THE NEW TYPEWRITER

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These are our latest models in electric typewriters. They will do just about anything. Certainly, anything you may want.

Well, as Editor of Word Ways, I must be able to reproduce any entry in Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

That is no problem at all, sir. After all, you need only the 26 letters in Lower Case and Upper Case, don't you?

I will need more than just the standard letters. A Hyphen, for example, for the two most-hyphenated words JOHN-GO-TO-BED-AT-NOON and KISS-ME-OVER-THE-GARDEN-GATE. And a Period for abbreviations and words such as JOHN Q. PUBLIC and U.S. ARMY BUFF. The only other name with a middle initial is JOHN A. GRINDLE. Except for B, V, D, in the very first printings, no entry has more than two Periods. Also a Comma. There are seven non-chemical entries that use it. Strangely, six of them use two, as LOCK, STOCK, AND BARREL. The singular example is ON-AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN. I'll need a Virgule, too. There are only three examples: AND/OR, OR/AND and 20/20. And, as I just illustrated, Arabic Numerals. Only two entries use only numerals: 606 and 1080. But there are many combinations such as A2-HORIZON, TB 1-698 and URANIUM 235.

Sir, any typewriter has all these.

But there's no numeral for one. I'll need to distinguish Al (top grade) from Al (symbol for aluminum).

You are looking at our cheapest model. The better ones have it.

Also an Ampersand for D&CO COLOR, FD&CO COLOR and FC&O WARRANTY. How about Roman Numerals for combinations like HELIUM I, ORANGE II, SUDAN IV and PARA BROWN V?

Everyone else uses the usual capitals -- can't you?
I guess I could. Anyway, there's no example of III or VI. But I must have an Acute Accent. No word has three or more, but many have two, such as AGRÉGÉ, NÉVÉ and RÉSUMÉ.

Most people use this mark here.

But on your machines it is straight up and down. I must distinguish the Acute Accent from the Grave Accent, which slants down. As SÜEDE, and VIS-À-VIS, and especially ÉTAGÈRE, for example.

We could put a special key in place of 1/2 and 1/4 for those.

And a Circumflex. There are at least six entries with two. Some single words with two are PÂTE-SUR-PÂTE, PÈLE-MÈLE, TÊTE-À-TÊTE and TÊTE-BÊCHE. Don't forget the Tilde. No word has more than one. Since it's not always a Spanish N, I'll need a separate Tilde key: MAÂNA vs. TOSTÃO. And a Cédilla. A C-Cédilla would be fine for FACÂDE and SOUPÇON, for example.

Not so fast, sir. Let me think.

And a Diaeresis. It may be used over any vowel: DÂUERLÂUFE, ELSINORÉ, CAMÀDEU, KÔNINGBERG and KAMÂGEY. Of the five words using two, the best known is GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG. Then there are Superscript Numbers. I'll need only two for $2$ or $H^2$, and $3$ or $H^3$. And Subscript Numbers, especially for vitamins: 1 through 6 will do: $F_2$ LAYER, VITAMIN $D_3$, and VITAMIN $B_12$, for example. The vitamins also require Subscript Letters. Just two, VITAMIN $B_C$ and VITAMIN $B_T$.

Sure, sir. Naturally.

Oh, I almost forgot. A Right-Handed Apostrophe for possessives, contractions and some plurals. Such as D'ALEMÉRT'S PRINCIPLE and P'S AND Q'S. There are about ten entries that use two, but only three single words with two: BO'SN, FO'C'SLE and 'N'.

Really, sir, I've already shown you the Apostrophe.

But I told you it's straight up and down with no curve. I'll need to distinguish a Left-Handed Apostrophe, as RUBA'I and SHA'BAN. I could get into real trouble with the only word that uses both: DHU'LQA'DAH. Further, I'll need a Hacek. It's fairly rare; only three examples ČECH, HÁCEK and KČ. And I did have my heart set on an A-With-A-Ring. Again, only three examples MÅL and its two derivatives LANDSMÅL and RIKSMÅL. And also the even rarer Modified O. Only one example, but it is used twice SMÅRREBRÔD.
You can type that using an O and a Virgule.

I'll also need five Greek Letters: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Omega. Webster's lists these as adjectives. They should be in boldface type, but aren't. Strangely, they all have hyphens except the last: α-, ß-, γ-, δ- and ω-.

For a slight additional charge we could include this set of changeable type. It has some of the symbols you want.

That would be helpful. Some of the authors use older dictionaries. Webster's Collegiate for 1956 illustrates the Signo De Interrogación which is in your set: ¿QUIÉN SABE? The same edition also has the Question Mark in QUIS SEPARABIT? and the Exclamation Point in OPEN SESAME! And one entry has Parentheses: PLAY (UP) ON WORDS. Did you know Webster's Third, only five years later, has neither play on words nor play upon words? There are also two Diphthongs in the 1956 Collegiate, œ as an entry and œ twice in the word œil-de-bœuf.

You can type those using our special half-space lever.

True. And I can use your up-and-down mark for a Prime, as in RADIUM'C'. With the half-space I can type a Double Prime, as in RADIUM'C". Both of these are in the 1956 Collegiate. But then, W eber's Second Unabridged has the Dollar Sign in the Addenda with $64 QUESTION. The main body has Quotation Marks in "4-H CLUB". And Capital Omega twice in RADIUM 'Α and ACTINIUM 'Α.

That certainly is an impressive list, sir.

Oh, hold on! Don't eliminate the key for the fractions 1/2 and 1/4. One author is bound to find the entry V - 1½ in The Language of World War II, by A. Marjorie Taylor (H. W. Wilson, 1948).

Very well, sir.

Come to think of it, I do get names from Webster's Second, in the Biographical and Gazetteer sections. They contain the Breve, Dot and Macron. Not to mention the strangest group of weird letters... Hey, where are you going?

Out, sir. Out to lunch!