

In the simultaneous mode, the interpreter lags behind the speaker's statements by at least one or more units of thought. The interpreter is thus able to "see" where the speaker is heading and to solve language problems prior to interpretation. The concentration required places a great deal of pressure on interpreters. The interpreter must keep pace with the speaker while maintaining accuracy at all times. Simultaneous interpreting as practiced by conference interpreters differs from that required in court. Whereas the conference interpreter has traditionally had license to improve the message stylistically, the court interpreter never has and must render an exact equivalent regardless of errors in content, grammar, logic, tone, or style. The examination panel checks for conservation of these elements during the simultaneous portion of the oral exam.

In the oral examination, the candidate is asked to demonstrate proficiency in the simultaneous mode during a seven-minute opening or closing statement by an attorney and again during a four-minute cross-examination of two witnesses. The attorney's statement is recorded at 120 words per minute, and the cross-examination of the witnesses is recorded at 160 words per minute. Although these speeds may sound relatively fast, they represent only the minimum range for rates of speed in an actual courtroom. There is a total of 11 minutes of simultaneous interpretation on the oral examination.

The following are some of the specific skills required to perform simultaneous interpreting effectively: 1) excellent analytical skills in organizing and comprehending messages simultaneously; 2) superior prediction skills (also called **syntactic anticipation**, or grasping the intent of a message before all the words have been spoken); 3) broad-based knowledge of the world, two languages, two cultures, and a variety of topics; 4) excellent facility in the cognitive processes of concentration, retention, re-organization of information, and **decalage**, i.e., listening ahead while speaking; 5) exceptional ability to monitor and correct spoken output to produce a fluent and smooth final rendition in a strong, steady voice; and 6) immense stamina to render a prolonged and sometimes exhausting simultaneous interpretation. Obviously, a superior knowledge of Spanish and English is fundamental.

In very practical terms, the success or failure of an interpreter to perform in the simultaneous mode will depend in part on the ability to avoid being distracted by the sound of his or her own voice. The interpreter will always **hear** the sound of his or her own voice, but must only **listen** to the voice of the speaker. The use of headphones in this portion of the exam exacerbates this phenomenon. Practice with headphones prior to taking this exam is strongly suggested.