

**STENOGRAPHY; OR, A
BRIEF AND SIMPLE
SYSTEM OF SHORT-HAND**

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Stenography; Or, A Brief and Simple System of Short-hand by Morris Coleman

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MORRIS COLEMAN

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INTRODUCTION.

THE system of *SHORT-HAND* now offered to the public, although founded upon *Taylor's*, contains many modifications which will doubtless be found to render it more simple and comprehensive.

Many have relinquished the study of Stenography, on account of difficulties appearing at first sight to be insurmountable, except by very close and constant application. Several of these, it is endeavoured, in the present system, to supersede, and as far as possible simplify, in order that it may be perfectly easy even to the most unlearned.

The advantages of Stenography are very great. The letters being of the simplest form, it can be written with facility; and those forms are such, that any one letter (vowels excepted) can be joined to another without raising the pen,—whatever therefore, be the length of the word, the pen should never be lifted until it is finished. (*See Table of Joined Letters, Plate 2.*)

It is also extremely brief, inasmuch as on an average from one hundred to a hundred and twenty words may be written in a minute, and when Arbitraries and Contractions are introduced (many of which the student may compose for himself as occasion may require), a simple mark denotes a whole word, and occasionally several words, consequently a sentence is thereby very considerably shortened. Important memoranda may be made with a few dashes of a pencil, when time or place will not allow of writing in Long-hand; and for ordinary business purposes, such as copying letters for office use,—in which much time is now consumed,—and many other purposes, its value would be inestimable.

Again, to Short-Hand we are indebted for the greater part of the interesting details of every-day life, contained in the several organs of the Press, for speeches in the House of Parliament, for Lectures on all subjects, and from every quarter of the globe, for the records of eloquence in Exeter Hall, and other places where meetings are held. Indeed, few people are really aware of the amount of knowledge brought within their reach by the means of Short-Hand.

In addition to the advantages above mentioned, it is of great use to the student in cultivating habits of close attention and much patience, as in following a speaker who has an indistinct voice or broad accent, both these qualifications are absolutely indispensable; and having these faculties called into action when engaged in reporting, he will naturally, to a greater or less extent, carry them into the practice of daily life. If he habituates himself to report the speeches of eloquent men, it will also tend to improve his own mind.

It likewise strengthens the memory, as it is sometimes necessary to write " &c." when losing ground, and to proceed with what the speaker is *then* saying, which omission must be inserted from recollection when being afterwards transcribed into Long-hand.

The author has great pleasure in transcribing the following opposite remarks by Mr. Gawtress:—

"The rapidity with which it enables a person to commit his thoughts to the safety of manuscript, also renders it an object peculiarly worthy of regard. By this means a thousand ideas which daily strike us, and which are lost before we can record them in the usual way, may be snatched from destruction, and preserved till mature deliberation can ripen and perfect them.

"Such are the blessings which Short-Hand, like a generous benefactor, bestows indiscriminately on the world at large. But it has additional and peculiar favours in store for those who are so far convinced of its utility as personally to engage in its pursuit. The advantages resulting from the exercise of this science are not, as is

the case with many others, confined to a particular class of society, for though it may seem more immediately calculated for those whose business is to record the eloquence of public men, and the proceedings of popular assemblies, yet it offers its assistance to persons of every rank and station in life,—to the man of business as well as to the man of science,—for the purpose of private convenience as well as of general information.”

Further it may be studied as a secret hand. Many wish to write in some style which cannot be deciphered by others, and very many might even discover the Alphabet of this Short-Hand, who would yet find it extremely difficult to read without any previous instruction; or should any one have studied the entire system, it is quite possible even then, that much difficulty would be experienced in reading it, as each Stenographer is likely to make some alterations convenient to himself, which would more or less puzzle another Short-Hand writer, and therefore it forms a most excellent medium for secret correspondence, as will be observed by the following quotation:—

“Protagenes, a presbyter of Edesee, was banished by the Emperor Valens in the fourth century, as an opponent of the Arian heresy which was favoured by that Emperor, and sent to the city of Antinous, in Egypt. He found that the churches here were almost empty, and on inquiring the cause, he learnt, to his great grief, that the greater part of the inhabitants of the city were still heathens. Love impelled him to contrive some method by which he might scatter, unperceived, the seed of the divine word in the minds of the youths. As he was skilled in Short-Hand, he opened a school to give lessons in that art. He dictated to the heathen youth, as exercises in Short-Hand, passages from the Psalms and the Gospels, which, as well as the truths they contained, were thus impressed on their minds; a method which has been adopted, not without good results, by missionaries in the East Indies, Siam and Africa. One of the youths became very ill; Protagenes visited him with paternal love, prayed at his bed-side, and he was restored to health. This love and the answer to prayer made a great impression on the heathen.”

in the ordinary manner. It is possible, however, that the student may find that some few words will be read more easily by being spelt in the usual way. A word will convey its meaning from its *general appearance* just as it does in long-hand, so that there will be no necessity to spell every long word before deciphering it, and will soon become so familiar to the eye that it will be read with ease.

When the pen is used, it will be found better to write with it held almost perpendicularly over the paper, as the characters will thereby be formed more correctly and easily. When a pencil is used (which it will be almost always necessary to provide), I have found the best for the purpose to be those marked III. ; and perhaps a pencil is preferable, as pens are liable to blot the loops and make the characters of an irregular shape, besides which, there is the additional inconvenience of carrying ink in the pocket.

Every fresh sentence should be commenced in the middle of the succeeding line, in order to preserve as much distinction as possible between them; and as occasion requires, such as the division of a subject, a different speaker, &c., a line should be drawn right across the paper, the report being recommenced.

It is a convenient method of distinction between speakers, to draw a double oblique line close at the edge of the left hand side of the paper, inclining upwards from left to right, but on no account should the writing be continued without paying regard to full stops, which may be thus indicated. All other punctuation must generally be dispensed with, or if used, a wider space than usual must be left between the words or sentences as being preferable to its omission altogether.

The characters should at first be written in rather a large hand, carefully and plainly, so that their form may become perfectly familiar to the eye, before attempting rapidity, which is the last thing to acquire.

Great attention must be given to this, as upon it alone depends whether the student write a good Short-Hand, which is of the greatest importance; for example the letter *m* should not be written as the joined letters *gm*. (see Table of Joined Letters, Plate 2.)

Straight lines should be *made straight*, and not crooked or curved; semicircles should be *made semicircles*, and not three-quarters of a circle. Unless the student can make up his mind to conquer this, he had far better give up the study before he proceeds any further, for it will only end in his doing so ultimately when much valuable time has been lost.

A Teacher is of great advantage where one can be obtained, as questions which arise may then be explained, which could not be dwelt upon in any work, however elaborate; and difficulties will often present themselves to one mind which do not exist in another. Many steps will thus be gained which might otherwise have to be retraced.

EXPLANATION OF THE CHARACTERS.

A is a point, and E a comma above the line.

I " O " on the line.

U " Y " below the line.

These vowels can never be forgotten; they require simply to be read carefully over in order to be remembered.

These are only used when absolutely necessary, such as when strongly accented, or when isolated, and sometimes when a word is commenced with one or more; for instance, were such an awkward sentence to occur, as, "*I am going out to tea too*" a vowel would be written before the *t* in "*out*," and after it in "*tea*" and "*too*," otherwise there would be a row of upright strokes, which would never be understood. Where words or sentences of such a curious nature are met with, they must be treated according to the student's best

judgment; if, however, he finds no difficulty as to the time in adding the vowels, it would be as well to do so.

By leaving out the vowels, several different words may perhaps be suggested to the mind, each being composed of the same consonants; but the *connexion* will always correct any error which might thus be made.

C j v and *z* are not required to be used; the words being spelt as they are pronounced, *c* soft and *z* are superseded by *s*, *j* by *g*, and *v* by *f*.

D and *r* would appear at first sight alike, but the difference between them consists in *d* being drawn from the top downwards, and *r* from the bottom upwards. A glance at the table (*plate 2*) will explain this. Observe the difference between *Dr* and *Rd*.

H is generally omitted where it is not aspirated, and when it occurs in the middle of a word. It is however, quite optional when to use it.

S must be written longer when it denotes the plural number; the same thing will apply when double; it also sometimes stands for "*sover.*" (*see Arbitraries Part 2.*)

The vowel *y* is mostly required, and is placed in its proper position with respect to the word, but is not actually written till after the whole of the character is formed, so as not to raise the pen.

The two terminations must be made smaller than the ordinary letters, that for *ing* being smaller than an inverted *m*, and the end of *ght* smaller than *f*, so that no perplexity may arise as to their meaning.

The looped letters should be commenced with the loop, all of which (except *w*) may be turned whichever way is found most convenient. (*see Table Plate 2.*) The termination *ing* must end with the loop, and must never be used in the middle of a word as "*exceedingly*," but only as a termination, otherwise the characters for *ng* must be written.