

What skills should you have before attempting to become a certified court interpreter?*

Professional court interpreters:

- possess native-like mastery of both English and a second language,
- have wide, general knowledge that is comparable to two years of college or university education, and,
- perform the three mode of court interpreting – simultaneous, consecutive, and sight translation.

Court interpreters must be able to perform each mode of interpreting skillfully enough to:

- include everything that was said,
- preserve the tone and level of the language of the speaker, and
- neither change nor add to what is said

Native-like mastery of languages requires reading and speaking the languages regularly in a wide variety of settings, and, usually, years of formal education. Acquiring the performance skills needed requires some innate ability and **practice, practice, practice!**

Self Assessment Questions Related to Court Interpreting

1. Do you have experience interpreting simultaneously in court or conference settings?
2. Have you ever recorded yourself while simultaneously interpreting, and compared your performance to a transcript of what was said?
3. If you answer to 2 was yes, how successful were you?
 - a. I could not keep up.
 - b. I could keep up most of the time.
 - c. I omitted very little of the original information.
 - d. I rendered the complete meaning of what was said with very few exceptions.
4. When watching the nightly news, I can simultaneously render the newscaster's speech into my specialty, non-English language without falling behind.
 - a. Always
 - b. Most of the time
 - c. Often
 - d. Rarely
 - e. Never
5. If someone reads a descriptive passage (what something looks like or something that happened), I can remember and repeat back what I hear word-for-word.
 - a. I have never tried this, and have no idea
 - b. Only if the passage is less than 20 words
 - c. Usually, even if the passage is as many as 30 to 40 words long
 - d. Usually, even when the passage is more than 40 words long

KEY

Question 1: If your answer was **no**, you are probably not ready for the exam.

Question 2: If your answer was **no**, you are probably not ready for the exam.

Question 3: If your answer was **C** or **D**, you are a good candidate for the exam.

If your answer was **B**, did you accurately render as much as 80% of the source language? If yes, then you might be ready for the exam.

Question 4: If you answered **D** or **E**, you are not ready for the exam.

Question 5: If you answered **C** or **D**, you are probably ready for the exam

*As found at and borrowed from the New Mexico's Court Interpreter website at:

<http://www.nmcourts.gov/newface/court-interp/files/selfassessquestions.pdf?uid=1235330132>