Employment Testing Tips

No matter what profession you are in, submitting your résumé and taking employment tests can be daunting, challenging, and nerve-wracking, to say the least. Whether you are starting out as a new healthcare documentation specialist or perhaps coming back into the field after a period of absence, this document will provide some advice and helpful tips for before, during, and after taking an employment test. Preparation can make a huge difference. The better you plan and prepare, the more confident you'll feel.

Although some companies allow you to do part of the employment test, save it, and then return at a later time to complete it, it is best to set aside adequate, uninterrupted time (at least two hours) to finish the test. There is no sense in delaying completion and submission of it unless an emergency comes up. Employers will be looking at all aspects of a candidate's showmanship, so start off on a positive note by showing good work ethic right out of the gate. Be sure that you always read <u>all</u> instructions, and contact the company if you do not understand the instructions or if you have technical difficulties.

There are usually several levels to any employment test. If you pass the first level, you will most likely proceed to the second level, which can be longer and more involved. There may also be a third part, which is the actual transcription part of the testing process. Some companies have you edit transcription rather than fully transcribe it or they may require a combination of both straight transcription and editing of reports. The latter is to evaluate your speech recognition editing skills.

Set yourself up for success with these helpful tips:
- Get plenty of rest before taking the exam – you want to be fresh. Set aside the time to do the test and devote all of your attention to that task alone.
- Minimize distractions – ensure you have a quiet environment so you can maintain your focus.
- Take your time. The employment test is usually "open book," so you can use whatever resources you need to get the right answers. Use your web browser, The Book of Style, Stedman's online resources, reliable drug websites, macros, etc. You will be required to do this kind of research on the job, so that is why testing most often allows an open-book policy.
- Do your own work. As a reminder, having anyone assist you with your exam is not allowed and is a fraudulent act. Keep in mind that if you are hired, you will be required to do the work yourself, so having someone assist you with the test is not in anyone's best interest.
- Review common knowledge areas before testing such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, disease processes, signs and symptoms, medications and dosages, laboratory tests and values, as well as specialty-related terminology. When you are hired by any company, you will be expected to have solid knowledge in all of these aspects.
- Set up your browser with websites to research the areas above so that you can easily refer to those sites while you are doing the testing.
- Do practice medical terminology quizzes. This is highly recommended. The more you practice, the more you become familiar with terms while learning new ones. Here are several sites that offer quizzes:
  https://www.dmu.edu/medterms/basics/quiz-one/
  http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games_vocab_med.htm
  http://www.learningnurse.org/tests/terms/terminology1/quiz.html
  http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/dynamic_MC_med_voc_web.html

http://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=medical-terminology-basics
- Do practice voice files. If you have an instructor contact, ask for practice files of different kinds of reports and continue to practice. Any practice will help you prepare for the transcription portion. If you have access to speech recognition practice files, practice those as well. Here are a couple websites from which to download files:
  http://www.stenospeed.com/
  http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/practice.html
- Read and understand the entire directions and pay attention to detail! If you are required to transcribe a document for testing, be sure you understand from the instructions whether the work should be verbatim or if you may/should make appropriate adjustments in grammar, etc. If the directions state verbatim, the testing company will expect that and review your compliance with their instructions. Keep the following notifications and instructions in mind when editing speech-recognized sections:
  - Your response should contain only the word or phrase replacing the wrong word or phrase in the transcribed text. Do not add words before or after your response that represent correct words already indicated in the text.
  - Do not add punctuation to your transcribed responses.
  - Do not include a space, tab, indent, or other visible or hidden character at the end of your response, as this will result in a mismatch against the answer key, and the item will be marked wrong.
- Practice editing transcription to help enhance your proofreading and grammar skills.
- Before looking at the choices of answers, take your best guess at the answer. Then then read the choices and eliminate the ones you know are incorrect. This will help to narrow down the correct answer quickly. Avoid second-guessing yourself; usually your first instinct is correct!
- Watch out for "all of the above" and "none of the above" answers – read each choice carefully. Be sure each component of "all" is going to be correct. Ask yourself if any of the choices are simply not correct.
- Study sound-alike words – both spelling and meaning – if you know you have a propensity to mix them up.
- Use the scroll bar on the side of the page to maneuver up and down.

If you do not pass a test, find out if you are able to come back and test at a later time or what the wait period is before you are allowed to retest. Take notes immediately after a failed test so that you can remember what areas you might want to concentrate on before your next attempt and then spend ample time "mock" testing yourself by doing online exams or getting instructor help before retesting.

It never hurts to ask the testing company if they can provide you with feedback, especially if you have failed a particular section. They just might be able to point you in the right direction and help you be ready to ace the next one.

Above all, keep a positive attitude and don't give up! Continue to network with others for potential job leads, and keep brushing up on your knowledge and skills. The more information you're able to retain and not have to look up, the more proficient you'll be.