# Pitman Shorthand

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Introduction

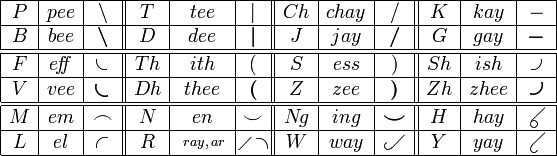
Pitman shorthand is a system of shorthand for the English language developed by Englishman Sir Isaac Pitman (1813 - 1897), who first presented it in 1837. Like most systems of shorthand, it is a phonetic system; the symbols do not represent letters, but rather sounds, and words are, for the most part, written as they are spoken. Shorthand was referred to as phonography in the 19th century. It was first used by newspapers who sent phonographers to cover important speeches, usually stating (as a claim of accuracy) that they had done so. The practice got national attention in the United States in 1858 during the Lincoln–Douglas Debates which were recorded phonographically. The shorthand was converted into words during the trip back to Chicago, where typesetters and telegraphers awaited them. Pitman shorthand was the most popular shorthand system used in the United Kingdom and the second most popular in the United States. One characteristic feature of Pitman shorthand is that unvoiced and voiced pairs of sounds (such as /p/ and /b/ or /t/ and /d/) are represented by strokes which differ only in thickness; the thin stroke representing "light" sounds such as /p/ and /t/; the thick stroke representing "heavy" sounds such as /b/ and /d/. Doing this requires a writing instrument responsive to the user's drawing pressure: specialist fountain pens (with fine, flexible nibs) were originally used, but pencils are now more commonly used.

What you already Know

Every language has vowels, but languages vary in the number of vowel sounds they use. While we learn A, E, I, O, U, and sometimes Y, English, depending on speaker and dialect, is generally considered to have at least 14 vowel sounds.

Consonants

The consonants in Pitman's shorthand are pronounced bee, pee, dee, tee, jay, chay, gay, kay, vee, eff, thee, ith, zee, ess, zhee, ish, em, el, en, ray ar, ing, way, yay, and hay. When both an unvoiced consonant and its corresponding voiced consonant are present in this system, the distinction is made by drawing the stroke for the voiced consonant thicker than the one for the unvoiced consonant. (Thus s is ⟨)⟩ and z is ⟨)⟩.) There are two strokes for r: ar and ray. The former assumes the form of the top right-hand quarter of a circle (drawn top-down), whereas the latter is like chay ⟨/⟩, only less steep (drawn bottom to top). There are rules governing when to use each of these forms

 Vowels

The long vowels in Pitman's shorthand are: /ɑː/, /eɪ/, /iː/, /ɔː/, /oʊ/, and /uː/. The short vowels are /æ/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /ʌ/, and /ʊ/. The long vowels may be remembered by the sentence, "Pa, may we all go too?" /pɑː | meɪ wiː ɔːl ɡoʊ tuː/, and the short vowels may be remembered by the sentence, "That pen is not much good" /ðæt pɛn ɪz nɒt mʌt͡ʃ ɡʊd/. A vowel is represented by a dot or a dash, which is written with either a light stroke (for a short vowel) or heavy stroke (for a long vowel). For example, sate is written as ")•|", but set is written as ")·|"; seat is written as ").|", but sit is written as ").|". Vowels are further distinguished by their position relative to the consonant stroke – beginning, middle or end – for a total of 12 possible combinations. Another feature of Pitman's shorthand allows most vowels to be omitted in order to speed up the process of writing. As mentioned above, each vowel is written next to either the beginning, middle or end of the consonant stroke. Pitman's shorthand is designed to be written on lined paper and when a word's first vowel is a "first position" vowel (i.e. it is written at the beginning of the stroke), the whole shorthand outline for the word is written above the paper's ruled line. For a second position vowel, the outline is written on the line, and for a third position vowel, it is written through the line. In this way, the position of the outline indicates that the first vowel can only be one of four possibilities. In most cases, this means that the first and often all the other vowels can be omitted entirely.

Compound Vowels

There are twelve vowels in Shorthand which are represented by dots and dashes. These twelve vowels are equally divided into three places i.e. four in first place, four in second place and four in third place. 2 Vowels are represented by dots and dashes written along side the consonant strokes.

 Diphthongs

There are four diphthongs in Pitman's shorthand, representing /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /juː/, as in the words "I enjoy Gow's music." The first three appear as small checkmarks; the "ew" sound is written as a small arch. Both "ie" and "oi" are written in first position, while "ow" and "ew" are written in third position. In the same way, the whole outline is placed above, on or through the paper's ruled line. If the diphthong is followed by a neutral vowel, a little flick is added.

Circles Circles are of two sizes – small and large. A small circle represents 's' (sing) and 'z' (gaze). A large circle at the beginning of a word represents the double consonant 'sw' (sweep). Elsewhere it represents 's-s': a sequence of two 's' or 'z' sounds with a vowel in between (crisis, crises or exercise). The vowel in the middle may be any of the vowels or diphthongs, though any vowel other than 'e' must be notated inside the circle. Loops Loops are of two sizes – small and large. The small loop represents 'st' and 'sd' (cost and based). The large loop represents 'ster' (master or masterpiece). The 'ster' loop is not used at the beginning of a word; i.e, it would not be used to notate the word sterling. Hooks  **Stroke-initial hooks**. For straight strokes, an initial hook may be written in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. A clockwise initial hook represents 'r' after the stroke (tray, Nichrome, bigger). A counter-clockwise initial hook represents 'l' after the stroke (ply, amplify, angle). For curved strokes, the hook is written inside the curve and a small hook represents 'r' while a large hook represents 'l'.  **Stroke-final hooks**. For straight strokes, a final hook may be written in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. A clockwise final hook represents 'en' after the stroke (train, chin, genuine), while a counter-clockwise final hook represents 'eff' or 'vee' after the stroke (pave, calf, toughen). For curved strokes, the hook is written inside the curve and it represents 'n' after the stroke (men, thin).  **'Shun' hook**. A large hook written at the end of a stroke represents the sound 'shun' or 'zhun', as in fusion or vision. The 'shun' hook is written either to the left or right depending on the positions of other attachments and vowels in the stroke. Phraseography

Phrasing in shorthand is often referred to "phraseography" which simply means "writing phrases" and the shorthand outline for the phrase is called a "phraseogram". A phrase in shorthand is the joining of two or more outlines into one outline. The purpose of shorthand phrasing is to: Gain speed.

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Loops

The loops 'st' or 'str' when written initially read first, and finally read last. When a small circle is attached to the final 'st' or 'str' loops, that small circle 's' is read last. The 'str' loop cannot be written when a strongly sounded vowel occurs between 'st' and 'r'.

Initial & Alternate Hooks

**Halving** Many strokes (both straight and curved) may be halved in length to denote a final 't' or 'd'. The halving principle may be combined with an initial or final hook (or both) to make words such as "trained" appear as a single short vertical light stroke with an initial and final hook. There are some exceptions to avoid ambiguous forms; for example, a straight-r stroke can't be halved if it's the only syllable, because that might be confused for some other short-form (logogram) consisting of a short-stroke mark in that direction ("and" or "should"). **Doubling** If a word contains 'ter', 'der', 'ture', 'ther', or 'dher' — for example, in matter, nature, or mother — the preceding stroke is written double the size. There are exceptions to avoid ambiguous forms; for example, "leader" is not written as a doubled-l but as l plus a hooked-d representing "dr". In contrast, "later", for example, is written with a doubled-l. Straight strokes at the beginning of a word are not doubled unless they have a final hook or attached diphthong..

The Aspirate

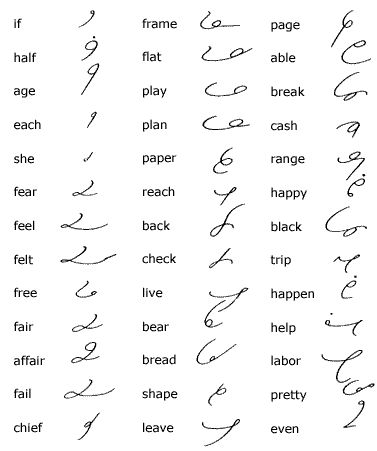
The 'aspirate' 'h' is provided with two alternative forms; one is downward form and another is upward form. The upward form of 'h' is used most frequently. The downward form of 'h' is used when it stands alone and in it derivatives and compound words.

Halving & Double Principals

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Diphthong signs can be attached and abbreviated with some strokes whereas Diphone signs cannot be attached and abbreviated. Diphthong signs are placed on first and third vowel places of a consonant whereas Diphone signs are placed on all the three places of a Consonant.

Short Forms

 Exercises

Exercise will be coming soon

References

* Pitman, Isaac. Pitman Shorthand Instructor and Key: A Complete Exposition of Sir Isaac Pitman's System of Shorthand. Carlton, Victoria (Australia): Pitman Australia. ISBN 0-85896-065-6.
* Pitman, Isaac (1845). A Manual of Phonography; or, Writing by Sound (7 ed.). London: S. Bagster. Retrieved 4 November 2010.