



Interpreter

Interpreters translate the spoken word, on the spot or remotely from one language into another language. This allows people who do not share the same first language to understand each other.

What does the job involve?

There are 3 different types of interpreting:

As a conference interpreter you could:

- work at national and international conferences, lectures and meetings
- listen to a speaker through headphones in a soundproof booth
- interpret speeches at the same time as the speaker through a microphone and headset

As a consecutive interpreter you may:

- work in smaller business meetings with 2 or more people
- interpret after each sentence or passage of speech

As a public service interpreter, you could:

- interpret for people using legal, health and local government services
- check their understanding after each sentence
- interpret at short notice for emergency medical or police interviews

Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least four or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, Science and maths. Other relevant subjects include Languages and IT.



Skills You'll need:

- foreign language skills
- knowledge of English language
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- customer service skills
- patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- the ability to work on your own
- to be flexible and open to change
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through:

- a university course
- volunteering
- applying directly
- specialist courses run by a professional body

University

You can do a degree or postgraduate qualification in:

- interpreting studies
- languages and interpreting
- translation and interpreting

Volunteering

You can find unpaid or paid volunteering opportunities through local councils and organisations offering community interpreting services.

A community interpreting qualification may help you volunteer as an interpreter in your local community. Colleges and universities may have more information about this.

Direct Application

You may be able to get into this job if you have a non-language degree if you're fluent in English and a second language.

Other Routes

To help you to get a job in public service interpreting, you can take a Chartered Institute of Linguists course like:

- Certificate in Bilingual Skills
- Diploma in Public Service Interpreting

Further information

Career tips

You can find out more about training and working as an interpreter from the Institute of Translation and Interpreting.



Career path and progression

You could combine interpreting with translating or teaching. You could also move into the management of interpreting services in the public or private sector.

Rates of Pay

The starting salary for interpreters for those in full time posts in UK-based organisations start in the region of £20,000 to £28,000 per year.

Salaries in international organisations tend to be higher. Staff interpreters at the European Commission start on grade AD5, which has a salary of around £4,500 to £5,000 a month. Senior interpreters on grade AD7 earn around £5,500 to £6,500 a month.