

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

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h y | a l e o h k z

h' k e o r s b' g q

k r i o d m e v

m y k x | b o . z

m y | k - s l k . o y v

s k o | x | k y . k m r

y u r . o n l l . o h i

l' r d' z k = k v -

h i a v y . o b . o

r e x y k y' o y a v i

y h i . o e o ~ k p { -

1 - k | o //

① 1 a 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34

35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

② 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34

35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

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Short Letters 5

Here are some more plain hundred word letters so that you can practise neat writing without worrying about new vocabulary. This is entirely different from other dictations where you take unknown matter full of alarming new and difficult words with the aim of testing your ability to survive. In the race for speed increase, it is easy to forget the great importance of compact and neat writing. Outlines tend to get larger and more sprawling as the stress increases. It feels like fast writing but this is an illusion, you are merely laying down twice as much ink per outline, skating over twice the amount of paper, and using up twice as many notepad lines, for no particular increase in speed or accuracy. I suspect that it just gives the adrenaline something to occupy itself with, at no advantage to you.

A determined attempt to neaten up the wild stuff needs to be made, as it will not magically happen on its own. You might wish to follow the advice of former high speed champion Emily D Smith, who suggested making the effort to write smaller instead of bigger at such times. It does seem to work, as long as the pen or pencil can still show the details, and a coarse nib or blunt pencil will not do. It requires a determined frame of mind but like anything else in life the more you do it, the more automatic it becomes and the old desperate and undignified paper-digging sprawl can finally be laid to rest, never to resurface to hinder your success. Pretend to yourself that someone else will have to read your notes and that they will be paying you serious money for each outline that they can read accurately!

1. Dear Mr Robertson, Thank you for replying to our advertisement for our new range of items for the garden. We are very pleased to enclose our latest booklet giving details of everything that we can provide to make your time in the garden an even greater pleasure. Many people have written to us and said how pleased they are with the products. We are especially delighted with the new series of digging tools that will help you with this task that many of us often find rather difficult. I think you will find many new items of interest. Yours sincerely (100 words)

2. Dear Friends, I am writing to tell you that the building work on the Social Club has been completed and we can move back into the hall as soon as we wish. It is looking really good and we are sure that all of our members will find it a much better place in which to have our meetings. I am glad to say that the cost was the same as what was quoted and that everything was finished in good time. We are so looking forward to our first meeting there which will be held next Saturday. Best wishes (100 words)

3. Dear Parents, First of all may I thank you all for your support of our recent Open Day. We are grateful to everyone who helped organise this event. I am writing to let you know that our donation target was reached and we are now able to buy the new play equipment for the Under Ten Children's Club. We are very grateful to everyone who made this possible and we hope that you and your family will be able to come and visit to see what a difference this is making to the children's time with us. With best regards (100 words)

Short Letters 5

4. Dear Jim, I am so glad that we met the other day when we were both in the accounts office. I have been meaning to get in touch with you for some time. I am writing a book about my time with the company over the past three decades and wanted to ask you a few things about its history and some of your anecdotes from your work here all those years ago. Maybe we could meet for coffee sometime and talk over those interesting times in the early days. Just drop me an email if you are interested. Regards (100 words)

5. Dear Mrs Brown, Thank you for your email informing me of the difficulties that you have had with your new washing machine. I am glad that our man was able to fix the problem for you and that everything is now working well. We have found this model to be very reliable and I am sure this problem will not be repeated. If you do have any further trouble with it, we will do our best to put things right or, if you felt you wanted a different machine, we would be more than happy to provide this. Yours faithfully (100 words) (792 words total)