

# Australian Standard 2708—1984

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## TYPING SPEED TESTS

*For referenced documents see p. 5*



**STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
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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 28 February 1984 and published on 6 April 1984.

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This standard was issued in draft form for comment as DR 83056. ✓

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RE : TYPING SPEED TESTS

Janet Leslie advises that any body wanting to conduct a speed test for a blind or partially blind person, can use the standard, but they should also issue a letter stating the exception to the standard

(ie) ~~Typing materials~~  
clause 2.1

Test Material.

Janet said that "audio typing" was just not covered by AS 2708.

**AUSTRALIAN STANDARD**

# **TYPING SPEED TESTS**

**AS 2708—1984**

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## 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 provides a test method which facilitates the comparison of individual typing speeds.

The need for the standard stems from the fact that, although many employers hire staff or award pay increases on the basis of typing speed, the tests to determine typing speed have in the past varied widely, producing results which are not comparable. As a consequence, many employers have conducted their own speed tests. This standard will to some extent eliminate that need. However, it must be recognized that speed is not the only indicator of a typist's capability.

In preparing the standard, the committee agreed to retain the accepted practice of expressing typing speed in words per minute, where a word is a standard unit consisting of a specific number of keystrokes. The number of keystrokes that should constitute a standard typing word, however, was an issue that provoked considerable discussion.

Research conducted by J.A. Silverthorn<sup>1</sup>, D.J. Perry<sup>2</sup> and B.S. Ober<sup>3</sup> indicated that the average word, including spaces and punctuation marks, in written American business language contained respectively 5.97, 5.83 and 6.13 keystrokes. A study by the committee of 300 current Australian shorthand test passages, which had an average of 5.6 keystrokes per word, tended to support the assumption that Australian business language also had closer to six keystrokes per word than the commonly accepted five. If a speed test was intended to measure actual typing speed, then the standard typing word should resemble as closely as possible the average word in current business language, i.e. six keystrokes.

On the other hand, many argued that the main purpose of a standard speed test was not necessarily to provide an accurate measure of speed, but rather to provide an effective ranking method. In that case, the unit of measurement used was not as important as the fact that the unit should remain constant for each test. In addition, the 5-stroke standard word had been accepted internationally for many years. On these grounds, the committee acknowledged that to introduce a 6-stroke standard word in Australia, at this time, might cause unnecessary complications.

However, it should be noted that while the standard retains a 5-stroke standard typing word, results achieved using this test method will not be comparable with results achieved using other test methods, because the keystrokes themselves are counted differently.

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1. *West, L.J.* The vocabulary of instructional materials for typing and stenographic training—research findings and implications. *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 10(3), 1968:13-25.
  2. *Perry, D.J.* An analytical comparison of the relative word-combination frequencies of business correspondence with phrase frequencies of selected shorthand textbooks, Vols I and II. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1968.
  3. *Ober, B.S.* The difficulty level of typewritten copy in industry. *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 25(1), 1983:1-8.

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**STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA****Australian Standard  
for  
TYPING SPEED TESTS****FOREWORD**

Modern technology has necessitated several changes in the previously accepted rules of speed tests. The most obvious of these is the change from the concept of a speed test as a test in which error correction was not permitted to a test where corrections are encouraged on certain types of machines.

The change was brought about by the rapid replacement in the workplace of manual and electric typewriters by electronic machines, such as word processors, which allow quick and imperceptible correction of errors. In order that the test is standard regardless of the machine used, and because the distinction between word processors and typewriters is blurred, this standard allows any method of correction to be used during a speed test.

Although the standard does not enable comparisons to be made between speeds achieved on different types of machines, e.g. word processors and manual typewriters, it will enable employers to confidently compare speeds achieved by different persons on a particular type of machine.

Since the purpose of the standard is to provide an effective ranking method, the duration of the test has been set at the minimum level necessary to achieve reliable results. Experience has shown that when people are ranked on the basis of 5-minute and 10-minute tests, the same persons are at the top of the scale in each case.

Reliability is also behind the separation in the standard of the two distinct qualities, speed and accuracy. The practice in the past of combining the two figures in a net score could be misleading to an employer in that it fails to distinguish between a fast, inaccurate typist and a slow, accurate typist.

Finally, examining bodies using this standard should recognize that the standard is a method only. The responsibility for designing, conducting, scoring and certifying speed tests remains with the examining body.

## SECTION 1. SCOPE AND GENERAL

**1.1 SCOPE.** This standard sets out a method for the conduct, assessment and certification of typing speed tests conducted in the English language.

It does not deal with tests in the theory or application of typing skills.

**1.2 APPLICATION.** This standard is intended for use by all bodies that conduct tests in typing 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

parts  
3.042  
ed.  
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 Examining body**—an institution or group which devises, administers, assesses and certifies typing speed tests in accordance with this standard.

**1.4.2 Pica**—a unit of measurement for printer's type. One pica is approximately equal to 4.2 mm.

**1.4.3 Pitch**—the number of characters in every 25.4 mm of type.

**1.4.4 Point**—a unit of measurement for printer's type. One point is approximately equal to 0.35 mm.

**1.4.5 Signs**—all non-alphanumeric symbols on a typewriter keyboard with the exception of the punctuation marks, viz comma, hyphen, apostrophe, full stop, quotation mark, colon, and semicolon.

**1.4.6 Speed**—measurement of the rate of typing in standard typing words per minute.

**1.4.7 Standard typing word**—a nominal unit used in the measurement of typing speed. One standard word is equal to five keystrokes.

**1.4.8 Typewriter**—a manual, electric or electronic typewriter, text editor, word processor, computer operating as a word processor, or any similar device.