

The Aspirate

The sound of H can be represented in several ways, the choice being influenced by which makes the best join and therefore most legible outline:

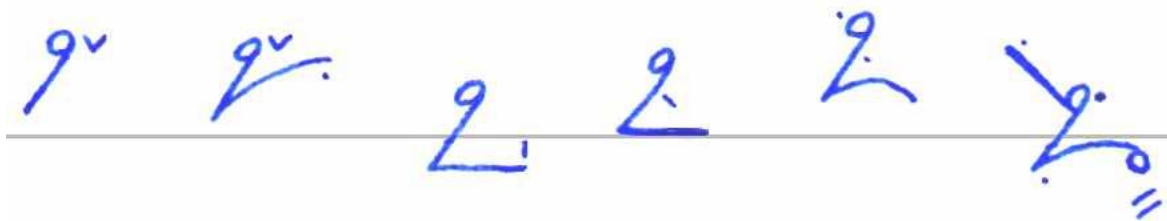
- Upward Hay, used by the majority of outlines.
- Downward Hay is used when alone and before simple Kay Gay.
- Initial Downward Hay is shortened to a tick before Em Imp Ell Ar Rer Ard.
- Dot Hay – a dot written next to the following vowel, used when the other methods are not convenient or possible.
- In compound words and derivatives, the form that joins best is generally used.
- Only used to represent the sound. A silent longhand H is not represented in shorthand.
- As many examples as possible have been given, so that you can base new outlines on existing known ones.
- one of each usage:



UP: head hammer hacker heckle hurry hose



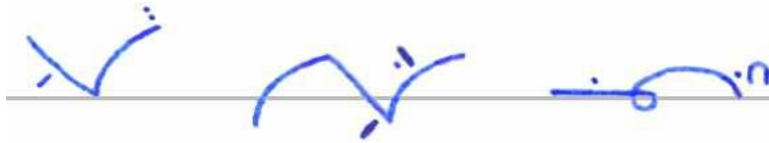
hen half hat hunt behave racehorse



DOWN: high highly hook hug ahem Bahamas



TICK: hem hump hear hearer hole, for whom



•

DOT: uphill loophole exhume

Upward Hay

- Upward Hay is the most used form – it is preferable as it is a forward moving stroke:



•

happy hop hype hope hip heap



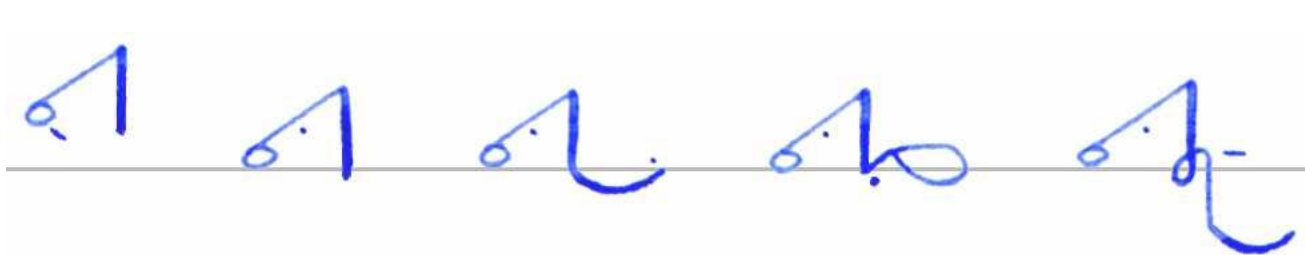
•

hoop/whoop hypothesis hypothetical hypocrisy



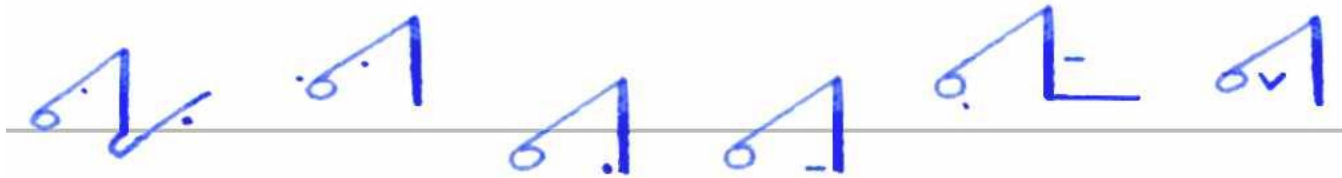
•

hob hobby hautboy hub habit



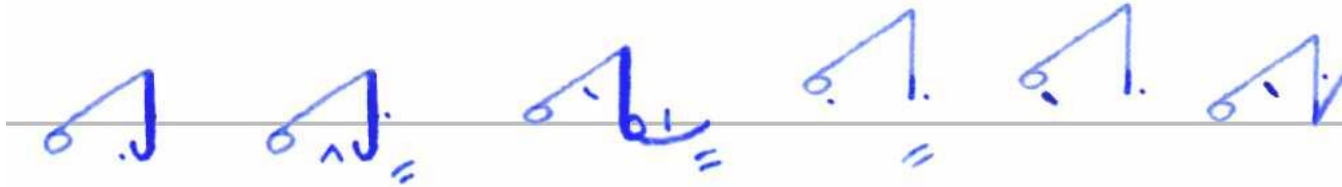
•

hod head heading headmaster headstrong



•

headway ahead heed hood haddock hide/Hyde



•

hidden Howden Hudson Hattie haughty hotel*

• *pronunciation without the H sound is less common nowadays



•

hottest heighten hiatus hatch hedge hedgerow



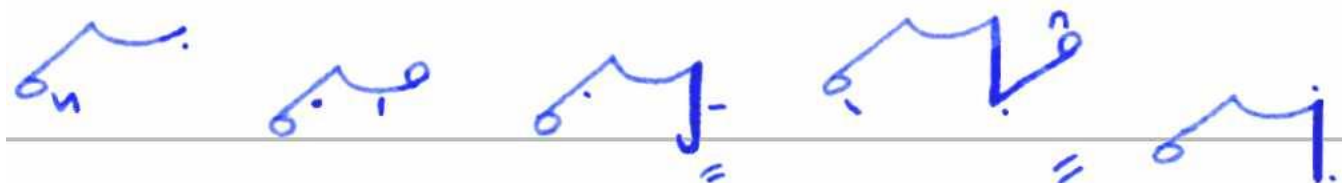
•

huge hijack hitch hutch Hutchinson Hodges



•

Hannah honey honeymoon hunch hinge



•

hyena heinous Hendon Honduras Hindi



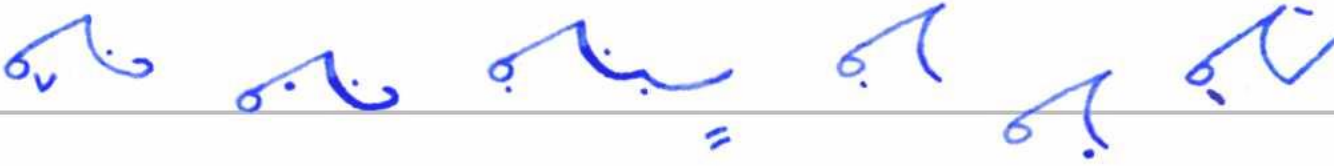
•

hang hanger hung hunger



•

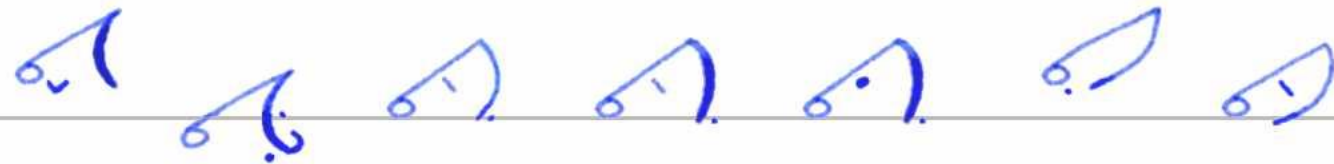
hank honk huffy heavy havoc



•

hyphen haven Havana hath heath hawthorn*

- *although "haw" uses downward Hay, this derivative needs upward Hay to produce an angle at the join



•

hithe/hythe heathen hussy* hazy hash hush

Dot Hay

Use Dot Hay when the other forms cannot conveniently be written. It is only used if the resultant outline remains legible when unvocalised.

- Mostly used in compound words, where the original form of Hay would make an awkward join.
- Never used initially or finally.
- The dot is always placed close against the vowel that comes after the H sound, and both signs are placed against the following stroke, regardless of whether the vowel is a first, second or third place one (as the H is medial, this is similar to the behaviour of vowels after a medial Circle S or medial hook).
- The sign for a vowel that is sounded immediately before the H sound also remains with its own stroke, whether first second or third place vowel, because it cannot "jump" over the H, e.g. "[apprehend](#)" below

- The dot is always written against a vowel sign. If you omit the vowel sign, then also omit the Dot Hay. Dot Hay on its own is meaningless, but a vowel sign on its own is preferable, when hard-pressed, if you feel the outline needs it for clarity.

Note the exact placement of the Dot Hay:

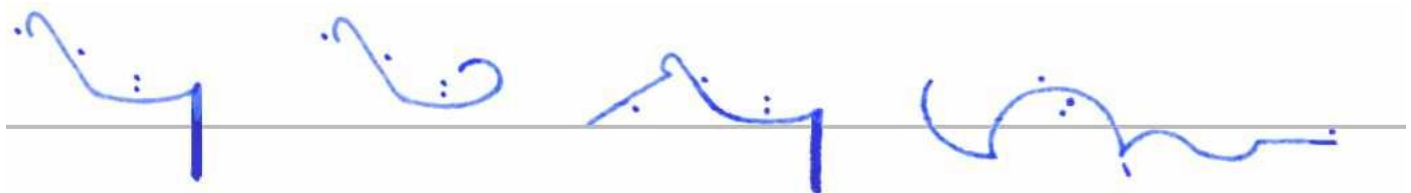
- Over a dot vowel, so they occupy the same position against the stroke, i.e. a line drawn between them would resemble a dash vowel. The Dot Hay is the outer one of the two. The two dots are not side by side in relation to the stroke.
- Immediately before and beside a dash vowel, which will vary according to the direction of the stroke.
- To the left side of a diphthong.



Blackheath loophole pinhole manorhouse

This can look similar to two vowel signs written together e.g. **genii nuclei tracheae*** but as Dot Hay is never used finally and is never placed immediately after a stroke, this does not present a problem.

*see outlines on [Vowels page](#)



apprehend apprehension reprehend philharmonic

English Consonant Sounds

Consonant letters and their sounds

A consonant letter usually represents one consonant sound. Some consonant letters, for example, c, g, s, can represent two different consonant sounds. (Одна согласная буква обычно передает один согласный звук. Некоторые согласные буквы, например, c, g, s, могут передавать два разных согласных звука.)

Letters	Sounds	Examples
B	[b]	baby, best, buy, bring, blind, absent, about, number, labor, robber, tub
C	[s] [k]	center, cellar, cigarette, cinema, agency, notice; cake, come, cucumber, clean, cry, scratch, act, panic
D	[d]	day, dear, die, door, duty, admire, hidden, lady, kind, ride, ended
F	[f]	fast, female, five, forest, fund, fry, flight, often, deaf, cuff
G	[g] [j] [zh]	game, gap, get, go, gun, great, global, giggle, ago, begin, dog, egg; general, gin, giant, agent, suggest, Egypt, energy, huge, manage; mirage, garage, beige, rouge
H	[h] [-]	hair, help, history, home, hotel, hunt, behind, inherit; hour, honor, honest, heir, vehicle, Sarah
J	[j]	jam, Jane, jet, jelly, Jim, jingle, joke, John, June, just
K	[k]	Kate, kind, kill, kilogram, sky, blanket, break, take, look
L	[l]	late, let, live, alone, close, slim, please, old, nicely, table, file, all
M	[m]	make, men, mind, mother, must, my, common, summer, name, form, team
N	[n]	napkin, never, night, no, nuclear, funny, student, kindness, ton, sun
P	[p]	paper, person, pick, pour, public, repair, apple, keep, top, crisp
q (qu)	[kw] [k]	quality, question, quite, quote, equal, require; unique, technique, antique, grotesque

R	[r]	rain, red, rise, brief, grow, scream, truck, arrive, hurry, turn, more, car
S	[s] [z]	send, simple, song, system, street, lost, kiss, release; cause, present, reason, realism, advise, always, is, was
T	[t]	task, tell, time, tone, tune, hotel, attentive, student, boat, rest
V	[v]	vast, vein, vivid, voice, even, review, invest, give, move, active
W	[w]	wall, war, way, west, wind, word, would, swear, swim, twenty, twist
X	[ks] [gz] [z]	exercise, exchange, expect, ex-wife, axis, fix, relax; exam, exact, executive, exert, exist, exit, exult; Xenon, Xerox, xenophobia, xylophone
Z	[z] [ts]	zero, zoo, horizon, puzzle, crazy, organize, quiz, jazz; pizza, Mozart, Nazi, waltz

Note 1: The letter Y

The letter Y can function as a vowel or as a consonant. As a vowel, Y has the vowel sounds [i], [ai]. As a consonant, Y has the consonant sound [y] (i.e., a semivowel sound), usually at the beginning of the word and only in the syllable before a vowel.

[i]: baby, hurry, lyrics, mystery;

[ai]: by, try, rely, nylon, type;

[y]: yacht, yard, year, yes, yet, yield, you, young, Yukon.

Примечание 1: Буква Y

Буква Y может функционировать как гласная или как согласная. Как гласная, Y имеет гласные звуки [i], [ai]. Как согласная, Y имеет согласный звук [y] (т.е. полугласный звук), обычно в начале слова и только в слоге перед гласной.

[i]: baby, hurry, lyrics, mystery;

[ai]: by, try, rely, nylon, type;

[y]: yacht, yard, year, yes, yet, yield, you, young, Yukon.

Note 2: The letter W

The letter W represents the vowel sound [u:] in the diphthongs [au] and [ou]: now, how, owl, brown; low, own, bowl.

Примечание 2: Буква W

Буква W передает гласный звук [u:] в дифтонгах [au] и [ou]: now, how, owl, brown; low, own, bowl.

The -s/es ending of nouns and verbs

After a voiceless consonant: [s] (После глухого согласного звука: [s])

After a voiced consonant or vowel: [z] (После звонкого согласного или гласного звука: [z])

After the letters s, z, x, ch, tch, ge, dge, sh: [iz] (После букв s, z, x, ch, tch, ge, dge, sh: [iz])

Vowels Indicators

Vowels are indicated by dots, dashes and small signs placed in various positions against the sides of the strokes, and sometimes joined to strokes. The shape, thickness and position against the stroke are all meaningful pieces of information that identify which vowel is meant, i.e. you cannot vary these. Some angles may be varied, some not. Joining to a stroke is not meaningful, just convenient.

They represent the spoken sound and not the longhand written form. Some short forms use just a vowel sign on its own for certain short words (see [2nd half of List4](#) for short forms derived from vowel signs).

They do not follow exactly the variations in vowel sounds spoken by different regional accents, or even variations within the same accent. Shorthand textbooks and dictionaries follow what is termed Standard English/Queen's English/BBC English/Oxford English/Received Pronunciation which approximates to English spoken in the mid-to-south of the UK. Examples given here will adhere to that and you should make adjustments to suit your own situation.

Substituting other vowels to accommodate your own variety of English does seem reasonable and not likely to cause problems if done thoughtfully and sparingly, bearing in mind that you may be taking dictation from speakers with a variety of accents. This may result in a change of outline position, as you will not generally be writing in all the vowels. It may also throw up a new set of clashing outlines, different from those listed on the Distinguishing Outlines page. You should keep notes of your variations and be totally consistent in their use. It does not seem advisable to attempt learn the system and revise it all at the same time!



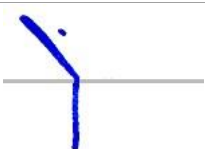
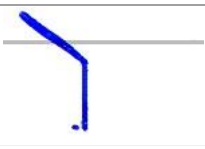



If your shorthand becomes highly personalised as regards pronunciation, you will create difficulties for yourself when the speaker does not sound like you. At the lower examination speeds you may be marked on your shorthand outlines, so caution is needed, and if you wished to teach Pitman's




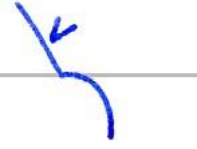





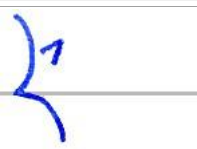
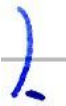
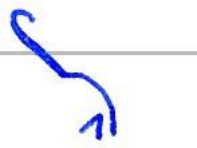






Shorthand, then you cannot deviate from the vowel values and signs given in the textbooks and dictionaries.



When taking from dictation, you are not expected to reflect the speaker's accent which may vary from your own. If you had to read it back to the speaker, it would be insulting if you read it in his/her accent! If you came across a dialect word for the first time, you would of course write it exactly as pronounced, as you would have nothing else to compare it with.

On this page I have written in all the vowels, although you will not do this during normal note-taking.

QUICK REFERENCE TABLE

Name & Place	Examples	Additional vowel	Mnemonic
SHORT VOWEL		Vowel plus one = diphone	
1	 bat	 sahib	THAT
2	 bet		PEN
3	 bit		IS
1	 tock		NOT
2	 tuck		MUCH
3	 took		GOOD
LONG VOWEL			

1	 pa	 baa-ing	PA
2	 pay	 payer	MAY
3	 pea	 previous	WE
1	 saw	 sawing	ALL
2	 so	 sower	GO
3	 sue	 bluer	TOO
DIPHTHONG		Diphthong plus one = triphone	
1	 by	 buyer	I
1	 boy	 loyal	ENJOY
3	 out	 power	LOUD

3	 few	 fewer	MUSIC
---	---	---	-------

SHORT AND LONG VOWELS

Short vowels = light dot or dash

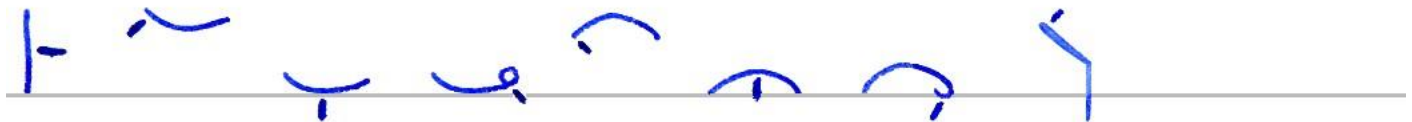
Mnemonic: THAT PEN IS NOT MUCH GOOD

Long vowels = heavy dot or dash

Mnemonic: PA MAY WE ALL GO TOO

The mnemonics contain short forms so those particular outlines cannot be used to illustrate all the vowels, but the simplicity of the sentences has served generations of shorthanders very well over the years and they are worth preserving as our "shorthand heritage".

The dashes are written at 90° to straight strokes, therefore they change their angle as the stroke changes its angle. The dash is generally written from the stroke outwards and about a quarter of the length of a normal stroke; a dash should not be written straight up or straight backwards, in order to maintain smooth writing and avoiding catching the nib against the paper. Against horizontal strokes the dash is always written downwards. For curved strokes, the angle of 90° changes along the length of the stroke. The angle of a dash vowel is therefore not meaningful when used in an outline, but is only meaningful when used alone as a short form – See Short Forms List 4 page Short forms from vowel marks:



toe gnaw know noose maw mow moon bought

Some dash vowels end up being written with an upward slant and this is the only time that any thick mark is written upwards, as in the outline "bought" above. The angle of the dash may be adjusted slightly in places where there is limited room between strokes:



droll dhurrie roach

Heavy dots and dashes must be written with one stroke of the pen, not moved around on to thicken them up.

Students of phonetics will notice that in Queen's English "pay" "sew" and similar words are not simple vowels but diphthongs, despite all the shorthand books describing them otherwise. They and the diphthongs below are, however, single phonemes (meaningful units of sound) in English, and generally found within one syllable, which is why they are perceived as one sound. I suspect that such words are pronounced with simple vowels in English accents other than the present Queen's English standard. This is borne out by a teachers' textbook that I have which advises south of England teachers to place extra emphasis on the "pure long vowel" of "lake", which to southern English ears does sound more like an accent from further north of the country.

DIPHTHONGS (pronounced dif-thong)

Two vowels sounded in quick succession, glided together and producing one syllable.

Mnemonic: I ENJOY LOUD MUSIC

- There are 4 diphthong signs - two first place, two third place.
- There are no second place diphthong signs.
- No heavy versions.
- The first three never change angle, the last may be rotated when joined.

First place



pie tie china lie rye my nice

fine vie thigh sigh shy sky wise high I/eye

Joined at the beginning of some downstrokes and in phrases:

ice eyes idea item Ivan ire, I have, I think, I say, I shall

For convenience, joined finally to stroke En (despite being a first place vowel) when no other stroke or ending follows:

night nigh deny downright fortnight finite Anno Domini *but* nights denies

Contracted to a tick on upward Ell:

isle/aisle island islander Eileen/Aileen (*but Aileen if so pronounced*)

As short form for "I", contracted in phrases where convenient:

I believe, I propose, I regret, I can, I am, I will have

First place

The top half of the sign is written horizontally:



poise toy joy coy coil moist noise foible voice hoist

Joined only to upward Ell. The angle is adjusted slightly but this does not clash with the third place vowel "owl" because of the outline's position. Not joined to other strokes because not convenient and could be confused with "of the":



oil oiled oil-field oil-tanker oil-well

Third place



out ouch joust cow mouth noun found shout loud how (short form)

Joined initially to upward Ell, despite being a third place vowel, for convenience:



owl owlet owlish owl-like

Joined finally where convenient:

h h h h h h h h h h

Contracted after stroke N, when nothing else follows in the outline:

The frequent occurrence of t and d in past tenses, as well as in other cases, is provided for in phonography by what is called the "halving principle." By halving a **consonant** stroke, t or d is added according as the stroke is light or heavy - t being added to a light stroke and d to a heavy stroke. See lines 1 to 3.

160. Vocalization Of Half-Lengths

a. A vowel before a half-length stroke is read first. See line 4. b. A vowel after a half-length stroke is read next after the primary letter but before the added or d. See line 5.

161. Halving of L, R, M, N. - The rule for writing given in par. 159 would agree exactly with the phonetic principle stated in par. 158 if it were not for the fact that /, r, m, and n, although voiced sounds, are represented by light lines, contrary to the general method of representation explained in par. 6. When these strokes are halved t is added because they are light. See line 6. But as these strokes represent voiced sounds it is desirable to add the voiced sound d; and this is done by shading the strokes when halved for that purpose. See line 7. This necessitates that y, w, nip and ng never be halved. Half-length ld should always be written down.

162. Tick-H On Halved Strokes

The [tick-h](#) is attached to half-length exactly as it is to full-length strokes. See line 8.

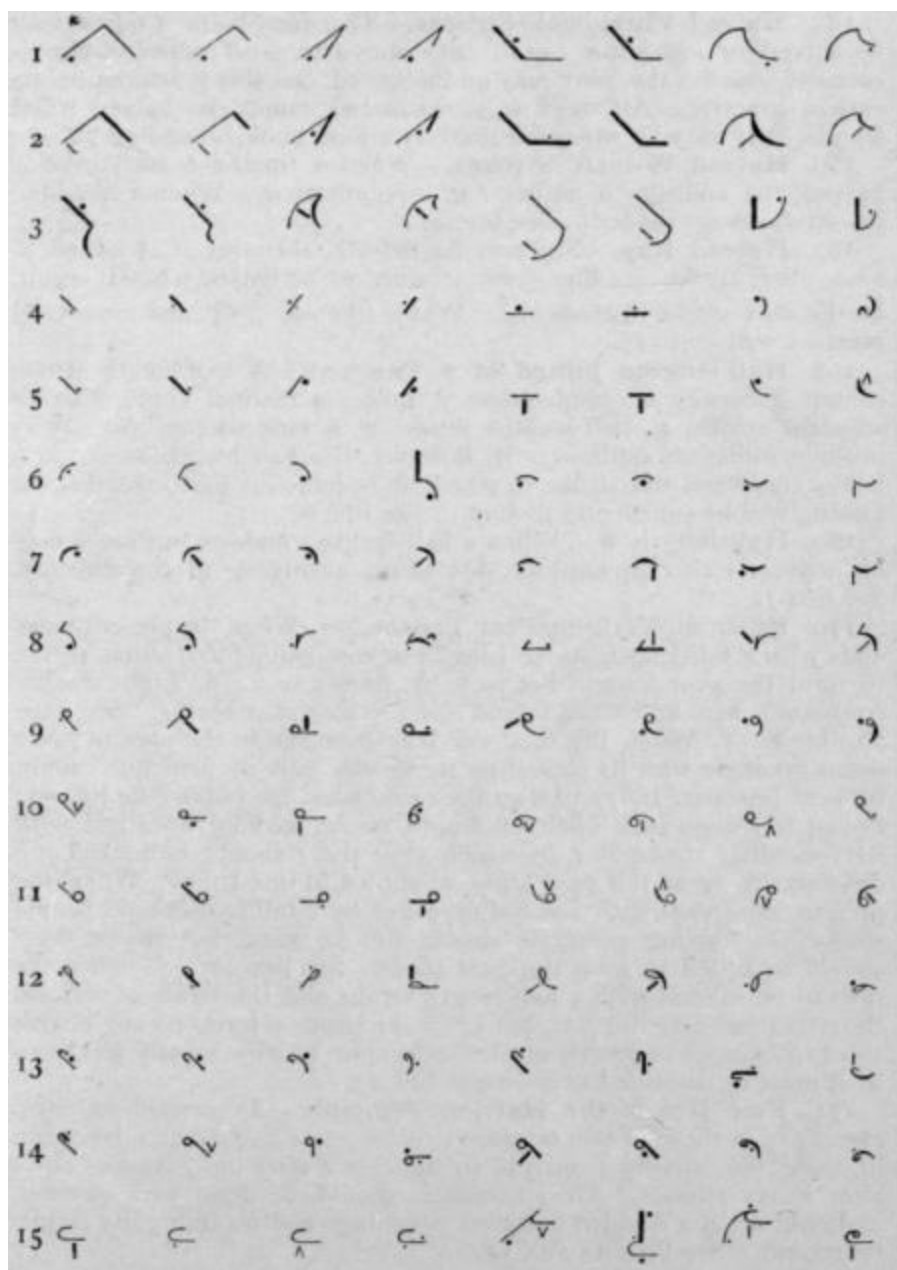
163. Circles And Loops On Halved Strokes

The circles and loops are attached to half-length exactly as they are to full-length strokes. See lines 9 to 12.

164. Halved Double And Triple Consonants

The l and r-hook strokes, as also the [large w-hook](#) strokes, are halved like simple strokes. See lines 13 to 15.

Exercise on the Halving Principle.



The Halving Principle

Concluded.

165. Halved Final-Hook Strokes

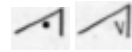
The **final**-hook strokes-may be halved to add either t or d. See lines 1 to 3. To distinctly indicate the added d the hook may be thickened, but this is seldom necessary in practise. Although w, y, mp and ng cannot be halved when simple, they may be when followed by a final hook. See line 3.

166. Halved W-Hook Strokes

When a small w-hook stroke is halved, the addition of either t or d is indicated. When d is added the stroke is not shaded. See line 4.

167. Halved Ray

Ray may be halved whenever it is joined to some other stroke (see line 5) but it must not be halved when it would be the only stroke in the word. Words like *rate*, and *write* must be written in full.



168. Half-Lengths Joined At A Tangent

A half-length stroke cannot generally be used unless it makes a distinct angle with its adjacent stroke, as half-lengths joined at a tangent (cp. par. 25 c) produce indistinct outlines. If, however, the half-length stroke is a heavy curve and the stroke to which it is joined is light, the tangent joining will be sufficiently distinct. See line 6.

169. Half-Length S

When a half-length s ends an outline it may be written either upward or downward according to convenience. See line 7.

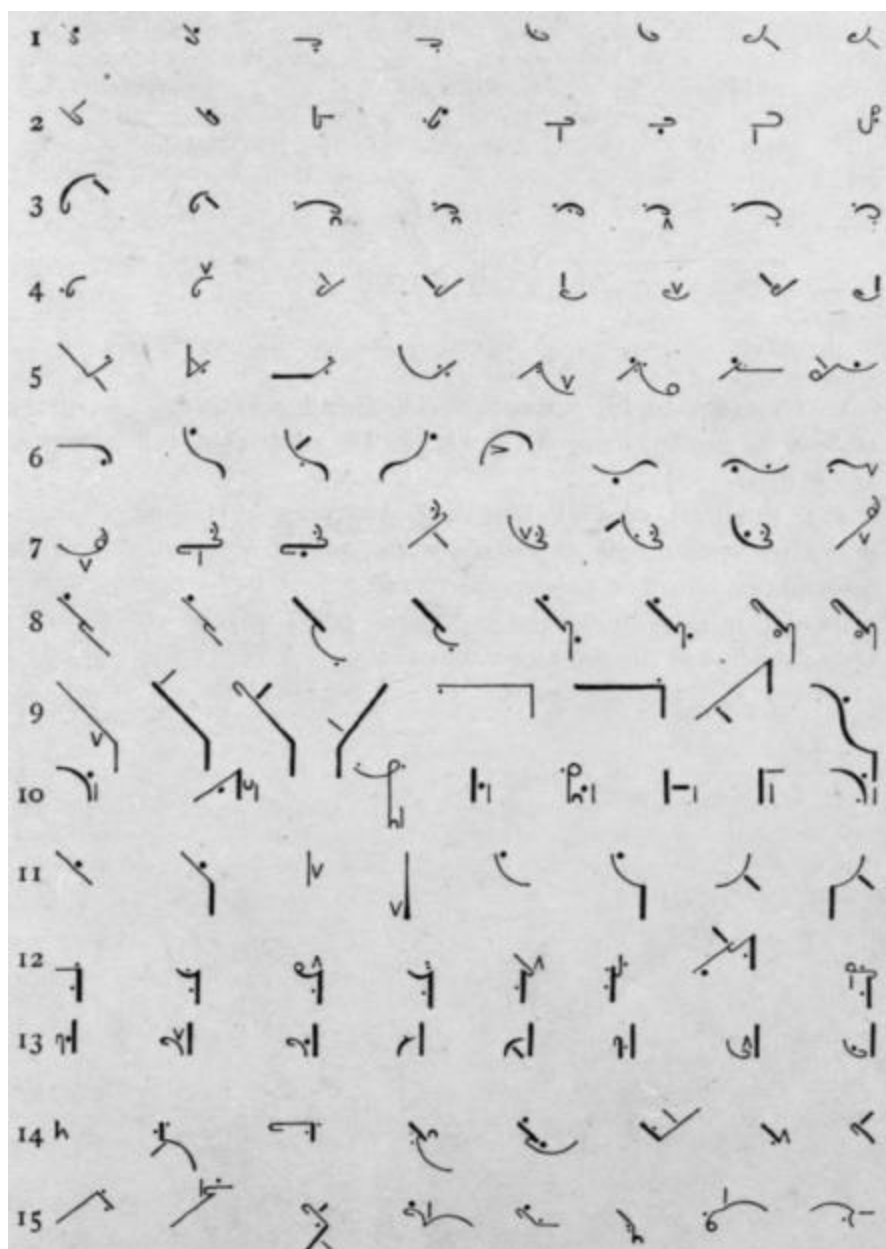
170. Rules For Writing Past Tenses

a. When the present tense ends with a full-length stroke (simple or compound) halve that stroke to form the past tense. See page 77, lines 1 to 3. b. Light **double consonants** may be halved to add d in forming past tenses. See page 79, line 8. c. When the final full-length stroke in the present tense forms no angle with its preceding stroke the halving principle cannot be used (cp. par. 168) and a stroke t or d must be added (see line 9); except (d) when such final full-length stroke making no angle with its preceding stroke is t, in which case the t should be halved and disjoined to form the past tense, as shown in line 10. e. When the present tense ends with a vowel preceded by a full-length light simple stroke, the halving principle should not be used, but the stroke-d should be added to form the past tense. See line 11. f. When the present tense ends with a half-length stroke add the stroke-d to form the past tense (see line 12), but (g) if the stroke-d forms no angle with the preceding half-length stroke or cannot be conveniently joined to it, it must be disjoined as shown in line 13.

171. Free Use Of The Halving Principle

In certain outlines, especially in those of two or more strokes, some license may be taken in using the halving principle to indicate d after light strokes and / after heavy strokes. This, however, should be done with caution, and only when a decided practical advantage and no ambiguity results therefrom. See lines 14 and 15.

Exercise on the Halving Principle-II.



The Doubling Principle

175. Ter And Der Added By Doubling

Any curved stroke may be doubled in length to represent the addition of ter or der. See lines 1 to 7.

176. Ther And Dher Added By Doubling

Any curved stroke may be doubled in length to add ther or dher (see lines 8 and 9) provided the same [double-length stroke](#), similarly vocalized, is not already used to represent a word of the same part

of [speech](#) containing ter or der. Thus, feather should be written because [eal](#) already represents fetter.



177. Double-Length Ng

Ng may be doubled to add ker or ger, and also, under the foregoing rules, to add ter, der, ther or dher. See lines 10 and 11. . 178. Double-length Mp-mb. - Mp-mb may be doubled to add er, as well as to add ter, der, ther or dher. See lines 12 and 13.

178a. [The Base-Line](#). - Upright and slanting double-length strokes do not, like corresponding single-length strokes, rest upon the line; they are so written that the line shall cut them at the middle point.

179. Vocalization Of Double-Lengths

a. A vowel placed before a double-length stroke is read first. b. A vowel placed after a double-length is read next after the primary stroke, but before the added value, ter, der, etc.

180. Double-Lengths Joined At An Angle

A double-length stroke cannot generally be used unless it makes a distinct angle with its adjacent stroke. Compare paragraph 168. Double-length n and ng may however be joined with continuous motion after th and el.

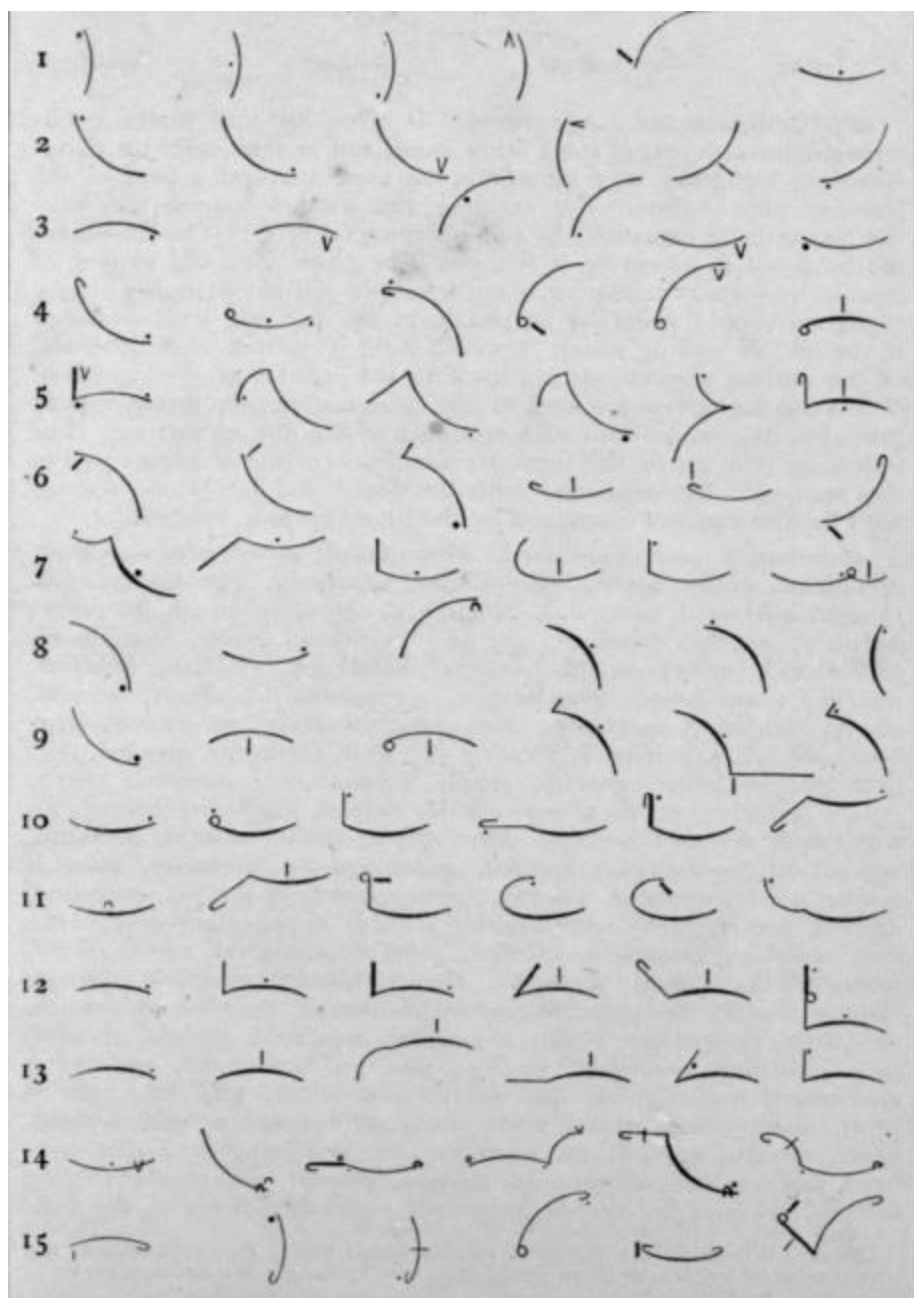
181. Intervocalization Of Double-Lengths

The normal vowel in the syllable added by doubling is the second-place light dash, but any short, unaccented vowel may appear in this syllable without special indication. If, however, the vowel is long, a diphthong, or accented, it should be indicated by [intervocalization](#) in a manner similar to the vocalization of [double consonants](#). (See line 14 and cp. par. 140.) When a double-length double [consonant](#) is intervocalized, the inter-vocalization takes effect in the double consonant and not in the syllable added by lengthening. See northern in line 15.

182. N-Hook Added To Double-Lengths

[The n-hook](#) may be added to double-length strokes, and is invariably read after the syllable added by lengthening. See line 15.

Exercises on the Doubling Principle.



W-Form

The sound of W is represented in two main ways. The outline uses whichever method produces the easiest outline to write and read, and in some cases to indicate the presence of a preceding vowel:

- Stroke Way

- Small semicircle:

(a) Initially, right semicircle, attached before simple Kay Gay, Em Imp/Imb Ar Ard Rer Ray

(b) Medially, left or right semicircle, unattached and written to replace the sign of the vowel that immediately follows it.

- Also part of strokes Hway Wel Hwel Kway Gway
- Also part of Circle Sway, dealt with on page
- Although the W sound is a long vowel, it does the job of a consonant when it begins a syllable.

Stroke Way

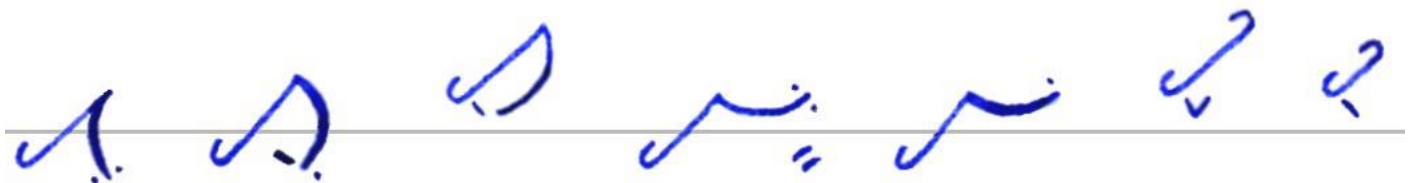
This is the form most commonly used. As stroke Way has an initial hook as part of its basic form, it can take no other initial hooks or initial loops:



way we* wee weep wiper web wobble weighbridge *Short form



wide wed wooden wattle waddle watch wedge



withy woozy wash Winnie wing wife waft



wafter waffle weave woven wave waved wavy



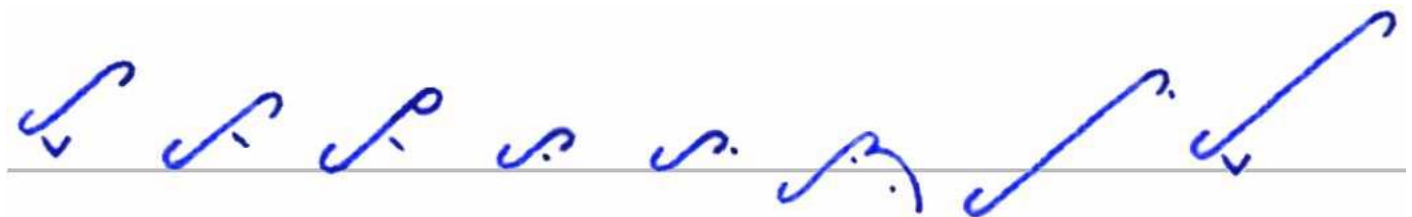
waver/waiver weevil ways/weights waste/waist western
Wooster/Worcester* Worcestershire*

*Worcester, worsted (woollen cloth) and the endings -ward, -wart, -wort are the only outlines that do not show the longhand R (see). In the first two, the letter R is not sounded at all, the vowel is the same as that in "wool".



worsted = woollen cloth (named after the district of Worstead in Norfolk, UK)

worsted = past tense of verb "to worst" to defeat/get the better of, i.e. "give someone the worst of it"



wine won/one ones/once went/wend wind winner winter winder



wit witty water bewail beware between



otherwise unwise