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FREE EBOOK

ENGLISH, CAREERS AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Shorthand Study Book

The complete study notes, practice questions and glossary for
Shorthand

INSIDE THIS BOOK

- What Shorthand and Stenography Are
- Writing by Sound
- Strokes, Vowel Signs and Outlines
- Short Forms and Phrasing
- Building Speed with Graded Dictation
- ...and 2 more chapters, practice questions and a glossary

Beginner

Students preparing for stenography

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Shorthand Study Book

Learn what shorthand and stenography are, how Pitman-style shorthand writes by sound with strokes, vowel signs, short forms and phrases, and how graded dictation, careful transcription and daily typing practice build real speed and accuracy.

WHO IT IS FOR	Students preparing for stenography
LEVEL	Beginner
SUBJECT AREA	English, careers and vocational skills
WHAT IS INSIDE	7 chapters, practice questions with answers, and a glossary

HOW TO USE IT

Read one chapter at a time and try the examples as you go: on a computer, at your workbench or in your notebook. The boxes give tips, safety points and short activities. When you finish, test yourself with the practice questions and check your answers at the end. Words you may not know are explained in the glossary.



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What Shorthand and Stenography Are

What is shorthand?

Shorthand is a fast way of writing in which signs, strokes and abbreviations stand for sounds, words and even whole phrases. Ordinary handwriting, with every word spelt out in full, is called **longhand**. Longhand is far too slow to keep up with a person speaking, so a writer using it can only note the main points. Shorthand closes that gap: a trained writer can take down spoken words as they are said.

Stenography is the skill of writing in shorthand and then turning the notes back into ordinary text. The word comes from Greek words meaning "narrow" or "close" writing. A person who does this work is called a **stenographer**, often shortened to "steno".

Where shorthand is used

- **Courts.** Statements of witnesses, arguments and the orders or judgments that judges dictate are taken down by stenographers and then typed out.
- **Offices.** Officers and managers dictate letters, notes and reports. The stenographer takes them down in shorthand and types them in the correct format. Many government departments in India have posts such as Stenographer and Personal Assistant, and recruitment for these posts usually includes a shorthand skill test: dictation at a fixed speed, followed by transcription on a computer within a time limit.
- **Legislatures and meetings.** Speeches and debates, and the proceedings of meetings and conferences, are recorded word for word.
- **Reporting.** Journalists use shorthand to take accurate notes during interviews and press conferences.

Even where voice recorders are available, a stenographer can read back a sentence at once, without searching through a long recording.

Shorthand systems

There are several shorthand systems, each with its own signs and rules.

- **Pitman shorthand** was created by Sir Isaac Pitman and first published in 1837. It is widely taught for English in India. It is a **phonetic** system: it records the sounds of words, not their spelling.
- **Gregg shorthand** became popular in the United States, and **Teeline** is used by many journalists in the United Kingdom.
- **Hindi shorthand** systems also exist and are taught for Hindi stenography. They follow the same basic idea of writing by sound, adapted to the sounds of Hindi.

Choose one system and stay with it. Mixing signs from two systems confuses both your hand and your reading.

What a stenographer needs

1. **A shorthand notebook** with ruled lines. In Pitman shorthand, where an outline sits in relation to the line carries meaning.
2. **A smooth pen or a sharp pencil.** Pitman uses both light and thick strokes, so the pen or pencil must make both easily without catching on the paper.
3. **Good typing skill**, because notes are of little use until they become clean typed text.
4. **Good language skills:** vocabulary, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Shorthand records sounds, but the final typed text must be correctly spelt and punctuated.

How learning is organised

Learning shorthand has two stages. First comes **theory**: the strokes, signs and rules of the system, learnt chapter by chapter. Then comes **speed**: regular dictation practice that slowly trains your hand to write the outlines automatically. Both stages need daily practice, and theory learnt well makes the speed stage much easier.

KEY POINTS

- Shorthand uses signs and abbreviations so that speech can be written as fast as it is spoken.
- A stenographer takes down dictation in shorthand and transcribes it into typed text.
- Shorthand is used in courts, offices, legislatures, meetings and reporting.
- Pitman shorthand is a phonetic system widely taught for English in India; Hindi shorthand systems also exist.
- Learning has two stages: theory first, then speed through regular dictation.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Ask a friend to read a short newspaper paragraph aloud at normal speed while you write it in longhand. Count how many words you managed, and note why longhand cannot keep up.
2. Make a list of five workplaces in your town or district where a stenographer might work, and write one line on what they would take down in each.
3. Prepare your kit: a ruled shorthand notebook, a smooth pen or two sharpened pencils, and a folder for dictation passages.

CHAPTER 2

Writing by Sound

Sounds, not spellings

The most important principle in shorthand is **writing by sound**, also called the **phonetic** principle. You write what you hear, not how the word is spelt.

English spelling is full of silent letters and letters that change their sound from word to word:

Word	Spelling	Sounds you actually hear
knife	k-n-i-f-e	n, long i, f
phone	p-h-o-n-e	f, long o, n
write	w-r-i-t-e	r, long i, t
city	c-i-t-y	s, short i, t, ee
cat	c-a-t	k, short a, t

In shorthand, "knife" is written with the signs for the N and F sounds, plus a vowel sign if needed; the silent K and E are simply ignored. "Phone" begins with the same F sound as "fan", so both begin with the same stroke. "Cat" and "kite" both begin with a K sound, so they begin with the same stroke even though one is spelt with C.

Consonants and vowels

Speech is made of **consonant sounds**, such as p, t, k, m, n and s, and **vowel sounds**, such as the sounds in "pat", "pet", "pit", "pot" and "but". Pitman shorthand gives each consonant sound its own **stroke** and shows vowels with small signs written beside the strokes. Because the consonants give a word most of its shape, a trained writer can read many outlines even when the vowel signs are left out.

Paired sounds

Some consonants come in pairs that are made in the same position of the mouth. One sound of the pair is made with breath alone, and the other is **voiced**, with a buzz in the throat. Examples are p and b, t and d, k and g, f and v, s and z, and ch and j. Place your fingers lightly on your throat and say "p" and then "b": you feel the buzz only with "b".

In Pitman shorthand, each such pair shares one stroke shape. The stroke is written **light** for the breathed sound and **thick** for the voiced sound. So learning one shape gives you two sounds.

Training your ear

Writing by sound needs a careful ear. Practise these habits:

1. Say each new word aloud slowly before writing it.
2. Break it into its sounds: "desk" is d, short e, s, k; "lamp" is l, short a, m, p.
3. Notice silent letters: "honest" and "hour" begin with a vowel sound because the H is silent.
4. Notice that one letter can stand for different sounds: the S in "sun" is an S sound, but the S in "rose" is a Z sound. Listen for the sound, not the letter.

Use the pronunciation given in your shorthand textbook. The outlines are built on it, and your reading will match your teacher's.

Why sound-writing is faster

Writing only the sounds removes silent letters, double letters and spelling exceptions. "Thought" has seven letters but only three sounds: th, aw and t. "Knee" has four letters but only two sounds: n and ee. Fewer sounds means fewer marks, and fewer marks means more speed. Correct spelling returns when you type the transcript.

KEY POINTS

- Shorthand writes the sounds you hear, not the spelling of the word.
- Silent letters are ignored; words that begin with the same sound begin with the same stroke.
- Pitman gives each consonant sound a stroke and shows vowels with small signs.
- Paired sounds such as p and b share one stroke shape, written light or thick.
- Correct spelling returns when you type the transcript.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Write twenty common words (for example knife, phone, school, honest, thought) and, beside each, list only the sounds you hear.
2. Say these pairs aloud with your fingers on your throat and mark which sound of each pair is voiced: p/b, t/d, k/g, f/v, s/z, ch/j.
3. Find ten words in a newspaper that contain a silent letter and underline the silent letter in each.

CHAPTER 3

Strokes, Vowel Signs and Outlines

Consonant strokes

In Pitman shorthand every consonant sound has a basic **stroke**: a short straight line or a curve. Strokes differ from one another in:

- **shape**: straight or curved;
- **direction**: for example written downwards, upwards or along the line;
- **thickness**: light or thick, for the paired sounds you met in the last lesson;
- **length**: a stroke can also be written at half or double its normal length to add further sounds. For example, **halving** a stroke adds a T or D sound.

The direction of each stroke is part of the rule, not a matter of style; a few strokes may be written either upwards or downwards, and your textbook says when. Learn the strokes from the diagrams in your textbook and copy them until each one comes out at the same size and slope every time.

Vowel signs

Vowels are shown by small **dots** and **dashes** placed beside the strokes. In Pitman shorthand:

- whether the sign is a dot or a dash tells you which group the vowel belongs to;
- whether it is heavy or light tells you whether the vowel is long or short;
- its place beside the stroke, at the beginning, middle or end, tells you which vowel of the group it is;
- the side of the stroke it is written on tells you whether the vowel is read before or after the consonant.

There are also signs for **diphthongs**, the double vowel sounds heard in words such as "my", "now" and "boy".

Position writing

The ruled line in your notebook is a working tool. In Pitman shorthand an outline can be written above the line, resting on it or through it, and this **position** indicates the first vowel sound of the word. This is one reason trained writers can leave out most vowel signs and still read their notes: the consonant strokes plus the position point to the right word. Your textbook gives the exact rules for each kind of outline.

Outlines

The complete written form of a word in shorthand is called its **outline**. An outline is built by joining the consonant strokes in order, without lifting the pen, and then adding vowel signs where they are needed. Small attachments such as circles, loops and hooks add common sounds without extra strokes; for example, in Pitman a small circle adds an S or Z sound.

A good outline is:

1. **Accurate:** the right strokes, in the right direction and thickness.
2. **Proportionate:** strokes of a steady size, so that half-length and full-length strokes look clearly different.
3. **Fluent:** joined smoothly in one movement.
4. **Legible:** you can still read it a week later.

A practice method that works

- Write each new stroke in neat rows, saying its sound aloud each time.
- Write simple words that use the stroke, first with vowel signs, then without them.

- Read printed shorthand from your textbook every day. Reading trains your eye to recognise outlines quickly, which you will need during transcription.
- Ask your teacher to check your outlines early, before a wrong habit settles in.

Neatness comes before speed. A fast outline that you cannot read back is worth nothing at transcription time.

KEY POINTS

- Each consonant sound has a stroke that differs in shape, direction, thickness and length.
- Vowels are small dots and dashes; their type, weight and place tell you which vowel it is.
- In Pitman, writing an outline above, on or through the line indicates its first vowel sound.
- An outline is the complete shorthand form of a word: joined strokes plus any signs.
- Accurate, proportionate and legible outlines come before speed.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Copy each stroke from your current textbook chapter in three neat rows, saying its sound aloud as you write.
2. Write ten simple words from your textbook twice: once with all vowel signs and once without. Ask a classmate to read both versions back.
3. Spend ten minutes reading a page of printed shorthand aloud, and mark any outline you cannot recognise to ask your teacher about.

CHAPTER 4

Short Forms and Phrasing

Why short forms exist

A small number of everyday words make up a large share of all speech and writing: the, and, of, to, a, in, is, it, you, that, for, have, and so on. Writing even these short words stroke by stroke would waste time on every line, so shorthand systems give them special brief signs called **short forms**.

Pitman textbooks call a frequent word that is written with a single sign a **grammologue**, and the sign itself a **logogram**. Shortened outlines for longer common words are called **contractions**. Some signs stand for more than one word, and the right word is decided by the position of the sign or by the sense of the sentence.

How to learn short forms

1. Learn them in the small sets your textbook gives, a few at a time.
2. Make flash cards: the word on one side, the shorthand sign on the other.
3. Test yourself both ways: from word to sign, and from sign to word.
4. Write each short form in a row, then use it in short sentences.
5. Revise the earlier sets every day. Forgetting one short form in the middle of dictation makes you hesitate, and while you hesitate the speaker moves on.

Short forms are the words you will write most often. Knowing them perfectly gives you more speed than almost any other single habit.

Phrasing

Phrasing means joining the outlines of two or more words without lifting the pen. Common phrases such as "I am", "it is", "we have", "thank you" and "as soon as possible" can be written as one combined outline. Pitman textbooks call this **phraseography**.

Every pen lift costs a fraction of a second. Over a five-minute dictation, good phrasing saves a great many of these small losses.

Rules of good phrasing

- Join only words that naturally go together when spoken.
- The phrase must join easily and stay easy to read.
- Do not phrase across a full stop or a strong break in meaning.
- Learn the phrases given in your textbook first, and make your own only when your theory is secure.

Phrases for the kind of work you will do

Office dictation repeats the same phrases again and again, for example:

Business letters	Government notes	Court work
with reference to your letter	it is submitted that	the learned counsel

Business letters	Government notes	Court work
we are pleased to inform you	for kind information	the petitioner
please find enclosed	may kindly be approved	the respondent
Yours faithfully	as per rules	the said order

Collect the phrases that come up in the dictation you take, check their correct outlines with your teacher, and practise them as single units until your hand writes them without thinking.

A word of caution

Short forms and phrases only help when you can read them back instantly. If a phrase you have made up looks unclear in your notes, write the words separately next time. A slightly slower outline that you can read is always better than a fast one you cannot.

KEY POINTS

- Short forms are brief signs for very common words; Pitman calls many of them grammalogues.
- Learn short forms in small sets, test yourself both ways and revise them daily.
- Phrasing joins the outlines of words that naturally go together, saving pen lifts.
- Never phrase across a full stop, and keep every phrase easy to read.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Make flash cards for the short forms in your current textbook chapter and test yourself in both directions until you get every card right twice in a row.
2. Write a short business letter of about 80 words in longhand, underline every phrase you could join in shorthand, and check the outlines with your teacher.
3. Keep a phrase list for one week: note every phrase that appears more than once in your dictation passages.

Building Speed with Graded Dictation

Measuring speed

Shorthand speed is measured in **words per minute (wpm)**: the number of words dictated in one minute that you can take down. A passage dictated at 80 wpm for 5 minutes contains 400 words.

Dictation passages are usually marked at regular intervals so that the reader can keep an even pace with a watch. For example, at 80 wpm a mark after every 20 words should be reached every 15 seconds.

Speed	Words in 1 minute	Words in 5 minutes	Words every 15 seconds
60 wpm	60	300	15
80 wpm	80	400	20
100 wpm	100	500	25
120 wpm	120	600	30

Graded dictation

Graded dictation means practising at speeds that rise step by step.

1. Start at a speed you can take comfortably and accurately, for example 40 or 50 wpm.
2. When you can take passages at that speed and transcribe them with very few errors, move up by about 10 wpm.
3. Each new level feels too fast at first. Stay with it until it feels steady, then move up again.

Recruitment tests announce the dictation speed and transcription time in their notice, so read it carefully and train for a speed comfortably above the one the test asks for.

Stretch and settle

A useful pattern for each practice session:

- **Stretch:** take one passage at a speed slightly above your comfortable level. Your notes will be rough, but your hand learns to move faster.
- **Settle:** take another passage at your comfortable speed, aiming for neat outlines and full accuracy, and transcribe it.

Repetition helps too. Take the same passage three times: first at your normal speed, then 10 wpm faster, then 20 wpm faster. Because the outlines are now familiar, your hand can reach a speed it could not manage on new matter.

Sources of dictation

- A teacher or classmate reading a marked passage, checking the pace with a watch or a phone stopwatch.
- Recorded dictation audio at a stated speed.
- Your own voice: record yourself reading a marked passage at a set pace, then play it back and write.

Use varied matter: business letters, government notes, court and legal passages, and speeches. Each has its own vocabulary and phrases.

Habits that build speed

- **Keep the hand moving.** If you miss a word, leave a small gap and carry on. Never stop to correct an outline during dictation.
- **Write small and light.** Large outlines take longer to write.
- **Carry a few words in memory.** Stay calm when the speaker is a few words ahead of you; this is normal at higher speeds.
- **Use short forms and phrases fully.** They are where most of your speed comes from.
- **Turn pages smoothly.** Practise turning the notebook page quickly so that you do not lose the next sentence.

Speed and accuracy grow together. A speed you cannot transcribe accurately is not yet your real speed.

KEY POINTS

- Speed is measured in words per minute: 80 wpm for 5 minutes is 400 words.
- Graded dictation raises the speed step by step, about 10 wpm at a time.
- Stretch with a faster passage, then settle with an accurate one at your comfortable speed.
- If you miss a word, leave a gap and keep writing; never stop mid-dictation.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Mark a 300-word passage every 15 words and ask a classmate to read it to you at 60 wpm, reaching each mark every 15 seconds.
2. Take one passage three times, at your normal speed, then 10 wpm faster, then 20 wpm faster, and note how your outlines change.
3. Record yourself reading a business letter at a steady 50 wpm and use the recording for dictation practice at home.

CHAPTER 6

Accuracy and Transcription

The transcript is what counts

Transcription means converting your shorthand notes into ordinary text, usually typed on a computer. A stenographer is judged by the final **transcript**, not by the notes. It must be complete, correctly spelt and punctuated, and properly laid out.

Steps to transcribe

1. **Read through your notes first.** Before you type anything, read the whole passage once. Put a light pencil tick beside any outline you are unsure of.
2. **Use the context.** An unclear outline usually becomes clear from the sentence around it: which word makes sense there?
3. **Type steadily by touch.** Keep your eyes on the notebook and let your fingers find the keys, so you do not lose your place.
4. **Add punctuation and capital letters.** Speakers do not always say "comma" or "full stop", so use your knowledge of grammar to punctuate.
5. **Use the correct layout.** Put each part of a letter in its place: reference number, date, address, salutation, subject, body, closing and signature.
6. **Proofread.** Read the typed text against your notes, then read it once more on its own for sense, spelling and figures.

Common errors

Error	Example	How to avoid it
Omission	A word or a whole line left out	Leave gaps while writing and fill them from context
Substitution	"affect" typed instead of "effect"	Read for meaning and learn confusing word pairs
Addition	An extra word that was not dictated	Type only what is in your notes
Spelling	"recieve" instead of "receive"	Build vocabulary and check doubtful words
Figures	! 15,000 typed as ! 1,500	Write figures clearly and check every number twice

Spell check is a helper, not a proofreader

Spell check marks words it does not recognise, but it can miss a correctly spelt wrong word: "form" typed for "from", or "their" for "there", may pass without a mark. Some programs also check grammar and context, but no checker catches every such error. Only careful proofreading does.

Measuring your accuracy

A simple way to track progress is the **error percentage**:

error percentage = (number of mistakes ÷ number of words in the passage) × 100

For example, a 400-word passage transcribed with 20 mistakes has an error percentage of $(20 \div 400) \times 100 = 5\%$. Recruitment tests set their own rules for counting mistakes, so always read the test notice.

Names, figures and special terms

- Write figures clearly in numerals and check them twice when typing. A wrong amount or date in an official letter can cause real trouble.
- Keep a list of names you meet often, for example officers' names such as Shri Rajesh Kumar or Smt. Meena Sharma, and place names such as Ghaziabad or Thiruvananthapuram, with their correct spellings.
- Learn the special words of your field, such as legal terms for court work or accounting terms for an office that handles GST invoices.

Transcribe your notes on the same day you take them whenever you can. Notes that are fresh in memory are far easier to read than notes from last week.

KEY POINTS

- Transcription turns shorthand notes into correct, complete and well laid-out typed text.
- Read the whole passage first and use the context to decide unclear outlines.
- Common errors are omissions, substitutions, additions, spellings and figures.
- Spell check can miss correctly spelt wrong words, so always proofread.
- Error percentage = mistakes divided by total words, multiplied by 100.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Take a 200-word dictation, transcribe it on the computer, and calculate your error percentage by comparing it with the printed passage.
2. Type ten sentences that each contain a confusing pair (their/there, affect/effect, form/from, principal/principle) and check which ones spell check would not flag.
3. Start a names-and-terms list for one type of matter (office letters, court work or accounts) and add five correct spellings to it every day for a week.

CHAPTER 7

A Daily Practice Plan: Typing and Shorthand Together

Why typing matters to a stenographer

In offices, and in most recruitment tests, shorthand notes are transcribed on a computer. A writer who takes dictation well but types slowly runs out of transcription time. **Touch typing** lets your eyes stay on the shorthand notes while your fingers type, which is faster and safer than looking back and forth between the notebook and the keyboard. Hindi stenographers need Hindi typing for the same reason.

The skills that go together are:

- shorthand speed and accuracy;
- touch typing with high accuracy;

- word processing: setting out letters and notes, page setup, spell check, saving files with sensible names;
- grammar, spelling and punctuation in the language you write.

A sample daily plan

This plan takes about 70 minutes. Adjust the times to your level, but keep every part.

Time	Activity	Purpose
10 min	Warm-up: rows of strokes and short forms	Loosen the hand and revise signs
10 min	Read printed shorthand aloud	Faster recognition of outlines
15 min	Theory: one rule or one set of short forms	A firm foundation
15 min	Graded dictation: one stretch passage, one settle passage	Speed
15 min	Transcribe the settle passage on the computer	Accuracy and typing speed
5 min	Check, list errors and drill wrong outlines	Fix weak spots

Do your typing drills as a separate short session each day, so that your typing speed rises alongside your shorthand.

The error notebook

Keep a separate small notebook for mistakes. Each time you write an outline wrongly or cannot read one back, write the correct outline in the error notebook and practise it in a row. Revise the error notebook at the start of each week. Most learners find the same few outlines going wrong again and again; this notebook catches them.

A weekly routine

- Once a week, take a longer, test-style dictation and transcribe it within a fixed time, as a recruitment test would.
- Calculate your error percentage and note it in a progress register with the date, speed and type of matter.
- Revise all the short forms you have learnt so far.
- Read one page of new printed shorthand to widen your vocabulary of outlines.

Writing comfortably

- Sit upright with the notebook flat on the desk and your forearm resting lightly on it.
- Hold the pen lightly; a tight grip tires the hand quickly.
- Write from a relaxed arm and fingers, keeping outlines small.
- Rest your eyes and stretch your fingers between sessions.

When progress seems to stop

Almost every learner reaches days when speed seems stuck at one level. This is normal. Keep the daily routine, go back to accurate settle passages for a few days, and revise your theory and short forms. Speed usually starts to move again once the basics are secure.

Regular short practice every day builds more skill than one long session once a week.

KEY POINTS

- Transcription is done on a computer, so typing speed and accuracy matter as much as shorthand.
- A balanced daily plan covers warm-up, reading, theory, dictation, transcription and error drill.
- An error notebook catches the outlines you get wrong again and again.
- Track your speed and error percentage weekly in a progress register.
- Steady daily practice beats occasional long sessions.

TRY THESE EXERCISES

1. Follow the sample daily plan for one full week and record your speed and error percentage on the last day.
2. Start an error notebook today: write five outlines you got wrong this week and practise each in a row of ten.
3. Time yourself typing a 300-word printed passage on the computer, then type it again from your own shorthand notes of the same passage and compare the times.

Practice questions

Choose the best answer for each question. The answers, with a short explanation, are in the next chapter.

1. What is shorthand?

- a) A short summary written at the end of a long letter or report
- b) A way of typing quickly with two fingers while looking at the keys
- c) A fast way of writing that uses signs for sounds, words and phrases
- d) A secret code that only the person who wrote it can ever read

2. What does a stenographer do?

- a) Takes down spoken words in shorthand and transcribes them into typed text
- b) Designs printed office stationery such as letterheads and visiting cards
- c) Repairs typewriters, printers and computer keyboards in an office
- d) Translates official documents from Hindi into English and back

3. Which shorthand system is widely taught for English in India?

- a) Braille
- b) Morse code
- c) Roman numerals
- d) Pitman shorthand

4. Which statement about Hindi shorthand is correct?

- a) Shorthand can be written only for the English language
- b) Hindi shorthand systems exist and are taught for Hindi stenography
- c) Hindi shorthand is simply another name for Hindi typing
- d) Hindi is written in shorthand using English spellings

5. Which of these is a typical use of stenography?

- a) Designing a logo for a company
- b) Recording court proceedings word for word
- c) Calculating GST on a sales invoice
- d) Replacing a faulty laptop keyboard

6. What does "writing by sound" mean in shorthand?

- a) Writing every letter of the spelling, including silent letters
- b) Writing only the words that the speaker says loudly
- c) Recording the speech on a phone and writing it later
- d) Writing the sounds you hear rather than the spelling of the word

7. In shorthand, the word "knife" is written using signs for which consonant sounds?

- a) N and F
- b) K, N and F
- c) K and N
- d) K, N, F and E

8. Why do "phone" and "fan" begin with the same shorthand stroke?

- a) Both have the same number of letters
- b) Both are spelt with the letter H
- c) Both begin with the same F sound
- d) Pitman has no stroke for the P sound

9. In Pitman shorthand, how are paired sounds such as P and B told apart?

- a) B uses the same stroke as P but is written in a different ink colour
- b) P is always written above the line and B is always written below it
- c) B is written as two P strokes placed side by side on the line
- d) They share one stroke shape, written light for one and thick for the other

10. Which letter is silent in the word "honest"?

- a) O
- b) H
- c) N
- d) T

11. What is an "outline" in shorthand?

- a) The margin of the notebook page
- b) A summary of the whole dictation
- c) The complete shorthand form of a word
- d) The first draft of a typed letter

12. In Pitman shorthand, how are vowel sounds mainly shown?

- a) By small dots and dashes placed beside the strokes
- b) By writing the strokes extra thick
- c) By capital letters written above the line
- d) By numbers written after each word

13. In Pitman shorthand, what can the position of an outline (above, on or through the line) indicate?

- a) The first vowel sound of the word
- b) The speed of the dictation
- c) The number of letters in the word
- d) Whether the word is a noun or a verb

14. In Pitman shorthand, what does a small circle attached to a stroke commonly add?

- a) A silent letter
- b) The number zero
- c) An S or Z sound
- d) The end of a paragraph

15. What should a beginner aim for first when writing outlines?

- a) The highest possible speed from the first day
- b) Neat, accurate outlines that can be read back easily
- c) Very large outlines that fill the page
- d) Pressing hard so that every stroke is thick

16. What are short forms in shorthand?

- a) Short sentences used to close business letters
- b) Abbreviations used in mobile text messages
- c) Any word that has fewer than four letters
- d) Special brief signs for very common words

17. In Pitman textbooks, what is a frequent word written with a single sign called?

- a) A diphthong
- b) A transcript
- c) A grammalogue
- d) A consonant

18. What is phrasing in shorthand?

- a) Writing each word of a sentence on a separate line of the notebook
- b) Underlining the important phrases of a passage after dictation
- c) Translating common English phrases into Hindi before writing
- d) Joining the outlines of two or more words without lifting the pen

19. Which of these is a rule of good phrasing?

- a) Join only words that naturally go together and keep the phrase easy to read
- b) Join as many words as possible into one outline on every line
- c) Phrase across a full stop whenever it saves a little more time
- d) Invent new phrases during a speed test to keep up with the reader

20. Why should short forms be revised every day?

- a) Because the short forms of a system are changed every year
- b) Forgetting one during dictation makes you hesitate and fall behind
- c) Because short forms are used only in Hindi shorthand, not English
- d) Because they are needed only in the theory stage, not in dictation

21. In which unit is shorthand speed commonly measured?

- a) Pages per hour
- b) Words per minute (wpm)
- c) Letters per second
- d) Lines per page

22. A passage dictated at 80 wpm for 5 minutes contains how many words?

- a) 400
- b) 85
- c) 160
- d) 800

23. At 100 wpm, how many words should the reader cover every 15 seconds?

- a) 15
- b) 50
- c) 100
- d) 25

24. What is graded dictation?

- a)** Dictation given only to students who have top grades
- b)** Dictation read at random speeds that keep changing
- c)** Dictation practice at speeds that increase step by step
- d)** Copying shorthand from a printed book

25. You miss a word while taking dictation. What should you do?

- a)** Stop and ask the reader to repeat the sentence
- b)** Go back and rewrite the whole line
- c)** Stop writing until the next paragraph begins
- d)** Leave a small gap and keep writing

26. In the "stretch and settle" approach, how is the settle passage taken?

- a)** At a speed far above your current level, to push the hand
- b)** Without writing anything, by listening to the passage only
- c)** At your comfortable speed, aiming for full accuracy
- d)** Only by reading the printed shorthand of the passage aloud

27. What is transcription?

- a)** Taking down dictation at high speed in a shorthand notebook
- b)** Converting shorthand notes into ordinary text, usually typed on a computer
- c)** Making photocopies of shorthand notes for the office file
- d)** Reading a marked passage aloud for someone else to take down

28. What should you do first, before typing a transcript?

- a)** Read through the whole passage of notes
- b)** Start typing from the last line of the notes
- c)** Cross out every outline you are unsure of
- d)** Type the first line as fast as you can

29. Why can spell check not catch every transcription mistake?

- a)** It may not flag a correctly spelt wrong word, such as "form" for "from"
- b)** It checks spelling only in documents that are typed in Hindi
- c)** It automatically changes every number in the document into words
- d)** It works only when the computer is not connected to the internet

30. A 400-word passage is transcribed with 20 mistakes. What is the error percentage?

- a)** 2%
- b)** 5%
- c)** 8%
- d)** 20%

31. When an outline in your notes is unclear, what usually helps most to decide the word?

- a) Choosing the longest word you know
- b) Leaving the whole sentence out of the transcript
- c) The meaning of the sentence around it
- d) Typing the shape of the outline as letters

32. Which habit helps prevent errors in figures, such as amounts in rupees?

- a) Rounding every amount to the nearest thousand rupees before typing
- b) Leaving numbers out of the transcript so that the officer adds them
- c) Typing all the numbers first and the rest of the text afterwards
- d) Writing figures clearly and checking every number twice when typing

33. How does touch typing help during transcription?

- a) It removes the need to proofread the transcript
- b) It converts shorthand into text automatically
- c) Your eyes can stay on the shorthand notes while you type
- d) It raises your shorthand speed in wpm directly

34. What is the purpose of an error notebook in shorthand practice?

- a) To store finished transcripts so that the teacher can mark them
- b) To record outlines you got wrong and practise their correct forms
- c) To note down the mistakes made by the person reading the dictation
- d) To write the date and time of each practice session only

35. Which approach builds shorthand skill most reliably?

- a) One very long practice session once a month before the test
- b) Taking dictation every day but never transcribing the notes
- c) Learning only the short forms and skipping dictation practice
- d) Short, regular daily practice of theory, dictation and transcription

Answers

1. (c) **A fast way of writing that uses signs for sounds, words and phrases.** Shorthand replaces full spellings with signs and abbreviations so that speech can be written as fast as it is spoken.
2. (a) **Takes down spoken words in shorthand and transcribes them into typed text.** Stenography is the skill of writing dictation in shorthand and then turning the notes into ordinary typed text.
3. (d) **Pitman shorthand.** Pitman shorthand, a phonetic system created by Sir Isaac Pitman, is widely taught for English in India. Braille and Morse code are not shorthand systems.
4. (b) **Hindi shorthand systems exist and are taught for Hindi stenography.** Separate Hindi shorthand systems exist; like Pitman, they write by sound, adapted to the sounds of Hindi.
5. (b) **Recording court proceedings word for word.** Courts are one of the main places where stenographers record statements, arguments and dictated orders.
6. (d) **Writing the sounds you hear rather than the spelling of the word.** Shorthand is phonetic: it records the sounds of a word and ignores silent letters and spelling exceptions.
7. (a) **N and F.** The K and the final E in "knife" are silent, so only the sounds you hear, N and F (with a vowel sign if needed), are written.
8. (c) **Both begin with the same F sound.** Shorthand follows sound: "ph" in "phone" sounds like F, so it is written with the same stroke as the F in "fan".
9. (d) **They share one stroke shape, written light for one and thick for the other.** In Pitman, the breathed sound of a pair is written with a light stroke and the voiced sound with a thick stroke of the same shape.
10. (b) **H.** "Honest" begins with a vowel sound because the H is not pronounced, so shorthand does not write it.
11. (c) **The complete shorthand form of a word.** An outline is a word written in shorthand: the joined consonant strokes plus any vowel signs, circles or hooks.
12. (a) **By small dots and dashes placed beside the strokes.** Pitman shows vowels with small dots and dashes; their type, weight and place beside the stroke tell you which vowel it is.
13. (a) **The first vowel sound of the word.** Position writing links the place of the outline on the line to the first vowel sound, which helps writers read outlines without vowel signs.
14. (c) **An S or Z sound.** In Pitman, a small circle on a stroke adds an S or Z sound without writing an extra stroke.

- 15. (b) Neat, accurate outlines that can be read back easily.** Accuracy and legibility come first; an outline that cannot be read back is useless at transcription time, however fast it was written.
- 16. (d) Special brief signs for very common words.** Short forms are brief signs for frequent words such as "the", "and" and "of", which saves time on every line.
- 17. (c) A grammalogue.** Pitman textbooks call a frequent word represented by a single sign a grammalogue; the sign itself is a logogram.
- 18. (d) Joining the outlines of two or more words without lifting the pen.** Phrasing joins words that naturally go together, such as "it is" or "thank you", saving the time of lifting the pen.
- 19. (a) Join only words that naturally go together and keep the phrase easy to read.** A phrase helps only if it joins easily and can be read back instantly, so it should follow natural word groups and stop at full stops.
- 20. (b) Forgetting one during dictation makes you hesitate and fall behind.** Short forms are the most frequent words, so any hesitation over one costs time again and again during dictation.
- 21. (b) Words per minute (wpm).** Shorthand speed, like typing speed, is stated in words per minute.
- 22. (a) 400.** 80 words in each minute for 5 minutes gives $80 \times 5 = 400$ words.
- 23. (d) 25.** 15 seconds is a quarter of a minute, and a quarter of 100 words is 25 words.
- 24. (c) Dictation practice at speeds that increase step by step.** In graded dictation you move up, often by about 10 wpm at a time, once you can take and transcribe the current speed accurately.
- 25. (d) Leave a small gap and keep writing.** Stopping makes you lose several more words; a gap can usually be filled from the context during transcription.
- 26. (c) At your comfortable speed, aiming for full accuracy.** The stretch passage pushes the hand faster; the settle passage, at a comfortable speed, builds neat and accurate notes for transcription.
- 27. (b) Converting shorthand notes into ordinary text, usually typed on a computer.** Transcription is the stage where notes become a complete, correctly spelt and punctuated typed text.
- 28. (a) Read through the whole passage of notes.** Reading the whole passage first lets you mark doubtful outlines and use the context to work them out before you type.
- 29. (a) It may not flag a correctly spelt wrong word, such as "form" for "from".** Spell check marks words it does not recognise; a real word used in the wrong place can pass unnoticed, so proofreading is still needed.
- 30. (b) 5%.** Error percentage = $(20 \div 400) \times 100 = 5\%$.
- 31. (c) The meaning of the sentence around it.** Context usually makes the intended word clear, because only one word will make sense in that place.

- 32. (d) Writing figures clearly and checking every number twice when typing.** A wrong figure, such as ! 1,500 for ! 15,000, changes the meaning of a document, so figures must be written clearly and checked twice.
- 33. (c) Your eyes can stay on the shorthand notes while you type.** With touch typing your fingers find the keys by memory, so you can keep reading your notes without losing your place.
- 34. (b) To record outlines you got wrong and practise their correct forms.** Writing each wrong outline correctly and drilling it catches the outlines that go wrong again and again.
- 35. (d) Short, regular daily practice of theory, dictation and transcription.** Daily practice that covers every part of the skill builds speed and accuracy together.

WORD LIST

Glossary

Consonant stroke

The basic straight or curved line that stands for a consonant sound in shorthand.

Contraction

In Pitman shorthand, a shortened outline used for a common longer word.

Dictation

Reading a passage aloud at a set speed for someone to take down.

Diphthong

A double vowel sound, such as the sound in "boy" or "now", which has its own sign in Pitman shorthand.

Error percentage

The number of mistakes divided by the number of words in a passage, multiplied by 100.

Graded dictation

Dictation practice at speeds that rise step by step.

Grammaloque

In Pitman shorthand, a frequent word that is written with a single sign.

Halving

In Pitman shorthand, writing a stroke at half its normal length to add a T or D sound.

Logogram

A single sign that stands for a whole word.

Longhand

Ordinary handwriting in which every word is spelt out in full.

Omission

A transcription error in which a dictated word or phrase is left out.

Outline

The complete shorthand form of a word.

Phonetic

Based on the sounds of speech rather than on spelling.

Phrasing

Joining the outlines of two or more words without lifting the pen.

Pitman shorthand

A phonetic shorthand system created by Sir Isaac Pitman and widely taught for English in India.

Position writing

In Pitman shorthand, writing an outline above, on or through the line to indicate its first vowel sound.

Proofreading

Checking a typed transcript carefully for mistakes against the notes.

Short form

A special brief sign for a very common word.

Shorthand

A fast writing method that uses signs and abbreviations for sounds, words and phrases.

Stenographer

A person who takes down speech in shorthand and transcribes it into typed text.

Stenography

The skill of writing in shorthand and transcribing the notes into ordinary text.

Substitution

A transcription error in which a wrong word is typed in place of the dictated one.

Transcription

Converting shorthand notes into ordinary text, usually typed on a computer.

Vowel sign

A small dot or dash written beside a stroke to show a vowel sound.

Words per minute (wpm)

The usual measure of shorthand and typing speed.



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