



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the goal of the A to Z® Intro to Steno Machine Shorthand program?

The goal of the program is to introduce you to the basics of the steno machine to help you gauge your interest and determine if pursuing further education is right for you. We hope to help you with making this career decision prior to formally enrolling in a program. You will learn the letters A to Z on the steno machine and the numbers 0 to 9. You will also practice putting together some letters to create basic words.

What materials do I need to be successful?

You will need access to a desktop or laptop to log into the NCRA Learning Center. Our videos and lessons are not optimized for mobile viewing and therefore we strongly recommend against using a mobile device for accessing the lessons. In addition, you will need access to a steno machine.

You stated that we need access to a steno machine. How can I get one to use?

You need to secure your own machine either via a one of our rental partners (live sessions only), your state association, or a local court reporter. If you have an iPad, you can download the iSteno app by StenoCAT from the App Store. While a working steno machine is encouraged, the goal of this course is to gain familiarity with the keyboard and therefore a non-working or older machine can be used. You will need to submit a photo/screenshot of your machine in order to access the learning materials within the course.

What are the similarities and differences between live and asynchronous sessions?

Our program runs two different models to host the maximum number of sessions per year. Both the asynchronous and live courses include six modules and run for six weeks. You must complete each module before the next module will be activated.

The live class has more of an established pace because each week features a live class session held over Zoom and is an opportunity for direct interaction with classmates and the instructor. The sessions are recorded for those who are unable to attend. Each week one more module is ready to open, which keeps you on pace for the session. The live course sessions are open for machine rentals.

In contrast, the asynchronous model allows students to access all materials at their own pace, as long as all required items are completed by the end of the session. Asynchronous courses typically overlap with live sessions and therefore are not open for machine rentals.

What if I am in a different time zone or cannot attend the live class? Can I still sign up?

Yes! The Zoom courses are recorded and posted the following day. You can meet the course requirements by viewing the recording.

Who is the course facilitator?

Classes are led by a court reporter, either freelance, official, CART captioner, a court reporting instructor, or someone in a combination of these roles. The NCRA A to Z program leaders all have diverse backgrounds and experience that will help you get a feel for what possibilities this exciting profession holds.

How much time will this course take?

The course will take a minimum of 15 hours; however, that does not consider the practice time necessary to truly learn the material. You should anticipate at least one-to-two hours per day of practice time. This is an amount that will prepare you for the number of required practice hours while attending court reporting school should you choose to further your education.

What if I need help during the course?

Our course platform includes a discussion forum for posting questions regarding the class content. For the asynchronous class, this is the primary form of communication between you and the instructor. The live class also has this feature, as well as the ability to ask questions directly during the live session.

If you have difficulty navigating the Learning Center platform, technology related issues, or general course questions, you may direct your inquiry to our Program Coordinator at atozprog@ncra.org.

Are there refunds available if I don't like the course?

This is a free course through NCRA, therefore there is no refund necessary. The cost associated with renting a machine is to cover the cost of shipping. Any additional questions regarding the machine rentals fees and shipping should be sent directly to our machine partners.

When do I return the machine?

We ask that you return the machine promptly and with care immediately following the close of the class. These machines are serviced by our rental partners in preparation to be shipped for our future classes. For other students to use this offer, we need the machines returned quickly.

What are the benefits of earning an NCRA A to Z Program Certificate?

The A to Z program certificate is held in high regard at court reporting schools because it demonstrates your willingness to investigate if this is the right career path. Many court reporting schools express that completion of the NCRA A to Z introductory program sets students up to feel more confident and comfortable as they begin their formal education. Students also have shared this sentiment. NCRA has many partnerships with industry leaders (ProCAT and Advantage Software) for discounted student machines and/or software. In addition, NCRA offers student scholarships exclusively for NCRA A to Z certificate holders. From time to time, NCRA also has other opportunities available for those who complete the program which will be advertised on the Association's website and social media platforms.

How do I get a certificate? Can I get a job in court reporting after this course?

A personalized certificate is available for you to download and print at the end of the course. This is not a certification to work. In most cases, to become a certified stenographer you will need to attend two-three years at a court reporting school/program and pass state/national requirements. NCRA encourages you to review this list of questions to ask a prospective school that is approved by its Council on Approved Student Education (CASE). A list of NCRA approved programs is available on the Association's website. Should you enroll in a school, NCRA hopes to continue its partnership with you by having you enroll as an NCRA Student Member to take advantage of additional opportunities the Association offers.