

Introduction to Secretarial Work

Unit 1

Part One Dialogues



Sample Dialogue 1

 **Situation** ► Li Hua is being interviewed for a secretary post at Miss Brown's office.

- (A—Li Hua, the interviewee; B—Mary Brown, the interviewer)
- **A:** (Knocks at the door) May I come in?
- **B:** Come in, please.
- **A:** Good morning, Miss Brown! I'm Li Hua. I've come for an interview as requested.
- **B:** Good morning, Miss Li! Please take a seat.
- **A:** Thank you.
- **B:** Well. Would you mind telling me about yourself?
- **A:** Of course not. I come from Shanghai and study at Shanghai International Studies University as an English Major. I specialize in English Secretarial Studies. And I will graduate from Shanghai International Studies University this July.
- **B:** Oh, I see. What courses have you taken in English Secretarial Studies?
- **A:** I've taken such courses as secretarial principles, office administration, business English, public relations, etiquette study, psychology, computer programming, typing, stenography and file-keeping.
- **B:** Oh, very good, very good. But how are your typing and shorthand skills?
- **A:** Well. I am a good shorthand-typist. I can type 100 Chinese words a minute and take dictation in English at 150 words a minute.
- **B:** Oh, fantastic! Can you operate computers skillfully?

- A: Yes, I can. I have received some special training in computers. Besides I am good at operating common office machines, such as fax machines and duplicating machines.
- B: Where did you learn to operate these machines?
- A: At a Foreign Trade Corporation last summer. I worked there for nearly two months.
- B: Oh, really? That must be very interesting experience. What did you do there?
- A: Yes. Mostly typing and running errands.
- B: Good. That experience will be very helpful to secretarial job. Ok, we'll be letting you know the result of the interview sometime next week. Thank you very much for coming.
- A: Thank you very much for giving me the chance, Miss Brown.
- B: You're quite welcome. Good-bye.
- A: Good-bye.



Sample Dialogue 2

- **Situation** ▶ Miss Brown invites Li Hua, the new secretary to have a cup of coffee with her at a cafe nearby. Now they are talking over coffee about qualities of a good secretary.

- (A—Miss Brown; B—Li Hua, the new secretary)
- A: Li Hua, how is your secretarial work going these days?
- B: Um..., not bad. Miss Brown, could I ask you a few questions?
- A: Yes, please!
- B: What qualities would people like to find in his secretary?
- A: Well. I think loyalty should be the first quality. If a man can't trust his secretary, whom he can trust?
- B: Ah, I see! You mean a secretary is supposed to be loyal to his boss and his company and to be trustworthy. When making decisions and solving problems, he needs to keep the interests of the company in the forefront of his mind. What is the next, then?
- A: Well, efficiency, I think. You know, a secretary needs to handle many repetitious and routine tasks and it's imperative for him to be able to complete a lengthy to-do list of tasks with a sense of urgency.
- B: Right. Efficiency is essential to a qualified secretary. But do you think initiative is also one essential quality for a good secretary?
- A: Of course it is. Although a good secretary should not exceed his duties and meddle in the boss' affairs, yet he needs to act for his boss in his absence. Surely, he needs to consult with his boss before he take the initiative to make any major decisions.

- Therefore, it is crucial for secretaries to know when to act on your own and when to consult.
- **B:** I agree with you. Well, what other qualities do you think a good secretary should have?
- **A:** I have to admit that a good secretary should be tactful and charming. Secretarial work can be so tense and tedious that secretaries are very likely to lose their tempers. Thus, a good secretary should be tactful enough to avoid any friction and resolve any conflicts. Additionally, a good secretary is expected to be charming, which involves looking and sounding attractive. As the company's appearance symbol, a good secretary should have a professional demeanor, good dress sense and presentation.
- **B:** Ah... It seems very difficult to be a good secretary. I bet he must be very lucky if an executive can recruit a secretary with all those qualities.
- **A:** Yes, of course. I am sure you will be a good secretary.
- **B:** Thank you. I will try my best!

Useful Expressions

1. I've come for an interview as requested.
我是应邀来参加面试的。
2. I specialize in English Secretarial Studies.
我专攻英语文秘。
3. Besides I am good at operating common office machines, such as fax machines and duplicating machines.
另外,我还能熟练操作一般的办公设备,比如传真机和复印机。
4. Yes. Mostly typing and running errands.
是的,大多是打打字,有时候跑跑外勤。
5. We'll be letting you know the result of the interview sometime next week.
我们会在下周的某个时间通知你面试的结果。
6. Therefore, it is crucial for secretaries to know when to act on your own and when to consult.
因此,对于秘书而言,知道什么时候该独自行动而什么时候该请示至关重要。
7. Secretarial work can be so tense and tedious that secretaries are very likely to lose their tempers.
秘书工作可能会很紧张,很烦琐。秘书发脾气是很有可能的。
8. Thus, a good secretary should be tactful enough to avoid any friction and resolve any conflicts.
因而,一个好的秘书应该要足够机智去化解摩擦,解决矛盾。

9. As the company's appearance symbol, a good secretary should have a professional demeanor, good dress sense and presentation.

作为公司形象的象征，一个好的秘书应该有专业的行为举止、良好的着装和仪表。

10. I bet he must be very lucky if an executive can recruit a secretary with all those qualities.

我肯定如果一位主管能找到具有上述品质的秘书，他一定很幸运。

Situational Dialogues

Using the Sample Dialogue as a model, try to create a new dialogue with your partner.

Situation 1 ▶ Wang Li, majoring in English for secretaries, is soon to graduate from Sichuan International Studies University. Now she is being interviewed on telephone for a secretary post in a Sina-foreign joint venture.

Situation 2 ▶ Lily, a secretary in a foreign trade company, is talking with her superior, Mary Brown, and she wants to know secretarial duties and responsibilities.

Part Two Text A

Secretarial Work

1. The Term "Secretary"

The term "secretary" is derived from the Latin word *secernere*, "to distinguish" or "to set apart," with the eventual connotation of something private or confidential, as with the English word *secret*. A *secretarius* was a person, therefore, overseeing business confidentially, usually for a powerful individual (a king, Pope, etc.). As the duties of a modern secretary often still include the handling of confidential information, the literal meaning of their title still holds true.

Since the Renaissance until the late 19th century, men involved in the daily correspondence and the activities of the mighty had assumed the title of secretary. With time, the term was applied to varied functions, producing compound titles to specify various secretarial work better, like General Secretary, Financial Secretary or Secretary of State. Just "secretary" remained in use for relatively modest positions such as administrative assistant of the officer(s) in charge. As such less influential posts became more feminine and common with the multiplication of bureaucracies in the public and private sectors, new words were also coined to describe them, such as personal assistant.

For a long time, the term "secretary" has come to be used for too loosely. Many junior typists, who are only beginning to acquire their secretarial skills, like to think of themselves as secretaries. However, the true secretary should have not only highly competent manual skills but also an understanding of organization and administration and a capacity for obtaining results

through people on behalf of her manager or managers. This is a complex activity requiring knowledge, experience, and social skills.

2. Duties and Functions

A secretary is a person in charge of records, correspondence, and related affairs, as for a company; a person employed to do routine work in a business office, such as typing, filing, and answering phones; or a person employed to attend to the individual or confidential correspondence, scheduling, etc. of an executive, celebrity, or the like.

The duties of a secretary or administrative assistant vary by industry or employer, but some tasks are common to many work settings. In general, secretaries perform basic clerical, organizational and office responsibilities for an organization or department. Their basic duties and functions are:

2.1 Files

Secretaries often manage customer files and other records in an office. In a doctor's office, for instance, the secretary pulls each patient's file at the time of the appointment for the nurse or doctor. She replaces it when the appointment is over. Keeping files in alphabetical order and using a local filing system for easy storage and retrieval are keys to successful file organization.

2.2 Correspondence

Secretaries are the common liaison for incoming and outgoing phone and mail correspondence. They receive calls from clients, business partners, workers or community members, and either answer questions or forward the calls. They also make calls on behalf of managers to communicate information to customers, to schedule appointments or to follow up on inquiries. Taking notes from a manager, preparing a memo or letter, and screening mail are common written correspondence duties.

2.3 Documents

Secretaries are often tasked with copying documents for mailings or for internal distribution. They also must fax documents from the company to clients or customers, and receive incoming faxes to pass on to the appropriate person. Some secretaries use e-mail, Word and Excel to create spreadsheets or documents and pass them on to employees or customers. Proofreading documents before they are sent out of the office is another duty.

2.4 Office Tasks

Especially in small offices, a secretary may be asked to carry out routine clerical tasks and errands to assist others. This may include canceling or rescheduling appointments, ordering office supplies, taking notes during meetings, and getting drinks for the supervisor and guests.

2.5 Reception

In general office positions, secretaries commonly assist new employees and visitors in finding their way around. This includes directing visitors to the people they come to meet and showing new employees where to go on their first day. In general, the secretary projects the image of the business by offering a friendly and professional reception to people who come into

the office.

Admittedly, specific duties and functions vary with different types of secretaries. Executive secretaries or executive assistant may handle some routine and complex responsibilities, including managing budgets, doing bookkeeping, attending telephone calls, handling visitors, maintaining websites, making travel arrangements, conducting research, preparing statistical reports, training employees, and supervising other clerical staff, and so on.

Some secretaries, such as legal and medical secretaries, perform highly specialized work requiring knowledge of technical terminology and procedure. For instance, Legal secretaries often prepare documents, including legal briefs, court summons, spreadsheets and other office-related letters. Many legal secretaries also maintain electronic-filing databases, help lawyers with research for cases, gather necessary documents for trials and submit paperwork to courthouse. Other duties may include scheduling client appointments, answering calls, taking notes during legal meetings and maintaining the firm's legal research references. Medical secretaries perform secretarial duties using specific knowledge of medical terminology and hospital, clinic, or laboratory procedures. Their duties may involve scheduling appointments, billing patients, and compiling and recording medical charts, reports, and correspondence.

Other technical secretaries who assist engineers or scientists may handle correspondence, maintain the technical library, and gather and edit materials for scientific papers.

3. Outlook for Secretarial Work

Since the 1970s, office automation has developed rapidly in the new wave of technological revolution and a number of high-tech have quickly entered the field of office automation. With the application of a large amount of advanced office automation equipment in secretarial work, the efficiency and the quality of the work have been greatly improved, but traditional secretarial work has been affected deeply and the content, methods, thinking and work site of the secretarial work have been changed. Hence, the work has converted from experienced management to high-level one which is more standard, automotive and efficient. Therefore, Those people who wish to continue on as secretaries will need to demonstrate ever more flexibility on the job and get ready for some new tasks.



New Words

distinguish [dis'tɪŋgwɪʃ] *vt.* 区别, 辨认, 使显著

eventual [i'ventʃuəl] *adj.* 最终的, 可能的

connotation [ˌkɒnəu'teɪʃən] *n.* 含义, 言外之意

confidential [kənfi'denʃəl] *adj.* 秘密的, 机密的; 表示信任的, 获信赖的

oversee ['əʊvə'si:] *vt.* 监督, 监管, 监视

Pope [pəʊp] *n.* 罗马教皇

literal ['lɪtərəl] *adj.* 逐字的, 字面上的, 文字的

Renaissance [rə'neisəns] *n.* 文艺复兴, 再生

correspondence [ˌkɒrɪs'pɒndəns] *n.* 通信, 信件, 相符, 一致

mighty ['maɪti] *adj.* 强大的, 巨大的

assume [ə'sju:m] *vt.* 假定, 设想, 承担, (想当然地) 认为, 假装

varied ['vɛəriəd] *adj.* 各种各样的

compound ['kɒmpaʊnd] *adj.* (词语等) 复合的

specify ['spesɪfaɪ] *v.* 详细说明, 指定, 阐述

secretarial [ˌsekɹə'tɛəriəl] *adj.* 秘书的

relatively ['relatɪvli] *adv.* 相对地

modest ['mɒdɪst] *adj.* 谦虚的; 适度的; 有节制的

administrative [əd'mɪnɪstrətɪv] *adj.* 行政的, 管理的

assistant [ə'sɪstənt] *n.* 助手, 助理, 助教

influential [ˌɪnflu'ɛnʃəl] *adj.* 有影响的, 有权势的

post [pəʊst] *n.* 职位; 邮件; 标杆

feminine ['femɪnɪn] *adj.* 女性的

multiplication [ˌmʌltɪplɪ'keɪʃən] *n.* 增加, 繁殖, 乘法运算

bureaucracy [bjʊə'rɒkrəsi] *n.* 官僚制度, 官僚主义, 官僚

sector ['sektə] *n.* 部门, 部分, 区域

coin [kɔɪn] *vt.* 制造硬币; 杜撰, 创造
n. 硬币

junior ['dʒu:njə] *adj.* 资历较浅的, 年少的, 下级的

typist ['taɪpɪst] *n.* 打字员

competent ['kɒmpɪtənt] *adj.* 有能力的, 足够的, 胜任的

manual ['mænjuəl] *adj.* 手工的, 体力的

administration [əd'mɪnɪ'streɪʃən] *n.* 实施, 管理, 行政, 任期

capacity [kə'pæsɪti] *n.* 能力, 才能

obtain [əb'teɪn] *vt.* 获得, 得到

complex ['kɒmpleks] *adj.* 复杂的, 合成的, 复合的

social ['səʊʃəl] *adj.* 社会的, 社会阶层的, 社交的

employ [ɪm'plɔɪ] *v.* 雇佣, 使用

routine [ru:'ti:n] *n.* 例行公事, 常规, 无聊 *adj.* 常规的, 例行的, 乏味的

filing ['faɪlɪŋ] *n.* 整理成档案, 文件归档

individual [ˌɪndɪ'vɪdʒuəl] *n.* 个人, 个体
adj. 个人的, 个别的, 独特的

celebrity [si'lebrɪti] *n.* 名流, 名声, 名人, 知名人士, 名誉

vary ['vɛəri] *v.* (使) 变化, (使) 不同

perform [pə'fɔ:m] *v.* 执行, 履行, 表演, 扮演

clerical ['klerɪkəl] *adj.* 文书或办事员的

replace [ri'pleɪs] *vt.* 代替, 替换, 把……放回原位

retrieval [ri'tri:vəl] *n.* 检索, 找回

liaison [li'eɪzɔ:n] *n.* 联络, 联络人

client ['klaɪənt] *n.* 顾客; 当事人, 诉讼委托人

inquiry [ɪn'kwɪəri] *n.* 探究, 调查, 审查, 询问, 质询

memo ['meməu] *n.* 备忘录, 内部通知

screen [skri:n] *n.* 屏幕, 银幕, 屏风
vt. 掩藏, 庇护, 检查

internal [ɪn'tə:nl] *adj.* 内部的, 国内的, 体内的, 内心的

distribution [ˌdɪstrɪ'bju:ʃən] *n.* 分配, 分布

fax [fæks] *n.&vt.* 传真

appropriate [ə'prəʊpriit] *adj.* 适当的, 合适的, 恰当的

spreadsheet [spredʃi:t] *n.* 电子表格程序

document ['dɒkjʊmənt] *n.* 公文, (计算机)文档

proofread ['pru:fri:d] *v.* 校对, 校正, 校勘

errand ['erənd] *n.* 差事, 使命

supply [sə'plai] *n.* 供应, 补给, 日用(必需)品

supervisor ['sju:pəvaizə] *n.* 监督者, 管理者

reception [ri'sepʃən] *n.* 接待, 招待会, 接待处

specific [spi'sifik] *adj.* 具体的, 明确的

handle ['hændl] *v.* 操纵, 处理, 负责, 管理

maintain [men'tein] *vt.* 维持, 维修, 保养

supervise ['sju:pəvaiz] *vt.* 监督, 管理, 指导

staff [stɑ:f] *n.* 员工, 全体人员, 全体职员

legal ['li:gəl] *adj.* 法定的, 法律的, 合法的

terminology [ˌtɜ:mɪ'nɒlədʒi] *n.* 术语, 术语学

procedure [prə'si:dʒə] *n.* 程序, 手续, 步骤

trial ['traɪəl] *n.* 试验, 试用

submit [səb'mit] *vt.* 提交, 递交, 使服从, 使屈服

compile [kəm'paɪl] *vt.* 编译, 编制, 编纂

automation [ɔ:tə'meɪʃən] *n.* 自动化

revolution [ˌrevə'lʊ:ʃən] *n.* 革命, 变革, 重大改变

application [æpli'keɪʃən] *n.* 应用; 申请; 应用程序

advanced [əd'vɑ:nst] *adj.* 先进的, 高级的

efficiency [i'fi:ənsi] *n.* 效率, 功率

convert [kən'vɜ:t] *v.* (使)转变, 转化; 兑换, 换算

standard ['stændəd] *n.* 标准, 规格, 水准 *adj.* 标准的, 普通的, 规范的

automotive [ɔ:tə'məutiv] *adj.* 机动的; 自驱推进的

flexibility [ˌfleksə'biliti] *n.* 灵活性, 弹性, 适应性, 柔韧性



Phrases and Expressions

as with 与……一样

hold true 适用, 有效

be involved in 涉及, 与……有关联

apply to 应用于, 适用于

General Secretary 秘书长

Financial Secretary 财务司司长

Secretary of State 国务卿

administrative assistant 行政助理

on behalf of 代表, 为了……的利益

in charge of 负责, 主管

as for 至于, 关于

attend to 注意, 专心于, 照料, 料理, 处理

or the like 或其他同类的东西等，或诸如此类

in general 大体上，一般来说，通常

follow up 跟踪，重复补充，跟进，采取措施

pass... on to sb. 将……传递给某人

carry out 实现，执行，完成

vary with 随……而改变

do bookkeeping 做账，记账

make arrangements 安排，操办

court summons 法院传票

technological revolution 科技革命

a large amount of 大量的

Notes

- 1 A secretarius was a person, therefore, overseeing business confidentially, usually for a powerful individual (a king, Pope, etc.).

本句中，overseeing business confidentially 是一个现在分词短语作后置定语，修饰限定前面的 a person。

英语中，现在分词短语通常放在被修饰词的后面，作后置定语。请看下例：

This is a complex activity requiring knowledge, experience, and social skills.

这是一项需要知识、经验和社交技能的活动。

另外，therefore 意为“因此”，在本句中作插入语。请看下例：

Many fast food restaurants, therefore, have red furniture and walls.

因此，许多快餐店都有红色的家具和墙。

- 2 Since the Renaissance until the late 19th century, men involved in the daily correspondence and the activities of the mighty had assumed the title of secretary.

本句中，involved in the daily correspondence and the activities of the mighty 是一个过去分词短语作后置定语，修饰限定前面的 men。

英语中，过去分词短语通常放在被修饰词的后面，作后置定语。请看下例：

Most of the people invited to the conference were my old friends.

大多数被邀请参加会议的人是我的老友。

另外，since the Renaissance until the late 19th century 是由连词 since 引导的时间状语。请看下例：

She hasn't been out riding since the accident.

她自从出了事故以后，一直没有骑马外出过。

- 3 Medical secretaries perform secretarial duties using specific knowledge of medical terminology and hospital, clinic, or laboratory procedures.

本句中，using specific knowledge of medical terminology and hospital, clinic, or laboratory procedures 是现在分词短语作谓语 perform 的伴随状语，表示伴随状态。

英语中，分词或分词短语作状语时，可表示时间、原因、让步、条件、方式或伴随状态。请看下例：

All night long he lay awake, thinking of the problem.

他整夜躺在床上睡不着，思考着那个问题。

Confined to bed, she needed to be waited on in everything.

她卧病在床，什么事都需要人伺候。

- 4 Many junior typists, who are only beginning to acquire their secretarial skills, like to think of themselves as secretaries.

本句中，who are only beginning to acquire their secretarial skills 是由关系代词 who 引导的非限制性定语从句，补充说明 many junior typists。

英语中，非限制性定语从句和先行词之间有逗号分开，而且两者之间的关系比较松散，只起补充说明的作用。请看下例：

My brother, who works abroad, is coming back next week.

我哥哥在国外工作，他打算下周回来。

另外，think of... as... 意为“把……看作是；把……认为是”。

- 5 The true secretary should have not only highly competent manual skills but also an understanding of organization and administration and a capacity for obtaining results through people on behalf of her manager or managers.

本句中，句子的主体结构是 not only... but also... 引导三个名词词组 manual skills, an understanding 和 a capacity 并列的平行结构。

英语中，not only... but also... 是非常有用的关联连词，意为“不仅……而且……”。通常用于连接两个相同的句子成分，即所谓的“对称结构”。请看下例：

If this project fails, it will affect not only our department, but also the whole organization.

要是这个项目失败了，这将不仅影响到我们部门，还会影响到整个单位。

另外，on behalf of... 意为“代表，为了……的利益”。



Exercises

EX. 1 Answer the following questions.

1. Which word was the term “secretary” deprived from?
2. What were the titles produced to specify various secretarial work better as the term “secretary” was applied to varied functions?
3. According to this article, what should a true secretary have?
4. What are the keys to the successful file organization?
5. What are common written correspondence duties for secretaries?
6. What are secretaries obliged to do before the documents are sent out of office?
7. In small offices, what do the routine clerical tasks include?
8. How can a secretary project the image of the business?
9. What are the duties for medical secretaries?
10. What contributes to the improved efficiency and quality of office work?