



### Upcoming Dates:

[CLAS Online  
Calendar](#)

### Inspiration

The process toward becoming a court interpreter is difficult, and at times we all need a little inspiration to keep going:

- “Recipe for success: Study while others are sleeping; work while others are loafing; prepare while others are playing; and dream while others are wishing.” - William A. Ward
- “Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle.” - Christian D. Larson
- “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” Thomas A. Edison

## Preparing for the Oral Exam—Part I

*In this multi-part series, we are going to present study tips and tricks for the Oral Exam, compiled by CLAS staff interpreter, Chantal Portillo.*

If you are considering taking the Oral Exam in the future, now is the time to begin polishing your vocabulary. One way to do this is to read materials in both of your testing languages. You can also develop audio files in the main areas of expertise tested: traffic and automotive terms, formulaic legal terms and phrases, weaponry, forensics, medical terms, and everyday vocabulary. This, together with watching movies and listening to the radio in both of your working languages is what we could call the “fun” study phase of your exam preparation. During the “fun” phase you should be dedicating more time to the language that you are less fluent in. After the “fun” phase comes the “intense” study phase.

It is recommended that the intense study phase starts at least three months prior to the exam date. The length of this phase may be longer or shorter depending on your needs. But calculate that for studying to be effective and for your interpreting technique to improve you will need to dedicate at least two hours a day for at least four days a week to this task. Less rarely gives the desired results.

To study efficiently you need to first and foremost know your exam. Not only the structure of your exam, but the exam process as well. Luckily, the National Center for State Courts has published a [handbook](#) where you can find an explanation of each section of the exam, as well as information about the exam process.

Next, you need to organize yourself. This is, in fact, the most important step in your oral exam preparation venture. Yes, venture! Because by studying for the exam with purpose you are embarking in an adventurous journey to an exciting professional future. Take a hard look at your availability and be ready to make sacrifices. Reach out to those people who you usually find support in, for they might need to help you out so you can follow through with this intense study period. Two hours a day for four days a week (minimum) on top of your daily obligations is no easy task. We all either work full or part time or take care of family, but again, this is the minimum needed to see meaningful improvement in interpreting technique.

You have been studying your vocabulary and are now organized with an intense study plan, what is next? Practice, practice, practice!

*Subsequent parts of the series will cover different ways to practice, and study methods for each portion of the exam: sight, consecutive and simultaneous.*