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Blogs - 2017 - February

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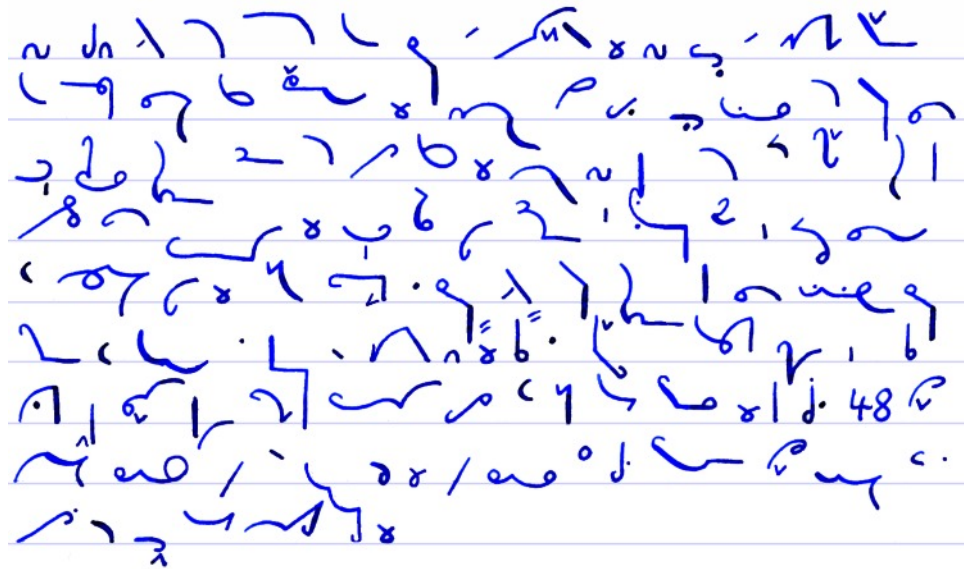
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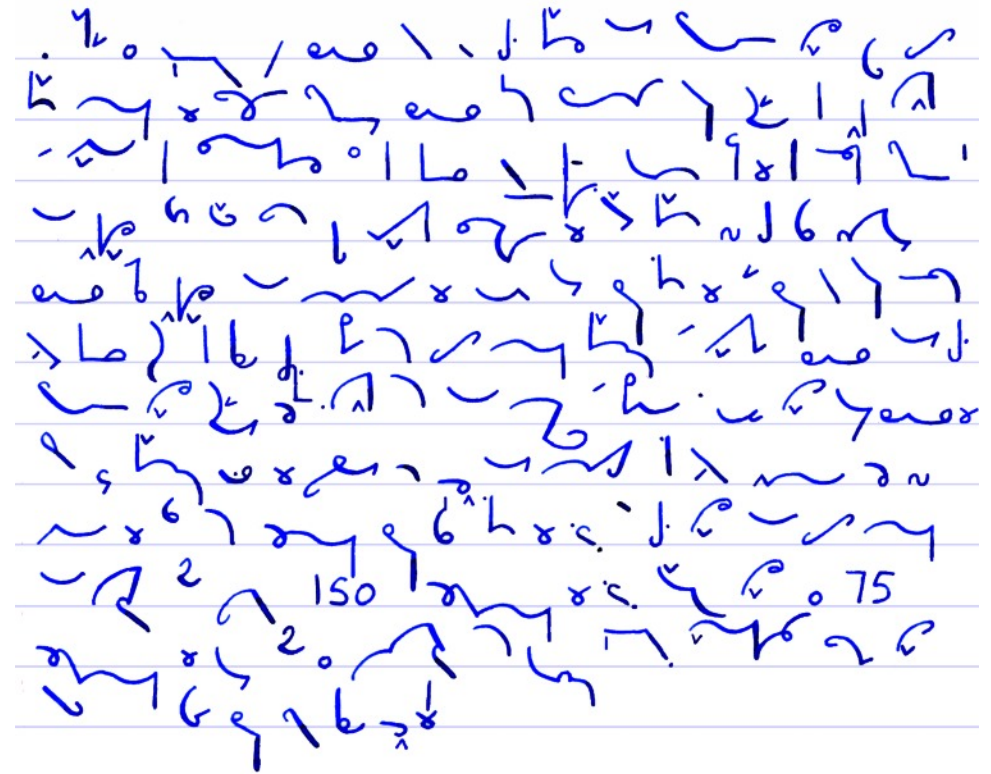
Speed Up Pad

You have tuned up your car for speed and reliability. You have cleaned and oiled the bike for extra smooth fast cycling. You may have lost weight, gained fitness or bought some cushioned trainers so that you can walk or run faster. Maybe you have defragged your hard drive so that it responds more quickly. None of those will work on shorthand, but here is something that most certainly* will. I have created a Speed Up Pad, so that you can do some intensive speed practice without having a

dictator to help you. It is a type of facility drill, but it is laid out slightly differently from the normal ones that I do for the blogs. It contains 48 line length sentences, each of 15* words. Each sentence has 10* blank lines underneath with a running word count in the margin.

* Omission phrase "mos(t) certainly"

* "ten" and "eighteen" Must have the vowel written in



Speed Up Pad

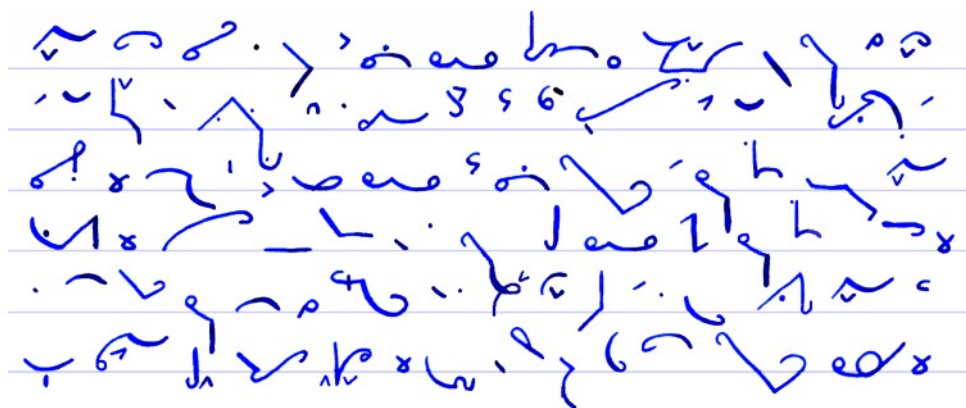
The idea is to copy each sentence up to ten times in the blank lines within one timed minute. Firstly* practise the sentence on your normal pad, saying it out loud and writing it as many times as it takes to become* totally familiar with it. Do extra practice on any outlines that you find more difficult to write smoothly. By the time you have done this, you will have the sentence and its outlines in memory. Now for the speed attempt. On the Speed Up pad, cover up the text so that it does not distract, start your one minute timer, and write the sentence in the ten blank lines, saying the words out loud or in imagination, and starting a new line for each sentence. Stop when the timer ends. Using the word

counts in the margin, add up how many words you have written. That is your words a minute* speed on this attempt. Completing all ten lines in one minute in legible shorthand will be 150 words per minute. Completing five lines is 75 words per minute. If the shorthand is illegible, or if you were* copying mindlessly from the line above, then the speed number does not count!

* "Firs(t)ly" Omits the T

* "to become" Based on the short form phrase "to be"

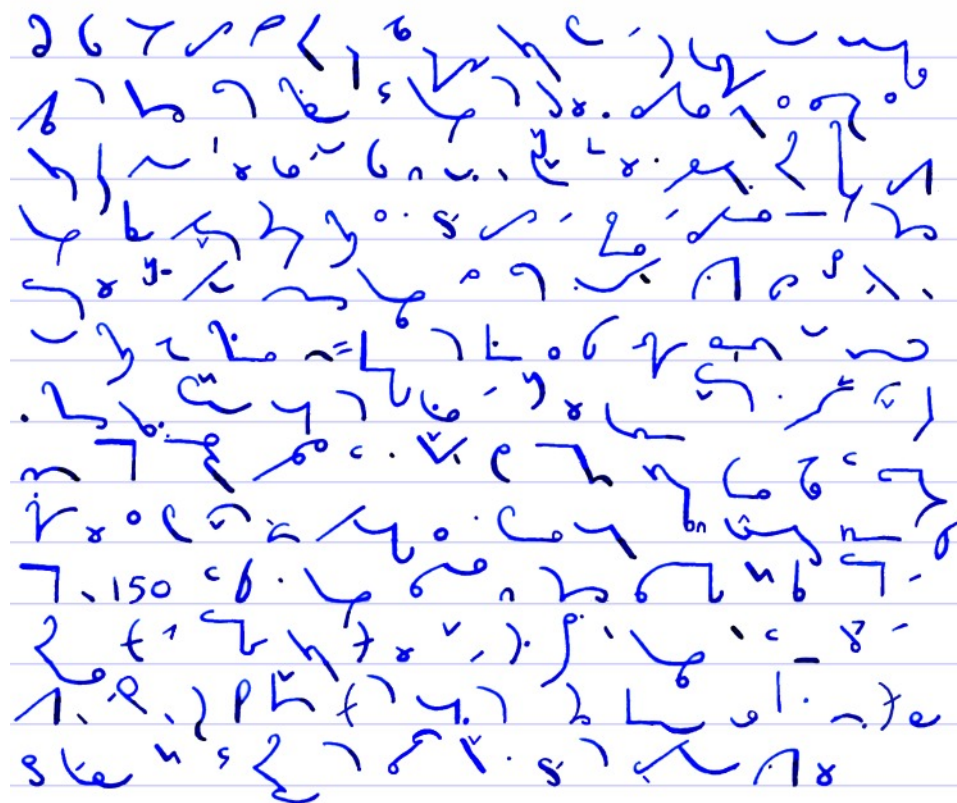
* Omission phrases "words (a) minute" "if you (w)ere"

**Speed Up Pad**

Writing more than half a page of the same sentence at one time* is unlikely to be productive, as the mind and hand tire of repetition beyond a certain point, with the thoughts wandering and the hand wavering and hesitating. Move on to the next sentence, with the same preparation and speed attempt, to keep the writing varied.

Later on come back to a previously done sentence and do the speed attempt again. An important part of speed improvement is the cultivation of a light touch and an even rate of writing, with no slowing down between outlines. If you have to stop to think, then more preparation is necessary.

* "at one time" Halving for the T of "time"

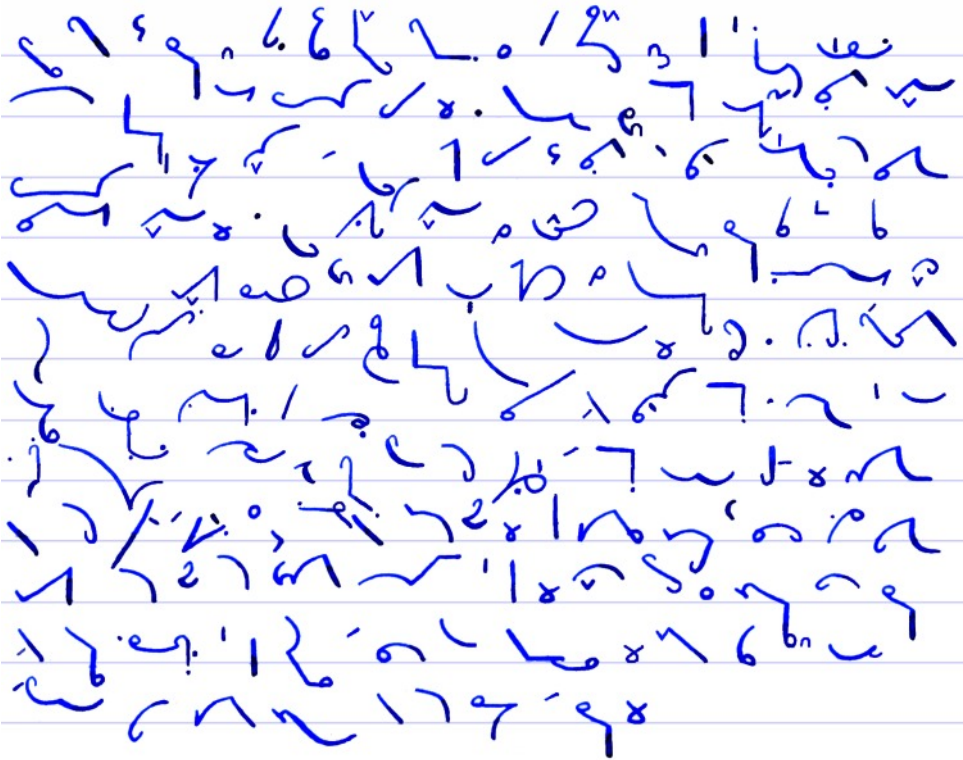
**Speed Up Pad**

There is then only one last job to do, and that is to turn the paper over and see if there are any indentations, ridges or bumps from pressing with the pencil or pen. The surface should be as smooth as before it was written on. If it is not, then you need to identify why. A reasonably sharp traditional wood pencil does not require so much pressure as a blunt one, and hooks and circles can remain clear. I don't recommend mechanical pencils as the very narrow lead will not stand up to any pressure and if it breaks mid-dictation, your take is well and truly scuppered, not to mention the broken piece flying into your face and eyes. If you can acquire a really light touch, you may get acceptable results with a biro, as they can be made to produce thicks and thins with

careful control. As ever, my ultimate recommendation is a flex nib fountain pen, but you can still get to 150 with just a pencil, as long as you remain selective about its quality and sharpness (and the quality of the paper). I should say "stash* of pencils", all with good points and ready to swap to, so that study time (or indeed your assignment taking notes at a meeting) is not spent fussing about with the sharpener or hampered* by a blunt or wobbling lead.

* "stash" Not in dictionary. Ish goes down after stroke T and up after stroke D

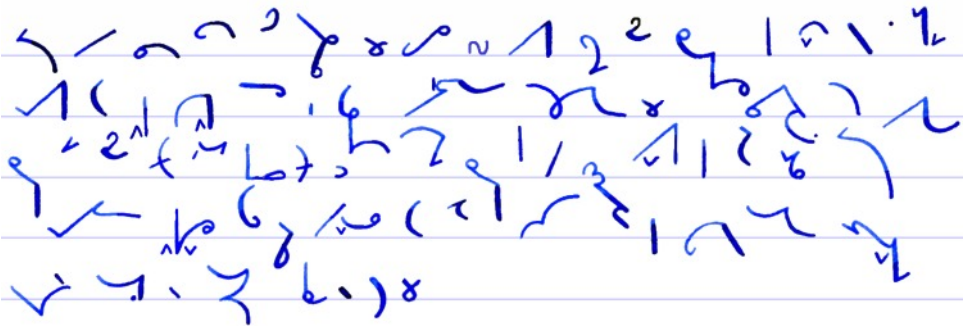
* "hampered" This is a halved Imp stroke, hooked for R. Without the thickening it would be "hammered"



Speed Up Pad

Please remember that the speed you achieve with this type of practising is much higher than you would do on continuous unseen matter dictated in the normal way. The benefit is that you get into the habit of writing quickly, neatly, lightly and evenly, and do away with the habit of slow, uneven or heavy-handed writing. An even rate of writing is the foundation of future speed, which is why it is beneficial to write sentences that you already know, and it also has the effect of calming the mind so that learning is not just one stressful dictation after another. There is a Latin

proverb for this "Festina lente" which means "Hurry up slowly", getting a move on in a controlled orderly manner, and without tripping over your own shoelaces and getting nothing done. You will have to be your own judge and jury as to the acceptability of your shorthand. It helps to imagine that someone else will have to read your shorthand, or that you will be marked on it. My plan is to produce more Speed Up pads concentrating on different aspects and some for beginners. I hope this new offering will help to bring up your skill and speed. (891 words)

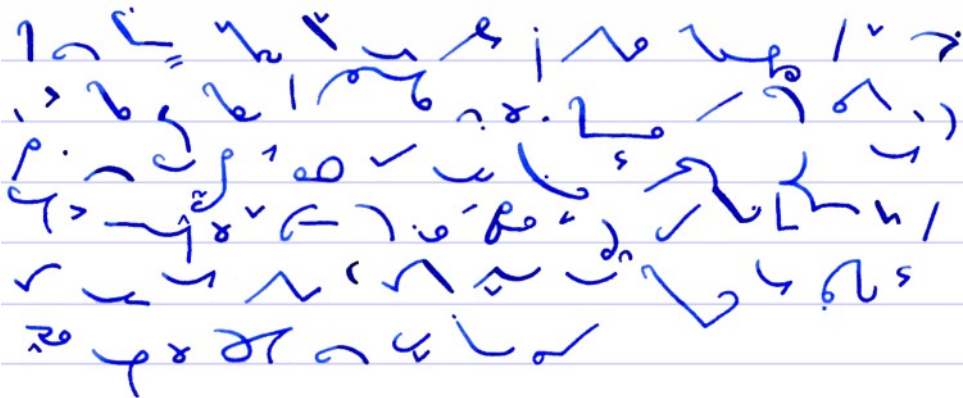


Short Letters 10

Here are some more short passages. Once you have read through the shorthand several times, it might be an idea to read them out loud again, but this time recording yourself. Hopefully your reading speed on the shorthand (not the text)

would match the speed at which you would be able to write it, although I think it is harder to recall outlines than to just recognise them and that little difference will be enough to provide the pull needed to ensure it is not too easy.

Handwritten practice lines for the 'Short Letters 10' section. The lines are blank, intended for the user to practice writing the shorthand passages.

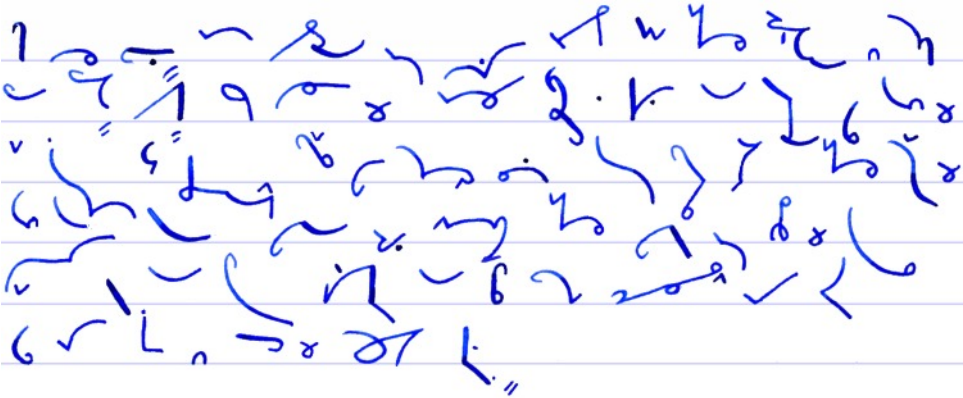


Short Letters 10

Dear Mr Black, I hope you have* by now received the committee reports and financial statements* which I emailed* to all the members who were* present at last month's meeting. The directors are very happy to see such an improvement in our situation and the success of our new venture with the refurbished showroom in the north of the county. I welcome your comments and suggestions on the issues we talked about, which I will include in the report that I will be writing, in preparation for the consultation with the

accountants next month. Your sincerely, Mr White, Company Secretary (100 words)

- * Omission phrase "I (h)ope you have" "who (w)ere"
- * "financial statements" You cannot use this phrase for "finance statements" which should be written separately. If you must have a phrase for that, then use the large Ses circle to indicate the two S sounds in the middle.
- * "emailed" Insert first vowel, as it is similar to "mail"

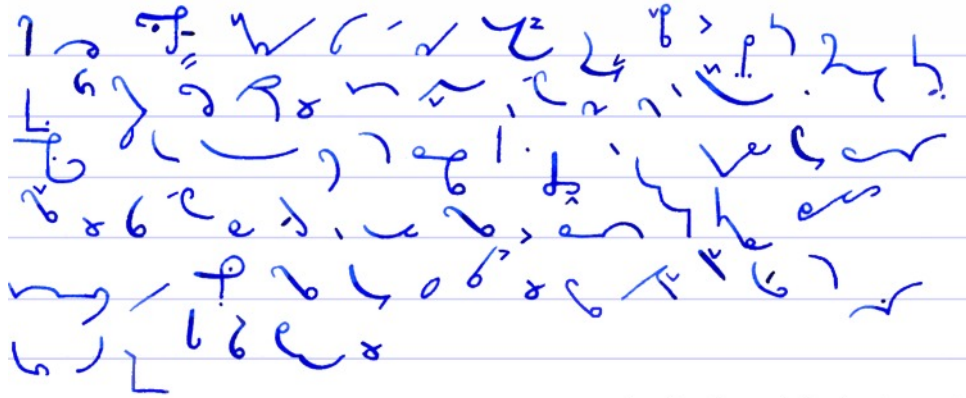


Short Letters 10

Dear Miss Gray, I am responding to your email* of yesterday about the items of clothing you ordered in our North Road store last week*. I am sorry that there has been a delay in obtaining these for you. I confirm that the discounted price will remain the same for your purchase, until the items arrive. Thank you for being willing to wait and I am sure the items will be to your satisfaction. If there is likely to be any further hold-up in deliveries from

the warehouse to our shop, then I will contact you again. Yours sincerely*, Debbie (100 words)

- * "email" Insert first vowel, as it is similar to "mail"
- * Omission phrases "Yours si(n)cerely", with downward L to keep the outline compact, despite the final vowel (similarly "necessarily"), "last (w)EEK"



Short Letters 10

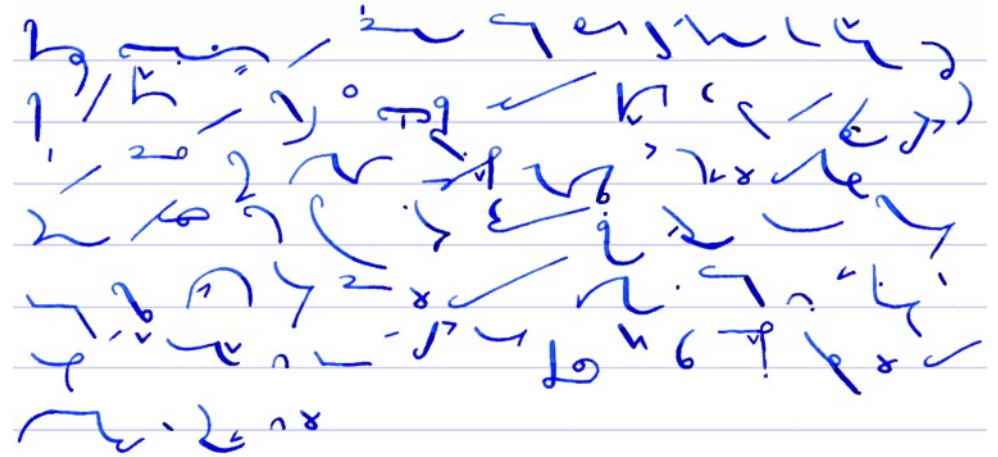
Dear Miss Greystone, I hope you are* well and you are enjoying seeing the sights of the city on your three month touring ticket that you purchased from us last year. I am writing to offer you the opportunity of buying an extension for another three or six months, at a discount of fifty percent* over the normal price. This offer is not open to new members to the scheme at present, as we want to make sure our existing members have the first choice.

Please reply by phone or email* if you wish to take advantage of this saving. (100 words)

* Omission phrase "I (h)ope you are"

* "fifty percent" Personal choice whether you use this or numerals and a P stroke, whichever is faster without losing clearness

* "email" Insert first vowel, as it is similar to "mail"



Short Letters 10

Dear Mrs* Greenham, Our Walking Club has now been operating for five years, during which time our membership has grown considerably and we are delighted that people are choosing to join us on our walks through the lovely countryside and villages of the area. We have received* so many requests from further afield, that we are considering opening another branch, to keep numbers lower for each walk. We are holding a club meeting on the tenth* of next month* and I invite you to come and join in the discussions about this exciting

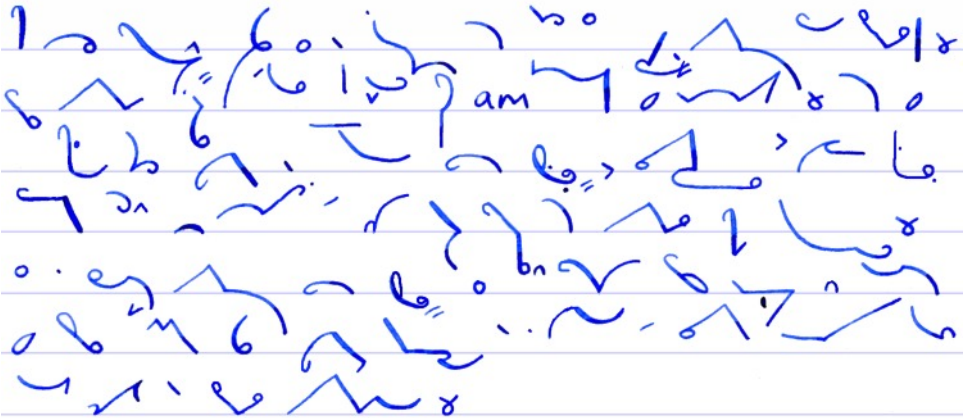
possibility*. We look forward* to seeing you. (100 words)

* "Mrs" Not using Ses Circle, as that would be "misses"

* Omission phrases "We have (re)ceived" "ne(k)s(t mon)th" "look fo(r)ward"

* "tenth" "eighteenth" Always insert the vowels

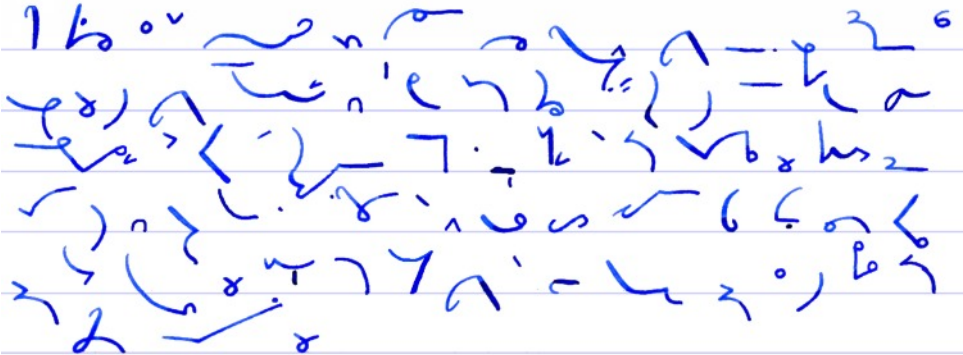
* "possibility" Optional contraction



Short Letters 10

Dear Miss Brownley*, This letter* is to confirm your appointment as Junior* Reporter in our sports department*. Please report to this office at 9.30 a.m. on Monday first of March. Your first trainee assignment will be to accompany Mr Stevens to the headquarters* of the local tennis club around mid-morning and you will both produce your reports during the afternoon. As a senior reporter, Mr Stevens is very well* placed to coach you in your first steps, and I hope* this will be the beginning of a long and happy career for you in the world of sports reporting. (100 words)

Blank lined area for writing practice.



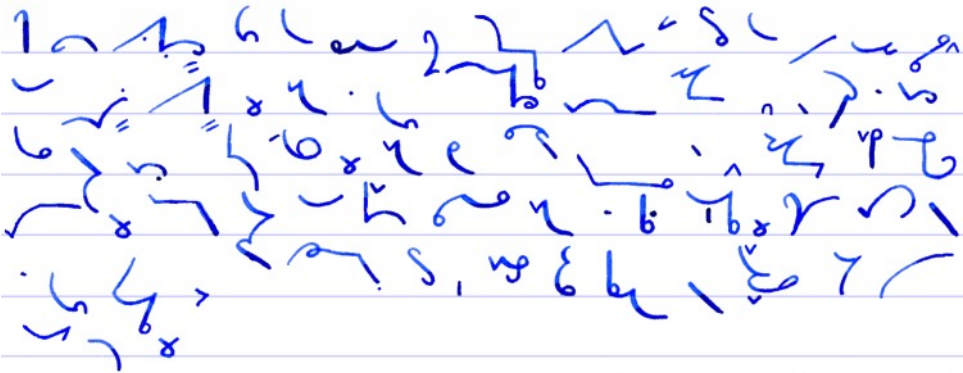
Short Letters 10

Dear James, As I mentioned to you last week*, Miss Brownley* will be coming to start work with us next month*. She will be accompanying you on several of your assignments, so that she can have first-hand experience of the job, and so that we can get a good idea of her abilities. At the end of the week I will see you both for an appraisal of how things went, and we can then allocate some jobs to her for the

future. I know your knowledge will be of great benefit to her as she starts her journalism* career. (100 words)

- * Omission phrase "las(t w)eek" "ne(k)s(t mon)th"
- * "Brownley" see para above
- * "journalism" Optional contraction

Blank lined area for writing practice.



Short Letters 10

Dear Mr Redman, Thank you for sending* through the architect's report on the plans for our new house in Mill Road. I have a few amendments to make and would like you to arrange an appointment for us both to meet at your offices. I have several sample pictures of how I would like the side extension to look. I can be available any time as long as I have a day's notice. There will also be a few changes to the landscaping* plan but I understand that

this does not have to be finalised until later in the year. (100 words) (Total 787 words)

* "sending" Note that "sending the report" and "signing the report" could look similar, so "signing" should always have the diphthong written in

* "landscaping" It is the halved L that is in position above the line, so it does not matter where the stroke P ends up



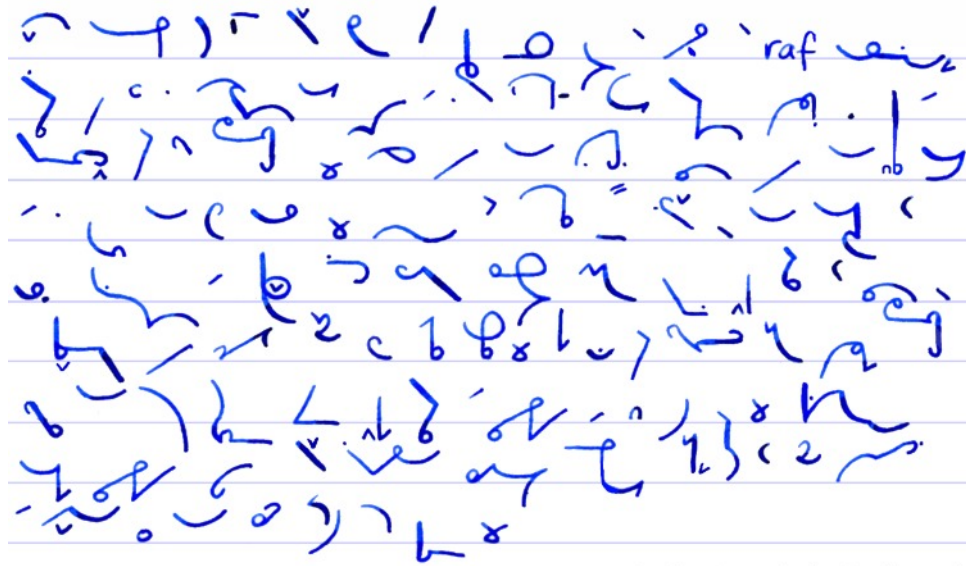
RAF Badges

A short while ago we went back to visit the RAF Museum in north west London. We had an interesting time looking at the airplanes and reading the information boards by each one and the more detailed ones around the walls. There were* displays of medals and photos of those who earned them, with descriptions* of their bravery in the face of the horrendous circumstances of air battles, some ignoring grave wounds to continue their flight to bring the plane and their crew safely home. What started as a day out to

a place of interest ended up as a sobering education on the sacrifices made on our behalf, before we were even born, and which have made possible the world in which we now live and the comforts we are able to enjoy.

* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

* "descriptions" This plural does not use the contraction, as that would look similar to "discourse"



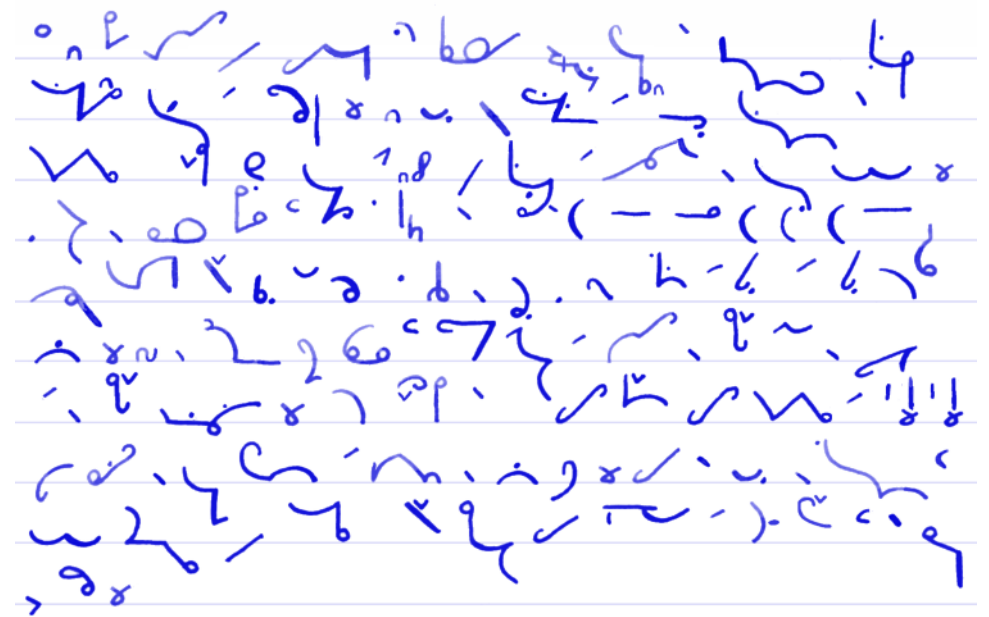
RAF Badges

My interest was caught by several large display cases full of rows of RAF insignia badges, each with an emblem in the middle and a motto along the bottom, illustrating the duties and background of each particular squadron. Most are in Latin, some are in English, and a few in other languages. Many of the mottoes could apply to any endeavour that needs firm and decisive action in order to be* successful, and I have picked out all those that seem to describe our world of shorthand effort and its necessities. At the end of each paragraph I have listed the squadron

numbers in order*, so that you can check out the badges and history, should you wish to do so. Delving into the history will, by comparison, certainly extinguish the idea that shorthand learning and writing is any sort of hardship or difficulty.

* Omission phrase "in ord(er to) be". As the "to" is part of the first stroke, this phrase does not use the third place phraseogram "to be"

* "in order" Not using the phrase (Doubled Nr stroke), as this usage is slightly different, and separately is clearer



RAF Badges

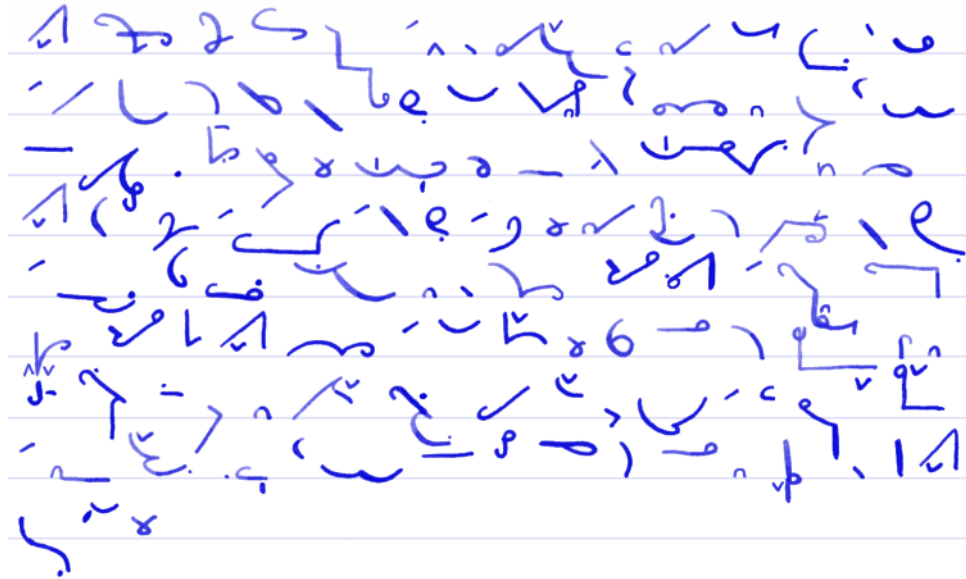
As you start to learn our winged* art, it is necessary to cultivate the virtues of "Determination" "Tenacity" "Endurance" "Foresight" and "Versatility". You need to be "Energetic and keen" "Firm of purpose" "Swift" "Vigilant" and the students "Each tenacious" and resolved to "Fear nothing". The path to success starts with an attitude of "They can because they think they can", but this must be followed by "Deeds not words", a decision to "Seize* the opportunity", "Attempt and achieve" and "Achieve your aim". You have to work through the lessons "With courage and faith" and learn "To strive and not to yield"

and to "Strive to excel". Your mind-set of "One time, one purpose" and "On, on!" will serve "To feed the flame" and help you to "Aim sure". We all need to affirm that "Nothing escapes our notice", "By strength we conquer" and so fly "With all speed to the stars".

* "winged" The Ing stroke cannot be halved

* Omission phrase "mus(t) be"

* "seize" This is the same outline as "cease", also a verb, and would need a note if you felt it needed distinguishing, maybe a wiggly underline, or a Zee stroke in the margin



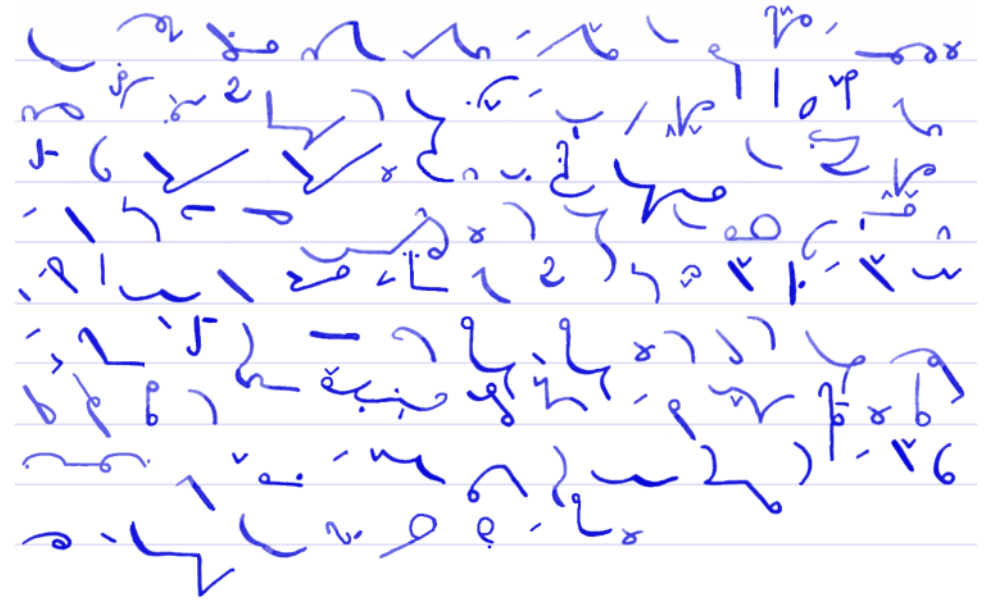
RAF Badges

Right from the beginning, there is the question* of dictations and how to survive them when you are "In the thick of things" and are doing your best to be "Swift in pursuit", although sometimes you feel that "Nothing can withstand" the torrent of speech. Unknown words come up "Unexpectedly" but you must write them "Surely and quickly" and be "Swift and sure". You are training your reactions to be "Swifter and keener than eagles" enabling you to remain "Always ahead" and producing the correct outline "Always at the

right moment" and "In time". This is because your instructor told you "Don't prattle, act" to which you replied bravely "We fight to the finish" and "With speed I strike" and you can finally conclude that "Nothing can stand against us" because you decided to "Do right fear nought*".

* "question" Optional contraction

* "nought" Insert the vowel and ensure it is clearly thick, as "not" would also make sense. "Naught" means "nothing" and "nought" means the numeral zero.



RAF Badges

Having mastered the basics, you will have to review and revise for speed trials and exams. You must constantly consult the shorthand dictionary, your "Faithful ally", and know each outline "At first sight*" and if you don't, then "Beware Beware". You need "Eternal vigilance" for clashing outlines and "Be on your guard" against inaccuracies. Your enthusiasm for success will cause you to "Stop at nothing", be "Always on the attack" and have shorthand on your mind "By day and by night" and "To the break of dawn" so that you can go from "Strength to strength". Your pen or

pencil must be the* best possible, as it is your "Sine qua non/Indispensable" item and has to be entirely "Trusty". Its maxim should be "I seek" and "I never sleep" so that "Nothing escapes us" and "By this means to victory", having proved ourselves "Swift and strong".

* "At first sight" In full, as it is a motto, and not using the normal omission phrase - see www.long-live-pitmans-shorthand.org.uk/phrasing3-theory.htm#NonUseOfShortForm

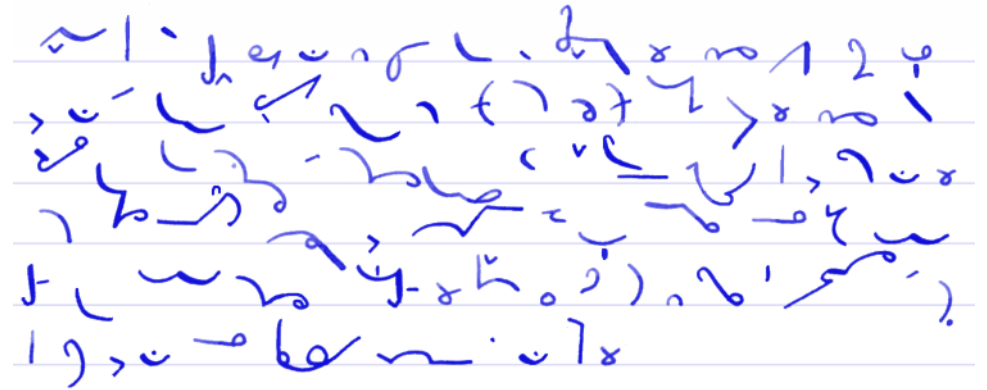
* Omission phrase "mus(t) be the"



RAF Badges

Eventually you may want to "Be bold" and prove your skill by taking a speed exam "If you dare". But you know there are "No odds too great". You are "Always prepared" and "Prepared for all things" and will have left "Nothing to chance", enabling you to say "I fear nothing" and "This arm shall do it". The examiner hopes that there is

"Nobody unprepared" and when he starts, his words will come "Like a thunderbolt". Pens and pencils must fly over the page "Without delay" "On wings of fire" and "Woe to the unwary" who do not "Strike with a sure hand". At last you can say "Through difficulties I arise" and "I saw, I conquered".



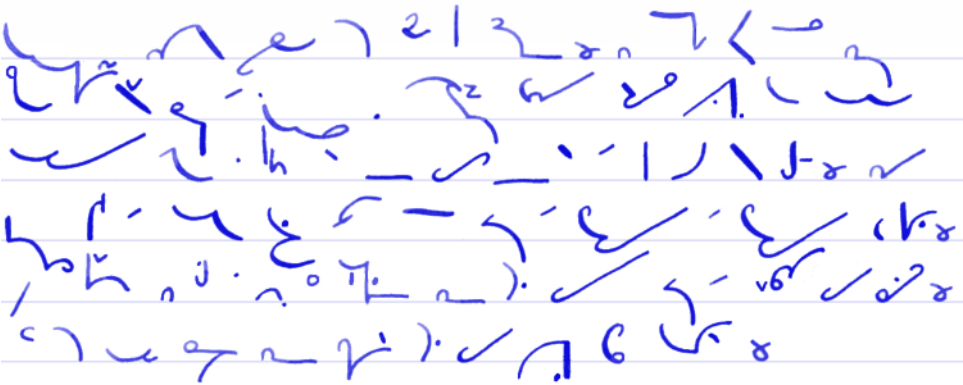
RAF Badges

Writing it all down is not the end, you still have to transcribe*. You must read through the notes "To the end" and "Having watched, bring word" (or words) onto the page. You must "Be always vigilant" for errors and remain convinced that "I overcome" and finish it "To the very end". Your "Accuracy" must be* "To the mark" and with no gaps because "I think nothing

done if anything remains undone". Time is short, so you "Press on regardless" and see it "Through to the end", because "It is necessary to make an end of it".

- * "transcribe" Omits the R, to make it less like "describe"

* Omission phrase "mus(t) be"



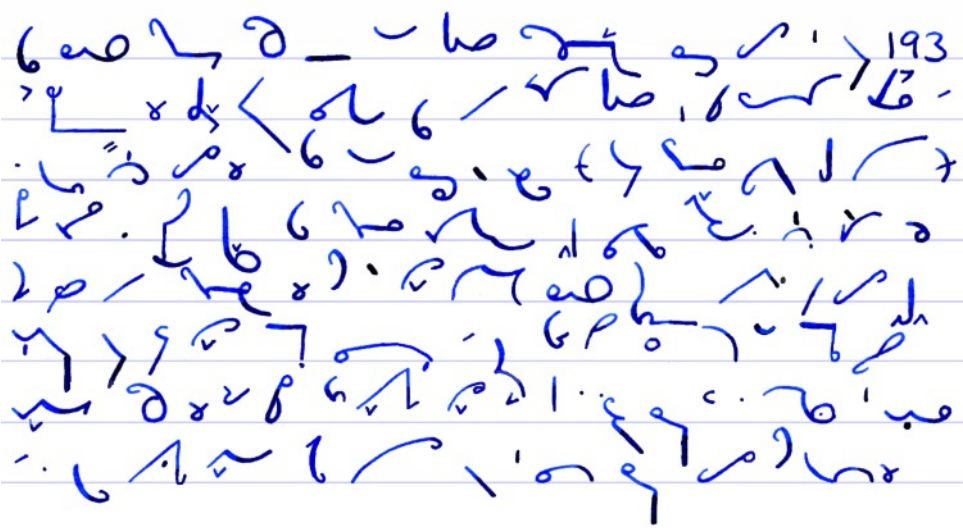
RAF Badges

Eventually you will be using your shorthand at work. You got the job because you were* "Strong by speed" and convinced the employer that you are "Always ready" for "Anything anywhere" and have an attitude of "Come one, come all" and "It shall be done". You are "Determined on delivery" and "Never failing" and will go "Here and

everywhere" and "Everywhere without delay". Each time you attend a meeting as note-taker, you can say "We are here" and "Silently we serve". With your new skill, you can truly say "We lead, others follow". (1020 words)

* Omission phrase "you (w)ere"

Handwriting practice lines for the left page.



Instructor Phrases Section 1

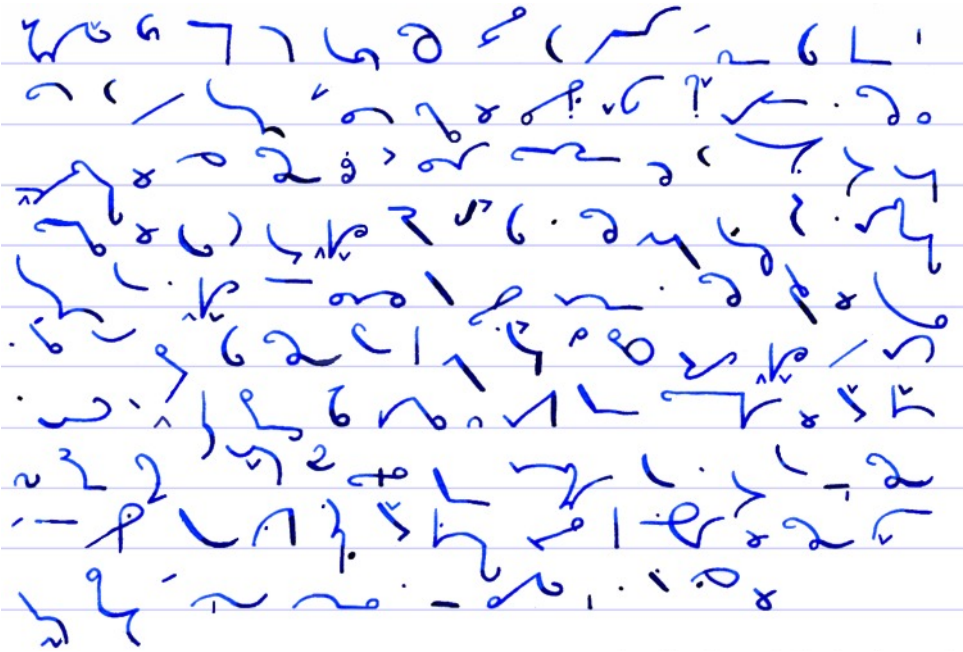
These sentences practise the phrases* given in Advanced Phraseography* Section 1 on page 193 of the Instructor. Despite the chapter heading, these are hardly advanced, but just normal joinings and a few omission ones. Those in Sections 2 to 7 (for which blogs will be done later) start to use the shortening devices, then progress to leaving out syllables and finally omitting whole words, so the lists are progressive. They are all line length sentences so that you can repeat each one down the notepad page, with each line getting smoother and easier than the last as your hand gets used

to writing the phrases. I would suggest that you write the lines at a comfortable speed with an emphasis on neatness and an even rate of writing, and then later on put on some speed once they are familiar.

* "phrases" In another context, inserting the vowel would be advisable, as this could look like "verses"

* "Phraseography" It is barely possible to show the R hook, by making the circle taller, but the outline would be recognisable anyway

Handwriting practice lines for the right page.



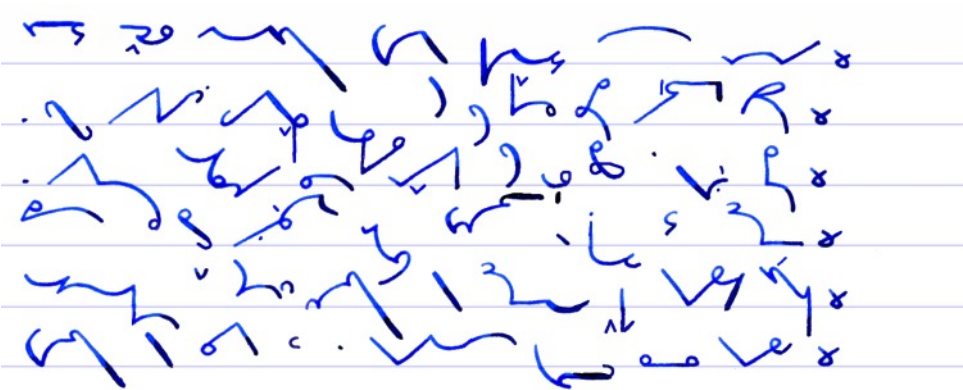
Instructor Phrases Section 1

I think you will find that you get your favourite phrases and use them regularly, and you can then take on more that are formed on the same principles. Hesitating while trying* to recall a phrase is counterproductive. Most phrasing consists of the small grammatical words that naturally fall into groups. Even so, if the outlines cannot be joined, then a phrase should not be forced, although an alternative form for an outline can sometimes be used to make a phrase possible. If there is* a pause in speech, then phrasing over it should be avoided, as the spaces between outlines are also an

indication of how it was spoken, and this helps you to read back correctly. By the time you have worked through the entire shorthand course book, I am sure you will have a feel for good phrasing, and can resist being led astray by the temptation to use it excessively. Phrasing, like power, strength and money, makes a good servant but a bad master.

* "trying" No triphone, as the "I" sound is included in the Dot Ing

* "If there is" You can double for "if there" but not "for there", this ensures they are never misread for each other



Instructor Phrases Section 1

I agree with the accountants and in all probability they will be dealing with the matter tomorrow.

The number of returning website visitors was three times as much as were* recorded last year.

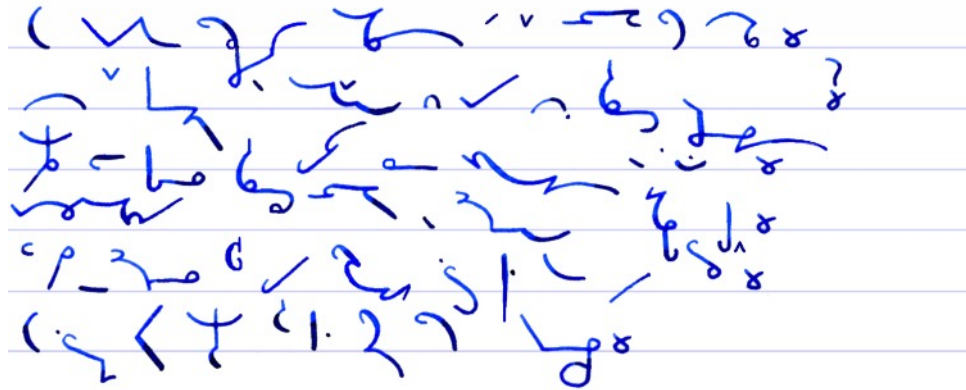
The reporters in this country seem to write their notes as fast as a bullet, as it were*.

As the matter has been resolved, I feel sure* that you will agree to continue with the work.

In the meantime I assume you will probably be working out the percentage of profit.

They will probably be happy with a per annum figure of six per cent.

* Omission phrases "as much as (w)ere" "as it (w)ere" "I fee(l) sure"



Instructor Phrases Section 1

They performed* very satisfactorily in this matter and I quite agree with their methods.

May I take the liberty of inviting you to our meeting on this occasion to discuss the matter?

Notwithstanding such great difficulties on these occasions, we will seek to bring the matter to an end.

I am certain* that you are quite agreeable to working on the other side of* town.

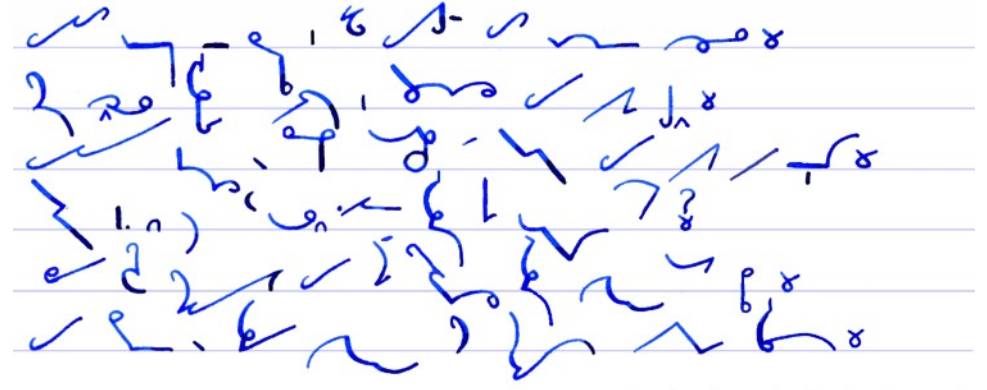
With such good workers on either hand, we brought forward* the completion date for our plans.

They completed the job, notwithstanding that on that day there were* very peculiar circumstances.

* "performed" This could also read as "perform", therefore use a full outline if the context needs it

* "I am certain" Compare the omission phrase for "mos(t) certain" which uses Ses circle

* Omission phrase "on the oth(er) side of" "there (w)ere"



Instructor Phrases Section 1

We want to get good speeds but on the other hand* we don't* want to make mistakes.

There were* mountains on either side of the river but by some means we reached the town.

We were determined to succeed in all circumstances, and by and by we reached our goal.

By the by, did you see that news article on those who were* at the football match?

As we travelled through the world, we saw the problems of those who were* living in the cities.

We spoke to those who are living there, so that we may report on this matter.

* Omission phrase "on the oth(er h)and" "who (w)ere" "of those who (w)ere"

* "we don't" Essential to insert the vowel sign, as without it this would be "we do not"



Instructor Phrases Section 1

I think it is necessary* to go there and I think that you are the one who should* do it.

Every circumstance is different and I am inclined to think* we must get all the facts first.

I am persuaded that we have acted
correctly on these occasions.

In this respect the officer is wrong but in his own opinion he was in the right.

I am sending last month's reports, as well as those which we are now considering.

As the matter is now closed, I am very glad to say that* I will be free tomorrow. (700 words)

- * "I think it is necessary" Using halving for "it" makes a quicker phrase than the full version shown in Instructor

* "who should" Note "who" is written downwards, "should" upwards

* "on these occasions" The Shun Hook is written thus to balance the preceding circle. On its own "occasions" would have a clockwise Shun Hook, away from the vowel.

* Omission phrase "I am (in)clined to think"
Having "to" in the middle or end of a phrase is best avoided, as it looks like "of", but here it cannot be mistaken

- * Omission phrase "I am very glad (to) s(ay) that"

See September 2016 for "Instructor Phrases Intro"