

So you want to be ... A Secretary

Qualifications: To become a secretary, you must have a minimum of 40 words per minute typing and 80 words per minute shorthand. Although exam requirements are not essential, "O" levels are preferred, especially in English and maths. To qualify as a legal, medical or farming secretary, you must be fairly good. To qualify as a bi-lingual secretary, a language degree is required. To be a secretary, you must have a polite manner, good telephone technique and be generally well organised.

The way in: The best way is to answer every advertisement that interests you, and to get yourself put on the books of at least two or three agencies. Anyone can take a secretarial course and these can last anything from four months or two years (although, to obtain a place on the longer courses, academic qualifications are generally required).

What the job involves: Although secretarial jobs vary, duties usually include taking dictation, typing, answering the phone, making travel arrangements, restaurant bookings, arranging appointments, drafting employer's letters, fixing meetings, taking notes and writing reports. A secretary plays a very important part in the smooth-running of a company. As well as being efficient, she must also be neat in appearance, tactful and able to deal with people.

Conditions

Most secretaries work normal office hours and are fairly well-paid. Promotion prospects are good and often a secretary can work her way up and perhaps get a non-secretarial job within the company.

Good and bad points.

Good points: The job is a responsible and demanding one. A secretary does not have to remain in a single industry but can go more or less where she pleases. Also, she's well integrated within the company because, by typing up letters and reports, she generally knows what's going on. If you work as a bi-lingual secretary, you may get the chance to travel.

Bad points: Secretarial work can be hard and a secretary may sometimes be overloaded with work whilst at other times have little to do. A lot depends on the company that she works for.

Questions:

1. *What do you need for being a secretary?*
2. *What's the best way in?*
3. *What are the duties?*
4. *Why is she well integrated?*
5. *How can she go abroad?*
6. *How are the job conditions?*
7. *Why must a sec. have a neat appearance?*
8. *What would be a bad point about her job?*