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Blogs - 2020 - September

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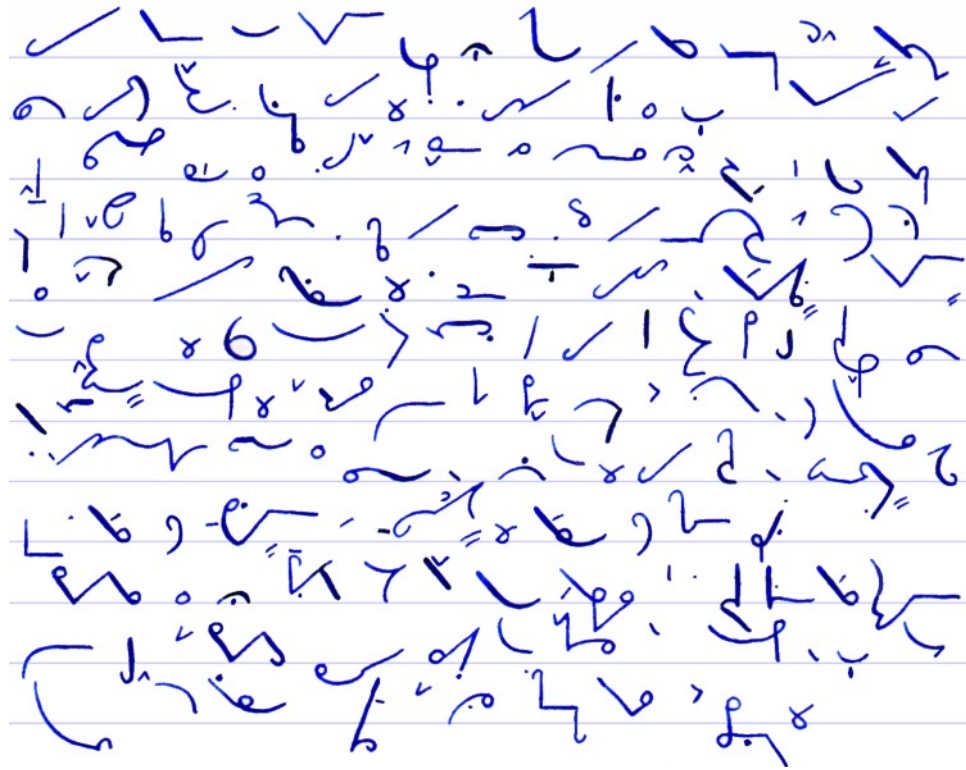
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PDF Date: 9 September 2024



Burgess Park

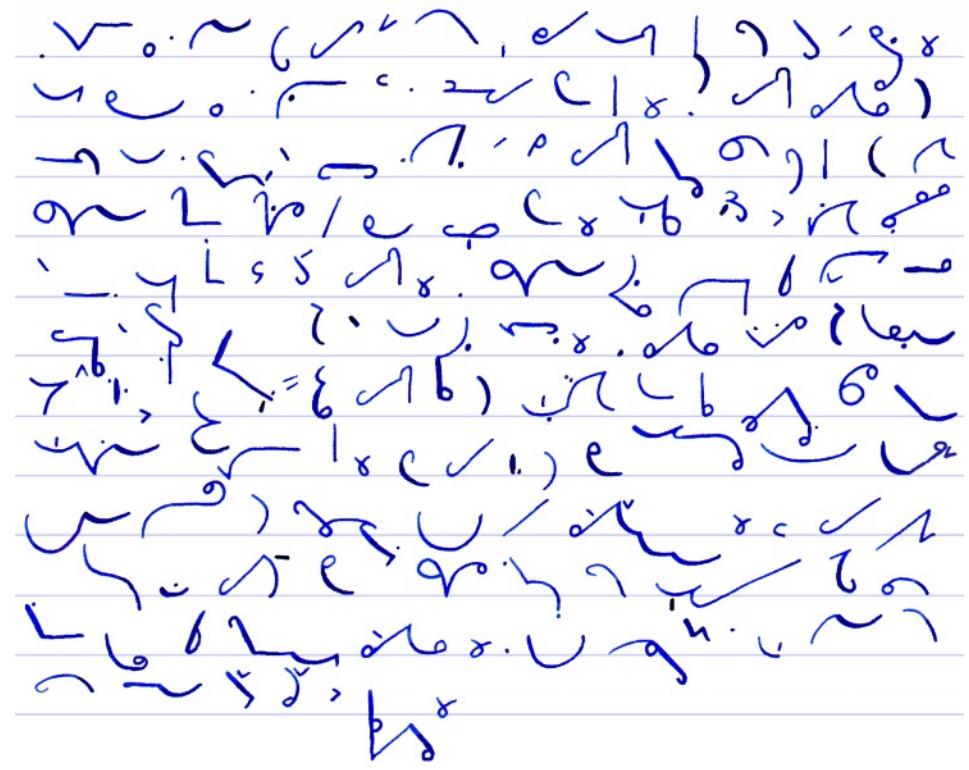
We are back in park visiting mode, and doing our best to get around before the summer weather finally fades away. A wintry day is no barrier to our outings, as long as the sun is shining and the sky has the maximum amount of blue, but even better to do it whilst it is still warm, the trees are green, the plants are colourful and the fresh air is mild rather than bracing. A week ago we went to Burgess Park in south London. This is another patch of green which we had overlooked, as it did not at first sight* seem to be of great interest. I always look at the satellite image of the map to see if there is an ornamental* garden, as something to aim for. We travelled to London Bridge and then

took a bus through Southwark* and Walworth. Bussing through traffic congested suburbs is made tolerable only by being upstairs on a double decker bus, so that we can look down on the suburban scenery, searching for items of interest to note for the future, or passing judgement on the less attractive parts of the cityscape.

* Omission phrase "at first sight"

* "ornamental" Using Ray, in order to join the following hook and strokes easily

* "Southwark" The W in the spelling is silent

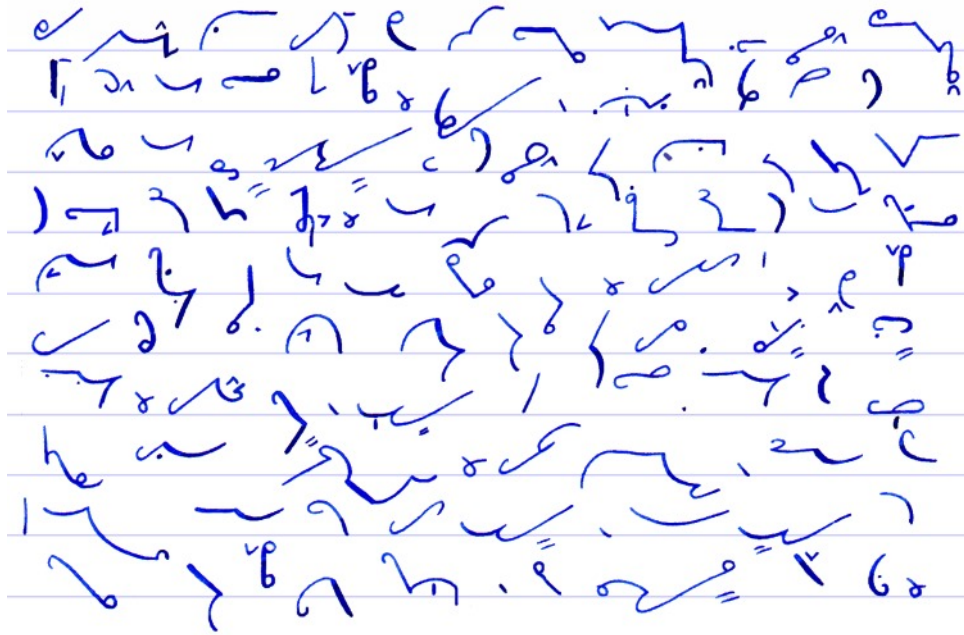


Burgess Park

The park is a long thin one on the map but, as we entered, it was very open and spacious. In the centre is a lake, with a walkway over it. The water surface was covered in a bloom of green algae, and as the water birds swam through it, they left swirling dark trails which soon closed over. Notices warned of the health hazards of coming into contact with the pond water. The swirling shapes looked just like the gas clouds of planet Jupiter, although all in shades of green. The surface patterns, although fascinating, only added to the

feeling that this water was unhealthy for its inhabitants, as well as being unappealing to look at. However we did see several anglers in their various fishing locations, so presumably the fish are surviving. When we reached the far end, we saw several swirls appearing from nowhere and then some back fins just breaking the surface. The fish must have been* about a foot long or more, going by the size of the disturbance.

* Omission phrase "must have been"

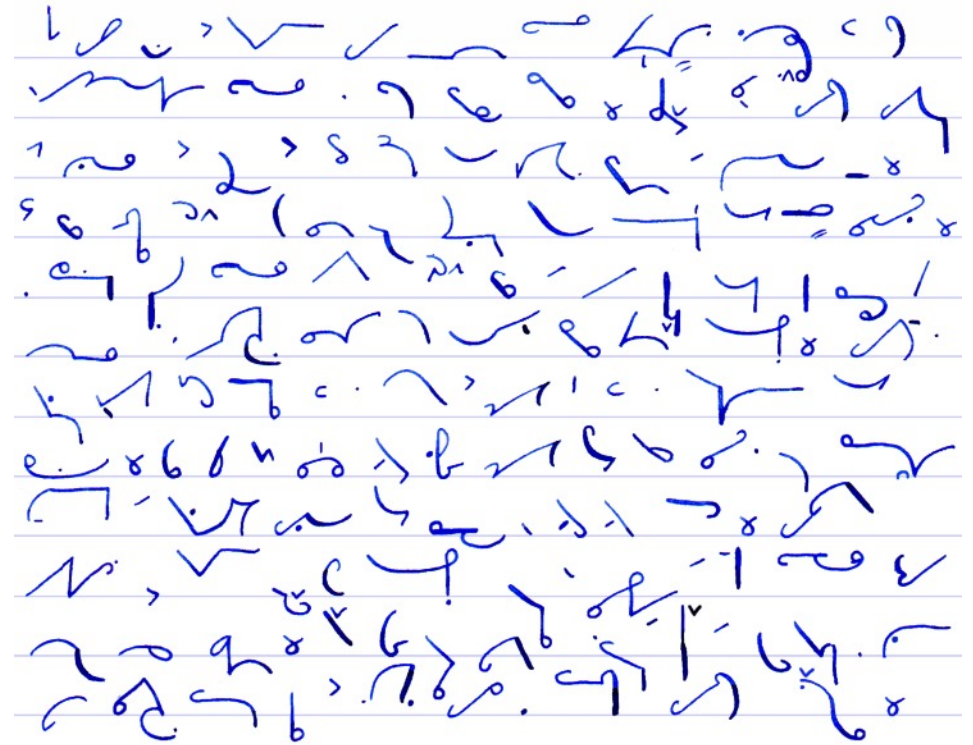


Burgess Park

As we rounded the lake we saw several little groups of miniature concrete house sculptures dotted around in the grass at the sides. These were to commemorate those who lost their lives in the Second World War, when their houses, which were located here before the park was created, were bombed and destroyed. In the middle area, construction work was in progress, laying the drainage ditches for the new sports pitches. We went on to the south

side where there is a lower level path which was once the Surrey Grand Canal. We found the Bridge To Nowhere, which crossed the canal, although closed at present awaiting refurbishment. We will look forward* to walking over it in future, going from one nowhere to another nowhere, or perhaps both sides will be promoted to special "somewheres" by then.

* Omission phrase "look fo(r)ward"



Burgess Park

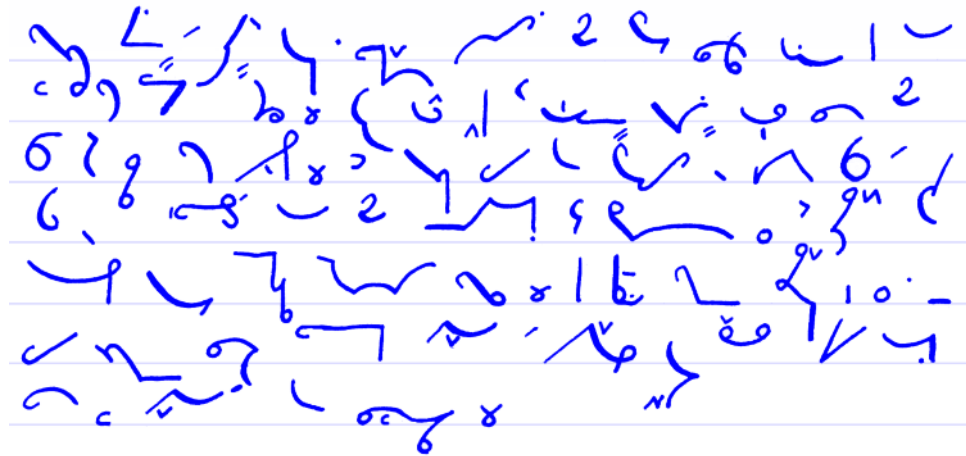
At the west end of the park we came across Chumleigh Almshouses with their ornamental* gardens, a very pleasant* surprise. Despite the hot weather we have had and the lateness of the season, all the plants were in healthy bloom and looking good. With the buildings and the trees around, they seem to have escaped being cooked in the August heatwave. The secluded shady gardens wrap around the buildings, and are divided into different sections which makes a relatively small or narrow space much more* interesting. We saw a pair of wrought iron gates with a map of the world on, with a padlock in the centre. This just about sums up the state of the world over the past half a year,

securely locked and patiently* waiting for the signal to open up again. We will be returning to the park to find other interesting bits of history and odd corners that we may have missed first time. By then the pitches will be completed and tidy, and, even better, the lake will hopefully clear itself of the algae once the colder weather arrives. (689 words)

* "ornamental" Using Ray, in order to join the following hook and strokes easily

* "pleasant" "pleasing" Helpful to insert the vowel, as these are similar

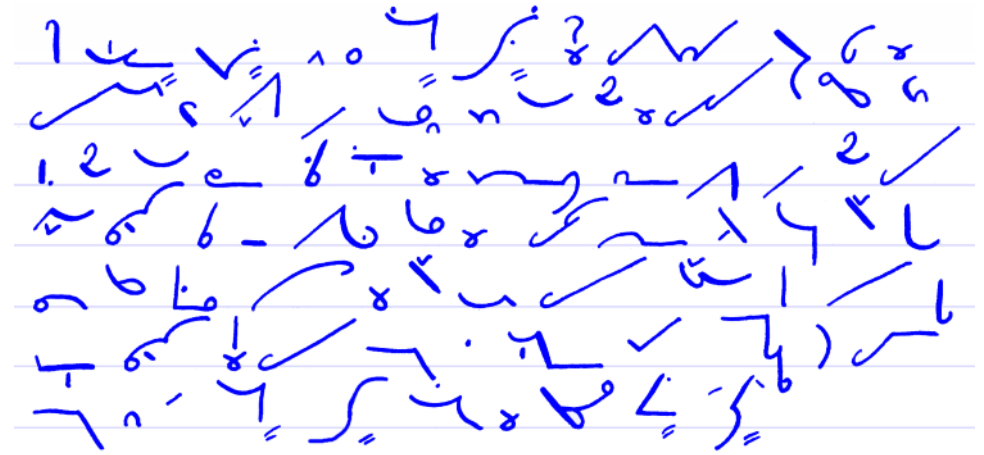
* Omission phrase "much m(ore)"

**Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill****Each paragraph is 100 words**

Brothers Jack and Josh have had a great time learning shorthand over the summer months, fitting it in with their college assignments*. They have found out that Uncle Bill knows some shorthand as well although he is very rusty. What better way for everyone to help themselves and each other than to correspond in shorthand,

guaranteeing that the subject matter is of the highest interest, being the activities of family members. It doesn't practise high speed but is a good way to practise smooth correct writing and revise the vowel signs, which are needed more when writing for someone else.

* "assignments" Contraction, on the line

**Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill**

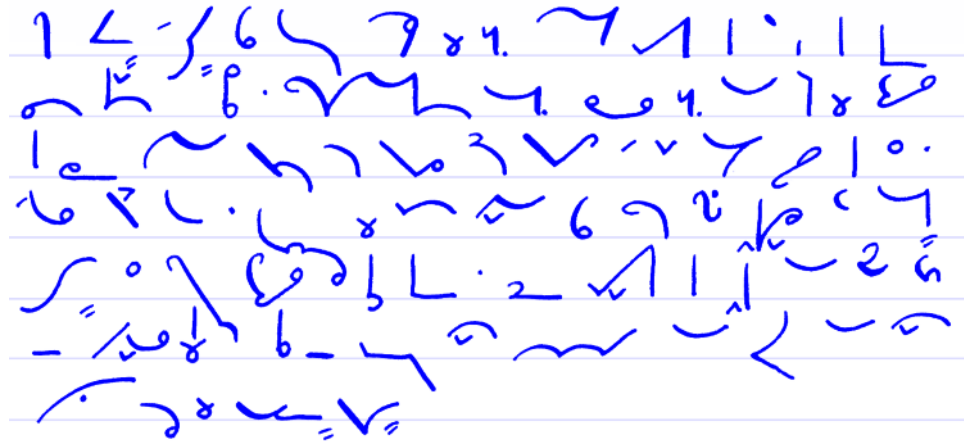
Dear Uncle Bill, How is Auntie Sheila? We hope* you are both well. We are now able to write our news to you in shorthand. We were surprised that you did shorthand in school ages ago. To make sure you can read our shorthand, we are writing slowly which is good revision for us. We will make up for it by doing some fast takes later on. By now we are finding it rather difficult to go slowly! We are keeping a notebook* of our activities, so we can keep you and

Auntie Sheila informed. Best wishes*, Jack and Josh

* Omission phrase "we (h)ope"

* "notebook" Insert the first vowel, as this is similar to "handbook"

* "Best wishes" Upward Ish in order to join the phrase

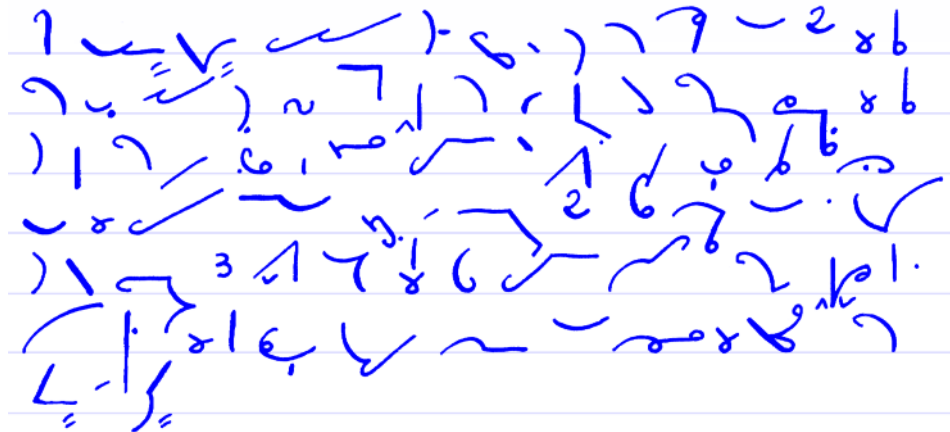


Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

Dear Jack and Josh, Thanks for your message. I did manage to read it all, but it took some time, as it is a very long time indeed since I did any of it. That was at school long before your parents were born, and I only used it as an office boy for a few years. I am writing this from draft outlines

that Auntie Sheila has prepared, otherwise it would take a week to write it out in shorthand that you could* recognise! It is good to keep my memory in shape in my later years. Uncle Bill

* "you could" Not phrased, so it does not look like "you can"

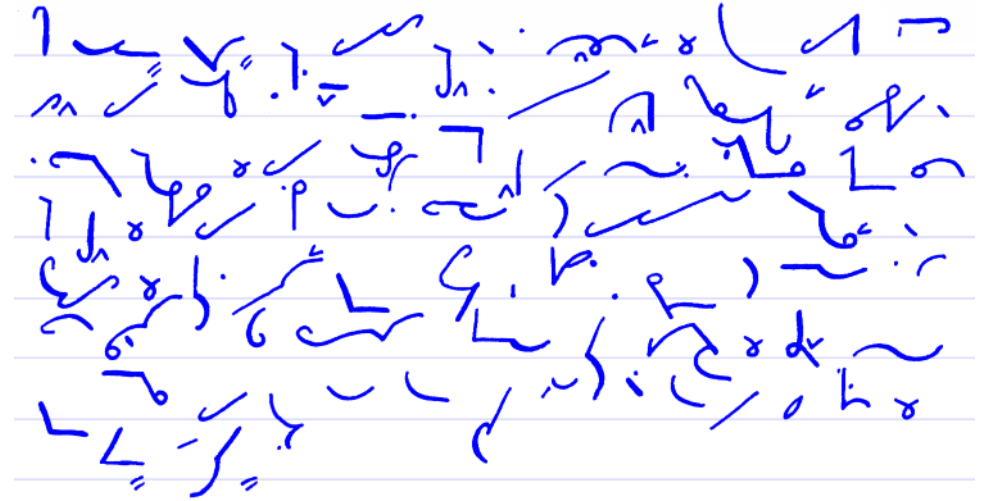


Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

Dear Uncle Bill, We were so pleased to see your message in shorthand. It is very neat and we see you have got out your old dip pen from your schooldays. It is so different from our efforts, but of course we can all read each other's notes, which is the main thing. We are going to print and keep the

shorthand images in a folder, so be careful what you write in them! Then we can learn from the outlines at a later date. Do let us know if we make any mistakes. Best wishes* from Jack and Josh

- * "Best wishes" Upward Ish in order to join the phrase



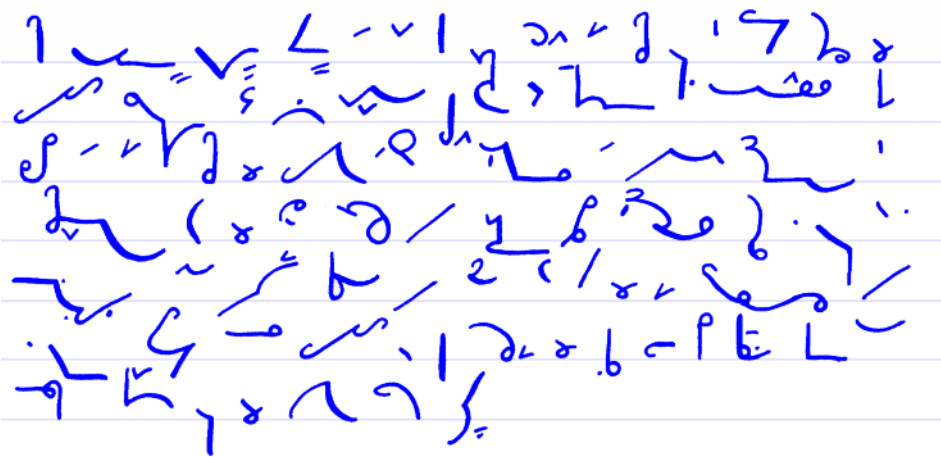
Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

Dear Uncle Bill, Today we went to town to a museum. After we had gone round, we noticed a guide giving a rather loud presentation on the history to a group of visitors. We instantly got out our mini notebooks* and took some of it down. We sat in a corner so we were not obvious to everyone. It was a really big challenge but

at least the speaker was going a lot more slowly than normal talking, which was helpful. Despite many big gaps, we filled in for each other, not bad for our first attempt. Jack and Josh

- * "notebooks" Insert the first vowel, as this is similar to "handbooks"

[illegible]

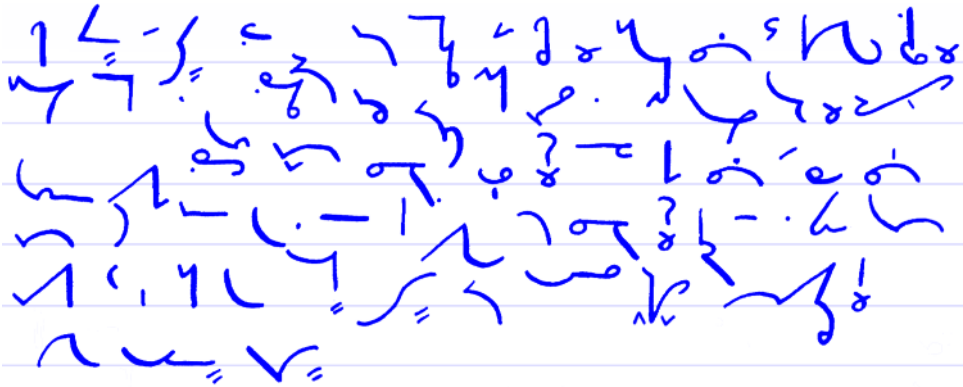


Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

Dear Uncle Bill, Jack and I had to travel around on the trains today, on college assignments. We went separately with the aim of writing down all the automatic announcements at the stations and on the trains. We have swapped notebooks* and are now working on transcribing* them. Lots of phrases are identical, such as the warnings, so that is a bit of a giveaway* and not really testing our shorthand that much. But the placenames are a big challenge, because we went to different

areas. It's great as it doesn't take any extra time to do. Love from Josh

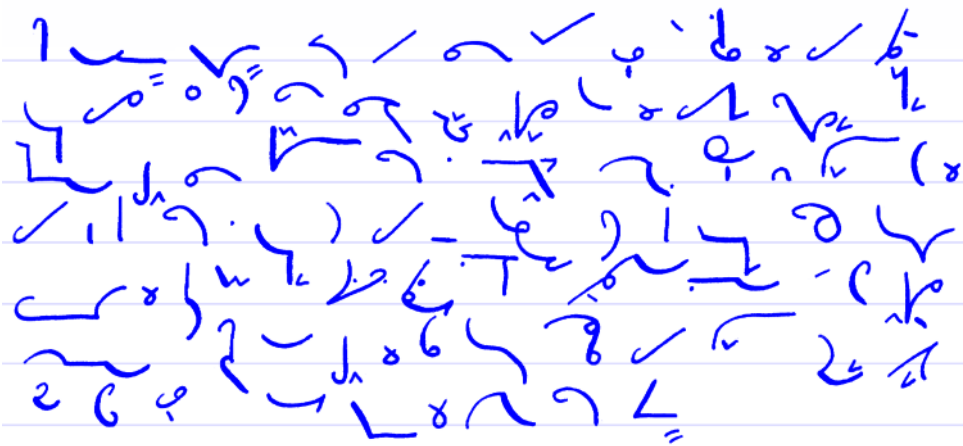
- * notebooks" Insert the first vowel, as this is similar to "handbooks"
- * "transcribing" Omits the second R, to stop it looking like "describing"
- * "giveaway" In full, as using the short form would not be clear



Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

Dear Jack and Josh, Glad to hear of your activities on the trains. I have done the same with the television adverts*. I only got a few snatches of words here and there*, and I had to use a pencil for that. I wonder if you can read the scan of my scribbly* notes? Can you do the same and send some to me, so I can have a go at reading your scribble? It would be quite an achievement for me to read that, but I do have Auntie Sheila here in case of outline emergencies! Love Uncle Bill

- * "adverts" Normal outline, insert the first vowel to ensure it is not misread as the contraction "advertisements" which is written on the line
- * Omission phrase "here (and) there"
- * "scribbly" Insert the final vowel, so it is not misread as "scribbled"



Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

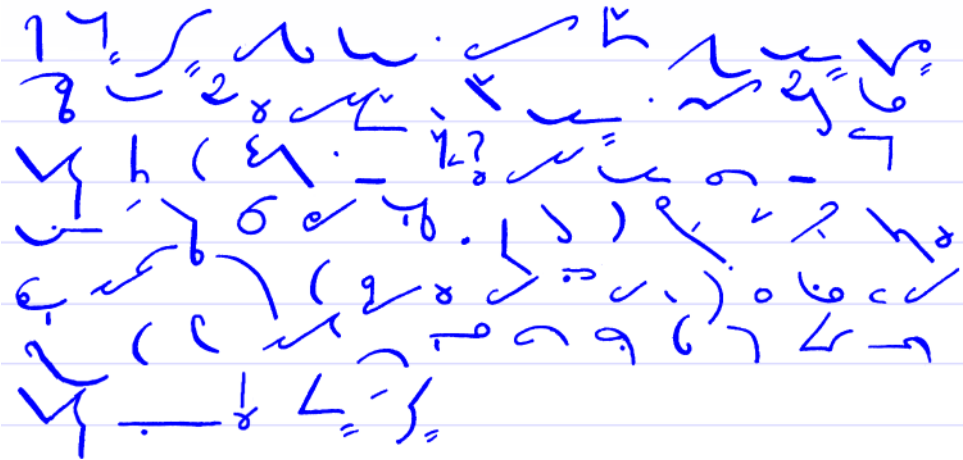
Dear Uncle Bill, Here are some of our notes of adverts*. We chose the food ones, as they are more simple to find the outlines for. We had the brilliant idea of taking down some dialogue from a cowboy movie, as we know you like them. We did it from a video, so we could* fast forward* through it to get the phrases fairly quickly. It was about the sheriff chasing the cattle rustling gang and other outlaws making trouble in town. Thanks for your messages, we like

seeing real shorthand other than what's in the book. Love from Jack

* "adverts" Normal outline, insert the first vowel to ensure it is not misread as the contraction "advertisements" which is written on the line

* "we could" Not phrased, so it does not look like "we can"

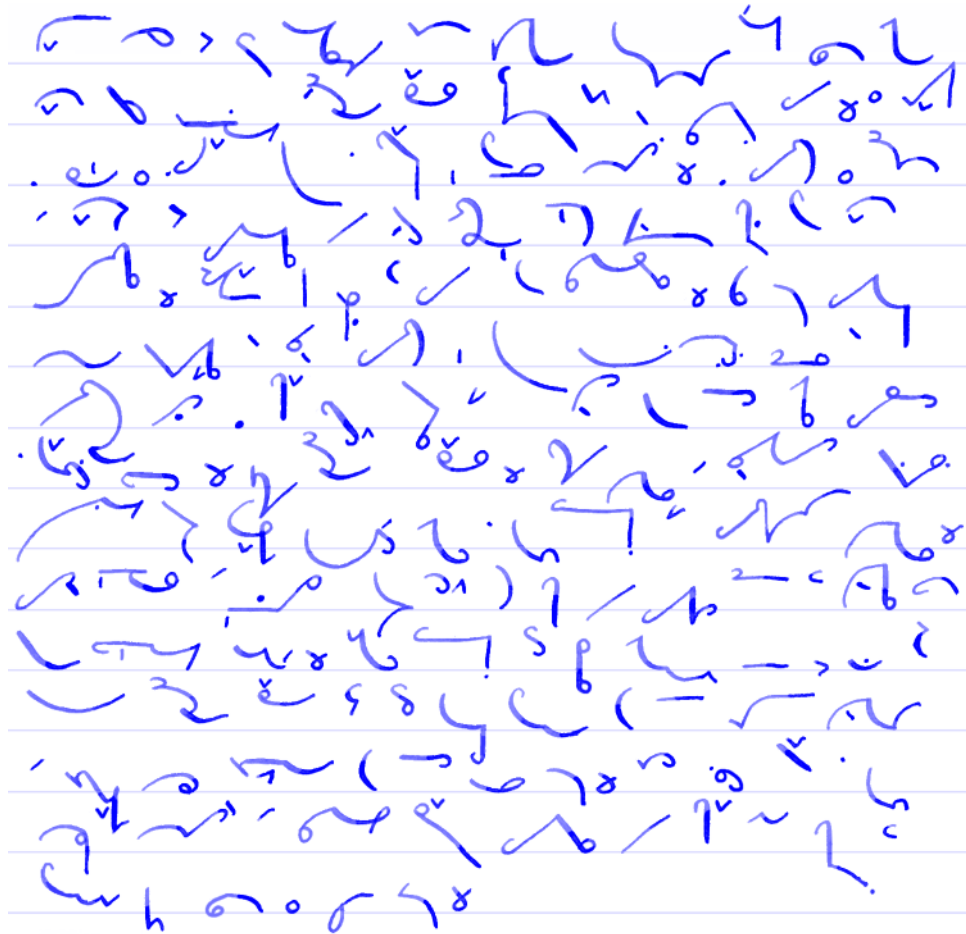
* Omission phrase "fas(t) fo(r)ward"



Jack, Josh And Uncle Bill

Dear Auntie Sheila, We have been having a wonderful time reading Uncle Bill's messages in shorthand. We would like to buy Uncle a modern shorthand pen for his birthday, do you think that would be a good idea? We would include some good quality ink and pads as well, as we noticed the dip

pen was sputtering on the rough paper. Let us know and we will order them straight away. We can't wait to see his face when we bring them over, and we think it may cause more stir than your chocolate covered birthday cake! Jack and Josh (900 words)

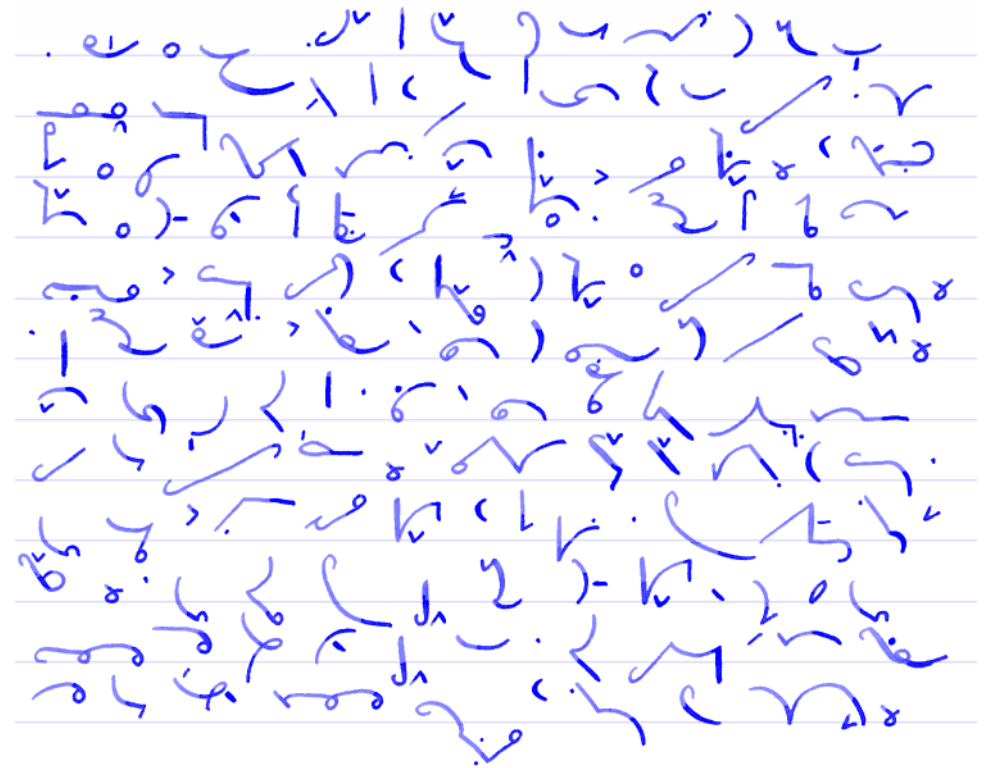


Warning Signs

Like most of the people in this country, I am holding firmly onto summer and doing my best to ignore the warning signs that it may be about to slip away. As I write, the sun is shining after a bright but overcast morning. The weather is warm and mild, all the windows are open and there is no cosy jumper draped over my shoulders. I would like it to stay that way for as long as possible*. This year we have had many periods of hot weather, but after intermittent weeks of refreshing rain, the dry brown patches on the lawn have gone and it is once again* a vibrant green. But there are warning signs. There are leaves and hawthorn berries littering the path

alongside the fishpond, and even a few collecting on the waterlily leaves. One or two conkers and acorns fell around us during our woodland walk, with loads more being crunched underfoot. I have been collecting plant seeds and have now come to the end of that, another warning sign that the plants have done everything they can to look lovely and to provide the means of growing them again next year. I am not concerned by a few misty mornings, and as long as the spider webs are dry and not dripping with overnight dew, summer is still here.

* Omission phrases "as long as poss(ible)"
"wu(n)s again"



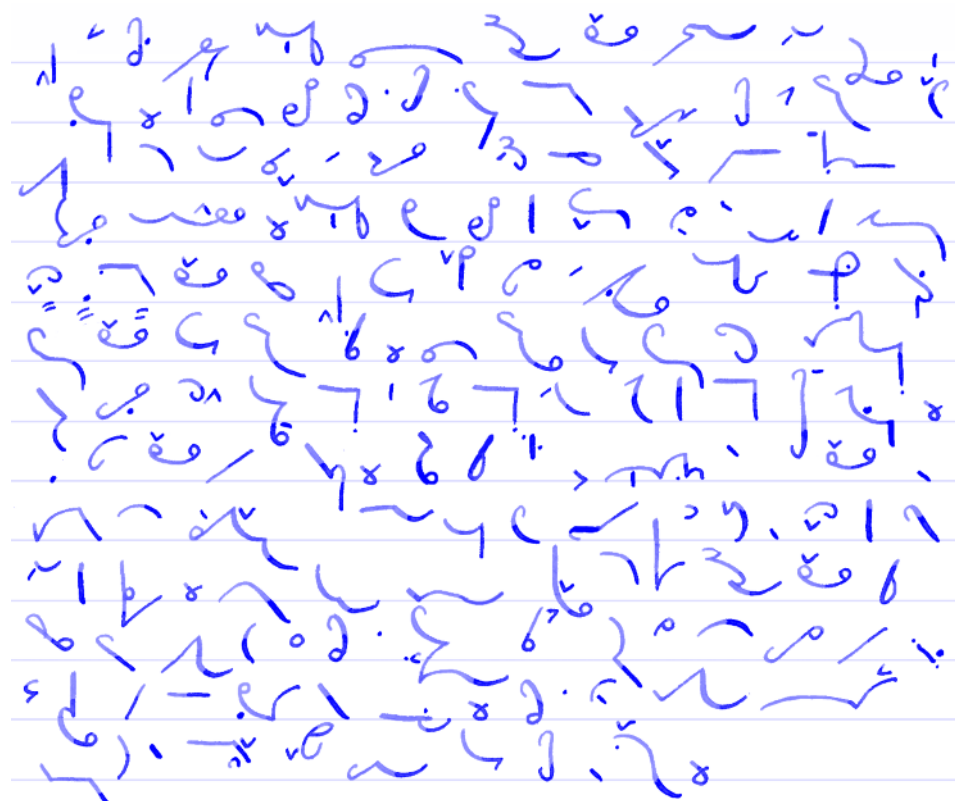
Warning Signs

The sun is no longer shining at five thirty in the morning, so I have no excuse to get up at that hour any more, although in winter an early start is still preferable to limiting my "daytime" to the hours of daylight. That progression of time is so slow that it doesn't really count as a warning at all, and it is more the greyness of the cloudy weather that deprives us of daylight as winter gets nearer. A different warning sign of the passing of summer was something I was rather pleased about. My favourite* shoe shop had a sale of summer sandals, which have to be* shifted to make way for the winter stock. I happily obliged by

helping them clear a few inches of the rack, and was delighted that at the till a further reduction appeared on the prices. A few shops further down, I was not so delighted to see the first few Christmas cards for sale low down in a shop window and I am bracing myself for the onslaught of Christmas fripperies that appear ever earlier.

* "favourite" Note that "favoured" uses the anticlockwise VR stroke

* Omission phrase "which have (to) be"



Warning Signs

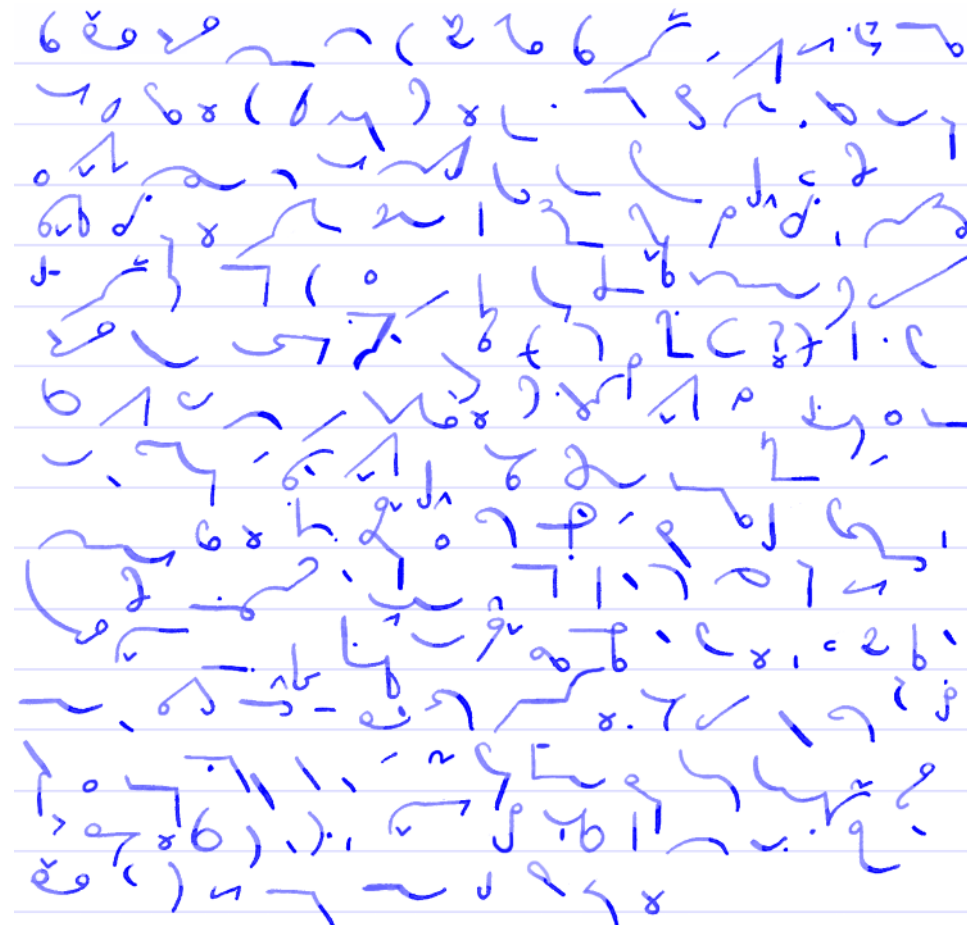
Out on the trains recently I noticed some other warning signs, regarding not seasons but safety. At some stations there is a larger than average gap between the train and the platform*, either widthways or in height, and always warned against by the regular automatic announcements. I noticed several stations had acquired lots of new large and clear Mind The Gap signs spaced out along the side walls and railings, in addition to the* existing painted floor signs along the platform* edges. Some platforms* have the floor version alternating both ways around, for those getting on and those getting off, and they do get trodden and faded. The wall signs are better. All this just added to the multitude of signs to help me survive,

going into ever greater detail of what I was to mind, do, remember, not do, etc. Maybe having too many advice or warning signs just stops people reading them, as there is an overwhelming* choice, especially as the important ones are competing with the advertisements which can safely be ignored. There is a lot of reading material to keep us all occupied whilst waiting for the train to arrive.

* "platform " Optional contraction

* Omission phrase "in addition (to) the"

* "overwhelming" Vowel and Dot Hay shown, but not really necessary to insert, as the outline is a distinctive one

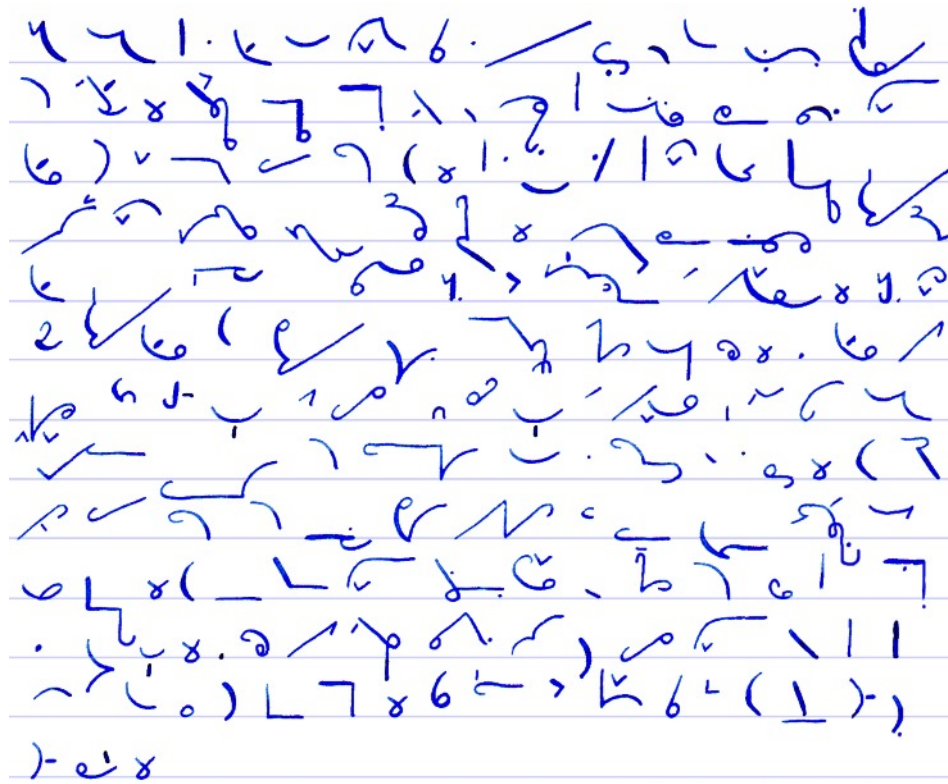


Warning Signs

Those signs always make me think of shorthand, and for us this really should read Avoid The Gaps In The First Place. They just should not be there. If a gap has been left, the best thing to do is write the missing word in the margin, even if further down, when there is the slightest chance to do so. Real life* shorthand writing* at work provides such chances, but learners don't really get them, as our teachers have the task of making sure we are always being encouraged, cajoled, pushed (or is it dragged along?) at an ever faster rate, in order to* improve our performance. They are absolutely right, as the tendency is to give in to gravity and slow right down, unless there is something to keep us "on track" and making the efforts. Attempting

high speed is very exhausting, and has to be done over and over again*, but afterwards there is the exhilaration of knowing you got it all or most of it, like coming out of the dentist in high spirits because it is all over. But with shorthand it is all going to happen again quite soon, and very regularly. The only way to be free of that constant battle is to get capability up to and beyond the average talking speed for your eventual use of the skill. This is easy to say but, like the station notices, it may need a string of signs that say "Keep Going, Do Not Stop Here." (854 words)

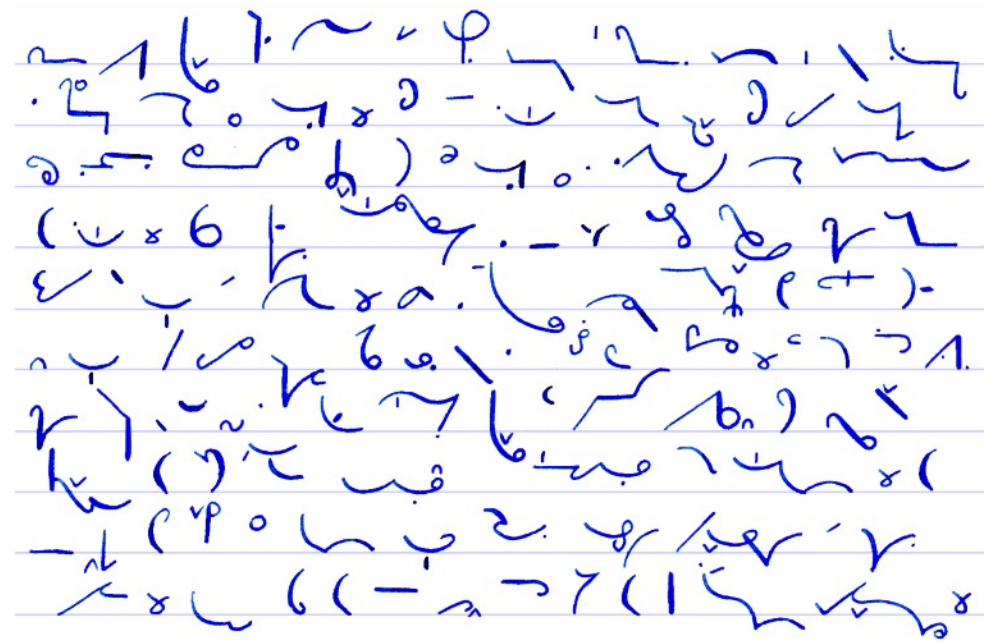
* Omission phrases "rea(l) life" "short(hand) writing" "in ord(er to)" "over (and) over again" The second "over" is reversed in order to make a good join.



Foes To Friends

I have never had a foe in life, which is a rather quaint word for enemy, adversary or opponent. Boisterous kids getting up to mischief at infants school seemed like foes, so I kept away from them. At a young age it might have been the dentist, but they were really my helpers to prevent worse trouble. Maybe the school exams were the foe, but they were conquered, as long as I did all the homework and revising. I didn't mind shorthand foes, though, as they were easily captured and turned into friends. The foes are the outlines that you don't know

and the ones you sort of know and recognise but not well enough to recall quickly or correctly in a fraction of a second. They cannot be run away from or ignored, as they will return with equal vigour and frustration in the next dictation. They come back like pesky flies to torment your efforts at getting a full note. The friends are the opposite, happy little easy ones like be, it, do, me, for, is, was, take, get. Those occur all the time, which is why they become so easy so soon.



Foes To Friends

You can read advice all day long on the necessity to keep on practising to improve, but to be effective a targeted method is needed. They are not quite common enough to find their own way into the friends category as quickly as desired, so what is needed is an artificial method of making them common. This is, totally unsurprisingly*, the good old indispensable personalised drill notebook that we all know and love. First of all*, the offenders must be captured as they occur, so you know which ones to deal with, and this needs to be a constant effort at all times*. With your action ready drill pad to hand, you have a foe munching device that regularly reduces

their numbers, by depriving them of their novelty, newness, awkwardness or unfamiliarity. They come out the other side as familiar, known, ordinary, instantly recognisable and easily recalled. If not, then they go round again until they do conform to requirements.

* "unsurprisingly" Short forms and contractions with "-un" added retain their position

* Omission phrase "first (of) all"

* "at all times" Halving to represent the T of "time"



Foes To Friends

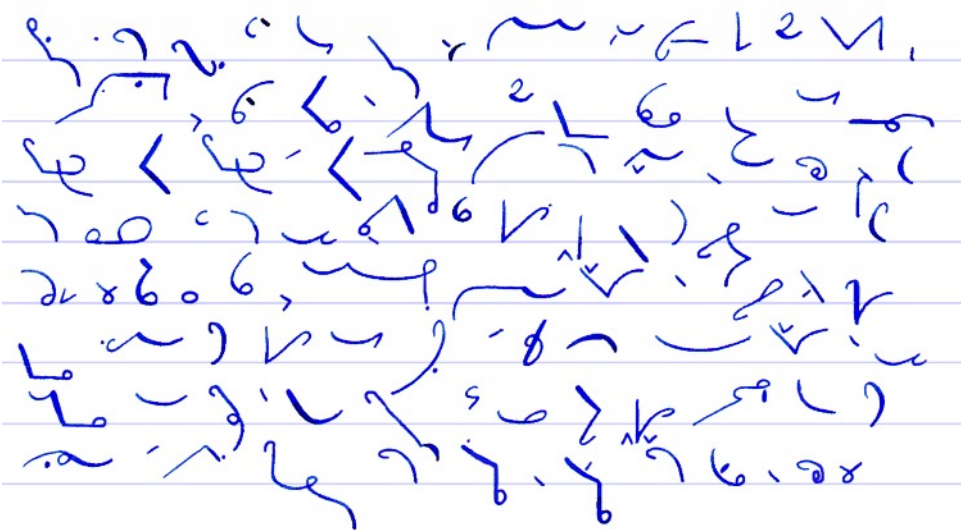
Re-reading the bits of theory relevant to your list of captives* will not do the job efficiently, the actual outlines must be picked out of those pages and drilled. The little rascals must be* gathered together, a few at a time* to keep things manageable, and put into some easy short sentences so that it all flows more naturally and keeps the mind interested and not wandering. Each sentence is then drilled down the entire page. Repeating the same drill over several days is helpful, to ensure they are properly* learned, filling in part of the page and completing it another day. By the time you have written a sentence several times,

you will not be looking at the line above, and can say the words quietly to yourself as you write. This marries sound and outline, and banishes the intrusive longhand from the scene.

* "captives" Written thus, and not with T+V Hook, in order to accommodate derivatives e.g. "captivate"

* Omission phrase "at (a) time"

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



Foes To Friends

Spare a very brief thought for the poor old longhand, not welcome at the shorthand party, but relegated to the slow jobs of reading the shorthand book lessons, filling in the exam application form, job application form and job acceptance letter, or writing to friends to tell them of your success with your new hobby* that is turning out to be so useful in other areas. All this is thanks to the uninteresting looking pile of used up drill books, awaiting their turn in the shredder, and, just as important, another pile of new notebooks in process of being prepared with the next batch of outline recruits for their amazing*

and rapid transformation* from baddies to buddies*, from foes to friends. (621 words)

* "hobby" "habit" Always insert the first vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

* "amazing" "amusing" Always insert the second vowel, and in all derivatives

* "transformation" Optional contraction

* "baddies, buddies" Helpful to insert the vowel in these