



# JOB of the Week



**Job name:** Translator

**Job description:** As a translator, you'll convert written material from one or more 'source languages' into the 'target language', making sure that the translated version conveys the meaning of the original as clearly as possible. The target language is normally your mother tongue. Transcreating may also be part of the job, which is a mix of translation, localisation and copywriting, where the text is culturally and linguistically adapted to suit the reader. You typically need an excellent command of two or more languages. Those most in demand are the official languages of the European Union

**Tasks you will undertake in the job:** As a translator, you'll need to:

- read through original material and rewrite it in the target language, ensuring that the meaning of the source text is retained
- use translation memory software, such as Wordfast, memoQ, Across, SDL Trados and Transit NXT, to ensure consistency of translation within documents and help efficiency
- use specialist dictionaries, thesauruses and reference books to find the closest equivalents for terminology and words used
- use appropriate software for presentation and delivery
- research legal, technical and scientific phraseology to find the correct translation
- liaise with clients to discuss any unclear points
- proofread and edit final translated versions
- provide quotations for translation services offered
- consult with experts in specialist areas
- retain and develop knowledge on specialist areas of translation
- follow various translation-quality standards to ensure legal and ethical obligations to the customer.

Expect to work to a daily output of 2,000 to 3,000 words. There will be some periods of intense concentration and pressure as you near deadlines.

In-house roles are usually office-based where you'll work independently. Working as part of a small team is possible in translation agencies or companies in large cities. Contact with clients is limited and mostly by email or phone.

The majority of translators are self-employed. As a freelance translator you'd work from home and enjoy flexible hours, although work flow may be unpredictable. It can be helpful to build up experience and client contacts by working as an in-house translator before going freelance. More regular interaction with clients is usually helpful if you're a freelance or literary translator, particularly for seeking commissions for work.

It can be useful to visit relevant countries from time to time to keep up your command of the language.

**Skills required for this job (core competencies):**

Communication	Resilience	Organisation	Teamwork
Problem Solving	Initiative	Creativity	Digital literacy

**Sectors in which Translators would normally work:** The majority of translators are self-employed, but work is often found through agencies by advertising services directly to clients, or by networking. There are opportunities to work in international organisations but they may be limited as work is often out-sourced to translation agencies and freelancers. Organisations include: the UN and its specialised agencies, employing British translators working with the six official languages of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish; the institutions of the EU, including the European Commission - covering 24 official EU languages; other international organisations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which have occasional opportunities.

## Career path and progression within the industry:

You may start your career working as an in-house translator for a translation agency or company and could then move to a more managerial in-house role, or to freelance work. Translation agencies and companies offer varying prospects for promotion.

If you have membership with a professional body, you'll get good support in career development. Promotion prospects are good within international bodies, such as the institutions of the European Union (EU). Government departments and EU institutions have a clear career grading system and the further you progress, the more managerial work you'll take on.

If you work freelance, career development often depends on how many commonly used modern languages you know, the number and type of clients you work for, and the rates of pay you are able to command. If your expertise is in a less commonly used language, you'll need to develop a specialist client base through networking and will then be able to charge higher rates than translators working in the more common languages.



**Salary:** Salaries for translators in the UK vary widely and freelance rates are often calculated according to the word count. Translation of highly specialised texts, from or into unusual languages, demands higher rates than general translation. As an approximate guide, you may be able to earn a salary in the region of £18,000 to £40,000.



**Working hours:** Working hours for in-house translators are usually 9am to 5pm. If you work as a freelance translator, your hours can be flexible but you'll need to organise them to make sure you can meet fixed deadlines. Part-time work is possible and short-term temporary contracts are available. You may need to juggle several freelance projects at one time.

**Essential skills you need to show:** You'll need to show evidence of:

- fluency in two or more languages
- a good understanding and in-depth knowledge of language/country-specific cultures, known as localisation / subject matter knowledge specific to the content you'll be translating
- excellent writing skills and command of grammar
- attention to detail combined with the ability to work quickly to meet deadlines
- the ability to use initiative in a commercial context
- proficiency in the use of a range of computer packages - knowledge of translation-oriented applications and software is helpful, though not essential
- self-motivation, particularly if working as a freelancer
- enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge.

**This job in the future:** The workforce is projected to grow by 1.9%, creating 1 800 jobs; in the same period, 58.5% of the workforce is likely to retire, creating 55 900 job opportunities.

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[www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk) (careers videos)

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