



1. Generic preparatory exercises

These are generic exercises designed to be used with all IVY dialogues and monologues. If you would like to work with additional exercises for a specific monologue/dialogue, you can go to Specific Preparatory Exercises.

Go to the IVY environment, select a monologue or dialogue that you would like to work with and then work through the following preparatory exercises. The exercises are designed to show you the kind of preparation work you should carry out before an interpreting assignment.

1.1 Working with the brief

Read and analyse the interpreting brief.

If you have selected a monologue, you should consider:

- Who the speaker is
- Who the speaker is addressing and the relationship between the speaker and the audience (e.g. number of people in the audience; whether the speaker and audience are of equal status; the extent to which the speaker and audience share the same knowledge/background)
- How long the communication is likely to last
- The purpose of the communication
- What kind of language the speaker is likely to use (e.g. formal/informal; specialised/general/colloquial; polite)
- What kind of communicative function(s) will feature in the interview (e.g. providing information, presenting an institution or idea, expressing an opinion, giving reasons, etc.)

If you have selected a dialogue, you should consider:

- Who the interlocutors are and whether they are likely to know each other
- How long the communication is likely to last
- The purpose of the communication and goals of the participants (shared/conflicting)
- What kind of language the speakers are likely to use (e.g. formal/informal; specialised/general/colloquial; polite)
- What kind of communicative function(s) will feature in the interview (e.g. providing information, presenting an institution or idea, expressing an opinion, giving reasons, etc.)

Then do a sight translation of the brief into your other working language and note any terminological or other problems you come across while doing this.

1.2 Carrying out background research

This section helps you to prepare for the topic given in the brief by carrying out background research.

Look at the brief again. What topic(s) do you think the speaker(s) will talk about? Consider what you would do to prepare for this topic/these topics. Consider, for example:

- Sources you could use to find out about the topic
- Where you would find these sources
- How you can assess the relevance and reliability of these sources

Make a note of the source(s) you intend to use.

As well as the topic, what other information would it be useful to research before your interpreting assignment? Consider, for example:

- Companies or organisations that might be mentioned in the brief
- Events that might be mentioned in the brief
- Proper names (places/people) that might be mentioned in the brief

Is there any other information in the brief that you think you should research?

Make notes from your research on the topic(s) in the brief and on any other information you think might be useful for the interpreting assignment.

Using the BACKBONE video corpus for background research

An example of a resource that you could use for carrying out background research is the BACKBONE suite of video corpora (<http://purl.org/backbone/searchtool>). In these videos you will encounter the speaker(s) that you will encounter in your chosen interpreting assignment and the speakers will talk on a topic that is similar to or the same as in your chosen assignment.

Go to the BACKBONE search site and load the corpus of the language you want to work with.

You can use the Browse or the Section Search option to find a video (or video sections) that are relevant for your background research.

Search option 1: Browse

Find a video by clicking on the 'Browse' tab and scroll through the available interviews. Skim read the titles and summary descriptions to assess whether they might contain any information relating to the topic of your chosen assignment.

Watch the video(s) that you think are relevant by clicking on 'Watch video'. You can also view the interview transcript by clicking on 'Show transcript'.

Make notes on the topic and note down any words and terms that you are not familiar with or that need further research.

Search option 2: Section search

A more focused option is to retrieve sections from the video corpus that are relevant to the topic in your chosen assignment. To do this, click on the 'Section search' tab. From the 'Category filter', select the category (or categories) that you are researching. You can restrict the search using the other filters if required. Press the red 'Search!' button.

Look through the sections that are returned in the search results. Assess whether they are useful to your research. Watch the video sections that you consider relevant to your research.

Make notes on the topic and note down any words and terms that you are not familiar with or that need further research.

Using other resources for background research

This section invites you to think about where you could look for other resources for preparing a topic for an interpreting assignment.

What other resources could you use?

Why are they appropriate resources for researching the topic of the interpreting assignment?

Use these resources to prepare the topic of the interpreting assignment. Add this research to the notes you made from watching the BACKBONE video(s).

Now summarise what you have learnt about the topic. You could write down your summary, talk to a partner, or work in small groups.

1.3 Researching words, terms and phrases

As well as researching the topic and other information that you are given in the interpreting brief, it is also important to research relevant words and terms. This section helps you to learn where and how to research words and terms and to explore how they are used in different contexts.

Using the BACKBONE video corpus to research words, terms and phrases

In our sample setting, we can use the BACKBONE search site (<http://purl.org/backbone/searchtool>) to research words and terms.

Starting from your background search results (cf. 1.2), you can now use four additional functions on the BACKBONE corpus website to research the words and phrases you have noted down more in-depth and to create a glossary.

Annotation highlighting function

The Section search function includes the option to make words and phrases that are relevant for a specific topic visible in the transcript. To use this function, click on the 'Section search' tab, select the category (or categories) that you are researching and press the red 'Search!' button.

From the section search results, select the Annotation categories that you would like to see displayed in the section transcript and press the red 'Highlight selected annotation' button. Observe how the words and terms that are highlighted are used in context. Add any usage notes to your glossary.

Lexical lists function

Click on the 'Lexical lists' tab. This function takes all interview sections that relate to the topic categories you choose and creates a list of all words in these sections, sorted by their frequency. Note that the most frequency words in any language tend to be 'grammatical words' (e.g. articles). Scroll through the Lexical list to identify lexical words that relate to your topic and add them to your glossary.

The Lexical Lists search function also includes the option to search for "annotated words and phrases". If you select this option (from the drop-down menu above the red "Show list" button) with a topic category, you will get a list that shows only those words and phrases that have been annotated as being relevant for the selected topic.

Concordance function

Clicking on the 'Concordance' tab allows you to study the meaning and use of the entries in your glossary. Each concordance line gives you a micro-context for a word, showing how the word has been used by one or more speakers. Identify relevant patterns of use, and use the micro-contexts to find out about the word's meanings.

Co-occurrence function

Click on the 'Co-occurrence' tab. This function is used to find out whether two or more words that you have in mind are used together.

Add your findings from your research with these functions to your glossary.

If you cannot deduce the meaning or use of a particular word or term using these functions, refer to other sources e.g. specialist dictionaries and/or reliable online sources.



Always research words, terms, phrases or concepts that you are not familiar with.

Using other resources to research words, terms and phrases

This section invites you to think about other resources you can use to research words, terms and phrases to prepare for your chosen interpreting assignment.

What other resources could you use?

Why are they appropriate resources for researching the words, terms and phrases relevant to your chosen interpreting topic?

Use these resources to explore words, terms and phrases associated with your chosen topic. Think about how they are used as well as what they mean.

Add this research to the notes you made about words, terms and phrases from watching the BACKBONE video(s) and using the search functions.

Now prepare a summary of the topic again, this time using some of the words, terms and phrases that you have just researched. You could write down your summary, talk to a partner, or work in small groups.

If you have encountered problems with the use of background documents/resources in your research, discuss with a partner how to resolve them.

1.4 Exploring communicative functions

A 'communicative function' is the function of an utterance in communication and it reflects the purpose that the speaker intends the utterance to perform (e.g. providing information, presenting an institution, expressing an opinion, giving reasons). This section focuses on anticipating and preparing the communicative function(s) that the speakers may use in your chosen interpreting assignment.

Using the BACKBONE video corpus to explore communicative functions

Read the brief for your chosen interpreting assignment again. Is there any information in the brief that you can use to anticipate which communicative function(s) might be used during the assignment? If so, what is that information? How does that information lead you to anticipate (a) certain communicative function(s)? Make a note of the communicative function(s) you anticipate being used.

Now go to the BACKBONE video corpus in your chosen language. Click on the 'Section search' tab. From the 'Category filter', select the function that you are researching from the 'Communicative functions' category. Press the red 'Search!' button.

Look through the search results and note down any means of expressing the communicative function(s) that you did not know. Can you think of any other ways of expressing the same communicative function(s)?

What ways can you think of to express this/these communicative function(s) in your other language(s)?

1.5 Focusing on style and register

This section asks you to think about the style and register of different speakers and to think about how this may affect your interpretation.

Using the BACKBONE video corpus to focus on style and register

Read the brief for your chosen interpreting assignment again and the notes that you made about the kind of language the speaker(s) is/are likely to use and the purpose of the communication and goals of the participant(s).

If you are preparing a dialogue interpreting assignment, consider the following:

- The register of language you think the speakers will use
- The purpose of the communication and the goal(s) of the participants (i.e. do they share the same goal or are their goals different? What effect could the similarity/difference of goal have on their style and register of speech?)
- How well you think the speakers know each other and the effect their relationship might have on their register and style.

If you are preparing a monologue interpreting assignment, consider the following:

- The register of language you think the speaker will use
- The purpose of the communication and the speaker's goal

Now go to the BACKBONE video corpus in your chosen language. Use the 'Browse' function to search for the video relating to your chosen assignment. Watch the video.

How would you assess the style and register of the language the speaker(s) use in the video? Consider for example:

- Whether the speech is formal or informal
- Whether the speaker(s) use(s) a lot of specific terminology to get their point across
- What their style of speech is (e.g. do they use simple or complex sentences; do they have 'preferred' turns of phrase; do they speak fast or pause often; do they speak monotonously or with a lot of expression)
- Whether they use any polite speech

Do you think the register/style the speaker in the video uses is appropriate for the topic and purpose of the communication you have deduced from the interpreting brief? Discuss with a partner.

Think about how would you render the style and register in your other language.