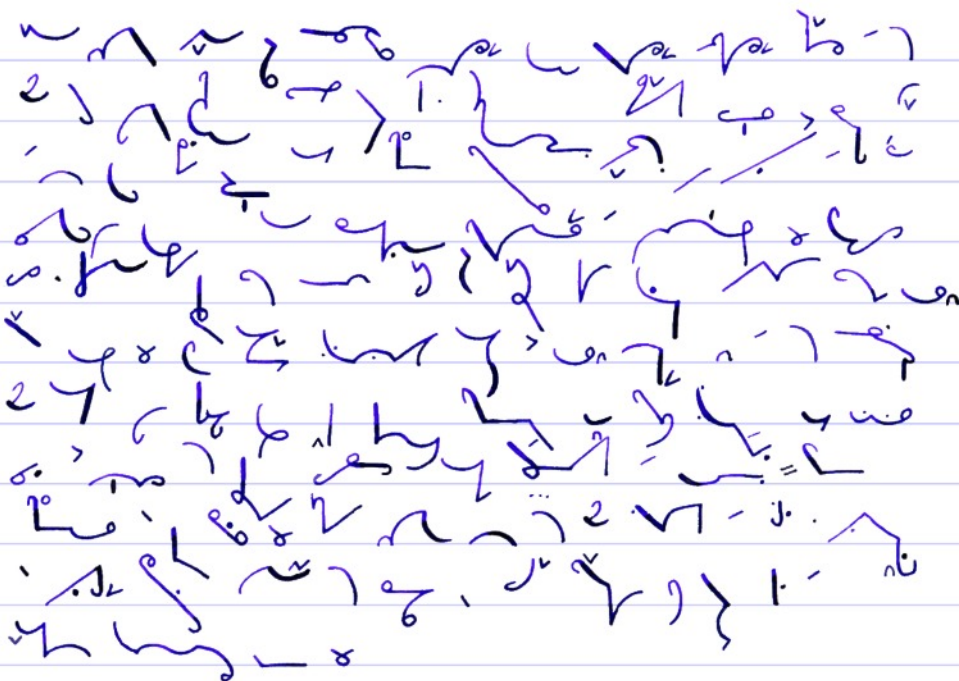
Comet Ison

This Comet of the Century, as it is being called by the press, originates from the Oort Cloud, a belt of trillions of ice and rock fragments – possible future comets – at a distance of one light year from the sun, on the edge of the solar system. After 4.5 billion years in that deep freeze, it is now hurtling towards a near miss with the furnace of the sun, and in the process providing a wonderful opportunity for astronomers and amateurs to practise their observational and predictive skills, as well as a hoped-for spectacular light show. You as a shorthand writer* have also been given a great opportunity, as the many scientific news articles offer quite a collection of words whose outlines use the

initial stroke Ess. Here is your "ought" cloud, which you may consider* you ought to practise, all spread out for you in a long line just like the comet's watery tail, trailing into space in glorious and luminous magnificence:

- Ison, ice, icy, isotropic, astronomy, astronomic, astronomical, astronomer, astrometry, astronaut, astrophysics
- asteroid, aster, easterly, east, eastern, eastwards, ascend, ascent, ascertain, assortment, science, scientist, scientific, scientifically

* Omission phrases "short(hand) writer" "which you may (con)sider"



Comet Ison

I know you will be writing all these examples millions if not billions and trillions of times, and your shorthand pen will be travelling across the page at an astronomically high rate, close to the speed of light, and may even start to glow in the dark, perhaps rivalling our rare and honoured heavenly visitor in scintillating brilliance and luminosity. Everyone wants a dazzling display from Comet Ison, although I suspect* it will fade rapidly from the news by next month*. However, unlike the ephemeral enthusiasm of the news media, you and your expanded shorthand knowledge will definitely not* fizzle out, diminish, break up under pressure, evaporate under the intense heat of the

moment, or disappear once again* into the obscurity and inky-black darkness of deep space. On the contrary*, you will have improved your shorthand ability and attained a reputation of radiant splendour, allowing your skills to shine brightly, through both the day and night-time, for many years to come. (909 words)

* "suspect" The contraction is used only for the verb. The noun is a full outline.

* Omission phrase "ne(k)s(t mon)th" "wu(n)s again" "On (the con)trary"

* "definitely not" Hook N and halving to represent "not"



Sneaky

After all the long words in the other blogs, I think a simple piece is overdue, with no special outlines to learn. The advantage of a passage with common words is that you are giving yourself a greater chance of success at writing it really fast, because you already know most of the outlines. I like to call this "sneaking up" on the higher speeds. I prefer regular small successes than a big one now and then*, as it enables me to see ahead and know that I will definitely reach my goal, if I continue

to work at the same rate. I do not like successes to be hit and miss, and any method that makes it easier and quicker is worth considering. If you can sneak up on your quarry to catch it, that has to be better than an occasional mad dash on difficult matter that has a low chance of success and a high chance of failure that will harm your progress and drain away your energy to continue.

* Omission phrase "now (and) then"

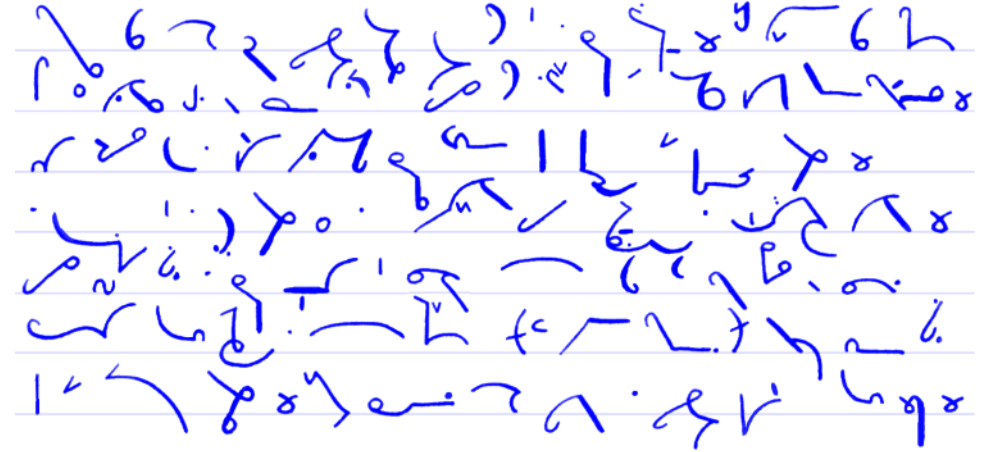


Sneaky

Once you have gone from 60 words a minute to 70, you not only quite rightly feel you are improving, but the new figure becomes the "new you". Yesterday, 60 was a huge improvement over the previous 50, but now it has to be considered* beneath your best. If you have a class teacher, you will probably know by now that he or she will never let you go back to that old

figure. Some lazy little part of you is saying a sad goodbye to the comfort of 60, but the stronger and better part of you welcomes the 70 – and of course 80 is the next in line. All the other higher figures start looking closer and you can now say to them, "You're next!"

* Omission phrase "has to be (con)sidered"



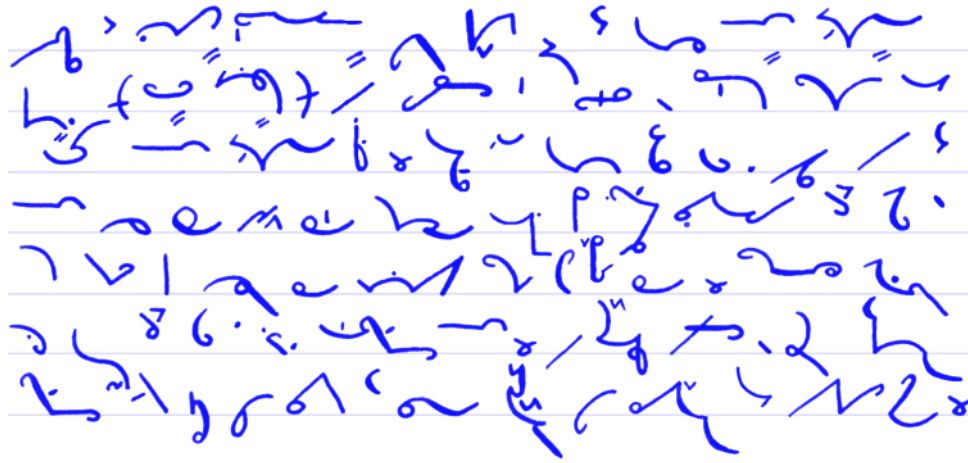
Sneaky

Perhaps this method would be useful for those who feel they are on a "speed plateau". I do not like this term at all, as labels tend to stick hard once they are applied and in themselves hold back progress. You will always have a whole range of speeds that you can do, depending on the difficulty of the passage. A victory on an easy passage is a reliable way of loosening an unhelpful label. Once you have achieved a speed goal on simple matter, then that number starts to seem

normal for you, and it is only* a matter of time (with regular practising) before you can achieve it on the harder passages. I hope the* Sneak Method will be a useful tool for you to consider*. (428 words)

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

* Omission phrases "I (h)ope the" "to (con)sider"



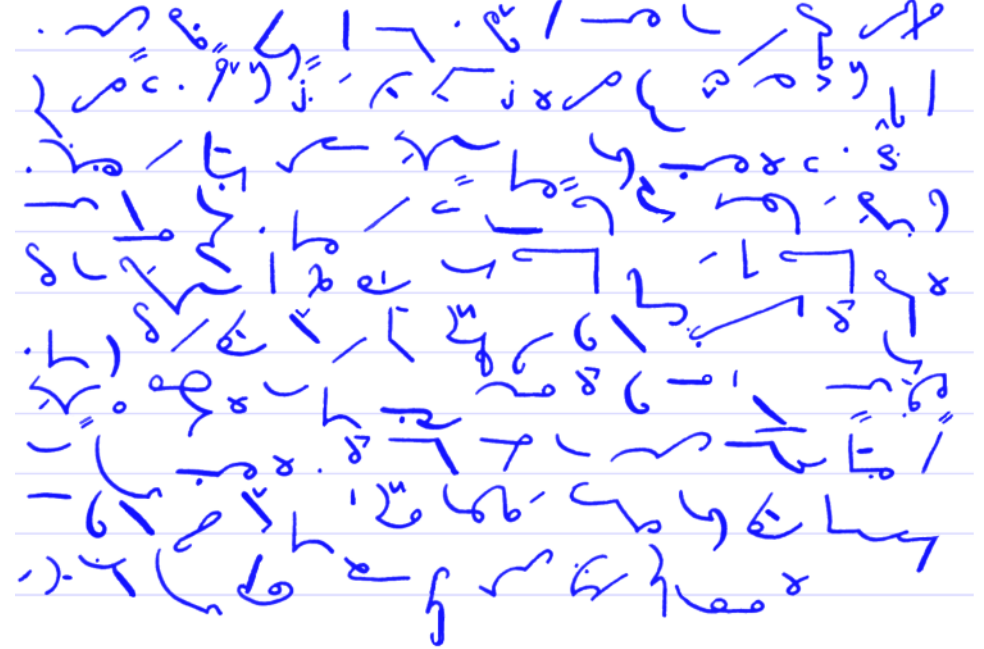
Martian Comet Update

Readers of the Martian Chronicle will be delighted to hear that the famous Comet Hurling Team (Northern Hemisphere) are once again* on course to score very well* in the National Comet Hurling Contest. For those* not familiar with this event, the rules are that the comet must swing round the sun, remaining intact as it approaches the halfway point, and then all or part of it must be seen to emerge from the other side of the sun. Fragments and vapour earn fewer points than a complete unbroken

comet. Our scientists are beginning to suspect that it may have broken up, but there is still hope that something identifiable will survive for the return journey.

- * Omission phrases "wu(n)s again" "very (w)ell"

* "for those" Insert the vowel, as it could be read as "this" or "these", being out of position

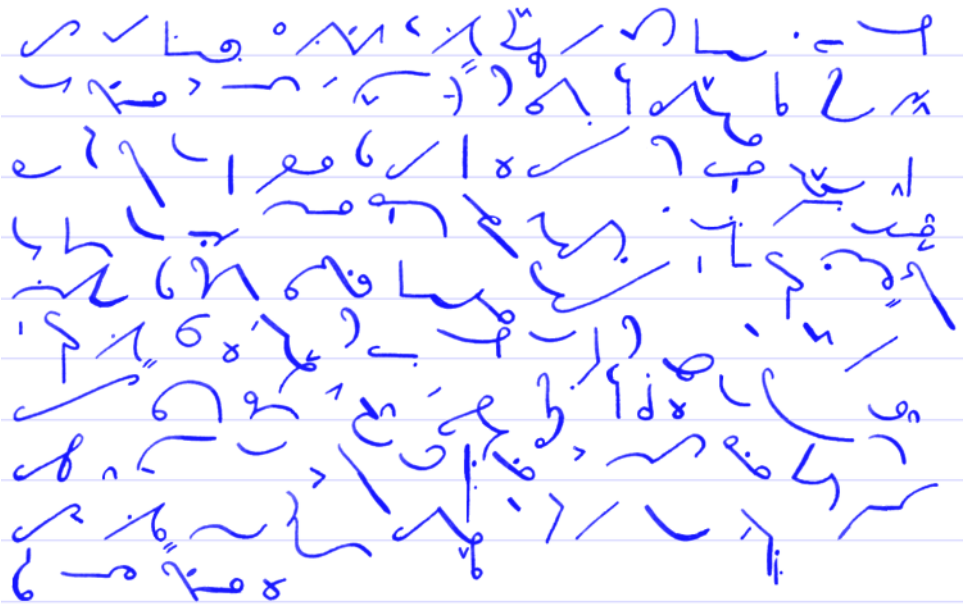


Martian Comet Update

The Martian Space Agency do keep a supply of large comets for our planet's water requirements, especially ones with a high ice content and low rock content. Once they have mined most of the ice out of it, the remains are donated to local Hurling Teams for their games. When a spent comet becomes available, the teams are called together from all over the hemisphere and submit their plans for propelling it towards the sun, in the correct direction and at the correct speed. The team whose plans are chosen by our

top scientists will then be awarded points if the Hurl is successful. Any team gaining maximum points then goes on to become Comet Consultants in future games. The points can be exchanged for Martian Government Tokens which can then be used by the team on science facilities and equipment for their chosen Technical College*, and so enable future generations of school children to learn elementary astrophysics.

* Omission phrase "techni(cal) college"

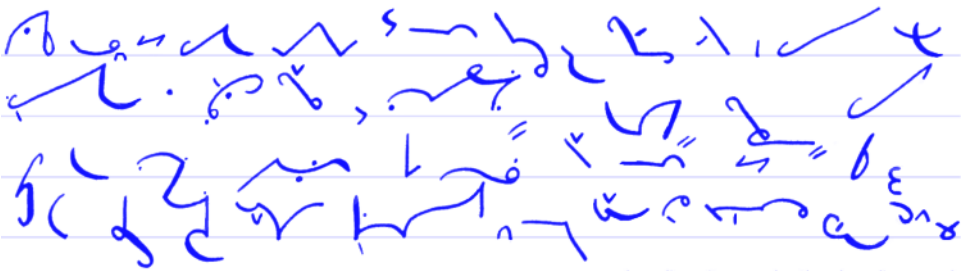


Martian Comet Update

One of our technicians has reported that Earth scientists are also taking a great interest in the progress of the comet, and like us they are hoping that it survives its journey round the sun, although probably for different reasons than we do. We are very close to finding out if the Team have gained the maximum score possible, and if we see an intact rocky nucleus emerging, then there will be celebrations taking place everywhere on planet Mars, and probably on planet Earth as well. Obviously they are

equally interested in teaching their youngsters all about our wonderful solar system, and the beautiful and useful treasures that it contains. For further news, we suggest you log in* to the Public Information Database of the Martian Space Agency, or one of Earth's many astronomy websites, all of which are being updated regularly on this comet's progress.

* "log in" For "log on" you could use the N Hook



Martian Comet Update

Latest news: We have to report that the Comet appears to have broken up, but we are nevertheless awarding a Consolation Prize to the Marsingley Village Preschool where the children have imaginatively

renamed it the Mince Pie Comet - just when you think it has been entirely demolished, you keep finding lots of crumbs floating around. (475 words)