

Typing Skills Test

Technical Manual and User Guide

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Typing Skills Test

Technical Manual

This document serves as the official Technical Manual for the Typing 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 Typing Skills Test is designed to measure the typing speed and accuracy required in a wide range of administrative, clerical, transcription, and office-based roles. These abilities, captured through Words Per Minute (WPM), Corrected Words Per Minute (CWPM), Characters Per Minute (CPM), and Overall Accuracy, form the foundational competencies necessary for producing work 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 typing proficiency. Whether used for hiring, training evaluation, or internal development, the assessment offers a standardized method for identifying candidates who can type 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 Typing Skills Test.

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1. Introduction

The Typing Skills Test is a general assessment of a candidate's typing speed and accuracy. It measures Words Per Minute (WPM), Corrected Words Per Minute (CWPM), Characters Per Minute (CPM), Overall Accuracy, and a Total Score. These metrics together provide a clear and standardized picture of how quickly and how accurately a candidate can type, which is a core requirement for transcription, clerical, administrative, and other office-based roles where typing is a critical function.

The assessment is comprised of three 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 passages of text, making it a direct, practical measure of real-world typing performance.

1.1 Purpose of the Test

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

1.2 Intended Audience

The Typing Skills Test is appropriate for roles such as:

- Transcriptionists
- Clerks and office clerks
- Receptionists
- Secretaries
- Writers
- Data entry workers
- Customer service representatives and call center agents
- Medical scribes and office assistants
- Any administrative role whose tasks are related to typing

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

Format: Free-response typing test (candidates type presented passages of text)

Test Structure: Three sub-tests (two timed passages and one fixed-length untimed passage)

Time: Approximately 5 minutes to complete (typical range 5–10 minutes)

Language: English

Mode of Administration: Online, browser-based

Delivery Method: 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.

Device Compatibility: PC or Mac computer with an updated browser. A physical keyboard and a stable internet connection are required

2.1 What the Test Measures

The test evaluates typing performance through the following measures:

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

3. Test Structure and Content

The Typing Skills Test is comprised of three sub-tests designed to measure a candidate's typing speed and accuracy from complementary angles. Two sub-tests are timed and measure how much accurate text a candidate can produce under time pressure, while the third is untimed and measures sustained accuracy over a fixed passage. Across all sub-tests, the same set of performance measures is recorded.

3.1 Sub-test 1 – Timed Passage (1 minute)

The candidate is presented with a paragraph of text and is given 60 seconds to type as much of the paragraph as possible.

3.2 Sub-test 2 – Timed Passage (1 minute)

The candidate is presented with a new paragraph of text and is again given 60 seconds to type as much as possible.

3.3 Sub-test 3 – Fixed Passage (no time limit)

The candidate is presented with a new paragraph of text and must type the complete text. There is no time limit; the text consists of 400 characters.

3.4 Performance Measures

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

Words Per Minute (WPM) – the candidate's uncorrected typing speed.

Corrected Words Per Minute (CWPM) – typing speed adjusted to account for errors; the primary measure of overall performance.

Characters Per Minute (CPM) – the number of characters typed per minute.

Overall Accuracy – the percentage of text typed correctly.

Total Score – the Total Percentile Population Score, derived by comparing the candidate's average CWPM with the norm group.

4. Item Development

In the Typing Skills Test, the “items” are the passages of text that candidates are asked to type. Each passage is selected to provide a fair and representative measure of everyday typing, using natural prose and common vocabulary. The development process prioritizes clarity, relevance, fairness, and consistency across administrations.

4.1 Item Types

- Timed passages – used in Sub-tests 1 and 2, where the candidate types as much of a paragraph as possible within 60 seconds.
- Fixed untimed passage – used in Sub-test 3, where the candidate types a complete passage of 400 characters with no time limit.

4.2 Passage Design

- Passages use standard, natural prose representative of general written text.
- Vocabulary is kept common and broadly accessible to avoid disadvantaging candidates unfamiliar with specialist terms.
- Sub-test 3 is fixed at 400 characters to provide a consistent, comparable measure of sustained accuracy.

4.3 Item Writing Guidelines

- Clarity – passages are written in straightforward, readable language.
- Relevance – content reflects the kind of text typed in everyday office work.
- Fairness – passages avoid unusual symbols or terminology that could unfairly affect speed or accuracy.
- Consistency – passage length and difficulty are controlled so that results are comparable across candidates.

4.4 Example Passage

The following is an example of a fixed 400-character passage of the type used in sub-test 3:

Online courses have increased in popularity, with many people choosing to study from home as opposed to attending classes in person. It is predicted that more than 30 percent will choose an online course instead of a traditional classroom this year, which is a 6 percent increase compared to last year. "All that matters is that you learn something useful, not how much time you spend or where you study." It's up to you to decide whether you agree or not.

4.5 Item Review and Quality Control

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

- Internal review for readability, length, and representativeness.
- Verification that passages contain no errors and use common vocabulary.
- Review of passage difficulty to ensure comparable results across administrations.

5. Scoring & Interpretation

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

5.1 Scoring Method

Typing performance is captured through several complementary measures:

WPM (Words Per Minute) – the candidate's raw, uncorrected typing speed.

CWPM (Corrected Words Per Minute) – typing speed after accounting for errors. CWPM is the primary measure of overall performance.

CPM (Characters Per Minute) – the number of characters typed per minute.

Overall Accuracy – the percentage of the text that was typed correctly.

The candidate's overall result is based on the average CWPM across the sub-tests, which combines both speed and accuracy into a single, balanced measure of typing 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
- Words Per Minute (WPM)
- Corrected Words Per Minute (CWPM)
- Characters Per Minute (CPM)
- 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 CWPM 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
98–99%	Very high
95–97%	High
88–94%	Moderate
70–87%	Low
61–69%	Very low
60% or below	Alarming low

The speed interpretation is based on the candidate's average (uncorrected) Words Per Minute:

Average WPM	Interpretation
Above 94	Extremely fast
75–94	Very fast
53–74	Fast
37–52	Moderate
23–36	Slow
22 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 CWPM 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:

- Call Center Agent
- Customer Service Representative
- Data Entry
- Medical Scribe
- Office Assistant
- Office Clerk
- Receptionist
- Secretary
- Transcriptionist

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 typing speed and accuracy, performance can be influenced by factors such as familiarity with the keyboard layout, language proficiency, and the testing environment. Typing 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 Typing 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 standard physical keyboard (typing on a touchscreen is not recommended)

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 three short sub-tests and takes approximately five minutes.
- In the first two sub-tests, they have 60 seconds to type as much of the presented passage as possible.
- In the third sub-test, they type a complete passage of 400 characters with no time limit.

- They should type as quickly and as accurately as they can, as both speed and accuracy are measured.

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 Typing Skills Test has undergone reliability and validity studies to ensure it measures typing 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 1,000 individuals collected as part of a 2020 test study. The norm group includes a range of occupations, such as clerks, customer service representatives, transcriptionists, data entry workers, and others, providing a relevant basis for comparing candidate performance.

7.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. With a value of $\alpha = 0.93$, the Typing Skills Test demonstrates very high internal consistency, indicating that 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 0.88, the test–retest reliability of the Typing Skills Test is high, indicating that results are stable over time.

7.4 Summary of Technical Evidence

- Norm group of more than 1,000 individuals from a 2020 test study.
- Very high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$).
- High test–retest reliability (Pearson's $r = 0.88$).

Together, these findings indicate that the Typing Skills Test is a reliable measure of typing 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 Typing 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. Typing 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.