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## Blogs - 2019 - June

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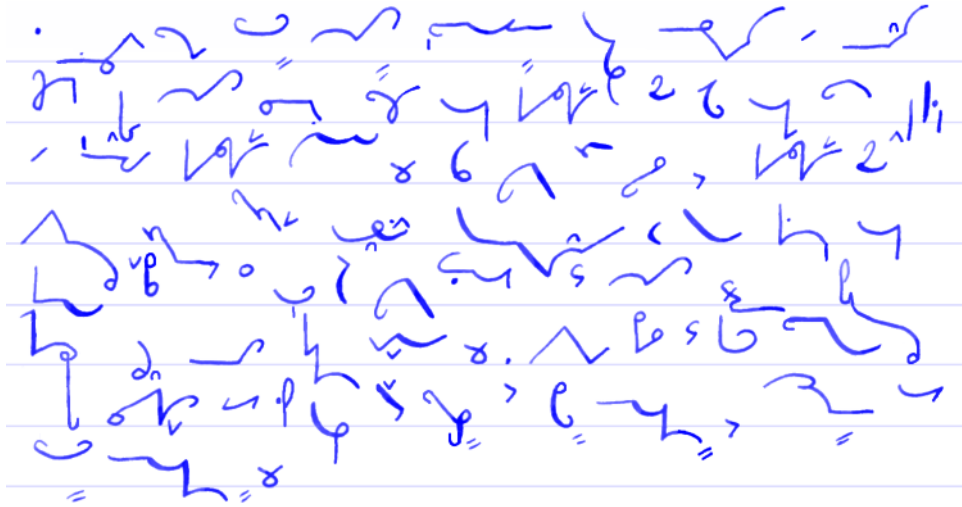
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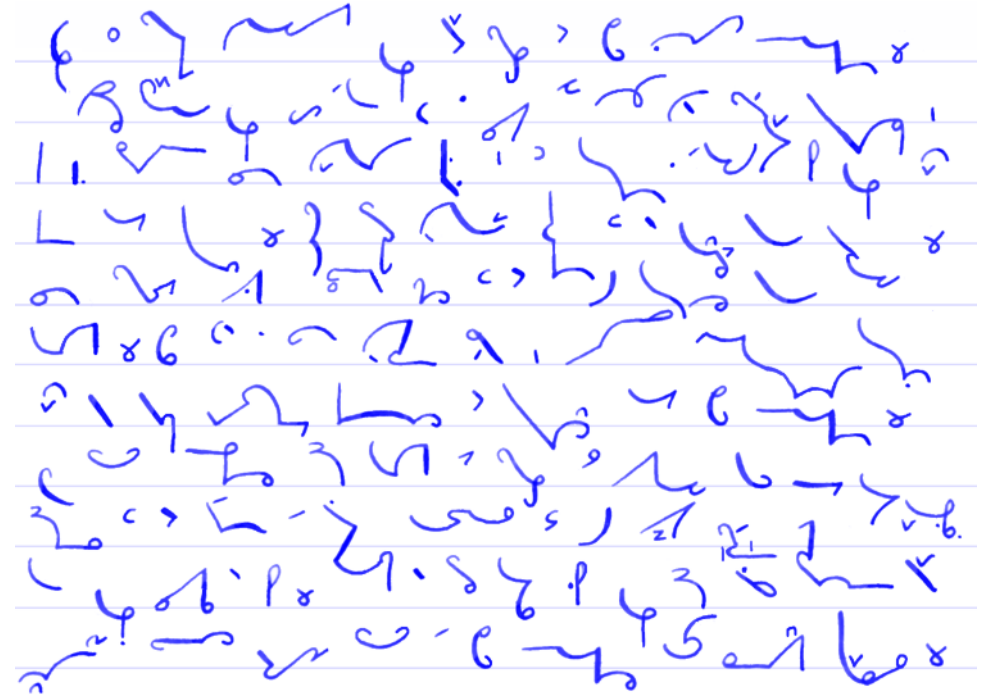
PDF Date: 21 March 2021



**Martian State Visit**

An excerpt from the Northern Martian Chronicle for this month, expertly and accurately translated\* out of the Martian Script, firstly\* into Terrestrial Shorthand and then into the more outdated and awkward Terrestrial Longhand. This will be of great use to the Terrestrial shorthand reporters, to practise the appropriate\* newshound\* vocabulary without being tempted into taking sides, as none of them will be acquainted with the Martian political state of affairs and administrative\* issues current at the time of writing. The report starts with the attention-grabbing headline: State visit by the President of the Southern Kingdom to the Monarch in the Northern Kingdom.

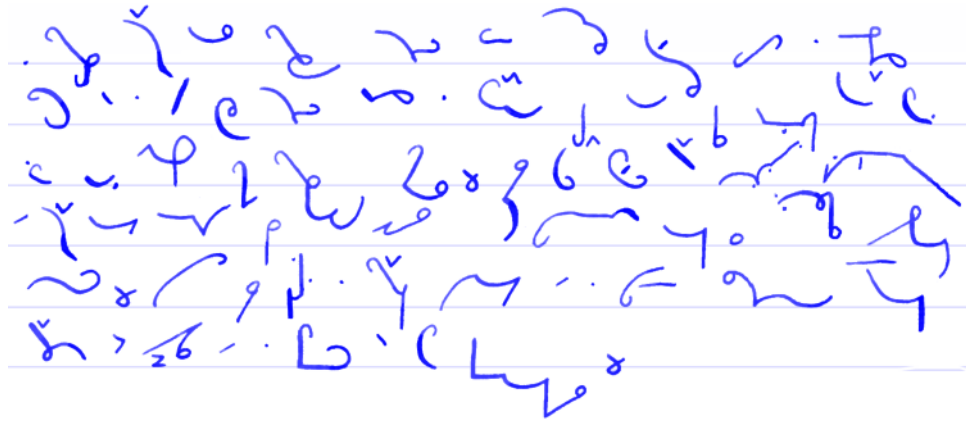
- \* "translated" Omits the N
- \* "firstly" Omits the T
- \* "appropriate" Always insert the diphone, and the first vowel in "proper", as these are similar in outline and meaning
- \* "newshound" Note the Dot Hay before the diphthong, as that sound is pronounced first
- \* "administrative" Omits the R



**Martian State Visit**

This month\* has brought the long-awaited visit by the President of the Southern Martian Kingdom. Last year's flying visit went off without a hitch and with mostly\* low-profile publicity, but it did spark some lively debate on what form an official state visit might take in the future. There was plenty of lobbying at that time, with all viewpoints being put forward. Some preferred the red carpet treatment, with all the usual formalities being followed. Others thought a more logical, sober, but relaxed and informal format\* might be better, to reflect the temperament of the population\* in the Southern Kingdom. However, Northern customs were followed, and the President and his retinue have been given the full works, with all the pomp and pageantry, in accordance with the usual royal protocol and diplomatic niceties\* for visiting heads of state. All plans for this state visit were passed\* by mutual agreement between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms' national security advisers.

- \* Omission phrase "this (mon)th"
- \* "mostly" Omits the T
- \* "format" Always insert the second vowel, as it is similar to "form" in outline and meaning
- \* "population" Ensure the shun hooks remains large, as it could look similar to "populace" which has a similar meaning
- \* "niceties" Insert the diphthong, to differentiate it from "nasties" and, when singular, from "honesty"
- \* "passed" Always insert the first vowel in this and in "opposed" and derivatives, as they are otherwise identical in outline and opposite in meaning

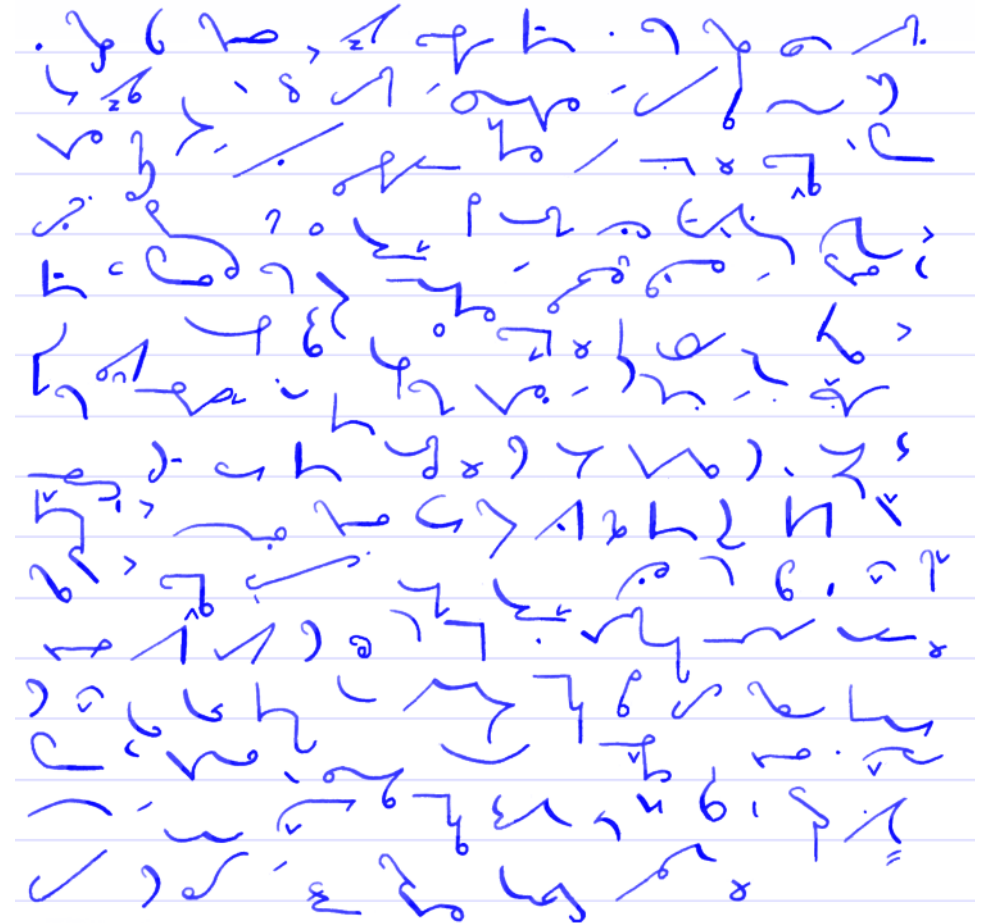


**Martian State Visit**

The President arrived in his personal aircraft, called Mars Force One, a customised version of a large civil aircraft, almost a flying town in itself, to cater for every comfort, need and necessity during the presidential journeys. He was then

flown by military helicopter and arrived in the capital city, and was welcomed into his ambassador's residency mansion. Later on he attended a private lunch and a welcome ceremony, accompanied by some of the royals and a delegation of other dignitaries.

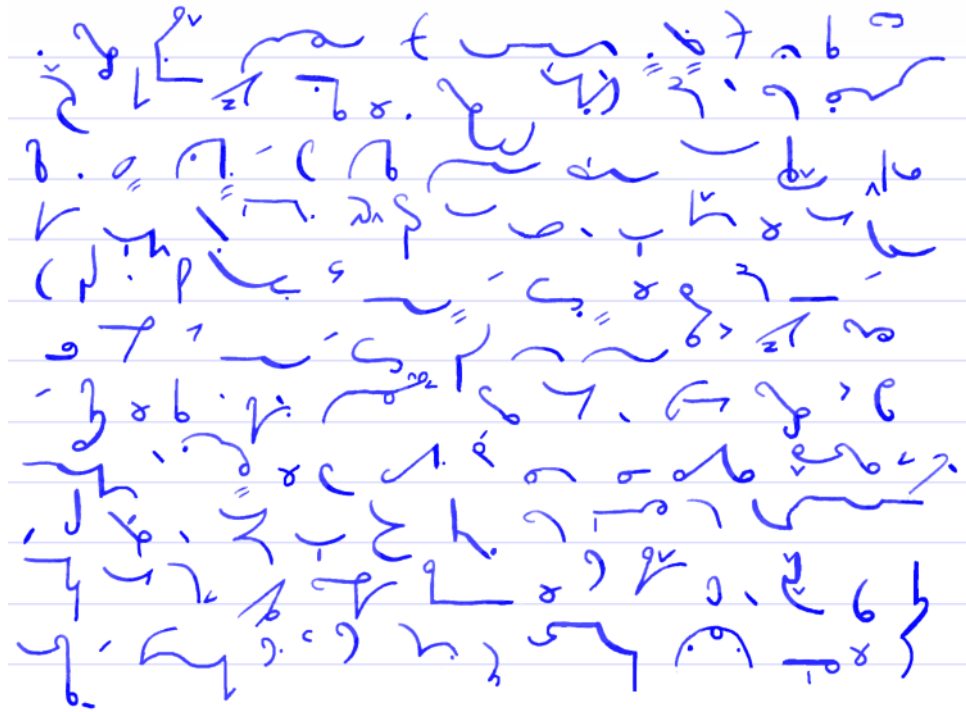
Blank lined paper for taking notes.



**Martian State Visit**

The President then progressed to the Royal Crystal Dome, a very prestigious summer retreat for the royals, full of plants, water and swimming pools, and where many of their palace treasures and rare historical items are kept. Crowds of flag waving supporters cheered his vehicle as it entered the main thoroughfare leading to the Dome, with flags from both kingdoms, and humorous slogans and placards that showed the huge interest that this visit has created. It was necessary to have large numbers of the very experienced command team from the police and army, and a sterile exclusion zone near the Dome entrance. Their only purpose was to ensure

that the timetable of the motorcade's progress along the approach road towards the Dome was not delayed by members of the crowds wandering into the vehicle lanes, or others who might try to cross the road to reach their friends or get an alternative camera angle. There might even have been the temptation for wrongful activity, such as one person taking the flag that belongs to someone else, in their excitement, but this is of course a minor matter and nothing like the activities that we have heard about on planet Earth, where their social and political problems have not yet been resolved.



**Martian State Visit**

The President's high-tech limousine (nicknamed "The Best") made its grand arrival at the Royal Gates. The presidential entourage were all very smartly dressed, the First Lady and other ladies looking stunning in their designer outfits, which will no doubt be copied around the planet in next to no time. In the evening they attended a state banquet with the King and Queen. Speeches were given and gifts exchanged, and the King and Queen showed him many of the royal apartments

and treasures. It is a truly luxurious place in which to welcome the President of the Southern Kingdom of Mars. However, we did spot some secret service snipers on the roof, who had been posted to ensure no falling debris from comets or volcanic activity in the area reaches the crystal structure. They are highly trained to identify these dangerous intruders, and eliminate the threat with their army issue anti-gravity laser guns.

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**Martian State Visit**

On day two, the morning press conference was a very upbeat affair. However the President would not be drawn into commenting on his government's current policies as he felt that short statements are often insufficient\* to accurately convey information on complex subjects. Later on the President spoke briefly with members of the Northern Kingdom administrative\* team. In the afternoon the President had meetings with various members of the cabinet and other leaders to discuss the

future negotiations to smoother collaboration between the two realms, to ensure optimum use of planet Mars's more scarce resources (water and plant life) and better use of the more abundant ones (rocks, minerals and dust).

\* "insufficient" As a contraction, it retains its position on the line

\* "administrative" Omits the R

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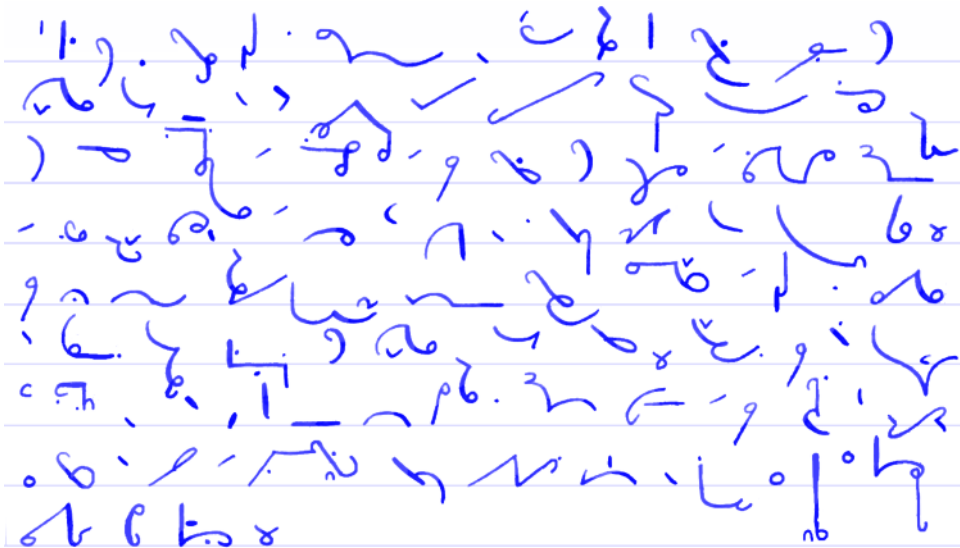
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**Martian State Visit**

On day three, the President attended a ceremony to honour all those who had bravely risked their lives for the good of all the inhabitants of our wonderful planet, in their actions to defend us against catastrophes and accidents, and he praised their ceaseless and selfless work and efforts to find solutions and improvements that lead to a better world for future generations\*. He met many of those who are continuing to make personal sacrifices and attended a service of thanksgiving for

those who have dedicated their lives to this in the past. Finally he bade farewell with gratitude to all who had given him such a warm welcome, and he travelled on to one of his places of rest and recuperation, before returning home to continue his duties as administrative\* head of the southern domain. (950 words)

\* "generations" Optional contraction

\* "administrative" Omits the R

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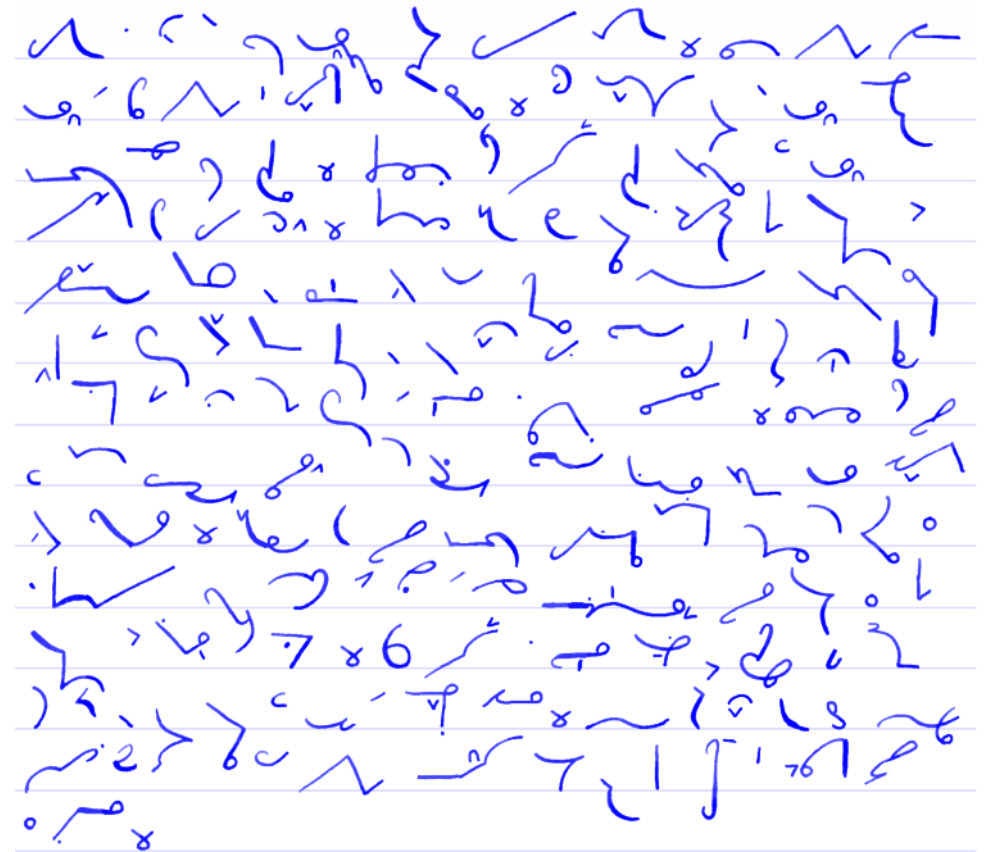
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**Free Newspapers**

We have a lot of free newspapers available where I live. Some report local news and others report on wider subjects. They are not entirely full of news because they have to cover their\* costs through advertisements. It seems to me\* that they are really advertising papers with news, rather than the other way around. At the moment\* I have several pages of one of them at the bottom of the recycling boxes to soak up any drips, and another paper spread out on the floor by the back door to put my wet garden shoes on, so that the mud does not get on the mat or the floor and cause a slipping hazard. Sometimes they are used when I am cleaning the house or painting the garden fence, to protect things and wipe up the brushes\*. I have seen them used to cover windows of empty rooms or shops as a temporary

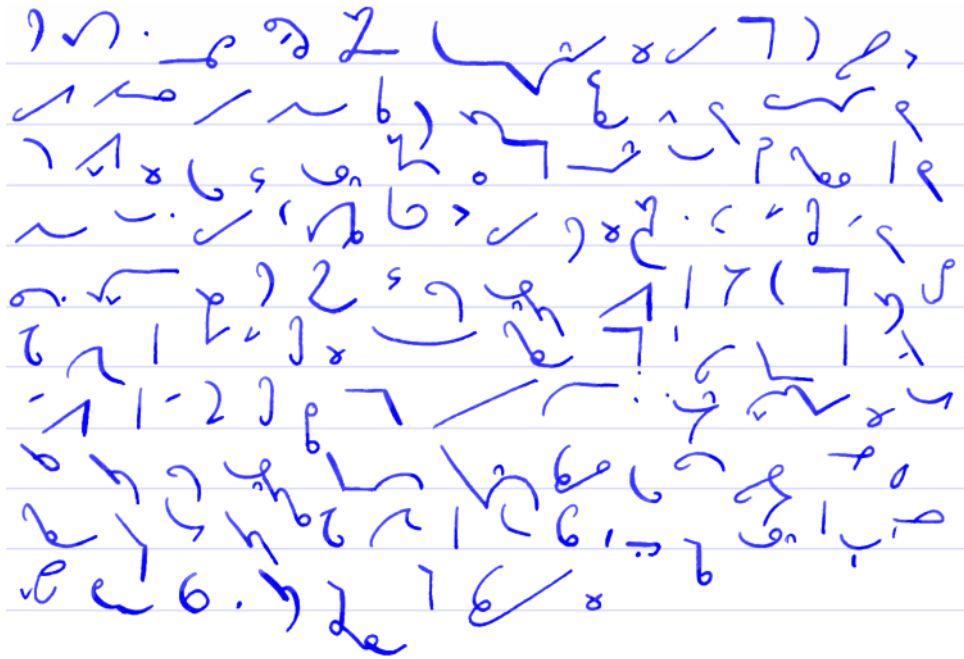
privacy measure, and the last and most ignominious use for them is at the bottom of the parrot's cage. This is really a gross insult to the journalists who have worked so hard to fill the pages with new and exciting articles. Many of them might have spent many months learning shorthand in order to\* report accurately, only to have it trodden on, soiled and used as rags.

\* "cover their " Doubling to represent "their"

\* Omission phrase "it seems (to) me" Always insert the vowel in "me" so that it is not misread as "it seems important"

\* Omission phrases "at (the) moment" "in ord(er) to"

\* "brushes" Upward Ish to balance the R hook

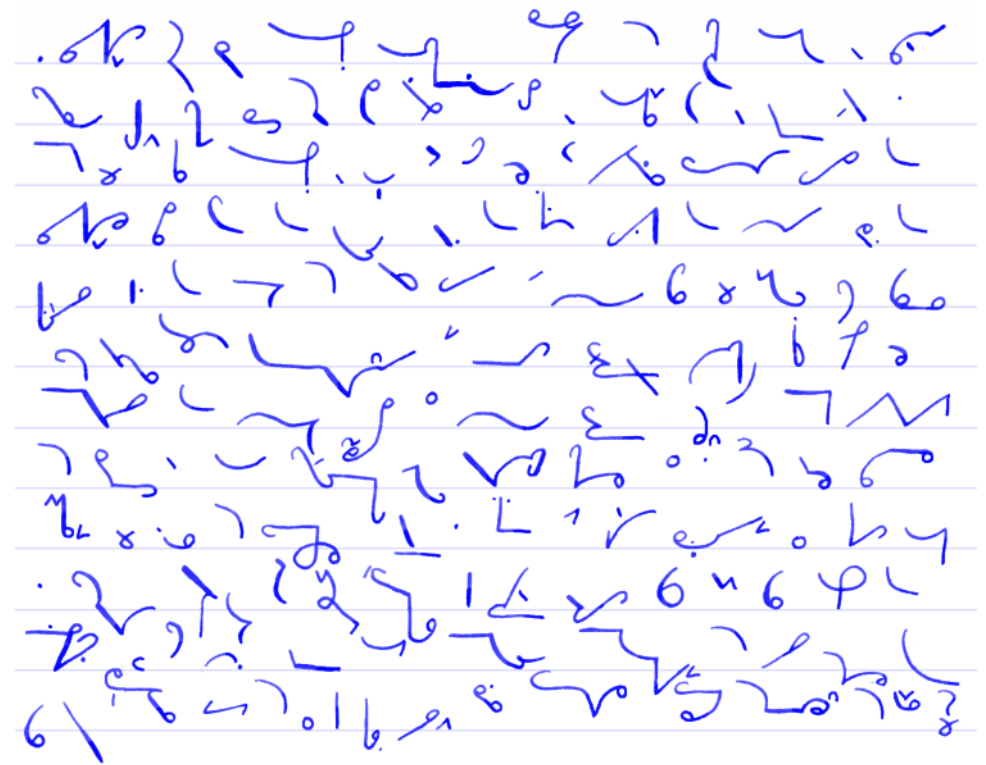


**Free Newspapers**

They are also an excellent source of journalistic\* vocabulary. We get so used to the way the articles are written, it is easy to forget that it is not how people normally speak or write. Even when the news item is accurate in what it presents, it has to be\* written in a way that holds the attention all the way through. I travel a lot on the trains, and people seem to like to start their journey with the free newspaper, read it until they get to their station and then leave it on the train. Another person getting on will pick it up and read it, and so the train seats can be rather like a

communal library. In the past, before free newspapers became popular, this was even more useful, because the first person paid for the paper, and then left it for others, who gained today's news at no cost, whilst saving themselves the bother of disposing of it elsewhere.

- \* "journalistic" Option contraction
- \* "it has to be" Not entirely phrased, so that it is clearly different from "it has to be"



**Free Newspapers**

The headline especially has to be interesting, intriguing, sensational or controversial\* enough to slow the person down during the second or two as they pass the stand, to entice them to pick up a copy. It is interesting to note all the short words that replace normal ones for headlines, such as over for finished, bid for attempt, wed for marry, split for divorce, dead for killed or passed away, and many others. I have been through this week's\* free papers for some vocabulary on the current political party leadership contest, and such words can be used for many other\* situations, as many political issues get reported or spoken of in provocative

and even belligerent terms, as a war of words, slogans and ideas. Comments or criticisms become an attack, and the whole scenario is turned into a verbal battlefield, although I suspect the politicians do chuckle between themselves about this necessity for exaggeration when they are meeting together in the government cafeteria or rest rooms after these public squabbles, or is it tiffs, rows, spats, clashes, quarrels, arguments or fights?

- \* "controversial" Optional contraction
- \* Omission phrase "many oth(er)" "this (w)EEK'S"



**Free Newspapers**

Here we go with the leadership contest vocabulary. With the deadline for party nominations rapidly approaching, candidates have had to rustle up enough support to get the required number of nominations, in order to\* go through to the first round of voting. Several hopefuls managed to get their applications in at the last minute. Some secured the backing of particularly significant high profile supporters, others attracted few public backers and had to work harder to win any support at all. After a flurry of candidates

for the leadership campaign, many were eliminated at the first hurdle, as they failed to build the necessary support for their campaigns. A significant proportion of them dropped out, as withdrawal of support scuppered their chances of success. As they were picked off and eliminated at the second hustings, the field of candidates narrowed and it became clear that the main leadership aspirants had survived this first battle for the top job.

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

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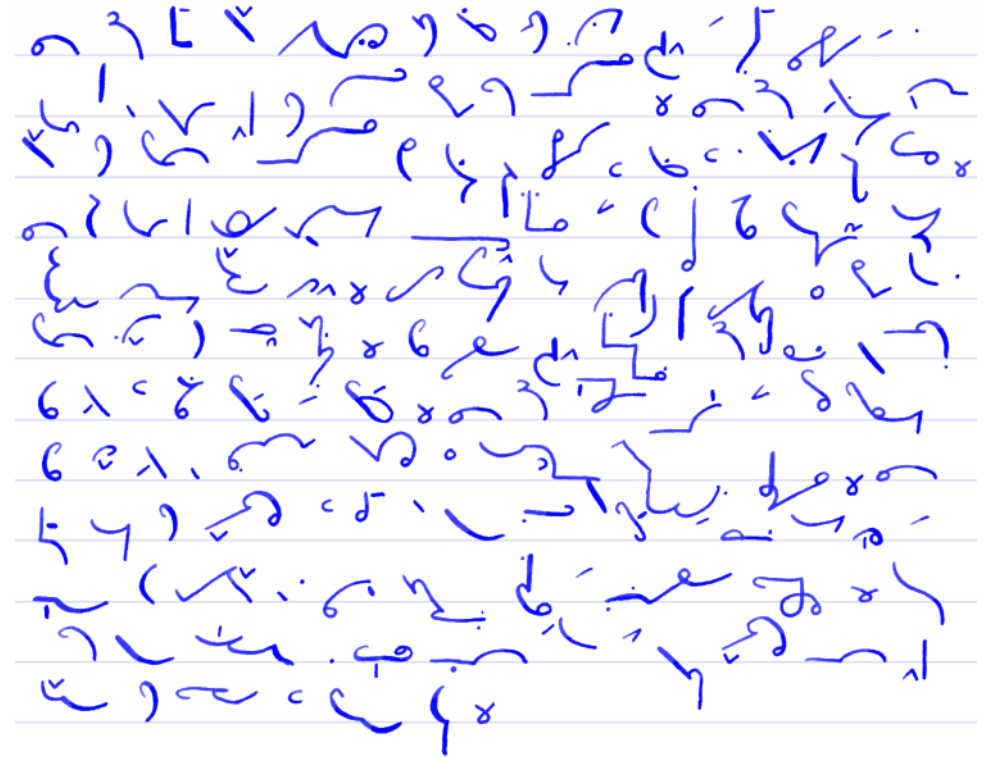
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**Free Newspapers**

Some were dogged by revelations of their past, and their alleged doubtful and dodgy history, and a few had to pull out through lack of support from colleagues. Some were openly mocked by their former colleagues, as they failed to deliver satisfactorily when faced with a barrage of difficult questions. Some of them felt it necessary to launch counter attacks on the other contenders and this virtually ensured that they would not make the final round. One challenger for the leadership who had withdrawn his support for a former ally was accused of treachery. Others using doubtful tactics

were seen to be covering this up with endless bluff and bluster. Some were cautiously cool on the plans presented, others lined up to slam the policies as unworkable and potentially disastrous. Some tore into their rivals, with taunts of being gaffe prone and stick-in-the-muds, and goading them to reply to a slew of prickly, adverse and embarrassing criticisms. Far from being unnerved, the gloves came off and the bitter rivals came out fighting their corner with everything they had.

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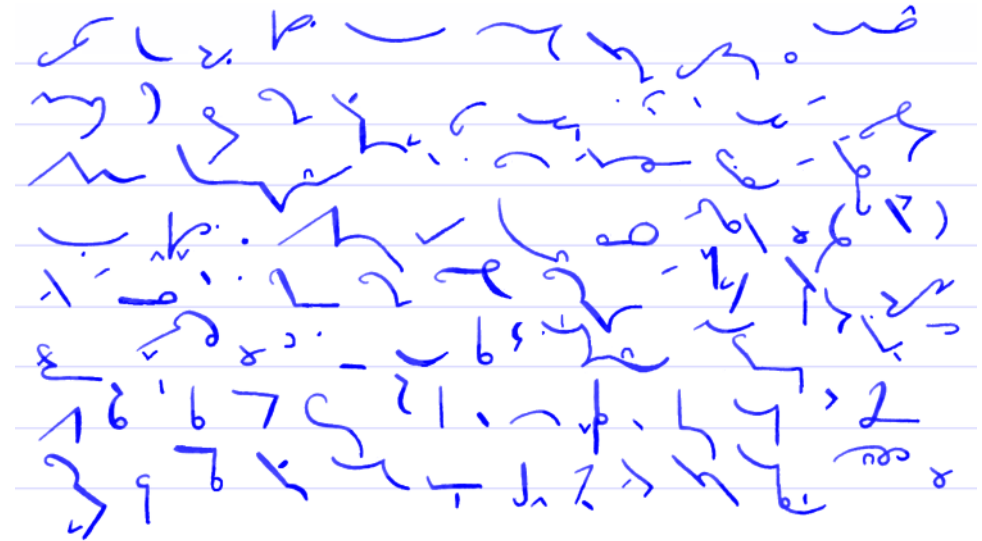
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**Free Newspapers**

The flagging campaign received an injection of fresh energy from the leading contenders, who were able to find sufficient support and survive the next ballot. The campaign of one of the leading figures received a boost from several prominent backers, after he pledged to deliver the required improvements through forward-looking and innovative policies. The stakes couldn't be higher and he was confident that the party could get its mojo back and extricate\* the country from its problems,

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**Free Newspapers**

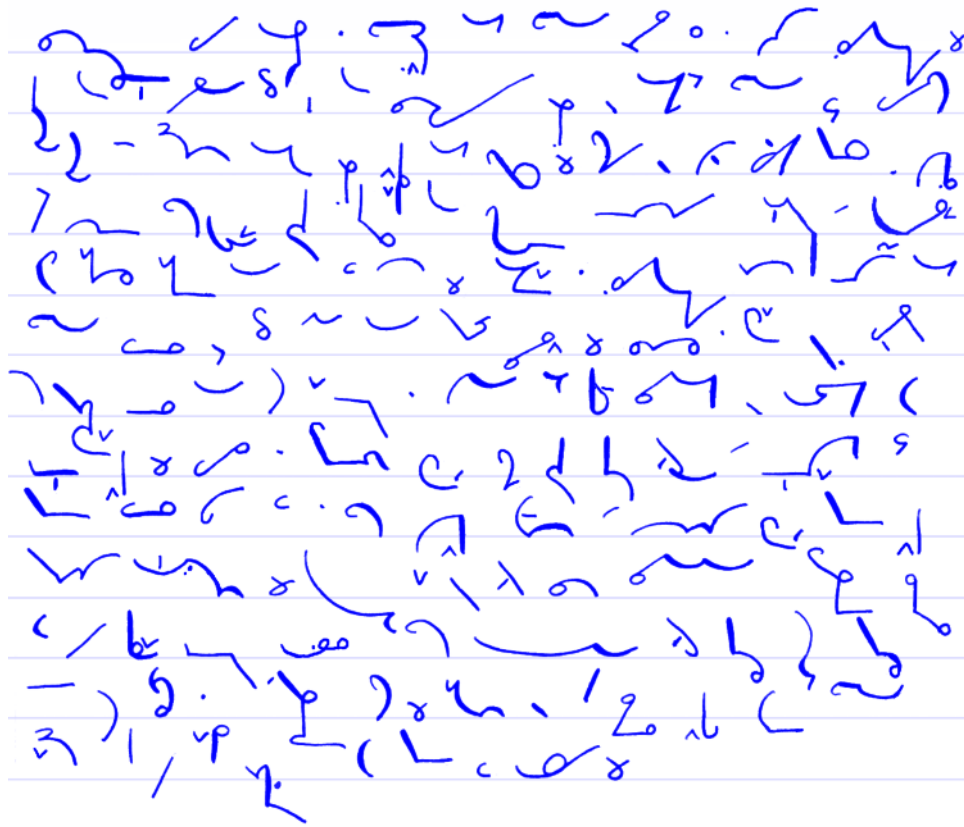
We will have to wait at least another month before the winner is announced, and I am sure their speech from the podium will include a lot of new and useful reporting vocabulary of a more optimistic\*, pleasant\* and positive nature, outlining the roadmap to our future success and prosperity. This will buoy us up and give us all a break from the aggressive verbal and ideological battlefield between the political rivals . What a good thing it is that the unassuming and uncomplicated parrot cannot read all

Blank lined area for notes.

this on its cage floor, although it too may decide to tear into all the journalistic\* verbiage when it gets bored enough to go down and chew up the paper for its own amusement. (1146 words)

- \* "optimistic" Omits the T
- \* "pleasant" Helpful to insert the first vowel, to ensure it is not misread as "pleasing"
- \* "journalistic" Optional contraction





**The Bees**

Some years ago we installed a greenhouse in the garden, to use as a little conservatory. It was not for raising plants but for somewhere to sit\*, to enjoy the garden when the weather was not quite warm enough to sit outside in the breezes. There are two low storage boxes, the lids of which make very convenient table tops for drink, camera, notepad and various other items I take in with me. Unlike a conservatory, I am actually in the garden close to the plants, and not in part of the house. Sometimes a fly, bee, wasp or butterfly comes in, so I keep a long handled duster handy to encourage them

to go out. Once a blackbird flew through the double door opening and collided with the back glass wall with a very loud thump and immediately flew back out, apparently unharmed\*. After that I put up some hanging plastic strips that are designed to keep insects from entering open doors, so that the birds can see that there is an obstacle there. I have made two large hooks out of thick garden wire at each side, to drape them back when necessary.

\* "sit" Always insert the vowel in "sit, seat" and derivatives, to differentiate



**The Bees**

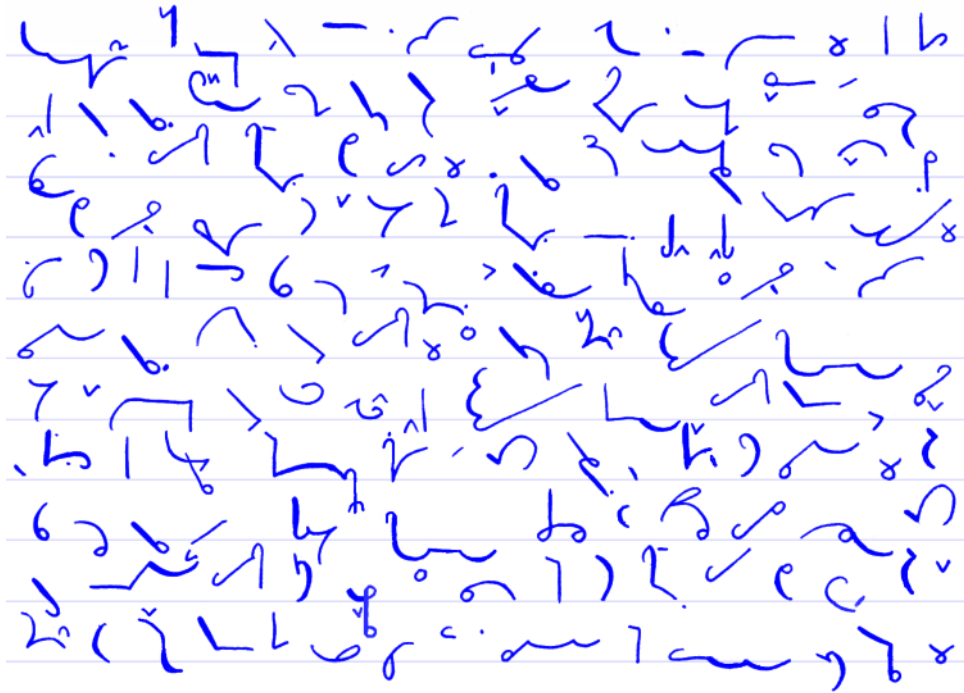
Immediately opposite the open sliding doors is the lawn with a concrete birdbath in the middle, in roughly the shape of an upturned shell, reasonably deep in the middle and shallow at the edges, just perfect for birds of all sizes. As long as I sit\* very still, I can watch the fascinating show of birds having their bath, fairly close up. Last year, while sitting\* there with the knitting basket and listening to a talk on the Ipod\*, I noticed little points of light skimming across the view through the doors. I had no idea what they were and my first guess was that it was floating seedheads, gnats or flies catching the

sunlight for some reason. But the points were a little too big for that. Also they were not moving randomly, they were appearing in the middle of my view and falling at a curving 45 degree angle, the same every time\*, like little shooting stars.

\* "sit" Always insert the vowel in "sit, seat" and derivatives, to differentiate

\* "Ipod" Insert the vowel in this and in "Ipad" to differentiate

\* "every time" Helpful to insert the vowel, to prevent misreading as "over time"

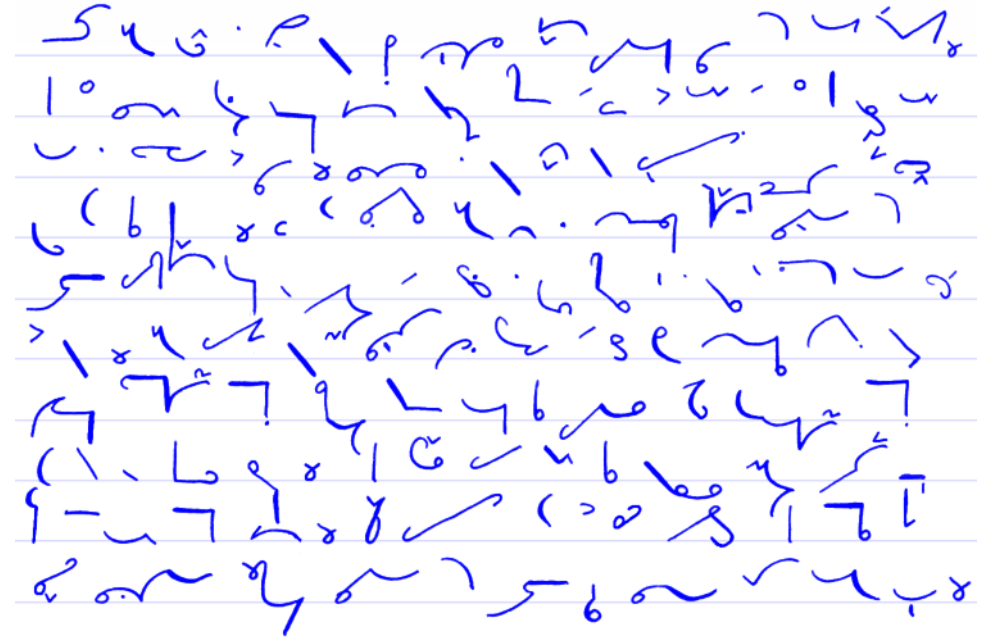


**The Bees**

Eventually I had to get up, go a little closer and have a good look. It turned out to be bees flying from the bird bath, rising sharply into the sky, and some of them\* losing a water droplet as they went. The bees were unnoticeable from my seat as they rose steeply, so I only saw the droplet coming down out of apparently nowhere. Well, they are at it again this year, and the rim of the basin at present has rows of little honey bees lapping up the water. As before, I assumed they were drinking until I looked up the information and found out that they were taking water back to the hive to

dampen it, for the purpose of temperature control, and also possibly to dilute the honey. Although this year's bees are definitely drinking, it seems that last year's ones must have also been carrying water on their undersides, as some of it was dropping away as they flew, although I assume they arrived back at the nest still with a certain amount\* of it clinging to their bodies.

\* Omission phrases "some (of) them" "certain (am)ount"



**The Bees**

Occasionally I have found a lost bee sitting motionless on my window sill or in the porch. It has somehow failed to get home before the dark and cold of the night and has had to spend the night in a corner of the sill. Sometimes a bee might be wandering weakly on the ground, even though it is daytime. When that happens, I have made a mixture of diluted honey or sugar water for it to refuel and placed a few drops on a piece of card in front of the bee. I have watched the bee slowly lean forward

and spend several minutes lapping up the liquid, gradually\* getting strength back into its wings and then eventually getting them up to take-off speed. It flies away, about its business, and I feel really good that it can now get home. I just wonder what sort of reception it gets at the hive, smelling of strange honey or sugar, but that is something I will never know. (852 words)

\* "gradually" Using full stroke D, to differentiate from "greatly"



**The Bees**

As they fly away, it is impossible to follow them with the eye, at a certain point they just disappear. After some overnight rain, despite the presence of water everywhere, they kept coming, little winged\* computers following their instructions to get to that particular supply in that bird bath and no other. No doubt as the weather cools with the showers, there will be no need to cool their nest for a while. There was only one casualty, one bee had drowned, but

another bee I rescued from the water. Another one did get an inadvertent shower as I put fresh water in, but he soon dried off and flew away. The birds don't seem to mind the bees, and as the bees don't like any disturbance, I am sure they all buzz off when a bird lands, and return again when the birds have gone.

\* "winged" Stroke Ing cannot be halved

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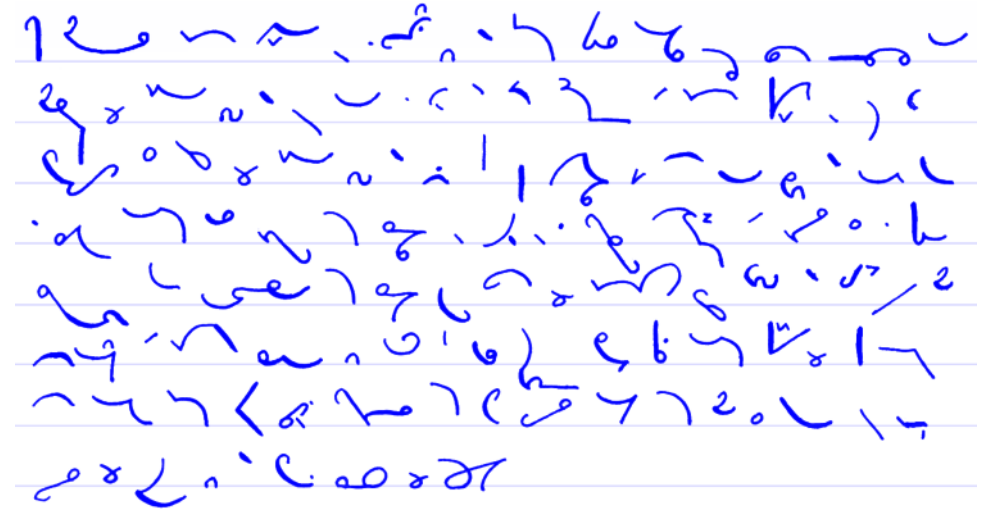
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**Short Letters 17**

**Each letter is 150 words**

Dear Shorthanders\*, I am writing to congratulate you all on your achievements in this year's summer exams in shorthand speed. I know you have all put in a lot of hard work, and I am delighted to see that everyone has passed. I know you have all aimed at different levels, but the important thing is that you all now have a certificate in your hands to prove your skills, to show to a prospective employer and to use as a definite springboard for increasing your skill even more. I am also\* pleased that you have all joined our shorthand improvement community, and I will be sending you information on events so that you can save

the days in your diary. Do keep me informed of your job hunting progress or other ways in which your shorthand is being put to good use. Wishing you all every success. Yours sincerely\* (150 words)

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

\* "I am also" The attached vowel sign of "also" is omitted in phrases

\* Omission phrase "Yours (sin)cerely"

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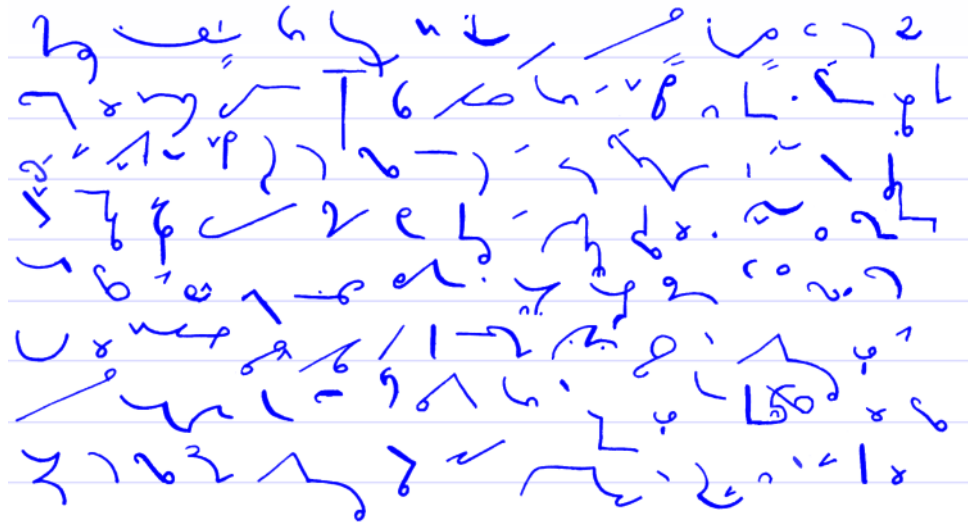
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**Short Letters 17**

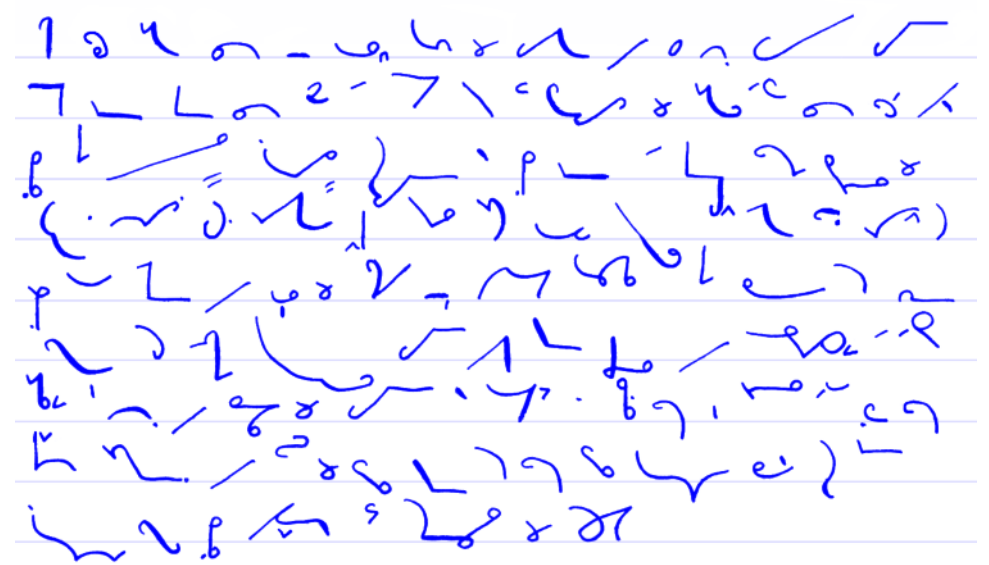
Dear Mrs Anderson, Thank you for your enquiry about attending our Writers Conference with your shorthand group. I am sure we can accommodate this request for you, and I suggest you take a block of seats at the front on the right hand side, so that your members can see and hear properly\*, but not be distracted by the activities on the other\* side where there are several doors and literature tables. The lighting is very good in all places and the sound should be excellent, as we have a newly installed system that has proved very efficient. I enclose the house rules,

which do cover the legitimate uses of reporters' notes and the writers involved have agreed that they are happy for you all to take notes for educational purposes. Please ensure your members wear the reporters badges and we look forward\* to seeing you all on the day. (150 words)

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

\* Omission phrases "on the oth(er) side" "look fo(r)ward"

Blank lined area for writing a response to the letter.



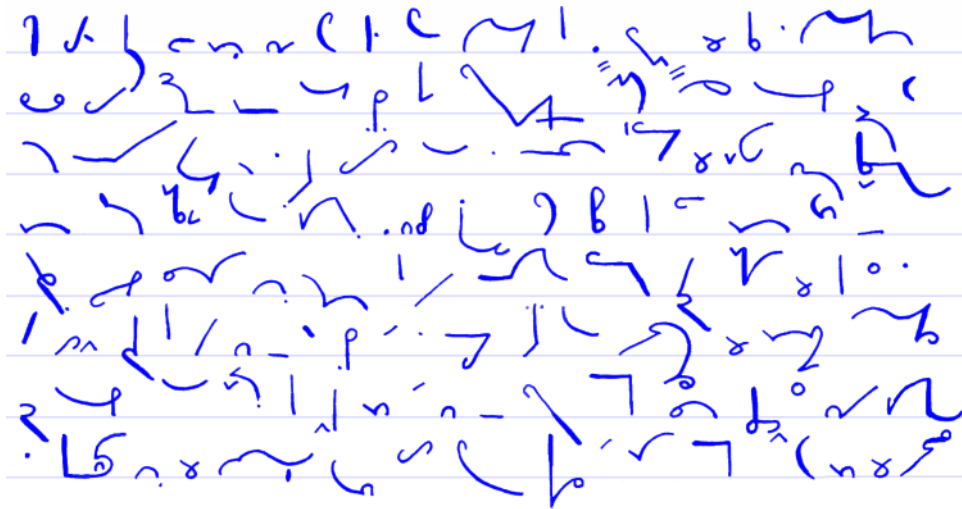
**Short Letters 17**

Dear Friends, I have some good news for you. We have our first meeting where we can get together, take some shorthand and catch up with everyone. I have been offered some front row seats at the Writers Conference, so that we can all sit together and take down from the speakers. They have a morning session of reading out parts of their new publications, and have agreed to allow us to sit in and take our notes. There are good lunch facilities at the centre, or you can bring your own, and

during the afternoon we can read back, discuss our experiences, and swap ideas on improving our skills. We can all enjoy a stress free, but of course not effort free, time of practising our craft. Please book your free place fairly soon, so that I can confirm the number of seats required with the organisers. Yours sincerely\* (150 words)

\* Omission phrase "Yours (sin)cerely"

Blank lined area for writing a response to the letter.



**Short Letters 17**

Dear Joan, It was great to meet you the other day over\* lunch at The Plough\*. It is a long time since we worked together in the city at the property company and I was most interested to hear that your career changed to a teaching one in a commercial college. While you were describing to me all your ideas for helping the students continue their studies, it occurred to me that you could possibly use the small meeting room at our golf club, which would be ideal. It has a large round table at which you could all sit, and a kitchen attached for

refreshments. I am sure the management would be interested in hiring it out to you, and you could probably get some discount as you are holding an educational meeting. Let me know if you want further details and I will get them to you. Regards (150 words)

\* "over" Keep the hook clear, as "for lunch" would also make sense

\* "at The Plough" Not using Tick The, as it is part of the business name

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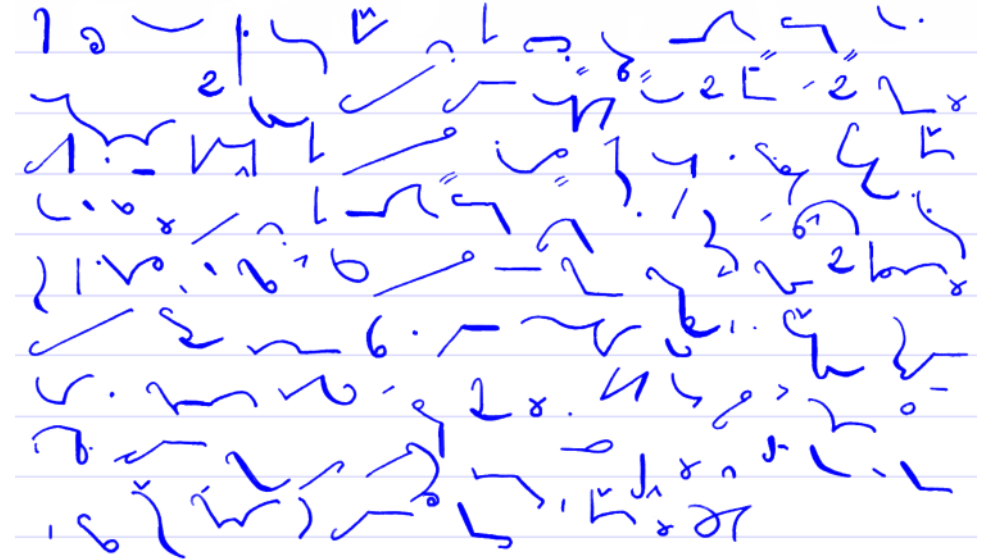
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**Short Letters 17**

Dear Friends, Another date for your diary, meeting at the Green Fields Golf Club for an informal shorthand evening, where we can indulge in shorthand talk and shorthand practice. We had a good turnout at the Writers Conference and it was indeed a pleasantly challenging time for all of us. Our meeting at the golf club will be a much easier and slower affair, so that it appeals to all members, and the faster writers can practise producing perfect shorthand at the same time\*. We are planning to make this a regular monthly event on a Friday evening\*, so that we can follow a

programme of revision and speed training. The charge for the use of the room is quite modest and we can bring our own refreshments to keep the cost down. You don't have to book but please arrive promptly so we can begin on time. Yours sincerely\* (150 words)

\* "at the same time" Halving for the T of "time"

\* Omission phrases "Friday ev(en)ing" "Yours (sin)cerely"

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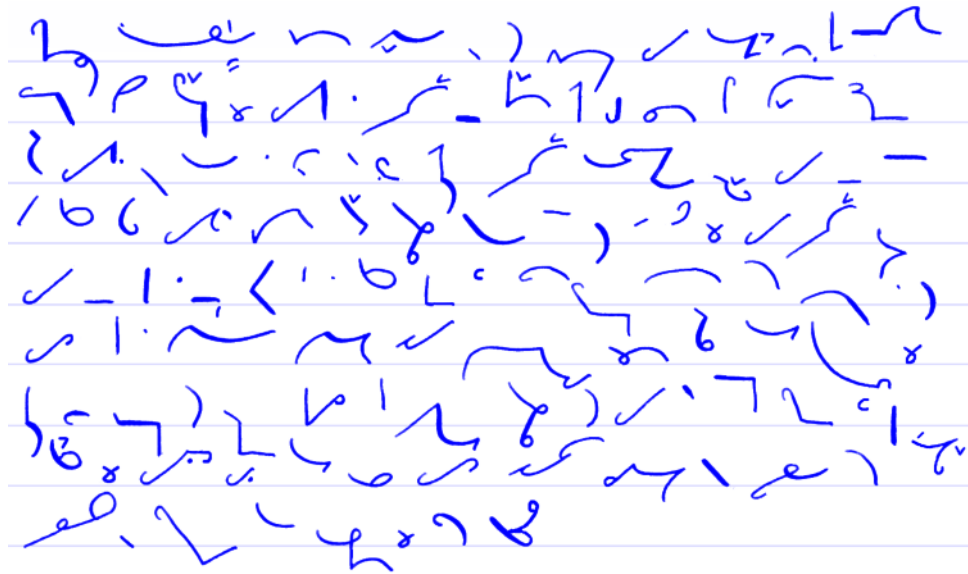
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Short Letters 17

Dear Mrs Anderson, I am writing to say how much\* we enjoyed the meeting at the golf club last Friday. We had a really good time and it did not seem at all like work, although we did put in a lot of effort, and it was really encouraging to find we could go much faster than we thought, helped by the passages being quite easy and short. We really feel we could do a good job on a faster take with more complicated matter, or maybe an easy one at a longer length, and we look forward\* to some of those in the future. It was great to get us to take turns at reading the passages, so we all got practice with different voices. We can't wait

for the next one and we will certainly be using your online resources to prepare for next time\*. Very best wishes\* (150 words) (Total 900 words)

\* "how much" The M is included to enable the phrase, which is quicker than writing separately, similarly "so much, very much"

\* Omission phrases "look fo(r)ward" "ne(k)s(t) time"

\* "best wishes" Upward Ish to enable the join

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Short Letters 17

Dear Friends, I hope\* you have space in your diary for another engagement on the shorthand theme. I have just been advised of a forthcoming exhibition up in the city showcasing the changing workplace through history, covering the past two centuries. As well as displays of the office and factory machinery\* that has transformed the working environment over the years, there will be a section on writing systems and print production, which of course includes shorthand, and there will be original examples of shorthand written by famous authors. We are eligible\* for a concessionary\* entrance fee for a group of ten\* or more, so if you would like to come with us, please contact me. We will meet at the golf club, and go up and return by coach, and lunch is included. I hope you

can\* join us to learn more of the history of our profession. Yours sincerely\*

\* Omission phrases "I (h)ope" "Yours (sin)cerely"

\* "machinery" Alternative outline that omits the N

\* "eligible" Generally advisable to insert the initial vowel, so it is not misread as "legible", although clear here without it

\* "concessionary" Note that the outline for "concession" is Con Dot + stroke S + Shun hook

\* "ten" "eighteen" Always insert the vowels

Blank lined paper for writing practice.