



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Court Language Access Services

How to Study for the Oral Exam Summary

This video outlines the six-steps for success to study for the Court Interpreting Oral Examination. Note, all resources listed in this document will also be provided in a separate document on our website.

Step 1: Know your test. The best way to prepare for an exam is to know how it is organized and structured. There are several unknowns when it comes to the Oral Exam, what is known however is how the exam will be administered and how the exam is structured. CLAS has created an “Overview of the Oral Exam” video that you may be interested in watching. Additionally, the National Center for State Courts has published a comprehensive overview of the exam that you can find on our website.

Step 2: Make time to study. Preparing for the Oral Exam takes time, effort and dedication. While you are studying be ready to make some sacrifices and have a system in place to support you. For the Oral Exam, you should be prepared to study two-hours a day, four days a week, for the six to 12 months before the exam. You should plan to spend two hours on consecutive exercises, one hour on sight interpreting exercises and one hour on simultaneous exercises. One way to make time is to make a calendar for yourself and write it down, this will help you stick to your plan.

Step 3: Gather and organize your materials. Set up a place in your home or office that is designated for study only. Make it an inviting place, and be sure to have everything you need available to you in that area, so when you sit down to study you don't need to get up for anything.

Step 4: Vocabulary. The Oral Exam is not a vocabulary test, but there is so much vocabulary for court interpreting that it is worth its own step in the process. We have a great guide on “How to Study Vocabulary” on our resources page, so we highly recommend you check that out. Another great way to study vocabulary is to interact with it. Rather than doing static flashcards, create vocabulary audio files on your phone. You should also create your own working glossaries. As a court interpreter you hear new vocabulary every day, and having a working glossary is one way to continue to act with new words or phrases you hear in court.

Step 5: Break the skills down. CLAS has created a whole series of Oral Exam Prep Essentials videos that give skill building tips for each mode of interpreting. We suggest that you start with the “How to Warm Up to Your Study Session” video. Here are some quick tips for each of the modes:

- **Sight Interpretation:** read as much as you can and make sure you are focused on comprehension, work on your public speaking skills, learn how to read ahead and familiarize yourself with archaic legal terminology.



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- Consecutive: active and acute listening skills are essential, develop a notetaking system that works for you, work on your short term memory.
- Simultaneous: learn how to multitask, practice overcoming noise interference from your own voice. You should practice simultaneous interpreting with headphones, leave one ear out of your headphone so that you can hear yourself and the audio equally.

Step 6: Create an Assessment Log. You should use your assessment log every time you do an exercise. This will help you to use your study time more efficiently. Here is a breakdown of the columns on the assessment log:

- Date – the date you completed the exercise
- Exercise – Name of the exercise you completed
- Modality – The mode of interpreting you were focused on
- Objective – Your objective for this exercise - smooth delivery, reduce number of hesitations, etc.
- Omissions – Words that you omitted
- Additions – Words that you added
- Misinterpretations – Words that you interpreted improperly
- Vocabulary – New vocabulary words you encountered
- Delivery – Comment on your delivery – smooth, choppy, quiet, etc.
- Cognates – words that sounded familiar to the word you intended to use, but had the wrong meaning
- Biggest Challenge – Biggest challenge you faced when completing the exercise
- What did I learn? – Comment on something you learned while completing the exercise – could be positive or negative

We have other oral exam study resources on our website.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact our office:

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