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***HISTORY OF LITERARY TRANSLATION***

The first important translation in the West was that of the [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint), a collection of [Jewish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) Scriptures translated into early [Koine Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koine_Greek" \o "Koine Greek) in [Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria) between the 3rd and 1st centuries BCE. The dispersed [Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) had forgotten their ancestral language and needed Greek versions (translations) of their Scriptures.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-54)

Throughout the [Middle Ages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages), [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) was the [*lingua franca*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua_franca) of the western learned world. The 9th-century [Alfred the Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_the_Great), king of [Wessex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wessex" \o "Wessex) in [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England), was far ahead of his time in commissioning [vernacular](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernacular) [Anglo-Saxon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_language) translations of [Bede](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bede)'s [*Ecclesiastical History*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_ecclesiastica_gentis_Anglorum) and [Boethius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boethius)' [*Consolation of Philosophy*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consolation_of_Philosophy). Meanwhile, the [Christian Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Church) frowned on even partial adaptations of [St. Jerome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Jerome)'s [*Vulgate*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate_Bible) of ca. 384 CE,[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-55) the standard [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) [*Bible*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible).

In [Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia), the spread of [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) led to large-scale ongoing translation efforts spanning well over a thousand years. The [Tangut Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tangut_Empire" \o "Tangut Empire) was especially efficient in such efforts; exploiting the then newly invented [block printing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Block_printing), and with the full support of the government (contemporary sources describe the Emperor and his mother personally contributing to the translation effort, alongside sages of various nationalities), the Tanguts took mere decades to translate volumes that had taken the [Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) centuries to render.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

The [Arabs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabs) undertook large-scale efforts at translation. Having conquered the Greek world, they made [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic) versions of its philosophical and scientific works. During the [Middle Ages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages), translations of some of these Arabic versions were made into Latin, chiefly at [Córdoba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%B3rdoba,_Spain) in [Spain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain).[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen13-56) King Alfonso X el Sabio (Alphonse the Wise) of Castille in the 13th century promoted this effort by founding a *Schola Traductorum* (School of Translation) in [Toledo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toledo,_Spain). There Arabic texts, Hebrew texts, and Latin texts were translated into the other tongues by Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars, who also argued the merits of their respective religions. Latin translations of Greek and original Arab works of scholarship and science helped advance European [Scholasticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholasticism), and thus European science and culture.

[**Geoffrey Chaucer**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer)

The broad historic trends in Western translation practice may be illustrated on the example of translation into the [English language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language).

The first fine translations into English were made in the 14th century by [Geoffrey Chaucer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer), who adapted from the [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language) of [Giovanni Boccaccio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Boccaccio) in his own [*Knight's Tale*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight%27s_Tale) and [*Troilus and Criseyde*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troilus_and_Criseyde); began a translation of the [French-language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French-language) [*Roman de la Rose*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_de_la_Rose); and completed a translation of [Boethius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boethius) from the [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin). Chaucer founded an English [poetic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry) tradition on [*adaptations*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_adaptation) and translations from those earlier-established [literary languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_language).[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen13-56)

The first great English translation was the [*Wycliffe Bible*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wycliffe_Bible) (ca. 1382), which showed the weaknesses of an underdeveloped English[prose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prose). Only at the end of the 15th century did the great age of English prose translation begin with [Thomas Malory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Malory)'s [*Le Morte Darthur*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Morte_Darthur)—an adaptation of [Arthurian romances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthurian_romance) so free that it can, in fact, hardly be called a true translation. The first great [Tudor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tudor_period) translations are, accordingly, the [*Tyndale New Testament*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyndale_Bible) (1525), which influenced the [*Authorized Version*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorized_Version) (1611), and [Lord Berners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Berners)' version of [Jean Froissart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Froissart)'s *Chronicles* (1523–25).[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen13-56)

[**Marsilio Ficino**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsilio_Ficino)

Meanwhile, in [Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy), a new period in the history of translation had opened in [Florence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence) with the arrival, at the court of [Cosimo de' Medici](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosimo_de%27_Medici" \o "Cosimo de' Medici), of the [Byzantine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine) scholar [Georgius Gemistus Pletho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgius_Gemistus_Pletho" \o "Georgius Gemistus Pletho) shortly before the fall of [Constantinople](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinople) to the Turks (1453). A Latin translation of[Plato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato)'s works was undertaken by [Marsilio Ficino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsilio_Ficino" \o "Marsilio Ficino). This and [Erasmus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erasmus)' Latin edition of the [*New Testament*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament) led to a new attitude to translation. For the first time, readers demanded rigor of rendering, as philosophical and religious beliefs depended on the exact words of [Plato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato), [Aristotle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle) and[Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus).[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen13-56)

Non-scholarly literature, however, continued to rely on *adaptation*. [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France)'s *[Pléiade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pl%C3%A9iade" \o "Pléiade)*, [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England)'s [Tudor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tudor_period) poets, and the [Elizabethan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabethan) translators adapted themes by [Horace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace), [Ovid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ovid), [Petrarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrarch) and modern Latin writers, forming a new poetic style on those models. The English poets and translators sought to supply a new public, created by the rise of a [middle class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_class) and the development of [printing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing), with works such as the original authors *would have written*, had they been writing in England in that day.[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen13-56)

[**Edward FitzGerald**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_FitzGerald_(poet))

The [Elizabethan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabethan) period of translation saw considerable progress beyond mere [paraphrase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraphrase) toward an ideal of [stylistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stylistics_(linguistics)) equivalence, but even to the end of this period, which actually reached to the middle of the 17th century, there was no concern for [verbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Words) [accuracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accuracy).[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen14-57)

In the second half of the 17th century, the poet [John Dryden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dryden) sought to make [Virgil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgil) speak "in words such as he would probably have written if he were living and an Englishman". Dryden, however, discerned no need to emulate the Roman poet's subtlety and concision. Similarly, [Homer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer" \o "Homer)suffered from [Alexander Pope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Pope)'s endeavor to reduce the Greek poet's "wild paradise" to order.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen14-57)

[**Benjamin Jowett**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Jowett)

Throughout the 18th century, the watchword of translators was ease of reading. Whatever they did not understand in a text, or thought might bore readers, they omitted. They cheerfully assumed that their own style of expression was the best, and that texts should be made to conform to it in translation. For scholarship they cared no more than had their predecessors, and they did not shrink from making translations from translations in third languages, or from languages that they hardly knew, or—as in the case of [James Macpherson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Macpherson)'s "translations" of [Ossian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ossian)—from texts that were actually of the "translator's" own composition.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen14-57)

The 19th century brought new standards of accuracy and style. In regard to accuracy, observes J.M. Cohen, the policy became "the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text", except for any [bawdy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bawdy) passages and the addition of copious explanatory [footnotes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Footnote).[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-58) In regard to style, the [Victorians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorians)' aim, achieved through far-reaching [metaphrase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphrase" \o "Metaphrase) (literality) or *pseudo*-metaphrase, was to constantly remind readers that they were reading a *foreign* classic. An exception was the outstanding translation in this period, [Edward FitzGerald](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_FitzGerald_(poet))'s *[Rubaiyat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubaiyat_of_Omar_Khayyam" \o "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam)* of [Omar Khayyam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Khayyam)(1859), which achieved its Oriental flavor largely by using Persian names and discreet Biblical echoes and actually drew little of its material from the Persian original.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen14-57)

In advance of the 20th century, a new pattern was set in 1871 by [Benjamin Jowett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Jowett), who translated [Plato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato) into simple, straightforward language. Jowett's example was not followed, however, until well into the new century, when accuracy rather than style became the principal criterion.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-Cohen14-57)

**Modern translation**]

As a language evolves, texts in an earlier version of the language—original texts, or old translations—may become difficult for modern readers to understand. Such a text may therefore be translated into more modern language, producing a "modern translation" (e.g., a "modern English translation" or "modernized translation").

Such modern rendering is applied either to literature from classical languages such as [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) or [Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language), notably to the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) (see "[Modern English Bible translations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_English_Bible_translations)"), or to literature from an earlier stage of the same language, as with the works of [William Shakespeare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare) (which are largely understandable by a modern audience, though with some difficulty) or with [Geoffrey Chaucer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer)'s [*Canterbury Tales*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Canterbury_Tales) (which is not generally understandable by modern readers).

Modern translation is applicable to any language with a long literary history. For example, in Japanese the 11th-century [*Tale of Genji*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tale_of_Genji) is generally read in modern translation (see "*[Genji:](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tale_of_Genji" \l "Modern_readership" \o "The Tale of Genji)*[modern readership](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tale_of_Genji" \l "Modern_readership" \o "The Tale of Genji)").

Modern translation often involves literary scholarship and textual revision, as there is frequently not one single canonical text. This is particularly noteworthy in the case of the Bible and Shakespeare, where modern scholarship can result in substantive textual changes.

Modern translation meets with opposition from some traditionalists. In English, some readers prefer the [Authorized King James Version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorized_King_James_Version) of the Bible to modern translations, and Shakespeare in the original of ca. 1600 to modern translations.

An opposite process involves translating modern literature into classical languages, for the purpose of [extensive reading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extensive_reading) (for examples, see "[List of Latin translations of modern literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Latin_translations_of_modern_literature)").

**Poetry**

[**Douglas Hofstadter**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Hofstadter)

[Poetry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry) presents special challenges to translators, given the importance of a text's formal aspects, in addition to its content. In his influential 1959 paper "[On Linguistic Aspects of Translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Linguistic_Aspects_of_Translation)", the [Russian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia)-born [linguist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguist) and [semiotician](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotician" \o "Semiotician) [Roman Jakobson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Jakobson) went so far as to declare that "poetry by definition [is] untranslatable". [Robert Frost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Frost) was equally pessimistic: "Poetry is that which is lost in translations."

In 1974 the American poet [James Merrill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Merrill) wrote a poem, "[Lost in Translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_in_Translation_(poem))", which in part explores this idea. The question was also discussed in [Douglas Hofstadter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Hofstadter)'s 1997 book, [*Le Ton beau de Marot*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Ton_beau_de_Marot); he argues that a good translation of a poem must convey as much as possible of not only its literal meaning but also its form and structure (meter, rhyme or alliteration scheme, etc.).[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-59)

**Sung texts**

[**Catherine Winkworth**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_Winkworth)

Translation of a text that is sung in vocal music for the purpose of singing in another language—sometimes called "singing translation"—is closely linked to translation of poetry because most [vocal music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vocal_music), at least in the Western tradition, is set to [verse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verse_(popular_music)), especially verse in regular patterns with [rhyme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhyme). (Since the late 19th century, musical setting of [prose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prose) and [free verse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_verse) has also been practiced in some [art music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_music), though [popular music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_music) tends to remain conservative in its retention of [stanzaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanza" \o "Stanza) forms with or without [refrains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refrain).) A rudimentary example of translating poetry for singing is church [hymns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hymn), such as the German [chorales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chorale) translated into English by [Catherine Winkworth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_Winkworth).[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation#cite_note-60)

Translation of sung texts is generally much more restrictive than translation of poetry, because in the former there is little or no freedom to choose between a versified translation and a translation that dispenses with verse structure. One might modify or omit rhyme in a singing translation, but the assignment of syllables to specific notes in the original musical setting places great challenges on the translator. There is the option in prose sung texts, less so in verse, of adding or deleting a syllable here and there by subdividing or combining notes, respectively, but even with prose the process is almost like strict verse translation because of the need to stick as closely as possible to the original prosody of the sung melodic line.

Other considerations in writing a singing translation include repetition of words and phrases, the placement of rests and/or punctuation, the quality of vowels sung on high notes, and rhythmic features of the vocal line that may be more natural to the original language than to the target language. A sung translation may be considerably or completely different from the original, thus resulting in a [contrafactum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contrafactum" \o "Contrafactum).

Translations of sung texts—whether of the above type meant to be sung or of a more or less literal type meant to be read—are also used as aids to audiences, singers and conductors, when a work is being sung in a language not known to them. The most familiar types are translations presented as subtitles or surtitles projected during [opera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opera) performances, those inserted into concert programs, and those that accompany commercial audio CDs of vocal music. In addition, professional and amateur singers often sing works in languages they do not know (or do not know well), and translations are then used to enable them to understand the meaning of the words they are singing.

**Religious texts**

*Further information:*[*Bible translations*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_translations)*and*[*Translation of the Qur'an*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_of_the_Qur%27an)

[**Saint Jerome**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome), [patron saint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patron_saint) of translators and[encyclopedists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopedia)

Mistranslation: horned [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses), by [Michelangelo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo)

An important role in history has been played by translation of religious texts. Such translations may be influenced by tension between the text and the religious values the translators wish to convey. For example, [Buddhist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist) [monks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monk) who translated the [Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) [sutras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sutra) into [Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_language) occasionally adjusted their translations to better reflect [China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China)'s distinct [culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture), emphasizing notions such as [filial piety](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filial_piety).

One of the first recorded instances of translation in the West was the rendering of the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) into Greek in the 3rd century BCE. The translation is known as the ***"***[***Septuagint***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint)***",*** a name that refers to the ***seventy translators*** (seventy-two, in some versions) who were commissioned to translate the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) at [***Alexandria***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria)***,***[***Egypt***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt). Each translator worked in solitary confinement in his own cell, and according to legend all seventy versions proved identical. The ***Septuagint***became the [source text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_text) for later translations into many languages, including [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin), [Coptic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptic_language), [Armenian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_language) and [Georgian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_language).

Still considered one of the greatest translators in history, for having rendered the [*Bible*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) into [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin), is [Jerome of Stridon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome), the [patron saint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patron_saint) of translation. For centuries the [Roman Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) used his translation (known as the [Vulgate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate)), though even this translation at first stirred controversy.

The period preceding, and contemporary with, the [Protestant Reformation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation) saw the translation of the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) into local European languages—a development that contributed to [Western Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Christianity)'s split into [Roman Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) and [Protestantism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism) due to disparities between Catholic and Protestant versions of crucial words and passages (although the Protestant movement was largely based on other things, such as a perceived need for reformation of the Roman Catholic Church to eliminate corruption). Lasting effects on the religions, cultures and languages of their respective countries have been exerted by such [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) translations as [**Martin Luther**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther)**'s into**[**German**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language), **[Jakub Wujek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jakub_Wujek" \o "Jakub Wujek)'s into**[**Polish**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_language)**,** and the [King James Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Bible)'s translators' into [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language). Debate and religious [schism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schism) over different translations of religious texts remain to this day, as demonstrated by, for example, the [King James Only movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Only_movement).

A famous "mistranslation" of the [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) is the rendering of the [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language) word קֶרֶן **(*keren*),** which has several meanings, as "horn" in a context where it also means **"beam of light**". As a result, for centuries artists have depicted [***Moses the Lawgive***r](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses) with horns growing out of his forehead; an example is [Michelangelo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo)'s famous sculpture.

***TYPES OF LITERARY TRANSLATION*Language Interpretation**

Interpretation or interpreting is oral translation of speech or sign from a language into another. Translation study is the systematic study of the theory, description and application of interpretation and [translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_interpretation#cite_note-1)

An ***interpreter*** is a person who converts a thought or expression in a source language into an expression with a comparable meaning in a target language either simultaneously in "real time" or consecutively when the speaker pauses after completing one or two sentences.

The interpreter's objective is to convey every semantic element as well as tone and register and every intention and feeling of the message that the source-language speaker is directing to target-language recipients (except in summary interpretation, used sometimes in conferences)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_interpretation" \l "cite_note-2)

## Comparison to translation

The terms *interpretation* and [*translation*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) are commonly used interchangeably but are not synonymous. *Interpretation* describes immediate conversion of source (oral or text) orally (or by sign language), whereas [*translation*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) is the conversion of source (recorded oral, sign or text) to text. The primary practical distinction is that, in translation, the translator has more time to consider the output and may access resources ([dictionaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dictionary), [glossaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary), etc.) in that process. These ought not to be confused with "[Transliteration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transliteration)" which, in contrast, seeks to render the sound of one language into the script or form of another with no attendant interpretation or translation of meaning, [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_interpretation#cite_note-3) e.g. a spoken Chinese dialect written using [alphabetic characters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization) or spoken English represented in a signed form of English, Signed Exact English, not ASL.

In a legal context, such as court interpretation, where ramifications of misinterpretation may be dire, accuracy is paramount. Teams of two or more interpreters, with one actively interpreting and the second monitoring for greater accuracy, may be deployed.

Translators have time to consider and revise each word and sentence before delivering their product to the client. While live interpretation's goal is to achieve total accuracy at all times, details of the original (source) speech can be missed and interpreters can ask for clarification from the speaker. In any language, including sign languages, when a word is used for which there is no exact match, expansion may be necessary in order to fully interpret the intended meaning of the word.

**Technical translation**

is a type of [specialized translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specialized_translation) involving the [translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) of documents produced by [technical writers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_writer) ([owner's manuals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owner%27s_manual), [user guides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_guide), etc.), or more specifically, texts which relate to technological subject areas or texts which deal with the practical application of scientific and technological information. While the presence of specialized [terminology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminology) is a feature of technical texts, specialized terminology alone is not sufficient for classifying a text as "technical" since numerous disciplines and subjects which are not "technical" possess what can be regarded as specialized terminology.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_translation#cite_note-1) Technical translation covers the translation of many kinds of specialized texts and requires a high level of subject knowledge and mastery of the relevant terminology [[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_translation#cite_note-2) and writing conventions.

The importance of consistent terminology in technical translation, for example in [patents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patent), as well as the highly formulaic and repetitive nature of technical writing makes [computer-assisted translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-assisted_translation) using [translation memories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_memory) and terminology databases especially appropriate. In his book *Technical Translation* [Jody Byrne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jody_Byrne_(academic)) argues that technical translation is closely related to [technical communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_communication) and that it can benefit from research in this and other areas such as usability and [cognitive psychology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_psychology).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_translation#cite_note-3)

In addition to making texts with technical jargon accessible for a wider ranging audience, technical translation also involves linguistic features of translating technological texts from one language to another.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_translation#cite_note-4)

Translation as a whole is a balance of art and science influenced by both theory and practice.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_translation#cite_note-5) Having knowledge of both the linguistic features as well as the aesthetic features of translation applies directly to the field of technical translation.

**Literal translation**

Literal translation, direct translation, or word-for-word translation is the rendering of text from one language to another one word at a time ([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin): "verbum pro verbo") with or without conveying the [sense](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_sense) of the original whole.

In translation studies, "literal translation" denotes technical translation of scientific, technical, technological or legal texts.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literal_translation#cite_note-1)

In [translation theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_theory), another term for "literal translation" is "[metaphrase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphrase" \o "Metaphrase)"; and for [phrasal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase) ("sense") translation — "[paraphrase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraphrase)."

When considered a bad practice of conveying word by word ([lexeme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexeme) to lexeme, or [morpheme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morpheme) to lexeme) translation of non-technical type literal [translations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) has the meaning of mistranslating [idioms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiom),[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literal_translation#cite_note-Hutchins-2) for example, or in the context of translating an [analytic language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analytic_language) to a [synthetic language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic_language), it renders even the [grammar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar) unintelligible.

The concept of literal translation may be viewed as an [oxymoron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxymoron) ([contradiction in terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contradiction_in_terms)), given that literal denotes something existing without interpretation, whereas a translation, by its very nature, is an interpretation (an interpretation of the meaning of words from one language into another).

**Legal translation**

Legal translation is the [translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) of texts within the field of [law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law). As law is a culture-dependent subject field, the work of legal translation and its products are not necessarily [linguistically transparent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transparency_(linguistic)).

As the mistranslation of a passage in a [contract](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract), for example, could lead to [lawsuits](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawsuit) and loss of money, translation is often considered to be preferably handled by professional translators specializing in legal translation should translate legal documents and scholarly writings.

When translating a text within the field of law, the translator should keep the following in mind. The legal system of the [source text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_text) (ST) is structured in a way that suits that culture and this is reflected in the legal language; similarly, the [target text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Target_text) (TT) is to be read by someone who is familiar with the other legal system (corresponding to the jurisdiction for which TT is prepared) and its language. Most forms of legal writing, and contracts in particular, seek to establish clearly defined rights and duties for certain individuals. It is essential to ensure precise correspondence of these rights and duties in the [source text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_text) and in the translation. Legal translation may also involve, certificates of accuracy, witness statements, [depositions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deposition_(law)), [trusts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trusts), [wills](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will(law)), [articles of incorporation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articles_of_incorporation), [litigation documents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleadings), immigration documents, property/exhibit labels and in some cases attendance in court by the translator(s).

Apart from terminological [lacunae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexical_gap), or lexical gaps, the translator may focus on the following aspects. Textual conventions in the source language are often culture-dependent and may not correspond to conventions in the target culture (see e.g. Nielsen 2010). Linguistic structures that are often found in the source language may have no direct equivalent structures in the target language. The translator therefore has to be guided by certain standards of linguistic, social and cultural equivalence between the language used in the [source text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_text) (ST) to produce a text (TT) in the target language. Those standards correspond to a variety of different principles defined as different approaches to translation in [translation theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_theory). Each of the standards sets a certain priority among the elements of ST to be preserved in TT. For example, following the functional approach, translators try to find target language structures with the same functions as those in the source language thus value the functionality of a text fragment in ST more than, say, the meanings of specific words in ST and the order in which they appear there.

Different approaches to translation should not be confused with different approaches to [translation theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_theory). The former are the standards used by translators in their trade while the latter are just different [paradigms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigms) used in developing translation theory.

There is confusion between the names of some of the translation standards used in legal practice. Not many lawyers and judges are familiar with the terminology used in translation theory, and they often ask court [interpreters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpreters) and [translators](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translators) to provide [verbatim](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/verbatim) translation. They often view this term as a clear standard of quality that they desire in TT. However, usually it does not mean to provide verbatim translation in the meaning of the standard described in translation theory with which they are not familiar. Their use of this term is based on a layperson's misconception that an accurate translation is achieved simply when "the correct" words of the target language are substituted for the corresponding words of ST. In reality, they just want to have a [faithful and fluent translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Faithful_and_fluent_translation&action=edit&redlink=1) of ST having no doubt that a good translator will provide it. They do not realize that word-by-word translations could sound as complete nonsense in the target language, and usually have no idea of different professional translation standards. Many translators would probably choose to adhere to the standard that they themselves find more appropriate in a given situation based on their experience rather than to attempt to educate the court personnelTranslators of legal texts often consult [law dictionaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_dictionary), especially bilingual law dictionaries. Care should be taken, as some bilingual law dictionaries are of poor quality and their use may lead to mistranslation.