



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Court Language Access Services

Introduction to Sight Interpretation Summary

During the webinar we spoke about how to approach Sight Interpretation (also called Sight Translation) by following three steps and debunking two myths.

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.

Step 1. Read fully and carefully

You must take to read and understand the text in front of you to be able to render a faithful and complete interpretation.

Myth 1. There's not enough time to take my time to read and comprehend the text, neither at the exam or when I am working.

False!

In the exam, you are allotted 2 minutes to read. This time is built in into your sight interpretation portion of the exam and it is for you to read the text before we start interpreting.

The first time around turn off your inner interpreter. You must concentrate on reading and understanding.

The second time around you should analyze your text and make annotations on a blank piece of paper to highlight, for example, where you might need to switch the order of the words (i.e., noun+adj constructions in Spanish) to sound natural in your target language.

KEEP CALM, THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME

This takes us to the second myth we debunked during our session today:

Myth 2. If I read the text fully, I will run out of time to render my interpretation.

False!

You are granted 4 minutes to sight interpret. You won't run out of time to sight interpret, even if you sight interpret very slow.

Step 2. Use your chunking technique to read ahead so you have time to think before you render each chunk and use the punctuation marks and natural pauses in the text to pace yourself. Remember to render at slow, even pace.

When approaching this section of the exam speed while providing your rendition is not the best tactic. Render slowly, use your chunking technique to divide the texts in the smallest chunks (units of meaning) possible. Interpreting in small units of meaning makes determining what you



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are going to say next more feasible. This will reduce the number of times you need to correct yourself, and will reduce your number of false starts and misinterpretations. If you hold a steady, slow pace, and stop at every natural stop it will sound natural.

Also, by stopping at every natural stop (and taking an inhale) you are calming yourself down and allowing your voice to feel more confident. Reading ahead is a skill that needs to be practiced though. Make sure you give yourself time to get used to the technique before taking your certification exam.

Step 3. Practice, practice, practice!!!!

Practice using these techniques and timing yourself. The best way to prepare for the certification exam is to replicate exam conditions when you are doing your interpreting practices. This means not stopping to look up terms and practicing your mode techniques, like reading ahead and pausing.

Bibliography and resources

Interpretrain Master Class for Court Interpreters. It was in this class where presenter learned the technique of stopping and breathing in those natural pauses. Thank you, trainers Virginia Valencia and Athena Matilsky!

Maharani, Sang Ayu & Maharani, Isnu. (2020). Sight Translation: Obstacles and Strategies. [\(PDF\) SIGHT TRANSLATION: OBSTACLES & STRATEGIES \(researchgate.net\)](#)

Sight Translation and Written Translation, Guidelines for Health Care Interpreters, by the National Council of Interpreting for Health Care (2009).
[Translation \(ncihc.org\)](#)

Trainers Specialized in Judicial Interpreting Training and Certification

There are many, many trainers and courses available. After being in the USA for ten years and taking a great number of courses with many different trainers these two ladies are the ones that I personally recommend.

Virginia Valencia – Interpretrain [State Court Interpreter Oral Certification Training Program \(interpretrain.com\)](#)

Athena Matilsky - [Athena Sky Interpreting – Interpreting, Translation and Interpreter Training](#)

Check out these free online resources by Interpretrain:

Glossaries for language pairs other than English-Spanish.

[Legal glossaries for language combinations other than English and Span \(interpretrain.com\)](#)



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Oral exam training exercises:

[Court Interpreter Oral Exam Training Exercises \(interpretrain.com\)](http://interpretrain.com)

Check out these free online resources by Skyinterpreting (Athena Matilsky) on how to deal with making mistakes while interpreting:

[The Fine Art of Making Interpreting Mistakes - YouTube](#)

I recommend you sign up to Interpretrain monthly's newsletter, which is free and always includes excellent resources. And 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:

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