



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT  
Court Language Access Services

## Introduction to Consecutive Interpretation and Notetaking Summary

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.

During the session we spoke about:

### 1. **Streamlining and verticality, and connectors**

Writing your notes diagonally and vertically will help you read them when you are going to render your interpretation. 6x9 inch steno pads are my preferred paper media.

You still have some time to experiment. I just started trying to work with a pad with no horizontal lines. We are taught since a young age to write on the line, and I found that sometimes I was following the lines, which blocks creativity in notetaking.

An essential part of your notes are connectors between ideas. Connectors guide speech flow. Many times, if we forget the connector we lose our train of thought when reading our notes. Placing connectors strategically (on the far-left edge of the page) will make your notes clearer.

### 2. **The end of thought line**

When we interpret it is best practice to interpret full thoughts. At the end of each full thought or utterance we should draw a horizontal line that facilitates the reading of our notes and clearly delimits where our last interpreted utterance ended and where our next utterance should start.

### 3. **The recall line**

The recall line is used to save time when taking notes. If you have already written something down and it is repeated while you are on the same page, you can draw a line from the previous notes to your current notes. Since this line can go in any direction it is recommended you draw an arrow to indicate where the info is going.

### 4. **Verb tenses**

Verb tenses can be indicated in different ways:

- a. Using straight arrows (preferably below the verb) to indicate past, future or gerund.  
Arrow to the left past tense, arrow to the right future tense, squiggly arrow is the gerund form.
- b. Using curved arrows
- c. Using one dot  
Dot to the left of the symbol for past, to the right for future, squiggly line for gerund.



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d. Using superscripted letters

**5. Noting negatives and opposites**

Negatives and opposites can be indicated with a transversal line over the symbol, word, or abbreviation.

**6. Noting emphasis and repetitions**

Emphasis and repetitions can be noted by underlining the idea.

**7. Abbreviations**

Remember that in notetaking for consecutive interpretation, less is always best. Don't try to write down every word, it is impossible. Only jot down words or abbreviations of the most important parts of the message, the key words that will help you recall the rest and leave out all non-essential information. Again, the less you write the more you listen, the more you listen the more you understand and remember. When you read your notes your brain will fill in some of those words you didn't write down (i.e.: of, to, the).

Unless a word is short (4 to 5 letters max.) you should use an abbreviation. By omitting the middle vowels, you can abbreviate a word while still understanding it.

Words with prefixes should also add part of the suffix to not confuse the term with other words with the same prefix.

Suffixes can be represented by just superscripting one of letters that form the suffix since most suffixes are very common.

**8. The use of symbols in notetaking**

As we spoke about at the end of the session, symbols are extremely personal and should be developed by you.

When trying to add a new symbol to your repertoire follow the rule of useful repetition. If you try to use the symbol 10 times (in 10 different occasions on 10 different days, not in the same exercise on the same day) and either the symbol doesn't come fast enough or its meaning isn't sufficiently clear when you read your notes, you should discard that symbol (for that concept) and try something new.

While doing interpreting practices with my study group we found it very useful to share the symbols we all used. It is a great way to add to your repertoire. Not all the symbols your colleagues use will make sense to you personally, but a few will surprise you!



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### **TWO ESSENTIAL THINGS TO REMEMBER**

The key to taking notes efficiently and in a way that they do not interfere with listening or interpreting is **REPETITION** of simulated interpreting practices.

Repetition of simulated interpreting practices allows us to stop concentrating on specific words and the content in general. It is only once you have all the problematic terminology looked up and memorized that you start concentrating on working your interpreting skills and your note-taking technique.

### **Finally - never stop listening**

If an unknown word or a word that you don't immediately have an equivalent for comes up, I recommend continuing listening. Do not block your ears while thinking of a possible translation. Maybe, by the time you need to interpret, you might have the term due to context or because you remembered it. If not, say the term in English or skip it all together. It is just one word; it might not even have a scoring unit attached! It is better to skip one word than to miss a whole sentence.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TRAINING RESOURCES**

Francois Rozan, Jean. *Note-Taking in Consecutive Interpreting*. Poland: Tertium, 2004.

Gillies, Andrew. *Note-Taking for Consecutive Interpreting*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2005.

Valencia, Virginia. *Note-taking Manual, A Study Guide for Interpreters and Anyone Who Takes Notes*. Interprettrain Publication, 2013 (includes free online audio exercises to practice).

March Bosch, Clara, *Técnicas de interpretación consecutiva: la toma de notas*. Editorial Comares, 2012.

### **Consecutive note taking demonstrations (hover over underlined portion to access):**

[Consecutive Demonstration: Note-Taking – YouTube](#) by prof. of conference interpreting Qjinti Oblitas, Glendon University, Canada

[A consecutive demo: Boudica – YouTube](#) by student in master of conference interpreting, La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain



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**European Union Speech Repository:**

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sr/speech/pirates-can-be-friends>

The EU speech repository is a great resource. You can choose the mode you want to practice, consecutive or simultaneous, the difficulty level of the practice and the area of knowledge that you want to work on. This speech is the one I suggested to do if you would like to see how your techniques advances when you practice regularly. Do a dry run of the interpretation practice for about 1 minute. Remember to record yourself and to save your notes. In a month's time do it again and compare both versions. If you study regularly for a month I am sure you will be happy with the result.

**Trainers Specialized in Judicial Interpreting Training and Certification**

There are many, many trainers and courses out there. 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 – Interprettrain ([www.Interpretrain.com](http://www.Interpretrain.com))

Athena Matilsky – <https://AthenaSkyInterpreting.com>

And, as a final treat, here is a video from Interprettrain! If you sign up to their free newsletter you will get free interpreter training videos like this one on a regular basis. I am signed up and recommend it!

In this video, Virginia Valencia takes notes and explains the logic behind her symbols:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBMhJDjkS2c>

This is a 1.5-hour free video in which Virginia Valencia shares how to get the most out of her Note-Taking Manual for consecutive interpretation

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ\\_6-xHaxHY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ_6-xHaxHY)

Contact Chantal for Note-Taking questions at [chantal.m.portillo@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:chantal.m.portillo@ojd.state.or.us) , or contact Certification and Training for general exam questions at:

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