

# Advanced written translation

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# Tips to handle written translation properly

- The first thing to remember is that translation is the transfer of meaning from one language to another. It is not the transfer of words from language to language. You must translate the meaning of what is being said, rather than do it word-for-word. This is because languages are not just different words. Different languages also have different grammar, different word orders, sometimes even words for which other languages do not have any equivalents. The English spoken by a scientist may have words which a simple farmer cannot even start to imagine. And the farmer is likely to have words for things the technologist never dreamed of.
- Translators must be accurate and complete expression of original ideas and content, while not add or delete anything or change the meaning arbitrarily, and should absolutely respect the thinking, perspectives, standpoints and personal feelings reflected in the process of narrative, description and description, while not be relying on personal likes and dislikes to wanton distortion, should keep the original style; Fluent means the translation must be normative, easy to understand.

- Successful translators should use the modern languages in a popular style, and do their best to make the translation simple, smooth, fresh and vivid. Regarding to the standard of translation, the British put three principles of translation: The first is “the meaning of the original should be fully transferred to the translation”, the second is “translation must have the original style and stylistic”, the third is ” translation should be as fluent as the original”.
- Professional translations differ from other translators in that they take context into account. They have an interest not only in words, but also – and most importantly - in the MEANING of the message, as well as the field, author, reader, language level, literary and technical aspects, etc.

Then, translators should think of how certain expressions are not always translated the way they intend. These ambiguous phrases lose their meaning and can cause confusion.

- The critical element of successful translation is often the translated text quality. How well written is your content?
- These are some general guidelines you should keep in mind when translating. Keep your sentences simple and direct to increase understanding—and use a style guide for consistency. Because clear, concise, well-constructed sentences improve language translation quality, reduce turnaround time, and cut costs.

# 1. Keep sentences brief

- For increased comprehension and simpler translations, aim for about 20 words or less. And boost readability. I often ask myself, what's truly important? How can I simplify what I want to say? Reading sentences aloud helps to keep them short and sweet.

## 2. Use Standard English word order whenever possible

- This generally means a subject, verb, and object with associated modifiers. Ensure correct grammatical structure and proper punctuation.
- This includes checking the basics, because mistakes can travel from source language to target languages. Translators often find and flag source errors, but that shouldn't replace proofreading your source text for spelling and grammar.

### 3. Avoid long noun strings

- When connecting elements are omitted from noun strings, readers must infer the relationship between the words. If you have to read a sentence several times to understand it, chances are that there will be further complications when it's translated into multiple languages. When this happens, we tend to see misinterpretations of the meaning—or a translation that appears too literal.

## 4. Use just one term to identify a single concept

- Synonyms get in the way of clarity. Write the same thing, the same way, every time you write it. Finding different ways to write a single concept will not only affect the overall consistency of translation, but it will also reduce the related translation memory leverage. This can lead to decreased quality, increased cost, and increased turnaround.

## 5. Use relative pronouns like “that” and “which.”

- Even if you don’t need them, they may improve understanding. “The software that he licensed expires tomorrow” is clearer than “The software he licensed expires tomorrow.” It’s good to check that pronouns have been included rather than assumed.

## 6. Avoid phrasal verbs (containing a verb form with one or more articles)

- They tend to complicate translations. For example, use “met” rather than “ran into.” Phrasal verbs often have multiple meanings and are less formal.

## 7. Make sure it fits

- English written text is often shorter than other languages, which means sufficient space is needed for expansion. Differences exist not only in sentence length, but also in individual word length—as some languages use large compound words.

Communication and preparation are key

These are the basic translator skills you need to handle written translation as a professional translator.

# 1. Advanced language knowledge

- You can't translate something unless you understand it.
- And if you don't understand the text *fully*, you risk misinterpreting it and delivering a translation that's not completely accurate.
- So good translators need to understand *all* meaning – including all the subtle nuances implied in the text.
- That level of understanding requires *advanced*, near native level, knowledge of your source language. Nothing less will do.
- How to gain advanced language knowledge
  - Study –
  - Read widely
  - Be an avid consumer of source language media
  - Immerse yourself in the culture – visit source-language countries regularly if you live elsewhere
  - Keep it up! Language is constantly changing, so it's an on-going process, not a target to reach then relax

## 2. Excellent writing skills

- To be a good translator you must be a *very good*, and not merely adequate, writer in your target language.
- You must have a way with words, the ability to *write with flair*.
- And you'll likely need to do that *across a variety of text styles* – promotional and marketing, formal/legal, casual, technical, etc.
- To some extent you either have excellent writing ability and expression or you don't.
- But it's also a skill you can hone and improve with experience and application.
- How to improve your translator writing skills
- Take a writing course
- Collaborate with your peers – see how they translate things and the wording and expression they use
- Read your translations aloud to pick up any unnatural phrasing, and spend time refining and polishing your wording
- Read widely – it'll extend your vocabulary
- Note down wording you come across that you really like, and add it to your repertoire

# 3. In-depth cultural knowledge

- Good translators have a deep understanding of both source and target cultures.
- That's *general cultural knowledge* like [values systems and how people view the world](#).
- And *culture-specific* aspects like [pastimes, customs, etc.](#)
- You'll often need cultural knowledge to grasp the significance or implication of text you're translating.
- And understanding the differences between your source and target language cultures will alert you to text that won't work well or will have reduced impact when translated.
- How to extend your cultural knowledge
- Spend time in both target and source culture countries
- Consume media in both languages
- Attend cultural events
- Research aspects of the culture you haven't personally experienced
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## 4. Sound research skills

- Translators are always researching things – wording, meanings, vocab, jargon, background info.
- The more efficiently you can do it the better.
- How to refine your translation research skills
- Learn the tricks to [refining Google searches](#)
- See what your peers do
- Find and bookmark your most useful reference sources
- Ask on translator forums

## 5. Best practice translation and review processes

- Translation is mentally challenging, and it's dead easy for the odd shortcoming to slip through.
- A little inaccuracy here, less than ideal wording there.
- That's why good translators stick like barnacles to proven translation processes.

# 6. Sound translation judgement

- Good translators make consistently good translation decisions.
- On vocabulary and structures to use, when to be more literal / freer, what and how much to research, etc.
- Much of this is instinctive, but with the right effort any translator can markedly improve this basic skill.
- How to improve your translation judgement
- Study translation –
- Collaborate with a colleague – critique each other’s work and learn from each other
- Seek out a mentor – an accomplished translator willing to give feedback and help you hone your translation skills
- Self-critique your work. Revisit earlier translations and see how you could improve them
- Gain experience! Generally, the more you translate the better you’ll get – especially if you’re receiving constructive feedback
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# 7. Computing and CAT skills

- You'll need to have good command of commonly used office programs – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc
- And you should be an expert on your chosen TM software.

Thank you