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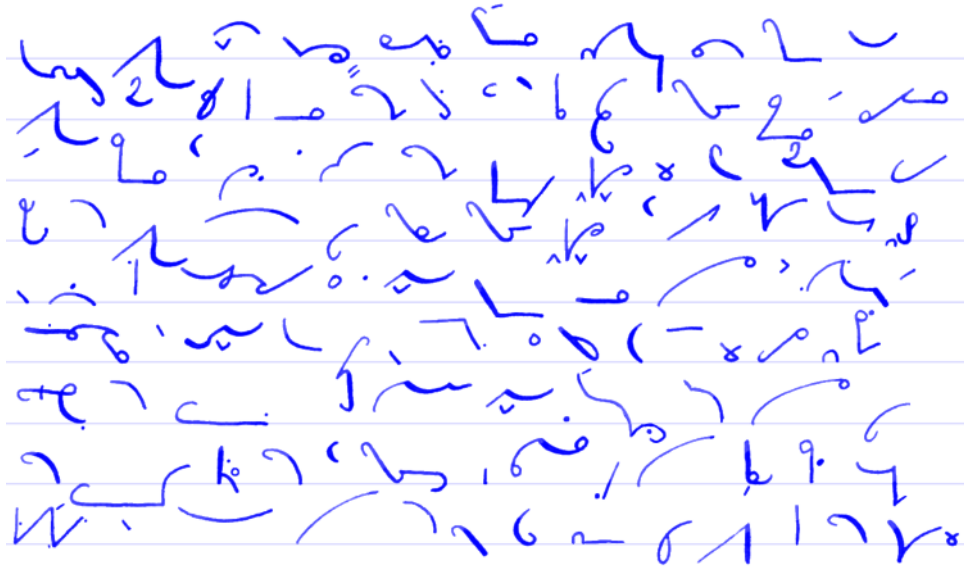
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PDF Date: 14 December 2024



Less Than Perfect

If you have been reading my Pitmans Snippets blogs, you will have had some practice in reading shorthand just as it comes from the pen, with all its less-than-perfect* hooks and circles, and strokes that lean a little from the dictionary outline. Every shorthand book, whether instruction or reading matter, will present perfect outlines that are the ideal for the student to aim at, in the same way as a writing book gives letters of the alphabet and examples of handwriting* for children to copy as best they can. Once you start cursive or quick

longhand writing, the formation of your letters will very quickly depart from that perfection, but as long as each letter does not stray into the "territory" of another letter or number, then you can still read it very easily.

* "less than" Downward L in order to join the phrase

* "handwriting" It helps to make a small angle between the Nd and the Ray, for clarity

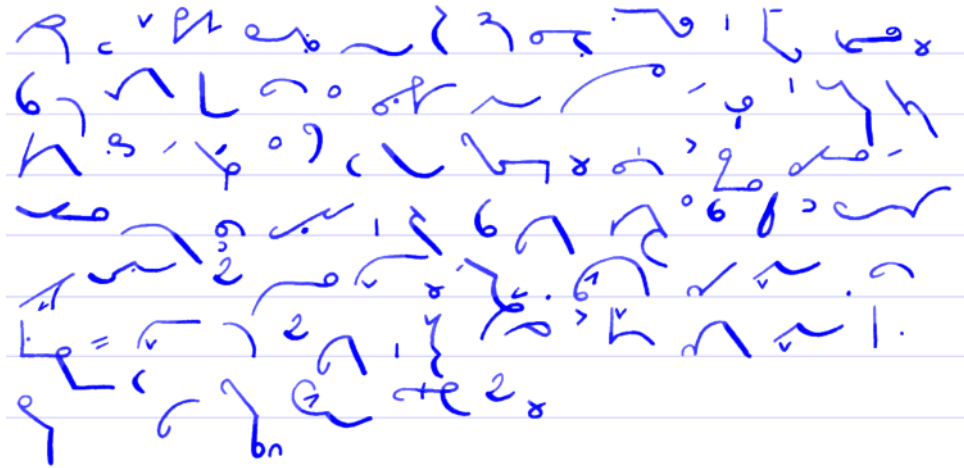


Less Than Perfect

Longhand letters have a lot of redundancy in the lines that form them, so if they are badly formed they are still quite readable, up to a point. They can be deformed and altered quite a large amount in order to* produce the abundance of fonts, most of which give us no trouble at all in reading. Shorthand is not so much like that, as the

lines required for each word are kept to the bare minimum. Once you know all the strokes, then you get to know how far you can stray before one stroke begins to change into another merely through varying its length or angle.

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to)"



Less Than Perfect (Continued)

Last year when I started the Snippets many of them were scribbled captions on top of photographs. This year I will be doing more as hastily written letters and notes, on notepad paper, which will be scanned and posted as they are, without being perfected. Some of the hooks, circles and angles may be somewhat wayward, but I believe this will be helpful, as that is just what normal real handwritten* shorthand looks like. Obviously the slower you are writing, the

more textbook-like* your shorthand will be, but I think that most of the time you will be writing at a speed that will produce flowing cursive shorthand.

* "handwritten" See note on "handwriting" in previous paragraph

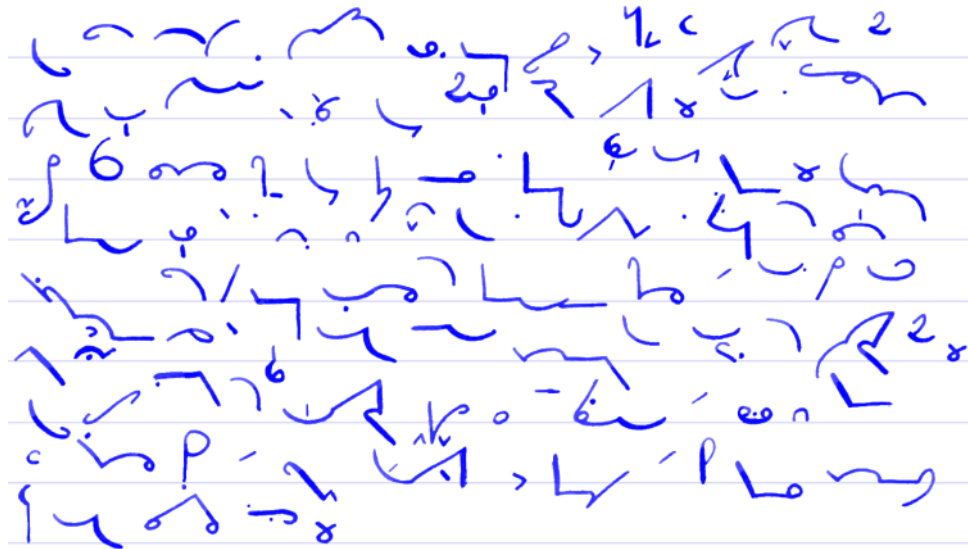
* "textbook" Omits the lightly-sounded middle T



Less Than Perfect

The Snippets are meant to be a "halfway house" between the book outlines and your own shorthand notes. They will give you an opportunity to sharpen your reading and recognition skills on lifelike shorthand, without having to worry whether any of the outlines are wrong or missing. However, unlike your own notes, you will not have

heard the matter before, so in that respect it is just a little more like very "cold" notes where you may have entirely forgotten what was in them. I think the effort of reading them will help you to cultivate an attitude of persistence and determination to get all of it, and not be content with just the easy bits.

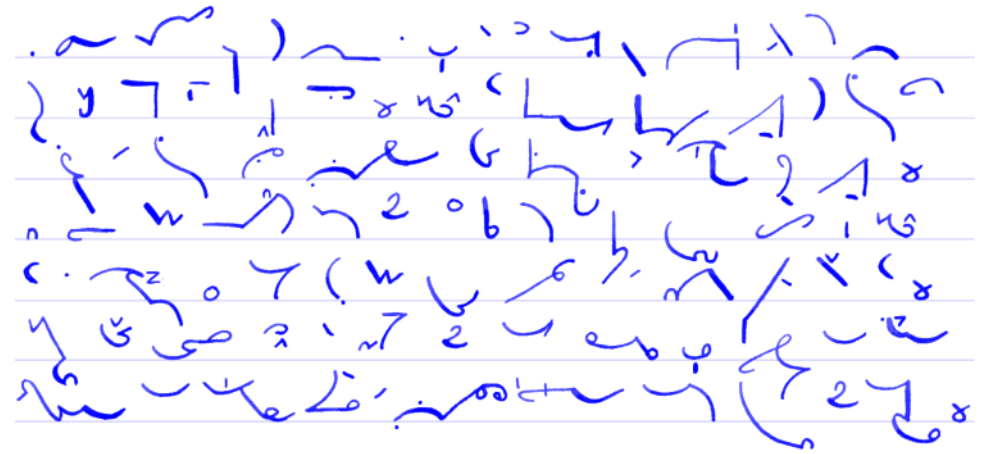


Less Than Perfect

Even more importantly, the learner needs to get used to the idea that real-life shorthand will have no longhand to consult, if the shorthand notes cannot be read. In a classroom situation this is sometimes true if the teacher gives a dictation that is not in the book. If you were taking notes of a meeting, you might have a report, an agenda or some paperwork from which to get names or technical terms*, and any such information should be made the most

of, but that is never going to make up for incomplete or illegible shorthand. Even one gap or unreadable outline is quite chastening and sends you back, with palms sweating and brow furrowed, to the dictionary and study books to make sure that it never happens again.

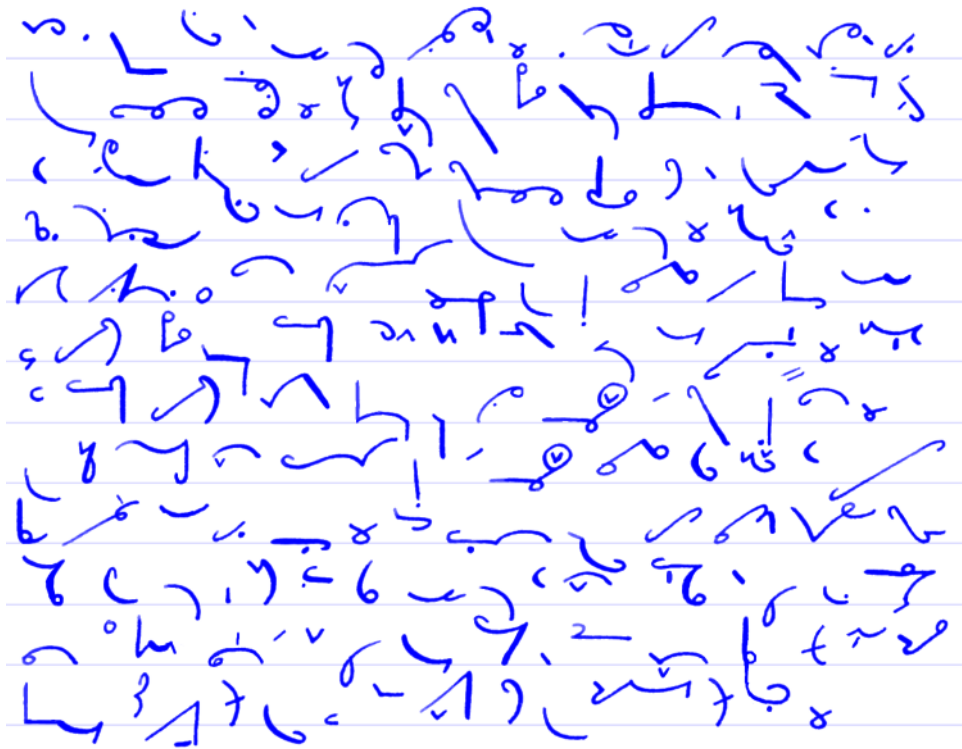
* "technical terms" You could also write this as an omission phrase "tech(nical) terms"



Less Than Perfect

The first thing I learned to do was make a note of what needed to be looked up or improved, so that I did not get caught out again. I found that taking the dictionary route was far more comfortable and far less embarrassing than the temptation of the "muddling through" route. You care about the accuracy of your shorthand, as does your teacher if you have one, but I found

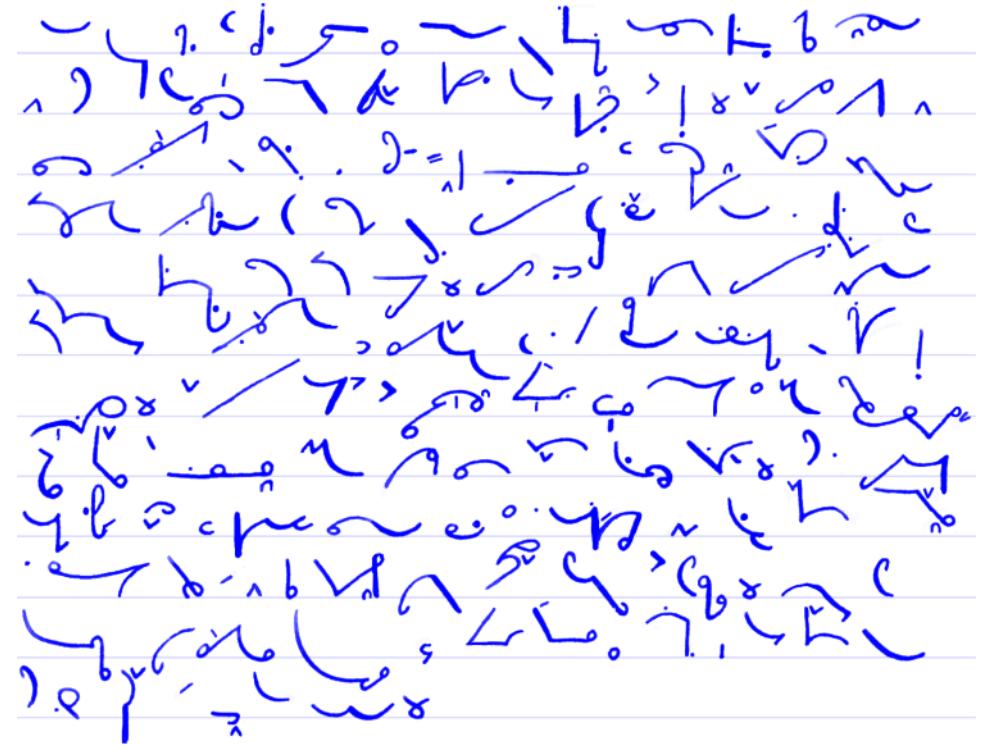
that an employer is only thinking about the finished result and you will be judged by that. I hope that you find the increased amount of actual shorthand in the Snippets notes useful in avoiding and preventing any unpleasant shocks and embarrassments occurring in your future shorthand endeavours. (715 words)



Chocolate

I am not a big fan of New Year's resolutions. The most common one must be to lose weight after the Christmas excesses. I think the desire probably starts before December, but cannot be acted upon without suffering deprivation all the way from the pre-Christmas dinners through to finishing off the treats remaining in the larder after New Year. I have found that a health regime is more likely to succeed if eating habits are taken in hand when the weather starts to get colder, around about October here in the UK. I know that with

colder weather I will be tempted to do less exercise and probably eat more. If I just maintain my normal eating and exercise habits, then I find that winter does not result in weight gain. I cannot claim to have been one hundred percent perfect in this every year, but I was glad this New Year that my clothes all still fit exactly the same as at the end of summer, and I still have the energy to walk to my destination (and not always taking the shortest route), even when I could ride there if I wanted.

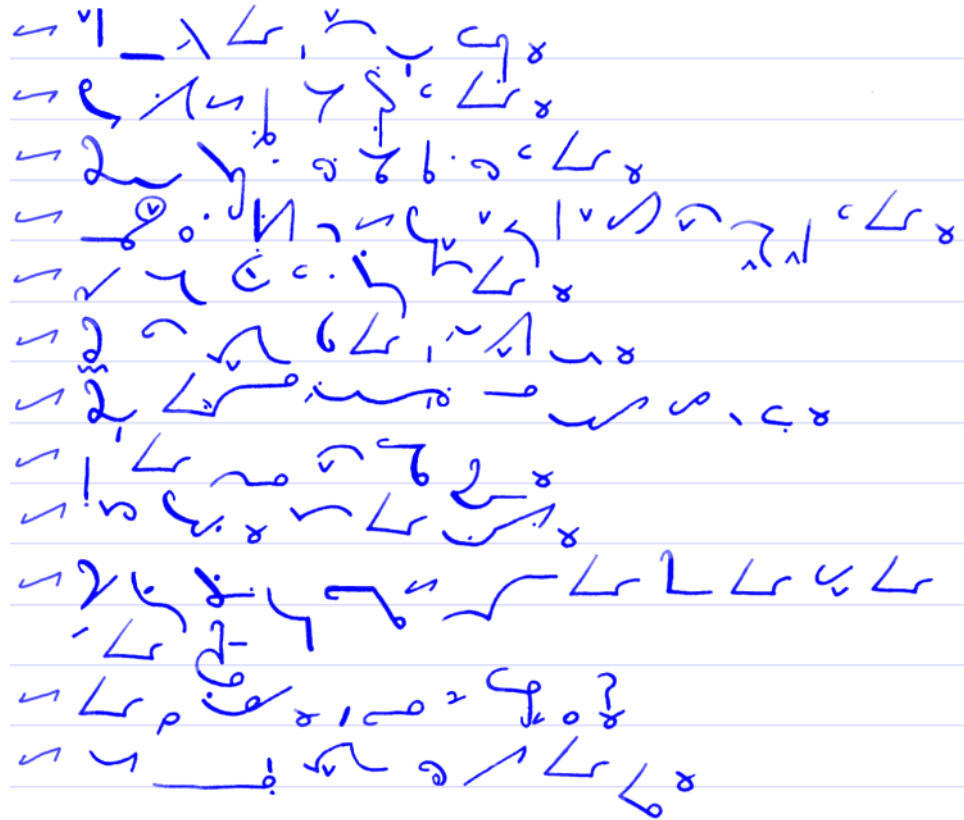


Chocolate

Any food treat that contains sugar is going to be addictive in some degree and it is amusing how their over-consumption can be justified, at least for the duration of the eating. I once read how someone resorted to spraying the thrown-out cakes* with furniture polish to prevent herself retrieving them from the bin, where they had been consigned in a desperate effort to remove the temptation from her kitchen. One can't help wondering how long her resolve would survive without a much stronger incentive to control eating impulses. I rather enjoy all the humorous chocolate quotes, mainly as I have personal experience* of these types of excuse, and I have listed some of my favourites* below. They are a window into the state of the mind when dealing with something seen as an indulgence, how

the favoured* item occupies a central* position, and how its pursuit will be rationalised over and above all the other considerations. Maybe the other factors will surface afterwards, when the chocolate box is empty, but for the time being they are swept aside and count for nothing.

- * "cakes" Insert vowel, to distinguish it from "cookies"
- * Omission phrase "personal (ek)sperience"
- * "favoured" Note that "favourite" has a reversed Vr
- * "central" Uses doubling for convenience, even though there is no vowel between the T and R sounds

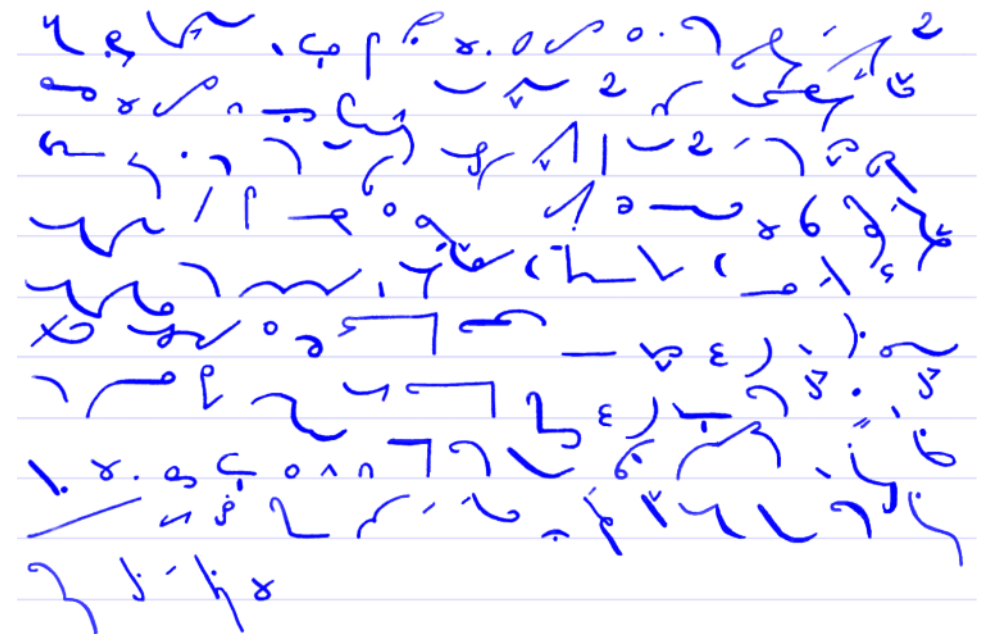


Chocolate

- I'd give up chocolate but I'm no quitter.
- Save the Earth - it's the only planet with chocolate.
- There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate.
- Exercise is a dirty word - every time I hear it, I wash my mouth out with chocolate.
- You are never alone with a bar of chocolate.
- There's more to life than chocolate, but not right now.
- There is no chocoholics anonymous because no one wants to quit.

- Eating chocolate makes my clothes shrink.
- I am not overweight. I am chocolate enriched.
- There are four basic food groups - milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate, and chocolate truffles.
- Chocolate is the Answer. Who cares what the Question is?
- In the cookies* of life, friends are the chocolate chips.

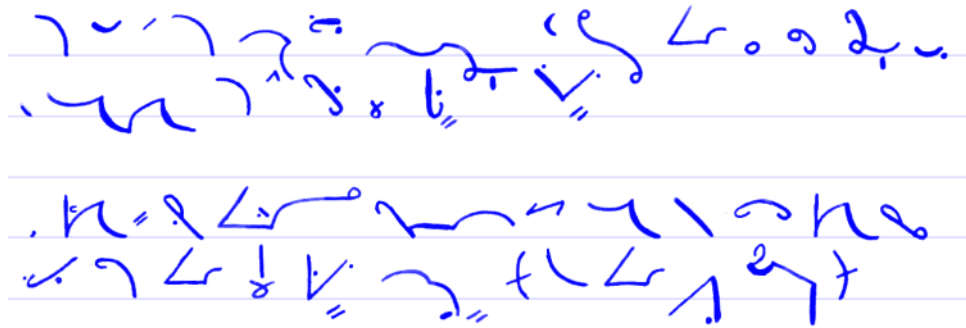
* "cookies" and "cakes" Always insert the vowels, to differentiate



Chocolate

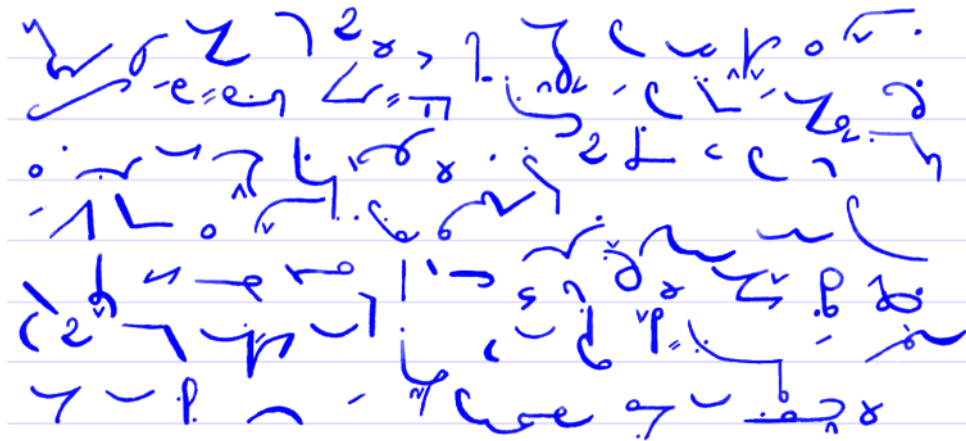
I have saved the following two quotes till last. The first one has a very useful and real shorthand significance. Once you gain fluency in writing shorthand, you will increasingly find that you can hear a word, your hand will instantly write it in shorthand, and your mind will not be involved much at all, except as "supervisor" watching what is going on. This process obviously involves your memory, but only that automatic part that comes up with the

required information, in the same way as words and correct grammar come to mind when you wish to say something, or legs start moving in the correct direction when you wish to go from point A to point B. The second quote is how you get from being slow learner to confident fast writer - constant practice, little and often, made possible by never being very far from your pen and paper.



Chocolate

- Your hand and your mouth agreed many years ago that, as far as chocolate is concerned, there is no need to involve your brain. – Dave Barry
- The 12-step chocoholics program: Never be more than 12 steps away from chocolate! – Terry Moore (for chocolate read shorthand pad).

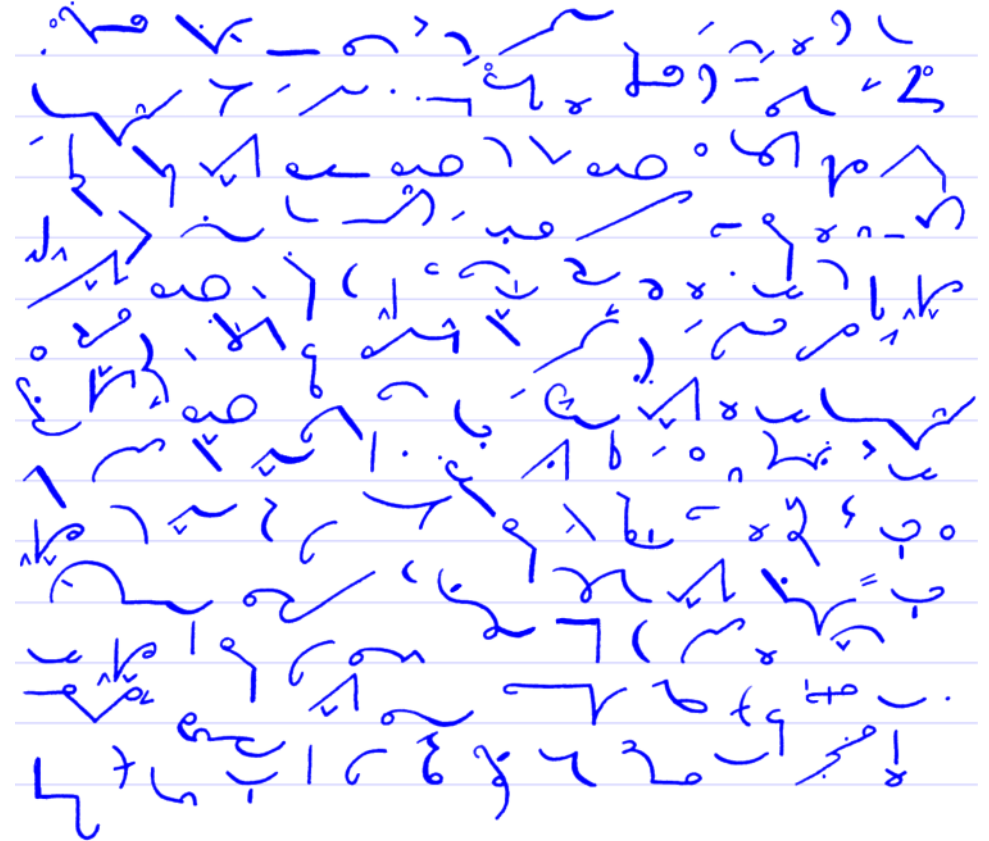


Chocolate

I hope that you are still enjoying your shorthand. To the true enthusiast, every new outline is like a wonderful soft-centred chocolate-coated confection, and every compact and ingenious phrase is a melt-in-the-mouth dainty morsel. A completed shorthand task, with every word captured and read back, is like a pleasant celebratory meal, leaving nothing further to be desired – except, of course, to do it all again when the opportunity arises. Unlike the sweets and feasts, though, shorthand

can be indulged in continuously, without any adverse side-effects*, and resulting only in steady improvement and ever-increasing skill in execution. (811 words)

* "side-effects" Does not use the advanced phrasing method of the F hook, as it would look too similar to "defects", see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing2-theory.htm#effect



Minutes Of The Meeting

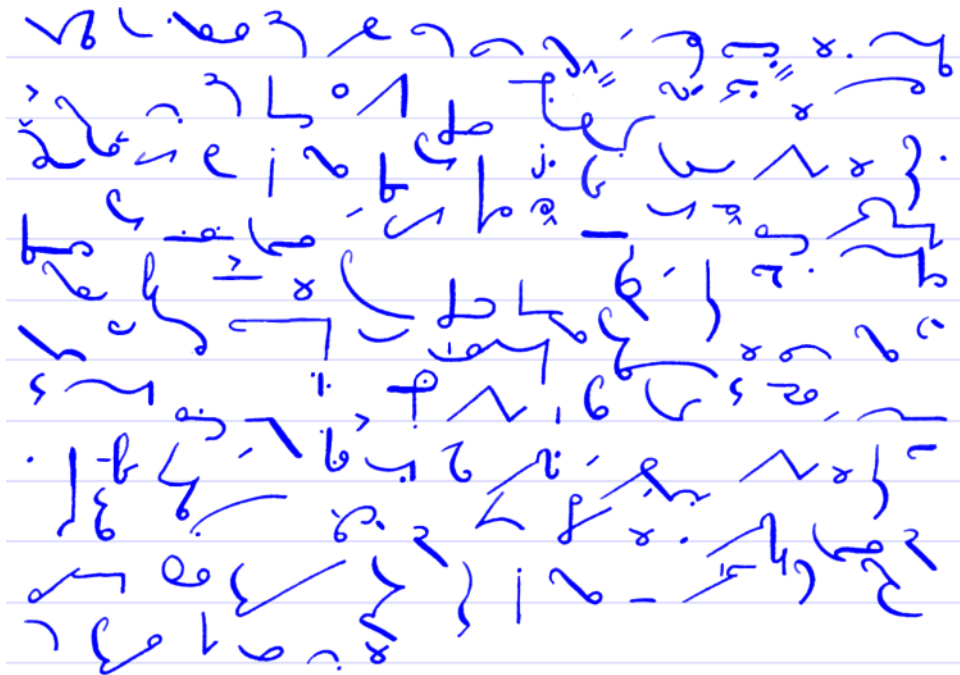
The paragraphs below give some of the wordings relating to discussions and meetings. They are for vocabulary only and are not a connected narrative. They are quite heavy on the jargon, and it would be better to write single sentences or part sentences, as facility drills repeated down the page, aiming for accuracy and neatness rather than great speed. You could also rewrite the sentences to pad them out with more common ordinary words. A new or difficult outline is always easier to absorb when it is surrounded by really easy and well known ones, and the plainer diluted sentences will be more even and flowing to write. New vocabulary should be learned by writing at a comfortable rate at first*, and as you assimilate all the new outlines your writing of them will naturally speed up of

its own accord. I suspect* that the notion is lurking somewhere that forcing yourself to write the barely-known new outlines at speed will somehow get them learned. My experience is that you can only* write something correctly and fast (when it occurs in a dictation) if you know it well, and that this process never works in reverse!

* Omission phrase "at (fir)st"

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

* "only" This form is only used in phrases, full strokes when standing alone



Minutes Of The Meeting

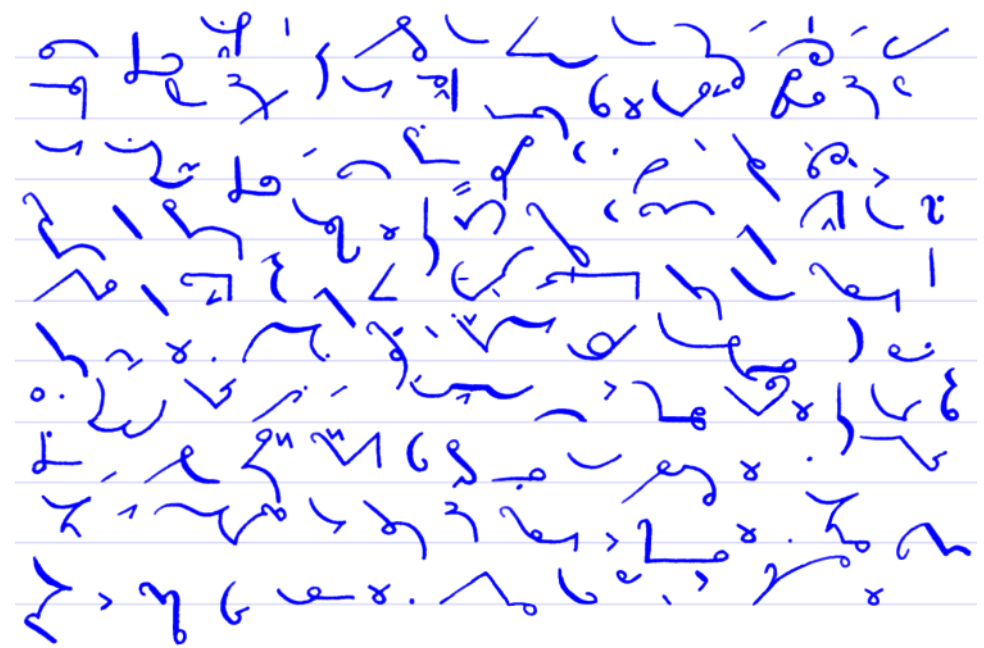
Apologies for absence were received from Mr Brown and Mrs Green. The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, discussed extensively, approved and agreed. Matters arising: several committee members disagreed over the details contained within the financial report. There was a disagreement over the exact figures and whether the amounts* given in the accounts* section reflected the present state of affairs of the company. Further discussion took place on this subject and it was agreed that an amendment be made in order to* correct any uncertainty over this matter. Some members thought that the amended section could be added to the existing report, but others felt that the accountants should make a detailed study of the changes and additions needed and

then redraft and resubmit the report. It was agreed that this latter solution would be much more* satisfactory. The redrafted figures would be circulated as soon as they were available, so that the committee members could record* their approval or otherwise at the next meeting.

* "amounts" "accounts" Ensure "amounts" has a goodly humped curve, as these two can easily look like each other when written at speed

* Omission phrases "in ord(er to)" "much mo(re)"

* "record" Insert the dash vowel so that it does not look like "regard"



Minutes Of The Meeting

Some discussion ensued* on who was responsible for checking for errors and omissions, and whether extra staff were required in the accounts department* to cover this. Various suggestions were offered in the ensuing* discussions and Mr Black suggested that a list of possible solutions to the problem be submitted for consideration*. It was also proposed that more time should be allowed for draft reports to be created* and that they should be checked thoroughly and corrected*, before being presented at board meetings. The lengthy process of compiling the necessary facts and figures* was seen as an essential part of the running and ongoing improvement of the organisation's operations. It was felt that this task should receive higher priority than has been the case in recent years. A copy of the annual report* and the monthly reports* for the past year were presented to the directors. The annual report and accounts* will be made available to the board of directors*

within the next week. The report and accounts* have been sent to all the shareholders.

* "ensued" "ensuing" Note that "ensue" and "ensuing" use stroke S

* "accounts department" Intersections can often be written close up, if it is not possible or clear to write through

* Omission phrases "for (con)sideration" "fac(t)s (and) figures" "annual (re)port" "monthly (re)ports" "annual rep(ort and) accounts" "rep(ort and) accounts" "b(oa)rd (of) dir(ector)s"

* "more time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

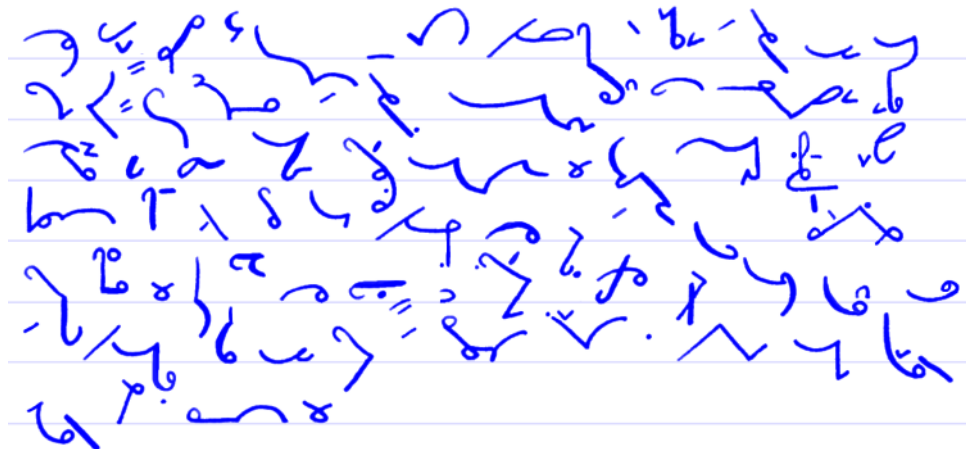
* "created" Insert the diphone, so it does not look like "corrected"

The image shows a page of handwritten shorthand notes in blue ink on lined paper. The notes are dense and cover most of the page, with some lines left blank at the bottom. The shorthand consists of various symbols, including circles, lines, and arrows, representing words and phrases.

Minutes Of The Meeting

The chairman of the committee was of the opinion that when formal motions are tabled, moved, proposed, seconded, voted on and passed*, this should be fully recorded in the minutes. A strategy meeting with senior management must be held as soon as practicable, to carry out the proposals. This should be followed immediately by the creation and drafting of a comprehensive plan of action. The job of the creation* of the plans and their subsequent correction* was allocated to several of the senior staff in the personnel* department. It was necessary to determine which workers and operatives should be involved at the planning stage, in order that they are able to make informed* decisions in good time. It is hoped that our vision can now go forward without any set-backs or hindrances. The immediate commencement and implementation of such a policy would give the managers insufficient time to consult the appropriate panels of advisers* and consultants. This policy document will result* in everyone being in possession of information that is relevant and up-to-date*. They can then investigate* all the options open to them in order to* make the most efficient and advantageous decisions for the furtherance of our business.

- * "passed" Always insert the vowel, and in "opposed", as they identical in shape and opposite in meaning
- * "creation" Insert the diphone, so it does not look like "correction"
- * "personnel" Note the outline for "personal" uses N with L Hook
- * "informed" This could also read as "enough", therefore write the outline in full strokes, as shown above. See https://www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/contractions-intro.htm#past_tenses
- * "appropriate" Insert the diphone, and the first vowel in "proper", as they are similar in outline and meaning
- * "advisers" This is the dictionary spelling, but "advisors" is becoming more prevalent
- * Omission phrases "will (re)sult" "up (to) date" "in ord(er to)" "investigate" Omits the T



Minutes Of The Meeting

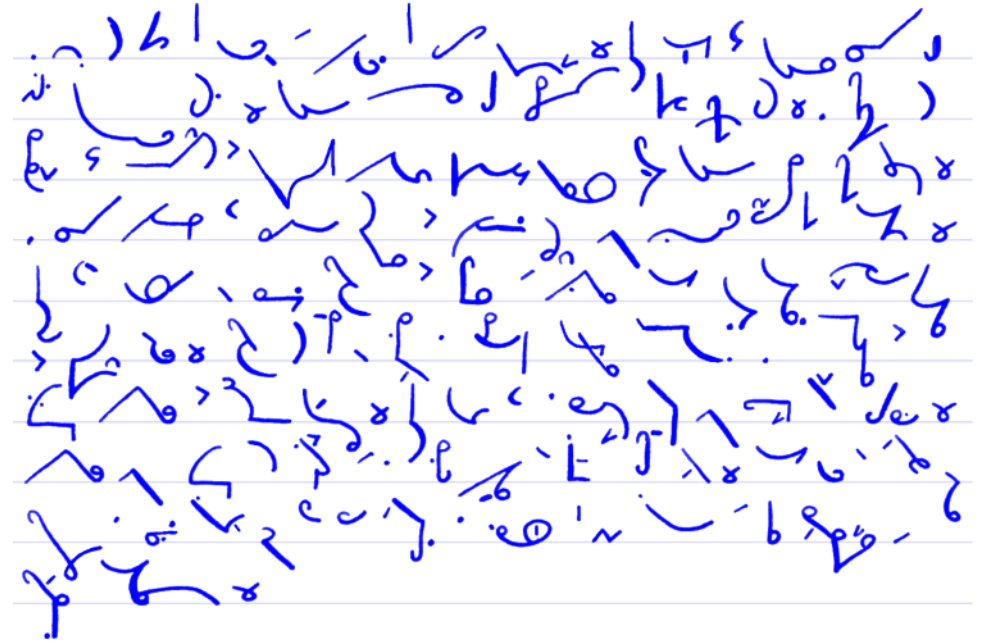
Mrs White suggested that the firm could also request contributions of ideas and possible new initiatives from the shop-floor workers and possibly interview the more experienced employees who have first-hand knowledge of the processes involved. They would be able to maintain the status quo, whilst at the same time* draw up plans for the requisite* improvements to achieve and even surpass the production targets. It was agreed that Miss Gray would approach the general managers of each

department for their views, opinions and recommendations on this new project and subsequently compile a report into the advisability and feasibility of such a scheme.

* "at the same time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

* "requisite" Insert the last vowel and keep the T long, so that it does not look like "requested"

Blank lined area for additional notes or exercises.



Minutes Of The Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at noon, and reconvened at 1 pm. It was noted that the Finance* Secretary did not attend the afternoon session. Financial matters had been satisfactorily dealt with during the morning session. The Treasurer was satisfied with the accuracy of the published* review dealing with the business's overall financial situation during the past year. The Secretary requested that certain aspects of the legal issues should be mentioned at the Annual General Meeting*. It was not thought necessary to seek the approval of the delegates and reps* in the field for these minor changes to the schedule of events. Approval was sought to set up a standing committee for the purpose of governing the activities of the elected representatives of the workforce. It was felt that a senior body should be created by general consent, representatives should be elected or appointed, and a set of rules of conduct drawn up. In the event of opposition to this proposal, a secret

ballot would be offered, in order to* obtain a consensus on how the company and its subsidiaries should proceed in this matter.

* "finance" Dictionary outline. Tends to be pronounced "fye-" when the emphasis is on the first syllable, and "finn-" when on the second syllable. Better written through the line, as above the line could look similar to "findings". "Financial" is a contraction written in second position on the line.

* "published" The contraction should be avoided and written in all full strokes when used as an adjective, to avoid clashing with "public"

* Omission phrases "Ann(ual) Ge(neral) Meet(ing)" "in order to"

* "reps" Always insert the vowel, so it cannot be read as "representatives" which would look similar if its V Hook was not clear

Blank lined area for additional notes or exercises.

Minutes Of The Meeting

The matter of the remuneration of volunteers' expenses was shelved, pending an enquiry into the legal and financial regulations on this subject. It is intended to carry out an in-depth study of the rules and regulations* that presently govern these particular conditions. Advice would be sought and if necessary an extraordinary* meeting convened to discuss this at length with those directly involved. It was hoped that this would bring about a satisfactory resolution to the questions* that had been raised. It was anticipated that most attendees would vote in favour of the motion, although there were* a small number of interested parties who would be voting by proxy. It was estimated that the postal* vote would account for

approximately ten per cent*, and that time should be allowed for these to come in and be counted.

* Omission phrases "rules (and re) g(u)lations" "there (w)ere"

* "extraordinary" "questions" Optional contractions

* "postal" Omits the lightly sounded T

* "ten per cent" Always vocalise outlines for "ten" and "eighteen". Use stroke P for "per cent" only after actual numerals, use the full outline otherwise, as here

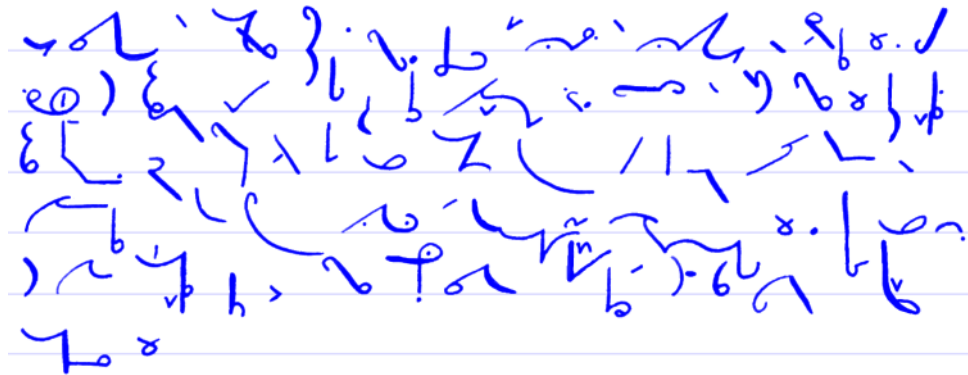
Minutes Of The Meeting

In reviewing his time as chairman of the company, Mr Smith said that his primary function had been to oversee the ongoing growth, stability and prosperity of the company. He had witnessed significant changes to the fortunes of the business through the various ups and downs of the market conditions and the unstable economic climate. He referred back to his days serving on the many advisory committees, as well as his honorary post of Secretary many years ago. He described his times leading groups of enthusiastic staff and delegations to the many functions, conventions* and exhibitions* around the country. Those attending the conference were unanimous in their praise for the reporters who had consistently and

successfully met all their deadlines. Everyone had successfully completed the tasks and assignments within the timescale required. It was decided that future tasks will be assigned on the basis of experience and past performance. This revised policy will result* in a significant improvement in the company's track record. It is hoped that these new teleconferencing, online conferencing and seminar facilities will significantly improve communication within the company.

* "functions" "conventions" Insert the vowel in each, as they are similar in outline and meaning

* Omission phrase "will (re)sult"



Minutes Of The Meeting

Under the heading of Any Other Business*, there was a brief* discussion on the merits of merging the two sub-committees. The general consensus was that this would be to our advantage, but that it would require the complete agreement of all their members. It was decided that this topic would be brought up at the next Annual General Meeting*, after which it could* be referred back to local committees for further revision and eventual implementation. The date of the next

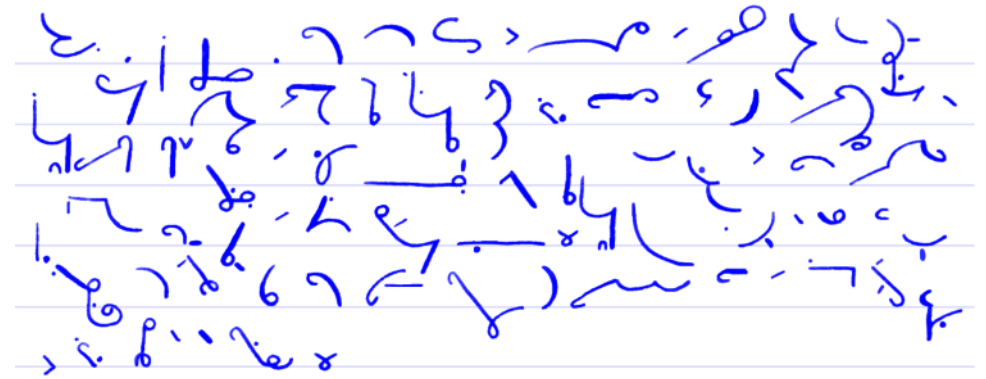
meeting was left undecided, due to the members' existing heavy diary commitments, and so this will be advised in due course.

* Omission phrases "any oth(er) biz(ness)"
"Ann(ual) G(eneral) Meet(ing)"

* "brief" Always insert the vowel, as it could be misread as "number of"

* "could" Best not phrased, as when it is

Horizontal lines for writing.



Minutes Of The Meeting

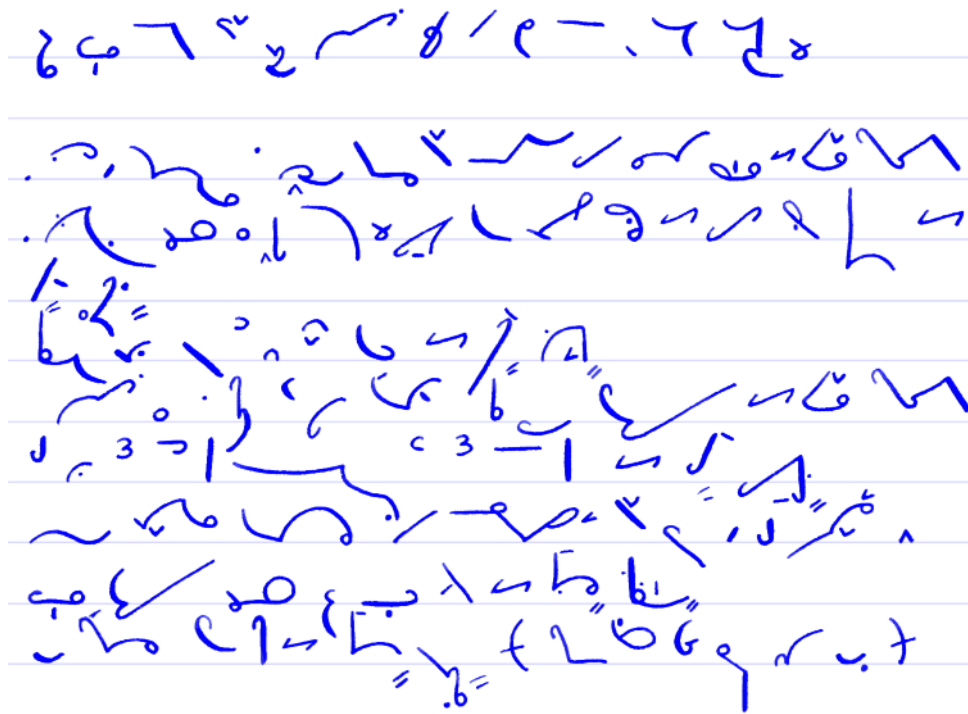
Finally, the committee discussed the very important question* of the materials and resources available for sustaining the continued energy levels and growth of its attendees, and there was complete agreement that the usual refreshments of water, dry biscuits and stale cookies* should be discontinued in favour of the more relevant tea, coffee, fruit juice and jam sponge cake*. After a show of hands, with no abstentions or opposition, this very

welcome proposal was unanimously agreed and acted upon without delay, to the complete satisfaction of all present. (2025 words)

* "question" Optional contraction

*"cookie, cake" need their vowels inserted to differentiate them

Horizontal lines for writing.



Success Quotes

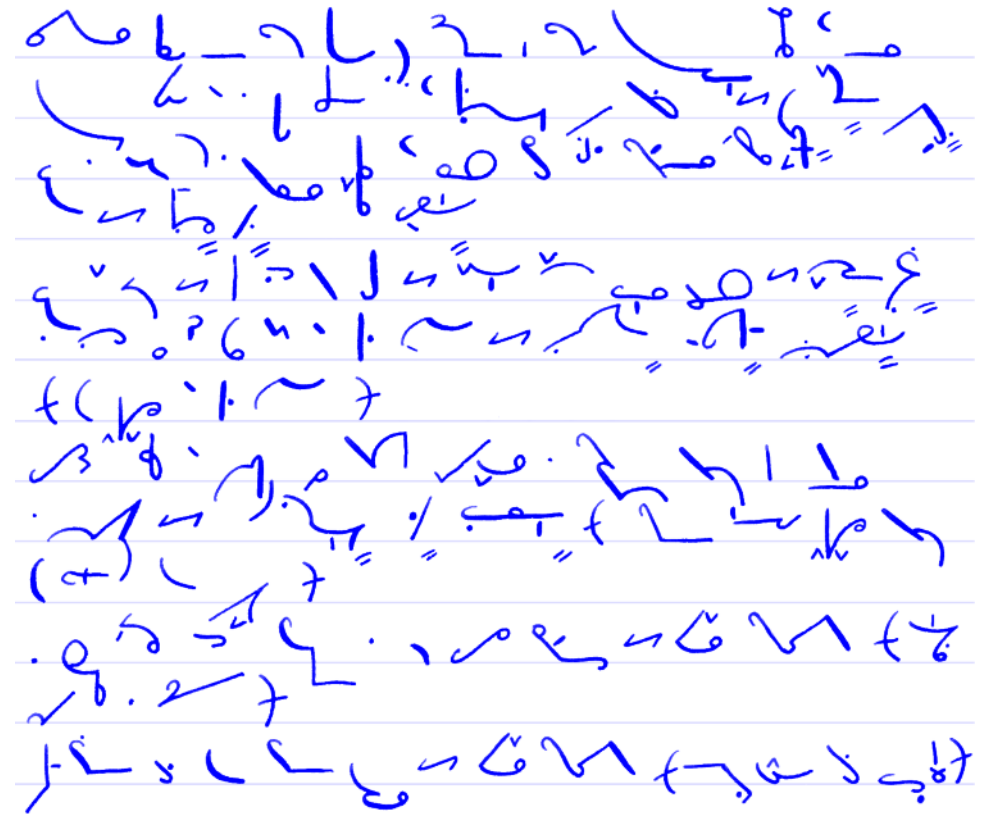
All these quotes can be applied to shorthand learning, just as much as they can to any other endeavour:

The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones. Chinese proverb

The elevator to success is out of order. You'll have to use the stairs . . . one step at a time. Joe Girard

It is never too late to be what you might have been. George Eliot

Horizontal lines for writing notes.



Success Quotes

Happiness does not come from doing easy work but from the afterglow of satisfaction that comes after the achievement of a difficult task that demanded our best. Theodore Isaac Rubin

Whenever an individual or a business decides that success has been attained, progress stops. Thomas J. Watson

Whenever I hear, 'It can't be done,' I know I'm close to success. Michael Flatley

A man is what he thinks about all day long. Ralph Waldo Emerson (Think outlines all day long)

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere. Chinese proverb

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do. John Wooden

Many of life's failures are experienced by people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up. Thomas Edison

Under promise, over deliver. Tom Peters (Practise faster than the speed you will need)

One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency. Arnold H. Glasgow (Practise awkward outlines before they occur for real)

The swiftest horse cannot overtake a word once spoken. Chinese proverb (unless you are a shorthand writer)

Touch black paint, have black fingers. Chinese proverb (Keep the fountain pen clean!) (272 words)