

Twenty Shortcuts To Shorthand Speed

By

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SHORTHAND WRITTEN BY
CHARLES RADER

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Dedicated to

JOHN ROBERT GREGG

WHO, THROUGH HIS SYSTEM OF SHORT-
HAND, HIS METHOD OF TEACHING, AND
HIS FRIENDLY GUIDANCE, HAS BEEN A
MAJOR FACTOR IN MY PROFESSIONAL
CAREER, AND TO WHOM I AM DEEPLY
GRATEFUL FOR SUPPLYING ME WITH
MANY EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR
SERVING OTHERS AS A TEACHER AND CO-
WORKER IN BUSINESS EDUCATION.

PREFACE

Twenty Shortcuts to Shorthand Speed has developed from talks on this subject given by the author before commercial-teacher associations, department faculties, and teachers in training.

The book in no manner pretends to be a formal treatment of the pedagogic principles involved in skill building. The shortcuts described have for their major purpose the increasing of the effectiveness of teaching shorthand skill up to the average stenographic level of around 120 words a minute. It is assumed that the reader recognizes that the building of reporting speed requires a different technique in some respects.

If the reader does not agree with certain statements or claims made, he has a kindred spirit in the writer of this book, for no one realizes more than he the value of individuality among successful teachers. Nevertheless, we all must hold to certain fundamentals from which no properly trained teacher deviates. The writer has endeavored to treat only fundamental procedures in the shortcuts presented here.

CLYDE INSLEY BLANCHARD

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 Most students of skill subjects reach higher goals
 through inspiration rather than through the logical
 presentation of a lesson.

SHORTCUT No. 1

Start and Finish with the Right Objective—Fluency

What immediate objective do you have in mind as you teach the first lessons in shorthand? The objective I had in mind for many years was accurate writing—perfect outlines. I showed my beginning students how to write the curves, the straight lines, and the circles separately and together, and I taught them as painstakingly as if they had never before written these strokes and were building a new skill.

Of course, I linked the shorthand alphabet with the longhand alphabet and followed as best I could Dr. Gregg's method of presentation, which revolutionized the teaching of shorthand more than thirty years ago and has proved to be almost as valuable a contribution as his system of shorthand. Here is what he said about fluency in one of his early addresses: ¹

Among my theories was the training of students to write fluently from the first lesson. I well remember how utterly

¹ An address delivered before the National Shorthand Teachers Association in Chicago in 1899. Also read *The Teaching of Shorthand*, by John Robert Gregg, pages 44-45.

absurd that appeared to nearly all the teachers, because it was then an axiom that students should be taught to “draw the characters slowly and carefully” until the theory was mastered. This practice, I contended, fastened upon the students the habit of writing slowly and sluggishly, and thereby rendered it difficult for them to emancipate themselves from that habit later when they were plunged into “speed practice.” In support of my theory, I wrote on the board some simple alphabetic combinations, illustrating the difference between the characters that were written fluently and rapidly and those that were slowly drawn.

I repeat, I didn't make the mistake of permitting my students to draw the characters slowly and painfully. I strove for fluency to that extent, but I stopped short of the desired goal. I didn't carry on far enough. A student can be taught to write separate characters fluently and even separate words fluently, but all the fluency gained thus far will have little effect on speed building if the moment you start dictating connected matter to the student you change your fluency objective and substitute accuracy.

My objective of 100 per cent writing accuracy during dictation wasn't exactly wrong, and I can see now why I didn't realize sooner that it was not the best immediate objective. The best method of instruction is not needed to obtain 100 words a minute from the average student in the length of time consumed in the average course.

When I was confronted with the problem of building speed above 120 words a minute, I saw clearly certain

faults in the methods I had been using both in my theory classes and in those on the lower speed levels. My major fault was the overemphasis I was placing on accuracy. I realized that I must emphasize fluency more. I must teach the first lessons in such a way that the student would maintain the writing fluency that he already possessed while making the transition from longhand to shorthand. This transition is mainly a mental one—that of learning new meanings for familiar characters.

The shortcuts that follow will show how the fluency objective may be maintained without lowering the student's writing accuracy below the practical standard required by business.

SHORTCUT NO. 2

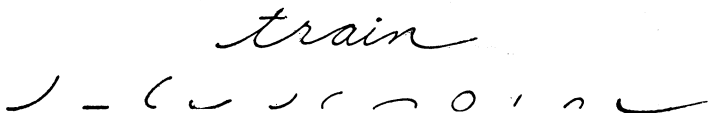
Remove All Fear That Shorthand Is Difficult to Learn

It makes no difference whether you write longhand or shorthand, Greek or Latin, Chinese or English—you use only three basic strokes: a curve, a circle, and a straight line:



Suppose you were to ask your beginners to write in longhand the word *train*. Would they hesitate? Would they think the word was difficult to write? Would they be conscious of the fact that they were joining together a number of curves, circles, and straight lines that are the same as those used by shorthand writers?




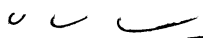

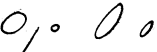

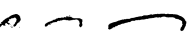
No; of course they wouldn't. They are beyond the stage when they wrote longhand stroke by stroke with conscious effort. Yet, in writing *train* in longhand they write at least eleven different alphabetic characters of Gregg shorthand:



In transferring this skill to the writing of *train* in shorthand, they will need to use only four characters—two straight lines, a curve, and a circle:



Their longhand skill in writing *train* not only applies to the eleven strokes shown above but also includes proportion and direction as illustrated by the height of the *t* and the combination of upward, downward, and horizontal strokes. The eleven strokes, therefore, should be expanded as follows to represent truly the student's fluency, based on this word alone:

- Upward curves 
- Straight horizontal strokes 
- Downward curves 
- Horizontal curves 
- Upward curves 
- Circles and loops 
- Straight downward strokes 
- Horizontal curves 

What a mountain has been made out of a molehill by some shorthand teachers in the name of modern pedagogy! In 1897, Dr. Gregg first published his system

in book form. In it he said, as he still says in his latest edition: ¹

Gregg Shorthand is easy to learn, easy to read, easy to write. . . . The aim of the author has been to adhere to those natural principles that govern ordinary writing. By a practical combination of these elements as a foundation, the system secures to the writer *with very little* practice that perfect command of the characters that is productive of the best results.

Do we believe Dr. Gregg or do we not? Is he right or is he wrong? Have we ever tried to teach Gregg Shorthand simply, as the author would teach it?

One of the strongest evidences of its simplicity is the fact that, in spite of prognostic, diagnostic, subjective, and objective tests; in spite of the deep research into what has happened, is happening, and may happen under this or that condition; in spite of all the incorrect adaptations of Morrison *et al.* that have been injected into the teaching and learning of this skill subject, its basic simplicity cannot be destroyed and students are still able to learn how to write it.

Let us adopt this second shortcut without any reservations whatsoever and remove all fear that shorthand is difficult to learn.

Once the teacher and the students are convinced that shorthand is easy to learn, it must follow that shorthand is easy to teach. One of the convincing illustra-

¹ *Gregg Shorthand*, Anniversary Edition, page x.

tions of the merit of this shortcut is the increasing utilization of the reading approach, first made possible by Dr. Gregg through the publication of the two companion books to the Manual—*Gregg Speed Studies* and *Graded Readings*—and a series of all-shorthand readers. The simplicity of shorthand is capitalized by this approach, and the teacher is guided from the beginning to build shorthand skill the easy way.

An amusing incident occurred following a talk I gave one afternoon to a group of shorthand teachers. One of the teachers who had heard me describe this shortcut started a beginning class the following day. She told the students how easy shorthand is. She put the word *train* on the board in longhand, analyzed its strokes as I have described, and was delighted at the enthusiastic reaction of her students—with one exception. In the rear of the room this “exception” raised his hand.

“There is more to it than that, teacher. I know. I had it last term and failed!”

Of course, that student had not been started right!

SHORTCUT No. 3

When You Teach, Teach Instead of Test

When we teach, we *help* our students all we can. When we test, they are “on their own.” Students can’t build a skill very quickly “on their own.” We must, of course, both teach and test, but our major job is to teach, to build skill. If we direct our major efforts toward building our students’ skill, we are giving them the maximum service we can render them as their shorthand teachers.

When we think our students have built their skill, say, up to 60 words a minute, we have available tests and tangible rewards for work well done, in the form of the prized Order of Gregg Artists’ certificate for artistic shorthand penmanship; and certificates, pins, and medals, marking the achievement of each 20-word increase in shorthand speed, beginning with the 60-word *Gregg Writer* certificate and ending with the coveted 200-word diamond medal.

Why is it safe for us to forge ahead, devoting our major efforts to building skill without frequent check-ups by formal vocabulary tests and theory reviews?

Because our beginning students have correctly written shorthand constantly in front of them in their texts and on the blackboard. Because they have automatic reviews of theory principles and outlines in each new lesson. Because they have our intelligent criticism and help day after day, as we teach them how to build speed.

One of the most popular, as well as one of the most effective, shortcuts with students is this third one. Don't delay a moment in teaching more and testing less. On all days except those on which you are giving formal tests, assure your students that, when you dictate to them, you are *not* testing them. Tell them that they are to write the first outline they think of, without fear of being penalized for incorrect outlines. If they can read their notes back correctly, their notes are correct as judged by business standards, because the notes have accomplished the purpose for which they were written.

Even if the students can't read a few outlines in a take, it is better for them to write whatever they do write *fluently* and thus complete the take than to drop out because they stopped to think how an outline should be written as the teacher would like to have it written.

Before the dictation is the time to learn how to write correct outlines. After the dictation is the time to "clean up" notes that were poorly written during the dictation.

Incidentally, if a student has written many poor outlines, the fault may lie with the teacher. The student may not have practiced the preview sufficiently before-

hand, or possibly the speed was too high or the material ill suited for the purpose.

The complete elimination of the fear of consequences while taking dictation will result in a fluency of writing that is indispensable to high speed. And, until your own experience proves its truth, take my word for it that the student's accuracy will keep step with his fluency.

"Let me help you. . . . Let me show you how. . . . Here's what's the matter. . . . What do you think is causing the trouble? . . . Try it this way." Teaching, helping, trying to see things with our students' eyes, let us encourage our students step by step to build the skill by means of which they can place their feet on the first rungs of the ladder leading to a successful business career.

The student thrives in this atmosphere of encouragement and sympathetic understanding. Just the opposite is true in the classroom presided over by the fault-finding, critical instructor, who, whether he realizes it or not, is trying to teach by testing. Read what Dr. Gregg has to say about the critical teacher: ¹

Too many teachers, especially the younger and inexperienced, are apt to feel that they are not fulfilling their mission unless they put themselves in the attitude of critics. There can be no greater mistake. You at once antagonize the student, and all that confidence and freedom of expression, and

¹ *The Teaching of Shorthand*, by John Robert Gregg, pages 29-30.

that unfolding of his real self are lost to you—you never get at his better side, the side which will lead both him and you to success. If the student feels that you are his *guide and friend*, and that he can come to you in the fullest confidence, without fear of criticism, when he meets a difficult situation, you have done more for the development of that student than you could by all the criticisms you could ever make.

On the other hand, there is such a thing as being too much of a guide—the student will *lean* on you instead of being self-reliant. The quality of self-reliance must be cultivated. He must learn that while you may mark his pathway all along with sign-posts for his guidance, he must do the traveling for himself—that nothing can ever be substituted for his own energy, industry, intelligence, and initiative.

SHORTCUT NO. 4

Substitute Shorthand for Longhand

Contradictory as it may seem, no truer statement regarding speed building can be found than this:

The personal use of shorthand is one of the most potent shortcuts for building shorthand skill for vocational use.

To make my point, I must repeat that the shortcuts I am describing are not essential to the building of a speed that stops at 80 or 100 words a minute. But I am not satisfied with a goal of 80 or 100 words a minute. Neither are you. Let us see if we cannot raise it to 120, or even 140, words in the same length of time. No one is justified in claiming that it can't be raised until he has repeatedly failed after using the *best* method.

With this higher goal in mind, can you now see the advantage of substituting shorthand for longhand? The student who does so adds to the daily period of instruction and the usual home-study period (all too short for building a vocational skill) a considerable amount of time spent in writing and reading shopping lists, a diary, various memos, and lecture notes—in shorthand.

A mere saving of time, however, is not a sufficient incentive to some students to discard the long-standing habit of writing in longhand and use shorthand for personal note taking.

If you will assure your class of future stenographers that the personal use of shorthand will increase their speed on the job and back up your assurance with a definite reward for using this shortcut daily, then your students will have the required incentive. Fortunately, the by-product—the habit of using shorthand personally—is as valuable as the resulting increased speed. It may, in many cases, become the more valuable of the two.

Put this shortcut into effect as soon as your students start writing shorthand. Make it a daily requirement. And, by the way, don't forget to join your students if you yourself haven't already acquired this habit. Establish a system of substantial credits that will be granted to all your students, both beginning and advanced, who hand in *daily* concrete evidences of their personal use of shorthand—adulterated with longhand at first and with many outlines written out in full—but nevertheless a step in the desired direction.

You will greatly encourage your students to use shorthand personally if you will post on your bulletin board specimens of typical personal memos written in shorthand. Also, prepare a series of personal memos graded according to the units in the shorthand Manual, so that the student may start building this habit as soon as possible.

Here is an illustration of notes taken by a beginning shorthand student in a business English recitation.

Assign.) 9/16 = art. c
 Poetry - Business - Am.)
 Write . c r e z ?
 r. f 1 . ext. - y room.
 ✓ 6 16 20 - text .) (c
 no illus.) 9 rule.

In 1935, I gave a radio course in shorthand for personal use over Station WNYC, in New York City. The illustrations that follow are taken from that course and suggest the type of material that the teacher can prepare to encourage students to develop this most valuable habit of using shorthand for personal use.

TWO DIARY ENTRIES

2-22-22-22-6-6
 60' re. f 23. n. b. r
 26' - 2. 6 f u. g. a. r. c.

This recipe was published in the January, 1939, number of the *Business Education World*, with the suggestion that teachers use it as an illustration of the usefulness of shorthand in personal note taking. Several days later the following humorous letter was received from Miss B. S. Schumann, of the Batavia, Illinois, High School, relating her experience in following the suggestion set forth in the magazine.

A slippery morning in January and a shorthand teacher carrying to school a paper sack containing four eggs, a cup of sugar, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of flour, one lemon, and some gelatin. Arriving at the "temple of learning," she hands it to one of her senior students.

That's a funny combination! Eggs, flour, sugar, and shorthand! It's a sequel to an episode of the preceding day.

If integration is one of the watchwords of education, why not make practical application? Above-mentioned teacher dictated the recipe for Sunny Silver Pie on page 409 of BEW for January, with this challenge: "I'll bring the ingredients for the recipe if someone will agree to bake the pie." Whereupon a half dozen eager hands went up excitedly. "Let *me*; please let *me*." Two of the not-to-be-denied were chosen, and they betook themselves to the Home Economics Building the next afternoon after school to perform the culinary masterpiece. The names of the pie bakers are Hazel Patzer and Mary Alice Marsh. Hazel has passed her 100-word-a-minute test and is ready for the 120. She is president of the High School Home Economics Club.

The pie was baked and eaten (by both students and teacher) and—Boy!—was it good! Cooking and shorthand both accurate. That's integration and motivation!

It might be added that the history teacher in the high school where this incident occurred is encouraging those of her pupils who are also taking shorthand to make as much use as possible of shorthand note taking in the history class since their enthusiasm for shorthand is stimulating them to work harder in history.

An extension of this personal-use shortcut can be made to include the substitution of shorthand for print with much benefit. The "reading approach" means to some teachers merely an approach to the *learning of shorthand theory*—an approach to be used with beginners. The reading of shorthand is also valuable to advanced students. It is one of the major factors in the building of high speed. The benefit derived is in direct ratio to the *quantity* of shorthand read. As the quantity of shorthand reading increases, so is the writing speed likely to increase, provided, of course, that the rest of the skill-building program is correctly followed.

Advanced shorthand teachers should bear this in mind and include in their daily homework assignments a definite amount of reading from shorthand plates in the text, in the *Gregg Writer*, and in the many Gregg Shorthand readers.

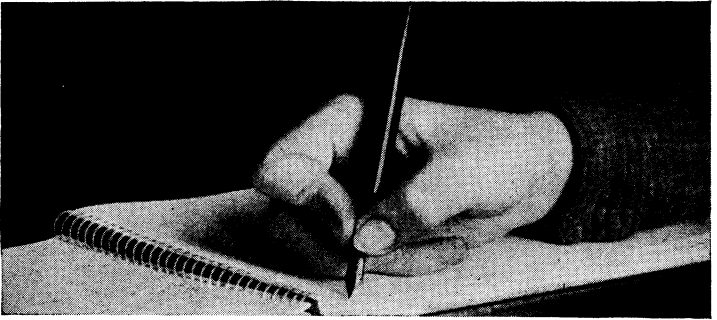
SHORTCUT No. 5

Eliminate Pen Pinching

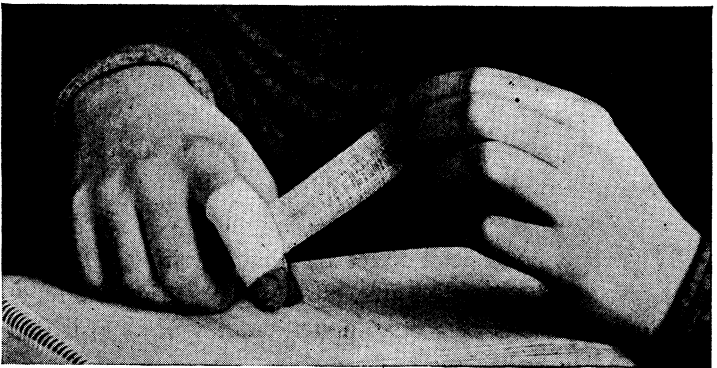
One of the most serious drawbacks to speed that I have noted among the students in my court-reporting classes is pen pinching. The bad effects of pen (and, of course, pencil) pinching are not evident, as a rule, until the student passes the 60-word level and begins to lengthen his takes to 5 minutes or more. When that stage of his shorthand training is reached, I feel sorry for him if he is a pen pincher.

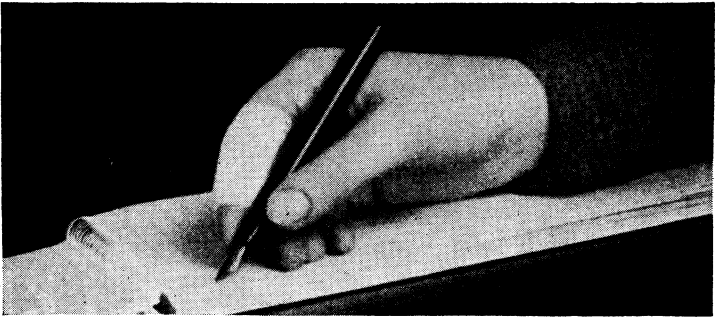
One of the effects of pushing speed to a higher level is the natural tendency to tighten up the writing muscles. They have not yet learned to function easily and smoothly at this higher speed. This condition is bad enough for the student who does not ordinarily pinch the pen, but it brings an added handicap to the habitual pen pincher.

If pen pinching is not eliminated early in the shorthand course, it will not only limit the student's speed to a low level but will also, sooner or later, bring on a painful physical condition that may permanently cripple the writing hand.



Pen pinching is easy to remedy. There are several effective remedies. The one I have found most successful in my own classes is to wind around the offending finger several inches of gauze bandage. It is not advisable to wind the gauze tightly—just enough to make it difficult for the finger to bend at the knuckle. Keep a roll of this gauze in your desk and, whenever you observe a pen pincher among your shorthand students, *use it* and continue to use it till it cures.



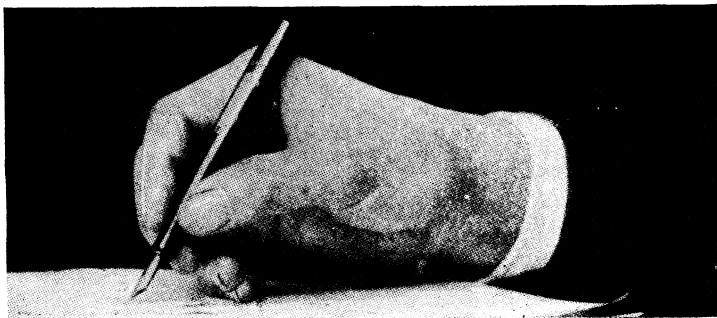


In many cases, the physical pinching of the pen is a symptom of mental tension. In addition to making it difficult for the student to bend his first finger, the bandage will also serve as a visible reminder to him that it is necessary for him to relax mentally in order to write fluently.

In order to concentrate attention upon this exceedingly harmful habit of many shorthand writers, I have said little about other phases of the correct writing position.

Under the caption, "Expert Hands," Louis A. Leslie has given us the following graphic description of the hand positions of four expert shorthand writers. The illustrations show variations in the hand position, but not a single pen pincher.

The proper hand position for shorthand writing is the one that gives the writer the greatest ease of writing for long-continued periods of dictation. Different writers will find different hand positions best.

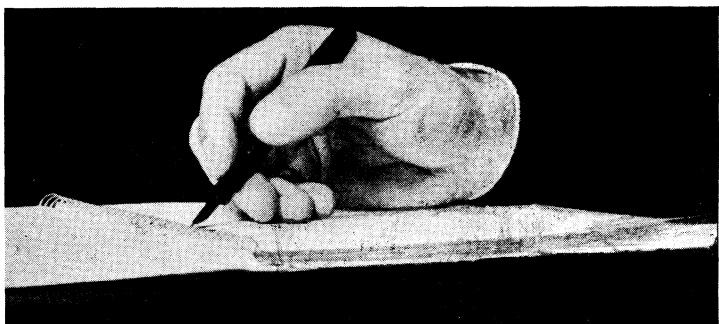


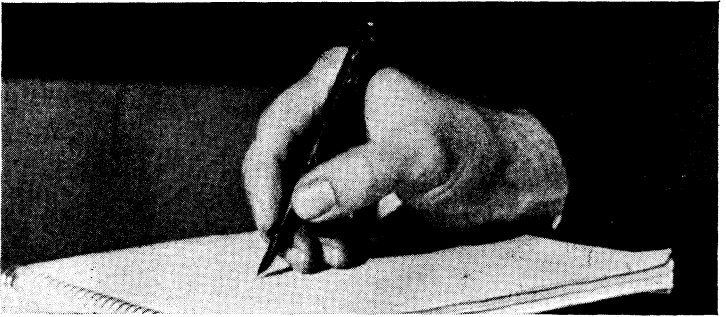
Writing Position of Charles L. Swem, C. S. R.

The expert hands shown here belong to four different shorthand experts, no two of whom have exactly the same hand position. None of the four writers uses exactly the position recommended by most longhand penmanship teachers; yet each writer has found the position shown here to be the one best adapted to his hand, to give him the greatest freedom and accuracy of movement with the least fatigue.

Notice the angle at which the different writers hold the pen. Dupraw's pen lies rather flat in the hand. Swem's pen

Writing Position of Martin J. Dupraw, C. S. R.





Writing Position of Louis A. Leslie, C. S. R.

position is at the other end of the scale—rather vertical. Leslie and Zoubek come in between the two extremes.

Each of the writers holds his thumb rather straight, Swem's being the only thumb with any appreciable bend at the knuckle. None of the writers bends his first finger appreciably. . . .

It is difficult to tell from these pictures, but a close observation of the pictures will show how loosely these writers hold the pen. This is characteristic of the ease with which these men write. The first principle of good shorthand writ-

Writing Position of Charles E. Zoubek, C. S. R.



ing is relaxation of the muscles. The surest sign of the novice in shorthand, as in swimming, is the employment of unnecessary effort. The more physical effort you put forth, the less you accomplish. When the mind is giving the hand proper directions, the physical work of shorthand writing is very slight. The hand suffers when the mind falters.

As a means toward the accomplishment of this relaxation, even when writing, all four writers have the hand turned somewhat to the side, resting on the three fingers not used for holding the pen. This is particularly noticeable in the pictures of the hands of Dupraw and Zoubek. Swem and Leslie also display this characteristic, though not so markedly.

Notice the relative position of the thumb and the first finger. They do not close over the pen—they guide the pen from each side, without meeting on top of the pen. The pen lies on top of the second finger, without being pressed on it by the thumb and first finger.

These photographs are not given so that any writer may slavishly imitate any one of these positions. They are shown to indicate the range of acceptable shorthand positions. If your hand position embodies the style shown by any one of these writers, you needn't worry about the correctness of your position. If your position differs from any of those shown here, it is not necessarily wrong, but it will bear investigating!

SHORTCUT No. 6

Make No Effort to Standardize the Size and Slant of Your Students' Notes

A great deal of damage may be done to the potential speed of some of your students by attempting to standardize the size and slant of their shorthand characters.

Remembering that our main objective is to transfer to shorthand the fluency acquired in writing longhand, we must not disturb any more than is absolutely necessary the size and slant that the student habitually uses in writing longhand. Take several specimens of the longhand writing of each one of your students. Use these specimens as the basis for criticizing the size and slant of their shorthand notes. Permit the large writers, the small writers, the backhand writers, the vertical writers, and the left-handed writers to retain, with very few exceptions, their individuality of style when writing shorthand. To mold them all into the same style is likely to retard their progress and set up a hurdle that will constantly slow down their writing.

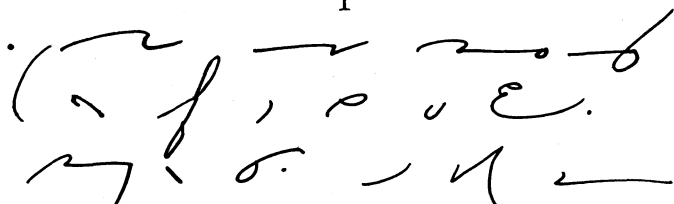
Unless this matter of size and slant is brought to your attention by the students, don't discuss it in class. Many

students will automatically carry their longhand writing style over to their shorthand notes.

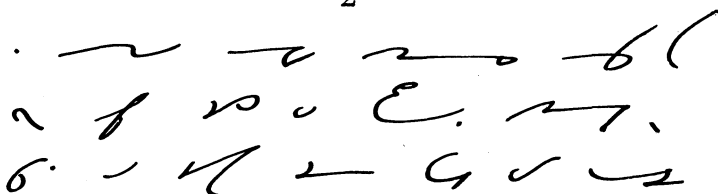
This shortcut, of course, must not be used by the lazy teacher as an alibi for neglecting to correct poorly written notes of faulty proportion. Notes of different sizes can be equally beautiful and of the same high quality of fluency and proportion.

The following illustrations show interesting comparisons in the size and slant of the writers' shorthand and longhand style. Two stenographers wrote the notes on this page.

1


A great mistake com-
monly made by young

2


A great mistake com-
monly made by young

Shorthand and longhand style of Charles L. Swem, Official Reporter, New York State Supreme Court, and World's Shorthand Champion, 1923-1924.

Handwritten shorthand notes, likely representing the words "In writing from dictation it should be an invariable rule never to allow one's self to pause when a doubtful or difficult word or phrase is encountered." The notes are written in a cursive shorthand style.

In writing from dictation it should be an invariable rule never to allow one's self to pause when a doubtful or difficult word or phrase is encountered. It should be understood that whenever the rate of dictation (whatever it may be) has been settled the

Shorthand and longhand style of Martin J. Dupraw, Official Reporter, New York State Supreme Court, World's Shorthand Champion three successive years, and present holder of the title.

Handwritten shorthand notes, likely representing the words "Speed, or at least the semblance of speed, may Martin J. Dupraw".

Speed, or at least
the semblance
of speed, may
Martin J. Dupraw

Shorthand and longhand style of Anna Pollmann, Official Reporter, New York State Supreme Court; winner of special 220-word Gregg Certificate.

Handwritten shorthand notes, likely representing the text of the paragraph below, written in a cursive shorthand style.

There seems to be particular benefit to the young stenographer from writing up to and
Anna Pollmann.

Shorthand and longhand style of J. E. Broadwater, Official Reporter, District Court, Marion, Kansas; winner for three successive years of speed contest of Southwest Reporters Association.

2420 (1000)
1000.0000
1000.0000
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1000.0000
The semi-angular
hand represents
the maximum
in speed and

Shorthand and longhand style of Morris Rifkin, Official Reporter, Magistrates' Courts of the City of New York. He is a left-handed writer.

Mr. Morris Rifkin
Magistrate's Court
City of New York
115 West 42nd Street
New York City
N. Y.

any lengthy discussion of the terms and purposes of the bill except to say that as I have conceived the measure, it draws a

SHORTCUT No. 7

Spend Little Time on Minor Theory Points

Constantly keep in mind the employer's attitude toward his stenographer's notes. If the speed is adequate, if the reading back pleases him, if the transcripts are correct—he will be satisfied. Any interest he may take in his stenographer's shorthand notes themselves is likely to have only a nonvocational objective!

To him, the shorthand outline for *bright*, for example, looks just as good with or without the *t*. *Adjust* will mean just as much written with the *t* as without the *t*. And he wouldn't deduct two points if *delight* were written in the first two ways shown below.



How much time and how many heartaches would be saved if we ignored little slips on minor points!

Shorthand principles are basic and must be mastered, but some of the paragraphs in the Manual are not concerned with basic principles. Some deal with desirable,

but not essential, points. The three illustrations, taken from Paragraphs 145 and 174 of the Manual, show a desirable shortening of outlines; but no harm is done if, during dictation, the student should forget the dictionary outline and write it in full. Let us devote the time saved by this shortcut to increasing the student's vocabulary and his knowledge of business idioms, for shorthand will be of little use to him if he doesn't understand what he is writing.

As far back as 1924, Dr. Gregg called attention to the danger of devoting too much time to unimportant points in teaching shorthand theory. Here is a very interesting quotation on this subject from one of his books: ¹

Some years ago, in an address to young teachers, I warned them against an epidemic of what I termed "Shorthand Technic-itis," which appeared to be spreading all over the country at that time. By that expression I meant elaborate explanations of each rule and of every possible application or modification of the rule. Such detailed explanations are not only confusing to the student, but are a source of discouragement. The young student will attain a better knowledge of the practical application of the rules, and greater skill in the execution of the forms, by actually writing and reading a great variety of words in which the rule is applied than he will from oral explanations of it.

One of the most successful teachers I have known expressed my ideas very well when he said, "In presenting a

¹ *The Q's and A's of Shorthand Theory*, by John Robert Gregg, pages ii and iii.

lesson, touch the *high spots* only—the rest will be made clear in practice.”

I think that there are two reasons why so many of the younger teachers overemphasize the importance of presentation and underestimate the importance of drill.

The first reason is that many of them carry into their own class work the methods followed in methods classes for shorthand teachers in colleges, normal schools, and other institutions. Some of the teachers attending such classes do not realize that in the methods classes the instructors necessarily devote a great deal more time to giving *teachers* such a thorough understanding of all the rules and principles—and their application under all conditions—as will enable them to answer any questions that may be asked by students than they would if they were teaching an ordinary class of students.

The second reason is that many of the teachers of shorthand have had previous experience in teaching in the grades, where much time is given to “drawing out” the young students by questions and suggestions. Excellent as this method is in the grades, and even in the secondary schools, it results in a great waste of valuable time in shorthand teaching where the acquirement of *rapidity* in the execution of the forms demands that at least two-thirds of the time be given to *practice* in reading and writing. . . .

Many teachers have found, to their sorrow, that the explanation of obscure technical points sometimes starts the students on a search for all sorts of “problems” to be submitted to the teacher the next day. Some students love to ask questions—especially if it will enable them to shirk practice work.

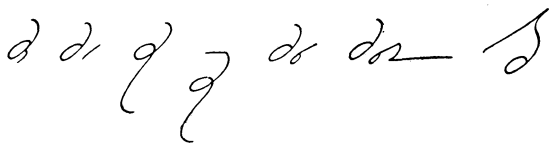
SHORTCUT No. 8

Teach Derivatives As Soon As Possible

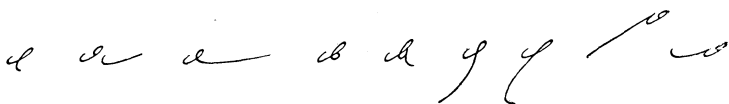
When we teach the root form of a common word, our job is only half done. And if the shorthand outline for the root form should be an abbreviation ending in a vowel—as, for example, *point-appoint*—then the student would really be better off if he were to write the word out in full unless at the time he practices the root form, or as soon thereafter as practicable, he also practices all the common derivatives of the word.

He will, of course, have no trouble in writing *favor* and *point* and *appoint*, but dictate the following derivatives to him and watch his hand slow down immediately if he has not previously mastered the outlines.

Derivatives of *favor* and *point-appoint*



A row of handwritten shorthand outlines for derivatives of 'favor' and 'point-appoint'. From left to right: 'd', 'd', 'g', 'g', 'ds', 'ds', and a large 'S'.

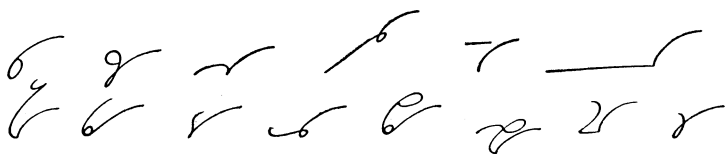


A second row of handwritten shorthand outlines for derivatives of 'favor' and 'point-appoint'. From left to right: 'e', 'e', 'e', 'b', 'h', 'y', 'y', and a large 'e'.

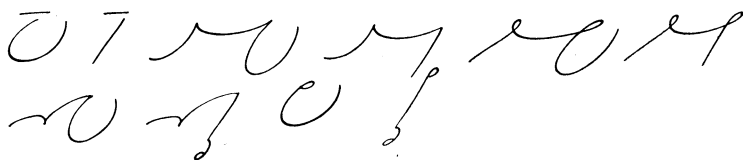
This problem is simplified, of course, by withholding from the student certain derivatives until he has learned the theory principles that govern their writing. Nevertheless, my experience in training high-speed writers has convinced me that more time can be spent to advantage in mastering the derivatives of common words at the earliest possible moment. Link them inseparably to their root forms whenever opportunity permits.

An extension of this shortcut to include the teaching of shorthand "word families" by analogy is also a great timesaver in vocabulary building and in reviewing similar word beginnings, word endings, and root forms. Here are typical illustrations of shorthand word families taken from Dr. Gregg's most helpful department in the *Gregg Writer*, "The Learner," and from the *Gregg Shorthand Dictionary*, pages viii-xii.

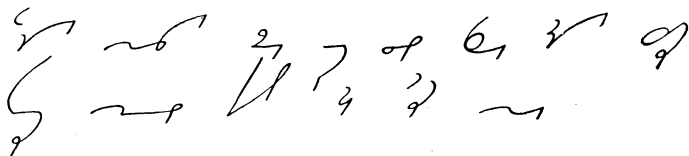
The *tain* family



The *gent-gence* family



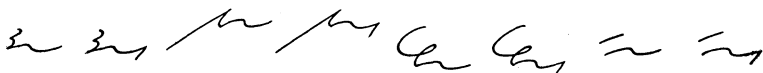
The *tial-cial* family



The *cient-ciency* family



The *scribe-scription* family



Once you are convinced of the value of analogical grouping for vocabulary building, you will not let a single day's shorthand lesson pass without putting this timesaving device to work for you. If you are not already analogically minded, take time to become so, especially in the building of shorthand skill.

SHORTCUT No. 9

Master the Speed Blends

Every Gregg writer enjoys writing the blends. In addition to their beauty, they possess an innate fluency which itself speeds up the hand. The term "blend," as generally used, applies to the following combinations:



These combinations consist of more than one letter of the alphabet, but they are, nevertheless, written as one character. Have you ever analyzed other joinings in Gregg Shorthand to ascertain their high-speed possibilities? If so, you have found that several of them can also be termed blends and written as one character just as fluently as the true blends.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Gregg included some of these combinations with the blends in the early editions of the system. Writing on the "Bibliography of Gregg Shorthand," Dr. Gregg says:

In the early editions of the system, the section devoted to the Blended Consonants included *pr, pl, br, bl, kr, kl, gr, gl.*

This was done largely to emphasize the fact that the alphabet had been constructed with a view to facile combinations. In the fifth edition, these combinations were omitted, being introduced in the ordinary way in the early lessons.

These other blends I have termed "speed blends" to emphasize their contribution to the development of speed. They are such combinations as:



When these combinations are thought of as speed blends and written as if they were one stroke, they take on a new importance in speed building. In some of them, particularly *kr*, *gl*, and *vb*, the blended form is shorter than the combined length of the two characters when written separately. These blends, therefore, give us not only increased fluency but, in some cases, they are definitely shorter.

I have found that the following type of material serves the purpose admirably for a 2-minute daily drill on the speed blends. This drill at the same time serves as a part of the warm-up prior to the main dictation. The combinations used in this take are the horizontal curves *kr*, *gl*, *rk*, *lg*, *rg*, *lk*, and *og*. The words containing these combinations (which appear in italics) are taken from the 5,000 most-used forms.

A WARM-UP ON THE SPEED BLENDS

If I am *correctly* informed, the *records* of these men are *recognized* as putting one of the *blackest marks* and *darkest stains* on the history of this country.

Over a *year ago*, we were unable to *reconcile* their *course* of action. It was not in *accordance* with the *regular* procedure of this type of case either *directly* or *indirectly*. *Over and over again*, we thought we were making progress in *procuring* regular *work* and *organizing* *courses* of study under a *practical instructor*; but we are becoming *discouraged* instead of *encouraged*, and some of us *lack* the patience and *critical* judgment *required* to *select* suitable *careers* for these men and to *work* out *concrete*, as well as *attractive*, suggestions for *correct* training for the *careers* they have *selected*.

We, *of course*, *will* go on *struggling* to *secure* *accurate* and dependable advice, even though it means a *sacrifice* on our part. We have had considerable *correspondence* with the *credit* bureaus of the country and have met all their *requirements* and *incorporated* those *requirements* in our *courses*.

We hope that this *discourse* will help you *quicker* than any other device to solve the *secret* of maintaining *accurate* proportion at high speed. (200)

SHORTCUT No. 10

Dilute Your Teaching of the Disjoined Prefixes and Suffixes

Don't bank the speed fires with heaping shovelfuls of disjoined prefixes and suffixes when you reach those lessons in the shorthand Manual. Drop them on a few at a time as needed in your dictation. If you try to teach them all at once, the learning is so far away from the application that the student will forget most of the outlines when the time comes to use them.

I am reminded of the story of the two Irishmen who were out hunting wild pigeons and found themselves at lunch time with both empty bags and empty stomachs. Sitting down to eat some sandwiches, they placed their guns against a near-by tree. Suddenly, Mike jumped up and grabbed his gun.

"Look at that pigeon over there," he exclaimed to Pat as he brought his gun to his shoulder.

"Don't shoot, Mike," yelled Pat. "The gun ain't loaded."

"I gotta shoot," yelled back Mike. "The bird won't wait."

It would be beneficial to most of us teachers of shorthand at this stage of the course if our "passion for immediacy were immersed in a bath of reality."

I first thought of the aptness of the expression "banking the fire" late one night in the basement of my home. I had just returned from teaching a shorthand theory class at evening school and had gone downstairs to bank the furnace fire for the night. After I had covered the flames with several shovelfuls of coal and had turned off all the drafts, it suddenly occurred to me that that was what I had just done with my shorthand students. Most of them were tired, having worked hard all day, and I was sure that they were beginning to think that shorthand was getting more difficult all the time. I had banked their speed fire with several shovelfuls of new and difficult words and had gone home, hoping that the fire would not be out when I returned the following Monday night to shake down the ashes and build it up again!

Standing by that banked fire I realized more clearly than ever before that I had not been teaching the latter part of the Manual in the right way. I was forgetting that shorthand, *when taught properly*, is easy to learn and that the student's interest and skill should flame higher and higher until the desired results are accomplished.

As the shorthand student's training advances, the daily lesson plan should require him to make an ever-widening practical application of his writing skill. What

is the actual situation, however, in the shorthand theory classes of a large number of our schools?

It is this: Toward the end of the theory course, the daily lesson plan, instead of broadening out, narrows down like the neck of a bottle, and the theory class concentrates on mastering disjoined prefixes and suffixes. Here are the students nearly at the end of the theory course, with considerable writing skill already developed, eager to be thrown into the fast-running stream of business dictation. Instead, they are forced slowly and painfully through these bottle-neck chapters on the disjoined prefixes and suffixes, with disastrous effect upon the growth of their writing speed.

The shorthand Manual must present all the theory principles necessary for the writing of all the words in the English language regardless of their immediate usefulness to a stenographer-in-training. Up to a certain point, it is possible for the logical presentation of theory principles to go hand in hand with the development of a useful stenographic skill. Concentration upon the one brings the desired results in the other. At a certain point, however, the very completeness of the Manual and its intensive treatment of large bodies of technical words in the latter chapters make it imperative that the teacher dilute this part of the theory, spreading it out over a dictation area many times greater than that used for the other principles of the Manual.

The acquiring of shorthand skill would be materially speeded up if, before the completion of the Manual,

teachers would start what is now commonly known as the advanced shorthand course. The student would then master the disjointed prefix and suffix forms as they occur in the daily dictation material. Because of the rather infrequent use of some of these forms, they would thus be learned and relearned a few at a time, and *as the student needs them*.

The motivation and the dilution accomplished by this plan would heighten the student's interest in the subject and would, we feel sure, raise the speed requirement for the beginning course to a minimum speed of 80 words a minute for 5 minutes on new matter. This standard is already being attained in many schools.

In addition to speeding up the student's ability to take dictation, the shoving ahead of the so-called advanced course so that it overlaps the last part of the theory course accomplishes another important result. *It merges these two courses into one fluid, homogeneous course*. The present pedagogic division of shorthand into two distinct courses, elementary and advanced, is an artificial division which has no pedagogic reason for being and which retards the student's progress. It is most unfortunate that this division is recognized in courses of study. The sooner it is done away with, the sooner many of the present shorthand speed-building problems will disappear.

Certain private business schools are eliminating this harmful division by means of a preparatory dictation class. Toward the latter part of his theory course the

student is placed in a preparatory dictation class, meeting 30 minutes each afternoon. He stays in this class until he has completed the theory. The 30-minute period is divided into three 10-minute periods. The first dictation is at the required rate at this stage of the course; the second, 10 words a minute faster; and the third, 20 words a minute faster. Each student takes as much of the three dictations as he can. Each dictation is 3 minutes long, which provides ample time for correcting outlines and reading back notes during the period.

A definite plan for merging the latter part of the theory course with the first part of the advanced course was presented by me in the April, 1933, issue of the *American Shorthand Teacher* under the title of "A New and Easy Method for Teaching the Prefixes and Suffixes of Chapters X and XI of the Gregg Shorthand Manual."¹

¹ This plan has been reprinted in "A Course of Study for Teaching Gregg Shorthand by the Anniversary Manual Method," which may be obtained free of charge from The Gregg Publishing Company.

SHORTCUT No. 11

Vary Your Daily Speed-Building Lessons

It is very easy for the advanced shorthand teacher to teach the same way day after day, changing only his dictation material. Both the teacher and the students, however, become weary from this constant repetition of the same procedure. Monotony retards speed. Variety in your method of teaching a new goal each day, and a competitive spirit in the class generate added enthusiasm and a determination to win—to make a better record than ever before.

Take advantage of this shortcut; capitalize it; make your speed-building lessons different. Divide speed building into several factors. Concentrate upon one factor at a time.

Here is a weekly cycle of speed-building lessons illustrating this shortcut.

Monday..... Mastering shorthand theory.

Tuesday..... Building transcription skill.

Wednesday..... Building phrasing skill.

Thursday..... Building sustained speed.

Friday..... Forcing speed.

On Mondays, you may utilize the dictation material to increase mastery of theory principles. Through the motivation of the day's dictation, you can accomplish more in one period than in a week of formal theory review. On the facing page is an illustration of this type of lesson.

The italicized words in the letter are to be used for the motivated theory review. Note the first italicized word, *rang*. This word forms the basis for a drill on the expressing of *ng*.

The rest of the words in this drill are taken from the 5,000 most-used words. The other drills in the lesson are similarly prepared.

With one motivated theory lesson a week, it is easily possible to review all the major shorthand principles at least four times during the advanced course. At the same time, the student will have practiced in analogical groupings many most-used shorthand forms.

Few students are interested in reviews as such. When they are trying to increase their speed on a take, however, they are very much interested in mastering the new words in that take. If those new words are made the basis of a continual review of theory principles, the student is constantly increasing his familiarity with the principles as needed in his daily lesson, and not once does he have the feeling that he is reviewing the theory merely for the sake of review.

SECTION 5

ASSIGNMENT 1

Mastering Shorthand Theory Principles

95. Dear Mr. Johnson: One cold winter day our telephone rang with a request to rush 5 tons of coal out to your¹ home. Within an hour, our coal truck was at your own cellar doorway. We are proud of our record for reliability² in an emergency.

Well, now it's spring, and almost everyone has forgotten last winter—that is,³ everyone but our company. Our books are still carrying your unpaid account for those 5 tons of coal. You, as⁴ a reliable businessman, will testify that no company does a profitable business for any⁵ length of time on unpaid accounts; it's literally an impossibility.

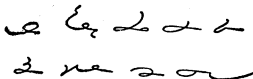
For ten years you have bought coal from⁶ us and paid promptly, yet this time we have sent you three statements that have gone unanswered. If anything is wrong, the⁷ whole problem can be simplified if you will just give us a ring here at the office. We don't want to misinterpret⁸ your silence.

We think we have given you ample time to meet this responsibility; however, if you need⁹ an

extra thirty days, just notify us and we shall gladly grant whatever time extension is necessary.¹⁰ If it is just a case of having forgotten the matter, we should appreciate receiving your check at once¹¹ for the full amount. Sincerely, (226)

Theory Drills

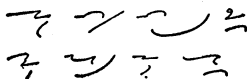
1. -ng.



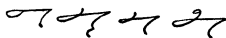
2. Brief-form compounds.



3. Compound prefixes.



4. -ple.



This and subsequent illustrations in this chapter are reproductions (slightly reduced in size) of pages in the text, *Gregg Speed Building*, New, Revised Edition, by John Robert Gregg.

On Tuesday the period can be devoted to the building of transcription skill, with emphasis upon English fundamentals. The conventional method of teaching punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation, and other English fundamentals of special importance to transcribers has been to study all the rules for the use of each point of English under its own heading—the comma, the semi-colon, etc. This procedure imposes a difficult task on the student who is struggling with the complicated process of transcribing.

Much of this difficulty will be eliminated by presenting the English assignments organized around the types of English problems the student encounters most often in transcribing his notes.

The specimen page selected for this assignment illustrates this latter type of organization. Word study based on the vocabulary in the instructional material used for the current week should have a major part in this assignment. The word study should include the spelling, definition, and application of the carefully selected list of words.

Less than half the period is needed for this part of the transcription lesson. The remainder of the period should be filled with the dictation of specially prepared letters in which the English fundamentals just studied are applied.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Building Transcription Skill

PUNCTUATING A SERIES OF WORDS, PHRASES, OR CLAUSES

A succession of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses, used in the same construction in a sentence, is known as a *series*. For example:

Please quote me the charges for shipping the implement by truck, by
 express, and by parcel post.
 Place an order at once for a secretarial desk and a proper-posture chair.
 The auditor submitted a thorough, painstaking report.
 The handy little black notebook contains the data.

The rules for punctuating series are as follows:

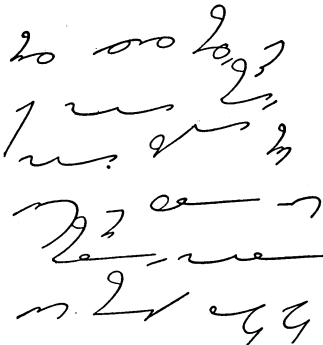
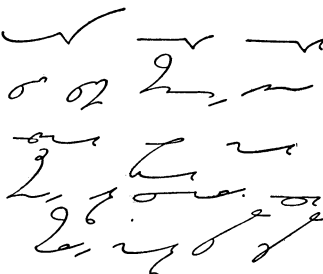

1. When the last member of a series of *three* or more items is preceded by *and*, *or*, or *nor*, place a comma before the conjunction.

The handy little black notebook contains the data.
 The auditor submitted a thorough, painstaking report.
 Place an order at once for a secretarial desk and a proper-posture chair.

WEDNESDAY—BUILDING PHRASING SKILL

On Wednesdays, you may wish to concentrate on the *mastery of phrasing*. The shorthand student enjoys learning new phrases. This type of lesson will arouse his interest, and with little practice he will be able to write specially prepared phrase letters at a much higher rate than he has ever before written average business letters. This taste of increased speed will spur him on to bring his skill on his other dictation material up to the same level. Here is a typical phrase-building assignment.

Phrasing Drills

<p style="text-align: center;">1</p>  <p style="font-size: small;">Key: if you care, take care, I have carried, to force, to charge, you will look, I have looked, you are looking, I should look, if you wish, to govern, in full, I remember, in question, I have remembered, you will remember, to question, I have mentioned, he will purchase, to purchase.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>  <p style="font-size: small;">Key: long time, among the, among those, I thank you, I thank you for the, I have communicated, to correct, anyone else, anybody else, your list, we have corrected, to experience, I am returning, in answer, I have returned, you will experience, I did not, we did not.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> 
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Phrase Letter

80. *Handwritten cursive text, likely a practice exercise for the phrase "I am very...".*

*I am very
 pleased to
 hear that you
 are all well
 and hope you
 are enjoying
 the summer
 vacation. I
 will be home
 soon and
 will be glad
 to see you
 all. Love,
 Mother*

THURSDAY—BUILDING SUSTAINED SPEED

On Thursdays, strive for *concentrated effort* over writing periods of 5 or 6 minutes in length. Demonstrate to your students the necessity for building the habit of concentration beyond the customary length of 2 or 3 minutes. Dictate to them at their regular speed for 3 minutes and then for 6 minutes, to prove to them that, although they can write accurately for 3 minutes, they “go to pieces” on the longer take. This is not because of any lack of shorthand knowledge, or lack of shorthand writing skill, but solely because they have not yet learned how to concentrate during the fourth, fifth, and sixth minutes so completely as they do during the first 3 minutes.

Note in the illustration of this type of lesson how the inside names and addresses are treated. As a rule, it is not advisable to dictate names and addresses within the body of a 5-minute take. This device permits you to combine several letters in one take instead of trying to find a single letter of from 400 to 500 words in length.

write to me or call on me personally when you stay¹¹ with us again:
Cordially yours, (226)

A Five-Minute Take

The following correspondence is between the Tri-State Mining Corporation, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Ward and Colby Company, Utica, New York.

Vocabulary Preview

Key: of all, advantage, ascertain, let us have, large, ability, preparations, upon receipt, of your letter, fuel, few months, Cicero, we have not, Savannah, Youngstown, concerned, we shall send you, Norfolk, Wilmington, acknowledgment, receiver, day or two.

149. Gentlemen: The February prices of all kinds of coal will advance 20 cents a ton on March 1.

If you¹ desire to take advantage of this saving, we suggest that you ascertain your requirements at once. Let us have² your orders not later than the 25th of this month.

This suggestion is, of course, for your benefit. You³ realize there will be a large volume of shipping toward the end of the month, and any orders received after the⁴ 25th will be subject to the ability of the mine to make shipment during February. Naturally,⁵ those orders that are carried over will be shipped in March at prices in effect at the time of shipment.⁶

Please do not forget that after the 25th of this month your order will be subject to the mine's ability⁷ to make shipment during February.

We hope that you will give this matter your consideration and will⁸ make immediate preparations for obtaining your supply of coal at the present price. Very truly yours,⁹

150. Gentlemen: Your letter informing us of the 20-cent increase per ton in the price of coal after March 1¹⁰ has been received and given very careful consideration. Thank you for writing us at this time.

Immediately¹¹ upon receipt of your letter we communicated with several of our branch factories to¹²

On Fridays, the students will enjoy a lesson planned around the following type of dictation, which is a welcome variation from the customary 5-minute take. In this take, the second and each succeeding minute are counted at a gradually increasing rate of speed. In this manner, your students will be led to write for a short time at a higher rate of speed than they would think possible if the dictation were started at the higher speed.

The dictation for the first 2 minutes should be well within their writing speed, and the success of the test depends a great deal on the way in which they write during these 2 minutes of easy dictation. They should be instructed to write their best notes and observe correct posture, so that, as the speed increases, their brain, their hand—their entire body—will be in top form.

As the speed increases, they should make every effort to “hang on,” even though the fourth or fifth minute’s dictation may be at a speed beyond their present skill. A determination to get down on paper dictation at a speed beyond the rate at which they have been writing is a real help in the development of their power of concentration and their tenacity of purpose, upon which speed depends to a large extent.

Here is a typical take of this nature.

A FIVE-MINUTE TAKE RANGING FROM 55 TO 70 WORDS A MINUTE

The words in these takes are counted in quarter-minute groups. Each light bar represents a quarter minute's dictation and the heavy bar marks the end of one minute.

(One Minute at 55)

21. Dear Sir: Thank you for your order of a few days ago.

We are sorry that | we cannot send you at the present time the desks you ordered in your letter. | They have been on the market during the past year. They have been more and more in | demand, and are now one of the best sellers we have had for some time. We hope. to |

(One Minute at 60)

have more on hand in a few months. Everything has been done to speed the work. For the | past week or two the factory has been running both day and night.

After reading your | letter, we are not certain whether or not you are aware of the fact that you can | obtain this desk in any one of five different colors. As you did not say which |

(One Minute at 60)

color you would like to have, we presume that you want us to ship desks of the same | color as those you purchased from us a number of years ago. If we are wrong, will you | please let us know. Yours truly,

22. Gentlemen: We cannot deliver your shipment of goods | this week as we promised you. The goods will reach you about ten days late because of a |

(One Minute at 65)

serious fire, which forced us to close down our factory for a few days.

Immediately after the fire, we arranged for another firm to send you the goods you had ordered from | us, and that firm wired us that we could count on receiving the entire order by October | 4.

We regret this delay, but it was through no fault of ours, and we are now in a position |

(One Minute at 70)

to serve you again. In fact, our facilities are considerably enlarged, as the enclosed | circular will show, and we want you and your friends to make full use of these new facilities. Cordially | yours,

23. Dear Sir: Enclosed is a statement of account covering the past two months. We regret | having to remind you again about these items and shall expect your check by return mail. Yours truly, (310)

Other factors can be used as objectives for subsequent lessons, or this cycle can be repeated. The fourth factor, *Sustained Speed*, needs more repetition than any of the others.

In describing this cycle, I have made no attempt to outline a complete daily lesson. Running through the cycle, for example, would be a 5-minute drill on shorthand penmanship for fluency. The major objective of each lesson is not changed as the lesson plan is enriched in this manner.

The main point to keep in mind is that by varying your speed-building lessons you maintain student interest at a high pitch.

A caution must be added at this point. In your endeavor to maintain your students' interest, don't get sidetracked through the use of shorthand games during the daily lesson period. Shorthand games may be most interesting, but their main value is avocational—not vocational. They belong on the shorthand club program after school hours. The greatest incentive in the classroom is a personal realization of a steady growth in speed. Keep on the main track, building speed day by day, and your students will never show any diminution of interest.

SHORTCUT No. 12

Build Speed by the 6 Per Cent Method

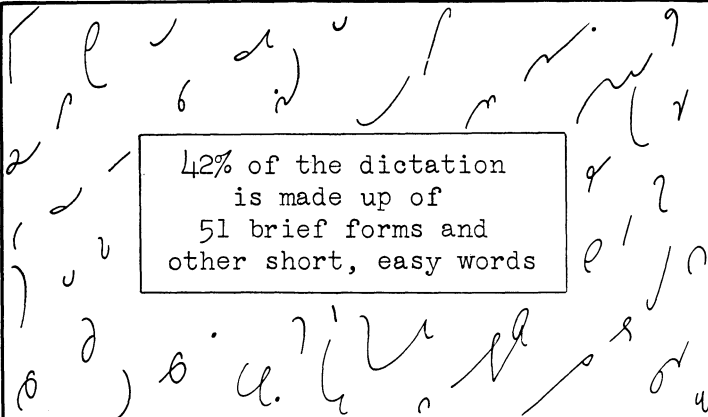
When you are dictating, do you know what the dictation consists of? I don't refer to its meaning. I refer to the words that make up the dictation. I have found that it helps me to increase my students' speed on a take if I know in advance what the dictation is "made of." For example, let us analyze the words in this short take:

Dear Madam: We are about to close our fiscal year with the greatest volume in our history of 104 years. So far, our transactions have increased over 400,000 and we are now preparing to make the coming year a greater and better year.

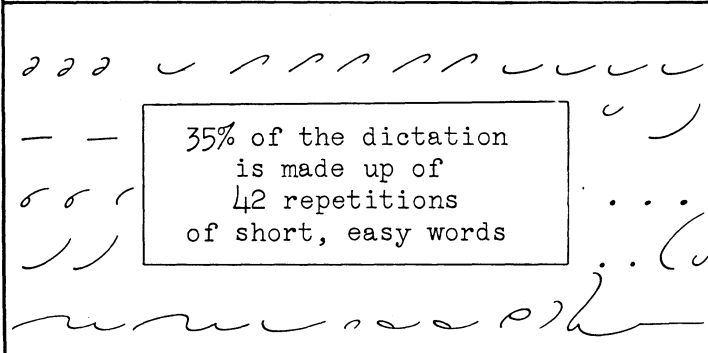
With a greater volume of business, a quicker turnover, and lower prices for quality merchandise, we shall be in a position to offer extraordinary values if we have your cooperation. (120 words)

The illustration on page 60 graphically shows the distribution of the 120 words into four groupings. Vocabulary growth can be very slow in the advanced course, when the takes are diluted, as shown in the illustration, with 94 per cent of common words. When you are aware of this fact, you will plan your lessons so as

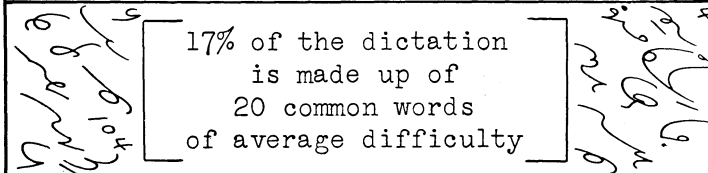
WHAT THE DICTATION IS "MADE OF"



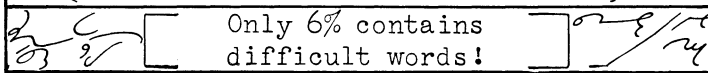
42% of the dictation
is made up of
51 brief forms and
other short, easy words



35% of the dictation
is made up of
42 repetitions
of short, easy words



17% of the dictation
is made up of
20 common words
of average difficulty



Only 6% contains
difficult words!

to hasten this growth and avoid wasting time on words that need no additional practice.

Several years ago, business efficiency engineers found out that the amount of time and labor spent in keeping the pay roll of a large corporation could be greatly reduced if, instead of keeping a record of all who were present and all who were absent, they merely kept a record of only those who were absent.

In other words, by using subtraction instead of addition, they cut a big job to one-tenth its original size.

Apply this plan to vocabulary building beyond the 60-word level. The brief forms and other common words make up approximately 94 per cent of much of your dictation material. They are the ones on the pay roll that are always present. The 6 per cent represent the absentees. Go after them. The others will take care of themselves!

Let these difficult words form your vocabulary previews for your 5-minute takes. Have the shorthand outlines practiced as part of the preceding homework assignment. Instruct the student to write the entire preview through each time, checking critically with the outlines in his text and reading back his own outlines rapidly. Pretest the students' knowledge of the words in this preview so that intelligent dictionary study assignments may be made. You will reap big dividends by giving sufficient time to the mastery of this 6 per cent in advance of dictation.

SHORTCUT No. 13

Increase the Student's Power of Concentration

When the teacher lengthens the dictation from 1 or 2 minutes to 5 minutes, something happens to the student that cannot be corrected by shorthand remedial drills. I have had students who could transcribe with 100 per cent accuracy a 3-minute take, say, at 80 words a minute and yet fail to reach even a 95 per cent accuracy standard on a 5-minute take at the same speed. *Nearly all their errors were made during the last minute of dictation.* I am sure that this condition is prevalent among shorthand students, and of course it is evident that the condition is not traceable to any lack of shorthand knowledge.

What happens during that last minute? I used to think the trouble was due mainly to mental fatigue, but I know now that that is not exactly the case. Psychologists tell us that the average person finds it difficult to concentrate upon a single subject for more than 2 or 3 minutes. To do so and at the same time convert sounds heard by the ear into intelligent shorthand symbols written at a high speed by the hand is even more diffi-

cult. Think, then, of the tremendous handicap under which the student is struggling when you dictate to him for 5 minutes at a speed at which he can just write accurately for not more than 3 minutes. He has had no training up to this point that would enable him to concentrate for more than 2 or 3 minutes.

When this perfectly normal lapse in concentration occurs, even though it is of brief duration, recovery is almost impossible and the student's writing mechanism stops functioning. As other thoughts enter his mind, he has two opposing forces at work, one counteracting the other. There can be, of course, but one outcome—a slowing down of the skill that he has not yet mastered sufficiently to permit him to think of two things at once.

Once we are aware of this handicap and realize that the student's ability to concentrate for a period of 5 minutes must be acquired, then we make a place in our daily teaching plan and in the student's daily home assignment for training in concentration under those conditions that confront the shorthand writer.

How can the desired length of concentration be best acquired? I know of no other way than to give the maximum number possible of 5-minute takes, both in the class and at home, through voluntary dictators or a mechanical dictating appliance.

The sooner this training is started, the better. Of course, 1- and 2-minute takes have their place in a skill-building program, but they are appetizers only and not

the main course on which our students must feed to develop a vocationally usable skill.

I have not found it necessary to dictate longer than 5-minute takes to develop the desired speed on 5-minute tests up to as high as 140 words a minute. There is some analogy between the training of shorthand writers and the training of 100-yard sprinters. No coach would think of requiring his sprinters to run the quarter mile as a part of their routine preparation for the 100-yard dash. Of course there is no harm in lengthening a take now and then to 6 or 7 or even 10 minutes, but no appreciable increase in speed will result merely from the lengthened dictation.

The foregoing statement is based upon following the teaching procedure set forth in this book. By that I mean that all the dictation material (with the exception of tests, of course) is liberally previewed before it is dictated and is repeatedly dictated until an increase of at least 20 words a minute is achieved in writing it. Should the teacher dictate new matter without first previewing it and then repeating it until the students have acquired an increase of at least 20 words a minute on the matter dictated, longer dictation periods might be advisable. The preview and the repetition of the material seem to make the use of takes longer than 5 minutes unnecessary in training students up to the 140-word level.

In training writers beyond that speed, a change in the teaching procedure may take place because of the pres-

ence of this basic skill. The percentage of new matter dictated increases rapidly until all the dictation material consists of new matter. Likewise, the length of the takes may be increased at times beyond 5 minutes as the speed of the writer advances from the 140-word level to reporting levels.

Regardless of whether the students are beginners learning to attain stenographic skill or stenographers in training to become reporters, it is essential that the teaching plan include a procedure that assures a steady increase in the writer's power of concentration over a period of at least 5 minutes in length.

Please do not overlook the implied caution contained in the statement made on page 62 to the effect that the student's lack of concentration is not due to an insufficient knowledge of shorthand. Remedial shorthand drills aimed to correct the shorthand errors made during the fourth and fifth minutes of writing will not materially aid the student in strengthening his power of concentration.

SHORTCUT No. 14

Write One More Word Every 3 Seconds

If you can write at the rate of 120 words a minute, how difficult do you think it would be for you to write 1 more word every 3 seconds? Would you need to know any more shorthand? The additional word would not necessarily be a difficult word; it might be a brief form or just an average word. That is all you would have to do to increase your speed from 120 words a minute to 140 words a minute.

When you write 120 words a minute, you write 2 words a second or 6 words every 3 seconds. To increase that speed to 140 words, you must write 20 more words a minute, or 1 more word every 3 seconds. Instead of writing 6, you would write 7, words every 3 seconds.

Stated this way, the problem of increasing your speed from 120 to 140 words a minute is not difficult.

On page 67 is a 1-minute take, counted at 120 and also at 140. The superior figures represent seconds. In the second take, *every seventh word* is italicized, marking the additional word that has to be written every 3 seconds.

One-Minute Take
At 120 Words

Dear Madam: We are about to ³ close our fiscal year with the ⁶ greatest volume in our history of ⁹ 104 years. So far, ¹² our transactions have increased over ¹⁵ 400,000 and we are now ¹⁸ preparing to make the coming year ²¹ a greater and a better year. ²⁴

With a greater volume of business, ²⁷ a quicker turnover, and lower prices ³⁰ for quality merchandise, we shall be ³³ in a position to offer extraordinary ³⁶ values if we have your co-operation. ³⁹

Our economists state that it will ⁴² be necessary for our customers to ⁴⁵ clear up past-due indebtedness in ⁴⁸ order that our program may be ⁵¹ fulfilled. This will enable you to ⁵⁴ start with a balanced account and ⁵⁷ greater purchasing power; also to take ⁶⁰ . . .

I have found that, when students writing 80 or 100 or 120 words a minute reach a plateau in their progress that tends to discourage them, the use of this device has a most beneficial effect upon some of them. The student's attention is directed to the important fact that often a nonshorthand factor is responsible for speeding up his progress.

This shortcut could, of course, be stated more realistically if we were to say, "Perspire more!"

One-Minute Take
At 140 Words

Dear Madam: We are about to *close* ³ our fiscal year with the greatest *volume* ⁶ in our history of *104* ⁹ years. So far, our transactions have *increased* ¹² over 400,000 and we *are* ¹⁵ now preparing to make the coming *year* ¹⁸ a greater and a better year.

With ²¹ a greater volume of business, a *quicker* ²⁴ turnover, and lower prices for quality *merchandise*, ²⁷ we shall be in a position *to* ³⁰ offer extraordinary values if we have *your* ³³ co-operation.

Our economists state that it *will* ³⁶ be necessary for our customers to *clear* ³⁹ up past-due indebtedness in order *that* ⁴² our program may be fulfilled. This *will* ⁴⁵ enable you to start with a *balanced* ⁴⁸ account and greater purchasing power; also *to* ⁵¹ take . . .

Taking dictation is very much like running a race. The student can't hope to better his speed in either without a determination to win. There must be a competitive spirit present in the classroom. The students must want to win so badly that they will perspire and grit their teeth, if necessary, to keep up, even though that brings a tension instead of the desired relaxation. Relaxation comes only to the one who is able to accomplish rather easily what he has set out to do. It is to be striven for just as much as the speed itself. The two go together. Analyzed in this manner, the problem appears in an entirely different light to the student; and, to his great joy, he leaves his plateau behind and begins climbing steadily upward.

SHORTCUT No. 15

Dictate Sympathetically and Clearly—When You Are Teaching

For years one of my fondest dreams as a teacher of advanced shorthand was to be able financially some day to employ a dictator, leaving me free to “teach” shorthand. You know what happens to dreams as they grow older—many of them don’t come true and many of them that don’t shouldn’t! This particular dream of mine, I have found out, shouldn’t! And I didn’t find it out until a few years ago.

In September, 1933, I was given the opportunity of taking over two evening classes of high-speed shorthand from Martin Dupraw, the world’s shorthand champion, and the instructor of these two classes for several years at Hunter College of the City of New York.

After three years of dictating on the average of twenty 5-minute takes at speeds that ranged from 120 to 200 words a minute, totaling approximately 15,000 words a night for two nights, my voice began to show the effects of overstrain and I decided to make my long-standing dream a reality. So I employed a dictator.

How vividly I can recall that first night when the dictator did all, or nearly all, the dictating and I put outlines on the board and walked around the room watching the students' writing positions and shorthand outlines. It was truly an enjoyable evening—for me.

On the third evening, however, I heard grumblings and noticed a restlessness among my students that caused me to investigate the source of the trouble. To my consternation I found that they were not satisfied with the dictation. They wanted *me* to dictate to them. Of course, I immediately acceded to their request because I was being paid on a fee basis and a satisfied student was of prime importance to me! But I knew I couldn't dictate any more clearly or more accurately than my hired dictator was dictating. So I set myself to analyzing how my dictation was different. Here is what I found out.

As I dictated, I constantly watched my class to see how they were "getting it." If I noticed that many of them were dropping out, I either stopped the dictation or slowed down so that all could get the take. I was teaching, not testing. Of what good was it to me or to my students if half of them couldn't get the take? My hired dictator, on the other hand, finished every dictation to the bitter end, no matter how many students fell by the wayside. That was what she was paid to do. It began to dawn on me that one can *teach while dictating*.

This experience caused me to incorporate my dictating into my lesson plan as a definite teaching aid. I

studied the effect of emotion in my voice while dictating and I found that if I let undue emotion creep into my voice my students immediately began to be more conscious of the subject matter than is necessary for writing it in shorthand. They would laugh at humorous passages, they would be stirred by oratorical outbursts, and —*they would fail to write it at high speed!*

So now I dictate meaningfully, of course, but without undue emotion or emphasis. I enunciate as clearly as I can, violating vowel shadings and other niceties of enunciation whenever by so doing I can help the student to write the correct shorthand outline. I also emphasize the *shorthand* phrases whenever I can.

I dictate according to the count, staying with the stop watch second by second. It is a great handicap to the student if you dictate unevenly and wait for the watch to catch up. If you are dictating a 120-word take, you should dictate at the rate of 120 words a minute for every one of the 60 seconds in every minute of the take. You will never realize how helpful you are in following this rule until you yourself try to increase your own speed under a dictator who does not abide by this rule.

In my dictation I give no special training in word-carrying ability. The shorthand learner has enough to master without complicating his task with unnecessary memory tests. If the customary word-carrying drills that are used were real memory *lessons*, they wouldn't be objectionable; but they are not—they are merely mem-

ory tests. The students aren't given any help; they are simply required to remember!

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that the word-carrying faculty is undesirable or unnecessary. It is most helpful to the shorthand writer when forced beyond his speed. Reporters are often from 20 to 30 words behind the speaker. Fortunately, however, the student who has the aptitude for high-speed shorthand writing usually has a good memory. Fortunately, also, in the daily program of speed building, the student naturally is constantly several words behind the dictator. He must carry these words in his mind while writing. His memory, if it needs strengthening, is thus being automatically strengthened during his daily dictation without special drills.

Don't let this or any other auxiliary asset sidetrack your major job of building shorthand skill. The higher the skill, the less need for these auxiliary aids. The more time you devote to teaching the skill itself, the less need your students will have for auxiliary aids.

Restating this shortcut: I dictate sympathetically and clearly *because I am teaching while I am dictating*. When the time comes for testing, I fear that this habit continues and I still dictate sympathetically and clearly!

SHORTCUT No. 16

Have Not More Than Half the Dictation Read Back in Class

We have all heard many times the statement to the effect that the student should read back everything that is dictated to him. That is probably true, but when and where? A great deal of time is wasted, in my opinion, by having all the dictation read back in class. The purpose of the reading back is to ascertain whether or not a student can read his notes. I have found that, to accomplish this purpose, it is not necessary to have more than half the dictation read back in class. The other half I require to be read as part of the homework assignment.

Shorthand teachers can learn something from the technique used in ascertaining the country's attitudes on public questions. Scientific surveys embrace only a small percentage of the total population, but that percentage is distributed in such a manner that it accurately represents the entire population.

Try a similar plan in the shorthand classroom. Have only enough of the dictation read back to enable you and your students to know whether or not they can read

back their notes. The time saved can be devoted to more dictation and vocabulary building.

Just as dictating is an important part of teaching, so is reading back. It is so easy to conduct the reading-back part of the recitation as if it were a test. It should not be a test. The time to test the student's ability to read back is when you are giving a formal test and requiring a complete transcript.

How can you teach through reading back? The easiest way to answer this question is to put yourself on the other side of the teacher's desk and have someone ask *you* to read back your notes. Suppose—only for illustration, of course—that, after reading three or four words, you are stumped and can't read the fifth word. You feel absolutely sure that you can read the rest of the take with the exception of that one word. How do you think you would feel if your teacher, after waiting a moment while you try to decipher that undecipherable outline, says, "Next!" and you hear your neighbor give the correct word? You surely haven't learned any more shorthand through this painful process. Your disappointment is keen. You may feel embarrassed. You may even feel irritated with your teacher for not having helped you. And he should have helped you.

In at least three ways you can help a student strengthen his reading ability:

1. If the word he cannot read is one that you think he does not know the meaning of, give it to him immediately.
2. If it is a common word but rather hard to read because

of a spelling difficulty, ask him to try to spell the outline. Help him, if necessary, by spelling it for him.

3. If it is a word that he would be able to read easily if he had the meaning of the entire sentence, ask him to read to the end of the sentence and then, if necessary, go back and read the entire sentence again so that its meaning will suggest the meaning of the missing word. Help him in this step also, if necessary.

Let me emphasize that, regardless of the procedure used, you are to help the student all that is necessary to enable him to read through the time you have allotted him.

Until you can arrive at a more accurate division of time, you may wish to follow my procedure.

My procedure in having a 5-minute take read back is either to have five students each read for half a minute or else to have three students each read for 1 minute. I help each student as much as necessary. I find that this assistance gives him sufficient encouragement to continue throughout the entire half minute or minute, as the case may be. I also find that he needs less and less help in reading back as his training progresses.

Since I am *teaching* during this activity, I call upon the poor readers to do most of the reading back. The other students are encouraged to write as much of the material read back as they can get, writing their notes over or above the outlines being read back. This procedure enables them to find the place quickly if called upon to read; also, to improve any poorly written notes.

Since only approximately half the material dictated is read back, have the first half of the 5-minute take read back after the first dictation and the second half after the second dictation of the same take.

In having additional repetitions of the take read back, I read a sentence taken at random from the material and ask the students to raise their hands as soon as they find this sentence in their notes. The ability to find a phrase or sentence in one's notes quickly is of great practical value. Find out which students in your class do not have this ability and have them do much of the reading back of these repetitive takes.

Here is an important thought to pass on to your students: The more rapidly a shorthand writer can read his notes, the more money he can make. Reporters make most of their money from their transcripts. They do not use any special phrases or other shortcuts that would slow down their reading back. *Do not use shortcuts that are too short!*

SHORTCUT NO. 17

Use New Matter for Testing Only

“Use new matter for testing only” is one of the most important of all the shortcuts. The reason for its importance will be readily recognized when you realize that your students are being *tested* when you dictate new matter to them. Fluency is still your objective. The time for the student to learn new outlines is before and after the dictation—not during it.

We will all grant that a higher speed can be obtained more quickly on practiced matter than on new matter. Our first step in building skill, therefore, is to obtain the desired increase in speed in the easiest and quickest way—first on practiced matter, then on matter that is partially familiar because it has been liberally previewed.

After the students can write such matter at the higher speed is the time to use new matter to ascertain whether or not the increase in speed is permanent or only temporary. If the new-matter *test* indicates that the increase is only temporary, we must return to our job of *teaching*, using partially familiar material as before—

familiar to the extent that, because of the preview, the student knows that, when you start to dictate, he will not encounter any new outlines that will slow up his speed.

This shortcut, like some of the others in this book, does not apply after the student has reached the speed of, say, 140 words a minute and is in training for reporting speed.

Describing the procedure followed in training the world's shorthand champion, Charles L. Swem, and other famous writers, Mr. Rupert P. SoRelle wrote:¹

Some radical features were introduced into the training, the most important of which was perhaps the almost exclusive use of *new matter*. . . . When the student has completed the principles and can apply them correctly at a moderate rate of speed, is familiar with the common phrases, and has acquired a neat style of writing from repeated matter, *new matter* is unquestionably the kind of practice he must have. This is contrary to the usually accepted theory of shorthand training; but it is, nevertheless, the correct one. The principal difficulty is to make the student understand what a proper basis for speed practice is. Nothing short of a mastery of every principle in the text and a ready familiarity with the brief forms and phrases is sufficient. If you are not sure of the *old* words, what can you expect to do with the new ones?

The student who starts in to practice on new matter with a poor preparation is surely doomed to disappointment. In

¹ *Expert Shorthand Speed Course*, by Rupert P. SoRelle, pages 6, 31, 32.

the first place, his word-forms will not be brief enough, and his phrasing will be so uncertain and inconsistent, his style of writing so poor, that speed and accuracy will be simply impossible.

New dictation should be given slowly at first, but always with sufficient speed to *keep the writer busy*.

The difficultness of dictation material varies greatly. You must be constantly on the alert either to insure that the dictation material you use, both in building speed and in testing speed, is of the same grade of difficultness or else interpret the results correctly if the material is not of the same grade. Unedited letters and such material as congressional speeches are usually much easier to take than so-called "literary material." Do not depend too much upon the standard word count to equalize the difficultness of the material. It is a great help in this direction, but a take made up of one-syllable words, for example, may be more difficult to write at a given speed than another take with a much higher syllable intensity.

SHORTCUT No. 18

Restrict Testing to the Minimum

Skill building is 99 per cent teaching and 1 per cent testing. The first essential for testing is to have something worth testing. The second is to use the right kind and length of test at the right time. If a teacher were to test his shorthand students on the customary vocabulary tests after the first two or three lessons, he would, of course, find that the students would make several errors. They are still novices at the art of writing shorthand.

Suppose that, after he finds out these errors, he assigns remedial drills or more practice on the words missed before passing on to the next lesson. What has he accomplished? In the first place, since the words selected to illustrate the shorthand principles are taken from the 5,000 most-used words, they will naturally occur many times in subsequent lessons. Also, in the preparation of the reading and writing material for each lesson, the vocabulary of former lessons was worked into the context in so far as practicable. The constant presence of this automatic remedial drill in each day's new lesson makes most of the formal vocabulary testing

not only unnecessary but a definite break upon the speedy progress of the class.

Tests on lists of words out of context while students are mastering the theory principles are taboo in my own teaching. If used, the words in the test should be dictated at a rate that will force the students to write them fluently or not at all.

It is most encouraging to note how today's errors generally disappear tomorrow as the student becomes more and more familiar with shorthand. The beginning shorthand teacher's task will be made much lighter and the students, much happier if, instead of constantly testing short units of work and assigning remedial drills, the teacher would depend for his checkup upon the new day's lesson and upon his constantly showing the students how to write accurately and fluently by means of his blackboard notes and his criticisms of their own notes as he observes them writing. As soon as the student's skill reaches, say, 40 words a minute, testing properly belongs in the teacher's program. Earlier testing should be mostly confined to reading or transcribing shorthand plates.

Dr. Gregg says: ¹

Some distinguished educators are opposed to examinations but mainly on the ground that they interfere with continuous work, and for this reason I believe that the tests should be short . . . so that they may not interfere with the constant progress of the student.

¹ *The Teaching of Shorthand*, by John Robert Gregg, page 26.

Properly conducted examinations give students an opportunity to discover for themselves many of their weak points and perhaps therein lies their greatest value. The examination is of much more benefit to the student than to the teacher. The teacher generally knows the student's capabilities.

Mr. Leslie says: ²

Tests of some sort are necessary for establishing grades for administrative purposes. Also, no matter how well we know our pupils, we like to have some definite check on our own ideas of their abilities. An ideal test for this purpose is a transcribing test, having the pupils transcribe for a limited period—not more than two or three minutes—from a graded shorthand plate, preferably one which the pupils have not had an opportunity to practice. The grade is then based on the percentage of accuracy of the transcript *and* on the number of words a minute transcribed. This gives the pupil the minimum opportunity for error or discouragement and at the same time furnishes a more accurate measure of his shorthand skill than any theory test could give. Such a test will provide accurate grades, with a good distribution curve. The papers are so easy to correct and grade that the work may be done by a pupil or an assistant if one is available for such work.

An interesting shorthand reading test for beginners, prepared by the Department of Business Education at Ball State Teachers College for use in the Indiana State Commercial Contests, is shown on page 83.

² *The Teaching of Gregg Shorthand by the Functional Method*, by Louis A. Leslie, pages 28, 29.

SHORTHAND READING TEST

Directions: Read the paragraph given below. Write in longhand the word or phrase represented by the last combination in each line, in the space provided at the end of the line. Credit will not be given if more than one word or phrase is written in any one space.

2 n u u
 6 o o o o
 3 - - -
 4 r e
 5 e s d
 2 o e s b
 7 h - o e
 2 - - -
 1 m - e
 5 h - o
 11 n -
 12 h o
 13 r s m
 14 l l e r y

1	thought
2	isolation
3	advocates
4	radio
5	fast
6	having made
7	last
8	around
9	less than
10	how
11	in
12	when
13	world
14	close

I cannot emphasize too strongly the desirability of using for testing material connected matter only, and preferably business letters of average difficulty, until the student has reached a speed of at least 120 words a minute. I have little use for tests shorter than 3 minutes in length, and in my own testing program I lengthen the tests to 5 minutes as soon as the students are writing 60 words a minute.

Let me repeat what I have said elsewhere. The purpose of the test is defeated if the teacher penalizes the student for incorrect outlines. An incorrect outline correctly transcribed satisfies the standard set by business. Following the test, the student, of course, should be given the correct outlines for any words that he has written incorrectly and should be required to master the correct outlines. The elimination of a penalty encourages the student to write fluently whatever outline occurs to him during the dictation and strengthens this most important habit of fluency while relieving the tension and nervousness that often cause the student to fail the test completely.

Some tangible reward for progress, beginning early in the course, should be instituted by the teacher. Rewards will make a world of difference with the students. I have found the *Gregg Writer* awards admirably suited for this purpose and see to it that not a single month in the school year passes without publicly recognizing, through this system of awards, the progress of my advanced students. Somehow or other, this incen-

tive seems to take the dread out of a testing program. Students do not feel that they are being examined merely to be given a grade, but rather that they are being given a valuable opportunity to prove their skill not only to themselves but to their parents and friends.

The *Gregg Writer* awards are fully described in a booklet that will be sent upon request to any interested teacher.³ Hundreds of thousands of students have derived great benefit and shortened their skill-building period through participation in this worth-while testing service.

Skill cannot be measured in the same way as knowledge. Shorthand skill cannot be tested in the same way as knowledge of history or geography. In my own shorthand testing program, I have no place for true-false, multiple-choice, or any other objective tests of knowledge.

³ Awards booklet, *The Gregg Writer*, 270 Madison Avenue, New York, New York.

SHORTCUT No. 19

Give the Right Kind of Remedial Assistance

If a shorthand teacher were to submit for publication a series of remedial drills in shorthand and the manuscript were referred to me for my opinion, I should recommend its rejection regardless of the merit of the remedial drills.

Why? Because of the certainty that it would be misused. Most of the classroom ills of our shorthand students are of nonshorthand origin and require nonshorthand prescriptions.

The truth of this statement was forced upon me by my own observations made after I accidentally found out that the remedial shorthand drills I had been prescribing for many years to cure certain ailments were not effective because of the presence of symptoms that had escaped my unscientific diagnoses. Let me illustrate.

CASE NO. 1

Several of my students failed to transcribe a 120-word 5-minute take with the required 98 per cent accuracy and yet previous class records showed that they knew

shorthand theory very well and that they could take an average business letter with almost 100 per cent accuracy.

A diagnosis that overlooked one symptom seemed, of course, to call for more intensive shorthand drill based on the type of errors in the transcripts—more attention paid, possibly, to the meaning of words and to certain English fundamentals.

The symptom that I first overlooked stood out clearly when I noticed that the errors in the transcript were all made in the last 2 minutes of the 5-minute take. The students transcribed the first 3 minutes with 100 per cent accuracy and then made from 15 to 40 errors in the last 2 minutes. This symptom indicated that nothing was wrong with the students' knowledge of shorthand. They were merely unable to concentrate upon the task before them for more than 3 minutes. The remedy they needed for this condition was more training in sustained concentration, a determination to stick it out, an impelling incentive to win.

CASE NO. 2

A young lady in one of my evening classes had been unable to increase her speed from 120 to 140 words a minute after an entire year's training. Her shorthand penmanship was beautiful; her knowledge of shorthand theory was far above the average; her transcripts of her 120-word takes were 100 per cent accurate. She was

most conscientious and regular in attendance. Tests did not upset her. What was the trouble?

The diagnosis uncovered a symptom that is accountable for the slow progress of many students—*too much accuracy!* It doesn't sound reasonable, does it? But that is exactly what was wrong with this young lady. During the daytime, she was the head bookkeeper in a large investment house and every entry she made, every item she checked, every paper she handled, called for 100 per cent accuracy. Her longhand was painfully legible; every word was written deliberately.

This accuracy habit, which was one of her most valuable assets, was also the barrier that kept her from attaining a shorthand speed of 140 words a minute. She could not sacrifice perfection of shorthand outline for a practical standard of readability. She could not release her hand to write fluently and trustfully.

She is typical of many students (and many teachers) who have the wrong conception of the right kind of accuracy in shorthand writing. We are so accustomed to being ever on the alert to detect and remedy our students' errors in writing that we are likely to overlook the necessity of guarding against forming the habit of being overaccurate. Too much is often as harmful as too little!

CASE NO. 3

I shall never forget the case of the beautiful red-haired young lady and the handsome black-haired

young man—both students in one of my evening high-speed classes. The young lady was an accomplished writer, taking 150 words on congressional matter with ease. The young man also wrote 150 words a minute, but not so easily.

They sat next to each other in the front row of my class and, as I watched them night after night, I found myself wishing that he could write as easily as she. He wasted so much energy. His whole body showed the strain he was under. When he turned a page of his notebook, the noise could be heard two rows in back of him. He flourished his pen. His lips looked as if he were repeating the words he was writing. So different from the quiet, self-possessed red-haired beauty next to him.

What was the remedy? I could, of course, drill him on turning the page of his notebook quietly, on relaxing more while writing. Several obvious remedial drills occurred to me. But, after a thorough diagnosis, which included some outside-of-class observations, I moved the young lady to the rear of the room and the disturbing symptoms disappeared. The young man had been merely showing off, trying hard to make a favorable impression on this young lady. Needless to say, he did not approve of the remedy!

CASE NO. 4

One of my best students was completely discouraged. She had her 120-word *Gregg Writer* pin and could take

my regular class dictation at 140 and transcribe her notes with 98 per cent accuracy, yet month after month she failed on the official 140-word test. The very thought of a formal test threw her into a panic. Her writing muscles tightened so much that she couldn't write with her accustomed fluency. When her transcript was checked, inevitably she would have one or two errors more than were permitted. What to do?

I was convinced that she could write at 140 words a minute even better than many who had passed the test and had been given the medal. The diagnosis plainly called for a large dose of self-confidence, self-assurance. I gave it to her and it cured her, but you may not approve of my method. Here is the method I used.

When the next official test was given and transcribed, as usual she had two more errors than were allowed. I examined her errors critically and found to my surprise (!) that two of them could hardly be attributed to her. It seems that her typewriter was somewhat out of adjustment and she should not, of course, be penalized for that. So, a very happy young lady went home that night to break the good news to her parents and to display the prized 140-word medal.

Fortunately, that treatment was lasting. Her fear of tests disappeared as if by magic. During the following semester she won both the 150 and the 160 medals. All she needed was that little help over a very real and very high hurdle.

For brevity's sake, let me group several of the more common illnesses and shortcomings that no shorthand drill can remedy. I have in mind the student who was at a dance till four o'clock in the morning; the student who had a falling out with her or his best friend the night before; the student who is having a big party at his or her home tonight; the undernourished student; the student with a splitting headache, tired eyes, and a weary brain after a day's hard work at the office—all nonshorthand symptoms requiring nonshorthand remedies.

For those readers who wish to pursue this most important subject further, guided by scientific authority, I prescribe the reading of *The Psychology of Adjustment*, by Laurance Shaffer, of Carnegie Institute of Technology.

SHORTCUT No. 20

Be a Constant Inspiration to Your Students

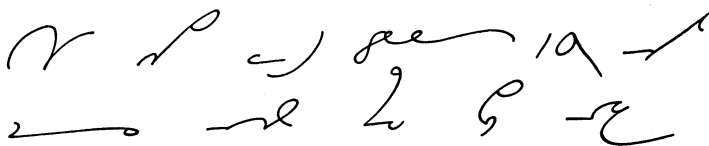
Emotion is the mainspring for so many of our actions. That is why inspiration is such a powerful aid in teaching. Students reach higher goals of achievement in a skill subject more often through inspiration than through a matter-of-fact, logical presentation of a lesson.

If you don't feel inspired when you teach, don't teach. Find something else to do that will inspire you. Remember that you are not teaching yourself; you have the future of hundreds of young people in your hands every year. I think the reason I do not care for tests or for a set lesson plan is that such things seem to act as a "wet blanket" on whatever inspiration I bring to the class.

Of course, it is self-evident that no one can be an inspired teacher until and unless he himself is a master of the skill he is teaching. That mastery is a large part of the source of his inspiration. When you are exceptionally skillful in anything, it is usually a great pleasure to show that skill to someone else—and particularly to someone else who is interested in mastering it too.

One interesting way to show your skill to your students and at the same time open up to them the lucrative and highly professional field of shorthand reporting is to give them a reporting shortcut once or twice a week—one that will help them over some tough spot in their dictation.


For example, if they are struggling with a real estate letter that has the phrase *apartment house* in it, they will forever be your friends if you write the reporting shortcut for this phrase on the board. In like manner, give them the facile outline for *hospital* when they are in need of a little stimulus in taking down an accident. A few typical reporting outlines that may be worked into the advanced course and cause you to grow in stature with your students are:



Key: difference between, other day, on the other hand, 8 or 10 years ago, 10 or 20, in other words, sum of money, income tax, even though, apartment house, in the hospital.

You can, with benefit, inject some humor into your class presentation now and then by illustrating on the blackboard some of the devices used by reporters either for fun or to get out of a tight place. For example, one

reporter working feverishly to keep up with an unusually difficult speaker heard the expression, "like a streak of lightning," which was uttered about that fast. When transcribing his notes, he found that he had written the following outline: _____

Something similar happened in reporting the expression, "That's a hazel nut on top of my persimmon." The outline used was this: 

Illustrations like these have a legitimate place in your teaching. Use them when the class needs a little relaxation.

The inspiring teacher loves to teach, to help others. He is a kindly, sympathetic, understanding person possessed of much patience. I don't believe that inspiration can be manufactured. If it is an artificial teaching device, it will not be of much value. Sooner or later the students will find out that it is not real.

The inspired and inspiring teacher presents shorthand to his students as a diamond with many facets. Its vocational use by stenographers and private secretaries is but one facet and shines no more brightly than the other facets.

There is almost a complete turnover of stenographic labor in the United States every four years. In other words, the average stenographic life is four years. Does that statement tend to cool your ardor as a teacher of a *vocational* skill? Why work so hard developing, over a

two-year period, a skill that will be used for only four years? There are two very satisfactory answers to that question.

First, there is little relation between the cost of anything and its length of service. The relation is between cost and the purpose for which the skill is to be used. In order to get anywhere, it is necessary to start. The first job is in many ways the most important step in the entire march toward success. Shorthand is thus a door opener to almost any vocation. It is one of those essentials required in nearly every business. How much should we pay for a door opener? How much is a successful life worth? Read the following story and you will have a satisfactory answer to this question.

A SCHOOL TEACHER MADE THIS MAN GREAT ¹

“The most thankless job in the world,” said the tired-looking teacher, “is trying to make men and women out of boys and girls. They resent us while we’re struggling with them, and forget us when we’ve made them attain the priceless estate they’ve fought so hard to avoid.”

“I know how you feel,” said the woman next to him at the dinner party. “It’s pretty discouraging being a parent, too, sometimes.”

The conversation around the dinner table proceeded, veered off into other channels. “I understand,” someone

¹ Reprinted from “This Week” by permission of the author, Arthur Bartlett, and the publisher.

remarked, "that the Pasteur Institute has a new serum for measles nearly perfected. That will certainly make life more pleasant for all of us who have anything to do with children."

The guest of honor smiled. "That reminds me of a story," he said.

The story concerned a lad named Harry Plotz and a teacher named Campbell. It started thirty years or so ago, when Harry Plotz was one of Campbell's pupils in Public School No. 25 in Brooklyn. Campbell was interested in Harry, because the boy was bright; and when he began to play hooky, the teacher made it his job—though, of course, it wasn't—to look him up and to find out what was wrong. Harry said he was fed up; he wanted to quit school once and for all, and go to work.

Campbell had an idea. He was athletic coach as well as teacher, and he began suggesting the possibilities of an athletic career. Harry agreed to come back and try—and it worked. In 1910, he ran the hundred-yard dash in ten seconds flat—the first boy in the New York public school system to do it. What was more important, he did excellent work in his studies.

He went on through high school, and Campbell kept track of him, gave him advice and encouragement from time to time. It came time for him to graduate. Campbell, now a principal, sent for him, asked him what he was going to do next. Harry Plotz shook his head doubtfully.

“Go to work, I suppose,” he said. “Of course, I’d like to study medicine, but I can’t.”

“Why not?” asked Campbell.

“It costs money,” said Harry Plotz.

“Of course it does,” said Campbell. “Now let’s see what you could do. . . .”

The next fall Harry Plotz entered medical school. Campbell didn’t see him again for three years. Then he met him on the street, near the Board of Education building where Campbell, having stepped up another notch in the school system, now had an office. Young Plotz looked frightful. His eyes were bloodshot, his cheeks pale and drawn.

“Hello, Harry,” said Campbell. “Come on up to my office.” And when they were up there: “Now what in the world are you doing?” he demanded. “Hitting the booze, or something?”

Harry shook his head. He hadn’t been getting much sleep, he said—had been sitting up over his microscope.

“Getting along all right?” Campbell asked.

“No,” said Harry Plotz, heavily. “I think I may as well quit.” Anatomy had him down, he said. There was an examination coming, and he knew he wouldn’t be able to pass it. Anatomy bored him, and he couldn’t study it.

“Now, bugs!” he said. “There’s something worth while.” His whole attitude changed, and he began talking eagerly about his microscopic studies. He had been putting all his time into it. He couldn’t see why he should bother himself with stuff like anatomy.

“Come to my house for dinner tonight,” said Campbell. “Let’s talk this over.”

Harry Plotz came, and his old teacher gave him a two-hour talk as severe as any football coach ever gave a losing team between the halves. When Harry Plotz left that night, he knew that he was going back to get his degree, even though it meant studying anatomy.

He got the degree. A few years later, the newspapers carried an important story: A young intern named Dr. Harry Plotz had isolated the typhus bacillus. When the World War broke out, it was Dr. Harry Plotz who was called to carry on the work of the great Pasteur, as head of the Pasteur Institute in Paris. And of course it was Dr. Harry Plotz who was directing the research that might virtually end that scourge of children, measles.

The guest of honor—his name was Dr. Harold G. Campbell, for many years superintendent of schools of the City of New York—paused, then turned to the tired-looking teacher.

“It’s not such a thankless job, working with young people,” he said. “When the news came out about Harry Plotz’s success in isolating the typhus bacillus, he received letters of congratulation from distinguished men all over the world—from men like Sir William Osler and the Mayo brothers. He told me about it when he acknowledged my own letter of congratulation. And he said, ‘But it was your letter I was waiting for. You are the man who really isolated the typhus bacillus.’”

Dr. Campbell smiled. “Perhaps I’ll develop a serum

for measles, too," he said, "though I haven't the faintest idea how one would start doing it."

Reward enough, for teacher or parent—to be made able to do the great things that you don't know how to do!

* * *

THE SHORTEST WAY HOME

In closing, I can leave with you no more important thought regarding skill building than that contained in the proverb: "The longest way round is the shortest way home."

With your teaching load heavy and your extracurricular and avocational interests growing, you are tempted to take advantage of one shortcut that is responsible for many of our pedagogic ills and for which the teacher is not to blame. That shortcut is mass or wholesale teaching—the restriction of your teaching activities to large classes in which the individual becomes merged into the group. The teacher is forced, through circumstances beyond his control, to think in terms of the upper quartile, the median, and the lower quartile, instead of John, Mary, William, Ruth, and Harry.

Teaching must not be confined to the classroom. He who chooses teaching as his life's work will consider it part of his avocation as well as his vocation. He will get his greatest thrill and his most treasured recompense from teaching the individual. No matter how over-

loaded your teaching program may be, find a place in it for personal conferences with your pupils. More time spent early in the course on individual guidance will keep the student on the path that is the shortest way home.

