

# Tips on starting a Career in Freelance Translation

## Step One

Step one is about considering whether translation is something you could seriously see yourself doing. Are you prepared to work from home? Would you not get lonely? Does translation really interest you? Is this a long-term career move or short-term gap filler?

Having asked all of the above being a freelance translator offers a fascinating and rewarding career. However it is only suitable for certain types of people and naturally to people with the right combination of language skills, professional commitment and business acumen.

Starting is the hardest part of all. The competition is huge and agencies or companies seeking freelancers usually have preferred suppliers and their doors may only open once in a while. You must be determined and motivated.

## Step Two

### Can I be a freelance translator?

In order to become a freelance translator you must:

- Have a high standard of education. A degree is normally a bare minimum requirement but not always.
- Be highly proficient in two languages with some in-country experience of both languages.
- Have excellent writing skills in your target language.
- Have some sort of professional experience or a qualification as a translator.

- Have solid IT skills and be able to use the usual software packages like Microsoft Office. Some, but not all agencies, may require proficiency in one of the main translation tools such as TRADOS.

## Step Three

### What do you need?

In order to be in a position to start working as a freelance translator you will need (as a minimum):

- A PC/computer with a decent memory
- Internet connection
- A phone line (although you can now use software like [Skype](#) which offers phone lines)
- Reference materials such as dictionaries, etc.

## Step Four

### How do I find work?

- Prepare a good CV.
- Prepare a covering letter in which you should include your background, qualifications, availability, rates and daily capacity.
- Send these to translation agencies, specialist recruitment agencies, local companies, local councils, immigration services, etc. Basically target anyone who may need the services of a translator.
- You may also be able to pick up work through translation jobs sites such as [Proz](#), [Translators Cafe](#), [Linguist-Jobs](#) or [Translation Jobs](#).

## Resources

### [ITI](#)

The Institute of Translation & Interpreting was founded in 1986 as the only independent professional association of practising translators and interpreters in the United Kingdom.

### [ATA](#)

ATA is a professional association founded to advance the translation and interpreting professions and foster the professional development of individual translators and interpreters

### [IoL](#)

The Chartered Institute of Linguists serves the interests of professional linguists throughout the world and acts as a respected language assessment and accredited awarding body.

### [Translation Associations](#)

A comprehensive list of international translation associations.

### [Languages Work](#)

Languages Work helps careers advisers, teachers and parents to provide guidance on the use of languages at work and at play.