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## Blogs - 2021 - July

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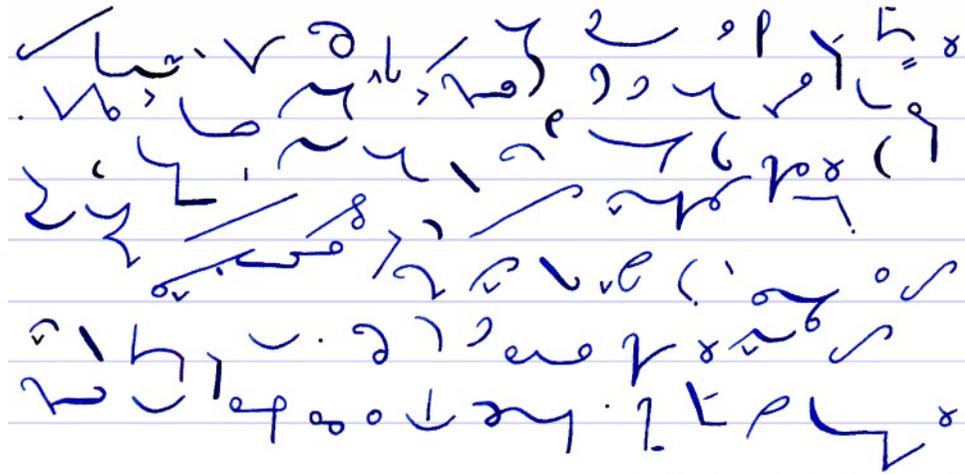
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PDF Date: 9 November 2022

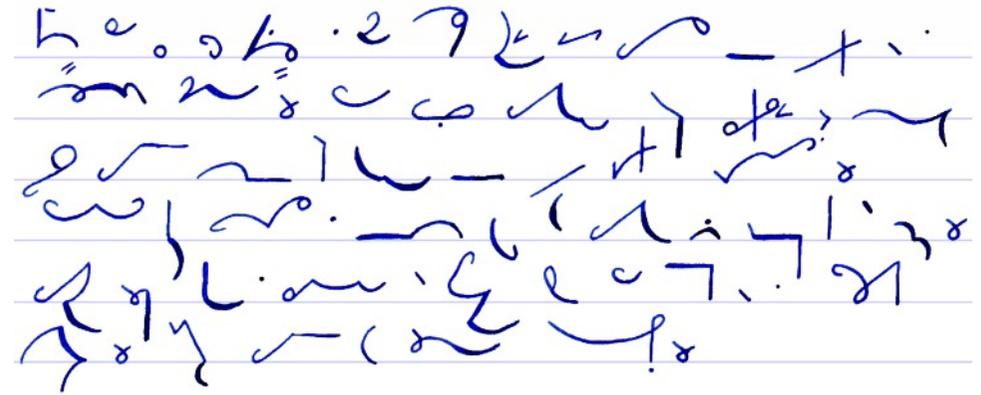


Phrase Paras 3

These practice paras are all 100 words

We are continuing to pull phrases out of our enthusiastic shorthander\* and his study buddy Tom. The purpose of the fixed length of the paragraphs is that they are short enough to use for speed pushing without fatigue but long enough to be more natural than drills. They ensure the writer responds to each word rather than mindlessly copying hieroglyphics from the line above whilst thinking of something else\*, as one might be tempted to do in a phrase or

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



Phrase Paras 3

Tom sent his friend James a shorthand message, saying: we must give our attention to a most important part of\* shorthand writing\*. In our quest we have not paid serious attention to the many other\* uses we can make of it, having given our whole attention to learning. In our opinion it was more or less\* a game, even though we have aimed to get it all word for word\*. We shall have to consider\* doing a certain amount\* of challenging

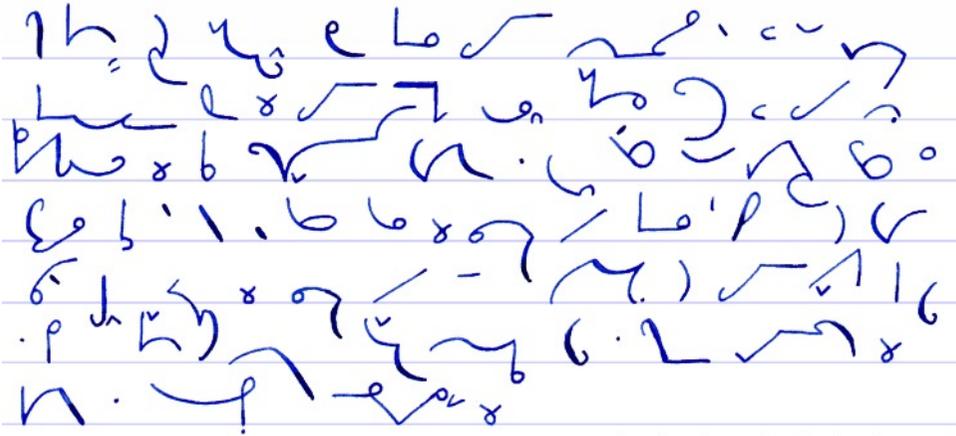
stuff, in order to\* get to a first rate\* level. I hope that\* we can think of something interesting. (100 words)

\* Omission phrases "mos(t) important part (of)" "short(hand) writing" "many oth(er)" "more (or) less" "word (for) word" "to (con)sider" "in ord(er to)" "firs(t) rate"

\* "certain (am)ount" This is the only phrase where "amount" is shortened in this way

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Phrase Paras 3

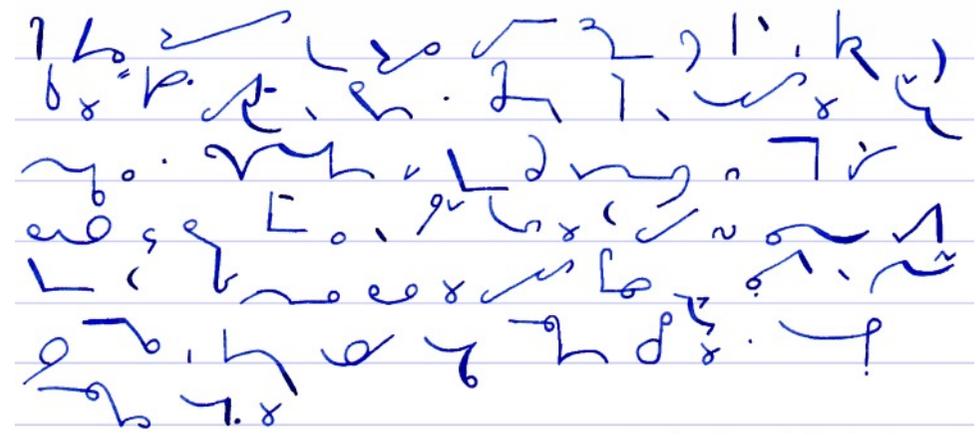
Dear Tom, So far\* I have found several talks we can make use of, with not too much\* technical stuff. We can get the news items fresh when we meet on Saturday afternoon\*. It is very likely they will have a few pauses in helpful places, as otherwise it would all be too fast for us. Some of them\* are talks on stage so they will slow down here and there\*. Some of them\* are quite lengthy so we can write it within a set time, maybe five minutes, then a break to

recover. It will be an interesting experience. (100 words)

\* "So far" Note that "far" on its own is full strokes

\* "too much" Includes the M stroke to enable the join

\* Omission phrases "Saturday af(ter)noon" "some (of) them" "here (and) there"



Phrase Paras 3

Dear James, I wonder if between us we can work through it all, but it will not be easy at first\*. At least\* we don't have to submit a transcript\* of it to anyone. Five minutes is a very long time but the book says to make sure you get whole sentences, when the speed of the talk is too high for you. That way you have something to read back that makes sense. We want at all costs to avoid\* the habit\* of allowing ourselves gaps but it may be necessary in these extreme circumstances. An interesting experiment indeed. (100 words)

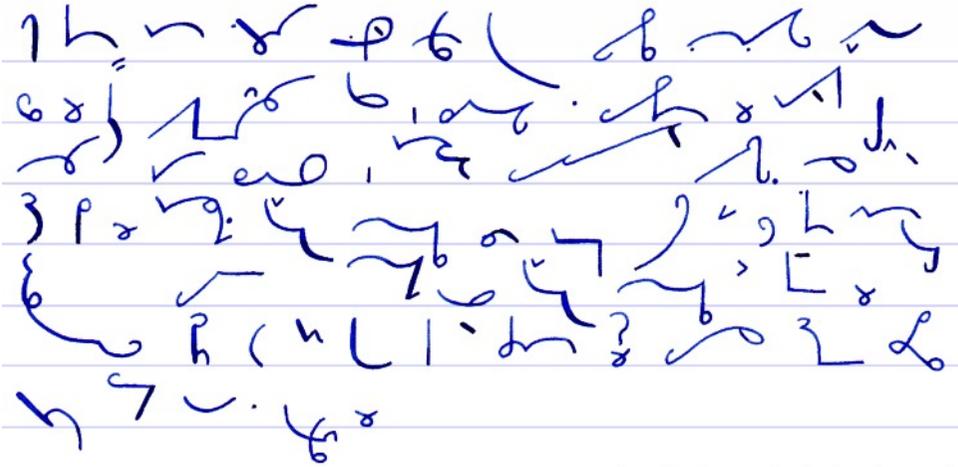
\* Omission phrases "at (fir)st"

\* "at least" "at last" Always include the vowel

\* "transcript" and related words omit the R, to differentiate from "describe" and its related words

\* "to avoid" Insert the diphthong when "avoid" is out of position in a phrase, to different from "evade" which has a similar meaning

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



Phrase Paras 3

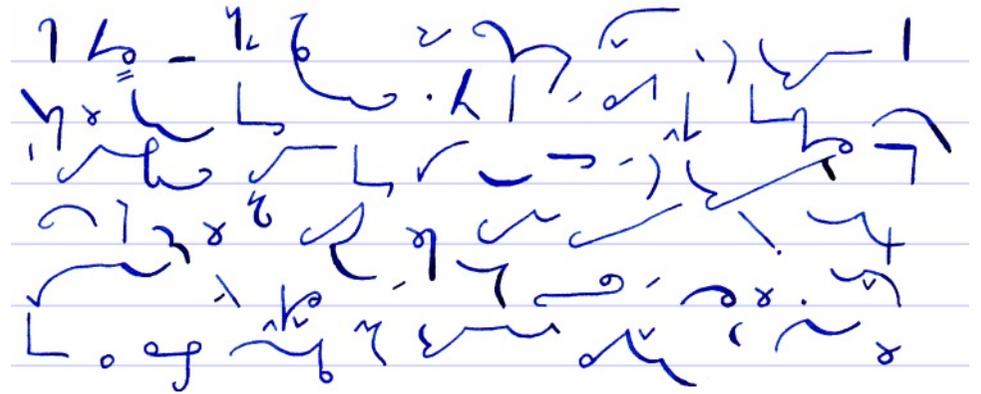
Dear Tom, I am absolutely exhausted this morning, after yesterday's marathon writing efforts. It was ridiculously fast but certainly not a waste of time\*. I wrote down mostly\* whole sentences, but I am glad that we were able to retrieve most of what was said. I must say the\* five minutes seemed to get shorter on the third attempt, and I am confident that this afternoon we can manage the next five minutes of the talk. What do you think

about doing it all at some time\*? We must work as much as possible\* before college in a few months. (100 words)

\* Omission phrases "was(te of) time" "I mus(t) say the" "as much as poss(ible)"

\* "mostly" Omits the T

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



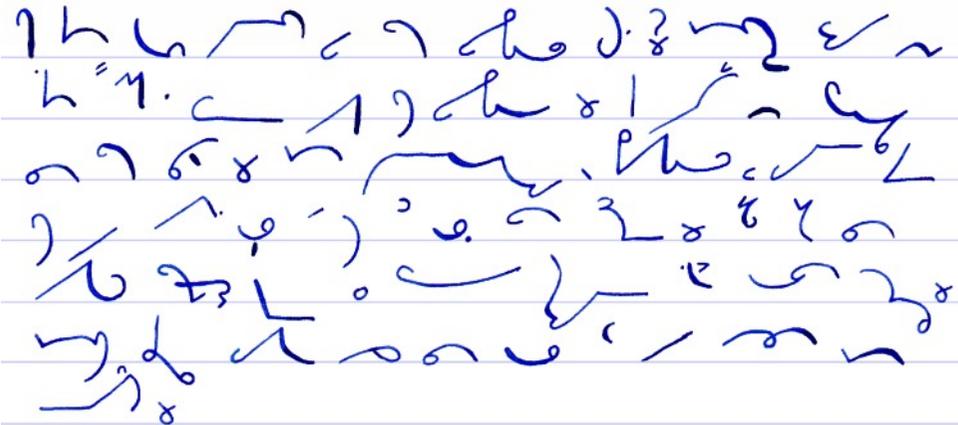
Phrase Paras 3

Dear James, Good idea, and this afternoon I would very much\* like to see if we can do better. Having taken a large part of\* it and sorted out the technical terms\*, maybe on Wednesday afternoon\* we can take the whole thing again and see if we are able to get more of it word for word\*. On the other hand\* we shall have to consider\* whether or not\* we are paying enough attention to looking up outlines and any other\* corrections and improvements. The entire

talk is sixteen minutes and I think that we can now survive that long. (100 words)

\* "very much" Includes the M stroke to enable the join

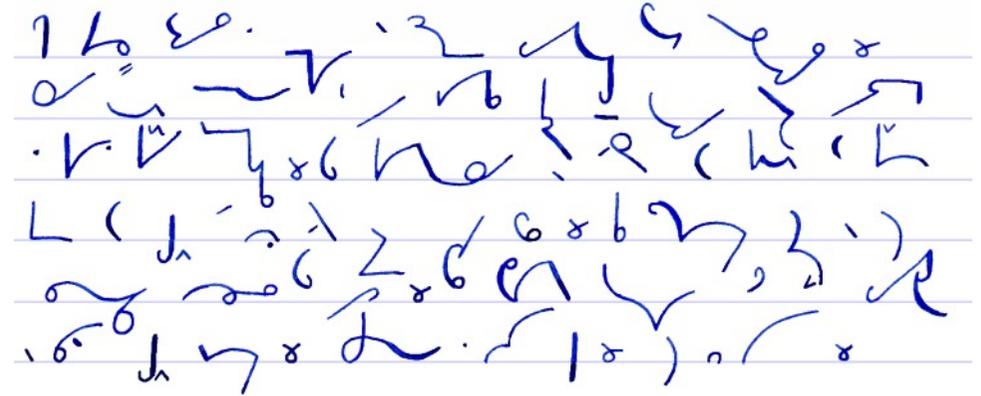
\* Omission phrases "large part (of)" "tech(nical) terms" "Wednesday af(ter)noon" "word (for) word" "on the oth(er h)and" "to (con)sider" "whether (or) not" "any oth(er)



Phrase Paras 3

Dear Tom, Have you recovered yet from yesterday afternoon's\* session? I am very glad that we made the attempt and I had a quick read through yesterday evening\*. It really made everything else\* seem very slow. I am looking forward\* to Saturday afternoon\* when we can check through our rapid notes and see what needs more work. On the other hand\* I think some revision from the beginning of the book is in order, so that we can avoid any more errors. I am sure it is possible\* we have missed some

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



Phrase Paras 3

Dear James, That was a good deal of work we have done over the past few weeks\*. As we are now going on our holidays, it would be good if we both recorded a daily diary of activities. Then it will be necessary to swap them at the end of that time, take them down and meet up to check each other's efforts. It is very much\* easier to see someone else's\* mistakes than our own. As they will be fairly short, we do not have to slow down too much\*. It is something a

Horizontal lines for writing practice.

things\* that are most important\* to improve accuracy. (100 words)

\* Omission phrases "yesterday af(ter)noon's" "yesterday eve(n)ing" "Saturday af(ter)noon" "on the oth(er h)and" "it is poss(ible)" "mos(t) important"

\* "everything else" Downward L in order to join the phrase

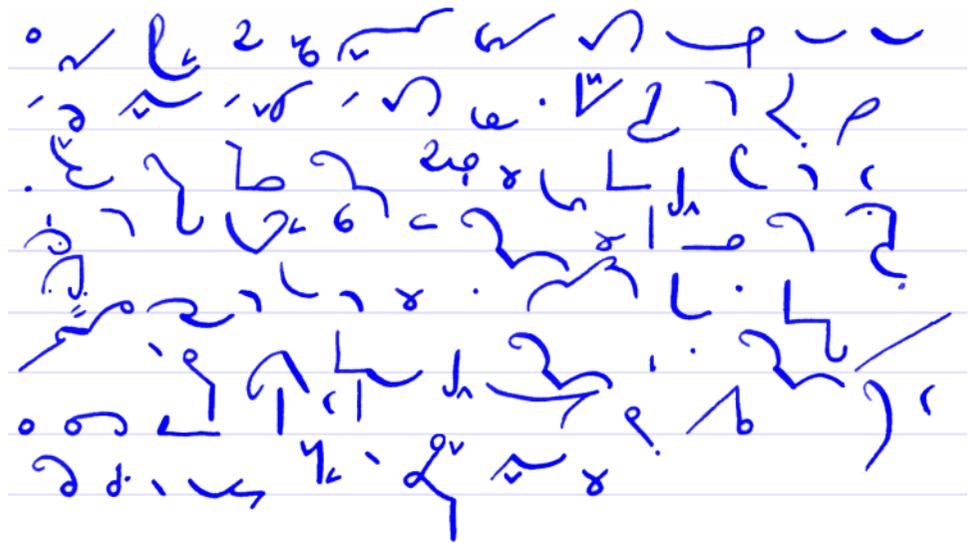
\* "some things" Do not phrase, so it does not look like "something"

little different. See you later. (100 words) (Total 1000 words)

\* Omission phrases "pas(t) few wee(k)s"

\* "someone else's" Downward L in order to join the phrase

\* "too much" Includes the M stroke to join the phrase



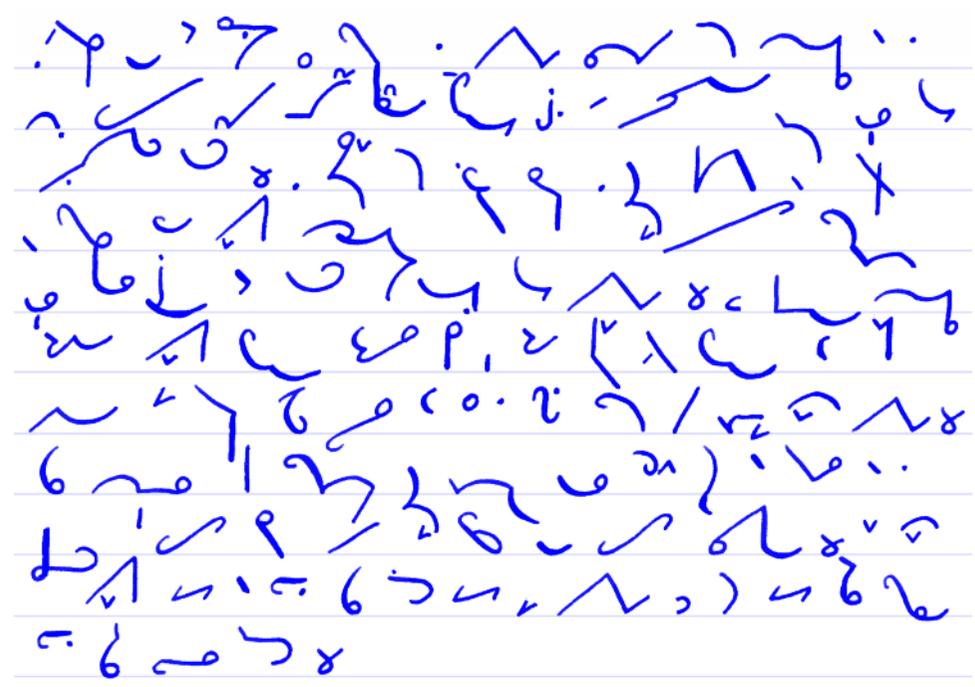
**Word For Word**

As you are studying shorthand, I think it is likely that you are also interested in language and words, writing and style, and also, if it is not a diary, journal or shopping list, the final production of text from your shorthand notes. If you take down every word without omission or variation, that is called verbatim. It comes from Medieval Latin meaning "word for word"\*. A learner

doing a dictation, regardless of speed, will be taking down verbatim, but a "verbatim writer" is someone who can do that at natural speaking rates, therefore that phrase tends to include the idea of high speed writing.

\* "word for word" See below para 6 for the omission phrase for this

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Word For Word**

The opposite end of the scale is producing a report, summary or minutes of a meeting, where you are actually authoring the content, and referring to your notes for the relevant information. The higher your comfortable speed, the easier it will be to pay attention to proceedings, in order to\* write meaningful, rather than verbatim, notes containing all the information needed for the report. When taking minutes, I would not write everything that was said, but I would type up everything that I had written on the pad, and then use that as a draft from which to create my report. This

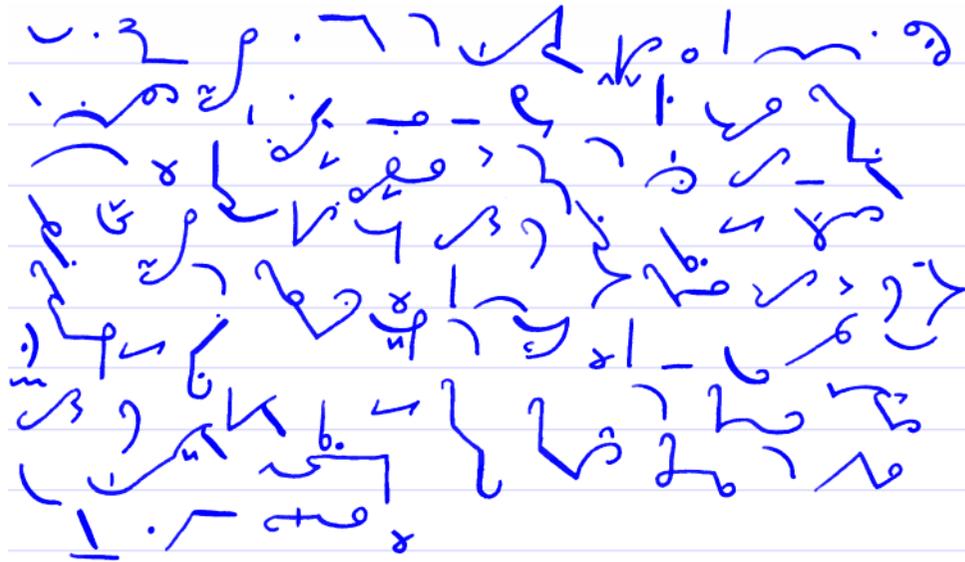
makes it very much\* easier to move things around, so that all parts of a discussion on one subject are placed under one heading. I might\* write "all agreed this action" but the report would say, "All those present agreed on this course of action."

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

\* "very much" Includes the M stroke to join the phrase

\* "I might" Not phrased, so it does not look like "I may"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Word For Word**

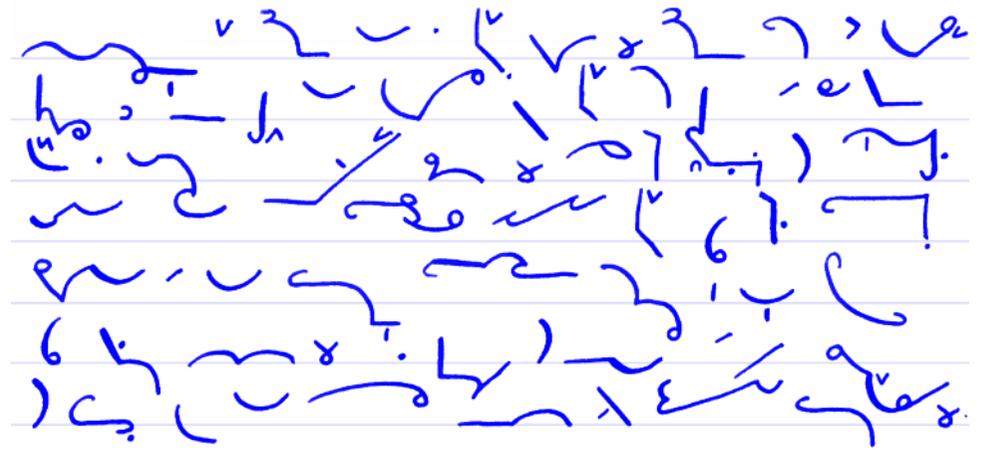
In a work situation, a gap or unreadable outline is at minimum a source of embarrassment but a judicious guess could save the day if it was predictable matter. Depending on the seriousness of the error or omission, one could possibly find the situation turning into one of the Three Painful P's - puzzlement, perplexity or perspiration. It may progress to one of the Three Awful A's\* - agitation, anxiety or anguish\*. It could even result in one of the Three Terrible T's - trepidation, tribulation or termination of employment, if unreliable

and incorrect transcripts\* or reports become a regular occurrence.

\* "A's" Include the wavy line underneath, as this is less obvious than the other two letters P's T's

\* "anguish" Omits the hard G sound

\* "transcript" and related words omit the R, to differentiate from "describe" and its related words



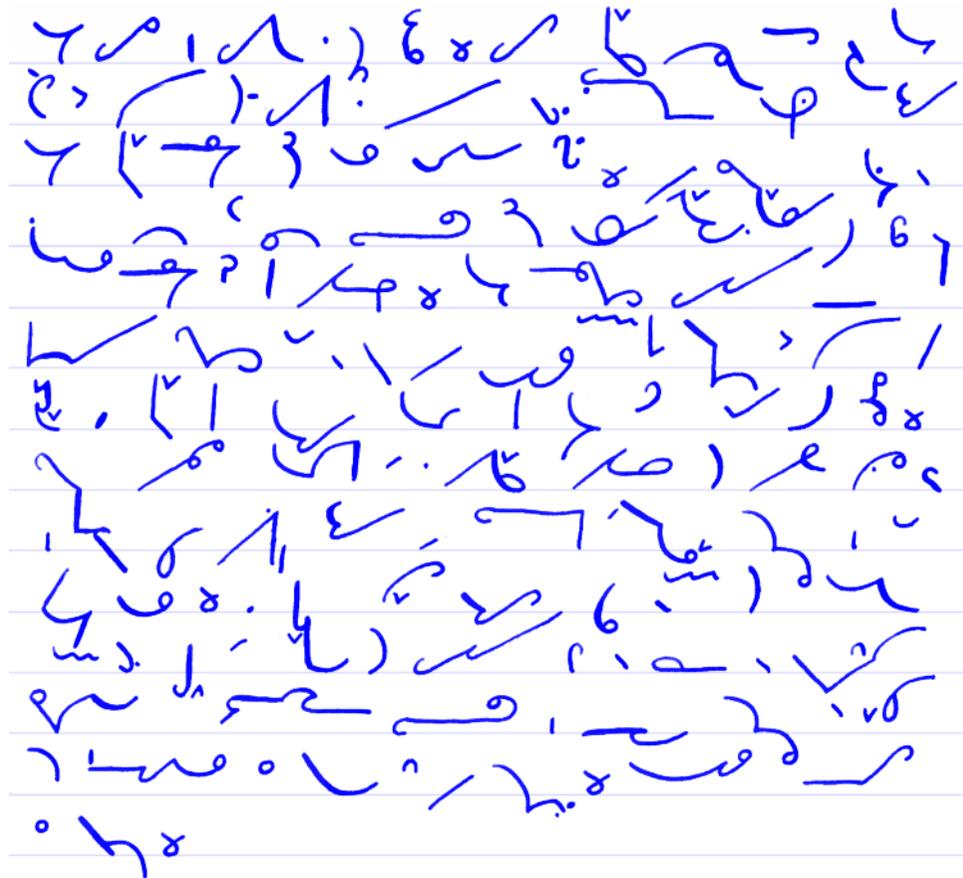
**Word For Word**

Many years ago I worked in a typing pool. Work from all the various departments would come down in folders to be typed or duplicated and sent back via an internal courier system. Most of it was mundane handwritten\* correspondence and we would type these all day, correcting spelling and any clear-cut grammatical errors, but

no further than this bare minimum. The dictionary was king and our supervisor was queen, if any matters came up that were not clear.

\* "handwritten" Helpful to have a slight angle between the Nd and the halved Ray

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple horizontal lines for writing.

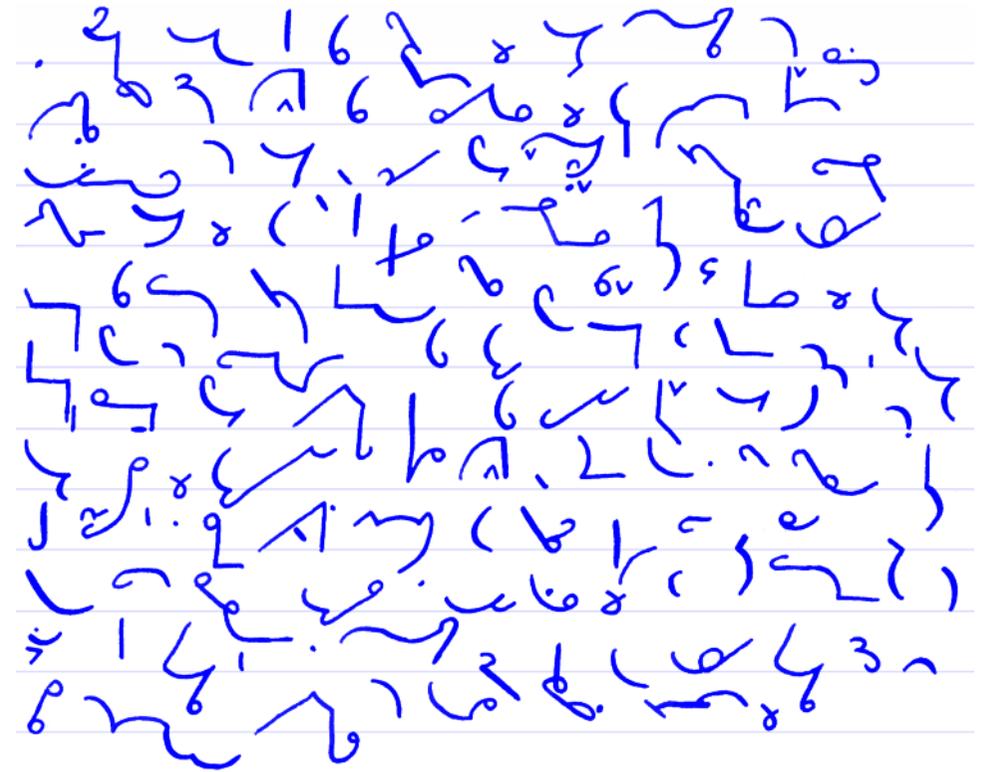


**Word For Word**

Only once did we have an issue with this. One typist must have\* gone too far\* for the author of the letter, so we had a rather peeved clerk insist that we only type exactly what was in his handwritten\* draft. Our supervisor failed to convince him that some corrections were necessary and finally she told us to do exactly what he had requested. For that "experiment" we were given temporary permission not to put our initials at the bottom of the letter, which identified who typed it, if we felt it fell short of our usual standards.

line between these two was never pinned down, and so we were told to stick to purely\* spelling and grammatical corrections but ignore errors of style or awkwardness as being beyond our remit. In other words, carry on as before.

- \* Omission phrase "mus(t) have"
- \* "too far" Note "far" on its own is full strokes
- \* "handwritten" Helpful to have a slight

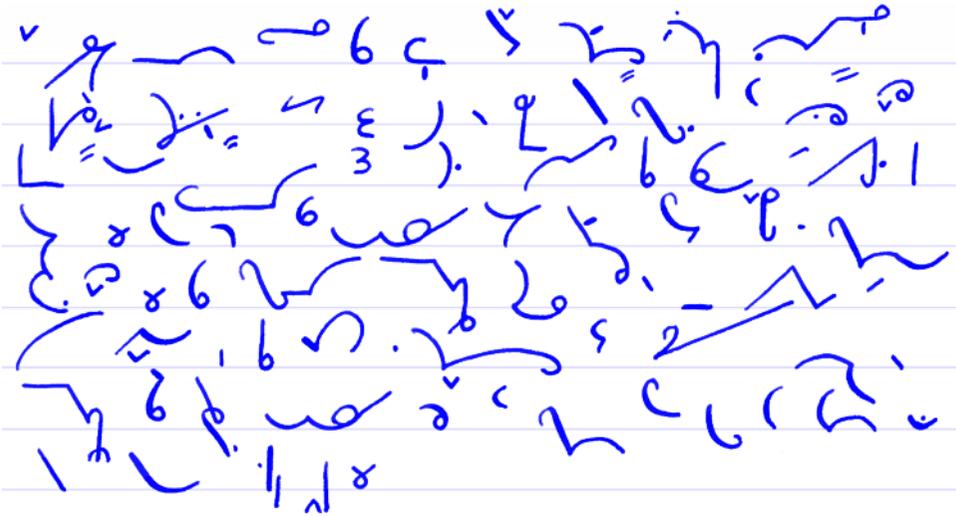


**Word For Word**

The shorthand typists never had this problem. Only the managers or section leaders were allowed this service. They had limited time, inclination or knowledge to worry over the minutiae\* of producing crisp and perfect English. They all had different requirements and expectations\*, and it was necessary to get this clear before taking liberties, however slight, with the text. If they dictated every word carefully, then they would get that back, word for word\*, but if they scooted over the repetitive details, then we would type in the usual wording for that situation. They were not allowed to ask for a particular person, it

was done on a strict rota, and I am sure they behaved differently according to who was sent to them, being more specific if it was a "new face". That clerk was annoyed at changes, but a manager would be displeased if necessary changes were not made, such as removing repetitions or faults of grammar.

- \* "minutiae" For a plain vowel followed by a diphthong, both are written side by side
- \* "expectations" Optional contraction
- \* Omission phrase "word (for) word"



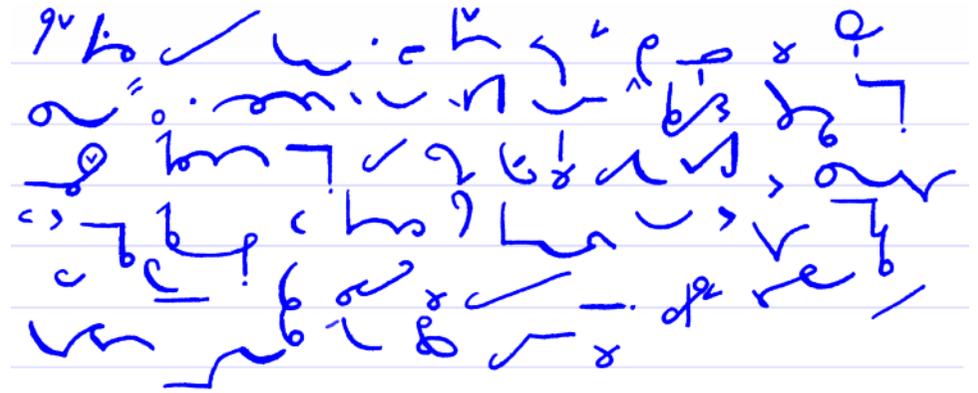
**Word For Word**

I recently came across this quote by the Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero: "When you wish to instruct, be brief\*; that men's minds take in quickly what you say, learn its lesson, and retain it faithfully. Every word that is unnecessary only pours over the side of a brimming mind." This perfectly captures the essence of good report and letter writing, but it is also a reminder that the shorthand writer\* may have to capture

all those possibly unnecessary words that brim over, even though they may end up being edited out. (846 words)

\* "brief" It is generally helpful to insert the vowel, as this is similar to "number of", and both refer to quantity

\* Omission phrase "short(hand) writer"



**Phrase Paras 4**

Hi James, We are having a great time here on the south coast. As we know, swimming is a most important\* part of any holiday, in fact\* it is one of the best methods\* of getting exercise and at the same time\* getting away from the phone! We have already been to the swimming pool with all the kids and it is interesting that at the moment\* they are taking part in all the pool activities, in order to\* overcome this

month's heatwave. We are giving serious attention to using our valuable time\* cooling off as fast as we can. (100 words)

\* Omission phrases "mos(t) important part" "in (f)act" "bes(t) methods" "at (the) moment" "in ord(er to)"

\* "at the same time" "valuable time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

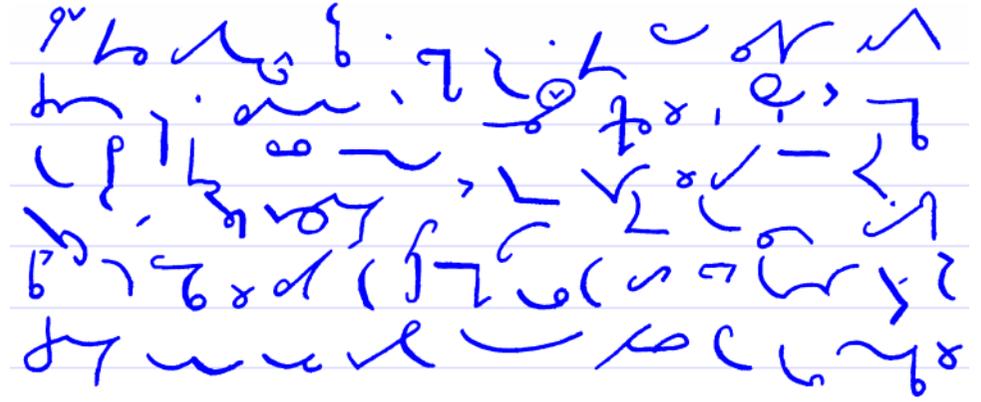


Phrase Paras 4

Hi Tom, We are having a very good time at the moment\*. Yesterday evening we were once again\* enjoying lunch with a large number\* of guests on the hotel sun terrace. With such delicious food it is perfectly clear\* that it would be a waste of time\* to make our own. It is something we have always enjoyed and, from our point of view, it is most important\* to have more time\* for the beach. We are taking advantage of as many as possible of the hotel activities, although at first\* we had to find out what is going on. (100 words)

- \* Omission phrases "at (the) moment" "wu(n)s again" "perfect(ly) clear" "was(te of) time" "mos(t) important" "at (fir)st"
- \* "large number of" This phrase can have the F hook for "of" but the "of" is omitted in "large part (of)", in order to be clearer, as these two are similar
- \* "more time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

Blank lined area for writing practice.



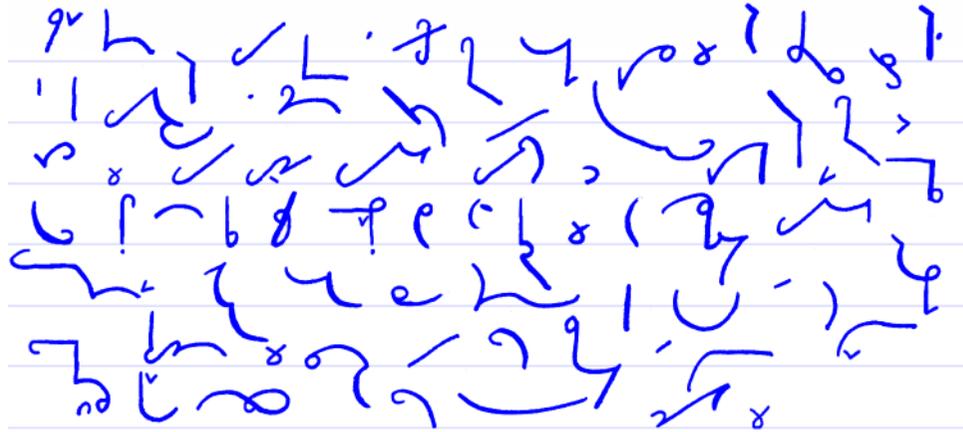
Phrase Paras 4

Hi James, We have found that it is a great advantage to have a gym in our hotel and we hope\* at some time\* to do a certain amount\* of exercise during the mornings. But, as we know, all the kids have said that it cannot be considered\* as good as going to the big pool. We go shopping beforehand and almost certainly\* the children will ask for some water toys or clothes. As a rule\* they get the things they want, according to the\* family budget, although it is certainly nothing new to receive another request every few minutes. (100 words)

- \* Omission phrases "we (h)ope" "that it cannot be (con)sidered" "almos(t) certainly" "as (a) rule" "according (to) the"
- \* Omission phrase "certain (am)ount" This is the only phrase where "amount" is shortened like this
- \* "at some time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

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**Phrase Paras 4**

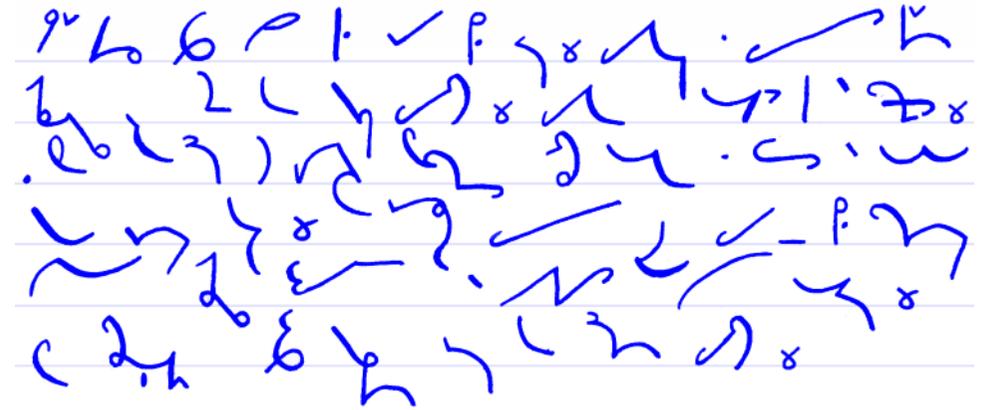
Hi Tom, Today we took a railway train trip into the hills. Although it is possible\* to spend all day on it, we have only a short time\* before our afternoon boat trip to the island. We wondered whether or not\* the weather would hold, but the kids have been telling me it is just as exciting as they thought it would be. They most definitely wanted to visit the aquarium and they have never seen so many different fish and sea

creatures at one time\*. Some of them\* are very strange and look like tiny monsters from another world. (100 words)

\* Omission phrases "it is poss(ible)" "whether (or) not" "some (of) them"

\* "short time" "at one time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

Blank lined area for writing practice.



**Phrase Paras 4**

Hi James, This is the last day of our stay here. We have had a wonderful time and it is not possible to have asked for better weather. We have enjoyed it all from the beginning. The staff were so helpful over and over again\* and there is never a question\* of anything being too much\* for them. I must say that\* we are wishing we could stay very much\* longer, and it is possible\* that we can all return later in the year. However there is no doubt\* that this is the best time\* of year for warm weather. (100 words)

\* Omission phrase "over (and) over again" The second "over" is reversed in order to make a good join

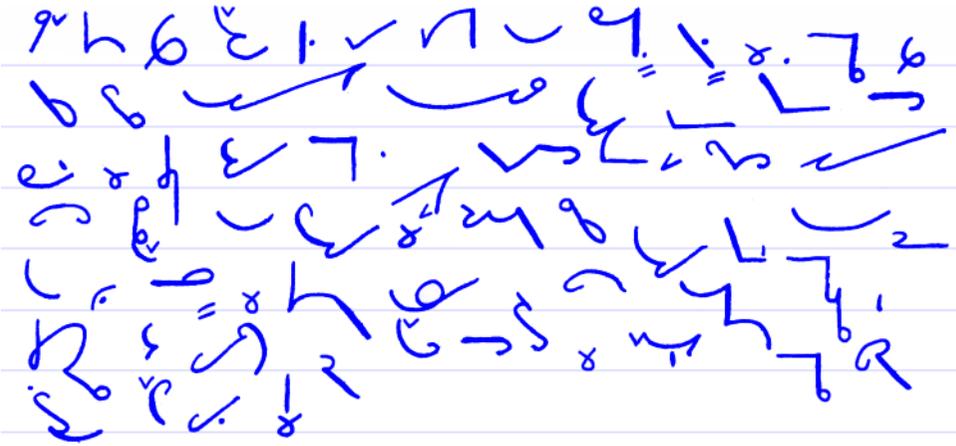
\* "question" Optional contraction

\* "too much" Includes the M stroke to enable the join

\* Omission phrases "I mus(t) say that" "it is poss(ible)" "bes(t) time"

\* "very much" Includes the M in order to join the phrase

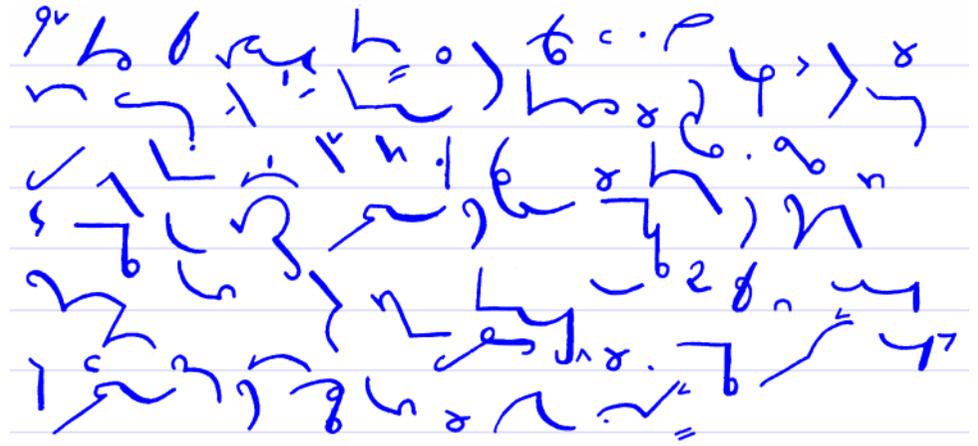
Blank lined area for writing practice.



Phrase Paras 4

Hi Tom, This is the final day of our holiday in Sandy Bay. The kids think it is the best place in the world\*, in other words they would like to come back again soon. It is true that we got a real bargain on the apartment and we are more than satisfied in every way. I would not be surprised if we booked another week for late August. It may be necessary to plan more indoor

Blank lined area for writing practice.



Phrase Paras 4

Hi James, Just to let you know\* that Tom is busy this morning with a last visit to the beach. I am clearing up and packing at the moment\*. So far as\* I can see, we should be back home by about eight this evening. It may be a surprise to you that the kids have also been recording their activities, so there will be very much more\* for you both to practise taking down in shorthand, just as you intended to do when you were home once again\*. The kids really enjoyed recording their messages for you. Love, Maria. (100 words)

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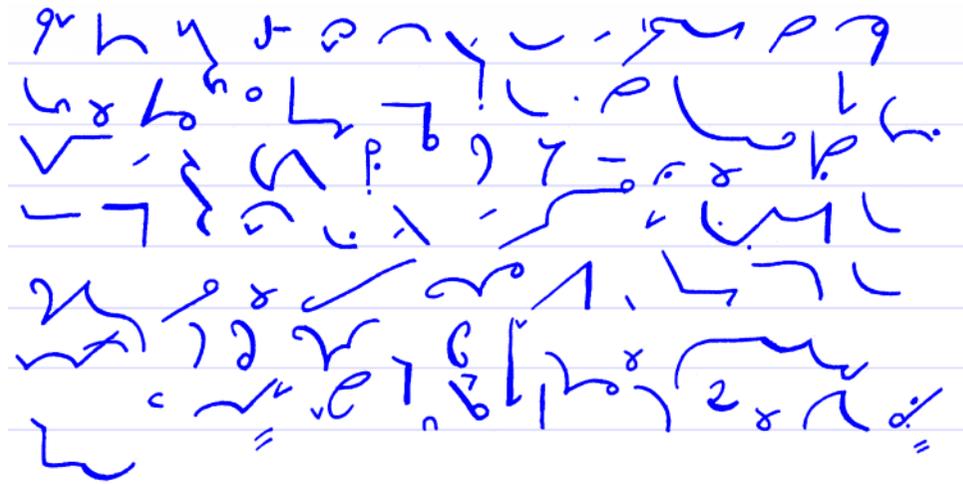
activities but it is also possible\* that the weather would be fine again. I know the kids will not be complaining either way! (100 words)

\* Omission phrases "in (the) world" "it is also poss(ible)" The vowel sign of "also" can be omitted in phrases

\* "let you know that" The short form "you" is normally written the normal way up after L Stroke, but here writing it on its side (as in "value") allows the next stroke to join

\* "so far as" On its own, "far" has full strokes

\* Omission phrases "at (the) moment" "wu(n)s again" "very much m(ore)"



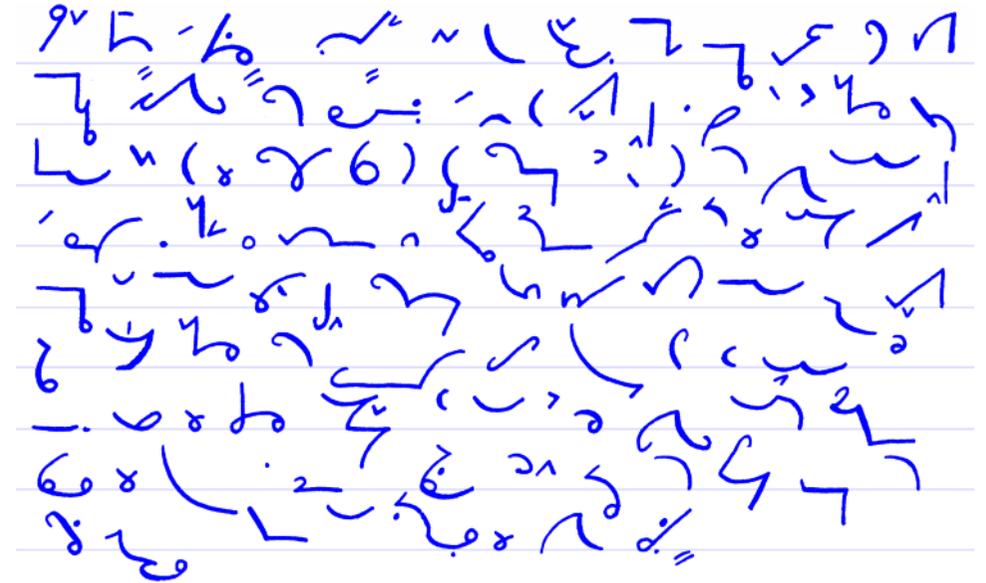
**Phrase Paras 4**

Hi Tom, I hope that you don't mind me butting in and recording the last message for you. James has taken the kids for a last afternoon at the theme park and I believe that they will be staying there until quite late. At last I can get my feet up and relax on the veranda for three or four\* hours. We are more or less\* ready to pack the car

for tomorrow morning, so there is very little to do other than tidy the rooms. Looking forward\* to talking with Maria whilst you boys do your shorthand. Love, Sarah. (100 words) (Total 1000 words)

\* Omission phrases "three (or) four" "more (or) less" "looking fo(r)ward"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Seaside Activities**

*Continuing with James and Tom from the Phrase Paras blogs, who must now take dictation from each other's kids.*

Hi Tom and James, Maria and I have finally got the kids to record their holiday activities and we have been very sneaky and made them write out a list of all the items before talking about them. Firstly\*, this is so they don't forget what to say or leave anything out, and secondly the idea is to make you chaps work really hard. Not only are the kids not going to slow down very much\* for you, but you are also going to have to write all these unusual\* items

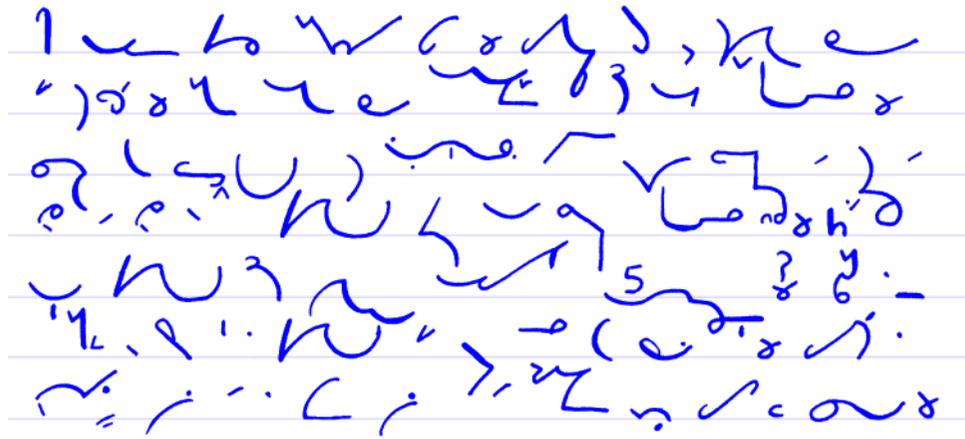
very quickly one after the other, without knowing what is coming next. It seems unlikely that any of the words will have been in your shorthand book lessons. After a week of lazing around, here is your challenge to get your brains and fingers back in harness. Love, Sarah

\* "Firstly" Omits the T sound

\* "very much" includes the M stroke in order to join the phrase

\* "unusual" Helpful to insert the vowel so it does not look like "English"

Blank lined paper for writing practice.



**Seaside Activities**

Dear Uncle James, I hope you are\* well. We have just been to the sea life centre on the seafront. I have never seen anything like what was in the tanks. Some of them\* have clownfish, sea anemones, rock pool creatures and seahorses, and lots\* and lots of jellyfish which were\* in separate tanks. Did you know jellyfish were living in the world\* five hundred million years ago? I do not think it is\* a good idea to step on a jellyfish on the beach because they sting. We saw a Moray eel and an electric eel, and

I would not like to meet one when swimming.

\* Omission phrases "I (h)ope you are" "some (of) them" "there (w)ere" "in (the) world"

\* "lots" "masses" Insert the vowels, as these are similar in outline and meaning

\* "I do not think it is" Halving to represent "it"

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



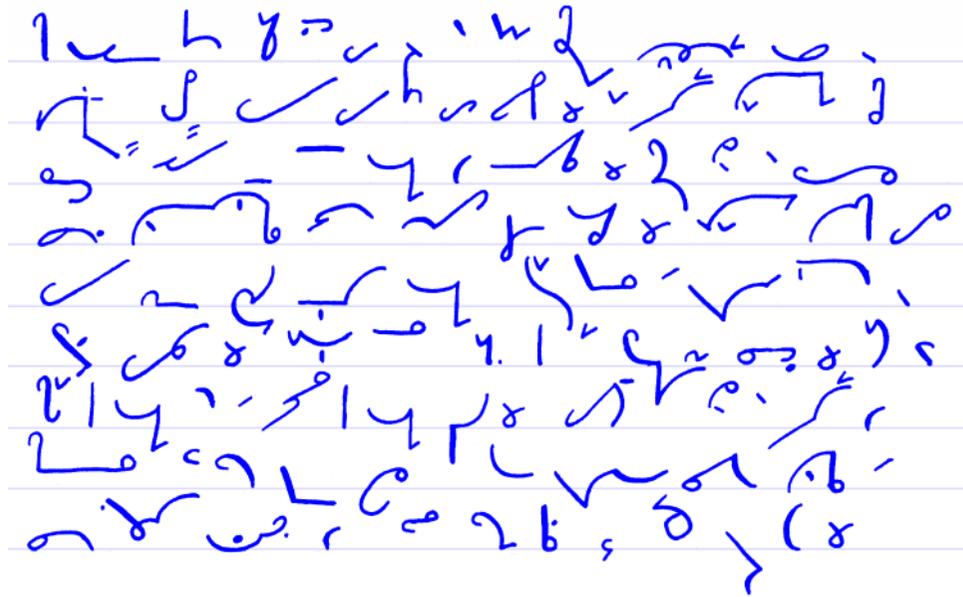
**Seaside Activities**

We went through the ocean tunnel so we were underneath the turtles, sharks, rays and an enormous octopus. The suckers were all over the glass ceiling and it was looking at us! I will send some photos so you can see how big it was. Then we saw some tanks with fish that are caught for food, such as cod, dogfish, mackerel, plaice and herring. There were\* even some crabs in another tank. There were\* several open

topped tanks with all the different kinds of seaweed. There was knotted wrack, bladder wrack, egg wrack, sugar kelp and sea lettuce. I have kept a piece of red seaweed from the beach for you as a special gift, but you might need to wet it, as it is getting a bit dry. Bye, see you soon. Jack

\* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

Horizontal lines for writing practice.



Seaside Activities

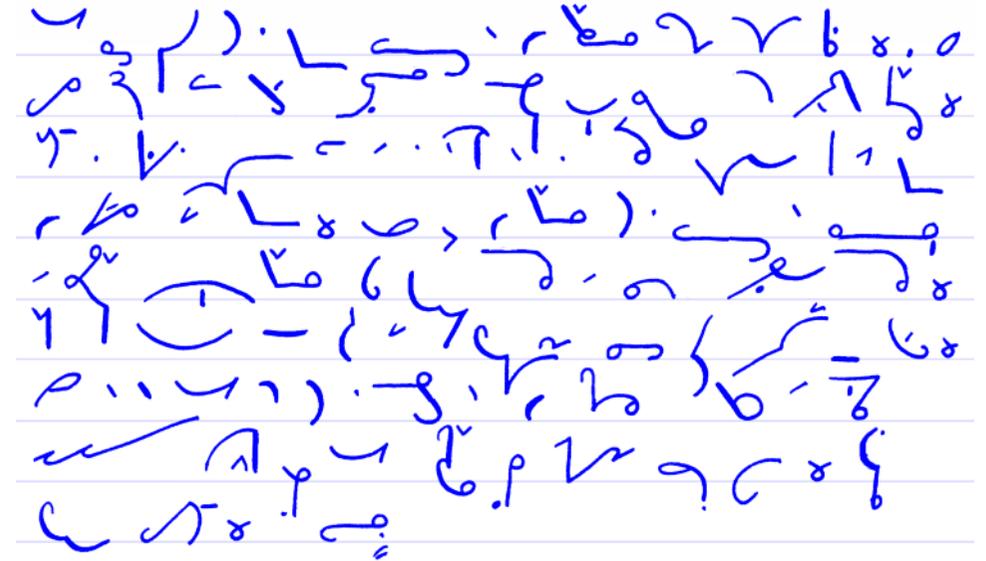
Dear Uncle Tom, I just can't wait to tell you all about the transport museum next to Hilltop Station, where we went yesterday. I really liked the trains section and we could go into the old carriages. There were\* lots\* of enormous steam locomotives and more modern diesel engines. I like the older ones where you can shovel the coal into the firebox and pull the cord to blow the whistle. I know, because I did it on the virtual screen. I was able to drive it into the yard

and reverse it into the shed. We saw lots\* of really old tractors with very big wheels for pulling heavy loads, and some absolutely ancient old carts from the days when the horses pulled them.

\* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

\* "lots" "masses" Insert the vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

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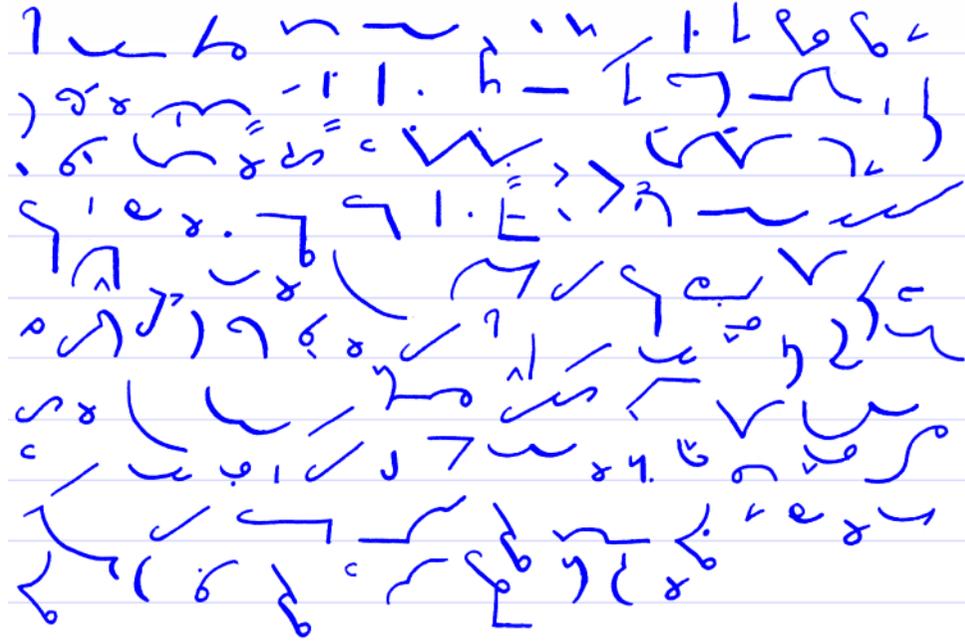
Seaside Activities

In the second shed was a big collection of old bicycles from the early days. The first ones were called bone shakers because they had no springs or rubber tyres. I saw a dairy milk cart and a model of a horse pulling it, and the big old churns on the back. Next to the old bikes was a collection of scooters and high speed motorbikes, then vintage cars and some racing cars. I had another go on them on the virtual

screen which was really good fun. Last of all in the yard was an exhibition of old trams, buses and coaches, and we were allowed to sit in the driver's seat and turn the steering wheel. That's\* everything we saw. Chris

\* "That's" Apostrophied phrases do not use short forms, they are mostly written in full

Blank lined writing area for notes.

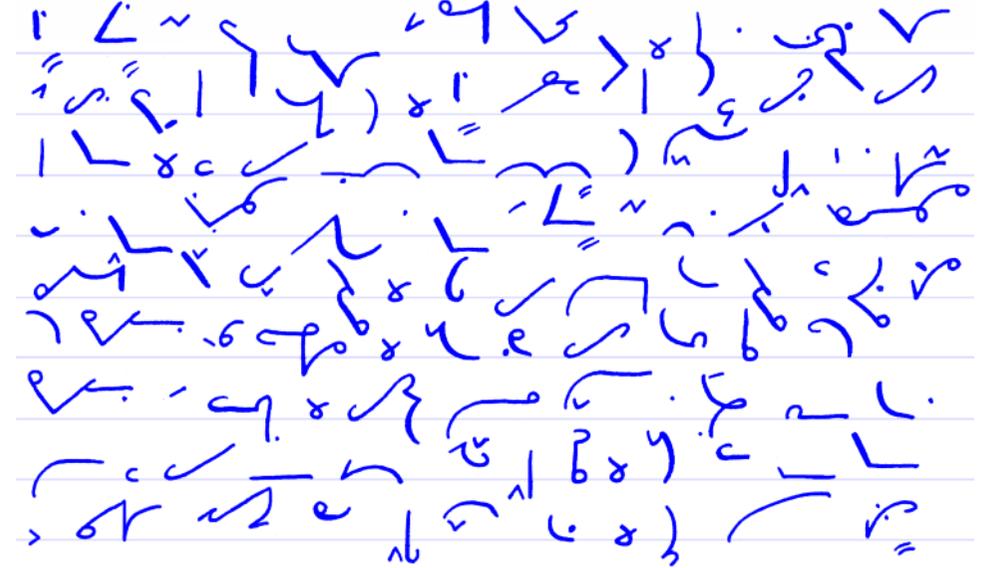


**Seaside Activities**

Dear Uncle James, I am going to tell you all about our day at the sports place on the seafront. Mum and Dad had a go at the crazy golf, but it was too slow for me. I went with Barbara to the beach volleyball area played on sand. The kids club had a tug of war going and we were allowed to join in. After lunch we played squirt ball which was great as the weather was very

hot. We tried out our new kites but there was not enough wind. After having our ice creams we went rock pool fishing with our new nets but we did not catch anything. I did find some nice shells, and after that we collected coloured pebbles to make shapes on the sand. In the shops they sell pebbles with little plastic eyes on them.

Blank lined writing area for the student's response.

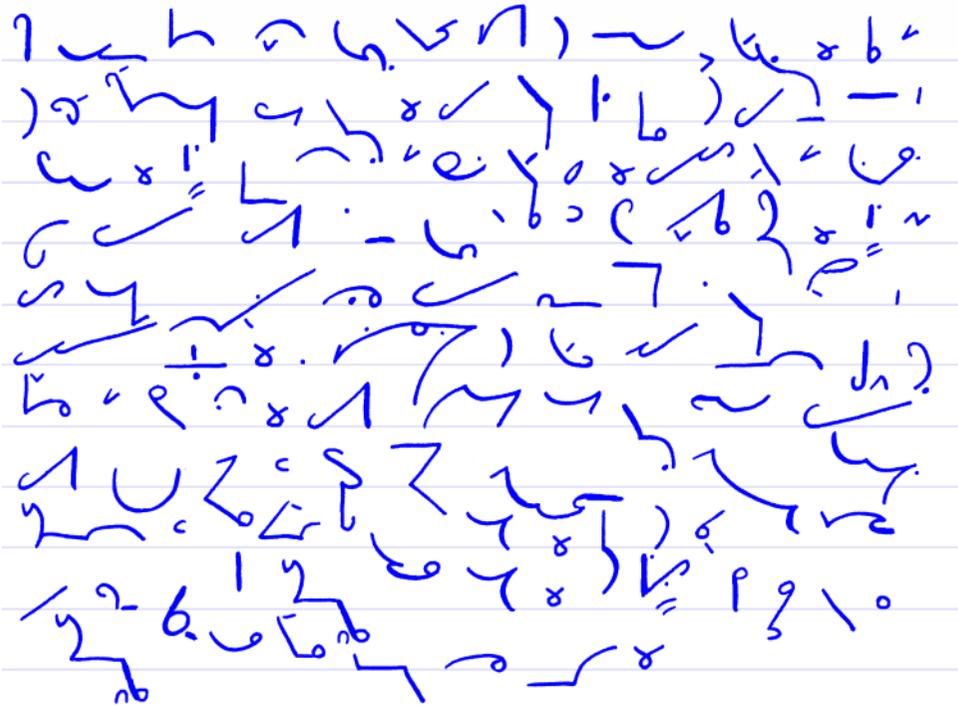


**Seaside Activities**

Dad, Jack and I played football on the sandy part of the beach. It was an inflatable ball and the wind blew it into the sea. Dad rescued it when the wave washed it back. When we came back, Mum was lying down on a towel under a big parasol reading a book, and Jack and I made a row of sand castles surrounded by white

pebbles. Then we looked for pebbles with shapes, holes or sparkly salt crystals. I have saved one for you, it is very sparkly and glittery. One of them looks like a fossil, you can have a look when we come home and find out what it is. I was glad to come back to the hotel and wash the sand out of my feet. See you later, Helen

Blank lined writing area for the student's response.



**Seaside Activities**

Dear Uncle Tom, My favourite\* part of the holiday was going to the funfair. It is on the seafront promenade near the pier. We bought day tickets so we could\* go on everything. Dad took me on the swing boats first. We went up on the Ferris wheel where we had a good view of what other rides there were\*. Dad and I went into the mirror maze where you can get a bit lost, but we were OK. The helter skelter was fun and we came down three times on the special mat. We had lunch in the beer\* garden where we had fish and chips with plenty of ketchup and vinegar, and after

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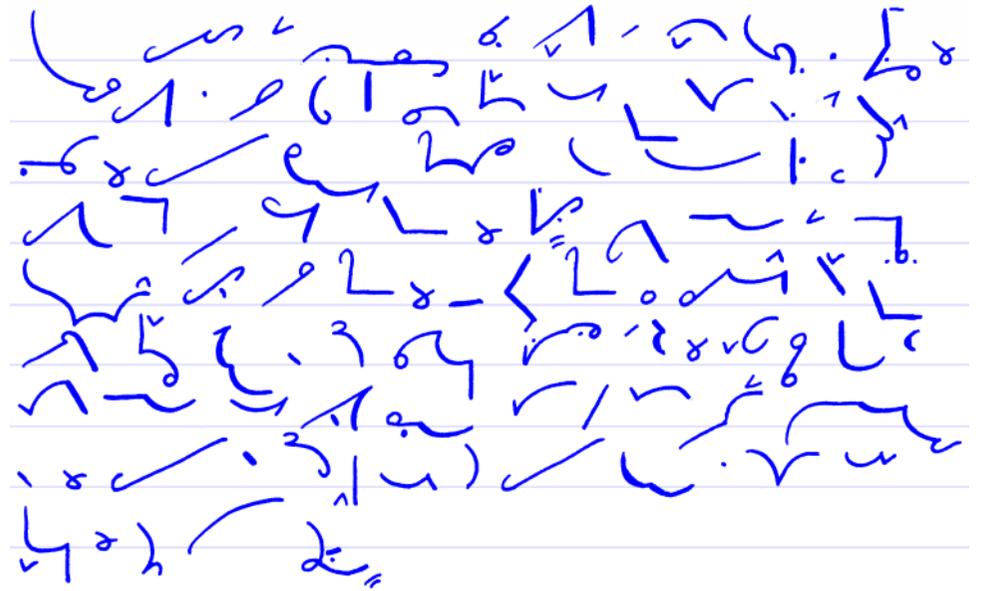
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that vanilla ice cream with chocolate fingers in them. It was so hot, I am glad our fruit juices had ice cubes in them. Darren said he would put his ice cubes in his pockets to keep himself cool.

\* "favourite" Note that "favoured" uses an anticlockwise Vr stroke, to differentiate

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

\* "beer garden" Ensure B is clear, so it is not misread as "pier" in this context



**Seaside Activities**

Afterwards we went on the Mexican Hat ride and my favourite\*, the Dodgems. We had a rest then had some time in the big ball pit and the bouncy castle. We are saving the trampolines for another day when we have got our energy back. Darren will be going on the kiddies\* Formula One race track. Good job the track is surrounded by big rubber tyres, and they have to wear safety helmets and all that. While he is doing that, I will be going in the

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roller skating hall, which I am really looking forward\* to. We are all worn out now so we are having an early night tonight. See you later, Susan

\* "favourite" Note that "favoured" uses an anticlockwise Vr stroke, to differentiate

\* "kiddies" Second vowel essential, as "kids" would also make sense

**Seaside Activities**

Hi Uncle James, What a surprise it was to meet Helen and Uncle Tom and Auntie Maria. We didn't know they were all on holiday in the same place at the same time\* as us! Helen and I had a great time playing together, and that is much better for us than playing boys' games, because Helen and I like to go clothes shopping and the boys are not interested in that. We all went on the pier, which is very long and it has a little train for people who don't want to walk. It is very old and the floorboards are a bit creaky and you can see the waves

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**Seaside Activities**

At the end of the pier we went into the restaurant and had fish and chips, mushy peas with dips and lemon juice, then strawberry ice cream with wafers, and after that some grapes. On a separate part of the pier some people were fishing and they had bait boxes full of wriggling maggots. I thought, how awful, but it seems the fishes like to eat them. One man had a whole bucket of fish he had caught. We even saw a shoal of mackerel swimming past the pier. The water looks very deep and the pier legs are rusty\* and full of barnacles. There are lots\* of life saving rings on stands, in case

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through the cracks. There were\* seagulls sitting on the railings making a lot of noise. Here is what we bought: some sunhats, flip flop sandals, beach dresses and sunglasses. We also bought buckets and spades, two blow-up rings for when we go in the pool and some fishing nets for the rock pools.

\* "at the same time" Halving to represent the T of "time"

\* Omission phrase "there (w)ere"

anyone falls in. In the evening Helen and I tried on all our new clothes, and I am sending you a photo of us in our sunglasses, we look like film stars. We will visit you next week\* with our holiday photos. Love from Barbara (1501 words)

\* "rusty" Keep the T stroke proper length, so it does not look like "rusted"

\* "lots" "masses" Insert the vowel, as these are similar in outline and meaning

\* Omission phrase "ne(k)s(t w)eek"