

# **MS Word Proficiency Test**

*Technical Manual and User Guide*

# Publisher Information

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# MS Word Proficiency Test

## *Technical Manual*

This document serves as the official Technical Manual for the MS Word Proficiency Test.

It provides a comprehensive overview of the purpose, structure, and psychometric foundations of the assessment, along with detailed guidance on its administration, scoring, and interpretation. The MS Word Proficiency Test is designed to measure the essential document-editing and formatting skills required in a wide range of administrative, clerical, customer service, and office-based roles. These skills, such as basic editing, file management, formatting, navigation, and collaboration, form the foundational competencies necessary for producing clear, accurate, and professional documents in modern work environments.

The test provides an objective, reliable, and valid measure of these core abilities, supporting organizations in making informed, evidence-based decisions when selecting or developing employees who need practical Word proficiency. Whether used for hiring, training evaluation, or internal development, the assessment offers a standardized method for identifying candidates who can confidently perform everyday Word tasks.

In addition to outlining the theoretical basis and validation evidence supporting the test, this manual offers practical guidance on how to administer the assessment effectively, ensure fairness and compliance with professional testing standards, and interpret the results in a manner consistent with best practices. Whether you are an HR professional, a recruiter, a trainer, or a decision-maker involved in candidate evaluation, this manual serves as a key resource for understanding and applying the MS Word Proficiency Test.

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## 1. Introduction

The MS Word Proficiency Test is designed to measure a candidate's essential skills and knowledge in Microsoft Word. It evaluates the ability to complete everyday document tasks such as editing, formatting, file management, page setup, and the use of collaboration features. These skills represent core requirements for administrative, clerical, customer service, and office-based roles where Microsoft Word is routinely used.

The assessment consists of 30 multiple-choice questions to be completed within a 20-minute time limit. It measures practical, real-world Word competencies that enable individuals to produce clear, accurate, and professional documents. The test is designed to be accessible for entry-level users while still distinguishing varying levels of proficiency.

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### 1.1 Purpose of the Test

- To identify candidates who possess basic Microsoft Word proficiency needed for everyday administrative tasks.
- To provide employers with a reliable, standardized measure of Word skills at the entry level.
- To support hiring decisions by ensuring candidates can complete essential document-related tasks efficiently.

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### 1.2 Intended Audience

The MS Word Proficiency Test is appropriate for roles such as:

- Administrative assistants
- Office clerks
- Customer service staff
- Data entry personnel
- Any role requiring frequent use of Microsoft Word for document creation or editing

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### 1.3 How to Use This Manual

This manual is designed for HR professionals, recruiters, trainers, and hiring managers responsible for administering, interpreting, or implementing the MS Word Proficiency Test. The manual outlines the structure of the test, the skills it measures, administration procedures, scoring guidelines, and supporting technical evidence.

- **Chapters 1–3** provide an overview of the test, its structure, and the skills it measures.
- **Chapters 4–6** contain practical information on administering, scoring, and interpreting results.

- **Chapter 7** presents the technical evidence supporting the reliability and validity of the test.
- **Chapter 8** outlines security and fair-use guidelines.
- **Appendices** include supplemental information such as sample items, score tables, and technical summaries.

Readers do not need to read the manual sequentially. You may move directly to the sections relevant to your responsibilities.

## 2. Test Specifications

The MS Word Proficiency Test is a structured, multiple-choice assessment designed to measure practical and foundational skills in Microsoft Word. The test format, timing, and delivery are optimized for online administration, making it suitable for both remote and in-person testing environments.

- **Format:** Multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- **Number of Questions:** 30
- **Time Limit:** 20 minutes
- **Answer Options:** 6 options per question, with one correct answer
- **Question Types:**
  - Primarily text-based questions
  - Some questions include images (e.g., screenshots of Word layouts or menus)
- **Delivery Method:** Online, accessible via any modern browser (no software installation required)



### 3. Content Domains

The MS Word Proficiency Test assesses the essential skills required to effectively create, edit, format, and manage documents in Microsoft Word. The 30 items in the test are distributed across several key content domains that reflect real-world usage in administrative, clerical, and office-based roles. Each domain targets a specific skill area to ensure balanced coverage of fundamental competencies.

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#### 3.1 Basic Editing & Proofing

This domain measures the ability to review, adjust, and correct document text using essential editing and proofreading tools.

- Using Track Changes to monitor multiple edits.
- Using Find and Replace for word updates.
- Identifying Track Changes as the feature marking edits in red.
- Pasting text using destination formatting.
- Using a shortcut to select a paragraph.

**Coverage:** 5 items

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#### 3.2 Page Layout & Margins

This domain assesses a candidate's ability to control the document's overall structure through margin settings, columns, image positioning, and page layout adjustments.

- Using columns to create side-by-side text blocks.
- Sending an image behind the text to allow text to appear on top.
- Identifying missing headings due to incorrect style formatting.
- Using mirrored margins for double-sided printing.
- Adjusting top margin to avoid overlapping the header.

**Coverage:** 5 items

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#### 3.3 Document Formatting & Editing

This domain evaluates the skills needed to apply consistent and professional formatting to text using styles, alignment, spacing, and visual emphasis tools.

- Using highlighting to mark text for review.
- Adjusting line spacing in a document.

- Using Format Painter to copy formatting.
- Using styles to format headings consistently.
- Using justify text alignment.

**Coverage:** 5 items

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### 3.4 Tables & Lists

This domain measures proficiency in organizing information through tables and lists, including structuring content and adjusting layout elements.

- Merging table cells to create a section heading.
- Using a numbered list to show steps in order.
- Pressing Enter twice to exit a list and start a new paragraph.
- Adjusting bullet indentation to align text and bullets.

**Coverage:** 4 items

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### 3.5 Shortcuts & Navigation

This domain assesses efficiency and document control by testing knowledge of keyboard shortcuts, navigation tools, and multi-view features.

- Understanding why Ctrl + End moves the cursor to a blank line at the end.
- Using the shortcut to insert a page break.
- Using a shortcut to jump to a specific page in Word.
- Using the Split View feature to compare sections of a document.

**Coverage:** 4 items

---

### 3.6 File Management

This domain evaluates the ability to create, save, protect, and recover Word documents using essential file-handling features.

- Understanding the difference between Save and Save As.
- Recovering an unsaved document in Word.
- Finding the option to password-protect a document.
- Creating a new document in Word.

**Coverage:** 4 items

### 3.7 Collaboration Features

This domain measures the ability to communicate and work with others in Word through commenting, review tools, and real-time collaboration features.

- Responding to comments in Word.
- Using the Comment Feature
- Identify Word's real-time collaboration feature.

**Coverage:** 3 items

### 3.8 Summary of Item Categories

Domain	Number of Items	% of Test
Basic Editing & Proofing	5	17%
Page Layout & Margins	5	17%
Document Formatting & Editing	5	17%
Tables & Lists	4	13%
Shortcuts & Navigation	4	13%
File Management	4	13%
Collaboration Features	3	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4. Item Development

The MS Word Proficiency Test consists of 30 multiple-choice questions designed to measure practical skills and foundational knowledge in Microsoft Word. Each item targets a specific skill within one of the test's content domains and is written to reflect realistic workplace tasks. The development process prioritizes clarity, relevance, fairness, and alignment with professional testing standards.

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### 4.1 Item Types

The MS Word Proficiency Test includes several item formats to ensure comprehensive assessment of real-world skills:

- **Knowledge-based questions** – assessing understanding of Word functions, commands, and terminology.
  - **Scenario-based items** – requiring candidates to choose the correct action in common workplace situations.
  - **Interface identification items** – recognizing Word tools, features, or review elements.
  - **Problem-solving items** – determining the appropriate feature or setting to resolve a document issue.
- 

### 4.2 Answer Options

Each item contains one correct answer and several distractors. Distractors are intentionally designed to reflect common mistakes or misunderstandings seen among Word users. This approach ensures that incorrect answers provide meaningful diagnostic information about candidate skill gaps.

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### 4.3 Item Writing Guidelines

Items are created following standardized guidelines to ensure fairness, clarity, and relevance:

1. **Clarity** – Questions are written in plain language, avoiding unnecessary complexity or ambiguity.
2. **Relevance** – Every item reflects a real task or function used in typical office roles.
3. **Authenticity** – Scenarios mimic actual document editing or formatting tasks.
4. **Balance** – Items are distributed across all content domains to represent the test blueprint.
5. **Time Awareness** – Items are short enough to be answered within the average time per question (≈40 seconds).

6. **Accessibility** – Screenshots and visuals are kept simple and readable across devices and browsers.
- 

#### 4.4 Example Item

**Domain:** Basic Editing & Proofing

**Skill:** Using Track Changes Question

Your colleague has made several edits to a shared document using Track Changes. You want to accept all the edits at once. Which action should you take?

- A. Turn off Track Changes
- B. Use the 'Accept All Changes' command
- C. Switch to Read Mode
- D. Hide all markup
- E. Use the 'Lock Tracking' command
- F. Filter all markup

**Correct Answer:** B – Use the 'Accept All Changes' command.

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#### 4.5 Item Review and Quality Control

- Each item is reviewed internally for technical accuracy and clarity.
- Items are piloted and monitored for performance (difficulty and discrimination).
- Poorly performing items are revised or removed to maintain test quality.

## 5. Scoring & Interpretation

The MS Word Proficiency Test uses an objective scoring system based on the number of correct responses. Scores reflect a candidate's proficiency in fundamental Word skills and provide useful indicators for hiring or development decisions.

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### 5.1 Scoring Method

- **Correct response** = 1 point
  - **Incorrect or unanswered response** = 0 points
  - **Total score** = sum of all item scores (maximum = 30, minimum = 0)
  - No penalty is applied for guessing
- 

### 5.2 Score Reporting

Candidates receive a raw score (0–30) and a percentile rank.

**Raw score:** Number of correctly answered test items.

**Percentile rank:** A percentile rank indicates the percentage of test-takers who scored at or below a given score. For example, a score at the 75th percentile means the candidate performed as well as or better than 75% of the comparison group.

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### 5.3 Interpretation of Scores

#### Advisory Score Ranges

Based on empirical performance patterns, candidate scores can be interpreted in the following advisory ranges:

<b>Raw Score</b>	<b>Percentile rank</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>0 – 10</b>	<i>0 – 16</i>	Very limited Word familiarity; difficulty performing basic tasks.
<b>11 – 14</b>	<i>21 – 40</i>	Basic awareness; able to complete simple document edits.

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<b>15 – 18</b>	<i>47 - 65</i>	Developing proficiency; suitable for roles requiring routine Word use.
<b>19 – 22</b>	<i>71 – 84</i>	Solid proficiency; capable of performing common document tasks with confidence.
<b>23 - 30</b>	<i>88 - 100</i>	Strong proficiency; efficient and accurate with key Word functions.

### Percentile Norms

Percentile ranks provide additional context by showing how a candidate compares to the tested population (n = 676).

<b>Percentile</b>	<b>Score (out of 30)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
10th	9	Lower 10% of test-takers
25th	12	Below-average performance
50th (Median)	16	Typical performance
75th	20	Strong foundational skills (top 25%)
90th	24	Excellent performance (top 10%)

### Example interpretations:

- A score of **16** places a candidate at the **50th percentile** — the median performance.
- A score of **20** places a candidate in the **top 25%** of all test-takers.
- A score of **24** places a candidate among the **top 10%** of respondents.

## 5.4 Suggested Use of Scores

Employers may use both **advisory ranges** and **percentile ranks** when interpreting results:

- **Entry-level roles** requiring simple document editing: Raw scores of **15+** recommended.
- Positions requiring **frequent editing, formatting, and collaboration**: Scores of **19+** recommended.
- Roles involving **higher-stakes document accuracy** (e.g., reports, customer letters): Scores of **22+** preferred

Scores should not be used as the sole predictor of job success; they should be combined with interviews, job history, or practical exercises.

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## **5.5 Limitations**

While the test provides a reliable indicator of Word proficiency, it measures conceptual and applied knowledge in a multiple-choice format. It does not directly evaluate hands-on performance within the Word application. Candidates who understand Word concepts may still vary in actual typing or editing speed.

Additionally, performance may be influenced by reading comprehension, familiarity with digital interfaces, or time-management skills.



## 6. Test Administration

The MS Word Proficiency Test is designed for online delivery and can be administered flexibly across a variety of environments. This chapter outlines requirements and best practices for administering the assessment.

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### 6.1 Delivery Method

- The test is delivered online through a secure testing platform.
  - No software installation is required.
  - The test can be accessed through any modern browser (e.g., Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Safari).
- 

### 6.2 Technical Requirements

To ensure a smooth testing experience, the following minimum requirements should be met:

- **Internet connection:** Stable broadband connection.
  - **Device:** Laptop or desktop computer; while mobile devices are supported, they are not recommended for best usability.
  - **Browser settings:** JavaScript and cookies enabled.
  - **Screen size:** At least 13-inch display recommended for readability of tables and charts.
  - **Pop-up blockers:** Disabled if they interfere with test navigation.
- 

### 6.3 Test Environment

- Candidates should complete the test in a quiet environment free of interruptions.
  - Use of Word or other software tools is not permitted during the test.
  - It is recommended that candidates close other applications and browser tabs to maximize performance and reduce distractions.
- 

### 6.4 Candidate Instructions

Before starting the test, candidates should be informed of the following:

- The test consists of 30 multiple-choice questions.
- The time limit is 20 minutes.

- Each question has six answer options, only one of which is correct.
  - Questions can be skipped and returned to later.
  - Scores are based on the number of correct answers; there is no penalty for guessing.
- 

## 6.5 Security Measures

- Candidates are asked to confirm their identity before the test can begin.
  - Test sessions should be monitored if security is critical (e.g., proctored testing for recruitment).
  - Candidate results are stored securely in compliance with data privacy regulations.
- 

## 6.6 Sample Questions

Before the timed portion begins, candidates are presented with two sample questions. These items are:

- **Untimed** — they do not count toward the 20-minute limit.
- **Unscored** — responses do not contribute to the final test result.
- **Representative** — they illustrate the types of questions used in the test, including both text-based and screenshot-based items.

The purpose of the sample questions is to:

- Familiarize candidates with the test format and navigation.
- Allow candidates to practice selecting an answer before the test begins.
- Reduce anxiety and ensure smoother test-taking performance.

## 7. Validity & Reliability

The MS Word Proficiency Test has undergone statistical evaluation and content review to ensure it measures the intended construct—entry-level Microsoft Word skills—accurately and consistently. This chapter summarizes the empirical evidence supporting the test’s validity and reliability.

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### 7.1 Sample

The reliability and validity analyses presented in this manual are based on performance data collected from a sample of 676 individuals who completed the MS Word Proficiency Test.

The sample includes candidates from a range of age groups, countries, and occupational backgrounds, providing a diverse basis for evaluating test performance.

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### 7.2 Face Validity

Face validity refers to the extent to which a test appears to measure what it is intended to measure. After completing the test, candidates were asked whether the questions reflect real workplace Word tasks.

- **74.7%** of respondents selected *Agree*.
- **19%** selected *I don’t know*.
- **6.3%** selected *Disagree*.

These results indicate that a strong majority of respondents perceive the test as relevant and representative of Word use in professional settings.

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### 7.3 Construct Validity

Construct validity assesses whether the test accurately measures Word proficiency, as intended.

#### Self-Reported Skill Level

Candidates rated their own Word ability on a scale from *Novice (1)* to *Expert (5)*. Average test scores increased consistently across all self-reported levels:

- Novice: ~15 correct answers
- Basic: ~16 correct
- Intermediate: ~17 correct
- Proficient: ~19 correct
- Expert: ~21 correct

This clear progression indicates that the test effectively distinguishes between different proficiency levels.

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## 7.4 Item and Test Performance

Although item-level statistics are documented in Appendices, key findings are:

- Items span an appropriate range of **difficulty**, with most falling between 30–80% correct.
- **Discrimination values** were generally strong ( $>0.30$ ), meaning items effectively differentiate between high- and low-scoring candidates.

These results confirm that the test is functioning as intended at the item level.

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## 7.5 Reliability Evidence

Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha across all 30 items.

- **Cronbach's alpha = 0.83**, which indicates excellent internal consistency.
  - This means that the items collectively measure a coherent construct: Word proficiency.
- 

## 7.6 Summary of Validity Evidence

- **Face validity:** Strong — most test-takers agreed the test reflects real workplace Word tasks.
- **Construct validity:** Strong — higher self-reported skill levels consistently correspond with higher test scores.
- **Reliability:** Excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ).

Taken together, these findings provide robust evidence that the MS Word Proficiency Test is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing Word Proficiency in professional contexts.

## 8. Security & Fair Use

Maintaining the security, fairness, and ethical use of the MS Word Proficiency Test is essential to ensuring valid results, protecting test content, and supporting fair decision-making. This chapter outlines recommended practices and guidelines for protecting test integrity and using results responsibly.

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### 8.1 Test Security

- **Session monitoring:** Employers may choose to use online proctoring, in-person supervision, or browser lockdown tools for high-stakes testing situations.
  - **Data protection:** Candidate responses and scores are stored securely in compliance with data privacy regulations (e.g., GDPR).
- 

### 8.2 Candidate Integrity

- Candidates are expected to complete the test individually without assistance.
  - Use of external resources such as Word, internet searches, or notes is not permitted.
- 

### 8.3 Fair Use of Scores

- Test results should be used as one component of a broader hiring or development decision-making process.
  - Scores should not be the sole basis for employment decisions. Instead, they should be combined with interviews, references, and job experience.
  - Employers should ensure that score interpretation is job-related and consistent with the skills required for the role.
  - Candidates should not be denied employment opportunities on the basis of test performance alone if Word Proficiency is not essential to the role.
- 

### 8.4 Ethical Guidelines

- Employers must ensure that the test is administered in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Reasonable accommodations should be provided for candidates with documented needs.
- Test data must be handled with confidentiality and should not be shared outside the hiring process

## 9. Appendices

The following appendices provide supporting information and reference materials for the Word Proficiency Test.

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### Appendix A. Sample Item

**Domain:** Basic Editing & Proofing

**Skill:** Using Track Changes Question

Your colleague has made several edits to a shared document using Track Changes. You want to accept all the edits at once. Which action should you take?

- A. Turn off Track Changes
- B. Use the 'Accept All Changes' command
- C. Switch to Read Mode
- D. Hide all markup
- E. Use the 'Lock Tracking' command
- F. Filter all markup

**Correct Answer:** B – Use the 'Accept All Changes' command.

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### Appendix B. Technical Requirements Checklist

- Device: Desktop or laptop computer
  - Internet: Stable broadband connection
  - Browser: Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari (latest versions recommended)
  - Screen size: 13-inch or larger recommended
  - Browser settings: JavaScript and cookies enabled
  - Optional: Headphones or quiet testing environment
-

## Appendix C. Score Interpretation Tables

### Advisory Score Ranges

<b>Raw Score</b>	<b>Percentile rank</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>0 – 10</b>	<i>0 – 16</i>	Very limited Word familiarity; difficulty performing basic tasks.
<b>11 – 14</b>	<i>21 – 40</i>	Basic awareness; able to complete simple document edits.
<b>15 – 18</b>	<i>47 - 65</i>	Developing proficiency; suitable for roles requiring routine Word use.
<b>19 – 22</b>	<i>71 – 84</i>	Solid proficiency; capable of performing common document tasks with confidence.
<b>23 - 30</b>	<i>88 - 100</i>	Strong proficiency; efficient and accurate with key Word functions.

## Appendix D. Percentile Norm Ranges

### Percentile Norms (n = 676)

Raw Score	N	Percentile
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	1	0
4	2	1
5	8	2
6	12	3
7	14	5
8	20	8
9	20	11
10	33	16
11	32	21
12	42	27
13	47	34
14	38	40
15	48	47
16	47	54
17	36	59
18	41	65
19	38	71
20	34	76
21	27	80
22	27	84
23	25	88
24	23	91
25	18	94
26	13	96
27	10	97
28	10	98
29	8	99
30	2	100



## Appendix E. Item Statistics

Item Number	Difficulty	Discrimination
1	0.78	0.31
2	0.79	0.40
3	0.71	0.28
4	0.77	0.48
5	0.78	0.31
6	0.83	0.31
7	0.88	0.41
8	0.82	0.40
9	0.72	0.34
10	0.62	0.25
11	0.52	0.46
12	0.67	0.33
13	0.54	0.48
14	0.55	0.47
15	0.56	0.37
16	0.51	0.45
17	0.47	0.41
18	0.52	0.56
19	0.40	0.58
20	0.43	0.49
21	0.48	0.56
22	0.48	0.50
23	0.26	0.45
24	0.31	0.52
25	0.25	0.24
26	0.35	0.45
27	0.42	0.29
28	0.32	0.56
29	0.49	0.34
30	0.10	0.38

## Appendix F. Norm Group: Age Distribution

Age	Percentage
18 – 25	32.3%
26 – 35	26.6%
36 – 45	18.3%
46 – 60	18.6%
60+	4.1%

## Appendix G. Norm Group: Country Distribution

Country	Percentage
United States	43.5
Philippines	6.5
India	6.2
Canada	5.8
United Kingdom	5.0
South Africa	4.0
Ireland	3.0
New Zealand	1.6
Australia	1.3
Italy	0.9

## Appendix H. Norm Group: Occupational Group

<b>Occupational Group</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Admin and Clerical	35.5
Other	14.5
Health Care	8.4
Customer Service	7.5
Human Resources	6.4
Information Technology	4.1
Banking and Finance	3.8
Management	3.1
Education - Teaching	3.0
Engineering	3.0
Sales and Marketing	2.1
Pharmaceutical	1.6