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# Gateway Language Manual

unfoldingWord

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## **A MANUAL FOR TRANSLATING UNFOLDINGWORD RESOURCES INTO GATEWAY LANGUAGES**

The Gateway Language Manual is for the use of translators and checkers of the Gateway Language resources. Before reading the GL Manual, it is important to understand the Gateway Language Strategy and the reasons for translating the unfoldingWord resources. See [Explanation](#) for a brief explanation of the objective of the Gateway Languages strategy and the effects of implementing it. See the [Gateway Languages Strategy](#) web page for more information on the Gateway Languages of the world.

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### 2.1 Gateway Language Translation

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What is the Gateway Language Manual?”

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The Gateway Language Manual is for the use of translators and checkers of the Gateway Language (GL) resources. It contains instructions for translating the unfoldingWord resources from English into a GL (Gateway Language), checking the translated GL resources, and aligning the GL Literal Text and GL Simplified Text to the original languages.

Before translating or checking any of these resources, please read the manual carefully. It presents the unique properties of each of the resources, the purpose of each one, and how each one functions as part of a complete translation package for the use of Other Language (OL) translators.

If you fail to understand the properties and purpose of the resource that you are translating or checking, that resource will not be able to fulfil its purpose and the translation package that you produce will be defective. But if you follow these guidelines and understand well how each resource functions, you will produce a set of translation resources that will allow the OL (Other Language) translators to create accurate, natural, and clear translations of the Bible in their own languages.

**See also:**

The Gateway Language Strategy at <http://ufw.io/gl/>.

#### 2.1.2 What Needs To Be Translated?

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What must be translated in the Gateway Languages?”

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In order to have a useful set of resources to support a high-quality Bible translation, the following materials must be translated into the Gateway Languages.

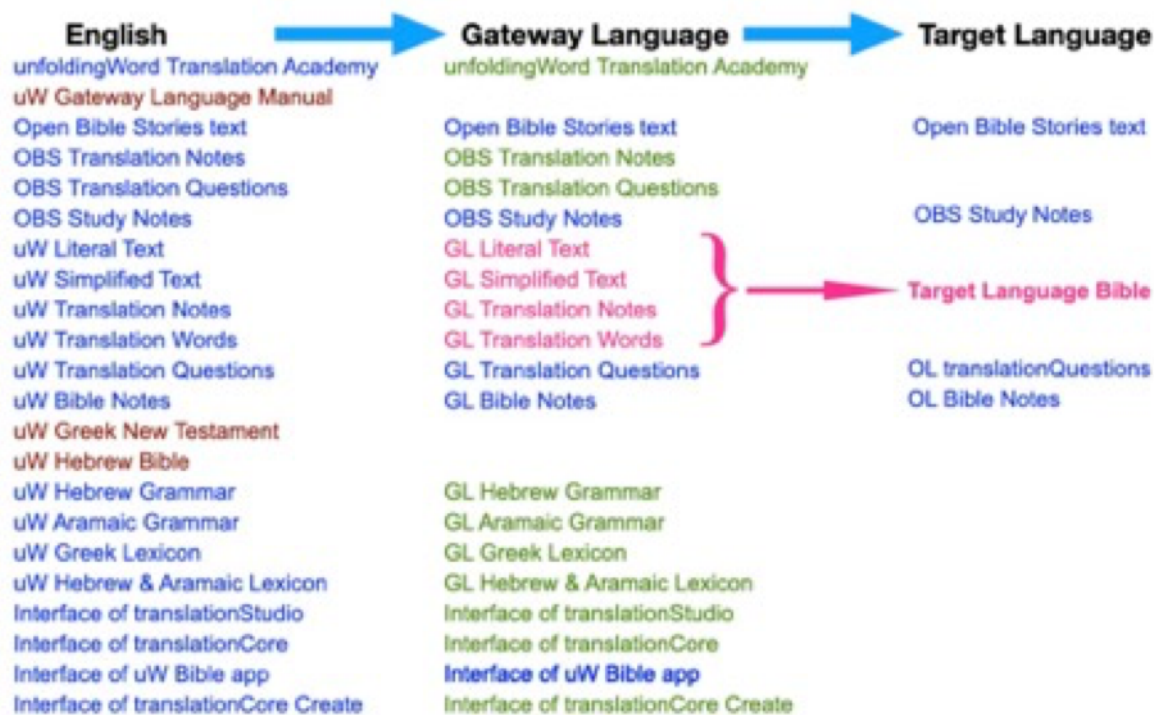
- [translationAcademy](#) (UTA)
- [Open Bible Stories](#) (OBS) text
- [Open Bible Stories translationNotes](#) (OBS-UTN)
- [Open Bible Stories translationQuestions](#) (OBS-UTQ)
- [unfoldingWord Literal Text](#) (ULT) Text
- [unfoldingWord Simplified Text](#) (UST) Text

- translationNotes (UTN)
- translationWords (UTW)
- translationQuestions (UTQ)

We recommend that you translate the resources basically in the order given in the list above, although it is not necessary to finish an entire resource before starting the next. By translating some of the basic modules of UTA (unfoldingWord Translation Academy) first, the translators will gain knowledge of how to translate well, and also make that knowledge available in the GL for the rest of the translation team. Translating the OBS (Open Bible Stories) resources next will give the translation team members valuable experience in translating as they work through a simplified presentation of biblical content. Then the translation team will be ready to start translating the UTW (unfoldingWord translation Words).

The following table illustrates the unfoldingWord resources that are under development in English (column one), and which of those are to be translated into the Gateway Language (column two). A few of those are then to be translated into the target language (column three). The target language translator will not directly translate the GLT, GST, GTN, and GTW, but will use them as resources to translate the Bible into the target language.

## What Needs to be Translated?



Color Explanation Note:

Blue = resource gets translated from English to GL to OL

Brown = does not get translated

Green = get translated just to GL

Pink = resources that become the OL Bible



It is important that you translate the text of the ULT (unfoldingWord Literal Text) and the UST (unfoldingWord Simplified Text) before you translate UTN, UTW, and UTQ. This is because the text of the GLT (the translation of the ULT into the Gateway Language) provides the context for the other three resources. Without this context, the translators of UTN, UTW, and UTQ will not know how they should translate. For the same reason, the text of OBS should be translated before the Notes, Questions, or Words resources that belong to OBS. It is not necessary to complete all 50 stories of OBS before starting to translate the other resources, however. You can start to translate the resources for an OBS story after that story is complete. For the books of the Bible, you will need to translate in a similar way: First translate the ULT and UST for a Bible book, then the UTN, UTW and UTQ resources for that same Bible book. This is necessary because the ULT, UST, UTN, and UTW are not yet complete for all of the Bible books. This is also a good translation procedure so that the translation team can see how the resources work together very early in the process. This is instead of translating the entire ULT before the entire UST, or the ULT New Testament before the UST New Testament. If desired for long books, you could translate all of the resources for each chapter before moving on to the next chapter. Once all of the resources for a Bible book have been completely checked, then an OL translation team could start using them to translate, without having to wait for the entire Bible to be ready.

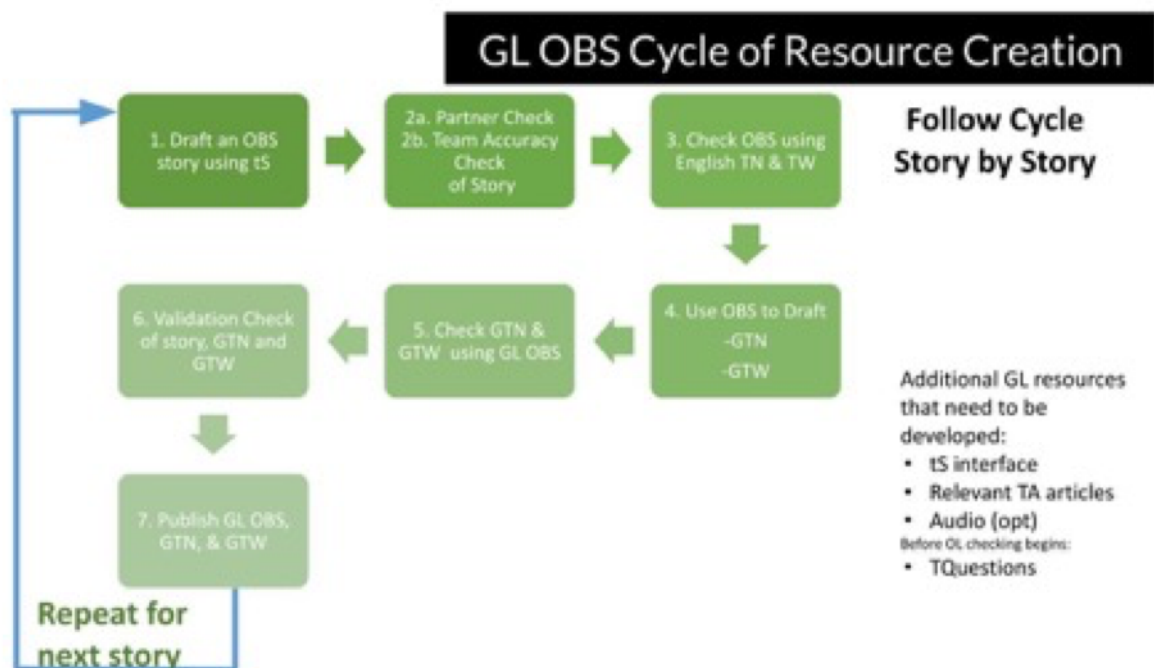
We recommend that you translate all of the translation resources for a Bible book together. For example, you would translate the ULT of Titus, then the UST of that same book. Then you would use those to translate the UTN, UTW, and UTQ for Titus. Then you would repeat the process for the next book. (For information about which books of the Bible to translate first, see the UTA module [Choosing What to Translate](#).)

## What is the Recommended Translation Process?

### Open Bible Stories

The following is the process that we recommend for translating OBS. The numbers in the list below correspond to the steps as illustrated in the following diagram.

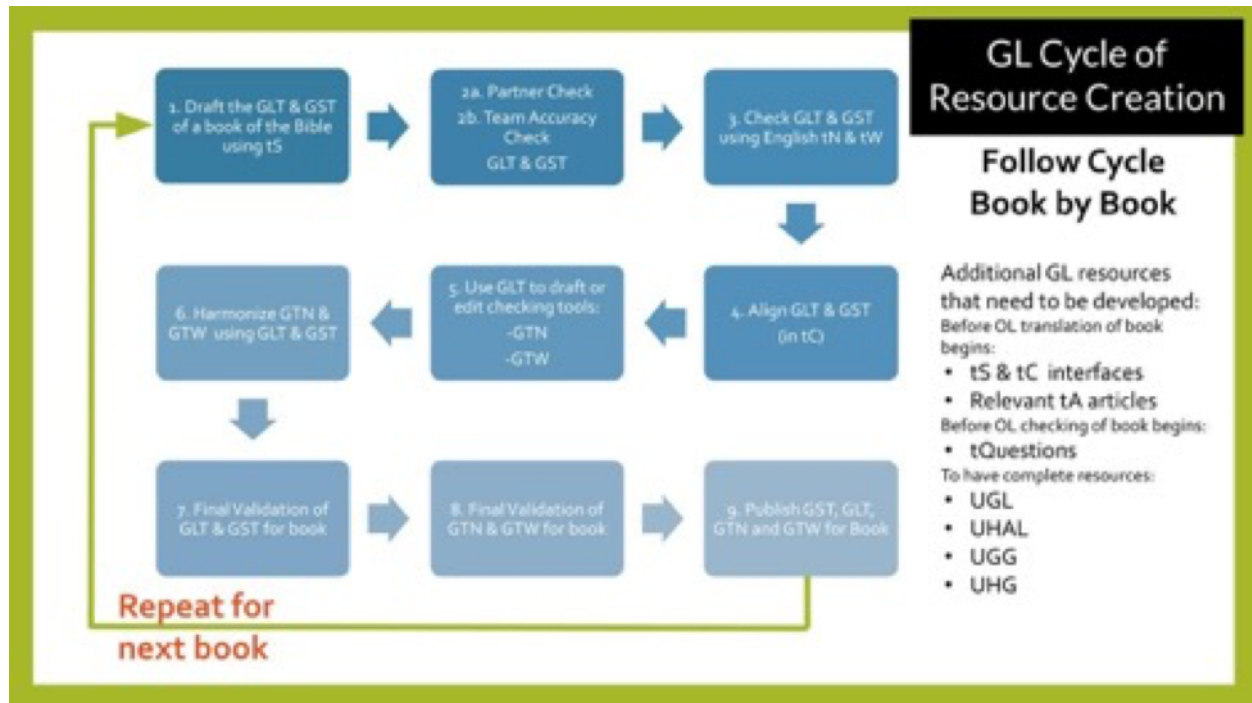
1. Using translationStudio, make a first draft translation of a complete OBS story in the GL. Use the English Translation Notes and Translation Words tools to guide your translation.
- 2a. Check the translation of the OBS story with a partner on your translation team. It can be helpful to trade stories with a team member and offer suggestions for improvement to each other.
- 2b. Check the translation of the OBS story with the full translation team. It can be helpful to read the story out loud while others follow along in the written text, and to discuss suggestions for improvement together.
3. Check the translation of the OBS story using the English Translation Notes and Translation Words tools in translationStudio for that Bible book. Look for ideas in the Notes and Words that can improve the translation.
4. Using the newly translated OBS story in the Gateway Language (the GL OBS) as a reference, translate the Translation Notes (UTN) and the Translation Words (UTW) for that OBS story, using translationCore Create. We will refer to these translations as the GTN and GTW, respectively.
5. Check the GTN and the GTW for accuracy by comparing them again to the GL OBS in translationCore Create. Specifically, make sure that the notes of the GTN make sense with the GL OBS story. If not, edit them so that they do make sense with the GL OBS story. Also make sure that the articles in the GTW provide good and clear definitions of the terms that are used in the various contexts of the GL OBS story.
6. Check the translation of GL OBS, GTN, and GTW with leaders of church networks for their validation. Either before or after this step, translate the Translation Questions for the OBS story using translationCore Create.
7. After finishing all of the OBS stories, publish the translation of the GL OBS, GTN, GTW, and GTQ for the OBS on Door43 to make them freely available for the use of OL translation teams.



## Books of the Bible

The following is the process that we recommend for translating a book of the Bible. By design, it is very similar to the process for translating OBS. But there are distinct differences, primarily due to the unique characteristics of the ULT and UST. Follow this process for a book of the ULT, and then follow it again to translate the same book of the UST. The numbers in the list below correspond to the steps as illustrated in the following diagram.

1. Using translationStudio, make a first draft translation in the GL of a book of the Bible for the ULT, and then for the UST. When these are translated into the Gateway Language, we will refer to them as the GLT and GST, respectively.
- 2a. Check the translation of the GLT with a partner on your translation team. Then do the same with the GST.
- 2b. Check the translation of the GLT with the full translation team. Then do the same with the GST.
3. Check the translation of the GLT using the English Translation Notes and Translation Words tools in translationCore for that Bible book. Then do the same with the GST.
4. Align the GLT and GST translations with the original languages using the Aligning Tool in translationCore.
5. Using the newly translated version of the ULT in the Gateway Language (the GLT) as a reference, translate the Translation Notes (UTN) and the Translation Words (UTW) for that Bible book, using translationCore Create. We will refer to these translations as the GTN and GTW, respectively.
6. Check the GTN and the GTW for accuracy, using the GLT and GST in translationCore. Specifically, make sure that the notes of the GTN make sense with the GLT and helpfully explain the rendering in the GST. Also make sure that the articles in the GTW provide good and clear definitions of the terms that are used in the various contexts of the GLT.
- 7-8. Check the translation of the GLT, GST, GTN, and GTW with leaders of church networks for their validation.
9. Publish the translation of the GLT, GST, GTN, and GTW for the Bible book on Door43 to make them freely available for the use of OL translation teams.



In addition to the resources named above, unfoldingWord is developing original language resources that are open-licensed and free to use, adapt, and translate. We recommend that these also be translated into each GL so that everyone can have access to them. These are the unfoldingWord Greek Lexicon, the unfoldingWord Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon, the unfoldingWord Greek Grammar, and the unfoldingWord Hebrew Grammar. These are, however, currently still works in progress.

### Why Translate Two Bibles into the Gateway Languages?

Some people might ask this question, because adequate Bibles already exist in most of the Gateway languages. However, the existing translations are end-user Bibles, designed to be read and studied by people who speak those languages in their homes and churches. The Bibles that we are translating are not end-user Bibles. They are Bible texts designed to be used in conjunction with each other and with the other translation helps as a set of tools that will allow speakers of other languages to use them to translate a Bible into their own languages. What translators produce from these tools will be an end-user Bible.

To make an end-user Bible, it is always best to translate from more than one version so that the translator does not fall into the habit of following too closely the form of any one version. Also, it is always possible to translate something in more than one way in a target language, and often the biblical language has more than one possible meaning. Looking at multiple versions that between them reveal these differences gives the translator a window into those things that a single version would not give. This benefit is maximized when the two (or more) source Bibles use very different styles, such as literal and simplified. Having a literal version and a simplified version side by side gives the translator a “three-dimensional” view into the original text, allowing him to see both the form and the meaning at the same time. It is for this purpose that we are providing the ULT and the UST.

**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy, Translating the UST*

### 2.1.3 Translating translationAcademy

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for translating translationAcademy?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy, Translating translationNotes, TA (translationAcademy) module Introduction to translationAcademy, The Gateway Language Strategy at <http://ufw.io/gl/>.*

#### Recommended Training and Experience

TA (translationAcademy) contains many lessons on specialized topics, such as language, translation issues, and biblical studies. Some of the vocabulary is also specialized. We recommend that the people who translate TA into a GL have a **college-level education or some training and experience in the particular area that they are translating**. For example, if you are translating the Translation Manual, it would be good if you have training and experience in linguistics and translation. You will be able to translate more accurately and clearly if you have experience in the topic.

This means that you will want to have **several specialists** on your translation team, with each specialist translating the parts that they are most familiar with. If you find that some lessons are unclear, discuss the problem with other members of the team until you understand what the lesson is trying to teach. If you still do not understand, contact unfoldingWord. You cannot translate something that you do not understand. If you try to do that, the OL translator will not be able to understand it, either, or be able to use it.

#### Recommended Reference Materials

We recommend that you use specialized dictionaries as you translate to help you understand the concepts that you are translating. Do not use unusual or technical words in your translation if there is a simpler way to communicate the same thing. Remember that the OL translators speak the GL as a second language, so they will not know unusual or technical words. Try to keep the lessons uncomplicated and clear, using simple language as much as you can. We have tried to write the lessons of TA using simple language, so please follow this same style.

#### Adaptations Must Be Made

In order for TA to be useful in the Gateway Language, it must be adapted from the English version. The examples of different grammatical structures in TA are all taken from English, but they will all need to be changed so that they illustrate the grammar of the Gateway Language. Do not just translate the English examples unless the Gateway Language works the same way. For example, it is unlikely that possessives work the same way in the Gateway Language as they do in English. Please change those examples so that they illustrate what possessives do in the Gateway Language. Please also change any descriptions of sentence structure and parts of speech whenever necessary so that they describe the Gateway Language rather than English.

Some articles will not apply in the Gateway Language and can be skipped. For example, if the Gateway Language has both a singular and a plural form of “you,” it is not necessary to translate the article, “Forms of ‘You’ — Singular.”

Many articles of TA contain verses from the UnfoldingWord Literal Text (ULT) in order to illustrate different translation difficulties. These will all need to be replaced by those verses in the Gateway Language Literal Text (GLT). This may mean that you will need to translate the example verses from English as you translate TA and then go back and replace them with the actual verses from the GLT when that has been translated.

We want TA to be useful for the translators that speak your Gateway Language, so please make any changes that are necessary so that it works well in your language.

**See also:**

*Checking the GL translationNotes (GTN), Checking the GLT*

## 2.1.4 Translating the ULT

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for translating the ULT?”

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### Translation Theory for Translating the ULT

The ULT is designed to be used in conjunction with the UTN (translationNotes) and the UST as a tool for Bible translation. Unlike the UST and unlike an end-user Bible, the ULT is designed to reflect the forms of the source languages, so that the OL translator can see what they are. By using the ULT, the OL translator can “look through” it to see how the original Bible expressed the biblical ideas.

As you translate the ULT you must try to retain the grammatical and syntactic structures of the original as far as the target language (GL) will allow. If the original structure does not make sense in the target language, then you will need to change it into a structure that does make sense. It is not useful to make a translation that the OL translator will not be able to understand. But as far as the target language will allow, retain the structures of the original in your translation of the ULT. It is possible that the OL expresses that meaning in the same way.

### Notes About Making a “Literal” Translation

1. It is not possible to maintain a one-for-one correspondence between words in translation. One word from the source language may require a phrase for its translation in the target language, and vice-versa.
2. Even though the ULT is a “literal” text, that does not mean that every word from the original language will be translated in the same way each time it occurs. We will always seek to use the meaning that the word has in its context, using whatever English word or phrase is closest to that meaning.
3. Both Greek and Hebrew can make a sentence without using a verb, while English cannot. For the ULT to make sense, the verb will always be supplied (usually “is”).
4. Greek makes abundant use of participial clauses. For the English of the ULT to make sense, often this must be changed to a relative or adverbial clause.
5. The general rule is, retain the structures of the original unless English sense does not allow it. If it does not, make the necessary adjustments.

### What Method Should Be Used to Translate the ULT?

When translating the ULT, keep the English source open in front of you. This means that you should not use any methodology that includes a step of blind drafting. The reason for this is that blind drafting is a method that translators use in order to produce natural target language translations. Through blind drafting, the translator replaces structures from the source language that would be unnatural in the target language with structures that are natural for that target language. But the ULT is a tool that must retain the original, biblical language structures in order to be useful to the translator. The best way to guard these structures is to translate with the English source ULT open in front of you so that you can be sure to keep these structures as they are in the English ULT, as far as the target language will allow.

### Does Translation of the ULT Require a Back Translation?

We expect that the people translating the text into the GL will be well-educated and have good theological training. They will be connected into church networks that will have adequate resources for checking the translations against the English source as well as the original biblical languages.

For these reasons, back translations of the text will usually not be necessary. An exception to this is if the translation was done by a secular translation company. In this case, either a church network that speaks that GL will need to check the translation or a back translation into English may be necessary, done according to the guidelines set forth in [Back Translation](#) and following modules.

### What Are the Structures of the ULT That Should Be Retained?

The translation of the ULT needs to retain the original grammatical forms (as far as is possible), the idioms, and the figures of speech of the original so that the OL translator can consider them and use them if they communicate the right thing in the target language. If those forms get changed in the GL translation of the ULT, then the OL translator will never see them and the UTN about them will not make sense.

Keep in mind that the ULT and the UST are only going to be translated into the GLs (Gateway Languages), because they are translation tools for the use of the OL translator. We want these tools to be as useful as possible.

For the ULT, this means that it should retain structures that we would not always retain in an end-user Bible. The GL translator must understand that this translation will lack naturalness and sometimes also lack clarity because it is aiming at reproducing these original language structures and figures of speech that may not translate well into the GL. Wherever the ULT translation lacks clarity, however, there should also be a note to explain the meaning of the structure for the OL translator. The UTN and the UST will provide the meaning wherever that meaning is in doubt in the ULT. In this way, the tools will work together to provide the OL translator with a full set of information about both the form and the meaning of the original Bible.

## Examples

### Grammatical Forms

The ULT of Luke 2:47 reproduces a grammatical form from the Greek source language that is also natural in English, but that might not be natural in other languages. When talking about the boy Jesus at the temple, it says, “All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.” The nouns “understanding” and “answers” refer to events, not things, and so must be translated as verbs in many languages.

The UST of the same verse gives an example of how these nouns can be translated as verbs. It says, “All the people who heard what he said were amazed at how much he *understood* and how well he *answered* the questions that the teachers asked.”

When translating the ULT, however, these nouns should be translated as nouns if that will make sense in the target language.



## Idioms

The ULT of Matthew 2:20 reproduces an idiom from the Greek source language. It refers to Herod and his soldiers who were trying to kill the child Jesus as, “those who sought the child’s life.” In some languages this is clear, and in others, it is not.

The UST of the same verse tries to make the meaning clear by translating this idiom as, “the people who were trying to kill the child.” Many GL Bibles do the same thing.

When translating the ULT, however, this idiom should be translated as it is, so that the OL translator can consider it and use it if it makes sense. The UST and the UTN will provide the meaning.

## Figures of Speech

The ULT of John 1:17 reproduces a figure of speech from the Greek source language. It says, “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (This figure of speech is called “personification;” see the TA module [Personification](#).) This figure of speech refers to grace and truth like people who can come and go, and it refers to Jesus Christ like a doorway that they can come through. In some languages this makes sense, but in other languages it does not. The plain meaning is that Jesus Christ acted toward us with grace and taught us true things about God.

The UST of the same verse tries to make this plain meaning clear by translating it as, “Jesus Christ was kind to us far beyond what we deserved, and he taught us true things about God.”

When translating the ULT, however, this figure of speech should be translated as it is, so that the OL translator can consider it and use it if it makes sense. If it does not, the UST provides an alternative way to translate it.

**See also:**

*Adapting the ULT, Checking the GLT, Translating the UST*, TA module [Translation Difficulty](#).

## Translation Glossary for the ULT

A list of decisions as to how to translate some senses of the source language words and phrases into another language is called a Translation Glossary (TG). Such a device is especially useful when more than one person works on the same project because it helps keep everyone using the same English terms. See [Combined ULT-UST Translation Glossary](#)

## The ULT Contrasted with the UST

The ULT seeks to represent the language **forms** of the original in a way that also makes sense in English and other Gateway Languages. The UST (unfoldingWord® Simplified Text) seeks to represent the **plain meaning** of the original Bible text. This means that:

- The ULT reflects better than the UST the grammatical structures of the biblical languages.
- The ULT reflects better than the UST the parts of speech of the biblical languages. The ULT, for example, will seek to use nouns where the original uses nouns, adjectives where the original uses adjectives, and so forth.
- The ULT will reproduce the form of the biblical language logical connections. Thus, for example, the ULT will read, *the righteousness of faith*, even though the logical relationship between *righteousness* and *faith* is not further specified. Is it the righteousness that comes by faith? Is it the righteousness that vindicates faith? All that *the righteousness of faith* explicitly signals is that there is some close association in the text between *righteousness* and *faith*, and that we can probably rule out **a number of** conceivable logical relationships between the two concepts, but not **all** possible relationships, as the foregoing example illustrates. In contrast, the UST will choose the one logical relationship that seems most likely.

- The ULT will reproduce the linear succession of ideas found in the original, even when English may prefer a different arrangement of the same ideas.
- The ULT will not present information that is only **implied** in the original. For example, in Matt. 26:5 it says, *For they were saying, “Not during the feast, so that a riot does not arise among the people.”* The part of the sentence, with the implied information included (in bold) would be, **“Let us not arrest Jesus** during the feast.” The ULT will not overtly represent this implied information, while the UST will include it.
- The ULT reflects as much as reasonably possible the written style of the original. It reads, for example, “Paul...to Timothy...” instead of English’s preferred, “Dear Timothy, [new paragraph] this is Paul.”
- The ULT will depart from closely representing the structures of the original only when it must do so to avoid violating the rules of English grammar, or to avoid giving the wrong meaning.
- The ULT is not meant to be a refined, polished English version. It is meant to present the structure of the original in a way that is as meaningful as possible, so that it can, in turn, be translated into other languages.
- Even when the ULT is ambiguous or not entirely clear (as is often true of the original), **the ULT must never promote to the MTT the wrong meaning.**

### 2.1.5 Translating the UST

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for translating the UST?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy*, the Gateway Language Strategy at <http://ufw.io/gl/>.

### Translation Theory for Translating the UST

The UST is designed to be used in conjunction with the ULT and the UTN as a tool for Bible translation. Unlike the ULT and unlike an end-user Bible, the UST does not use figures of speech, idioms, abstract nouns, or grammatical forms that are difficult to translate into many languages. The purpose of the UST is to show the plain meaning of all of those things wherever they occur in the ULT. Because the UST lacks these things, it is not a beautiful end-user Bible. An end-user Bible will use the figures of speech and idioms that speak naturally and beautifully in the target language, but the UST does not use them.

As the OL translator uses both the UST and the ULT together as his translation source, he will be able to see the figures of speech, idioms, and other forms of the original Bible in the ULT and also see what their meaning is in the UST. Then he can use the figures of speech or other forms from the ULT that are clear and natural in his language. When the forms in the ULT are not clear or natural in his language, then he can choose other forms in his language that have the same meaning as the UST translation or the Notes. When translating the UST, please do not use idioms, figures of speech, or difficult grammatical forms in the GL translation. The purpose of the UST is to change all of these problematic grammatical forms into more universal ones to make them easier to translate, and to make the meaning as clear as possible.

The primary goal of the UST is to express the meaning of the Bible as clearly as possible. In order to do this, it follows these guidelines.

The UST must avoid:

1. Idioms
2. Figures of speech
3. Events out of order
4. Difficult or specialized grammar:



- a. Complex sentences
- b. Passive voice
- c. Abstract or verbal nouns
- d. People speaking of themselves in third person

The UST must explicitly include:

1. Participants where these are unclear
2. Implied information that is necessary for understanding

When translating the UST, please do not use in the GL translation those things that the UST must avoid. The purpose of the UST is to change all those problematic forms into more universal ones to make them easier to translate. Also, be sure to include all the named participants and the information that has been made explicit so that the meaning can be as clear as possible.

### **What Method Should Be Used to Translate the UST?**

When translating the UST, keep the English source open in front of you. This means that you should not use any methodology that includes a step of blind drafting. The reason for this is that blind drafting is a method that translators use in order to produce natural target language translations. Through blind drafting, the translator replaces structures from the source language that would be unnatural in the target language with structures that are natural for that target language. But the UST is a tool that carefully avoids certain structures that can be difficult to translate in some languages, as explained above. If the translator is using blind drafting, he might accidentally replace the simple structures of the UST with structures that are natural in the target GL but unwanted in the UST, such as idioms and figures of speech from the target GL. In order to guard against replacing these structures, it is best to translate the UST with the English source text open to look at.

### **Does Translation of the UST Require a Back Translation?**

We expect that the people translating the text into the GL will be well-educated and have good theological training. They will be connected into church networks that will have adequate resources for checking the translations against the English source as well as the original biblical languages.

For these reasons, back translations of the text will usually not be necessary. An exception to this is if the translation was done by a secular translation company. In this case, either a church network that speaks that GL will need to check the translation or a back translation into English may be necessary, done according to the guidelines set forth in [Back Translation](#) and following modules.

### **Examples**

The following are examples of ways that the text of the Bible can be unclear for some languages and what the UST does to overcome those problems. When you translate the UST, make sure that your translation of the UST also avoids these problems.

### Passive Voice

Passive voice is a grammatical construction that is common in Greek and English but it is not used in many other languages, so it can be very confusing. For that reason, it is not used in the UST. In passive voice, the receiver of the action changes places with the actor. In English, the actor normally comes first in the sentence. But in passive voice, the receiver of the action comes first. Often, the actor is left unstated. In that case, the UST will fill in the actor. See “Missing Participants” below.

For example, the ULT of Romans 2:24 says, “... the name of God is dishonored among the Gentiles because of you.”

The action is “dishonor,” the actors are “the Gentiles” (non-Jews), and the receiver of the action is “the name of God.” The reason for the action is “because of you.”

The UST rearranges the verse to put the actor and the receiver of the action in a more normal order. It says, “The non-Jews speak evil about God because of the evil actions of you Jews.” This is clearer for many languages. When you translate the UST, make sure that you do not use any passive voice constructions.

### Abstract Nouns

The ULT of Romans 2:10 says, “But praise, honor, and peace will come to everyone who practices good...”

In this verse, the words “praise,” “honor,” “peace,” and “good” are abstract nouns. That is, they are words that refer to things that we cannot see or touch. They are ideas. The ideas that these nouns express are closer to actions or descriptions than they are to things. In many languages, therefore, these ideas must be expressed by verbs or description words, not by nouns.

For this reason, the UST expresses these nouns as actions or descriptions. It says, “But God will praise, honor, and give a peaceful spirit to every person who habitually does good deeds.”

When translating the UST, avoid using abstract nouns. For more information on abstract nouns, see the TA module [Abstract Nouns](#).

### Long, Complex Sentences

The UST avoids using long or complex sentences. In many languages, long or complex sentences are unnatural and unclear.

The ULT translates the first three verses of Romans as one complex sentence. It says,

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand by his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup>concerning his Son, who was born from the descendants of David according to the flesh.

The UST breaks that into five sentences that are more simple in form. It says,

<sup>1</sup>I, Paul, who serve Christ Jesus, am writing this letter to all of you believers in the city of Rome. God chose me to be an apostle, and he appointed me in order that I should proclaim the good news that comes from him. <sup>2</sup>Long before Jesus came to earth, God promised that he would reveal this good news by means of what his prophets wrote in the sacred scriptures. <sup>3</sup>This good news is about his Son. As to his Son’s physical nature, he was born a descendant of King David.

When translating the UST, keep the sentences short and simple.

## Missing Participants

The UST often fills in the participants when these are lacking in the original Bible and the ULT. In the original biblical languages, these participants could be left out and still understood by the reader. But in many languages these must be included for the translation to be clear and natural.

In the ULT, Romans 1:1 says, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God...”

In this verse, there is a participant that is left unstated, but still understood. This participant is God. It is God who called Paul to be an apostle and who set him apart for the gospel. In some languages, this participant must be stated.

Therefore the UST of Romans 1:1 says, “God chose me to be an apostle, and he appointed me in order that I should proclaim the good news that comes from him.”

When translating the UST, be sure to include all of the participants that are there in the UST.

## Events out of Order

The ULT of Luke 2:6-7 says,

<sup>6</sup>Now it came about that while they were there, the time came for her to deliver her baby. <sup>7</sup>She gave birth to a son, her firstborn child, and she wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth. Then she put him in an animal feeding trough, because there was no room for them in a guest room.

In some languages, events need to be told in the order in which they happened, or else the story will be confusing and hard to understand. People might understand from these verses that Mary delivered her baby outside in the street, and then looked for somewhere to stay and, after a long search, ended up putting him in an animal feeding trough.

The UST tells these events in the order in which they happened, so that it is clear that Mary was already in the shelter for animals when she gave birth. It says,

<sup>6-7</sup>When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no place for them to stay in a place where visitors usually stayed. So they had to stay in a place where animals slept overnight. While they were there the time came for Mary to give birth and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in wide strips of cloth and placed him in the feeding place for the animals.

## Figures of Speech

The ULT of Romans 2:21 says, “You who preach not to steal, do you steal?”

This is a figure of speech called a rhetorical question. It is not a real question that is used to seek an answer. It is used to make a point. In this case, Paul is using it to scold his audience and to condemn their hypocrisy. Many languages do not use rhetorical questions, or they do not use them in this way.

To show how to translate this meaning without a rhetorical question, the UST says, “You who preach that people should not steal things, it is disgusting that you yourself steal things!” When you translate the UST, be sure to not use rhetorical questions or other figures of speech. (For more examples of figures of speech, see the TA module [Figures of Speech](#), and the modules linked there.)

### Idioms

The ULT of Deuteronomy 32:10 says, “he guarded him as the apple of his eye.”

The word “apple” here does not refer to a kind of fruit, but instead refers to the pupil, the dark center of a person’s eye. The phrase “the apple of his eye” is an idiom that refers to anything that is extremely precious to a person, or the one thing that is the most precious to a person. In many languages this idiom makes no sense, but they have other idioms that have this meaning. The OL translator should use one of these idioms from the target language in the OL translation, but there should be no idiom in the translation of the UST.

To show the meaning of this verse, the UST expresses this in plain language, without an idiom. It says, “He protected them and took care of them, as every person takes good care of his own eyes.”

The Notes add another way to translate this that makes the meaning clear. It says, “He protected the people of Israel as something most valuable and precious.” When you translate the UST, be sure that you do not use any idioms. Only use plain language that makes the meaning clear. (For more information on idioms, see the TA module [Idiom](#).)

(For more examples of how the UST avoids difficult grammatical constructions, idioms, and figures of speech, see the section of examples in [Translating translationAcademy](#).)

### People Speaking of Themselves in Third Person

The ULT of Genesis 18:3 says:

He said, “My Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass by your servant.”

Here Abraham refers to himself in the third person as “your servant.” To make it clear that Abraham is referring to himself, the UST adds the first-person pronoun “me.”

The UST of Genesis 18:3 says:

He said to one of them, “My Lord, if you are pleased with me, then please stay here with me, your servant, for a little while.”

When editing or translating the UST, be sure to include the indications of the first person that are there in these passages of the UST so that it can be as clear as possible.

### Implied Information

The ULT of Mark 1:44 says:

He said to him, “Be sure to say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

This was all that Jesus needed to say to the man whom he had just healed of leprosy, because the man was Jewish and knew all about the laws concerning being clean and unclean. But most modern readers of our Bible translations do not know that information. For that reason, the UST makes this information explicit that was left implied in the text. This information is indicated in italics below.

The UST of Mark 1:44 says:

He said, “Do not tell anyone what just happened. Instead, go to a priest and show yourself to him in order that he may examine you and see that you no longer have leprosy. Then make the offering that Moses commanded for people whom God has healed from leprosy. This will be the testimony to the community that you are healed.”

When editing or translating the UST, be sure to include all of the implied information that is there in the UST so that it can be as clear as possible.

**See also:**

*Checking the GST, Translating translationAcademy*

**Specific Editing Guidelines for the UST**

- Only use quotation marks at the beginning and ending of direct speech. Do not put quotation marks at the beginning of each verse, even though the speech may span several verses.
- Do not use contractions.
- Periods go inside the quote marks. The position of question marks and exclamation points depends on usage.
- Capitalization issues: in general, we are following the practice of the 2011 NIV.
- All pronouns are lower case (except when beginning sentences and except for the first singular “I”).
- Capitalize titles (Son of Man, King David, the Messiah).
- Use vocabulary and phrases that differ from the ULT. The two translations fail to help the MTT when they are the same.
- Where possible, use common vocabulary that is easy to translate into another language.
- Spell out numbers up to and including ten (e.g., one, two...). For numbers larger than ten, use numerals (e.g., 11, 12...).
- Metaphors may be transformed into similies or substituted with the plain meaning of the metaphor. Similies may be the preferred option when the metaphor is extended over several clauses or verses.

**Translation Glossary for the UST**

A list of decisions as to how to translate some senses of the source language words and phrases into another language is called a Translation Glossary (TG). Such a device is especially useful when more than one person works on the same project because it helps keep everyone using the same English terms. See *Combined ULT-UST Translation Glossary*

**2.1.6 Adapting the ULT**

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for adapting an existing Bible translation to be the GLT?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy, Translating the UST.*

### Using an existing translation as the GLT

#### Can I use an existing Bible translation as the Gateway Literal Text (GLT)?

We do not recommend that you use an existing Bible translation as the GLT without adapting it to become a translation resource. A GLT is a translation resource that is intended to enable translators to see the structures of the original languages. Existing Bible translations are not intended to do this. Instead, they are intended to communicate God's message in a natural way to speakers of the Gateway Language. The translation resources that you develop will enable translators to create Bibles in their own languages that do that. But an existing translation in your language is not the kind of resource that will make this possible.

If you attempt to use an existing Bible as a translation resource, you will find that you need to make excessive adjustments in the other translation resources in order for them to work together. For example, you will need to add hundreds of translation notes to explain the meaning of words that are not used anymore or that may have changed meaning over time. Such notes would be inconsistent with the current system of translation notes. They would not address a translation issue and so would not refer to any article of translationAcademy, as all translation notes currently do.

You would also need to add hundreds of translation notes to tell the translator about the many words and phrases that are not in the original but were added by the translators of your existing Bible in order to make it speak smoothly in the Gateway Language. If you do not alert the translator to these places, the GLT will not serve the function that the translator expects and requires of a GLT.

As an example, consider what would be required if we used the King James Version as a translation resource. Let us consider Matthew 17:25 as an example.

*And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon?* (Matt 17:25 KJV)

We would have to add notes to address several further issues just in this sentence. One note would have to explain the meaning of the strange construction “was come.” Another note would have to explain that the word that the KJV translates as “prevented” actually means “anticipated.” It does not mean that Jesus stopped Peter from doing what he wanted to do. (The word has changed in meaning since 1611, when the KJV was first published.) Other notes would have to explain the archaic words “thinkest” and “thou.” It would be necessary to address the issue of the KJV not using quotation marks. The ULT would not require any of those notes:

*And having entered into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon?”* (Matt 17:25 ULT)

The need to add so many more notes would create much more work for translators. It would also deprive translators of a resource that would show them the structure of the Greek text. Translators working with the ULT instead of the KJV would not need these notes, because the ULT was created from the beginning to be a resource for translators, not to be a Bible translation to use in church.

Here is a further example. These are the notes that would have to be added to one phrase in Romans 11:2:

*Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?* (KJV)

*Wot ye not οὐκ οἶδατε* The word Wot is an archaic form of the word “know.” Alternate translation: “Do you not know”

*Wot ye not οὐκ οἶδατε* The word ye is an archaic form of the second person plural pronoun. Alternate translation: “Do you not know”

*saith λέγει* The word saith is an archaic form of the third person singular verb. Alternate translation: “says”

*Elias Ἠλεία* See Translation Academy, translate/translate-names. The name Elias describes the same man who is known as “Elijah” in the Old Testament. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use the same name for him in both testaments. Alternate translation: “Elijah”

The original ULT required three notes. Without adapting the sentence to be a translation resource, you would need to add the four notes above. You would need to add notes like this for most of the verses in the Bible. Rather than doing that, it would be much faster and easier to adapt the Bible translation to be a translation resource, or to translate the UST. The resulting resource set would also be easier for the translator to use.

For these reasons, we recommend that you either translate the ULT or adapt your existing Bible translation to become a translation resource. You would then call it something else, such as “The Literal Text (based on the KJV).” Then there would be no confusion between the resource that you were supplying to translators and the Bible version that people use in church.

## **Prerequisites for Adapting an Existing Translation to be the GLT**

### **What is needed to adapt an existing translation to be the GLT?**

In order to adapt an existing translation and use it as the ULT for a GL, it is necessary that the existing translation be a literal translation. That is, it should follow the same order of clauses as the original biblical languages and reproduce the original biblical idioms and figures of speech. Most Bibles that were translated into GLs in the first half of the twentieth century or earlier are literal translations.

It is also necessary that the Bible that you adapt as the ULT not be encumbered by copyright. That means that it must be in the public domain or have a license that permits us to reproduce and translate it. (For more information on copyrights and licensing, see the TA module [Open License](#).)

If the Bible is very old, you will need to update the language and the style so that it uses words that people use now and “talks” in the way that people talk now. Even though the ULT has a literal style, it must use words that people know so that they can understand it.

## **Methodology for Adapting an Existing Translation for the ULT**

### **What are the steps for adapting an existing translation for the ULT?**

Because adapting an existing translation is a process of editing rather than of translating, you should not try to follow any translation methodology. Especially do not follow any methodology that uses blind drafting. Instead, you should follow these steps:

1. Read the chapter in the English ULT and the Notes for that chapter. If you are beginning to translate a book, also read the overview of the book.
2. Read the chapter in the Bible that you are adapting as the ULT.
3. Go through the chapter and change old words to words that people use now.
4. Using the list of UTW for that chapter, check to make sure that a good translation for each of those words is used in the Gateway Language ULT.
5. If some sentences are put together in a strange way, check to see if they are also that way in the English ULT.
  - a. If the sentences are also put together in that same strange way in the English ULT, it is because the original Bible has that structure. Leave them as they are. There will be a note that will explain that structure.
  - b. If the sentences are not put together in that same strange way in the English ULT, then change the sentence so that it is clearer for modern readers, using the structure that is in the English ULT.
6. If you see that any verse or phrase in the Bible that you are adapting is very different than the English ULT, then change it so that it is more like the English ULT.
7. If you see that any verse is missing in the Bible that you are adapting but it is there in the English ULT, then translate that verse from the English ULT.
8. If you see that any verses are in a different order than in the English ULT, change them to the order that they are in the English ULT.

9. After finishing the adaptation of a Bible book, now align it to the original biblical language. This will show you places where the adapted book is still not literal, so you will need to change those places so that they are more literal (more like the original languages). See [gl-alignment](#).

After you do these things so that the text is ready to use as the GLT, you will need to translate the UTN. As you translate the UTN, you may see that there are parts of your adapted ULT that should be different so that the note can make sense. Also, you may see that some TN (translationNotes) need to be changed so that they can refer to the right parts of the adapted GLT. In this way, you will need to make changes to both the GLT and the Gateway Language Notes as you adapt them to each other so that they make sense and are truly helpful for the OL translator. (For more information about this process, see [Translating translationNotes](#).)

### Does Adapting a Translation of the ULT Require a Back Translation?

#### How does the church ensure the translation conforms to these guidelines?

We expect that the translation that has been adapted as the ULT already went through a series of checks to ensure that it accurately reflects the original meaning of the biblical text. This would have been done by the entity that originally translated and published the Bible translation. We also expect that the people adapting this translation for use as the ULT in the Gateway Language will be well-educated and have good theological training. They will also be connected into church networks that will have adequate resources for checking the adapted translation.

For these reasons, back translations of the text will usually not be necessary. An exception to this is if the translation was done by a secular translation company. In this case, either a church network that speaks that GL will need to check the translation or a back translation into English may be necessary, done according to the guidelines set forth in [Back Translation](#) and following modules.

### 2.1.7 Translating translationNotes

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for translating or adapting the translationNotes?”

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#### See also:

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read: [Translating translationAcademy](#), [Adapting the ULT](#)

#### Guidelines

TN offer alternative ways to translate a phrase from the ULT. It is important that the phrase that you use to translate this kind of note be a direct substitute for the phrase that it replaces in the ULT. In other words, the phrase has to have the same grammatical construction as the phrase in the ULT. It needs to fit into the sentence in the ULT just like the original phrase did.

In order to make sure that the phrase in the GL note fits the sentence in the GL ULT, you must be able to always look at both the English note and the GL ULT as you translate. Translating the TN while having the source visible is the most efficient way to translate them and this will also reduce the number of errors in translation. (For more information on the types of TN, see the TA module [Using the translationNotes](#).)



## Does the entire Bible need to be translated first?

It is not necessary to have the **entire** ULT and UST Bible translated before translating the helps (TN, TW (translation-Words), TQ (translationQuestions)). The translation of these resources for a book could be started after the translation of that book is complete.

## When I Am Translating the Notes, Do I Need the ULT and UST Available and Translated?

Yes. When you translate the Translation Notes for a book of the Bible, you must also have both the GLT and the GST in front of you, in final form, if possible, and fully aligned. You must have the GLT available so that you can copy the part of the GLT text that the note is talking about directly into the note. You must also have the GST text available because the Notes often refer to it. In that case, you need to be able to see what the GST says in order to translate the note in the best way. Also, you need to see what the GST says so that you can make the Alternate Translation (AT) in the note different from the reading in the GST. The AT should offer a third alternative beyond the GLT and the GST.

In addition, the Translation Notes directly comment on parts of the GLT text, so you must read the part of the GLT text that the note comments on in order to properly translate the note. After you read and understand the GLT text, then you can translate the note so that it makes sense together with the GLT text that it refers to.

It is also helpful to have the English ULT and English UST available as you translate the English TN in case its relationship to the GLT and GST is not clear. This can help you to see what the note is talking about and to judge whether or not the note is relevant to the Gateway Language or if it needs to be modified.

## When I Am Translating the Notes, Should I Translate the Snippet?

No. The words in bold text are the part of the note that is a direct quote from the Gateway Language Literal Text (GLT). That part is quoted from the GLT so that the Note can talk about it. When you translate the Translation Notes, make sure that you always copy that part directly from the GLT. For example, the following is the text of Ezra 7:19 from the ULT, with the part that the note is about in italics (the snippet), and the note.

Ezra 7:19 (ULT) And the vessels that were given to you *for the service of the house of your God*, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem.

>The idea behind the abstract noun **service** can be expressed with a verb such as “use.” Alternate translation: “to use in the temple of your God”

The word **service** is a direct quote from the ULT so that the note can talk about it. You must copy that part from the GLT - Do not translate that part of the note from English. It is important that that part be exactly the same as in the GLT. If you are using tC Create, you can easily see the word or words that you need to copy because they will be part of the snippet, that is, the text that is highlighted in yellow in the Scripture pane. In order to see this highlighting, the GLT and GST must be aligned already to the original language.

The last sentence in the note above is an Alternate Translation (AT). It is an alternative way to express the same meaning as the snippet and must fit into the verse in the same way as the snippet does. In other words, the phrase in the AT must be a direct substitute for the phrase that it replaces in the GLT. This means that the AT has to perform the same grammatical function as the snippet from the GLT. It needs to fit into the sentence in the GLT just like the original phrase did. For this reason, it may be necessary to expand the snippet in order to accommodate the different grammatical form of the AT.

In order to make sure that the phrase in the GL note fits the sentence in the GLT, you must be able to always look at both the English note and the GLT as you translate.

### May I Use Blind Drafting?

No. Do not use any method that includes blind drafting to translate the Notes. Always translate the Notes with the GLT and GST in front of you, and the English Notes also visible. Always translate the Notes with the GLT and GST in front of you and the English Notes also visible. Translating the Notes while having the source visible is the most efficient way to translate them and this will also reduce the number of errors in translation. (For more information on the types of notes, see the TA module Using the translationNotes.)

### How Does the Church Ensure the Translation Conforms to These Guidelines?

We expect that the people translating the text into the GL will be well-educated and have good theological training. They will be connected into church networks that will have adequate resources for checking the translations against the English source as well as the original biblical languages.

Because the Notes talk about grammar and figures of speech, it is highly recommended that the people translating them into the GL have training in linguistics as well as in biblical studies. They will need to know how to adapt the Notes for the grammar of the GL.

### Adapting the TranslationNotes

#### May I Change a Note So That It Makes Sense in My Language?

Often, the ULT in the target GL will say things in a different way than the ULT said them in English. In order for the note to be useful in the target GL, you will need to adapt the note so that it talks about the text as it is in the GLT. This means that you will need to sometimes change the note so that it makes sense and is helpful for the translators who will use these Notes as resources to translate the Bible into Other Languages (OLs).

#### May I Delete a Note that Does Not Apply to My Language?

Because languages can be very different from each other, sometimes there will be notes that are important and necessary for some languages, but that are not needed for other languages. If there is a note that does not make sense when applied to the GLT text, then you as the translator will need to modify the note so that it does make sense in relation to the text in your target GL.

If the note does not apply at all to the text of the GLT, then you may delete that note from your translation of the TN. But be sure to think about it very carefully before you delete a translation note to be sure that it is not necessary for the OL translator who will be using the GL translation to translate the Bible into his language, which may work differently than the Gateway Language.

#### May I Add a Note that Would Help with Translation in my Language?

For the same reason, sometimes you will realize that the OL translator will need a note in order to understand a phrase in the target GLT, but there might not be a note already written for that phrase because it was not necessary for the English ULT. In that case, you will need to write a new note and include it in your translation. Usually, these Translation Notes will be to explain a phrase or way of saying something that is normal in the GL but that is not normal in the OLs (Other Languages) that you know of. When writing your translationNote, follow the same style and format of the existing Translation Notes.

Remember that speakers of many different languages will be using these GL Translation Notes to help them translate the Bible. There will be many things that you will understand about the Bible in the GL that the OL translator may not understand. For that reason, if you think that there is something difficult to understand in the GLT, write a note that can

help the OL translator to understand it. There will probably be many OL translators who will benefit from reading the translation note and who will make a better translation because of it.

Because the Translation Notes need to be adapted in these ways and not simply translated, it is best if the people adapting the Notes be people who are well educated in both linguistics and biblical studies so that they can understand the various problems that the Notes explain.

**See also:**

*Checking the GL translationNotes (GTN), Translating translationWords, Translating translationQuestions*

## 2.1.8 Translating translationWords

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for translating translationWords?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy, Adapting the ULT, Translating translationNotes*

### Guidelines

It is important that the OL translators understand all of the words that they are translating. But some of the words in the Bible are not used in everyday life in our time or in our cultures, and so the translator may not be familiar with them. Other words are used in everyday life, but they are used in a different way in the Bible. Some of these words have very important or special meanings in the Bible. They tell us a lot about God and his relationship with us.

In order for the OL translator to completely understand these words, we have provided the definitions in UTW. When you translate this list into the GL, it will help all of the OL translators who will use it to translate the Bible for their people with good understanding.

### Does the entire Bible need to be translated first?

It is not necessary to have the **entire** ULT and UST Bible translated before translating the helps (TN, TW, TQ). The translation of these resources for a book could be started after the translation of that book is complete.

### What Is the “Definition” Section of translationWords?

TW entries have several parts; the first part is “Definition.” This gives the meaning of the word as it is used in the Bible. Please do not use definitions from a modern GL dictionary, because the way words are used in the Bible can be different from the way they are used in modern, everyday life. We want to make sure that the OL translator understands the way that the word is used in the Bible.

It is possible that the GL might express the idea of the English UTW by using different words for that idea in different contexts. That is, the GL may use different words when the idea is talked about in different ways. Each of these GL words for the UTW word may have a part of the meaning of the English word.

In this case, you will need to list each of those words at the top, separated by commas. Several of the English UTW entries already have multiple words at the top like this, such as “prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess” (see the [Prophet UTW article](#)). Then, in the “Definition” part, you will need to list those words in separate paragraphs with a definition for each one. The OL translator can then choose the word that he needs to understand from that list and translate it correctly in the passage that he is translating.

### What is the “Translation Suggestions” Section of translationWords?

The second part of a TW entry is “Translation Suggestions” or “Translation Strategies.” This section gives different ideas for how the OL translator can translate the word. This section gives more than one way to translate the word because it can mean slightly different things in different contexts. Be sure that you understand the differences of meaning between the different contexts in which the word is used so that you can translate them correctly.

In the GL, some of the UTW are not used in all of the same contexts as the English UTW are. **In that case, you will need to adjust your translation of this section.** If one of the Translation Suggestions does not work in the GL, then do not translate that Translation Suggestion. Instead, write a Translation Suggestion that shows how that word is used in the GL. Think about the different ways that the word is used in the Bible, and try to make sure that there is a Translation Suggestion for each of the primary uses. We want the OL translator to see and consider the differences and the similarity in meaning between the uses of the word so that he can choose the best word in his language to express those meanings.

As you translate the ULT and UST, you may find that you need to add a meaning to a word in the UTW entry, or you may need to add another word to the entry because the GL uses more than one word for the idea of that important UTW. Go ahead and do this as you find more words or meanings for the words.

Under the “Translation Suggestions” or “Translation Strategies” section is a line that says, “(See also...)” You only need to translate the words “See also,” and you only need to translate this one time, not for every UTW. The rest of the line will be created automatically if the translation is done in translationStudio Desktop.

### Do I Translate the “Bible References” and “Examples for the Bible Stories” Sections of translationWords?

The third and fourth parts are “Bible References” and “Examples from the Bible Stories.” You only need to translate these words of the titles, and you only need to translate them one time, not for every TW. You do not need to translate the rest of these parts. They will be created automatically if the translation is done in translationStudio Desktop.

**See also:**

*Translating translationNotes, Translating translationQuestions*

## 2.1.9 Translating translationQuestions

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for translating translationQuestions?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy, Adapting the ULT, Translating translationWords, Translating translationNotes*

### Guidelines

We want all translations of the Bible to communicate clearly the message that God wants them to communicate. One tool that we are providing so that the OL translators can make sure that their translations are communicating correctly is translationQuestions (UTQ (translationQuestions)). The OL translators will use UTQ to conduct community checks of each chapter of the Bible that they translate.

## Does the entire Bible need to be translated first?

It is not necessary to have the **entire** ULT and UST Bible translated before translating the helps (TN, TW, TQ). The translation of these resources for a book could be started after the translation of that book is complete.

## What Is the Recommended Method for Translating UTQ?

1. Read the chapter of the ULT that the questions are about, so that you understand it.
2. Translate only the question part of each question-answer pair. Draft all of the questions for one chapter.
3. In the self-edit stage of checking, edit each Question to correct any mistakes or to add things that you left out.
4. Instead of translating the answer to each question, copy the answer from the words of the GLT of that verse that match the answer to that question in the English source. In this way, the words of each answer will always match the words of the GLT.

## If the ULT Has Not Been Translated

In order to translate the questions for a book of the Bible, the ULT of that book must be translated already. The purpose of the questions is to check the translation of the ULT, so it serves no purpose to translate the questions first.

**See also:**

*Translating translationNotes, Translating translationQuestions, Checking the GL translationNotes (GTN), Checking the GLT*

## 2.2 Gateway Language Checking

### 2.2.1 Checking the GLT

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for checking the Gateway Language Literal Text (GLT)?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationAcademy, Adapting the ULT, TA module Steps in Checking a Translation, TA module Things to Check*

When checking the GLT (Gateway Language Literal Text), remember that the GLT needs to retain the original grammatical forms (as far as possible), the idioms, and the figures of speech of the original so that the OL translator can consider them and use them if they communicate the right thing in the target language. If those forms get changed in a GL translation of the ULT, then the OL translator will never see them and the notes about them will not make sense.

When you are checking the GL translation of the ULT, you must only compare it to the English ULT. Do not refer to any other version of the Bible when checking the ULT. The GL translation of the ULT may not be as smooth and clear as the GL Bible that you are used to, because it is showing the OL translator the forms of the original biblical languages. Please do not try to make the GLT sound like your favorite translation of the Bible in your language.

### What Should Be Checked in the GLT?

In addition to the things mentioned in [Types of Things to Check](#) in TA, the text needs to be checked in these areas:

1. **Idioms** - If there is an idiom in the source ULT, then that same idiom should be in the target GLT. If the idiom does not make sense in the target language, make sure that there is a note that explains its meaning. If there is not a note for it, then write one in the GL TN that explains its meaning.
2. **Figures of Speech** - If there is a figure of speech in the source ULT, then that same figure of speech should be in the target GLT. If the figure of speech does not make sense in the target language, make sure that there is a note that explains its meaning. If there is not a note for it, then write one in the GL TN that explains its meaning.
3. **Grammatical Forms** - Check to see if the grammatical form, that is, the order of words in the sentence or the way that the words are arranged, is the same in the target GLT as they are in the English source ULT. If the words are arranged differently, ask yourself if they could be arranged the same as the words in the English ULT and still make good sense, or if it is necessary for them to be arranged in a different way in the GLT. If they would still make good sense in a way that an Other Language translator would understand, then put them in the same arrangement as in the English. This is because the English ULT is attempting to reproduce the grammar of the original, as much as possible, so that the OL translator can see it. But if the words are in a different arrangement because that is what makes sense in the target GL, then leave them in the different arrangement.

### What Should Not Be Checked in the GLT?

It is not necessary to check the GLT for naturalness with speakers of the GL. The GLT will not be natural in some cases because it is designed to retain the forms of the biblical languages, as far as the GL allows.

**See also:**

*Translating translationNotes, Checking the GL translationNotes (GTN), Checking the GST*

## 2.2.2 Checking the GST

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for checking the GST (Gateway Language Simplified Text)?”

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**See also:**

*Translating the UST, TA module Steps in Checking a Translation, TA module Things to Check*

When checking the GST (Gateway Language Simplified Text), remember that the GST does not use figures of speech, idioms, abstract nouns, or grammatical forms that are difficult to translate into many languages. The purpose of the GST is to change all of these problematic grammatical forms into more universal ones to make them easier to translate, and to make the meaning as clear as possible.

When you are checking the GL translation of the UST, you must only compare it to the English UST. Do not refer to any other version of the Bible when checking the GST. The GL translation of the UST may not be as smooth and natural as the GL Bible that you are used to, because it does not use many of the forms of expression that make a language sound natural. These forms of expression are different for every language. So please do not try to make the GST sound like your favorite translation of the Bible in your language.

## What Should Be Checked in the GST?

In addition to the things mentioned in [Types of Things to Check](#) in TA, the text needs to be checked in these areas:

1. **Sentence length** - If you see any long or complex sentences in the GST, see how you might break them up into shorter sentences.
2. **Passive voice** - If you see a passive voice construction in the GST, check to see what it was in the English source UST and change it so that it is active.
3. **Abstract Nouns** - If you see an abstract noun in the GST, check to see what it was in the English source UST and change the abstract noun back to an action or description word.
4. **Events out of order** - Make sure that the events in your GST are in the order that they occurred. Also make sure that the logical flow of arguments, such as occur in many of the New Testament letters, is in a natural order that makes sense in the GL.
5. **Figures of speech and idioms** - Make sure that the GST does not contain any figures of speech or idioms. Instead, it should use only plain, clear language.

If you see any of these forms in the English UST, email [<help@door43.org>](mailto:help@door43.org) to let them know of the error.

It is also useful to check the GST for clarity with speakers of the GL, but do not confuse clarity with naturalness (see below). You can read a passage from the GST to a speaker of the GL and ask if the meaning is clear. If they say, “Yes,” that is enough. If they also say, “But I would say it differently,” that is fine. We expect that they would say it differently. But the GST needs to say it in a plain way. As long as the meaning of the GST is clear, it is a successful translation.

**See also:**

*Translating the UST*

## What Should Not Be Checked in the GST?

It is not necessary to check the GST for naturalness with speakers of the GL. The GST will very often not be completely natural because it avoids some forms that languages naturally use such as idioms and figures of speech. The GST must avoid these because they are specific to individual languages and do not translate well from one language to another.

**See also:**

*Translating translationNotes, Checking the GL translationNotes (GTN)*

### 2.2.3 Checking the GL translationNotes (GTN)

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “What are the guidelines for checking the GL translationNotes?”

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**See also:**

*Translating translationNotes, TA module Steps in Checking a Translation, TA module Things to Check*

When checking GTN (Gateway Language translationNotes), remember that GTN are very closely tied to the text of the GLT. The purpose of GTN is to explain any phrases or sentences in the GLT that are hard to understand or hard to translate.

### What Should Be Checked?

In addition to the things mentioned in [Types of Things to Check](#) in TA, the text needs to be checked in these areas:

1. Make sure that the phrase in each note that translates the phrase from the English ULT is exactly the same as the corresponding phrase in its translation in the Gateway Language Literal Text (GLT). In other words, the phrase in the GL Notes must quote the phrase from the GLT accurately. The words must be exactly the same.
2. Check the meaning of the note in the English UTN and make sure that the GTN has the same meaning.
3. In the same way, make sure that any quotations of the GST have the exact wording of the GST.
4. Check that the GTN makes sense with the GLT. It is possible that the GL translator made a good translation of the English UTN but when the note is read with the new GLT, it might not explain the GLT in the right way, or it might not make sense with the GLT. In that case, you will need to discuss the problem with the translator. Then you will need to decide how to change the note so that it explains the GLT in a way that will be helpful to the OL translator.
5. Check that all references in the Notes to the GST make sense when read with the GST.
6. If the GL translator has decided that a note does not apply to the GLT and has deleted the note from the GTN, check to make sure that the note was not needed.
7. If the GL translator has written a new note, check to make sure that it was needed, and that it makes sense with the GLT.

In order to check the GTN for naturalness and clarity, you will need to have people read them together with the GLT and GST. Then ask them to mark anything that is not clear to them, or that they would say in a different way. Then give this feedback to the translator so that he can make those places clearer and more natural.

**See also:**

*Translating translationNotes, Checking the GLT, Checking the GST*

### 2.2.4 Finishing Checking

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “How do I know when I have finished checking the GL resources?”

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**See also:**

*What Needs To Be Translated?*, TA module [Steps in Checking a Translation](#), TA module [Things to Check](#)

It can be difficult to know when you have sufficiently checked a text for errors or for ways that it could be improved. In a sense, this process is never completely finished, and people continually find ways to improve texts that have been checked already by many people. For example, there are many Bible translations in English that have been checked by many biblical scholars and are considered to be excellent translations. Yet it is possible to find places where they could be made better, and over time, they are continually revised, and new versions are published. This is the process that you should expect to happen with these Bible translations as well.



## Checking Evaluation Lists

The following lists can help you to consider whether or not you have checked a GL resource sufficiently.

### For the Translator

- Review the guidelines for translation of the specific materials in the Gateway Language Manual. Make sure that you have translated the material according to those guidelines. Correct anything that does not conform.
- Carefully compare your translation with the source text. Correct any inaccuracies.
- Read the resource that you have translated alongside the related resources, either in English or, if they have been translated, in the GL. Make sure that the resources are clear and make good sense together. The GLT and GST should be read alongside each other, the Notes, Words, and Questions alongside the GLT and GST.
- Submit your translation for review by a partner on the translation team.

### For the Translation Team

- Review and discuss the resource together as a team, comparing it to the source
- Check the GLT and the GST with the English Words and Notes checks in translationCore
- Check the GLT for accuracy and literalness with the aligning tool
- Check the GST for completeness with the aligning tool
- Check the GL Notes and GL Words by reading them with the GLT and GST. Improve anything that is not clear or not helpful.

### For the Broader Translation Oversight Committee

- After orienting a group of pastors (preferably representing various denominations) to the goals and guidelines of the GL resources, assign them to review the resources, especially the GLT and GST.
- When they are satisfied with the resources, have them communicate this by affirming the following:
  - the translation conforms to the Statement of Faith (see <http://ufw.io/faith/>) and Translation Guidelines (see <http://ufw.io/guidelines/>)
  - the translation accurately communicates the content of the source document in the target language
  - the style of the translation conforms to the guidelines set forth for translation of this resource in the Gateway Language Manual
  - the translation team has edited the Translation to their satisfaction
- Arrange for Bible scholars to review the alignments of the GLT and GST with the original biblical languages.
- Arrange for leaders of different church networks or denominations to review the GL resources and affirm the validity and usefulness of the resources. This works best if they have been involved in the project from the beginning and know and trust those who have done the work.

Additional questions that can help you to evaluate if the translation has been sufficiently checked are in the TA module [Self-Assessment Rubric](#). Just be aware that the ULT and the UST are not intended to be completely natural in the GL. (Again, this is not intended to be an “end-user Bible.”)

The most rigorous testing of your work will come when OLs teams begin to use it for Bible translation. Be prepared to make many more corrections at that time!

See also:

TA module [Self-Assessment Rubric](#)

## 2.2.5 Source Text Creation

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “How do I make my Gateway Language translation a source text?”

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### Source Text Process

Source text publishing is required for all Gateway Languages so that they can be used as source texts by Other Languages. Note that this process only applies to Gateway Languages.

### Prerequisites

Before a Gateway Language translation can become a source text, the following prerequisites must all be met:

- **Whole Resource** - The whole resource (a whole book) must have completed the [Translation and Checking Process](../translation-overview/01.md). Parts of resources (e.g. half of the Open Bible Stories, only a few chapters of a book of the Bible) cannot be published.
- **Checking** - A translation must have been put through the checking process and been validated by Gateway Language church leadership. See [Validation Checking](../checking/level3/01.md).
- **On Door43** - Door43 must have the version that will be published. If the work was done on multiple devices, then it may need to be merged together. Get the help of a Content Tech to make merging easier (either email <[help@door43.org](mailto:help@door43.org)> or start a conversation on the [Door43 Forum](<https://forum.door43.org>)).
- **Agreements** - Everyone involved in the translation and checking must have agreed to the [Statement of Faith](../intro/statement-of-faith/01.md), the [Translation Guidelines](../intro/translation-guidelines/01.md), and the [Open License](../intro/open-license/01.md). Attesting to agreement can be done by either creating Door43 accounts or by physically signing the documents, digitizing them (scanning or photos), and submitting them as explained below. See <http://ufw.io/forms> for downloadable agreement forms.

### Source Text Request Form

Once you have completed the prerequisites, you may fill out the source text request form at <http://ufw.io/pub/>. A few notes about the form:

- You must have a Door43 account to create a request.
- You must include the names or pseudonyms of everyone involved. You must also include their Door43 usernames if you are not attaching signed license agreements for them.
- Note that the information you enter will be public and will become a part of the front matter of the source text.

After your form has been submitted, you will be contacted if anything is missing. Once the request has been approved, it will go into the publishing queue where a developer will work to make the translation a source text. You may also be contacted by the developer if there are any issues encountered during the publishing process. You will be notified when the process is completed, and you may review a PDF of the work.

## Finishing the Source Text Process

After the source text publishing process is completed, your work will then be available:

- Online on the unfoldingWord website
- As a PDF, downloadable from unfoldingWord
- In translationStudio as a source text for Other Languages to use (may require a tS update first)

## 2.3 Gateway Language Alignment

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**Note:** This module answers the question, “How do I align my GL translation in tC?”

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The purpose of the aligning tool in translationCore (tC) is to create highlighting that will appear for the OL translator who will use the GL text as a source text for an OL translation. This highlighting will show the user of the GL text how that GL text represents the meaning of the original biblical language text.

When the OL translator uses the UTW or UTN tools in tC (translationCore) (translationCore), the aligned GL text will allow tC to highlight the word or phrase that the tC check is talking about in both the ORIGL (Original Language) and the GL. This will help the OL translator to see how the biblical language expressed that meaning, how the GL expressed that meaning, and how he might express that same meaning in the target language. So, as you align the GL text with the ORIGL text, your job is to match as accurately as possible the words of the GL text to the words of the ORIGL text that express the same meaning.

### See also:

Always check to make sure you are using the latest version of tC, which is available from <http://translationcore.com>. Please also read the [Release Notes](#) for the most up to date instructions.

### 2.3.1 Alignment Instructions

In the tC Word Alignment tool, the GL chapters and verses are listed down the left side. When you click on a verse to open it, the words of that verse appear in a vertical list, ordered from top to bottom, just to the right of the list of chapters and verses. Each word is in a separate box.

The words of the ORIGL (Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic) text for that verse are also in separate boxes in a field to the right of the GL word list. There is a space under each of the source word boxes outlined with a dotted line.

To align the GL text:

1. Using the mouse, click and drag each word box of the GL text into the space under the word box of the ORIGL text that the GL word corresponds to.
2. Drop the GL word by releasing the mouse button.

When the GL word is over a word box of the original, the dotted outline will turn blue to let you know that the word will drop there. If you make a mistake or decide that the GL word belongs somewhere else, simply drag it again to where it belongs. GL words can also be dragged back to the list.

When the same GL word occurs more than once in a verse, each instance of the word will have a small superscript number after it. This number will help you to align each repeated GL word to the correct original word in the correct order. When the same GL word does occur more than once in a verse, it is important to be careful to align each instance of the word to the correct corresponding original-language word. The automated features of the aligning program, while generally very

helpful, can cause repeated GL words to be aligned to the wrong original-language words. Natural human error can cause the same thing. So careful attention to repeated GL words is important.

Notice below, in the UST translation of Ezra 4:18, that the word “to” occurs two times.

“My officials carefully read out loud **to** (occurrence 1) me the letter that you sent **to** (occurrence 2) us.” Ezra 4:18

In the picture below the two occurrences of “to” are not aligned with their correct original words because they are aligned in the wrong order. In this example the two occurrences of “to” need to be switched around in the UST alignment in order to be aligned with their correct original language words and therefore ensure that tC highlights the correct “to”. Otherwise the wrong “to” is highlighted as in the second picture below (circled in red).

The screenshot shows the Gateway Language alignment tool interface. It has four columns: English (EN) Target Language, Ancient Hebrew (UHB) Original Language, English (ULT) Gateway Language, and English (UST) Gateway Language. The English (EN) column contains the text: "4:18 My officials carefully read out loud to me the letter that you sent to us." The Ancient Hebrew (UHB) column contains the text: "4:18 נִשְׁתַּנָּא דִּי שְׁלַחְתוֹן עֲלֵינָא מִפְּרֶשׁ קָרִי קִדְמִי". The English (ULT) column contains the text: "4:18 The letter that you sent to us has been carefully read aloud before me." The English (UST) column contains the text: "4:18 My officials carefully read out loud to me the letter that you sent to us." Below the columns is an "Align" bar with a list of words: "me", "to", "My", "officials", "read", "out", "loud", "carefully", "to", "us", "you", "sent", "that", "the", "letter". The word "to" appears twice in the list, and the alignment tool is showing that the two occurrences of "to" are not correctly aligned with their respective original words.

The picture below shows the result of incorrectly aligning the multiple occurrences of the word “to” in the alignment tool.

The screenshot shows the result of incorrectly aligning the multiple occurrences of the word “to” in the alignment tool. The English (EN) column contains the text: "4:18 the letter that you sent me has been translated and read before me." The Ancient Hebrew (UHB) column contains the text: "4:18 נִשְׁתַּנָּא דִּי שְׁלַחְתוֹן עֲלֵינָא מִפְּרֶשׁ קָרִי קִדְמִי". The English (ULT) column contains the text: "4:18 The letter that you sent to us has been carefully read aloud before me." The English (UST) column contains the text: "4:18 My officials carefully read out loud to me the letter that you sent to us." The word "to" is highlighted in yellow in the UST column, and a red circle is drawn around the entire UST column to indicate the incorrect alignment.

## Merge and Unmerge Words

tC supports one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, and many-to-many alignments. That means that one or more GL words can be aligned to one or more ORIGL words, as necessary to get the most accurate alignment of the **meaning** conveyed by the two languages.

- To align multiple GL words to a single ORIGL word, simply drag and drop the GL words onto the box below the desired ORIGL word.
- When it is desired to align GL word(s) to a combination of ORIGL words, first drag one of the combination ORIGL words into the same box as the other ORIGL word. Multiple ORIGL words can be merged together in this fashion.
- To unmerge previously merged ORIGL words, drag the rightmost ORIGL word slightly to the right. A small, new alignment box will appear, and the unmerged word can be dropped into that box.
- The leftmost ORIGL word can also be unmerged by dragging and dropping it into the ORIGL word box immediately to its left.
- Any GL words that were aligned with that ORIGL word return to the word list.
- The ORIGL words should remain in the proper order. If the merge contains 3 or more ORIGL words, unmerge the rightmost ORIGL word first. Unmerging the center word(s) first may result in the ORIGL words coming out of order. When that happens, unmerge the remaining words in that box to properly return the ORIGL words to their original order.

### 2.3.2 Alignment Philosophy

Because each GL will have different requirements for sentence structure and the amount of explicit information that must be provided there is often not a one-to-one correspondence of the ORIGL word and the GL word. In these cases, the GL words that are provided should be aligned with the ORIGL word that implies them.

For English, we follow these principles, but your GL may need a different list to support full alignment.

- Align indefinite articles to their “head word.” For example, both “a” and “servant” should align to *doulos* in Titus 1:1.
- Definite articles that English supplies should also be aligned to their “head word.” For example, both “the” and “faith” should align to *pistin* in Titus 1:1.
- Original language definite articles that English does not use need to be combined with their ORIGL head word. For example, *ton* and *logon* need to be combined, then “word” aligned with that combination in Titus 1:3.
- Implicit verbs in the original language that are translated explicitly in the target language should be aligned with the predicate. For example, “he should be” that is supplied in English should be aligned to *philoxenon* along with “hospitable” in Titus 1:8.
- Words with apostrophes will be split and show up as two words in the word panel. This allows for proper alignment of the two parts of meaning. In most cases in English these are used to represent possession and will be aligned to a single ORIGL word in the genitive case. For example, both “God” and “s” will align to *theou* in Titus 1:1.
- Often the original language and GL part of speech won’t match. That is inevitable. Often an ORIGL word will be translated as a GL phrase. For example, the three words “does not lie” in English all align with the single word *apseudes* in Titus 1:2.
- Sometimes particles in the original language are not translated in the GL. These should be aligned to make the alignment between the ORIGL and the GL as precise as possible. For example, in most cases the Hebrew direct object marker should be merged with the Hebrew direct object and aligned with that translated word in the GL. However, in cases where the direct object marker has a conjunction prefix that must be translated in the GL, then the Hebrew word containing the conjunction and direct object marker should be aligned with the translated conjunction in the GL.

Other alignment issues pertinent to Biblical Hebrew include the following:

- When an infinitive absolute is paired with a finite verb, the infinitive absolute should be aligned separately, if possible. Usually, the infinitive absolute will be translated as an adverb, and it should be aligned with the adverb.
- As a general rule, the GLT (Gateway Literal Text) should translate the conjunction in Hebrew verbal forms. The translated conjunction should then be aligned with that Hebrew verb.
- When aligning construct phrases in Hebrew, the English word “of” should be aligned with the construct noun. If the English translation of the construct phrase uses a single definite article “the,” then it should be aligned with the absolute noun. When the English translation uses multiple instances of the definite article “the,” then each definite article should be aligned with the corresponding Hebrew noun.
- When aligning a verbless clause in Hebrew, the supplied “to be” verb should usually be aligned with the predicate instead of the subject. An exception to this rule occurs when the subject is a demonstrative pronoun (or carries some sort of deictic function). In those cases, the supplied “to be” verb should be aligned with the subject of the verbless clause.
- Sometimes a verb in Hebrew requires an accompanying preposition that is not required in English, or vice versa. In these cases, align with whichever part of speech fits best on a case-by-case basis. For example, take the phrase “...to pay on our fields...” in Nehemiah 14:4 in the UST. The English preposition “on” fits better semantically with the noun (“on our fields”) rather than with the infinitive (“to pay on”). However, the reverse is true in v.15 in the phrase “...even their servants oppressed the people...” (Heb. על־הָעַם שָׁלַט. In this case, the Hebrew שָׁלַט requires an accompanying preposition, and the concept is already incorporated into the English translation of the verb itself,

“oppressed.” So in this case, it is best to merge the Hebrew verb and preposition together, and then align both with the English “oppressed.”

### Alignment Philosophy for the GLT

The purpose of text alignment (the reason for doing it) for the GLT is to show the user from which ORiGL word each part of the GL meaning is taken. The goal of text alignment (the desired result) is to align the ORiGL and GLT texts according to the smallest possible units of corresponding meaning between them. When aligning a GLT to the ORiGL text, the precision of the alignment between the two languages is the highest priority. The most important function of the aligned text is to show the GLT user as specifically as possible from which word in the Original Language text the GL meaning is derived. **In practice, this means that Original Language words should be merged together ONLY when absolutely necessary for the accuracy of the alignment. Otherwise, Original Language words should not be merged together. In other words, the aligning should be done so that the smallest number of :abbr:`GL (Gateway Language)` words are aligned to the smallest number of Original Language words that accurately represent their shared meaning.**

The GLT is intended to be a fairly literal translation of the ORiGL, so that it reproduces the structure of the ORiGL when that is also understandable in the GL. Ideally, then, there would be one GL word aligned with each ORiGL word. Of course, this is not possible because languages work very differently from each other.

Therefore, we expect that you must align words or phrases in the GL with words or phrases in the ORiGL that differ in the number of words, order of words, and parts of speech, as described above. Always, however, you should align the GL words to the ORiGL words whose meaning they express, in whatever combination is necessary to produce the most accurate alignment of the meaning.

After aligning a verse, you may see words in the GLT that are left over and seem to be extra. If those words are truly necessary for the GLT to make sense, then find the ORiGL word or words that they help to express and align them there. But if those words do not express a meaning found in the ORiGL text, then it may be that those words should be deleted from the GLT. See *Words Not Found in the Original Language* for more information.

Sometimes, in the process of aligning a verse, you will find:

- An ORiGL word that is not represented in the GLT.
- A mistake in the GLT.
- Words in the GLT that do not represent anything in the ORiGL text.
- A better or more literal way to express something in the GLT.

In the above cases, if you are an authorized editor, you will want to edit the GLT so that it is more accurate to the ORiGL. Otherwise, contact the GLT translation team to let them know about the issue.

If you notice places where the ULT is wrong or potentially wrong, create an issue for it at [https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en\\_ult/issues](https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en_ult/issues) and we'll address it in the next release. In the meantime, align the text as well as possible.

### Words Not Found in the Original Language

In the process of alignment according to the instructions above, you may find that the GLT has words or phrases that do not represent any meaning in the ORiGL text and are not there because the GL sentence needs them to make sense. If this occurs, follow these recommendations:

1. If possible, consider editing the GLT to match the original language text.
2. You may consult other Greek or Hebrew manuscripts to see if there is textual support for your translation (see the [Biblical Humanities Dashboard](#) for other manuscripts).

3. If you find support for your translation, make sure to include a comment or note about where you found it and why the translation should include it.
4. You should consider placing these GL words in brackets or in a footnote.

### Alignment Philosophy for the GST

The main objective and goal of text alignment for the GST is the same as for the GLT. However, the task is much more difficult for the GST for several reasons, but mostly because the GST will almost always contain more words than the GLT. As with the GLT, it is best to align words in the GST in the same order as they appear in the list on the left so that you avoid misaligning multiple occurrences of the same word within a verse.

However, the process by which to decide which GST words should be aligned with which ORiGL words is significantly more complex than for the GLT. The process is not systematic but must be done by weighing a core group of principles together as a whole and then deciding what is best in each instance. Sometimes these principles might disagree or even contradict. In those cases, the aligner must decide which principle takes priority in a given instance and align the GST text accordingly. For all these reasons, the GST aligner should expect that it will take multiple attempts at aligning a GST text before it is aligned properly. The general principles which should govern the alignment of a GST text are as follows:

- The overarching purpose of the GST alignment is to show the user from which ORiGL words (or groups of words) the GL words (or phrases) take their meaning. Sometimes these units of meaning are larger than the ORiGL, and sometimes they are smaller.
- Smaller units of alignment are more desirable than larger units of alignment. In other words, only merge ORiGL words together when necessary for the sake of alignment of meaning between the two languages.
- If the meaning of an ORiGL word(s) is nowhere represented in the GST, leave that word unaligned rather than merging it with another ORiGL word. If necessary, consult with the translator who prepared the GST to determine if the GST is missing elements of meaning that need to be included and then aligned to the ORiGL word(s) in view.
- As much as possible, GL words should be aligned with ORiGL words within that same phrase or clause rather than being moved into a different phrase or clause.
- Words in the GST that express implied information should be aligned with the ORiGL words that they help to explain.
- In some cases, such as for a rhetorical question, the basic unit of meaning for alignment consists of an entire phrase or clause. In these cases, the entire unit of meaning must be merged in the ORiGL and then aligned with the entire unit of meaning in the GST.

NOTE: Sometimes words in the GST will need to be aligned with ORiGL words which appear much earlier or much later in the text. This is because the GST often rearranges text in order to follow its specific rules (use short sentences, present events in chronological order, etc.). The aligner should be aware that a properly aligned GST text may appear, at first glance, to have words drastically out of place.

The GST is intended to be, above all, a clear translation. Therefore, it adds words and phrases to explain the meaning of the original for the reader. These words and phrases should be aligned with the word or words that they are explaining. For example, in Titus 1:1, the phrase, “I am a servant” must be aligned with the single word, *doulos*.

Sometimes, for the sake of clarity, the GST will repeat things that are only mentioned once in the original. This often happens with subjects or objects of sentences. For example, in Titus 2:9 the English UST refers to “their masters” twice, although the original language only has *idiois despotais* once. In these cases, You should align the second occurrence of the repeated reference with the clause where it occurs. Do not align it with the clause earlier in the verse where the earlier occurrence is aligned. By doing this, we can better show the user the meaning equivalents across translations.

Some of the words and sentences of the GST do not directly represent the meaning of the original words. This is information that is only implied by the original words, but included in the GST because it is necessary for understanding the meaning of the original. For example, in Titus 1:1, the sentence, “I, Paul, write this letter to you, Titus” includes information that is not there in the ORiGL words, such as the fact that what the reader is about to read is a letter, and that



it is written to someone named Titus. This information, however, makes the text clearer and understandable. For the aligning, then, all this explanation must be aligned with the single word that it is explaining, *Paulos*.

If you notice places where the UST is wrong or potentially wrong, create an issue for it at [https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en\\_ust/issues](https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en_ust/issues) and we'll address it in the next release. In the meantime, align the GL text as well as possible.

## 2.4 Roles on the Team

We recommend that you translate the first resources as a team so that everyone learns about the various tasks involved. However, members of the team will find that they are more qualified or interested in some tasks than others. For example, translating Translation Academy requires more knowledge of linguistics than translating OBS. Similarly, not everyone on a team may be able to align the translations to Hebrew because that task requires a knowledge of the Hebrew language.

We suggest that a GL team consider the following roles as a way to work more efficiently as members contribute in the areas where they are the strongest.

- First, the team may want to have a project manager to coordinate the various members and interact with unfoldingWord, church networks, and other language groups.
- Second, the team should have a technologist who handles software, hardware, and managing files of the server, Door43.
- Third, the team will need three kinds of translators. For translation Academy and technical translation, the team may need a professional translator with knowledge of biblical studies and linguistics. In addition, a team member may want to specialize on the GST translation work, since that requires in-depth knowledge of the specific translation strategies of the UST; in addition, this person would benefit from a high level of English. Finally, a member may want to specialize on the GLT translation work; this translator would benefit from a knowledge of the biblical languages, but it is not required.
- Fourth, we suggest that the team have two members who specialize in alignment. One aligner could focus on Greek, the second on Hebrew. It is estimated that the alignment of the Old Testament will take three times longer than the alignment of the New Testament. Because of the greater work required by the Old Testament, the team may need two Hebrew aligners.

## 2.5 Guidelines for English Language Content Editing

### 2.5.1 unfoldingWord Literal Text (ULT)

#### Specific Editing Guidelines for the ULT

- Follow the original language in a literal manner. Remember that the purpose of the ULT is to give the user who does not know the original languages insight into the form of the original. Idioms will be reproduced in a literal manner and explained in a Note. Exceptions:
  1. As a rule, ULT should follow standard English usage. However, it does not necessarily have to be completely grammatical, as long as it is understandable. Translation notes can explain ungrammatical expressions that reflect translation issues in the original language.
  2. Do not follow the original language in a literal manner when this would give a wrong meaning. For example, reproducing a Greek double negative in English would give the opposite meaning. English might also need to use a different word order from Greek in order to convey the same meaning.
- Where possible, use common vocabulary that is easy to translate into another language.



- Do not use contractions.
- Use vocabulary and phrases that differ from the UST. The two translations fail to help the OL translator when terms are the same.
- Regarding all issues of style, grammar, and punctuation, see [Appendix A. unfoldingWord Book Package Style Sheet](#). It explains preferred English usage for all unfoldingWord materials. **You can use the drop-down menus in the left sidebar to navigate to specific topics.** The next several points here address some matters specific to the translation of ULT.
- Only use quotation marks at the beginning and ending of direct speech. Do not put quotation marks at the beginning of each verse when continuous direct speech spans several verses.
- Capitalization: In general, follow the practice of the 2011 NIV. (For example, “Scripture” capitalized when it means the entire Bible, but “scripture” not capitalized when it means a specific passage.)
- Capitalize titles (Son of Man, King David, the Messiah).
- All pronouns that refer to God should be lowercase (except at the start of sentences and except for the first-singular “I”).
- Spell out numbers up to and including ten (e.g., one, two, three). For numbers larger than ten, use numerals (e.g., 11, 12, 13).
- Prefer more formal, longer-established usages and avoid more informal usages that have only recently become acceptable in standard English. See [Formal usage](#) in the Style Sheet for more information and for examples.

## Aligning the ULT

In the tC (translationCore) Word Alignment tool, the English chapters and verses are listed down the left side. When you click on a verse to open it, the words of that verse appear in a vertical list, ordered from top to bottom, just to the right of the list of chapters and verses. Each word is in a separate box.

The words of the OrigL (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) text for that verse are also in separate boxes in a field to the right of the English word list. There is a space under each of the source word boxes outlined with a dotted line.

## Alignment Process for the ULT

To align the English text:

- Click and drag each word box of the English text into the space under the word box of the OrigL text to which the English word corresponds.
- Drop the English word by releasing the mouse button.

When the English word is over a word box of the OrigL, the dotted outline will turn blue to let you know that the word will drop there. If you make a mistake, or if you decide that the English word belongs somewhere else, simply drag it again to where it belongs. English words can also be dragged back to the list.

When the same English word occurs more than once in a verse, each instance of the word will have a small superscript number after it. This number will help you to align each repeated English word to the correct original word in the correct order. **When aligning, check to ensure that these numbered words are in their proper places, since it is easy to miss the numbers and align repeated words incorrectly.**

## Process to Merge and Unmerge Original Language Words

translationCore supports one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, and many-to-many alignments. That means that one or more English words can be aligned to one or more OrigL words, as necessary to get the most accurate alignment of the **meaning** conveyed by the two languages.

- To align multiple English words to a single OrigL word, simply drag and drop the English words onto the box below the desired OrigL word.
- When it is desired to align English word(s) to a combination of OrigL words, first drag one of the combination of OrigL words into the same box as the other OrigL word. Multiple OrigL words can be merged together in this fashion.
- To unmerge previously merged OrigL words, perform the following steps. For Hebrew, drag the leftmost OrigL word slightly to the left. A small new alignment box will appear, and the unmerged word can be dropped into that box. For Greek, drag the rightmost OrigL word slightly to the right. A small new alignment box will appear, and the unmerged word can be dropped into that box. In both cases, any English words that were aligned with that OrigL word return to the word list.
- The OrigL words should remain in the proper order. If the merge contains 3 or more OrigL words, unmerge either the leftmost or rightmost OrigL word first. Un-merging the center word(s) first may result in the OrigL words becoming out of order. If that happens, unmerge the remaining words in that box to properly return the OrigL words to their original order.

## Alignment Philosophy for the ULT

Because English has different requirements for sentence structure and the amount of explicit information that must be provided, there is often not a one-to-one correspondence between an OrigL word and an English word. In these cases, the English words that are provided should be aligned with the OrigL word that implies them.

**When aligning an English translation to the OrigL text, the precision of the alignment between the two languages is the highest priority. The most important function of the aligned text is to show the ULT user as specifically as possible from which word in the OrigL text the English meaning is derived. In practice, this means that OrigL words should be merged together ONLY WHEN ABOSLUTELY NECESSARY for the accuracy of the alignment. Otherwise, OrigL words should not be merged together. In other words, the aligning should be done so that the smallest number of English words are aligned to the smallest number of OrigL words that accurately represent their shared meaning.**

For English, we follow these principles, but other GL's may need a different list to support full alignment.

- Align indefinite articles to their “head word.” For example, both “a” and “servant” should align to *doulos* in Titus 1:1.
- Definite articles that English supplies should also be aligned to their “head word.” For example, both “the” and “faith” should align to *pistin* in Titus 1:1.
- Original language definite articles that English does not use should be combined with their original language head word, if possible. For example, *ton* and *logon* need to be combined, then “word” aligned with that combination in Titus 1:3. If the article and head word are separated by other words and cannot be combined, and English does not have an article in that place, then leave the OrigL article unaligned.
- Implicit verbs in the OrigL that are translated explicitly in the target language should be aligned with the predicate. For example, “he should be” that is supplied in English should be aligned to *philoxenon* along with “hospitable” in Titus 1:8.
- Words with apostrophes will be split and show up as two words in the word panel. This allows for proper alignment of the two parts of meaning. In most cases in English these are used to represent possession and will be aligned to a single OrigL word in the genitive case. For example, both “God” and “s” will align to *theou* in Titus 1:1.

- Often the OrigL and English part of speech won't match. That is inevitable. Often an original language word will be translated as a English phrase. For example, the three words "does not lie" in English all align with the single word *apseudes* in Titus 1:2.
- Sometimes particles in the OrigL are not translated in English. These should be aligned to make the alignment between the OrigL and the English as precise as possible. For example, in most cases the Hebrew direct object marker should be merged with the Hebrew direct object and aligned with that translated word in English. However, in cases where the direct object marker has a conjunction prefix that must be translated in English, then the Hebrew word containing the conjunction and direct object marker should be aligned with the translated conjunction in English.
- When aligning verbal negations, align any English helping verbs with the OrigL verb. Only align the English term(s) of negation with the negative particle in the OrigL.
- For relative clauses where English adds a "to be" verb, the verb should be aligned with the predicate if possible, especially if the predicate is a prepositional phrase. Sometimes the predicate is a compound, in which case the added "to be" verb should be aligned with the applicable OrigL relative pronoun/particle.
- Sometimes English uses a preposition to render the case of a Greek noun or adjective. When Greek has both an adjective and a noun in the same case (such as "good works" in the genitive) the English preposition normally precedes the phrase ("of good works"). However, the English preposition "of" should be aligned to the Greek noun as the head of phrase, rather than to the adjective.

Other alignment issues pertinent to Biblical Hebrew include the following:

- When an infinitive absolute is paired with a finite verb, the infinitive absolute should be aligned separately, if possible. Usually, the infinitive absolute will be translated as an adverb, and it should be aligned with the adverb.
- As a general rule, the ULT should translate the conjunction in Hebrew verbal forms. The translated conjunction should then be aligned with that Hebrew verb.
- When aligning construct phrases in Hebrew, the English word "of" should be aligned to the Hebrew construct noun, and any English definite articles should be aligned with the English term it modifies. This may not always reflect the most precise alignment of meaning between Hebrew and English in regard to definiteness, but it keeps the alignment simple and more understandable for the English user.
- When aligning a verbless clause in Hebrew, the supplied "to be" verb should usually be aligned with the predicate instead of the subject. An exception to this rule occurs when the subject is a demonstrative pronoun (or carries some sort of deictic function). In those cases, the supplied "to be" verb should be aligned with the subject of the verbless clause.
- Sometimes a verb in Hebrew requires an accompanying preposition that is not required in English, or vice versa. In these cases, align with whichever part of speech fits best on a case-by-case basis. For example, take the phrase "...to pay on our fields..." in Nehemiah 14:4 in the UST. The English preposition "on" fits better semantically with the noun ("on our fields") rather than with the infinitive ("to pay on"). However, the reverse is true in v.15 in the phrase "...even their servants oppressed the people..." (Heb. *על־העם*). In this case, the Hebrew *שָׁלַם* requires an accompanying preposition, and the concept is already incorporated into the English translation of the verb itself, "oppressed." So in this case, it is best to merge the Hebrew verb and preposition together, then align both with the English "oppressed."

You should expect that sometimes you must align words/phrases in English with words in the OrigL that differ in the number of words, order of words, and/or parts of speech (as described above). However, you should ALWAYS align the English words to the OrigL words whose meaning they express, in whatever combination is necessary to produce the most accurate alignment of the meaning.

After aligning a verse, there may be words in the English text that are left over and seem to be extra. If those words are truly necessary for the English text to make sense, then find the OrigL word(s) that they help to express and align them there. But if those words do not express a meaning found in the OrigL text, then it may be that those words should be deleted from the English translation.

Sometimes, in the process of aligning a verse, you will find:

- An OrigL word that is not represented in the English translation.
- A mistake in the English translation.
- Words in the English translation that do not represent anything in the OrigL text.
- A better or more literal way to express something in the English translation.

For the above cases: if you are an authorized editor, you will want to edit the English translation so that it is more accurate to the OrigL. Otherwise, contact the English translation team to let them know about the issue.

If you notice places where the ULT (unfoldingWord Literal Text) is wrong or potentially wrong, create an issue for it at [https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en\\_ult/issues](https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en_ult/issues) so we can address it in the next release. In the meantime, align the text as well as possible.

### Words Not Found in the Original Language

In the process of alignment according to the instructions above, you may find that the English text has words or phrases that do not represent any meaning in the OrigL text and are not there because the English sentence needs them to make sense. If this occurs, follow these recommendations:

- If possible, consider editing the English text to match the OrigL text.
- You may consult other Greek or Hebrew manuscripts to see if there is textual support for your translation (see the *Biblical Humanities Dashboard* <<http://biblicalhumanities.org/dashboard/>> for other manuscripts).
- If you find support for your translation, make sure to include a comment or note about where you found it and why the translation should include it.
- You should consider placing these English words in brackets or in a footnote.

## 2.5.2 unfoldingWord Simplified Text (UST)

### Specific Editing Guidelines for the UST

- The purpose of the UST is to express the meaning of the text in a clear and simple way. One can avoid translation difficulties of grammar and figures of speech by rendering those in a plain form and in short sentences.
- Where possible, use common vocabulary that is easy to translate into another language.
- Use vocabulary and phrases that differ from the ULT. The two translations fail to help the OL translator when terms are the same.
- The UST should generally reflect the same interpretation of the meaning of the text as the ULT.
- When there are textual ambiguities, the ULT will retain them, while the UST will express the most likely interpretation. A translation note should explain the possible interpretations and offer alternative translations for the other one or ones.
- The UST will often repeat phrases so that it can end a sentence and then start a new one.
- Metaphors may be transformed into similes, or their meaning may be expressed in a non-figurative way. Similes may be the preferred option when the metaphor is extended over several clauses or verses. Examples of non-figurative equivalents: “believe in your heart” = “sincerely believe”; “be joined to your spirit” = “be as close to you as your own hearts”; “harden your heart” = “be stubborn” or “refuse to obey.”

- A few abstract nouns are allowed in the UST because of the awkwardness or inadequacy of any English circumlocution. These include “authority” (when used of a person), “sin,” “behavior,” “work,” “thing,” “time,” “resource,” “kingdom,” “relationship,” and some nouns referring to speech (“message,” “saying,” etc.), although it is often possible in such cases to use a verb instead.
- The UST will add implied information that is necessary to understand the text. This is usually a matter of cultural knowledge.
- The UST will mark this implied information by enclosing it in {curly braces}.
- The UST will clarify locations and participants. For example, not “Jerusalem” but “the city of Jerusalem”; not “Herod” but “King Herod.” This is not considered implied information, since it only clarifies information that is already in the text.
- The UST will clarify antecedents. For example, it may repeat “Jesus” from a preceding verse rather than say “he” if the antecedent might not be clear.
- Regarding all issues of style, grammar, and punctuation, see the [Style Sheet](#). It explains preferred English usage for all unfolding Word materials. **You can use the drop-down menus in the left sidebar to navigate to specific topics.** For some matters specific to the translation of UST, see the last five points in the previous section about ULT. Those points also apply to UST.
- Prefer more formal, longer-established usages and avoid more informal usages that have only recently become acceptable in standard English. See [Formal usage](#) in the Style Sheet for more information and for examples.

## Aligning the UST

In the tC (translationCore) Word Alignment tool, the GL (Gateway Language) chapters and verses are listed down the left side. When you click on a verse to open it, the words of that verse appear in a vertical list, ordered from top to bottom, just to the right of the list of chapters and verses. Each word is in a separate box.

The words of the OrigL (Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic) text for that verse are also in separate boxes in a field to the right of the English word list. There is a space under each of the source word boxes outlined with a dotted line.

## Alignment Process for the UST

To align the English text:

- Click and drag each word box of the English text into the space under the word box of the OrigL text that the English word corresponds to.
- Drop the English word by releasing the mouse button.

When the English word is over a word box of the original, the dotted outline will turn blue to let you know that the word will drop there. If you make a mistake or decide that the GL word belongs somewhere else, simply drag it again to where it belongs. GL words can also be dragged back to the list.

When the same GL word occurs more than once in a verse, each instance of the word will have a small superscript number after it. This number will help you to align each repeated GL word to the correct original word in the correct order. **When aligning, check to ensure that these numbered words are in their proper places, since it is easy to miss the numbers and align repeated words incorrectly.**

### Process to Merge and Unmerge Original Language Words

tC (translationCore) supports one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, and many-to-many alignments. That means that one or more English words can be aligned to one or more OrigL words, as necessary to get the most accurate alignment of the **meaning** conveyed by the two languages.

- To align multiple GL words to a single OrigL word, simply drag and drop the GL words onto the box below the desired OrigL word.
- When it is desired to align English word(s) to a combination of OrigL words, first drag one of the combination OrigL words into the same box as the other OrigL word. Multiple OrigL words can be merged together in this fashion.
- To unmerge previously merged OrigL words, drag the rightmost original language word slightly to the right. A small new alignment box will appear, and the unmerged word can be dropped into that box.
- The leftmost OrigL word can also be unmerged by dragging and dropping it into the OrigL word box immediately to its left.
- Any English words that were aligned with that OrigL word return to the word list.
- The OrigL words should remain in the proper order. If the merge contains 3 or more OrigL words, unmerge the rightmost OrigL word first. Un-merging the center word(s) first may result in the OrigL words becoming out of order. When that happens, unmerge the remaining words in that box to properly return the OrigL words to their original order.

### Alignment Philosophy for the UST

Because each GL has different requirements for sentence structure and the amount of explicit information that must be provided, there is often not a one-to-one correspondence between an OrigL word and an English word. In these cases, the English words that are provided should be aligned with the OrigL word that implies them.

The main objective and goal of text alignment for the UST is the same as for the ULT. However, the process by which to decide which UST words should be aligned with which OrigL words is significantly more complex than for the ULT. The process is not systematic but must be done by weighing a core group of principles together as a whole and then deciding what is best in each instance. Sometimes these principles might disagree or even contradict. In those cases, the aligner must decide which principle takes priority in a given instance and align the UST text accordingly. **For all these reasons, the UST aligner should expect that it will take multiple attempts at aligning a UST text before it is aligned properly.** The general principles which should govern the alignment of a UST text are as follows:

- The overarching purpose of the UST alignment is to show the user from which OrigL words (or groups of words) the GL words (or phrases) take their meaning. Sometimes these units of meaning are larger, and sometimes they are smaller.
- Smaller units of alignment are more desirable than larger units of alignment. In other words, only merge OrigL words together when necessary for the sake of alignment of meaning between the two languages.
- If the meaning of an OrigL word(s) is nowhere represented in the English text, leave that word unaligned rather than merging it with another OrigL word. If necessary, consult with the translator who prepared the UST to determine if the UST is missing elements of meaning that need to be included and then aligned to the OrigL word(s) in view.
- As much as possible, English words should be aligned with OrigL words within that same phrase or clause rather than being moved into a different phrase or clause.
- Words in English that express implied information can be aligned with earlier OrigL words but not with later OrigL words. This is because it is impossible for information to be implied from a place later in the text.

- In some cases, such as for a rhetorical question, the basic unit of meaning for alignment consists of an entire phrase or clause. In these cases, the entire unit of meaning must be merged in the OrigL and then aligned with the entire unit of meaning in the GL text.

**NOTE: Sometimes words in the UST will need to be aligned with OrigL words which appear much earlier or much later in the text. This is often necessary because of the specific rules that the UST must follow (use short sentences, present events in chronological order, etc.). The aligner should be aware that a properly aligned GST text may appear to have words drastically out of place at first glance.**

When aligning the UST, you must remember that its first priority is to be a clear rendering of the meaning of the OrigL text. Therefore, it adds words and phrases to explain the meaning of the original for the reader. These words and phrases should be aligned with the word or words that they are explaining. For example, in Titus 1:1, the phrase, “I am a servant” must be aligned with the single word, *doulos*.

Sometimes, for the sake of clarity, the UST will repeat things that are only mentioned once in the original. This often happens with subjects or objects of sentences. For example, in Titus 2:9 the English UST refers to “their masters” twice, although the original language only has *idiois despotais* once. In these cases, you should align the second occurrence of the repeated reference with the clause where it occurs. Do not align it with the clause earlier in the verse where the earlier occurrence is aligned. By doing this, we can better show the user the meaning equivalents across translations.

Some of the words and sentences of the UST do not directly represent the meaning of the original words. This is information that is only implied by the original words, but included in the UST because it is necessary for understanding the meaning of the original. For example, in Titus 1:1, the sentence, “I, Paul, write this letter to you, Titus” includes information that is not there in the original words, such as the fact that what the reader is about to read is a letter, and that it is written to someone named Titus. This information, however, makes the text more clear and understandable. For the aligning, then, all of this explanation must be aligned with the single word that it is explaining, *Paulos*.

If you notice places where the UST is wrong or potentially wrong, create an issue for it at [https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en\\_ust/issues](https://git.door43.org/unfoldingWord/en_ust/issues) so we can address it in the next release. In the meantime, align the text as well as possible.

For English, we follow these principles, but your GL may need a different list to support full alignment.

- Align indefinite articles to their “head word.” For example, both “a” and “servant” should align to *doulos* in Titus 1:1.
- Definite articles that English supplies should also be aligned to their “head word.” For example, both “the” and “faith” should align to *pistin* in Titus 1:1.
- Original language definite articles that English does not use need to be combined with their OrigL head word. For example, *ton* and *logon* need to be combined, then “word” aligned with that combination in Titus 1:3.
- Implicit verbs in the OrigL that are translated explicitly in the target language should be aligned with the predicate. For example, “he should be” that is supplied in English should be aligned to *philoxenon* along with “hospitable” in Titus 1:8.
- Words with apostrophes will be split and show up as two words in the word panel. This allows for proper alignment of the two parts of meaning. In most cases in English these are used to represent possession and will be aligned to a single original language word in the genitive case. For example, both “God” and “s” will align to *theou* in Titus 1:1.
- Often the OrigL and English part of speech won’t match. That is inevitable. Often an OrigL word will be translated as an English phrase. For example, the three words “does not lie” in English all align with the single word *apseudes* in Titus 1:2.
- Sometimes particles in the OrigL are not translated in English. These should be aligned to make the alignment between the OrigL and English as precise as possible. For example, in most cases the Hebrew direct object marker should be merged with the Hebrew direct object and aligned with that translated word in English. However, in cases where the direct object marker has a conjunction prefix that must be translated in English, then the Hebrew word containing the conjunction and direct object marker should be aligned with the translated conjunction in English.



- When aligning verbal negations, align any English helping verbs with the OrigL verb. Only align the English term(s) of negation with the negative particle in the OrigL.

Other alignment issues pertinent to Biblical Hebrew include the following:

- When an infinitive absolute is paired with a finite verb, the infinitive absolute should be aligned separately, if possible. Usually, the infinitive absolute will be translated as an adverb, and it should be aligned with the adverb.
- As a general rule, the ULT should translate the conjunction in Hebrew verbal forms. The translated conjunction should then be aligned with that Hebrew verb.
- When aligning construct phrases in Hebrew, the English word “of” should be aligned with the construct noun, and any English definite article should be aligned with the English term that they modify. If the meaning of the English rendering of the Hebrew construct phrase can be divided in the same way as the division of terms in Hebrew, then Hebrew terms should not be merged together in the alignment. However, if the meaning of the English rendering cannot be divided in the same place as the Hebrew phrase, or if the entire Hebrew phrase constitutes a single unit of meaning, then the applicable Hebrew terms must be merged together in the alignment.
- When aligning a verbless clause in Hebrew, the supplied “to be” verb should usually be aligned with the predicate instead of the subject. An exception to this rule occurs when the subject is a demonstrative pronoun (or carries some sort of deictic function). In those cases, the supplied “to be” verb should be aligned with the subject of the verbless clause.
- When a common noun is in construct to a proper noun, we align “the” with the noun in construct. So the aligning for this construct chain would be: אַהֲרֹן [Aaron] בְּנֵי [the sons of]
- Sometimes a verb in Hebrew requires an accompanying preposition that is not required in English, or vice versa. In these cases, align with whichever part of speech fits best on a case-by-case basis. For example, take the phrase “...to pay on our fields...” in Nehemiah 14:4 (UST). The English preposition “on” fits better semantically with the noun (“on our fields”) rather than with the infinitive (“to pay on”). However, the reverse is true in v.15 in the phrase “...even their servants oppressed the people...” (Heb. עַל־הָעַם) שִׁלְטוּ. In this case, the Hebrew שִׁלְטוּ requires an accompanying preposition, and the concept is already incorporated into the English translation of the verb itself, “oppressed.” So in this case, it is best to merge the Hebrew verb and preposition together, then align both with the English “oppressed.”

## Words Not Found in the Original Language

In the process of alignment according to the instructions above, you may find that the English text has words or phrases that do not represent any meaning in the OrigL text and are not there because the English sentence needs them to make sense. If this occurs, follow these recommendations:

- If possible, consider editing the English text to match the OrigL text.
- You may consult other Greek or Hebrew manuscripts to see if there is textual support for your translation (see the *Biblical Humanities Dashboard* <<http://biblicalthumanities.org/dashboard/>> for other manuscripts).
- If you find support for your translation, make sure to include a comment or note about where you found it and why the translation should include it.
- You should consider placing these English words in brackets or in a footnote.



### 2.5.3 Combined ULT-UST Translation Glossary

A list of decisions as to how to translate some senses of the OrigL words and phrases into another language is called a Translation Glossary (TG). Such a resource is especially useful when more than one person works on the same project because it helps keep everyone using the same English terms. However, a TG cannot be foolproof because the source will often use some words to signal more than one sense, depending on context. A TG is therefore a glossary of word senses, not a glossary of words. Check back often to this page because this TG is likely to develop for the entire life of the unfolding Word project.

NOTE: Occasionally, the TG's specified translation will not be suitable. As always, the text editors must remain in control of the decision-making process. The TG is to guide you as much as is possible. If you must depart from the TG guidelines, do so and insert a translation note to explain the meaning.

- Sentence-initial or preverbal use of the word “and” of the type “And Joseph said,” “And it came about,” etc. should be rendered in the ULT, usually as the conjunction “and.” However, a different word (“but,” “so,” etc.) may be selected in cases where the discourse function of the conjunction is foregrounded, and the specific conjunctive meaning is so strong as to be contextually undeniable. The UST will not need to render this conjunction.
- It will often be suitable to use English “role” nouns ending in -er to translate Hebrew construct participles in ULT. For example, Job 4:8 **וְקִצְרֵהוּ עֹמֵל וְזָרַעוֹ אֶת־הַחֲדָשִׁי** “plowers of misery and sowers of trouble reap it.” Absolute participles with direct objects can generally be translated with the English participles ending in ing: Job 3:14 **לְמוֹתֵי חֲרָבוֹת הַבָּנִים** “the ones building monuments for themselves.” In some contexts, however, it may be appropriate to translate absolute participles with the English -er form: Job 9:25 **פָּנִי־רִץ קֵלִי וְיָמֵי** “For my days are swifter than a runner.”
- **Shall vs. will:** In the ULT, we will use “will” to express prediction of the future, and “shall” to express the will or intentionality of the speaker concerning the future. (This applies to verbs other than imperatives. The ULT will represent imperatives as imperatives.) When in doubt between the two, it is probably best to choose “will.” The UST will use “will” for prediction and an expression other than “shall” for intentionality. Examples:

– **Prediction:**

Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work. (Gen 29:27)

But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark... (Gen 6:18)

He is a prophet, and he will pray for you. (Gen 20:7)

– **Expression of will or intentionality:**

Then Yahweh said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? (Gen 18:17)

I intend to reveal to Abraham what I plan to do. (UST)

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but shall raise them up at the last day. (John 6:39)

God, who sent me, intends for me to keep forever all of the people that he has entrusted to me. He intends for me to make them alive again... (UST)

So they called together all of the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, “What shall we do with the box of the god of Israel?” (1 Sam 5:8)

So they called together the rulers from each of the Philistine towns and asked them, “What do you want us to do with the sacred chest of the god of Israel?” (UST)

You shall not murder. (Exod 20:13)

Do not murder anyone. (UST)

If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. (Exod 21:2)

...he is to serve {you} for {only} six years. At {the beginning of} the seventh year you must set him free... (UST)

– **Prediction, followed by intentionality (both originally expressed with the weqatal verb form):**

Behold, you are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. (Gen 16:11)

You must name him Ishmael... (UST)

- Metaphors will be turned into either similes or plain, concrete language. Examples:
  - live in your heart: “become a part of you,” “be joined to your spirit,” “be as close to you as your own hearts.”
  - hard heart: “refuse to obey.”
- A few abstract nouns are allowed because of the awkwardness or inadequacy of any English circumlocution. These include “authority” (when used of a person), “sin,” “behavior,” “work,” “thing,” “time,” “resource,” “kingdom,” “relationship,” and some nouns referring to speech (“message,” “saying,” etc.), although it is often possible to use a verb instead.

## Translation Glossary for the Old Testament

*atonement lid* (kapporeth) ULT will say “atonement lid,” and UST will use an expression such as “the lid for the sacred chest”

*behold* (hinneh) ULT will say “behold,” and a translation note will explain when the usage is figurative and means something like “pay attention” or “this is important.” UST will often not translate the term, or else give some other indication of the emphasis it is conveying. For example, Esther 6:5, ULT “Behold, Haman is standing in the courtyard,” UST “O king, Haman is standing in the courtyard.”

*box* For the ark of the covenant, ULT will use the word “box” (“Box of the Testimony” in Exodus, “Box of the Covenant of Yahweh” in Joshua, etc.), and UST will use the term “sacred chest.” For Noah’s ark, ULT and UST will both say “ark.”

*covenant* The UST will use “agreement” or “promise.”

*covenant faithfulness* (hesed) ULT will translate this as “covenant faithfulness,” except in cases where a different meaning is clearly warranted in the context. UST will use a phrase including an adjective such as “faithful” or “kind.” For example, Nehemiah 13:22, ULT “according to the greatness of your covenant faithfulness,” UST “because you are so abundantly kind.”

For Israelite Festivals the ULT will use “Festival of (Name)” and the UST will use “Celebration of (Name)” Some examples of names to use for some of the major festivals are:

“Festival of Unleavened Bread” in the ULT and “Celebration of Unleavened Bread” in the UST.

“Festival of Weeks” in the ULT and “Celebration of Weeks” in the UST.

“Festival of Shelters” in the ULT and “Celebration of Shelters” in the UST.

*glory* The UST will rework the grammar to use the adjective “glorious” or an equivalent description such as “who is so great.”

*Holy of Holies* ULT will translate this as “Holy of Holies” and the UST as “Most Holy Place”

*horns* The Hebrew terms for the various kinds of horns should be rendered as follows: qeren = “horn” in ULT and UST; shofar = “horn” in ULT and “long horn” or “large horn” in UST.

*it came about* or *it happened* (wayehi) ULT will translate this as “it came about” or “it happened.” UST will typically not translate the phrase. For example, Esther 5:2, ULT “And it happened that, as soon as the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court,” UST “As soon as the king noticed Queen Esther standing there in the courtyard,”

*judgement* (mishpat) ULT should translate this as “judgment(s)” wherever possible, since it is the derivative noun of “to judge.” However, in instances where it clearly does not mean “judgments,” then the English term “ordinance” should be used when referring to a religious rule, and another word such as “regulation” when referring to a more civil or legal rule. UST should use whatever term or expression is appropriate to the context. For example, Nehemiah 9:13, ULT “just judgments,” UST “honest instructions.”

*knew, know* Expressions of the type “he knew his wife” or “he went in to his wife” should be reproduced word for word in ULT. The context will make their meaning clear. UST will express the meaning of the phrase. For example, Genesis 4:1, ULT “The man knew Eve his wife and she conceived,” UST “Adam had sexual relations with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant.”

*life* (nephesh) ULT will translate this term as “soul” or “life” rather than “spirit.” UST will express the meaning. For example, Esther 7:3, ULT “let my life be given to me at my petition,” UST “Please allow me to live.” (This guidance does not apply to other senses of nephesh e.g. desire.)

*man, men* (adam) (ASV: man, men) ULT will regularly say “man” or “men,” and a translation note will indicate when this is a generic usage. When it is generic, UST will use terms such as “anyone,” “people,” etc. For example, Esther 2:15, ULT “every man,” UST “everyone.”

*Messiah* (Meshiach) ULT will say “Messiah,” and almost always “the Messiah,” since “Messiah” is a title. UST will say “the One God Has Anointed/Chosen.” For example, Psalm 2:2, ULT “against his Messiah,” UST “against the One God Has Anointed.”

*nose* (‘af) The Hebrew ‘af should be rendered in ULT as “nose” when it appears in the singular form, and as “nostrils” when it appears in the dual form. When the usage is figurative, UST will express the meaning. For example, Ezra 8:22, ULT “his might and his nose are against all those who forsake him,” UST “he becomes very angry with those who refuse to obey him”; Nehemiah 8:6, ULT “nostrils to the ground,” UST “with their faces touching the ground.”

*servant, slave* (‘ebed) ULT will render this term as “servant” or “slave,” whichever English term best fits the specific context. UST may use other expressions, for example, Ezra 4:11, ULT “your servants,” UST “the officials serving you.” When the usage is figurative, UST will indicate that, for example, Nehemiah 7:57, ULT “the servants of Solomon,” UST “the laborers that King Solomon first conscripted.”

*skin disease* (tzara’at) ULT and UST should translate this term as “skin disease” (not “leprosy”).

*Son, sons* (ben, beney) ULT will say “son” or “sons.” When the usage is figurative, UST will express the meaning, and when it is generic and includes women, ULT will indicate that. For example, Nehemiah 3:31, ULT “a son of the goldsmiths,” UST “one of the goldsmiths”; Ezra 10:44, ULT “who had borne sons,” UST “who had borne children.”

*spirit* (nephesh) ULT will translate this term as “spirit” or “life” rather than “soul,” except in cases where the specific context demands it. UST will express the meaning. For example, Esther 7:3, ULT “let my life be given to me at my petition,” UST “Please allow me to live.”

*the declaration of Yahweh* (ne’um YHWH) ULT will say “the declaration of Yahweh.” The UST will express the meaning of the phrase, and it may do that before the material that it describes, even though in Hebrew the phrase comes afterwards. For example, Obadiah 1:4, ULT (at the end) “a declaration of Yahweh”; UST (at the beginning) “I, Yahweh, declare this to you.” When punctuating this phrase, if you can, use something besides dashes. If it is necessary to use dashes, if the phrase comes at the end of a sentence, introduce it with a dash and end it with a period. If it comes in the middle of a sentence, then use dashes before and after the phrase but no ending period. e.g. Isaiah 37:34-35, ULT “The way by which he came, he will return {in}, and he will not enter to this city” —the declaration of Yahweh— 35 “for I shall defend this city and rescue it, or my own sake and for the sake of David, my servant.”

*Tabernacle* ULT will say “Dwelling” and the UST will say “sacred tent”

*trumpet* (hatzotzerah) This word means “trumpet” in ULT and UST. The term “shofar” should never be translated as “trumpet.”

*thus says Yahweh* (koh ‘amar YHWH) The ULT will say, “Thus says Yahweh.” UST will say, “This is what Yahweh says.”

*Yahweh* (YHWH) ULT and UST will both translate this as the name Yahweh

(herem) ULT will translate this concept according to what it appears to mean locally in its immediate context. This might include either the concept of a “ban” or the concept of “complete destruction,” etc. UST will explain the meaning of the phrase. For example, Joshua 22:20, ULT, “Did not Achan son of Zerah act very treacherously in what was set apart for destruction?” UST “Surely you remember what happened when Zerah’s son Achan refused to obey Yahweh’s command to destroy everything in Jericho.”

*Numbers* Both ULT and UST will use words for numbers from one through ten, and digits for numbers higher than ten. But when numbers are used as titles, ULT should write them out and capitalize them, for example, “The Thirty” in 2 Samuel 23:23. UST could express the meaning of that title with a phrase such as “the 30 chief warriors.” If a number has a figurative meaning, the ULT editor should write it out, as a signal to the UST editor to address the figurative usage. For example, ULT would write out “thousand” in Judges 6:15, a note would explain that this is idiomatic for “clan,” and UST could say “clan.”

## **Translation Glossary for the New Testament**

*and it happened that* (egeneto de, kai egeneto) The ULT will say, “And it happened that.” UST will often not translate this phrase at all, in keeping with the advice that is given in translation notes where it appears.

*apostle* The ULT will say “apostle,” and UST will use a phrase along the lines of “one sent to represent” and will use “representative” when the prior would be awkward and/or not fit the context well. (Note: “one sent to represent” is a passive construction should not be used verbatim. Rather, “one sent to represent” is merely meant as a shorthand way of presenting the elements to use in the UST expression, and should be tweaked to fit individual contexts, such as “God sent me to represent him,” or “Jesus chose 12 whom he would send to represent him.”)

*apostle of Jesus Christ* The ULT will say “apostle of Jesus Christ,” and the UST will use a phrase along the lines of “sent to represent the Messiah Jesus.”

*behold* (idou) The ULT will say “behold,” and a translation note will explain when the usage is figurative and means something like “pay attention” or “this is important.” UST will often not translate the term, or else give some indication of the emphasis it is conveying. For example, Luke 2:34, ULT “Behold,” UST “Note well what I say.” However, in cases where it literally means “look” or “see,” UST would use a term like that.

*brothers* (adelphoi) The ULT will use brothers. Since this term usually refers figuratively to Christian believers, the UST will most often use “believers” or “fellow-believers.”

*Christ* (Christos) The ULT will say either “Christ” or “the Christ.” The definite article is appropriate if the term is being clearly used as a title, but not if it is being used as a second name for Jesus. The UST will normally use “the Messiah.”

*church* (ekklésia) The ULT will say “church” and UST will say “groups of believers”

*deacon* (diakonos) The ULT will say “deacon” and UST will say “assistant” or “those who assist” for the church office, and “servant” or “agent” in other contexts.

*disciple* The ULT will say “disciple” regularly. UST will say “apprentice” to mean the people who were in this relationship with Jesus. In other contexts, however, UST can translate “disciple” with terms such as “learner” or “student,” for example, Luke 6:40, “A student is not greater than his teacher.”

*good news, gospel* (euangelion) The ULT will say “gospel” in most cases, and UST will say “good news.” However, in cases where the term could not yet have the sense of the message of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, ULT can say “good news,” for example, Luke 3:18 in reference to John the Baptist, “he preached the good news to the people.”

*Law and Prophets* The ULT will capitalize the phrase “Law and the Prophets” because it refers to the whole work. The UST will render it as a capitalized “Scriptures”. The same applies for similar phrases such as the one in Matthew 11:13 ULT “For all the Prophets and the Law have prophesied until John.”

*lawyer* (nomikos) The ULT will say “lawyer,” following its form-based principles. The UST will say “expert in the Jewish law” or something similar. If ULT were an end-user translation, there might be a risk of misunderstanding “lawyer” to mean someone who argued cases in a courtroom. But ULT is designed to be used interactively with UTN and UST. A translation note should explain at the first instance in each book what “lawyer” means, and UST will model that.

*man, men* (anthropos) ULT will regularly say “man” or “men,” and a translation note will indicate when this is a generic usage. When it is generic, UST will use terms such as “anyone,” “people,” etc.

*Messiah* When the term appears in the New Testament in transliterated Greek, both ULT and UST should translate it as “Messiah.”

*overseer* (episkopos) The ULT will say “overseer” and UST will say “leader of the believers.”

*peace* The UST will rework the grammar to use the adjective “peaceful [spirit, etc.]” or an adjectival phrase such as “at peace.”

*rabbi* (rhabbi) The ULT will say “Rabbi” and the UST will say “Teacher”

*sabbath* The ULT will use “Sabbath” while the UST will use “Jewish day of rest.”

*saints* (hagioi) The ULT will say “saints.” UST will say “God’s people” or “us who belong to God” or use some similar expression.

*scribe* (grammateus) The ULT will say “scribe,” and UST will say “teacher of the Jewish law,” “those who taught the Jewish law,” etc. If ULT were an end-user translation, there might be a risk of misunderstanding “scribe” to mean someone who made copies of documents. But ULT is designed to be used interactively with UTN and UST. A translation note should explain at the first instance in each book what “scribe” means, and UST will model that.

*Sea of Galilee* Both ULT and UST will say “Sea of Galilee,” since that is the widely recognized name for this body of water.

*Spirit/spirit* (pneuma) When the word pneuma occurs and it is clearly referring to the Holy Spirit the ULT will capitalize it and render it as “Spirit” and the UST will render pneuma as “Holy Spirit” when it occurs without any modifiers such as “God’s”. When it is debatable whether or not a specific occurrence of pneuma is referring to the Holy Spirit the ULT and UST should render the most likely meaning of pneuma and a “This could mean:” translation note should be written for it.

*synagogue* The ULT will say “synagogue,” and UST will say “Jewish meeting place.”

*teacher* (didaskalos) The ULT will say “Teacher” and the UST will say “teacher”

*wilderness* The ULT will say “wilderness,” and UST will say “desolate place” or “desolate region” or “desolate area.”

The UST will render χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as “[May] God our Father and our Lord Jesus the Messiah {continue to be} kind to you and {make you} peaceful.” This Greek introduction is found in the following verses: Romans 1:7b, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, and Philemon verse 3. Colossians 1:2 contains the first part of this introduction verbatim but leaves off καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ at the end of the verse.

## 2.5.4 unfoldingWord Translation Notes

## 2.5.5 Guidelines for Writing and Checking UTN

### Write Notes to Cover the Following Situations:

1. Translation notes define obscure terms that are infrequent enough that they are not included in the definitions of Translation Words. Also included here are phrases or actions that might be obscure. These Notes should reference the TA article *translate-unknowns*. If the action is symbolic, the note should reference *translate-symaction*. This type of note is also useful for identifying the gender of people named in the text and should reference *translate-names*. The following example gives the snippet

from the SupportReference field in tC Create highlighted in yellow, followed by the text of the Note that comments on it:

*herald* A herald is someone who is sent out to announce a message. If your language does not have a similar term and your readers would not know what a herald is, you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “a messenger” (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]])

2. A UTN can offer synonyms or other translation possibilities. These notes should simply offer the alternatives between quotes with no explanatory text or TA article reference, but the alternative must still replace the snippet seamlessly. For clarity, the alternative(s) should be identified with “Alternate translation:” For example:

*the way* Alternate translation: “the path” or “the road”

3. A UTN can suggest alternate translations (ATs) to the text of the ULT in case the target language prefers a different form. This is due to differences of language use, such as figurative language, the need to make implied information explicit, or to change an unnatural grammatical construction. These Notes explain what the translation issue is, then they offer ATs that address that issue and can be used when the ULT form is not meaningful or natural in the target language. These Notes will reference tA articles that further explain the particular issue. For example:

*enslaved to much wine* People who cannot control themselves and drink too much wine are spoken of as if they were a slave to the wine. Alternate translation: “controlled by their desire for wine” or “addicted to wine” (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]])

4. Notes may present various possible meanings when there are textual ambiguities. For various reasons, scholars disagree about the meaning of many passages, and so such notes will present the major alternatives with the recommended alternative listed first. This will be the alternative that the UST will model. Less likely alternatives will follow in descending order of probability. Such notes should be as succinct as possible, with an AT given for each alternative. For example:

*Suffer together* The term **together** could refer to (1) Timothy suffering together with Paul. Alternate translation: “suffer together with me” (2) Timothy suffering together with all Christians who suffer. Alternate translation: “suffer together with all believers” (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]])

Notice that in this example, the note discusses two possible meanings, (1) and (2), and each discussion has its own AT. In the example under point 3 above, two ATs are offered after a discussion of a single meaning. A third possibility is to offer two ATs together in a follow-up note to two possible meanings discussed in an earlier note. In that case, but not in a case like point 3, the ATs would be numbered (1) and (2), corresponding to the possibilities in the earlier note. Example:

*in this one truly the love of God has been perfected* If it would be clearer in your language, you could use an active verbal form in place of the passive form **has been perfected**. The person or thing doing the action will depend on how you decide to translate the phrase the love of God. Alternate translation: (1) “that person indeed loves God completely” or (2) “God’s love has achieved its purpose in that person’s life” (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-activepassive]])

5. Notes may alert translators to issues of culture or genre that they may need to accommodate. For example, translators may need to give more specific kinship information, or they may have a specific cultural form for a greeting or a blessing that they will need to use. For example:

*Grace, mercy, and peace from* After stating his name and the name of the person to whom he is writing, Paul adds a blessing to Timothy. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: “may you experience kindness, mercy, and peace within you from” or “I pray that you will have grace, mercy, and peace from” (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-blessing]])

6. Notes may present pertinent information about a section of text in order to aid in the translation of that section. Such notes typically occur at the beginning of books and chapters and they alert the translator to the themes or larger translation issues in those sections. This type of note is also useful for suggesting places to insert section headings. For this type of note, no text is selected to be highlighted for the snippet (the SupportReference field in tC Create). Only the chapter and verse are indicated. For example:

In verses 11b-13, Paul may be quoting a poem or hymn. To show the reader that this may be a quotation, in your translation you may choose to set these verses farther to the right than the other verses in the chapter.

### Guidelines For Composing Notes (Content)

- All Notes should be actionable. In other words, the translator should know what to do as a result of reading the Note. Often this recommended action is in the form of an AT, but it can also be in the form of advice in the text of the note. Delete notes that only give information, or rewrite them so that it is clear what the translator should do as a result of knowing the information.
- Notes are suggestions. They are not instructions of how to translate. We do not know in advance the clearest or most natural way to translate any given phrase or sentence into a target language. So a note should give options of ways to express the meaning, *in case* one of them would be helpful. To this end, it is good to remind the translator of this by regularly using phrases such as, “if it would be clearer in your language” or “use the term that would be most natural in your language.”
- Notes comment on the English text of the ULT, not directly on Hebrew or Greek. If you want to refer to the Hebrew or Greek behind the English, you can say something like, “The phrase translated \_\_\_\_ also refers to \_\_\_\_.”
- The note can refer to any part of what is in the yellow highlight of the ULT. If the note is not about the entire highlighted portion, one way to write the note would be: “The word **word** indicates that ...” That way the translator doesn’t have to guess which word the note is talking about.
- One reason to highlight more than just the text that the note is discussing is to be able to include parts of speech that are necessary to make a coherent AT, since the AT replaces the entire highlighted portion.
- Not every note has to have something bolded in it. Bold only if the note is referencing a specific term or terms in the ULT text.
- A note should not bold a word that is not in the ULT of the verse that it comments on. The proper way to write a note that quotes from another verse is: The word translated **now** is similar to the expression translated “and now” in [4:10](../04/10.md) and [4:11](../04/11.md).
- In general, write notes that comment on a larger portion of text first, followed by notes that comment on smaller segments of that same text, as necessary. In that way, the notes can give translation suggestions or explanations for the whole as well as for each part.
- Our target audience is speakers of English as a second language with a high-school education. Do not use words that only specialists in linguistics and biblical studies would know.
- To give one specific example, when discussing quotations within quotations, speak of them as first-level, second-level, third-level, fourth-level, or fifth-level quotations, rather than as primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, or quinary quotations.
- Prefer more formal, longer-established usages and avoid more informal usages that have only recently become acceptable in standard English. See [Formal usage](#) in the Style Sheet for more information and for examples.
- Beware of using familiar idioms that would not be familiar to non-English speakers.
- Avoid using literary words that would not be familiar to users. Doublet, hyperbole, idiom, irony, metaphor, and personification are generally understandable and so allowed. Try to find other, more general ways to refer to the other figures of speech.



### Guidelines For Composing Notes (Tech)

- When composing UTN using gatewayTranslate, all hyperlinks should be written in “Markdown” mode instead of “Preview” mode. Hyperlinks entered in “Preview” mode will not be saved in their proper format. Important: Editing must be done in “Markdown” mode, or hyperlinks will be disabled.
- When the original-language quote (OrigQuote) leaves out some words (for example, words that are not relevant to the translation issue under discussion), indicate this with an ellipsis (...). Use the Unicode ellipsis character. Do not use three periods with spaces in between. Within the OrigQuote field, **do not put a space before or after an ellipsis**. Otherwise, the software will not be able to read the field correctly. Example: οἱ...αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι, **not** οἱ ... αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι.

### Rules for the Support Reference of TA Articles

- All notes should reference **ONLY ONE** translationAcademy article. If a second article needs to be referenced, an additional note should be added.
- All notes that consist of more than just an alternate translation suggestion should reference one of the “Just-in-Time” articles from TranslationAcademy. (See the list in Appendix B.)
- In any note that uses a support reference, the note should specifically address that topic, and the bolded term should be the subject of the topic.

For a list of the TA articles that may be referenced in a Note, see [Appendix B](#)

### 2.5.6 Formatting Notes

- The general form of the note should be: Text explaining the translation issue and optionally containing a **bolded word or phrase** from the ULT that is being discussed. Alternate translation: “a translation suggestion that exactly fits as a replacement into the grammatical space of the words that are highlighted in yellow in the ULT” (See: [hyperlink to the tA article](#))
- The ULT term/concept being discussed in each note should be in **bold type**, NOT in “quotation marks.” For a word to appear in bold in a note, it must be in the ULT of the verse that the note is written for and must appear in the same form or tense. Usually this will be from the yellow highlighting, because that is the part that the note is commenting on. But the note might also reference other wording in the verse, and in the notes, the bolding means, “this is quoted directly from the literal source text of the verse that you are translating.” That includes the word “and.”
- Do not bold words in explanations. Do not bold words offered in suggestions or ATs.
- Use quotation marks alone to indicate suggested translations. Do not precede suggestions with the word “that” (which turns them into indirect quotes). Instead, when the note contains explanatory text, end the text with a period and precede the suggestion(s) with, “Alternate translation:” (not within the quotation marks).
- Quotation marks may also be used to call attention to specific words in the note.
- Do not enclose “for example” in commas mid-sentence and follow it with an example, i.e., You can say this with an active form, for example, “Mordecai found out what they were planning.” Instead, use “Alternate translation:” as follows: *You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “Mordecai found out what they were planning”* Another example: *You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “Then the king’s servants investigated Mordecai’s report and found out that it was true”*
- Rather than beginning a note with the bolded ULT quotation, begin with “Here.” When beginning a note with the word “Here,” the term should be followed by a comma if it is immediately followed by the ULT term. For instance: “Here, **ULT term** means \_\_\_\_\_.” No comma is needed for “Here we see that ...”



- Scripture references within the same book should be referenced using both chapter and verse, separated by a colon, i.e., 3:16. This should be done as a hyperlink. To use this same example, the proper hyperlink format places the hyperlink text in brackets [3:16] immediately followed by the link itself in parentheses (../03/16.md). There should not be a space between the brackets and the parentheses.
- Scripture references to another book should be formatted as: [Matthew 26:14-16] (../mat/26/14.md).

### Alternate Translations (ATs)

- The purpose of the AT is to illustrate how a translator might adjust the form of the text in order to avoid the translation difficulty discussed in the text of the note. Occasionally you may want to offer an alternate translation when there is no specific translation issue involved, but only because it may help the translator to see other possible ways to say something. In that case, simply present the AT within quotation marks with no explanatory text.
- The AT should fit grammatically into the same slot as the snippet (the highlighted ULT phrase). In other words, the translator should be able to insert the AT seamlessly as a substitute for the highlighted portion and not have to adjust it. At times, however, you may want to suggest that the translator start a new sentence using the AT. In that case, eliminate the conjunction (if appropriate), start the AT with a capital letter, and make sure that it can replace the snippet if the translator ends the previous part with a period.
- Here are some things to check when writing ATs:
  1. The AT should express the entire meaning of the snippet, not failing to represent any part of it.
  2. If the original text and snippet contain an ellipsis, the AT should show an ellipsis at the corresponding place.
  3. If the snippet begins at the start of a sentence and its first word is therefore capitalized, the first word of the AT should also be capitalized.
  4. The AT should be phrased in such a way as to fit with the ending punctuation of the snippet.
  5. If a comma precedes or follows the snippet, take that into account when creating the AT.
  6. In general, if the snippet begins with a conjunction, the AT should as well. However, a note writer does have the option of omitting an initial conjunction from an AT if that would make the AT clearer and more readable. (Also see the first bullet point after this list for a further exception.)
  7. If the snippet contains a subject but not its verb, the subject in the AT should agree in person and number with the verb that is found in ULT.
  8. If the snippet contains a verb but not its subject, the verb in the AT should agree in person and number with the subject that is found in ULT.
  9. The AT should conform to the active or passive voice of the verb(s) in the sentence from which the snippet comes, unless the AT is modeling how a passive verbal form could be expressed in active form.
  10. If the verb in the snippet is a participle, the verb in the AT should also be a participle, not a verb in the indicative.
    - At times, you may want to suggest that the translator start a new sentence using the AT. In that case, eliminate the conjunction (if appropriate), start the AT with a capital letter, and make sure that it can replace the snippet if the translator ends the previous part with a period.
    - Similarly, an AT does not necessarily have to represent a conjunction that is present at the beginning of a sentence in a snippet. However, so that the replacement is seamless, be sure to include the conjunction in the snippet itself and begin the AT with a capital letter. For example, from Luke 14:5:

Snippet: And they were not able to give an answer to these things.

AT: There was nothing they could say in response.

- The yellow highlighting (the snippet) in the ULT means, “This is the part that the note is focused on, and it is the part that the AT is made to replace exactly, if you prefer to use the AT.” Every note other than notes about sectional information (see #6 in Write Notes to Cover the Following Situations, above) must contain a snippet.
- The AT may say more than the highlighted ULT phrase says if the note is explaining why that might be helpful, which is always the case with a figs-explicit note.
- Do not include an AT that is identical to the rendering in the UST. Use the AT to give another alternative.
- Although a note might deal only with a conjunction and not with the accompanying verb (which will necessarily also be highlighted because it is attached in the typical Hebrew construction), the AT should still directly replace the entire portion of the ULT that is highlighted.
- As a rule, only say “Alternate translation:” once per note. However, it is acceptable to have two alternates separated by “or.” Furthermore, if a note is discussing possible alternative meanings, it is proper to say “Alternate translation:” at the end of each of its sections.
- When offering more than one alternate translation, use this formatting. Alternate translation: “does not belong to God” or “does not have a relationship with God”
- Do NOT use this formatting, repeating the label “Alternate translation.” Alternate translation: “I, John, am writing this letter” or Alternate translation: “I, John, the elder, am writing this letter”
- Do NOT include punctuation at the end of the snippet or the AT. The AT should be formatted as a floating sentence fragment immediately followed by the translationAcademy hyperlink (if applicable), i.e., Alternation translation: “in the presence of Yahweh” (See: [\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](https://en.ta.man/translate/figs-explicit)) The exception to this rule are snippets and ATs for rhetorical questions (see below).
- The AT for a rhetorical question can be another rhetorical question or it can be a statement or exclamation point. If it is a statement or exclamation, include the ending period or exclamation point, since you have made a change to the punctuation. Otherwise, translators might think that the punctuation should not change.
- An AT would also include punctuation at the end if a comma were needed after the AT for it to be a seamless replacement for the snippet. For example, suppose ULT read “But” at the start of a sentence and you wanted to suggest “Nevertheless” as an AT. Since “Nevertheless” would be followed by a comma while “But” would not, you would say, Alternate translation: “Nevertheless,”
- An AT will not usually be more than a sentence. However, if it does consist of more than one sentence, then final punctuation is permitted within the AT, after all sentences except the last one. What we don’t want is any ending punctuation that might confuse the translator who might not be able to tell if it is to be included in the AT or not. The AT should reflect the same capitalization and punctuation as the ULT snippet (which should not include final punctuation), completely ignoring the needs of the note in which it is found.
- Do not add a period at the end of the TA hyperlink, either inside or outside the parentheses.
- Regarding initial capitalization in alternative translations, capitalize the first word in the AT if it would be replacing a ULT reading that begins a sentence and so starts with a capitalized word. If the snippet (the highlighted portion of the ULT) begins with an initial capital, so must the AT. The guideline about “no sentence formatting in ATs” refers specifically to final

punctuation, which would only be shown if the AT is recommending a change from period to question mark or exclamation point, or the reverse.

- An AT can only contain an ellipsis (...) if that matches an ellipsis in the GLQuote, that is, in the quotation from ULT. There will be no ellipsis in ULT itself. But the GLQuote may contain an ellipsis if it is leaving out words from ULT that are not relevant to the translation issue under discussion. For example, a note to Luke 1:2 addresses metonymy in the phrase “who...were eyewitnesses.” The OrigQuote is οἱ...αὐτόπται...γενόμενοι, abridged from οἱ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι. The GLQuote is accordingly “who ... were eyewitnesses,” and the AT, to match, says “who ... saw these things personally.” The GLQuote may also contain an ellipsis if the word order in ULT differs from the word order in the original. For example, in a note that addresses the metaphor of “walking” in Luke 1:6, the OrigQuote is πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιώμασιν τοῦ Κυρίου. The GLQuote contains an ellipsis: “walking ... in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.” This is because ULT places the word “blamelessly” after “walking,” translating ἄμεμπτοι, which comes after the end of the OrigQuote. The AT accordingly says “obeying ... everything that the Lord had commanded.” But in no situation should an AT have an ellipsis at its end. That is never needed. Also, if possible, try to avoid creating ellipses in the GLQuote, as this makes things more complicated for translators. If you can include a single word (such as “blamelessly” in Luke 1:6) or a short phrase in order to avoid an ellipsis, include it, even if it is not directly relevant to the translation issue under discussion.
- To indicate further discussion, add a note to the end of the AT. For example: Alternate translation: “the people of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin” or see the next note for a further possibility.

### Notes that identify more than one possible meaning

When writing a translation note that identifies more than one possible meaning or interpretation, the recommended approach is to introduce those with the phrase “This could mean” with a colon following it. (We do not want to suggest that we are identifying all possible meanings, so we are no longer saying, “This could mean one of two things” or “one of three things,” etc.) Sometimes the phrase “This could mean:” will not work well in context, in which case the phrase “This could refer to:” should be used. If this phrase does not work in context then use another comparable phrase.

Each interpretation should be numbered and have a discussion that is an incomplete sentence by itself and requires the opening “This could mean” to make it a complete sentence. We will not use sentence capitalization after the numbers. The recommended interpretation is always listed first, and is modeled in the UST. If appropriate, each interpretation should offer an alternate translation.

A link to a support reference for the translation issue under discussion may come at the end of the whole note. An introductory sentence may identify the translation issue before the note lists possible meanings.

In general, offer only the most likely two or three possibilities, since any beyond those tend to be more improbable and not really worth mentioning.

### Examples

To the phrase “*she was a widow for 84 years*” in Luke 2:37

This could mean: (1) Anna was a widow for 84 years. Alternate translation: “but then her husband had died and she had not remarried, and 84 years had gone by since” (2) Anna being a widow who was now 84 years old. Alternate translation: “but her husband had died and she had not remarried, and now she was 84 years old”

To the phrase “*the kingdom of God has come to you*” in Luke 11:20

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **kingdom** with a verb such as “rule.” This could mean: (1) the kingdom of God has arrived in this place, that is, its activities are happening

here. Alternate translation: “God is ruling in this area” (2) the kingdom of God having arrived in time, that is, it is already beginning. Alternate translation: “God is beginning to rule as king” (See: [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnouns]])

To the phrase “*he began to say to his disciples first*” in Luke 12:1

This could mean: (1) Jesus is addressing his disciples before speaking to the crowd. Alternate translation: “Jesus first started speaking to his disciples, and said to them” (2) the first thing Jesus said to his disciples when he began to speak to them. Alternate translation: “Jesus started speaking to his disciples, and the first thing he said was”

Occasionally, when a word could legitimately mean 2 different things simultaneously, we may need a note like this:

To the word “*again*” in John 3:3

The word translated as **again** here has two different meanings, and John may have intended both of them. If your language can include both, that would be best. Otherwise, choose one of the following: (1) Alternate translation: “you must be born again” (2) Alternate translation: “you must be born from above”

### Key Terms

- Do not use a note to define a term that is in the list of Translation Words.
- Sometimes a note will need to discuss a phrase containing one or more Translation Words. It is proper for the note to discuss their meaning within the phrase, and then to give unified ATs that cover the phrase.

## 2.5.7 unfoldingWord Translation Words (UTW)

### Description

UTW is a list of words with their definitions; it can be thought of as a basic Bible dictionary. Based on the English vocabulary of the ULT, its purpose is to help people understand the ULT, and thus, translate it well. It helps by providing translators with concise definitions of important or difficult biblical concepts along with translation suggestions for those concepts to help them make sound translation decisions.

We also intend that UTW will be translated into other Gateway Languages; each Gateway Language translation of the UTW will be based on the vocabulary of the GLT in that language. Its purpose in that form will be similar—to help people understand the GLT, and thus, use it well as part of a set of translation resources. Although UTW is based on English vocabulary, its definitions will be organized by concept in order to allow GL translators to more easily sort and combine the concepts into the categories and vocabulary of their own Gateway Languages. This means that an English word with multiple senses will yield one UTW article for each sense. GL translators can then take these articles and arrange them under the appropriate head word or words of their own language.

### Categories

To avoid burdening the translator unnecessarily with definitions of routine vocabulary, UTW articles will be limited to the following categories of key or difficult concepts:

- **theologically freighted terms**—These are also called “key terms.” They carry a lot of theological weight and meaning, so it is important to understand them correctly and be consistent in using them. Even if they aren’t difficult (although they usually are), they are important. Examples: righteousness, forgiveness, sin, grace, love.
- **unusual or obscure words** that a speaker of English as a second language might not know, such as abomination, eunuch, iniquity, propitiation, chariot
- **words that have a modern usage but a different ancient/biblical usage**, such as altar, priest, bless, curse, clean, unclean, church
- **words that are unique to the Bible**, such as Ark, gentile, psalm, tabernacle

- **words that are transliterated rather than translated**, such as shekel, ephah, amen, apostle, angel
- **ambiguous terms**, that is, concepts that are lumped together into one English or GL word so that it is unclear which concept is being accessed in any certain context of the ULT or GLT. (This is the category in which the GL team may need to do the most work to adjust terms to the GL.) Examples: call, fear, age, great.

## 2.5.8 UTW differentiated from UTN, UGL, and UHAL

It is important to note that UTW is only one component in a set of translation tools and resources. It is not intended to cover everything, but only the concepts as described above. It is also important to note that UTW is not based on Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek and does not provide definitions of terms from those languages. The unfoldingWord® Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon (UHAL) and the unfoldingWord® Greek Lexicon (UGL) will do that. UTW will only define English terms as used in the context of the English ULT version of the Bible. This will give the maximum help to translators whose immediate need is to understand the unknown terms in the GL text in front of them as they are used in that GL context.

The two “front-line” checking tools based on UTW and UTN are also complementary and are most useful for the translator when they remain distinct. For that reason, both resources are limited to their own domains. UTW is limited to the categories of key and difficult concepts, and UTN is limited to the categories of difficulties specified for it (figures of speech, grammar, etc.).

The value of UTW for translators is to provide definitions for general concepts that they will find difficult to translate. A primary differentiator between UTW and UTN is that UTN addresses individual, verse-specific difficulties. It speaks to exact problems in exact contexts, many of which may only occur once in the Bible. For example, a UTN metaphor check is supported by the general UTA article on metaphor, but the specific note explains the specific metaphor that may be unique to that verse and may occur nowhere else. On the other hand, the UTW tool addresses concepts that recur constantly throughout the Bible, so the help that it gives is much more general, and one UTW article may apply dozens of times even in the same book. The strength of checking with the UTW is that it allows translators to see each instance of a recurring concept in its context but gathered into one place where the translation of each one can be compared side-by-side for appropriateness and consistency.

## 2.5.9 The next stage of UTW

UTW is in the process of being converted into a spreadsheet database format. Once that is completed, we will begin a process of deleting articles that do not meet the criteria outlined above. We will also begin separating the articles for words with multiple senses into separate articles. This will be in addition to the ongoing process of editing the articles as we produce book packages, ensuring that each article sufficiently discusses the concept as it is used in each context.

## 2.6 Appendix A. unfoldingWord Book Package Style Sheet

### 2.6.1 Abbreviations

Use abbreviations when writing or editing unfoldingWord resources only for the names of other resources, for example, ULT, UST.

## 2.6.2 “As if” and “as though” clauses

If an “as if” or “as though” clause describes something that is most likely not true, use the subjunctive mood in the clause. If the clause indicates something that is a more likely possibility, use the indicative mood in the same tense as in the introductory clause that precedes the “as if” or “as though” clause.

- “She acts as if she hates me.” This conveys that the way she acts suggests that she really does hate me.
- “She acts as if she hated me.” This presents her hating me as a more remote possibility. It suggests that I have reason to believe that she actually does not hate me.

Source of examples: *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*

- “In Exodus 7:14, Yahweh speaks of Pharaoh’s heart as if it were heavy.” The subjunctive is appropriate because Yahweh is using an idiom. Pharaoh’s heart is not actually heavy.
- “In Exodus 7:14, Yahweh speaks of Pharaoh’s heart as if it is heavy.” This would suggest that his heart really being heavy is a likely possibility that Yahweh’s statement is disclosing.

However, if something is described that would be the case if an unlikely thing were true, then that thing is described in the indicative, because once the unlikely possibility is granted, then what follows from it is considered likely.

- “James is speaking of God’s word figuratively as if it **had been** (subjunctive) planted and **was** (indicative) growing inside of believers.”

Once the premise is granted that the word has been planted, then it is likely that the word is growing inside believers.

- “Suppose a thief **were** (subjunctive) going to rob a house, and suppose the owner of the house **knew** (subjunctive) when the thief **was** (indicative) coming.”

Once the premise is granted that a thief is going to rob a house, then it is likely (certain, in fact) that the thief is going to come at a specific time. But it is a further premise that the house owner knows what time this will be.

## 2.6.3 Attributions

Use either a comma or a colon after an attribution that identifies the speaker or writer of a direct quotation.

- Comma (Luke 8:46): Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I know power has gone out from me.”
- Colon (Luke 13:6): Then he spoke this parable: “Someone had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it but did not find any.”

## 2.6.4 Bible citations

### Punctuation

Use an en-dash, not a hyphen, to indicate a verse range. (See Numbers: Range)

- Correct: Genesis 1:1–5; Genesis 1:1–2:3
- Incorrect: Genesis 1:1-5; Genesis 1:1-2:3

If you cite consecutive verses separately because each one supports a point you want to make, list them separately with a comma but no space in between.

- Correct: The people described in the Beatitudes are sometimes blessed by being associated with God (Matthew 5:8,9)
- Incorrect: The people described in the Beatitudes are sometimes blessed by being associated with God (Matthew 5:8–9)

If you want to specify the version you are citing, you may use the common abbreviation for it. However, it may be helpful to write out the full name of the version in the first instance. It may also be helpful to say in that instance that you will be quoting from this version unless otherwise noted, in which case you do not need to repeat the version abbreviation every time.

Do not place a comma between the book, chapter, and verse reference and the version abbreviation, and do not put the version abbreviation in parentheses. For a citation within the text:

- Correct: In Job 4:8 ULT, “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it,” the metaphor that Eliphaz uses can be clearly seen.
- Incorrect: In Job 4:8, ULT, “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it,” the metaphor that Eliphaz uses can be clearly seen.
- Incorrect: In Job 4:8 (ULT), “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it,” the metaphor that Eliphaz uses can be clearly seen.

You may also make a citation parenthetically. The period at the end of a sentence should follow the citation.

- Correct: Eliphaz tells Job that “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it” (Job 4:8 ULT).
- Incorrect: Eliphaz tells Job that “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it.” (Job 4:8 ULT)

Similarly, the comma at the end of a clause should follow the citation.

- Correct: Eliphaz tells Job that “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it” (Job 4:8 ULT), but Job is not swayed by this argument.
- Incorrect: Eliphaz tells Job that “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap it,” (Job 4:8 ULT) but Job is not swayed by this argument.

## Partial quotations

Even if you do not quote an entire verse, you can simply give the verse number as the reference. For instance, “For God so loved the world that He gave” (John 3:16). Only in books such as Bible studies, where segments are analyzed separately, will there likely be a need for greater clarification. Lowercase letters can be used for that purpose.

There is no generally agreed-upon system for using lowercase letters to indicate parts of verses. However, here is one helpful system recommended by editing coach Kathy Ide (<http://kathyide.com/>)

- If your quotation includes the beginning of the verse but not the end, you can identify it with “a” to indicate that it consists of some first portion of the verse. “For God so loved the world that He gave” (John 3:16a).
- If your quotation begins after the start of the verse, you can identify it with “b” to indicate that it consists of some second portion of the verse that may or may not include the end of the verse. Example: We have his promise that “whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16b).
- If your quotation consists of two non-consecutive portions of a verse, if the first portion contains the beginning of the verse, you can identify that portion with “a” and the next portion with “c,” showing that material has been omitted in between. Example: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” and that is how we can “have eternal life” (John 3:16a,c).
- If your quotation consists of two non-consecutive portions of a verse, if the first portion does not contain the beginning of the verse, you can identify that portion with “b” and the next portion with “d,” showing that material has been omitted in between. Example: God “gave his only begotten Son,” and anyone who “believes in him will not perish” (John 3:16b,d).
- This system can be adapted to meet other circumstances.

### Quotations of non-consecutive verses

Another recommendation from Kathy Ide: Suppose you quoted 1 Chronicles 24:7–8, did not quote verses 9–17, but then quoted verse 18. You could cite the full passage’s beginning and ending verses: 1 Chronicles 24:7–18. But it would be clearer and more specific if you cited just the verses being quoted (1 Chronicles 24:7–8,18).

### Citing from only one Bible version

If you cite from the same Bible version throughout your text, you can note this when you make your first citation and then not specify the version in subsequent citations.

- First citation: Luke refers to Herod the Great as “Herod, king of Judea” (Luke 1:5 ULT; all subsequent citations are from this version).
- Subsequent citation: Luke calls his son Herod Antipas “tetrarch of Galilee” (Luke 3:1).

## 2.6.5 Brackets

Square brackets [ ] have a number of uses.

They are used to mark material in a Bible translation that was most likely not in the original version of a biblical book.

- 35 There will be two women grinding together; the one will be taken, and the other will be left. [36 There will be two men in the field; the one will be taken, and the other will be left.]

Square brackets are also used to mark editorial asides or additions within material.

- “In Buenos Aires, Cardinal Bergoglio [later Pope Francis] lived in a small apartment, cooked his own meals, and took public transportation.”

Square brackets also enclose material that is parenthetical within parentheses.

- “But you, Yahweh, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head” (Psalm 3:3 [Heb. v. 4])

## 2.6.6 Branding

- unfoldingWord® (as our organization name) – Should **always** be lowercase u and uppercase W
- unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible (UHB)
- unfoldingWord® Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon (UHAL)
- unfoldingWord® Hebrew Grammar (UHG)
- unfoldingWord® Aramaic Grammar (UAG)
- unfoldingWord® Greek Grammar (UGG)
- unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament (UGNT)
- unfoldingWord® Greek Lexicon (UGL)
- unfoldingWord® Grammatical Concepts (UGC)
- unfoldingWord® Open Bible Stories (OBS)
- unfoldingWord® Open Bible Stories Study Notes
- unfoldingWord® Open Bible Stories Study Questions
- unfoldingWord® Open Bible Stories Translation Notes



- unfoldingWord® Open Bible Stories Translation Questions
- unfoldingWord® Literal Text (ULT)
- unfoldingWord® Simplified Text (UST)
- unfoldingWord® Translation Notes (UTN) Note: UTN are different than SIL “Translator’s Notes”
- unfoldingWord® Translation Words (UTW)
- unfoldingWord® Translation Academy (UTA)
- unfoldingWord® Translation Questions (UTQ)

**Do not use this way:**

- Unfoldingword | unfoldingword | UnfoldingWord

## 2.6.7 Bullets

To introduce a bulleted list, use either a complete sentence or a phrase that ends with a preposition or a verb, followed by a colon. If bullets are followed by complete sentences, use initial capitals and periods. If bullets are followed by incomplete sentences, do not use capitals or periods.

Examples:

Here is what I want you to do:

- Clean up your room.
- Mow the lawn.
- Take out the trash.

I want you to:

- Clean up your room.
- Mow the lawn.
- Take out the trash.

You should complete:

- cleaning up your room
- mowing the lawn
- taking out the trash

## 2.6.8 Capitalization

### After a Bullet

See Bullets

### After a Colon

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it the start of a complete sentence.

### After a Dash

Capitalize the first word after a dash only when the word always has to be capitalized, for example, if it is a proper noun. Do not capitalize the first word of an independent clause (which could be a complete sentence of its own) that follows a dash, since it is being incorporated into the sentence that begins before the dash.

### Capitalized Terms

Capitalize words such as “law” and “king” when they are used within titles: “King David,” “the Book of the Law.” Do not capitalize such words when they are common nouns: “the law of Moses,” “the king of Israel.”

The term “word” is capitalized when it means the Bible, God’s Word. It is also capitalized when it means Jesus, the living Word. “The Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14).

The following represents correct usage: “God himself took great care with his word. God created the world by his word, inspired the Scriptures as his Word, and sent Jesus to earth as the Living Word.” (Matt L.)

The words “Scripture” and “Scriptures” are also capitalized when they refer to the whole Bible, but not when they refer to individual passages or verses.

Luke 24:45, “Then he opened their mind to understand the Scriptures” (meaning the whole Bible) Mark 12:10, “And have you not read this scripture?” (referring to an individual passage)

Note: In the New Testament, the term “Scriptures” usually refers to the Old Testament, which was the part of the Bible that had been written at that time. However, in two places, 1 Timothy 5:18 and 2 Peter 3:16, the term “Scriptures” includes some New Testament writings.

## 2.6.9 Chapters

In documents you create that are divided into chapters, identify the chapters sequentially with ascending consecutive numbers. Use digits for the numbers in chapter titles, even for the numbers one through ten. (This is an exception to the general rule about numbers.) You may also give the chapters a title. Example:

Chapter 1

A Short History of Bible Translation

### 2.6.10 Colon

A colon introduces an element or a series of elements that illustrates or amplifies what precedes the colon. Between independent clauses, a colon functions much like a semicolon, although it more strongly emphasizes sequence. A colon may be used instead of a period to introduce a series of related sentences.

What precedes the colon must be a complete sentence, not a sentence fragment. For example, for a list within a sentence, there must be a complete sentence in front of the colon.

- I like my meals very bland: no salt, no pepper, no vinegar, no sweeteners.

A colon is normally used after “as follows,” “the following,” and similar expressions. A colon is not normally used after “namely,” “for example,” and similar expressions. A colon is also not used before a series that is introduced by a verb or a preposition.

- I like bland meals that have no salt, no pepper, no vinegar, no sweeteners.

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is the start of a complete sentence. When a colon is used within a sentence (as in the first example), the first word following the colon is lowercase unless it is a proper noun. When a colon introduces two or more sentences or when it introduces a direct quotation, the first word following the colon is capitalized.

## 2.6.11 Comma

### Adverbial phrase

Ordinarily a comma follows an adverbial phrase that comes at the beginning of a sentence.

- After he went out from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose him fiercely

However, when the phrase is short (five words or less is a guideline), the comma may be omitted.

- One day Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him.
- On another day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples.

It may be important for clarity to use or omit a comma.

- In Luke 23:56 ULT, the comma after "Sabbath" is omitted for clarity: "And on the Sabbath they rested, according to the commandment." The point is that they rested on the Sabbath as commanded, not that they rested as commanded, and that they did so on the Sabbath. That could be taken as the meaning if the punctuation were, "And on the Sabbath, they rested, according to the commandment."
- Luke 7:39 describes what a Pharisee thought when a woman anointed Jesus with perfume. If the next verse began, "And answering Jesus," readers might think that Luke is about to tell how the Pharisee answered Jesus. They would have to start reading the sentence over again when this turned out not to make sense. Using a comma for clarity shows that Jesus was actually responding to the Pharisee: "And answering, Jesus said to him."

### Alternatives in questions

A comma should be used to show when a question is presenting an alternative. Example from Luke 20:4:

- Correct: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?" This means, "Tell me which it was."
- Incorrect: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" With this punctuation, the Pharisees could simply have replied "Yes," meaning, "Yes, it was one or the other." That way Jesus would not have been able to use this question to defend his own authority. We can only imagine that if he had written the question in English, he would have used a comma after "heaven."

### Appositives

An appositive is a word or phrase that expands on the meaning of a noun. When the noun preceding the appositive provides sufficient identification on its own, use commas around the appositive.

- Luke 4:31, "And he went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and he was teaching them on the Sabbaths."

But when an appositive is essential to the meaning of its noun, do not use commas.

- Luke 1:13, "your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son"

### “Because” clause after a positive statement

When a comma precedes a “because” clause that follows a positive statement, the comma indicates that the clause applies to the entire statement. When there is no preceding comma, the “because” clause applies to the last word or phrase in the statement that it could refer to.

- If 1 John 3:14 said, without a comma, “We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brothers,” this would mean that the reason why we have passed from death to life is that we love our fellow believers.
- This is not what John is saying. Rather, the statement should be punctuated with a comma: “We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brothers.” This indicates that the reason we know that we have passed from death to life is that we love our fellow believers.

### “Because” clause after a negative statement

After a negative statement with a preceding comma, a “because” clause is specifying the reason why something did not happen.

- Luke 5:41, “But he was rebuking them, not permitting them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.” If this said instead “not permitting them to speak because they knew he was the Christ,” it would mean that he did permit them to speak, but for some other reason.

After a negative statement without a preceding comma, a “because” clause is specifying something that was not the reason why something did happen.

- Luke 11:8, “Even if he does not get up to give it to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence ... he will give to him as much as he needs.” The neighbor did get up, but the reason was not because the man asking for help was his friend. (In this case, the sentence goes on to explain what the reason actually was.)

### Compound-complex sentence

In a compound-complex sentence, when the second independent clause has a preceding dependent clause, a comma should follow the conjunction (“and,” “or,” “but”) that joins the two independent clauses. The comma should not precede the conjunction. Example from Luke 4:17:

- Incorrect: The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, and opening the scroll, he found the place where it was written
- Correct: The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him and, opening the scroll, he found the place where it was written

### Compound subject or object

When a compound object consists of only two nouns, a comma should not separate them. Example from Luke 4:6:

- Incorrect: I will give to you all this authority, and their glory.
- Correct: I will give to you all this authority and their glory.

## Compound predicate

When a compound predicate has only two verbs, a comma should not separate them. Example from Luke 1:22:

- Incorrect: He was making signs to them, and remained unable to speak.
- Correct: He was making signs to them and remained unable to speak.

## Compound sentence

Commas are ordinarily used in between independent clauses in a compound sentence.

- Luke 2:9, “And an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.”

However, there is discretion to omit the comma in between short phrases.

- Luke 9:39, “And behold, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out.” Omitting the comma helps depict the simultaneity of the actions. It helps indicate that the boy suddenly cries out just when the spirit seizes him.

Use a comma, not a semicolon, when a coordinating conjunction joins the two independent clauses in a compound sentence. However, a semicolon can be used if the conjunction is omitted.

- Incorrect: An angel of the Lord stood before them; and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
- Correct: An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
- Correct: An angel of the Lord stood before them; the glory of the Lord shone around them.

## Compound subject

When a compound subject consists of only two nouns, a comma should not separate them. Example from Luke 7:30:

- Incorrect: But the Pharisees, and the lawyers, rejected the purpose of God for themselves.
- Correct: But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves.

## Conditions

In conditional statements, typically an “if” clause states the condition (the protasis), and a “then” clause states the conclusion or result (the apodosis). The word “then” may be only implied.

When the “if” clause comes before the “then” clause, it should be followed by a comma.

- Luke 11:20, “But if I cast out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.”

When the “if” clause comes after the “then” clause, it should not be preceded by a comma.

- Acts 24:19, “But there are certain Jews from Asia who should appear before you and make accusations if they have anything against me.”

### Coordinate adjectives

Use commas between coordinate adjectives—that is, adjectives that are equal in meaning, that could have their order reversed, or that could be separated by “and.”

- A long, tedious drive home

### Dependent clauses

A clause has a subject and a verb. An independent clause can be a sentence of its own, while a dependent clause cannot. Commas are used to set off dependent clauses.

- Matthew 5:48, “Therefore you must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” A comma is needed because this would not be a complete sentence by itself: “As your heavenly Father is perfect.”

### Direct object precedes subject and verb

When a direct object or direct-object phrase precedes its subject and verb, a comma should follow the direct object. This is especially helpful in the case of long direct-object phrases.

- Romans 8:29 ULT

“Because **those whom he foreknew**, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” =

“Because he also predestined **those whom he foreknew** to be conformed to the image of his Son”

- Ezra 7:19 ULT

“And **the rest of what is needed for the house of your God that falls to you to give**, you may give from the house of the treasures of the king.” =

“And from the house of the treasures of the king you may give **the rest of what is needed for the house of your God that falls to you to give.**”

There is discretion to omit the comma after a short direct object.

- Acts 3:6 ULT

“**Silver and gold** I do not possess, but what I have, this I give to you.” =

“I do not possess **silver and gold**, but what I have, this I give to you.”

### Direct object shared

When two verbs share the same direct object, a comma should not separate them. Example from Luke 11:48:

- Incorrect: “So you bear witness, and you consent to the works of your fathers.” With this punctuation, only “consent” would have a direct object, and it would be unclear what these people “bear witness” to.
- Correct: “So you bear witness and you consent to the works of your fathers.” Jesus is saying that they both bear witness to and consent to the works of their ancestors.

## Direct quotations

A comma precedes a direct quotation that is syntactically independent from the rest of the sentence. This is typically the case with reported speech.

- Elizabeth said, “And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?”

A comma should not precede a direct quotation that is integrated into the rest of the sentence syntactically.

- The expression “whence is this to me” means “where did this come from to me.”

It can often be a judgment call to decide whether a direct quotation, particularly reported speech, is integrated into a sentence. In response to an inquiry, the Chicago Manual of Style suggests that a comma would not be needed in the following case, since “the quoted material is a direct object within a dependent clause” and “a comma would do little to help clarify that”:

- The person who says “I no longer get anything out of reading” has stopped running up against questions to think about as he or she reads.

However, note that in this case the capital letter at the beginning of the quotation is only retained because it is the pronoun “I.” It would not be correct to have a capital letter in mid-sentence with no comma preceding. It is permissible to change the first word of the quotation to lowercase to accommodate this rule.

- Elizabeth meant “and where did this come from” when she said “and whence is this.”

## “Even though” clause

“Even though” is equivalent to “although,” a subordinating conjunction. It ties a dependent clause to an independent clause and is used to highlight the contrast between the two clauses. (Source: Linguablog)

- She failed the test even though she spent the entire night studying.

Like any dependent clause, an “even though” clause can be placed before the independent clause.

- Even though the book was on the shelf, he wasn’t able to find it.

## “Just as” clauses

When a comma does not precede “just as,” the word “just” has the meaning of “precisely” or “exactly”:

- “He means that the first is just as true as the second” (that is, “He means that the first is precisely as true as the second”)

When a comma does precede “just as,” the phrase begins a dependent clause and introduces a simile:

- “Does not the ear test words, just as the palate tastes its food?” (This means that there is a similarity between the way the ear tests words and the way the palate tastes food. It does not mean that the ear tests words in precisely the way that the palate tastes food.)

### With participle or gerund phrases

Participle or gerund phrases modify a noun or pronoun, adding context. Present participles always end in -ing, e.g. walking, hoping. Past participles often end in -ed, but are sometimes irregular, e.g. tired, upset.

For participial phrases before the main clause, use a comma after the participial phrase.

- Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? *Having begun by Spirit*, are you now finishing by flesh?

For participial phrases in the middle of the sentence, use commas both before and after the phrase.

- Galatians 2:7 But if, *seeking to be justified in Christ*, we ourselves were also found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin?

For participial phrases after the main clause, use a comma before the participial phrase.

- Luke 13:22 And he was traveling through cities and villages, *teaching and making his journey toward Jerusalem*.

### Relative clauses

A comma is used before a non-restrictive relative clause. Example from Luke 2:5:

- Incorrect: “He registered himself with Mary who was engaged to him.” This is saying that Joseph registered with this Mary as opposed to some other Mary.
- Correct: “He registered himself with Mary, who was engaged to him.”

No comma is used before a restrictive relative clause. Example from Luke 3:7:

- Correct: “He said to the crowds who were coming out to be baptized by him” This is indicating that John said this to these specific crowds.
- Incorrect: “He said to the crowds, who were coming out to be baptized by him” This would mean that all of the crowds in the whole area were coming to be baptized and that John spoke to them when they did.

### Sentence adverbs

A sentence adverb or adverbial phrase is one that comes at the beginning of a sentence and indicates how the content of the sentence that follows relates to what has previously been said or the writer or speaker’s attitude toward that content. Words such as “frankly,” “however,” “likewise,” “namely,” “therefore,” “thus,” etc., and phrases such as “in the same way” can be used in this sense. A comma should always follow a sentence adverb or adverbial phrase. In this case, there is no discretion to omit the comma after a short adverbial phrase at the start of a sentence.

- In the same way, it is easy to know what a person is like inside by looking at what that person does.

However, an adverb at the beginning of a sentence that applies to action within the sentence does not have to be set off by a comma.

- Luke 2:13, “Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly army was with the angel.”
- Luke 4:39, “Immediately she got up and began to serve them.”



### Series comma (serial comma)

Use a comma before the last element in a series, even if that element is preceded by the word “and.” So, “red, white, and blue,” not “red, white and blue.” This helps prevent ambiguity and it provides clarity when an appositive is present rather than a series.

For example, 1 Samuel 18:6 NIV (not a literal rendering but helpful as an example): “The women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres.” If the series comma is adopted as a convention, the punctuation seen here indicates that the phrase “with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres” is an appositive elaborating on how the women met Saul with singing and dancing. If the meaning instead is that these are three ways in which the women met Saul, the punctuation would be, “with singing and dancing, with joyful songs, and with timbrels and lyres.” Adopting the series comma as a standard allows writers to make this kind of distinction.

However, do not use commas to separate items in a series when there is a conjunction between each element in the series.

- Incorrect: Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob
- Correct: Abraham and Isaac and Jacob

### “So that” clauses (alternatively “so,” “that”)

When “so that” (or “so” or “that”) is preceded by a comma, it introduces a result clause.

- “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will not let you go” means “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and as a result, he will not let you go.”

With no preceding comma, “so that” introduces a purpose clause.

- Without a comma, “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he will not let you go” means “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart in order to make him not let you go.” (There can be a lot of theology riding on a comma!)

### Subject and verb

A comma should not come between a subject and its verb. Example from Luke 9:48:

- Incorrect: Whoever welcomes this child in my name, welcomes me.
- Correct: Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me.

### “Too”

In general, commas are not needed around the word “too.”

- Luke 19:9, “he too is a son of Abraham” (= “he is a son of Abraham like us”).

However, use commas around “too” when the word is indicating an additional consideration.

- “He has repented and, too, he is a son of Abraham” (“he has repented and, for another thing, he is a son of Abraham”)

## 2.6.12 Conjunctions

Do not begin a sentence with a conjunction if that can be avoided.

Do not substitute an ampersand (&) for the word “and.”

Phrases joined by conjunctions should be parallel. That is, they should share the same structure.

- Correct: Either she likes to see him or she doesn't like to see him.
- Incorrect: Either she likes to see him or she doesn't like seeing him.

Source: <https://examples.yourdictionary.com/parallel-structure-examples.html>

## 2.6.13 Contractions

Do not use contractions in the unfoldingWord resources that you write or edit.

## 2.6.14 Dashes

Use an en-dash (–) to indicate a range of numbers.

- From 30–40 people attend regularly.

*The following points describe standard usages for the em-dash. However, since our materials are going to be translated into other languages, it is good to keep the punctuation in them as simple and basic as possible. Many languages do not use dashes in the ways described, and so while these are standard usages, it may be best to avoid them in any materials that are intended to be translated.*

An em-dash may substitute for a comma, semicolon, colon, or period.

- He said he was going to leave—and that's just what he did!

A pair of em-dashes (—) may be used to set apart a phrase or clause.

- We will have the chance to say—once and for all—whether we want to stay or go.

A pair of em-dashes may substitute for parentheses.

- He—that is, my husband—is a gem.

An em-dash at the end of a sentence may indicate that something is being left unsaid or that a speaker has been interrupted.

- And if that doesn't work—
- “But—”

## 2.6.15 Ellipses (omitted material)

Conventionally a comma is used to indicate an “ellipsis” in the sense of material that has been omitted that is to be understood from the context.

- Luke 9:58 ULT
- “The foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky, nests, but the Son of Man does not have anywhere to lay his head”  
=
- “The foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky **have** nests, but the Son of Man does not have anywhere to lay his head”
- James 3:12 ULT

- “A fig tree is not able to make olives, is it, my brothers, or a grapevine, figs?” =
- “A fig tree is not able to make olives, is it, my brothers, or **is** a grapevine **able to make figs?**”

There is discretion not to use the comma when the meaning would be clear without it.

A comma is not used with an “ellipsis” in the sense of the punctuation mark (...) that stands in for material that has been omitted.

- Luke 1:3 ULT
- Original: “it seemed good to me also, having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, to write for you an orderly account”
- Incorrect with ellipsis: “it seemed good to me also, ... to write for you an orderly account”
- Correct with ellipsis: “it seemed good to me also ... to write for you an orderly account”

## 2.6.16 Footnote

Leave no space between the superscript (note number) in the text and the word or mark of punctuation that it follows. Place the superscript before a dash but after all other marks of punctuation.

## 2.6.17 Formal usage

Our English-language resources should be written and edited for a target audience of people who have learned English as a second language in formal settings. Our experience shows that translators who use these resources with English as their Gateway Language and translators who translate these resources into other Gateway Languages are likely to have this background. Our experience also shows that these translators will “call us on it” if our resources contain informal usages, even if those usages are now becoming accepted within standard English. So in writing and editing our English-language resources, avoid informal usages that have more recently become accepted, and employ more formal, longer-established usages. Here are some specific examples.

(who vs. whom)

- Informal: the people **who** John is writing **to**
- Formal: the people **to whom** John is writing

(adjectives for adverbs)

- Informal: They will need to think **different** about that.
- Formal: They will need to think **differently** about that.

(indefinite “they” vs. “he”)

- Informal: If anyone has questions, **they** can speak to me afterwards.
- Formal: If anyone has questions, **he** can speak to me afterwards.

(split infinitives)

- Informal: You may wish **to simply retain** the question form in your translation.
- Formal: You may wish **simply to retain** the question form in your translation.

(contractions)

- Informal: This **doesn’t** mean that Zechariah saw the angel in a vision.
- Formal: This **does not** mean that Zechariah saw the angel in a vision.

(subjunctive)

- Informal: Jesus speaks figuratively of God's *wisdom* as if it **was** able to speak by itself.
- Formal: Jesus speaks figuratively of God's *wisdom* as if it **were** able to speak by itself.

### (prepositions at the end of sentences)

Informal: Give God what he is entitled to. Formal: Give God what he deserves. (It is not necessary to be excessively formal and say, "Give God that to which he is entitled." Often a simpler equivalent can be found.)

## 2.6.18 Fractions

Use hyphens with fractions when the entire fraction is an adjective. Do not use hyphens when the quantity word ("half," "quarter," etc.) is a noun and the number is an adjective.

- The gas tank is one-third full.
- Three quarters of the group went home.

## 2.6.19 Hyphen

A hyphen is used between parts of a compound word or between syllables of a word divided by a line break.

- A twenty-nine-year-old man

Never hyphenate compounds that include an adverb (typically, a word ending in '-ly').

- Correct: A divinely appointed meeting
- Incorrect: A divinely-appointed meeting

## 2.6.20 "Like" and "as"

Use the word "like" to compare things (nouns). Use the word "as" to compare actions (verbs).

- Incorrect: God does not change **like** created things change.
- Correct: God does not change **as** created things change.
- Incorrect: Just **like** cattle fatten themselves, you have lived to enjoy things.
- Correct: Just **as** cattle fatten themselves, you have lived to enjoy things.
- Correct: Just **like** cattle **that** fatten themselves, you have lived to enjoy things.

## 2.6.21 Nor (usage)

"Nor" is a conjunction that means "and not." The subject follows the auxiliary verb in an independent clause introduced by "nor."

- He did not call, and he did not write. =
- He did not call, nor did he write.

According to the current conventions of international standard English (the usage was previously different), when an auxiliary verb is negated, this negates the main verbs that follow in a compound predicate, so "or" is used between those verbs.

- Correct: I will not leave you or forsake you.
- Incorrect: I will not leave you nor forsake you.

However, this would also be correct, though it is an older usage: “I will neither leave you nor forsake you.”

Similarly, when a verb is negative, this negates both parts of a compound object, so “or” is used between those objects.

- Correct: I do not like carrots or peas.
- Incorrect: I do not like carrots nor peas.

Alternatively, though an older usage: I like neither carrots nor peas.

Another alternative is to add a comma. This effectively creates a compound sentence with an implied subject and verb, and this allows the use of “nor.”

- I do not like carrots, nor peas. =
- I do not like carrots, nor [do I like] peas.

## 2.6.22 Not only ... but also

Parallelism is important here. The element that follows “but also” should parallel the element that follows “not only.”

- Correct: He’s not only intelligent but also funny. (Two adjectives, “intelligent” and “funny,” used in parallel.)
- Incorrect: He’s not only intelligent but also has a great sense of humor. (The phrase after “but also” does not parallel the adjective after “not only.” This would be correct if it said, “Not only is he intelligent, he also has a great sense of humor.”)

There is discretion to use a comma for emphasis before the “but also” element, even though this is an exception to the general rule that says not to use commas between elements introduced by correlative conjunctions such as either/or, neither/nor, not/but, etc.

- Acceptable: He’s not only intelligent, but also funny.

Source: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/parallelism-with-not-only-but-also/>

## 2.6.23 Numbers (general)

In all unfoldingWord resources, use words for the numbers from one through ten and use numerals for higher numbers.

- Why did the other nine not come back?
- Certainly you will leave the 99 other sheep in the wilderness and go search for the lost sheep until you have found it.
- The number was 144,000.

If there would be a mix of words and numerals in the same context, use the same format for all the numbers that would be used for the majority. Example from Genesis 32:15:

- Incorrect: 30 milking camels and their colts, 40 cows and ten bulls, 20 female donkeys and ten male donkeys
- Correct: 30 milking camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys

When numbers are adjectives rather than nouns, write them out:

- I am giving a thousand pieces of silver to your brother.

When numbers are common nouns rather than proper nouns, write them out:

- “I hope the Lord your God will give you a hundred times more soldiers than you already have” (2 Samuel 24:3). If this said “one hundred,” that would be written as a numeral.

Write out numbers that are titles, for example, “the Twelve” in the gospels and “the Thirty” in 2 Samuel 23:23.

When numbers higher than ten are figurative, they should be written out to show that they are not literal. For example, διςμυριάδες μυριάδων in Revelation 9:16 seems to mean figuratively “an indefinite number of incalculable immensity.” So rather than say 200,000,000, ULT might say “a double myriad of myriads,” and a translation note would explain the usage. UST might say something like “a couple of hundred million” to indicate the indefinite usage.

Similarly when numbers higher than ten are idiomatic, they should be written out to show that they are not literal. For example, one literal version translates Judges 6:15 as “my thousand is the poorest in Manasseh.” ULT would not say “my 1,000 is the poorest in Manasseh,” but write out the word, and UST could express the idiomatic meaning with “clan.”

### **2.6.24 Numbers (dates)**

When referring to a specific date in the month-day format, use cardinal numbers (one, two, three) rather than ordinal numbers (first, second, third).

- On April 17, Haman summoned the king’s secretaries.

In text, do not use ordinal abbreviations. If an ordinal must be used, spell it out.

- in one day—on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar

Use an ordinal number in expressions such as “the first of January,” since you are placing the day in a series: Of all the days in January, this day is the first.

- He told them that every year they should celebrate on the eighth and ninth of March.

### **2.6.25 Numbers (range)**

To indicate a range of numbers, use an en-dash rather than a hyphen. The en-dash (with no space before or after) is used to represent a span of numbers, dates, or times.

### **2.6.26 Parentheses**

Use parentheses ( ) to enclose material that is informative but incidental. The sentence should work just as well without the material in parentheses.

Other punctuation with parentheses:

#### **Periods**

Place periods inside parentheses that enclose a complete sentence.

- Correct: The cake looks great. (She is an accomplished baker.)
- Incorrect: The cake looks great. (She is an accomplished baker).

However, if you place a complete sentence of parenthetical material within another sentence, do not use a period at the end and do not capitalize the first letter.

- Correct: Not surprisingly, the cake that Susan made (she is an accomplished baker) looks great.

Place periods outside closing parentheses that do not enclose a complete sentence.

- Correct: The cake looks great (and tastes even better).
- Incorrect: The cake looks great (and tastes even better.)

## Commas

Only use a comma after a closing parenthesis if the sentence would need a comma even if it did not contain parenthetical material.

- Correct: We're going to the zoo tomorrow (Tuesday), which will be nice.
- Incorrect: We will go to the zoo tomorrow (Tuesday), if the weather is nice.

## Question marks and exclamation points

Place question marks and exclamation points within parentheses if they are part of a parenthetical complete sentence. Then punctuate the rest of the sentence as you would even if it did not contain this parenthetical material.

- Correct: The man (what was his name?) left a note.
- Correct: I was not invited (and I am furious!).
- Incorrect: I was not invited (and I am furious!)

Source: <https://getproofed.com/writing-tips/punctuate-brackets/>

## 2.6.27 Possessives

Singular possession: For possession by one person or thing, use 's.

- He left there and started traveling back to his father's house.

This even applies to names that end in an s, x, or z sound.

- Dickens's novels

There is one exception. For classical and biblical names that end in s or es and have two or more syllables, just add an apostrophe. However, if a name has only one syllable, add 's.

- Jesus' disciples, Lazarus' body, Ramses' kingdom, but Zeus's warnings.

Plural possession: Use an apostrophe alone after the name or word if it ends with an s. Otherwise, use 's.

- The high priests' robes
- The children's room

Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/what-happens-to-names-when-we-make-them-plural-or-possessive>

## 2.6.28 Question Mark

Questions that are quoted within sentences should end with a question mark. No comma should be used after the quotation, even though it will be a complete sentence. (This is an exception to the general rule for quotations in mid-sentence.)

- "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked (Genesis 27:24).

## 2.6.29 Quotation marks

For the use of quotation marks, follow the conventions of American English. First-level quotations get double quotation marks. Second-level quotations get single quotation marks. Periods and commas go inside quotation marks. Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks.

- American usage: He said it was “an unexpected bonanza.”
- British usage: He said it was ‘an unexpected bonanza’.

Question marks and exclamation points go inside quotation marks if they are part of the direct quotation, but they go outside quotation marks if they are not part of the direct quotation.

- He asked, “Why do you want to know?”
- Can you believe he said, “You do not need to know that”?

Use single quotation marks for a second-level quotation inside the double quotation marks for a first-level quotation.

- Jesus replied, “No, I will not do that, because it is written in the Scriptures, ‘People need more than just food in order to live.’”

For direct quotations that are more than 40 words long, use block quotes instead of placing the material inside quotation marks within the text. Block quotes should be single spaced, indented ½ inch or 5–7 spaces, and offset from the main text. Do not use quotation marks around block quotes. Begin the block quote on a new line.

If a block quote is a quotation from the Bible, the citation is handled differently than it would be if the quotation were in the text. Put the citation in parentheses after the quotation. Put the opening parenthesis after the final punctuation mark of the quote, and do not use any punctuation after the citation. Example:

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. Its gates will never be closed at the end of day, because there is no night there. (Revelation 21:22–26 NLT)

### Run-in Quotations

After a run-in quotation from the Bible (a quote that is included in the running text of a paragraph), put the citation, which may include a version abbreviation, after the closing quotation mark, with the final punctuation after the citation.

- Jesus told Thomas at the Last Supper, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).
- Was Paul advocating slavery when he wrote, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do” (Colossians 3:22 NLT)?

If the quotation is in the middle of a sentence, put the reference immediately after the ending quotation mark, before any necessary punctuation.

- When Paul said, “Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11), he was paraphrasing Isaiah 45:23.

When a quote comes at the end of a sentence and it is a question or an exclamation, put its final punctuation stays inside the quotation marks, but add a period after the closing parenthesis.

- When the Lord asked Cain where Abel was, Cain replied, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9).



### When to use a colon before a quote

If the sentence used to introduce a quotation could stand alone, use a colon just before the quotation.

- Then he spoke this parable: “Someone had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, but did not find any” (Luke 13:6).

If the word just before the quotation is a verb indicating someone uttering the quoted words, use a comma.

- Then he said, “What is the kingdom of God like, and to what will I compare it?” (Luke 13:18).

### Punctuating partial-verse quotations

Even if you do not quote an entire verse, if the portion you are quoting would be a full sentence, end it with a period.

- In Luke 13:24, Jesus told a questioner, “Struggle to enter through the narrow door.”

Source for the previous three items: <http://kathyide.com/>

## 2.6.30 Regional language variety

Follow the conventions of American English (U.S. English)

- Spelling: e.g., color, not colour; curb, not kerb; worshiped, not worshipped; program, not programme; etc.
- Punctuation: Place periods and commas inside of quotation marks; use double quotes for first-level quotations and single quotes for second-level quotations; etc.

## 2.6.31 Semicolon

Use a semicolon between closely related independent clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction. Do not use a semicolon with a conjunction.

- Incorrect: An angel of the Lord stood before them; and the glory of the Lord shone around them.
- Correct: An angel of the Lord stood before them; the glory of the Lord shone around them.

Do not use a semicolon between an independent clause and a dependent clause.

- Incorrect: Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord; because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.
- Correct: Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

A semicolon should be placed outside of ending quotation marks.

- He said it was “an unexpected bonanza”; it was not clear what he meant by that.

### 2.6.32 Spaces

Use single spaces rather than double spaces between sentences.

Remove rogue spaces at the beginning and end of paragraphs.

### 2.6.33 Speech and thoughts

Out-loud speech: Use quotation marks (double or single, as appropriate).

Unspoken thoughts: In fiction, writers often represent unspoken thoughts (inner dialogue) in italics, without using quotation marks. However, the convention in Bible translations is to represent unspoken thoughts as quotations, just like out-loud speech.

- Saul threw the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall” (1 Samuel 18:11)
- Only in a work of fiction would this be punctuated: Saul threw the spear, thinking, I will pin David to the wall.

Do not use quotation marks with indirect quotations, and do not place a comma before an indirect quotation.

- Correct: One of the laws that God gave Moses said that only priests were permitted to eat that bread.
- Incorrect: One of the laws that God gave Moses said that “only priests were permitted to eat that bread.”
- Incorrect: One of the laws that God gave Moses said that, only priests were permitted to eat that bread.

### 2.6.34 Subject-verb agreement

The verb in a relative clause agrees in number with the noun or pronoun that the relative clause modifies.

- Correct: “If I have sinned, what have I done to you, you who see everything we do?” (Job 7:20 NIV)
- Incorrect: “If I have sinned, what have I done to you, you who sees everything we do?”

A verb that follows an “or” list agrees in number with the closest subject.

- If one or two or three are helped, we will be grateful.
- If three people or two or even one is helped, we will be grateful.

A verb that precedes an “and” list agrees in number with the closest subject.

- There are three apples, two oranges, and a banana on the table.
- There is a banana, two oranges, and three apples on the table.

### 2.6.35 Time

When times of the day are given in full, half, or quarter hours, the numbers are usually spelled out in the text.

- The meeting continued until half past two.
- We’ll start again at quarter to twelve.

With the expression “o’clock,” the number is usually spelled out.

- Her day begins at four o’clock in the morning.
- All of you must be ready to leave by eleven o’clock.

With AM and PM and the 24-hour clock, use numerals.

- The first train leaves at 5:22 AM and the last at 11:00 PM

- The first train leaves at 05:22 and the last at 23:00.

### 2.6.36 Titles and ranks

Use lowercase when the title or rank is a general reference, but use uppercase when it refers to a specific individual.

- The queen opens each session of Parliament.
- Before the tea, the Queen visited the gardens on the estate.

### 2.6.37 Words being discussed

Words that are being discussed and that do not form part of the grammar of a sentence should be set off with double quotes.

- How would you use the word “amped” in a sentence?

## 2.7 Appendix B. Translation Academy Topics to Be Cited in Notes

When a note discusses a translation issue that is addressed in translation Academy (tA), the note should end with a link to the pertinent article. The following is a list of the articles that the Notes should cite, with definition, a sample note for each issue, and a link to the corresponding article. (If an article title is highlighted in yellow, that indicates that the article is planned but has not yet been written.)

These articles are designed so that translators can access and refer to them in a just-in-time manner as they encounter these particular issues in the text. Translators and translation managers should also read and study the other articles in tA as general-education material in order to be equipped for their work.

### 2.7.1 Figures of Speech

#### Apostrophe

**Description:** An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker directly addresses someone who is not there, or addresses a thing that is not a person.

See [figs-apostrophe](#)

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem* (Luke 13:34)

Jesus is addressing something that he knows cannot hear him, the city of Jerusalem, in order to show his listeners in a strong way how he feels about it. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing this feeling by talking about Jerusalem. Alternate translation: “I am very upset with the city of Jerusalem”

### Aside

**Description:** An aside is a figure of speech in which someone who is speaking to a person or group pauses to speak confidentially to himself or to someone else about those to whom he had been speaking. The speaker does this to indicate in a strong way his thoughts or feelings about that person or group.

See [figs-aside](#)

*There is no understanding in him* (Obadiah 1:7)

Yahweh could be saying this as an aside in order to express his evaluation of the people of Edom. If it would be helpful in your language, you could continue his address to Edom in the second person. Alternate translation: “There is no understanding in you”

### Doublet

**Description:** A doublet is two or more words or very short phrases that mean the same thing and that are used in the same phrase. In the Bible, doublets are often used in poetry, prophecy, and sermons to emphasize an idea.

See [figs-doublet](#)

*were bowing down and prostrating themselves* (Esther 3:2)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that the officials knew how important it was to obey the king’s command and to honor Haman as he said. If your language does not use repetition to do this, you could use one phrase and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “were bowing down all the way to the ground”

### Euphemism

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

See [figs-euphemism](#)

*the time of my departure is here* (2 Timothy 4:6)

Paul is referring to his death as a **departure**. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: “soon I will die and no longer be with you”

### Hendiadys

**Description:** In hendiadys a single idea is expressed with two words connected with “and.” Also, the reader understands that one of the words further describes the other. That is, one word could be used to modify the other.

See [figs-hendiadys](#)

*cheered and rejoiced* (Esther 8:15)

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **rejoiced** tells how the people of Susa **cheered**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use **and**. Alternate translation: “shouted joyfully”

## Hyperbole

**Description:** A hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration used to indicate the speaker's feeling or opinion about something.

See [figs-hyperbole](#)

*May the king live to eternity* (Nehemiah 2:3)

Here, **to eternity** is an exaggeration that Nehemiah uses to show honor to King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah knows that the king will not live to eternity. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that shows honor. Alternate translation: "Long live the king" or "May you have a long life"

## Idiom

**Description:** An idiom is a group of words that has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words.

See [figs-idiom](#)

*he has visited ... his people* (Luke 1:68)

Here, the term **visited** is an idiom meaning "helped." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "he has come to help ... his people"

## Irony

**Description:** Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words.

See [figs-irony](#)

*unless we go and buy food for all these people* (Luke 9:13)

The disciples are not making a serious suggestion here. They actually mean to communicate the opposite of the literal meaning of their words. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "and we certainly can not go and buy food for all these people"

## Litany

**Description:** A litany is a figure of speech in which the various components of a thing are listed in a series of very similar statements. The speaker does this to indicate that what he is saying should be understood as comprehensive and without exceptions.

See [figs-litany](#)

*But you should not have ... and you should not have ... and you should not have* (Obadiah 1:12)

Yahweh uses a repetitive series of sentences in verses 12–14 to show how badly the people of Edom have treated the people of Judah. This repetitive style of speaking or writing is called a "litany." This is a list of the charges against the people of Edom. Yahweh goes on to say in verses 15 and 16 that he has found them guilty of all of these charges and that he will punish them. Use a form in your language that someone would use to list things that someone has done wrong.

### Litotes

**Description:** Litotes is an emphatic statement about something made by negating an opposite expression.

See [figs-litotes](#)

*without neglect* (Ezra 6:9)

Here the king uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: “with diligence” or “diligently”

### Merism

**Description:** Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by listing some of its parts or by speaking of two extreme parts of it.

See [figs-merisms](#)

*from east and west, and from north and south* (Luke 13:29)

Jesus speaks, using these four directions in order to include everything in between. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “from all over the world”

### Metaphor

**Description:** A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one concept is used in place of another, unrelated concept. This invites the hearer to think of what the unrelated concepts have in common. That is, metaphor is an implied comparison between two unrelated things.

See [figs-metaphor](#)

*have shipwrecked regarding the faith* (1 Timothy 1:19)

Paul speaks of these people as if they were a ship that had sunk. He means that they no longer believe in Jesus and no longer live as his followers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternative translation: “no longer belong to Jesus”

*our fathers* (Acts 15:10)

Peter is using the term **fathers** to mean “ancestors.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “our ancestors”

### Metonymy

**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.

See [figs-metonymy](#)

*something from his mouth* (Luke 11:54)

Luke is describing something Jesus would say by association with his **mouth**, which he would use to say something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “something he said”

## Parallelism

**Description:** In parallelism two or more phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. It is found throughout the whole of the Hebrew Bible, most commonly in the poetry of the books of Psalms and Proverbs.

See [figs-parallelism](#)

*Until when will be your journey? And when will you return?* (Nehemiah 2:6)

These two phrases mean the same thing. The king says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to show that he is genuinely interested in Nehemiah's situation. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: "How long would you be away?"

## Personification

**Description:** Personification is a figure of speech in which an idea or something that is not human is referred to as if it were a person and could do the things that people do or have the qualities that people have.

See [figs-personification](#)

*The pride of your heart has deceived you* (Obadiah 1:3)

Here, **pride** is spoken of as though it were a person who could deceive someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternate translation: "Because you are so proud, you have deceived yourselves"

## Predictive Past

**Description:** The predictive past is a form that some languages use to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen.

See [figs-pastforfuture](#)

*your house has been left to you* (Luke 13:35)

Jesus is using the past tense in order to refer to something that will happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: "your house will be left to you alone"

## Rhetorical Question

**Description:** A rhetorical question is a question that is used for something other than getting information. Often it indicates the speaker's attitude toward the topic or the listener. Often it is used for rebuking or scolding, but some languages have other purposes as well.

See [figs-rquestion](#)

*Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?* (1 John 2:22)

John is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah is certainly a liar!"

### Simile

**Description:** A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. It focuses on a particular trait that the two items have in common, and it includes words such as “like,” “as,” or “than” to make the comparison explicit.

See [figs-simile](#)

*has become like a wave of the sea, wind-blown and tossed* (James 1:6)

The point of this comparison is that anyone who doubts will be like the waves in the ocean, which keep moving in different directions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: “will keep changing his mind about what to do”

### Synecdoche

**Description:** Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which 1) the name of a part of something is used to refer to the whole thing, or 2) the name of a whole thing is used to refer to just one part of it.

See [figs-synecdoche](#)

*our daily bread* (Luke 11:3)

Jesus refers to **bread**, one common food, to mean food in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: “the food we need that day”

## 2.7.2 Grammar Topics

### Abstract Nouns

**Description:** Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, 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.

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those 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, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, “I believe in the forgiveness of sin.” But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns “forgiveness” and “sin,” but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, “I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned,” by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

See [figs-abstractnouns](#)

*we may have boldness* (1 John 2:28)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **boldness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “we may be bold” or “we may act boldly”

*the love that you have for all the saints* (Colossians 1:4)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: “how much you love all the saints”



## Active or Passive

**Description:** Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use 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 to use the active form.

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 bolded 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.)

See [figs-activepassive](#)

*they knew that this work was done by our God* (Nehemiah 6:16)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “they knew that our God had done this work”

*it was hidden from them* (Luke 9:45)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: “God hid it from them”

## Collective Nouns

**Description:** A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family**, **clan**, or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

See [grammar-collectivenouns](#)

The word crowd is a singular noun that refers to a group of people. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “a group of people” or “many people”

## Distinguishing versus Informing or Reminding with relative clauses

**Description:** In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

Some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that it is making a distinction:

- 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.

With the comma, the sentence is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
- This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

See [figs-distinguish](#)

*the household of God, which is the church of the living God* (1 Timothy 3:15)

This phrase gives us further information about **the household of God**. It is not making a distinction between a household of God that is the church and one that is not the church. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between these phrases clearer. Alternate translation: “the household of God, that is, the church of the living God”

## Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each 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.

**Description:** Negative words are words that have in them the meaning “not.” Examples in English are “no,” “not,” “none,” “no one,” “nothing,” “nowhere,” “never,” “nor,” “neither,” and “without.” Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean “not,” such as “un,” “im,” and “less,” in the following words: “unhappy,” “impossible,” and “useless.” Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as “lack” or “reject,” or even “fight” or “evil.”

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

- We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)
- And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)
- Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **unpunished**. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT) (The word “unpunished” is a negative word because of the prefix “un” which turns the “punished” into a negative.)

See [figs-doublenegatives](#)

*every word will not be impossible for God* (Luke 1:37)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “every word will be possible for God” or “God is able to do anything that he says”

## Ellipsis

**Description:** An ellipsis occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

- So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.** (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor 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 by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

- So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will sinners stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

### Two Types of Ellipsis

- A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.
- An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

See [figs-ellipsis](#)

*And we justly* (Luke 23:41)

The second criminal is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “And we are receiving this punishment justly”

### Generic Noun Phrases

**Description:** Generic noun phrases refer 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 in to his neighbor’s wife; the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

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

See [figs-genericnoun](#)

*Look at the fig tree* (Luke 21:29)

Jesus is speaking of these trees in general, not of one particular **fig tree**. If it would be helpful in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “Consider fig trees”

### Go and Come

**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” when talking about motion. 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 study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words “go” and “come” (and also “take” and “bring”), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

See [figs-go](#)

*he came ... into the temple* (Luke 2:27)

Your language may say “went” rather than **came** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “he went ... into the temple”

### Nominal Adjectives

**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 ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

- **He will not be rich**; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

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

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

- **The rich** must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

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.

See [figs-nominaladj](#)

*the righteous* (1 Timothy 1:9)

Paul is using the adjective **righteous** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “people who are righteous”

### Order of Events

**Description:** In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

See [figs-events](#)

*dragged away and enticed* (James 1:14)

Since the Greek word that ULT translates as **enticed** often means to use bait to trap prey, James may be stressing the result (the captured prey being **dragged away**) by speaking of it before the method that was used to achieve it (baiting a trap). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the order of events clear. Alternate translation: “dragged away after being enticed” or “enticed and dragged away”

## Plural (unusual uses)

**Description:** (see link below)

See [translate-plural](#)

## Possession (and genitives)

**Description:** (see link below)

See [figs-possession](#)

*by the word of truth* (James 1:18)

James is using the possessive form to describe a **word** that is characterized by **truth**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use the adjective “true” instead of the noun “truth.” Alternate translation: “by the true word”

## When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) 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 also be used in a more general way 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 in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronouns “he,” “himself,” and “his” are not limited to males.

- 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 ULT)

See [figs-gendernotations](#)

*his brother* (1 John 2:9)

Although the term **brother** is masculine, John is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “a fellow believer”

## 2.7.3 Pronouns

### Pronouns What Are They

See [figs-pronouns](#)

### Pronouns When to Use Them

See [writing-pronouns](#)

*while he was still speaking* (Luke 22:60) The pronoun **he** refers to Peter, not to the man who was insisting that Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "while Peter was speaking"

### Reflexive Pronouns

See [figs-rpronouns](#)

*he himself stood* (Luke 24:36) Luke uses the word **himself** to emphasize how surprising it was when Jesus actually appeared to this group. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this surprise. Alternate translation: "none other than Jesus stood" or "Jesus, the very person, stood"

### First, Second or Third Person

See [figs-123person](#)

*If it is good to the king* (Esther 5:4) Esther is addressing the king in the third person as a sign of respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the second person and convey the respect in another way. Alternate translation: "If it seems like a good idea to you, O king"

### Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

See [figs-exclusive](#)

*we saw ... with us* (Luke 9:49) When John says **we**, he is speaking of himself and some other disciples who spoke to this man, so **we** would be exclusive. However, when John says **us**, he seems to be referring to the disciples and Jesus traveling together, and since he is speaking to Jesus, **us** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms.

### Forms of 'You' – Intro

See [figs-you](#)

### Forms of 'You' – Singular vs. Plural

See [figs-yousingular](#)

*you* (1 Timothy 1:3) In this letter, with one exception, the words **you**, **your**, and **yourself** refer to Timothy and so are singular. A note will discuss the one exception in [6:21](../06/21.md) where "you" is plural.

## Forms of ‘You’ – Dual/Plural

See [figs-youdual](#)

*you have gone ... you have seen* (Luke 7:22) Since Jesus is speaking to two men, **you** would be dual in both of these instances, if your language uses that form. Otherwise, the word would be plural.

## Forms of ‘You’ – Singular to a Crowd

See [figs-youcrowd](#)

*you are going ... your ... you* (Luke 12:58) Even though Jesus is speaking to the crowd, he is addressing an individual situation, so **you** and **your** are singular throughout this verse. But if the singular form would not be natural in your language for someone who was speaking to a group of people, you could use the plural forms of **you** and **your** in your translation.

## Forms of ‘You’ – Formal or Informal

See [figs-youformal](#)

*I thank you, Father* (Luke 10:21) Use your best judgment about whether the formal or informal form of **you** would be more natural in your language here. Jesus is speaking as an adult son would speak to a father with whom he has a close relationship.

## 2.7.4 Quotes

### Quotations and Quote Margins

**Description:** (See link below)

See [writing-quotations](#)

*prophesied, saying* (Luke 1:67) Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “prophesied, and this is what he said” or “prophesied this:”

*But just as it is written* (1 Cor 2:9) In Paul’s culture, **just as it is written** is a normal way to introduce a quotation from an important text, in this case, the Old Testament book written by Isaiah the prophet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Paul is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “as it can be read in the Old Testament” or “according to Isaiah the prophet”

*for Isaiah had again said* (John 12:39 ULT) This phrase introduces a quotation from the Old Testament book written by **Isaiah** the prophet ([Isaiah 6:10](../isa/06/10.md)) which occurs in the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that John is quoting from an important text. Alternate translation: “for Isaiah had again said in the Old Testament” or “for according to Isaiah”

## Direct and Indirect Quotations

**Description:** There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

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 reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "."

- 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 and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes 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" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

See [figs-quotations](#)

*commanding them to tell this to no one* (Luke 9:21) If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "commanding them, 'Tell this to no one'"

## Quote Markings

**Description:** Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotes from the rest of the text. English uses the mark " immediately before a quote and " immediately after it.

- 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 several levels of quotations inside of other quotations, it might be hard for readers to understand who is saying what. Alternating two kinds of quotation marks can help careful readers to keep track of them. In English, the outermost quotation has double quote marks, and the next quotation within it has single marks. If there is a third embedded quote, that quotation again has double quotation marks.

- Mary said, "John said, 'I do not know when I will arrive.' "
- Bob said, "Mary told me, 'John said, "I do not know when I will arrive.'" "

Some languages use other kinds of quotation marks: Here are some examples: , ' , " " , < > « » 7 — .

See [figs-quotemarks](#)

*To Darius the king: All peace* (Ezra 5:7) Here the book begins to quote the letter that Tattenai and his associates sent to King Darius. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation.



## Quotes within Quotes

**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 say there are “levels” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a level. When there are many levels 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.

See [figs-quotesinquotes](#)

*she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice together with me, for I have found the drachma that I lost’* (Luke 15:9) If your language would not use a direct quotation inside of a direct quotation, you could translate the second direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: “she calls together her friends and neighbors and tells them to rejoice with her because she has found the drachma that she lost”

## 2.7.5 Sentences

### Information Structure

See [figs-infostructure](#)

*Everyone who goes beyond and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God* (2 John 1:9) If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: “Everyone who does not remain in the teaching of Christ but goes beyond it does not have God”

### Statements – Other Uses

See [figs-declarative](#)

*he will ask* (1 John 5:16) John is using a future statement to give an instruction. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural form for instruction. Alternate translation: “he should pray”

### Imperatives – Other Uses

See [figs-imperative](#)

*Give us* (Luke 11:3) This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “Please give us”

*Be clean* (Luke 5:13) This is an imperative, but this was not a command that the man was capable of obeying. Instead, this was a command that directly caused the man to be healed. Use a form in your language that would be used in this type of situation. Alternate translation: “I heal you from your leprosy”

### Exclamations

See [figs-exclamations](#)

*Aha, Aha* (Psalm 35:21) **Aha** is an exclamation word that communicates triumph, usually over an enemy. Use an exclamation that is natural in your language for communicating this. Alternate translation: “Hurray for us!” or “Take that!”

*he has ten minas* (Luke 19:25) If the plain statement form for this seems unnatural, you could translate this as an exclamation. Alternate translation: “he already has ten minas!”

### Connecting Words

See [grammar-connect-words-phrases](#)

*And now* (Ruth 3:12) **And now** indicates that what follows is something else important that Ruth should pay attention to. Alternate translation: “You also need to know that”

*For* (2 Corinthians 6:16) Here, the word **For** introduces an explanation of what Paul said about the **temple of God**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different word or phrase that introduces an explanation. Alternate translation: “Now” or “As a matter of fact,”

### Sequential Clauses

See [grammar-connect-time-sequential](#)

*Then* (Ezra 3:1) The word **then** indicates that the events the story will now relate came after the event it has just described. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase. Alternate translation: “Once this group had returned to Judah”

### Simultaneous Clauses

See [grammar-connect-time-simultaneous](#)

*And* (Nehemiah 4:23) In this verse Nehemiah is describing something else that was also true of the conditions in Jerusalem during the time period he is describing. You can make this clear in your translation with an appropriate connecting word or phrase. Alternate translation: “At that time”

### Background Clauses

See [grammar-connect-time-background](#)

*And the people were expecting* (Luke 3:15) Luke is providing this background information to help readers understand what happens next. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation: “Now the people were expecting”

### Goal or Purpose Clauses

See [grammar-connect-logic-goal](#)

*for us to be* (James 1:18) This phrase introduces a purpose clause. James is stating the purpose for which God **desired to give us birth**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation (without a comma preceding): “so that we would be”

### Reason-Result Clauses

See [grammar-connect-logic-result](#)

*he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes* (1 John 2:11) If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because the darkness has blinded his eyes, he does not know where he is going”

## Contrast Clauses

See [grammar-connect-logic-contrast](#)

*And* (Luke 14:18) What follows the word **And** here is in contrast to what was expected, that all the invited guests would come to the dinner. Instead, the guests all declined to come. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But”

## Factual Conditions

See [grammar-connect-condition-fact](#)

*If you know that he is righteous* (1 John 2:29) John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “Since you know that God is righteous”

## Contrary-to-Fact Conditions

See [grammar-connect-condition-contrary](#)

*If this man were a prophet, he would know who and of what type the woman is who is touching him, that she is a sinner* (Luke 7:39) This Pharisee is making a conditional statement that sounds hypothetical, but he is already convinced that the condition is not true. He has concluded that Jesus must not be a prophet, because he allowed this sinful woman to touch him and a prophet would have known that she was sinful and not allowed that. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that the speaker believes is not true. Alternate translation: “Jesus must not be a prophet, because if he were, he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner”

## Hypothetical Conditions

See [grammar-connect-condition-hypothetical](#) (Note: This article is specifically about if-then constructions and how those connectors work and what they do. A different Translation Academy article, the [translate/figs-hypo](#) article ([see description](#)), is about hypothetical situations in general and should be referenced for notes not involving if-then constructions.)

*if anyone competes, he is not crowned if he has not competed lawfully* (2 Timothy 2:5) Paul is using a hypothetical situation to teach Timothy. Alternate translation: “suppose an athlete did not compete by the rules. Then he would not be crowned”

## Exception Clauses

See [grammar-connect-exceptions](#)

*he did not allow anyone ... except* (Luke 8:51) If it would appear in your language that Luke was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “Jesus only allowed”

### Oath formulas

**Description:** (see link below)

See [writing-oathformula](#)

## 2.7.6 Text Variants

### Text variants

**Description:** (see link below)

See [translate-textvariants](#)

*But Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34) See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to include this sentence in your translation. The next four notes below discuss translation issues in the sentence, for those who decide to include it.

## 2.7.7 Theology

### Son of God

See [guidelines-sonofgodprinciples](#)

*the Father and the Son* (1 John 2:22) **Father** and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: “God the Father and Jesus his Son”

## 2.7.8 Unknowns

### Translate Unknowns

**Description:** (see link below)

See [translate-unknown](#)

*the rooster will not crow today before you deny three times that you know me* (Luke 22:34) A **rooster** is a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up. If your readers would not be familiar with this bird, you could use the name of a bird in your area that calls out or sings just before dawn, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: “before the birds begin to sing in the morning, you will deny three times that you know me”

### Copy or Borrow Words

See [translate-transliterate](#)

Akeldama (Acts 1:29)

This is an Aramaic word. Luke spelled it out using Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded and then he told what it meant, **Field of Blood**. In your translation you can spell it the way it sounds in your language and then explain its meaning.

## How to Translate Names

See [translate-names](#)

*Obadiah* (Obadiah 1:1) Some English translations call this prophet Abdias, but Obadiah is the form of his name most commonly used in English. Use the form of the name that is in your source language or a similar form that sounds like a name in your language.

Note: Since some languages have different conventions for the names of men and women, it is helpful to specify whether a name is that of a man or a woman. Also, you do not need to write a separate note for each name in a list of names; you can write a single note for an entire verse.

*Carpus* (2 Timothy 4:13) The word **Titus** is the name a man.

*Claudia* (2 Timothy 4:21) The word **Claudia** is the name of a woman.

*Hashum ... Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh ... Shimei* (Ezra 10:33) The words **Hashum, Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei** are the names of men.

## When to Make Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

See [figs-explicit](#)

Assumed knowledge and implied information are part of the communication of Scripture. As such they can be made explicit for readers who do not share the same knowledge that the original readers shared. However, when this information is more than a phrase, it may skew the message and is better included as a footnote.

*who stood at a distance* (Luke 17:12, assumed knowledge) Luke assumes that his readers will know that the **lepers** were not reluctant to engage Jesus. Rather, this was a respectful gesture, since they were not allowed to approach other people. If it would help your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. It may be helpful to make this a separate sentence. Alternate translation: “They stood at a distance, as they were required to do”

*And the one who blew the ram’s horn was beside me* (Nehemiah 4:18, implicit information) The implication is that Nehemiah stationed this person next to him so that he could sound a danger signal if needed. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “And I stationed someone next to me who would blow a ram’s horn if we needed a danger signal”

*Everyone who commits sin also commits lawlessness. Indeed, sin is lawlessness.* (1 John 3:4, assumed knowledge, suggested footnote) If it would help your readers, you could explain why John gives this warning. See the discussion of “sin” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Suggested footnote: “The false teachers were saying that it does not matter what people do in their physical bodies. In this way, they were tempting the people to sin.”

## Kinship Terms

See [translate-kinship](#)

*his brothers* (Luke 8:19) These were Jesus’ younger brothers, the other sons of Mary and Joseph who were born after Jesus. Since the Father of Jesus was God and their father was Joseph, they were actually his half-brothers. That detail is not normally translated, but if your language has a specific word for a man’s younger brother, it would be appropriate to use it here.

### When to Make Explicit Information Implicit

See [figs-explicitinfo](#)

*before he was conceived in the womb* (Luke 2:21) It might seem that the phrase **conceived in the womb** contains redundant information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could abbreviate it. Alternate translation: “before he was conceived”

### When to Keep Implicit Information Implicit

See [figs-extrainfo](#)

*you concealed these things* (Luke 10:21) By **these things**, Jesus likely means his identity as God’s Son and God’s identity as his Father. He says of those identities in the next verse that only people to whom he reveals them can understand them, just as he says here that **these things** are revealed only to certain people. Since the expression is explained in the next verse, you do not need to explain its meaning further here.

### Biblical Distance

See [translate-bdistance](#)

*50 cubits high* (Esther 5:14) If it would help your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: “25 meters high” or “75 feet high”

### Biblical Volume

See [translate-bvolume](#)

*100 cors of wheat* (Ezra 7:22) A cor was equivalent to about 220 liters. If it would help your readers, you could express the quantity in modern measurements, as UST does, “500 bushels of wheat.” Alternatively, to help your readers recognize that the biblical writings come from long ago when people used different measurements, you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the **cor**, and explain the equivalent in modern measurements in a footnote.

### Biblical Weight

See [translate-bweight](#)

*it weighed a talent* (1 Chronicles 20:2) If it would help your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: “it weighted 34 kilograms” or “it weighed 75 pounds”

### Biblical Money

See [translate-bmoney](#)

*forty silver shekels* (Nehemiah 5:15) In ancient times, a silver shekel weighed about 11 grams or about a third of an ounce. You could try to express the equivalent in terms of modern money values, but if you did, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values could change over time. Instead, you could say something general like “40 silver coins” or give the equivalent weight or use the biblical term in the text and explain the weight in a footnote.

## Hebrew Months

See [translate-hebrewmonths](#)

*the third day of the month of Adar* (Ezra 6:15) You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. Suggested footnote: “The month of Adar was in the February—March time of the year.” Alternate translation: “by the third day of the month of Adar”

## Numbers

See [translate-numbers](#)

*10,000 talents of silver* (Esther 3:9) The **talent** was the largest unit of money and **10,000** was the largest number in the counting system of the time. It is possible that Haman used these terms to represent a very large, but not precise, amount. Alternate translation: “a huge amount of silver”

## Ordinal Numbers

See [translate-ordinal](#)

*in the second year ... in the second month* (Ezra 3:8) If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you could use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: “in month two of year two”

## Fractions

See [translate-fraction](#)

*a third of a shekel* (Nehemiah 10:32) A **third** means one part out of three equal parts.

## Symbolic Action

See [translate-symaction](#)

*shake off the dust from your feet* (Luke 9:5) This action was an expression of strong rejection in this culture. It showed that someone did not want even the dust of a town to remain on him. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation.

## 2.7.9 Writing Styles (Discourse)

### Blessings

See [translate-blessing](#)

*Grace, mercy, and peace from* (2 Timothy 1:2) After stating his name and the name of the person to whom he is writing, Paul adds a blessing to Timothy. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: “May you experience kindness, mercy, and peace within you from” or “I pray that you will have grace, mercy, and peace from”

### Complex Metaphors

See [figs-cometaphor](#)

A complex metaphor is an implicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to simple metaphors, which use only a single Image and a single Idea. Complex metaphors are similar to extended metaphors; the difference is that extended metaphors are explicitly stated in the text, but complex metaphors are not. For this reason, it can be extremely difficult to identify complex metaphors in the Bible.

### Extended Metaphors

See [figs-exmetaphor](#)

*it finds it swept out and put in order* (Luke 11:25) Jesus speaks about the person whom the demon left by continuing the metaphor of a house. You could express this metaphor as a simile if that would help your readers. Alternate translation: “the demon finds that the person it left is like a house that someone has swept clean and organized by putting everything where it belongs”

### Marking Background Information

See [writing-background](#)

*he was passing through between Samaria and Galilee* (Luke 17:11) Luke provides this background information about Jesus’ location to help readers understand what happens in this episode, in which Jesus engages a group of men that includes both Jews and at least one Samaritan. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. Alternate translation: “Jesus was traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee”

### Marking End of Story

See [writing-endofstory](#)

*And news about him went out* (Luke 4:37) This is a comment about what happened after the story as a result of the events within the story itself. Use the natural form in your language for expressing the conclusion of a story.

### Marking Hypothetical Situations

See [figs-hypo](#) (Note: This article is about hypothetical situations in general and should be referenced for notes addressing hypothetical situations that do not involve if-then constructions. A different article, the [translate/grammar-connect-condition-hypothetical](#) article, should be cited in notes that address if-then constructions. *Hypothetical Conditions*)

*If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar* (1 John 1:10) John is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the serious implications of disregarding sin. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: “Suppose we say that we have not sinned. Then we are calling God a liar”



## Introduction of a New Event

See [writing-newevent](#)

*After these things* (Esther 2:1) This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: “Some time later”

## Introduction of New and Old Participants

See [writing-participants](#)

*Ezra the scribe* (Nehemiah 8:1) This introduces Ezra as a new character in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. The expression “the scribe” identifies him as a teacher who had carefully studied the law of Moses. Since he is a new participant, if it would help your readers, you could call him something like “a man named Ezra, who was a teacher of the law of Moses”

## Parables

See [figs-parables](#)

*There were two debtors* (Luke 7:41) To help Simon the Pharisee understand what he wants to teach him, Jesus tells a story. If it would help your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Then Jesus told Simon this story to help him understand: ‘There were two debtors’”

## Poetry

See [writing-poetry](#)

*I am writing to you, little children* (1 John 2:12) In order to show that John is writing something like poetry in this verse and the next two verses, some translations set the statements in these verses farther to the right than the rest of the text, and they begin a new line at the start of each statement. You could do this, or use a natural form in your language for expressing poetry.

## Politeness Issues (article does not exist yet)

## Proverbs

See [writing-proverbs](#)

*People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness* (Luke 5:31) Jesus begins his response by quoting or creating a proverb, a short saying about something that is generally true in life. This proverb draws a figurative comparison: Just as sick people need to see a doctor to be healed, so sinners need to see Jesus in order to be forgiven and restored. But since Jesus explains the comparison in the next verse, you do not need to explain it here. Rather, you can translate the proverb itself in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: “People who are well do not need to see a doctor; people who are sick do”

### Symbolic Language

See [writing-symlanguage](#)

*seven spirits* (Revelation 1:4) The number **seven** is often used in the Bible as a symbol for completeness and perfection. Here, the **seven spirits** could refer to: (1) the Spirit of God, which is described with seven attributes in [Isaiah 11:2](../isa/11/02.md). Alternate translation: “the sevenfold Holy Spirit” (2) seven individual spirits who serve God, which might be the “seven angels” in [8:2](../08/02.md). Alternate translation: “the seven angelic spirits”

### Verse Bridges

See [translate-versebridge](#)

*For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man* (Luke 8:29) If your language would put the reason before the result, you could create a verse bridge by moving this sentence to the previous verse, after the man bows down to Jesus but before he speaks. You would need to change the tense of the verb to fit the context. You would then present the combined verses as 28–29. Alternate translation: “Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man”