Mediation

Mediation is about helping people with different languages understand each other.

To do that successfully, you have to use different skills. Don’t translate word for word – that’s usually not helpful and also not necessary.

Instead, use the information on this page to learn how to be a good mediator.

(A) How does mediation work?

(1) Source and target

When you mediate there is always a **source text** [Quelltext] (which can also be spoken language) and a **target text** [Zieltext] (which can also be spoken language output).

Before you start mediating, you should **ask yourself** what the **purpose** of the text is (Does it inform in a neutral way? Does the author want to convince the reader of something? etc.) You, as the **mediator, should take a neutral position**.

(2) Who for?

In addition, there’s the **person you are mediating for,** the person who doesn’t understand the language of the source text. This person is called the **addressee** [Adressat:in] because you address [hier: an jemanden richten] your output to them.

(3) Context

Finally, there’s the **context** in which mediation takes place. Here, you have to think about the following aspects:

1. What’s the **register** [Sprachniveau] and the **style** [Stil] of the source text?
    - Is the source text very formal or informal? Does the source text use a very scientific style or is it more casual [ungezwungen]?
    - Should register and style stay the same for my addressee or do I have to change them so that the addressee understands better?
    - If the source text uses slang etc. you should usually make your target text more neutral and use standard English.

2. Based on the context, **which information can I omit [weglassen] and do I have to add anything** for my addressee to understand the source text? For example, if the source text contains many examples it might be enough to just name one. On the other hand, if the source text refers to something that your addressee might not know, you might have to add an explanation about it.

3. What's the **purpose** of your mediation? That means: why is it necessary to mediate and what does this mean for your target text?

(B) Necessary Skills

For mediation, you need different language skills. You'll find explanations and guidelines for them in the skills section of your English textbook.

- Skimming and scanning
- Summarising
- Vocab skills (knowing words but also guessing unknown words from the context)
- Paraphrasing [umschreiben]

(C) Example: Tour of London

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

You're a tourist in London with your family. Your uncle is part of your group and he doesn't speak any English. You're sitting next to him and mediate to him what the tour guide says.



TASK

1. From the introduction above, write down what you know about the mediation task. Identify and describe:
    1. the addressee and what this means for your target text,
    2. the sort of target text you have to produce based on the context,
    3. the register and style you should use and
    4. the purpose of the mediation.
2. Compare the two versions given below to learn what mediation is about. Describe how the target text is different from the original and what its register and style are like.

Transcript of the original audio	Mediated version
Tour guide: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this fantastic tour of London by bus. My name's Greg and I'm your guide this afternoon on our tour of London. As you can see, we're on an open-top bus, so you can see all the attractions from your seat and you don't need to walk anywhere. And please don't worry about the rain, I'm sure it'll stop soon. A-a-and please ask any questions at any time.	Er begrüßt alle, er heißt Greg und ist unser Fremdenführer. Er meint, der offene Bus sei toll, um alle Attraktionen gut zu sehen, der Regen werde sicher bald aufhören. Wir können jederzeit Fragen stellen.
Tourist 1: I have a question. Tour guide: Yes?	–
Tourist 1: Do you have extra umbrellas? I mean, if it rains a lot.	Sie fragt, ob es Schirme gibt.
Tour guide: Err, no, we don't have any extra umbrellas, but don't worry, I'm sure the rain will stop soon. Right, OK, so where are we going on our wonderful tour? Well, the tour takes two hours and we are going to visit all the famous sites. First we'll see Madame Tussauds, the museum with wax models of famous people and celebrities, then we'll drive along the most famous shopping street in the world, Oxford Street. After that we'll see the famous clock Big Ben and The Houses of Parliament. As we drive along the river you'll see the popular attraction, the London Eye, from which you can see the whole city on a sunny day. Then we'll see Tower Bridge and the famous Tower of London before arriving at Buckingham Palace, just in time for a cup of tea with the Queen.	Sie haben keine extra Schirme. Die Tour dauert zwei Stunden und besucht alle berühmten Attraktionen: Zuerst Madame Tussaud's, dann zur Oxford Street (er sagt: Die berühmteste Einkaufsstraße der Welt). Dann zum Big Ben und zu den Houses of Parliament und dann am Fluss das London Eye. An einem sonnigen Tag kann man von dort die ganze Stadt sehen. Dann zur Tower Bridge und zum Tower von London. Am Ende kommen wir zum Buckingham Palace und können einen Tee mit der Queen trinken, sagt er.
Tourist 2: Is that included in the tour? A cup of tea with the Queen?	Sie will wissen, ob der Tee mit der Queen im Preis inbegriffen sei.
Tour guide: Err, well, no, not exactly, but there's a lovely café near the palace where you can get a cup of tea.	Der Tee mit der Queen ist nicht im Preis enthalten. Es gebe aber am Buckingham Palace ein schönes Café, wo man einen Tee trinken könne.
Tourist 1: I have another question. Tour guide: Yes?	–
Tourist 1: Can we have our money back? We're getting off the bus.	Sie will ihr Geld zurück, weil sie doch nicht mitfahren möchte.
Tour guide: Err, well, you see … Oh – the rain is getting very heavy … Quick! Run! Everyone off the bus! …	Wir sollen alle schnell runter vom Bus.