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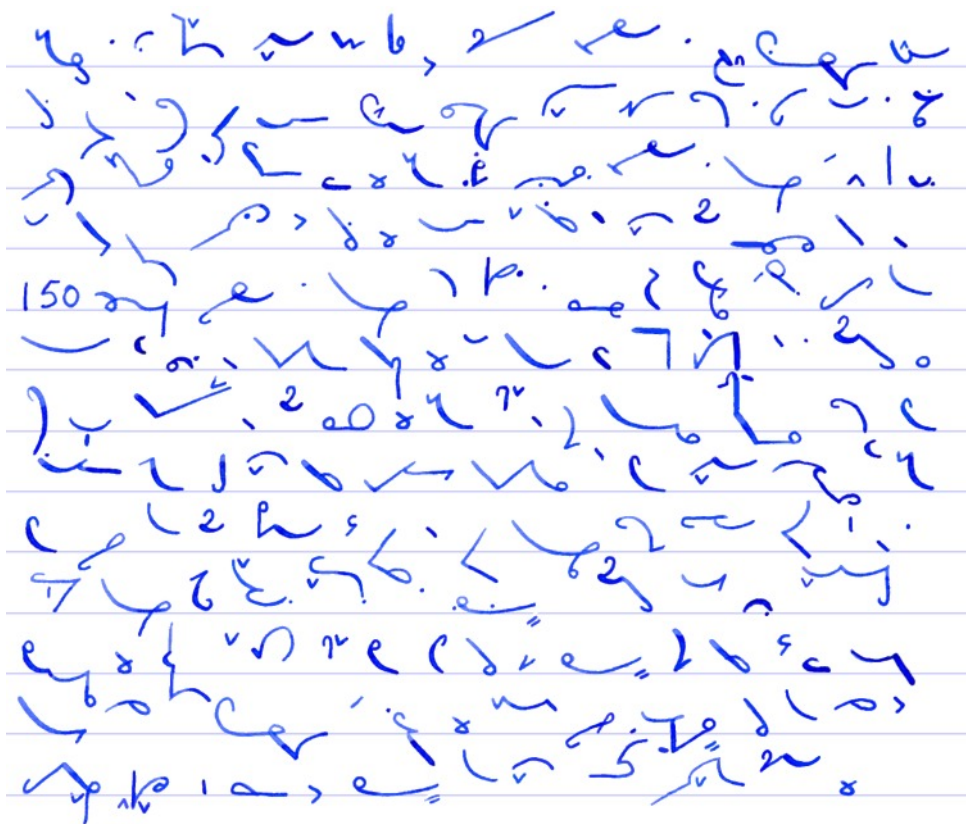
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PDF Date: 8 July 2020



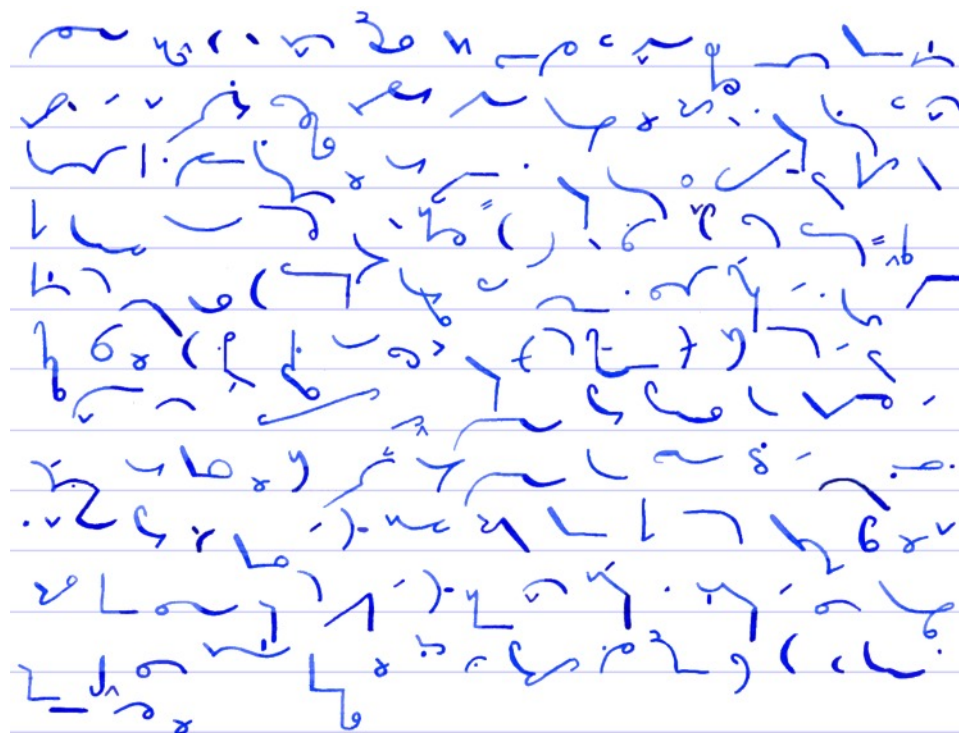
The Wrong Pencil

I have spent a lot of time writing about the advantages to the shorthand writer* of using a beautiful flexible fountain pen full of fresh juicy ink, flowing smoothly like oil from a well, in an endless river of precious black gold. I have conceded the merits of using a pencil, and how it need not be the poor relation of the pens. In fact* I passed all my shorthand exams, up to 150 words a minute*, using a pencil, or at least* a succession of them over the months, swapping one for another that seemed to perform better. Not being able to get hold of a shorthand pen is therefore no barrier to shorthand success. I have tried to see the benefits and drawbacks from every angle, and have done my best to recall the performance of every writing implement

that I have ever used for shorthand, starting with the cheapest of cheap pencils from the corner shop, on to a clutch pencil, and then finally acquiring a Senator shorthand pen in the mid 1970's. At that time I also tried several other pens but the Senator was the best, with the gold nib being the most flexible and comfortable. I now use the Noodler's pens for most of the website outlines but stick to the Senator for my occasional real-life* shorthand writing*.

* Omission phrases "in fact" "short(hand) writer" "words (a) minute" "rea(l) life" "short(hand) writing"

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



The Wrong Pencil

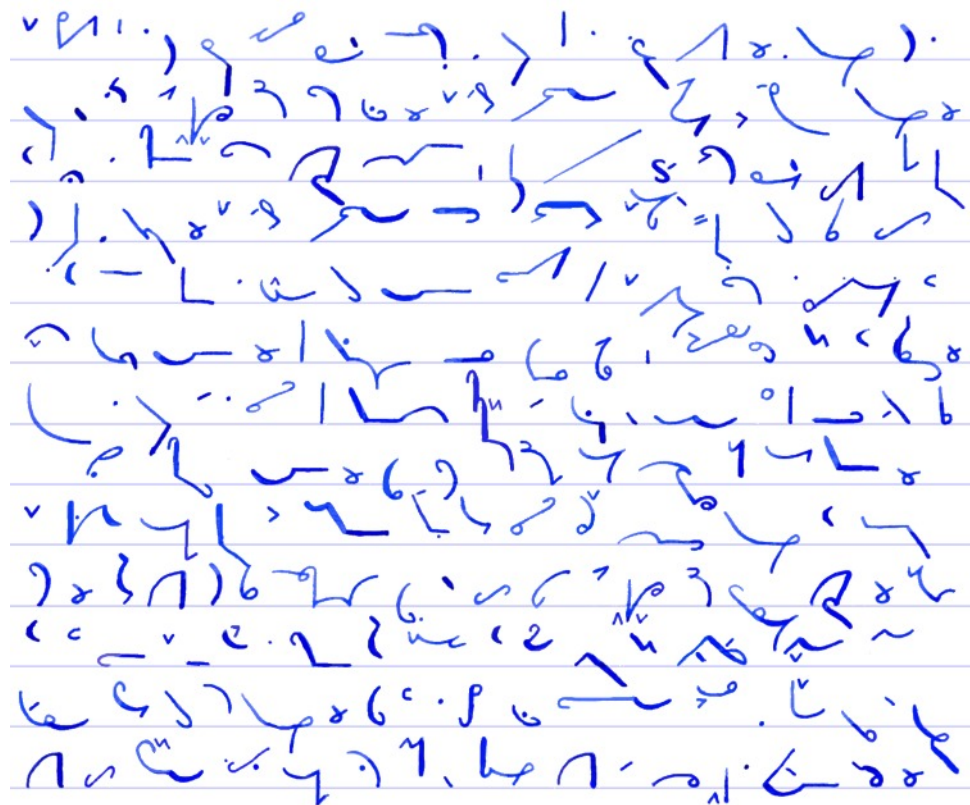
Last weekend* I found that all of my warnings about carelessness with writing instruments came back home to roost, and I relived the frustrations of using the wrong pencil. I went to a boot fair with my family at a local farm. In the UK a boot fair is where people turn up at the venue in their cars, full of items they wish to sell, either from clear-outs at home or maybe things they collect for the purpose, in order to* make a small profit, and a few regular traders as well. They set up tables in front of the boot (or trunk) of their car, and people like me wander round looking over the offerings for bargains and rummaging in the boxes. I was really only looking for garden plants and maybe casting an eye over the old books, and so I knew I would

be back at the car before the others. I always take something to do or read, and so I took my Ipod*, a notepad and some pencils, to take down some of my own* dictations. I can't let everyone else work through them without having a go myself.

* Omission phrases "Las(t w)eekend" "in ord(er to)"

* "Ipod" "Ipad" Always insert the second vowel, and also in "notepad" which could look similar

* "my own" Full stroke for own, as the N Hook would be "mine"



The Wrong Pencil

I started on an easy speed, and was soon covering the page at a comfortable rate. The pencil was a bit too hard, and the outlines were very faint. I stopped the recording and changed to the softer pencil. That made a darker more legible mark but it was rather blunt and very soon the wood at the tip was touching the paper. I stopped the recording again and grabbed the nylon-tipped pen which is one that can take a fountain pen ink cartridge, which I refill from a syringe with my favourite ink. It barely gives thicks and thins but I was not concerned about that on this occasion*. After a page and a half, it became drier and drier*, and faded to nothing as it gave up its last drop of ink. These three were the only implements I had in the bag. I delved into the depths of the handbag pocket, for the half size mechanical pencil that I keep there. Although the lead was extremely thin, all went well and the outlines were pleasingly* legible. I felt that with care I

could* avoid* a break although I knew that shorthand should be about robust writing and not fussing over the pen or pencil. Then with a sudden faint cracking noise the tiny piece of visible lead went flying away into the air and I had to advance the lead and miss out a chunk of words.

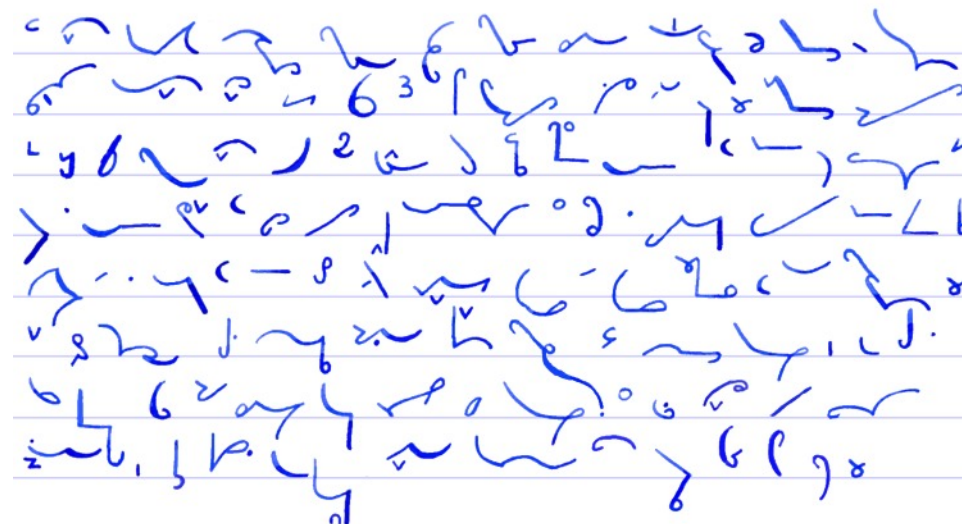
* "on this occasion" The shun hook of changes direction in this phrase to balance the outline, which helps to keep the stroke straight

* Omission phrase "dri(er and) drier" See more examples at www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing4-omission.htm#OmittingRepeatedSound

* "pleasingly" "pleasantly" Helpful to insert the vowel, as these are similar

* "I could" Not phrased, so it cannot be misread as "I can"

* "avoid" "evade" Always insert the vowel, as they are similar in outline and meaning



The Wrong Pencil

With my fourth implement proving less than* perfect, certain uncomfortable words began to form slowly* in my mind, "This is what you tell everyone else not to do." I began to wonder why I did not just bring my usual shorthand fountain pen, with its dark ink that I can see clearly on the page, an ink supply that will not run out unexpectedly as there is a window where I can check its level, and a nib that can stand up to writing the thinnest and thickest of strokes without any problem. I spent the remaining ten minutes of waiting time persevering with the mechanical pencil, but

if it had been a fast dictation then I would certainly have had to use the first pencil, as faint lines are merely annoying but it would at least* have continued writing for many more pages than the other three.

* "less than" Downward L to make a good join

* "slowly" Advisable to insert the vowel, as "slightly" could also make sense

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



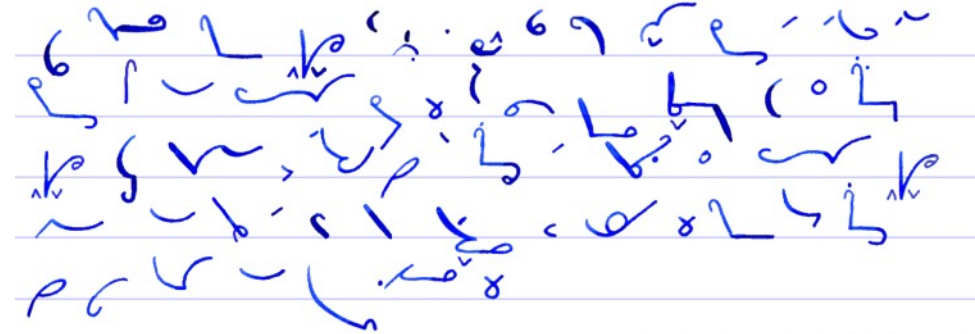
The Wrong Pencil

Obviously I was not treating the dictation as I would advise others to do. I should have continued with the first pencil until it wore down and then done the same with all the others even though it was only practice. I had brought bread but wanted cake. The shorthand pens were sitting at home crowded together in their mug, asking themselves why I had left them behind in a stuffy room and had not* taken them on an outing into the fresh air and given them a taste of working outside in the pleasant* countryside. When I arrived home, they were all standing in a row, frowning and looking at me reproachfully, saying, "We told you so, serves you right!" I accepted their reprimand and promised I would never do it again, and that if a hard pencil was all I had, I would keep going all the

way to the bell sound at the end of the dictation. They accepted my apology, and I hurriedly sneaked out into the garden to get the new plants in and recover my composure, and leave any further shorthand adventures until the evening. (998 words)

* "had not" Quicker to write separately, as the phrase would require the Hay dot and vowel dot, thus not saving any time, see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing7-misc.htm#contractedapostrophe

* "pleasingly" Keep clearly through the line and insert the first vowel, as "pleasantly" is similar in outline and meaning

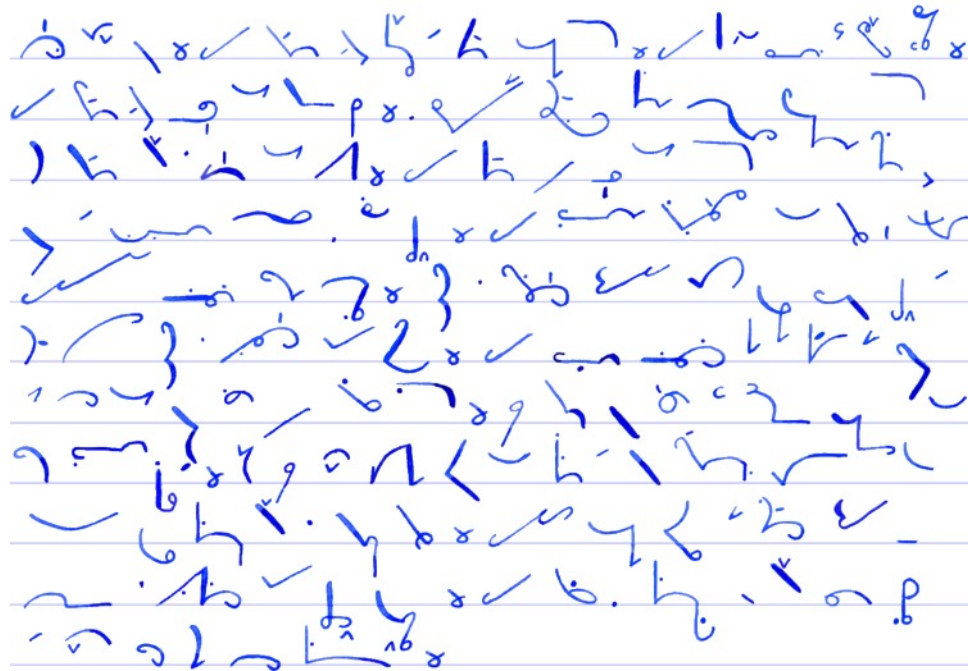


Omitted Sounds

These paragraphs practise outlines that omit a sound that is very lightly spoken and often not spoken at all in normal speech. Although some books describe them as contracted outlines, they do not belong to

the official list of contractions, and behave as normal outlines, written in position and able to be vocalised when necessary. Practice for the contraction list will follow in future articles.

Blank lined area for handwriting practice.



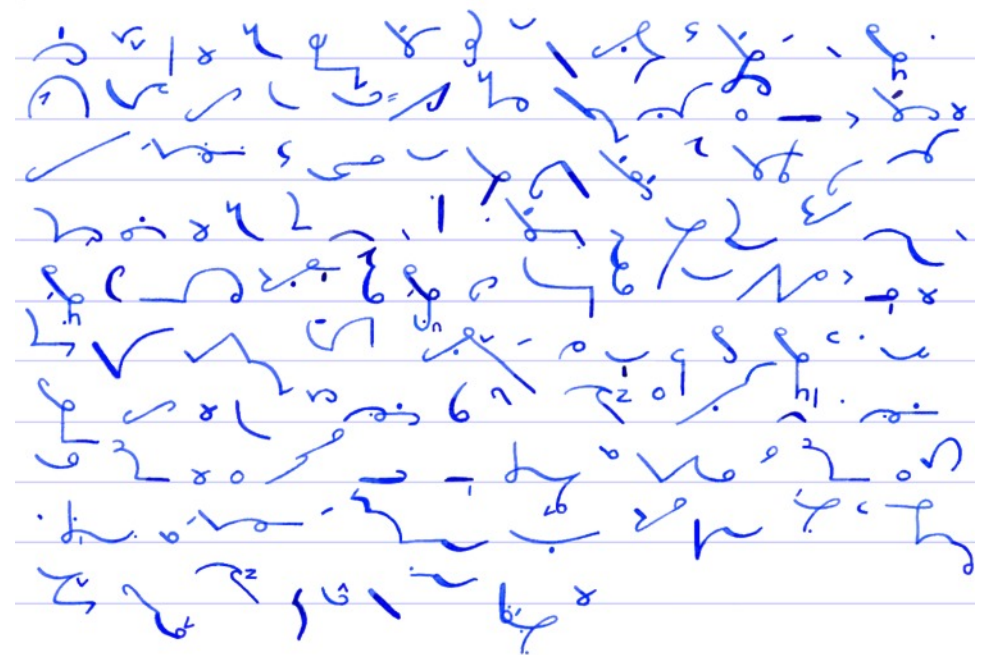
Omitted Sounds

Omission of light P. Omission of light P. We PUMPED up the tyres and JUMPED into the car. We had not* SKIMPED with the supply of sandwiches. We PLUMPED up the cushions in the back seat. The superior suspension DAMPED the movement every time the car was BUMPED by a hump in the road. We DUMPED our coats in the car, TRAMPED to the beach and ENCAMPED amongst the sand dunes. We CLAMPED the parasols in position but unfortunately* we were not EXEMPT from the midges. There was a PRESUMPTION that we would also visit the nearby town and so later on there was a RESUMPTION of our journey. We claimed EXEMPTION at the toll gate on the bridge and the man in the booth STAMPED our pass card. He appeared to be

SWAMPED with work undertaken in very CRAMPED conditions. I think he might hold the job in CONTEMPT and be PROMPTED to look for another, if he is TEMPTED by a better position. We went into the shops on the ASSUMPTION that we could make a REDEMPTION of our discount vouchers. We faced the TEMPTATION to buy some sweets and my friend was the main TEMPTER.

* "had not" Quicker to write separately, as the phrase would require the Hay dot and vowel dot, thus not saving any time, see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing7-misc.htm#contractedapostrophe

* "unfortunately" Optional contraction



Omitted Sounds

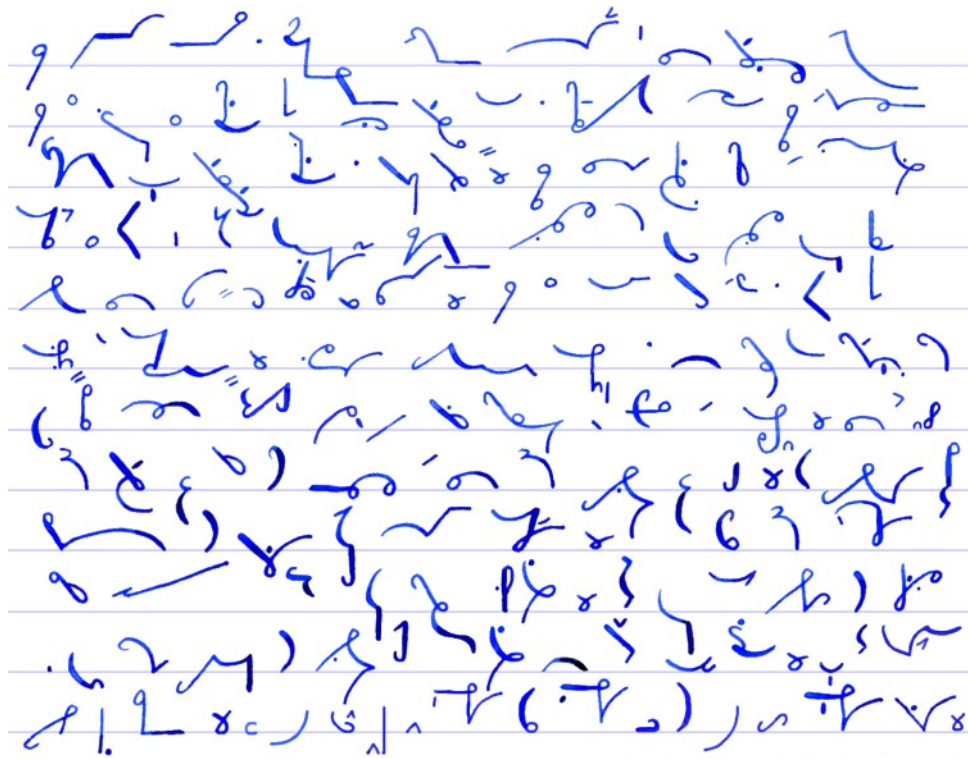
Omission of light T. I have instructed the POSTAL assistant not to be WASTEFUL with the POSTAGE STAMPS* and to SUBSTITUTE a lower value one for non-urgent items, before the mail is given to the POSTMAN. We are OPTIMISTIC that the increase in POSTAGE will be POSTPONED and that POSTAL charges will MOSTLY remain the same. I have asked him to add a POSTSCRIPT to this month's* newsletter saying that we may have to SUBSTITUTE* other colours of WAISTCOAT and that this SUBSTITUTION will not affect any returns of the goods. Ask the builder to repair the faulty WASTEPIPE and let us know when it has been SUBSTITUTED* with a new plastic one. If I am not MISTAKEN this particular employee has rarely made a MISTAKE in his work. His referees gave good

TESTIMONIALS of his performance and his work is also a TESTIMONY to his OPTIMISTIC and hardworking nature, always dealing HONESTLY* with customers, unlike the previous employee who was found to be acting DISHONESTLY.

* Omission phrase "pos(t)age s(t)amps" "to this (mon)th's" Stroke Ith is generally intersected for "month" but joined if more convenient

* subs(t)itute" Omits the first T

* "honestly" Always insert the first vowel, and the diphthong in "nicely", to differentiate

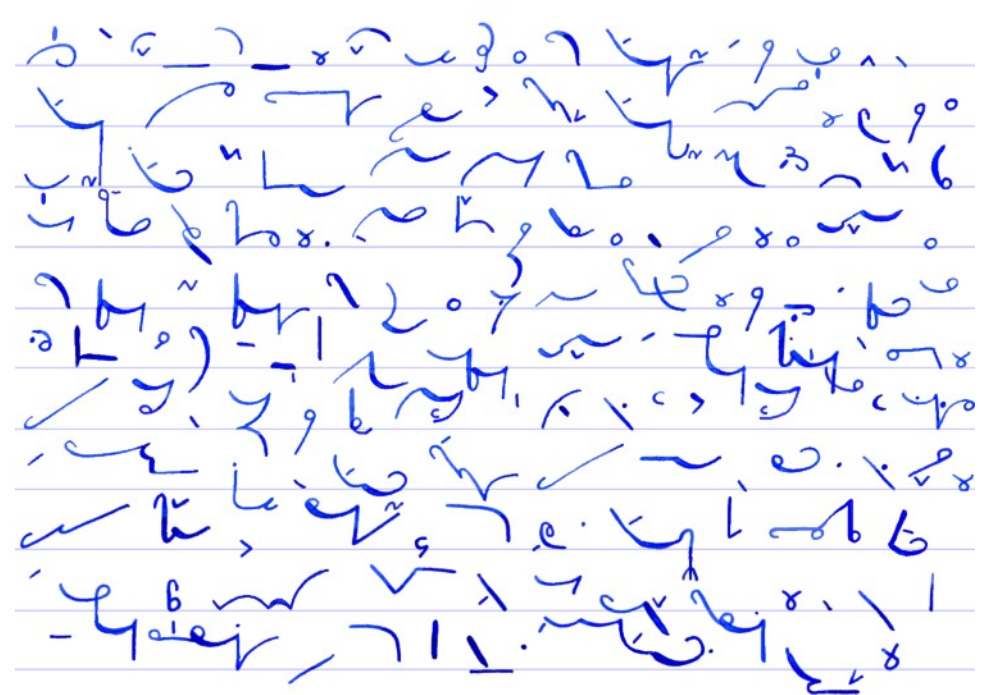


Omitted Sounds

He regularly carries a shorthand TEXTBOOK and practice material on some POSTCARDS and after he has completed his training at the main POST OFFICE in a TRUSTWORTHY manner, he is OPTIMISTIC that there will be no POSTPONEMENT of attaining a better position. He is smart, TASTEFULLY dressed and MANIFESTLY enjoys his job but I think eventually he will become RESTLESS or even LISTLESS if he does not receive some well-earned ADJUSTMENTS to his salary. He has in fact* been offered a job at the INSTITUTE* of Engineering. Consequently we have now INSTITUTED* an improved process for promoting from within as it is most important* that we do not lose our best personnel to other companies and INSTITUTIONS*. Some of the students were BOASTFUL when they passed their exams and some were WISTFUL when they did not. They WISTFULLY said that the subject matter was BEASTLY* and they had been marked UNJUSTLY. Others were

MODESTLY surprised and were glad that they had persevered STEADFASTLY. Although the food in the restaurant was TASTELESS, the view from the window was RESTFUL and had been VASTLY improved by the new planting. Note that the following use the T stroke. When she found out how COSTLY* this GHASTLY* gift was, she went GHOSTLY* pale.

- * Omission phrases "in (f)act" "mos(t) important"
- * "ins(t)itute, ins(t)itution" Omit the first T
- * "beastly" Distinguishing pair with "bestial" which includes the T stroke
- * "costly " "ghastly" "ghostly" Advisable to insert the vowel in these, especially as the last two are similar in meaning

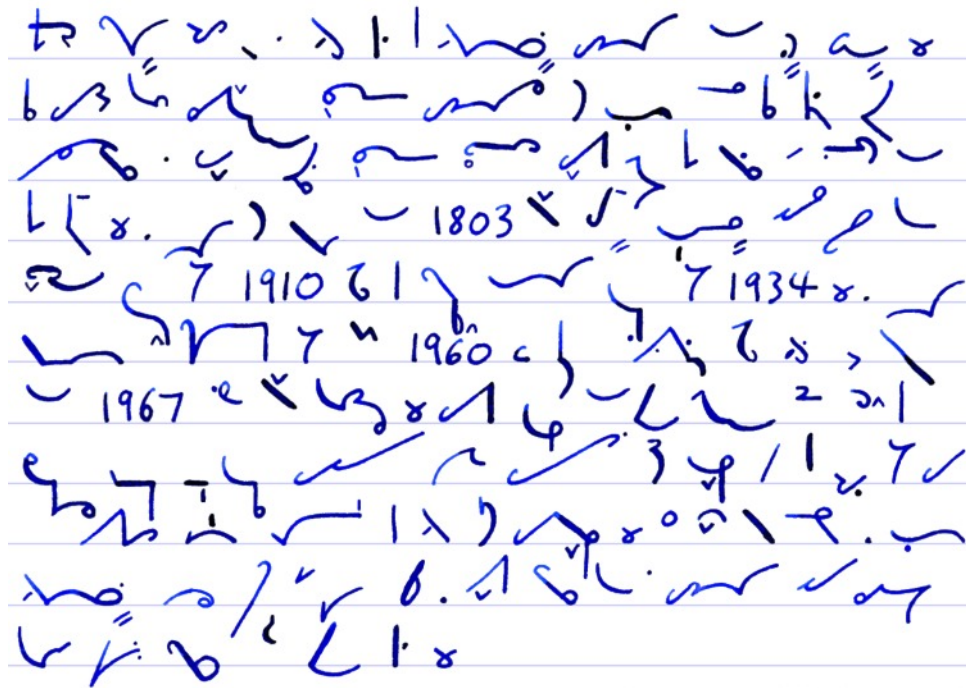


Omitted Sounds

Omission of light K or G. My new assistant is very PUNCTUAL and he knows how to PUNCTUATE* letters correctly, using all the appropriate* PUNCTUATION marks. However he has no COMPUNCTION about taking long lunch breaks and I have warned him about this in the STRONGEST* possible terms. The LONGEST* time he was absent is two hours. His handwriting is very DISTINCT and I DISTINCTLY remember seeing his neatly written application form. He gained a DISTINCTION in his Arts Degree and is therefore quite good at reading INDISTINCT handwriting and EXTINCT and DEFUNCT forms of script. We are ANXIOUS to ensure he does not LANGUISH on low pay, with all the ANGUISH that entails, and in order that he can continue to FUNCTION properly*, we are going to SANCTION a pay rise. We were driving to the SANCTUARY when the

car suffered a PUNCTURE at the crossroads JUNCTION and INSTINCT told us to immediately park up in the nearby PRECINCT. To put it quite SUCCINCTLY, our car had become a NON-FUNCTIONING vehicle. (806 words)

- * "punctuate" Note the use of two T strokes, and not halving, similarly effectuate, fluctuate.
- * "strongest, longest" These are optional alternatives to the full outline using the G stroke. There is no reason not to use the shorter versions, as they do not clash with anything.
- * "properly" Insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately", as they are similar in outline and meaning

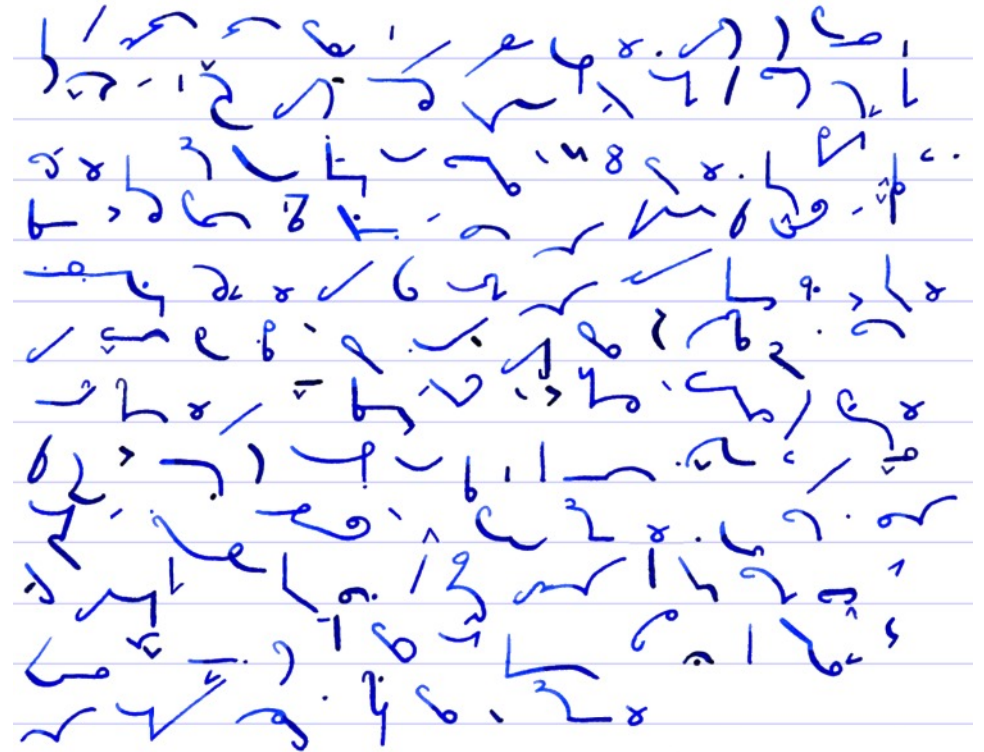


Upminster Windmill

At the beginning of April I went to an open day at Upminster windmill in East London. It is one of the few surviving smock windmills, so named because its tapered shape resembles a white shepherd's smock garment, wide and full at the base, and gathered in at the top. The mill was built in 1803 by John Noakes and was used for grinding flour* until 1910, and then it produced animal feed until 1934. The mill became derelict until about 1960 when it was repaired and then opened to the public in 1967, staffed by volunteers. We had visited in January and having walked

around it several times to get good photos, we were left wondering what was inside, which had to wait until we returned home to look it up on their website. As might be expected, the name Upminster means church on the hill, just the right place for a windmill, and we certainly felt the chilly breezes on that January day.

* "flour" The outline for "flower" has a triphone, as it is considered to be two syllables. It is a useful distinction to make for the shorthand writer, although not always discernible in ordinary speech.



Upminster Windmill

It was much warmer and more pleasant* on our recent visit. The weather was overcast but mild, and on arrival we saw cars pulling up onto the large grassy area at the front. Tours were being conducted in groups of about eight people. The tour started outside with a description of the former cottages, bakery and steam mill, which are now just foundations and excavated areas. We then entered the mill and were taken straight to the top. We climbed several sets of steep narrow wooden steps, although ladders* would be a more accurate term. Our guide described the operation of all the items of equipment on each floor. Just seeing all the gear was interesting in itself, but it came alive with our guide's knowledgeable* and comprehensive explanations of how everything worked. The view from a small open window at the top seemed much

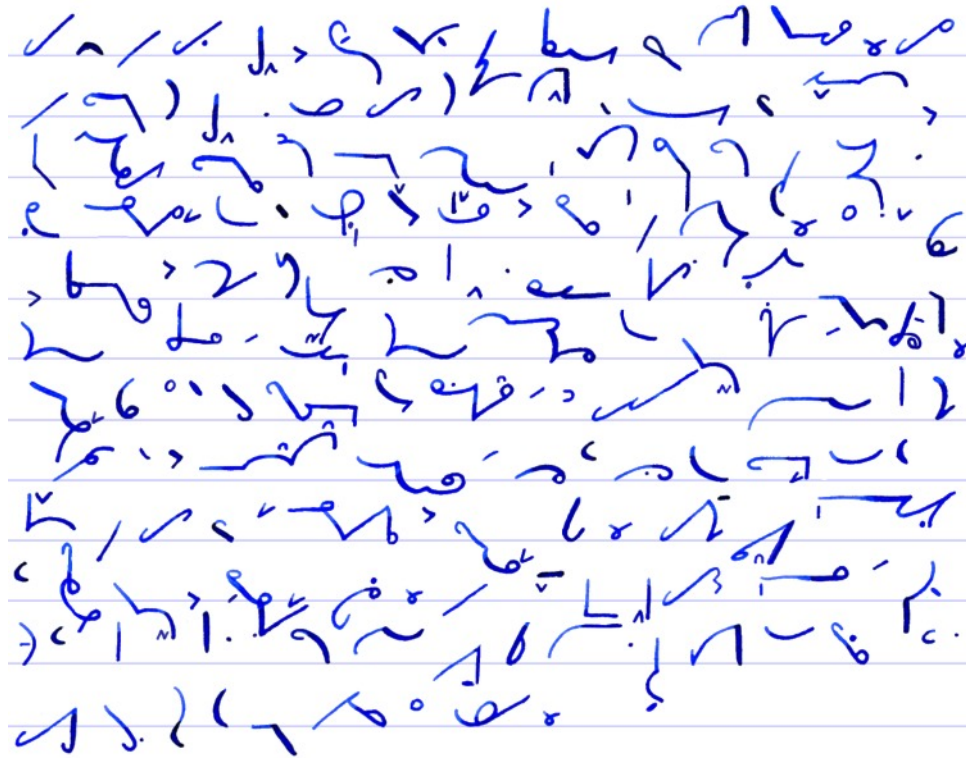
higher than the windmill had appeared from the ground and the chinks of light coming through odd places in the timber walls made it obvious that the mill interior must have been* a draughty place to work.

* "pleasant" "pleasing" Helpful to insert the first vowel

* "ladders" L is not doubled for "-der.-ther" unless it is part of a longer outline such as "stepladder"

* "knowledgeable" Based on the contraction for "knowledge", it is same outline as an unvocalsed "enjoyable", this latter should have the diphthong written in, to distinguish

* Omission phrase "must (have) been"

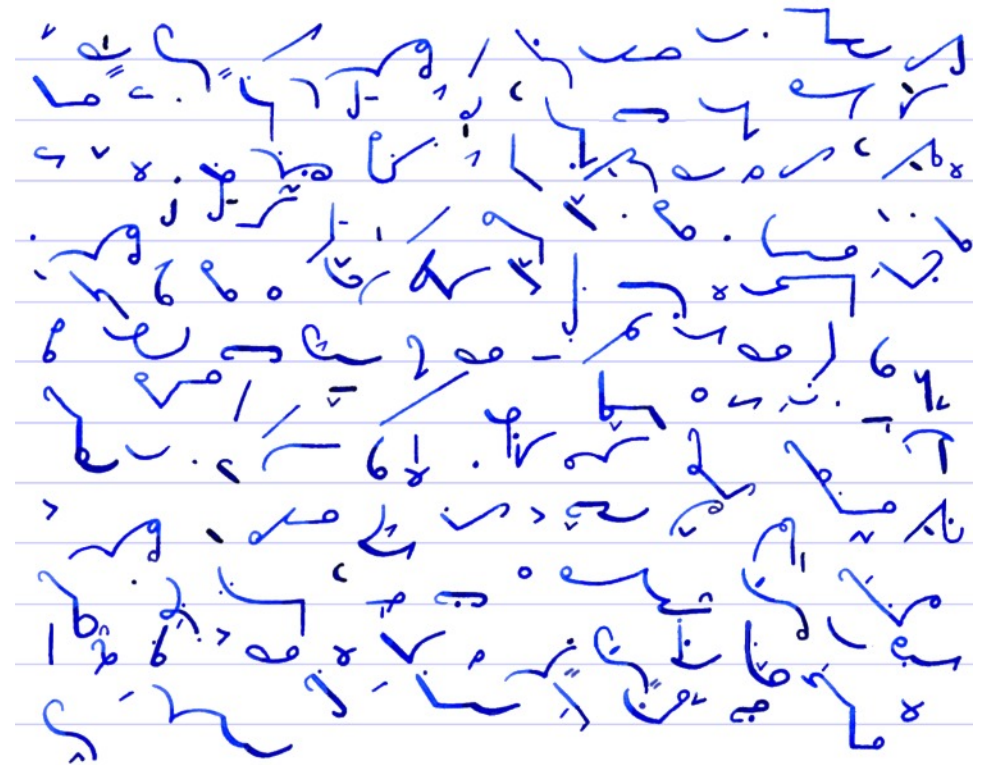


Upminster Windmill

We made our way down to the floor below, gingerly* descending the steep ladder backwards. Once our group was down, the next one was allowed to enter the building and climb to the top, and in this way the groups were kept moving but also separate* from each other, ensuring a safe experience for all, necessitated by the tightness of the space on each level. As I listened to the descriptions* of the machinery*, I was continually amazed* at how a single turning shaft could be made to do so many tasks, and include so many mechanisms for power control and adjustments*. Obviously this has all been perfected over the centuries and what we were looking at was the result of all the accumulated inventions and improvements that men have created in that time, each one building on the expertise of the previous generation*. We saw the huge cogwheel* that transfers the power to the subsidiary wheels. Our guide took out one of the cogs and showed us that it had a

very long root, just like a tooth, held in place with a wooden pin, so that they could be replaced as necessary.

- * "gingerly" Optional contraction
- * "separate" Keep the T full length, as "separated" would also make sense here
- * "amaze" and "amuse" Always insert the vowels
- * "descriptions" The singular is a contraction but the plural is a full outline, so that it does not look like "discourse" which has a similar meaning
- * "machinery" Optional contraction
- * "adjustments" Omits the lightly sounded T
- * "wheel" Written with two strokes here, in order to be able to join.
- * "generation" Optional contraction

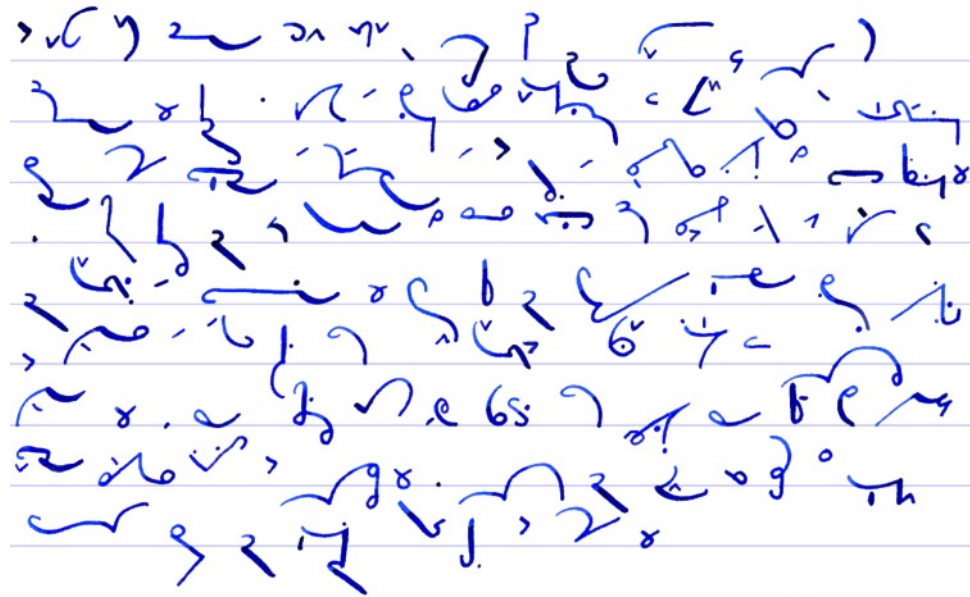


Upminster Windmill

On the Stone Floor* are the millstones, each pair enclosed in an octagonal wooden box called a vat or tun, and the chutes that feed* the grain into the central hole called the eye. The bedstone remains stationary* and the top runner stone is the one that rotates. The millstones do not actually touch but are separated by a space the thickness of a piece of paper, and this space is finely adjustable by the tentering* gear. Incorrect operation, such as insufficient grain flowing through the stones, could result in the stones touching thus producing sparks, which our guide rather understatedly described as "not a good idea in a building like this!" A small transparent perspex model of the millstones, two circles showing the pattern of the grinding lines, illustrated how the rotation produces a scissoring effect that cuts the grain, as centrifugal force propels it towards the edges of the stones. Below is the Meal Floor containing devices for sifting the flour and

removing bran, and bagging* up the various grades of products.

- * "Stone Floor" Using initial capitals, to retain the sense of the floor name (the floor where the stones are located), rather than an adjective "floor made of stone". These two versions would be pronounced with the emphasis on different syllables, and shorthand needs to reflect that.
- * "feed" Vowel needed, as "fed" would also make sense
- * "stationary" The Shun hook written on this side in order to join the R. "Station" on its own has the hook on the other side, as per normal rules
- * "tentering" This outline also reads "tendering". If necessary, you could abandon the dictionary outline and write T + N + Tr + Dot Ing, to ensure a more accurate reading of an unusual term
- * "bagging" Keep clearly thick, as "packing"



Upminster Windmill

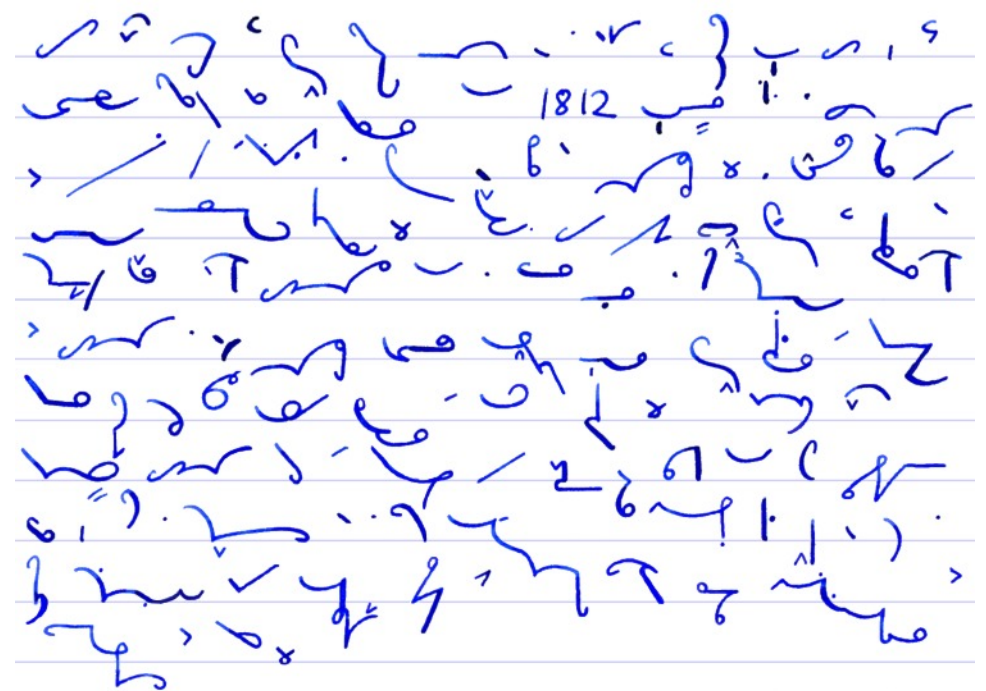
All the while I was walking around, I tried to imagine what it would have been* like when the mill was working. It would have been a health and safety officer's nightmare, with giant pieces of unprotected spinning machinery* groaning and rumbling, and all the bins and hoppers rattling as the grain descended. The trap doors would be heard banging as the sacks of grain were hoisted up and the whole building would be vibrating and creaking. Flour dust would be everywhere, causing severe irritation to the lungs and often death from fibroid phthisis*, commonly

called miller's lung. The stone dressers also suffered this complaint from inhaling stone dust as they renewed the grinding surface pattern of the millstones. The miller would be shouting to his assistant, as no doubt normal speech would be inaudible above the din of the machinery*.

* Omission phrase "would (have) been"

* "machinery" Optional contraction

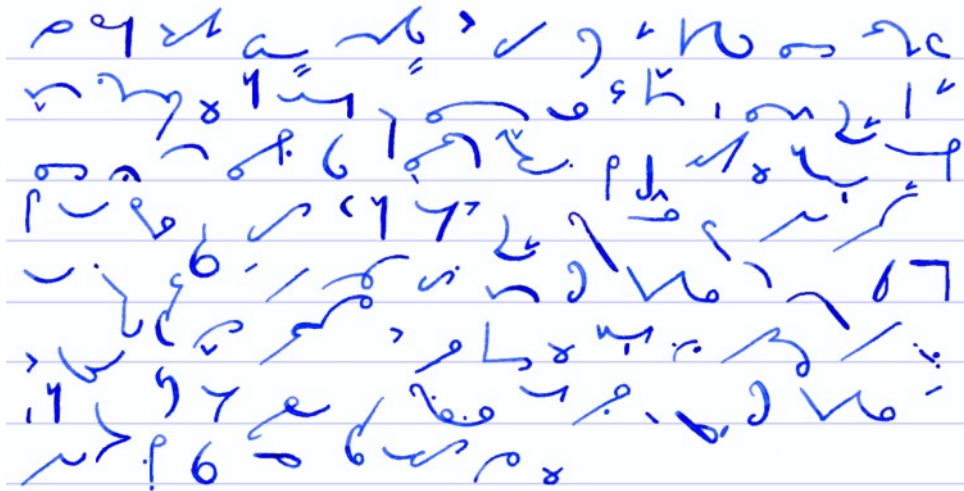
* "phthisis" The PH is silent, so outline is similar to "thesis"



Upminster Windmill

One might imagine that flour production came to a halt when there was no wind, but with the increasing prosperity of his business, in 1812 Noakes added a steam mill to the rear which operated a further two sets of millstones. The foundations of this are undergoing excavation at present. Finally we reached the ground floor, with displays of archaeological finds, model windmills in a glass case, a larger working model of the windmill, an old millstone, photographs, newspaper cuttings, flour

containers and packaging bags throughout the years, as well as the necessary souvenirs and information table. I am sure my Upminster windmill pen and pencil are identical to those sold in other historic buildings but they are a reminder of a very informative and interesting day out, to see a treasured remnant of our industrial heritage and the remarkable skills and inventiveness of the craftsmen of the past. (1006 words)



Marathon 2015

Last Sunday I watched the London Marathon all the way through, on the television screen and from the comfort of my armchair. I had intended to do some other* things with the time, but somehow seeing it on the screen made me hesitate, then hover, and finally sit down and watch. I have no interest at all in sports, but this is one that I do enjoy seeing, probably because people are not* really in competition with each other, and are mostly wanting to improve their own performance, or maybe just get to the

finish line regardless of the hours taken. I know the elite runners are competing, but I do feel that they are only using each other's presence in the race to boost their own performance, and are not *setting themselves against anyone else.

* "some other" Doubling to represent "other"

* "are not" In full, not using halving and N Hook, as in most other phrases that would look too much like "will not"



Marathon 2015

Although I have seen it many times before, I am always amazed* at how many people have made the bold and courageous decision to apply for a place, been accepted, done as much training as they can, and have turned up on the day, ready and willing to put their absolute* best effort into running the 26.2 miles around London's roads. This year over 38,000* runners took part, starting in a Royal Park and ending up at a Royal Residence and a large percentage were running to raise money for charities. Whilst watching the elite runners, I admire their skill and endurance, as they are obviously not getting out of breath in the first mile as we armchair viewers would be likely to do! They settle into a consistent regular pace and it is interesting how some of them* let

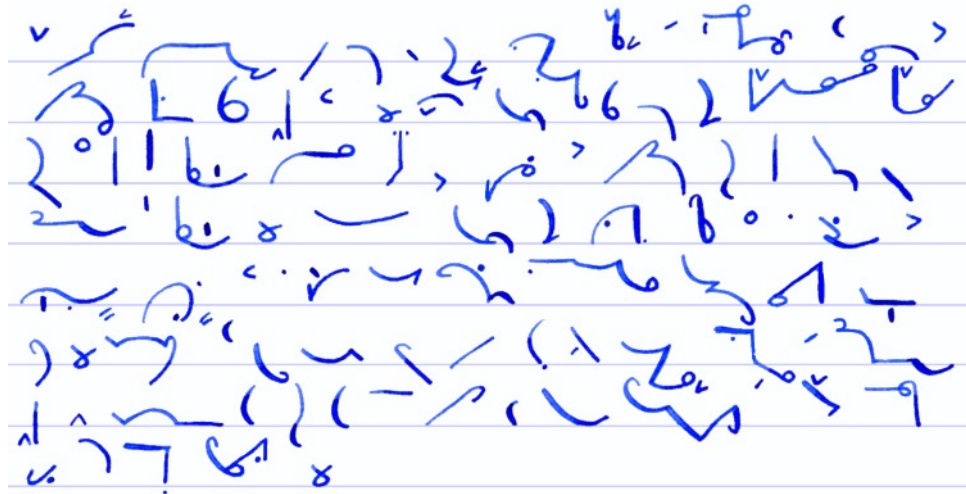
another become the leader of the group and keep themselves behind for most of the route. The exciting part is when they start to break up in the last mile or so, and make their sprint towards the finish line, and that seems to be* where the competitive aspect becomes more apparent.

* "amaze" and "amuse" Always insert the vowel

* "absolute" and "obsolete" Always insert the first vowel

* "38,000" Use stroke Ith for thousand only with normal numerals

* Omission phrases "some (of) them" "seems (to) be"



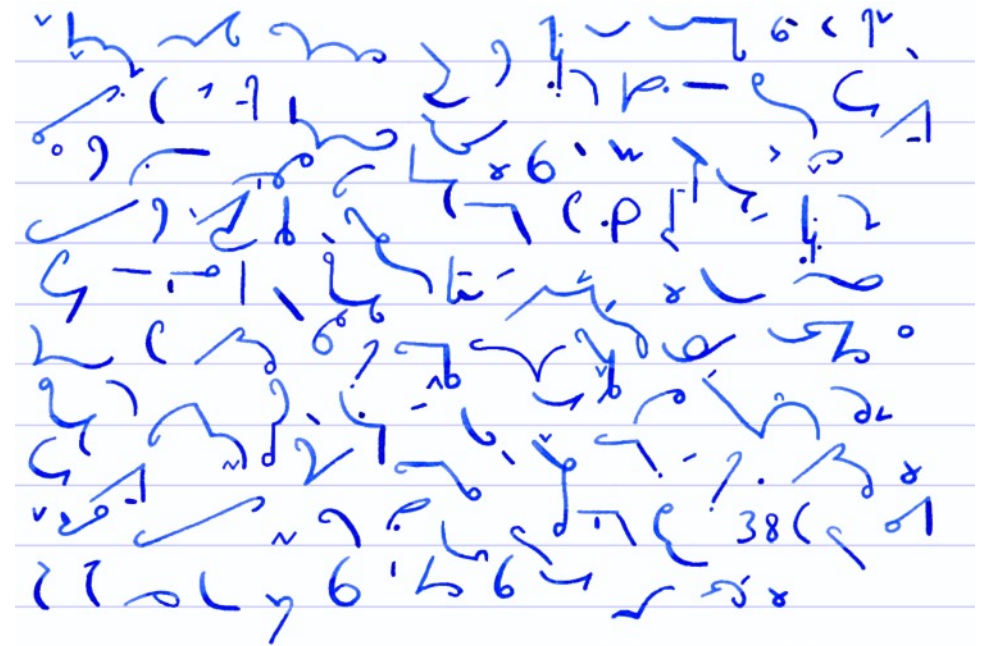
Marathon 2015

I really look forward* each year to seeing the imaginative ideas and costumes that some of the runners deck themselves out with. My favourite this year was the tyrannosaurus dinosaur, especially as it had its own legs, attached to the heels of the runner, so that it appeared to be walking on its own. Another favourite was the lady dressed as a painting of the Mona Lisa, with

a hole in the framed canvas for her own head to go through. I am sure that even now people are thinking up ingenious get-ups and working out how to make them, so that they can run without being overburdened by the extra weight or getting overheated.

* Omission phrase "look fo(r)ward"

Blank lined paper for notes.



Marathon 2015

I admire the marathon frame of mind*, pushing through and defeating any negative thoughts that try to hinder them, and the utter* determination to finish, or at least* go as far along the route as their leg muscles will take them. This is all about the "battlefield of the mind" where their original decision to persevere can be either swayed, toppled and defeated, or the challenge can cause it to be strengthened, toughened and reinforced. Being amongst so many other runners, as well as the cheering crowds, clearly provides the necessary encouragement, as strength or willpower threatens to fade, and even in the less popular* areas along the route, there are groups of bystanders clapping and cheering the runners. I always wonder how the very

last few people cope, as they have 38,000 people ahead of them, and they must have to cheer themselves on much more than* those in the middle and front.

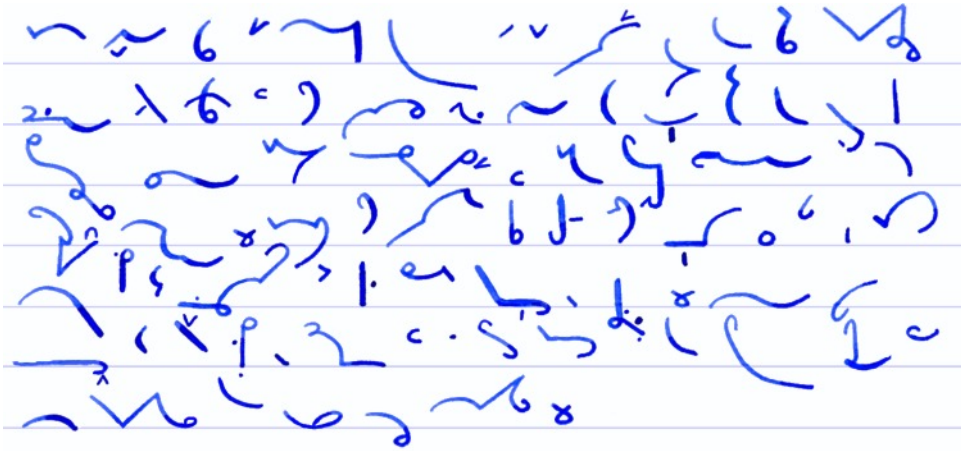
* Omission phrases "frame (of) mind" "much mo(re tha)n"

* "utter" "true" Always insert the vowel as these are similar in outline and meaning, likewise "utterly, truly"

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

* "popular" Keep the Ar curved, so it does not look like "populated" which would also make sense

Blank lined paper for notes.

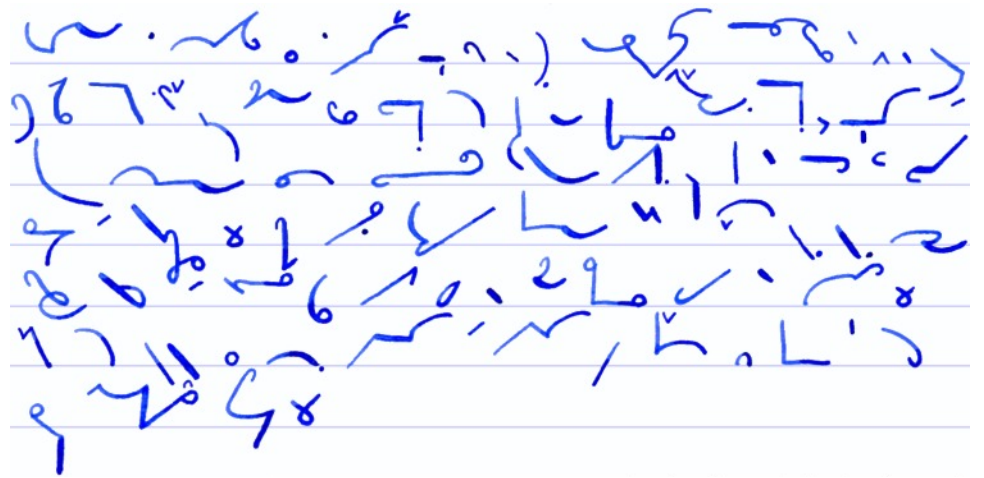


Marathon 2015

I am writing this on the Monday after, and I really feel for all those participants waking up this morning with their limbs and feet letting them know that they have pushed it as far as possible*, something I only experience when I have overdone the gardening or furniture moving. I am sure they are relieved it is done and their goal is achieved, but also maybe sad that the

exhilaration of the day has now begun to dissipate. Many will counter that by setting to work with a plan of action for further training in order to* improve performance for next year's marathon.

* Omission phrases "as far as poss(ible)"
"in ord(er to)"



Marathon 2015

Following a marathon is a really good opportunity to see inspirational examples of how to push through and this can be applied to your shorthand writing* efforts, gritting your teeth under difficulties, and finally getting to the goal, and, after making some corrections, being ready to do it all again, with greater skill and better results*. During the race they were talking

about "my PB" meaning Personal Best and of course, these are the first two shorthand strokes we all learned. I hope your PB is improving regularly and rapidly each time you take on your own speed and endurance challenge. (802 words)

* Omission phrases "short(hand) writing"
"better (re)sults"