

# Instructions for use

## PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Thank you for choosing one of our “Weightlifting for court interpreters™” self-study tools. In this set of exercises, we have condensed years of interpreting experience and knowledge into exercises designed to help you get the best use out of your study time. First, let’s talk about what exercises are provided, and how they are laid out.

### Why “Weightlifting?”

Why do we call it weightlifting? Well, you don’t need big muscles to be an effective interpreter, so you can relax! We use the term “weightlifting” to refer to all of the different exercises interpreters can do to assess and improve their accuracy and delivery, especially the exercises that don’t directly involve interpreting. Just like professional athletes can’t get ready for the big game just by playing a lot of practice games, interpreters can’t expect their performance to improve if they only interpret. Think about it: no matter the sport, in the off season, the athletes lift weights, stretch, run laps, and do many other exercises that are different from just practicing the sport they play. And yet we understand that they need to do these exercises in order to prepare their bodies to give the best possible performance on game day. Interpreting is no different. First, however, we’ll talk about the three modes of interpretation and the exercises provided for them.

Before you begin, you should recruit someone else to help you practice. It can be a family member or a friend, and it doesn’t have to be another interpreter. You just need someone to help you manage your equipment so you get the best possible use of your study time let’s call them proctor.

To get started, you will need the following:

- ✓ A digital recorder so you can record yourself and listen to your own renditions.  
Most modern phones will have this feature.
- ✓ A stopwatch to time yourself- again, most likely you have one on your phone.
- ✓ A notepad and pen
- ✓ Your “proctor”
- ✓ A positive attitude

Ready to get started? Let's jump in!

## Sight Translation

In this set of exercises, you will find two sight translation texts, one for each language. To get the best use out of them, follow these steps:

- Record yourself interpreting the first document (English to Foreign Language). Make sure to use the UNMARKED script (no scoring units)
- Have your proctor time you during this exercise. You will have a total of 6 minutes to complete each document. You can spend up to 2 minutes reading the document for comprehension before you begin interpreting (your proctor should remind you to start if you haven't started at the 2 minute mark) and no more than 4 minutes interpreting the document out loud.
- Once you have finished, listen to your recording and check it against the script. Did you leave anything out? Did you embellish anything?
- When you are going over your recording, use the MARKED script (with scoring units). Listen carefully to each time you interpreted something marked by a scoring unit. As you're listening to your recording, write down what you hear yourself say for each scoring unit. Put parentheses around anything you omitted for any reason. If you skipped something, ask yourself: did you forget to interpret it, or did you leave it out because you didn't know what to say?
- Once you've finished, it's time to assess your accuracy. Look at your script, going carefully over each scoring unit. For every scoring unit you omitted (in parentheses) you must mark that scoring unit as "incorrect"- put a big X over it. Try to remember: did you just forget to say something, or did you skip a word or phrase because you weren't sure how to interpret it? Don't worry! This is why you're practicing- to address and identify weak points, even ones you may not have known about. If you did say something, read what you wrote down and, ***even if you are sure it is correct***, take a moment to look it up in a reputable bilingual dictionary or other reference material. It's important to do this so that you are sure you are not practicing a mistake! If you've been using the wrong word for "defendant", and you don't check your own work by researching it, you could

continue to use the wrong word and set yourself up for problems down the road.  
As Agustín says: “trust, but verify”

## Consecutive Interpretation

As you may know, Consecutive Interpretation is the mode favored for many interactions, and mandatory at the witness stand, because it is considered the most accurate. Follow these instructions to get the most out of this exercise.

- Have your proctor time you and record you. You have a total of 21 minutes to complete this exercise. After each utterance, you will hear a reasonable pause that should be long enough for you to interpret it completely. If you find yourself out of time, try to keep pace- your time is always going to be limited when you're actually in the courtroom.
- As before, you need to listen to the recording while reviewing the script (with scoring units). Listen carefully to each time you interpreted something marked by a scoring unit. Remember to put parentheses around anything you omitted for any reason. As you're listening to your recording, write down what you hear yourself say for each scoring unit.
- Once you've finished, it's time to assess your accuracy. Look at your script, going carefully over each scoring unit. For every scoring unit you omitted (in parentheses) you must mark that scoring unit as “incorrect”- put a big X over it. Try to remember: did you just forget to say something, or did you skip a word or phrase because you weren't sure how to interpret it? Don't worry! This is why you're practicing- to address and identify weak points, even ones you may not have known about. If you did say something, read what you wrote down and, ***even if you are sure it is correct***, take a moment to look it up in a reputable bilingual dictionary or other reference material. It's important to do this so that you are sure you are not practicing a mistake! If you've been using the wrong word for “defendant”, and you don't check your own work by researching it, you could continue to use the wrong word and set yourself up for problems down the road. As Agustín says: “trust, but verify”

## Simultaneous Interpretation

Simultaneous Interpretation is considered the most challenging and tiring form of interpreting because of the mental effort required. Follow these instructions to get started on improving your confidence in this mode.

- Have your proctor time you. You have a total of 8 minutes to complete this exercise. Try to maintain a consistent amount of “décalage” or Ear-voice span (EVS) so that you keep pace with the speaker without falling too far behind or “racing” to catch up with them. Even if you stumble, lose your place, or feel like you’re missing too many words, continue interpreting- this is your chance to improve your accuracy in a safe, controlled environment!
- Once you have finished, listen to your recording and check it against the script. Did you leave anything out? Did you embellish anything?
- When you are going over your recording, use the MARKED script (with scoring units). Listen carefully to each time you interpreted something marked by a scoring unit. Did you forget to interpret it, or did you leave it out because you didn’t know what to say? You must put it in parentheses. Put parentheses around anything you omitted for any reason. As you’re listening to your recording, write down what you hear yourself say for each scoring unit.
- Once you’ve finished, it’s time to assess your accuracy. Look at your script, going carefully over each scoring unit. For every scoring unit you omitted (in parentheses) you must mark that scoring unit as “incorrect”- put a big X over it. Try to remember: did you just forget to say something, or did you skip a word or phrase because you weren’t sure how to interpret it? Don’t worry! This is why you’re practicing- to address and identify weak points, even ones you may not have known about. If you did say something, read what you wrote down and, *even if you are sure it is correct*, take a moment to look it up in a reputable bilingual dictionary or other reference material. It’s important to do this so that you are sure you are not practicing a mistake! If you’ve been using the wrong word for “defendant”, and you don’t check your own work by researching it, you could continue to use the wrong word and set yourself up for problems down the road. As Agustín says: “trust, but verify”

## Shadowing

Do you remember reading about “weightlifting” at the beginning of this manual? Now we’re there! Shadowing is an important exercise that can help with confidence,

smoothness of delivery, and other aspects of Simultaneous interpretation. Since simultaneous in court is always done from English into Spanish, we strongly recommend to shadow Spanish. To get you started we have provided you with one exercise with this kit, but you should continue looking for more material to shadow. The best way to shadow is to follow along while recording yourself. As before, you should listen to your recording after the fact to make sure you're repeating everything faithfully. As you become more comfortable, start practicing dual-tasking. As you progress, you will find that even challenging "background" tasks become easier and more fluid. Try these:

While shadowing with decalage

- Write down the numbers 1-100
- Write down even numbers 1-100
- Write down odd numbers 1-100
- Write down the letters of the alphabet, any alphabet you wish
- Write down the letters of the alphabet but skip the vowels
- Attempt to change 1 word per minute for a synonym
- Attempt to change 3 words per minute for a synonym
- Paraphrase the speaker while retaining as much meaning as possible