Translating language

Whether you are learning a brand-new language, studying in a non-native language, or if you're on holiday being able to quickly translate text between languages is invaluable. AI translation tools can be a useful tool when to overcome language barriers as they're quick and many are available online for free. New text generating tools like ChatGPT can also help with some basic translation.

Suggested tools:

Online translation services e.g., Google translate, DeepL

Text generation tools e.g., Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Perplexity

Example:

You are studying in your second language and while working on an assignment, you come across a phrase in a resource that you're not completely sure about. Unfortunately, its late and you don't have a native speaker who can help you check the meaning. However, you want to keep working and don't want to lose momentum.

To get a better understanding, you use an AI translation tool to translate the section back into your native language. The translation isn't perfect, but along with the original resource you are able to work out the meaning of the phrase and continue with your assignment. You can double check it with your teacher too to confirm.

You might find it helpful to use AI tools not just to translate the language but to check the meaning of phrases and words specific to certain languages. After all, sometimes the literal translation of a word or phrase isn't exactly what the writer using those words means – like with slang words.

For example, you are studying French and you come across a strange phrase in a book: *"chercher la petite bête."* You translate the phrase, and it means *"looking for the little beast."* but the novel has nothing about beasts. You ask an AI tool what is means in the context of the story and it explains that this is a French expression that actually means *"nitpicking"* or *"looking for small mistakes."*

Prompt Suggestions:

- Can you translate this sentence into [language] for me?

- I need help understanding this phrase in another language. Can you translate it into British English and tell me what it means?

  - How do you say 'Thank you for your help' in German/Italian/another language?

- I wrote a sentence in British English. Can you help me translate it into a different language? Can you translate 'I love reading books' into French?

- I found a word in another language I don't recognise. What language is [word] from and what does it mean in British English.

  - I need to write a short message in another language. Can you help me translate it?

Tips:

Lots of AI tools and services aren't made in the UK – if you are reading and writing in British English then be sure to specify that in your prompts or in the translation tool you use.

Some languages work better with AI translation tools than others because these tools are typically trained on data from languages that have lots of speakers. For less common languages including ones we use in the UK like Welsh, the translations might not be as good or as accurate.