

Typing

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Why Is It Important?

In most online and face-to-face college classes, written assignments must be typed. Because writing takes the place of spoken activities for most online activities, even more writing is required for online courses. You'll use the keyboard to type documents, create discussion postings, answer quizzes, write emails, etc. This means that good typing skills will save you a lot of time, so it would be worth your time to learn to type faster.

In addition, accurate typing can make a big difference in how your instructors and fellow students perceive you. When readers encounter typing errors, they may view them as spelling errors, assuming you are careless and don't bother to check for errors.

What's the Goal?

Most people think typing speed is the goal. Increased typing speed is the reason most non-typists want to learn to touch type. Though learning to touch type will almost always result in a perceptible increase in typing speed, it is just one factor contributing to a marked increase in productivity. Accuracy is just as important!

How Typing Skills Are Measured

Typing tests measure two aspects of typing: speed and mistakes. When you take a typing speed test, don't consider only your speed. Consider also the number of mistakes you make and concentrate on reducing your mistakes in future tests rather than just increasing your typing speed.

WPM is the abbreviation of Words-Per-Minute. For typing tests, this does not literally mean whole words, but rather, word-units. To measure speed and, subsequently, improvements in typing speed, the typing rate must be measured in standard units. In the case of typing speed, if actual words were used for the WPM measurement, then typing speed test results would not be comparable unless everyone used the same texts for their respective typing speed tests.

For typing tests, one word-unit is five keystrokes. Thus, "*study*" is one word-unit, "*study chemistry*" is three word-units (spaces count as keystrokes, too).

Improving Your Typing Skills

You must invest time to learn and practice to improve your typing skills, but this investment will definitely pay off in future time savings in school, possibly on the job, and in your personal life.

To improve your typing skills, follow this three-step process:

1. Measure your current typing speed and accuracy so you will know how much progress you make when you learn to type faster. To measure your typing speed, go to one of the websites listed in the Resources links at the end of this module.
2. Once you know your current typing speed, take one or more typing courses. See the Resources links at the end of this module for recommended free online courses. You may wish to browse through several courses before you commit to one of them. This way you can join the best course from the beginning. Allocate time every day to study the course and do the exercises.

3. Practice your typing. Learning to type faster doesn't have to be serious all the time. You can have fun too. The Resources link on the Online Education homepage includes practice sites and typing games you can play in your browser.

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