

Australian Standard[®]

SHORTHAND SPEED TESTS

This Australian standard was prepared by Committee MS/16, Typing and Shorthand Tests. It was approved on behalf of the Council of the Standards Association of Australia on 1 September 1986 and published on 6 October 1986.

The following interests are represented on Committee MS/16:

Australian Council of Independent Business Schools
Australian Public Service Board
Canberra College of Advanced Education
Canberra College of Technical and Further Education
Catholic Education Office
Commercial Education Society of Australia
Darwin Community College
Department of Technical and Further Education, New South Wales
Department of Technical and Further Education, South Australia
Education Department of Queensland
Education Department of Tasmania
Education Department of Victoria
Education Department of Western Australia
National Association of Personnel Consultants
Pitman Examinations Institute
Public Service Board, New South Wales
Public Service Board, Tasmania
Technical and Further Education Board, Victoria

Review of Australian Standards. *To keep abreast of progress in industry, Australian Standards are subject to periodic review and are kept up to date by the issue of amendments or new editions as necessary. It is important therefore that Standards users ensure that they are in possession of the latest edition, and any amendments thereto.*

Full details of all Australian Standards and related publications will be found in the Standards Australia Catalogue of Publications; this information is supplemented each month by the magazine 'The Australian Standard', which subscribing members receive, and which gives details of new publications, new editions and amendments, and of withdrawn Standards.

Suggestions for improvements to Australian Standards, addressed to the head office of Standards Australia, are welcomed. Notification of any inaccuracy or ambiguity found in an Australian Standard should be made without delay in order that the matter may be investigated and appropriate action taken.

This standard was issued in draft form for comment as DR 85363.

Australian Standard[®]

SHORTHAND SPEED TESTS

First published 1986

PUBLISHED BY STANDARDS AUSTRALIA
(STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA)
1 THE CRESCENT, HOMEBUSH, NSW 2140

ISBN 0 7262 4374 4

PREFACE

This standard was prepared by the Association's Committee on Typing and Shorthand Tests at the request of the Canberra College of Technical and Further Education.

The standard was prepared to overcome the fact that while employment and pay rises depend on shorthand speed, tests to determine shorthand speed have varied widely, thus producing non-comparable results. The standard will to some extent eliminate the need for employers to conduct their own shorthand speed tests.

The major problem in developing this standard was the standardization of difficulty levels of test passages. For passages to provide a valid measure of shorthand skill, variations in candidates' performances must, as far as possible, reflect changes in skill rather than changes in passage difficulty. However, there is a large number of variables associated with passage difficulty, some of them, such as flow, indefinable. The committee was acutely aware that the test method had to be usable as well as accurate. After an examination of existing test methods, characteristics of Australian business language, and reports of overseas studies, four specific requirements regulating difficulty were included—test duration, passage length, syllabic intensity, and percentage of common words. These are accompanied by general requirements on style and content.

One of the deciding factors in including the two latter difficulty measures was the ease with which the syllabic intensity and percentage of common words in a passage could be determined by computer.

There are several commercially available programs which will measure syllabic intensity and a current list of these is available from any SAA Office.

Percentage of common words may be determined using any spelling verification program in which it is possible to insert a separate dictionary, i.e. the list of 500 commonly used words. Further information on the study of Australian business documents from which the 500 word list was derived is also available in SAA MP51 published by this Association.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
SECTION 1. SCOPE AND GENERAL	
1.1 SCOPE	3
1.2 APPLICATION	3
1.3 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS	3
1.4 DEFINITIONS	3
SECTION 2. ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF SHORTHAND SPEED	
2.1 TEST MATERIAL	4
2.2 EQUIPMENT	5
2.3 ENVIRONMENT	5
2.4 CONDUCT OF TEST	5
2.5 SCORING	6
2.6 ASSESSMENT	7
2.7 STATEMENT OF SHORTHAND SPEED	7
APPENDICES	
A EXAMPLE OF TEST PASSAGE FORMAT	8
B METHOD FOR MARKING TEST PASSAGE INTO QUARTER-MINUTE SEGMENTS	9
C 500 COMMONLY USED WORDS	14
D EXAMPLE OF A SHORTHAND SPEED STATEMENT	16

© Copyright — STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Users of Standards are reminded that copyright subsists in all Standards Australia publications and software. Except where the Copyright Act allows and except where provided for below no publications or software produced by Standards Australia may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system in any form or transmitted by any means without prior permission in writing from Standards Australia. Permission may be conditional on an appropriate royalty payment. Requests for permission and information on commercial software royalties should be directed to the head office of Standards Australia.

Standards Australia will permit up to 10 percent of the technical content pages of a Standard to be copied for use exclusively in-house by purchasers of the Standard without payment of a royalty or advice to Standards Australia.

Standards Australia will also permit the inclusion of its copyright material in computer software programs for no royalty payment provided such programs are used exclusively in-house by the creators of the programs.

Care should be taken to ensure that material used is from the current edition of the Standard and that it is updated whenever the Standard is amended or revised. The number and date of the Standard should therefore be clearly identified.

The use of material in print form or in computer software programs to be used commercially, with or without payment, or in commercial contracts is subject to the payment of a royalty. This policy may be varied by Standards Australia at any time.

STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Standard
for
SHORTHAND SPEED TESTS

SECTION 1. SCOPE AND GENERAL

1.1 SCOPE. This standard sets out a method for the design, conduct, assessment, and certification of shorthand speed tests of 60 w.p.m. or greater, conducted in the English language.

This standard does not deal with tests in shorthand theory.

1.2 APPLICATION. This standard is intended for use by all bodies that conduct tests to measure shorthand speed.

1.3 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS. The following documents are referred to in this standard:

AS 1837 Code of Practice for Application of Ergonomics to Factory and Office Work

Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers of Australian Government Publications. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

1.4 DEFINITIONS. For the purpose of this standard, the following definitions apply:

1.4.1 Dictionary word—a meaningful unit of speech which when written or printed is shown with space on either side of it.

1.4.2 Examining body—an institution or group which devises, administers, assesses, and certifies shorthand speed tests in accordance with this standard.

1.4.3 Shall—indication of a mandatory requirement.

1.4.4 Shorthand—any system of speed writing by means of substitution of contractions or signs for letters or words and including that which may be written by shorthand machine.

1.4.5 Should—indication of a recommendation.

1.4.6 Speed—the rate of taking shorthand from dictation. Speed is measured in standard shorthand words per minute in increments of 10 words per minute, starting at 60 words per minute.

NOTE: Throughout this standard, the abbreviation 'w.p.m.' means standard shorthand words per minute.

1.4.7 Standard shorthand word—a notional unit of word length equivalent to 1.5 syllables.

1.4.8 Syllable—a character or set of characters corresponding to a vocal sound or set of sounds uttered with a single effort of articulation and forming a word or an element of a word.

NOTE: In the implementation of this standard, syllable divisions are determined in accordance with the Oxford or Macquarie series of dictionaries.

1.4.9 Syllabic intensity—the average number of syllables per dictionary word.

1.4.10 Transcription time—the time allowed for the conversion of shorthand notes to a typed or written form of language.

1.4.11 Typewriter—a manual, electric or electronic typewriter, text editor, word processor, computer operating as a word processor, computer-aided transcription unit, or any similar device.