

# Introduction to Simultaneous Interpreting Discussion Questions

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Simultaneous Interpreting from  
English

# 1. Why were the simultaneous interpreters at the Nuremberg trials considered pioneers in the field of interpreting?

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- Prior to the trials consecutive interpreting was used and no one had formal training in simultaneous or really knew how to go about it. Despite the lack of training and proper equipment, these interpreters began working in simultaneous interpreting and laid the groundwork for the development of the profession.

## 2. Why is it important to practice the component skills in the interpreting process while learning to interpret?

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- Practicing the component skills provides two advantages. First, knowing that you can perform the skill in isolation provides a sense of accomplishment, mastery, and confidence. Second, separating the skills allows you to see and learn the importance of each one before combining them in the more complex skill of simultaneous interpreting.

### 3. Why are strong word recognition skills important for interpreters?

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Interpreters must be able to recognize words quickly due to the complex demands of the interpreting process. Recognizing a word before it is fully delivered in the source language can save the interpreter time. Knowing the patterns of the source language and how words can and cannot be used can also reduce the cognitive load for the interpreter who has good word and pattern recognition skills. Interpreters cannot afford to spend time searching for words and their meanings during the interpretation process.

## 4. Why is control of attention important for interpreters?


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- Interpreters must manage their resources in two very important and different directions simultaneously. They must attend closely to the message in order to capture its meaning and essence fully and also selectively not attend to information and distractions that are not relevant to the interpreted event.

## 5. Neubert (2000) says approximation is important. What is it and why is it important?

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- Interpreters are not necessarily experts in the subjects they interpret and so must acquire the capacity to approximate the subject areas to an extent that allows understanding. The need to be open-ended, or flexible, leads to the need for creativity because the source text must be expressed in a different language, with different linguistic and cultural constraints. Creativity in the context of interpretation means that the interpreter uses strongly grounded linguistic skills to render the message effectively, not that the interpreter invents an interpretation that is unrelated to the source text.



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Simultaneous Interpreting  
Discussion Questions  
Unit 1 Consecutive Interpreting

Simultaneous Interpreting from  
English

# 1. What are the main differences between simultaneous and consecutive interpreting?

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- These are two different processes, each with its own advantages. The main distinguishing features are that simultaneous interpretation occurs while the source is ongoing and does not require the speaker to pause while the interpretation is rendered. Consecutive interpretation requires that the source message stop while the interpretation is rendered. Consecutive tends to put more demands on memory while simultaneous puts more demands on rapid processing. A message can be rendered into a target language using either consecutive or simultaneous interpreting.





## 2. What is the main advantage of using consecutive interpreting?

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- In most instances, the use of consecutive leads to greater accuracy, provided that the interpreter knows how to use consecutive appropriately.

### 3. What role does studying consecutive interpreting play in the development of simultaneous interpreting skills?

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- The development of consecutive interpreting skills helps develop the interpreting process because it allows additional time for comprehending the message and rendering the interpretation. If the underlying interpreting process is in place, the skill can be further developed and simultaneity can be added.

## 4. Why would studying consecutive be helpful for practicing interpreters?

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- Until recently CI has been overlooked in many interpreter education programs and working interpreters may not have had the opportunity to learn how to use consecutive interpreting and use it in daily practice where appropriate. It is helpful for practicing interpreters because it provides greater control of processing time and accuracy if they have had the opportunity to study it.

## 4. Why would studying consecutive be helpful for practicing interpreters? (cont'd)

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- Consecutive allows for greater accuracy but it is important to allow oneself time to learn how to use it. If more interpreters become confident in their ability to use consecutive interpreting, it becomes more likely that consecutive will be more widely and more appropriately used.

## 5. How does studying a model of consecutive interpretation help you develop consecutive interpreting skills?

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- The primary value of models is that they allow the unseen process of interpretation to be discussed in tangible ways. Models of the interpretation process are usually of the simultaneous interpreting process. A model of consecutive is included here to show the cognitive aspects of the process.

## 6. In which settings could consecutive interpreting be used?

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- Certain settings may lend themselves to consecutive interpreting such as medical or legal interviews or other situations where accuracy is crucial. It can also be used in other situations that are less demanding. In any case, the interpreter must know how to use the technique.

## 7. What is the value of studying a model of interpretation?

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- Models of interpretation are theoretical ideas about how the interpreting process may be explained. Models can be useful when studying interpretation because models help break down a complex process into smaller pieces that can be studied and mastered. Knowing about a model allows us to have a shared language and terminology to discuss the complex issues associated with interpreting.

8. List the components of Gile's 2001 model of consecutive interpretation. Be sure you understand and can explain all components.

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○ Listening phase

- 1. The listening effort
- 2. The production effort
- 3. The short-term memory effort

○ Reformulation phase

- 1. Note-reading effort-read and deciphers one's own notes
- 2. Long-term memory effort for retrieving information from long-term memory
- 3. Production effort for producing the message in the target language



## 9. What are the advantages of using consecutive interpreting?

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- The main advantage of consecutive interpreting is that it allows for greater accuracy than simultaneous interpreting. Mikkelsen (1995) notes that consecutive interpreting allows the interpreter to include information that is crucial to the message but that might be omitted during the pressures of simultaneous interpreting.

## 9. What are the advantages of using consecutive interpreting? (cont'd)

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- Examples include vocal intonation, pauses and repetitions. Russell (2002) reviewed the literature on consecutive interpreting and found that “consecutive interpreting results in much greater accuracy in the transmission of the message” Another advantage of consecutive interpreting is additional time for reformulation and expression, without ongoing input of the source language.