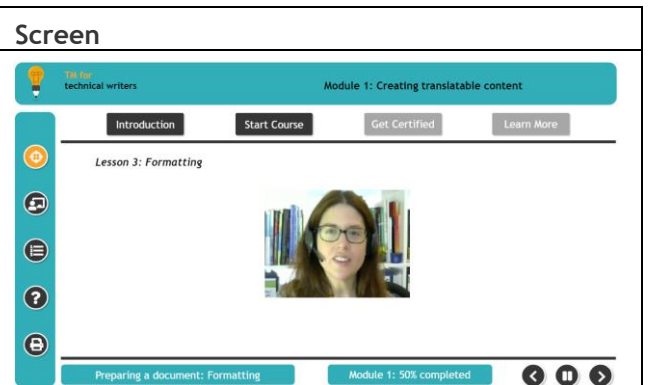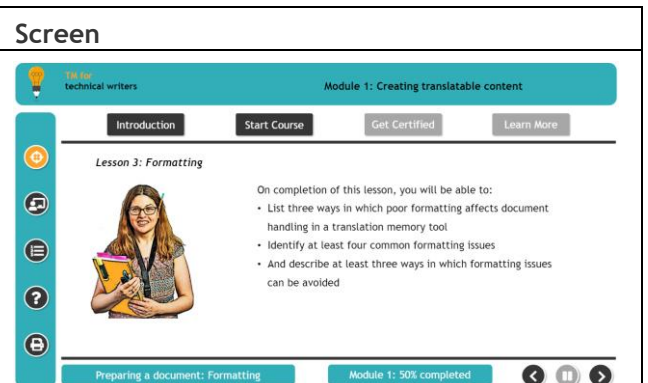# Lesson 3: Formatting

## Lesson overview

### Screen 1

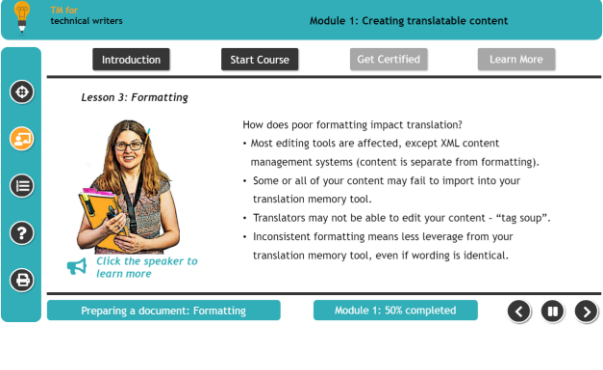| Welcome | Screen |
|---|---|
| How a text is written is often the first thing people notice. How that text is formatted is less obvious. Yet poor formatting can make or break a translation. In this lesson, we will look at the impact that document formatting can have on translation, and we will learn how to format a document properly so that it can be processed in a translation memory tool such as Trados Studio. | |

### Screen 2

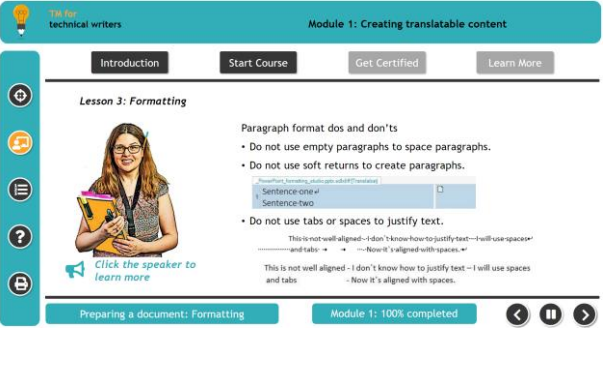| Objectives | Screen |
|---|---|
| On completion of this lesson, you will be able to:<br>• List three ways in which poor formatting affects document handling in a translation memory tool<br>• Identify at least four common formatting issues<br>• And describe at least three ways in which formatting issues can be avoided | |

## Lesson Content

### Screen 1

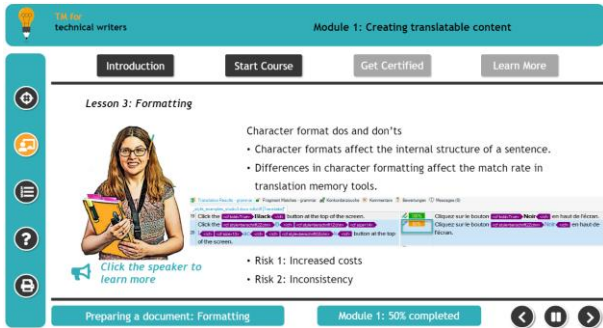| How does poor formatting impact translation? | Screen |
|---|---|
| More and more companies are moving their documentation to XML content management systems that separate content from formatting. However, tools such as Word, FrameMaker, InDesign and PowerPoint, in which content and formatting are closely linked, are still very common. If you are using one of these tools, poor formatting can impact translation in three ways:<br><br>• Firstly, parts of your content might be missing after you import your document into a translation memory tool such as Trados Studio. In fact, the document might not be imported at all.<br><br>• Secondly, it might prove difficult for translators to edit your content. We will talk about the "tag soup" issue in a few minutes.<br><br>• And thirdly, even if you use the same wording for multiple sentences, the leverage from your translation memory will drop if these sentences are not identically formatted. |  |

### Screen 2

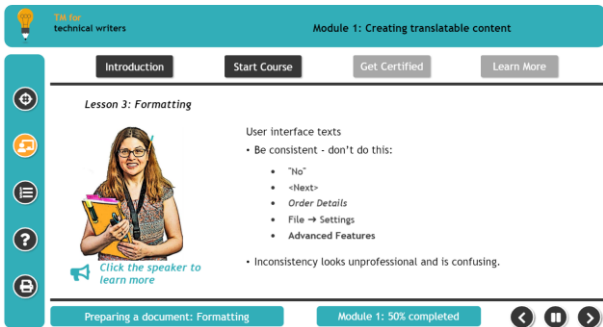| Paragraph format dos and don'ts | Screen |
|---|---|
| So how do you know if your document is properly formatted? Some of these examples may sound a little unlikely, but trust me, in my career as a translator and technical writer, I have seen every one of these on multiple occasions.<br><br>• Do not use empty paragraphs for spacing between paragraphs. Instead, define standard paragraph formats with appropriate spacing, and use these formats consistently throughout your document.<br><br>• Do not use soft returns to create paragraphs. You could end up with two sentences in a single segment, like this. This will reduce the match rate in Trados Studio, and increase your translation costs.<br><br>• Do not use tabs or spaces to justify text. This looks like this for your translators. And because sentence length varies from language to language, the translated document could look end up looking like this. Instead, configure the relevant paragraph format with correct indenting so that it is applied whenever the paragraph format is used. |  |

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## Screen 3

| Character format dos and don'ts | Screen |
|---|---|
| Character formats are inline. This means that they affect the internal structure of a sentence.<br><br>This also means that when you import a document into Trados Studio, inconsistencies in character formatting can affect the match rate.<br><br>A sentence that could have been an exact match is suddenly a fuzzy match, like this.<br><br>This not only costs more to translate – there is also the risk that translators might not use the fuzzy match suggested by the translation memory, and create completely new translations for your sentence.<br><br>This is how inconsistencies can creep into a translation memory database. So, make sure to define standard character formats and to use them consistently. |  |

## Screen 4

| User interface texts | Screen |
|---|---|
| Just recently I saw a document in which user interface text was marked in five different ways:<br>• "No"<br>• <Next><br>• *Order Details*<br>• File ➜ Settings<br>• **Advanced Features**<br><br>Not only does this look unprofessional it is very confusing for translators. They can't be sure if the text is an interface item or if it should be translated. |  |

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## Screen 5

| Converted documents and fields | Screen |
|---|---|
| Beware of converted documents. They might look good, but they often result in what is known as "tag soup". <br><br> In this example, individual letters of words (rather than the whole word) have been formatted in bold. This sort of thing is virtually impossible to translate. <br><br> Fields can also cause problems. Depending on how they have been formatted, they not be interpreted properly by translation memory tools. <br><br> So, do your translators a favor and check your files before starting the translation workflow. I'll explain how to do just that in Module 3 of this course. |  |

## Screen 6

| Closing | Screen |
|---|---|
| So, that was quite a lot of information. I've added some links on tag soup on this slide. And if you want to know even more, I've included some additional resources on formatting documents in the Learn More section. You can take a look at these at once you have completed this module. |  |

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## Lesson Summary

| Summary | Screen |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Format your documents correctly – otherwise:<ul><li>They may not be imported properly into translation memory tools</li><li>Translators may not be able to edit them easily</li><li>The leverage from your translation memory will suffer</li></ul></li><li>Avoid manual formatting – use standard character formats and paragraph formats instead.</li><li>Beware of converted documents – they often contain formatting issues.</li><li>Flag user interface items consistently.</li></ul> | |

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