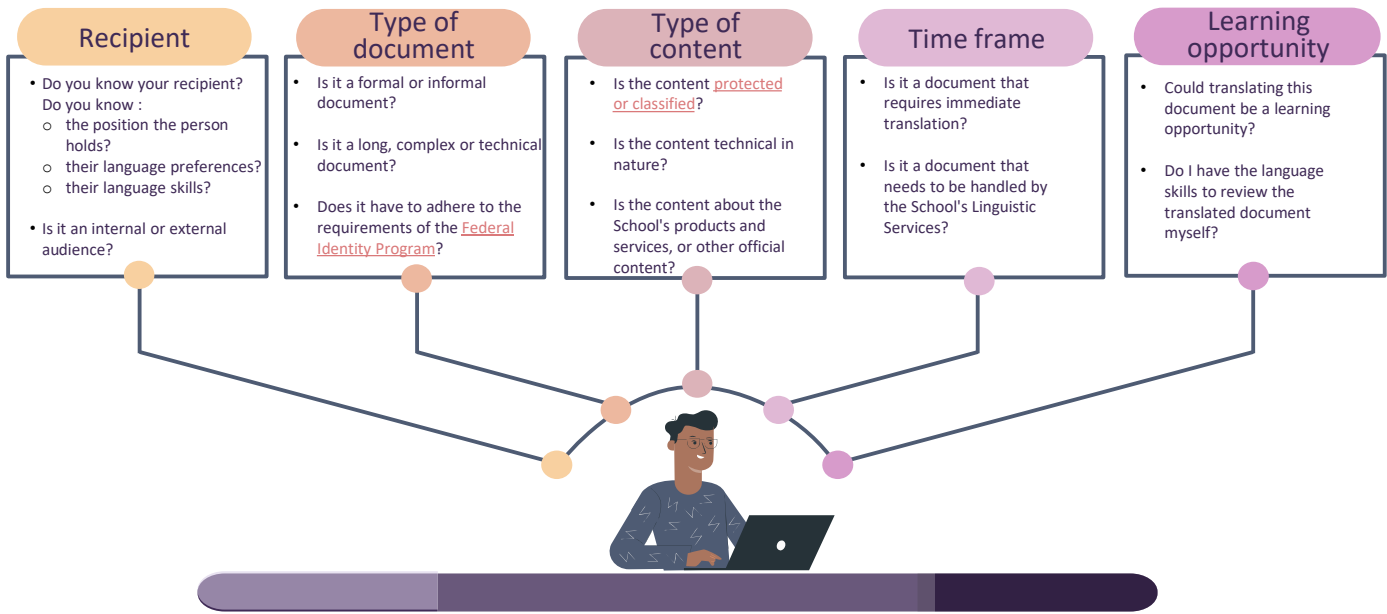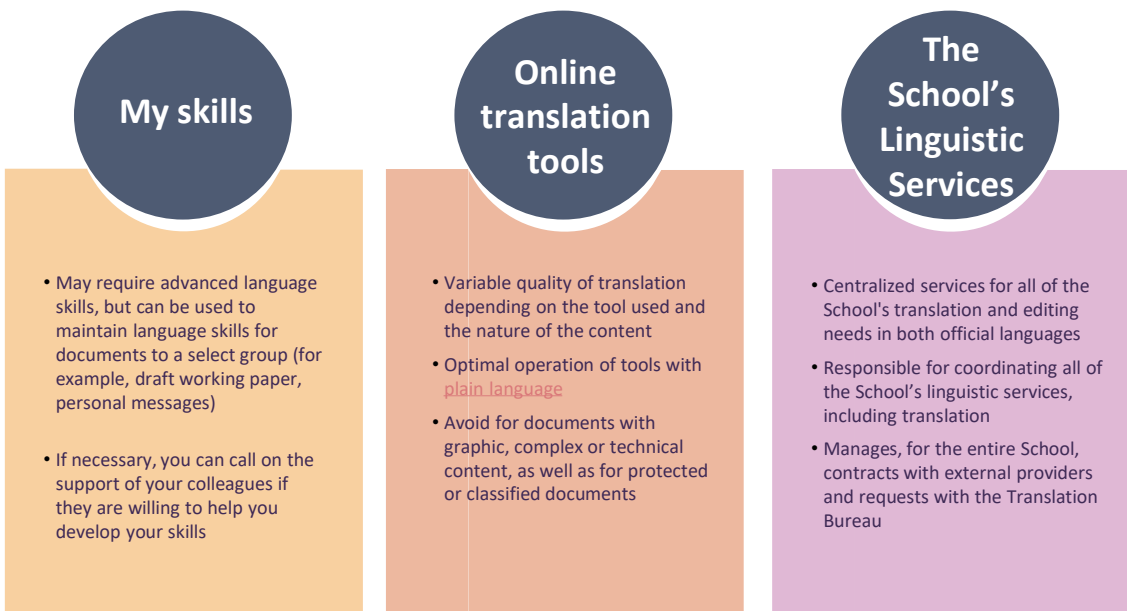# Translation of a document
Job Aid

What considerations should I take into account?

When translating a document, there are several options available to you, but how do you choose the most appropriate option while respecting the Official Languages Act and the School's Official Languages Standard? To make an informed decision, you need to ask yourself some questions.

Recipient
- Do you know your recipient? Do you know :
  - the position the person holds?
  - their language preferences?
  - their language skills?
- Is it an internal or external audience?

Type of document
- Is it a formal or informal document?
- Is it a long, complex or technical document?
- Does it have to adhere to the requirements of the Federal Identity Program?

Type of content
- Is the content protected or classified?
- Is the content technical in nature?
- Is the content about the School's products and services, or other official content?

Time frame
- Is it a document that requires immediate translation?
- Is it a document that needs to be handled by the School's Linguistic Services?

Learning opportunity
- Could translating this document be a learning opportunity?
- Do I have the language skills to review the translated document myself?

My resources

Once you have established the main characteristics of the document and the context in which it is used, you can determine which of the following resources best meets your needs.

My skills
- May require advanced language skills, but can be used to maintain language skills for documents to a select group (for example, draft working paper, personal messages)
- If necessary, you can call on the support of your colleagues if they are willing to help you develop your skills

Online translation tools
- Variable quality of translation depending on the tool used and the nature of the content
- Optimal operation of tools with plain language
- Avoid for documents with graphic, complex or technical content, as well as for protected or classified documents

The School's Linguistic Services
- Centralized services for all of the School's translation and editing needs in both official languages
- Responsible for coordinating all of the School's linguistic services, including translation
- Manages, for the entire School, contracts with external providers and requests with the Translation Bureau

When to use the School's Linguistic Services

Most documents, including products and services designed by the School and offered to learners and client organizations, as well as all-staff communications, must be submitted to the School's Linguistic Services to ensure language quality and compliance with the Treasury Board Directive on the Management of Communications. Consult the Linguistic Services intranet page to learn about their services and how to submit a request

Tips and tricks

- All translations should be reviewed by someone with the necessary skills and in-depth knowledge of the content. Humans are better at detecting nuances than machines and avoid errors in meaning and interpretation.

- To promote quality translation, source texts should be written in a clear and simple language. This practice will also help make your texts more accessible.

- The Language Portal of Canada offers a multitude of tools that can facilitate the writing and translation of a document. Explore the portal to find out about new tools.

Translation of a document
Frequently asked questions

What are my obligations with respect to the translation?

All School employees must comply with the requirements of the Official Languages Act and the School's Official Languages Standard.

In what context is a professional translation recommended?

In most contexts, it is recommended to use a professional translation service, especially for documents intended for an external audience, official documents, and protected or classified documents. You need to contact Linguistic Services to request this service.

Moreover, in accordance with the School's Official Languages Standard, Linguistic Services must review all documents related to products and services developed by the School and offered to learners and client organizations before they can be published or posted online.

Are online translation tools reliable?

A variety of online tools are now available to produce the **first draft** of a translation. Examples include Google Translate and Reverso, or more advanced artificial intelligence-based tools such as DeepL. Their performance is highly variable and depends on multiple factors, including the quality and clarity of the source language.

Feel free to explore these tools. However, keep in mind that all documents translated using these tools need to be reviewed by someone with the necessary language skills.

Where can I get more tools and information on good translation practices?

For more information on good translation practices and access to tools that can make writing and translating a document easier, visit the Language Portal of Canada. Explore the portal to stay on top of new developments.

The School's Linguistic Services can also refer you to additional resources.