

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CONTENT FOR TRANSLATION?

We want our translations to give the target audience the same **meaning and feeling** that the source gives its audience.

But **the quality of the translation often depends on the source** content. Here you will find some tips on how to prepare your content for a smoother and more consistent translation process.

Polish your writing skills

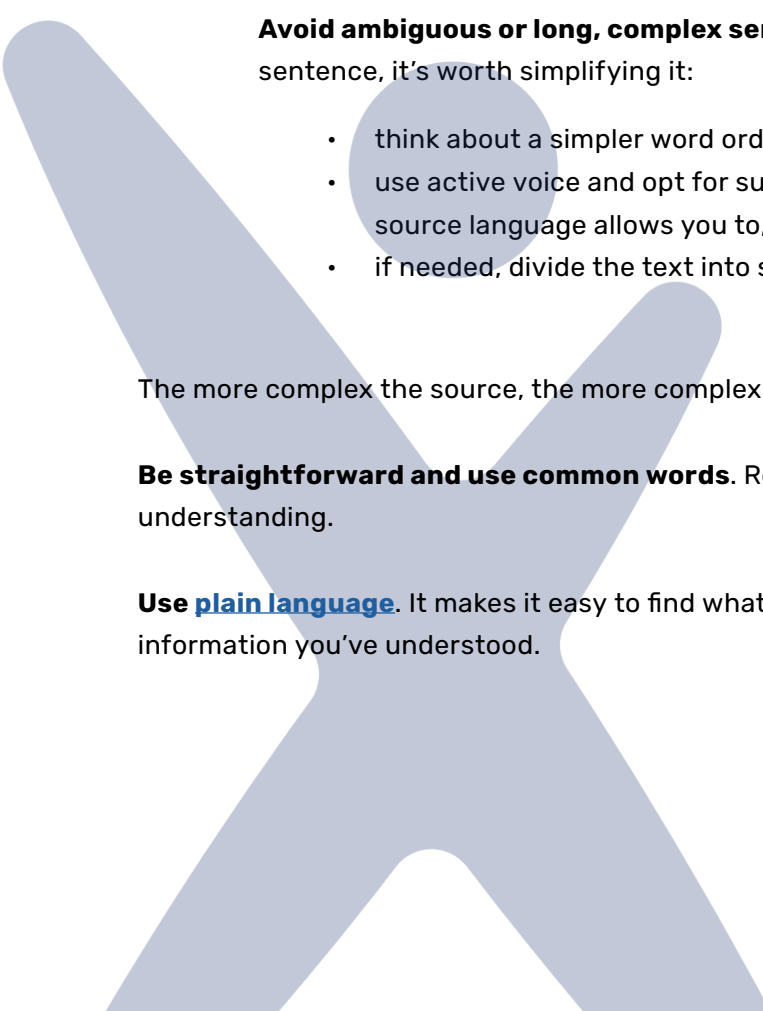
Avoid ambiguous or long, complex sentences. As a rule of thumb, if you need to reread a sentence, it's worth simplifying it:

- think about a simpler word order or grammar,
- use active voice and opt for subject-verb-object (SVO) sentence structure, if your source language allows you to,
- if needed, divide the text into smaller sentences

The more complex the source, the more complex the translation process is.

Be straightforward and use common words. Repeat verbs, nouns, or even full phrases if they help with understanding.

Use plain language. It makes it easy to find what you're looking for, understand what you find, and use the information you've understood.



Be consistent and coherent. This will help with quality and turnaround:

- we use Term Bases (TBs) to capture terms in their source and apply in our translations
- we reuse similar parts of text in a controlled way through Translation Memories (TMs)

What else to avoid?

- We often forget that not everything is universally understood. You want to reduce cultural or local references. Opt for them only when they are very relevant for the message you want to transmit. Similarly, you should avoid humor, jargon, colloquial phrases, phrasal verbs, or metaphors.
- In general, more creative content requires more effort from the translators, which impacts the turnaround.

For special cases you might want to transcreate the content instead. It's a method where 'creative translating' meets copywriting.

- Are you using **abbreviations or acronyms**? Make sure they are always explained when you introduce them.

Do you need to translate only one sentence or a list of separate sentences, that do not follow any particular order? Remember that context is key for linguists. Also, be mindful how you want to use such sentences in your final text. It's best not to incorporate new content into existing translation, if you do not speak the language.

Review is key

Check for understanding. It's worth checking your content with a person with no subject matter expertise. Do so especially if you are writing for the general public:

Will you also use your text to communicate in the source language? If so, remember that some people in your audiences do not speak the language as their native or first language. Some native speakers may have a lower level of reading and understanding.

Do a final read. If the deadline allows, take a break. It's best to plan the review for later in the day. This will give you a 'fresh' perspective and help to distance yourself from the text.

Keep an extra eye on the style, tone, and terminology consistency. This is especially important if you have more than one author. For a bigger group of authors, consider having one person responsible for the final adjustments.



Know your terminology

You should be mindful of how you want to use it. Remember that words with multiple meanings can create problems for translators, resulting in a flawed target. Same issues happen when you are interchangeably using terms with similar meanings.

*A **term** is a word or expression that has a precise meaning or is peculiar to a science, art, profession, or subject. Terms need to appear consistently in any language, including in the source content.*

You can have terms that are specific to your organization. There are also terms that are specific to your subject field or domain, as used by professionals in the field.

*Read more about our [**Terminology Management**](#).*

Get your design and formatting right

We work with publishable contents. And we have prepared a separate document with [guidance for designers](#). We also offer [Desktop publishing \(DTP\) services](#). This way we ensure the content is ready for translation and further publishing.

Formatting. Keep in mind that we use specialized translation software to process the text. Your **files should be fully editable**, otherwise the content will not be captured and, in result, translated.

Files conversion. Sometimes files are converted from one format to another. While they may look fine, they are problematic. Their **'hidden' formatting issues** are visible in the translation software. Those slow down the translation and prevent us from accessing all of the benefits of the software (such as TMs). They might even cause mistranslations or formatting issues in the final translation. Refrain from file conversion outside of the DTP process.

Extra tips for audiovisual services

Languages vary in word length, punctuation rules, or sentence structure. There are different alphabets and scripts too. The voice-over or subtitles will need to catch up with the video. At the same time, they will need to keep the correct meaning. And sometimes one word in the source language needs more explanations to get it just right. Without sounding unnatural, **consider slowing down the pace** in the original language and **adding more breaks** between the text.

Some videos have **on-screen text**: it needs to be translated too, on top of the audio content. It's best to avoid any overlap of on-screen text and audio, to facilitate their translation.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your Project Officer or CLEAR Global representative
