

2

How to Handle New Terms

Illustrations by Alex Mathers

Pre-Lesson Warm Up

Which statement best describes your approach to dealing with a new term?

- ☐ I look the term up in my language dictionary and use the translation that works best with the context.
- ☐ First, I search for the term in a monolingual dictionary for the source language. Then, once I really understand the meaning in context, I look for the best fit in my language dictionary.
- ☐ I search an online translation forum and if nothing comes up, I post a question there.

Which statement do you most agree with?

- ☐ It's essential to understand each and every word of the source text in order to generate an accurate translation.
- ☐ You only need to understand the overall meaning of the source text to be able to create a great translation.
- ☐ Both the meaning of individual words and the meaning of the phrase should be taken into consideration when producing a translation.

How do you handle untranslatable words when translating?

- ☐ I choose the closest approximation in the target language.
- ☐ I ignore the word altogether.
- ☐ I provide an explanation of the cultural context in order to help the audience understand what the author is attempting to convey.

Intro

Tackling new and unfamiliar terms is one of the biggest challenges faced by translators.

This lesson presents a step-by-step process for handling new terms, including term search tips.

Following this process will help you overcome this translation challenge and produce a great translation.

A Tailor-Made Translation



1. Measurements & Specifications



2. Sourcing of Materials

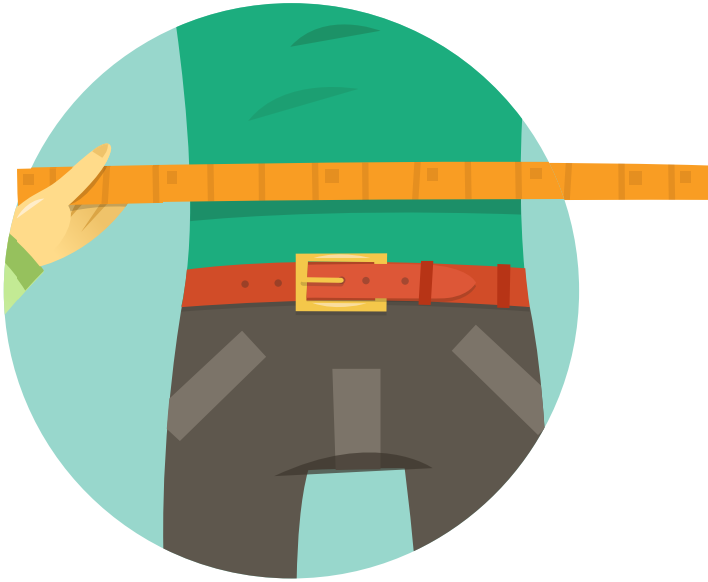


3. Fitting & Finishing



1. Measurements & Specifications

Consider the job brief before you begin your term search.



Translators work under various constraints such as time, tools, content type and customer instructions.

Before you start sourcing materials and crafting your translation, size up the task at hand and consider the client's specifications.

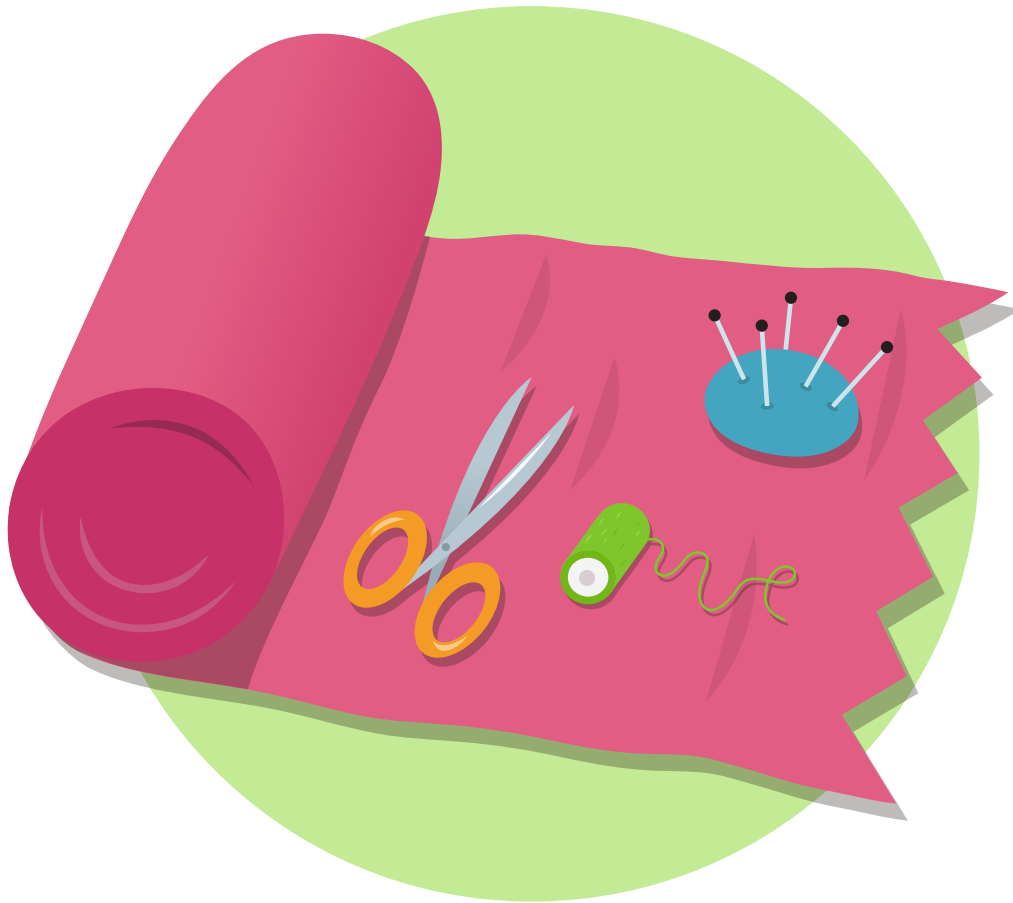
Know Your Operating Environment

- ☐ Does the customer have specific preferences around style or tone?
- ☐ Is there a glossary that you must follow?
- ☐ Is there an industry-accepted translation that you must use (common for legal/medical translations)?



2. Sourcing of Materials

Draw on multiple sources to find the right translation.



The trick to successfully translating a source text with new terms is having multiple resources at your fingertips.

The Internet is a great starting point. Here are some of the best Word Warehouses on the Web:

- Your client's website
- [ProZ.com term search](#)
- [WordReference.com](#)
- [Google search](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)

Tricks of the Trade: Google Search

Mastering the art of Google search can help you filter thousands of search results and reduce time spent trawling for translations.

Here are the top tips for translators:

- Search for an explicit phrase using quotes, for example, "c'est la vie"
- Exclude a term using a dash (-). For example, you want to find results for "c'est la vie" but you don't want them to include the hit song by Khaled. The solution is to search "c'est la vie" -khaled
- Generate the English translation of a term or phrase using translate, for example, translate "c'est la vie"
- Find the missing word in a phrase using an asterisk (*), for example, "find a * in a haystack"
- Search for definitions using "define:", for example, "define:apple"
- Search for similar words and synonyms using a tilde (~)
- Search for images on [Google Images](#) to assist with translating product descriptions

When you want to get super specific, give [Google Advanced Search](#) a try.

This is especially useful for narrowing down results by language and region.



3. Fitting & Finishing

Check that your translation works in context and sounds natural.



Before you package up your tailor-made translation, it's important to try it on for size.

First Fitting: Accuracy

- Check at least 2 sources
- Look up your translation in a monolingual dictionary
- Translate the new term back into the source language

Final Fitting: Naturalness

- Search for a term or phrase using quotes on Google
- Search for a term or phrase in a well-reputed online newspaper

Finishing: Meaning

- Translations don't exist for every word in every language
- At the end of the day, it's important to remember that you're not translating words, but contextualized meanings

