

Language Translations

Many units of the National Park system want waysides that effectively communicate to bilingual audiences. To date, parks have worked with Harpers Ferry Center to develop more Spanish and English bilingual waysides than any other language. NPS waysides have also included French, German, Hawaiian, Cherokee, Chamorro, and Japanese texts.

Interpretively effective translation of wayside exhibit texts enables visitors who do not speak English or who have limited use of English to enjoy and make meaningful connections to national park site resources. Each non-English block of translated text must work with the graphics to achieve the stated purpose of the wayside exhibit, regardless of what language is used.

General Requirements

No later than with the submittal of the *Wayside Proposal*, the Contractor shall identify what text elements of the waysides will (or will not) be translated into a second language, and what translation, text-fitting, and editing services and resources are available to meet the needs for second language review and editing as the project develops.

Actual translation of texts for each new wayside shall be done **after approval of the Wayside Plan**, so that the translation team is working from text that has been reviewed, adjusted, and approved by park staff and subject matter experts.

All translations from English to target languages for bilingual wayside exhibits shall be created, reviewed, revised, and edited by professional translation **human** providers.

Travel to the actual sites where the new exhibits will be installed by translator/editors is not required, but has proven cost effective and helpful in other media translation efforts.

Machine translations generated by software or Internet websites will be rejected.

Draft translation texts shall be submitted to the COR as electronic Microsoft Word files, as well as integrated layouts showing both graphics and the bilingual texts in place.

The Contractor shall not proceed to panel production until the final revised translated texts are approved by the COR.

Specific Requirements for Bilingual Wayside Exhibits

While preparing translation of original wayside text for the *Wayside Plan*, the Contractor shall be guided by the following principles and specifications:

Leave Room for Two in the Layout.

Written English is one of the most compact modern languages. Most other languages require significantly more line space to express equivalent thoughts in print. For example, a typical Spanish translation will be 125–140% larger than the original English text.

Designers and writers who copy the size of their English text blocks and paste them alongside to represent the second language texts will run into serious trouble. Even with rigorous editing in the second language, more room will be needed.

Avoid mechanical word-for-word translations.

Translated texts do not need to match the exact word order of the original English. The best non-English titles to convey important interpretive themes and engage immediate visitor interest are usually **not** exact translations of the original English titles.

No Baby Talk

Park visitors who only read Spanish, German, French, or Japanese should be **just as effectively engaged**—and interpretively provoked — as English-only readers. Non-English readers should not be bored by a dumbed-down version of their language.

No Tortured Grammar and Syntax

When a translator forces another language to mirror the original order of English thoughts, the results read in an awkward and unnatural way. Thoughts need to flow effectively in both language blocks.

Do Not Assume Everybody Understands Some English

Some wayside projects have placed false hopes in the notion that visitors will be able to make sense with just a partial translation of the original English labels and texts. This does no one a service. Write second language texts based on the assumption that the audience does not understand a word of English, especially when dealing with safety information.

Use vocabulary that is international, not a regional dialect.

Match the general vocabularies and level of complexity heard on news broadcasts on international cable channels. See encyclopedia Internet sites in the target language as a measurement of how complex is considered acceptable for your target audience.

Readily available examples of this standard for language complexity are <http://www.wikipedia.org>, for multiple non-English languages, the online German encyclopedia <http://www.encyclopediagermanica.com>, or the online *Enciclopedia hispánica* seen at <http://mexico.planetasaber.com/>.

Treat Second Languages with Parity.

Placing a second language text block below an English text block, or making it a smaller font so it fits, is problematic. Some non-English-speaking visitors see this kind of treatment as insulting. Side-by-side text block placement avoids this problem.

Capitalize non-English wayside texts by their rules, not English rules.

The rules of what words are capitalized differ significantly from language to language. Provide translated wayside exhibit texts that conform to guidance in capitalization found in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, Chapter 10, or in style manuals for major newspapers published in the target language.

Punctuate non-English wayside texts by their rules, not English rules.

Punctuation rules differ from language to language. Provide translated wayside exhibit texts that conform to guidance found in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, or in style manuals for major newspapers published in the target language.

Spell with Accented letters in non-English wayside texts

Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Hawaiian, and many other languages require accents, tildes, umlauts, and dieresis above certain letters. When these marks are left out, the word is considered to be spelled wrong, or may have an entirely different meaning. NPS Rawlinson typeface, required for this contract, includes all special language marks for the above listed languages. A special version of Adobe Frutiger created by the NPS called HFrutiger includes the additional Hawaiian marks.

Check that translated wayside exhibit texts have all words spelled correctly—including accents and other diacritical markings — conforming to standard reference dictionaries published in the target language.

Geographic names and names of persons in non-English wayside texts

Do not translate geographic place names or the names of persons.

Where a place name differs from its English form and is widely known in the target language, for example LONDON vs. LONDRES (Spanish) or COLOGNE vs. KOLN (German), use the most widely known place name form for the intended audience.

Time and date formats in non-English wayside texts

Convert dates and times in the original English wayside exhibit texts to the standard international day-month-year date format and the 24-hour international time format instead of the A.M. and P.M. convention.

Metric units of measurement in non-English wayside texts

Convert all units of measurement into metric equivalents for non-English-speaking audiences **unless specifically requested not to do so** by the client park staff.

All conversions should **preserve the degree of precision** of the original English text. For example, an English text that calls a trail "*about a quarter of a mile long*" should not be converted to 402.33 meters; this implies a degree of exactness that the original English did not have. The dynamic equivalent of a *about a quarter mile* would be *about 400 meters*.

Trail distances below 1 kilometer will be stated in rounded off hundreds of meters. Distances greater than 1 kilometer may be stated in rounded off tenths of kilometers.

Numeric separators in non-English wayside texts

Submit translated texts with numbers larger than one thousand separated in the manner most widely used by the target language audience. In many cases, this will be periods where in English commas divide the thousands and millions, and a comma to divide the "decimal point" for smaller quantities below a single unit.

Dividing words for line breaks in non-English wayside texts

Word division by syllable rules differ from language to language. Some major modern languages do not allow words to be divided at the end of a line of text. Try not to have texts with many divided words at the end of a line of text. Submit translated wayside exhibit texts with syllable breaks that conform to guidance found in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, or in style manuals for major newspapers published in the target language.

Names of plants and animals in non-English wayside texts

Common names do not exist in all languages for all flora and fauna found in national park sites. Sometimes there are multiple common names for a single species, with different countries and regions having variants based on indigenous or non-European names.

Find what common names do exist in the target language for the plants and animals cited in English wayside exhibit texts, working from the recognized scientific name for each species.

Where conflict exists in competing common names in a non-English wayside text, use the common name from the nearest country or region speaking the target language. Example: the turkey vulture *Cathartes aura* is known by many names in the Spanish-speaking world — AURA TIÑOSA in Cuba and Puerto Rico, ZOPILOTE in México, GALLINAZO DE CABEZA ROJA in Perú, and BUITRE DE CABEZA ROJA in Spain. For a wayside in Arizona, use ZOPILOTE. But for a bilingual wayside in the Everglades in South Florida, use AURA TIÑOSA.

Where no common name exists for a plant or animal in the target language, provide a generic term followed by the scientific name for that species, e.g. " the tree *Acer rubrum*" or "the fish *Caranx hippos*."