

Office Practice

Book

2

Secretarial Duties

**Pauline Naidoo and
Maryvonne Bolch**

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**Cassell
London**

PREFACE

The Special English series from Collier Macmillan, Publishers, London, introduces titles on a wide range of technical subjects that will be of interest to students of English as a second language. Each volume illustrates the special English of a particular trade or profession in both its spoken and written forms. It is not possible, of course, for books of this size to cover the subject matter exhaustively, so the authors have concentrated on those topics and activities that should have the widest appeal. The conversations which are the basis of each chapter or unit are deliberately written in the colloquial and idiomatic speech used by technicians and specialists as they go about their everyday activities.

It must be emphasized that these books are *not* primarily intended to teach the subject matter itself, although the technical content is accurate in every respect. Nor are they intended to teach the introductory stages of English. It is assumed that the reader is already familiar in his own language with the subject matter of the book, and has a good grounding in the basic grammatical patterns and vocabulary of English. He will use these books to improve his knowledge of English within the framework of a technical vocabulary that is of interest to him either privately or professionally.

The authors in this series each have their individual approach, but all the volumes are organized in the same general way. Typically, each book is based on a series of situational dialogues, followed by narrative passages for reading comprehension. Exercises give the student practice in handling some of the useful and more difficult patterns, as well as lexical items, that occur in each unit. Tape recordings, of the dialogues and selected exercises, may be used either in the language laboratory or for private study. Each volume is provided with a glossary of technical terms, with i.p.a. equivalents as used in the Daniel Jones Pronouncing Dictionary.

PETER STREVENS
General Editor

INTRODUCTION

This book is the sequel to *Office Practice: Clerical Duties*. It is intended for anyone who is already working in an office or who wants to start a career as a secretary. The various duties of a secretary are described in dialogues and reading passages; but the book has a double purpose. As well as teaching office procedures, it is intended to teach English (and particularly the English which will be useful in an office) to students for whom it is a second language.

Office Practice: Secretarial Duties does not claim to cover every aspect of the secretary's work, but what is included is realistic, practical and relevant. The dialogues should provide good classroom activity and at the same time help to improve the student's spoken English. Exercises following the dialogues give the student practice in the use of new vocabulary and structures; exercises following the reading passages include comprehension questions and further structural practice. A key to the exercises is provided at the back of the book.

A glossary is provided for those words which a standard dictionary might not include in the sense in which they appear in the text. The International Phonetic Alphabet is used as a guide to pronunciation. Idiomatic expressions are footnoted at the bottom of the pages on which they appear.

The tape recording that accompanies the book may be used by the teacher in the classroom or the language laboratory. For the student working alone, it will provide a model for pronunciation as well as a means of taking dictation for practice in spelling. The exercises have pauses for student response, but there are no pauses in the dialogues. This has been done on purpose to provide the maximum amount of recorded material. Most tape recorders are now equipped with a pause button, which will enable the listener to stop the tape after each sentence and repeat it aloud before proceeding to the next one. If pauses are required for language laboratory work, a copy may be made and the pauses inserted of a length to suit the requirements of the students. A demonstration tape, free of charge, is available from the publisher upon request.

CONTENTS

Preface	vi
Introduction	vii
1 Good secretaries are hard to find	1
2 Take a letter	7
3 Correspondence	15
4 Banking	21
5 Where to find it	27
6 Don't rely on your memory	32
7 Travel arrangements	38
8 It's as easy as ABC	44
9 Business documents	49
10 Recording information	54
11 Rotas	60
12 Arranging meetings	66
13 Outside services	72
14 Do your own O & M	77
15 Just give him the facts	85
Key to exercises	93
Glossary	115



UNIT 1

GOOD SECRETARIES ARE HARD TO FIND

Dialogue

A busy office in a commercial firm in the West End of London. Mr. Lumley, a senior executive, is talking to Karen Adams, whom he has just promoted from being his secretary to the position of personal assistant.

Mr. Lumley: Well, Karen, now that you're my *P.A. one of your new duties—and not the least important—will be to appoint a new junior secretary, and you can start by preparing an advertisement.

Karen: I already have, Mr. Lumley—here it is. Would you like to read it to see if it's all right?

Mr. Lumley: *(Reads the advertisement.)* Yes, that's fine. Let's see what response it brings—I expect we'll have a number of applicants with the required speeds. You'll be interviewing them, Karen, and you must look out for the qualities necessary in a secretary. What would you say these are?

Karen: Hmm. I should say that initiative is important, a sense of responsibility—and a methodical approach to work. It's amazing how often the unexpected happens, even in the best-planned offices. A secretary wouldn't be much use if she was always needing instructions.

Mr. Lumley: I must say I also appreciate a girl who looks presentable—which doesn't mean that I want a beauty queen!¹ But she should take care over her appearance, and her office and her work should be as neat as she is. What else are we looking for, Karen?

Karen: Well, I don't know about other offices, but a sense of humour is certainly essential here—also tact and discretion.

Mr. Lumley: Yes, I agree. I can't bear girls who gossip about the office and the staff—you never know when they'll give away some important bit of information about the company's activities.

Karen: I think they should also keep their private problems to themselves, don't you? Too many office hours are wasted on private dramas—what he said to her and she said to him the night before.

¹ beauty queen: girl who wins a prize for her beauty in a competition with other girls

PERSONAL SECRETARY

With experience of legal work required by Director of an International Finance Company. Excellent working conditions in West End office. Salary commensurate with experience and ability, but will be substantial. *Write or call*

SECRETARY

ECONOMIST ADVISORY

An economic consultancy needs a secretary

SECRETARY

Experienced Secretary with good shorthand skills required for one of our Undermen in our City office. We require will take an active part in all the op

INTELLIGENT PERSONAL SECRETARY

required for MD of a company in the financial sector. Good salary around £10,000. E. K. Fincham, c/o Mr. Grayson, 100, Strand, London, W.C.2

PERSONAL SECRETARY/SECRETARY

Managing Director of 1944-1945-1946-1947-1948-1949-1950-1951-1952-1953-1954-1955-1956-1957-1958-1959-1960-1961-1962-1963-1964-1965-1966-1967-1968-1969-1970-1971-1972-1973-1974-1975-1976-1977-1978-1979-1980-1981-1982-1983-1984-1985-1986-1987-1988-1989-1990-1991-1992-1993-1994-1995-1996-1997-1998-1999-2000-2001-2002-2003-2004-2005-2006-2007-2008-2009-2010-2011-2012-2013-2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019-2020-2021-2022-2023-2024-2025-2026-2027-2028-2029-2030-2031-2032-2033-2034-2035-2036-2037-2038-2039-2040-2041-2042-2043-2044-2045-2046-2047-2048-2049-2050-2051-2052-2053-2054-2055-2056-2057-2058-2059-2060-2061-2062-2063-2064-2065-2066-2067-2068-2069-2070-2071-2072-2073-2074-2075-2076-2077-2078-2079-2080-2081-2082-2083-2084-2085-2086-2087-2088-2089-2090-2091-2092-2093-2094-2095-2096-2097-2098-2099-2100-2101-2102-2103-2104-2105-2106-2107-2108-2109-2110-2111-2112-2113-2114-2115-2116-2117-2118-2119-2120-2121-2122-2123-2124-2125-2126-2127-2128-2129-2130-2131-2132-2133-2134-2135-2136-2137-2138-2139-2140-2141-2142-2143-2144-2145-2146-2147-2148-2149-2150-2151-2152-2153-2154-2155-2156-2157-2158-2159-2160-2161-2162-2163-2164-2165-2166-2167-2168-2169-2170-2171-2172-2173-2174-2175-2176-2177-2178-2179-2180-2181-2182-2183-2184-2185-2186-2187-2188-2189-2190-2191-2192-2193-2194-2195-2196-2197-2198-2199-2200-2201-2202-2203-2204-2205-2206-2207-2208-2209-2210-2211-2212-2213-2214-2215-2216-2217-2218-2219-2220-2221-2222-2223-2224-2225-2226-2227-2228-2229-2230-2231-2232-2233-2234-2235-2236-2237-2238-2239-2240-2241-2242-2243-2244-2245-2246-2247-2248-2249-2250-2251-2252-2253-2254-2255-2256-2257-2258-2259-2260-2261-2262-2263-2264-2265-2266-2267-2268-2269-2270-2271-2272-2273-2274-2275-2276-2277-2278-2279-2280-2281-2282-2283-2284-2285-2286-2287-2288-2289-2290-2291-2292-2293-2294-2295-2296-2297-2298-2299-2300-2301-2302-2303-2304-2305-2306-2307-2308-2309-2310-2311-2312-2313-2314-2315-2316-2317-2318-2319-2320-2321-2322-2323-2324-2325-2326-2327-2328-2329-2330-2331-2332-2333-2334-2335-2336-2337-2338-2339-2340-2341-2342-2343-2344-2345-2346-2347-2348-2349-2350-2351-2352-2353-2354-2355-2356-2357-2358-2359-2360-2361-2362-2363-2364-2365-2366-2367-2368-2369-2370-2371-2372-2373-2374-2375-2376-2377-2378-2379-2380-2381-2382-2383-2384-2385-2386-2387-2388-2389-2390-2391-2392-2393-2394-2395-2396-2397-2398-2399-2400-2401-2402-2403-2404-2405-2406-2407-2408-2409-2410-2411-2412-2413-2414-2415-2416-2417-2418-2419-2420-2421-2422-2423-2424-2425-2426-2427-2428-2429-2430-2431-2432-2433-2434-2435-2436-2437-2438-2439-2440-2441-2442-2443-2444-2445-2446-2447-2448-2449-2450-2451-2452-2453-2454-2455-2456-2457-2458-2459-2460-2461-2462-2463-2464-2465-2466-2467-2468-2469-2470-2471-2472-2473-2474-2475-2476-2477-2478-2479-2480-2481-2482-2483-2484-2485-2486-2487-2488-2489-2490-2491-2492-2493-2494-2495-2496-2497-2498-2499-2500-2501-2502-2503-2504-2505-2506-2507-2508-2509-2510-2511-2512-2513-2514-2515-2516-2517-2518-2519-2520-2521-2522-2523-2524-2525-2526-2527-2528-2529-2530-2531-2532-2533-2534-2535-2536-2537-2538-2539-2540-2541-2542-2543-2544-2545-2546-2547-2548-2549-2550-2551-2552-2553-2554-2555-2556-2557-2558-2559-2560-2561-2562-2563-2564-2565-2566-2567-2568-2569-2570-2571-2572-2573-2574-2575-2576-2577-2578-2579-2580-2581-2582-2583-2584-2585-2586-2587-2588-2589-2590-2591-2592-2593-2594-2595-2596-2597-2598-2599-2600-2601-2602-2603-2604-2605-2606-2607-2608-2609-2610-2611-2612-2613-2614-2615-2616-2617-2618-2619-2620-2621-2622-2623-2624-2625-2626-2627-2628-2629-2630-2631-2632-2633-2634-2635-2636-2637-2638-2639-2640-2641-2642-2643-2644-2645-2646-2647-2648-2649-2650-2651-2652-2653-2654-2655-2656-2657-2658-2659-2660-2661-2662-2663-2664-2665-2666-2667-2668-2669-2670-2671-2672-2673-2674-2675-2676-2677-2678-2679-2680-2681-2682-2683-2684-2685-2686-2687-2688-2689-2690-2691-2692-2693-2694-2695-2696-2697-2698-2699-2700-2701-2702-2703-2704-2705-2706-2707-2708-2709-2710-2711-2712-2713-2714-2715-2716-2717-2718-2719-2720-2721-2722-2723-2724-2725-2726-2727-2728-2729-2730-2731-2732-2733-2734-2735-2736-2737-2738-2739-2740-2741-2742-2743-2744-2745-2746-2747-2748-2749-2750-2751-2752-2753-2754-2755-2756-2757-2758-2759-2760-2761-2762-2763-2764-2765-2766-2767-2768-2769-2770-2771-2772-2773-2774-2775-2776-2777-2778-2779-2780-2781-2782-2783-2784-2785-2786-2787-2788-2789-2790-2791-2792-2793-2794-2795-2796-2797-2798-2799-2800-2801-2802-2803-2804-2805-2806-2807-2808-2809-2810-2811-2812-2813-2814-2815-2816-2817-2818-2819-2820-2821-2822-2823-2824-2825-2826-2827-2828-2829-2830-2831-2832-2833-2834-2835-2836-2837-2838-2839-2840-2841-2842-2843-2844-2845-2846-2847-2848-2849-2850-2851-2852-2853-2854-2855-2856-2857-2858-2859-2860-2861-2862-2863-2864-2865-2866-2867-2868-2869-2870-2871-2872-2873-2874-2875-2876-2877-2878-2879-2880-2881-2882-2883-2884-2885-2886-2887-2888-2889-2890-2891-2892-2893-2894-2895-2896-2897-2898-2899-2900-2901-2902-2903-2904-2905-2906-2907-2908-2909-2910-2911-2912-2913-2914-2915-2916-2917-2918-2919-2920-2921-2922-2923-2924-2925-2926-2927-2928-2929-2930-2931-2932-2933-2934-2935-2936-2937-2938-2939-2940-2941-2942-2943-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Mr. Lumley: You could also mention to the girl you hire that she doesn't lose status if she helps out with any odd job that needs doing when we're busy. On the contrary, she gains respect by showing that she's willing.

Karen: Yes, I'll remember that. Another thing that's not rated highly enough is a good telephone manner. Of course, it's often a disappointment for the caller when he finally meets you face to face!

Mr. Lumley: (*Laughing*) Anyway, by that time you've established a good image for the firm.

Karen: And built up a lot of goodwill.

Mr. Lumley: Well, I should say you know what we're looking for. I suppose it can be summed up as someone with initiative and responsibility who will anticipate our needs and take some of the pressure off us. Now, Karen, all you have to do is find this paragon² of virtue!

² paragon: perfect model

EXERCISE 1: STRUCTURAL PRACTICE

Notice this structure from the conversation:

You can start by preparing an advertisement.

Use this structure to respond to the following questions:

Example: What shall I do first?

Prompt: *prepare an advertisement*

Response: You can start by preparing an advertisement.

Now you do it.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. What shall I do first? | <i>prepare an advertisement</i> |
| 2. How shall I deal with the applicants? | <i>interview them</i> |
| 3. How can I be methodical in my work? | <i>organize your daily schedule</i> |
| 4. Where should I look for the file? | <i>look in that drawer</i> |
| 5. What shall I do this morning? | <i>help the filing clerk</i> |
| 6. What should I say in the letter? | <i>thank them for the order</i> |
| 7. How shall I find their address? | <i>consult the telephone directory</i> |
| 8. How shall I get the information? | <i>make some telephone calls</i> |

4 OFFICE PRACTICE 2

EXERCISE 2: SUBSTITUTION DRILL

Statement: I should say that initiative is important.

Prompt: *think*

Response: I should *think* that initiative is important.

Now you do it.

Statement: I should say that initiative is important.

Prompts:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. think | 5. would |
| 2. tact | 6. essential |
| 3. necessary | 7. punctuality |
| 4. imagine | 8. say |

EXERCISE 3

Make the following sentences negative:

Example: You'll be interviewing the applicants for the job.

Response: You won't be interviewing the applicants for the job.

1. You'll be interviewing the applicants for the job.
2. A sense of humour is essential here.
3. We've got to hire a new secretary.
4. Do you like the advertisement I've written?
5. Am I going to appoint junior staff?
6. She went to see the employment officer.
7. He wanted to know if her speeds were high.
8. You've established a good image for the firm.

Reading and Comprehension

People often wonder what difference there is between a shorthand typist and a secretary. It is easy enough to define the work of a shorthand typist—her main job is to take down shorthand from dictation and then to transcribe it. A secretary does this as well, but she also

does much more. Her duties will include such things as arranging conferences, dealing with callers, and even fetching her boss's lunch-time sandwiches. In addition to company work she often has to cope with her boss's private engagements. It is almost impossible to list all the duties that a secretary may be called upon to perform, and it is even more difficult to list the qualities that she needs in her work. If you look at the advertisements—for instance, the one below—you will see what order of importance employers give to secretarial abilities. The important thing to remember, it seems, is that secretaries should be prepared to turn their hand to anything,³ and to do so cheerfully.

WANTED

Junior secretary for busy, friendly office, to work for managing director and his personal assistant. She should have good speeds, a sense of humour, a sense of responsibility and an ability to cope without flapping.⁴ Starting salary within range £1,200—£1,400 depending on age and experience. Good promotion prospects for capable career girl.

Write to Box RG 7604

³ turn their hand to anything: do a variety of different jobs

⁴ flapping: panicking

EXERCISE 4: COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the main job of a shorthand typist?
2. List three duties which a secretary may be expected to perform.
3. What might she have to do in addition to company work?
4. What qualities is the writer of the advertisement looking for?
5. What, according to the advertisement, can a capable career girl expect?
6. How much money does the advertisement offer?
7. Can *you* cope without flapping? Explain what this means.



EXERCISE 5

Use the following words or phrases in sentences of your own to show that you understand their meaning and use.

1. copy
2. initiative
3. discretion
4. sense of responsibility
5. image
6. for instance
7. cope with
8. perform
9. paragon
10. capable

UNIT 2

TAKE A LETTER

Dialogue

A week later, Karen has appointed a junior secretary, Jackie Collins, and this is her first week at work.

Karen: Will you come in please, Jackie, and take a letter?

Jackie: Oh dear, this pen's run out of ink; can I go and fill it?

Karen: Here's your first lesson in taking dictation: never arrive without spare pens and pencils. And while we're about it, make sure that every page has a margin wide enough to take notes and amendments during dictation.

Jackie: I'm sorry, Miss Adams, I should have thought of that myself. It's so obvious.

Karen: There are many tips¹ like that which you'll pick up with experience. For instance, has anyone ever told you that even if instructions, such as the number of extra copies, are given to you at the end of a letter, you should go back to the beginning and write them down there?

Jackie: You mean, so that I don't get half way through the letter before realizing that I should have put in an extra *carbon?

Karen: That's right.

Jackie: While we're on the subject, may I ask you something? If I don't understand a word or a phrase when you're dictating, or I know I've got down a wrong *outline, would you prefer me to try and work it out for myself later or to ask you during dictation?

Karen: Obviously you'll have to use your judgment; I don't want interruptions every other minute, but I'd rather you asked at the end of the letter than spend hours struggling. I'd prefer to explain while it's still fresh in my mind, and I certainly don't want you to give me a letter for signature which has an error in it.

¹ tip: hint

Jackie: I always use a dictionary if it's just the spelling I'm unfamiliar with, but sometimes you use technical terms that I haven't heard before.

Karen: Well then, whenever we're interrupted by the telephone or a caller it will give you an opportunity to read through your notes and ring round anything that worries you; then you can ask me before we go on. Let's get started.

Jackie: I'll just find my place.²

Karen: Ah, that's another thing—it's a good idea to put a rubber band round all the used pages so that you don't waste time looking for your place. Also, you should put the date at the beginning of each day's dictation, and cross through the letters as you type them.

Jackie: Oh yes! That's one thing I *do* enjoy. It gives me a lovely sense of achievement to see how much I've done in a day.

² find my place: find the next empty page in the notebook



EXERCISE 1: STRUCTURAL PRACTICE

Notice this structure from the conversation:

I'd rather you asked. . . .

Use this structure to respond to the following questions:

Example: Should I ask you or Mr. Lumley?

Prompt: *Mr. Lumley*

Response: I'd rather you asked Mr. Lumley.

Now you do it.

1. Should I ask you or Mr. Lumley?
2. Shall I use a pen or a pencil?
3. Shall I do it now or later?
4. Do you want me to put the date at the beginning or the end?
5. Do you want me to interrupt you or wait until the end?
6. Shall I type the letters now or this afternoon?
7. Shall I go for lunch at twelve or one?
8. Shall I give the letters to Mr. Jones or his secretary?

Mr. Lumley

a pencil

now

at the beginning

interrupt me

this afternoon

one

his secretary

EXERCISE 2: SUBSTITUTION DRILL

Statement: I should have put in an extra carbon.

Prompt *You*

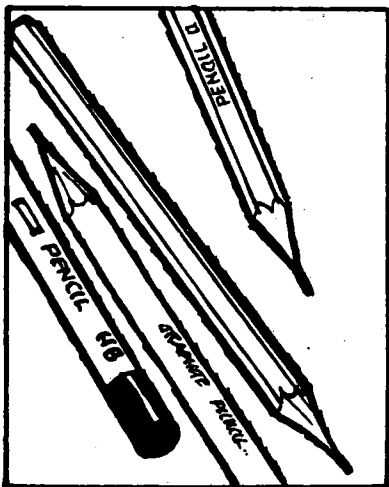
Response: *You should have put in an extra carbon.*

Now you do it.

Statement: I should have put in an extra carbon.

Prompts:

- | | |
|------------|----------------------|
| 1. You | 5. shouldn't |
| 2. a comma | 6. interrupted |
| 3. used | 7. could |
| 4. pencil | 8. used a dictionary |



EXERCISE 3: FURTHER STRUCTURAL PRACTICE

Notice this structure from the conversation:

And while we're about it, make sure that every page has a margin.

Use this structure, with the appropriate pronoun, to respond to the following statements:

Example: I'm writing to Mr. Jones.

Prompt: *you can ask for his advice*

Response: And while you're about it, you can ask for his advice.

Now you do it.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. I'm writing to Mr. Jones. | <i>you can ask for his advice</i> |
| 2. I'm going to fill my pen. | <i>you can sharpen your pencil</i> |
| 3. I'm going to look up the spelling. | <i>you can look up the meaning
as well</i> |
| 4. Karen's making herself a cup of coffee. | <i>she can make one for me</i> |
| 5. They're reading through their notes. | <i>they should ring round all
the technical words</i> |
| 6. I must find my place. | <i>put a rubber band round the
pages</i> |
| 7. I'm typing your letter. | <i>do a carbon for Mr. Jones</i> |
| 8. I'm going to get some rubber bands. | <i>get me some carbon paper</i> |

A letter in shorthand

The same letter
transcribed

NBK/PNN

Mr A.G. Jones
Smith Brown & Drysdale Limited
Melbrow House
40 South Street
LONDON W3R 2DL

Dear Mr Jones

I enclose our revised budget based on your letter of 18th October. We have considered carefully the present situation, your requirements and the limited budget available and we are confident that the twelve proposed data sheets will provide the greatest benefit for your company.

As requested we have concentrated on the London office. All expenses connected with the European offices will be outside this budget figure and you should bear the future travel costs in mind. In the case of the Zurich office for which we have already produced some designs, I anticipate that at least four trips will be necessary in the coming year. With the development of the Paris and Amsterdam offices we propose to let you have a breakdown of corporate design costs and requirements when our work at the London office has progressed for another three or four months. We shall then be in a better position to see the extent of the requirements and the solutions possible in various media.

I feel sure you understand that your budget changes and restrictions have involved us in an enormous amount of planning and administrative work and that in future we shall be unable to carry such overheads.

We look forward to a happy collaboration enabling us to work on a consecutive programme in London and then throughout Europe.

Yours sincerely

Norma B. Kitting
Business Manager

Reading and Comprehension

A well displayed, nicely typed letter is a joy to receive. Conversely, a letter that is badly typed, grubby^a and full of errors will reflect badly on the whole company and not merely on the typist. Many factors go to make up a good letter, including the quality of the paper, the printed heading, the absence of both errors and clumsy corrections, the evenness of touch, and consistency of *display. All sorts of things can make it difficult to produce a good letter: a worn *typewriter ribbon, dirty *type face, rubber dust in the *type basket (leading to *"shadowing" and uneven spacing), inconsistency in spacing after punctuation, very uneven right-hand margins, incorrect or too frequent word divisions. All these faults can and should be eliminated by the typist. But it is not enough to type a letter perfectly if this has taken the typist three or four attempts. The cost of the letter is far more than the cost of the paper and the postage. It includes the time taken by the typist and her employer in dictation; the equipment and premises that are needed for both to work in; the time taken to type, check and post the letter; and the depreciation and servicing of the typewriter. A part of all these expenses must be charged to each letter that leaves the office, and it stands to reason that if there are only ten letters going out in a day, the cost per letter will be twice as much as if there were twenty.

^a grubby: dirty

