

**Be A Dinosaur**

I am sure you have heard or read at some time that shorthand has gone the way of the dinosaurs. Once upon a time shorthand writers\* roamed the Earth in great numbers, in all shapes, sizes and abilities. Some were specialists\* with a narrow field of activity, and some were omnivores\*, able to deal with anything they came across, quickly and easily. Then the meteoric burst of technology that hit the planet in the mid twentieth century changed their world beyond recognition, although it did not wipe them out completely. Much to the surprise of those who thought that we only have a monoculture of technological solutions, the shorthand dinosaurs are still with us,

although somewhat reduced in numbers and distribution, but definitely surviving in a modified form, taking their\* place amongst all the other species, filling specific niches that no other life form can.

- \* Omission phrase "short(hand) writers"
- \* "omnivores" the noun is not in dictionary. Full V and Ar strokes, so that it is not misread as "omnivorous" which has a reversed VR stroke, as per dictionary.
- \* "specialist" Note also "specialised" which should always have its diphthong sign
- \* "taking their" Doubling for "their"

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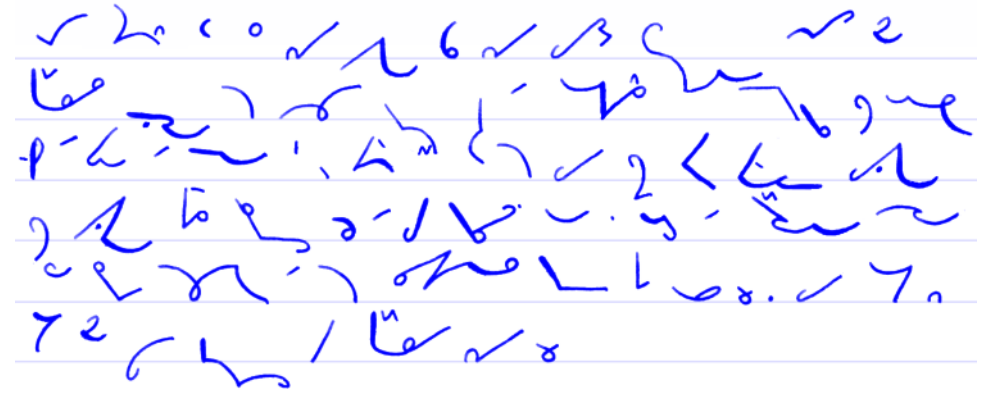
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**Be A Dinosaur**

I will assume that, as you are reading this, you are one of the flourishing modern shorthand dinosaurs, gaining your muscle power, teeth and endurance capabilities through intensive study and achievement, and going on to chomp your way through the job jungle, wading through raging torrents of spoken words, and generally

behaving in an independent and pioneering manner, in order to\* support yourself and your hatchlings back at the nest. The way in which you handle shorthand will determine which dinosaur you are.

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

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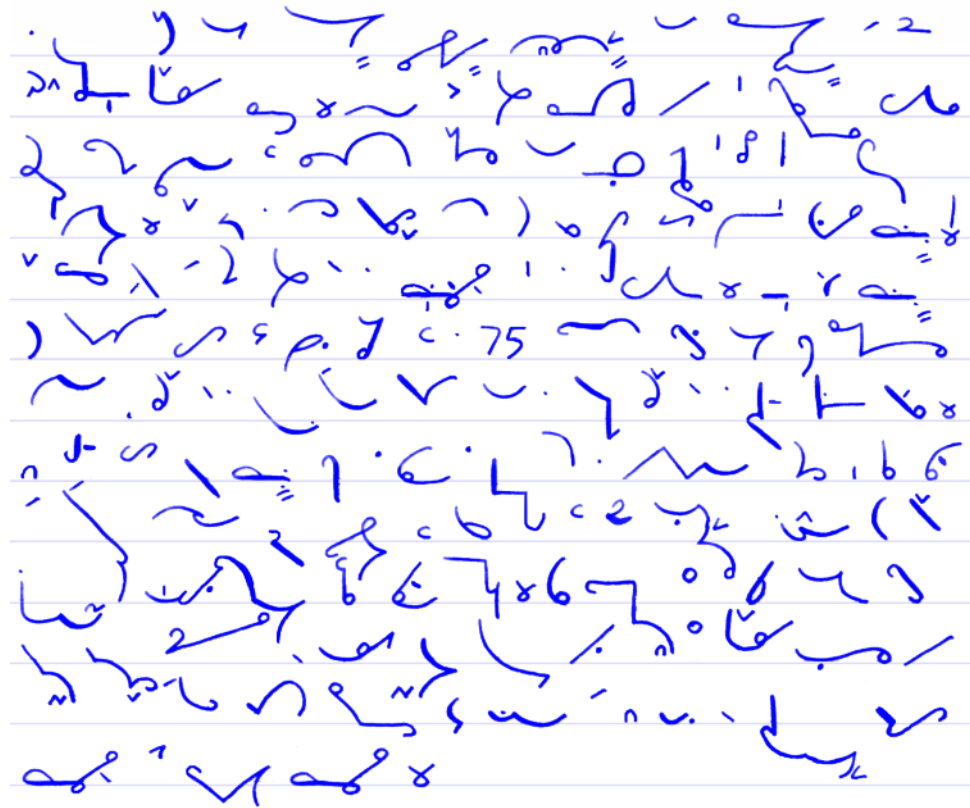
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**Be A Dinosaur**

A few days ago I was in the Natural History Museum in central London and walked around the dinosaur section. Many of the fossil skeletons are on perspex shelves suspended from the ceiling, with smaller items in cases and displays on stands at floor level. I heard a man behind me say to his children, "Look, there's\* Steggy!" I glanced up and saw the fossil of a Stegosaurus on a shelf. Good old Steggy was apparently the one with the least intelligence, with a 75 gram brain only 3 centimetres long, the size of a ping-pong ball, in a body the size of a double decker bus. You don't want to be Steggy during a lesson, a dictation, or a reporting assignment\*, but its slow and ponderous manner would be useful when faced with shorthand nay-sayers, confounding them

by continuing unwaveringly with its chosen activity. This creature has just enough brain power to remind shorthand writers\* to insert the vowel after the Ray, as dinosaur names are often also spoken without the ending and you need to differentiate between Stegosaurus and the plural Stegosaurus.

\* "there's" Apostrophied phrases are always written as full outlines and fully vocalised, and not using short forms

\* "assignment" Contraction that omits the first N

\* Omission phrase "short(hand) writers"



**Be A Dinosaur**

Learning and feeding on great quantities of outlines come before speed, so of course we all need to be like the voracious and rapacious Tyrannosaurus. The idea is to consume as much as possible\*, as fast as it can be digested, and grow as large as possible\*, building up big strong bones, massive muscles and a useful array of steak knife teeth in the jaws with which to despatch and carve up the material on offer. It has been called a killing machine, but with its great bulk it is quite likely that it ambushed its prey, especially picking off the slow, weak or injured, and never

passing up an opportunity to scavenge from the kills made by other predators. All we have now is its descendant, the humble pigeon, no teeth but the same watchful beady eyes looking for opportunities and the same appetite for handouts.

\* Omission phrase "as much as poss(ible)"

\* "as large as possible" Always write separate outlines for this phrase, otherwise it would be misread as the above "as much as possible"

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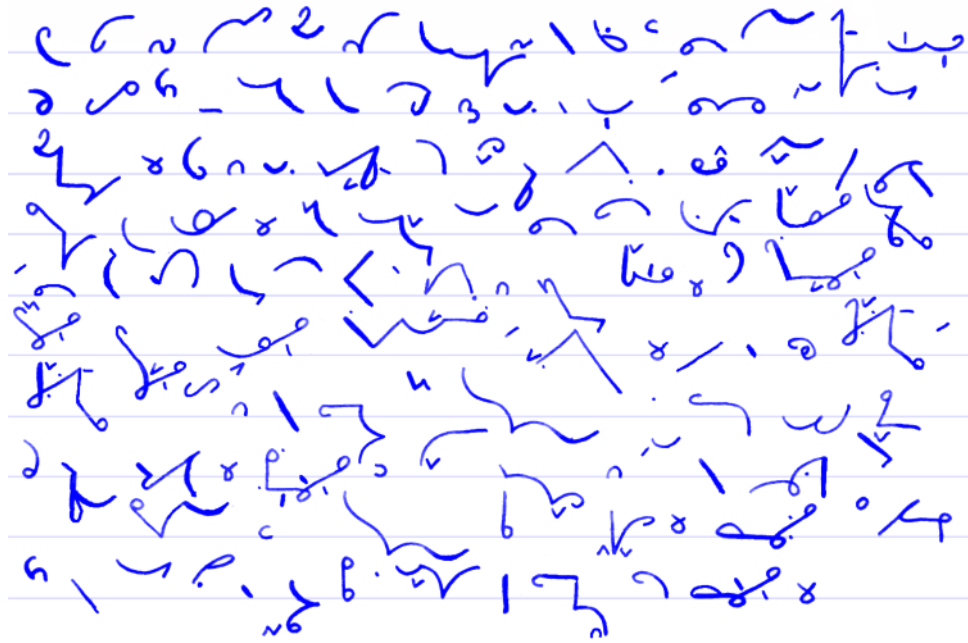
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**Be A Dinosaur**

However well you have learned shorthand, you will eventually be faced with some long and totally unknown words, ones that you could never have imagined you would need to know, and sometimes not in the shorthand dictionary. Then you need to readjust\* your mind to just representing the sounds, writing each syllable separately if necessary. I have invited in some more fellow dinosaurs for this purpose and some of them also have the important job of helping you to practise the diphones. They are Brachiosaurus, Pleiosaurus, Plesiosaurus\*, Noasaurus, Baryonyx and Eoraptor. Our two friends Triceratops and Diceratops want you to be careful about forming a clear initial hook so as to

distinguish between them\*. Psittacosaurus would like to remind you not to be misled by the spelling when forming its outline. Stegoceras has requested that you put in the last two vowels, as it is an entirely different creature from Stegosaurus.

\* "readjust" Insert the diphone, so it is not misread as "register"

\* Omission phrase "betwee(n) them"

\* "Plesiosaurus" Not using Ses Circle, in order to be able to vocalise clearly, and it would also look too much like "Pleiosaurus"

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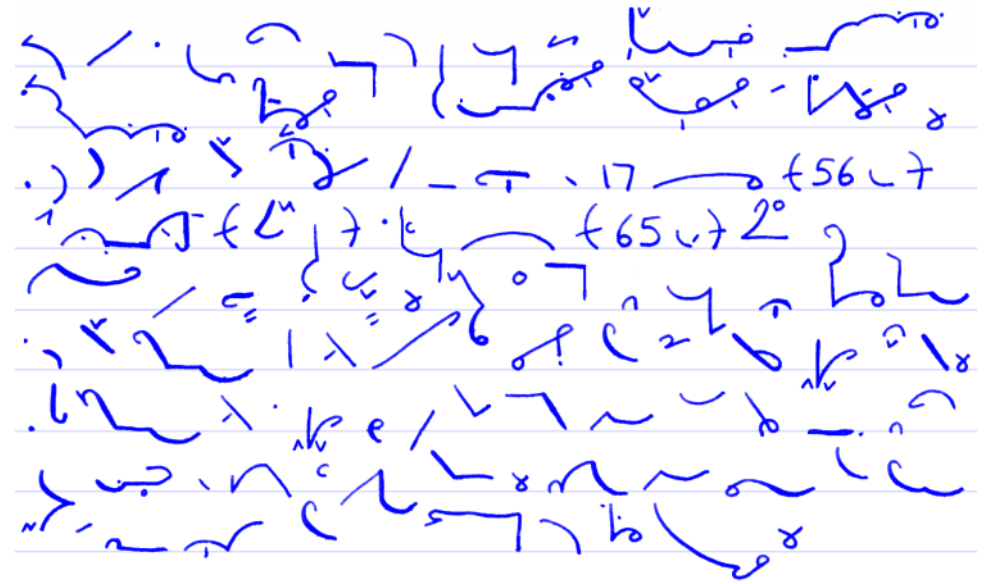
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**Be A Dinosaur**

Here are a few more to get your teeth into: Deinonychus, Gallimimus, Harpymimus, Dromiosaurus, Ankylosaurus, Spinosaurus and Tarbosaurus. The sea was ruled by the Mosasaur which could grow to 17 metres (56 feet) and the Megalodon (giant tooth) a 20 metre (65 foot\*) shark three times longer than our Great White. I hope this has got you into the mode of attacking a word by breaking it up, rather than hesitating over what the best outline might

be. The advantage of breaking up an outline is that each part can be written in position, giving you more vowel indication to help with reading back. You will have written "something for everything" and you can mull over and correct your attempts afterwards.

\* "65 foot" Insert the vowel. "Foot" is used when adjectival, and "feet" when stating a simple length.

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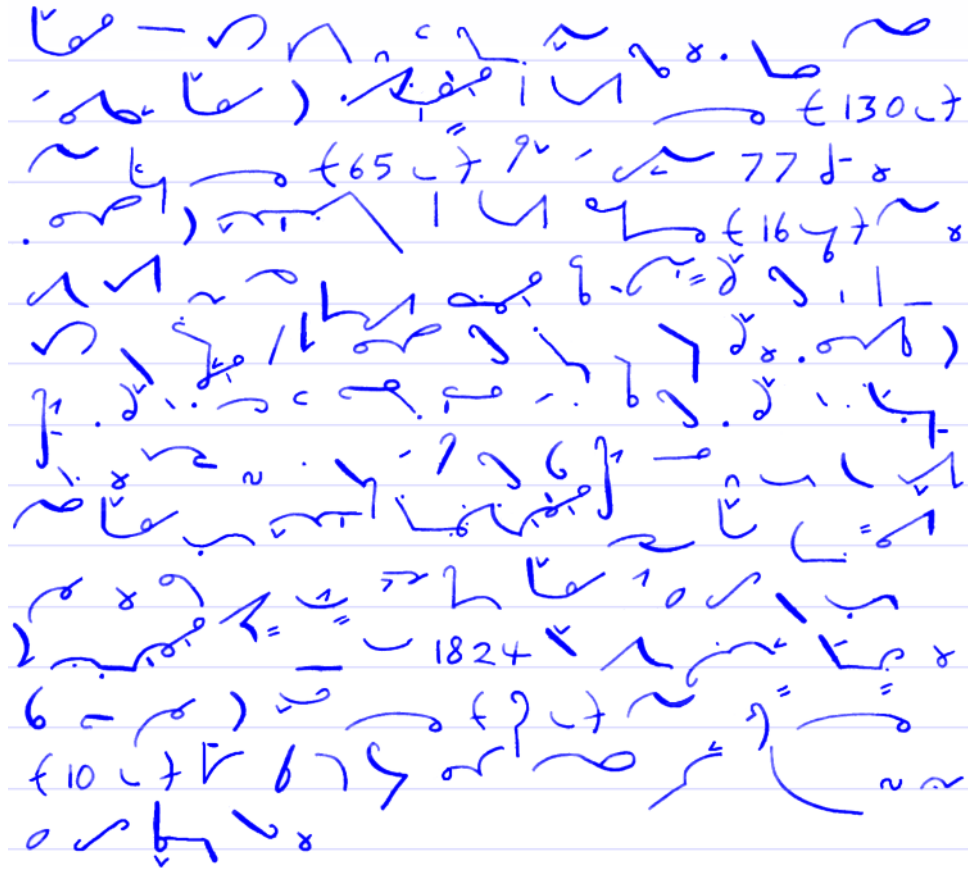
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Be A Dinosaur

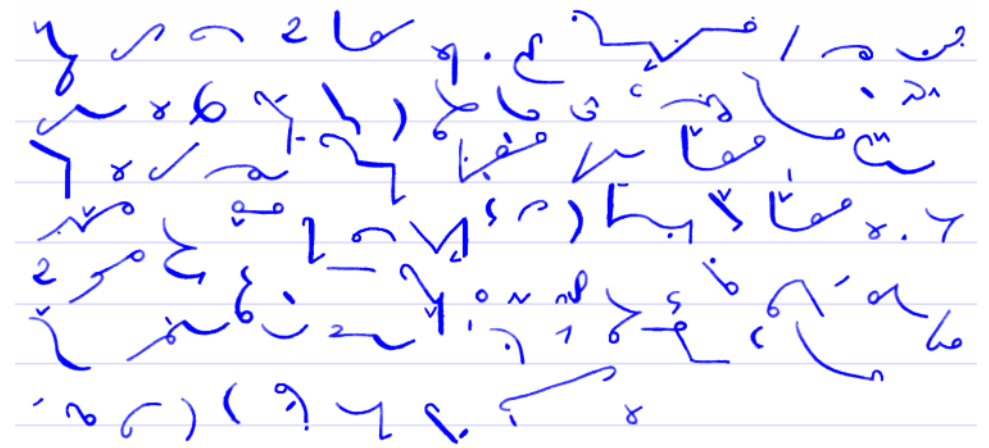
Dinosaurs can also help you with practising writing numbers. The biggest, longest\* and heaviest dinosaur was Argentinosaurus at 40 metres (130 feet) long, 20 metres (65 feet) high and weighing 77 tonnes. The smallest was Microraptor at 40 centimetres (16 inches) long. We have already met the most dim-witted, Stegosaurus with its walnut-sized brain, but it could also be Plateosaurus\* which had the smallest brain compared to its body size. The smartest was Troodon, the size of a man, with grasping claws and a brain the size of an avocado pit. I am glad you have a better and larger brain than Troodon because you now have to write the longest\* dinosaur name, Micropachycephalosaurus, meaning tiny thick-headed lizard. Sir Richard Owen

coined the term dinosaur, and the first one to be named was the Megalosaurus, given in 1824 by Reverend\* William Buckland. This "great lizard" was 9 metres (30 feet) long and 3 metres (10 feet) tall, just your average small monster really, after you have met the first one described above.

\* "longest" Alternative outline that omits the G stroke

\* "Plateosaurus" Must have a full P, not halved, in order to be able to vocalise fully

\* "Reverend" This unvocalised outline is a contraction for "Reverend", vocalise if the speaker actually says "Rev"



Be A Dinosaur

I have just one more shorthand dinosaur to consider\*, the delightful Archaeopteryx which means "ancient wing". This is the proto-bird whose fossils have been found with imprints of feathers all around the body. We must not\* forget the Pterosaurs, which are not dinosaurs but flying reptiles, filling the skies during the same period that the land was dominated by the dinosaurs. The only shorthand reference that these two can provide is how the student feels

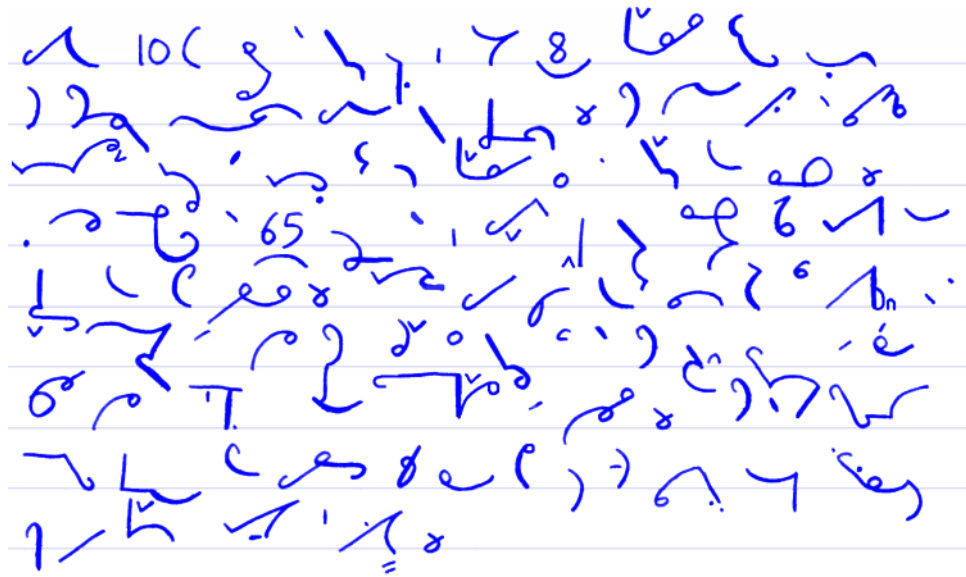
when the pass slip and certificate arrive, resulting in walking on air and the expectation\* that future achievements and opportunities will see them soaring into the blue yonder.

\* Omission phrases "to (con)sider" "mus(t) not"

\* "expectation" Optional contraction

Handwriting practice lines consisting of horizontal lines for writing.





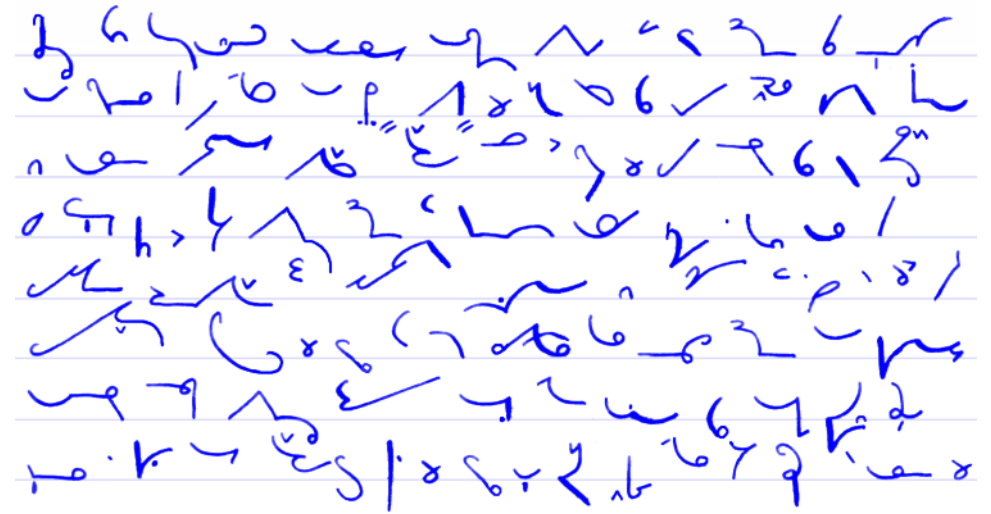
**Be A Dinosaur**

We have 10,000 species of bird today, but only 800 dinosaurs that have been named, so there must be\* many more waiting to be discovered. Their long reign of hundreds of millions of years ought to mean that the word dinosaur is a byword for success. The mass extinction of 65 million years ago all but wiped out both the successful and those already in decline for other reasons. I am glad we still have some of them with us, reduced to a manageable and less

threatening size as birds, with all their beautiful plumage and song, as well as the less cuddly crocodiles and lizards. They are all perfectly capable of taking over once again\*, just as soon as they see us slipping into complacency during our time of rule on Earth. (1492 words)

\* Omission phrases "there mus(t) be" "wun(s) again"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Short Letters 12**

Dear Sirs, Thank you for your communication enclosing the interim\* report on the building work which is currently in progress at our offices in City Road. I have passed this to our accountants who will be contacting you next week\* regarding the revised final cost of the project. We expected\* this to be higher than first quoted, due to the additional repair work that became necessary, but there are a few things which we would like to clarify with you, and we will be emailing you shortly with a list of points on which we require further information\*. Please thank your Service Manager for his excellent work in dealing with the unexpected extra repairs that were

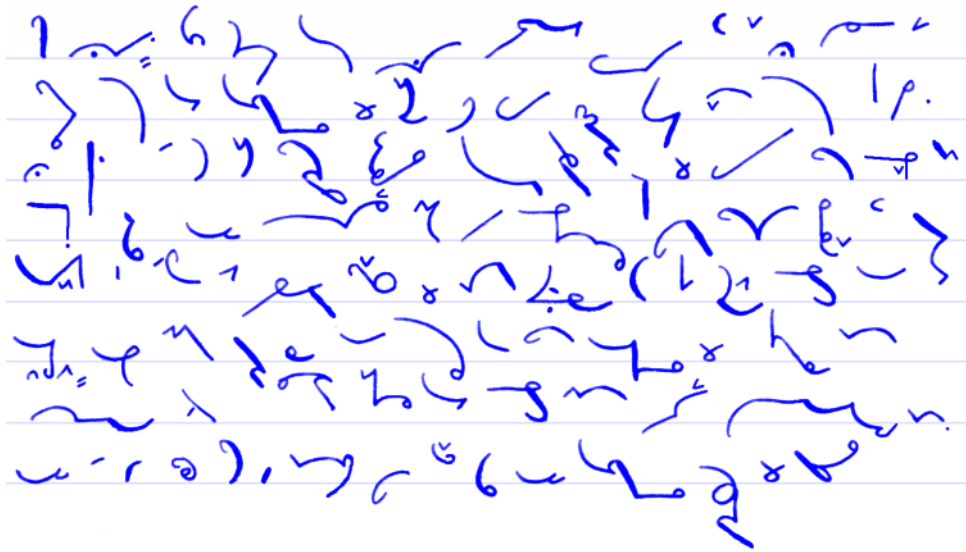
needed and for fitting these into the schedule, so as not to cause a delay in the final completion date. Please note I shall be out of the office until Thursday of next week. (150 words)

\* "interim" Does not use doubling which would not allow the M to join

\* Omission phrases "ne(k)s(t w)eeek" "further (informa)tion)

\* "expected" This could also read as "expect", therefore if necessary write in full or use wavy underline to remind it is past tense.

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



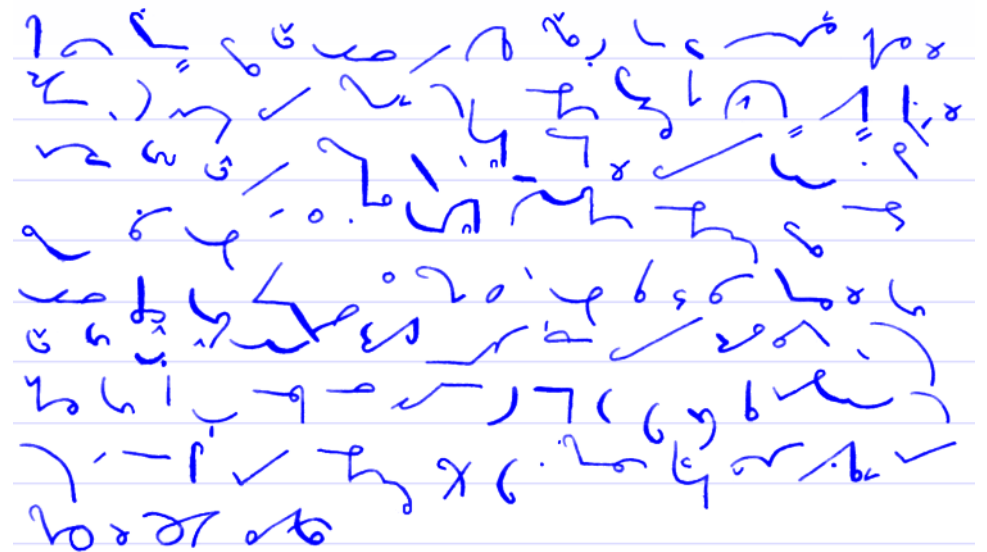
Short Letters 12

Dear Mary, Thank you so much\* for your email regarding the query that I made last week\* on the purchase order for the fabrics. I was not sure whether you would be able to change my order at such a late date, and so I was very pleased that this was after all possible to do. We are very excited about getting all these new materials and I think our customers will be very well\* satisfied with both the variety on offer and the reasonable prices. I will be showcasing them at the sewing exhibition in Newtown next month\* and I hope\* to be able to send in orders for more in due course. At

present I am making up sample items for the exhibition and I am really looking forward\* to meeting new and old friends there, who I am sure will find these new fabrics irresistible. Best wishes. (150 words)

\* "so much" Writing "much" in full allows the phrase to be formed

\* Omission phrases "las(t w)eek" "very (w)ell" "ne(k)s(t mon)th" "I (h)ope" "looking fo(r)ward"



Short Letters 12

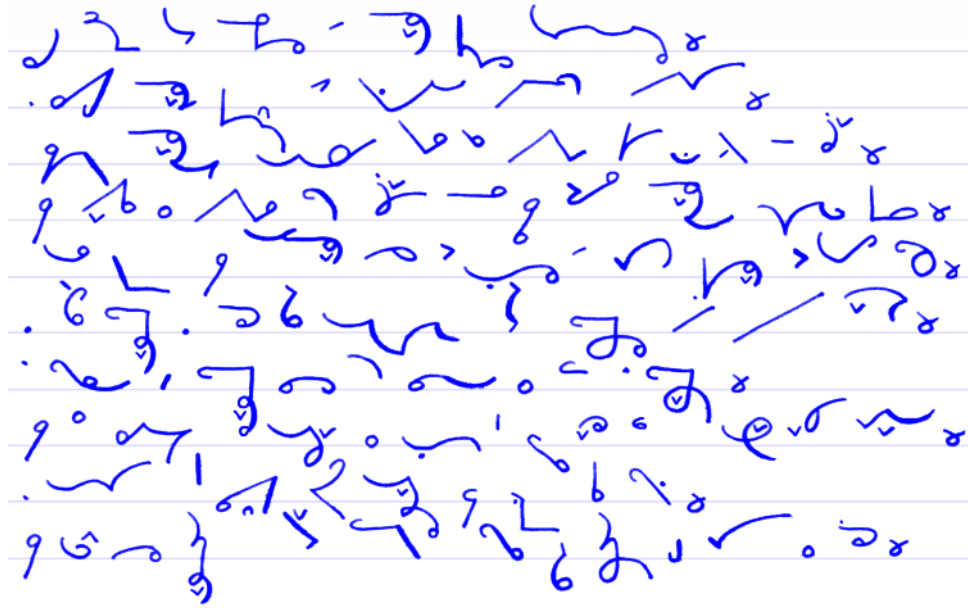
Dear Mr Black, Please find enclosed our latest price sheet for building materials and tools. I would like to say how much\* we appreciate your continued custom over the years at the Lower Road Depot. I am glad that you have found our products to be of good quality. We are having a special spring sale next month\* and, as a valued long-term customer, please accept the enclosed discount voucher which can be used as from the first of next month\*, which is when the sale begins. If you find that you need anything that we do not currently stock, we are always happy to

order items for you at no extra cost, and we can usually get them within two or three\* days of receiving your order, and can deliver to our customers free of charge\* within an approximate 20 mile radius of our premises. Yours sincerely,\* Service Manager (150 words)

\* "how much" Writing "much" in full allows the phrase to be formed

\* Omission phrases "ne(k)s(t mon)th" "two (or) three" "free (of) ch(arge)" "Yours si(n)cerely"





**Short Letters 12**

Dear Mrs White, Thank you for coming to the interview last week\* for the post of Accounts Assistant. I am writing to offer you this post which is based at our head office in North Street. This will be for a probationary period of six months\*, after which there will be a review on both sides, and then hopefully continuing for a further five-year contract. I attach a sheet giving details of the salary, pension package and other benefits, as well as a leaflet outlining the facilities that we are able to offer all of

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



**Short Letters 12**

Dear Parents, I am writing to let you know of some of the events that we have planned for this spring and summer, which are listed on the enclosed flyer. The outings to special places of interest last year were very well\* attended and so this year we have increased the variety we are offering. We will also be welcoming several service agencies to talk to the youngsters, and I am sure the visit by the fire department, with their new high-tech engine, will be a big hit with the children. Our regular

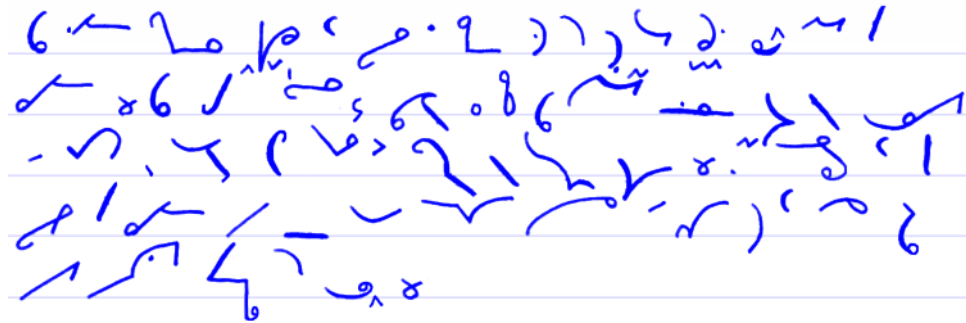
Horizontal lines for writing practice.

our staff. We also have an arrangement with our local gym and fitness centre, and a nearby hairdresser, for discounted terms for our staff which I hope\* will be of interest to you. Please report to the reception desk at 9 a.m. on Monday 1 March and bring all your documents with you. Yours sincerely.\* (150 words)

\* Omission phrases "las(t w)eek" "six (mon)ths" "I (h)ope" "Yours si(n)cerely"

entertainer Mr Bubbles has several new acts aimed at younger children, with a new range of attractive puppets and other props, so we all look forward\* to seeing him at several of the events. Please remember to book early for the trips, and we hope\* that we will be meeting many of you at the Club events. (150 words) (Total 750 words)

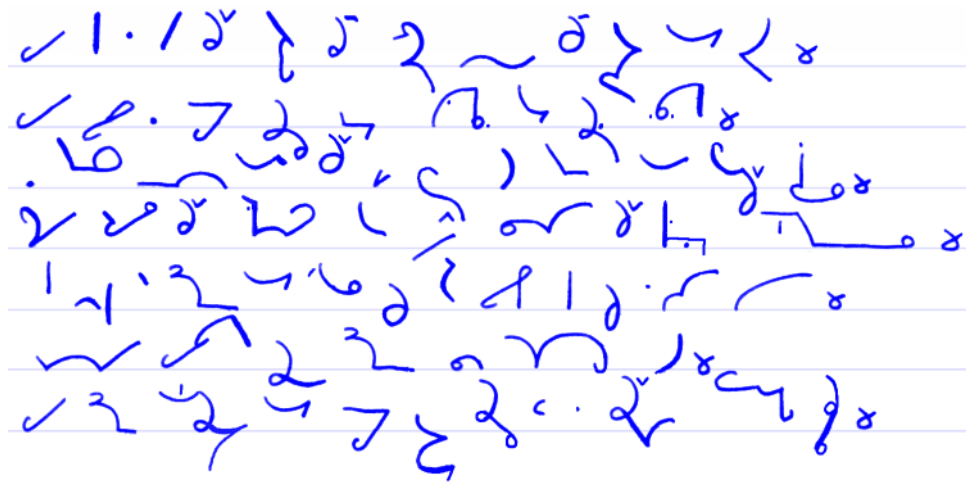
\* Omission phrases "very (w)ell" "look fo(r)ward" "we (h)ope"



**Sess Words**

This article practises outlines that use a stroke S or Z for the "Sess" sound and not the large circle. This generally occurs when the syllable is stressed, thus allowing the

exact vowel to be inserted, and also to enable the other parts of the verb to be formed easily. The exceptions that do use the large circle are given in capital letters, and you will see that most of these are the related adjectives or nouns.



**Sess Words**

We had a large size bottle of sauce, and there were\* many saucers available in the shop.

We used the kitchen scissors to cut the lettuce for the Caesar salad.

The boxes came in all sizes but the flour\* was packed in over-sized containers.

There are always sighs of admiration for our small-sized decorated cupcakes.

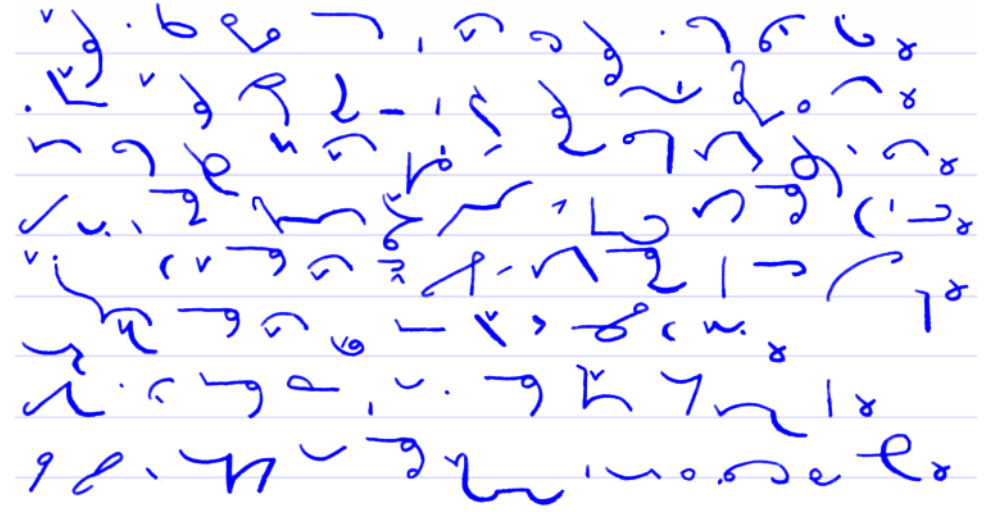
At midday all work in the office ceases, although yesterday it ceased a little later.

Tomorrow we will be ceasing work somewhat earlier than\* usual.

We worked unceasingly in the kitchen, filling the saucepans with a sizeable quantity of sausages.

\* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

\* "flour" Treated as one syllable, hence diphthong not triphone. "Flower" is considered to be two syllables.



**Sess Words**

I possess a fast sports car but my friend possesses a very slow van.

The bike I possessed last year was not good but I believe possessing my own transport is important.

I am very POSSESSIVE about my tools and someday I will be the POSSESSOR of more.

We need to access the program files regularly and our technician also accesses them on occasion.

I confirm that I accessed my account yesterday and I will be accessing it again later on today.

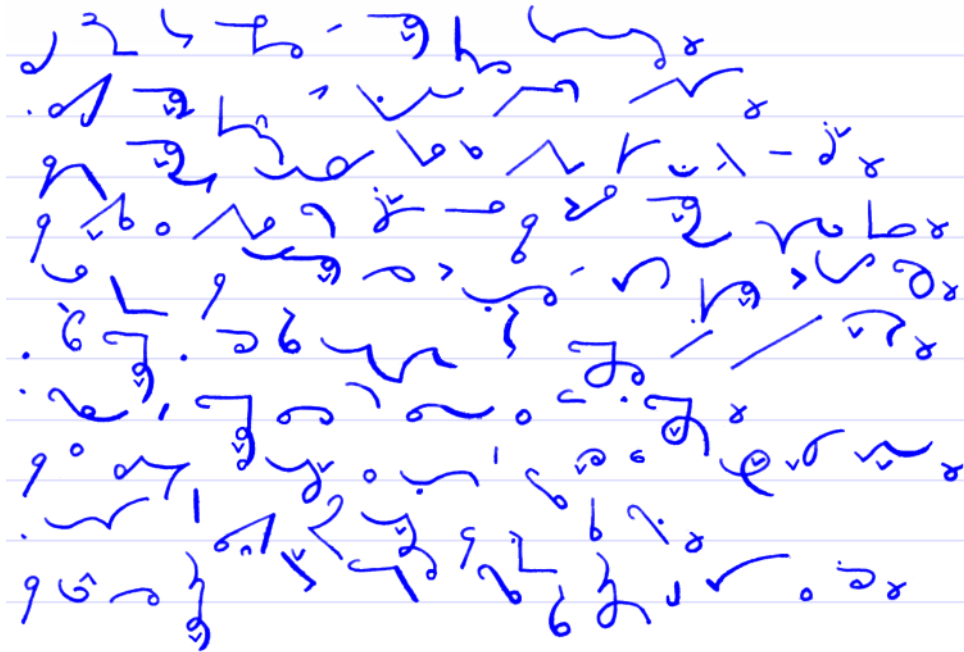
Now that I have accessed my funds I can buy all the ACCESSORIES\* that I need.

We have a lot of excess stock but not an excess of time in which to move it.

He used to indulge in excesses of drinking but now his consumption\* is not EXCESSIVE.

\* "accessories" When used as a legal term meaning "accomplice" (e.g. accessory to theft) it can also be spelled "accessary"

\* "consumption" Omits the lightly-sounded p



**Sess Words**

She has worked for the Customs and Excise Department for many years.

The surgeon excised the tumour and the patient recovered rapidly.

He will be excising the unnecessary parts of his report which will end up quite concise.

He writes his reports very concisely because he is always excising irrelevant text.

In his book he anglicised most of the names and also italicised all the foreign phrases.

The authors criticise the actions of those involved although the CRITICISMS are rather mild.

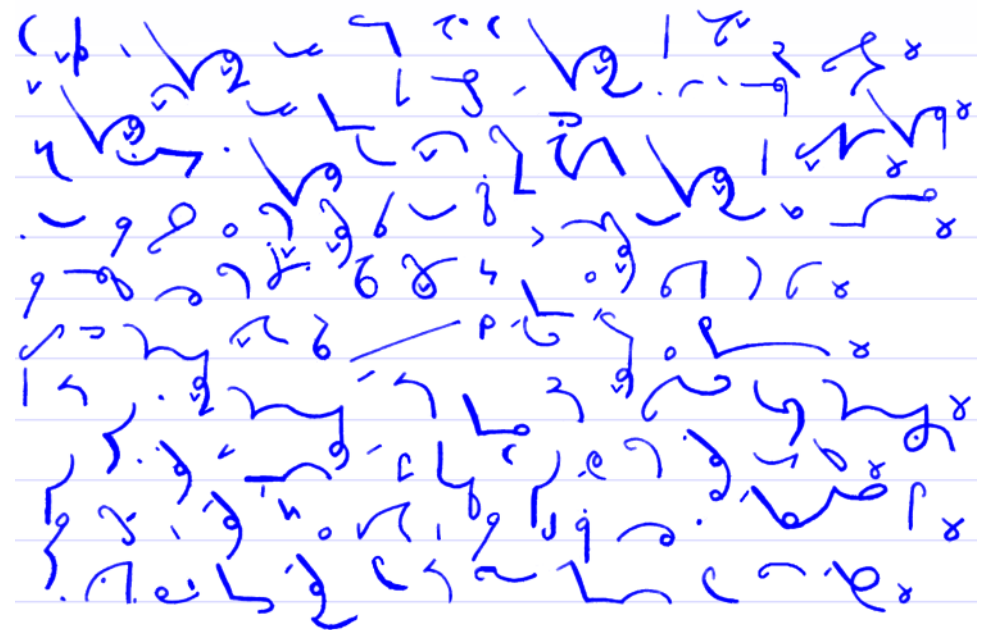
A person who criticises someone or something is called a criticiser.

He has certainly incised his name on people's minds, with his INCISIVE style of writing.

The animal had huge sharp incisors with which to attack\* its prey.

He found himself ostracised by the club members but this ostracism did not alter his actions.

\* "attack" Insert the first vowel, as "take" could also make sense here



**Sess Words**

They decided to publicise the new club and thought that publicising it online would be useful.

I publicised my new book at the exhibition and gained a lot of extra publicity.

I have engaged a publicist for my product and they will be publicising it widely.

The language he uses is very precise which is in contrast to the imprecise language of his colleagues.

He expressed himself very concisely and this is PRECISELY why the book has sold so well.

One cannot romanticise the life of this writer as he often politicised his subject matter.

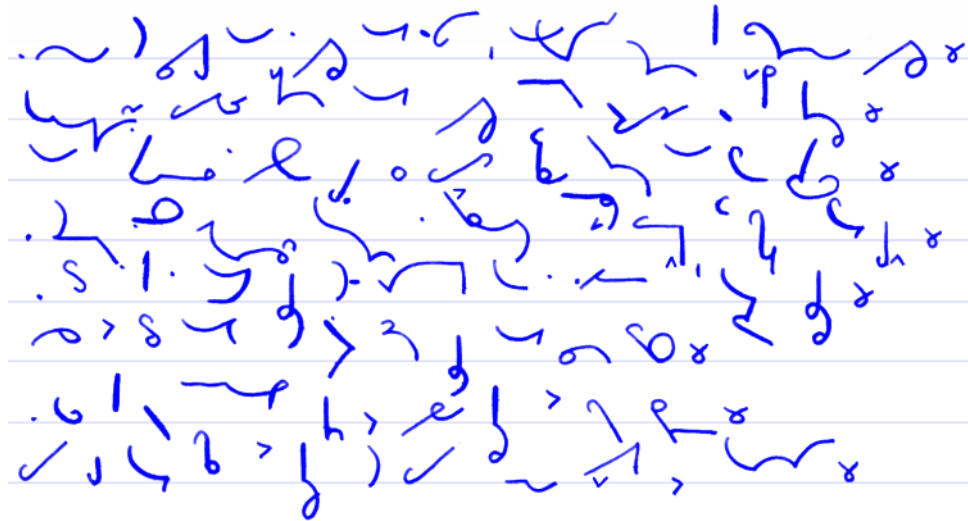
At heart she was a romanticist and her books were well-known for their romanticism.

She had an abscess on the gum and told the dentist that she had suffered from abscesses in the past.

He was prone to obsess about his health but he did not consider himself an obsessionist at all.

The lady\* soon began obsessing over her garden and became ever more OBSESSIVE.

\* "lady" Insert the vowels, so it does not look like "lad" or "laddie"



**Sess Words**

The money was hidden in a recess in the wall but unfortunately the room had very many recesses.

Eventually we found the item in the recessed gap between the two side doors.

In genetics a RECESSIVE gene is one that does not appear in every generation.

The escaping gases and fumes formed a poisonous gaseous cloud that drifted over the town.

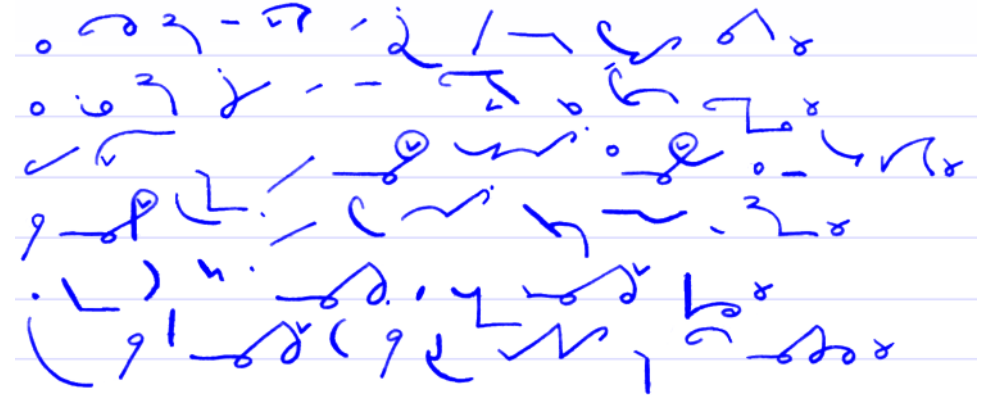
The plant had an unusual disease so I looked for an article on vegetable diseases.

Most of the plants in that batch were diseased in the same places.

The event had to be cancelled due to the recent decease of the principal speaker.

We did not have the address of the deceased so we could not write to the family.

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Sess Words**

His remarks were quite mild and concessive\* which kept everyone happy.

His comments were concessory\* and quite agreeable to his former critics.

We like to take our EXERCISE in the morning as EXERCISING is good for the health.

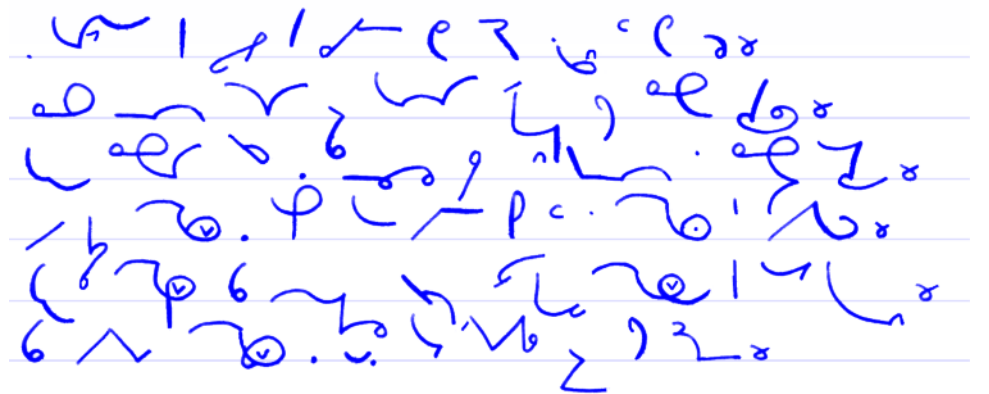
He EXERCISED for an hour every morning before going to work.

The book was about an EXORCIST who undertook to EXORCISE\* demons.

After he had EXORCISED them, he did not have to return to do more EXORCISMS.

\* "concessive" "concessory" have the same meaning: tending to concede or permit

\* "exorcise" Full strokes, to distinguish it from "exercise"



**Sess Words**

The following do use the large circle, as they cannot be confused with other words.

SUCCESS came early to this family and continued through SUCCESSIVE generations.

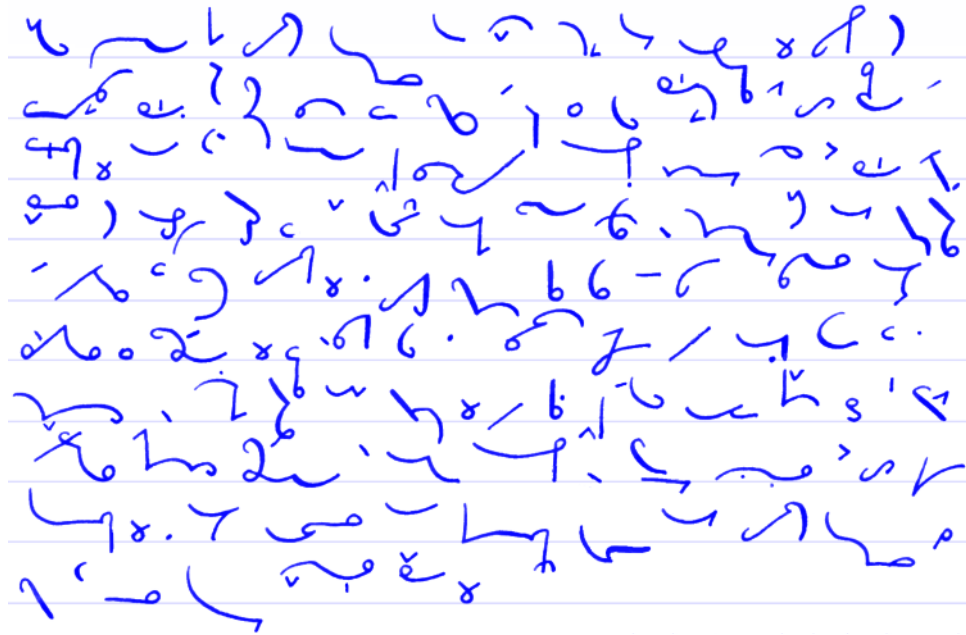
Having SUCCESSFULLY passed the exams, he became a SUCCESSFUL engineer.

Our teachers EMPHASISE the necessity for regular study with an EMPHASIS on revision.

They have EMPHASISED this many times before and will continue EMPHASISING it in the future.

This report EMPHASISES the need for the operatives to check their work.



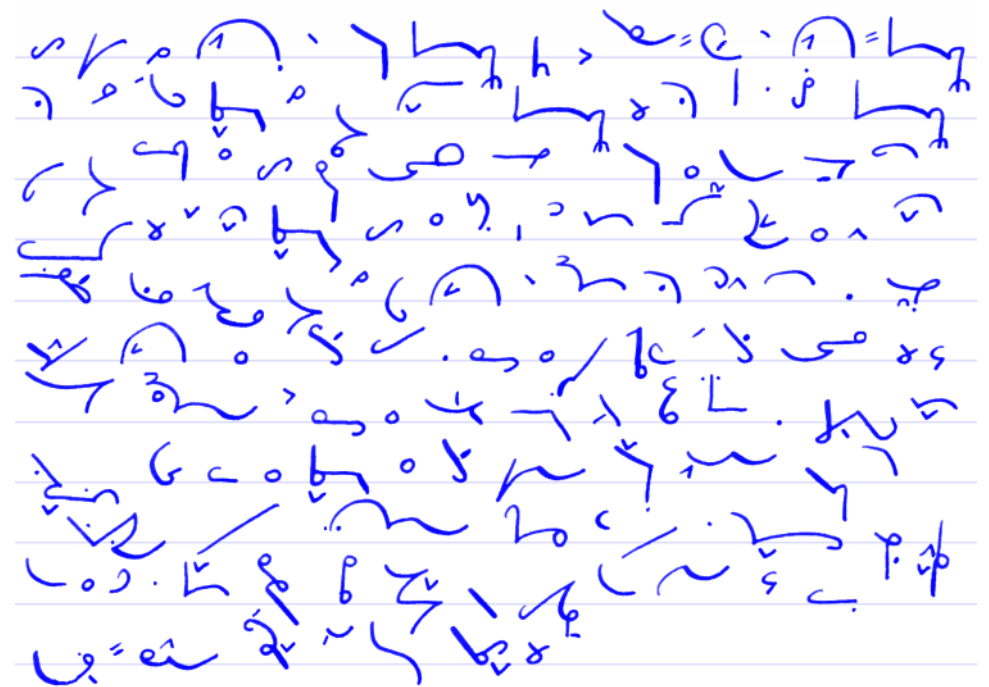


**Wind Chill Factor**

I have been looking at the weather forecast for my area for the next few days. Yesterday was gloriously sunny\* although there were\* some cold breezes, and today is even sunnier\* and the wind stronger and colder. Any thought of going out somewhere interesting to make the most of the sun\* and blue skies was instantly abandoned when I ventured into the garden this morning to remove the ice in the birdbaths and replace with fresh water. A wooden broom does this quite well, as long as only the surface is frozen\*. When it is solid, then a hammer and chisel are needed, along with a reminder to empty the baths the night before. Our days out often include time spent on blowy railway

platforms and at the moment\* there is nothing of enough interest to overcome the menace of the wind chill factor. The only increase in temperature figure in the weather forecast is the number that comes after the minus sign.

- \* "sun, sunny, sunnier" Always insert the vowels, so these do not look like "snow, snowy, snowier"
- \* Omission phrases "there (w)ere" "at (the) moment"
- \* "frozen" Always insert the vowel in this and in "freezing" as they are similar in outline and meaning



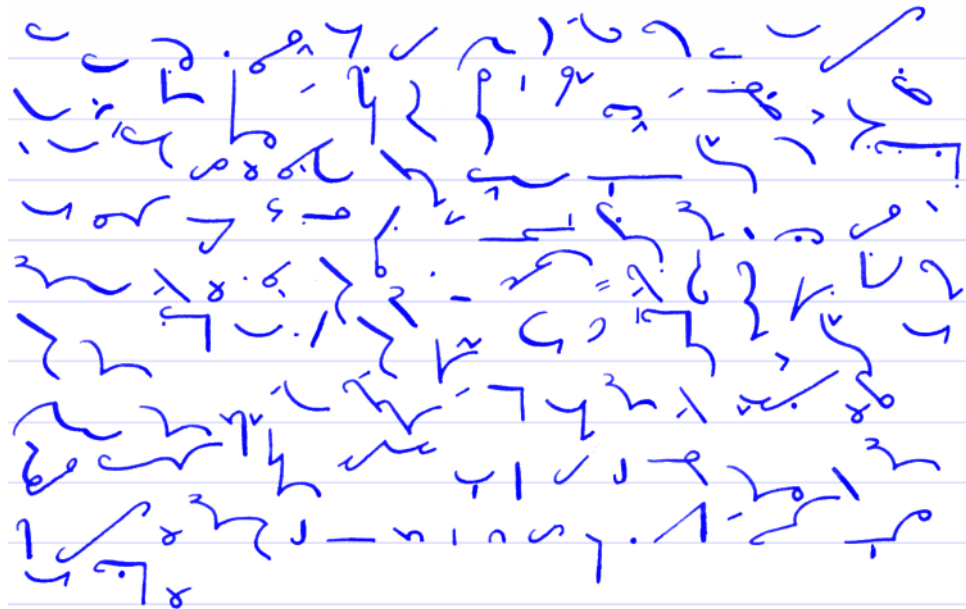
**Wind Chill Factor**

Wind chill is "the lowering of body temperature due to the passing-flow of lower-temperature air" and is often described as the "feels like" temperature. Air at a constant temperature will feel colder as wind speed increases, because the body is being cooled more quickly. I might describe the wind as icy\* but what I am actually saying is how my exposed face and fingers feel, as the thin layer of warm air around me, the "insulating boundary layer", is blown away, the skin is chilled, and discomfort and pain increase. When the natural self-warming of the skin is unable to\* keep up with this attack, the

"disruption of my epiclimate", then the cold is described as bone chilling, biting, gnawing, bitter or perishing, rather alarming terms that are a reminder to stay outside for as short a time as possible, as it is unlikely to be withstood for long, with the equally vicious-sounding frostbite not far behind.

- \* "icy" Insert the last vowel, as the S stroke here does not mean the presence or absence of a final vowel
- \* "unable to" Always insert the first vowel and in "enabled", to distinguish them





**Wind Chill Factor**

In our younger years, the house in which we lived was often very cold in winter, being old, damp at times and draughty, especially as it was on high ground and exposed to the full blast of any north winds. Huddling before the glowing coke fire, or congregating in the small kitchen with the gas jets on the cooker blaring, were the two main ways of warming up. A hot bath would be a good warmer-upper, but then there was the chilly dash\* from the bathroom, clad in a large bath towel, along the short corridor to the fireplace in the living room, to dry off properly\* and get into the warmed up nightwear\*. All this was normal at the time and we knew no different, we did not expect rooms to be warm during winter. Warmth did not come

to you, but you went to it, the red and yellow coals in the grate.

\* "dash" Ish goes up after D and down after T, to provide some distinction in outlines

\* "properly" Insert the first vowel, and the diphone in "appropriately", as these are similar in outline and meaning

\* "nightwear" Insert the first vowel in this and in "knitwear" "underwear" "footwear" as they are all similar. "underwear" is using a short form so has no vowel there, but inserting one above the Nd would help clarify if necessary.

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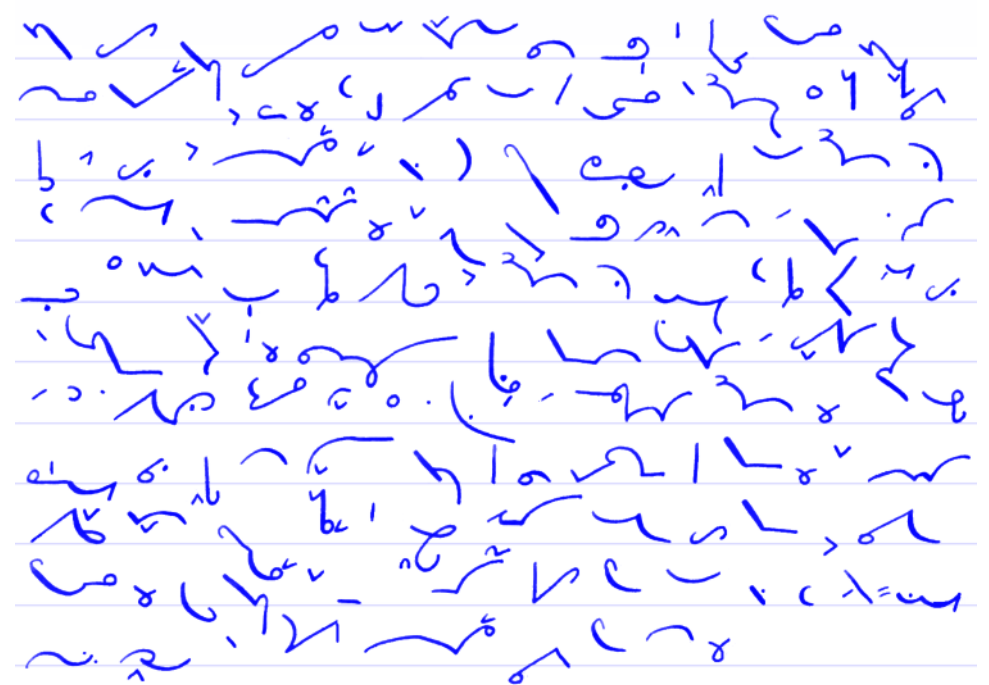
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**Wind Chill Factor**

I remember one bitter winter's night piling some cushions on top of the blankets to provide the maximum barrier to the cold. That did not result in much increase of warmth, as I had hoped it would, and the weight of the materials on the bed was probably squeezing out any warm air that managed to accumulate. I should have put the cushions round me and built a little cave, as I now know that it is the retention of the warm air underneath that does the job, not the weight of fabric piled on. Some years later, duvets became fashionable and

widely available, and what a revelation\* that was, light as a feather and extremely warm. Instead of sucking the heat out of me like before, it seemed to reflect it back. I immediately revised all my previous ideas on insulation and gladly never went back to the heavy blankets. Even better, I could actually turn over in bed without up-ending the mini mountain of assorted materials heaped over me.

\* "revelation" Essential to insert the vowel, so it is not misread as "revolution"

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