

LORD HAILSHAM'S SHORTHAND

Throughout his career Lord Hailsham used his own personal shorthand to make diary entries and notes. A reference to 'speedhand'¹ suggests it may be based on this system. The notes below are provided to assist researchers in understanding passages written in this shorthand.

The shorthand is fundamentally **phonetic**. So for example 'ks' represents case and 'lj' large.

It also makes **extensive use of Greek letters** to extend the normal alphabet. eg

θ for the sound 'th' ʧ for 'ch' Φ for 'ph'

There are also **special characters** such as

- for 'ent'] for 'st' , for 'ee'

Vowels are often omitted, as are word endings, so we are left, for example, with 'bvx' to mean obviously, 'psl' for personally, 'nfk' infact, 'mj' imagine etc

Often the **same string of letters may mean different things** in different contexts eg.

'se' can mean seated, seat, scene, seen, see or seem ;
'Kk' can mean clerk or character

A string of letters may equate to more than one word. The longest seen so far was 'taushbma' (that use had been made of) but shorter examples 'tz' (it was) 'wv' (out of) etc are quite common.

There are some **additional conventions**. Capital 'O' means other and capital 'U' under. 'η' (with a dot underneath) means not. 'θ' on its own means this.

An example, and its deduced meaning, is given below:-

Ap. Os notes l 30 Dat of 1/2 42 m l4 and 2 η
report. These notes will show that the offer of £42 million launching aid was not

The examples examined so far have yielded a list of over 500 shorthand strings and their 'plain text' equivalents. This list is available on an additional sheet. In order to input the data into a spreadsheet we have had to use approximations to some of the non-standard characters. The originals, their meanings and the typed form we used, are shown below.

Σ	ζ	'sh' as in Shropshire	ʧ	y	'ch' as in much
]]	'st' as in must , stand,	u,	,	'ee' as in any
j	j	'tion'	θ	θ	'th' as in this, that, or at the end of a word 'ty'
/	/	seems to be word endings, usually 'ss'		y	'oi' as in oil, appoint

¹ In the typed up version of a statement regarding an accident on the M1 on 9 June 1985