

Preparing for A105: Approaches to translation

From Book 3, *Cultural Encounters*, 6.2 Translating Sophocles' *Antigone*, p.207.

Approaches to translation

... [T]here is no rigid system of definition or classification of what a translation should be ... However, a very broad spectrum of approaches might include those summarised below.

Translation that attempts above all to be *accurate*, communicating the *letter* of the original. The emphasis is on understanding and communicating the original Greek and assumes that it has a settled meaning which can be transferred into another language.

Translation that concentrates on communicating the *spirit* of the original. This approach recognises that the idioms and cultural frameworks of ancient and modern are not congruent, but works on the basis that the sense and the 'feel' of the source text and context can be represented. The translator therefore also has to make judgements about what will be effective in the language of the target audience/readers.

Pragmatic translation, which places particular emphasis on the target language and culture and the purposes for which the translation is made.

You can see that there are overlaps between these approaches but that the emphasis shifts along a line from the primacy of the Greek source language to the primacy of the modern language and its users.