

# 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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