
General Strategies for Taking the Court Interpreter Written Exam Judicial Council of California Administrative Office of the Courts

Long-term test preparation

Preparing can help you pass your exam and possibly save time and money needed to take it again.

- Plan to study every day in preparation for the examination. Budget your time; set aside a definite study period for each day. Begin concentrating as soon as you sit down to study. Shorter periods of daily study are often more effective than occasional periods of longer study.
- Study both by yourself and with others to encourage an exchange of ideas. Your study should focus on learning the principles and practices of a language interpreter as well as gaining a broad understanding of the exam content areas.
- Take coursework in language and interpreting whenever possible or seek out study materials in your language to gain the breadth and depth of language skills necessary to perform the varied duties of a professional interpreter.
- Make sure you fully understand the basic terms for each content area. Create your own glossary of terms and look up any new words in a reference book.
- Build a personal library of your language and English dictionaries (general and legal), textbooks on language usage and expanding vocabulary, and textbooks on the theories and practices of court interpreting.
- Review material at law libraries to strengthen your knowledge of legal terms and the California legal system.
- Read a wide variety of magazines; legal, ethnic, and general circulation newspapers; and literature in English and your language. Research the definitions and correct usage of unfamiliar words.
- The test will contain items at various levels of ability. Consequently, it is important to be able to understand, apply and analyze the material as you would on the job. Although all questions will be in a multiple-choice format, the items will be presented in a number of forms; for example, a written scenario may be followed by a series of three or four questions.
- Some test takers are anxious about taking tests and need to simulate the test-taking situation. If this is true for you, try practicing in a quiet, distraction-free environment.

Exam day preparation

Please arrive at the test site early to allow for parking, walking to the room and signing in.

- Be sure to get plenty of rest the night before the exam.
- Your attitude about the test process can make a difference. Approach the test confidently.
- Remember to bring a valid, government-issued photo identification card, such as a driver's license, state issued identification card, passport, or military identification card with you to the testing center.
- You should plan to be at the test site for approximately five hours to allow time for signing in, presentation of instructions and taking the 155-question multiple-choice written test (4 hours and 15 minutes allowed).
- Under no circumstances will you be permitted to bring items with you into the test room. This includes cell phones, briefcases, backpacks, etc. Pocket items (keys and wallet) must remain in your pocket during testing. Do not bring dictionaries, books, notes, reference materials or any other aids to the exam site, as you will not be allowed to use them.



Important Failure to provide appropriate photo identification is considered a missed appointment. If you miss an appointment, you forfeit your fees.

Taking the exam

Be sure to listen very carefully to all instructions that are read to you by the proctor. There may be helpful clues given during the proctor's instructions. Ask questions if you do not understand the instructions.

Hints to use while taking the exam:

- Read all directions carefully, twice if necessary. Be mindful that each section of the written test has its own specific directions. In many cases, test takers lose credits because they misread an important point in the directions. For example, if the directions indicate you are to select the sentence that is grammatically incorrect, be sure you select the sentence with an error instead of selecting the grammatically correct choice.
- Read each question carefully so you know what is being asked. Reread it if needed, but do not waste time on questions that seem too unfamiliar or too difficult. Words should be read for their generally accepted meanings. Rephrase or underline key words in difficult questions. The authors of the exams have tried to make the questions clear. No question is intended to be a "trick" or "catch" question.
- The test is designed to have only one answer that is the best from among the four choices given.
- Mark the answer sheet clearly. Remember, knowing the correct answer is not enough. If you do not mark the answer sheet correctly so that it can be machine-scored, you will not get credit for your answers. Answers marked only in your test book and not on your answer sheet will **not** be scored.
- Make sure the number of the question in the test book matches the number of the question you are answering on the answer sheet. It is a good idea to check the numbers of the questions and answers frequently. If you decide to skip a question, but fail to skip the matching answer blank for that question, all your answers thereafter could be wrong.

- Do not read through or answer a question too quickly. Do not place too much emphasis on speed. The time element is a factor, but it is not all-important. Accuracy should not be sacrificed for speed.
- Watch your time carefully during the test. First, answer the questions that seem easy to you; postpone more difficult questions until later, make an initial guess in case you do not have enough time to go back to them. Check your answers if you have time, but remember that your first response is often correct.
- Test center administrators are not allowed to answer any questions pertaining to the exam content. If you do not understand a question on the examination, you should answer the question to the best of your ability. There is no penalty for guessing.



Note If you feel an item is a problem, you may call it to your proctor's attention **after the test is over**. Subject matter experts and testing specialists will carefully review any questioned items. Often they find that the candidate has missed the point of the item. Try to focus on doing well on many items in the test rather than getting "bogged down" on just one item that counts as one point.

Scoring

Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. You will not be given credit for any question answered incorrectly, marked with more than one answer or left blank. There is no penalty for guessing, so be sure to mark an answer for each question.

Your score report will be mailed to your address on record within 45 days after the exam date to. Candidates who achieve a passing score in both the English and test examination language sections of the test will be permitted to schedule for the oral performance exam.