



I. COURT PROCEEDINGS _____ 35%

Our judicial system is arguably the most complex in the world. Actually, we could speak of systems. One reason for the complexity: ours is a federated country with its component units sharing some overlapping powers yet having exclusive control in other areas.

A further reason is that Americans may well be the most litigious people of all: we have more attorneys per capita than anywhere else. We seem to share a love/hate relationship with laws and lawsuits in general, and appeals in particular.

Yet a third reason for what many lay observers find confusing, is that we inherited so much of our jurisprudence from a completely different system: a non-federal, culturally unitary, parliamentary kingdom which had its own intricate developmental history long before we built our fifty-one constitutional superstructures on top.

This category may include questions on:

- 1001. Jurisdiction
- 1002. State Courts
- 1003. Federal Courts
- 1004. Administrative Agency Forums
- 1005. Categories of Law
- 1006. Statutory Law
- 1007. Common Law
- 1008. Administrative Law
- 1009. Law v. Equity
- 1010. Court Opinions
- 1011. Proceedings Before Trial
- 1012. Discovery
- 1013. Court Proceedings
- 1014. Standard Order of Criminal and Civil Trials
- 1015. A civil suit in state court without a jury
- 1016. A criminal case in state court
- 1017. Jury Trial Considerations
- 1018. Jury selection and challenges



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- 1019. Testimony before a jury
 - 1020. Proceedings After Trial
 - 1021. Sentencing
 - 1022. Appeal

II. TRANSCRIBING AND PROOFREADING _____ 15%

Strange as it may seem, punctuation is something of a latecomer to written language. English has been decided about it (more or less) for only a few generations. The rules our grandparents learned are not always those we were taught.

If you read early editions of our great literature, you may be surprised to find commas, semicolons, or other marks, in unusual places, not to mention entire arrays of unexpected and inconsistent capitalizations and spellings.

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Even inserting spaces between words took some time to catch on. Before paper was widely available in Europe, the cost of parchment or vellum (thin, stretched animal skins cut into rectangles) provided the incentive to avoid unnecessary white space.

And those are all one-syllable words. Imagine trying to read technical materials. Because we deal with the spoken language and are not creating literature, we face a problem: how to turn the arbitrary, mechanical rules which at least try to standardize correct literary English, into working principles that can be applied in real life.



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TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS (BLUEPRINT) FOR THE CERTIFIED ELECTRONIC TRANSCRIBER (CET) EXAMINATION

We rarely speak the way we are supposed to write, and we almost never speak in a way that might pass an English exam. We regress. We change thoughts in midstream. We take liberties with grammar. We litter our speech with mindless throw-away words — Like, I mean, you know, man, what we're going to do now is, we're going to eat — and we speak in fragments: Did you? Never did.

This category may include questions on:

- 2001. Proofreading Versus Literary Editing
- 2002. Punctuating, Spelling, and Capitalization
- 2003. Punctuation Standards
- 2004. Period
- 2005. Question Mark
- 2006. Exclamation Point
- 2007. Colon
- 2008. Clauses
- 2009. Semicolon
- 2010. Comma
- 2011. Quotation Marks
- 2012. Apostrophe
- 2013. Dashes
- 2014. Ellipsis
- 2015. Slash/Slant
- 2016. Parentheses
- 2017. [sic]
- 2018. Hyphens
- 2019. Capitalization
- 2020. Abbreviations
- 2021. Numbers
- 2022. Spelling



III. TRANSCRIPT FORMATTING _____ 35%

What is a deposition? As explained by Jason Wietholter of the American Guild of Court Videographers, "In its simplest form, a deposition involves at least one attorney posing questions to a witness who then answers those questions on-the-record while a court reporter and/or videographer preserves those interactions by recording them in some form or fashion."

In this section we will delve a bit further into the intricacies of how a deposition works. You may note some repetition of material here and there from that covered in the previous section, but that is only because both courtroom and deposition materials often overlap in some key ways. This section focuses specifically on the world of freelance and deposition work.

A discovery deposition is an examination under oath of a witness by opposing counsel. An evidentiary deposition is an examination under oath of an expert witness by any party of record. The party requesting the deposition serves a Notice of Deposition on the witness and all parties of record in a case. If the parties are willing to so stipulate, a deposition can also occur without formal notice.

Depositions usually take place in a conference-type setting, most often in an attorney's office. However, they may occur anywhere that the attorney chooses, especially if there are issues with witnesses. It is not uncommon for a deposition to transpire in institutional settings such as a hospital, a prison, or a city council conference room. In some situations, for the convenience of one of the participants, someone may appear by telephone or videoconference. The deposition may also be video-recorded. This section focuses on depositions where all parties are present in one location.

- 3001. This category may include questions on:
- 3002. Federal District Court Standards
- 3003. Parts of a Transcript
- 3004. Page Specifications
- 3005. Title Page
- 3006. Index Page
- 3007. The First Transcript Page (Proceedings Page)
- 3008. Call to Order of the Court
- 3009. Certificate/Transcript Certification



**TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS (BLUEPRINT)
FOR THE CERTIFIED ELECTRONIC
TRANSCRIBER (CET) EXAMINATION**

- 3010. Page Headers
- 3011. Colloquy
- 3012. Swearing/Affirming Witnesses
- 3013. Question and Answer Mode
- 3014. Paragraphs
- 3015. Parenthetical Notations
- 3016. Striking from the Record
- 3017. Exhibits — Marking and Receiving
- 3018. Transcriber Responsibilities
- 3019. Playback Software
- 3020. Annotations
- 3021. Case Information/Appearance Sheet
- 3022. Summary of Witnesses and Exhibits
- 3023. Interacting with the Court Reporter
- 3024. Estimating Transcript Pages
- 3025. Transcriber Judgment Calls
- 3026. Your Research Responsibilities
- 3027. Standard References
- 3028. The Internet
- 3029. Comprehending the Case
- 3030. Chopped-Down/Slurred Speech
- 3031. Playbacks
- 3032. Other Recordings or Videos Played
- 3033. Quoted Materials
- 3034. Interruptions and Double-Dashes
- 3035. Verbal Content
- 3036. Private Communications/Inadvertently Recorded Remarks (Asides)
- 3037. Sidebar or Bench Conference
- 3038. Indiscernible Speech
- 3039. Nonverbal Considerations
- 3040. Spelling Words on the Record
- 3041. Italics and Italicized Words/Non-English Words and Phrases
- 3042. Interpreters/Translators



IV. LEGAL TERMINOLOGY _____ 10%

For most purposes, English law before the Norman-French conquest was a matter of clan and regional custom. There were few principles that might qualify as a true national body of law such as we understand today.

The Normans, however, brought with them a system, mostly drawn from their own customary feudal code, partly drawn from Roman law, largely in Latin (with generous French admixtures). And almost overnight England was surprised, and somewhat annoyed, to find itself with a national body of law. These strands of Anglo-Saxon customary law and Norman-Latin law were gradually woven together, refined, and added to, becoming in due course English and American common law.

Everything that can be said with those pithy legal Latinisms can also be said in simple English. It just takes more words to do so with the same precise, agreed-upon meanings. The day may come when lawyers who use these phrases may be viewed as anachronistic, but now we hear a good number of them very frequently. This is largely an institutional issue, as with the medical profession's fondness for Latin and Greek. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court opens each session when the clerk calls out "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!" (French, "Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!"), first heard in an English court after 1066, and still going strong.

One key to greater facility with law Latin, as well as complex English, lies in getting a feel for prefixes tacked onto the beginnings of words, the roots to which they are added, and suffixes trailing at their ends. At least we get helpful clues as to what the words might mean. Many of these are well known and easy, but others may not be.

This category may include questions on:

- 4000. Common Construction Forms
- 4001. Common Phrases and Meanings



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V. NON-LEGAL TERMINOLOGY _____ 5%

This section contains general knowledge terms encountered in medicine, business or government.

This category may include questions on:

- 5001. Medicine
- 5002. Business
- 5003. Government