Lesson 2.

**What is a CAT tool?**

Computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools provide a range of features to help translators convert the meaning of text from one language into another consistently and with speed.

Modern CAT tools take a hybrid approach that enables translators and translation project managers to work seamlessly online or offline, using desktop tools or browsers, or even on the go using mobile apps.

**How do CAT tools work?**

CAT tools are designed to automate translation-related tasks to make translators faster and more efficient. Translators upload the source document to the application and the interface will split it into segments (phrases, sentences or paragraphs) for them to translate. These source segments and their corresponding translations are then stored in a database known as a [translation memory](https://www.trados.com/learning/topic/translation-memory/) and can be recalled later during the translation process. Over time your translation memories will become bigger and will offer more translation matches, significantly improving your efficiency and increasing consistency.

**What are the benefits of CAT tools?**

With the aid of a CAT tool, translators can:

* **Foster consistency:** Thanks to the use of translation memories and termbases, you can repurpose previous translation efforts to provide consistent results on every project.
* **Speed up turnaround times:** The more content you can leverage from the combination of translation memories, terminology and machine translation, the faster your translation process will become.
* **Improve quality:** With an array of automated QA functions designed to compensate for human error (such as spellcheckers, grammar algorithms, and number verifiers), you can ensure your translations are accurate and consistent.
* **Increase margins:** With less time manually typing, editing and formatting content, you will be able to focus on what makes you money: translation. What’s more, you can pass these benefits on to your customers, making it a win-win situation for everyone.

**What are the core components of a CAT tool?**

There are many CAT tools on the market today, all with varying features included. These are the most common:

* Translation memory
* Termbases
* Integrated [machine translation](https://www.trados.com/learning/topic/machine-translation/)
* Language quality assurance