

MSU Translation Competition 2024: Prix de la meilleure traduction en français

The MSU Translation Center and the Department of Romance and Classical Studies are proud to present the first official MSU Translation Competition. As a way of engaging and improving their language skills outside the classroom, MSU undergraduate students that study or speak Spanish or French are invited to try their hand at literary translation.

Participants will submit the following:

1. An English Translation of a literary source text written in French (around 250 words)
2. Write a reflection detailing your translation process (Min: 500 words)

Evaluation Criteria

1. Translation

- a. Participants will be evaluated on their ability to capture the meaning, content, and voice of the original text. In doing so, they are expected to use both direct and indirect translation techniques. Special attention will be paid to specific cultural references and expressions and how the participant decides to represent these in English. Lastly, participants will need to ensure that their text sounds “natural” in English, conforming to English conventions around grammar and vocabulary.
- b. The translation will account for 80% of the overall score.

2. Reflection

- a. Participants will be evaluated on how completely they fulfilled the expectations laid out in the reflection prompt, as well as for correct grammar and spelling.
- b. The reflection will account for 20% of the overall score.

Translations will be evaluated by faculty from the French department as well as personnel from the Translation Center. To see specific evaluation criteria, please consult the rubric at the end of this PDF. If you have any questions, reach out to translat@msu.edu or sebreza@msu.edu.

Awards:

- Financial award and certificate for the best translation and reflection
- Recognition and Publication of the translation on MSU websites like the RCS blog and the Translation Center page

Final submissions must be sent as a single PDF or Word Document to translat@msu.edu with the subject line written as follows: Translation FRN - Last Name, First Name

[Due Date Extended To April 22nd!](#)

Bonne chance !

Texte source :

La Place, Annie Ernaux

J'ai passé les épreuves pratiques du Capes dans un lycée de Lyon, à la Croix-Rousse. Un lycée neuf, avec des plantes vertes dans la partie réservée à l'administration et au corps enseignant, une bibliothèque au sol en moquette sable. J'ai attendu là qu'on vienne me chercher pour faire mon cours, objet de l'épreuve, devant l'inspecteur et deux assesseurs, des profs de lettres très confirmés. Une femme corrigeait des copies avec hauteur, sans hésiter. Il suffisait de franchir correctement l'heure suivante pour être autorisée à faire comme elle toute ma vie. Devant une classe de première, des matheux, j'ai expliqué vingt-cinq lignes - il fallait les numéroter - du *Père Goriot* de Balzac. "Vous les avez traînés, vos élèves", m'a reproché l'inspecteur ensuite, dans le bureau du proviseur. Il était assis entre les deux assesseurs, un homme et une femme myope avec des chaussures roses. Moi en face. Pendant un quart d'heure, il a mélangé critiques, éloges, conseils, et j'écoutais à peine, me demandant si tout cela signifiait que j'étais reçue. D'un seul coup, d'un même élan, ils se sont levés tous trois, l'air grave. Je me suis levée aussi, précipitamment. L'inspecteur m'a tendu la main. Puis, en me regardant bien en face : "Madame, je vous félicite." Les autres ont répété "je vous félicite" et m'ont serré la main, mais la femme avec un sourire.

Description d'auteur:

Annie Ernaux est née à Lillebonne et elle a passé toute sa jeunesse à Yvetot, en Normandie. Agrégée de lettres modernes, elle a enseigné à Annecy, Pontoise et au Centre national d'enseignement à distance. Elle vit dans le Val-d'Oise, à Cergy. En 2022, Annie Ernaux a reçu le prix Nobel de littérature pour l'ensemble de son œuvre.

Reflection

Participants are expected to reflect and think critically during the translation process. To gain insight into their process, they are expected to write a reflection of at least 500 words about their translation.

Participants will consider the following:

- How they tried to capture the content, meaning, and voice of the source text
- How they handled and incorporated cultural references potentially unfamiliar to the target audience
- How they overcame cultural, grammatical, and lexical difficulties in the source text
- How they made ensured that the text sounded smooth and idiomatic in the target language

In all, they will explain at least 3 specific elements of their translation as well as 3 major challenges or difficulties they encountered in the source text.

Reflections will be evaluated on their ability to address the criteria above, the thoughtfulness of their reflection, and formal and grammatical correctness of their reflection.

Translation Rubric

| | Grammar and Spelling (10%) | Meaning and Content (25%) | Style (25%) | Ease of Translation (20%) | Student Reflection (20%) |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| 4 | The final work has few to no grammar and/or spelling mistakes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meaning and content of the source text are accurately reflected in the translation Cultural and linguistic nuances are recognized and reflected in the translation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled word choice and use of translation techniques (direct and indirect) replicate the voice and style of the original text in the target language Tone is consistent and closely mirrors that of the source text | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is smooth and idiomatic Sentences “flow” and match stylistic codes of the target language Word choice captures the nuances of the source text while being appropriate and natural in the target language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtfully and carefully reflects on the translation process Translation choices, difficulties, and challenges are discussed in considerable detail Few to no spelling or grammar mistakes Respects the criteria outlined in the prompt |
| 3 | The final work has a few notable grammar and/or spelling mistakes, but these do not impede readability of the text | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meaning and content of the source text are generally accurately reflected in the translation Cultural and linguistic nuances are generally reflected in the translation but may have occasionally been misunderstood or omitted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally skilled word choice and use of translation techniques (direct and indirect) often replicate the voice and style of the original text in the target language, although the presence of the translator is sometimes felt Tone is generally consistent and mirrors that of the source text, but occasionally strays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is generally smooth and idiomatic Sentences generally flow and fit target language conventions, but may occasionally read as “clunky” Word choice generally captures the nuances of the source texts but might not always sound natural in the target language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection is generally thoughtful Translation choices, difficulties and challenges are discussed in some detail Some spelling and grammar mistakes Respects most of the criteria outlined in the prompt |

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|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| 2 | <p>The final work has several notable grammar and/or spelling mistakes that occasionally impede readability of the text.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning and culture of the source text are reflected but several elements are missing • Attempts are made to capture cultural and linguistic nuances but they frequently misunderstood or misrepresented in the translation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word choice and use of translation techniques (direct and indirect) sometimes replicates the voice and style of the original text in the target language, but the presence of the translator is generally felt • Tone is inconsistent and only occasionally follows the source text | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is often unidiomatic • Sentences and word choice may not match stylistic or cultural norms in the target language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some reflection on the translation process • Some translation choices, difficulties, and challenges are mentioned but with little detail or discussion • Respects most of the criteria outlined in the prompt |
| 1 | <p>The final work has many notable grammar and/or spelling mistakes that actively impede readability of the text.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical components of the meaning and content of the source text are missing • Cultural and linguistic nuances are not understood and/or reflected in the translation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice and style of the original text is not reflected in the translated work; the translator is very visible • Tone does not follow the source text | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is unidiomatic and overly conforms to the source language • Many sentences and words are translated literally, producing cumbersome structures and unusual vocabulary for the target language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to no reflection on the translation process • Translation choices, difficulties, and challenges are discussed in insufficient detail or are not discussed at all • Does not respect the criteria outlined in the prompt |