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The Court Interpreter Exam

Proficiency in court interpreting skills would require a high level of mastery of two languages (one being English) plus specific performance skills in the rules and modes of interpreting. In most US states there are written and oral exams for the profession. This study notes focuses on both.

A language pair MUST include English and a target language. One is expected to possess the ability to accurately and idiomatically turn the message from the source language into the receptor language without any additions, omissions or other misleading factors that alter the intended meaning of the message from the speaker.

"Shadowing" involves repeating a narrative simultaneously in a word-for-word manner using the same language as it is heard, but without the need to transfer from one language to another. Back-translation requires that a candidate translates English into a foreign language and then later on translates her or his own language version of the passage back into English. To be able to achieve these and other requirements the

interpreter must have an excellent short-term memory and be able to speak and listen at the same time. This is the sort of oral language proficiency expected out of an interpreter.

On the other hand, the written exam procedures are often state-specific even though they share highly similar contents and knowledge domains. Basic understanding of the US court system, courtroom procedures and mastery of the English languages are all very important. **One must know the basic courtroom procedures in order to pass the exam.** In fact, correct understanding of the legal procedures can help you pick the correct translation choices (since you will be presented with distracter choices that are obviously wrong).

You are not expected to be as competent as a legal assistant in terms of legal skills. HOWEVER, you will not survive in the courtroom if you have no understanding of the very basic legal theories.

This study notes is not specific to a particular interpreter exam. In other words, you can use it to prepare for any US based interpreter exam. Use this study notes for exam prep purpose **TOGETHER WITH** other resources. Never rely on a single resource for guaranteeing exam success.

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