

Is this a good translation?

Translation purchasers need tools to evaluate the quality of translation in a myriad of unfamiliar languages. Use this guide to evaluate your translation provider.

First: Background information.

- Have they translated similar documents? What kind, how many, how long, for whom?
- Ask for references. Call the references.

Second: Quality assurance.

At minimum, expect:

- Certified Translation
- Independent Editing
- Proofing
- Final Proofing by original translator

Third: Qualifications of the translators.

Many people are bilingual, but few are certified linguists. Certification is objective evidence that a translator is competent in a specific language combination. Use translators that have passed one or more of these exams:

ATA accreditation: The American Translators Association tests in 25 language combinations. The ATA also has an alternate mechanism awarded to proven translators of languages for which there is no test.

California Court Interpreter Certification: Using written and oral exams, California tests in 12 languages. The candidates must demonstrate a command of language in a variety of fields. The 96% failure rate is evidence of the difficulty in mastering these skills.

Federal Court Interpreter Certification is the highest ranking at the national level for court interpreters. Amongst the millions of Spanish-English bilinguals, only 558 have passed this rigorous exam.

United Nations: Candidates must possess a degree in translation and pass a test in 3 of the UN languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese. Passing candidates then take oral exams. Less than 1% of candidates pass the exam.

National Center for State Courts offers court interpreters exams in 10 languages to participating states. Currently, testing is available in Spanish, Hmong, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese, Cantonese, Haitian-Creole, Lao, Polish, and Portuguese.

Society of Translators & Interpreters of British Columbia certifies translators in 20 language combinations. Translators must pass a written national examination demonstrating proficiency.



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