

「C」

Korthic Shorthand

**A cursive, orthographic shorthand that
strives for legibility, and happy wrists.
Designed with modern tablets in mind,
and open-licensed for you to extend
and share.**

"y ~ c k - ~~~~~,
k - ~~~~~. y ~
c k - ~~~~~, k
- ~~~~~, k
~~~~~
~~~~~"  
-「biji」

# About Korthic

Korthic is an attempt to create a way of writing the Latin alphabet. My goal was to create something with the following criteria:

- minimal wrist strain
- works well on tablets
- doesn't stray from the starting line
- produces words whose meaning is unambiguous and easy to read.

Korthic is a 1:1 letter replacement for any language that uses the Latin alphabet. It's designed for clean, flowing, and unambiguous writing. There aren't hundreds of abbreviated words or phonetic spellings to memorize.

Korthic isn't designed for live transcription. There are far better options if that's what you need. It's designed to be "fast enough" to capture thoughtful words. Think journaling, and storytelling. It's fast enough for quick reminders, but you won't fit much of it on a Post-It note.

It's also great for keeping diary entries, and private notes private. 🙄

## Origins

I've written large portions of my novels by hand. Printing proved frustratingly slow, and left my wrist aching after a handful of pages. I switched to standard cursive, but a couple-hundred pages later I was straining to read what I'd written. At speed, too many of my scribbled characters looked like each other. I'd found great joy in writing portions of my novels by hand, and wasn't willing to give that up. I started looking at shorthands. It seemed the obvious

solution, but which one to use?

Many were beautiful to look at, but far too ambiguous when it came to reading. Some had intractable numbers of special forms to memorize. Some were phonographic, and used sounds that varied wildly from how people in my part of the world pronounce things. Some had weird spellings that annoyed me like an unscratchable mental itch. Some wandered up and down the page like a drunken sailor.

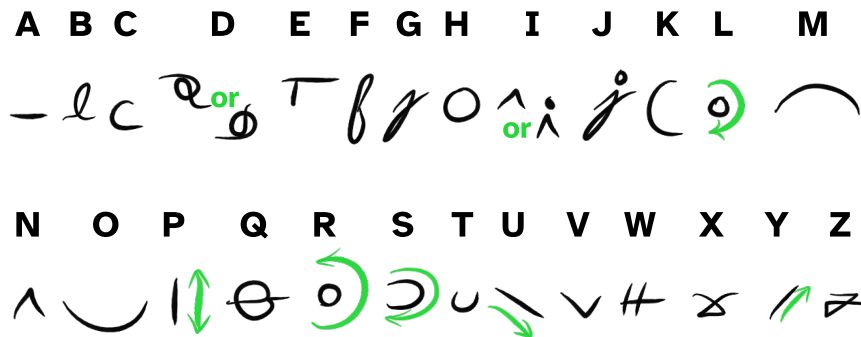
Some - like Graffiti - looked great in the sample material, but had multiple sets of identical characters differentiated only by size. Some relied on the thick and thin lines that can be created with the fountain pens of the era. I do most of my writing on a tablet, or using modern ball-point pens.

I spent a lot of time learning shorthands that looked promising, but ultimately didn't work with my brain, or body. Orthographic Shorthand felt "almost, but not quite" right, so I started tweaking it one letter at a time. Eventually it became unrecognizable, and unreadable by Orthographic users. I needed a new name for it, so I added a K, because my name starts with a K.

## Updates

For the latest version of Korthic please visit <https://korthic.fyi>

# Korthic 2.0 Alphabet



## Shortened Forms

and:

is:

## Punctuation

- Proper nouns are surrounded with corner brackets.

Ex.: 「Ada Lovelace」

- Emphasis is added with double hill brackets

Ex.: «fascinating»

- New sentences start with a small backslash under the first letter. \

Ex.:

- Hyphens have a crossing line to distinguish them from the letter "a".

Ex.:

- All other punctuation is written normally.

# Korthic Rules

## General

### Connecting Letters

If a connecting line is so small as to be indistinguishable from a connector, it's not a thing.

### Capitalization

There is no capitalization in Korthic. We use a grave under the first letter of a sentence to indicate the beginning of the sentence, and proper nouns are surrounded with corner brackets.

### Repeated letters

Instead of writing a letter twice we use a doubling character that looks like a greater-than with a flattened top. >

Ex.: bass fool

When a letter is repeated more than once we add an acute accent under the doubling character for each additional repeated letter.

Ex.: hmmm hmmm

At the start of sentences you combine the doubling character with the start of sentence indicator.

Ex.:

The only letter that doesn't use the doubling character is "p". Instead we write the character twice, and frequently use that to help keep things from moving too far vertically.

Ex.: "happy" "loopy"

## Proper Nouns

Proper nouns are always enclosed in corner brackets.

Ex.: 「Ada Lovelace」

## Separating or distinguishing Letters

We use a single crossing line between two letters whenever the intent is ambiguous. For example, the following two lines are intended to be “OU” and “ON” but the difference is subtle, and can disappear entirely when writing quickly. To make the intent unambiguous we add a crossing line to denote the division between the letters.

Ex.: Ambiguous “OU”  “ON” 

Unambiguous “OU”  “ON” 

## Relative letter sizing

“H” and “L” are both circles. “T” and “O” are both u-shaped curves. “I” and “N” are both upside-down “V”s. There isn’t a correct size to draw any of these. It doesn’t even matter if you’re consistent from word to word. What matters is that you consistently make one of them “big”. In practice I’ve found that “N” and “I” are the only place where this can be problematic. That’s why you can always dot your “I” to make things clearer.

## Letter Specific Guidance

### N vs. I

“N” and “I” are the same shape but N should be larger. When written in isolation, context is usually sufficient to make it clear which one you are looking at, however a dot can always be added above an “I” (think “i”). You can do this to aid in clarity, or simply because you prefer it that way.

Ex. “aid” (could be “and” too)  vs “aid” 

Note that “and” should always be written using its simplified form: 

### H vs. L

If you find it hard to tell the difference between an “h” and an “L” you probably need to be making your “H”s larger circles.

Ex.: “happy”  “floppy” 

### D

“D” can be written upwards, downwards, or even sideways. The sideways variant is only ever used when coming off of an “O”, and it - unfortunately - resembles a “Q” like this, but my hands just kept wanting to make it.

Ex.: “sad”  “pad”  “odd” 

### E

“E” is drawn with a line coming off of one side of another at a near perpendicular angle. The following are all valid ways of representing an “E”

Ex.: “pelt”  “one”   
“help”  “me” 

When followed by an “A” draw a horizontal line over the tail of the “E”. You can continue from the end of the “E” or the “A”. Do whichever you prefer.

“great”  “eat” 

“mean”  “mean” 

## O

When followed by “A”, “O” behaves in the same way as “E”.

Ex.: “oat”  or “oat” 

## P

As noted earlier, “P” is the only letter that is drawn doubled. It can be drawn ascending or descending. Use whichever direction will help to keep the word from becoming too tall.

Ex.: “happy”  and  “pappus”

## S

“S” has special cases resulting from its backwards curve.  Whenever things would start moving backwards you’ll generally want to cross it diagonally to get back to the starting line before starting the next letter. 

Ex.: “smile”  and “stop” 

You don’t need to do this if the letters are moving downward.

Ex.: “schwing” 

Sometimes you’ll cross your “s” for purely aesthetic reasons.

Ex.: “see”  “see” 

Sometimes you’ll do it for clarity. With “SL” and “SR” things can become confusing if you don’t cross your “S”

Ex.: Confusing vs. clear “slop”  vs. 

## W

When starting a word with “W” it is easiest to make the two lines of the “W” before the line it will be crossing. For example, in order to write “who” we would write the two crossing lines, and then fit the horizontal line to them.

Ex.: First the “W”  then the rest  together as 

When writing quickly the two lines of the “W” will inevitably end up joining. This is fine.

Ex.: 

## Y

In my experience, the only oddity about “Y” is that when following an “S” it can look like a simple connecting line. To avoid this, be sure to make your “Y” tall and thus more intentional looking.

Ex.: ambiguous vs. clear “says”  

# Letter Combinations

## Shortened Forms

### T+H

The “T” widens and flows directly into the “H” to facilitate quick, easy movement.

Ex.: “TH”  “the” 

### I+N+G

We drop the “N” in “ING” for both aesthetics, and ease of writing. When you need to disambiguate between “ING” and “IG” add a dot over the “I”

Ex.: “ING”  “thing” 

## Non-obvious letter combinations

Examples of how to handle common ones.

### C+H

Ex.: “CH”  “chip” 

### S+H

Ex.: “SH”  “ship” 

### C+T

Ex.: “CT”  or  “tract” 

### S+E

Ex.: “SE”  or 

### S+C+H

Ex.: “SCH”  “Schwinn” 

### B+E

Ex.: “BE”  “beet” 

### I+T+I

Ex.: “ITI” 

Without dots is valid, but harder to read. 

“transition” 

### R+L

Ex.: “RL”  “girl” 

### M+S

Ex.: “MS”  “arms” 

### C+O

Ex.: “CO”  “comb” 

### K+S

Ex.: “KS”  “thanks” 

### S+K

Ex.: “SK”  “ask” 

## P+L

Ex.: "PL"  "PL" 

"please"  or 

## P+R

Ex.: "PR"  "PR"   
"pram"  or 

## O+T

Ex.: "OT"  "cot" 

## T+I

Ex.: "TI"  "tin" 

# Example Texts

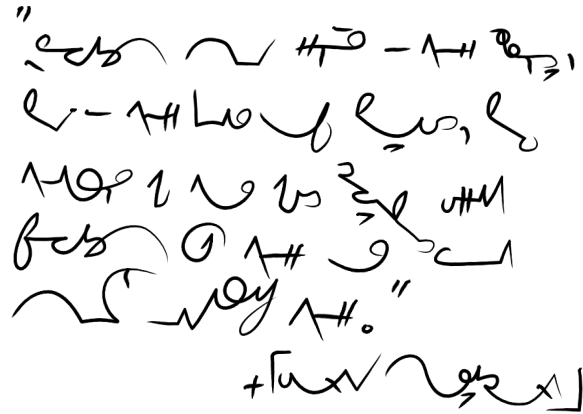
A collection of quotes and their translations for your consideration.

"If we define an American fascist as one who in case of  
conflict puts money and power ahead of human beings, then  
there are undoubtedly several million fascists in the United  
States." - Henry Wallace

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"When Fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the  
flag and carrying a cross." - James Waterman Wise

"When Fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the  
flag and carrying a cross." - James Waterman Wise



Fascism may wear a new dress, buy a new pair of boots, but neither it nor its succubus twin make anything new.”  
- Tony Morrison

## Thoughts on Going Faster

Most shorthands employ one of the following strategies to enable faster writing:

- Exclude the vowels and sometimes add rules for excluding other letters.
- Phonetic spellings
- Memorizing long lists of “shortened forms”

What follows are my very opinionated thoughts on those options as they pertain to Korthic, and why they’re not included. Regardless of what you try, keep in mind that the only thing that matters is if it works for your brain, and body. It should also be something that you’ll be able to read years after you write it.

### Vowel Exclusions

I’ve specifically avoided any vowel exclusion rules because they rely too heavily on the context of your sentence in order to decipher. I want every word to be readable without having to consider the surrounding sentence.

### Phonetic Spellings

I love this approach, but there are two problems with me documenting it for you. The biggest is that word pronunciation differs wildly from region to region. Even if you and I could agree on a spelling for each sound, we will frequently use different sounds to say the same word.

The next is the spelling of each sound. For me, this has always been a mixed bag. Some spellings seem obvious, while others seem nonsensical, or irritatingly strange.

If you choose to explore this approach I’d advise that you make yourself a clear key. Reference each sound with example words that you’ll be able to refer to as you’re learning. This key will also be critical when you find an example of you’re writing in a drawer years later.

### Shortened Forms

Korthic has two shortened forms (“and” and “is”). There is certainly room for more. Yet, I’ve found that most of the common words seem to be quick and easy to write as they are.

There are two other reasons I haven’t really explored this. The first is that I have severe memory problems. There’s no way I’d memorize a hundred, or even fifty shortened ways of writing words. I’d also like anyone who attempts to read my writing to be able to do so without having to memorize them all too. The second is that I want things to be as unambiguous as possible, and this approach seems counter to that.

## Making it Yours

Korthic isn't perfect. It's not even perfect for me. I'm still not happy with the "D" but none of the things I've tried to replace it with have worked as well as what I currently have.

I'd recommend starting by exploring the tools [Orthic](#) has for simplifying, and expediting its use. They won't all be directly applicable because of the different alphabet, but the core ideas - like abbreviating common endings - should work well.

## Credit

NotSteve1075 has been sharing their exploration of - and opinions on - various shorthand systems on the FastWriting subreddit. Their work helped me learn what was possible.

Korthic wouldn't exist without Hugh L. Callendar's "Orthographic Cursive Shorthand" (commonly known as Orthic).

It also wouldn't exist without the support of my amazing wife.

## About The Author

Korthic was created by a trans woman who believes that trans lives matter, trans kids need protecting, black lives matter, queer lives matter, and no form of bigotry is ever acceptable. If you're not ok with that, please go away and find yourself another shorthand to play with.

If you've got questions, please contact me on the Fediverse at [@masukomi@connectified.com](mailto:@masukomi@connectified.com) I'm terrible at email, but you can also try emailing [masukomi@masukomi.org](mailto:masukomi@masukomi.org) with "Korthic" in the subject line.

This is version 1.1 of the Korthic 2.0 manual.



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