

Before You Order a Translation

A free checklist from Fine Grain Collective. Feel free to share it with anyone who might find it useful.

A little prep before you order makes a translation faster, smoother, and more useful. Here is what we suggest checking first.

- ☐ **1. Know what the translation is for.** Is it to help someone understand a letter, or does an office need it for an official filing? Those can be very different things, so decide this first.
- ☐ **2. Check with the office that will receive it.** If the translation is going to an agency, school, employer, or any other office, ask them what kind of translation they accept, in what format, and by when. Only they can say what they will accept.
- ☐ **3. Be clear about both languages.** Tell your translation provider the language the document is in now and the language you need. If a regional version matters, like the version of a language spoken in one country, say so up front.
- ☐ **4. Gather every page.** Include all pages, front and back, plus any attachments or inserts that go with the document. Missing pages can hold up a job.
- ☐ **5. Make sure it's easy to read.** Use a clear scan or a flat, well lit photo with every edge visible. If you have a typed or digital copy, send that instead of a photo.
- ☐ **6. Leave out what isn't needed.** Before you send anything, cover or remove details the translator does not need, like Social Security numbers, full account numbers, birth dates, and medical detail.
- ☐ **7. Point out what matters most to you.** Say which parts need translating and how to treat things like stamps, handwritten notes, headers, and footers.
- ☐ **8. Share names and key terms.** Write down how names, places, and any special terms should be spelled, so they come back the way you expect.
- ☐ **9. Give your real deadline, with a cushion.** Share the date you actually need it, and leave extra time for questions and fixes.
- ☐ **10. Get a written quote first.** Before you commit, ask for a written quote based on the word or page count, the languages, and your deadline.
- ☐ **11. Plan how you will use it.** Think about whether you will print it, email it, or read it on your phone, and mention that when you agree on the scope.
- ☐ **12. Give it a read when it comes back.** If the meaning really matters, review it with someone who reads both languages, and report anything that looks off right away.

Fine Grain Collective offers everyday translations for informational use only. They aren't certified, sworn, or court translations, and our work isn't legal advice.
