



TOOLS FOR LIFE

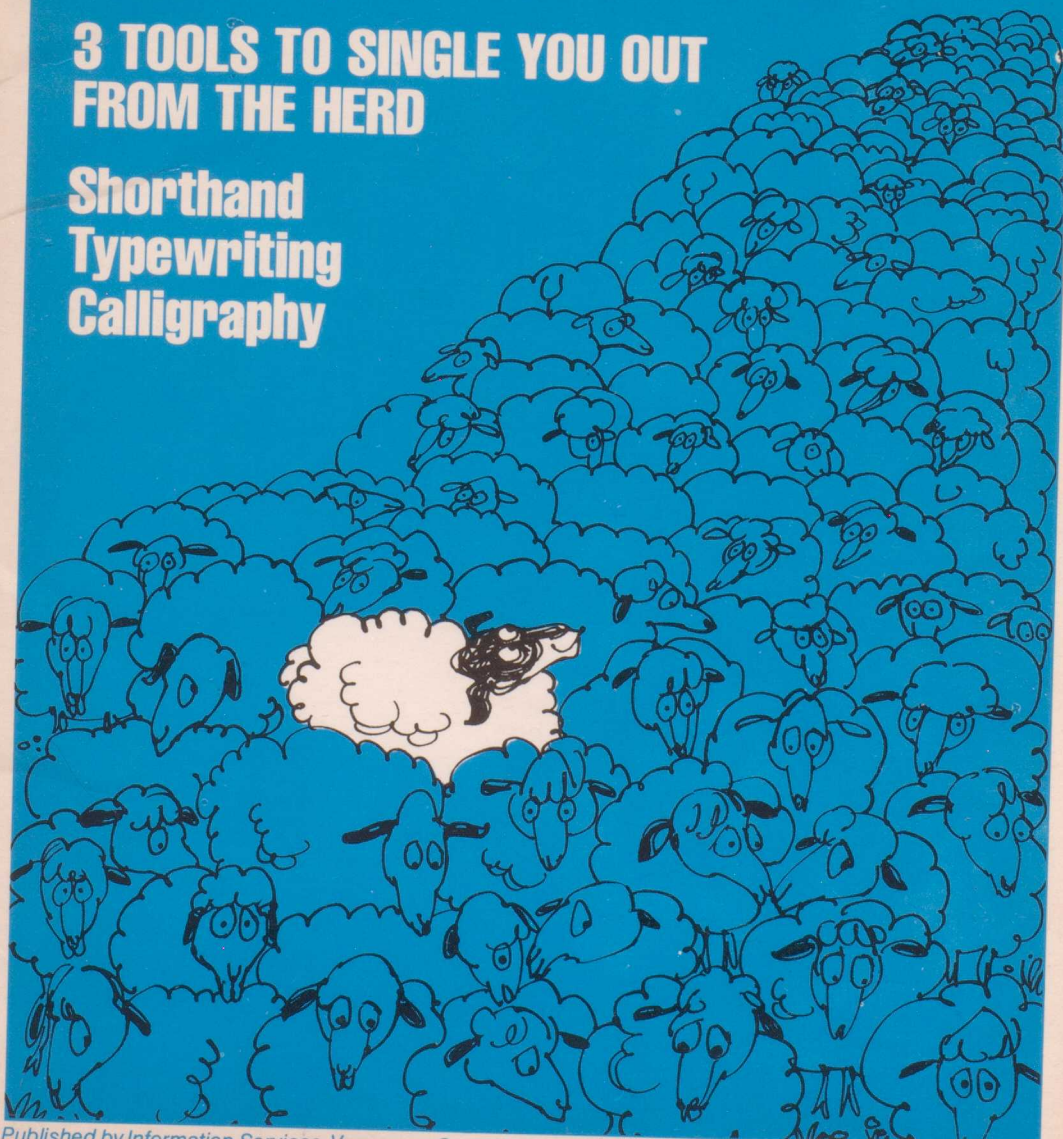
A Series of Self-Help Booklets designed to help students beyond the classroom into Life.

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No.7

3 TOOLS TO SINGLE YOU OUT FROM THE HERD

**Shorthand
Typewriting
Calligraphy**



TOOLS FOR LIFE/Number 7

**3 TOOLS TO SINGLE YOU OUT FROM
THE HERD**

Shorthand Typewriting Calligraphy



by Geoff Spencer
Director of Information Services, Vancouver Community College

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There may well come a time, according to political idealists and writers of social science-fiction, when we shall no longer have to 'work' for a living. An all-embracing state will provide jobs for those who want to work, and for those who do not it will nonetheless provide the necessary means of existence. 'Competition,' as we understand it, will have lost its meaning. The idea that men and women, moved by ambition, can improve their lot by working harder than the average of their fellow men, will have vanished into limbo.

In fact, there are already countries where, in certain circumstances, it is more profitable for the individual to draw social welfare benefits than to work (e.g. Britain). There is thus little incentive for anyone to acquire greater skills with which to compete in the job market.

Generally speaking, this does not apply to North America (or not yet), where free enterprise and competition are still dominant. Those who combine greater knowledge and skills with hard work usually get more money than those who don't. The employers who pay most are to be found in private industry, representing men and women who, themselves having worked hard to achieve success, are on the lookout for those selfsame qualities in others.

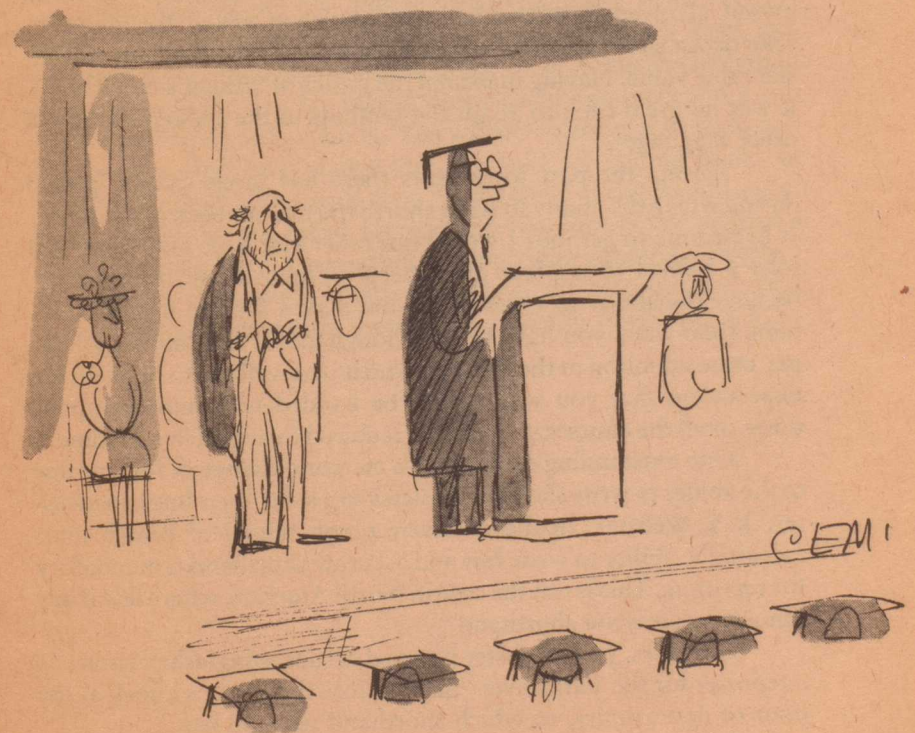
This is the real world, motivated by the strong urge of personal gain and often buffeted by the chill wind of competition. Increasingly, it tends to differ from the sheltered world created by current educational theory, which tends to play down the role of grading or competitive examinations.

In real life, you will likely have to compete for the most desirable jobs. Whatever you have to offer will be compared with what other job applicants have to offer. The one who has most to offer will usually get the job. In a run-of-the-mill batch of applicants, the successful one will, in other words, be *different* from the rest. He will stand out from the herd. He will have something which, by its essential difference, will capture the interest of the potential employer and predispose him towards selecting the outstanding candidate. Business is a Darwinian process, offering survival and progression by a natural selection of the fittest.

I'm going to suggest three personal tools — 'skills' if you like — the acquisition of which may enable you to become that outstanding candidate. I refer to shorthand, typewriting, and calligraphy (the art of attractive handwriting). On the face of it, they make up an oddly assorted package, typewriting and calligraphy amounting al-

most to a contradiction in terms. However, I hope to show you by practical examples how the command of these skills may often give you that vital edge in a competitive situation.

First, you can teach yourself the basics of all three in a matter of weeks or months without detracting from your formal classroom studies. Fluency and ease then becomes a matter of practice.



"And now to describe to you in terms of the harshest reality what you'll be up against."

Shorthand

There are several systems from which to choose. I can speak with personal knowledge of only one: Pitman's. This is a phonetic system, which means that the symbols are designed to represent spoken sounds. A phonetic system seems to me to have the advantage that it can readily be adapted to recording other languages as well as English. Don't imagine that you're never likely to find yourself in circumstances where this might be useful.

In Canada, for example, we are officially bi-lingual. The ability to take down French as well as English will be of increasing value as bi-lingualism takes hold. Much wider job opportunities are likely to open up for those who acquire this second language as well as the ability to take it down in shorthand.

During one mildly stimulating period of World War II I found myself involved in inter-allied staff duties in which the ability to take down shorthand in English, French, and German, was of considerable value. Having mastered the basics of Pitman's in my teens, it was no great trick to adapt the symbols to the spoken sounds of other languages.

During the past forty years there has rarely been a period during which the ability to write shorthand has not been of use to me. It helped me to get jobs I would not otherwise have got. In several jobs it helped to implant more deeply essential job information, because the ability to write shorthand makes for less frantic scribbling than when you have to write longhand. It thus allows you to pay more attention to the lecturer. And it is as well not to bank on the expectation that you will always be handed neat mimeographed notes of all the courses you may be required to attend in a lifetime.

One outstanding example of a meteoric change of fortune due to the ability to write shorthand relates to a local open-line broadcaster, Jack Webster. In the relatively tough school of British journalism, the ability to write fast and accurate shorthand is mandatory for reporters. This is not the case in North America, where few if any reporters can write shorthand.

For years, Jack Webster pursued an undistinguished career as a reporter for the Vancouver "Sun" before there was a knock at the door of opportunity, to which shorthand was the key.

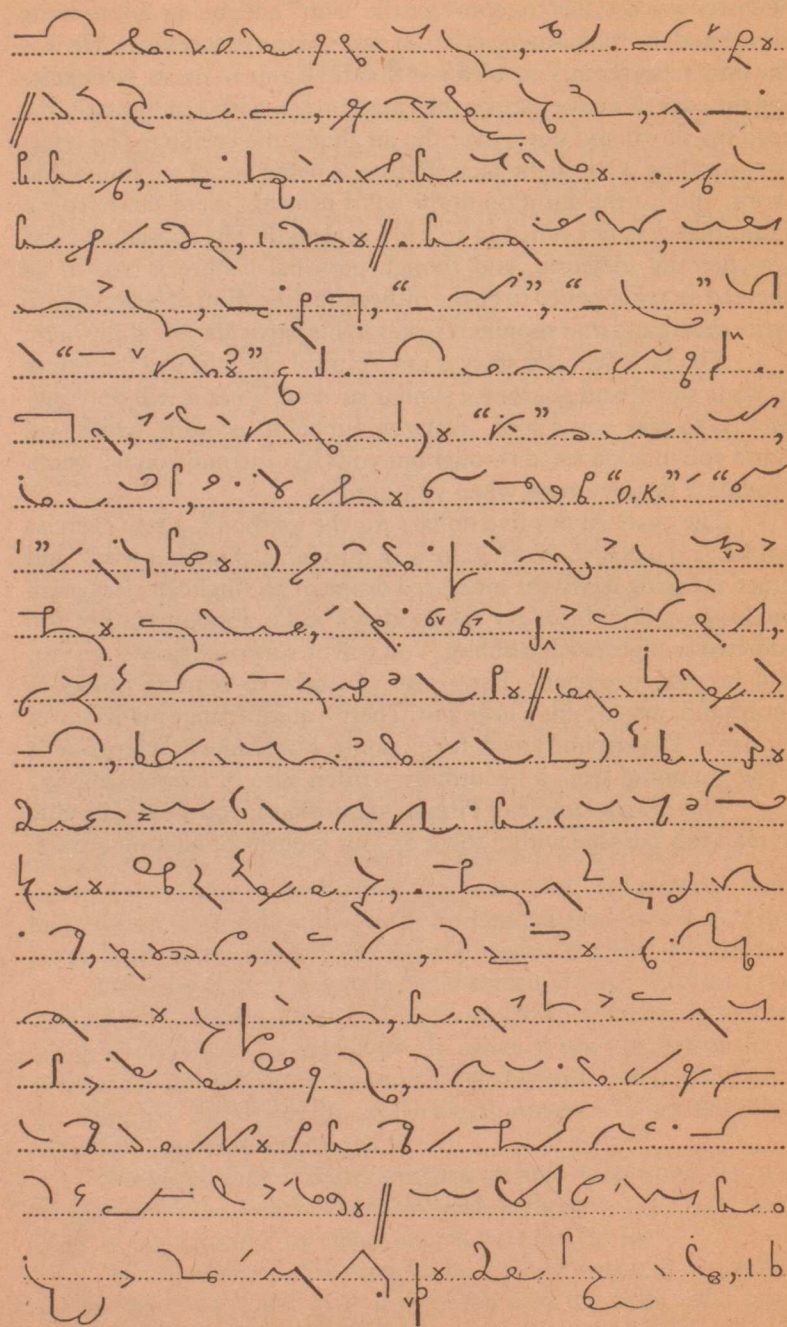
An unsavoury police scandal, involving charges of corruption against the then Chief of Police, broke into the open. The court hearings became a local cliff hanger and filled the headlines. Jack

Webster was detailed to report for the "Sun" and, being able to write shorthand, he took down verbatim notes of the proceedings. He was the only reporter in Vancouver at that time able to do so. Recognizing the edge this gave him, he then made a deal with a radio station to read his shorthand notes over the air that same evening. The effect was startling. Overnight Jack Webster's name became a household word, and for the duration of the court hearings there was hardly a radio that was not tuned in to his wavelength. His subsequent rise was literally meteoric, and though personal calibre is not to be sneezed at, it happened to be the offbeat qualification of being able to write shorthand that supplied the key to his particular breakthrough.

The Jack Webster story is not a typical one, nor will the ability to write shorthand guarantee similar success. What it will do, however, is to give you a tool, relatively simple to acquire, which will stand you in good stead throughout your life and may, on occasion, provide a decisive edge when you need it.

The cost? About five dollars for the textbook, a few exercise books, and a pencil. Work your way through a chapter a week, and practice taking down the measured drone of an Anglican clergyman on Sundays (I did), or try taking down radio announcers not too addicted to highspeed gabbling. You will be surprised how soon you will become proficient. Later you can take to reading books in shorthand, which adds a little zest. There's quite a range published in Pitman's. The last one I read, for example, was Somerset Maugham's "The Summing Up," a beautifully written slice of autobiography.

This is an example of Pitman's shorthand: you should be able to read this passage within three or four months of making a start.



Typewriting

Fluent touch-typing can be self-taught within a matter of days. I say this on the basis of personal experience. There are no doubt books on the subject, quite apart from manuals published by typewriter manufacturers. Personally, I've never used one. Having acquired my first portable in my late teens, I spent several days solidly banging away at the keyboard, using all my fingers and thumbs. I still don't know whether what I do is kosher IBM or Olivetti dogma, but it works, and I can turn all the typing I need at a rate of knots.

Typing is an essential skill in today's society. Not only is it an invaluable time-saver in dealing with the routine correspondence of a proliferating bureaucracy, but it is a 'must' in such things as job resumés, where the prospective employer is conditioned to receiving submissions in typed form. The substance no less than the form of job resumés is dealt with in booklet No. 1, "Creative Job Search." A neatly typed job resumé, all else being equal, will get you on to the short list. A badly typed resumé is likely to eliminate you at the first screening.

Buy yourself a good portable as soon as you can afford it. Avoid bargains: in this, as in most things in life, you get what you pay for. A quality portable may well last you a lifetime.

A word about typefaces. If you're offered a choice, avoid flashy or 'arty' typestyles (e.g. "Spencerian," the aping of a manual script). Choose a straightforward face, and preferably 'Elite' (with 12 characters to the inch rather than 'Pica' (10 characters to the inch).

Not this:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

but this:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

You can use a typewriter for 95% of your written work. How about the other 5%? For that I'm going to recommend that you think about acquiring possibly the most distinctive — and if you do, probably the most effective — of the three life tools under discussion: a style of personal handwriting that will set you apart from the herd.



Calligraphy

Handwriting is perhaps the most neglected of personal skills. The typewriter and the ballpoint pen added to academic indifference have produced a state of affairs in which most people's handwriting tends to resemble chicken tracks. Even in academic circles it is no longer considered important. The concept of 'Writing Master' as applied to Arrighi, Palatino, or George Bickham, no longer exists. Once prized by our forefathers, handwriting must now be numbered among the lost arts.

However, in this very fact lies an opportunity to stand out from the herd. Simply because it is so rare, a beautiful and legible hand creates an immediate impact. Thus whenever you want to make an impression, to highlight the difference between what you have to offer in relation to everyone else, use calligraphy. Calligraphy is handwriting raised to an artform.

Anyone who puts his mind to it can become an accomplished calligrapher in six weeks. I did it at the ripe old age of 45, and never regretted it. More, it has become a source of considerable pride and personal satisfaction. It is a journey of re-discovery.

There are many handwriting styles. In Charles Dicken's day, copperplate was the 'in' thing. Today, mainly due to the efforts of an Englishman, Edward Johnson, the type of italic script used in the papal chanceries of the 16th and 17th centuries is generally regarded as the most acceptable and pleasing style. Written even at speed, it is far more attractive and legible than the ordinary handwriting taught in most schools.

Devote half an hour each day for six weeks to practising italic script, and you will have acquired a hand so different that it will open up doors you never dreamed of. Once you have mastered the basic alphabet, the secret is to write one letter each day to a friend or relative, a kind of daily discipline.

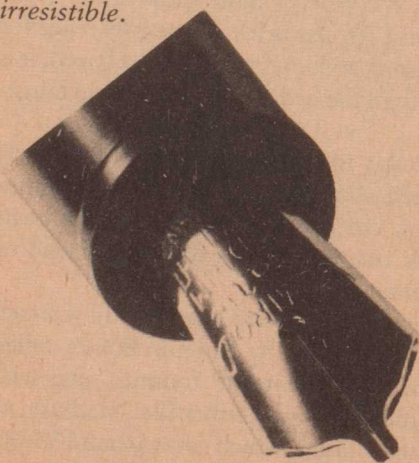
The cost is low and the instruments are simple: buy yourself for .65¢ a Puffin Picture Book published by Penguin Books called 'Better Handwriting.' Then buy an 'Osmiroid' fountain pen with interchangeable straight-edge nibs (choosing either fine, medium, or broad: or all three if you want to splurge), which costs around \$5.00, and you're in business.

Now I'm not going to try to sell you on italic script as an exercise in aesthetics, though that's part of it. I'm going to concentrate on demonstrating its practical value as a tool for personal advancement. I'll single out two examples out of many.

Several years ago my family doctor gave up private practice in order to join the medical faculty of UBC. I asked him to recommend another doctor. He gave me three names. One of them was, in his opinion, the best, but he added that he would be unlikely to accept my family as new patients because he already had more than he could handle, and his list was closed.

I wrote to the doctor in italic script, specifying the circumstances and requesting that he be good enough to accept us as patients. Within 48 hours his nurse had 'phoned to say that he would, commenting on an aside that he had been intrigued by the letter.

Now let's assume that you are on the prowl for a job. You've adopted all the wrinkles contained in "Creative Job Search" so that, amongst other things, you're sitting on top of one hundred immaculately typed and quick-printed job resumés. You have three preferred target employers. Don't just send them the resumé with a stereotyped covering letter: send them a hand-written letter in italic script enclosing your resumé. And if you can manage to make the contents of the covering letter as intriguing as the form in which it is cast, you cannot fail to command attention: **YOU HAVE SINGLED YOURSELF OUT FROM THE HERD.** You have shown yourself to be *different*. Hopefully, the net result will have been to make yourself irresistible.



*I am me.
I am separate.
I am an individual.
I use...*

the Osmiroid Italic pen because in a world gone mad with mass production, this marches to a different drummer. Made in England. Made in left-handed models, too. \$3.75 for the Osmiroid... and a free instruction booklet.

Available at all good art supply, stationery and college bookstores.

Osmiroid Italic Pen

Hunt Manufacturing Company
1405H Locust St., Phila., Pa. 19102

Consider as an example the covering letter featured in the second edition of "Creative Job Search," written by a job hopeful to Miss FitzGibbon, Advertising Manager of Macy's in New York. Here it is, typed:

Dear Miss Fitz-Gibbon:

I want to write copy for you.

Not only am I able to put words on paper with power and charm, I am also sensational in selling.

I know you have hundreds of applicants, but you don't have anyone just like me. Because I can earn my keep from the day you put me on the payroll.

I have wonderful legs. I can fetch and carry. I'm a demon for speed. If you hire me, I could make it from the advertising office to Miss Hoffstretter's office in your basement girls' dress department to get her OK in nothing flat. And there'll be nothing flat in the copy I take to her to OK. And it won't contain any irrelevant whimsey; because I know that every store buyer is primarily concerned with her bonus which depends on the volume I can help her bring in. I agree with Winston Churchill, "when there's a serious point to be made, forget humor and whimsey. Make your point with a piledriver."

You see I've been a selling sensation all my life. For eight years during my brownie days in the Girl Scouts, I sold more cookies than any other scout in all Denver.

Money? Anything you can afford to pay me. I well realize that at this point you can do more for me than I can do for you. Pay me peanuts now. But be prepared to pay me pots of money later.

How can I earn my keep right off the bat? I'll wager I am a better typist than anyone in your whole department... 85 words a minute... never an error, typographical, punctuation, spelling.

Here is my idea: Right now, late in December, you are preparing pages for your big annual February furniture show. I am well aware that your store does not run the usual February furniture sale; but you do feature page after page of furniture and rugs. You run thousands of rug listings.

Who will type those thousands of rug listings? Not your razzle-dazzle star writer! Me, lowly me. Or rather I, lowly I. After I type them, I'll race down to the rug department to get them OK'd and race back to your production department - as I did all last summer for Bloomingdale's advertising department.

Why did I suggest rugs? Because rugs are a big profit maker. Like other soft goods, rugs roll up into small storage space. And they don't drop suddenly in value from fashion changes as other merchandise does. Since I want to make a lot of money eventually, I'd like to write copy for a big profit-making department.

I'm your girl, all right. If you can see me at 10 a.m. tomorrow (Wednesday) I could be sitting at your typewriter by Wednesday afternoon.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Elizabeth Carter

P.S. How come I know so much about soft-goods profit makers? I have made it my business to know. I read and study every issue of *Retailing Daily*.

Now take a look at the same letter, handwritten in italic script. Isn't it doubly effective?

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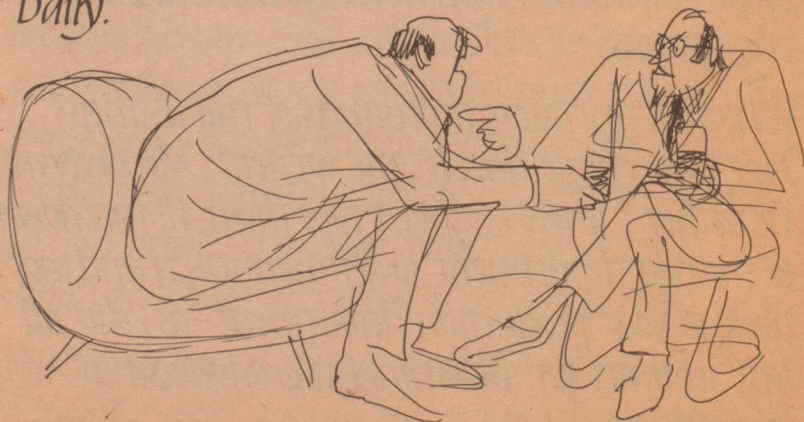
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"Speak for yourself, friend. I find the more
I know, the more I know."

Finally, here is a page from the original model rescued by Edward Johnson, on which the modern italic chancery script is based. It was written in 1522 A.D. by Ludovici Vicenti, known as Arrighi, and is from his 'First Writing Book.' The English version was written by John Howard Benson.

Al benigno Lettore:~

Pregato piu uolte, anzi constretto da molti amici benignissimo Lettore, che riguardo hauendo alla publica utilita e comodo non solamente di questa eta, ma delli posterì anchora, uoleſſi dar qualche eſſempio di ſcriuere, et regulatamente formare gli caratteri e note delle lre (che cancellaresche hoggi di chiamano) uoletier pigliai questa fatica: E perche impossibile era de mia mano porger tanti eſſempi, che ſoddisſaceſſino a tutti, mi ſono ingegnato di ritrouare questa nuoua inuentione de lre, e metterle in ſtampa, le quali tanto ſe auicinano alle ſcritte a mano, quanto capera il mio ingegno, E ſe puntualmente in tutto no te riſpondono, ſupplicoti che mi facci iſcuſato, Concioſia che la ſtampa no poſſa in tutto ripreſentarte la uia mano, Spero nondimeno che imitando tu il mio ricordo, da te ſteſſo potrai conſeguire il tuo deſiderio. *Uui, e ſta Sano:~*

∴ To the kind Reader:~

Besought, indeed compelled by many friends, most gracious Reader, that having regard for public use & profit not only in this age; but also for posterity, I would give some examples of the writing & regular formation of the characters and particulars of the letters (which today are called (Chancery) willingly I have undertaken this task: & since it was impossible to offer enough examples of my own hand to satisfy all, I have set myself to study this new invention of letters and to put them into print, & they are as close to handwriting as my ability can achieve. If they do not exactly answer in every respect, I beg you to excuse me; since the press cannot entirely represent the living hand. I hope nonetheless that by following my instruction you will obtain your desire. Long life, & Health:~

The two examples which follow were written by secondary students aged 16 and 17 respectively:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth :
for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away;
and the sea is no more. And I saw the Holy City, the
New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from
God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying,
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He
shall dwell with them, and be their God: and they shall
be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them;
and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear
from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither
shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more:
the first things are passed away.
From the Book of Revelation of St. John.
Chap. XXI verse I - IV.

PRINCE CHATRACHAI
(aged 16 - Siamese)

"He early cautioned the young gentlemen of the Foreign Office against the trim iniquities of ill-formed letters and pale ink. But letters still continued to slope backwards "like the raking masts of an American schooner," or stood in horrid rows "which can only be compared to iron railings leaning out of the perpendicular." His own flowed exquisitely in that faultless hand which lived on in Mr. Gladstone's memory as one of the two perfect things he had known, entitling Palmerston to be a trifle captious on points of calligraphy to return a despatch to a distant consul for transcription in a blacker ink and even to issue acidly precise instructions that some reluctant pupil "slid from his letters by connecting his slanting down strokes by visible lines at top or bottom according to the letters which he intends his parallel lines to represent." ' Guedalla, Palmerston.

DAVID WRIGHT (aged 17)



"Dear Diary: It was a perfectly beautiful day today. Not a cloud in an azure-blue sky, and all major appliances were operative.

“Tools for Life”

Booklets published so far in the series:

- (1) Creative Job Search
- (2) The Effective Job Application
- (3) Getting to See the Man and Selling Yourself at the Interview
- (4) Creating Your Own Job
- (5) Jobs: The Shape of Things to Come
- (6) You and the Energy Crisis
- (7) 3 Tools to Single You out from the Herd:

In preparation:

- (8) Testing for Top Jobs

Written and researched by Geoff Spencer, Director of Information Services, Vancouver Community College, and designed by Martin Jackson.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to “The New Yorker” for reproducing various cartoons.

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

REGIONAL OFFICES

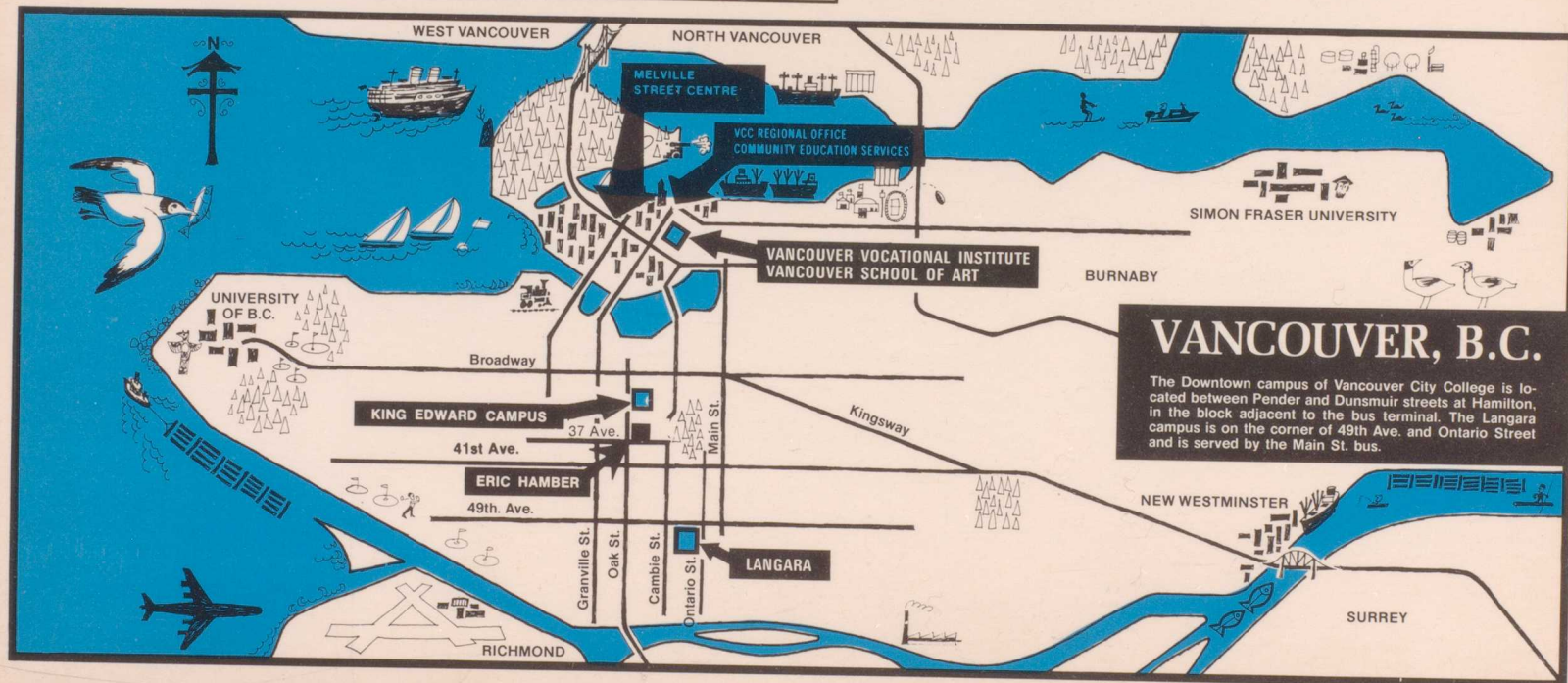
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Vancouver Community College is an educational complex consisting of five divisions:

- The Langara Campus,
- The Vancouver School of Art,
- The Vancouver Vocational Institute,
- King Edward Campus,
- Community Education Services.

Each morning, afternoon and evening classes held in centres throughout Vancouver, the College offers the most flexible arrangements whereby those in the community who wish to further their education may undertake studies to obtain a variety of diplomas or certificates.



VANCOUVER, B.C.

The Downtown campus of Vancouver City College is located between Pender and Dunsmuir streets at Hamilton, in the block adjacent to the bus terminal. The Langara campus is on the corner of 49th Ave. and Ontario Street and is served by the Main St. bus.