



FBI LINGUISTICS: An Inside Look

Knowledge of foreign languages and cultures is a significant asset to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Linguists provide valuable intelligence about criminal and terrorist activity on American soil that could potentially damage national security and risk American lives. Their unique talents also help to identify and prevent foreign counterintelligence threats, cases of corruption, espionage, cyber crime, human trafficking and other offenses.

Generally, FBI Linguists begin their careers as Contract Linguists; the agency may invite the best Contract Linguists to join as full-time Language Analysts.

More than Just Words

FBI Linguists' duties can include:

- » Translating written or audio materials, normally from a foreign language into English.
- » Interpreting during a crucial interview of a subject of an investigation or a visit from a foreign dignitary.
- » Providing cultural expertise relating to any matter over which the FBI has jurisdiction

Linguists also may testify at trials, help interview suspects, victims and witnesses and occasionally accompany Special Agents on searches or arrests. Contract Linguists are required to work on-site, but may be asked to travel on a temporary duty assignment, such as serving as an interpreter at an overseas training session.

The FBI has Contract Linguist opportunities in many major U.S. metropolitan areas, as well as with the National Virtual Translation Center (NVTC). Applicants can choose to work with either organizations.

Professional Proficiency Required

Successful candidates must exhibit proficiency in English and pass the required components of the FBI's Foreign Language Test Battery. The FBI looks for candidates with skill levels who score in the general professional proficiency range according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale (www.govtilr.org).

There are no official study guides for the series of tests. To prepare for the translation portion of the test, you may wish to read newspapers written in the foreign language and practice translating them into English. Watching foreign language news programs may also be useful.



Foreign Language Test Battery: What You Need to Know

The FBI's Foreign Language Test Battery consists of listening, reading, translating and speaking tests:

 **Listening Comprehension Test**
Hear foreign language conversations and answer multiple-choice or short-answer questions in English. For some languages, you may be asked to write a summary of the conversation in English.

 **Reading Comprehension Test**
Answer multiple-choice questions in English about the content of short passages written in the foreign language.

 **Translation Test** Translate short passages in the language fully and faithfully into English, communicating everything in the original passage. The test is scored for accuracy of content and quality of expression.

 **English Composition Test**
Required if a translation test is unavailable; involves writing an essay on a given topic. For both translations and compositions, you are allowed to use a non-electronic dictionary.

 **Speaking Tests** After passing the written tests, you will take speaking tests in the foreign language and English. These tests consist of a structured conversation conducted via phone with native speakers of the test language.

We seek those fluent in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Urdu or Vietnamese among many others.



OUR core VALUES:

Rigorous Obedience to the Constitution

Respect

Compassion

Fairness

Integrity

Accountability

Leadership

Diversity

Becoming an FBI Linguist Takes Dedication

The role of an FBI Linguist is a demanding and rewarding job and requires stringent entry qualifications. Those who complete the process become part of an elite team that keeps our country safe.

Minimum Qualifications

All FBI Linguists and Language Analysts begin as Contract Linguists.* To apply, you must:

- » Be at least 18 years old.
- » Be a U.S. citizen. If you have dual citizenship, it is not a requirement that you renounce it, but you must be willing to renounce if asked.
- » Have lived in the United States for three of the last five years, unless employed outside of the country by the federal government.
- » Be able to obtain a Top-Secret Clearance.
- » Be willing to undergo a language proficiency test battery, polygraph and comprehensive background investigation.
- » Be available to work on-site at least 20 hours a week and perform work as mutually agreed upon with the local FBI office.

Automatic Disqualifiers

- » Non-U.S. citizenship.
- » Conviction of a felony.
- » Violation of the FBI Employment Drug Policy.
- » Default on a student loan insured by the U.S. government.
- » Failure to register with the Selective Service System (males only).
- » Knowingly or willfully engaged in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. government by force.
- » Failure to file income tax returns.

** Contract Linguists are considered self-employed and are not eligible to receive government benefits. They earn an hourly rate as determined by their language proficiency levels, specialized experience and the need for their languages in current FBI initiatives. Hourly rates range from \$29 to \$41.*

Applicant Process

If you're inspired by our mission and eager to start a career like no other, here's what you need to know about the application process:

STEP 1 INFORM & APPLY

Visit the Language Talent Network at FBIJobs.gov.

STEP 2 TESTING

If selected, complete required language testing.

STEP 3 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

If qualified, you will undergo an intensive background investigation, including:

- » Polygraph examination.
- » Interviews with former and current colleagues, neighbors, friends, etc.
- » Credit and records checks.

Be aware that the background investigation process can take a year or more.

STEP 4 BASIC ORDERING AGREEMENT (BOA) & WORK ORDER

If approved, sign the BOA and work order.

