



# How to Take an Online Skills Test with Realtime Coach and Record+

Testing Instructions and Requirements

If you have any questions about the testing instructions, please contact [testing@ncra.org](mailto:testing@ncra.org).

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## Prepare

1. Make sure your equipment meets the minimum technical requirements listed under **Appendix A: Technical Requirements**.
2. Check the **Troubleshooting Recommendations** (find at [www.ncra.org/SKT](http://www.ncra.org/SKT)) for tips on how to reduce the chance of any technical issues.
3. Download the [Guardian browser](#) (this is the secure browser required for testing).

 <b>IMPORTANT!</b>	<p>Please keep in mind that during the test you will be running your CAT software, the Record+ test session (proctoring), and uploading files to Realtime Coach. Each of these can increase your CPU and RAM loads.</p> <p>This is why it is so important to take an online skills practice test session where you can see how your equipment will function in the real testing environment.</p>
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## Purchase

- Purchase your Online Skills Test at [www.ncra.org/SKT](http://www.ncra.org/SKT) during an open registration period.

 <b>NOTE</b>	<p>You may only purchase one registration for each test to be taken in a specific testing period. <i>For example, you may purchase the RPR Literary, Jury Charge, and Testimony to be taken in the same testing period but cannot purchase two registrations for the RPR Testimony to be taken in the same testing period. For more information, please see the <a href="#">SKT FAQs</a>.</i></p>
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## Testing Process

### **Before the Test(s) or your Online Skills Practice Test Session**

1. Download the [Guardian browser](#) ahead of time to prevent any delays on test day. Open Guardian browser to start your testing process.
2. Make sure to close all applications and programs on your computer that are not being used for your testing session.
3. Connect your writer to your computer.
4. Turn on your writer.
5. Place your writer in Test Mode. If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer.
6. Temporarily disable any automatic cloud backup or storage features within your CAT software. [Instructions for CaseCATalyst Users Disabling Cloud Backup](#).
7. Make sure your webcam is connected and functioning. *An external webcam is strongly recommended.*
8. Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.
9. Plug your headphones in and make sure they are functioning. Practice and test with the same wired headphones. (Bluetooth headphones are NOT permitted.)
10. Open your CAT software and start a new translation. Write a few strokes to confirm that the realtime feed from your writer is functioning.

 <b>ESSENTIAL TIP FOR REALTIME TESTS (CRC, CRR)</b>	<p>If you choose to test in all uppercase, make sure that your settings are correct to maintain all uppercase when copying and pasting. <b>NOTE:</b> Eclipse users find instructions under the <a href="#">SKT FAQs</a>.</p>
 <b>ESSENTIAL TIP FOR TRANSCRIPTION TESTS (RSR, RPR, RMR)</b>	<p>Reminder your test will be considered an automatic failure if submitted in all capitals or all lowercase letters</p>

## Practice

**Purpose:** To familiarize yourself with the testing process and test equipment in the *real testing environment and completing the authentication process*. This is not for speed-building practice, and you will not receive an official score.

**When:** Once prior to your first-time testing with Record+ and prior to any long-time break in your online skills testing or changes in your testing equipment.

**How Many:** Candidates are eligible to take up to six (6) online skills practice test sessions every calendar year. The Certification and Testing team can assist candidates if additional online skills practice test sessions are needed.

**Additional Notes:** Make sure you take your online skills practice test session in the same environment and use the same equipment you plan to use for your actual test to verify you meet the minimum technical requirements.

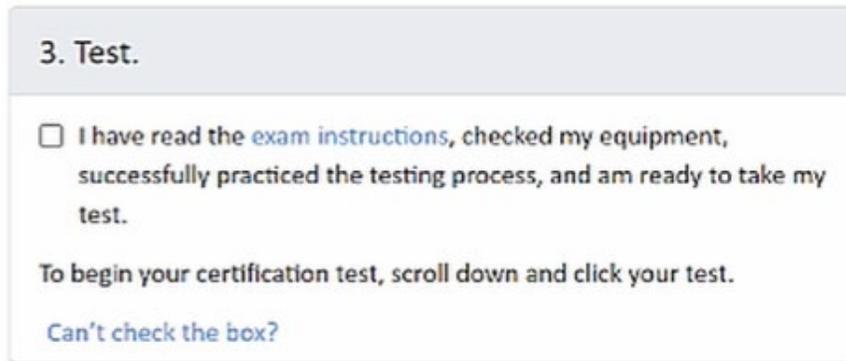
For additional ways to prepare and practice, Realtime Coach offers NCRA Cert Prep. To purchase NCRA Cert Prep, go to RTC and click **Play** > Certification Prep. For any questions about the Certification Prep, please contact [Realtime Coach](#) directly. You may also purchase speed building material and former NCRA certification tests for speed building practice in [NCRA's Learning Center](#).

## Ready, Begin - Your Online Skills Test Practice Session/Your Real Test

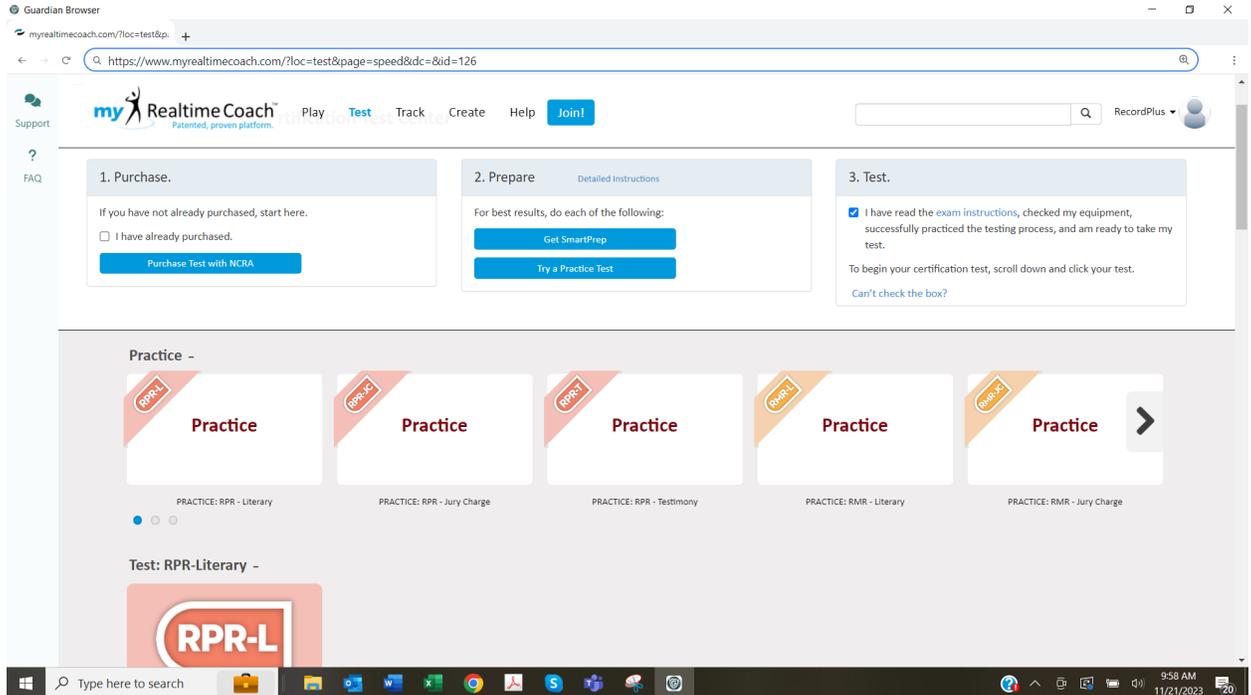
1. During your 1-20 registered testing period, open the Guardian browser and go to [www.myrealtimecoach.com](http://www.myrealtimecoach.com) and log in using the login information in your confirmation email. **You MUST use the login information in your confirmation email or you will NOT have access to your NCRA tests. Tests are only valid during the testing period for which you registered.**

 <b>NOTE</b>	<p>If you already have an RTC username, but it's not your NCRA member number, you'll have a second RTC login created for testing with your NCRA number. If you would rather have a single login for practice and testing, please <a href="#">contact RTC</a> with your NCRA member number to merge your accounts.</p>
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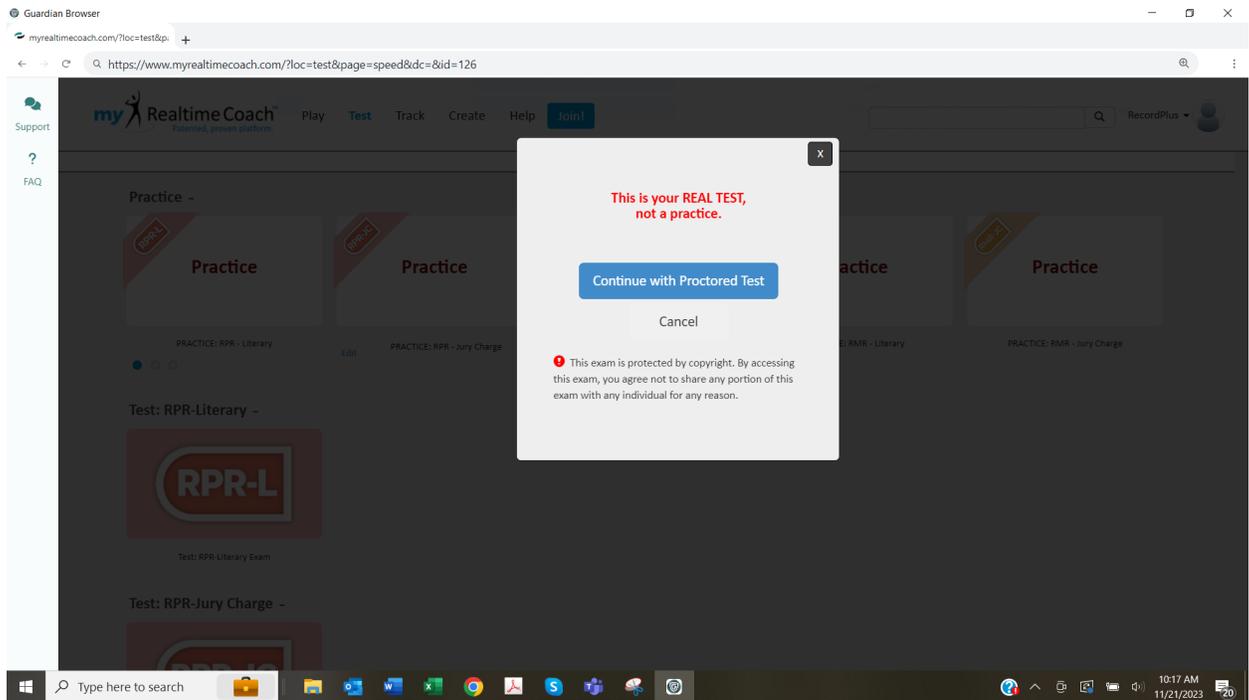
2. Click Test>NCRA Certification Test Center.
3. Click the box in Step 3.



4. You will see your available Practice Tests and Real Tests on the RTC platform.



5. Click play on the test you wish to take: Practice or your REAL test. Note: If you are choosing your REAL test, you will see this message:

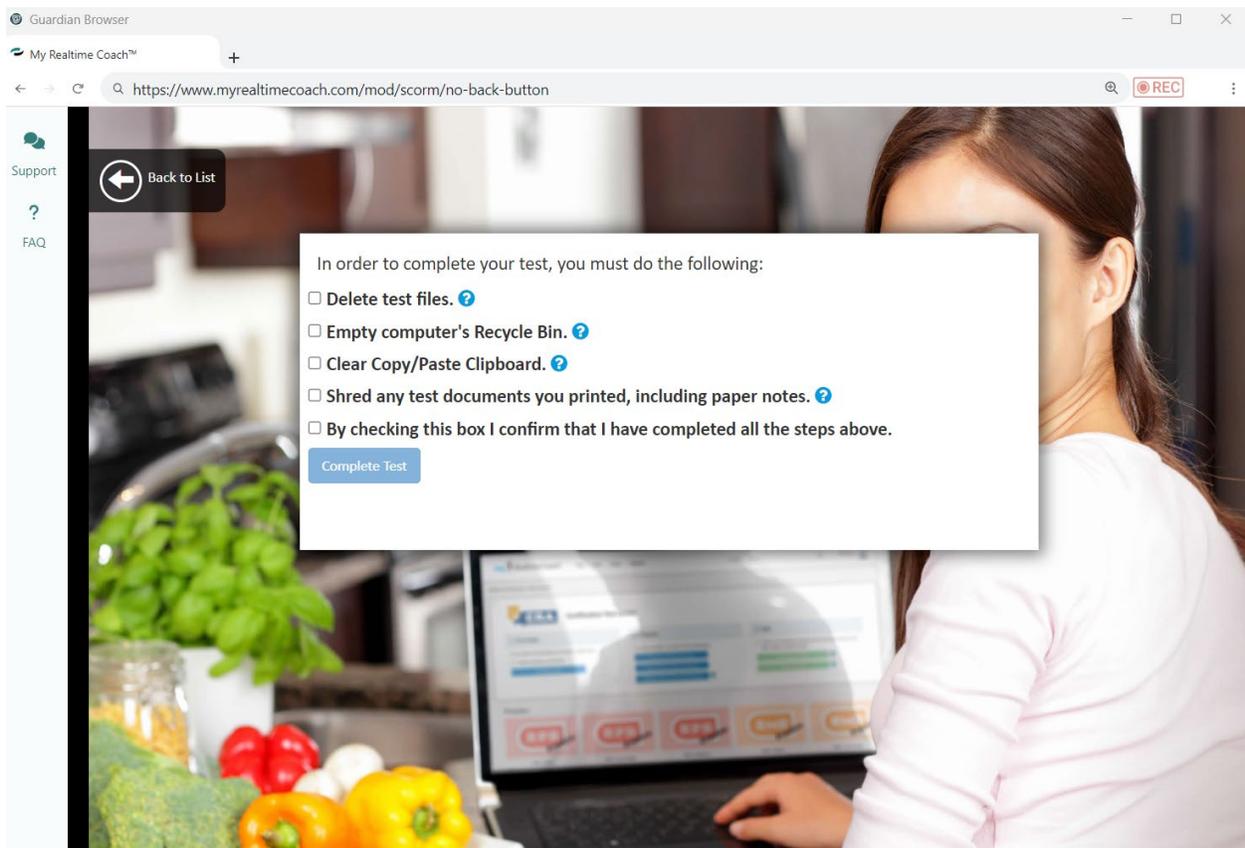


6. If this is your first-time testing, when you click “Continue with Proctored Test” you may be asked to acknowledge some information for ProctorU/Record+ prior to taking your photo and a photo of your government issued photo I.D. for the authentication process.
7. You will then see a screen asking you to “Select your preferred devices” and the system will default to “webcam.” If not, select “webcam” and continue with prompts.
8. Once you have successfully completed the authentication process you will receive a screen that says, “Begin Exam.” Review the steps below on adding any Job Dictionary words and specifics for Realtime or Transcription tests and begin your online skills practice test session or your actual testing.

 <b>IMPORTANT!</b>	<p>Please remember that if you choose to take an Exam Preview Session (practice test) and your real test in the same setting, you must completely close out of the Guardian browser before starting the next testing session.</p>
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<b>Job Dictionary:</b> Check the right side of the screen for the Job Dictionary. These words will appear on your test. Enter the words into your job dictionary. (If there are no words provided, you will see “No Dictionary Words.”)	
After you have entered the word list into your Job Dictionary, click Play to start the one-minute warm-up audio.	
After the warm-up, toggle to your CAT file and write a few strokes to confirm that you still have a realtime feed from your writer.	
Click Play to start the test and write the test.	
<i>Setting up a realtime feed to RTC is not needed and is therefore optional.</i>	
Go back to your CAT file and close it (saving, if prompted).	
Go to RTC. Click Attach Notes and select your steno notes file. (If you are unsure what format to attach your files in, refer to Appendix B: Attaching Files.) <b>You will have three (3) minutes to find and attach your notes.</b>	
<b>Realtime Tests (CRR, CRC)</b>	<b>Transcription Tests (RSR, RPR, RMR)</b>
Skip this step as <b>you cannot make any edits to a realtime transcript.</b>	Go back to your CAT software. Transcribe your test and close your transcript (saving if prompted).
Go to RTC. Click Attach Transcript and select your transcript file.	
<b>Realtime Tests (CRR, CRC)</b>	<b>Transcription Tests (RSR, RPR, RMR)</b>
<b>You will have five (5) minutes to attach your transcript. You cannot make any edits before attaching your final transcript.</b>	<b>You will have 75 minutes to edit AND attach the final transcript.</b>
Go back to your CAT software. Re-open your CAT file. Highlight only the test portion of your final transcript (no warm-up text, headers, footers, page numbers, etc.) and copy your transcript.	
<b>CaseCATalyst Users</b>	<b>StenoCAT Users</b>
When copying and pasting, unconfirmed EZ Choice conflicts will appear in the original conflict form. Once you confirm an EZ Choice selected conflict, it will be pasted as normal text. To confirm all the EZ Choice selected conflicts at one time, use Resolve All Chosen Conflicts from the Special Edit menu.	Before copy/pasting, be sure to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept conflicts by going to Tools &gt; Accept Conflicts</li> <li>• Accept fields by going to Tools &gt; Accept Defined Fields</li> </ul>
Go to RTC. Click in the <b>My Transcript</b> box and paste your final transcript.	
If you choose not to transcribe your test, please attach your notes file and unedited transcript as directed. Instead of copying and pasting your transcript, please type “Non-Transcribe” in the <b>My Transcript</b> box in RTC.	
<b>Practice Test Completion</b>	<b>Real Test Completion</b>
Complete the checklist (see below) and then click “Complete Test.” You will not receive a grade for any practice tests.	Complete the check list (see below) and then Click “Complete Test” to receive your preliminary score. You will receive your certified final score from NCRA by email within 10 to 15 business days of taking your test.

<p><b>NOTE</b></p> 	<p style="color: red;"><b>Remember you MUST include all required testing files for your test to be graded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Transcript</li> <li>• Final Transcript</li> </ul> <p>If you are disconnected from the testing session, please attempt to reconnect to the Guardian browser and the Realtime Coach platform to complete your test.</p> <p style="color: red;">If for any reason you are unable to attach your files in the Realtime Coach Testing platform, email ALL files to <a href="mailto:testing@ncra.org">testing@ncra.org</a> while you are still within your recorded proctor session and before you complete the checklist below.</p>
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**Please be sure to read this policy carefully as you will be asked to acknowledge compliance when you launch your test.**

### **NCRA Online Skills Testing Policy**

*I acknowledge I am aware of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) policy concerning testing honesty and integrity. Failure to follow any NCRA Testing procedures may result in my automatic failure and being barred from taking NCRA-administered tests for a minimum of three testing cycles or permanently depending on the nature of the violation. NCRA*

members may also be suspended or expelled from the Association. I understand that the test is the exclusive property of the National Court Reporters Association. Copyright law protects the NCRA Tests. No part of these tests may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including memorization, unless previously authorized by NCRA.

I further attest that the skills exam I am submitting is solely my own and was developed stenographically during the exam. I have used no notes, materials, or other aids other than those provided by NCRA. I further attest that, to the best of my knowledge, I have not retained a copy (either audio, text or stenographically) of the skills exam. Further, if I discover at any time that I have accidentally retained said copy, I will immediately delete it (any and all formats), and notify NCRA promptly of the discovery. I further attest that I will not share any copies of this skills test with others, nor will I share its content (terminology or topic), either privately or on a public forum. The theft or attempted theft of an NCRA test is punishable as a crime.

 <b>IMPORTANT!</b>	<p>In virtue of your registration, you agree and understand the Online Skills testing instruction and policy.</p> <p>Please note, to receive an official grade for your test, both test notes and official transcription must be submitted. <b>If all files are not submitted, notes and official transcripts your test will not be graded.</b></p>
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## Appendix A: Technical Requirements

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Computer, Web Browser, and Internet Connection

	Minimum	Recommended
<b>Screen Resolution</b>	1366x768 resolution	1920x1080 resolution (or more)
<b>PC Operating System*</b>	Windows 10	Windows 11 or higher
<b>Mac Operating System*</b>	MacOS 10.13	MacOS 10.15
<b>CPU</b>	2 core CPU, less than 85% Usage	4 core CPU (or more), less than 50% Usage
<b>RAM</b>	4GB, less than 90% Usage	16GB (or more), less than 70% Usage
<b>Web Browser</b>	<a href="#">Guardian</a>	<a href="#">Guardian</a>
<b>Internet Connection</b>	Wi-Fi Connection	Wired Connection
<b>Internet Download Speed</b>	1 Mbps	12 Mbps (or more)
<b>Internet Upload Speed</b>	3 Mbps	8 Mbps (or more)

\*Note: The testing platform will only support OS versions that are currently being supported by Microsoft and Apple. \*

## Important Note About Using a Virtual Machine on Apple

Using a Virtual Machine to access Windows on an Apple computer is allowed for NCRA tests, however, it is not common practice. If you have any trouble, please email [testing@ncra.org](mailto:testing@ncra.org).

## Webcam

Candidates will be required to present a **full view** of their face while testing. NCRA **strongly recommends** an external webcam for testing. Built-in webcams on laptops or monitors **are not** recommended; if using an internal camera, candidates should confirm writer is still properly connected after completing the room pan. Cameras with bendable necks or other external web cameras are recommended so the proctor can ask the candidate to move the camera around at different angles. External web cameras are readily available for purchase online or in stores.

## Other Requirements

 <b>NOTE</b>	On test day, if there is anything in your testing area/room not listed here as a permitted material, your test session may be flagged for an integrity or security violation and upon review your test could be deemed invalid. Please be prepared and do this ahead of time to reduce your authentication check time.
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- 1) Clear your desk/testing area of everything not listed here as a permitted material. **(Only one monitor is allowed for testing; multiple monitors are NOT permitted.)**
- 2) Stenographic writer.
- 3) CAT software.
- 4) Microphone (your computer and/or web camera might have a built-in microphone).
- 5) Wired headphones (to connect to your computer and listen to the test) must be used. Bluetooth headphones are NOT allowed under any circumstances.

### **Transcription tests only (RSR, RPR, or RMR) – optional permitted resources**

- 6) Spell checker option within CAT software
- 7) Printed Merriam-Webster dictionary
- 8) Two (2) sheets scratch paper (must also have shredder)
- 9) Shredder and printer (for those using paper notes or wishing to print anything out)

## Hardware and Software *Not* Supported

- 1) Google Chromebooks
- 2) Tablets (Nexus, iPad, Tab, Note, etc.)
- 3) Smartphones
- 4) Linux operating systems
- 5) Windows 10 in S mode
- 6) Microsoft Surface RT

- 7) Kaspersky Security — this program blocks the testing platform used for NCRA Skills Testing. We highly recommend switching to a different security program to maintain security on your computer and be able to take your SKT.
- 8) NCRA strongly recommends that test takers do NOT use a work computer as their security settings are generally more strict and sometimes block the necessary testing programs. Additionally, you will need administrative permissions on your computer, which are usually given to IT only on work computers.

 <b>IMPORTANT!</b>	Please keep in mind that during the test, you will be running your CAT software, Record+ proctoring software, and uploading files to Realtime Coach. Each of these can increase your CPU and RAM loads. All auxiliary programs/software not needed for the skills testing should be shut down during your testing to prevent any additional resource issues with your computer.
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## Appendix B: What Type of Files to Attach and How to Attach Them

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Attaching your notes and transcript files is like attaching a photo to an email. Do the following:

- 1) In RTC, click **Attach Notes** or **Attach Transcript**.
- 2) Navigate to the place on your computer where the file is saved and select your file.
- 3) Click **Open**.

**NOTE:** You will have **three (3) minutes** to attach your notes file (watch the timer). This is plenty of time if you know where your file is. Make sure you are comfortable with finding your files before test day. If you are not comfortable with doing this step within the allotted time, make sure to practice it ahead of time using the online skills practice test session.

For realtime tests (CRR, and CRC), you will have **five (5) minutes** to upload your transcript *file* (*you cannot make any edits on a realtime transcript*).

For transcription tests (RSR, RPR, and RMR) you will have **75 minutes** to transcribe and upload your transcript file.

Each CAT program has a default location where it saves your notes and transcript files as follows:

- *CaseCATalyst*
  - Default location: **C: drive > CAT4 > USR > [your name]**

- Notes file: ends in **.sgstn**
- Transcript file: ends in **.sgngl**

- *DigitalCAT:*

- Default location: **C: drive > Documents > digitalCAT > Transcripts**
- Notes file: ends in **.stn**
- Transcript file: ends in **.trn**

- *Eclipse:*

- Default location: **C: drive > Users > My Documents > Eclipse > [your name] > [your name]**
- Notes file: ends in **.not**
- Transcript file: ends in **.ecl**

- *Winner (ProCAT):*

- Default location: **C: drive > Winner > [your user]**
- Notes file: ends in **.stn**
- Transcript file: ends in **.trp**

- *StenoCAT®:*

- Default location: **C: drive > My Documents > [USERNAME] > JOBS**
- Notes file: ends in **.trn**
- Transcript file: ends in **.trn**

**NOTE:** Your transcript file must have a different name than your notes file.

- **AristoCAT:** Please upload your files in PDF format. If unsure how to do so, please reach out to AristoCAT support.

- **SmartCAT:** Please upload your notes file in .prt format and upload your transcript in PDF format. If unsure how to do so, please reach out to SmartCAT support.

- **Plover:** Please output your notes and transcript to Notepad and upload your files in .txt format.

**NOTES:**

- You are not permitted to use programs, such as MS Word, that include grammar check features, like Word's Editor function.
- Your transcript file must have a different name than your notes file.