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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Esther

Introduction to Esther

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Esther

King Ahasuerus sends away his wife, the queen (1:1–22)

Ahasuerus chooses Esther as the new queen (2:1–23)

Haman plots to destroy the Jews (3:1–15)

Mordecai asks Esther to help her people (4:1–17)

Esther pleads with the king for the Jews (5:1–7:10)

The result of Haman's plot to destroy the Jews (8:1–9:16)

The Feast of Purim (9:17–32)

Conclusion (10:1–3)

What is the Book of Esther about?

The Book of Esther tells how a young Jewish woman named Esther became the queen of Persia. As queen, she worked to save all the Jews in the Persian Empire from being destroyed.

This book ends by telling why the Jews celebrate the festival of Purim. The name “Purim” comes from the word “pur,” which means “lots” or “dice.” Haman, the enemy of Jews, threw dice to choose when to attack and destroy the Jews. The Jews celebrate Purim to remember how Yahweh rescued his people from being destroyed.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators can use the traditional title of this book, which is “The Book of Esther” or just “Esther.” Or they can choose a clearer title, such as “The Book About Esther.”

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the Persian Empire?

King Cyrus the Great conquered and ruled over many kingdoms. This was in the part of the world called Persia, which is now Iran. So people named his kingdom the Persian Empire. When Cyrus conquered Babylonia in 539 B.C., he then controlled the Jews whom the Babylonians had earlier taken into exile.

Why were there Jews in Babylonia when the Persians conquered it?

In 586 B.C., the Babylonians conquered and took into exile the people of Judah. These Jews and their descendants were still in Babylon when the Persians conquered it.

What was meant by “the laws of the Medes and Persians”?

The phrase “the laws of the Medes and Persians” is found in Esther 1:19 and Daniel 6:12. It referred to laws and decrees that could not be changed or removed once they were issued. In the book of Esther, the king made a decree that the people could attack the Jews. Later he regretted that decision but he was not able to change the decree.

The term “Medes” refers to a people group that had formed its own nation, but the Persians conquered them.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What different levels of language are in the Book of Esther?

In the Book of Esther, people talk to each other in many different situations. There is the polite and stately talk in the Persian court and the words of royal decrees. Friends and close relatives also talk to each other. There are even the words that one uses in speaking to oneself. Translators should use all the ways their own language has to express these different situations in a way that their readers will identify and understand.

Esther 1

Esther 1 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The king's divorce

The king's advisers were afraid that husbands would lose their authority when they heard the queen had refused to come to show her beauty to the king's guests, so the advisers told him to divorce her.

Esther 1:1

Now it happened

In the Old Testament, this is a standard way of beginning a historical story. Many languages have similar story-opening formulas, and if your language has one, you can use it. But do not use it if it would suggest that the story is not real, only made up. Alternate translation: “this account happened” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

in the days of Ahasuerus

The term **day** is used figuratively here to refer to a longer period of time. You could just say “during the reign of Ahasuerus,” as UST does. But as an alternative, you could say, “in the time of Ahasuerus” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Ahasuerus

This is a man's name. It occurs many times in the story. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

he was Ahasuerus, the one who ruled from India even as far as Ethiopia, 127 provinces

This is background information to help the reader identify Ahasuerus. (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

he was Ahasuerus, the one who ruled

Alternative translation: “This king named Ahasuerus ruled”

from India even as far as Ethiopia

In case your audience might not know where these places are, you could say, “extending from India in the east to Ethiopia in the west.” (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

127 provinces

The number is given to show what a large empire this was. You could say that explicitly by saying, “Ahasuerus ruled a very large empire that had 127 provinces.” (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

127 provinces

Alternate translation: “one hundred twenty-seven provinces” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Esther 1:2

as & sat on the throne of his royalty

Here, the action of **sitting** on a throne is used figuratively to mean ruling over a kingdom. You could just say “ruled,” as UST does. But as an alternative, you could say, “ruled his empire from his royal throne” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

on the throne of his royalty

Royalty is an abstract noun that refers to the royal authority that the king exercised. You can translate this idea with a verb by saying, “the throne he ruled from,” or use an adjective, “his royal throne.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

was in Susa

This was the name of a royal city of the Persian kings. It occurs many times in the story. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the citadel

This means a castle or palace where a king would live. But since the city of Susa itself is being called a **citadel** here, it’s likely that the term figuratively means royal city or capital city. The person telling this story is identifying Susa as the capital by calling it by the name of something closely associated with it, the royal palace within it. A good translation might be “the capital city of Persia.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 1:3

in year three of his reign

This means that Ahasuerus had already ruled for two full years and that these events took place in the year that followed them. Alternate translation: “during the third year that Ahasuerus ruled his empire” or “after he had ruled for two years” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

in year three of his reign

Reign is an abstract noun that refers to the royal authority that the king exercised. You can translate it with a verb by saying, “during the third year that Ahasuerus ruled.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

he made a feast

Alternative translation: “he hosted a feast”

the army of Persia and Media

This likely refers to the leaders of the army. It is describing a part of the army by referring to the whole army. Alternate translation: “the officers of the army” (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

the noblemen

This probably means something like “the wealthy landowners.”

before his face

Face figuratively stands for the presence of a person, so this phrase means “in his presence.” The invitation was to come to the royal capital to attend a banquet where the king would be present in person. You could say, as UST does, that the king was present in person to host the feast. Or you could say as an alternative, “all of them came to Susa for the feast” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 1:4

when he displayed the wealth of the glory of his kingdom

You can translate the abstract noun with an emphasized adjective. Alternate translation: “Ahasuerus ... wanted to demonstrate ... the great wealth of his kingdom” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

when he displayed

He refers to the king. The implication is that he held this banquet to show all of his officials how wealthy and powerful he was. The invited officials would then go back to all the different parts of the empire and tell everyone this. Alternate translation: “Ahasuerus wanted to demonstrate to his guests” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the wealth of the glory of his kingdom

The words **wealth** and **glory** have similar meanings and they are used together to emphasize how great his kingdom was. Alternate translation: “the great wealth of his kingdom” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

when he displayed & and the splendor of the beauty of his greatness

You can translate the abstract nouns **splendor**, **beauty**, and **greatness** as adjectives. Alternate translation: “Ahasuerus ... wanted to demonstrate ... that he was a very powerful king” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

the splendor of the beauty of his greatness

The words **splendor** and **beauty** have similar meaning and emphasize how great he was. Alternate translation: “the splendor of his greatness” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

for many days, 180 days

This was a very long time for a royal feast to last. The earlier part of the verse provides the reason for this. To make the connection explicit, you could add some explanatory words to the verse like this: “Ahasuerus entertained his guests fabulously because he wanted to demonstrate that his empire was extremely wealthy and that he was a very powerful king. He did so many things for them that the festivities lasted for six months.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

180 days

Six months is about **180 days** or about half a year. You can use whatever expression will best express this time period in your language. (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Esther 1:5

And when those days were fulfilled

This implies “at the end of that feast.” You could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “after those 180 days were over” or “at the end of those six months” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the king made a feast

This was a second feast that the king hosted. He likely did this to thank the people who had worked so hard in hosting the first feast. You could say that explicitly. (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

in Susa the citadel

The expression in this case seems to refer specifically to the royal **citadel** from which the city got its name. This second feast would not have been for everyone in the entire city. It was specifically for the people who served the king in the citadel and who had worked so hard over the previous six months hosting the first feast. Alternate translation: “for every man who worked for him in the palace at Susa” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

who were found

Here, **found** is an idiom that means could be found or were there. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

who were found

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “who worked for him in” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

from the greatest even to the least

The person telling this story is referring to the staff of the palace by speaking of two extreme parts of it, the most important and the least important people who worked there, in order to include everyone in between. You could just explain this meaning, as UST does. Alternate translation: “from the most important official to the least important servant” (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

for seven days

The story does not suggest that this was an unusually long time by saying, “for many days.” But you could also say something like “a whole week” to show that this was a generous gesture of thanks on the part of the king. Alternate translation: “another feast that lasted seven days”

Esther 1:6

Linens cotton and blue

These **linens** were curtains that were hung in the courtyard. **Cotton** refers to the white color of some of them. So this means white and blue curtains. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Linens cotton and blue

You can specify at the beginning of this verse that the location being described is the same as in the previous verse: "In the courtyard, white and blue curtains."

by cords of byssus and purple

Byssus means "white linen" and it is used to describe the white color of some of these cords. So this means white and purple cords. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Couches of gold and silver

You can specify that these couches were there for the guests to recline on while they ate. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the pavement of

This word probably refers to a mosaic floor made of inlaid pieces of colorful precious stones. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

porphyry

This is a kind of red and purple stone that contains pieces of crystal. You could call it "feldspar" or something descriptive like "red marble." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

and alabaster

This is a white precious stone. You could identify it as "alabaster." Alternatively, while it is not exactly the same thing as marble, your readers would get the right idea if you called it "white marble." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

and precious stone

This word probably refers to a black marble that was used to create borders around mosaics. You could call this "black marble," or you could just say that the floor contained "another precious stone." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 1:7

And the serving was

The abstract noun **serving** refers to how the drinks were served at the banquet. You can translate it with a verb by saying, "The attendants served wine." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

with vessels differing from other vessels

This could mean that "no two of them were alike." But you could also just say that the wine was served in "various kinds of golden cups."

and the wine of royalty was abundant according to the hand of the king

This means that King Ahasuerus himself paid for all the wine that the guests drank at his seven-day feast in Susa, and the wine came from his personal supply. Alternate translation: "the king was very generous with the royal wine" or "the king showed a great willingness to give" or "the king provided all of it" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and the wine of royalty was abundant according to the hand of the king

This probably means special fine wine that only the king could acquire and afford. You can translate the abstract noun **royalty** with an adjective. Alternate translation: "royal wine" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

according to the hand of the king

Here, **hand** refers figuratively to the king himself, viewed through his action of giving. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 1:8

And the drinking was according to the law

The abstract noun **drinking** refers here not to the action of drinking, but to the guidelines for serving drinks that the king had established for the banquet. Alternate translation: "Ahasuerus had established this rule for all his household attendants who served the wine" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

There is no compulsion

This could mean one of two things: (1) No one would be stopped from drinking even if the attendants thought they had already had enough. Alternate translation: "there was to be no restriction on drinking" (2) There would be no requirement to drink. Alternate translation: "no one must be forced to drink" Either way, this was another sign of the generosity that the king showed as he hosted this banquet to thank the people who worked for him. Either he was: (1) allowing them to drink as much as they wanted to, or (2) not requiring them to eat and drink everything that was served at a banquet as guests of the king would usually be expected to do. You could say explicitly at the beginning of the verse that the king was giving his guests a special privilege. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

for thus the king had established for every overseer of his house to do according to the desire of man by man

This explains why no one had to drink if they did not want to. If it would be helpful in your language, you could give this explanation (the reason) before the result that it accounts for, using a connecting word like "so." You could say, "The king had established for every overseer of his house to do according to the desire of man by man, so the drinking was according to the law, 'There is no compulsion.'" Alternate translation: "the king made the attendants who served the wine follow this rule" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

to do according to the desire of man by man

Alternate translation: "the king wanted every guest to be able to drink as much as he wanted" or "all the guests could drink as little or as much as they wanted"

man by man

This is an idiom that means "everyone." (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 1:9

Also

This introduces something else that was happening at the same time. You can indicate this by saying something like “during this time.” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**)

Vashti the queen

You can explain that she was the wife of Ahasuerus by saying, “Queen Vashti, the king’s wife” or “his wife.” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**)

Vashti the queen

This is a woman’s name. It occurs several times in this chapter and the next one. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

a feast of women

This could mean the women who served in the palace, the wives of the men who were officers and servants, or both. You could say, “a feast for the wives of the men who attended” or “for the women who worked in the palace.”

in the palace of royalty that belonged to the king Ahasuerus

Alternate translation: “the royal palace where King Ahasuerus lived”

in the palace of royalty

You can translate the abstract noun **royalty** with the adjective royal. Alternate translation: “royal palace” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 1:10

On the seventh day

Alternate translation: “after six days” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

when the heart of the king was pleased by the wine

Here, **heart** figuratively means the action of thinking or feeling. Alternate translation: “when King Ahasuerus was in a good mood from drinking wine” or “when the king was drunk with wine” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha and Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas

These are names of seven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the & eunuchs

This term occurs a dozen times in the story. It describes male royal officials who served as guardians for the women who lived in the palace. They were both guardians of the door, to keep unwanted people out of the women's quarters, and guardians of the women inside, to take care of them and look after their needs. (As we learn in 2:21, some of these officials also protected the king's private quarters.) As we see here, and as will also be seen in 2:14 and 2:16, their duties included escorting women from place to place. The term likely indicates that, in keeping with the practices of the time, these men were castrated because their work brought them into such close contact with the king's wives and concubines. If your language has a term for such an official and you think your readers would recognize it, you could use it. Otherwise, you could use a term that describes the role that these officials played in the royal court. Alternate translation: “guardians” or “officials” or “castrated servants” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

who served before the face of the king Ahasuerus

This is background information to explain who these men were. Alternate translation: “who attended him personally” (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively means the presence of a person. The phrase means that these seven men served King Ahasuerus personally. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 1:11

to bring

This is the beginning of the instructions that King Ahasuerus gave to the seven eunuchs he summoned in verse 10. You can make this explicit by saying, "He told them to bring." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

to the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively means the presence of a person. The phrase means that King Ahasuerus wanted Queen Vashti to come personally into his presence. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

in a crown of royalty

You can translate the abstract noun **royalty** with an adjective by saying, "wearing her royal crown." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

in a crown of royalty

Ahasuerus likely wanted Vashti to wear her queen's crown so that everyone would know that she was his wife. You could say that explicitly. (For the possible reasons why he wanted them to know this, see the next note.) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

in order to show the people and the officials her beauty

Everything Ahasuerus did at his banquets was to show how rich and powerful he was. He seems to have believed that having a very beautiful wife was one more thing that proved he was a great man. So he wanted everyone to see how beautiful Vashti was. You can put this second in the verse, after explaining that Vashti was a very beautiful woman, because it accounts for what happens afterwards, when the king sends his seven personal servants to bring her in to his banquet. (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

the people and the officials

This might mean "his guests, especially the officials."

for she was pleasing of appearance

If it would be helpful in your language, you could place this first in the verse because it is the reason that explains everything else that happens afterward in the verse. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

for she was pleasing of appearance

Alternate translation: "she was very beautiful" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 1:12

But the queen Vashti refused to come

You can put the events in chronological order and say first that the eunuchs told Vashti what the king had commanded and then say that she refused to come. (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

But the queen Vashti refused to come

If your language needs to give a reason why she refused, it is most likely because she did not want a group of drunken men staring at her lustfully. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

at the word of the king

Alternate translation: “at the king’s command” or “what the king wanted”

by the hand of the eunuchs

Here, **hand** refers figuratively to the eunuchs themselves, viewed through their action of telling Vashti what the king had commanded. Alternation translation: “when those servants told Queen Vashti what the king wanted” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the eunuchs

See how you translated this term in [1:10](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Then the king became very angry, and his rage burned within him

These two phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize the idea that they are expressing. You could combine them as UST does by saying, “The king became so angry that he could barely contain himself.” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

and his rage burned within him

Here the story uses a metaphor that pictures the king’s anger as **a fire that burned inside of him**. If your language has a different word picture that it uses to describe extreme anger, you can use that here. If not, you can translate plainly, “his anger continued to increase.” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 1:13

to the wise men

This means the king's advisors. You could call them "his advisors" or "the royal advisors."

who were knowers of the times

This means something like "who knew the right way to do things" or "who understood the culture."

for thus was the manner of the king

This means that it was the king's habit to consult his advisors on important questions. This is background information that explains why the king called upon these men. (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

for thus was the manner of the king

If it would be helpful in your language, you could place this first in the verse to put the reason before the result because it explains what happens next. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

before the face of

Here, **face** refers figuratively to the presence of a person. The phrase means that King Ahasuerus would personally ask his wise men for advice in matters like these. Alternate translation: "to consult personally with" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

those who were knowers of law and judgment

This means that these advisors knew the law and knew how to make good decisions in light of it.

Esther 1:14

and the ones near to him were

Alternate translation: "the king's closest advisors"

Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Mersena, Memukan

These are the names of seven men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 278)**)

who were seers of the face of the king

To see the face of is an idiom that means to be in the presence of a person. The phrase means that King Ahasuerus would regularly and personally consult with these seven advisors. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p. 286)**)

the ones who sat first in the kingdom

Here, **sitting** represents ruling or judging. The expression here means that these were the most powerful officials in the empire. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 1:15

According to law, what is to be done with the queen Vashti on account of this, that she did not perform the command of the king Ahasuerus by the hand of the eunuchs

This verse presents the question that the king asked the wise men. It may be helpful to indicate this by saying something like “The king asked them.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

According to law, & on account of this, that

Alternate translation: “What does the law say we should do ... because ... ?”

by the hand of the eunuchs

To present the events in chronological order, you can begin with the information that these men brought the command. Alternate translation: “Queen Vashti did not do what I told my servants to command her to do” (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

by the hand of the eunuchs

Here, **hand** figuratively represents the action of doing or giving. The phrase means that the eunuchs were the ones who told Queen Vashti what King Ahasuerus had commanded her. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the eunuchs

See how you translated this term in [1:10](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 1:16

And Memukan replied before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. The phrase means that Memukan was speaking in the presence of the king and of the other officials. Alternate translation: “then Memukan spoke so that both the king and the officials could hear” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

all the peoples who are in all the provinces of the king

This means all the different people groups that were living in the empire. You could say, “all the people groups in all the provinces that King Ahasuerus rules” or more generally, “every person who lives in the entire empire of King Ahasuerus.” (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**)

Memukan

See how you translated this man’s name in [1:14](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the king Ahasuerus

Memukan speaks of **the king** in third person as a form of respect. If you want to portray him as speaking primarily to the king because he is answering the king’s question, you could have him say, “in all the provinces that you rule” or “every person who lives in your entire empire.” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Esther 1:17

For

This introduces the reason why Memukan says that Queen Vashti has done wrong against all the men in the kingdom and not only against King Ahasuerus. To show that, you can begin with “This is what will happen.” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

the matter of the queen will go out to all the women

To emphasize his point, Memukan exaggerates and says that every single woman in the empire will hear about Queen Vashti refusing to obey King Ahasuerus. You could say, as UST does, that “women all over the empire” will hear about what the queen did. Or you could preserve Memukan’s manner of speaking by saying, “every woman” will hear. (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**)

in order to make their husbands despised in their eyes

Here, **eyes** stand for seeing, and seeing figuratively means knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. The phrase means that the women will treat their husbands with disrespect and not obey them. Alternate translation: “women will despise their husbands” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

when they say, ‘The king Ahasuerus said to bring Vashti the queen before his face, but she did not come

The implication is that they will go on to say, “So if even the queen can disobey the king, why should I have to obey my husband?” If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

The king Ahasuerus said to bring Vashti the queen before his face, but she did not come

The women will stop respecting their husbands after they hear about this. You can put this report about what Queen Vashti did first, before “women will stop respecting their husbands,” because it is the reason that explains that result. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

before his face

Here, **face** figuratively means the presence of a person. The phrase means the Queen Vashti refused to come into the presence of King Ahasuerus when he summoned her during the feast. See how you translated this in verse 11. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 1:18

Now this day

Alternate translation: “even today” or “even this very day”

the noblewomen of Persia and Media

It becomes clear later in the verse that Memukan is speaking of the wives of the king’s officials, and you could communicate that here by saying, “the wives of the officials who govern Persia and Media.” But the term “noblewomen” indicates that they also had high status of their own, so you could also call them “the leading women of Persia and Media.”

the matter of the queen

Alternate translation: “what the queen has done”

will speak

This means that they will “talk back” or “disobey.” Alternate translation: “refuse to obey”

to all the officials of the king

This means the husbands of the noblewomen. The implication may be, “They will disobey their husbands even though they are officials of the king.” You could say that explicitly, as UST does. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And there will be contempt and wrath enough

This could mean either that they will treat their husbands with disrespect, and this will make their “husbands angry with them” or that “they will be angry with their husbands and treat them with contempt.”

And there will be & enough

This could mean that the husbands will be as furious “as much as they can bear.” But you could also say, “That will be bad enough by itself, even if the news does not spread any farther.” If you think that is the meaning, you can say that explicitly, as UST does. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 1:19

If it is good to the king

This is an idiom that means “if the king thinks this is a good idea” or “if this advice is pleasing to the king.” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

If it is good to the king

Memukan speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. Alternate translation: “If it pleases you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

let a decree of royalty go out from before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. The phrase means that the decree will come from the king himself. Alternate translation: “you should personally issue a royal decree” or “you should write a decree yourself” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

a decree of royalty

You can translate the abstract noun **royalty** with the adjective “royal.” Alternate translation: “royal decree” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

from before his face

Memukan speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. Alternate translation: “personally” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

and let it be written

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who will do the action. Alternate translation: “you should write a decree yourself” or “command your scribes to write a decree” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

which do not pass away

Alternate translation: “these laws never become invalid” or “can never be changed”

shall & come before the face of the king

Memukan speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. Alternate translation: “never come into your presence again” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

shall & come before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. The phrase means that Queen Vashti will never again come into the king's presence. Alternate translation: “never again come before King Ahasuerus” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

And let the king give her royalty to her female neighbor, the woman who is better than she

Memukan speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. You can show the same meaning with a verb that addresses a singular “you” and indicates that Memukan is offering advice, not giving a command when he say, “choose another woman to be queen.” Alternate translation: “the king can give her position as queen to some other woman” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

And & her royalty

You can translate the abstract noun **royalty** with an expression such as “her royal position” or “her position as queen.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

the woman who is better than she

Memukan means that the next queen should be “better than” Vashti by obeying all of the king’s commands. You could say this explicitly, as UST does. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 1:20

And the decree of the king will be heard

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who will do the action. Alternate translation: “when everyone ... hears” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

the decree of the king

Memukan speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. You could express the same meaning in the second person: “When they hear what you have commanded.” Alternate translation: “when they hear the king’s decree” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

that he will make for all his kingdom

Even though the decree of Ahasuerus applied only to Vashti directly, implicitly it meant that all wives had to obey their husbands or else their husbands could banish and divorce them as well. You can say this explicitly at the end of the verse by saying, “because if any wife disobeys her husband, he can banish and divorce her, just as you did to Vashti.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

his kingdom

Memukan speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. Alternate translation: “for all your kingdom” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

though it is great

Alternate translation: “even though your empire is very large”

the women will give honor to their husbands

Alternate translation: “women will respect and obey their husbands”

from the greatest to the least

This expression figuratively refers to all of the husbands in the empire. By naming both extremes, it includes everyone in between. You could just give the meaning, as UST does: “every husband in the empire.” Alternate translation: “this will be true for both the most important man and the least important man in the empire, and everyone in between” (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

Esther 1:21

And the word seemed good in the eyes of the king

Like “if it is good to the king” in verse 19, this is an idiom that means the king thought this was a good idea or this advice pleased the king. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

in the eyes of the king and the officials

Here, **eyes** stand for seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. The phrase means that King Ahasuerus and all the officials who heard Memukan’s advice thought that his suggestion was a good idea. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

And the king acted according to the word of Memukan

This means that King Ahasuerus wrote a law proclaiming what Memukan had suggested.

Memukan

Translate his name as in [1:14](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther 1:22

And he sent letters to all the provinces of the king

He means King Ahasuerus. This is saying that the king sent letters to every province in his empire.

province by province

This is an idiom that means “every province” or every single province. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

according to its own writing

Alternate translation: “using its own alphabet” or “written in its own script”

people by people

This is an idiom that means “every people group” or every single people group. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

according to its own tongue

Here, **tongue** figuratively means the language spoken by a person or a group of people. Alternate translation: “in its own language” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

that every man should be ruling in his house

This meant that all men should have complete authority over their wives and their children.

according to the tongue of his people

Here, **tongue** figuratively means the language spoken by a person or a group of people. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

according to the tongue of his people

The implication is that the husband ought to be able to give orders to his wife in his own native language and that she should understand and obey him, even if she had to learn his language to do so. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 2

Esther 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Esther becomes queen

Esther was humble and took the advice of the royal officials about how to dress for her time with the king. The king chose Esther to be the new queen.

Mordecai warns the king against a plot

Esther's cousin, Mordecai, discovered that two men planned to kill the king. He told Esther, who then told the king. She also gave Mordecai credit for telling her.

Esther 2:1

After these things

This introduces a new event that happened some time later, but we do not know how much later. You can show this with a phrase like “After some time had passed.” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

when the rage of the king Ahasuerus subsided

Alternate translation: “when King Ahasuerus was not angry any more” or “when King Ahasuerus became less angry”

he remembered Vashti

This means that he started to think about Vashti. He probably thought about the things that he liked about her, meaning that he missed her.

what she had done, and what had been decided concerning her

This refers to Vashti’s refusal to obey Ahasuerus, and to the decision he made in 1:21 that she could never come into his presence again. This could actually mean that when he thought about Vashti and what she had done, he regretted the decision that he had made about her. But there was nothing he could do to bring her back because the laws of the empire could not be changed. You could explain all or some of this in your translation, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

what had been decided concerning her

You can say this with an active form, and you can say that the king performed the action. Alternate translation: “what he had decided” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 2:2

the young men of the king who served him

These were not the older, wiser royal advisors whom Ahasuerus consulted in 1:13, but younger men who stood nearby the king ready to help with any practical needs. You could call them his personal servants. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Let them seek for the king young women

Implicit in this suggestion is the idea, “You should get a new wife for yourself.” You can say that explicitly at the beginning of the advice that the young men gave to the king. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Let them seek

Them refers to the servants that the king would send to do this. If this is unclear, you could say “servants” or “your servants.” Be sure to express this in a form that shows that it is not a command but a respectful suggestion such as “You could send some men Alternate translation: “to look for” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**)

for the king

The young men speak to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternatively, you could have them say “for yourself” or “on your behalf” if that would be clear but also respectful in your language (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

and pleasing of appearance

As in 1:11, this is an idiom that means very beautiful. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 2:3

And let the king appoint

The young men speak to the king in third person as a sign of respect. Alternatively, you could have them say “you could appoint” in a respectful way (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

and pleasing of appearance

As in 1:11, this is an idiom that means very beautiful. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Susa the citadel

In this context, this expression probably means “to the palace here in Susa.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

the house of women

This means the harem for virgins, the place where the young women would live and receive beauty treatments before they were taken to the king (see verses 13 and 14).

into the hand of Hegai (the eunuch of the king who is overseer of the women

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “let Hegai, the king’s official, who is in charge of the women, take care of them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

the hand of Hegai

Here, **hand** is a metaphor meaning power, control, or authority. As the overseer of the women, Hegai was responsible for the young women who lived in the harem for virgins. Alternate translation: “under the custody of Hegai” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

the & Hegai

This is a man’s name. It occurs several times in this chapter. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the eunuch of the king

The servants spoke to the king in third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “your eunuch” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

the eunuch of

See how you translated this term in 1:10. Alternate translation: “the official of” or “the administrator of” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

who is overseer of the women

Alternate translation: "who is in charge of the women who live there."

their ointments

This term seems to refer to a specific substance that women would put on their face or other parts of their body to make themselves more beautiful. From verse 12, it appears to mean lotions that were used along with oils and perfumes. But here, this one aspect of a woman's beauty treatment seems to be used to refer to all of it, so you could call these "beauty treatments." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 2:4

And & the young woman who is pleasing in the eyes of the king

The servants spoke to the king in third person as a sign of respect. You could express the same meaning in the second person by saying something such as “the young woman you like the best.” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

in the eyes of

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. The phrase means that King Ahasuerus could decide which young woman he liked the best and make her queen. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

And the word was pleasing in the eyes of the king

Here, **eyes** have the same figurative meaning. The phrase indicates that King Ahasuerus thought that this suggestion was a good idea. Alternate translation: “The king found their suggestion appealing” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

so he did thus

Alternate translation: “so he followed the suggestion”

Esther 2:5

A man, a Jew

This introduces Mordecai as a new character in the story. Use your language's way of introducing a new character. This expression means a Jewish man. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**)

in Susa the citadel

Here the phrase likely indicates the city rather than the palace, that is, the capital city of Susa. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Mordecai

This is a man's name. It occurs many times throughout the story. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish

These are men's names. Jair, Shimei, and Kish are Mordecai's male ancestors. You could say, "Mordecai was the son of Jair, who was the son of Shimei, who was the son of Kish," or see the UST. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

a man, a Benjamite

While this likely refers to Kish, it is necessarily also true of Mordecai, and you could put it second in the verse. That way Mordecai's nationality would come first, then his tribe, and then his family and clan. Alternate translation: "from the tribe of Benjamin"

Esther 2:6

who had been exiled from Jerusalem with the exiles who had been exiled along with Jeconiah, the king of Judah, who Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled

The story now tells about something that happened many years before. This is background information that explains how this Jewish family came to live in Susa. You can introduce this by saying something like, "Many years earlier." (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

who had been exiled from Jerusalem

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had taken Kish away from Jerusalem along with some other captives" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

who had been exiled from Jerusalem

You can bring this information forward from later in the verse because it provides background information that helps identify Mordecai. (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

who had been exiled from Jerusalem

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say where King Nebuchadnezzar brought the people that he took away from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "had taken Kish away from Jerusalem ... and brought him to Babylon." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

along with

This means that the two things happened at the same time. You can indicate this with a phrase like "at the same time that he took." (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**)

Jeconiah, the king of Judah

In the historical passage where this event is described (2 Kings 24:8–17), this king is called Jehoiachin. That was another name by which he was known. You can call him Jehoiachin here in Esther if you think that would help your readers recognize him better. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

who Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled

You can say where King Nebuchadnezzar brought this king when he took him away from Jerusalem. For example, you can say, "Nebuchadnezzar ... took King Jehoiachin of Judah away from Jerusalem and brought him to Babylon." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther 2:7

And he was

The story now returns to talking about Mordecai. If it is helpful for your readers, you can specify his name, saying, "Now, Mordecai."

the daughter of his uncle

If your language has a specific term for this relationship, you can use it. For example, you can say, "his cousin."
Alternate translation: "his uncle's daughter"

Hadassah (she is Esther

Here the story is indicating that this woman's Hebrew name was Hadassah and her Persian name was Esther. You could say that explicitly. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther

This is a woman's name. It occurs many times throughout the story. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

there was not for her a father or a mother

You could say simply that "she was an orphan," as UST does. Alternate translation: "both her father and mother had died"

Now the young woman was beautiful of form and pleasing of appearance. & her

These two phrases mean something similar. Separately, they could be saying that Esther was both sexually mature and very attractive. But taken together, they mean that, overall, she was very pleasant to look at. You could combine them, as UST does, and say that she was "exceptionally attractive" Alternate translation: "she had a lovely body and a beautiful face" (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

And at the death of her father and her mother, Mordecai had taken & for him as a daughter

This is background information explaining the relationship between Mordecai and Esther. You can move it to right after the place where Esther is introduced by name because it describes what happened in the past, before Esther became a beautiful young woman. Alternate translation: "after her father and her mother had died, Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter" (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

Esther 2:8

And it happened

After providing this background information about Mordecai and Esther in verses 5–7, the story now tells what happened as a result of these facts, when the provincial officers described in verse 3 began sending young women to the harem. That is, the story tells what happened to Esther because her family was living in the Persian empire and she was very attractive. Use your language's way of showing that the events are now moving forward after giving background information. Alternate translation: "and so this is what happened" (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

when the decree of the king and his law were heard, and when many young women were gathered

This indicates that two actions took place at the same time. You should indicate this with a phrase like "at the same time." (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**)

when the decree of the king and his law were heard, and when many young women were gathered

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. For example, you can say, "when the messengers proclaimed the king's decree and the scribes published the king's law." (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

the decree of the king

This refers to King Ahasuerus banishing Queen Vashti from his presence.

and his law

This refers to King Ahasuerus commanding that men would have complete authority over their wives.

when & were heard

You could also say where they did this action. Alternate translation: "Messengers went throughout the empire and proclaimed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and when many young women were gathered

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. See the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Susa the citadel

Here again, this likely means "the capital city of Susa." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

into the hand of Hegai

Here, **hand** is a metaphor meaning power, control, or authority. As the overseer of the women, Hegai was responsible for the women in the harem for virgins. You could say that the officers “put them under the custody of Hegai” or that “Hegai began to take care of them.” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

And it happened that, when & were heard, and when & were gathered & was taken

This means that Esther was brought to the harem of King Ahaserus at the same time as other young women were also being brought to the harem. You can say, “they brought Esther at the same time” or “they also brought Esther.” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**)

that, & was taken

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “they brought Esther” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

that, & was taken

You can explain why this happened. For example, you can say, “Because Esther was exceptionally attractive, the officers also brought her” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the palace of the king

Alternate translation: “the king’s palace”

into the hand of Hegai (who was overseer of the women

As earlier in this verse, this means under the custody of Hegai or that Hegai also began to take care of her. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

who was overseer of the women

This means that Hegai took care of the young women who lived in the harem for virgins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could move this information to earlier in the verse when Hegai is first mentioned because it explains why the young women were brought to him. (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

Esther 2:9

And the young woman was pleasing in his eyes, and she lifted kindness before his face

This means that Hegai found Esther attractive, and she obtained kindness from him or that Hegai was very impressed with Esther, and she won his favor. In other words, because he was so impressed with her, this made him want to do everything he could to help her. This is background information that explains why Hegai took the actions that are listed next.

And the young woman was pleasing in his eyes

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. In this context, the phrase probably means that Hegai thought that Esther was either an attractive woman or a pleasant person, or both. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the young woman

This means Esther. You should make sure that this is clear in your translation.

in his eyes

Here, **his** refers to Hegai. You should make sure that this clear in your translation.

and she lifted kindness before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. To say that she “lifted kindness before his face” is a rare expression in Hebrew, and the exact meaning is uncertain. In this context, it could even suggest that Esther and Hegai became friends. Alternate translation: “she won his favor” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

before his face

Here, **his** refers to Hegai. You should make sure that this clear in your translation.

gave her ointments

Alternate translation: “her beauty treatments,” as in [2:3](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

portions of food

In context, this likely means that Hegai made sure that Esther was served good food that would keep her healthy.

gave her seven young women chosen from the house of the king

This means that Hegai chose seven female servants from the king's palace and assigned them to take care of Esther.

And he transferred her and her young women

Her means Esther, and **her young women** means the female attendants Hegai assigned to her.

Esther 2:10

Esther had not declared her people or her ancestry

This means that Esther had not told anyone this information about herself.

her people or her ancestry

These two short phrases mean almost the same thing. They are used together to emphasize that Esther followed Mordecai's instructions exactly. You could combine them, as UST does, and say something like "what people group she was from." Alternate translation: "Esther did not tell anyone that she was a Jew, and she did not tell anyone who her relatives were" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

for Mordecai had laid a charge upon her

This is background information that explains why Esther did not tell anyone about her family or nationality. It might be helpful to your readers to state this at the beginning of the verse. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

had laid a charge upon her

This means that Mordecai had gotten her to promise not to do it.

Esther 2:11

And always, day by day

Alternate translation: “every single day” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Mordecai was walking about

Express this in the way your language describes an action that someone repeats over and over. For example, you can say, “Mordecai would walk around.”

before the face of the courtyard of

Here, **face** figuratively means the front of a place. So you could say, “in front of the courtyard.” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the house of women

Alternate translation: “the harem for virgins”

in order to know the peace of Esther and what was being done with her

This is background information that explains why Mordecai would walk around in front of the courtyard. It was so that he could ask people who were going into or coming out of the courtyard how Esther was doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could place this first in the verse because it explains the rest of what is said. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

the peace of Esther

Alternate translation: “how Esther was doing” or “about Esther’s well-being”

the peace of Esther and what was being done with her

These two phrases mean similar things. The story is using the repetition to emphasize how concerned Mordecai was for Esther. You could combine them and say, “how Esther was doing” or “if Esther was all right.” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

Esther 2:12

Now when & came

Verses 12 to 14 are background information about how the virgins who were gathered for the king became his concubines. These verses are not specifically about Esther, but about the women in general. Use your language's way of letting your readers know that this is background information by using a connecting word or a phrase such as, "This is how virgins became concubines for the king." (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

young woman by young woman

Alternate translation: "each one of the young women" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Now when the turn came for & to go to the king Ahasuerus

Each of these young women was going to have sexual relations with the king and, as a result, legally become one of his concubines, that is, one of his secondary wives. As the story has already explained, he would then choose one of them to become his queen and primary wife. But the king would still provide for each of the concubines for the rest of her life; they would not be free to marry anyone else. This is something that the story's original audience would have understood implicitly. you could say it explicitly if your readers need this information to understand the story: "Each young woman in the harem, one at a time, was going to have sexual relations with King Ahasuerus and become one of his concubines" or "one of his secondary wives." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

according to the law of women

Here, **law** probably does not mean a legal decree, but rather a standard regimen that had been developed. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

For thus the days of their beautification would be fulfilled

This phrase indicates that the story is now going to provide background information on how these treatments were done. It means, "This is how these women would spend the time preparing to go to the king." (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

six months by oil of myrrh

This means that a woman's attendants would rub her body with olive oil mixed with myrrh every day for six months. you could explain this in more detail if your readers need this information to understand the story. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

by oil of myrrh

This likely means "olive oil mixed with myrrh."

and by the ointments of women

This means lotions designed for women. In 2:3 and 2:9, this one specific part of the program seems to be used figuratively to mean all of it, and so in those verses it can be translated “beauty treatments.” But it should be translated with a specific term or phrase here, such as “women’s lotions” or “feminine ointments” because it is named along with oils and perfumes as one component of the treatment. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 2:13

Then at this

Alternate translation: “after a woman’s year of beauty treatments was completed”

the young woman would go to the king

This means that the young woman would go and have sexual relations with the king and thereby become one of his concubines. If your readers need this information to understand the story, you could explain that here, if you did not do so in verse 12. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Anything that she said would be given to her

Anything most likely refers to clothing and jewelry. This phrase probably means that a woman could take any of those that she wanted from the harem for virgins and wear them when she went to the king’s palace. You could say that explicitly by saying, “A young woman could take whatever clothing and jewelry she wanted from the harem for virgins and wear them when she went to the king’s palace.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Anything that she said would be given to her

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “she could take whatever she wanted” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

בֵּית

Alternate translation: “the king’s rooms” or “the king’s house” or “the king’s palace”

the house of the king

Alternate translation: “the king’s rooms” or “the king’s house” or “the king’s palace”

Esther 2:14

she would go

She would not walk over on her own. Rather, the king's servants would come and bring her to the king's private quarters, in the way that they were told to bring Vashti to the banquet in 1:11. you could say this explicitly if it would help your readers to understand the story. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and in the morning she would return

It is implied that this is the following morning. This information can be made clear. Once again, she would not go on her own. Alternate translation: "the next morning the king's servants would bring her to" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the second house of women

Alternate translations: "a different house for women" or "the harem for concubines" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

into the hand of Shaashgaz (the eunuch of the king who was overseer of the concubines

Alternate translation: "where Shaashgaz, the king's servant in charge of the concubines, would take care of her"

into the hand of Shaashgaz (the eunuch of the king who was overseer of the concubines

Here, **hand** is a metaphor meaning power, control, or authority. Just as Hegai was the overseer of the virgins, Shaashgaz was the overseer of the concubines, so he would be the one responsible for Esther while she was in the harem for concubines. Alternate translation: "under the custody of Shaashgaz" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

the & Shaashgaz

This is a man's name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the eunuch of the king

See how you translated this term, **eunuch**, in 1:10. You could say "royal" rather than "of the king." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

who was overseer of the concubines

This means that Shaashgaz was the official who *took care of the concubines* or who was responsible for the concubines.

the concubines

As a **concubine**, the young woman was one of the king's secondary wives. She would live in this harem for the rest of her life. She was not free to return to her family or to marry anybody else. If it would help your readers to understand the story, you could explain all or part of this to your readers here, if you did not do so in 2:12 or 2:13. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

She would not go to the king again

In verse 12, the Note mentioned that "go to the king" meant "have sexual relations with the king." But for this occurrence of the expression, it is appropriate to use a more general phrase such as "visit the king" because there could be other, more social reasons for a further visit. The woman would now be a secondary wife, and the king would only send for her if he decided that he enjoyed being with her. Alternate translation: "She would not go and see the king again"

had delighted in her

This means that he "had enjoyed being with her" or that she "had pleased the king very much."

and she was called by name

You can say this with an active form. For example, you can say, "and the king asked for her by name" or "and called for her by name." (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 2:15

Now when the turn of Esther (& her & came to go to the king

The story resumes here after the background information that was provided in verses 12-14 about what the women in the harem did when they became concubines of the king. A contrast is being drawn. A young woman could take any clothing and jewelry she wanted from the harem. But Esther only asked for what Hegai recommended. So it would be good to introduce this episode with a word such as “but,” which draws a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**)

the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken & for him as a daughter

This background information reminds the reader who Esther was by describing her relationship to Mordecai. You could make this a separate sentence and move it later in the verse to keep from breaking up the flow of the first sentence about what Esther did. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

Abihail

This man was Esther’s father and Mordecai’s uncle. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

she did not seek anything except what Hegai (& said

You can state this in a positive form by saying, “she asked only for.” Alternate translation: “she did not ask for anything else to wear except” (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**)

what Hegai (& said

Alternate translation: “what Hegai recommended” or “what Hegai suggested”

what Hegai (& said

As the king’s personal servant, **Hegai** would have known what kind of clothing and jewelry Ahasuerus found attractive on a woman. By following his advice, Esther showed that she trusted Hegai. This is implicit information that you could make explicit if it would help the reader to understand the story. You might say, for example, “Hegai knew the king’s preferences because he was his personal servant. Esther had come to trust Hegai and so she followed his advice.” This could go at the end of the verse or in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the eunuch of the king who was overseer of the women

This is saying that Hegai was the royal official responsible for the women in the harem for virgins. This is background information that reminds the reader who Hegai was by describing his responsibilities. You could also move this to the end of the verse and put it in parentheses. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

the eunuch of the king

See how you decided to translate the term **eunuch** in 1:10. You could say “royal” for “of the king.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

a lifter of favor in the eyes of everyone who saw her

This is a rare expression in Hebrew, and the exact meaning is uncertain. In this context, the expression probably means that everyone who saw Esther dressed in the clothes she would wear for her visit to the king was very impressed with the way she looked. Alternate translation: “pleased all who saw her” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

in the eyes of

Here, **eyes** is a metonym for seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. In this context, the phrase probably means that everyone who saw Esther thought that she was either an attractive woman or a pleasant person, or both. Alternate translation: “in the judgment of” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

everyone who saw her

This phrase can mean either **every man or every person who saw her**. Alternate translation: “every man who saw her” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**)

Esther 2:16

And Esther was taken

You can say this with an active form by saying, for example, “The king’s servants brought Esther.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

to the palace of his royalty

You can use an adjective to translate the abstract noun **royalty**. For example, you can say, “in his royal palace” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

in the tenth month

Alternate translation: “in month ten” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

which is the month of Tebeth

Tebeth is the name of the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. Alternate translation: “that is, the month of Tebeth” (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

the month of Tebeth

The story is being recorded from the perspective of the Persian court. But for the benefit of its intended Jewish audience, the Hebrew name of the month is given.

the month of Tebeth

You could convert the Hebrew days and months into approximate dates on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the dates will be different every year and the translation will not be quite accurate. So you may just want to provide the Hebrew days and months. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

in year seven of his reign

Alternate translation: “during the seventh year of the reign of Ahasuerus as king of Persia” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

Esther 2:17

And the king loved Esther more than all the women and she lifted favor and kindness before his face more than all the virgins

These two phrases mean almost the same thing. The information is given twice, in slightly different ways, to emphasize that Ahasuerus was completely convinced that Esther was the one he should make his queen. “More than all the virgins” basically duplicates the meaning of “more than all the women,” so, if this duplication would be confusing in your language, you don’t need to include both phrases, or you could say, “more than all of them” for the second phrase. (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

more than all the women

This means all the other women who had been brought to the king and who became his concubines. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and she lifted favor and kindness before his face

This is a rare expression in Hebrew, and the exact meaning is uncertain. See how you translated similar phrases in [2:9](#) and [2:15](#). Review the explanation there if that would be helpful. In this context, it probably means that King Ahasuerus was very impressed with both Esther’s appearance and her personality. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and she lifted favor and kindness before his face

Favor and **kindness** mean similar things and are probably used together here to strengthen a single idea. Alternate translation: “he was very pleased with her” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

And he set a crown of royalty on her head

Ahasuerus did this to show that he was making Esther his queen. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

a crown of royalty

To translate the abstract noun **royalty**, you can use an adjective such as a “royal” crown. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 2:18

And the king made a great feast

The king did this to celebrate Esther becoming the queen. You can say this explicitly. For example, you can say, "Then, to celebrate her becoming the queen, the king hosted a great feast." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the feast of Esther

You could indicate to your readers this is the name that Ahasuerus gave to the feast, for example, "He called it 'Esther's Feast.'" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

And he made a holiday for the provinces

This was probably a "tax holiday," that is, a temporary elimination of taxes. For a time, the provinces did not have to send in the usual taxes to the king. You could say something like "he proclaimed a temporary reprieve from taxes for all the provinces of his empire." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

according to the hand of the king

Here, **hand** figuratively represents the action of doing or giving. The phrase means that King Ahasuerus personally gave lavish gifts to the guests at this feast. You could say something like "with royal generosity" or "with great willingness to give" or "with generosity that only a king can give." (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 2:19

Now when virgins were being gathered a second time

Since this happened some time after Esther's Feast, you can show this by using a connecting phrase such as "some time later." (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**)

Now when virgins were being gathered a second time

The most likely explanation for this is that Ahasuerus decided he would like to have more concubines. you could say this explicitly if it will help the readers to understand the story. He probably believed that having a large number of concubines was another thing that would show he was a great king. To do so, you could add: "because Ahasuerus decided that he would like to have more concubines." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Now when virgins were being gathered a second time

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. For example, you can say, "at the time when the king's officers were gathering virgins for a second time." (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Now when virgins were being gathered a second time, Mordecai & then

This indicates that the information about Mordecai explains what he was doing at this same time. You can use a phrase such as "during this time" to indicate this. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**)

Mordecai was then sitting at the gate of the king

Possible meanings are: (1) **Sitting at the king's gate** is an idiom meaning that Mordecai worked for the king in some capacity and was stationed at the gate. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (2) Mordecai sat there so he could hear about how Esther was doing from the many people who passed through the gate. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

at the gate of the king

Alternate translation: "the gate to the king's house" or "the gate to the king's palace"

Esther 2:20

her ancestry (that is, her people

These two short phrases mean almost the same thing. They are used together to emphasize that Esther followed Mordecai's instructions exactly. You could combine them, as UST does. Alternate translation: "who her relatives were or that she was a Jew" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

according to the charge that Mordecai had laid upon her

Alternate translation: "just as Mordecai had instructed her" or "as Mordecai had made her promise" or "because Mordecai had warned her not to tell anyone"

Esther 2:21

In those days

This resumes the story after the background information that is provided in verse 20. Indicate this in the way that your language resumes a story after giving background information, such as with a connecting phrase like “during that time.” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**) (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.249)**)

when Mordecai was sitting at the gate of the king

It is implicit in the story that Mordecai heard the two men talking who are named right afterwards. You can say this explicitly if it helps the readers to understand this part of the story. To do so, add: “he heard two men talking.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

was sitting at the gate of the king

As in verse 19, this is likely an idiom that means that Mordecai worked for the king in some capacity and was stationed at the gate where officials met to make important decisions. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Bigthan and Teresh

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

two eunuchs of the king

See how you translated this term in 1:10. For the phrase **of the king**, you can say “royal.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

who were guardians of the doorway

In this case the men were not guardians of one of the harems but guardians of the king's private rooms. You could say, “they guarded the doorway to the king's private rooms” or “they protected the doorway to the king's private quarters.”

and they sought

Here, **seeking** figuratively means actively trying to do something. Alternate translation: “they were plotting” or “they wanted to find a way” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

to stretch out a hand

Here the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to cause someone physical harm with the intention of killing him. You could say, “they were planning to assassinate him.” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 2:22

And the matter was made known to Mordecai

You can say this with an active form, for example by saying, "Mordecai found out what they were planning." (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

and he declared it to Esther the queen

This means that he told Queen Esther about it somehow.

in the name of Mordecai

This expression means that Esther passed the information along to King Ahasuerus on Mordecai's behalf or that she told the king the information had come from Mordecai. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 2:23

And the matter was sought out and was found out, and the two of them were hanged on a pole

This verse tells what happened next after Esther gave the information to the king. You can use a word such as “then” to indicate this. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**)

And the matter was sought out and was found out

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. For example, you can say, “Then the king’s servants investigated Mordecai’s report and found out that it was true.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

and the two of them were hanged on a pole

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “the king ordered his servants to impale those two men on wooden poles” or “the king ordered his servants to hang those two men on a gallows” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

a pole

This seems to refer specifically to a pole or wooden structure that would be used to suspend a person above the ground and that could be used as a means of killing him or to display his body after he was dead. This might mean: (1) by hanging him from it with a rope tied around his neck, or (2) by impaling him on it, that is, by sticking a sharp point on one end of a pole through his body. Alternate translation: “wooden structure” or “wooden pole” or “gallows” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

And it was written

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. You can say, for example, “The king’s scribes recorded an account of this.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in the book of the events of days

This is an idiom that describes a regular record of the events in a king’s reign. You could call this “the royal chronicles.” Alternate translation: “the daily record book” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

before the face of the king

Here, **face** refers figuratively to the presence of a person. The phrase means that the scribes wrote this account while King Ahasuerus was personally present. You could say that they did this in the king’s presence. Alternate translation: “the king watched a scribe write this down” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 3

Esther 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Haman plots against the Jews

Mordecai was told to prostrate himself before Haman. This would be considered to be worship. But for a Jew, it was wrong to worship someone other than Yahweh. Because of this, he refused to do it. This made Haman angry, so he decided to kill all the Jews in the Persian Empire. Haman was a descendant of Agag, a king of the Amalekite people. The Amalekites became the enemies of the Jews during the exodus (Exodus 17:8-16). Moses told the people that they would need to destroy them (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), and later God commanded Saul to destroy them (1 Samuel 15:2-3). Samuel killed King Agag (1 Samuel 15:33), but the Amalekites were never completely destroyed (1 Samuel 30:17). Both Mordecai and Haman were probably very aware that their people were enemies.

Esther 3:1

After these things

This introduces a new event in the story. Use a connecting phrase that introduces a new event in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

After these things

This event happened some time after Esther became queen, and you can show this by using a connecting phrase such as “some time later.” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**)

Haman

This is a man's name. It occurs many times in the story. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite

These are the names of Haman's father and Haman's people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Ahasuerus made Haman, & great

This means that Ahasuerus **promoted** Haman. It's implied in the story that Haman was already one of Ahasuerus's officials, but that he was now being promoted to a higher position. You could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And he lifted him up and placed his seat of authority from over all the officials

These two phrases mean the same thing. They are used together to emphasize that the king was making Haman very powerful. You could combine them and say something like, “the king gave Haman a very high position that was over all of his other officials.” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

And he lifted him up

Here, **lifting** is a metaphor meaning to advance or promote a person to a higher, more important position than they held previously. Alternate translation: “he gave him a more important position” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

his seat of authority

Here, **seat of authority** means Haman's position or status in the Persian government. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

his seat of authority

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **authority**, you can express the same idea with a concrete noun for this whole phrase. For example, you can say, "his position." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

from over all the officials who were with him

Him in this phrase may refer to the king. You could say that "the king promoted him above his other officials" or "gave him more authority than all of his other officials" or that "Haman became more important than all of his other officials."

Esther 3:2

And all the servants of the king who were at the gate of the king

Here, the **gate of the king**, probably the entrance to the citadel, may figuratively represent the citadel itself, the place where these people served the king. The citadel, in turn, would represent everyone who served the king. So you could say just “all the king’s other servants.” However, this may also be a reference to the specific group of officials who were stationed at the gate, the way Mordecai was. Alternate translation: “the royal officials who were stationed at the palace gate” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

And all the servants of the king & were bowing down and prostrating themselves to Haman

The servants were required to do this as a way of honoring him whenever Haman walked by. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

were bowing down and prostrating themselves

This means that the other officials humbled themselves and lay flat on the ground before Haman. These actions represented recognition and respect for the very high position that the king had given him in the Persian government. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

were bowing down and prostrating themselves

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 honor Haman in this way. You could combine them as UST does and say something like “bow down all the way to the ground.” Alternate translation: “bowing and lying down on the ground” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

and prostrating themselves

This means bowing down all the way to the ground.

for thus & had commanded concerning him

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this information first in the verse because it explains the reason why all the other officials were bowing to Haman. See the UST. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

for thus & had commanded concerning him

The king did this as a sign of Haman’s new position. You can state this here or in a separate sentence, as in the UST. Alternate translation: “the king had commanded them to do this in order to show that he had given Haman such a high position” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

But Mordecai would neither bow down nor would he prostrate himself

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how serious an offense this was against the king's command and how much determination it took for Mordecai to remain standing. You could combine these phrases as UST does and say, "But Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman." Alternate translation: "Mordecai did not bow down or lie on the ground" (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

But Mordecai would neither bow down nor would he prostrate himself

It appears that as a Jew, Mordecai considered it wrong to worship anyone other than Yahweh, and that he believed he would be worshiping Haman if he bowed down low to the ground to honor him. So, on religious grounds, Mordecai refused to bow down. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 3:3

the servants of the king who were at the gate of the king

See how you translated this expression at the beginning of [3:2](#).

And & said to Mordecai

They spoke to Mordecai because they saw that he did not bow down. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. You could say, for example, “The other officials saw that, and they asked Mordecai.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Why are you trespassing the command of the king

Alternative translation: “why are you disobeying the king’s command” or “why are you not obeying what the king commanded”

Esther 3:4

when they spoke to him

This means that they spoke to him about not bowing down. Specifically, they warned him that he would be severely punished if he kept disobeying the king and not honoring his highest official. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

day after day

This expression means “every day.” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

And it happened that, when they spoke to him & he did not listen to them

Here, **he did not listen** means he did not heed their warning or he did not do what they said. Mordecai heard them, but he did not do what they advised him to do. This means that even though the other officials questioned him and probably warned him, he still refused to bow down. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

So they told Haman to see if the words of Mordecai would stand

In this context, **standing** figuratively means to survive a challenge, and **words** means the reasons that Mordecai gave for his actions. This phrase means that the other officials told Haman about it to see if he would tolerate it. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

for he had told them that he was a Jew

This is the answer that Mordecai gave the other officials when they asked him why he refused to bow down to Haman. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put it first in the verse because it explains everything that happens afterwards. Alternate translation: “Mordecai told them that he was a Jew, and that Jews would bow down only to God” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

for he had told them that he was a Jew

Mordecai’s explanation would have included the fact that Jews would only worship Yahweh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 3:5

And Haman saw

Here, **seeing** figuratively means knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. This phrase means that Haman learned about this. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Mordecai would neither bow down nor prostrate himself to him

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how serious an offense this was. You could combine them as UST does and say, "Mordecai was refusing to bow down to him." Alternate translation: "Mordecai would not bow down or lie on the ground" (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

And Haman was filled with rage

Here, **Haman's rage** is spoken of as something that could fill him up. You could say that he was furious or extremely angry. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 3:6

And it was despised in his eyes

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "Haman considered that it was not enough" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

And it was despised in his eyes

Haman probably decided to go to such extremes because he was so angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And it was despised

Despise in this context means not to hate but to think little of or think something is too small. This expression means that Haman decided it would not be enough just to kill Mordecai alone.

in his eyes

Here, **eyes** stand for "seeing," and in this case "seeing" figuratively means judgment. This phrase means in Haman's judgment. Alternate translation: "as he saw it" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

to stretch out a hand against Mordecai alone

Alternate translation: "he rejected the idea of killing only Mordecai" or "he decided to kill more than just Mordecai" or "he decided that it would not be enough to get rid of only Mordecai"

to stretch out a hand

As in [2:21](#), the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to cause someone physical harm with the intention of killing them. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

for they had told him the people of Mordecai

They means the other royal officials. **Him** refers to Haman. **The people of Mordecai** means the Jews. Mordecai had told these officials that he would not bow down to Haman because Jews worshiped only God. So this means that the other officials had told Haman that Mordecai was not bowing down to him because he was a Jew.

And Haman sought to annihilate

Here, **seeking** figuratively means trying to do something. In this context, it means that Haman decided that he would try to kill all the Jews. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

of & were in all the kingdom & Ahasuerus

This means in the entire empire that King Ahasuerus ruled.

the Jews, the people & Mordecai, & of

These two phrases refer to the same group of people. The repetition emphasizes how great the threat was to their existence. You could combine them as UST does and say something like "all of the Jews." Alternate translation: "Mordecai's people, the Jews" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Esther 3:7

In the first month

Alternate translation: "In month one" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

which is the month of Nisan

Nisan is the name of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

the month of Nisan

As in 2:16, you could convert the Hebrew month into an approximate time on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the dates will be different every year and the translation will not be quite accurate. So you may just want to give the Hebrew month. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

in year 12 of the king Ahasuerus

Alternate translations: "during the twelfth year of the reign of Ahasuerus as king of Persia" or "when King Ahasuerus had reigned for about twelve years" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

a Pur (which is "the lot") was cast

The storyteller is giving both the Persian and the Hebrew name because this is the story behind the Festival of Purim, which takes its name from "Pur." So this is not repetition for emphasis. You can put in the Persian name and the word for "lot" in your own language to show that the storyteller is doing this. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

the lot

A **lot** was an object with different markings on various sides that was used, most likely by dropping it on the ground, to select a specific time for doing something. The belief was that God or the gods would control which way the object fell, thus guiding the selection process and granting favor to the action if it were done on the date chosen. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

a Pur (& was cast

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. You can say, for example, "Haman had his servants cast a Pur." (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

a Pur (& was cast

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this information first because it explains the rest of what happens in this verse. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

before the face of Haman

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. In this context, the phrase means that Haman was physically present when the lot was cast. Alternate translation: “as Haman watched” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

from day to day and from month to month

This expression means that the lot was cast to select a particular day of the month and a particular month of the year.

from day to day and from month to month

Haman was casting the lot to determine the best day and the best month to kill the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to determine the best day and the best month to kill the Jews” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the twelfth, which is the month of Adar

Adar is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This name occurs several times in the story. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

the twelfth, which is the month of Adar

See how you decided in [2:16](#) and the first part of this verse to represent the dates that are given in the Hebrew calendar in the book of Esther. Be consistent.

the twelfth, which is the month of Adar

This means that the lot indicated the twelfth month of that year as the time for Haman to carry out his plan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. (The day that was chosen is reported in verse 13.) Alternate translation: “the lot indicated the twelfth month, the month of Adar, as the best month to kill the Jews” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the twelfth

Alternative translation: “month twelve” or “the twelfth month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

Esther 3:8

And Haman said to the king Ahasuerus

The implication is that Haman then went to see the king so that he could speak with him. You could say that explicitly. Do not give your readers the impression that the king was present with Haman while he was casting the lot. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

He has one people

He refers to the king, and **one people** refers to the Jews as a people group. So this means there is a people group or a group of people. (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

scattered and dispersed

These two words mean almost the same thing. Haman uses the repetition to emphasize that the Jews are everywhere throughout the empire and so their influence, which he says is bad, will affect everyone. You could combine these words as UST does. (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom

Haman is saying that the Jews are mixed in with all the other peoples, and they live in every province.

And their laws are different from every people, and the laws of the king they do not obey

Haman is saying that the Jews have their own set of laws, and he is accusing them of not obeying the king's laws as a result.

the laws of the king

Haman speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. You could have him say, "your laws." Or you could indicate this respect another way by having Haman begin by saying, "Your Majesty." (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

And there is no profit to the king to leave them untouched

Haman is saying, "It is not good for you to allow them to live in your empire." This can also be stated without the negative. Alternate translation: "the king should remove them" or "you should remove them"

And & to the king

Haman speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. You could express the same meaning in the second person by saying, "not good for you." (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Esther 3:9

If it is good to the king

Haman speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

If it is good to the king

See how you decided to translate this idiom in 1:19. Alternate translation: “if it seems like a good idea to you, O king” or “if the king thinks this is a good idea” or “if this advice is pleasing to the king” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

let it be written

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who would do the action. For example, you could say, “the king could write a decree” or “you could write a decree.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

to destroy them

This means that the decree would say that all the Jews should be killed.

I will weigh out & into the hands of the doers of the work

This could mean either of two possibilities: (1) Haman could mean that the king’s men will be able to collect a huge amount of money from the plunder that they would get from the Jews. Referring to the weight would be a way of saying, “I guarantee that it will be at least that much.” This reasoning agrees with 3:13, where the king’s letter specifies that those who kill the Jews can take their plunder. Alternate translation: “we will get so much plunder that the officers you send will be able to bring back” (Also see UST) (2) “**Weigh out into the hands**” could be an idiom that means Haman himself will pay the officers who will put the plan into effect. Haman will not do this personally, but it means that he will take responsibility for paying them from his own resources. Alternate translation: “From my own resources I will pay ... to the men who do the work” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and & 10,000 talents of silver

This would be worth over \$300 million at current prices today. But since prices vary over time, if you expressed the value in modern measurements, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate. Instead you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the talent, and explain in a note that a talent was equivalent to about 30 kilograms. Alternatively, you could specify the weight of the silver in the text, as UST does in metric tons. (See: **Biblical Money (p.238)**) (See: **Biblical Money (p.238)**)

and & 10,000 talents of silver

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” or “enormous amounts of silver” (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**)

the doers of the work

This could mean: (1) those who work for the king in general (administrators) or (2) more specifically the officers whom Ahasuerus would send around the empire to organize the killing of the Jews.

the treasuries of the king

Haman speaks to the king in third person as a form of respect. You could also have him speak of “your royal treasuries.” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Esther 3:10

And the king removed his signet ring from on his hand, and he gave it to Haman

The implication is that Ahasuerus thought that Haman's suggestion was a good idea and he agreed to it. You could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king agreed that this was a good idea, so" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And the king removed his signet ring from on his hand, and he gave it to Haman

Giving the ring to Haman showed that Haman could act on the king's own authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king gave Haman the power to act on his authority to carry out the plan. To show that, he gave Haman the ring he wore that had his official seal on it" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

his signet ring

This was a special ring that could be used to imprint the king's official seal on a law or decree. This ring had the king's name or mark on it. When he put a wax seal on important papers, he would press the mark onto the seal. If a paper had this mark on its seal, people would know that what was written on the paper was written with the king's authority and had to be obeyed. You could describe this as "the ring he wore that had his official seal on it." (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite

This information about Haman's identity is repeated to stress that the king giving him the signet ring was an official legal act that transferred power to him. (In the same way, legal documents today often use a person's full name and other identifying information.) If you repeat this information in your own translation, your readers should see this significance.

the adversary of the Jews

This phrase gives clarifying information about Haman. It means that he had become "the enemy of the Jews." (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

Esther 3:11

The silver is given to you

You can say this with an active form. This could mean one of the following things: (1) "You can keep the money from plundering the Jews for yourself." (2) "I give you permission to take the money from the Jews and to give it to the men just as you have said." (3) "You do not need to pay for the expenses of the plan yourself." (4) This statement by the king may also be a formal and cultural way of expressing gratitude for the promised money without actually releasing Haman from paying the money into the treasury. (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

and the people, to do with them as is good in your eyes

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. The king is telling Haman that **he can do whatever he wants to the Jews**. Alternate translation: "you can do to the Jews as you see fit" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 3:12

And the scribes of the king were called

You can say this with an active form. You can also say who did the action. It was most likely Haman, since the king had given him authority to act on his behalf. So you could say, "Haman called in the royal scribes." Alternate translation: "the king summoned his scribes" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in the first month, on day 13 of it

You can add "of that same year" to show that Haman did this right after Ahasuerus agreed to his plan. Alternate translation: "on the thirteenth day of the first month" (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

in the first month, on day 13 of it

You can put this information first because it places the event within the timeline of the story.

and it was written according to all that Haman commanded

You can say this with an active form. You can also say who did the action. Alternate translation: "and Haman dictated a letter to them" or "they wrote a decree containing all that Haman had commanded" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

the satraps of the king

This seems to mean the officials of the king who served in the palace in the capital city, since they are distinguished from the provincial governors and the leaders of the people groups. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

province by province

This expression means every province. See how you translated this in 1:22. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the officials of people by people

Alternate translation: "the leaders of each people group"

people by people

This expression means every people group. See how you translated this in 1:22. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

province by province according to its writing

See how you translated this in 1:22. Alternate translation: "to each province using its own alphabet" or "written in its own script" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

province by province according to its writing

The implication is that the scribes translated the letter and sent it to each province using its own alphabet. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and people by people according to its tongue

See how you translated this expression in 1:22. Alternate translation: “and to each people group in its own language” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

according to its tongue

Here, **tongue** is a metonym meaning the language spoken by a person or a group of people. Alternate translation: “according to its language” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

In the name of the king Ahasuerus it was written

There are two This could mean: (1) Here, **name** could mean the authority of the king. This would be saying that Haman’s letter had the same authority as it would have had if the king had sent it himself. Alternate translation: “Haman sent the letter under the king’s own authority” (2) However, this could also mean that Haman actually had the scribes sign the king’s name to the letter. Alternate translation: “they signed the king’s name at the end of the letters” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

it was written, and it was sealed with the signet ring of the king

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “to show that he was sending the letter under the king’s own authority, Haman sealed each copy of the letter with the ring that had the king’s official seal on it,” or “the scribes signed the king’s name at the end of the letters. Then they sealed the letters with wax, and stamped the wax by using the king’s ring” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 3:13

And letters were sent

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. For example, you can say, “couriers delivered the letters.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

by the hand of runners

Here, **hand** could mean two different things: (1) It could literally mean “hand,” meaning that the couriers carried the letters in their hands. Alternate translation: “couriers hand-delivered the documents” (2) “Hand” could also be a metaphor for power, control, or authority, meaning that couriers were the ones who delivered the letters to all the provinces throughout the empire. Alternate translation: “couriers gave the documents directly” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

to all of the provinces of the king

Haman did not send the letters to the provinces (the geographical territories) themselves. Rather, he sent them to the officials in every province in the empire. The story is using the word “province” to refer figuratively to these officials by something associated with them, the territories they ruled. Your translation should make clear that the letters were sent to people, not places. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

to annihilate, to slaughter, and to destroy

These words mean the same thing. They are used together to emphasize the completeness of the destruction that is envisioned. You could combine them as UST does and say something like “completely destroy.” (A “doublet” can use more than two words. See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

from young even to old

This is a figure of speech that figuratively describes all of something by naming two extreme parts of it in order to include everything in between. You could express its meaning as UST does and say something like “every single one of them.” Alternate translation: “including young people and old people” (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

children and women

Alternate translation: “including the children and the women”

in one day

Alternate translation: “on a single day” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

on the thirteenth

Implicitly, this means “the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of that same year.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

on the thirteenth

Alternate translation: "on day thirteen" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

of month 12

Alternate translation: "of month twelve" (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

which is the month of Adar

This is the name of the twelfth month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you decided in 2:16 and 3:7 to express dates that the story gives according to the Hebrew calendar. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

and to plunder their spoils

This means that the letters also said that those who killed the Jews could take everything that belonged to them.

Esther 3:14

the writing, to be given as a law in every province by province

You can say this with an active form. For example, you can say, “The officials in every province presented a copy of the letter as the law.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in every province by province

This expression means each and every province. See how you translated the term “province” in 1:1. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the writing, & was uncovered for all the peoples

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “the letter told the officials to post copies where everyone could see them” or “the king commanded the officials to display copies of these letters where all the people could see them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

to be ready for this day

Alternate translations: “so that people would be ready to do on that day what the king had written in the letter” or “so that they would get ready to do what the letter said to do when the day came”

Esther 3:15

The runners went out, hurrying by decree of the king

This means that the king had commanded the couriers to deliver the letters as quickly as possible.

The runners went out, hurrying by decree of the king

You can state explicitly where the couriers brought the letters. Alternate translation: “as the king had commanded, couriers rushed the letters to every province in the empire” or “then, according to what the king commanded, men riding horses took these letters quickly to every province in the empire” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and the law was given

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. For example, you can say, “People read the letter out loud” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in Susa the citadel

Here this likely means in the “capital city of Susa.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

sat down to drink

(1) This could mean that Ahasuerus and Haman had more than just a drink together. This could be a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to mean the whole thing. They may have celebrated with an entire banquet that is being described here by reference to one part of it, the drinks. Alternate translation: “had a celebration feast together” (2) Another possibility is that this is describing a toast that Ahasuerus and Haman shared to celebrate their plan. “Sat down” would simply be describing how the men would have reclined at a table to drink. Alternate translation: “had a celebration toast” (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

was in confusion

The implication is that the people in Susa were very upset about what was going to happen and they did not know what to do about it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

but the city of

The author wants us to see the contrast between the king and Haman sitting down to relax and drink and the people in the city agitated and in an uproar over what the king and Haman had proclaimed. Use a connecting word or other way that your language uses to show a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**)

but the city of Susa

This does not mean the city itself, but the people who live there. This is a figure of speech in which something is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. So this means “everyone who lived in Susa” or the people in Susa (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

was in confusion

You can translate the abstract noun **confusion** with a verbal phrase such as “was very confused.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 4

Esther 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Mordecai warns Esther to act

Mordecai tells Esther she must beg the king for the Jews' lives even if she risks her own death.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

There is implicit information that translators may not understand. The sentence, "Who knows whether you have come to this royal position for such a time as this?" means "maybe God made you the queen so you could save the Jews." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 4:1

Now when Mordecai knew about

Here the story re-introduces Mordecai as the main character in focus. Alternate translation: “when Mordecai found out” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**) (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.291)**)

all that had been done

Alternate translation: “about Haman’s plan to kill all the Jews” or “about those letters”

Mordecai tore his garments and put on sackcloth and ashes

These actions demonstrate extreme sadness. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

Mordecai tore his garments and put on sackcloth and ashes

You can explain why Mordecai did this. Alternate translation: “he was so anguished that he tore his clothes and put on rough sackcloth and threw ashes over himself” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And he went out into the midst of the city

The next verse shows that Mordecai was heading towards the king’s palace. You could say that explicitly here. Mordecai might have wanted to call attention to the danger that the Jews were in by going to a public location where people were used to seeing him. Or he might have wanted to contact Esther and ask her to help with the trouble. Or he might have wanted both. Alternate translation: “he started walking towards the city center, towards the king’s palace” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and cried out a great and bitter outcry

Great and **bitter** are two words that refer to the same thing and that work together. They indicate that Mordecai’s cry was so loud because it was so anguished. Alternate translation: “cried out in anguish” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Esther 4:2

And he came

He means Mordecai. Alternate translation: “Mordecai came”

only as far as before the face of the gate of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of an object. The phrase means that Mordecai could not come inside the gate to the king’s palace, but had to wait just outside of it. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the gate of the king

See how you translated this in [2:19](#). Alternate translation: “the gate to the king’s palace”

no one was to come into the gate of the king while wearing sackcloth

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this information first in the verse because it explains why Mordecai waited outside. See the UST. Alternate translation: “But no one who was wearing sackcloth was allowed inside the palace gates” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

Esther 4:3

And in every province by province

This expression means in every single province. See how you translated the term “province” in 1:1. Alternate translation: “in each and every province” or “in every province of the empire” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

any place where the decree of the king and his law reached

Alternate translation: “anywhere that the letter that said to destroy the Jews was announced in public”

the decree of the king and his law

These two phrases are referring to the same thing, that is, the information that the letter conveyed. The repetition is used to emphasize how serious a situation this was. Alternate translation: “the letter from the king” or “the law that said to destroy the Jews” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

there was great mourning by the Jews

Alternate translation: “the Jews mourned greatly” or “when the Jews heard about it, they mourned greatly”

and fasting

Fasting is a sign of mourning. If your readers would not understand this, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: “they went without food because they were so upset” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and weeping and lamenting

These two words mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how distressed the Jews were. Alternate translation: “wailed loudly” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

sackcloth and ashes were laid out by the multitudes

These were actions that demonstrated deep grief. “Many of them lay on the ground, dressed in sackcloth and sitting in ashes” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

Esther 4:4

the young female attendants of Esther

Alternate translation: "Esther's female servants" or "Esther's maids"

with her eunuchs and

See how you translated this term in 1:10. Alternate translation: "her male servants" or "her other officials" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

they told her

That is, they told her that Mordecai was sitting outside the gate wearing sackcloth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

even the queen was seized with extreme fear

The queen means Esther. You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "Esther herself became very afraid" or "this made the queen very distressed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

even the queen was seized with extreme fear

The implication is that this happened when she heard what Mordecai was doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "When she heard about this, Esther herself became very afraid" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai

She means Esther. This was her way of encouraging Mordecai to be hopeful and act publicly as if whatever situation he was worried about were not completely desperate. Alternate translation: "she sent servants to take to Mordecai some good clothes to wear" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

but he did not accept

This was Mordecai's way of replying to Esther that the situation truly was desperate. Alternate translation: "he refused to put them on" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

Esther 4:5

And Esther called for Hathak, from the eunuchs of the king & he

Alternative translation: “then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king’s officials”

for Hathak

This is a man’s name. It occurs several times in this chapter. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

from the eunuchs of the king whom he had caused to stand before her face

Alternate translation: “who was one of the royal guardians whom the king had assigned to serve Esther personally”
You can put this information first because it provides background information. (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

from the eunuchs of

See how you translated this term **eunuch** in [1:10](#). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

before her face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. This phrase means that the guardians served Esther personally. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

to know what this was and on account of what this was

These two phrases mean similar things. In both cases, “this” refers to what Mordecai was doing. The repetition is used to emphasize that Esther now knew there must be a very serious reason why Mordecai was wearing sackcloth in such a public place. Alternate translation: “to find out why he was so distressed that he was sitting at the palace gate wearing sackcloth” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

Esther 4:6

And Hathak went out to Mordecai

Hathak went out specifically to speak with Mordecai and find out why he was so distressed, as Esther had asked him to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Hathak went out to speak with Mordecai" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the open place of the city

Alternate translation: "the central plaza"

before the face of

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of an object. The phrase means that the open square was in front of the palace gate. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the gate of the king

The citadel is being described by reference to something associated with it, the gate that leads into it. Alternate translation: "the citadel gate" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 4:7

all that had happened to him

Here, **him** refers to Mordecai, but here Mordecai figuratively represents the entire group of which he is a member. Alternate translation: “everything that Haman was planning to do to the Jews” (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

the exact amount of silver that Haman had said to weigh out into the treasuries of the king against the Jews to destroy them

This could mean either of two possibilities: (1) the amount of silver that Haman said the king would get for his treasury from the plunder that the people who destroyed the Jews would take from them, or (2) the amount of silver that Haman had said he would contribute to pay for the expenses of the plan to destroy the Jews. You could say either one as an alternate translation, but it should agree with your interpretation of [3:9](#).

Esther 4:8

a copy of the writing of the law

Alternate translation: “a copy of the letter that Haman had sent out” or “a copy of the decree”

the law that had been given in Susa

If it would help your readers to understand, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “the law that the heralds had read out loud in Susa” or “the decree that the king’s servants had posted in Susa” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

to & annihilate them

Alternative translation: “that said that all the Jews must be killed”

in order to show Esther and to inform her

These two phrases mean similar things. They are repeated to emphasize how important Mordecai knew it was for Esther to understand just what Haman was planning. “so that Esther could see exactly what it said.” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

and to lay a charge upon her

Alternate translation: “and to urge her”

to implore his favor and to seek

These two phrases mean similar things. They are repeated to emphasize the force of the action that Mordecai felt was needed. Alternate translation: “to plead with him” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

from before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. In this context, the phrase means that Esther should go into the presence of the king to ask personally for the king’s intervention. Alternate translation: “to go to the king personally” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

concerning her people

Alternate translation: “to act mercifully toward her people”

Esther 4:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Esther 4:10

And Esther spoke to Hathak and commanded him to say to Mordecai

Alternate translation: "then Esther told Hathak to go back to Mordecai and tell him this"

Esther 4:11

All the servants of the king and the people of the provinces of the king are knowing

All the servants of the king refers to the royal officials in the palace. **The people of the provinces** refers to those living out in the empire. So this phrase means something like “those both near and far.” Esther is using a figure of speech to refer to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it in order to include everything in between those parts. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and say something like, “everyone in the whole empire knows.” Alternate translation: “all the king’s officials and all the people in the empire know this law” (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

All the servants of the king and the people of the provinces of the king are knowing

Esther says this to show that there is no uncertainty about this being the law. You can put this information after the description of the law itself. If it would be helpful in your language, so that it can serve to emphasize how definite the law is that was just described.

for any man or woman who

Here, Esther once again refers to a group figuratively by describing two parts of it. She means all of the people whom Ahasuerus rules as king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and say something like “anyone”. (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

goes to the king, to the inner court

As [5:1](#) makes clear, this refers to a courtyard right outside the room where King Ahasuerus sat on his throne. He could see out of the entrance to the room into the courtyard and tell if anyone came and stood there. Anyone who did that was asking to speak to the king. Alternate translation: “who goes into the inner courtyard of the palace, where the king can see them” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

who has not been called

If it would help your readers to understand, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who did the action. Alternate translation: “when the king has not summoned that person” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

his law is one

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this after the explanation of the law itself. Alternate translation: “this law applies to everyone in the kingdom”

to cause to die

Alternate translation: “that person must be executed” or “the guards will kill that person”

apart from when the king holds out to him the scepter of gold

If the king pointed his scepter toward a person, that meant that the king was accepting him. Alternate translation: “unless the king extends his golden scepter towards him” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

the scepter of gold

A scepter was an ornamental staff or wand that rulers carried or held as a symbol of their authority. According to this, the scepter of King Ahasuerus was made of gold. Alternate translation: “golden scepter” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

then he will live

This means that the guards will not kill this person and he can proceed to speak to the king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “then the guards will not kill him and he can speak to the king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

But as for me, I have not been called to come to the king these 30 days

Esther is saying by implication that she cannot speak to the king as Mordecai has requested because the king has not been calling for her, which would have given her an opportunity to speak to him. If she goes without being summoned, she could be put to death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

But as for me

This expression indicates a contrast between Esther’s present situation and the situation she has just described. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**)

these 30 days

The phrase means that Esther has not been called in the king’s presence for a period of at least 30 days. You could use an equivalent expression in your language that would indicate this is a long enough time that Esther has reason to believe the king is not interested in seeing her. Alternate translation: “in over a month”

these 30 days

Alternate translation: “thirty days” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Esther 4:12

And they told to Mordecai

From this point on, the author focuses only on Mordecai and Esther and does not specify who the messenger is. You can use a general phrase such as, "they told Mordecai" or "Mordecai was told" or "messengers told Mordecai." If that would be confusing, you could continue to specify that the messenger was Hathak, as the ancient Greek version did. See the UST.

Esther 4:13

And Mordecai said to return to Esther

Alternate translation: "then Mordecai sent back this message to Esther"

Esther 4:14

relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place

Here, **relief** and **deliverance** are spoken of as if they are living things that can rise up. Alternate translation: “someone else will rise up from another place and rescue the Jews” (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

relief and deliverance

Here, **relief** and **deliverance** mean very similar things. They are used together to emphasize the great emotion behind being delivered from this great evil. If it works better in your language, you can use one word instead of two, as in the UST. (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

but you and the house of your father will perish

The implication is that the Jews will be rescued starting in that other place, but the ones living in Susa will still be in danger because no one who could have helped them there (such as Esther) would have done anything. Alternate translation: “you and your relatives will be killed”

And who knows if you have arrived at royalty for such a time as this

This is really a statement, and it is about what is happening right then. Mordecai asks it in question form so that Esther will think deeply about her role in this situation. Alternate translation: “who knows, perhaps it was to intervene in this very situation that you became queen” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**)

Esther 4:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Esther 4:16

all the Jews who are found in Susa

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “all the Jews who live here in Susa” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

And fast on account of me

The verb **fast** here is plural, including Mordecai and all of the Jews. Fasting (that is, going without eating) was a symbolic act that the Jews did when they were praying intensely. You could make the connection with prayer explicit. Alternate translation: “fast and pray for me” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

neither eating nor drinking for three days, both night and day

This expression means that Esther was asking the Jews in Susa not to eat or drink anything during the day or the night for a period of three days. Alternate translation: “tell them to not eat or drink anything for three days and three nights” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Also, I myself and my young female attendants will fast likewise

Alternate translation: “my maids and I will also fast”

Then, in such circumstances

Alternate translation: “after we have all done that, and while still fasting”

which is not according to the law

Alternate translation: “even though there is a law against going without being summoned”

And if I perish, I perish

Alternate translation: “then if they kill me, they kill me”

Esther 4:17

And Mordecai went

The implication is that Mordecai did this after Hathak brought Esther's reply back to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "so after Hathak told this to Mordecai, he went" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

according to the whole charge that Esther had laid upon him

Alternate translation: "everything that Esther had told him to do"

Esther 5

Esther 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a section about Haman's fall (Chapters 5-7).

Special concepts in this chapter

Esther's respect

Esther approached the king with the utmost of respect. By doing this, her character became respected by the king.
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 5:1

And it happened on the third day

This introduces a new event in the story. Alternate translation: “three days later” or “when Esther had been fasting for three days” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

that Esther put on royalty

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **royalty**, you can express the same idea with an adjective and a concrete noun. Alternate translation: “Esther put on the robes that showed that she was the queen” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

that Esther put on royalty

It is clear from the story that before she went to see the king, Esther got a banquet ready so that she could invite him and Haman to come to it right away. If it is confusing to leave that out, you can explain that here. Alternate translation, add: “Esther prepared a grand banquet and then put on her royal robes” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

in the inner court of the palace of the king

See how you translated this in [4:11](#). Alternate translation: “the inner courtyard of the palace”

opposite to the house of the king

Alternate translation: “across from the room where the king was”

Now the king was sitting on the throne of his royalty in the palace of royalty

Royalty is an abstract noun that refers to those things that belonged only to the king. You can translate this idea with a verb, “the throne he ruled from” and “the palace where he reigned,” or with an adjective, “his royal throne” and “his royal palace.” Alternate translation: “in the throne room of the palace, sitting on the king’s throne” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

opposite to the entrance of the palace

Alternate translation: “facing the entrance of the room”

Esther 5:2

And it happened that

This expression introduces what happened next. Alternate translation: “Now” or “and” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.247)**)

as soon as & saw

Alternate translation: “when ... noticed”

she lifted favor in his eyes

See how you translated similar expressions in 2:9, 2:15, and 2:17. Review the explanations there if that would be helpful. In this context, it probably means that King Ahasuerus **thought Esther looked very attractive** as she stood in the court. It could also mean that King Ahasuerus was very pleased to see her. It could mean both.

Alternate translation: “he was very pleased to see her” or “he approved of her” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

she lifted favor in his eyes

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. This phrase means that King Ahasuerus decided not to kill Esther for coming into the inner court without being summoned. Alternate translation: “he was very pleased to see her” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

And the king held out to Esther the scepter of gold that was in his hand

King Ahasuerus did this to show that he would not enforce the law that said that Esther should be executed for coming into the king’s inner court without being summoned. See how you translated this in 4:11. Alternate translation: “he extended the gold scepter toward her.” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

And the king held out to Esther the scepter of gold that was in his hand

King Ahasuerus did this to show that he would not enforce the law that said Esther should be executed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “he extended the gold scepter toward her to signal that he would be glad to talk to her.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

so & approached

Alternate translation; “so ... came close” or “so ... came up to the throne”

and touched the head of the scepter

This action was probably customary for a king’s subjects in a Persian court, when the king extended the royal scepter. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

and touched the head of the scepter

This action demonstrated that Esther respected the authority of King Ahasuerus and was thankful for his kindness to her. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could include that information here, such as: "... to show that she respected his authority." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the head of the scepter

Here, **head** is a metonym meaning the top (or uppermost part) of an object or location. This phrase means that Esther touched the top of the king's scepter on the end that was extended toward her. Alternate translation: "the top of the scepter" or "the tip of the scepter" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 5:3

What is to you, Esther the queen

Alternate translation: "What do you want, Queen Esther?"

What is to you, Esther the queen? And what is your request

These two phrases mean almost the same thing. Ahasuerus says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to show that he is very interested in hearing why Esther has come to see him. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if it would be more natural in your language to combine them into one. Alternate translation: "What do you want, Queen Esther?" (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

As much as half of the kingdom, and let it be given to you

This was probably a formal and customary expression in the Persian royal court, meant to show honor to the person making a request of the king and to indicate the king's willingness to be very generous when answering the request. King Ahasuerus was almost certainly not offering to give Esther half of his kingdom. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning: "I will give you anything you ask for, no matter how great it is." Alternate translation: "I will give you what you want, even if you ask me to give you half of my kingdom!" (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**)

and let it be given to you

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who will do the action. Alternate translation: "I will give you anything you ask for" or "I will give you what you want" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 5:4

If it is good to the king

This is an idiom. See how you translated it in 1:19 and 3:9. Alternate translation: “If it seems like a good idea to you, O king” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

If it is good to the king

Esther speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “if it seems like a good idea to you, O king” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

let the king come with Haman

Esther speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “O king, please come with Haman” or “you and Haman come” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

the banquet that I have made for him

Esther speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “the banquet that I have prepared for you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

the banquet that I have made for him

If you decide to translate this as “the banquet that I have prepared for you,” then the word “you” should be singular, since here it refers just to the king. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.270)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.270)**)

Esther 5:5

And the king said

The king would have said this to his servants, not to Esther. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "The king said to his servants" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Bring Haman quickly in order to do the word of Esther

The **word of Esther** means her invitation to the banquet. Alternate translation: "go and get Haman and bring him quickly to the banquet that Esther has prepared"

had made

Alternate translation: "had prepared for them"

Esther 5:6

What is your petition? And let it be given to you. And what is your request? As much as half of the kingdom, and let it be done

These two question-and-statement pairs mean almost the same thing. Ahasuerus says the same thing twice in slightly different ways to show that he is truly disposed to give Esther whatever she wants. If this is confusing, you do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation. you can combine them into one or replace the repetition with a statement of what the repetition means, as in the UST. Alternate translation: “now please tell me what you really want. I will do it for you” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

What is your petition? And let it be given to you. And what is your request? As much as half of the kingdom, and let it be done

When Ahasuerus asked Esther in the throne room what she wanted, she said that she wanted him and Haman to come to a banquet she had prepared. But since the king asks her once again at the banquet what she wants, it is clear that he knew this was not her real request. Instead, he knew that she wanted to show him hospitality first, as a gesture of respect for him and their relationship. You can indicate this by translating, “Now please tell me what you really want.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

is your petition? & is your request

The two abstract nouns **petition** and **request** can be expressed with a single phrase using the verb “want.” Alternate translation: “what you really want” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

And let it be given & and let it be done

You can capture these parallel passive statements with one statement using an active form. Alternate translation: “I will give you anything you ask for” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

As much as half of the kingdom

See how you translated this expression in [5:3](#). Review the explanation there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “I will give you anything you ask for, no matter how great it is”

Esther 5:7

And & answered and said

Here a single idea is being expressed by using two words connected with “and.” Together the two words mean that Esther responded to the question that the king asked her. Alternate translation: “answered” or “replied” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

My petition and my request

The words **petition** and **request** mean the same thing. Esther probably used these words together as a way of speaking very formally and respectfully to the king. Alternate translation: “this is what I want” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

My petition and my request

The two abstract nouns **petition** and **request** can be expressed with a single phrase using the verb “want.” Alternate translation: “this is what I want” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 5:8

if I have found favor in the eyes of the king

The expression **find favor** means to gain the approval or acceptance of another person. Alternate translation: “if you are pleased with me” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

if I have found favor in the eyes of the king

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. The phrase means the King Ahasuerus is pleased with Esther and willing to grant her request. Alternate translation: “if the king evaluates me and approves” or “if the king is pleased with me” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

if I have found favor in the eyes of the king

Esther speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “if you evaluate me and approve” or “if you are pleased with me” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

and if it is good to the king

This is an idiom. See how you translated it in [1:19](#), [3:9](#), and [5:4](#). Alternate translation: “If it seems like a good idea to you, O king” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to grant my petition and to perform my request

The phrases **to grant my petition** and **to perform my request** mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “to do what I want” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

let the king come with Haman to the banquet that I will make for them

Esther speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “please come with Haman to another banquet that I will prepare for you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

let the king come with Haman to the banquet that I will make for them

If you decide to translate this as “the banquet that I have prepared for you,” then the word “you” should be dual if your language uses that form, since it refers to the king and Haman, otherwise it should be plural. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.268)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.268)**)

and tomorrow I will do according to the word of the king

The **word of the king** means his request for Esther to tell him what she wants. Alternate translation: “I will answer your question then”

according to the word of the king

Esther speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. Alternate translation: “according to your word”
(See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Esther 5:9

And & went out

Alternate translation: “and ... left the banquet”

joyful and pleased of heart

The word **joyful** and the phrase **good of heart** mean the same thing. These terms are used together to show that Haman was very happy after attending Esther’s banquet with King Ahasuerus. Alternate translation: “feeling very good” **Doublet (p.257)** (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

and pleased of heart

Here, **heart** figuratively represents the action of thinking or feeling. The phrase means that Haman felt happy. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

that he neither rose up

Under other circumstances, officials were expected to bow low to the ground to show respect for Haman. See [3:2](#). But since Mordecai was already sitting on the ground as a sign of mourning, he would have been expected to stand up to show respect. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Mordecai did not stand up to show respect for Haman” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

nor trembled from him

The phrase means that Mordecai was not afraid of Haman or of what Haman might do to him for refusing to show the respect that the king had commanded. Alternate translation: “or tremble fearfully in front of him” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

then Haman was filled with rage on account of Mordecai

Here, **Haman’s rage** is described as something that could fill him up. See how you translated this expression in [3:5](#). Alternate translation: “Haman became very angry because of Mordecai” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 5:10

But Haman restrained himself

There is a contrast between this sentence and the previous one. Haman felt very much like doing one thing, but he decided it would be better to do something else. The contrast can be indicated with a phrase such as “but even though.” Alternate translation: “but even though Haman was so angry, he kept himself from losing his temper” or “Haman refused to show how angry he was” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**)

Zeresh

This is a woman's name. It occurs several times in this chapter and the next. Be sure to translate it consistently. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther 5:11

And & recounted to them

Alternate translation: "then ... made a long speech to them about"

the glory of his wealth

Glory and **wealth** are both abstract nouns. Alternate translation: "Haman told them about how great his wealth was" or "Haman told them about the many great things he owned" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

and the multitude of his sons

Having many sons was probably seen as a mark of honor and status in Persian culture. This phrase probably means that Haman was boasting about the status he enjoyed in Persian society because he had many sons.

Alternate translation: "how many sons he had" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

his sons

This word can sometimes be used in Hebrew to mean both male and female children. However, here it clearly refers to male children, so you should translate it that way. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**)

had made him great

Alternate translation: "how the king had continually given him more authority" or "how the king had honored him many times by giving him more important work"

he had lifted him over

Here, **lifting** is a metaphor meaning to "advance" or "promote" a person to a higher, more important position than they had previously. Alternate translation: "given him a position more important than" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

the officials and administrators of the king

This means all of the others, as 3:1 makes clear. Alternate translation: "all of his other officials and administrators" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the officials and administrators of the king

The words **officials** and **administrators** mean similar things. If your language uses one word for these, you can combine them. (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

Esther 5:12

In addition

You can translate it as an exclamation because Haman believes he has saved the best for last and is now introducing what he considers to be his most recent significant honor. Alternate translation: “and that is not all” (See: **Exclamations (p.263)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.263)**)

Esther the queen did not bring anyone with the king & except me

This can be expressed positively. Alternate translation: “I was the only one Queen Esther invited besides the king” or “Queen Esther invited just two of us, the king and me” (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**)

she had made

Alternate translation: “she had prepared”

And also for tomorrow, I am called by her with the king

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “and she has invited me to attend another banquet with the king again tomorrow” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 5:13

But all of this is not equal for me to every time that I see

This is a figurative way of speaking. It is as if Haman is weighing his happiness on one side of a scale and his unhappiness on the other side. Haman is saying that his happiness over all the honors he has received is still not greater than his unhappiness over seeing Mordecai fail to honor him, so on balance, he is unhappy. Alternate translation: "I still cannot be happy as long as I keep seeing" or "all of this does not make me happy" or "... does not satisfy me" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

But all of this

Haman is continuing to speak here. You can show this by beginning with "Then Haman said."

the Jew

This phrase gives clarifying information about Mordecai. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p. 251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

sitting at the gate of the king

Haman could be referring to the way Mordecai has been refusing to stand up to honor him, or he could be referring generally to the way Mordecai has never honored him (by either bowing or standing up) ever since he was appointed to a position in the king's service and stationed at the gate. Either way, being reminded of this dishonor is the reason why Haman continues to be unhappy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "sitting at the citadel gate and refusing to honor me" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

at the gate of the king

Alternate translation: "the citadel gate"

Esther 5:14

And Zeresh his wife, with all of his friends, said to him

The verb is feminine, so it is Zeresh who is speaking here. By mentioning the friends, it is implied that they are in agreement with what she says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say, “Then Haman’s wife Zeresh suggested, and his friends agreed.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

with all of his friends

This means the friends whom Haman had invited to his home that day. Alternate translation: “his friends who were there”

Let them make

You can say who would do the action. Alternate translation: “have your servants set up” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

a pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Be sure your translation is consistent in the chapters that follow. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

50 cubits high

You can convert this to a modern measure if that is the style of translation that you are using. Alternate translation: “seventy-five feet high” or “twenty-five meters high” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.235)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.235)**)

speak to the king, and let them hang Mordecai on it

If it would be helpful in your language, you could make explicit what Haman would say to the king. Alternate translation: “speak to the king and tell him that you would like to hang Mordecai on it” or “tell the king that you intend to hang Mordecai on it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and let them hang Mordecai on it

If it would be helpful in your language, you could make explicit who does the action. Probably, Haman’s servants would carry out the action. But since it would happen under Haman’s orders and perhaps under his supervision, you could also describe him as the one who does the action if that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: “and have your servants hang Mordecai on it” or “and hang Mordecai on it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Then go & to the banquet joyful

Then indicates more than a time sequence here. Zeresh and the friends are saying what the result would be. Alternate translation: “after he is dead, you will be able to go to the banquet ... in a good mood” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

And the word was good before the face of Haman

The **word** was the suggestion that Zeresh and the friends made. Here, **face** figuratively represents Haman himself by something associated with him, his face, which showed what he was thinking and feeling. Alternate translation: “Haman decided that he liked this idea” or “that suggestion pleased Haman” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

and he made the pole

Haman most likely did not do this personally. He ordered it to be done. Alternate translation: “he gave his servants orders to set up the pole” or “he told his servants to construct the gallows”

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Be sure your translation is consistent in the chapters that follow. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 6

Esther 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the story of Haman's fall.

Special concepts in this chapter

Approaching the king

It was not possible for a person to easily approach the king. Normally, access to him was very limited. There are several events in this chapter which show the layers of protection surrounding the king.

Esther 6:1

That night

This introduces a new event in the story. Use a natural way of introducing a new event in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

the sleep of the king fled away

Here, **sleep** is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could flee away. Alternate translation: “the king could not sleep” (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

And he said to bring

He means the king. The implication is that he told the young men who attended him to do this. Verses 3 and 5 indicate this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “so he commanded his servants to fetch” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the book of records of the events of days

This is equivalent to the expression “the book of the events of days” in 2:23. See how you translated that expression. Alternate translation: “the royal chronicles” or “the records of what had happened during all the time that he had been king”

and they were being called out

This means that the chronicles were read out loud. You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “the young men got the chronicles and began to read them out loud” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. This phrase means that the book was being read in the king’s presence. Alternate translation: “to the king” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 6:2

And it was found written

Both terms **found** and **recorded** can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: “they found that the writers had recorded there” or “they read the part where the writers had written” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Mordecai had told about

The implication is that Mordecai had saved the king's life by discovering the plot and telling him about it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Mordecai had saved the king's life by discovering a plot against the king and telling him about it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Mordecai had told about

To relate the events in chronological order, you can put this at the end of the verse. Alternate translation: “but Mordecai had saved the king's life by discovering their plot and telling him about it” (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

Bigthana and Teresh

These are the same two men who are named in [2:21](#). However, there the first man's name is said to be “Bigthan.” Decide on a consistent way of translating these names so your readers will know that they are the same men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

two of the eunuchs of the king

See how you translated the term **eunuch** in [1:10](#). Alternate translation: “two of the royal guardians” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

who were from the guardians of the doorway

See how you translated this expression in [2:23](#). Alternate translation: “who protected the doorway to the king's private quarters”

they had sought

Here, **seeking** figuratively means actively trying to do something. Alternate translation: “they had planned” or “they had tried” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

to stretch out a hand

As in [2:21](#), the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to cause someone physical harm with the intention of killing them. Alternate translation: “to assassinate” or “to kill” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 6:3

What honor or greatness was done for Mordecai

Honor and **greatness** have similar meanings and they are used together to emphasize that Mordecai should certainly have been honored in some grand way for saving the king's life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this by putting the terms together. For example, you could say, "What great honor was done for Mordecai?" Alternate translation: "what did we do to reward Mordecai or to show that we appreciated what he did" (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

was done

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "what did I do" or "what did we do" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Not a thing has been done with him

You can say this with an active form. However, it would be good to say this in a way that does not create the impression that the young men are accusing the king. Alternate translation: "no one did anything for him" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

on account of this

Alternate translation: "for saving my life"

Esther 6:4

Who is in the court

This could mean either: (1) The king knows that there is someone in the courtyard, maybe because he heard someone walking there; he wants to know who it is. (2) Since there are always people around the palace, the king assumes that there must be someone out in the courtyard. In either case, the king wants to know if there is someone there with whom he could consult about the best way to honor Mordecai. As the story has already said in [1:13](#), it was the king's habit to consult his advisors on important questions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king wanted to consult someone about the best way to honor Mordecai, so he asked, 'who is in the courtyard'" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Who is in the court

In order to present the events in logical and chronological order, you can put the king's question last in the verse if that would be more natural in your language. Haman had already come in the courtyard by the time the king asked this question.

Now Haman had come into the outer court of the house of the king to say to the king to hang Mordecai on the pole that he had prepared for him

This sentence indicates that Haman had already entered the outer court when King Ahasuerus asked his question. You could indicate this with a phrase such as "at that moment" or "just then" or "while they were talking" (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.240)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.240)**)

into the outer court of the house of the king

This phrase is describing the first courtyard a person would come to after entering the palace from the outside. Alternate translation: "the outer courtyard of the palace"

to say to the king to hang Mordecai

Alternate translation: "to tell the king that he wanted to hang Mordecai" or "to tell the king that he wanted to impale Mordecai"

the pole that he had prepared for him

Alternate translation: "on the pole that he had set up" or "on the gallows that he had set up for Mordecai"

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Be sure your translation is consistent in the chapters that follow. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 6:5

And the young men of the king said

It is implied that the young men went and looked, perhaps through a window or a doorway, to see who might be in the courtyard before they answered the king. If it would be helpful in your language, you can say so. Alternate translation: “the young men who served the king looked and saw that Haman was in the courtyard. They said” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Behold

This is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation. You could also have the young men address the king directly to get his attention. Alternate translation: “O king” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Let him come

Alternate translation: “he may come in”

Esther 6:6

And Haman came, and the king said to him

Alternate translation: "when Haman came in, the king said"

What is one to do for the man in whose honor the king is delighted

Here the king speaks of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person instead. Alternate translation: "what should I do for the man whom I would really like to honor" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

in whose honor the king is delighted

To delight in doing something means to be glad to do it and to really want to do it. Alternate translation: "whom I am glad to honor" or "whom I want to honor" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Then Haman said in his heart

Here, **heart** could mean two different things: (1) Heart could figuratively represent the action of thinking or feeling. In that case, the phrase would mean "then Haman said in his thoughts." (2) Heart could also be a metaphor meaning to be inside someone or something. In that case, the phrase would mean "then Haman said inside himself." Either way, the phrase means that Haman was not saying this out loud, but saying it to himself in his thoughts. Alternate translation: "Haman thought to himself" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

For whom would the king delight to do honor more than me

Haman is actually making a statement to himself rather than asking a question and trying to figure out the answer. He uses a question form to emphasize how true he believes the statement to be. If it would be helpful in your language, instead of a question, you could use a statement such as, "Surely there is no one whom the king would take pleasure in honoring more than me!" Alternate translation: "whom would the king like to honor more than me" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**)

Esther 6:7

For a man whom the king delights to honor

To delight in doing something means to be glad to do it and to really want to do it. Alternate translation: “for a man the king is glad to honor” or “for a man the king wants to honor” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

For a man whom the king delights to honor

Haman speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. You can have him address the king in the second person. Alternate translation: “if you really want to honor someone” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Esther 6:8

let them bring

The implication is that the king's servants would do this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "let someone bring" or "tell your servants to bring" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

a garment of royalty with which the king has clothed himself

Royalty is an abstract noun that refers to anything that belongs to the king. You can translate this idea with an adjective, "a royal garment." Alternate translation: "one of your own royal robes that you have already worn yourself" or "one of the robes you wear to show that you are the king" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

with which the king has clothed himself

Haman speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. You can have him address the king in the second person. Alternate translation: "that you have already worn yourself" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

and a horse on which & has ridden

Haman speaks to the king in the third person as a sign of respect. You can have him address the king in the second person. Alternate translation: "a horse that you have already ridden yourself" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

and which has been given a crown of royalty for its head

This whole phrase refers to the horse. You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "and that has a royal crown on its head" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

and which has been given a crown of royalty for its head

The implication is that this would be done to show that this was one of the king's own horses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "and that has a royal crown on its head to show that it belongs to you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

a crown of royalty

Royalty is an abstract noun that refers to the royal authority that the king exercised. You can translate this idea with an adjective, "a royal crown." (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 6:9

And give this garment and this horse into the hand of a man from the & officials of the king

Here, **hand** is a metaphor meaning power, control, or authority. It appears that the king himself would not perform such acts of service to one of his subjects even if he really wanted to honor that person. So Haman is saying that on behalf of the king, representing his authority and power, one of the king's most noble officials should present the man with the robe and the horse. Alternate translation: "then, on your behalf, have one of your most noble officials present the man with the robe and the horse" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

a man from the most noble officials of the king

Haman speaks to 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. Alternate translation: "one of your most noble officials" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

And let them clothe

Since **them** is plural, it likely refers to the king's servants. If it would be helpful in your language, you can say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "have your servants clothe ... with the robe" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the man whom the king delights to honor

To delight in doing something means to be glad to do something or to want to do something. Alternate translation: "the man whom you really want to honor" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the man whom the king delights to honor

Haman speaks to 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. Alternate translation: "the man whom you really want to honor" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

in the open square of the city

This refers to a large, open space in the city, either the space that was in front of the palace (as in 4:6), or a space inside one of the city gates. In either case, this would have been a public area where people could gather, and so it was a place where a great number of people would have seen how the king was honoring Mordecai. Alternate translation: "through the public square of the city"

and proclaim

Alternate translation: "and tell the noble official and servants to proclaim" or "and have them shout out"

before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of a person. The phrase means that the servants were to shout out to the people in front of the man on the horse, that is, to the people who were in the path of his horse as it

approached. Alternate translation: “to whoever is in front of them” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Thus shall it be done for the man whom the king delights to honor

To delight in doing something means to be glad to do something or to want to do something. Alternate translation: “the king is doing this because he really wants to honor this man” or “this is what the king does when he especially wants to honor someone” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Thus shall it be done

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who is doing the action. Alternate translation: “the king is doing this” or “this is what the king does” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 6:10

And the king said

The implication is that the king liked Haman's suggestion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king liked this idea, so he replied" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

according to how you have spoken, and do thus

Alternate translation: "do everything that you have said" or "do just what you have suggested"

the man who sits at the gate of the king

As in 2:19, this is likely an idiom which means that Mordecai worked for the king in some capacity and was stationed at the gate. Alternate translation: "one of my servants, who is stationed at the king's gate" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the man who sits at the gate of the king

Here the king speaks of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: "one of my servants, who is stationed at the gate to the palace" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Do not allow a word to fall

Here the action of letting **fall** is a metaphor meaning to leave out or leave unfulfilled. The phrase means that Haman must do absolutely everything that he said. Alternate translation: "do not leave out anything that you suggested" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Do not allow a word to fall

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "Be sure to do absolutely everything that you have said" (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**)

Esther 6:11

and caused him to ride in the open place of the city

See how you translated these expressions in verse 9. Alternate translation: “seated him on the horse and then led the horse through the public square of the city”

and called out before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of a person. The phrase means that Haman shouted out to the people in front of Mordecai, that is, the people who were in the path of his horse as it approached. Alternate translation: “called out to all of the people in front of him” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

whom the king delights to honor

To delight in doing something means to be glad to do something or to want to do something. Alternate translation: “the king is doing this because he really wants to honor this man” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 6:12

mourning with a covering of head

People often covered their heads to show that they were either extremely sad or ashamed. Alternate translation: "covering his head because he felt completely disgraced" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 320)**)

Esther 6:13

And Haman recounted

The implication is that, just as Haman gathered his friends together in 5:10 to boast of his status, now he gathered them together once again to talk about what had just happened. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Haman brought all his friends together again. He told ..." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

everything that had happened to him

The implication is that he told about the things that had happened to him "that day." If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Then his wise men and Zeresh & said to him

The implication is that, just as King Ahasuerus had royal advisors, Haman had advisors of his own. They would have been included among the "friends" he gathered for this occasion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "some of his friends were also his advisors, and they and his wife Zeresh told him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

his wise men

See how you translated this expression in 1:13. Alternate translation: "his advisors"

If Mordecai, before whose face you have begun to fall, & then

This could mean either of two possibilities: (1) The action of falling could refer to bowing down and it could be a metaphor meaning to be dishonored and defeated. Haman wanted Mordecai to bow down in front of him. But instead, the story would be saying that Haman is starting to bow down (in a metaphorical sense) in front of Mordecai. Alternate translation: "Mordecai has begun to humiliate you. If he ..." (2) "Fall" could be a figurative way of saying "be killed in battle." In that case, Zeresh would be comparing Haman and Mordecai to two soldiers who are fighting. She is saying that Haman has already "begun to fall," that is, he is losing the battle, and he is likely to be killed. Alternate translation: "Mordecai has begun to defeat you. Since he ..." (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

before & face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of a person. This could mean: (1) that Haman has already begun to fall down (bow down) in front of Mordecai figuratively, or (2) that Haman and Mordecai are facing one another figuratively in hand-to-hand combat. Alternate translation: "before whom" or "in whose presence" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

is from the seed of the Jews

Here, **seed** is a metaphor meaning "offspring." It is a comparison: Just as plants produce seeds that grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. Alternate translation: "one of the Jewish people" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

you will not prevail against him

Here Haman's wife and friends are again speaking figuratively as if Haman is in a battle with Mordecai. Alternate translation: "you will not win against him" or "you will not have greater honor than he has" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

but

This conjunction indicates a contrast between the actions of prevailing (in the previous clause) and falling. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.243)**)

you will surely fall

Here the action of **falling**: (1) either refers once again to prostrating oneself, and is a metaphor meaning to be dishonored and defeated, or (2) Haman's wife and friends are saying that for Haman, defeat will be the outcome of the figurative battle. Alternate translation: "you will certainly lose to him" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

before his face

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of a person. The phrase means that Haman will lose in his struggle with Mordecai. Alternate translation: "before him" or "in his presence" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 6:14

They were still speaking with him

This phrase indicates something that happened after Haman's wife and friends started talking with Haman and while they were still talking. You should indicate this with a phrase such as "while." Alternate translation: "while they were still talking together, the king's eunuchs arrived" (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.240)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.240)**)

when the eunuchs of the king

See how you decided to translate this term in [1:10](#). Not all of the king's eunuchs came. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "some of the king's servants" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

And they hurried to bring Haman

Alternative translation: "they wanted to bring Haman quickly"

that Esther had made

Esther's servants would have done most of the work of preparing the banquet. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "that Esther and her servants had prepared" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 7

Esther 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The story of Haman's fall concludes in this chapter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Covering Haman's face

When "the servants covered Haman's face," they were showing that he had been condemned to be executed. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 7:1

And the king came with Haman to drink with Esther the queen

Esther hosted Ahasuerus and Haman for more than just drinks. This is a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to mean the whole thing. An entire banquet is being described here by reference to one part of it, the drinks. Alternate translation: “so the king and Haman went to the second banquet that Queen Esther had prepared” (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

Esther 7:2

on the second day

This refers to the day after the first banquet, as mentioned in [5:8](#). Alternate translation: “at that second banquet” or “on that second day of feasting” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

during the banquet of wine

Alternate translation: “while they were drinking wine” or “while the servants were pouring the wine and giving it to them”

What is your petition, & And let it be given to you. And what is your request? As much as half of the kingdom, and let it be done

These two statements mean almost the same thing. Ahasuerus says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, to show that he is truly disposed to giving Esther what she wants. You do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation if that would be confusing for your readers. Alternate translation: “now please tell me what you really want. Tell me, and I will do it for you” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

What is your petition

Ahasuerus has now allowed Esther to show her hospitality at two banquets. But he knows that she has done this as a gesture of respect for him and their relationship, and that this signals that she has an important and urgent request to make. You can indicate this by having the king ask, “Now please tell me what you really want.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And let it be given & and let it be done

You can capture these parallel passive statements with one statement using an active form. Alternate translation: “I will give you what you ask for” or “I will do for you what you ask” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

is your petition, & is your request

The two abstract nouns **petition** and **request** can be expressed with a single phrase using the verb “want.” Alternate translation: “what you really want” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

As much as half of the kingdom

See how you translated this expression in [5:3](#) and [5:6](#). Alternate translation: “I will give you anything you ask for, no matter how great it is” (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**)

Esther 7:3

And & answered and said

Here a single idea is being expressed by using two words connected with “and.” Together the two words mean that Esther responded to the question that the king asked her. Alternate translation: “answered” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

If I have found favor in your eyes

Favor means the approval or acceptance of another person. Alternate translation: “if you evaluate me and approve” or “if you are pleased with me” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

If I have found favor in your eyes

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. Alternate translation: “if you evaluate me and approve” or “if you are pleased with me” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

O king

In this case, Esther is addressing Ahasuerus directly as “O king”; she is not speaking about him in the third person as a sign of respect, as she and others usually do elsewhere in the story. This may indicate a special urgency to what she is saying, so it would be good to include this difference in your translation or indicate the urgency in some other way.

and if it is good to the king

This is an idiom that also appears in 1:19, 3:9, 5:4, and 5:8. The suggested translation in those cases was, “If it seems like a good plan to you, O king.” That was suitable for the deferential tone the speakers were using. But here, Esther has just addressed the king directly with “O king” and she is pleading urgently for the survival of her whole people. So an alternate translation here could be something more like, “I hope you will be willing to do what I ask” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

let my life be given to me at my petition and my people at my request

The phrases **at my petition** and **at my request** mean the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize the urgency of the request. If it would be more natural in your language, you could combine the two requests. Alternate translation: “please spare my life and save my people” or “my request is that you spare my life and the lives of my people” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

let my life be given to me

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “please spare my life” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

at my petition

The abstract noun **petition** can be expressed with the verb “ask for.” Alternate translation: “that is what I am asking for” or “that is what I want” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

and my people

If this is unclear in your language, you can repeat from the previous clause the words that have been left out.
Alternate translation: “and let my people be given to me” (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.259)**)

at my request

The abstract noun **request** can be expressed with the verb “ask for.” Alternate translation: “rhat is what I am asking for” or “rhat is what I want” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 7:4

For we have been sold

As Esther points out later in the verse, the Jews actually have not been exchanged for money. Rather, **sell** is a figurative way of saying “turn over to.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning by saying something like “For someone has turned us over to our enemies.” Alternatively, you could use the same figure, but show that it is a comparison. Alternate translation: “it is as though I and my people are cattle that have been sold to be slaughtered” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

For we have been sold

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “for someone has sold us” or “for someone has put us in danger of our enemies” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

for annihilation, for slaughter, and for destruction

As in [3:13](#), these words mean the same thing and are used together to emphasize the completeness of the destruction. If using three words would be difficult or confusing in your language, you could use one word for this and indicate that the destruction is extreme. Alternate translation: “and they are going to kill every one of us” (A “doublet” can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

for annihilation, for slaughter, and for destruction

If your language does not use abstract nouns such as these, you can replace them with one or more verbs. Alternate translation: “and they are going to kill every one of us” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Now if we had been sold as slaves and female servants

Alternate translation: “if the men and even the women had been sold into slavery”

the distress would not have been equal to a burden of the king

Esther is speaking very deferentially and with some exaggeration in order to impress on the king how important this is to her. She is saying that it would have been worth less to her to see her people rescued from slavery than it would have been to see the king spared the trouble of intervening on their behalf. (Haman uses the expression of “not equal” in this same sense in [5:13](#).) Alternate translation: “that would have been a matter too small to bother you with” or “that would be a small matter to a king like you, but this is very much worse” (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**) (See: **Hyperbole (p.282)**)

the king

Esther addresses King Ahasuerus in the third person as a way of showing respect. Alternate translation: “you” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

Esther 7:5

And & spoke and said

These two words mean the same thing. Alternate translation: “responded” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p. 257)**)

Who is he, this man? Where is this man, he

These two phrases mean similar things. They both ask about the identity of the man who is trying to destroy the Jews. King Ahasuerus uses the repetition to emphasize how outraged he is. If the repetition would be confusing in your language, you could combine the two phrases. However, from another perspective, both the man’s identity and his location are important to know so that his plot can be stopped. So, for that reason, you could also decide to include both phrases in your translation. (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

Who is he, this man? Where is this man, he

Alternate translation: “who has done this”

Where is this man, he whose heart is full to do thus

Here the concept of a **full heart** uses two metaphors at once. “Heart” figuratively represents the action of thinking or feeling. Also, saying that the “heart” is “full” is a figurative way of saying that someone is fully intending to do something, usually something that should not be done. Alternate translation: “where is the man who is intending to do such a thing” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 7:6

an adversary, and an enemy

These words mean the same thing. Together, they emphasize Haman's complete hostility towards the Jews. If it is more natural in your language, you can combine them and indicate the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: "the one who is our absolute nemesis" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

was terrified

Alternative translation: "was extremely afraid"

was terrified from before the face of

Here, **face** figuratively means the presence of a person. The phrase means that Haman was now extremely afraid to be in the presence of King Ahasuerus and Queen Esther. Alternate translation: "this made Haman very afraid to be in the presence of the king and the queen" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 7:7

And the king rose up in his rage from the banquet of wine

Here, **in his rage** is an idiom meaning to be extremely angry. Alternate translation: “the king was extremely angry and got up” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to the garden of the palace

The implication is that Ahasuerus went outside to absorb the shock that a man he had promoted to the highest position in his empire was plotting to destroy his queen and her whole people. Ahasuerus needed to sort out his conflicting loyalties and decide what to do about this. If it would be misunderstood, you could say explicitly why he went outside. Alternate translation: “he went outside to the palace garden to decide what to do.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

in order to seek for his life

Here, **seeking** figuratively means to beg or plead urgently for something. This phrase means that Haman wanted to beg Esther to persuade the king not to order his execution. Alternate translation: “to plead with Queen Esther to spare his life” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

for he saw

Here, **seeing** is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. Alternate translation: “he realized” or “he understood” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

evil was determined against him by the king

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “the king had decided to cause a disaster against him” or “the king was decided to destroy him” or “the king had decided to kill him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

evil was determined against him by the king

Here the abstract noun **evil** means “harm,” not something that is morally wrong as in the previous verse. In this context, it can be expressed with a verb such as “execute.” Alternate translation: “the king was likely to execute him” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 7:8

Now when the king returned & Haman was fallen

The implication is that when the king returned to the room, he saw what this verse describes next. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “when the king returned ... , he saw that Haman had fallen ... ” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Haman was fallen on the couch on which Esther was

The implication is that Haman was doing this as he pleaded for his life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could add that information to the end of this phrase: “ ... as he was begging Esther to spare his life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Haman was fallen on the couch on which Esther was

If you prefer to present the events in chronological order, you can put this information first in the verse. See the UST. (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

Haman was fallen on the couch on which Esther was

The expression **was fallen** means that as Haman was begging for his life, he was not standing up; he had suddenly come down very close to Esther as she was reclining on a couch. (From the impression that the king got when he returned, it is possible that Haman was even grabbing her arms or shoulders as he pleaded with Esther.) Alternate translation: “Haman had come down very close to Esther as she was reclining on a banqueting couch” or “Haman had thrown himself down on the couch where Esther was reclining” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the couch on which Esther was

In this culture, especially at a banquet like this one, wealthy people would recline on couches as they ate and drank. Alternate translation: “Esther’s banqueting couch”

Is it also to subdue the queen with me in the house

The king phrases this as a question to show his shock and anger at what he thinks Haman is doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could phrase it as a statement. Alternate translation: “he is even trying to rape the queen” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**)

to subdue the queen

The story is using a mild expression to refer to something that is disturbing. In this context, “subdue” means “rape.” The king thought that Haman was trying to rape Esther, and he likely said just that. You can show this in your translation if you want to make this clear. Alternate translation: “trying to rape the queen” (See: **Euphemism (p.261)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.261)**)

with me in the house

These two phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize the idea that they are expressing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases. However, each one does indicate something

slightly different about what a serious offense it would be if Haman actually were trying to rape Esther. It would be a violation of the king's personal trust and a violation of the trust implicit in hospitality. So you could also include both phrases. Alternate translation: "in my presence and in my own house" (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

The word was going out from the mouth of the king

This expression describes the action of speaking. Alternate translation: "as soon as the king said this" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

The word & when they covered the face of Haman

The king spoke, and then the servants covered Haman's face. One action followed upon another. However, this happened so quickly that almost no time seemed to pass in between. You can indicate this with a phrase like "as soon as." Alternate translation: "when the king said this, immediately they covered Haman's face" (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.240)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.240)**)

when they covered the face of Haman

The implication is that some the king's servants who were present did this, and they did it because they understood that the king wanted Haman to be executed. Alternate translation: "some of his servants covered Haman's face because he was going to be executed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

when they covered the face of Haman

Covering the face in this culture, as in many others, was a sign that a person had been condemned to death. Alternate translation: "some of his servants covered Haman's face to show that he would be executed" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

Esther 7:9

Harbona

This is a man's name. See how you translated it in [1:10](#). (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.278\)](#)) (See: [How to Translate Names \(p.278\)](#))

one from the eunuchs before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. This phrase means that Harbona was one of the eunuchs who served King Ahasuerus personally. (See: [Metonymy \(p.302\)](#)) (See: [Metonymy \(p.302\)](#))

the eunuchs before the face of the king

See how you translated this term and this phrase in [1:10](#). Alternate translation: "the guardians who served the king personally" (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.324\)](#)) (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.324\)](#))

behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, it can be omitted from your translation. But consider using an expression that is natural in your language for someone to address the king directly to get his attention. For example, you could say, "O king!"

Also, & the pole that Haman made for Mordecai, & is standing at the house of Haman

Alternate translation: "Haman has also set up a pole [or gallows] at his house because he wants to impale [or hang] Mordecai on it"

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Be sure your translation is consistent in the chapters that follow. (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.324\)](#)) (See: [Translate Unknowns \(p.324\)](#))

for Mordecai, who spoke good for the king

This expression means that Mordecai said something that benefitted the king. Specifically, Mordecai reported an assassination plot and saved the king's life. Alternate translation: "Mordecai, who saved the king's life." (See: [Idiom \(p.286\)](#)) (See: [Idiom \(p.286\)](#))

spoke good for the king

Harbona addresses the king in the third person as a way of showing respect. Alternate translation: "saved your life" (See: [First, Second or Third Person \(p.266\)](#)) (See: [First, Second or Third Person \(p.266\)](#))

is standing

Alternate translation: "is set up"

50 cubits high

If it would be helpful in your language, you could convert this to a modern measure. See how you translated this phrase in [5:14](#). Alternate translation: “seventy-five feet high” or “twenty-five meters high” (See: **Biblical Distance (p.235)**) (See: **Biblical Distance (p.235)**)

Hang him on it

Him means Haman. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “hang [or impale] Haman on it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 7:10

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Be sure your translation is consistent in the chapters that follow. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

and the rage of the king subsided

Here the story figuratively compares the king's anger to floodwaters, which can cause great destruction. "Subside" means for waters to drain away and for their level to go down. You could express the meaning by saying something like "Then the king's rage lessened," or "Then the king was not so angry." Or you could use a different metaphor that would be meaningful in your language, such as, "Then the king cooled off." (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 8

Esther 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

God's protection

Yahweh is at work in this chapter preventing the possible destruction of the Jews. God used Esther and Mordecai to protect their people.

Esther 8:1

On that day

This could mean one of three things: (1) A new series of events is now being described, but the story makes clear that they happened on the same day as the second banquet. While it must have been some time later in the day, the idea is that when Haman lost his life, and also his property, Esther gained what her enemy had lost. Alternate translation: “that same day” (2) The expression could also be an idiom that means “as of that day.” This would refer to the effective date for the transfer of Haman’s property to Esther. Alternate translation: “as of that day” (3) The term “day” could also be used figuratively to mean around the same time. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

the king Ahasuerus gave to Esther the queen the house of Haman

Here, **house** figuratively represents all the household and property of Haman. The story could be referring to all the property by naming one part of it, the house. Or “house” could be a metonym for “property,” meaning everything a person owns and keeps in their house, and by extension everything they own beyond the house as well. Alternate translation: “King Ahasuerus declared that everything that Haman had owned would now belong to Queen Esther” (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

the adversary of the Jews

This phrase gives clarifying information about Haman. Alternate translation: “the enemy of the Jews” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

And Mordecai came before the face of the king

The implication is that when the king learned how Mordecai was related to Esther, he summoned Mordecai into his presence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “when he learned that, the king sent for Mordecai to come into his presence” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. This phrase indicates that Mordecai was allowed to come into the king’s presence. Alternate translation: “into his presence” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther told what he was to her

You can say this before saying that the king summoned Mordecai, since it happened first. See the UST. Alternate translation: “Esther told the king how Mordecai was related to her” (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

Esther told what he was to her

Esther told this to the king. She would likely have explained not just how she and Mordecai were related, but that he had raised her after her parents died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin and that he had been like a father to her”

(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 8:2

And the king removed his signet ring, & and he gave it to Mordecai

Giving the ring to Mordecai showed that Mordecai could now act on the king's own authority, and it enabled him to do that. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king now gave this ring to Mordecai to show that Mordecai had the power to act on the authority of the king" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

his signet ring

See how you translated this in 3:10. Review the explanation there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: "the ring that had his official seal on it" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

which he had caused to pass from Haman

This means that the king had taken back his signet ring from Haman. He would have done this when he sentenced Haman to death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the king had given Haman the ring that had his official seal on it, but he had taken it back from Haman when he sentenced Haman to death, and the king was wearing it again." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

which he had caused to pass from Haman

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this information first in the verse because it happened before everything else. (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

and he gave it to Mordecai

By giving his signet ring to Mordecai, the king gave Mordecai the authority to write important papers that people would have to obey. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. See the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And Esther placed Mordecai over the house of Haman

To place someone over something figuratively means to put them in charge of it. Alternate translation: "Esther appointed Mordecai to be in charge of everything that had belonged to Haman" (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

the house of Haman

See the explanation of this phrase in verse 1. Alternate translation: "everything that Haman had owned" or "the household of Haman" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 8:3

And Esther repeated her action, and she spoke before the face of the king

Here the exact meaning of the progression of verbs is uncertain, but this verse probably begins a new event in the story separate from what happened in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “then Esther again spoke in the king’s presence” (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. Alternate translation: “while she was in his presence” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

She fell before the face of his feet

Here, **falling** is an idiom referring to the action of bowing down or prostrating oneself, and **face** figuratively represents the front of a person, place, or object. Alternate translation: “and she bowed down” or “and she prostrated herself” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

She fell before the face of his feet

This may actually mean that Esther put her face right on top of the feet of King Ahasuerus. This would have been an act of humility and desperation by which she showed that her need was very great and that she believed the king had great power to help her. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

She fell before the face of his feet

Esther’s action was probably a recognized sign of pleading in this culture. However, it would likely still have been remarkable for a queen to fall at the feet of her husband, the king. you could show this by introducing the information with a phrase like “in fact.” Alternate translation: “in fact, to show how desperately she was pleading, Esther got down and put her face right on top of his feet” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

before the face of his feet

Here, **face** is a metonym meaning the front of a person, place, or object. This phrase means that Esther prostrated herself in front of the feet of King Ahasuerus. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

to take away the evil of Haman the Agagite

Here, **the evil** refers to Haman’s plan. This expression means to prevent a wrong action from happening. Alternate translation: “to stop the evil plan of Haman the Agagite” or “to prevent the evil things from happening that Haman the Agagite had planned” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the Agagite

This is the name of Haman’s people group. See how you translated this in [3:1](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

and his plot that he had plotted

Alternate translation: “and the plot that he had invented” or “and the plot that Haman invented”

Esther 8:4

And the king held out to Esther the scepter of gold

As in [5:2](#), King Ahasuerus did this to show that Esther had his favor. In that earlier episode, this indicated that he would not enforce the law that said Esther should be executed for coming into the inner court without being summoned. But since Esther was apparently already in the king's presence on this occasion, it seems that the gesture could also be used generally to show that the king was positively disposed towards a person and would grant the person's request. Alternate translation: "the king held out his golden scepter to Esther" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

the scepter of gold

See how you translated this in [4:11](#). If it would be helpful, review the explanation of what this object was. Alternate translation: "golden scepter" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

so Esther rose up

Alternate translation: "Esther got up off the floor"

before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the front of a person, place, or object. This phrase means the Esther now stood facing King Ahasuerus. Alternate translation: "and stood facing the king" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 8:5

If it is good to the king, & and the word is proper before the face of the king

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Esther is saying very deferentially that she hopes that the king will think that her suggestion is a good idea and will, therefore, grant her request. Esther uses the repetition to emphasize the importance of what she is expressing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases. Alternate translation: “if what I am going to suggest seems like a good idea to you” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

and if I have found favor before his face, & and I am good in his eyes

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Esther is saying very deferentially that she hopes that the king is positively disposed towards her, that he thinks well of her, and will, therefore, grant her request. Esther uses the repetition to emphasize the importance of what she is expressing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases. Alternate translation: “if you are pleased with me” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

If it is good to the king, and if I have found favor before his face

Here Esther addresses the king throughout in the third person as a way of showing respect. You could express the same meaning in the second person, as in the UST. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

If it is good to the king

This is an idiom that also appears in 1:19, 3:9, 5:4, and 5:8. A suggested translation in those cases was, “If it seems like a good idea to you, O king.” That was suitable for the deferential tone the speakers were using. But in another place, 7:3, when Esther was pleading urgently for the survival of her whole people, the suggested alternate translation was, “I hope you will be willing to do what I ask” Here, Esther is also pleading, so you could use that phrase here in your translation as well. Alternate translation: “if what I ask for seems right in the king’s evaluation” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and if I have found favor

This expression also appears many times in the story. It means to gain the approval or acceptance of another person. Alternate translation: “if you are pleased with me” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

before his face, & before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively means the presence of a person. These phrases could mean “as I stand here before you.” But “face” could also be referring figuratively to the king himself by naming one part of him. What he thought and felt about Esther’s request would become evident in his face first, so it would be an appropriate part of him to use to represent all of him. Alternate translation: “you” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

in his eyes

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent the action of seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. Alternate translation: “if you evaluate me and I please you” or “if you are pleased with me” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

let it be written to bring back the letters

The first letters that told of the plan to destroy the Jews would not be brought back to Susa physically. Rather, **bring back** is an idiom that means “cancel” or “revoke.” Alternate translation: “make a new law to cancel what Haman decreed” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

let it be written to bring back the letters

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “write a new letter” or “make a new law” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 8:6

For

Here Esther is giving the reason why she is asking King Ahasuerus to revoke the letters. Alternate translation: “the reason I am asking is that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

how could I bear to see the evil that my people would find? And how could I bear seeing the destruction of my kindred

Esther is actually making a statement, but she expresses herself in question form to show how strongly she feels about what she is saying. She does not actually expect the king to tell her how she could bear seeing her people destroyed. Alternate translation: “I cannot bear to see disaster fall on the Jews” or “I cannot endure watching my relatives be killed” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**)

how could I bear to see the evil that my people would find? And how could I bear seeing the destruction of my kindred

These two sentences mean basically the same thing. Esther uses the repetition to emphasize the importance of what she is saying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases. Alternate translation: “I could not bear to see my relatives and my whole people destroyed” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

the evil that my people would find

Even though it was morally very wrong for Haman to want to destroy Mordecai’s whole people, here the abstract noun **evil** likely means “harm,” as in 7:7. It means the same thing as “destruction” in the next sentence. Alternate translation: “my people being destroyed” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

would find

As in 1:5, **find** is an idiom that means something exists in a certain place or time, not that people were looking for it and located it. Esther is speaking of the harm that will exist for the Jews if the effect of Haman’s letters is not undone. Alternate translation: “would be destroyed” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

the destruction

This abstract noun can be expressed with a verb such as “destroyed.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

of my kindred

Alternate translation: “my relatives”

Esther 8:7

Behold

This is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation, or you can use an alternate translation like “as you know.”

I have given the house of Haman to Esther

See the note about this expression in [8:1](#). Alternate translation: “I have given Esther all the property that belonged to Haman” or “I have given Esther the household of Haman”

the house of Haman

Here, **house** is a metonym meaning the entire household of Haman. Alternate translation: “the household of Haman” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

and they have hanged him on the pole

You can put this information first because it happened before the king gave Haman’s property to Esther. Alternate translation: “I had my servants impale Haman on a wooden pole” or “I had my servants hang Haman on a gallows” (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. Be sure your translation is consistent in the chapters that follow. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

he stretched out his hand

Here the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to cause someone physical harm with the intention of killing them. Alternate translation: “because he plotted to destroy all the Jews” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 8:8

So, & you

Alternate translation: “so this is what you should do”

write for the Jews as is good in your eyes

Alternate translation: “I am giving you permission to write other letters to save your people”

as is good in your eyes

Here, **eyes** figuratively represent the action of seeing, and seeing is a metaphor for knowledge, notice, attention, or judgment. This phrase means that Esther and Mordecai have permission to write what they think is best.

Alternate translation: “as you think is best” or “what you think is best” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

in the name of the king

Here, **name** is a metaphor meaning authority. This phrase means Esther and Mordecai have permission to write with the authority of the King Ahasuerus. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

in the name of the king

King Ahasuerus refers to himself in the third person. You can have him say this in the first person. Alternate translation: “I give you permission to write with my own authority” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

with the signet ring of the king

This is a special ring that could be used to imprint the king’s official seal on a law or decree. Alternate translation: “the ring that has my official seal on it” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

with the signet ring of the king

King Ahasuerus refers to himself in the third person. You can have him say this in the first person. Alternate translation: “the ring that has my official seal on it” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.266)**)

For

Here, King Ahasuerus is expressing the reason why he cannot simply revoke the first letter and also why Esther and Mordecai can write another letter that people must obey. Alternate translation: “you see” or “people will obey your letter because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

there is none to take back

As in verse 5, this expression means “revoke.” Alternate translation: “no one can revoke” or “no one can nullify”

there is none to take back a writing

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this first in the verse because it explains why Ahasuerus answers Esther and Mordecai in the way that he does. See the UST.

a writing that has been written in the name of the king and has been sealed with the signet ring of the king

The king is describing a general situation, but he has Haman's letter specifically in mind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Haman wrote his letter with my authority, and he sealed it with the ring that has my official seal on it. No one can revoke a letter like that" (The story explained in [1:19](#) that the king's laws could not be changed once they had been made and proclaimed.) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 8:9

And the scribes of the king were called

This indicates that what is described in this verse was done because of what the king said in the previous verse. Use a connecting word or phrase to show this in your language. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

And the scribes of the king were called

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “the king called his scribes” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

And the scribes of the king were called

If you use an expression such as “called,” make sure your readers will understand that the king likely sent an official to go and bring the scribes back with him. The king did not call out in a loud voice to get them to come.

in the third month

Alternate translation: “in month three” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

in the third month

It would still be the same year as in [3:7](#), the twelfth year that Ahasuerus reigned as king of Persia. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the third month of the year” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

which is the month of Sivan

Sivan is the name of the third month of the Hebrew calendar. Alternate translation: “the month of Sivan” (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

which is the month of Sivan

The story is being recorded from the perspective of the Persian court, but for the benefit of its intended Jewish audience, the Hebrew name of the month is given. This month overlaps with May and June on a Western calendar.

on the twenty-third of it

Alternate translation: “on day 23” or “on the twenty-third day of the month” The exact date of the letter helps to establish its legal authority. This would be on June 25th of a Western calendar. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

And according to all that Mordecai commanded, it was written

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “and they wrote in a letter everything that Mordecai dictated to them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

to the Jews

It appears from verse 11 that the letter would have been addressed specifically to the Jews in the empire, telling them that the king had authorized them to defend themselves. But copies were also sent to all the royal and provincial officials. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the letter addressed the Jews in the empire, but copies were also sent” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and to the satraps, and the governors and officials of the provinces

See how you translated these terms in 3:12, where they were used to describe who received Haman’s letter. These are all people in government positions. The first one is the governor of the province and the other two are rulers under him who govern cities or smaller areas. If your language uses one term for all of these, you could use that with a descriptive phrase such as “to the government leaders of each province and also to the leaders under him.”

that were from India even as far as Ethiopia: 127 provinces

This is background information explaining how far this new letter had to be sent. See how you translated this phrase in 1:1. Alternate translation: “the empire of Ahasuerus had 127 provinces, stretching all the way from India in the east to Ethiopia in the west”

127 provinces

Alternate translation: “one hundred and twenty-seven provinces” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

province by province

This expression means “to people in every province.” Alternate translation: “the scribes wrote to the people in each province” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

according to its writing

Alternate translation: “using its own alphabet” or “written in its own script”

and people by people

This expression means “every people group.” Alternate translation: “and to each ethnic group” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

according to its tongue

Here, **tongue** figuratively means the language spoken by a person or a group of people. Alternate translation: “in its own language” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

and to the Jews according to their writing and according to their tongue

The Jews would have been included among all the people groups in the empire in the phrase “people by people.” So this seems to be saying, “and especially to the Jews.” Verse 11 explains that it was particularly important for the Jews to read the letter because it gave them the right to defend themselves. Alternate translation: “they wrote especially to the Jews in their own script and in their own language”

Esther 8:10

And he wrote & and he sealed

He refers to Mordecai. If it would be helpful in your language, you can use his name here.

in the name of the king Ahasuerus

Here, **name** is a metaphor meaning authority. Alternate translation: “Mordecai wrote with the authority of King Ahasuerus” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

and he sealed with the signet ring of the king

This means that Mordecai sealed the letters with this ring. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “and he sealed the letters with the ring that had the king’s official seal on it” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

by the hand of runners on horses

As in 3:13, **hand** could mean two different things. (1) It could literally mean “hand,” meaning that the runners carried the letters in their hands. (2) It could also be a metaphor for power, control, or authority, meaning that runners were the ones who delivered the letters to all the provinces throughout the empire. Alternate translation: “couriers on horseback delivered the letters” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

riders of the royal pack horses, sons of the mares

Alternate translation: “They rose fast horses that were used in the king’s service. These horses had been bred in the king’s stables.”

sons of the mares

Here, **sons** is a metonym meaning the offspring of royal livestock. Alternate translation: “the offspring of the king’s horses” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 8:11

in every city, city by city

This expression means “in each and every city.” It is possibly referring to the entire empire by naming one part of it, its cities. The story says in [9:19](#) that not just Jews living in cities but Jews living in rural areas also defended themselves. It is likely that the messengers only published the news in the cities and not the entire countryside, but the news was certainly intended for everyone, not only people living in the cities. Alternate translation: “throughout the empire” or “in each and every city” or “in every single city” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to gather and to stand for their life

Here, **to stand** is a metaphor meaning to defend oneself and fight back instead of running away from an enemy. Alternate translation: “to join together and fight for their lives” or “to join together and fight back” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

to annihilate, and to slaughter, and to destroy

These words mean the same thing and are used together to emphasize the completeness of the destruction that is being described. See how you translated this in [3:13](#) and [7:4](#). Alternate translation: “completely destroy” (A “doublet” can involve the use of more than two words.) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

any strength of a people or province that would attack them

Strength is a figurative way of referring to an army or to a person carrying weaponry. Alternate translation: “the army of any people or province that attacked them” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

children and women

Alternate translation: “they could also kill the wives and children of the armed men”

and plunder their spoil

See how you translated this expression in [3:13](#). Alternate translation: “and take everything that belonged to them”

Esther 8:12

on one day

This was the day that Haman had set for destroying the Jews in [3:13](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit. Alternate translation: “on the same day that Haman had set for destroying the Jews” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus

Alternate translation: “in every province of the kingdom”

on the thirteenth

Alternate translation: “on day 13” or “on the thirteenth day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

of month 12

Alternate translation: “of month 12” or “of the twelfth month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

of month 12

Implicitly, this means “the twelfth month of that same year.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

which is the month of Adar

This is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you translated this in [3:07](#) and [3:13](#). (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

Esther 8:13

A copy of the writing was to be given as a law

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “the letter told the officials to proclaim this as a law” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in every province by province

This expression means “in each and every province.” Alternate translation: “in every single province” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

being uncovered for all the peoples

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “the letter told the officials in every single province to post copies where everyone could see them” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

and for the Jews to be prepared for that day

Alternate translation: “that way the Jews would get ready to do what the letter said when the day came”

to take revenge from their enemies

This expression, “to take revenge from” another person, means to correct a wrong they have done. In this context, the phrase means to correct the wrong of the original law that gave people permission to kill the Jews. Alternate translation: “and fight back against their enemies” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 8:14

The runners, the riders of the royal pack horses

See how you translated this in [8:10](#). Alternate translation: “messengers riding on fast horses that were used for the king’s business”

hastened and hurried by the word of the king

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “the king commanded the couriers to deliver the letters as quickly as possible” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

hastened and hurried

These two terms mean almost the same thing and are used together to emphasize the fact that the couriers were told to deliver the letters as quickly as possible. Alternate translation: “they went immediately” or “as quickly as possible” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

The runners, the riders of the royal pack horses

To present the events in chronological order, you can put this after the king’s command, as in the UST. (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

And the law was given

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “the king’s officials also posted and read copies of the letter” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 8:15

And Mordecai went out

This introduces a new event in the story. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

from before the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. This phrase means that Mordecai had been in the presence of King Ahasuerus and was now leaving in order to fulfill his duties as a high official in the Persian government. Alternate translation: “from the palace” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

in a garment of royalty of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a robe of fine linen and purple

The implication is that the king gave Mordecai these special things to wear to show that he was now his highest officer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. To put these events in chronological order, you could place this information before the report that Mordecai left the king's presence to fulfill his duties. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

in a garment of royalty of blue

Alternate translation: “a blue and white garment that the king had worn”

with a great crown of gold

Alternate translation: “a large golden crown”

and the city of Susa cheered and rejoiced

Here, **the city** represents the people living in it. Alternate translation: “the people of Susa” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

cheered and rejoiced

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with “and.” The word **rejoiced** tells how they cheered. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning by saying something like “shouted joyfully.” Alternate translation: “cheered and were happy” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

cheered and rejoiced

The implication is that the people did this when they saw Mordecai. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 8:16

there was light

Here, **light** figuratively represents happiness. Alternate translation: “the Jews felt happy” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

there was light and joy

The terms **light** and **joy** refer to the same thing here. They are used together to emphasize the extreme happiness that the Jews felt. Alternate translation: “the Jews felt very happy” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

and rejoicing and honor

These terms have similar meaning and are used together with the previous doublet to emphasize again the great happiness and joy that the Jews felt. (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

and honor

Here, **honor** might have two possible meanings. (1) Other people honored the Jews. Alternate translation: “other people honored them” (2) The Jews themselves felt honor instead of shame. Alternate translation: “they felt honored” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 8:17

In every province by province

This expression means “each and every province.” Alternate translation: “in every single province” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and in every city by city

This expression means “each and every city.” Alternate translation: “in every single city” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

any place where the word of the king and his law came

This expression describes the king’s message as if it were a person that could travel to a particular place. This phrase refers to all the places that received the king’s letter. Alternate translation: “wherever the king’s couriers took his decree” or “wherever the couriers read the letter announcing the king’s decree” (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

there was joy and rejoicing for the Jews

The terms **joy** and **rejoicing** have similar meaning and are used together to emphasize the great happiness and joy that the Jews felt. Alternate translation: “the Jews rejoiced greatly” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

a feast and a good day

These two terms mean something similar and are used together to emphasize the great happiness and joy that the Jews felt. Alternate translation: “and had festive celebrations” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

and a good day

This expression generally means a day of happiness or celebration. Alternate translation: “and a holiday” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

And many from the peoples of the land became Jews

The implication is that they did this because they thought that the Jews might attack them when the Jews fought back against their enemies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And many from the peoples of the land became Jews

Alternate translation: “many people from the other ethnic groups in the empire”

from the peoples of the land

The **peoples of the land** were the non-Jewish people groups within the empire. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

dread of the Jews had fallen upon them

Here, **falling** is a metaphor meaning to affect someone. Alternate translation: “they had become very afraid of the Jews” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

dread of the Jews had fallen upon them

To present the events in chronological order, you can say this before saying that the people from the other groups became Jews themselves. (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

Esther 9

Esther 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Purim

The events of this chapter were so significant, the Jews celebrated these events every year after this. It is known as "Purim."

Important stylistic devices in this chapter

Ironic Situation

The day that was supposed to bring great victory to the enemies of the Jews became a day of great victory for the Jews. This is a type of irony.

Opening Summary

Verse 1 of chapter 9 provides a summary of everything that happens in this chapter. If using an opening summary is not normally used in your language, be sure to mark this as a summary either in the text or in a footnote. An opening summary like this is a characteristic device of Hebrew storytelling. So even though it describes the final outcome, we do not recommend that you move it to the end of the chapter unless it is very confusing to leave it here. To make it clear that verse 1 is only a summary and not the entire story, you could say something like this at the end of the verse: "This is what happened" or "Here are more details about what happened."

Esther 9:1

Now in month 12

This introduces a new event. Use a natural way in your language to indicate a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

Now in month 12, which is the month of Adar, on day 13 of it

The implication is that this happened in the twelfth month of the same year that the letters were sent out. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of that year, the month of Adar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Now in month 12

Alternate translation: “now in the twelfth month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

which is the month of Adar

Adar is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you translated this in [3:7](#), [3:13](#), and [8:12](#). (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

on day 13 of it

Alternate translation: “on the thirteenth day of the month” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

when the word of the king and his law & the time to be done

Alternate translation: “what the letters said the king had decreed”

when the word of the king and his law had reached the time to be done

This expression describes the king’s decree as if it had traveled through time (as a person travels through space) and reached this particular day. This phrase means that it was time for people to obey the decree. Alternate translation: “when the time came for people to obey the king’s law and decree” or “when it was the day established in the king’s letters for people to carry out the king’s law” (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to dominate them

Alternate translation: “the enemies of the Jews had expected to defeat the Jews on that day”

to dominate

This word usually means “to rule over,” but here it figuratively means “to have power over, to be able to destroy.” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

but being overturned

Saying that a situation was turned over is a figurative way of saying that what happened was the opposite of what was expected. Alternate translation: "the situation was reversed" or "the opposite happened" (See: **Metaphor (p. 296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

it happened that the Jews themselves dominated those who hated them

Alternate translation: "Instead, it was the Jews themselves who destroyed their enemies"

those who hated them

This is an idiom that describes enemies (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:2

to stretch out a hand

Here the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to cause someone physical harm with the intention of killing him. Alternate translation: “to defend themselves” or “to fight” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

against those seeking their evil

Here the abstract noun **evil** likely means “harm,” as in 7:7 and 8:6. In this context, the term can be expressed with a verb. Alternate translation: “who were trying to destroy them” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

But a man did not stand to their face

Alternate translation: “no one stood against them” or “no one was able to defeat them” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

But a man did not stand to their face

Here, **standing** is a metaphor meaning to defend oneself and to fight back instead of running away from an enemy. Alternate translation: “was able to fight back” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

to their face

Here, **face** figuratively stands for the presence of a person, so here it means “when faced with them.” Alternate translation: “against them” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

sudden fear of them had fallen on all the peoples

Here, **falling** is a metaphor meaning to affect someone. Alternate translation: “all the peoples suddenly became very afraid” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

sudden fear of them had fallen on all the peoples

The implication is that as a result, no one helped anyone who attacked the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 9:3

the officials of the provinces, and the satraps and the governors

See how you translated these terms in [3:12](#) and [8:9](#). Alternate translation: “the government leaders in each province”

and those doing the work that was for the king

Alternate translation: “anyone the king had trusted with his affairs”

were lifting up the Jews

Here, **lifting up** is a figurative way of saying “helping.” The picture is likely of someone helping a tired or injured person to stand or walk by holding them up. Alternate translation: “helped the Jews” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

dread of Mordecai had fallen on them

Here, **falling** is a metaphor meaning to affect someone. Alternate translation: “they were afraid of Mordecai” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 9:4

For & for

This term introduces the reason why the officials and satraps and governors were becoming afraid of Mordecai. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

Mordecai was great in the palace of the king

The implication is that this is why all the other officials were afraid of Mordecai. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation, add: “They were afraid of him because” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Mordecai was great in the palace of the king

The palace of the king is a figurative way of describing the king’s administration by referring to the place where it was headquartered. Alternate translation: “was very important in the king’s government” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Mordecai was great in the palace of the king

Great here is the same term that, as a verb, describes promotion within the king’s service in 3:1 and 5:11. Alternate translation: “Mordecai was a very important royal official”

and the report of him was going out into all the provinces

Here the story speaks of the news of Mordecai’s greatness as if it were a living thing that could travel throughout the empire. Alternate translation: “throughout the empire, everyone was hearing the news of his greatness” (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

Mordecai was progressing and becoming great

This expression means that Mordecai continued to become more powerful and influential. Alternate translation: “Mordecai was becoming more famous because the king was giving him more and more power” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:5

And the Jews struck to all their enemies a strike of sword

After the information about Mordecai, the story now returns to tell what happened on the appointed day. You could add a phrase to show this. Alternate translation, add: "on the day when they were allowed to defend themselves"

And the Jews struck to all their enemies a strike of sword

This expression means that the Jews defended themselves against their enemies, even to the point of killing people who attacked them. Alternate translation: "the Jews attacked all of their enemies and killed them with their swords" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

a strike of sword

Swords were not necessarily the only weapons the Jews had and used. The sword is used to represent all of their weaponry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this more general meaning. Alternate translation: "the Jews took up their weapons and used them against their enemies" (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

and slaughter and destruction

These two words have the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: "they destroyed them completely" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

And they did to those who hated them according to their pleasure

This expression does not mean that the Jews felt pleasure when they killed their enemies. Rather, it means that the Jews were able to defend themselves against their enemies and were not hindered in any way. Alternate translation: "they were able to do everything they wanted to do against their enemies" (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to those who hated them

This is an idiom that describes enemies. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:6

And in Susa the citadel

Alternate translation: "just in Susa, the capital city"

slaughtered and destroyed

These two words have the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: "killed" (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

500 men

Alternate translation: "five hundred men" (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Esther 9:7

Parshandatha & Dalphon & Aspatha

The story lists the names of Haman's sons before explaining that they were his sons and that the Jews killed them. To be clear who these people are, you can add this information from verse 10 explicitly here. Alternate translation, add: "the Jews killed the ten sons of their enemy Haman son of Hammedatha. The names of his sons were ..." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Parshandatha & Dalphon & Aspatha

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther 9:8

Poratha & Adalia & Aridatha

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther 9:9

Parmashta & Arisai & Aridai & Vaizatha

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

Esther 9:10

the ten sons of

Alternate translation: “the 10 sons” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

the adversary of the Jews

This phrase gives clarifying information about Haman. Alternate translation: “the enemy of the Jews” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

they did not stretch out their hand

Here the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to take something from another person. Alternate translation: “they did not take” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

But & to the plunder

Alternate translation: “But ... their possessions”

Esther 9:11

On that day

Alternate translation: "at the end of that day"

the report of the number of & came to the face of the king

Here the story speaks about the report as if it were a living thing that could come into the king's presence.

Alternate translation: "one of the king's servants told the king the number of" (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

to the face of the king

Here, **face** figuratively represents the presence of a person. This phrase likely means that someone came into the king's presence in order to deliver this report. Alternate translation: "someone came in and reported to the king" (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

the report of the number of those who were killed

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: "how many people the Jews had killed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 9:12

have slaughtered and destroyed

These terms mean the same thing and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: “killed” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

500 men

Alternate translation: “five hundred men” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

with

Alternate translation: “including”

ten sons of

Alternate translation: “10 sons” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

In the rest of the provinces of the king, what have they done

The king is making a statement, but he uses a question form to show that he is very convinced that the Jews must have also killed many people in the other provinces. Alternate translation: “what they must have done in the rest of the king’s provinces” or “they must have killed many more in the rest of the king’s provinces” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**)

Now what is your petition? And it will be given to you. And what is your request? Again, and it will be done

These two statements mean basically the same thing. Ahasuerus says the same thing twice to show that he is truly disposed to give Esther what she wants. If it would be confusing, you do not need to repeat both phrases in your translation. Alternate translation: “is there anything more that you want? Tell me, and I will do it for you” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

And it will be given to you. & and it will be done

You can capture these parallel passive statements with one statement using an active form. You can also say who will do the action. Alternate translation: “I will do it for you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

your petition? & your request

The two abstract nouns **petition** and **request** can be expressed with a single phrase using the verb “want.” Alternate translation: “anything more that you want” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

Esther 9:13

If it is good to the king

This is an idiom that has been used many times in the story. Alternate translation: “if it seems like a good idea to you, O king” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

let it be given

You can say this with an active form, and you can indicate that Esther is asking the king to do it. Alternate translation: “please allow” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

also tomorrow to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the law of today

Alternate translation: “all the Jews who live in Susa to obey today’s decree tomorrow also” or “to do tomorrow also what was decreed that they should do today”

are in Susa

Alternate translation: “in the capital city of Susa”

let the ten sons of Haman hang

The request is not for the king to allow the bodies to be impaled (or hanged), but instead, for the king to order this. Alternate translation: “and have the bodies of Haman’s ten sons hanged [or impaled]”

let the ten sons of Haman hang

The purpose of this would not be to kill the sons, since they are already dead, but to demonstrate publicly that the enemies of the Jews had been completely defeated. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

let the ten sons of Haman hang

It is implicit that since Haman’s sons are already dead, what Esther is actually asking for is for their bodies to be impaled or hanged. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the bodies of Haman’s ten sons” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

ten sons of

Alternate translation: “10 sons” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 9:14

And the king said for this to be done

You can say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “the king granted both of Esther’s requests” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

And a law was given in Susa

This phrase, “in Susa,” seems to indicate that this refers to Esther’s first request. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “he issued a decree allowing the Jews in Susa to fight against their enemies again the next day” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And a law was given in Susa

This can be stated in active form as in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in Susa

Alternate translation: “in the capital city of Susa”

they hanged

This was Esther’s second request. You can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “he ordered his servants to hang [or impale] the bodies of Haman’s ten sons” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

ten sons of

Alternate translation: “10 sons” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Esther 9:15

were in Susa

Alternate translation: “who lived in the capital city of Susa”

And & assembled themselves

Alternate translation: “joined together”

on day 14

Alternate translation: “on day 14” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

of the month of Adar

Adar is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you translated this in [3:7](#), [3:13](#), [8:12](#), and [9:1](#). (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

in Susa

Alternate translation: “in the capital city of Susa”

300 men

Alternate translation: “three hundred men” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

But they did not stretch out their hand to the plunder

Here, the expression **to stretch out a hand** means to take something from another person. Alternate translation: “they did not take the things that belonged to them” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:16

assembled themselves and stood for their lives

Here, **standing** is a metaphor meaning to defend oneself and to fight back instead of running away from an enemy. See how you translated this in [8:11](#). Alternate translation: “joined together to fight back against their enemies” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

assembled themselves and stood for their lives

It’s implicit here, and stated explicitly in the next verse, that these other Jews fought their enemies only on the thirteenth day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly here. Alternate translation, add: “on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and they rested from their enemies

Here, **resting** is a figurative way of saying that they no longer needed to fight against their enemies because they had won the battle. Alternate translation: “they had no more trouble from their enemies” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

and they slaughtered 75,000 of those who hated them

Alternate translation: “and killed 75,000 of them”

75,000

Alternate translation: “seventy-five thousand” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

they did not stretch out their hand

Alternate translation: “they did not take the things that belonged to them” or “they did not take the valuable things” or “they did not take their possessions”

Esther 9:17

On day 13

Alternate translation: “on the thirteenth day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

of the month of Adar

Adar is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you translated this in [3:7](#), [3:13](#), [8:12](#), [9:1](#), and [9:15](#). (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

On the fourteenth of it, then they made it a day of feasting and rejoicing

Alternate translation: “they devoted the next day, the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, to joyful celebration” or “they feasted joyfully the next day, the fourteenth day of the month of Adar”

On the fourteenth of it

Alternate translation: “on day 14” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

feasting and rejoicing

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with “and.” The word **rejoicing** tells how they celebrated. Alternate translation: “joyful celebration” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

feasting

This is a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to mean the whole thing. The celebrations must have included more than just eating special meals together, but the story uses those meals to refer to the entire celebrations. (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.322)**)

Esther 9:18

But the Jews who were in Susa assembled themselves

Alternate translation: “but the Jews who lived in the capital city of Susa”

assembled themselves

The implication is that they did this to fight against their enemies. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “the Jews who lived in Susa joined together to fight against their enemies” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

on the thirteenth of it and on the fourteenth of it

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say which month this is. Alternate translation: “on the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the month of Adar” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

on the thirteenth of it

Alternate translation: “on day 13” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

and on the fourteenth of it

Alternate translation: “and on day 14” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

And they rested on the fifteenth of it, and they made it a day of feasting and rejoicing

Resting is a figurative way of saying that they no longer needed to fight against their enemies because they had won the battle. Alternate translation: “they defeated them, and there was no fighting on the fifteenth day. They devoted that day to joyful celebration” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

on the fifteenth of it

Alternate translation: “on day 15” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

feasting and rejoicing

This phrase means the same thing as in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “for feasting joyfully” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

Esther 9:19

Therefore

This term introduces the result of the events that were described in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “for that reason” or “that is why” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

the Jews, the ones of the open country, the ones who dwell in the cities of the open areas

These two phrases mean similar things. They are used together to make the identification of this group clear. The first phrase means that they lived in rural areas. The second phrase means they lived in settlements that did not have walls around them, that is, in villages. You can combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “the Jews who live in villages in the countryside” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

make day 14 of & and a good day

The implication is that this explanation is being offered for the benefit of city-dwelling Jews who might wonder why rural Jews celebrate this holiday on a different day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation, add: “rather than on the fifteenth day.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

make day 14 of & and a good day

Alternate translation: “observe this holiday on the fourteenth day”

day 14 of

Alternate translation: “the fourteenth day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

the month of Adar

Adar is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you translated this in [3:7](#), [3:13](#), [8:12](#), [9:1](#), [9:15](#) and [9:17](#). (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

for rejoicing and for feasting

As in verses 17 and 18, this means “by celebrating joyfully” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

and a good day

This expression generally means a day of happiness or celebration. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and for the sending of gifts, a man to his friend

Giving gifts, in this culture as in many cultures, was a way of acknowledging a special occasion. Alternate translation: “and by giving gifts to one another” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

a man to his friend

Here, **a man** means “a person.” The term **friend** would include family members and neighbors as well as social friends. Alternate translation: “to one another” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:20

And & wrote these things

Alternate translation: "wrote an account of all of these events"

all the Jews who were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus

Alternate translation: "all the Jews everywhere in the kingdom"

the near ones and the far ones

This is a figurative way of referring to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it in order to include everything in between. This expression means the Jews who lived in or near Susa, those who lived far away, and all Jews in between. Alternate translation: "everywhere they lived" (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

Esther 9:21

to set up for them to be making

Here, **to set up** means to establish, and to **make** a day means to observe it as a holiday. Alternate translation: “to establish ... as a holiday” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

day 14

Alternate translation: “the fourteenth day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

of the month of Adar

Adar is the name of the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. See how you translated this in [3:7](#), [3:13](#), [8:12](#), [9:1](#), [9:15](#), [9:17](#), and [9:19](#). (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**) (See: **Hebrew Months (p.272)**)

day 15 of it

Alternate translation: “the fifteenth day” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**) (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.309)**)

every year by year

This expression means “every year.” Alternation translation: “each year” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:22

as the days when & as

This verse gives the reason for what Mordecai told the Jews to do in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “because those were the days when” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

the Jews rested on them from their enemies

As in verses 16, 17, and 18, **resting** here is a figurative way of saying that they no longer needed to fight against their enemies because they had won the battle. Alternate translation: “the Jews stopped fighting because they had defeated their enemies” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

and & the month when

Alternate translation: “And that was the month when”

it had turned for them from sorrow into joy and from mourning into a good day

These two phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize how dramatic and wonderful the change was. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and say something like “after being very sad, they became very happy.” Alternate translation: “they changed from being very sorrowful and crying to being very joyful and celebrating” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

it had turned for them from sorrow into joy and from mourning into a good day

It is implicit that the Jews were deeply distressed because they were being threatened with destruction, and they became very happy once they were safe from all their enemies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that here. Alternate translation: “everything had changed for them. They had been deeply distressed because they were threatened with destruction. But they became very happy once they were safe from all their enemies” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

it had turned for them from sorrow into joy

Turning figuratively represents changing. Alternate translation: “they changed from being very sad to being joyful” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

from sorrow into joy

The abstract nouns **sorrow** and **joy** can be expressed with adjectives such as “distressed” and “happy.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

in order to make them days of

These are things that Mordecai is telling the Jews to do in his letters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that here. Alternate translation: “so Mordecai told them to observe those days with” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

feasting and rejoicing

As in verses 17, 18, and 19, this phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with “and.” The word “rejoicing” tells how the celebrating was to be done. Alternate translation: “joyful celebration” or “feasting joyfully” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

and sending of gifts, a man to his friend

See how you translated this in verse 19. Review the notes there if that would be helpful. Alternate translation: “and by giving gifts to one another”

a man to his friend

Here, **a man** means “a person.” The term **friend** would include family members and neighbors as well as social friends. Alternate translation: “to one another” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and gifts to the needy

In this culture as in many others, helping the poor was also a way of acknowledging a special occasion. The idea was that no one should miss out on the benefits of the wonderful thing that God had done. Alternate translation: “Mordecai also told them that they should help the poor on those days” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.320)**)

and gifts to the needy

This is also something that Mordecai is telling the Jews to do in his letters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that here. Alternate translation: “Mordecai also told them that they should give gifts to the poor on those days” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Esther 9:23

And & accepted & what Mordecai had written to them

The implication seems to be that the Jews were glad to do what Mordecai had instructed, because they had already been doing it. You can add a word such as “readily” to indicate this. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

And & accepted

Alternate translation: “agreed”

what they had begun to do

You can put this information first, to present the events in logical and chronological order. Alternate translation: “the Jews were already celebrating those days that way” (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

Esther 9:24

For

This introduces the reason for the events previously described. The story will now summarize everything that happened previously. The Jews were to celebrate because they were able to fight back when Haman plotted to destroy all of them. Alternate translation: “they would celebrate these days to remember” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

For

If it would be helpful in your language, you could say here what this reason is explaining. Alternate translation: “they would establish those days as a holiday in order to remember how” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

the adversary of all the Jews

This phrase gives clarifying information about Haman. Alternate translation: “the enemy of all the Jews” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

had plotted concerning the Jews to annihilate them

Alternate translation: “had tried to carry out a plan that would destroy the Jews”

And he had cast a Pur (which is “the lot

You can say explicitly why Haman did this. Alternate translation: “he threw Pur (that is, he threw lots) to find out what would be the best day” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

a Pur (which is “the lot

As in 3:7, the storyteller is giving both the Persian and the Hebrew name because this is the story behind the Festival of Purim, which takes its name from “Pur.” So this is not repetition for emphasis. You can put in the Persian name and then the name for “lot” in your own language to show that the storyteller is doing this. Alternate translation: “a Pur (that is, a lot)” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

to vex them and to destroy them

The terms **vex** and **destroy** mean basically the same thing. They are used together to emphasize the degree to which Haman’s deadly plans were distressing to the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the terms and express the emphasis with a word like “completely.” Alternate translation: “and completely destroy them” (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**) (See: **Hendiadys (p.275)**)

Esther 9:25

But when she came to the face of the king

In this summary, many details are communicated implicitly. **She** means Esther. Also, this verse continues the account of what this celebration is commemorating. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make these things explicit. Alternate translation: “the celebration also commemorated how Esther dared to come into the king’s presence without being summoned, and she won his favor” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

to the face of the king

Here, **face** is a metonym meaning the presence of a person. This phrase means that Esther came into the king’s presence. Alternate translation: “into the king’s presence” or “before the king” (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

he said with the letter

Once again, there is much information that is implicit here. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it explicit. Alternate translation: “the king gave Mordecai the authority to send a letter throughout the empire saying that the Jews could defend themselves against their enemies” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Let his evil plot that he plotted concerning the Jews return on his head

His, **he**, and **him** in this sentence refer to Haman. **Return on his head** is an idiom that means that what a person was planning to do to someone else happened to that person instead. Use an idiom with that meaning in your language. Alternate translation: “the wicked plan that Haman developed against the Jews will be done to him” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and let them hang him and his sons on the pole

The letter itself did not say this. The story is summarizing the events in compressed form. It is speaking of the letter as if it were a person who could take action and give commands like this, but it was the king who gave the command. Alternate translation: “the king also ordered his servants to hang [or impale] Haman on a wooden pole [or hang Haman on a gallows]. When the Jews in Susa killed his ten sons, the king had their bodies hanged [or impaled] as well” (See: **Personification (p.315)**) (See: **Personification (p.315)**)

the pole

See how you translated this in [2:23](#). Review the note there if that would be helpful. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.324)**)

Esther 9:26

Therefore

This introduces the reason why the Jews gave the name “Purim” to this celebration. Alternate translation: “for that reason” or “that is why” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

they called these days “Purim

They means the Jews. Alternate translation: “the Jews called these days Purim, like the word Pur” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Purim

This is the name of the festival that commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in ancient Persia from Haman's plot to destroy and kill all the Jews in a single day. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

on account of the name of Pur

This is information that the original audience needed to understand how this celebration got its name. You can put this first in the verse because it explains what comes next. Alternate translation: “the Persian word for ‘lot’ is ‘Pur’” (See: **Background Information (p.232)**) (See: **Background Information (p.232)**)

the name of Pur

It can be stated clearly what “Pur” means. Alternate translation: “the word Pur, which means ‘lot’” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

Therefore

The story has just given the reason why the holiday is called Purim. Now it is going to give another reason. It will be explaining why the Jews added this holiday to their calendar, in addition to the festivals that were commanded in the Law of Moses. The next verse describes them adding the holiday. This verse gives the reasons why they did that. Alternate translation: “because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

on account of all the words of this letter

This is a reference to the letter that Mordecai wrote, as described in verses 20–22. Alternate translation: “because Mordecai wrote to them to tell them to observe this holiday”

and what they had seen concerning this and what had come upon them

These two phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize what a vivid experience it was to live through the events that this story describes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases and express the emphasis with a word like “amazing.” Alternate translation: “the amazing things that had happened to them” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

and what they had seen concerning this and what had come upon them

These phrases say generally “this” and “what,” but they are referring to the specific events the story has related. If it would be helpful in your language, you could describe these things specifically. Alternate translation: “because the Jews had been able to destroy the enemies who had wanted to destroy them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

and what they had seen concerning this and what had come upon them

You can put this first, before the information about Mordecai’s letter, because it happened first. You can say “then” when you tell about the letter. (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

and what had come upon them

This expression means “what had happened to them.” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:27

the Jews set up and accepted for themselves and for their seed and for all those who unite themselves to them (& to be making these two days

Alternate translation: “the Jews said that they would tell their descendants and those people who became Jews to be certain to celebrate this festival”

the Jews set up and accepted

“Set up” and “accepted” mean basically the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize that the Jews definitely agreed to do this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these words. Alternate translation: “agreed to establish” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

and for their seed

As in [6:13](#), **seed** is a metaphor meaning “offspring.” Alternate translation: “and for their descendants” or “and for their offspring” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

and it will not pass away

This expression means that the Jews would never stop celebrating the feast of Purim every year. you could put this last since it applies to the whole verse. Alternate translation: “always” or “forever” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to be making these two days

To present things in chronological order, you can put this before the reference to Jewish descendants and converts to Judaism. Alternate translation: “to establish those two days as holidays and to observe them” (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**) (See: **Order of Events (p.307)**)

according to their writing

Alternate translation: “in the way that Mordecai had told them to do in the letter”

and according to their appointed time

This means the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, as specified in [9:21](#). Alternate translation: “on those exact days of the month of Adar”

every year by year

This expression means “each and every year.” Alternate translation: “every single year” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 9:28

And these days are remembered and are made

This gives the result of the reasons described in verses 26 and 27. Alternate translation: “therefore” or “that is why” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

And these days are remembered and are made

Remembered and **made** mean basically the same thing here. The repetition is used to emphasize that the Jews have been faithful in doing this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the general meaning by saying something like “So the Jews have celebrated these days.” Alternate translation: “therefore they said that they would remember and celebrate on those two days” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

And these days are remembered and are made

This expression uses two passive forms, but you could say the same thing using active forms. Alternate translation: “so the Jews have celebrated and observed these days” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

in every generation by generation

This expression means “in each and every generation.” Alternate translation: “in every single generation” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

family by family

This expression means “every family.” Alternate translation: “every Jewish family” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

province by province, and city by city

This could be a figure of speech that refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it in order to include everything in between those parts. Generally speaking, a province would be the largest division of the empire that would identify a person’s location, and a city would be the smallest. Particularly, since the Jews would continue to celebrate Purim after the Persian empire and its provinces no longer exist, you might choose to express the meaning of this figure of speech in a more general way. Alternate translation: “everywhere they have lived” (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

province by province

This expression means “every province.” Alternate translation: “in every single province” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

and city by city

This expression means “every city.” Alternate translation: “in every single city” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

And these days of Purim will not pass away from the midst of the Jews, and their remembrance will not come to an end from their seed

As in verse 27, this expression means that the Jews will never stop celebrating the feast of Purim. You can say this positively. Alternate translation: “will always observe the Festival of Purim faithfully” (See: **Double Negatives (p. 254)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.254)**)

And these days of Purim will not pass away from the midst of the Jews, and their remembrance will not come to an end from their seed

These two phrases mean similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize that the Jews will definitely not stop celebrating Purim each year. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases and express the emphasis with a word like “definitely” or “certainly” or “always.” Alternate translation: “the Jews and their descendants will certainly always continue to celebrate this festival of Purim” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

from the midst of the Jews

Alternate translation: “within the Jewish community”

and their remembrance will not come to an end

Alternate translation: “will always observe”

from their seed

As in verse 27, **seed** is a metaphor meaning “offspring.” Alternate translation: “and for their descendants” or “and for their offspring” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

Esther 9:29

the daughter of Abihail

This information reminds the reader who Esther was. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p. 251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

Abihail

This man was Esther's father and Mordecai's uncle. See how you translated his name in [2:15](#). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**) (See: **How to Translate Names (p.278)**)

and Mordecai

Since the Hebrew verb wrote is feminine singular, it means that the letter was from Esther. The mention of **Mordecai** here probably means that Mordecai helped her to write the letter. Alternate translation: "with Mordecai"

the Jew

This phrase gives information about Mordecai to remind the reader. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

And & wrote with all power

Alternate translation: "using her royal authority" or "using the authority that she had as queen"

to set up this second letter of Purim

This second letter of Purim could refer to: (1) this letter that Esther is writing, which is the second letter that the Jews will receive about the festival of Purim. Alternate translation: "an additional letter about Purim with her authority" or (2) the second letter that Mordecai wrote (see verses 20-22), creating the festival of Purim. Alternate translation: "to confirm what Mordecai had written about Purim in his second letter" In either case, this letter from Esther is to add her royal authority to what Mordecai had already written. (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

Esther 9:30

And he sent letters

While this says “**he**,” in context it refers to the letter that Esther wrote with Mordecai’s help. Alternate translation: “they sent copies of this second letter” or “Mordecai ordered messengers to take copies of the letter” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**)

to all the Jews, to 127 provinces, the kingdom of Ahasuerus

These three phrases all mean the same thing. The repetition emphasizes that Esther and Mordecai sent this second letter out comprehensively throughout the empire. Alternate translation: “to all the Jews throughout the entire empire of Ahasuerus” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

127 provinces

The letter was not sent to the provinces as geographical territories, but to the Jews who lived in them. The Jews are being described by something associated with them, the places where they lived. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

127 provinces

Alternate translation: “one hundred and twenty-seven provinces” (See: **Numbers (p.304)**) (See: **Numbers (p.304)**)

words of peace and truth

The abstract nouns **peace** and **truth** can be expressed in other ways. Alternate translation: “encouraging the Jews that they are now safe and can live peacefully” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

words of peace and truth

The Hebrew word translated as **truth** here also refers to things that are “sure” or “secure.” When “peace” and “truth” are paired together, they can refer to a peaceful, stable political environment, as in 2 Kings 20:19 and Jeremiah 33:6. Alternate translation: “with a message that assured them of their peaceful and stable situation”

Esther 9:31

to set up these days of Purim at their appointed times according to what Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had set up for them

Alternate translation: "in this second letter, Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther confirmed that Purim should be celebrated on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar"

the Jew

This phrase gives clarifying information about Mordecai. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding** (p. 251)) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding** (p.251))

and according to what they had set up concerning their lives and concerning their seed, the matters of the fasts and their outcry

This is referring to background information that the original audience would have known. They would have known what the fasting was about. It could be either: (1) fasting as a part of Purim. We know that some Jews fasted on the 13th day of the month of Adar to commemorate the day that Haman intended to destroy them, or (2) other times of fasting. Ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews had been fasting and mourning in the fifth month of the year to show their sorrow over what had happened. (The story refers to the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in [2:6](#).) You could put this information in a footnote if it would help your readers to understand this.

and concerning their seed

Here, **seed** is a metaphor meaning the offspring or descendants of the Jews. Alternate translation: "and for their descendants" or "and for their offspring" (See: **Metaphor** (p.296)) (See: **Metaphor** (p.296))

Esther 9:32

and it was written in the book

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “and the royal scribes made an official record of it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

Esther 10

Esther 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Mordecai's new position

Through the power of Yahweh, Mordecai was given a new position in the Persian Empire. Mordecai was now the second in command in the kingdom of Persia and he used his position to help other Jews.

Esther 10:1

And the king Ahasuerus set

This introduces a new event in the story. Use a natural way to introduce a new event in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**) (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.288)**)

And & set a tribute

Alternate translation: "Then ... levied a tax"

on the land and the islands of the sea

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the greatness of Mordecai. It does that by showing that he was second in command to a very powerful emperor. Referring to both the land and the sea is a way to include everything that lives in a very large area of the earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the general meaning by saying something like "everyone throughout his empire." Alternate translation: "on all the people in the empire ... even the people who lived on the islands in the Mediterranean Sea" or "on everyone throughout the land and even the far-away islands" (See: **Merism (p.294)**) (See: **Merism (p.294)**)

and the islands of the sea

The phrase **the islands of the sea** likely refers to the fact that the Persian kings had conquered territories reaching all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "which reached all the way to the Mediterranean Sea." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.228)**)

on the land and the islands of the sea

These geographic features were not expected to pay the tax. The land and coastlands represent the people living there. The story is describing those people figuratively by reference to something associated with them, the places where they live. (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.302)**)

Esther 10:2

And all the deeds of his power and his might

Power and **might** mean essentially the same thing. They are used together to emphasize how powerful King Ahasuerus was. If it is more natural in your language, you can use one word with that meaning, with another word that gives it emphasis. Alternate translation: “all that he achieved because of how very powerful he was” or “all the great things that he did because of his great power” (See: **Doublet (p.257)**) (See: **Doublet (p.257)**)

his power and his might

The abstract nouns **power** and **might** can be translated with an adjective. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

with the full account of

Alternate translation: “They also wrote a full account”

the greatness of Mordecai

Alternate translation: “of how important Mordecai was” or “of how the king had honored Mordecai for the great things he had done”

had made him great

See how you translated this phrase in 3:1 and 5:11. Alternate translation: “had promoted him”

are they not written in the book of the events of days for the kings of Media and Persia

This is actually a statement. The question form is used to emphasize the certainty of the statement. If questions are not used this way in your language, then use a statement instead, as in the UST. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.317)**)

are they not written

You can say this with an active form, and you can say who did the action. Alternate translation: “The king’s scribes made a record ... ” (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.225)**)

are they not written

Because it comes first logically, you can put this first in the verse, if it would be helpful in your language.

the book of the events of days for the kings of Media and Persia

See how you translated this in 2:23. Alternate translation: “the royal record books of Media and Persia” (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

Esther 10:3

For

This word indicates that this verse will give the reason why the scribes made a record about Mordecai. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.245)**)

the Jew

This phrase gives clarifying information about Mordecai. (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.251)**)

was second to the king Ahasuerus

Alternate translation: “was the second most important person after King Ahasuerus himself”

and great among the Jews

Alternate translation: “and a great leader of the Jews”

his brothers

Here, **brothers** is a figurative way of describing fellow members of the same people group. Alternate translation: “fellow Jews” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.327)**)

seeking good for his people and speaking peace to all its seed

These two phrases basically mean the same thing. The repetition is used to emphasize how hard Mordecai worked for the good of his people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and say something like, “He worked hard so his people and their descendants would prosper.” (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.312)**)

seeking good for his people and speaking peace to all its seed

The abstract nouns **good** and **peace** refer in this context to prosperity and security. You could translate these ideas with verbs, for example, you could say, “He worked hard to make sure that his people would prosper and their descendants would be secure.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.223)**)

seeking good for his people

Seeking is a figurative way to describe actively trying to do something or work hard for something. (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)

and speaking peace to all its seed

Speaking peace is a figurative way of describing actions that benefit the general welfare of others. (See: **Idiom (p.286)**) (See: **Idiom (p.286)**)

to all its seed

Here, **seed** figuratively means “descendants.” Even if you combine the two parallel phrases, you can still convey the idea of “down through the generations” with a word such as “always.” Alternate translation: “and for their descendants” or “and for their offspring” (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.296)**)



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Version 36

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.

This page answers the question: *What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, "What is its **weight**?" could be expressed as "How much does it **weigh**?" or "How **heavy** is it?"

Examples From the Bible

From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The abstract noun "slowness" refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

... from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.

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

But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.

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

Today the people in this house **have been saved** ... Today God **has saved** the people in this house ...

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

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

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

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

”

Referenced in: [Esther 1:2](#); [Esther 1:3](#); [Esther 1:4](#); [Esther 1:7](#); [Esther 1:8](#); [Esther 1:9](#); [Esther 1:11](#); [Esther 1:19](#); [Esther 2:16](#); [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 5:1](#); [Esther 5:6](#); [Esther 5:7](#); [Esther 5:11](#); [Esther 6:8](#); [Esther 7:2](#); [Esther 7:3](#); [Esther 7:4](#); [Esther 7:7](#); [Esther 8:6](#); [Esther 9:2](#); [Esther 9:12](#); [Esther 9:22](#); [Esther 9:30](#); [Esther 10:2](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

Active or Passive

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.

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the active form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the passive form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is not always mentioned.

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All languages use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use it.

Purposes for the Passive

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

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

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

Examples From the Bible

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

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**.
(Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
- (3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

- (2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."

It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

- (3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Referenced in: [Esther 1:5](#); [Esther 1:19](#); [Esther 1:20](#); [Esther 2:1](#); [Esther 2:3](#); [Esther 2:6](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 2:13](#); [Esther 2:14](#); [Esther 2:16](#); [Esther 2:19](#); [Esther 2:22](#); [Esther 2:23](#); [Esther 3:6](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 3:9](#); [Esther 3:11](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 3:14](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 4:4](#); [Esther 4:8](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 4:16](#); [Esther 5:3](#); [Esther 5:6](#); [Esther 5:12](#); [Esther 6:1](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 6:3](#); [Esther 6:8](#); [Esther 6:9](#); [Esther 7:2](#); [Esther 7:3](#); [Esther 7:4](#); [Esther 7:7](#); [Esther 8:5](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 8:13](#); [Esther 8:14](#); [Esther 9:11](#); [Esther 9:12](#); [Esther 9:13](#); [Esther 9:14](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 9:32](#); [Esther 10:2](#)

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

This page answers the question: *How can I be sure that my translation communicates the assumed knowledge and implicit information along with the explicit information of the original message?*

When the speaker does give the audience information, he can do so in two ways. The speaker gives explicit information in what he states directly. Implicit Information is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from other things he says.

Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is explicit information.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called assumed knowledge.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Implicit information is information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly.

Often, the audience understands this implicit information by combining what they already know (assumed knowledge) with the explicit information that the speaker tells them directly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different from the biblical languages and is made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the assumed knowledge or the implicit information is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, it is helpful if you include this information in the text or in a footnote.

Examples From the Bible

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

Jesus did not say what foxes and birds use holes and nests for, because he assumed that the scribe would have known that foxes sleep in holes in the ground and birds sleep in their nests. This is **assumed knowledge**.

Jesus did not directly say here "I am the Son of Man" but, if the scribe did not already know it, then that fact would be **implicit information** that he could learn because Jesus referred to himself that way. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in **Tyre and Sidon** which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But

I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the **day of judgment** than for you.
(Matthew 11:21-22 ULT)

Jesus assumed that the people he was speaking to knew that Tyre and Sidon were very wicked, and that the day of judgment is a time when God will judge every person. Jesus also knew that the people he was talking to believed that they were good and did not need to repent. Jesus did not need to tell them these things. This is all **assumed knowledge**.

An important piece of **implicit information** here is that the people he was speaking to would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged **because** they did not repent.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands when they eat bread**. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

One of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating. People thought that in order to be righteous, they had to follow all the traditions of the elders. This was **assumed knowledge** that the Pharisees who were speaking to Jesus expected him to know. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

Translation Strategies

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes **have holes to live in**, and the birds of the sky **have nests to live in**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep."

It will be more tolerable for **Tyre and Sidon** at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.
>

At the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for **those cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked**, than it will be for you. or At

the day of judgment, It will be more tolerable for those **wicked cities, Tyre and Sidon**, than for you.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands** when they eat bread. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not go through the ceremonial handwashing ritual of righteousness** when they eat bread.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

The implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, then, like Jesus, he would have to live without a house.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but **I, the Son of Man**, have **no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live.**"

It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.

At the day of judgment, God will **punish Tyre and Sidon**, cities whose people were very wicked, **less severely than he will punish you.**
or:

At the day of judgment, God will **punish you more severely** than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:4](#); [Esther 1:5](#); [Esther 1:6](#); [Esther 1:7](#); [Esther 1:8](#); [Esther 1:11](#); [Esther 1:12](#); [Esther 1:15](#); [Esther 1:17](#); [Esther 1:18](#); [Esther 1:19](#); [Esther 1:20](#); [Esther 1:22](#); [Esther 2:1](#); [Esther 2:2](#); [Esther 2:6](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 2:12](#); [Esther 2:13](#); [Esther 2:14](#); [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 2:18](#); [Esther 2:19](#); [Esther 2:21](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 3:2](#); [Esther 3:3](#); [Esther 3:4](#); [Esther 3:6](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 3:8](#); [Esther 3:10](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 4 General Notes](#); [Esther 4:1](#); [Esther 4:3](#); [Esther 4:4](#); [Esther 4:6](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 4:17](#); [Esther 5 General Notes](#); [Esther 5:1](#); [Esther 5:2](#); [Esther 5:5](#); [Esther 5:6](#); [Esther 5:9](#); [Esther 5:11](#); [Esther 5:13](#); [Esther 5:14](#); [Esther 6:1](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 6:4](#); [Esther 6:5](#); [Esther 6:8](#); [Esther 6:9](#); [Esther 6:10](#); [Esther 6:13](#); [Esther 6:14](#); [Esther 7 General Notes](#); [Esther 7:2](#); [Esther](#)

7:7; Esther 7:8; Esther 7:9; Esther 8:1; Esther 8:2; Esther 8:3; Esther 8:8; Esther 8:9; Esther 8:10; Esther 8:12; Esther 8:15; Esther 8:16; Esther 8:17; Esther 9:1; Esther 9:2; Esther 9:4; Esther 9:7; Esther 9:13; Esther 9:14; Esther 9:16; Esther 9:18; Esther 9:19; Esther 9:22; Esther 9:23; Esther 9:24; Esther 9:25; Esther 9:26; Esther 10:1

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

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

Order of Events ([UTA PDF](#))

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story
 - > * Setting includes:
 - > * where the story takes place
 - > * when the story takes place
 - > * who is present when the story begins
 - > * what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son** (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said ... (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said"

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

And Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word "and" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

- (2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

"**When Abram was 86 years old**, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."

Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

"Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things**, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Next we recommend you learn about:

Connecting Words and Phrases ([UTA PDF](#))

Introduction of a New Event ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:1](#); [Esther 1:10](#); [Esther 1:11](#); [Esther 1:13](#); [Esther 2:6](#); [Esther 2:7](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 2:12](#); [Esther 4:5](#); [Esther 9:26](#)

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspace was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong," which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
"long" cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal]]
Fractions (UTA PDF)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**."

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**."

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

[¹] two and a half cubits
[²] one cubit and a half

"

Referenced in: [Esther 5:14](#); [Esther 7:9](#)

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see [Biblical Weight](#). The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

- (1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
- (3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
- (4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

▮ The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See [Copy or Borrow Words.](#))

▮ "The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**."

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

▮ "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

▮ "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

▮ "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

▮ [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

▮ "The one owed **500 denarii**,¹ and the other, **50**." (Luke 7:41 ULT)

▮ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Copy or Borrow Words \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Esther 3:9](#)

Connect — Background Information

Time Relationship

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses that give background information?*

Background Clause

Description

A background clause is one that describes something that is ongoing. Then, in the same sentence, another clause indicates an event that begins to happen during that time. These events are also simultaneous events, but they have the further relationship of background event and main event because the event that is already happening serves as the background for the other event, the one that is in focus. The background event simply provides the time frame or other context for the main event or events.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate a shift in time in different ways. You (the translator) need to understand how these shifts in time are indicated in the original languages in order to communicate them clearly in your own language. Background clauses often indicate a time that began long before the event that is in focus. Translators need to understand how both the source language and the target language communicate background events. Some English words that indicate background events are “now,” “when,” “while,” and “during.” Those words can also indicate simultaneous events. To tell the difference, ask yourself if all of the events seem to be equal in importance and started at about the same time. If so, they are probably simultaneous events. But if an event(s) is ongoing and another event(s) just started, then the ongoing event(s) is probably background to the other event(s). Some common phrases that indicate background events are “in those days” and “at that time.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

When Solomon was old, he also worshiped their gods. (OBS Story 18 Frame 3)

Solomon began to worship foreign gods at a time when he was old. Being old is the background event. Worshiping other gods is the main event.

And his parents went **every year** to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the feast. (Luke 2:41-42 ULT)

The first event—going to Jerusalem—is ongoing and started long ago. We know this because of the words “every year.” Going to Jerusalem is the background event. Then an event begins that started during the time “when he was twelve years old.” So the main event is the specific time Jesus and his family traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival **when he was twelve years old**.

And it came about that, **while** they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. (Luke 2:6 ULT)

Being in Bethlehem is the background event. The birth of the baby is the main event.

And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of

Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
(Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

This example begins with five background clauses (marked by commas), signalled as background by the words “while” and “during.” Then the main event happens: “the word of God came to John.”

Translation Strategies

If the way that the Background Clauses are marked is also clear in your language, then translate the Background Clauses as they are.

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a Background Clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.

(2) If your language marks Background Clauses in a different way than using connecting words (such as by using different verb forms), then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
(Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a background clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.

It happened during the time that Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, **and during the time that** Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, **and during the time that** his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, **and during the time that** Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **and also during the time that** Annas and Caiaphas were high priests—**that** the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

(2) If your language marks background clauses in a different way than using connecting words, such as with different verb forms, then use that way.

Pontius Pilate **was governing** Judea, and Herod **was ruling over** Galilee, and his brother Philip **was ruling over** the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias **was ruling over** Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas **were being** high priests—the word of God **came** to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Example of Differences in Time Relationship Connecting Words:

Category	Example
Background setting	Yahweh's word was rare in those days ;
Background repeated	there was no frequent prophetic vision.
Introduction of main event	At that time, when Eli
Background	whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see well,
Simultaneous background	was lying down in his own bed.
Simultaneous background	The lamp of God had not yet gone out,
Simultaneous background	and Samuel was lying down to sleep in the temple of Yahweh,
Simultaneous background	where the ark of God was.
Main event	Yahweh called to Samuel,
Sequential event	who said, "Here I am." (1 Sam 3:1-4 ULT)

In the above example, the first two lines talk about a condition that was going on for a long time. This is the general, long-term background. We know this from the phrase "in those days." After the introduction of the main event ("At that time,"), there are several lines of simultaneous background. The first one is introduced by "when," and then three more follow, with the last connected by "and." The background clause introduced by "where" explains a little more about the background clause before it. Then the main event happens, followed by more events. Translators will need to think about the best way to show these relationships in their language.

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Referenced in: [Esther 6:4](#); [Esther 6:14](#); [Esther 7:8](#)

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a contrast relationship?*

Contrast Relationship

Description

A contrast relationship is a logical relationship in which one event or item is in contrast or opposition to another.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, many events did not happen as the people involved intended or expected them to happen. Sometimes people acted in ways that were not expected, whether good or bad. Often it was God at work, changing the events. These events were often pivotal. It is important that translators understand and communicate these contrasts. In English, contrast relationships are often indicated by the words “but,” “although,” “even though,” “though,” “yet,” or “however.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, **but** God used the evil for good! (Story 8 Frame 12 OBS)

Joseph’s brothers’ evil plan to sell Joseph is contrasted with God’s good plan to save many people. The word “but” marks the contrast.

For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

Jesus contrasts the proud way that human leaders behave with the humble way that he behaves. The contrast is marked by the word “yet.”

The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

It was unexpected that the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, would be able to conquer and lay claim to the promised land.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses contrast relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Unlike that person**, I am among you as one who serves.

(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

The hill country will also be yours. It is a forest, **but** you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders. They have chariots of iron, and they are strong, **but** you will drive out the Canaanites.

(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

{David} found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)

[David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **But** it was, Solomon, **not David**, who built the house for God. **Even though Solomon built him a house**, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands.

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Referenced in: [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 5:10](#); [Esther 6:13](#)

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — “I did Y because I wanted X to happen.” But usually it is looking backward — “X happened, and so I did Y.” Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are “because,” “so,” “therefore,” and “for.” Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a [Verse Bridge](#).

Examples From OBS and the Bible

The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
(Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
(Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

“Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
- (2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
- (3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

- (1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

- (1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.
- (2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.
- (3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

Since he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

- (1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.
- (2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.
- (3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

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Referenced in: [Esther 1:8](#); [Esther 1:11](#); [Esther 1:13](#); [Esther 1:17](#); [Esther 2:10](#); [Esther 2:11](#); [Esther 3:2](#); [Esther 3:4](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 4:2](#); [Esther 5:14](#); [Esther 8:6](#); [Esther 8:8](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 9:4](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:22](#); [Esther 9:24](#); [Esther 9:26](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate clauses with a sequential time relationship?*

Sequential Clause

Description

A sequential clause is a time relation that connects two events in which one happens and then the other happens.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate sequences of events in different ways; some use ordering, some use connecting words, some even use relative tense (Relative tense is a tense that refers to a time in relation to a reference point in the context.) Connecting words that may indicate sequence are words such as “then,” “later,” “after,” “afterward,” “before,” “first,” and “when.” Translators need to be certain that they communicate the order of the events in a way that is natural in their language. This may require ordering clauses differently than in the original languages.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

When Joseph came to his brothers, they kidnapped him and sold him to some slave traders.
(OBS Story 8 Frame 2)

First Joseph came to his brothers, and then they kidnapped and sold him. We know this because of the connecting word “**when**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but **after** I ate it, my stomach became bitter. (Revelation 10:10b ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs first, and the event of the last clause occurs later. We know this because of the connecting word “**after**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs after the event of the second clause. First the land they dread will be desolate, and then the child will know to refuse evil and choose good. We know this because of the connecting word “**before**.” However, stating the clauses in this order may communicate the wrong order of events in your language. The translator may have to change the order so that the clauses come in the order that they happen. Or it may be possible to keep the order of the original language text and mark the ordering of sequence so that it is clear to the readers. You (the translator) need to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Here the general connector “**and**” connects four events. These are sequential events—each happens after the one before it. We know this because that is the only way that these events would happen. So in English, the general connector “and” is enough to make the sequence clear for events such as these. You will need to decide if this also communicates this sequence clearly and correctly in your language.

Translation Strategies

If the sequence of events is clear in your language, then translate the sequence as it is.

- (1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.
- (2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.

Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Then Mary arose in those days. **Then** she quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah. **Then** she entered into the house of Zechariah, **and then** she greeted Elizabeth.

For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

For the time will come when the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, **but even before that time**, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate.

- (2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

For the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For more about sequences of events, see [Sequence of Events](#).

"

Referenced in: [Esther 2:19](#); [Esther 2:23](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 5:2](#)

Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Time Relationships

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses with a simultaneous time relationship?*

Simultaneous Clause

Description

A simultaneous clause is a time relationship that connects two or more events that occur at the same time.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate in many different ways that events occur simultaneously. These ways may vary based on whether or not something is causing the events to occur simultaneously. Connecting words that may indicate simultaneous events are words such as “while,” “as,” and “during.” Often the Bible does not state a relationship between the events but simply says they occurred at the same time. It is important that you (the translator) know when a time relationship is implied and when it is not implied so that you can communicate it clearly. A simultaneous clause communicates that events happened at the same time but it does not indicate that one event caused the other. That would be a reason-and-result relationship.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

Joseph served his master well, **and** God blessed Joseph. (OBS Story 8 Frame 4)

Two events happened while Joseph was a slave to a wealthy government official: Joseph served well, and God blessed Joseph. There is no indication of a reason-and-result (cause and effect) relationship between the two, or that the first event happened, and then the second event happened.

But in truth I say to you that there were many widows in Israel **during** the days of Elijah. (Luke 4:25b ULT)

The connecting word “**during**” tells us clearly that two things happened at the same time, but one event did not cause the other.

And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

The people were both waiting and wondering at the same time. The general connector “**and**” indicates this.

While they were looking intensely into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

Three events happened at the same time — the disciples looking, Jesus going up, and two men standing. The connector words “**while**” and “**as**” tell us this.

Translation Strategies

If the way that the simultaneous clauses are marked also is clear in your language, then translate the simultaneous clauses as they are.

- (1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that the simultaneous clauses are happening at the same time, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
- (2) If it is not clear which clause the simultaneous clause is connected to, and that they are happening at the same time, mark all of the clauses with a connecting word.
- (3) If your language marks events as simultaneous in a different way than using connecting words, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Below, each Bible verse will be restated in three different ways, according to the translation strategies in the list above. Each restatement will have the same number as the translation strategy that it is using.

And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

- (1) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were wondering at his delaying in the temple.
- (2) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were **also** wondering at his delaying in the temple.
- (3) Now the people were waiting for Zechariah, wondering at his delaying in the temple.

While they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

- (1) And **during the time** they were looking intently into heaven **while** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing.
- (2) And **while** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, **at that same time** two men stood by them in white clothing.
- (3) They were looking intently into heaven; he was going up **when** they saw two men standing by them in white clothing.

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Referenced in: [Esther 1:9](#); [Esther 2:6](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 2:19](#); [Esther 2:21](#)

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

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.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

■ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

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

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

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

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is the reason that Abraham did not think that Sarah could bear a son. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age, and he was not telling anyone something new about her age. He simply did not think that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

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

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

>

Because idols are worthless, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child.

>

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

I will call on Yahweh, **who is worthy to be praised**. (2 Samuel 22:4a ULT) There is only one Yahweh. The phrase “who is worthy to be praised” gives a reason for calling on Yahweh.

I will call on Yahweh, because **he is worthy to be praised**

(2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

Receiving my love, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Double Negatives ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 3:10](#); [Esther 5:13](#); [Esther 8:1](#); [Esther 9:10](#); [Esther 9:24](#); [Esther 9:29](#); [Esther 9:31](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

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.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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 the bolded parts of these words: “**un**happy,” “**im**possible,” 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)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. The Spanish sentence, “No vi a nadie,” literally says “I did not see no one.” It has both the word ‘no’ next to the verb and ‘nadie,’ which means “no one.” The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, “I did not see anyone.”
- In some languages, a double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” means, “He is somewhat intelligent.”
- In some languages, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is very intelligent.” In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called [litotes](#).

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν

Without me **not** you can do **nothing**

We cannot reproduce this double negative in the English ULT because in English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one. In English, and perhaps in your language, we need to choose only one of the negatives and say either:

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means "in order to be fruitful."

A prophet is **not without** honor (Mark 6:4 ULT)

This means "a prophet is honored."

I do **not** want you to be **ignorant**. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the double negative is used in the Bible is natural and has the same meaning as in your language, consider using it in the same way. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.
- (3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)

"For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses."

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

"... so that they may be fruitful."

- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν

Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

...ἰώτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)

...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law

...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law

or:

...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Next we recommend you learn about:

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 5:12](#); [Esther 6:10](#); [Esther 9:28](#)

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike [Hendiadys](#), in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

This page answers the question: *What are doublets and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

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

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, “**Master! Master!** We are perishing!” (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of “Master” means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

"You have decided to prepare **false** things to say."

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

"He has one people **very spread out**."

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

• English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."

"... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**."

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, "**Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, "Master!**
We are perishing!"

"

Referenced in: [Esther 1:4](#); [Esther 2:10](#); [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 2:20](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 3:2](#); [Esther 3:6](#); [Esther 3:8](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 4:1](#); [Esther 4:3](#); [Esther 4:8](#); [Esther 4:14](#); [Esther 5:7](#); [Esther 5:8](#); [Esther 5:9](#); [Esther 5:11](#); [Esther 7:4](#); [Esther 7:5](#); [Esther 7:6](#); [Esther 8:11](#); [Esther 8:14](#); [Esther 8:16](#); [Esther 8:17](#); [Esther 9:5](#); [Esther 9:6](#); [Esther 9:12](#); [Esther 9:27](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 10:2](#)

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis^[1] 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.

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.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis ?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight.**” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight.**” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

”

Referenced in: [Esther 7:3](#)

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

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

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man?**” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**"

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

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

"They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa."

"

Referenced in: [Esther 7:8](#)

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word "Alas" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
- (2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
- (3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
- (4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

“You **are** such a worthless person!”

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)

“They were extremely astonished, saying, ‘**Wow!** He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”

Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)

“**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

“**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

“Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me?** For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

“**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

”

Referenced in: [Esther 5:12](#)

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

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

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of You ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:16](#); [Esther 1:19](#); [Esther 1:20](#); [Esther 2:2](#); [Esther 2:3](#); [Esther 2:4](#); [Esther 3:8](#); [Esther 3:9](#); [Esther 5:4](#); [Esther 5:8](#); [Esther 6:6](#); [Esther 6:7](#); [Esther 6:8](#); [Esther 6:9](#); [Esther 6:10](#); [Esther 7:4](#); [Esther 7:9](#); [Esther 8:5](#); [Esther 8:8](#)

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural

Description

Some languages have a singular form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to just one person, and a plural form for when the word “you” refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a dual form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to only two people. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is dual or plural?*

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

[Forms of You \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Parts of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have a singular form of “you” and a plural form of “you.” When we read the Bible in those languages, the pronouns and verb forms show us whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one person. However, they do not show us whether it refers to only two people or more than two people. When the pronouns do not show us how many people the word “you” refers to, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular, dual, and plural forms of “you” will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language.
- Many languages also have different forms of the verb depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. So even if there is no pronoun meaning “you,” translators of these languages will need to know if the speaker was referring to one person or more than one.

Often the context will make it clear whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. If you look at the other pronouns in the sentence, they will help you know how many people the speaker was addressing.

Examples From the Bible

Then **James and John**, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him, saying to him, “Teacher, we desire that you to do for us whatever we ask you.” 36 So he said to them, “What do **you** want me to do for **you**?” (Mark 10:35-36 ULT)

Jesus is asking the two, James and John, what they want him to do for them. If the target language has a dual form of “you,” use that. If the target language does not have a dual form, then the plural form would be appropriate.

Jesus sent out two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village opposite us. As soon as **you** enter it, **you** will find a colt tied there, on which no one has yet sat. Untie it and bring it to me.” (Mark 11:1b-2 ULT)

The context makes it clear that Jesus is addressing two people. If the target language has a dual form of “you,” use that. If the target language does not have a dual form, then the plural form would be appropriate.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are in the dispersion: Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brothers, when **you** experience various troubles. You know that the testing of **your** faith produces endurance. (James 1:1-3 ULT)

James wrote this letter to many people, so the word “you” refers to many people. If the target language has a plural form of “you,” it would be best to use it here.

Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

- (1) Look at the translationNotes to see if they tell whether “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
- (2) Look at the UST to see if it says anything that would show you whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
- (3) If you have a Bible that is written in a language that distinguishes “you” singular from “you” plural, see which form of “you” that Bible has in that sentence.
- (4) Look at the context to see who the speaker was talking to and who responded.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youdual.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Singular [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Esther 5:8](#)

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

Some languages have a singular form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to just one person, and a **plural** form for when the word “you” refers to more than one person. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is singular?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of You ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have both a singular form of “you” and a plural form of “you.” When we read the Bible in those languages, the pronouns and verb forms show us whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. When we read the Bible in a language that does not have different forms of you, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular and plural forms of “you” will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language.
- Many languages also have different forms of the verb depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. So even if there is no pronoun meaning “you,” translators of these languages will need to know if the speaker was referring to one person or more than one.

Often the context will make it clear whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. If you look at the other pronouns in the sentence, they will help you know the number of people the speaker was speaking to. Sometimes Greek and Hebrew speakers used the singular form of “you” even though they were speaking to a group of people. (See [Forms of 'You' — Singular to a Crowd](#).)

Examples From the Bible

But he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” But when he heard this, Jesus said to him, “One thing is still lacking to **you**. All things, as much as **you** have, sell all and distribute to the poor, and **you** will have treasure in heaven—and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:21-22 ULT)

The ruler was speaking about just himself when he said “I.” This shows us that when Jesus said “you” he was referring only to the ruler. So languages that have singular and plural forms of “you” need the singular form here.

The angel said to him, “Dress **yourself** and put on **your** sandals.” So he did that. He said to him, “Put on **your** outer garment and follow me.” (Acts 12:8 ULT)

The context makes it clear that the angel was speaking to one person and that only one person did what the the angel commanded. So languages that have singular and plural forms of “you” would need the singular form here for “yourself” and “your.” Also, if verbs have different forms for singular and plural subjects, then the verbs “dress” and “put on” need the form that indicates a singular subject.

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. For this purpose I left **you** in Crete, that **you** might set in order things not yet complete and ordain elders in every city as I directed **you**. But **you**, say what fits with sound teaching. (Titus 1:4a, 5; 2:1 ULT)

Paul wrote this letter to one person, Titus. Most of the time the word “you” in this letter refers only to Titus.

Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

- (1) Look at the notes to see if they tell whether “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
- (2) Look at the UST to see if it says anything that would show you whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
- (3) If you have a Bible that is written in a language that distinguishes “you” singular from “you” plural, see which form of “you” that Bible has in that sentence.
- (4) Look at the context to see how many people the speaker was talking to and who responded.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 5:4](#)

Hebrew Months

Description

This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as “the first month” or “the second month” refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

Aviv — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

Ziv — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

Sivan — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

Tammuz — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

Ab — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

Elul — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

Ethanim — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

Bul — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

Kislev — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

Tebeth — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

Shebat — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

Adar — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

Examples From the Bible

Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)

You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#).)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

(2) Use the names for months that people know.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)

It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

(2) Use the months that people know.

At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month**, you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**¹ you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

^[1] The Hebrew says, "the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month."

Next we recommend you learn about:

Ordinal Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 2:16](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 8:12](#); [Esther 9:1](#); [Esther 9:15](#); [Esther 9:17](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:21](#)

Hendiadys

Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

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

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

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

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

"

Referenced in: [Esther 5:7](#); [Esther 6:3](#); [Esther 7:3](#); [Esther 8:15](#); [Esther 9:17](#); [Esther 9:18](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:22](#);
[Esther 9:24](#)

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

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

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see [Borrow Words](#).
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.

(5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’)**, and she said,
“For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?”
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:1](#); [Esther 1:2](#); [Esther 1:9](#); [Esther 1:10](#); [Esther 1:14](#); [Esther 1:16](#); [Esther 1:21](#); [Esther 2:3](#); [Esther 2:5](#); [Esther 2:6](#); [Esther 2:7](#); [Esther 2:14](#); [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 2:18](#); [Esther 2:21](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 4:5](#); [Esther 5:10](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 7:9](#); [Esther 8:3](#); [Esther 9:7](#); [Esther 9:8](#); [Esther 9:9](#); [Esther 9:24](#); [Esther 9:26](#); [Esther 9:29](#)

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it does not necessarily mean **exactly** “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never.” It simply means “most,” “most of the time,” “hardly any,” or “rarely.”

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

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

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

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

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

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

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”

> Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
> and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

"

Referenced in: [Esther 1:16](#); [Esther 1:17](#); [Esther 3:9](#); [Esther 5:3](#); [Esther 7:2](#); [Esther 7:4](#)

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

He **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

■ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

■ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, "the one who helps me."

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
- (2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

■ Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

■ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

■ Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

■ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

■ I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

■ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

■ Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

■ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

■ My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

■ I am crying my **eyes out**

"

Referenced in: [Esther 1:1](#); [Esther 1:5](#); [Esther 1:8](#); [Esther 1:10](#); [Esther 1:11](#); [Esther 1:14](#); [Esther 1:19](#); [Esther 1:21](#); [Esther 1:22](#); [Esther 2:2](#); [Esther 2:3](#); [Esther 2:11](#); [Esther 2:12](#); [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 2:19](#); [Esther 2:21](#); [Esther 2:22](#); [Esther 2:23](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 3:4](#); [Esther 3:6](#); [Esther 3:9](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:14](#); [Esther 4:3](#); [Esther 5:2](#); [Esther 5:4](#); [Esther 5:8](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 6:6](#); [Esther 6:7](#); [Esther 6:9](#); [Esther 6:10](#); [Esther 6:11](#); [Esther 7:3](#); [Esther 7:7](#); [Esther 7:8](#); [Esther 7:9](#); [Esther 8:3](#); [Esther 8:5](#); [Esther 8:6](#); [Esther 8:7](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 8:11](#); [Esther 8:13](#); [Esther 8:17](#); [Esther 9:1](#); [Esther 9:2](#); [Esther 9:4](#); [Esther 9:5](#); [Esther 9:10](#); [Esther 9:13](#); [Esther 9:15](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:21](#); [Esther 9:22](#); [Esther 9:25](#); [Esther 9:26](#); [Esther 9:27](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 10:2](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

Introduction of a New Event

Description

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. This information that the writer gives before the events of the story begin is called the setting of the story. Some new events in a story also have a setting because they might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages, people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Order of Events ([UTA PDF](#))

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

Examples From the Bible

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase “And it happened that” in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

And it happened that in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way. His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word “then” shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**.
This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
- (2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
- (3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
- (4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**.
This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.

One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.

As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him ... (Mark 2:14a ULT)

As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as "another time," or "someone."

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase "after that" can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.

After that, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.

Again he began to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone's house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.

Another time Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.

Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)

Now this is what happened when Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.

This part tells about what happened when the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Now this is what happened when Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come.**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Introduction of New and Old Participants ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:1](#); [Esther 2:1](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 5:1](#); [Esther 6:1](#); [Esther 8:1](#); [Esther 8:3](#); [Esther 8:15](#); [Esther 9:1](#); [Esther 10:1](#)

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** ... **This man** came to Jesus at night ... Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

The first bolded phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. After being introduced, he is then referred to as “This man” and “him” when he has become an old participant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about. Different languages have different ways of doing this. You must follow the way that your language does this, not the way that the source language does this.

Examples From the Bible

New Participants

Often the most important new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as “There was a man,” as in the example below. The phrase “There was” tells us that this man existed. The word “a” in “a man” tells us that the author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who his family was, and what his name was.

Now there was a man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2a ULT)

A new participant who is not the most important participant is often introduced in relation to the more important person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah’s wife is simply referred to as “his wife.” This phrase shows her relationship to him.

Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. **His wife** was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the first verse of 1 Kings, the author assumes that his readers know who King David is, so there is no need to explain who he is.

Now King David was old, he had advanced in the days, and they covered him with the garments, but it was not warm enough for him. (1 Kings 1:1 ULT)

Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story can be referred to with a pronoun after that. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun “his,” and his wife is referred to with the pronoun “she.”

His **wife** was barren and **she** had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Old participants can also be referred to in other ways, depending on what is happening in the story. In the example below, the story is about bearing a son, and Manoah's wife is referred to by the noun phrase "the wife."

The angel of Yahweh appeared to **the wife** and he said to her ... (Judges 13:3a ULT)

If the old participant has not been mentioned for a while, or if there could be confusion between participants, the author may use the participant's name again. In the example below, Manoah is referred to by his name, which the author has not used since verse 2.

Then **Manoah** prayed to Yahweh. (Judges 13:8a ULT)

Some languages place an affix on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages, people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough information for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See [Verbs](#).)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.
- (2) If it is not clear to whom a pronoun refers, use a noun phrase or name.
- (3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.

Then Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus by birth ... (Acts 4:36-37 ULT) — Starting the sentence with Joseph's name when he has not been introduced yet might be confusing in some languages.

There was a man from Cyprus who was a Levite. His name was Joseph, and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement). There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement.

- (2) If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.

And it happened that when he was praying in a certain place, when he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1 ULT) — Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who "he" refers to.

It happened when **Jesus** finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

- (3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there. (Genesis 39:20) — Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might prefer the pronoun.

Joseph's master took **him** and put **him** in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and **he** stayed there in the prison.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Pronouns — When to Use Them ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:9](#); [Esther 2:2](#); [Esther 2:5](#); [Esther 4:1](#)

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

"I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)

I am **the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

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

Reason This is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

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

In all places, people should praise Yahweh's name.

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

I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

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

He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

"

Referenced in: [Esther 1:5](#); [Esther 1:20](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 9:20](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 10:1](#)

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a Bible passage that has one?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Simile ([UTA PDF](#))

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison (Idea)** between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page in

a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see [Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns](#) and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
(Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator’s special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is “I” (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is “bread.” Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is “life.” In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (“you,” the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay. You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material.

The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter's clay and "us" is that **neither the clay nor God's people have a right to complain about what they are becoming.**

Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**"
The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, "It is because we did not take bread."
(Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said "yeast," they thought he was talking about bread, but "yeast" was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

- (1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
- (2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
- (3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as "like" or "as." See [Simile](#).
- (4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.
- (5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
- (6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)
- (7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.
- (8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet.** (Mark 5:22 ULT)

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him.**

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible.** If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

But Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart.**” (Mark 10:5 ULT)

It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay.** You **are our potter;** and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad.** (Acts 26:14b ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick.**

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay.** You are our **potter;** and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood.** You are our **carver;** and we all are the work of your hand.”

“And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string.** You are the **weaver;** and we all are the work of your hand.”

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; **He is my rock.** May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to become **people who gather men**.
Now you gather fish. I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see [Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns](#).

"

Referenced in: [Esther 1:12](#); [Esther 1:14](#); [Esther 1:17](#); [Esther 1:21](#); [Esther 2:3](#); [Esther 2:4](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 2:14](#); [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 2:21](#); [Esther 3:1](#); [Esther 3:5](#); [Esther 3:6](#); [Esther 3:11](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 5:2](#); [Esther 5:8](#); [Esther 5:9](#); [Esther 5:11](#); [Esther 5:13](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 6:6](#); [Esther 6:9](#); [Esther 6:10](#); [Esther 6:13](#); [Esther 7:4](#); [Esther 7:5](#); [Esther 7:7](#); [Esther 7:10](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Esther 8:5](#); [Esther 8:8](#); [Esther 8:10](#); [Esther 8:11](#); [Esther 8:16](#); [Esther 8:17](#); [Esther 9:1](#); [Esther 9:2](#); [Esther 9:3](#); [Esther 9:16](#); [Esther 9:18](#); [Esther 9:22](#); [Esther 9:27](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 9:31](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) 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 that it is associated with.

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

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

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

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

Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

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

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

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

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
- (2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, “**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20 ULT)

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, “**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

- (2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

“The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David.”

or:

“The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David.”

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment**?”

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

”

Referenced in: [Esther 1:2](#); [Esther 1:3](#); [Esther 1:7](#); [Esther 1:10](#); [Esther 1:11](#); [Esther 1:12](#); [Esther 1:13](#); [Esther 1:15](#); [Esther 1:16](#); [Esther 1:17](#); [Esther 1:19](#); [Esther 1:22](#); [Esther 2:9](#); [Esther 2:11](#); [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 2:18](#); [Esther 2:23](#); [Esther 3:2](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 4:2](#); [Esther 4:5](#); [Esther 4:6](#); [Esther 4:8](#); [Esther 5:2](#); [Esther 5:14](#); [Esther 6:1](#); [Esther 6:9](#); [Esther 6:11](#); [Esther 6:13](#); [Esther 7:3](#); [Esther 7:6](#); [Esther 7:9](#); [Esther 8:1](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Esther 8:3](#); [Esther 8:4](#); [Esther 8:5](#); [Esther 8:7](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 8:10](#); [Esther 8:11](#); [Esther 8:15](#); [Esther 9:2](#); [Esther 9:4](#); [Esther 9:11](#); [Esther 9:25](#); [Esther 9:30](#); [Esther 10:1](#)

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words ("five") or as numerals ("5"). Some numbers are very large, such as "two hundred" (200), "twenty-two thousand" (22,000), or "one hundred million" (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

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

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word "about" shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Ordinal Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Fractions ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:1](#); [Esther 1:4](#); [Esther 1:5](#); [Esther 3:8](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 4:16](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 9:6](#); [Esther 9:10](#); [Esther 9:12](#); [Esther 9:13](#); [Esther 9:14](#); [Esther 9:15](#); [Esther 9:16](#); [Esther 9:29](#); [Esther 9:30](#)

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.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
- (2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of [Verbs](#).)
- (3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See [Verse Bridges](#).)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_events.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Connecting Words and Phrases ([UTA PDF](#))

Introduction of a New Event ([UTA PDF](#))

Verse Bridges ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:12](#); [Esther 1:15](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 7:8](#); [Esther 8:1](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Esther 8:7](#); [Esther 8:14](#); [Esther 8:17](#); [Esther 9:23](#); [Esther 9:26](#); [Esther 9:27](#)

Ordinal Numbers

Description

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

[Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have “-th” added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row

must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

There were **24** lots. **One** lot went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

There were **24** lots. **One** lot went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)

A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

- (2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Esther 1:3](#); [Esther 1:10](#); [Esther 2:14](#); [Esther 2:16](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 3:13](#); [Esther 7:2](#); [Esther 8:9](#); [Esther 8:12](#); [Esther 9:1](#); [Esther 9:15](#); [Esther 9:17](#); [Esther 9:18](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:21](#)

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

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

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

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

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

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

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

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

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase "all the paths he takes" is a metaphor for "all he does."

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

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

Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

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

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

All you have done is lie to me.

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

Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Personification ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:12](#); [Esther 2:7](#); [Esther 2:11](#); [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 3:2](#); [Esther 3:5](#); [Esther 4:5](#); [Esther 4:8](#); [Esther 5:3](#); [Esther 5:6](#); [Esther 7:2](#); [Esther 7:3](#); [Esther 7:5](#); [Esther 7:8](#); [Esther 8:5](#); [Esther 8:6](#); [Esther 9:12](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:22](#); [Esther 9:26](#); [Esther 9:28](#); [Esther 9:30](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

Personification

Description

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

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

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

Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

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

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

- (1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

Sin is at your door, **waiting to attack you**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.

He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Apostrophe ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 4:14](#); [Esther 6:1](#); [Esther 8:17](#); [Esther 9:1](#); [Esther 9:4](#); [Esther 9:11](#); [Esther 9:25](#)

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

But those who stood by said, **"Are you insulting the high priest of God?"**(Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
- (3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
- (4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add the answer after the question.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed ...

Are you insulting the high priest of God? (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

You should not insult God's high priest!

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

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Referenced in: [Esther 4:14](#); [Esther 6:6](#); [Esther 7:8](#); [Esther 8:6](#); [Esther 9:12](#); [Esther 10:2](#)

Symbolic Action

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

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

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

- (1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
- (2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.

Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

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Referenced in: [Esther 2:17](#); [Esther 3:2](#); [Esther 3:10](#); [Esther 4:1](#); [Esther 4:3](#); [Esther 4:4](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 4:16](#); [Esther 5:2](#); [Esther 5:9](#); [Esther 5:11](#); [Esther 6:12](#); [Esther 7:8](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Esther 8:3](#); [Esther 8:4](#); [Esther 9:13](#); [Esther 9:19](#); [Esther 9:22](#)

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ “**My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ “**I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

■ I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

"

Referenced in: [Esther 1:3](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 4:7](#); [Esther 7:1](#); [Esther 8:1](#); [Esther 9:5](#); [Esther 9:17](#)

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

How to Translate Names ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Esther 1:2](#); [Esther 1:5](#); [Esther 1:6](#); [Esther 1:10](#); [Esther 1:12](#); [Esther 1:15](#); [Esther 2:2](#); [Esther 2:3](#); [Esther 2:5](#); [Esther 2:8](#); [Esther 2:9](#); [Esther 2:12](#); [Esther 2:14](#); [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 2:16](#); [Esther 2:18](#); [Esther 2:21](#); [Esther 2:23](#); [Esther 3:7](#); [Esther 3:10](#); [Esther 3:12](#); [Esther 3:15](#); [Esther 4:4](#); [Esther 4:5](#); [Esther 4:11](#); [Esther 5:14](#); [Esther 6:2](#); [Esther 6:4](#); [Esther 6:14](#); [Esther 7:9](#); [Esther 7:10](#); [Esther 8:2](#); [Esther 8:4](#); [Esther 8:7](#); [Esther 8:8](#); [Esther 9:13](#); [Esther 9:25](#)

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 pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

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

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Translation Principles

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

Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

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

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

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”

“Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
(Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

>

“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

”

Referenced in: [Esther 2:15](#); [Esther 5:11](#); [Esther 9:30](#); [Esther 10:3](#)

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