

Minute Taking Skills

Speed Writing Tips 1 of 5

Speed Writing Tips

Don't ignore this just because it looks weird. Believe it or not, you can read it.

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the first and last ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit a porbelm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

f u cn rd ts u cn use spd wrtg tchnqs.

Interesting, isn't it?

Use a glossary

The key is to have a glossary of common terms and/or jargon that is unique to your industry, project or department. This will help you work to a consistency in note taking. If other minute takers share the same terms then it will help people make sense of your notes if you are absent following making notes in a meeting.

It will also help new starters understand what is being talked about.

A snapshot of our glossary (some industry jargon, some abbreviations) is below:

Abbreviation	Meaning
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TD	Training Design
Ee	Employee
Er	Employer
Appr	Appraiser
Mgr	Manager
JIS	Joining instructions
TE	Training Evaluation
C&B	Compensation and Benefits

Shorthand

The prediction for the next decade is that more and more text speak will enter our written vocabulary. The advantage of this whole new language is that most of us will become more adept at speed writing. 'Text speak' you may have heard of is LOL (Laugh out loud), IOW (In other words) and KR (Kind regards). The advantage of this abbreviated language is in speed writing.

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Minute Taking Skills

Speed Writing Tips 2 of 5

Use of symbols

Symbols have been used throughout history to simplify complex or often used words/phrases. Here are a few examples:

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
&	And	£/\$	Money
2	To, two	8	Ate
%	Percent	!	Exclamation, exclaim
?	Question	+	Plus
=	Equal to, equal	ψ	Psychology
C	Century	“	speech

Think of symbols that will help you write common terms down quickly.

Use of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
C	See, sea	R	Are
U	You	Y	Why?
No	Number	i.e.	That is
Etc	Etcetera, and so on	e.g.	For example
Aka	Also known as	Ono	Or nearest offer
PS	Post script	Cc	Carbon copy

Practise is the key

Most people have some form of shorthand that will help with writing notes during meetings. The problem is that most of us think of something during the meeting and if we don't write up our notes quickly, what seemed logical whilst writing suddenly IS a foreign language.

When toddlers are learning to speak, they often learn one word a day. I used this when devising and learning my own speed writing language. What I found whilst learning speed writing was to incorporate a new abbreviation into my own personal glossary week by week. It is surprising how quickly it becomes second nature. Some example of my speed writing dictionary is below:

Suffix:

^g	(for) ing	e.g.	spea ^g	speaking
ⁿ	for sion/tion	e.g.	exten ⁿ	extension

Minute Taking Skills

Speed Writing Tips 3 of 5

Prefix

Use the / after a common expression used, such as:

p/	pre	p/view
u/	under	u/stand
w/	with	w/out
a/	after	a/wards

Reducing words

You can then practise taking this one step further by contracting words and removing letters:

hlo	hello
pls	please
adrs	address
p/vw	preview
u/stnd	understand
a/wds	afterwards

Case Study

I coached a new PA in note taking/minute taking skills once and we drew up an initial 250 word glossary of terms. Once we had that together she immediately said she felt much better because the exercise meant that she had ingrained the abbreviations into her own mind.

She then worked on developing her own form of speed writing and found in 6 months she had added 60 more words to the list.

As her glossary was available to a PA who job shared with her, when she was absent once, her colleague could make sense of her notes.

It is worth persisting in developing this skill, as it will enable you to record the right level of information you require.

Quick tests

What do these sentences mean?

1. Mst ltd co's acep resp 4 invst^g £ wsly.
2. In th lst ¼s prfts wr up anthr 5%.
3. It wl B 2 expn^v 2 hv thr servs.
4. Yr ordr 4 10 bxs ws rcvd.
5. W hv cred u wth th corr amt
6. Pls send our £ b rtn.
7. Dur^g wk 40 w xpct 2 rlse ou nw prods.
8. W wrt 2 yr Co 2 wks ago re: th T&C u impsd.
9. Ny hlp n ths mttr wld B apprct.
10. Ur a/c is ovr th crd lmt agrd.

Answers

1. Most Limited companies accept responsibility for investing their money wisely.
2. In the last quarter profits were up another five percent.
3. It will be expensive to have their services.
4. Your order for ten boxes was received.
5. We have credited you with the correct amount.
6. Please send our money by return.
7. During week forty we expect to release our new products.
8. We wrote to your company two weeks ago regarding the terms and conditions you imposed.
9. Any help in this matter would be appreciated.
10. Your account is over the credit limited we agreed.

It takes time to practise and review however it is worth it.