

# Data Entry Skills Test

*Technical Manual and User Guide*

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# Data Entry Skills Test

## *Technical Manual*

This document serves as the official Technical Manual for the Data Entry Skills Test. It provides a comprehensive overview of the purpose, structure, and psychometric foundations of the assessment, along with detailed guidance on its administration, scoring, and interpretation. The Data Entry Skills Test is designed to measure the data entry speed and accuracy required in a wide range of administrative, clerical, financial, and office-based roles. These abilities, captured through Characters Per Minute (CPM), Corrected Characters Per Minute (CCPM), Words Per Minute (WPM), and Overall Accuracy during a practical data entry exercise, form the foundational competencies necessary for entering information quickly and accurately in modern work environments.

The test provides an objective, reliable, and valid measure of these core abilities, supporting organizations in making informed, evidence-based decisions when selecting or developing employees who need practical data entry proficiency. Whether used for hiring, training evaluation, or internal development, the assessment offers a standardized method for identifying candidates who can enter data efficiently and accurately, comparing each candidate's performance against a relevant norm group.

In addition to outlining the theoretical basis and validation evidence supporting the test, this manual offers practical guidance on how to administer the assessment effectively, ensure fairness and compliance with professional testing standards, and interpret the results in a manner consistent with best practices. Whether you are an HR professional, a recruiter, a trainer, or a decision-maker involved in candidate evaluation, this manual serves as a key resource for understanding and applying the Data Entry Skills Test.

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## 1. Introduction

The Data Entry Skills Test assesses a candidate's data entry skills by measuring typing speed and accuracy during a practical data entry exercise. It measures Characters Per Minute (CPM), Corrected Characters Per Minute (CCPM), Words Per Minute (WPM), Overall Accuracy, and a Total Score. Together these metrics provide a clear, standardized picture of how quickly and how accurately a candidate can enter data—a core requirement for data entry, clerical, administrative, and other office-based roles.

The assessment is comprised of two short sub-tests and is completed online through the browser in approximately five minutes. It uses a free-response format in which candidates type presented lines of data, making it a direct, practical measure of real-world data entry performance.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Test

- To identify candidates who possess the data entry speed and accuracy required for roles that involve frequent data entry.
- To provide employers with a reliable, standardized measure of data entry performance.
- To support hiring decisions by objectively comparing a candidate's performance against a relevant norm group.

### 1.2 Intended Audience

The Data Entry Skills Test is appropriate for roles such as:

- Data entry workers and data entry clerks
- Data encoders
- Transcriptionists
- Clerks and office clerks
- Receptionists
- Secretaries
- Accountants, financial clerks, and paralegals
- Any administrative role whose tasks are related to data entry

### 1.3 How to Use This Manual

This manual is designed for HR professionals, recruiters, trainers, and hiring managers responsible for administering, interpreting, or implementing the Data Entry Skills Test. It outlines the structure of the test, what it measures, administration procedures, scoring guidelines, and the supporting technical evidence.

- Chapters 1–3 describe the foundation, purpose, and structure of the test.
- Chapters 4–6 provide guidance for item development, scoring procedures, and test administration.
- Chapter 7 presents the reliability evidence supporting the test’s use.
- Chapter 8 outlines security policies and fair-use guidelines.

The manual does not need to be read sequentially—readers may go directly to the sections most relevant to their responsibilities.

## 2. Test Specifications

The Data Entry Skills Test is a free-response, online skills assessment designed to measure practical data entry speed and accuracy. The format, timing, and delivery are optimized for online administration, making it suitable for both remote and on-site testing environments.

### 2.1 What the Test Measures

The test evaluates data entry performance through the following measures:

- Characters Per Minute (CPM)
- Corrected Characters Per Minute (CCPM)
- Words Per Minute (WPM)
- Overall Accuracy
- Total Score

### 2.2 Test Properties

- Format: Free-response data entry test (candidates type presented lines of data)
- Test structure: Two sub-tests, each with a 90-second time limit
- Number of items: Adaptive
- Time: Approximately 5 minutes to complete (typical range 4–6 minutes)
- Item response form: Free response
- Languages: English
- Mode of administration: Online, browser-based

### 2.3 Delivery and Device Compatibility

The test is administered online through the browser. No software installation is required. It can be run on any PC or Mac computer with an updated browser and a stable internet connection, either on-site or remotely from the candidate’s own home.

- PC or Mac computer with an updated browser

- A stable internet connection is required
- A keyboard with a numpad is recommended but not required

## 2.4 Suitable Occupations

Data entry workers, transcriptionists, clerks, receptionists, secretaries, and other administrative employees whose jobs have tasks related to data entry.

## 3. Test Structure and Content

The Data Entry Skills Test is comprised of two sub-tests designed to measure a candidate's data entry speed and accuracy. In both sub-tests, the candidate enters short lines of realistic data under a time limit, and the same set of performance measures is recorded across both.

### 3.1 Sub-test 1 – Data Entry (90 seconds)

The candidate is presented with short lines of textual data—names, addresses, dates, and other textual data. The candidate types the data one line at a time and is given 90 seconds to type as many lines of data as possible.

### 3.2 Sub-test 2 – Data Entry (90 seconds)

The second sub-test is the same as the first but uses new data. The candidate again has 90 seconds to type as many lines as possible.

### 3.3 Performance Measures

Each sub-test contributes to the following measures, which are reported individually by sub-test and as overall results:

- Characters Per Minute (CPM) – the candidate's uncorrected data entry speed.
- Corrected Characters Per Minute (CCPM) – data entry speed adjusted to account for errors; the primary measure of overall performance.
- Words Per Minute (WPM) – the number of words entered per minute.
- Overall Accuracy – the percentage of data entered correctly.
- Total Score – the Total Percentile Population Score, derived by comparing the candidate's average CCPM with the norm group.

## 4. Item Development

In the Data Entry Skills Test, the “items” are the lines of data that candidates are asked to type. Each line is designed to reflect the kind of information entered in everyday data entry work, such as names, addresses, dates, identification numbers, and other short textual data. The development process prioritizes clarity, relevance, fairness, and consistency across administrations.

### 4.1 Item Types

- Lines of textual data – names, addresses, dates, email addresses, identification numbers, and similar short entries.
- Timed entry – in both sub-tests the candidate types as many lines as possible within the 90-second time limit.

### 4.2 Data Design

- Data lines reflect realistic information of the type encountered in administrative and clerical data entry tasks.
- A mix of alphabetic and numeric data is used so that both letter and number entry are assessed.
- The recommended use of a numpad is reflected in the inclusion of numeric data such as dates and identification numbers.

### 4.3 Item Writing Guidelines

- Clarity – data lines are clear and unambiguous so that candidates know exactly what to type.
- Relevance – content reflects the kind of data entered in everyday office work.
- Fairness – data avoids unusual symbols or formats that could unfairly affect speed or accuracy.
- Consistency – line length and difficulty are controlled so that results are comparable across candidates.

### 4.4 Example Data

The following illustrates the type of short data lines a candidate is asked to enter:

*Charlotte G Horn · 2839 Reeves Street · Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53226 · 920-812-8252 ·  
04/19/1980 · Carl Asger Messer · 100.6 pounds · Bachelor's degree · 462636633 · FYX-7358*

## 4.5 Item Review and Quality Control

Before inclusion in the test, data lines undergo review to ensure fairness, clarity, and consistent performance:

- Internal review for readability, length, and representativeness.
- Verification that data lines contain no ambiguity and use realistic formats.
- Review of difficulty to ensure comparable results across administrations.

## 5. Scoring & Interpretation

The Data Entry Skills Test uses an objective scoring system based on the speed and accuracy of a candidate's data entry. Scores reflect a candidate's practical data entry ability and provide useful indicators for hiring or development decisions.

### 5.1 Scoring Method

Data entry performance is captured through several complementary measures:

- CPM (Characters Per Minute) – the candidate's raw, uncorrected data entry speed.
- CCPM (Corrected Characters Per Minute) – speed after accounting for errors. CCPM is the primary measure of overall performance.
- WPM (Words Per Minute) – the number of words entered per minute.
- Overall Accuracy – the percentage of the data that was entered correctly.

The candidate's overall result is based on the average CCPM across the sub-tests, which combines both speed and accuracy into a single, balanced measure of data entry performance.

### 5.2 Score Reporting

The detailed test report includes all of the information needed to interpret a candidate's performance:

- Total Percentile Population Score
- Characters Per Minute (CPM)
- Corrected Characters Per Minute (CCPM)
- Words Per Minute (WPM)
- Overall Accuracy
- Interpretation of candidate performance
- Advisory score ranges for common professions
- The exact text typed by the candidate, with errors highlighted

The Total Percentile Population Score is determined by comparing the candidate’s average CCPM with the norm group. For example, a candidate scoring at the 70th percentile has performed as well as or better than 70 percent of the individuals in the norm group.

### 5.3 Interpretation of Scores

Two scales are used to interpret a candidate’s performance: one for accuracy and one for speed. The accuracy interpretation is based on the candidate’s Overall Accuracy:

Overall Accuracy	Interpretation
Above 99%	Perfect
96–99%	Very high
91–95%	High
85–90%	Moderate
66–84%	Low
56–65%	Very low
55% or below	Alarming low

The speed interpretation is based on the candidate’s average (uncorrected) Characters Per Minute. Because using a numeric keypad (numpad) affects data entry speed, the test detects whether a numpad was used and applies the appropriate scale. The following scale applies when a numpad is detected:

CPM (with numpad)	Interpretation
Above 250	Extremely fast
191–250	Very fast
141–190	Fast
106–140	Moderate
81–105	Below average
66–80	Slow
65 or below	Very slow

When no numpad is used, the following scale applies instead:

CPM (without numpad)	Interpretation
Above 220	Extremely fast
176–220	Very fast
126–175	Fast
86–125	Moderate
66–85	Below average
51–65	Slow
50 or below	Very slow

## 5.4 Advisory Score Ranges for Professions

To help place a candidate's result in context, the report compares the candidate's CCPM against advisory ranges for a number of common professions and indicates where the candidate falls relative to each (for example, below range, low range, or high range). The professions covered include:

- Accountant
- Call Center Agent
- Customer Service Representative
- Data Encoder
- Data Entry Clerk
- Financial Clerk
- Office Assistant
- Office Clerk
- Paralegal
- Receptionist
- Secretary

These score ranges are guidelines only and should not stand alone in any hiring decision.

## 5.5 Limitations

While the test provides a reliable measure of data entry speed and accuracy, performance can be influenced by factors such as familiarity with the keyboard layout, the availability of a numpad, language proficiency, and the testing environment. Data entry results should be considered alongside interviews, work history, and other job-relevant information, and should not be used as the sole basis for a hiring decision.

# 6. Test Administration

The Data Entry Skills Test is designed for flexible online delivery, allowing organizations to administer the assessment in remote, hybrid, or on-site settings. This chapter outlines best practices, technical requirements, and recommended procedures to ensure fair and consistent testing conditions.

## 6.1 Delivery Method

- The test is delivered online and accessed through the browser.
- No software installation is required.
- It can be administered on-site or completed by the candidate from the comfort of their own home.

## 6.2 Technical Requirements

- A PC or Mac computer with an updated browser
- A stable internet connection
- A keyboard with a numpad is recommended but not required (the report adjusts the interpretation accordingly)

## 6.3 Test Environment

Candidates should complete the test in a distraction-free environment. Employers may encourage the following:

- A quiet room without interruptions
- Closing other applications and browser tabs
- Ensuring the keyboard is comfortable and in good working order

## 6.4 Candidate Instructions

Before beginning, candidates should be informed of the following:

- The test consists of two short sub-tests and takes approximately five minutes.
- In each sub-test, they have 90 seconds to type as many lines of data as possible, one line at a time.
- They should type as quickly and as accurately as they can, as both speed and accuracy are measured.
- Using a numpad, where available, may help with the entry of numeric data.

## 6.5 Security Measures

- Verify candidate identity prior to the start of the test.
- Consider remote proctoring or monitoring for high-stakes testing.
- Ensure candidates do not use external assistance during the test.
- Store test results securely and in compliance with data protection laws (e.g., GDPR).

## 7. Reliability & Validity

The Data Entry Skills Test has undergone reliability and validity studies to ensure it measures data entry speed and accuracy consistently and meaningfully. This chapter summarizes the available technical evidence supporting the test's use.

## 7.1 Norm Group

The Total Percentile Population Score is based on a norm group of more than 3,000 individuals collected as part of a 2020 test survey. The norm group includes a range of occupations, such as clerks, paralegals, accountants, data entry workers, and others, providing a relevant basis for comparing candidate performance.

## 7.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated and yielded a correlation of 0.92, indicating that the Data Entry Skills Test has very high internal consistency. This means the components of the test consistently measure the same underlying ability.

## 7.3 Test–Retest Reliability

Test–retest reliability was evaluated by comparing the scores of individuals who completed the test on more than one occasion. With a Pearson’s  $r$  of 0.81, the test–retest reliability of the Data Entry Skills Test is high, indicating that results are stable over time.

## 7.4 Summary of Technical Evidence

- Norm group of more than 3,000 individuals from a 2020 test survey.
- Very high internal consistency (correlation of 0.92).
- High test–retest reliability (Pearson’s  $r = 0.81$ ).

Together, these findings indicate that the Data Entry Skills Test is a reliable measure of data entry speed and accuracy suitable for use in hiring and workforce development contexts.

# 8. Security & Fair Use

Maintaining the security, fairness, and ethical use of the Data Entry Skills Test is essential to ensuring valid results, protecting test content, and supporting fair decision-making. This chapter outlines recommended practices and guidelines for protecting test integrity and using results responsibly.

## 8.1 Test Security

Test security measures help protect the confidentiality of test content and ensure that scores accurately reflect individual ability. Organizations are encouraged to implement the following:

- Monitor test sessions where appropriate (in-person or remote proctoring).
- Prevent candidates from using external assistance during the test.
- Ensure candidate accounts and access links are not shared with others.

- Store test scores and response data securely in compliance with privacy regulations (e.g., GDPR).

Unauthorized copying, distribution, or reproduction of test content is strictly prohibited and may compromise the validity of future test administrations.

## **8.2 Candidate Integrity**

Candidates are expected to complete the test independently and honestly. To maintain fairness, organizations should remind test-takers that no outside assistance may be used and that the test should be completed without help from other people or tools.

## **8.3 Fair Use of Results**

Results should be interpreted in light of the requirements of the specific role. The advisory score ranges and interpretations are guidelines only and should not stand alone in any hiring decision. Data entry results are most valuable when combined with other relevant information, such as interviews, work samples, and job history.

## **8.4 Data Protection**

Candidate data should be handled in accordance with applicable data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR). Personal information and test results should be stored securely, retained only as long as necessary, and shared only with individuals involved in the hiring or development decision.