



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

## **DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE**

# **Rating Translation Exams According to the ILR SLDs for Translation Performance**

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# Objectives



- Present how translation skills can be rated on the basis of the *ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Translation Performance* with the emphasis on holistic rating, not the number of errors.
- Explain about FBI's Translation Exam rating methodology based on this holistic approach.

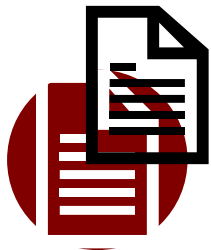


# Rating Criterion

## ***The ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Translation Performance***



# Translation Exam Construction



TWO PARALLEL  
FORMS FOR EACH  
LANGUAGE



FOUR PASSAGES  
OF INCREASING  
DIFFICULTY



90-115 WORDS  
PER PASSAGE



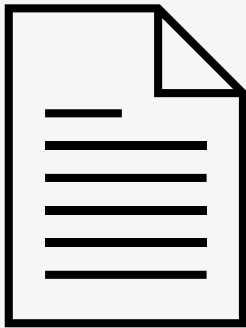
90 MINUTES



PEN AND PAPER  
ASSESSMENT  
(EXCEPT  
SPANISH)

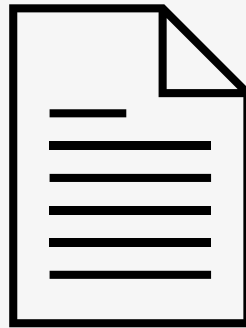


# Test Passages at 4 Levels



**Passage 1**

***Level 2***



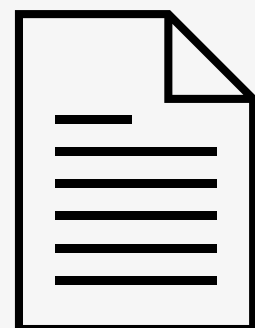
**Passage 2**

***Level 2+***



**Passage 3**

***Level 3***



**Passage 4**

***Level 4***



# Level 2 Passage

## Characteristics

- **Content**: straight-forward narration, description, instructions, and explanations
- **Purpose**: to convey concrete information
- **Lexicon**: everyday usage, some technical terms, if any, that don't demand expertise
- **Structure**: basic, high-frequency syntax

## ILR SLD Level 2

Able to render into the target language some straightforward, factual texts in the standard variety of the source language. Can typically render accurately uncomplicated prose that does not contain figurative language, complex syntax...





# Level 2 Example Passage

**At about 5 PM, an explosion occurred in a warehouse near the city center. The explosion injured more than 100 people. Eighty six people were taken to nearby hospitals by ambulances. Most were treated and released.**



# Level 2+ Passage

## Characteristics

- **Content**: straightforward narration, but may contain some opinion and judgment
- **Purpose**: to convey concrete information or may convey some opinion or judgment
- **Lexicon**: everyday usage, some technical terms, if any, that don't demand expertise
- **Structure**: basic, high-frequency or more complex syntax

## ILR SLD Level 2+

Can render straightforward texts dealing with everyday matters that include statements of fact as well as some judgments, opinion... which entail more than direct exposition, but do not contain figurative language, complex syntax...





# Level 2+ Example Passage

**Ending a dramatic case involving drug trafficking, murder and corruption at the highest levels, a former government official who faced 25 drug and money laundering charges in the U.S. died of apparent heart failure today in New Jersey.**



# Level 3 Passage

## Characteristics

- **Content**: not only facts but abstract concepts
- **Purpose**: varied, including discussion, argumentation, evaluation of options and situations
- **Lexicon**: professional, can be culture-specific
- **Structure**: complex syntax, stylistic devices

## ILR SLD Level 3

Can translate texts that contain not only facts but also abstract language, showing an emerging ability to capture their intended implications and many nuances...



# Level 3 Example Passage

Corruption and the crime of **money laundering** are closely related. In some cases that have been **exposed** the way that corrupt officials **appropriate state assets** is that money obtained through corruption is **transferred** overseas, then it is brought back to the country under the identity of a foreign business investor using the favorable policies of foreign investment. In this way, a **chain of money laundering** is formed, where power and money are **interdependent, local and overseas actions** are **coordinated**, forming a circular system of **misappropriation** of state assets.



# Level 4 Passage

## Characteristics

- **Content**: not only facts but abstract language, concepts and ideas. Can be highly technical, with cultural load
- **Purpose**: varied, including discussion, argumentation, evaluation of options and situations
- **Lexicon**: professional, subtle, nuanced
- **Structure**: less frequent and highly complex, requiring decoding, item analysis

## ILR SLD Level 4

Can successfully apply a translation methodology to translate a wide variety of complex texts that contain difficult, abstract, idiomatic, highly technical writing. Able to capture subtleties, nuances, tone and register...



# Level 4 Example Passage

There is no lack of people who cast a long line to catch a big fish; that is, cultivating a long-term relationship for the purpose of offering bribes; even three, five, six or seven years; we call it '**feathering your nest**', making a personal investment, then seeking out improper favors. These cases of offering and accepting bribes after cultivating this personal relationship all come under the guise of "courtesy begets reciprocity," and are certainly less detectable. For example, New Years festivals, weddings, births, children starting school, etc., offering and accepting bribes based on a cultivated personal relationship can easily occur. With all these kinds of "good opportunities" corrupt officials are rarely tempted to openly touch public funds that are subject to institutional scrutiny.



# ***How do we rate Translation Exams?***





# TE Rating Basics

1. Reviews each passage separately using both the ***Literal*** and ***Idiomatic Translations***.
2. Labels errors using the ***Error Notation Key***.
3. Decides if the translation is successful for that level based on the ***Definitions of Successful Translation***.
4. Consults ***the Profile Chart***.
5. Determines the final score based on ***ILR SLDs***.





## Source Text

**Огромный интерес для органов налоговой полиции представляет внебанковское обращение денежных средств. В целях пресечения нелегального денежного оборота налоговые органы выявляют и проверяют конкретных физических лиц, владеющих крупными пакетами ведущих промышленных предприятий, являющихся учредителями и владельцами доходных предприятий торговли...**





# First of all, Keys

## Literal Translation

Enormous interest for bodies of tax police represents extra-bank circulation of monetary means. In purposes of cutting off of illegal money turnover tax bodies uncover and check concrete physical people owning large packets of leading industrial enterprises...

## Idiomatic Translation

The circulation of funds that do not go through banks is of great interest to the tax police. To suppress the illegal turnover of money, tax agencies identify and check specific individuals owning large blocks of shares in leading industrial enterprises...



# Error Notation Key

## Accuracy Errors

**MT – Mistranslation**

**PMT – Partial  
Mistranslation**

**OM – Omission**

**ADD – Addition**

**DIST – Distortion**

## Expression Errors

**GR – Grammar**

**SP – Spelling**

**CP – Capitalization &  
Punctuation**

**RT – Register & Tone  
(Can be MTs at higher  
levels)**



# No Error-Counting

**The final score is NOT based on the number of errors, but on whether the examinee's entire production has met the standard.**





# Holistic Rating

**Rating is based on the entirety of the examinee's production to a criterion (*ILR SLD for Translation Performance*) rather than focusing on the number of errors.**



# Congruity Judgment

**The ability to choose the equivalent expression in the target language that both fully conveys and best matches the meaning intended in the source language**



# Definition of Successful Translation at Level 2

**The translation conveys the meaning accurately, even though expression may be faulty, reflecting the word order and structure of the source language. Lexical choices may be awkward. Minor errors, omissions, and/or additions do not impact negatively *overall accuracy*.**



# Definition of Successful Translation at Level 2+

The translation reflects ***some use of congruity judgment*** and conveys the meaning accurately, even though expression may be faulty, reflecting the word order and structure of the source language. Lexical choices may be awkward. Minor errors are permissible to include omissions and/or additions as long as they do not impact negatively ***key points or main ideas***.



# Definition of Successful Translation at Level 3

The translation reflects ***good use of congruity judgment*** and conveys the meaning accurately. Expression generally adheres to target language norms, to include word order, structure and lexical choice. Some errors are permissible, to include omissions and/or additions if they rarely obscure meaning or do not impact negatively ***key points or main ideas or important implications and nuances.***



# Definition of Successful Translation at Level 4

The translation reflects ***superior use of congruity judgment*** and conveys the meaning accurately. ***Expression reflects native usage and consistent control of target language norms and conventions to include word order, structure, lexical choice, style and tone.*** Some errors are permissible, to include omissions and/ or additions as long as they don't negatively impact key points, main ideas, or important implications and nuances.





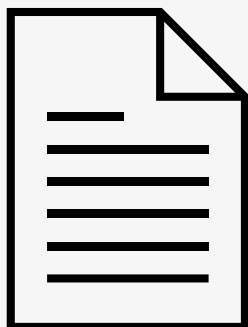
# Translation Match Labels

**Raters decide the degree to which the translation of each passage matches the Definition of a Successful Translation**

- ***SM:***                **Successfully matches**
- ***MM:***                **Mostly matches**
- ***IM:***                **Intermittently matches**
- ***RM:***                **Rarely matches**
- ***NT:***                **Not translated (anything less than 50%)**

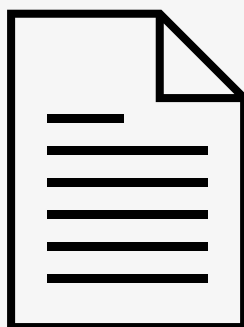


# Rated Passages at Four Levels



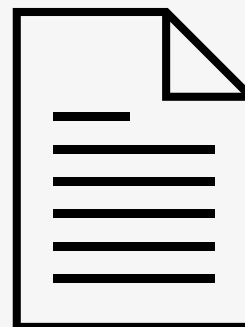
**Passage 1**  
**Level 2**

***SM***



**Passage 2**  
**Level 2+**

***SM***



**Passage 3**  
**Level 3**

***MM***



**Passage 4**  
**Level 4**

***IM***



# Examinees' Sample Profiles

Passage 1 Level 2	Passage 2 Level 2+	Passage 3 Level 3	Passage 4 Level 4	Possible Score
SM	SM	MM	IM	2+/3
SM	IM	IM	NT	2
IM	IM	IM	IM	1+/2
MM	MM	IM	RM	1+



# The Profile Chart

1+	2	2+	3
MM MM IM IM	SM MM MM IM	SM SM MM MM	SM SM SM MM
MM MM IM RM	SM MM MM RM	SM SM MM IM	SM SM MM MM
MM MM IM NT	SM MM IM IM	SM SM MM RM	SM SM MM IM
MM MM RM NT	SM MM IM RM	SM SM MM NT	SM MM MM MM
MM IM IM IM	SM MM IM NT	SM SM IM IM	SM SM SM NT
MM IM IM RM	SM MM RM IM	SM SM IM RM	
MM IM IM NT	SM MM RM RM	SM SM IM NT	
MM IM RM IM	SM MM RM NT	SM SM NT NT	
MM IM RM RM	SM MM NT NT	SM MM SM IM	
MM IM RM NT	SM IM MM RM	SM MM SM NT	
MM IM NT RM	SM IM IM IM	SM MM MM IM	
MM IM NT NT	SM IM IM RM	SM MM MM RM	
MM RM RM RM	SM IM IM NT	SM MM MM NT	



# Final Arbiter

***ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Translation Performance, not the Profile Chart, is the final arbiter in determining a TE rating.***



# Questions?

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202-436-7979**

