

Handywrite

A handwriting system that used the simplest possible strokes for letters would, of course, be faster to write with than longhand, which uses several, sometimes as many as four, strokes for each letter. And if the system were phonetic, words couldn't be misspelled!

The usual 26 letter alphabet just doesn't have enough letters to represent all the 32+ sounds used in English, especially vowel sounds, so several letters are often used to represent a single sound. The word "ought," for example, uses five letters to write only two sounds.

So a really slick form of handwriting would use one stroke for one sound. Simple, but too difficult? Not necessarily. You just need to learn to hear the sounds that you use when speaking English so you can write them, and then learn some simple symbols to represent those sounds. Since you have been taught to pay attention to 26 letters and not the actual sounds of English, tuning in to speech sounds may take a little time, but can also be quite interesting and fun.

In the box below is a summary of everything you need to learn to start writing faster. As a bonus, hardly anyone (probably no one you know) will be able to read your writing.

Handywrite System Summary

<u>Consonant Sounds</u>		<u>Vowel Sounds</u>	
n m		sh ch	
t d		zh j	
k g		ng nk	
r l		Th th y	
p b		s z x	
f v		'd > s (end of word)	
h w		t'n nt	
hw	 as in <u>why</u>	kw	 as in <u>quit</u>
			bat bait bet beet bit bite bought boat but butte boot boil book bawl bout bur bar bore bear beer

To better understand the above, study the following. Notice how, in the examples, each sound is often spelled several different ways.

Consonants: (as in....)

n m knit--mit , knife--calm (no l sound)

t d two--do , stopped (one p, ends in t)--fiddle

k g coat--goat , back--ghost

r l rake--lake, wrong--tell

p b pin--been, happy (only one p sound)--rabbit

f v fairy--very, laugh--of (v not f)

h w how--wow, who (starts with h)--wine

sh ch shin--chin, ocean--watch

("ch" is the sound of t+sh, but gets a symbol of its own)

zh j azure--jam, measure--bridge

("j" is the sound of d+zh as in "edge")




ng nk sing--sink, long--lank

("nk" is the sound of ng+k)

Th th thin--then (same vowel), thigh--breathe


("Thin" and "then" are the only two common words distinguished solely by the two forms of th, so if you get them mixed up writing other words, no big deal. By the way, the

"th" in "then" or "the" occurs about ten times more often in writing than "Th" in "thin" or "think")

s z  sin--zen , scent--has 

(s, z, and x may curve two ways, whichever seems best)








x y  example--yet , extra--onion 








("x" is the sound of k+s in fox, eh+k+s in extra, or eh+g+z in exact--if you need to be excruciatingly exact you could write extra as )

ll ny  llama--mana 

(These sounds are from foreign words such as "llama" when pronounced like "y" instead of "l." In Spain "ll" is like the "lli" in "million." The "ny" sound is the "ñ" in "mañana" or "canyon")

Vowels: (as in...)

ae  bat , plaid , half , laugh , can , glad 

eh  bet , many , said , says , bread , leopard 

ih • bit , mini , Sid , busy , women , hymn

a • bot or bought , father , Don , far , caught , heart

uh • but , done , alone , circus , pencil

ey • bait , age , aid , say , they , vein

i • beet , team , people , key , equal






ay | ↓ bite , height , aisle , eye l , lie , high

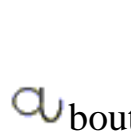
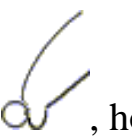
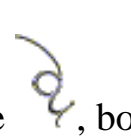
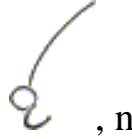
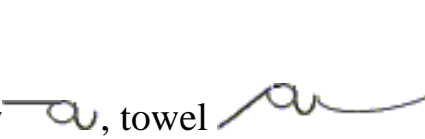
(may be written with a forward or backward slant, but generally down)


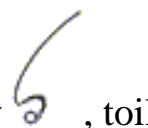

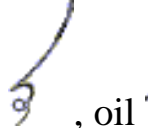

o • boat , sew , open , toe , beau , yeoman






yu • butte , new , few , feud , beauty , view


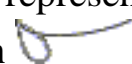
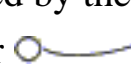


u • boot , shoe , rule , blue , fruit , adieu

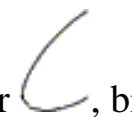



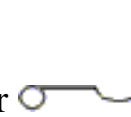

c c book, put , full , wolf , good , should 

au a bout , house , bough , now , towel 

oy o boil , boy , toil , voice , oil 

aw a bawl , dawn , law , yawl--y'all , drawl 

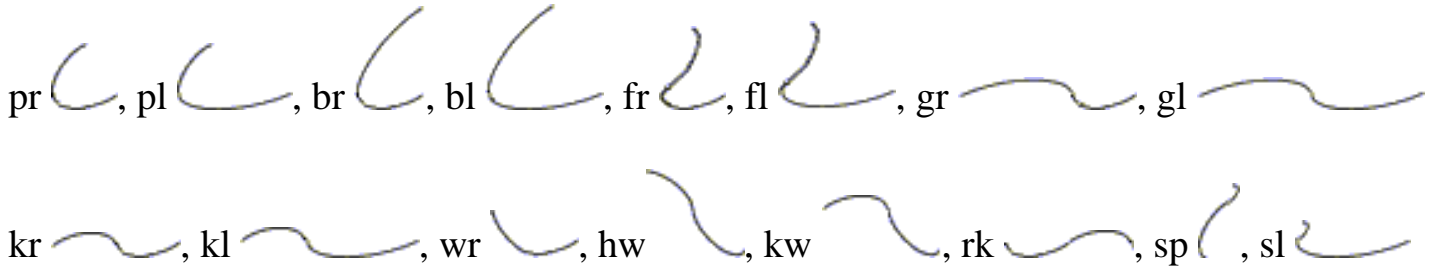
(This is a minor vowel very close to the "short o" in Don. In practice this vowel sound can be represented by the  symbol without confusion. So "all" or "awl" could be written  or  and so forth, but if you need to distinguish between "dawn" and "Don" or "la" and "law," "tock" and "talk," then you can--these being the among the few examples I have encountered that differ solely on the basis of these vowel sounds. Some words, like "bought" (bawt) and "bot" (baht) may be pronounced the same by some people, and so may be written the same. Note that when writing this symbol there is always at least one sharp angle between it and a consonant to distinguish it from the vowels  and  which may also be tear shaped when they sometimes blend in with two consonants-- in which case there is no angle.)

r r bur , bird , first , word , honor , zephyr 




(A little known or acknowledged fact: "r" is a vowel, not a consonant. Generations of English teachers have misled you. While I did list "r" with the consonants, I'm now giving you the straight dope. A vowel sound is one you can make in a continuous manner using your vocal cords with mouth open until you run out of breath. Try it. Consonants are the various ways vowels can be modified at the beginning or end of them. Say "ahahahahahahah," now say "rrrrrrrrrrrr." Obviously "R" is a vowel. Some admit only that it's a semivowel, but I prefer to say the emperor has no clothes and claim it's a vowel. Next time you're around an English teacher or other language expert, argue this point *ad nauseum* until they concede.)





Consonant Blends

Some consonant sounds often blend with others. For example "bl" or "fr." When possible, the symbols for consonants that blend also blend. Here are some examples.



Note that most words starting with "wh" are actually pronounced "hw" with a few exceptions like "who" which is just "h" plus "oo" without a "w" sound.

Also, "nt" can be written  or blended into . The vowels in the syllables "ten," "ton," and "tin" are often indistinctly pronounced, especially at the ends of words (as in "cotton"), and may be heard as just "t+n" which can be blended into  as in "cott'n pick'n good."

Another handy blend is to use  for "d" or "ed" at the end of a word by making the hook with a counter-clockwise motion as in "and"  or "bird" . This differs from the vowel usage of this symbol which is always written clockwise as in "know" .

Typing the Handywrite Alphabet

It is useful to assign the sounds in the Handywrite phonetic alphabet to keyboard characters that are quick to type. Since you already know most of the characters, learning a few more will allow you to type words phonetically. Play around with the following and you may find it isn't that hard to print/type phonetically.


Here are typeable characters for each sound based on international usage:

<u>Consonant Sounds</u>		<u>Vowel Sounds</u>							
n m		sh ch		ae	⊙	bat	ey	⊙	bait
t d		zh j		eh	⊙ ↻	bet	i	⊙ ↻	beet
k g		ng nk		ih	⊙ ↻	bit	ay	↓	bite
r l		rr		a	⊙ ↻	Bach	o	↷	boat
p b		Th th		uh	⊙ ↻	but	yu	⊙ ↻	butte
f v		s		u	∪ ↻	boot	oy	⊙ ↻	boy
h w		z		c	< ↻	bull	aw	⊙	bawl
hw		x		au	⊙ ↻	bout	r	—	bur
ll, y		ñ ny		e	⊙ ↻	el bebe	or	~	bore
kh		tn		er	~	bear	ar	⊙	bar
nt									

The above usage will make sense if you are familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Since the IPA is the only really good pronunciation guide, I would suggest studying it, and using the above simplified typeable version to break down words into basic speech sounds.


Because our interest is to write using only the minimum number of distinctive vowel and consonant sounds needed to tell one word from another, it would be correct to say that Handywrite uses a phonemic rather than phonetic alphabet. One symbol may stand for two speech sounds provided they differ only subtly (as allophones) and are not used to differentiate between words. True homophones, of course, cannot be written differently using a phonemic or phonetic alphabet, so "their" and "there" are written the same.

Since "c" is not used for a consonant sound, it is used to represent the vowel in "bull" or "book."

Sometimes a vowel is indistinct or non-existent. The word "nation" could be pronounced "neyshuhn," "neyshihn," "neyshehn," or with no vowel in "neyshn." In such cases, go with the simplest and write "shn"  for "-tion" or "-sion."

Phonetics is phun. As infants we have the ability to hear all possible speech sounds used in any language. With maturity most of us lose the ability to hear speech sounds not in our native language. In some languages, for example, there is no distinction made between "p" and "b" so if

you say "pet" then "bet" native speakers will hear both as the same word. With other sounds, English speakers have the same impairment.

The vowel "e," as in Spanish "el bebe," is not normally found in English other than in the diphthong "ey" as in "bait" or Spanish "ley," which is the "e" sound with the slight addition of the "i" in "beet." The "e" vowel is a tensed form of "eh" in "bet," but sounds more like "ey" to English speakers. So English speakers tend to hear "el" to rhyme with "bell (behl)" and "bebe" to rhyme with the first vowel in "baby (beybi), while Spanish speakers hear "ey," they tend not to hear any difference between "eh" and "e." In Handywrite both "eh (bet)" and "e (bebe)" are represented by the same counter-clockwise small loop, even though these sound like two distinct vowel sounds to English speakers. For practical purposes, "eh" or "e" is also the first vowel in "hair," "care," or "air" when followed by "r." In Handywrite, then, "hair" would be .

Here's an example from Spanish:

El mes de julio es un mes de fiestas por todo el mundo hispano.

el mes de hulio es un mes de fiestas por todo el mundo ispano.

Not too many differences, since Spanish is quite phonetic to begin with. An English speaker learning Spanish might phonetically write the above as:

ehl meys dey hulio ehs un meys dey fiehstuhz por todo ehl mundo hispano.

Ah, so that's why I speak Spanish with such a thick accent! Using the international based characters with English would look like this:

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dogs, and that made me laugh.

thuh kwihk braun fax juhmps ovr thi leyzi dagz, ænd thæt meyd mi læf.

Not nearly as close to normal spelling as with Spanish, but English orthography is only marginally phonetic--about 40%. Note that the vowel in "cat" can be typed as "æ" or as a single character "æ" if you have an international keyboard.


The above international typeable version should be used along with a dictionary that uses the IPA system to help you make sense of phontetics. While the IPA may seem confusing, the other pronunciation guides used by many dictionaries *are* confusing.




Handywrite Lessons

Part One: The Basics



There must be a direct and intimate correspondence between the two acts of speaking and writing. For this reason the basis of the writing must be phonetic, so that we may, as it were, talk with our fingers. --McDermut


Lesson 1

1. The sound of long A (ey), as in "pace," is represented by a double circle symbol  as it is actually a diphthong, a vowel sound made up of two other vowels. Say it slowly and hear the change in vowel sounds. Make the larger circle first, then the smaller one.
2. F and V, P and B, and S and Z are represented by downward elliptical strokes of different length. With S and Z the in-out direction of the curve is not significant, so use whichever is most facile. Note that many words ending in S actually have a Z sound ("base" ends in S while "bays" end-z in Z).


F and V  , P and B  , S and Z 





face  vase 

pace  base 


say  bays 





3. T and D are represented by straight lines written forward and up.

T and D 


bait  paid  fade  fate 





4. N and M are represented by forward straight lines.

N and M 

gain  game  name  Maine 

5. K and G are represented as forward convex curves.

K and G 

bake  peg  cave  gave 

Lesson 2

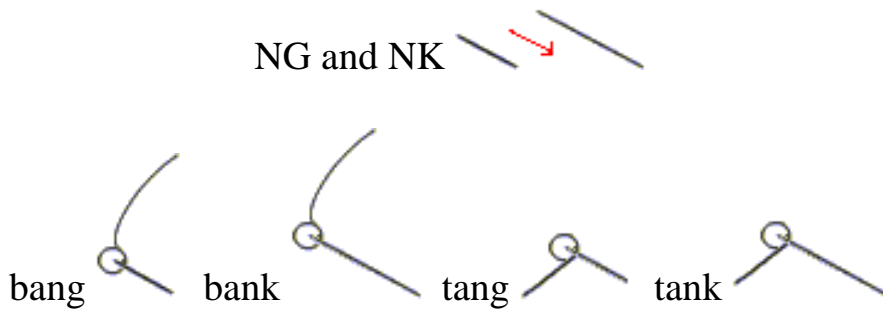
1. The sound of long E (i) as in "beet" is represented by a small figure eight symbol. This sound is often spelled using "ee," which helps in remembering this symbol.



2. The sound of A (ae) in "cat" is represented by a circle with a tick mark inside. The pen moves to the middle of the circle before continuing.



3. The NG sound, as in "sing," and NG+K sound, as in "sink," are represented by forward sloping lines.



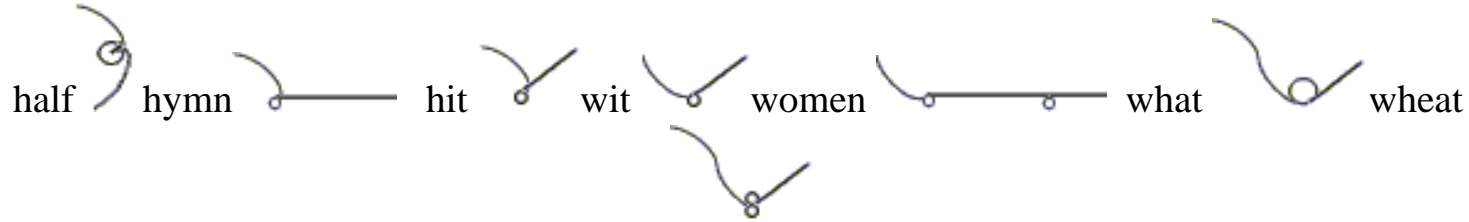
4. The sound of SH and CH are represented by down and backward lines. The CH sound is actually the sound of T+SH.



3. Forward and downward curves of opposite direction and median length represent the sounds of H as in "hate" and W as in "wait". In words like "when," "what," and "where" the "wh" is actually an H-W sound when the H pronounced at all. If you don't pronounce the H and leave it off, no confusion is likely to occur.

H and W 

H-W 



4. The Q or QU sound is actually a K-W sound and so is represented as a K-W blend.

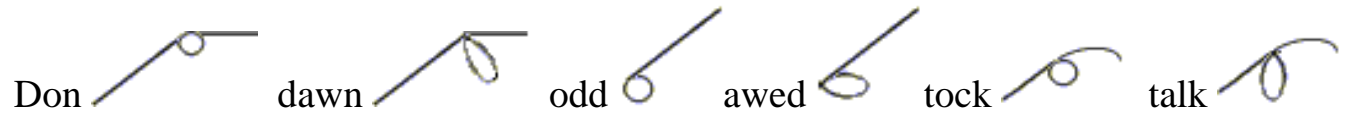
KW 



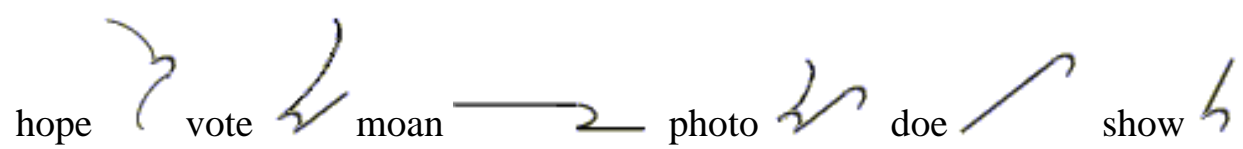
Lesson 4

1. The sound of AW as in "dawn" is very closely related to the sound of AH in "father," "hot," or "Don." Few words are distinguished one from the other on the basis of this sound alone. It is represented by a teardrop symbol made either clockwise or counter-clockwise. It is like the more open circle used in "Don" but the pen always comes to a stop when making it. Since the distinction is rarely required, using the clockwise circle for words like "tall," "bought" or "broad" creates no confusion just as pronouncing them with an AW or AH sound would be heard as the same word by almost everyone. If you say bawt for "bought" and want to avoid confusion with baht, as in "a bot

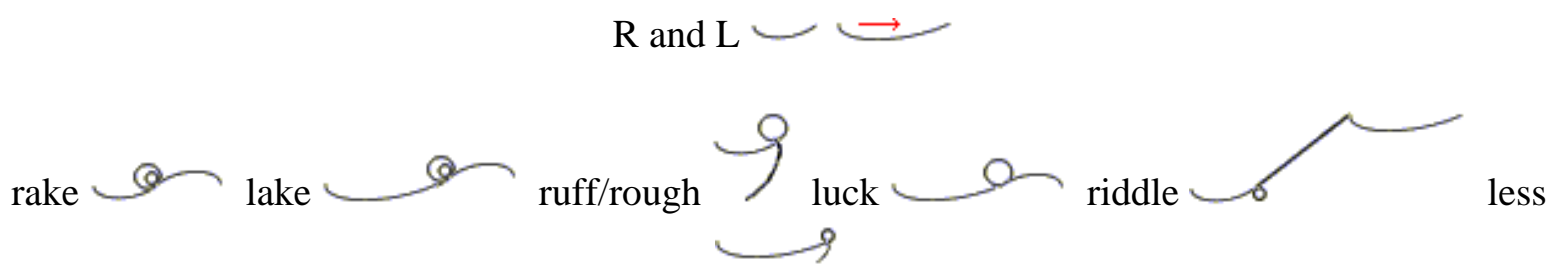
is the larva of a botfly," then you can be meticulous and write "bought" using the teardrop symbol.



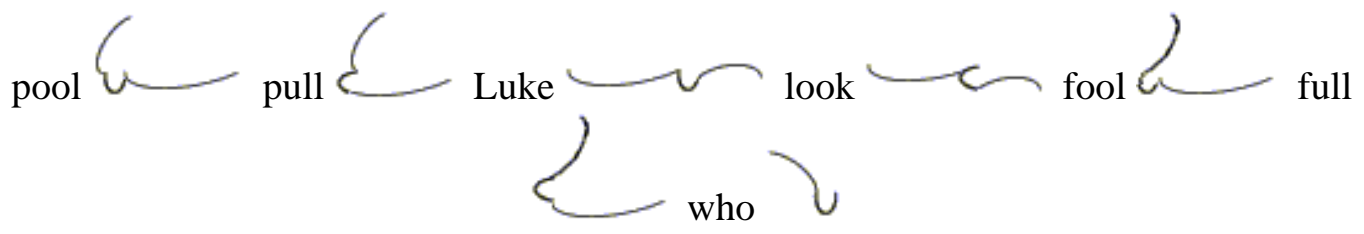
2. A forward or upward hook represents the sound of long O as in "hope".



3. The sound of R and L are represented by convex forward curves.

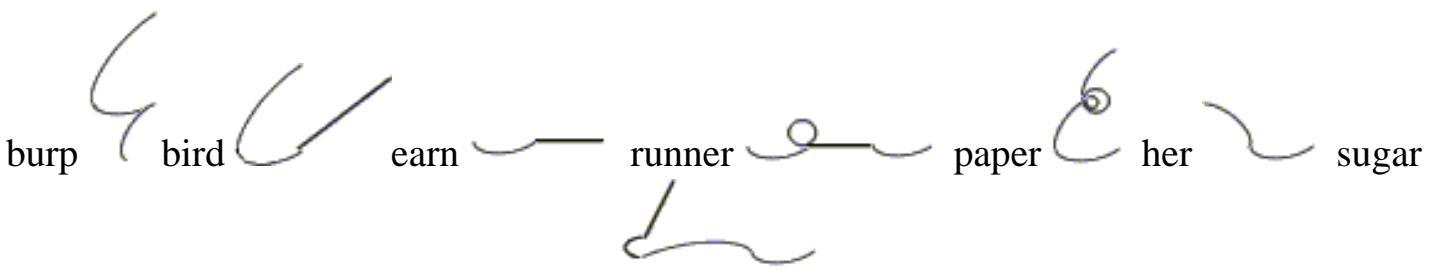


4. The sound of OO as in "boot" or "Luke" is represented by a U shape symbol, while the vowel sound in "pull" is represented by a sideways hook.

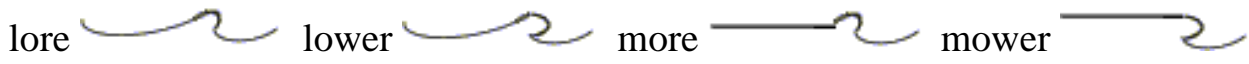


Lesson 5

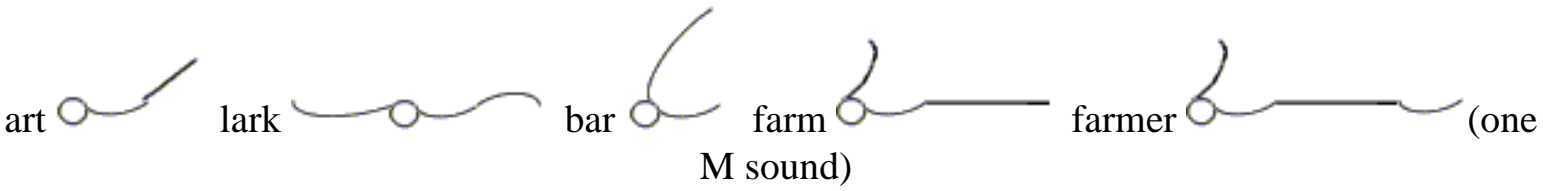
1. Sometimes called a semi-vowel, the R sound is best regarded simply as a vowel in its own right. Pronunciation guides often insert an imaginary UH sound in front of R in such words as bird, burp, earn, purple, dirt, her, and heard when the only vowel is actually R.



2. Vowel sounds before R may blend with R or not. The OR sound would always be blended.



3. The AR sound is the sound of AH in "father" combined with R.



4. The EH sound in "bet" before R may sound close to long A as it does in bear, care, terror, but it is not as distinct as it is in "player," which has the EY/long A sound. In most cases, write EHR instead of EYR



5. The IH sound in "bit" before R sounds close to long E as it does in beer, dear, sere (dried up), but is not as distinct as it is in "seer" (a person who sees). The IH sound is also the Y at the end of many words although long E for Y also works.

beer sere seer many marry

Lesson 6

1. The ZH sound, the second vowel in "measure" and the J sound as in "major," which is actually a D+ZH sound, are represented by vertical down strokes.

ZH and J

measure vision garage division


major adjust jest gist









2. The long I (AY) sound is represented by a short downward stroke, but it need not be straight down.

bite tight fly kite price prize

3. There are two TH sounds although the distinction is rarely important. You can hear the

difference in "thin" and "then," and between "thy" and "thigh." The symbols are upward curves of medium length in the shape of quarter circles.

Th and th 





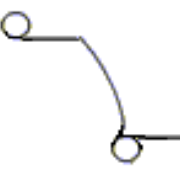
Th as in thigh  ether  thin  that 
 th as in thy  either  then  they 

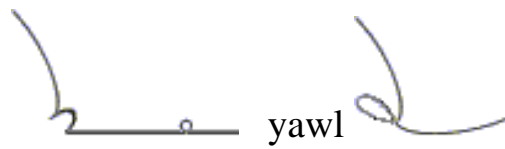
4. The AH+OO sound, as in "bout," may be represented by writing each vowel, or by using a short upward/backward line.

town  noun  loud  fowl  outer 

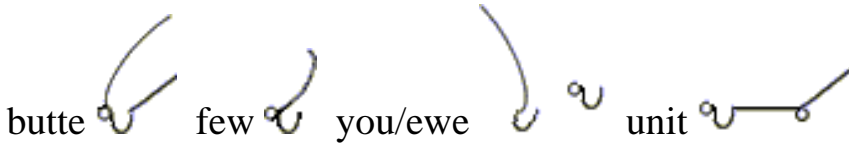
Lesson 7

1. The Y sound as in "yet" is represented by a long steep downward curve.

Y 
 yet  yellow  yank  onion  yeomen



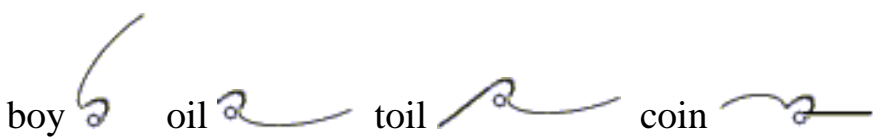
2. The long U (YU) sound as in "butte" is the IH sound plus OO. You could also use Y+OO if you prefer.



3. The sound of X is actually a KS sound and is represented by a short upward curve, which also stands for EH+KS at the beginning of words. Writing K+S would also work.



4. The sound of OY as in "boy" and "oil" is an O+IH sound represented by combining these vowels.



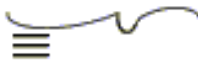
Part Two: The Refinements

Shorthand is the science of abbreviation. --Pitman


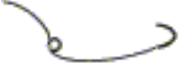





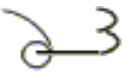
Lesson 1

1. Punctuation is the same as in longhand although you may want to use different symbols for the dash and hyphen if you want to reserve N and M for abbreviations. Since capitals are not spoken, they are not used in phonetic writing. However, you could use proofreader convention and triple underline the first sound.








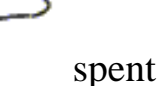

hyphen ≧ dash ≧

Luke ≡ 

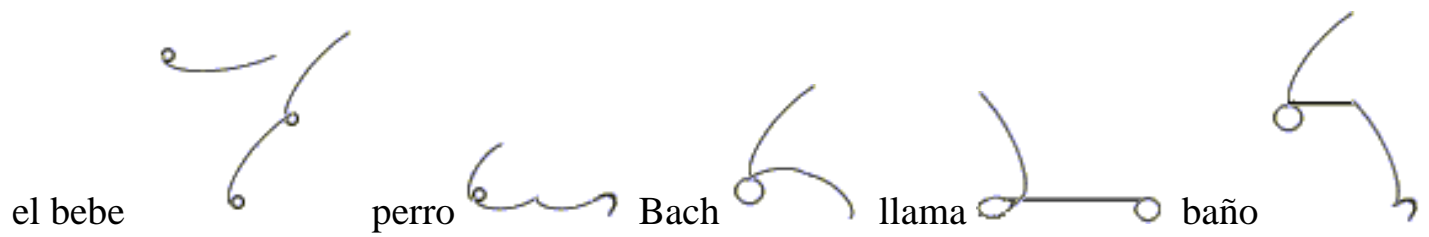
2. An upward hook can (but need not) be used for the ending D or ED sounds when preceded by R, L, N, M, NG, NK, or T, D. Two hooks make DIHD and an S or Z can be added.

bird  held  hand  hanged  baited  padded  handed 
hands 

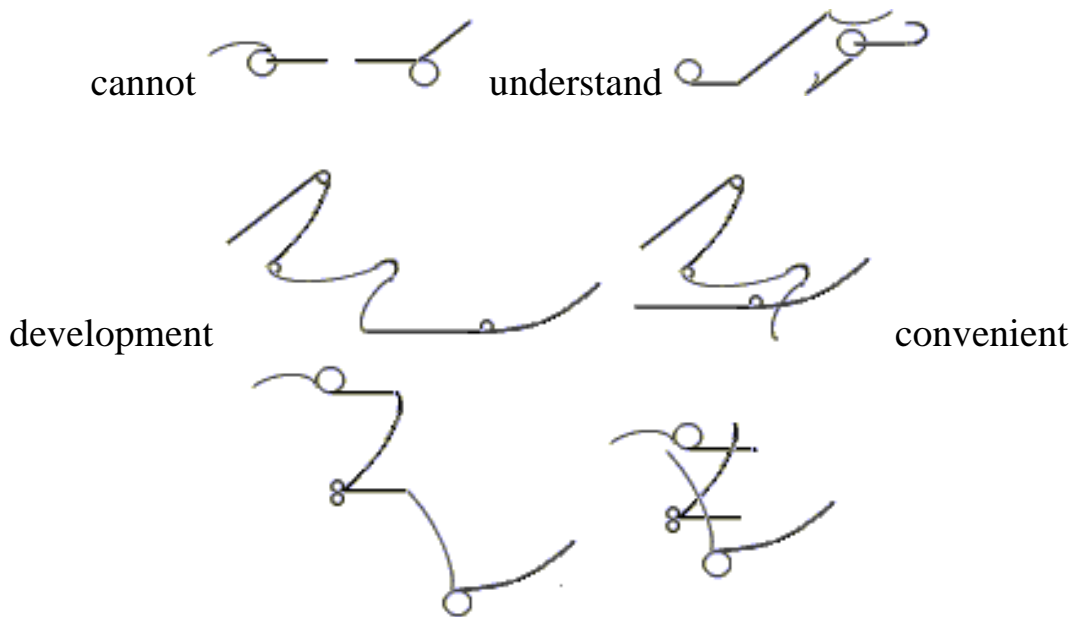
3. Words ending in the TUHN, TIHN, or TEHN sounds can be written as a T-N blend. The NT sound can be written as an T-N blend.

T-N  and NT 
cotton  hint  tense  paint  extend  spent 
Washington 

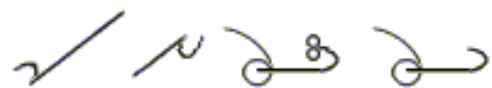
4. International sounds can be written. The E in "el bebe" is the EH small circle. The trilled double R is just written RR. The KH sound in "Bach" is a K-H blend. The LL sound is represented by Y, and the Ñ sound is NY.



5. Long or compound words need not be written as one continuous line, and parts can overlap as in Chinese ideographs for a more compact form.



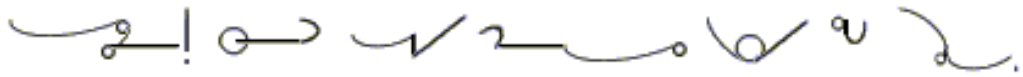
6. Just for fun:



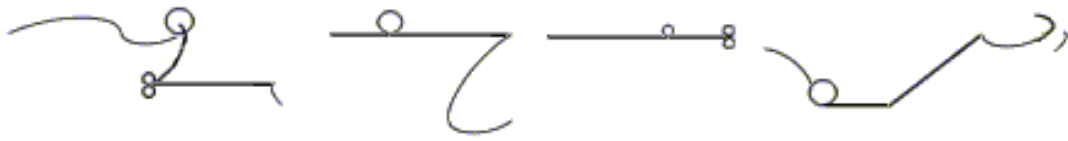
Ode to Handy Hand



The lesson one must learn is clear,



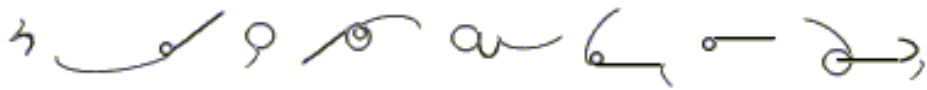
Listen! And write only what you hear.



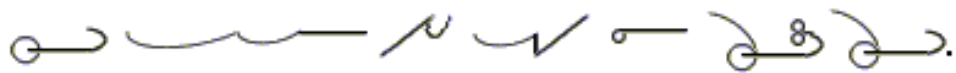
Graphemes number many hundred,



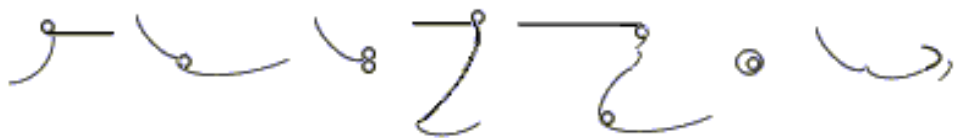
Phonemes are but few when numbered.



So let us take our pens in hand,



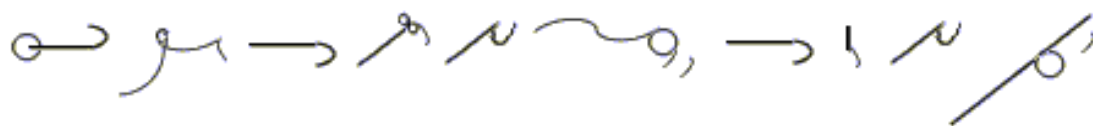
And learn to write in Handy Hand.



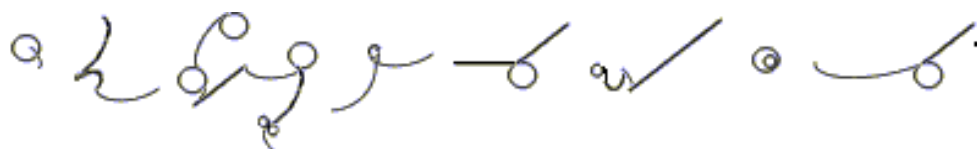
Then will we never misspell a word,



'Cause they're written just like they're heard.



And there's no T's to cross, no I's to dot,



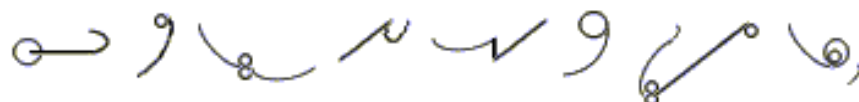
As for apostrophes, they're not used a lot.



But just five vowels we cannot permit,



There are more than that we must admit.



And if we're to write the speedy way,



Then we must practice everyday.



Thus will we come to understand,



The advantages of learning Handy Hand.

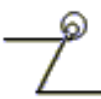
Lesson 2

1. General abbreviating principle: Write out as much of a word as is required to suggest its meaning (to you), and put a dot.

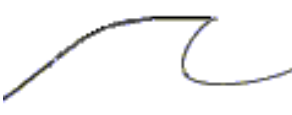

abbreviation 

2. If you must pause for even a fraction of a second in composing an abbreviation, the abbreviation becomes a speed handicap rather than a help, so abbreviate only words you often use.


3. The word ending -tion and -sion, can be written as SHN.

nation 

4. Certain other blends are possible. The sounds DEHM, DIHM, DUHM can be written as a D-M blend, like T-N but longer.

dimple  wisdom 

The sounds of TEHM and TIHM can be written as a T-M blend, like T-N but with an extended straight line.

tempo 

Lesson 3

Here's a short sample of writing using only a few short cuts and no shorthand abbreviations.

Handywrite Shorthand

Shorthand is any system of abbreviation.



























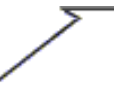



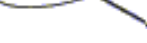
















Assuming you are already familiar with [handwriting](#), which offers a short and sweet (but not abbreviated) writing system, you can write even faster by systematically abbreviating common words and phrases. Of course you could learn one of the many alphabetic shorthand systems and write in abbreviated longhand, but why start with an inherently slow form of handwriting and then try to write fast? Better to start with something that is already fast and go from there.




















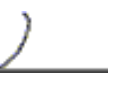








What to abbreviate? The most common words, prefixes, suffixes, and phrases.

About 40 words make up about 40% of all the words you write and the 100 most frequent words make up about 50%, so learning a few abbreviations for the most common words would give you a big bang for the effort. If you have to stop writing to think of an abbreviation, then you're better off just writing out the word.

Here are 100 abbreviations selected from the 300 most common words listed in their order of frequency. Only use an abbreviation if you feel it is easier than writing it out in full.

the .	of —	and ∩	a, an °
in —	is \	you ∪	that /
he)	for)	was \	are)
as \	with (they ⊙	at ⊙
be (this /	from ∩	have)
one	had /	not —	but 6

what 	all 	when 	we 
can 	your 	you're 	which 
said 	will 	about 	how 
out 	she 	many 	some 
would 	into 	time 	could 
first 	been 	now 	people 
over 	did 	down 	only 
find 	use 	long 	very 
after 	words 	just	where 
before 	good 	new 	our 
used 	think 	around 	another 
come 	become 	because 	things 






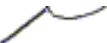




different 	again 	number 	great 
small 	every 	found 	between 
should 	Mr. 	under 	along 
next 	while 	below 	something 
often 	house 	hadn't 	form 
without 	sometimes 	being 	however 
thing 	example 	using 	answer 

Note that a short upward line can be used for the "au" sound in "out." Also place dots, dashes, and commas used as punctuation close to the preceding word and further away when used to represent words (the, of, in, some).

Prefixes





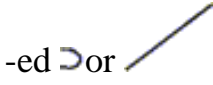











Prefixes may be written separately from the root word that should then be written below or through the prefix.

pre- 	de- 	inter- 	in- 	com- 
--	---	--	---	--

re- 	over- 	be- 	out- 	fore- 
trans- 	counter- 	after- 	an- 	sub- 










Suffixes
































Suffixes may be written separately from the root word also, and should be written under or through it.

-ment 	-ly 	-ness 	-er 	-ed 
-est 	-ing 	-ological 	-tion, -sion 	-able 
-ant 	-ten, -tin, -ton 	-ship 	-al 	-ful 
-ent 				

Common Phrases

Some phrases occur frequently enough that you might want to use abbreviations for them.

are not, aren't 	are you 	as many 
as soon as 	be able 	cannot 
could be 	could have, could've 	could not 

did not, didn't 	do not 	had not 
have been 	have had 	have not, haven't 
have you 	I am, I'm 	I have, I've 
in which 	is not, isn't 	it is, it's 
of course 	of which 	one of 
should be 	should have 	should not 
some of 	that are 	that have 
that is, that's 	that will 	they are 
they could 	they will 	this is 
this will 	we are, we're 	we could 
we have, we've 	we should 	we will 
will be 	will have 	with which 

would have



you have, you've



you will, you'll



Suggestions

Don't try to convert from longhand to Handywrite in one go. Just start to write a few of the most common words in Handywrite, and add more as you feel the need for speed. This will make learning Handywrite relatively painless and provide an immediate payoff.

You will have to practice if you do not want to write words the long way.

