

Oh hi there! My name is Sandra.

You may be asking yourself...what do I do for a living? Me? I'm a court reporter.

Ohhh, you say, you're the person who types on that little machine in court!

Well, yes...no...sort of...let me explain.

First off, let's answer your first looming question - WHO is a court reporter?

Well, the official definition is:

A sworn officer of the Court and Notary public in the state in which they work. A court reporter is also known as a guardian of the record as they capture the spoken words of everyone during a legal proceeding. The court reporter plays a neutral role in the judicial process. In other words, the court reporter is not related to the parties involved in the action, nor financially interested in the outcome of the case.

Phew - long definition, huh? Questions?

Oh - what's a notary public? Great question!

Notary public is a fancy term for getting the power to swear people in. You know, "Do you solemnly swear or affirm to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth"....cool huh?

There will be some more information about notary publics in the file that accompanies this video, so check that out!

Okay, moving on - you may be asking yourself WHERE do court reporters work?

Well, court reporters work in a variety of settings include courtrooms, hearings, depositions, professional meetings, and...at home!

[PAUSE]

Alright, so WHAT does a court reporter do?

Believe it or not, we don't all type on that funny machine. A court reporter can take the record using different court reporting methods like stenography, digital or voice writing.

Stenographers create an official written record of the proceedings using a shortened writing style called stenography. Steno is written on the steno machine using syllables rather than letters. This shortened writing style allows stenographers to type at ~200 words per minute, which is more than double the words per minute of a professional typist on a regular keyboard. The fastest steno types at ~250 words per minute. WHOA, right?

Digital Court reporters create a verbatim record of the proceedings using a digital audio recording and log notes. The log notes are a rough outline of the proceedings important details including examination events, speaker changes and exhibits. A digital court reporter transcribes the verbatim record by typing and/or dictating using voice recognition software.

Less common in Wisconsin, is the Voice Writer. Voice writers create a verbatim record by speaking into a steno-mask device containing a microphone that transfers the court reporter's speech into text using voice translation software.

Not too bad right? Well, NOW your next question may be, WHEN is the right time to become a court reporter?

Well, right NOW! The State of WI needs court reporters all over the state. Over 40% of court reporters in the state could retire today with even more retiring in the next five years! So, there's an incredible need for these positions!

In addition, starting salary can be 41 thousand, to upwards of 77 thousand. Check out the official Wisconsin court system site for current job openings and education requirements.

[PAUSE]

Speaking of education requirements, the State of Wisconsin has a number of schools and programs that offer coursework to become a court reporter. Check out that accompanying document for some more information!

[PAUSE]

So I have some questions for you:

- Do you find the law interesting?
- Are you a good listener?
- Do you enjoy English grammar, spelling, and punctuation?
- Are you detail oriented?
- Are you self-motivated and organized?
- Do you enjoy a flexible schedule?

If you answered yes to a lot of these questions, a career as a court reporter may be for you!

And who knows? Maybe I'll see you around the courtroom!