



translationAcademy

Translation Manual Volume 2

Version 5

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Introduction to translationAcademy

Welcome to translationAcademy

The "translationAcademy" is intended to enable anyone, anywhere to equip themselves so that they will be able to make high-quality translations of biblical content into their own language. translationAcademy is designed to be highly flexible. It can be used in a systematic, in-advance approach or it can be used for just-in-time learning (or both, as needed). It is modular in structure.

This page answers the question:

What is translationAcademy?

translationAcademy contains the following sections:

- [Introduction](#) - introduces the unfoldingWord project
- [Process Manual](#) - answers the question "what next?"
- [Translation Manual](#) - explains the basics of translation theory and practical translation helps
- [Checking Manual](#) - explains the basics of checking theory and best practices
- [Audio Manual](#) - How to do high quality audio recordings
- [Gateway Languages Manual](#) - explains issues specific to the Gateway Languages

Several of the manuals are separated into two volumes. Volume 1 of each manual covers the basics of that subject while volume 2 goes more in depth. In general, if a module is needed to translate and publish Open Bible Stories, then it is included in volume 1, if not, then it is included in volume 2.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[The unfoldingWord Project](#)

Why We Translate the Bible

The purpose of translationAcademy is to train you to become a Bible translator. Translating God's Word into your language to help your people grow as disciples of Jesus is an important task. You must be committed to this task, take your responsibility seriously, and pray that the Lord will help you.

God has spoken to us in the Bible. He inspired the writers of the Bible to write his Word using the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek languages. There were about 40 different authors writing from around 1400 B.C. to A.D. 100. These documents were written in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. By recording his Word in those languages, God ensured that the people at those times and in those places could understand it.

Today, your people in your country do not understand Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. But translating God's Word into their language will enable them understand it!

Someone's "mother tongue" or "heart language" means the language they first spoke as a child and the one which they use at home. This is the language in which they are most comfortable and which they use to express their deepest thoughts. We want everyone to be able to read God's Word their heart language.

Every language is important and valuable. Small languages are just as important as the national languages spoken in your country and they can express meaning just as well. No one should be ashamed to speak their dialect. Sometimes, those in minority groups feel ashamed of their language and try not to use it around the people who are in the majority in their nation. But there is nothing inherently more important, more prestigious, or more educated about the national language than there is about local languages. Each language has nuances and shades of meaning that are unique. We should use the language we are most comfortable with and with which we best communicate with others.

This page answers the question:

Why should we translate the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[*The unfoldingWord Project*](#)

[*Introduction to the Translation Manual*](#)

in [*Translation Manual Volume 1*](#)

[*What is Translation*](#) in [*Translation Manual Volume 1*](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[*The Qualities of a Good Translation*](#) in [*Translation Manual Volume 1*](#); [*The Translation Process*](#) in [*Translation Manual Volume 1*](#)

The unfoldingWord Project

The unfoldingWord project exists because we want to see **unrestricted biblical content in every language**.

Jesus commanded his disciples to make disciples of EVERY people group:

"Jesus came to them and spoke to them and said, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey all the things that I have commanded you. And see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'" (Matthew 28:18-20 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What is the unfoldingWord Project?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

We have the promise that people from EVERY language will be in heaven:

"After these things I saw, and behold, there was a great crowd, which no one was able to number, out of every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb."
(Revelation 7:9 ULB)

Understanding the Word Of God in one's heart language is important:

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
(Romans 10:17 ULB)

How Do We Do This?

How do we accomplish the goal of **unrestricted biblical content in every language**?

- [unfoldingWord Network](#) - By partnering with other like-minded organizations
- [Statement of Faith](#) - By working with those who have the same beliefs
- [Translation Guidelines](#) - By using a common translation theory
- [Open License](#) - By releasing everything we create under an open license
- [Gateway Languages Strategy](#) - By making Biblical content available to translate from a known language

What Do We Do?

- **Content** - We create and make available for translation free and unrestricted biblical content. See <http://ufw.io/content/> for a complete list of resources and translations. Here are a few samples:
 - **Open Bible Stories** - a chronological mini-Bible comprising 50 key stories of the Bible, from Creation to Revelation, for evangelism and discipleship,

- in print, audio, and video (see <http://ufw.io/stories/>).
- **the Bible** - the only inspired, inerrant, sufficient, authoritative Word of God made available under an open license for unrestricted translation, use, and distribution (see <http://ufw.io/bible/>).
 - **translationNotes** - linguistic, cultural, and exegetical helps for translators. They exist for Open Bible Stories and the Bible (see <http://ufw.io/tn/>).
 - **translationQuestions** - questions for each chunk of text that translators and checkers can ask to help ensure that their translation is understood correctly. Available for Open Bible Stories and the Bible (see <http://ufw.io/tq/>).
 - **translationWords** - a list of important Biblical terms with a short explanation, cross references, and translation aids. Useful for Open Bible Stories and the Bible (see <http://ufw.io/tw/>).
- **Tools** - We create translation, checking, and distribution tools that are free and open-licensed. See <http://ufw.io/tools/> for a complete list of tools. Here are a few samples:
 - **Door43** - an online translation platform where people can collaborate on translation and checking, also the content management system for unfoldingWord (see <https://door43.org/>).
 - **translationStudio** - a mobile app and a desktop app where translators can do offline translating (see <http://ufw.io/ts/>).
 - **translationKeyboard** - a web and mobile app to help users create and use custom keyboards for languages without them (see <http://ufw.io/tk/>).
 - **unfoldingWord app** - a mobile app where translations can be distributed (see <http://ufw.io/uw/>).
 - **Training** - We create resources to train mother tongue translation teams. translationAcademy (this resource) is our primary training tool. We also have audio recording and training resources. See <http://ufw.io/training/> for a complete list of training materials.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Statement of Faith](#); [Gateway Languages Strategy](#)

Statement of Faith

The official version of this document is found at <http://ufw.io/faith/>.

The following statement of faith is subscribed to by all member organizations of and contributors to the *unfoldingWord* project (see <https://unfoldingword.org>). It is in agreement with the Lausanne Covenant (see

<http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-covenant.html>).

We believe that Christian belief can and should be divided into **essential beliefs** and **peripheral beliefs**.

Essential beliefs

Essential beliefs are what define a follower of Jesus Christ and can never be compromised or ignored.

- We believe the Bible to be the only inspired, inerrant, sufficient, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the humanity of Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father.
- We believe that every person is inherently sinful and so is deserving of eternal hell.
- We believe that salvation from sin is a gift of God, provided through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, attained by grace through faith, not by works.
- We believe that true faith is always accompanied by repentance and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the follower of Jesus Christ is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, from all nations and languages and people groups.
- We believe in the personal and physical return of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; the unsaved will be resurrected to eternal damnation in hell and the saved will be resurrected to eternal blessing in heaven with God.

Peripheral beliefs

This page answers the question:

What do we believe?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The unfoldingWord Project](#)

Peripheral beliefs are everything else that is in Scripture but about which sincere followers of Christ may disagree (e.g. Baptism, Lord's Supper, the Rapture, etc.). We choose to agree to disagree agreeably on these topics and press on together toward a common goal of making disciples of every people group (Matthew 28:18-20).

Next we recommend you learn about:

[*Translation Guidelines; Open License; Copyrights, Licensing, and Source Texts*](#) in
[*Translation Manual Volume 1*](#)

Translation Guidelines

The official version of this document is found at <http://ufw.io/guidelines/>.

The following statement on the principles and procedures used in translation is subscribed to by all member organizations of and contributors to the unfoldingWord project (see <https://unfoldingword.org>). All translation activities are carried out according to these common guidelines.

This page answers the question:

By what principles do we translate?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The unfoldingWord Project Statement of Faith](#)

1. **Accurate** — Translate accurately, without detracting from, changing, or adding to the meaning of the original text. Translated content should faithfully communicate as precisely as possible the meaning of the original text as it would have been understood by the original audience. (see [Create Accurate Translations](#))
2. **Clear** — Use whatever language structures are necessary to achieve the highest level of comprehension. This includes rearranging the form of a text and using as many or as few terms as necessary to communicate the original meaning as clearly as possible. (see [Create Clear Translations](#))
3. **Natural** — Use language forms that are effective and that reflect the way your language is used in corresponding contexts. (see [Create Natural Translations](#))
4. **Faithful** — Avoid any political, denominational, ideological, social, cultural, or theological bias in your translation. Use key terms that are faithful to the vocabulary of the original biblical languages. Use equivalent common language terms for the biblical words that describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. These may be clarified, as needed, in footnotes or other supplemental resources. (see [Create Faithful Translations](#))
5. **Authoritative** — Use the original language biblical texts as the highest authority for translation of biblical content. Reliable biblical content in other languages may be used for clarification and as intermediary source texts. (see [Create Authoritative Translations](#))
6. **Historical** — Communicate historical events and facts accurately, providing additional information as needed in order to accurately communicate the intended message to people who do not share the same context and culture as the original recipients of the original content. (see [Create Historical Translations](#))
7. **Equal** — Communicate the same intent as the source text, including expressions of feeling and attitudes. As much as possible, maintain the different kinds of literature in the original text, including narrative, poetry, exhortation, and prophecy, representing them with corresponding forms that communicate in a similar way in your language. (see [Create Equal Translations](#))

Identifying and Managing Translation Quality

The quality of a translation generally refers to the fidelity of the translation to the meaning of the original, and the degree to which the translation is understandable and effective for the speakers of the receptor language. The strategy we suggest involves checking the forms and communicative quality of the translation with the language community, and checking the fidelity of the translation with the Church in that people group.

The specific steps involved may vary significantly, depending on the language and context of the translation project. Generally, we consider a good translation to be one that has been reviewed by the speakers of the language community and also by the leadership of the church in the language group so that it is:

1. **Accurate, Clear, Natural, and Equal** — Faithful to the intended meaning of the original, as determined by the Church in that people group and in alignment with the Church global and historical, and consequently:
2. **Affirmed by the Church** - Endorsed and used by the Church. (see [Create Church-Approved Translations](#))

We also recommend that the translation work be:

1. **Collaborative** — Where possible, work together with other believers who speak your language to translate, check, and distribute the translated content, ensuring that it is of the highest quality and available to as many people as possible. (see [Create Collaborative Translations](#))
2. **Ongoing** — Translation work is never completely finished. Encourage those who are skilled with the language to suggest better ways to say things when they notice that improvements can be made. Any errors in the translation should also be corrected as soon as they are discovered. Also encourage the periodic review of translations to ascertain when revision or a new translation is needed. We recommend that each language community form a translation committee to oversee this ongoing work. Using the unfoldingWord online tools, these changes to the translation can be made quickly and easily. (see [Create Ongoing Translations](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Open License; Introduction to the Translation Manual](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*;
[Introduction to Translation Checking](#) in *Checking Manual Volume 1*

Open License

A License for Freedom

To achieve **unrestricted biblical content in every language**, a license is needed that gives the global church "unrestricted" access. We believe this movement will become unstoppable when the Church has unrestricted access. The

This page answers the question:

What freedoms do users have with unfoldingWord content?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The unfoldingWord Project](#)

[Statement of Faith](#)

[Translation Guidelines](#)

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- [CC Attribution \(CC BY\)](#)
- [CC Attribution-ShareAlike \(CC BY-SA\)](#)
- [Free Translate License](#)

See [Copyrights, Licensing, and Source Texts](#) for more information.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Gateway Languages Strategy; Copyrights, Licensing, and Source Texts](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Gateway Languages Strategy

The official version of this document is found at <http://ufw.io/gl/>.

Explanation

The objective of the gateway languages strategy is to equip 100% of the people groups that comprise the global Church with biblical content that is released from copyright restrictions and made available in a language they understand well (a language of wider communication) together with unrestricted translation training and tools that enable them to translate it into a language they understand fully (their own language). A "gateway language" is a language of wider communication through which second-language speakers of that language can gain access to content and translate it into their own language.

The "gateway languages" at the world level comprise the smallest number of languages through which content can be delivered to every other language, via translation by bilingual speakers. For example, French is a gateway language for minority languages in Francophone Africa in that content available in French can be translated by bilingual speakers from French into their own languages.

At the country level, the gateway languages of a given country are the fewest languages of wider communication required for bilingual speakers in every minority language native to the country (not located there due to immigration) to gain access to content. For example, English is the gateway language for North Korea, given that all people groups native to North Korea can be reached by translation of content into their language from English.

Effects

This model has two basic effects: First, it empowers all languages to "pull" content to their language once the content and helps have been "pushed" into a language accessible to every language of the world (a gateway language). Second, it limits the amount of translation that needs to be done as the translation helps only have to be translated into the gateway language. All other languages can translate only the biblical content, since no language will be dependent upon them for understanding the translation helps.

Thus, whether or not a language is a gateway language will determine what needs to be translated into that language.

For Other Languages, we recommend they translate at least Open Bible Stories. They

This page answers the question:

How can every language be reached?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The unfoldingWord Project](#)

[Open License](#)

are welcome to translate whatever other resources they like.

To see what must be translated for Gateway Languages, go to [Translating in the Gateways](#). If you are translating into a gateway language, you will find the [Gateway Languages Manual](#) particularly helpful because it deals with certain issues that specifically appear for gateway languages.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Translating in the Gateways](#) in [Gateway Languages Manual](#); [Finding Answers](#)

Finding Answers

How to Get Answers

There are several resources available for finding answers to questions:

- **translationAcademy** - This training manual is available at <http://ufw.io/ta> and has much information including:
 - [Introduction](#) - introduces the unfoldingWord project
 - [Process Manual](#) - answers the question "what next?"
 - [Translation Manual](#) - explains the basics of translation theory and practical translation helps
 - [Checking Manual](#) - explains the basics of checking theory and best practices
 - [Audio Manual](#) - How to do high quality audio recordings
 - [Gateway Languages Manual](#) - explains issues specific to the Gateway Languages
- **Slack Chatroom** - Join the Team43 community, post your questions to the "#helpdesk" channel, and get real-time answers to your questions (sign up at <http://ufw.io/team43>)
- **Helpdesk** - email help@door43.org with your questions

This page answers the question:

Where can I find answers to my questions?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Introduction to the Process Manual](#) in [Process Manual Volume 1](#)

Further Defining a Good Translation

Create Faithful Translations

Faithful Translations

To make a translation that is faithful to the Bible, you must avoid any political, denominational, ideological, social, cultural, or theological bias in your translation. Use key terms that are faithful to the vocabulary of the original biblical languages. Use equivalent common language terms for the biblical words that describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. These may be clarified, as needed, in footnotes or other supplemental resources.

This page answers the question:

What are faithful translations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Qualities of a Good Translation](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Translation Guidelines](#) in [Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

Your goal as a Bible translator is to communicate the same message that the original writer of the Bible intended to communicate. This means that you should not try to communicate your own message, or the message that you think the Bible should say, or that your church thinks that the Bible should say. For any Bible passage, you must communicate what it says, all of what it says, and only what it says. You must resist the temptation to put any of your own interpretations or messages into the Bible or add any meaning to the message that is not there in the Bible passage.

You must also use key terms that are faithful to the vocabulary of the original biblical languages. Read the definitions of the translationWords to make sure that you understand the meanings of these words. Translate so that these key terms have these same meanings, and do not translate them in different ways just to please your pastor, your village leaders, or yourself.

Always translating faithfully can be difficult for several reasons:

1. You might be used to the way that your church interprets some Bible passages, and not know that there are other interpretations.
 - Example: When you are translating the word "baptize," you might want to translate it with a word that means "sprinkle," because that is what your church does. But after reading translationWords, you learn that the word has a meaning in the range of "plunge," "dip," "wash," or "purify."
2. You might want to translate a Bible passage in a way that accords with your culture, rather than according to what it meant when it was written.
 - Example: It is common in North American culture for women to speak and preach in churches. A translator from that culture might be tempted to

translate the words of 1 Corinthians 14:34 in a way that is not as strict as the Apostle Paul wrote them: "the women should keep silent in the churches." But a faithful translator will translate the meaning of the Bible passage just the way it is.

3. You might not like something that the Bible says, and be tempted to change it.
 - Example: You might not like what Jesus says in John 6:53, "Truly, truly, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves." This may seem disgusting to you. But you must translate it faithfully, so that your people can read it and contemplate what Jesus meant by it.
4. You might be afraid of what others in your village will think or do if they read a faithful translation of what the Bible says.
 - Example: You might be tempted to translate God's words in Matthew 3:17, "This is my beloved Son. I am very pleased with him," with a word that does not mean "son." But you must remember that you do not have the right to change the meaning of what the Bible says.
5. You might know something extra about the Bible passage that you are translating and want to add that to your translation.
 - Example: When you are translating Mark 10:11, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her," you might know that in Matthew 19:9 there is also the phrase, "...except for sexual immorality..." Even so, do not add this phrase into Mark 10:11, because that would not be translating faithfully. Also, do not add any of your own ideas or teachings from your church. Only translate the meaning that is there in the Bible passage.

In order to avoid these biases, especially the ones that you might not be aware of, you must study the translationNotes (see <http://ufw.io/tn/>), translationWords (see <http://ufw.io/tw/>) and the Unlocked Dynamic Bible (see <http://ufw.io/udb/>), as well as any other translation helps that you have. That way you will know what the meaning of the Bible passage is, and you will be less likely to translate in a biased, unfaithful way.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/guidelines_faithful.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Discover the Meaning of the Text in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Son of God and God the Father

God is one being, and he exists as the Holy Trinity, that is, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

The Bible teaches that there is only one God.

In the Old Testament:

Yahweh, he is God; there is no other God! (I Kings 8:60 ULB)

And in the New Testament:

Jesus said,... This is everlasting life: that they should know you, the only true God. (John 17:3 ULB)

(See also: Deuteronomy 4:35, Ephesians 4:5-6, 1 Timothy 2:5, James 2:19)

The Old Testament begins to reveal God's three persons.

God created the heavens... The Spirit of God was moving... "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:1-2 ULB)

God has spoken to us by a Son... through whom he also made the universe. His Son is the radiance of his glory, the very character of his essence... about the Son he says,... "In the beginning, Lord, you laid earth's foundation; the heavens are the work of your hands." (Hebrews 1:2-3, and 8-10 ULB quoting Psalm 102:25 ULB)

The Church has always found it impossible to state what the New Testament says about God without affirming that he exists in three distinct persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "...Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19 ULB)

God sent his Son, born of a woman,... God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls, "Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:4-6 ULB)

See also: John 14:16-17, 1 Peter 1:2

Each person of God is fully God and is called "God" in the Bible.

Yet for us there is only one God the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6 ULB)

This page answers the question:

Who are the Son of God and God the Father?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Create Faithful Translations](#)

Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God." Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:28-29 ULB)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land?... You have not lied to men, but to God." (Acts 5:3-4 ULB)

Each person is also distinct from the other two persons. All three persons can appear separately at the same time. In the verses below, God the Son is baptized while God the Spirit comes down and God the Father speaks from heaven.

After he was baptized, Jesus came up... from the water... He saw the Spirit of God coming down..., and a voice [the Father's] came out... saying, "This is my Beloved Son..." (Matthew 3:16-17 ULB)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[*Translating Son and Father*](#)

Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

Biblical Witness

"Father" and "Son" are names that God calls himself in the Bible. The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and... a voice came out of the heavens saying, "This is my beloved Son. I am very pleased with him." (Matthew 3:16-17 ULB)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father.

Jesus said, "I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth,... no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" (Matthew 11:25-27 ULB) (See also: John 6:26-57 ULB)

Christians have found that "Father" and "Son" are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the kind of eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19 ULB)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal.

no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son. (Luke 10:22 ULB)

Jesus said, "Father, glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you... I glorified you on the earth,... Now Father, glorify me... with the glory that I had with you before the world was created." (John 17:1-5 ULB)

The Father loves the Son. (John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULB)

I love the Father, I do what the Father commands me, just as he gave me the commandment. (John 14:31 ULB)

This page answers the question:

Why are these concepts important in referring to God?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Create Faithful Translations](#)

[Son of God and God the Father](#)

Human Relationships

Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used and refer to a human "father" and "son."

Translation Strategies

1. Think through all the possibilities that your language has to translate the words "son" and "father." Determine which words in your language best represent the divine "Son" and "Father."
2. If your language has more than one word for "son," use the word that has the closest meaning to "only son" (or "first son" if necessary).
3. If your language has more than one word for "father," use the word that has the closest meaning to "birth father," rather than "adoptive father."

See *God the Father* and *Son of God* pages in [translationWords](#) for help translating "Father" and "Son."

Create Authoritative Translations

An authoritative translation is one that is based on the original language biblical texts as the highest authority for the meaning of biblical content.

Whenever two or more translations of the Bible disagree about the meaning of a Bible passage, it is the original languages that have the final authority for deciding the meaning. Sometimes people are very loyal to certain Bible translations that they are used to reading, and might argue with other people who are loyal to a different Bible translation. But neither of those Bible translations are the highest authority, because they are only translations of the original. All translations are secondary in authority to the original languages. That is why we must always refer to the original biblical languages when deciding how to translate the Bible.

This page answers the question:

What are authoritative translations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Qualities of a Good Translation](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Translation Guidelines](#) in [Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

Since not all translation teams have a member who can read the original languages of the Bible, it is not always possible to refer to the biblical languages when translating the Bible. Instead, the translation team has to rely on translations that they are able to read that have, in turn, been based on the biblical languages. Many of the translations in the Gateway Languages were translated from the biblical languages, including the ULB, but some are translations of translations. It is easy for errors to be introduced when a translation is two or three steps removed from the original. To help with this problem, the translation team can do three things: 1. The translation team must use translationNotes, translationWords, and any other translation helps they have to help them translate in the best way. These translation helps were written by Bible scholars who know the original biblical languages. 1. They should compare their translation with as many other reliable translations as they can, to make sure that it is communicating the same message as the others. 1. Someone who has studied the biblical languages should review the translation to make sure that it is accurate. This person could be a church leader, pastor, seminary professor, or Bible translation professional.

Sometimes Bible translations differ because some passages in the Bible are unclear or ambiguous in the original biblical languages. In that case, the translation team must choose between them based on what Bible scholars say in translationNotes, translationWords, the UDB, and other translation helps.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Discover the Meaning of the Text](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Create Historical Translations

See the video "Translating the Scriptures - Culture" at http://ufw.io/trans_culture.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/guidelines_historical.

A historical translation communicates historical events and facts accurately, providing additional information as needed in order to accurately communicate the intended message to people who do not share the same context and culture as the original recipients of the original content.

This page answers the question:

What are historical translations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Qualities of a Good Translation](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Translation Guidelines](#) in [Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

To communicate well with historical accuracy, you need to remember two things:

1. The Bible is a historical document. The events of the Bible happened in the way that the Bible describes at different times in history. Therefore, when you translate the Bible, you need to communicate that these events happened, and do not change any of the details of what happened.
2. The books of the Bible were written down at specific times in history for people of a certain culture. This means that some things in the Bible that were very clear to the original hearers and readers will not be clear to those who read the Bible in different times and in different cultures. This is because both the writer and the readers were familiar with many of the practices that the writer wrote about, and so the writer did not need to explain them. We, from other times and cultures, are not familiar with these things, and so we need someone to explain them to us. This kind of information is called "implicit information." See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#).

So as translators, we need to translate the historical details accurately, but also provide some explanation when we think that our readers will need it so that they can understand what the translation is about.

- For example, Genesis 12:16 refers to camels. For readers in parts of the world where this animal is unknown, it might be good to provide a description. The best way to do this is in a footnote, or in a glossary entry such as the one in [translationWords](#). Some explanation can be included in the text, as long as it is brief and does not distract the reader from the main point of the text.
- For example, the New Testament writers often referred to events in the Old Testament, but without explaining what they were referring to. They knew that their readers were very familiar with the Old Testament, and did not need any explanation. But it is possible that readers from other times and places will need some explanation.

Let us compare **1 Corinthians 10:1** from the ULB and UDB.

"I want you to know, brothers and sisters that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. " (ULB)

"I want you to remember, brothers and sisters, that our Jewish ancestors were following God, who led them as a cloud during the day, as they passed through the Red Sea on dry land, long ago in the time of the Exodus." (UDB)

Notice that the UDB makes several points explicit: the 'fathers were all under the cloud' tells of the time that God led the Jewish ancestors as a cloud. The statement that 'our fathers passed through the sea' is also about the 'passing through the Red Sea in the time of the exodus.' The UDB translator decided to explicitly describe the historical events. This is a way to translate historical events that is more meaningful for those who have little knowledge of Old Testament history.

Include or refer to the needed implicit information intended by the original writer that will be necessary for your community to understand what is written.

Maintain the historical accuracy of the message. Avoid referring to items and events that were not present in the Bible times. Do not make your translation sound like it is a modern day event.

Remember:

- Keep true to the historical text. The original message, historical events, and cultural background information should all be the same as it was written in the source text. For example, the translation must not have the message rewritten so that events happened at a different place or time.
- Communicate clearly by expressing the message in such a way that people in the Target Language culture will be able to understand the meaning that the original author intended to communicate.
- Only provide additional information as needed to accurately communicate the intended message to people who do not share the same context and culture as the recipients of the original content.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Discover the Meaning of the Text](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Create Equal Translations

Ensure that any **expressive** meaning comes across similarly in the target language as it does in the source language. Especially notice the forms in the source text that communicate certain kinds of emotions and choose forms in the target language that communicate the same emotions. Examples of some of these forms follow.

Idioms

Determine the meaning of difficult idioms, proverbs and figures of speech and translate them with meaningful expressions in your language. Usually idioms cannot be translated literally into another language. The meaning of the idiom has to be expressed in a way that is natural in the other language.

Here are three translations, all with the same meaning, of Acts 18:6:

- "Your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent" (RSV)
- "If you are lost, you yourselves must take the blame for it! I am not responsible" (GNB)
- "If God punishes you, it is because of you, not me!" (TFT)

These are all accusations of guilt. Some are using idioms with the word "blood" or "lost," while the third is more direct using the word "punishes." In order for your translation to be equal, it must also express an accusation in an emotional way, and may use an idiom, as long as both the form of the accusation and the idiom are appropriate for the target language and culture.

Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a special way of saying something in order to catch the attention or express an emotion about what is said. Often the meaning of a figure of speech is different from the literal meaning of the words. The meaning is not intended to be taken literally.

Here are some examples:

- **I was shattered!** The speaker was not literally broken, but he felt very bad.
- **He closed his ears to what I was saying.** Meaning, "he chose to not listen to what I was saying."
- **The wind moaned in the trees.** This means that the wind blowing through the trees sounded like a person moaning.

This page answers the question:

What is an equal translations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Qualities of a Good Translation in Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Translation Guidelines in Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

- **The whole world came to the meeting.** Everyone in the world did not attend the meeting. Most likely there were many people at the meeting.

Each language has different figures of speech, make sure you can:

- Recognize that a figure of speech is being used
- Recognize the purpose of the figure of speech
- Recognize the real meaning of the figure of speech

It is the **real meaning** that should be translated into your language, not the meaning of the individual words. Once you understand the real meaning, you can choose an expression in the target language that communicates that same meaning and emotion.

For more information, see the [Figures of Speech](#) lesson as well.

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical Questions are another way that the speaker captures the attention of the reader. Rhetorical questions are a type of question that does not expect an answer or ask for information. They usually express some kind of emotion and can be intended as a rebuke, a warning, or to express surprise.

See, for example, Matthew 3:7: "You offspring of poisonous snakes, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming?"

Here no answer is expected. The speaker is not asking for information, he is rebuking his hearers. It does no good to warn these people of God's wrath, because they refuse the only way to escape it: to repent of their sins.

You may need to restate this rhetorical question as a statement when you translate, if your language does not use rhetorical questions in this way. But remember, be sure to keep the same purpose and meaning, and communicate the same emotion as the original rhetorical question had.

Remember: Communicate the feelings and attitudes of the original text. Translate them into forms that communicate in a similar way in your language. Consider how that meaning can best be **Accurately, Clearly, Equally,** and **Naturally Expressed** in the Target Language.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Discover the Meaning of the Text](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*; [Figures of Speech](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*; [Rhetorical Question](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Create Collaborative Translations

Bible translations that are **collaborative** are those that have been translated by a group of speakers of the same language. To ensure that your translation is of the highest quality, work together with other believers who speak your language to translate, check, and distribute the translated content. Here are some ways to have others help improve the quality of the translation.

- Read the translation out loud to someone. Have them notice if the sentences connect well. Ask that person to point to words or phrases that do not sound right or are unclear. Make changes so that it sounds as if someone from your community is speaking.
- Ask someone to read your translation to check your spelling. You may have spelled a word differently when it was not necessary. Some words change in different situations, but some words can stay the same in every situation. Take note of these changes, so others can know what decisions you have made on the spelling of your language.
- Ask yourself if the way you wrote can be recognized easily by speakers of different dialects in your language community. Ask others how they would say something that is not clear in your translation. Make changes to the translation before you distribute it to a wider audience.

Remember, if possible, work together with other believers who speak your language to translate, check, and distribute the translated content, ensuring that it is of the highest quality and available to as many people as possible.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/guidelines_collab.

This page answers the question:

What are collaborative translations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Qualities of a Good Translation](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Translation Guidelines](#) in [Introduction to translationAcademy](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Discover the Meaning of the Text](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Create Ongoing Translations

Bible translations should be **ongoing**. Share the translation with others to see if they understand the meaning of the message. Improve your translation with their input. Revising a translation to increase understanding and accuracy is a good idea. Whenever someone has a good idea for making the translation better, you should edit the translation to incorporate that change. When you use translationStudio or other electronic text editors, you can keep this process of revision and improvement ongoing.

This page answers the question:

What are ongoing translations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

The Qualities of a Good Translation in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Translation Guidelines in *Introduction to translationAcademy*

- Reviewers are needed who can read the translation and point to text that needs revision.
- Have people read the translation or listen to a recording of the translation. This will help you know if the translation has the same impact in your community that it had among the original audience (for example: giving comfort, encouragement or guidance).
- Continue to make corrections to the translation that will provide the same meaning as the source text.

Remember, encourage people to review the translation and to give you ideas for making it better. Talk to other people about these ideas. When several people agree that these are good ideas, then make these changes in the translation. In this way, the translation will get better and better.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/guidelines_ongoing.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Discover the Meaning of the Text in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Unlocked Bible Text

The Original and Source Languages

The Text in the Original Language is the most Accurate

The original language is the language in which a Bible text was initially written. The original language of the New Testament is Greek. The original language of most of the Old Testament is Hebrew. However, the original language of some parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra is Aramaic. The original language is always the most accurate language from which to translate a passage.

The source Language is the language from which the translation is being made. If a translator is translating the Bible from the original languages, then the original language and the source language for his translation are the same. However, only people who have spent many years studying the original languages understand them and can use them as a source language. For that reason, most translators use Bibles that have been translated into a language of wider communication as their source language text.

If you are translating from a language of wider communication, it is a good idea to have someone who has studied the original languages compare the meaning in the target language translation with the meaning in the original language to make sure that the meaning is the same. Another way to make sure that the meaning of the target language translation is accurate is to check the translation with translation helps that have been written by people who know the original languages. These would include Bible commentaries and dictionaries, as well as the unfoldingWord translationNotes, translationWords definitions, and translationQuestions with their answers.

The Text in the Source Language may not be Accurate

If the translator does not understand the original language, he will have to use a language of wider communication as a source language. The meaning in the source may be correct, depending on how carefully it was translated from the original. But it is still a translation, so it is a step away from the original and is not quite the same. In some cases, the source may have actually been translated from another source, rather than from the original, putting it two steps away from the original.

Consider the example below. A translator uses a Swahili New Testament as the

This page answers the question:

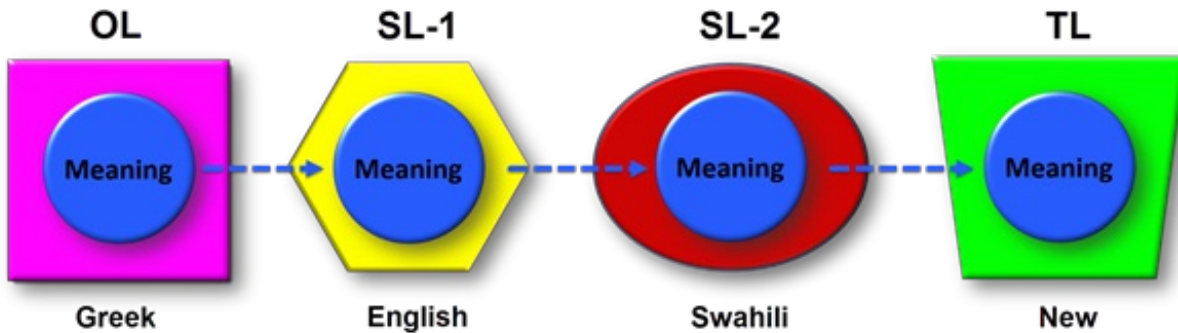
What is the difference between the original language and the source language?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Translation Process](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Choosing a Source Text](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

source for a new target language translation. However, the particular Swahili Bible version he is using was actually translated from English — not directly from the Greek (the original language of the NT). So it is possible that some of the meaning has changed in the chain of translation from the original to the target languages.



The only way to make sure the translation is as accurate as possible is to compare the new translation with the original languages. Where this is not possible, use the ULB as the source text, along with other Bible translations that were translated from the original languages.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Chapter and Verse Numbers](#); [Original Manuscripts](#); [Terms to Know](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#); [Textual Variants](#)

Original Manuscripts

The Writing of the Original Manuscripts

The Bible was written many hundreds of years ago by God's prophets and apostles as God directed them to write it. The people of Israel spoke Hebrew, so most of the Old Testament books were written in Hebrew. When they lived as strangers in Assyria and Babylon, they learned to speak Aramaic, and parts of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic.

This page answers the question:

Is there more information about the Original Language text?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Choosing a Source Text](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

About three hundred years before Christ came, many people in Europe and the Middle East spoke Greek as a second language. So the Old Testament was translated into Greek. When Christ came, many people still spoke Greek as a second language, and the New Testament books were all written in Greek.

Back then there were no printers, so the authors wrote these books by hand. These were the original manuscripts. Those who copied these manuscripts also did so by hand. These were also manuscripts. These books are extremely important, so the copiers got special training and were very careful to try to copy them accurately.

Over hundreds of years, people made thousands of copies of the Bible books. The manuscripts that the authors originally wrote have all been lost or fallen apart, so we do not have them. But we do have many of the copies that were written long ago. Some of these copies have survived for many hundreds and even thousands of years.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Chapter and Verse Numbers](#); [Original Manuscripts](#); [The Original and Source Languages](#); [Terms to Know](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#); [Textual Variants](#)

Structure of the Bible

The Bible is made up of 66 books. It has two main parts. The first part was written first and is called the Old Testament. The second part was written later and is called the New Testament. The Old Testament has 39 books and the New Testament has 27 books. (Some of the books in the New Testament are letters to people.)

Each book is divided up into chapters. Most books have more than one chapter, but Philemon, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude each have only one chapter. All the chapters are divided up into verses.

When we want to refer to a verse, we first write the name of the book, then the chapter, and then the verse. For example "John 3:16" means John, chapter 3, verse 16.

When we refer to two or more verses that are next to each other, we put a line between them. "John 3:16-18" means John, chapter 3, verses 16, 17, and 18.

When we refer to verses that are not next to each other, we use commas to separate them. "John 3:2, 6, 9" means John chapter 3, verses 2, 6, and 9.

In translationAcademy we tell where portions of scripture come from. However, this does not mean that the whole verse or set of verses is shown. The text below comes from Judges, chapter 6, verse 28, but it is not the whole verse. The verse has more at the end.

In the morning when the men of the town got up, the altar of Baal was broken down (Judges 6:28 ULB)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Chapter and Verse Numbers](#)

This page answers the question:

How is the Bible organized?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Choosing a Source Text](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Chapter and Verse Numbers

When the books of the Bible were first written, there were no breaks for chapters and verses. People added these later, and then others numbered the chapters and verses to make it easier to find particular parts of the Bible. Since more than one person did this, there are different numbering systems used in different translations. If the numbering system in the ULB is different from the numbering system in another Bible that you use, you will probably want to use the system from that Bible.

This page answers the question:

Why are the chapter and verse numbers in my Bible different from those in your Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Structure of the Bible](#)

Description

When the books of the Bible were first written, there were no breaks for chapters and verses. People added these later, and then others numbered the chapters and verses to make it easier to find particular parts of the Bible. Since more than one person did this, there are different numbering systems. Some people use Bibles with one numbering system and some use Bibles with another numbering system.

Reason this is a translation issue

People who speak your language may also use a Bible written in another language. If that Bible and your translation use different chapter and verse numbers, it will be hard for people to know which verse someone is talking about when they say a chapter and verse number.

Examples from the Bible

¹⁴ But I expect to see you soon, and we will speak face to face. ¹⁵
Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name. (3
John 1:14-15 ULB)

Since 3 John has only one chapter, some versions do not mark the chapter number. In the ULB and UDB it is marked as chapter 1. Also, some versions do not divide verses 14 and 15 into two verses. Instead they mark it all as verse 14.

A psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

¹ Yahweh, how many are my enemies! (Psalm 3:1 ULB)

Some of the psalms have an explanation before them. In some versions the explanation is not given a verse number, as in the ULB and UDB. In other versions the explanation is verse 1, and the actual psalm starts with verse 2.

and Darius the Mede received the kingdom when he was about sixty-two years old. (Daniel 5:31 ULB)

In some versions this is the last verse of Daniel 5. In other versions this is the first verse of Daniel 6.

Translation Strategies

1. If the people who speak your language have another Bible that they use, number the chapters and verses the way it does. Read the instructions on how to mark verses in the translationStudio APP.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

If the people who speak your language have another Bible that they use, number the chapters and verses the way it does.

The example below is from 3 John 1. Some Bibles mark this text as verses 14 and 15, and some mark it all as verse 14. You may mark the verse numbers as your other Bible does.

- **¹⁴ But I expect to see you soon, and we will speak face to face. ¹⁵ Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.** (3 John 1:14-15 ULB)
 - "¹⁴ But I expect to see you soon, and we will speak face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name."(3 John 14)

Next is an example from Psalm 3. Some Bibles do not mark the explanation at the beginning of the psalm as a verse, and others mark it as verse 1. You may mark the verse numbers as your other Bible does.

A psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

**¹ Yahweh, how many are my enemies!
Many have turned away and attacked me.**

**² Many say about me,
"There is no help for him from God." *Selah***

¹ *A psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.*

² Yahweh, how many are my enemies!
Many have turned away and attacked me.

³ Many say about me,
"There is no help for him from God." *Selah*

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Verse Bridges](#)

Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB) and Unlocked Dynamic Bible (UDB) Formatting Signals

Description

The Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB) and Unlocked Dynamic Bible (UDB) use ellipsis marks, long dashes, parentheses, and indentation to show how information in the text is related to what is around it.

Ellipsis marks

Ellipsis marks (...) are used to show that either someone did not finish a sentence they started, or that the author did not quote all of what someone said.

In Matthew 9:4-6, the ellipsis mark shows that Jesus did not finish what he was saying to the scribes when he turned his attention to the paralyzed man and spoke to him:

Behold, some of the scribes said among themselves, "This man is blaspheming." Jesus knew their thoughts and said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,..." he said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your mat, and go to your house." (ULB)

In Mark 11:31-33 The ellipsis mark shows that either the religious leaders did not finish their sentence, or Mark did not finish writing what they said.

They discussed between themselves and argued and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' ..." They feared the people, for they all held that John was a prophet. Then they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." Then Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." (ULB)

Long Dashes

Long dashes (—) introduce information that is immediately relevant to what came before it. For example:

Then two men will be in a field—one will be taken, and one will be left behind. Two women will be grinding with a mill—one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on your guard, for you do not know on what day your Lord will come. (Matthew 24:40-41 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What do some of the formatting signals in the ULB and UDB show?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[The Translation Process](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Structure of the Bible](#)

Parentheses

Parentheses "()" are used to show that some information is an explanation or afterthought. It does not contribute as well as the material around it to the point of the passage.

In verse John 6:6, John he interrupted the story he was writing to explain that Jesus already knew what he was going to do. This is put in parentheses.

⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where are we going to buy bread so that these may eat?" ⁶ (Now Jesus said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he was going to do.)⁷Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be sufficient for each one to have even a little." (John 6:5-7 ULB)

The words in the parentheses below are not what Jesus was saying, but what Matthew was saying to the reader.

Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let him who is on the housetop not go down to take out anything that is in his house, ¹⁸and let him who is in the field not return to take his cloak. (Matthew 24:15-18 ULB)

Indentation

When text is indented, it means that the line of text starts further to the right than the lines of text above and below it that are not indented. This is done for poetry and some lists. For example:

⁵ These are the names of the leaders who must fight with you:
 From the tribe of Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur;
⁶ from the tribe of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;
⁷ from the tribe of Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab; (Numbers 1:5-7 ULB)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Verse Bridges](#)

How to Use the ULB and UDB when Translating the Bible

As translators, you can best use the ULB and UDB if you remember the following differences between the ULB and UDB, and if you learn how the target language can best deal with the issues that these differences represent.

1. Order of Ideas

The ULB tries to present ideas **in the same order** as they appear in the source text.

The UDB tries to present ideas in an order that is more natural in English, or that follows the order of logic or the order of sequence in time.

When you translate, you should put ideas into an order that is natural in the target language. (See: [Order of Events](#))

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, and set apart for the gospel of God...⁷ This letter is to all who are in Rome, the beloved of God. (Romans 1:1,7 **ULB**)

¹ I, Paul, who serve Christ Jesus, am writing this letter to all of you believers in the city of Rome. (Romans 1:1 **UDB**)

The ULB shows Paul's style of beginning his letters. He does not say who his audience is until verse 7. However, the UDB follows a style that is much more natural in English and most other languages today.

2. Implied Information

The scriptural text often presents ideas that **imply** or **assume** other ideas that are important for the reader to understand.

The UDB often makes those other ideas explicit. The UDB does this in order to remind you that you should perhaps do the same in your translation if you think that your audience will need to know this information in order to understand the text.

When you translate, you should decide which of these implied ideas would be understood by your audience without being included. If your audience understands these ideas without including them in the text, then you do not need to make those ideas explicit. Remember also that you might even offend your audience if you

This page answers the question:

What is the best way to use the ULB and UDB in translating the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[What is Translation](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

[Why We Translate the Bible](#) in *Introduction to translationAcademy*

[More about Translation](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

needlessly present implied ideas that they would understand anyway. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid, because from now on you will catch men." (Luke 5:10 **ULB**)

But Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid! *Until now you gathered in fish*, but from now on you will gather in people to become my disciples." (Luke 5:10 **UDB**)

Here the UDB reminds the reader that Simon was a fisherman by trade. It also makes clear the similarity that Jesus was drawing between Simon's previous work and his future work. In addition, the UDB makes it clear why Jesus wanted Simon to "catch men" (ULB), that is, "to become my disciples" (UDB).

When he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." (Luke 5:12 **ULB**)

When he saw Jesus, he *bowed down to the ground* in front of him and pleaded with him, "Lord, please heal me, because you are able to heal me if you are willing!" (Luke 5:12 **UDB**)

Here the UDB makes it clear that the man who had leprosy did not fall to the ground by accident. Instead, he deliberately bowed down to the ground. Also, the UDB makes it clear that he is asking Jesus to heal him. In the ULB, he only implies this request.

3. Symbolic Actions

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. The ULB often simply presents the symbolic action with no explanation of what it means.

The UDB often presents the meaning expressed by the symbolic action as well.

When you translate, you should decide whether your audience will correctly understand a symbolic action. If your audience will not understand, then you should do as the UDB does. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

The high priest tore his garments (Mark 14:63 **ULB**)

In response to Jesus' words, the high priest *was so shocked* that he tore his outer garment. (Mark 14:63 **UDB**)

Here the UDB makes it clear that it was not by accident that the high priest tore his garment. It also makes clear that it was probably only his outer garment that he tore, and that he did so because he wanted to show that he was sad or angry or both. In this case, because the high priest actually tore his garment, the UDB must of course

say that he did.

However, you do not have to represent a symbolic action in your translation, if that action never actually took place.

Present that to your governor; will he accept you or will he *lift up your face?*" (Malachi 1:8 **ULB**)

You would not dare to offer such gifts to your own governor! You know that he would not take them. You know that *he would be displeased with you!* (Malachi 1:8 **UDB**)

Here the symbolic action "lift up someone's face," represented in this way in the ULB, is presented only as its meaning in the UDB: "he would be displeased with you and would not welcome you." It can be presented in this way because Malachi is not actually referring to a particular event that actually took place. He is only referring to the idea represented by that event.

4. Passive Verb Forms

The ULB uses a wider variety of verb forms than the UDB does. Languages differ greatly from each other in how they express actions, events, and conditions. For example, both Biblical Hebrew and Greek often use passive verb forms, while many other languages do not have that possibility.

The ULB uses passive verb forms when the original languages do so. The UDB usually does not use these passive verb forms. As a result, the UDB **restructures** many phrases.

When you translate, you must decide whether the target language can present events or states using a passive expression, as in the following examples. Many languages do not use passive expressions at all, while other languages make some use of them in limited situations. Still other languages make widespread use of passive expressions. If you cannot use a passive verb form in a particular context, then you may find in the UDB one possible way to restructure the phrase. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

For *he was amazed*, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken. (Luke 5:9 **ULB**)

He said this because *he marveled* at the huge number of fish that they had caught. All the men who were with him also marveled. (Luke 5:9 **UDB**)

Here the UDB uses a verb in the active voice ("he marveled") instead of the ULB's verb in the passive voice ("was amazed").

Large crowds of people came together to hear him teach and *to be healed* of their sicknesses. (Luke 5:15 **ULB**)

The result was that large crowds came to Jesus to hear him teach and *to have him heal them* from their sicknesses. (Luke 5:15 **UDB**)

Here the UDB avoids the ULB's passive verb form "to be healed." It does this by restructuring the phrase. It says who the healer is: "to have him [Jesus] heal them."

5. Metaphors and Other Figures of Speech

The ULB tries to represent the figures of speech found in the biblical texts as closely as possible.

The UDB often presents the meaning of these ideas in other ways.

When you translate, you will have to decide whether the target language readers will understand a figure of speech with little effort, with some effort, or not at all. If they have to make a great effort to understand, or if they do not understand at all, you will have to present the essential meaning of the figure of speech using other words.

He has *made you rich in every way*, in all speech and with all knowledge. (1 Corinthians 1:5 **ULB**)

Christ has *given you so many things*. He helped you to speak his truth and to know God. (1 Corinthians 1:5 **UDB**)

Paul uses a metaphor of material wealth, expressed in the word "rich." Even though he immediately explains what he means ("in all speech and with all knowledge"), some readers might not understand. The UDB presents the idea in a different way, without using the metaphor of material wealth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

I send you out *as sheep in the midst of wolves*, (Matthew 10:16 **ULB**)

When I send you out, you will be *as defenseless as sheep, among people who are as dangerous as wolves*. (Matthew 10:16 **UDB**)

Jesus uses a simile that compares his apostles going to others as sheep going out among wolves. Some readers might not understand how the apostles would be like sheep while the other people would be like wolves. The UDB clarifies that the apostles would be defenseless, and that their enemies would be dangerous. (See: [Simile](#))

You are separated from Christ, *all you who are "justified" by the law*. You have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4 **ULB**)

If you expect God to declare you good in his sight because you try to keep the law, you have separated yourself from Christ; God will no longer

act kindly toward you. (Galatians 5:4 **UDB**)

Paul uses irony when he refers to them as being justified by the law. He had already taught them that no one can be justified by the law. The ULB uses quote marks around "justified" to show that Paul did not really believe that they were justified by the law. The UDB translates the same idea by making it clear that it was what the other people believed. (See: [Irony](#))

6. Abstract Expressions

The ULB often uses abstract nouns, adjectives, and other parts of speech, because it tries to closely resemble the biblical texts. The UDB tries not to use such abstract expressions, because many languages do not use abstract expressions.

When you translate, you will have to decide how the target language prefers to present these ideas. (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

He has made you rich in every way, in *all speech* and with *all knowledge*.
(1 Corinthians 1:5 **ULB**)

Christ has given you so many things. He *helped you to speak his truth*
and *to know God*. (1 Corinthians 1:5 **UDB**)

Here the ULB expressions "all speech" and "all knowledge" are abstract noun expressions. One problem with them is that readers might not know who is supposed to do the speaking and what they are to speak, or who is doing the knowing and what it is that they know. The UDB answers these questions.

Conclusion

In summary, the ULB will help you translate, because it can help you understand to a great degree what form the original biblical texts have. The UDB can help you translate, because it can help make the ULB text's meaning clear, and also because it can give you various possible ways to make the ideas in the biblical text clear in your own translation.

Translation Decisions

Alphabet/Orthography

Creating an Alphabet

If your language has not been written down before, then you will need to create an alphabet so that you can write it. There are many things to think about when creating an alphabet, and creating a good one can be very difficult. If this seems to be too difficult, you could do an audio translation instead of a written one.

The goal of a good alphabet is to have one letter to represent each different sound of your language.

If a neighboring language already has an alphabet, and if that language has similar sounds to your language, it might work well to simply borrow their alphabet. If not, then the next best thing is to borrow the alphabet from the national language that you learned in school. However, it is likely that your language has sounds that the national language does not, and so it will be difficult to use this alphabet to represent all of the sounds of your language. In that case, it is good to think about each sound in your language. Write out the national language alphabet on a piece of paper from top to bottom. Then write a word from your language next to each letter that either starts with that sound or has that sound in it. Underline the letter that makes that sound in each of the words. There may be letters in the national alphabet that your language does not use. That is fine. Now think about the sounds from these words that you had a hard time writing, or that you could not find a letter for. If the sound is similar to a sound that you did find a letter for, then maybe you can modify that letter to represent the other sound. For example, if you have a sound represented by "s", and a similar sound that there was no letter for, you could add a mark to the letter for the similar sound, such as putting ' or ^ or ~ on top of it. If you find that there is a group of sounds that seem to all have the same kind of difference from the national language sounds, then it is good to modify that group of letters in the same way.

Once you have finished this exercise and cannot think of any more sounds in your language, try writing a story or write down something that happened recently. As you write, you will probably discover sounds that you had not thought of earlier. Continue to modify letters so that you can write these sounds. Add these sounds to the list you made earlier.

Take your list of sounds to other speakers of your language who also read the national language and see what they think about it. Maybe they can suggest a

This page answers the question:

How can I create an alphabet for my language?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Choosing a Translation Team](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

[Choosing a Source Text](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

different way to modify some letters that is simpler or easier to read. Also show these other people the story you wrote and teach them to read it by referring to your list of words and letter-sounds. If they can learn to read it easily, then your alphabet is good. If it is difficult, then there might be parts of the alphabet that still need work to be simpler, or there may be different sounds that are being represented by the same letter, or there may be some sounds that you still need to find letters for.

It is good to continue to work on this alphabet together with other speakers of your language who are good readers in the national language. You can discuss the different sounds and decide on the best way to represent them together.

If the national language uses a writing system other than the Roman alphabet, then think about the different marks that you could use to modify the symbols so that they can represent the sounds of your language. It is best if you can mark the symbols in ways that can be reproduced on a computer. You can experiment with the writing systems in a word processor or with the keyboards in translationKeyboard (<http://ufw.io/tk/>). If you need help creating a keyboard, send an email request to help@door43.org. When you use symbols that can be typed on a computer keyboard, then your translation can be stored, copied, and distributed electronically, and then people can get it for no cost and read it on tablets or cell phones.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Decisions for Writing Your Language in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Just-in-Time Learning Volume 2

Figures of Speech

Apostrophe

Apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. This calls his listener's attention to his feelings toward that person or thing.

Mountains of Gilboa, Let there not be dew or rain on you (2 Samuel 1:21 ULB)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling the mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

This page answers the question:

What is the figure of speech called apostrophe?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Description

Apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. This calls his listener's attention to his feelings toward that person or thing.

Reason this is a translation issue: Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to.

Examples from the Bible

Come now, you who are rich, cry out loud because of the miseries coming upon you. (James 5:1 ULB)

James wrote to the church, which was made up of poor people, as if rich people could hear him, showing his anger about what rich people were doing.

The man of God cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh and said, "Altar, altar, Yahweh says, ' ... on you they will burn men's bones.' " (1 Kings 13:2 ULB)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option.

1. Have the speaker express his feelings toward the thing or idea without speaking directly to it.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, you may preserve the meaning of the apostrophe and let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him.

- **The man of God cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh and said, "Altar, altar, Yahweh says, ' ... on you they will burn men's bones.' "** (1 Kings 13:2 ULB)
 - "The man of God said, "This is what Yahweh says about this altar'... They will burn men's bones on it."

Doublet

A doublet is a pair of words used together that mean nearly the same nearly thing. In some languages people do not use doublets, or they may use them only in certain situations. Translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning.

King David was old and advanced in years. (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)

The underlined words mean the same thing. Together they mean "very old."

This page answers the question:

What are doublets and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Description

We are using the word doublet to refer to two words or very short phrases that mean the same thing and that are used in the same phrase. Often they are joined with the word "and." Often they are used to emphasize or intensify the idea expressed by the two words.

Reason this is a translation issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but they may do it for a reason that would not fit in a particular verse.

Examples from the Bible

King David was old and advanced in years. (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)

This means that he was "very old."

he attacked two men more righteous and better than himself (1 Kings 2:32 ULB)

This means that they were "much more righteous" than he was.

You have decided to prepare false and deceptive words (Daniel 2:9 ULB)

This means that they had prepared "many false things to say."

as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:19 ULB)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any blemish--not even one.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using one. If not, consider these strategies.

1. Translate only one of the words.
2. If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."
3. If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use your culture's way of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate only one of the words.
 - **You have decided to prepare false and deceptive words** (Daniel 2:9 ULB)
 - "You have decided to prepare false things to say."
2. If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."
 - **King David was old and advanced in years.** (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)
 - "King David was very old."
3. If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.
 - **a lamb without blemish and without spot.** (1 Peter 1:19 ULB) - English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."
 - "a lamb without any blemish at all"

Euphemism

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private. Its purpose is to avoid offending the people who hear or read it.

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable. Its purpose is to avoid offending the people who hear or read it.

they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8 ULB)

This means that Saul and his sons were dead. It is euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason this is a translation issue: Readers may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples from the Bible

where there was a cave. Saul went inside to relieve himself (1 Samuel 24:3 ULB)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so he does not say specifically what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

whether we are awake or asleep (1 Thessalonians 5:10 ULB)

Paul refers to being dead as being "asleep" so that instead of thinking that they will never see their loved ones again in this life, his readers will remember that they will see them again when Jesus establishes his kingdom.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

1. Use a euphemism from your own culture.
2. State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

This page answers the question:

What is a Euphemism?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech in
Translation Manual Volume 1

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

- **where there was a cave. Saul went inside to relieve himself** (1 Samuel 24:3 ULB) - Some languages might use euphemisms like these:
 - "where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet"
 - "where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to dig a hole"
 - "where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to have some time alone"

2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

- **whether we are awake or asleep** (1 Thessalonians 5:10 ULB)
 - "whether we are alive or dead"

Extended Metaphor

Description

An extended metaphor occurs when someone speaks of a situation as if it were a different situation. He does this in order to effectively describe the first situation by implying that in some important way it is similar to the other. The second situation has multiple **images** of people, things, and actions that represent those in the first situation.

This page answers the question:

What is an extended metaphor?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Metaphor](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Simile](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Reasons this is a translation issue

- People may not realize that the images represent other things.
- People may not be familiar with the things that are used as images.
- Extended metaphors are often so profound that it would be impossible for a translator to show all of the meaning generated by the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of the extended metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning more clear to the target audience than it was to the original audience.
- When someone uses an extended metaphor, the images are an important part of what he is trying to say.
- If the target audience is not familiar with some of the images, you will need to find some way of helping them understand the images so they can understand the whole extended metaphor.

Examples from the Bible

In Psalm 23:1-4, the writer says that God's concern and care for his people can be pictured as the care that a shepherd has for his flock of sheep. Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

¹Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing.

²He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside tranquil water.

³He brings back my life;
he guides me along right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow,

I will not fear harm since you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me. (ULB)

In Isaiah 5:1-7, Isaiah presents God's disappointment with his people as the disappointment that a farmer would feel if his vineyard only produced bad fruit. Farmers care for their gardens, but if they only produce bad fruit, farmers eventually stop caring for them. Verses 1 through 6 appear to be simply about a farmer and his vineyard, but verse 7 makes it clear that it is about God and his people.

¹...My well beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

²He spaded it and removed the stones, and planted it with the choicest vine.

He built a tower in the middle of it, and also built a winepress.

He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes.

³So now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah;
judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it?

When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes?

⁵ Now I will inform you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge;

I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled on.

⁶I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. But briers and thorns will spring up,

I will also command the clouds not to rain on it.

⁷For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah his pleasant planting;

he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;

for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help. (ULB)

Translation Strategies

Consider using the same extended metaphor if your readers will understand it in the same way the original readers would have. If not, here are some other strategies:

1. If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate it as a simile by using "like" or "as". It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two.
2. If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.
3. If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate it as a simile by using "like" or "as." It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two. See Psalm 23:1-2 as an example:

**Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside tranquil water. (ULB)**

Can be translated as:

"Yahweh is like a shepherd to me, so I will lack nothing.
Like a shepherd who makes his sheep lie down in green pastures and leads them by peaceful waters,
Yahweh helps me to rest peacefully."

2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.

**My well beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
He spaded it and removed the stones, and planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in the middle of it, and also built a winepress.
He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes.(Isaiah 5:1-2 ULB)**

May be translated as:

"My well beloved had a grapevine garden on a very fertile hill.
He dug up the ground and removed the stones, and planted it with the best grapevines.
He built a watchtower in the middle of it, and also built a tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes.
He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes that were not good for making wine."

3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

- **Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing.** (Psalm 23:1 ULB)
 - "Yahweh cares for me like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing."

**For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah his pleasant planting;
he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help. (Isaiah 5:7 ULB)**

Can be translated as:

"For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts represents the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are like his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

OR

- So as a farmer stops caring for a grapevine garden that produces bad fruit, Yahweh will stop protecting Israel and Judah, because they do not do what is right."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

Hendiadys

Hendiadys is when a speaker makes a single idea more forceful by connecting two nouns or adjectives with "and" when one of the words actually describes the other.

Description

Hendiadys is when a speaker expresses a single idea by connecting two words with "and" when one of the words actually describes the other.

This page answers the question:

What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Parts of Speech](#)

his own kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12 ULB)

Though "kingdom" and "glory" are both nouns, "glory" actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a kingdom of glory or a glorious kingdom.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Often hendiadys has an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Some languages do not use hendiadys, so people may not understand that one word describes the other.

Examples from the Bible

for I will give you words and wisdom (Luke 21:15 ULB)

"Words" and "wisdom" are nouns, but in this figure of speech "wisdom" describes "words."

if you are willing and obedient (Isaiah 1:19 ULB)

"Willing" and "obedient" are adjectives, but "willing" describes "obedient."

Translation Strategies

If the hendiadys would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

1. Substitute one noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
2. Substitute one noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
3. Substitute one adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.
4. Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word describes the other.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Substitute one noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

- **for I will give you words and wisdom** (Luke 21:15 ULB)
 - "For I will give you wise words"
- **that you should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to his own kingdom and glory.** (1 Thessalonians 2:12 ULB)
 - "that you should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to his own glorious kingdom."

2. Substitute one noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

- **for I will give you words and wisdom** (Luke 21:15 ULB)
 - "For I will give you words of wisdom"
- **that you should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to his own kingdom and glory.** (1 Thessalonians 2:12 ULB)
 - "that you should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to his own kingdom of glory."

3. Substitute one adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

- **if you are willing and obedient** (Isaiah 1:19 ULB)
 - "if you are willingly obedient"

4. Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word describes the other.

- **if you are willing and obedient** (Isaiah 1:19 ULB) - The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."
 - "if you obey willingly"

Next we recommend you learn about:

Doublet

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the speaker shows that something is very important by describing it as larger or greater than it really is. He may greatly exaggerate something in order to show his strong feeling or opinion about it, or he may generalize the situation by using words like "every" or "all" to mean "many."

Description

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the speaker shows that something is very important by describing it as larger or greater than it really is. There are two kinds of hyperbole:

1. **Exaggeration:** This is when a speaker deliberately describes something by an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it.

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:27 ULB) - This is an exaggeration. It means that whoever wants to be Jesus' disciple must be determined to follow him faithfully, even if his enemies were to kill that person.

2. **Generalization:** This is when a speaker uses words like "every" or "all" to mean something like "very many," but not "every one." (Some people may not call generalization like this "hyperbole.")

Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22 ULB) - This is a generalization. It means that he had learned much of what the Egyptians knew and taught.

Reason this is a translation issue

If readers do not understand that a statement is a hyperbole, they may either think that something happened that did not happen, or they may think that the speaker or writer was saying something that is not true.

Examples from the Bible

Examples of Exaggeration

If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to

This page answers the question:

What is hyperbole?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

enter into life maimed... (Mark 9:43 ULB)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should do whatever extreme things we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters--yes, and his own life also--he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26 ULB)

Because of many other things that Jesus said, we know that his use of the word "hate" here is hyperbole. He meant that we must not love even our own family members more than we love him. We must love him more than we love ourselves or anyone else.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the chariots, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. (1 Samuel 13:5 ULB)

The underlined phrase is an exaggeration. It means that there were many, many soldiers in the Philistine army.

Examples of Generalization

They found him, and they said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULB)

The disciples told Jesus that everyone was looking looking for him. They probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for him, but that many people were looking for him, or that all of Jesus closest friends there were looking for him.

But as his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27 ULB)

This is a generalization. God's Spirit teaches us about all things that we need to know.

Caution

Do not assume that something is hyperbole just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

... they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat ... (John 6:19 ULB)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

... for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23 ULB)

The word "all" here is not hyperbole. All humans have sinned. The only human who has never sinned is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here is another option.

1. Express the meaning without the hyperbole. For example "all the people" could be translated as "large crowds of people."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Express the meaning without the hyperbole.
 - **If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters–yes, and his own life also–he cannot be my disciple.** (Luke 14:26 ULB)
 - "If anyone comes to me and does not love me much more than he loves his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters–yes, and his own life also–he cannot be my disciple."
 - **The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the chariots, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore.** (1 Samuel 13:5 ULB)
 - "The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the chariots, and a great number of troops."

Litotes

Litotes is a strong statement made by negative phrases to strengthen a positive meaning. It is used to show that the opposite idea is not true.

Description

Litotes is a strong statement made by negative phrases to strengthen a positive meaning. It is used to show that the opposite idea is not true.

This page answers the question:

What is litotes?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Reason this is a translation issue

People who speak some languages do not use litotes and would fail to understand that the statement is strengthened. They might think that it is weakened or even canceled.

Examples from the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, our coming to you was not useless, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULB)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was very worthwhile.

All things were made through him. Without him was not one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULB)

By using litotes John emphasized that the Son of God created absolutely everything.

Now when it became day, there was no small excitement among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULB)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a lot of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very concerned.)

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are not the least among the leaders of Judah,
for from you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULB)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a very important city.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

1. If the meaning would not be clear, say in a strong way what is true.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the meaning would not be clear, say in a strong way what is true.
 - **For you yourselves know, brothers, our coming to you was not useless,** (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULB)
 - "For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you did much good."
 - **Now when it became day, there was no small excitement among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.** (Acts 12:18 ULB)
 - "Now when it became day, there was great excitement among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter."
 - "Now when it became day, the soldiers were very concerned because of what had happened to Peter."

Merism

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it.

Description

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8, ULB)

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. (Revelation 22:13, ULB)

"Alpha and Omega" is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, (Matthew 11:25 ULB)

"Heaven and earth" is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason this is a translation issue

Some readers may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples from the Bible

From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULB)

This underlined phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

He will bless those who honor him, both young and old. (Psalm 115:13)

The underlined phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

This page answers the question:

What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

1. Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
2. Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

- **I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth** (Matthew 11:25 ULB)
 - "I praise you, Father, Lord of everything"
- **From the rising of the sun to its setting, Yahweh's name should be praised.** (Psalm 113:3 ULB)
 - "In all places, people should praise Yahweh."

2. Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

- **I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth** (Matthew 11:25 ULB)
 - "I praise you, Father, Lord of everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth"
- **He will bless those who honor him, both young and old.** (Psalm 115:13 ULB)
 - "He will bless all those who honor him, regardless of whether they are young or old."

Metonymy

Many times the Bible uses metonymy. If you do not recognize it as a metonymy you will not understand the passage or worse yet, get the wrong understanding of the passage.

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a thing or idea is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A **metonym** is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something it is associated with.

and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 ULB)

The blood represents Christ's death.

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:20 ULB)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a concrete object associated with it.

Reason this is a translation issue

- If a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples from the Bible

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David. (Luke 1:32 ULB)

A throne represents the authority of a king. Throne is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship" or, "reign". This means that God would make him become the king that was to follow King David.

Immediately his mouth was opened (Luke 1:64 ULB)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk

This page answers the question:

What is a metonymy?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech in
Translation Manual Volume 1

again.

who warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming? (Luke 3:7 ULB)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people, and as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here is an option.

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
2. Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
 - **He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."** (Luke 22:20 ULB)
 - "He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "The wine in this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."
2. Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.
 - **The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David.** (Luke 1:32 ULB)
 - "The Lord God will give him the kingly authority of his father, David."
 - "The Lord God will make him king like his ancestor, King David."
 - **who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** (Luke 3:7 ULB)
 - "who warned you to flee from God's coming punishment?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies](#).

Parallelism

Description

In **parallelism** two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. There are different kinds of parallelism. Some of them are the following:

1. The second clause or phrase means the same as the first.
2. The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
3. The second completes what is said in the first.
4. The second says something that contrasts with the first.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

Reason this is a translation issue

Some languages would not use the kind of parallelism in which the two phrases mean the same thing. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or they think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning.

Examples from the Bible

The second clause or phrase means the same as the first.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULB)

- Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything.

The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.

The eyes of Yahweh are everywhere,
keeping watch over the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15:3 ULB)

- The second line tells more specifically what Yahweh watches.

The second completes what is said in the first.

I lift up my voice to Yahweh,
and he answers me from his holy hill. (Psalm 3:4 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What is parallelism?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech in
Translation Manual Volume 1

- The second line tells what Yahweh does in response to what the person does in the first clause.

The second says something that contrasts with the first.

For Yahweh approves of the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. (Psalm 1:6 ULB)

- This contrasts what happens to righteous people with what happens to wicked people.

A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1 ULB)

- This contrasts what happens when someone gives a gentle answer with what happens when someone says something harsh.

Translation Strategies

1. For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases.
2. When the two clauses or phrases mean the same thing, some languages would not translate them both. (See [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#))

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(See [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#)

Parallelism with the Same Meaning

Description

Parallelism with the same meaning is a poetic device in which one complex idea is expressed in two or more different ways. Speakers may do this in order to emphasize the idea that is the same in the two phrases. This is also called "synonymous parallelism."

Note: We use the term "parallelism with the same meaning" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term [Doublet](#) for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULB)

The first underlined phrase and the second underlined phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything ... does" corresponds to "all the paths ... takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

Synonymous parallelism in poetry has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason this is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not expect someone to say the same thing twice, even in different ways. They expect that if there are two phrases or two sentences, they must have different meanings. So they do not understand that the repetition of ideas serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples from the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULB)

Both parts of the sentences are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. The words 'lamp' and 'light' are similar in meaning because they refer to light, and the words 'my feet' and 'my path' are related, because they refer to a

This page answers the question:

What is parallelism with the same meaning?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Parallelism](#)

person walking.

Praise Yahweh, all you nations; exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULB)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words 'Praise' and 'exalt' mean the same thing, 'Yahweh' and 'him' refer to the same person, and 'all you nations' and 'all you peoples' refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULB)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses parallelism in the same way as the biblical languages, that is, to strengthen a single idea, then it would be appropriate to use it in your translation. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

1. Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
2. If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
3. If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could use words like "very," "completely" or "all."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
 - **Until now you have deceived me and told me lies.** (Judges 16:13, ULB) - Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.
 - "Until now you have deceived me with your lies."
 - **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB) - The phrase "all the paths he takes" is a metaphor for "all he does."
 - "Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does."
 - **For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel.** (Micah 6:2 ULB) - This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:
 - "For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel."

2. If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
 - **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB)
 - "Yahweh truly sees everything a person does."
3. If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could use words like "very," "completely" or "all."
 - **you have deceived me and told me lies.** (Judges 16:13 ULB)
 - "All you have done is lie to me."
 - **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB)
 - "Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does."

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

| Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1 ULB)

Or sin:

| sin crouches at the door (Genesis 4:7 ULB)

People also do this because it is sometimes easier to talk about relationships between people and other people than about relationships between people and non-human things, such as wealth.

| You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

Some languages do not use personification, and some languages use it only in certain situations.

Reason this is a translation issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples from the Bible

| You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

| Does not Wisdom call out? Does not Understanding raise her voice?
(Proverbs 8: ULB1)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they are a woman who calls out to teach people. They are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

This page answers the question:

What is personification?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Translation Strategies

If the personification would not be understood clearly, here are some strategies for dealing with it.

1. Add words or phrases to make it clear.
2. Use the words "like" or "as" to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.
3. Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Add words or phrases to make it clear.
 - **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - God speaks of sin as a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.
 - "sin is at your door, waiting to attack you"
2. Use the words "like" or "as" to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.
 - **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - This can be translated with the word "as."
 - "sin is about to destroy you, just as a wild animal could harm a person."
3. Find a way to translate it without the personification.
 - **even the winds and the sea obey him** (Matthew 8:27 ULB) - The men speak of the wind and the sea as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.
 - "He even controls the winds and the sea."

Note: We have broadened our definition of "personification" to include "zoomorphism" (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and "anthropomorphism" (speaking of other things as if they had human characteristics).

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Apostrophe](#)

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity
for lack of understanding;
their leaders go hungry, and their masses have nothing to drink.
(Isaiah 5:13 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What is the predictive past?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Verbs](#)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

Reason this is a translation issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

Examples from the Bible

Now all the entrances to Jericho were closed because of the army of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have handed over to you Jericho, its king, and its trained soldiers." (Joshua 6:1-2 ULB)

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given;
and the rule will be on his shoulder; (Isaiah 9:6 ULB)

In the examples above God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

And about these people also Enoch, the seventh in line from Adam, foretold, saying, "Look, the Lord came with tens of thousands of his holy ones, (Jude 1:14 ULB)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said "the Lord came."

Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option.

1. Use the future tense to refer to future events.
2. If it refers to something in the immediate future use a form that would show that.
3. Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

- **For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given;** (Isaiah 9:6a ULB)
 - "For to us a child will be born, to us a son will be given;

2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

- **Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have handed over to you Jericho, its king, and its trained soldiers."** (Joshua 6:2 ULB)
 - Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I am about to hand over to you Jericho, its king, and its trained soldiers."

3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

- **Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I have handed over to you Jericho, its king, and its trained soldiers."** (Joshua 6:2 ULB)
 - Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, I am handing over to you Jericho, its king, and its trained soldiers."

Synecdoche

Synecdoche is when a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole or uses the whole to refer to a part.

Description

Synecdoche is when a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole or uses the whole to refer to a part.

My soul exalts the Lord. (Luke 1:46 ULB)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said "my soul", the part of herself that has emotions, to refer to her whole self.

the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing something that is not lawful ...?" (Mark 2:24 ULB)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Some readers may understand the words literally.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example from the Bible

I looked on all the deeds that my hands had accomplished (Ecclesiastes 2:11 ULB)

"My hands" is a synecdoche for the whole person, because clearly the legs and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

1. State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

This page answers the question:

What does the word synecdoche mean?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

1. State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

- **My soul exalts the Lord.** (Luke 1:46 ULB)
 - "I exalt the Lord."
- **the Pharisees said to him** (Mark 2:24 ULB)
 - "a representative of the Pharisees said to him"
- **I looked on all the deeds that my hands had accomplished** (Ecclesiastes 2:11 ULB)
 - "I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished"

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

Grammar

Grammar Topics

Grammar has two main parts: words and structure. Structure involves how we put words together to form phrase, clauses, and sentences.

This page answers the question:

What is some basic information about English Grammar?

Parts of Speech - All words in a language belong to a category called a part of speech. (See: [Parts of Speech](#))

Sentences - When we speak, we organize our thoughts in sentences. A sentence usually has a complete thought about an event or a situation or state of being. (See: [Sentence Structure](#))

- Sentences can be statements, questions, commands or exclamations. (See: [Exclamations](#))
- Sentences can have more than one clause. (See: [Sentence Structure](#))
- Some languages have both active and passive sentences (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Possession - This shows that there is a relationship between two nouns. In English it is marked with "of" as in "the love of God," or with "'s" as in "God's love," or with a possessive pronoun as in "his love." (See [Possession](#))

Quotations - A quotation is a report of what someone else has said.

- Quotations normally have two parts: Information about who said something and what the person said. (See: [Quotations and Quote Margins](#))
- Quotations can be either direct quotes or indirect quotes (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))
- Quotes can have quotes within them (See: [Quotes within Quotes](#))
- Quotes can be marked to make it easy for readers to understand who said what. (See [Quote Markings](#))

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech are categories of words. All languages have parts of speech, and all words in a language belong to a part of speech. All languages have some of these parts of speech, and some languages have others. This is not an exhaustive list of parts of speech, but it covers the basics.

VERBS are words that express either an action (such as come, go, eat) or a state-of-being (such as is, are, was.) More detailed information can be found on [Verbs](#).

NOUNS are words that represent a person, place, thing, or idea. Common nouns are generic (man, city, country). Names are capitalized and refer to a specific entity (Peter, Jerusalem, Egypt). For more information see [How to Translate Names](#).

PRONOUNS take the place of nouns and include such words as he, she, it, they and we. More detailed pages on pronouns can be found on [Pronouns](#).

CONJUNCTIONS are words that join phrases or sentences. Examples include: and, or, but, for, yet, nor. Some conjunctions are used in pairs: both/and; either/or; neither/nor; not only/but also. More information about these can be found on [Connecting Words](#)

PREPOSITIONS are words that begin phrases which connect a noun or verb with more detail. For example, "The boat was off the shore." Here the phrase with the preposition "off" tells the location of the boat in relations to the shore. Another example is "The crowd around Jesus grew in numbers." The phrase with the preposition "around" tells the location of the people in relation to Jesus. Some examples of prepositions are: to, from, in, out, on, off, with, without, above, below, before, after, behind, in front of, among, through, beyond, among.

ARTICLES are words that are used with nouns to show whether or not the speaker is referring to something that his listener should be able to identify. In English these words are: a, an, the. The words "a" and "an" mean the same thing. If a speaker says "a dog" he does not expect his listener to know which dog he is talking about; this might be the first time he says anything about a dog. If a speaker says "the dog," he is usually referring to a specific dog, and he expects his listener to know which dog he is talking about. English speakers also use "the" to show that they are talking about something in general. For example the can say "The elephant is a large animal" and refer to elephants in general, not a specific elephant. More information about this can be found on [Generic Noun Phrases](#).

ADJECTIVES are words that describe nouns and express such things as quantity, size, color, and age. Some examples: many, big, blue, old, smart, tired. Sometimes people

This page answers the question:

What are some of the parts of speech in English?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Grammar Topics](#)

use adjectives to give some information about something, and sometimes people use them to distinguish one item from another. For example, in "my elderly father" the adjective "elderly" simply tells something about my father. But in "my eldest sister" the word "eldest" distinguishes that sister from any other older sisters I might have. More information about this can be found on [Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding](#).

ADVERBS are words that describe verbs or adjectives and tell such things as how, when, where, why, to what extent. Many English adverbs end in 'ly.' Some examples of adverbs: slowly, later, far, intentionally, very.

Generic Noun Phrases

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things.

The one who does what is right is kept away from trouble and it comes upon the wicked instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULB)

The underlined phrases above do not refer to any specific people but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

Languages have different ways of showing that a phrase refers to something in general. Translators should use ways of doing this that are natural in their language.

Description

Generic noun phrases refers to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

Can a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
So is the man who goes into his neighbor's wife;
the one who has relations with her will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28 ULB)

The underlined phrases above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason this is a translation issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. Translators should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in their language.

Examples from the Bible

People curse the man who refuses to sell them grain (Proverbs 11:26 ULB)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to a good man, but he condemns a man who makes evil plans. (Proverbs 12:2 ULB)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who

This page answers the question:

What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULB to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. Here are some strategies you might use.

1. Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
2. Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
3. Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
4. Use the plural form, as in "people."
5. Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
 - **Yahweh gives favor to a good man, but he condemns a man who makes evil plans.** (Proverbs 12:2 ULB)
 - "Yahweh gives favor to the good man, but he condemns the man who makes evil plans." (Proverbs 12:2)
2. Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
 - **People curse the man who refuses to sell them grain.** (Proverbs 11:26 ULB)
 - "People curse a man who refuses to sell them grain"
3. Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
 - **People curse the man who refuses to sell them grain.** (Proverbs 11:26 ULB)
 - "People curse any man who refuses to sell them grain"
4. Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").
 - **People curse the man who refuses to sell them grain.** (Proverbs 11:26 ULB)
 - "People curse men who refuse to sell them grain"
5. Use any other way that is natural in your language.
 - **People curse the man who refuses to sell them grain.** (Proverbs 11:26 ULB)
 - "People curse whoever refuses to sell them grain."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[*When Masculine Words Include Women*](#)

Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even to relationships among these ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, injury, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it. For example, "What is its weight?" could be expressed as "How much does it weigh?" or "How heavy is it?"

This page answers the question:

What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

Description

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea.

Abstract Nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even to relationships among these ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, and weight.

Abstract nouns allow us to express thoughts about ideas in fewer words than if we did not have those nouns. For example, we can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." But if English did not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," then we would have to make a longer sentence to express the same meaning. We would have to say, for example, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned."

Abstract nouns also allow us to refer to a situation without telling more details about it than we want to tell. For example, we can say "I got here late because there was an accident on the highway." "Accident" is an abstract noun. If it does not matter whose accident it was, or what kind of accident it was, then it can be better if I do not have to say these things about it.

Reason this is a translation issue:

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas; instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will have other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs, that express some of the meaning in the abstract noun.

Examples from the Bible

from childhood you have known the sacred writings (2 Timothy 3:15 ULB)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone is a child.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULB)

The abstract nouns "godliness" and "contentment" refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun "gain" refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULB)

The abstract noun "salvation" here refers to being saved.

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider slowness to be (2 Peter 3:9 ULB)

The abstract noun "slowness" refers how slowly something is done.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5 ULB)

The abstract noun "purposes" refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

If an abstract noun would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

1. Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun.
 - **from childhood you have known the sacred writings** (2 Timothy 3:15 ULB)
 - "Ever since you were a child you have known the sacred writings."
 - **But godliness with contentment is great gain.** (1 Timothy 6:6 ULB)
 - "But being godly and content is very beneficial."
 - "But we benefit greatly when we are godly and content."
 - "But we benefit greatly when we honor and obey God and when we are happy with what we have."

- **Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.** (Luke 19:9 ULB)
 - "Today the people in this house have been saved..."
 - "Today God has saved the people in this house..."
- **The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider slowness to be** (2 Peter 3:9 ULB)
 - "The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider moving slowly to be"
- **He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart.** (1 Corinthians 4:5 ULB)
 - "He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them."

Nominal Adjectives

Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.

Description

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word "rich" is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that "rich" is an adjective.

The rich man had huge numbers of flocks and herds, (2 Samuel 12:2 ULB)

The adjective "rich" comes before the word "man" and describes "man."

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last; (Job 15:29 ULB)

The adjective "rich" comes after the verb "be" and describes "He."

...the rich must not give more than the half shekel, and the poor must not give less. (Exodus 30:15 ULB)

In Exodus 30:15, the word "rich" acts as a noun in the phrase "the rich," and it refers to rich people. The word "poor" also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

Reason this is a translation issue

- Some languages do not use adjectives this way.
- Readers may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about many people whom the adjective describes.

Examples from the Bible

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of the righteous. (Psalms 125:3 ULB)

"The righteous" here are people who are righteous, not one particular righteous person.

Blessed are the meek (Matthew 5:5 ULB)

"The meek" here are people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

This page answers the question:

How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

If your language uses adjectives as nouns to refer to a class of people, consider using the adjectives this way. If it would sound strange, or if the meaning would be unclear or wrong, here is another option:

1. Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.
 - **The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of the righteous.**
(Psalms 125:3 ULB)
 - "The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of righteous people."
 - **Blessed are the meek** (Matthew 5:5 ULB)
 - "Blessed are people who are meek"

When Masculine Words Include Women

In some parts of the Bible, the words "men," "brothers" and "sons" refer only to men. In other parts of the Bible, those words include both men and women. When the writer meant both men and women, translators need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can be used to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says 'brothers' when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" can be used for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or woman. In the example below, the pronoun is "his," but it is not limited to males.

A wise child makes his father rejoice
but a foolish child brings grief to his mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULB)

Reason this is a translation issue

- In some cultures words like "man," "brother," and "son" can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns "he" and "him" can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that.

Examples from the Bible

The wise man dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16 ULB)

This verse is not speaking only of men, but of men and women.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24-26 ULB)

This page answers the question:

How do I translate "brother" or "he" when it could refer to anyone, male or female?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases](#)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of men and women.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The underlined words below are specifically about men.

Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry his wife and have a child for his brother.' (Mark 22:24 ULB)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like "man," "brother," and "he" can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

1. Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
2. Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
3. Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.
 - **The wise man dies just like the fool dies.** (Ecclesiastes 2:16 ULB)
 - "The wise person dies just like the fool dies."
 - "Wise people die just like fools die."
2. Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
 - **For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, about the troubles we had in Asia** (2 Corinthians 1:8) - Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.
 - "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we had in Asia" (2 Corinthians 1:8)
3. Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.
 - **If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.** (Matthew 16:24 ULB) - English speakers can change the singular pronouns "he" "himself" and "his" to plural pronouns "they" "themselves" and "their" in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.
 - "If people want to follow me, they must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me."

Possession

Description

In common English, "possession" refers to having something, or to something that a person has. In grammar, **possession** refers to a grammatical relationship between two nouns. In English that grammatical relationship is shown with "of," or an apostrophe and the letter "s," or a possessive pronoun.

- the house of my grandfather
- my grandfather's house
- his house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership - Someone owns something.
 - My clothes - The clothes that I own
- Social relationship - Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - my mother - the woman who gave birth to me, or the woman who cared for me
 - my teacher - the person who teaches me
- Contents - Something has something in it.
 - a bag of potatoes - a bag that has potatoes in it, or a bag that is full of potatoes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head - the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house - the roof that is part of a house

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Translators need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one possesses the other.
- Some languages do not use possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples from the Bible

Ownership - In the example below, the son owned the money.

... the younger son ... wasted his money with wildly extravagant living.

This page answers the question:

What is possession and how can I translate phrases that have it?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

| (Luke 15:13)

Social Relationship - In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

| Then the disciples of John came to him ..., (Matthew 9:14 ULB)

Material - In the example below, the material used for make the crowns was gold.

| On their heads were something like crowns of gold (Revelation 9:7)

Contents - In the example below, the cup has water in it.

| Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink ... will not lose his reward.
(Mark 9:41 ULB)

Part of a whole - In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

| But Uriah slept at the door of the king's palace (2 Samuel 11:9 ULB)

Part of a group - In the example below, the whole group is "us" and "each one" refers to the individual members.

| To each one of us has been given a gift (Ephesians 4:7 ULB)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject - Sometimes the word after "of" tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, John baptized people.

| The **baptism** of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me."
(Mark 11:30)

In the example below, Christ loves us.

| Who will separate us from the **love** of Christ? (Romans 3:35)

Object - Sometimes the word after "of" tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, people love money.

| For the **love** of money is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10 ULB)

Instrument - Sometimes the word after "of" tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would punish people by sending enemies to attack them

with swords.

then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings the **punishment of the sword** (Job 19:29 ULB)

Representation - In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their baptism represented their repentance.

As John came, he was baptizing in the wilderness and was preaching a **baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULB)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

1. Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
2. Read the verse in the UDB. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
3. See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

1. Use an adjective to show that one describes the other.
2. Use a verb to show how the two are related.
3. If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use an adjective to show that one describes the other. The adjective below is in **bold** print.
 - **On their heads were something like crowns of gold** (Revelation 9:7)
 - "On their heads were **gold** crowns"
2. Use a verb to show how the two are related. In the example below, the added verb is in bold.
 - **Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink ... will not lose his reward.** (Mark 9:41 ULB)
 - "Whoever gives you a cup that **has** water in it to drink ... will not lose his reward.
 - **Wealth is worthless on the day of wrath** (Proverbs 11:4 ULB)

- Wealth is worthless on the day when God **shows** his wrath"
- Wealth is worthless on the day when God **punishes** people because of his wrath.

3. If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. In the example below, that verb is in bold.

- **Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen the punishment of Yahweh your God,** (Deuteronomy 11:2 ULB)
 - "Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen how Yahweh your God **punished** the people of Egypt."
- **You will only observe and see the punishment of the wicked.** (Psalms 91:8 ULB)
 - You will only observe and see the how Yahweh **punishes** the wicked.
- **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** (Acts 2:38 ULB)
 - "you will receive the Holy Spirit, whom God will **give** to you."

Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding

In some languages, phrases can be used with a noun for two different things. They can either distinguish one item from another or they can give more information or a reminder about an item. Other languages use phrases with a noun only for distinguishing. When people who speak these languages hear a phrase with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another.

Description

In some languages, phrases can be used with a noun for two different things. They can either distinguish one item from other possible items, or they can give more information about an item. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know or assume.

- "Mary gave some of the food to her sister who was very thankful.
 - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase "who was thankful" could distinguish this sister of Mary's from another sister who was not usually thankful.
- "Mary gave some of the food to her sister, who was very thankful."
 - This same phrase can be used to inform us about how Mary's sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Some languages use phrases with a noun only for distinguishing one item from another. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, people who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish one item from other possible items.

Examples from the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items: These usually do not cause a problem in translation.

... The curtain is to separate the holy place from the most holy place.
(Exodus 26:33 ULB)

This page answers the question:

When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

The words "holy" and "most holy" distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to the woman who bore him. (Proverbs 17:25 ULB)

The phrase "who bore him" distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item: These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these. (See: [Phrases that Inform or Remind](#))

for your righteous judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39 ULB)

The word "righteous" simply reminds us that God's judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgement from his unrighteous judgement, because all of his judgments are righteous.

Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a son? - (Genesis 17:17-18 ULB)

The phrase "who is ninety years old" is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, see [Phrases that Inform or Remind](#) for translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

See [Phrases that Inform or Remind](#) for how to translate phrases that inform or remind.

Phrases that Inform or Remind

Some languages can use a word or phrase with a noun to give information about that noun or to remind people of something about it.

- Mary gave some of the food to her sister, *who was very thankful*.

The phrase "who was very thankful" immediately follows the word "sister" and informs us about how Mary's sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish this sister from another sister that Mary might have. It simply gives added information about that sister.

Description

Some languages can use a word or phrase with a noun to give information about that noun or to remind people of something about it.

- Mary gave some of the food to her sister, *who was very thankful*.

The phrase "who was very thankful" immediately follows the word "sister" and informs us about how Mary's sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish this sister from another sister that Mary might have.

Reason people use these phrases: People often present either reminders or new information in a weak way. They do this when they want their listener to give most of his attention to something else they are saying. In the example above, the speaker wants most attention to be given to what Mary did, NOT to how her sister responded.

Reason this is a translation Issue: Languages have different ways of signaling the parts of communication that the listener should pay most attention to.

Translation Principles

- If your language does not use phrases with a noun for new information or a reminder, you may need to put that information or reminder in a different part of the sentence.
- Try to present it in a weak way.
- Ask yourself: In our language, how do we express information in a strong way, and how do we express it in a weaker way?

Examples from the Bible

This page answers the question:

When phrases are used with nouns, what are phrases that inform or remind and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding](#)

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

The name of the third river is Tigris, *which flows east of Asshur*. (Genesis 2:14 ULB)

There is only one Tigris River. The phrase "which flows east of Asshur" gives more information about where the Tigris River was. This would have been helpful to the original audience, because they knew where Asshur was.

I will wipe away mankind *whom I have created* from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULB)

The phrase "whom I have created" is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind.

I will bring an end to the *worthless* idols of Memphis. (Ezekiel 30:13 ULB)

All idols are worthless. This is why God said he would destroy them.

for your righteous judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39 ULB)

All of God's judgments are righteous. This is why the person who wrote this psalm said that they are good.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. Otherwise here are other strategies of showing that the phrase is used to inform or remind.

1. Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
2. Use one of your language's ways for expressing information in a weak way. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
 - **I hate those who serve *worthless* idols** (Psalm 31:6 ULB) - By saying "worthless idols," David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.
 - "*Because* idols are worthless, I hate those who serve them."
 - ***for your righteous* judgments are good.** (Psalm 119:39 ULB)

- "for your judgments are good *because* they are righteous.
 - **Can Sarah, *who is ninety years old*, bear a son?** (Genesis 17:17-18 ULB) -
The phrase "who is ninety years old" is a reminder of Sarah's age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.
 - "Can Sarah bear a son *even when* she is ninety years old?"
 - **I will call on Yahweh, *who is worthy to be praised*** (2 Samuel 22:4 ULB) -
There is only one Yahweh. The phrase "who is worthy to be praised" gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.
 - "I will call on Yahweh, *because* he is worthy to be praised"
2. Use one of your language's ways for expressing information in a weak way.
- **The name of the third river is Tigris, *which flows east of Asshur*.**
(Genesis 2:14 ULB)
 - "The name of the third river is Tigris. (It flows east of Asshur).

Verbs

Description

Verbs are words that refer to an action or event or that are used in describing or identifying things. The verbs in the examples below are underlined.

- John ran. ("Run" is an action.)
- John ate a banana. ("Eat" is an action.)
- John saw Mark. ("See" is an event.)
- John died. ("Die" is an event.)
- John is tall. (The phrase "is tall" describes John. The word "is" is a verb that links "John" with "tall".)
- John looks handsome. (The phrase "is handsome" describes John. The word "looks" here is a verb that links "John" with "handsome.")
- John is my brother. (The phrase "is my brother" identifies John.)

This page answers the question:

What are verbs and what kinds of things are associated with them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

People or Things Associated with a Verb

A verb usually says something about someone or something. All of the example sentences above say something about John. "John" is the **subject** of those sentences. In English the subject usually comes before the verb.

Sometimes there is another person or thing associated with the verb. In the examples below, the underlined one is the verb, and the phrase in bold print is the **object**. In English the object usually comes after the verb.

- He ate **lunch**.
- He sang **a song**.
- He read **a book**.
- He saw **the book**.

Some verbs never have an object.

- The sun rose at six o'clock.
- John slept well.
- John fell yesterday.

In English, it is sometimes alright to leave out the object when the object is not important in the sentence.

- He never eats at night.
- He sings all the time.
- He reads well.
- He cannot see.

In some languages, a verb that needs an object must always take one, even if the object is not very important. People who speak those languages might say the sentences above like this.

- He never eats **food** at night.
- He sings **songs** all the time.
- He reads **words** well.
- He cannot see **anything**.

Subject and Object Marking on Verbs

In some languages, the verb may be a little bit different depending on the persons or things associated with it. For example, English speakers sometimes put "s" at the end of the verb when the subject is just one person. In other languages marking on the verb may show whether the subject is "I," "you," or "he"; singular or plural; or male or female.

- They **eat** bananas every day. (The subject "they" is more than one person.)
- John **eats** bananas every day. (The subject "John" is one person.)

Time and Tense

When we tell about an event, we usually tell whether it is in the past, the present, or the future. Sometimes we do this with words like "yesterday," "now," or "tomorrow."

In some languages the verb may be a little bit different depending on the time associated with it. This kind of marking on a verb is called "**tense**". English speakers sometimes put "ed" at the end of the verb when the event happened in the past.

- Sometimes Mary cooks meat.
- Yesterday Mary cooked meat. (She did this in the past.) In some languages speakers might add a word to tell something about the time. English speakers use the word "will" when the verb refers to something in the future.
- Tomorrow Mary will cook meat.

Aspect

When we tell about an event, we usually show whether or not we are thinking about how the event progressed over a period of time, and whether or not the event is still relevant when something else happens. This is "**aspect**". English speakers sometimes use the verbs "is" or "has" and adds "s," "ing," or "ed" to the end of the verb.

- Mary cooks meat every day. (This tell about something Mary often does.)
- Mary is cooking the meat. (This tells about something Mary is in the process of doing right now.)
- Mary cooked the meat, and John came home. (This simply tells about things that

Mary and John did.)

- While Mary was cooking the meat, John came home. (This tells about something Mary was in the process of doing when John came home)
- Mary has cooked the meat, and she wants us to come eat it. (This tells about something Mary did that is still relevant now.)
- Mary had cooked the meat by the time Mark came home. (This tells about something that Mary completed in the past before something else happened.)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Sentence Structure; Active or Passive; Predictive Past

Active or Passive

Some languages have both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences the subject is the one that the action is done to. Here are some examples with their subjects underlined:

- **ACTIVE:** My father built the house in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not have passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when not to.

This page answers the question:

What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Sentence Structure](#)

[Verbs](#)

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the **ACTIVE** form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the **PASSIVE** form, the action is done to the subject and the one who does the action is *not always* mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have underlined the subject.

- **ACTIVE:** My father built the house in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built by my father in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

All languages have active forms. Some languages have passive forms, and some do not. The passive form is not used for the same reasons in all of the languages that have it.

Purposes for the passive:

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.

- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples from the Bible

And their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants were killed, and your servant Uriah the Hittite was killed too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULB)

This means that the enemies shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them.

In the morning when the men of the town got up, the altar of Baal was broken down ... (Judges 6:28 ULB)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down.

No stonework was seen there. (1 Kings 6:18 ULB)

This means that no one saw stonework there. The point is that no stonework was done there.

Translation Strategies

If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies you might consider.

1. Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action.
2. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action.
3. Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action.
 - **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)
 - The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.
2. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead use a generic expression like "they," or "people," or "someone."

- **It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea** (Luke 17:2 ULB)
 - It would be better for him if they were to put a millstone around his neck and throw him into the sea.
 - It would be better for him if someone were to put a heavy stone around his neck and throw him into the sea.

3. Use a different verb in an active sentence.

- **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)
 - He received a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Abstract Nouns; Word Order](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Go and Come

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come." For example when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming", while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to translate the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring") in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

This page answers the question:

What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?

Description

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring." For example when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming", while Spanish speakers say "I'm going."

Reason this is a translation issue: If the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving in.

Examples from the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "Come, you and all your household, into the ark (Genesis 7:1 ULB)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you come to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULB)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away and he wanted his servant to go to them.

When you have come to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULB)

Moses and the people were in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them.

Behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was one of the leaders of the synagogue. Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet and implored him to come to his house, (Luke 8:41 ULB)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to go with him to his house.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULB would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option.

1. Use the word "go", "come", "take" or "bring" that would be natural in your language.
2. Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the words that would be natural in your language.
 - **But you will be free from my oath if you come to my relatives and they will not give her to you.** (Genesis 24:41 ULB)
 - But you will be free from my oath if you go to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
2. Use another word that expresses the right meaning.
 - **When you have come to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it** (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULB)
 - "When you have arrived in the land that Yahweh your God gives you possess it and live in it,"
 - **Yahweh said to Noah, "Come, you and all your household, into the ark** (Genesis 7:1 ULB)
 - "Yahweh said to Noah, "Enter, you and all your household, into the ark"

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that express the meaning of "not." Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question:

What are double negatives?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

Description

Most languages express the negative near the verb or at the beginning or end of the sentence. Some languages also have prefixes or suffixes that express the negative as in "unhappy," "impossible," and "useless." Some languages can also express the negative with pronouns like "none," "nothing," and "no one," with adverbs like "nowhere," and with prepositions like "without."

A double negative occurs when a sentence has two words that express the meaning of "not."

It is not that we do not have authority (2 Thessalonians 3:9 ULB)

And this better confidence did not happen without the taking of an oath, (Hebrews 7:20 ULB)

Be sure of this—wicked people will not go unpunished (Proverbs 11:21 ULB)

Reason this is a translation issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as Spanish, a double negative emphasizes the negative. The following Spanish sentence *No ví a nadie* is literally "I did not see no one." It has both the word 'no' next to the verb and 'nadie,' which means "no one." It emphasizes the negative, and means "I did not see anyone."
- In some languages a double negative simply means a positive. So "She is not unattractive" means "She is attractive."
- In some language the double negative weakens the adjective. So "She is not unattractive" means "She is a little bit attractive."
- In some languages, such as the languages of the Bible, the double negative often strengthens the adjective. So "She is not unattractive" means "She is very attractive."

To translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language,

you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples from the Bible

so that they may not be unfruitful. (Titus 3:14 ULB)

This means "so that they will be fruitful."

All things were made through him and without him there was not one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULB)

By using a double negative John emphasized that the Son of God created absolutely everything.

Translation Strategies

If double negatives are natural and are used to express the positive in your language, consider using them. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

1. If the double negative simply expresses the positive, remove the two negatives.
2. If the double negative emphasizes the positive, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as "very" or "surely."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the double negative simply expresses the positive, remove the two negatives.
 - **For we do not have a high priest who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses** (Hebrews 4:15 ULB)
 - "For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses"
 - **so that they may not be unfruitful** (Titus 3:14 ULB)
 - "so that they may be fruitful"
2. If the double negative emphasizes the positive, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as "very" or "certainly."
 - **Be sure of this—wicked people will not go unpunished** (Proverbs 11:21 ULB)
 - "Be sure of this—wicked people will certainly be punished"
 - **All things were made through him and without him there was not one thing made that has been made.** (John 1:3 ULB)
 - "All things were made through him. He made absolutely everything that has been made."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Verbs](#)

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is where a speaker or writer leaves one or more words out of a sentence because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and fill in the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there.

Description

Ellipsis is where one or more words are left out of the sentence because the sentence can be understood without them. The information that is omitted has usually already been stated in a preceding sentence or phrase.

the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous (Psalm 1:5)

This is ellipsis because "sinners in the assembly of the righteous" is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous.

Reason this is a translation issue: Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know what the missing information is.

Examples from the Bible

when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." (Luke 18:40-41 ULB)

The man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite by giving Jesus only as much information as necessary. He did not say that he wanted Jesus to heal him, because he knew that Jesus would understand that if he wanted to receive his sight, Jesus would have to heal him.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox. (Psalm 29:6 ULB)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. He did not say that Yahweh makes Sirion skip like a young ox because he knew that his readers could fill in the information themselves.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider

This page answers the question:

What is ellipsis?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Sentence Structure](#)

using it. If not, here is another option:

1. Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

- **the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous** (Psalm 1:5)
 - "the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and sinners will not stand in the assembly of the righteous"
- **when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight."** (Luke 18:40-41)
 - "when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, I want you to heal me that I might receive my sight.'"
- **He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6)
 - "He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and he makes Sirion skip like a young ox."

Pronouns

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that people use instead of a noun to refer to someone or something. Some examples are I, you, he, it, this, that, himself, someone.

Description

Pronouns are words that people use instead of a noun to refer to someone or something. There are six different types of pronouns.

This page answers the question:

What are pronouns and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show if the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may give.

Person

- First Person - The speaker and possibly others (I, we)
 - [Inclusive "We"](#)
 - [Exclusive "We"](#)
- Second Person - The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person - Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular - one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural - more than one (we, you, they)
- Dual - two (Some languages have pronouns for specifically two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine - he
- Feminine - she
- Neuter - it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- **John saw himself in the mirror.** - The word "himself" refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: who, whom, whose, what, where, when, why, how

- **Who built the house?**

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause: that, which, who, whom, where, when

- **I saw the house that John built.** The clause "that John built" tells which house I saw.
- **I saw the man who built the house.** The clause "who built the house" tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else: this, these, that, those. \

- **Have you seen this here?**
- **Who is that over there?**

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used: you, they, he or it.

- **He does not want to talk to anyone.**
- **Someone fixed it, but I do not know who.**

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as "I" and the person he is speaking to as "you." Sometimes in the Bible a speaker referred to himself or to the person he was speaking to with a phrase other than "I" or "you".

Description

- **First person** - This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns "I" and "we". (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- **Second person** - This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun "you." (Also: your, yours)
- **Third person** - This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns "he," "she," "it" and "they." (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like "the man" or "the woman" are also third person.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker used the third person to refer to himself or the people he was speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant "I" or "you."

Examples from the Bible

Sometimes people uses the third person instead of "I" or "me" to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father"s sheep."
(1 Samuel 17:34 ULB)

David referred to himself in the third person as "your servant" and "his." He was calling himself Saul's servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
"... Do you have an arm like God's? Can you thunder with a voice like him? (Job 40:6, 9 ULB)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words "God's" and "him." He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful. Sometimes people use the third person instead of "you" or "your" to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, "Look what I have done, taking it upon myself to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!

This page answers the question:

What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit in Translation Manual Volume 1 Pronouns](#)

(Genesis 18:27 ULB)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as "My Lord" rather than as "you." He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULB)

After saying "each of you," Jesus used the third person "his" instead of "your."

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean "I" or "you" would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options. 1. Use the the third person phrase along with the pronoun "I" or "you." 1. Simply use the first or second person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the the third person phrase along with the pronoun "I" or "you."
 - **But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep."** (1 Samuel 17:34)
 - But David said to Saul, "I, your servant, used to keep my father's sheep."
2. Simply use the first person ("I") or second person ("you").
 - **Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "... Do you have an arm like God's? Can you thunder with a voice like him?"** (Job 40:6, 9 ULB)
 - Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "... Do you have an arm like mine? Can you thunder with a voice like me?"
 - **So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.** (Matthew 18:35 ULB)
 - So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Exclusive 'We'

Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we" will need to understand what the speaker meant so they can decide which form of "we" to use.

This page answers the question:

What is exclusive "we"?

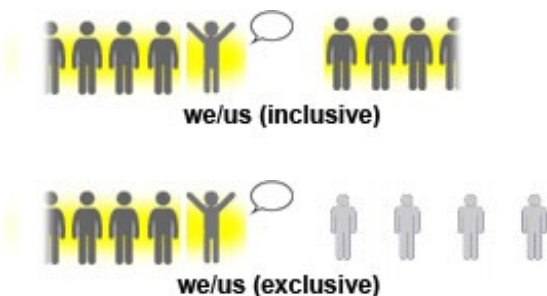
In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

Description

Some languages have more than one form of "we": an **inclusive** form that means "I and you" and an **exclusive** form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason this is a translation issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we". Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we" will need to understand what the speaker meant so they can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples from the Bible

Forgive us our sins (Luke 11:4 ULB)

God has no sins to forgive; so languages that have exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the exclusive forms in this verse.

we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us (1 John 1:2 ULB)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the exclusive forms in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[*Inclusive 'We'*](#)

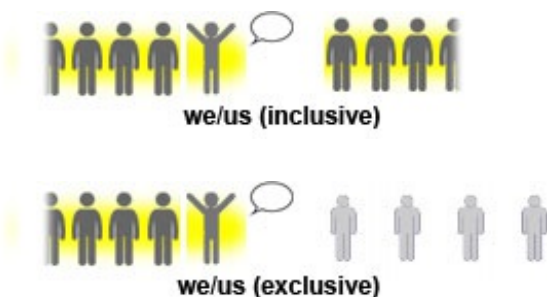
Inclusive 'We'

Some languages have more than one form of "we": an **inclusive** form that means "I and you" and an **exclusive** form that means "I and someone else but not you."

Description

Some languages have more than one form of "we": an **inclusive** form that means "I and you" and an **exclusive** form that means "I and someone else but not you." The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason this is a translation issue - The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we" will need understand what the speaker meant so they can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples from the Bible

... the shepherds said one to each other, "Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULB)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us", they were including the people they were speaking to - one another.

Now it happened on one of those days that Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat, and he said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." Then they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULB)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was

This page answers the question:

What is inclusive "we"?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

speaking to.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_inclusive.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Exclusive 'We'](#)

Forms of 'You' - Formal or Informal

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_youform.

Some languages make a distinction between the formal form of "you" and the informal form of "you". This page is primarily for people whose language makes this distinction.

Description

Some languages make a distinction between the formal form of "you" and the informal form of "you". This page is primarily for people whose language makes this distinction.

In some cultures people use the formal "you" when speaking to someone who is older or in authority, and they use the informal "you" when speaking to someone who is their own age or younger or who has less authority. In other cultures people use the formal "you" when speaking to strangers or people they do not know well, and the informal "you" when speaking with family members and close friends.

Reasons this is a Translation Issue

- The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. These languages do not have formal and informal forms of "you".
- English does not have formal and informal forms of "you."
- Translators who use a source text in a language that has formal and informal forms of "you" will need to understand how those forms are used in that language. The rules in that language may not be exactly the same as the rules in the translator's language.
- Translators will need to understand the relationship between two speakers in order to choose the appropriate form in their language.

Translation Principles

- Understand the relationship between a speaker and whoever he is speaking to.
- Understand the speaker's attitude toward the person he is speaking to.
- Choose the form in your language that is appropriate for that relationship and attitude.

Examples from the Bible

Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"
(Genesis 3:9 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What are formal and informal "you"?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Forms of You in
Translation Manual Volume 1
Pronouns

God is in authority over the man so languages that have formal and informal forms of "you" would probably use the informal form here.

So, it seemed good to me also, having investigated everything accurately from the beginning, to write it down for you in order, most excellent Theophilus. I want you to know the certainty of the things that you were taught. (Luke 1:3-4 ULB)

Luke called Theophilus "most excellent." This shows us that Theophilus was probably a high official who Luke was showing great respect to. Speakers of languages that have a formal form of "you" would probably use it here.

Heavenly Father, sanctify your name. (Matthew 6:9 ULB)

This is part of a prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Some cultures would use the formal "you" because God is in authority. Other cultures would use the informal "you" because God is our Father.

Translation Strategies

Translators whose language has formal and informal forms of "you" will need to understand the relationship between two speakers in order to choose the appropriate form of "you" in their language.

Deciding whether to Use the Formal or Informal "You"

1. Pay attention to the relationships between the speakers.
 - Is one speaker in authority over the other?
 - Is one speaker older than the other?
 - Are the speakers family members, relatives, friends, strangers, or enemies?
2. If you have a Bible in a language that has formal and informal forms of "you," see what forms it uses. Remember, though, that the rules in that language might be different than the rules in your language.

Translation Strategies Applied

English does not have formal and informal forms of "you", so we cannot show in English how to translate using formal and informal forms of "you".

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of 'You' - Dual/Plural](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*; [Forms of 'You' - Singular](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Forms of 'You' - Singular to a Crowd

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These languages have a **singular** form of "you" for when the word "you" refers to just one person, and a **plural** form for when the word "you" refers to more than one person. However sometimes speakers in the Bible used the **singular** form of "you" even though they were speaking to a group of people.

Description

Sometimes people in the Bible used the singular form of "you" even though they were speaking to more than one person. This is not obvious when you read the Bible in English, because English does not have distinct forms for "you" singular and "you" plural. But you may see this if you read a Bible in a language that does have distinct forms.

This page answers the question:

How do I translate "you" when someone was speaking to a crowd and yet used the singular form of "you"?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Forms of You](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Forms of 'You' - Singular](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Pronouns](#)

Reason this is a Translation Issue

- When a translator reads a Bible with "you" singular, he needs to know whether the speaker was speaking to one person or more than one.
- In some languages it might be confusing if a speaker uses the "you" singular when speaking to more than one person.

Examples from the Bible

¹Take heed that you do not do your acts of righteousness before people to be seen by them, or else you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²So when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before yourself as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have the praise of people. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. (Matthew 6:1,2 ULB)

Jesus said this to a crowd. He used "you" plural in verse 1, and "you" singular in the first sentence of verse 2. Then in the last sentence he used the plural again.

God spoke all these words: "I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You must have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:1-3 ULB)

God said this to the people of Israel. He had taken them all out of Egypt and he wanted them all to obey him, but he used the the singular form of "you" here when speaking to them.

Translation Strategies

1. If the singular form of "you" would be natural when speaking to a group, consider using it.
 - A. Whether you can use it may depend on who the speaker is and who his listeners are.
 - B. It may also depend on what the speaker is saying.
2. If the singular form of "you" would not be natural when speaking to a group, or if the readers would be confused by it, use the plural form of "you."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of 'You' - Dual/Plural](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Reflexive Pronouns

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. This page will help you understand how English shows this and will help you to see how your language handles this.

This page answers the question:

What are reflexive pronouns?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

Description

Reflexive pronouns are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, and themselves.

Reason this is a translation issue

- Languages have different ways of referring to someone or something more than once in a sentence.
- The reflexive pronouns in English have other functions.

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- to show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- to show that someone did something alone
- to show that someone or something was alone

Examples from the Bible

Reflexive pronouns used to that show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence

If I should testify about myself alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULB)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover in order to purify themselves. (John 11:55 ULB)

Reflexive pronouns used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were (John 4:2 ULB)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, since he was already in the boat. Other boats were also with him. And a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was

already full. But Jesus himself was in the stern, asleep on a cushion.
(Mark 4:36-38 ULB)

Reflexive pronouns used to show that someone did something alone

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain by himself. (John 6:15 ULB)

Reflexive pronouns used to show that someone or something was alone

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up in its place by itself. (John 20:6-7 ULB)

Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

1. In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
2. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
3. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
4. In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like "alone."
5. In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
 - **If I should testify about myself alone, my testimony would not be true.**
(John 5:31)
 - "If I should self-testify alone, my testimony would not be true."
 - **Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover in order to purify themselves.** (John 11:55)
 - "Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover in order to self-purify."

2. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
 - **He himself took our sickness and bore our diseases.** (Matthew 8:17 ULB)
 - "It was he who took our sickness and bore our diseases."
 - **Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were.** (John 4:2)
 - "It was not Jesus who was baptizing, but his disciples were."

3. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.
 - **Now Jesus said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he was going to do.** (John 6:6)

4. In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like "alone."
 - **When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain by himself.** (John 6:15)
 - "When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again alone up the mountain."

5. In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.
 - **He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up in its place by itself.** (John 20:6-7 ULB)
 - "He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up and lying in a different place."

Pronouns - When to Use Them

Different languages have different rules about when to use pronouns. When you follow your language's rules for using pronouns, people will easily understand who and what your translation is about.\

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun, as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily who the pronoun refers to.

Now there was a **Pharisee whose name was Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Council. This man** came to Jesus ... Jesus replied to **him** (John 3:1-3 ULB)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase "this man." Then he is referred to with the pronoun "him."

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The **main character** is who a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See: [Verbs](#).) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is, and speakers use a pronoun, noun phrase, or name only when they want to emphasize or clarify who the subject is.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time, readers might not know who the pronoun refers to.
- If translators frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners might not realize that the person is a main character.

This page answers the question:

How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the thing it refers to.

Examples from the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear who the pronouns refer to.

Again Jesus walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. **They** watched **him** to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2 ULB)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear who "he" in the second sentence refers to.

Now after some days, **King Agrippa** and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay an official visit to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented Paul's case to the king; (Acts 25:13-14 ULB)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath."

But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him? ..."

Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-9 ULB)

Translation Strategies

1. If it would not be clear to your readers who or what a pronoun refers to, use a noun or name.
2. If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If it would not be clear to your readers who or what a pronoun refers to, use a noun or name.

- **Again Jesus walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. They watched *him* to see if *he* would heal *him* on the Sabbath.** (Mark 3:1-2 ULB)
 - "Again Jesus walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. **Some Pharisees** watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal **the man** on the Sabbath (UDB)

2. If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

At that time *Jesus* went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. *His* disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to *Jesus*, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath."

But *Jesus* said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him? ..."

Then *Jesus* left from there and went into their synagogue.
(Matthew 12:1-9 ULB)

May be translated as:

"At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath."

But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him? ..."

Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue."

Quotes

Quotations and Quote Margins

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, who they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and who they spoke to is called the **quote margin**. What the person said is the **quotation**. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

This page answers the question:

What are quote margins and where should I put them?

Description

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, who they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and who they spoke to is called the **quote margin**. What the person said is the quote. In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between to parts of the quote. The quote margins are underlined below.

- She said, "The food is ready. Come and eat."
- "The food is ready. Come and eat," she said
- "The food is ready," she said. "Come and eat."

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning "said".

But his mother answered and said, "No, instead he will be called John."
(Luke 1:60 ULB)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas ("_").

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning "said".

Examples from the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know this will happen? For I

am an old man, and my wife also is very old." (Luke 1:18 ULB)

Then some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?" (Luke 3:12 ULB)

He to them, "Do not collect more money than you are supposed to." (Luke 3:13 ULB)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. "It will not happen," he said. (Amos 7:3 ULB)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

"I will hide my face from them," he said, "and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful." (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULB)

"Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULB)

"For look, days are coming"—this is Yahweh's declaration—"when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel" (Jeremiah 30:3 ULB)

Translation Strategies

1. Decide where to put the quote margin.
2. Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Decide where to put the quote margin.
 - **"Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."** (Acts 25:5 ULB)
 - He said "Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."
 - "Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him," he said.
 - "Therefore, those who can should go there with us," he said. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."
2. Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

- **But his mother answered and said, "No, instead he will be called John."** (Luke 1:60 ULB)
 - But his mother replied, "No, instead he will be called John."
 - But his mother said, "No, instead he will be called John."
 - But his mother answered like this. "No, instead he will be called John," she said.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[*Direct and Indirect Quotations*](#)

Direct and Indirect Quotations

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotation and indirect quotation. In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by direct or indirect quotations.

- Direct Quotation: John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."
- Indirect Quotation: John said that he did not know what time he would arrive. When translating a quotation, translators need to decide whether to translate it as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation.

This page answers the question:

What are direct and indirect quotations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Pronouns](#)

[Verbs](#)

[Quotations and Quote Margins](#)

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Description

A **direct quotation** occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is telling about John John saying this, uses the word in the quotation "I" to refer to John.

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An **indirect quotation** occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead of from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually features changes in pronouns, and it often features changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would," which is the past tense of "will."

- John said that he did not know what time he would arrive.

Examples from the Bible

The verses in the examples below have both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have underlined the quotations.

He instructed him to tell no one, but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULB)

- Indirect quote: He instructed him to tell no one,
- Direct quote: but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest..."

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. Neither will they say, 'Look here!' or, 'Look there!' because the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULB)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come,
- Direct quote: Jesus answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. Neither will they say, 'Look here!' or, 'Look there!' because the kingdom of God is among you."
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, 'Look here!' or, 'Look there!'

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it.

1. If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
2. If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
 - **He instructed him to tell no one, but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."** (Luke 5:14 ULB)
 - He instructed him to tell no one, but to go on his way, and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
2. If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.
 - **He instructed him to tell no one, but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."** (Luke 5:14 ULB)

- He told him "Tell no one. But go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quotes In Quotes](#)

Quote Markings

Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotations from the rest of the text. When a quotation is very long, or when a quotation has many layers of quotes within quotes, some languages indent the main quote.

Description

Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotes from the rest of the text. English uses the mark " before and after a quote.

- John said "I do not know when I will arrive."

Quotation marks are not used with indirect quotes.

- John said that he did not know when he would arrive.

When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it might be hard for readers to understand who is saying what. Alternating two kinds of quote marks can help careful readers to keep track of them. In English the outermost quote has double quote marks, and the next quote inside has single marks. The next quote inside of that has double quote marks.

- Mary said, "John said, 'I do not know when I will arrive.' "
- Bob said, "Mary said, 'John said, "I do not know when I will arrive." ' "

Some languages use other kinds of quotation marks: Here are some examples: , ' „ " < > « » 7 — .

Examples from the Bible

The examples below show the kind of quote marking used in the ULB.

A quotation with only one layer

A first layer direct quote has double quote marks around it.

So the king replied, "That is Elijah the Tishbite." (2 Kings 1:8 ULB)

Quotations with two layers

A second layer direct quote has single quote marks around it. We have underlined it for you to see it clearly.

This page answers the question:

How can quotes be marked, especially when there are quotes within quotes?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Direct and Indirect Quotations](#)

They asked him, "Who is the man that said to you, 'Pick up your bed and walk'?" (John 5:12 ULB)

... he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the next village. As you enter, you will find a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If any one asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord has need of it.' " (Luke 19:29-31 ULB)

A quotation with three layers

A third layer direct quote has double quote marks around it. We have underlined it for you to see it clearly.

Abraham said, "Because I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. When God caused me to leave my father's house and travel from place to place, I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, "He is my brother." ' ' " (Genesis 20:10-13 ULB)

A quotation with four layers

A fourth layer direct quote has single quote marks around it. We have underlined it for you to see it clearly.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' ' ' " (2 Kings 1:5-6 ULB)

Quote Marking Strategies

Here are some ways you may be able to help readers see where each quote starts and ends so they can more easily know who said what.

1. Alternate two kinds of quote marks to show layers of direct quotation. English alternates double quote marks and single quote marks.
2. Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quote marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))
3. If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

Examples of Quote Marking Strategies Applied

1. Alternate two kinds of quote marks to show layers of direct quotation as shown in the ULB text below.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' " ' " (2 Kings 1:6 ULB)

2. Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quote marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. In English the word "that" can introduce an indirect quote. In the example below, everything after the word "that" is an indirect quote of what the messengers said to the king. Within that indirect quote, there are some direct quotes marked with " and '.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' " ' " (2 Kings 1:6 ULB)

- They told to him that a man came to meet them who said to them, "Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die." ' "

3. If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' " ' " (2 Kings 1:6 ULB)

- They said to him,
 - A man came to meet us who said to us, "Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which

you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die." ' "

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quotes In Quotes](#)

Quotes In Quotes

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to understand who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we can talk about it having layers of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

Reasons this is a translation issue

1. When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example if a quote that is inside a quote has the word "I," the listener needs to know whether "I" refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.
2. Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes. They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.
3. Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples from the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, "I was born a Roman citizen." (Acts 22:28 ULB)

Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, "Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, 'I am the Christ,' and will lead many astray. Matthew 24:4-5 ULB

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

This page answers the question:

What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[*Direct and Indirect Quotations*](#)

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king." (John 18:37 ULB)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, "... I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, "He is my brother." ' ' " (Genesis 20:10-13 ULB)

The outermost layer is what Abraham said to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have underlined the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' " ' ' " (2 Kings 1:6 ULB)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have underlined the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

1. Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
2. Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have underlined the indirect quotes in the ULB and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.
 - **Festus presented Paul's case to the king; he said, "A certain man was**

left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. ...I was puzzled about how to investigate this matter, and I asked him if he would go to Jerusalem to be judged there about these things. But when Paul called to be kept under guard for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him to be kept until I send him to Caesar." (Acts 25:14-21 ULB)

- Festus presented Paul's case to the king; he said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. ...I was puzzled about how to investigate this matter, and I asked him 'Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there about these things?' But when Paul said 'I want to be kept under guard for the Emperor's decision,' I told the guard 'Keep him under guard until I send him to Caesar.'"

2. Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is underlined in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also underlined.

- **Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.' "** (Exodus 16:11-12 ULB)
 - Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them that at twilight they will eat meat, and in the morning they will be filled with bread. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God."
- **They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' " ' "** (2 Kings 1:6 ULB)
 - They told him that a man had come to meet them who said to them, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him that Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.' "

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quote Markings](#)

Sentences

Sentence Structure

Description

The simplest sentence structure in English includes a **subject** and an **action** word:

- The boy ran.

Subject

The **subject** is who or what the sentence is about. In these examples, the subject is underlined:

- The boy is running.
- He is running.

Subjects are typically noun phrases or pronouns. (See: [Parts of Speech](#)) In the examples above, "the boy" is a noun phrase that has the noun 'boy,' and "he" is a pronoun.

When the sentence is a command, it usually does not have a subject pronoun. People understand that the subject is "you."

- Close the door.

Predicate

The predicate is the part of a sentence that tells something about the subject. It usually has a verb. (See: [Verbs](#)) In the sentences below, the subjects are "the man" and "he." The predicates are underlined and the verbs are in bold.

- The man is strong.
- He worked hard.
- He made a garden.

Compound Sentences

A sentence can be made up of more than one sentence. Each of the two lines below has a subject and a predicate and is a full sentence.

- He planted the yams.
- His wife planted the corn.

This page answers the question:

What are the parts of a sentence?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

The compound sentence below has the two sentences above. In English, compound sentences are joined with a conjunction such as "and," "but," or "or".

- He planted the yams and his wife planted the corn.

Clauses

Sentences can also have clauses and other phrases. Clauses are like sentences because they have a subject and a predicate, but they do not normally occur by themselves. Here are some examples of clauses. The subjects are in bold, and the predicates are underlined.

- when **the corn** was ready
- after **she** picked it
- because **it** tasted so good

Clauses are usually only part of a sentence. The clauses are underlined in the sentences below.

- When the corn was ready, she picked it.
- After she picked it, she carried it home and cooked it.
- Then she and her husband ate it all, because it tasted so good.

The following phrases can be a whole sentence.

- She picked it.
- She carried it home and cooked it.
- Then she and her husband ate it all.

Note: We are using the word **clause** for 'dependent clause' and **sentence** for 'independent clause.'

Relative Clauses

In some languages, clauses can be used with a noun that is part of a sentence. These are called **relative clauses**.

In the sentence below, "the corn that was ready" is part of the predicate of the whole sentence. The relative clause "that he had planted" is used with the noun "corn" to tell which corn she picked.

- His wife picked **the corn** that was ready.

In the sentence below "his mother, who was very annoyed" is part of the predicate of the whole sentence. The relative clause "who was very annoyed" is used with the noun "mother" to tell how her mother felt when she did not get any corn.

- She did not give any corn to **her mother, who was very annoyed.**

Translation Issues

- Languages have different orders for the parts of a sentence.
- Some languages do not have relative clauses, or they use them in a limited way.
(See: [Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Word Order](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*; [Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding](#)

Sentence Types

Description

A **sentence** is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. The basic types of sentences are listed below with the functions they are mainly used for.

This page answers the question:

What are the different types of sentences and what are they used for?

- **Statements** - These are mainly used to give information. '*This is a fact.*'
- **Questions** - These are mainly used to ask for information. '*Do you know him?*'
- **Imperative Sentences** - These are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. '*Pick that up.*'
- **Exclamations** - These are mainly used to express a strong feeling. '*Ouch, that hurt!*'

Reasons this is a translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence has a particular function.
- Some languages use these sentence types for more than one function.
- A sentence in the Bible may have a certain sentence type and function, but some languages would not use that type for that function.

Examples from the Bible

The examples below show each of these types used for their main functions.

Statements

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1 ULB)

Statements can also have other functions. (See [Statements - Other Uses](#))

Questions

The speakers below used these questions to get information, and the people they were speaking to answered their questions.

Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." (Matthew 9:28 ULB)

The jailer...said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your house." (Acts

16:29-31 ULB)

Questions can also have other functions. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Imperative Sentences

There are different kinds of imperative sentences: commands, instructions, suggestions, invitations, requests, and wishes.

With a **command**, the speaker uses his authority and tells someone to do something.

Rise up, Balak, and hear. Listen to me, you son of Zippor. (Numbers 23:18 ULB)

With an **instruction**, the speaker tells someone how to do something.

...but if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. ... If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. (Matthew 19:17, 21 ULB)

With a **suggestion**, the speaker tells someone something to do that he thinks might help that person. In the example below, Paul was concerned about Timothy's health, so he suggested something Timothy could do in order to be well.

You should no longer drink water. Instead, you should take a little wine for the stomach and your frequent sicknesses. (1 Timothy 5:23 ULB)

Speakers may intend to be part of the group that does what is suggested. In Genesis 11, the people were saying that it would be good for them all to make bricks together.

They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." (Genesis 11:3 ULB)

With an **invitation**, the speaker uses politeness or friendliness to suggest that someone do something if he wants. This is usually something that the speaker thinks the listener will enjoy.

Come with us and we will do you good. (Numbers 10:29)

With a **request**, the speaker uses politeness to say that he wants someone to do something. This may include the word 'please' to make it clear that it is a request and not a command. This is usually something that would benefit the speaker.

Give us today our daily bread. The speaker is asking for something. (Matthew 6:11 ULB)

Please excuse me. (Luke 14:18 ULB)

With a **wish** a person expresses what they want to happen. In English they often start with the word "may" or "let."

In Genesis 28, Isaac told Jacob what he wanted God to do for him.

May God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you.
(Genesis 28:3 ULB)

In Genesis 9, Noah said what he wanted to happen to Canaan.

Cursed be Canaan. May he be a servant to his brothers' servants.
(Genesis 9:25 ULB)

In Genesis 21 Hagar expressed her strong desire not to see her son die, and then she moved away so that she would not see him die.

Let me not look upon the death of the child. (Genesis 21:16 ULB)

Imperative sentences also have other functions. (See: [Imperatives - Other Uses](#))

Exclamations

Exclamations express strong feeling. In the ULB and UDB, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end.

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25 ULB)

See [Exclamations](#) for other ways that exclamations are shown and ways to translate them.

Translation Strategies

1. Use your language's ways of showing that a sentence has a particular function.
2. When a sentence in the Bible has a sentence type that your language would not use for the sentence's function, see the pages below for translation strategies.
 - [Statements - Other Uses](#)
 - [Rhetorical Question](#)
 - [Imperatives - Other Uses](#)
 - [Exclamations](#)

Statements - Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

Reason this is a translation issue: Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

This page answers the question:

What other uses are there for statements?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Sentence Types](#)

Examples from the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULB)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb "will" to tell people what to do.

He commanded them, saying, "This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath *will* keep watch over the king's house, and a third *will* be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse." (2 Kings 11:5 ULB)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what to do.

She will give birth to a son, and *you will call his name Jesus*, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULB)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was asking Jesus to heal him.

Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, *you can make me clean*." (Matthew 8:2 ULB)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

cursed is the ground because of you; (Genesis 3:17 ULB)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, Jesus forgave the man's sins.

Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Son, *your sins are forgiven.*" (Luke 2:5 ULB)

Translation Strategies

1. If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, *use a sentence type* that would express that function.
2. If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, *add a sentence type* that would express that function.
3. If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, *use a verb form* that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.
 - **She will give birth to a son, and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.** (Matthew 1:21 ULB) The phrase "you will call his name Jesus" is an instruction. It can be translated as a command.
 - "She will give birth to a son. Call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.
2. If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.
 - **Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.** (Matthew 8:2 ULB) The function of "you can make me clean" is to make a request.
 - "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Please do so."
 - "Lord, if you are willing, please make me clean. I know you can do so."
3. If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.
 - **She will give birth to a son, and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.** (Matthew 1:21 ULB)
 - "She will give birth to a son, and you must call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.
 - **Son, your sins are forgiven.** (Luke 2:5 ULB)
 - "Son, I forgive your sins."

Imperatives - Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Reason this is a translation issue: Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

This page answers the question:

What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Sentence Types](#)

Examples from the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 2, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land that I tell you to live in. (Genesis 26:2 ULB)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. ("Be clean" means "Be healed.")

"I am willing. *Be clean.*" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3 ULB)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist.

God said, "*Let there be light,*" and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULB)

Imperatives that Function as Conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you; love her and she

will keep you safe. (Proverbs 4:6 ULB)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6 below is teach what people can expect to happen *if* they teach their children the way they should go.

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULB)

Translation Strategies

1. If people would not use an imperative sentence to cause something to happen, try using a statement instead.
2. If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
3. If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the word "if."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If people would not use an imperative sentence to cause something to happen, try using a statement instead.
 - **Be clean.** (Matthew 8:3 ULB)
 - "You are now clean."
 - "I now cleanse you."
 - **God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.** (Genesis 1:3 ULB)
 - "God said, "There is now light" and there was light.
2. If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
 - **God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.** (Genesis 1:3 ULB)
 - "God said, 'Let there be light,' so there was light."
3. If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the word "if."

**Teach a child the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.**
(Proverbs 22:6 ULB)

Translated as:

*"If you teach a child the way he should go,
when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction."*

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULB and UDB, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people say helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

This page answers the question:

What are ways of translating exclamations?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Sentence Types](#)

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25 ULB)

When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULB)

Reason this is a translation issue: Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence shows strong emotion.

Examples from the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULB)

The word "Ah" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. Gideon said, "Ah, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULB)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33 ULB)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22 ULB)

Translation Strategies

1. If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
2. Use a word word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
3. Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
4. Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
 - **You worthless person!** (Matthew 5:22 ULB)
 - "You are such a worthless person!"
 - **Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!** (Romans 11:33 ULB)
 - "Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God are so deep!"
2. Use an exclamation word from from your language that shows the strong feeling. The word "wow" below shows that they were astonished. The expression "Oh no" shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.
 - **They were absolutely astonished, saying, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."** (Mark 7:36 ULB)
 - "They were absolutely astonished, saying, "Wow! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." "
 - **Ah, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!** (Judges 6:22 ULB)
 - "**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"
3. Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
 - **Ah, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!** (Judges 6:22 ULB)
 - Lord Yahweh, what will happen to me? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"
 - Help, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

4. Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

- **How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering!** (Romans 11:33 ULB)

- "His judgements are so unsearchable and his ways are far beyond discovering!"

5. Tell how the person felt.

- **Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. Gideon said, "Ah, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"** (Judges 6:22 ULB)

- "Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. He was terrified and said, "Ah, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULB)

Translation Issues

Textual Variants

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. Sometimes the copiers added sentences by mistake or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles have some of these sentences that were added. In the ULB, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, and some mistook a word for another that looked like it. Occasionally they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident, or because they wanted to explain something.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULB based the ULB on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULB may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULB translators included footnotes that tell about some of the differences between them.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULB and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULB. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

Examples from the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULB has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰See that you do not despise any of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹[1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11. *For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.*

This page answers the question:

Why does the ULB have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Choosing a Source Text](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Original Manuscripts](#)

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULB, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

⁵³[Then every man went to his own house.... ¹¹She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way; from now on sin no more."]^[2]

^[2]The best earliest manuscripts do not have John 7:35-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULB or another version that you have access to.

1. Translate the verses that the ULB does and include the footnote that the ULB provides.
2. Translate the verses as another version does, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:15-16 ULB, which has a footnote about verse 16.

- **¹⁴He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵There is nothing from outside of a person that can defile him when it enters into him. It is what comes out of the person that defiles him."** ¹⁶[1]
 - **[1]Many ancient authorities insert v. 16. *If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.***
1. Translate the verses that the ULB does and include the footnote that the ULB provides.
 - ¹⁴He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵There is nothing from outside of a person that can defile him when it enters into him. It is what comes out of the person that defiles him." ¹⁶[1]
 - ^[1]Many ancient authorities insert verse 16. *If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.*
 2. Translate the verses as another version does, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

- ¹⁴He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵There is nothing from outside of a person that can defile him when it enters into him. It is what comes out of the person that defiles him. ¹⁶If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." [1]
 - [1]Some ancient authorities do not have verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Chapter and Verse Numbers](#); [Original Manuscripts](#); [Terms to Know](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#); [The Original and Source Languages](#)

Verse Bridges

Sometimes in the ULB or UDB (an in other versions, too) two or more verse numbers are combined, such as 17-18. This is called a verse bridge. The numbers are written like this because the information in the verses was rearranged.

Description

In rare cases, you will see in the Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB) or the Unlocked Dynamic Bible (UDB) that two or more verse numbers are combined, such as 17-18. This is called a verse bridge. It shows where the information in the verses was rearranged so that the story or message could be more easily understood.

This page answers the question:

Why are some verse numbers combined, such as "3-5" or "17-18"?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Structure of the Bible](#)

²⁹ These were the clans of the Horites: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah, ³⁰ Dishon, Ezer, Dishan: these are clans of the Horites, according to their clan lists in the land of Seir. (Genesis 26:29-30 **ULB**)

²⁹⁻³⁰ The people groups who were descendants of Hor lived in Seir land. The names of the people groups are Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. (Genesis 26:29-30 **UDB**)

In the ULB text, verses 29 and 30 are separate, and the information about the people living in Seir is at the end of verse 30. In the UDB text, the verses are joined, and the information about them living in Seir is at the beginning.

Examples from the Bible

Sometimes the ULB has separate verses while the UDB has a verse bridge.

⁴ However, there should be no poor among you (for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land that he gives you as an inheritance to possess), ⁵ if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all these commandments that I am commanding you today. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 **ULB**)

⁴⁻⁵ Yahweh our God will bless you in the land that he is giving to you. If you obey Yahweh our God and obey all the commandments that I am giving to you today, there will not be any poor people among you. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 **UDB**)

There are also a few verse bridges in the ULB.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ Ezrah's sons were Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Mered's Egyptian wife bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah, who became the father of Eshtemoa. These were the sons of Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered married. Mered's Jewish wife bore Jered, who became the father of Gedor; Heber, who became the father of Soco; and Jekuthiel, who became the father of Zanoah. (1 Chronicles 4:17-18 ULB)

Translation Strategies

Order the information in a way that will be clear to your readers.

1. If you put information from one verse before information from an earlier verse, put a hyphen between the two verse numbers.
2. If the ULB has a verse bridge, but another Bible you refer to does not have one, you can choose the order that works best for your language.

See how to mark verses in the translationStudio APP.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If information from one verse is put before information from an earlier verse, put the verse numbers before the first verse with a hyphen between them.
 - **² you must select three cities for yourself in the middle of your land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess. ³ You must build a road and divide the borders of your land into three parts, the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, so that everyone who kills another person may flee there.** (Deuteronomy 19:2-3)
 - ²⁻³ you must divide into three parts the land that he is giving to you. Then select a city in each part. You must make good roads in order that people can get to those cities easily. Someone who kills another person can escape to one of those cities to be safe. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 UDB)
2. If the ULB has a verse bridge, but another Bible you refer to does not have one, you can choose the order that works best for your language.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Chapter and Verse Numbers](#)

Unknowns

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong", which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question:

How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Decimal Numbers](#)

[Fractions](#)

Original Measure	Centimeters	Meters
handbreadth	8 centimeters	.08 meters
span	23 centimeters	.23 meters
cubit	46 centimeters	.46 meters
"long" cubit	54 centimeters	.54 meters
stadia	-	185 meters

Translation Principles

1. The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
2. Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
3. Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

Translation Strategies

1. Use the measurements from the ULB. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULB. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
2. Use the metric measurements given in the UDB. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
3. Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
4. Use the measurements from the ULB and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
5. Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULB in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

- **They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half.** (Exodus 25:10 ULB)
1. Use the measurements given in the ULB. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULB. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
 - "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half kubits; its width will be one kubit and a half; and its height will be one kubit and a half."
 2. Use the metric measurements given in the UDB. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
 - "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be one meter; its width will be 0.7 meter; and its height will be 0.7 meter."
 3. Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard foot length, you could translate it as below.
 - "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be 3 3/4 feet; its width will be 2 1/4 feet; and its height will be 2 1/4 feet."
 4. Use the measurements from the ULB and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

- "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits (one meter); its width will be one cubit and a half (0.7 meter); and its height will be one cubit and a half (0.7 meter)."

5. Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULB in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULB measurements in notes.

- "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be one meter¹; its width will be 0.7 meter²; and its height will be 0.7 meter." The footnotes would look like:
 - ^[1] one meter two and a half cubits
 - ^[2] one cubit and a half

Biblical Money

Description:

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals such as silver and gold in order to buy things. Later people started to make coins. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

This page answers the question:

How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament

1. Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

2. Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
3. Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
4. Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a note.
5. Use the Bible term and explain it in a note.

Translation Strategies

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

- **The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other owed fifty denarii.** (Luke 7:41 ULB)
 1. Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
 - "The one owed five hundred denali, and the other owed fifty denali." (Luke 7:41 ULB)
 2. Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.
 - "The one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other owed fifty silver coins." (Luke 7:41 ULB)
 3. Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
 - "The one owed five hundred days' wages, and the other owed fifty days' wages."
 4. Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.
 - "The one owed five hundred denarii¹, and the other owed fifty denarii.²" (Luke 7:41 ULB) The footnotes would look like:
 - ^[1] five hundred days's wages
 - ^[2] fifty day's wages
 5. Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.
 - "The one owed five hundred denarii¹, and the other owed fifty denarii." (Luke 7:41 ULB)
 - ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#); [Translate Unknowns](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Biblical Volume

Description

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain).

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	kor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

This page answers the question:

How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Decimal Numbers](#)

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

1. Use the measurements from the ULB. These are the same kinds of

- measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULB. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
2. Use the metric measurements given in the UDB. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
 3. Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
 4. Use the measurements from the ULB and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
 5. Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULB in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

- **For four hectares of vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah.** (Isaiah 5:10 ULB)
1. Use the measurements from the ULB. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULB. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
 - "For four hectares of vineyard will yield only one bat, and one homer of seed will yield only an efa."
 2. Use the measurements given in the UDB. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
 - "For four hectares of vineyard will yield only twenty-two liters, and ten baskets of seed will yield only one basket."
 - "For four hectares of vineyard will yield only twenty-two liters and 220 liters of seed will yield only twenty-two liters."
 3. Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
 - "For four hectares of vineyard will yield only six gallons, and six and a half bushes of seed will yield only twenty quarts."
 4. Use the measurements from the ULB and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.
 - "For four hectares of vineyard will yield only one bath (six gallons), and one

homer (six and a half bushels) of seed will yield only an ephah (twenty quarts)."

5. Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULB in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULB measurements in footnotes.

- "For four hectares of vineyard will yield only twenty-two liters¹, and 220 liters² of seed will yield only twenty-two liters²." The footnotes would look like:
 - [1]one bath
 - [2]one home
 - [3]one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULB and UDB, add the word "measure."

- **whenever anyone came to the grainery for twenty measures of grain, there were only ten, and whenever someone came to the wine vat to draw out fifty measures of wine, there were only twenty.** (Haggai 2:16 ULB)

Translation Strategies

1. Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
2. Use a generic word like "measure" or "quantity" or "amount."
3. Use the name of an appropriate container, such as "basket" for grain or "jar" for wine.
4. Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

- **whenever anyone came to the grainery for twenty measures of grain, there were only ten, and whenever someone came to the wine vat to draw out fifty measures of wine, there were only twenty.** (Haggai 2:16 ULB)

1. Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
 - "whenever anyone came to the grainery for twenty of grain, there were only ten, and whenever someone came to the wine vat to draw out fifty of wine, there were only twenty."

2. Use a generic word like "measure" or "quantity" or "amount."
 - "whenever anyone came to the grainery for twenty amounts of grain, there were only ten, and whenever someone came to the wine vat to draw out fifty amounts of wine, there were only twenty."
3. Use the name of an appropriate container, such as "basket" for grain or "jar" for wine.
 - "whenever anyone came to the grainery for twenty baskets of grain, there were only ten, and whenever someone came to the wine vat to draw out fifty jars of wine, there were only twenty."
4. Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.
 - "whenever anyone came to the grainery for twenty liters of grain, there were only ten liters, and whenever someone came to the wine vat to draw out fifty liters of wine, there were only twenty liters."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions; Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit](#) in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Biblical Weight

Description

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term "shekel" means "weight" and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The exact weights are uncertain, but the approximate amounts are:

This page answers the question:
How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	-	0.57 kilograms
mina	50 shekels	570 grams	0.57 kilograms
talent	3000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

Translation Principles

1. The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
2. Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
3. Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

Translation Strategies

1. Use the measurements from the ULB. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULB. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
2. Use the metric measurements given in the UDB. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
3. Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
4. Use the measurements from the ULB and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
5. Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements

from the ULB in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

- **The bronze from the offering weighed seventy talents and 2,400 shekels.**
(Exodus 38:29 ULB)
 1. Use the measurements from the ULB. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULB. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))
 - "The bronze from the offering weighed seventy talents and 2,400 sekels."
 2. Use the metric measurements given in the UDB. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
 - "The bronze from the offering weighed 2,400 kilograms."
 3. Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
 - "The bronze from the offering weighed 5,300 pounds"
 4. Use the measurements from the ULB and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.
 - "The bronze from the offering weighed seventy talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)."
 5. Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULB in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULB measurements in notes.
 - "The bronze from the offering weighed seventy talents and 2,400 shekels.¹"
 - The footnote would look like:
[¹] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Decimal Numbers; Fractions](#)

Hebrew Months

Description

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Abib, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

This page answers the question:

What are the Hebrew months?

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as "the first month" or "the second month" refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The scripture may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

Abib - (This month is called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile) - This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Abib 10, the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

Ziv - This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on western calendars.

Sivan - This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

Tammuz - This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on western

calendars.

Ab - This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on western calendars.

Elul - This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on western calendars.

Ethanim - This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

Bul - This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on western calendars.

Kislev - This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on western calendars.

Tebeth - This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on western calendars.

Shebat - This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rain fall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on western calendars.

Adar - This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

Examples from the Bible

You are going out of Egypt on this day, in the month of Abib. (Exodus 13:4 ULB)

You must eat unleavened bread from twilight of the fourteenth day in the first month of the year, until twilight of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULB)

Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

1. Tell the the number of the Hebrew month.
2. Use the months that people know.
3. State clearly what season the month occurred in.
4. Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

- **At that time, you will appear before me in the month of Abib, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.**
(Exodus 23:15 ULB)
- **It will always be a statute for you that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you must humble yourselves and do no work** (Leviticus 16:29 ULB)

1. Tell the number of the Hebrew month.
 - "At that time, you will appear before me in the first month of the year, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt."
2. Use the months that people know.
 - "At that time, you will appear before me in the month of March, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt."
 - It will always be a statute for you that on the day I choose in late September you must humble yourselves and do no work"
3. State clearly what season the month occurred.
 - "It will always be a statute for you that in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month, you must humble yourselves and do no work."
4. Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.
 - "It will always be a statute for you that in the day I choose in early autumn you must humble yourselves and do no work"

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#)

Numbers

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words, such as "five" or as numerals, such as "5". Some numbers are very large, such as "two hundred" (200), "twenty-two thousand" (22,000) or "one hundred million" (100,000,000.) Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers.

Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question:

How do I translate numbers?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. Some are small, such as "five" (5) and "fifteen" (15). Others are very large, such as "two hundred" (200), twenty-two thousand (22,000) or "one hundred million" (100,000,000). Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.
(Genesis 16:16 ULB)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

That day about three thousand men out of the people died. (Exodus 32:28 ULB)

Here the number three thousand is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word "about" shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason this is a translation issue: Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples from the Bible

When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULB)

The numbers 162, eight hundred, and 962 are exact numbers and should be

translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands
(Genesis 24:60 ULB)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

1. Write numbers using numerals.
2. Write numbers using your language's words or the gateway language words for those numbers.
3. Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.
4. Combine words for large numbers.
5. Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house 100,000 talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14 ULB)

1. Write numbers using numerals.
 - "I have prepared for Yahweh's house 100,000 talents of gold, one 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities."
2. Write numbers using your language's words or the gateway language words for those numbers.
 - "I have prepared for Yahweh's house one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. "
3. Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.
 - "I have prepared for Yahweh's house one hundred thousand (100,000) talents of gold, one million (1,000,000) talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.
4. Combine words for large numbers.
 - "I have prepared for Yahweh's house one hundred thousand talents of gold, a thousand thousand talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

5. Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.
 - "I have prepared for Yahweh's house a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents), and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULB and UDB

The ULB (Unlocked Literal Bible) and the UDB (Unlocked Dynamic Bible) use words for numbers that have only one or two words (nine, sixteen, three hundred). They use numerals for numbers that have more than two words (the numerals "130" instead of "one hundred thirty").

When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived eight hundred years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived 930 years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULB)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#); [Fractions](#)

Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

He gave to the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then those who do powerful deeds (1 Corinthians 12:28 ULB)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

This page answers the question:

What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

He gave to the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then those who do powerful deeds (1 Corinthians 12:28 ULB)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have "-th" added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason this is a translation issue: Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples from the Bible

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULB)

People tossed lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The first row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The second row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The third row must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The fourth row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULB)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably be the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

1. Use "one" with the first item and "another" or "the next" with the rest.
2. Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Tell the total number of items, and use "one" with the first item and "another" or "the next" with the rest.
 - **The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.** (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULB)
 - "There were twenty-four lots. One lot went to Jehoiarib, another to Jedaiah, another to Harim, ... another to Delaiah, and the last went to Maaziah."
 - "There were twenty-four lots. One lot went to Jehoiarib, the next to Jedaiah, the next to Harim, ... the next to Delaiah, and the last went to Maaziah."
 - **A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon. It is the one which**

flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of the second river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.(Genesis 2:10-14 ULB)

- "A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became four rivers. The name of one is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of the next river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of the next river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The last river is the Euphrates."

2. Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

- **The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.** (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULB)
 - "They cast twenty-four lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim, ... Delaiah, and Maaziah."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions](#)

Fractions

Fractions are a kind of number that refer to parts of a thing or to groups within a larger group of people or things. Some languages do not have this kind of number.

Description

Fractions are a kind of number that refer to equal parts of a thing or to equal groups within a larger group of people or things. An item or a group of items is divided into two or more parts or groups, and a fraction refers to one or more of those parts or groups.

This page answers the question:

What are fractions and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

For the drink offering, you must offer a third of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7 ULB)

A hin is a container used for measuring wine and other liquids. They were to divide a hin container into three parts and fill up only one part and offer that.

a third of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9 ULB)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have "-th" added to the end of the number.

Number of parts the whole is divided into	Fraction
four	fourth
ten	tenth
one hundred	one hundredth
one thousand	one thousandth

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

Number of parts the whole is divided into	Fraction
two	half
three	third
five	fifth

Reason this is a translation issue: Some languages do not have fractions. They may

simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

Now to one half of the tribe of Manasseh, Moses had given them an inheritance in Bashan, but to the other half, Joshua gave an inheritance beside their brothers in the land west of the Jordan.
(Joshua 22:7 ULB)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase "one half of the tribe of Manasseh" refers one of those groups. The phrase "the other half" refers to the other group.

The four angels who had been prepared for that very hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released to kill a third of humanity.
(Revelation 9:15 ULB)

If all the people were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

You must also prepare a fourth of a hin of wine as the drink offering.
(Numbers 15:5 ULB)

They were to divide a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare one of them.

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

1. Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
2. For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UDB.
3. For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

1. Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
 - **A third of the ocean became red like blood** (Revelation 8:8 ULB)
 - "It was like they divided the ocean into three parts, and one part of the ocean became blood."

- **then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil.** (Numbers 15:9 ULB)
 - "then you must divide an ephah of fine flour into ten parts and mix three of those parts with half a hin of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull."
2. For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UDB. The translators of the UDB have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- **two thirds of a shekel** (1 Samuel 13:21 ULB)
 - "eight grams of silver" (1 Samuel 13:21 UDB)
 - **three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil.** (Numbers 15:9, ULB)
 - "6.5 liters of finely ground flour mixed with about two liters of olive oil." (Numbers 15:9 UDB)
3. For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- **three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil.** (Numbers 15:9, ULB)
 - "six quarts of fine flour mixed with two quarts of oil."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Ordinal Numbers](#); [Decimal Numbers](#)

Decimal Numbers

Description

The decimal point, or decimal comma, is a mark placed to the left of a number to show that the number refers to part of a whole number. For example .1 meter is not a whole meter but is only one tenth of a meter. And .5 meter is not five meters, but is only five tenths of a meter. 3.7 meters is three and seven tenths of a meter. Numbers like these are used in the Unlocked Dynamic Bible (UDB).

This page answers the question:

What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Numbers](#)

[Fractions](#)

In some countries people use a decimal point, and in other countries people use a decimal comma. So translators in countries that use a decimal comma would write "3.7 meters" as "3,7 meters." In some cultures people prefer fractions. (See: [Fractions](#))

In the Unlocked Dynamic Bible (UDB) parts of a number are written as decimals or fractions. When they are used with a measurement such as meters, grams, and liters, they are usually written as decimals.

Decimal Numbers in the UDB

Decimal	Fraction	Simpler Fraction
.1	one tenth	
.2	two tenths	one fifth
.3	three tenths	
.4	four tenths	two fifths
.5	five tenths	one half
.6	six tenth	three fifths
.7	seven tenths	
.8	eight tenths	four fifths
.9	nine tenths	
.25	twenty-five one hundredths	one fourth
.75	seventy-five one hundredths	three fourths

Reasons this is a translation issue

- If translators want to use the measures in the UDB, they will need to be able to understand the decimal numbers that are used with them.
- Translators will need to write the numbers in a way that their readers will understand them.

Examples from the Bible

For telling about parts of a number, the Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB) uses fractions, and the Unlocked Dynamic Bible (UDB) uses mostly decimals when the number is used with a measurement. Another difference between the ULB and the UDB is that when measuring [Biblical Distance](#), [Biblical Weight](#), and [Biblical Volume](#), they use different systems, so the numbers in the ULB and the UDB are not the same for these measures.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULB)

The ULB uses the fraction "half." This can also be written as a decimal: .5.

Tell the people to make a sacred chest from acacia wood. It is to be one meter long, 0.7 meter wide, and 0.7 meter high. (Exodus 25:10 UDB)

The UDB uses the decimal 0.7. This equals seven tenths.

Two and a half cubits is about one meter.

One and a half cubits is about .7 meter or seven tenths of a meter.

Translation Strategies

- Decide whether you want to use only fractions, only decimals, or a combination of the two.
 - Decide whether you want to use the measures given in the ULB or the UDB or some other kind of measures.
 - If you decide to use fractions and the measures in the ULB, simply translate the numbers and measures in the ULB.
 - If you decide to use decimals and the measures in the UDB, simply translate the numbers and measures in the UDB.
1. If you decide to use decimals and the measures in the ULB, you will need to change the fractions in the ULB to decimals.
 2. If you decide to use fractions and the measures in the UDB, you will need to change the decimals in the UDB to fractions.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If you decide to use decimals and the measures in the ULB, you will need to change the fractions in the ULB to decimals.
 - **three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil.** (Leviticus 14:10 ULB)
 - " 0.3 ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil."
2. If you decide to use fractions and the measures in the UDB, you will need to change the decimals in the UDB to fractions.
 - **about 6.5 liters of a fine flour offering, mixed with olive oil, to be an offering, and about one third liter of olive oil.** (Leviticus 14:10 UDB)
 - "about six and a half liters of a fine flour offering, mixed with olive oil, to be an offering, and about one third liter of olive oil."

Symbolic Action

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their head up and down to mean "Yes" or turn their head from side to side to mean "No". Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures.

Translators need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in their own culture, they need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

This page answers the question:

What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. An action does not have to actually be performed; it may simply be referred to.

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason this is a translation issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture, and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means "I am surprised" or "What did you say?" In others cultures it means "Yes."

In the Bible people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture.

Examples from the Bible

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet. (Luke 8:41 ULB)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to his home, and have a meal with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULB)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people want someone to welcome them into their

home, they stand at the door and knock on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for it.

1. Tell what the person did and why he did it.
2. Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
3. Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Tell what the person did and why he did it.
 - **Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet.** (Luke 8:41 ULB)
 - "Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him."
 - **Look, I stand at the door and knock.** (Revelation 3:20 ULB)
 - "Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in."
2. Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
 - **Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet.** (Luke 8:41)
 - "Jairus showed Jesus great respect."
 - **Look, I stand at the door and knock.** (Revelation 3:20)
 - "Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in."
3. Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.
 - **Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet.** (Luke 8:41 ULB) - Since Jairus actually did this, we would not substitute an action from our own culture.
 - **Look, I stand at the door and knock.** (Revelation 3:20 ULB) - Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
 - "Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat."

Writing Styles (Discourse)

Writing Styles

Writing styles is also called 'Discourse.' It refers to how the parts of a text are organized and connected in order to communicate the author's meaning. In every translation, the way that words, sentences, and paragraphs are arranged will affect how people will understand the message.

Kinds of Writing Styles:

The following are four basic writing styles based on the kind of information they give.

- **Narrative** or **Parables**- tells a story or event
- **Explanatory** - explains facts or teaches principles
- **Procedural** - tells how to do something
- **Argumentative** - tries to persuade someone to do something

The following writing styles often present challenges in translation.

- **Poetry**- expresses ideas and feelings in a beautiful way
- **Proverbs**- briefly teaches a truth or wisdom
- **Symbolic Language** - uses symbols to represent things and events
- **Symbolic Prophecy** - uses symbolic language to show what will happen in the future
- **Hypothetical Situations** - tells about what would happen if something were real or expresses an emotion about something that is not real.

The purpose of a particular text will influence what kinds of discourse features are used. For example, in a narrative, discourse features would include:

- telling about events that happen before and after other events;
- introducing people in the story;
- introducing new events in the story;
- conversation and the use of quotes;
- referring to people and things with nouns or pronouns.

Languages have organized ways of communicating information in each of these discourse types.

Specific discourse issues:

1. **Introduction of a New Event**- Phrases like "One day" or "It came about that" or

This page answers the question:

What are the different types and issues of writing styles?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Decisions for Writing Your Language](#)
in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

"This is how it happened" or "Sometime after that" signal to the reader that a new event is about to be told.

2. **Introduction of New and Old Participants**- Languages have ways of introducing new people and of referring to those people again.
3. **Background Information**- An author may use background information for several reasons: 1) to add interest to the story, 2) to provide important historical or cultural information or 3) to tell the reader, or listener, something very important.
4. **Pronouns - When to Use Them** - Languages have patterns for how frequently to use pronouns. If that pattern is not followed, wrong meaning can result.
5. **End of Story** - Stories can end with various kinds of information. Languages have different ways of showing how that information is related to the story.
6. **Quotations and Quote Margins**- Languages have different ways of reporting what someone said.
7. **Connecting Words**- Languages have patterns for how to use connecting words (such as "and," "but," or "then").

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information; Connecting Words; Introduction of a New Event; Introduction of New and Old Participants; Order of Events in Translation Manual Volume 1; Poetry; Proverbs; Quotations and Quote Margins; Symbolic Language

Background Information

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. Sometimes a writer may give some background information to help his listeners understand the story. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story. The story teller and translator need to tell the story in a way that people will know whether an event is background information and will be able to understand what order the events happened in.

This page answers the question:

What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Order of Events](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Writing Styles](#)

Description

Every story has a storyline. The storyline tells a series of events mostly in the time order that the events happened. It is full of action verbs that moves the reader along the storyline. Occasionally an author may take a break from the storyline to share something of interest. This break is called **background information**. The underlined sentences in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day! They walked for hours through low bushes until they found a wild pig. They shot the pig and killed it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope they had brought with them, and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were", rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "Peter was the best hunter in the village" and "it was his own pig."

Sometimes a storyteller makes a break in the story to tell about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a a feast the next day" and "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," "that they had brought with them," and "Peter had mistakenly killed his cousins's pig.

A writer may use background information

- to help their listeners be interested in the story.
- to help their listeners understand something in the story.

- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story.
- to tell the setting of a story. Setting includes:
 - where the story takes place.
 - when the story takes place.
 - who is present when the story begins.
 - what is happening when the story begins.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Translators need to know whether or not the events in the Bible happened in the same order that they are told.
- Translators will need to translate the story in a way that their own readers will understand the order of events.

Examples from the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULB)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

Now Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULB)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story starts up again in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Now it happened on a Sabbath that Jesus was going through the grain fields and his disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them between their hands, and eating the grain. But some of the Pharisees said... (Luke 6:1-2a ULB)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the sentence "But some of the Pharisees said."

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study the grammar and punctuation of your language. Observe how your language presents background

information in writings. Follow those same grammar rules when you translate.

1. Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
2. Reorder the information so that that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies applied

1. Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULB English translations.
 - **Now Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.** (Luke 3:23 ULB) - English uses the word "now" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.
 - **With many other exhortations also, he preached good news to the people. John also rebuked Herod the tetrarch for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias, and for all the other evil things that Herod had done. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison.** (Luke 3:18-20 ULB) The underlined phrases happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.
2. Reorder the information so that that earlier events are mentioned first.
 - **Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.** (Genesis 16:16 ULB)
 - "When Abram was eighty-six years old, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."
 - **John also rebuked Herod the tetrarch for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias, and for all the other evil things that Herod had done. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison.** (Luke 3:18-20) - The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.
 - "Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and he did many other evil things, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Connecting Words; Introduction of a New Event](#)

Connecting Words

Connecting words show how thoughts are related to other thoughts. They are also called **conjunctions**.

This page is about connecting words that connect statements and groups of statements to others. Some examples are: and, but, for, so, therefore, now, if, if only, since, then, when, while, whenever, because, yet, unless.

Description

Connecting words show how thoughts are related to other thoughts. This page is about connecting words that connect statements and groups of statements to others. Some examples of connecting words are: and, but, for, so, therefore, now, if, if only, since, then, when, while, whenever, because, yet, unless.

- It was raining, so I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella. So I got very wet. Sometimes people do not use a connecting word because they expect the readers to understand the relationship between the thoughts because of the context.
- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

Reason this is a translation issue

- Translators need to understand the meaning of a connecting word in the Bible and the relationship between the thoughts it is connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- Translators need to know how to help their readers understand the relationship between the thoughts.

Translation Principles

- Translators need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

Examples from the Bible

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit, and ate it. And she gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. (Genesis 3:6 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What are connecting words for, and how do I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Sentence Structure](#)

The word "and" can connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. The underlined examples above show where it connects clauses and sentences. In this verse, the event that follows "and" happened after the event before "and".

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me, but instead I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days. (Galatians 1:16-18 ULB)

The word "but" introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do with what he did do. Here the word "then" introduces something Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULB)

Here the word "But" contrasts what one group of people will be called in God's kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

Translation Strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULB would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

1. Use a connecting word (even if the ULB does not use one).
2. Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
3. Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use a connecting word (even if the ULB does not use one).
 - **Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left the nets and went after him.** (Mark 1:17-18 ULB) - They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this with "so."
 - "Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you become fishers of men." So immediately they left the nets and went after him."
2. Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

- **And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit, and ate it. And she gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.** (Genesis 3:6 ULB) - The word "and" here simply shows that something else happened. Some languages would not need to start the sentence with "and."
 - "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit, and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it." (Genesis 3:6 ULB)
- **I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me, but instead I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days.** (Galatians 1:16-18 ULB) Some languages might not need the words "but" or "then" here.
 - "I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. Instead I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days.

3. Use a different connecting word.

- **Therefore whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** (Matthew 5:19 ULB) - The word "but" is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word "but" would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So "and" might be clearer for those languages.
 - "Therefore whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever keeps them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."
- **Since the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.** (Acts 21:34 ULB) - Instead of starting the first part of the sentence with "since", some translators might prefer to start the second part of the sentence with "so".
 - "The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, so he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress."

End of Story

Description

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

This page answers the question:

What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Writing Styles](#)

[Background Information](#)

Different purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a comment about what happened in the story
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons this is a translation issue:

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If translators do not use their language's ways of doing this, readers may not know

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story.

Principles of translation

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples from the Bible

1. To summarize the story

Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us came safely to land.** (Acts 27:44 ULB)

2. To give a comment about what happened in the story

Many who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. When they counted the value of them, it was fifty thousand pieces of silver. **So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULB)

3. To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her house. (Luke 1:56 ULB)

4. To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

All who heard it were amazed at what was spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept thinking about all the things she had heard, treasuring them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULB)

5. To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

After Jesus left there, the scribes and the Pharisees opposed him and argued with him about many things, trying to trap him in his own words. (Luke 11:53-54 ULB)

Introduction of a New Event

When people tell a story or when they start a new part of a story, they often put certain information at the beginning, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. They may have certain ways of telling these things. For your translation to sound natural you may need to follow those ways.

Description

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. New events in a story might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? You may need to change how and in what order new information is introduced at the beginning of a new event in order for your translation to sound natural in your language.

Here are some examples of how some events are introduced in the books of Matthew and Luke.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zechariah, from the division of Abijah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULB)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first underlined phrase tells when it happened, and the next two underlined phrase introduce the main people.

One day while Zechariah was performing his duties as a priest before God in the order of his division, the priests followed their custom and chose him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULB)

Like 1:5-7 tell about Zechariah and Elizabeth being old and not having any children. The phrase One day helps to introduces the first event in this story.

The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way. His mother Mary was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULB)

The underlined sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being

This page answers the question:

How do we introduce a new event in a story?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Writing Styles](#)

[Order of Events](#) in

[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem saying,...
(Matthew 2:1 ULB)

The underlined phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened after Jesus was born.

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying, ... (Matthew 3:1-22 ULB)

The underlined phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. (Matthew 3:13 ULB)

The word "then" shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

Examples from the Bible

Now there was a Pharisee whose name was Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Council. This man came to Jesus at night time (John 3:1-2 ULB)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did. In some languages it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth. ⁷Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6,7 ULB)

Verse 6 is a summary of the events that happen in the rest of the chapter. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. This sentence introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this simply introduces the event. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULB or UDB. If not, consider one of these strategies.

1. Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
2. If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as: another time, someone.
3. If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
4. If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
 - **Now there was a Pharisee whose name was Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Council. This man came to Jesus at night time and said to him ...** (John 3:1,2)
 - "There was a man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council. One night he came to Jesus and said..."
 - "One night a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council, came to Jesus and said ..."
 - **As he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, who was sitting at the tax collecting place, and he said to him ...** (Mark 2:14 ULB)
 - "As he passed by, Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting at the tax collecting place. Jesus saw him and and said to him ..."
 - "As he passed by, there was a man sitting at the tax collecting place. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ..."
 - "As he passed by, there was a tax collector sitting at the tax collecting place. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ..."
2. If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as: another time, someone.
 - **Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth.** (Genesis 7:6 ULB) - If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase "after that" can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.
 - "After that, when Noah was six hundred years old, the flood came upon the earth."
 - **Again he began to teach beside the lake.** (Mark 4:1 ULB) - In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone's house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to

the lake.

- "Another time Jesus began to teach people again beside the lake."
- "Jesus went to the lake and began to teach people again there."

3. If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary. This is one way that it can be done in English.

- **Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth.**

(Genesis 7:6 ULB)

- "Now this is what happened when Noah was six hundred years old and the flood came upon the earth."

4. If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event would actually happen later in the story.

- **Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood.** (Genesis 7:6 ULB)

- "Now this is what happened when Noah was six hundred years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because God had said that the waters of the flood would come."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Background Information; Introduction of New and Old Participants](#)

Introduction of New and Old Participants

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are new participants. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are old participants. In order to make your translation clear and natural, you will need to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or ones that they have already read about.

This page answers the question:

Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Parts of Speech](#)

[Writing Styles](#)

Description

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are new participants. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are old participants.

Now there was a Pharisee whose name was Nicodemus... This man came to Jesus at night time... Jesus replied to him (John 3:1)

The first underlined phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. He is then referred to as "This man" and "him" when he is an old participant.

Reason this is a translation issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to properly refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about.

Examples from the Bible

New Participants

Sometimes a new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as "There was a man" in the example below. The phrase "There was" tells us that this man existed. The word "a" in "a man" tells us that that author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who is family was, and what his name was.

There was a man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2 ULB)

Sometimes a new participant is simply mentioned in relation to another person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah's wife is simply referred to as "his wife". This phrase shows her relationship to him.

There was a man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose

name was Manoah. His wife was not able to become pregnant and so she had not given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULB)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the book of Judges, the first time that the angel of Yahweh is mentioned, he is referred to simply by his title.

The angel of Yahweh went up from Gilgal to Bochim, (Judges 2:1 ULB)

Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story, may then be referred to with a pronoun, with a noun phrase, or by name or title. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun "his," and his wife is referred to with the pronoun "she".

His wife was not able to become pregnant and so she had not given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULB)

In the example below, Manoah's wife is referred to with the noun phrase "the woman".

The angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, (Judges 13:3 ULB)

In the example below, Manoah is referred to with his name.

Then Manoah prayed to Yahweh

Some languages have something on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough of a clue for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See: [Verbs](#))

In some languages people do not always have to use a noun or noun phrase to refer to an old participant when that participant is the subject of a sentence. People can understand it from the context.

Translation Strategies

1. If it is a new participant, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.
2. If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.
3. If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If it is a new participant, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.
 - **Joseph, a Levite, a man from Cyprus, was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of encouragement).** (Acts 4:36-37 ULB)- Starting the sentence with Joseph's name when he has not been introduced yet might be too quick in some languages.
 - "There was a man named Joseph, from Cyprus. He was a Levite and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of encouragement)."
 - "There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement."

2. If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.
 - **It happened when he finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."** (Luke 11:1 ULB) - Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who "he" refers to.
 - "It happened when Jesus finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

3. If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.
 - **Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there.** (Genesis 39:20 ULB) - Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might find it odd to use his name so much. They might prefer a pronoun.
 - "Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and he stayed there in the prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Pronouns - When to Use Them](#)

Poetry

Poetry combines figures of speech with pleasant sounds and deep feelings to make a passage both beautiful and easier to remember.

Description

Poetry is one of various way in which to use words to make the writing more beautiful and to show the feeling. It is used to express a stronger emotional feeling than simple non-poetic forms would express. Poetry is easier to remember and tends to last longer than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question:

What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)
[Writing Styles](#)

Some things commonly found in poetry

- Many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#).
- Parallel lines (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#))
- Repetition of some or all of a line
 - **Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his angel armies. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.** (Psalm 148:2-3 ULB)
- Lines of similar length.
 - **Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude.** (1 Corinthians 13:4 ULB)
- The same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines
 - "Twinkle, twinkle little star. How I wonder what you are." (from an English rhyme)
- The same sound repeated many times
 - "Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater" (from an English rhyme)
- Old words and expressions

Some places to look for poetry in your language

1. Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
2. Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
3. Prayers, blessings, and curses
4. Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as

much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons this is a translation issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language you may need to write it without the poetry.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples from the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely poetry.

for you saw my affliction;
you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7 ULB)

This example of [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations;
vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High.

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See: [Parallelism](#))

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins;
let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13 ULB)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See: [Personification](#))

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good, for his covenant
faithfulness endures forever.
Oh, give thanks to the God of gods, for his covenant faithfulness
endures forever.
Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his covenant faithfulness
endures forever. (Psalm 136:1-3 ULB)

This example repeats the phrases "give thanks" and "his covenant faithfulness endures forever."

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

1. Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
2. Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
3. Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech. If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

**Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked,
or stand in the pathway with sinners,
or sit in the assembly of mockers.
But his delight is in the law of Yahweh,
and on his law he meditates day and night.** (Psalm 1:1,2 ULB)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1,2.

1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

"Happy is the person not encouraged to sin
Disrespect for God he will not begin
To those who laugh at God, he is no kin.
God is his constant delight
He does what God says is right
He thinks of it all day and night

2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

- "This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people, or stop along the road to speak with sinners, or join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather he takes great joy in Yahweh's law, and he meditates on it day and night."

3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

- "The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or with those who do not respect God. They love to obey Yahweh's law, and they think about it all the time."

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Symbolic Language](#)

Proverbs

People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. When you follow your language's ways of saying proverbs, you will make your translation sparkle.

Description

Proverbs are a sentence or a few sentences that give wisdom or teach a truth. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism.

Hatred stirs up conflicts,
but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULB)

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise.
It has no commander, officer, or ruler,
yet it prepares its food in the summer,
and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8
ULB)

Reason this is a translation issue:

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in a way for people to recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples from the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULB)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,
so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULB)

This means that if a person is lazy and does do what he was sent to do, he will be very annoying to those who send.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity,
but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULB)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those

This page answers the question:

What are proverbs, and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Metaphor](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Parallelism](#)

[Writing Styles](#)

who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

If translating a proverb literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

1. Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
2. If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.
3. Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.
4. Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

- **A good name is to be chosen over great riches, and favor is better than silver and gold.** (Proverbs 22:1 ULB)

Here are some ideas for ways people might say a proverb in their language.

- "It is better to have a good name than to have great riches, and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold."
- "Wise people choose a good name over great riches and favor over silver and gold."
- "Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches."
- "Will riches really help you? I would rather have a good reputation."

2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

- **Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so a fool does not deserve honor.** (Proverbs 26:1 ULB)
 - "It is not natural for a cold wind to blow in the hot season or for it to rain in the harvest season; And it is not natural to honor a foolish person."

3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

- **Do not boast about tomorrow** (Proverbs 27:1 ULB)
 - "Do not count your chickens before they hatch."

4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

- **A generation that curses their father and does not bless their mother, that is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, but they are not washed of their filth.** (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULB)
- "People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous, and they do not turn away from their sin."

Symbolic Language

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things and events. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future. Though people may not immediately know the meaning of a symbol, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation.

This page answers the question:

What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Writing Styles](#)

Description

Symbolic language in speech and writing is the use of symbols to represent other things and events. In the Bible it occurs most in prophecy and poetry, especially in visions and dreams about things that will happen in the future.

“Eat this scroll, then go speak to the house of Israel.” (Ezekiel 3:1 ULB)

This was in a dream. Eating the scroll is a symbol of reading and understanding well what was written on the scroll.

One purpose of symbolism is to help people understand the importance or severity of an event by calling it another. Another purpose of symbolism is to tell people about something that they would be able to understand while hiding the true meaning from others.

Reason this is a translation issue: People who read the Bible today may find it hard to recognize that the language is symbolic, and they may not know what the symbol stands for.

Translation Principle: When symbolic language is used, it is important to keep the symbol in the translation. It is also important not to explain it more than the original speaker or writer did, since he may not have wanted everyone living then to be able to understand it easily.

Examples from the Bible

After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns. (Daniel 7:7 ULB)

The meaning of the underlined symbols is explained in Daniel 7:23-24 as shown below. The animals represent kingdoms, iron teeth represent a powerful army, and the horns represent powerful leaders.

This is what that person said, 'As for the fourth animal, it will be a fourth kingdom on earth that will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, and it will trample it down and break it into pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise, and another will arise after them. He will be different from the previous ones, and he will conquer the three kings. (Daniel 7:23-24 ULB)

I turned around to see whose voice was speaking to me, and as I turned I saw seven golden lampstands. In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a Son of Man, ... He had in his right hand seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp two-edged sword.... As for the hidden meaning about the seven stars you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:12, 16, 20 ULB)

This passage explains the meaning of the seven lampstands and the seven starts. The two-edged sword represents God's word and judgment.

Translation Strategies

1. Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
2. Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate the text with the symbols. Often the speaker or author explains the meaning later in the passage.
 - **After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns.** (Daniel 7:7 ULB) - People will be able to understand what the symbols mean when they read the explanation in Daniel 7:23-24.
2. Translate the text with the symbols. Then explain the symbols in footnotes.
 - **After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal, terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth; it devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns.** (Daniel 7:7 ULB)
 - "After this I saw in my dream at night a fourth animal,¹ terrifying, frightening, and very strong. It had large iron teeth;² it devoured,

broke in pieces, and trampled underfoot what was left. It was different from the other animals, and it had ten horns."³ The footnotes would look like:

- ^[1] The animal is a symbol for a kingdom.
- ^[2] The iron teeth is a symbol for the kingdom's powerful army.
- ^[3] The horns are a symbol of powerful kings.

Symbolic Prophecy

Description

Symbolic prophecy is a type of message that God gave to a prophet so that the prophet would tell others. These messages use images and symbols to show what God will do in the future.

The main books that have these prophecies are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Shorter examples of symbolic prophecy are also found in other books, such as in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

The Bible tells both how God gave each message and what the message was. When God gave the messages, he often did so in miraculous ways such as in dreams and visions. (See *dream* and *vision* pages in [translationWords](#) for help translating "dream" and "vision".) When prophets saw these dreams and visions, they often saw images and symbols about God and heaven. Some of these images are a throne, golden lamp stands, a powerful man with white hair and white clothes, and eyes like fire and legs like bronze. Some of these images were seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies about the world also contain images and symbols. For example, in some of the prophecies strong animals represent kingdoms, horns represent kings or kingdoms, a dragon or serpent represents the devil, the sea represents the nations, and weeks represent longer periods of time. Some of these images were also seen by more than one prophet.

The prophecies tell about the evil in this world, how God will judge the world and punish sin, and how God will establish his righteous kingdom in the new world he is creating. They also tell about things that will happen concerning heaven and hell.

Some of these writings are presented as poetry and some are presented as narrative. They usually use the past tense because the prophets tell about what they saw in their visions or dreams. But they are about things that would happen in the future. Some of these things happened after the prophets told about them, and some of them will happen at the end of this world.

Reason this is a translation issue: Some of the images are hard to understand because we have never seen things like them before.

Translation Principles

- Translate the images in the text. Do not try to interpret them and translate their meaning.
- When the same image appears in more than one place in the Bible, and it is

This page answers the question:

What is symbolic language and how do I translate it?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Writing Styles](#)

[Symbolic Language](#)

- described in the same way, try to translate it the same way in all those places.
- Sometimes it is difficult to understand what order the events described in the various prophecies happen. Simply write them as they appear in each prophecy.

Examples from the Bible

The following passages describe powerful beings that Ezekiel, Daniel, and John saw. Images that come up in these visions include hair that is white as wool, a voice like many waters, a golden belt, and legs or feet like polished bronze. Though the prophets saw various details, it would be good to translate the details that are the same in the same way.

In the middle of the lampstands there was one like a Son of Man, wearing a long robe that reached down to his feet, and a golden belt around his chest. His head and hair were as white as wool — as white as snow, and his eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many rushing waters. He had in his right hand seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp two-edged sword. His face was shining like the sun at its strongest shining. (Revelation 1:13-16 ULB)

As I looked,
thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow,
and *the hair of his head was like pure wool*. (Daniel 7:9 ULB)

I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt around his waist made of pure gold from Uphaz. His body was like topaz, his face was like lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and his feet were like polished bronze, and the sound of his words was like the sound of a great crowd. (Daniel 10:5-6 ULB)

Behold! The glory of the God of Israel came from the east; his voice was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory! (Ezekiel 43:2 ULB)

Biblical Imagery

Biblical Imagery

Description

Imagery is language in which an image is paired with another idea so that the image represents the idea. This includes metaphors, similes, metonymies, and cultural models. Most of these things in a language come from broad patterns of pairings between images and ideas, but some do not. These pages on Biblical Imagery tell about patterns of imagery in the Bible.

The patterns of pairings found in the Bible are often unique to the Hebrew and Greek languages. It is useful to recognize these patterns because they repeatedly present translators with the same problems on how to translate them. Once translators think through how they will handle these translation challenges, they will be ready to meet them anywhere they see the same patterns.

This page answers the question:

What kinds of imagery are commonly used in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Figures of Speech](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metaphor](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

Common Patterns in Metaphors and Similes

A **metaphor** occurs when someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing. The speaker does this in order to effectively describe the first thing. For example, in "My love is a red, red rose," the speaker is describing the woman he loves as beautiful and delicate.

A **simile** is like a metaphor, except that it uses words such as "like" or "as" as a signal to the audience that it is a figure of speech.

See: [Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#) for links to pages showing common patterns of pairings between ideas in metaphors and similes.

Common Metonymies

In metonymy, a thing or idea is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it.

See [Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies](#) for a list of some common metonymies in the Bible.

Cultural Models

Cultural models are mental pictures of parts of life or behavior. These pictures help us imagine and talk about these things. For example, Americans often think of marriage and friendship as if they were machines. Americans might say "His marriage is breaking down" or "Their friendship is going full speed ahead."

The Bible often speak of God as if he were a shepherd and his people were sheep. This is a cultural model.

Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULB)

He led his own people out like sheep and guided them through the wilderness like a flock. (Psalm 78:52 ULB)

Some of the cultural models in the Bible were used much by the cultures in the Ancient Near East, and not only by the Israelites.

See: [Biblical Imagery - Cultural Models](#) for a list of cultural models in the Bible.

Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies

Some common metonymies from the Bible are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an idea. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

A CUP or bowl represents what is in it

my cup runs over. (Psalm 23:5 ULB)

There is so much in the cup that it runs over the top of the cup.

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26 ULB)

People do not drink cups. They drink what is in the cup.

The MOUTH represents speech or words

A fool's mouth is his ruin. (Proverbs 18:7 ULB)

Oh, how I would encourage you with my mouth! (Job 16:5 ULB)

I heard you when you boasted against me with your mouth; you said many things against me. I heard them. (Ezekiel 35:13 ULB)

In these examples the mouth refers to what a person says.

The MEMORY OF A PERSON represents his descendants

The memory of a person represents his descendants, because they are the ones who should remember and honor him. When the Bible says that someone's memory dies, it means that either he will not have any descendants, or his descendants will all die.

You terrified the nations with your battle cry;
you have destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their memory forever.
The enemy crumbled like ruins
when you overthrew their cities.
All remembrance of them has perished. (Psalm 9:5-6 ULB)

His memory will perish from the earth (Job 18:17 ULB)

Yahweh is against evildoers,
in order to wipe out their memory from the earth. (Psalm 34:16 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What are some common metonymies used in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery](#)

[Metonymy](#)

ONE PERSON represents many people

For the wicked person boasts of his deepest desires;
he blesses the greedy and insults Yahweh. (Psalm 10:3 ULB)

This does not refer to a particular wicked person, but to wicked people in general.

A PERSON'S NAME represents his descendants

Gad—raiders will attack him, but he will attack them at their heels.
Asher's food will be rich, and he will provide royal delicacies.
Naphtali is a doe let loose; he will have beautiful fawns. (Genesis
49:19-21 ULB)

The names Gad, Asher, and Naphtali refer not only to those men, but to their descendants.

A PERSON represents himself and the people with him

It came about that when Abram entered into Egypt, the Egyptians saw
that Sarai was very beautiful. (Genesis 12:14 ULB)

Here when it says "Abram" it represents Abram and all the people traveling with him.
The focus was on Abram.

PIERCING represents killing

His hand pierced the fleeing serpent. (Job 26:13 ULB)

This means that he killed the serpent.

Look, he is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, including
those who pierced him. (Revelation 1:7 ULB)

"Those who pierced him" refers to those who killed Jesus.

SINS represent punishment

Yahweh has placed on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6 ULB)

This means that Yahweh placed on him the punishment that should have gone to all
of us.

Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns

This page discusses ideas that are paired together in limited ways. For a discussion of more complex pairings, see [Biblical Imagery - Cultural Models](#).

Description

In all languages, most **metaphors** come from broad patterns of pairings of ideas in which one idea represents another. For example, some languages have the pattern of pairing **height** with "much" and pairing **being low** with "not much," so that **height** represents "much" and **being low** represents "not much." This could be because when there is a lot of something in a pile, that pile will be high. So also if something costs a lot of money, in some languages people would say that the price is **high**, or if a city has more people in it than it used to have, we might say that its number of people has gone **up**. Likewise if someone gets thinner and loses weight, we would say that their weight has gone **down**.

The patterns found in the Bible are often unique to the Hebrew and Greek languages. It is useful to recognize these patterns because they repeatedly present translators with the same problems on how to translate them. Once translators think through how they will handle these translation challenges, they will be ready to meet them anywhere.

For example, one pattern of pairings in the Bible is of walking with "behaving" and a path with a kind of behavior. In Psalm 1:1 the walking in the advice of the wicked represents doing what wicked people say to do.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked
(Psalm 1:1)

This pattern is also seen in Psalm 119:32 where running in the path of God's commands represents doing what God commands. Since running is more intense than walking, the idea of running here might give the idea of doing this wholeheartedly.

I will run in the path of your commandments. (Psalm 119:32 ULB)

Reasons this is a translation Issue

These patterns present three challenges to anyone who wants to identify them:

(1) When looking at particular metaphors in the Bible, it is not always obvious what

This page answers the question:

In the Bible, what ideas are often used to represent other ideas?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery](#)

[Metaphor](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Simile](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

two ideas are paired with each other. For example, it may not be immediately obvious that the expression //It is God who puts strength on me like a belt// (Psalm 18:32 ULB) is based on the pairing of clothing with moral quality. In this case, the image of a belt represents strength. (See: "Clothing represents a moral quality" in [Biblical Imagery - Man-made Objects](#))

(2) When looking at a particular expression, the translator needs to know whether or not it represents something. This can only be done by considering the surrounding text. The surrounding text shows us for example, whether "lamp" refers concretely to a container with oil and a wick for giving light or whether "lamp" is an image that represents life. (See: "FIRE or LAMP represents life" in [Biblical Imagery - Natural Phenomena](#)).

In 1 Kings 7:50, a lamp trimmer is a tool for trimming the wick on an ordinary lamp. In 2 Samuel 21:17 the lamp of Israel represents King David's life. When his men were concerned that he might "put out the lamp of Israel" they were concerned that he might be killed.

The cups, lamp trimmers, basins, spoons, and incense burners were all made of pure gold. (1 Kings 7:50)

Ishbibenob...intended to kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah rescued David, attacked the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You must not go to battle anymore with us, so that you do not put out the lamp of Israel." (2 Samuel 21:16-17)

(3) Expressions that are based on these pairings of ideas frequently combine together in complex ways. Moreover, they frequently combine with—and in some cases are based on—common metonymies and cultural models. (See: [Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies](#) and [Biblical Imagery - Cultural Models](#).) For example, in 2 Samuel 14:7 below, "the burning coal" is an image for the life of the son, who represents what will cause people to remember his father. So there are two patterns of pairings here: the pairing of the burning coal with the life of the son, and the pairing of the son with the memory of his father.

They say, 'Hand over the man who struck his brother, so that we may put him to death, to pay for the life of his brother whom he killed.' And so they would also destroy the heir. Thus they will put out the burning coal that I have left, and they will leave for my husband neither name nor descendant on the surface of the earth. (2 Samuel 14:7 ULB)

Links to Lists of Images in the Bible

The following pages have lists of some of the ideas that represent others in the Bible, together with examples from the Bible. They are organized according to the kinds of

image:

- A. [Biblical Imagery - Body Parts and Human Qualities](#)
- B. [Biblical Imagery - Human Behavior](#) - Includes both physical and non-physical actions, condition and experiences.
- C. [Biblical Imagery - Plants](#)
- D. [Biblical Imagery - Natural Phenomena](#)
- E. [Biblical Imagery - Man-made Objects](#)

Biblical Imagery - Animals

Some images from the Bible involving body parts and human qualities are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an idea. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

An ANIMAL HORN represents strength

God is my rock. I take refuge in him.
He is my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold, and my refuge,
the one who saves me from violence. (2 Samuel 22:3 ULB)

The "horn of my salvation" is the strong one who saves me.

There I will make the horn of David to grow. (Psalm 132:17 ULB)

The "horn of David" is King David's military strength.

BIRDS represent people who are in danger and defenseless

This is because some birds are easily trapped.

My enemies have relentlessly hunted me like a bird, without cause.
(Lamentations 3:52 ULB)

Save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,
like a bird from the hand of the fowler. (Proverbs 6:5 ULB)

A fowler is a person who catches birds, and a snare is a small trap.

We have escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowlers;
the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. (Psalm 124:7 ULB)

BIRDS THAT EAT MEAT represent enemies who attack swiftly

In Habakkuk and Hosea, Israel's enemies who would come and attack them were compared to an eagle.

and their horsemen come from a great distance—they fly like an eagle hurrying to eat! (Habakkuk 1:8 ULB)

An eagle is coming over the house of me, Yahweh.

This page answers the question:

What are some examples of animals and animal body parts that are used as images in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

... Israel has rejected what is good,
and the enemy will pursue him. (Hosea 8:1,3)

In Isaiah, God called a certain foreign king a bird of prey because he would come quickly and attack Israel's enemies.

I call a bird of prey from the east, the man of my choice from a distant land; (Isaiah 46:11 ULB)

A BIRD'S WINGS represent protection

This is because birds spread their wings over their chicks to protect them from danger.

Protect me like the apple of your eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings
from the presence of the wicked ones who assault me, my enemies who surround me. (Psalms 17:8-9 ULB)

Be merciful to me, God, be merciful to me,
for I take refuge in you until these troubles are over.
I stay under your wings for protection until this destruction is over.
(Psalm 57:1 ULB)

DANGEROUS ANIMALS represent dangerous people

In Psalms, David referred to his enemies as lions.

My life is among lions;
I am among those who are ready to devour me.
I am among people whose teeth are spears and arrows,
and whose tongues are sharp swords.
Be exalted, God, above the heavens (Psalm 57:4 ULB)

Peter called the devil a roaring lion.

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary—the devil—like a roaring lion is stalking around, looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8 ULB)

In Matthew, Jesus called false prophets wolves because of the harm they did to people by their lies.

Beware of false prophets, those who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are truly ravenous wolves. (Matthew 7:15 ULB)

In Matthew, John the Baptist called the religious leaders poisonous snakes because of the harm they did by teaching lies.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him for baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of poisonous snakes, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming? (Matthew 3:7 ULB)

EAGLES represent strength

He satisfies your life with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle. (Psalm 103:5 ULB)

For Yahweh says this, "See, the enemy will come flying like an eagle, spreading out his wings over Moab." (Isaiah 48:40 ULB)

SHEEP or a FLOCK OF SHEEP represents people who need to be led or are in danger

My people have been a lost flock. Their shepherds have led them astray in the mountains; (Jeremiah 50:6 ULB)

He led his own people out like sheep and guided them through the wilderness like a flock. (Psalm 78:52 ULB)

Israel is a sheep scattered and driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him; then after this, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon broke his bones. (Jeremiah 50:17 ULB)

See, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Watch out for people! They will deliver you up to councils, and they will whip you in their synagogues. (Matthew 10:16 ULB)

Biblical Imagery - Body Parts and Human Qualities

Description

Some images from the Bible involving body parts and human qualities are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an idea. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

The **BODY** represents a group of people

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27 ULB)

Rather we will speak the truth in love and grow up in all ways into him who is the head, Christ. Christ joins the whole body of believers together—it is held together by every supporting ligament so that the whole body grows and builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16 ULB)

In these verses, the body of Christ represents the group of people who follow Christ.

The **FACE** represents someone's presence

Do you not fear me—this is Yahweh's declaration—or tremble **before my face**? (Jeremiah 5:22 ULB)

To be before someone's face is to be in their presence, that is, to be with them.

The **FACE** represents someone's attention

Every man of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart, or who **puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face**, and who then comes to a prophet—I, Yahweh, will answer him according to the number of his idols. (Ezekiel 14:4 ULB)

To put something before one's face is to look at it intently or pay attention to it.

Many seek the face of the ruler, (Proverbs 29:26 ULB)

If someone seeks another person's face, he hopes that the person will pay attention to him.

Why do you **hide your face** and forget our affliction and our

This page answers the question:

What are some examples of body parts and human qualities that are used as images in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

oppression? (Psalm 44:24 ULB)

To hide one's face from someone is to ignore him.

The FACE represents surface

The famine was over all the face of the whole land. (Genesis 41:56 ULB)

He encloses the face of the moon and spreads his clouds on it. (Job 26:9 ULB)

The HAND represents a person's agency or power

Yahweh has burst through my enemies by my hand like a bursting flood of water. (1 Chronicles 14:11 ULB)

"Yahweh has burst through my enemies by my hand" means "Yahweh has used me to burst through my enemies."

Your hand will seize all your enemies; your right hand will seize those who hate you. (Psalm 21:8 ULB)

"Your hand will seize all your enemies" means "By your power you will seize all your enemies."

Look, Yahweh's hand is not so short that it cannot save. (Isaiah 59:1 ULB)

"His hand is not short" means that he is not weak.

The HEAD represents the ruler, the one who has authority over others

God has subjected all things under Christ's feet and has made him the head over all things in the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all things in all ways. (Ephesians 1:22 ULB)

Wives should be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. (Ephesian 5:22-23 ULB)

A MASTER represents anything that motivates someone to act

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

To serve God is to be motivated by God. To serve money is to be motivated by money.

A NAME represents the person who has that name

May your God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and make his throne greater than your throne." 1 Kings 1:47 (ULB)

See, I have sworn by my great name—says Yahweh. My name will no longer be called upon by the mouths of any of the men of Judah in all the land of Egypt..." (Jeremiah 44:26 ULB)

If someone's name is great, it means that he is great.

Listen now to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight to honor your name.... Nehemiah 1:11 (ULB)

To honor someone's name is to honor him.

A NAME represents the fame or reputation of a person

You must no longer profane my holy name with your gifts and your idols. Ezekiel 20:39 (ULB)

To profane God's name is to profane his reputation, that is, to profane how people think about him.

For I will make my great name holy, which you have profaned among the nations.... Ezekiel 36:23 (ULB)

To make God's name holy is to cause people to see that God is holy.

Your servants have come here from a land very far away, because of the name of Yahweh your God. We have heard a report about him and about everything that he did in Egypt (Joshua 9:9 ULB)

The fact that the men said they heard a report about Yahweh shows that "because of the name of Yahweh" means because of Yahweh's reputation.

The NOSE represents anger

Then...the foundations of the world were exposed at your battle cry, Yahweh—at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. (Psalms 18:15 ULB)

By the blast of your nostrils the waters were piled up.... (Exodus 15:8 ULB)

Smoke went up from out of his nostrils, and blazing fire came out of his mouth.... (2 Samuel 22:9 ULB)

...This is the Lord Yahweh's declaration: 'My fury will arise in my nostrils!' (Ezekiel 38:18 ULB)

A blast of air or smoke coming from someone's nose shows his great anger.

RAISED EYES represents arrogance

but you bring down those with proud, uplifted eyes! (Psalm 18:27 ULB)

Uplifted eyes show that a person is proud.

God humbles a proud man, and he saves the one with lowered eyes. (Job 22:29 ULB)

Lowered eyes show that a person is humble.

The SON OF SOMETHING shares its qualities

no son of wickedness will oppress him. (Psalm 89:22b ULB)

A son of wickedness is a wicked person.

May the groans of the prisoners come before you;
with the greatness of your power keep the **children of death** alive.
(Psalm 79:11 ULB)

Children of death here are people that others plan to kill.

We all were once among these unbelievers and acted according to the evil desires of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the mind, and we were by nature **children of wrath** like the others. (Ephesians 2:3 ULB)

Children of wrath here are people with whom God is very angry.

Translation Strategies

See the Translations Strategies on [Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#).

Biblical Imagery - Farming

Some images from the Bible related to farming are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an idea. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

A FARMER represents God, and the **VINEYARD** represents his chosen people

My well beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He spaded it and removed the stones, and planted it with the choicest vine.

He built a tower in the middle of it, and also built a winepress.

He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes.
(Isaiah 5:1-2)

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. (Matthew 20:1 ULB)

There was a man, a person with extensive land. He planted a vineyard, set a hedge about it, dug a winepress in it, built a watchtower, and rented it out to vine growers. Then he went into another country.
(Matthew 21:33 ULB)

The GROUND represents people's hearts

For Yahweh says this to each person in Judah and Jerusalem: 'Plow your own ground, and do not sow among thorns. (Jeremiah 4:3)

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom but does not understand it.... This is the seed that was sown beside the road. He who was sown on the rocky ground is he who hears the word and receives it with joy immediately....He who was sown among the thorn plants, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word.... He who was sown on the good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it. (Matthew 13:20-23)

Break up your unplowed ground, for it is time to seek Yahweh....
(Hosea 10:12)

This page answers the question:

What are some examples in the Bible of images taken from farming?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in

[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

SOWING represents actions or attitudes, and REAPING represents judgment or reward

Based on what I have observed, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. (Job 4:8 ULB)

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a man plants, that is what he will also harvest. For he who sows seed to his own sinful nature will harvest destruction, but he who sows seed to the Spirit, will harvest eternal life from the Spirit. (Galatians 6:7-8 ULB)

THRESHING and WINNOWING represent the separation of evil people from good people

After farmers harvest wheat and other types of grain, they bring them to a *threshing floor*, a flat place with hard ground, and have oxen pull heavy wheeled carts or sleds without wheels over the grain to *thresh* it, to separate the usable grains from the useless chaff. Then they take large forks and *winnow* the threshed grain by throwing it up in the air so the wind can carry off the chaff while the grains fall back to the threshing floor, where they can be gathered and used for food. (See *thresh* and *winnow* pages in [translationWords](#) for help translating "thresh" and "winnow.")

So I will winnow them with a pitchfork at the gates of the land. I will bereave them. I will destroy my people since they will not turn from their ways. (Jeremiah 15:7 ULB)

His winnowing fork is in his hand to thoroughly clear off his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his storehouse. But he will burn up the chaff with fire that can never be put out. (Luke 3:17 ULB)

GRAFTING represents God's allowing the Gentiles to become his people

For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a good olive tree, how much more will these Jews, who are the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree? For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of this mystery, in order that you will not be wise in your own thinking. This mystery is that a partial hardening has occurred in Israel, until the completion of the Gentiles come in. (Romans 11:24-25 ULB)

RAIN represents God's gifts to his people

...he comes and rains righteousness on you. (Hosea 10:12)

For the land that has received the rain that often falls on it, and that

produces a crop useful for those who worked the land, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. Its end comes in burning. (Hebrews 6:7-8)

Therefore be patient, brothers, until the coming of the Lord, like the farmer awaits the valuable harvest of the earth, waiting patiently for it, until the early and late rains fall. (James 5:7)

Biblical Imagery - Human Behavior

Some images from the Bible involving human behavior are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an image. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

BEING BENT OVER represents being discouraged

Yahweh supports all who are falling and raises up all those who are bent over. (Psalm 145:14 ULB)

BIRTH PAINS represent the suffering that is necessary to achieve a new condition

Be in pain and labor to give birth, daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor.
For now you will go out of the city, live in the field, and go to Babylon. There you will be rescued.
There Yahweh will rescue you from the hand of your enemies. (Micah 4:10 ULB)

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. But all these things are only the beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24:7-8 ULB)

My little children, I am suffering labor pains for you again, until Christ will have been formed in you! (Galatians 4:19 ULB)

BEING CALLED SOMETHING represents being that

The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of the whole earth. (Isaiah 54:5b ULB)

This is because he actually he is the God of the whole earth.

The one who is wise in heart is called discerning, (Proverbs 16:21a ULB)

This is because he actually is discerning.

He will be...be called the Son of the Most High. (Luke 1:32 ULB)

This is because he actually will be the Son of the Most High.

This page answers the question:

What are some examples of things people do that are used as images in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35 ULB)

This is because he actually will be the Son of God.

Every male that opens the womb will be called dedicated to the Lord. (Luke 2:23 ULB)

This is because he actually will be dedicated to the Lord.

CLEANLINESS represents being acceptable for God's purposes

Noah built an altar to Yahweh. He took some of the **clean** animals and some of the **clean** birds, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. Yahweh smelled the pleasing aroma... (Genesis 8:20 ULB)

The priest will examine him again on the seventh day to see if the disease is better and has not spread farther in the skin. If it has not, then the priest will pronounce him clean. It is a rash. He must wash his clothes, and then he is clean. (Leviticus 13:6 ULB)

CLEANSING or PURIFYING represents making something acceptable for God's Purposes

He must go out to the altar that is before Yahweh and make atonement for it, and he must take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on the horns of the altar all around. 19He must sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and dedicate it to Yahweh, away from the unclean actions of the people of Israel. (Leviticus 16:18-19 ULB)

This is because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you from all your sins so you will be clean before Yahweh. (Leviticus 16:30 ULB)

UNCLEANLINESS represents not being acceptable for God's purposes

You may eat any animal that has a split hoof and that also chews the cud. However, some animals either chew the cud or have a split hoof, and you must not eat them, animals such as the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have a split hoof. So the camel is unclean for you. (Leviticus 11:3-4 ULB)

And if any of them dies and falls on anything, that thing will be unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, leather, or sackcloth. Whatever it is and whatever it is used for, it must be put into water; it

will be unclean until evening. Then it will be clean. (Leviticus 11:32 ULB)

MAKING SOMETHING UNCLEAN represents making it unacceptable for God's purposes.

Or if anyone touches anything God has designated as unclean, whether it be the carcass of an unclean wild animal or the carcass of any livestock that has died, or creeping animal, even if the person did not intend to touch it, he is unclean and guilty. (Leviticus 5:2 ULB)

BEING CUT OFF FROM SOMETHING represents being separated from it

Uzziah, the king, was a leper to the day of his death, and lived in a separate house, since he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Yahweh. (2 Chronicles 26:21 ULB)

BEING CUT OFF represents being killed

So you must keep the Sabbath, for it must be treated by you as holy, reserved for him. Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death. Whoever works on the Sabbath, that person must surely be cut off from his people. (Exodus 31:14-15 ULB)

Whoever does not humble himself on that day must be cut off from his people. Whoever does any work on that day, I, Yahweh, will destroy him from among his people. (Leviticus 23:29-30 ULB)

But he was cut off from the land of the living. (Isaiah 53:8 ULB)

COMING AND STANDING BEFORE SOMEONE represents serving him

How blessed are your people, and how blessed are your servants who constantly stand before you, because they hear your wisdom. (1 Kings 10:8 ULB)

Covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness come before you. (Psalm 89:14 ULB)

(Covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness are also personified here. See: [Personification](#))

DRUNKENNESS represents suffering and WINE represents judgment

Too much wine makes a person weak and he staggers. So too, when God judges people, they become weak and stagger. So the idea of wine is used to represent God's judgment.

You have shown your people severe things;
you have made us drink the wine of staggering. (Psalm 60:3 ULB)

But God is the judge;
he brings one down and raises up another.
For Yahweh holds a cup in his hand of foaming wine,
which is mixed with spices, and pours it out.
Surely all the wicked of the earth will drink it to the last drop. (Psalm 75:8 ULB)

he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, the wine that has been
prepared and poured unmixed into the cup of his anger. (Revelation 14:10 ULB)

EATING UP represents destroying

God brings [Israel] out of Egypt.
He has strength like a wild ox.
He will eat up the nations who fight against him.
He will break their bones to pieces.
He will shoot them with his arrows. Numbers 24:8 ULB)

Another word for "eat up" is devour.

Therefore as the tongue of fire devours stubble, and as the dry grass
goes down in flame,
so their root will rot, and their blossom will blow away like dust,
(Isaiah 5:24 ULB)

Therefore Yahweh will raise up against him, Rezin, his adversary, and
will stir up his enemies,
the Arameans on the east, and the Philistines on the west.
They will devour Israel with open mouth. (Isaiah 9:11-12 ULB)

I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
and my sword will devour flesh
with the blood of the killed and the captives,
and from the heads of the leaders of the enemy. (Deuteronomy 32:42
ULB)

FALLING UPON or BEING UPON represents affecting

Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, so the man
slept. (Genesis 2:21 ULB)

Would not his majesty make you afraid?

Would not his dread fall upon you? (Job 13:11 ULB)

Then the Spirit of Yahweh fell on me and he said to me... (Ezekiel 11:5 ULB)

Now look, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will become blind. (Acts 13:11 ULB)

FOLLOWING SOMEONE represents being loyal to him

They broke away from Yahweh, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. **They went after other gods**, the very gods of the peoples who were around them, and they bowed down to them. They provoked Yahweh to anger because they broke away from Yahweh and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths.

For Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and he followed Milcom, the disgusting idol of the Ammonites. (1 Kings 11:5 ULB)

Not one of them who despised me will see it, except for my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit. He has followed me fully; I will bring him into the land which he went to examine. His descendants will possess it. (Numbers 14:23-24 ULB)

GOING BEFORE, ACCOMPANYING, OR FOLLOWING A KING WITH HIS OTHER ATTENDANTS represents serving him

See, his reward is with him, and his recompense is going before him. (Isaiah 62:11 ULB)

Righteousness will go before him and make a way for his footsteps. (Psalm 85:13 ULB)

INHERITING is permanently possessing something

Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34)

The blessing of God's complete rule is given as the permanent possession to those to whom the King is speaking.

Now this I say, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither does what is perishable inherit what is imperishable. (1 Corinthians 15:50 ULB)

People cannot receive the kingdom of God in its complete form as a permanent possession while they are still in their mortal bodies.

An **INHERITANCE** is something that someone permanently possesses

You will bring them and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance. (Exodus 15:17 ULB)

The mountain where God will be worshiped is viewed as his permanent possession.

Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as your inheritance. (Exodus 34:9 ULB)

Moses asks God to still accept the people of Israel as his special possession, that is, as the people permanently belonging to him.

the richness of the glory of his inheritance among those who are set apart for him. (Ephesians 1:18 ULB)

The wonderful things that God will give all who are set apart for him is viewed as their permanent possession.

An **HEIR** is someone who permanently possesses something

For it was not through the law that the promise was given to Abraham and to his descendants, this promise that they would be heirs of the world. (Romans 4:13 ULB)

The promise was that Abraham and his descendants would permanently possess the entire world.

God has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. (Hebrews 1:2 ULB)

God's Son will receive all things as a permanent possession.

It was by faith that Noah...condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes through faith. (Hebrews 11:7 ULB)

Noah received righteousness as a permanent possession.

LYING DOWN represents DYING

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up a descendant after you, (2 Samuel 7:12 ULB)

Ask them, 'Are you really more beautiful than anyone else? Go down and lie with the uncircumcised!'

They will fall among those who were killed by the sword! Egypt is given to the sword; her enemies will seize her and her servants! (Ezekiel 32:19-20 ULB)

REIGNING OR RULING represents controlling

This happened so that, as sin ruled in death, even so grace might rule through righteousness for everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:21 ULB)

Therefore do not let sin rule in your mortal body in order that you obey its lusts. (Romans 6:12 ULB)

RESTING or a RESTING PLACE represents a permanent beneficial situation

Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek a place for you to rest, so that things may go well for you?" (Ruth 3:1 ULB)

Therefore I vowed in my anger that they would never enter into my resting place. (Psalm 95:11 ULB)

This is my resting place forever; I will live here, for I desire her [Zion]. (Psalm 132:14 ULB)

The nations will seek him out, and his resting place will be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10 ULB)

RISING, STANDING UP represents acting

Rise up for our help and redeem us for the sake of your covenant faithfulness. (Psalm 44:26 ULB)

SEEING SOMETHING represents being there

You will not let the one who has covenant faithfulness see the pit. (Psalm 16:10 ULB)

SELLING represents handing over to someone's control. BUYING represents removing from someone's control

[Yahweh] sold [the Israelites] into the hand of Cushan Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim. (Judges 3:8 ULB)

SITTING IS RULING

A throne will be established in covenant faithfulness, and one from David's tent will faithfully sit there. (Isaiah 16:5 ULB)

STANDING represents successfully resisting

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. (Psalm 1:2 ULB)

WALKING represents behaving and PATH represents behavior

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked. Psalm 1:1 ULB)

For Yahweh approves of the way of the righteous. (Psalm 1:6 ULB)

Turn from me the path of deceit. (Psalm 119:28 ULB)

I will run in the path of your commandments. (Psalm 119:32 ULB)

Biblical Imagery - Man-made Objects

Some images from the Bible involving man-made objects are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an image. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

BRONZE represents strength

He trains...my arms to bend a bow of bronze.
Psalm 18:34 ULB)

CHAINS represent control

Let us tear off the shackles they put on us and throw off their chains.
Psalm 2:3

CLOTHING represents moral qualities (emotions, attitudes, spirit, life)

It is God who puts strength on me like a belt. (Psalm 18:32 ULB)

Righteousness will be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his hips. (Isaiah 11:5 ULB)

May my adversaries be clothed with shame; may they wear their shame like a robe. (Psalm 109:29 ULB)

I will clothe his enemies with shame. (Psalm 132:18 ULB)

A SNARE (A LIGHT TRAP FOR BIRDS WORKED BY CORDS) represents death

For he will rescue you from the snare of the hunter. (Psalm 91:3 ULB)

The cords of death surrounded me, and the snares of sheol confronted me. (Psalm 116:3 ULB)

The cords of the wicked have ensnared me. (Psalm 119:61 ULB)

The wicked have set a snare for me. (Psalm 119:110 ULB)

The wicked is ensnared by his own actions. (Psalm 9:16 ULB)

A SNARE IS PERSUASION TO DO EVIL

This page answers the question:

What are some examples things people make that are used as images in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in [Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

They mingled with the nations and learned their ways and worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. (Psalm 106:35-36 ULB)

A TENT represents a house, home, people in one's home, descendants

God will likewise destroy you forever; he will take you up and pluck you out of your tent. (Psalm 52:5 ULB)

The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. (Proverbs 14:11 ULB)

A throne will be established in covenant faithfulness, and one from David's tent will faithfully sit there. (Isaiah 16:5 ULB)

Biblical Imagery - Natural Phenomena

Some images from the Bible involving natural phenomena are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an image. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

LIGHT represents someone's face (This often combines with **FACE** represents someone's presence)

Yahweh, lift up the light of your face on us.
(Psalm 4:6 ULB)

For they did not obtain the land for their possession by their own sword,
neither did their own arm save them;
but your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face,
because you were favorable to them. (Psalm 44:3 ULB)

they did not reject the light of my face. (Job 29:24 ULB)

Yahweh, they walk in the light of your face. (Psalm 89:15 ULB)

LIGHT represents goodness, and **DARKNESS** represents evil

But if your eye is bad, your whole body is full of darkness. Therefore, if the light that is in you is actually darkness, how great is that darkness!
(Matthew 6:23 ULB)

LIQUID represents a moral quality (emotion, attitude, spirit, life)

Yahweh has burst through my enemies before me like a bursting flood of water. (2 Samuel 5:20 ULB)

He will make a full end to his enemies with an overwhelming flood.
(Nahum 1:8 ULB)

My heart drips because of sadness. (Psalm 119:28 ULB)

I am being poured out like water. (Psalm 22:14 ULB)

It will come about afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.
(Joel 2:28 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What are some examples of things in nature that are used as images in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in

[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

My God, my soul has melted within me. (Psalm 42:6 ULB)

For it is great, the anger of Yahweh that has been poured out on us. (2 Chronicles 34:21 ULB)

FIRE represents extreme feelings, particularly love or anger

Because iniquity will be increased, the love of many will be extinguished. (Matthew 24:12 ULB)

Surging waters cannot quench love. (Song of Solomon 8:7 ULB)

For a fire is kindled by my anger and is burning to the lowest sheol. (Deuteronomy 32:22 ULB)

Therefore the anger of Yahweh was set on fire against Israel. (Judges 3:8 ULB)

When Yahweh heard this, he was angry; so his fire burned against Jacob, and his anger attacked Israel. (Psalm 78:21 ULB)

FIRE OR A LAMP represents life

They say, 'Hand over the man who struck his brother, so that we may put him to death, to pay for the life of his brother whom he killed.' And so they would also destroy the heir. Thus they will put out the **burning coal** that I have left, and they will leave for my husband neither name nor descendant on the surface of the earth. (2 Samuel 14:7 ULB)

You must not go to battle anymore with us, so that you do not put out the lamp of Israel. (2 Samuel 21:17 ULB)

I will give one tribe to Solomon's son, so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem. (1 Kings 11:36 ULB)

Nevertheless for David's sake, Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up his son after him in order to strengthen Jerusalem. (1 Kings 15:4 ULB)

Indeed, the light of the wicked person will be put out; the spark of his fire will not shine. The light will be dark in his tent; his lamp above him will be put out. (Job 18:5-6 ULB)

For you give light to my lamp; Yahweh my God lights up my darkness. (Psalm 18:28 ULB)

A dimly burning wick he will not quench. (Isaiah 42:3 ULB)

WATER represents what someone says

A quarreling wife is a constant dripping of water. (Proverbs 19:13 ULB)

His lips are lilies, dripping myrrh. (Song of Solomon 5:13 ULB)

My groaning is poured out like water. (Job 3:24 ULB)

The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a flowing stream. (Proverbs 18:3 ULB)

FLOODING WATER represents disaster

I have come into deep waters, where the floods flow over me. (Psalm 69:2 ULB)

Do not let the floods of water overwhelm me. (Psalm 69:15 ULB)

Reach out your hand from above; rescue me out of many waters from the hands of these foreigners. (Psalm 144:7 ULB)

A ROCK represents protection

Who is a rock except our God? (Psalm 18:31 ULB)

Yahweh, my rock, and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14 ULB)

A SPRING OF WATER represents the origins of something

The fear of Yahweh is a fountain of life. (Proverbs 14:27 ULB)

SHADOW or DARKNESS represents death

Yet you have severely broken us in the place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death. (Psalm 44:19)

Biblical Imagery - Plants

Some images from the Bible involving plants are listed below in alphabetical order. The word in all capital letters represents an idea. The word does not necessarily appear in every verse that has the image, but the idea that the word represents does.

A BRANCH represents a person's descendant

In the examples below, Isaiah wrote about one of Jesse's descendants and Jeremiah wrote about one of David's descendants.

A shoot will sprout from the root of Jesse, and a branch out of his root will bear fruit.

The Spirit of Yahweh will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding. (Isaiah 11:1 ULB)

See, days are coming—this is Yahweh's declaration—when I will raise up for David a righteous branch.

He will reign as king; he will bring prosperity and carry out justice and righteousness in the land. (Jeremiah 23:5 ULB)

In Job when it says "his branch will be cut off," it means that he will not have any descendants.

His roots will be dried up beneath;
above will his branch be cut off.

His memory will perish from the earth;
he will have no name in the street. (Job 18:17 ULB)

A PLANT represents a person

God will likewise destroy you forever; he will...root you out of the land of the living. (Psalm 52:5 ULB)

A PLANT represents an emotion or attitude

Just as planting one kind of seeds results in that kind of plant growing, behaving in one way results in that kind of consequence.

The emotion or attitude in the verses is underlined below.

Sow righteousness for yourselves, and reap the fruit of covenant faithfulness. (Hosea 10:12 ULB)

This page answers the question:

What are some examples of plants that are used as images in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

[Metaphor](#) in
[Translation Manual Volume 1](#)

[Metonymy](#)

Based on what I have observed, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble, reap the same. (Job 4:8 ULB)

For the people sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. (Hosea 8:7 ULB)

You have turned...the fruit of righteousness into bitterness. (Amos 6:12 ULB)

What fruit then did you have at that time of the things of which you are now ashamed? (Romans 6:21 ULB)

A TREE represents a person

He will be like a tree planted by the streams of water that produces its fruit in its season, whose leaves do not wither; whatever he does will prosper. (Psalm 1:3 ULB)

I have seen the wicked and terrifying person spread out like a green tree in its native soil. (Psalm 37:35 ULB)

I am like a green olive tree in God's house. (Psalm 52:8 ULB)

Biblical Imagery - Cultural Models

Description

Cultural models are mental pictures of parts of life or behavior. These pictures help us imagine and talk about these topics. For example, Americans often think of marriage and friendship as if they were machines. Americans might say "His marriage is breaking down" or "Their friendship is going full speed ahead." In this example, human relationships are modeled as a MACHINE.

This page answers the question:

What are cultural models and what are some cultural models found in the Bible?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Biblical Imagery](#)

Some cultural models, or mental pictures, found in the Bible are listed below. First there are models for God, then models for humans, things, and experiences. Each heading has the model written in capital letters. That word or phrase does not necessarily appear in every verse, but the idea does.

God is modeled as a HUMAN BEING

Although the Bible explicitly denies that God is a human being, he is often spoken of as doing things that humans do. But God is not human, so when the Bible say that God speaks, we should not think that he has vocal chords that vibrate. And when it says something about him doing something with his hand, we should not think that he has a physical hand.

If we hear the voice of Yahweh our God any longer, we will die.
(Deuteronomy 5:25 ULB)

I have been strengthened by the hand of Yahweh my God (Ezra 7:28 ULB)

The hand of God also came on Judah, to give them one heart to carry out the command of the king and leaders by the word of Yahweh (2 Chronicles 30:12 ULB)

The word "hand" here is a metonym that refers to God's power. (See: [Metonymy](#))

God is modeled as a KING

For God is the King over all the earth; (Psalm 47:7 ULB)

For the kingdom is Yahweh's;
he is the ruler over the nations. (Psalm 22:28 ULB)

Your throne, God, is forever and ever;

a scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom. (Psalm 45:6 ULB)

This is what Yahweh says,

"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. (Isaiah 66:1 ULB)

God reigns over the nations;

God sits on his holy throne.

The princes of the peoples have gathered together

to the people of the God of Abraham;

for the shields of the earth belong to God;

he is greatly exalted. (Psalm 47:8-9 ULB)

God is modeled as a SHEPHERD and his people are models as SHEEP

Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULB)

His people are sheep.

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95:7 ULB)

He leads his people like sheep.

He led his own people out like sheep and guided them through the wilderness like a flock. (Psalm 78:52 ULB)

He is willing to die in order to save his sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and I know my own, and my own know me. The Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this fold. Those, also, I must bring, and they will hear my voice so that there will be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10:14-15 ULB)

God is modeled as a WARRIOR

Yahweh is a warrior; (Exodus 15:3 ULB)

Yahweh will go out as a warrior; he will proceed as a man of war. He will stir up his zeal.

He will shout, yes, he will roar his battle cries; he will show his enemies his power. (Isaiah 42:13 ULB)

Your right hand, Yahweh, is glorious in power;

your right hand, Yahweh, has shattered the enemy. (Exodus 15:6 ULB)

But God will shoot them;

suddenly they will be wounded with his arrows. (Psalm 65:7 ULB)

For you will turn them back; you will draw your bow before them.
(Psalm 21:12 ULB)

A leader is modeled as a SHEPHERD and those he leads are modeled as SHEEP

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look...when Saul was king over us, it was you who led the Israelite army. Yahweh said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become ruler over Israel.' " (2 Samuel 5:1-2 ULB)

"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture—this is Yahweh's declaration." (Jeremiah 23:1 ULB)

Therefore be careful about yourselves, and about all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the assembly of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood. 29I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you, and not spare the flock. I know that from even among your own selves some men shall come and say corrupt things, in order to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30 ULB)

The eye is modeled as a LAMP

Variations of this model and the model of the EVIL EYE are found in many parts of the world. In most of the cultures represented in the Bible, these models included the following elements:

People see objects, not because of light around the object, but because of light that shines from their eyes onto those objects.

The eye is the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eye is good, the whole body is filled with light. (Matthew 6:22 ULB)

This light shining from the eyes carries with itself the viewer's character.

The appetite of the wicked craves evil; his neighbor sees no kindness in his eyes. (Proverbs 21:10 ULB)

Envy and cursing are modeled as looking with an EVIL EYE at someone, and favor is modeled as looking with a GOOD EYE at someone

The primary emotion of a person with the evil eye is envy. The Greek word translated as "envy" in Mark 7 is "eye," which refers here to an evil eye.

He said, "It is that which comes out of the person that defiles him. For

from within a person, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts..., envy
.... (Mark 7:20-22 ULB)

The context for Matthew 20:15 includes the emotion of envy. "Is your eye evil?" means "Are you envious?"

Is it not legitimate for me to do what I wish with my own possessions?
Or is your eye evil because I am good? (Matthew 20:15 ULB)

If a person's eye is evil is envious of other people's money.

The eye is the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eye is good, the whole body is filled with light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body is full of darkness. Therefore, if the light that is in you is actually darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:22-24 ULB)

A person who is envious might put a curse or enchantment on someone by looking at him with an evil eye.

Foolish Galatians, whose evil eye has harmed you? (Galatians 3:1 ULB)

A person with a good eye can put a blessing on someone by looking at him.

If I have found favor in your eyes... (1 Samuel 27:5 ULB)

Life is modeled as BLOOD

In this model, the blood of a person or an animal represents its life.

But you must not eat meat with its life—that is its blood—in it.
(Genesis 9:4 ULB)

If blood is spilled or shed, someone has been killed.

Whoever sheds man's blood, by man will his blood be shed, (Genesis 9:6 ULB)

In this way, this person would not die by the hand of the one who wanted to avenge the blood that was shed, until the accused person would first stand before the assembly. (Joshua 20:9 ULB)

If blood cries out, nature itself is crying out for vengeance on a person who killed someone. (This also includes personification, because the blood is pictured as someone that can cry out. See: [Personification](#))

Yahweh said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood is calling out to me from the ground. (Genesis 4:10 ULB)

A country is modeled as a WOMAN, and its gods are modeled as HER HUSBAND

It came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, the people of Israel turned again and prostituted themselves by worshiping the Baals. They made Baal Berith their god. (Judges 8:33 ULB)

The nation of Israel is modeled as GOD'S SON

When Israel was a young man I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. (Hosea 11:1 ULB)

The sun is modeled as BEING IN A CONTAINER AT NIGHT

Yet their words go out over all the earth and their speech to the end of the world. He has pitched a tent for the sun among them. The sun is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and like a strong man who rejoices when he runs his race. (Psalm 19:4-5 ULB)

Psalm 110 pictures the sun as being in the womb before it comes out in the morning.

from the womb of the dawn your youth will be to you like the dew. (Psalm 110:3 ULB)

Things that can move fast are modeled as having WINGS

This is especially true of things that move in the air or the sky.

The sun is modeled as a disc with wings, which allow it to "fly" through the air from east to west during the daytime. In Psalm 139, "the wings of the morning" refers to the sun. In Malachi 4 God called himself the "sun of righteousness" and he spoke of the sun as having wings.

If I fly away on the wings of the morning and go to live in the uttermost parts across the sea. (Psalm 139:9 ULB)

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. (Malachi 4:2 ULB)

The wind moves quickly and is modeled as having wings.

He was seen flying on the wings of the wind. (2 Sam. 22:11 ULB)

He rode on a cherub and flew; he glided on the wings of the wind. (Psalm 18:10 ULB)

you walk on the wings of the wind (Psalm 104:3 ULB)

Futility is modeled as something that the WIND can blow away

In this model, the wind blows away things that are worthless, and they are gone.

Psalm 1 and Job 27 show that wicked people are worthless and will not live long.

The wicked are not so,
but are instead like the chaff that the wind drives away. (Psalm 1:4 ULB)

The east wind carries him away, and he leaves;
it sweeps him out of his place. (Job 27:21 ULB)

The writer of Ecclesiastes says that everything is worthless.

Like a vapor of mist,
like a breeze in the wind,
everything vanishes, leaving many questions.
What profit does mankind gain from all the work that they labor at
under the sun? (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 ULB)

In Job 30:15, Job complains that his honor and prosperity are gone.

Terrors are turned upon me;
my honor is driven away as if by the wind;
my prosperity passes away as a cloud. (Job 30:15 ULB)

Human warfare is modeled as DIVINE WARFARE

When there was a war between nations, people believed that the gods of those nations were also at war.

This happened while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn,
those whom Yahweh had killed among them, for he also inflicted
punishment on their gods. (Numbers 33:4 ULB)

And what nation is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth
whom you, God, went and rescued for yourself?...You drove out
nations and their gods from before your people, whom you rescued
from Egypt. (2 Samuel 7:23 ULB)

The servants of the king of Aram said to him, "Their god is a god of
the hills. That is why they were stronger than we were. But now let us
fight against them in the plain, and surely there we will be stronger
than they." (1 Kings 20:23 ULB)

Constraints in life are modeled as PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

The verses below are not about real physical boundaries but about difficulties or the lack of difficulties in life.

He has built a wall around me, and I cannot escape. He has made my shackles heavy. (Lamentations 3:7 ULB)

He has blocked my path with walls of hewn stone; every way I take is crooked. (Lamentations 3:9 ULB)

Measuring lines have been laid for me in pleasant places (Psalm 16:6 ULB)

Dangerous places are modeled as NARROW PLACES

In Psalm 4 David asks God to rescue him.

Answer me when I call, God of my righteousness;
give me room when I am hemmed in.
Have mercy on me and listen to my prayer. (Psalm 4:1 ULB)

A distressing situation is modeled as a WILDERNESS

When Job was distressed because of all the sad things that happened to him, he spoke as if he were in a wilderness. Jackals and ostriches are animals that live in the wilderness.

My heart is troubled and does not rest;
days of affliction have come on me.
I go about with darkened skin but not because of the sun;
I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.
I am a brother to jackals,
a companion of ostriches. (Job 30:27-29 ULB)

Wellbeing is modeled as PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS, and evil is modeled as PHYSICAL DIRTINESS

Leprosy is a disease. If a person had it, he was said to be unclean.

Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean." Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:2-3 ULB)

An "unclean spirit" is an evil spirit.

When an unclean spirit has gone away from a man, it passes through waterless places and looks for rest, but does not find it. (Matthew 12:43 ULB)