



NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM

EXAMINATION ORIENTATION GUIDE: 2011 Senior Court Reporter Examination

Examination Numbers 45-767 & 55-767
April 2011

ORIENTATION GUIDE

The 2011 Senior Court Reporter Examination

This Orientation Guide for the Senior Court Reporter Examination is being provided to all candidates who have applied to take the 2011 Senior Court Reporter Examination. The following material describes the format and content of the written and performance components of the examination and also suggests a number of ways to prepare for the examination so that you can perform at your best. In addition, this guide provides a brief summary of the work that Senior Court Reporters perform for the New York State Unified Court System.

We hope this guide and the general examination announcement (#45-767 and #55-767) will answer your questions about the screening and hiring process for the court reporter job.

I. INTRODUCTION

Senior Court Reporters provide a crucial service in the New York State Unified Court System by recording and preserving word-for-word accounts of trials and other court proceedings. Transcripts of these proceedings are used by judges and counsels to assess the facts, evidence and procedures employed in a particular case, thereby playing an integral role in the fair administration of justice. Senior Court Reporters provide an essential service to the courts, the legal community and the public at large.

In addition to proficiency in shorthand and in the operation of the stenographic machine, Senior Court Reporters must have excellent command of the English language. They must also possess research and computer skills and have familiarity with legal and medical terminology. Court reporting requires a highly trained ear that can adapt to different accents and styles of speech. A Senior Court Reporter must be detail-oriented, work under pressure and meet court deadlines for producing transcripts.

II. TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

The duties of a Senior Court Reporter vary from day to day and usually depend upon the type of court and its location. Typically, Senior Court Reporters are responsible for multi-voiced verbatim recording and transcribing testimony in formal and informal court settings such as trials, conferences, calendar calls, arraignments and hearings. They may also be assigned to record and transcribe administrative hearings or to work in other courts during emergencies or in difficult or protracted proceedings. They also perform back office and courtroom clerical tasks such as processing forms related to case proceedings. Senior Court Reporters work in the Supreme Court and those County Courts with two or more full-time County Court judges or one full-time County Court judge and combined annual filings of indictments and Supreme Court civil actions exceeding 650.

III. DESCRIPTION OF EXAMINATION

The examination for Senior Court Reporter consists of two components: a written multiple-choice test and a dictated performance test presented through a videotaped format.

Written Test

This written examination consists of multiple-choice questions designed to assess the following:

1. **Knowledge of English Grammar and Usage, Punctuation and Sentence Structure**
These questions assess the candidates' ability to apply the rules of English grammar, usage, punctuation and sentence structure. Candidates are presented with a series of sentences and must select the sentence that best conforms to standard English grammar, usage, punctuation and sentence structure.
2. **Spelling and General Vocabulary**
These questions assess the candidates' knowledge of the spelling and meaning of words and phrases that Senior Court Reporters may encounter in their daily work.
3. **Knowledge of Medical, Legal and Technical Terminology**
These questions assess the candidates' knowledge of medical, legal and technical terminology that Senior Court Reporters may encounter in their daily work. These questions may include, but are not limited to, terms from fields such as law, forensic science, anatomy, physiology and medicine.

Performance Test

The performance component of the Senior Court Reporter exam consists of two parts:

1. **TRANSCRIPTION** - Candidates are required to take and transcribe an Opening of Counsel (averaging 185 words per minute for three minutes) and Direct Testimony involving four voices, including examination of witnesses, objections, rulings by the Court, etc. (averaging 200 words per minute for five minutes).

NOTE: Prior to the beginning of the actual transcription portion of the test, candidates are provided with a practice dictation involving four voices for 2 minutes at the rate of 200 words per minute. This section does not have to be transcribed and will not be rated.

2. **READ-BACK** - Candidates are also required to take and later read back a Judge's Charge (averaging 185 words per minute for three minutes). Candidates are given 5 minutes to study their notes from dictation and 10 minutes to read back the Charge. Candidates must be able to produce a paper record of their stenographic notes and read from these notes for this portion of the examination.

TIMING - Candidates are given a total of **2½** hours to complete the transcription and read-back parts of the performance test.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

Candidates are given one (1) hour to complete the written component and two and one-half (2½) hours to complete the transcription and read-back sections of the performance test.

V. SCORING

The passing score for the written examination will be determined at a date following the administration of the examination. Candidates must pass **both** the written and performance components of the examination.

For the performance component, candidates cannot have more than a 5% error rate across the entire dictated portion of the examination in order to obtain a passing score. The performance test includes the Opening Statement of Counsel and the Direct Examination sections as well as the Read-Back portion. There are approximately 2,110 words on this examination which translates into approximately 106 errors allowed across the performance portion of the examination, and not on any one individual section.

Please note: One error does not equal one point. Each error on the performance section deducts approximately one-fourth of a point from your total performance score. Candidates are *strongly* encouraged to complete and transcribe the entire test and should not be discouraged by a few dropped words or sentences in any individual section.

PERFORMANCE TEST - RATING CRITERIA
SAMPLE RATING

The performance test is usually scored by three raters using the following key:

1. Dictated Passage

Direct Examination by Mr. Arthur:

Q. Doctor, are you a physician duly licensed to practice medicine in the State of New York?

A. I am.

2. Candidate's Transcription Paper

Direct Examination by Mr. Paulson:
①

Q. Doctor Jackson, were you a psychiatrist licensed to practice medacine in
② ⑤ ⑥ ③ ⑦
_____ New York State?
③ ④ & ③

A. Yes I am.
②

KEY TO RATING

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|
| ① | Wrong Speaker (candidate must identify speaker, Q & A must match), repeated use of the wrong speaker will result in additional errors | 1 error |
| ② | One word insertion | 1 error |
| ③ | One word omission | 1 error |
| ④ | Transposition of words (if all words are still included). | . . . 1 error |
| ⑤ | Wrong verb tense | 1 error |
| ⑥ | Wrong word (substitution) | 1 error |
| ⑦ | Misspelled words | 1 error |

Repeated misspelling of the same word will result in additional errors counted.

Note: No errors are counted for split words such as “cannot” written as “can not.” Arabic numerals may be substituted for the numbered word, e.g., twelve = 12. No errors are counted if a candidate drops the “th” from 5th. Contractions such as: “it’s” written as “it is,” or “can’t” written as “cannot” are not counted as errors. No errors are counted for wrong punctuation or capitalization; however, **1 error will be counted for using plural for singular and vice versa.**

The Read-Back

During the 2½ -hour period designated for the transcription, you will be individually called out of the examination room to read back Section III - the Judge's Charge. **Candidates using a paperless writer must be able to produce stenographic paper notes in an untranslated format on 8½ x 11 inch sheets of paper.** See the last page of this document to see an example of what a printout might look like. It should be large enough for you to be able to read it back. The read-back is organized as follows:

- 1) The read-back will take place in a separate examination area away from the transcription room. The Monitor will inform you when it is your turn for the read-back.
- 2) During the read-back portion of the examination, you will be provided with the stenographic notes that you took during the dictation of Section III - the Judge's Charge. You will be given exactly 5 minutes to review these notes. You **may** write on your stenographic notes of the Judge's Charge when reviewing them; however, no candidate will be permitted to have access to their original notes from the Judge's Charge, or to make a copy of their notes **prior** to the official read-back, except as explained above for those with paperless writers.
- 3) At the completion of the 5-minute period or at an *earlier* time if you indicate you are ready to begin, a Monitor will start a tape recorder and you will read back the entire dictation from your notes. You will be given 10 minutes to complete the read-back.
- 4) No errors will be counted for words which you correct. The **last** version of any phrase, sentence, or word which you repeat will be the version that is scored. Therefore, you may repeat a word, phrase, or sentence several times when reading from your notes. The **last** time that word, phrase, or sentence is recorded will be the version that is scored.
- 5) At the completion of the read-back or the 10 minutes, you will return to the transcription room to complete the transcription.
- 6) The time used to read back the Judge's Charge will be counted as part of your 2½ -hour transcription period.

VI. FINAL SCORING AND RANKING

To be eligible for appointment, candidates **must** obtain a passing score on each of the two components. The written part will be weighted 25% and the performance part will be weighted 75% of the final ranked score.

VII. GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES USING *COMPUTER-AIDED TRANSCRIPTION (CAT)*

INSTRUCTIONS

A. TRANSCRIPTION

1. The transcription portion of the dictation must be completed on a typewriter, personal computer, or with the use of computer-aided transcription (CAT). Candidates must provide their own equipment to transcribe the dictation. Laptop computers and compact printers are preferred since transcription space will be limited. Typewriters and computers will **not** be available at any of the examination sites.
2. **Candidates using paperless writers** must inform the Test Center Supervisor that they are using a paperless writer and check with the room monitor for further instructions.
3. Candidates are responsible for producing their own transcripts without assistance. Candidates must use their own dictionary (English, Legal and/or Medical) and perform their own translating, editing, and printing functions. Sharing of dictionaries is **not** permitted. Use of dictionaries will be permitted during the performance component of the examination **only**.
4. Additional transcription time will **not** be allowed for equipment failure, candidate mishaps such as accidental erasing of computer files, or forgotten items (e.g., cables, power cords).
5. The printing of rough drafts is permitted; however, the following rules apply:
 - **All** rough draft pages must be turned in with the final test transcript.
 - **All** rough draft pages must be clearly marked "Rough Draft" and a large "X" marked across the page to separate them from final copies.
 - **No** printer may be shared with another candidate. In the event of a computer failure, the candidate may use the remaining test time to transcribe the dictation on a personal typewriter that he or she brings to the test center.

B. EQUIPMENT

1. Only manual shorthand or shorthand writing machines will be permitted. Real-time translation is **not** permitted and computers will **not** be allowed to be used during the dictation or the read-back portion of the examination. **The audiosync function of stenographic machines equipped with this feature must be turned off.** Audio or video recording devices and any kind of headphones or earphones will **not** be allowed. Candidates using paperless writers must produce paper notes.
2. Stenographic paper, computer disks and flash cards will not be available at the test site. Candidates must provide their own equipment and supplies necessary to record, transcribe and print the exam. Proper functioning of equipment and having sufficient supplies are the sole responsibility of the candidate. Should any equipment fail to function properly, be dropped, stolen, broken, etc., neither the site, the Chief Examiner, nor the Office of Court Administration is responsible.
3. Candidates are responsible for all necessary hardware and software including **CAT** writers, software, computers, security keys, blank disks, flash memory cards, printers, cables, extension cords, adapters and surge protector/power strips.
4. The "TEST MODE" feature on most current stenographic machines prevents files from being stored in the machine's RAM but allows their storage in the stenographic machine's flash memory card. Those candidates who have stenographic machines with this feature will be asked to run their machines in "TEST MODE" in order to insure that no files are stored in their stenographic machine's RAM. Please consult the manufacturer or stenographic machine's manual for more information about this feature. Using this feature may prevent any personal work from being needlessly erased.

5. All notes, tapes, and diskettes must be given to the Monitor at the close of the examination. Candidates who plan to use stenographic machines requiring diskettes must bring a blank diskette to the examination. After candidates have finished the exam and handed in all transcripts, and before they leave, candidates will be asked to delete all files from the stenographic machine's RAM and to delete any files from their memory flash card and/or computer's hard drive in order to insure that all exam files have been erased. **Therefore, candidates should be careful to arrive at the examination with NO files stored in memory or on the memory flash card. Candidates are urged to bring a NEW MEMORY FLASH CARD to the test site for this exam so their personal work files will not be inadvertently erased.** Candidates must turn off the power to their machines at the close of the examination.
6. Candidates **must** know how to erase the RAM of their stenographic machine.
7. Candidates **must** know how to get to the Recycle Bin of their computer and empty out the deleted test files.
8. **Candidates' failure to delete all exam-related files from their computer's internal memory, flash memory or any other storage media, after the examination is completed, may result in their disqualification. It is the candidate's responsibility to perform this function.**

C. GENERAL

1. Candidates are prohibited from viewing or handling another candidate's test material. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in automatic disqualification. **Sharing of test material by electronic or manual transmission, via email, text messaging or any other means is not permitted. Any candidate found sharing exam-related information (e.g., dictated exam transcripts) will be subject to disqualification.**
2. Candidates, including those withdrawing from the examination, are required to submit the following items to the room monitor:
 - Writer Disk (with 9-digit Social Security Number on it),
 - The word “**Withdrawn**” written on **all** rough drafts, if applicable,
 - Final transcript.
3. Access to the Internet will **not** be permitted during the examination.
4. Use of **cell phones** and **beepers** is **not** permitted at the test site and these devices must be turned off before entering the test center. Candidates will **not** be permitted to make or receive any calls or electronic messages until the examination is over and candidates are dismissed from the test center. Children and pets are **not** permitted at the test center.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **TYPEWRITERS AND TRANSCRIPTION PAPER ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT ANY TEST SITE. YOU MAY BRING YOUR OWN TYPEWRITER. IF YOU BRING AN ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER, YOU MUST ALSO BRING AN EXTENSION CORD AT LEAST 10 FEET LONG. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU BRING AT LEAST 50 SHEETS OF TRANSCRIPTION PAPER.**

***** If you have any additional questions, contact NYS Office of Court Administration
Exams Information at (212) 428-2580 *****

CHECK LIST

Prior to the day of the Examination:

- Thoroughly familiarize yourself with your equipment and software.** Make certain that you have the correct software for your printer. If you have new equipment or are borrowing equipment, make sure you know how to operate it. Turn it on and off a few times and make sure it is operational. **Do not** expect that someone at the test site will be familiar with your equipment or can help you in getting it operational. It is *your* responsibility to make sure that you can produce a transcript when required.
- For paperless writers, make sure you know how to print your untranslated stenographic notes that will be needed for the read-back portion of the Judge's Charge. For an example of a printout, see the last page of this document. You should print it large enough for you to be able to read it.
- Make sure you know how to save your work!
- Ensure that the batteries to your stenographic machine, laptop computer, and any other equipment are fully charged.
- Make sure that you have sufficient ink/toner in your printer. Bring additional ink/toner cartridges to ensure that you don't run out. You will not be allowed to leave the test site if you run out of ink/toner or other supplies, and you will not be permitted to have someone bring you supplies once the test begins.
- If you intend to bring a typewriter, make sure you have sufficient cartridges and/or correction ribbons.
- Bring sufficient transcription paper and stenographic note paper. The test site will not have any supplies available.
- Bring a power surge protector and a 10-foot long extension cord.
- Gather the material you will need for the test site (admission letter, **picture identification**, any equipment for transcription and instructions for getting to the test site). No candidate will be allowed to take the examination unless they have a picture identification. Make certain you know the exact location of the test center and how to get there. If you are not certain of the test center location, attempt to locate it a few days before the test. Make certain of any train, subway or traffic detours that might affect your ability to get to the test center on time.
- Use of **cell phones** and **beepers** is **not** permitted at the test site and these devices must be turned off before entering the test center. The **audiosync** function of stenographic machines equipped with this feature **must be turned off**. You will **not** be permitted to make any calls during the entire time you are present at the test center until the examination is over and you are dismissed. Therefore, it is your responsibility to make any arrangements for childcare, parking, pets and food preparation, prior to the exam. **No children or pets will be allowed at the test site.** You may want to bring a small snack or refreshment with you.
- Access to the Internet will **not** be permitted during the examination.
- Be prepared to spend at least **4-5** hours at the test center.
- Take a few minutes to review the material in this Orientation Guide.
- Get a good night's sleep prior to the examination.

On the day of the Examination:

Bring all the necessary materials. Dress casually; be as comfortable as possible. Plan to arrive at the test site at least 15 minutes early. At some locations, you will have to go through a magnetometer (metal detector) before going to the examination room. There will be an identification form to fill out prior to the test. The entire Examination should take approximately **4 to 5** hours to complete.

19:20:24		F P L T	19:31:48	P H O	PB	19:47:05	W	R
19:20:24	T P	E B	19:32:01	P A	R B G	19:47:06	S	HR U T
19:20:24	W A	E R	19:32:02	P HRA	EU S	19:47:06	HR	EU
19:20:24	1	5		Z		19:47:06	A	EU
19:20:24		R B G S	19:32:21	T H O U		19:47:07	F H A	EU Z
19:20:24	2		19:32:21		6	19:47:07		G
19:20:24	T H O U		19:32:22	T R A	E R	19:47:07		F P L T
19:20:24		6	19:32:23	T A	E P L T	19:47:08	F H	E PB
19:20:24		F P L T	19:32:23	T O		19:47:08	A	PB DC
19:21:17	HRA		19:32:24	T P H O	EU S	19:47:08	W	EU P L
19:21:17	HRA		19:32:24	K R O	L	19:47:09		R B G S
19:21:20	P H O E	L	19:32:25	HRA	U	19:47:09	K W R O	U PB G
19:21:20	P H O E	L	19:32:55	T P O	R	19:47:09	A	PB D
19:21:23	T A O E	R	19:32:56	T P H O	R B G T	19:47:10	O	L D
19:21:23	T A O E	R	19:32:56	TK	E P T	19:47:10		F
19:21:28	S R O E	G	19:32:57	T R A	F	19:47:11	H O U	
19:21:28	S R O E	G	19:32:57	T R A	PB S	19:47:11	S	A O U S
19:21:30	T P R A	PB G	19:32:58	T P O	R	19:47:12		A PB
19:21:30	T P R A	PB G	19:32:58	T A	EU G S	19:47:12	FW	F P L T
19:22:36	T P H O	F	19:32:59	A O E		19:47:13	A	PB
19:22:36	T P H O	F	19:33:00	T P H A O	EU T	19:47:13	T H O E	PB
19:22:51	K R A	U S	19:33:01	W O	R B G	19:47:14	K O	PB TS
19:22:51	K R A	U S	19:33:01	T O		19:47:14	T O	
19:23:01	H R O E		19:33:02	T R E		19:47:15	T P H R	U
19:23:01	H R O E		19:33:02	S	U R	19:47:16	T H R	EU R
19:23:16	T P R A	PB G	19:33:02	T P A	S	19:47:16	HRAO	EU P S
19:23:17	T P R A	PB G	19:33:03	A		19:47:16		F P L T
19:23:19	S R O E	G	19:33:03	F O	R G S	19:47:17	S	O
19:23:19	S R O E	G	19:33:03	F		19:47:17	W A O E	
19:25:54	S P	E R	19:33:28	T P R A	PB G	19:47:18	T H A U	PB G
19:25:54	S P	E R	19:33:28	TK	EU	19:47:18	T P O	R
19:26:27	T P R A	PB G	19:33:33		F P L T	19:47:19	R O	EU S
19:26:29	TK	EU	19:33:34	F R O		19:47:20		G
19:26:30	K O	S	19:33:34	S K W R	E B G T	19:47:20	T	
19:26:30	ST A	PB	19:33:35	P H A	PB G	19:47:20		EU P L
19:26:32	S O E		19:33:35	E R		19:47:20	P O	R
19:26:59	FWHR		19:33:35		F P L T	19:47:20	T A	PB S
19:27:00	TK	EU	19:33:37	T P R A	+ PB G	19:47:21		F
19:27:36	S R A		19:33:41	T P R A	R P B G	19:47:21	T H	
19:27:37	R A	EU D	19:33:44	T P R A	+ PB G	19:47:21	TK A	EU
19:27:56	P H	EU L	19:33:46	TK	E	19:47:21	T	
19:27:56	T P H	E R	19:33:51	FWHR	EU	19:47:21		EU P L
19:28:13	A	PB	19:33:52	TK	EU	19:47:22	F O	R
19:28:16	A *	PB	19:33:59	T P R A	+ PB G	19:47:22	T A	PB S
19:28:18	HRA		19:34:01	TK	EU	19:47:22		F
19:28:18	T P H A	EU PB	19:34:15	T P H O	R B G T	19:47:22	T H	
19:28:54	F H R O	PB	19:34:16	TK	E P T	19:47:23	W O	PB
19:28:54	T	E	19:34:16	T R A	F P G S	19:47:23	TK	E R
19:29:07	HRA		19:34:20	S R A		19:47:23	T P	U L
19:29:08	S R A O E	PB	19:35:07	S R A		19:47:24	W O	F P L
19:29:13	T O	P L S	19:35:07	S R A	EU D	19:47:24		F P L T
19:29:14	K R	F P L T	19:36:13	S A O U	P L	19:47:25	T P O	R
19:29:15	TKPW	RAO EU PB	19:36:13	S A O U	P L	19:47:25	T H O E	S
19:29:15	T P H	E R	19:36:16	P A U	S	19:47:26		F
19:29:46	P HRA	*E R	19:36:16	P A U	S	19:47:26		U S
19:29:48	A	PB	19:46:30	F R O	B G	19:47:26	T	E
19:29:48	T P H A		19:46:31	HRA		19:47:27	H O U	S
19:29:49	TKPW	A O EU B	19:46:31	P H A	EU G S	19:47:27	K O	PB T
19:29:54	P H A	*E R	19:46:36	P R O	B G	19:47:28	T O	
19:30:01	A	PB	19:46:36	HRA		19:47:28		EU PB
19:30:02	T P H A		19:46:37	P H A	EU G S	19:47:28	S P	A O EU R
19:30:21	TKPW	A O EU B	19:46:59	P H O E	S	19:47:28	A	PB DC
19:30:38	P H O	PB	19:47:00		F	19:47:29	T P H R	U
19:30:38	K A		19:47:00	T H	E S	19:47:29	S	O
19:30:39	TKPW	EU L	19:47:00	T P A O E	P L	19:47:29	F H A	E PB
19:30:48	TKPW	A PB	19:47:01	T H A		19:47:30	F A O E	P L
19:31:02	S K W R A	PB T	19:47:01	K A	EU P L	19:47:30		F P L T
19:31:06	H O	P	19:47:01	T HRAO	U	19:47:30	S R	U
19:31:06	K	EU PB S	19:47:02	TK	A	19:47:31	S R	PB T
19:31:09		R B G S	19:47:02	W	R	19:47:31	FW	E PB
19:31:10	R O E	P L	19:47:02	T A	EU	19:47:31	T O	T
19:31:11	K R	E L	19:47:03	TK	U L TS	19:47:31	H O U	S
19:31:11	HR	EU	19:47:03		F P L T	19:47:32	HRA	EU T
19:31:17	K R	E L	19:47:03	T		19:47:32	HR	EU
19:31:17	E		19:47:04	P H	E S	19:47:33		R B G S
19:31:43	T O	P L S	19:47:04	A	P B L G S	19:47:33	F HRAO	E S
19:31:45	S K W R A	EU	19:47:05	O		19:47:33	TK	O
19:31:47	S O	L	19:47:05	K A	R DZ	19:47:34	K O	P L