



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Court Language Access Services

Chunking, Shadowing and Paraphrasing Summary

During the webinar we spoke about how to use Chunking, Shadowing and Paraphrasing as warmup exercises before you start your interpreting practice sessions, and how these techniques can also be used to solve some common interpreting issues.

At the end of this document, you will find a bibliography and other useful resources that were used to prepare the webinar, and resources that can complement your interpreting practice sessions.

Chunking is dividing a text into smaller ideas. Chunking exercises can be used to aid our comprehension. Chunking is useful to tackle issues like fusion of ideas and distortion of meaning, especially when rendering your interpretation of long consecutive chunks. You can practice chunking parts of transcriptions of consecutive exercises that are giving you more trouble (it is not necessary that you do this with the whole transcription of an exercise). Chunk the paragraph in question, record yourself while you listen to the audio and interpret, and then compare your recording to the transcription. Repeat until you can render all the ideas separately and with completeness.

Shadowing is a verbatim repetition of an audio in the same language as the original. Shadowing while doing another task is an excellent way to improve your multitasking abilities. Shadowing can be used to solve issues like false starts and lagging when a speaker speeds up. To do so we suggested to practice shadowing of exercises that are giving issues by progressively increasing *décalage* or using the onlinetonegenerator¹ to slow down the words per minute (wpm). We can gradually increase the wpm as we grow more comfortable with the speed. Shadowing can also be used to solve issues like low voice volume or lack of confidence in our rendition. To do so we can shadow an exercise that has proven challenging in that regard and repeat it with the specific intent of sounding confident and maintaining good voice volume. To gain dexterity in multitasking we practiced shadowing while writing numbers/names/songs and shadowing while taking summary notes.

Paraphrasing is presenting ideas and information in your own words. This technique is useful because it trains the brain to listen for comprehension (as opposed to just words). Paraphrasing also helps us to rearrange information and to look for synonyms in a split second. This technique can be used to help to reduce false starts for either simultaneous or sight by paraphrasing the exercise that is giving you difficulties first, and afterward interpreting it. It can also help to solve issues of comprehension in a challenging exercise, or it can be used to solve lack of accuracy (when it is due to lack of comprehension, not due to unknown vocabulary).

¹ [Free Online Time Stretcher | OnlineToneGenerator.com](#)



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We also talked about the importance of having overall good communication skills when your job is to interpret. An essential ability for any interpreter is public speaking. It is the basis of any good interpretation. Here are 5 tips to improve your public speaking skills that will in turn help you to render better interpretations:

Tip 1. Record yourself

If you plan on becoming an interpreter, you can't be camera shy. Being comfortable on camera and recording yourself while doing your interpreting practices at home can help you to get more comfortable speaking in public.

Tip 2. Non-native English speakers: seek extra help

Everyone has an accent whether we realize it or not. When your career is to speak and understand others, you have an obligation to ensure you are also easily understood. For non-native English speakers, seeking extra help with accent reduction classes can build confidence when speaking in public and when working as an interpreter for the courts.

Tip 3. Practice makes perfect!

The more you practice, the better you will become at interpreting and the better you are the more comfortable you will be with public speaking. Practice interpreting the actors' lines into your target language of choice when you are watching T.V.

Tip 4. Get a partner

By practicing with someone else - a friend, family member or classmate, you can receive in-the-moment feedback if something was pronounced wrong or missed.

Tip 5. Be curious

Whenever you hear a word that you don't recognize- in either your A or B languages, look that word up in the dictionary. Try to find synonyms for it and use them in context. The bigger your vocabulary is, the easier your job will be.

And remember: the best way to improve on your interpreting skills is Practice, Practice, Practice! Following the 4-step method outlined by the editorial Acebo:

1. **Blind Run:** perform your interpreting practice exercise without reviewing the transcript or looking up any vocabulary and **RECORD** yourself. Setting a goal every time you do an interpreting practice is useful too. E.g., sound confident or be precise with all numbers and addresses.
2. **Assess your recording:** Listen to the recording while comparing it to the transcript of the exercise. Jot down what you notice regarding omissions, additions, and misinterpretations.



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3. **Research:** Look up any unfamiliar terminology, add that terminology to your working vocabulary lists. Practice formulating a sentence with the term and providing a translation in English and Non-English language(s).

4. **Repeat:** Perform the exercise as many times as you need to be satisfied. Remember, practice makes perfect!

It is only after we overcome our comprehension and vocabulary issues that we are able to improve on our interpreting techniques.

I recommend you sign up to the Interprettrain monthly newsletter, which is free and always includes excellent resources. Check out both their training courses and Athena Matilsky's training webinars. I have taken several of them and guaranty you will get your money's worth.

An investment in you is an investment in your future.

Contact Chantal for study related questions at chantal.m.portillo@ojd.state.or.us or contact Certification and Training for general exam questions at: court.interpreter.program@ojd.state.or.us

Bibliography and other resources:

Carsten, Svetlana. (2017). A Different Shade of Shadowing: Source Text to Source Text as Efficient Simultaneous Processing Exercise. *Vertimo studijos*. 6. 9. 10.15388/VertStud.2013.6.10542.

The Interpreter's Edge, 2nd Edition. Acebo Publications

The Interpreter's Edge Turbo, 1st Edition. Acebo Publications

Dueñas González, Vázquez, Mikkelson. *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation* (1991), Carolina Academic Press

Sheldon Hentschke. *Paraphrasing* (2017), San José State University writing Center
[Paraphrasing \(sjsu.edu\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/paraphrasing)

Interpretrain Master Class Course with Virginia Valencia and Athena Matilsky (AthenaSkyInterpreting). I have attended dozens of legal interpreting courses since 2015, and these two trainers are the ones I personally recommend.

Shadowing and Paraphrasing source tests. Source of the text:

[U.S. Attorneys | Trial | United States Department of Justice](https://www.usdoj.gov/rt/trial)



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(From the United States Department of Justice, Offices of the United States Attorneys web page. This is an excellent resource to learn about the various steps in a trial, and it also includes a glossary and courtroom images).

More paraphrasing exercises with sample answers:

[Paraphrasing - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University](#)

Free App to slow down or speed up audio: [Free Online Time Stretcher | OnlineToneGenerator.com](#)