

SHORTHAND MARKING GUIDE 2011-2012

Dictated material is to be transcribed verbatim using handwriting or a computer. A transcript is produced from dictated material with no more than three per cent error.

The following marking criteria are applied and provide guidance for the learner:

- The error margin is three per cent.
 - One mark is deducted for a word wrongly transcribed.
 - One mark is deducted for a word missing from the transcript.
 - One mark is deducted for a word added which was not dictated.
 - One mark is deducted for a word which is illegible.
- One mark is deducted for transpositions provided all the words are there and the sentence still makes sense.
- Spelling and punctuation are not marked unless an error changes the sense of the piece, but English dictionaries are allowed and should be used.
- Spelling mistakes are not penalised, but an accumulation of misspellings – together with the overall standard of punctuation, presentation etc – will be considered in borderline cases and the marker will use his/her professional judgement to consider upgrading to a 'pass'.
- Contractions will not be used in dictated passages. Therefore words should be transcribed in full i.e. 'cannot' – not 'can't', 'it is' – not 'it's'. One error will be deducted for the use of a contraction.
- Shorthand is not marked, but is checked. Any longhand appearing in the shorthand note will be penalised by the deduction of one mark per word. In line with industry practice, any of the following, which could lead to the shorthand note losing credibility, may lead to the deduction of marks:
 - Shorthand outlines not matching the transcript
 - The alteration, deletion and/or insertion of outlines in the shorthand note after dictation has taken place
 - Longhand being written in the margin
 - Longhand over the top of outlines in the shorthand note

Gaps in the shorthand may invalidate the transcript.

- Shorthand notes must not be altered; incorrect outlines may be ringed and the correct shorthand outline written in the margin. Journalists' notebooks may be used as evidence in court; it is therefore in the learners' own interest to use recognisable outlines.
- Figures are permissible, as are signs such as £ or %.
- If an abbreviation is dictated that is how it should be transcribed; i.e. the transcription should be an exact account of what was said.
- Hyphenated words should be counted as two words. It helps learners who like to count the number of words they have written, to write abbreviations in full.
i.e. % sign – preferable to write the words 'per cent'.
£ sign with figures is acceptable, but should be counted as a word.
- If a learner uses a shorthand abbreviation for words that were dictated in full, a squiggly line should be put under the abbreviation to remind them to transcribe the words in full, otherwise marks will be lost. i.e. TV/television or MP/Member of Parliament.
- A correctly identified quote in the final minute of dictation in exams of 90-120wpm is marked for accuracy. The words before and after the quote in the final minute of dictation are not marked.
- Only the identified quote should be transcribed in the box provided on the NCTJ transcription sheet. Any other words transcribed in the quote box will result in a fail.
- The quote will always be a minimum of 25 words up to a maximum of 35 words and will always appear in the final minute.
- In exams of 90-120 wpm learners must transcribe the quote accurately, along with no more than 3% error in the first three minutes' dictation, in order to achieve a pass.

Error tolerances

Marking guide for 2 x 2 minutes
4 minutes with no more than 3% error

60 wpm	70 wpm	80 wpm
240 words	280 words	320 words
7 or fewer errors	8 or fewer errors	9 or fewer errors

Marking guide for 2 minutes + 1 minute
First 3 minutes with no more than 3% error + the quote must be accurate

90 wpm	100 wpm	110 wpm	120 wpm
270 words	300 words	330 words	360 words
8 or fewer errors	9 or fewer errors	10 or fewer errors	11 or fewer errors

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