



COURT INTERPRETER SELF-ASSESSMENT

ARE YOU A GOOD CANDIDATE?

- Do you possess educated, native-like mastery of both English and a second language?
- Do you display wide general knowledge characteristic of what a minimum of two years of general education at a college or university would provide?
- Can you perform the three major types of court interpreting:
 - **Sight Interpretation:** Practice of quickly and accurately translating written in text from one language into another orally. Often conducted at the moment.
 - **Consecutive Interpretation:** A method where an interpreter listens to a speaker, takes notes, and then relays the message into the target language after the speaker has paused. This requires alternating between the target language.
 - **Simultaneous Interpretation:** Is the process where the interpreter translates a speakers message into another language and the same time the speaker is speaking.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Rank how knowledgeable or skilled you believe you are in each area

I am able to speak my non-English language fluently and can incorporate specialized terminology, regional colloquialisms, and slang terms with ease. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

I can adjust the volume of my speech so that I am clearly audible to the intended audience in small settings as well as those that require that I project my voice. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

I am able to read and understand technical material written in English and my non-English language, such as legal documents, police reports, medical reports, etc. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

I am able to interpret what a speaker is saying consecutively in both directions. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

I can read any English document out loud in my non-English language promptly and accurately without hesitation, omissions, or additions. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

When interpreting consecutively or simultaneously and when going in either direction, I am able to interpret effectively under pressure of time constraints, adversarial settings, and in emotionally charged circumstances. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

I am able to set and honor boundaries while interpreting, explaining to all participants that I cannot add my own opinions, recommendations, or feelings into the process. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4



Rating	Description of Scale
4	I am very knowledgeable or skilled in this
3	I know a good amount about this
2	I have some knowledge or skill in this
1	I currently know little to nothing about this

Key:

22–28: You are likely ready to start the exams

15–21: You are on the right path, but may benefit with further study

8–14: You should consider more professional development

7: More study is needed to meet professional requirements

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

The following questions will not be found on the actual exam.

Answering most of the questions on the exam sample correctly will not guarantee that you will succeed on the actual exam. This exam sample has 45 questions while the actual exam has 135. The written exam will consist of two parts that will test candidates' knowledge of three areas imperative to the work of a court interpreter.

Part 1: General Language Proficiency

Part 2: Court-Related Terms & Usage, and Ethics & Professional Conduct

As candidates work their way through the test, they should carefully read the instructions for each section to be sure they understand how to answer and select the **best** choice.



Part I: General Language Proficiency

SENTENCE COMPLETION:

In each of the following items you are given an unfinished sentence. From the list of four words or phrases select the one that best completes the sentence.

- Both spouses were _____ about the division of their assets, as each felt they, more so than their partner, had contributed to the accumulation of their wealth.
 - unwavering
 - compliant
 - contrite
 - affable
- A person is found exonerated then the person is
 - admonished
 - exculpated
 - mentally unstable
 - released on probation
- The judge gave the jury instructions in a _____ manner because their comprehension was critical to the case.
 - deliberate
 - feeble
 - callous
 - monotonous
- A 'not guilty' verdict was almost _____ given the conflicting testimony of the undercover police officers.
 - improbable
 - indefinite
 - inevitable
 - far-fetched
- Although charged with grand larceny, the bank teller was careful not to _____ others who were involved in the crime for fear of retribution.
 - oscillate
 - intonate
 - inundate
 - implicate

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Part I: General Language Proficiency

SYNONYMS:

In each of the following questions choose from the list of four words the one that has the same meaning or closest to the same meaning as the word provided.

1. Labyrinth
 - a. flower
 - b. building
 - c. maze
 - d. overwhelming
2. Veracity
 - a. aggressiveness
 - b. truthfulness
 - c. full of life
 - d. provability
3. Onus
 - a. burden
 - b. grace
 - c. dignity
 - d. bias
4. Appease
 - a. excite
 - b. agitate
 - c. placate
 - d. curtail
5. Plunder
 - a. loot
 - b. replace
 - c. confiscate
 - d. succeed

ANTONYMS:

In each of the following questions select from the list of four words the one that is opposite in meaning to the word provided.

1. Stoic
 - a. cool
 - b. detached
 - c. unconcerned
 - d. emotional
2. Perfunctory
 - a. careful
 - b. superficial
 - c. cursory
 - d. problematic
3. Belligerent
 - a. acerbic
 - b. aggressive
 - c. flippant
 - d. peaceful
4. Affirm
 - a. declare
 - b. witness
 - c. support
 - d. negate
5. Deliberate
 - a. motivational
 - b. hurried
 - c. accidental
 - d. intentional

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Part I: General Language Proficiency

IDIOMS:

Each of the following questions is an idiomatic expression. From the list of four words or phrases that follows each expression, select the one that is closest in meaning.

1. To face the music
 - a. cheer up
 - b. accept punishment
 - c. enjoy time off
 - d. make a decision
2. Sharp as a tack
 - a. difficult to get along with
 - b. pointy
 - c. dangerous
 - d. very bright
3. Bought off
 - a. charitable
 - b. bribed
 - c. impressed
 - d. killed
4. Playing the devil's advocate
 - a. consorting with the enemy
 - b. twisting the truth
 - c. putting forth counter-arguments
 - d. enacting satanic rituals
5. In a nutshell
 - a. in a confined space
 - b. in summary
 - c. in lieu of
 - d. in quotations

SYNONYMS IN CONTEXT:

In each of the following sentences there is an underlined word. From the list of four words following each sentence, select the one that is closest in meaning to the underlined word in the sentence.

1. The doctor had never heard such a unique explanation.
 - a. uniform
 - b. auspicious
 - c. numerous
 - d. singular
2. Only after having time to think about it did he realize how grievous the mistake was.
 - a. serious
 - b. superfluous
 - c. shameful
 - d. regretful
3. After being stuck in a hospital bed for three months, it felt wonderful to be ambulatory again.
 - a. sedentary
 - b. quiescent
 - c. stationary
 - d. mobile
4. She was too afraid to utter any kind of dissent.
 - a. consider
 - b. connote
 - c. express
 - d. accept
5. The meeting so excruciating that the chairperson avoided saying anything unnecessary to prolong it.
 - a. halt
 - b. inquire
 - c. decrease
 - d. extend

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Part II: Court-Related Terms & Usage Ethics & Professional Conduct

LEGAL TERMINOLOGY:

In each of the following questions, select the legal phrase or definition that is closest in meaning.

1. A monetary amount for conditional pretrial release from custody is known as:
 - a. lien
 - b. bail
 - c. fine
 - d. surcharge
2. To waive means
 - a. to prove
 - b. to relinquish
 - c. to justify
 - d. to use
3. A defendant who represents himself/herself is designated
 - a. improper
 - b. in camera
 - c. in loco parentis
 - d. pro se
4. An admission of guilt in exchange for a specific sentence is
 - a. a plea bargain
 - b. a hung jury
 - c. a no lo contendere
 - d. ipso facto
5. A peremptory challenge allows an attorney to dismiss a potential juror
 - a. without cause or giving reason
 - b. with cause and giving reason
 - c. after a hearing is held
 - d. when everyone agrees in chambers

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Part II: Court-Related Terms & Usage Ethics & Professional Conduct

SENTENCE COMPLETION:

In each of the following questions you are given an unfinished sentence that is likely to be heard in the court environment. From the list of four words or phrases following each unfinished sentence, select the one that most appropriately completes the sentence.

1. At a preliminary hearing the judge may not
 - a. dismiss the case
 - b. release the defendant if the evidence is insufficient
 - c. release the defendant if the evidence was illegally obtained
 - d. determine the guilt or innocence of the defendant
2. If a person is convicted of larceny, the court found that the defendant
 - a. sexually assaulted someone
 - b. stole something
 - c. trespassed on someone's property
 - d. burned down someone's property
3. If the defendant is acquitted it probably means
 - a. the defense attorney didn't do a very good job
 - b. the prosecution convinced the jury of their story
 - c. the defense made a good argument for their client
 - d. the defendant is getting the minimum sentence
4. If the judge adjourns the case, the judge is
 - a. dismissing the charges
 - b. postponing the case until a later date
 - c. agrees that the objection is reasonable
 - d. leaving the case due to a conflict of interest
5. If the defendant has an alibi, it means the defendant
 - a. has a good reason to commit the crime
 - b. has evidence that he was doing something else when the crime was committed
 - c. is remorseful for having committed the crime
 - d. isn't sorry for what he has done

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Part II: Court-Related Terms & Usage Ethics & Professional Conduct

COURT-RELATED QUESTIONS:

In each of the following questions, select from the list of four possible answers the one that is the best answer.

1. To sustain an objection means
 - a. to uphold an objection
 - b. to make an objection
 - c. to suffer an objection
 - d. to withdraw an objection
2. A hung jury is one that
 - a. has no alternate jurors
 - b. cannot reach a verdict
 - c. is missing a juror during deliberations
 - d. is dismissed for unethical behavior
3. In a criminal proceeding, which party has the burden of proof?
 - a. jury
 - b. judge
 - c. prosecution
 - d. defendant
4. Comments made at the beginning of a trial by the attorneys to the jury summarizing the factual and legal issues of the case
 - a. closing arguments
 - b. opening statements
 - c. Miranda rights
 - d. briefs
5. Who should not be involved in a pre-trial conference?
 - a. judge
 - b. defense attorney
 - c. jury member
 - d. prosecuting attorney

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Part II: Court-Related Terms & Usage Ethics & Professional Conduct

ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

In each of the following questions, select from the list of four possible answers the one that is the best answer.

1. When interpreting consecutively and the interpreter does not hear or understand a word, he or she should
 - a. wait for the speaker to finish and then ask the judge for repetition
 - b. invent a translation in order to retain the flow of the language
 - c. immediately interrupt the speaker to avoid missing a detail
 - d. skip over the word completely
2. If you are sure that the person for whom you are interpreting is lying, you should
 - a. inform the attorney
 - b. interpret what is said
 - c. let the judge know
 - d. tell the person not to lie
3. The interpreter may give legal advice
 - a. in a limited way, under certain circumstances
 - b. when the defendant is indigent
 - c. when the defendant explicitly asks for help
 - d. never under any circumstances
4. If a witness uses a term an interpreter is unfamiliar with, the interpreter should
 - a. make an educated guess based on the context
 - b. ask the witness what he/she meant and inform the court
 - c. skip the unknown term and continue interpreting
 - d. inform the court of the problem and ask permission to consult a dictionary or inquire with the witness
5. During a jury trial, the court interpreter is approached by a newspaper reporter who wishes to discuss the case. The interpreter should
 - a. answer any questions the reporter has
 - b. refuse to talk to the reporter under any circumstances
 - c. explain to the reporter that he/she is not allowed to discuss a pending case
 - d. inform the reporter that there will be a fee for interview regarding this case because such work goes beyond that which the interpreter is normally required to do

COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Answer Key to Sample Questions

PART I - GENERAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

Sentence Completion

1.	A	2.	B	3.	A	4.	C	5.	D
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Synonyms

1.	C	2.	B	3.	A	4.	C	5.	A
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Antonyms

1.	D	2.	A	3.	D	4.	D	5.	B
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Idioms

1.	B	2.	D	3.	B	4.	C	5.	B
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Synonyms in Context

1.	D	2.	A	3.	D	4.	C	5.	D
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COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM SAMPLE

Answer Key to Sample Questions

PART II - COURT-RELATED TERMS & USAGE ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

Legal Terminology									
1.	B	2.	B	3.	D	4.	A	5.	A

Sentence Completion									
1.	D	2.	B	3.	C	4.	B	5.	B

Court-related Questions									
1.	A	2.	B	3.	C	4.	B	5.	C

Ethics & Professional Conduct									
1.	A	2.	B	3.	D	4.	D	5.	C

9-13 = 20%-29%
14-17 = 31%-38%
18-22 = 40%-49%

23-26 = 51%-58%
27-31 = 60%-69%
32-35 = 71%-78%

Passing:
36-40 = 80%-89%
41-45 = 91%-100%