



Writing a document to be translated

Writing a document which you intend to have translated is not as simple as you might think. For ease of translation, there are several things that need to be taken into consideration, which you may not usually think about when writing in English.

Things to consider:

- Where it is possible, use a picture in place of text. If it can express the same meaning, it will save a lot of time and money.
- Try to avoid jokes. Things that are funny in English usually do not mean the same in other languages, and may even be impolite. Even visual jokes can have a different meaning in other countries.
- Avoid the use of similes, metaphors, cultural clichés, etc. These are very difficult to translate, because often there is no equivalent phrase in other languages, and will mean that the translator will have to use complicated and often long-winded wordplay to convey the meaning.
- Make sure that the text includes any information that is necessary abroad but not needed in England. This can include international dialling codes, full addresses etc. Also ensure that the text does not include information that is unnecessary abroad.
- Make sure the translator has as much information as possible. To ensure the original style of the text is followed in the translation, they need to know what the text is for (a brochure, an instruction leaflet etc) and the intended audience of the text (children, housewives, marketing specialist etc).

- ☑ Know who your target is. For example, if you are having your text translated into Spanish, is it for clients in Spain or in Mexico? Both speak Spanish, but very differently!
- ☑ If your company has any preferred terms in the target language(s), such as technical vocabulary specific to the company, it can be useful to make a glossary for the translator BEFORE sending them the text. This will avoid complications later in the process.
- ☑ Do not send an unfinished piece of text to be translated. If it is edited or changed later in the process, it will increase the cost of the translation, as well as delaying it.
- ☑ Provide the translator with a contact number or e-mail address, preferably for a specialist within your company. If the translator has any problems or queries, it is easier and faster for them to contact the company directly.
- ☑ Have the text checked by your localization specialist before it is translated. This will ensure that there is nothing in the text which will be impossible to translate into the target language(s), and that you have included all the necessary information.

