How to Take the California CSR Skills Test

CONTENTS

1. Applying for the CSR Skills Test

The examination application and fee must be submitted directly to the Court Reporters Board of California (CRBC). After the CRBC receives and processes the examination application and fee, a confirmation email will be sent to the candidates from Realtime Coach (RTC) with login information.

2. Prepare

1) Make sure your equipment meets the minimum technical requirements listed under **Appendix A: Technical Requirements.**

Log in to Realtime Coach™ (RTC)

2) Go to myrealtimecoach.com and log in following the instructions in your confirmation email.

   NOTE: When you apply for the CSR, a new Realtime Coach™ testing account is created for you. If you already have an RTC account and would like to have a single login for practice and testing, please contact Realtime Coach.

Get ready to test

1) Steno: connect your writer to your computer.
2) Steno: turn on your writer.
3) Steno: place your writer in Test Mode (if available). If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer.
   Voice writers: connect and test dictation equipment.
4) Make sure your external web cam is connected and functioning.
5) Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.
6) Plug your headphones in, and make sure they're functioning (Practice and test with the same headphones).
7) Open your CAT software and start a new translation.
   Voice writers: open a new file.
8) In **Test** > **Certification Test Center,** click a practice test thumbnail.

Practice the Testing Process

1) Click **Play** to start the two-minute warm-up, and write/dictate the warm-up. (Please note: the practice warm-up is two minutes, whereas the actual exam warm-up is three minutes.)
2) Go to RTC. Click **Play** to start the test, and write/dictate the test.
3) Go back to your CAT file, and close it (saving, if prompted).
4) Go to RTC. Click **Attach Notes**, and select your steno notes PDF file.
   Voice writers: attach audio (.mp3 format, under 30MB).
5) Go back to your CAT software. Transcribe your test, and close your transcript (saving if prompted).
6) Go to RTC. Click **Attach Transcript**, and select your transcript PDF file.
7) Steno: go back to your CAT software. Re-open your CAT file. Highlight *only* the exam portion of your final transcript (no warm-up text, headers, footers, page numbers, etc.), and press **CTRL+C** to copy your transcript.
   Voice writers: copy transcript.

CaseCATalyst Users:
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.

StenoCAT® Users:
Before copy/pasting, be sure to:
- Accept conflicts by going to Tools > Accept Conflicts
- Accept fields by going to Tools > Accept Defined Fields

8) Go to RTC. Click in the **My Transcript** box, and press **CTRL+V** to paste your final transcript.

Schedule a Proctored Practice Test

1) Log in to **myRealtimeCoach.com**.
2) Click **Test** > **California Certification Test Center**.
3) Click Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice.
4) A new browser tab will load **ProctorU.com**.
5) Click on **New Exam** to schedule your practice test.
6) Select your desired skills test from the **Exam** dropdown menu. *Make sure it says Practice Test, not CSR Real Test.*
   Example:
   - 0. PRACTICE TEST (Steno)
   - 0. PRACTICE TEST (Voice)
7) Select your preferred **date**.
8) Select your preferred **time**.
9) After scheduling your exam, you will see a **countdown** for your scheduled exam time.
10) Make sure you take your proctored practice test in the **same environment** and using the **same equipment** as you plan for your actual test in order to verify you meet the minimum technical requirements.
11) Remember that while you may do practice tests as many times as you would like without a proctor, you will have no more than **two practice opportunities** with a proctor. We recommend you do not schedule your proctored practice and actual exam back-to-back should you encounter any issues with your equipment that need to be addressed before your actual exam. We strongly recommend that you successfully complete a proctored practice exam before taking your actual exam.

   NOTE: All exams must be scheduled 72 hours in advance.

Take a Proctored Practice Test

1) On the day of your practice test, click **Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice Test**.
2) A new browser tab will load ProctorU.com. Note the countdown timer at the bottom of the My Exams page.
3) At the appointment time, click **Take it Now!**
4) Download and run the ProctorU applet.
5) Once you have connected your screen to the proctor, the proctor connects the two- way video and audio connection.
6) As prompted by the proctor, show your photo ID.
7) As prompted by the proctor, take your authentication quiz. If this is your first-time testing, you will also be asked to leave a keystroke sample. If you have done this step before, the authentication quiz will be omitted and only the *keystroke recognition will be administered.
8) As prompted by the proctor, pan your camera to show your testing area.
9) After checking your photo ID and the security of your testing environment, your proctor will guide you back to the **California Certification Test Center** to take your test.
10) Click the icon to load your practice test, and take the practice test with the proctor. (Make sure to listen to ALL 15 minutes of the practice file to ensure it doesn't pause/skip due to buffering.)

   * The keystroke biometric is a behavioral biometric of that uses the manner and rhythm in which an individual types characters on a keyboard or keypad. The keystroke rhythms of a user are measured to develop a unique biometric template of the user's typing pattern for future authentication.

3. Test

Schedule Your Test
1) Log in to **myRealtimeCoach.com**.
2) Click **Test** > **California Certification Test Center**.
3) Check the box **I have successfully practiced the testing process...**
4) Click **Schedule my Test**. A new browser tab will load **ProctorU.com**.
5) Click **New Exam** and schedule your *actual* test.
6) Select your desired skills test from the Exam dropdown menu. *Make sure it says CSR Real Test, not Practice Test*.
   Example:
   • 1. CSR REAL TEST (Steno)
   • 1. CSR REAL TEST (Voice)
7) Select your preferred date.
8) Select your preferred time.
9) After scheduling your exam, you will see a countdown for your scheduled exam time.

NOTE: Please allow sufficient time to complete your test. Dictation is approximately 15 minutes, and transcription time is 2 hours and 30 minutes. The authentication process and camera equipment check with a proctor will take approximately 30 minutes before you can start your test. ***No breaks will be allowed during the exam, including smoking or restroom breaks. Candidates that leave the testing room during the exam will be disqualified.***

Get ready to test
1) Steno: connect your writer to your computer.
2) Steno: turn on your writer.
3) Steno: place your writer in **Test Mode** (if available). If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer.
   Voice writers: connect and test dictation equipment.
4) Temporarily disable any automatic cloud backup or storage features within your CAT software.
5) Make sure your external web cam is connected and functioning.
6) Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.
7) Plug in your headphones, and make sure they work (practice and test with same headphones).
8) Open your CAT software and start a new translation.
   Voice writers: open a new file.
9) Important note about the proctor process:

During each appointment, you will interact with multiple proctors. Your first proctor will launch your exam session by verifying your identity and checking your equipment and may transfer you to a technician if there are any issues. The second proctor will watch the session while you take your exam. Please do not be alarmed when you submit your exam and the proctor is a different individual.

Take Your Test
1) Log in to **myRealtimeCoach.com**.
2) Click **Test** > **California Certification Test Center**.
3) Check the box **I have successfully practiced the testing process...**
4) Click **Take my Test**, and complete the testing process, just as you've practiced, with a proctor.

After the Test
1) Allow proctor to clear your computer clipboard.
2) Delete all test files from your writer.
   Voice writers: see step 3.
3) Delete all test files from your CAT software and computer (including Recycle Bin and any Cloud backup).
4) Shred any test documents you printed, including paper notes.
5) Receive your final score from CRBC within four to six weeks at the end of the testing window.

Appendix A: Technical Requirements

Computer, Web Browser, and Internet Connection:

	Minimum	Recommended
Screen Resolution	1280x720	1280x720 resolution (or more)
PC Operating System*	Windows 10	Windows 10
Mac Operating System*	MacOS 10.13	MacOS 10.15
RAM	4GB	16GB (or more)
Web Browser	IE10+ Chrome (latest) Firefox (latest) Guardian	IE10+ Chrome (latest) Firefox (latest) Guardian
Internet Download Speed	1.5 Mbps	12 Mbps (or more)
Internet Upload Speed	1 Mbps	3 Mbps (or more)

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

Webcam:
Candidates will be required to present a **full view** of their face while testing. CRBC requires an *external* webcam for testing. Built-in webcams on laptops or monitors **will not** be allowed. 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:
1) Headphones (to connect to your computer and listen to the test)
2) Microphone (your computer and/or web camera might have a built-in microphone).
3) Shredder and printer (only if printing a rough draft).

NOTE: Because the 15-minute dictation file is LARGE, it is imperative to ensure you have adequate bandwidth so you don't run into problems with buffering.

Hardware and Software *Not* Supported:
1) Google Chromebooks
2) Android tablets (Nexus 7, etc.)
3) iOS tablets (iPad, iPad mini, etc.)
4) Microsoft Surface RT
5) Linux operating systems

The only software permitted to be open on the candidate's computer will be:
1) CAT software
2) Realtime Coach site
3) Express Scribe software
4) Audio Conversion Software (e.g., Audacity)
5) Dictionary (loaded on hard drive, not online)

ProctorU System Check
Once you feel your setup meets the minimum technical requirements detailed in this section, please perform the ProctorU System Check.

Appendix B: Attaching Files

Attaching your steno notes/audio file and transcript file is similar to attaching a photo to an email. Do the following:

1) Navigate to the place on your computer where the steno notes/audio file or transcript file is saved and select your file. (See below for default location for varies CAT software.)
2) Open file and convert to PDF.
   Voice writers: convert transcript to PDF if not already in PDF format.
3) In RTC, click **Attach Notes** or **Attach Transcript**.
   Voice writers: attach audio file (.mp3 format, under 30MB) and transcript.
4) Navigate to the place on your computer where the PDF file is saved and select your file.
5) Click **Open** to attach into RTC.

NOTE: **Transcript and notes must be saved as PDF before attaching in RTC.** You will have **four minutes** to attach your notes in PDF format (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.
Voice writers: check with vendor for this information if you need assistance.

Each CAT program has a default location where it saves your steno notes and transcript file, 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 **.trn**
  - Transcript file: ends in **.trn**

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

- *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.

NOTE: **Transcript and steno notes must be converted to PDF before uploading.**

Schedule Your Test

1) Log in to **myRealtimeCoach.com**.
2) Click **Test** > **California Certification Test Center**.
3) Check the box **I have successfully practiced the testing process...**
4) Click **Schedule my Test**. (Or click **Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice** for a practice test.)
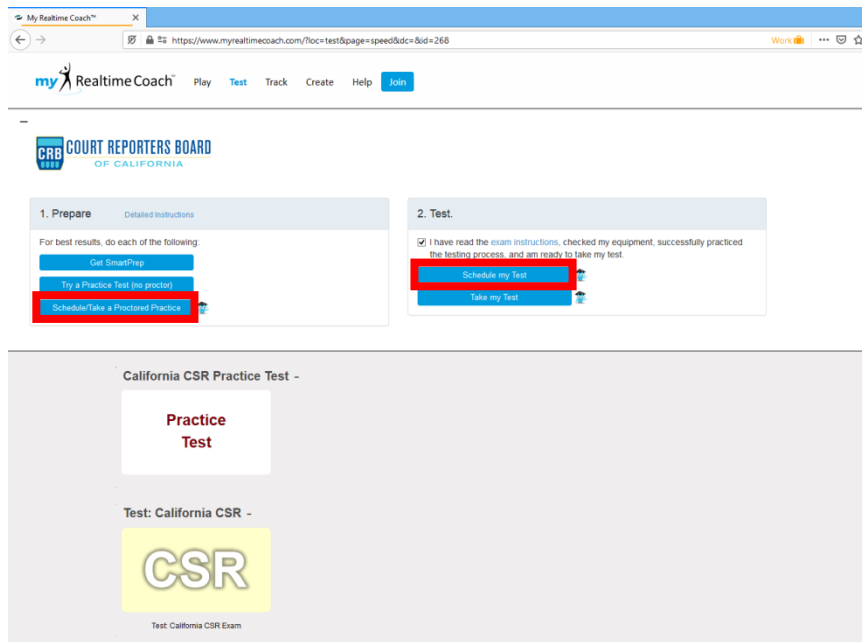
5) A new browser tab will load **ProctorU.com.** Select *Schedule New Session*.
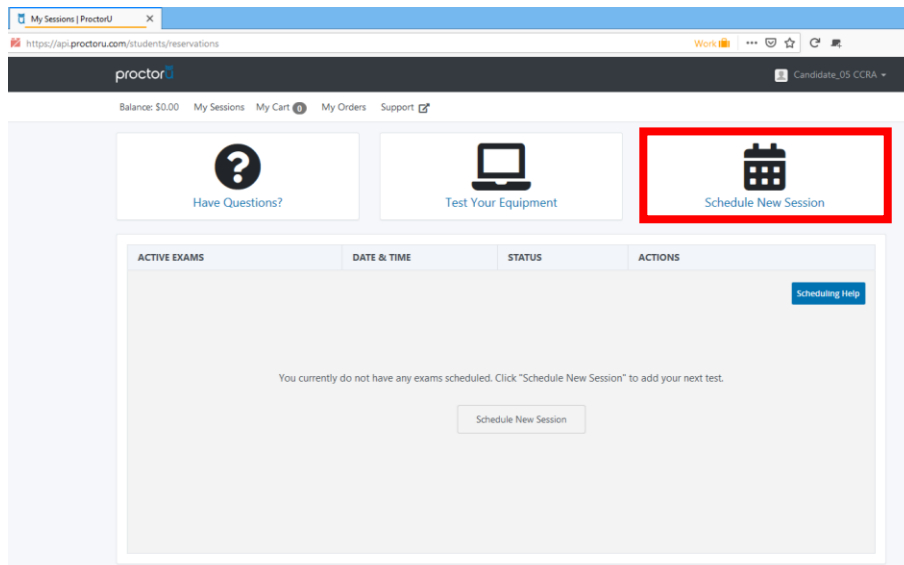
NOTE: During each appointment, you will interact with multiple proctors. Your first proctor will launch your exam session by verifying your identity and checking your equipment and may transfer you to a technician if there are any issues. The second proctor will watch the session while you take your exam. Please do not be alarmed when you submit your exam and the proctor is a different individual.

6) Confirm the institution (CRBC – Court Reporters Board of California), select *Online Testing,* select the test you wish to take, and click the *Find Sessions* button.

7) Select a *date and time,* and click *Find Available Times*.

8) Select from the list of available days/times closest to your preference.

9) Click the **Schedule** button to confirm the date/time:

10) Receive confirmation of date/time:

Remember that while you may do practice tests as many times as you would like without a proctor, you will have *no more than* **two practice opportunities** with a proctor. You may wish to take this opportunity to *Test Your Equipment* prior to your proctored practice or test.
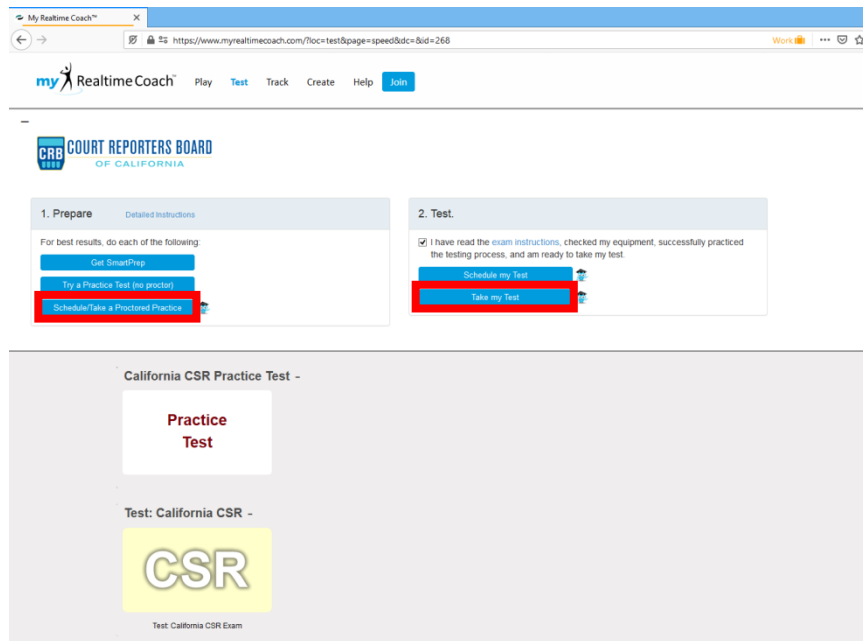
Take a Proctored Test

1) On the day of your test, click **Take my Test.** (For a practice test, click **Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice**.)

2) Download and run the ProctorU applet.
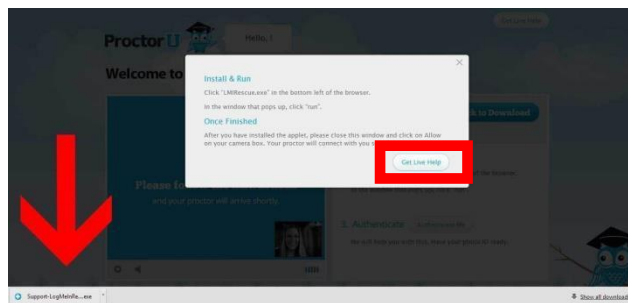
3) Here is the downloaded applet, which connects your screen to the proctor.

4) Once you have connected your screen to the proctor, the proctor connects the two-way video and audio connection.

5) As prompted by the proctor, show your photo ID. A photo of your face is kept on file to help authenticate your identity.

6) As prompted by the proctor, take your authentication quiz. Questions are based on publicly available information about you. If this is your first time testing, you will also be asked to leave a keystroke sample. If you have done this step before, the authentication quiz will be omitted and only the keystroke recognition will be administered.

As prompted by the proctor, pan your camera to show your testing area.

7) After checking your photo ID and the security of your testing environment, your proctor will guide you back to this CRBC Certification Test Center to take your test.

8) Click the icon to load your practice test, and take the practice test with the proctor. (Make sure to listen to ALL 15 minutes of the practice file to ensure it doesn't pause/skip due to buffering.)

Get Ready to Test

1) Steno: connect your writer to your computer.
2) Steno: turn on your writer.
3) Steno: place your writer in Test Mode (if available). If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer.
   Voice writers: connect and test dictation equipment.
4) Make sure your external web cam is connected and functioning.
5) Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.
6) Plug in your headphones, and make sure they work (practice and test with same headphones).
7) Open your CAT software, and start a new translation.
8) In **Test** > **California Certification Test Center,** click a practice test thumbnail.

Take Your Test

1) The glossary will appear at the beginning of the test, and it will also be read during reader identification. Once the glossary is gone, you will not have access to it again. At the end of the test a screen will pop up telling you where to begin typing and will stay up for one minute. You will not have access to it again. The pop-up screen will also say the following: "You may use your steno machine to stroke/or speak this quoted line for reference, but do not include it at the end of your finished transcript."

   NOTE: Preferred format for Speaker ID: Q. BY MR. JONES:

2) Click **Play** to start the three-minute warm-up, and write the warm-up.

3) When you are ready, click **Play** to start the test, and write/dictate the test.

4) Go back to your CAT file, and close it (saving, if prompted).

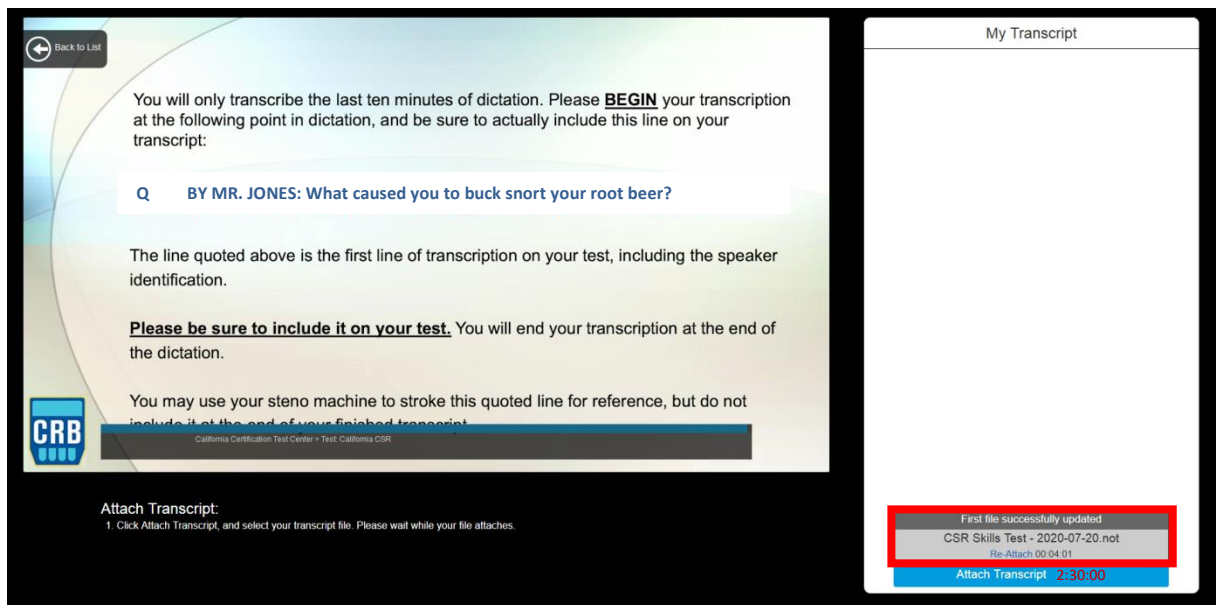5) Go to RTC, and click **Attach Notes**.

NOTE:
Steno: you must attach your notes in PDF format before your four-minute timer finishes counting down.
Voice writers: you must attach your audio file (.mp3 format, under 30MB) before your four-minute timer finishes counting down.

Navigate to the place on your computer where you've saved your steno notes PDF/audio file. Select your steno notes PDF/audio file, then select **Open** to attach file.
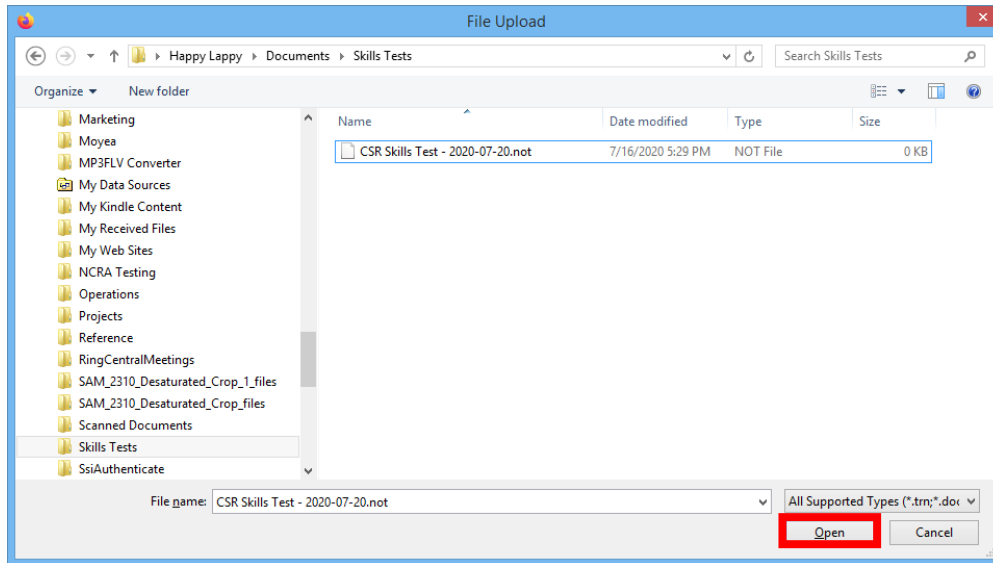
You'll see a message in RTC indicating that your file has been successfully attached. If you accidentally selected the wrong file, click the **Re-Attach** link, and attach the *correct* file.

6) Go back to your CAT software. Transcribe your test and close your transcript (saving if prompted).

7) Convert transcript to PDF.
NOTE: Transcript must be saved as PDF before attaching.

8) Go to RTC, and click **Attach Transcript**. Navigate to the place on your computer where you have saved your transcript PDF file. Select your transcript PDF file, then select **Open** to attach file.

NOTE: You must attach your transcript in PDF format before your 2 hours and 30-minute timer finishes counting down.

9) Steno: go back to your CAT software. Re-open your CAT file. Highlight only the exam portion of your final transcript (no warm-up text, headers, footers, page numbers, etc.), and press **CTRL+C** to copy your transcript.
Voice writers: copy transcript.

CaseCATalyst Users:
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.

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Before copy/pasting, be sure and:
- Accept conflicts by going to Tools > Accept Conflicts
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10) Go to RTC. Click in the RTC **My Transcript** box, and press **CTRL+V** to paste your final transcript.
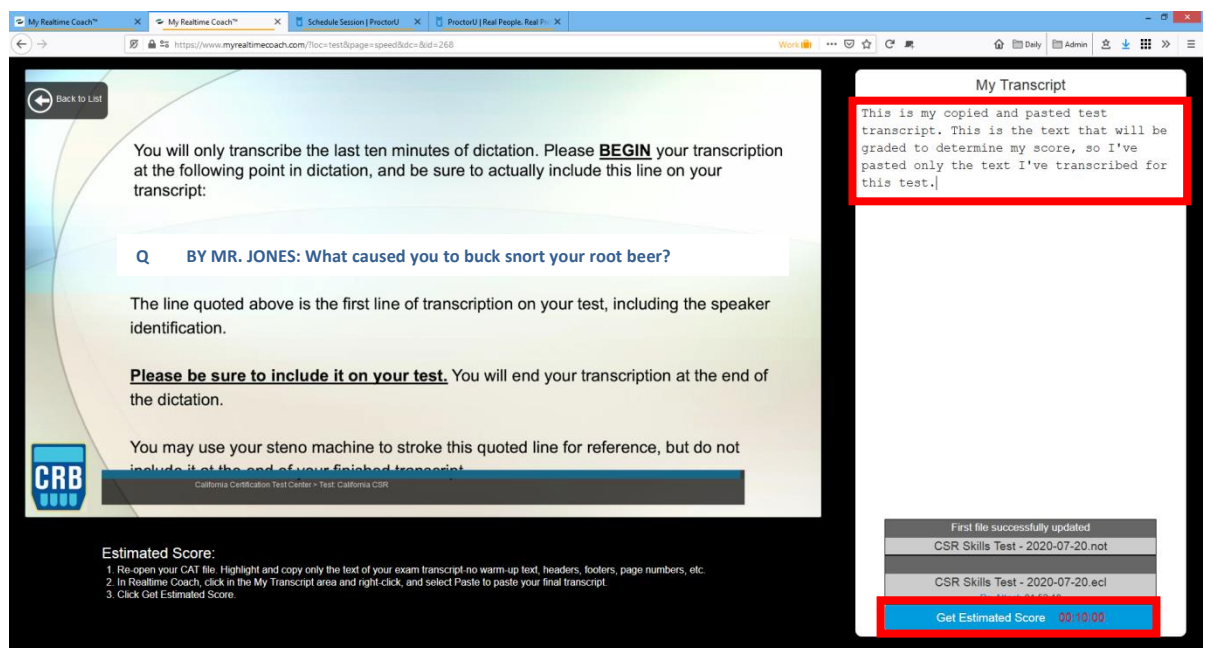
11) Click **Get Estimated Score** to submit your test. This will submit your test *but will not* produce an estimated score. Your test will be reviewed by a qualified human grader. Test results will be mailed from CRBC within four to six weeks at the end of the testing window. Per board policy that was amended in November 2020, notification is pass/fail only. Actual scores are unavailable.

After the Test

1) Allow proctor to clear your computer clipboard.
2) Steno: delete all test files from your writer.
3) Delete all test files from your CAT software and computer (including Recycle Bin).
4) Shred any test documents you printed, including paper notes.
5) Receive your certified final score from CRBC within four to six weeks at the end of the testing window.