



unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Genesis

Version 80

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Genesis

Introduction to Genesis

Part 1: General Introduction

In the book of Genesis, God communicates to all people the early history of the universe. He begins with how he created everything from nothing, including the earth and all the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars), all the plants and animals, and especially how he created human beings in his image to be in a relationship with him. This book also explains how sin and death came into the world and what God's plan is to save people from that. In fact, all the important teachings in the Bible begin in Genesis. That makes this book **foundational** and important for everyone so that they can know and understand the truth about God and his plan for their lives.

Beginning with verse 1, the book of Genesis is a **narrative** that tells the history of events that actually happened. This is confirmed by the fact that the conjunctions and the forms of the verbs that are used in the Hebrew text reflect the Hebrew narrative style, which is used to narrate historical accounts. In the same way, those who translate the book of Genesis should also use grammatical structures in their languages that are used for true, historical narratives. God uses narrative, which is one of the most interesting styles of communication, to not only tell people about the events in the early history of the world, but also to teach them about himself and about the way he interacts with people as their loving Creator.

Genesis provides the **vital context** for the rest of God's Word, especially the gospel message about Jesus, and so it helps people to understand their need for him to be their Savior. In fact, without Genesis, it would not be clear why everyone needs to trust in Jesus as the only one who can save them from sin and its consequences, so that they can associate with God and be part of his eternal family.

In light of all that, Genesis should be one of the first books of the Bible that is translated into every language that needs a translation. May God guide and bless you and your translation team as you undertake this important task together by his power.

Author and date of writing

Moses was the human author of the first five books of the Bible, including the book of Genesis (Exodus 24:3-4; Deuteronomy 31:9, 24; John 1:45). The Holy Spirit is the one who inspired what Moses wrote in those books (2 Peter 1:21), so ultimately God is the author, and these books are part of his Message to mankind. Those five books are sometimes referred to as the Torah (a Hebrew word that means "teaching," "instruction," or "law") or the Pentateuch (a Greek word that means "five books"). In the New Testament this set of books is also referred to as "the Law" (John 1:45) or "the Law of Moses" (Acts 28:23), and Jesus himself affirmed that Moses wrote them (John 5:46-47; 7:23).

Moses was born in the country of Egypt around 1526 B.C. (Exodus 2:1-10). According to the genealogies in Genesis, his birth was about 1,000 years after the Flood (which was about 1,650 years after creation). Moses may have written much of the Pentateuch during the forty years that he led the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness (around 1446 B.C.—1406 B.C.).

The very first verse in Genesis assumes that God (the author guiding the human author) has always existed and that he has no beginning and no end (also see Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2). He uses his personal name "Yahweh" for the first time in Genesis 2:4. The name "Yahweh" means "he is" and indicates that God is eternal. His name also means that he is unchanging and that he is always present.

Book outline

In all, Genesis covers a span of about 2200 years of history. After the world's early history, the rest of Genesis tells about the ancestors of God's people, with special focus on Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (and their families). Genealogies are an important part of what ties the book together from beginning to end.

The following outline shows these two main divisions in the book of Genesis: (1) Early World History, and (2) The History about the Ancestors of God's Chosen People. Those two divisions each have roughly four main subdivisions, which are based on four key events (in the first division) and four key ancestors (in the second division). Some scholars prefer to divide the book up into ten divisions that are introduced by the Hebrew phrase that means "these are the generations of..." In the outline below, **asterisks** mark the sections that contain that phrase. The phrase is found in Genesis 2:4 (heavens and earth), 5:1 (Adam), 6:9 (Noah), 10:1, 32 (sons of Noah), 11:10 (Shem), 11:27 (Terah), 25:12 (Ishmael), 25:19 (Isaac), 36:1, 9 (Esau), and 37:2 (Jacob).

Bolded words in the outline show which sections contain promises and covenants from God and also mark who the main ancestors were in the various sub-divisions.

Division 1: Early World History

Creation - God creates the universe and everything in it (1:1-2:3) - Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden (2:4-25)*

The Fall - The first sin and God's judgment; prophecy of Christ (3:1-24) - **promise** - Cain and Abel: the first murder; Cain's descendants (4:1-26) - The descendants of Adam to Noah (5:1-32)*

The Flood - God destroys the world with a flood, puts rainbow in the sky - **covenant** (6:1-9:17)\ - *Noah curses his son Ham and his grandson Canaan, blesses other sons (9:18-27) - The descendants of Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10:1-32)**

Tower of Babel - Mankind rebels against God at Babel, so God creates many different languages and scatters the people over the earth (11:1-9)

Division 2: The History about the Ancestors of God's Chosen People

The history about **Abraham** [Genesis 11:10-25:11] - The descendants of Shem to Abram (11:10-26)\ - *Terah and his three sons' families in Haran; Terah dies (11:27-32)* - Abram travels to Canaan with Sarai and his nephew Lot (12:1-9) - **promise** - Abram lies about Sarai to Pharaoh, king of Egypt (12:10-20) - Back in the Negev Desert, Abram and Lot part ways (13:1-18) - **promise** - War of the kings; Abram rescues Lot and the other citizens of Sodom (14:1-17) - Melchizedek blesses Abram; Abram refuses bounty from king of Sodom (14:18-24) - God's **covenant** with Abram (15:1-21) - **promise** - Hagar and Ishmael (16:1-16) - New names: Abraham and Sarah; **covenant** of circumcision (17:1-27) - **promise** - Three men visit Abram, Yahweh renews promise, Sarah laughs (18:1-15) - **promise** - Abram pleads with Yahweh to spare Sodom (18:16-33) - Lot and two daughters escape destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (19:1-29) - Lot's grandsons: the ancestors of the Moabites and Ammonites (19:30-38) - Abraham lies about Sarah to Abimelech, king of the Philistines (20:1-18) - Isaac is born to Sarah; Ishmael grows up in the desert (21:1-21) - Abraham makes a treaty with King Abimelech at Beersheba (21:22-34) - God tests Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac (22:1-19) - **promise** - Sarah dies and Abraham buys burial property in the land of Canaan (23:1-20) - God provides Rebekah as a wife for Isaac (24:1-67) - Abraham's descendants by second wife Keturah (25:1-6) - Abraham dies and is buried by Isaac and Ishmael (25:7-11)

The history about **Ishmael** and **Isaac** [Genesis 25:12-35:29] - Ishmael's descendants and his death (25:12-18)\ - *Isaac's sons Esau and Jacob; Esau sells his birthright (25:19-34)* - Isaac lies about Rebekah to Abimelech, king of the Philistines (26:1-22) - **promise** - God's **covenant** with Isaac in Beersheba; treaty with Abimelech (26:23-33)

The history about **Esau** and **Jacob** [Genesis 26:34-36:43] - Jacob steals Esau's blessing; Esau plans revenge (26:34-27:46) - Jacob flees and heads to Haran; stairway to heaven at Bethel (28:1-22) - **promise** - Jacob works for Laban to marry his wives Leah and Rachel (29:1-30) - Jacob's wives have his first eleven sons (29:31-30:24) - Jacob becomes wealthy while working for Laban (30:25-43) - Jacob and his family flee from Laban; Jacob's treaty with Laban (31:1-55) - Jacob wrestles with God, who names him **Israel** (32:1-32) - Jacob and Esau reconcile, and Jacob settles in the city of Shechem (33:1-20) - Shechem rapes Dinah, and Jacob's sons take revenge (34:1-31) - God blesses Jacob at Bethel (35:1-15) - **promise** - Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin (35:16-20) - List of Jacob's twelve sons; Isaac dies and is buried by Esau and Jacob (35:16-29) - Esau's descendants, the Edomites (36:1-43)\

The history about **Jacob** and **Joseph** [Genesis 37-50] - Jacob's family; Joseph's dreams anger his brothers (37:1-11) - *Joseph sold as a slave and taken to the country of Egypt (37:12-36)* - *Judah** and his daughter-in-law Tamar have children (38:1-30) - Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Joseph, and he is imprisoned (39:1-23) - In the prison, Joseph interprets dreams for Pharaoh's officials (40:1-23) - Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams about famine (41:1-40) - As governor over Egypt, Joseph stores up grain; he has two sons (41:41-57) - Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy grain, then return to Jacob (42:1-38) - All Joseph's brothers return to Egypt and have a meal with him (43:1-34) - Joseph tests his brothers with his silver cup (44:1-17) - Judah pleads with Joseph for Benjamin's freedom (44:18-34) - Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers; they give the news to Jacob (45:1-28) - Jacob and his family move to Egypt; list of his descendants (46:1-27) - Joseph settles Jacob and his family in the land of Goshen (47:1-12) - Joseph sells grain to all the people of Egypt (37:13-31) - Jacob blesses Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh (48:1-22) - Jacob blesses each of his 12 sons (49:1-28) - Jacob's death (49:29-33) - Joseph has his father Jacob embalmed and buries him in Canaan (50:1-14) - Joseph reassures his brothers that he has forgiven them (50:15-21) - Joseph's death (Gen 50:22-26)

Special formatting

The book of Genesis sometimes uses poetic language to emphasize what is being said. Many translations use a special format to identify these passages as poetry by indenting each clause on a new line. Many other translations do not do this, but rather use regular paragraph formatting everywhere, including for poetry. It may be helpful to look at a translation in the national language of your country that uses poetry formatting, to help you decide whether or not you want to do something similar in your translation. Some translations put some of the following passages in poetry format since these verses have certain features of poetry such as parallelisms and metaphors: Genesis 1:27; 2:23; 3:14-16, 17b-19; 4:23-24; 8:22; 9:6, 25-27; 12:2-3; 14:19-20; 15:1; 16:11-12; 24:60; 25:23; 27:27-29, 39-40; 48:15-16, 20; 49:1-27. You may not want to put all these passages in poetry format since some of them have parallelisms that are not necessarily poetry but may just be emphasizing certain events in the narrative or certain points in a prophecy.

Genesis 1

Possible titles for this book:

- “Genesis”
- “The Book of Genesis”
- “Genesis: The First Book By Moses”
- “Genesis: The Book About Beginnings”
- “The First Book That God's Prophet/Spokesman Moses Wrote: Genesis”

The English title “Genesis” is a transliteration of a Greek word that means “origin” or “beginning” or “birth”; the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures (the Septuagint) uses this word for the first time in Genesis 2:4. The Hebrew title of this book בְּרֵאשִׁית (pronounced “bereshith”) is the first Hebrew word in verse 1 and literally means “In the beginning.” The Latin translation of the Bible (the Latin Vulgate) was the first translation to use the title “The Book of Genesis.” Since that time, many other translations include “Genesis” in the book title because people are familiar with that name. Sometimes as part of the title, translators also include the fact that Moses was the author and that he was inspired by God. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning

“At the beginning {of time/everything}” or “{This is how everything} began.” The first chapter of Genesis is a true historical narrative (which is indicated by the Hebrew language structures that are used throughout the chapter), and verse 1 records the first event in that history. This is confirmed by the wider context of the Scriptures, which teach us that God created everything out of nothing at the very beginning of the world (Psalm 33:6, 9; Hebrews 11:3). Some languages must use a verb (“began”) in verse 1 rather than an abstract noun (“beginning”). Do what is best in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1562)**)

God

Translate the title “God” in a way that refers to the Supreme Being who created everything, who has complete power, who knows everything and is present everywhere. He is the only true God and has always existed. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

created

“made”. In the Hebrew Bible, the verb “create” refers to an activity that only God does, and it often implies (as it does here) that he made something out of nothing. Also, the forms of the verbs in the Hebrew text (and the conjunctions) show that chapter 1 is a narrative that tells about true history and events in the order that things actually happened. Make sure that your translation does the same thing. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

the heavens

“the sky”. This phrase refers here to the region where all the stars and planets would later exist. Keep that in mind as you translate this term. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and the earth

This phrase refers to the planet earth. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 1:2

Now the earth

“Now {at first after that,} the earth” or “{At first after that,} the earth”. The author pauses here to describe what the earth and the heavens were like after God first created them (verse 1). Some languages use a conjunction like “Now” to introduce that information; other languages do not use a conjunction here. Do what is natural in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you translated “the earth” in verse 1.

was formless and empty

It is not clear what the earth looked like at that time, but it did not have its present shape and order. Also, the Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “was formless/shapeless and empty/desolate,” or “did not have {its present} form, and there was nothing {living} on it {yet},” or (2) “completely empty/desolate,” which treats the text as a hendiadys. However, it is best to keep both terms separate in your translation (as they are in the Hebrew text).

and darkness {was} over the surface of the deep {waters}

“It was {totally/completely} dark, there was deep {water} {everywhere},” or “There was deep {water} {everywhere} {that was covered/surrounded} in/by {complete/total} darkness,” For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

and the Spirit of God was hovering

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “and God’s Spirit was hovering/moving” or (2) “and a wind from God was blowing” or (3) “and a powerful wind was blowing”. The first interpretation is most likely, since the Hebrew verb “hovering” does not describe what wind does.

over the surface of the waters

“over the surface of the water.” or “above the waters/water.” Throughout this chapter, the word “waters” is in the plural in the Hebrew text. For some languages it is more natural to use the singular “water”. Do what is best in your language in each context.

Genesis 1:3

Then God said

“Then God commanded,” What God says in verse 3 is a command. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to make that explicit in this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let there be light

“Let light exist.” or “I command there to be light.” or “I command light to start shining!” This is a command, not a permission or a suggestion. It is a direct quote of what God actually said, and it is usually put between quotation marks in a translation. If you use an exclamation point with this command in your translation, make sure it does not mean or imply that God was angry. Also, the way you translate “light” should refer to what shines from a source of light; it does not refer here to the source itself.

And there was light

“And/So {immediately} there was light.” or “And {so/immediately} light started shining.” Light began to shine immediately as a result of God’s command.

Genesis 1:4

And God saw

“And he saw/observed” or “God/He saw/observed”. Notice that Hebrew frequently uses a conjunction such as “And” or “Then” at the beginning of a sentence. Some languages do not use conjunctions as frequently as Hebrew uses conjunctions. Do what is accurate and natural in your language in each context. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

the light, that {it was} good

“that the light {was} good/excellent.” In the Bible, “good” is an important theme. Throughout chapter 1, it especially means that what God created was high quality, complete, and had no defects; in other words, it had all the characteristics and functions that God intended it to have. It also includes the idea that what God created was untainted by sin and reflected his good character (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20). The focus here is not on how pleased or satisfied God was. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Then God separated

In order to produce an accurate and natural translation, it is important in each context to make sure that nouns (such as “God”) and pronouns (such as “he”) are used properly in your language. In the Hebrew text, “God” is repeated frequently in chapter 1 to emphasize him and show that he is in focus. For some languages it is more natural to say “God” only once at the beginning of each paragraph or section, and then use pronouns to refer to him the rest of the time (or most of the time). Throughout chapter 1, do what is best in your language each time that you refer to God. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Then God separated between the light and the darkness

“Then God/he separated/divided the light from the darkness {so that each had its own time}.” or “Then God/he caused the light to have its own time and the darkness to have its own time.” or “Then God/he separated the light from the darkness {so that it would be light for a number of hours, and then dark for a number of hours}.”

Genesis 1:5

And God called

“Then God/he called/named” or “God/He called/named”. Some languages omit the connecting word “And” or “Then” here. Consider what is the best way in your language to connect this sentence with the previous one. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

the light Day

“the light Daytime,” Notice that in this context the word “Day” refers only to the time when the sun is shining, not to the 24-hour time period that makes up a complete day. Make sure that this is clear in your translation. Throughout chapter 1, some translations use quote marks around the names that God gives the different things he created. Do what is best in your language.

and the darkness he called Night

“and the darkness he called/named Nighttime.” or “and he called/named the darkness Nighttime.” In the Hebrew text, “the darkness” is first in this clause to emphasize the contrast between the light and the darkness. Consider what is the best way to translate this clause in your language.

Then there was evening, and there was morning

“Then evening came, and {then/after} morning came,” The evening and the morning are the parts of a 24-hour day that separate the hours of daytime (light) from the hours of nighttime (darkness): Evening came at the end of each daytime after God finished his work of creating. Then after about 12 hours of nighttime, morning came, which began the next 12 hours of daytime when God did more work. Make sure your translation does not sound like morning came immediately after evening. Some languages have a one-word conjunction that means “and then” or “and later” and would fit well here. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1599)**)

one day

“{and that was} day one.” or “{and that was} {the end of} the first day.” Here “day” refers to a full 24-hour day. Also, the Hebrew text uses a cardinal number (“one”) here, but then uses ordinal numbers (“second,” “third,” and so on) for the rest of the days of the creation week. Some languages need to use an ordinal number (“first”) here too. Other languages use cardinal numbers throughout (“day one,” “day two,” and so on). Do what is best in your language. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

Genesis 1:6

Then God said

“Then God commanded,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Let there be an expanse

“Let there be a large/vast space” or “I command there to be a {large/vast} expanse/space” or “I command a large/vast space to form/exist”. The Hebrew word for “expanse” here describes a large space that is “spread out.” It was not solid, but rather it was open and empty and could be seen through and flown through (verse 20). It was probably also curved, following the spherical shape of the earth. See how you translated “Let there be” in verse 3.

in the middle of the waters

“in the middle of the water,” See how you translated “waters” in verse 2.

and let it separate the waters from the waters

“and let it separate/divide the water {above it} from the water {below it}.” or “so that it separates/divides the waters/water into two separate/different places.”

Genesis 1:7

So God made

“In that way God/he made/created” or “That is how God/he made/created”. Verse 7 explains what God’s command in verse 6 caused to happen, and it repeats some of the same words and phrases. Make sure that your translation of these verses does not sound like God created the expanse twice.

the expanse

“a large/vast space”

and separated

“and divided” or “and used it to separate/divide”

between the waters that {were} under the expanse and the waters that {were} above the expanse

“the water that {was} below the expanse/space from the water that {was} above it.” or “the water that {was} under/below it from the water that {was} above it.” For some languages it is more natural to use a pronoun (“it”) here to refer to the expanse, since it was just mentioned earlier in the verse. Each language has its own system of when to use nouns or pronouns to refer to people, places, and things. In each context, do what is clear and natural in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

And it was so

“That is the way it happened.” or “Everything was/happened {exactly} as he commanded {it to be/happen}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 1:8

And God called

“God/He called/named” or “and God/he called/named”. Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here (with or without a conjunction) or to continue the sentence that began at the end of verse 7. Also see how you translated this phrase in verse 5. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

the expanse

“the large/vast space”. See how you translated this phrase in verses 6 and 7.

Heavens

“Sky.” This word probably refers here to the atmosphere above the earth’s surface where clouds are and where birds fly, as well as the space where the sun, moon, and stars are now. Be consistent here with how you translated this term in verse 1. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Then there was evening, and there was morning

“Then evening came, and {then/after} morning came,” See how you translated this sentence in verse 5, and see the note about that there.

the second day

“{and that was} {the end of} the second day.” or “{and} the second day ended.” or “{and that was} {the end of} day two.” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use an ordinal number (“second”) here or a cardinal number (“two”). (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

Genesis 1:9

Then God said

"Then God commanded," See how you translated this phrase in verses 3 and 6. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let the waters under the heavens be gathered

"Let the water {that is} under the heavens/sky gather/come together" or "I command the water {that is} below the heavens/sky to gather/come together". Consider whether it is better here in your language to use a passive form of the verb ("be gathered") or an active form ("gather" or "come"). (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

to one place

"in one place/area" or "into one area"

and let the dry ground appear

"so that there is dry ground/land." or "so that dry ground/land can be seen." or "so that land is uncovered and dries off." The water had been covering the land, so when the water receded from it, the land became exposed and dried off. Make sure that the way you translate "dry ground" does not sound like the land was dry while it was under the water.

And it was so

"And that is {exactly} what happened." or "And it was/happened {exactly} as God commanded {it to be/happen}." See how you translated this sentence in verse 7. It may be necessary to translate it in different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 1:10

And God called

“Then God/he called/named”

the dry ground

“the dry land” or “the ground/land that had dried off”

Land

“Ground,” This is the same Hebrew word that is translated as “earth” in verse 1, but here it refers to the dry land or ground (in contrast to the water), and not to the entire planet.

and the gathered waters he called

“and the waters/water that he had gathered together he called/named” or “and he called/named the gathered waters” or “and he called/named the waters/water that had gathered/come together”. See how you translated a sentence in verse 5 that is similar in structure to this sentence. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Seas

“Oceans.” or “Sea/Ocean.” At that time there was probably just one very large body of water and one very large land mass on the earth (as verse 9 indicates). So a singular noun that refers to the largest body of water, such as “Ocean” or “Sea”, could be used here in your translation.

And God saw

“And he saw/observed” or “God/He saw/observed”. Decide whether it is more natural in your language to use a noun (“God”) or a pronoun (“he”) in this context. See how you translated this phrase in verse 4. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

that {it was} good

“that {what he had made was} good/excellent.” or “that {the land and the seas/ocean were} good/excellent.” Some languages cannot use a pronoun (“it”) here, but have to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated the word “good” in verse 4, and see the note about that there.

Genesis 1:11

Then God said

“Then God commanded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let the land sprout vegetation

“I command the land/ground to grow/produce {green} plants,” or “The land/ground must now be covered with {green} plants,” The Hebrew word for “vegetation” refers generally here to any kind of green plant and includes the plants and trees that are mentioned next in this verse. Also, see how you translated “Land” in verse 10.

every} plant yielding seed

“{including} {every kind/type of} plant that produces/has seeds” or “{including} {all kinds/types of} plants that produce/have seeds”. This phrase refers to many different kinds of plants, not just one plant or one seed. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Also, these kinds of plants have soft stems and include vegetable plants, herbs and other plants that produce edible seeds, such as rice, corn, and wheat.

every} fruit tree bearing fruit according to its kind

“{and} fruit trees that bear/produce fruit, {each} according to its {own} kind/type,” or “{and} {every kind/type of} fruit tree that bears/produces/has its own kind/type of fruit” or “{and} {all kinds/types of} fruit trees that bear/produce/have their own kind/type of fruit”. The phrase “according to its kind” emphasizes that each different kind of tree produces its own kind of fruit and seeds, which grow and become only that kind of tree. For example, apple trees always produce apples with apple seeds, never peaches or cherries, or any other kind of fruit or seeds.

that {has} its seed inside it

“that {has} seeds inside,” or “with seeds inside,” or “with its {own kind/type of} seeds inside it,”

on the earth

“throughout the earth.” or “all over the earth.” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to put this phrase earlier in this verse and say, “Let the land sprout vegetation on/throughout the earth ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And it was so

“And that is {exactly} what happened:” or “And it/everything happened {exactly} as God commanded {it to happen}.” Either a period or a colon can be used here, but a colon more clearly shows that verse 12 gives the details of what happened. This is different from verse 7, where the details of what happened come before “And it was so”, and from verse 9, where no additional details are given.

Genesis 1:12

So the land brought out vegetation

“The land sprouted/produced vegetation/plants,” or “The land started growing/producing {green} plants,” Verse 12 explains what God’s command in verse 11 caused to happen, and it repeats some of the same words and phrases. Make sure that your translation of these verses does not sound like God created the plants twice.

every} plant yielding seed according to its kind

“{including} plants that produce/have seeds, {each} according to its {own} kind/type,” or “{including} {every kind/type of} plant that produces/has seeds that grow into the same kind/type of plant,” or “{including} {all kinds/types of} plants that produce/have their own kind/type of seeds,”

and {every} tree bearing fruit that {has} its seed inside it, according to its kind

“and trees that bear/produce fruit with seeds inside, {each} according to its {own} kind.” or “and {every kind/type of} tree that produces/has fruit with seeds that grow into the same kind/type of tree.” or “and {all kinds/types of} trees that {produce/have} their own kind/type of seed-bearing fruit.”

And God saw

“And he saw/observed” or “God/He saw/observed”. Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin this sentence with a conjunction. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

that {it was} good

“that {what he had made/created was} good/excellent.” or “that {all the plants and trees were} good/excellent.” See how you translated this clause in verse 10. Some languages have to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 1:13

Then there was evening, and there was morning

“Then evening came, and {then/after} morning came,” See how you translated this sentence in verses 5 and 8.

the third day

“{and that was} {the end of} the third day.” or “{and} the third day {ended}.” or “{and that was} {the end of} day three.” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

Genesis 1:14

Then God said

"Then God commanded," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let there be lights

"Let lights/lamps appear/exist" or "I command there to be sources of light" or "Let there be things/objects that give/shine light". These lights refer to the sun, moon and stars that give off light. But it is important to keep this general in your translation (like the Hebrew text does) and not specify the names of these lights.

in the expanse of the heavens

"in the expanse/space of/called the heavens/sky" or "in the open space of the heavens/sky" or "in the heavens/sky". The expanse is the same thing as the heavens (verse 8), so some translations leave "the expanse of" implied here. Do what is best in your language.

to separate

"to divide/distinguish" or "that separate/divide"

between the day and the night

"the day{time} from the night{time}." See how you translated "Day{time}" and "Night{time}" in verse 5.

And let them be for signs

"Let those lights/lamps also be" or "They must/will also serve/function as" or "I also command those lights/lamps to serve/function as"

And let them be for signs

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "signs/markers {of special/important events}, and {they must/will} mark" or "They must/will also mark/indicate when important things happen, and {they must/will} mark/show" or (2) "signs/markers that mark/indicate/show". The word "signs" means that the lights are to mark certain times of the year. Following the first interpretation, the lights are to also mark special events (such as the star that signaled Jesus' birth and the darkened sun at Jesus' death).

and for seasons, and for days and years

"seasons, days and years." or "when seasons, days and years begin {and end}." The sun and moon show the passing of time. For example, the 30-day month is determined by the phases of the moon, and the 365-day year is determined by the time it takes for the earth to travel around the sun. Seasons are regular times of the year, such as seed-planting and harvesting times, and the seasons of spring, summer, fall and winter (Genesis 8:22), as well as the special festivals which God appointed for his people to meet with him. You could put some of that information in a footnote.

Genesis 1:15

And let them be as lights

“And they must/will be sources of light” or “They must/will serve/function as lights” or “Their purpose is to serve/function as sources of light”

in the expanse of the heavens

“in the expanse/space called the heavens/sky” or “in the open space of the heavens/sky” or “in the heavens/sky”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 14.

to shine on the earth

“to/that shine {light} on the earth.” or “so that they provide/give light to/for the earth.” See how you translated “the earth” in verses 1-2.

And it was so

“And that is {exactly} what happened.” or “And it was/happened {exactly} as he commanded {it to be/happen}.”

Genesis 1:16

So God made

“In that way God/he made/created” or “That is how God/he made/created”. Verses 16-18 explain what God’s commands in verses 14-15 caused to happen. Make sure your translation of these verses does not sound like he created the lights twice. See how you translated “So God made” in verse 7.

the two great lights

“the two bright/big lights,” This phrase refers to the sun and the moon, which are the two brightest objects in the earth’s sky. However, the author intentionally does not use their names, so you should not include their names in your translation either.

the greater light

“the stronger/brighter light”. The focus is on the relative brightness or strength of the lights, not on their size.

to rule the day

“to dominate/govern the day,” or “to shine during the day,” The word “rule” is a figure of speech that means each light has the greatest effect during a particular time period because it is the brightest light that is shining then. For some languages, nonliving objects like the sun and the moon cannot “rule” because only people can do that. Do what is accurate and natural in your language. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

and the lesser light

“and the weaker/dimmer light”

to rule the night

“to dominate/govern the night,” or “to shine during the night,” Be consistent here with how you translated “rule” previously in this verse.

and the stars

“and {he also made/created} the stars.” or “{That is} also {when he made/created} the stars.” The verb “made” that is used earlier in the verse is implied here. Translate this in a way that is clear and natural in your language. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

Genesis 1:17

And God set them

“God/He placed/put them” or “God/He placed/put the lights”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to God and the lights at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

in the expanse of the heavens

“in the expanse/space called the heavens/sky” or “in the open space of the heavens/sky” or “in the heavens/sky”. See how you translated this phrase in verses 14 and 15.

to shine on the earth

“to shine light on the earth,” or “to provide/give light to/for the earth,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 15.

Genesis 1:18

and to rule over the day and over the night

“and to govern/dominate the day{time} and/or the night{time},” or “and to shine during the day{time} and/or during the night{time},” Make sure that your translation of the word “day” refers here to the daytime hours, not an entire 24-hour day. Also see how you translated “rule” in 1:16. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

and to separate between the light and the darkness

“and to divide/distinguish the light from the darkness.” or “and to separate/distinguish the time of light from the time of darkness.” Consider again how you translated “separate” in verses 4, 6-7, 14 and 18.

And God saw

“And he saw/observed” or “God/He saw/observed”

that {it was} good

“that {what he had made/created was} good/excellent.” or “that {the lights in the heavens/sky were} good/excellent.” Some languages need to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 1:19

Then there was evening, and there was morning

“Then evening came, and {then/after} morning came,”

the fourth day

“{and that was} {the end of} the fourth day.” or “and the fourth day ended.” or “{and that was} {the end of} day four.” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

Genesis 1:20

Then God said

“Then God commanded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let the waters swarm {with} swarm{s} of living creature{s}

“I command the water to be full of large numbers/groups of living creatures,” or “I command there to be large numbers/groups of {water} animals that live everywhere in the water,”

and let bird{s} fly

“and let there be birds that fly” or “I also command there to be birds that fly” or “Also let there be winged creatures that fly”. The Hebrew word for “birds” can also be more general and refer to “winged/flying creatures,” which includes birds, bats, flying insects and even flying reptiles that are now extinct. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

above the earth across the face of the expanse of the sky

“above the earth, through the sky/air.” or “across/in/through the sky above the earth.”

Genesis 1:21

So God created

“That is how God/he created/made” or “In that way God/he created/made”. See how you translated “created” in verse 1. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

the great sea creatures

“the huge/gigantic sea/ocean animals”. These include whales, sharks, giant squid, crocodiles, and leviathans (Psalm 74:13-14, Isaiah 27:1), which were probably swimming reptiles that are now extinct.

and every living creature that moves

“and every {kind/type of fish and every other} creature/animal that moves/lives” or “and all the {fish and other} {kinds/types of} creatures/animals that move/live”

which the waters swarm with

“throughout the water/ocean in large numbers/groups,” or “in the water and fills it,” or “all over the place in the water/ocean,”

according to their kind

“{each} according to its {own} kind/type,” or “{each} that produces/has its own kind/type {of offspring/young},” This phrase emphasizes that each different kind of creature has its own distinct kind of offspring/young. For example, whales always give birth to whales, and never give birth to cats or cows or any other kind of creature.

וַיַּאֲרֶךְ

“and {how he created/made}” or “{That is} also {how he created/made}”. For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here, so that the previous sentence is not too long. Do what is best in your language.

every winged bird

“every {kind/type of} bird” or “all {the different kinds/types of} birds” or “every {kind/type of} winged creature”. See how you translated “birds” in verse 20.

according to its kind

“{each} according to its {own} kind/type.” or “{each} that produces/has its own kind/type {of young}.” See how you translated this phrase earlier in this verse.

And God saw

“And He saw/observed” or “God/He saw/observed”

that {it was} good

“that {what he had created/made was} good/excellent.” or “that {the water animals and the birds were} good/excellent.” Some languages need to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 1:22

Then God blessed them

“Then God caused them {all} to prosper/flourish” or “Then God blessed the water creatures/animals and the birds”. For some languages it is necessary to specify what “them” refers to. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

saying

“by saying {to them},” or “and said {first to the water animals},” God blesses the water animals first. If that is not clear, you could make that explicit here in the quote margin or at the beginning of what God says. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Be fruitful

“Reproduce” or “You water animals must/will produce/have many babies/young”. God speaks directly to the water animals using the second person (“you”), then later in the verse speaks about the birds in the third person (“the birds”). For some languages it is necessary to use either second person for both or third person for both, to prevent confusion. Do what is natural and clear in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

and multiply

“so that you {and your offspring/descendants} {will} multiply/increase {greatly} {in number}” or “so that you {and your offspring/descendants} {will} become {very} numerous/many” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1594)**)

and fill

“and live all over the place in” or “and live throughout”

the waters in the seas

“the water in/of the sea/ocean” or “the ocean/water”. For some languages, “water in the seas” is too repetitive, so it is more natural here to just say “seas/sea” or “ocean” or “water”. Do what is best in your language.

and let the bird{s} multiply

“And the birds must/will {also} increase {greatly} in number” or “{You} birds must/will {also} become {very} numerous/many”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “multiply” earlier in this verse.

on the earth

“throughout the earth.” or “{and live} all over the earth.”

Genesis 1:23

Then there was evening, and there was morning

“Then evening came, and {then/after} morning came,”

the fifth day

“{and that was} {the end of} the fifth day.” or “and the fifth day ended.” or “{and that was} {the end of} day five.”
(See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

Genesis 1:24

Then God said

"Then God commanded,"

Let the land bring forth

"I command the land/ground to produce/yield" or "The land/ground must now produce/yield". See how you translated a similar command to the land in verse 11.

every} living creature

"{every kind/type of} living creature/animal" or "{all kinds/types of} creatures/animals," This is a general term that refers to all the different kinds of creatures/animals that breathe, including the three large categories of animals mentioned below in this verse.

according to its kind

"{each} that bears/has its own kind/type of offspring/young," or "{each} bearing/having its own kind/type of offspring/young," This phrase means that every kind of animal that God created always produces young that are the same kind of animal as their parents. See how you translated this phrase in verse 21, and see the note about that there.

livestock

"{including} domestic/farm/tame animals," This term probably includes animals such as horses, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats that people raise for food or use for farming or other work. This is in contrast to animals that normally live in the wild.

and {every} crawling creature

"{every} {kind/type of} creature/animal that crawls" or "{all kinds/types of} creatures/animals that crawl"

and {every} living thing of the earth

"and {every} {other} {kind/type of} {wild/untamed} creature/animal {that lives} on the earth/land," or "and {all} the {other} {kinds/types of} {wild/untamed} animals {that live} on the earth/land," This phrase refers in general to animals that are normally not raised by people but live in the wild.

each} according to its kind

"{each} that bears/has its own kind/type of offspring/young." or "{each} having its own kind/type of offspring/young." See how you translated this phrase earlier in this verse.

And it was so

"And that is {exactly} what happened." or "It/Everything happened {exactly} as he commanded {it to happen}."

Genesis 1:25

So God made

"That is how God made/created" or "In that way God made/created"

every} creature of the earth

"{every kind/type of} wild/untamed creature/animal," or "{all the different kinds/types of} wild/untamed creatures/animals," See how you translated "{every} creature of the earth" in verse 24.

according to its kind

"{each} that bears/has its own kind/type of offspring/young," or "{each} having its own kind/type of offspring/young,"

and the livestock

"and {every kind/type of} domestic/farm/tame animal," or "and {all} the domestic/farm/tame animals," See how you translated "livestock" in verse 24.

according to its kind

"{each} that bears/has its {own} kind/type of offspring/young," or "{each} having its {own} kind/type of offspring/young,"

and every crawling creature of the ground

"and every {kind/type of} creature/animal that crawls on/along the ground," or "and all {different kinds/types of} creatures/animals that crawl on/along the ground," See how you translated "crawling creature" in verse 24.

according to its kind

"{each} that bears/has its own kind/type of offspring/young." or "{each} having its {own} kind/type of offspring/young," Consider again how you translated this phrase in verses 11, 12, 21, 24 and 25. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

And God saw

"And he saw/observed" or "God/He saw/observed"

that {it was} good

"that {what he had made/created was} good/excellent." or "that {all the creatures/animals that he had made/created were} good/excellent." Some languages need to specify what was good. Consider again how you translated "And God saw that ... good" in verses 10, 12, 18, 21, 25. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

Genesis 1:26

Then God said

“Then God said {to himself},” Here God is not commanding anything to happen, but is getting ready to personally create mankind himself (the details are given in Gen 2:7, 21-22). Some languages have to specify who is being spoken to. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let us make

“{Now} we should/will make/create”. Most Bible scholars think that the plural pronouns (“us” and “our”) in this verse refer to God and reflect the fact that he is three Persons in one God. So it is best to keep these pronouns plural in your translation. Also, many translations capitalize the first letter of all pronouns that refer to God in order to show him honor and respect. Your translation team needs to decide whether or not you will do that too. Be consistent with your decision as you translate the Bible.

man

“mankind/humankind” or “human beings”. The Hebrew word for “man” is used here (and in verse 27) as a collective noun that refers to human beings in general, including both male and female.

in our image, according to our likeness

“to be like us and act like us,” or “to be like us, so that they are similar to us in many ways,” These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize that God made mankind to be like himself in many ways. (See: **Doublet (p.1614)**)

and let them rule

“and let us put them in charge/control of” or “We will give them authority to rule/oversee/manage”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

over the fish of the sea

“the fish of/in the sea/ocean,”

and over the bird{s} of the sky

“the birds {that fly} in the sky/air,” Some translations leave out the phrase “of the sky” because it is strongly implied and may not sound natural in their languages. However, if it is natural in your language, it is best to include this phrase, because the author repeatedly contrasts three large categories of animals in this section: creatures that live on the ground, creatures that swim in the water, and creatures that fly in the sky.

and over the livestock

“the domestic/farm/tame animals,” Consider again how you translated “livestock” in verses 24-26.

and over all the earth

“and the entire earth,” This refers to the planet earth and everything on it, including water, soil, metals, minerals, and other resources, as well as all the plants and animals.

and over every moving creature moving on the earth

“including every creature/animal that moves/lives on the earth.” or “and/including all the creatures/animals that move/live on the earth.” For some languages it is not natural to repeat “and” or “over” with each item in this list. Consider what is the best way to translate a list like this in your language.

Genesis 1:27

Then God created

“So God created/made”. In this verse God does what he said he was going to do (verse 26). Make sure your translation does not sound like God created mankind twice. Also see how you translated “created” in verses 1 and 21. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

man

“mankind/humankind” or “human beings”. Be consistent here with how you translated this term in verse 26. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

in his image

“in his own image.” or “to be like himself.” or “to be similar to himself {in many ways}.” God made mankind to be like himself in some ways (not all ways) and to represent him in the world and show people what he is like. For example, God gave human beings an eternal spirit and the ability to have a relationship with him. He also gave us emotions, an understanding of right and wrong, and the ability to reason and make choices, to create new things and to have authority over the rest of creation. You could include some of that information in a footnote.

In the image of God he created him

“{Yes/Indeed,} he created/made them in his image” or “{Indeed} God/he created/made them to be like himself” or “{Yes,} God/he created/made them to be similar to himself {in many ways}”. The pronoun “him” refers to the collective noun “man”, which in this case refers to human beings in general, not just one person. Also, this clause is the second half of a chiasm (an inverted parallelism) that repeats the first part of verse 27 in reverse order, to emphasize that it was in God’s image that human beings were created. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

male and female he created them

“He {also} created/made them {to be} male or female.” The phrase “male and female” comes first in the Hebrew text in order to emphasize it. Do what is accurate and natural in your language. Also make sure your translation of this verse does not sound like God is both male and female.

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them

“Then God showed his favor to them” or “Then God caused them to prosper/flourish”. See how you translated “blessed” in verse 22.

and God said to them

“and said,” or “by saying to them,” or “by saying,” or “He said,” Make sure it is clear in your translation of this quote margin that what God says next is the way that he blessed mankind, not something he said separately from that. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Be fruitful

“Bear/Have many children” or “You will bear/have many children”. See how you translated “Be fruitful and multiply” in verse 22. It may be necessary to translate the phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

and multiply

“so that you {and your descendants} {will} multiply/increase {greatly} {in number}” or “so that you {and your descendants} {will} become {very} numerous/many” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1594)**)

and fill the earth

“and live all over the earth” or “and inhabit the whole earth” or “Fill the earth”. For some languages, it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

and subdue it

“and take control/care of it.” or “and bring it under your control.”

And rule

“You must rule over” or “You are in charge of” or “I am giving you authority to rule/oversee/manage”. See how you translated “rule” in verse 26.

over the fish of the sea and over the bird{s} of the sky

“the fish in the ocean, the birds {that fly} in the sky/air,” See how you translated these phrases in verse 26.

and over every living thing that moves on the earth

“and every creature/animal that moves/lives on the earth/land.” or “and all the creatures/animals that move/live on the earth/land.” This phrase refers generally here to every kind of creature that lives on land.

Genesis 1:29

Then God said

“Then God/he {also} said {to them},” or “Then God/he continued/added,” God is still speaking to the human beings, so it may be necessary to add “also” to this quote margin. Some languages need to specify who is being spoken to. Other languages may leave this quote margin implied, since the same subject (God) is talking to the same people. However, the repeated quote margin in the Hebrew text could show that God paused before continuing or that he is changing the topic, or to emphasize what he says next. So if it is natural to keep the quote margin here in your language, that is best. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Look,” or “Listen {to this},” or “I want you to know that”. This word means that what God says next is important and should be given special attention. Consider what is the best way to translate this term in your language. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

I have given to you

“I am {now} giving to you {as/for food}” or “I have provided {as food} for you” or “I am {now} providing {as food} for you”

every plant {that} yields seed that {is}

“every {kind/type of} seed-bearing plant that grows” or “every {kind/type of} plant with seeds that grows” or “all the {different kinds/types of} plants that yield/produce seeds and grow”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 11 and 12.

on the surface of the whole earth

“anywhere on/throughout the earth,”

and every tree that {has}

“as well as every {kind/type of} tree that {bears/produces}” or “and all the {different kinds/types of} trees that {bear/produce}”

tree fruit {that} yields seed inside it

“fruit with seeds inside it.” or “seed-bearing fruit.” See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 11 and 12.

They will be yours for food

“{All of} them are yours to eat from.” or “You may eat from {any/all of} those plants.”

Genesis 1:30

And to every living thing of the earth

"In the same way, to every {kind/type of} {wild/untamed} creature/animal {that lives} on the earth/land," or "Similarly/Likewise, to all the {wild/untamed} creatures/animals {that live} on the earth/land," or "In the same way, to all the wild animals," See how you translated similar phrases in verses 24 and 25.

and to every bird of the sky

"and every {kind/type of} bird {that flies} in the sky," or "and all the birds {that fly} in the sky,"

and to every{thing} moving on the earth that {has} living breath in it

"and every {other} {kind/type of} {creature/animal} that moves/lives on the earth/land and has the breath of life," or "and all the {other} creatures/animals that move/live on the earth/land and breathe {air} to live," See how you translated "that moves on the earth" in verse 28.

I have given} every green plant for food

"{I give} every {kind/type of} green plant for/as food." or "{I have given/provided} all the green plants for/as food." For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this phrase near the beginning of this verse and say, "In the same way, {I give} every {type of} green plant for food to all the {wild} animals {that live} on the earth, and all the birds {that fly} in the sky, and all the {other} animals {that live} on the land and breathe {air}." Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated "plant" in verses 11, 12, 29. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And it was so

"And that is how it was." or "And it/everything was {exactly} as he/God said {it should/would be}." Consider again how you translated this sentence in verses 7, 9, 11, 15, 24 and 30. It may be necessary to translate it in different ways, depending on the context. For example, here in verse 30 this phrase follows a statement God made, which is different from the other contexts where it follows a command.

Genesis 1:31

Then God saw

"Then God observed/considered" or "Then God looked at". See how you translated "God saw ..." in verse 4.

all that he had made

"everything that he had made/created," This phrase refers to everything that God made during the entire week of Creation, not just on the sixth day. Consider again how you translated "made" (or "make") in verses 7, 16, 25, 26 and 31. Compare that to how you translated a word that has a similar meaning ("created") in verses 1, 21 and 27.

and behold

"and indeed" or "and he saw/observed that". This word calls attention to what God is looking at and helps emphasize that what he saw was very good.

it was} very good

"{it was} {all} very good/excellent." Consider again how you translated "good/excellent" in verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31.

Then there was evening, and there was morning

"Then evening came, and {then/later} morning came," Consider again how you translated these phrases in verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31, and see the note about that at verse 5.

the sixth day

"{and that was} {the end of} the sixth day." or "and the sixth day ended." or "{and that was} {the end of} day six."
(See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

Genesis 2

Genesis 2:1

So the heavens and the earth were completed

“So {it was that} the heavens and the earth were completed/finished {by God},” or “That is how {God} finished {creating/making} the heavens and the earth,” Verse 1 is a summary statement that looks back at what God did in chapter 1. Make sure that is clear in your language. Also consider whether it is better in your language to use an active or passive clause here, and see how you translated “heavens and earth” in Gen 1:1. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

and all their hosts

“including all the many things that are in them.” or “along with everything in them.” This phrase refers to everything in the heavens and on the earth that God had created, as described in chapter 1.

Genesis 2:2

by the seventh day

“By the seventh day” or “By day seven”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that God had completed his work by the seventh day and did not work on that day. Also consider again how you translated ordinal numbers in Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:2. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

And & God had completed

“God/he had completed/finished” or “God/he was finished with”. Decide whether it is better in your language to refer to God with a title (“God”) or a pronoun (“he”) in this context. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

his work that he had done

“his/the work he had been doing,”

so he rested on the seventh day from all

“so he rested/ceased on that day from all” or “so on the seventh day he no longer did”. God “rested” in the sense that he stopped his work and did not work on that day. It does not mean he was tired or had lost his strength. Rest is an important theme in the Bible, so you should try to be consistent in how you translate this term here and in other passages such as Exodus 23:12, 31:17 and Hebrews 4:4, 10. Part of this theme includes the Hebrew word for “Sabbath” which has the same root word as the verb for “rest” and is often translated “resting day.”

his work that he had done

“the work that he had been doing.” or “that work.”

Genesis 2:3

And God blessed the seventh day

“Then God/he established/designated the seventh day {as a day} to bless {people}” or “God/He honored the seventh day”. For some languages it is more natural to begin verse 3 without a conjunction. Other languages use a conjunction here like Hebrew does. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p. 1603)**)

and sanctified it

“and made it a holy/sacred day,” or “and set it apart as a day especially devoted/dedicated to him,” or “by setting it apart as a special day/time {for people/them} {to rest and worship him},” (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

because on it

“because on/during that day” or “{He did that} because on/during that day”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

he rested from all his work

“he ceased from all his/the work” or “he did not do any more work” or “he no longer did the work”. See how you translated a similar clause in verse 2.

of creating that God had done

“of creating that he had been doing.” or “that he had been doing, creating {everything}.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 2:4

These {are

"These {are more details about}" or "This {is more about}" or "What follows {gives/tells more details about}". This phrase refers forward to Gen 2:5-24 and begins a new section. Chapter one of Genesis gives an overview of what God did each day of creation week, including that he created human beings on day six. Chapter two gives more details about how God created Adam and Eve, who were his most important creations. Each chapter emphasizes different parts of the same history; they are not two different histories. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created

"the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created {by God}," or "what happened when {God} created the heavens and the earth." or "the history of what {God} did when he created the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew text uses a passive construction here to emphasize the heavens and the earth. Decide the best way to do that in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

in the day {when

"during the days/time {when}" or "During the days/time {when}". Consider whether or not it is clearer or more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 5.

Yahweh God

"Yahweh {who is} God" or "God {whose name is} Yahweh". This phrase is a combination of God's personal name "Yahweh" with his title "God." Both are used together when he is especially in focus. This pattern of using a personal name and a title together is also used for people in the Old Testament when they are being emphasized, for example, "Ahab king of Israel" and "Ruth the Moabitess." Many translations have "LORD God" in place of "Yahweh God" throughout the Old Testament. This follows the Jewish custom of substituting the Hebrew title "Adonai" (which means "my Lord") for "Yahweh" (which means "he is") when they read the Scriptures aloud. More recently, translation teams are putting "Yahweh" back in the Bible text (especially in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament), and they include a footnote to explain the term. (Some translation teams consider using "Jehovah" instead of "Yahweh." However that is not a name from the Bible, but is formed by taking the consonants from "Yahweh" and combining them with the vowels from "Adonai.") (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p. 1665)**)

made the earth and the heavens

"made/created the earth and the heavens". This clause forms a chiasm with "the heavens and the earth ... created" in the first part of this verse. Try to keep the same phrase order in your translation. See how you translated "the heavens" and "the earth" in Gen 1:1 and 2:1. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-chiasm\]\]](#))

Genesis 2:5

and every shrub of the field had not yet appeared on the earth

“And/Now {for a while,} there were not yet any shrubs/bushes in the fields} on the earth,” or “{For a while,} no wild shrubs/bushes had started growing on the earth yet,” Consider whether or not it is better in your translation to begin a new sentence here. Verses 5-6 give background information about what things were like before God created mankind (verse 7). Some languages use a conjunction like “Now” to introduce background information, while other languages do not use a conjunction here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

and every plant of the field had not yet sprung up

“nor had any {other} plants started growing yet,” or “and there were not any {other} plants that had sprouted yet,” See how you translated “plants” in Gen 1:11-12, 29-30.

because Yahweh God

“because Yahweh/he” or “{That was} because God”. The Hebrew text repeats “Yahweh God” frequently in chapter 2 (starting in verse 4) to emphasize God. For some languages, it is not natural to repeat “Yahweh God” so often in the same paragraph, and it could even give the wrong meaning that there was more than one Yahweh God. For languages like that, it may be best to use “Yahweh God” only once at the beginning of a section or paragraph, then use “Yahweh”, “God”, or “he” in the rest of the section, depending on the context. Consider what is the most accurate and natural way to refer to Yahweh God at each point in your translation. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

had not caused it to rain on the earth

“had not {yet} caused it to rain on the earth,” or “had not {yet} sent/caused rain to water the earth,” See how you translated “earth” in Gen 1:1 and 2:1.

and there was no man

“and there were no human beings {yet}” or “and mankind/humans did not exist {yet}”

to work the ground

“to cultivate/farm the land/soil.” Working the ground includes tasks such as clearing the ground, preparing the soil, planting seeds, and watering the plants. See how you translated “ground” in Gen 1:25. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 2:6

But mist

“But {during/at that time} mist/water/groundwater” or “{During/At that time} mist/springs”. The Hebrew word for “mist” refers to water in some form, such as water vapor, springs, or streams of water. Also, some translations begin verse 6 without “But”. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

came up

“seeped up” or “kept coming/seeping up” or “would come/seep up”. This verb describes a repeated or continuous action.

from the earth

“from the ground” or “from underground”

and watered

“and irrigated” or “and spread over” or “supplied water to”

all of the surface of the ground

“the entire/whole surface of the land/earth.” or “the ground everywhere.”

Genesis 2:7

Then Yahweh God formed

“Then Yahweh {who is} God shaped/crafted”. The word “formed” describes what an expert craftsmen would do, and implies artistic skills and design. See how you translated “Yahweh God” in Gen 2:4-5.

the man

“a man” or “the {first} man”. The definite article “the” is used here because this refers to a specific man, the first male human. For many languages it is more natural to use an indefinite article (“a”) to introduce him here, or to not use an article at all. Do what is best in your language.

out of} dust

“{out of} dirt/mud/clay”. The word used here in the Hebrew text is usually translated “dust” (as in Gen 13:16, 28:14), but it can also be translated “dirt” (as in Gen 26:15) or “mortar/mud/clay” (as in Leviticus 14:42). The dirt would have been damp enough to be formed or shaped.

from the ground

“from the earth,” For some languages it may be better to change the order of the phrases in the first half of this verse and say, “Then Yahweh {who is} God {took} {some} dirt/clay from the ground/earth {and} formed/shaped a man {out of it},” Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated “ground” in Gen 1:25 and 2:5-6. You may need to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

and he breathed

“and he/Yahweh blew/exhaled” or “Then he/Yahweh blew/exhaled”. For some languages, it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

into his nostrils the breath of life

“into the man’s nostrils/nose the/his breath that would make him live,” or “his breath into the man’s nostrils/nose to make him live,” This refers to God’s breath. As you translate the pronouns “he” and “his” in this verse, make sure it is clear in your language who is being referred to. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and the man became a living being

“so that he became a living person.” or “and then the man became alive” or “and he came to life.” or “so that he started to live.” Consider what is the most natural way in your language to refer to the man throughout verse 7. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 2:8

Now Yahweh God had planted

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "Now Yahweh God had {previously/already} planted" or "{Before that,} Yahweh God had planted". This interpretation fits the context of chapter one, which says that God had made all the trees and plants on day three (Gen 1:11-12), three days before he created man (Gen 1:26-27; 2:7). Following this view, verses 8-14 give background information for what happens in verses 15-24. (2) "Then Yahweh God planted". According to this interpretation, God made the Garden of Eden on day six after he created man. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

a garden

"a {large} garden" or "a {large} farm/park". The man lived in this garden, and there were animals and many trees and other plants in it too, so it was fairly large. Make sure your translation of this term does not refer to something that is too small.

in Eden, in the east

"in {the land/region of/called} Eden, {which was} in/to the east," or "in the eastern part of {the land/region of/called} Eden," In this context, the phrase "in the east" could refer to: (1) the eastern part of the region of Eden; or (2) a region east of where Moses lived when he wrote this. It is best, if possible, to keep your translation of this phrase general here (like the Hebrew text).

and there he put the man

"and that is where he put the man" or "and in that garden he put the man" or "That is where he put the man". Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

whom he had formed

"whom he had shaped/crafted." or "whom he had created/made." See how you translated "formed" in verse 7.

Genesis 2:9

And Yahweh God had made to grow from the ground every tree {that} is pleasant

“{There} Yahweh/he had made/caused to grow from the ground every {kind/type of} tree that is pleasant/beautiful/delightful” or “Yahweh/He had made/caused all {kinds/types of} trees to grow from the ground that are pleasant/beautiful”. See how you translated “Yahweh God” in verse 5, and how you translated “every tree” in Gen 1:29. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

to the sight

“to the eyes” or “to look at” or “in appearance”

and good

“and {that produce/have/grow fruit that is} good” or “and {whose fruit is} good”

for food

“for eating,” or “to eat,”

and the tree of life in the middle of the garden

“including the tree whose fruit gives people {eternal} life, {which was} in the middle of the garden,” or “In the middle of the garden was the tree whose fruit makes people live {forever},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

“as well as the tree whose fruit enables people to know/discern {what is} good/right and {what is} evil/wrong.” The word “good” refers here to all that is morally right and pleasing to God, and “evil” refers to what is morally wrong and against his will. Keep that in mind as you translate these terms. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p. 1665)**)

Genesis 2:10

And a river was going out

“Now a river was flowing” or “A river was flowing” or “There was a river flowing”. Verse 10 gives more background information that began in verse 8. Many translations omit the conjunction “And” or “Now” here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

from Eden

“from/through {the land/region of} Eden”. The garden was inside the land of Eden, so as the river flowed through Eden, it watered the garden.

to water

“to irrigate” or “to provide water for” or “that watered/irrigated” or “that provided water for”. See how you translated “watered” in verse 6.

the garden

“the farm/park,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 8.

and from there

“and from the garden” or “From there/Eden”. For some languages it is better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

it divided and became four head{water}s

Verse 10 is ambiguous in the Hebrew text. It could mean: (1) “the/that river divided into four {smaller} waters/ rivers.” This interpretation means that the river in Eden was the source river that watered the garden and then divided downstream into the four smaller rivers. (2) “there were four {smaller} source rivers that joined together and formed the larger river.” This interpretation means that the four rivers were source headwaters that flowed downstream and joined to form the larger river in Eden. If possible, leave your translation ambiguous here (like the Hebrew text does), so that either interpretation is possible.

Genesis 2:11

The name of the first {is

"The name of the first {river} {is/was}" or "The first {river} is/was named/called" or "The first {river} is/was". Most translations use past tense in verse 10, but then use present tense throughout verses 11-14. It may be best to use past tense throughout verses 10-14, especially since the rivers and places that are named in these verses no longer existed when Genesis was written, because the Flood completely changed the entire surface of the earth; after the Flood, the names of some of those rivers and places were given to new rivers and places.

Pishon

"the Pishon {River}." Consider whether or not it is natural in your language to use the article ("the") with the name of a river. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

It winds through

"It meanders/meandered through" or "which flows/flowed around through". The word "winds" or "meanders" means that the river changed direction from time to time. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.

all of the land of Havilah

"the entire/whole region of/called Havilah," Be consistent in how you translate "land of" throughout this section. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

where gold {is

"{a place} where {there is/was} {much} gold." or "which has/had {a lot of} gold."

Genesis 2:12

And the gold of that land

“In fact, the gold from that land/region” or “Indeed, the gold {that is found} in that land/region”. This sentence emphasizes the previous statement about the gold and gives more information about it.

is} good

“{is/was} {very} pure.” or “{is/was} {very} high quality.”

Bdellium

“A kind/type of fragrant/sweet-smelling resin called} bdellium” or “A {kind/type of} fragrant/sweet-smelling resin/perfume”. The meaning of this Hebrew word is not certain. In many translations it is transliterated, that is, spelled the way the Hebrew word is pronounced. It may refer to: (1) a fragrant/sweet-smelling tree resin that was used to make perfume; or (2) a type of stone or crystal, or possibly pearl. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and onyx stone

“and {valuable} onyx gemstones” or “and {valuable} stones/gemstones called onyx” or “and {valuable} gemstones”. It is not certain what kind of stone this was, but most Bible scholars think it was onyx, which is a kind of quartz that is often black, but also occurs in many other colors, and can have stripes or bands of white (or other colors) running through it. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

are} there

“{are/were} {also} {found} there.” or “{are/were} {also} in that land/region.” Make sure the verb tense you choose here fits with the way you translated verse 11.

Genesis 2:13

And the name of the second river {is

“The name of the second river {is/was}” or “The second river is/was named/called” or “The second river is/was”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 11.

Gihon

“the Gihon {River}.”

It winds through

“It meanders/meandered through” or “which flows/flowed around through”. Consider whether it is better here in your language to begin a new sentence or to continue the previous sentence. See how you translated this phrase in verse 11.

all of the land of Cush

“the entire/whole region of/called Cush.” See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 11.

Genesis 2:14

And the name of the third river {is

“The name of the third river {is/was}” or “The third river is/was named/called” or “The third river is/was”

Tigris

“the Tigris {River}.”

It goes east of

“It flows/flowed {in an area} east of” or “which flows/flowed {in an area} east of” or “which was located east of”. The word “east” refers to where the river was located, not the direction it was flowing.

Asshur

“{the land/region of/called} Asshur/Assyria.” This Hebrew name is pronounced “ash-shur” and is spelled “Asshur,” “Ashur,” or “Assyria” in English, depending on the context. This was a region of land, because at that time there were no cities. Most translations have “Assyria” here. Consider again how you translated “the land of” in verses 11 and 13. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

And the fourth river {is

“{The name of} the fourth river {is/was}” or “The fourth river {is/was named/called}” or “and the fourth river {is/was}”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 11, 13-14. Also consider again whether it is best in your language to use present tense or past tense in verses 10-14.

Euphrates

“the Euphrates {River}.” Consider again how you translated the names of rivers in verses 11, 13-14.

Genesis 2:15

And Yahweh God took the man and put him

“Now Yahweh God had {already} put the man” or “After Yahweh God put the man”. In verse 8 it says that God had already put the man in the garden, so the way you translate verse 15 should not sound like he did it again. This information is repeated here to continue the story from verse 8. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

in the Garden of Eden

“in the garden in {the land/region of/called} Eden” or “in Eden Garden”. Notice that “Garden” is capitalized when it is part of a name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

to work it

“to cultivate/farm it” or “so that he would cultivate/farm it”. See how you translated “work” in verse 5.

and tend it

“and maintain it.” or “and take care of it.”

Genesis 2:16

Then Yahweh God commanded the man, saying

“Then Yahweh/he commanded the man,” or “he commanded him,” The way you begin verse 16 depends on how you began verse 15. Consider what is the best way to refer to “Yahweh God” and “the man” here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

From every tree of the garden you may freely eat

“You may eat as much {fruit} as you want {to eat} from every/any tree in the garden,” or “You are permitted to eat whatever fruit that you want {to eat} from every/any tree in the garden,”

Genesis 2:17

but you must not eat from the tree of

“except you must/may not eat {any fruit} from the tree” or “except for one: you must/may not eat {the fruit that grows} on the tree” or “except I forbid you to eat {any fruit} from the tree”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is not contradicting himself here, but rather he is giving an exception to what he said in verse 16. To make that clear, you could say (starting with the beginning of God’s words in verse 16), “Out of all the trees in the garden, there is only one tree that you must/may not eat from: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat fruit from that tree, on that {same} day you will certainly/definitely die.” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

the knowledge of good and evil

“whose fruit enables people to know/discern {what is} good/right and {what is} evil/wrong,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 9.

because on the day you eat from it

“because on the {same} day you eat {fruit} from that tree” or “If you eat {any fruit} from that tree, on that {same} day” or “because as soon as you eat {fruit} from that tree”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

you will surely die

“you will certainly/definitely die.”

Genesis 2:18

Then Yahweh God said, “{It is} not good {for

“Then/Next Yahweh {who is} God declared, {It is} not good”

the man to be alone

“that the man is alone.” or “{for} the man to live by himself.”

I will make

“{So} I will make/create”

a suitable helper for him

“a helper/companion who is {just/exactly} right for him.” or “someone who is suitable/right for him and will help him.” or “a suitable companion to help him.”

Genesis 2:19

Now Yahweh God had formed from the ground

“Now {before that,} Yahweh God had formed/shaped from {the dust/dirt on} the ground” or “Now {previously,} Yahweh/he had used {dust/dirt} from the ground to form/shape”. The first sentence of verse 19 is a flashback of what happened before the events in verses 15-18 (which were first recorded in Gen 1:20-21, 24-25). Translate this phrase in a way that makes it clear that this is background information that has already happened. Also see how you translated “formed” in verses 7-8 and “dust from the ground” in verse 7. (See: **Background Information (p. 1571)**)

every living thing of the field

“every {kind/type of} creature/animal that lives in the fields/wild” or “all {the different kinds/types of} animals that live in the fields” or “all {the different kinds/types of} wild animals”. Consider how you translated a similar phrase (“every living creature of the earth”) in Gen 1:24, 30.

and every bird of the sky

“and every {kind/type of} bird {that flies} in the sky.” or “and all {the different kinds/types of} birds {that fly} in the sky.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 1:30.

So he brought {them

“So/Then he brought/took them {all}”. This sentence continues the storyline. Consider how your language continues a story after giving background information. Also consider whether “brought” or “took” fits best here in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

to the man

“to Adam”. Every translation team needs to decide when to use Adam’s name for the first time in the book of Genesis. The Hebrew word “adam” means “man” and is also Adam’s name; the choice that is not followed here in your translation could be put in a footnote. Some translations first use Adam’s name here in verse 19, when he is naming the animals. Many other translations start using his name at the end of verse 20. Still other translations wait until 3:20 when he names Eve, and a few other translations begin in 3:9, 17, or 21. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

to see

“to watch/hear” or “to find out”

what he would call them

“what he would name each one,” or “what names he would give/assign to them,” These names were labels for what kind of animals they were, such as “dog” or “horse”, not personal names like “David” or “Mary”.

and whatever the man called

“and whatever Adam called/named” or “Whatever name the man gave/assigned to”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

a living creature

“each {kind/type of} living creature,” or “each {kind/type of} animal,”

that {was} its name

“that {became} its name.” or “that {became} the name of/for that kind/type of animal.”

Genesis 2:20

And the man gave names to all the livestock

“The man gave/assigned names to all the {different kinds/types of} livestock” or “Adam named all the {different kinds/types of} domestic/tame animals”. For a note about when to first use Adam’s name, see verse 19. Also, see how you translated “livestock” in Gen 1:24-26.

and to the bird{s} of the sky

“and to {all} the {different kinds/types of} birds {that fly} in the sky”

and to every living thing of the field

“and to all the {other} {different kinds/types of} creatures/animals that live in the fields/wild,” or “and to all the wild animals,” See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 19.

but for the man a suitable helper was not found

“but he did/could not find a suitable helper for himself {among them}.” or “but none of them was a helper/companion who was {just/exactly} right for him.” or “but none of them was a suitable companion to help him.” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use an active or passive construction here. Also see how you translated “a suitable helper” in verse 18. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 2:21

So Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall on the man

“So/Then Yahweh God caused the man to fall/go into a deep/sound sleep.” or “So/Then Yahweh God caused the man to sleep {very} deeply/soundly.” Many languages have a similar idiom for “caused a deep sleep to fall on” that works well here. Consider what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And {while} he was sleeping

“Then {while} the man was sleeping/asleep,” Consider whether it is best in your language to use a pronoun or a noun here to refer to the man. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

then he took

“he/God took {out}”. Consider whether to use a pronoun or noun here to refer to God. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to at each point in this verse. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

one of his ribs

This phrase is ambiguous in the Hebrew text. It could mean: (1) “one of the man’s ribs {from his body/side}” or “a rib {from the man’s body/side}” or (2) “part of the man’s side {from his body}”

and closed up its place {with} flesh

“and filled in the place/hole where it had been with flesh {and healed it}.” or “and replaced it with flesh {and healed him}.” In this context, the term “flesh” probably includes muscles and skin.

Genesis 2:22

Then Yahweh God built

“Next Yahweh God” or “Next he” or “After that, Yahweh/he”. For many languages it is more natural here to use a pronoun to refer to Yahweh God. Do what is best in your language. After you finish translating a chapter or section, it is a good practice to read that section aloud and listen for what is the best way to refer to God and others at each place in the text. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Then & built the rib which he had taken from the man into a woman

“made/constructed a woman from the rib which he had taken out of the man’s body,” or “used the rib which he taken from the man to make/construct a woman from it,” See how you translated “rib” in verse 21 and see the note about that there.

and he brought her to the man

“and he took her to the man.” or “Then he brought/took her to the man.” See how you translated “brought” in verse 19. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

Genesis 2:23

And the man said

"Then the man said/exclaimed," or "{When the man saw her,} he said/exclaimed," or "{When the man woke up and saw the woman,} he said/exclaimed," Remember to only make implied information explicit in your translation if it helps people understand the text better or if it is necessary to prevent wrong meaning or bad grammar in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

This {one} now

"Now there is a person who" or "At last here is a person {like me} who" or "Finally/Ahh! Here is someone {like me} who"

is} bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh

"{has} bones and flesh from me!" or "was made out of my own bones and flesh!"

She will be called 'woman

"I will call her 'woman,'" There is a play-on-words here because the Hebrew word for woman ("ishsha") is similar to the Hebrew word for man ("ish"). You could put that information in a footnote.

because {it was} from a man {that} she was taken

"because she was taken {by God} from {the body of} a man." or "because {it was} from {the body of} a man {that} {God} took her." Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 2:24

For that {reason

“Because of that,” or “That is why” or “Since the woman was created from the man’s body,”

a man will leave

“a/every man {who marries} will/must leave” or “{when a man gets married,} he must move away from”

his father and his mother

“{the home of} his father and mother,”

and he will cling to his wife

“and he must unite/join with his wife,” or “and he must live in close relationship with his wife,” This idiom means that the man is committed to his wife and has a close physical relationship with her too. Consider what is the best way to translate this in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and they will become

“so that they become”. Some languages have a special dual pronoun for “they” that fits well here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

one flesh

“completely one/united.” or “united in body {and spirit}.” or “united like one person.” The phrase “one flesh” is an idiom that emphasizes the close physical and spiritual unity between a husband and wife. Other languages may have a similar idiom. Consider how to best communicate this in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 2:25

And the man and his wife were both naked

“Now {at/during that time} both the man and his wife were naked,” or “{At/During that time} the man and his wife did not wear any clothes,”

but they were not ashamed

“but {yet} they were not ashamed/embarrassed {about it}.” or “but {yet} they did not feel ashamed/embarrassed {about being naked}.” Some languages have an idiom for this clause that fits well here. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 3

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent

“Now the snake”. The conjunction “Now” introduces background information about the serpent. See how you translated this conjunction in Gen 2:5, 8, 19. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

was more crafty than every living thing of the field

“was more {deceptive and} clever/cunning than any of the {other} creatures/animals that live in the fields/wild” or “was the craftiest of all the animals”. Make sure that your translation of “crafty” means that the snake had evil intent and was clever in a way that was not good. See how you translated “living thing of the field” in Gen 2:19-20.

that Yahweh God had made

“that Yahweh {who is} God had made/created.” or “that God {whose name is} Yahweh had made/created.” Make sure your translation of this phrase refers to the animals that God had made, not the fields. Also see how you translated “Yahweh God” in chapter 2, beginning in verse 4.

And he said to the woman

“{One day} he asked the woman,” or “{One day} the serpent/snake {came/went to} the woman {and} asked {her};” If you use a pronoun (“he”) here in your translation, make sure it refers to the serpent, not God. Also, since the snake asked a question, some languages have to be more specific and say “asked” in the quote margin. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Did God really say, ‘You must not eat

“Did God really/actually command you to not eat” or “Is it true that God commanded you not to eat”. Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

from any tree of the garden

“{fruit} from any of the trees {that is/are} in the garden?” or “{any fruit} from the trees in the garden?” See how you translated “garden” in Genesis 2, beginning in verse 8.

Genesis 3:2

Then the woman said to the serpent

"The woman answered the serpent/snake," or "The woman responded to him," or "The woman replied," Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

We may eat

"{No,} we have permission {from God/him} to eat" or "{No,} God/he has given us permission to eat". The woman is not including the snake when she says "we" here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

from the fruit of

"the fruit of/from" or "fruit from". See how you translated "fruit" in Gen 1:11-12, 29.

the tree{s} of the garden

"{any/all of} the tree{s} {that are} in the garden," or "{any} tree in the garden,"

Genesis 3:3

except from the fruit of the tree that {is} in the middle of the garden

“except fruit from the tree that is in the middle/center of the garden.” or “except there is one tree that we must/may not eat fruit from, which is in the middle/center of the garden.” For some languages it is necessary to put the exception clause first and say, “{No,} it is only the tree in the middle of the garden that {God said} we must/may not eat any fruit from, but the fruit of/from {all the rest of} the trees in the garden we may eat.” Notice that if you follow this example, you must combine verses 2 and 3 and put the verse numbers “2-3” in front of the combination. (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1721)**)

God said, ‘You must not eat from it

“God/he told/commanded {us}, ‘Do not eat fruit from that tree,” or “God/He told/commanded {us} to not eat {any of} that fruit,” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

and you must not touch it

“and do not even touch it,” or “or even touch it,”

or else you will die

“because if you do {eat it or touch it}, you will die!” or “because if we do {eat it or touch it}, we will die!” Make sure the way you translate this clause fits with whether you translated the first part of the sentence as a direct (“you”) or indirect (“we”) quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 3:4

But the serpent said to the woman

“But the snake said/replied to her,” or “But the snake replied,” See how you translated “serpent” in verses 1-2. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You will not surely die

“{That is not true.} You will not die.” or “It’s not true that you will die.”

Genesis 3:5

For God knows

“Actually, God/he knows” or “The reason God said that is because he knows”. The connecting word “For” introduces an explanation here. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language.

that on the day

“that as soon as” or “that when/if”

you eat from it

“you eat {fruit} from that tree,” or “you eat some/any of that fruit,” The pronouns “you” and “your” are plural in this verse and refer to the man and the woman. Some languages have a special dual pronoun for this. Consider again how you translated “you” and “your” in verses 1-5. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dual\]\]](#))

then your eyes will be opened

“your mind/understanding will be opened/expanded,” or “you will gain/have new understanding,” or “you will understand/know new things,” Consider whether your language has an idiom like “your eyes will be opened” that would fit well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and you will be like God in knowing good and evil

“and {as a result} you will be like God/him because you will know {what is} good/right and {what is} evil/wrong.” or “so that you will know {what is} good/right and {what is} evil/wrong just like God does.” The Hebrew word “Elohim” is ambiguous in this context. It could mean: (1) “God”, which is what it means everywhere else in the first 30 chapters of Genesis; or (2) “gods” or “divine beings” or (3) “angels”. See how you translated “good and evil” in Gen 2:9, 17.

Genesis 3:6

And the woman saw that

"The woman saw/observed that"

the tree

"the tree {produced fruit that}" or "{the fruit of} that tree" or "the tree's fruit)". The word "tree" refers here to the fruit that is produced by that tree. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

was} good for food

"{was/looked} good/delicious to eat"

and that it {was} pleasant to the eyes

"and that the tree {itself} was/looked {very} beautiful,"

and {that} the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom

"and {she thought/believed} that {the fruit from} the tree would make her wise/wiser." or "She {also} desired/wanted {to eat} the fruit so that it would make her wise/wiser." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

So she took some of its fruit and ate {it

"So/Then she took/picked some of the fruit {from/off the tree} and ate {it}."

Then she also gave {some

"She also gave {some of the fruit}"

to her husband with her

"to her husband, {who was} {there} with her,"

and he ate {it

"and he ate {it/some} {too}." or "and he {also} ate {it/some}."

Genesis 3:7

Then the eyes of them both were opened

“Immediately/Suddenly it was as if their eyes/minds were opened/enlightened,” or “Immediately/Suddenly they both gained/had new understanding,” or “Immediately/Suddenly they both understood new things,” An immediate result of their sin was that they realized they were naked, which they had not been aware of before. See how you translated the idiom “eyes ... opened” in verse 5. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and they knew

“so that they realized” or “so that they became aware”

that they {were} naked

“that their bodies {were} naked/uncovered/bare {and they felt ashamed/embarrassed}.”

So they sewed & together

“So they fastened/joined {together}”. The word for “sewed” implies here that some type of needle and thread were used. For example, they may have used a thin, sharpened stick for the needle, and plant fibers for the thread. If necessary, you could use a more general term such as “fastened/joined together” or “connected”. Also, some languages have dual pronouns that can be used in verses 7-8 for “they” and “themselves”. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

fig leaves

“{some} fig {tree} leaves” or “{some} {large} leaves from a fig tree”. Historical facts should not be changed in a translation, including the historical fact that Adam and Eve used fig tree leaves to make aprons. If fig trees are not known in your language area, you could say “{large} leaves from a tree called a fig {tree}”. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and made aprons for themselves

“and used/wore them like/as aprons/skirts/loincloths {to cover their nakedness/bodies}.” or “and wore them around their waists {to cover their nakedness/bodies}.” or “and used them to make clothes for themselves.” These aprons/skirts probably covered them from the waist down to somewhere around the knees.

Genesis 3:8

Then they heard

“Then/Later the man and his wife heard”. For some languages it may be clearer and more natural to put the noun phrase “the man and his wife” here and then use a pronoun (“they”) later in this sentence. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

the sound of Yahweh God walking

“the sound of Yahweh God{s footsteps} as he walked” or “Yahweh God’s voice as he walked”. This phrase can refer to the sound of God’s footsteps or to the sound of his voice. Either meaning fits the context well and is followed by many translations.

in the garden

“{around} in the garden” or “through the garden”

in the breeze of the day

“{late in the afternoon} in/during the breezy/cool {time} of the day,” or “{late that afternoon/day} when there was a cool breeze blowing,” This idiom refers to the late afternoon or early evening when there is a breeze blowing and it is cooler. For some languages it is more natural to put this time phrase at the beginning of the sentence. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

but the man and his wife hid

“but/so they hid {themselves}” or “but/so they {tried to} hide {themselves}”. If you use “the man and his wife” earlier in this verse in your translation, consider whether or not a pronoun should be used here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

from the presence of Yahweh God

“from Yahweh God” or “from his presence/sight” or “from him”. Consider what is the best way to refer to Yahweh at this point in the paragraph in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

among the tree{s} of the garden

“in the midst of the tree{s} in the garden.” or “behind some tree{s} there.” Since the garden is already mentioned earlier in verse 8, for some languages it may be more natural to be general here and say “there”. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 3:9

So Yahweh God called

"Then/But Yahweh God called {out}". See how you translated this name for God in verses 1 and 8.

to the man and said to him

"to the man and asked him," or "to Adam," See the note at Gen 2:19 about when to start using Adam's name. Also consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Where {are} you

"{Adam,} where are you?" Notice that the word "you" is singular here because God is only addressing the man. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1627)**)

Genesis 3:10

And he said

“He/Adam answered {him},” or “The man replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I heard your sound

“I heard the sound of you {walking}” or “I heard your voice” or “I heard the sound of your footsteps/voice {as you walked}”. See how you translated “sound” in verse 8.

in the garden

“through the garden,”

but I was afraid because I {was} naked, so I hid

“but I was naked, so I was/felt afraid and I hid {from you}.” or “but I was naked and afraid {that you would see me}, so I hid.”

Genesis 3:11

Then he said

“So Yahweh God asked {him},” Make sure your translation of “he” refers to Yahweh here, not the man. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Who told you that you {were} naked

“What made you realize/know that you were naked?” or “How did you find out that you were naked?” The pronoun “you” is still singular here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

Did you eat from the tree

“Did you {disobey me and} eat {fruit} from the tree”

that I commanded you not to eat from

“that I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it?’” For some languages it is more natural to use a direct quote here for Yahweh’s words. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 3:12

Then the man said

“But the man said/replied {to him},” or “The man answered {him},”

The woman whom you gave {to be} with me, she

“The woman whom you put here {to be/live} with me, she {is the one who}” or “It was the woman you gave to me who”. The pronoun “she” is emphatic in the Hebrew text. That, along with the position of “The woman” at the beginning of the sentence, shows that the man is strongly emphasizing his blame of the woman. Consider what is the best way to communicate that emphasis in your language.

gave me {fruit} from the tree

“gave me {some fruit} from that tree,” or “gave me some of the/that fruit,” See how you translated “fruit” in verses 1-6.

and I ate {it

“so I ate {it}.” or “That is why I ate {it/some}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 3:13

Then Yahweh God said to the woman

“So Yahweh God asked the woman,” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {is} this you have done

“What have you done?” or “What did you do?” or “Tell me what you have done.” God already knew the answer to this question, but he is giving the woman a chance to confess and explain what she did. God’s question probably also implies that he is displeased with what has happened.

And the woman said

“But the woman said/replied {to him},” or “The woman said/replied,” or “She replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The serpent

“The snake” or “It was the serpent/snake that”. This phrase is emphasized in the Hebrew text.

deceived me

“tricked me,” or “lied to me,”

so I ate {it}

“so I ate {some of the/that fruit}.” or “That is why I ate {it/some}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 3:14

Then Yahweh God said to the serpent

“So Yahweh God said to the snake,”

Because you have done this

“Because/Since you did that,” or “Because/Since you deceived/tricked the woman,”

you are cursed

“you are cursed {by me}” or “I am cursing you” or “I will cause you to suffer” or “I will punish you”. In this context, “cursed” involves God punishing the serpent and its descendants, causing them to suffer by crawling along the ground on their bellies and having a hostile relationship with human beings. Make sure that the way you translate this term does not imply the use of magic. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

above all the livestock

“more {severely/harshly} than all the domestic/tame animals”. When Adam and Eve sinned and God judged them, the curse and punishment of death and decay also affected everything that was under their authority, including the animals. Here in Gen 3:14, God puts a more severe curse on the serpent (and his descendants) than he put on the rest of the animals. See how you translated “livestock” in Gen 1:24-26; 2:20.

and above every living thing of the field

“and more {severely/harshly} than all the creatures/animals of/in the fields/wild.” or “and more {severely/harshly} than all the wild animals.” See how you translated “every living thing of the field” in verse 1.

You will move on your belly

“{As a result,} you will/must move/crawl {on/along the ground} on your belly/stomach,”

and you will eat dust

“and you will/must eat dust/dirt {with your food}”. Make sure your translation of this clause does not imply that dust or dirt is all the snake will eat. Rather it could mean that dirt will get into his mouth when he eats his food, or it could be an idiom that refers to the fact that as he slithers along, his mouth will always be close to the dirt on the ground (a position of humility). Also see how you translated “dust” in Gen 2:7.

all the days of your life

“your entire life.” or “for as long as you live.”

Genesis 3:15

I will also put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring

“I will also cause you and the woman to be enemies {with each other}, and your offspring/descendants and her offspring/descendants to also be enemies.” or “ Besides that, I will cause you and your descendants to be enemies with the woman and her descendants.”

He

“{In fact,} her offspring/descendant” or “{In fact,} one of her descendants”. The pronoun “He” is ambiguous here. It could refer to: (1) the woman’s descendant (Jesus) who would one day come to earth as the Messiah/Christ; or (2) the woman’s descendants who will constantly be enemies of the snake’s descendants. If you follow the first interpretation, this would be the first prophecy in the Bible about the Messiah/Christ (“the Anointed One” or “the Promised Savior King”) who would come to earth and destroy Satan’s power (Hebrews 2:14). You could include that information in a footnote.

will strike you {on} the head, and you will strike him {on} the heel

“will strike/crush your head, and you will strike/bite/bruise his heel.” This is figurative language that Satan will harm the Messiah, but the Messiah will destroy him. For some languages it is better to switch the order of these clauses and say, “{In fact,} you will strike/bite/bruise the heel of one of her descendants, but he will strike/crush your head.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said

"{Then} he/God said to the woman," or "{Then} Yahweh God {turned} to the woman and said {to her}," In the Hebrew text, "to the woman" comes first in this sentence, to emphasize her. Do what is natural in your language. Also consider what is the best way to refer to God here in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1696)**)

I will greatly multiply your pain

"I will greatly increase how much you suffer" or "I will cause you to have/experience much/severe pain" or "I will cause it to be very painful"

and your childbearing

"when you bear children;" or "when you give birth;"

in pain you will bear children

"{yes/indeed,} you will suffer much pain when you give birth." or "{yes/indeed,} bearing children will be very painful for you." This clause is the second part of a parallelism, which emphasizes the pain and suffering that women will experience when they bear children. If possible, it is best to keep both parts of the parallelism in your translation. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Yet your desire {will be} for your husband

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here, because the conjunctions and the idiom "your desire will be for your husband" are all ambiguous in this context. The text could mean: (1) "Yet/But you will {still} desire/long {to be with} your husband, and he ...", which is similar to what "desire" means in Song of Songs 7:10; or (2) "Besides that, you will desire/want {to control} your husband, but he ...", which is similar to what "desire" means in Gen 4:7. The interpretation that is not followed in your translation could be put in a footnote.

and he will rule over you

"and he will control/dominate you." or "and he will lord it over you." See how you translated "rule over" in Gen 1:18. It may be necessary to translate this term differently here because of the negative context of the curse and the consequences of sin.

Genesis 3:17

Then to the man he said

“Then/Next he/God said to the man,” or “Then/Next Yahweh God {turned} to Adam and said {to him},” In the Hebrew text, the phrase “to the man” is emphasized. See how you translated a similar case (“to the woman”) in verse 16. For a note about when to start using Adam’s name in your translation, see Gen 2:19.

Since you listened to the voice of your wife

“Since/Because you {disobeyed me and} did what your wife said/suggested” or “Since/Because you did/followed what your wife told you to do”. This phrase means that Adam heard what his wife said to him and then did what she said. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and ate from the tree

“and ate {fruit} from the tree”

that I commanded you, saying, ‘You must not eat from it

“that I commanded/told you, ‘Do not eat {any fruit} from it,’” or “that I commanded you to not eat {any fruit} from.” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Also see how you translated this command in verse 3. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

the ground is cursed because of you

“the ground is cursed {by me} because of what you did.” or “I have cursed the ground because you sinned.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to break up this long sentence and say, “You did what your wife said and ate {fruit} from the tree that I commanded you not to eat {any fruit} from. Because of what you did, I have cursed the ground.” Also see how you translated “cursed” in verse 14. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

By painful toil you will eat {from} it

“{As a result,} {only} by painful toil will you eat {any food} from it” or “{As a result,} you will have to work {very} hard and suffer {to grow/get enough food} to eat” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

all the days of your life

“every day of your life.” or “for your entire life.” or “for as long as you live.” For some languages it is better to put this phrase before the previous clause and say, “{As a result,} for as long as you live, you will have to work {very} hard and suffer {to grow/get enough food} to eat.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 3:18

And it will produce thorn{s} and thistle{s}

"In fact, the ground will produce/grow thorn {plants} and thistle {plants} {and other weeds}" or "In fact, thorn bushes and thistle plants {and other weeds} will grow from the ground". The thorn and thistle plants represent all types of weeds, which are useless and possibly harmful plants. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

for you, and you will eat the plant{s} of the field{s}

The Hebrew text here could mean: (1) "{and make it difficult} for you to grow {enough} crops in the/your fields for food." or "so that you will have to work very hard in your fields to grow/produce {enough} crops/food to eat." or (2) "so that {your crops will not grow well and} you will {have to} eat {wild} plants that grow in the {open} fields {to survive}." That difference of interpretation comes from the fact that the Hebrew word "fields" can refer to land that people cultivate or to uncultivated land where wild plants grow.

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your nose you will eat bread

"{Only} by the sweat of your face/brow/forehead will you be able to {grow/produce/have} {enough} food to eat," or "You will have to {work hard and} sweat a lot in order to {grow/produce/have} {enough} food to eat," The phrase "by the sweat of your nose/brow" is an idiom that refers to hard physical labor. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. Also, bread was one of the main food staples for that time and culture, so the Hebrew word for "bread" is used here as an idiom that refers to all food, not just bread. Consider whether your language does something similar, using one type of food (such as bread, rice or potatoes) to refer to all food in general. Or you could use a general term like "food," especially if bread is rare or expensive in your language area. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

until you return to the ground

"until you {die and} again become dust/dirt,"

since from it you were taken

"which you were taken/made from {by me}." or "which I took/created you from." or "which I made/created you out of."

For

"Yes/Indeed," or "That's right," This sentence rephrases and emphasizes what God just said. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

you {are} dust

"your bodies {were created/made} {by me} from dust/dirt" or "{I created/made} you out of dust/dirt"

and to dust you will return

"so dust/dirt is what you will become again {after you die}."

Genesis 3:20

Then the man called the name of his wife

“Then Adam called/named his wife” or “Then the man gave his wife the name”. Some translations use Adam’s name here because he is naming Eve. See what you did in verse 17.

Eve

“Eve, {which means “living/live,”}” If you include the meaning of Eve’s name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it is similar to the word in the following clause that has the same meaning (“living”), so that it is clear why Eve was given that name. The meaning of names is important in the Hebrew language, and this translation issue occurs frequently in the book of Genesis. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because

“{He did that} because”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

she was the mother of

“she would be the mother/ancestor of”

all the living

“all the people who would ever live.” or “everyone who would ever live.”

Genesis 3:21

Then Yahweh God made garments of {animal} skins

“Then Yahweh God made {some} garments/clothes out of animal skins/hides” or “Then Yahweh God used {some} animal skins/hides to make {some} garments/clothes”

for Adam and his wife

“for Adam and his wife {Eve},” or “for the man and his wife,”

and he clothed them

“and he dressed them.” or “and he put the garments/clothes on them.”

Genesis 3:22

Then Yahweh God said

“Then he said/thought,” or “Then Yahweh/he said/thought {to himself},” Consider what is the best way to refer to Yahweh God in your language at this point in the paragraph. Also, see how you translated a similar quote margin in Gen 1:26, where “said” has the same meaning. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Behold

“Look/Listen,” This word expresses emotion and calls attention to what God says next. See how you translated this term in Gen 1:29.

the man

“the man {and his wife}” or “man{kind}” or “human beings”. Throughout verses 22-24 “the man” represents mankind, which included both the man and the woman at this point. Make sure your translation communicates that clearly in those verses and does not just refer to Adam.

has become like one of us

“have become like one of us” or “have become like us”. The pronoun “us” is inclusive because God is talking to himself. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

in knowing good and evil

“so that they know {what is} good and {what is} evil.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 5 and a similar phrase in Gen 2:9.

And now he must not reach out his hand and also take

“So now, they must not be allowed/permitted {by us} to also take/pick” or “So we must not allow/permit them to also take/pick” or “So now we must do something so that they do/can not also take/pick”. See how you translated “took/picked ... fruit” in verse 6.

fruit} from the tree of life and eat it

“{fruit} from the tree of {eternal} life and eat {some of} it,” or “and eat {fruit} from the tree that gives people {eternal} life,” See how you translated “the tree of life” in Gen 2:9.

and live forever

“and {then/so} live forever!” or “which will/would make them live forever!”

Genesis 3:23

So Yahweh God sent him

“Then Yahweh God expelled/banished the man {and his wife}” or “So {then} Yahweh God forced them to leave”. Notice that in verses 22-24, “the man”, “him”, and “he” refer to mankind, that is, the man and the woman. Make sure it is clear in your translation here that both of them were sent out of the garden, not just the man. Consider again how you translated “Yahweh God” in Genesis 2 and 3, and see the note about this at Gen 2:4. Some languages have dual pronouns that are used for “they” and “them” in verses 22-24.

out of the Garden of Eden

“the garden in {the land/region of/called} Eden” or “Eden Garden”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 2:15.

to work the ground

“to work/farm/cultivate the ground/land/soil”. See how you translated “work the ground” in Gen 2:5 and “work it” in 2:15.

which he had been taken from

“which they had been taken/created from {by him/God}.” or “which God/he had taken/made them from.” It does not refer to the exact ground that he was made from. See how you translated “taken from” in verse 19.

Genesis 3:24

And after he drove the man out

"Then after he/Yahweh/God drove/forced the man {and his wife} out {of the garden}," or "After he/Yahweh/God expelled/banished them {from the garden},"

then he placed

"then he stationed" or "he placed/stationed"

on the east side of the Garden of Eden

"on/to the east {side} of the garden {at its entrance}" or "{at the entrance} of/to the garden, {which was} on its east side". It is implied that the entrance to the garden is where the cherubim were placed to keep everyone from ever entering the garden again. Consider again how you translated "garden" in Gen 2:8-10, 15-16; 3:1-3, 8, 10, 23-24.

cherubim {angels}

"{some} {powerful} cherubim {angels}" or "{some} {powerful beings called} cherubim {angels}". Most translations transliterate or borrow this term from Hebrew throughout the Bible. Cherubim are a special category of very powerful angels. Each one has four faces: a human face, a lion's face, a bull's face and an eagle's face (Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14). Each of them also has multiple wings. You could include some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and a flaming sword

"and a blazing/fiery/burning sword" or "and a sword made of flames/fire". A sword is a weapon that has a very long, sharp (often two-sided) blade that is longer than a knife, machete, or dagger and is attached to a hilt or handle. This sword may have had flames coming from it, or this may have been fire in the shape of a sword.

that was turning in every direction

"that was turning/swinging around in all directions" or "that was swinging/flashing back and forth". It seems that the sword was swinging by itself since there is no mention of anyone holding it.

to guard the way of

"to keep everyone away from the way/path {that leads/goes} to" or "so that no one could get/go near"

the tree of life

"the tree of {eternal} life." or "the tree whose fruit gives people {eternal} life." or "the tree whose fruit makes people live {forever}." See how you translated this phrase in Gen 2:9 and 3:22.

Genesis 4

Genesis 4:1

Then the man

“Then Adam” or “Then the man {Adam}”. For a note about when to begin referring to the man as Adam, see Gen 2:19.

knew Eve his wife

“had {marital} relations with his wife Eve,” or “slept with his wife Eve,” or “was intimate with his wife Eve,” This phrase is a Hebrew idiom that means Adam had marital/sexual relations with Eve. Many languages have a similar idiom. Make sure you translate this in a way that is polite and will not offend or embarrass people, especially when read aloud. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and she conceived and bore

“so that she became pregnant and {later} gave birth to”. Translate this clause in a way that will not embarrass people, especially when read aloud.

Cain

“{a son they named} Cain, {which means “obtained/acquired.”}” You could include the meaning of Cain’s name in your translation or in a footnote. See what you did for a similar case in Gen 3:20.

And she said

“because she said/exclaimed,” or “{They named him that} because she/Eve had said/exclaimed,” This sentence explains how Cain got his name. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

I have obtained

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “I have obtained/acquired” or (2) “I have produced/created”. If you include the meaning of Cain’s name earlier in this verse in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches your choice here so that it is clear why he was given that name.

a man

“a male child” or “a boy/son” or “a baby boy”. For some languages it is confusing to refer to a newborn baby as a man. Do what is clear and natural in your language.

with Yahweh

“with {help from} Yahweh!” or “with Yahweh{s help}!” For some languages it is more natural to put this phrase earlier in this sentence and say, “With Yahweh’s help I have obtained/acquired a son!” or “Yahweh has enabled/helped me to obtain/get a son!” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 4:2

Then she continued on to bear

“Then she/Eve also gave birth to” or “After that, she/Eve gave birth to”. The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. Cain and Abel may have been twins, or Abel may have been born sometime later after Eve became pregnant again. If possible, translate verse 2 in a way that allows for either interpretation. Also, consider whether it is better in your language to use a pronoun or a noun to refer to Eve here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

his brother

“his/Cain’s brother” or “another baby boy, {who was} his/Cain’s brother”. Some languages have a specific term for “younger brother” that can be used here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

Abel

“{whom they named} Abel.” or “{whose name was} Abel.”

Now Abel became

“Now {when the boys had grown up,} Abel” or “{When they grew up,} Abel”. This sentence introduces background information for what happens next. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language. Also, It is implied here that the boys had grown up to be adults. If necessary, you could make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

a keeper of flock{s

“became/was a keeper/herder of flocks/sheep,” or “became/was a shepherd,” or “raised sheep {and goats},” A flock can be a large group of sheep or goats, or a mixture of both.

and Cain

“whereas/but Cain”. Consider what is the best way in your language to contrast Cain and his work with Abel and his work. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

became a worker of the ground

“became/was a worker/tiller/farmer of the ground/soil.” or “became/was a {crop} farmer.” or “grew {food} crops.” Cain raised crops, not animals. See how you translated a similar phrase (“work the ground”) in Gen 2:5.

Genesis 4:3

And it happened in the course of days

“Then one day it happened that” or “As time went on/by, one day”. These phrases introduce an important new event. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that Cain brought

“Cain offered/gave”

some of the fruit of the ground

“some of the crops {that he had raised/grown} in his fields” or “some of the edible plants {that he had harvested} from his farmland/fields”. The word “fruit” is general here and refers to any edible plant or crop that grows as the result of being cultivated. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

as} an offering to Yahweh

“to Yahweh as an offering/gift/sacrifice {to honor/worship him}.” The term “offering” refers to something that is given. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 4:4

And Abel also brought

“Abel also brought/offered/gave {an offering/gift/sacrifice} {to Yahweh}, {but what he offered/gave was}” or “But Abel offered/gave {to Yahweh}”. There is a contrast between Abel and Cain and between their offerings.

some of the firstborn of his flock{s

“some of the firstborn {animals} from his flock{s}/sheep”. See how you translated “flocks” in verse 2.

and some of their fat

“and/including some of the fat portions of the meat.” or “and/including some of their best parts.” or “and/including the fattest/best parts of the animals/meat.” In that culture, fat was considered one of the best parts of an animal to eat. If that is different from how fat is viewed in your language area, that information could be put in a footnote.

And Yahweh looked {favorably} on

“Yahweh was pleased/happy with” or “Yahweh accepted”

Abel and his offering

“Abel and his gift/sacrifice.” or “Abel and what he offered/gave {to him}.”

Genesis 4:5

But he did not look {favorably} on Cain

"But he/Yahweh was not pleased/happy with Cain" or "However, he/Yahweh did not accept Cain". See how you translated "looked {favorably} on" in verse 4.

and his offering

"and/or his gift/sacrifice." or "and/or what he offered/gave {to him}."

So Cain burned with intense anger

"So Cain was/became/felt extremely angry," Many languages have a similar idiom that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and his face fell

"and his face showed that he was angry/upset." or "and he frowned/scowled." or "and his face showed it." (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 4:6

Then Yahweh said to Cain

“Then Yahweh asked Cain/him,” The way you translate this quote margin should fit with the way that you translated the following three rhetorical questions. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why are you burning with anger? And why is your face fallen

“Why are you so angry? And why are you frowning/scowling?” or “There is no need/reason for you to be angry and frowning/scowling.” God is using these rhetorical questions to correct Cain. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. Also see how you translated the idioms “burned with ... anger” and “face fell” in verse 5. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 4:7

If you do right

"If you do {what is} right,"

will {you} not {be} accepted

"{you know that} you will be accepted {by me}." or "{you know that} I will be pleased with you {and your offering/gift} {too}." or "I will accept you {and your offering/gift} {too}." God uses this rhetorical question here to remind Cain of something that he already knew. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

But if you do not do right

"But if you don't do {what is} right," or "But if you do what is wrong,"

sin is crouching

"{then} sin {is like a fierce/dangerous animal that} is crouching/waiting" or "{then} sin will be crouching/waiting {like a fierce/wild animal}". In verse 7 sin is personified, that is, it is treated as if it were alive, like a lion or some other fierce animal that wants to attack Cain. Some languages can do the same thing. Other languages cannot do that and must say something like: "then you are in great danger of being tempted to sin, but you must resist and not give in." (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

at the door

"outside your door {to attack you}," or "outside the door {of your heart} {to attack/tempt you},"

and its desire {is} for you

"It/Sin desires/wants {to control/destroy} you," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

but you must rule over it

"but you must master/control it {so that you do not sin}." or "but you must keep/prevent it {from controlling/destroying you}." or "but you must keep/prevent it {from doing that}."

Genesis 4:8

Then Cain spoke

“But {after that,} Cain said” or “Later Cain spoke/talked”. After God spoke to Cain, we do not know how long Cain waited before he spoke to Abel; it may have been a few hours or a few days.

to Abel his brother

“to/with his brother Abel.” This sentence is what the Hebrew text has. Instead of that text, some ancient manuscripts and translations (including the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Latin Vulgate, and Syriac) and many modern translations have: “Then Cain said to Abel his brother, “Let’s go out to the field {and work} {together}.” ” or “Then Cain invited/asked his brother Abel to go out to the field with him {to work}.” Some translation teams follow the way this verse is translated in a well-known translation, such as in the national language or in a neighboring language. Decide what to do in your translation. The textual variant that you do not use in your translation could be put in a footnote. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1716)**)

And it happened while they were in the field

“Then/So {they went out} to the field {to work} {together}, and/but while they were there,” For some languages it is necessary to make explicit that Cain and Abel actually went to the field. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

then Cain rose up against

“Cain attacked” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Abel his brother

“his {own} brother Abel” or “his {own} brother” or “him”. The Hebrew text keeps repeating the phrase “Abel his brother” to emphasize the seriousness of Cain’s crime. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. See how you translated “brother” in verse 2. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and killed him

“and murdered him.”

Genesis 4:9

Then Yahweh said to Cain

"Then/Later Yahweh asked Cain," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Where {is} Abel your brother

"Where {is} your brother Abel?" See how you translated "Abel ... brother" in verse 8.

And he replied

"Then He/Cain said/replied {to him}," or "He/Cain answered {him}," or "He/Cain responded/retorted," Cain is answering Yahweh rudely. Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language, including whether or not to use a conjunction here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I do not know

"I don't know {where he is}." or "How should I know {that}?"

Am I my brother's keeper

"Am I my brother's guardian/caretaker?" or "Am I in charge of my brother?" or "Is it my job/responsibility to take care of my brother?" or "It's not my job/responsibility to keep track of my brother!" Cain uses this rhetorical question to support the lie that he just told. His response to God is rude and disrespectful. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question communicates that here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 4:10

Then he said

“Then Yahweh asked/exclaimed,” Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Yahweh, not Cain. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

What have you done

“What you have done is very horrible/terrible!” or “You have done a horrible/terrible thing!” God uses this rhetorical question to condemn what Cain had done. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question works well here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground

“Your brother’s blood is calling out to me from the ground {to avenge him}!” or “Your brother’s blood on the ground is like a voice/person calling out to me {for justice/revenge}!” or “I see your brother’s blood on the ground, and/so I must judge/punish you {for killing/murdering him}!” In the Hebrew text, blood is personified, as if it had a voice or could cry out like a person does. If it is not possible to do that in your language, you could say that his brother’s blood is “like a voice ...” or you could translate this sentence without personification. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

Genesis 4:11

So now

“So/Therefore from now on” or “Because of what you did,”

you are cursed

“you are cursed {by me}” or “I am cursing you”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also see how you translated this in Gen 3:14. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

from the ground

“{so that you will not be able to grow food} from the ground/soil,” or “{so that you are banned/banished} from {working/farming} the ground/soil,” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood

“which is covered/soaked with blood from your brother” or “which is where your brother’s blood spilled/poured out”. In the Hebrew text, “the ground” is personified as if it had a mouth to open. If that is not possible in your language, you could follow one of the alternates above. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

from your hand

“when/after you killed/murdered him.”

Genesis 4:12

When

“Whenever” or “{As a result,} whenever”

you work the ground

“you {try to} cultivate/farm the ground/soil,” See how you translated “work the ground” in Gen 2:5 and 3:23; also see similar phrases in 4:2, 11.

it will not continue to yield its strength for you

“it will no longer produce/grow good crops for you.” or “it will not produce/grow enough food/harvest for you anymore.”

You will be

“{From now on,} you will” or “and you will {also}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth

“be a fugitive/outcast who wanders around on the earth {without a permanent home}.” or “be a wandering/homeless fugitive/outcast on the earth.” or “{be rejected/shunned by people so that you} have no permanent home and have to move from place to place.” The phrase “a fugitive and a wanderer” forms a hendiadys. Consider what is the best way to translate that phrase in your language. (See: **Hendiadys (p.1631)**)

Genesis 4:13

Then Cain said to Yahweh

“But Cain replied to Yahweh/him,” or “Cain said/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My punishment {is} greater

“Your punishment of me will cause me more suffering” or “You are punishing me more {severely/harshly}” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1562)**)

than I can bear

“than I can endure.” or “than I am able to live/cope with.”

Genesis 4:14

Behold

“Look/Listen,” This term emphasizes what Cain says next. See how you translated this term in Gen 1:29 and 3:22. It may be necessary to translate it in different ways, depending on the context.

today you are driving me

“today you are forcing me away” or “you have now banished/prevented me”. See how you translated “drove/expelled” in Gen 3:24.

from the surface of the ground

“from {farming/working/cultivating} the ground/land/soil,”

and I will be hidden from your presence

“and I will be separated from you.” or “and I will be far away from you.” or “and you will no longer bless me.” This clause is probably an idiom that means Cain will be cursed and no longer blessed by God. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And I will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth

“I will be a fugitive/outcast who wanders around on the earth {without a permanent home},” or “I will be a wandering/homeless fugitive/outcast on the earth,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 12. (See: **Hendiadys (p.1631)**)

and it will be {that

“and” or “so that”

everyone who finds me will kill me

“anyone who sees/meets me will kill me!” Cain uses hyperbole here to emphasize his strong emotion. If possible, keep this hyperbole in your translation because it helps communicate how fearful Cain was feeling. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

Genesis 4:15

Then Yahweh said to him

“So/But Yahweh said/replied to him/Cain,” or “Yahweh said/replied to him/Cain,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

For that {reason

“In that case,” or “So then,” That is what the Hebrew text has. Instead of that text, some ancient translations (such as the Septuagint) and many modern translations have: “Not so/true.” or “That will not happen {because}”. The textual variant that you do not use in your translation could be put in a footnote. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1716)**)

anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance

“{I will warn everyone that} if anyone kills Cain/you, I will take vengeance/reveng on him {for you}” or “{I will make it clear to everyone that} I will take vengeance/reveng on anyone who kills you” What God says here implies that he will do something to prevent people from killing Cain; he is not just talking about punishing them if they kill him. If necessary, you could make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

seven times over

“{and punish him} seven times more {severely} {than I am punishing you}!”

Then Yahweh put a mark on Cain

“Then Yahweh/he put a {special/distinguishing} sign/symbol on Cain” or “Then Yahweh/he marked Cain with a {special/distinguishing} mark/symbol”. We do not know exactly how Yahweh marked Cain, so keep your translation of this clause general (like the Hebrew text is).

so that everyone who found him would not strike him

“so that anyone who saw/met him would not kill him.” or “to warn everyone who saw/met him not to kill him.” The phrase “strike him” is used here as an idiom that means “kill him”. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 4:16

Then Cain went away

“After that, Cain went/traveled away” or “Then Cain left”

from the presence of Yahweh

“from Yahweh” or “from the place where Yahweh had been talking to him”. Yahweh is everywhere, so this probably means that after talking to Yahweh, Cain left that place. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and lived

“and settled” or “and started living”

in the land of Nod

“in the land/region of/called Nod, {which means “wandering,”}” or “in Nod Land,” The original readers of the Hebrew text knew that the name “Nod” means “wandering”. Usually translators transliterate (copy or borrow) the name from the Hebrew text, and they might also include the meaning of the name in the text or in a footnote. If you do that here, the meaning should be similar to how you translated “wanderer” in verses 12 and 14. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

east of Eden

“{which was} east of {the land/region of/called} Eden.” or “{which was} east of Eden {Land}.” Consider again how you translated “{the land/region of} Eden” and “the Garden of Eden” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 2:8, 10, 15; 3:23-24; 4:16.

Genesis 4:17

Then Cain knew his wife

"Then Cain had {marital} relations with his wife," or "Then Cain slept with his wife," See how you translated this idiom in Gen 4:1. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and she conceived and bore

"so that she became pregnant and gave birth to". See how you translated this phrase in Gen 4:1.

Enoch

"{a son named} Enoch." or "{a son they named} Enoch." or "{a son whose name was} Enoch." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And he was building a city

"And/Now {at/during that time,} Cain was {in the process of} building/constructing a city," Make sure that your translation of this clause refers to Cain, not Enoch. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so he called the name of the city

"so he called/named the/that city"

after the name of his son Enoch

"after his son Enoch." or "Enoch, after his son." or "Enoch, the same name as his son."

Genesis 4:18

Then to Enoch was born

“Later on, Enoch fathered/had” or “When Enoch {grew up,} he fathered/had” or “Enoch was the father of”. In this record of Cain’s descendants, It is implied that many years have gone by between each descendant growing up, getting married, and having his own children. Decide the best way to translate this genealogical record in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

Irad

“{a son named} Irad,” or “{a son whose name was} Irad,”

and Irad fathered

“Then Irad fathered/had” or “When Irad {grew up,} he fathered/had” or “Irad was the father of”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence with each new generation that is mentioned in this verse.

Mehujael

“{a son named} Mehujael,” or “{a son whose name was} Mehujael,”

and Mehujael fathered

“Then Mehujael fathered/had” or “When Mehujael {grew up,} he fathered/had” or “Mehujael was the father of”

Methushael

“{a son named} Methushael,” or “{a son whose name was} Methushael,”

and Methushael fathered

“Then Methushael fathered/had” or “When Methushael {grew up,} he fathered/had” or “Methushael was the father of”

Lamech

“{a son named} Lamech.” or “{a son whose name was} Lamech.”

Genesis 4:19

Then Lamech took for himself two wives

“Then Lamech {grew up, and} he chose two women to be his wives.” or “When Lamech {grew up,} he married two wives/women.” In this context, the phrase “took for himself” is an idiom that means “married”. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

The name of the one {was} Adah

“His first wife’s name was Adah,” or “His first wife was named Adah,”

and the name of the second {was} Zillah

“and his second wife’s name was Zillah.” or “and his second/other wife was named Zillah.”

Genesis 4:20

And Adah bore

“Adah gave birth to” or “Adah had”

Jabal

“{a son named} Jabal.” or “{a son whose name was} Jabal.”

He was

“He/who was/became” or “He/who {grew up and} became”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the father of {those} who live

“the ancestor/first of {all} those/people who”. The phrase “father of” is used here as an idiom that means Jabal was the first person to do these things. He originated this way of living, and many people after him followed his example. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

those} who live {in} tents

“are tent dwellers” or “live in portable shelters”. A tent is a portable living place that has walls made of cloth or animal skins and is held up by poles. Tents are used by people who need to take their home with them as they move from place to place, often to find food and water for themselves and their livestock. If people in your language area are not familiar with tents, you could include some of the above information in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and own livestock

“and raise livestock/animals {for a living}.” The term “livestock” includes all kinds of domestic animals, such as cows, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys. See how you translated “livestock” in Gen 1:24-26; 2:20, 3:14.

Genesis 4:21

And the name of his brother {was} Jubal

“His/Jabal’s brother’s name was Jubal.” or “Jabal had a brother named Jubal.” Jubal was probably younger than Jabal. See how you translated “brother” in verse 2. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

He was

“He/who was/became” or “He/Jubal {grew up and} was/became”

the father of all

“the ancestor/first of all {those/people} who”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 20.

who play harps and flutes

“play {musical instruments called} harps/lyres and flutes/pipes.” or “play stringed instruments and wind instruments.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 4:22

And Zillah

“Zillah{, who was Lamech’s other wife,}” or “{Lamech’s other wife} Zillah”

also bore

“also {became pregnant and} gave birth to {a son, and they named him}”

Tubal Cain

“Tubal-Cain” or “Tubal-cain” or “Tubalcain”. Be consistent with how you spell this name both times in verse 22. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

who forged

“who/He was {the first person to} forge/make” or “He {was the first blacksmith and} forged/made” or “He {was the ancestor/first of all those/people who} forge/make”. It is probably implied from verses 20-21 that Tubal Cain, like his brothers, was the father/ancestor or first of all those who had his skill. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

all {kinds} of tools out of bronze and iron

“all {kinds} of tools {and other things} out of bronze/brass and iron.” or “all {kinds} of bronze/brass and iron things/tools.” The word “tools” that is used here in the Hebrew text is general and can include farming tools and weapons and other things that are made out of metal.

And the sister of Tubal Cain {was} Naamah

“Tubal Cain had a sister {named} Naamah.” or “Tubal Cain had a sister {whose name was} Naamah.”

Genesis 4:23

And Lamech said

"{One time,} Lamech said {proudly}" or "{One day,} Lamech bragged/boasted". Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

to his wives, Adah and Zillah

"to his {two} wives, "Adah and Zillah," Be consistent with how you spelled these names in verses 19-20, 22-23.

hear my voice

"listen to what I have to say." or "listen to what I am going to tell you." The phrase "my voice" refers here to the words being said. Consider what is the best way to translate this figure of speech in your language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Wives of Lamech, give ear to my word{s

"My wives, listen to this:" or "My wives, listen to me carefully." This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause and emphasizes what Lamech says next. Also, consider whether or not your language has an idiom that is similar to "give ear to". (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

For I killed a man for my wound, even a young man for my bruise

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "I killed a man for wounding me; {he was} a young man who bruised/injured me!" or "I killed a young man for wounding/injuring me! In fact, {I killed} that man {just} because he bruised/injured me!" or (2) "I killed a man for wounding me, and also a young man for bruising/injuring me." or "A man wounded me, so I killed him. A young man injured me, so I killed him too!" According to the first interpretation, Lamech refers to one man he killed. According to the second interpretation, he refers to two men he killed.

Genesis 4:24

If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech

“Since {God has promised} to avenge Cain seven times, then” or “Cain is avenged {by God} seven times, but” or “God will avenge Cain seven times, but”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

then Lamech {is avenged} seventy-seven times

“{I,} Lamech {avenge myself} seventy-seven/77 times!” or “I {avenge myself} seventy-seven/77 times!” Lamech is bragging in verses 23 and 24 about how severely he avenges himself. He is not saying that God will avenge him more than he will avenge Cain. Also, each translation team needs to decide how they will handle numbers in the Hebrew text so that readers will not confuse those numbers with verse numbers. For example, it may be best to use words for single and double-digit numbers in the text. Be consistent with how you spelled the name “Lamech” in verses 18-19, 23-24.

Genesis 4:25

Then Adam knew his wife again

“Then Adam slept with his wife {Eve} again,” or “Again Adam had {marital} relations with his wife {Eve},” See how you translated the idiom “knew” in 4:1, 17. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and she bore a son

“and she gave birth to a son,” or “so that she {conceived and} bore/had a son,” or “with the result that she {became pregnant and} gave birth to a son,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

and she called his name

“and she named him” or “and she gave him the name”. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 3:20.

Seth

“Seth, {which means “appointed/granted/given,”}” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because {she had said

“{She named him that} because {when he was born,} {she had said/exclaimed},” What follows is a direct quote of what Eve said that gave Seth his name. Make sure that is clear in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

God has appointed for me

“God has granted/given to me”. If you include the meaning of Seth’s name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches the way you translate “appointed” here, so that it is clear why he was given that name.

another offspring

“another child”

in place of Abel

“to replace Abel,” or “to take the place of Abel,”

since Cain killed him

“whom Cain killed/murdered.” For some language it is necessary to put this phrase first in this clause (so that events are in the order that they happened) and say, “Since Cain killed Abel, God granted me another child to replace him.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 4:26

And to Seth also a son was born

"{Later on,} Seth also fathered/had a son," The word order in the Hebrew text here emphasizes Seth. Do what is natural in your language.

and he called his name Enosh

"and he named him Enosh." or "whom he named Enosh."

Then

"At/During that time" or "That is when"

people} began to call on the name of Yahweh

"people began to address God by his name Yahweh as they worshiped him." or "people began to worship/praise Yahweh by name." or "people first called Yahweh by name in their prayers and worship." The phrase "call on the name of Yahweh" is an idiom that refers to prayers, worship, and praise in which people addressed God directly by his personal name Yahweh. It also implies that they were trusting in him to help and guide them. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

Genesis 5

Genesis 5:1

This {is}

"Here {is}" or "What follows {is}"

the written account of

"the written {family} record/history of/about" or "the {family} record of"

the generations of Adam

"of/about Adam and his descendants:" or "of/about Adam's family-line/genealogy:"

On the day God created man{kind}, he made him

"On the day {that/when} God created/made human beings, he made them". See how you translated "created" in Gen 1:1, 27; 2:4, and "man" in Gen 1:26-27.

in the likeness of God

"in his own likeness." or "to be like himself." God created mankind to be like himself in certain ways, but not to be exactly like him in every way (Gen 1:26-27).

Genesis 5:2

He created them male and female

“He {also} created them {to be} male and female,” See how you translated this clause in Gen 1:27.

and he blessed them

“He blessed them” or “He said/promised that he would make them prosper/flourish”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also see how you translated “blessed” in Gen 1:22, 28. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

and called their name

“and called/named them”. See how you translated the phrase “called ... name” in Gen 4:17, 25, 26.

man{kind

“human beings”. Be consistent here with how you translated this term in verse 1.

on the day they were created

“on the {same} day {that} they were created {by him}.” or “on the {same} day {that} he created them.” Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also, for some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this clause earlier in this verse and say, “and on the {same} day {that} he created them, he blessed them and called/named them human beings.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 5:3

And Adam lived 130 years, then he fathered {a son

“When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered/had {a son}” or “When Adam was 130 years old, he fathered/had {a son}”. Each translation team needs to decide how they are going to write large numbers in the Bible. Many teams use numerals, for example, “130” here in verse 3, especially if the target language has a complicated counting system. Other teams prefer to use words, for example, “one hundred thirty” here. Be consistent in what you do throughout your translation. (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

in his own likeness, according to his image

“who was {a human being} like himself and looked like him,” or “who was like him in many ways,” These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize that Seth was similar to Adam in many ways. See how you translated similar phrases in Gen 1:26. (See: **Doublet (p.1614)**)

and he called his name Seth

“and he/Adam named him Seth.” or “Adam named his/that son Seth.” For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 5:4

And the days of Adam after he fathered Seth were

“After he/Adam fathered/had Seth, Adam/he lived” or “After Seth’s birth, Adam lived” or “After Seth was born, Adam lived”

800 years

“{another} 800 years,” or “800 {more} years,” For some languages, it may be more natural to change the clause order of this sentence and say, “Adam lived 800 {more} years after Seth was born ...” Do what is best in your language throughout this chapter. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Adam {also} fathered/had” or “He/Adam was {also} the father of”. This clause probably refers to all the other children that Adam had, including those who were born before and after Seth was born. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 5:5

So all the days of Adam that he lived were 930 years

“So Adam/he lived a total of 930 years,” or “All together Adam/he lived 930 years,” Make sure that the name “Adam” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 1, 3-5. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.” Notice that if you use the second alternative here (“before he died”), a comma is not used before it (in English). Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 5:6

And Seth lived 105 years

“When/After Seth had lived 105 years,” or “When/After Seth was 105 years old,” The events in verse 6 happened before Adam died (verse 5). So if you use a conjunction here, make sure your translation does not sound like verse 6 happened after Adam died. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

then he fathered Enosh

“he fathered/had {a son named} Enosh.” or “he fathered/had {a son he/they named} Enosh.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Enosh.” You could make it explicit in your translation or in a footnote that Enosh was a son. The same thing is true for the rest of the children whose births are mentioned in this chapter (who were all sons). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:7

Then after he fathered Enosh, Seth lived

"After he/Seth had Enosh, Seth/he lived" or "After Enosh's birth, Seth lived" or "After Enosh was born, Seth lived". In fact, throughout chapter 5, make sure it is clear in your translation whom each pronoun refers to. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

807 years

"{another} 807 years," or "807 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Seth {also} fathered/had" or "He/Seth was {also} the father of". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated this phrase and the following one in verse 4.

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters."

Genesis 5:8

So all the days of Seth were 912 years

“So Seth/he lived a total of 912 years,” or “All together Seth/he lived 912 years,” Be consistent with how you spell the name “Seth” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:25-26; 5:3-4, 6-8. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:9

And Enosh lived ninety years

“When/After Enosh had lived ninety/90 years,” or “When/After Enosh was ninety/90 years old,” See how you translated the beginning of a similar new paragraph in this genealogy at verse 6. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

then he fathered Kenan

“he fathered/had {a son named} Kenan.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Kenan.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:10

Then after he fathered Kenan, Enosh lived

“After he/Enosh had Kenan, Enosh/he lived” or “After Kenan’s birth, Enosh lived” or “After Kenan was born, Enosh lived”. See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 7, and see the notes about that there. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

815 years

“{another} 815 years,” or “815 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Enosh {also} fathered/had” or “He/Enosh was {also} the father of”

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 5:11

So all the days of Enosh were 905 years

“So Enosh/he lived a total of 905 years,” or “All together Enosh/he lived 905 years,” Make sure that the name “Enosh” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 6-7, 9-11. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:12

And Kenan lived seventy years

“When/After Kenan had lived seventy years,” or “When/After Kenan was seventy years old,” Throughout this chapter, be consistent with how you have decided to handle numbers in the Bible. For example, many translation teams use words for single and double-digit numbers, but use numerals for larger numbers. This strategy helps prevent confusion with verse numbers. This is especially true in translations that use a large font size for verse numbers so that people doing group Bible study can easily be in the same verse together. (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

then he fathered Mahalalel

“he fathered/had {a son named} Mahalalel.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Mahalalel.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:13

Then after he fathered Mahalalel, Kenan lived

"After he/Kenan had Mahalalel, Kenan/he lived" or "After Mahalalel's birth, Kenan lived" or "After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

840 years

"{another} 840 years," or "840 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Kenan {also} fathered/had" or "He/Kenan was {also} the father of". Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Kenan at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters."

Genesis 5:14

So all the days of Kenan were 910 years

“So Kenan/he lived a total of 910 years,” or “All together Kenan/he lived 910 years,” Make sure that the name “Kenan” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 9-10, 12-14. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:15

And Mahalalel lived sixty-five years

“When/After Mahalalel had lived sixty-five/65 years,” or “When/After Mahalalel was sixty-five/65 years old,”

then he fathered Jared

“he fathered/had {a son named} Jared.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Jared.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:16

Then after he fathered Jared, Mahalalel lived

"After he/Mahalalel fathered/had Jared, Mahalalel/he lived" or "After Jared's birth, Mahalalel lived" or "After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

830 years

"{another} 830 years," or "830 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Mahalalel {also} fathered/had" or "He/Mahalalel was {also} the father of". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters."

Genesis 5:17

So all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years

“So Mahalalel/he lived a total of 895 years,” or “All together Mahalalel/he lived 895 years,” Make sure that the name “Mahalalel” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 12-13, 15-17. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:18

And Jared lived 162 years

“When/After Jared had lived 162 years,” or “When/After Jared was 162 years old,”

then he fathered Enoch

“he fathered/had {a son named} Enoch.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Enoch.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:19

Then after he fathered Enoch, Jared lived

"After he/Jared fathered/had Enoch, Jared/he lived" or "After Enoch's birth, Jared lived" or "After Enoch was born, Jared lived"

800 years

"{another} 800 years," or "800 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Jared {also} fathered/had" or "He/Jared was {also} the father of". Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Jared at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters."

Genesis 5:20

So all the days of Jared were 962 years

“So Jared/he lived a total of 962 years,” or “All together Jared/he lived 962 years,” Make sure that the name “Jared” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 15-16, 18-20. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:21

And Enoch lived sixty-five years

“When/After Enoch had lived sixty-five/65 years,” or “When/After Enoch was sixty-five/65 years old,” Consider again how you translated double-digit numbers in verses 9, 12, 15, 21.

then he fathered Methuselah

“he fathered/had {a son named} Methuselah.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Methuselah.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:22

after he fathered Methuselah

“After he/Enoch had Methuselah,” or “After Methuselah was born,” or “After Methselah’s birth,”

Then & Enoch walked with God

“Enoch walked/lived {closely/faithfully} with God” or “Enoch lived {in a close/faithful relationship} with God”. The phrase “walked with” is used here as an idiom that means “lived in a close relationship with”. Consider whether or not you have a similar idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

300 years

“{another} 300 years,” or “for 300 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Enoch {also} fathered/had” or “He was {also} the father of”

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 5:23

So all the days of Enoch were 365 years

“So Enoch/he lived a total of 365 years.” or “All together Enoch/he lived 365 years.” Make sure that the name “Enoch” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 18-19, 21-24.

Genesis 5:24

And Enoch walked with God

"{All his life} Enoch/he walked/lived {in a close/faithful relationship} with God, and {then}" or "Then while he was {still} living {in a close relationship} with God,"

and {then} he was not {there}

"{suddenly} he was not {on earth} {anymore}," or "{suddenly} he was no longer {on earth}," or "he {suddenly} disappeared {from earth},"

because God took him away

"because God had taken him away {to be with him}." It may be more natural to put this clause before the previous clause and say, "... God took him away {to be with him}, so he was {suddenly} no longer {on earth}." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 5:25

And Methuselah lived 187 years

“When/After Methuselah had lived 187 years,” or “When/After Methuselah was 187 years old,” Consider again how you translated verses in this chapter that are similar in structure to this verse; see verses 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25, and part of verses 3 and 28, and see the note about this at verse 6.

then he fathered Lamech

“he fathered/had {a son named} Lamech.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Lamech.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 5:26

Then after he fathered Lamech, Methuselah lived

“After he/Methuselah had Lamech, Methuselah/he lived” or “After Lamech’s birth, Methuselah lived” or “After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived”

782 years

“{another} 782 years,” or “782 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Methuselah {also} fathered/had” or “He was {also} the father of”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Methuselah at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 5:27

So all the days of Methuselah were 969 years

“So Methuselah/he lived a total of 969 years,” or “So all together Methuselah/he lived 969 years,” Make sure that the name “Methuselah” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 21-22, 25-27. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:28

And Lamech lived 182 years

“When/After Lamech had lived 182 years,” or “When/After Lamech was 182 years old,”

then he fathered a son

“he had a son,”

Genesis 5:29

and he called his name

“and he named him” or “whom he named”

Noah

“Noah, {which means “comfort/relief/rest,”}” If you include the meaning of Noah’s name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches what Lamech says about him in the following quote so it is clear why he was given that name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

saying

“{because} he said,” or “{He/Lamech named him that because} he had said {about him},” What Lamech says next is the reason that he named his son Noah. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

This {one} will comfort us

“This {son} will relieve us” or “This {son} will give us rest/relief”

from our labors and from the toil of our hands

“from the {difficult} labor and toil/work we have to do with our hands” or “from the difficult/agonizing labor/work that we have to do/suffer”. These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize how difficult the work was. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Doublet (p.1614)**)

because of the ground which Yahweh has cursed

“because Yahweh has cursed the ground.” or “as we farm/cultivate the ground that Yahweh has cursed.”

Genesis 5:30

Then after he fathered Noah, Lamech lived

“After he/Lamech fathered Noah, Lamech/he lived” or “After Noah’s birth, Lamech lived” or “After Noah was born, Lamech lived”. Consider again how you translated verses in this chapter that are similar in structure to this verse; see verses 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 26, 30, and part of verses 4 and 22.

595 years

“{another} 595 years,” or “595 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Lamech {also} fathered/had” or “He was {also} the father of”

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 5:31

So all the days of Lamech were 777 years

“So Lamech/he lived a total of 777 years,” or “All together Lamech/he lived 777 years,” Consider again how you translated verses that are similar to verse 31; see verses 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31, and the first half of verses 5 and 23. Also make sure that the name “Lamech” is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 25-26, 28-31, and also in 4:18-19, 23-24 for a different person who has the same name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 5:32

And Noah was a son of 500 years

“After Noah was 500 years old,” Noah’s sons were not triplets, but were born in different years after Noah was 500 years old. The way you translate this verse should allow for that meaning. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

then Noah fathered

“he fathered/had”. Consider again how you translated “fathered” in this chapter; see verses 4, 6-7, 9-10, 12-13, 15-16, 18-19, 25-26, 28, 30, 32.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth

“{sons named} Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” or “{sons he/they named} Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” or “{sons whose names were} Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 6

Genesis 6:1

And it happened

“Now it happened”. The events in Gen 6:1-2 started happening long before the events in 5:32, so the way your translation begins this verse should allow for that meaning and not begin with a sequence word like “Then”, which would have the wrong meaning here. Many translations omit the conjunction here. Do what is best in your language. Also, the phrase “it happened” introduces and emphasizes important background information which the following narrative builds on. It also creates suspense so that readers and listeners wonder what will happen next. Some translations leave this phrase out, but doing that loses some of the suspense. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

when

“{that} when/as” or “that” (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

mankind

“human beings” or “people”. See how you translated this term in Gen 5:1-2.

began to multiply

“began to multiply/increase {in number}” or “began to be more/very numerous”

on the surface of the earth

“all over the earth” or “throughout the earth/world”

and daughters were born to them

“and they were having {many} daughters,”

Genesis 6:2

then & saw

“then/Then {when those daughters/girls grew up,}” or “{When those daughters/girls grew up,}” Verses 1 and 2 are one long sentence in the Hebrew text. For many languages it is necessary to divide it into two or more shorter sentences. For example, depending on how you began verse 1, you could begin verse 2 with a new sentence. Do what is best in your language.

the sons of God

“{some} angels” or “{some} supernatural beings”. The meaning of Gen 6:2 is not certain and is heavily debated, so it is probably best to translate it fairly literally and possibly include a footnote about what it means. If it is not translated literally, the literal text should be put in a footnote. There are three main views of who “the sons of God” and “the daughters of mankind” refer to: (1) nonhuman, god-like (supernatural) beings, such as demons or angels (as in Job 1:6, 38:7) who took human form and married the daughters of human beings (which may be what is referred to in 1 Peter 3:19–20; 2 Peter 2:4, and Jude 6); or (2) male descendants of Seth (the righteous, chosen family line) who married female descendants of Cain (the unrighteous family line); or (3) sons of powerful men, such as judges or rulers (as in Exodus 22:8, Psalm 82:1, 6) who married the daughters of common, poor people.

then & saw the daughters of mankind, that they {were} beautiful

“saw that the daughters of human beings {were} beautiful,” or “saw that those young women {were} beautiful,” or “saw that they {were} {very} beautiful,”

so they took wives for themselves from any {of them} that they chose

“so they married any {of them} that they wanted to.” or “So they chose any/all {of them} that they wanted and married them.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “took/married” in Gen 4:19.

Genesis 6:3

Then Yahweh said

“Then/So Yahweh said {to himself},” Only make implied information explicit in your translation if it is necessary to prevent wrong meaning or if your language’s grammar requires it, so that your translation is easier to read and understand. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

My Spirit

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “My Spirit” or “I”, which is a way of God referring to himself (Gen 1:2 is similar); or (2) “My spirit”, which could refer to God’s breath that gives life (as in Gen 2:7). If the text is not translated literally, the literal text should be put in a footnote.

will not strive with mankind forever

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “will not contend with human beings forever,” or “will not put up with human beings forever;” or (2) “will not remain/live with/in human beings forever;” The interpretation that is not used in your translation could be put in a footnote.

because they {are} indeed flesh

“because they {are} certainly/very sinful/corrupt.” or “because they {are} only/mere sinful/corrupt mortals.” The word “flesh” is used here as an idiom that means human beings are “mortal” (that is, their bodies will die) and that they are “sinful/corrupt”. The two meanings are interrelated since it is because of sin that their bodies die. In this context, the focus is on their corrupt behavior, which is the reason God will send a flood. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Therefore their days will be 120 years

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “So they will have 120 years {to repent}.” or “I will give them 120 years {to repent}.” or (2) “{From now on,} they/people will have/live {no longer than} 120 years.” The first interpretation seems to best fit the context here of God announcing his plan to judge mankind for their sin (verse 7). This would mean that Noah was 480 years old when God said this (about 20 years before he started having sons; Gen 5:32), since the flood came when he was 600 years old (Gen 7:6); you could put some of that information in a footnote. The second interpretation does not fit with the fact that after God said this, many people lived much longer than 120 years, so it does not seem likely that length of life was his meaning here.

Genesis 6:4

The Nephilim

“{People/Giants called} the Nephilim” or “Giants”. Most translations transliterate (borrow or copy) the Hebrew word “Nephilim” here, treating it as a name. The word means “fallen ones” and probably refers to their fallen (sinful) spiritual state. The Nephilim were the descendants of the sons of God and the daughters of mankind. The only other time in the Bible that the Nephilim are mentioned is centuries later in Numbers 13:32-33, where they are identified as evil giants. Based on that, some translations translate “the Nephilim” as “giants” here in Gen 6:4. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

were on the earth

“lived on the earth” or “were living on the earth”

in those days and also after that

“during that time and also later on,” It may be more natural to put this time phrase first in verse 4 and say, “During that time there were Nephilim/giants living on the earth, when ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

when

“{That was/happened} when”. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

the sons of God

“angels” or “supernatural beings”. Be consistent here with how you translated this phrase in verse 2, and see the important note about that there.

went to

“slept with” or “had {marital/sexual} relations with”. Translate this idiom in a way that is polite and will not shame or embarrass people when this verse is read aloud in public. See how you translated a similar idiom (“knew”) in Gen 4:1, 17, 25. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

the daughters of mankind

“the daughters of human beings,” or “human women,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2.

and they bore children for them

“and those women gave birth to children for them.” or “and those women had children.”

They {were}

“The Nephilim {were}” or “Those/Their children {grew up and} {were/became} {the Nephilim, who were}”. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

the mighty {ones}

“the powerful men/warriors” or “heroes”

who {were} from long ago

“who lived a long time ago,” or “who lived many years ago,”

the men of renown

“{who/and were} famous men.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this phrase earlier in this sentence and say, “They {were} the mighty men of renown who {were} from long ago.” or “They {were} the famous mighty men who lived a long time ago.” Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 6:5

And Yahweh saw

“Yahweh knew” or “Yahweh was aware”. The verb “saw” is used here as an idiom. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

that the wickedness of mankind {was} great on the earth

“how wicked/evil mankind/people had become on the earth,” or “that the people on the earth had become very wicked/evil,”

and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts

“and that every intention/desire they had in their hearts/minds” or “and that everything they thought about and desired/wanted”. In Hebrew culture the heart is considered the center of thoughts and desires. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

was} only evil

“{was} completely evil”

all day long

“all the time.” or “constantly.”

Genesis 6:6

So Yahweh was sorry

“As a result, Yahweh/he regretted” or “Yahweh/he regretted” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

that he had made mankind

“that he had made/created people/them” or “that he had made/created human beings”. See how you translated “mankind” in verses 1, 3, and 5, and consider whether or not it is best to use a pronoun (“them”) here in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

on the earth

“{to live} on the earth,”

and he was grieved in his heart

“and his heart was filled with pain/sadness/grief.” or “and he was/felt extremely/very sad/grieved.” Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 6:7

Then Yahweh said

“Then/So Yahweh/he said {to himself},” See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. Also make sure that the way you begin verse 7 fits well with the way you begin verse 6.

I will wipe away

“I will wash away” or “I will blot out” or “I will completely wipe/destroy”. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

mankind whom I created off the surface of the ground

“{all} the human beings whom I created, from the surface of the earth,” or “from the earth {all} the people whom I created,”

both mankind and animals

“{In fact,} {I will destroy} {not just/only} {all} the people, but also {all} the animals,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and crawling creatures

“and/including the creatures that crawl/move {on/along the ground}”

and the birds of the sky

“and {all} the birds {that fly} in the sky/air,” or “and {all} the birds,”

because I am sorry

“because I am sad/grieved” or “because I regret”. See how you translated “was sorry” or “regretted” in verse 6.

that I made them

“that I {ever} made/created them.”

Genesis 6:8

But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh

“But Noah pleased God.” or “However, Yahweh was pleased with Noah.” The idiom “find favor” means to please someone. And the idiom “in the eyes of” refers to someone’s opinion about something or someone. Consider whether your language has similar idioms that work well here or whether it is better to translate this sentence without an idiom. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 6:9

These {are} the generations of Noah

"This/Here is {more of} the account/record/history of/about Noah and his descendants/family:" or "What follows tells {more} about Noah and his descendants/family:" Some of Noah's history has already been given in Gen 5:29, 32, and 6:8. What follows tells more about him.

He {was}

"He {was}": Consider whether it is better in your language to use a noun or a pronoun here to refer to Noah. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

a righteous man

"an upright/good man." or "a man who did what was right." (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

He was without blemish in his generation

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "He {alone} was blameless/faultless {in God's eyes} among his contemporaries." or "Out of all the people living at that time, Noah/he was the only one {whom God considered} blameless." or (2) "He had a blameless/spotless reputation among his contemporaries." or "His contemporaries considered him to be a man of integrity." The phrase "without blemish" is often used in the Bible to describe animals that have no defects. Here it is used as an idiom that means Noah was "blameless/faultless" in an ethical or moral sense, or that he had good integrity, but it does not mean that he was sinless. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would work well here. Also, the word "generation" refers here to people who lived during the same time period. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Noah walked with God

"{and} he walked {closely/faithfully} with God." or "{and} he lived in a close/faithful relationship with God." Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated this idiom in Gen 5:22, 24. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 6:10

And Noah fathered

“Eventually Noah/he fathered/had” or “And {as mentioned before,} Noah/he had”. The fact that Noah fathered/had these three sons was already mentioned in Gen 5:32. Make sure that the way you begin this verse in your translation does not sound like he fathered these sons a second time.

three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth

“three sons, {namely} Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” or “three sons, {whose names were} Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

Genesis 6:11

Now the earth was corrupt

“Now {the people of/on} the earth had become corrupt/wicked”. The phrase “the earth” is often used in the Bible to refer to all the people on the earth. Consider whether your language can do the same thing, or whether it is necessary to make that implied information explicit. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

before God

“in God’s sight/opinion,” or “according to God’s standards,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and the earth was filled {with} violence

“and they had filled the earth with {their} violence/lawlessness.” or “and all over the earth they were doing violent/lawless things.” This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause in order to emphasize how evil the people on the earth had become. The two clauses are different enough from each other that, if possible, it is best to keep both parts of the parallelism in your translation. Also be consistent with how you translated “the earth” earlier in this verse. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Genesis 6:12

And God saw

“God saw”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin this sentence with a conjunction.

the earth, and behold, it was corrupted

“that {everyone on} the earth was indeed/very corrupt/wicked,” or “how corrupt/wicked {everyone on} the earth had become,” See how you translated “corrupt” and “the earth” in verse 11. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

because all flesh on the earth

“because all the people on the earth” or “because everyone {living} on earth”. The phrase “all flesh” refers here to all people and probably implies that people are mortal (verse 3). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

had corrupted its way

“were living corrupt/wicked lives.” or “were {continually} doing wicked/evil things.” or “were {continually} acting/behaving in evil ways.”

Genesis 6:13

So God said to Noah

“So/Then God/he said to Noah,”

The end of all flesh has come before me

“I have decided to put an end to all human beings,” or “I am going to destroy all flesh/people,” Be consistent here with how you translated “flesh” in verse 12. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

because the earth is filled {with} violence because of them

“because they have filled the earth with {their} violence/lawlessness.” or “because all over the earth they are doing violent/lawless things.” See how you translated “violence” in verse 11.

So behold, I

“Now listen,” or “In fact,” This phrase draws extra attention to what God says next. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language.

am destroying them

“I am going to destroy them” or “I plan to destroy them” or “I will destroy them”

with the earth

“as well as {everything else on} the earth.” or “and {everything else on} the earth {too}.” This phrase includes everything on the earth, not just the people. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 6:14

Make

"{Therefore/Consequently} {you must} make/build" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

an ark

"a {very} large boat/houseboat". The term "ark" is general and refers to a chest/box that is closed on all sides, including the top. In this case, the ark was a very large boat that people and many animals lived in for a year. It had no motor, no oars, no sail and no rudder. Since this was a unique, one-of-a-kind boat that may already be well-known as the "ark" in the receptor language area, some translations transliterate (copy or borrow) the word "ark" throughout Genesis. Decide what is best for your translation. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1607)**)

for yourself

"for you/yourself {and your family}" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

out of gopher wood

"from gopher/cypress wood {which is good for building boats}." or "out of the best wood {for building boats}." It is not certain what kind of wood this was, so many translations transliterate (copy or borrow) the Hebrew word "gopher". Some Bible scholars think it was cypress wood. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Make the ark {with} rooms

"Build/Construct the ark/boat with compartments/stalls {inside}," or "Make/Build rooms inside the ark/boat,"

and cover it inside and outside

"and {completely} seal/coat it inside and outside"

with a covering

"with pitch/tar {to keep water out}." or "with pitch/tar {to keep the boat from leaking}." The Hebrew word "covering" is general and does not specify what kind of waterproofing material is being used. However, many translations are more specific than that here and refer to "pitch" or "tar" or some other material made from tree resin or sap that can seal a boat well and keep it from leaking.

Genesis 6:15

And this {is} how you must make it

“Build the ark/boat with these dimensions/measurements:” or “You must make/build the ark/boat like this:”

the length of the ark {must be} 300 cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits

“It {must be} 140 meters long, twenty-three/23 meters wide, and fourteen/14 meters high.” or “It {must be} 450 feet long, seventy-five/75 feet wide, and forty-five/45 feet high.” A cubit was about half a meter (18 inches) long, which was the distance from a man’s elbow to the tip of his middle finger. You can: (1) translate cubits into meters or feet, and put the literal text in a footnote; or (2) keep “cubits” in the main text (so that the numbers 300, fifty/50 and thirty/30 are kept) and put what that equals in meters or feet in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1574)**)

Genesis 6:16

Make a window for the ark and finish it to within one cubit from the top

“Make/Build a window/skylight for the ark/boat by finishing {the sides/walls of} the ark/boat to within one cubit below the top/roof {of the ark/boat}.” or “Make/Build a half-meter high window/opening between the top of the walls/sides of the ark and its roof {all the way around}, {to let light and air in}.” The meaning of the Hebrew text is not completely certain here, but God was probably telling Noah to make a one-cubit high window or opening at the top of the outside walls of the ark, just below the roof, all the way around the ark, to let light and air into the ark. See the note about “cubit” in verse 15. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1574)**)

And put the door of the ark in its side

“Also put/build a door in the side of the ark/boat.” or “Put/Build a door for the ark/boat in its side.” Some translations begin this sentence without a conjunction (“And” or “Also”). Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

Make a lower, a second, and a third {deck

“Make/Build a lower {deck/level}, a middle {deck/level}, and an upper {deck/level} {on the inside}.” or “{and} make/build a lower, second/middle, and third/upper story/floor {on the inside}.” or “{and} make/build three {complete} levels/floors {on the inside}.” Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 6:17

And I, behold, I

“Behold/Listen, I myself” or “Listen {carefully} to me: I”. In the Hebrew text, the pronoun “I” is emphatic, both by its form and by its position at the beginning of the sentence. Consider what is the best way to communicate that emphasis in your language. (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

am bringing floodwaters on the earth

“am going to bring/send a flood on/over the {whole/entire} earth” or “am going to flood the {whole/entire} earth {with water}”

to destroy

“{in order} to destroy” or “which will destroy”. See how you translated “destroy” in verse 13.

all flesh

“all the creatures/beings” or “every creature” or “every living thing”. This phrase is general here and includes people and animals, so you may need to translate the phrase differently here from what you did earlier in verses 12-13 (where the focus seems to be on people).

that {has} the breath of life in it

“that breathe/breathes {air}”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 1:30.

from under the heavens

“from under the sky.” For some languages it may be clearer to put this phrase earlier in this sentence and say, “to destroy every living thing under the heavens/sky that has the breath of life in it.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Everything that {is} on the earth

“{As a result,} every {living} thing/being that {is/lives} on land”

will expire

“will breathe out {its last breath}!” or “will die/perish!” The verb “expire” (which could also be translated “exhale” or “breathe out”) is used here as an idiom that means “die”. Consider whether your language has a similar or different idiom that would work well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 6:18

But I will establish

“But/However I will make/institute” or “But/However I will set up”. The word “establish” means to deliberately and formally put something into effect. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

my covenant with you

“a covenant between me and you,” or “a {special/peace} agreement between me and you,” This covenant is made up of the unconditional, unbreakable promises that God made to Noah (and all mankind and all other living things) in Genesis 8:2-9:17. The word “testament” is another word for “covenant,” so the way you translate “covenant” here could be similar to the way you translate the titles “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

so you must go into the ark

“so you must enter the ark/boat,” or “so you must get on board the ark/boat,”

you and your sons and your wife and the wives of your sons with you

“and {take} your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” or “and {take} with you your wife, your sons, and their wives.”

Genesis 6:19

And from every living {creature}, from all flesh, you must bring two from each {kind} into the ark

“Also, from every {kind of} living creature, {yes,} from every {kind of} animal, you must bring/take two/pairs of each {kind} into the ark/boat” or “You must also bring/take into the ark/boat two/pairs of every {kind of} living creature, including every {kind of} animal,”

to keep alive with you

“{in order} to keep {them} alive with you.” or “so that they stay alive with you.”

They must be male and female

“They must be {pairs} with {one} male and {one} female {each}.” or “Each pair must have/include {one} male and {one} female.” or “Make sure that each pair has {one} male and {one} female.”

Genesis 6:20

From the birds according to their kinds

"{Males and females} from/of every kind/type of bird,"

and from the animals according to their kinds

"and from/of every kind of animal,"

from every moving creature of the ground according to its kind

"including every kind of creature that moves/lives on the ground/land," This phrase emphasizes that the birds and animals mentioned in the first half of this verse lived on land.

two from every {kind} will come to you

"two/pairs of every kind {of animal} will come to you" or "two/pairs of each kind {of animal} will come to you". For some languages it is more natural to change the order of clauses in this sentence and say, "Two/Pairs of every kind of bird and every kind of animal, including every kind of creature that moves on the ground, will come to you ... " Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

to keep alive

"to keep {them} alive {on/in the ark/boat}." or "{into the ark/boat} so that they stay alive." or "so that you keep them alive {in the ark/boat}."

Genesis 6:21

And you

“You” or “You {and your family}”. Although the pronoun “you” is singular in the Hebrew text in verse 21, it could be translated as plural, since God’s instructions apply to Noah and his family, not just Noah. Or you could make his family explicit. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

must take with you

“must {also} {gather and} take/bring” or “must {also} gather”

some of every food

“every {kind of} food” or “all the different kinds of food”

that is eaten

“that is eaten {by people and animals}” or “that people and animals eat” or “that you and {all} the animals/creatures will need”

and store it with you

“and store/stockpile/put it {on the ark/boat} with you,”

and it will be food

“This/That will be the food supply” or “so that there will be {enough} food”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for you

“for you {and your family}”. Consider again how you translated the pronoun “you” in this verse. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

and for them

“and for {all} the animals.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 6:22

And Noah did {that

“So, {that is what} Noah did;” or “Noah did {all of that}”. Some translations begin verse 22 without a conjunction. Do what is best in your language.

according to all that God had commanded him, so he did

“he did everything just/exactly as God had commanded/told him {to do}.”

Genesis 7

Genesis 7:1

Then Yahweh said to Noah

“Then {after they had finished building the ark/boat,} Yahweh told/commanded Noah,” or “{When/After the ark/boat was finished,} Yahweh told/commanded Noah,” For some languages it may be necessary to make it explicit that the boat was completed before Yahweh told Noah to enter it. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Go into the ark, you and all your household

“Enter/Board the ark/boat, along with your entire family,” or “You and your entire household/family must go/get into the ark/boat,” See how you translated “ark/boat” in Gen 6:14-16.

because I have seen

“because I have found” or “because I see/know”

that} you {are} righteous

“{that} you {alone} {are} upright” or “{that} you {are} {the only one who is} living righteously/rightly” or “... living the right way”. In the Hebrew text, the pronoun “you” is emphasized to show that Noah was the only one who was righteous. See how you translated “righteous” in Gen 6:9.

before me

“in my sight/eyes/opinion” or “according to my standards/will”

in this generation

“among the people living today.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this phrase earlier in this verse and say, “... you {are} {the only one} among the people living today {who is} righteous in my sight.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 7:2

From every clean animal

“From every {kind of} pure animal” or “From every {kind of} animal that is acceptable to sacrifice”. It may be necessary to include a footnote that explains the concept of clean and unclean animals: In the Bible a “clean animal” was an animal that was acceptable to be sacrificed to God or to be eaten, and an “unclean animal” was one that could not be sacrificed or eaten; it does not refer to how clean the animal was physically. Later Moses wrote down the laws about clean and unclean animals in the book of Leviticus.

take with you

“bring with you”. The pronoun “you” is singular in the Hebrew text, but could be translated as a plural to include Noah’s family. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

seven pairs, a male and its female

“seven male and female pairs”. See how you translated “male and female” in Gen 6:19.

and from {every} animal that {is} not clean

“and from {every kind of} unclean/impure animal” or “and from {every kind of} animal that is not acceptable to sacrifice”

take} two, a male and its female

“{take} a/one male and female pair,” For some languages it may be better to change the order of the phrases in this sentence and say, “Take with you seven male and female pairs of every {kind of} clean/pure animal, and {one} male and female pair of {every kind of} unclean/impure animal,” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 7:3

also

"{and} also" or "In addition," or "Also," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

from {every} bird of the sky

"from {every kind/type of} bird {that flies} in the sky/air" or "from {every kind/type of} bird"

take} seven pairs, male and female

"{take} seven male and female pairs". See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 2. Also, for some languages it may be better to put this phrase earlier in this sentence and say, "Also {take} seven male and female pairs of {every kind of} bird {that flies} in the sky/air ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

to keep {their} offspring alive

"so that {later} their offspring will live" or "so that {later} they will have offspring that will live"

on the surface of the whole earth

"{and spread} all over the earth," or "and/to repopulate the whole/entire earth,"

Genesis 7:4

because

"{You must do that,} because" or "The reason {you must do that} is". For many languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

in seven more days

"seven days from now/today". The phrase, "seven more days" could be translated "another week" here and in verse 11. However, it is probably best to keep the number seven in the text in both places, especially since the number seven often signifies perfection or completion in the Bible, perhaps also here.

I will cause it to rain

"I will make it rain {continuously}" or "I will send rain"

on the earth

"{all} over the earth/world"

for} forty days and forty nights

"{for} forty days and nights," This phrase refers to forty complete 24-hour days.

and I will wipe

"in order to wipe/blot out" or "That will wash away" or "In that way, I will completely destroy". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated this idiom in Gen 6:7. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

every living thing that I have made

"every living creature that I have made" or "all the living things/creatures that I have made". See how you translated a similar phrase ("living creature") in Gen 6:19.

off the surface of the ground

"off/from the surface of the earth." or "off/from the earth/land." It may be clearer to put this phrase earlier in the sentence and say, "in order to completely destroy from/off the ground/earth every living creature/thing that I have made." Do what is best in your language. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 6:7. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 7:5

Then Noah did all that

“Then/So Noah did everything that” or “So Noah did everything {exactly} as”

Yahweh had commanded him

“Yahweh had commanded/told him {to do}.” See how you translated Gen 6:22 which is similar to 7:5.

Genesis 7:6

Now Noah {was} a son of 600 years

“Noah/He was 600 years old”. See how you handled large numbers in Gen 5 and in Gen 6:3, and see the note about this at Gen 5:3. Also see how you translated the idiom “son of ... years” in Gen 5:32. (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

when the floodwaters came on the earth

“when the flood covered the earth.” or “when the earth was covered/flooded with deep water.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this clause first in this sentence and say, “When the flood waters came on the earth, Noah was 600 years old.” Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated “floodwaters” in Gen 6:17. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 7:7

And Noah and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons went with him into the ark

"{That is when} Noah/he and his wife, and his sons and their wives, went together into the ark/boat". Noah and his family entered the ark on the same day that the floodwaters started coming (See verses 11-13). See how you translated a similar list of people in Gen 6:18.

from the presence of

"because of" or "to escape from" or "to keep them safe from" or "so that they would not die in"

the waters of the flood

"the floodwaters." or "the flood."

Genesis 7:8

Pairs} from the clean animal{s} and from the animal{s} that are not clean

"{Also,} {every kind of} clean/pure animal and {every kind of} unclean/impure animal". See how you translated "clean" and "unclean" animals in verse 2.

and from the bird{s}

"and {every kind of} bird,"

and everything that moves on the ground

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "including every {kind of creature/animal} that moves/lives on land," or "which includes every {kind of creature/animal} that moves/lives on land," According to this interpretation, the rest of verse 8 emphasizes that the clean and unclean animals and birds (verses 2-3, 8) were all creatures that lived on land (which are the creatures that the flood affected). Or it could mean: (2) "as well as every {kind of} creature/animal that crawls/creeps along the ground". According to this interpretation, the rest of verse 8 refers to a fourth category of creatures besides the clean animals, unclean animals, and birds.

Genesis 7:9

went two {by} two to Noah into the ark

“came to Noah in pairs {and came/went} into the ark/boat,” or “came in pairs and entered the ark/boat with Noah,”

male and female

“{They were} male and female pairs,” or “Each pair had one male and one female,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

just as God had commanded Noah

“which was exactly what God had commanded/told Noah/him {to take/bring along}.”

Genesis 7:10

And it happened

“So it happened {that}” or “Then”. This phrase focuses attention on an important event (the beginning of the flood), and it builds suspense so that readers and listeners wonder what will happen next. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language.

after the seven days

“when the seven days {that God had spoken about} had passed,” or “after seven days,” This phrase refers to the seven days which God talked about in verse 4. It does not mean seven days after Noah and the animals went into the ark (verses 7-9); they went into the ark on the same day that the flood started (verse 13). Translate the beginning of this sentence in a way that makes that clear. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1567))

then the waters of the flood came on

“the floodwaters started to come on/over” or “water started to flood/cover”

the earth

“the {entire/whole} earth.”

Genesis 7:11

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life

"When Noah was 600 years old," Compare how you translated Noah's age in verse 6. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1681)**)

in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month

"on the seventeenth day of the second month {of the year}," For some languages it is more natural to switch the phrase order and say which day it is before giving the month. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

on that day

"on that {same/very} day" or "that is the day when"

all the fountains of

"all the springs" or "all the {underground} water sources"

the great deep

"in the deep ocean"

burst open

"split/ripped open," or "started gushing/pouring out water," For some languages it may be more natural to put this phrase earlier and say, "water started gushing/pouring out of all the fountains/springs in the deep ocean," Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and the windows of the heavens were opened

"and {all} the windows/floodgates in the heavens/sky were opened {by God}," or "{God also caused} the water in the heavens/sky to start coming/pouring down, as if he had opened {huge} windows/floodgates/faucets {in the heavens/sky}," This metaphor describes the beginning of a very heavy rainfall; it does not refer to actual windows. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

Genesis 7:12

so that the rain fell

“so that {torrential/heavy} rain fell/poured {continuously}” or “so that it rained {continuously}”

on the earth

“{all} over the earth/world”

forty days and forty nights

“{for} forty days and nights.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

Genesis 7:13

On that same day

"{So it was/happened that} on the {very} same day {that the flood/rain started}," This is the same day that is mentioned in verse 11, when the flood started. Verses 13-16 repeat what happened, in order to emphasize it. Make sure that a translation does not sound like this is the second (or third) time that Noah and his family and the animals entered the ark.

Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and the wife of Noah and the three wives of his sons with them

"Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, along with his wife and his sons' three wives {all}" or "Noah and his wife and his/their sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their three wives {all}". See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 7.

went into the ark

"entered/boarded the ark/boat,"

Genesis 7:14

they and every

“They had/took with them every”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and every living thing according to its kind, and every

In the Hebrew text this phrase is ambiguous. It could mean: (1) “every kind of living thing/creature, including every” or (2) “every kind of wild animal, and every”. The animal groups listed in verse 14 show that every kind of animal was to be brought onto the ark. Your language may have a different way of grouping animals. Make sure it is clear in your translation of this verse that all the different kinds of birds and land animals are included.

and every livestock according to its kind

“every kind of livestock,” or “every kind of domestic/tame animal,”

and every moving creature moving on the earth according to its kind

In the Hebrew text, this phrase is ambiguous. It could mean: (1) “and every {other} kind of creature/animal that moves/lives on the earth/land,” which seems to fit this context best; or (2) “and every kind of creature/animal that crawls on the ground,”

and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every wing

“and every kind of bird {and} everything {else} that has wings.” or “and every kind of bird {and} every {other} {kind of} creature that flies.” This phrase probably refers not only to birds, but also to other creatures that have wings and fly, such as bats and insects.

Genesis 7:15

So they went to Noah into the ark

“They came to Noah {and went/came} into the ark,” or “They entered the ark with Noah,” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 9.

two {by} two from all flesh

“pairs of every {kind of} creature/animal” or “pairs of every {kind of} living thing/creature”. The word “flesh” refers here to any kind of creature or animal. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

which {has} in it the breath of life

“that breathes {air}.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 6:17. For some languages it may be better to change the order of the clauses in this verse and say, “Pairs of every {kind of} living thing that breathes {air} came to Noah {and went} into the boat.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 7:16

And those that went in

"The pairs/animals that went/came into {the ark/boat}" or "Those animals". Consider whether it is better in your language to use "went" or "came" here. Also consider again how you translated "went" in verses 7, 9, 13, and 15. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

were} male and female

"{were} male and female {pairs}"

from all flesh

"from/of every {kind of} creature/animal," or "from/of every {kind of} living thing," See how you translated "all flesh" in verse 15. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

they went in just as God had commanded him

"which was exactly what God had commanded him/Noah {to take/bring along}." See how you translated "just as God commanded him" in verse 9.

Then Yahweh shut him in

"After that, Yahweh shut them in/inside {the ark/boat}." or "Then {after they were all inside,} Yahweh shut/closed the door {of the ark/boat} behind him/them."

Genesis 7:17

Then the flood came

“After that the floodwaters/water kept getting deeper and deeper” or “The floodwaters/water kept coming”. Some translations begin this sentence without a conjunction. Do what is natural in your language. Also, notice that verses 17-20 talk about the forty days and nights that the flood kept getting deeper and deeper. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1599)**)

on the earth

“{all} over the earth”

for} forty days

“{for} forty days {and forty nights},” For some languages it may be more natural to put this time phrase first in this sentence and say, “{For} forty days {and forty nights} the flood kept getting deeper and deeper {all} over the earth,” Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated this phrase in verse 12. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and the waters increased

“and as the water level rose,” or “As the water got deeper and deeper,”

and lifted the ark so that it rose up off the earth

“it lifted up the ark/boat so that it floated {on the water} {high} above the earth/ground.” or “it made the ark/boat lift/rise up off the ground and float.”

Genesis 7:18

And the waters rose

“So the floodwaters continued to rise and get much deeper/higher” or “Yes, the floodwaters/water continued ...” or “The floodwaters/water continued ...” Verse 18 repeats some of verse 17 to emphasize what happened. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

on the earth

“{all} over the earth/world,”

and the ark went

“but/while the ark/boat floated {safely}” or “so that the ark/boat moved/drifted {about/along}”

on the surface of the waters

“on the surface of the water.” or “on top of the water.” or “on the water.”

Genesis 7:19

And the waters rose very greatly on the earth

“At last, the waters became very deep on/over the earth/world, so that” or “Eventually the water became so high/deep on/over the earth/world that”

all the high mountains

“{even} all the highest mountains”

that {were} under the entire heavens

“everywhere under the sky”

so that & were covered

“were covered {with/by water}.” or “were submerged {in/under water}.” or “were under water.” For some languages it is better to use an active form of the verb here and say, “Eventually the water became so deep on the earth that it {even} covered all the highest mountains under the entire sky.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 7:20

The waters rose fifteen cubits above {them

"{In fact,} the water rose {at least} seven meters above {the tops of} the {highest} mountains," or "{In fact,} the {highest} mountain tops were covered with/by {at least} twenty-two feet of water," See how you translated "cubits" in Gen 6:15-16. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1574)**)

so that the mountains were covered

"so that they were {completely} covered {with/by water}." or "... {completely} submerged {in/under water}." or "... {completely} under water." See how you translated "were covered" in verse 19. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 7:21

all flesh

“Then all the creatures/beings” or “Then every creature” or “Then every living thing”. This phrase refers to everything listed in verse 21, including people. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 6:17.

that moved on the earth

“that moved/lived on the ground” or “that lived on land”

Then & expired

“breathed out {its last breath},” or “died/perished,” See how you translated this idiom in Gen 6:17. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

including the birds and the livestock

“That included {all} the birds, the livestock,” or “including {all} the birds, the domestic/tame animals,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and the living things

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “and the {other} living things/creatures” or (2) “and the wild animals”

and all the swarming things swarming on the earth

“including every {kind of} creature/animal that lived in large groups/numbers on the earth,”

and all mankind

“in addition to all the human beings.” or “as well as all the people.”

Genesis 7:22

Everything that {had} the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils

“Every living creature/thing that breathed air”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 15.

everything that {lived} on dry land, died

“and was/lived on dry land died.”

Genesis 7:23

So he wiped away

“That is how Yahweh washed away” or “In that way, Yahweh blotted out” or “... completely destroyed”. See how you translated this idiom in verse 4.

every living thing

“every living creature” or “all living things/creatures”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

that {was} on the surface of the ground

“that {was/lived} on the surface of the earth,” or “that {were/lived} on the earth/land,” See how you translated “the surface of the ground” in verse 4.

including mankind

“including {all} mankind/people”. See how you translated “mankind” in verse 21. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and livestock and crawling creatures

“and {all} the livestock and {all the other} creatures/animals that moved/lived {on the ground/land}” or “and {all} the animals, including smaller creatures/animals that crawl/move {on/along the ground}”

and also the birds of the sky

“and also the birds {that flew} in the sky.” or “and also the birds.” Some languages leave out the phrase “of the sky” because it is not natural. Do what is best in your language.

So they were wiped off the earth

“{All of} them were {completely} wiped/washed off the earth {by Yahweh/God},” or “He/God completely destroyed them all from the earth,” or “Yes, he/God completely destroyed everything {that lived} on the earth,” See how you translated “wipe ... off” in verse 4. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and only Noah was left

“so that only Noah was left/still alive, along with” or “so that the only ones who were left/still alive were Noah and” or “Only Noah survived, along with”. Some translations leave out the first conjunction and begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

and {those} who {were} with him in the ark

“and his family and the animals that were with him/them in the ark/boat.” or “along with his family ...”

Genesis 7:24

And the waters prevailed over

“{Deep} water continued to flood/cover” or “The floodwaters stayed/remained deep/high over”

the earth {for} 150 days

“the {entire} earth/world {for} 150 days.” See how you handled a large number in verse 6. (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

Genesis 8

Genesis 8:1

But God remembered

“God kept in mind” or “But God did not forget” or “God never forgot”. The phrase “God remembered” is an idiom in the Bible that often means God was paying special attention to certain people and was about to do something. Make sure that the way you translate this phrase does not imply that God had forgotten about Noah. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Noah

“Noah {and his family}”. Noah is the person that the author is focusing on here, but Noah’s family is also included. Consider whether or not you need to make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and all the living thing{s} and

In the Hebrew text this phrase is ambiguous. It could mean: (1) “and all the creatures/animals, including” or (2) “and all the wild animals and”. See how you translated “living thing” in Gen 7:14.

all the livestock that {were} with him in the ark

“all the domestic/tame animals that {were} with him/them in the ark/boat,” Some translations combine this phrase with the previous phrase and say, “and all the animals, both wild and tame/domestic, that {were} with him/them in the ark/boat.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and God caused a wind to pass over

“and he sent a wind over” or “So God/he caused/sent a wind to blow over”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

the earth

“{the water that was covering/over} the earth,” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the waters subsided

“so that the floodwaters/water {started to} recede/decrease.” or “so that the water {level} {started to} go down.” Notice that the floodwaters did not go all the way down until verse 14, so the way you translate this clause should allow for that. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 8:2

And the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed

"{He also caused} the fountains/springs in the deep {ocean} to stop {gushing out water}, and {he caused} the rain/water to stop pouring from the sky," or "{God/He also} stopped the water from {gushing out of} springs/places at the bottom of the ocean, and the rain from pouring/coming from the heavens/sky," See how you translated some of the same words and phrases in Gen 7:11. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

and the rain from the heavens was stopped

"so that rain stopped falling/coming from the sky." or "so that it stopped raining." Consider whether it is better in your language to use an active or a passive verb here and in the previous clause. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 8:3

Then the waters receded steadily

“Then the floodwaters/water steadily/gradually went down”

from the earth

“from {the surface of} the land/ground,”

at} the end of the 150 days

“so that after the 150 days {had passed},” or “After the 150 days {had passed},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also make sure it is clear in your translation that the 150 days mentioned here in Gen 8:3 are the same 150 days mentioned in Gen 7:24, not two different periods of time.

the waters

“the water {level}” or “they/it”. Make sure the way you translate this phrase fits with the way you translated the beginning of the verse.

and {& had decreased

“had gone down,” or “had subsided,”

Genesis 8:4

so that & rested

“so {much/far/low} that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month

“on the seventeenth day of the seventh month {of the year},” See how you translated a similar time phrase in Gen 7:11. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

so that & the ark rested

“the ark/boat came to rest” or “the ark/boat settled/landed”

on the mountains

“on a mountain” or “on {one of} the mountains”. The ark landed on one mountain in a mountain range. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

of Ararat

“in {the land/region of} Ararat.” or “in the Ararat {mountain range}.”

Genesis 8:5

And the waters

“Then the water/floodwaters” or “The water/floodwaters”

continued to decrease

“continued to go down/away” or “kept decreasing/subsiding”. See how you translated “decreased” in verse 3.

until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first of the month

“until the tenth month {of the year}. On the first day of that month,” or “until on the first {day} of the tenth month {of the year};” See how you translated a similar time phrase in verse 4. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

the tops of the mountains

“the peaks of the {surrounding} mountains” or “the mountaintops”

could be seen

“could be seen {above the water} {by Noah}.” or “became visible {above the water}.” or “appeared {above the surface of the water}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 8:6

Then it happened {at} the end of forty days

“After forty {more} days {had passed},” The phrase “Then it happened” focuses attention on what happens next, and it builds suspense so that readers and listeners wonder what the outcome will be. Some translations leave this phrase out, but that loses some of the suspense. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that Noah opened the window

“Noah opened a window”. It is not clear when Noah made this window. It may refer to the opening around the top of the walls of the ark (Gen 6:16) or a different window that he made sometime later.

of the ark that he had made

“that he had made in the ark/boat,”

Genesis 8:7

and he sent out

“and he released” or “and he set free”

the raven

“{a large black bird called} a raven”. A raven is a large, black scavenger bird that eats whatever it finds, including dead animals. If the people in your language area are not familiar with ravens, you could make a comparison to a similar bird that they are familiar with and say, “a large black bird {like a ...}” Or you could include a footnote that explains what a raven is. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns\]\]](#))

and it kept flying out and returning

“which kept/continued flying back and forth {outside the ark/boat}” or “but it kept flying around {outside the ark/boat}”

until the waters

“until the water/floodwaters”

dried up from the earth

“had dried up {more} from the ground/land.” This phrase refers to the ground/land (as verse 8 confirms), not the entire planet.

Genesis 8:8

Then he sent out

“Then/Meanwhile he/Noah {also} sent out” or “Then/Meanwhile he/Noah {also} released”. The events in verse 8 happened while the raven was still flying back and forth (verse 7). Consider what conjunction best communicates that in your language. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1601)**)

the dove from him

“a dove that was with him” or “a dove from the ark/boat” or “a {small bird called a} dove”. A dove is a small, white or gray bird that makes a cooing sound. If doves are unknown in your language area, you could make a comparison to a similar bird they are familiar with and say, “a small white/gray bird {like a ...}” Or you could include a footnote that explains what a dove is. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

to see if the waters had subsided

“to find out if/whether the floodwaters/water had receded”

from the surface of the ground

“from the surface of the land.” or “from the ground/land.”

Genesis 8:9

But the dove did not find

“But the dove could not find” or “But it was not able to find”. Consider what is the best way to refer to the dove at this point in the paragraph in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

a resting place for the sole of its feet

“anywhere to land/perch and rest,” In Hebrew the word “dove” is grammatically a feminine noun (for both male and female doves), so some translations say “her feet ... she returned ...” here. For languages such as English that do not assign grammatical gender to nouns, it is more accurate to use “its” and “it” here, because it is not known whether this dove was male or female. Do what is best in your language.

so it returned

“So/Then it returned” or “So/Then the dove flew back”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to him in the ark

“flew back to him/Noah in/at the ark/boat,”

because the waters {were} over the surface of the entire earth

“because water was {still} covering the entire earth/world.” Some languages may have to switch the clause order in this verse and say, “But water was {still} covering the entire earth/world, so the dove did/could not find a resting place for its feet. Then it returned to Noah at the boat, and he/Noah reached ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And he reached out his hand

“Then/So he/Noah reached out” or “and he/Noah reached out”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and took it and brought it

“caught it, and brought it”

to him into the ark

“{back} to himself in the ark/boat.” or “{back} into the ark/boat.”

Genesis 8:10

Then he waited

“He/Noah waited”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin this sentence with or without a conjunction. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

another seven days

“seven more days,”

and again sent out the dove from the ark

“then he sent the dove out from the ark/boat another time.” or “then he released the dove from the ark/boat again.”

Genesis 8:11

Then the dove returned to him at evening time

“That evening the dove returned to him/Noah,” or “When it was evening, the dove returned to him/Noah,”

and behold

“and surprisingly,” or “and he/Noah saw that”

there was} a freshly picked olive leaf in its mouth

“{it was holding} a newly picked {green} leaf from an olive tree in its mouth/beak.” or “{the dove had} a {green} leaf in its mouth/beak that it had just picked/taken from an olive tree.” An olive tree produces small, oval, green fruit that has a hard pit. Olives are used for food and as a source of cooking oil. If olive trees are unknown in your language area, you could include a footnote about them. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

So Noah knew

“Then Noah realized” or “That is how Noah/he knew/realized”

that the waters

“that the water/floodwaters”

had subsided

“had receded” or “had gone down {more/further}”. See how you translated “subsided” in verse 8, and how you translated three other Hebrew words with similar meanings in verses 1, 3, and 5.

from the earth

“from the ground/land.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 7.

Genesis 8:12

Then he waited another seven days, and he sent out the dove

“He waited another seven days, then he released the dove {again},” or “After he waited seven more days, he released the dove {again},” See how you translated “sent out” in verses 7, 8, and 10.

but it did not return to him again

“but {this time} it did not come/fly back to him again {because it found a dry place to land/live}.” Remember to only make implied information explicit in a translation if it helps readers’ understanding or if it is necessary to prevent wrong meaning or incorrect grammar. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 8:13

So it happened

“So it happened {that}” or “So it was,”

in the six hundred and first year

“In {his/Noah’s} 601st year,” or “when {Noah was} 601 years old,” See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 7:11.

in the first {month}, on the first {day} of the month

“in the first {month} {of the year}, on the first {day} of the month,” or “on the first {day} of the first month {of the year};” (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1681)**)

the waters were drying up

“the water was drying up” or “the water had {almost} dried up”. Make sure your translation of this phrase fits with the fact that the ground was not yet dry enough to get out of the ark. That did not happen until the end of the second month (verse 14).

from the earth

“from the ground/land.”

Then Noah removed

“So Noah/he took off {part of}” or “made an opening in”

the covering of the ark

“the roof that was covering the ark/boat” or “the roof of the ark/boat”

and looked

“and looked {around/out};”

and behold

“and indeed,” or “and he saw that”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 11.

the surface of the ground

“the land’s surface” or “the ground/land”

was drying

“was drying off.” or “was {almost} dry.”

Genesis 8:14

Then in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month

“Then by the twenty-seventh day of the second month {of the year},” See how you translated similar time phrases in verses 4, 5, and 13.

the earth

“the land/ground”. Notice that the land/ground was dry here, not the entire earth. Consider again how you translated this phrase in verses 3, 7, 11, 13-14.

was dry

“had dried off.” In this context “dry” means that the ground was dry enough to walk on and live on without getting stuck in mud. Make sure your translation does not imply that it was so dry that nothing would grow on it (like a desert).

Genesis 8:15

Then God said to Noah, saying

“Then/So God said to Noah,” or “Then God commanded Noah,” See how you translated “said to Noah” in Gen 7:1.
(See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Genesis 8:16

Go out of the ark

“Come out of/from the ark/boat” or “Disembark from the ark/boat”. Consider whether “come” or “go” is more natural here in your language. Also, some languages have a special term for getting off a boat that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

you and your wife

“together with” or “with”

and your wife and your sons

“your wife, your sons,”

and the wives of your sons with you

“and your sons’ wives.” or “and their wives.”

Genesis 8:17

Bring out with you

“Bring/Take with you” or “Bring/Take out”. Consider whether “bring” or “take” is more natural here in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

every living thing that {is}

“all the living things/creatures that {are}” or “all the animals that {are}”

with you

“with you {in the ark/boat},” or “in the ark/boat,”

all flesh

“all the animals,” or “all of them,” See how you translated “flesh” in Gen 7:15-16. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

including the birds and the livestock

“including the birds, domestic/tame animals,”

and every moving creature moving

In the Hebrew text this phrase is ambiguous. It could mean: (1) “and every {other} creature/animal that moves/lives”, which seems to fit this context best since it is general and includes all the land animals that were not birds or livestock; or (2) “and every creature/animal that crawls”, which is more specific and refers to animals like lizards, snakes, mice, and other animals that have bodies that are close to the ground.

on the earth

“on the ground,” or “on land,”

so that they will abound on the earth

“Then they will/can live/spread all over the earth/world”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and be fruitful

“{yes,} they will have many offspring/young”. The rest of verse 17 forms a parallelism with “abound on the earth” that emphasizes filling the earth again with animals. Make sure your translation does not sound like this refers to separate events. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

and multiply

“and increase {in number}” or “and become {very} numerous/many”. See how you translated “be fruitful” and “multiply” in Gen 1:22, 28.

over the earth

“{all} over the earth/world.” or “throughout the earth.”

Genesis 8:18

Then Noah went out

“Then/So Noah went/came out {of the ark/boat},” or “Then/So Noah disembarked {from the ark/boat},” or “Then/So Noah got off {the ark/boat},” (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons with him

“and his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives {went} with him.” or “along/together with his wife and his sons and their wives.” See how you translated this list of Noah’s family members (and similar lists) in Gen 6:18; 7:7, 13; 8:16. Notice that the order of the people in this list varies in the Hebrew text, perhaps depending on who is in focus in each context.

Genesis 8:19

Every living thing

“Every living creature,” or “All the animals,”

every crawling thing

“{including} every animal/creature that crawls” or “{including} all the animals/creatures that crawl”

and every bird

“and all the birds”

everything

“{yes,} every creature” or “{and} everything {else}”

moving on the earth

“that moves/lives on the ground,” or “that lives on land,” This phrase refers here to the land, not the entire planet earth. See how you translated this phrase in verse 17.

went out of the ark

“{also} went/came out of the ark/boat”. Consider again how you translated “go/come out” and “went/came out” and “bring/take out” in verses 16-19. Notice that your choices are affected by your perspective: whether the viewpoint is from inside the ark or whether the viewpoint is from outside the ark. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

by their families

“{grouped} by their kinds.” or “in groups of their own kind.” or “one family/kind after another.”

Genesis 8:20

Then Noah built an altar

“Then Noah built/made an altar {out of large stones}” or “Then Noah built/made a {sacrifice} table/mound {with large stones}”. An altar was an elevated, often table-shaped structure made out of stones where certain animals and crops were burned as sacrifices to God. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

to Yahweh

“{to offer sacrifices} to Yahweh,” or “{dedicated} to Yahweh,” or “to worship Yahweh,”

and he took

“Then/Next he selected/chose”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

from every clean animal and from every clean bird

“{some/one} from/of every {kind of} clean/pure animal and {some/one of} every {kind of} clean/pure bird,” or “{some/one} from/of every {kind of} animal and bird that are acceptable to sacrifice”. In the Bible, a “clean” animal or bird is one that is acceptable to be sacrificed to God or eaten; it does not refer to how clean the animal or bird was physically. See how you translated this term in Gen 7:2, 8.

and he offered burnt offerings on the altar

“and he {killed them and} offered/sacrificed them as burnt offerings {to Yahweh} on the altar.” or “and he {killed them and} burned {their bodies} on the altar as offerings/gifts {to Yahweh} {to worship/honor/thank him}.” When animals were sacrificed, they were killed first, not burned alive. Consider whether or not you need to make that information explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 8:21

And Yahweh smelled the pleasant aroma

“Yahweh smelled the pleasant/sweet aroma/smell {of the sacrifices},” or “When Yahweh smelled the aroma {of the sacrifices}, he was pleased,”

and Yahweh said in his heart

“and/so he said/thought to himself,” Consider whether or not your language has this idiom or a similar idiom that would work well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Never again will I curse the ground

“I will never again curse/devastate the ground/earth”. Make sure that your translation of “curse” does not imply the use of magic. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

because of mankind

“because of mankind{s sins},” or “to punish mankind {for their sins},”

though the inclination of mankind’s hearts {is} evil

“{even} though the intentions/desires of their hearts/minds/thinking {are} evil” or “{even} though everything they desire {is} evil”. See how you translated “inclination” in a similar phrase in Gen 6:5. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

from their youth

“from youth/childhood {onward}.” or “from the time they are young/children.”

And never again will I

“I will never again” or “Nor will I ever again”

strike

“destroy/annihilate/kill”. Consider whether your language has this idiom or a similar idiom that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

every living {thing}

“every living {creature}” or “all living {things/creatures}”

as I have done

“as I {just} did.” or “the way I {just} did.”

Genesis 8:22

While all of the days of the earth continue

“As long as the earth {still} exists/lasts,”

seed time

“seed-planting time/season” or “the time/season for planting seeds”

and harvest

“and harvest {time/season},” or “the time/season for harvesting/gathering {crops}”

and cold and heat

“cold {weather/season} and hot {weather/season},” These terms form a parallelism with “summer and winter”. If possible, it is best to keep both parts of the parallelism in your translation since each part has a different emphasis. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

and summer and winter

“summer and winter,” The seasons of summer and winter may be described differently depending on which part of the world your language area is located in. For example, some translations might use the terms “dry season” and “rainy/wet season,” depending on what best corresponds to summer and winter in that area.

will not cease

“will never cease/stop.” or “will always continue {to happen/occur} {each year}.” It may be more natural to change the order of this sentence and say, “As long as the earth exists, {each year} there will always be a season/time to plant seeds and a season/time to harvest {crops}, as well as cold {weather} and hot {weather}, winter and summer, and day and night.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 9

Genesis 9:1

Then God blessed Noah and his sons

“Then God showed favor to Noah and his sons” or “Then God caused Noah and his sons to prosper/flourish”. See how you translated “blessed” in Gen 1:22, 28.

and said to them

“by saying to them,” or “by saying,” or “He said,” The phrase “blessed ... and said” is a Hebrew expression that refers to one event and emphasizes it. It does not refer to two separate events. The words of the blessing are in verses 1-7. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 1:28. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Be fruitful

“Bear/Have many children” or “You will bear/have many children” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and multiply

“so that you {and your descendants} {will} multiply/increase {greatly} {in number}” or “so that you {and your descendants} {will} become {very} numerous/many”. See how you translated “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” in Gen 1:28. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1594)**)

and fill the earth

“and fill the earth {with people}.” or “and inhabit the whole earth.” or “and live/spread all over the earth/world.”

Genesis 9:2

And the fear of you and the dread of you will be on every living thing of the earth

“Every living thing/creature on the earth will be afraid and terrified of you,” or “All the animals on earth will be very/terribly afraid of you,” The phrase “the fear ... and the dread” repeats the same idea in two different ways to emphasize how afraid the creatures will be. For some languages it may be better to combine the phrase and say “very afraid/terrified”. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Doublet (p.1614)**)

including on every bird of

“including every bird {that flies} in the sky/air,” or “including all the birds {that fly} in the sky/air,” The birds, moving creatures, and fish are all included in the general category of living creatures. Consider again how you translated “birds of the sky” in the book of Genesis; see Gen 1:26, 28, 30; 2:19-20; 6:7; 7:3, 23; 9:2.

on everything that moves

“{along} with every creature/animal that moves/lives on land” or “as well as all creatures/animals that move/live on land,”

on the ground

“on land,”

and on all the fish of the sea

“and all the fish in the sea/ocean.”

Into your hand they are given

“I have put them {all} under your authority.” or “I have put you in charge of them {all}.” The phrase “into your hand” means God was again giving mankind the responsibility to manage and control all the rest of what God had created. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would work well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 9:3

Every moving creature that lives

“{From now on} every {kind of} living creature/thing that moves” or “{From now on} every creature/animal that is alive and moves”. See how you translated “every moving creature” in Gen 1:26, and see the note about that there. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways in different contexts.

will be for you for food

“is yours {to eat} as food.” or “is available for you {to eat} as food.” For some languages it is more natural to change the order of this sentence and say, “You may {now} have/eat any {kind of} living creature that moves, for food.” or “{I now permit} you to eat every/any {kind of} living creature that moves.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Just as the green plants

“green plants {for food},” or “plants {to eat},” Consider again how you translated “green plants” in Gen 1:30, and how you translated “plants” in Gen 1:11-12, 29; 2:5; 3:18; 9:3.

I give you everything

“{now} I give/provide you everything {for food}.” or “{so now} I permit you to eat everything.” or “{so now} I permit you to eat both plants and animals.” Make sure that the way you translate this phrase means that God is now permitting people to eat both plants and animals.

Genesis 9:4

But

“However,” God is putting a limit on the way that people may eat meat. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p. 1592)**)

you must not eat flesh

“you must never eat {animal} flesh/meat”

with its life, {that is,} its blood

“that still has its life {in it}, {which is in} its blood.” or “with its blood {in it}, which made it live.” or “that still has its lifeblood {in it}.” Since life is in the blood, God did not want people to eat meat that still had its blood in it. Rather he wanted them to drain it out first before they cooked it (also see Deuteronomy 12:16, 23). You could put that information in a footnote.

Genesis 9:5

And surely I will demand your blood for your lives

"Also, I will definitely require an accounting/reckoning for your lifeblood." or "Also, I definitely require that anyone who murders someone must die."

From the hand of every living thing

"From every/any animal {that kills a person}" or "{In fact,} if any animal {kills a human being}," In this verse, the phrase "the hand of" refers to the animal or the person that is responsible for killing someone. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

I will demand it

"I will demand/require its blood/life," or "I require it to be killed," or "I demand/require that it must die,"

and from the hand of mankind

"{That is also true} for human beings:" or "and {that is also true} for human beings." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

from the hand of a man {who kills

"If a man/person {kills/murders}" or "If anyone {kills/murders}"

his brother

"his/a fellow human being," or "another person," This phrase is used here as a general reference to any human being, not just biological brothers. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

I will demand the life of the man

"I require him to be executed/killed." or "I demand/require that he must die."

Genesis 9:6

The one shedding

"{That's right,} whoever" or "{Yes/Indeed,} if anyone/someone". The first half of verse 6 repeats and summarizes verse 5.

The one shedding the blood of

"{That's right,} whoever spills the blood of" or "{Yes/Indeed,} if anyone/someone kills/murders" or "Whoever takes the life of". The first half of verse 6 repeats and summarizes verse 5. The phrase "sheds the blood of" is an idiom that means to deliberately kill someone. Blood is an important concept in this passage and throughout the Bible so, if possible, it is best to keep this term in a translation. If that is not possible, you should put the literal text in a footnote. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

a man

"a person," or "another human being," or "someone,"

by mankind his blood must be shed

"people/you must execute him," or "people/you must put him to death," or "he must be executed," For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, "{That's right,} you must put to death anyone who murders a human being, because {I,} God, made human beings in my own image." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

because in the image of God he made mankind

"because {I,} God made/created mankind/people in my {own} image." or "because I created human beings to be like myself." Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is referring to himself in this clause. See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 1:27. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 9:7

And you

“And/Now {as for} you,” or “As for you,” In the Hebrew text, the pronoun “you” is emphatic and has an emphatic position in the sentence (before the verb) to introduce a new topic. Consider what is the best way in your language to begin a new paragraph like this.

be fruitful

“bear/have many children”. See how you translated “be fruitful and multiply” in verse 1. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and multiply

“so that you {and your descendants} become {very} numerous/many.” or “so that you have many descendants.”

Abound on the earth

“Spread out all over the earth” or “Live all over the earth”

and multiply

“and multiply/increase {in numbers}” or “and become numerous”

on it

“throughout it.” or “everywhere.”

Genesis 9:8

Then God said

“Then God continued speaking”

to Noah and to his sons with him, saying

“to Noah and his sons {who were} with him, and said,” or “to Noah and his sons,” or “to them,” God is still speaking to the same people. This phrase emphasizes what he says next to them. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Genesis 9:9

And I, behold, I

“Now listen {carefully} to me: I” or “Listen {carefully} to me: I” See how you translated “behold” in Gen 1:29, 4:14, 6:13, 17. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

am establishing

“am making/instituting” or “am setting up”. See how you translated “establish my covenant with” in Gen 6:18, and see the note about that there.

my covenant with you and with your offspring after you

“my/a {special/peace} covenant/agreement with you and your offspring/descendants {who come/live} after you,” or “my/a covenant/agreement between me and you and your offspring/descendants,” Notice that the pronouns “you” and “your” are plural throughout verses 2-15, since God is speaking to Noah and his sons.

Genesis 9:10

and with

“along with” or “{It is} also with” or “{The covenant/agreement is} also with”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to break up this long sentence and begin a new sentence here.

every living creature that {is} with you

“all the living creatures that {are} with you:”

with the birds, with the livestock

“including the birds, the livestock,”

and with every living thing of the earth

“and all the {other} living things/creatures from/on the earth” or “and all the wild animals”

with you

“{that are} with you,”

from all that came out of the ark

“{That includes} all {those} that came/went out of the ark”. The words “from ... to ...” are used to emphasize that all the animals are included in God’s covenant. Consider what is the best way to express that in your language.

to every living thing

“and all the living things/creatures” or “and all the creatures/animals”

of the earth

“{that live} on the earth.” or “{that will ever live} on the earth.”

Genesis 9:11

And I am establishing my covenant with you

“My/The covenant/agreement that I am establishing/making/instituting with you is that”. See how you translated “my covenant” and “establish” in verse 9. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

that never again & all flesh

“never again will all life” or “never again will all living creatures/things”. The phrase “all flesh” refers here to all people and animals. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

will & be cut off

“be killed/destroyed by” or “be wiped out by” or “die from” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

by the waters of a flood

“water from a flood,” or “a flood,” See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 7:10.

and never again will there be a flood

“That’s right, never again will {I use/cause} a flood” or “{I promise that} I will never again use/cause a flood”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to destroy

“that destroys”. See how you translated “destroying” in Gen 6:13.

the earth

“{life/everything on} the earth.” or “{all living creatures on} the earth.” This phrase refers here to everything that lives on the earth. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 9:12

Then God said

“Then God {also} said {to them},” or “Then God added/continued,” or “Then God continued talking/speaking {to Noah and his sons},” God is still talking to the same people, but a quote margin (“Then God said”) is added here to emphasize the new topic (“the sign of the covenant”). For some languages it is more natural to leave this quote margin implied and just have a paragraph break. See what you did for a similar case in verse 8. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

This {is} the sign of the covenant that I am making

“This {is} the sign {which shows} {that I promise to always keep} the covenant/agreement that I am making/establishing” or “This is how I will show/remind {everyone} that I have made/established this covenant/agreement”

between me and you and every living creature that {is} with you

“with you and with all the living creatures that {are} with you,”

for generations forever

“for all future generations:” or “and with all generations to come:” or “as well as with all the people and creatures/animals that will ever live:”

Genesis 9:13

I have set my rainbow

“I have/will put my rainbow” or “I am setting/putting/placing my rainbow”

in the clouds

“among the clouds {in the sky},”

and it will be the sign of

“where it will show/remind {everyone}” or “to show/remind {everyone}” or “and/where it will serve/function as the sign {which shows}”. See how you translated “the sign of the covenant” in verse 12.

the covenant between me and

“that I have made/established my/this covenant/agreement with” or “that I promise/vow/pledge to {always} keep my/this covenant/agreement with”

the earth

“{every living thing on} the earth.” or “{every creature that lives on} the earth.” This phrase refers here to mankind and all the animals. See how you translated the same phrase in verse 11. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 9:14

And it will be when I bring clouds

“So it will be/happen {that} whenever I bring/gather clouds {together}” or “So whenever I cause clouds to form/appear”

over the earth

“{in the sky} over/above the earth”

and the rainbow is seen in the clouds

“and the/a rainbow appears/forms among the clouds,” or “and you see the/a rainbow in/among the clouds,”
Consider whether it is better in your language to use a passive or active verb here. (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1564)**)

Genesis 9:15

then I will remember my covenant

“then I will remember {and keep} my/the covenant/agreement” or “then I will not forget {to keep/fulfill} my/the covenant/treaty”. See how you translated “remember” in Gen 8:1. It may need to be translated differently in different contexts. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

that {is} between me and you

“that {I have established/made} between me and you” or “that I have established/made with you”

and every living creature of all flesh

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “and all living creatures of every kind,” or “and all the animals, including all the different kinds,” or (2) “and all {other} living creatures, including all people and animals,”

and never again will waters become a flood to destroy

“that never again will there be a flood that destroys” or “{I promise/vow/pledge} that never again will I use/cause a flood to destroy”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that this last clause in verse 15 is what God promised in his covenant. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

all flesh

“all life.” or “all living creatures.” or “all people and animals.”

Genesis 9:16

So the rainbow will be

“So/Yes, whenever the/a rainbow appears/forms” or “{That is how it will be;} Whenever there is a rainbow”. In verse 16, God repeats and emphasizes what he said in verses 12-15.

in the clouds

“among the clouds,” See how you translated this phrase in verses 13 and 14.

and I will see it

“I will see it” or “I will look at it”

to remember

“and keep/fulfill” or “and not forget {to keep/fulfill}”. See how you translated “remember” in verse 15. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the everlasting covenant

“{my} never-ending/permanent covenant/agreement” or “the/{my} covenant/agreement that lasts forever” or “the/{my} covenant/agreement that never ends”

between God and

“between me and” or “which I have established/made with”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is referring to himself here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

every living creature, with all flesh

“all living creatures/beings/things of every kind” or “all people and all animals”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 15 and how you translated “every living creature” in verses 10 and 12.

that {is} on the earth

“that {live/are} on the earth.” or “that {live} in the world.”

Genesis 9:17

Then God said to Noah

“Finally, God said to Noah,” or “Then God {concluded/finished} by saying to Noah,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

That {is

“A rainbow {is}”

the sign of the covenant that I have established

“the sign {which shows} {that I promise to always keep} the covenant/agreement that I am establishing/making” or “what I will use to show/remind {everyone} that I have established/made/instituted this covenant/agreement/treaty”. See how you translated a similar clause in verse 12. In that verse God is explaining the rainbow for the first time, whereas here in verse 17, he is pointing back to what he just said about the rainbow in order to emphasize its importance. Also, consider again how you translated “covenant” in verses 9, 11-13, 15-17. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

between me and

“with”

all flesh that {is} on the earth

“all living creatures/things.” or “all the people and creatures/animals that {are/live} on the earth.” Consider again how you translated “all flesh” when it includes people and animals. See Gen 6:12-13, 17; 7:21; 9:11, 15-17. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways in different contexts.

Genesis 9:18

the sons of Noah

“Noah’s sons” or “{The names of} Noah’s sons”

the ark

“who went out of/from the ark/boat {after the flood}” or “who disembarked from ...” or “who got off ...” Be consistent here with how you translated “ark/boat” in chapters 6-8, and see the note about this at Gen 6:14.

And & were Shem and Ham and Japheth

“were Shem, Ham, and Japheth;” Consider what is the best way to list names in your language.

and Ham, he

“it was Ham who” or “Ham was the one who”. The pronoun “he” is emphatic here, emphasizing that Ham was the father of Canaan, who is probably mentioned here because he was well known as the ancestor of the Canaanites and the one whom the land/region of Canaan was named after.

was} the father of Canaan

“{was} Canaan’s father:” or “fathered Canaan.”

Genesis 9:19

Those three {were} the sons of Noah, and from them the whole earth was overspread

“It was from Noah’s three sons that the entire earth was populated {again}.” or “It was the descendants of Noah’s three sons who populated the entire earth {again}.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 9:20

Now Noah, a man of the soil, began and planted

“Now {later on,} Noah,” or “After a while, Noah,” or “Noah,” Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce or begin a new episode here. The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “{who was} a farmer, began/started {farming} and planted” or “{who was} a farmer, was the first {man/person} to plant” or (2) “began {to be} a farmer and planted” or “became a farmer and planted”

a vineyard

“{some} grapevines {and made wine from the grapes}.” or “a field/garden with grapevines. {And he made wine from the grapes.}” It is implied that Noah made wine from the grapes (verse 21). If necessary, you could make that explicit here. Also, if grapes are not known in your language area, you could say “vines/plants with a fruit called grapes”, or you could put in a footnote information about grapes, including how they are squeezed and how the juice is fermented to make wine. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 9:21

Then he drank some of the wine

“Then {one day} he drank {too much of} the wine,” or “{One day} he drank a lot of the wine,”

and he became drunk, and he uncovered himself

“so that he became drunk and was {lying} naked” or “so that he became so intoxicated/drunk that he {fell asleep} uncovered/naked”. It is implied from verse 24 that Noah had fallen asleep. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

inside his tent

See how you translated “tent” in Gen 4:20.

Genesis 9:22

Then Ham, the father of Canaan, saw

“Ham, {who was} Canaan’s father, saw”

the nakedness of his father

“that his father was naked/uncovered,”

and he told his two brothers outside

“and he went outside and told his two brothers {about it}.” or “and he went out and told his two brothers {that their father was drunk and naked}.”

Genesis 9:23

But Shem and Japheth took

“However/Then Shem and Japheth took”

a garment

“a robe/cloak,” This garment would have probably been fairly large, big enough to cover Noah’s body.

and laid it across the shoulders of the two of them

“put it {between them} over their shoulders” or “held it {between them} at shoulder level”

and walked backward

“and walked/went backward {into the tent}”

and covered the nakedness of their father

“and covered their father’s naked body {with it}.” or “and used it to cover their naked father.”

And their faces were turned away

“{As they did that,} they kept their faces/eyes turned/looking away {from him},” or “{As they did that,} they looked away {from him},”

so that they did not see the nakedness of their father

“so that they did/would not see his nakedness.” or “so that they did/would not see him naked.” Consider whether it is better here in your language to refer to Noah with a noun phrase or a pronoun. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 9:24

Then Noah woke up

“Later Noah/he woke up”

from his wine

“{sober} from {the effects of} the wine,” or “from being drunk,” or “sober,”

and he learned

“and he found out” or “and he heard {about}”. The text does not say how Noah found out about this, so it is best to not be too specific about that here in your translation.

what his youngest son had done to him

“that his youngest son {Ham} had dishonored/disrespected/mockled him,”

Genesis 9:25

and he said

“So he exclaimed {about him/Ham},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Cursed be

“I {hereby} {ask God to} curse” or “May God curse”

Canaan

“{Ham’s son} Canaan!” In verses 25-27, Canaan probably represents Ham and all of Ham’s descendants (the Canaanites), who will serve Shem and Japheth and all their descendants. You could put that information in a footnote. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

He will be

“Canaan will be” or “{I declare/proclaim that} he/Canaan will be”

a slave of slaves

“the lowest slave/servant”. The Hebrew word here can mean either “slave” or “servant”. Slaves in the Old Testament were usually treated well and were not much different than servants, sometimes even becoming like members of their owner’s family. But they were of lower status than their masters, which is part of how Ham’s family is being cursed.

for his brothers

“for his/Canaan’s relatives.” Verses 26 and 27 show that “his brothers” probably refers here to Shem and Japheth (who were Canaan’s uncles) and their descendants.

Genesis 9:26

Then he said

"Then he/Noah {also} said," or "He/Noah also said," (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Praised be Yahweh

"Praise Yahweh," or "I praise Yahweh," Although many English translations have "Blessed be" here instead of "Praised be," the word used in the Hebrew text means "praise" when people are acting towards God (as here), and it means "bless" when God is acting towards people (as in Gen 1:28; 5:2; 9:1). (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

the God of Shem

"{who is} Shem's God!" or "{who is} the God whom Shem worships/serves!" or "{who is} the God who takes care of Shem!"

And may Canaan be

"May he/God cause Canaan to be" or "May he/God make Canaan" or "I ask him/God to make Canaan"

a slave for him

"a servant for him/Shem." or "his/Shem's slave/servant."

Genesis 9:27

May God enlarge Japheth

"I {also} ask God to enlarge/expand Japheth's {territory}," or "I {also} pray that God will make Japheth's territory larger," or "... give Japheth more/much {land}," In this context, "Japheth" refers to the territory or land where he lived. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and may he live

"and enable him {and his family/descendants} to live"

in the tents of Shem

"together {in harmony/peace} with Shem {and his family/descendants}." or "peacefully among Shem {and his family/descendants}."

And may Canaan be

"May God {also} cause Canaan to be" or "I {also} ask God to make Canaan" or "Canaan will {also} be". See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 26.

a slave for him

"a servant for him/Japheth." or "his/Japheth's slave/servant." Compare how you translated "slave" or "servant" in verses 25-27.

Genesis 9:28

after the flood

"After/From {the time that} the flood {began}," or "After/From {the beginning of} the flood," Notice that this phrase refers to when the flood began, when Noah was 600 years old (Gen 7:6), not when it ended a year later, when he was 601 years old (8:13), since he was 950 when he died (verse 29), not 951. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And & Noah lived 350 years

"Noah lived {another} 350 years." or "Noah lived 350 {more} years."

Genesis 9:29

So all the days of Noah were

“so that Noah/he lived a total of 950 years,” or “So all together Noah lived 950 years,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated Gen 5:31, which is similar to 9:29.

and he died

“and {then} he died.” or “before he died.”

Genesis 10

Genesis 10:1

Now these {are} the generations of

“This/Here is the genealogy/list/record of {the names of}”. This sentence begins a new section.

the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth

“Noah’s sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth,” Give special attention to the best way in your language to spell all the names in this chapter. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and sons were born to them

“and their sons {and other descendants} who were born” or “and the sons/descendants they had”. The following record includes the names of Noah’s sons and grandsons and their descendants (including some of the people groups who came from them).

after the flood

“after the flood {was over/gone}.”

Genesis 10:2

The sons of Japheth {were}

"{The names of} Japheth's sons {were}" or "These {were} {the names of} Japheth's sons:" Throughout this chapter, many translations have a colon (:) instead of "{were}". Do what is best in your language.

Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras

"Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Jubal, Meshech, and Tiras." Translate the lists of names in this chapter in a way that is natural in your language.

Genesis 10:3

And the sons of Gomer {were

"{The names of} Gomer's sons {were}" or "These {were} {the names of} Gomer's sons:"

Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah

"{named} Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah."

Genesis 10:4

And the sons of Javan {were}

"{The names of} Javan's sons/descendants {were}" or "These {were} {the names of} Javan's sons:" Compare how you translated a similar clause in verses 2 and 3.

Elishah and Tarshish

"{named} Elishah and Tarshish, {and he was the ancestor of}". These are the names of Javan's sons, but the next two names are the names of people groups that descended from him.

the Kittim and the Dodanim

"the Kittites and the Dodanites." or "the Kitt people {group} and the Dodan people {group}." Most translation teams transliterate people group names in the Bible, but handle the suffix endings in different ways. For example, you could: (1) transliterate the Hebrew plural suffix "-im"; or (2) use a suffix that your language has for names of people groups (such as "-ites" in English); or (3) translate "-im" as "people" or "people/ethnic group." Try to be consistent in how you handle people group names throughout this chapter and the rest of the book of Genesis. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 10:5

From those

"From those/Japheth's {descendants}". This phrase probably refers to Japheth's descendants (verses 2-4), especially since the descendants of his brothers Ham (verse 20) and Shem (verse 31) are summarized in a similar way.

the coastland peoples spread out

"came the people groups who lived {in regions} near/beside the {Mediterranean} Sea. They moved to different places {and settled}"

into their lands

"in their {own} territories/regions," (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

each with its own language

"and each {group} spoke its own language," or "They all developed/spoke their own languages," Consider whether it is more natural in your language to break up this long sentence and start a new sentence here (or later in this verse).

according to their clans

"and each of them lived in their {own} {extended} families," or "They each had their {own} family groups," The word "clan" refers to a group of families who are descended from a common ancestor.

in their nations

"and they formed/became their own people/ethnic groups." or "which {grew/multiplied and} became their own {distinct} people/ethnic groups." The word "nations" refers here to people groups, not countries. Also, for some languages it may be clearer to change the order of the phrases in this verse and say, "Japheth's descendants spread out and settled near/by the {Mediterranean} Sea. They all formed their own family groups, which {grew/multiplied and} became their own people groups that spoke their own languages and lived in their own territories/regions." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 10:6

And the sons of Ham {were} Cush

"{The names of} Ham's sons {were}" or "{These {were} {the names of} Ham's sons:"

Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan

"Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan."

Genesis 10:7

And the sons of Cush {were}

"{The names of} Cush's sons {were}" or "These {were} {the names of} Cush's sons:"

Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca

"Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah."

And the sons of Raamah {were} Sheba and Dedan

"And Raamah's sons {were} Sheba and Dedan." or "{The names of} Raamah's sons {were} Sheba and Dedan."

Genesis 10:8

Cush also fathered Nimrod

“Cush also fathered/had {a son named} Nimrod,” See how you translated “fathered” in Gen 6:10, and how you translated a phrase in 10:1 (“were born to”) that has a similar meaning.

who began to be

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “who was the first {person/man/one} to be” or (2) “who became”

mighty

“a powerful {warrior/conqueror}” or “a powerful {ruler/king}”. There were other mighty men before Nimrod, but apparently he was the first one to have a kingdom (verse 10).

on the earth

“on earth.” or “in the world.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this phrase earlier and say, “who was the first {person/man} on earth to be/become a powerful ruler/warrior.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 10:9

He was a mighty hunter

“He/Nimrod was {also} a great/excellent hunter”

before Yahweh

“whom Yahweh blessed/helped.” or “because Yahweh helped him.”

For that reason

“That is why”

it is said

“people say {about other great men},” or “people/we have the/this saying/expression {about other great men}.” This phrase indicates that what follows was a well-known saying that was used by people to praise or compliment other great men by comparing them to Nimrod.

Like Nimrod

“{That man is} like Nimrod,” or “{So and so is} like Nimrod,”

He was a mighty hunter

“He/Nimrod was {also} a great/excellent hunter”

before Yahweh

“whom Yahweh blessed/helped.” or “because Yahweh helped him.” Be consistent here with how you translated this phrase earlier in verse 9.

Genesis 10:10

And the beginning of his kingdom was

“His/Nimrod’s kingdom began with him ruling {over}” or “He/Nimrod started ruling as king {over}” or “The first cities that he/Nimrod ruled as king were”

Babel and Erech and Akkad and Calneh

“{the cities of} Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh,”

in the land of Shinar

“{which were all located} in the land/region of/called Shinar.” Shinar is another name for the land/country of Babylonia. You could put that information in a footnote.

Genesis 10:11

From that land

“From that region” or “From the land/region of Shinar” or “From there”

he went to Asshur

“he/Nimrod went/moved to {the land/region of/called} Asshur/Assyria,” See how you translated “{the land/region of/called} Asshur/Assyria” in Gen 2:14.

and he built

“and {there} he built” or “where he built”

Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah

“{the cities of} Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah,”

Genesis 10:12

and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah, which {is} the great city

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "and Resen, {which is located} between {the cities of} Nineveh and the great city of Calah." or (2) "and Resen, {which is} the great city {located} between {the cities of} Nineveh and Calah."

Genesis 10:13

And Mizraim fathered

“Mizraim was the father/ancestor of”

the Ludim and the Anamim and the Lehabim and the Naphtuhim

“the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites,” Throughout verses 13-18, translate the names of people groups in a way that is clear and natural in your language. See what you did in verse 4. Also consider what is the best way in your language to list the names in these verses. Some languages use a conjunction (like “and”) between names, while other languages only use a conjunction before the last name in the list, with commas between the other names. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 10:14

and the Pathrusim and the Casluhim (whom the Philistim came from) and the Capthorim

“Pathrusites, Casluhites (whom the Philistines came/descended from), and Capthorites.” or “Pathrusites, Casluhites, and Capthorites. The Philistines came/descended from the Casluhites.”

Genesis 10:15

And Canaan fathered

“Canaan fathered/had”. See how you translated “fathered” in verses 8 and 13.

Sidon his firstborn

“Sidon {who was} his firstborn {son},”

then Heth

“then {he fathered/had} {a son named} Heth,” Canaan’s son Heth was the ancestor of the Hittites, so some translations use “Hittites” here instead and say, “{He was} also {the ancestor of} the Hittites,”

Genesis 10:16

and the Jebusites and the Amorites and the Girgashites

“and {he/Canaan was also the ancestor of} the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites,” or “Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites,” In verses 16-18, the people group names are singular collective nouns in Hebrew (in contrast to the people group names in verses 4, 13-14 that are plural nouns). Most English versions translate these names with a plural “-ites” suffix so that it is clear that these names refer to more than one person.

Genesis 10:17

and the Hivites and the Arkites and the Sinites

“Hivites, Arkites, Sinites,”

Genesis 10:18

and the Arvadites and the Zemarites and the Hamathites

"Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites."

And afterward

"Later," or "As time went by,"

the clans of the Canaanites

"those {extended} families {that descended} from {Ham's son} Canaan"

scattered

"spread out," or "moved to different places,"

Genesis 10:19

so the border{s} of the Canaanites were

“and {eventually} the borders/boundaries of their {territory/land} reached/extended” or “so that {eventually} the territory/land where Canaanites/they lived reached/extended”

from Sidon

“from {the city of} Sidon {in the north},” or “from Sidon {City} {in the north},” Some languages have an affix or a word (that means “city”) that must be used every time the name of a city is mentioned or the first time a particular city is mentioned in a paragraph or section. Do what is natural in your language here and elsewhere throughout the Bible. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

then} you go toward Gerar as far as Gaza

“all the way {down/south} toward {the city of} Gerar to {the city of} Gaza,” or “{down/south} to Gaza {City}, which is on the road to Gerar {City},” The Canaanites’ border reached Gaza, but did not extend down to Gerar, which was farther south. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

then} you go to Sodom

“{then} as far {east} as” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim

“{the cities of} Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim,”

as far as Lasha

“all the way to {the city of} Lasha.” or “until {you reach} Lasha {City}.”

Genesis 10:20

Those {are

"Those {are/were} {the names of}" or "Those {men/people} {are/were}". The word "Those" refers back to the people listed in verses 6-19. Also, many translations that use "were" (and other past tense verbs) in verses 2-19 and 21-30 use "are" here (and in verses 31 and 32). Do what is best in your language.

the sons of Ham

"the descendants of Ham" or "Ham's sons/descendants"

according to their clans

"according to their family groups," or "and each one had his own clan/family," or "and their {extended} families," See how you translated "clans" in verse 5.

according to their languages, in their lands, in their nations

"Each {clan/family} had/spoke its own language and {lived in} its own territory/region, and {eventually} became its own people/ethnic group." or "Each {clan/family} {grew/multiplied and} became/established its own people/ethnic group that had/spoke its own language and {lived in} its own territory/region." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated verse 5, which has some of the same phrases as verse 20.

Genesis 10:21

And sons were also born to Shem

“Shem also fathered/had {some} sons”. In the Hebrew text, “to Shem” comes first in this sentence after “And”, to emphasize Shem. Do what is natural in your language.

he {was} the father of all the sons of Eber

“He was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber”

and the brother of Japheth the elder

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “and his/Shem’s older brother was Japheth.” (2) “and he/Shem was Japheth’s older/oldest brother.”

Genesis 10:22

The sons of Shem {were}

"{The names of} Shem's sons {were}" or "These {were} {the names of} Shem's sons:"

Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram

"Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram." The name "Arpachshad" is spelled as "Arphaxad" in many translations. Also, see how you spelled "Lud" in verse 13 (who is a different person with the same name). Be consistent with how you spell each name throughout the Bible.

Genesis 10:23

And the sons of Aram {were}

"{The names of} Aram's sons {were}" or "These {were} {the names of} Aram's sons:"

Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash

"Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash." The same person who is called "Mash" here, is referred to as "Meshech/Meshek" in 1 Chronicles 1:17. To prevent confusion, some translations use "Meshech/Meshek" here too, or they put that name in a footnote.

Genesis 10:24

And Arpachshad fathered Shelah

“Arpachshad/Arphaxad fathered/had {a son named} Shelah,” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Arpachshad/Arphaxad” in verse 22.

then Shelah fathered Eber

“then/and Shelah fathered/had {a son named} Eber.”

Genesis 10:25

Then two sons were born to Eber

"Then Eber fathered/had two sons."

The name of the one {was}

"The name of the first {one/son} {was}" or "The first one/son was named"

Peleg

"Peleg, {which means "division/divide,}" You can put the meaning of Peleg's name in the text or in a footnote, so that it is clear why he was given his name. See what you did for a similar case (Noah's name) in Gen 5:29.

because in his days

"because during his lifetime"

the earth was divided

"{the people on} the earth divided/separated {into separate groups} {and scattered everywhere}." This phrase refers to the people on the earth and implies that they scattered and lived all over the earth (as specified in Gen 11:8). (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

And the name of his brother {was} Joktan

"His/Peleg's {younger} brother's name was Joktan." or "{Eber's second/other son} was named Joktan and was younger than Peleg." Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to in this sentence, especially after reading the previous two sentences. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 10:26

And Joktan fathered

“Joktan fathered/had {sons named}” or “Joktan fathered/had {the following sons;}” Notice that the list of Joktan’s sons continues through verse 29.

Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah

“Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,”

Genesis 10:27

and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah

“Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,”

Genesis 10:28

and Obal and Abimael and Sheba

“Obal, Abimael, Sheba,”

Genesis 10:29

and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab

“Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab.” Consider again how you translated lists of names throughout chapter 10.

All those {were}

“All those {were} {the names of}” or “All those {men/people} {were}” or “Those {were} all”

the sons of Joktan

“Joktan’s sons.”

Genesis 10:30

And their dwelling was

"Their dwelling {place}" or "Their territory/region" or "The region/area where they {and their descendants} lived"

And & was from Mesha

"extended/reached from {the city of} Mesha {in the west};" See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 19. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

then} you go to Sephar

"all the way to" or "as far as"

to Sephar

"{the city/town of} Sephar, {which is in/near}"; Sephar might refer to a city, a mountain, or a region (that was named after the city or mountain).

the mountain{s} of the east

"the mountain range {that is} in the east." or "the hill country in the east." or "the eastern hill country." The word "mountain{s}" is ambiguous in the Hebrew text. It can be: (1) a collective noun that refers to mountains or hill country near the town of Sephar; or (2) a singular noun that refers to a specific mountain that was called Sephar.

Genesis 10:31

Those {are

“Those {are/were} {the names of}” or “Those {men/people} {are/were}”. The word “Those” refers here to the people listed in verses 21-30. See how you translated verse 20, which is almost exactly the same as verse 31.

the sons of Shem

“the descendants of Shem” or “Shem’s sons/descendants”

according to their clans

“and each one had his own clan/family.” See how you translated “clans” in verses 5 and 20.

according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations

“Each {clan/family} had/spoke its own language and {lived in} its own territory, and {eventually} became its own people/ethnic group.” or “Each clan/family {grew/multiplied and} became/established its own people/ethnic group that had/spoke its own language and {lived in} its own territory.”

Genesis 10:32

Those {are} the clans of the sons of Noah

"{All} those {people} {are/were} the clans/families {who descended} from Noah's sons," or "{All} those clans/families descended from Noah's sons," The word "Those" refers here to everyone who is listed in verses 2-31. Consider again how you translated "clans" in verses 5, 18, 29, 31-32.

according to their generations, in their nations

"Each clan/family had its own genealogy/descendants and became its own people/ethnic group." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, compare how you translated similar phrases in verses 5, 20, and 31.

And from those the nations spread out on the earth after the flood

"From those {people} {came/descended} {all} the people/ethnic groups {who} spread out on/over the earth after the flood." or "In fact, after the flood {all} the people groups on the earth descended from them and spread out everywhere." Consider again how you translated "nations" in verses 5, 20, 31-32. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

Genesis 11

Genesis 11:1

Now the whole earth had one language

“Now {at first,} everyone on the earth spoke/shared the same language” or “Now {for a while,} all {the people on} the earth spoke one language”. The events in chapter 11:1-9 happened before the people listed in chapter 10 had their own languages and before they spread out over the earth (Gen 10:5, 19-20, 30-32). You could include some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

and the same words

“and {spoke/shared} the same words/vocabulary.” or “and spoke words everyone knew/understood.” or “so that everyone understood each other.” The phrases “one language” and “the same words” are very similar in meaning and emphasize the fact that everyone spoke the same language. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Doublet (p.1614)**)

Genesis 11:2

And it happened

“After a while, as/when” or “As/When” or “As time passed,” The phrase “it happened that” introduces an important event and helps create suspense so that readers will wonder what the outcome will be. Some translations omit this phrase because it is not natural in their language. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

as they migrated

“they moved/traveled” or “the people migrated/moved”. Consider whether it is better in your language to use a pronoun (“they”) or a noun phrase (“the people”) here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

from the east

“from the eastern {regions},” or “{around} in the eastern {regions},” At first after the flood, people lived in the regions around the mountains of Ararat (where the ark had landed). As they began to migrate and spread out to different places (as God had told them to do), they must have headed south at some point since they ended up at the plain of Shinar, which was south of where the Ararat Mountains were. The reference to “the east” probably reflects the viewpoint of the author (Moses), since the Ararat mountains and the plain of Shinar were both far to the east of where he was living.

that they found

“they discovered” or “they {eventually} came to” or “and {eventually} came to”. Make sure the way you translate this phrase fits with the way you translated the first half of this verse.

a plain in the land of Shinar

“a wide/spacious, flat valley/area in the land/region called Shinar”. This plain was a wide, flat area between mountains. Also be consistent here with how you translated “land of Shinar” in Gen 10:10.

and settled there

“and lived/stayed there.” or “and began to live there.”

Genesis 11:3

Then they said to each other

"Then {one day} they urged each other," The events that are described below probably did not happen immediately after they arrived at the plain. Consider what is the best way to begin these events in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

Come

"Come on," Consider whether or not your language has an idiom like this that is used to urge or persuade someone to do something together. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

let us make

"let us {work together and} make" or "we should {work together and} make". The pronoun "us" is inclusive here and refers to the people who are talking to each other. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

bricks

"{some} {clay/mud} bricks/blocks" or "{some} bricks/blocks {from clay/mud}" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and bake them with fire

"and harden them with fire." or "and use fire to bake/harden them." or "and put/bake them in/over fire {to make them hard/strong}."

And they had

"So {they did that, and} they had" or "They had/used"

bricks for stones

"bricks/blocks {to build with} instead of stone,"

and they had tar

"and they used tar {between the bricks/blocks}"

for mortar

"instead of mortar." or "to hold/stick the bricks/blocks together."

Genesis 11:4

Then they said

“Then they said {to each other},” or “Then they urged {each other},”

Come

“Come on,” See how you translated this idiom in verse 3.

let us build

“let us {work together and} build” or “we should {work together and} build”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 3.

a city for ourselves

“a city for us {to live in}”

and a tower

“that includes/has a {high} tower” or “with a {very} tall building”

with its top in the heavens

“that reaches high into the heavens/sky,” or “that reaches up to heaven,”

and let us make a name for ourselves, so that we are not scattered

“{We should do that} to make ourselves famous and to keep us from spreading out” or “{That way} we will become well-known/famous, and we will not separate from each other {and live}”. The phrase “make a name for ourselves” is an idiom. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom that would work well here. Also see how you translated the word “scattered” in Gen 10:18, 32. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

over the face of the whole earth

“all over the earth/world.” or “around the world.” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 11:5

Then Yahweh came down

“Then/But {one day} Yahweh came down {from heaven}” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

to see the city

“and looked at the city” or “and inspected the city”. The text implies that Yahweh actually looked at the city. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to make that explicit here.

and the tower

“and the {very} tall building”. See how you translated this word in verse 4.

that the sons of mankind

“that the people”

had built

“were building.” or “had started building.” Make sure the way you translate this verb fits with the fact that the people had not yet finished building the city (verse 8).

Genesis 11:6

And Yahweh said

“And/Then he said (to himself),” or “He said,” Consider what is the best way to refer to Yahweh here in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Behold

“Look,” This term calls attention to what Yahweh says next. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language.

they are} one people

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “{they are} one people/ethnic {group};” or (2) “the/these people {are} one/united {in what they are doing};”

and they all have one language

“and they all speak/share the same language.” See how you translated “have one language” in verse 1.

So this {is} what they have begun to do

“This {is} {only} the beginning of what they can/will do {together}.”

and now

“Now/Soon”

everything that they plan to do will not be impossible for them

“nothing that they plan to do will be impossible for them.” or “everything/anything they plan/attempt to do will be possible for them.” or “they will be able to do anything/whatever they plan/try to do.” The words “not” and “impossible” are two negatives that work together to communicate an emphatic positive statement. Consider what is the best way to translate this in your language. (See: **Double Negatives (p.1611)**)

Genesis 11:7

Come

"{So} come on," or "{So}"

let us go down & there

"we must go down there {now}" or "let us go to them". Most Bible scholars think the plural pronoun "us" refers here to God and the fact that he is three Persons in one God. So it is best to keep this plural pronoun in your translation. See what you did for similar pronouns in Gen 1:26.

and & confuse their language

"and scramble their language" or "and mix up their language"

so that they will not understand

"so that they will not {be able to} understand" or "so that they cannot understand"

each other's language

"what they say to each other." or "each other."

Genesis 11:8

Then Yahweh scattered them from there

“Then/So Yahweh {did that and} caused the people to leave from there and spread out” or “That is how Yahweh caused the people to leave from there and settle/live in different places”

over the face of the whole earth

“over the surface of the entire earth,” or “all over the earth/world,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and they stopped building

“so that they had to stop building/constructing”

the city

“the city {and the tower}.” or “the city {and the tall building}.” For some languages it is better to change the order of clauses in this verse (so that events are in the order that they happened) and say, “In that way, Yahweh caused the people to stop building the city {and the tower} and to move away from each other, {so that eventually they lived} all over the world.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 11:9

For that {reason

“That is why”

they called its name

“people named the/that city” or “the name of the/that city is” or “the/that city was named/called”. Frequently in the Hebrew text, this phrase has a general meaning and does not refer to someone specific.

Babel

“Babel, {which means “confused/mixed-up/scrambled,”}” If you include the meaning of “Babel” here in your translation or in a footnote, be consistent with the way you translate “confused” later in this verse and in verse 7.

because there Yahweh

“because that is where Yahweh” or “because {it was} in that city {that} Yahweh”

confused

“mixed up” or “scrambled”

the language of the whole earth

“the language that everyone on the earth spoke/shared,”

and from there Yahweh scattered them

“and {in that way} Yahweh/he made them spread out from there”

over the face of the whole earth

“over the surface of the entire earth.” or “all over the earth/world.” See how you translated this phrase in verses 4 and 8.

Genesis 11:10

These {are} the generations of Shem

"This/Here is the record/list of Shem's descendants:" or "This is Shem's genealogy/family-line:"

Shem {was} the son of 100 years, then he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood

"Two years after the flood {began}, when Shem was 100 years old, he had {a son named} Arpachshad/Arphaxad." The phrase "after the flood" probably refers to two years after the flood began, not after it ended; see a similar case in Gen 9:28. Also be consistent here with how you spelled "Arpachshad/Arphaxad" in Gen 10:22. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 11:11

Then after he fathered Arpachshad, Shem lived

“After he fathered/had Arpachshad/Arphaxad, Shem/he lived” or “After Arpachshad/Arphaxad was born, Shem lived” or “After Arpachshad/Arphaxad’s birth, Shem lived”. Throughout this section, make sure that names and pronouns (like “he”) are used in a way that is accurate and natural in your language, so that it is always clear who is being referred to. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

500 years

“{another} 500 years,” or “500 {more} years,” See how you translated Gen 5:7, which has the same sentence structure as 11:11. For some languages, it may be more natural to change the clause order of this sentence and say, “Shem lived 500 {more} years after Arpachshad/Arphaxad was born ...” Do what is best in your language throughout this chapter. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Shem {also} fathered/had” or “He/Shem was {also} the father of”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated this phrase and the following one in Gen 5:4.

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 11:12

And Arpachshad lived thirty-five years

“When Arpachshad/Arphaxad had lived thirty-five/35 years,” or “When Arpachshad/Arphaxad was thirty-five/35 years old,” Make sure that your translation of this clause does not mean that Arpachshad only lived to be thirty-five years old. Also, throughout this chapter, be consistent with how you have decided to handle numbers in the Bible. For example, many translation teams use words for single and double-digit numbers, but use numerals for larger numbers. This strategy helps prevent confusion with verse numbers. This is especially true in translations that use a large font size for verse numbers so that people doing group Bible study can easily see the numbers and be in the same verse together. See what you did in chapter 5.

then he fathered Shelah

“he fathered/had {a son named} Shelah.” or “he fathered/had {a son he/they named} Shelah.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Shelah.” See how you translated Gen 5:6, which has the same sentence structure as 11:12.

Genesis 11:13

Then after he fathered Shelah, Arpachshad lived

“After he fathered/had Shelah, Arpachshad/Arphaxad lived” or “After Shelah was born, Arpachshad/Arphaxad lived” or “After Shem’s birth, Arpachshad/Arphaxad lived”. Be consistent with how you spell the name “Arpachshad/Arphaxad” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:22, 24; 11:10-13. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

403 years

“{another} 403 years,” or “403 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Arpachshad {also} fathered/had” or “He was {also} the father of”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Arpachshad at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 11:14

And Shelah lived thirty years

“When Shelah had lived thirty/30 years,” or “When Shelah was thirty/30 years old,”

then he fathered Eber

“he fathered/had {a son named} Eber.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Eber.”

Genesis 11:15

Then after he fathered Eber, Shelah lived

"After he/Shelah fathered/had Eber, Shelah/he lived" or "After Eber was born, Shelah lived" or "After Eber's birth, Shelah lived". Be consistent with how you spell the name "Shelah" in Gen 10:24; 11:12-15. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

403 years

"{another} 403 years," or "403 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Shelah {also} fathered/had" or "He/Shelah was {also} the father of"

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters."

Genesis 11:16

And Eber lived thirty-four years

“When Eber had lived thirty-four/34 years,” or “When Eber was thirty-four/34 years old,”

then he fathered Peleg

“he fathered/had {a son named} Peleg.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Peleg.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 11:17

Then after he fathered Peleg, Eber lived

“After he/Eber fathered/had Peleg, Eber/he lived” or “After Peleg was born, Eber lived” or “After Peleg’s birth, Eber lived”. Be consistent with how you spell the name “Eber” in Gen 10:24-25; 11:14-17. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

430 years

“{another} 430 years,” or “430 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Eber {also} fathered/had” or “He/Eber was {also} the father of”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Eber at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 11:18

And Peleg lived thirty years

“When Peleg had lived thirty/30 years,” or “When Peleg was thirty/30 years old,”

then he fathered Reu

“he fathered/had {a son named} Reu.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Reu.”

Genesis 11:19

Then after he fathered Reu, Peleg lived

"After he/Peleg had Reu, Peleg/he lived" or "After Reu was born, Peleg lived" or "After Reu's birth, Peleg lived". Be consistent with how you spell the name "Peleg" in Gen 10:25; 11:16-19. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

209 years

"{another} 209 years," or "209 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Peleg {also} fathered/had" or "He/Peleg was {also} the father of"

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters."

Genesis 11:20

And Reu lived thirty-two years

“When Reu had lived thirty-two/32 years,” or “When Reu was thirty-two/32 years old,”

then he fathered Serug

“he fathered/had {a son named} Serug.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Serug.”

Genesis 11:21

Then after he fathered Serug, Reu lived

“After he/Reu had Serug, Reu/he lived” or “After Serug was born, Reu lived” or “After Serug’s birth, Reu lived”. Be consistent with how you spell “Reu” in Gen 11:18-21. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

207 years

“{another} 207 years,” or “207 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Reu {also} fathered/had” or “He/Reu was {also} the father of”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Reu at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 11:22

And Serug lived thirty years

“When Serug had lived thirty/30 years,” or “When Serug was thirty/30 years old,”

then he fathered Nahor

“he fathered/had {a son named} Nahor.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Nahor.”

Genesis 11:23

Then after he fathered Nahor, Serug lived

“After he/Serug had Nahor, Serug/he lived” or “After Nahor was born, Serug lived” or “After Nahor’s birth, Serug lived”. Be consistent with how you spell the name “Serug” in Gen 11:20-23. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

200 years

“{another} 200 years,” or “200 {more} years,”

and he fathered

“and he {also} fathered/had” or “He/Serug {also} fathered/had” or “He/Serug was {also} the father of”

other} sons and daughters

“{other} sons as well as daughters.”

Genesis 11:24

And Nahor lived twenty-nine years

“When Nahor had lived twenty-nine/29 years,” or “When Nahor was twenty-nine/29 years old,”

then he fathered Terah

“he fathered/had {a son named} Terah.” or “he fathered/had {a son whose name was} Terah.” Consider again how you translated verses 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24, which all have the same sentence structure.

Genesis 11:25

Then after he fathered Terah, Nahor lived

"After he/Nahor had Terah, Nahor/he lived" or "After Terah was born, Nahor lived" or "After Terah's birth, Nahor lived" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

119 years

"{another} 119 years," or "119 {more} years,"

and he fathered

"and he {also} fathered/had" or "He/Nahor {also} fathered/had" or "He/Nahor was {also} the father of". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

other} sons and daughters

"{other} sons as well as daughters." Consider again how you translated verses 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25, which all have the same sentence structure.

Genesis 11:26

And Terah lived seventy years

"After Terah had lived seventy/70 years," or "After Terah was/turned seventy/70 years old," Your translation needs to allow for the fact that Terah's sons were not triplets (just as Noah's sons were not triplets; see Gen 5:32), rather he started having children after he turned seventy and his sons were born in different years after that. In fact, Abram was not born until Terah was at least 130 years old (11:32, 12:4-5; Acts 7:4), and he was probably Terah's youngest son. Abram is listed first (instead of Haran or Nahor) probably because of his importance as the one whom Yahweh made His covenant with. Some of this information could be put in a footnote.

then he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran

"he fathered/had {sons named} Abram, Nahor, and Haran." or "he fathered/had {sons whose names were} Abram, Nahor, and Haran."

Genesis 11:27

Now these {are} the generations of Terah

“Here/This {is} the history/account/record about/of Terah and his descendants/family.” This section is different from the previous section. What follows is a history about Terah’s descendants (especially Abram); it is not a genealogy or list of names. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 6:9.

Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran

“Terah fathered/had {sons named} Abram, Nahor, and Haran;” or “Terah’s sons were Abram, Nahor, and Haran.”

and Haran fathered Lot

“and Haran fathered/had {a son named} Lot.” or “Haran’s son {was named} Lot.” or “and Haran had a son {whose name was} Lot.”

Genesis 11:28

And Haran died in the presence of Terah his father

“Later Haran died while he was with his father Terah,” or “While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died”

in the land of his birth

“in the land where he was born,” or “in his native land,”

in Ur of the Kasdim

“in {the city of} Ur which was ruled/inhabited by the Kasdim/Chaldeans.” or “in {the city of} Ur where the Kasdim/Chaldean people lived.” The word “Kasdim” probably comes from the name of one of Nahor’s sons, Kesed (Gen 22:22), and often refers to the Chaldeans who were a people group that lived in the country of Babylonia (where Ur was located).

Genesis 11:29

And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves

“Meanwhile Abram and Nahor each got married.” or “Abram and Nahor each married a wife.”

The name of Abram’s wife {was} Sarai

“Abram’s wife was named Sarai,”

and the name of Nahor’s wife {was} Milcah

“and Nahor’s wife was Milcah.”

the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah

“She/Milcah was the daughter of {his/Nahor’s brother} Haran, who was the father of {both} Milcah and {her sister} Iscah.” or “Milcah and {her sister} Iscah were Haran’s daughters.”

Genesis 11:30

But Sarai was barren

“But/Now Sarai was unable to conceive,” or “Sarai was not able to become/get pregnant,” Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information about Sarai. (See: **Background Information (p. 1571)**)

she did not have a child

“{so} she did not have any children.” or “{so} she had no children.” For some languages it may be better to switch the order of the clauses in this verse and say, “But/Now Sarai did not have any children, because she was not able to conceive.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 11:31

Then Terah took

“Then {one day,} Terah gathered” or “{One day,} Terah brought/called together”. Consider what is the best way to begin this new paragraph in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

Abram his son

“his son Abram,” Make sure it is clear in your translation of this phrase that “his son” refers to Abram, not another person.

and Lot, Haran’s son, his son’s son

“and Lot, {who was} his son Haran’s son,” or “and his grandson Lot, {who was} Haran’s son,” The phrases “Lot,” “Haran’s son,” and “his son’s son” all refer to Lot. Make sure that is clear in your translation and that it does not sound like three people.

and Sarai his daughter-in-law

“and his daughter-in-law Sarai,” The phrases “Sarai,” “his daughter-in-law,” and “the wife of his son Abram” all refer to Sarai. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

the wife of his son Abram

“who was his son Abram’s wife,” or “who was Abram’s wife,”

and they went out together

“and they {all} left” or “and {all of} them set out together” or “Then they {all} left”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

from Ur of

“from {the city of} Ur” or “from Ur {City}”. See the note at Gen 10:19 about how to translate the names of cities. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

the Kasdim

“of the Chaldeans” or “where the Kasdim/Chaldean people lived”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 28.

to go to the land of Canaan

“to go/travel to the region of/called Canaan.” or “to go/travel to Canaan Land.”

But they came to Haran

“But {on the way there,} they came to {the city of} Haran, and” or “But {along the way,} when they arrived/stopped at {the city of} Haran,” The city of Haran was not in the land of Canaan, rather it was around 450 kilometers (280 miles) northeast of there.

and they settled there

“they settled/stayed there {instead}.” or “they decided to settle/live there {instead}.”

Genesis 11:32

And the days of Terah were 205 years

“Then {many years later,} when Terah was 205 years old,” or “When Terah reached the age of 205 years,”

then Terah died

“he died {there}”

in Haran

“in {the city of} Haran.” or “in Haran {City}.”

Genesis 12

Genesis 12:1

Then Yahweh said to Abram

"Then {one day} Yahweh told/commanded Abram," Consider what is the best way to begin this new section in your language. Also, make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits with what Yahweh says in the following quote. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

You yourself must go from your land

"Get yourself away from your homeland/country" or "You must move away from your homeland/country" or "You must leave {behind} the land/country where you are living"

and from your relatives

"and your relatives/people,"

and from the house of your father

"including your father's household/family," The phrase "the house" refers here to everyone who was a member of Terah's household. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

to the land

"{and go/move} to the land/place"

that I will show you

"that I will guide you to."

Genesis 12:2

And I will make you

“I will make you {and your descendants} become” or “I will make you {the father/ancestor of}”

into a great nation

“an important/large people group,” or “a large, important people/ethnic group,”

and I will bless you

“and I will bless/prosper you {and them}.” or “and I will cause you {all} to prosper/flourish.” See how you translated “blessed” in Gen 1:22, 28. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

and I will make your name great

“I will make you {important and} well-known/famous,” Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

and you must be a blessing

“and you will be a blessing {to many people}.” or “and you {and your descendants} will bless {many people}.” or “and {I will use} you {and your descendants} to bless {many people}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 12:3

And I will bless those who bless you

"I will bless everyone who blesses you,"

but whoever curses you I will curse

"but I will curse anyone who curses you." See how you translated "curse" in Gen 8:21.

in you

"Through you {and your offspring/descendants}" or "Because of you {and your offspring/descendants}" or "By means of you {and your offspring/descendants}". This phrase refers to Abram and his descendants, including ultimately the Messiah. In other words, God's promise in this verse is part of his wonderful news (the Gospel message) for all people (Galatians 3:8-9) and is a prophecy about the Messiah/Christ, who was one of Abraham's descendants (Matthew 1:1, Genesis 22:18, Galatians 3:16). God blessed all people on earth by sending his Son Jesus (the Messiah/Christ) to die in their place and pay for all their sins (John 3:16-18, 1 Timothy 2:3-6), so that they could have a close relationship with him/God and be part of his family forever. God repeats this great promise in Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

And & all the families of the earth will be blessed

"all the families/people on the earth will be blessed {by me}." or "{I} will bless all the families/people on the earth." Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this passive sentence. For some languages it is clearer to change the order of the sentence and say, "I will use you {and your offspring/descendants} to bless all the families/people on the earth." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 12:4

Then Abram went, just as Yahweh had told him

“Then/So Abram left {the city of Haran}, just/exactly as Yahweh had told/commanded him {to do},” or “Then/So Abram did/obeyed what Yahweh had told/commanded him {to do} and left {the city of Haran},” Consider what is the best way in your language to begin this sentence to show that Abram is now doing what God just commanded him to do (verse 1). (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

and Lot went with him

“and {his nephew} Lot went/left with him.”

And Abram

“Now Abram” or “Abram”. Many translations omit the conjunction “And” or “Now” here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

was the son of

“was seventy-five/75 years old”. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 5:32 and 11:10.

when he departed

“when he left” or “when he set out”

from Haran

“from {the city of} Haran.” or “from there.”

Genesis 12:5

וַיִּקַּח אִתּוֹ שָׂרָי אִשְׁתּוֹ י

“Abram/He took/brought {with him} his wife Sarai”. Be consistent here with how you spelled “Sarai” in Gen 11:29-31. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

and Lot the son of his brother

“and his {deceased} brother’s son Lot” or “and his nephew Lot”. For some languages it is more natural to make “son of his brother” or “his nephew” explicit in verse 4 (where Lot is first mentioned in this section) and leave it implied here in verse 5. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and all their possessions that they had accumulated and the people whom they had acquired

“everything that they owned, including slaves/servants {and everything else} they had acquired/gotten”. The word “possessions” is general here and includes slaves, animals, furniture, clothes, and money. See how you translated “slave” or “servant” in Gen 9:25-27.

in Haran

“in {the city of} Haran,” or “in Haran {City}”

and they set out to go

“and they {all} started traveling”

to the land of Canaan

“to the land/region of/called Canaan.” or “to Canaan Land.”

Then they came to the land of Canaan

“Then/Eventually they arrived in Canaan.” or “When they reached Canaan,” or “When they arrived/got there,”

Genesis 12:6

Then Abram passed

“Abram traveled/went” or “Abram {and his family} traveled/went” or “they traveled/went”. Abram is the only one named here because he is in focus. However, your translation should not sound like he traveled alone in verse 6. Also make sure that the way you begin this verse in your translation fits with the way you ended verse 5. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

through the land

“through that land/region”. See how you translated “land” in verse 5.

as far as

“until they arrived at” or “to”

the place of Shechem

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “the city of Shechem,” or (2) “the/a {sacred} place at/near {the city of} Shechem,”

to the terebinth tree of Moreh

“to Moreh’s terebinth/oak tree.” or “to the terebinth/oak tree on Moreh’s land.” Moreh is probably the name of the person who owned the land where the terebinth tree was. A terebinth tree is a large, broadleaf, flowering tree in the cashew family that can grow to a height of 5 to 12 meters (16 to 40 feet). The Hebrew words for “oak” and “terebinth” are similar, so many translations (including LXX) translate this as “oak tree” here. Notice, however, that oak trees and terebinth trees are from two different families of trees. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

And the Canaanites {were} in the land at that time

“At/During that time the Canaanites {were still living} in that land/region,” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to put the time phrase (“at that time”) first in this sentence. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 12:7

Then Yahweh appeared to Abram

“Then/but Yahweh came to Abram” or “but Yahweh visited Abram”. Yahweh’s promise in verse 7 to give Canaan to Abram’s descendants contrasts with the fact that the Canaanites were still occupying that region (verse 6). Also, notice that the text does not specify in what form or in what way God appeared to Abram, so your translation should not do that either.

and said

“and said/promised {to him};” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

To your offspring I will give this land

“I will give this land to your offspring/descendants.” In the Hebrew text, the phrase “to your offspring” is emphasized by its position at the beginning of this quote. However, for some languages it may be clearer and more natural to change the order of the clauses and say, “I will give this land to your offspring/descendants.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So he built an altar

“So/Then he/Abram built/made an altar {out of large stones}” or “So/Then he/Abram built/made a sacrifice table/mound {with stones}”. Consider what is the best way to refer to Abram here in your language. See how you translated “altar” in Gen 8:20. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

there

“near the tree” or “in that place”

to Yahweh

“to worship Yahweh” or “{and burned sacrifices on it} to {thank and} worship Yahweh,”

who had appeared to him

“who had appeared/come to him {there}.” or “because he/Yahweh had appeared/come to him {there}.” See how you translated “appeared” earlier in verse 7.

Genesis 12:8

Then from there he went on

“From {the place/city of} Shechem, he/Abram {and his family} moved/traveled {south} to” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

to the mountains to the east of Bethel

“the hill country that was east of {the town of} Bethel” or “the mountainous region east of {the town of} Bethel”

and pitched his tents

“and set/put up his/their tents {there}” or “They set up their tents/camp”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “tent” in Gen 9:21, 27.

with} Bethel on the west and Ai on the east

“between Bethel to the west and {the town of} Ai to the east.” or “Bethel was to the west {of them} and {the town of} Ai was to the east.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

And there he built

“There he/Abram built/made”

an altar

“another altar” or “another sacrifice table/mound”. See how you translated “altar” in verse 7.

to Yahweh

“{and burned sacrifices on it} to worship Yahweh,” See how you translated “to Yahweh” in verse 7.

and he called on the name of Yahweh

“and he worshiped/praised Yahweh/him by name.” or “he addressed Yahweh/him by {his} name as he worshiped/praised him.” or “he used Yahweh’s/his name in his prayers and worship.” or “he worshiped/praised Yahweh/him.” See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 4:26. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 12:9

Then Abram set out and continued to travel

“After that, Abram/he {and his family} traveled in stages” or “Then Abram/he {and his family} moved from place to place”

toward the Negev

“{south} toward the Negev/Southern {Wilderness/Desert}.” or “{southward} until they reached the Negev/Southern {Wilderness/Desert}.” The Hebrew word “Negev” can mean “south” or “dry country,” so some translations translate the meaning. But most translations transliterate the Hebrew name (as “Negev” or “Negeb”) as they do with other names in the Bible. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 12:10

Then there was

“Now there was”. This clause gives the setting for the rest of the sentence. Translate this in a way that is natural in your language.

a famine

“a serious/extreme shortage/lack of food” or “a hungry/starving time when food was very/extremely scarce”. A “famine” is a prolonged period of time when people are starving because crops are failing, often due to a lack of rain or other severe weather conditions.

in the land

“in that land/region/area,” or “in the Negev Wilderness/Desert,”

so Abram went down

“so Abram {and his family} headed/traveled southwest” or “so Abram {and his family} went/traveled/moved {further} south”. This phrase refers to the fact that Egypt is lower in elevation than Canaan (verse 5). It is also located southwest of Canaan.

to Egypt

“to/toward {the land/country} of Egypt”

to sojourn there

“to live/stay there for a while”

because the famine {was} heavy

“because the food shortage was {very} severe/oppressive”

in the land

“in that land/region.” or “in the Negev {Wilderness/Desert} {so they could not survive/live there}.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this clause near the beginning of this verse and say, “Then/Now there was a famine in that land/region that was so heavy/severe/bad that Abram {and his family} {left there and} went down to {the land/country of} Egypt to live for a while.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure** (p.1652))

Genesis 12:11

And it happened that as he was about to enter Egypt

“Just before they arrived in Egypt,” or “As they approached Egypt,”

then he said to Sarai his wife

“Abram said to his wife Sarai,” or “he/Abram told/urged his wife Sarai,”

Behold please

“Listen please,” or “Please listen {to me/this}.”

I know that you {are} a woman beautiful in appearance

“I know/realize that you {are} a very beautiful woman.” or “you {are} a very beautiful woman.”

Genesis 12:12

So it will happen when

“So when” or “When”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin this sentence with or without a conjunction (“So”). (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

the Egyptians

“the people of/in Egypt”

see you

“see/notice you {with me},”

then they will say, ‘This {is} his wife

“they will say/know that you are my wife,” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

and they will kill me but let you live

“Then they will kill me but/and let you live {so that they can have/take you}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 12:13

Please say

"{So} please tell {people/them}"

that} you {are} my sister

"I am his/Abram's sister;" Consider whether an indirect quote or direct quote is best here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

so that it will go well for me

"so that I will be treated well" or "so that they/people will treat me well"

for your sake

"because of you"

and my life will live because of you

"and my life will be spared {by them}." or "and they will spare my life." or "and {they will} let me live." For some languages it is not natural to include the phrase "because of you" here, because it repeats the same idea as "for your sake" in the previous clause. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 12:14

Then it happened

“That is {exactly} what happened:”

when Abram came into Egypt

“When Abram {and his family} entered {the land/country of} Egypt,” Although Abram is in focus here, your translation should not sound like he was traveling alone. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

then the Egyptians saw

“the Egyptian {people} saw/noticed” or “the people {living} there saw/noticed”

the woman, that she {was} very beautiful

“that the woman {with him} {was} {indeed/truly} very beautiful.” or “that Sarai {was} {indeed/truly} very beautiful.”

Genesis 12:15

And the officials of Pharaoh saw her

“{Some of} the officials/officers who served/ruled under the {Egyptian} king/ruler noticed/spotted her, so” or “When some officials/officers of/under Pharaoh {the king of/over Egypt} saw/noticed her,” The term “officials” is general and refers to leaders or rulers who were under Pharaoh and served him. Also, the term “Pharaoh” is an Egyptian title that refers to the king or ruler over Egypt. However, in the Old Testament, it is treated as a name (that frequently occurs with the title “king of Egypt”), so translators often transliterate “Pharaoh” (which is how other names in the Bible are normally treated). Some languages require an honorific title with the names of kings, for example, “{King} Pharaoh”. Decide how you will handle this in your translation. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

so they praised her to Pharaoh

“they told Pharaoh/him how beautiful she was,” or “they highly recommended her to him,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and the woman was taken

“and she/Sarai was taken/brought” or “So he had them bring her/Sarai”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

into Pharaoh’s house

“into/to his palace {to be one of his wives}.”

Genesis 12:16

Then he treated Abram well for her sake

“Then Pharaoh treated Abram well because of her/Sarai,” or “The king thought that Abram was her/Sarai’s brother, so he treated him well.”

so that he had

“and Abram acquired {from him}” or “and he gave him/Abram” or “He gave him/Abram”. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

flock{s} and herd{s}

“flocks {of sheep} and herds {of cattle},” or “many sheep and cattle,”

and male donkeys and male slaves and female slaves and female donkeys

“as well as men and women slaves/servants, and male and female donkeys,”

and camels

“and {larger load-bearing animals called} camels.” If camels are not known in your language area, you could include a picture of a camel in your translation. You could also describe it in the text or in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 12:17

But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house

“But/Then Yahweh struck/afflicted the king and {the people in} his household/family” or “Then Yahweh caused {King} Pharaoh and {the people} in his household/family to get/be very sick”. See how you translated “Pharaoh” in verse 15. You could translate it differently in different contexts. Do what is clear and natural in your language in each context. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

with} great plagues

“{with} severe/terrible diseases/illnesses”

on account of Sarai the wife of Abram

“because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” or “because he/Pharaoh had taken Abram’s wife Sarai.” For many languages it is clearer and more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “But since {King} Pharaoh had taken Abram’s wife Sarai, Yahweh afflicted the king and his family {with} severe illnesses.” Do what is best in your language (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 12:18

So Pharaoh called

“So/Then {King} Pharaoh called/sent for Abram” or “So/Then Pharaoh/he summoned Abram {before him}” or “So/Then the king sent for Abram {to come to him}”

and said

“and said {to him},” or “and asked {him},” Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way that you translate the following quote. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {is} this you have done to me

“Why have you treated me so badly?” or “You have treated me very badly!” Pharaoh uses rhetorical questions in verses 18 and 19 to express his anger at what Abram had done; he does not expect Abram to answer him. Some languages must use statements or exclamations here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Why did you not tell me that she {was} your wife

“You should have told/informed me that she/Sarai {is} your wife!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 12:19

Why did you say, 'She {is} my sister

"Why did you say/pretend that she {is} your sister," or "You should not have said/pretended that she {is} your sister," Pharaoh uses this rhetorical question to scold Abram and express his anger at him. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Also consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

so that I took her to me as a wife

"so that I took/chose her to be a/my wife!" or "so that I ended up taking her to be my wife!" or "I believed you and took her to be my wife!" For some languages it is clearer and more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

Now then

"Now therefore," or "So now,"

behold your wife

"here is your wife {back}." or "look, I'm giving your wife back to you."

Take {her} and go

"Take {her} and leave {my country}!"

Genesis 12:20

Then Pharaoh commanded

“Then {King} Pharaoh gave orders to” or “Then the {Egyptian} king ordered” or “Then the king {of/over Egypt} commanded/ordered”. Consider again how you translated “Pharaoh” in verses 15-18, 20. It may be helpful to read this section aloud to make sure it is clear and natural in your language.

his men

“{some of} his men/soldiers”

concerning him

“concerning/about him/Abram,” or “to make sure that Abram left,” Throughout this verse, make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and they sent him away

“and/so they forced him to leave {the/their country},” or “and/so they expelled him {from Egypt},” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

and his wife

“along with his wife”

and everything that {belonged} to him

“and all that he/they had/owned.” or “all his/their possessions.” This included Abram’s slaves, animals, and everything else that he owned.

Genesis 13

Genesis 13:1

Then Abram went up from Egypt

“So Abram went/traveled {northeast} from {the land/country of} Egypt,” or “Then/So Abram left {the land/country of} Egypt,” The Negev Wilderness (or Desert) is northeast in direction from Egypt and is higher in elevation. Compare how you translated “down” in Gen 12:10 when Abram traveled in the opposite direction.

he and his wife

“{taking} with him his wife” or “{He took} with him his wife”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and everything that {belonged} to him

“and everything that he/they owned/had,”

and Lot with him

“as well as {his nephew} Lot,” or “and also {his nephew} Lot,” or “and {his nephew} Lot {went} with him/them.”

to the Negev

“{and they all went/traveled} {back} to the Negev/Southern {Wilderness/Desert}.” For many languages it is more natural to put this phrase earlier in this verse and say, “Then Abram went up from Egypt {and traveled back} to the Negev {Wilderness/Desert}, along with his wife and everything that belonged to him. {His nephew} Lot also went with them.” Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “Negev” in Gen 12:9, and see the note about that there. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 13:2

And Abram

“Now” or “{By this/that time} Abram” or “Abram”. Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information about Abram. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

was} very wealthy

“{had become} very wealthy/rich”

in livestock

“with {many} livestock” or “so that he owned {many} livestock”. The term “livestock” includes all kinds of domestic animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats, camels and donkeys.

in silver, and in gold

“and {much} silver and gold.” In this context, “silver and gold” includes the metals themselves as well as objects made out of the metals, but not coins (since coins did not exist at that time). See how you translated “gold” in Gen 2:11-12.

Genesis 13:3

from the Negev

“From the Negev/Southern {Wilderness/Desert}”. See how you translated “the Negev” in verse 1.

Then he went on his journeys

“he/Abram {and his family} moved/traveled from place to place {northward}” or “he/Abram {and his family} continued traveling {northward}”. Abram represents his whole family here, and it is assumed that they are traveling with him. Consider whether or not you need to make them explicit in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

as far as Bethel

“{until he/they came} to {the town of} Bethel,”

to the place where his tents had been

“to the place/site where he/they had camped/lived in tents” or “where he had pitched his tents”

at the beginning

“before/previously,” or “the first time {he was there},”

between Bethel and Ai

“between {the towns of} Bethel and Ai,” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this phrase earlier in the sentence and say, “Then from the Negev {Desert} Abram {and his family} continued traveling {northward} {until they came} to the place between {the towns of} Bethel and Ai where they had camped in tents before.” Do what is best in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled “Bethel” and “Ai” in Gen 12:8. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 13:4

to the place of the altar that he had made there at first

“to the {same} place/site where he had made/built an altar before/previously,” or “{That is/was} the {same} place/site where he had first/previously made/built an altar,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also see how you translated “altar” in Gen 8:20 and 12:7-8.

and there Abram called on the name of Yahweh

“There {again} Abram/he {sacrificed animals on the/that altar and} addressed Yahweh by {his} name as he worshiped/praised him.” or “So Abram/he {again} {used that altar} there {and} worshiped/praised Yahweh by name.” or “... worshiped/praised Yahweh.” See how you translated “called on the name of Yahweh” in Gen 12:8. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 13:5

Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had

“Lot was traveling with {his uncle} Abram, and he {and his family} also had/owned”. The word “Now” introduces more background information for the new episode. For some languages it is more natural to leave “Now” implied and just use a paragraph break. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p. 1584)**)

flock{s} and herd{s}

“flocks {of sheep and goats} and herds {of cattle}” or “many sheep and cattle”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:16.

and tents

“and {many} tents.” or “as well as {many} tents.”

Genesis 13:6

But the land could not support them

“As a result, there was not enough land to provide them {all} with enough food and water” or “In fact, there was not enough land to provide/have enough food and water for both families {and their livestock/animals}”

while they stayed together

“if they lived near each other,” or “if they lived in the same area/region,”

because their possessions were great

“because their belongings were so abundant that” or “because they owned so many servants and livestock/animals that” or “They each owned so many servants and livestock/animals that”. The phrase “their possessions” especially refers to their livestock, which required much land to graze on and much water to drink, and probably also includes their many servants. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

so that they were not able to stay together

“they could not {all} live near each other.” or “it was not possible for them to {all} live in the same area/region.” See how you translated a similar phrase earlier in this verse. For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “In fact, they {each/both} owned so many servants and livestock/animals that they could not live in the same area. There was not enough land to provide/produce the amount of food and water that they {all} needed.” Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “stayed together” earlier in this verse. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 13:7

Then there was

"In fact," or "As a result,"

Then there was strife

"there was conflict/arguing" or "arguments/quarreling erupted/started". The Hebrew word for "strife" is general in meaning and can include arguing and fighting. Some languages have an idiom for this that fits well here. Do what is best in your language.

between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock

"between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen." or "between the men who were tending Abram's livestock and the men who were tending Lot's livestock." For some languages it may be clearer and more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, "Then the men who were taking care of Abram's livestock and the men who were taking care of Lot's livestock started to argue with each other." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And the Canaanites

"Besides that," or "Adding to that {problem was the fact that}"

And the Canaanites and the Perizzites

"the Canaanite people and the Perizzite people" or "the descendants of Canaan and Perez". See how you translated the names of people groups in Gen 10, and see how you translated "the Canaanites" in Gen 12:6. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

were living in the land

"were {also} living in the/that land/area/region"

then

"at that time." For some languages it is more natural to put this time phrase earlier in the sentence and say, "... at that time the Canaanites ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 13:8

So Abram said to Lot

"Then/Finally {one day} Abram said to Lot,"

Please do not let there be

"Please, we should not have/allow" or "We need to do something so that there is not {any}"

strife

"conflict/fighting/arguing". See how you translated "strife" in verse 7.

between me and you

"between you and me," or "between us,"

or between my herdsmen and your herdsmen

"or/nor between the men tending my livestock and the men tending your livestock," or "or/nor between our herdsmen," See how you translated "herdsmen" in verse 7.

because we {are} men, brothers

"because/since we {are} men {who are also} brothers/relatives." or "because/since we {are} close relatives." Abram and Lot were close relatives, not actual brothers. Also, for some languages it may be better to put this clause earlier in this verse and say, "Please, since we {are} close relatives, we need to do something so that you and I and our herdsmen will not argue." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 13:9

Is not the whole land before you

“Look, the entire land is available to you {to choose from}.” or “You can {choose to} live anywhere in this entire land.” Abram is using a rhetorical question to emphasize his point. He does not expect an answer from Lot. If that is not clear, you can translate this as a statement. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Please separate from me

“Please {choose the land you want, and} let’s go our separate ways.” or “Please {choose where you want to live, and} let’s live in separate places.” Make sure it is clear in your translation of verse 9 that Abram is being kind to Lot, not mean or rude. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

If {you go to} the left

“If {you choose} {the land to} the left {of here},” or “if {you decide to live} {in the land to} our left,”

then I will go right

“then I will take/choose {the land to} the right,” or “then I will live {in the land} to our right,”

or if {you go to} the right

“Or if {you choose} {the land to} the right {of here},” or “Or if {you decide to live} {in the land to} our right,” For some languages, it may be more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

then I will go left

“then I will take/choose {the land to} the left.” or “then I will live {in the land} to our left.”

Genesis 13:10

Then Lot lifted his eyes

“So Lot looked {all} around” or “Lot looked around {carefully}” (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-idioms\]\]](#))

and saw all the plain of the Jordan as you go {toward} Zoar, that all of it

“and he observed/noticed that the entire/whole Jordan {River} Valley, all the way to {the town of} Zoar,” The Jordan Plain is the wide, flat valley where the Jordan River flows between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

was} well-watered

“had a lot of water;” or “had plenty of water;”

like Yahweh’s garden

“{It was lush and green} like the garden that Yahweh had planted,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also see how you translated “garden” in Gen 3:23-24. This phrase refers to the Garden of Eden. You could put that information in a footnote.

like the land of Egypt

“and/or like the country of Egypt,”

before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah

“{That is what it was like} before Yahweh destroyed {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah {which were also in that valley}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 13:11

So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan

“So/Then Lot chose the entire/whole Jordan {River} Plain/Valley for himself,” or “So/Then Lot decided to live in the plain/valley that surrounded/bordered the Jordan {River},” See how you translated “plain of the Jordan” in verse 10.

and Lot traveled

“and he traveled/moved” or “Then Lot/he {left Abram and} traveled/moved”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also consider whether it is better in your language to use Lot’s name or a pronoun to refer to him here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

to the east

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “to/toward the east {to live there}” or “eastward” or (2) “from the east”

and they separated from each other

“So {in this way} they lived separately from each other.” or “That is how Abram and Lot ended up living in separate/different places.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also consider what is the best way to refer to Abram and Lot at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 13:12

Abram settled

“Abram settled/stayed {where he was}” or “Abram continued to live”

in the land of Canaan

“in {that part of} the land/region of Canaan,”

and Lot settled

“but/while/whereas Lot lived”

in the cities of the plain

“{in another part of the land/region} in/among the cities of/in the {Jordan River} valley” or “{in another part of the land/region} in/among the cities in the plain/valley {surrounding/bordering the Jordan River}”. As Lot traveled, he probably lived in several different cities in the Jordan River Valley until he eventually settled in the city of Sodom (Gen 14:12). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and moved his tents as far as

“He {eventually} pitched his tents in/near” or “and {eventually} moved his tents to/near”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Sodom

“{the city of} Sodom {and settled/stayed there}.”

Genesis 13:13

Now the men of Sodom

“But the people {who lived} in {the city of} Sodom”. The conjunction “Now/But” introduces background information that builds suspense for what happens to the people of Sodom later in Genesis (chapters 18-19). Consider what is the best way to begin this verse in your language. Also, this phrase probably has a general meaning here that includes all the people of Sodom, especially the men. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

were} exceedingly wicked

“{were} extremely/very wicked/evil”

and sinful against Yahweh

“were {terrible} sinners against Yahweh.” or “were {always/constantly} sinning/rebelling against Yahweh.” Some translations treat the phrase “wicked and sinful” as a hendiadys that means “wicked sinners”, but it is best to keep the two parts of this phrase separate (like the Hebrew text does) to emphasize the people’s evil character and behavior.

Genesis 13:14

Then Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him

"After Lot had left Abram, Yahweh said to Abram,"

Lift up your eyes please

"Look around please/now" or "Look {all} around you". See how you translated the idiom "lift ... eyes" in verse 10. The Hebrew word for "please" is used to show politeness when making a proposal or to soften a command. It can also be translated "now" or omitted, depending on the context. Your translation here should not sound like God is begging. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

from the place where you {are

"from the place where you {live}," or "from where you {are standing}," For some languages it is more natural to put this phrase first in this quote and say, "From where you are standing, look {all} around you. Look ...". Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and look

"Look". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

northward and southward and eastward and westward

"to the north, south, east, and west," or "{in all directions:} north, south, east, and west," or "around you in every direction," See how you translated "east" and "west" in Gen 12:8.

Genesis 13:15

because all the land that you see

“All the land that you see” or “All that land, as far as you can see,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

I will give to you and to your offspring

“I will give to you and your descendants”. See how you translated “offspring” in Gen 12:7.

forever

“{to own/possess} forever.”

Genesis 13:16

And I will make your offspring

“Besides that, I will {also} cause your offspring/descendants to be” or “In fact, I will {also} give you so many offspring/descendants that they will be”

like the dust of the earth

“as {numerous as} the {specks of} dust/dirt on the earth,” See how you translated “dust/dirt” in Gen 3:19.

which if anyone were able to count

“Just as it is impossible to count” or “Just as no one is able to count”. The Hebrew text has a contrary-to-fact clause here which implies that it is impossible for anyone to count all the specks of dust. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.1587)**)

the dust of the earth

“all the dust/dirt specks/particles,” or “how many specks/particles of dust/dirt there are,” For some languages it is not natural to repeat “of/on the earth” here. Do what is best in your language.

your offspring could also be counted

“so it will be impossible to count all your offspring/descendants {because they will be so numerous}.” or “no one will be able to count how many descendants you have.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the last two clauses and say, “No one will be able to count how many offspring/descendants you have, just as no one can count how many {specks/particles of} dust/dirt there are.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 13:17

Get up and walk

"{Now} go walk" or "{So now,} start walking". The phrase "get up" may imply that Abram was sitting down, but it probably just means that God is telling him to start walking through the land.

through the land

"through/throughout the land {in all directions},"

through its length and through its width

"including its length and its width, {and look it over,}" or "Walk/Go throughout the entire land {and look it over},"
The phrase "its length ... its width" also includes all the area of land in between. Consider what is the best way to translate this merism in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

because to you I am giving it

"because you {are the one} I am giving it to." or "because I am giving it {all} to you." In the Hebrew text, the phrase "to you" is before the verb to emphasize Abram. In your translation, communicate this emphasis in a way that is natural in your language.

Genesis 13:18

So Abram moved his tents

“Then Abram {did what Yahweh commanded} and moved his tents” or “Abram {obeyed Yahweh and} moved/relocated his tents”. Abram obeyed God, but we do not know if he did everything that God commanded in verse 17 before he moved his tents near Hebron (verse 18), or if moving his tents was the first step in obeying what God told him to do. It is best to keep this general in your translation (as the Hebrew text does). Also see how you translated the phrase “moved his tents” in verse 12.

and went and settled

“and went to settle/live” or “and settled”

by the terebinth trees of Mamre

“near the terebinth/oak trees on Mamre’s {land},” or “near the terebinth/oak trees {on the land} owned by {a man named} Mamre,” See how you translated “terebinth” in Gen 12:6.

that {were} near Hebron

“near {the city of} Hebron,”

and there he built an altar

“There he built an altar {out of stones}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:7-8.

to Yahweh

“{and burned/offered sacrifices on it} to {thank and} worship Yahweh.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:7 and how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 8:20 and 12:8.

Genesis 14

Genesis 14:1

Now it happened in the days of

“Then it happened {that} during the days/time when” or “During that time”

Amraphel king of

“Amraphel {was} the king/ruler over” or “King Amraphel was ruling”. The term “king” refers to the highest ruler or leader over a kingdom, which at that time was often just a city, a small region or a people group. Translate this with the best word for that in your language. Also see how you translated “Shinar” in Gen 10:10; 11:2. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-keyterms\]\]](#))

Shinar

“{the land/region of} Shinar,”

Arioch king of

“Arioch {was} the king/ruler over” or “King Arioch was ruling”. It is not known whether Ellasar was the name of a city or the name of a kingdom that had one or more cities.

Ellasar

“{the city/kingdom of} Ellasar,”

Kedorlaomer king of

“Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer {was} the king/ruler over” or “King Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer was ruling”. In Hebrew this king’s name is pronounced “Kedorlaomer”. However in many translations it is spelled “Chedorlaomer”. Be consistent with your choice throughout this chapter. Also, “Elam” refers to the land where the descendants of Shem’s son Elam lived (Gen 10:22). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Elam

“{the land/region of} the Elamites,”

and Tidal king of

“and Tidal {was} the king/ruler over” or “and King Tidal was ruling”. Most translation teams transliterate the name “Goyim” (as they do other names in the Bible). Some translations translate its meaning and say, “the nations/peoples.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

the Goiim

“the Goyim {people},” Most translation teams transliterate the name “Goyim” (as they do other names in the Bible). Some translations translate its meaning and say “the nations/peoples”. Do what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 14:2

they made war against

“those/Those {four} kings {became allies/partners and} made/waged war” or “those/Those {four} kings {joined forces and} went to war”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here, which depends on how you translated verse 1.

Bera king of

“Bera {who was} the king/ruler over” or “King Bera who was ruling”

Sodom

“{the city of} Sodom,”

and against Birsha king of

“Birsha {who was} the king/ruler over” or “King Birsha who was ruling”

Gomorrah

“{the city of} Gomorrah,”

Shinab king of

“Shinab {who was} the king/ruler over” or “King Shinab who was ruling”

Admah

“{the city of} Admah,”

and Shemeber king of

“Shemeber {who was} the king/ruler over” or “King Shemeber who was ruling”

Zeboiim

“{the city of} Zeboyim,”

and the king of

“and the king/ruler over” or “and the king/ruler who was ruling”

Bela

“{the town of} Bela,”

which {is} Zoar

“which {is also/now called} Zoar.” or “which {was later called} Zoar.” or “that is, Zoar.” This town is first mentioned in Gen 13:10, but it was not actually named Zoar until later (Gen 19:22). You may want to put that information in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 14:3

All these

“These/Those {five kings} all”. Consider whether it is necessary to make it explicit in your translation that “these” refers to the five kings just mentioned in verse 2. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

joined together

“united/combined their forces/armies {as allies/partners} {and fought against the four kings}”

in the Valley of Siddim

“in the Siddim Valley,”

which {is now} the Sea of Salt

“which {later} {became} the Salt Sea.” or “where the Salt Sea {is now}.” The Hebrew word for “sea/ocean” can also refer to a large lake. The Salt Sea, also known as the Dead Sea, is about 31 miles (50 kilometers) long and 9 miles (15 kilometers) wide. Use a term in your language for a body of water that size.

Genesis 14:4

For} twelve years

“{This is what happened;} {For/During} twelve years” or “{This is why they were fighting;} {For/During} twelve years”. This paragraph (verses 4-9) is a flashback that tells the events that led up to the war (verses 1-3). Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

they had served

“the five kings had paid tribute/taxes/money to” or “the five kings had been subject to” or “they had been ruled by””. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to the five kings (listed in verse 2) at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Kedorlaomer

“{King} Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer;” Be consistent here with how you spelled this name in verse 1.

but the thirteenth year

“but {sometime} in/during the thirteenth year”

they rebelled

“they started to rebel/revolt {against him}.”

Genesis 14:5

Then in the fourteenth year

“Then {sometime} in/during the fourteenth year,”

Kedorlaomer

“{King} Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer”

and the kings

“and the {three} kings”

who {were} with him

“who {were allied} with him” or “who {were} his allies/partners”

went

“{united/combined their armies and} went {to war/fight} {against all their enemies}”. Verses 5-7 list enemies of King Kedorlaomer that are in addition to the five kings mentioned in verses 2-4. Consider whether or not to make it explicit in your translation here that they were fighting all their enemies. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and struck

“{First,} they conquered/defeated”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the Rephaim

“the Rephaites” or “the Rephaite/Repha people”. See how you translated the names of people groups in Gen 10:4, 13-18, and see the note about that at 10:4. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

in Ashteroth-Karnaim

“in {the city of} Ashteroth-Karnaim,”

and the Zuzim

“and/then the Zuzites” or “and the Zuzite/Zuz people”

in Ham

“in {the city of} Ham,”

the Emim

“the Emites” or “the Emite/Em people”

in Shaveh-Kiriathaim

“in {the city of} Shaveh-Kiriathaim,”

Genesis 14:6

and the Horites

“and the Horite/Hor people”

in their hill country of Seir

“{who lived} in the hill country of {the land/region of} Seir” or “{who lived} in the Seir Hills/Mountains”

as far as El Paran

“{all the way} to {the city of} El Paran,”

which {is} by

“which {is located} near/beside” or “which {is} on/at the edge/border of”

the wilderness

“the/a desert.” A wilderness is a dry, rocky area where few plants grow and few people live. See how you translated “wilderness/desert” in Gen 12:9 and 13:1, 3 (if you made that explicit in those verses).

Genesis 14:7

Then they turned back

“Next the/those {four} kings {and their armies}”

Then they turned back

“turned around” or “started to return home”

and came

“and went” (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

to En Mishpat

“to {the city of} En Mishpat,”

which {is} Kadesh

“which {is also/now called} Kadesh,” or “which {was later called} Kadesh,” or “that is, Kadesh,” See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 2.

and they struck

“They conquered/defeated”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the entire territory of the Amalekites

“the entire/whole territory/area/land where the Amalekites lived” or “... where the Amalekite/Amalek people {group} lived”

and also the Amorites

“as well as the Amorite/Amor people {group},” Be consistent here with how you translated “Amorites” in Gen 10:16.

who were living in Hazezon Tamar

“who lived in {the city of} Hazezon Tamar.”

Genesis 14:8

Then & went out

“That’s when”. Verse 8 is talking about the same battle that is mentioned in verse 2, except it leaves out the names of the kings. Make sure in your translation that it does not sound like a different battle. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases** (p.1603))

the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela

“the king over {the city of} Sodom, the king over {the city of} Gomorrah, the king over {the city of} Admah, the king over {the city of} Zeboyim, and the king over {the town of} Bela,” or “the kings over {the cities of} Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Bela,” Be consistent in verse 8 with how you spelled the names of these cities in verse 2 and in Gen 10:19.

which {is} Zoar

“which {is also/now called} Zoar,” or “that is, Zoar,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2.

Then & went out

“went/marched out {with their armies}”

into the Valley of Siddim

“into the Siddim Valley”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 3.

and arranged themselves for battle

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “and assembled/prepared/positioned {themselves} for battle” or “and got ready to fight” or (2) “and joined/united together in battle”

Genesis 14:9

against Kedorlaomer king of

“against Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer {who was} the king/ruler over” or “against King Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer who was ruling”. The same kings (and the places they ruled) that are listed here in verse 9 are listed in verse 1, but in a different order. Be consistent here with how you spelled the names there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

Elam

“{the land/region of} Elam,”

and Tidal king of

“Tidal {who was} the king/ruler over” or “King Tidal who was ruling”

Goiim

“the Goyim {people},” Be consistent here with how you translated this people group name in verse 1.

and Amraphel king of

“Amraphel {who was} the king/ruler over” or “King Amraphel who was ruling”

Shinar

“{the land/region of} Shinar,”

and Arioch king of

“and Arioch {who was} the king/ruler over” or “and King Arioch who was ruling”

Ellasar

“{the city/kingdom of} Ellasar,”

four kings against

“{It was} four kings {who started fighting} against” or “{Then} the/those four kings attacked”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the five

“the five {kings} {and started defeating them}.” It is implied in verse 10 that the four kings had started defeating the five kings. If that is not clear, you could make that explicit here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 14:10

Now the Valley of Siddim {had} many tar pits

“The Siddim Valley was full of tar pits,” or “There were many tar pits in the Siddim Valley,” The word “Now” indicates a change of topic and introduces background information. For some languages it is more natural to omit that word and just use a paragraph break. Do what is best in your language. Also be consistent here with how you translated “the Valley of Siddim” in verses 3 and 8, and how you translated “tar” in Gen 11:3. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled

“As/When the kings of/over {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah {and their armies/soldiers} were running away {from the battle},” It is assumed here that the kings were accompanied by their armies. If that is not understood, you could make that explicit in your translation. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and they fell there

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “they died there {in the tar pits}.” or “some {of their soldiers/men} were killed there {in the tar pits}.” or “they fell into the tar pits {and died}.” or (2) “jumped into the tar pits {to hide}.” Notice that the king of Sodom is still alive in verse 17, so the pronoun “they” probably does not include him here, depending on how you translate “fell there”.

And those who remained

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “while/but those who were left” or “Those who escaped” or (2) “But the other {three kings and their armies/soldiers}”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.

fled

“ran away”. See how you translated “fled” earlier in this verse.

to the hill country

“to the mountains/hills {to hide}.” See how you translated “hill country” in verse 6.

Genesis 14:11

Then they took

“Then the four kings took {by force}” or “Then the four kings seized”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to the four kings at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah

“all the possessions of/from {the people of/in} {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah” or “all the {people’s} belongings in {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah”. The phrase “Sodom and Gomorrah” refers here to the people who lived in those cities. Consider what is the best way to refer to those people here in your language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and all their food

“including/even all their food,” or “as well as all their food,”

and left

“and left {with it all}.” or “and carried it {all} away {with them}.” or “and went on their way.”

Genesis 14:12

And they took

“They also took {with them}” or “They also carried off/away” or “The four kings also captured”

Lot and his possessions, the son of Abram’s brother, when they left

“Abram’s nephew Lot and his possessions/belongings,”

since he was living in Sodom

“since he was living in {the city of} Sodom.” For some languages it may be more clearer or more natural to put this phrase first in this sentence and say, “Since Abram’s nephew Lot was {also} living in {the city of} Sodom, the four kings took/captured him too, along with his possessions.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 14:13

Then someone who escaped came

"Then/But someone {from Sodom} escaped {from the battle} and came/went"

and reported to Abram the Hebrew

"to Abram the Hebrew and reported {to him} {what had happened}." The Hebrew people are the descendants of Abram (Abraham), and they were named after his ancestor Eber, who was Shem's great grandson (Genesis 11:10-26). Some of this information could be put in a footnote.

And he

"Now {at that time} he/Abram" or "{At that time} he/Abram". This phrase introduces background information about Abram as part of the setting for what happens next. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

was living by the terebinth trees of Mamre

"was {still} living by/near the terebinth/oak trees that were owned by Mamre" or "was {still} living by/near the terebinth/oak trees on the land owned by Mamre". See how you translated this clause in Gen 13:18.

the Amorite

"{who was} {a member of} the Amorite {people/ethnic group}". See how you translated "Amorites" in verse 7.

the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner

"{who was} the brother of Eshcol and Aner" or "{whose} brothers were Eshcol and Aner"

and they {were

"Those {three} men". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

owners of a covenant with Abram

"had made a covenant/pact/agreement with Abram {to be his allies}." or "and Abram had made a covenant/pact/agreement together {that they would help each other against their enemies}."

Genesis 14:14

And when Abram heard

“When Abram found out”

that his relative had been taken captive

“that his relative/nephew {Lot} had been captured,” or “that {the four kings} had captured his nephew {Lot},”
Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

then he led out

“he called/gathered together {for battle}” or “he summoned/assembled/mobilized {for battle}.”

his 318 trained men who had been born in his house

“318 of his/the servants who had been born in his household and were trained/skilled warriors” or “318 of his servants born in his household whom he had trained to fight/battle”. It is clear from verse 15 that these men were Abram’s servants.

and he pursued {his enemies

“Then he/Abram {and his men/servants and his allies} went/chased after {the invaders}” or “Then {together with his allies} they {all} pursued {the four kings and their armies}”. In this sentence the pronoun “he” refers to Abram and all those who had united with him as his allies. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

as far as

“all the way to” or “until they caught up with them at”

Dan

“{the town of} Dan.”

Genesis 14:15

Then he divided against them during the night, he and his servants

"Then/There during the night he/Abram and his servants/men divided {into groups}, {surprise} attacked the {four} kings {and their soldiers},"

and struck them

"and overpowered/defeated/routed them" (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and pursued them

"Then they went/chased after them". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to Hobah

"{all the way} to {the town of} Hobah," or "as far as {the town of} Hobah,"

which {is} north of Damascus

"which {is located} north of {the city of} Damascus."

Genesis 14:16

And he brought back

“As a result, he/Abram got back” or “He/Abram recovered”

all the possessions

“all the {people’s} belongings/things {that the four kings had taken/seized}”

and he also brought back

“He also got back” or “He also recovered/rescued”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

his relative Lot

“his nephew Lot”

and his possessions

“and {all} his/Lot’s belongings,”

and also the women

“as well as the women”

and the {other} people

“and {all} the {other} people {whom the kings had captured}.”

Genesis 14:17

Then the king of Sodom came out

"Then the king over {the city of} Sodom"

Then the king of Sodom came out

"Then the king over {the city of} Sodom went out". Consider whether "came" or "went" is more natural here in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

to meet him

"to greet/welcome him/Abram" or "and greeted/welcome him/Abram" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1696)**)

in the Valley of Shaveh

"in the Shaveh Valley,"

which {is} the King's Valley

"which {is also called/named} the King's Valley," or "that is, the King's Valley,"

after he returned

"as he/Abram was returning {home}" or "as he/Abram was going/headed back home". When Abram reached the Shaveh Valley, he was still about 20 miles (30 kilometers) north of his home, which was near the city of Hebron (Gen 13:18).

from striking

"after defeating" or "after he defeated". See how you translated "struck" in verse 15. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Kedorlaomer

"{King} Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer {and his army}". Be consistent here with how you spelled this name previously in this chapter; see verses 1, 4-5, 9, 17.

and the kings

"and {the armies of} the {other} {three} kings"

who {were} with him

"who were Kedorlaomer's/Chedorlaomer's allies/partners." or "who had joined/allied themselves with Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer." For some languages it may be better to put the clauses of this verse in the order that the events actually happened. For example you could say, "After Abram defeated {King} Kedorlaomer/Chedorlaomer and the {other} {three} kings who were Kedorlaomer's/Chedorlaomer's allies, he started to return

{home}. When Abram reached the Shaveh Valley, that is, the King's Valley, the king over {the city of} Sodom came/ went there and greeted/welcome him." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 14:18

Then Melchizedek the king of Salem

"Then Melchizedek {who was} the king over {the city of} Salem {also came/went there, and he}". Salem is the short name for the city of Jerusalem (See: Psalm 76:2). The Shaveh Valley, where Melchizedek met Abram, was located just east of Jerusalem. You could put some of that information in a footnote.

brought out bread and wine

"brought (some) bread and wine {for them to eat and drink}." or "brought {some} bread and wine {for Abram and his men to eat and drink}." It is not known whether Melchizedek brought out a large amount of bread and wine to feed Abram and his men, or if he brought out just enough for him and Abram to share, possibly as part of establishing a covenant between them. The first alternate above would work for either meaning. See how you translated "wine" in Gen 9:21, 24.

And he {was

"He {was also}" or "{King} Melchizedek {was also}"

a priest

"a priest for" or "a priest who served". A priest is someone who represents people to God, and who represents God to the people. He leads the people in praying, worship, making sacrifices, ceremonies, and festivals. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

to God Most High

"the most high/powerful God." or "the highest/greatest God." or "God who is higher/greater {than all other gods}."

Genesis 14:19

And he blessed him

“He blessed Abram” or “So he/Melchizedek blessed Abram”. Make sure your translation of “blessed ... and said” refers to the same event, not two separate events. Also see how you translated “bless” in Gen 12:2-3. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and said

“by saying {to him},”

May Abram be blessed

“I pray that {you} Abram will be blessed”

by God Most High

“by the most high/powerful God,” or “by the highest/greatest God,” See how you translated this title in verse 18. For some languages it may be better to switch the order of phrases in this sentence and say, “May the greatest God, who owns heaven and earth, bless Abram/you.” or “I pray that the most high/powerful God, who created heaven and earth, will bless {you} Abram.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

the Possessor of heaven and earth

“{who is} the Owner/Creator of heaven and earth.” or “who owns/created heaven and earth.” The Hebrew word for “Possessor” also means “Creator,” which is used in many translations. Whichever one you do not use in the text you could put in a footnote.

Genesis 14:20

And praised be

“Praise” or “Give praise to” or “Let everyone praise”. See how you translated “Praised be” in Gen 9:26.

God Most High

“the most high/powerful God,” or “the highest/greatest God,” See how you translated this phrase in verses 18-19.

who delivered your enemies into your hand

“because he gave you victory over your enemies!” or “because he enabled you to defeat your enemies!” The phrase “delivered ... into your hand” is an idiom. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Then he gave to him

“Then Abram gave {King} Melchizedek”. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

a tenth

“one-tenth” or “ten percent”

of everything

“of everything {that he had recovered/captured in the battle}.” or “of all {the plunder he had brought back from the battle}.” This phrase refers to the belongings of the people of Sodom that Abram had recovered from the kings who stole them.

Genesis 14:21

Then the king of Sodom said to Abram

"Then the king of Sodom requested of Abram," or "After that, the king over {the city of} Sodom urged/asked Abram,"

Give to me

"{Please} give/return to me". Make sure in your translation that the king of Sodom's request to Abram sounds polite, not rude or demanding. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

the people

"the/my people {whom you rescued/saved}," or "the people {from Sodom} {whom you rescued},"

but the possessions take for yourself

"but the possessions/plunder you may take/keep for yourself." or "but take/keep for yourself the/their belongings {that you recovered}." See how you translated "possessions" in verses 11-12,16.

Genesis 14:22

But Abram said to the king of Sodom

“But Abram/he replied to him,” Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Abram and to the king of Sodom at this point in their conversation. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

I raise my hand to Yahweh

“{I will not keep anything, because} I have raised my hand {and sworn/vowed/promised} to Yahweh,” It was the custom that when a person made an oath, he raised his hand to show that he was telling the truth and making a serious, unbreakable promise. Abram’s oath to Yahweh made Yahweh his witness who would hold him accountable and punish him if he were to break his oath. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

God Most High

“{who is} the highest/greatest God,” See how you translated this phrase in verses 18-20.

the Possessor of heaven and earth

“{and} the Owner/Creator of heaven and earth,” or “{and} the One who owns/created heaven and earth,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 19.

Genesis 14:23

אם

"{that} I will not {keep/accept}"

מחוט ועד שרוך נעל

"even a thread/string or the strap from a sandal," or "even {something as small/insignificant as} a {piece of} string or a sandal strap,"

ואם אקח מכל

"No/Yes, I will not keep/accept anything". This clause emphasizes Abram's point. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

אשר לך

"that {belongs} to you {or your people}," or "that is yours {or your people's}," For some languages, it may be clearer and more natural to put this phrase earlier in this verse and say, "{that} I will not keep/accept anything that {belongs} to you {or your people}, not even {something as small as} a {piece of} thread/string or the strap from a sandal." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

ולא תאמר

"That way you can never say," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

אני העשיתי את אברם

"I {am the one who} made Abram rich/wealthy!" or "that you {were the one who} made me rich." The Hebrew pronoun that refers here to the king of Sodom is emphatic. Consider what is the best way to communicate that emphasis in your language. Also consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 14:24

I {will take} nothing, except

"{So} I {will} not {keep/accept} anything, except" or "{So} I {will} only {keep/accept}". Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this exception sentence. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

what the young men have eaten

"what my servants {who fought with me} have eaten" or "what my men/warriors ate". These young men were Abram's trained servants or warriors who are mentioned in verses 14-15.

and the share of the other men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre

"and the share/part {of the plunder} that Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre deserve for being my allies/partners." or "and what Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre deserve for helping me in the battle."

Let them take

"{Please} let them take/have" or "{Please} give them". Abram is being polite, but make sure in your translation that he does not sound like he is begging, especially since he is a mighty warrior. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

their share

"their share/part {of the plunder}." or "their share/part {of what we recovered}."

Genesis 15

Genesis 15:1

After those things

"After those things/events {happened}," or "After that,"

the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying

"Yahweh said to Abram in a vision," or "Yahweh appeared/came to Abram visually and said {to him}," A vision is a supernatural experience that a person has while he is awake, so the way you translate this term should be different from the way you translate "dream" (since people have dreams while asleep). Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like what Abram saw was unreal; what he saw and heard actually happened. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Do not be afraid, Abram

"Abram, do not be afraid!"

I {am} a shield for you

"I {am} your shield/protector," or "I protect you {like} a shield," or "I will shield/protect you," God is like a shield to Abram since he protects him. Consider what is the best way to translate this metaphor in your language. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

your reward will be very great

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "{and} your reward {from me} will be very great." or "{and} I will give you a very great/valuable reward/gift." (2) "{and} {I am} your very great/valuable reward." The context (verse 2) shows that the first interpretation is what Abram understood God to be saying.

Genesis 15:2

But Abram said

“Then Abram said/lamented {to him},” or “But/Then Abram asked {him},” The way you translate this quote margin may depend on how you translate the following rhetorical question. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

My Lord Yahweh

“My Master Yahweh,” or “Yahweh my Lord/Master,” The phrase “My Lord” means that Yahweh owns Abram and has complete authority over him, just as a master (at that time) had complete authority over his servant. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

what will you give to me

“what {reward} will/can you give to me {that would benefit me},” or “{I don’t understand} how a reward from you {would benefit/help} me,” or “even if you reward me {greatly}, {that will not benefit/help me,}” Abram uses this rhetorical question to show that he is lamenting that he has no children. Make sure in your translation that he does not sound rude. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

since I go childless

“since I remain childless” or “I still have no children”

and the son of the inheritance of

“so that {when/after I die,} the inheritor/heir of” or “So {when I die,} the one who will inherit/own”. The phrase “son of the inheritance” is used here as an idiom that means “inheritor” or “heir”; it does not refer to an actual son. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

my house

“my estate/property” or “all/everything that I have/own”. This phrase refers here to all Abram’s belongings. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

is} the Damascan, Eliezer

“{is} {my foreign servant} Eliezer from Damascus” or “{is} {my servant} Eliezer {who is} {a foreigner} from {the city of} Damascus”. In the Hebrew text, Abram emphasizes the fact that Eliezer was from Damascus, which means he was a foreigner from a foreign city, not a blood relative. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you translated “{the city of} Damascus” in Gen 14:15. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 15:3

Then Abram said

"Then he continued/added," Some languages omit these words, because the same speaker is still speaking to the same audience. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

"Look/Indeed," Some translations omit this phrase to prevent Abram from sounding rude. Do what is best in your language.

you have not given a child to me

"you have not given me any children," In the Hebrew text "to me" is before "you have not given" to emphasize Abram. Do what is natural in your language.

so that behold

"so that now {when/after I die},"

a servant of my house

"a servant from my household" or "one of my household servants"

is my heir

"will be my heir!" or "will inherit/get everything I own!"

Genesis 15:4

Then behold

“But immediately” or “Immediately”

the word of Yahweh {came} to him, saying

“Yahweh said/replied to him/Abram,” See how you translated this idiom in verse 1. It may be necessary to translate it differently here because of the different context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

That {man

“{No,} that man/servant” or “{No,} your servant {Eliezer}”

will not be your heir, but rather

“will not inherit/get your estate/property, rather”

a son who comes from your bowels, he

“a son whom you father” or “it will be your very own {biological} son who”. The phrase “comes from your bowels” is an idiom that refers to fathering a child. Make sure your translation of this clause does not imply that Abram would give birth to a son. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-Idiom\]\]](#))

will be your heir

“will inherit/own your estate/property.” or “will inherit/own it.”

Genesis 15:5

Then he brought him

“Then Yahweh took/led him/Abram”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Yahweh and Abram at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

outside

“outside {his tent}”. Abram was probably inside a tent, not inside a house. But if possible, it is best to leave this implied in a translation (as the Hebrew text does). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and said

“and said {to him};” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please look

“Please/Now look {up}” or “Look {up}”. See how you translated “please” in Gen 13:14. Make sure your translation does not sound like God is begging.

at the heavens

“into the heavens” or “at/into the {night} sky”

and count the stars, if you are able to count them

“and {try to} count how many stars there are, if {in fact,} anyone could {possibly} count {all of} them.” or “There are so many stars that no one could {ever/possibly} count them {all}.” God’s point here is that there are so many stars that no one could ever count that high. He is not questioning Abram’s ability to count. Consider what is the best way to translate this contrary-to-fact statement in your language. (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.1587)**)

Then he said to him

“{While Abram was looking at the stars,} Yahweh said to him/Abram,” or “{So Abram looked up at the stars,} and Yahweh continued speaking to him,” Throughout this chapter make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking to whom. Always use pronouns and nouns in a way that is clear and natural in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

So will your offspring be

“That is how {numerous/many} your offspring/descendants will be.” or “That is how many offspring/descendants you will have.”

Genesis 15:6

And he trusted

“He/Abram trusted/believed Yahweh,” or “He/Abram believed what Yahweh said,” Many translations omit the conjunction “And” here. Do what is best in your language. Also, make sure it is clear in your translation that Abram is the subject here, not Yahweh (who was the last subject in verse 5). (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1696)**)

and he counted it to him {as} righteousness

“and {so} Yahweh counted/credited it/that to him {as} righteousness.” or “and because of that, Yahweh considered/reckoned him/Abram to be righteous.” or “so Yahweh considered him/Abram to have a right relationship with him.” Notice that Yahweh is now the subject again. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking to whom here and throughout this section. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 15:7

Then he said to him

“Then Yahweh said to him/Abram,”

I {am} Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of

“I {am} Yahweh who brought/led you {here} from {the city of} Ur” (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

the Kasdim

“which is ruled/inhabited by the Kasdim/Chaldeans” or “that the Kasdim/Chaldeans rule” or “where the Kasdim/Chaldeans live”. See how you translated “Ur of the Kasdim/Chaldeans” in Gen 11:28, 31, and see the note about that there.

to give to you this land

“to give this land to you”

to possess it

“to own.” or “as your homeland.” or “to be your own/home.”

Genesis 15:8

Then he said

“Then/But Abram said/replied {to him},” or “Then/But he/Abram asked {him},” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abram is the one speaking here, not Yahweh. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

My Lord Yahweh

“My Lord/Master Yahweh,” or “Yahweh my Lord/Master,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2.

how will I know

“how will/can I know {for sure}” or “how will/can I be certain/sure”

that I will possess it

“that I will possess/own this land/territory?” or “that this land will be mine?”

Genesis 15:9

Then he said to him

“Yahweh said/replied to him/Abram,” or “Yahweh replied,”

Bring to me

“Bring me”

a three-year-old heifer

“a cow that is three years old,”

and a three-year-old she-goat

“a female goat that is three years old,”

and a three-year-old ram

“and a male sheep that is three years old”. For some languages it may be more natural to shorten this list of animals and say, “Bring to me a {young} cow, a female goat, and a male sheep, each of which is three years old,” Do what is best in your language.

and a turtledove and a young pigeon

“as well as a turtledove/dove and a young pigeon.” Turtledoves and pigeons are common, closely related birds that look similar and are often gray or grayish brown in color. One of the main differences is that turtledoves are smaller than pigeons. Compare how you translated “dove” in Gen 8:8. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 15:10

So he brought

“So {the next/following day} Abram brought/took”. It was nighttime in verse 5 when Abram looked at the stars. Now in verses 10-11 it was probably daytime, which is when birds of prey fly (verse 11). Then in verse 12 it became night again. Consider what is the best way to begin this verse in your translation.

all those to him

“all those {animals} to him/Yahweh {and slaughtered/killed them}.” Some languages need to make explicit that Abram killed the animals first, before cutting them in half. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Then he cut them in two

“Then/Next Abram cut/divided the animals’ bodies”

down the middle

“in half lengthwise” or “into two parts lengthwise”. Abram probably cut the animals down the middle lengthwise, which means that each half had one front leg, and one back leg.

and laid the halves opposite to each other

“and placed/arranged each half a short distance/space across from the/its other half {in two rows},” or “and laid/arranged the right half of each animal opposite/across from its left half {in two rows},”

but the birds he did not cut in two

“but he did not cut/divide {the bodies of} the birds in two/half.” or “except for the birds, which he did not cut in two/half.” See how you translated “cut ... in two” earlier in verse 10.

Genesis 15:11

Then birds of prey came down

“Then {some} birds of prey landed” or “Then {some} vultures flew/swooped down {and landed}” or “Then {some} meat-eating birds”. This phrase refers to large birds that eat dead animal meat. Examples of these birds include vultures, buzzards, condors, eagles, and crows.

on the carcasses

“the {dead} animal bodies/parts {to eat them},” or “the dead animals {to eat them},”

and Abram drove them away

“but Abram chased/scared them away.” or “but Abram made them go away.”

Genesis 15:12

Then it happened

"Then it happened {that}" or "Later". This phrase adds suspense and makes the reader wonder what will happen next. Many translations leave it out, but if possible it is best to keep it in your translation.

the sun was setting

"as/when the sun was going down" or "as/when it was starting to become dark/night"

and a deep sleep fell on Abram

"Abram fell/went into a deep/sound sleep," or "Abram went soundly asleep," See how you translated a similar idiom in Gen 2:21. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and behold

"and suddenly," or "Then suddenly," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

terror {and} great darkness fell on him

"a great/deep, terrifying darkness came over him." or "it became completely/very dark, and he became/was terrified." (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 15:13

Then he said to Abram

“Then Yahweh said to Abram/him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Know for certain that

“You can be certain/sure that” or “I want you to know that”

your offspring

“your descendants”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 5.

will be strangers

“will live as foreigners/sojourners”. The word “strangers” refers to people who live temporarily in a city, country, or region, but they do not settle there permanently.

in a land

“in a country”

that} {does} not {belong} to them

“that is not their own.” or “that is not their home/homeland.”

and they will serve them

“They will serve the people {of/in that land/country} {as slaves},” or “They will be servants/slaves for the people {who live in that land/country},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, make sure that your translation of these pronouns clearly communicates who is being referred to. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and they will afflict them

“and those people will oppress/mistreat them” or “and those people will treat them cruelly/badly”. Notice that here the pronoun “they” refers to the people who were living in the country where Abram’s descendants will be sojourning and “them” refers to Abram’s descendants. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

400 years

“{for} 400 years.” or “{for a period of} 400 years.” This phrase refers to how long Abram’s descendants would live in a land that is not theirs, not how long they would be oppressed, which was less than half of those 400 years. To make that clear in your translation, you could move this phrase earlier and say: “I want you to know that for 400 years your offspring/descendants will live in a land/country that is not their own, and the people of that country will oppress them.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 15:14

But also

“But” or “But/And you can also be certain/sure that”

the nation

“{the people of} that nation/country” or “the/those people” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

that they serve

“whom they serve {as slaves}” or “who made them slaves”

I will judge

“I will punish,” For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this clause earlier in this sentence and say, “But I will also judge/punish {the people of} the nation that they serve”. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and after that

“After that,” or “Then”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

they will come out

“your offspring/descendants will leave {that land/country}”

with great possessions

“with many possessions.” or “with great/much wealth.” or “and take many possessions/riches with them.” See how you translated “possessions” in Gen 14:16, 21.

Genesis 15:15

And you

“Now/But {as for} you,” or “As for you,” In the Hebrew text, the pronoun “you” is emphatic and has an emphatic position in the sentence (before the verb) to change the topic. Do what is clear and natural in your language.

you will go to your fathers in peace

“you will be at peace when you {die and} join your forefathers/ancestors {who have died/gone before you}”. This clause is a euphemism that refers to Abram’s death. However, it is best to translate the clause as literally as possible, since it implies the important information that people are still alive after they have died on earth. Also, notice that the term “fathers” refers here to ancestors who have died, not those who are still alive on earth. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

you will be buried at a good old age

“{In fact,} you will not die until you have lived a good/blessed, long life.” or “{In fact,} you will live a good/blessed, long life before you die.” This clause is a euphemism that refers to Abram’s death. Make sure in your translation that it does not sound like he will be buried alive. For some languages it may be more natural to change the order of this sentence and say, “after you have lived a good/blessed long life, you will die peacefully and join your ancestors {who have died before you}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 15:16

Then in the fourth generation

“Then four generations later,” or “Then after four generations {have passed},”

they will come back here

“your descendants will return here {to live},” or “your descendants will come back to this land {and live here},”

because the sin of the Amorites {will} not {be} complete until then

“because that is when the Amorite/Amor people will have sinned as much as I will allow {before I take away their land and give it to your descendants}.” or “{and I will give them the land of the} Amorite/Amor people, whose sin will have reached its limit by then.” God planned to give the Amorites’ land to Abram’s descendants because of the Amorites’ sin. Consider whether or not to include that implied information in your translation or in a footnote. Also, see how you translated the names of people groups in Gen 10:13-18. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 15:17

Then it happened

“Then it happened {that}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 12, and see the note about that there.

the sun went down

“when/after the sun had gone down,” or “when/after the sun had set,” The sun had started to go down in verse 12. Here it had completely set.

and darkness came

“it was/became {very} dark”. This Hebrew word for “darkness” implies that it was darker than normal, so that not even light from the moon and stars was visible.

and behold

“and suddenly,” or “Then suddenly,” For some languages it is better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

there was} a smoking fire pot

“a {clay} pot {appeared} {that was full} of burning coals and had smoke coming from it,”

and a flaming torch

“and {also} a burning/blazing torch”

that passed

“and they {both} passed/went”

between those pieces

“between those/the {two rows of} {animal} parts/halves.”

Genesis 15:18

On that day

“On that {very} day” or “At that time”. It is still nighttime at this point (See: verse 17), so the word “day” refers generally here to a 24-hour day; it does not refer to daytime.

Yahweh cut

“Yahweh established/made” (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-Idiom]])

a covenant with Abram

“a {special/peace} covenant/agreement with Abram”. See how you translated “covenant” in Gen 9:9, 11-13, 15-17.

saying

“{by} saying,” or “and said,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

To your offspring I have given this land

“I am giving your offspring/descendants this land,” or “I hereby give this land to your offspring/descendants,” In the Hebrew text “to your offspring/descendants” is first in this quote to emphasize Abram’s descendants. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

from the river of Egypt

“{which extends} from Egypt’s river {in the south}”. This phrase probably refers to the Wadi El-Arish (not the Nile River), which is on the border between Egypt and Israel. It is best in a translation to leave this general as the Hebrew text does.

to the great river, the Euphrates River

“to the great/big Euphrates River {in the north},”

Genesis 15:19

the land of

"{including} {the land which is owned/inhabited by}" or "{That is/includes} {the land which belongs to}". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the land of} the Kenites and the Kenizzites and the Kadmonites

"the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites," or "Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites," In a list of people group names like this (verses 19-21), for some languages it is more natural to leave out "and" and "the" most of the time. Do what is natural in your language.

Genesis 15:20

and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Rephaim

“the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim/Rephaites,” or “Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim/Rephaites,” Be consistent here with how you translated “the Hittites” in Gen 10:15, “the Perizzites” in Gen 13:7, and “the Rephaim/Rephaites” in Gen 14:5.

Genesis 15:21

and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Girgashites and the Jebusites

“the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” or “Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.” Be consistent here with how you translated “the Amorites” in verse 18 and “Amorites”, “Canaanites”, “Girgashites”, and “Jebusites” in Gen 10:15-18.

Genesis 16

Genesis 16:1

Now Sarai, the wife of Abram

“Sarai, Abram’s wife,” or “Now Abram’s wife Sarai”. This verse begins a new topic and gives background information about Sarai. Some languages have a special conjunction for this. Other languages do not use a conjunction here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

had not born {children} for him

“{still} had not had {any} children for him,” or “had {still} not given birth {to any children} for him,” Sarai’s barrenness is first mentioned in Gen 11:30.

but she had

“but she owned” or “but she did have”

an Egyptian maidservant

“an Egyptian slave/servant woman” or “a female slave/servant from {the country of} Egypt”. See how you translated “female slaves/servants” in Gen 12:16.

and her name {was} Hagar

“whose name was Hagar.” or “named Hagar.”

Genesis 16:2

So Sarai said to Abram

“So she told Abram,” or “Then Sarai/she told Abram,”

Behold please

“Listen please/now:” or “Please listen {to me/this}.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:11.

Yahweh has prevented me from bearing {children

“{Since} Yahweh has not permitted/allowed me to bear/have {any} children,” or “{As you know,} Yahweh has not permitted/allowed me to bear/have {any} children, {so}”

Please go to

“please sleep with” or “please have {marital/sexual} relations with”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence. Also, see how you translated the idiom “went to” in Gen 6:4. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

my maidservant

“my slave/servant woman {Hagar}.” See how you translated “maidservant” in verse 1.

Perhaps

“Maybe” or “{so that} perhaps/maybe”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

I can be built up from her

“I can build/have a family through her {children}.” or “she can have children for me so that I can build/have a family.”

And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai

“Abram agreed to do what Sarai/she requested/suggested.” or “So Abram listened to Sarai.” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 16:3

So Sarai, the wife of Abram, took

“So/Then Abram’s wife Sarai took/brought” or “Then Sarai took/brought”. In the Hebrew text, the phrase “Abram’s wife” is repeated (in verses 1 and 3) to emphasize Sarai’s relationship to Abram in contrast to Hagar. For some languages it is overly redundant to repeat that phrase, and so they leave it implied here. However, if possible, it is best to keep this repetition in your translation.

Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant

“her Egyptian servant woman Hagar,” or “her servant Hagar,” The word “Egyptian” is repeated (in verses 1 and 3) to emphasize the fact that Hagar was a foreigner. If possible, it is best to keep this repetition in your translation.

at the end of ten years that Abram had lived in the land of Canaan

“after Abram {and Sarai} had lived in the land/region of Canaan for ten years,”

and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife for him

“and she gave her to her husband Abram to be his {second} wife.” For most languages it is clearer and more natural to change the order of the clauses in this verse and say, “So Abram’s wife Sarai gave her servant Hagar to her husband Abram to be his {second} wife. {This/That happened} after Abram {and Sarai} had lived in the land/region of Canaan for ten years.” Make sure your translation does not sound like verse 3 happened ten years after Abram agreed to sleep with Hagar. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 16:4

Then he went to Hagar

“Then/So Abram slept with Hagar,” or “Then/So Abram/he had {marital} relations with Hagar,” Consider whether it is better in your language to refer to Abram by his name or by a pronoun here at the beginning of this paragraph. See how you translated the idiom “go to” in verse 2. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and she conceived

“and {as a result,}” or “and {so}” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

and she conceived

“and {as a result,} she became pregnant.” or “and {so} she became pregnant.” Make sure that the way you translate this phrase will not be embarrassing or offensive to people, especially when it is read aloud.

And she saw that she had conceived

“And/But {when} she/Hagar saw/realized that she was pregnant,” The word “saw” is used here as an idiom that means “realized” or “perceived”. Consider whether or not you have a similar idiom in your language that would work well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and her mistress was despised in her eyes

“she despised/disrespected her mistress/owner {Sarai}.” or “she regarded/treated her mistress/owner {Sarai} with contempt/disdain.” or “she started to look down on her mistress {Sarai}.” The phrase “despised in her eyes” is an idiom that refers here to Hagar’s attitude and disrespectful actions toward Sarai. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. Also consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 16:5

Then Sarai said to Abram

“Then/So Sarai complained to Abram,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My wrong {is} on you

“I am suffering because of you!” or “I am being mistreated because of you!” or “It is your fault that I am being treated wrongly/badly!” or “It is your fault that I am suffering!”

I myself put my maidservant into your arms

“I gave my maidservant/servant to you to be your wife,” or “I allowed my maidservant/servant to have {marital} relations with you,” The idiom “put ... into your arms” refers to Abram’s relationship with Hagar. Make sure that your translation of this clause is not offensive. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

but she sees that she has conceived

“but {now that} she knows/realizes that she is pregnant,”

and I am despised in her eyes

“she despises/disrespects me!” or “she treats me with contempt/disdain”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also see how you translated a similar clause in verse 4. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

יִשְׁפֹּט ט בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ

“I ask Yahweh to judge/decide between you and me {who is responsible for this}!” or “I ask Yahweh to judge/decide who is right/wrong, you or me!” or “May Yahweh judge whether it is you or I who is responsible {for this}!” As the head of the household, it was Abram’s responsibility to rebuke Hagar and require her to respect Sarai. You could put that information in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 16:6

Then Abram said to Sarai

“But Abram said/replied to Sarai/her,” or “Abram said/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Look/Listen,”

your maidservant {is} in your hand

“your slave/servant woman is under your authority/control.” or “you have authority over your slave/servant.” or “you are in charge of your servant.” The phrase “in your hand” is an idiom that refers to having control or authority over someone. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. Also see how you translated “maidservant” in verses 1-3, 5. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Do to her

“Do with her” or “{So} {you can/may} do to/with her”

what {is} good in your eyes

“what{ever} you think/decide is good/right/best.” or “what{ever} pleases you.” The phrase “in your eyes” is an idiom that refers to Sarai’s opinion. See how you translated a similar idiom (“in her eyes”) in verses 4 and 5.

Then Sarai afflicted her

“Then/So Sarai oppressed/mistreated her/Hagar, and/so” or “Then/So Sarai treated her/Hagar so harshly/badly that”. See how you translated “afflict” in Gen 15:13.

and she fled from her face

“she/Hagar ran away from her.” or “she/Hagar ran away {from home to get away} from her/Sarai.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Hagar is the one who fled, not Sarai. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 16:7

Then the angel of Yahweh found her

“Then/But an angel/messenger {sent} from Yahweh found Hagar” or “Then/But one of Yahweh’s angels/messengers came to Hagar”. Make sure that the way you translate “found” does not sound like the angel had come across Hagar accidentally. Rather, he knew where she was and had gone to her intentionally. Also, this messenger from Yahweh was an angel, not a human being. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

at a spring of water

“by/beside a spring of water” or “by/beside a spring”

in the wilderness

“in the desert”. See how you translated “wilderness” in Gen 14:6.

at the spring

“{She was} at the spring” or “{It was} the spring”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

beside the road of Shur

“{that was} beside/by the road {that goes} to {the city of} Shur.” or “{that was} beside/by the road near {the city of} Shur.”

Genesis 16:8

And he said

“And the angel/messenger said {to her},” or “The angel/messenger asked {her},” The angel asked Hagar a question, so for some languages it is better to use a word like “asked” here. Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Hagar, maidservant of Sarai

“Hagar, Sarai’s slave/servant,” or “Hagar, who serves Sarai,”

where have you come from, and where are you going

“where are you coming from, and where are you headed?”

And she said

“She/Hagar said/replied {to him},” or “She/Hagar answered {him},” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

I am fleeing from the face of Sarai, my mistress

“I am running away from my mistress/owner Sarai.” See how you translated “fled from ... face” in verse 6 and how you translated “mistress” in verse 4.

Genesis 16:9

Then the angel of Yahweh said to her

“But/So Yahweh’s angel/messenger told her/Hagar,” or “Then/But he told her/Hagar,” Consider what is the best way to begin this verse in your translation, after what Hagar said in verse 8. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p. 1603)**)

Return to your mistress

“Go back {home} to your mistress/owner {Sarai}”. See how you translated “mistress/owner” in verses 4 and 8.

and submit under her hands

“and {humbly} submit {yourself} to her authority.” or “obey her {as her servant}.” See how you translated a similar idiom (“in your hand”) in verse 6. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 16:10

Then the angel of Yahweh said to her

“Then the angel/messenger told/promised her,” or “Then he added/continued,” Some languages do not include the quote margins here and in verse 11, because the angel is still talking to Hagar. However, the repeated quote margins could be there to emphasize what the angel says next and/or to show that he paused or that he is changing the topic. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will greatly increase your offspring

“I {Yahweh} will greatly increase/multiply {the number of} your offspring/descendants, so that” or “{This is what Yahweh says/promises to you:} “I will give you so many offspring/descendants that” ” or “{Yahweh promises to you that} he will give you many descendants, so that”. The pronoun “I” refers to Yahweh here. So either the angel was representing Yahweh and speaking Yahweh’s words to Hagar or it was Yahweh himself who had taken on the form of an angel. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

so that they cannot be counted

“no one will be able to count them all,” or “there will be too many to count,”

because of their abundance

“because of their large number.” or “because there will be so many of them.”

Genesis 16:11

Then the angel of Yahweh said to her

“Then/Finally the angel/messenger {also} said/prophesied to her,” or “Then/Finally he {also} told her,” or “Then the angel/messenger added/continued,” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Behold, {you are} pregnant, and you will bear a son

“Look/Listen, {as you know,} {you are} expecting a child/baby. You will bear/have a son, and/then” or “Look/Listen, you are pregnant with a son. After/When he is born,” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Hagar already knew that she was pregnant, but did not know she was having a son or what she should name him.

and you will call his name

“give him the name” or “name him”

Ishmael

“Ishmael, {which means “God listens/hears,}” Some translation teams make the meaning of Ishmael’s name explicit in their translation. Other teams put the meaning of his name in a footnote. See what you did for similar cases in Gen 3:20, 4:1, 16, 25; 6:29, 10:25, 11:9.

because Yahweh has listened to

“because Yahweh heard” or “because Yahweh paid attention to”. If you include the meaning of Ishmael’s name earlier in this verse, make sure it fits with how you translate this clause. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

your misery

“your {cries of} misery/suffering {and has helped you}.” or “you when you were suffering {and has helped you}.” The word that means “listened to” implies here that God also took action to help Hagar. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 16:12

And he

“{When Ishmael grows up,} he” or “As for Ishmael, {when he grows up,} he”. The pronoun “he” is emphatic here, to emphasize Ishmael. Make sure that your translation refers here to Ishmael, not Yahweh. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

will be a wild donkey of a man

“will be {proud and free} {like} a wild/untamed donkey” or “will be {like} a wild/untamed donkey {that no one can control/rule}” or “will not be ruled by anyone else”. The angel compares Ishmael to a wild donkey. Consider whether or not your language can use a similar metaphor or a simile here. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

his hand against everyone and the hand of everyone against him

“He will fight against everyone, and everyone will fight against him.” or “He will be enemies with everyone.”

and he will live in the faces of

“In fact, he will {even} be hostile toward” or “Yes/Indeed, he will {also/even} fight against”. The rest of this verse forms a parallelism with the first half, emphasizing what Ishmael (and his descendants) will be like. Try to keep both parts of the parallelism in your translation, since each part has a different focus and the second part adds important information. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

all of his brothers

“all of his {own} relatives.” or “all of his {own} family members.” The word “brothers” is used here to refer to relatives in general. Consider what is the best way to translate this synecdoche in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 16:13

Then she called the name of Yahweh who had spoken to her, “You {are} El Roi

“Then she/Hagar named Yahweh who had spoken to her. {She said/exclaimed,} “You are the God who sees!” ” or “After Yahweh spoke to her/Hagar, she called him El Roi, {which means “the God who sees,”}” Some translations transliterate (copy or borrow) the name “El Roi” from the Hebrew, some translate its meaning, and some do both. Decide what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because she said

“{She named him that,} because she {had} said/exclaimed {to herself},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Have I really seen here the back of {the one who} sees me

“How can it be that I was able to look at the back of {the one/God who} looks after me?” or “I just now saw the back of {him/God who} sees me!” Hagar’s rhetorical question shows surprise and amazement. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your translation. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 16:14

For that {reason

“That is why”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 11:9.

they call the well

“the/that well is/was called/named” or “people call that well” or “the name of the/that well is”. Frequently in the Hebrew text, this phrase has a general meaning and does not refer to someone specific. Also, this well is the same as the spring in verse 7. For some languages, it may be necessary to translate these words the same way so that it is clear that they refer to the same place. Do what is best in your language.

Beer Lahai Roi

“Beer Lahai Roi, {which means, “Well of the Living One, who sees me.”}” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Behold

“It is {still} there” or “That well is {still} there”

it is} between Kadesh and Bered

“between {the cities of} Kadesh and Bered.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Kadesh” in Gen 14:7.

Genesis 16:15

Then Hagar bore a son for Abram

“After that, Hagar/she {returned home and} gave birth to a son for Abram,”

and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael

“and he called/named his son whom she bore/had Ishmael.” or “and Abram/he named his/their son Ishmael.”

Genesis 16:16

And Abram {was

“Abram {was}”. For some languages it is more natural to omit the conjunction here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

a son of

“86 years old”. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 5:32. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-idioms\]\]](#))

when Hagar bore Ishmael for Abram

“when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael for him.” or “when Hagar had Ishmael for him.” See how you translated “bore ... for Abram” in verse 15. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled “Hagar” in chapter 16 (verses 1, 4, 6-11, 13), and how you spelled “Ishmael” in verses 11, 12 and 15.

Genesis 17

Genesis 17:1

Then Abram was a son of ninety-nine years

"{Years} later, when Abram was ninety-nine/99 years old," Thirteen years have passed between the last verse of chapter 16 and the first verse of chapter 17. Consider what is the best way in your language to begin this new section. See how you translated "was a son of ... years" in Gen 5:32. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

and Yahweh appeared to Abram

"Yahweh appeared/came to him" or "Yahweh visited him". See how you translated this clause in Gen 12:7.

and said to him

"and told him,"

I {am} God Almighty

"I {am} Almighty God." or "I {am} the all-powerful God." or "I {am} God {who is} all-powerful." Most translation teams translate the meaning of God's title here ("God Almighty"). A few teams transliterate the title as "El Shaddai" (as if it were a personal name) and put the meaning of the title in a footnote. Abram already knew that God's personal name is Yahweh (Gen 12:8; 15:7-8), so he would have understood that God was using a title here (not a personal name). The title "God Almighty" emphasizes God's authority and power. You could include a transliteration of this title in a footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Walk before me

"Walk/Live in my presence" or "Live according to my will" or "Live in a way that pleases me". This phrase is an idiom that means to habitually live according to God's will. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-idioms\]\]](#))

and be

"{yes, you must} be" or "so that you will be"

without blemish

"without fault." or "blameless/upright." See how you translated this idiom in Gen 6:9. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 17:2

And I will make my covenant

“I will establish/institute my covenant/agreement”. Some translations begin this sentence without a conjunction. Do what is best in your language. See how you translated “cut/make/establish ... covenant” in Gen 15:18, where the verb is different from here but has a similar meaning (“establish/seal” or “put into effect”). (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

between me and you

“with you,”

and I will multiply you very greatly

“and I will cause you to have very many descendants.” or “and I will increase {the number of} your descendants so that they are exceedingly/very numerous.”

Genesis 17:3

Then Abram fell on his face

“Then Abram prostrated himself {before God} {to show him respect},” or “{When} Abram {heard that, he} bowed with his face to the ground {before God} {to show respect},” Make sure that the translation of this clause does not sound like Abram fell down accidentally. Rather, he intentionally threw himself to the ground out of deep respect for God. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and God spoke with him, saying

“and God spoke with/to him and said,” or “and God continued speaking with/to him/Abram,” or “and God continued/added,” Some translations omit “saying” here because it is not natural in those languages. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Genesis 17:4

As for} me, behold, my covenant with you {is} that you will be

“Listen/Look, this is my part/responsibility in my covenant/agreement with you: I will cause you to be/become” or “Listen/Look, this is what I will do to fulfill my covenant/agreement with you: I will make you” In the Hebrew text, the pronoun “me” is emphatic both in form and in sentence position to emphasize that Yahweh is the one doing this.

the father of

“the ancestor of”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 4:20, 21; 10:21.

a multitude of

“a large number of” or “many”

nations

“people/ethnic groups.” See how you translated this term in Gen 10:5, 20, 31, 32. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 17:5

And your name will not be called Abram anymore

“So your name will not be Abram anymore,” or “Your name will no longer be Abram,”

but your name will be Abraham

“Rather/Instead, {from now on} it will be Abraham,” or “Rather, I am changing it {now} to Abraham,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

because I have made you

“because I will make you” or “because you will be”. The form of the Hebrew verb in this clause is completed aspect (“have made”) and shows certainty that God will do this. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language.

the father of a multitude of nations

“the ancestor of many people/ethnic groups.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

Genesis 17:6

And I will make you very, very fruitful

“Yes, I will make you extremely/exceedingly fruitful,” or “I will give you very many offspring/descendants,” This verse repeats and elaborates on the last part of verse 5; it does not refer to different events. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

and I will make you into nations

“so that you will be/become {the father/ancestor of} {many} people/ethnic groups,” or “and I will cause your descendants to become {many} people/ethnic groups,”

and kings will come from you

“In fact, there will be kings who descend from you.” or “In fact, some of your descendants will be/become kings.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “king” in Gen 14:1-5.

Genesis 17:7

And I will establish my covenant between me and you

“I will establish/make my covenant/agreement with you”. See how you translated a similar clause in verse 2. The pronouns “you” and “your” are singular in this clause and also later in this verse. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

and your offspring after you

“and {all} your offspring/descendants {who live/come} after you” or “as well as {all} your offspring/descendants”

throughout their generations

“for {all} generations to come” or “for {all} future generations”

as an eternal covenant

“It will be a covenant/agreement that never ends,” or “It will be a covenant/agreement that lasts forever,” For some languages it is better to break up this long sentence and begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

to be God to you and to your offspring after you

“that I will be your God and {the God} of {all} your descendants.” or “that I will be the God who takes care of you and {all} your descendants.” or “that I will be the God whom you and {all} your descendants worship/serve.”

Genesis 17:8

And I will give to you and to your offspring after you

"I will also give to you and your offspring/descendants"

the land of your sojournings

"the/this land where you have been living as a foreigner/outsider,"

all the land of Canaan

"{yes,} the entire land/region of Canaan,"

as an eternal possession

"It will be their land/property forever;" or "They will own it forever;" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and I will be God to them

"and I will be their God." or "and I will be the God who takes care of them." or "I will be the God whom they worship/serve." See how you translated the phrase "be God to you" in verse 7.

Genesis 17:9

Then God said to Abraham

"Then God continued," Some languages leave out this quote margin, because God is still speaking to the same person. See what you did for similar cases in Gen 16:10-11.

And you

"As for you," or "Now as for your part/responsibility {in this/my covenant/agreement}," or "Your part/responsibility {in this/my covenant/agreement} is that". In the Hebrew text, the pronoun "you" is emphatic both in form and in sentence position to shift the focus from talking about God's part in the covenant (verses 4-8) to talking about Abraham's part. Translate this phrase in a way that shows this change in focus.

you must keep my covenant

"you must keep/obey {the requirements/rules of} my covenant/agreement," or "you must obey me,"

you and your offspring

"{both/including} you and" or "{That includes} you and" or "{That applies to} you as well as". For some languages it is better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

and your offspring after you

"{all} your descendants {who live} after you" or "{all} your offspring/descendants"

throughout their generations

"for/including {all} generations to come." or "for/including {all} future generations." See how you translated this phrase in verse 7, and a similar phrase in verse 8.

Genesis 17:10

This {is} my covenant

“This is {what I require in} my covenant/agreement” or “This is {one of the requirements of/in} my covenant/agreement”

which you must keep

“which you {all} must obey,” Notice that the pronoun “you” is plural here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

between me and you and

“{the covenant/agreement that is} between me and you {all}, including” or “{the covenant/agreement I have made} with {all of} you, including”. The pronoun “you” is plural here and probably refers to Abraham and his family or household. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

your offspring after you

“your descendants {who will live} after you:” or “{all} your descendants:” Notice that the pronouns “your” and “you” are singular here and refer to Abraham. Also, it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of some of the clauses in this sentence and say, “This is {what I require in} my covenant/agreement with you and your descendants {who will live after you}, which you {all} must keep/obey:” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Every male among you must be circumcised

“You must circumcise all males {who live} among/with you.” or “You must cut off the {male} foreskin of every boy and man {who lives} among you.” Circumcision involves cutting the foreskin off the penis of a boy or man. Translate this clause in a way that does not offend or embarrass people. Some languages may need to be more discreet and say something general like “must cut off the {male} skin” or “must follow the {male} skin-cutting custom.” It may be necessary to include a footnote and/or an explanation in the glossary about this so that people understand what circumcision is, especially in areas where people cut their skin on other parts of the body for other reasons. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 17:11

Indeed, you must be circumcised {in} the flesh of your foreskins

“Yes, {all the males among} you must have your/their foreskins cut off,” or “Indeed/Yes, you must circumcise the foreskin of {all the males among} you”. Notice that in the Hebrew text, the pronouns “you” and “your” are plural in this verse. Also, be consistent here with how you translated “circumcise” in verse 10. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you

“and that {custom/practice} will serve as the sign {that reminds you} of this/my covenant/agreement {I made} with {all of} you.” or “and that {custom/practice} will remind/show {you all} that {I made} this/my covenant/agreement with you.” The pronoun “you” is plural here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

Genesis 17:12

So a son of eight days must be circumcised

"{Every} eight-day-old baby boy must be circumcised {by you}," or "So you must circumcise {every} eight-day-old baby boy," Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

every male

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "{and} every {other} male" or "{as well as} all {other} males" or (2) "{yes,} every male {child}". The following context suggests that this phrase includes males of all ages, not just babies, since male slaves who were bought would especially include adult males.

among you

"among your people"

throughout your generations

"for all {future} generations," It may be more natural to put this phrase at the beginning of this verse and say, "For all {future} generations you must circumcise {every} baby boy who is eight days old, {as well as} all {other} males among your people ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

the one born in {your} house

"{including} those/males {who are} born in your household/family" or "{That includes} those/males from your own household/family". This phrase refers to Abraham's future sons, including Isaac (Gen 21:4) and his concubines' sons (25:6), and may also refer to the sons of Abraham's servants. Also, for some languages it may be better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

and the one bought with money from any son of a foreigner, who {is} not your offspring

"and those whom you buy from foreigners {as slaves/servants}, who {are} not your offspring/descendants." or "as well as those who {are} not your offspring/descendants but {are slaves/servants whom you} have bought from foreigners."

Genesis 17:13

He must surely be circumcised

"{That's right,} they must definitely be circumcised," or "{Yes,} you must surely/definitely circumcise {all of} them," This verse repeats and emphasizes what was just said in verse 12. Consider what is the best way to communicate this emphasis in your language.

the one born in your house and the one bought with your money

"{including} those/males who are born in your household as well as those/males whom you buy {as a slave/servant};" or "{regardless of whether} they are sons/males from your own household/family or slaves/servants whom you have bought." See how you translated these phrases in verse 12. It may be best to translate them in a slightly different way here because of the repetition. Do what is best in your language.

So my covenant will be

"That is how {the sign of} my covenant/agreement will/must be marked" or "That is how you must mark my covenant/agreement"

in your flesh

"on your bodies". The word "flesh" refers here to the body in general. Translate this in a way that is clear and natural in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

as an eternal covenant

"to show that it is an everlasting/permanent covenant/agreement." or "to show that it is a covenant/agreement that never ends." See how you translated "an eternal covenant" in verse 7.

Genesis 17:14

And {as for} an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

"But {as for} any/every male/man who is not circumcised," or "In fact, if a/any man refuses to let you circumcise him," or "If a/any man refuses to be circumcised," In this context, "male" refers to men who refuse to be circumcised, not baby boys.

indeed that person must be cut off from his people

"that person must {be sent away and} not be allowed to associate/fellowship with his/my people" or "you must {send him away and} not allow him to associate/fellowship with his/my people". The phrase "cut off from his people" is an idiom which means that the person is an outcast of society and can no longer associate closely with other people in that society. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom that would work well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

he has broken

"{because} he has not kept/obeyed" or "{because} he has disobeyed". This phrase has the opposite meaning of "keep" or "obey" in verse 9. Consider whether or not your language has an idiom like "broken" that means to not do what has been agreed upon or to disobey what was commanded. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

my covenant

"{the requirements/rules of} my covenant/agreement." or "{what I require in} my covenant/agreement."

Genesis 17:15

Then God said to Abraham

“Later God {also} said to Abraham,” or “God {also} told Abraham,”

As for} Sarai your wife

“{As for} your wife Sarai,” This phrase is first in this quote to change the focus to Sarai and emphasize her. Consider what is the best way to do this in your language.

do not call her name Sarai

“do not call her Sarai {anymore},” or “her name will no longer be Sarai,”

because her name {will be} Sarah

“because {from now on} her name will be Sarah.” or “Rather/Instead, her name is {now} Sarah.” or “Rather, {from now on} it will be Sarah.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 17:16

and I will also give to you a son from her

“and I will definitely enable her to bear/have a son for you.” or “and I will definitely give you a son by her.”

Indeed I will bless her

“In fact, I will bless/prosper her” or “Yes, I will bless/prosper her”

and she will become nations

“so that she will become {the mother/ancestor of many} people/ethnic groups,” or “so much that she will {have many descendants that will} become/form {new/many} people/ethnic groups,” See how you translated “nations” in verses 4-6.

kings of peoples will come from her

“and kings over peoples/nations will descend from her.” or “and some of her descendants will {even} be kings {who rule} over {many} people/ethnic groups.” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 6.

Genesis 17:17

Then Abraham fell on his face

"{When} Abraham {heard that, he} bowed with his face to the ground {before God} {to show respect}," or "Then Abraham prostrated himself {before God} {to show him respect}," See how you translated a similar clause in verse 3. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and he laughed and said in his heart

"but he laughed {to himself} and thought," or "but he laughed {silently} and thought to himself," The phrase "said in his heart" is an idiom that refers to something Abraham thought, but did not say out loud. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Will {a child} be born to a son of 100 years

"How can a hundred-year-old man {like me/myself} father a son/child?" or "Certainly it is not possible for a hundred-year-old man {like me} to father a son/child!" or "Certainly a hundred-year-old man {like myself} cannot father a son/child, can he?" Abraham uses the rhetorical questions in verse 17 to express strong disbelief. If that is not clear in your language, you could translate the rhetorical questions as statements, with or without a tag question. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And will Sarah who is a daughter of ninety years bear {a child

"And how can Sarah who is 90 years old {still} have a baby/child?" or "And certainly it is not possible for a 90-year-old woman like Sarah to {still} bear/have a baby/child!" or "And certainly a 90-year-old woman like Sarah cannot {still} give birth to a baby/child, can she?" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 17:18

Then Abraham said to God

"Then/So Abraham/he said to God," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

If only Ishmael

"Oh, that Ishmael could/would" or "Please let Ishmael". Consider what is the best way to express this strong wish or hope in your language.

might live before you

"live/prosper in your presence!" or "be the one whom you bless!" This idiom means to live under God's care and be blessed by him. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 17:19

Then God said

“God said/replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

No

“No, rather” or “Yes, but/however”. Consider whether it is best in your language to begin God’s response to Abraham here with a “No” or a “Yes”. Although God agrees that he will bless Ishmael (verse 20), he disagrees with Abraham’s request to allow Ishmael to be the one God establishes his covenant with.

Sarah your wife

“{as I said,} your wife Sarah {is the one} {who}” or “{it is} your wife Sarah {who}”. Here God emphasizes what he said in verse 16 about Sarah.

is bearing a son for you

“will bear you a son,” or “will give birth to a son for you,”

and you will call his name Isaac

“and you must name him Isaac.” or “You must give him the name Isaac.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “call ... name ...” in verse 15.

And I will establish my covenant with him

“I will establish/make my covenant/agreement with him” or “He {is the one} I will establish my covenant/agreement with,” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 7.

as an eternal covenant

“as a permanent covenant/agreement”

for his offspring after him

“{that will also be} for/with {all} his offspring/descendants {who live} after him.” or “{that I will also establish/keep} with {all} his offspring/descendants {who live} after him.”

Genesis 17:20**And as for Ishmael, I have heard you**

“As for Ishmael, I have heard your request {for him}.” or “I also heard what you asked me to do for Ishmael.”

Behold

“{So} behold/listen,” or “{So} here/this is what I will do:”

I will bless him

“I will {also} bless/prosper him,” See how you translated “bless” in verse 16. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and I will make him fruitful

“and I will give him many children” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and multiply him very greatly

“and greatly increase {the number of} his descendants.” or “so that he has a great many descendants.”

He will father

“{In fact,} he will be the father of” or “{In fact,} he will have”

twelve rulers

“twelve {sons who become} chiefs,” or “twelve {sons who will be} {great/powerful} leaders,” Many translations have “princes” here, but these Ishmaelite rulers were not actually sons of a king, so it is better to use a more general term in your translation.

and I will make him into a great nation

“and I will make him {the father/ancestor of} a great/large people/ethnic group.” or “and I will make him {and his descendants} become a great/large people/ethnic group.”

Genesis 17:21

However, my covenant I will establish

“But I will establish/make my covenant/agreement”. In the Hebrew text, the phrase “my covenant” is put before the verb in order to change the topic to God’s covenant. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Also consider again how you translated “covenant” in verses 2, 4, 7, 9-11, 13-14, 19, 21. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

with Isaac

“with {your son} Isaac,”

whom Sarah will bear for you

“whom Sarah will give birth to for you” or “Sarah will give birth to him”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “is bearing ... for you” in verse 19.

by this time in the next year

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “by/at this time/season next year.” or (2) “at the appointed/set time next year.”

Genesis 17:22

Then he finished speaking with him

“When/After he/God had finished speaking/talking with/to Abraham,” See how you translated “spoke with him” in verse 3.

and God went up from Abraham

“he went up from Abraham/him {to heaven}.” or “God/he left him and ascended {to heaven}.” or “God/he left him.” Consider whether to use a noun or a pronoun to refer to God and Abraham at each point in this verse. Do what is clear and natural in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 17:23

Then Abraham took

“Then Abraham gathered” or “Then Abraham brought together”

Ishmael his son

“his son Ishmael”

and all those born in his house

“and all the {other} males {who were} born in his household”

and everyone bought with his money

“as well as all {the/his male slaves/servants} whom he had bought,”

every male among the men of Abraham’s house

“{yes,} every male in his household,” This phrase refers to everyone mentioned in the first half of this verse, including all males of all ages, not just men.

and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day

“and on that same day he cut off their foreskins,” or “Then on that same day he circumcised them,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

just as God had told him

“just/exactly as God had commanded him {to do}.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this verse and say, “Then that very/same day, Abraham did just/exactly as God had told/commanded him {to do}: He took/gathered ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 17:24

And Abraham

“Now Abraham” or “Abraham”. The information in verses 24 and 25 is background information. Many languages have a specific conjunction or transitional phrase that is used to introduce this kind of information. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

was} a son of 99 years

“was ninety-nine/99 years old”. See how you translated “a son of ... years” in verse 1.

when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

“when his foreskin was cut off,” or “when he was circumcised,” We do not know who circumcised Abraham. Some Jewish scholars think it was Shem and some others think Abraham did it himself. However, the Hebrew text does not say who did it, so in your translation it is best to also not specify who did it. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 17:25

and Ishmael his son

“and his son Ishmael” or “His son Ishmael”. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

was} a son of thirteen years

“was thirteen/13 years old”

when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

“when his foreskin was cut off.” or “when he was circumcised.” or “when {he/Abraham} circumcised him.” See how you translated this clause in verse 24. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 17:26

On that very day

"{So it was,} on that very/same day". Verses 26 and 27 repeat what happened in verse 23 to emphasize what happened. Make sure in your translation that it does not sound like Abraham and Ishmael were circumcised twice. See how you translated "on that very/same day" in verse 23.

Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son

"{both} Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised." or "Abraham was circumcised, and {he circumcised} his son Ishmael." Abraham is the one who circumcised his son Ishmael (verse 23). See how you translated "he was circumcised" in verse 24. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 17:27

And all the males of

“And all the {other} males in/from his/Abraham’s household,” or “All the males in/from his/Abraham’s household,”

the one born in his house

“{including} those {who had been} born in his household”. See how you translated this phrase in verses 12 and 23.

and the one bought with money

“as well as those {whom he had} bought {as slaves/servants}”. See how you translated a similar clause in verses 12 and 23.

from the son of a foreigner

“from foreigners,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

were circumcised with him

“were also circumcised.” For some languages it may be better to move this phrase earlier in this verse and say, “And all the {other} males in his/Abraham’s household were also circumcised, {including} those {who had been} born ...” Do what is best in your language. Also, consider again how you translated “circumcised” in verses 10-14, 23-27. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 18

Genesis 18:1

Then Yahweh appeared to him

“Then {one day} Yahweh appeared/came {again} to him/Abraham” or “One day Yahweh visited Abraham {again}”. See how you translated “appeared” in Gen 12:7 and 17:1. Also, consider whether it is better to refer to Abraham here with a pronoun or with his name in your language.

by the terebinth trees of Mamre

“at/near Mamre’s terebinth/oak trees,” or “beside the terebinth/oak trees on Mamre’s land,” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 13:18, 14:13, and a similar phrase in Gen 12:6.

and he was sitting

“while/as Abraham was sitting” (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

at} the opening of the tent

“{at/in} the entrance/doorway of his tent” or “{by} the front of his tent”. The entrance to the tent was an opening that could be closed by a large piece of cloth or animal skin. It did not have a solid wood door like a house has. See how you translated “tent” in Gen 4:20.

in the heat of the day

“during the hot/hottest time/part of the day.”

Genesis 18:2

And he lifted his eyes and looked

“He/Abraham looked up/around”. See how you translate this phrase in Gen 22:13. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and behold, three men were standing

“and saw/noticed that there were three men standing” or “and was surprised to see three men standing”

nearby him

“a short distance away.” or “not too far away from him.” Translate this phrase in a way that fits with the fact that the men were far enough away from Abraham that he could run over to them (as he did in the next sentence).

And {when} he saw {them

“When he saw {them},” or “As soon as he saw {them},”

then he ran from the entrance of the tent

“he got/jumped up from where he was and ran/hurried” or “he {jumped/got up and} ran/hurried {to them}”

to meet them

“to greet/welcome them.”

Then he bowed to the ground

“Then he bowed {low} {before them} {with his face/forehead} to the ground {to show respect},” or “Then he prostrated himself on the ground {in front of them} {to show respect},” Compare how you translated a phrase that has a similar meaning (“fell on his face”) in Gen 17:3, 17.

Genesis 18:3

and he said

“and said {to them},”

My lords

“My masters,” or “Sirs/Gentlemen,” Abraham uses “lords” here as a polite address to the three men. The Hebrew word “lord” can also be a reference to God, but notice that at this point Abraham probably thought he was talking to men or angels. It wasn’t until later that he realized that one of them was Yahweh (verse 14). (See: **Honorifics (p. 1634)**)

if I have found favor in your eyes

“if you are pleased/satisfied with me,” or “if you consider me worthy {to be your host},” or “if you would favor/honor me {with your presence},” The pronoun “your” is singular here in the Hebrew text, and also in the next clause. It could be that Abraham is addressing each of the three men simultaneously, or that he is addressing their leader or spokesman.

please do not pass by your servant

“please do not leave here without letting me serve you {as my guests}.” or “please stay here for a while as my guests.” Abraham refers to himself as a servant here in order to show respect to his guests. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 18:4

Please let a little water be brought

“Please let me bring {you} some water,” or “Let my servants bring {you} some water,” Saying “a little” was a polite way of showing generosity. Make sure your translation does not sound here like Abraham was only offering the men a tiny bit of water; he or his servants were going to bring them enough water to wash their feet. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Then you can wash your feet

“That way you {all} can wash {the dust off} your feet”. People wore sandals and their feet would get dusty when they traveled. So it was customary to offer guests water to wash the dust off their feet. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Also, notice that the pronouns “you” and “your” are plural here in the Hebrew text. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

and rest yourselves

“and then rest/relax {here}”

under the tree

“under {the shade of} this tree.”

Genesis 18:5

And I will bring

"I will also bring/get {you}" or "Let me also bring/get {you}"

a morsel of

"a little bit of" or "some". Saying "a morsel" was a polite way of showing generosity. Make sure your translation does not sound here like Abraham was only offering the men a tiny bit of bread; he was going to give them plenty of food to eat.

bread

"bread/food {for you} {to eat}." Since bread was a common staple of their diet, it is often used in the Bible to refer to food in general. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

so that you can refresh your hearts

"Then you can be refreshed/strengthened" or "That way you can regain your strength". Notice that the pronouns "you" and "your" are plural in this quote in the Hebrew text and refer to Abraham's three guests. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

before you go away

"and then continue on your way," or "before you continue traveling,"

since you have come to your servant

"now that you have come to me." or "since you are here with me." For some languages it may be more natural to put this clause at the beginning of this verse and say, "Since you are here with me, let me {also} bring some food ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And they said

"Then/So they said {to him}," or "The men replied {to him}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Alright

"Okay," or "Very well," or "That is good/fine," The word used here in the Hebrew text shows agreement or acceptance. Do what is natural in your language.

do as you have said

"do what you have proposed/suggested."

Genesis 18:6

Then Abraham hurried

“So Abraham quickly went”

into the tent to Sarah

“to Sarah inside the/their tent”

and said

“and said {to her},” or “and told her,”

Hurry! {Prepare

“Quickly {get/use}” or “Quickly {prepare}”

three seahs of

“three {large} measures/scoops/batches”. It is not certain how much “three seahs” was, but it is thought that it was more than 20 quarts/liters. It was enough flour to make bread for many people, just as the calf (verse 7) provided enough meat for many people and showed generous hospitality. Besides Abraham’s guests, others in his household may have also joined in eating the feast. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

fine flour

“of {good/high} quality flour.” or “of the/our best flour.”

Knead {it} and make loaves

“Knead {the dough} and make it into loaves/bread.” or “and bake {some} loaves of {flat} bread.” or “and bake/make {some} bread.” The Hebrew word for “loaves” here is often translated “cakes”, which probably refers to their flat, round shape (similar to biscuits). However, make sure your translation of this word does not sound like a dessert, because this bread was not sweet. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 18:7

Then Abraham ran to the herd

"Then Abraham/he hurriedly {left the tent and} went to his herd {of cattle}" or "Next Abraham/he quickly went/hurried {outside} to his herd {of cattle}" or "Then he ran {outside} to his herd {of cattle}" (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

and selected

"and chose" or "and picked out"

a tender and choice calf

"one of his best/choice calves that would be good/tasty to eat."

Then he gave it

"Then he took/brought the calf" or "Then he turned it over". The word "gave" means Abram brought the calf to his servant and put him in charge of preparing its meat for a meal. Make sure your translation does not sound like the calf was a gift.

to a servant

"to one of his servants"

and he hurried to prepare it

"and the/his servant quickly prepared it." or "who quickly slaughtered/butchered it and cooked/roasted it." Make sure it is clear in your translation that this clause refers to the servant, not Abraham. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 18:8

Then he took

“Then he/Abraham brought/got”. Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Abraham, not his servant. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

curds

“{some} curds/yogurt/cheese”. This term refers to churned, fermented milk that has curdled.

and milk

“along with milk” or “as well as milk”

and the calf

“and {the meat from} the calf” or “and the meat”

that he had prepared

“that he had his servant prepare,” or “that the/his servant had prepared/cooked/roasted,”

and he set it before them

“and he served {all of} it/that to the {three} men {to eat}.” or “and he set/put it {all} before his {three} guests {to eat}.” Since verse 2 was the last time the three men were mentioned, it may be clearer and more natural to make them explicit here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Then he stood by them

“Then he stood nearby them” or “Then he stood near/nearby”

under the tree

“{where they were sitting} under the tree”

and they ate

“{and waited on them} while they ate.” or “{and served them} while they ate.” As the host, Abraham stood nearby his guests in order to wait on them and make sure they had everything that they needed. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 18:9

Then they said to him

"Then {one of} the men asked him/Abraham," The Hebrew text uses a plural pronoun here ("they") to refer to one of the three men who spoke to Abraham on behalf of them all (See verse 10). Many languages can use "they" or "the men" in the same way. Make sure your translation of this quote margin does not sound like all three of the men spoke at the same time. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Where {is} Sarah your wife

"Where {is} your wife Sarah?"

And he said

"He/Abraham answered {them/him}," Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham is the one speaking here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, in the tent

"{She is} there in/inside the tent."

Genesis 18:10

Then he said

“Then the/that man”. This phrase refers to the man in verse 9 who spoke on behalf of himself and the other two men. We find out in verse 13 that the man was actually Yahweh. However, at this point Abraham and Sarah probably did not yet know who he was, so it is better to not specify who he was here, in order to keep that suspense in your translation.

Then he said

“said/responded {to him/Abraham};” or “spoke again {to Abraham};” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

I will surely return

“I will certainly/definitely come back”

to you

“to you {here}” or “{here} to visit you”

at the time of life

“at/about this time/season next year,” or “next year at/around this time/season,” For some languages it may be more natural to move this time phrase to the beginning of this quote and say, “Next year at this time I will surely/definitely return ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and behold

“and when I do,” or “When I do,” or “At that time,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Sarah your wife will have a son

“your wife Sarah will have a {baby} son/boy {with her}.” or “your wife Sarah will {already} have a {baby} son/boy.” This means that Sarah would have a son with her when Yahweh returns. It does not mean that she would give birth at that time.

And Sarah was listening

“Now Sarah was listening/eavesdropping” or “Sarah was listening/eavesdropping”. This sentence gives information about something that was happening while the man was talking. Translate this in a way that makes that clear in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

at} the opening of the tent

“inside the entrance/doorway of the tent;” See how you translated “the entrance of the tent” in verse 1.

and it {was} behind him

“which was {right} behind”. Notice that the pronoun “it” refers to the entrance to the tent (where Sarah was).

was} behind him

The pronoun “him” is ambiguous here. It can refer to: (1) “the man” or (2) “Abraham”

Genesis 18:11

Now Abraham and Sarah

“Abraham and Sarah/she” or “Sarah/She and Abraham”. This verse gives background information that is important to what happens next. Some languages use a conjunction such as “Now” here to introduce this kind of information, while other languages omit the conjunction, especially if “Now” is used to begin the last sentence in verse 10. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

were} old, advanced in days

“were {already} very/quite old/aged” or “{were} very elderly”

the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah

“so that Sarah/she was much older than the normal age for bearing children.” or “so that Sarah/she was {far} past the age/time that she could bear/have children.” The Hebrew text has an idiom here that is a polite way of saying that Sarah had reached menopause and so was not able to have children. Other languages may have a similar idiom. Make sure your translation of this clause will not offend or embarrass people when it is read aloud in public. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 18:12

So Sarah laughed within herself

“So Sarah/she laughed to herself {in disbelief}”. See how you translated “laughed” in Gen 17:17 where Abraham also laughed to himself.

and said

“and said/thought {to herself},” or “and asked {herself},”

After I am worn out

“Since my body is {now} worn out,” or “Now that I am too old {to conceive},” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

will I have pleasure

“will I {still} have/experience {this/that} pleasure?” or “it doesn’t seem possible that I could {still} have/experience the pleasure {of bearing/having a child}!” Sarah uses a rhetorical question to express her strong emotion and disbelief. Consider whether or not it is best to use a rhetorical question here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And my lord {is} old

“Besides that, my master/husband is {also} {very/too} old!” The phrase “my lord” is a title of respect that Sarah uses to refer to Abraham as her husband. Also, for some languages it may be better to change the order of some of the clauses in this verse and say, “I am too old {to conceive} and my husband is {also} {very/too} old! How can I {possibly} {still} have/experience the pleasure {of having a child}?” or “It doesn’t seem possible that I could have/experience the pleasure {of having a child} now that I am too old {to conceive}. Besides that, my husband is {also} {very/too} old!” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 18:13

Then Yahweh said to Abraham

“Then/But Yahweh asked Abraham,” The way you translate this quote margin will depend on whether you translate the rest of this verse as a rhetorical question or a statement. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why {is it} that Sarah laughed, saying

“Why did Sarah laugh {to herself} and say/think,” or “Sarah should not have laughed and said/thought {to herself},” or “Sarah should not have laughed, thinking,” Yahweh uses rhetorical question in verses 13-14 to confront Sarah’s disbelief and to emphasize that nothing is too difficult for God to do. Consider whether or not it is best to use rhetorical questions here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Will I really bear {a child} when I am old

“I am too old to bear/have a child!” or “that she is too old to have a child.” or “that it isn’t possible for her to have a child now that she is old.” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to make this embedded quote a direct or indirect quote. Make sure that your translation of “I” refers here to Sarah, not Yahweh. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 18:14

Is anything too hard for Yahweh

"Is {there} anything {that is} too hard/difficult for Yahweh {to do}?" or "Nothing is too hard/difficult for Yahweh {to do}!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

At the appointed time

"At the time that I have set/decided,"

I will return to you

"I will return to you {here}" or "I will come back {here} to visit you". Consider how you translated this in verse 10.

at the time of life

"{Yes, I will come/return} at this time next year," or "{it will be} at this time next year—". See how you translated this idiom in verse 10. Also, for some languages it may be better to put this phrase right after the first time phrase in this verse and say, "At the time that I have decided, which will be this time next year, I will return {here} to visit you," Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and Sarah will have a son

"and Sarah will have a {baby} son/boy {with her}." or "and Sarah will {already} have a {baby} son/boy." See how you translated a similar clause in verse 10.

Genesis 18:15

But Sarah denied it

“But/Then Sarah lied {to him}”. The Hebrew verb here includes the meaning of lying or deceiving.

by saying

“and said,” Notice that the verbs “denied” and “saying” refer to the same event, not two separate events. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

I did not laugh,” because she was afraid

“that she did not laugh. {She said that,} because she was afraid.” Consider whether it is best in your language to translate this quote as a direct or indirect quote. Also, for some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “{When Sarah heard that,} she was afraid, so she lied {to him} and said, “I did not laugh.” ” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

But he said

“But he/Yahweh replied {to her},”

No, but you did laugh

“Yes, you did laugh.” or “That is not true. You did laugh.” Consider whether Yahweh’s reply to Sarah here should begin with “No” or “Yes” in your language.

Genesis 18:16

Then the men got up from there

"{When/After they had finished eating,} the {three} men got up {to leave}"

and looked down toward Sodom

"and started walking/heading down toward {the city of} Sodom." This phrase reflects the fact that the city of Sodom was lower in elevation than the city of Hebron, where Abraham was living.

And Abraham went with them

"Abraham went/walked with them {for a while}" or "Abraham escorted/accompanied them {for a while}"

to send them off

"to see them on their way." or "as they were leaving."

Genesis 18:17

And Yahweh said

“Then Yahweh said/thought {to himself},” The context implies that Yahweh said this to himself, without Abraham hearing him. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 11:6. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Should I hide from Abraham

“Should I keep secret from Abraham” or “I should/will not hide/conceal from Abraham” or “I should/will tell Abraham” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

what I am doing

“what I am going/about to do {to the city of Sodom}”. Whether you end this sentence with a question mark or a period will depend on how you choose to translate this rhetorical question.

Genesis 18:18

And Abraham will surely become

“Abraham/he will surely/definitely be {the ancestor of}” or “After all, Abraham/he {and his descendants} will surely/definitely {multiply and} become”. Some translations begin a new sentence here. Other translations continue the rhetorical question (or statement) in verse 17 to the end of verse 18 and say, “since Abraham/he will ...” or “seeing that Abraham/he will ...” Do what is best in your language.

a great and mighty nation

“a great/important and powerful people/ethnic group,” See how you translated “great nation” in Gen 12:2.

in him

“and through him/them” or “and because of him/them” or “and by means of him/them”. This phrase refers to Abraham and his descendants, including ultimately the Messiah. See the note about this at Gen 12:3. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and & all the nations of the earth will be blessed

“all the people/ethnic groups in the world will be blessed {by me}.” or “{I} will bless all the people/ethnic groups in the world.” See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 12:3. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 18:19

For

“Indeed” or “In fact,”

I have known him

“I have chosen him/Abraham”. Consider whether or not your language has an idiom that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

so that he will command his children

“so that he will train/guide/instruct his children”

and his house after him

“grandchildren, and other descendants {who will live} after him,” or “and his descendants,”

and they will keep the way of Yahweh

“so that they will live the way I want them to live” or “to obey Yahweh's/my ways/will”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is speaking about himself here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

by doing righteousness and justice

“and do what is righteous/right and just {in my eyes}” or “and do what is righteous/right and/including treat people justly/rightly”

לְמַעַן

“Therefore/So”. For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

Yahweh will bring about

“I will do/accomplish”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is referring to himself here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

for Abraham what he has said to him

“for Abraham/him what/everything I have promised him {that I will do}.” The pronoun “he” refers to Yahweh here. Make sure the way you use nouns and pronouns throughout this verse makes it clear in your language who is speaking and who is being referred to. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 18:20

Then Yahweh said

“So Yahweh said {to Abraham},” or “Then/So Yahweh informed/told {Abraham},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous

“I have heard {many} serious/terrible complaints/accusations against {the people of} {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah because they are sinning so/very grievously/terribly. So” or “I have heard many people crying out against {the people of/in} {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah because they are committing/doing very evil/terrible sins/things.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that the phrase “Sodom and Gomorrah” refers to the people in those cities. Also, in the Hebrew text this sentence continues into verse 21. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 18:21

I will go down now

"I must go down {to those cities} now" or "I am going {to those cities} now". The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were both lower in elevation than the city of Hebron. See what you did for a similar case in verse 16.

and see

"to investigate/determine" or "in order to find out" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1594)**)

whether they have done altogether according to its outcry

"whether {or not} the people in those cities are guilty of everything" or "if the people there have done/committed all the {terrible} sins"

that has come to me

"that I have heard against/about them." or "that I have heard they are guilty of."

And if not

"If {those things are} not {true}," or "If {they are} not {guilty},"

I will know

"{then} I will know {it} {and I will not punish them}."

Genesis 18:22

וַיִּפְּנוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יָמָּה

“Then the {other two} men”

Then the men turned away from there

“Then the {other two} men left from there” or “Then the {other two} men left”

toward Sodom

“and continued walking/heading toward {the city of} Sodom,” or “and headed/traveled toward {the city of} Sodom,”

and Abraham was still standing

“and/while Abraham stood/remained {there}”

before Yahweh

“with Yahweh.” or “in Yahweh’s presence.”

Genesis 18:23

Then Abraham approached {him

“Then Abraham came/stepped closer to him/Yahweh”

and said

“and said/exclaimed {to him},” or “and asked {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Will you really sweep away

“Will/Would you indeed/actually wipe out” or “Surely/Certainly you will/would not destroy”. Abraham uses a rhetorical question here to express his strong feelings and concern about what Yahweh told him. Consider whether or not it is clear and natural to use a rhetorical question here in your language. Make sure it does not sound like Abraham is angry or being rude. See how you translated a similar idiom (“wipe away”) in Gen 6:7. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

the righteous

“the righteous/godly/good/innocent {people} {in the city}” or “righteous {people}”

with

“{along/together} with” or “when you destroy”

the wicked

“the wicked/evil/guilty {people} {there}” or “the people {there} who are wicked/evil” or “the wicked/evil {people} {there}, will/would you?” The way you translate this rhetorical question will determine what punctuation mark you end this sentence with. If you use an exclamation point here, make sure it does not sound like Abraham was angry, shouting, or being disrespectful. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 18:24

Suppose

“Suppose {that}” or “What {will you do} if”

there are fifty righteous in the city

“there are fifty/50 righteous/good {people} {living} in the city {of Sodom}?” See how you translated “the righteous” in verse 23. Also consider whether to use “fifty” or “50” here in your translation, which depends on how your translation team has decided to represent numbers.

Will you really sweep away

“Will/Would you really/actually {still} destroy” or “Certainly you will/would not {still} destroy”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 23. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

and not spare the place

“the place/city {and all its inhabitants} rather than spare it/them” or “{all the people in} the place/city rather than let them all live”

for the sake of

“because of” or “in order to save”

the fifty righteous

“the fifty/50 righteous/good {people}”

who {are} in it

“who live in it” or “who live there” or “who live there, will/would you?” The way you translate this rhetorical question will determine what punctuation mark you end this sentence with. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 18:25

Far be it from you

“Surely/Certainly you would never” or “It seems impossible/inconceivable that you would {ever}” or “I hope that you would never”. This idiom expresses emphatically that Abraham does not believe Yahweh would do this. Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. Make sure that Abraham sounds respectful in your translation. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

to do something like that, killing

“do such a thing as kill”

the righteous

“righteous/godly/good/innocent {people}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 23.

with

“{along/together} with” or “when you destroy”

the wicked

“wicked/evil {people},” See how you translated “the wicked” in verse 23.

so that the righteous are like the wicked

“so that righteous/good {people} are treated/punished {by you} as if they were wicked/evil!” or “so that you are treating them both the same way!” If exclamation points are used in this chapter, make sure it does not sound like Abraham is angry, shouting, or being disrespectful

Far be it from you

“Surely/Certainly you would never do such a thing!” or “It seems impossible/inconceivable that you would ever do such a thing!” or “I hope that you would never do such a thing!” See how you translated a similar phrase at the beginning of this verse.

Will the one who judges all the earth not do justice

“As the judge of/over everyone on the earth, certainly/surely you will treat people justly/rightly.” or “You are the one who judges all {the people on} the earth. Certainly/Surely you will do what is just/right.” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this rhetorical question; make sure that Abraham sounds polite. Also see how you translated “justice” in verse 19. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 18:26

Then Yahweh said

“Then Yahweh answered {him/Abraham},” or “Yahweh replied {to him},” Make sure that the various quote margins in this long conversation (verses 23-32) are clear and natural in your translation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

If I find

“If there are”

in Sodom fifty righteous in the city

“fifty/50 righteous/godly/good/innocent {people} {living} in the city of Sodom,” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1676)**)

then I will spare the whole place

“then I will spare the whole/entire city {and everyone who lives there}” or “then I will not destroy the city {or anyone in it}”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is referring here to the city of Sodom as well as the people who live there, not just the city. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

for their sake

“because of them.” or “for the sake/benefit of those righteous people.” or “in order to save those righteous/good people.”

Genesis 18:27

Then Abraham spoke up

“Then Abraham spoke up {again}” or “Then Abraham responded”

and said

“and said {to Yahweh/him},” or “and asked {Yahweh/him},” (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Behold, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to

“Listen, please, since I have been bold to speak to {you,}” or “Please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly,” The idiom “taken it upon myself” means that Abraham has decided to do something and is acting boldly. Consider whether or not your language has an idiom that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

my Lord

“my Master;” or “Lord/Master;” Abraham realizes by now that he is talking to Yahweh, so use a respectful term in your translation that is appropriate for him to use when he refers to Yahweh here and in the rest of this chapter. Also, for some languages it is more natural to put this phrase first in this quote and say, “My Lord/Master, please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly,” Do what is best in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

although I

“even though” or “in spite of the fact that”

although I {am} dust and ashes

“I am {as unimportant/insignificant as} dust/dirt and ashes {compared to you}.” or “I am nothing/unimportant {compared to you}.” or “I have zero/no status/importance {compared to you}.” It may be clearer to put this comparison earlier in the sentence and say, “My Lord/Master, I am {as unimportant/insignificant as} dust/dirt and ashes, so please excuse me ...” Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated “dust” in Gen 2:7 and 3:19. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

Genesis 18:28

Suppose

"{But} suppose {that}" or "{But} what {will you do} if". See how you translated this term in verse 24.

the fifty righteous lack five

"there are five fewer than fifty/50 righteous {people} {living in the city}?" or "there are only forty-five/45 righteous {people} {in the city} instead of fifty/50?"

Will you destroy the whole city

"Will/Would you {still} destroy the whole city {and everyone in it}?" See how you translated "the whole place" in verse 26. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

because of five

"if there are five people too few {who are righteous}?" or "because the number {of righteous people} is five persons short/low?"

And he said

"And/Then Yahweh said/replied {to him/Abraham}," or "Yahweh answered {him/Abraham}," Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is speaking here, not Abraham. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there

"I will not destroy the city if there are forty-five/45 {righteous people} {living} there." or "if I find forty-five/45 {righteous people} {living} in the city, I will not destroy it." Make sure it is clear in your translation what "forty-five/45" refers to. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

Genesis 18:29**Then he continued again to speak to him**

“Then he/Abraham spoke again to him/Yahweh” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and said

“and asked {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Suppose

“Suppose {that}” or “What {will you do} if”

forty are found

“{only} forty/40 {righteous people} are found {by you}” or “you find {only} forty/40 {righteous people}” or “there are {only} forty/40 {righteous people}”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

there

“{living} there?” or “{living} in the city? {Will you destroy it then?}”

And he said

“And/Then Yahweh replied,” or “He/Yahweh answered {him/Abraham},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will not do it

“I will not destroy the city”

for the sake of

“because of” or “in order to save”

the forty

“the forty/40 {righteous people}.” or “those forty/40 {people}.” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

Genesis 18:30

Then he said

“Then Abraham asked {him/Yahweh},” or “Then Abraham pleaded {with him/Yahweh},” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham is speaking here, not Yahweh. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Please do not let my Lord be angry

“My Lord/Master, please do not be angry {with/at me},” Abraham addresses Yahweh using the third person and the title “Lord” to show him honor and respect. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

and let me speak

“but/rather let me say something {else}:" or “but/rather let me ask {you} {another question}:"

Suppose

“Suppose {that}” or “What {will you do} if”

thirty are found

“{only} thirty/30 {righteous people} are found” or “you find {only} thirty/30 {righteous people}” or “there are {only} 30/thirty {righteous people}”. If you use the numeral “30” here in your translation, make sure that it will not get confused with the verse number. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

there

“{living} there?” or “{living} in the city?”

And he said

“He/Yahweh replied,” or “He/Yahweh answered {him},” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is speaking here, not Abraham. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

I will not do it if I find thirty there

“I will not destroy {the city} if I find thirty/30 {righteous people} {living} there.” or “If I find thirty/30 {righteous people} {living} in the city, I will not destroy it.” See how you translated a similar sentence at the end of verse 28. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

Genesis 18:31

Then he said

“Then Abraham said {to him/Yahweh},” or “Then Abraham asked {him/Yahweh},” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham is speaking here, not Yahweh. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to my Lord

“Listen, please, since I have been bold to speak to {you,} my Lord/Master.” or “My Lord/Master, please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly.” See how you translated this clause in verse 27. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1623)**)

Suppose

“Suppose {that}” or “What {will you do} if”

twenty are found

“{only} twenty/20 {righteous people} are found {by you}” or “you find {only} 20/twenty {righteous people}” or “there are {only} twenty/20 {righteous people}” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

there

“{living} there?” or “{living} in the city?”

וַיֹּאמֶר

“He/Yahweh replied,” or “Then he/Yahweh answered {him/Abraham},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

I will not destroy it

“I will not destroy the city”

for the sake of

“because of” or “in order to save”

the twenty

“the twenty/20 {righteous people}.” or “those twenty/20 {people}.” (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

Genesis 18:32

Then he said

"Then/Finally he/Abraham said {to him}," or "Then/Finally he/Abraham asked {him/Yahweh}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please do not let my Lord be angry

"My Lord/Master, please do not be angry {with/at me}," See how you translated this sentence in verse 30. Consider again how you translated "my Lord" in verses 27, 30-32. Contrast that to verse 3, where Abraham probably used the term before he realized that he was talking to Yahweh.

and let me speak just once more

"rather, let me say one more thing:" or "and/but let me ask {you} just one more/last thing/question:"

Suppose

"Suppose {that}" or "What {will you do} if". Consider again how you translated the term "Suppose" in verses 24 and 28 and how you translated the sentence "Suppose {only} ...{righteous people} are found there?" in verses 29-32.

ten are found

"{only} ten {righteous people} are found" or "you find {only} ten {righteous people}" or "there are {only} ten {righteous people}". Consider again how you translated "found" and "find" in verses 26, 28-32. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

there

"{living} there?" or "{living} in the city? {Will you destroy it then?}"

And he said

"And/Then Yahweh replied," or "He/Yahweh answered {him}," Consider again how you referred to Yahweh and Abraham in your translation throughout this dialogue (verses 23-32). It is a good idea to read this conversation aloud at a regular speed and listen to make sure that all quote margins are natural and clear in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will not destroy it

"I will not destroy the city"

for the sake of

"because of" or "in order to save". Consider again how you translated this phrase in verses 24, 26, 29, 31, 32.

the ten

“the/those ten {righteous people}.” Consider again whether you used words or numerals for the numbers throughout verses 24-32. Also consider again how you translated “righteous {people}” and “{righteous people}” in verses 23-32. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1616)**)

Genesis 18:33

Then Yahweh left as soon as he finished speaking to Abraham

"Then Yahweh left {Abraham/him} as soon as he finished speaking to/with him," or "When Yahweh had finished talking with Abraham, he left {him},"

and Abraham returned to his place

"and Abraham returned/went home."

Genesis 19

Genesis 19:1

Then the two angels came to Sodom in the evening

“That evening {Yahweh’s/God’s} two angels/messengers arrived at {the city of} Sodom,” or “Then/Later that evening the two {men, who were} {Yahweh’s/God’s} angels/messengers arrived at {the city of} Sodom,” See how you translated “angel” in Gen 16:7-11. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and Lot was sitting

“while Lot was sitting” (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1601)**)

at the gate of Sodom

“at/by the gate/entrance of the city.” or “at the city gate/entrance.” Cities like Sodom had stone walls built around them, with entrance gates (that were closed at night) to protect the people in the city from enemies.

And Lot saw them, and he got up

“When Lot saw them, he got/stood up”. Some languages have a special dual pronoun that can be used throughout verses 1-19 to refer to the two angels. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

to meet them

“to greet them” or “and greeted them”

and bowed down {with} nose to the ground

“and {then} bowed {before them} with his face/forehead to the ground {to show respect}.” or “and {then} kneeled {in front of them} and bowed/touched his forehead to the ground {to show them respect}.” See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 18:2. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 19:2

Then he said

"Then he said {to them}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, please, my lords

"Listen {to me} please, my lords/masters:" or "Sirs/Gentlemen, please listen {to this}:" See how you translated "Behold, please" in Gen 18:27. Also see how you translated "my lord" in Gen 18:3. At this point, Lot probably did not know that these were angels, because they looked like men. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

Please turn aside to

"Please come to" or "Please stop in at". Lot is being urgent here (using "please" twice), probably because he knows how dangerous the city is. Translate this quote in a way that communicates this urgency. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

the house of your servant and spend the night

"my house so that I can serve you". Lot refers to himself as "your servant" here to show respect to the two men and to politely offer to host them as his guests. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

and spend the night, and wash your feet

"and you can lodge for the night {there}. {That way} too {you can} wash {the dust off} your feet." or "You can wash {the dust off} your feet and lodge/stay for the night {there}." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated "wash your feet" in Gen 18:4.

Then you can get up early

"Then {tomorrow morning} you can get up early" or "Then early {in the morning} you can get up"

and go on your way

"and continue on your way." or "and continue traveling."

But they said

"But the two angels replied," or "The two angels said {to him/Lot},"

No, rather

"No, {thank you,} rather" or "Thank you, but" or "That is kind of you, but". The angels' reply should sound polite and respectful in your translation, not rude or disrespectful. For example, in some cultures it is not polite to say "No" too directly. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

we will spend the night in the street

“we will {just} stay/sleep in the public/city square tonight.” or “we plan to spend/stay the night in the street/square.”
This refers to a public, outdoor place inside the city, perhaps the open place inside the city gate where people would meet.

Genesis 19:3

But he urged them strongly

“But he/Lot insisted urgently” or “However he/Lot continued to urge/invite them earnestly” or “However he/Lot continued to urgently invite them”

so that they turned aside with him

“until they {finally} {agreed and} went with him” or “until {he finally convinced them and} they went with him”

and entered into his house

“to his house and entered it.” or “to his house.”

Then he prepared a feast for them

“Then/There he/Lot prepared/made a big/hearty meal for them,” or “Then/There Lot had a big/hearty meal prepared for them,” Lot probably had his wife or servants prepare the meal (as Abraham did in Gen 18:6-7). It is common in the Bible to say that a leader or head of household (as here) did something, when in reality he had it done by someone else who was under his authority.

and he baked unleavened bread

“including {some} bread without yeast/leavening {in it},” or “including {some} flat bread,”

and they ate

“and they {sat down and} ate {the meal}.”

Genesis 19:4

Before they lay down

"{But} {after the meal,} before they could lie down {to sleep}," or "{After that,} before they could go to bed {for the night},"

then the men of the city, the men of Sodom

"{all} the men of/in the city of Sodom"

surrounded the house

"surrounded/encircled Lot's house," or "crowded around the/Lot's house,"

from the young and to the old

"from/including the youngest to the oldest," or "including men of all ages," This phrase refers to all the men of the city of Sodom, including the young and the old and everyone in between. Consider what is the best way to translate this phrase in your language. (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

all the people from the edge{s

"{In fact,} all the people from every section/part {of the city} {were there}." or "{so that} people from the entire city {were there}." or "{In fact,} everyone/people from all parts of the city {had come there}." This phrase is hyperbole or exaggeration, to emphasize that a very large number of people from the city were there. Consider whether or not your language can do the same thing. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

Genesis 19:5

Then they called

"Then the crowd/mob {of men/people} called out to Lot/him," or "Then the crowd/mob {of men/people} shouted to Lot/him," Consider what is the best way to refer to these people at this point in the paragraph in your translation. (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

Where {are} the men

"Where {are} the {two} men"

who came to you tonight

"who came {to lodge} with you tonight?" or "who came to your house tonight?"

Bring them out to us

"Bring them to us out here" or "Bring them outside to us" or "{We demand that you} bring them out here to us"

so that we can know them

"so that we can have relations/sex with them!" In Hebrew the verb "know" is often used as an idiom that means "have sex with" (as in Gen 4:1, 25). Here it refers to homosexual activities and raping the two men. Translate this in a way that is not too offensive to be read aloud in public. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 19:6

Then Lot went out to them at the entrance

“But Lot went outside near the entrance/doorway {to talk} to them,”

and shut the door behind him

“and he shut/closed the door {of the house} behind him,”

Genesis 19:7

and he said

"Then he said {to them}," or "and/Then he pleaded {with them}," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please, my brothers

"{No,} please, my brothers/friends," or "I beg you, my brothers/friends," or "{No,} my brothers/friends, please". The phrase "my brothers" is used here as a polite address that implies a close relationship. Lot uses this idiom to try to get the men of Sodom to not harm his guests. The men were not his actual brothers. For some languages it is more natural to put "my brothers" (or "my friends") first in this quote. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

do not do evil

"do not do this evil!" or "do not do such an evil/wicked thing!"

Genesis 19:8

Behold, please

“Listen {to me/this} please:” or “Please listen {to me/this}.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2.

I have two daughters who

“My two daughters”

have not known a man

“have not/never had {marital/sexual} relations with a man.” or “have never slept with a man.” or “are virgins.” See how you translated the idiom “knew” in verse 5 and Gen 4:1, though it may need to be translated in different ways depending on the context. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Please let me bring them out to you, and you do to them

“Allow me to bring them out to you {instead} so that you may/can do to/with them” or “If you will let me bring them out {here} to you, then you may/can do to/with them”

as {is} good in your eyes

“whatever you want/like.” or “whatever pleases you.” See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 16:6.

But do not do anything to these men

“But you must not do anything to {harm} these men,” or “But do not violate/harm these men,”

because for that {reason} they have come under the shadow of my rafters

“because they have come under the shelter/protection of my roof/house.” or “because they are my guests and I am responsible for their well-being/safety.” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 19:9

But they said

“But the men of Sodom responded {to him/Lot},” or “But the men of Sodom shouted {at him/Lot},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Get back

“Stand aside!” or “Get out of the/our way!”

Then they said

“Then they said/exclaimed/complained {to each other},”

This one came

“This guy came {here}”. The phrase “this one/guy” shows disdain and disrespect for Lot. If possible, use a similar term in your language here.

to sojourn

“to live temporarily,” or “as a foreigner/outsider;” See how you translated “sojourn” in Gen 12:10. Here it has the negative meaning that Lot does not belong there.

and now he is judging {us

“and now he wants/dares to judge/condemn {us}!” or “and now he thinks that he can judge {us}!”

We will treat you worse than them

“{Then they shouted at him/Lot,} “{Now} we will treat you worse than {we treat} your {two} guests!” ” or “{Then they shouted at him/Lot,} “We will do worse things to you than {we do} to your {two} guests!” ” Here the crowd switches from talking to each other to shouting at Lot. Decide whether or not that needs to be explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Then they pressed hard against the man Lot

“Then they started shoving/pushing hard against Lot/him” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and came near to break down the door

“and moved/surged forward to break down/through the door {of his house}.”

Genesis 19:10

But the men reached out their hand{s

“But the {two} men {inside} {who were Lot’s guests} {opened the door,} reached outside” or “But Lot’s {two} guests {opened the door,} reached outside”

and brought Lot

“and {quickly} brought/pulled Lot/him”

into the house to them

“{back} into the house with them”

and shut the door

“and closed the door.” or “and slammed the door shut.”

Genesis 19:11

Then they struck the men who {were at} the entrance of the house with blindness

"Then those {two} men/guests {who were angels} caused the men {of Sodom} who {were at/outside} the door of the house to be blind," (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

from the small and to the great

"from/including the youngest to the oldest," or "including every last one of them," This phrase refers to all the men who were outside the house, including the young and the old and everyone in between. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 4. (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

so that they became weary {trying} to find the door

"so that they wearied/exhausted themselves {groping/fumbling around} {trying} to find the door:" or "so that they {could not see} the door and gave up {trying} to find it."

Genesis 19:12

Then the men said to Lot

"Then the {two} men/angels asked Lot," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Who else {belongs} to you here

"What other family members do you have here," or "Do you have any other relatives here in the/this city,"

a son-in-law or your sons or your daughters

"{such as} sons-in-law or sons or daughters" or "{If you have} sons-in-law, sons, daughters," Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or later in this verse.

or anyone {else} who {belongs} to you

"or any {other} relatives" or "or any {other} members of your family"

in the city

"in this city," or "in Sodom?" or "here," The punctuation you use here depends on whether or not you began a new sentence earlier in this quote.

Take {them} out

"{then} {quickly} take/get {them} out/away". Whether or not you begin a new sentence here will depend on whether you began a new sentence earlier in this quote.

from this place

"from this city," or "from here," Make sure that the way you translate this phrase fits well with the ways that you refer to the city of Sodom earlier in this verse and in the next verse. It may help to read the entire verse aloud to make sure everything is clear and sounds natural in your language.

Genesis 19:13

because we are destroying

“because we are about/going to destroy”. The pronoun “we” refers here only to the two angels, not Lot or anyone else. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

this place

“this city.” or “it.” The way you translate this phrase will depend on how you translated the end of verse 12.

For their outcry before Yahweh {is} great

“Yahweh has heard that the people of this city are guilty of serious/terrible sins,” or “Yahweh has heard serious/terrible accusations against the people who live here”. See how you translated “outcry” in Gen 18:20-21. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. Also, make sure that your translation of “their outcry” refers to the people of Sodom, not Lot’s relatives who were the last ones referred to (verse 12). (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so Yahweh has sent us

“so he has sent/ordered/commissioned us” (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

to destroy it

“to destroy the city.” or “to destroy them {and their city}.” Make sure the way you translate this phrase fits with how you translated the first part of this sentence.

Genesis 19:14

וַיֵּצֵא אֶלְיָדָבְרָאֵל

“Then/So Lot went and spoke to/with” or “Then/So Lot went to speak to/with” or “Then/So went to”

his sons-in-law

“his {future} sons-in-law” or “his daughters’ fiancés”

who were to take his daughters

“who were {going/pledged} to marry his daughters” or “who were engaged to his daughters”. The word “take” is used here as an idiom that means to marry. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to translate this as an idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he said

“and he said {to them},” or “and he warned/urged {them},” or “He told them,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Get up

“Hurry up {and}” or “Come on! {We must}”. This phrase communicates urgency here.

get out of

“get away from” or “flee from” or “leave”

this place

“this city,”

because Yahweh is destroying

“because Yahweh is about/going to destroy”. See how you translated “are destroying” in verse 13.

the city

“the place!” or “it!”

But it seemed like he was joking in the eyes of his sons-in-law

“But his sons-in-law thought that he was joking, {so they ignored him}.” or “But his sons-in-law {did not listen to him, because they} thought he was joking.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 19:15

Then when the dawn came

"{Very} early the next morning," Dawn is the time before sunrise when it starts getting light.

the angels urged Lot, saying

"the {two} angels/messengers urged Lot," or "the/Yahweh's {two} angels/messengers urgently told Lot," See how you translated "angels" in verse 1.

Get up

"Hurry up {and}" or "You must quickly"

take your wife and your two daughters who are here

"take/get your wife and two daughters {away from the city}" or "leave {the city} with your wife and two daughters"

so that you are not swept away

"so that you will not be destroyed" or "or else you will be destroyed" or "so that you will not die". Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also, see how you translated the idiom "sweep away" in Gen 18:23-24. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-passives\]\]](#))

in the punishment of the city

"when {the people of/in} the city are punished {by God}." or "when {God/Yahweh} punishes {the people of/in} the city."

Genesis 19:16

But he lingered

“But Lot did not leave immediately,” or “Lot hesitated/delayed,” Consider what is the best way to refer to Lot at this point in the paragraph in your language. (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

so the men grabbed his hand and the hand of his wife and the hand{s} of his two daughters

“so the {two} men/angels took hold of his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters,” or “so they took him and his wife and two daughters by the hand,”

because of Yahweh’s mercy for him

“because Yahweh was being merciful/kind to him/them,” For some languages it may be better to put this phrase last in verse 16 so that it does not interrupt the flow of the sentence. Or it may be better to put this phrase earlier in the sentence and say, “Lot hesitated, but Yahweh was being merciful/kind to him, so the {two} men/angels took hold of Lot’s hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and took/led them out of the city.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and brought him out and set him

“and took/led him/them {safely}”

outside the city

“out of the city.”

Genesis 19:17

And it happened when they had brought them out to the outside

"As {soon as} the angels had brought/taken/led them outside {the city}," See how you translated "brought" in verse 16. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

then he said

"one of them said {to Lot/them}," or "one of the angels said {to Lot/them}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Flee for your life

"Run for your lives!" or "Flee/Run to save your lives!" or "Run away from here as fast as you can!"

Do not look behind you

"Do not look behind you {at Sodom}," or "Do not look back {at the city},"

and do not stop anywhere in the plain

"and do not stop/delay anywhere in the plain/valley!" or "and do not stop/delay in the plain/valley for any reason!" This plain or valley was a wide, flat area between mountains. See how you translated "plain/valley" in Gen 13:10-12.

Escape

"Flee/Hurry" or "Go quickly" or "Run away"

to the mountain{s

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "to the mountains/hills" or "to the hill country" or "to the/that mountain {range}" or (2) "to the/that mountain". This phrase is ambiguous because often the Hebrew text uses a singular form to refer to something that is plural.

so that you are not swept away

"so that you will not be destroyed!" or "so that you will not die!" or "or else you will die!" See how you translated this clause in verse 15. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 19:18

Then Lot said to them

“But Lot replied to them,” or “But Lot pleaded with them,” Some languages have a special dual pronoun for “them” that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

Please, no, my lords

“Please, my lords/masters, do not {make us go that far}!” or “I beg you, sirs, do not {make us do that}!” See how you translated “my lords/masters” in verse 2.

Genesis 19:19

Behold, please

"Listen {to me/this} please:" or "Please listen {to me/this}:"

Your servant has found favor in your eyes

"{I,} your servant, have been treated well/kindly by you," or "You have treated me well/kindly even though I am unimportant," The phrase "your servant" does not mean that Lot is actually a servant for the angels, but rather, it is a humble way for Lot to refer to himself and show respect to them. See how you translated that phrase in verse 2. Also see how you translated the idiom "found favor in ... eyes" in Gen 6:8 and 18:3. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

and you have magnified your mercy that you have shown to me

"and you have shown me great mercy/kindness" or "and you have been very merciful/kind to me". This is the first occurrence in the Bible of the important Hebrew word "khesed," which is translated as "mercy," "kindness," or "lovingkindness" and often implies that it was not deserved. Compare how you translated a different word that has a similar meaning ("mercy" or "compassion") in verse 16. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

by saving my life

"and saved my life."

But I am not able to escape to the mountain{s

"But I am not able to flee/run {all the way} to the mountains/hills" or "But there is no way that I can make it safely {all the way} to the mountains/hills" or "But the mountains/hills are too far away for me to make it there safely". See how you translated "the mountain{s}" in verse 17.

because the disaster will overtake me and I will die

"before the disaster catches up with me and kills me." or "before the disaster strikes/occurs and kills me." The word "disaster" is personified here, that is, it is talked about as if it can act in human ways. Consider whether or not it would be clear and natural to do that here in your language. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

Genesis 19:20

Behold, please

"{So} listen {to this} please:" Consider again how you translated "Behold, please" in verses 2, 8, 19-20. It may be necessary to translate it in slightly different ways, depending on the context.

That town there

"That town up ahead" or "That town over there". The Hebrew word for "town" here (and in verses 21-23) can refer to either a city or a town, depending on the context. Many translations have "town," or even "village," here because the place was very small (verses 20, 22). Many other translations have "city" here instead, but that does not fit the context.

is} near to flee to

"{is} near/close {enough} to flee/run to {in time},"

and it {is} a little one

"and it {is} {just/only} a little/small {town}." or "and it {is} little/small."

Please let me escape there

"Please let us escape/flee/run there, {and do not destroy it}."

Is it not a little one

"{After all,} it is {only/just} a little/small place/town." or "{After all,} it is very small." This rhetorical question implies that it will not matter if such a small town like Zoar is not destroyed. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question works well here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Then my life will live

"Then I/we will/can stay alive." or "{If you let us go there,} then {my family and} I will live." or "{If you allow that,} our lives will be saved/spared." Lot says "my life," but he is probably also including his family who is with him. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 19:21

Then he said

“The angel said/replied”. This phrase probably refers to the same angel who spoke to Lot in verse 17. Make sure it does not sound like Lot is the one speaking here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

to him

“to Lot,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Behold

“Listen,” or “Alright,” or “Here {is what I will do}:

I have also lifted up your face concerning this thing

“I will allow/grant your request,” or “I will allow/permit you to do what you have requested,” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate the idiom “lifted up your face” here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

so I will not overthrow

“and/so I will not overturn/destroy”

the town that you are talking about

“the {little/small} town that you mentioned.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause earlier in the sentence and say, “I will allow you to go to the {small} town that you are talking about, and I will not destroy it.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 19:22

Hurry up

"{But} hurry up {now} {and}" or "{But} go quickly {now} {and}"

escape there

"flee/run there," or "escape/flee to that town," Consider again how you translated "escape" in verses 17, 19-20, 22.

because I am not able to do

"because I am not allowed to do/destroy anything" or "because I must wait to do/destroy anything" or "because {God} will not allow/permit me to do/destroy anything". This clause implies that Yahweh will not allow the angel to destroy anything until Lot and his family arrive safely in the town of Zoar.

until you go there

"until you get/reach there {safely}." or "until you are {safely} there."

For that {reason

"That is why" or "Since Lot said the town was little/small," This phrase refers back to what Lot said in verse 20, not what the angel just said.

they called the name of the town

"the town was called" or "they/people called that town" or "the name of the town is". See how you translated "they called the name" in Gen 11:9 and 16:14.

Zoar

"Zoar, {which means "little/small."}" If this implied information is included in your translation or in a footnote, be consistent here with how you translated the word "little" or "small" in verse 20.

Genesis 19:23

The sun rose over the land

“The sun was rising”. Make sure that the way verse 23 begins in your translation fits with the way verse 15 begins, which refers to the same day.

and Lot

“as/when Lot {and his family}”. In that culture the father was often the only one mentioned and the other family members were assumed to be with him. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1601)**)

came to Zoar

“arrived at/in {the town of} Zoar.” or “reached{the town of} Zoar.”

Genesis 19:24

Then Yahweh rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire

“Then Yahweh rained/poured down burning sulfur/rocks and fire on {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah” or “Then Yahweh caused fire and burning sulfur/rocks to rain/pour down on {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah”. The word “brimstone” refers to sulfur, which is a type of rock that is highly flammable. When it burns, it produces smoke, intense heat, and a bad smell like rotten eggs.

from Yahweh out of the heavens

“from himself in heaven,” or “from out of the heavens/sky,” Some translations omit the phrase “from Yahweh” since Yahweh is already mentioned earlier as the one doing this. Also, for some languages it may be better to change the order of phrases in this verse and say, “Then Yahweh caused fire and burning sulfur/rocks to fall/pour like {heavy} rain from the heavens/sky on {the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah.” Do what is best in your language. (See:

Information Structure (p.1652))

Genesis 19:25

and he overthrew

“and (so) he/Yahweh {completely} destroyed” or “In that way, he/Yahweh {completely} destroyed ” or “That is how he/Yahweh {completely} destroyed”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated a phrase with a similar meaning (“swept away”) in verses 15 and 17.

those cities

“those {two} cities”

and all of the plain

“and the entire/whole plain/valley,” or “and the rest of the plain/valley,” Make sure it is clear in your translation that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were also in the plain/valley, not separate from it.

including all the inhabitants of the cities

“including all the people who lived in the cities {of/in that plain/valley}” or “including everyone who lived in the cities {there}”. This phrase refers to Sodom and Gomorrah and at least two other cities in the valley (Deuteronomy 29:23).

and the vegetation

“and {even} {all} the vegetation/plants”

and the vegetation of the ground

“{that were growing} on the ground/land.” or “of/in the/that area/region.”

Genesis 19:26

But his wife from behind him looked back

“But Lot’s wife, {who was} {walking} behind him, looked/glanced back {at the city},” or “... looked back {at Sodom},”

and she became

“and {immediately} she turned into” or “and {immediately} her body turned into” or “and {immediately} {God/ Yahweh} turned her into”

a pillar of salt

“a column/statue of {solid} salt {rock} {and she died}.” or “salt {rock} that was in the shape of a pillar/column.”

Genesis 19:27

Abraham got up early in the morning

"{Meanwhile,} Abraham got up early that {same} morning" or "Early that same morning, Abraham got up". Some translations translate this as the next morning, but it is more likely that this was the same day when Lot arrived in Zoar and Yahweh destroyed the cities in the valley (verse 23).

and went to the place

"and returned to the place/spot"

where he had stood before Yahweh

"where he had stood/been with Yahweh {the previous day}," or "where he had stood in Yahweh's presence {the day before}."

Genesis 19:28

and he looked down

“Then he/Abraham looked down” or “He looked down”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, make sure it is clear that Abraham, not Yahweh, is being referred to here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

toward

“at” or “in the direction of”

Sodom and Gomorrah

“{the cities of} Sodom and Gomorrah”

and toward all the surface of the land of the plain

“and all {the rest of} the plain/valley.”

And he saw that, behold

“There in front of him, he saw that” or “And he was amazed to see that”

smoke was rising from the land

“{lots of thick} smoke was billowing up from/over the land” or “{a large amount of} smoke was ...”

like smoke from a furnace

“like smoke {that comes from the fire} in a {large} furnace/oven.” or “like smoke from a {huge} fire.” During that time period, a furnace was heated by fire. (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

Genesis 19:29

So it was, when God destroyed

“So it was/happened {that} when God destroyed” or “When God destroyed”. See how you translated “destroyed” in verses 13-14, 17.

the cities of the plain

“the cities on the plain,” or “the cities in the plain/valley,” Consider again how you translated “plain/valley” in Gen 13:10-12; 19:17, 25, 28, 29.

that God remembered Abraham

“he kept Abraham {and his request} in mind” or “he remembered/granted Abraham’s request”. Make sure your translation of this clause does not imply that God forgot Abraham. See how you translated “God remembered” in Gen 8:1.

and sent Lot out of the middle of

“and brought Lot {safely} away from” or “So he rescued/saved Lot from”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the overthrow

“the disaster/catastrophe,”

when he overthrew the cities

“when he {completely} destroyed the cities” or “that he had caused/used to {completely} destroy the cities”

which Lot had lived in

“where Lot had been living.”

Genesis 19:30

Then Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the mountain{s}, and his two daughters {were} with him

“After that, Lot moved with his two daughters from {the town of} Zoar up into the mountains/hills and settled/lived there,” or “Sometime later, Lot and his two daughters left {the town of} Zoar and moved to the mountains/hills,” Be consistent here with how you translated “the mountain{s}” in verses 17 and 19.

because he was afraid to settle in Zoar

“because he was afraid to stay in {the town of} Zoar.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause earlier in this sentence and say, “Lot was afraid to settle/stay in {the town of} Zoar, so he and his two daughters moved from there to the mountains/hills, where they lived in a cave.” Do what is best in your language. Also, be consistent with how you spelled “Zoar” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 13:10; 14:2, 8; 19:22-23, 30. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So he lived in a cave, he and his two daughters

“So he/Lot and his two daughters lived in a cave {in the mountains/hills}.”

Genesis 19:31

Then the firstborn said to

"Then {one day} {his} oldest/older {daughter} said/suggested to"

the younger

"{his} younger {daughter/one}," or "her younger {sister}," or "her sister,"

Our father is old

"Our father is elderly," or "Our father is getting along in years," In some cultures, it is not polite to call someone "old". Translate this clause in a way that is accurate and acceptable in your language area. (See: **Politeness (p. 1691)**)

and there is not a man

"and there is no man" or "and there are not any men"

on the earth

"in this land/area" or "around here". Lot's daughter is exaggerating here, to emphasize her point. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

to come to us

"to be/sleep with us," or "to marry us," See how you translated the idiom "went to" in Gen 6:4, which is the same meaning as "come to" here. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

as {is} the way of all the earth

"as {is} the way/custom of all {the people on} the earth." or "which is normal/customary {for people} all over the earth/world." or "which {is} the custom {that people have} everywhere else in the world." (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 19:32

Come on

"{So} come on," or "{So} let's do this together:" See how you translated this in Gen 14:7.

let us get our father to drink wine

"let's get our father to drink wine {until he is drunk}," or "we should get our father drunk on wine," Consider what is the best way to translate this proposal or suggestion in your language.

and let us lie with him

"and {then} we should/can sleep with him" or "Then we should/can have {physical/sexual} relations with him". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

so that we will give life to

"That way we will/can have descendants" or "so that we can preserve/continue our family line" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

through our father

"with/by our father." or "through/with him." (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 19:33

So they got their father to drink wine on that night

“So they got their father drunk on wine that {very} night,” or “So that night Lot’s daughters got their father drunk on wine,” Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Lot’s daughters at this point in the paragraph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and the firstborn went

“Then the/his oldest/older {daughter} went {to him}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and lay with her father

“and slept with him,” or “and had relations with him,” Make sure that the way you translate the euphemism “lay with” will not be too offensive to be read aloud in public. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

but he did not know

“But {he was so drunk that} he did not {even} know/realize” or “But {he was so drunk that} he was not {even} aware” or “But {he was so drunk that} he was {completely} unaware”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

when she lay down or when she got up

“that she got in bed {with him} or that she left.” or “that she had been with him.” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 19:34

Then it happened on the next day

“The next day, this is what happened:” or “The next day”. The phrase “Then it happened” introduces and emphasizes important information which the following narrative builds on. It also creates suspense so that readers and listeners wonder what will happen next. Some translations leave this phrase out, but doing that loses some of the suspense. Do what is best in your language.

that the firstborn said to

“{Lot’s} oldest/older {daughter} said to”

the younger

“{his} younger {daughter/one},” or “her younger {sister},” or “her sister,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 31.

Behold, last night

“Listen, last night”. For some languages it may be more natural to put this time phrase (“last night”) last in this sentence. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

I lay with my father

“I slept with our father.” or “I had {sexual/physical} relations with our father.” See how you translated “lay with” in verse 33. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Let us get him to drink wine again tonight

“Let’s get him drunk on wine again tonight.” or “Tonight we should get him drunk again.” Consider whether it is better in your language to put the time word “tonight” first or last in this clause. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Then you go

“Then you {also} should go {and}”

lie with him

“sleep with him” or “have relations with him” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

so that we will give life

“so that we will/can have descendants” or “so that we will/can preserve/continue our family line”. See how you translated the last clause in verse 32, which is the same as the rest of verse 34.

through our father

“with/by our father.” or “through/with him.” (See: **Pronouns (p.1694)**)

Genesis 19:35

So on that night also they got their father to drink wine

“So they got their father drunk on wine that night, also/too.” or “So that night Lot’s daughters got their father drunk on wine again.”

Then the younger went and lay with him

“Then the/his younger {daughter} went {to him} and slept with him,” or “Then the/his younger {daughter} went {to him} and had {sexual/physical} relations with him,” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

but he did not know

“But/And {once again} {he was so drunk that} he did not {even} know/realize” or “but ... he was not {even} aware” or “But ... he was completely unaware”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated the last clause in verse 33, which is similar to the rest of verse 35.

when she lay down or when she got up

“that she got in bed {with him} or that she left.” or “that she had been with him.” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 19:36

So both of the daughters of Lot conceived

“In that way, both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant” or “As a result ...”

וַתִּהְיֶינָה בְּיָדָאָהוּן

“from/by {having relations with} their father.” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 19:37

Then the firstborn bore a son

“Later the/his oldest/older {daughter} gave birth to a son,” or “... had a son,” Make sure that the way you translate “Later” fits with the fact that several months have gone by.

and she called his name

“and she called/named him” or “whom she named”. See how you translated “called his name” in Gen 5:29.

Moab

“Moab, {which means “from my father.”}” You can include the meaning of this name in your translation text or in a footnote. Some translations put this implied information in parentheses. Do what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

He {is} the father of

“He/Moab {was/became} the forefather/ancestor of”

the Moabites to this day

“the Moabite people {who are still living} today.” or “the people/ethnic group {who are} called the Moabites today.” The phrase, “to this day” or “today” refers to the time when Moses wrote the book of Genesis, which was hundreds of years after Lot and his daughters lived and died.

Genesis 19:38

Then the younger, she also

"Lot's younger {daughter} also"

bore a son

"gave birth to a son," or "had a son," See how you translated the last half of verse 37, which is the same as the rest of verse 38, except for the names.

and she called his name

"and she called/named him" or "whom she named"

Ben-Ammi

"Ben-Ammi, {which means "son of my people.}" You can include the meaning of this name in your translation text or in a footnote. Some translations put this implied information in parentheses. Do what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

He {is} the father of

"He/Ben-Ammi {was/became} the forefather/ancestor of"

the sons of Ammon to this day

"the Ammonite people {who are still living} today." or "the people/ethnic group {who are} called the Ammonites today." See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 37.

Genesis 20

Genesis 20:1

Then Abraham traveled

“Then/Meanwhile Abraham {and his family} journeyed/moved/left”. Consider what is the best way to introduce this new episode in your language, where the focus shifts to Abraham.

from there

“from the place where he/they were living” or “from near {the city of} Hebron”. Abraham and Sarah had been living by the trees of Mamre, near the city of Hebron (Gen 13:18; 18:1).

to the land of the Negev

“{and went/moved south} to the Negev {Wilderness/Desert} area/region,” See how you translated “the Negev {Wilderness/Desert}” in Gen 12:9 (note); 13:1, 3. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he settled between Kadesh and Shur

“There he/they lived between {the cities of} Kadesh and Shur”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled “Kadesh” in Gen 14:7 and “Shur” in 16:7.

and sojourned in Gerar

“and they stayed/lived {there} for a while {as foreigners}, in {the city of} Gerar.” or “and they stayed/lived in {the city of} Gerar for a while.” See how you translated “sojourn” in Gen 12:10. Also be consistent here with how you translated “Gerar” in Gen 10:19.

Genesis 20:2

And Abraham said about Sarah his wife, “She {is} my sister

“{While they were there,} Abraham/he told {people} that his wife Sarah {was} his sister.” or “{While they were there,} Abraham/he told {people} that Sarah {was} his sister, not his wife.” Sarah was Abraham’s younger sister (Gen 19:19). Some languages use special words for “sister” and “brother” in Gen 12:13, 19; 20:2, 5, 12-13, 16, to distinguish when someone is younger or older than his or her sibling. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

So Abimelech the king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her

“So/Then {one day} Abimelech, {who was} the king of/over {the city of} Gerar, had {some of his servants} bring Sarah {to his home} {to be his wife}.” or “So/Then {one day} {King} Abimelech, who ruled {the Philistines} from {the city of} Gerar, had Sarah brought {to him} {to be his wife}.” The city of Gerar was the Philistines’ capital city where King Abimelech ruled from (Gen 21:2, 32; 26:1).

Genesis 20:3

But God came to Abimelech in a dream

“But God appeared to {King} Abimelech in a dream”. For some languages it is necessary to use an honorific title for a king each time (or most of the time) that he is referred to by name, in order to show him proper respect. Do what is best in your language throughout this chapter. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

in} the night

“{during} the night” or “by/at night” or “that night”. It may be more natural to put this time phrase earlier in this sentence and say, “But that night God came/appeared to {King} Abimelech in a dream ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and said to him

“and told/warned him,”

Behold, you are dead

“Listen {to me}, you are a dead man” or “Listen {to me}, you are about to die” or “Behold, {I have sentenced} you to die”. Make sure that the way you translate this clause does not make it sound like King Abimelech is already dead. God is telling King Abimelech what is about to happen to him.

because of the woman whom you have taken, because she

“because the woman whom you have taken {to be your wife}”. See how you translated “took” in verse 2.

is married to a husband

“is {already} married to someone else!” or “is a married woman!” or “is another man’s wife!”

Genesis 20:4

Now Abimelech

“Now/However {King} Abimelech”. Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

had not gone near to her

“had not {yet} slept with her/Sarah,” or “had not had {marital/sexual} relations with her/Sarah,” Translate this clause in a way that will not be offensive or embarrassing in your language when it is read aloud in public. See how you translated a different phrase in Gen 19:31 (“come to us”) that has the same meaning. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

so he said

“so he asked {God},” The way you translate this quote margin will depend on how you translate the rhetorical question that follows it. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My Lord

“My Master;” or “Lord/Master;” See how you translated this title of respect for God in Gen 18:27, 30-32.

will you kill a nation even though

“will/would you kill {me and} my people {group} even if/though” or “please do not kill/destroy {me and} my people {group}, since”. King Abimelech uses a rhetorical question here to express his desperate concern. Abimelech is saying in a dramatic way that if God kills him, he will destroy the nation that Abimelech leads as their king. Make sure in your translation that he does not sound angry or rude. Also, see how you translated “nation” in Gen 18:18. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

it is} righteous

“{we are} innocent?” or “{we are} {actually} righteous/innocent!” Consider again how you translated the word “righteous” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 6:9, 7:1, 18:23-26, 28; 20:4. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 20:5

Did not he himself say to me, 'She {is} my sister

"He/Abraham himself told me that she/Sarah {was} his sister." Abimelech uses another rhetorical question here as he continues to defend his actions. Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated "sister" in verse 2. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And she herself also said, 'He {is} my brother

"And she/Sarah herself also said/claimed that he {was} her brother." Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

I did this

"{So} I did what I did" or "{So} I took her {to be my wife}"

in the integrity of my heart

"with a pure/blameless/clear conscience" or "with honorable/pure intentions/motives" (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and in the innocence of my hands

"and with clean/innocent hands!" or "and I did not know that I was doing anything wrong!" If you use an exclamation point here in your translation, make sure it does not mean that King Abimelech is angry or being rude; rather, he is desperate. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 20:6

Then God said to him in the dream

“God replied to him in the dream,” or “God answered {King} Abimelech in the dream,”

Yes, I know that

“Yes, I know/realize that {it was}” or “I am aware that {it was}”

in the integrity of your heart

“with a pure/blameless/clear conscience” or “with honorable/pure intentions/motives”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 5. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

you did this

“{that} you did this,” or “{that} you took her/Sarah {to be your wife},” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this phrase before the previous one and say, “Yes, I know/realize {that} you did this with honorable/pure motives ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and indeed I kept you from sinning against me

“and in fact, it is I who kept/prevented you from doing this sin against me.” or “In fact, I {am the one who} kept/prevented you from sinning against me.” In the Hebrew text, “I” is an emphatic pronoun. Try to communicate that emphasis in a natural way in your translation. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

For that {reason

“That is why”

I did not allow you

“I did not permit you to” or “I did not let you”

to touch her

“sleep with her.” or “have {marital/sexual} relations with her.” or “do anything with/to her.” See how you translated the idiom “gone/come near to her” in verse 4, which has a meaning that is similar to the idiom here. Also, for some languages it may be better to change the order of these clauses and say, “I {am the one who} did not allow/permit you to touch her so that you would not sin against me.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 20:7

So now

“Now then,”

return the wife of the man

“give back the man’s wife” or “you must give Abraham’s wife back {to him}” or “return her/Sarah to her husband {Abraham}”

because he {is} a prophet

“He {is} a prophet/spokesman {for me},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, a prophet is someone who speaks for someone else. In this case, Abraham serves as an intercessor and speaks for God and prays what God wants him to say (verses 7,17). Avoid a translation of this term that focuses on telling the future, which is only one of the things that a prophet might do. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and he will pray for you

“and/so he will ask me to be merciful/kind to you,”

and you will live

“and I will let you live.” or “so that you will not die.”

But if you do not

“But if you will not” or “However, if you refuse to” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

return her

“give her/Sarah back {to him/Abraham},” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

know that

“you need to know that” or “be aware that” or “you can be sure that”

you will surely die, you and all who {belong} to you

“you and all your people will surely/definitely die!” or “I will surely/definitely kill/destroy you and all your people!” The phrase “all who {belong} to you” refers to King Abimelech’s people, whom he referred to in verse 4. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

Genesis 20:8

So Abimelech got up early in the morning

“So the next morning {King} Abimelech got up early” or “Early the next morning {King} Abimelech got up”

and called

“and called together” or “summoned”

for all of his servants

“all of his officials,” or “all his {officials and other} servants,”

and he told all those things in their ears

“Then he told/informed them about everything that God had said to him {in the dream},” or “He told told them everything that had happened,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and the men were very afraid

“and they were/felt terrified.” or “{When they heard that,} they were very afraid {that God would punish/kill them}.” or “{As soon as they heard that,} the men/servants/officials were very afraid {of what would/might happen next}.” Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to King Abimelech’s servants at each point in this verse. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 20:9

Then Abimelech called

“Then {King} Abimelech summoned Abraham” or “Then the king called Abraham in {to see him}” or “Then he had Abraham brought to him”. Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to King Abimelech at this point in the paragraph.

and said to him

“and asked him,” or “scolded him {by saying},” The way you translate this quote margin will depend on how you translate the rhetorical question that follows it. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What have you done to us

“Why have you treated us like this?” or “What you have done to us is not right!” or “You have treated us very badly!” Abimelech uses two rhetorical questions here to express his anger and to scold Abraham for what he had done. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And how have I sinned against you so that

“What did I do wrong to you so that” or “I never did anything wrong to you, and/but yet” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

you brought a great sin on me and on my kingdom

“you brought on me and my kingdom/people the guilt of a terrible sin!” or “you have caused me and the kingdom/people that I rule to be guilty of sinning terribly!” Make sure your punctuation here fits with how you translate this rhetorical question. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

You have done deeds to me that should not be done

“You have wronged me in ways that should never be done {to anyone}!” or “No one should ever wrong someone the way you have wronged me!”

Genesis 20:10

Then Abimelech said to Abraham

“Finally, {King} Abimelech asked him,” For some languages it is more natural here to omit this quote margin, because the same person is still talking to the same person. However, the words emphasize what King Abimelech says next and may indicate that there was a pause between what he said in verse 9 and in verse 10. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What were you looking for when you did

“What did you expect {to benefit} from/by doing” or “What motivated you to do” or “What were your reasons/motives for doing” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

this thing

“this {terrible} thing?” or “what you did?”

Genesis 20:11

And Abraham answered

"Abraham answered {him}," or "Abraham replied {to him},"

Because

"{I did it} because"

I said, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, so they will kill me because of my wife

"I said/thought {to myself}, 'Surely/Certainly there is no one in this place/city who fears/reveres/respects God, so they will kill me because they want {to take} my wife.' " or "I thought that there was certainly no one in this place/city who feared/revered/obeyed God, so {I was afraid} that they would kill me {in order} to get/take my wife {for themselves}." To "fear God" is an important theme in the Bible. It is a complex term that means to recognize how holy and powerful God is and to deeply respect and honor him by obeying and worshiping him. Also, consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 20:12

And also

“Besides that,” or “In addition to that,”

she truly {is} my sister

“it is true that she/Sarah {is} my sister/half-sister,” or “she/Sarah actually {is} my sister/half-sister,”

the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother

“because she and I have the same father, but not the same mother,” or “We have the same father, but different mothers,”

and she became my wife

“and {after we grew up,} we got married.” or “and {when we were old enough,} I married her.”

Genesis 20:13

And it happened

"It happened {that}" or "{Years} later,"

when God caused me to wander

"when God told/commanded me to leave" or "when God led me to travel away from"

from the house of my father

"my father's household/family," or "the place where my father {and other relatives} were living," See how you translated "house of ... father" in Gen 12:1. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

then I said to her

"I told/asked her/Sarah" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

This {is} your kindness that you can do for me: At every place where we go, say about me, "He {is} my brother

" 'This {is} how you can show kindness/loyalty to me: Wherever we go, tell people that I {am} your brother.' " or " '{Please} be kind/loyal to me and tell people wherever we go that I {am} your brother.' " or "to {please} do me a {special} favor and tell people wherever we go that I {am} her brother." Consider whether it is better in your language to translate these embedded quotes as direct or indirect quotes. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 20:14

Then Abimelech took

“Then {King} Abimelech brought” (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

flocks and herds

“flocks {of sheep} and herds {of cattle}” or “many sheep and cattle”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:16.

and men slaves and women slaves

“and men and women slaves/servants {to Abraham}” or “and male and female slaves/servants {to Abraham}”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:16.

and gave them to Abraham

“and gave them {all} to Abraham/him,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and he returned Sarah his wife to him

“He also gave back to Abraham his wife Sarah.” or “And/Then he {also} gave Abraham’s wife Sarah back to him.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “return” twice in verse 7.

Genesis 20:15

Then Abimelech said

"Then Abimelech/he said {to him/Abraham}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

"Look," or "Listen,"

my land {is} before you

"my land {is} in front of you." or "my land {is} available to you." See how you translated the idiom "before your face" in Gen 13:9. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Settle

"{You may} settle/live" or "{I invite you to} settle/live". See how you translated this verb in verse 1.

wherever {is} good in your eyes

"wherever you think/decide {is} good/best {for you}." or "wherever you want." See how you translated the idiom "good in your eyes" in Gen 19:8. You may need to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 20:16

And to Sarah he said

"Then {King} Abimelech said to Sarah," or "Then he {turned} to Sarah {and} said,"

Behold

"Look," or "Listen {to this}:"

I have given 1, 000 {shekels of} silver to your brother

"I have given 1,000 {pieces of} silver to your brother." or "I have given your brother 1,000 {shekels/pieces of} silver." Coins did not exist at that time. Rather people paid each other with shekels of silver or gold shekels, which was a weight measurement. A thousand shekels of silver was about 25 pounds (11.5 kilos) of silver. Many translation teams like to keep the same numbers that are in the Hebrew text in their translation, and then in a footnote give the equivalent amount in their own currency. Other teams put the equivalent amount in the text and put the literal phrase in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1580)**)

Behold, that {is

"I am doing this" or "The reason I am doing that is"

for you a covering of the eyes before all who {are} with you

"to show everyone that you are innocent {of any wrongdoing}," or "so that everyone knows you did nothing wrong," or "to prove/show to everyone that you are an honorable woman," The phrase "a covering of the eyes" is an idiom which means that King Abimelech's payment to Abraham "covered" (that is, "protected") Sarah's good reputation and showed that she was innocent. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

so that you are vindicated for everything

"and to make it clear that you are not at fault for anything {that happened}." or "and to compensate you for everything {that has happened to you}." (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 20:17

Then Abraham prayed to God

“Then Abraham prayed to God {for King Abimelech},” or “asked God {to be merciful/kind to the king},” See how you translated “pray” in Gen 20:7.

and God healed Abimelech

“So God healed {King} Abimelech” or “So God healed him”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and his wife and his slave women

“and his/Abimelech’s wife and his servant women,” or “as well as his/Abimelech’s wife and his female slaves/servants,” Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to King Abimelech at each point in this verse. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so that they bore children

“so/and they were able to {conceive and} bear/have children {again},”

Genesis 20:18

because Yahweh

“because {previously} Yahweh” or “{Previously} Yahweh”. For some languages it may be more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

had completely closed up every womb in the house of Abimelech

“had made every woman in {King} Abimelech’s household barren/infertile” or “had kept/prevented all the women in {King} Abimelech’s household from conceiving,” Consider again how often you need to use the honorific title “King” with Abimelech’s name in this chapter in your language. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

because of

“on account of” or “because he had taken” or “to punish him for taking”

Sarah, the wife of Abraham

“Sarah, Abraham’s wife.” or “Abraham’s wife Sarah.” For some languages, it may be more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence (which begins in verse 17) and say, “{Before this,} Yahweh had completely closed up every womb in the household of {King} Abimelech because he had taken Abraham’s wife Sarah. Then Abraham prayed ...” If the order is changed, it will be necessary to combine these two verses and to put the verse numbers “17-18” in front of the sentence. Some translation teams have decided that they will never combine verses like that. Other teams have decided that occasionally it is acceptable to do that if it makes the meaning clearer. (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1721)**)

Genesis 21

Genesis 21:1

Then Yahweh visited Sarah as he had said

“Then Yahweh blessed Sarah as he had said/promised {that he would},” or “Then Yahweh was gracious/kind to Sarah {just} as he had said/promised {he would be},” The word “visited” is used here as an idiom that means God blessed Sarah and was kind to her (by enabling her to have a son). The same idiom is used in 1 Samuel 2:21 and Luke 1:68. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and Yahweh did for Sarah

“Yes, Yahweh/he did for her” or “That’s right, Yahweh/he did for her”. The two halves of verse 1 form a parallelism to emphasize what God did for Sarah. In your translation it is best, if possible, to keep both parts of the parallelism, since each part has a different emphasis. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

as he had said

“{just} as he had said {he would do}” or “{exactly} what he had promised {to do},”

Genesis 21:2

so that Sarah conceived

“So Sarah/she became pregnant” or “As a result, Sarah/she conceived”. Translate this clause in a way that is not offensive or awkward, especially when read aloud in public. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and bore a son

“and gave birth to a son” or “and had a son”

for Abraham in his old age

“for Abraham when he was old”

at the appointed time

“at the set/exact time” or “at the time {God had} appointed/set” or “{That happened} at the exact time”. See how you translated “appointed time” in Gen 18:14.

which God had told him

“when/that God had told/promised him {it would happen}.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “So Sarah became pregnant, and at the time {God had} appointed/set, she gave birth to a son for Abraham when he was old, just as God had told/promised him {that she would}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 21:3

And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him

“Then Abraham named/called his son,”

whom Sarah bore for him, Isaac

“whom Sarah had given birth to, Isaac, {which means “he laughs.”}” or “Isaac, {the son} whom Sarah had given birth to.” Many translations include the meaning of Isaac’s name, either in the text or in a footnote. Do what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 21:4

And Abraham circumcised

“And Abraham/he {also} circumcised”. Abraham may have circumcised Isaac (verse 4) on the same day that he named him (verse 3). See how you translated “circumcised” in Gen 17:10-14.

his son Isaac

“his son,” or “Isaac/him,” Consider what is the best way to refer to Isaac at this point in the paragraph, in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

a son of eight days

“who was eight days old,” or “when he was eight days old,” For some languages it may be more natural to put this phrase first in this verse and say, “Also, when Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him,” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

just as God had commanded him

“which was exactly what God had commanded him {to do}.” or “He did exactly what God had commanded him {to do}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 21:5

And Abraham {was} a son of 100 years

“Abraham {was} 100 years old”. See how you translated this clause in Gen 17:17. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

when Isaac his son was born to him

“when his son Isaac was born.” or “when Isaac was born.”

Genesis 21:6

And Sarah said

"{When he/Isaac was born,} Sarah said/exclaimed,"

God has brought laughter to me

"God has made me laugh {for joy}!" or "God has enabled me to {rejoice and} laugh!"

Everyone who hears

"Everyone who hears {about this}" or "Everyone who finds out {what he has done for me}"

will laugh with me

"will laugh {for joy} with me!" or "will {rejoice and} laugh with me!"

Genesis 21:7

And she said

“Then she added/exclaimed,” or “She also said/exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Who would have said to Abraham

“No one would have {ever} told Abraham” or “No one would have {ever/even thought of} telling Abraham”. Sarah uses a rhetorical question here to express great joy and amazement. Some languages must use a statement or exclamation here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

that} Sarah would nurse children

“{that} Sarah/I would bear/have children.”

Yet

“{And/But} yet” or “In spite of that,”

I have born a son

“I have had a son {for him}” or “I have given birth to a son {for him}”. See how you translated “bear” in Gen 18:13.

in his old age

“when he is old!” or “even though he is old!” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. You may need to translate it in a different way here because of the slightly different context.

Genesis 21:8

Then the child grew

“The child/boy {Isaac} grew” or “Isaac grew as a child”

and was weaned

“and his mother weaned him,” or “and reached the age when his mother stopped nursing/breast-feeding him,” Children in that culture were often weaned around the age of three. Translate “weaned” in a way that will not embarrass or offend people. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and Abraham made a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned

“When that happened, Abraham held a big/elaborate feast {to celebrate}.” or “On that same day, Abraham had {his servants prepare} an elaborate feast {to celebrate}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 21:9

And Sarah saw

“But {at/during the feast} Sarah saw/noticed”

that} the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born for Abraham

“{that} the son whom Hagar, {her handmaid} from {the country of} Egypt, had given birth to for Abraham” or “{that} {Ishmael,} the son of {her} Egyptian {handmaid} Hagar and Abraham,” Also see how you translated “have born” in verse 8.

was mocking

“was mocking {Isaac}.” or “was making fun of {Isaac}.” or “was laughing at {Isaac}.”

Genesis 21:10

So she said to Abraham

"So she {was angry/upset and} told Abraham," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Drive away

"Send away" or "Get rid of"

that slave woman

"that servant woman" or "that female slave/servant". See how you translated "slave women" in Gen 20:17. Some languages may have a single word (as Hebrew does) that means this.

and her son

"{along} with her son!"

because the son of that slave woman

"The son of that slave/servant woman" or "Her son". Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here.

will not inherit with my son, with Isaac

"will/must not/never inherit/share {any part of} what my/our son Isaac inherits {from you}!" or "will/must not/never inherit/get anything {from you}! Only my/our son Isaac {will/should inherit your estate}!"

Genesis 21:11

And the matter was very distressing in the eyes of Abraham

“Abraham was/felt very distressed/upset/grieved about that” or “Sarah’s words/demands were very distressing/upsetting/painful to Abraham” or “What Sarah/she said distressed/grieved Abraham very much” (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

on account of his son

“because of his son {Ishmael}.” or “because he {also} cared about his son {Ishmael}.” or “because {Ishmael} was {also} his son {and he cared about him too}.”

Genesis 21:12

But God said to Abraham

“But/Then God said to him,” or “But/Then God told Abraham/him,”

Do not be distressed in your eyes

“Do not be distressed/upset/sad” or “Do not let yourself be upset/distressed”. See how you translated “distressing” in verse 11. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

because of the boy and because of your slave woman

“about the boy/youth or your slave/servant woman.” Ishmael was about 17 years old at this time, so in verses 12-16 use terms for him in your language that fit with that fact.

All that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice

“{Rather,} listen to everything/whatever Sarah tells you {to do}, {and do it,}” or “Do everything that Sarah tells/told you {to do},” The word “listen” means to hear and do what is being asked. Also, the phrase “her voice” refers to Sarah and what she said. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

because in Isaac, offspring will be called yours

“because it is in/through Isaac that the/your descendants {I promised you} will be reckoned/traced.” or “because Isaac is the one who will be the ancestor of the/your descendants {that I promised to give you}.” or “because the offspring/descendants {that I promised to you} will come through/from Isaac.”

Genesis 21:13

And the son of the slave woman I will also make

“But I will also make the son of your slave/servant woman” or “However, I will also make your slave/servant woman’s son” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

into a nation

“become {the ancestor of} an {important/large} people/ethnic group,”

because he {is} your offspring

“because/since he {is} your son/descendant.” For some languages, it may be clearer or more natural to put this “because ...” clause earlier in this sentence and say, “And/But because/since the son of your slave/servant woman is your offspring/son, I will also make him into a {great/important/large} people/ethnic group.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 21:14

Then Abraham got up early in the morning

“So Abraham got up early the next morning,” or “Early the next morning Abraham got up,”

and took bread

“got/brought {some} bread/food”. This phrase may refer to bread or more generally to food. (See: **Synecdoche (p. 1714)**)

and a skin of water

“and a leather bag/container {full} of water” or “and a {full} water container/bag made of {animal} hide/leather” or “and a water bag/container {full of water}”. The word “skin” refers here to an animal skin or hide.

and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder

“to Hagar and put them on her shoulder/back.”

Then {he gave her} the child and sent her away

“Then he sent her and the child/boy away,” or “Then he sent her off with the boy/youth,”

and she left and wandered

“and she/they left and wandered {around}” or “and they wandered {around}”

in the wilderness of Beersheba

“in the Beersheba Wilderness/Desert.” or “in the wilderness/desert near {the place/city that was later called} Beersheba.” Sometimes in the Bible a place is identified by the well-known name it will be called later. That is the case in this verse, since Beersheba is not given its name until verse 31.

Genesis 21:15

And when the water from the skin was gone

“When they had finished/drank {all} the water {that they had} in the {water} skin/container,” or “When there was no more water in the water skin/bag,” or “When the water container/bag was empty,” See how you translated “skin” in verse 14.

then she threw

“she/Hagar {hurriedly} put/left”. Make sure your translation of this idiom does not mean that Hagar literally threw Ishmael through the air. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the child

“the/her boy” or “her son”

under one of the bushes

“under {the shade of} one of the bushes {there},” or “under {the shade of} a {nearby} bush,”

Genesis 21:16

and she went and sat down by herself at a distance

"Then she went {away from him} and sat down by herself," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

as far away as they shoot a bow

"about as far away as someone can shoot a bow/arrow," or "about a hundred meters/yards away," If you do not translate the text literally, the literal text could be put in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1574)**)

because she said

"because she said/thought {to herself}," or "She said/thought {to herself},"

Do not let me look on the death of the child

"I cannot {bear to} watch/see my child/son die!" or "I don't want to watch my child/son die!" Consider whether it is better to use a noun ("death") or a verb ("die") in your translation here. Also, see how you translated "child" in verses 14 and 15. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnoun\]\]](#))

And {as} she sat at a distance, then she lifted her voice and sobbed

"As she sat there, she started sobbing/crying loudly." or "Then she started sobbing/crying loudly." For some languages it may be more natural to change the order of the clauses in this verse (so that the events are in the order that they actually occurred) and say, "She thought {to herself}, "I cannot {bear to} watch/see my son die." So she went {away from him} and sat down by herself, about as far away as someone can shoot an arrow. Then she started crying loudly." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 21:17

And God heard the voice of the boy

“God {also} heard the boy/youth crying,”

so the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her

“so one of his angels/messengers called to Hagar from heaven and said/asked,” or “so he had one of his angels/messengers call to Hagar from heaven and say/ask,” See how you translated the key term “angel” in Gen 16:7. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

What {troubles} you, Hagar

“What is the matter, Hagar?” or “What’s wrong, Hagar?” or “Hagar, why are you crying/upset?” For some languages it is necessary to put “Hagar” first in this quote. Do what is natural in your language.

Do not be afraid, because God has listened to the voice of the boy where he {is} there

“Do not be afraid, because God has heard the cries/sobs of the boy/youth where he is lying {and will take care of him}.” or “Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy/youth crying over there {and will take care of him}.” or “God has heard the boy/youth crying over there, so do not be afraid {because he will take care of you both}.” The phrase “has listened to” means that God heard the boy and that he will help him. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 21:18

Get up, lift the boy

"{So} go help the boy/youth to get/stand up," or "{So now,} go to your son, help him get/stand up,"

and hold on to him with your hand

"and hold/lead him by the hand {to help him walk}," or "and take care of him,"

because I will make him

"because I {Yahweh} will make him become {the ancestor of}" or "because Yahweh will make his descendants become". The pronoun "I" refers to Yahweh here. So either Yahweh had taken on the form of an angel, or the angel was representing Yahweh and speaking for him. See what you did for a similar case in Gen 16:10. Also, see how you translated "make ... into a great nation" in verse 13. Also see 18:18, which is similar.

into a great nation

"an important/large people/ethnic group." See how you translated "nation" in verse 13.

Genesis 21:19

Then God opened her eyes and she saw

“Then God enabled/helped her/Hagar to see” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

a well of water

“a water well.” or “a well.” See how you translated “well” in Gen 16:14.

So she went

“So/Then she went/walked over {to the well},”

and filled the skin {with} water

“filled the/her {water} container/bag {with} water,” See how you translated “skin” in verses 14-15.

and gave the boy a drink

“and gave her son some water to drink.” or “and gave Ishmael a drink {from it}.”

Genesis 21:20

And God was with the boy

“God was with the boy/youth {and helped/blessed him},” This clause means that God guided, helped, protected, and blessed Ishmael, that is, he took care of him. Consider whether or not your language has an idiom that fits well here. Also consider again how you translated “boy/youth” in verses 12, 17-20. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he grew up. And he lived

“as he grew up/older.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this verse and say, “As the boy/youth grew up/older, God was with him {and helped/blessed him}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And he lived in the wilderness

“And he lived in the wilderness/desert {of Paran}” or “He lived in the {Paran} Wilderness/Desert”. For some languages it is more natural to specify here in verse 20 that the name of the wilderness is Paran, rather than wait until verse 21, so that it is clear that both verses refer to the same wilderness. See how you translated “the wilderness” in verse 14.

and became a great bowman

“and became a skilled/expert bowhunter/archer.” or “and learned to hunt skillfully with a bow {and arrows}.”

Genesis 21:21

And {while} he was living in the wilderness of Paran

“While he was living in the Paran Wilderness/Desert,” or “While he was living in that wilderness/desert,” or “While he was there,” See how you translated “wilderness” in verse 20.

then his mother took a wife for him

“his mother found/chose/got a wife for him” or “his mother arranged for him to marry a woman” (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

from the land of Egypt

“{who was/came} from the country of Egypt.” or “who was Egyptian.” See how you translated “the land of Egypt” in Gen 13:10.

Genesis 21:22

And it happened at that time

“Meanwhile, one day” or “Around that same time,” Consider what is the best way to introduce a new episode here in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying

“{King} Abimelech {came/went} with his army commander/captain Phicol to Abraham {and} said to him,” or “{King} Abimelech and his army commander/captain Phicol {came/went} to Abraham {and} said to him,” For some languages it is necessary in your language to make explicit that King Abimelech and Phicol came (or went) to Abraham before they spoke to him. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

God {is} with you in all that you do

“{I have noticed that} God {is} with you {and helps/blesses you} in everything that you do.” See how you translated a similar phrase (“God was with ...”) in verse 20. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 21:23

So now

“So now, {please}” or “Now then, {please}”. King Abimelech’s words to Abraham should sound polite and respectful in your translation, not rude or demanding. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 20:7.

swear to me here by God

“swear/vow to me here in God’s presence” or “solemnly promise me here with God as your witness”. To “swear ... by God” means that Abraham would be accountable to God, asking him to be his witness and to punish him if he breaks his oath/vow/promise to King Abimelech. It does not mean that Abraham used swear words or other foul language. If this custom is not familiar to many people in your language area, you could put this information in a footnote. See how you translated a similar sentence in Gen 14:22.

if you will deal falsely with me or with my children or with my descendants

“that you will never {again} deceive me or my children or my descendants.”

According to the kindness that I have done to you

“{Instead/Rather,} just as I have treated you kindly,” or “{But} just as I have been kind to you,”

do to me and to the land

“{swear/vow that} you will {also} be kind to me and {the/my people in} this land/country”. In this context, the phrase “the land” refers to the people who live in the land. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

which you are sojourning in

“where you are sojourning/living.” or “where you are living/staying {as a foreigner/outsider}.”

Genesis 21:24

And Abraham said

“Abraham said/replied {to him/Abimelech},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I swear

“I swear/vow {that I will do those things}.” or “I solemnly promise {that I will do that}.” See how you translated “swear” in verse 23. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 21:25

Then Abraham complained to

"{But} then Abraham/he confronted" or "Then Abraham/he {also} protested to"

Abimelech

"{King} Abimelech". For some languages, it is necessary to include the title "King" every time that Abimelech (or any other king) is referred to by name. For other languages, it is more natural to use the title only occasionally (especially when the focus is on him), or perhaps only the first time he is referred to in a section (so that his status is clear). Do what is best in your language throughout this section.

on account of

"about/regarding"

the well of water

"a well of water" or "a/the water well" or "a/the well". See how you translated "well of water" in verse 19.

that the servants of Abimelech had seized

"that {King} Abimelech's servants had seized/taken control of {from Abraham's/his servants}."

Genesis 21:26

Then Abimelech said

“But Abimelech responded {to him},” or “When {King} Abimelech {heard that}, he said/responded,”

I do not know

“I have no idea”

who has done this thing

“who did that.” or “who seized/took your well from you.” or “who seized/took control of your well.”

And also

“Furthermore,” or “Besides that,” Here Abimelech is introducing an additional explanation of his innocence in this matter. Consider what it the best way to do that in your language.

you did not tell me

“you did not tell/inform me {about it/that} {before/previously},” or “you never told/informed me {about this/that},”

and also

“and so” or “so {as a result}”

I have not heard about it until today

“I knew nothing about it until today.” or “today is the first {time} that I have heard about it.”

Genesis 21:27

Then Abraham took sheep and cattle, and he gave them to Abimelech

“Then Abraham brought/got {some of his} sheep and cattle, and gave them to Abimelech,” or “Then Abraham gave {some of his} sheep and cattle to Abimelech,” See how you translated “sheep and cattle” in Gen 20:14.

and the two of them cut a covenant

“and he and Abimelech made/established a {peace} treaty/agreement {with one another}.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 15:18. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 21:28

Then Abraham set apart

“Abraham {also} separated/isolated”

seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves

“seven female lambs from the rest of the flock/sheep.” or “seven young female sheep from the rest of the flock/sheep.”

Genesis 21:29

So Abimelech said to Abraham

“So Abimelech asked Abraham/him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {are} they, these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart by themselves

“What is the reason that you set apart those seven lambs?” or “Why did you put those seven lambs off by themselves?” or “Why did you isolate/separate those seven lambs {from the rest of the flock/sheep}?” See how you translated “set apart” in verse 28.

Genesis 21:30

And he said

“Abraham replied,” or “Abraham answered {him},”

Because you must take the seven ewe lambs

“These/Those seven lambs are for you to receive/accept” or “Because I want you to take/accept them”

from my hand

“from me,” (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

so that it can be a witness for me

“to show {everyone} that you agree with me” or “to testify/verify {to everyone}”

that I dug this well

“that I dug this well {and so it is mine}.” or “that I {am the one who} dug this well {and it belongs to me}.”

Genesis 21:31

For that {reason

“That is why” or “Therefore/So” or “{Abimelech accepted the lambs,} so”

he called that place

“Abraham called/named that place” or “they/people call that place” or “that place was/is called”. The phrase “he called” often means that people in general gave a city or other place a certain name. Here it could be that Abraham named the place Beersheba, and then later other people called it the same name, and it became well known by that name. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 19:22.

Beersheba

“Beersheba, {which means “Well of the Seven” or “Well of the Vow/Oath,}” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Beersheba” in verse 14. Also, if you include the meaning of the name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure that the way you translate “vow” or “oath” here matches the way you translate “oath” later in this verse.

because there

“because it was there that” or “because that is where”

the two of them

“they both” or “he/Abraham and Abimelech both”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 27.

swore an oath

“made a vow/oath {to each other}.” or “vowed {to live at peace with one another}.” or “solemnly promised {each other to live in peace}.” See how you translated “swear” in verses 23-24.

Genesis 21:32

So they cut the covenant at Beersheba

“After Abraham and {King} Abimelech made/established their {peace} treaty/agreement at Beersheba,” Consider whether it is better in your language to use a pronoun or nouns here to refer to these men. Some languages have a special dual pronoun for “they” that fits well here. Also, see how you translated the idiom “cut ... covenant” in verse 27. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Then Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, got up

“Abimelech and Phicol, his army commander/captain, left {from there}” or “Abimelech and his army commander/captain Phicol left {Abraham}”. See how you translated “got up” in verse 22. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and returned

“and went back”

to the land of the Philistines

“to the land/territory where the Philistines lived.” or “to {their homes in} the Philistines’ land/territory {that Abimelech ruled over}.” Abimelech and Phicol probably returned to their homes in the city of Gerar (Gen 20:2), which at that time was the Philistines’ capital city, where Abimelech ruled from. The place in the desert where Abimelech and Abraham made their covenant (Beersheba) was probably located on the border of the Philistines’ territory.

Genesis 21:33

Then he planted

"Then Abraham planted"

a tamarisk tree

"a salt-cedar tree" or "an {evergreen} tree {called/named} tamarisk/salt-cedar". The tamarisk tree (also known as salt-cedar) is a small-leaved evergreen tree that grows up to 30 feet (9 meters) high and provides shade. It grows well in desert areas that have salty soil. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

at Beersheba

"at {the place called} Beersheba,"

and there he called on the name of Yahweh

"and he worshiped/praised Yahweh by name there," or "and he addressed Yahweh there by {his} name as he worshiped/praised him," or "and there he worshiped/praised Yahweh," See how you translated this clause in Gen 12:8 and a similar clause in 13:4. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the God of eternity

"{who is} the Eternal/Ever-existing God." or "{who is} the God who lives forever." or "{who is} the God who has always existed." This phrase means that God has no beginning and no end. In other words, he has always existed and he will continue to exist forever.

Genesis 21:34

Then Abraham sojourned

“After that, Abraham/he lived/stayed {there}”. See how you translated “sojourning” in verse 23.

in the land of the Philistines

“in the land/territory that was ruled/occupied by the Philistines” or “in the land/territory where the Philistines lived/ruled” or “in Philistines’ territory”

many days

“for many years.” Abraham lived in the Philistines’ territory for around 25 years, so keep that in mind as you translate this phrase. For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this time phrase earlier in this sentence and say, “... lived {there} for many years in the land ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 22

Genesis 22:1

Then it happened after those things

“Sometime after those things happened” or “Sometime later” or “Several years later”. This is the beginning of a new episode that takes place around twelve years after Abraham and King Abimelech made their treaty (chapter 21). See how you translated “after those events” in Gen 15:1; it may be necessary to translate this phrase in a slightly different way here because of the different context. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that God tested Abraham

“God {wanted/decided to} test Abraham.” Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like the test was over. Rather it introduces what the following episode is about.

And he said to him, “Abraham

“So {one day} he called to him, “Abraham!” ” or “He called to him, “Abraham!” ” or “{This is what happened;} He/God called to him, “Abraham!” ”

And he said

“Abraham replied/responded {to him},” Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Behold me

“I’m listening, {Lord/Master}.” or “Yes, {Lord/Master}?” or “What is it, {Lord/Master}?” Abraham’s reply is respectful and means that he is listening and ready to do what God wants him to do. Consider what is the best way to say this phrase in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 22:2

Then he said

"Then God said {to him}," or "Then God commanded/told {him}," Translate this quote margin in a way that fits this context well. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please take your son

"Take your son {with you}," See how you translated "please" when God is talking to a person in Gen 13:14; 15:5. Your translation of "take" here should not imply the use of force. See how you translated "took" in Gen 11:31 and 12:5.

your only {son} whom you love, Isaac

"{yes/indeed,} your only {son} Isaac whom you love," This phrase repeats part of the previous phrase in order to emphasize it. Do what is natural in your language.

and go yourself

"and go/travel {with him}". It is understood that he was to take Isaac with him. If this is not clear in your language, you could make that information explicit. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to the land of Moriah

"to the region of/called Moriah," or "to the Moriah Region," (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering

"and sacrifice/offer him there {to me} as a burnt offering" or "There you are to burn him up {on an altar} as a sacrifice/offering {to me}," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 8:20.

on one of the mountains

"on {top of} one of the mountains" or "on {top of} a mountain"

that I will tell to you

"that I will show to you." or "that I will point out to you."

Genesis 22:3

So Abraham got up early in the morning

“So the next morning, Abraham got up early” or “Early the next morning Abraham got up”. See how you translated “got up early in the morning” in Gen 20:8.

and saddled his donkey

“and put a {pack} saddle on his donkey {to get it ready} {for the trip}.” or “and got his donkey ready {for the trip}.” A donkey is like a small horse that people used to carry loads (as here). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Then he took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son

“He took/brought two of his servants with him and his son Isaac,” or “Then he took/got his son Isaac and two of his servants,”

and he cut wood

“and he chopped/split {some} {fire}wood {with them}” or “and they chopped {some} {fire}wood {together}”. The reason Abraham is the only one mentioned in this clause and in the next sentence is that he is in focus. He did not travel alone and he probably did not chop the wood alone. Decide whether or not you need to make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

for the burnt offering

“{to use} for the burnt offering {and loaded it on the donkey}.” or “that they would use to burn the sacrifice/offering {and loaded it on the donkey}.” Some languages must translate this noun phrase using a verb. Do what is natural in your language. See what you did in verse 2. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1562)**)

Then he got up and left for the place

“Then he set out {with them} for/toward the place/mountain” or “Then they started traveling toward/to the place/mountain”. In this context, “got up” is used as an idiom that means Abraham started an activity. It does not mean that he was sitting down and literally stood up. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

that God had told to him

“that God had told/commanded him/Abraham {to go to}.”

Genesis 22:4

On the third day

“Three days later,” or “After walking/traveling for three days,”

Abraham lifted his eyes

“Abraham/he looked up/ahead”. See how you translated the idiom “lifted his eyes” in Gen 18:2. It may be necessary to translate it differently here, because of the different context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he saw the place from a distance

“and he could see the place/mountain {where they were headed} in the distance.” or “and in the distance he could see the place/mountain {where they were headed/going}.” Consider where it is best in your language to put the location phrase “from a distance” or “in the distance”. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 22:5

Then Abraham said to his young men

“Then Abraham/he told his servants,” Be consistent here with how you translated “young men” in verse 3.

Stay here by yourselves with the donkey

“You {two} stay here with the donkey,” Some languages have special dual pronouns (that refer to only two people) that can be used in verse 5 to refer to Abraham’s two servants. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

and I and the boy will go

“while the young man and I go” or “while my son and I go”. See how you translated “the boy” in Gen 21:12, 17-20. We do not know for sure how old Isaac was at this time, but estimates range between 18 and 37 years old. Make sure your translation of “boy” allows for that fact.

over there

“over there {to that mountain}” or “{to the mountain} over there”

and bow down

“and bow down {to worship God}.” or “and worship {God}.” In that culture, people had the custom of bowing down to worship God. Make sure it is clear in your translation why Abraham and Isaac would bow down. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Then we will come back to you

“Then we will return to you {here}.” or “After that, we will come back {here} to you.”

Genesis 22:6

Then Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering

"Then Abraham/he took the {fire}wood for the burnt offering {off the donkey}," or "Then Abraham/he took the {fire}wood that they would use to burn the/their sacrifice/offering," See how you translated "{fire}wood" and "burnt offering" in verse 3.

and put {it} on Isaac his son

"and loaded/put {it} on his son Isaac's shoulder/back} {to carry}," or "and gave {it} to his son Isaac to carry," The Hebrew text does not specify exactly where Abraham put the wood on Isaac. Only specify that in a translation if it is necessary in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and he took in his hand{s

"and/while he himself carried" or "He himself carried". Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

the fire {pot

"a fire {pot} {with hot coals/embers in it}" or "the {other} things to make/start a fire". The "fire" can either refer to hot coals (in a pot) or to a flint stone and wood chips that they would use to start the fire on the altar. Make sure that your translation of this phrase does not mean that Abraham was holding fire or hot coals in his bare hands. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the knife

"and a knife {to kill the sacrifice}." or "and a {sacrifice} knife."

Then the two of them went on together

"Then Abraham and Isaac walked on together," or "Then they continued walking/heading {toward the mountain}," Some languages have a dual pronoun that could be used here. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dual\]\]](#))

Genesis 22:7

and Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said

“and {as they went/walked,} Isaac said to his father Abraham,” or “{As they walked,} Isaac said to Abraham,” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My father

“Father.”

And he said

“Abraham said/replied {to him},” Consider what is the best way to refer to Abraham at this point in the paragraph in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Behold me, my son

“I’m listening, my son.” or “Yes, my son?” or “What is it, my son?” See how you translated the idiom “Behold me” in verse 1. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Then he said

“Then Isaac asked {him},” or “Isaac asked {him},” Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits well with what Isaac says next. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Here is/are” or “I see {that we have}”

the fire and the wood

“the fire {pot/coals} and the {fire}wood,” or “what/everything we need to make a fire {to burn the sacrifice},”

but where {is} the lamb

“but where {is} the lamb/sheep” or “but why is there no lamb/sheep” or “but why don’t we have a lamb”

for the burnt offering

“{for us} to use as the burnt offering?” or “{for us} to burn as the/our sacrifice {to God}?” or “that we will burn as a/our sacrifice/offering {to God}?”

Genesis 22:8

And Abraham said

“Then Abraham said {to him},” or “Abraham answered {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

God will see for himself

“God himself will see {to it that there is}” or “God himself will provide”. This is an idiom that means God will provide the lamb. Make sure this meaning is clear in your translation. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the lamb for the burnt offering

“a lamb/sheep for the burnt offering,” or “a lamb/sheep for us to burn as a/our sacrifice/offering {to him},” See how you translated this phrase in verse 7.

my son

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to put this address first in this quote and say, “My son, God himself will ...” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Then the two of them went on

“Then/So the two of them walked on together.” or “Then/So they continued walking together {toward the mountain}.”. See how you translated “the two of them” in verse 6. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dual\]\]](#))

Genesis 22:9

Then they came to

“When/After they got to” or “When/After they arrived at” or “When/After they reached”

the place that God had told to him

“the place/mountain that God had told him {to go to}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 3.

and there Abraham built the altar

“Abraham built/made a {stone} altar there”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “altar” in Gen 13:4, 18.

and arranged the wood

“and laid/put the wood {on top of it}.” Abraham arranged the wood on top of the altar so that it would burn well. Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like he lit the fire yet; he did not do that until verse 13 when he sacrificed the ram.

Then he bound Isaac his son

“Then he bound/tied his son Isaac {‘s arms and legs} {with rope}”. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood

“and put him on top of the wood {that was} on the altar.” Consider which order of these phrases is the clearest and most natural in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 22:10

Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife

“Then he took the knife in his hand” or “Then he picked up the knife”. Consider whether it is better in your language to use a noun or a pronoun to refer to Abraham here. See how you translated “knife” in verse 6. (See:

Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696))

to kill his son

“{in order} to kill his son {before sacrificing/burning his body on the altar}.” In the process of sacrificing, the first step was to kill the sacrifice and then burn up the body on the altar. If necessary, you could make that information explicit in your translation or in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 22:11

But an angel of Yahweh called

“But {before he/Abraham could use the knife,} an angel from Yahweh called/shouted” or “But {just then} one of Yahweh’s angels called/shouted”. Make sure in your translation that it does not sound like Abraham killed Isaac. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 21:17.

to him from heaven and said, “Abraham! Abraham

“to him/Abraham from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” ” The angel repeats Abraham’s name to communicate urgency and that he wants him to stop and listen. Make sure your translation does not sound like the angel was angry or criticizing Abraham.

And he said

“Abraham replied {to the angel},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold me

“I’m listening, {Lord/Master}.” or “What is it, {Lord/Master}?” or “Yes, {Lord/Master}?” See how you translated “Behold me” in verse 1. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 22:12

Then he said

“Then the angel said,” or “Then the angel told him,” Make sure it is clear in your translation that the angel is speaking here, not Abraham. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Do not reach out your hand against

“Do not lay your hands on” or “Do not harm/kill”. Consider whether your language has an idiom that has the same meaning as the Hebrew idiom here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the boy

“the young man” or “your son”. See how you translated this in verse 5.

And {do} not do anything to him

“Do not do anything to {harm} him” or “You must not do anything to {harm} him” or “You must not harm him in any way”. The angel repeats the previous command (using different words) in order to emphasize that Abraham should not hurt Isaac. Most languages can do something similar. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Parallelism (p. 1683)**)

because now I know

“Now I know/see” or “You have shown me”. Yahweh is the one talking here, represented by the angel who speaks on his behalf, or perhaps God is appearing to Abraham as an angel.

that you fear God

“that you fear/revere me” or “that you deeply respect me”. See how you translated “fear” in Gen 20:11. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

since you have not withheld your son, your only {son}, from me

“since/because you {obeyed me and} did not hold back your son from me, {yes/indeed,} your only son.” or “since/because you {obeyed me and} did not refuse to sacrifice your son to me, {even though he is} your only son.”

Genesis 22:13

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked

“Then Abraham looked around”. See how you translated “lifted his eyes and looked” in Gen 18:2. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

and behold, a ram {was} behind {him}

“and suddenly he saw a ram behind {him}” or “and there behind {him} he saw a ram”. A ram is an adult male sheep or goat. See how you translated this term in Gen 15:9.

caught in the thicket by its horns

“that had caught/tangled its horns in the thicket/bushes.” or “that had its horns caught/stuck in a bush.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

So Abraham went and took the ram

“So/Then {after releasing Isaac,} Abraham/he took/untangled the ram {from the thicket/bush}.” or “So/Then Abraham/he {released/untied Isaac,} went {over to the ram} and untangled it.” For some languages it may be necessary to explicitly state that Abraham untied Isaac and took him off the altar before he sacrificed the ram. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and sacrificed it as a burnt offering

“{Then he killed/slaughtered the ram} and burned it on the altar as a sacrifice/offering {to God}”. Animals that were sacrificed to God as burnt offerings were killed first before they were burned on an altar. Make sure your translation does not sound like the ram was burned alive. If that is not clear, you could make some of the above implied information explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

instead of his son

“in place of his son.” or “as a substitute for his son.”

Genesis 22:14

So Abraham called the name of that place

“That is why Abraham called/named that place” or “{Because God provided the ram,} Abraham called/named that place”. Make sure it is clear that what Yahweh did in verse 13 is the reason that Abraham gave that place the name “Yahweh-Yireh” in verse 14.

Yahweh-Yireh

“Yahweh-Yireh, {which means “Yahweh will see/provide,}” or “Yahweh Will See/Provide,” If you include the meaning of this name in your translation text or in a footnote, be consistent with how you translate the verb “see/provide” in verse 8 (and later in verse 14), which the name is based on. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

as it is said {to} this day

“{Even} today/now people {still} say,” This refers to the time period when Moses was writing this book. If that is not clear, you could put that information in a footnote.

On the mountain of Yahweh

“On Yahweh’s mountain”

it will be seen

“it will be provided {by him}.” or “he will see to it {that we have what we need}.” or “he will provide what we/you need.” See how you translated this idiom in verse 8. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 22:15

Then the angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second {time} from heaven

“Then Yahweh’s angel called/spoke to Abraham from heaven again.” See how you translated “called ... from heaven” in verse 11, and how you translated “angel” in verses 11-12.

Genesis 22:16

and said

“He said,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

I swear by myself, a declaration of Yahweh

“This is what Yahweh declares/says {to you}: ‘I swear by my own name’ or “These are Yahweh’s own words: ‘With myself {as my own witness}, I vow/promise {to you}’”. See how you translated “swear” in Gen 21:23-24.

that it is because you have done this thing

“that because/since you have done what I said/commanded” or “that since you obeyed me”

and have not withheld your son

“and did not hold back your son {from me},” or “and did not refuse to sacrifice your son {to me},” or “were willing to give/sacrifice your son {to me}”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 12.

your only {son

“{yes,} your only {son}” or “{even though he is} your only {son}”. See how you translated this in verse 12.

Genesis 22:17

that I will greatly bless you

“I will abundantly/surely bless you,” or “I will {surely} cause you to prosper greatly,”

and I will greatly multiply your offspring

“I will greatly multiply/increase {the number of} your offspring/descendants {so that they will be}” or “In fact, I will give you so many offspring/descendants {that they will be}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

as the stars of the heavens

“{as many/numerous} as the stars in the heavens/sky”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is comparing the number of stars and grains of sand to the number of descendants Abraham will have. There will be so many that no one can count them all (as in Gen 13:16 and 15:6). (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

and as the sand that {is} on the shore of the sea

“and {as many/numerous} as the {grains of} sand on the seashore,”

and your offspring will possess the gate{s} of their enemies

“and they will conquer the cities of {all} their enemies.” or “They will conquer/defeat {all} their enemies and rule over them.” or “Your offspring/descendants will ...” Cities often had high stone walls surrounding them to protect the people inside. The gates in the walls were the only way to go in or out of a city. The idiom “possess the gates of ... enemies” refers to taking control of the cities and conquering the people living there. Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 22:18

in your offspring

“In/Through your offspring/descendants” or “Because of your offspring/descendants” or “By means of your offspring/descendants”. See how you translated “offspring” in verse 17.

And & all the nations of the earth will be blessed

“all the nations/peoples of/on the earth will be blessed {by me},” or “{I} will bless all the people/ethnic groups {that live} on the earth,” See how you translated a similar sentence (“in/through ... all the ... of/on the earth will be blessed”) in Gen 12:3 and 18:18. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

because you listened to my voice

“because you heeded/obeyed my command.” or “{I will do that} because you obeyed me.” Make sure your translation of “my voice” refers to what God commanded Abraham. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 22:19

Then Abraham returned

“After that, Abraham returned {with Isaac}” or “Afterwards/Then Abraham {and Isaac} went back”. Make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham returned alone (without Isaac). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to his young men

“to his/the {two} servants”. Be consistent here with how you translated “young men” in verses 3 and 5.

and they got up and went together to Beersheba

“Then they returned {home} together to {the city of} Beersheba,” or “Then together they {all} traveled {back} {home} to {the city of} Beersheba,” At that time, Abraham and his family were living in Beersheba (Gen 21:31-34). So in your translation, it should not sound like Beersheba was a new destination; they were returning home. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And Abraham stayed at Beersheba

“and Abraham {and his family} stayed there.” or “and Abraham continued to live there {with his family}.” or “where Abraham {and his family} continued to live.” Make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham was living alone in Beersheba apart from his family. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 22:20

Then it happened after those things

“Sometime after that” or “Sometime later”. This phrase introduces a new topic. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that it was told to Abraham, saying

“someone told Abraham,” Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Behold

“Listen,” or “I have {some} news {for you}:”

Milcah, she too, has born sons for Nahor your brother

“Milcah the wife of your brother Nahor has born {some} sons for him,” or “your brother Nahor and his wife Milcah also have {some} sons,” For some languages it may be better to use an indirect quote in this verse and say, “Sometime later Abraham found out that his brother Nahor and {Nahor’s wife} Milcah had some sons,” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 22:21

Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel

"{including} their firstborn/oldest son Uz, then Buz and Kemuel," or "The first/oldest son/one {is} Uz, {the second is} Buz, and {the third is} Kemuel," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the father of Aram

"{who is} the father of Aram." or "who fathered Aram." or "whose son is Aram."

Genesis 22:22

and

"{They} also {have sons named}". Make sure it is clear in your translation that the people listed in verse 22 were sons of Nahor and Milcah, not sons of Kemuel (verse 21). Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Kesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel

"Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." Consider whether it is best in your language to use a conjunction between each name in this list (like Hebrew does), or only before the last name in the list. See what you did for a similar list of names in Gen 10:26-29.

Genesis 22:23

And Bethuel fathered Rebekah

“Bethuel was the father of Rebekah.” or “Bethuel had {a daughter named} Rebekah.” Some translations put this sentence in parentheses to show that it is a separate comment by the author and not part of the previous quote. Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated “fathered” in Gen 11:27.

Those {are} the eight {sons} Milcah bore for Nahor, the brother of Abraham

“Those {are} the eight {sons} {that} Milcah had for Abraham’s brother Nahor.” or “Those {are} {the names of} the eight {sons} whom Abraham’s brother Nahor and {his wife} Milcah had together.” or “{Altogether} Milcah bore/had eight sons for Abraham’s brother Nahor.”

Genesis 22:24

And his concubine, and her name {was} Reumah, and she also bore

“Besides that, Nahor’s concubine/servant-wife Reumah also bore/had {some sons, whom they named}” or “In addition to that, Nahor and his concubine/servant-wife Reumah also had {some sons, including}”

Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah

“Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.” See how you connected the list of names in verse 22.

Genesis 23

Genesis 23:1

Now the life of Sarah was 127 years

“Sarah lived 127 years” or “Sarah lived to be 127 years old”

the years of the life of Sarah

“{Yes,} that is how long she lived” or “That is how old she lived to be”. Consider whether it is better in your language to combine the last part of verse 1 with the beginning of verse 2 and say, “That is how old she was when she died in Kiriath Arba ...” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 23:2

Then Sarah died

“Then she died” or “before she died”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.

in Kiriath Arba

“in {the city of} Kiriath Arba,” or “in {the city of} Kiriath-arba,” You can spell this name as two words, as in the Hebrew text, or combine them into one word with or without a hyphen. Be consistent with how you spell this name throughout the Bible. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

which {is} Hebron

“which {is also/now called/named} Hebron,” or “also/now known as Hebron,” or “that is, Hebron,” The city of Kiriath Arba was later named Hebron (Joshua 14:15).

in the land of Canaan

“in the land/region of/called Canaan.” For some languages it is more natural to put a general location before a specific location and say, “in the land of Canaan, in {the city of} Kiriath Arba, which {is} Hebron.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And Abraham went

“Then Abraham went/came {to her}” or “Abraham went/came {to her side}”

to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her

“to mourn and weep/cry for her.” or “and cried and mourned for her.” For some languages it is necessary to translate this sentence using a verb form that expresses completion or past tense so that it is clear that Abraham actually did this. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 23:3

Then Abraham got up from beside

“Later he got/stood up from {mourning} beside” or “After a while, Abraham/he left”

his dead one

“her body,” or “her,” or “his wife’s body,”

and he spoke to the sons of Heth, saying

“and he {went} to {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {at the city gates} {and} said to them,” The phrase “sons of Heth” refers to the descendants of Canaan’s son Heth (Genesis 10:15; 15:20) who are also known as the Hittites. Consider what is the best way to refer to them here in your language. Also, for some languages it is necessary to make it explicit here in verse 3 that Abraham went to the city gates to meet with the Hittites, rather than wait until verse 10 for that information. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 23:4

I {am}

"I {am coming to you as}" or "{As you know,} I {am}" or "{Since} I {am}". The leaders of the city already knew that Abraham was a foreigner, so make sure your translation of this sentence does not sound like he is telling them something that they did not know. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

a foreigner and a sojourner

"a foreigner/outsider who has settled" or "a foreigner/outsider who is living". See how you translated "foreigner" in Gen 15:13.

among you

"among you {and I have no land/property of my own}." or "in your land {and/so I do not own any property here}." It is implied by Abraham and understood by the Hittites that Abraham's status as a foreigner means he owns no property. Consider whether or not to make this implied information explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Give to me

"{Please} give/sell me" or "{Please} let me buy". Make sure that the way you translate this phrase sounds polite, not rude or demanding. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

property for a burial place among you

"{some} property/land among you" or "some of your land/property"

so that I can bury my dead from before me

"so I have a place to take my dead/deceased {wife} and bury her." or "where I can bury {the body of} my wife who has died." or "so that I can give my deceased {wife} a proper/decent burial." Translate this clause in a way that shows respect for the person who has died.

Genesis 23:5

Then the sons of Heth replied to Abraham, saying to him

"{The leaders/elders of} the Hittites replied/responded to Abraham/him," or "When {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {heard that}, they replied/responded," See how you translated "the sons of Heth" in verse 3. (See:

Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699))

Genesis 23:6

Listen to us, my lord

"{Please} listen to our proposal, my/our lord/master." or "Sir, {please} listen to what we propose:" Abraham was not their actual lord or master. Rather, the Hittites are addressing him in a respectful manner. Also, for some languages it is more natural or respectful to put the form of address "My lord" or "Sir" first in this quote. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

You {are} a mighty prince

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "You {are} a powerful/important leader/man" or (2) "You {are} a leader/man of/from God". The interpretation that you do not follow in your translation could be put in a footnote.

among us

"{living} among us." or "{who lives} among our people."

Bury

"{So} {you may} bury/put". Make sure that the reply of the Hittites sounds polite here in your translation.

your dead

"your dead/deceased {wife}" or "{the body of} your wife who has died"

in the choicest of our burial places

"in {any} one of our best"

our burial places

"burial sites." or "places to bury {people who have died}." or "tombs." For some languages it may be better to change the order of the phrases in this sentence and say, "{So please choose} {any} one of our best burial sites and bury/put your dead/deceased {wife} there." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Each of us will not withhold from you his burial place to bury

"Each of us is willing/happy to give you {some of} his land where you can bury" or "All of us are willing/happy for you to use {any of} our burial sites to bury" (See: **Litotes (p.1663)**)

your dead

"your dead/deceased {wife}." or "{the body of} your wife who has died." or "her." Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Sarah's dead body here since it was just mentioned in the previous sentence.

Genesis 23:7

Then Abraham got up

“So Abraham got/stood up” or “Abraham got/stood up”. The verb “got up” reflects the fact that Abraham and the leaders/elders of the Hittites were all sitting as they talked to each other.

and bowed

“and bowed {in respect}” or “and bowed down/low {to the ground} {in respect}” or “and kneeled and touched his forehead to the ground {in respect}”. We do not know how far Abraham bowed down. He may have bowed his upper body from a standing position, or he may have knelt down and touched his forehead to the ground with his arms outstretched. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth

“in front of {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites, who owned the land {in the area}” or “before the leaders/elders over the Hittites”. The phrase “people of the land” is a term that refers to the leaders of that region who owned land in the area and were the ones to decide whether a foreigner could acquire land.

Genesis 23:8

and he said to them, saying

“and said to them,” or “Then he said to them,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to have two verbs or just one verb in this quote margin. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

If it is your will

“If you are willing”

to bury my dead from before me

“{for me} to bury my dead/deceased {wife} {here},” or “{to allow me} to bury {the body of} my wife who has died,” or “to {help/let me} give my deceased {wife} a proper/decent burial {here},” See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

listen to me and intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar

“{please} appeal to Ephron the son of Zohar on my behalf” or “{please} help me by asking Zohar’s son Ephron”

Genesis 23:9

so that he will give to me

“to give/sell to me”

the cave of Machpelah, which {belongs} to him, which {is} at the end of his field

“his cave that is at the end/edge of his field in the Machpelah {area}.” Machpelah is the name of the area or neighborhood where Ephron’s cave and field were located (verse 17). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

For full price let him give it to me

“Ask him to give/sell it to me for its full price/value” or “Ask him to sell it to me and I will pay him the full amount that it is worth”

among you

“in front of you {all}” or “with all of you {present/here} to witness the sale”

as property for a burial place

“so that I will have land/property to bury {the body of my deceased wife}.” or “That way I will have a place {here} where I can bury {the body of my wife who has died}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 23:10

Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth

“Now Ephron the Hittite was sitting {there} {at the meeting} among the {other} Hittite leaders/elders,” or “Ephron was one of the Hittite leaders/elders who had gathered {there} {at the meeting},”

וַיַּעַן אֶת אַבְרָהָם

“so/and he replied to Abraham” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

in the ears of the sons of Heth

“in the hearing/presence of {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites,” or “as/while the {other} leaders/elders listened,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

for everyone who had come {to} the gate of his city

“including everyone who had gathered {there} at their/the city gate,” The pronoun “his” refers back to “everyone” who had gathered at the city gate, not just one person. Also, in that culture, the leaders of a city would hold their meetings at the city gates, where they would make decisions on important matters such as the one Abraham brought before them. You could include that information in a footnote.

saying

“He said,” or “This is what he said:” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Genesis 23:11

No, my lord

“That is not necessary, sir.” or “Sir, there is no need for that.” Make sure your translation of this phrase sounds polite. In some cultures it is rude to say “No” too directly. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

Listen to me

“{Please} listen to this/my proposal:” or “{Please} accept this offer/proposal:” or “{Please} listen to what I am proposing:”

I give to you the field

“I {hereby} give/offer you the {entire} field,” Ephron is making a formal proposal or offer. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language.

and I give to you the cave that {is} in it

“including the cave that {is} in it.” or “as well as the cave that {is} in it.”

I give it to you

“I’m giving it/them to you {now/here}”

before the eyes of the sons of my people

“in the sight/presence of the leaders/elders of my people.” or “as/while the leaders/elders of my people watch/listen {as witnesses}.” or “and {all} the leaders/elders of my people here are witnesses of this.”

Bury your dead

“{You may/can} bury your dead/deceased {wife} {there}.” or “{Please go ahead and} bury your dead/deceased {wife} {on that land}.”

Genesis 23:12

Then Abraham bowed

"Then Abraham bowed {again}" or "{Once again,} Abraham bowed". See how you translated "bowed" in verse 7. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

the people of the land

"in front of the people/leaders/elders who owned the land {in the area}," or "before/to the leaders/elders {of/over the Hittites}," See how you translated this phrase in verse 7. You could translate this in a slightly different way here since these people have been referred to repeatedly before this.

Genesis 23:13

and he spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying

“and he said to Ephron while the {rest of} the leaders/elders listened,” or “As/While they {all} listened, he/Abraham said to Ephron,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “in the ears of” in verse 10. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

But

“Rather {than that},” or “Instead {of doing that},”

if you would, please

“if you are willing,” or “since you are willing {to let me have the field},” In verses 9-15, Abraham and Ephron are bargaining indirectly with each other according to the customs of that culture and time. Keep that in mind as you translate their conversation.

listen to me

“please accept my proposal/offer.” or “please listen to what I am offering/proposing.”

I will give the price of the field

“I will give/pay you the {full} price of what the field is worth.” or “I want to give/pay you the {full} price of/for the field.”

Take it from me

“{Please} take/accept my money/payment,” or “{Please} let me buy it from you,” (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

and I will bury my dead there

“so that I can bury {the body of} my dead/deceased {wife} there.” or “so that {the field will be mine and} I can bury {my wife} there who has died.” or “then I will have a place to bury {the body of} my dead/deceased {wife}.”

Genesis 23:14

Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him

“Then Ephron said to Abraham,” or “Ephron responded to Abraham,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Genesis 23:15

My lord

“Sir,” See how you translated this respectful form of address in verses 6 and 11. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

listen to me

“{please} listen to me.” See how you translated this clause in verse 13. Make sure Ephron sounds polite here in your translation. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

Land {worth} 400 shekels of silver

“The land/field {is worth} 400 shekels of silver.” or “If I were selling that land, it would cost 400 shekels of silver.” Coins did not exist at that time. Rather people paid each other with shekels of silver or gold, which was a weight measurement. Four hundred shekels of silver was about 10 pounds (4.5 kilos) of silver. Many translation teams like to keep the same numbers that are in the Hebrew text in their translation, and then in a footnote give the equivalent amount in their own currency. Other teams put the equivalent amount in the text and put the literal phrase in a footnote. See how you translated “shekels of silver” in Gen 20:16. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1580)**)

between me and you

“{However,} since you and I are friends,” or “{But} as far as you and I are concerned,”

what {is} that

“what {significance} {is} that?” or “that {is} not important.” or “I would not ask you to pay that.” or “there is no need for that.” Decide whether or not a rhetorical question fits here well in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

So bury your dead

“So {go ahead and} bury your dead/deceased {wife} {there}.” Consider again how you translated “bury ... dead” in verses 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 15.

Genesis 23:16

So Abraham listened to Ephron

“Abraham accepted Ephron’s price/offer,” or “Abraham agreed with Ephron’s price/offer,” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham did not just hear what Ephron said, but also acted on it.

and Abraham weighed out to Ephron

“and/so he paid Ephron/him”

the price that he had mentioned

“the {amount of} silver that he/Ephron had stated/suggested”

in the ears of the sons of Heth

“in the hearing/presence of the {other} Hittite leaders/elders” or “as/while {the rest of} {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites {watched and} listened”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 10. You might need to translate it differently here because of the different context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

400 shekels of silver

“{which was} 400 shekels of silver,” or “{Abraham weighed the} 400 shekels of silver”

the currency among the merchants

“using/with the same kind of weights/scale that merchants used {to accurately weigh silver/things}.” or “using the standard shekel/weights that sellers/traders used {at that time}.”

Genesis 23:17

So the field of Ephron & was deeded

“So Ephron’s field” or “That is how the field that belonged to Ephron”. Verses 17-18 are a summary of the transaction between Ephron and Abraham. Make sure your translation of these verses does not sound like this was a second time that the field was sold.

that {was} in Machpelah

“that {was} in the Machpelah {area}”

which {was} before Mamre

“east of {the city of} Mamre,” or “near {the city of} Mamre,” Mamre was another name for the city of Hebron (verse 19). The name probably came from Abraham’s friend and ally who lived there (Gen 13:18; 14:13).

the field and the cave that {was} in it

“{including both} the field and the cave that {was} in it,” or “including the cave that {was} in the field,”

and every tree that {was}

“as well as all the trees that {were}”

in the field, that {was} within all of its surrounding borders

“in the field, {whatever was} inside its borders,” or “anywhere inside the borders/boundaries of the field,”

So & was deeded

“was {officially/legally} deeded/sold {by Ephron}” or “Ephron deeded/sold {all of that}”. For some languages it may be better to break up this long sentence, change the order of the phrases in this verse, and say, “So Ephron sold his field {to Abraham}, including the cave that was in the field, as well as all the trees that were inside its boundaries. The field was in the Machpelah {area} near {the city of} Mamre. {Ephron sold the/that field} ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 23:18

to Abraham as his possession

“to Abraham as his property” or “to Abraham, and it became his possession/property”

before the eyes of the sons of Heth

“in the sight/presence of {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites” or “while {the leaders/elders of} the Hittites watched {as witnesses}”. See how you translated the idiom “before the eyes of” in verse 11. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

before everyone who had come to the gate of his city

“including everyone who had gathered at their/the city gate/gates.” or “That included everyone who had met together at their/the city gate/gates.” For some languages it may be more natural to change the order of some of the clauses in this verse and say, “... to Abraham in front of {the leaders of} the Hittites who had gathered at the city gates, so that they all witnessed that the land was now Abraham’s property.” Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated a similar clause in verse 10.

Genesis 23:19

Then after that

“After that,” or “After Abraham/he bought the field,”

Abraham buried Sarah his wife

“Abraham/he put/placed {the body of} his wife Sarah”

in the cave of the field of Machpelah

“in the cave in the field in the Machpelah {area},” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Machpelah” in verses 9 and 17. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

before Mamre

“east of {the city of} Mamre,” or “near {the city of} Mamre,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 17. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled this name in verse 17 and in Gen 14:13, 24; 18:1.

which {is} Hebron

“which {is also called/named} Hebron,” or “also known as Hebron,” or “that is, Hebron,”

in the land of Canaan

“in the land/region called Canaan.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2.

Genesis 23:20

So the field and the cave that {was} in it were deeded to Abraham

“So {that is how} that field, including the cave that {was} in the field, was/were {officially/legally} sold to Abraham” or “So {in that way,} the field {of Ephron}, including ...” Verse 20 is a concluding summary of chapter 23 and repeats parts of verses 17-18. Make sure that the way you translate this does not sound like Abraham bought another property from the Hittites.

as property for a burial place from the sons of Heth

“by the Hittites as a burial place/site.” or “by the Hittites, so that he had a place where he could bury {his wife who had died}.” Consider again how you translated “a burial place” in verses 4, 9, and 20, and how you translated “the sons of Heth” in verses 3, 5, 7, 10, 16, 18, and 20.

Genesis 24

Genesis 24:1

Now Abraham was old, advanced in days

“Abraham had lived a long time and was {now} {very} old,” or “Abraham was very old now. He had lived many years,” or “Now Abraham had become very old,” Verse 1 gives the setting for the new episode and begins with a doublet that emphasizes how old Abraham was. Try to preserve this emphasis in a way that is natural in your translation. (See: **Doublet (p.1614)**)

and Yahweh had blessed Abraham

“and Yahweh had blessed him” or “and Yahweh had caused him to prosper”. See how you translated “bless” in Gen 12:2-3.

in all {things}

“in everything {he had done}.” or “in every way.”

Genesis 24:2

Then Abraham said to

"{One day} Abraham/he told". Consider what is the best way to introduce the first event in this episode in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

his oldest servant of his house

"the oldest servant in his household," or "his senior/chief household servant,"

who was in charge of everything

"who managed everything that he owned," or "who took care of his entire estate for him,"

Please put your hand under my thigh

"Please put your hand under my thigh/leg {to show that you will do what I ask}". You can make the meaning of this custom explicit in your translation, or you can put that information in a footnote. What Abraham asks his servant to do here is part of the vow-making process in verse 3. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 24:3

and I will have you swear

“I want you to vow {to me}” or “and swear/vow {to me}” or “and make an unbreakable promise {to me}”. Decide the best way to translate this command in your language. Also, see how you translated “swear” in Gen 21:23, and see the note about that there. (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1649)**)

by Yahweh, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth

“with Yahweh as your witness, the God who rules/created the heavens and the earth,” See how you translated “the heavens and the earth” in Gen 1:1.

that you will not take a wife for my son

“that you will not get/find/choose a wife/woman for my son {Isaac} {to marry} from {among}” or “that you will not arrange for my son {Isaac} to marry”. For some languages it is clearer and more natural to make “Isaac” explicit here in verse 3 rather than wait until the end of verse 4. Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated the idiom “took a wife for” in Gen 21:21. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

from the daughters of the Canaanites whom I am living among

“the Canaanite women whom we live among” or “{any of} the Canaanite women who live around us here”. Make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham was living by himself among the Canaanites; his family and servants also lived among them with him.

Genesis 24:4

but you will go

“Rather/Instead, you must go” or “Rather/Instead, I want you to go” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1649)**)

to my country

“to my {home} country” or “to the country/region where I grew up” or “to the country that I came from”

and to my relatives

“to my relatives/family/kinfolk {who live there},”

and take a wife for my son, for Isaac

“and find/choose a wife/woman {from there} for my son Isaac {to marry}.” or “and get/choose a wife/woman {from among them} for him {to marry}.” or “and arrange for him to marry one of their daughters.” The way you refer to Isaac here will depend on how you referred to him in verse 3.

Genesis 24:5

Then the servant said to him

“Then the servant asked Abraham,” or “But {Abraham’s} servant asked him,” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language so that it fits the context well. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Suppose

“Suppose {that}” or “What {should I do} if”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 18:24, 28, 29. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

the woman

“the {young} woman {I find/choose}” or “{when I find} that {young} woman, she”

is not willing

“does not want/agree” or “refuses”

to come with me

“to come/go {back} with me” or “to follow me {back}”

to this land

“to this land {to live}?” or “to {live in} this land?”

Should I take your son back

“{In that case,} should I take your son” or “Do you want me to {then} take your son back {there}”

to the country that you came from

“to your {home} country {to marry her} {and live there}?” or “{to live} in your {home} country?”

Genesis 24:6

Then Abraham said to him

“Then Abraham said/replied to his servant,” or “Abraham answered him,” or “Abraham replied,” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin at this point in the conversation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins** (p.1699))

Be sure that you do not take my son back

“{No,} be/make sure that you never take my son back” or “{No,} you must definitely not/never take my son back”

there

“there {to live}” or “to my home country/land {to live}”

Genesis 24:7

Yahweh, the God of the heavens

"{because} Yahweh, the God who rules/created the heavens," Make sure it is clear in your translation that verse 7 gives the reason for verse 6. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here, and see how you translated "the God of the heavens" in verse 3.

who took me from the house of my father

"brought/led me {here} from my father's household"

and from the land of my relatives

"and from the land where {the rest of} my relatives/family live,"

and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying

"and he vowed to me," or "and he made an oath/vow to me and said," or "and he made an unbreakable promise to me and said,"

To your offspring I will give this land

"I will give this land to your offspring/descendants" or "that he would/will give this land {where we live} to my descendants". The phrase "this land" refers to the land of Canaan here, not the land where Abraham's relatives lived. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Also, consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote with a direct quote or an indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

he will send his angel before you

"He will send one of his angels ahead of you {to guide/help you}," If you begin a new sentence here, make sure that the previous sentence is well-formed and complete in your language. Also, see how you translated "angel" in Gen 22:11, 15.

and you will take

"so that you will {be able to} find/choose" or "so that you can find/get"

a wife for my son from there

"a wife/woman from there for my son {to marry}" or "a wife/woman from my home country/land for my son {to marry}." See how you translated "take/find a wife for" in verses 3-4.

Genesis 24:8

But if the woman

“However, if the woman {you find/choose}”

is not willing

“does not want” or “refuses”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 5.

to come with you

“to come {back} {here} with you,” or “to follow you {back} {here},” See how you translated a similar phrase (“to come with me”) in verse 5.

from this oath of mine

“then you will be released/free from {keeping} this oath/vow that I am asking/requesting you to swear/make {today/now}.” or “then you will not have to keep/fulfill this binding/unbreakable promise that you are swearing/making to me {today/now}.” An oath is a serious, unbreakable promise or vow that is made before God to guarantee that it will be fulfilled. See how you translated the verb form of this word (“swear” or “vow”) in verse 3.

Only

“Just” or “But {no matter what happens,}”

do not take my son back there

“you must not/never take my son back to my home country/land!” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 6.

Genesis 24:9

וַיִּשָׁם אֶת יָדוֹ תַּחַת יַד אֲבִרְהָם מֵאֲדָנָיו י

“So the/Abraham’s servant put his hand under his master/owner Abraham’s thigh/leg”. See how you translated a similar clause in verse 2. Also, in that culture, people owned servants and had complete authority over them. Make sure your translation of “master” and “servant” does not imply that the servant was mistreated. Servants were treated well, could hold important positions and were often considered as members of the master’s family. See how you translated a related term “mistress/owner” in Gen 16:4, 8-9. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and swore to him

“and vowed to him” or “and made an oath/vow to him” or “and made an unbreakable promise to him”. See how you translated “swore” in verse 7 and “swear” in verse 3.

concerning this matter

“that he would do what he/Abraham had requested/told him to do.” or “that he would go get/find a wife/woman for Isaac.” Some languages need to make explicit what “this matter” refers to. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 24:10

Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master

“Then/Next he got ten of his master’s camels ready {for the trip}”. Make sure that your translation of “took” does not imply that the servant stole the camels or valuable things from Abraham. Rather, the “good things” that he loaded on the camels included things that he would give as gifts to Isaac’s relatives (verse 53). Also, see how you translated “camels” in Gen 12:16.

and left, and all {kinds of} good {things} from his master {were} in his hand, and he got up

“and left {with some other servants}, taking with him many of his master’s valuable things {to give as gifts}. Then he” or “and after he loaded them with all kinds of valuable things from his master {to use as gifts}, he left {with some other servants} and”. For some languages, it is best to make it explicit here in verse 10 that other servants went with Abraham’s chief servant, rather than have them appear suddenly in verse 32. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and went to

“and made the {long} journey/trip to” or “Then he traveled to”. This was about a 800 kilometer (500 mile) trip and would take camels about seventeen days to complete. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Aram Naharaim

“{the region of} Aram Naharaim,”

to the city of Nahor

“to Nahor’s city.” or “to the city where Nahor lived.” Nahor lived in the city of Haran (Gen 11:31-32). That information could be put in a footnote. Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like Nahor owned the city.

Genesis 24:11

Then he made the camels kneel down outside the city

"{When they arrived there,} Abraham's servant had the camels kneel/lie down {to rest} outside the city"

by the well of water

"near its well" or "by/near the {community/public} well {that was there}". Each town or city had a well where people from the city came to get their water. See how you translated "well of water" in Gen 21:19. You might need to translate this in a slightly different way here because of the different context.

at evening time

"It was evening time," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

at the time the women who draw water come out

"the time when the {young} women {of the city} came out to draw/get water {from the well} {for their families/homes}." or "when the {young} women {of the city} were starting to come out {to the well} to draw/get water {for their families/homes}." In that time and culture, there was no running water in homes so people had to come out to the city well to get water for their families. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 24:12

Then he said

"Then Abraham's servant said/prayed," Consider what is the best way to begin this paragraph in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Yahweh

"{Dear/Oh} Yahweh," Consider what is the best way to begin this prayer in your language.

God of my master Abraham

"{who is} the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham," or "{who is} the God whom my master Abraham worships/serves,"

please cause it to happen before me today that you show kindness toward my master Abraham

For some languages it may be clearer and more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, "Please be kind/gracious to my master by helping me succeed today." or "Please show your kindness to my master today by helping me {find a wife/woman for his son to marry}." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

please cause it to happen before me today

"please help me do what I have come here to do today" or "please help me succeed today"

that you show kindness toward

"and {in that way} show kindness to" or "and be kind to"

my master Abraham

"my master." or "him." (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 24:13

Behold, I am standing by

“Look/See, {here} I am, standing beside/near” or “As you see/know, I am standing {here} beside/near”. Make sure in your translation that what Abraham’s servant says here to Yahweh sounds polite and respectful, not rude, demanding, or complaining. Also, he is not telling God something that God did not already know. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

this spring of water

“this spring/well,” or “this spring-fed well,” The phrase “spring of water” (here and in verse 16) refers to the same well that is referred to in verses 11 and 20, which means that this was probably a spring-fed well. Some translation teams use only one term to refer to this spring or well throughout this chapter in order to prevent confusion. Decide what is best in your language.

and the daughters of the people of the city

“and the daughters of the townspeople” or “and the young women of/from the city”

are coming out to draw water

“are coming out {here} to draw/get water.” See how you translated “draw/get water” in verse 11.

Genesis 24:14

And let it be {that}

"{Please} make it happen {that}". Make sure that your translation of the servant's request to God sounds polite. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

the young woman whom I say to her

"when I say to one of the young women," The phrase "young woman" is actually a single word in Hebrew (like the old English words "damsel" and "maiden") and refers to a young woman who is old enough to get married, but has never been married before. Some languages have a single word for this; other languages prefer a phrase.

Please let down your jar

"Please lower your {water} jar/jug/pot". The water containers that people used were usually made out of clay.

so that I may drink

"so that I can drink {some water}," or "so that I can have/take a drink {of water},"

and she says

"and/if she says/replies {to me}," or "she will say {to me},"

Drink and I will also water your camels

"Have/Take a drink, and I will also draw/get water for your camels". For some languages it is clearer and more natural to make one or both of the two embedded direct quotes in this verse into indirect quotes. For example you could say, "{Please} make it happen that when I ask one of the young women to lower her jug so that I can have a drink {of water}, she will offer me a drink and will also offer to draw water for my camels." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

let} her {be the one} you have appointed

"{Then I will know that} she {is the one} you have chosen". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for your servant, for Isaac

"{as a wife} for your servant Isaac." or "to be the wife of Isaac who serves you,"

And by her I will know that you have shown kindness toward my master

"and that you have been kind/gracious to my master {Abraham}." See how you translated "show kindness toward" in verse 12.

Genesis 24:15

Then it happened before he had finished speaking

“Before Abraham’s servant had {even} finished speaking/praying {to God},” Many translations omit the phrase “Then it happened”, but this phrase emphasizes the events that follow it and adds suspense, so that the audience wonders what the outcome will be. Do what is natural in your language.

then behold

“just then {he saw}” or “suddenly {he saw}”. This phrase spotlights Rebekah and shows that she is the center of attention. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language.

Rebekah was coming out

“{a young woman named} Rebekah coming out {of the city}”. Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce Rebekah here for the first time in this episode. Some translations use an exclamation point to help show the excitement. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1658)**)

who was born to Bethuel

“She was the daughter of Bethuel,” or “Her father was Bethuel,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, the brother of Abraham

“{who was} the son of Milcah and Abraham’s brother Nahor.” or “and his/Bethuel’s parents were Abraham’s brother Nahor and Milcah.”

And her water jar {was} on her shoulder

“She was carrying her/a water jug on her shoulder.” or “She had her/a water jar/jug on her shoulder.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this clause earlier in this verse and say, “Rebekah was coming out {of the city} with/carrying her/a water jar/jug on her shoulder.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 24:16

And the young woman {was} a very beautiful-looking virgin

"She/Rebekah was a very beautiful unmarried young woman," See how you translated "young woman" in verses 14 and 15.

and a man had not known her

"whom no man had ever slept with." or "who had never slept with a man." or "who had never had {marital/sexual} relations with a man." See how you translated the idiom "not known a man" in Gen 19:8. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And she went down

"She went/walked down". Notice that the spring or well was at a place that was lower than the place where Abraham's servant was standing.

to the spring

"to the spring/well" or "to the spring-fed well," See how you translated "spring" in verse 13.

and filled her jar

"filled her jar/jug {with water},"

and came up

"and came/walked {back} up {with/carrying it on her shoulder}." If it is not clear, you may need to make it explicit in your translation that Rebekah still had the jar with her when she came up from the well or spring, especially since she lowers it from her shoulder in verse 18. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 24:17

Then the servant ran to meet her

“Then {Abraham’s} servant ran/hurried to meet the young woman” or “Then the servant ran up to her”

and said

“and said {to her},” or “and requested,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please let me drink a little water from your jar

“Please let me have a little water to drink from your jar/jug.” or “Please give me a little drink/water from your jar/jug.”

Genesis 24:18

And she said

“She replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Drink, my lord

“{Please} have a drink, sir.” or “{Certainly,} sir, {you may} have a drink.” Make sure that Rebekah’s reply is polite and respectful in your language, though the way she addresses Abraham’s servant should not make it sound like she is his slave. Also see how you translated “my lord” in Gen 23:6, 11, 15. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

Then she hurried and lowered her jar to her hand{s

“Then she quickly lowered her jar/jug {from her shoulder} to her hands” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and gave him a drink

“and let him drink {some water} {from it}.” or “and let him have a drink.”

Genesis 24:19

And {after} she finished giving him a drink

“After he finished drinking,” or “After that,”

then she said

“she said/offered {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will also draw water for your camels

“Let me also draw/get water for {all} your camels”

until they have finished drinking

“until they have had enough to drink.” or “until they are done.”

Genesis 24:20

Then she hurried and emptied her jar

“Then/So she quickly emptied/poured {the rest of the water from} her jar/jug”. See how you translated “Then she hurried and” in verse 18.

into the trough

“into the {animal} {drinking} trough/place {that was there}” or “into the {stone} trough/container/thing {that was there for animals to drink out of}”. The drinking trough was a long, open stone container that several animals could drink from at the same time. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and ran back to the well to draw water

“and ran back {and forth} to the well to draw/get {more water},”

and she drew water for all his camels

“until she had drawn/brought {enough} for all of the camels.”

Genesis 24:21

And the man watched her silently

“Meanwhile the/Abraham’s servant silently watched her/Rebekah {and waited}” or “While she/Rebekah was doing that, the/Abraham’s servant silently watched her”. Starting in verse 21 the Hebrew text takes Rebekah and Laban’s perspective and refers to Abraham’s servant as “the man”. This continues until verse 34, when the servant tells everyone that he is Abraham’s servant. For some languages this is confusing (because it sounds like two different people), so for those languages it is necessary to refer to him as “Abraham’s servant” or “the servant” throughout this chapter. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1658)**)

to know whether Yahweh had made his journey succeed or not

“to find out whether or not Yahweh had made him successful on his journey/trip {to find a wife for Isaac}.” or “to know/see for sure whether/if Yahweh had given him success on his journey/trip.” (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

Genesis 24:22

Then it happened, when the camels had finished drinking

“Finally, when the camels had finished drinking,” or “After {all} the camels had drunk as much water as they wanted {and Rebekah had stopped drawing/fetching water},” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

then the man took out a gold nose ring, its weight a beka

“the/Abraham's servant brought out a gold nose ring weighing one beka {and gave it to Rebekah/her}” or “the/Abraham's servant gave {Rebekah/her} a gold nose ring that weighed one beka”. Many translation teams keep the numbers and the names of weights that are used in the Bible text in their translation, and they may or may not put the modern equivalents in pounds or grams in a footnote. Other teams do the opposite. One beka was about 1/5 of an ounce (5.5 grams), and ten shekels (See below) was about 4 ounces (110 grams). (See: **Biblical Weight (p. 1582)**)

and two gold bracelets

“He also gave her two gold bracelets”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for her arms

“for her wrists”. The Hebrew term is ambiguous here; it can refer to hands, arms, or wrists. However in this context, the bracelets would have been put on the arms or the wrists.

their weight ten shekels

“that weighed ten shekels {each}.” or “Each bracelet weighed ten shekels.” (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1582)**)

Genesis 24:23

And he said

“Then he said {to her/Rebekah},” or “Then he asked {her/Rebekah},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Whose daughter {are} you? Please tell me

“Please tell me who your father {is}.” The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. The phrase “Please tell me” can go: (1) with the previous question (“Whose daughter {are} you?”); or (2) with the following question (“Is there a place...to lodge?”). Since Abraham’s servant’s goal was to find a wife for Isaac who was one of Abraham’s relatives, the first interpretation seems most likely.

Is there a place at the house of your father

“{Also,} is there {enough} room/space at/in his house” or “{Also,} does your father have enough/any room in/at his house”. If you made “your father” explicit in the previous sentence, it may be more natural to refer to him with the pronoun “his” in this sentence. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

for us

“for me and my men”. The pronoun “us” includes other servants who came with Abraham’s chief servant (as verse 32 shows). If your language has inclusive and exclusive forms of this pronoun, you should use the exclusive form here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

to lodge

“to spend the night {there}?” or “to stay {there} tonight?”

Genesis 24:24

Then she said to him

“She/Rebekah answered him,” or “She/Rebekah replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am} the daughter of Bethuel

“My father {is} Bethuel,” or “Bethuel {is} my father,” or “My father’s name {is} Bethuel,”

the son of Milcah, whom she bore for Nahor

“{who is} a son of Milcah and Nahor.” or “{and he is} one of Nahor and Milcah’s sons.” or “and his parents are Nahor and Milcah.” Make sure the way you translate this does not sound like Bethuel was the only son of Milcah and Nahor; they had eight sons (Gen 22: 21-22). Also, in some cultures the father’s name is normally given first; in other cultures the mother’s name is normally first.

Genesis 24:25

Then she said to him

“Then she added/continued,” Some languages leave this quote margin implied here, because the same person is still talking to the same person. Other languages can keep the quote margin (like the Hebrew text does), to emphasize what Rebekah says next. The quote margin may also indicate that Rebekah paused before she said what she says in verse 25. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Plenty of both straw and fodder {are} with us

“We have plenty of both straw and {other} feed {at our house} {for the/your camels to eat},” The term “fodder” refers to dry feed that is prepared for animals to eat; it can include chopped hay and grains such as oats and barley.

There is} also a place

“{and there is} also {enough} room {at/in his/our house} {for all of you}”

to lodge

“to spend the night {there}.” or “to stay {there} tonight.” See how you translated this in verse 23.

Genesis 24:26

Then the man bowed down and prostrated himself before Yahweh

“Then the/Abraham’s servant bowed to the ground and worshiped/thanked Yahweh,” See how you translated “bowed” in Gen 18:2; 19:1. The word “prostrated” means he bowed low to the ground and touched his face or forehead to the ground with outstretched arms, in an act of worship. When combined with “bowed down” as in this verse, it is usually translated as “worshiped”. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 24:27

and said

“by saying,” or “He said,” The servant is worshipping God by bowing down and by what he says in verse 27.

Praised be Yahweh

“Praise Yahweh,” or “I praise Yahweh,” See how you translated this in Gen 9:26.

the God of my master Abraham

“the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham” or “{who is} the God whom my master Abraham worships/ serves”. See how you translated “God of my master Abraham” in verse 12.

who has not abandoned his kindness and his faithfulness toward my master

“He has never stopped being kind and faithful to my master;” or “He has always been kind and faithful to my master;” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “kindness” in verses 12 and 14. The phrase “not abandoned” is a way of emphasizing that Yahweh had always been kind and faithful to Abraham. (See: **Litotes (p.1663)**)

As for} me, Yahweh has led me on the road

“and he has guided me on the road/journey {here}” or “{Yes,} Yahweh/he guided me on the/my journey/trip {here}”. The last part of verse 27 is what Abraham’s servant is praising God for; it is an example of how God has been kind and faithful to Abraham. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to} the home of the relatives of my master

“{to} the home of my master’s relatives/family!” or “{to} the home where my master’s relatives/family live!” or “to my master’s relatives.” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 24:28

Then the young woman ran

“Then Rebekah ran/hurried {home}”. See how you translated “young woman” previously in this chapter, and consider what is the best way to refer to Rebekah here.

and announced

“and reported to” or “and told” or “and shared the news with”

to the household of her mother

“{the people in} her mother’s household/family”

about those things

“about what had happened.” or “about what the man/servant had said to her.”

Genesis 24:29

Now Rebekah had a brother

“Now {it so happened that} Rebekah had a brother” or “Rebekah had a brother”. Laban was Rebekah’s older brother. Some languages have a specific term for “older brother” that fits well here. Also, consider what is the best way to introduce this background information in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p. 1584)**)

and his name {was} Laban

“whose name {was} Laban,” or “named Laban,”

and Laban ran

“and he ran/hurried/rushed” or “Laban/He ran/hurried” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also consider what is the best way to refer to Laban here in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

to the man outside at the spring

“out to the spring/well where the man/servant was.” or “to where the man/servant was standing beside the spring/well.”

Genesis 24:30

And it was when he had seen

“This is how it was/happened: When he/Laban had seen” or “As soon as he/Laban had seen”. Verse 30 is a flashback of what had happened before Laban ran to the well (verse 29). Consider what is the best way to express this in your language. For some languages it may be necessary to combine verses 29-30 and put the sentences in the order that things actually happened. For example, “Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban. When he saw the nose ring and the bracelets she was wearing and heard her tell what the man had said to her, he hurried out to meet the man. He found/saw him standing with his camels beside the well.” If you do this, you would mark these combined verses as 29-30. (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1721)**)

the nose ring and the bracelets on the arms of his sister

“the nose ring that his sister was wearing and the bracelets on her arms” or “the nose ring and the bracelets that his sister was wearing”. Some languages have a specific term for “younger sister” that fits well here. Also see how you translated “nose ring” and “bracelets” in verse 22.

and when he had heard the words of Rebekah his sister, “This {is} what the man said to me

“and had heard her announce/tell/report what the man {at the well} had said to her,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a direct quote or indirect quote here. If you want to make it clear who “the man” refers to, you should still translate it generally, for example, “the man {I met at the well}” because when Rebekah said this, she did not yet know who he was. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

then he went to the man

“he went {out} to {where} the man/servant {was},” or “he went {out} to meet him,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and behold, he was standing

“and there he was, standing” or “He found/saw him standing”. The word “behold” emphasizes what follows it. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

by the camels at the spring

“with {his} camels at/beside the spring/well.” or “beside/near the spring/well with {his} camels.”

Genesis 24:31

Then he said

“Then Laban said {to him},” or “Then Laban said {to the man/servant},” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Laban is the one talking here. Consider whether or not to include whom he is speaking to in this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Come

“Come {with me},” or “{Please} come {stay with us},”

blessed of Yahweh

“{you who are} blessed by Yahweh.” or “you whom Yahweh has blessed.”

Why are you standing out here

“There is no need for you to stand out here.” Laban is being polite here, not accusing or critical. For some languages a rhetorical question does not fit here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

For I have prepared the house

“I have gotten our house ready {for you and your men to stay with us}” or “because the house is prepared/ready {for you and your men to lodge/stay there}”. Consider whether or not it is necessary in your translation to make any implied information explicit in this sentence. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and a place

“and {there is also} a place” or “and {we also have} room/space {there}”

for the camels

“for {your} camels {to stay}.” or “where your camels can stay.”

Genesis 24:32

So the man went to the house

"Then the man/servant went/came home {with Laban}." or "So Abraham's servant went/came to Laban's house." The Hebrew verb can be translated "went" or "came", depending on the perspective that is taken. Do what is most natural in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

Then he unloaded the camels

"{When they arrived there,} Laban unloaded the camels" or "There Laban took the loads off the camels". The Hebrew text ("he") is ambiguous here, but since Laban was the host it is most likely that he (or some of his servants) took care of the camels for his guests.

and gave straw and fodder to the camels

"and he gave straw and {other} feed to them {to eat}." or "and fed them straw and {other} fodder/feed." See how you translated "straw and fodder" in verse 25.

and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who {were} with him

"{He} also {gave/brought} water to the/Abraham's servant and the men who {were} with him, to wash {the dust/dirt off} their feet." or "{He} also {brought} water for the/Abraham's servant and his men to wash {the road dust/dirt off} their feet." Make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham's chief servant washed the feet of the other servants who were with him; each person washed off his own feet. See how you translated "wash {the dust off} your feet" in Gen 19:2. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 24:33

Then food was set before him to eat

“Then they served/brought the servant {and his men} some food,” or “After that, {Laban’s family} served/provided them a meal to eat,” Consider whether it is best in your language to use a passive or active construction here. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

but he said

“but the man/servant said {to them},” or “but the man/servant said {to Laban’s family},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will not eat until I have spoken my words

“I will/must not eat {anything} until I have told you my message.” or “Before I will/can eat {anything}, I need to tell {you} why I am here.”

So he said

“So/Then Laban replied,” or “Laban responded {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Speak

“{Please} tell {us} {what you have/want to say}.” or “{Go ahead and} tell {us} {your message}.” Make sure the way you translate this sounds polite. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

Genesis 24:34

Then he said

“Then/So the man/servant told {them},” Consider again how you referred to “the man” in verses 21, 22, 26, 29-34, and see the note about that at verse 21. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am} a servant of Abraham

“I {am} Abraham’s {chief/head} servant.”

Genesis 24:35

And Yahweh has greatly blessed my master

“Yahweh has abundantly blessed/prospered my master,”

so that he has become great

“so that he is wealthy.” or “and as a result, he is {very} wealthy.” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

And he has given him flock{s} and herd{s}

“Yahweh has given him {many} sheep and cattle,” This is the beginning of a list of what Yahweh had given Abraham. Consider the most natural way to list items in your language. Also, see how you translated “flocks and herds” in Gen 13:5.

and silver and gold

“{much} silver and gold,” See how you translated “silver and gold” in Gen 13:2.

and men slaves and women slaves

“{many} men and women slaves/servants” or “{many} male and female slaves/servants,” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 20:14.

and camels and donkeys

“and {many} camels and donkeys.” See how you translated “donkeys” in Gen 22:3. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1718)**)

Genesis 24:36

And Sarah, the wife of my master, bore a son for my master

“Besides that, my master’s wife Sarah bore him a son” or “Also, my master’s wife Sarah gave birth to a son for him”

after her old age

“in her old age,” or “after/when she was {very} old,”

and he has given to him

“and my master has given him” or “and my master has given his/that son”

everything that {belongs} to him

“everything that he owns.” or “all of his possessions/property.”

Genesis 24:37

And my master made me swear

"{Before I came here,} my master made/had me vow {to do something for him}," or "{Before I came here,} my master asked me to make an unbreakable promise to him," See how you translated "swear" in verse 3, and "swore" in verses 7 and 9.

saying

"and he said {to me}," or "He said," or "This is what he said {to me}:" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You must not take a wife for my son

"You must not get/find/choose a wife/woman for my son {to marry}" or "You must not arrange for my son {Isaac} to marry {any of}". See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 3.

from the daughters of the Canaanites

"from {among} the Canaanite women" or "{any of} the Canaanite women"

whose land I am living in

"whose land we have been living in" or "whom we live among in this land". As in verse 3, make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham lived by himself among the Canaanites; his family and servants also lived among them with him.

Genesis 24:38

but rather

“Rather/Instead,” Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. After you translate a section, it is a good habit to read through it at normal speed as you pay attention to where it is best to begin new sentences so that sentences and paragraphs flow well and it is easy for people to read.

you must go to the house of my father

“go to my father’s household/family,” or “go to where my father’s family lives,” See how you translated “house of my father” in verse 7.

and to my clan

“to my {own} relatives,”

and take a wife for my son

“and get/find/choose a wife/woman {from among them} for my son {to marry}.”

Genesis 24:39

Then I said to my master

“So I asked my master,”

Suppose

“Suppose {that}” or “What {should I do} if”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 5. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

the woman

“the {young} woman {I find/choose}” or “when I find that {young} woman, she”

will not come with me

“does not {want/agree to} come/go {back/home} with me?” or “refuses to come {back} {here} with me?” See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 5.

Genesis 24:40

And he said to me

“He answered/told me,” or “He replied to me,”

Yahweh, whom I walk before

“Yahweh, whose presence I walk/live in,” or “Yahweh whom I serve/obey,” See how you translated “walk/live before” in Gen 17:1. This idiom implies that Abraham lived according to God’s will. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

will send his angel

“will send one of his angels”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 7.

with you

“{to go} with you” or “to accompany you”

and make & succeed

“to make your journey successful,” or “He will make you succeed on your journey,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

so that you will take a wife for my son from my clan

“so that you will/can get/find/choose a wife for my son from {among} my relatives,” or “so that you can arrange for my son to marry a woman who is one of my relatives,” See how you translated “clan” in verse 38, and consider again how you translated “take a wife for my son” in verses 3, 4, 7, 37-38.

and from the house of my father

“{someone} {who is} from my father’s family.” See how you translated “house of my father” in verse 38.

Genesis 24:41

Then

“At that/this time” or “But if this happens,” or “There is a situation/circumstance when”. The word “Then” is a special Hebrew word that can mean “at that time” and implies here that the servant’s question (in verse 39) is now being addressed specifically.

you will be clear from my oath

“you will be released/free from {keeping} the/your oath/vow {you are making} to me:” or “you will not have/need to fulfill the/your vow to me:”

When you go to my clan, and if they will not give her to you

“When/After you go to my clan/family {and find a wife/woman for Isaac}, if they are not willing to let her go with you,” or “If you find a wife for Isaac but my family refuses to let the woman {you have found/chosen} leave with you,”

then you will be clear from my oath

“you will be released/free from {keeping} the/your oath/vow {that you are making} to me.” or “you will not have/need to keep/fulfill the unbreakable promise {you are making} to me.” See how you translated “clear from” earlier in this verse and in verse 8.

Genesis 24:42

Then today I came to the spring

"Then today when I arrived at {your city's} spring/well," or "{Abraham's servant said/continued,} "Then today when I arrived at {your city's} spring/well," Make sure it is clear in your translation that the servant is now talking about himself. He is no longer quoting Abraham (whose words ended in verse 41).

and I said, 'Yahweh

"I prayed, {Oh/Dear} Yahweh," See how you began the prayer in verse 12.

God of my master Abraham

"{who is} the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham," or "{who is} the God whom my master Abraham serves/worships," See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

if it is your will

"if you are willing," or "if you agree,"

please make my journey succeed

"please give me success on/during this journey/trip" or "please make me successful on this journey/trip". See how you translated this clause in verses 21 and 40.

that I have come on

"that I have made/undertaken."

Genesis 24:43

Behold, I am standing by

“Look/See, {here} I am, standing beside/near” or “As you see/know, I am standing {here} beside/near”. See how you translated this in verse 13. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

this} spring of water

“{this} spring/well.” or “{this} spring-fed well.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 13.

And let it be {that

“{Please} make it happen {that}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 14. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

the young woman who comes out to draw {water

“when a young woman comes out {of the city} to draw water”

and I say to her, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar

“and I ask her, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar/jug,” or “and I ask her to let me drink some water from her {water} jar/jug/pot,” This direct quote is within a direct quote that is within another direct quote. For some languages, it may be clearer or more natural to use an indirect quote here. Decide what is best in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 24:44

and she says to me, “Both you drink and I will also draw water for your camels

“if she says/replies, “{Yes,} have a drink and I will also draw/get water for your camels,” or “if she gives me a drink and also offers to draw/get water for my camels,” See how you translated the embedded direct quote in verse 43. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

let} her {be} the wife whom Yahweh has chosen for the son of my master

“{then} {let} her {be} the woman/one whom {you} Yahweh have chosen to be the wife of my master’s son.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham’s servant is still talking directly to Yahweh in this clause. For example, you could make “you” explicit in this clause. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

Genesis 24:45

Before I had finished

“Before I had {even} finished” or “Before I could {even} finish”

speaking in my heart

“praying {to God} in my heart,” or “praying {to God} silently/quietly,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

then behold

“just then I saw” or “suddenly I saw” or “there was”

Rebekah was coming out

“Rebekah coming out {of the city}”. See how you translated the first half of verse 15, which is very similar to the first half of verse 45.

and her jar {was} on her shoulder

“carrying/with her {empty} {water} jar/jug on her shoulder.”

And she went down to the spring and drew water

“She walked down to the spring/well and filled up her jar/jug with water,” Consider again how you translated “spring” (verses 13, 16, 29-30, 42-43 and 45) and “well” (verses 11 and 20) in this chapter. Both terms refer to the same source of water. See the note about this at verse 13.

and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink

“so I said to her, ‘Please let me have a drink.’ ” or “so I asked her, ‘May I please have a drink {of water}?’ ” or “so I asked her to please give me a drink.” Consider what is the best way to translate this embedded quote in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 24:46

And she hurried and lowered her jar

“She quickly/immediately lowered her jar/jug” or “She quickly/immediately brought her jar/jug down”. Consider again how you translated “jar” in verses 14-18, 20, 43, 45-46.

from her

“from/off her {shoulder}”

and said, ‘Drink

“and said {to me}, ‘Have/Take a drink,” Make sure Rebekah sounds polite here in your translation. (See: **Politeness** (p.1691))

and I will also water your camels

“and I will also give water to your camels.” or “and I will also draw/get water for your camels.” See how you translated this clause in verse 14. Also see verse 18, which is similar.

So I drank

“So I drank {some water} {from her jar/jug},” or “So I took a drink {from her jar/jug},”

and she also watered the camels

“and she also drew/gave water to my camels.”

Genesis 24:47

Then I asked her and said

“Then I asked her,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Whose daughter {are} you

“Who {is} your father?” See how you translated this question in verse 23.

And she said

“She answered {me},” or “She replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The daughter of Bethuel

“{I am} the daughter of Bethuel,” or “My father is Bethuel,” or “My father’s name is Bethuel,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 24.

a son of Nahor whom Milcah bore for him

“{who is} a son of Nahor and {his wife} Milcah.” or “{and he is} one of Nahor and Milcah’s sons.” or “and his parents are Nahor and Milcah.”

Then I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms

“Then/So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms/wrists.” or “After that I gave her a/the nose ring and bracelets to wear.” See how you translated “nose ring”, “bracelets”, and “arms” in verse 22.

Genesis 24:48

And I bowed down and prostrated myself before Yahweh, and I praised Yahweh

“Then/Next I bowed to the ground and worshiped and praised Yahweh,” See how you translated “bowed down and prostrated himself” in verse 26, and see the note about that there. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

the God of my master Abraham

“the God {who takes care} of my master Abraham,” or “the God whom my master Abraham serves/worships,” See how you translated this phrase in verses 12 and 42.

who led me

“because he led/guided me”

on the right way

“the right way/direction” or “right/exactly where I should go”

to take

“to get/find”

the daughter of my master’s brother

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “the granddaughter of my master’s brother”, which refers to Nahor’s granddaughter; or (2) “the daughter of my master’s relative”, which refers to Bethuel’s daughter. Abraham’s brother Nahor was the father of Bethuel and the grandfather of Rebekah (Genesis 11:26; 22:20-23).

for his son

“{to be the wife} for my master’s son.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that this refers to Abraham’s son, not Nahor’s or Bethuel’s son.

Genesis 24:49

And now if it is your will

“So now/then, if you are willing”. Throughout this verse “you” is plural.

to show kindness and faithfulness to my master

“to {let her come with me, and in that way} show {your} kindness and faithfulness to my master,” or “to be kind and faithful to my master {by sending her with me},” See how you translated “kindness” and “faithfulness” in verse 27. If necessary in your translation, you can make it explicit how they would show kindness and faithfulness to Abraham. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

tell me. But if not, tell me

“{please} tell me, or if you are not willing, tell me,” It may be clearer or more natural to put this information near the beginning of the sentence and say, “So now, please tell me whether or not you are willing to {let her come with me, and in that way} show {your} kindness and faithfulness to my master,” or “So now, please tell me whether or not you are willing to be kind and faithful to my master {by letting her come with me},” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

so that I will turn to the right or to the left

“so that I will/can know/decide which way to turn/go.” or “so that I can decide/know what to do {next}.” Consider whether your language has the same idiom that Hebrew has here, or a similar idiom, with the same meaning, or whether you need to say this without an idiom. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 24:50

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said

"Then Laban and {his father} Bethuel answered {Abraham's servant}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

The thing has come from Yahweh

"{We can clearly see that} Yahweh has made {all} this happen," or "{It is clear/obvious that} {all} this is the will of Yahweh,"

we are not able

"{so} it is not our place/right" or "{so} we have no right". Some languages have a dual pronoun that is used here. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dual\]\]](#))

to tell you bad or good

"to tell you anything different {from what he has done/decided}." or "to say/decide anything against what he has decided." (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 24:51

Behold, Rebekah {is} before you

“See/Here, Rebekah {is} in front of you.” or “Look, here {is} Rebekah.”

Take her and go

“{You may} take her {with you} and go/return {home}” (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

and let her be the wife of the son of your master

“so that she will be the wife of your master’s son” or “so that she can marry your master’s son”

as Yahweh has spoken

“as Yahweh has guided.” or “just as Yahweh has decided/determined {it should be}.”

Genesis 24:52

Then it happened, when the servant of Abraham heard their words

“When Abraham’s servant heard what they said,” The phrase “Then it happened” introduces the climax of the chapter, when the servant responds to hearing that Yahweh has fulfilled his prayer to find a wife for Isaac. Do what is natural in your language.

then he bowed down to the ground before Yahweh

“he bowed low to the ground and praised/thanked Yahweh.” See how you translated “bowed down” in verse 48. Notice that here in verse 52, the phrase “to the ground” is explicit and emphasized. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 24:53

Then the servant brought out

“Then he brought/took out”

jewelry of silver and jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah

“silver and gold jewelry and {other expensive/valuable gifts, including} {beautiful} clothing, and gave them to Rebekah.” or “{expensive/valuable gifts, including} silver and gold jewelry, and {also} {beautiful} clothing, and gave them to Rebekah.”

And he gave valuable things

“He {also} gave valuable/expensive gifts”

to her brother and to her mother

“to her brother and mother.” or “to her mother and brother.”

Genesis 24:54

Then he and the men who {were} with him ate and drank and lodged

"Then Abraham's servant and his men ate {supper} and stayed/slept {there} that night." See how you translated "lodged" in verses 23, 25, and 31.

Then in the morning they got up, and he said

"{Early} the next morning after everyone got/was up, he said {to Rebekah's family}," or "{Early} the next morning when everyone {in Rebekah's family} was up, Abraham's servant said {to them},"

Send me to my master

"{Please} let me/us return {home} {now} to my master." Make sure that what Abraham's servant says here sounds polite in your translation, not rude or demanding. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

Genesis 24:55

But her brother and her mother said

“But her/Rebekah’s brother and mother said/replied {to him},”

Let the young woman stay with us

“{Please} let the young woman stay/remain {here} with us” or “{Please} let Rebekah stay/remain {here} with us”
(See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

a few days, at least ten

“{for another} ten days or so.” or “around ten more days.”

After that she will go

“Then she can go {with you}.” or “Then you can go/leave and take her {with you}.”

Genesis 24:56

But he said to them

“But the/Abraham’s servant said/responded to them,” Some languages have a dual pronoun that could be used here. However the servant is probably still addressing the whole family. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dual\]\]](#))

Do not detain me, since Yahweh has made my journey succeed. Send me off

“{Please} do not detain/delay me. Since Yahweh has made me successful on my journey, send me/us off” or “{Please} do not detain/delay me, now that Yahweh has given me success on my journey. Let me/us leave”. There are two different places where you could begin a new sentence here. Consider what is the most clear and natural way to do this in your language. Also, see how you translated “make my journey succeed” in verse 42.

so that I will go to my master

“so that I can go/return {home} to my master.”

Genesis 24:57

Then they said

“So they replied,” or “They replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let’s call for the young woman

“Let’s call/summon Rebekah” or “Let’s ask Rebekah to come here”. Consider again how you translated “young woman” in verses 14-16, 28, 43, 55, and 57, and see the note about this at verse 14. You may need to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

and ask her mouth

“and ask her to tell us {what she wants to do}.” or “and ask her what she wants to do.” or “and ask her if she is willing to go now.” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 24:58

So they called for Rebekah

“So they called for her” or “So/Then they summoned her”. Consider whether it is better to use a name or a pronoun to refer to Rebekah here in your language, especially considering how you referred to her in verses 53, 55, and 57. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and said to her

“and asked her,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Will you go with this man

“Are you willing to go {now} with this man?” or “Do you want to go {now} with this man?”

And she said

“She answered {them},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will go

“{Yes,} I will go {now}.” or “{Yes,} I am willing to go {now}.”

Genesis 24:59

Then they sent off Rebekah their sister

“So they {agreed/decided to} send their sister Rebekah”. Notice that Rebekah does not actually leave until verse 61. If this is not clear in your translation, you could include the implied information that they agreed or decided to send her with Abraham’s servant. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and her nurse

“and her {personal} servant {who had helped raise her},” The term “nurse” refers here to a servant woman who probably nursed Rebekah as a baby, took care of her as she was growing up, and still served her now.

and the servant of Abraham and his men

“with Abraham’s servant and his men/companions.”

Genesis 24:60

And they blessed Rebekah and said to her

"They blessed Rebekah by saying to her;" Make sure your translation of "blessed ... and said" refers to the same event, not two separate events.

Our sister

"{Dear} {little} sister;" This is a term of endearment that family members used to refer to Rebekah even though she was not the actual sister of all of them. This practice is common in many cultures. Do what is natural in your language.

may you become

"may you become {the mother/ancestor of}" or "we pray that you will have" or "we pray that God will give you"

thousands of myriads

"thousands and thousands {of descendants}," or "countless/many thousands {of descendants},"

and may your offspring possess

"and we pray that your/those descendants will conquer/defeat" or "and we pray that God will help them conquer/defeat"

the gates of {those} hating them

"the cities of {all} their enemies!" or "{all} their enemies and rule over them!" See how you translated the phrase "possess the gates" in Gen 22:17. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 24:61

Then Rebekah got up and her maids

“Then Rebekah and her maids/servants {who were going with her} got ready {to go}, and” or “After Rebekah and her maids/servants {who were going with her} packed their things,”

and they mounted the camels

“they got up on the camels {they were going to ride}”

and went with the man

“and went with Abraham’s servant.” Consider again how you translated “the man” in verses 21, 22, 26, 29, 30, 32, 61. See the note about this at verse 21.

So the servant took Rebekah

“So the/Abraham’s servant took Rebekah {with him}” or “So he took her {with him}”

and left

“and left {to return home}.” or “and started the journey {back} home.”

Genesis 24:62

Meanwhile Isaac came from going to

“Meanwhile Isaac returned {home} from visiting” or “{While they were traveling,} Isaac returned {home} from a trip/visit {he had made} to”

Beer Lahai Roi

“{the place/well called} Beer Lahai Roi”. See how you translated the name of this place in Gen 16:14. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he was living

“{At that time} he was living” or “and/so he was {back home} where he lived”

in the land of the Negev

“in the Negev {Wilderness/Desert} region/area.” or “in the Negev {Wilderness/Desert}.” See how you translated “the land of the Negev” in Gen 20:1, and “the Negev” in Gen 12:9; 13:1, 3.

Genesis 24:63

And Isaac went to meditate in the field

"{One day} Isaac/he went out in/to the field/countryside to meditate/pray" or "{After Isaac/he had returned home, one day} he was meditating/praying out in the fields/countryside". What Isaac does in verse 63 happened sometime after he returned from Beer Lahai Roi, but the Hebrew text does not say exactly when. So introduce this new event in a general way that is not too specific.

as it was turning toward evening

"as it was becoming evening/dusk" or "late in the afternoon". For some languages it is more natural to put this time phrase earlier in this sentence and say, "{One day} as it was becoming evening, Isaac/he went ..." or "One evening, Isaac/he went ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and he lifted his eyes

"{As he was praying,} he looked up". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and saw that, behold

"and saw {in the distance} that there were" or "and suddenly he saw {in the distance}"

camels were coming

"{some} camels coming/heading {toward him}." or "{some} camels approaching {him}."

Genesis 24:64

And Rebekah lifted her eyes and saw Isaac

“Rebekah {also} looked up and saw Isaac.” or “Then Rebekah, as she looked ahead {of her}, saw Isaac.”

Then she dismounted

“Then she {quickly} jumped/got down” or “Immediately she got down”

from the camel

“from/off the camel {that she was riding};” Consider again how you translated “camel” throughout chapter 24.

Genesis 24:65

and she said to the servant

“and asked {Abraham’s} servant,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Who {is} that man in the field who is coming to meet us

“Who {is} that man in the field who is walking {this way} to greet us?” or “Who {is} that man walking towards us in the field?”

And the servant said, “He {is} my master

“The servant answered {her}, “He {is} my master {Isaac}.” ” Abraham and Isaac were both the servant’s masters, especially since Abraham had already given Isaac all of his possessions (verse 36), which included his servants. Consider again how you translated “master/owner” throughout chapter 24.

So she took the veil and covered herself

“So she took the/her veil and covered her face with it {to show modesty}.” or “So she covered herself with a/her veil {to show modesty}.” In that culture a bride-to-be wore a large veil to cover her entire body, especially her face, to show modesty and submission to her husband. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 24:66

Then the servant reported to Isaac

“Then the servant told Isaac” or “{When they reached Isaac,} the servant told him”

all the things that he had done

“everything/all that he had done {on/during the journey/trip}.” or “everything/all that had happened {on/during his journey}.”

Genesis 24:67

Then Isaac brought her

“Then/So Isaac brought/took Rebekah”

into the tent of Sarah his mother

“into the tent where his mother Sarah had lived {before she died},” Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like Sarah still lived there; she had died three years previously (Gen 23:1-2).

and he took Rebekah

“and he married her,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and she became a wife to him

“so that she became his wife.”

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“Isaac loved her/Rebekah,” or “Isaac was/fell in love with her/Rebekah,”

and he was comforted

“and he was consoled {by her}” or “and he was happy again” or “and she made him happy again” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

after his mother

“after {mourning for} his mother {who had died}.” or “after {the sadness of} his mother’s {death}.” Make sure it is clear in your translation here why Isaac needed comforting. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25

Genesis 25:1

Then Abraham added and took a wife, and her name {was} Keturah

“Then Abraham married another wife/woman, who was named Keturah.” or “Then Abraham got married again, and his wife’s name {was} Keturah.” Abraham probably married Keturah after Sarah died (Gen 23:1-2) and after Isaac married Rebekah (Gen 24:67). Make sure your translation of this verse does not sound like Abraham had two wives named Keturah.

Genesis 25:2

And she bore for him

“She/Keturah gave birth to sons for him/Abraham {whose names were}” or “She bore/had {sons} for/with him {whom they named}” or “They had sons together {whom they named}”. See how you translated “bore for him” in Gen 21:3; 24:47.

Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah

“Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.” See how you used commas and conjunctions in similar lists of names in Gen 22:22, 24. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 25:3

And Jokshan fathered

“Jokshan was the father of” or “{Her/Keturah’s son} Jokshan had”. See how you translated “fathered” in Gen 11:27.

Sheba and Dedan

“{sons named} Sheba and Dedan.” or “{sons whom they named} Sheba and Dedan.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

And the descendants of Dedan were the Asshurim and the Letushim and the Leummim

“Dedan’s descendants were/became {people/ethnic groups named} the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites.” See how you translated the names of people groups in Gen 10:4, 13-14, 16-18, and see the note about that at 10:4. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:4

And the sons of Midian {were}

"{Keturah's son} Midian fathered/had sons {named}"

Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah

"Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah." Consider what is the best way to connect the names in this list in your language. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

All of those {were} the descendants of Keturah

"All of those {were} Keturah's descendants {whom she had with Abraham}." or "All those {were} the descendants of Keturah {and Abraham}." This phrase refers back to all the people listed in verses 2-4, which includes Keturah's six sons, seven grandsons and three great grandsons. Make sure you spelled "Keturah" consistently in verses 1-4.

Genesis 25:5

And Abraham gave everything that {belonged} to him to Isaac

“Abraham left/willed everything that he owned to Isaac.” or “And Isaac inherited all/everything that Abraham owned/possessed.” Some languages have a specific word such as “left” or “willed” that means to give something as an inheritance. In that time and culture, a father would give his children their inheritance before he died.

Genesis 25:6

And to the sons of the concubines who {belonged} to Abraham, Abraham gave gifts

“Abraham/He also gave {valuable} gifts to the sons he had with his concubines,” or “Abraham/He also gave (valuable gifts) to the sons that his servant wives had {for/with him},” See how you translated “concubine” in Gen 22:24. The word “gifts” in this clause is very general and can include domestic animals, servants, gold, silver, and other things. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and while he was still alive he sent them eastward to the land of Kedem

“then while he was still alive he sent them eastward to the land/region in the East” or “and/but after that he sent them to the east country” or “and/but after that he made them move away to the east country”. The Hebrew word “Kedem” means “east” and refers to the region east of Canaan and the Dead Sea. Consider whether it is best in your language to transliterate (copy) the Hebrew name or to translate the meaning. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

away from Isaac his son

“{to be/live} {far} away from his son Isaac.” or “{so that they would live/be} {far} away from his son Isaac.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:7

And these {are} the days of the years of the life of Abraham that he lived: 175 years

“The length of Abraham’s life that he lived was 175 years.” or “Abraham lived a total of 175 years.” or “Abraham lived to be 175 years old.”

Genesis 25:8

Then Abraham exhaled

"Then Abraham/he breathed out {for the last time}" or "Then he breathed/took his last/final breath"

and died at a good old age

"and died at a ripe/very old age," or "and died when he was very old,"

elderly and full

"an elderly/old man who had lived a full life, and" or "After he had lived a long and satisfying/blessed life," The idiom "full" refers to a long life that was blessed by God. Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he was gathered to

"he was gathered/taken {by God} to be with" or "{God} took his spirit to be with" or "he joined". The phrase "gathered to his people" is a euphemism that refers to dying but also implies that God took his spirit to be with his ancestors who had already died. It is best to translate this phrase fairly literally since it teaches about life after death. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

his people

"his ancestors/relatives {who had already died}." or "his ancestors/relatives {who had gone/died before him}." or "his {deceased} ancestors/relatives." Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like these ancestors were still alive. They had already died before Abraham died. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:9

Then Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him

“His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried/put/placed his body”

in the cave of Machpelah

“in the cave of/in the Machpelah {area}”. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 23:9, and see the note about that there. Also see how you translated similar phrases in Gen 23:17, 19.

in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite

“{which was} in the field that had belonged to Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite,” Ephron no longer owned the field (See: verse 10).

which {was} before Mamre

“east of {the city of} Mamre.” or “near {the city of} Mamre.” For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this phrase earlier in this verse. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “before Mamre” in Gen 23:17, 19. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 25:10

the field that Abraham had bought

"{That is} the {same} field that Abraham had bought"

from the sons of Heth

"from the Hittites." The Hebrew text has two different ways to refer to the Hittites; compare the phrase here with verse 9 where a single Hebrew word is used to refer to this people group. See how you translated "the sons of Heth" in Gen 23:20.

There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife

"Abraham was buried in that cave, where his wife Sarah had also been buried." or "That is {the cave} where his/ Abraham's sons buried/put/placed his body next to {the body of} his wife Sarah {whom he had buried there before}." or "That is where Sarah had been buried, and they buried Abraham {next to her}." Abraham had already buried Sarah's body in the cave (Gen 23:19). Make sure your translation of this sentence does not sound like Sarah was buried there a second time. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:11

And it happened after the death of Abraham

“After Abraham died,”

then God blessed Isaac his son

“God blessed his son Isaac”. Use the phrase order in your language that is most natural in this context. (See: **Word Order (p.1723)**)

And Isaac lived near

“who lived/settled near” or “Isaac lived {in the region} near”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Beer Lahai Roi

“{the place/well called} Beer Lahai Roi.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Beer Lahai Roi” in Gen 24:62. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 25:12

Now these {are} the generations of

“This/Here {is} the genealogy/family-line of” or “This/Here {is} the list/record of the descendants of” or “What follows {is} the/a record of the descendants of”. Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce the new topic that begins here. See how you translated this clause in Gen 11:10. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1655)**)

Ishmael the son of Abraham

“of Abraham’s son Ishmael,” (See: **Word Order (p.1723)**)

whom Hagar the Egyptian, the maidservant of Sarah, had born for Abraham

“whom Sarah’s Egyptian maidservant Hagar gave birth to for Abraham.” or “whom Abraham had with Sarah’s Egyptian slave woman Hagar.” (See: **Word Order (p.1723)**)

Genesis 25:13

And these {are} the names of the sons of Ishmael

"These/Here {are} the names of Ishmael's sons," or "Here {is} {a list/record of} the names of Ishmael's sons,"

by their names according to their births

"{listed/given} in the order that they were born:"

the firstborn of Ishmael {was} Nebaioth

"His oldest {son/child} {was} Nebaioth," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

then Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam

"followed by Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam," or "After him came Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 25:14

and Mishma and Dumah and Massa

“Mishma, Dumah, Massa,”

Genesis 25:15

Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedermah

“Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedermah.” See how you translated a similar list of names in verses 2-4. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

Genesis 25:16

Those {were} the sons of Ishmael

"Those/They {were} Ishmael's {twelve} sons,"

and those {are} their names by their settlements and by their camps, twelve rulers according to their tribes

"who became the rulers/leaders of twelve tribes that were named after them, and each tribe lived in its {own} settlements/towns and camps/villages." or "Each of them became the ruler/leader of a tribe that was named after him, and each tribe had its own towns/villages and {tent} camps/settlements." The Hebrew words for "settlements" and "camps" overlap in meaning. Both refer to temporary or permanent places where people settled, surrounded by some sort of wall or fence. Also, many translations have "princes" here instead of "rulers," but these Ishmaelite rulers were not actually sons of a king. See how you translated "rulers" in Gen 17:20.

Genesis 25:17

And these {are} the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years

"The length of Ishmael's life that he lived was 137 years." or "Ishmael lived a total of 137 years." "Ishmael lived to be 137 years old." See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 7.

Then he exhaled and died

"Then he/Ishmael breathed out {for the last time} and died," or "Then he/Ishmael breathed/took his last/final breath and died," See how you translated "exhaled" in verse 8.

and he was gathered to

"and he was gathered/taken {by God} to be with" or "and {God} took his spirit to be with {the spirits of}" or "and he joined". See how you translated this phrase in verse 8.

his people

"his ancestors/relatives {who had already died}." or "his ancestors/relatives {who had gone/died before him}." or "his {deceased} ancestors/relatives." (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:18

And they settled

"His/Ishmael's descendants settled/lived"

from Havilah to Shur

"{throughout the area that extended} from {the region of} Havilah to {the wilderness/desert of} Shur". Be consistent here with how you spelled "Havilah" in Gen 2:11; 10:7, 29 and "Shur" in Gen 16:7; 20:1. The name "Shur" means "wall". The Wilderness of Shur may have been named after a city or fortification named Shur that was located near the eastern border of Egypt (Gen 16:7). (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

that {is} near Egypt

"that {is} east of {the country/land of} Egypt"

as you go

"as you go/head {from there}" or "as one goes/travels"

toward Asshur

"to {the city of} Asshur {in Assyria}." or "in the direction of {the land/country of} Assyria." Assyria and its capital city Asshur were far east of Shur. Consider again how you spelled "Asshur" in Gen 2:14; 10:11, 22, and 25:3, 18.

He fell in the face of all his brothers

The Hebrew text has an idiom here that is ambiguous in this context. It could mean: (1) "He/They lived in hostility toward/against all his/their brothers/relatives." or "They lived as enemies against all their brothers/relatives." See how you translated a different idiom in 16:12 that probably has this meaning. Or it could mean: (2) "They settled/lived in the presence of all their brothers/relatives." or "They settled/lived among/near all their brothers/relatives." or (3) "He/Ishmael died in the presence of all his brothers/relatives." or "He/Ishmael died when/while all his brothers were still alive." (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 25:19

And these {are} the generations of Isaac the son of Abraham

"This/Here {is} {more of} the record/history of/about Abraham's son Isaac and his descendants/family:" or "What follows tells {more} about Abraham's son Isaac and his descendants/family:" We have already heard about much of Isaac's history in previous chapters; now we are told even more. See how you translated "these are the generations of" in verse 12 and Gen 6:9.

Abraham fathered Isaac

"{After} Abraham fathered/had {his son} Isaac," See how you translated "fathered" in verse 3.

Genesis 25:20

then Isaac was a son of forty years when he took Rebekah for himself as a wife

“Isaac {grew up and} married Rebekah when he was forty/40 years old.” See how you translated “was a son of ... years” in Gen 21:5.

the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram

“{She/Rebekah was} the/a daughter of Bethuel, {who was} an Aramean from {the land/region of} Paddan Aram,”

the sister of Laban

“and {she was} a sister of Laban” or “and her brother was Laban”

the Aramean

“{who was also} an Aramean.”

Genesis 25:21

And Isaac entreated Yahweh on behalf of his wife because she {was} barren

“Isaac prayed {earnestly} to Yahweh for his wife {to have children} because she {was} barren/infertile.” or “But/ However {for many years} Rebekah was not able to become/get pregnant, so Isaac prayed that Yahweh would give her children.” Isaac and Rebekah had been married for almost 20 years and they still had no children. See how you translated “barren” in Gen 11:30. Also, it may be clearer to change the order of the clauses in this sentence to put them in the order in which they happened. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

So Yahweh was entreated by him

“Yahweh answered his/Isaac’s prayer;” or “Yahweh did what he/Isaac prayed for,”

and Rebekah his wife conceived

“so that Rebekah/she became pregnant {with twins}.” For some languages it is clearer to include here the fact that Rebekah was pregnant with two babies, rather than wait until verse 22. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:22

And the children struggled against each other inside her

“And/But the {two} babies inside her kept/started pushing/shoving against each other,” or “After a while the twins wrestled with each other inside her,”

so she said

“so she/Rebekah asked,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why {is this} so? Why {am} I {like} this

“Why is this happening to me?” or “What is happening inside me?”

And she went to inquire of Yahweh

“Then she went/turned to Yahweh to ask him {what was happening}.” or “Then she prayed to Yahweh about it.”

Genesis 25:23

And Yahweh said to her

“Yahweh/He answered her,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Two nations {are} inside your womb

“{The ancestors of} two {future} people groups {are} inside you.” or “Inside you {are} {the ancestors of} two people groups.” or “{The two babies} inside your womb will become {the fathers/ancestors of} two nations.” Many translations put Yahweh’s words in poetry format in this verse. If your translation team decides to do this, look at a Bible version that does this to know where to divide the clauses.

and two peoples

“Those two people groups” or “Those two ancestors” or “They”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

will be divided

“will be divided/hostile {against each other}” or “will be rivals/enemies”

from inside your womb

“{starting now} even while they are {still} inside you.” or “{starting now} even before they are born.”

And one people will be stronger than the other people

“One of them will be more powerful than the other,”

and the older will serve the younger

“so that the older {son’s descendants} will serve the younger {son’s descendants}.”

Genesis 25:24

Then her days were fulfilled to deliver

“Later when it was time for her/Rebekah to give birth,”

and behold, twins {were} inside her womb

“sure enough, {there were} twin boys/sons inside her!”

Genesis 25:25

And the first came out red; all of him {was} like a garment of hair

“When the first one/baby came out, he was covered with thick red hair so that he was as hairy as a fur coat/robe.”
or “The first {one/baby} who was born was completely covered with thick red hair.” (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

so they called his name

“So his parents named him” or “So he was called/named”. The Hebrew text has “they” here, which probably refers to Esau’s parents and may include people in general after his parents named him.

Esau

“Esau, {which means “hairy.”}” Consider whether or not to include the meaning of Esau’s name in the text or in a footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 25:26

Then after that

“Next” (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-logic-sequential\]\]](#))

his brother came out

“his brother was born,” Some languages have a specific term for a younger brother that fits here. See what you did in Gen 4:2.

and his hand was grabbing on to the heel of Esau

“with his hand holding on {tightly} to Esau’s heel.” or “gripping Esau’s heel {tightly} with his hand.”

so he called his name

“So they called/named him” or “So he was called/named”. See how you translated a similar clause in verse 25 that probably has the same meaning.

Jacob

“Jacob, {which means “heel-grabber.”}” If you decide to include the meaning of Jacob’s name in the text or in a footnote, make sure it matches the way you translate “grabbing” earlier in this sentence. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

And Isaac {was} a son of sixty years

“Isaac {was} sixty years old”. See how you translated the idiom “was a son of ... years” in verse 20. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

when she bore them

“when Rebekah gave birth to them.” or “when Esau and Jacob were born.”

Genesis 25:27

Then the boys grew up

“When/As the boys grew up/older,”

and Esau became a man who knew hunting

“Esau became a skilled/expert hunter,” or “Esau became good at hunting animals {for food},” See how you translated a similar phrase (“mighty hunter”) in Gen 10:9.

a man of the field

“and he enjoyed/preferred {being/working in} the open country,” or “and he was an outdoorsman,”

and Jacob {was} a quiet man

“but/whereas Jacob {was} a quiet/mild-mannered man/person” or “Jacob, on the other hand, had a quiet/mild-mannered personality/character”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, make sure that it is clear in your translation that Esau and Jacob are being contrasted. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

who stayed among the tents

“and stayed/worked close to home.” or “and {liked/preferred} to be/work at/near home.”

Genesis 25:28

And Isaac loved Esau

“Isaac loved Esau {most},” or “Isaac’s favorite son was Esau,” Your translation should not sound like Isaac and Rebekah did not love both of their sons. Rather, they each had their favorite son.

because {he liked} game meat in his mouth

“because he liked to eat the meat of wild animals/deer {that he/Esau hunted},” Make sure your translation of “he liked” refers here to Isaac, not Esau. For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this clause first in this sentence and say, “Isaac liked to eat wild animal/deer meat, so his favorite son was Esau”. Do what is best your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

but Rebekah loved Jacob

“but/whereas Rebekah loved Jacob {most}.” or “but/whereas Rebekah’s favorite son was Jacob.” See how you translated a similar clause earlier in this verse.

Genesis 25:29

Now Jacob was cooking stew

"{Once} Jacob was making/cooking {some} stew/soup," or "{One day} when Jacob was making {some} stew/soup," According to verse 34, this stew (or thick soup) was made out of lentils, which are a type of bean; it may also have had pieces of meat in it. Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce the first event in this episode (following the background information in verses 27-28). (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

and Esau came in from the field

"Esau came home from {hunting/working out in} the fields/country". See how you translated "field" in verse 27.

and he {was} exhausted

"and he {was/felt} exhausted/weak {from hunger}." or "and he {was/felt} exhausted/weak {and hungry}." or "extremely/very tired {and hungry}." The Hebrew word for "exhausted" means Esau was very tired (perhaps even feeling faint) from his hunting or work, as well as hungry and thirsty from lack of food. Some languages have an idiom for this that fits well here. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 25:30

Then Esau said to Jacob

“So Esau asked Jacob,” or “So Esau requested from Jacob,” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please let me devour

“Please let me eat/have”

some of that very red stuff

“some of that very/dark red stew/soup {you are making}”

because I {am} exhausted

“because I {am/feel} exhausted/weak {from hunger}!” or “because I {am/feel} {hungry and} exhausted/weak!” See how you translated “exhausted” in verse 29.

For that {reason

“That is why” or “Because he/Esau said that,”

they called his name

“he/Esau was/is {also} called/nicknamed” or “his/Esau’s nickname was” or “they/people called/nicknamed him”. Frequently in the Hebrew text, this phrase has a general meaning and does not refer to someone specific. Do what is best in your language.

Edom

“Edom, {which means “red.”}” You could include the meaning of “Edom” in your translation or in a footnote so that it is clear why Esau was given that name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 25:31

But Jacob said

“But Jacob said/replied {to him},” or “Jacob replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

On this day

“Today {right now}” or “Right now” or “First”

sell your birthright to me

“give your birthright to me in exchange {for some stew/soup}.” or “trade your rights as the firstborn/oldest son to me {for the/some stew/soup,} {then I will give you some}.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob was offering the stew as payment for Esau’s birthright as the firstborn son. In Hebrew culture the firstborn son inherited twice as much as the rest of the children in the family (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). That information could be put in a footnote so that people understand what Esau was selling for a bowl of stew. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 25:32

And Esau said

“Esau said/responded {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, I am about to die

“Look, I am about to die {from hunger}!” or “Look/Listen, {I am so hungry that I feel like} I am about/going to die!”
Esau is using hyperbole or exaggeration here to emphasize how hungry he is. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

So for what use {is} that to me, a birthright

“So how will my birthright benefit me {if I die}?” or “So my birthright is of no use/value/benefit to me {right now}!”
Esau uses a rhetorical question to emphasize his point about how hungry he is. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question works well here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 25:33

But Jacob said

“Jacob insisted,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Swear to me on this day

“{First} make an oath/vow to me today {before God} {that your rights are now mine}!” or “{You must first} vow/ promise to me right now {that you sell/give your rights to me}.” See how you translated “swear to me by God” in Gen 21:23. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

So he swore to him

“So he/Esau swore/vowed to him/Jacob” or “So Esau made an unbreakable promise/vow to him/Jacob”. Make sure the way you translate this clause fits well with what Jacob just said.

and sold his birthright to Jacob

“that he had sold/traded his rights as the firstborn/oldest son to Jacob/him {for the stew/soup}.” or “that he was selling/giving his firstborn-son-rights to Jacob/him {in exchange for the stew/soup}.” See how you translated “sell your birthright” in verse 31. Also see how Hebrews 12:16 is translated, which refers to the same event.

Genesis 25:34

Then Jacob gave to Esau bread and lentil stew

“Then Jacob gave Esau {some} bread and {some of the} lentil stew/soup,” or “Then Jacob gave Esau {some of the} lentil stew/soup and/with {some} bread,” Consider again how you translated “stew/soup” in verses 29 and 34. Lentils are small, round, flat, reddish-brown legume seeds that grow inside a pod (similar to peas or beans). If lentils are not known in your area, you could describe them as “a type of legume/bean called lentils”. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and he ate and drank, and got up and left

“and Esau ate, drank, got/stood up, and left.” or “and Esau {quickly/hurriedly} ate the meal and left.” Consider what is the most natural way to translate this series of actions that happened quickly one after the other and shows how carelessly Esau treated his birthright.

So Esau despised his birthright

“So Esau showed that he did not value his rights as the firstborn/oldest son.” or “In that way, Esau treated his birthright {carelessly/flippantly} as if it had no/little value.” See how you translated “birthright” in verses 31-33.

Genesis 26

Genesis 26:1

Then there was

“Now there was”. Consider what is the best way in your language to begin this new episode. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

a famine

“{another} famine” or “{another} extreme/serious shortage/lack of food” or “{another} {time of} extreme/severe food shortage”. See how you translated “famine” in Gen 12:10.

besides the earlier famine that was

“in addition to the previous famine/one/shortage that occurred/happened” or “{This was} a different famine/shortage from the one that had happened {years} earlier/before,”

in the days of Abraham

“during Abraham’s lifetime.” or “while Abraham was still alive.”

So Isaac went

“So Isaac {and his family} went”. In your translation it should not sound like Isaac went alone to the city of Gerar; the rest of his family lived with him. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, to Gerar

“went {for help} to the Philistine king Abimelech, {who lived} in {the city of} Gerar.” or “went to {the city of} Gerar to {ask for help from} King Abimelech, who ruled over the Philistines.” Be consistent here with how you translated “{the city of} Gerar” in Gen 10:19; 20:1-2 and “Philistines” in Gen 10:14; 21:32, 34.

Genesis 26:2

Then Yahweh appeared to him

“Then Yahweh came to Isaac”. See how you translated “appeared” in Gen 12:7. Also consider whether it is more natural in your language to refer to Isaac here with his name or a pronoun. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and said

“and said {to him};” or “and told/commanded {him};” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Do not go down

“Do not go/travel south” or “Do not go/travel”. Egypt was lower in elevation and also south of the land of the Philistines. Many translations leave that information implied. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to Egypt

“to {the land/country of} Egypt,”

live in the land that I tell you

“{but rather} live/stay/reside in the/this land where/wherever I tell you {to live}.” or “{but rather} live where/wherever I tell you to live.”

Genesis 26:3

Sojourn

“You must live/stay/reside for a while” or “Live/Stay/Reside temporarily {as a foreigner/outsider}”. See how you translated this term in Gen 12:10 and 19:9. You may need to translate it in slightly different ways, depending on the context.

in this land

“in this region,”

and I will be with you

“and I will stay with you” or “and I will be/stay {right} beside you”. This clause means that God will guide, help, and protect Isaac and provide for his needs.

and bless you

“and prosper you.” or “cause you {and your family} to prosper.” (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-keyterms\]\]](#))

For to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands

“In fact, I will give all the {surrounding} lands/regions to you and your offspring/descendants,” Starting here (and continuing through verse 4) Yahweh explains how he will bless Isaac. Begin this sentence in a way that makes that clear in your translation. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

and I will confirm

“and I will continue to keep/fulfill”

the oath that I swore to Abraham your father

“the vow/promise that I made to your father Abraham.” Consider again how you translated “oath” in Gen 24:8. It may be necessary to translate this word differently in different contexts.

Genesis 26:4

And I will multiply

“Yes, I will multiply” or “that I will multiply”. Verse 4 gives the details of the oath that is referred to in verse 3. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 3.

your offspring as the stars of

“multiply/increase {the number of} your offspring/descendants {so that they are as numerous/countless} as” or “make your offspring/descendants as numerous/many/countless as” or “give you so many offspring that they will be as numerous as”. See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 22:17. (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

as the stars of the heavens

“as the {number of} stars in the sky,”

and I will give

“I will also give”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to your offspring

“to your descendants” or “to them”

all these lands

“all these regions.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 3.

in your offspring

“In fact, through your offspring/descendants” or “And because of your offspring/descendants” or “In fact, by means of your offspring/descendants”. See how you translated this phrase and the following clause in Gen 22:18.

And & all the nations of the earth will be blessed

“all the people/ethnic groups on earth will be blessed {by me},” or “{I} will bless all the people/ethnic groups on the earth,” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this passive clause. (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1564)**)

Genesis 26:5

because

"{all} because" or "{I will do all that} because". Verse 5 gives the reason that Yahweh will do everything that he says in verses 3 and 4. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Abraham obeyed my voice

"Abraham obeyed me" or "Abraham {always} obeyed/did what I told him". The phrase "my voice" stands for what Yahweh said to Abraham and also represents Yahweh himself. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees, and my laws

"Yes, he kept/obeyed all my requirements, {including} {all} my commands, decrees, and laws." or "and did everything that I ever commanded {him} {to do}." This clause is another way of saying "obeyed my voice" (found in the previous clause), and emphasizes that Abraham always obeyed God in everything. Notice that the terms in this clause have much overlap in meaning. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Genesis 26:6

So Isaac stayed in Gerar

“So/Then Isaac {did/obeyed what God said/commanded and} stayed/settled {with his family} in {the city of} Gerar.”
In your translation it should not sound like Isaac lived alone; the rest of his family lived with him. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 26:7

Then the men of the place asked about his wife

“After a while the men of/from that place/city started asking {Isaac/him} about Rebekah,” or “When the men from there started asking {Isaac/him} about Rebekah,”

and he said

“he said/replied {to them}” or “he {lied and} told {them}” or “he {deceived them by} saying” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

She {is} my sister

“that she {was} his sister”. Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a direct quote or an indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

because he was afraid to say, “{She is} my wife

“He was afraid to say/admit that she was his wife,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also see how you handled the previous quote in this sentence. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

He thought,} “Lest the men of the place kill me

“He thought that the men of the/that city might kill him” or “He was afraid that the men in that place/city would kill him”. See how you translated “the men of the place” earlier in this verse. Also consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here, and see what you did earlier in this verse. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

on account of Rebekah

“because of Rebekah,” or “so that they could take/have Rebekah,”

because she {is} beautiful of appearance

“because she {is/was} very/so beautiful.” For some languages it may be better to put this clause first in this verse and say, “Now Rebekah {was} very beautiful, so the men in that city started asking {Isaac} about her. Isaac was afraid they might kill him in order to take/have her, so he {lied and} told {them} she {was} his sister.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 26:8

Then it happened, when the days had been long for him there

"{One day} when/after he/Isaac {and his family} had been/lived there a long time,"

then Abimelech the king of the Philistines looked down

"Abimelech {who was} king over the Philistines looked down/out" or "the Philistines' King Abimelech looked down/out" or "King Abimelech looked down/out"

from a window

"from a window {of his house/palace}"

and saw that, behold

"and saw to his surprise" or "and was surprised to see". In this context, "behold" means that King Abimelech was surprised at what he saw.

Isaac was laughing with Rebekah his wife

"that Isaac was flirting with his wife Rebekah." or "that Isaac was showing affection to his wife Rebekah." There is a word play here in Hebrew (since "Isaac" and "laughing" come from the same root word). Isaac may have been laughing or flirting with Rebekah or physically touching her in an affectionate or intimate way, as a husband would do with his wife.

Genesis 26:9

So Abimelech called for Isaac

“So/Then {King} Abimelech summoned Isaac” or “So/Then {King} Abimelech sent someone to bring Isaac to him”. King Abimelech probably sent a servant to tell Isaac to come talk to him.

and said

“and said {to him},” or “and scolded {him} {by saying},” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, she {is} really your wife

“It is clear/obvious that she/Rebekah {is} actually your wife!” The word “behold” emphasizes what follows it. Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this term in this context. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-keyterms\]\]](#))

So how could you say, ‘She {is} my sister

“So why did you tell us that she {is} your sister?” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded direct quote (“She is my sister”) as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

And Isaac said to him

“Isaac answered him,” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Because I said, ‘I might die because of her

“Because I thought that I might die because of her.” or “{I said that} because I was afraid that someone might kill me in order to take/have her {as a wife}.” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 26:10

Then Abimelech said

"Then Abimelech scolded {him} {further}," Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language to fit this context. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {is} this you have done to us

"Why did you treat us this way?" or "You have treated us very badly!" or "You should not have done this to us!" King Abimelech uses a rhetorical question here to show strong emotion and to emphasize that what Isaac did was wrong and should not have been done. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

One of the people might easily have lain with your wife

"Sooner or later, one of the people/men {whom I rule} could/might have slept with your wife," or "... had {physical/sexual} relations with your wife," or "... committed adultery with your wife," See how you translated the idiom "lay with" in Gen 19:32-35. It may be necessary to translate this in slightly different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and you would have brought guilt on us

"and you would have caused us to be guilty {of adultery}!" or "with the result that you would have brought guilt/punishment on us!" The pronoun "us" in this verse refers to King Abimelech and the Philistines whom he ruled; it does not include Isaac. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

Genesis 26:11

Then Abimelech ordered all the people by saying

"Then {King} Abimelech warned/told all {his} people,"

Whoever touches this man or his wife will surely be killed

"If anyone harms this man {Isaac} or his wife {in any way}, I will surely/definitely have that person killed/executed!" or "I will surely/definitely execute anyone who harms Isaac or his wife {in any way}!" In this context "touches" is used as an idiom that means "harms {in any way}." Many languages have a similar idiom that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 26:12

Then Isaac sowed seeds in that land

"Isaac planted seeds/crops in that land/area," The phrase "sow seeds" means to plant seeds by scattering them by hand on the ground in order to grow crops. If this method of planting is not known in your language area, you could translate this more generally and say, "planted seeds/crops" or "planted {large} fields {with seeds/crops}".

and in that year he obtained a hundredfold

"and during that year he gathered/reaped {a huge harvest that was} a hundred times {more than what he had planted}" or "and that year he harvested a very large crop/harvest"

and Yahweh blessed him

"because Yahweh blessed him." or "Yahweh continued to bless him," Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 13.

Genesis 26:13

And the man became great, and he continued to become even greater

“In that way he/Isaac kept getting more and more wealthy” or “so that he grew/became richer and richer”

until he was exceedingly great

“until {eventually} he was extremely/very wealthy/rich.”

Genesis 26:14

And he had possession of flocks and possession of herds

“He had/owned many flocks {of sheep} and herds {of cattle}” or “He had/owned many sheep and cattle”. See how you translated “flocks” and “herds” in Gen 24:35.

and many servants

“and {he also had/owned} many servants/slaves.” or “He also had/owned many servants/slaves.” The same Hebrew word is used for both “servant” or “slave”. Slaves and servants were owned by their masters but often they were treated as respected members of the family. An example of this was Abraham’s head servant who was sent to find a wife for Isaac (Gen 24). Keep this information in mind as you translate “servants” into your language. (See:

Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665))

So the Philistines envied him

“Because of that, the Philistines envied him/Isaac,” or “As a result, the Philistines were envious/jealous of him/Isaac,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597))**

Genesis 26:15

and the Philistines stopped up all the wells that the servants of his father had dug in the days of Abraham his father and filled them with dirt

“and/so they stopped/plugged up all his father Abraham’s wells by filling them with dirt.” or “So they filled up with dirt all the wells that the servants of his father Abraham had dug while he was {still} alive.” or “and/so they filled up all his/Isaac’s wells with dirt {so that no one could use them anymore}. Those were the wells that Abraham’s servants had dug while he was still alive.” See how you translated “well” in Gen 21:30-31.

Genesis 26:16

Then Abimelech said to Isaac

“Then/Finally {King} Abimelech said to Isaac/him,” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Go away from us

“{Please} move away from us,” or “{We want you to} move {somewhere else} away from us,” Although King Abimelech is asking Isaac to leave, he is still trying to be polite. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

because you are more powerful than we {are

“because you are too powerful for us.” or “because you are so powerful {that you are a threat} to us.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this quote and say, “You are so powerful that we {are afraid of you and} want you to move away from us.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

Genesis 26:17

So Isaac went from there

“So Isaac moved {away} from {the city of} Gerar {with his family}”. In your translation it should not sound like Isaac moved by himself from the city of Gerar; his family moved with him. See what you did for similar cases in verses 1 and 6. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and camped

“and pitched his tents” or “and set up his tents”

in the Valley of Gerar

“in the Gerar Valley” or “in the valley near Gerar”

and settled there

“and stayed/lived there {for a while}.”

Genesis 26:18

Then Isaac returned and dug out the water wells that they had dug in the days of Abraham his father

“Then Isaac {had his servants} dig the dirt out of the wells that Abraham’s servants had dug and” or “Then Isaac’s servants re-dug his father Abraham’s wells”. Isaac had his servants re-dig the wells; he did not do that work by himself. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and {that} the Philistines had stopped up after the death of Abraham

“{that} the Philistines had plugged up with dirt after Abraham had died,” or “{that} the Philistines had {just} filled {with dirt},” Be consistent with how you spelled or translated “Philistines” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:14; 21:32, 34; 26:1, 8, 14-15, 18. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he called them names like the names

“He/Isaac gave the/those wells the same names” or “He/Isaac named the/those wells with the same names”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

that his father had called them

“that his father had named/given them.”

Genesis 26:19

Then the servants of Isaac dug in the valley

“Next Isaac’s servants dug {at/in a new place} in the valley {of Gerar}” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and found a well of living water there

“and discovered/struck/reached a source/spring of fresh/flowing water there.” The phrase “living water” is an idiom that means the well was spring fed and was a source of continually flowing, fresh water to drink. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

Genesis 26:20

But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying

“But the herdsmen from {the city of} Gerar argued/disputed with Isaac’s herdsmen and said/claimed,”

The water {belongs} to us

“That water/well is ours!” or “that the water/well belonged to them.” or “that they owned that water/well.” Consider whether it is best in your language to use a direct quote or an indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

So he called the name of the well

“So Isaac named/called the/that well”

Esek

“Esek, {which means “dispute/argument,”}” If you include the meaning of this well’s name in your translation text or in a footnote, make sure it fits with how you translate “disputed” in the next clause. This word is different from the word for “quarreled” used earlier in verse 20, but it has the same meaning. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

because they disputed with him

“because they argued with him {about it}.” or “because they disputed/argued with his herdsmen {about it}.” The herdsmen from Gerar disputed with Isaac indirectly (verse 20b) when they quarreled with his herdsmen (verse 20a). Make sure in your translation that the two halves of this verse do not contradict each other.

Genesis 26:21

Then they dug another well

“Then Isaac’s servants dug another well,”

but they quarreled over it too

“but {once again} the herdsmen from Gerar argued/disputed {with them} about that one/well too,” Be consistent here with how you translated “quarreled” in the first part of verse 20.

so he called its name

“so he/Isaac named it” or “So he/Isaac named the/that well”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Sitnah

“Sitnah, {which means “hostility/strife.”}” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 26:22

Then he moved from there

"Then Isaac {and his family} moved from there". In your translation it should not sound like Isaac moved by himself. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and he dug

"and he {had his servants/men} dig" or "and his servants dug". See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 18.

another well

"a new/third well,"

and they did not quarrel over it

"but {this time} the herdsmen of/from Gerar did not quarrel/argue about it," or "{This time} Gerar's herdsmen did not quarrel/argue about it,"

so he called its name

"so he called/named it" or "so he called/named the/that well" or "so he gave it the name". See how you translated this clause in verses 20 and 21.

Rehoboth

"Rehoboth, {which means "space/room,"}" Be consistent here with how you spelled "Rehoboth" in Gen 10:11.

and he said, "Because now Yahweh

"because he said, "Now/Finally Yahweh"

has made space for us

"has provided space/room for us," or "given our/my family {enough} space/room {to live},"

and we will be fruitful in the land

"so that we will prosper/flourish {here} in the/this land."

Genesis 26:23

Then from there he went up to Beersheba

“From there he/Isaac {and his family} went/moved south to {the city of} Beersheba.” or “{One day} he/Isaac {and his family} went/moved from there to {the city of} Beersheba.” The word “up” refers to the fact that Beersheba is higher in elevation from where they were; it is also south in direction. Some translations leave that information implied. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 26:24

And Yahweh appeared to him during that night and said

“That night Yahweh appeared/came to him and said {to him},” See how you translated “Yahweh appeared to him” in verse 2.

I {am} the God of Abraham your father

“I {am} the God whom your father Abraham serves/worships.” or “I {am} the God {who takes care} of your father Abraham.”

Do not be afraid, because I {am} with you

“I {will always be} with you, so do not be afraid.” Some languages can do as the Hebrew text does and put the result clause (“do not be afraid”) before the reason (“I am with you”). Other languages prefer to put the reason before the result. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And I will bless you

“I will bless/prosper you”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and multiply your offspring

“and multiply/increase {the number of} your offspring/descendants” or “and make your offspring/descendants numerous” or “and give you many/countless offspring/descendants”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

for the sake of

“because of {my promise/relationship to}” or “just as I promised to” or “in order to keep my promise to”

Abraham my servant

“my servant Abraham.” or “Abraham, who serves me.”

Genesis 26:25

Then he built an altar there

“Then/So Isaac built an altar there {at Beersheba}”. See how you translated “altar” in Gen 22:9.

and called on the name of Yahweh

“and {offered/burned sacrifices on it to Yahweh as he} worshiped/praised Yahweh/him by name.” Consider again how you translated the idiom “called on the name of Yahweh” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:26, 12:8, 13:4, 21:33, 26:25, and see the note about this at 4:26.

And he pitched his tents there

“He also set up his tents/camp there,” See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 17.

and the servants of Isaac dug a well there

“and his servants started digging {another} well there {too}.” Notice that they did not finish digging this well until verse 32. Keep that in mind as you translate this clause.

Genesis 26:26

Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar

“Then {King} Abimelech came/went to him/Isaac from {the city of} Gerar”

and Ahuzzath his friend

“with his adviser Ahuzzath”. King Abimelech’s friend Ahuzzath was probably his adviser.

and Phicol the commander of his army

“and Phicol {who was} the commander/leader of his/Abimelech’s army/soldiers.” or “and his army/military commander/captain Phicol.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 21:22, 32.

Genesis 26:27

And Isaac said to them

“Isaac asked them,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why have you come to me

“Why did you come here,” or “I don’t understand why you came to see me,” Isaac probably wants to know why King Abimelech and his men are there, but this may also be a rhetorical question that shows his strong emotion. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

since you hate me

“{especially} since you have treated me hatefully/meanly” or “{especially} since you have been hateful/unfriendly/hostile toward me”

and you sent me away from you

“and forced me to move/go away from you!”

Genesis 26:28

And they said

“They answered {him},” or “They responded/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We have clearly seen

“It is very obvious/clear to us”. Make sure your translation of the pronoun “we” does not include Isaac here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

that Yahweh has been with you

“that Yahweh is with you {and blessing/prospering you},” See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 3 and 24.

so we said

“so we said {to each other}” or “so/and we decided”

There should be an oath between us’—between us and you

“that there should be an oath/vow between us and you.” or “that we should make a vow with you {to live in peace with one another}.” or “that we should make a vow to each other.” In the Hebrew text, the first “us” in this sentence includes Isaac, but the second “us” excludes him. Notice that in the first two alternate translations, the pronouns “us” and “we” exclude him, but in the third alternate, the pronoun “we” includes him. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

So let us cut a covenant

“So {please} let us make/establish a {peace} treaty/agreement”. See how you translated “cut a covenant” in Gen 21:27, 32. Notice that the pronoun “us” in this phrase either excludes Isaac or includes him, depending on whether you use “with you” or “with each other” for the following phrase. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

with you

“with each other,”

Genesis 26:29

that you will not do evil against us

“that you will never harm us,” Verse 29 specifies the details of the covenant or treaty that they want Isaac to vow or promise.

just as we did not touch you

“just as we never harmed you {in any way},” See how you translated “touch” or “harm” in verse 11. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

and just as we did only good to you

“but only treated you well/kindly”

and sent you away in peace

“and sent you away peacefully.” or “and in a peaceful manner asked you to leave.”

Now you are blessed by Yahweh

“Now {because of that,} Yahweh has {greatly} blessed/prospered you.” or “{As a result,} Yahweh has now {greatly} blessed/prospered you.”

Genesis 26:30

Then he made a feast for them

“Then Isaac prepared a feast,”

and they ate and drank

“and they {all} ate and drank {together}.” In your translation it should not sound like the feast was only for King Abimelech and his men; Isaac ate with them.

Genesis 26:31

Then they got up early in the morning

“Early the next morning they got up”. See how you translated “got up early in the morning” in Gen 20:8; 21:14, 22:3.

and swore to each other

“and made unbreakable oaths/promises to each other {to keep their covenant/treaty}.” or “and made vows/oaths to one another {that they would keep their treaty/agreement}.” See how you translated “swore” in Gen 25:33. Also, if you make the implied information explicit, it should match the way you translate “covenant” or “treaty” in verse 28.

Then Isaac sent them on their way

“Then Isaac said goodbye to them,” or “Then Isaac told them goodbye,”

and they left from him in peace

“and they went home from him in peace.” or “and they left him on peaceful terms and went/returned home.”

Genesis 26:32

Then it happened on that day

“On that {same} day” or “{Later} that {same} day”

the servants of Isaac came and told him

“Isaac’s servants came {to him} to tell/inform him”

about the matter of the well that they had dug

“about the well that they had been digging”. This is the same well that Isaac’s servants started digging in verse 25.

and said to him

“and announced,” Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We have found water

“We have discovered/struck/reached water!” See how you translated “found” in verse 19.

Genesis 26:33

So he called it Shibah

“So Isaac named the well Shibah/Shebah, {which means “oath/vow.”}” The name of this well can be spelled “Shibah” or “Shebah.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

For that {reason

“That is why”

the name of the city {is} Beersheba to this day

“{even} today the name of that city {is} still Beersheba, {which means “well of the oath/vow.”}” See how you translated “Beersheba” and its meaning in Gen 21:31.

Genesis 26:34

And Esau was a son of forty years

“Now Esau was forty/40 years old, and” or “When Esau was forty/40 years old,” Consider again how you translated “a son of ... years” in the book of Genesis. See 5:32; 11:10; 12:4; 16:16; 17:1, 17, 24-25; 25:20-21 and 26:34.

and he took {as} a wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite

“he married {a woman named} Judith, {who was} the/a daughter of a Hittite {man} named Beerli, and {he also married} {a woman named} Basemath, {who was} the/a daughter of a Hittite {man} named Elon.” or “he married {two} Hittite women: Judith, whose father was Beerli, and Basemath, whose father was Elon.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Basemath was Esau’s second wife, not Beerli’s wife.

Genesis 26:35

And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah

“Those {foreign} women caused Isaac and Rebekah to be very distressed/upset.” or “Isaac and Rebekah were very distressed/upset that their son had married foreign women {rather than a woman from their own religion and people group}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 27

Genesis 27:1

Then it happened, when

“One day when” or “Now when”. The events in chapter 27 happened about 23 years after the end of chapter 26. Make sure your translation begins this verse in a way that fits with that fact. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1655)**)

Isaac was old

“Isaac was {very} old” or “Isaac was an old man”

and his eyes were too dim to see

“and his eyes were so weak that he could not see,” or “and he could no longer see,” or “and he was almost blind,” Isaac was either totally blind or so blind that he could not recognize people anymore (See: verses 18-27, 32-33).

then he called

“he called/sent for” or “he summoned”. Isaac probably told a servant to go and tell Esau to come to him.

Esau, his older son, and said to him, “My son

“his older son Esau and said, “Son.” ”

And he said to him

“Esau answered him,” or “Esau replied,” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold me

“Here I am.” or “Yes, {sir/Father,} {what is it}?” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 22:1,7,11.

Genesis 27:2

Then he said

“Then Isaac told {him},” Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, please

“Listen {closely/carefully}, please:” or “Please listen {closely/carefully}:”

I am old

“I am {very} old” or “I am an old man {now}”. See how you translated “old” or “an old man” in verse 1.

I do not know the day of my death

“{and} I do not know when I will die.” or “{and} I might die soon.” or “{and} I might not live much longer.”

Genesis 27:3

So now

“So then,” or “So” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

please take your weapons, your quiver, and your bow

“take/get your hunting gear, your quiver {of arrows}, and your bow,” or “take/get your bow and arrows”. Consider what is the most natural way to refer to a bow and arrows in your language.

and go out

“then go out” or “go out”

in} the field

“into/to the fields” or “into/to the open country”. See how you translated “the field” in Gen 25:27.

and hunt game for me

“and hunt/get {some} {wild} animal/deer {meat} for me.” or “and go hunting for me.” See how you translated “game” in Gen 25:28.

Genesis 27:4

Then prepare

“Next/Then {use the meat to} cook/make” or “Next/Then {butcher the animal/deer and} cook/make”. For some languages it may be necessary to make explicit more of the steps that Esau needs to take to prepare the meal, so that it does not sound like the animal would be eaten alive or uncooked. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

tasty food for me

“{some} tasty/savory food for me” or “a tasty/delicious meal for me”

such as I love

“the kind I like best,” or “{just} the way that I like it,”

and bring it to me so I can eat it, so that

“and bring it to me to eat so that”

my soul can bless you before I die

“I can bless you before I die.” or “before I die I can ask God to bless/prosper you.” Isaac uses the phrase “my soul” to refer to himself. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 27:5

And Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to Esau his son

“Rebekah overheard what Isaac said to his/their son Esau.” or “Now while Isaac was speaking to his son Esau, Rebekah was listening/eavesdropping.” The phrase “his son” probably recalls the fact that Esau was Isaac’s favorite son (Gen 25:28). However make sure that your translation of this phrase does not sound like Esau was not also Rebekah’s son. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Then Esau went {to} the field to hunt game to bring it back

“So after Esau went out to the fields/country to hunt/get {wild} animal/deer {meat},” or “So after Esau had left to go hunting in the open country,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 6. Also see how you translated “the field” and “hunt game” in verse 3.

Genesis 27:6

Then Rebekah said to Jacob her son, saying

“Rebekah/she said to her/their son Jacob,” The phrase “her son” probably recalls the fact that Jacob was Rebekah’s favorite son (Gen 25:28). See how you translated “his son” in verse 5.

Behold

“Listen,” or “Listen to this:”

I heard your father

“I {just} heard/overheard your father”

speaking to Esau your brother, saying

“tell your brother Esau” or “say to your brother Esau,” Some languages have a special term for “older brother” that is used here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

Genesis 27:7

Bring game for me

“to bring/get him {some} {wild} animal/deer {meat}”. Consider whether it is best in your language to translate Rebekah's quote of Isaac in verse 7 as a direct quote or an indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

and prepare tasty food for me so that I can eat it

“and {use it to} cook a tasty/delicious meal for him to eat.” See how you translated this clause in verse 4.

and I can bless you in the presence of Yahweh, before my death

“Then before he dies, he wants to bless Esau with Yahweh as his witness.” or “Then before he dies, he will ask Yahweh to bless/prosper Esau.” Be consistent in translating the parts of verse 7 as either a direct quote (using first person pronouns) or an indirect quote (using third person pronouns). (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p. 1609)**)

Genesis 27:8

So now, my son

“So then, my son,” or “Now son,” See how you translated “So now” in verse 3. Also, make sure it is clear that Rebekah is no longer quoting Isaac’s words (whether directly or indirectly). If necessary, you could begin this verse with: “Rebekah continued,” or “Then Rebekah said {to Jacob},”

listen to my voice

“listen to me” or “listen to what I’m saying”. See how you translated “my voice” in Gen 26:5. (See: **Metonymy (p. 1674)**)

to what I command you

“and do what I tell you {to do}.” or “so that you do what I’m telling you.” or “and obey me.”

Genesis 27:9

Please go to the flock

“Please go {out} to our flock {of goats}” or “Go to our flock {of goats}”

and bring to me from there

“and bring me” or “and get for me”

two good kids of the goats

“two fine/choice kid/young goats” or “two of the/our best kid/young goats”

so that I will prepare from them

“so that I can {use the meat from them to} prepare/cook” or “I will {use their meat to} cook/make”. Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

tasty food for your father

“{some} savory food for your father” or “a tasty/delicious meal for your father”. See how you translated “prepare some tasty food for” in verses 4 and 7.

such as he loves

“the kind he likes best/most.” or “{just} the way that he likes it.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

Genesis 27:10

Then you take it to your father

“Then you can take the meal/food to your father”

and he will eat {it}, so that he will bless you before his death

“to eat, so that he will bless you before he dies.” or “so that he will eat {it}, and {then} before he dies, he will ask Yahweh to bless/prosper you.” See how you translated “will bless” in verses 4 and 7.

Genesis 27:11

Then Jacob said

“Then/But Jacob replied/responded” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

to Rebekah his mother

“to his mother,” or “to her,”

Behold

“Look/Listen,” or “Remember that” or “As you know,”

Esau my brother

“my brother Esau”. See how you translated “brother” in verse 11.

is} a hairy man

“has hairy skin” or “has a lot of hair on his skin/body”. See how you talked about Esau’s hairy body in Gen 25:25.

but I {am} a smooth man

“but I have smooth/non-hairy skin.” or “but I am not hairy.”

Genesis 27:12

Suppose

“What if” or “What will/would happen if” or “{I am afraid of} what will happen if”

my father touches me

“my father touches/feels my skin/arms”. If this sentence is translated as a statement, you could end it with a period or an exclamation point to show that Jacob is worried.

Then I will be in his eyes as a deceiver

“{Certainly} he will/would {recognize me and} know/realize that I am trying to deceive/trick him.” Make sure that your translation of verse 12 describes a hypothetical situation, not something that had happened yet. Some languages have a special verb form (such as “would”) to communicate this. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

and I will bring a curse on me and not a blessing

“Then I will/would cause myself to be cursed instead of blessed.” or “Then he will curse me instead of blessing me.”

Genesis 27:13

But his mother said to him

“But his mother replied/responded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let your curse be on me, my son

“My son, {if your father curses you,} may that curse be/fall on me {and not on you}.” or “{If that happens,} may God curse me instead of you, my son.” Make sure that your translation of “your curse” refers to the curse Jacob fears his father might say against him and does not sound like Jacob cursed someone. Also, for some languages it is more natural to put an address like “my son” first in this quote. Do what is best in your language.

Just listen to my voice

“{Please} just do/obey what I say,” or “Just listen to me,” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and go get {them} for me

“and go get {two goats} for me.” or “and go and bring {two goats} to me.”

Genesis 27:14

So he went

“So Jacob went {to the/their flock}”

and got {them

“and got {the goats}” or “chose/selected {two goats}”

and brought {them} to his mother

“and brought/took {them} to her.”

Then his mother prepared

“Then she {had them butchered and she} prepared/cooked/made” or “Then she {used the butchered meat from the goats to} prepare/cook”. In some languages it is necessary to specify that the animal was killed and cut up before being cooked. Do what is best in your language. See what you did for a similar case in verse 4. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

tasty food

“{some} tasty/savory food” or “a tasty/delicious meal”. See how you translated this phrase in verses 4, 7 and 9.

such as his father loved

“{just} the way that his father liked it.” See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 4 and 9.

Genesis 27:15

Then Rebekah took

“Rebekah/She also took/got {out}”

the best clothes of Esau her older son

“her older son Esau’s best/finest clothes”

that {were} with her in the house

“that she had in the house”

and put them on Jacob her younger son

“and had her younger son Jacob put them on.” or “and gave them to her younger son Jacob to put on.” Your translation should not sound like Rebekah dressed Jacob herself as if he were a little child. She probably gave him the clothes and asked him to put them on himself.

Genesis 27:16

And she put the skins of the kid goats over his hands and over

“Then she used the goat skins to cover his/Jacob’s arms and”. See how you translated “skins” in Gen 3:21. The skins still had the goat hair or fur on them.

the smooth part of his neck

“the non-hairy part of his neck.” or “the part of his neck that had no hair {on it}.” See how you translated “smooth” in verse 11.

Genesis 27:17

Then she gave the tasty food and the bread that she had made into the hand{s} of Jacob her son

“Then she/Rebekah gave/handed to Jacob/him the tasty/savory goat meat dish and some bread she had baked/made.” or “Then she gave/handed the tasty/delicious food/meal to Jacob/him, including some bread that she had baked/made.”

Genesis 27:18

and he went to his father

“He/Jacob took the meal to his father”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and said, “My father.” And he said

“and said, “Father.” His father answered/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold me. Who {are} you, my son

“Here I am, my son. Who {are} you?” or “Yes? Which {one} of my sons {are} you?” See how you translated “Behold me” in verse 1. It may be necessary to translate this in a different way here because the context is different.

Genesis 27:19

Then Jacob said to his father

"Jacob replied/lied to his father," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am} Esau, your firstborn

"I {am} Esau, your firstborn/oldest son." The term "firstborn" is a key term in the Bible because the firstborn son had special rights, including the fact that he inherited his father's authority and the largest portion of his father's estate. Jacob is claiming those rights by using this term. See how you translated this term in Gen 25:13. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

I have done as you told me

"I have done what you told/requested me {to do}."

Please get up, sit and eat some of my game

"{So now,} please sit up and eat some of the game/deer {meat} that I have prepared/cooked {for you}," See how you translated "game {meat}" in verses 3, 5 and 7.

so that your soul will bless me

"so that you can bless me." See how you translated a similar clause in verse 4. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 27:20

Then Isaac said to his son

“But Isaac asked him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

How {is} this you were quick to find {it}, my son

“How were you able to find/get {the deer/animal} so quickly, my son?” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to put the address “my son” first in this quote.

And he said

“Jacob answered {him},”

Because Yahweh your God

“{I was successful} because Yahweh, the God you worship/serve,” or “Yahweh, {who is} the God who takes care of you,”

caused {it} to happen before me

“helped me to hunt/find it.” or “helped me to succeed.” or “brought it to me.” See how you translated this clause in Gen 24:12.

Genesis 27:21

Then Isaac said to Jacob

“Then/But Isaac said to him,”

Please come close, so that I can touch you, my son

“Please come close/closer {to me}, my son, so that I can touch/feel you” or “My son, please come here so that I can touch/feel you”. Consider whether it is more natural in your language to put the address “my son” first or earlier in this quote. Also see what you did in verses 13 and 20.

and know} whether you are really my son Esau or not

“and make/be sure/certain that you are really my son Esau.” or “{I want to know} {for sure} whether or not you really are my son Esau.” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 27:22

So Jacob went close to Isaac his father

“So/Then Jacob came/stepped close/closer to his father Isaac,”

and he touched him

“and his father touched/felt him” or “and his father touched/felt his hands/arms”. See how you translated “touch” or “feel” in verses 12 and 21.

and said

“and said/thought {to himself},”

The voice {is} the voice of Jacob

“{Hmm,} the/his voice {sounds like} Jacob’s voice,” or “{Hmm,} he sounds/talks like Jacob,” (See: **Metonymy (p. 1674)**)

but the hands {are} the hands of Esau

“but the/his hands/arms {feel like} Esau’s hands/arms.” or “but he feels like Esau.” In Hebrew, the word for “hand” is the same word as for “arm”. Isaac probably felt Esau’s hands and arms.

Genesis 27:23

So he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like the hands of Esau his brother

“So Isaac was not able to recognize/identify who he/Jacob was because his/Jacob’s hand/arms were/felt hairy like his brother Esau’s.” or “Since Jacob’s hands/arms were/felt hairy like the hands/arms of his brother Esau, Isaac did not recognize him.” Be consistent here with how you translated “hands” or “arms” in verses 16 and 22. Also consider whether it is more natural in your language to change the original order of clauses in this sentence, as in the second alternate translation above. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and he was about to bless him

“Then Isaac was about/prepared to bless him/Jacob,” or “Isaac was getting ready to bless him/Jacob,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 24.

Genesis 27:24

But he said

"But {he still was not sure/certain, so} he asked {him}," or "but {first} {he wanted to be completely sure/certain, so} he asked {him},"

Are} you really my son Esau

"Are you really/truly/actually my son Esau?"

And he said

"Jacob answered {him}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am

"{Yes,} I am {Esau}." or "{Yes, Father/sir,} I am."

Genesis 27:25

Then he said

“So Isaac said {to him},” or “So his father said {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Bring {the food} to me

“{Please} bring/serve me {the food/meal}” Your translation of Isaac’s request should sound polite, not rude or demanding. It should also not sound like he was begging or pleading. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

and I will eat some of my son’s game, so that my soul will bless you

“so that I can eat some of your {wild} animal/deer {meat} and bless you.” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 19.

Then he brought {it} to him, and he ate

“Then/So Jacob brought/served {the meal} to his father, and he ate {it}.”

and he brought wine to him, and he drank

“Jacob also brought/served him wine, and he drank {it}.” Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Also, see how you translated “wine” in Gen 19:32-35.

Genesis 27:26

Then Isaac his father said to him

“Then his/Jacob’s father said to him,” or “Then Isaac said to him/Jacob,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Please come close

“Come here” or “Come closer/near {to me}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 21.

and kiss me, my son

It was a Hebrew custom for relatives and close friends to greet each other with a kiss on each cheek. Also consider whether it is more natural in your language to put the address “my son” first in this quote.

Genesis 27:27

So he went close

“So/Then he/Jacob came/stepped close/closer {to his father}”. See how you translated “went close” in verse 22.

and kissed him

“and kissed him {on the/his cheek/cheeks}.”

And he smelled the smell of his clothes

“Then Isaac smelled/recognized the fragrance/scent of Esau’s clothes {that Jacob was wearing}” or “{As he/Jacob did that,} his father smelled/recognized the fragrance/scent of Esau’s clothes”

so he blessed him

“Then he/Isaac blessed him/Jacob”

and said

“by saying {to/about him},” or “He said {to/about him},”

See, the smell of my son is

“Ahh, my son smells” or “Ahh, my son, you smell”. Some translations put the words of Isaac’s blessing in poetry format (beginning here and through verse 29). Be consistent here with how your translation team decides to format passages like this.

like the smell of a field

“{wonderful} like the fragrance of a {green/productive} field” or “{wonderful} the way a {green/productive} field smells”

that Yahweh has blessed

“that Yahweh has caused to flourish!” or “that Yahweh has caused to be very productive!”

Genesis 27:28

And may God give to you

“May God give/provide you {and your descendants}” or “I ask God to provide you {and your descendants}” or “I pray that God will give/provide you {and your descendants}”. In the Hebrew text, “you” is singular in verses 28-29 and refers to both Jacob and his descendants. If necessary, you could make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

from the dew of the heavens and from the fatness of the earth

“{plenty of} dew/rain from the heavens/sky {for your crops and animals} and riches from the earth/land/soil” or “{plenty of} rain and rich/fertile land/soil,”

and an abundance of grain and wine

“including an abundance of grain/food and wine/drink.” or “so that {you have} abundant harvests/food and {much} wine.” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 27:29

May peoples serve you, and may nations bow down to you

"May people groups serve you {and your descendants}, and may they bow down to you {in respect/submission}." or "I also ask God to cause nations to serve and honor you {and your descendants}." If possible in your language, it is best to keep both halves of this parallelism, which is used to emphasize what Isaac is saying to Jacob. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Be master

"May you rule" or "You will {even} rule"

over your brothers

"over your brother and his descendants," Jacob only had one brother, so this phrase refers here to Esau and his descendants.

and may the sons of your mother bow down to you

"Yes, may your mother's descendants show you complete submission/respect." or "and they will bow down to you {in submission}." or "Yes, they {too} will {submit to you and} bow down to you." This clause is another way of referring to Jacob's authority over Esau and his descendants. Consider again how you translated the singular "you" in verses 28-29. You could use a plural "you" here or you could say "you {and your descendants}." (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

May} those {who} curse you be cursed, and {may} those {who} bless you be blessed

"Whoever curses you will be cursed {by God}, and/but whoever blesses you will be blessed {by him}." or "Whoever curses you {God} will curse, but whoever blesses you {he} will bless." or "I ask {God} to curse those who curse you, and/but I ask {him} to bless those who bless you." See how you translated "curse" in Gen 12:3.

Genesis 27:30

Then it happened, just as Isaac finished blessing Jacob

“Just as Isaac finished blessing Jacob,” or “As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob,”

and it happened, scarcely had Jacob just left from the presence of Isaac his father, then Esau his brother

“and right after Jacob had left his father’s presence/tent, his/Jacob’s brother Esau” or “and no sooner had Jacob left his father than his/Jacob’s brother Esau”

came in from his hunt

“came back from hunting.” or “returned {home} from hunting.”

Genesis 27:31

Then he too prepared tasty food

“Then he/Esau also prepared/cooked a tasty/delicious meal {with/from the meat he had hunted},” Consider again how you translated “prepared tasty food” in verses 4, 7, 9, 14, 31 and “tasty” in verse 17.

and he brought {it} to his father

“and he took/carried {it} to his father {Isaac}”

and said to his father

“and said to him,” or “and requested,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let my father get up

“Father, {please} sit up”. Esau’s request to his father should sound polite in your translation, not rude or demanding. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

and eat from his son’s game

“and eat some of your son’s {wild} animal/deer meat” or “and eat some of my {wild} animal/deer meat”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Esau is referring to himself in this phrase. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1623)**)

so that your soul can bless me

“so that you can bless me.” or “and then you can bless me.” See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 4, 19, 25 and 31.

Genesis 27:32

But Isaac his father said to him

“But/Then his father asked him,” or “But his father responded/asked/exclaimed,” For some languages it is more natural to make “Isaac” explicit in verse 31 and leave it implied here in verse 32. Do what is best in your language.

Who {are} you

“Which son {are} you?!” or “Which of my sons {are} you?!” Isaac knew from what Esau just said in verse 31 that one of his sons was talking to him. Also, Isaac is very upset, so some translations add an exclamation point after the question mark to help communicate that. Do what is best in your language.

And he said

“Esau answered {him},” or “Esau replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am} your son, your firstborn Esau

“I {am} your firstborn/oldest son Esau.” or “I {am} Esau, your firstborn/oldest son.” See how you translated “firstborn” in verse 19.

Genesis 27:33

Then Isaac trembled a very great tremble

"Then Isaac {became so upset that he} trembled/shook very violently/noticeably," or "Then Isaac {was very upset, so that he} began to tremble/shake all over,"

and he said

"and he asked {Esau}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Then who {was} it

"Who {was} it then" or "Then where {is} the one"

that hunted game and brought {it} to me

"that/who hunted game/deer meat and brought a meal to me?" or "that/who brought to me a meal made from wild animal/deer meat?" Consider again how you translated "game" in Gen 27:3, 5, 7, 19, 25, 31 and 33. It may be necessary to translate it in slightly different ways, depending on the context.

And I ate from {it} all just before you came

"Just before you came {to me}, I finished eating the meal" or "I finished eating it just before you came {here}"

and I blessed him. Indeed, he will be blessed

"and then I blessed him. And/So {God} will surely/definitely bless him." or "Then I asked God to bless him, and/so God will definitely bless him." Consider where it is most natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 27:34

When Esau heard the words of his father

“When Esau heard what his father said {to him},”

then he cried out a great and exceedingly bitter cry

“he shouted/burst out with an extremely/very loud and bitter/distressed cry/shout” or “he was so distressed/upset that he cried/yelled out loudly/bitterly”

and said to his father

“and begged his father;” or “and begged him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Bless me, me too, my father

“{Please} bless me too, father!” or “Father, {please} bless me too!” For some languages it is more natural to put the address “My father” or “Father” first in this sentence. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 27:35

And he said

“But his father responded/replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Your brother came in deceit and took your blessing

“Your brother came {to me} and deceived/tricked {me} and stole the blessing that I was planning to give you.” or
“Your brother deceived/tricked me so that I blessed him instead of you!”

Genesis 27:36

Then he said

"Then Esau exclaimed {bitterly/angrily}," or "{When Esau heard that,} he said/exclaimed {bitterly/angrily},"

Is it because his name is called Jacob that he has defrauded me these two times

"It is no wonder that he is called Jacob, since he has cheated me two times!" or "The name Jacob fits him exactly, because he has tricked me like this two times {now}!" Esau uses a rhetorical question here to show his strong emotion. Do what is most natural in your language. Also, in order to help readers understand why Esau said this about Jacob, some translations include a footnote like the following: The name "Jacob" means "heel-grabber" and can imply deception. He was given that name because when he was born, he was grabbing hold of Esau's heel (Genesis 25:26). (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

He took my birthright, and behold, now

"{First} he stole my rights as the oldest son, and now look/see {what he has done}:" or "Not only did he take/steal my birthright, but now look/see {what he has done}:"

he has taken my blessing

"he has {also} stolen my blessing!" or "he has tricked/deceived you into blessing him instead of me!"

וַיִּאָמֶר

"Then he/Esau begged {his father}," or "Then he/Esau pleaded {with his father},"

Have you not reserved a blessing for me

"Don't you still have at least one blessing left for me?" or "Is there still a/some way you can {ask God to} bless me?"

Genesis 27:37

But Isaac responded and said to Esau

“Isaac responded/replied to Esau/him,” or “Isaac answered him,”

Behold, I have made him master over you

“Look/Listen, I have {already} appointed Jacob to be your master,” See how you translated “master” in verse 29.

and I have given all his brothers to him as servants

“In fact, I said that you and all your descendants will serve him.” or “In fact, I have asked {God to make it so} that you and your descendants will serve him {and his descendants}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “brothers” in verse 29.

And I have sustained him with grain and wine

“Besides that, I have {also} supplied/blessed him with {abundant} harvests/food and wine/drink.” or “I have also asked God to provide/supply/bless him with {plenty of} food and wine/drink.” See how you translated “grain and wine” in verse 28. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

So then, what can I do for you, my son

“So then, there is no way left for me to bless you, my son!” or “So my son, there is no blessing left for you!” Isaac uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that there is no blessing left for Esau. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1705)**)

Genesis 27:38

But Esau said to his father

“But Esau continued to beg his father {and say/said},” or “But again Esau begged/pleaded/asked,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Is there one blessing that you have, my father

“Father, isn’t there {just/even} one way that you can bless {me}?” or “Father, don’t you have at least one blessing left to give me?” It may be more natural to put “my father” or “Father” first in this quote. See what you did in verse 34.

Bless me, me too, my father

“{Please} bless me too, father!” or “Father, {please} bless me too!” See how you translated this sentence in verse 34.

Then Esau lifted his voice and sobbed

“Then/And Esau started sobbing/crying loudly.” See how you translated “lifted ... voice and sobbed” in Gen 21:16. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 27:39

Then Isaac his father responded and said to him

“Finally/So his father Isaac responded/said to him,” or “His father replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, your dwelling will be

“Listen, you {and your descendants} will live”. What Isaac says in verses 39-40 applies to Esau and his descendants. See what you did for a similar case in verses 28-29. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

away from the fatness of the earth and away from the dew of the heavens from above

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “away from the fatness of the earth and away from the dew of the heavens from above.” or “in a place/region where the earth/land/ground is not rich/fertile and where there is very little dew/rain.” or “in a place/region where the land/soil is not good {for farming} and where there is not much rain.” or (2) “of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of the heavens from above.” or “in a place where the land is good/fertile {for farming} and where there is {plenty of} dew/rain.” See how you translated “fatness of the earth” and “dew of the heavens” in verse 28.

Genesis 27:40

And you will live by your sword

“You {and your descendants} will survive by using your swords {to protect yourselves},” or “You {and your descendants} will have to fight battles to stay alive,” or “You {and your descendants} will continually be fighting battles {with other peoples/nations},” The phrase “live by your sword” is an idiom that means Esau and his descendants will have violent conflict with others, often in order to survive. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and you will serve your brother

“and you {and your descendants} will serve your brother {and his descendants}.” or “and you {and your descendants} will be servants/slaves for your brother {and his descendants}.”

But it will happen when you become restless

“But when you rebel/revolt {against him/them},” Consider again how you translated the singular “you” in verses 39-40. You could use a plural “you” here or you could say “you {and your descendants}”. See what you did for a similar case in verses 28-29. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

then you will break his yoke off of your neck

“you will break/get free from his/their control/rule over you.” or “you will no longer be under his/their control/rule.” The metaphor “break his yoke off of your neck” means Esau and his descendants will be free from the control of Jacob and his descendants. A yoke is a wooden collar that is placed around the necks of work animals to control them as they pull a plow or cart. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

Genesis 27:41

Then Esau hated Jacob

“After that, Esau held a grudge against Jacob” or “Esau continued to be very angry with/at Jacob”

because of the blessing that his father had blessed him with

“because his/their father had given his blessing to Jacob.” or “because their father had blessed Jacob {instead of him}.” Consider again how you translated the terms “bless” and “blessing” in chapter 27. See verses 4, 7, 10, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29-31, 33-36, 38 and 41. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and Esau said in his heart

“So Esau said/thought to himself,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The days of the mourning of my father are near

“Soon my father will die, and we will have a time of mourning for him, then” or “Soon my father will die; then after we {bury him and} mourn for him,” In that culture, they had the custom of mourning the death of a loved one for a certain period of time, anywhere from a week to a month or more. See how you translated “mourn” in Gen 23:2.

then I will kill

“I am going to kill” or “I plan to kill”

Jacob my brother

“my brother Jacob.” or “Jacob.”

Genesis 27:42

But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah

“But/Then someone told Rebekah what Esau was saying/planning, so” or “But/Then Rebekah heard about what her older/oldest son Esau was planning, so” or “When Rebekah heard what Esau was planning {to do},” It was probably a servant who told Rebekah about Esau’s plan to kill Jacob. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

so she sent and called for Jacob her younger son

“she sent for her younger/youngest son Jacob {to come to her}” or “she sent a messenger to tell Jacob {to come to her}” or “she summoned her son Jacob”

and said to him

“and told/warned him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, Esau your brother is consoling himself about you, planning to kill you

“Look/Listen, your brother Esau is making himself feel better by planning to kill you.” or “Listen, your brother Esau is planning to take revenge on you and kill you.”

Genesis 27:43

So now, my son

“So then, my son,” or “Now son,” See how you translated “So now” in verses 3 and 8.

listen to my voice

“listen to me:” or “do/obey what I tell you:” See how you translated this phrase in verses 8 and 13. It may be necessary to translate it differently here because of the context. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and get up, flee for yourself

“get ready immediately and flee/escape” or “Hurry {and} flee/escape” or “Flee/Escape immediately”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to Laban my brother in Haran

“to my brother Laban {who lives} in {the city of} Haran!” or “to {the city of} Haran, to {the house of} my brother Laban!” For some languages, it is more natural to put the location (Haran) before the person who lives there (Laban). Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 27:44

And stay with him for a few days

“Stay/Live with him for a short time”

until the fury of your brother turns away

“until your brother’s fury/anger subsides/stops” or “until your brother is no longer furious/angry {with you}”. Consider whether it is more natural in your language to end this sentence here or to continue the sentence into verse 45. Also, the phrase “turns away” is used here as an idiom that means “becomes less” or “goes away”. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 27:45

until the anger of your brother turns away from you

“until his anger against you is gone” or “When he is not angry with you anymore” or “After a while, when your brother is no longer angry with you”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, notice that the Hebrew word for “anger” here is different from the stronger word (“fury”) in verse 44. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he forgets what you have done to him

“and he forgets what you did to him” or “and he no longer thinks about what you did” or “and he doesn’t hold a grudge against you anymore”. Rebekah is not saying that Esau would totally forget what Jacob did, but that at some point he would not hold it against him anymore.

Then I will send and get you from there

“I will send word that it is safe for you to come {back home} from there.” or “I will send someone to tell you when/that it is safe to come back {home}.”

Why should I also lose both of you {in} one day

“I do not want to lose both of you {on} the same day!” or “I do not want both my sons to be killed!” Rebekah knew that if Esau were to kill Jacob, he himself would have been killed for that crime. Consider whether it is best in your language to use a rhetorical question or an exclamation to emphasize Rebekah’s concern. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 27:46

Then Rebekah said to Isaac

"Then Rebekah complained to Isaac," or "{Soon} after that, Rebekah said/complained to Isaac," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I am disgusted with my life

"My life is {very} miserable" or "I do not enjoy living" or "I am very upset". Rebekah is exaggerating how she feels to influence Isaac to do what she wants. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

because of the daughters of Heth

"because of the Hittite women {whom Esau married}!" or "because of our Hittite daughters-in-law {whom Esau married}!" To show that Rebekah is speaking with strong emotion, you could use an exclamation point at the end of this sentence and the following one.

If Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these, from daughters of the land

"If Jacob {also} marries a Hittite woman from around here," or "If Jacob were to {also} marry a local Hittite woman like that,"

what {would} life {be} to me

"my life will/would not be worth living!" or "I would not want to keep on living!" Rebekah uses a rhetorical question and hyperbole to emphasize how upset she would be if Jacob married a Hittite woman. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 28

Genesis 28:1

Then Isaac called for Jacob

“So Isaac called/sent for Jacob {to come to him}” or “{Because of what Rebekah said,} Isaac summoned Jacob”

and blessed him

“blessed him,” or “Then he blessed him” or “{When/After Jacob/he came,} Isaac blessed him”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, for some languages it may be necessary to make it explicit that Jacob arrived. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and commanded him and said to him

“and told/instructed him,” or “and said to him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan

“Do not take/marry a woman who is a descendant of Canaan.” or “You must not take/choose a wife from among the Canaanite women.” or “Do not marry a Canaanite woman.” If the word “woman” is used here in your translation, make sure it refers to a virgin woman who has never been married, or is general enough to include that.

Genesis 28:2

Get up, go

"{Rather} get up/ready and go" or "{Instead} you must go right away". See how you translated "get up" in Gen 27:43. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

to Paddan Aram

"to {the land/region of} Paddan Aram," Be consistent here with how you translated "Paddan Aram" in Gen 25:20. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

to the home of Bethuel the father of your mother

"to the home/family of your mother's father Bethuel," or "to your grandfather Bethuel's home/family,"

and take a wife for yourself from there

"and choose/find a woman from there to marry" or "and marry"

from the daughters of Laban the brother of your mother

"from among the daughters of your mother's brother Laban." or "one of your uncle Laban's daughters." Laban was Rebekah's older brother. Some languages have a special term for this that is used here. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

Genesis 28:3

And may God Almighty bless you

“I pray that Almighty God will bless/prosper you” or “I ask God, {who is} all-powerful, to bless/prosper you” or “I pray that God, {who is} all-powerful, will bless/prosper you”. Most translation teams translate the meaning of God’s title here (“God Almighty”). A few teams transliterate the title as “El Shaddai” as if it were a personal name (which it is not). See how you handled “God Almighty” in Gen 17:1.

and make you fruitful

“and give you many children” or “and enable you to have many children”

and multiply you

“and increase {the number of} your descendants” or “so that you have many descendants and”. See how you translated “fruitful and multiply” in Gen 17:20. It may need to be translated in different ways, depending on the context.

so that you become a community of peoples

“so that you become {the ancestor of} many people/ethnic groups.” or “so that many people/ethnic groups will descend/come from you.” or “so that they become many people/ethnic groups.”

Genesis 28:4

And may he give the blessing of Abraham to you, to you and to your offspring with you

"I {also} pray that he/God will give Abraham's blessing to you and your descendants," or "I {also} ask him/God to bless you and your descendants the same way that he blessed Abraham,"

so that you possess the land of

"so that you will own the/this land" or "so that you will take possession of the/this land"

your sojournings

"where you have been living/residing as a foreigner/outsider," or "where you {and your ancestors} have been living as foreigners/outsiders," See how you translated "land of your sojournings" in Gen 17:8; it may be necessary to translate this differently here because of the different context.

which God gave to Abraham

"{the same land} which God gave/promised to Abraham/him."

Genesis 28:5

Then Isaac sent Jacob

“Then Isaac sent Jacob {on his way},” or “Then Isaac said good-bye to Jacob,”

and he went

“and he/Jacob left to go/travel” or “and/so Jacob started traveling”. Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like Jacob had already arrived at Paddan Aram.

to Paddan Aram, to Laban

“to/toward {the land/region of} Paddan Aram, to Laban” or “to/toward {his uncle} Laban{s house} {which was} in {the land/region of} Paddan Aram.” Consider whether is more natural in your language to refer to Paddan Aram first or to Laban first in this sentence. Also see how you translated “to Paddan Aram” in verses 2 and 5. (See:

Information Structure (p.1652))

the son of Bethuel the Aramean

“{who/Laban was} the son of Bethuel the Aramean”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, be consistent with how you spelled the name “Bethuel” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 22:22-23; 24:15, 24, 47, 50; 25:20; 28:2, 5.

and the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau

“and {also} the brother of Rebekah, {who was} Jacob and Esau’s mother.”

Genesis 28:6

Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram

“Now Esau had seen/observed Isaac bless Jacob and send him to {the land/region of} Paddan Aram”

to take a wife for himself from there

“to choose/marry a wife from {among his relatives} there” or “to marry a woman from there”

and that} when he blessed him, then he commanded him, saying

“{and that} when/as Isaac was blessing him/Jacob, he told/instructed him/Jacob” or “When/As Isaac was blessing him/Jacob, {Esau heard} him tell/instruct him/Jacob”. Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “commanded” in verse 1.

Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan

“You must not take/marry a woman who is a descendant of Canaan,” or “that he must not take/choose a wife from among the Canaanite women,” or “to not marry a Canaanite woman,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to translate this direct quote as an indirect quote. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 28:7

and {that} Jacob listened

“and {he also saw/observed that} Jacob” or “{Esau also saw/noticed that} Jacob”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶל אָבִיו וְאֶל אִמּוֹ

“obeyed his/their father and mother” or “obeyed his/their parents”

and went to Paddan Aram

“and {immediately} left to go to Paddan Aram.” or “and started traveling to Paddan Aram.”

Genesis 28:8

Then Esau saw that

“That is when/how Esau realized/understood that”

the daughters of Canaan were displeasing in the eyes of Isaac his father

“his father Isaac did not approve of {his sons marrying} Canaanite women.” or “his father Isaac did not want {his sons to marry} Canaanite women.”

Genesis 28:9

So Esau went to Ishmael

“So/Then Esau went/traveled to {the family/clan of} Ishmael” or “So/Then Esau went to {the region where} Ishmael’s descendants were living”. Most likely Ishmael was already dead by this time, so that Esau went to the region where Ishmael’s children and other descendants were living.

and he took as a wife Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son

“and married Abraham’s granddaughter Mahalath, who was Ishmael’s daughter” or “and married Mahalath, who was the daughter of Abraham’s son Ishmael”

the sister of Nebaioth

“and {who was} the {younger} sister of Nebaioth,” or “and whose {older} brother was Nebaioth,” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Nebaioth” in Gen 25:13. Since Nebaioth was Ishmael’s oldest child, Mahalath was his younger sister, probably from the same mother. Use a kinship term here in your language for “sister” or “brother” that fits with those facts. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

in addition to his wives {who belonged} to him

“besides the {two} wives he already had.” For some languages it may be better to change the order of some of the clauses in this sentence and say, “So, in addition to the {two} wives he already had, Esau went to {the family of} Abraham’s son Ishmael and married Ishmael’s daughter Mahalath, whose brother was Nebaioth.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 28:10

And Jacob left from Beersheba and set out

“{After} Jacob left from {his family's home in} {the city of} Beersheba, he started traveling” or “{Meanwhile} Jacob had left {the city of} Beersheba and was traveling”. Verse 10 refers back to verse 5, where Jacob had left his parents' home in Beersheba to go to Paddan Aram. Make sure your translation does not sound like he left a second time here in verse 10. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

for Haran

“to/toward {the city of} Haran {in the region/land of Paddan Aram}.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob was heading toward the same place that his father had told him to go to in verse 2. The author assumed here that his audience knew that Haran was a city located in the Paddan Aram region. It may be helpful to include a map in your translation that shows the locations of the city of Haran and the region of Paddan Aram. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 28:11

Then he reached a {certain} place, and he stopped there

"{That evening} he reached a {good} place {to camp/sleep}, so he stayed/spent the night there" or "{Late that evening} he came to a place where he stopped/stayed {for the night}"

because the sun had gone

"because the sun had gone {down}." or "because the sun had set." For some languages it is more natural to put the information in this clause first in this sentence and say, "After the sun went down, he reached a good place {to camp/sleep}, so he stopped/stayed there {for the night}." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And he took {one} of the stones of the place

"He chose {one} of the stones that was there" or "He picked out a large {flat} stone {that he found} there". The way you translate "stone" should refer to something that would be large enough to support Jacob's head, but not so large that it would be too heavy for him to lift. For example in English, a pebble is too small and a boulder is too big.

and put it under his head

"and rested his head on it {as a headrest/pillow}," or "and used it as a headrest/pillow," or "to use as a headrest/pillow,"

and he lay down in that place

"then he lay down there {and went to sleep}." or "Then he lay down there {on the ground} {and went to sleep}." or "then he went to sleep there." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 28:12

And he dreamed

“And {as} he dreamed,” or “{As/While he slept,} he had a dream and” or “While he was dreaming,”

and behold, a stairway was set up on the earth

“he saw a stairway/staircase whose base was resting on the ground” or “he saw a stairway/staircase. The bottom/base of the stairway was/rested on the ground”. This stairway was wide enough for there to be angels moving up and down on it at the same time. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns\]\]](#))

and its top reached to the heavens

“and its top reached up to heaven,” or “and the top of it went/reached {all the way} up into the heavens/sky,”

and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending on it

“and there were angels of/from God who were going up and down on the stairway.” or “and he saw God’s angels going up and coming down on the stairway.” See how you translated “angel” in Gen 24:7, 40. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 28:13

And behold, Yahweh was standing above it

“Then suddenly Yahweh was standing at the top {of the stairway},” or “And there standing at the top {of the stairway} was Yahweh,” or “And Yahweh was {also} there, standing at the top {of the stairway}”. The phrase for “above it” in the Hebrew text is ambiguous. It could mean: (1) “above it” or “at the top {of the stairway}” or (2) “above/beside him/Jacob”. The interpretation that is not followed in your translation could be put in a footnote.

and he said, “I {am} Yahweh

“and he/Yahweh said {to him/Jacob}, “I {am} Yahweh,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

the God of Abraham your grandfather and the God of Isaac

“the God whom your forefathers/ancestors Abraham and Isaac serve/worship.” or “the God {who takes care} of your forefathers/ancestors Abraham and Isaac.” Abraham was Jacob’s grandfather and ancestor.

The land that you are lying on I will give to you and to your offspring

“The/This land where you are lying/sleeping I am giving to you and your descendants.” or “I will give you and your descendants this land that you are lying/sleeping on.” In the Hebrew text, “the land that you are lying on” comes first in this sentence in order to emphasize it and show its importance. Do what is natural in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 28:14

And your offspring will be

“And your descendants will be” or “They will be” or “You will have so many descendants that they will be”

like the dust of the earth

“{as numerous/many} as the dust {specks} on the ground,” See how you translated “dust” in Gen 13:16. (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

and you will spread out

“and your descendants/people will spread out” or “so that they expand {their territory}” or “so that they live throughout this land”. In this clause “you” refers to Jacob’s descendants. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south

“to the west, east, north, and south.” or “to the north, south, east, and west.” or “in every direction.” See how you translated the names of the directions “west,” “east,” “north,” and “south” in Gen 13:14. Notice that they are in a different order there.

in you and in your offspring

“In/Through you and your offspring/descendants” or “Because of you and your offspring/descendants” or “By means of you and your offspring/descendants”. Be consistent here with how you translated “your offspring” in Gen 22:18 and 26:4.

And & all the families of the earth will be blessed

“all the families/people on the earth will be blessed {by me}.” or “{I} will bless all the families/clans/people in the world.” For some languages it may be better to change the order of phrases in this sentence and say, “And {I} will bless all the families in the world through you and your offspring/descendants.” or “I will use you and your offspring/descendants to bless all the families on earth.” See how you translated similar Messianic blessings in Gen 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, and 26:4. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 28:15

And behold

“Listen to this:” or “Remember that”

I {am} with you

“I {will always be/stay} with you.” or “I {promise to always be/stay} with you {and help you}.” See how you translated “I {am} with you” in Gen 26:24 and “I will be with you” in Gen 26:3.

and I will watch over you

“I will protect/guard you” or “I will take care of you”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

in every {place} that you go

“everywhere that you go/live,” or “wherever you go/live,”

and I will bring you back to this land

“and I will lead/guide you back to this land.”

For I will not leave you

“In fact, I will never leave/abandon you”

until I have done what I have spoken to you

“and I will do everything that I have promised you {that I will do}.” Make sure your translation of “until” does not sound like God will only be with Jacob up to the time that he fulfills his promises. Rather the focus is on the period of time between now when God is speaking to Jacob and the time later on when Jacob would see the fulfillment of God’s promises to him.

Genesis 28:16

Then Jacob woke up from his sleep and said

“Suddenly Jacob woke up from his dream and said/exclaimed {to himself},” or “When Jacob woke up from his dream, he said/exclaimed {to himself},”

Surely Yahweh is in this place

“Certainly Yahweh is/lives {here} in this place,” or “Yahweh definitely lives here,”

but I did not know {it

“but I did not know/realize {it} {before now}!” or “but I was not aware of {that} {before}!”

Genesis 28:17

So he was afraid and said

“He was afraid, so he {also} said/exclaimed,”

How awesome this place is

“This is an awesome/terrifying place!” or “This place is terrifying!” The word “awesome” refers here to the terror that Jacob was feeling from being in the holy presence of Almighty God.

This is nothing other than the house of God

“This/It can only be God’s house!” or “This/It must be the house/place where God himself lives!”

and this {is} the gateway of heaven

“This/It {can only be} the gateway/entrance to heaven!” or “This/It {must be} the gateway/entrance to heaven!” Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 28:18

Then in the morning Jacob got up early

“Early the next morning Jacob got up,” or “Jacob got up early the next morning,”

and he took the stone that he had put under his head

“took the stone that he had used as a headrest/pillow”. See how you translated “stone” and “under his head” in verse 11.

and stood it up

“and stood/set it up {on its end}”

as} a pillar

“{as} a monument/marker,” or “{as} a memorial stone,” or “to commemorate/mark the/that place {where God had appeared to him}.” The word “pillar” refers here to a stone that is used to commemorate something. In this case, Jacob used a stone to mark and help him remember the place where God had appeared to him.

and he poured oil on its top

“Then he poured {some} {olive} oil on top of the stone/pillar {to dedicate the place to God}.” In Bible times people poured olive oil on a person’s head or on objects (as here) to dedicate that person or object to God. Make sure that the way you translate “oil” does not refer to motor oil. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 28:19

And he called the name of that place Bethel

“He named that place Bethel, {which means “God’s house,”}” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Bethel” in Gen 12:8 and 13:3.

even though Luz {had been} the name of the town at first

“even though originally/previously that town was named/called Luz.” or “Originally/Previously the name of that town {had been} Luz.” Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 28:20

Then Jacob vowed a vow, saying

"Then Jacob/he made a vow/pledge/promise {to God} and said," See how you translated a clause that has a similar meaning ("swear to ...") in Gen 21:23, 31.

If God will be with me

"God, if {you} will be/stay with me". Since Jacob is making this vow to God, for some languages it is more natural to address God directly (as "you") throughout verses 20-22, rather than only in the last half of verse 22 (as the Hebrew text does). Do what is best in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

and watch over me

"and protect/guard me" or "and take care of me". See how you translated "watch over" in verse 15.

on this road that I am walking on

"on/during this {long} journey I am taking" or "as I travel on this {long} journey". The way you translate this phrase should reflect that fact that Jacob's journey from his home to the city of Haran was about 725 kilometers (450 miles) long.

and give to me bread to eat and clothes to wear

"and if you give/provide me food to eat and clothes to wear," or "and if you provide me with food and clothes," In this context "bread" refers to food in general, not just bread. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 28:21

and {if} I return in peace

“and {if} I come back safely” or “so that I return safely”

to the home of my father

“to my father’s/family’s home,” or “to my family,” This phrase especially refers to Jacob’s father’s family members, not just the physical home. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

then Yahweh will be God to me

“then Yahweh, {you} will be the God whom I serve/worship,” or “then I will serve/worship {you} Yahweh as my God,” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 28:22

and this stone that I have stood up {as} a pillar will be the house of God

“This stone that I have set up will be your house and will mark the/this place {where you appeared to me},” or “and this memorial stone that I set up will remind people that you live here,” See how you translated “as a pillar” in verse 18. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and all that you give to me I will tithe a tenth to you

“and everything that you give to me, I will give a tenth of it back to you.” or “and I will give back to you ten percent of everything that you give to me.” Consider again how you translated the way Jacob refers to Yahweh in verses 20-22; see the note about this at verse 20. Also see how you translated “tithe” in Gen 14:20. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 29

Genesis 29:1

Then Jacob lifted his feet and went

“Then Jacob left {Bethel} and continued traveling {until he came}” or “Then Jacob continued traveling until he came”

to the land of the sons of the east

“to the land in the east where various people/ethnic groups lived.” or “to the land/region that was east {of the land of Canaan} where the eastern people/ethnic groups lived.” This land was located east of the land of Canaan and included the region of Paddan Aram where Jacob’s uncle Laban lived in the city of Haran (Gen 27:43; 28:5). See how you translated “east” in Gen 28:14.

Genesis 29:2

And he looked

“Then he looked {around},” or “{When he arrived/got there,} he looked {around},” or “{When he arrived at a place near the city of Haran,} he looked {around},” Jacob was now near the city of Haran (verse 4), which was in the land east of Canaan (verse 1). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and behold, a well {was} in the field

“and he saw a well in an {open} field/area” or “and there in an {open} field/area {was} a well”. The word “field” refers to an open area of land, not a fenced-in area. See how you translated this term in Gen 25:27, 29.

and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there

“He saw three flocks of sheep that were lying {down}” or “There were three flocks of sheep lying {down}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

near it

“beside it,” or “near/beside the well {waiting for water},” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

because from that well the flocks were watered

“because that was the well where the shepherds drew/got water for the sheep/flocks,” or “That was the well that flocks/sheep drank water from,” Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and the stone over the mouth of the well {was} large

“but the stone covering the opening/top of the well {was} large {and heavy}.” or “but there was a {heavy} large stone over/covering the opening/top of the well.” This stone would have been very large and heavy and probably had been cut into a circular shape to cover the round opening of the well. You could include here in your translation a picture of a well with a round, flat stone covering it. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 29:3

And all the flocks would be gathered there, then they would roll the stone

"{Every day} shepherds would bring all the/their flocks {of sheep} there. They would {work together to} roll/take the stone" or "{Whenever/After} all the shepherds brought their flocks there, {together} they would remove the stone". Verse 3 tells what happened regularly every day. Consider what is the best way to communicate this in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you translated "stone" in verse 2.

from over the mouth of the well

"from/off the opening/top of the well"

and water the sheep

"and draw water for the sheep." or "and get water {from it} for the sheep {to drink}." See how you translated "watered" in verse 2, and how you translated a different word that has a similar meaning ("draw water") in Gen 24:19-20.

Then they would return the stone to its place

"Then they would put/roll/position the stone back"

over the mouth of the well

"over the opening/top of the well."

Genesis 29:4

Then Jacob said to them

“Jacob asked/greeted the shepherds,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My brothers

“My friends,” or “Friends,” This is a polite, friendly idiom used as a greeting; it does not mean that the shepherds were actually Jacob’s relatives. Many languages have a similar greeting. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

where {are} you from

“where do you live?”

And they said

“They replied {to him},” or “They answered {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We {are} from Haran

“We {are} from {the city of} Haran.” or “We live in {the city of} Haran.” Your translation should not sound like the city of Haran was far away from there; it was nearby.

Genesis 29:5

Then he said to them

“So Jacob asked them,” or “So Jacob asked,” Consider what is the most natural way in your language to translate quote margins in a conversation that goes back and forth quickly like the one in verses 4-8. After the conversation gets started, it often sounds more life-like and natural to shorten the quote margins and leave implied some of the references to the people who are being talked to (as long as it is still clear who is talking to whom). (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nahor

“Do you know Laban, Nahor’s grandson?” or “Do you know Nahor’s grandson Laban?” Consider what is the best way to order this question in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And they said

“They answered/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We know him

“{Yes,} we know him.” or “{Yes,} we do.” Hebrew does not have a single word for “Yes”, but rather repeats words from what was asked. Do what is natural in your language.

Genesis 29:6

Then he said to them

“Then/So Jacob asked,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Are {things} well for him

“Are {things} going well for him?” or “Is he doing well?” Jacob is asking about Laban’s general well-being, not just his health.

And they said

“They answered {him},”

Things are} well

“{Yes,} {things are} well/good {for him}.” or “{Yes,} {he is} well.”

And behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep

“Look, there/here is his/Laban’s daughter Rachel {now} with {his} sheep.” or “In fact, here comes his/Laban’s daughter Rachel {now}, bringing {his} sheep.”

Genesis 29:7

Then he said

“Then Jacob said {to them},” or “Then Jacob urged {them},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold, the day {is} still large

“Look, it is still the middle of the day” or “Look, the sun is still high/bright {in the sky}” or “There is still a lot of daylight/sunlight left”. This is an idiom that means there are still many more hours of daytime left. Consider whether your language has an idiom for this. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

It is} not time for the livestock to be gathered

“and/so {it is} too early/soon to gather the livestock/flocks {for the night}.”

Water the sheep

“{You ought to} draw/get water for them” or “{It seems like you should} water the/your sheep” or “So why not water the/your sheep”. For some languages it sounds too rude for Jacob to make a direct command here, so it is better to make this a suggestion or even a rhetorical question. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

and go pasture {them

“and/then take {them} {back} out {to the fields} to graze {some more}.” or “then you can take them out to eat {more} grass.”

Genesis 29:8

But they said

“But they said {to him},” or “But they replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We cannot

“We can’t {do that}” or “We have to wait”

until all the flocks are gathered

“until all the shepherds are here with their flocks” or “until all the shepherds have brought their flocks here”

and they roll the stone

“and they/we {all} remove the stone”, or “Then {together} they/we will roll/move the stone”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that the ones who are talking here are also shepherds. See how you translated this phrase in verse 3.” Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

from over the mouth of the well

“off/from the opening/top of the well” See how you translated this phrase in verses 2 and 3.

Then we will water the sheep

“and draw/get water for the sheep/flocks.”

Genesis 29:9

He was still talking with them

“While Jacob was still talking with/to the shepherds,”

when Rachel came with the sheep that {belonged} to her father

“Rachel arrived {at the well} with her father {Laban}'s sheep;”

because she was tending them

“because she was the one who shepherded/tended them.” or “it was her job to take care of them.”

Genesis 29:10

Then it happened, when

“As soon as” or “When”

Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother

“Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of his uncle Laban”

and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother

“with his uncle Laban’s sheep,” or “with his uncle’s sheep,” or “with her father’s sheep,”

then Jacob went over

“he went/walked over {to the well}”

and rolled the stone from over the mouth of the well

“and rolled/took the stone off the opening/top of the well,” or “removed the stone that was covering it,”

and watered

“and drew/got water for”. See how you translated “watered” in verses 2-3, 7-8, and in 24:14, 20.

the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother

“his uncle Laban’s sheep.” or “his uncle’s sheep.”

Genesis 29:11

Then Jacob kissed Rachel

“Then he kissed Rachel {on the/her cheek}” or “Then he greeted Rachel warmly/enthusiastically {as one of his relatives}”. In that culture it was common to greet a relative with a kiss on the cheek (or both cheeks). However, if it would be offensive in your culture for Jacob to kiss Rachel here, you could translate this more generally (See: the second alternate translation above). Also see how you translated “kiss” in Gen 27:26-27.

and lifted his voice and cried

“and he started crying aloud/loudly {because he was so happy}.” or “and {he was so happy that} he started crying.” See how you translated the idiom “lifted his voice” in Gen 27:38. However, here Jacob is crying because he is happy, not upset. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

Genesis 29:12

Then Jacob told Rachel

“Then he told her”. Consider what is the most natural way in your language to refer to Jacob and Rachel in this context. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

that he {was} a relative of her father and that he {was} a son of Rebekah

“that he {was} her father’s relative/nephew, the son of {her aunt} Rebekah.” or “that her father {Laban} was his uncle and that {her aunt} Rebekah was his mother.” or “I am your father’s nephew, the son of {your aunt} Rebekah.” Consider whether it is best in your language to use an indirect quote here or a direct quote. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Then she ran and told her father

“Then/So she ran {home} and told her father {the news}.” or “Then/So she ran {home} to her father and told/informed him {about Jacob}.”

Genesis 29:13

And it happened, when Laban heard

“When Laban found out” or “As soon as Laban heard”

the news about Jacob the son of his sister

“about his sister’s son Jacob,” or “that his nephew Jacob was there,”

then he ran to meet him

“he ran {out} to meet/greet him.”

Then he embraced him

“Then he embraced/hugged him/Jacob” or “He gave him/Jacob a hug”

and kissed him

“and kissed him {on the/his cheeks}” or “and greeted him warmly/enthusiastically {as one of his relatives}”. See how you translated “kissed” in verse 11.

and brought him to his house

“and brought/took him {back} to his house.” or “and took him home.”

Then he told Laban all these things

“Then he/Jacob told Laban {about himself and} everything that had happened,” Laban’s response in verse 14 implies that Jacob told him about himself here in verse 13. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 29:14

and Laban said to him

“and Laban responded/exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You {are} indeed my bone and my flesh

“You {are} definitely my own flesh and blood!” or “You {are} definitely my close relative!” or “There is no doubt that you {are} a close relative of my family!” This is an idiom that means Jacob is a close, biological relative of Laban. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Then he stayed with him

“Then Jacob stayed {and served/worked} with/for him/Laban” or “After Jacob had stayed with Laban {and worked for him}”. Your choice here in verse 14 will determine whether or not this sentence continues into verse 15. Do what is best in your language.

a month of days

“{for} an entire month” or “for thirty days”

Genesis 29:15

Then Laban said to Jacob

“Laban said to him,” or “Laban asked him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Because you {are} my relative, should you then serve me for nothing

“{Just} because you are my relative/nephew, {does that mean that} you should work for me without pay?” or “Even though you are my relative/nephew, {that does not mean that} you should {have to} work for me for free!” or “You should not {have to} work for me for nothing/free {just} because you are my relative/nephew!” See how you translated “relative” in verse 12. This rhetorical question expects the implied answer “No, of course not!” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a statement here instead. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Tell me, what {are} your wages

“{So} tell me what your wages/pay {should be}.” or “{So} tell me what you want me to pay you {for your work}.”

Genesis 29:16

Now Laban had two daughters

“Now {it so happened that} Laban had two daughters:” or “Laban had two daughters:” Verses 16-17 introduce background information for what happens in the verses that follow that. Translate this in a way that is natural and clear in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

The name of the older {was} Leah, and the name of the younger {was} Rachel

“The name of the older {one/daughter} {was} Leah, and the younger {one/daughter} {was} Rachel.” or “The older {one/daughter} was named Leah and the younger {one/daughter} was named Rachel.”

Genesis 29:17

And the eyes of Leah {were} delicate

“Leah’s eyes {were} delicate/pretty/weak,” or “Leah had pretty eyes,” The Hebrew word for “delicate” is ambiguous in this context. It can have: (1) a positive meaning of “pretty” or “lovely” or (2) a negative meaning of “weak”, which implies that Leah’s eyes were plain, dull, or unattractive.

but Rachel was lovely of form and beautiful of appearance

“but/whereas Rachel’s face and figure/shape were lovely/beautiful.” or “but/whereas Rachel was extremely beautiful in every way.”

Genesis 29:18

And Jacob loved Rachel

“Jacob was in love with Rachel,” or “Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel,”

so he said

“so he said/responded {to Laban},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will serve you seven years

“I will work seven years for you”. Jacob is offering seven years of work as the dowry or bride-price for Rachel. Translate this sentence in a way that reflects that.

for Rachel your younger daughter

“{in exchange} for your younger daughter Rachel {as my wife}.” or “if you will give me your younger daughter Rachel {to be my wife}.” or “if you will let me marry your younger daughter Rachel.”

Genesis 29:19

And Laban said

“Laban replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

It is} better for me to give her to you than for me to give her to & man

“{I agree to your terms.} I would {much} rather give her to you {to marry} than give her to some/any other man.” or
“{Alright/Okay, that’s fine.} I prefer that she marry you rather than someone else.”

Stay with me

“{So} stay {and work} with me.” or “{So} stay here {and work for me}.”

Genesis 29:20

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel

“So/Then Jacob worked seven years {for Laban} so that he could marry/have Rachel,”

but in his eyes they were like a few days because of his love for her

“but to him it seemed like {only} a few days {had passed} because he loved her {so much}.” or “but he loved her so {much} that to him the time/years seemed {to pass quickly} like {only} a few days.” For some languages it is more natural to switch the order of the clauses in this sentence so that the cause is mentioned before the effect (See: the second alternate translation above). Do what is most clear and natural in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 29:21

Then Jacob said to Laban

"{When the seven years were over,} Jacob said to Laban," or "After that, Jacob requested of Laban,"

Give {me} my wife, because my days are completed, so that I may go to her

"{Please} let me marry {your daughter} {Rachel} {now} so that I can live with her {as} my wife, because I have finished/completed my {seven} years {of work/service} {for you}." or "I have fulfilled/finished the {seven} years of work/service {that we agreed on}, so {please} let me have {your daughter} {Rachel} so that I can marry her and live with her." Consider what is the best order for the clauses in this sentence in your language. Also make sure that Jacob's request here sounds polite in your translation, not rude or demanding. It should also not sound like he was begging or pleading. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 29:22

Then Laban gathered all the people of the place and made a feast

“Then/So Laban gathered/invited all the local people and held a {wedding} feast.” or “Then/So Laban prepared a wedding/marriage feast and gathered/invited everyone who lived in town {to attend}.” Consider what is the best way to order these events in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 29:23

But it happened in the evening

“But that evening” or “But/However this is what happened that evening:”

that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him

“Laban {deceived/tricked Jacob and} took/brought his daughter Leah {to Jacob’s tent} {instead of Rachel},” or
“Laban took/brought Leah to Jacob {instead of Rachel},”

and he went

“and/so he/Jacob” or “so that he/Jacob”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that “he” refers here to Jacob, not Laban. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and he went to her

“so that he/Jacob had marital/sexual relations with her/Leah.” or “and/so he/Jacob slept with her/Leah.” or “spent the night with her/Leah.” Make sure that your translation of “he” refers here to Jacob, not Laban. See how you translated the euphemism “went to” in Gen 16:4 (and “go to” in Gen 16:2 and 29:21). Translate this in a way that is natural, clear, and acceptable for reading in public. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 29:24

And Laban gave

“Laban also gave” or “In addition, Laban gave”. It is not clear in the Hebrew text when Laban gave Zilpah to Leah, so it is probably best to keep it that way in your translation. Some translations say that Laban “had {already} given” Zilpah to Leah before the wedding night. However according to Jewish history (outside the Bible), it was on the wedding night that Laban did this as part of his plan to deceive Jacob: Zilpah was younger than Bilhah, so everyone would expect her to be given to Rachel as the younger sister; seeing Zilpah (instead of Bilhah) would help Jacob think that his veiled bride was Rachel. Since we do not know for sure which interpretation is right, it is probably best to be like the Hebrew text and not specify when Laban gave Zilpah to Leah. Some translations put this verse in parentheses because it seems to interrupt the telling of the main events.

to her Zilpah his maidservant, to Leah his daughter

“his female servant Zilpah to Leah” or “to Leah a female servant named Zilpah”

to be} a maidservant

“{to be} {her} {personal} servant/attendant.” or “to serve {her}.” or “to attend to her.”

Genesis 29:25

Then it happened in the morning

“But the next morning” or “The next morning”

that behold, she {was} Leah

“{Jacob} saw/found that his {new} wife was Leah!” or “{Jacob was shocked to} see/discover that it was Leah {he had married}!” Translate “behold” in a way that shows Jacob’s surprise at finding out that he had married Leah instead of Rachel. Also, make sure that your translation of “she” refers here to Leah, not Zilpah (who was mentioned in verse 24). (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

So he said to Laban

“So/Then he/Jacob complained to {his father-in-law} Laban,” or “So/Then he/Jacob rebuked/confronted Laban and said,” Some languages use an honorific title such as “his father-in-law” here now that Jacob is married. Do what is best in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

What {is} this you have done to me

“Why have you treated me like this?” or “You have treated me very badly!” In this verse, Jacob uses rhetorical questions to communicate how angry and upset he is. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Also see how you translated this question in Gen 12:18, 20:9, 26:10. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Was {it} not for Rachel that I served with you

“{You know that} Rachel is the one I served you for!” or “You know very well that I worked for you in order to marry Rachel!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

So why have you deceived me

“So why did you deceive/trick me?” or “Tell me why you deceived/tricked me!” See how you translated a different word (“deceit”) that has a similar meaning in Gen 27:35.

Genesis 29:26

But Laban said

“But Laban said/replied {to him},” or “Laban replied/responded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

It is not done so in our place

“It is not customary In our/this land/region” or “It is not the/our custom/tradition/practice here”. For some languages it is necessary to say what the custom is, rather than what it is not. For example, you could say, “Our custom/practice here is to wait until the firstborn/oldest daughter is married before we let the younger daughter{s}/one{s} get married.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

to give the younger

“to give the younger {daughter} {in marriage}” or “to marry off the younger {daughter}” or “for the younger {daughter} to marry”

before the firstborn

“before the oldest/older {daughter/one} {marries}.”

Genesis 29:27

Fulfill the week of this {one}

“{So} fulfill/finish this daughter’s bridal/wedding week {and she will remain your wife},” or “{So then,} finish/complete this week of celebrating your marriage/wedding to my daughter {Leah},” or “{So then,} {keep Leah as your wife and} finish this week of celebrating your marriage to her,” For some languages it may be necessary to make explicit the fact that it is assumed that Leah would still remain his wife. Only make this information explicit if it is necessary to avoid wrong meaning. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

then we will also give you this {one}

“Then our family will also give you {my} other/younger daughter {to marry}” or “Then you may also marry {my} other/younger daughter”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for service that you will serve with me

“if you will work for me” or “in exchange for working for me”. See how you translated “serve” in verses 15, 18, 20, 21 and 25.

for another seven years

“for seven more years.”

Genesis 29:28

So Jacob did so

“So that is what Jacob did:” or “So Jacob {agreed with Laban and} did what he said:”

and he fulfilled the week {for} that {one

“he fulfilled/completed Leah’s bridal/wedding week.” or “he finished/completed his wedding week with Leah.” or “he finished celebrating his marriage to Leah that week.” See how you translated “fulfill” in verse 27.

Then he gave to him Rachel his daughter as a wife for him

“Then Laban gave him/Jacob his daughter Rachel to marry.” or “Then Laban gave his daughter Rachel to Jacob to be his wife.”

Genesis 29:29

And Laban gave

“Laban/he also gave” or “In addition, Laban/he gave”. See how you translated verse 24, which is similar to verse 29.

Bilhah his maidservant to Rachel his daughter

“his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel” or “Rachel a female servant named Bilhah”

as a maidservant for her

“to be her {personal} maidservant/servant.” or “to serve her.”

Genesis 29:30

Then he also went to Rachel

“Then Jacob had marital relations with Rachel,” or “Then Jacob slept with Rachel,” See how you translated “went to” in verse 23. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and he & loved Rachel more than Leah

“and he loved her more than {he loved} Leah.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

And he served him

“Then he worked for Laban” or “Then he {started} working for Laban”. At this point Jacob begins another seven years of work, but he does not finish the work until Gen 30:25-26.

for another seven years

“for seven more years.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 27.

Genesis 29:31

Now Yahweh saw

“Now/Meanwhile Yahweh knew” or “{During that time,} Yahweh saw/knew”

that Leah was hated

“that Leah was loved less {than Rachel},” or “that Jacob did not love Leah {very much},” Jacob did not actually hate Leah. Rather, this is hyperbole that emphasizes how much he loved Rachel compared to Leah (verse 30). (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

so he opened her womb

“so he made it so that she could conceive,” or “so he made it possible for her to have children,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

but Rachel {was} barren

“but Rachel was not able to conceive.” or “but he did not enable Rachel to have children.” See how you translated “barren” in Gen 11:30 and 25:21.

Genesis 29:32

Then Leah conceived

“Then Leah became pregnant”

and bore a son

“and had a son” or “and gave birth to a son”

and she called his name Reuben

“She named him Reuben, {which means “Look/See, a son!”}” You could include the meaning of Reuben’s name in your translation (or in a footnote), so that people understand why Leah gave him that name. If you do that, make sure the meaning of Reuben’s name matches the way you translate “looked/seen” later in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because she said

“because {when he was born} she had said/exclaimed,”

Because Yahweh has looked on my misery, surely now my husband will love me

“Now that Yahweh has seen that I am suffering {and has helped me}, surely my husband will love me!” or “Surely my husband will love me now, since Yahweh has seen that I am suffering {and has helped me}.” Consider what is the best way to order these clauses in your language. Also see how you translated “misery” in Gen 16:11. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 29:33

Then she conceived again

“Then Leah became pregnant again”

and bore a son

“and had {another} son” or “and gave birth to {another} son”

and she said

“and/so she exclaimed,” or “She exclaimed,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Because Yahweh heard that I am hated

“Since Yahweh heard that my husband does not love me,” or “Yahweh heard that I am not loved, so”. See how you translated “hated” in verse 31. Also consider whether it is better in your language to use an active or passive verb here. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

then he gave to me this {son} also

“he has given me this {son/child} also/too!” or “he has given me another {son/child}.”

So she called his name

“So she named him” or “So she named that son” or “So she gave him the name”

Simeon

“Simeon, {which means “he hears.”}” If you include the meaning of Simeon’s name in your translation (or in a footnote), make sure it matches the way you translated “heard” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 29:34**Then she conceived again**

“Then Leah became pregnant {yet} again” or “Once again Leah became pregnant”

and bore a son

“and had {another} son,” or “and gave birth to {another} son,”

and she said

“and she exclaimed,” or “She exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

This time now my husband

“Now finally my husband”

יִלְוֶה אִלַּי

“will become attached to me” or “will want to be with me”. Many languages have an idiom that is similar to the Hebrew idiom and fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

because I have born three sons for him

“because I have had three sons for him.” or “because I have given him three sons!” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this quote and say, “I have born/had three sons for my husband, so now finally he will become attached to me.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

For that {reason

“That is why” or “Because she had said that,”

he called his name

“his name was” or “he was named”. Although this phrase could mean that Jacob named Levi, most translations translate this in a general or indefinite way that does not specify who named him. Do what is best in your language.

Levi

“Levi, {which means “joined/attached.”}” or “Levi, {which means “be with.”}” If you include the meaning of Levi’s name in your translation (or in a footnote), make sure it matches the way you translated “be joined” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 29:35

Then she conceived again

“Then Leah became pregnant again” or “Once again Leah became pregnant”

and bore a son

“and had a/another son,” or “and gave birth to another son,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 34.

and she said

“and she exclaimed,” or “She said/exclaimed,”

This time I will praise Yahweh

“Now I will praise Yahweh {for giving me this son}!”

For that {reason

“That is why” or “Because she praised Yahweh,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 34. You may need to translate it in different ways, depending on the context.

she called his name

“she named him” or “she named that son” or “she gave him the name”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 33.

Judah

“Judah, {which means “praise.”}” See how you translated “praise” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Then she stopped bearing

“Then Leah stopped bearing/having babies/children {for a while}.” or “After that, Leah did not give birth to any more babies/children {for a while}.” Leah had more children at a later time. So it was only temporarily that she stopped having children. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 30

Genesis 30:1

Now Rachel saw that she was not bearing {children} for Jacob

“Now/Meanwhile when Rachel saw/realized that she was not able to bear/have {any} {children} for Jacob,”

so Rachel envied her sister

“she was envious/jealous of her sister {Leah},”

and she said to Jacob

“and she pleaded with Jacob,” or “and she demanded of Jacob,” Use a quote margin here in your language that fits the context well. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Give me children, and if not

“Help me have children, or else” or “Help me get pregnant! Otherwise”

I will die

“I want to die!” or “I have no reason to live!” Rachel is using hyperbole (exaggeration) to show how desperate and deeply ashamed she feels about not having children. You could include a footnote here in your translation that explains how in that culture it was considered very shameful for a woman to be barren (See: Gen 30:23). (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

Genesis 30:2

And Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said

"Jacob's anger flared up against Rachel, and/so he said/responded {to her}," or "Jacob became very angry with Rachel and said/responded," Some languages have an idiom that is similar to the Hebrew idiom here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Am I in the place of God, who has kept the fruit of the womb from you

"I am not in the place of God, who has kept/prevented you from having children!" or "I am not God! He is the one who has kept/prevented you from having children!" Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to show that he is upset with Rachel and to strongly emphasize his point. Do what is best in your language to communicate this. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 30:3

Then she said

"Then Rachel told {him}," or "Rachel replied {to him}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold my slave woman Bilhah

"Here is my servant woman Bilhah." or "You can take/have my servant woman Bilhah {as a/another wife}."

Go to her

"Sleep with her" or "Have marital relations with her". See how you translated this euphemism in Gen 16:2. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

so that she will bear {children

"so that she will/can give birth {to children}" or "so that she will/can have children"

on my knees

"{for me} {who will sit} on my knees/lap," or "as my surrogate/substitute," or "for me," The idiom "bear children on my knees" means that Bilhah's children would be considered Rachel's children. It may come from the custom of immediately putting a newborn child on the lap of the father and mother to symbolize that the child belonged to them. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and I also will be built up from her

"so that from/through her {children} I too can/will build/have a family." or "so that I too can/will build/have a family." See how you translated "built up from her" in Gen 16:2.

Genesis 30:4

And she gave to him Bilhah her maidservant

“So Rachel gave Jacob her servant/maid Bilhah”. See how you translated “maidservant” in Gen 29:24, 29. Also see how you translated a different word (“servant woman”) in verse 3 that has the same meaning. Some translations use the same term in both verses to prevent confusion. Do what is best in your language.

as a wife

“as {his} wife,” or “to be {a/another} wife {for him};” Make sure your translation does not sound like Bilhah replaced Rachel as Jacob’s wife; Bilhah was an additional wife.

and Jacob went to her

“and Jacob slept with her.” or “and Jacob had marital relations with her.” See how you translated “go to” in verse 3 and “went to” in Gen 16:3. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 30:5

Then Bilhah conceived

“Then Bilhah became pregnant”

and bore a son for Jacob

“and gave birth to a son for Jacob” or “and had a son for Jacob”

Genesis 30:6

and Rachel said

“and Rachel exclaimed,” or “Then Rachel said/exclaimed,” Consider whether it is more natural here in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 5. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

God has vindicated me

“God has judged in my favor!” Some translations have “judged me” here. However, make sure your translation of this phrase has a positive meaning (making a decision in Rachel’s favor) and not a negative meaning (condemning her).

and indeed, he has listened to my voice and given to me a son

“Yes indeed, he has heard/answered my prayer/request/plea and given me a son!”

For that {reason

“That is why” or “Because of that”

she called his name

“she called/named him” or “she gave him the name” or “she named her baby/son”. Make sure it is clear here in your translation that Bilhah’s son is the one being named, not God (who was the subject of the previous sentence). See how you translated “called his name” in Gen 29:32.

Dan

“Dan, {which means “he vindicated.”}” or “Dan, {which means “he judged in my favor.”}” If you include the meaning of Dan’s name in your translation (or in a footnote), make sure it matches the way you translated “he has vindicated” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 30:7

Then Bilhah the maidservant of Rachel conceived again

“Then Rachel's servant Bilhah became pregnant again”. See how you translated verse 5 which is very similar to verse 7.

and bore a second son for Jacob

“and gave birth to a second son for Jacob.” or “and had a second son for Jacob.”

Genesis 30:8

So Rachel said

"So/Then Rachel exclaimed,"

With} mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "I have had a mighty/difficult struggle/contest with my sister" or "I have struggled intensely/hard with/against my sister". That would be the meaning if the Hebrew word "elohim" in this phrase is used as an adjective that means "mighty/powerful." (2) "I have wrestled/struggled with God because of my sister", which could refer to a struggle against her sister praying to God for children. That would be the meaning if the word "elohim" in this phrase means "God."

Indeed I have prevailed

"and I have won!" or "and/but now I have defeated her!" or "and/but now I am prevailing/winning!"

And she called his name

"And/So she called/named him" or "Then/So she called/named that son" or "So she gave him the name". See how you translated "called his name" in verse 6.

Naphtali

"Naphtali, {which means "my struggle/contest."}" As always, if you include the meaning of a name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure that it matches the text that the name is based on. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 30:9

Now Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing {children

“When Leah saw/realized that she had stopped bearing/having children,” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 1.

so she took Zilpah her maidservant

“she took/brought her servant Zilpah {to Jacob}”

and gave her to Jacob as a wife

“and gave her to Jacob/him as {his} wife.” or “and gave her to Jacob/him to be {another} wife {for him}.” See how you translated “gave ... as a wife” in verse 4.

Genesis 30:10

Then Zilpah the maidservant of Leah bore a son for Jacob

“Then Leah’s maidservant Zilpah gave birth to a son for Jacob,” or “Then Zilpah had a son for Jacob,” See how you translated verses 5-8, which are very similar in structure to verses 10-13.

Genesis 30:11

and Leah said

“and Leah exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What good fortune

“What good luck!” or “I am so/very fortunate/lucky!”

So she called his name

“So she called/named him” or “So she called/named him” or “So she gave him the name”

Gad

“Gad, {which means “fortunate/lucky.”}” If you include the meaning of Gad’s name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches the way you translated “good fortune” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 30:12

Then Zilpah the maidservant of Leah bore a second son for Jacob

“Then Leah’s servant Zilpah gave birth to a second son for Jacob,” or “ Then Leah’s servant Zilpah had a second son for Jacob,”

Genesis 30:13

and Leah said

“and Leah exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

How blessed I am

“I am truly/greatly blessed!” or “{God} has truly/greatly blessed me!” Although many translations have “happy” in this verse instead of “blessed,” the Hebrew noun (and the verb it is based on) is more general and has to do with a person’s blessed state (which results in joy and happiness). The same Hebrew word is used in Psalm 1:1, and the equivalent Greek word is used in Luke 1:48 and Matthew 5:3-11.

For women will call me blessed

“Now {other} women will say that I am blessed {by God}.” or “Now {other} women will say that {God} has blessed me.”

So she called his name

“So she called/named him” or “So she named that son” or “So she gave him the name”

Asher

“Asher, {which means “blessed.”}” If you include the meaning of Asher’s name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches the way you translated “blessed” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

Genesis 30:14

Then in the days of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out

"Then {one day} during the season/time when people were harvesting wheat/grain/crops, {Leah's son} Reuben went out" or "{One day} during ..." Wheat is a type of grain that is ground into flour to make bread, which was one of the people's main foods. The harvest time for wheat in that part of the world is in March and April.

and found mandrakes in the field

"and found {some} {fertility/love plants called} mandrakes in a field," or "in a field and found {some} fertility/love plants {there};" The roots of mandrake plants were used to help people be more fertile. If mandrakes are not known in your language area, you could describe them as a kind of fertility plant. You could also put information about mandrakes in a footnote or glossary. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and he brought them to Leah his mother

"and he took/gave them to his mother:" or "and he took/gave the plants to his mother:"

Then Rachel said to Leah

"{When Rachel found out about the plants,} she asked/begged Leah,"

Please give to me some of your son's mandrakes

"Please give me some of the fertility/love plants that your son found." See how you translated "mandrakes" earlier in this verse. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 30:15

But she said to her

“But Leah replied to her,” or “But Leah retorted,” or “But Leah scolded her,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Is it a small matter you have taken my husband

“{No!} It was {bad} enough that you took/stole my husband {from me}!” or “You already took/stole my husband {from me}!” Leah uses two rhetorical questions in verse 15 to scold Rachel and show how upset she is with her. Consider whether or not rhetorical questions are the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And would you also take my son’s mandrakes

“Do you also/even want to take my son’s fertility/love plants?” or “And/So {now} you also/even want to take/steal my son’s fertility/love plants!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Then Rachel said

“Rachel said/replied {to her/Leah},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Therefore

“Alright then,” or “Very well,” Rachel’s response shows that she realizes that even though Leah was scolding her, she was also bargaining with her.

he may lie with you tonight

“I will let him/Jacob sleep/stay with you tonight” or “Jacob can sleep/stay with you tonight” or “Jacob can spend tonight with you” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

for your son’s mandrakes

“{in exchange} for your son’s fertility/love plants.” or “if you will give me your son’s fertility/love plants.” See how you translated “{in exchange} for” in Gen 29:18.

Genesis 30:16

Then Jacob came from the field in the evening

“So when/as Jacob came back that evening from {working in} the fields,” or “That evening as Jacob was coming {home} from {working in} the fields,” Consider where it is best in your language to put the time phrase in this clause. Also see how you translated “field” in verse 14. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and Leah went out to meet him

“Leah went/came out to greet him”

and said

“and she said {to him},” or “and told {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You must come to me

“You must lie/sleep with me {tonight},” or “You must spend tonight with me,” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

because I have surely hired you with my son’s mandrakes

“because I have bought time with you with my son’s fertility/love plants.” or “because I have traded/exchanged my son’s fertility/love plants for time with you.” See how you translated “mandrakes” in verses 14 and 15.

So he lay with her during that night

“So that night Jacob slept with her/Leah.” or “So Jacob spent that night with her/Leah.” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 30:17

and God listened to Leah

“God heard/answered Leah’s/her {prayers/requests},” or “God heard Leah and answered her {prayers},” or “God did what Leah had been asking him to do,” See how you translated “listened to” in verse 6.

and she conceived

“so that she became pregnant”

and bore a fifth son for Jacob

“and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob.” or “and had a fifth son for Jacob.”

Genesis 30:18

Then Leah said

“Then Leah/she exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

God has given {me} my reward

“God has rewarded me”. Some languages must translate the noun “reward” as a verb. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1562)**)

because I gave my maidservant to my husband

“for giving my servant to my husband {as a/another wife}.”

So she called his name

“So she called/named him” or “So she named that son” or “So she gave him the name”. Make sure the way you translate “his name” refers here to Leah’s baby son, not to her husband or God (who were both mentioned earlier in this verse).

Issachar

“Issachar, {which means “reward.”}” See how you translated “reward” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 30:19

Then Leah conceived again

“Then Leah became pregnant again”

and bore a sixth son for Jacob

“and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob.” or “and had a sixth son for Jacob.”

Genesis 30:20

And Leah said

“Then she said/exclaimed,”

God has presented me a good present

“God has given me a valuable/precious gift”

This time my husband will honor me

“{so} now my husband will honor me”

because I have born six sons for him

“because I have had six sons for him.” or “because I have given him six sons.”

So she called his name

“So she called/named him” or “So she named that/their son” or “So she gave him the name”. Make sure the way you translate “his name” refers here to Leah’s baby son, not to her husband (who was mentioned in the previous sentence).

Zebulun

“Zebulun, {which means “honor.”}” See how you translated “honor” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 30:21

Then later

"{Sometime} later" or "{Sometime} after that,"

she bore a daughter

"she/Leah gave birth to a daughter" or "she/Leah had a daughter"

and called her name Dinah

"and called/named her Dinah." or "whom she named Dinah."

Genesis 30:22

Then God remembered Rachel

“God had kept Rachel in mind,” or “God had not forgotten Rachel,” Make sure that your translation of this phrase does not imply that God forgot about Rachel. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 8:1.

and God listened to her

“and/so he heard/answered her {prayers/requests}” or “and/so he did what she had been asking him to do”. See how you translated “listened to” in verses 6 and 17.

and opened her womb

“and made it so that she could conceive.” or “and made it possible for her to have children.” See how you translated this idiom in Gen 29:31. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 30:23

Then she conceived

“so that {finally} she conceived” or “Then/So she/Rachel became pregnant”. Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 22.

and bore a son

“and gave birth to a son,” or “and had a son,”

and she said

“and she exclaimed,” or “Then she said/exclaimed,” Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

God has taken away my disgrace

“God has removed my shame/humiliation!” or “God has made it so that I am no longer {barren and} ashamed/humiliated!”

Genesis 30:24

And she called his name

“She called/named her son” or “She gave him the name”

Joseph

“Joseph, {which means “may he add/give another;”}” If you include the meaning of Joseph’s name here in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches the way you translate what Rachel says next. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

saying

“{because} she said,” For some languages it is more natural to put the last half of verse 24 first in the verse and say, “She also said, “May Yahweh add/give another son to me.” So she named that/her son Joseph, {which means “may he add/give another.”}” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

May Yahweh add another son to me

“I pray/ask that Yahweh will give me another son.” or “I ask Yahweh to give me another son.”

Genesis 30:25

Then it happened, after Rachel bore Joseph

"{Soon} after Rachel gave birth to Joseph," or "After Rachel had Joseph,"

then Jacob said to Laban

"Jacob requested of Laban," or "Jacob {went to} Laban and said to him,"

Send me off

"{Please} send me on my way," or "{Please} allow me to leave {here}," Make sure that your translation of Jacob's request here sounds polite, not rude or disrespectful. It should also not sound like he is begging or pleading. See how you translated the same request in Gen 24:54. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

so that I may go to my place and to my land

"so that I may/can return to my {own} home in my {own} country." or "so that I can go/return to my homeland."

Genesis 30:26

Give me my wives and my children

“Let me have/take my wives and my children”

for whom I have served you

“whom I have finished serving you for,” or “whom I have earned by working for you,”

so that I may go

“so that I may/can leave {with them}.” or “and let me go/leave {with them}.” or “so that I can take them with me.”

For you yourself know

“because you yourself know” or “You yourself know”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.

my service that I have served you

“that I have served you {well/faithfully}.” or “how {well/faithfully} I have served you.” or “how {well/faithfully} I have worked for you.”

Genesis 30:27

Then Laban said to him

“But Laban responded to him/Jacob,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please {stay}, if I have found favor in your eyes

“If you are pleased with me, please {stay},” or “Please be gracious/kind to me {and stay},” or “Please do me a favor {and do not leave/go},” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

I have learned by divination

“{because} I have found out from observing signs” or “{because} I have learned from observation/experience”. The word “divination” refers to trying to find out information by looking at signs (omens) and interpreting them either by God’s power (Gen 44:5, 15) or by witchcraft and false gods (Ezekiel 21:21). Laban may have consulted his household gods (mentioned in Gen 31:19, 30). It could also be that Laban meant that he had figured this out simply by observing how God had blessed him through Jacob’s expert tending of his flocks.

that Yahweh has blessed me

“that Yahweh has caused me to prosper”

because of you

“because you {are here with me}.” or “because you {have been working for me}.”

Genesis 30:28

Then he said

“Then he said {to him,}” or “Then he/Laban added,” Some translations delete this quote margin, since the same person is still speaking to the same person as in the previous verse. However it could be that there was a pause in the conversation, or the author may want to show that there is a change in topic or emphasize what is said next. So if possible, it is best to keep the quote margin here in your translation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Name your wages to me, and I will give {them

“Tell me what you want your wages/pay to be, and that is what I will give/pay you.” or “Tell me what you want me to pay you, and I will give that to you.” or “Set your wages, and that is what they will be.” See how you translated “wages” in Gen 29:15.

Genesis 30:29

And he said to him

“Jacob said/replied to him/Laban,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You yourself know how I have served you

“You yourself know how {hard/well} I have worked for you”. See how you translated “you yourself know” in verse 26.

and how your livestock have been

“and how {well} your animals/flocks have prospered/fared”

with me

“under my care.” or “ever since I have been taking care of them.” or “while I have been tending them.”

Genesis 30:30

For {there was} little that was yours before me, and it has prospered to abundance

“Before I came, you had very little {wealth}, but now you are prospering abundantly/greatly.” or “The few {animals} that you owned before I came have multiplied/increased dramatically/greatly.” or “Before I worked for you, you owned very few animals, but now you have a huge/large number of animals.”

and Yahweh has blessed you

“That is how Yahweh has blessed/prospered you” or “Yes, Yahweh has blessed/prospered you”. See how you translated “blessed” in verse 27.

at my feet

“because of me.” or “because I am here.” or “because I have been working for you.” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

But now, when will I also do something for my household

“But now I need to also provide for my {own} household/family!” Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to express his strong feelings. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 30:31

Then he said

“So Laban asked {him/Jacob},” or “Laban responded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What should I give to you

“What do you want me to give/pay you {so that you will stay and work for me}?” or “What can I give/pay you {to persuade you} {to stay here}?”

And Jacob said

“Jacob answered/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Do not give anything to me

“Do not give/pay me anything.” or “You do not need to give/pay me anything.”

If you will do this thing for me

“{But} if you will do this {one} thing for me,” or “Just do this {one} thing for me, and”

I will continue tending your flock{s} watching over {them

“I will continue to tend and watch over your flock{s}.” or “I will continue/keep taking care of your flock{s}.” See how you translated “watches over” in Gen 28:20.

Genesis 30:32

I will pass through all your flock{s} today

“Let me go/look through all your flock{s} today” or “Today I will go/look through all your sheep and goats”

to remove from there

“and separate out from them” or “and take away from them”

every speckled and spotted lamb and every dark-colored lamb among the sheep

“all the lambs that are speckled, spotted or dark-colored,” or “all the lambs that have speckles or spots, or that are dark-colored,” The Hebrew word for “speckled” refers to small spots, whereas “spotted” refers to medium-sized and bigger spots. In that part of the world, most sheep were white and most goats were solid brown or black. So Jacob was asking for the irregular animals for himself, including white sheep with dark marks, dark-colored goats with light marks and dark-colored lambs. You could put some of this information in a footnote.

and the spotted and speckled {young} among the goats

“and {all} the young/kid goats that are spotted or speckled.”

And that will be my wages

“They will be my wages/pay.” or “Those animals will be my wages/pay.”

Genesis 30:33

So my righteousness will testify for me in future days

“Also, in the future you will know whether or not I am being righteous/honest” or “That way {too}, in the future it will be easy {for you/everyone} to know whether {or not} I am being honest”. The phrase “my righteousness” is referred to here as if it can testify like a person can. Some languages cannot personify righteousness like that. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

when you go over my wages in front of you

“whenever you check the animals you have paid/given me.” For some languages it is more natural to move this clause earlier in this sentence and say, “Also, in the future, whenever you check the animals you have paid/given me, you will know whether or not I am being honest.” Do what is best in your own language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

any that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and dark-colored among the sheep

“{If you see} that I have any {sheep or} goats that are not speckled or spotted or any sheep/lambs that are not dark-colored,” or “{If you see/find} any {sheep or} goats {among my flocks} that do not have speckles or spots or any sheep/lambs that are not dark-colored,”

it was stolen {if it is} with me

“{you will know that} I stole them {from you}.” or “{it will be obvious that} I stole them {from you}.”

Genesis 30:34

And Laban said

“Laban said/replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“I agree,” or “Yes,” or “I agree with that;”

let it be according to your word

“let’s do exactly as/what you have said/suggested.” or “we should/will do exactly as/what you have said/suggested.”

Genesis 30:35

Then on that day he removed

“But that {same/very} day, he/Laban removed/separated {from his flocks}”. Make sure your translation of “he” in this clause refers to Laban, not Jacob (as verse 36 confirms). Also, what Laban does in verse 35 does not follow the agreement he just made with Jacob in verses 32-34. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted

“{all} the he-goats that had streaks or spots, and all the she-goats that had speckles or spots,”

any that {had} white on it

“any/all that {had any} white {marks} on them,” The goats were normally dark brown or black, so if they had streaks or spots on them those marks would be white. In the Hebrew text, there is a pun (play-on-words) in verses 35 and 37: the name “Laban” means “white”, so verse 35 literally says that any goats with “Laban” (“white”) on them became Jacob’s. You could include that information in a footnote.

and all the dark-colored {ones} among the lambs

“together with all the dark-colored lambs.” or “as well as all the lambs that were dark-colored.”

Then he gave {them} into the hand of his sons

“Then he had his sons tend {them},” or “Then he put his sons in charge of {them},” or “Then he told his sons to take care of {them},” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 30:36

and he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob

“and he {and his sons} took {those animals} a three-day walking distance away from Jacob.”

And Jacob was tending the rest of Laban’s flock{s

“Meanwhile Jacob continued taking care of the rest of Laban’s flock{s}.” See how you translated “tending” in verse 31 and Gen 13:7.

Genesis 30:37

Then Jacob took for himself fresh-cut branches

“Then Jacob cut {some} branches”

of poplar and almond and plane trees

“from poplar {trees}, almond/hazel {trees}, and plane/chestnut {trees},” or “from three different kinds of trees,” If the three kinds of trees are not known in your language area, you could transliterate the names of the trees or be more general and leave out the names (if they are too distracting). (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns]])

and peeled white stripes in them

“and peeled/stripped off long strips/pieces of bark,” or “and made white stripes/streaks on them {by stripping/peeling off long strips/pieces of bark},”

exposing the white that {was} inside the branches

“which exposed/showed the white {wood} under the bark.” or “so that the white {wood} that was inside the branches was exposed/showing.”

Genesis 30:38

Then he put the branches that he had peeled in the troughs, in the water troughs

“Then he put/set those {striped/streaked} branches in all the {stone} drinking/watering troughs/tubs/places”. See how you translated “trough” in Gen 24:20.

where the flock{s} came to drink

“where the flock{s} came to drink,” or “that the flock{s} would come to drink from,” The way you translate this should allow for the fact that the animals came to the watering troughs repeatedly or regularly throughout the day, not just one time.

in front of the flock{s}

“in front of them.” or “so that the flock{s} would see the branches {there}.”

And they were in heat when they came to drink

“The flocks {often} mated when they came {to the troughs/tubs} to drink,” or “{That way, whenever} the animals that were ready to mate/breed came {to the troughs/tubs} to drink,” The way you translate this clause will determine whether you begin the next verse with a conjunction (“and” or “so”) or without a conjunction. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 30:39

and the flock{s} would mate by the branches

“and/so they would mate in front of the branches,” or “they would mate where they could see the branches,” or “they would see the branches as they were mating/breeding,” Make sure your translation of the verbs in this verse refers to a repeated or habitual activity, not a one-time event.

and the flock{s} would bear streaked, speckled, and spotted {young

“As a result, they would bear/have {young/offspring that were} streaked/striped or speckled or spotted.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “speckled” and “spotted” in verses 32-33 and 35. Also consider what is the most natural way in your language to refer to the flocks in verses 38 and 39. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 30:40

Then Jacob set apart the lambs

"Then Jacob separated those young animals {from Laban's flocks} {to form/make new flocks for himself}," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and he made the faces of the flock{s} look at

"and he put {the rest of} the flock{s} with". The Hebrew text uses an idiom here that means Jacob put the marked and unmarked animals together (so that they would mate). (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the streaked and all the dark-colored {animals}

"all the streaked/striped animals and dark-colored {animals}". See how you translated "streaked" in verses 35 and 39, and how you translated "dark-colored" in verses 32-33 and 35.

in the flock{s} of Laban

"{that were} in Laban's flock{s} {so that they would mate and have young/offspring/babies that were streaked or dark-colored}." You may need to make it explicit in your translation why Jacob put the unmarked sheep and goats with Laban's streaked and spotted animals, so that people understand what Jacob was doing. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And he put flocks for himself by themselves

"In that way, {over time} he created/formed/made separate flocks {of sheep and goats} for himself"

and he did not put them with the flock{s} of Laban

"that he did not put/mix with Laban's flock{s}." or "that he kept separate/away from Laban's flock{s}."

Genesis 30:41

So it happened whenever

“So whenever” or “Whenever”. This verse includes more details about what Jacob was doing on a regular basis.

the strong animals

“the stronger/best female animals” or “the strong/hardy/robust female sheep and goats”

were in heat

“were ready to mate/breed,” See how you translated this phrase in verse 38.

then Jacob put the branches in the troughs

“Jacob put/set the {striped/streaked} branches in the {drinking/watering} troughs/tubs”. See how you translated a similar clause in verse 38.

before the eyes of the flocks so that they would mate by the branches

“in front of those animals so that they would see the branches as they were mating/breeding.” or “so that as they were mating, they would see the branches.” See how you translated “mate” and “the branches” in verse 39. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/grammar-connect-logic-purpose\]\]](#))

Genesis 30:42

But when the animals were weak

“But whenever the weak/feeble female animals {were ready to mate/breed},” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

he did not put {them} {in

“Jacob did not put/set {the branches} {in the troughs/tubs}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

So it was

“In that way,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

the weak {ones

“{the young/offspring from} the weaker/feeble {animals}” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

went} to Laban

“were Laban’s,” or “{had no streaks or spots and} remained in Laban’s flocks,”

and the strong {ones

“and/whereas {the young/offspring from} the stronger/hardy/robust {animals}”. See how you translated “strong” in verse 41. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to Jacob

“{went} to Jacob,” or “were Jacob’s,” or “{had streaks and spots and} became part of Jacob’s {flocks},”

Genesis 30:43

so that the man prospered

“So Jacob became extremely/very prosperous/wealthy” or “As a result, Jacob became extremely/very wealthy/rich”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “prospered” in verse 30.

and he owned large flock{s

“and owned large flock{s} {of sheep and goats},” or “He owned many sheep and goats,” For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

and maidservants and menservants and camels and donkeys

“and {many} male and female servants and {many} camels and donkeys.” See how you translated “maidservants,” “menservants,” “camels,” and “donkeys” in Gen 12:16 and 24:35.

Genesis 31

Genesis 31:1

Then he heard

"Then {one day} Jacob heard" or "Then {one day} someone told Jacob"

the words of the sons of Laban, {who} were saying

"that Laban's sons were {complaining and} saying,"

Jacob has taken everything that {belonged} to our father

"Jacob has taken {for himself} everything/all that our father owned,"

and from what {belonged} to our father he has gained all this wealth

"Yes, he/Jacob has become wealthy/rich by taking our father's wealth/possessions!" or "In fact, he/Jacob has acquired/gotten all his wealth/riches by taking {the animals} that were our father's!" This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause and emphasizes Laban's sons' complaint against Jacob. The phrase "all this wealth" especially refers to all the livestock that Jacob had gained during the years he worked for Laban. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Genesis 31:2

And Jacob saw

"Jacob also saw/noticed"

the face of Laban, and behold, he was not with him as yesterday {and} three days ago

"that Laban no longer looked at him in a kind/friendly way as/like {he did} previously/before." or "that Laban was no longer pleased/happy with him as/like he was previously/before." or "that Laban no longer acted kind/friendly toward him the way he did in the past." The clause "he was not with him" is used here as an idiom that means Laban was no longer happy with Jacob or that he no longer liked him. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 31:3

Then Yahweh said to Jacob

“Then Yahweh told/commanded Jacob,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives

“Go back to your ancestors’ homeland, where your relatives live,” or “Return to the land where your ancestors lived and where your {other} relatives {also} live,”

and I will be with you

“and I will stay with you {and help/bless you}.” See how you translated this clause in Gen 26:3 and how you translated similar clauses in Gen 26:8, 24; 28:15.

Genesis 31:4

Then Jacob sent and called for Rachel and Leah to the field

“So Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah {to come} to the field/pasture” or “Then/So Jacob sent a message to Rachel and Leah that they should meet him at/in the field/pasture”. See how you translated “sent and called for” in Gen 27:42.

to his flock{s

“where {he was with/tending} his flock{s} {of sheep and goats}.”

Genesis 31:5

Then he said to them

"{When they arrived,} he said to them," or "{There} he told them," Consider whether in your language it is necessary to make explicit that Rachel and Leah had come to Jacob before he spoke to them. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

I have seen

"I have noticed"

the face of your father, that he is not toward me as yesterday {and} three days ago

"that your father no longer looks at me in a kind/friendly way as/like he did in the past," or "that your father is no longer pleased/happy with me as/like he was previously/before," or "that your father no longer acts friendly toward me the way he did previously/before," See how you translated a similar clause in verse 2.

but the God of my father

"but my father's God" or "but the God whom my father serves/worships" or "but the God {who takes care} of my father". See how you translated "the God of ..." in Gen 28:13.

has been with me

"has stayed with me {and has helped/blessed me}." See how you translated the idiom "be with you" in verse 3. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 31:6

And you know

“You {both} know”. In the Hebrew text, “you” is an emphatic pronoun. Also, some languages have a special dual pronoun that fits here well. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

that with all my might I have served your father

“that I have served your father with all my might/strength,” or “that I have tried as hard as I could to serve your father well,” or “how I have worked for your father as hard/faithfully as I could,”

Genesis 31:7

but your father has deceived me

“but {in spite of that,} he has deceived/cheated me” or “but {yet} he has treated me unfairly”

and changed my wages ten times

“by changing what he pays me ten times.” or “and ten times he has changed what he said that he would pay me.”

However, God has not allowed him to harm me

“However, God has not permitted him to harm/hurt me.” or “But God has prevented/kept him from harming/hurting me.” or “But God has protected me so that he/Laban did/could not hurt/harm me.” In this context, “harm” especially refers to financial harm, but it can also include physical harm.

Genesis 31:8

If he said like this

"{For example,} if/whenever he told {me}" or "{For example,} every time that he told {me}". The examples Jacob is describing in verse 8 took place repeatedly (as verse 7 indicates).

The speckled {animals} will be your wages

"that {only} the speckled {animals} would be my wages/pay," or "that he would pay me by giving me {only} the animals with speckles on them," Consider whether it is best in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Also, see how you translated "speckled" in Gen 30:32, 33, 35, 39. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

then all the flock{s} bore

"then all {the female animals in} the flocks gave birth to" or "then all the female sheep and goats gave birth to" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

speckled {young

"speckled {young/babies}." or "{young/babies that were} speckled."

But if he said like this

"But if/whenever he said {to me}" or "Then if/whenever he {changed his mind and} told {me}"

The streaked {ones} will be your wages

"that {only} the streaked/striped {animals} would be my wages/pay," or "that he would pay me by giving me {only} the animals with streaks/stripes on them," See how you translated "streaked" in Gen 30:35, 39, 40. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

then all the flock{s} bore

"then all {the females in} the flock{s} gave birth to" or "then all the female sheep and goats had" or "then they all gave birth to"

streaked {young

"streaked/striped {young/babies}." or "{young/babies that had} streaks/stripes on them."

Genesis 31:9

So God took away

“In that way, God has taken” or “So that’s how God took”

the livestock of your father

“{many of} the animals that belonged to your father” or “{many of} the sheep and goats that were your father’s” or “{many of} your father’s animals {from him}”. The term “livestock” usually includes all kinds of domestic animals, but in this context it refers to the sheep and goats that Jacob was taking care of for Laban.

and gave {them} to me

“and gave {them} to me {instead}.” or “and has given {them} to me.”

Genesis 31:10

And it happened

“One time/night”

in the season

“during the season/time” or “during the time of year”

the flock{s} were in heat

“that/when the female sheep and goats were in heat,” or “that/when the flock{s} {of sheep and goats} were mating/ breeding,”

and I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream that, behold

“I had a dream and {in the dream} I looked around and saw/noticed that” or “I had a dream. {In the dream} I looked around and was surprised to see that”. The word “behold” emphasizes what Jacob saw and might also express that he was surprised at what he saw.

the he-goats that were mounting the flock{s

“the {only} male goats {and sheep} that were mating with the female goats {and sheep}”. Some languages have special terms for male and female goats or sheep. For example, billy goats and nanny goats (for male and female goats) and rams and ewes (for male and female sheep). Choose terms in your language that are natural and well-known.

were} streaked, speckled, and spotted

“{were} streaked/striped, speckled, or spotted/blotched.” or “had a streaked/striped, speckled, or spotted/blotched pattern {in/on their fur/hair}.” It may be more natural to put this phrase earlier and say, “... saw that the male goats {and sheep} that were streaked, speckled, and spotted were the {only} ones that were mating with the female goats {and sheep}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 31:11

Then an angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob

"Then/And an angel from God called to me in the dream {and said}, 'Jacob!' " or "Then in the dream, one of God's angels said/called to me, 'Jacob!' " In some languages it is more natural to put "in the dream" earlier in this clause. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated "an angel of God" in Gen 21:17. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and I said

"and I answered/responded," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold me

"Here I am!" or "Yes, {Lord/sir}?" or "Yes, I am listening." See how you translated this phrase in Gen 22:1 and 27:11.

Genesis 31:12

Then he said

“Then he said {to me},” or “The angel said/replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please lift up your eyes

“Look around you” or “Look carefully”. See how you translated this idiom in Gen 22:13. Also see how you translated Gen 22:2, another passage where Yahweh uses “Please”. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and see

“and observe/notice {that}”

all the he-goats that are mounting the flock{s

“all the male goats {and sheep} that are mating with the female goats {and sheep}”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 10.

are} streaked, speckled, and spotted

“{are} streaked/striped, speckled, or spotted/blotched,” or “have a streaked/striped, speckled, or spotted/blotched pattern {in their fur/hair},” See how you translated this phrase in verses 8 and 10.

because I have seen

“{I, Yahweh, have caused that to happen,} because I have observed/noticed”. Sometimes an angel says “I” as God’s representative, but in this context, it seems to be Yahweh himself (in the form of an angel) who is speaking to Jacob (See verse 13). That information could be put in a footnote, and you could make “Yahweh” explicit in the text to make that clear. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

all that Laban is doing to you

“all {the wrong/terrible things} that Laban has done to you.” or “all the ways that Laban has been treating you {badly/wrongfully}.”

Genesis 31:13

I {am} the God of Bethel

"I {am} the God {who appeared to you} at {the town of} Bethel,"

where you anointed a pillar

"where you poured {olive} oil on top of a {memorial} pillar/stone {to dedicate the place to me}," See how you translated "poured oil on top of" in Gen 28:38 and "pillar" in Gen 28:18, 22. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

where you vowed a vow to me

"{and} where you made a vow/pledge/promise to me." See how you translated "vowed a vow" in Gen 28:20. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-key-term\]\]](#))

Now get up, go out from this land

"{So} now/then, get up/ready and leave this land/region {immediately}," or "Now go/leave at once from this land/region," The phrase "get up" means that Jacob should immediately get ready to go and then leave; see how you translated this phrase in Gen 27:43.

and return to

"and go/travel back to"

the land of your birth

"the land where you were born." or "the land where your relatives live." or "your native/home land." The Hebrew word for "birth" in this phrase can also be translated as "relatives" here (as in verse 3). See how you translated this phrase in Gen 24:7.

Genesis 31:14

Then Rachel replied, and Leah, and they said to him

“Then Rachel and Leah responded to him/Jacob,” or “Rachel and Leah replied to him/Jacob,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Is there still for us a portion or inheritance

“We no longer have any part/share in the inheritance” or “We will not/never inherit anything”. This rhetorical question expects the answer “no.” It also expresses Rachel's and Leah's strong emotion and emphasizes that there is nothing for them to inherit from their father. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question fits well here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

in the house of our father

“from our father's house/estate {when he dies}!” or “from our father {when he dies}”

Genesis 31:15

Are we not regarded by him

“Doesn’t he regard/treat us” or “It is obvious that he regards/treats us” or “He obviously is treating us”. This rhetorical question expects the answer “yes” and expresses Rachel’s and Leah’s anger at how their father treats them. Consider whether or not it is natural in your language to use a rhetorical question here. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

as} foreigners

“like foreigners/strangers/outside{rs} {and not family}” or “as if we were foreigners/strangers {instead of family}”. Make sure that the punctuation you use here fits with how you translate this rhetorical question.

For he sold us

“For example, he sold us {to you},” or “After all, he sold us {to you},” This sentence is an example of how Laban treated his daughters like foreigners.

and he has indeed completely eaten up

“and then he spent all” or “and then he used up all”. The phrase “eaten up” is used here as an idiom that means Laban had spent or kept for himself all the wealth he had gained from Jacob’s 14 years of working for him. Many languages have a similar idiom that could be used here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

our silver

“the money/wealth that should have been ours.” or “the money/wealth that belonged to us.” In that culture at that time, silver was a currency used to buy and sell things. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 31:16

For all the wealth that God took from our father

“In fact, all the wealth/abundance {of flocks} that God has taken from our father” or “In fact/reality, all {the flocks} that made our father wealthy and that God has taken from him”

belongs} to us and to our children

“{rightfully/actually} {belongs} to us and our children.” or “{should have been given} to us and our children {anyway}.”

וְעַתָּה עֲשֵׂה

“So then, {you should} do” or “So {go ahead and} do” or “So {we totally agree that you should} do”. The words “So now” introduce Rachel and Leah’s conclusion that is based on what they just said. Do what is best in your language to communicate that.

all that God has said to you

“everything/whatever God has told/commanded you {to do}.” or “exactly what God told/instructed you {to do}.”

Genesis 31:17

So Jacob got up

“So/Then Jacob {immediately/quickly} got ready/packed {for the journey}”. See how you translated “get up” in verse 13.

and put his sons and his wives on the camels

“and helped his wives and his sons/children {get/mount up} onto the/some camels.” Jacob took all his children with him, not just his sons. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 31:18

Then he drove

“Then he led/herded” or “Then he {started} driving/leading/herding”

all his livestock and all his property that he had acquired, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired

“{the camels and} all his {other} livestock/animals and {along with them,} {he also took} all the {other} possessions that he had acquired/accumulated”. The word “livestock” is general here and includes all of Jacob’s animals.

in Paddan Aram

“{while living} in {the land/region of} Paddan Aram,” Be consistent here with how you translated “{the land/region of} Paddan Aram” in Gen 25:20.

to go to Isaac his father, to the land of Canaan

“to go/return to his father Isaac’s house in the land/region of Canaan.” or “to go/return to Canaan, to {the home of} his father Isaac.” or “to the land/region of Canaan, where his father Isaac lived.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause earlier in this verse and say, “Then he {started} driving/herding {the camels} and all his {other} animals to/toward the land/region of Canaan where his father Isaac lived. {He took with him} all his possessions that he had accumulated, {including} all the livestock that he had acquired/accumulated {while living} in {the land/region of} Paddan Aram.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 31:19

Now Laban

“Now {before that,} Laban {the Aramean}”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that the events in verse 19 happened before Jacob and his family had left. Also, for some languages it is more natural to first make “the Aramean” explicit here in verse 19 rather than wait until verse 20. Do what is best in your language. (See:

Background Information (p.1571))

had gone to shear his sheep

“had gone away {for several days} to cut the wool off his sheep”. In that culture, sheep wool was very important since it was used to make clothing and blankets. The process of shearing many sheep would have taken several days. You could include some of this information in a footnote.

so Rachel stole

“so {while he was gone,} Rachel {went into her father’s tent and} stole/took” or “{While he was gone,} Rachel {entered his tent and} stole/took”. Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567))**

the idols that {belonged} to her father

“his {household/family} idols/gods,” or “the idols/gods that he had/worshiped.” These idols were statues made of wood or precious metals. They were small enough to be used in a private home. In this chapter these statues are referred to as “idols” (in verses 19, 34, 35 when the author refers to them) and “gods” (in quotes in verses 30 and 32 when Laban or Jacob talk about them). If it is confusing in your language to switch back and forth between these two terms, you could use “gods” throughout this chapter, since Laban would not have called them idols, and Jacob would not have used that term in his presence. However, if possible, it is best to translate the two terms the way the Hebrew text has them. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718))**

Genesis 31:20

and Jacob stole the heart of

“and Jacob deceived/tricked” or “At the same time, Jacob deceived/tricked”. Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Laban the Aramean

“Laban/him”. If you used “Aramean” earlier (verse 19), it may not be natural here. Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated this phrase in Gen 25:20.

by not informing him that he was fleeing

“by not informing/telling him that he was fleeing/leaving.” or “by fleeing/leaving {secretly} without informing/telling him that he was leaving.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 31:21

And he fled

“So Jacob {and his family} ran away” or “So {in that way} Jacob ran away {with his family}”. This statement summarizes an event that already happened (See verses 18 and 20). Make sure your translation of this verse does not sound like Jacob left a second time. To make this clear you could say, “After Jacob {and his family} ran away with everything that they owned, they {quickly} crossed the {Euphrates} River and headed toward the hill country of Gilead.”

and all

“with all/everything” or “and {took/brought} all/everything”

that {belonged} to him

“that {belonged} to them.” or “that he/they had/owned.” Make sure that your choice of pronouns throughout this verse fits with how you translate the beginning of this sentence. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

And he got up and crossed the River

“He/They quickly crossed the {Euphrates} River”. The Euphrates River was also called “the River” because it was large and well-known. It was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Haran, where Laban lived. This information could be put in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and set his face {toward

“and headed toward” or “and went/traveled in the direction of” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the mountain{s} of Gilead

“the mountain region of/called Gilead.” or “the hill country of/called Gilead.” The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could refer to: (1) mountains or hill country; or (2) a specific mountain (“Mount Gilead”).

Genesis 31:22

And on the third day it was told to Laban

“Three days after {Jacob/they had left}, someone informed/told Laban” or “Three days later Laban found out” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

that Jacob had fled

“that Jacob {and his family} had run away.” See how you translated “fleeing” and “fled” in verses 20-21.

Genesis 31:23

So he took his relatives with him

“So Laban took {some of} his relatives with him” or “So Laban gathered {some of} his relatives”

and pursued after him a seven-day journey

“and chased/followed after Jacob {and his family/household} for seven days”

and overtook him

“until they overtook him/them” or “until they caught up with him/them”

in the mountain{s} of Gilead

“in the mountain region of/called Gilead.” or “in the hill country of/called Gilead.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 21.

Genesis 31:24

But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream that night

“But/Then that {same} night God appeared to Laban in a dream” or “That night Laban had a dream and in it God appeared to him”. See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 20:3. Also see how you translated “Laban the Aramean” in verse 20.

and said to him

“and warned him,”

Watch yourself that you do not speak with Jacob either good or bad

“Be careful/sure that you do not say {or do} anything to Jacob {to try to stop him from leaving}.” or “ Be careful/sure that you do not threaten/harm Jacob in any way.” God is warning Laban not to say or do anything that would harm Jacob (See verse 29). (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

Genesis 31:25

And Laban overtook Jacob

“So {when} Laban overtook Jacob,” or “{By the time that} Laban caught up with Jacob,” Make sure that the way you translate this clause does not sound like Laban overtook Jacob a second time. This is referring to what already happened in verse 23. See how you translated “overtook” there. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

and Jacob had pitched his tent{s

“Jacob {and his family} had {already} set/put up his/their tents” or “Jacob {and his family} had {already} set up camp”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob had already pitched his tents before Laban arrived. Also see how you translated “pitched his tent” in Gen 12:8 and 26:25. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

in the mountain{s

“in the mountain region {of Gilead},” or “in the hill country {of Gilead},” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to make “Gilead” explicit here (rather than later in this verse). Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “mountain{s} of Gilead” in verses 21 and 23. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

so Laban with his relatives

“so Laban and {all} his relatives {that were with him}”

pitched {theirs

“{also} set/put up {their tents}” or “{also} set up camp” or “{also} camped”

in the mountain{s} of Gilead

“in the hill country of Gilead.” or “there {at a place nearby}.” If you made “Gilead” explicit earlier in this verse in your translation, it may not be necessary to repeat it here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 31:26

Then Laban said to Jacob

"Then {the next day} Laban {went/came to Jacob and} complained to Jacob/him," or "{The next day} Laban {met with Jacob and} {rebuked/confronted Jacob/him and} said to him," See how you translated a similar quote margin in 29:25, when the roles were reversed and Jacob confronted Laban. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

What have you done

"Why have you done this?" or "Look what you have done!" or "What you have done is wrong!" Laban uses a rhetorical question here to express his anger at Jacob. Do what is best in your language to communicate that. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And you have stolen my heart

"You have deceived/tricked me" or "You have acted deceitfully toward me". See how you translated the idiom "stole the heart of" in verse 20. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and carried away my daughters

"and dragged away my daughters {with you}" or "and forced my daughters to leave {with you}". Laban uses exaggeration to show he is angry and to try to make Jacob feel guilty for what he did. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

like captives of the sword

"like prisoners of war!" or "as if you had captured them in battle!" (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

Genesis 31:27

Why did you secretly flee and deceive me

“Why did you deceive/trick me and secretly run away” or “Why did you deceive me by secretly running away” or “You should not have deceived me and secretly run away”

and not tell me

“without telling me {you were leaving}!” or “{Why} didn’t you tell me {that you were leaving}?” or “You should have told me {you were leaving}!” Verse 27 is one long rhetorical question in the Hebrew text that expresses Laban’s anger at Jacob. For some languages it is better to break it up into two or more sentences. Do what is best in your language, and make sure that the punctuation fits well. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

For I would have sent you with joy and with songs

“{If I had known,} I/we would/could have {held a feast and} sent you {on your way}, singing joyful songs {together},” or “{If I had known,} I/we could/would have sent you {on your way} by {having a feast and} singing joyful songs {together},” Make sure it is clear in your translation that the events in this clause are contrary-to-fact (hypothetical). (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

with tambourine{s} and with lyre{s}

“with tambourines and lyres/harps playing!” or “with/to the music/sound/playing of musical instruments!” For some languages it may be better to change the order of the phrases in this sentence and say, “{If I had known,} we could have {held a feast and} sung joyful songs {and danced} together, with tambourines and lyres playing, before sending you {on your way}.” Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated “lyres/harps” in Gen 4:21. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 31:28

And you did not let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters

"You did not {even} let me kiss my daughters and my grandchildren {goodbye} {before they left}!" or "{You left so secretly that} I wasn't even able to say goodbye to my daughters and grandchildren!" For some languages, it may be more natural to mention the daughters before the children. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated "kiss" in Gen 27:26-27. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Now you have acted foolishly by doing {that

"What you have done is {very} foolish/stupid!" or "You acted foolishly when you left {secretly} like that!"

Genesis 31:29

It is in the power of my hand to do harm to you

"I {and my relatives/men} have the power/ability to harm {all of} you," The pronoun "you" is plural here, so it probably refers to Jacob and everyone in his household. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1627)**)

but last night the God of your father

"but last night {in a dream} the God whom your father serves". For some languages it may be more natural to put this time phrase later and say "... said to me {in a dream} last night". Do what is best in your language. See how you translated a similar phrase ("the God of my father") in verse 5. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

said to me, saying, 'Keep yourself from speaking with Jacob either good or bad

"commanded/warned me, 'Do not say {or do} anything to Jacob {to try to stop him from leaving}.'" or "commanded/warned me to not threaten/harm you in any way." For some languages it is necessary to make this embedded quote an indirect quote. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated a similar quote in verse 24. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 31:30

So now, you have surely gone

“Now then, {I know/understand that} you left” or “Now, {I know/understand that} you went/ran away”. Begin this verse in a way which shows that Laban is introducing a new topic. Also notice that “you” shifts to singular here in verse 30. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

because you greatly long

“because you longed so much” or “because you were so/very homesick”

for the house of your father

“to return to your father’s household/family,” or “to return home to your father {and other relatives},” This phrase refers to the people in Jacob’s father’s household and other relatives living nearby. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Why did you steal my gods

“{but} what is the reason that you stole my gods?” or “{but} why did you steal my gods?”

Genesis 31:31

Then Jacob answered and said to Laban

“Jacob answered Laban/him,” or “Then Jacob told Laban/him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Because I was afraid

“{We left secretly} because I was afraid.” Make sure it is clear here in your translation that Jacob is answering Laban’s question in verse 27, not his question in verse 30. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

because I said

“I told myself that {if you knew,}” or “I thought that {if I told you we were leaving,}” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

that perhaps you would seize your daughters from me

“you might take your {two} daughters from me {by force}.” Make sure you translate this sentence in a way that shows it is hypothetical. Also see how you translated “seized” in Gen 21:25. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

Genesis 31:32

Whoever you find your gods with

"{As for} your gods, if you find them {here} in someone's {tent}," or "{However we did not steal/take your gods. In fact,} if you find your gods with anyone {here}," See how you translated "gods" in verse 30.

will not live

"that person will die {for stealing them}!" or "that person will be put to death {as punishment for stealing them}!"

In front of our relatives

"{So} while our relatives are watching," or "{So} with our relatives as witnesses," Make sure your translation of this phrase refers to both Jacob's and Laban's relatives. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

observe for yourself what {is} with me

"search for yourself what/everything I have with me here" or "{go ahead and} search {all} my belongings for yourself"

and take {what belongs} to you

"and take whatever you find that is yours." or "{If you find} anything that is yours, take it." Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them

"{When Jacob said that,} he did not know that Rachel {was the one who} had stolen the idols." Translate this background information in a way that is clear and natural in your language. Also see how you translated "stole" in verses 19 and 30. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

Genesis 31:33

Then Laban went into the tent of Jacob

“Then/So Laban went/started {searching} in/through Jacob’s tent,” See how you translated “tent” in verse 25.

and into the tent of Leah

“Then {he searched} through/in Leah’s tent”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and into the tent of the two slave women

“and through/in the two servant women’s tent,” or “and through/in the tent where the two maidservants lived,” Consider again how you translated “slave/servant woman” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 20:17; 21:10, 12-13; 30:3; 31:33.

but he did not find {anything}

“but he did not find {anything} {that belonged to him}.” or “but he did not find {the/his idols/gods}.”

Then he came out of Leah’s tent and went into Rachel’s tent

“Then he came out of Leah’s tent {and the servant women’s tent} and went into Rachel’s tent {to search it}.” or “Then/Next after he left/searched those tents, he went into Rachel’s tent {to search it}.”

Genesis 31:34

Now Rachel had taken the idols and put them inside the camel's saddle

"Now/But Rachel had put the idols inside {her} camel saddlebag {to hide them}," or "Now/But Rachel had hidden the idols inside her camel saddlebag". This kind of saddle was used as a seat and also had compartments or bags for carrying things. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Rachel had hidden the idols before Laban entered her tent. Also see how you translated "idols" in verse 19. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

and was sitting on them

"and she was sitting on the idols/gods/saddlebag."

And Laban felt throughout the entire tent

"Laban searched/rummaged through everything {else} in the tent, but" or "So when/although Laban searched everywhere {else} in her tent,"

but he did not find {them}

"he did/could not find {them/anything}." or "he did/could not find {the/his idols/gods}." For some languages, it may be better to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, "So Laban was not able to find {them}, even though he searched her tent thoroughly."

Genesis 31:35

And she said to her father

“Rather Rachel had said to him,” or “{As he was searching,} Rachel said to him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Do not let it burn in the eyes of my lord

“{Please} do not be angry/upset {at me}, sir/Father,” or “Sir/Father, {please} do not be angry/upset {at me}”. Make sure you translate “my lord” in a way that is appropriate for a daughter to show respect to her father; it should not sound like she was Laban’s slave or servant. The word “burn” is used here as an idiom that means to be angry. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would work well here. Also see how you translated this idiom in Gen 30:2. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

that I am not able to stand up in your presence

“that I am not able to stand/get up to greet you,”

because the way of women {is} on me

“because it is that time of the month {when I feel weak}.” or “because I am having my {monthly} period/cycle.” Translate this in a way that will not offend or embarrass people when this is read aloud in public. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

So he searched, but he did not find the idols

“That is {also} why he did/could not find the/his idols/gods when he searched {her/Rachel’s tent}.” or “So {that is why} he did/could not find the/his idols/gods {in her/Rachel’s tent}.”

Genesis 31:36

Then it burned within Jacob

"Then Jacob became {very} angry {at Laban}". See how you translated the idiom "burn" in verse 35. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

and he disputed with Laban, and Jacob responded and said to Laban

"and contended with Laban/him and said," or "and confronted/rebuked Laban/him by saying to him," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {is} my crime

"Tell me my crime!" or "Tell me what crime I have done/committed!" Jacob's rhetorical questions in this verse show that he was angry at Laban. Do what is best in your language to communicate his anger. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

What {is} my sin, that you have hotly pursued after me

"How have I sinned against you so that you have a reason to pursue me so intensely/fiercely?" or "Tell me what sin/offense I have done/committed {against you} that gives you the right to pursue/chase after me!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 31:37

Since you have felt through all my things

“Now that you have felt/rummaged/searched through all my things/possessions,” See how you translated “felt through” in verse 34.

what have you found from any of the things of your house? Put {it} here

“did you find anything {that anyone took} from your household? {If so,} put/bring {it} here” or “show us what you have found that belongs to you! {If you found anything,} put/bring {it} here”. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

in front of my relatives and your relatives

“in front of our relatives,” or “where all our relatives can see it,”

and let them judge

“so that they can judge/decide whether you or I am right!” or “and they will/can judge/decide which one of us is right!”

Genesis 31:38

These twenty years I {have been} with you

“For {the past/last} twenty years I {have worked} for you!”

Your ewes and your she-goats

“{During those years} your female sheep and goats” or “{During all that time} your sheep and your goats”

did not miscarry

“bore their young without any problems,” or “had no trouble bearing young,”

and I have not eaten rams from your flocks

“and I have never {killed and} eaten {any} rams/animals from your flocks.” or “and I never took/killed {any} animals from your flocks to eat.” Make sure your translation does not sound here like Jacob is talking about eating animals while they are still alive; the animals would be killed and cooked first. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 31:39

I did not bring torn {animals} to you

"{And} whenever wild animals killed {any of} your animals, I never brought {the dead animal} to you {to show/prove I was innocent}."

I bore the loss of it myself

"{Rather/Instead,} I paid for that loss myself." or "{Rather/Instead,} I replaced them at my own expense." Normally it was the owner of the flocks (not the shepherds) who took care of the expense when an animal was killed or stolen. You could put that information in a footnote.

You required it from my hand

"{Besides that,} you required me to pay for" or "You {also} made me pay for". Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

those} stolen by day and {those} stolen by night

"{any} animals that got stolen {by thieves}, whether it happened in the day or at night." or "{any} animals {that anyone ever} stole {at any time of} day or night." Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 31:40

There I was

"That is how it was for me!" or "That was my life/situation!"

In the day, heat devoured me

"During the day the heat {of the sun} oppressed/pounded me," or "During the days, I suffered from the hot sun," Consider whether or not you can talk about heat and frost in your language as if they could harm Jacob the way a person could harm him. (See: **Personification (p.1686)**)

and in the night the frost, so that & fled

"and at night {I suffered from} the frost/cold, so that I could not/hardly sleep." or "and during the nights it was so cold that I could not/hardly sleep."

Genesis 31:41

That {is how it was} for me

“That {is what it was like} for me” or “{It was like} that for me”

twenty years in your house

“{for/during the} twenty years that I worked for you.” or “{during the entire} twenty years that I was with you.”

I served you fourteen years for your two daughters

“I worked for you for fourteen years in order to marry your two daughters,” or “For fourteen years I worked for you {in exchange} for {marrying} your two daughters,”

and six years for your flock{s

“and {I worked} {another} six years to earn flocks {of animals} from you,” or “and for six {more} years {I worked for you} to earn flocks {of sheep and goats} from you,”

and you changed my wages ten times

“even though you changed my wages/pay ten times.” or “even though ten times you changed what you said you would pay me.” See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 7.

Genesis 31:42

If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, & not

"If God, the Revered/Awesome One, whom my father Isaac and {grandfather} Abraham serve/worship," or "If God, whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac serve/worship and fear/revere," The phrase "the Fear of Isaac" is a title for God that is ambiguous in Hebrew (and English). It could mean: (1) "the One/God whom Isaac fears/reveres" or (2) "Isaac's God whom {people/others} are afraid/terrified of". The interpretation that is not used in your translation could be put in a footnote. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob is only talking about one God in this verse, not two or three. Also notice that "my father" and "Isaac" both refer to Jacob's father Isaac, not two different people.

If & had not been with me

"had not been with me {to take care of me}," or "had not been with me {protecting me and guiding me}," Make sure it is clear in your translation that the events in this sentence are contrary-to-fact (hypothetical) and imply that God actually had been with Jacob, so that Laban did not send him away empty-handed. (See: **Hypothetical Situations** (p.1643))

surely now you would have sent me away

"you would certainly be sending me away now" or "there is no doubt/question that I would now be leaving {here}"

empty-handed

"with {absolutely} nothing." or "without anything {at all}."

God has seen my affliction

"{But} God knows how much I have suffered {under you}" or "{But} God knows how {much} you have afflicted/oppressed/mistreated me"

and the toil of my palms

"and the hard work I did with my hands {for you}," or "and how hard I have worked {for you}," (See: **Synecdoche** (p. 1714))

and he judged {you} last night

"so last night he judged {against you} {in my favor}." or "so last night he rebuked {you}." See how you translated "judge" in verse 37. It may be necessary to translate this word in different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 31:43

And Laban responded and said to Jacob

“Then Laban responded to Jacob,” or “Laban replied to Jacob,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The daughters {are} my daughters, and the children {are} my grandchildren

“These women {are} my daughters, and their children {are} my grandchildren,” or “These {are} my daughters and my grandchildren,”

and the flock{s} {are} my flock{s}

“and these flock{s} {are} {also} mine.” or “and these flock{s}/animals {also} belong to me.”

And everything that you see {belongs} to me

“In fact, everything/all that you see {here} is mine!” or “Yes, everything that is here with you is {actually} mine!” Laban is lying or exaggerating here to make it sound like he was wronged, when actually he is the one who was dishonest in his dealings with Jacob. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

But what can I do today about these daughters of mine or about their children whom they have born

“But/Yet there is nothing I can do today/now to keep my daughters and grandchildren from leaving!” or “But I can’t do anything now to keep my daughters and their children near me {any longer}!” Laban uses this rhetorical question to express his emotions and emphasize that there is nothing that he can do. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question fits well here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 31:44

So now, come, let us cut a covenant, I and you

“So then, you and I should make a {peace} covenant/treaty {with each other},” or “So I invite you to make a covenant/treaty with me,” For some languages it may be more natural to put “I” and “you” earlier in the sentence. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “So now” in verse 16 and “cut a covenant” in Gen 26:28. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and let it be

“and let there be” or “and there should be”. The subject of the Hebrew verb in this phrase is masculine singular, so it cannot refer to “covenant,” which is feminine singular. It is probably best to translate this phrase in a general way.

a witness between me and you

“a witness/memorial to remind us {of our covenant/treaty}.” or “something to remind us {to keep that covenant/treaty}.” If your language has a dual pronoun for “us”, you could use it in this verse. Also, if your language distinguishes exclusive and inclusive pronouns, you could use the inclusive form of “us” here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Genesis 31:45

So Jacob took a stone

“So Jacob picked out a {large} stone”. See how you translated “stone” in Gen 28:18.

and set it up {as} a pillar

“and set/stood it up {on its end} {as} a monument {to mark the place where they made their covenant/treaty}.” or “and set/stood it up {as} a memorial/reminder stone {to mark the place as special}.” See how you translated “pillar” in verse 13 and “set it up as a pillar” in Gen 28:18, 22.

Genesis 31:46

Then Jacob said to his relatives

“Then Jacob/he told his relatives,” These relatives would have included Jacob’s sons, as well as Laban and his men who had come with him. See how you translated “relatives” in verses 23, 25, 32, 37.

Gather stones

“Gather {some more} stones.” or “{Please} gather {some} stones.” Make sure that your translation of Jacob’s request sounds polite here, not rude or demanding, but also not begging. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

So they took stones and made a heap

“So they {all} gathered/brought/got stones and put them in a {large} pile/mound.”

Then they ate there

“Then they/everyone ate {a meal together} there”. Make sure your translation does not sound like Jacob ate without Laban and his men.

by the heap

“near the heap/pile {of stones}.” or “next to the pile/mound {of stones}.”

Genesis 31:47

And Laban called it

“Laban gave the heap/pile/place the {Aramaic} name”

Jegar Sahadutha

“Jegar Sahadutha, {which means “witness heap/pile/mound,”}” or “Jegar Sahadutha, {which means “heap/pile that reminds,”}” If the meaning of “Jegar Sahadutha” and “Galeed” is included in your translation or in a footnote, be sure that it fits with how you translate “heap/pile/mound” in verses 46 and 48, and “witness” in verse 48. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

but Jacob called it Galeed

“but/whereas Jacob gave it the {Hebrew} name Galeed, {which has the same meaning}.”

Genesis 31:48

And Laban said

“Then Laban said {to Jacob/him},” or “Laban said {to him/Jacob},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

This heap {is} a witness between me and you today

“This heap/pile {of stones} is to remind us {to keep our peace covenant/treaty}.” or “{Starting} today, when we see this pile/mound {of stones}, we will remember {our peace covenant/treaty}.”

For that {reason

“That is the reason” or “That is why”

he called its name Galeed

“they/people call it Galeed.” or “that place is called Galeed.” or “the name of that place is Galeed.” The phrase “he called its name” is used here in a general way that means “they/people call it”; the pronoun “he” does not refer here to Laban. Make sure that is clear in your language.

Genesis 31:49

It is} also Mizpah

"{It is/was} also {called/named} Mizpah," or "People also call {the place,} Mizpah," or "{Another name for the place is} Mizpah, {which means "watchtower,;"}

because he said

"because Laban said {to Jacob}," Make sure that your translation of "he" refers here to Laban. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

May Yahweh watch between me and you

"May Yahweh watch both/each of us" or "May Yahweh keep watch on/over us"

when we are hidden one from the other

"while we are out of each other's sight {and hold both of us responsible for keeping our covenant/treaty with each other}." or "{to make sure we keep our covenant/treaty} while we are apart/away from each other." The pronoun "we" is inclusive here and includes both Laban and Jacob. Some languages have a dual pronoun that fits here well. Do what is natural in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dualpronoun\]\]](#))

Genesis 31:50

If you afflict my daughters

"If you treat my daughters badly," or "If you mistreat/oppress my daughters," See how you translated "afflict" in Gen 15:13 and 16:6, and how you translated a related word ("affliction") in verse 42.

or if you take wives besides my daughters

"or if you marry {other} wives/women besides them,"

even though} there is not someone with us, behold

"{even if} no one {else} is watching us, don't forget {that}" or "remember {that} {even if} no one {else} is watching us," See how you translated the pronoun "we" in verse 49. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-dual\]\]](#))

God {is} a witness between me and you

"God is {always} watching both of us {to hold us accountable}." or "God always sees/watches us {and will punish us if we break our covenant/treaty}." In his role as witness, God would also punish anyone who broke the covenant. You could make this information explicit in your translation or put it in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 31:51

Then Laban said to Jacob

"Then Laban {also} said to Jacob," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

"See" or "Here is" or "Look at"

this heap

"this heap/pile/mound {of stones};" See how you translated "heap" in verses 46 and 48.

and behold

"and here is" or "and see" or "and look at"

the pillar

"this monument" or "this memorial/reminder stone". See how you translated "pillar" in verse 45.

which I set up between me and you

"which I {helped} set up between us {to remind us to keep our peace treaty}." or "which we set/stood up between us {to remind us about our peace covenant/treaty}." Jacob set up the stone as a pillar, but Laban and Jacob, along with their relatives, worked together to make the pile of stones.

Genesis 31:52

This heap {is} a witness and the pillar {is} a witness

“This heap/pile {of stones} {is} a witness/reminder and this pillar {is} {also} a witness/reminder” or “This pile/mound {of stones} and this monument/memorial {both} remind us”. See how you translated “witness” in verses 44 and 48.

that I will not pass by this heap to you

“that I will/must never go past this heap/pile/mound to {harm/attack} you,” Laban and Jacob could go to each other’s homes in peace but not to harm each other.

and that you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, to do harm

“and that you will/must never go past this heap/pile/mound and this monument/memorial to harm/attack me.”

Genesis 31:53

the God of Abraham

“May {your grandfather} Abraham’s God” or “May the God whom your grandfather Abraham served/worshiped”. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 28:13.

and the gods of Nahor, the gods of their father

“and {my grandfather} Nahor’s gods, {which were also} their/his father {Terah}’s gods,” or “and the gods that {my grandfather} Nahor and his father {Terah} worshiped/served,” Abraham trusted in Yahweh, the one and only true God (Gen 15:6). Terah worshiped other gods (Joshua 24:2), and so did Laban (verses 19, 30), which suggests that Nahor served the same gods that his father Terah served, and then taught his son Laban to do the same thing. In spite of that, many translations still capitalize “God” all three times here in verse 53. Be consistent with how you spelled “Nahor” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 11:22-25, 29; 12:26-27; 22:20, 24, 28; 24:9, 15, 24, 47; 29:5; 31:53.

May & judge between us

“judge between us {and punish us if we break this/our covenant/treaty/agreement}!”

Then Jacob swore

“But Jacob swore” or “Then/But Jacob made/vowed a vow”. Jacob refused to swear by the gods of Nahor and Terah. See how you translated “swore” in Gen 26:31, and compare that to how you translated a related phrase (“vowed a vow”) in 31:13. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-key-term\]\]](#))

by the Fear of his father Isaac

“by the God whom his father Isaac feared/revered, {that he would keep their treaty,}” or “with the Fear/God of his father Isaac as his witness/enforcer,” See how you translated “the Fear of Isaac” in verse 42.

Genesis 31:54

and Jacob sacrificed a sacrifice on the mountain

“and Jacob/he offered an animal sacrifice {to God} {on an altar} on the/a mountain/hill.” or “and Jacob/he burned {the body of} an animal {on an altar} as a sacrifice {to God} on the/a mountain/hill.” Make sure your translation does not sound like Jacob burned the animal while it was still alive. Also see how you translated “sacrificed” in Gen 22:13.

Then he called his relatives to eat bread

“Then he invited his relatives to eat a meal {together} {there}.” In the Bible, “bread” is often used as an idiom that refers to food in general. In this context, it was a meal that they shared together. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Then they ate bread and spent the night on the mountain

“Then after they had eaten the meal, they spent the night {there} on the/that mountain/hill.” or “So they {all} ate the meal {together} and spent the night there.” As in Genesis 26:30, eating together was an important part of the covenant or treaty process, since it shows unity and close relationship, as if they were part of the same family. Some of that information could be included in a footnote. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 31:55

Then in the morning Laban got up early

“The next morning Laban got up early” or “Early the next morning Laban got up”. See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 28:18.

and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters

“and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters {goodbye} {on the cheeks}” or “said goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren and kissed them {on the cheeks}”. It was a Hebrew custom for relatives and close friends to greet each other with a kiss on each cheek. Only make this information explicit here if it is necessary to prevent wrong meaning. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and he blessed them

“and asked God to bless them.”

Then Laban left and returned to his place

“Then Laban/he {and his men} left {from there} and returned home.” or “Then Laban/he left {from there} {with his men} and went back home.”

Genesis 32

Genesis 32:1

Then Jacob went on his way

“Then/Meanwhile Jacob {also} {left from there and} went/continued on his way/journey {home} {with his family},”
You can make implied information explicit in your translation if it is necessary to make the meaning accurate and clear. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and angels of God met him

“and {some} angels from God met/encountered him.” Translate “met” in a way that allows for the fact that no conversation is recorded between the angels and Jacob and that the angels were probably not hostile; for example, they may have been sent by God to escort and protect him.

Genesis 32:2

And when he saw them, Jacob said

“When Jacob saw the angels, he said/exclaimed {in surprise},” Make sure that you refer to Jacob and the angels here in a way that is accurate and natural in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

This {is} God’s camp

“This {is} God’s army!” or “God’s camp/army must be here/nearby!” or “God’s army is {stationed/camping} here!”

So he called the name of that place Mahanaim

“So he named that place Mahanaim, {which means “two camps/armies.”}” If you include the meaning of the name “Mahanaim” in your translation or in a footnote, be sure it matches the way you translated “God’s camp” earlier in the verse so that it is clear why Jacob gave the place that name. Also see how you translated “he called the name of that place” in Gen 28:19. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 32:3

Then Jacob sent messengers before him

“Then Jacob sent {some} messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau” or “Then Jacob sent {some} of his servants ahead of him to give/deliver a message to his brother Esau”

to the land of Seir

“{who was living} in the land/region of Seir,”

the country of Edom

“{that is,} the country/land of Edom.” or “{which was also called} the country/land of Edom.”

Genesis 32:4

And he commanded them, saying

"{Before/As they left,} he ordered/instructed them," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

This {is what} you will say to my lord, to Esau

"This {is what} you must tell my master Esau:" or "I want you to tell Esau whom I highly respect:" Jacob uses "my lord" and "your servant" in verse 4 and 5 to show his brother Esau great respect. Do this in a way that is natural in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

This {is what} your servant Jacob says

"I, your servant Jacob, want you to know that" or "This is a message from Jacob who wants to serve you:" Verses 4 and 5 have two levels of embedded quotes. Some languages need to use indirect quotes for one or both of those levels; for example, "Your servant Jacob wants you to know that he has been sojourning/staying with {your uncle} Laban all this time." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

I have been sojourning with Laban and have remained there until now

"I have been staying with {our uncle} Laban all this time." or "Since we last saw each other, I have been staying/living with {Uncle} Laban."

Genesis 32:5

And I have

"I {now} have/own" or "Also {tell him that} I have/own". Consider whether it is more natural to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

cattle and donkey{s}, flock{s}

"{many} cattle, donkeys, and flocks {of sheep and goats}." See how you translated "donkeys" and "flocks" in Gen 12:16.

and menservant{s} and maidservant{s}

"as well as {many} male/men and female/women slaves/servants." See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 12:16.

And I have sent {messengers} to speak with my lord

"I have sent this message to {you,} sir," or "Sir, I sent these messengers to you," If you use indirect quotes in this section, make sure each part fits with the other parts, especially in your choice of pronouns. It is helpful if you read your translation aloud to check for accuracy and naturalness. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

so that I will find favor in your eyes

"hoping that you will be gracious/kind {to me} {when I arrive}." or "so that {when we see/meet each other} you will be pleased with me {and welcome me}." See how you translated the idiom "found favor in your eyes" in Gen 30:27. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 32:6

Then the messengers returned to Jacob

"{After the messengers delivered the/Jacob's message,} they returned to Jacob/him" or "{Jacob's messengers delivered his message,} then they came back to him"

saying

"and said/reported {to him}," or "and informed {him}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We went to your brother, to Esau

"We went {and spoke} to your brother Esau." or "We went to your brother Esau {and gave/told him your message}." or "We delivered the/your message to your brother Esau."

And also, he is coming to meet you

"Now he is on his way {here} to meet you," or "and he is already headed here to meet you," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, notice that the word "meet" is neutral in this context and does not imply whether or not Esau had hostile intent against Jacob.

and 400 men with him

"and/but {there are} {also} 400 men {coming} with him!" or "and/but {he has} 400 men with him!"

Genesis 32:7

And Jacob was exceedingly afraid

“{When Jacob heard that,} he was very frightened” or “{When Jacob heard the report,} he was terrified”

and it was distressing for him

“and {very/extremely} distressed/worried.”

so he divided the people who {were} with him and the flock{s} and the herd{s} and the camels into two camps

“So he divided/organized/put {all} the people and animals that were with him into two {large} camps/groups, including {his family, his servants and} {all} his flocks {of sheep and goats}, herds {of cattle} and camels.” Consider what phrase order for this sentence is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 32:8

And he said

"{He did that} because he thought," or "He was thinking,"

If Esau comes to one camp and strikes them

"If Esau {and his men} come and attack {the people in} one camp/group,"

then the camp that is left will escape

"then {the people in} the other camp/group can/could escape." or "then the other camp/group might {be able to} escape." (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

Genesis 32:9

Then Jacob said

“Then Jacob/he prayed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh

“{Dear} Yahweh, the God whom my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac served/worshipped,” Make sure that your translation of this address refers to only one God, not two or three different Gods. Also make sure it is clear that Jacob is talking directly to Yahweh, not talking about him.

who said to me, ‘Return to your land and to your relatives

“you told me to go back to my homeland/country where my relatives live,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. Also see how you translated “land” and “relatives” in Gen 31:3. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

and I will cause things to prosper with you

“and that you would cause me to prosper.” or “and that you would make things go well for me.” Make sure your choice of “I” or “you” (for God) and “you” or “me” (for Jacob) in this clause fits with the way you translated the previous part of this quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 32:10

I am unworthy

"I am not worthy of" or "I do not deserve"

of all the kindnesses and of all the faithfulness that you have shown your servant

"the way you have always treated me so kindly and faithfully as your servant." or "how kind and faithful/loyal you have always been to {me} as I have served you."

For I crossed this Jordan with my staff

"I crossed this/the Jordan {River} with {only} my staff," or "When I {first} {left home and} crossed this/the Jordan {River}, all that I owned/had was my walking stick,"

but now I have become two camps

"but now I have {so many people in my household and so many belongings/possessions that there are} two {large} camps/groups." or "but now my {family and belongings} are enough to form/make two {large} groups."

Genesis 32:11

Please save me

“Please rescue me {now}” or “{I’m asking you now to} please save/rescue me”

from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau

“from the power of my brother Esau,” or “from my brother Esau,” (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

because I am afraid of him, that

“because I am afraid that” or “I am very worried that”

he will come and strike me {and} the mothers with the children

“he {and his men} will come and attack me {as well as} {these} mothers with/and {their/my/our} children!” or “he {and his men} will attack {and kill} us {all}, {including} {these} mothers with/and {their/my/our} children!”

Genesis 32:12

But you said

“But/For you told/promised {me},” or “But {remember that} you promised {me},”

I will surely cause things to prosper with you, and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea

“that you would surely/greatly prosper me, and that you would make my descendants {as numerous} as {the grains of} sand on the seashore,” For some languages it is more natural to use an indirect quote here, especially since Jacob is quoting the one he is talking to. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “I will cause things to prosper with you” in verse 9 and how you translated “as the sand” in Gen 22:17. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

which cannot be counted from {their} abundance

“which cannot be counted because there are so many.” or “which are so numerous/many that no one can count them all.” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 32:13

Then he stayed there for that night

“Then Jacob spent the night there,”

and he took gifts from what was in his hand

“and {during that time} he selected {many} of his animals as gifts/presents” or “and {while he was there} he picked out {many} of the animals he had with him”

for Esau his brother

“to give to his brother Esau,”

Genesis 32:14

two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams

"{including} 200 nanny/female goats and twenty billy/male goats, 200 female sheep and twenty male sheep," or
"{including} 200 nanny/female goats, twenty billy/male goats, 200 female sheep, twenty male sheep," Consider
what is the most natural way in your language to list these animals, here and in verse 15. See how you translated
"she-goats", "he-goats", "ewes" and "rams" in Gen 31:10.

Genesis 32:15

thirty nursing camels and their young

“thirty mother camels with their young/colts,”

forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys

“forty cows and ten bulls, {and} twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.” or “forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.” See how you translated “female donkeys” and “male donkeys” in Gen 12:16.

Genesis 32:16

And he gave them into the hand{s} of his servants

“He/Jacob put his servants in charge of the animals,” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

each herd by itself

“with each kind {of animal} in a separate herd/group.” or “and had them put/keep the different kinds {of animals} in different/separate groups.”

And he said to his servants

“Then he ordered/told his servants,”

Go before me, and put space between each herd

“Go ahead of me, {one herd/group at a time,} and keep {some} space/distance between each herd/group {of animals}.” or “to go ahead of him, {one herd/group at time,} keeping {some} distance between each herd/group.” Consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 32:17

And he commanded the first {one}, saying

“He {also} ordered/instructed the servant in charge of the first herd/group {of animals},”

When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying

“When my brother Esau meets you and asks you”

Whom do you {belong} to, and where are you going

“ ‘Who is your master, and where are you headed?’ ” or “who your master is and where you are going/headed,”
Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a direct or indirect quote in verses 17-20a. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

And whom do these {animals} {belong} to {that are} before you

“And whose animals are these {that you are driving/herding} ahead of you? ” or “Who owns these animals in front of you? ” or “and asks who owns the animals that you are herding,” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 32:18

then you say

“then you must tell {him},” or “then you are to answer/tell {him},”

They belong} to your servant, to Jacob. They {are} a gift sent to my lord, to Esau

“Esau, sir, these {animals} belong to Jacob who {humbly} serves you. He has sent them to you as a gift.” Also see how you translated “your servant” and “my lord” in verse 4. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

And behold, he {is} also behind us

“And indeed/actually he is coming right behind us.” or “In fact, he is following us {here}.” Notice that the pronoun “us” is exclusive here.

Genesis 32:19

Then he also commanded

“In the same way, Jacob ordered/instructed” or “Jacob gave the same orders/instructions to”. See how you translated “commanded” in verse 17.

the second {servant}, also the third

“the servant in charge of the second herd/group and the servant in charge of the third herd/group,” or “the servants who were in charge of the second and third herds/groups {of animals},”

also all who followed behind the herds, saying

“as well as all {the other servants} who were in charge of the {other} herds/groups,”

Say the same thing to Esau when you find him

“When you meet/reach Esau, {you are to} tell him the same thing {that I told the first servant}.”

Genesis 32:20

And also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob {is} behind us

"Especially be sure to tell {him}, 'Your servant Jacob is following us {here}.'" or "Especially be sure to tell {him} that his servant Jacob is following you {there}." See how you translated "is behind us" in verse 18. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

For he said

"{Jacob did all that,} because he said/thought,"

I will cover his face with the gift

"I will/can appease/pacify Esau by sending" or "Perhaps Esau will stop being angry at me if I send". The idiom "cover his face" means to try to calm someone's anger by doing something to please him. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom you could use here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

with the gift that is going before me

"him this gift/present {of animals} ahead of me" or "this gift {of animals} to him ahead of me". For some languages it is more natural to use an indirect quote here and say, "because he thought that if he sent the gifts {of animals} ahead of himself {to Esau}, then Esau would stop being angry at him." Notice that this alternate translation also changes the clause order. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and after that, when I see his face, perhaps he will receive my face

"After that, perhaps he will {forgive me} and welcome/accept me when we see each other face to face." or "He was hoping that when Esau saw the gifts, he would {forgive him and} welcome him when they met in person." Make sure that the way you translate this clause fits with how you translated the previous clauses as either a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 32:21

Then the gift went before him

“Then/So the {animal} gifts {for Esau} were taken ahead of Jacob {by his servants},” or “So Jacob’s servants {went} ahead of Jacob with the {animal} gifts {for Esau},” See how you translated “gift” in verses 13, 18, 20.

and he himself stayed for that night in the camp

“but/while Jacob {and his family} stayed {behind} in/at the camp that night.” or “but/while Jacob himself stayed/slept for {part of} the night in the camp.”

Genesis 32:22

Then during that night he got up

"{Later} that {same} night Jacob got/woke up and took" or "{Sometime} during that night". Make sure it is clear in your translation that this is the same night that was referred to in verse 21. Also, the phrase "got up" often refers to initiating an action, but here it may also imply that Jacob got up out of bed after sleeping for a while.

his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven sons

"his two wives, his two servant wives and his eleven sons" or "his two wives, two concubines and eleven sons". Consider what is the best way in your language to list these people. See what you did for a similar list of people in Gen 7:13.

and crossed over

"and waded/walked across" or "across"

the ford of the Jabbok

"a shallow place on/in the Jabbok {Stream/River}." or "a place in the Jabbok {Stream/River} that was shallow." A ford is a very shallow place in a stream that is fairly easy and safe for people and animals to walk across. The Jabbok Stream was a small river that flowed from east to west into the Jordan River about halfway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Jacob took his wives and children from the north side of the stream to the south side; his brother was coming towards them from further south. It might be helpful to include a map here in your translation that includes the places named in this chapter and shows where Jacob and Esau were coming from.

Genesis 32:23

So he took them and had them cross over the stream

"{After} he had taken them across the stream/river," or "After he did that," Verse 23 refers back to what already happened in verse 22. Make sure your translation does not sound like Jacob's wives and children crossed the Jabbok Stream twice in verses 22-23.

and he sent what {belonged} to him across

"he {went back and} had his servants take {everything} that he owned across {the stream/river} {too}." or "he {went back and} had his servants take {all} his {livestock/animals and other} belongings/possessions across {the stream/river} {too}." At some point, Jacob went back to the north side of the Jabbok Stream, while his family waited for him on the south side. His belongings included the animals that he had not sent ahead to Esau as well as all his other possessions. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 32:24

Then Jacob was left alone

“Then Jacob was {there} by himself {for a while},” or “After that, Jacob was alone {there} {for a while},”

and a man wrestled with him

“and/but {then} a man {came and} wrestled/fought with him”. At some point, Jacob realized that this man was Yahweh in the form of a man (verse 30), so translation teams that capitalize references to God will capitalize all the pronouns that refer to him in verses 24-29 and may or may not capitalize “Man” in these verses. See what you did for a similar case when Yahweh appeared as a man to Abraham in Gen 18. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

until the dawn came up

“until dawn/daybreak.” or “until daylight started to appear.” The word “dawn” refers to the time before sunrise when the sky begins to get light.

Genesis 32:25

And he saw that he was not prevailing over him

“Then the man realized that he could not overpower/defeat him/Jacob, so” or “When the man saw/realized that he was not able to defeat him/Jacob,” Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to in verses 25-29. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so he touched {him} on the socket of his hip

“he struck/hit {him/Jacob} on his hip,” or “he touched/struck his/Jacob’s hip joint,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so that the socket of Jacob’s hip was dislocated

“so that it was wrenched/knocked/put out of place” or “and his hip joint went out of place”. Consider whether it is better in your language to use an active or passive clause here. Also consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a noun phrase or a pronoun here to refer to Jacob’s hip joint. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

as he wrestled with him

“as he/Jacob wrestled/fought with the man.” or “as they wrestled/fought with/against each other.”

Genesis 32:26

Then he said

“Then the man said {to him/Jacob},” or “Then the man demanded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Release me

“Let go of me,” or “{You must} let me go {now},”

because the dawn has come up

“because it is dawn/daybreak!” or “because daylight is beginning to come!” See how you translated “the dawn came up” in verse 24.

But he said

“But Jacob said/replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will not release you unless you bless me

“{No!} I will not let go of you until you {first} bless me!” or “{No!} {First} you must bless me, and then I will let you go!” or “I will let you go only if/after you bless me!” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

Genesis 32:27

So he said to him

“So/Then the man asked him/Jacob” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {is} your name

“Tell me your name.” or “what his name was.” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

And he said, “Jacob

“He/Jacob answered {him}, “{My name is} Jacob.”” or “And he told him his name was Jacob.” or “And Jacob told him his name.” Make sure in your translation that Jacob’s reply sounds respectful. Also consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 32:28

Then he said

“Then the man said {to Jacob},”

Your name will not be called Jacob anymore

“Your name will no longer be Jacob,” or “You will no longer be called/named Jacob,” The wording here is similar to what God said when he changed Abram’s name to Abraham (Gen 17:5) and Sarai’s name to Sarah (17:15). After that, Abraham and Sarah were no longer called by their previous names. In the case of Jacob, he continues to be referred to by both of his names in this chapter (“Jacob” in verses 29-30, 32; “Israel” in verse 32) and throughout the rest of the Bible, including by God (Gen 46:2). It could be that although God was changing Jacob’s primary name to “Israel,” he was still known by his previous name too. You could put some of that information in a footnote.

but Israel

“but {rather} {it will be} Israel, {which means “he who struggles/contends with God,”}” If you include the meaning of the name “Israel” in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it fits with how you translate “struggled” in the following clause. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because you have struggled with God and with men

“because you have struggled/contended with/against {both} God and men/people,” The Hebrew word for “struggled” here is more general than the word for “wrestled” in verses 24 and 25.

and you have prevailed

“and you have won/overcome.” See how you translated “prevailed” in verse 25 and Gen 30:8. It may be necessary to translate this term in slightly different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 32:29

Then Jacob asked and said

“Then Jacob asked him” or “Then Jacob asked the man”. Consider again whether or not you have capitalized references to the man in verses 24-29. See the note about this at verse 24. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

Please tell {me} your name

“What is your name?” or “what his name was.” or “to tell him his name.” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

But he said

“But he replied,” or “But the man replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why {is} this you are asking

“There is no need for you to ask {me}” or “You do not need to ask {me}”. This rhetorical question probably means that there was no need for Jacob to ask the man what his name was; he should have known without asking. Consider whether or not it is best to use a rhetorical question here in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

for my name

“to tell you my name!” or “what my name is!”

Then he blessed him there

“Then the man blessed Jacob there.” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 32:30

So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel

“So/Then Jacob named the/that place Peniel, {which means “face of God,”}”

because {he said

“because {he exclaimed},”

I saw God face to face

“I saw God’s face {here},” or “I saw/met God in person {here},” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

but my life was preserved

“but/and {yet} my life was spared {by him}!” or “but/and {yet} he has allowed me to live!” Jacob was amazed that he was still alive because, although there were exceptions (Exodus 33:11; Judges 13:22), normally people could not see God face to face and live (Exodus 33:20). You could put that information in a footnote so that readers understand why Jacob was surprised.

Genesis 32:31

And the sun rose on him

“The sun shined on Jacob” or “The sun was rising/shining”

as he passed Penuel

“as he/Jacob left Penuel {and returned to his family}.” Penuel is another name for the place that is called Peniel in verse 30. That information could be put in a footnote. Or you could use the same spelling in both verses to avoid confusion; “Penuel” is the spelling in the rest of the Old Testament. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he was limping

“He was limping {as he walked}” or “{As he walked,} he was limping”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

because of his hip

“because of his hip {injury}.” or “because his hip {joint} was injured/painful.”

Genesis 32:32

For that {reason

“That is why”

to this day

“even today/now” or “{even/still} to/in the present”

the sons of Israel

“the descendants/people of Israel” or “the Israelites”

do not eat the muscle of the tendon

“do not eat the muscle/tendon” or “do not eat meat”

that {is} on the socket of the hip

“that is/was attached to an {animal’s} hip socket/joint,” or “that comes from an {animal’s} hip socket/joint,” Make sure it is clear in your translation that this is talking about eating meat from an animal, not about cannibalism. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

because he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip on the muscle of the tendon

“to commemorate/remember {the fact} that God struck/hit {and injured} the muscle/tendon attached to Jacob’s hip socket/joint.” or “because that is the muscle/tendon/place on Jacob’s hip that God struck/hit {and injured}.” See how you translated the idiom “touched” in verse 25. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 33

Genesis 33:1

Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked

“Then Jacob looked up and saw” or “Then Jacob looked {ahead of him} and saw”. Make sure your translation of this idiom does not mean that Jacob looked straight up. Rather, he probably looked carefully to the south (the direction that his brother was coming from). (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and behold, Esau was coming

“{in the distance} that Esau was coming {toward him},” or “that Esau was {in the distance} coming/heading {his direction/way},” Esau was still a fair distance away, which gave Jacob time to do everything that he does in verses 1-3.

and with him 400 men

“and with him {were} 400 men!” or “with 400 men!” or “and that he had 400 men with him!”

Then he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maidservants

“Then/So he/Jacob {quickly} separated/put his children into groups with {their own mothers,} Leah, Rachel and {his} two servant wives.” or “Then/So he/Jacob had his children {quickly} gather/stand with their own mothers, so that Leah, Rachel and {his} two concubines were each with her own children.” Each of the women had her own children with her (verse 2). See how you translated “divided” in Gen 32:7 and “his two maidservants” in Gen 32:22.

Genesis 33:2

And he put the maidservants and their children

“He put his {two} servant wives and/with their children” or “He put the group that had/included his {two} servant wives and their children”. See how you translated “his two maidservants” in Gen 32:22.

first

“first {in line},” or “in front {of all the others},” For some languages it is more natural to put phrases like “first” and “after them” at the beginning of their clauses and say, “First {in line} he put his {two} servant wives and/with their children. Behind them {he put} Leah and/with her children, and last {of all} {he put} Rachel and/with {her son} Joseph.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and Leah and her children

“then {he put} Leah and/with her children”

after them

“behind them,” or “next,”

and Rachel and Joseph

“and {he put} Rachel and/with {her son} Joseph”

after them

“behind them {all}.” or “last.” or “in the rear.”

Genesis 33:3

Then he himself went before them

"Then Jacob himself went/walked ahead of them {all} {toward his brother}," or "Then he/Jacob started going/walking {toward his brother} ahead of them {all},"

and he bowed to the ground seven times as he came near to his brother

"and he bowed {with his face} to the ground seven times {to show respect} as he went/got closer to him/Esau." or "As he approached him/Esau, he prostrated himself {with his face} to the ground seven times {to show respect}." See how you translated "bow down" in Gen 27:29. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 33:4

But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him

“But Esau ran to greet Jacob and hugged him”. This sentence shows a contrast between what Jacob was expecting and what actually happened. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

and he fell on his neck and kissed him

“and he threw/put his arms around his neck/shoulders and kissed him,” or “He held him/Jacob tightly and kissed him {on the cheek/cheeks};” See how you translated “hugged him ... and kissed him {on the cheek/cheeks}” in Gen 29:13. Make sure that the way you translate “fell on his neck” does not imply that Esau accidentally fell. Rather, this is an idiom that means he embraced Jacob warmly, with much emotion. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and they cried

“and/as they {both} cried {for joy}.” or “Both of them cried {because they were so happy to see each other again}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, some languages have a dual pronoun for “they” that could be used here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

Genesis 33:5

Then he lifted his eyes

“Then Esau looked up/ahead”. See how you translated the idiom “lifted ... eyes” in verse 1 and Gen 31:10. It may be necessary to translate this idiom in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and saw the women and the children

“and saw/noticed the women and children {who were there} {with/behind Jacob},”

and he said

“so he asked {him/Jacob},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Who {are} these with you

“Who {are} these {people}? {Do they belong} to you?” or “How are these people related to you?” Esau wants to know if these people are Jacob’s family members or his servants or someone else; he is not asking what their names are.

And he said

“He/Jacob answered {him/Esau},” Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking to whom here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

The children

“{They are} the children {and the wives}” or “{They are} {the/my wives and} the/my children”

whom God has graciously given to your servant

“whom God has graciously/kindly given to {me,} your servant.” or “whom God has graciously/kindly given to me, sir.” Jacob uses the phrase “your servant” to be polite and show respect to Esau; he was not actually Esau’s servant. For some languages it is more natural to put the honorific title first in this sentence and say, “Sir, {they are} the {wives and} children whom God has graciously given to me.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 33:6

Then the maidservants came near, they and their children

“Then the {two} maidservants came closer {to Esau} {along} with their children,” or “Then the/Jacob’s {two} servant wives and their children came/went closer/forward,” See how you translated “maidservants” in verses 1-2.

and they bowed down

“and they {all} bowed {to the ground} {in front of Esau/him} {to show respect}.” See how you translated “bowed down” in verse 3. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 33:7

Then Leah also came near and her children

“Then Leah also came closer {to Esau} {along} with her children” or “Next Leah and her children also came closer/forward”

and they bowed down

“and bowed {to the ground}.” (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Then after {that}, Joseph came near and Rachel

“Then last {of all}, Joseph and {his mother} Rachel came closer/forward,”

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ

“and they {also} bowed {to the ground}.” Some languages have a dual pronoun for “they” that fits here well. See what you did in verse 4. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-theydual\]\]](#))

Genesis 33:8

Then he said

“Then Esau said {to Jacob},” or “Then Esau asked {Jacob},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What to you {are

“What do you mean/intend by” or “Why did you send” or “What is the meaning/purpose of”

all these groups

“all those groups/herds {of livestock/animals}”

that I met

“that I encountered/saw {on my way here}?” or “that came to me {on my way here}?”

And he said

“Jacob said {to him},” or “Jacob answered {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

To find favor in the eyes of my lord

“{I sent them} so that you would be gracious/kind to me, sir.” or “{They are gifts for you} so that you would be pleased with me, sir.” See how you translated “my lord” and the idiom “find favor in ... eyes” in Gen 32:5. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 33:9

Then Esau said

“But Esau replied,” or “Esau said/replied {to him},” What Esau says is in contrast to what Jacob said, but it may not be necessary to use a conjunction here at all. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I have plenty, my brother

“My brother, I {already} have/own enough {livestock/animals}”. For some languages it is more natural to put the address “my brother” first in this quote. Some languages also have a special term for “younger brother” that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Let what {belongs} to you be yours

“Keep what you have/own for yourself.” or “{so} keep your livestock/animals for yourself.” or “{so} keep them for yourself.”

Genesis 33:10

But Jacob said

"But Jacob responded/insisted {to him}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

No, please

"No, I beg you." or "Please don't refuse {my gift}." In verses 10 and 11, Jacob speaks urgently to Esau, because in that culture if Esau accepts Jacob's gift, he is committing himself to treat Jacob as a friend.

If, please, I have found favor in your eyes

"{Rather,} if you are pleased with me," or "{Rather,} if you want to be gracious/kind to me, then". See how you translated the idiom "find/gain favor in your eyes" in verse 8.

then take my gift from my hand

"then {please} accept these gifts from me." or "{please} accept from me what I have given {you}." (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

For indeed

"After all," or "The fact is,"

I have seen your face, {which is} like seeing the face of God, and you have received me

"for me to see your face is like seeing God's face, especially since you have received/welcomed me {so kindly/warmly}." or "{I thought you were still angry at me, so} I was afraid of seeing/meeting you again in person, just as I would be afraid of seeing/meeting God in person, but you {forgave me and} welcomed me!" In Old Testament times it was terrifying for someone to see God in person, because normally people could not see God's face and live (Exodus 33:20). However, God had been gracious to Jacob and allowed him to live (Genesis 32:30). In the same way, it was a terrifying thing for Jacob to see Esau who had 400 men with him, but Esau was gracious to him (33:4). See how you translated a different Hebrew word that means "receive" or "welcome" in Gen 32:20. (See: **Simile (p. 1709)**)

Genesis 33:11

Please take my blessing that was brought to you

"{So} please accept my gift {of livestock/animals} that my servants brought to you," or "{So} please accept the livestock/animals from me that I sent/gave to you," (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

because God has been gracious to me

"because God has been kind/generous to me," or "because God has blessed me,"

and because I have everything

"and he has given me everything {that I need}." or "so that I have/own all/everything {that I need/want}."

And he urged him

"He/Jacob kept urging him/Esau {to accept his gift}" or "He/Jacob kept insisting {that he/Esau accept the gift/ livestock/animals from him}". Make sure it is clear in your translation who and what is being referred to at every point in this sentence. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so he took {it

"until {finally} he/Esau accepted {it/them}."

Genesis 33:12

Then he said

“Then Esau said/suggested {to Jacob},”

Let’s travel and go

“Let’s start traveling/heading {home},”

and I will go in front of you

“and I will lead/accompany/escort you.” Esau is suggesting that he would accompany or escort Jacob and his family, not that he would go far ahead of them.

Genesis 33:13

But he said to him

“But he/Jacob replied to him,” or “But Jacob replied,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

My lord knows that

“Sir, you know that” or “Sir, as you know,” See how you translated “my lord” in verse 8.

the children {are} tender

“my children {are} fragile/frail/delicate/weak,”

and the flock{s} and the herd{s} {that} are nursing {are} with me

“and some of my sheep and cattle are nursing {their young}.” or “and I need {to be careful with} {all} the sheep and cattle that are nursing {their young}.” See how you translated “flock{s} and herd{s}” in Gen 12:16.

And if they drive them one day

“If my servants/men drive the livestock/animals {too hard/far} in one day,” or “If I force the livestock/animals to go/travel too far/fast {for} {even} one day,”

then all the flock{s} will die

“then all the flock{s} {and herds} will die.” or “then all of them will die.” This phrase especially refers to the sheep and cattle that were nursing, but Jacob is probably using hyperbole here (“all”) to emphasize that he does not want to travel too fast. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

Genesis 33:14

Please let my lord go on before his servant

“{So then,} sir, please go on {home} ahead of me, sir.” See how you translated Jacob’s use of “my lord” (in verse 8) and “servant” (in verse 5) to show respect and deference to Esau. Here he uses both terms for emphasis. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

and I will lead them on at my gentle pace, at the pace of the livestock that {are} ahead of me and at the pace of the children

“Then/Meanwhile I will travel along slowly at a pace/speed {that is safe/good} for the livestock/animals and children that are with me,”

until I come to my lord

“until we reach you, sir,” or “We will catch up to you later, sir,”

in Seir

“in {the land/region of} Seir.” See how you translated “the land of Seir” in Gen 32:3. The land of Seir was a mountainous region southeast of the land of Canaan (and the Dead Sea) and was where Esau had settled. It was also called “Edom” (Gen 32:3), which was Esau’s nickname (Gen 25:30). You could put some of that information in a footnote.

Genesis 33:15

And Esau said

“So/Then Esau said/responded {to Jacob/him},”

Please let me leave with you some of the people who {are} with me

“{Okay,} {then} please let me leave you some of my men {to escort/accompany you}.” or “{Okay,} {then} may I leave some of my men with you {to escort/accompany you}?”

But he said

“But Jacob replied,” or “Jacob said/replied {to him},” or “Jacob answered {him},” Make sure the way you translate this quote margin fits with how you translate the previous and following sentences. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why {do} that

“There’s no need for that.” or “There is no need {for you} to do that.” Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize that there is no need for Esau to leave any of his men with him. For some languages it is clearer and more natural to use a statement here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1705)**)

Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord

“{Just} please {continue to} be gracious/kind to me, sir.” or “Sir, please {just} {continue to} treat me kindly.” Consider again how you translated “my lord” in verses 8,13-15. For some languages it is more natural to put this address earlier in this quote. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated the idiom “find favor in the eyes of” in verse 8. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

Genesis 33:16

So on that day Esau went on his way back

“So that {very/same} day Esau {and his men} started on their way back” or “So that {very/same} day Esau {and his men} left and headed back”

to Seir

“{home} to {the land/region of} Seir.” See how you translated “Seir” in verse 14.

Genesis 33:17

And Jacob traveled to Succoth

“But Jacob traveled/went to {the town of} Succoth {instead},” or “Meanwhile, {instead of going to Seir,} Jacob {and his family} traveled/went to {the town of} Succoth,” Jacob went northwest to Succoth, instead of going south to the region of Seir as he had said he would do (verse 14). Also see how you translated “travel” in verse 12. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

and he built a house for himself

“There he {and his men/servants} built a house for himself {and his family/household},” or “where he {and his men/servants} built a house for his family/household,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and for his livestock he made shelters

“and they {also} built {some} shelters for his livestock/animals.” or “and shelters for his livestock/animals.” The term “livestock” is general here and includes all of Jacob’s animals.

For that {reason

“That is why” or “Because of that,” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 32:32.

he called the name of the place Succoth

“the name of that place/town is {called} Succoth, {which means “shelters.”}” or “they/people call that place/town Succoth, {which means “shelters.”}” The phrase “he/they called” could refer to Jacob, or it could refer to people in general (as it often does in Genesis). If you include the meaning of the name Succoth in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it matches the way you translate “shelters” earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 33:18

Then Jacob came {in} peace {to} the city of Shechem, which {was} in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram

“Later Jacob {and his family} arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land/region of Canaan, as he/they continued traveling {home} from {the land/region of} Paddan Aram,” or “{After that,} Jacob {and his family} continued their journey {home} from {the land/region of} Paddan Aram, until {eventually} they arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land/region of Canaan,” Jacob and his family had left Paddan Aram and had been traveling back to the land of his ancestors in Canaan (Gen 31:3, 13, 18). See how you translated “in peace” in Gen 28:21.

and he camped

“and he/they set up camp {in a field}” or “Then he/they set up his/their tents {in a field}”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “camped” in Gen 26:17.

before the city

“near/beside the/that city.” or “on the edge/outskirts of the/that city.”

Genesis 33:19

And he bought the portion of the field

“Then he bought the plot/piece of land” or “{While he was there,} he bought the land”

where he pitched his tent{s

“where they had set up their tents/camp” or “where he/they were camping/staying”

from the hand{s} of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitahs

“from the sons of Hamor for one hundred pieces {of silver/money}. One of Hamor’s sons was named Shechem.” or “for/with one hundred pieces {of silver/money} from the sons of Hamor {who was} the father of Shechem.” The weight and value of a hundred kesitahs of silver is not known. Some ancient translations (including the LXX and Latin Vulgate) have “a hundred lambs” here, but most modern translations have “a hundred pieces of silver/money”. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 33:20

And there he set up an altar

“On that land he/Jacob {also} built a {stone} altar,” or “Jacob {also} built/made an altar {out of stones} on that land,”
See how you translated “altar” in Gen 26:25.

and he called it El Elohe Israel

“and he named it El Elohe Israel, {which means “God is the God of Israel.”}” The name “El Elohe Israel” could also mean “Powerful/Mighty is the God of Israel,” because the Hebrew word “el” can mean “God” or “powerful.” You could put that information in a footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 34

Genesis 34:1

Then Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she had born for Jacob, went out

“Then/Now {one day} Dinah, {who was} the daughter whom Leah bore/had for Jacob, went out” or “{One day,} Dinah, {who was} the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went {to/into the city}” These events took place at an unspecified time after Jacob and his family set up their camp beside the city of Shechem (Gen 33:18). Consider what is the best way to introduce a new event in your language. Also be consistent here with how you spelled “Dinah” in Gen 30:21. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

to see

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. The verb “to see” could mean: (1) “to visit with”; many languages have a similar idiom. (2) “to see/observe” the local women, for example, how they dressed and what jewelry they wore. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the daughters of the land

“{some of} the women who were native to that area/region.” or “{some of} the local/native women.” See how you translated “daughters of the land” in Gen 27:46, and how you translated a similar phrase (“people of the land”) in Gen 23:7, 12.

Genesis 34:2

And Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of the land, saw

“Then Shechem, who was the/a son of the Hivite named Hamor who ruled that region, saw” or “Now the ruler/chief of that region was a Hivite named Hamor. His son Shechem saw”. Consider which order of phrases is best here in your language. Also see how you translated “Hivites” in Gen 10:17 and “ruler” in Gen 25:16. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

her, and he took her

“Dinah, and he grabbed {hold of} her” or “{how beautiful} Dinah was, so he took/grabbed {hold of} her”

and lay with her and violated her

“and forced her to go to bed with him.” or “and raped her.” This is a euphemistic way of saying that Shechem forced Dinah to have sex with him. Translate this in a way that will not offend or embarrass people, especially when hearing your translation read aloud. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 34:3

And his soul was attached to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved

“He/Shechem was strongly/deeply attracted to Jacob’s daughter Dinah and he loved her” or “He/Shechem admired Jacob’s daughter Dinah so much that he fell in love with her” or “He/Shechem admired her so much that he fell in love with her”

and spoke to the heart of the young woman

“and spoke sweetly/tenderly to her {to try to woo/persuade/comfort her}.” or “and {tried to win her heart/affection} by speaking tenderly/kindly to her.” See how you translated “young woman” in Gen 24:14, and see the note about that there.

Genesis 34:4

Then Shechem said to Hamor his father, saying

"Then Shechem said to his father Hamor," or "Then Shechem {went to} his father Hamor and requested/demanded,"

Get this girl for me as a wife

"Negotiate {things} for me so that I can marry this girl." or "Ask this girl's family to let me marry her." At that time it was normal for parents to negotiate with another family to get a spouse for their child. The negotiations would include a bride-price and other details. You could put some of that information in a footnote. The term "girl" that Shechem uses here is less respectful than the term "young woman" that is used in verses 3 and 12.

Genesis 34:5

Then Jacob heard that

“When Jacob found out that” or “When Jacob was told/informed {by someone} that”

he had defiled Dinah his daughter

“Shechem had dishonored/disgraced his daughter Dinah,” or “his daughter Dinah had been defiled/disgraced by Shechem,”

and his sons were with his livestock in the fields

“his sons were {still} tending his livestock/animals out in the fields,” or “his sons were {still} {out} in the fields taking care of his livestock/animals,”

so Jacob kept quiet

“so he didn’t say anything {about it}” or “so he didn’t tell anyone {about it}”. Make sure your translation of this phrase does not mean that Jacob was totally silent. Rather, it means he did not speak about what Shechem had done to Dinah.

until they came

“until they came {back} {home}.” or “until they returned {home}.”

Genesis 34:6

And Hamor the father of Shechem came out

“Meanwhile, Shechem’s father Hamor went {with his son}” or “Meanwhile, {Shechem and} Shechem’s/his father Hamor went”. For some languages it is more natural to introduce Shechem here, rather than wait and have him appear too suddenly in verse 11. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to Jacob to talk with him

“to talk with/to Jacob.” or “to Jacob’s {camp/tent} to talk with/to him.”

Genesis 34:7

Then the sons of Jacob came from the fields

"Then/Soon Jacob's sons came/returned {home} from the fields."

When they heard

"When they heard {what had happened}," or "When they heard {that Shechem had raped their sister}," Many translations put "when they heard" with the previous sentence. However, unless someone else told Jacob's sons the news of what happened, that interpretation contradicts verse 5, which says that Jacob kept quiet about it until his sons got home.

then the men were grieved

"they were {very} distressed/shocked". See how you translated "grieved" in Gen 6:6. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

and it burned within them greatly

"and filled with anger," or "and extremely angry". See how you translated the idiom "it/anger burned within ..." in Gen 32:36. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

because he had done something disgraceful to Israel

"because/that Shechem had disgraced/dishonored {the people/family of} Israel" or "because/that Shechem had brought shame on Israel's family". Notice in this verse that the Hebrew text has both of Jacob's names, "Jacob" and "Israel," to emphasize that Shechem had sinned against Jacob and all of his descendants (the people of Israel). You could put that information in a footnote. Make sure that your translation of "Israel" does not refer here to a place, since Israel was not yet a country or a territory.

by lying with the daughter of Jacob

"by having sexual relations with Jacob's daughter." or "by raping Jacob's daughter."

and such a thing should not have been done

"Such a {wicked/terrible} thing should never be done {by anyone}!" or "No one should ever do such a {wicked/horrible} thing/crime!"

Genesis 34:8

But Hamor spoke with them, saying

“But Hamor pleaded with Jacob and his sons and said,” or “But Hamor urged/begged Jacob and his sons,”

to your daughter

“My son Shechem really/deeply loves your {family’s} daughter.” or “My son Shechem has fallen {deeply/completely} in love with your daughter {and sister}.” The pronoun “your” is plural here, which shows that Hamor is addressing not only Jacob but also his sons. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

Please give her to him as a wife

“{So} please allow/permit him to marry her.” The way “give” and “take” are used in verses 8, 9, 12, 16 and 21 reflects the culture at that time, when parents or families arranged marriages for their daughters. Also see the note about this at verse 4.

Genesis 34:9

And intermarry with us

"{In fact,} let's allow marriage between our two people groups," or "Let's agree to let members of our families marry one another,"

Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves

"{so that} your daughters can/will marry our {young men} and your {young men} can/will marry our daughters." or
"{so that} you allow our {young men} to marry your daughters and we allow your {young men} to marry our daughters."

Genesis 34:10

and settle with us

“You can {also} settle/live among us.” or “{We also invite you to} settle/live with/among us.”

And the land is before you. Settle and trade in it

“The land is available for you {to choose what you want}; settle/live {in it} {wherever you want}. You can {also} trade {freely} here,” or “You can settle/live {wherever you want} in the land. You can also do business buying and selling things {wherever you want},” Normally foreigners were not allowed to own land or to move around in the land to trade freely. So that is why Hamor is offering this in exchange for Jacob allowing his family to intermarry with the Hivites.

and acquire {property} in it

“and you can buy/own {your own} {property/land}.”

Genesis 34:11

Then Shechem said to her father and to her brothers

“Then Shechem said to Dinah’s father and brothers,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let me find favor in your eyes

“{Please} be gracious/kind to me {and let me marry her/Dinah},” See how you translated the idiom “Let me find favor in the eyes of ...” in Gen 33:15. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and what you say to me I will give

“Then I will give/pay {you} whatever you request/require/ask from me {for her}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 34:12

Increase greatly the dowry and gift for me

“Set the dowry/bride-price and {marriage/wedding} gifts {that I must pay} {to marry her} as high as you want,” The “dowry” was the payment that a groom (and his family) had to give to the bride’s family. It could include things like money, land, and livestock. The term “gift” probably refers to additional gifts given to the bride and her family members (as in Gen 24:53). If the custom of paying a dowry is not known in your culture, you could include an explanation in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and I will give according to what you say to me

“and I will give/pay {you} whatever you request/ask/require from me.” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 11.

Then give the young woman to me as a wife

“{Just please} give the young woman to me to marry.” or “{Just/Only please} let me marry the young woman.” See how you translated “young woman” in verse 3.

Genesis 34:13

Then the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with deceit when they spoke

“Then/But Jacob’s sons responded/replied to Shechem and his father Hamor in a deceitful/deceptive way” or “Jacob’s sons responded/replied to Shechem and his father Hamor but deceived/tricked them”

because he had defiled Dinah their sister

“because he/Shechem had dishonored/disgraced their sister Dinah.” or “because he/Shechem had done a shameful thing to their sister Dinah.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “But because/since Shechem had defiled/dishonored their sister Dinah, the sons of Jacob deceived/tricked Shechem and his father Hamor 14 by saying to them,” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 34:14

And they said to them

“and said to them,” or “They said to them,” Consider whether it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence that started in verse 13.

We are not able to do this thing

“We are not able to do such a thing as” or “It would be not be acceptable/right for us”

to give our sister to a man who has a foreskin

“to let our sister marry a man {like you} who has not had his foreskin removed,” or “to allow a man {like you} who is not circumcised to marry our sister,” Translate “who has a foreskin” in a way that will not offend or embarrass people, especially when hearing your translation read aloud. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

because that {is} a disgrace to us

“because that would dishonor/humiliate our family!” or “That would cause {great} shame/humiliation to our family!” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 34:15

Only on this {condition} will we consent with you

“The only way that we will/can agree with your proposal {is}” or “We will/can do what you want/ask only if you do this one thing.”

if you become like us

“if {first} you {and your people} become like us” or “You {and your people} must {first} become like us”

by every male among you being circumcised

“by circumcising all your males.” See how you translated “circumcised” in Gen 17:10. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 34:16

Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for us

“Then we will let our daughters marry your {young men}, and our {young men} will marry your daughters.” or “{If/ After you do that,} then we will allow your {young men} to marry our daughters, and {we will allow} your daughters to marry our {young men}.” The pronouns “we,” “our,” and “us” are exclusive in verses 14-17 except for the last “we” in verse 16. Also see how you translated “give ... daughters ... take ... daughters ...” in verse 9. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

And we will settle with you

“We will {also} settle/live among you {in this land},” See how you translated “settle with” in verse 10.

and we will become one people

“so that we become one people group.” or “and as a result we will {all} be/become one people/ethnic group.” Here the “we” is inclusive because Jacob’s sons are including Shechem and Hamor’s people. If you have an inclusive form of this pronoun in your language, you could use it here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Genesis 34:17

But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised

“But/However if you refuse to agree with our requirement that you circumcise {your people/males},” or “But if you will/do not circumcise {your males} as we require/say,”

then we will take our daughter and go

“then we will take our {father’s/family’s} daughter {from you} and go/move {somewhere else}.” or “then we will leave and take our sister with us.” The phrase “our daughter” reflects the fact that Jacob’s sons are using their father’s perspective and authority here. If that is confusing, you could say “our sister” instead. See how you translated “our {family’s} daughter” in verse 8.

Genesis 34:18

And their words were good in the eyes of Hamor and in the eyes of Shechem, Hamor's son

“What Jacob’s sons said/proposed seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem.” or “Hamor and his son Shechem were pleased {and agreed to do} what Jacob’s sons said/proposed.” See how you translated the idiom “good in ... eyes” in Gen 19:8. It may need to be translated in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 34:19

So the young man did not delay

“So Shechem immediately started” or “So right away Shechem took action”

to do the thing

“to do/fulfill what they required/proposed,” or “to do/fulfill their requirement,”

because he was delighted with the daughter of Jacob

“because he was thrilled with Jacob’s daughter {Dinah}.” or “because he was deeply/completely in love with Jacob’s daughter {Dinah}.”

and he was honored more than all of the house of his father

“{He was able to get people/everyone to do what he wanted} because he was the most respected person in his father’s household/family.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause earlier in this sentence and say, “So right away Shechem, who was the most respected member in his father’s household/family, started to do what they required, because he was thrilled with Jacob’s daughter.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 34:20

So Hamor and Shechem his son went to the gate of their city

"In fact, he/Shechem and his father Hamor went {straight/directly} to their city's gates/entrance {for a town meeting},"

and they spoke to the men of their city, saying

"and they spoke to the city elders/leaders {who had gathered there}. They said," or "and they told the elders/leaders of their city {about Jacob and his sons}," In that culture the leaders of a city held their meetings at the main city gates (as in Gen 23:3). Cities were surrounded by walls (that had gates) for protection. You could put some of that information in a footnote so that people understand what was happening.

Genesis 34:21

These men {are} peaceful with us

"These people are friendly toward us," or "Jacob and his family are at peace with us," Here "us" includes Hamor, Shechem and the men they are talking to. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1621))

so let them settle in the land

"so {let's} allow them to live/stay in the/our land" or "so we should let them live/stay in the/our land". See how you translated "settle" in verse 10.

and let them trade in it

"and trade {freely} here." or "and let them buy and sell things {wherever they want}." See how you translated "trade in it" in verse 10.

And behold, the land {is} broad of hands before them

"Look, there is enough land to support them {and us}." or "After all, there is more than enough space/room in the/this land for them {too}." (See: **Idiom** (p.1646))

We can take their daughters for ourselves as wives, and we can give our daughters to them

"{That way too,} we can take/choose their daughters to be {our} wives, and we can let their {young} men marry our daughters." or "{Besides that,} {then} our {young men} can marry their daughters, and their {young men} can marry our daughters." See how you translated similar clauses in verses 9 and 16. It may be necessary to translate these in different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 34:22

Only on this {condition} will the men consent with us to settle with us

“There is just one thing/condition/requirement: They will only agree to settle/live among us” or “But they will only consent/agree to settle/live among us”. See how you began verse 15, which is very similar to verse 22.

to become one people

“and become one people group {with us}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 16.

when every male among us is circumcised

“if all our males are circumcised” or “if we circumcise all our males”. See how you translated “every male among ... circumcised” in verse 15.

just as they are circumcised

“as their males are.” or “so that we are like them.”

Genesis 34:23

Their livestock and their property and all their animals

"{Then} all their livestock and animals, and {all} their {other} property/possessions" or "{But if we do that,} {all} their property/possessions, {including} their livestock and all their {other} animals"

will they not {belong} to us

"will belong to us!" or "will be ours!" This rhetorical question emphasizes that all of Jacob's livestock and property will belong to the people of Shechem. If a rhetorical question does not fit here in your language, you could make this a statement. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Only let us consent with them

"{So} let's just agree to do what they require," or "{So} we should just do what they propose/require"

and they will settle with us

"so that they will settle/live among us!" See how you translated "settle with us" in verses 10 and 22.

Genesis 34:24

And all who went out of the gate of his city listened

"All {the men} who were citizens/leaders/elders of the city" or "All the men/leaders/elders who were {there} at the city gate/entrance". Make sure that your translation of this idiom refers here to the same men who had gathered at the city gates in verse 20. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And & listened to Hamor and to Shechem his son

"agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem," or "agreed to do what Hamor and his son Shechem said,"

and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city

"so all of them and all the other males in the city were circumcised." or "so they circumcised every male in the city, including themselves."

Genesis 34:25

Then it happened on the third day

“On the third day {after that},” or “Three days later,”

when they were in pain

“when the men of {the city of} Shechem were {all} {still} sore {from being circumcised},” or “when it was {still} painful for the men of the city {to move/walk},”

then two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dinah, each took

“two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, {who were} Dinah’s brothers, took” These brothers had the same father and mother as Dinah. Some languages have a special term for this. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Kinship (p. 1661)**)

his sword and went upon the city boldly

“their swords and attacked the city, with no one opposing/resisting them.” See how you translated “sword” in Gen 27:40.

and killed every male

“They killed all the males/men {there}”. The children who were males were probably not killed, since later (verse 29) it says that all the children were captured. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 26.

Genesis 34:26

And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the mouth of the sword

“with their swords, including Hamor and his son Shechem.” Some languages have dual pronouns for “they” and “you” that can be used in verses 25-26 and 30-31 to refer to Simeon and Levi. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1625)**)

and they took Dinah from the house of Shechem

“Then they took/got/rescued Dinah from Shechem’s house”

and left

“and left {the city}.” or “and returned {home}.”

Genesis 34:27

The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city

"{Then/Next} {all} Jacob's sons went {into the city} and took everything valuable from/off the dead bodies and from {the rest of} the city," All of Jacob's sons probably joined Simeon and Levi in plundering the city, after those two had killed all the men there (verse 25).

because they had defiled their sister

"{They did that} because {that was where} Shechem had defiled/dishonored/disgraced their sister." or "to get revenge for the shameful thing that had been done to their sister {there}." See how you translated "defiled" in verses 5 and 13. Even though Shechem was the one who actually defiled Dinah (verses 2, 5, 7, 13), Jacob's sons held everyone in the city responsible for the crime that their ruler's son had committed (verses 25-29). If that is not clear, you could put that information in a footnote. Make sure that your translation of "they" does not refer to Jacob's sons.

Genesis 34:28

They took their flock{s} and their herd{s} and their donkeys, and what {was} in the city and what {was} in the field{s}

“They took away the people’s sheep and goats, their cattle, their donkeys, and everything else {they wanted} from inside the city and from out in the fields/countryside.” or “They plundered whatever was inside the city and out in the {surrounding} fields/area, including the people’s flocks {of sheep and goats}, their herds {of cattle}, and their donkeys.” See how you translated “donkeys” in Gen 32:15. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 34:29

And all their wealth and all their little ones and their women they took captive, and they also plundered everything that {was} in the houses

“They carried away all the valuable things the people of Shechem had owned, including everything that was in their houses. They also captured all their women and children.” or “They took away everything that was valuable and also captured all the children and women. They seized and took away everything that was in the houses.” See how you translated “plundered” in verse 27.

Genesis 34:30

Then Jacob said to Simeon and to Levi

"Later/Afterwards {when they came home,} Jacob scolded/rebuked Simeon and Levi {by saying},"

You have brought trouble on me

"You have brought/caused me {serious} trouble/problems" or "You have put me/us in great danger"

by making me stink among {those} who live in the land, among the Canaanites and among the Perizzites

"by causing the people who live in this land to despise/hate me/us, {including/especially} the Canaanites and Perizzites!" or "by causing the Canaanites and Perizzites who live in this land to despise/hate me/us!" The idiom "making me stink" means Jacob's sons had caused him to have a very bad reputation, so that people would hate him and his family. Some languages have a similar idiom that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated "the Canaanites" and "the Perizzites" in Gen 13:7; 15:20-21. There were other people groups also living in the land, but these two groups are the ones being emphasized here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And I am few of number

"I/We {only} have a few men {to defend us}," or "I/We don't have many people {in our family/household}," The words "I," "me," and "my" refer in this verse to all of Jacob's family; he uses these pronouns because he is the leader of his family. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

and if they gather together against me and attack me

"so if they {all} join {forces} against me/us and attack me/us," Make sure your use of the pronouns "me" or "us" fits with the way you translate the rest of this sentence.

then I will be destroyed, I and my house

"then I/we and my/our family/household will be destroyed/killed!" or "they will destroy/annihilate/kill me/us and {the rest of} my/our family/household!"

Genesis 34:31

But they said

“But Simeon and Levi responded/replied {angrily},”

Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute

“He/Shechem should not have treated our sister like/as a prostitute/whore!” or “We couldn’t let him/Shechem {just} get away with treating our sister like/as a {cheap,} immoral woman!” This rhetorical question shows Simeon and Levi’s anger and emphasizes that Shechem was wrong to do what he did and implies that he (and his city) deserved justice. Some languages have an idiom for this. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1705)**)

Genesis 35

Genesis 35:1

Then God said to Jacob

“Then God told/commanded Jacob,” Translate this quote margin in a way that is natural in your language and that fits with what God says. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Get up

“Get ready/packed” or “Leave here”

go up to Bethel and settle there

“and travel to {the town of} Bethel and live there.” or “and move to {the town of} Bethel.” The verb “go up” reflects the fact that the town of Bethel is higher in elevation than the city of Shechem; it does not refer to the direction they were going, which was south. Many translations leave “up” implied (to prevent confusion). Do what is best in your language.

and make an altar there

“Build an altar there {and offer sacrifices on it}”. See how you translated “altar” in Gen 33:20. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

to the God

“to {me as} the God” or “to {me,} the God” or “to worship {me as} the God”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is referring to himself as he speaks here to Jacob. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

who appeared to you

“who appeared/came to you {there}” or “who introduced himself/myself to you {there}”. See how you translated “appeared” in Gen 26:2, 24.

when you were fleeing

“when you were running away”. See how you translated “flee” in Gen 31:20-21, 27.

from the presence of Esau your brother

“from {the anger of} your brother Esau.” or “from your brother Esau.”

Genesis 35:2

So Jacob said to his household

“So Jacob told {the members of} his household/family”

and to all who {were} with him

“and everyone {else} who {was} with him,” This included Jacob’s servants and the people (women and children) whom his sons had just captured from the city of Shechem (Gen 34:29). You could put some of that information in a footnote.

Remove the foreign gods that {are} among you

“Get rid of the idols you have that other/pagan people/ethnic groups worship.” or “Give up the idols that you got/have from foreigners”. See how you translated “idols” and “gods” in Gen 31:19, 30, 32. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and purify yourselves

“and cleanse yourselves” or “Also wash and make yourselves clean”. They were to make themselves physically clean as a sign that they were preparing themselves mentally and spiritually to worship God (as their only God) at Bethel, which was a holy place where God had met with Jacob before. Some languages may have a special word for “purify” that communicates this. Do what is best in your language. Also consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and change your clothes

“and put/get on clean clothes.”

Genesis 35:3

Then let us get up

“Then we will/must pack up {our things/belongings}” or “Then we will/must leave here”. See how you translated “get up” in verse 1.

and go up to Bethel

“and go/move to {the town of} Bethel,” See how you translated “go up” in verse 1.

and there I will make an altar to God

“where I/we will build an altar to worship God,” or “There I/we will build an altar and worship God,” The Hebrew text has “I” here, but probably also implies that others in Jacob’s household would help him build the altar. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also see how you translated “make an altar” in verse 1.

who answered me

“because he answered/helped me” or “who answered/granted my prayers {for help}”

in the day of my distress

“during the days/time/times when I was in distress/trouble.” The phrase “In the day of” is used here as an idiom that could refer to the time when Jacob was fleeing from Esau, or it could be more general and also include other times when Jacob was suffering, such as the years he worked for Laban. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And he has been with me

“He has {always} been/stayed with me/us {and taken care of me/us}”. See how you translated the idiom “with me” in Gen 31:5, where it also means that God is not only present with him but also helps him and takes care of him. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

in the way that I have gone

“everywhere that I/we have gone/traveled.”

Genesis 35:4

So they gave to Jacob

“So/Then they gave Jacob” or “So/Then they handed/turned over to Jacob”

all the foreign gods that {were} in their hand{s}

“all the foreign/pagan gods/idols that they had {with them}” or “all their idols”. See how you translated “foreign gods” in verse 2. You could translate this differently here since this is the second time they are mentioned in this paragraph.

and the rings that {were} in their ears

“and the earrings they wore on their ears.” or “and {all} their earrings.” These earrings seem to have been part of their idol worship and may have had images of their idols on them. You could include that information in a footnote.

and Jacob hid them

“Then Jacob hid/buried everything {in the ground}” or “Then Jacob hid/buried all those things {in the ground}”

under

“beside” or “at the foot/base of”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob buried these things in the ground beside the tree, not directly under the trunk of the tree.

the terebinth tree

“the/a terebinth/oak tree”. Although this phrase refers to a terebinth tree, many translations have “oak tree” instead, or some other type of large, strong tree that is well known. See how you translated a different Hebrew word that is also translated “terebinth tree” or “oak tree” in Gen 12:6; 13:18; 14:13; 18:1. Another Hebrew word in Gen 35:8 is also translated as “oak.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

that {was} by Shechem

“that {was} near {the city of} Shechem.”

Genesis 35:5

Then they set out

“Then they {all} left there {and started traveling},” or “Then Jacob and everyone with him left that place,”

and the dread of God was on the cities that {were} around them, so that & not

“and God caused {the people in} the surrounding/nearby cities/towns to be terrified/afraid, so that” or “and God made {the people in} the nearby cities/towns so afraid that”. The Hebrew word “Elohim” probably means “God” in this phrase (as it usually does in the Bible); most English versions translate it that way here. Or it could be an adjective that modifies “dread/terror” and means “great/deep dread/terror” (similar to Gen 23:6, 30:8). See how you translated “dread” in Gen 9:2.

so that they did not pursue after

“they did not attack” or “no one attacked” or “none of them chased/came/went after”. Make sure your translation of “they” refers here to the people in the surrounding towns, not Jacob’s sons.

the sons of Jacob

“Jacob’s sons/family {to avenge the people of Shechem}.” or “them.” or “Jacob and his family.” Jacob’s sons are mentioned here since they are in focus as the ones who just plundered the city of Shechem; Jacob and the rest of his family were there with his sons and were also in danger. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 35:6

Then Jacob came to Luz

“Then/Soon Jacob/they arrived at {the town of} Luz,” Be consistent in this verse with how you spelled “Luz” and “Bethel” in Gen 28:19.

which {is} Bethel

“which {is also/now called/named} Bethel,” or “that {is}, Bethel,” or “which {also/now has the name} Bethel,” See how you translated “which is” in Gen 23:2, 19.

which {is} in the land of Canaan

“which is {also} in Canaan,” Since Shechem (verse 4) and Bethel were both in the land or region of Canaan, for some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this location phrase earlier in the verse and say, “Jacob/He and his family {continued traveling} in the land/region of Canaan and arrived at {the town of} Luz, which {also/now has the name} Bethel,” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

he and all the people who {were} with him

“he/Jacob and his whole/entire household/family.” For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this phrase near the beginning of this verse. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 35:7

And there he built an altar

"There he/Jacob built an altar," or "Then he/Jacob built an altar there," Consider again how you translated "altar" throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 8:20; 12:7-8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

and he called the place

"and he named the/that place" or "and he called/named it"

El Bethel

"El Bethel, {which means "the God of/at Bethel,","}" or "El Bethel, {which means "the God of/at God's house,","}" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because there

"because that is where" or "because it was at Bethel that"

God had revealed himself to him

"God had {first} introduced himself to him/Jacob" or "God had {first} appeared to him/Jacob". Compare how you translated a different Hebrew word that has a similar meaning ("appeared") in verses 1 and 9.

when he was fleeing

"when/while he was running away". See how you translated "fleeing" in verse 1.

from the presence of his brother

"from {the anger of} his brother." or "from his brother." See how you translated "from the presence of" in verse 1.

Genesis 35:8

Then Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, died

“Then {while they were still in Bethel,} Rebekah’s {former} nurse/nanny Deborah died” or “{While they were there,} Deborah died. She was the servant who had helped raise {Jacob’s mother} Rebekah {when she was young}.” See how you translated “nurse” in Gen 24:59.

and was buried

“and {her body} was buried {by Jacob} {in the ground}” or “They/Jacob buried her {body} {in the ground}”

below Bethel

“{in the valley} below/near {the town of} Bethel,” or “{at a place} south of {the town of} Bethel,” The town of Bethel was built on a hill, so the phrase “below Bethel” means that Deborah was buried near Bethel, in a valley or place that was lower in elevation than the town, and possibly to the south of it.

under the oak tree

“beside the/an oak tree” or “at the foot/base of an oak tree.” See how you translated a similar phrase (“under the terebinth/oak tree”) in verse 4. Many translations translate this phrase the same way in both places (“under an oak tree”), even though different Hebrew words are used for the type of tree. Also, for some languages it is more natural to put this phrase before the previous phrase and say, “at the base of an oak tree, below/near {the town of} Bethel.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So he called its name

“So he/they named the tree/place” or “That is why the/that place is known as”. The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) that people in general called the tree or place Allon Bacuth; or (2) that Jacob was the one who named the place. See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 31:38.

Allon Bacuth

“Allon Bacuth, {which means “oak tree of weeping/mourning.”}” or “Allon Bacuth, {which means “oak tree where people mourn.”}” If you include the meaning of this name in your translation text or in a footnote, make sure it fits with how you translated “oak tree” in the previous sentence. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 35:9

Then God appeared to Jacob again when he had come from Paddan Aram

“Now that Jacob had come/returned from {the land/region of} Paddan Aram, God appeared to him {at Bethel} again” or “Now that Jacob had come/returned {to Bethel} from {the land/region of} Paddan Aram, God appeared to him {there} again” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and he blessed him

“and blessed him” or “and showed his goodness/kindness toward him” or “God blessed him”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 35:10

and God said to him

“and said to him,” or “by saying to him,” What God says to Jacob in verses 10-12 is the blessing. So make sure your translation of “blessed” (verse 9) and “said” (verse 10) refers to the same event, not two separate events. See how you translated “blessed ... and said” in Gen 1:28. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Your name {is} Jacob

“{Although} your name {has been} Jacob,” Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like God was telling Jacob something he did not know.

Your name will not be called Jacob anymore

“that will no longer be your {only} name,” or “it will no longer be Jacob/that,” Notice that Jacob is referred to by both of his names in this chapter (“Jacob” in verses 11-20, 22-29; “Israel” in verses 10 and 21). You could put that information in a footnote. Also see how you translated this clause in Gen 32:28, and see the note about Jacob’s names there.

but Israel will be your name

“Rather, your name will {also} be Israel!” or “Rather, you will {also} have the name Israel!” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

So he called his name Israel

“So {once again} God gave Jacob the name Israel.” This was not the first time God had given Jacob the name Israel (See: Gen 32:28). To make that clear, you could make “once again” explicit here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 35:11

Then God said to him

"Then God {also} said to him/Jacob," or "Then God {also} {blessed him/Jacob by} saying," or "God continued {blessing him/Jacob by} saying to him," In verse 11, God continues the blessing that he started in verse 10, perhaps after a pause. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am} God Almighty

"I {am} Almighty God." or "I {am} God {who is} all-powerful." See how you translated the title "God Almighty" in Gen 17:1 and 28:3.

Be fruitful

"Have many children". Consider again how you translated "Be fruitful and multiply" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 35:11. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

and multiply

"and increase {in number}." or "so that you {and your descendants} become {very} numerous/many."

A nation and a community of nations will be from you

"{Your descendants will become} a {large} people/ethnic group. In fact, many people/ethnic groups will come/descend from you," or "Your descendants will become many people/ethnic groups," Compare how you translated a similar phrase ("a multitude of nations") in Gen 17:4-5 and another similar phrase ("a community of peoples") in Gen 28:3.

and kings will come from your loins

"and kings will come/descend from you." or "and some of your descendants will be kings." The phrase "come from your loins" is an idiom that refers to having children, grandchildren and other descendants. Consider whether you have a similar idiom in your language. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 35:12

And the land that I gave to Abraham and to Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you

“{Besides that,} the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I {also} give to you and your descendants {who live} after you.” or “Also, I am giving to you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac, and I will {also} give it to your descendants {who live} after you.”

Genesis 35:13

Then God went up from him at the place where he spoke with him

“Then God left Jacob there where he had been speaking/talking to him.” or “After God finished talking to Jacob, he left him there and went up {to heaven}.” See how you translated “went up from” in Gen 17:22. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 35:14

Then Jacob set up a pillar

“Then Jacob set/stood a {large} stone up {on its end}” or “Then Jacob took/chose a {large} stone {that was there} and set/stood it up {on its end}”. See how you translated a similar passage in Gen 28:18 about Jacob setting up a memorial stone pillar.

at the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone

“at the place where God had spoken/talked to him, to mark the place {as special}.” or “as a memorial stone to remember the place where God had spoken/talked to him.”

and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it

“Then he poured some wine and some {olive} oil on the stone pillar/marker {to thank God and dedicate the place to him}.” A drink offering was probably wine that Jacob poured on the stone as a sacrifice to God, to worship and thank him. See how you translated “poured oil on ...” in Gen 28:18. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 35:15

And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him Bethel

“Then Jacob called/named that place Bethel, {which means “house of God,”} because God had spoken/talked to him there.” or “Since God had spoken/talked to Jacob at that place, Jacob named it Bethel, {which means “God’s house.”}” See how you translated “called the name of that place Bethel” in Gen 28:19.

Genesis 35:16

Then they set out from Bethel

"Then they left {the town of} Bethel" or "Later Jacob and his family moved on from {the town of} Bethel". Be consistent here with how you spelled "Bethel" throughout the book of Genesis and whether you refer to it as a town or a city. See Gen 12:8; 13:3; 28:19; 31:13; 35:1, 3, 7, 15, 16.

and there was still a distance of land to come to Ephrath

"and started {heading} toward {the town of} Ephrath. But while they were still a distance away from there," or "and headed for {the town of} Ephrath. While they were still some distance from there," The phrase "a distance of land" is very general, but your translation should not make it sound like the distance was too far, because Rachel's grave is about two kilometers (one mile) from Ephrath (Bethlehem).

Then Rachel started giving birth

"{Jacob's/his wife} Rachel, {who was pregnant,} began to have labor/childbirth pains," or "Rachel went into labor,"

but was having great difficulty while she was giving birth

"but she was having a very difficult time delivering the baby." or "but she was experiencing great difficulty."

Genesis 35:17

And it happened when she was in hard labor

“Then when her labor pain was at its worst,” or “Then when she was at the most difficult/painful point/time in her labor,” or “Then when her labor/childbirth pains were the most severe,” The phrase “hard labor” refers to when childbirth contractions are close together and very painful, often right before a baby is born.

then the midwife said to her

“the midwife told her,” or “{the baby was born and} the midwife/woman who was helping her deliver exclaimed to her,”

Do not be afraid

“Do not worry/despair!”

because this {is} also a son for you

“You {now} have another son/boy!” or “You {just} gave birth to another son/boy!”

Genesis 35:18

Then it happened as her soul was leaving {her}—for she was dying

“But Rachel was dying, and as her soul/spirit was leaving her body,” or “But {in fact/reality,} Rachel was about to die, and just/right before her soul/spirit left her,” Some translations use an idiom here, for example, “as she was taking her last breath” or “as her life was slipping/fading away”, but it is best to translate this in a way that preserves the biblical teaching that at death the soul or spirit leaves the body.

then she called his name Ben-oni

“she named her baby {boy} Benoni, {which means “son of my sorrow/trouble.”}” The meaning of this name could imply that the child caused Rachel’s death. In the Hebrew text this name is two words connected with a dash (“Ben-oni”). Many translations write it that way or as one word (“Benoni”), and a few translations write it as “Ben Oni.” Any of these spellings is fine. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

but his father

“But {later,} his father {Jacob}”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that this phrase refers to Jacob. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

called him Benjamin

“named him Benjamin {instead}.” or “changed his name to Benjamin, {which means “son of my right hand.”}” The phrase “son of my right hand” is an idiom that means “favored son” or “son of strength.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 35:19

So Rachel died and was buried

“After Rachel died, her body was buried {by Jacob}” or “After Rachel died, they/Jacob buried her {body}”. See how you translated “was buried” in verse 8. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

on the way to Ephrath

“beside/near the road {that goes} to {the town of} Ephrath,”

which {is} Bethlehem

“which {is also called/named} Bethlehem.” or “which {also has the name} Bethlehem.” or “that {is}, Bethlehem.” See how you translated a similar phrase (“which is Bethel”) in verse 6.

Genesis 35:20

And Jacob set up a pillar

“Jacob set/stood a {large} stone up {on its end}”. See how you translated this clause in verse 14. Also consider again how you translated “set up” and “pillar” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 28:18, 22; 31:13, 45, 51, 52; 35:14, 20.

over her grave

“over/on her burial place {to mark/show where it was}.” or “to mark/show {where} her grave/tomb {was}.” or “to mark the place where they/he had buried her body.”

that {is} the pillar of Rachel’s grave

“{In fact,} that {same} pillar/stone still marks Rachel’s/her grave/tomb”

to this day

“to/in the present day.” or “today/now.” The phrase “to this day” refers to the time when the author (Moses) was living. Even in modern times, Rachel’s grave is still marked beside the road about eight kilometers (five miles) south of Jerusalem and two kilometers (one mile) north of Bethlehem.

Genesis 35:21

Then Israel set out

“Then Israel {that is, Jacob,} {and his family} moved on {from there}” or “Then Israel {and his family} started traveling again”. Make sure it is clear in your translation or in a footnote that “Israel” (verses 21-22) and “Jacob” (verses 20, 22) refer to the same person, not two different people.

and pitched his tents

“and set/put up his/their tents”

beyond

“on the other/south side of”. This phrase reflects the perspective of Jacob, who was traveling south.

Migdal Eder

“the tower of Eder.” or “Eder Tower.” Many translations transliterate “Migdal Eder” (like most other names). Many others translate the meaning of “Migdal” as “the tower” and transliterate “Eder.” A few translate the meaning of the entire name as “the Tower of the Flock.” This was apparently a place near Bethlehem where sheep were raised (Micah 4:8); shepherds may have watched over their flocks from the tower. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1635)**)

Genesis 35:22

And it happened while Israel was living

“While Israel {and his family} were {still} living/staying” or “During the time that they were living/staying”

in that land

“in that area/region,” or “there,”

then Reuben went and lay with

“{his/Israel's son} Reuben slept with” or “{his/Israel's son} Reuben committed adultery with” or “{his/Israel's son} Reuben had {physical/sexual} relations with”. Translate this idiom in a way that will not offend or embarrass people, especially when read aloud in public. See how you translated “lain with” in Gen 26:10. (See: **Euphemism (p. 1619)**)

Bilhah, the concubine of his father

“his father's concubine/servant-wife Bilhah,”

and Israel heard

“and/but Israel found out {about it}.” or “and Israel was told/informed {by someone} {about it}.” See how you translated “heard” in Gen 34:5, 7.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve

“{After Benjamin was born,} Jacob's sons were twelve {in number}.” or “{With/After the birth of Benjamin,} Jacob {now} had {a total of} twelve sons.”

Genesis 35:23

The sons of Leah {were}

“The sons {he had} with {his wife} Leah {were}” or “{These are} {the names of} the sons {he had} with {his wife} Leah.” Throughout verses 23-26, many translations have a colon (:) instead of “{were}”. Do what is best in your language. See what you did in chapter 10.

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob

“Reuben, {who was} Jacob’s/his firstborn/oldest {child},”

then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun

“then Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.”

Genesis 35:24

The sons of Rachel {were} Joseph and Benjamin

"The sons {he/Jacob had} with Rachel {were} Joseph and Benjamin." or "These are the names of the sons {that he/Jacob had} with {his wife} Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin."

Genesis 35:25

And the sons of Bilhah, the maidservant of Rachel, {were} Dan and Naphtali

“The sons {he/Jacob had} with Rachel’s servant Bilhah {were} Dan and Naphtali.” or “These are {the names of} the sons {that he/Jacob had} with Bilhah, Rachel’s servant: Dan and Naphtali.”

Genesis 35:26

And the sons of Zilpah, the maidservant of Leah, {were} Gad and Asher

“And the sons {he/Jacob had} with Leah’s servant Zilpah {were} Gad and Asher.” or “These are {the names of} the sons {that he/Jacob had} with Leah’s servant Zilpah: Gad and Asher.” Consider again how you translated “maidservant” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:16, 16:1-3, 5-6, 8; 20:14; 24:35; 25:12; 29:24, 29; 30:4, 7, 9-10, 12, 18, 43; 32:5, 22; 33:1-2, 6; 35:25-26. It may be necessary to translate this word in slightly different ways, depending on the context. Compare that to how you translated a different Hebrew word that has a similar meaning (“slave/servant woman”); see Gen 31:33 for a list of where this word occurs in Genesis. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Those {are} the sons of Jacob who were born to him

“{All} those {are/were} the sons Jacob had” or “Those {are/were} {all} Jacob’s sons that he had”

in Paddan Aram

“{starting from the time that he lived} in {the region of} Paddan Aram.” Jacob started having children during the time he was living with Laban in Paddan Aram, but his last son Benjamin was not born until after they had left there (verse 18). Translate this in a way that allows for that.

Genesis 35:27

Then Jacob came to Isaac his father

“Then Jacob came/went {home} to his father Isaac {who was living}” or “Then Jacob continued traveling and came to where his father Isaac was {living}”

in Mamre

“in {the city of} Mamre,” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Mamre” in Gen 23:17, 19. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Kiriath Arba, which {is} Hebron

“{which is also/now called} Kiriath Arba, that {is}, Hebron,” or “which {is also known as} Kiriath Arba or Hebron,” or “which {also has the name} Kiriath Arba or Hebron,” See how you translated Gen 23:2, which says that Kiriath Arba (where Sarah died) was also known as Hebron.

where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned

“where Abraham and Isaac {and their families} had lived/stayed for a while {as foreigners/outsideers}.” or “That is where Isaac {and his family} had been living/staying for a while {as foreigners/outsideers} and where {his father} Abraham had also lived/stayed for a while.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 35:28

And the days of Isaac were 180 years

“Isaac lived to be 180 years old.” See how you translated “the days of” in Gen 5:4-31 and 11:32.

Genesis 35:29

Then Isaac exhaled and died

"Then Isaac/he breathed out {for the last time} and died," or "Then he breathed/took his last/final breath and died," See how you translated "exhaled" in Gen 25:8 and 17. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and he was gathered to

"and he was gathered/taken {by God} to be with" or "and {God} took his spirit to be with" or "and he joined". See how you translated this phrase in Gen 25:8 and 17.

his people

"his ancestors/relatives {who had already died}." or "his ancestors/relatives {who had gone/died before him}." or "his {deceased} ancestors/relatives."

old and full of days

"after living a long, full life." or "{He was} very old and had lived a long, full life." For some languages it is more natural to put this phrase earlier in this sentence and say, "Then, after living a long, full life, he breathed/took his last breath, died and joined his ancestors/relatives {who had died before him}." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And Esau and Jacob, his sons, buried him

"Then his sons Esau and Jacob buried his body." See how you translated "his sons ... buried him" in Gen 25:9.

Genesis 36

Genesis 36:1

And these {are} the generations of Esau

“Now this is the genealogy/family-line of Esau,” or “These/Here are the descendants of Esau,” or “Here {is} the/a record/history about the descendants/family of Esau,” See how you translated “the generations of” in 25:12, 19.

who {is} Edom

“who {was also called} Edom.” or “that is, Edom.” or “whose {name} was {also} Edom.” The name Edom means “red” and is the nickname that Esau got for trading his birthright to Jacob for some reddish-colored stew (Genesis 25:29-34). The region of Edom and the Edomites were named after Esau, which is probably why this chapter repeatedly mentions that Esau is Edom. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 36:2

Esau had taken his wives from the daughters of Canaan

“Esau had chosen {two of his} wives from {among} the Canaanite women:” or “Esau had married {two} Canaanite women” or “Esau had married {two} women who were descendants of Canaan”. Only the first two wives mentioned in this chapter were Canaanites; see the comment about Basemath at verse 3. The Canaanites were the descendants of Noah’s grandson Canaan (Ham’s son) and included the Hittites and Hivites (verse 2; Genesis 10:15-18) and several other people groups. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Adah

“{whose names were} Adah,” or “{Their names were} Adah,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the daughter of Elon the Hittite

“{who was} the daughter of a Hittite {man} named Elon,” or “whose father was Elon, {who was} a descendant of Heth,” or “the daughter of {a man named} Elon, {who was} a member of the Heth/Hittite people {group},” Make sure your translation does not sound like Elon was the only Hittite. See how you translated “Hittites” in Gen 27:46. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and Oholibamah

“and {also} Oholibamah,” or “as well as Oholibamah,” Notice that the names of Esau’s two Canaanite wives here are different from the names of his wives mentioned in Gen 26:34. It could be that they each had two names, or these may be different wives that he married later.

the daughter of Anah {and} the {grand}daughter of

“{who was} Anah’s daughter {and} the {grand}daughter of” or “whose father was Anah and whose grandfather was”. Notice that Elon, Anah, and Zibeon are the names of men here, not women. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Zibeon the Hivite

“a Hivite named Zibeon.” or “Zibeon {who was} a descendant of Hivi.” or “Zibeon {who was} a {member of the} Hivi/Hivite people {group}.” Make sure that your translation of this phrase does not sound like Zibeon was the only Hivite. Consider again how you translated “Hivites” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:17; 34:2; 36:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 36:3

and Basemath

"{Esau also married} Basemath," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Since this Basemath was a daughter of Ishmael (who was a descendant of Noah's son Shem), she was not a Canaanite, in contrast to Esau's first two wives (verse 2). She was also known as Mahalath (Gen 28:9); you could include some of that information in a footnote. Be consistent here with how you spelled Basemath (a different woman with the same name) in Gen 26:34.

the daughter of Ishmael {and} the sister of Nebaioth

"{who was} Ishmael's daughter {and} Nebaioth's {younger} sister." or "whose father was Ishmael and whose {older} brother was Nebaioth." Since Nebaioth was Ishmael's oldest child (Gen 25:13), Basemath (Mahalath) was his younger sister, probably from the same mother. Use a kinship term here in your language that fits with those facts. See how you translated "the sister of Nebaioth" in Gen 28:9. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

Genesis 36:4

And Adah bore Eliphaz for Esau

"{Esau's wife} Adah bore/had {a son} for/with him {named} Eliphaz," or "Adah had {a son} for/with Esau {whom they named} Eliphaz,"

and Basemath bore Reuel

"and/while {his wife} Basemath bore/had {a son named} Reuel," or "{His/Esau's wife} Basemath had {a son they named} Reuel," Consider whether or not it is best in your language to break this long sentence into two or more shorter sentences.

Genesis 36:5

and Oholibamah bore

“and {his/Esau’s wife} Oholibamah bore/had” or “Oholibamah had”

Jeush and Jalam and Korah

“{sons named} Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.” or “{sons whom they named} Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.”

Those {were} the sons of Esau who were born for him in the land of Canaan

“Those {were} Esau’s sons that his wives bore/had for/with him {while he and his family were living} in the land/region of Canaan.” or “{All} those {were} Esau’s sons whom he and his wives had {while they lived} in the land/region of Canaan.”

Genesis 36:6

Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters

“Later Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters,”

and all the people of his house

“and all the {other} members of his household,” This phrase refers to other relatives (besides Esau’s wife and children), as well as servants or slaves who lived with him.

and his livestock and all his animal{s} and all his possession{s}

“as well as his livestock and all {the rest of} his animals and all the {other} possessions/belongings”

that he had acquired in the land of Canaan

“that he had gotten/accumulated {while they lived} in the land/region of Canaan,” See how you translated “acquired” and “land of Canaan” in Gen 12:5 and 31:18.

and he went to a land from the presence of Jacob his brother

“and he moved to an area/region {that was} away from his brother Jacob.” or “and he moved/traveled to a {different} region {and settled there,} away from where his brother Jacob was living.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause at the beginning of this verse and say, “Then/Later Esau moved to a land {that was} away from his brother Jacob. He took {with him} his wives ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:7

because

"{He/Esau did that} because" or "The reason {he/Esau moved away} is that"

their possession{s} were {too} great for them to remain together

"he and Jacob {both} owned so many possessions/livestock that they could no longer live near each other." or "they {both} owned so many livestock/animals that they could not live together {in the same area/region}." The phrase "their possessions" is general, but here it refers primarily to livestock. Make sure your translation of this phrase refers to both Esau and Jacob's livestock, not just Esau's. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

the land of their sojournings

"The land where they were staying/living". See how you translated Gen 13:6, which is similar in content to this verse.

and & was not able to support them because of their livestock

"was {just} not big enough to support/feed them {all} because they owned/had so many livestock/animals." or "did not have enough grazing areas {or water} to support/feed all the livestock/animals that both families owned/had." For some languages it is necessary to switch the order of verses 6 and 7, and say, "After a while, Esau and Jacob had so many animals and other possessions that the land was not able to support both their families. So Esau took his wives ..." If you do this in your translation, you should label these verses as "6-7". (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1721)**)

Genesis 36:8

So Esau settled

“That is why/how Esau {and his family}” or “That is the reason Esau {took his family and}”

in the mountains of Seir

“moved to the hill-country in {the land/region of} Seir.” or “went to live in the Seir Mountains.” or “ended up living in the Seir Mountains.” Esau had already been living in the region of Seir (Genesis 32:3, 33:16). Here he moves to the part of that region that had mountains. To make that clear, you could put that information in a footnote.

Esau

“{That is the record/history about} Esau,”

who {is} Edom

“that {is}, Edom.” or “who {was also known as} Edom.” or “who {was also called} Edom.” Some translations put this phrase earlier in this verse and say, “So Esau, that {is}, Edom, moved {with his family} to the mountains of Seir {and settled there}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:9

Now these {are} the generations of Esau

“What follows {is} {more of} the history of Esau,” or “This/Here {is} a {more detailed} genealogy/record of/about the descendants of Esau,” Consider again how you translated “generations” in the book of Genesis when it is followed by a genealogy (list of names). See Gen 5:1, 10:1, 11:10, 25:12, 36:9. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

the father of the Edomites

“{who was} the ancestor of the Edomites” or “{who was} the ancestor of the Edom people {group}”

in the mountains of Seir

“{who live} in the Seir Mountains/Hills.” or “{who live} in the hill-country/mountains of Seir.” Consider again how you translated “mountains” or “hill country” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:30; 12:8; 14:6, 10; 19:17, 19, 30; 22:2, 14; 31:21, 23, 25, 54; 36:8-9, and see the note about this at 10:30. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

Genesis 36:10

These {are} the names of the sons of Esau

"These {were} the names of {two of} Esau's sons:" or "{Two of} Esau's sons {were}". Only two of Esau's many sons are listed in verse 10.

Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah

"Eliphaz, {who was} the son of his wife Adah," or "Eliphaz, whom he/Esau had with his wife Adah," Be consistent here with how you spelled "Eliphaz" and "Adah" in verse 4.

and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath

"and Reuel, {who was} the son of his wife Basemath." or "and Reuel, whom he/Esau had with his wife Basemath." See how you spelled "Basemath" and "Reuel" in verse 4.

Genesis 36:11

And the sons of Eliphaz were

“The sons of Eliphaz {and his wife} were” or “Eliphaz {and his wife} had sons {they named}”

Teman, Omar, Zepho and Gatam and Kenaz

“Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.”

Genesis 36:12

And Timna was a concubine for Esau's son Eliphaz, and she bore Amalek for Eliphaz

"Eliphaz {also} had a concubine/servant-wife {named} Timna, and she had {a son} with him {named} Amalek." or "Eliphaz and his concubine/servant-wife Timna had {a son they named} Amalek." See how you translated "concubine" in Gen 22:24, 25:6; 35:22.

Those {were} the grandsons of

"{All} those {sons of Eliphaz} {were} grandsons of" or "Eliphaz's sons {were} {all} grandsons of"

Adah, the wife of Esau

"Esau's wife Adah." or "{Esau and} his wife Adah." Make sure it is clear in your translation that Adah's grandsons were also Esau's grandsons. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 36:13

And these {were} the sons of Reuel

"{The names of} Reuel's sons {were}" or "The sons of Reuel were named" or "Reuel {and his wife} had these sons:"

Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah

"Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah."

Those were the grandsons of

"They were the grandsons of" or "Those {sons of Reuel} were grandsons of"

Basemath, the wife of Esau

"Esau's wife Basemath." or "{Esau and} his wife Basemath." Make sure it is clear in your translation that Basemath's grandsons were also Esau's grandsons. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 12. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 36:14

And these were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah

"These/Here are the sons that Esau had with his wife Oholibamah,"

the daughter of Anah {and} the {grand}daughter of Zibeon

"{who was} Anah's daughter {and} Zibeon's granddaughter:" or "whose father was Anah and whose grandfather was Zibeon:" See how you translated these phrases in verse 2.

and she bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah for Esau

"{Their sons' names were} Jeush, Jalam, and Korah." or "She/They had sons {whom they named} Jeush, Jalam, and Korah." For some languages it is clearer or more natural to change the order of clauses in this sentence and say, "Esau and his wife Oholibamah had sons {whom they named} Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. {Oholibamah was} the daughter of Anah {and} the granddaughter of Zibeon." or "The sons that Oholibamah had with Esau were Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. {She was} the daughter of ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

Genesis 36:15

These {were

“Here {is} {a record/list of}” or “The following {are/were}”

the chiefs of the sons of Esau

“Esau’s descendants/grandsons {who became} chiefs:” or “{the names of} the clan/tribal leaders of/for Esau’s descendants:”

The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau

“The sons of Esau’s/his firstborn/oldest {son} Eliphaz”

were} Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz

“who became chiefs {were} Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,” or “who became clan/tribal leaders {were} Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,”

Genesis 36:16

Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, Chief Amalek

“Korah, Gatam, and Amalek.” Make sure you are consistent in whether or not you use the title “Chief” in verses 15-16.

Those {were} the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom

“Those/They {were/are} the chiefs {who descended} from Eliphaz {and lived} in the land/region of/called Edom.” or “{All} those sons of Eliphaz were clan/tribal leaders {who lived} in the land/region of Edom.” Be consistent with how you spelled “Eliphaz” throughout this chapter; see verses 4, 10-12, 15-16.

Those {were} the grandsons of

“They {were} the grandsons of” or “They {were} {all} grandsons of”

Adah

“{Esau’s wife} Adah.” or “Adah {and Esau}.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Adah’s grandsons were also Esau’s grandsons. Also, be consistent with how you spelled “Adah” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:19-20, 23; 36:2, 4, 10, 12, 16.

Genesis 36:17

And these {were} the sons of Reuel, the son of Esau: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, Chief Mizzah

"{This/Here is a record/list of} the sons of Esau's son Reuel {who became} chiefs: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah." or "The sons of Esau's son Reuel {who became} clan/tribal leaders {were} Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah."

Those {were} the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom

"They {were} the chiefs {who descended} from Reuel {and lived} in the land/region of/called Edom." or "{All} those sons of Reuel {were} clan/tribal leaders {who lived} in the land/region of Edom." See how you translated a similar clause in verse 16. Also be consistent with how you spelled "Reuel" throughout this chapter; see verses 4, 10, 13, 17.

Those {were} the grandsons of

"They {were} {all} grandsons of" or "{All} those {sons of Reuel} {were} grandsons of". See how you translated this phrase in verses 12, 13 and 16.

Basemath, the wife of Esau

"Esau's wife Basemath." or "{Esau and} his wife Basemath." See how translated this phrase in verse 13 and a similar phrase in verse 12. Also be consistent with how you spelled "Basemath" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 26:34-35; 36:3-4, 10, 13, 17.

Genesis 36:18

And these {were} the sons of Oholibamah, the wife of Esau: Chief Jeush, Chief Jalam, Chief Korah

"{This/Here is a record/list of} the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah who became chiefs: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah." or
"The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah who became clan/tribal leaders {were} Jeush, Jalam, and Korah."

Those {were} the chiefs of Esau's wife Oholibamah

"They {were} the chiefs {who descended} from {Esau and} his wife Oholibamah," or "They {were} the clan/tribal leaders ..."

the daughter of Anah

"{who was} Anah's daughter."

Genesis 36:19

Those {were} the sons of Esau, and those {were} their chiefs

“Those {were} Esau’s descendants, and they {were} the chiefs of/over the Edomites.” or “{All} those {chiefs} {were} Esau’s descendants, and they {were} the leaders of their own family groups.”

He {is} Edom

“Esau {was also known as} Edom.” or “Esau {was also called} Edom.” or “That {is the record/history about} Edom.” Some translations put this phrase earlier in this verse and say, “{All} those {chiefs} were the descendants of Esau, that {is}, Edom, and each one led his own family group.” Do what is best in your language. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 8. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:20

These {were} the sons of Seir the Horite who were inhabiting the land

“Here is {a record/list of} the descendants of Seir the Horite who were {also} living in that land:” or “The sons/ descendants of Seir the Horite {who} were {also} living in that land {were}”. The name “Horites” is an alternate name for the Hivites (verse 2). Also, this genealogy is mentioned here because Seir was the ancestor of Esau’s Canaanite wife Oholibamah (verse 25) and the Seir mountains where Esau was living (verse 8) were probably named after Seir. You could put some of that information in a footnote. See how you translated “Horites” in Gen 14:6.

Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah

“Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,”

Genesis 36:21

and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan

“Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.”

Those {were} the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir

“Those descendants of Seir {were/became} the chiefs of/over the Horites” or “They were the descendants of Seir who became clan/tribal leaders for the Horites”. See how you translated the names of people groups in verses 2.

in the land of Edom

“{who were living} in the land/region of Edom.”

Genesis 36:22

And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam

“Lotan’s sons were Hori and Heman” or “{The names of} Lotan’s sons were Hori and Hemam”. Some translations spell the name “Hemam” as “Heman” or “Homam.” You could use any of these spellings in your translation.

and the sister of Lotan {was} Timna

“and {the name of} his sister {was} Timna.” or “Lotan’s sister {was} Timna.” or “Lotan was also Timna’s brother.” Timna became a concubine of Esau’s son Eliphaz (verse 12). This genealogy (verses 20-22) also shows that she was the daughter of Chief Seir (since her brother Lotan was the son of Chief Seir). You could put some of that information in a footnote. Also, according to Jewish history outside the Bible, Timna was Lotan’s younger sister. If your language has a special term for “younger sister” or “older brother,” you could use one of those here. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

Genesis 36:23

And these {were} the sons of Shobal

"These {were} Shobal's sons:" or "Shobal's sons {were}" or "{The names of} Shobal's sons {were}"

Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam

"Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam."

Genesis 36:24

And these {were} the sons of Zibeon: both Aiah and Anah

"{The names of} Zibeon's sons {were} Aiah and Anah."

He {is} Anah who found

"He/This {is} {the same} Anah who found/discovered" or "Anah {is} the one who found/discovered"

the hot springs

"{some} hot springs" or "springs/water". The term used here in the Hebrew text occurs only once in the Bible and its meaning is not certain. Most translations have either "hot springs" or "water."

in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys for Zibeon his father

"while/when he was {out} in the wilderness/desert grazing his father's donkeys." or "when/while he was pasturing/ grazing his father's donkeys out in the wilderness/desert." See how you translated "pasture" in Gen 29:7. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:25

And these {were} the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah

“Anah’s children {were} {his son} Dishon and his daughter Oholibamah.”

Genesis 36:26

And these {were} the sons of Dishon

"These {were} Dishon's sons:" or "Dishon's sons {were}" or "{The names of} Dishon's sons were"

Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Keran

"Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran." The Hebrew name "Keran" can also be spelled "Cheran." Each of these spellings is found in many translations. Be consistent here with how you spelled "Dishon" in verse 21.

Genesis 36:27

These {were} the sons of Ezer: Bilhan and Zaavan and Akan

"{The names of} Ezer's sons {were} Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan." Be consistent here with how you spelled "Ezer" in verses 20-21.

Genesis 36:28

These {were} the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran

“Dishan’s sons {were} Uz and Aran.”

Genesis 36:29

These {were} the chiefs of the Horites

“The chiefs/leaders of/over the Horite clans/tribes {were}” or “The Horites who became chiefs {were}”

Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah

“Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Lotan” and “Shobal” in verse 20, how you spelled “Zibeon” in verses 2, 14, 20, 24, 29, and how you spelled “Anah” in verses 2, 14, 18, 20, 24-25, 29.

Genesis 36:30

Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, Chief Dishan

“Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Dishon” in verses 21, 25-26, how you spelled “Ezer” in verses 21, 27, 30, and how you spelled “Dishan” in verses 21, 28, 30.

Those {were} the chiefs of the Horites, according to their clans

“Those {were} the Horite chiefs. They had/led their own family groups” or “Those {were} the clan/tribal leaders of/for the Horites. They had/led their own clans/tribes”. Be consistent with how you translated “Horites” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:6; 36:20-21, 29-30.

in the land of Seir

“{and lived} in the land/region of Seir.” or “{who/which were living} in the land/region of Seir.” Be consistent with how you spelled “Seir” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:6; 32:3; 33:14, 16; 36:8-9, 20-21, 30.

Genesis 36:31

And these {were} the kings

“These {are} {the names of} the kings” or “This/Here {is} {a record/history about} the kings”. See how you translated “kings” in Gen 17:6 and 35:11. Be sure to distinguish “kings” (verses 31-39) from “chiefs” (verses 15-19, 21, 28, 40-43) in your translation of this chapter.

who reigned in the land of Edom

“who reigned/ruled over {the people of/in} the land/region of Edom”

before a king reigned for the sons of Israel

“before there were any kings reigning/ruling over the descendants/people of Israel.” or “before the Israelites had their own king.” or “during the time {period} when the Israelites did not yet have their own king.” See how you translated “the sons of Israel” in Gen 32:3.

Genesis 36:32

And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom

“Bela, {who was} the son of Beor, was the {first} king to rule over {the people of} {the land/region of} Edom.” or “The {first} king to rule/reign over {the people of} {the land/region of} Edom was Bela, the son of Beor.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and the name of his city {was} Dinhabah

“The name of his hometown {that he ruled from} {was} Dinhabah.” or “His {capital} city {that he ruled from} {was} Dinhabah.” Dinhabah was probably King Bela’s hometown and his capital city that he ruled the land of Edom from.

Genesis 36:33

Then Bela died

“When {King} Bela died,”

and Jobab the son of Zerah from Bozrah reigned in his place

“Jobab, {who was} the son of Zerah from {the city of} Bozrah, took his/Bela’s place as king.” or “Jobab, {who was} the son of Zerah, replaced/succeeded him/Bela as king {and ruled} from {his hometown of} Bozrah.” The phrase “from Bozrah” probably means this was Jobab’s hometown, which he ruled from, much like the meaning of “his city” in verses 32, 35, and 39. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:34

Then Jobab died

“When {King} Jobab died,”

and Husham from the land of the Temanites reigned in his place

“Husham, {who was} from the land/region of the Teman/Temanite people {group}, took his/Jobab's place as king.”
or “Husham replaced/succeeded him/Jobab as king {and reigned/ruled} from {his hometown, which was in} the land/region where the Temanites lived.” King Husham may have been a descendant of Esau's grandson Teman (verse 11). You could put that information in a footnote. Also compare how you translated verse 33. (See:

Information Structure (p.1652))

Genesis 36:35

Then Husham died

"When {King} Husham died,"

Hadad the son of Bedad

"Hadad, {who was} the son of Bedad,"

and & reigned in his place

"took his/Husham's place as king." or "replaced/succeeded him/Husham as king."

who struck the Midianites

"{King Hadad is the one} who defeated the Midianites {in battle/war}". See how you translated the idiom "struck" in Gen 14:5, 7. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

in the field of Moab

"in a field {in the region/land} of Moab." or "in the region/land/country of Moab." Moab was a large region located to the east of the Dead Sea. This battle probably took place in the countryside or an unpopulated area (a "field") within this region.

And the name of his city {was} Avith

"The name of his/Hadad's hometown {that he ruled from} {was} Avith." or "His {capital} city {that he ruled from} {was} Avith." See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 32.

Genesis 36:36

Then Hadad died

“When {King} Hadad died,”

and Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place

“Samlah, {who was} from {the city of} Masrekah, took his/Hadad’s place as king.” or “Samlah replaced/succeeded him/Hadad as king {and ruled} from {his hometown of} Masrekah.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:37

Then Samlah died

“When {King} Samlah died,”

and Shaul from Rehoboth {on} the river reigned in his place

“Shaul {who was} from {the city of} Rehoboth {on/beside} the River {Euphrates} took his/Samlah’s place as king.” or
“Shaul replaced/succeeded him/Samlah as king {and ruled} from {his hometown of} Rehoboth, which was {beside} the {Euphrates} River.” See how you translated similar sentences in verses 33, 34 and 36. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 36:38

Then Shaul died, and Baal-Hanan the son of Acbor reigned in his place

“When {King} Shaul died, Baal-Hanan, {who was} the son of Acbor, took his place as king.” or “... replaced/succeeded him as king.”

Genesis 36:39

Then Baal-Hanan the son of Acbor died, and Hadar reigned

“When {King} Baal-Hanan died, Hadar”. Most translations follow the Hebrew text and have “Hadar” here. Some translations (and ancient versions such as SP, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate) have “Hadad” here instead, in order to spell this name the same way it is spelled in 1 Chronicles 1:50-51. However, that could cause confusion, because “Hadad” is also the name of a different king in verses 35-36 above. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and & reigned in his place

“took his place as king” or “replaced/succeeded him as king”. Consider again how you translated this phrase in verses 33-39.

and the name of his city {was} Pau

“and the name of his hometown {that he ruled from} {was} Pau.” or “His {capital} city {that he ruled from} {was} Pau.” Consider whether it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also see how you translated a similar clause in verses 32 and 35.

And the name of his wife {was} Mehetabel

“His wife’s name {was} Mehetabel,”

the daughter of Matred {and} the granddaughter of Me-Zahab

“{who was} the daughter of Matred {and} the granddaughter of Me-Zahab.” or “whose father was Matred {and} whose grandfather was Me-Zahab.” Notice that “Matred” and “Me-Zahab” are the names of men. See how you translated similar phrases in verses 2 and 14. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 36:40

And these {are} the names of

“Here {are} the names of” or “The following list of names includes”

the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans, according to their places, by their names

“{more of} the chiefs {who descended} from Esau. {These chiefs led} their own family groups in their own regions/territories, which were named after them:” or “{more of} the descendants of Esau who were clan/tribal leaders; the clans/tribes and the regions where they lived were named after them:” Notice that the chiefs listed below are different from those listed in the verses above, except for Kenaz and Teman (verse 15). Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to break up this long sentence into two shorter sentences. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Chief Timna, Chief Alvan, Chief Jetheth

“Timna, Alvan, Jetheth,” The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. (1) Most translations treat all the names in verses 40-43 as the names of chiefs (as in the ULT and UST of these verses). (2) However, some scholars think that all the names in verses 40-43 are the names of regions or clans and say, “{These are/were} {the names of} the clans/tribes {that descended} from Esau. Each clan/tribe lived {in the land of Edom} in its own region that was named after that clan/tribe. {The names of the clans/tribes} were Timna, Alvan ... Iram. Those were {the names of} the clans/tribes of the Edomites. Each of the clans/tribes lived in their own part of the land {of Edom} that they owned ...”

Genesis 36:41

Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon

“Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,” Make sure that the way you translate verses 41-43 fits with the interpretation you followed in verse 40.

Genesis 36:42

Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar

“Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,”

Genesis 36:43

Chief Magdiel, Chief Iram

“Magdiel, {and} Iram.” Make sure you are consistent in whether or not you use the title “Chief” in verses 40-43.

Those {were} the chiefs of

“Those {were} {the names of} {more of} the chiefs over/for” or “{All of} those {were} chiefs over” or “Those {were} {more of} the clan/tribal leaders of/over”. Consider again how you translated “chief” throughout this chapter; see verses 15-19, 21, 29-30, 40-43.

Edom

“the Edomites;” or “the Edom people {group};”

according to their dwellings

“they {all} led their own settlements” or “each of them led/ruled {their own clans/tribes} in the places where they lived”

in the land of their possession

“in the land/regions that they owned/controlled/inhabited.”

That {was} Esau

“That {was} {the record/history about} Esau,” or “This {concludes the record/history about} Esau,”

the father of the Edomites

“{who was} the ancestor of {all} the Edomites.” or “{who was} the ancestor of the Edom people {group}.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 9. Also compare how you translated the names of other people groups in this chapter, including “Hittite” and “Hivite” in verse 2; “Edomites” in verse 9; “Horite/Horites” in verses 20, 21, 29, 30; “Temanites” in verse 34; and “Midianites” in verse 35.

Genesis 37

Genesis 37:1

And Jacob lived

“Now Jacob was {still} living” or “Jacob continued to live”. Chapter 37 continues the history about Jacob that left off at the end of chapter 35. Begin this chapter in a way that is natural in your language. Make sure the way you translate “lived” allows for the fact that Jacob was already living in Canaan and had settled near the city of Hebron, where his father and grandfather had lived previously (Gen 35:27).

in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan

“in the land/region of Canaan where his father {Isaac} had lived for a while {as a foreigner/outsider}.” See how you translated “sojourned” in Gen 35:27 and “the land of Canaan” in Gen 35:6.

Genesis 37:2

These {are} the generations of Jacob

“This/Here is {more of} the record/history about Jacob and his descendants/family:” or “What follows tells {more} about Jacob and his descendants/family:” Consider again how you translated “These are the generations of” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 2:4; 6:9; 11:27; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2, where what follows is a narrative or history of events. Compare that to Gen 5:1; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12; 36:9, where what follows is more of a genealogy (list of names). It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

Joseph, a son of seventeen years

“{One day} {his} seventeen-year-old son Joseph” or “{Jacob’s/His son} Joseph, who was seventeen years old,” This verse may be referring to a single incident or it may be referring to what happened regularly.

was shepherding the flock{s}

“was taking care of the {family’s} flock{s} {of sheep and goats}” or “had the work/job of pasturing/tending the {family’s} flock{s} {of sheep and goats}”. See how you translated “flocks” in Gen 4:2.

with his brothers, and he {was} a young man with

“as an assistant/helper for his brothers {who were}” or “Joseph was helping his brothers {who were}”. As the youngest of these brothers, Joseph was their helper as they took care of their father’s flocks.

the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives

“the sons of his father’s {servant} wives Bilhah and Zilpah,” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Bilhah” in Gen 29:29 and “Zilpah” in 29:24.

and Joseph brought a bad report about them to their father

“and he told their/his father about the bad things they were doing.” or “and he gave bad/negative reports to their/his father about them.” The Hebrew text does not specify what Joseph’s brothers had done wrong, so neither should your translation. Also, make sure your translation of “their father” does not sound like the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah had a different father than Joseph had. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 37:3

Now Israel

“Now {Jacob, whose other name was} Israel,” or “Israel, {that is, Jacob,}” This verse introduces background information for the events that happen next. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language. Make sure it is clear in your translation or in a footnote that Jacob (verse 1) and Israel (verse 3) refer to the same person, not two separate people. For a note about this, see Gen 35:10. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

loved Joseph more than all of his sons

“loved Joseph more than any of his {other} sons”

because he {was} a son of his old age

“because he/Joseph was born to him when he was old.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “Now Joseph was born to Israel when he was old, so he/Israel loved him more than all {the rest} of his sons.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So he made a multicolored tunic for him

“So he/Israel/Jacob made a {special/beautiful} tunic/robe for him/Joseph that had many colors.” or “So he/Israel/Jacob made a {special} colorful tunic/robe for him/Joseph.” The meaning of the Hebrew text is not certain here. Many translations (including the Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate) say that the tunic or robe was “multicolored” or “colorful.” This “tunic” was probably full-length to the ankles and had long sleeves that reached to the hands. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 37:4

And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his brothers

“Joseph’s brothers saw/realized that their father loved him/Joseph more than any of {the rest of} his sons, so” or
“When Joseph’s brothers saw/realized that their father loved him/Joseph more than the rest of them,”

so they hated him and were not able to speak to him peaceably

“they hated/despised him/Joseph so much that they could/would not speak/talk to him kindly/nicely.” or “... they refused to speak/talk to him in a friendly/kind manner/way.” or “... they always spoke unkindly/disrespectfully to him.” Make sure it is clear here in your translation that the brothers hated Joseph, not their father. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 37:5

Then Joseph dreamed a dream

“Then {one night} Joseph had a dream” or “{One night} Joseph had a dream”

and told it to his brothers

“and he told his brothers about it.” or “{The next day} he told his brothers what he dreamed”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and they continued to hate him even more

“and they became even more hateful toward him.” or “That made them hate/despise him even more {than before}.”

Genesis 37:6

And he said to them

“He told them,” or “{This is what} he told them:”

Please hear this dream that I dreamed

“Please listen to {me tell about} this dream that I had:” or “I had a dream {that I want to tell you about}. Please listen to {me tell} it.”

Genesis 37:7

And behold

"{In it} I saw" or "{In my dream} I saw"

we were binding sheaves in the middle of a field

"that we {all} were out in the middle of a field {cutting stalks of grain/wheat and} tying the stalks into sheaves/bundles." or "us {working together} out in a field {cutting and} tying sheaves/bundles {of grain/wheat stalks}." A sheaf of grain is a bunch of grain stalks that have been cut and tied together in a bundle, with the heads of grain at the top. Wheat and barley were the grains that were common in this region at that time, not corn or oats.

and behold

"Then suddenly". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

my sheaf

"my sheaf/bundle {of grain/wheat}" or "the sheaf/bundle that I had made"

got up and also stood upright

"stood up straight." or "stood up on its end"

וַיֵּן הַ

"Then behold/amazingly," or "Then I saw that"

your sheaves

"your sheaves/bundles {of grain/wheat}" or "the sheaves/bundles that you had made"

gathered around

"gathered/stood around {my sheaf/bundle}" or "stood in a circle around {my sheaf/bundle}"

and bowed down to my sheaf

"and bowed down {to the ground} to/before my sheaf/bundle {to show respect/submission}." or "and bowed {respectfully} to my sheaf/bundle." or "and bowed down in front of it {in respect}." (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 37:8

Then his brothers said to him

“His brothers responded to him,” or “His brothers retorted {angrily},”

Will & really

“Do you really expect to” or “Certainly you don’t think you will” or “You will never”. The brothers use two rhetorical questions in this verse to express their disagreement with Joseph and to emphasize that they are not happy with him. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

you & reign over us

“reign over us!” or “be our king!” For languages that mark inclusive and exclusive pronouns, “us” excludes Joseph in this sentence. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Will you really rule over us

“You will never rule over us!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And they continued to hate him even more

“So they hated/despised him even more {strongly/intensely} {than they did before}”. Consider again how you translated “hate” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 24:60; 26:27; 29:31, 33; 37:4-5, 8. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

because of his dreams and because of his words

“for his dreams and for what he told them about the/his dreams.” or “because of what he had said {to them} about his dreams.” For some languages, it is more natural to switch the order of clauses in this sentence and say, “So because of what he/Joseph had told them about his dreams, his brothers hated him even more {strongly/intensely} {than they did before}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 37:9

Then he dreamed yet another dream, and he related it to his brothers

"Then Joseph had another dream that he {also} told to his brothers." or "Sometime after that, Joseph told his brothers about another dream that he had."

And he said

"He said," or "This/Here is what he said:"

Behold, I dreamed another dream

"Listen, I {just} had another dream,"

and behold

"and there/amazingly {in this dream}" or "and {in it} I saw that"

the sun and the moon and eleven stars

"the sun, the moon, and eleven stars"

were bowing down

"were bowing down {to the ground}" or "bowed down {to the ground}". See how you translated "bowed down" in verse 7.

to me

"to/before me {to show respect}." or "in front of me {to honor me}." Bowing down to someone was a way of showing respect and honor to that person. If that is not clear in your culture, you could make that information explicit in your translation or in a footnote. If it is understood, you can leave it implied (as the Hebrew text does). (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 37:10

And he related it to his father and to his brothers

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. Verse 10 could refer to: (1) a second time that Joseph told his dream; for example, "Then/Later Joseph told {the same dream} to {both} his father and his brothers, but his father ..." or (2) the same time that he told this dream to his brothers in verse 9; for example, "When Joseph related/told {the dream} to his father and his brothers, his father ..."

but his father rebuked him and said to him

"but his father rebuked/scolded him by saying," Your translation of this quote margin should not sound like two separate events; the verbs "rebuked" and "said" refer to the same event. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

What {is} this dream that you dreamed

"That {is} a strange dream that you had!" or "Your dream {is} ridiculous/outrageous!" Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to show that he is not happy about Joseph's dream. Decide the best way to translate this in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Will your mother and I and your brothers really

"Do you really expect your mother and me and your brothers to" or "Certainly you don't think that your mother and I or your brothers will" or "Your mother and I and your brothers will never". See how you translated a similar rhetorical question in verse 8. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

come to bow down to the ground

"come {to you} and bow down to the ground" or "bow down". See how you translated "bow down" in verse 7.

to you

"before you" or "in front of you"

Genesis 37:11

And his brothers envied him

“So Joseph’s brothers were envious/jealous of him,” or “{Because of Joseph’s dreams} his brothers were envious/jealous of him,” See how you translated “envied” in Gen 26:14; 30:1.

but his father kept the matter {in mind

“but his father continued to think/wonder about what it all could mean.” or “but his father kept thinking about the dreams and wondered what they meant.”

Genesis 37:12

Then his brothers went to shepherd the flock{s} of their father

“Sometime after that, his/Joseph’s brothers took their father’s flock{s} {of sheep and goats} to graze {in the fields}”
or “One time/day, his/Joseph’s brothers ...”

near Shechem

“near {the city of} Shechem.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Shechem” in Gen 35:4.

Genesis 37:13

And Israel said to Joseph

"Then/So {one day} Israel said to Joseph,"

Aren't your brothers shepherding

"As you know, your brothers are pasturing/tending {our flocks/animals}". Israel uses a rhetorical question to remind Joseph of something he already knows and to introduce what he wants Joseph to do. Decide the best way to communicate this in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

near Shechem

"near {the city of} Shechem." See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

Come and I will send you to them

"Get ready so that I can send you to them."

And he said to him

"He/Joseph responded," or "He/Joseph answered him,"

Behold me

"I'm here {and ready to go}." or "I'm ready {to go}." or "Yes, {sir}."

Genesis 37:14

Then he said to him

“Then Israel told him/Joseph,”

Please go and see

“Please go and check on” or “Please go find out”

the well-being of your brothers and the well-being of the flock{s}

“how your brothers and the flock{s} are doing,” or “whether {or not} things are going well for your brothers and the flock{s},”

and bring me word

“Then come tell me {how they are doing}.” or “Then report back to me {what you find out}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

So he sent him

“So/Then Israel sent him/Joseph {on his way}”

from the valley of Hebron

“from {their home in} the valley near {the city of} Hebron,” Be consistent in how you spell “Hebron” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 13:18; 23:2, 19; 35:27; 37:14.

and he went to Shechem

“and he/Joseph went/traveled to {the city of} Shechem.” The trip from the city of Hebron to the city of Shechem was about 100 kilometers (60 miles).

Genesis 37:15

And a man found him, and behold

“There he met a man who had seen/noticed him” or “{When he arrived there,} a man saw him”. In this context “found” means the man happened to meet Joseph as Joseph was walking around looking for his brothers; the man was not intentionally looking for him. Also, for some languages it is clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “He started wandering around {searching} in the fields {near there}, where/ and he met a man who asked ...” or “As he was wandering around {searching} in the fields {near there}, he met a man who asked ...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

he was wandering around in the fields. So the man asked him, saying

“searching around in the {nearby} fields/countryside and asked him”. The word “fields” refers here to large, open places with no fences and few trees, where sheep and goats could easily graze.

What are you looking for

“What/Who are you looking for?” or “what/who he was looking for.” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or an indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 37:16

And he said, “I am looking for my brothers

“He/Joseph responded/replied, “I am looking/searching for my brothers.” ”

Please tell me

“Can you tell me” or “Do you know”

where they are shepherding

“where they are pasturing/tending {their flocks}?” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause earlier in the verse and say, “I am looking for my brothers who were somewhere around here shepherding/pasturing/tending {their flocks}. Do you know where they are {now}?” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 37:17

Then the man said

“The man answered {him},” or “The man replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

They set out from here

“{I saw them, but then} they left from here” or “They were here and then left”

For I heard them say

“In fact, I heard/overheard them say {to each other}” or “but I overheard them say {to each other}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Let us go to Dothan

“‘Let’s {move on and} go to {the town of} Dothan.’ ” or “that they were going to {the town of} Dothan.” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your translation. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Then Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan

“So Joseph followed his brothers and caught up with them near {the town of} Dothan.” or “So Joseph went to {the town of} Dothan and found his brothers {near} there.”

Genesis 37:18

But they saw him from a distance

“But they saw him while he was still some distance away,” or “While he was still some distance away {from them}, they saw him,”

and before he came near to them

“and before he reached them,” or “and before he got close to where they were,”

then they conspired against him to kill him

“they plotted to kill him.” or “they made plans to kill him.”

Genesis 37:19

And they said each to his brother

“They said to each other {about him},”

Behold, that master of dreams is coming

“Look/See, here comes that master/expert dreamer!” or “Look who’s coming! It’s that master/expert of dreams!”
Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph’s brothers are being sarcastic and disrespectful here as they make fun of Joseph.

Genesis 37:20

So now, come and let us kill him

“Come on, let’s kill him” or “Let’s work/join together and kill him”

and throw him

“and throw his body”

into one of the cisterns

“into one of the {empty} pits/wells {here}.” A cistern was a large hole or pit that had been dug in the ground to catch rain water and store it there. It was wide at the bottom and had a small opening at the top. The sides of the hole were covered with plaster so that it would hold water. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Then we will say an evil animal

“Then we will/can tell {people} that a fierce/vicious/ferocious {wild} animal”

devoured him

“has devoured/eaten him,” or “ate him up/down,”

and we will see

“and we/everyone will see/watch”

what his dreams become

“what will become of his dreams!” or “what happens to his {great} dreams!” or “if his {great} dreams come true!” Joseph’s brothers are speaking here in a disdainful way, continuing to mock him.

Genesis 37:21

But Reuben heard

“But Reuben heard {their plan}, so” or “When Reuben heard {what they were planning,}”

and he rescued him from their hand{s

“he {tried to} rescue/save Joseph from them”. The phrase “their hand{s)” refers to Joseph’s brothers and their power to harm him. Consider whether you have a similar figure of speech in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

and said

“and said {to them},” or “by urging them,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let us not strike his life

“We should/must not take his life.” or “We should/must not kill him.” Consider again how you translated the idiom “strike” in Gen 4:15; 34:30; 37:21. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 37:22

And Reuben said to them

"Then Reuben/he continued/added," Some translations do not include this phrase, possibly because Reuben is still speaking to the same people. However, he may have paused between verses 21 and 22 to see the effect of what he said in verse 21. Also, the repeated quote margin helps emphasize what he says in verse 22. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Do not shed blood

"Do not kill him." or "You must not take his life." See how you translated the idiom "shed blood" in Gen 9:6. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Throw him into this cistern

"{Instead} put him into this {dry/empty} pit/well". See how you translated "cistern" in verse 20.

which {is} in the wilderness

"{here} in the wilderness/desert," Consider again how you translated "wilderness" or "desert" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:6 (and note); 16:7; 21:14, 20-21; 36:24; 37:22. Also see when it occurs as implied information in Gen 12:9-10; 13:1, 3; 20:1; 24:62.

but do not lay a hand on him

"but you must not harm him {in any way}." The phrase "lay a hand on" is an idiom that emphasizes that they are not to harm him at all, not even in the smallest way.

in order to rescue him from their hand{s}

"Reuben was planning to rescue/save him/Joseph from them" or "{He/Reuben said that} in order to save him/Joseph from being killed by them". See how you translated "rescued him from their hand{s}" in verse 21. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

to return him to his father

"so that he could return him {safely} to his/their father." or "and take him back {home} to his/their father." Make sure your translation of "his father" does not sound like Joseph had a different father than his brothers had.

Genesis 37:23

Then it happened when Joseph came to his brothers

“When Joseph reached his brothers,” As usual, the phrase “Then it happened” introduces and emphasizes an important set of events. Many translations leave it implied. Do what is natural in your language.

then they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the multicolored tunic

“they {grabbed/took hold of him and} stripped/ripped/tore off the/his colorful robe”. See how you translated “multicolored tunic” in verse 3.

that {was} on him

“he had on.” or “that he was wearing.”

Genesis 37:24

Then they took him

“Then they grabbed him”. If the phrase “grabbed/took hold of him” is made explicit in your translation in verse 23, it can be left implied here in verse 24.

and threw him into the cistern

“and put him into the pit/well.” See how you translated “throw him” and “cistern” in verse 20.

And the cistern {was} empty; there was not water in it

“Now the pit/well {was} empty; it had no water in it.” or “The pit/well {was} empty and {completely} dry inside.”

Genesis 37:25

Then they sat down to eat bread

"Then {some of} Joseph's brothers sat down to eat a meal," It is clear from verse 29 that Reuben was not there when his brothers made the plan to sell Joseph to the traders. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and they lifted their eyes and looked

"and {while they were eating,} they looked around" or "{While they were eating,} they looked around". See how you translated the idiom "lifted ... eyes" in Gen 22:13. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and behold

"and saw/noticed {that}" or "and they saw/noticed {that}"

a caravan of

"a {large} group/company of". A "caravan" is a large group of people who are traveling together.

Ishmaelites

"Ishmaelite {traders/merchants}" or "{traders/merchants} from the Ishmael/Ishmaelite people group" or "{traders/merchants who were} descendants of Ishmael". See how you translated the names of other people groups in Gen 15:19-21.

was coming from Gilead

"was coming/traveling {toward them} from {the region of} Gilead." or "was traveling from {the region of} Gilead {and was headed their way}." For some languages it may be clearer to change the order of some of the implied information in this sentence and say, "... and saw/noticed {that headed their way/direction was} a {large} group of Ishmaelite {traders/merchants} {that was} coming/traveling from {the region of} Gilead." Do what is best in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled "Gilead" in Gen 31:21, 23, 25. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And their camels were carrying

"Their camels were loaded with". Consider again how you translated "camel" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:16 (and note); 24:10-11, 14, 19-20, 22, 25, 30-32, 35, 44, 46, 61, 63-64; 30:43; 31:17, 18, 34; 32:7, 15; 37:25.

spices and balm and myrrh

"{expensive} spices, healing resin/salve and incense". Gilead was a mountainous region east of the Jordan River that was famous as a source of balm (or balsam), which was a rare tree resin that was used for perfume and for medicine. Myrrh was another type of tree resin that was used as incense and as medicine. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns\]\]](#))

that} they were going to take down to Egypt

“that they were taking/transporting down to {the country of} Egypt {to sell there}.” or “that they were taking {to sell} in {the country of} Egypt.”

Genesis 37:26

Then Judah said to his brothers

“Then/So Judah asked/urged his brothers,”

What gain {is there

“What will we gain” or “We will not gain anything”. Judah uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize his point. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

if we kill our brother and cover up his blood

“if we kill our brother and try to keep people from finding out about it” or “by killing our brother and trying to hide it!” The phrase “cover up” is an idiom that means to prevent people from knowing about something evil that was done. Also, the phrase “his blood” is an idiom that refers to Joseph’s death. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 37:27

Come and let us sell him

"{Instead,} come on, let's sell him" or "{Instead,} we should sell him". See how you translated "come and" in verse 20.

to the Ishmaelites

"to those Ishmaelites {over there}" or "to those Ishmaelite {traders/merchants} {over there}". See how you translated "Ishmaelites" in verse 25.

so that our hand{s} will not be on him

"so that we will/do not harm him." or "so that we will not be guilty of harming him." Translate this idiom in a way that is natural and clear in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

For he {is} our brother, our flesh

"After all, he {is} a member of our family, our own brother." or "After all, as our brother, he {is} member of our family." The phrase "our flesh" refers to the fact that they are closely related biologically. See how you translated a similar idiom ("my bone and my flesh") in Gen 29:14. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And his brothers listened

"Judah's brothers agreed {with him}." or "Judah's brothers agreed {to do what Judah had proposed/suggested}." See how you translated "listened" in Gen 34:24.

Genesis 37:28

Then the Midianite men, traders, passed by

“So when/as the Midianite {(that is, Ishmaelite)} traders/merchants came by/near {them},” or “So when the {Ishmaelite} traders who were {also/sometimes called} Midianites were passing/going by {them},” The Ishmaelites (verses 25, 27-28; 39:1) and Midianites (verses 28 and 36) were the descendants of Abraham’s sons Ishmael and Midian (16:15; 25:1-2). However, sometimes (as here) the names of those people groups are used interchangeably for the same people (also see Judges 8:22, 24, 26). Perhaps that was because the two people groups had intermarried. Or there may have been merchants from the two people groups in this caravan who bought and sold Joseph together. You could put some of that information in a footnote.

and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the cistern

“{some of} Joseph’s brothers pulled Joseph/him up out of the pit/well”. Not all of Joseph’s brothers were there, because we know from the next verse that at least Reuben was somewhere else when they sold Joseph. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty {shekels of} silver

“and sold him to the Ishmaelite {traders/merchants} for twenty {shekels/pieces of} silver.” See the note about shekels at Gen 20:16. Twenty shekels of silver was equal to about one-fourth of a kilo (half a pound) and was the average price for a slave. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1580)**)

Then they brought Joseph to Egypt

“Then the Ishmaelites took him to {the country of} Egypt.”

Genesis 37:29

Then Reuben returned to the cistern

"Later Reuben {who had been gone for a while} returned to the pit/well," or "Then/Later Reuben came/went back to the pit/well {to get Joseph}," Consider again how you translated "cistern" in verses 20, 22, 24, 28-29.

but behold, Joseph was not in the cistern

"and he was shocked to see that Joseph was not there!" or "but to his surprise/horror, Joseph was gone!"

so he tore his clothes

"So/Then he tore his clothes {to show distress/grief}." or "Then {he was so distressed/grieved that} he tore his clothes." (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 37:30

Then he returned to his brothers

“Then he went back to where his brothers were” or “Then he went to his brothers”

and said

“and said/exclaimed {to them},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The boy

“The lad/youth” or “Joseph” or “Our {younger} brother”. Joseph was seventeen years old (verse 2), so this phrase should be translated in a way that is appropriate for his older brother to refer to him here. See how you translated a different word that has a similar meaning in Gen 21:12.

is not {there

“is gone/missing!”

And I, where am I going

“Now what should/can I do?” or “Now I do not know what to do!” Reuben uses a rhetorical question here to express how distressed he is and to emphasize that he does not know what to do. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 37:31

Then they took

“So they” or “Then/So Joseph’s brothers”

Then they took Joseph’s tunic

“took his tunic/robe,” or “picked up his tunic/robe,”

and slaughtered a kid of the goats

“killed a male/young goat”

and dipped the tunic in the blood

“and dipped the/Joseph’s robe in its blood.” For some languages it is more natural to switch the order of clauses in this verse and say, “Then/So Joseph’s brothers killed a young goat, took Joseph’s/his tunic/robe, and dipped it in the {goat’s} blood.” or “Then/So Joseph’s brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph’s/his tunic/robe in the {goat’s} blood.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 37:32

Then they sent the multicolored tunic and had it brought to their father and said

“Then they had someone take/bring the colorful tunic/robe back to their father and say {to him} {for them},”
Consider again how you translated “multicolored/colorful tunic/robe” in verses 3, 23, 32.

We found this. Please examine

“We found this {tunic/robe}. Please look at it {to see/determine}”. See how you translated “examine” in Gen 31:32.

whether it {is} your son’s tunic or not

“whether/if it {is} your son’s tunic/robe.” or “whether or not it {is} your son’s.”

Genesis 37:33

And he examined it and said

"Jacob examined/recognized the robe and exclaimed,"

It is} my son's tunic

"{This is} my son {Joseph}'s tunic/robe!" or "This tunic/robe belongs to my son {Joseph}!"

An evil animal has devoured him! Surely Joseph was torn to pieces

"Surely/Clearly a fierce/vicious/ferocious {wild} animal has torn Joseph/him to pieces/bits and eaten him up!" See how you translated "an evil animal devoured him" in verse 20.

Genesis 37:34

Then Jacob tore his clothes

“Then Jacob tore his clothes {in grief/sorrow},” or “Jacob {was so grieved that he} tore his clothes,” See how you translated “tore his clothes” in verse 29. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and put sackcloth on his loins

“put on sackcloth,” or “put on mourning clothes,” It was a Hebrew custom to wear sackcloth, which was a rough/coarse garment made/woven from black goats’ hair, to show that the person was mourning for someone’s death. If this custom is not familiar in your culture, you could put that information in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and he mourned for his son many days

“and for many days he mourned/grieved that his son had died.” or “and for a {very} long time he mourned/grieved that/because his son was dead/gone.” See how you translated “mourn” in Gen 27:41.

Genesis 37:35**And all his sons and all his daughters got up**

“All Jacob’s sons and daughters”

וַיִּקְמוּ לְבָנָיו

“came {to him} {and tried} to comfort/console him,”

but he refused to be comforted

“but he did not want to be comforted/consoled” or “but he did/would not let them comfort/console him”

and said

“Instead he said {to them},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

For I will go down to my son in Sheol mourning

“{No,} I will continue to mourn until I {die and} join my son down in Sheol.” or “{No,} I will continue to mourn {for my son} until I {die and} go down to be with him in the afterworld.” Sheol is the Hebrew name for the world of the dead, that is, the place where the spirits of dead people lived. You could put that information in a footnote. Your translation of “Sheol” should not refer to hell or a place of punishment. Some translations have “the grave” here, but that leaves out the idea of an afterlife that this sentence implies. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

So his father wept for him

“So/Then Joseph’s father continued to mourn/grieve {deeply} for him/Joseph.”

Genesis 37:36

And the Midianites sold him in Egypt

“Meanwhile, in {the country of} Egypt, the Midianite {traders} sold Joseph” or “Meanwhile, when the Midianite {traders} got to {the country of} Egypt, they sold Joseph”. The event in verse 36 occurred during the time that the events in verses 29-35 happened.

to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh

“to Potiphar, {who was} an official/officer under Pharaoh {the king of/over Egypt};” See how you translated “Pharaoh” in Gen 12:15-20.

the chief of the guards

“{he was} the captain over the {royal/palace} guards.” or “{he was} the leader of the soldiers who guarded the king.”

Genesis 38

Genesis 38:1

And it happened at that time

“Meanwhile,” or “At/About that/this time,” The phrase “And it happened” introduces a new episode here. Some translations leave it implied. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that Judah went down from his brothers

“Judah left his brothers and went/traveled down”

and settled near an Adullamite man

“and settled/stayed/lived in {the town of} Adullam near {the home of} a man from there” or “to {the town of} Adullam and settled/stayed/lived near {the home of} a man from there”. The word “Adullamite” refers to the fact that Hirah was from the town of Adullam; it is not the name of a people group. The town of Adullam was about 19 kilometers (12 miles) northwest of the city of Hebron (37:14), and was lower in elevation, which is why the text says that Judah “went down” to get there.

and his name {was} Hirah

“whose name {was} Hirah.”

Genesis 38:2

And there Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man, and his name {was} Shua

"{While he was living} there, Judah/he met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua," or "{While he was living} there, Judah/he met a Canaanite woman whose father {was} Shua,"

and he took her

"and he took her {as his wife}." or "and he married her." See how you translated a similar idiom ("took a wife") in Gen 25:1. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Then he went to her

"Then he slept/lay with her," or "Then he had {marital/sexual} relations with her," See how you translated the idiom "went to" in Gen 6:4. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 38:3

and she conceived

“and she became pregnant”

and bore a son

“and gave birth to a son,” or “When she gave birth, she had a son,” Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

and he called his name Er

“whom he/Judah named Er.” Throughout Genesis, sometimes the father, sometimes the mother, and sometimes both are said to give their child his name.

Genesis 38:4

Then she conceived again

“Then Judah’s wife became pregnant again”. See how you translated verse 3, which is similar to verse 4.

and bore a son

“and gave birth to {another} son,”

and she called his name Onan

“and she named him Onan.”

Genesis 38:5

Then she continued further

“Then she conceived again” or “Then she became pregnant yet again”

and bore a son

“and gave birth to {another} son,”

and she called his name Shelah

“and she named him Shelah.”

And he was in Kezib when she bore him

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “He/Judah was in/at {the town of} Kezib when she gave birth to Shelah.” or “When she gave birth to Shelah, Judah was in {the town of} Kezib.” or (2) “It was in {the town of} Kezib that she gave birth to him/Shelah.” or “She was in Kezib when she gave birth to him/Shelah.”

Genesis 38:6

Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name {was} Tamar

“Years later, Judah got/chose a wife named Tamar for his firstborn/oldest son Er.” or “When Judah’s firstborn/oldest son Er grew up, Judah arranged/negotiated for him to marry a woman whose name {was} Tamar.” See how you translated the phrase “took a wife for” in Gen 21:21.

Genesis 38:7

But Er, the firstborn of Judah, was

“But Judah’s firstborn/oldest son Er” or “But Er”. Some languages leave “the firstborn of Judah” implied here since Er was already called the firstborn in verse 6. The Hebrew text repeats that information here to emphasize Er’s relationship to Judah in the following events. Do what is best in your language.

But & was evil in the eyes of Yahweh

“did things that were evil/wicked in Yahweh’s sight/opinion,” or “did something/things that Yahweh considered/ judged to be evil/wicked,” The Hebrew text does not specify what Er had done wrong, so neither should your translation. See how you translated the idiom “in the eyes of Yahweh” in Gen 6:8. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

so Yahweh killed him

“so Yahweh took his life.” or “so Yahweh caused him to die.”

Genesis 38:8

Then Judah said to Onan

"After that, Judah told {his son} Onan,"

Go to the wife of your brother

"Marry your brother's wife/widow {Tamar} {according to our custom}". The Israelites practiced the custom of Levirate marriage, which meant that if a man died without any children, it was his oldest brother's duty to marry his widow so that together they could have a son who would carry on the deceased man's family line and inherit his estate (See: [Deuteronomy 25:5-6](#)). You could put some of that information in a footnote.

and perform your duty to her

"so that you fulfill your duty/obligation to her {as her brother-in-law}"

and produce offspring

"and produce/have children {with her}"

for your brother

"for your {deceased} brother." or "to carry on {the name of} your brother {Er}."

Genesis 38:9

However, Onan knew that the offspring would not be his

“But Onan knew that the children {they would have together} would not belong to him.”

so it happened when

“So whenever” or “So every time”

he went to

“he slept/lay with” or “he had {marital/physical} relations with” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

the wife of his brother

“his brother’s wife/widow {Tamar},” or “Tamar;”

then he spilled {it} on the ground

“he wasted {his semen} on the ground” or “he caused/let {his semen} to spill/go on the ground”. Translate this clause in a way that is polite and will not shame or embarrass people when this verse is read aloud in public. Make sure it is clear that Onan did something to keep Tamar from getting pregnant.

so that he would not give offspring to his brother

“so that he would not have offspring/children for his brother.” or “to keep her from {getting pregnant and} having {any} offspring/children for his brother.”

Genesis 38:10

And what he did was evil in the eyes of Yahweh

“Yahweh considered/judged what he/Onan did to be evil/wicked,” or “But that was evil/wicked in Yahweh’s sight/opinion,” See how you translated “evil in the eyes of Yahweh” in verse 7.

so he killed him also

“so he/Yahweh took his life too/also.” or “so he/Yahweh caused him to die too.”

Genesis 38:11

Then Judah said to Tamar

“Then Judah told”

to Tamar his daughter-in-law

“his daughter-in-law Tamar,” or “his son’s widow Tamar,” or “Tamar,”

Remain a widow in the house of your father

“{Go back} to your father’s house and stay there as a widow” or “{Go and} live at your father’s house, and do not marry again”

until Shelah my son grows up

“until my son Shelah is old enough {to marry you}.”

For he said, “So that he does not also die like his brothers

“{He/Judah said/did that} because he said/thought {to himself}, “I don’t want Shelah to die like his brothers did!” ” or “{He/Judah did/said that} because he was afraid Shelah would die like his brothers had died.” or “{Actually Judah did not want Shelah to marry Tamar} because he was afraid/worried {that if he did,} he would also die like his brothers had died.”

So Tamar went and lived in the house of her father

“So Tamar went {home} to her father’s house and live/stayed there.”

Genesis 38:12

Then the days were many

“Many years later,” or “After a long time,” or “Years went by and then”

and Shua’s daughter, the wife of Judah, died

“Judah’s wife, the daughter of Shua, died.” or “Judah’s wife, {who was} Shua’s daughter, died.” Notice that Shua was the father of Judah’s wife. Be consistent here with how you spelled his name in verse 2.

Then Judah was comforted

“After Judah finished mourning/grieving {for her}, {one day}” or “After Judah had completed the {customary} time of mourning/grieving {for her};” See how you translated “comforted” in Gen 37:35.

and he went up to Timnah

“he {decided to} go to {the town of} Timnah”. Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like Judah had already arrived at Timnah, because he does not actually reach there until verse 19. His trip from the town of Adullam (verse 1) to the town of Timnah was about 13 kilometers (8 miles).

to {the men} who were shearing his sheep

“{to work} with {the men} who were shearing his sheep {there}.” or “where {his men} were shearing his sheep {for him}.” See how you translated “shear his sheep” in Gen 31:19 and see the note about that there.

he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite

“He and his friend Hirah, {who was} from {the town of} Adullam, {started traveling there together}.” or “His friend Hirah the Adullamite went/traveled with him.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause earlier in this verse and say, “... and he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to {the town of} Timnah where men were shearing Judah’s sheep {for him}.” Do what is best in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you spelled “Hirah” and how you translated “Adullamite” in verse 1. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 38:13

And it was told to Tamar, saying

“Then/Meanwhile someone told/informed Tamar,” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Behold, your father-in-law

“Listen, your father-in-law {Judah}”

is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep

“is on his way to {the town of} Timnah to shear his sheep.” or “is on his way to shear his sheep in/at {the town of} Timnah.” See how you translated “shearing his sheep” in verse 12.

Genesis 38:14

So she took off her widow's clothes from her

"So she changed from her clothes that showed she was a widow" or "So she changed {into different clothes} from the kind of clothes that widows wear". Make sure it is clear in your translation that Tamar did not just take off her widow's clothes, but that she also put different clothes on. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and covered herself with a veil

"and covered herself with a {large} veil/shawl" or "and covered her face with a {thin} veil/headscarf". A veil was a large piece of thin cloth that was used to cover the face and/or the body. See how you translated "veil" in Gen 24:65.

and wrapped herself

"and dressed/disguised herself {as/like a prostitute}." or "to disguise herself."

Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which {is} on the road to Timnah

"Then she sat near/by the entrance/gateway to {the town of} Enaim, which {was} on the road/way to/toward {the town of} Timnah," or "Then {she went/traveled} toward {the town of} Timnah and sat down at/near the entrance/gateway of {the town of} Enaim, which {was} along the way." Some languages need to specify that Tamar traveled to Enaim before she sat down there. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

because she saw that Shelah had grown up

"{She did that} because she had noticed that Shelah was now old enough {to marry};" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

but she had not been given to him as a wife

"but Judah had not given her to him/Shelah to marry {as he was supposed/required to do}." For some languages it is more natural to change the order of clauses in this sentence and say, "Tamar had seen/noticed that Shelah was now grown up, but Judah had not given her to him to marry {as he was supposed/required to do}. So she changed from her widow's clothes ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 38:15

Then Judah saw her

"{As Judah was traveling to Timnah,} he saw Tamar {beside the road},"

and he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face

"but since she had covered/veiled her face {with a veil/shawl}, {he could not see who she was and} he thought/assumed that she was a prostitute." See how you translated "prostitute" in Gen 34:31 and "covered her face" in verse 14. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 38:16

So he turned to her beside the road

“So he went over to where she was {sitting} beside/by the road” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and said

“and said {to her},” or “and propositioned {her} by saying,” or “and requested,”

Please come, let me come to you

“Let me sleep/lie with you.” or “Let me have relations/sex with you.” (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

because he did not know that she {was} his daughter-in-law

“{He did/said that} because he did not recognize/realize that she {was} his daughter-in-law {Tamar}.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this sentence and say, “He did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law {Tamar}, so he went over to her beside the road and said ...”

And she said

“So she asked {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What will you give to me

“What will you give me {in exchange}” or “What will you pay me”

if you will come

“if I allow you to” or “so that you can”

you will come to me

“sleep/lie with me?” or “have relations/sex with me?” or “do that?” See how you translated the idiom “come to” earlier in this verse. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 38:17

And he said

"He answered {her}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I will send a kid goat from the flock

"I will send {you} a young goat from my flock." See how you translated "kid goat" in Gen 27:9, 16.

And she said

"She replied,"

If you will give a pledge

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "{Ok,} if you will give {me} a pledge/deposit ..." or "{I will agree,} if you give {me} something {valuable} {of yours} to keep ..." or (2) "Will you give me a pledge/deposit ...?"

until you send {it

"until you send/deliver {the goat to me}."

Genesis 38:18

Then he said

“So Judah asked {her},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What {is} the pledge that I should give to you

“What should I give to you as a pledge/deposit?” or “What do you want me to leave with you?”

And she said

“She answered {him},”

Your signet and your cord

“{Leave/Give me} your {name/identification/signature} seal/thing with its cord/string {that you have/wear around your neck},” A “signet” or “identification seal” was a ring or small cylinder-shaped object that had the owner’s name engraved on it and was worn around his neck on a cord. It was used to prove his identity and to sign documents that were written on clay tablets, by rolling the cylinder over the soft clay. If people in your culture are not familiar with these things, you could put some of this information in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and your staff

“and your cane” or “and your walking stick”

that {is} in your hand

“that you are holding.” or “that you have.”

So he gave {them} to her

“So he gave {those things} to her”

and went to her

“Then he slept/lay with her,” or “Then he had {sexual} relations with her,” Consider again how you translated the idiom “went to” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 6:4 (See: note); 16:2, 4; 19:31; 30:3-4; 38:2, 8-9, 16, 18. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context; for example, the relationship in Gen 38:16, 18 was outside of marriage. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and she conceived by him

“and she became pregnant by/from him.” or “and he caused her to become pregnant.” Consider again how you translated “conceive” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:1, 17; 16:4-5; 19:36; 21:2; 25:21; 29:32-35; 30:5, 7, 17, 19, 23; 38:3-4, 18.

Genesis 38:19

Then she got up and left

“After that, Tamar left {Judah} and went/returned {home}” or “After Tamar left {Judah}, she went/returned {home}”

and she took off her veil from her

“took off her veil/shawl” or “Then she took her veil/scarf off”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “veil” in verse 14.

and put on her widow’s clothes

“and put {back} on her clothes that showed she was a widow.” or “and put {back} on the kind of clothes that widows wear.” See how you translated “widow’s clothes” in verse 14.

Genesis 38:20

Then Judah sent the kid goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite

“Meanwhile Judah sent a young goat with his friend {Hirah}, {who was} from {the town of} Adullam,” or “After that, Judah sent his friend {Hirah} the Adullamite with a young goat”. See how you translated “his friend ... the Adullamite” in verse 12 and “kid goat” in verse 17.

to get back the pledge from the hand of the woman

“to retrieve/reclaim his things from the woman/prostitute {whom he had given them to}.” or “to exchange it for the things he had left with the woman/prostitute.” or “to get back from the woman/prostitute the things he had left with her.”

but he did not find her

“but Hirah could not find her.” or “But {when Hirah looked for her;} he was not able to find her.”

Genesis 38:21

So he asked the men of her place, saying

“So he/Hirah asked {some} men {who lived} near the place where she had been,”

Where {is} the temple prostitute who {was} at Enaim beside the road

“Where {is} the temple/shrine prostitute who {was sitting} beside the road near {the town of} Enaim?” Pagan religions had fertility rites at their temples or shrines that included professional prostitutes. Make sure your translation of “temple prostitute” does not refer to any temple built by the Israelites. Also be consistent here with how you translated “Enaim” in verse 14.

But they said

“But they answered {him},”

There has not been a temple prostitute

“There has never been a temple/shrine prostitute” or “No temple/shrine prostitute has ever been”

in this place

“in/near this place/town.” or “around here.”

Genesis 38:22

So he returned to Judah

“So/Then Hirah went/came back to Judah”

and said

“and said/reported {to him},” or “and told/informed {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I did not find her

“I was not able to find the woman/prostitute.”

And also

“In fact,” or “And besides that,”

the men of the place

“the men who live {around} there” or “the men who live in/near that town”

said, ‘There has not been a temple prostitute in this {place

“claimed, ‘There has never been a temple/shrine prostitute in/near this {place/town}.’” or “say/claim that there has never been a temple/shrine prostitute near/around there.” See how you translated this same quote in verse 21. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to translate this as an indirect quote here in verse 22. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 38:23

And Judah said

“Then Judah said/replied {to him},” or “Judah replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Let her take {the things} for herself

“{Stop looking for her and} let her keep {my things} for herself”

so that we do not become a laughingstock

“so that people do not laugh at us.” or “Otherwise everyone will make fun of us.” or “so that we are not publicly shamed.” The pronouns “we” and “us” are inclusive here because Judah is including Hirah; some languages might use a dual pronoun. Use the pronouns that are best in your language in this context. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Behold

“Besides that,” or “After all,”

I sent this kid

“I {did try to} send/deliver this goat {to her},” or “I sent {you to deliver} this goat {to her},”

but you did not find her

“but you could not find her.” or “but you were not able to find her.”

Genesis 38:24

Then it happened about three months later

“About three months later,” The phrase “Then it happened” introduces an important part of the story and helps create suspense or anticipation, so that it leaves the audience wondering what will happen next. Some translations leave it implied. Do what is best in your language.

that it was told to Judah, saying

“someone said/reported to Judah,” or “someone told/informed Judah,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

Tamar your daughter-in-law

“Your daughter-in-law Tamar”. Consider again how you translated “daughter-in-law” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 11:31; 38:11, 16, 24.

has prostituted herself

“has acted/behaved like/as a prostitute.” Some languages have an idiom for this phrase. Do what is best in your language. See how you translated “prostitute” in Gen 34:31, 38:15 and “temple prostitute” in verses 21-22.

and also, behold, {she is} pregnant by her prostitutions

“In fact, look, {she is} {now} pregnant from doing that!” or “In fact, as a result of her immoral/indecent behavior {she has become} pregnant!” or “and even worse, {she is} {now} pregnant because of that!” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

So Judah said

“Judah said/responded {angrily},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Bring her out

“Take her outside {the town}”. Executions were normally done outside of the city walls. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and let her be burned

“and burn her {to death}!” or “and {punish her by} burning her {to death}!”

Genesis 38:25

She was being brought out

"{So they went to get her/Tamar, but} as they were taking her out {of the town},"

and she sent {a message} to her father-in-law, saying

"she sent {a messenger} to her father-in-law {along with his things} and {told the messenger to} say," See how you translated "father-in-law" in verse 13.

By the man whom these things belong to, I {am} pregnant

"The man who owns these things is the one who got me pregnant."

Then she said, "Please identify whose signet and cords and staff these {are

"Please identify {the man} who owns this name/identification/signature seal/thing with its cord/string and this walking stick." or "Please look at this name/identification/signature seal/thing with its cord/string and this walking stick. Do you know/recognize who they belong to?" For some languages it is more natural to omit the quote margin here, since what follows is a continuation of the message Tamar is sending to Judah. Do what is best in your language. See how you translated "signet" and "cord" and "staff" in verse 18. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Genesis 38:26

And Judah identified {the things

“Judah recognized {his things}” or “Judah saw/recognized {that the things she had were his}”

and said

“and confessed/admitted,”

She is more righteous than I {am

“She/Tamar is right, and I am wrong,”

because I did not give her to Shelah my son

“because I refused to have my son Shelah marry her {as I was supposed/required to}!” or “because I did not let her marry my son Shelah {as I was supposed/required to}!” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Shelah” in verses 5, 11, 14.

And he did not continue to know her more

“{So they released her/Tamar,} and {after that} he/Judah never again laid/slept with her/Tamar.” or “... never had {sexual} relations with her/Tamar again.” Consider again how you translated the idiom “knew” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:1 (and note), 17, 25; 19:8; 24:16; 38:26. It may be necessary to translate 38:26 differently, since the relationship in this verse was outside of marriage. Compare how you translated a related idiom (“went to”) in verse 18. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 38:27

Then it happened when {it was} time for her to give birth

"Months later, when Tamar {was ready} to give birth," See how you translated "Then it happened" in verse 24. The same phrase occurs three times in verses 27-29 to draw attention to the peak of this chapter, the birth of Perez, who was the ancestor of King David and the Messiah.

then behold, twins {were} inside her womb

"surprisingly/amazingly {there were} twins inside her!" or "they saw/realized that {there were} twins inside her!" or "it turned out that she was going to have twins!"

Genesis 38:28

And it happened, as she was giving birth

“While she was in labor,” or “As she was starting to deliver her babies,” See how you translated “giving birth” in Gen 35:16. This may need to be translated differently here because of the different context.

then {one} put out a hand

“{one of them} stuck out {his} hand” or “{one of the twins/babies} put/stuck out {his} hand”

and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied {it} on his hand, saying

“Then/So the midwife {who was there} tied a {bright} red thread/string on/around his wrist and said,” or “Then/So the midwife {who was helping her} ...” The midwife did this because it was her responsibility to identify which baby was the firstborn. See how you translated “midwife” in Gen 35:17.

This {one} came out first

“This {one/baby} was born first.”

Genesis 38:29

But it happened, when he drew his hand back in, then behold

“But then the/that baby pulled his hand back inside, and suddenly/unexpectedly”

his brother came out

“his brother came out {first} {instead}.” or “his brother was born {first} {instead}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Then she said

“Then/So the midwife said/exclaimed {to the baby};” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

How have you breached for yourself a breach

“How did you break/burst yourself out like that?” or “What a dramatic/powerful way for you to break/burst out!” or “Just look at how you have forced your way out!” The midwife uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize how surprised she is that Perez was born first. Decide the best way to communicate this in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

So he called his name

“So they named him” or “That is why he was named”. Although this phrase could mean that Judah (Perez’s father) named Perez, most translations translate this in a general or indefinite way that does not specify who named him. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 29:34.

Perez

“Perez, {which means “break/burst out.”}” If you include the meaning of Perez’ name in your translation or in a footnote, make sure it fits with how you translated the previous sentence. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 38:30

And afterwards, his brother

“After that, his {twin} brother”

came out

“was born/delivered”

who {had} the scarlet thread on his hand

“who {had} the {bright} red thread/string on his wrist.” or “with the {bright} red thread/string on his wrist.” See how you translated “scarlet thread” in verse 28.

and he called his name

“So he was named” or “So they named him”. See how you translated “he called his name” in verse 29.

Zerah

“Zerah, {which means “brightness.”}”

Genesis 39

Genesis 39:1

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt

“Now {as you know,} {Ishmaelite traders/merchants} had taken/brought Joseph down to {the country of} Egypt,” or “Back/Returning {now} to Joseph: {Remember that} he had been taken/brought down to {the country of} Egypt {by Ishmaelite traders/merchants},” Chapter 39 picks up where 37:36 left off and repeats some events (that happened in chapter 37) to remind readers of what happened before chapter 38 interrupted the narrative. Make sure your translation does not sound like Joseph was taken to Egypt twice or sold to Potiphar twice. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

Potiphar, an Egyptian man, an official of Pharaoh, the chief of the guards

“and/where an Egyptian {named} Potiphar, who was the captain over {King} Pharaoh’s {personal} guards,” See how you translated “an official of Pharaoh, the chief of the guards” in Gen 37:36.

and & had bought him from the hand of the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there

“had bought him {as a slave/servant} from the Ishmaelites who had taken/brought him there.” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to change the order of clauses in this verse and say, “Now {as you know,} {some} Ishmaelite traders had taken/brought Joseph down to {the country of} Egypt, and an Egyptian {named} Potiphar had bought him {as a slave/servant} from them. Potiphar {was} {one of} Pharaoh’s officials/officers, the captain over the king’s {personal} guards.” Do what is best in your language. See how you translated “Ishmaelites” in Gen 37:25, 27-28. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 39:2

And Yahweh was with Joseph

“But Yahweh was with Joseph {and helped/blessed him},” See how you translated “was with” in Gen 21:20; 26:28.

and he was a successful man

“so that he succeeded in what/everything he did” or “so that he did everything very well”

and he was in the house of his Egyptian master

“as he worked in his Egyptian master’s/owner’s house.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “As Joseph worked in his Egyptian master/owner’s house, Yahweh was with him/Joseph {and helped/blessed him}, so that he succeeded in everything he did.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 39:3

And his master saw that Yahweh {was} with him

“His/Joseph’s master/owner realized that Yahweh {was} with/blessing him/Joseph”. In verses 2 through 20, Potiphar is referred to as Joseph’s master (verses 2-3, 7-8, 16, 19-20) and “the Egyptian” (verse 5); he is no longer mentioned by his name in the Hebrew text. Some translations continue to use Potiphar’s name occasionally in verses 2 through 20 to prevent confusion and make it clear that all of these references refer to the same person, not two or three different people. Do what is best in your language. See how you translated “master” or “owner” in Gen 24:9-10.

and {that} Yahweh made all that he was doing successful in his hand

“and was helping/enabling him/Joseph to succeed/prosper in everything that he did.” or “and was helping/enabling him/Joseph to do everything very well.” See how you translated “successful” in verse 2.

Genesis 39:4

So Joseph found favor in his eyes, and he served him

“So he/Potiphar was pleased with Joseph/him and made him his personal servant/attendant.” Make sure that your translation of “in his eyes” refers here to Joseph’s master, not Yahweh. Also, see how you translated the idiom “found favor in ... eyes” in Gen 6:8. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

And he put him in charge over his house and gave into his hand all {that} was his

“He/Potiphar also put him/Joseph in charge of managing his household and taking care of everything {else} {that} he owned.” or “He/Potiphar also appointed him/Joseph as the manager/overseer of/over his {entire} household and entrusted into his care everything {that} belonged to him.” Make sure your translation of the pronouns (“he,” “him,” and “his”) in verses 2 through 6 refers to the correct person at each point in the text. Also see how you translated the idiom “gave ... into the hand of” in Gen 32:16. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 39:5

And it happened from the time

“Beginning from the time {that}” or “From the time {that}”

he put him in charge in his house and over all that was his

“Joseph’s Egyptian master/owner put him in charge of/over his household and everything {else} that belonged to him,” or “he/Potiphar put him/Joseph in charge of managing everything that belonged to him,” or “Joseph’s Egyptian master/owner did that,” See how you translated “put him in charge ... his house and ... everything {that} was his” in verse 4. It is repeated in verse 5 in the Hebrew text to emphasize the authority that Joseph was given. Do what is natural in your language.

then Yahweh blessed the house of the Egyptian

“Yahweh blessed the household of that Egyptian {man}” or “Yahweh caused that Egyptian’s household to prosper”. Make sure it is clear in your translation of this chapter that “Egyptian,” “master,” and “Potiphar” all refer to the same person, not two or three different people.

because of Joseph

“for Joseph’s sake/benefit.” or “because Joseph was working for him.”

So the blessing of Yahweh was on all that was his

“Yahweh/He blessed everything that belonged to him,” or “Yahweh/He caused everything that he owned to prosper;”

in the house and in the fields

“{including} {everything} in {his} household/home and in {his} fields.” or “{including} {his family and servants} in {his} household, as well as {the crops and livestock} in {his} fields.” In this context, “house” especially refers to the people in the house and “fields” refers to what is in the fields. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 39:6

And he left all that {belonged} to him in the hand of Joseph

“In fact, he/Potiphar gave Joseph the responsibility of managing everything that he owned/had, so that” or “In fact, after/since Joseph’s owner put him in charge of everything that he owned,” See how you translated a similar idiom (“gave into his hand”) in verse 4. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he did not think to himself {about} anything except for the bread that he ate

“he did not {need to} concern himself with anything {in his household} except for {personal things/matters like} {deciding} what {kind of} food {he wanted} to eat.” or “the only thing he {needed to} think/decide about {in his household} was {personal things/matters like} what food {he wanted} to eat.” For some languages, it is more natural to put the exception clause first in the sentence. Do what is best in your language. Also, Potiphar did more than decide what to eat; that was just one example of personal decisions which were all he had to concern himself with. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

Now Joseph was handsome in form and handsome in appearance

“Joseph was well-built/muscular and good-looking.” or “Now Joseph was a very handsome young man.” Some languages have a conjunction such as “Now” that introduces background information and a change of topic. For other languages a paragraph break is enough (without a conjunction). Do what is best in your language. (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

Genesis 39:7

And it happened after those things

“So after a while,” or “After {he had been/worked there for} a while,” The phrase “And it happened” introduces and emphasizes an important event. Many English translations do not include this phrase. Do what is natural in your language.

then the wife of his master lifted her eyes toward Joseph

“his master’s/owner’s wife started looking at Joseph/him {with desire/lust}” or “his master’s/owner’s wife started lusting for Joseph/him”. Many languages have a similar idiom that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and said

“and said {to him},” or “and told/demanded {him},” Translate this quote introduction in a way that fits well with what Potiphar’s wife says to Joseph. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Lie with me

“Sleep with me!” or “Come to bed with me!” See how you translated the idiom “lie with” in Gen 19:32. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 39:8

But he refused

“But Joseph refused” or “But he/Joseph rejected {her request/demand}”

and said to the wife of his master

“and said to her,” or “and told her,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Look/Listen,” or “Notice that”

with me {here}

“with me {in charge},” or “because of me,” or “since I am {working/serving} here,”

my master does not think {about}

“my master/owner does not {need to} think/worry {about}” or “my owner does not {need/have to} concern himself with”

what {is} in the house

“anything that {is} in {his} house,” or “{managing} anything in {his} household,”

and all that is his he has given into my hand

“In fact, everything that he owns he has given/entrusted into/to my care” or “In fact, he has put me in charge of everything that he owns/has”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated the idiom “gave into ... hand” in verse 4. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 39:9

He is not greater than me in this house

“{so that} he has no one in his household who has more authority than I do.” or “{As a result,} {even} he does not exercise more authority in/over this/his household than I do”. As Joseph’s master, Potiphar still had more authority than Joseph. But he had given Joseph authority to act in his place over everything in his household. Try to make that clear in your translation. Also, consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin verse 9 with a new sentence or to continue the sentence from verse 8.

and he has not withheld anything from me except for you, because you {are} his wife

“and he has given me freedom with everything {in his household}, except you, {of course,} because you {are} his wife.” or “He allows me to do anything {in his household}, except with you, his wife.” The phrase “has not withheld” is a litotes that emphasizes the freedom that Potiphar had given Joseph. Some languages must translate this in a way that does not use a negative word such as “not”. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Litotes (p.1663)**)

So how can I do this great evil, and sin against God

“So I refuse to do such an evil thing, which would be a terrible sin against God!” or “So there is no way I would {ever} sin against God by doing such an evil thing!” Joseph uses this rhetorical question to emphasize why he will not do what Potiphar’s wife wants. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 39:10

Then it happened even though she kept speaking to Joseph day {after} day

“Even though Potiphar’s wife kept propositioning/pressuring Joseph every day {to lie/sleep with her},” or “Day after day, Potiphar’s wife kept pressuring/asking Joseph {to go to bed with her}, but”. The phrase “Then/And it happened” is used several times in this chapter (verses 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19) to introduce and emphasize important events and to increase suspense so that the audience wonders what the outcome will be. Many English translations have omitted this phrase, possibly for reasons of naturalness. Consider whether you have an expression like this that is natural in your language.

yet he did not listen to her to lie beside her

“he did not do what she wanted, but refused to lie/sleep with her,” or “he refused/rejected her requests/demands”

to be with her

“and he stayed away from her.” or “and would not {even} go near her.”

Genesis 39:11

Then it happened on such a day

"{But} then on a day like that," or "Then/But one such day" or "Then/But one day"

that he went into the house to do his work

"Joseph went to {his master's/owner's} house {as usual} to do his work, and/but" or "when Joseph went into the/Potiphar's house to work,"

and there were no other men of the house there in the house

"no other menservants from the household were there." or "none of the other household menservants were there."

Genesis 39:12

So she caught him by his garment

“So/Then Potiphar’s wife caught/grabbed {hold of} him/Joseph by his robe/tunic,” The word “garment” is very general and probably refers to an outer article of clothing, such as a robe or tunic.

saying

“{and} said {to him},” or “{and} said/demanded,” See how you translated this quote introduction in verse 7. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Lie with me

“Come to bed with me!” or “Sleep with me!” See how you translated this quote in verse 7. (See: **Euphemism (p. 1619)**)

But he left his garment in her hand and fled and went outside

“But {immediately} he fled and left his robe/tunic {behind} in her hands as he ran outside/outdoors.” or “But he {immediately} got away from her and fled/ran outside/outdoors, leaving his robe/tunic {behind} in her hands.” Make sure your translation does not sound here like Joseph put his garment in her hands. Rather, it came off in her hands as he was fleeing.

Genesis 39:13

Then it happened when she saw

“As soon as she saw” or “After/When she saw”

that he had left his garment in her hands and had fled outside

“that Joseph had left his robe/tunic {behind} in her hands as he ran outside,” or “that Joseph had fled/run outside/outdoors and left his robe/tunic {behind} in her hands,” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 12. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 39:14

then she called for the men of her house

“she called out for the {other} household menservants {to come to her}” or “she summoned the {other} menservants of/from her household {to come}”. See how you translated “men of the house” in verse 11. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and said to them, saying

“Then {when they arrived/came,} she exclaimed to them,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Look

“Look {at this}!” or “Look/See {what happened}!” As Potiphar’s wife speaks, she is probably showing the servants Joseph’s garment in her hands. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

He brought to us a Hebrew man

“My husband brought {this} Hebrew slave/servant {here} to/among us”. Make sure that your translation of “He brought” refers here to Potiphar (as verse 17 confirms), not Joseph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1696)**)

to laugh at us

“to mock/insult/humiliate us!” or “to make fools of us!” In this context, “us” is general and includes Potiphar’s wife and the people she is talking to. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

He came to me

“He came here” or “That man/slave came {here} to me”. Make sure your translation of “He came” refers here to Joseph, not Potiphar (who was the subject of the previous sentence in the Hebrew text).

to lie with me

“to rape me,” or “to force me to lie/sleep with him,” Consider again how you translated the idiom “lie with” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 19:32-35; 26:10; 30:15-16; 34:2, 7; 35:22; 39:7, 10, 12, 14. It may be necessary to translate this in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

but I called out with a loud voice

“but I cried out {for help}!” or “but I screamed/shouted loudly {for help}!”

Genesis 39:15

Then it happened when he heard

"Then when" or "Then as soon as"

Then it happened when he heard that I raised my voice and called out

"Then when he heard me call/cry out loudly," or "Then as soon as he heard me scream/shout {like that},"

then he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside

"he left his robe/tunic with me and fled/ran outside/outdoors!" or "he {immediately} fled/ran outside/outdoors and he left his robe/tunic behind!" See how you translated a similar clause in verses 12 and 13.

Genesis 39:16

Then she kept

“So she kept” or “Then/So Potiphar’s wife kept”

his garment beside her

“Joseph’s robe/tunic with her”

until his master

“until {her husband,} Joseph’s master/owner;”. Make sure that your translation of this phrase does not sound like her husband and Joseph’s master were two different people. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

came to his house

“came {back} to his home.” or “came/returned home.”

Genesis 39:17

Then she spoke to him

"Then {when he/Potiphar arrived,} she told him"

according to those words

"the same story." or "the same thing she had told {the others}."

saying

"She said," or "This is what she said:" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The Hebrew slave whom you brought

"The/That Hebrew slave/servant whom you brought"

to us

"among us" or "{to work} for us". Here the pronoun "us" includes Potiphar, his wife and their household. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

came to me to laugh at me

"{just now} came to me to mock/insult/humiliate me!" or "came here to make a fool of me!" See how you translated "laugh at" in verse 14.

Genesis 39:18

Then it happened when I raised my voice and called out

"But as soon as I screamed/shouted loudly," or "But when I screamed/shouted {for help}," See how you translated verse 15, which is similar to verse 18.

then he left his garment beside me and fled outside

"he left his robe/tunic beside/with me and ran outside/outdoors!" Consider again how you translated "garment" in verses 12-13, 15-16, 18.

Genesis 39:19

And it happened when his master heard

“When Joseph’s master/owner heard”

the words of his wife that she spoke to him, saying, “Such {are} the things your slave did to me

“his wife say, “This is what your slave/servant did to me,”” or “what his wife said his slave/servant {Joseph} had done to her,” Make sure that your translation of “his” refers to Joseph’s master here, not Joseph. Also, consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

then his anger burned

“he burned with anger.” or “he became very angry.” Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 39:20

Then Joseph's master took him and put him in the round-house

"Then/So he had Joseph arrested and put in the prison/jail" or "And/Then he {had soldiers} arrest Joseph and put him in the prison/jail". Potiphar probably had soldiers arrest Joseph for him, since he had the authority to do that as the captain of the guards. Consider again how you referred to Joseph and Joseph's master, Potiphar, in verses 1-20. As usual, after you finish translating a section like this, it is a good practice to read the section aloud at a normal pace and listen carefully to make sure you refer to everyone accurately and naturally at each point in the text. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

the place where the prisoners of the king were bound

"where the king's prisoners were confined/imprisoned." or "where they kept/imprisoned people who had committed crimes against the king."

So he was there in the round-house

"So Joseph was/stayed there in the prison," or "Joseph remained there in prison,"

Genesis 39:21

but Yahweh was with Joseph

“but Yahweh was with him” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and showed kindness to him

“and was kind/gracious to him”. See how you translated “show kindness” in Gen 24:12.

and gave him favor in the eyes of the chief of the round-house

“and caused the prison warden to be pleased with him, {so that he treated him favorably/well}.” See how you translated a similar phrase (“favor in ... eyes”) in verse 4. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 39:22

And the chief of the round-house gave into the hand of Joseph

"{Soon} the warden of the prison gave Joseph the responsibility for {taking care of}" or "So {before long} the warden put Joseph in charge of" (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

all the prisoners who {were} in the round-house

"all the {other} prisoners who {were} in the/that prison," or "all the {other} prisoners,"

and all that they were doing there, he was {the one} doing {it

"so that he was in charge of everything that was done there." or "so that he {was the one who} managed everything that they did there."

Genesis 39:23

The chief of the round-house

"{So} the warden" or "{As a result} the jail/prison warden". Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1597)**)

did not look {at} anything

"did not {need to} supervise/oversee anything" or "did not {need to} pay attention to anything at all"

in his hand

"that Joseph was in charge of," or "that Joseph was managing,"

because Yahweh was with him

"because Yahweh was with Joseph". For some languages, it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, "Because/Since Yahweh was with Joseph and helped him to succeed in whatever he did, the warden did not need to supervise/oversee anything that Joseph was in charge of." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and Yahweh made what he was doing successful

"and gave him success in whatever/everything he did." or "and helped/enabled him to succeed at everything he did." See how you translated a similar clause ("Yahweh made all that he was doing successful") in verse 3.

Genesis 40

Genesis 40:1

Then it happened after those things {that

“Sometime after that,” or “After some time, {one day}”

the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and the baker

“the {chief/head} wine-server and the {chief/head} baker for the king of/over Egypt” or “the man {who was in charge of those} who served wine to the king of/over Egypt and the man {who was in charge of those} who made/baked bread/food {for the king}”. The chief cupbearer was one of Pharaoh’s most trusted servants. He was in charge of serving Pharaoh anything that he wanted to drink, especially wine. It was his job to test the drink before Pharaoh had some, to make sure it was high quality and not poisoned. Some of that information could be put in a footnote. Also, it may be more natural to include here in verse 1 the fact that these were the head officials in these jobs, rather than wait until verse 2 to introduce that. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

sinned

“disobeyed/displeased” or “offended”. The text does not say what the officials did wrong that angered Pharaoh. They may have done their jobs poorly in some way. Translate this phrase in a way that fits this context well in your language. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

against their lord, against the king of Egypt

“their master, {who was} {Pharaoh} the king of/over Egypt.” For some languages it is more natural to include here in verse 1 the fact that the king of Egypt was Pharaoh, rather than wait until verse 2 to introduce that. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 40:2

And Pharaoh broke out in anger

“So Pharaoh/he” or “As a result, {King} Pharaoh” or “So the king”. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Pharaoh (verse 2) is the same person as the king of Egypt (verse 1). See how you translated “Pharaoh” in Gen 12:15, and see the important note about this there. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

And Pharaoh broke out in anger against

“was very angry at/with” or “was furious with”. Consider whether or not your language has an idiom similar to “broke out in anger” that fits well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

his two officials, against the chief of the cupbearers and against the chief of the bakers

“the official in charge of serving wine to him and the official in charge of baking bread for him” or “his chief/head wine-server and chief/head baker” or “those two officials/officers.” It may be more natural to combine verses 1 and 2 and say, “Sometime after that, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, became very angry at two of his officials, his chief wine-server and chief baker, because they had displeased him.” In this case, you would also combine the verse numbers (1-2) to show it is a verse bridge combining two verses. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1721)**)

Genesis 40:3

and he put them

“So he had them {arrested and} put” or “So he {had his soldiers arrest them and} put them”. Often in the Bible (as here), when it says that a king (or someone else with authority) did something, it is implied that he had people who were under his authority actually do it. See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 39:20. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

in custody

“under guard” or “in prison”

in the house of the chief of the guards

“in/at the house of the captain of/over the guards,” Apparently the round-house prison was part of the house where the chief of the guards lived and worked, perhaps a lower part (See: Joseph’s use of the word “pit” in verse 15 to refer to this prison). See how you translated “chief/captain of the guards” in Gen 37:36 and 39:1.

in the round-house, the place where Joseph was bound

“{that is,} in the round-house {prison/jail}, the {same} place/prison where Joseph was imprisoned/confined.” or “in the same prison where Joseph was.” See how you translated “bound” in Gen 39:20.

Genesis 40:4

And the chief of the guards assigned Joseph to them

"{There} the captain of/over the guards assigned/appointed Joseph {to take care of them},"

so he attended them

"so he served them," or "and so he waited on them,"

and they were in custody

"and they were {kept} in custody/prison" or "and they remained in custody/prison". Some translations begin a new paragraph and sentence here that continues into verse 5 and say, "After they had been in prison {for} a while, 5 one night the king's head wine-server and head baker dreamed ..." (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

for} days

"{for} some days/time," or "{for} a while," The phrase "{for} days" is a general expression that refers to an unspecified length of time.

Genesis 40:5

Then the two of them dreamed a dream. Each {had} his {own} dream in the same night

“Then one night the two of them each had a dream,” or “One night they both/each had a dream,” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and} each {man’s} dream had its own interpretation

“{and} each of the dreams had its own interpretation/meaning.” or “each with its own interpretation/meaning.” or “Each {one’s} dream had its own meaning.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

They were} the cupbearer and the baker who {belonged} to the king of Egypt, who were bound in the round-house

“{This is talking about} the wine-server and the baker, who had served the king of Egypt and/but were in prison.” Many translations leave this sentence implied because it repeats information from the previous verses and may sound too repetitive. Or you could put this sentence earlier in this verse and say, “One night, the king of Egypt’s wine server and baker each had a dream while they were in prison, and each {man’s/one’s} dream had its own interpretation/meaning.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that the cupbearer and baker in verse 5 are the same officials as those in verses 2-4. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 40:6

And Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them, and behold

“In the morning, Joseph came to {serve} them and was surprised to see that” or “The next morning, when Joseph came to {serve} them, he saw/noticed that”. Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to have the time phrase “in the morning” first this verse. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

they were upset

“they were troubled.” or “they looked distressed/sad.”

Genesis 40:7

So he asked Pharaoh's officials who {were} with him in custody {in} the house of his master, saying

"So/And he asked {King} Pharaoh's officials/officers who {were} in prison with him in his master's house," or "So/And he asked them," (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Why {are} your faces sad today

"Why do your faces look so sad/downcast today?" or "Why do you look {so} sad/unhappy today?" Some languages have an idiom that fits well here. Do what is natural in your language.

Genesis 40:8

And they said to him

"They answered him," or "They replied," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We dreamed a dream

"We {each} had a dream {last night}," or "{Last night} we {both/each} had a dream,"

but {there is} no one to interpret it

"but there is no one {here} who can tell {us} what our dreams mean." or "but we do not have anyone {here} to interpret/explain them {for us}."

Then Joseph said to them

"Then/So Joseph replied," or "Joseph replied," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Don't interpretations {belong} to God

"God is the {only} one who can explain the meaning {of dreams}." or "God is the {only} one who gives someone/people the ability to interpret {the meaning of dreams}." Joseph uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that God is the only one who interprets dreams. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Please tell {them} to me

"Please tell me {what you dreamed}." or "Please tell/describe {your dreams} to me {and God will reveal to me what they mean}." Make sure that your translation of the last two sentences in this verse does not sound like Joseph is claiming to be God. Rather, he is saying that if the two officials tell their dreams to him, God will enable him to interpret the dreams. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 40:9

Then the chief of the cupbearers told his dream to Joseph

"Then/So the head wine-server told Joseph what was in his dream" or "So the one/officer who was in charge of/over the wine-servers related/described to Joseph what he had seen in his dream". See how you translated "chief of the cupbearers" in verse 2.

and said to him

"by saying," or "He said," or "This is what he said:" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

And behold, in my dream a grapevine

"In my dream there was a grapevine/vine" or "While I was dreaming, I saw a grapevine/vine". If grapevines and grapes are not known in your area, you could be more general in verses 9-11 and say "vine" and "fruit". See how you translated "vineyard" in Gen 9:20.

was} before me

"in front of me"

Genesis 40:10

and on the grapevine {were} three branches

“The grapevine/vine had three branches.” or “that had three branches.” Consider whether or not it is more natural to begin a new sentence here in your language.

Then while it was budding

“As soon as it started budding,” or “Soon buds started forming {on the vine/branches}. {Then}”

its blossoms came out

“{suddenly} there were blossoms/flowers,” or “{the buds} became blossoms/flowers,”

and} its clusters ripened {into} grapes

“{and} its/the clusters {of flowers} became {clusters/bunches of} ripe grapes/fruit.” or “{and the blossoms/flowers} became clusters/bunches of ripe grapes/fruit.”

Genesis 40:11

Then the cup of Pharaoh {was} in my hand

“Then/Next {I saw that} I was holding {King} Pharaoh’s cup,” or “... holding the king’s cup,”

and I took the grapes

“and/so I picked {some} grapes/fruit {from the vine}”

and squeezed them

“and squeezed juice from them” or “and squeezed them {so that the juice went/flowed}”

into the cup of Pharaoh

“into Pharaoh’s cup.” or “into the cup.”

Then I put the cup into the hand of Pharaoh

“Then I put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand {to drink from}.” or “Then I gave/handed the cup to Pharaoh {and he drank from it}.” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 40:12

Then Joseph said to him

“Joseph said to him,” or “Then Joseph told him,”

This {is} its interpretation

“This is the interpretation/meaning of your dream:” or “This/Here {is} what your dream means:”

The three branches {are} three days

“The three branches {represent/symbolize} three days.”

Genesis 40:13

Within three days

"In three {more} days" or "Three days from now"

Pharaoh

"{King} Pharaoh" or "the king". Consider what is the best way to refer to Pharaoh here in your language. Some languages need to include an honorific title with his name more often than other languages. (See: **Honorifics (p. 1634)**)

will lift up your head

"will summon you" or "will have you brought up {out of prison}". The idiom "lift up your head" means that the wine-server will be summoned or brought out from the lowly or shameful place where he had been staying. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and restore you to your position

"and reappoint/reinstate/return you to your {previous} position/work," or "and give you back your job/status,"

and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand

"so that you will {again} serve wine to Pharaoh/him," or "so that you will {again} have the duty of serving Pharaoh/him his cup of wine,"

according to the former custom when you were his cupbearer

"as you used to do when you were his cupbearer/wine-server." or "the way you did before as his cupbearer/wine-server."

Genesis 40:14

But if you remember me with you, when it goes well for you

“When {you are out of prison and} everything is going well for you, remember that I was {here} with you,” or “Also, when {you get out of prison and} your life is good, remember {how well} I served/treated you,”

then please show kindness to me

“and please be kind/gracious to me,” or “and please do me a favor,” See how you translated “showed kindness to” in Gen 39:21. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

and mention me to Pharaoh

“and mention my situation to {King} Pharaoh,” or “and tell {King} Pharaoh about me {and how I was falsely accused},” Make sure that the way Joseph refers to King Pharaoh sounds respectful in your translation. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

and get me out from this house

“so that I can get out of this prison.” or “so that he releases/frees me from this prison.”

Genesis 40:15

For indeed, I was stolen

“Surely I was taken by force” or “People brought me {here} by force”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language to emphasize Joseph. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

from the land of the Hebrews

“from the land where the Hebrew people live.” or “from the land where {my people,} the Hebrews, live.” The Hebrew people were the descendants of Abraham (See: note at Gen 14:13), and Joseph’s people were known as “Hebrews” in Egypt (Gen 39:14, 17). Their land, which God gave them, was the land of Canaan (Gen 13:12, 14-15; 17:8, 23:19; 37:1). Some of that information could be put in a footnote.

And also here

“And {while I have been} here {in Egypt},” or “Even here {in Egypt}” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

I did not do anything

“I have not done anything {wrong}” or “I have done nothing {wrong}”

that they should put me in the pit

“to be put/thrown into this dungeon/prison.” or “to deserve being in a dungeon/prison.”

Genesis 40:16

And the chief of the bakers saw that he interpreted favorably

“When the head baker heard Joseph interpret/explain that dream in a favorable/positive way,” or “When the head baker heard the positive interpretation/meaning that Joseph gave {for the first dream},” See how you translated a related word (“interpreter”) in verse 8.

so he said to Joseph

“he said to him,” or “he told him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I also {was} in my dream, and behold

“I also had a dream, and in it there were” or “I also {had a dream}, and while I was dreaming, I saw”

there were} three baskets of white bread

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “three baskets {full} of white/fine bread/cakes” or “three bread baskets” or (2) “three white/wicker baskets”. These baskets were open on top and were probably woven out of flexible strips of cane or willow branches.

on my head

“{stacked} {on top of each other} on my head.” These baskets would have been carried on the head, each one above the other.

Genesis 40:17

And in the top basket {were} all {kinds} of

“In the top basket {there were}” or “The top basket {was full of}”

all {kinds} of food for Pharaoh, baker’s goods

“all/many {kinds} of baked goods for {King} Pharaoh to eat,” or “all/many {kinds} of {fine/special} bread and cakes {that had been made/baked} for {King} Pharaoh {to eat},” Make sure that the way the chief baker refers to King Pharaoh sounds respectful in your translation. (See: **Honorifics (p.1634)**)

but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head

“but {some} birds were eating/gobbling them/everything {up} from the basket.” or “but {instead,} {some} birds {came and} ate/devoured {all} the food/bread in the basket on my head.”

Genesis 40:18

Then Joseph responded and said

“Joseph said {to him},” or “Joseph told {the baker},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

This {is} its interpretation

“This is the interpretation/meaning of your dream:” or “This/Here {is} what your dream means:” See how you translated this in verse 12.

The three baskets {are} three days

“The three baskets {represent/symbolize} three days.” See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 12.

Genesis 40:19

Within three days

“In three days” or “Three days from now”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 13.

Pharaoh

“{King} Pharaoh” or “the king”

will lift up your head from you

“will {have his soldiers} cut/chop off your head” or “will have you beheaded”. This phrase seems to have a literal meaning here (of having the baker beheaded) in contrast to the meaning of “lift up your head” in verse 13 (where it means to summon from a lowly or shameful place). Make sure your translation of this phrase is accurate and clear in both contexts.

and hang you on a tree

“and hang your body on a tree/stake,” or “and impale your body on a {sharp} pole,”

and the birds will eat your flesh from you

“and/where birds/vultures will eat/devour {all} your flesh off your bones.” These were birds such as vultures, buzzards, or condors, which eat carrion (dead animals); these were not birds that eat seeds or hunt live prey. You could use the name of a type of bird that is well-known in your language area. See how you translated “eating” in verse 17.

Genesis 40:20

Then it happened on the third day, the day Pharaoh was born

“Then sure enough, three days later {it was} {King} Pharaoh’s birthday, and” or “And it so happened that three days later, {it was} Pharaoh’s birthday, and”. The phrase “Then it happened” introduces and emphasizes a set of important events. Do what is natural in your language.

that he made a feast for all his servants

“he held a feast/banquet for all of his officials/officers {to attend}.” or “he invited all his officials/officers to attend a/ his {birthday} feast/banquet.” See how you translated “feast” or “banquet” in Gen 21:8.

And he lifted up the head of the chief of the cupbearers and the head of the chief of the bakers

“{During the feast/banquet,} he {had soldiers} bring {his} head/chief wine-server and head/chief baker {out of prison} {to the feast/banquet}”. See how you translated similar clauses in verses 3 (See: note), 13, and 19, where Pharaoh had his soldiers do something. Also see how you translated “lifted up your head” in verse 13, where it has a similar meaning.

in the presence of his servants

“in front of {all} his {other} officials/officers.” or “where all his {other} officials/officers were.”

Genesis 40:21

Then he restored

“Then he reinstated/reappointed/returned”. See how you translated “restore ... to ... position” in verse 13.

the chief of the cupbearers to his position

“the chief/head wine-server to his {former/previous} position/work,”

and he put the cup into the hand of Pharaoh

“so that {once again} he served wine to him.” or “so that {once again} he had the duty of serving him his cup of wine.” See how you translated a similar clause in verse 13.

Genesis 40:22

but the chief of the bakers he hanged

"But {as for} the chief/head baker, he/Pharaoh had him {executed/beheaded and} hanged/impaled {on a tree/pole}." or "But he/Pharaoh {had his soldiers execute/behead} the head baker {and} impale {his body on a pole/stake}." It is implied here that the baker was beheaded before his body was impaled on a stake (verse 19). Also, notice that "the chief of the bakers" is at the beginning of this clause in the Hebrew text to emphasize him and contrast him with what happened to the chief cupbearer. Do what is natural in your language. See how you translated "hang ... on a tree" in verse 19.

just as Joseph had interpreted for them

"{Everything} happened} exactly the way Joseph had interpreted/explained {their dreams} to them." or "which was exactly what Joseph had said would happen."

Genesis 40:23

However, the chief of the cupbearers did not remember Joseph but forgot him

“But the chief/head cupbearer/wine-server did not remember {to tell Pharaoh about} Joseph, but {rather/instead,} he forgot {about} him.” or “... {completely} forgot about Joseph and did not remember {to tell Pharaoh about} him.”

Genesis 41

Genesis 41:1

Then it happened {at} the end of two years of days

“After two full years had passed,” or “Two whole/complete years later,”

that Pharaoh was dreaming and behold, he was standing

“{King} Pharaoh had a dream. {In the dream} he saw himself standing” or “{King} Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing”. See how you translated “Pharaoh” in Gen 40:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

beside the river

“beside the {Nile} River.” This phrase usually refers to the Nile River, which was the most important river in Egypt and was so well known by everyone there that it was referred to as “the river”. See how you translated a different Hebrew word for “river” in Gen 36:37. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 41:2

Then behold

“Then suddenly,” or “Then he saw that” or “Suddenly,”

from the river came up seven cows, fine-looking and fat-fleshed

“seven cows {that were} healthy-looking and fat/well-fed came/walked up out of the river {onto the bank/land}” or “seven healthy-looking, fat/well-fed cows came/walked up out of the river {onto the bank/land}”. Make sure your translation does not sound like the cows rose up out of the water into the air. Also see how you translated “cows” in Gen 32:15.

and they grazed among the reeds

“and started grazing/feeding on the grass {that was there}.” or “and started eating the tall/marsh grass {beside the river}.”

Genesis 41:3

Then behold

“Then suddenly,” or “Then/Next he saw that”

seven other cows came up after them from the river, ugly-looking and thin-fleshed

“seven cows {that were} sickly-looking and scrawny/skinny walked up out of the river” or “seven sickly-looking, scrawny/skinny cows came/walked up out of the river” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and they stood beside the {other} cows

“and stood next to the {first/healthy} cows”

on the bank of the river

“on the bank of the river.” or “on the river bank.” Consider again how you refer to “the river” in verses 1-3. If you refer to it as “the {Nile} River” in verse 1, it may be more natural to refer to it as “the river” after that. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 41:4

Then the ugly-looking and thin-fleshed cows ate

“Then the sickly-looking, scrawny/skinny cows devoured” or “Then the cows {that were} sickly-looking and scrawny/skinny ate/swallowed {up/down}”. See how you translated this phrase in verse 3.

the seven fine-looking and fat cows

“the seven healthy-looking, fat/well-fed cows.” or “the seven cows {that were} healthy-looking and fat/well-fed.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 2.

and Pharaoh woke up

“{Just} then {King} Pharaoh woke up.” or “After that, the king woke up.” Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Pharaoh at each point/occurrence in this chapter.

Genesis 41:5

Then he fell asleep

“Then Pharaoh” or “Then the king”

Then he fell asleep

“Then Pharaoh/he went to sleep {again}” or “The the king went {back} to sleep” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and dreamed a second {time

“and had a second {dream}.” or “and started dreaming again.”

And behold

“{This time} he saw” or “{In this dream} there were”

seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, fat and good

“seven big/plump, beautiful/well-formed heads of grain growing on the same stem/plant.” The phrase “heads of grain” is one word in the Hebrew text. Consider whether it is better in your language to use a word or phrase to translate this.

Genesis 41:6

Then behold

“Then suddenly,” or “Suddenly,” or “Then/Next he saw {that}”

seven heads of grain, thin and scorched {by} the east wind

“seven small/shriveled heads of grain that were dried out {by} the {hot} east/desert wind” or “seven thin/shriveled heads of grain that the {hot} east/desert wind had dried out”. This wind was from the desert in the east, so it was hot and dry. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

sprouted

“grew/sprang up” or “started/were growing”

after them

“next to them {on the same stalk/plant}.” or “{on the same stalk/plant} beside the first/well-formed heads.” Consider whether it is better in your language to refer to the first heads here with a pronoun (“them”) or a noun phrase. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 41:7

Then the thin heads of grain swallowed up

"Next, the small/shriveled heads of grain devoured" or "... ate/gobbled up/down". See how you translated "thin" in verse 6 and "heads of grain" in verses 5-6.

the seven fat and full heads

"the seven big/plump, well-formed heads." The word "full" here describes heads of grain that have many seeds in them. See how you translated "fat" in verse 5.

Then Pharaoh woke up

"{Just} then Pharaoh woke up" or "After that, Pharaoh woke up" or "At that point, Pharaoh woke up". See how you translated this clause in verse 4.

and behold, {it was} a dream

"and {suddenly} realized/knew that {he had been} dreaming."

Genesis 41:8

Then it happened in the morning

“In the morning” or “The next morning”. The phrase “Then it happened” introduces and emphasizes an important event. It also increases suspense so that the audience wonders what the outcome will be. Many English translations do not include this phrase, possibly for reasons of naturalness. Do what is natural in your language.

that his spirit was agitated

“his/Pharaoh’s spirit/mind was disturbed/troubled {about what the dreams might mean},” or “Pharaoh was/felt upset/distressed {about the/his dreams},”

so he sent and called for

“so he sent {servants/messengers} to summon” or “so he had {servants/messengers} summon”

all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men

“all the magicians/sorcerers and {other} wise men in {the country of} Egypt {to come to him}.” Magicians were some of the wise men whom Pharaoh regularly consulted for advice. They had power from demons to do miracles (Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7) and to communicate with the spirits of people who had died. They may have also been astrologers or Egyptian priests who were skilled in sacred writings. Some of that information could be put in a footnote.

Then Pharaoh told his dreams to them

“{When they arrived,} Pharaoh/he told them what he had dreamed,” or “Then Pharaoh/he related/described to them what {he had seen} in his dreams,”

but no one

“but none of them” or “but none of those men”

could interpret them for Pharaoh

“was able to explain to him {what} the dreams {meant}.” or “could tell him what the dreams meant.”

Genesis 41:9

the chief of the cupbearers

“Then/But the head wine-server”. Consider again how you translated “chief of the cupbearers” and “cupbearer” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 40:1-2, 5, 9, 13, 20-21, 23; 41:9.

Then the chief of the cupbearers spoke with Pharaoh, saying

“Then/But the head wine-server spoke {up} and said to Pharaoh,” or “Then/But the head wine-server said to Pharaoh,” Consider again how you translated “chief of the cupbearers” and “cupbearer” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 40:1-2, 5, 9, 13, 20-21, 23; 41:9. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Today I remember

“{Sir;} today I remember” or “{Your Majesty/Honor;} I now remember”. For many languages, it is necessary to use a respectful title to address a person of high status like Pharaoh. Do what is best in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

my offenses

“my sins/failures.” The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “{the time} when I offended/displeased/wronged {you}.” or (2) “something {important} I failed/forgot to do.” The second interpretation refers to the cupbearer forgetting to tell Pharaoh about Joseph.

Genesis 41:10

Pharaoh broke out in anger against

"{Some time ago,} {King} Pharaoh, {you} were very angry at/with". The events in verses 10-13 had happened two years earlier (verse 1); chapter 40 gives the details about those events. See how you translated the idiom "broke out in anger against" in Gen 40:2. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

his servants

"his/your officials/officers," In verses 10 and 13, the cupbearer uses third person ("Pharaoh ... his ... he...") to show respect for Pharaoh. For some languages, it is confusing to do that, so second person ("you ... your ...you ...") must be used instead. Some languages have an honorific such as "your Majesty/Honor" that could be used occasionally in these verses instead of third person. Do what is best in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1623)**)

and he put me in custody {in} the house of the chief of the guards, me and the chief of the bakers

"{including} me and the chief/head baker, and he/you put us in custody/prison at the captain of the guards' house." or "and he/you put the head baker and me in the prison that is in the house of the captain of the guards." See how you translated "put ... in custody in the house of the chief of the guards" in Gen 40:3. Also consider again how you translated "chief of the bakers" and "baker" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 40:1-2, 4-5, 16-17, 20, 22; 41:10, 13.

Genesis 41:11

And we dreamed a dream in the same night, he and I

"{One time while we were there,} we {each} dreamed/had a dream in/during the same night," or "{While we were there,} one night we {each} had a dream," See how you translated a similar sentence in Gen 40:5. In verses 11-13, the pronouns "we" and "us" exclude Pharaoh. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his dream

"{and} each of our dreams had a different meaning." or "{and} each of our dreams had its own meaning." Consider again how you translated "interpretation" in Gen 40:5, 8, 12, 18; 41:11 and the related verb "interpret" in Gen 40:16, 22.

Genesis 41:12

Now there with us {was} a young Hebrew man

"There was a young Hebrew man with us," Translate "young ... man" in a way that fits with the fact that Joseph was 30 years old (verse 46) and was not yet married.

a servant for the chief of the guards

"{who was} a servant for the captain of/over the guards." Consider again how you translated "chief of the guards" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 37:36; 39:1; 40:3-4; 41:10, 12.

And we told {our dreams} to him

"After we told him {our dreams}," or "After we related/described {our dreams} to him," Consider again how you translated "told" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 24:66; 29:13; 37:9-10; 40:8-9; 41:8, 12.

and he interpreted our dreams for us

"he explained them to us." or "he told us what they meant."

He interpreted {for} each according to his dream

"He interpreted each man's dream." or "He told each of us the meaning of our dreams." or "He told us what each of our dreams meant."

Genesis 41:13

And it happened, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened

“And sure enough, everything happened exactly the way he had interpreted/explained {the dreams} to us:”

me he restored to my position

“you reinstated/reappointed/returned me to my {former/previous} position/work {as your cupbearer/wine-server},”
See how you translated “restored to ... position” in Gen 40:21.

and him he hanged

“and/but you {had your soldiers execute} the baker {and} hang/impale his body {on a pole/stake}.” or “but you {had your soldiers} execute the baker.” Consider again whether you referred to Pharaoh in third person (“he”) or second person (“you”) in verses 10 and 13. Also see how you translated “hanged/impaled {on a tree/pole}” in Gen 40:22.
(See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 41:14

Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph

"{Immediately} Pharaoh sent {servants/messengers} to summon/get Joseph." or "{When Pharaoh heard that,} {immediately} he had {servants/messengers} summon Joseph." See how you translated "sent and called for" in verse 8.

So they quickly brought him from the pit

"So they hurriedly brought/got him/Joseph out of the dungeon/prison." or "So they went right away and brought/got ..." See how you translated "pit" in Gen 40:15.

Then he shaved and changed his clothes

"Then he shaved {his head and face}, changed into suitable/better clothes and" or "Then after he shaved {his head and face} and changed into appropriate/clean clothing, he". Since Joseph lived in Egypt and Egyptian men kept their heads and faces clean-shaven, Joseph probably also shaved his head and his face. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to make this implied information explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and came to Pharaoh

"came/went before Pharaoh." or "came/went into Pharaoh's presence." Your choice of "came" versus "went" in this context depends on whose perspective you take: "came" reflects things from Pharaoh's point of view, and "went" reflects things from Joseph's point of view. Do what is most natural in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

Genesis 41:15

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

“Then Pharaoh said to him,” or “Then Pharaoh told Joseph/him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I dreamed a dream

“I had a dream,”

but no one could interpret it

“but no one has been able to explain {to me} what it means.” or “but there isn’t anyone who can interpret/explain it {for/to me}.” See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 40:8.

But I heard about you, saying

“But someone told me about you,” or “But I was told”

that} you hear a dream {and are able} to interpret it

“{that} when you hear a dream, {you are able} to interpret/explain what it means.” or “{that} when someone tells you a dream, {you are able} to interpret/explain its meaning.” Consider again how you translated “interpret” and “interpreter” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 40:8, 16, 22; 41:8, 12, 13, 15, 16.

Genesis 41:16

And Joseph responded to Pharaoh, saying

"Joseph replied to Pharaoh/him," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

It is} not in me

"{Sir,} I do not have that ability {on my own}," or "{Your Majesty,} I cannot do that {by myself}," Make sure your translation of Joseph's response sounds polite. See what you did in verse 9. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

God will answer

"{but/rather} God will explain/interpret {your dream}"

with Pharaoh's peace

"for your well-being/good, {King} Pharaoh." or "so that {you,} {King} Pharaoh, will have peace {in your heart/spirit}." Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to use Pharaoh's name at the beginning of this quote (instead of here) and say, "{King} Pharaoh, I do not have that ability..." (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 41:17

Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph

“So Pharaoh told Joseph/him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

In my dream, behold, I was standing

“As I was dreaming, I saw myself standing” or “I dreamed that I was standing”

on the bank of the river

“on the bank of the {Nile} River.” or “beside the {Nile} River.” See how you translated “the {Nile} River” in verse 1. Since this is the first time that Pharaoh mentions “the river” to Joseph, consider whether this is a good place in your translation to make it explicit again that this is the Nile River. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 41:18

Then behold

“Then suddenly,” or “Then I saw that”. Compare how you translated verse 2, which is similar but not identical to verse 18.

from the river came up seven cows, fat-fleshed and of fine form

“seven cows {that were} fat and healthy-looking came/walked up out of the river {onto the bank/land}” or “seven fat/well-fed, healthy-looking cows came/walked up out of the river {onto the bank/land}” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and they grazed among the reeds

“and started grazing/feeding on” or “and started eating”

among the reeds

“the reeds/plants {that were there}.” or “the tall/marsh grass {beside the river}.”

Genesis 41:19

Then behold

"Then suddenly," or "Then/Next I saw that". See how you translated verse 3, which is similar to the first half of verse 19.

seven other cows came up after them

"seven other cows came/walked up {out of the river} behind the first cows;"

poor and very ugly of form and thin-fleshed

"they were in terrible/horrible condition, very sickly-looking and scrawny/skinny." For some languages it is more natural to put this information earlier in this sentence and say, "Then behold, seven poor/weak, very sickly-looking, scrawny cows came up {out of the river} behind the first cows/ones." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

I have not seen

"{In fact,} I have not/never seen"

cows} as ugly as those

"such awful-looking {cows}" or "{cows} in such poor/terrible/bad condition"

in all the land of Egypt

"in the whole/entire country of Egypt!" or "anywhere in the country of Egypt!"

Genesis 41:20

Then the thin and ugly cows ate

“Then the scrawny/skinny, sickly/unhealthy cows devoured” or “Then the cows {that were} scrawny/skinny and sickly/unhealthy ate/swallowed {up/down}”. See how you translated “ate” in verse 4.”

the first seven fat cows

“the seven fat/well-fed cows.” See how you translated “fat” or “fat-fleshed” in verses 2, 4, 18 and 20.

Genesis 41:21

So they went into their bellies, but it could not be known

“But {even} after they had eaten/devoured them, no one would {ever} know” or “But although the scrawny/skinny cows had eaten/swallowed the fat/well-fed cows/ones, it could not be seen”

that they had gone into their bellies

“that they had eaten/devoured them,”

and their appearance {was} just as ugly as at the beginning

“because they {still} looked just as ugly/terrible/scrawny as {they had} before.”

Then I woke up

“That’s when I woke up.” or “At that point, I woke up.”

Genesis 41:22

Then I saw in my dream, and behold

"Then I {fell asleep again and} continued dreaming. {This time} I saw that there were" or "Then I {went back to sleep and} had {another} dream. {In this dream} there were"

seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, full and good

"seven heads of grain growing on a single stalk/plant. They were full of ripe grain kernels." or "seven full/big, beautiful/well-formed heads of grain growing on the same stalk/plant." See how you translated verse 5, which is similar to verse 22. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 41:23

Then behold

“Then suddenly,” or “Then/Next I saw {that}”. See how you translated verse 6, which is similar to verse 23.

seven heads of grain, withered, thin {and} scorched {by} the east wind

“seven heads of grain {that were} small and withered/wilted because they were dried out by the {hot} east/desert wind” or “seven small, withered/wilted heads of grain that the {hot} east/desert wind had dried out”

sprouted

“grew/sprang up” or “started/were growing”

after them

“next to them {on the same stalk/plant}.” or “{on the same stalk/plant} beside the first/well-formed heads/ones.”

For some languages it is more natural to change the order of phrases in this verse and say, “Then seven small heads of grain sprouted {on the same plant} next to the first heads/ones. {These had} withered/wilted because the {hot} east/desert wind had dried them out.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

Genesis 41:24

Then the thin heads of grain swallowed up

"Then the small/shriveled heads of grain ate/gobbled up/down" or "... swallowed down" or "... devoured". See how you translated the first half of verse 7, which is similar to the first half of verse 24.

the seven good heads of grain

"the seven beautiful/well-formed heads/ones." See how you translated "good" in verses 5 and 22.

And I told {this} to the magicians

"I told {my dreams} to {my} magicians/sorcerers," See how you translated "magicians" in verse 8.

but no one {could} explain {it} to me

"but none of them could explain to me {what the dreams meant}." or "but they could not explain/interpret {them} for me." See how you translated a different Hebrew word that means "explain" or "interpret" in verse 8.

Genesis 41:25

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh

“Then Joseph told {King} Pharaoh,” or “Then Joseph responded to Pharaoh,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Pharaoh’s dreams {are} one

“{Both} Pharaoh’s/your dreams have the same meaning.” or “Your Majesty/Honor, {both of} your dreams mean the same thing.” In verses 25, 28, 32-35, Joseph uses third person (“Pharaoh ... his ... he...”) to show respect for Pharaoh. For some languages, it is confusing to do that, so second person (“you ... your... you ...”) must be used instead. Some languages have an honorific such as “your Majesty/Honor” that could be used occasionally in these verses instead of third person. Do what is best in your language. Also see what you did in verses 10 and 13. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

What God is doing he has shown to Pharaoh

“{Through them,} God is revealing/showing to you what he will do.” or “God has revealed to {you,} {King} Pharaoh, what he is planning/about to do.” The Hebrew text emphasizes “what God is doing” by putting that phrase first in the sentence. Consider what is the most natural phrase order for this sentence in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 41:26

The seven good cows {are} seven years

“The seven healthy cows {in your dream} {represent/symbolize} seven years,”

and the seven good heads of grain {are} seven years

“and the seven beautiful/well-formed heads of grain {represent/symbolize} {the same} seven years.”

The dreams {are} one

“{Both} dreams mean the same thing.” or “{Both} dreams have the same meaning.” See how you translated “dreams {are} one” in verse 25.

Genesis 41:27

And the seven thin and ugly cows

"The seven scrawny/skinny and sickly/unhealthy cows". See how you translated "thin and ugly cows" in verse 20, and how you translated "thin" in verse 19.

that came up after them

"that came/walked up {out of the river} behind the first cows/ones"

are} seven years, and {so are} the seven thin heads of grain

"{represent/symbolize} {a different} seven years, and {so do} the seven small heads of grain". See how you translated "thin" in verses 6 and 23, and consider again how you translated "heads of grain" in verses 5-7, 22-24, 26-27.

scorched by the east wind

"that the {hot/dry} east/desert wind had dried out/up." or "that the {desert} wind from the east had dried out/up." See how you translated this phrase in verses 6 and 23. Also consider again how you translated "east" in the book of Genesis; see Gen 2:8; 3:24; 10:30; 11:2; 12:8; 13:11; 14; 25:6; 28:14; 29:1, 41:6, 23, 27. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

There will be seven years of famine

"{They both mean that} there will be a famine that lasts seven years." or "{Both dreams mean that} there will be seven years when food will be very/extremely scarce." A "famine" is a prolonged period of time when people are starving because crops are failing, often due to a lack of rain or other severe weather conditions. See how you translated this term in Gen 12:10 and 26:1.

Genesis 41:28

That {is} the word that I have spoken to Pharaoh

"{King} Pharaoh, that {is} what I was talking about when I told you {that}" or "Your Majesty/Honor, as I told you previously/before," Consider what is the best way to refer to Pharaoh here in your language. See what you did in verse 25. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

What God is doing he has shown to Pharaoh

"God is showing/revealing to you what he will do." or "God has shown/revealed to you what he is going/about to do." See how you translated this clause in verse 25. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 41:29

Behold, seven years are coming

“Listen, {first} there will be seven years”

of} great abundance

“when crops/harvests are abundant” or “when people will have more than enough food {to eat}” or “when everyone will have plenty of food {to eat}”

in all the land of Egypt

“throughout the entire/whole land/country of Egypt.”

Genesis 41:30

But seven years of famine will rise up after them

“But after them/that, there will be a famine that lasts seven years,” or “But after those {prosperous} years, there will be seven years when food is very/extremely scarce,” See how you translated “famine” in verse 27.

so that all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten

“So people/everyone in the country of Egypt will forget how good it was during the time/years when they had plenty of food,” or “As a result, the people in Egypt will forget what it was like in their country during all the years when they had more than enough {food} {to eat},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and the famine will consume the land

“because the famine will devastate/destroy the land/country {and the people}.” or “because the severe food shortage will devastate/ravage the land/country {so that many people will starve}.” The phrase “the land” here probably also includes the people who lived in that country. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 41:31

And the abundance in the land will not be remembered

“That’s right, people will completely forget about the time/years when food was plentiful,” or “Yes/Indeed, there will be no evidence/trace left that there were years when there was more than enough food,” Verse 31 restates much of the content of verse 30, so keep that in mind as you translate the beginning of this verse. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1603)**)

because of that famine after it, because it {will be} very heavy

“because the famine {that comes/happens} after that {will be} very/so severe/oppressive.” or “because the following years when food is scarce {will be} so severe/terrible.” For some languages, it clearer and more natural to put this clause near the beginning of this verse and say, “Yes, the famine that is coming will be so severe/terrible that people will completely forget about the time/years when food was abundant/plentiful in the land.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 41:32

And as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, {it is} because

“The reason you dreamed/had the same dream in two different ways/forms is that” or “The fact that you, {King} Pharaoh, had two {different} dreams that mean the same thing shows that” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1623)**)

the matter has been established by God

“God has {firmly} decided/determined what he is going to do,” or “God wants you to know that this will {definitely} happen,”

and God will soon do it

“and he will make it happen soon.” or “and he will cause it to happen {very} soon.”

Genesis 41:33

And now let Pharaoh seek a man

“So {King} Pharaoh, you should now look for a man” or “So now, {your Majesty/Highness,} I recommend that you choose a man” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

who is} discerning and wise

“{who is} intelligent/insightful and knows what to do,” or “who is wise and can make good decisions,”

and set him over

“and put him in charge of/over” or “and give him authority over”

the land of Egypt

“the country of Egypt {and its people}.” See how you translated “the land” in verse 30. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 41:34

Let Pharaoh do {this}: Let him set supervisors

"{King} Pharaoh, I also recommend that you appoint/assign {regional} administrators/overseers" or "Sir, you should {also} appoint ..." (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

over the land

"to be in charge of/over {different regions/parts of} the country," or "to supervise/manage {different regions/parts of} the country,"

and let him take a fifth

"and {have them} collect/gather {from the people} one-fifth" or "Then {command/order them to} collect ..."
Consider whether or not it is more natural to begin a new sentence here in your language.

of the land of Egypt

"of {all} {the crops/grain/food that people/they harvest in/throughout} the country of Egypt" or "of {everything} the land/country of Egypt produces". In this context, "the land/country" refers to the crops that were growing in Egypt. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

in the seven years of abundance

"during the seven years when harvests/crops are abundant/plentiful." or "during the seven years when there will be more than enough crops/food." See how you translated "abundance" in verses 29-31.

Genesis 41:35

And they should gather

“Have them gather/collect”

all the food of the good years that are coming

“all the/that {surplus/extra} food/grain from/during the prosperous years that will come.” or “all the/that {surplus/extra} food/grain during the good/prosperous years ahead {when there will be plenty of food}.”

And they should store {that} grain

“Have them stockpile {that} grain” or “Command/Order them to store up {that} grain”

under Pharaoh’s hand

“under Pharaoh’s/your direction/authority” or “with/using your authority, {King} Pharaoh,” Consider again how you translated the use of the third person to address Pharaoh respectfully in verses 10, 13, 25, 32-35. Also, for some languages it may be better to put this phrase earlier and say, “Using your authority, {King} Pharaoh, have them stockpile {that} grain {in storehouses}...” Do what is best in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1623)**)

for} food in the cities and guard {it

“in the cities {for/as} food and {have soldiers} keep {it} safe.” or “{in storehouses} in the cities and {have soldiers} guard it, so that there will be food {for the people}.”

Genesis 41:36

And the food should be in reserve

“That {surplus/extra} food/grain should be kept/held in storage” or “That food/grain should stay in storage” or “They must/should continue to store that {surplus/extra} food/grain”

for the land

“for {the people of} the land/country {to eat}” or “so that {the people of} the land/country have it {to eat}”. The phrase “the land” refers here to the people who live in the land of Egypt. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

for the seven years of famine that will come

“during the famine that will last seven years” or “during the seven years when food is very scarce”

on the land of Egypt

“in the country of Egypt,” or “in Egypt,” Consider whether or not it is natural in your language to repeat “the land/country” in this sentence.

so that the land will not be cut off

“so that {the people of/in} the land/country” or “so that the people” or “so that they”. Make sure the way you translated “{the people of/in} the land/country” at the beginning of this verse fits with how you translate it here. It is helpful to read your translation aloud to make sure it is clear and natural. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

so that the land will not be cut off

“will not be devastated/destroyed by” or “will not starve to death because of”. See how you translated the idiom “cut off” in Gen 9:11. It may be necessary to translate it differently here because of the different context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

by the famine

“the severe food scarcity/shortage.” or “the severe lack of food.”

Genesis 41:37

And the word was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants

“What Joseph said/proposed seemed like a good plan to {King} Pharaoh and all his servants/officials.” or “{King} Pharaoh and all his servants/officials agreed that what Joseph had said/proposed was good.” See how you translated the idiom “in the eyes of” in Gen 34:18. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 41:38

Then Pharaoh said to his servants

“So Pharaoh said to his officials,” or “So Pharaoh exclaimed to them,”

Can we find a man like this

“{Certainly} we cannot find anyone else more qualified than this man,” or “{It is obvious that} we will never find a man as qualified as this/Joseph,” Pharaoh uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize that no one is more qualified than Joseph. Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this quote using a question or a statement. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

who {has} the Spirit of God in him

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “who has God’s Spirit in him” or “whom God’s Spirit guides” or (2) “who has a divine spirit in him” or “who has a spirit of {the} gods in him”. Most translations follow the first interpretation, since Joseph had just talked to Pharaoh about God (verses 16, 28, 32) and Pharaoh acknowledges God in verse 39.

Genesis 41:39

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

“Then he said to Joseph,” or “Then Pharaoh/he {turned} to Joseph and said,”

Since God has shown all this to you

“Since God has made all this known to you,” or “God has revealed to you what he is going to do, so”

there is} no one {as} discerning and wise as you

“no one {else} is {as} intelligent/insightful as you {are} or/and knows what to do {in this situation}.” or “... or knows how to manage {this situation} wisely.” See how you translated “discerning and wise” in verse 33.

Genesis 41:40

You will be over my house

"{So} I am putting you in charge of my household {and my kingdom/country}," or "{So} I am giving you authority over {the people in} my palace {and the rest of my kingdom/country}," The phrase "my house" refers here to Pharaoh's household and all the other people he rules as king. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and all my people will kiss on your mouth

"so that all the people in my country/kingdom must obey/do whatever you say/command." or "so that all the people I reign over will/must respect and obey whatever you tell them to do." Consider whether you have a similar idiom in your language or if you need to say this without an idiom. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Only I {on} the throne will be greater than you

"Only I {who sit} {on} the throne {as king} will have higher/more authority than you." or "Only I who am king will ..."
In this context, "the throne" refers to Pharaoh's position as the king. Make sure that is clear in your translation. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 41:41

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

“Then Pharaoh said,” or “Pharaoh continued/added,” Some languages leave “Joseph” or even this entire quote margin implied here, since Pharaoh is still talking to the same person. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

See, I have put you over

“Look/Listen, I hereby/now put you in charge of” or “I am now appointing/installing you to be {the manager/supervisor} over”. The word “See” emphasizes what Pharaoh says next.

all the land of Egypt

“the whole/entire land/country of Egypt.”

Genesis 41:42

Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand

“Then Pharaoh/he took off his {official/royal} identification ring” or “Then Pharaoh took from his finger the ring that he used to mark/seal {documents/letters}”. The signet ring was the identification ring that the king used to seal official documents. See how you translated “signet” in Gen 38:18. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and put it on Joseph’s hand

“and put it on Joseph’s finger {to show that he had appointed him}.” or “and placed it on Joseph’s finger {showing he now had Pharaoh’s authority}”. The signet ring showed that Joseph represented Pharaoh and had his complete authority. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

And he dressed him {in} garments of fine linen

“He {also} had Joseph put on fine/expensive linen clothes/robes” or “He {also} gave Joseph high-quality/expensive clothes/robes to wear”. The Hebrew word for “fine linen” refers to a special kind of white cloth that was woven out of flax and had a fine texture. Clothes made from linen were expensive and were worn by the king and high officials. If linen is not known in your language area, you could be more general and refer to expensive, high-quality clothes. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and put a gold chain on his neck

“and put a chain/collar {made} of gold around his neck.” or “and put around his neck a chain/necklace {made} of gold.”

Genesis 41:43

Then he had him ride

"Then Pharaoh had Joseph ride {around}"

in the second chariot that {belonged} to him

"in a royal {horse-drawn} chariot/cart as his second-in-command" or "in the {horse-drawn} chariot/cart that showed he was the second highest ruler in the country." A chariot is a cart with two or four wheels that was pulled by one or more horses. It was used as transportation and was especially used in battles. Translate this in a way that fits with this description. It may be helpful to include a picture of a chariot in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and they shouted before him

"{As he rode,} heralds/messengers {walked} {in the road/streets} ahead of him calling out {to everyone};" Make sure the way you translate "shouted" does not sound angry. Rather they were calling out loudly enough for people to hear them.

Bow down

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could be: (1) a transliteration of an Egyptian word that means "Bow down {in reverence/respect}!" or "Make way {for the king's appointed one}!" or "Welcome/Honor {your new leader}!" which is what people would be told to do to honor an important person; or (2) a combination of Hebrew words that means "{This is} {the} father of {the} king!", which is similar to what Joseph says in Gen 45:8. (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1712)**)

So he put him over

"So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of" or "In that way, Pharaoh {officially} appointed/installed Joseph to be {the manager/supervisor} over/of". See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 41.

all the land of Egypt

"the whole/entire land/country of Egypt."

Genesis 41:44

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

"Pharaoh {also} told Joseph,"

I {am} Pharaoh

"I, Pharaoh, {hereby command/decreed} that"

and without you a person will not lift his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt

"no one throughout the whole/entire country of Egypt may do anything unless you tell them to do it!" or "throughout the whole/entire country of Egypt, everyone must only do what you tell them to do!" The phrase "will not lift his hand or foot" is hyperbole (exaggeration) that is used to emphasize Joseph's authority. Consider whether or not it is clear and natural to do that here in your language. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

Genesis 41:45

Then Pharaoh called Joseph's name

"Then Pharaoh called Joseph by the {Egyptian} name" or "Then Pharaoh gave Joseph the {Egyptian} name"

Zaphenath-Paneah

"Zaphenath-Paneah, {which means "explainer/revealer of secrets,"}" or "Zaphenath-Paneah, {which means "the one who explains/reveals secrets,"}" (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

and he gave to him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of On, as a wife

"and he gave him {a woman named} Asenath to be {his} wife. {She was} the daughter of Potiphera, {who was} a priest {at the temple} in/at {the city of} On." Potiphera was a pagan priest, and he led people in worshipping the Egyptians' gods, not Yahweh. See how you translated "priest" in Gen 14:18.

Then Joseph went out over the land of Egypt

"Then Joseph started going/traveling around all over the land/country of Egypt." or "Then Joseph {started his duties/work and} traveled throughout the land/country of Egypt."

Genesis 41:46

Now Joseph {was} a son of thirty years

“Joseph {was} thirty years old”. Consider what is the best way to begin this new paragraph in your language.

when he stood before

“when he had that meeting/audience with” or “when he started serving”. This phrase refers to when Joseph stood before Pharaoh and was commissioned to serve as the second-highest ruler in Egypt.

Pharaoh king of Egypt

“Pharaoh, the king over Egypt.”

And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh

“Then Joseph left Pharaoh’s presence” or “{After Pharaoh appointed him,} Joseph left him”

and passed through all the land of Egypt

“and traveled throughout the whole/entire country of Egypt {doing his work}.” or “and began traveling from place to place throughout ...”

Genesis 41:47

in the seven years of abundance

“During the seven years when food was abundant/plentiful,” or “For seven years the crops/harvests were abundant/plentiful and”. Compare how you translated “seven years of abundance” in verse 34.

And & the land produced {grain} by the handfuls

“the land produced huge/large amounts of grain.” or “the people harvested huge/large amounts of grain from the land.” The idiom “by the handfuls” refers here to large amounts of grain. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom you could use here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 41:48

So he gathered

“So Joseph {told the supervisors/administrators under him} to gather/collect” or “So Joseph {had his helpers} gather/collect”. When the Bible says that a leader such as Joseph did something, it often means that he had it done by people under his authority. Decide whether you want to include this information in your translation or in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

all the food of the seven years that were in the land of Egypt

“all the {extra/surplus} food/grain that was produced/harvested in the land/country of Egypt during {those} seven years,” or “all the {extra/surplus} grain {that people harvested/produced} during {those} seven years in the land/country of Egypt,” See how you translated “all the food” in verse 35.

and he put the food in the cities

“and he {had them} store/stockpile {that} grain in the cities.”

The food of the fields that surrounded {each} city he put inside it

“The food/grain {that people had harvested} from the fields, he {had his supervisors/helpers} store/stockpile in the nearby cities.” or “In each city he {had them} store/stockpile the food/grain {that people had harvested} from the surrounding/nearby fields.” Consider what phrase order is best for this sentence in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 41:49

So Joseph stored up

“In that way, Joseph stockpiled” or “Joseph {had his helpers} store up”. See how you translated “store/stockpile” in verse 35.

grain like the sand of the sea

“so much grain that it was/seemed/looked as {plentiful as} {grains of} sand beside the sea/ocean.” or “... as {plentiful as} the {grains of} sand on the seashore/beach.” See how you translated “as the sand of the sea” in Gen 32:12 and a similar phrase in Gen 22:17.

very much, until

“{In fact,} there was so much that” or “{In fact,} it was so plentiful that {after a while}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

he stopped measuring {it

“he {had them} stop keeping records/track {of it}” or “he/they had to stop writing down how much there was,” It was probably Joseph’s helpers who measured the grain and kept records of it. See how you handled this at the beginning of this verse.

because it was without number

“because {there was so much that} he/they could no longer measure/record it.” or “because it was too much to keep track of.”

Genesis 41:50

before the years of the famine came

"Before the {seven} famine years started," or "Now {it so happened that} before the {seven} years of famine came/ started," Consider what is the best way to change topics and begin this new paragraph in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

And & two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On, bore for him

"Joseph had two sons with {his wife} Asenath, a daughter of Potiphera, {who was} a priest in {the city of} On." or "Joseph and {his wife} Asenath had two sons. {Remember that} Asenath was a daughter of Potiphera, a priest {in the city} of On." See how you translated "Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On" in verse 45.

Genesis 41:51

And Joseph called the name of

“Joseph named”. See how you translated the idiom “called the name of” in Gen 21:3.

the firstborn {son

“{his} first/oldest {son}”

Manasseh

“Manasseh, {which means “forget,”}” or “Manasseh, {which means “stop/not thinking about,”}” If you include the meaning of the name “Manasseh” in your translation or in a footnote, it should fit with the way you translate “forget” in the following clause. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because {he said}, “God has made me forget

“{and he said/explained,} “{It is} because God has enabled/helped me to forget about” or “... to stop thinking about”. Your translation should not sound like Joseph had lost his memory of these things, rather God had blessed him so much that it helped him stop thinking about those things.

all my toil and

“all my troubles/hardships and {about}”

all of my father’s house

“{how much I have missed} all of my family {back home}.” or “{how much I have missed} my father and the rest of my family {back home}.”

Genesis 41:52

And the name of the second {son} he called

“And he/Joseph named {his} second son”

Ephraim

“Ephraim, {which means “twice fruitful/prosperous,”}” If you include the meaning of Ephraim’s name in your translation or in a footnote, it should fit with the way you translate “fruitful” in the following clause. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

because {he said}, “God has made me fruitful

“{and he said/explained,} “{It is} because God has enabled/helped me to prosper”. Consider again how you translated the idiom “fruitful” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 17:6; 26:22; 41:52. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

in the land of my affliction

“in the country where I have suffered {so much}.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1562)**)

Genesis 41:53

Then the seven years of abundance that was & ended

“Finally the seven years when food was abundant/plentiful”. See how you translated “the seven years of abundance” in verses 34 and 47, and a similar phrase in verse 29.

in the land of Egypt

“in the country of Egypt.”

Then & ended

“came to an end,” or “were over;” For some languages it is better to put this phrase earlier in the sentence and say, “Finally the seven years were over when food was plentiful in the country of Egypt. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 41:54

and the seven years of famine started to come

“Then the seven years of famine began,” or “Then the seven years began when there was a severe lack of food,”
Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

just as Joseph had said

“just as Joseph had predicted {would happen}.” or “which is exactly what Joseph had said/predicted {would happen}.”

And there was famine in all the lands

“The famine spread to every country,” or “The severe food shortage began to affect all countries,”

but in all the land of Egypt

“but everywhere in the land/country of Egypt” or “but throughout the whole/entire land/country of Egypt”

there was bread

“there was {still} food {in the storehouses}.” or “there was {still} {plenty of} food {stored up}.” In this context,
“bread” refers to all food in general. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 41:55

Then all the land of Egypt became famished

"Then all {the people in} the land/country of Egypt began to suffer from the famine, so" or "When everyone in Egypt became very hungry {because of the famine,}" The phrase "all the land" refers here to the people living in Egypt. Consider whether or not you need to make that explicit in your language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the people cried to Pharaoh for the bread

"they begged Pharaoh for food." or "they pleaded with Pharaoh to give them food."

So Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians

"So/Then {King} Pharaoh commanded/told them," or "So/Then he commanded/told them,"

Go to Joseph

"Go ask Joseph {for help/food}," or "You must go to Joseph {and ask him for help},"

Whatever he says to you, do {it

"{and} do whatever he commands/tells you {to do}." Consider whether or not it is best to begin a new sentence here in your language.

Genesis 41:56

And the famine was over all the face of the land, so & opened

“Since the famine had spread throughout the whole country,” or “Since the severe food shortage was affecting the entire/whole country,”

so Joseph opened

“Joseph {had his helpers} open up” or “Joseph {ordered the supervisors/administrators under him to} open up”. See how you translated verses 48 and 49, where Joseph is said to do something that he had his helpers do. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

all {the buildings} that {had grain} in them

“all {the storage buildings/barns} where {grain} was being stored,” or “all the storehouses {full of grain},”

and sold {grain} to the Egyptians

“and he/they started selling {the grain} to the people of Egypt.”

And the famine was severe

“Then the famine became worse {and worse}” or “Then the famine kept getting more and more severe”

in the land of Egypt

“throughout the land/country of Egypt.” or “throughout the/their country.”

Genesis 41:57

Then all the earth

“In fact, {people from} all over the earth/world”. This phrase refers to the people living on the earth. Consider whether or not you need to make that explicit in your language. See how you translated a similar metonymy (“all the land”) in verse 55. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

came to Egypt to Joseph to buy {grain

“started coming/traveling to Egypt to buy {grain/food} from Joseph,”

because the famine was severe in all the earth

“because the food shortage was {so} severe/terrible throughout the entire/whole world.” For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this clause near the beginning of verse 57 and say, “In fact, the famine was/became so severe/terrible in/throughout the entire/whole world that {people} started coming/traveling to Egypt from all over the world to buy {grain} from Joseph.” Do what is best in your language. See how you translated “severe/terrible” in verse 56. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 42

Genesis 42:1

Then Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt

“Meanwhile {in the land/region of Canaan}, when Jacob heard/learned that there was grain {for sale} in {the country of} Egypt,” or “... when Jacob found out that {he/they could buy} grain in Egypt,” This verse begins a new episode which overlaps in time with some of what was happening in chapter 41. Consider what is the best way to begin this episode in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

so Jacob said to his sons

“he asked/told his sons,”

Why are you looking at each other

“What are you waiting for?” or “Do not {just stand/sit here} looking/staring at each other!” or “Do not just {stand around/there} doing nothing!” Jacob uses this rhetorical question to get his sons to take action and do what he says next. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1705)**)

Genesis 42:2

And he said

“Then he continued/added,” For some languages it is more natural to omit the quote margin here, because the same person (Jacob) is still talking to the same people (his sons). Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Listen {to this}!” or “Look,”

I have heard

“I heard/learned” or “Someone told me”

that there is grain in Egypt

“that there is {much} grain {for sale} in {the country of} Egypt.” or “that {the country of} Egypt has {a lot of} grain {that people can buy}.”

Go down there

“{So} {I want/need you to} go/travel there” or “{So} {please} go/travel down there”. Make sure that the way you translate Jacob’s command to his sons does not sound rude or harsh. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

and buy {some} for us from there

“and buy {some} {grain} for us {all}” or “and buy {some} for us {and our families} {to eat}”

so that we will live

“so that we will/can survive” or “so that we will/can stay alive”

and not die

“and not die {from hunger}.” or “and not starve to death.”

Genesis 42:3

Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down

"Then/So Joseph's ten {older} brothers {left home/Canaan and} went/traveled down". These ten brothers were older than Joseph and had different mothers than he did. Also, the verb "went down" refers to the fact that Egypt was lower in elevation than the land of Canaan. It is also located southwest of Canaan. See how you translated "go down" in verse 2 and "went down" in Gen 12:10. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

to buy grain from Egypt

"to Egypt to buy {some} grain {there}."

Genesis 42:4

But Jacob did not send Benjamin, the brother of Joseph

“But Jacob did not send Joseph’s {younger} brother Benjamin {to Egypt}” or “But Jacob did not allow/permit Joseph’s {younger} brother to go {to Egypt}”. Benjamin was younger than Joseph and had the same mother (Rachel) and father. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

with his brothers

“with his {other} brothers,” or “with {the rest of} his brothers,”

because he said, “So that harm does not meet him

“because he/Jacob thought that he/Benjamin might be harmed.” or “because he/Jacob was afraid/concerned that something bad/terrible might happen to him.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “But Jacob was concerned that harm might come to Joseph’s {younger} brother Benjamin, so he did not send him with {the rest of} his brothers {to Egypt}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 42:5

And the sons of Israel came

“So Israel’s sons” or “The sons of Israel {that is, Jacob}” or “So the sons of {Jacob, who was also called} Israel,” If it is not clear that “Israel” (verse 5) and “Jacob” (verse 4) refer to the same person, you could include the name Jacob here in your translation or in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And & came

“came/went {to Egypt}” or “arrived {in Egypt}” (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

among {those} who came

“along with {many} other people who were coming/going {there}” or “along with {many} other travelers”

to buy {grain

“to buy {food},”

because the famine

“because the severe/extreme food shortage” or “because the extreme lack/scarcity of food”. See how you translated “because the famine” in Gen 41:57.

was in the land of Canaan

“was {also} {affecting everyone} in the land/region of Canaan.” or “was {also} affecting/devastating the {entire} land/region of Canaan.”

Genesis 42:6

Now Joseph {was} the governor over the land

"{Since} Joseph {was} the administrator over the land/country {of Egypt}," (See: **Background Information (p.1571)**)

It was} he who was selling {grain

"he {was} the one selling {grain}"

to all the people of

"to people {who came to him} from all over"

the land

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "the country {of Egypt}", which is what it means earlier in verse 6; or (2) "the earth/world."

So the brothers of Joseph came

So/Then Joseph's brothers {also} came/went

and bowed down to him {with} {their} noses to the ground

"before him {like everyone else} and bowed down {with} {their} faces/foreheads to/toward the ground {to show him respect}." or "{to him} and prostrated themselves before him {to show respect}." See how you translated "bow down" in Gen 37:7, 9-10. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 42:7

And Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them

“When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them,” or “Joseph immediately recognized his brothers”

but he acted like a stranger to them

“but he treated them like strangers” or “But he pretended that he did not {know} {them}”. For some languages it is better to divide the first sentence in this verse into shorter sentences. Do what is best in your language.

and he spoke with them harshly

“and spoke to them in a harsh/stern way/manner” or “In fact, he spoke to them sternly/roughly”. Consider whether or not it is more natural to begin a new sentence here in your language.

and said to them

“and asked/questioned them,” or “and demanded,”

Where did you come from

“Where are you from?” or “What country are you from?”

And they said

“They answered {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

From the land of Canaan to buy food

“{Sir,} {we came} from the land/region of Canaan to buy {some} grain.” or “{Sir,} {we are} from the land/region of Canaan {and we came} to buy {some} grain.” For some languages it is necessary to begin with a respectful title or form of address when someone talks to a person of high status like Joseph. See how Joseph’s brothers address him in verse 10. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

Genesis 42:8

And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him

“Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not realize/know who he was.”

Genesis 42:9

Then Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed

“Then Joseph remembered what he had dreamed”

about them

“about them {long ago},” or “about his brothers {long ago},”

and he said to them

“so he told/accused them,”

You {are} spies

“You are spying {on our country}!” or “You are secretly gathering information {about our country}!”

You have come

“You came {here}” or “{The reason} you came {here} {is}”

to see the nakedness of the land

“to see/learn our country’s weaknesses!” or “to find out where {our} country is weak/vulnerable!” (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

Genesis 42:10

But they said to him

"But his brothers replied to him,"

No, my lord

"No, sir," or "Sir, we are not {spies}," Make sure your translation of this phrase sounds polite. In some cultures it is rude to say "No" too directly. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 23:11. (See: **Politeness (p.1691)**)

but your servants have come

"but rather {we} come {before you} respectfully/humbly" or "Rather, {we are} {just} humble men {who} have come {here}". The brothers referred to themselves as "your servants" to show respect to Joseph and to acknowledge his high position. Translate this phrase in a polite way that shows respect toward Joseph. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

to buy food

"{only} to buy {some} food/grain."

Genesis 42:11

All of us {are

“We {are} all”

sons of one man

“{the} sons of the same man/father.” or “brothers who have the same father.”

We {are} honest. Your servants are not spies

“We {are} honest/trustworthy men/people who {highly} respect you. We are not spies.” or “We {are} humble, honest/trustworthy men/people, not spies.” (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 42:12

But he said to them

“But/Then Joseph replied,” or “But he/Joseph accused them,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

No, indeed you have come

“No/Yes, {you are spies!} {I’m sure} you must have come {here}” or “{That is} not {true}! You have definitely come {here}”. Different languages use “yes” and “no” in different ways, depending on the context. Do what is accurate and natural in this context in your language. Also see how you translated “No” in Gen 18:15.

to see the nakedness of the land

“to see/learn our country’s weaknesses!” or “to find out where {our} country is weak/vulnerable!” See how you translated this phrase in verse 9. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 42:13

But they said

“But/Then they responded,” or “But they replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Your servants {are} twelve brothers

“Sir, {there are/were} twelve of us brothers.”

We {are} sons of one man

“We {are} {all} sons of the same man/father” or “We {all} have the same father”

in the land of Canaan

“{who lives} in the land/region of Canaan.” or “{and we live} in the land/region of Canaan.”

And behold, the youngest

“In fact, {our} youngest {brother}” or “{Our} youngest {brother}”. The word “behold” calls attention to what the brothers say next. Some translations leave it implied. Do what is best in your language.

is} with our father today

“{is} presently {back at home} with our father,” or “{is} {there} with our father right now,”

and the one

“but the {other} one” or “but {our other} brother”

is not {alive

“is no more.” or “is no longer {with us}.” or “has died.” In this context, “is not” is an idiom that means “has died.” Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 42:14

Then Joseph said to them

“Then/But Joseph accused them,” or “Then/But Joseph responded,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

It {is} just as I told you, saying, ‘You {are} spies

“What I told you is right/true! You are spying {on our country}!” or “I was right when I said that you are secretly gathering information {about our country}!” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to translate the embedded quote “You {are} spies” as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 42:15**By this**

"{So now,} this is how" or "In this way"

you will be tested

"I will test/verify whether {or not} you {told me the truth}:" or "I am going to test you to find out if your claims are true:"

By} the life of Pharaoh

"{I swear/vow} by Pharaoh's life/authority {that}" or "As certain as {King} Pharaoh lives, {I swear/vow that}". Joseph uses King Pharaoh's name here to make an oath that emphasizes the certainty of what he says next. Make sure that the way he refers to Pharaoh sounds respectful in your translation. See how you translated other vows in Gen 14:22 and 21:23-24.

you will not leave

"you will {definitely} not/never leave" or "I will not/never let you leave"

from this {place

"from here" or "Egypt"

unless your youngest brother comes here

"until your youngest brother comes/is here." or "unless/until {I see that} your youngest brother is here." For some languages it may be better to change the wording of this sentence and say, "{By} the life of Pharaoh, the only way you will ever leave Egypt is if your youngest brother comes here." or "{By} the life of Pharaoh, your youngest brother must come here, or else you will {definitely} not/never leave Egypt!" Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

Genesis 42:16

Send one of you

"{So} one of you must go {back home}" or "Choose one of you to go {home}"

and let him bring your brother

"and bring your {youngest} brother back {here}." or "to get your {youngest} brother {and bring him here}."

and you

"You {who are left}" or "{The rest of} you". In this verse, the pronouns "you" and "your" are plural. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1627)**)

will be bound

"will be put/kept in prison." or "must stay here in prison." See how you translated "bound" in Gen 39:20; 40:3, 5. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

Then your words will be tested {as to whether} the truth {is} in you

"That way I can verify {whether or not} you told me the truth." or "If you do that, I will know that what you told me is true."

And if not

"But if {you are} not {telling the truth}," or "But if you are lying,"

by} the life of Pharaoh

"{I swear/vow} by Pharaoh's life/authority," or "as certain as {King} Pharaoh lives," See how you translated this phrase in verse 15.

surely you {are} spies

"{that means} you {are} definitely spies!" or "{that means} you really are spying {on our country}!"

Genesis 42:17

Then he put them together in custody {for} three days

“Then Joseph {had his soldiers} put them in custody/prison {for} three days.” or “Then Joseph {had his soldiers} lock up his brothers in prison {for} three days.” See how you translated “in custody” in Gen 40:3-4, 7.

Genesis 42:18

Then Joseph said to them on the third day

“Three days later, Joseph said to them,” or “After three days, Joseph said to them,” See how you translated “on the third day” in Gen 22:4, 31:22, 40:20. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

Do this

“Do what I say and” or “If you do this,” or “If you do what I say,”

and live

“{you will} live,” or “{I will let} you live,” or “{I will} spare your lives,”

because} I fear God

“{because/since} I revere/respect and obey God:” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “I {am a man who} reveres/respects God. So if you do what I say, {I will let} you live.” Do what is best in your language. See how you translated “fear God” in Gen 22:12. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 42:19

If you {are} honest

"If you {truly/really} {are} honest/trustworthy {men} {as you say/claim}," or "Since you {claim to be} honest/trustworthy {men}," See how you translated "honest" in verse 11.

let one of your brothers be bound in your prison house

"I will make {just} one of you brothers stay/remain where you have been, in prison," or "{just} one of you brothers must remain confined/imprisoned where you have been," See how you translated "be bound" in verse 16.

and you go take grain back

"while {the rest of} you go back {home} {now} with/taking grain/food" or "{The rest of} you {may} go {and} take/carry grain/food back {home}". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for} the famine of your households

"for your hungry/starving households/families {to eat}." or "to feed your hungry/starving households/families."

Genesis 42:20

Then you will bring your youngest brother to me

"But you must bring your youngest brother {back} {here} to me" or "After that, you must come back {here} to me with your youngest brother"

so that your words will be verified

"so that what you have told me will be proven/confirmed to be true," or "That way I will know that you are telling the truth," See how you translated a similar clause in verse 16.

and you will not die

"and I will {spare your lives and} not execute you {for being spies}." or "and I will let you live." In this context, the word "die" refers to execution, not death by natural causes. (See: **Litotes (p.1663)**)

And they did so

"So/Then Joseph's brothers {agreed to} do that." or "... {agreed to} do what he said/proposed." or "... accepted his proposal."

Genesis 42:21

Then each {man} said to his brother

“Then the/Joseph’s brothers said to each other,” or “{While they were still standing there,} they said to each other,”

We {are} truly guilty concerning our brother

“{This is happening because} we sinned badly against our brother {Joseph} {long ago}.” or “Surely what we did to our brother {Joseph} {long ago} was {very} wrong.”

because we saw the distress of his soul

“We saw how distressed he was” or “We saw how {terribly} he was suffering”. The phrase “his soul” refers here to Joseph. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

when he pleaded with us

“when he urgently asked us {to free him},” or “when he begged us {not to harm him},”

but we did not listen

“but we refused to listen {to him}.” or “but we refused {to let him go}.”

For that {reason

“That is the reason {that}” or “That is why”

this distress has come upon us

“we are now experiencing so much distress/trouble.” or “we are suffering like this now.”

Genesis 42:22

Then Reuben responded to them, saying

“Reuben scolded/reproached them by saying,”

Did I not tell you, saying

“Remember that I told you” or “I told you”. Reuben uses this rhetorical question to scold his brothers. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Do not sin against the lad

“{that} you should/must not harm the boy!” or “{that} you should not do anything bad to him!” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Also, see how you translated “lad” in Gen 37:30, and keep in mind that Joseph was seventeen years old when his brothers sold him. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

But you did not listen

“But you refused to listen {to me},” or “But you did/would not obey me,”

so now behold

“so now, see {what is happening}:” or “so/and now look,”

his blood is being accounted for

“we are being held accountable/responsible {by God} for his blood/death!” or “God is holding us responsible for causing him to die!” or “We are getting what we deserve for causing his death!” The phrase “his blood” refers to Joseph’s death; if you do not translate that phrase literally, you could put the literal text in a footnote since “blood” is such an important term throughout the Bible. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 42:23

And they did not know

“Joseph’s brothers did not know/realize” or “Joseph’s brothers were not aware”. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

that Joseph understood {them

“that Joseph/he {could} understand {what they were saying to each other},” or “that Joseph/he was listening {to what they were saying},” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

because the interpreter {was} between them

“because he had been speaking to them using a translator {as if he did not know their language}.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “Now Joseph had been using an interpreter to speak to his brothers, so they did not realize that Joseph could understand them.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 42:24

And he turned away

“Then/So he/Joseph turned” or “{When Joseph heard what they were saying,} he turned”. Throughout this section make sure it is clear at each point who is being referred to, using nouns (including names) and pronouns naturally in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

And he turned away from them

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “turned his back to them” or (2) “went/stepped away from them”. Either way, Joseph was hiding his face from his brothers so they could not see that he was crying.

and cried

“and started crying.” or “to hide his tears.”

Then he turned back toward them

“Then {after he recovered,} he/Joseph turned back around” or “{When he had composed himself,} he/Joseph came back to them”. Make sure that the way you translate this sentence fits with the way you translated the last sentence in verse 23.

and spoke to them

“and spoke to them {again} {through/using his interpreter/translator}.” or “and continued speaking to them.”

Then he took Simeon from them

“Then/Next he chose Simeon from {among} them” or “Then he separated Simeon from {the rest of} the/his brothers”.

and bound him

“and had him bound/imprisoned” or “and {had his soldiers} bind/confine him {with chains/ropes}”. Joseph probably had soldiers bind Simeon. See how you translated a similar case in Gen 40:3. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

before their eyes

“while/as they watched.” or “in front of them.” (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 42:25

Then Joseph ordered {his servants} and they filled

“Then Joseph commanded/told his servants to fill” or “Then Joseph had his servants fill”

their bags {with} grain

“his brothers’ bags/sacks {with} grain.” Two different words, “bag” and “sack”, are used in this verse to refer to the bags of grain that the brothers had. Some languages use just one of these terms in order to prevent confusion. Do what is best in your language.

And {he ordered them} to return {each} man’s silver to his sack

“{He} also {ordered/told them} to {secretly} put in each brother’s sack/bag the money {they had paid for the grain}” or “{He} also {ordered/told them} to {secretly} put the/his brothers’ {grain/food} money in their sacks/bags”. Joseph had his servants to do this without his brothers knowing about it. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and to give provisions to them for the road

“and to provide/supply them {with} food to eat on the/their trip/journey {home}.” or “and to give them food to eat as they traveled {home}.”

And he did that for them

“So, that is what was done for them.” or “That is what Joseph did for them.” or “After Joseph did that for his brothers,” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to end this sentence here (and begin verse 26 with a new sentence) or to continue this sentence into verse 26.

Genesis 42:26

Then they loaded

“Then his brothers loaded/put” or “they loaded/put” or “his brothers loaded/put”. Make sure your choice here fits with the way you translated the end of verse 25.

their grain onto their donkeys

“their {sacks of} grain on their donkeys’ {backs}”

and went from there

“and left there {to go home}.” or “and started traveling {home}.” The way you translate this phrase should reflect the fact that Joseph’s brothers were just starting their journey back home; they did not reach their home until several days later (verse 29).

Genesis 42:27

Then one {of them} opened his sack to give fodder to his donkey at the lodging place

“Later, {when they stopped} at a place to lodge/stay for the night, one {of them} opened his sack to get {some} feed/grain to feed his donkey.” See how you translated “fodder” in Gen 24:25, 32.

and he saw his silver, and behold, it {was} in the mouth of his sack

“Suddenly he saw that the silver/money he had paid {for the grain} was right there in the opening/top of his sack!” or “There in the top of his sack he saw the money that he had paid/used {to buy grain}!” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 42:28

So he said to his brothers

“So/Then he exclaimed to his brothers,” or “So/Then he exclaimed to the others,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My silver has been returned

“Somebody has returned my {grain} money {to me}!” or “Someone gave my {grain} money back {to me}!”

And indeed behold, {it is} in my sack

“Here it is in my {grain} sack!” or “It is right here in my {grain} sack!”

Then their hearts went out

“{They looked, and} their hearts sank,” or “{When they saw it,} they were {completely} shocked,” Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and each {man} trembled to his brother, saying

“and they all started trembling/shaking {with fear} and said/exclaimed to each other,” or “and they trembled/shook {with fear}. They asked each other,”

What {is} this God has done to us

“What is God doing to us?” or “Why is God doing this to us?” or “Why is God making this happen to us?”

Genesis 42:29

Then they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan

"{When} they came/got back {home} to their father Jacob in the land/region of Canaan," or "{When} they reached {their home in} the land/region of Canaan where their father Jacob was,"

and they reported to him all

"they related/explained to him all/everything" or "they told him everything". See how you translated "reported to" in Gen 38:13.

that had happened to them, saying

"they had experienced. They said,"

Genesis 42:30

The man, the lord of the land

"The man {who is} the ruler/governor over the land/country {of Egypt}" or "The man who governs/controls the land/country {of Egypt}"

spoke to us harshly

"spoke to us sternly/roughly" or "was very harsh/stern when he spoke to us". See how you translated "harshly" in verse 7.

and treated us as {if we were} spying out

"and accused us of spying {on} {their} country!" or "He even accused us of being spies!"

Genesis 42:31

But we said to him, 'We {are} honest. We are not spies

"But we told him, 'We {are} trustworthy {men}; not spies.'" or "We told him that we are not spies, but rather honest/trustworthy {men}." Consider whether it is more natural in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Also, see how you translated "... honest ... not spies" in verse 11. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 42:32

We {are} twelve brothers

"There {were} twelve of us brothers," or "{We told him that} we {are} twelve brothers," Make sure that the way you translate verse 32 fits with whether you used a direct or indirect quote in verse 31. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1702)**)

the sons of our father

"sons of one father." or "{and} {we are} the sons of the same father."

The one

"One {of our brothers}"

is not {alive

"is no more," or "is no longer {with us}," or "has died," See how you translated this idiom in verse 13. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and the youngest

"and the/our youngest {brother/one}"

is} with our father today

"{is} {at home} with our father right now" or "{is} right now with our father {at home}"

in the land of Canaan

"in the region of Canaan."

Genesis 42:33

Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us

"Then the ruler/governor of the land/country said/replied to us," or "But the man who governs/rules the land/country told us," See how you translated "the man, the lord of the land" in verse 30.

By this

"This is how" or "In this way". See how you translated "By this" in verse 15.

I will know that you {are} honest

"I will know that/if you {are} trustworthy {men/people}:"

Leave one of your brothers with me

"You must leave one of you here with me," or "One of you brothers will/must stay {here} with me,"

and take {grain} {for} the famine of your households and go

"while {the rest of} you take/buy {grain} {to relieve} the hunger of your families and go {home}." or "and/while {the rest of} you go {home} with {grain/food for} your hungry/starving households/families."

Genesis 42:34

Then bring your youngest brother to me

“Then/But bring your youngest brother {back} {here} to me” or “After that, you must come back {here} to me with your youngest brother.” See how you translated a similar clause at the beginning of verse 20.

so that I will know that you {are} not spies

“Then I will know that you {are} not spies,” Consider again how you translated “spies” in Gen 42:9-11, 14, 16, 30, 31, 34.

that you {are} honest

“{but} {are} honest/trustworthy {men/people}.” For some languages it is more natural to change the order of clauses in this sentence and say, “Then I will know that you {are} honest/trustworthy {men/people} and not spies.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Then} I will give your brother to you

“{Then} I will return your brother to you {from prison},” or “{Then} I will release to you your brother {who is in prison},”

and you {can} trade {in} the land

“and I will allow {all of} you to travel {and trade} throughout my country.’ ” or “and you can travel around my country {and trade} {freely}.’ ”

Genesis 42:35

Then it happened they were emptying their sacks

“Then Joseph’s brothers started/began to empty their {grain} sacks,” or “Sometime after that, the brothers began to empty {the grain} from their sacks,”

and behold, each {man’s} pouch of his silver {was} inside his sack

“and there inside each man’s sack was his pouch/bag of money {that he had paid for the grain}!” or “and they were surprised to find/see their pouches/bags of silver/money inside their sacks!”

And they and their father saw the pouches of their silver, and they were afraid

“When they and their father {Jacob} saw the pouches/bags of silver/money, they were terrified.”

Genesis 42:36

Then Jacob their father said to them

"Then their father said/exclaimed to them," If you make "Jacob" explicit in verse 35, you could leave it implied here in verse 36.

You have bereaved me

"You have bereaved/deprived me {of my sons}!" or "You have caused me {terrible} loss!"

Joseph is not {here}! And Simeon is not {here

"Joseph is gone! Simeon is gone!" or "Joseph and Simeon are no longer {with us}!"

And you will take Benjamin

"And {now} you {want to} take Benjamin {away} {from me} {too}!"

All {these} things are against me

"Everything is against me!" or "Everything is going terribly/badly for me!"

Genesis 42:37

Then Reuben said to his father, saying

“Then Reuben said/responded to his father,” or “Reuben replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him to you

“You may punish me by killing my sons if I do not bring Benjamin back to you.” or “If I fail to bring Benjamin/him {back} to you {safely}, you can {punish me by} killing my two sons.” For some languages, it is necessary to change the order of clauses in this sentence (so that the condition comes first), as in the second alternate above. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Put him in my hand

“Entrust him/Benjamin to my care {as we travel to Egypt},” or “Let me be responsible for {taking care of} him/Benjamin {on our trip to Egypt},” The phrase “in my hand” is used here as an idiom that means that Reuben was going to be responsible for Benjamin’s welfare. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and I will return him to you

“and {I promise that} I will bring him back to you {safely}.” For some languages it is more natural to change the order of clauses in this quote and say, “{Father,} let me be responsible for {taking} Benjamin {down to Egypt}. If I fail to bring him {back} to you {safely}, you can {punish me by} killing my two sons.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 42:38

But he said

“But his father replied/insisted,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

My son will not go down with you

“My son {Benjamin} will/may not go with you {to Egypt},” or “{No,} I will not let my son {Benjamin} go down {to Egypt} with you.” Notice that the pronoun “you” is plural in this verse. Also, see how you translated “go down” in verse 2.

because his brother is dead

“His brother is dead,” Joseph was Benjamin’s older brother from the same father and mother. Consider whether your language has a special kinship term for that. Also consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

and he alone is left

“so he is the only one {of his mother’s sons} {who is} still alive.” or “and/so he is the only one/son {I have} left {from his mother}.” You could include a footnote here that explains that Joseph and Benjamin were the only two sons of Rachel, Jacob’s favorite wife who died after giving birth to Benjamin (Gen 35:16-20).

And {if} harm were to meet him on the road that you are going on

“And/So if he were to be harmed/killed during your journey,” or “So if anything bad happened to him while you are traveling,” Jacob is saying what would happen if he lost Benjamin too. Consider what is the best way to translate this hypothetical statement in your language. Also, see how you translated “harm ... meet him” in verse 4. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

then you would bring my gray head down in sorrow

“you would cause me, your gray-haired/elderly father, to grieve so deeply/badly that I would {die and} go down” or “you would cause me, your gray-haired/elderly father, so much sorrow/grief that I would {die and} go down”. Jacob uses the phrase “my gray head” to refer to himself as their aged father. Consider whether your language has a similar phrase that is natural and works well here.

to Sheol

“to the afterworld!” The Hebrew term “Sheol” is the name of the place where the spirits of people went after they died. If you transliterate the name “Sheol” in your translation, you could put its meaning in a footnote. See how you translated this term in Gen 37:35, and see the note about that there. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 43

Genesis 43:1

Now the famine

“The famine” or “The food shortage”. The setting changes here to focus on what is happening in Canaan. Some languages use a special conjunction (like “Now”) to indicate that, while others do not use a conjunction here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

was} heavy

“{was} oppressive/severe” or “{continued to be} severe”. The word “heavy” is used here as an idiom that means the famine caused everyone much suffering. See how you translated the same idiom in Gen 12:10 and Gen 41:31. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

in the land

“in the land/region {of Canaan}.”

Genesis 43:2

So it happened

“So it happened {that}” or “So”. This phrase introduces an important event and helps create suspense so that readers will wonder what the outcome will be. Many translations omit “it happened” because it is not natural in their language. Do what is best in your language.

when they finished

“when Jacob and his family {had} finished eating” or “... {had} used/eaten up”. Consider whether it is clearer in your language to use a pronoun or a noun phrase here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

the grain that they had brought

“{all} the grain that his sons had {bought and} brought {home}”. The pronoun “they” refers here to Jacob's sons, not Jacob's family (as it did earlier in this sentence). (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

from Egypt

“from {the country of} Egypt,”

then their father said to them

“their father {Jacob} told/commanded them,” or “he/Jacob told/commanded them,”

Return

“Go back {to Egypt}”

buy a little food

“{and} buy some {more} food/grain”

for us

“for us {and our families}.” or “for the/our family.” The pronoun “us” includes Jacob and his sons and their families here. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Genesis 43:3

But Judah said to him, saying

“But {his son} Judah replied to him,” or “{His son} Judah replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The man

“The man {who governs/controls the country there}” or “The governor {there}”. The brothers did not realize yet that Joseph was the governor they had spoken to in Egypt, so Judah referred to him generally here as “the man.” See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 42:30.

strongly warned us, saying

“sternly warned/told us” or “was serious when he warned us”

You will not see my face

“that we cannot see him {again}” or “that we cannot go/come to him {again} {to buy grain}”. Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

unless your brother {is} with you

“unless our {youngest} brother is with us!” or “if our {youngest} brother {is} not with us.” Make sure that the way you translate this clause fits with how you translated the previous part of this sentence. For some languages it is necessary to put this clause before the previous clause and say, “... that our {youngest} brother must be with us or else we will not {be permitted to} see him {again}!” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

Genesis 43:4

If you will send our brother with us

"{So} if you will allow/permit our {youngest} brother to go with us," or "{So} if you will let our {youngest} brother go with us," In verses 3-5, the pronouns "us" and "we" are exclusive since they do not include Jacob (whom Judah is talking to). (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

we will go down

"{then} we will/can go/travel {to Egypt}"

and buy food for you

"and buy {more} food/grain for you {and the rest of the family}."

Genesis 43:5

But if you will not

“However if you refuse to”

send {him

“allow/permit him to go {with us},” or “let him go {with us},” See how you translated “send” in verse 4.

we will not go down

“we cannot go down {there},” or “we must not go {there} {to buy grain},” See how you translated “go down” and “went down” in Gen 42:2-3.

because the man said to us

“because the man/governor told/warned us”

You will not see my face

“that we cannot see him {again}” or “that we cannot go to him {again} {to buy grain}”. See how you translated this quote in verse 3. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

unless your brother {is} with you

“unless our {youngest} brother {is} with us!” or “if our {youngest} brother {is} not with us!” See how you translated this clause in verse 3. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1592)**)

Genesis 43:6

Then Israel said

“Then {their father} Israel asked {them},” If it is not clear that “Israel” (verse 6) and “their father” (verse 2) refer to the same person, you could include “their father” here in your translation or in a footnote. See what you did for a similar case in Gen 42:5. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Why did you treat me badly by telling

“Why did you cause trouble/distress for me by telling” or “You caused me a lot of trouble/distress because you told”. Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to scold his sons and to show how upset he is. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

the man

“that man” or “the/that governor”. See how you translated “the man” in verses 3 and 5.

you have yet {another} brother

“that you have another brother!” or “that you have a younger brother?” If you translate this rhetorical question as a statement, make sure that you end it with a period or exclamation point.

Genesis 43:7

And they said

“They answered {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The man asked persistently

“The man/governor questioned {us} intensely/thoroughly” or “The man asked {us} many questions”

about us and our relatives, saying

“about ourselves and about {the rest of} our family.” In verses 7-8, the pronouns “us,” “our,” and “we” are exclusive since they do not include Jacob (whom the sons are talking to). (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Is your father still alive? Do you have {another} brother

“He {specifically} asked {us} if/whether our father was still alive and if/whether we had {another} brother.” Consider whether it is more natural in your language to translate this embedded quote with a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

And we answered him according to those words

“So we {just/simplely} answered his questions {honestly/truthfully}.” or “All we did was answer his questions.”

How could we possibly know

“We could not possibly have known” or “There is no way we could have known”. Jacob’s sons use a rhetorical question here to emphasize their innocence and express strong emotion. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down

“that he would tell/require us to bring/take our brother down {there} {to him}!” If you translate this rhetorical question as a statement, make sure that you end it with a period or exclamation point.

Genesis 43:8

Then Judah said to Israel his father

“Then Judah urged his father Israel {about Benjamin},” For some languages it is necessary to make “Benjamin” explicit here in the quote margin so that it is clear that “young man” refers to him in the following quote. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Send the young man with me

“Allow/Permit the young man to come with me/us {and I will watch over him}” or “Entrust the young man to me {to take care of}”. See how you translated “young man” in Gen 37:2; 41:12. Use a term here in your language that fits with the fact that Benjamin was probably in his 30's.

and we will get up and go

“and/so we can leave right away {to buy grain in Egypt}” or “so that we can go immediately {to Egypt} {to buy grain}.”

so that both we and you and our little ones will live

“Then all of us, including our children, will survive” or “... will/can stay alive”. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Also, see how you translated “will live and not die” in Gen 42:2.

and not die

“and not die {from hunger}.” or “and not starve to death.”

Genesis 43:9

I myself will guarantee him

"I personally guarantee/promise to keep him safe." or "I personally guarantee his safety."

From my hand you can require him

"You can hold/make me responsible/liable for him," See how you translated a similar idiom in Gen 31:39. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

If I do not bring him {back} to you and set him before you

"{so that} if I do not bring him {back} {home} to you alive/safely," Consider what is the best way to translate this hypothetical sentence in your language. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

then I will have sinned against you

"I will be guilty of this sin against you" or "you can blame me for this sin"

all the days

"all the days {of my life}." or "for the rest of my life." or "forever."

Genesis 43:10

Surely if we had not delayed

“As it is, if we had not delayed/waited {such a long time},” or “In any case, if we had not delayed/waited {this long},” This sentence refers to something that could have happened, but did not actually happen. Consider what is the best way to translate this contrary-to-fact statement in your language. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

surely we could have returned here twice by now

“certainly we could have made two {round} trips {there and back} by now.” or “we certainly would have had enough time to go down there and back two times already.”

Genesis 43:11

Then Israel their father said to them

“Then their father Israel said to them,” See how you translated “Israel their father” in verse 8.

If {it must be} so

“If/Since that is how it must be,” or “{Okay,} if that is the only way {we can get more grain},” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

then do this

“then this is what you must/should do:”

Take {some} of the choice produce of the land in your bags

“Put {some} of the best things/goods from {our} land in your sacks,” or “Put in your sacks some of the most valuable things that {our} land produces,”

and take {it} down to the man

“and take {them} to the man/governor {in Egypt}”

as} a gift

“{as} gifts,” or “{as} gifts.” Consider what punctuation is best to use here in your language.

a little balm, and a little honey

“{including} some sweet-smelling tree resin/sap, some honey,” or “{Include} some healing salve, honey,” Consider what is the best way to make a list of things like this in your language. Also see how you translated “balm” in Gen 37:25. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns\]\]](#))

spices and myrrh

“{some} {food} spices/seasonings and incense,” See how you translated “spices” and “myrrh” in Gen 37:25. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns\]\]](#))

pistachio nuts and almonds

“{and} {some} pistachio nuts and almonds.” or “{and} {some} sweet-tasting tree nuts.” (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-unknowns\]\]](#))

Genesis 43:12

And take double the silver in your hand{s}

"{Also} take with you twice {as much} silver/money {as you took the first time},"

because you must return in your hand{s} the silver

"because you must take/give back the silver/money" or "You must give back the silver/money". Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

that was returned

"that was given back {to you} {by someone}" or "that someone gave back {to you}". Consider whether it is better in your language to use a passive or active clause here. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

in the mouth of your sacks

"in the opening/top of your sacks." or "in your sacks." See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 42:27.

Perhaps it {was} a mistake

"That might have happened by mistake." or "Maybe they/someone did that by mistake."

Genesis 43:13

So take your brother

“So {then/now,} take your {youngest} brother”

and get up, return to the man

“and return right away to the man/governor.” or “and immediately go back to the man/governor.” See how you translated “get up and ...” in verse 8.

Genesis 43:14

And may God Almighty give

“May Almighty God” or “I pray that God {who is} all-powerful will”

And may God Almighty give you mercies before the man

“be merciful/kind to you {as you go} before the man/governor,” or “cause the man/governor to be merciful/kind to you,” or “cause him to treat you mercifully/kindly,”

and may he send your other brother and Benjamin

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “so that he will” or “and I pray that the man/governor will” or (2) “and may he/God” or “and I pray that God will”

וְשֵׁלַח אֶת אֶחֱיֶיךָ מֵאֵחָר וְאֶת בְּנֵימִן יָן

“allow/permit your other brother and Benjamin to come/go” or “let your brothers Simeon and Benjamin come/go”. Notice that “other brother” refers to Simeon, who is older or younger (and has the same or different mother) than his brothers that Israel is talking to here. Also see how you translated “send” in verses 4-5. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

with you

“{back} {home} with you.”

And I, if

“{As for} me, if I” or “But {if not, and} if I”. The pronoun “I” is emphatic here in the Hebrew text. If possible, keep that emphasis in your translation.

I am bereaved, I am bereaved

“{must} be bereaved/deprived {of them}, {then} I {will} be bereaved/deprived.” or “{must} lose them and grieve {for them}, {then} I {will} grieve.” or “{must} suffer loss, then I {will} suffer loss.” See how you translated “bereaved” in Gen 42:36.

Genesis 43:15

Then the men took that gift

“Then/So the brothers packed those gifts {in their sacks}” or “So the brothers gathered/got {all} those gifts {and packed them}”. See how you translated “gift” in verse 11 and in Gen 33:10-11.

and they took double the silver in their hand{s

“along with twice as much silver/money {as the grain would cost}.” or “and they also packed double/twice the amount of silver/money {that they needed to pay for the grain}.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

and Benjamin. Then they got up and went down {to} Egypt

“They also {took/got} Benjamin and {together} they immediately/quickly traveled down to {the country of} Egypt” or “Then they {took} Benjamin {with them} and immediately/quickly traveled down to {the country of} Egypt”. See how you translated “get up and go” in verse 8.

and stood before Joseph

“and presented themselves before/to Joseph.” or “and went/came directly to Joseph.”

Genesis 43:16

And Joseph saw Benjamin with them. Then he said

“Joseph saw Benjamin with {the rest of} his brothers. So he told/ordered” or “When Joseph saw Benjamin with his {other} brothers, he told/commanded”

to {the one} who {was} over his house

“{the servant} who managed/supervised his household,” or “his head house-servant,”

Take the men to the house

“Bring/Lead the/these men to {my} house” or “Escort these men to {my} house.”

and slaughter an animal

“then slaughter/kill one of {the/my} livestock” or “Then slaughter/butcher an animal/calf/goat”. The Hebrew word for “animal” here is general and refers to an animal that was raised to be killed and eaten, such as a calf or goat. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

and prepare {a meal}

“and {use/roast/cook the meat to} prepare {a meal/feast},” or “and prepare {a feast} {with its meat},”

because the men will eat with me at noon

“because {I want} them to eat with me {today} at noon.” or “because {I have planned/decided that} the men will eat the noon meal with me {at my house}.”

Genesis 43:17

So the man did just as Joseph {had} said

“The servant did exactly what Joseph {had} told/commanded {him to do}”

and the man brought

“and took/led” or “and escorted”

the men to Joseph’s house

“the brothers to Joseph’s house.” Make sure that the way you translate this phrase does not sound like Joseph’s brothers went inside the house yet. They did not actually go inside until later (verse 24).

Genesis 43:18

And the men were afraid when they were brought {to} Joseph's house

"The brothers became afraid when/because they saw that the servant had brought/led them {to} Joseph's house," or "But when the brothers saw that he had taken them to Joseph's house, they were afraid,"

and they said

"and they said {to each other}," or "Then they said {to each other}," Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Because of the matter of the silver that was returned in our sacks the first time, we have been brought

"We have been brought {here} because of the silver/money that was returned {to us} in our sacks the first time {we came here}." or "He has brought/taken us here because of {our} silver/money that someone gave back to us in our sacks {on} {our} first trip {here}." (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

He wants} to roll himself over us and throw himself on us

"{He is planning} to take/seize us by force" or "{He intends} to {have his soldiers} attack us and overpower us". Consider what is the best way to translate these idioms in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and take us as slaves

"and keep us as slaves/servants," or "and make us {his} slaves/servants,"

and our donkeys

"along with our donkeys!" or "{He will} also {take/capture} our donkeys!" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 43:19

Then they went near to

“Then/So they went up to” or “Then/So they approached”

the man who {was} over Joseph’s house

“the servant who managed/supervised Joseph’s household” or “Joseph’s head house-servant”. See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 16.

and spoke to him {at} the entrance of the house

“to speak to him {at/outside} the entrance/door to {his} house.” or “{at/outside} the entrance/door to the house in order to speak to him.”

Genesis 43:20

And they said

"They said {to him}," or "{One of} them said {to him} {on behalf of them all}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Please, my lord

"Excuse me/us, sir," or "Master/Sir, please {allow me/us to speak to you}." The brothers are asking the servant for permission to speak. Translate this in a way that is respectful in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

we surely came down {here} the first time to buy food

"the first/previous time we came/traveled down {here} {to Egypt}, we came to buy {some} food/grain." or "one time before this, we traveled all the way down {here} {to Egypt} and bought {some} food/grain." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 43:21

But it happened

“But it {so} happened {that}” or “But {on our way home},” This phrase introduces an important event and helps create suspense so that readers will wonder what the outcome will be. Many translations omit “it happened” because it is not natural in their language. Do what is best in your language.

when we came to the lodging place, we opened our sacks

“when we arrived at the place where we lodged/stayed for the night, we opened our sacks”. See how you translated “the lodging place” in Gen 42:27.

and behold, {each} man’s silver {was} in the mouth of his sack

“and we were surprised to see that our bags/pouches of silver/money were in the opening/top of each of our sacks!” or “There in the opening/top of each of our sacks {was} the silver/money {we had paid/given to you} {for the grain}!” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, see how you translated “in the mouth of ... sacks” in verse 12. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

our silver {was there} in its {full} weight

“The full/exact weight/amount of silver/money was there!” or “The silver/money was all there!” The silver was weighed in shekels (Gen 20:16; 23:15-16; 37:28) to determine how much to pay for something. See how you translated “silver” in Gen 42:25, 27, 35. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1580)**)

So we have brought it back

“So/But we brought it {all} back” or “So/But we brought {all} that silver/money back”

in our hand{s

“with us {to return/give to you}.”

Genesis 43:22

And we have brought down other silver

“We also brought enough extra/additional silver/money with us” or “We have {also} brought more/additional silver/money with us”

to buy food

“so that we can buy {some more} food/grain {now/today}.”

We do not know

“We have no idea”

who put our silver in our sacks

“who put the money in our sacks.” or “who gave that silver/money back to us in our sacks.” or “how our silver/money got into our sacks {like that}.”

Genesis 43:23

But he said

"But Joseph's servant said/replied {to them},"

Peace {be} to you

"Be at peace, {and}" or "All is well for you, {so}" or "It/Everything is all right, {so}" The phrase "Peace to you" is a blessing that wishes someone to be well and at peace. Consider whether your language has a similar blessing or possibly an idiom that would work well here.

do not be afraid

"do not be anxious." or "do not worry {about it}."

Your God and the God of your father

"Your God, {who is} also your father's God" or "The God whom you and your father serve/worship". Make sure that your translation of these phrases refers to the same God, not two different Gods.

has given you hidden treasure in your sacks

"must have hidden/put the silver/money in your sacks,"

your silver came to me

"{because} I {definitely} received your/the silver/money {that you paid for the grain}." or "{because} {I know that} you gave/paid me silver/money {to pay for the grain}."

Then he brought Simeon out to them

"Then the/Joseph's head-servant brought Simeon out {of prison} to his brothers." or "Then the/Joseph's servant {got} Simeon out {of prison} {and} brought/took {him} to his brothers."

Genesis 43:24

Then the man took the men into Joseph's house

"Soon the man/servant took/brought them {all} into Joseph's/the house" or "Then Joseph's servant brought/led the brothers inside Joseph's/the house"

and gave {them} water

"and provided {them} with water"

and they washed their feet

"and they washed {the dust/dirt off} their feet," or "to wash {the road dust off} their feet," Consider again how you translated "wash ... feet" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24.

and he gave fodder to their donkeys

"and he provided fodder/feed for their donkeys." or "He also fed their donkeys." Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Also, see how you translated "fodder" in Gen 42:27.

Genesis 43:25

And they prepared the gift

“Then/Meanwhile Joseph’s brothers got {their} gift/gifts ready”

for Joseph’s arrival at noon

“to give to Joseph when he came/got home at noon,”

because they had heard

“because they had been told/informed” or “because someone had told them”

that they would eat bread there

“that they were going to eat a meal {with him} there {at his house}.” For some languages it is more natural to put the last half of this verse at the beginning of the verse and say, “When Joseph’s brothers heard that they were going to eat the noon meal with Joseph {at his house}, they got their gifts ready to give him when he came/got home.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 43:26

Then Joseph came to the house

“When Joseph came to his house,” or “When Joseph came/got home,”

and they brought to him the gift that {was} in their hand{s} into the house

“his brothers {gave/presented} to him the gift/gifts that they had brought with them into the house.”

and they bowed down to him to the ground

“Then they bowed {themselves} down before him {with their faces} to the ground {to show him respect/honor}.” or “Then they prostrated themselves on the ground {to respect/honor him}.” See how you translated “bowed down ... ground” in Gen 42:6. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 43:27

Then he asked them about {their} wellbeing

“Then Joseph asked them how they were doing,” or “Then he/Joseph greeted them”

and he said

“and he asked {them},” or “He also asked {them},” Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Are things} well {for} your aged father

“Is your aged/elderly father {doing} well” or “Is your aged/elderly father in good health,”

whom you spoke about

“whom you spoke about {to me} {before}?” or “whom you mentioned {to me}?”

Is he still alive

“Is he still living?”

Genesis 43:28

And they said

"They answered {him},"

Things are} well for your servant our father. He {is} still alive

"{Yes sir,} our father, who highly respects you, is still alive and well/blessed." The brothers refer to their father as "your servant" here to show respect to Joseph and to acknowledge his high position. Translate this phrase in a polite way that shows respect toward Joseph. Also, the pronoun "our" is exclusive here because Joseph's brothers did not yet know that they were talking to Joseph. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics\]\]](#))

Then they bowed

"Then they bowed {their heads}" or "Then they knelt". In this verse, the terms "bowed" and "bowed down" translate two different Hebrew words that together describe and emphasize the process of bowing down to the ground.

and bowed down

"and bowed down {to the ground} {again}." or "and prostrated themselves {in front of him} {again}." See how you translated "bowed down" in verse 26. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 43:29

Then he lifted his eyes and saw Benjamin his brother

“Then Joseph looked up/around and saw his brother Benjamin,” or “When Joseph looked around {at them all}, he saw his brother Benjamin,” Benjamin was younger than Joseph. Also, consider again how you translated the idiom “lifted ... eyes” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 13:10, 14; 18:2; 22:4, 13; 24:63-64; 31:10; 33:1, 5; 37:25; 39:7; 43:29. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

the son of his mother

“{who was} the {only other} son of his {own} mother,” or “who had the same mother that he had,”

and he said

“and he said {to them},” or “and he asked {them},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Is this your youngest brother

“So this {young man} must be your youngest brother” or “I suppose this {young man} is your youngest brother”. This question could be an actual question or a rhetorical question. The fact that Joseph does not wait for an answer suggests that this is a rhetorical question, especially since he already realized that the new brother in the group was Benjamin (verse 16). (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

whom you spoke to me {about}

“whom you told me about.” Make sure that your punctuation here fits with the way you translated this sentence, either as a question or a statement.

Then he said

“Then he said {to Benjamin},”

May God be gracious to you

“I pray that God will be gracious/kind to you,” See how you translated “God has been gracious to ...” in Gen 33:11. Also see how you translated “grace” in 24:12, 14 ,27, 49; 39:21.

my son

“young man.” The phrase “my son” is a kind way to address a man who is younger or of lower status; it does not mean that Benjamin was Joseph’s actual son. Also, for some languages it is necessary to put this address first in this quote. Do what is natural in your language.

Genesis 43:30

Then Joseph hurried out

“Then Joseph quickly/hurriedly left {the room}” or “Then/Suddenly Joseph rushed out {of the room}”

because his emotions boiled over for his brother

“because he was feeling deeply emotional about his brother,” or “because he felt overwhelmed with emotions for/about his brother”

and he sought to cry

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “and desired/wanted to cry,” or “and felt like crying,” or “and was about to cry,” or (2) “and was looking for {a place} to cry,” or “and went to find {a place} to cry,”

and he went to the inner room

“so he went to his private room” or “So he went to his bedroom,”

and cried there

“so that he could cry there.” or “where he cried {privately}.”

Genesis 43:31

Then he washed his face and came out. Then he controlled himself

“After a while, he stopped crying, washed {the tears off} his face and came out {of his room}” or “After he had gotten control of his emotions {and stopped crying}, he washed {the tears off} his face and came back out {of his room}.”

and said

“and told/commanded {his servants},” or “Then he told/commanded {his servants},” For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

Serve the bread

“Serve/Bring the food/meal {to us}.” or “{It is time to} serve/distribute the food/meal {to us}.” The word “bread” refers to all the food they ate at this meal, not just bread. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 43:32

So they served to him by himself

“So/Then they served/brought {food} to him/Joseph at his own table,”

and to them by themselves

“and his brothers at their own table,”

and to the Egyptians who were eating with him by themselves

“and the Egyptians who were eating as his guests at their own table.” or “They also served/brought {food} to some Egyptian guests at a separate table.” For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

because Egyptians cannot eat bread with Hebrews, because that {is} an abomination to Egyptians

“Egyptians do not eat at the same table as Hebrew people, because Egyptians/they consider it detestable/unacceptable {to do that}.” or “{The servants did that,} because Egyptians consider it detestable/unacceptable to eat with Hebrew people at the same table.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also consider again how you translated “Hebrews” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:13, 39:14, 17; 40:15, 41:12; 43:32.

Genesis 43:33

And they were sitting

“And/Now Joseph’s brothers were sitting {at a table}” or “Joseph’s brothers had been seated {at a table}”

before him

“in front of him/Joseph” or “facing his/Joseph’s table”

the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth

“according to their age order, from oldest to youngest,” or “in the order of their ages, from the firstborn/oldest to the youngest,”

and the men were astonished each to his neighbor

“so they looked/stared at each other in astonishment/amazement.” or “{When they saw/noticed that,} they were astonished/amazed {and stared} at one another.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 43:34

Then he served to them servings {of food} from before him

“Then Joseph served his brothers food from his table,” or “Then Joseph {had his servants} serve food to his brothers from his table,” As a person of high position and status, Joseph probably had his servants serve the food rather doing it himself. Decide whether you want to make that information explicit in your translation or include it in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

but Benjamin’s serving was five times larger

“but the amount of food that was served to Benjamin was five times more” or “but he {had them} serve Benjamin five times more {food}”

than any of their servings

“than {the amount of food that} was served to any of {the rest of} them.” or “than {they} served to any of {the rest of} his brothers.”

And they drank and became drunk with him

“Then they {ate food,} drank {wine} and celebrated/feasted with him.” or “Then his brothers feasted and drank {wine} freely with him.” or “Then they feasted and drank {wine} freely with him {until they were very merry}.” The Hebrew verb for “became drunk” is the same word that is used in Gen 9:21 to describe Noah when he had drunk so much wine that he had fallen asleep. Here, it probably means that they had drunk enough wine that they were feeling happy and sociable.

Genesis 44

Genesis 44:1

Then he commanded

“Later Joseph ordered” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

the one} who {was} over his house

“{the servant} who managed/supervised his household,” or “his head house-servant,” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 43:16.

saying, “Fill the men’s sacks {with} food, as much as

“Fill the men’s {grain} sacks/bags with as much grain as”. These grain sacks were carried by the brother’s donkeys and were probably fairly large since donkeys are able to carry around 50 kilos (about 110 pounds).

they are able to carry

“they can take {with them},” or “their/the sacks/bags can hold,”

and put the silver of each {one} in the mouth of his sack

“and put their {grain} money in the top/opening of their {grain} sacks/bags.” or “and in the top/opening of their sacks/bags, put the silver/money that each {of them} paid {for the grain}.” See how you translated “silver/money” in Gen 42:25, 27-28.

Genesis 44:2

And put my cup, the silver cup

“And put my cup, the one that is {made of} silver,” or “Also put my silver cup”. Notice that this cup was made out of silver; it was not just silver in color.

in the mouth of the sack of the youngest {one

“in the top/opening of the youngest {one/man}'s sack/bag,”

and his grain's silver

“and/with his grain money/payment.” or “along with the silver/money that he paid for the grain.”

So he did according to Joseph's word that he spoke

“So the servant did exactly as/what Joseph/he had told/ordered {him to do}.” See how you translated “according to ... words” in Gen 43:7.

Genesis 44:3

The morning became light

"The {next} morning {as it} was becoming light," or "The {next} morning at dawn," or "Early the next morning,"

and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys

"the men/brothers were sent {on their way} with their donkeys {by Joseph}." or "{Joseph} sent the men/brothers {on their way}, along with their donkeys." Consider what is the best way to translate this passive sentence in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 44:4

They had left the city, they had not gone far

"{But} after they left the city, before they had gone very far," or "{But} they had not gone very far out of the city when"

and Joseph said to {the one} who {was} over his house

"Joseph/he told {the servant} who managed/supervised his household," or "Joseph/he ordered his head-servant," See how you translated "{the one} who {was} over his house" in verse 1."

Get up

"Hurry {and}" or "Immediately"

follow after the men

"go/chase after the/those men" or "pursue those men"

and {when} you overtake them

"When you catch up with them," or "When you reach them," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

then say to them

"say to them," or "tell/ask them," Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way you translate the following rhetorical question. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why have you repaid evil for good

"Why have you treated {my master} so badly after/when {he was} so good {to you}?" or "My master was very good to you. Why have you treated him so badly?" or "My master treated you so/very well, but in return you have treated him very badly!" Joseph's servant uses this rhetorical question to scold the brothers and express his outrage. Consider what is the best way to communicate those things in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 44:5

Is this not what my lord drinks from

“Why {do you have} the cup that my master drinks from” or “The cup {you stole} is {the cup} that my master drinks from”. The servant uses this rhetorical question to further express his outrage about the missing cup. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

and what he indeed divines with

“{It is} the one he regularly uses for divination!” or “He {also} uses it to find out secret things!” The word “divines” refers to the practice of interpreting omens (signs) or using supernatural means to find out things. See how you translated a similar term (“divination”) in Gen 30:27. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

You have done evil {in} what you have done

“What you have done is very evil/wrong!” The phrase “you have done” is repeated in this sentence for emphasis. Consider what is the best way to communicate that emphasis in your language.

Genesis 44:6

Then he overtook them

“Then/So the/Joseph’s servant {left, and when he} caught up with the men/brothers,” Consider again how you translated “overtake” or “overtook” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 19:19; 31:25; 44:4, 6.

and spoke those words to them

“he repeated/said to them what Joseph had told him {to say}.” or “he gave/told them that/Joseph’s message.”

Genesis 44:7

But they said to him

“But they replied/exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Why does my lord speak words like those

“Sir, why do you say such things?” or “Master/Sir, we do not know why you are saying that!” The brothers use this rhetorical question to express their shock at being accused of something they had not done. They also address the servant as “my lord” to show him respect. Decide what is the best way to communicate those things in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Far be it from your servants to do

“{We assure you,} sir, {that} we would never do” or “{We swear as} your {humble} servants {that we} would never {even} think of doing” or “We would never {even} consider doing”. The brothers refer to themselves as “your servants” in order to show respect to Joseph’s head-servant. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics\]\]](#))

something like that

“anything like that!” or “such a thing!”

Genesis 44:8

Behold

“Remember that” or “After all,”

the silver that we found in the mouth of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan

“we returned to you the money that we found/discovered in our {grain} sacks/bags {last time}. {We brought it} {all the way} from {our home in} the land/region of Canaan!” or “as soon as we came {back here} from the land/region of Canaan, we returned to you the money we had found/discovered inside our {grain} sacks/bags.” Consider what is the best way in your language to order the clauses in this sentence. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So how would we steal

“So why would we {ever} steal/take” or “So we would never steal/take” or “So there is no reason that we would {ever} steal/take”. The brothers use this rhetorical question to strongly emphasize that they would never steal from the servant’s master. Some languages must use a statement or exclamation here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

silver or gold

“silver {things} or gold {things} {or anything else}”. The brothers are emphasizing that they would never steal anything from Joseph, especially not valuable things made out of gold or silver. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

from the house of your lord

“from your master’s house!” or “from your master!”

Genesis 44:9

Whoever of your servants is found with it

"{In fact,} sir, if you find/discover that one/any of us does have the cup," or "If any one of us does have the cup, sir,"
The brothers refer to themselves as "your servants" in order to show respect to Joseph's head-servant. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

then he will die

"then he must/should die," or "then he should be executed/killed," or "then {you may} execute/kill that person/man,"

and we also will be slaves for my lord

"and besides that, {the rest of} us will become slaves/servants for you, sir." or "and {the rest of} us, sir, will become your slaves/servants." See how you translated "my lord" in verse 7. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

Genesis 44:10

And he said

"The/Joseph's servant replied {to them}," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Indeed now

"So/Okay then," or "Very well then,"

according to your words, so it {will be

"based on what you have said I will do this:" or "I will do as you suggest {except for this}:"

Whoever is found with it

"The one whom I find with my master's cup" or "If I find one of you with my master's cup, that person"

will be a slave for me

"{is the only one who} will be/become my slave/servant."

but you {others} will be blameless

"{The rest of} you will be innocent {and free to go}." or "but {the rest of} you will be free to go/leave." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 44:11

Then they each hurried and lowered his sack to the ground

“So each of them quickly/immediately lowered his sack/bag {of grain} {from his donkey} to the ground,” or “Then/ So each of the men/brothers quickly/immediately took his {grain} sack/bag {off his donkey} and put it on the ground,”

and they each opened his sack

“and each of them opened his {own} sack/bag.” or “and opened it.”

Genesis 44:12

Then he searched

"Then the/Joseph's servant searched {their sacks/bags}." Consider what is the best way to refer to Joseph's servant in verses 6, 10 and 12. Also see how you translated "searched" in Gen 31:35. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest

"beginning/starting with the oldest {brother} and ending/finishing with the youngest {brother/one};" or "He started with the oldest {brother} and continued until he came to the youngest {brother/one};" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack

"and the cup was found {by him} in Benjamin's sack/bag!" or "and {there} he found the cup in Benjamin's sack/bag!" or "and {it was there} in Benjamin's sack/bag that he found the cup!" Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 44:13

Then they tore their clothes

"In response {to that}, the brothers tore their clothes {in distress/grief}." See how you translated "tore ... clothes {in distress}" in Gen 37:29, 34. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and each {one} loaded up his donkey

"Then each {of them} put his sack/bag {back} on his {own} donkey," or "Then each {of the men/brothers} loaded up his {own} donkey {again};" Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to the brothers in each context throughout this chapter. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and they returned to the city

"and they {all} returned to the city." or "and/then they {all} {turned around and} went back to the city."

Genesis 44:14

Then Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house

"When Judah and his brothers arrived at Joseph's house,"

and he was still there

"Joseph was still there," or "Joseph was there {waiting for them},"

so they fell to the ground before him

"Then/So they prostrated themselves on the ground before him {to show respect}." or "Then/So they bowed all the way to the ground in front of him {to honor him}." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 44:15

Then Joseph said to them

“Then Joseph told/asked them,” or “Then Joseph exclaimed to them,” Make sure the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way you translate the following rhetorical question. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1699)**)

What {is} this deed that you have done

“Why did you do such a terrible thing?” or “What you have done is terrible!” or “You should never have done such a thing!” Joseph uses rhetorical questions in this verse to express anger and scold his brothers. Some languages must use strong statements or exclamations here instead. Do what is best in your language. See what you did for a similar case in Gen 20:9. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Did you not know

“You should have known” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

that a man who {is} like me

“that a ruler like me” or “that someone in my position”

indeed divines

“regularly practices divination!” or “knows how to discover the secret things {that people do}!” or “could use divination to find out {what you did}!” See how you translated “divines” in verse 5.

Genesis 44:16

And Judah said

“Judah answered,” or “Judah replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

What can we say to my lord

“Sir, there is nothing {convincing} that we can say {to you}.” Judah uses a series of rhetorical questions in this verse to express how upset he is about what has happened and to emphasize that there is nothing that they can say to convince Joseph that they are innocent. Consider what is the best way to communicate those things in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

What can we speak

“There is no way that we can explain {this}.” or “We cannot explain {this}.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

And how can we justify ourselves

“We do not know how to show/prove {to you} that we did not do this.” or “There is no way we can prove/show {to you} that we are innocent.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

God has found out the sin of your servants

“God has uncovered/exposed our guilt {for our past sin}.” or “God is punishing {us,} your {humble} servants, for our {past} sin/sins.” or “God is using this occasion to punish us for our {past} sin.” Judah refers to himself and his brothers as “your servants” to show humility and to honor Joseph. Also, Judah is probably referring here to the sin of selling their brother Joseph into slavery years ago. You could include that information in a footnote. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Behold, we {are} slaves for my lord

“Here we {all} are, {ready to be} slaves/servants for you, sir,” or “{So now,} sir, we are {all} here to be your slaves/servants,” (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics\]\]](#))

both we and {the one

“including {the one/man}”

the one} in whose hand the cup was found

“who was found with your cup {in his grain sack/bag}.” or “in whose {grain} sack/bag {your house-servant} found the cup.” or “whom {your house-servant} found with your cup {in his sack/bag}.” Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

Genesis 44:17

But he said

“But Joseph told {them},” or “But Joseph exclaimed,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Far be it from me to do that

“{No,} I would never {even} consider doing such a thing!” See how you translated “Far be it from ...” in verse 7. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

The man in whose hand the cup was found, he

“{Only} the one who was found with my cup {in his sack/bag}” or “{Only} the man in whose sack/bag {my servant} found the/my cup” or “{Rather} {only} the one/man whom {my servant} found with my cup {in his sack/bag}”. See how you translated “in whose hand the cup was found” in verse 16. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

will be a slave for me

“will be/become my slave.” or “will {stay and} serve me as a slave.”

But you, go up in peace to your father

“But you {others} may return to your father in peace.” or “As for {the rest of} you, you may go {back} home to your father without any trouble.” or “{The rest of} you are free to go {back} home to your father.” The phrase “go up” refers to the fact that the land of Canaan was higher in elevation than the country of Egypt. Some translations leave “up” implied. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 44:18

Then Judah went near to him and said

“Then Judah went/came up/closer to Joseph and said,” or “Then Judah approached Joseph and said {to him},” See how you translated “went near” in Gen 43:19.

Please, my lord

“Please, sir/master,” or “Excuse me, sir/master,” Compare how you translated this phrase in Gen 43:20. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears

“I humbly ask you to let me speak freely/plainly to you.” or “will you please allow {me} your {humble} servant to say something to you.” Make sure your translation of “your servant” refers here to Judah, not to someone else. Throughout verses 18-34, Judah uses phrases such as “my lord,” “your servant,” and “your servants” to be polite and show respect to Joseph. At each point in these verses, make sure it is clear in your translation whom he is referring to. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

and do not let your anger burn against your servant

“Please do not be angry with/at me,” Compare how you translated the idiom “his anger burned” in Gen 39:19. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

since you {are} like

“{especially} since you {are} as {powerful as}” or “even though you {are} equal {in rank/authority} to”

Pharaoh

“{King} Pharaoh {himself}.” or “the king {himself}.”

Genesis 44:19

My lord asked

“Sir, {previously} you asked” or “Sir, {the last/previous time we were here,} you asked”

his servants

“{us} your {humble} servants” or “us”. Make sure it is clear in your translation of “his servants” that Judah is referring to himself and his brothers. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

saying, ‘Do you have a father or {another} brother

“Is your father still alive? Do you have {another} brother?” or “if/whether our father was {still} alive and if/whether we had {any other} brothers.” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate the embedded quotes in verses 19-23 as direct or indirect quotes. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 44:20

And we said to my lord

“And we told you, sir, {that}” or “We answered you, sir, {that}” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We have an aged father

“our aged/elderly father is {still} alive” or “we have an elderly father” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

and the youngest son of {his} old age

“and {also} a younger brother who was born when our father was {already} old.” or “and {with him is} his youngest son whom our father had when he was {already} old.”

But his brother is dead, so he is left by himself from his mother

“That son is the only one left {alive} from his mother, since his brother died.” or “And since that son’s brother is dead, he is his mother’s only living son/child.” or “That brother’s mother only had one other son, who is now dead.” In this sentence, “brother” refers to an older brother from the same father and mother. Some languages have a special kinship term for that. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

and his father loves him

“So his/our father loves him {very much}.” or “So his/our father {especially} loves our youngest brother.”

Genesis 44:21

Then you said to your servants

“Then you told {us, who are} your {humble} servants,” or “Then you told us, sir,” Judah uses the humble term “your servants” to show respect and honor to someone of higher status and authority. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

Bring him down to me, and I will set my eyes on him

“Bring your youngest brother to me so that I can see/meet him.” or “to bring our youngest brother {here} to you so that you could/can see him for yourself.” The verb “bring ... down” refers to the fact that Egypt was lower in elevation than the region of Canaan. Some translations leave “down” implied. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 44:22

And we said to my lord, 'The young man is not able to leave his father

"But we told you, sir, that the young man should/must not leave his father {and come here};" (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

because {if} he leaves his father, then he will die

"because if he did/does, his father would/will die {from anxiety}." Make sure the way you translate this clause fits with how you translated the previous clause, as either a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1702)**)

Genesis 44:23

But you said to your servants

“But then, sir, you told us {that}” or “But you told us {that}”

If your youngest brother does not come down with you

“if our youngest brother did not come back here with us,” or “unless our youngest brother came with us,” Consider again whether to translate the embedded quotes in verses 19-23 as direct or indirect quotes. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

you will not see my face again

“you would not permit/allow us to see you again.” or “we could never see you again.” Make sure that the way you translate this clause fits with how you translated the beginning of this verse, either as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 44:24

Then it happened when we went up

“When we returned {home}” or “So after we got/came back {home again}”. The phrase, “Then it happened” introduces an important event and helps create suspense so that readers will wonder what the outcome will be. Many translations omit “it happened” because it is not natural in their language. Do what is best in your language.

to your servant my father

“to my/our father, {who is} your {humble} servant,” or “to my/our father, who highly respects you,” See how you translated “your servant ... father” in Gen 43:28. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

then we related to him

“we reported to him” or “we told him”

the words of my lord

“my/our lord’s/master’s words.” or “what you told {us}.” or “what you had said {to us}.”

Genesis 44:25

Then our father said

"{Months} later our father told {us}," The pronouns "our" and "{us}" are exclusive here because they do not include Joseph. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

Return, buy a little food for us

"Go back {to Egypt} {and} buy some {more} grain for {all of} us." The pronoun "us" is inclusive here because what Judah's father (Jacob) had said included the brothers whom he was talking to. See how you translated this same quote in Gen 43:2. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1621)**)

Genesis 44:26

But we said

“But we replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We cannot go down. {But} if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go

“We cannot go {there} unless our youngest brother is with us. Then we can go.” or “We can only go down {there} if our youngest brother is with us.” See how you translated “... down” in verses 21 and 23.

For we are not able to see the man’s face

“We will not be allowed/permitted to go before/to the man/governor {who sells grain there}” or “The man/governor {who sells grain there} will not allow/permit us to see him {again}”. The phrase “the man’s face” refers to the governor (Joseph) himself. Translate this in a way that is natural in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

and our youngest brother not {be} with us

“if our youngest brother is not with us.” or “unless our youngest brother is with us.”

Genesis 44:27

Then your servant my father said to us

“Then my/our father {who is} your {humble} servant said to us,” or “Then my/our father said to us,” See how you translated “your servant my father” in verse 24. Also notice that the pronoun “us” does not include Joseph here. Some languages use an exclusive pronoun for this. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’** (p.1621))

You know that

“As you {all} know,” The pronoun “you” is plural here, referring to all the brothers. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular** (p.1627))

my wife bore two {sons} for me

“my wife {Rachel} bore/had {only} two {sons} for me.” or “my wife {Rachel} and I {only} had two {sons} together.”

Genesis 44:28

And the one went away from me

“One {of those/her sons} left here {one day},” or “One {of them} has disappeared,”

and I have said, “He was surely torn to pieces,” and I have not seen him until now

“I have thought that he must have been {killed and} torn to pieces {by a wild/fierce animal}. I have never seen him again.” or “and I have not seen him since then. I am sure that {a wild/fierce animal} must have {killed him and} torn him apart.” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this doubly embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Also see how you translated “torn. ... to pieces” in Gen 37:33. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 44:29

So {if} you also take this {one} from my presence

“So if you also take this {son} away from me,” or “So if you also take her other son {away} from me,” Consider what is the best way to translate the hypothetical sentence in this verse. Make sure all the parts of the sentence fit together well. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

and harm were to meet him

“and something terrible happens to him,” or “and if anything bad/terrible happens to him,” or “and anything harms him,” See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 42:38. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

then you would bring my gray head down in misery

“you will cause me, your gray-haired/elderly father, to grieve so deeply/badly that I will {die and} go down” or “you will cause me, your gray-haired/elderly father, so much sorrow/grief that I will {die and} go down”. See how you translated “bring my gray head down” in Gen 42:38. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

to Sheol

“to the afterworld.” Sheol is the Hebrew name for the world of the dead, that is, the place where the spirits of all people go after they die. You could put that information in a footnote. Your translation of “Sheol” should not refer to hell or a place of punishment. Some translations have “the grave” here, but that leaves out the idea of an afterlife that this sentence implies. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

Genesis 44:30

And now

“So now/then,” This phrase introduces the conclusion to what Judah said in verses 24-29. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language.

when I go to your servant my father

“when I/we return {home} to my/our father, who highly respects you,” or “if I/we go {home} to my/our father, sir,” See how you translated “your servant my father” in verses 24 and 27. (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

and the young man is not with us

“but I/we don’t have his youngest son with me/us,” or “without his youngest son,”

since his soul is bound to his soul

“since our father’s life depends on his son’s life,” or “since our father is deeply attached to his son,” This idiom reflects how close the relationship was between Judah’s father and youngest brother. Consider what is the best way to say this in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 44:31

then it will happen when he sees that the young man is not {there}, then he will die

“if he sees that his son is gone/missing, he will die!” or “then he will die when he sees that his youngest son is not with us!” The phrase “then it will happen” introduces an important hypothetical event here and helps create suspense so that readers will wonder what the outcome will be. Many translations omit the phrase because it is not natural in their language. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

And your servants will bring the gray head of your servant our father down in sorrow

“{Yes,} we will/would bring/cause our gray-haired/elderly father so much sorrow/grief that he will/would {die and} go” or “{In that way,} we will/would be responsible for bringing/causing our gray-haired/elderly father ...” Consider what is the best way to translate this hypothetical situation in your language. Also, see how you translated “bring ... gray head down in sorrow to Sheol” in Gen 42:38, and a similar phrase in 44:29. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p. 1643)**)

to Sheol

“to the afterworld!” Consider again how you translated “Sheol” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31.

Genesis 44:32

For your servant guaranteed the young man to my father, saying

"{I myself} your {humble} servant guaranteed the young man's safety to my father. I told/assured {him} that" or "Besides that, sir, I guaranteed/promised my father that I would return his son to him safely. I told him that". See how you translated the verb "guarantee" in Gen 43:9.

If I do not bring him {back} to you

"if I did not bring his son {back} to him," Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

then I will have sinned against my father

"then this would be a terrible sin against him" or "I would be guilty of sinning against him". See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 43:9. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

all the days

"all the days {of my life}." or "for the rest of my life." or "forever." Be consistent here with your choice in Gen 43:9.

Genesis 44:33

And now

“So now/then,” This phrase introduces the conclusion to what Judah said in verses 30-32. See how you translated this phrase in verse 30.

please let your servant stay

“I beg/urge you to allow {me} your servant to {be the one to} stay/remain {here}” or “sir, I beg/urge you to let me stay {here}”. Consider again how you translated “your servant” and “your servants” throughout this chapter. See verses 7, 9, 18, 24, 27, 30-32. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics\]\]](#))

as} a slave for my lord

“{as} a slave/servant for you” or “and be your slave/servant”. Throughout this chapter, the same Hebrew word is translated as “slave” when the context has negative connotations (verses 9-10, 16-17, 33), but is translated as “servant” when the context has more positive connotations (verses 7, 9, 16, 18-19, 21, 23-24, 27, 30-32). Do what is best in your language in each context.

instead of

“in place of” or “to take the place of”

the young man

“our youngest {brother},”

and let the young man go up with his brothers

“and let him go back {home} with his {other} brothers.”

Genesis 44:34

For how will I go up

“There is no way I can” or “I could never”. Judah uses this rhetorical question to emphasize how difficult it would be for him to return to his father without his brother. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

will I go up to my father

“go back to my father” or “return {home} to my father”. Consider again how you translated “... up” in verses 17, 24, 33-34. Contrast that to how you translated “... down” in verses 21, 23, and 26. Some translations leave “up” or “down” implied. Do what is best in your language.

if the young man is not with me

“if his youngest {son} is not with me!” or “if our youngest {brother} is not with me!” (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

I fear to see

“I could not bear to see” or “I do not want to see”

the misery that would find my father

“the terrible distress/grief that it would cause my father!” or “how much/terribly my father would suffer/grieve!” See how you translated “misery” in verse 29. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1643)**)

Genesis 45

Genesis 45:1

Then Joseph was not able

"{When Joseph heard that,} he could no {longer}" or "{When Joseph heard what Judah said,} he was no {longer} able to"

to control himself

"control/hide his emotions/feelings" or "keep himself from crying"

before all who were standing by him

"in front of all his servants who were with/attending him," or "in front of all his attendants/servants," Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Joseph's servants, not his brothers.

and he called out

"and/so he shouted {to them};" or "and/so he said loudly {to them};"

Have every man leave

"All of you, leave"

from beside me

"my presence!" or "the room!"

So no man stood with him when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers

"So Joseph was alone with his brothers when he made himself known to them." or "{Immediately the/his servants/ attendants left the room,} so that no one else was with him when he told his brothers who he was." Make sure your use of nouns or pronouns to refer to Joseph and his brothers here is clear and natural in your language. (See:

Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696))

Genesis 45:2

And he gave his voice in crying

“Then he raised his voice and cried loudly/uncontrollably, so that” or “But he started crying so loudly that”. Consider whether your language has an idiom such as “gave his voice in crying”. Also see how you translated “cried” in Gen 42:24; 43:30. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard

“{many} Egyptians heard {him/it}, including {the members of} Pharaoh’s household/family.” or “the Egyptian {servants} heard {him/it}, and so did Pharaoh’s household/family.” The word “house” refers here to Pharaoh’s family members and servants, not a literal building. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 45:3

Then Joseph said to his brothers

“Then Joseph/he exclaimed to his brothers {in their language},” In this chapter, the word “brothers” refers to Joseph’s older brothers (from different mothers) and his younger brother (from the same mother). (See: **Kinship (p. 1661)**)

I {am} Joseph

“I {am} {your brother} Joseph!” or “I {am} Joseph, {your brother}!”

Is my father still alive

“Is our father still alive?” Joseph uses “my father” to emphasize his relationship with his father. Make sure your translation does not sound like he had a different father than his brothers.

But his brothers were not able to answer him

“But his/Joseph’s brothers could not reply/respond to him,” or “His brothers could not say a word,”

because they were terrified at his presence

“because they were terrified/shocked {to realize} that they were in his presence.” or “because they felt very afraid to be standing in front of him.” For some languages it is necessary to put this clause earlier in this sentence and say, “But his brothers were so terrified to see him that they could not answer him.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 45:4

Then Joseph said to his brothers

“So Joseph said to them,”

Please come close to me

“Please come near/closer to me.” or “Please come here next to me.”

So they came close, and he said

“After/When they went closer {to him}, he said {to them},” or “After they did that, he said {to them},”

I {am} Joseph your brother

“I {really/truly am} your brother Joseph,”

whom you sold into Egypt

“whom you sold {to be a slave} in {the country of} Egypt.” or “whom you sold {as a slave that was brought/taken here} to Egypt.” Joseph’s brothers sold him to slave traders who were going to Egypt. If necessary, you could make some of that information explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

Genesis 45:5

And now

“But now,” or “But”

do not be grieved

“do not be upset/distressed”

and do not let it burn in your eyes

“or/and angry with/at yourselves”. Consider again how you translated various idioms for “anger” or “be angry” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:5-6; 30:2; 31:35-36; 34:7; 44:18; 45:5. It may be necessary to translate these idioms in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

that you sold me here

“that you sold me {and caused me to be a slave} here,” or “for selling me {as a slave},”

because God sent me

“because God sent me {here}” or “because {it was actually} God {who} sent me {here}”

ahead of you

“before you came,” or “before you got here,”

for the preservation of life

“to save {many people’s} lives.” or “to keep many people from dying.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1562)**)

Genesis 45:6

For this {is} two years

“For two years {now}” or “The past two years”

the famine {has been} in the midst of the land

“{there has been} a famine throughout this country/region,” or “a famine {has been affecting/devastating} this whole region,” See how you translated “famine” in Gen 12:10.

and {there are} still five years {in} which

“and for another five years {it will be so severe/bad that}” or “and during the next five years {it will be even worse, so that}” or “and there will be five more years when”

there will} not be plowing and harvesting

“{there will} be no plowing {of fields} or harvesting {of crops}.” or “no one will {be able to} plant {seeds} or harvest {crops}.”

Genesis 45:7

But God sent me

“That is why God sent me {here}” or “God sent me {here}” or “God caused me to come {here}”

ahead of you

“before you came,” or “before you got here,”

to preserve a remnant for you

“so that you will have descendants survive/living” or “to help you survive and have descendants”

on the earth

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “on the earth” or (2) “in the/this land”

and to keep you alive

“by helping you stay live” or “by saving your lives”

by a great deliverance

“through this/his amazing/extraordinary rescue.” or “in this amazing/powerful way.” For some languages it is better to put the last two phrases earlier in this sentence and say, “But God sent me ahead of you to save your lives in this amazing way so that you will survive and have descendants on the earth.” Do what is best in your language. (See:

Information Structure (p.1652))

Genesis 45:8

So now

"So then," or "So"

it was} not you

"you {are/were} not {the ones}"

who} sent me here

"{who} brought me here," or "{who} caused me to come here,"

but God

"but {rather} {it was} God {who sent/brought me}." or "but {rather} God {is/was the one} {who did it/that}."

And he has made me father to Pharaoh

"He has {also/even} made me {like a} father to {King} Pharaoh," Joseph was like a father to Pharaoh in that Pharaoh highly honored him and Joseph took care of Pharaoh's household and all their needs. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

and lord over all his house

"so that I am the master/supervisor of his entire household" or "so that I am the one in charge of his entire household". See how you translated "lord" in Gen 42:30, 33, and how you translated "house" in Gen 41:40. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the ruler

"and {also} the governor" or "and {also} the highest official"

in all the land of Egypt

"in/over the entire/whole country of Egypt."

Genesis 45:9

Hurry and go up

“Hurry up/back” or “Leave quickly and go back” or “Return quickly”. In this verse, the words “up” and “down” reflect the fact that Canaan was higher in elevation than Egypt. Many languages leave those words implied. Do what is best in your language.

to my father

“to our father”. See how you translated “my father” in verse 3.

and say to him, ‘This {is what} your son Joseph says

“and tell him that his son Joseph has sent him this message:” Consider whether it is best in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

God has made me lord over all Egypt

“God has made/appointed me ruler/governor over the entire {country of} Egypt.” Consider whether it is best in your language to translate this doubly embedded quote (which continues through verse 11) as a direct or indirect quote. An example of an indirect quote would be: “God has made him the ruler over all Egypt. He urges you to come down there to live near him, without delay. He also says that you and your family may live in Goshen Province and that way you will live near him ... He will provide for you there ...” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Come down to me

“{So} {please} come down {here} {to live} near me,”

do not delay

“{and} do not delay/wait.” or “{and} do not take very long to come.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this sentence and say, “{So} {please} do not take very long, but rather come down/here quickly {to live} near me.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 45:10

And you will live

“You {and your family} can/may live”. The pronouns “you” and “your” in this verse are singular, but Joseph’s message to his father includes the whole family. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

in the land of Goshen

“in the region/territory of Goshen” or “in Goshen Province/County”. Goshen was a region or territory that was part of the country of Egypt. Make sure your translation of “land” does not sound like Goshen was its own country.

so that you will be near to me

“and that way you can be/live near me” or “That way you will/can live close to me”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

you and your children

“with your children”

and your children’s children

“and your grandchildren”

and your flocks and your herds

“along with your flocks {of sheep and goats}, your herds {of cattle}” or “as well as all your {domestic} animals”

and all that {belongs} to you

“and all your {other} belongings.” or “and everything {else} that you own.”

Genesis 45:11

And I will provide for you there

“I will take care of you there,” or “I will support you there,”

because {there are} still five years of famine

“since {there are} still five {more} years of famine {ahead/coming}.” or “because the famine will last five {more} years.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “There are still five more years of famine ahead/coming, so I will provide for you there {in Goshen}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

so that you will not become impoverished, you and your household and all that {belongs} to you

“That way you and your {extended} family will not become impoverished/destitute/poor {and die}.” or “{Please come} so that {the famine} will/does not cause you and your family to lose everything you own {and die}.” The verb “become impoverished” can include losing livestock, other belongings, and the lives of their servants and family members.

Genesis 45:12

And behold

“And/Now look/listen!” or “{Then Joseph said to his brothers,} Look!” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph’s message to his father was completed in verse 11, and that here in verse 12 he is talking directly to his brothers again.

your eyes

“{I can tell that} {all of} you,” or “{All of} you,” The word “eyes” is used figuratively here (and in the next phrase) to refer to the persons themselves; it also emphasizes the fact that they were seeing Joseph in person. Consider what is the best way to translate this phrase in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

and the eyes of my brother Benjamin

“including my brother Benjamin,” See how you translated “brother” in Gen 43:29. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

see that {it is} my mouth

“{can} see that {it really is} me, {Joseph,}” or “{can} see that I {Joseph} {am the one}”. Here the phrase “my mouth” refers to Joseph himself; it also emphasizes the fact that it was Joseph himself who was talking to them. Consider what is the best way to translate this figure of speech in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

that is speaking to you

“who is talking to you.”

Genesis 45:13

So report to my father

“So {go and} tell my/our father”

all my glory in Egypt

“{about} my powerful/high position in Egypt” or “{about} how powerful/honored I am in Egypt”

and all that you have seen

“and {about} everything {else} that you have seen {here}.”

Then hurry and bring my father down here

“Then hurry and bring him down here {to me}.” or “Then quickly bring him here {to me}.” See how you translated “down” in verse 9.

Genesis 45:14

Then he fell on the neck of Benjamin his brother

“Then Joseph threw/put his arms around his brother Benjamin’s neck/shoulders” or “Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin {tightly/strongly}”. See how you translated the idiom “fell on his neck” in Gen 33:4. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

and cried

“and cried {for joy},” or “and started crying {because he was so happy}.”

and Benjamin cried on his neck

“and Benjamin {also} cried on his/Joseph’s neck/shoulder.” or “Benjamin {also} cried as he hugged him/Joseph {back}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 45:15

Then he kissed all his brothers

“Then/Next Joseph kissed all his brothers {on their cheeks}” or “Then/Next Joseph greeted all his brothers with a kiss {on their cheeks}”. See how you translated “kissed ... {on the cheeks}” in Gen 33:4.

and cried over them

“as he continued to cry {for joy}.” or “with tears {of joy}.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “Then as Joseph continued to cry, he kissed all his brothers {on the/their cheeks}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

And after that his brothers talked with him

“After {he did} that, his brothers started talking with him.” Previously Joseph's brothers had been too afraid to speak (verse 3). Now they felt free to start talking to him.

Genesis 45:16

And the report was heard {in} the house of Pharaoh, saying

“When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace/household” or “When Pharaoh’s household heard the news”

The brothers of Joseph have come

“that Joseph’s brothers had come/arrived {there},” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

And it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants

“it was pleasing to Pharaoh and {all} his servants/officials.” or “Pharaoh and {all} his servants/officials were pleased/happy.”

Genesis 45:17

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

"Then/So Pharaoh told/instructed Joseph," or "Then/So Pharaoh gave these instructions to Joseph:" (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals

"Give your brothers this message {from me}: 'Load your donkeys {with grain}'" or "Tell your brothers to load their {pack} animals {with grain}". These animals were donkeys (Gen 43:18, 44:3), not any other kind of animal. Also, consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote with a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

and leave; go

"and go quickly {back}" or "and quickly return". The two verbs "leave" and "go" emphasize that Joseph's brothers should go back immediately to their father in Canaan.

to the land of Canaan

"to region of Canaan." or "to Canaan."

Genesis 45:18

Then get your father and your households, and come to me

“Then bring your father and your families back {here} to me,” or “Then {tell them to} bring their father and their families back {here} to me.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that verse 18 is still part of Pharaoh’s message to Joseph’s brothers. Also make sure the pronouns that you use throughout verses 17 and 18 fit with whether you translate this embedded quote with a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

and I will give to you

“I will give you” or “I will give them”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

the best of the land of Egypt

“the best {region/area/land} in the country of Egypt {to live in},”

and you will eat the fat of the land

“so that you/they will live well/comfortably with the best/abundance of everything in the country.” This idiom means that they would live comfortably with the best of everything; it does not just refer to food. Consider whether or not you have a similar idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 45:19

And you are commanded

“You are also directed/instructed {to tell them}” or “{Then Pharaoh said to Joseph,} “I also command/want you {to tell them}”. The pronoun “you” is singular here and refers to Joseph. This clause is not part of Pharaoh’s message to Joseph’s brothers (verses 17-20). Make sure that is clear in your translation.

Do this: Take carts with you

“Take {some of} {my} carts/wagons with you” or “to take {some of} {my} carts/wagons with them”. These carts or wagons had two or four wheels and were pulled by animals such as oxen or donkeys. Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote with a direct or indirect quote. See what you did for a similar case in verses 17-18. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

from the land of Egypt

“from the country of Egypt”

for your little ones and for your wives

“for your/their {young} children and wives {to travel/ride in},” or “for your/their wives and {young} children {to travel/ride in},” For some languages it is more natural (and respectful) to put “wives” before “little ones” in this phrase. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “little ones” in Gen 43:8. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and get your father and come

“then bring {them and} your father {back} {here to live}.” or “Then {tell them} to bring their father {and their families} {back} {here to live}.” Make sure the pronouns you use throughout verses 19 and 20 fit with whether you translate the embedded quote with a direct or indirect quote. Also see how you translated “get your father” in verse 18. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 45:20

And do not let your eyes grieve

“And do not be concerned” or “You/They should not worry” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

over your belongings

“about {leaving some of} your/their belongings {behind},” or “if you/they have to leave behind {some of} your/their belongings/possessions,” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

because the best of all the land of Egypt

“because the best of everything in the land/country of Egypt” or “because the most valuable {things} in all the land/country of Egypt”. This phrase refers generally to the wealth of Egypt that will be available to Jacob's family, including fertile land and anything else that they need.

belongs} to you

“{will be} yours.” or “{will be} theirs.” (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 45:21

Then the sons of Israel did so

"Then/So Israel's sons {agreed to} do that." or "... {agreed to} do what Pharaoh said/commanded." Jacob is referred to by his other name Israel here (also in verse 28). If that is not clear in your translation, you could put that information in a footnote. If possible in your translation, it is best to keep the name that the author chose to use in each case so that you do not change what is being emphasized.

And Joseph gave to them carts

"Then Joseph gave them carts/wagons {to use}"

according to the mouth of Pharaoh

"according to Pharaoh's words/command," or "as {King} Pharaoh had commanded/directed {him}," This phrase refers to what Pharaoh said. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and he gave provisions to them

"and he provided/supplied them with food {to eat}" or "and he gave them food"

for the road

"to eat on their trip/journey {home}." or "to eat as they traveled {home}."

Genesis 45:22

To all of them, to each {one}, he gave changes of clothes

"To each of them he gave a {new} change/set of clothes," or "He {also} gave a {new} change/set of clothes to each one of his brothers,"

but to Benjamin he gave 300 {shekels} of silver and five changes of clothes

"but to Benjamin he gave 300 {pieces} of silver {money} and five {new} changes/sets of clothes." or "but to Benjamin he gave five {new} changes/sets of clothes and/plus 300 {pieces} of silver {money}." For some languages it is better to mention the gift of clothes to Benjamin before the gift of silver, to more clearly contrast how many clothes he received with how many his brothers received. Do what is best in your language. Also, see how you translated "{shekels} of silver" in Gen 20:16 (and see the note there). Three hundred shekels of silver was equal to about 3.5 kilos (7.5 pounds). (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 45:23

And to his father he sent this

“Besides that, he sent {with them} the following gifts for his father:” or “He also gave {them} the following gifts/ things to give to his father:”

ten he-donkeys loaded

“ten male donkeys that were carrying”

with the best of Egypt

“{some of} the best/finest {things/products} from Egypt,” or “{some of} the most valuable {things} produced in {the land/country of} Egypt,”

and ten she-donkeys loaded {with

“and ten female donkeys that were carrying”

grain and bread and provisions

“{bags of} grain, bread, and {other} provisions/food” or “{food} provisions, including grain and bread,”

for his father

“for his father {and family}” or “for him {and his family}” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1567)**)

for the road

“to eat on his/their trip/journey {to Egypt}.” or “to eat as he/they traveled {to Egypt}.” See how you translated “provisions ... for the road” in verse 21 and Gen 42:25.

Genesis 45:24

Then he sent his brothers

"Then Joseph sent/saw his brothers off {on their way/journey home}." or "After that, he/Joseph got his brothers started {on their journey home}." (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and {as} they left

"As they were leaving," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

then he said to them, "Do not quarrel

"he told/urged them, "Do not argue {with each other}" or "he told/urged them not to argue {with one another}". Consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

on the road

"on the way/journey." or "as you travel."

Genesis 45:25

Then they went up from Egypt

“Then Joseph’s brothers left Egypt”. See how you translated “up” in verse 9.

and came {to} the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father

“and went/traveled {back} {home} to their father Jacob in the land/region of Canaan.”

Genesis 45:26

And they reported to him, saying

"They {immediately} announced to him," or "{When they arrived,} they exclaimed/announced to him,"

Joseph {is} still alive! And in fact, he {is} the ruler over all the land of Egypt

"Joseph {is} still alive! In fact, he {is} the governor over/of the entire country of Egypt!" See how you translated "ruler" in verse 8.

But his heart went numb

"{When their father heard that news,} he was stunned {and silent}," or "{When Jacob heard that,} he was completely shocked," This idiom means that Jacob was so shocked that he did not know which way to go with his emotions or what to think, say, or do; it does not mean that he died. Some languages have a similar idiom. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

because he did not believe them

"because he could not believe them." or "because he thought it could not be true."

Genesis 45:27

Then they told him

“But then they reported to him” or “But {after} they told him”

all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them

“everything that Joseph had said to them,”

and he saw the carts

“and {when/after} he saw the carts/wagons”. See how you translated “carts” in verses 19 and 21.

that Joseph had sent to carry him

“that Joseph had sent to carry him {and his family} {to Egypt},”

then the spirit of Jacob their father revived

“their father Jacob felt much better.” or “he recovered {from the shock}.”

Genesis 45:28

And Israel said

"Then Israel/he exclaimed {to them}," Consider again whether to include in this chapter a footnote which explains that "Israel" (verses 21 and 28) and "Jacob" (verses 25 and 27) refer to the same person, not two different people.

Enough

"{That's} enough! {It must be true!}" or "{I have heard} enough! {I'm convinced!}"

Joseph my son {is} still alive

"My son Joseph must still be alive!" or "My son Joseph really is alive!"

I will go and see him before I die

"I must go {now} and see him {again} before I die."

Genesis 46

Genesis 46:1

Then Israel set out and all that {belonged} to him

“So Israel started the journey {to Egypt} with all his {family members and} belongings/possessions.” or “So Israel {and his family} started traveling {toward Egypt} with all his/their belongings.”

Then he came to Beersheba

“When they reached {the city of} Beersheba,”

and he sacrificed sacrifices

“he offered sacrifices/offerings” or “offered/burned some of his animals {on an altar} {there} as sacrifices”. See how you translated “sacrificed” in Gen 31:54.

to the God of his father Isaac

“to God, whom his father Isaac had worshiped/served.”

Genesis 46:2

And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob! Jacob

“During the night God spoke/called to Israel in a vision, “Jacob! Jacob!” ” or “That night, God {appeared/came to} Israel in a vision and said to him, “Jacob, Jacob.” ” God repeats Jacob’s name to communicate that he has something urgent or important to tell him. Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound angry or critical. Also see how you translated “vision” in Gen 15:1.

And he said

“Israel/Jacob replied {to him},” For some languages, it is more natural to put this quotation margin (“he said”) after the quote. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Behold me

“Here I am, {Lord/Master}.” or “Yes, {Lord/Master}?” or “I am listening, {Lord}.” Consider again how you translated the idiom “Behold me” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 22:1, 7, 11; 27:1, 18; 31:11; 37:13; 46:2. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 46:3

And he said

“Then God said {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I {am} God, the God of your father

“I {am} God, the God whom your father served/worshiped.” See how you translated “the God of” in verse 1.

Do not be afraid

“Don’t be afraid” or “You must not be afraid”

to go down to Egypt

“to move down to {the country of} Egypt,” or “to go/travel to {the country of} Egypt {and settle there},”

because I will make you

“because I will make you {and your family/descendants}” or “because I will make your family/descendants” or “because I will give you {many} descendants, who will”. See how you translated “I will make you into a great nation” (and similar phrases) in Gen 12:2; 17:20; 18:18; 21:13, 18. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

into a great nation there

“{multiply and} become an important/large ethnic/people group there.”

Genesis 46:4

I myself will go down with you to Egypt

“I myself/personally will go with you to Egypt,” or “I will personally go with you down to Egypt {and take care of you there}.” Consider what is the best way to translate the emphatic pronoun “I” here and in the next clause. Also see how you translated “down” and “up” in Gen 45:9.

and I myself will also surely bring you up

“Later I will definitely bring your descendants {back} {here} {to Canaan}.” The pronoun “you” refers here to Jacob’s descendants. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

And Joseph will put his hand over your eyes

“And {when you die}, Joseph will {be right there to} close your eyes.” or “When you die, Joseph will be with you.” This clause refers to the custom of closing a person’s eyes after he died and means that Joseph would be with Jacob when he died. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

Genesis 46:5

Then Jacob got up from Beersheba

“Then/So Jacob left {the city of} Beersheba,” or “After that, Jacob {whose other name was Israel} left {the city of} Beersheba,” Be consistent with how you spell “Beersheba” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 21:14, 31-33; 22:19; 26:23, 33; 28:10; 46:1, 5.

and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father

“and his sons, the sons of Israel, took/transported {him} their father” or “and his sons, {that is} the sons of Israel, took/transported him” or “and his sons took/transported him”. “Israel” is the name that God gave to Jacob (Gen 32:28, 35:10). In chapters 45 and 46, the text repeatedly switches back and forth between both of Jacob’s names. Make sure it is clear in your translation that these two names refer to the same person. You could include a footnote that helps readers understand what is happening.

and their little ones and their wives

“as well as their children and wives” or “and their wives and children”. See how you translated “little ones and ... wives” in Gen 45:19. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

in the carts

“in the wagons”. See how you translated “carts” in Gen 45:19, 21, 27.

that Pharaoh

“that {King} Pharaoh” or “that Pharaoh {the king of Egypt}” or “that the king {of/over Egypt}”. For a note about how “Pharaoh” is used like a name in the Bible, see Gen 12:15. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

had sent

“had sent {to Canaan}” or “had provided”

to carry him

“to transport him/them {to Egypt}.” or “for them to ride in/on {to Egypt}.” The pronoun “him” refers to Jacob, the head of his family, and includes Jacob’s wives and children. It may be necessary to use the plural pronoun “them” to make that clear. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 46:6

And they took their livestock

“They {also} took/brought {with them} their livestock/animals”

and their possessions

“and their {other} belongings”. Consider again how you translated “possessions” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:5 (and note); 13:6; 14:11-12, 16, 21; 15:14; 31:18; 36:7; 46:6. It may be necessary to translate this term in slightly different ways, depending on the context.

that they had acquired

“that they had accumulated/gotten”. Consider again how you translated “acquired” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:5; 31:18; 36:6; 46:6.

in the land of Canaan

“in the region of Canaan.” or “in Canaan.”

Then they came to Egypt, Jacob and all of his offspring with him

“Then Jacob and all of his descendants arrived in Egypt,”

Genesis 46:7

his sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters

"{including} his sons and grandsons, {and} his daughters and granddaughters." or "{including} his sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters." or "{including} his sons and daughters, {and} his grandsons and granddaughters." Consider what is the best way in your language to list these descendants. (See: **Kinship (p.1661)**)

So all his offspring he brought with him to Egypt

"{Yes,} he/Jacob brought his entire family with him to Egypt." or "He/Jacob had all his offspring/descendants with him when he arrived in Egypt." For some languages, it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this verse and say, "He/Jacob brought his entire {extended} family with him to Egypt, {including} his sons ...". Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 46:8

Now these {are} the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt, Jacob and his sons

“Here is a list of the names of Israel’s descendants who went/came {with him} to Egypt, {that is,} Jacob’s descendants:” or “The following list gives the names of Israel’s descendants, {that is,} Jacob’s descendants, who went/came {with him} to Egypt:”

the firstborn of Jacob {was} Reuben

“Reuben, {who was} his/Jacob’s firstborn/oldest {son},” Some translations put verses 8-14, 16-17, and 19-24 in list format, beginning a new paragraph with each of Jacob’s sons.

Genesis 46:9

And the sons of Reuben {were

“and Reuben’s sons, {who were}” or “and Reuben’s sons:” Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from the previous verse. Also, throughout this section (verses 9-27), some translations use a colon before each list of names instead of “{were}” or “{who were}”. Do what is best in your language.

Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi

“Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.” For some languages it is more natural to include “and” between every name in a list like this. For other languages it is more natural to use commas between names and leave “and” implied, except before the last name in the list. See how you translated similar lists of names in Genesis 10.

Genesis 46:10

And the sons of Simeon {were

“{Simeon and} Simeon’s/his sons, {who were}”

Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jakin and Zohar

“Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar,”

and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman

“and Shaul, who had a Canaanite mother.” or “and Shaul, whose mother was a Canaanite.” or “and Shaul. (Shaul had a Canaanite mother.)” In this list, only Shaul had a Canaanite mother. See how you translated “Canaanite” in Gen 38:2.

Genesis 46:11

And the sons of Levi {were} Gershon, Kohath, and Merari

“{Levi and} Levi’s sons, {who were} Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.”

Genesis 46:12

And the sons of Judah {were

“{Judah and} Judah’s sons, {who were}”

Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah

“Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah;” Be consistent here with how you spelled these names in Gen 38:3-11, 26, 29-30.

but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan

“actually, Er and Onan had {already} died in the land/region of Canaan.”

And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul

“Perez’s sons were Hezron and Hamul.” or “Perez had sons {named} Hezron and Hamul.”

Genesis 46:13

And the sons of Issachar {were

"{Issachar and} Issachar's sons, {who were}"

Tola and Puvah and Job and Shimron

"Tola, Puvah/Puah, Job/Jashub, and Shimron." Numbers 26:24 and 1 Chronicles 7:1 have the same list of Issachar's sons as here, but instead of "Puvah" and "Job," they have "Puah" and "Jashub." Some translations keep the spelling for these names the same in all three locations to avoid confusion. Do what is best in your language. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1635)**)

Genesis 46:14

And the sons of Zebulun {were} Sered

“{Zebulun and} Zebulun’s sons, {who were}”

Sered and Elon and Jahleel

“Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.”

Genesis 46:15

Those {were} the sons of

“Those {were} the sons {and grandsons}” or “{All} those {were} the descendants”

Leah, whom she bore for Jacob

“of Leah and Jacob who were born” or “that Jacob’s wife Leah had” or “whom Jacob and {his wife} Leah had together”

in Paddan Aram

“in {the land/region of} Paddan Aram,”

and Dinah his daughter

“as well as Dinah their daughter.” or “in addition to their daughter Dinah.” or “They also had a daughter {named} Dinah.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, be consistent with how you spell the name “Dinah” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 30:21; 34:1-5, 11, 13, 25-26; 46:15.

All the souls of his sons and his daughters {were} thirty-three

“All {together} those sons, daughters {and grandchildren} {totaled} thirty-three persons/people.” or “The {total} number of those descendants {was} thirty-three.”

Genesis 46:16

And the sons of Gad {were

“{Jacob’s other descendants who came with him included} {his/Jacob’s son Gad and} Gad’s sons, {who were}” or “{Other descendants were/included} {Jacob’s son Gad and} Gad’s sons:” This verse begins a new section in the list of Jacob’s descendants. Decide what is the best way to begin this new section in your language.

Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli

“Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.”

Genesis 46:17

And the sons of Asher {were

"{He/Jacob also took} {his son Asher and} Asher's sons, {who were}"

Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah

"Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah,"

and Serah their sister

"and their sister, {who was} Serah." or "and their sister, {whose name was} Serah." or "Their sister {was} Serah."

And the sons of Beriah {were} Heber and Malkiel

"Beriah's sons {were} Heber and Malkiel." or "Beriah had sons {named} Heber and Malkiel."

Genesis 46:18

Those {were} the sons of Zilpah

“Those {were} the descendants of {Jacob and} Zilpah,” or “Those {were} the children {and grandchildren} {that Jacob had} with Zilpah,” Be consistent with how you spell the name “Zilpah” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 29:24; 30:9-10,12; 35:26; 37:2; 46:18.

whom Laban had given to Leah his daughter

“{who was the servant woman} that Laban had given to his daughter Leah.”

And she bore those sixteen souls for Jacob

“Zilpah and Jacob had those sixteen descendants.” or “{The total number of} those descendants that Zilpah and Jacob had together was sixteen.” Consider whether it is better in your language to change the order of clauses in this verse and say, “Those {were} sixteen descendants that Jacob had with {his concubine} Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah {as a maidservant/servant}.” (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 46:19

The sons of Rachel, the wife of Jacob, {were} Joseph and Benjamin

“{Then} there were the sons of Jacob’s wife Rachel, {who were} Joseph and Benjamin.” or “The sons that Jacob had with his wife Rachel {were} Joseph and Benjamin.” This verse begins a new section in the list of Jacob’s descendants. Decide what is the best way to begin this new section in your language.

Genesis 46:20

And Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt

“Joseph’s {sons} who were born in the land/country of Egypt {were} Manasseh and Ephraim.” or “Joseph’s sons were Manasseh and Ephraim, and they were born in the land/country of Egypt.”

whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of On, bore for him

“{Joseph’s/His wife} Asenath bore/had those sons for him; she was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in/at {the city of} On.” or “Their mother was {Joseph’s wife} Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, {who was} the priest in/at {the city of} On.” See how you translated “Asenath ... daughter of Potiphera the priest of On” in Gen 41:45.

Genesis 46:21

And the sons of Benjamin {were

"{Benjamin and} Benjamin's sons, {who were}" or "Benjamin's sons {were}"

Bela and Beker and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman

"Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman,"

Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard

"Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard." Remember to use (or not use) "and" between the names in this list in a way that is natural in your language.

Genesis 46:22

Those {were} the sons of

“Those {were} the sons {and grandsons}” or “{All} those {were} the descendants”

Rachel, whom she bore for Jacob

“that Jacob’s wife Rachel had,” or “that Jacob and {his wife} Rachel had together,” or “who descended/came from Rachel and Jacob.” Your punctuation here will depend on how you translate the rest of this verse.

all the souls {were} fourteen

“a total of fourteen descendants.” or “The total {number} of those descendants {was} fourteen.”

Genesis 46:23

And the sons of Dan {were} Hushim

“{Other descendants who came with Jacob included;} {his son Dan and} Dan’s son Hushim.” This verse begins a new section in the list of Jacob’s descendants. See how you started verse 16, which is similar.

Genesis 46:24

And the sons of Naphtali {were

“{Naphtali and} Naphtali’s sons, {who were}”

Jahziel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem

“Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.” Consider again how you translated these lists of names in this chapter (verses 9-24).

Genesis 46:25

Those {were} the sons of Bilhah

“Those {were} the descendants of {Jacob and} Bilhah,” or “Those {were all} the sons {and grandsons} that Jacob had with Bilhah,” Be consistent in how you spell “Bilhah” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 29:29; 30:3-5, 7; 35:22, 25; 37:2; 46:25. Also see how you translated verse 18, which is similar in structure to verse 25.

whom Laban had given to Rachel his daughter

“{who was} {the servant woman} whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel.”

And she bore those for Jacob; all the souls {were} seven

“The total {number} of those descendants that Bilhah and Jacob had together {was} seven.” or “Those descendants that Bilhah had with Jacob totaled seven {persons/people}.” For some languages it is better to change the order of clauses in this verse and say, “All those {were} seven descendants that Jacob had with {his concubine} Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel {as a maidservant/servant}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 46:26

All the souls who went with Jacob to Egypt

“The total number of persons/people who traveled with Jacob to Egypt,”

who came out of his thigh

“who came/descended from him,” or “who were his blood relatives,” or “who were his biological descendants,”
Make sure that your translation of this idiom can be read in public without offending or embarrassing listeners.
See how you translated a similar idiom in Gen 35:11. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

apart from the wives of Jacob’s sons

“not counting/including {his wives or} the wives of his sons,”

all the souls {were} sixty-six

“was sixty-six people in all.” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “Altogether Jacob had sixty-six blood relatives who went with him to Egypt. That {number} does not include {his wives or} his sons’ wives.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p. 1652)**)

Genesis 46:27

And the sons of Joseph who were born for him in Egypt {were} two souls

"{If you include/count} {Jacob, Joseph, and} Joseph's two sons, who were born in Egypt, {then}" or "Joseph {and his} two sons were already in Egypt, {so, including Jacob,}"

All the souls {belonging} to the house of Jacob who went to Egypt {were} seventy

"all the people in Jacob's family who were in Egypt {totaled} seventy." or "there was a total of seventy members of Jacob's family in Egypt."

Genesis 46:28

And he sent Judah

“Then he/Jacob told Judah to go” or “{When they reached Egypt,} he/Jacob had Judah go”

before him to Joseph

“ahead of them to Joseph” or “to Joseph ahead of them”

to show {the way} before him

“to find out {which way} to go” or “to ask him how to get” or “to get directions {from him}”

to Goshen

“to {the region/territory of} Goshen.” or “to Goshen {Province/County}.” Goshen was a region or territory that was part of the country of Egypt. For some languages it is better to make that explicit here, rather than wait until the end of the verse. Do what is best in your language. Also be consistent here with how you spelled “Goshen” in Gen 45:10. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And they came

“Then Jacob and his family traveled to” or “After that, Jacob’s family arrived in”. Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

to the land of Goshen

“the region/territory of Goshen.” or “Goshen Province/County.” or “Goshen.” If you use “the land of Goshen” earlier in this verse, it may be better to just say “Goshen” here. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 46:29

Then Joseph harnessed his chariot

“Then Joseph got his chariot/cart ready” or “Then Joseph {had his servants} get his chariot/cart ready”. Joseph may have harnessed his horses to his chariot himself, or he may have had his servants do that for him (which was usual for a powerful person like him). Consider how you translated similar situations in Gen 41:48. Also see how you translated “chariot” in Gen 41:43. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen

“and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel.” See how you translated “went up” in Gen 13:1 and “go up” in Gen 45:9.

And he appeared to him

“{When he got there,} Joseph went/came up to his father” or “{There} Joseph greeted his father”

and he fell on his neck

“and threw/put his arms around his neck/shoulders” or “and hugged him {tightly/strongly}”. See how you translated “fell on ... neck” in Gen 45:14. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and cried on his neck a long time

“and cried {for joy} on his shoulder {for} a long time.”

Genesis 46:30

Then Israel said to Joseph

“Then Israel exclaimed to Joseph/him,”

Now I can die

“Now I can/will die {happy},” or “Now when I die {I will be at peace},” Jacob did not die until 17 years later (Genesis 47:28). Make sure your translation of this clause does not mean or imply that Jacob wanted to die soon or that he thought he would die soon.

since I have seen your face

“since/because I have seen you face to face” or “since/because I have seen you in person”. In this context, “your face” refers to Joseph, not just his face. Decide what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

that you {are} still alive

“{and know} that you {are} still alive!”

Genesis 46:31

Then Joseph said to his brothers

“Then Joseph announced to his brothers” or “Then Joseph told his brothers”

and to the household of his father

“and {the rest of} his father’s household/family,”

I will go up and report to Pharaoh, and I will say to him

“I will go to {King} Pharaoh and tell/inform him,” Make sure that the way Joseph refers to Pharaoh here sounds respectful in your translation. See what you did in Gen 41:35. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics\]\]](#))

My brothers and the household of my father

“My brothers and {the rest of} my father’s family” or “that my brothers and {the rest of} my father’s household/family”. Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote (in verses 31-32) with a direct or indirect quote. (See: [Quotes within Quotes \(p.1702\)](#))

who {were living} in the land of Canaan have come to me

“have come/traveled {here} from the land/region of Canaan to live near me.”

Genesis 46:32

And the men {are} herders of sheep

"The men {of my family} raise/tend sheep {and goats}." or "{I will} also {tell him that} the/you men {in my family} raise sheep {and goats}." Be consistent here with whether you are translating this embedded quote (that began in verse 31) as an direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

for they are livestock men

"for/because they are livestock raisers/herders," or "In fact, they raise {all kinds of} livestock {for a living}," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and they have brought their flock{s} and their herd{s}

"and they have brought {with them} {all} their sheep {and goats} and cattle"

and everything

"and everything {else}" or "as well as everything {else}"

that {belongs} to them

"that they own/have." or "that is theirs."

Genesis 46:33

Then it will be

“Then” or “So then,” This phrase introduces and emphasizes what Joseph says next. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language.

when Pharaoh

“when {King} Pharaoh” or “when the king”

calls for you and says, ‘What {is} your work

“summons you and asks {you} what your work/occupation is,” Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quotation with a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1702)**)

Genesis 46:34**then you should say**

“you should/must tell {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Your servants have been livestock men from our youth and until now

“Your Majesty/Highness, we have raised livestock since the time we were youths/young,” or “Sir, ever since the time we were young until now, we have been raising livestock,” The phrase “your servants” shows respect to Pharaoh and acknowledges his high position; it does not mean that Pharaoh actually owns Joseph’s brothers as servants. Translate this in a polite way that shows respect toward Pharaoh. Also, see how you translated “livestock men” in verse 32. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

both we {and} also our fathers

“{which is} the same occupation that our forefathers/ancestors had.” See how you translated “fathers” in Gen 15:15.

so that

“That way” or “If {you say} that, {then}”

you can settle

“you will be permitted/allowed to live {separately/privately}” or “{he/Pharaoh} will permit/allow you to live {separately/privately}”. The idea here is that Jacob’s family would be permitted to live in rural areas to raise their livestock away from most Egyptians, who despised sheep herders. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

in the land of Goshen

“in the region/territory of Goshen,” or “in Goshen Province/County,”

because

“{especially} because/since”

every herder of sheep {is} an abomination {to} Egyptians

“sheep herders are detestable {to} Egyptians.” or “the people of Egypt have disdain/contempt for sheep herders.” or “Egyptians despise/detest everyone who raises sheep.” For some languages it is clearer and more natural to change the order of phrases in this clause. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “abomination” in Gen 43:32. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 47

Genesis 47:1

Then Joseph went and reported to Pharaoh and said

"Then/So Joseph went to {King} Pharaoh and informed/told {him}," See how you translated "report to Pharaoh" in Gen 46:31.

My father and my brothers

"My father, my brothers {and their families}," It is implied that the brothers brought their families with them. Consider whether or not to make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

and their flock{s} and their herd{s}

"and/with their flock{s} {of sheep and goats} and their herd{s} {of cattle}" or "{along} with their sheep, {goats,} cattle,"

and all that {belongs} to them

"and everything {else} that they own," or "and all {the rest of} their belongings/possessions,"

have come from the land of Canaan

"have come {here} from the land/region of Canaan." For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause and the rest of this verse earlier in this sentence. For example: "My father and my brothers {and their families} have come {to Egypt} from the region of Canaan and {are} now in Goshen Province. {They brought with them} their sheep ..." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and behold, they {are}

"They {are staying} now" or "and they have {already} arrived". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

in the land of Goshen

"in the region/territory of Goshen." or "in Goshen Province/County."

Genesis 47:2

Then he took five men from among his brothers, and he presented them before Pharaoh

“Then he/Joseph took/brought five of his brothers before/to Pharaoh and presented/introduced them {to him}.” or “Joseph had brought five of his brothers {with him} {from Goshen}, so he took/brought them before Pharaoh and presented/introduced them {to him}.” Joseph probably brought his father and brothers with him from Goshen (46:31) to Pharaoh’s palace. It is not clear whether or not they were in the room yet when Joseph spoke to Pharaoh about them (47:1).

Genesis 47:3

Then Pharaoh said to his brothers

"Then Pharaoh asked Joseph's brothers," or "Then Pharaoh asked them," Make sure that your translation of "his brothers" refers to Joseph's brothers, not Pharaoh's. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

What {is} your work

"What {is} your occupation?" or "What {kind of} work do you do?" or "What do you do for a living?"

And they said to Pharaoh

"They answered Pharaoh/him," or "{One of} them said/replied,"

Your servants

"{We,} your {humble} servants," or "Your Majesty/Highness, we" or "Sir, we". See how you translated "your servants" in Gen 46:34. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

are} herders of sheep

"{are} shepherds/herdsmen," or "raise sheep {for a living},"

both we and our fathers

"just like/as our forefathers/ancestors were/did." or "{which is} the same {kind of} work/occupation that our forefathers/ancestors did/had."

Genesis 47:4

Then they said to Pharaoh

“They {also} said to him,” or “Then they added,” For some languages it is more natural here to omit this quote margin, because the same people (Joseph’s brothers) are still talking to the same person (Pharaoh). However, the words emphasize what Joseph’s five brothers say next and may indicate that there was a pause between what they said in verse 3 and verse 4. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We have come to sojourn

“We have come {here} to live/stay for a while” or “We came {here} to live/stay temporarily”

in the land

“in this country,” or “in {your} land/country,”

because there is not pasture for the flock{s} that {belong} to your servants

“because there was not enough pasture/grass for our flock{s} {of sheep and goats}” or “Our flocks, sir, did not have enough grass to eat”. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

because the famine {is} heavy in the land of Canaan

“in the region of Canaan {where we are/come from}, because the famine {is} very/so severe/terrible {there}.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause earlier in this sentence. For example: “The famine is so severe/terrible in the region of Canaan {where we are/come from} that there is not enough grass {in the fields} for our flocks.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So now, please let your servants settle

“So now/then, please let {us} your {humble} servants settle/live” or “So then, sir, please let us settle/live”. See how you translated “your servants” in verse 3 to show respect. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

in the land of Goshen

“in the region/territory of Goshen.” or “in Goshen Province.”

Genesis 47:5

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, saying

“Then Pharaoh {turned} to Joseph and said,” or “{When Pharaoh heard that,} Pharaoh/he said to Joseph,”

Your father and your brothers have come to you

“{Now that} your father and brothers have come {to live} near you,” Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like Pharaoh was telling Joseph something he did not already know. Rather, he is stating shared knowledge as the basis for what he says next.

Genesis 47:6

The land of Egypt {is} before you

“the {entire} land of Egypt {is} available to you {to choose from}.” or “you may choose any part of the land of Egypt {for them to live in}.” Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 5.

Settle your father and your brothers

“{So} have your father and your brothers settle” or “{In fact,} they may settle/live” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

in the best land; let them settle in the land of Goshen

“in the best/finest land {in the country}, in Goshen Province.” or “in the region/territory of Goshen, {which is} the best/finest land {in the country}.”

And if you know that there are men of ability among them

“And if you know that some of them are especially/very talented/skilled {at/in raising livestock},”

then appoint them overseers of livestock over {those} that {belong} to me

“then make them herdsmen over my livestock {also}.” or “then put them in charge of raising my livestock {also}.”

Genesis 47:7

Then Joseph brought Jacob his father

“Then Joseph brought/took his father Jacob”

and presented him before Pharaoh

“and presented/introduced him to {King} Pharaoh,” or “to {King} Pharaoh and introduced them to each other,” See how you translated “presented” in verse 2.

and Jacob blessed Pharaoh

“and Jacob {greeted and} blessed Pharaoh.” or “and Jacob {asked God to} bless/prosper Pharaoh.” or “and Jacob greeted Pharaoh with a blessing.” In Hebrew, there is a common greeting which means “peace be to you,” so it is possible that Jacob used this blessing of peace here to greet Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:8

Then Pharaoh said to Jacob

“Then Pharaoh asked Jacob,”

How many {are} the days of the years of your life

“{Sir,} how old are you now?” Make sure your translation of Pharaoh’s question about Jacob’s age sounds polite. Also, for some languages, a title of respect (such as “Sir”) is necessary whenever someone addresses a distinguished old man such as Jacob. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

Genesis 47:9

And Jacob said to Pharaoh

"Jacob answered him," or "Jacob replied," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

The days of the years of my sojournings {are} 130 years

"I have been living {in this world} for 130 years." or "The length of my life {so far} has been 130 years." Consider again how you translated "sojournings," "sojourn," and "sojourner" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:10; 15:13; 17:8; 19:9; 20:1; 21:23, 34; 23:4; 26:3; 28:4; 32:4; 35:27; 37:1; 47:4, 9. It may be necessary to translate these terms in different ways, depending on the context.

The days of the years of my life have been few and difficult

"I have not lived very long, and I have faced/had many difficulties/hardships." or "My life has been short, with many difficulties/hardships."

and they have not reached the days of the years of my fathers' lives

"In fact, I have lived less years than my forefathers/ancestors did" or "In fact, I have not lived {nearly} as long as my forefathers/ancestors did". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

in the days of their sojournings

"during the days/years/time that they lived {on earth}." or "during their years/time {on earth}."

Genesis 47:10

Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh

“Then Jacob {again} {asked God to} bless Pharaoh” or “Then Jacob {said goodbye} to Pharaoh with a blessing”. It was customary in Hebrew to use the blessing “peace be to you” both when greeting and when leaving someone. See how you translated “blessed” in verse 7.

and left from the presence of Pharaoh

“and left his presence.” or “and left him.” or “and left Pharaoh’s {throne} room.”

Genesis 47:11

Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and he gave them property in the land of Egypt, in the best land, in the land of Rameses

“So Joseph gave his father and his brothers the best/choicest property/land in the country of Egypt, and they {and their families} settled there. {The property was} in Rameses Province/Count, {that is, Goshen Province/County},” or “After that, Joseph helped his father and brothers settle in the country of Egypt. He gave them the choicest property {in Egypt}, which was in {Goshen Province, also known as} Rameses Province.” It is implied that Rameses (verse 11) was another name for Goshen (verses 1, 4, 6). If necessary, you could make that information explicit in your translation or put it in a footnote. Later in Egypt’s history, some of the Pharaohs were named Rameses and a city was named after one of them (Exodus 1:11). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

as Pharaoh had commanded

“just as Pharaoh had commanded/told him {to do}.” or “{He/Joseph did} {exactly} as Pharaoh had commanded/told him {to do}.” It may be more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “After that, Joseph did what Pharaoh had commanded/told him {to do}: He helped his father and brothers settle in the country of Egypt. He gave them property in Rameses Province/County, {that is, Goshen Province/County,} {which was} the choicest land {in Egypt}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 47:12

And Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all the household of his father {with

“Joseph {also} provided/supported his father and brothers and all {the rest of} his father’s household/family {with}”

bread, according to the mouth{s} of the little ones

“food, based on how many children/people were in each family.” or “as much food as {each family} needed to feed {all} the children/people in their family.” The children are mentioned to emphasize that all the members of the families were well-provided for, including the youngest ones. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph was providing food for everyone in each family, not just the children. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Genesis 47:13

Now there was no bread

“Now {meanwhile,} there was no {more} food” or “{Meanwhile,} there was {almost} no food” or “{After a while,} there was very little food {available}”. This clause is probably an exaggeration to emphasize that there was so little food that the people were starving. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. Also consider what is the best way in your language to begin this new section that returns to the famine and how it was progressing. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

in all the earth

This phrase is ambiguous in the Hebrew text. It could mean: (1) “in all the earth,” or “in the entire {known} world,” or “anywhere,” which might be an exaggeration (like the previous phrase); or (2) “in all the land,” or “in the/that entire area/region {of the earth/world},” which includes Egypt and Canaan (mentioned later in the verse) and other nearby regions and countries. See how you translated “all the earth” in Gen 41:57.

because the famine {was} very heavy

“because the famine {was} very/so severe/oppressive/terrible.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause first in this sentence and say, for example: “Now {after a while,} the famine was/became so severe/terrible in the entire world that there was very little food {available} {anywhere}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were languishing

“As a result, {the people of/in} the country of Egypt and the region of Canaan” or “In fact, {the people living in} the lands of Egypt and Canaan”. Make sure your translation of this phrase refers to the people who live in Egypt and Canaan, not just the lands. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and & were languishing

“were fainting/weak” or “were suffering badly/terribly” or “were wasting away”. The verb “languishing” refers in general to the suffering that the famine was causing, including things such as weakness, fainting and other distress. Some languages have an idiom (like “were wasting away”) that fits well here. Do what is best in your language.

because of the famine

“because of the severe lack of food.” or “because they did not have enough to eat.” or “from hunger.”

Genesis 47:14

And Joseph collected all the silver that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they were buying

“So the people spent their money buying grain from Joseph until he had collected/received all their money.” or “So they bought grain from Joseph until there was no more silver/money left in the country of Egypt or the land/region of Canaan.”

and Joseph brought the silver to the house of Pharaoh

“Then Joseph/He {had his servants} take the silver/money to Pharaoh’s palace.” or “Joseph/He stored that silver/money in Pharaoh’s palace.” Joseph probably had servants do this for him. See what you did for a similar case in Gen 41:48. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 47:15

So the silver was consumed from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan

“So {when} {all} the silver/money in the land/country of Egypt and the land/region of Canaan had been used up,” or “When/After {the people in} Egypt and Canaan had spent all their silver/money,” Consider whether it is better in your language to use a passive or active clause here. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

all Egypt

“all {the people} in Egypt” or “the Egyptians all” or “{people from} all over Egypt”. The word “all” is an exaggeration (hyperbole) which emphasizes that a large number of Egyptians went to Joseph. Consider whether or not it is best to use hyperbole here in your language. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1639)**)

and & came to Joseph

“went to Joseph”. Consider whether “came” or “went” is more natural here in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

saying

“and pleaded {with him},” or “and begged {him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Give us bread

“{Sir,} {please} give us food”. Make sure your translation of the people’s request sounds polite, not rude or disrespectful. Also see how you translated “bread” in verses 12-13. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

And why should we die before you

“so that we do not die {right here} in front of you!” or “and do not watch/let us starve to death!” or “so that we do not starve to death!” The people use a rhetorical question here to emphasize how desperate they feel. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

For the silver is gone

“There is no more money {to buy food/grain}!” or “We have no more money {to buy food/grain}!” It may be more natural to put this clause first in this quote and say, “{Sir,} we have no more money {to buy grain/food}! Please give us food so that we do not starve to death!” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 47:16

And Joseph said

“Joseph said/responded {to them},” or “Joseph replied,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Bring your livestock

“Bring/Give {me} your livestock/animals”. The word “livestock” is general here and includes all the different kinds of animals that are specified in verse 17.

and I will give {grain} to you {in exchange} for your livestock

“and I will give/sell you {grain/food} if/when you give me your livestock/animals {to pay for it},” or “and in exchange for them I will give you {grain/food},”

since the silver is gone

“since {all} your money is gone.” or “since you have spent {all} your silver/money.” For some languages it may be more natural to put this clause first in this quote and say, “Since your silver/money is gone, bring/give {me} your livestock to pay for the grain/food that I will give you.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 47:17

So they brought their livestock to Joseph

“So the people brought/took their livestock/animals to Joseph.”

and Joseph gave bread to them {in exchange} for the horses and for the herd{s} of sheep and for the herd{s} of cattle and for the donkeys

“and gave Joseph/him {their} horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys to pay for the grain/food that he gave them.” or “They gave Joseph/him {their} horses, ...” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

So he provided them with bread in that year

“In that way Joseph supplied the people with grain/food that year,”

in exchange} for all their livestock

“{and they gave him} all their livestock/animals {to pay} for it.”

Genesis 47:18

And {when} that year had ended

“When/After that year was over,”

then they came to him in the second year

“the people came/went to Joseph {again} in the next/following year” (See: **Go and Come (p.1629)**)

and said to him

“and told him,” or “and pleaded with him,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

We cannot hide {it} from my lord that since

“Our lord/master, we cannot hide from you {the fact} that” or “Sir, as you know,” For some languages, it may be more natural to put the address “my/our lord” or “sir” first in this quote. Also notice that this address is used three times in this verse to show extra respect to Joseph. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

the silver is consumed and the herd{s} of livestock

“{our} silver/money is gone and our livestock/animals” or “not only is {our} silver/money {all} gone, but {all} {our} livestock/animals {also}”. Consider again how you translated “silver” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 13:2; 20:16; 23:15-16; 24:35, 53; 31:15; 37:28; 42:25, 27-28, 35; 43:12, 15, 18, 21-23; 44:1-2, 8; 45:22; 47:14-16, 18. It may be necessary to translate this word in different ways, depending on the context.

belong} to my lord

“{belong} to {you,} our lord/master.” or “are yours, sir.” or “{belong} to you.” In this verse, the people use the third person (“my/our lord”) to address Joseph in a respectful manner. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

there is nothing left before my lord except our bodies and our lands

“We have nothing left to pay/give you, sir, {for grain/food}, except ourselves and our land/fields.” or “The only way we can pay you {for grain/food} is to give you our land/farmland and work for you, sir.” Consider what is the best way to translate the Hebrew word for “land” here (and in verses 19-26), which refers to cultivated land (such as farmland or fields), not to the planet earth or to a country. It is different from the word for “land” in the rest of this chapter (in verses 1, 4, 6, 11, 13-15, 27-28).

Genesis 47:19

Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land

“What good would it do for us to die and our farmland/fields {to become ruined/empty}?” or “Please do not {just} watch us die or let our land/fields {become wasteland/desolate/empty}.” For many languages, the verb “die” does not fit with both people and land, so a different verb must be used for each one. The end of verse 19 specifies how the land would “die.” See how you translated a similar rhetorical question in verse 15. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Buy us and our land {in exchange} for the bread

“{Instead,} {please} take us and our farmland/fields {in exchange} for food.” or “{Instead} {please} give us food and we will give you our farmland/fields and ourselves {to pay} for it.” Consider again how you translated the synecdoche “bread” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 3:19 (and note); 14:18; 21:14; 28:20; 37:25; 38:6; 41:54-55; 43:31; 47:12, 15, 17, 19. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh

“Then we will be {King} Pharaoh’s slaves/servants, and our land/fields {will also be his}.” or “Then our land/fields will belong to {King} Pharaoh and we will work for him as his slaves/servants.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Give {us} seed

“{Please} give {us} seeds {to sow/plant}” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

so that we will live

“so that we will/can survive” or “so that we will/can stay alive”

and not die

“and not die {from hunger},” or “and not {starve} to death,” See how you translated “so that we will live and not die” in Gen 42:2.

and the land will not be desolate

“and {so that} the land will not become a desert!” or “and {so that} the land will produce/grow plants/crops {again}!” For some languages it may be clearer and more natural to put this clause earlier in this sentence and say, “{Please} {just} give {us} seeds {to plant} so that the land will produce/grow {food} crops {again} and then we will survive and not die {from hunger}!” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 47:20

Then Joseph bought

“So Joseph {agreed and} bought/acquired/obtained” or “Joseph {did what they asked and} bought/acquired”. For some languages it may be necessary to make explicit that Joseph agreed to do what the people suggested. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

all the {farm}land of Egypt for Pharaoh

“all the land/farmland in {the country of} Egypt for Pharaoh.”

because every Egyptian sold his field

“All the Egyptians sold/gave their fields {to him} {in exchange for grain/food},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

כי- & הרע ב

“because the food shortage/scarcity”. Consider again how you translated “famine” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:10; 26:1; 41:27, 30-31, 36, 50, 54-57; 42:5; 43:1; 45:6, 11; 47:4, 13, 20. It may be necessary to translate it in different ways, depending on the context.

was heavy for them

“was {so/very} severe/oppressive.” or “was so severe/terrible that they did not have enough to eat.” See how you translated “heavy” in verses 4 and 13. For some languages, it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of clauses in this verse and say, “The famine was {very} severe for all the Egyptian people, so Joseph {agreed with their request/suggestion and} let them sell their fields {to him} {in exchange for grain/food}. In that way, Joseph/he bought/acquired all the land/farmland in {the country of} Egypt for {King} Pharaoh, so that {all} the land became Pharaoh’s {property}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So the land became Pharaoh’s

“In that way, {all} the farmland became Pharaoh’s {property}.” or “That is how {all} the farmland {eventually} belonged to {King} Pharaoh.”

Genesis 47:21

And {as for} the people, he moved them to the cities

“Joseph {also} moved/relocated {all} the people {from their farmlands} to the {nearby} cities”. The Masoretic Hebrew text has “moved them to the cities” here, which Joseph may have done in order to make the grain more readily accessible to them. The Samaritan Pentateuch (a different Hebrew version) and the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew text) have “made the people slaves” instead, which may refer to the fact that all the people would now be working for Pharaoh, since all the fields belonged to him. The textual variant that is not used in your translation could be put in a footnote. (See: **Textual Variants (p.1716)**)

from {one} end of the border of Egypt to its {other} end

“in every part of {the country of} Egypt.” or “throughout the entire {country of} Egypt.”

Genesis 47:22

Only the land of the priests he did not buy

“The only land/farmland that he/Joseph did not buy was the priests’ {land},” or “The priests’ land/farmland was the only land he/Joseph did not buy,”

because {there was} an allotment for the priests from Pharaoh

“because they regularly received a certain amount {of food} from Pharaoh,” or “because Pharaoh gave them a regular {food} allotment/allowance,”

and they ate {from} their allotment that Pharaoh gave to them

“and they had enough to eat from what he gave to them.” or “so that they had plenty to eat.”

For that {reason} they did not sell their land

“That is why they did not {need to} sell their land/farmland {to buy food}.”

Genesis 47:23

Then Joseph said to the people

“Then/Next Joseph announced/declared to the {Egyptian} people,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Look/Listen,”

today I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh

“now that I have bought/acquired you and your land/farmland/fields for {King} Pharaoh,” or “now that you and your land/farmland/fields belong to {King} Pharaoh,”

Here {is} seed for you

“here {are} {some} seeds for you” or “I am giving you {some} seeds”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

so that you can sow the ground

“so that you can plant {them in} the fields.” or “to plant {in} the fields.” See how you translated “sowed” in Gen 26:12.

Genesis 47:24

And it will happen in the harvests

“Then whenever you harvest/gather {the crops},” or “Then every harvest season/time,”

that you must give a fifth to Pharaoh

“you are required to give one-fifth {of the harvest/crops} to Pharaoh/him,” or “you must give Pharaoh/him one-fifth {of the crops you harvest/gather}.”

and the four parts

“but the {remaining/other} four-fifths” or “The {remaining/other} four-fifths {of your harvest}” or “The rest {of what you harvest/gather}”. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here.

will be for you

“will be yours” or “you may keep for yourselves”

as seed of the field

“as seed/seeds to plant the fields” or “to plant seeds {in} the fields”

and as your food and for those in your houses

“and as food for you and your households/families,” or “and for you and your households/families to eat,”

and for your little ones to eat

“including your children.”

Genesis 47:25

And they said

“Then they responded,” or “The people said/replied {to him},” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

You have kept us alive

“You have saved our lives!” or “You have made it so we can live!”

Let us find favor in the eyes of my lord

“May we {continue to} find favor in your eyes/sight, master/sir,” or “Please {continue to} be kind to us, master/sir,”

and we will be slaves for Pharaoh

“and we will {agree to} be/become {King} Pharaoh’s slaves/servants.” or “and we will serve {King} Pharaoh as his slaves/servants.”

Genesis 47:26

And Joseph established it as a law

“So Joseph established/made a law”

to this day

“{that is} still {in effect/force} today/now”. This phrase refers to the time that Moses was writing the book of Genesis. You could put that information in a footnote. For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this phrase at the end of the sentence and say, “{That law} is still {in effect/force} today/now.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

concerning the {farm}land of Egypt, {that} the fifth {belongs} to Pharaoh

“concerning/about the farmland/fields in {the country of} Egypt: one-fifth {of the harvest/crops} {belongs} to Pharaoh.” or “{that required} {people to give} to Pharaoh one-fifth {of all the crops they harvested} from the farmland/fields in Egypt.” See how you translated “a fifth” in verse 24.

Only the land of the priests by itself did not become Pharaoh’s

“The priests’ land was the only land {in Egypt} that did not belong to Pharaoh.” or “The only land that Pharaoh did not own was the land that belonged to the priests.” See how you translated “only the land of the priests” in verse 22. Also, consider again how you translated “land/farmland” in verses 18-26.

Genesis 47:27

And & settled

“So/Now” or “Meanwhile”. It was already mentioned in verse 11 that Israel (Jacob) had settled in the country of Egypt. Your translation of verse 27 should not imply that he settled there again. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1584)**)

Israel

“{Jacob, whose other name was} Israel,” or “Israel {that is, Jacob,}” The name “Israel” and the name “Jacob” refer to the same person. To make that clear, you could make “Jacob” explicit here in your translation or in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

And & settled

“had settled {with his family}” or “was living/dwelling {with his family}”

in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen

“in the region/territory of Goshen in the land/country of Egypt,” or “in Goshen Province/County in the country of Egypt,” See how you translated “in the land of Goshen” in Gen 45:10.

and they acquired {possessions}

“and they acquired/gained {many possessions}” or “and owned/possessed {much property/land}”. This phrase is general here and refers to acquiring land and other possessions. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

in it

“in that {region/territory}.” or “there.”

And they were fruitful

“They were fruitful” or “They had many children”. See how you translated a similar phrase (“be fruitful and multiply”) in Gen 35:11. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and multiplied greatly

“and their numbers increased greatly.” or “and became very numerous/many.”

Genesis 47:28

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years

"{When/After} Jacob had lived in the country of Egypt {for} seventeen years,"

and the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years

"he reached the age of 147 years." or "he was 147 years old."

Genesis 47:29

and the days of Israel drew near {for him} to die

"{When} it was almost time for Israel/him to die," or "Israel/He {knew that} it was almost time for him to die, so". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

So he called for his son, for Joseph

"he summoned his son Joseph" or "he asked for his son Joseph {to come to him}"

and said to him

"and urged him," (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

If, please, I have found favor in your eyes

"Please show your favor/kindness toward me {and}" or "Please do this favor for me:" or "Please, if you {truly} love me," (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

please put your hand under my thigh

"put your hand under my thigh/leg {to show/vow that you will do what I ask}," or "{make a vow by} putting your hand under my thigh/leg," See how you translated this clause in Gen 24:2, and see the note about this custom there. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

and deal with me {in} kindness and faithfulness

"and {promise me that} {after I die,} you will be kind and faithful to me." Consider again how you translated "kindness" in Gen 19:19; 20:13; 21:23; 24:12, 14, 27, 49; 32:10; 39:21; 40:14; 47:29, and how you translated "faithfulness" in Gen 24:27, 48, 49; 32:10; 42:16; 47:29.

Please do not bury me

"Please {promise that you will} not bury my body/bones". Make sure your translation of "bury me" does not sound like Israel would still be alive when he was buried.

in Egypt

"{here} in {the land/country of} Egypt."

Genesis 47:30

And {when} I lie down with my fathers

"{When/After} I die and rest/sleep with my ancestors," or "Rather, after I die and join my ancestors {who have died/ gone before me}," The phrase "lie down with my fathers" is an idiom that refers to Jacob's death. See how you translated an idiom with a similar meaning in Gen 15:15. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

then carry me out of Egypt

"carry/take my body out of Egypt {to the region of Canaan}." See how you translated "me" in verse 29.

and bury me in their tomb

"and bury me/it in the same burial place where their bodies are." Jacob is referring here to the cave near the city of Hebron that Abraham had bought as a family burial place, to bury Sarah there. Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah were also buried there (Gen 23:19-20; 25:9-10; 49:31). You could put some of that information in a footnote. Also see how you translated "grave" in Gen 35:20 and a different word with a similar meaning ("burial place") in Gen 23:4, 6, 9, 20.

And he said

"Then Joseph replied {to him}," or "Joseph promised {him}," Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph is the one speaking here. It may be helpful to read this paragraph aloud to make sure it is clear who is talking at each point in the conversation. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

I will do according to your word

"I will do as/what you requested {of me}." or "I will do exactly what you asked {me to do}."

Genesis 47:31

Then he said

“But he urged {him},” or “But his/Joseph’s father insisted,” Consider what is the best way to refer to Joseph’s father Israel here in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Swear to me

“Swear/Vow to me {by/before God/Yahweh} {that you will do it/that}.” or “{With God/Yahweh as your witness,} make an oath/vow to me {that you will do it/that}.” See how you translated “swear to me” in Gen 21:23.

And he swore to him

“So Joseph swore/vowed {that he would do it/that}.” or “So Joseph promised his father with an oath/vow {to do what he had requested}.” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph is the one speaking here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Then Israel bowed

“Then Israel bowed {down} {to worship/thank God}” or “Then {his father} Israel bowed {his head} {and worshiped/thanked God}”. If it is not clear in your culture why Israel bowed, you could make that explicit. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

at the head of the bed

“{as he sat} at the head/top of {his} bed.” or “{as he was sitting/lying} on {his} bed.” The Hebrew text has “at the head of the bed” here, while the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) has “on the top of his staff” instead, which is quoted in Hebrews 11:21. You could include some of that information in a footnote. The difference between versions may be due to the fact that the Hebrew words for “bed” and “staff” are very similar in spelling. Or it could be that Jacob did both; for example, he may have been sitting at the head of his bed and leaning on his staff when he bowed his head and worshiped God.

Genesis 48

Genesis 48:1

Then it happened after those things

"{Some time} after those things happened," Consider again how you translated these two phrases in the book of Genesis. See Gen 22:1, 20; 39:7; 40:1; 48:1. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1655)**)

that {someone} said to Joseph, "Behold, your father is sick

"{someone} told Joseph, "Look/Listen, your father is sick." or "Joseph was told/informed {by someone} that his father was sick." For some languages it may be more natural to use an indirect quote here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

So he took his two sons with him, Manasseh and Ephraim

"So/Then he/Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him {to visit his father}." or "So/Then he/Joseph {went to visit his father and} took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him." Consider what is the best way to refer to Joseph in this sentence in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 48:2

And {someone} announced to Jacob and said, “Behold, your son Joseph has come to you

“{When they got there,} {someone/they} informed/told Jacob, “Look, your son Joseph has come to see/visit you.” ” or “{When they arrived,} Jacob was informed/told {by someone} that his son Joseph had come to see/visit him.” Consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Then Israel gathered his strength

“Then Israel rallied/mustered his strength” or “{Immediately} Israel{, who was lying down,} used all his strength” or “{Immediately} Israel exerted himself”. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that fits well here. Also, make sure it is clear in your translation or in a footnote that “Israel” (verses 2, 8, 11, 13-14, 21) and “Jacob” (verses 2-3) refer to the same person, not two different people. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and sat up on the bed

“and sat up on/at {the edge/head of} {his} bed {and they greeted each other}.” The context (verse 12) shows that Jacob sat on the edge of his bed with his feet resting on the floor and his knees facing Joseph’s sons. Also, for some languages it may be necessary (for politeness) to make it explicit that they greeted each other first before continuing their conversation. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 48:3

Then Jacob said to Joseph

“Then Jacob recounted/related to Joseph {the following}” or “Then Jacob told Joseph,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

God Almighty

“Almighty/All-powerful God” or “God {who is} all-powerful”. Consider again how you translated “God Almighty” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14.

appeared to me

“appeared to me {long ago}” or “came to me in a vision {long ago}”. Consider again how you translated “appear” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 8:5; 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2, 24; 35:1, 9; 46:29; 48:3. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

at Luz in the land of Canaan

“{when I was} at {the town of} Luz in the land/region of Canaan,” or “in the land/region of Canaan at {the town of} Luz,” For some languages it is more natural to put the larger place (Canaan) first before the smaller place (Luz) that is located inside it. It may also be more natural to put the time and place phrases first in this verse and say, “{Long ago} {when I was} at {the town of} Luz in the land/region of Canaan, God Almighty ...” Do what is best in your language. Also see how you spelled the name “Luz” in Gen 28:19 and 35:6. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and he blessed me

“He blessed me {there}” or “He pronounced a blessing over me {there}”. For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.

Genesis 48:4

and said to me

“by saying to me,” or “He said,” Make sure your translation of “blessed ... and said” (verses 3-4) refers to the same event, not two separate events.

Behold, I am making you fruitful, and I will multiply you and make you

“Look/Listen, I will give you many descendants who will increase {in number} and become” or “Look/Listen, I will give you {and your descendants} many children so that your descendants will become”. See how you translated “make you fruitful and multiply you” in Gen 28:3 and “make him fruitful and ... multiply him” in Gen 17:20.

into a community of peoples

“many people/ethnic groups.” See how you translated this phrase in Gen 28:3, and a similar phrase (“a community of nations”) in 35:11.

And I will give this land to your offspring after you

“I will {also} give this land to your descendants”

as} an everlasting possession

“{as/for} an eternal/permanent possession.” or “to own forever.” or “and it will always belong to them.”

Genesis 48:5

And now, your two sons

"{Then Jacob said to Joseph,} "Now then, your two sons". The phrase "And now" shows that there is a change of topic. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob is no longer quoting God's words in verse 5. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

who were born for you

"who were born to you" or "who were born"

in the land of Egypt

"{here} in the land/country of Egypt"

before I came to you in Egypt

"before I joined you here," or "before I arrived,"

they {are} mine, Ephraim and Manasseh

"Ephraim and Manasseh, they {now} belong to me," or "Ephraim and Manasseh, {will be} my sons,"

just as Reuben and Simeon are mine

"just as/like Reuben and Simeon are my sons." or "just as/like my sons Reuben and Simeon." For some languages it may be clearer and more natural to put the names of these sons earlier in the verse and say, "Now then, your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you here in the country of Egypt before I joined you here, {I will treat as} my sons, just as/like ...". Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 48:6

But your children whom you father after them will be yours

“But any {other} children that you father/have later on will be yours.” or “If you father/have any more/other children, they will belong to you.”

They will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance

“So they will share in some of what their brothers inherit {from me}.” or “{so that} what they inherit {from me} will be some of what their brothers {Ephraim and Manasseh} inherit {from me}.” Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.

Genesis 48:7

And I

“I {want it this way because}” or “I {am doing this because}”. Jacob is probably explaining in verse 7 that since his favorite wife Rachel died with only two sons, that is why he is treating her son Joseph’s two sons as his sons (verses 5-6). You could make some of that information explicit in your translation or include it in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

as I was coming

“as I {and our family} were coming/returning {home}” or “as our family was coming/returning {home}”. Jacob is in focus here, but he was traveling with his family, not alone. Decide whether or not it is necessary to make that explicit in your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

from Paddan

“from {the land/region of} Paddan {Aram},” Consider again how you translated “{the land/region of} Paddan Aram” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 25:20 (and note); 28:2, 5-7; 31:18; 33:18; 35:9, 26; 46:15; 48:7. Also, be consistent with how you spelled “Aram” in those verses and in Gen 10:22-23; 22:21; 24:10.

Rachel

“{your mother} Rachel” or “{my beloved wife} Rachel”

died beside me

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here because the preposition can have different meanings. It could mean: (1) “died beside me” or “died by my side”; or (2) “died, {bringing sorrow/grief} on/to me”

in the land of Canaan

“in the region of Canaan”

on the way, while {there was} still a distance of land to go to Ephrath

“while we were still traveling and some distance away from {the town of} Ephrath.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Ephrath” in Gen 35:16, 19, and how you spelled “Bethlehem” in 35:19.

And I buried her there beside the road of Ephrath

“{As you know,} I buried her body there by the road that goes to Ephrath,”

which {is} Bethlehem

“which {now has the name} Bethlehem.” The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. This phrase might be: (1) Jacob’s words; or (2) the author’s words. If you follow the second interpretation, you could put this phrase within parentheses, outside of the quote marks.

Genesis 48:8

Then Israel saw the sons of Joseph

"Then Israel saw/noticed Joseph's {two} sons"

and said

"and asked {him/Joseph},"

Who {are} these

"Who {are} these {young men}?" or "Whose {sons} {are} these?" Joseph's two sons were in their 20s at this time, so refer to them here with a term that fits with that fact. They were born before the famine started (Gen 41:50-52), and Jacob had now been in Egypt for 17 years (47:28).

Genesis 48:9

And Joseph said to his father

“Joseph said/replied to him,” or “Joseph replied/answered,”

They {are} my sons whom God has given to me

“They/These {are} my sons whom God gave to me”

in this {place}

“here {in Egypt}.”

Then he said

“Then Israel said {to Joseph/him},” Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Please bring them to me

“Please bring them {closer} to me”. Some languages have a dual pronoun that works well to refer to Joseph's two sons here (and throughout chapter 48). Do what is best in your language. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p. 1625)**)

and I will bless them

“so that I can {ask God to} bless/prosper them.”

Genesis 48:10

Now the eyes of Israel were heavy

“Now Israel's eyes were weak/failing” or “Israel was almost blind” or “Israel had very poor/bad eyesight”. Consider whether or not it is natural in your language to use a conjunction (“Now”) to begin this clause that gives background information about Israel. Also, the word “heavy” is used here as an idiom that means Israel's eyesight was getting bad, but he could still see some (as indicated in verses 8 and 11). Many languages have a similar idiom. A translation of verse 10 should not imply that Israel was completely blind. (See: **Background Information (p. 1571)**)

from age

“because of old age,” or “because he was {very} old,”

so that} he was not able to see

“{so that} he could not see {very clearly/well}.” For some languages it is more natural to switch the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “Now Israel was {very} old, so his eyesight was failing and he was not able to see {very well}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

So he brought them near to him

“So Joseph brought/took his sons near/closer to his father,” or “So he/Joseph had his sons stand near/close to his father,” Make sure it is clear in your translation whom is being referred to at each point in this sentence. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and he kissed them

“and Israel kissed them {on the cheeks/cheek}” or “and his father kissed ...” It may be helpful to read this sentence aloud in your translation to make sure the use of nouns and pronouns is natural and accurate in your language. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and embraced them

“and hugged them.” Consider again how you translated the word “embraced” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 29:13; 33:4; 48:10. Also compare that to how you translated an idiom (“fell on ... neck”) that has a similar meaning in Gen 33:4; 45:14, 46:29. It may be necessary to translate these terms in different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 48:11

Then Israel said to Joseph

“Then Israel exclaimed to Joseph,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I did not expect to see your face

“I did not think I would ever see you {again},” or “I never thought I would see you {again},”

but behold

“but surprisingly/amazingly,” or “but {now} look,”

God has let me see also your offspring

“God has allowed me to see/meet also/even your offspring/children!” or “God has also/even allowed me to see/meet your offspring/children!”

Genesis 48:12

Then Joseph removed them

“Then Joseph moved/took his sons away” or “Then Joseph had his sons move/step away/back”

from beside his knees

“from beside his father’s knees,” or “from beside/near his father,” Joseph’s sons (who were in their 20s) were near Israel’s knees, so that he could hug them; they were not sitting on his knees or lap. Also make sure your translation of “his” refers to Joseph’s father (Israel/Jacob), not Joseph. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and he bowed down

“and he bowed {before his father}” or “and he prostrated himself {before him}”

with his nose to the ground

“with his nose/face toward the ground {in thankfulness and respect}.” or “and touched the ground with his forehead {to show him respect}.” Joseph bowed to the ground to show thankfulness and respect to his father and possibly also to God. If necessary, you could make that information explicit in your translation or put it in a footnote. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 48:13

Then Joseph took

“Then Joseph/he took/positioned”

both of them

“both of his sons,” or “his sons”

Ephraim on his right

“{with} Ephraim on/at his right {hand/side}”

toward Israel’s left

“facing Israel’s left {hand/side}” or “in front of Israel’s left {hand/side}”

and Manasseh on his left

“and {with} Manasseh on/at his left {hand/side}”

toward Israel’s right

“facing Israel’s right {hand/side},” or “in front of Israel’s right {hand/side},”

and brought {them} near to him

“and he brought/took {them} close to his father {again}.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “Then he took/brought his sons close to his father {again}. He had Ephraim stand in front of Israel’s left {hand/side}, and he had Manasseh stand in front of Israel’s right {hand/side}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 48:14

But Israel extended his right hand

“But Israel {intentionally} reached out his right hand”

and placed {it} on the head of Ephraim

“and put/rested/laid {it} on Ephraim’s head,”

and he {was} the younger

“even though Ephraim {was} the/{Joseph’s} younger {son}.”

and {he placed} his left hand on the head of Manasseh. He guided his hands

“Then he {intentionally} {put/rested} his left hand on Manasseh’s head. He crossed his arms {to do that}” or “Then he crossed his arms and {put} his left hand on Manasseh’s head,” In the Hebrew culture, the right side was the place of highest honor and using the right hand to bless someone was symbolic of giving greater honor to that person. The oldest son was also the one who normally received the greater blessing. Israel reverses that here and gives Joseph’s younger son the greater blessing. It may be important to include a footnote in your translation that gives this information. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

because

“{even} though” or “in spite of the fact that”. Make sure that the way you translate “because” fits with the fact that Israel wanted to place his right hand on Ephraim (to give him the greater blessing), even though Manasseh was the firstborn (who would normally receive the greater blessing in that culture).

Manasseh {was} the firstborn

“Manasseh {was} the/{Joseph’s} firstborn/oldest {son}.”

Genesis 48:15

Then he blessed Joseph and said

“Then Israel blessed Joseph {and his sons} by saying,” or “Then Israel blessed Joseph by {blessing his sons and} saying,” Israel blessed Joseph by blessing Joseph’s sons (verses 15-16, 19-20).

May the God

“May {God bless your sons,} the God” or “I pray that {God will bless your sons,} the God” or “I ask God {to bless your sons}. He is the God”. For some languages it may be necessary to make it explicit here that this prayer is a blessing for Joseph’s sons (rather than waiting until that is made clear in verse 16). Do what is best in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to break up the long sentence in verses 15-16 into shorter sentences. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac

“whom my forefathers/ancestors Abraham and Isaac”

walked before

“walked/lived before/with {according to his will},” or “walked/lived {obediently} in the presence of,” or “served/obeyed,” See how you translated the idiom “walk/live before” in Gen 17:1 and 24:40. You may need to translate it differently in different contexts. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the God who has been shepherding me

“the {same} God who has watched over me” or “He is the {same} God who has taken care of me”. The word “shepherded” includes guiding, protecting, and providing food and water, such as a shepherd would do for his sheep. Here it is used as a metaphor that refers to God’s complete care of Israel throughout his life. Consider whether or not it is best in your language to use a similar metaphor here. For example, you could say, “He is the {same} God who, for my entire life, has taken care of all my needs, just as a {good} shepherd takes care of his sheep.” (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

from since I {was born} until this day

“from {the beginning of} my {life} until the present day/time,” or “my entire life,”

Genesis 48:16

the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil

"{He is also} the Angel who saved/rescued me {continually} from all/every harm/trouble." Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also consider again how you translated "angel" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 16:7, 9-11; 19:1, 15; 21:17; 22:11, 15; 24:7, 40; 28:12; 31:11; 32:3, 6; 48:16. (See: **Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet (p.1665)**)

may he bless {these} boys

"I pray/ask that he will cause {these} young men to prosper {greatly};" Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here; your decision will depend on how you translated verse 15. Also, since Joseph's sons were probably in their 20s, make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like they were little boys. The Hebrew word for "boy" here can also be translated as "lad," "servant," or "young man," depending on the context and who is speaking to whom. With that in mind, consider again how you translated this word in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:24; 18:7; 19:4; 21:12, 17-20; 22:3, 5, 12, 19; 25:27; 34:19; 37:2; 41:12; 43:8; 44:22, 30-34; 48:16.

and may my name be called in them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth

"so that my family name/line and the family name/line of my ancestors Abraham and Isaac will continue through them and so that they will have many descendants on the earth." or "I pray that they will have many descendants on the earth who will carry on the family name/line for me and for my forefathers/ancestors Abraham and Isaac."

Genesis 48:17

And Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim

"{When} Joseph saw/noticed that his father had put/rested/laid his right hand on Ephraim's head," See how you translated "placed" in verse 14.

and it was displeasing in his eyes

"it displeased him," or "he was displeased/unhappy {about it}," or "he thought it was a mistake," (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

so he took hold of the hand of his father

"So he took hold of his father's hand". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to move it from the head of Ephraim

"{in order} to move/take it from Ephraim's head" or "{and started} to move/take it from Ephraim's head"

to the head of Manasseh

"and {place/put it on} Manasseh's head."

Genesis 48:18

And Joseph said to his father

“Then he said to his father,”

Not so, my father, because that {one} {is} the firstborn son

“Not like that, Father. {It is} the other son {who is} the/my firstborn/oldest.” or “That is the wrong one/son, Father. The other {one} {is} {my} firstborn/oldest son.”

Put your right hand on his head

“{So} {you need to} put/have your right hand on his head.”

Genesis 48:19**But his father refused**

“But his father refused {to move his hands}” or “But his father would not {move his hands}”

and said

“and replied,”

I know, my son, I know

“I know {it/that}, my son, I know {what I am doing}.” or “I know {what I am doing}, my son.”

He will also become a people, and he will also be great

“{In fact,} {the descendants of} your firstborn/oldest son will also become a people/ethnic group, and he will be/become a great/important man.” or “{In fact,} your firstborn/oldest son will also be/become a great/important man, and he will be/become {the ancestor of} a people/ethnic group.” Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Joseph's firstborn in these two clauses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than he

“However, his younger brother {Ephraim} will be {even} greater than he {will be},”

and his offspring

“and his/Ephraim's offspring/descendants” or “with {many} descendants, who”. Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Ephraim's descendants, not Manasseh's.

will become a multitude of nations

“will become many people/ethnic groups.” Compare how you translated a similar phrase (“a community of peoples”) in verse 4.

Genesis 48:20

And he blessed them on that day

“So Israel blessed Ephraim and Manasseh that day” or “That {same} day, Israel blessed {both of} them”

saying

“by saying {to them},” or “and said,” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

By you Israel will bless {people

“{The people of} Israel will use your names when they bless {someone/people}” or “When {the people of} Israel say/pronounce a blessing over {someone}, they will use your names”

saying

“and say,”

May God make you

“May God bless/prosper you” or “We ask God to make you {great/prosperous}”

like Ephraim and like Manasseh

“like {he blessed/prospered} Ephraim and Manasseh.”

So he put Ephraim before Manasseh

“When he/Israel said that, he/Israel put/ranked Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.” or “In that way, he/Israel made Ephraim greater than Manasseh.”

Genesis 48:21

Then Israel said to Joseph

“After that, Israel {turned} to Joseph {and} said {to him},” or “Next Israel spoke to Joseph. {He said,}” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Behold

“Look/Listen,” or “As you can see,”

I am dying

“I am about to die,” or “I will die soon,”

and God will be with you

“but God will {always} be/stay with {all of} you {and help you},” or “but God will {always} be/stay with you and your brothers {and all your descendants} {and help you}.” The pronouns “you” and “your” are plural throughout this verse and probably refer to all Israel’s family, including Joseph, his brothers, and their descendants. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1627)**)

and he will bring you back

“He will also bring/take you back”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to the land of your fathers

“to the land that {he gave} to your forefathers/ancestors.”

Genesis 48:22

And I give you

“And I give/bequeath to you {as part of your inheritance}” or “Besides that, {as part of your inheritance from me,} I {hereby} give you”. The pronouns “you” and “your” shift to singular in verse 22.

Shechem

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could refer to: (1) “{the city of} Shechem,” or (2) “a mountain slope/ridge.” This second interpretation comes from the meaning of the Hebrew word “shekem” (“shoulder”), which can be used as a metaphor to refer to a mountain slope or ridge. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

one {portion} above your brothers

“which is more {land} than I am giving to your brothers and”

which I took from the hand of

“which I took control of from” or “which I took/captured from” or “I took/captured that land from”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the Amorite{s} with my sword and with my bow

“the Amorite{s} {in battle} using my sword and my bow.” or “the Amorite{s} when I defeated them in battle.” For some languages it may be clearer to change the order of clauses in this verse and say, “Besides that, I {hereby} give you {the city of} Shechem, {which} I took/captured from the Amorite{s} when I defeated them in battle. This is more {land} than I am giving to your brothers.” Do what is best in your language. Also consider again how you translated “Amorite{s}” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:16; 14:7, 13; 15:16, 21; 48:22. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 49

Genesis 49:1

Then Jacob called for his sons

“Then Jacob summoned {all} his sons”. The events in chapter 49 may have occurred on the same day as the events in chapter 48, or not very long after that. Consider again how you translated “called for” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:18; 14:14; 20:2, 8-9; 24:57-58; 26:9; 27:1, 42; 28:1; 31:4; 39:14; 41:8, 14; 46:33; 47:29; 49:1.

and said

“He said {to them},” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

Gather together

“Gather {yourselves} together {before me},” or “Come together {here},” Much of what Jacob says to his sons in verses 1-27 is Hebrew poetry, which is characterized by the use of parallelisms and metaphors to emphasize important points. Many translations put these verses in poetry format (starting here); many others use regular paragraph formatting. Do what is best in your language. For a complete list of verses that some translations treat as poetry in the book of Genesis, see the introduction to the book. (See: **Poetry (p.1688)**)

and I will reveal to you

“and I will declare to you” or “so that I can tell/inform you”

what will meet you

“what will happen to you {and your descendants}”. Much of what Jacob prophesies in this chapter about his sons also applies to their descendants. Some translation teams may prefer to put that information in a footnote rather than make it explicit in the text. Do what is best in your language. Also see how you translated “meet” in Gen 42:4, 38. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

in the end of days

“in the days/years ahead.” or “in future days/years.” In this context, this phrase refers to a period of years in the future. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 49:2

Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob

"{Yes/Indeed,} Jacob's/my sons, come/gather {here} and hear {what I have to say}," or "My sons, gather around {me,} {your father} Jacob, and listen {to me}." Make sure it is clear in your translation of this verse that Jacob is talking to his own sons and is referring to himself as both Jacob and as Israel. Also, for some languages it is more natural to put the address "sons of Jacob" first in verse 2, or even first in the quote (which begins in verse 1). Do what is best in your language. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

and listen to Israel your father

"Pay attention to {me,} your father Israel." or "{I,} your father Israel, have something {important} to tell you." This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause to emphasize that Jacob wants his sons to listen to him carefully. Try to keep both halves of this parallelism in your translation, since each half has a slightly different focus. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 49:3

Reuben, you {are} my firstborn

“Reuben, you {are} my oldest {son},” Consider again how you translated “firstborn” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 4:4; 10:15; 19:31, 33-34, 37; 22:21; 25:13, 27; 27:19, 32; 29:26; 35:23; 36:15; 38:6-7; 41:51; 43:33; 46:8, 14; 48:18; 49:3. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

my might and the first of my strength

“{the result of} my strength/fertility, and the first child I had as a young man.” or “{You are} the first {evidence/sign} of my manhood and strength/virility.” This phrase is used here as a euphemistic idiom that refers to Jacob’s ability to have children. Other languages may have a similar idiom. Translate this in a way that will not embarrass or offend listeners. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

excelling {in} rank and excelling {in} power

“{You had} higher/more honor and authority {than all your brothers}.” or “{You had} high status and great authority {in our family}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 49:4

Turbulent

"{However,} {you are} uncontrollable" or "{However,} {you are} unstable/reckless"

like waters

"like a flood of water," or "like {rushing} water," Here Jacob compares Reuben's reckless, uncontrolled sexual behavior to turbulent water that is out of control and destructive. Consider whether or not you have a similar simile in your language that would fit well here. (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

you will not excel

"{so} you will no longer have your high/important status/position {in our family}," or "{so} you will no longer be first {among your brothers},"

because you went up {onto} your father's bed, and you defiled {it

"because you climbed/got {into} my bed {with my concubine/wife} {and} dishonored me!" or "because you dishonored me by getting into my bed and committing adultery {with my concubine/wife}!" This clause, along with the rest of the verse, is a euphemistic way of referring to Reuben committing adultery by sleeping with his father's concubine (secondary wife) Bilhah (Genesis 35:22). (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

He went up {onto} my couch

"{Then Jacob exclaimed,} "He went up {onto} my couch!" " or "He/You {actually} climbed/got up {onto} my couch/bed {and dishonored me}!" or "{You dishonored me when} you slept with my concubine/wife!" Here Jacob repeats part of what he said in the previous clause, in order to emphasize Reuben's sin against him and to communicate how upset he is about it. He may have still been talking to Reuben (switching from second to third person), or he may have been exclaiming about Reuben to himself and the rest of his sons. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 49:5

Simeon and Levi

"{As for} Simeon and Levi, {they}" or "Simeon and Levi, {you}". In verses 3-27, Jacob sometimes refers to his sons using second person ("you"), and sometimes (as here) he uses third person ("they" or "he"). Consider whether or not it is better in your language to use second person throughout these verses, especially since Jacob is talking to his sons who are right there with him. Also, some languages have dual pronouns that fit well in verses 5-7. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

are} brothers

"{are} {true/close} brothers." or "{are} partners {in crime}." or "do {evil} things together." This phrase is used here as an idiom that emphasizes the fact that Simeon and Levi thought alike and acted together to do evil things.

Their swords {are} weapons of violence

"They/You use their/your swords/weapons to do violent things {together}." Make sure in your translation that the pronouns you use here (and in verses 6-7) fit with the way you translated the beginning of this verse.

Genesis 49:6

Do not let my soul enter

“Do not ever let me” or “May I never” or “I will never”. Here Jacob uses the phrase “my soul” to refer to himself and to emphasize how strongly he feels about what he is saying. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

Do not let & enter into their council

“take part in their/your {evil} plans/schemes!” or “participate with them/you when they/you plan {evil} things!” In verses 5-7, Jacob is probably referring to the time when Simeon and Levi killed all the males in the city of Shechem out of revenge (Genesis 34:25-26, 30). Jacob was very upset that they did that.

Do not let my glory join in their assembly

“Do not let my honor/presence be connected/associated with their/your {evil} plans,” or “I never want to be linked/associated with their/your {evil} plans,” or “I refuse to make {evil} plans with them/you,” This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause and emphasizes that Jacob is upset and does not want to participate with these two sons in their evil behavior. Consider what is the best way to translate that in your language. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

because in their anger they killed a man

“because they/you became angry and murdered {many} men/people,” The phrase “a man” probably refers collectively here to all the men whom these two sons killed in the city of Shechem (Gen 34:25-26, 30).

and for their pleasure they hamstrung an ox

“and {just} to please/entertain themselves/yourselves, they/you crippled/maimed {some} oxen/cattle {so they could not walk}.” or “and they/you cut the leg tendons of {some} oxen/cattle, {just} for the fun of it.” This may have happened during the time that Simeon and Levi took revenge on the people of Shechem.

Genesis 49:7

Cursed {be} their anger because {it is} strong, and their fury because {it is} cruel

"{May God} curse {them/you for} their/your intense/terrible anger and {their/your} cruel/malicious fury!" or "{I ask God to} curse/punish them/you for being so intensely/fiercely angry and cruel/malicious!" Consider what is the best way to translate this parallelism in your language. Also, consider again how you translated "cursed" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 3:14 (and note), 17; 4:11; 5:29; 8:21; 9:25; 12:3; 27:12-13, 29; 49:7. (See: **Parallelism (p. 1683)**)

I will divide them

"I {ask God to} scatter/disperse them/you {and their/your descendants}" or "May {God/he} cause them/you {and their/your descendants} to be spread out". The last half of verse 7 specifies how Jacob is asking God to curse Simeon and Levi.

in Jacob

"among {the family/descendants of} Jacob." In this context, the name "Jacob" refers to his family and especially his descendants. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and I will scatter them

"Yes, I/God will" or "That's right, I {ask God/him to}". The clauses "I will divide ..." and "I will scatter ..." form a parallelism that emphasizes the way Jacob is asking God to curse Simeon and Levi. If possible, it is best to keep both parts of a parallelism in your translation. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

and I will scatter them

"scatter/disperse them/you" or "cause them/you to be spread out". Consider again how you translated "scatter" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:18, 32; 11:4, 8-9; 49:7. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. If the pronoun "you" is used here in your translation, it should be plural.

in Israel

"throughout {the descendants/land of} Israel." Jacob's prophecy in verse 7 came true many years later: the tribe of Simeon was absorbed by the tribe of Judah (Joshua 19:1), and the tribe of Levi never had its own territory, but rather lived in cities scattered throughout the other tribes of Israel (Joshua 21:1-42). You could put this information in a footnote.

Genesis 49:8

Judah, {it is} you your brothers will praise

“Judah, you {are the one whom} your brothers will praise.” or “Judah, you {and your descendants} will be {highly} praised by your brothers {and their descendants}.” or “Judah, your brothers {and their descendants} will {highly} praise you {and your descendants}.” In the Hebrew text, the pronoun “you” is emphatic, and it has an emphatic position in the sentence. Consider what is the best way to communicate that emphasis in your language.

Your hand {will be} on the neck of

“You will be victorious over” or “You will conquer/defeat”. Consider what is the best way to translate this Hebrew idiom in your language. Also, if your translation includes Judah’s descendants in the previous sentence, make sure that the pronouns “your” and “you” are plural in this sentence. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

those opposing you

“those who are against you.” or “your enemies/adversaries.”

The sons of your father

“Your father’s {other} sons” or “{Then} my {other} sons” or “Your brothers”. Make sure that your translation of “your father” refers to Jacob. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

will bow down to you

“{and their descendants} will bow/prostrate themselves before you {and your descendants} {in respect/submission}.” Consider again how you translated “bow down” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 18:2; 19:1; 22:5; 23:7, 12; 24:26, 48, 52; 27:29; 33:3, 6-7; 37:7, 9-10; 42:6; 43:26, 28; 47:31; 48:12; 49:8. Also see how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 17:3, 17. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Genesis 49:9

Judah {is} the cub of a lion. From the prey, my son, you have gone up

“Judah, my son, {you are} {powerful} {like} a young lion that has returned {to its den} after {killing} {its} prey.” or “Judah, {you,} my son, {are} {like} a {powerful} young lion that {kills its} prey and returns {to its den}.” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1577)**)

He crouches {and} lies down like a lion

“You {are} like a lion that stretches out {and} lies down {to sleep/rest} {after eating}.” or “It stretches out {and} lies down {to sleep}.” Here in verse 9 Jacob switches to using third person references (“he, his, him”) for Judah. For some languages it is better to use second person references (“you, your”) throughout verses 8-12. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Simile (p.1709)**)

And like a lioness, who will rouse him

“Yes, {you are} like a lioness/lion that no one dares to awaken/disturb.” or “No one dares to disturb/disrespect that lion.” This sentence forms a parallelism with the previous sentence to emphasize Judah’s authority. Also, Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize the respect that people will have for Judah. Some languages must use a statement here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 49:10

The scepter will not depart from Judah

“Judah, the authority to rule will always belong to you {and your descendants}.” or “Judah, there will always be one of your descendants ruling as king.” A scepter, or a king’s staff, is a special, decorated rod that a king holds to symbolize his authority to rule the people who are under him. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

nor the staff from between his feet

“The {king’s/ruler’s} staff will never leave his/your descendants/family” or “In fact, your descendants will rule”. This phrase forms a parallelism with the previous clause and emphasizes the authority that Judah and his descendants will have. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

until Shiloh comes

“until the {highest} king comes/arrives” or “until the One whom the scepter/kingdom belongs to comes/arrives”. Jacob is probably prophesying here about the coming of the Messiah/Christ. This fits with the fact that Jesus was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and is now ruling as the true King over heaven and earth. You could put some of that information in a footnote.

and to him {belongs} the obedience of the peoples

“and the peoples/nations {of the earth} obey him.” or “and all people obey him.” or “All people/nations will obey him.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 49:11

He will tether

“Judah {and his descendants}” or “You {and your descendants}”. In verse 11, the pronouns “he” and “his” refer to Judah and his descendants. To make that clear, you could make that explicit here and then use plural pronouns “they” and “their” throughout the verse. Or if you are using the second person throughout this section, you could say, “You {and your descendants} ...” and use plural pronouns “you” and “your” after that. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

He will tether his donkey to the {grape}vine

“will {be so wealthy that they/you will/could} tether/tie their/your donkey{s} to {their/your} {grape}vine{s} {to eat the valuable fruit}.” or “let your donkey{s} eat your choice/valuable {grape}vine{s}.” In Jacob’s culture grapevines were valuable plants, so unless a person was very rich, he would never tether a donkey to his grapevines because it would eat the fruit and the vines. If necessary, you could make some of that information explicit in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

and the son of his donkey to the choice branch

“Their/Your donkeys’ colts will/could eat the best/finest grapevines.” or “{It will not matter if} their/your donkeys’ colts eat {their/your} best/finest {grapevine} branch{es}.” This clause forms a parallelism with the previous one to emphasize how wealthy Judah and his descendants will be. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

He will wash his garment{s} in wine and his robe{s} in the blood of grapes

“{They/You will still have so much wine from other vines/grapevines that} they/you could {even} use the wine like water to wash their/your robes and {other} clothes.” This sentence is another parallelism that emphasizes how wealthy Judah and his descendants will be. The phrase “blood of grapes” is an idiom that refers to red wine made from the juice of grapes. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Genesis 49:12

His} eyes

"{Their/Your} eyes" or "{They/You will be so blessed/wealthy that} {their/your} eyes"

will be} brilliant from wine

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "{will be} bright from {drinking} {abundant} wine," or (2) "{will be} darker than wine," In both interpretations the emphasis is that Judah's descendants will be blessed with an abundance of the best foods, including wine and milk, which are examples of the most valuable foods that were produced in the land.

and {his} teeth {will be} white from milk

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "and {their/your} teeth {will be} white from {drinking} {abundant} milk." or (2) "and {their/your} teeth {will be} whiter than milk." Make sure that the way you translate this phrase fits with the interpretation you used for the first part of this verse. For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of some of these phrases and say, "{They/You will be so blessed/wealthy that} they/you will have plenty of the best foods, including {abundant} wine and milk." Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 49:13

Zebulun

"{As for} Zebulun, {he} {and his descendants}" or "Zebulun, {you} {and your descendants}". Throughout this chapter, decide whether it is best in your language to use third person or second person when Jacob refers to each of his sons (and their descendants).

will settle at the shore of the sea

"will settle/live at/near the seashore/coast,"

and he {will live} at the shore of ships

"yes, they/you {will settle/live} at/near a harbor for ships," or "where there will be a {safe} harbor/place for ships {to load and unload their cargo}," This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause to emphasize where Zebulun and his descendants will live. (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

and his border {will reach

"Their/Your territory {will extend}". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to Sidon

"{all the way north/up} to {the city of} Sidon." or "as far {north} as {the city of} Sidon."

Genesis 49:14

Issachar

"{As for} Issachar, {he} {and his descendants}" or "Issachar, {you} {and your descendants}"

is} a strong donkey

"{will be} {like} a strong/sturdy donkey". Consider again how you translated "donkey" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:16; 16:12; 22:3, 5, 6; 24:35; 30:43; 32:5, 15; 34:28; 36:24; 42:26-27; 43:18, 24; 44:3, 13; 45:23; 47:17; 49:14. (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1577)**)

lying down

"crouching/lying down {resting}" or "{that is} resting {on the ground}"

between two saddlebags

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "between two saddlebags/loads." or (2) "between the two parts of a sheep pen." Both interpretations imply that the donkey is lying down to rest after it worked hard.

Genesis 49:15

And he sees {his} resting place that {it is} good and the land that it is pleasant

“They/You will have a good place to rest/live, in a pleasant/enjoyable land.” (See: **Parallelism (p.1683)**)

Then he will bend his shoulder

“However, they/you will {also} have to exert themselves/yourselves” or “But they/you will labor/work hard”. Consider what is the best way to translate this Hebrew idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

to bear {the loads

“to/and carry {heavy loads},”

and he will be a forced labor servant

“In fact, they/you will be forced to be slaves.” or “They/You will have to work {very} hard {for others} as slaves.” or “People will force you to be their slaves.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 49:16

Dan

"{As for} Dan, he {and his descendants}" or "Dan, you {and your descendants}"

will judge his people

"will govern/rule their/your {own} people group"

as one of the tribes of Israel

"just as the other tribes of Israel {judge/govern/rule their own people}." or "and have equal status with {the rest of} the tribes of Israel."

Genesis 49:17

Dan

“They/You”. Be consistent with your choice of third person or second person (singular or plural) references to Dan (and his descendants) throughout verses 16 and 17. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

will be a snake beside the road, a viper beside the path

“will be {clever/cunning} {like} a poisonous snake {lying} beside a road” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1577)**)

that bites the heels of a horse

“that strikes the feet of {its enemy’s} horse,”

and its rider falls off backward

“so that {it rears up and} the rider/enemy falls off backward {to the ground}.” or “... is thrown off the horse {and defeated}.”

Genesis 49:18

I am waiting for your salvation, Yahweh

"{Then Jacob paused and exclaimed to God,} "Yahweh, I am looking expectantly to you to save {me}!" Make sure it is clear in your translation that Jacob is talking to God in verse 18, not Dan any more. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1567)**)

Genesis 49:19

As for} Gad

"{Then Jacob/he continued,} "{As for you,} Gad,"

raider{s} will attack him

"a group of robbers will attack him/you {and his/your descendants}," or "you {and your descendants} will be attacked by raiders/enemies,"

but he will attack {their} heel{s}

"but they/you will chase/hunt them {down} {and defeat them}." Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to at each point in this sentence. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 49:20

From Asher, his bread {will be} fat

"Asher {and his descendants} will produce rich/fine food," or "Asher, you {and your descendants} will {be wealthy and} produce/eat the best/finest food." Here the word "bread" refers to food in general and "fat" refers to the best kinds of food. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

and he will provide king's delicacies

"He/They/You will {even} supply/produce food that is rich/fancy enough for a king." or "In fact, he/they/you will supply/produce delicious/fine foods {that are fit} for kings {to eat}." Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, the word "delicacies" refers to special, delicious foods that only rich people can afford to eat.

Genesis 49:21

Naphtali

"{As for} Naphtali, {he} {and his descendants}" or "Naphtali, {you} {and your descendants}"

is} a doe

"{will be} {swift} {like} a doe/deer" or "{will be warriors who are} {swift} {like} a deer". This metaphor pictures a deer that swiftly runs away after being released from captivity. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

that is let loose

"that is set free." or "that has been released {to run freely}." or "that is free to run/go wherever it wants."

He gives words of beauty

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) "He/They/You will {also} speak eloquently." or "They/You will {also} be gifted/excellent speakers/negotiators." or (2) "and that bears/has beautiful/healthy fawns." or "He/They/You will have beautiful children." If you made Naphtali's descendants explicit at the beginning of this verse, make sure you use a plural pronoun ("they" or "you") here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 49:22

Joseph {is

“{As for} Joseph, {he} {and his descendants}” or “Joseph, {you} {and your descendants}”

the son of a fruit-bearing {vine}, the son of a fruit-bearing {vine

“{will be} {like} the branch of a fruitful {vine/tree}, {yes,} {like} a fruitful/productive {vine/tree}” or “{will be} very successful/prosperous and flourish {like} a fruitful/productive branch {of a vine/tree}” or “{will be/become} very fruitful/numerous {like} {the fruit on} a fruitful/productive {vine/tree}”. The same phrase is repeated here to emphasize how prosperous and productive Joseph (and his descendants) will be. Instead of saying the same phrase twice, many translations combine the two phrases and form one clause that communicates the emphasis in a different way. Do what is accurate and natural in your language. (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1577)**)

beside a spring

“{that is growing/planted} next to a spring/stream {of water},”

whose} daughters go up

“{with} branches extending/hanging” or “{with} branches {full of fruit} that extend/hang”. This phrase probably continues the metaphor of the fruitful vine that symbolizes how prosperous and numerous Joseph and his descendants will be. Consider what is the best way to translate this metaphor in your language. (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1577)**)

over a wall

“over a/the {surrounding} wall.” or “over a {nearby} wall.”

Genesis 49:23

And & will attack him

“Expert/Skillful bowmen/archers will {fiercely} attack them/you {and their/your descendants}” or “Enemy warriors/soldiers will ...” or “His/Their/Your enemies will ...” Be consistent with your choice of third person or second person (singular or plural) references to Joseph (and his descendants) throughout verses 22-26. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

and shoot

“and shoot {arrows} {at them/you}”

and harass him

“and treat them/you hatefully.” or “and try to destroy them/you.”

Genesis 49:24

But his bow will remain in strength

“But {as they/you fight back,} they/you will hold/keep their/your bows/weapons steady” or “... they/you will use their/your bows/weapons well/effectively”. Make sure that the way you translate “his” in this verse fits with whether you use second or third person (singular or plural) to refer to Joseph (and his descendants) in verses 22-26.

and the arms of his hands will be made limber

“and their/your strong/powerful arms will remain/stay agile/nimble”

by the hands of the Mighty {One} of Jacob

“because of the power/strength”. Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

the Mighty {One} of Jacob

“of the Mighty/Powerful {One/God} whom I worship/serve,” or “that the Mighty/Powerful {God} of Jacob gives them/you,” For some languages, it is clearer or more natural to change the order of the phrases in this verse and say, “But the Mighty/Powerful {God} whom I worship/serve will keep you strong and help you use your bows/weapons well/effectively {as you fight back}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

by the name of the Shepherd

“{that’s right,} by the name/power of the/our Shepherd.” or “He takes care of {his people} the way that a shepherd takes care of his sheep.” A shepherd takes care of his sheep and provides for all of their needs. In the same way God takes care of his people and provides for all of their needs. See Psalm 23 which also talks about God as our Shepherd. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

the Rock of Israel

“{He is} Israel’s/my Rock/Fortress.” or “{He is} {like} a rock {fortress} who protects Israel {and his descendants}.” In verses 24 and 25, several different titles are used to refer to Yahweh, the only true God. Make sure that your translation of these verses does not sound like there is more than one God. Also make sure it is clear in your translation or in a footnote that Jacob is referring to himself in this verse as Jacob and Israel. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 49:25

by the God of

"{That strength/power is/comes} from". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

by the God of your father, and he will help you

"your father's God, who will help you {and your descendants}." or "the God {who has always taken care} of {me,} your father. He will {also} help you {and your descendants}."

and with the Almighty, and he will bless you

"He is the all-powerful {God}, who will bless you {all}". For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of some of the clauses in the first half of this verse and say, "{That strength/power comes} from the God {who has always taken care} of {me,} your father. He is the all-powerful {God} who will help you {and your descendants} and bless you {all}". Do what is best in your language. Also, compare how you translated "God Almighty" in Gen 48:3. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

with} blessings of the heavens above

"{with} rain from above" or "{He will} bless/provide {you} with rain from the heavens/sky". Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

blessings of the deep that lies below

"and water from deep in the ground." or "and bless/provide {you} with water from under the ground." This phrase refers to water that comes from under the ground and supplies springs, wells, and rivers.

blessings of breasts and womb

"He will {also} bless {you} with many children {and much livestock}." or "May your women/wives bear/have many children {and your animals bear/have many offspring/young}." Consider what is the best way to translate this metonymy in your language. Also consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 49:26

The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “{God} has blessed {me} your father more than he blessed my ancestors,” or (2) “The blessings your father is blessing {you} {with} are greater than the blessings my ancestors blessed me with,” or (3) “The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings/riches of the ancient mountains,” The third interpretation is based on the Greek Septuagint, which interprets the Hebrew word for “ancestors” as “mountains” (which has a similar spelling in Hebrew). (See: **Textual Variants (p.1716)**)

even to the bounties of

The meaning of the Hebrew text is uncertain here. It could mean: (1) “{He has blessed me with bounties/riches that are} greater than the bounties/riches {that come} from” or (2) “{My blessings are} {so great that they extend} to the utmost/farthest boundaries/limits of”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

the eternal hills

“the everlasting/ancient mountains.”

May they rest on the head of Joseph

“May {God} {also} give those/abundant blessings to {you} Joseph, {as}” or “I pray that {God} will abundantly bless {you too,} Joseph, {since you are}”. The words “head” and “top of the head” refer to Joseph and are connected with the custom of laying hands on the head of the person being blessed. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1714)**)

the one consecrated from {among

“the one who has been set apart {by God} {as ruler/leader}” or “the one who is distinguished/honored {by God}” or “the one whom he/God chose to set apart {and honor}”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive phrase in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

his brothers

“above/over his/your brothers.” Make sure your choice of “his” or “your” here fits with how you translated the beginning of this sentence. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 49:27

Benjamin

"{As for} Benjamin, {he} {and his descendants}" or "Benjamin, {you} {and your descendants}". Consider again whether you make "and ... descendants" explicit for each of Jacob's sons in this chapter or whether you leave it implied and possibly put that information in a footnote. See verses 1, 7-8, 11, 13-14, 16, 19-23, 27.

is} a ravenous wolf

"{is/are} {like} a fierce wolf." or "{will be} {fierce warriors} {like} ravenous/hungry wolves." Wolves are a type of large, fierce, wild dog that lives and hunts together in groups. If wolves are unknown in your language area, you could say "wild dog" or "a pack of wild dogs." Consider again how you translated the metaphors and similes that Jacob uses in verses 4, 9-11, 14, 17, 21-22, 24, 27. (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1577)**)

In the morning it devours {its} prey, and in the evening it divides the plunder

"They/You defeat their/your enemies in the morning and share the plunder/spoils of battle {with their/your family/warriors} in the evening." or "You will always defeat your enemies and take their possessions and wealth." Consider again whether to use second person or third person (singular or plural) in verses 3-27, and make sure your translation of the pronouns is clear and natural. To do that, it is helpful to read your translation of this section aloud. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1623)**)

Genesis 49:28

All those {are} the twelve tribes of Israel

“Those {twelve sons} {are} {the forefathers/ancestors of} the twelve tribes that descended/came from Israel,” This clause refers back to Jacob’s sons who are mentioned in verses 1-27.

and that {is} what their father said to them

“and those {were} the words/blessings that their father spoke to them.”

And he blessed

“when he blessed” or “He blessed”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

them, each one

“each one of them” or “each of them” or “each one/son”

according to his blessing he blessed them

“with blessings that were right/appropriate for them {and their descendants}.” or “in a way that was fitting/appropriate for them {and their descendants}.”

Genesis 49:29**Then he commanded them**

“After that, he/Jacob instructed his sons”

and said to them

“by saying to them,” Make sure that your translation of “commanded ... and said ...” refers to a single action, not two different actions. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

I am being gathered to

“I will soon {die and} be gathered/taken {by God} to be with” or “{God} will soon take my spirit to be with” or “I am about to {die and} join”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

my people

“my ancestors/relatives {who have already died}.” or “my ancestors/relatives {who have gone/died before me}.” or “my {deceased} ancestors/relatives.”

Bury me

“{Please} bury my body” or “{When that happens,} {please} bury me”. Make sure that your translation of this phrase does not mean or imply that Jacob was asking to be buried while he was still physically alive.

with my fathers

“with/beside {the bodies of} my forefathers/ancestors” or “next to their {bodies}” or “next to them”

in the cave that {is} in the field of Ephron the Hittite

“inside the cave that {is located} in the field that Ephron the Hittite used to own.” or “... the field that used to belong to Ephron the Hittite.” Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like Ephron still owned that property.”

Genesis 49:30

in the cave that {is} in the field of Machpelah

“That cave and field are in the Machpelah {area}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated “Machpelah” in Gen 23:9.

that {is} in front of Mamre

“that is near {the city of} Mamre” or “that is east of {the city of} Mamre”

in the land of Canaan

“in the region of Canaan.”

that Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite

“{That is the cave} that {my grandfather} Abraham bought, along with the field, from Ephron the Hittite,”

as property {for} a burial place

“to possess/use for a {family} burial place/site.” or “in order to possess/have a place to bury {his dead relatives}.”

Genesis 49:31

There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife

"That is where {the bodies of} Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried," The pronoun "they" is general in this verse and does not specify who buried these people. Many languages have a similar general word. Other languages make this a passive clause without specifying the subject. Do what is best in your language.

there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife

"{and} where {the bodies of} Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried,"

and there

"and that is where" or "That is also where"

I buried Leah

"I buried {the body of} {my wife} Leah."

Genesis 49:32

The purchase of the field and the cave that {is} in it {was}

“That field and cave were bought {by Abraham}” or “{Abraham} bought that field and cave”. In verse 32, Jacob repeats some of what he said in verses 29-30. Make sure your translation does not sound like it was the first time he said this. Also consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

from the sons of Heth

“from the descendants of Heth.” or “from the Hittites.” or “from the Hittite people.” Compare how you translated “Hittite” in verse 29, which refers to the same people group as here.

Genesis 49:33

Then Jacob finished commanding his sons

“When Jacob had finished giving those instructions to his sons,”

and he drew his feet into the bed

“he {lay down and} pulled/lifted his feet {up} into {his} bed.” This clause means that Jacob lay back down after being in a sitting position on the side of his bed (Gen 48:2).

and exhaled

“and breathed out {his last/final breath}” or “Then he took his last/final breath {and died}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also consider again how you translated the idiom “exhaled” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 6:17; 7:21; 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:33. (See: **Euphemism (p.1619)**)

and was gathered to his people

“and was gathered/taken {by God} to be with his {deceased} relatives/ancestors.” or “and joined his ancestors {who had died before him}.” Consider again how you translated this phrase in the book of Genesis. See Gen 25:8 (and note), 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33.

Genesis 50

Genesis 50:1

Then Joseph fell on

“Then Joseph threw/flung himself on his father’s face/body,” or “Then/Immediately Joseph embraced/hugged his father {in sorrow/grief},” Make sure that your translation of this phrase does not imply that Joseph fell down accidentally. Rather he intentionally threw himself on his father to embrace him and express his love and grief for him. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 46:29. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and he wept over him

“and he cried over him” For some languages it may be better to put this clause earlier and say, “Then Joseph cried {in his sorrow/grief}, and he hugged his father {tightly} and kissed him.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and kissed him

“and kissed him {goodbye} {on the cheek/forehead}.” Consider again how you translated “kissed” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 27:26-27; 29:11, 13; 31:28, 55; 33:4; 45:15; 48:10; 50:1.

Genesis 50:2

Then Joseph commanded

“Then Joseph/he ordered/told” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1699)**)

his servants the physicians

“his servants {who were} physicians/doctors/morticians” or “his physicians/doctors who served him”

to embalm his father

“to prepare/preserve his father’s body} for burial.” The word “embalm” refers here to the special process that the Egyptians did to slow down the decaying process of a dead body in order to preserve it for burial. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1718)**)

So the physicians embalmed

“So his doctors/morticians embalmed/preserved/prepared {his father} Israel’s body} for burial,” or “So they did that,” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Genesis 50:3

and they completed forty days for him

“which took them forty days,” or “The process/work required/took forty days,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for so they complete the days of embalmings

“because that is the {usual/normal} amount of days/time {required/needed} to embalm/prepare/preserve a body.” or “which is how long it {normally/usually} takes to embalm/prepare/preserve a body.”

And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days

“The people in Egypt wept/mourned for him/Israel {for} seventy days.” or “For seventy days the people in/of Egypt mourned for him/Israel.” The seventy days of mourning included the forty days of embalming, so do not begin your translation of this sentence with a word like “Then”.

Genesis 50:4

And the days of his mourning passed

"When those {seventy} days of mourning for him/Israel were over/finished," or "After that time of mourning his/Israel's death,"

then Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh, saying

"Joseph spoke to the people/officials in Pharaoh's household/court and said," or "Joseph said to Pharaoh's officials,"
The phrase "the house of Pharaoh" refers to members of the royal court. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Please, if I have found favor in your eyes

"Please do this favor/kindness for me:" or "Please show me kindness and do this:"

please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying

"please speak to {King} Pharaoh {for me} and say {to him}," or "please take a message to {King} Pharaoh {for me} and tell {him},"

Genesis 50:5

My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am dying. In my grave that I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you must bury me

“{Just before he died,} my father had me make a vow/oath to him. He said, “Look/Listen, I am about to die. {Swear/Promise to me} {with an oath} {that} you will bury my body in the tomb that I dug/made for myself in the region of Canaan.” ” For some languages it may be better to translate this embedded quote as an indirect quote and say, “that when my father was about to die, he had me swear/vow/promise to him that I would bury his body in the region of Canaan, in a grave/tomb that he had prepared for himself there.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

So now, please let me go up {there} and bury my father

“{Joseph continued,} “So now, please allow/permit me to go and bury my father {there},” or “So {ask the king to} please let me go {to Canaan} and bury my father{’s body} {there}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as an indirect quote. Also see how you translated “go up” in Gen 45:9. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

then I will return

“After that, I will come back {here}.” or “After I/we have done that, I will return {to Egypt}.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 50:6

And Pharaoh said

"{When Pharaoh heard Joseph's message,} he replied," or "Pharaoh {sent back} this reply {to him/Joseph}:"

Go up and bury your father just as he made you swear

"{You may} go {to Canaan} to bury your father{'s body}, just as he made you swear/vow/promise {to do}." or "{Tell Joseph that} he may go {to Canaan} and bury his father{'s body} just as his father made him swear/vow/promise {that he would do}." Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this sentence as a direct or indirect quote. Also see how you translated "go up" in verse 5. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

Genesis 50:7

So Joseph went up

“So Joseph started traveling {to/toward Canaan}” or “So Joseph started the trip/journey {to Canaan}” or “So Joseph left {Egypt/Goshen}”. Joseph did not arrive in Canaan until later (verse 10).

to bury his father

“to bury his father{s body},”

and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh

“All the officials of Pharaoh went with him {to escort him},” or “and all Pharaoh’s officials escorted him,” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Also, consider again how you translated “Pharaoh” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:15 (and note), 16-18, 20; 37:36; 39:1; 40:2, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19; 41:1, 4, 7-10, 14-17, 25, 28, 32-35, 37-39, 41-46, 55; 42:15-16; 44:18; 45:2, 8, 16-17, 21; 46:5, 31, 33-34; 47:1-5, 7-11, 14, 19-26; 50:4, 6-7. Also consider again how you translated “servants” and “officials” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 20:8; 40:2, 4, 7, 20; 41:10, 37-38; 45:16; 50:7.

the elders of his house

“{including} the senior/important men/leaders in/from his/Pharaoh’s household/court”. The “elders” were probably older men who had served Pharaoh for a long time and held important positions in his court.

and all elders of the land of Egypt

“and all the {other} senior/important men/leaders in/from the country of Egypt.”

Genesis 50:8

and all of the house of Joseph

“All of Joseph’s family also {went with him,}” The word “house” refers here to Joseph’s whole extended family, not just to the people in his own household. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

and his brothers

“including his brothers”

and the house of his father

“and {the rest of} his father’s family.”

Only their little ones

“Only their children”

and their flock{s} and their herd{s}

“and their sheep and cattle” or “and their livestock”. Consider again how you translated “flock{s} and herd{s}” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:16; 13:5; 20:14; 21:27; 24:35; 26:14; 32:8; 33:13; 34:28; 45:10; 46:32; 47:1, 17; 50:8. Also see how you translated “herd” in Gen 18:7-8, and how you translated “flock” in Gen 4:2, 4; 21:28; 27:9; 29:2-3, 6-10; 30:31, 32, 36, 38-43; 31:4, 8, 10, 12, 19, 38, 41, 43; 32:6; 37:2, 12, 14; 38:12, 13, 17; 46:34; 47:1, 17. It may be necessary to translate these terms in different ways, depending on the context.

they left

“they left {behind}” or “were left {behind} {with servants/caretakers}”. The children and animals were probably left with servants who took care of them during the funeral. For some languages it may be better to change the order of the phrases in this sentence and say, “They left {behind} only their children and their livestock in Goshen Province.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

in the land of Goshen

“in the region of Goshen.” or “in Goshen Province.” Consider again how you translated “the land/region of Goshen” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 45:10; 46:28-29, 34; 47:1, 4, 6, 27; 50:8.

Genesis 50:9

And with him went up both chariot{s} and horsemen

"There were men/soldiers riding chariots and men/soldiers riding horses who also went with him/Joseph," or "{Many} soldiers also escorted him/Joseph, {including} those {who were} riding chariots and those {who were} riding horses," Consider again how you translated "chariot" in Gen 41:43; 46:29; 50:9.

and the company was very great

"so that the {entire} procession/group {of people} was very large." or "so that there was a very large group {of people} {traveling together}."

Genesis 50:10

Then they came to

“Then {when} they came to” or “When they arrived at”

the threshing floor of Atad

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) “Atad’s threshing floor/place,” or “a place owned by {a man named} Atad where people separated grain {from chaff},” or (2) “the threshing floor/place near {the city/town of} Atad,” or “Goren Ha-Atad,” or (3) “the {grain/wheat} threshing place that was surrounded by thornbushes,” The Hebrew word “atad” means “thorns,” but most Bible scholars think it refers here to the name of a person or city.

which {is} beyond the Jordan, and they lamented

“which {was} located beyond/across the Jordan {River},” For some languages it may be better to put this clause earlier in this verse and say, “They traveled to the other side of the Jordan {River} and stopped at a {grain} threshing place owned by {a man named} Atad.” The location of Atad’s threshing floor is not certain. It was most likely on the west side of the Jordan River, since that is where the cave was located and that is where the Canaanites would have been most likely to observe Joseph’s family and the Egyptians mourning (verse 11). However, since its location is not certain, it is best to translate “beyond the Jordan” in a general way (like the Hebrew text is). (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

and they lamented there

“they mourned/grieved there for Joseph’s father” or “they began to mourn/grieve”

with} a very great and heavy lamentation

“{with} a very loud and sorrowful lamentation/mourning.” or “very loudly and sorrowfully.”

And he did seven days {of} mourning for his father

“For seven days Joseph {and the others} mourned/grieved/lamented the death of his father.” or “and for seven days, he/Joseph led everyone in mourning/lamenting the death of his father.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to combine the last two sentences in this verse and say, “There Joseph {and the others} mourned for his father very loudly and sorrowfully for seven days.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 50:11

And the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad

“When the Canaanites who lived in the area saw them mourning {like that} at Atad’s threshing floor/place,” See how you translated “threshing floor of Atad” in verse 10.

and they said

“they exclaimed {to each other},”

This {is} a heavy mourning for the Egyptians

“{Wow!} Those people of/from Egypt are mourning {very} sorrowfully {for someone who died}!” Consider again how you translated “Egyptian” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:14; 16:1, 3; 21:9; 25:12; 39:1, 2, 5; 41:55-56; 43:32; 45:2; 46:34; 47:15, 20; 50:3, 11. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

For that {reason

“That is the reason that” or “That is why”

they called its name

“people call that place” or “the name of that place is” or “that place is called/named”. Consider again how you translated “For that (reason) he/they called/call ...” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 11:9; 16:14; 19:22; 21:31; 25:26, 30; 31:48; 33:17; 35:8; 38:29-30; 50:11.

Abel Mizraim

“Abel Mizraim, {which means “Egyptians’ mourning place,”}”

which {is} beyond

“which {is located}” or “The/That place {is}”. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

beyond the Jordan

“on the other side of the Jordan {River}.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to put this phrase earlier in this sentence and say, “That is why the name of that place on the other side of the Jordan {River} is Abel Mizraim, {which means “Egyptians’ mourning place.”}” Do what is best in your language. Also, be consistent here with how you translate this phrase in verse 10. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 50:12

And his sons did for him just as

“So his/Jacob’s sons did for him exactly what” or “Jacob’s sons did {everything} for him just as”

he had commanded them

“he had instructed/told them {to do}:”

Genesis 50:13

And his sons carried him

“They took/brought his body”

to the land of Canaan

“to the region of Canaan”. Consider again how you translated “the land/region of Canaan” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 11:31; 12:5; 13:12, 14; 16:3; 17:8; 23:2, 19; 31:18; 33:18; 35:6; 36:5-6; 37:1; 42:5, 7, 13, 29, 32; 44:8; 45:17, 25; 46:6, 12, 31; 47:1, 4, 13, 15, 27; 48:3, 7; 49:30; 50:5, 13. Also be consistent with how you spelled the name of the man named Canaan in 9:18, 22, 25-27; 10:6, 15, and compare that to how you translated “the Canaanites” in 10:18-19; 12:6; 13:7; 15:21; 24:3, 37; 28:1, 6, 8; 34:30; 36:2; 38:2; 46:10; 50:11.

and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah

“and buried him/it in the cave {that is} in the field in the Machpelah {area},” Consider again how you translated “cave” and “the cave of the field of Machpelah” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 19:30; 23:9 (and note), 11, 17, 19-20; 25:9; 49:29-30, 32; 50:13.

which Abraham had bought with the field as property for a burial place from Ephron the Hittite

“{It was} the field {and cave} that Abraham had bought from Ephron the Hittite as a property/place to bury his dead {relatives}”. Consider again how you translated “property for a burial place” in Gen 23:4, 9, 20, and how you translated “Hittite” or “Ephron the Hittite” in Gen 10:15; 15:20; 23:3, 5, 7, 10, 16, 18; 25:9-10; 26:34; 27:46; 36:2; 49:29-30; 50:13. Be consistent with how you spelled “Ephron” in those verses and in Gen 23:8, 13-14, 16-17.

in front of Mamre

“near {the city of} Mamre.” For some languages it is clearer or more natural to put this phrase earlier in this sentence (after “Machpelah”) and say, “... the field of Machpelah near {the city of} Mamre. {It was} the field {and cave} that Abraham ...” Do what is best in your language. Also, consider again how you translated “in front of Mamre” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 23:17, 19; 25:9; 49:30; 50:13. Be consistent with how you spelled “Mamre” in those verses and in Gen 13:18; 14:13, 24; 18:1. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 50:14

after he buried his father

“After Joseph buried his father{s body},”

Then & Joseph returned to Egypt

“Joseph/he returned to {the country of} Egypt,”

he and his brothers

“along with his brothers”

and all

“and everyone {else}”

who had gone up with him

“who had gone {to Canaan} with him” or “who had accompanied him”

to bury his father

“to bury/entomb his father{s body}.” or “to/for his father’s burial/funeral.” Consider again how you translated “bury” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 15:15; 23:4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 19; 25:9-10; 35:8, 19, 29; 47:29-30; 48:7; 49:29, 31; 50:5-7, 13-14. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

Genesis 50:15

And the brothers of Joseph saw that their father was dead, and they said

“Joseph’s brothers thought about the fact that their father was dead, and they {were worried and} said {to each other},” or “Now that their father was no longer alive, Joseph’s brothers {were worried and} said {to each other},”

What if Joseph hates us

“What if Joseph is holding a grudge against us?” or “If Joseph is angry at us,”

Then he will surely repay us

“Then certainly he will pay us back” or “then he will certainly take revenge on us {and punish us severely}”. Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language.

for} all the evil that we did to him

“for all the ways that we harmed him!” or “for the completely evil/terrible way that we treated him!” or “because we treated him so badly.” It may be clearer or more natural to put this clause before the previous clause and say, “If Joseph is angry at us for the terrible way that we treated him, he might punish us severely for what we did.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 50:16

Then they ordered {a messenger to go} to Joseph, saying

“So they sent {a messenger} to Joseph to tell {him},” or “So they sent {a message} to Joseph that/which said,”

Your father commanded before his death, saying

“Your/Our father commanded {us} before he died,” or “Before your/our father died, he commanded/told {us}”. Consider again how you translated “commanded” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 2:16; 3:11, 17; 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16; 12:20; 18:19; 21:4; 26:5, 11; 27:8; 28:1,6; 32:4, 17, 19; 42:25, 44:1; 45:19; 47:11; 49:29, 33; 50:2, 12, 16. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. Also, the pronoun “us” is exclusive here since it does not include Joseph. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1621)**)

Genesis 50:17

This you must say to Joseph: “I beg {you

“Please say this to Joseph {for me}: ‘I beg/urge you to’ or ‘to tell you that he asks/begs you to’ or ‘to ask/urge you on his behalf to’.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. See what you did for doubly-embedded quotes in Gen 32:4. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

please forgive the crime of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you

“please forgive your brothers for all the evil/harm they did {to you} and for their offenses {against you}, even though what they did was very evil/wrong.” or “please forgive {us}, your brothers, for sinning {against you} and treating you so badly.” Consider again how you translated “sin” in Gen 4:7; 18:20; 31:36; 50:17, and consider again how you translated the synonym “crime” in Gen 31:36; 50:17. It may be necessary to translate these terms in different ways, depending on the context. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1609)**)

So now, please forgive the crime of the servants of your father’s God

“So we beg you to forgive {us}, the servants of your/our father’s God, for our crimes {against you}.” or “So then, as servants of God whom our father worshiped/served, we beg you to forgive us for sinning {against you}.” Consider again how you translated “the God of” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 9:26; 24:12, 27, 42, 48; 26:24; 28:13; 31:5, 29, 42, 53; 32:9; 43:23; 46:1, 3; 49:24-25; 50:17.

And Joseph cried when they spoke to him

“Joseph cried when he heard that/their message.” or “When Joseph received/heard his brothers’ message to him, he {was very sad and} cried.”

Genesis 50:18

Then his brothers also came

“After that, his/Joseph’s brothers themselves came {to him},”

and fell before him and said

“and threw/bowed themselves {on the ground} in front of him and said,” or “prostrated themselves before him {to show respect}, and said {to him},” See how you translated “fell ... before him” in Gen 44:14. Compare that to how you translated “bowed down to/before ...” (See: 49:8). (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1712)**)

Behold us

“Here we are,” See how you translated a similar phrase (“Behold me”) in 22:1, 7. It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

we belong} to you as slaves

“we {will be} your slaves/servants!” or “we {will serve you} as slaves/servants!” If you use an exclamation point here in your translation, make sure it does mean that Joseph’s brothers were angry. Rather, they were worried and desperate.

Genesis 50:19

But Joseph said to them

“But Joseph replied to them,”

Do not be afraid

“You do not need to be afraid.” or “You have nothing to fear.”

For {am} I in place of God

“I would never take God’s place {and judge/punish you}!” or “After all, I am not God! {So I have no right to judge/punish you.}” Joseph uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize that he will not take God’s place and punish his brothers. Some languages must use a statement or exclamation here instead. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1705)**)

Genesis 50:20

And {as for} you, you intended evil against me

"{It is true that} you planned to harm me, {but}" or "Although you intentionally treated me {very} badly," In the Hebrew text, the pronoun "you" is emphatic in form and position to emphasize Joseph's brothers and contrast them with God. Consider what is the best way to translate that contrast in your language. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1590)**)

but} God intended it for good

"God is using that {evil} to benefit {us all}" or "God planned that what you did would turn out to be good/beneficial {for me and everyone else}"

in order to do as {he is doing} this day

"to accomplish what he is doing these days," or "Right now he is doing what he planned," Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to save many people

"to save {the lives of} many people." or "to keep many people alive." or "keeping many people from dying." Consider again how you translated "save (lives)" or "keep alive" in the book of Genesis. See Gen 7:3; 12:12; 19:19; 45:7; 47:25; 50:20.

Genesis 50:21

So now

“So then,” or “So again {I tell you},”

do not be afraid

“you do not need to be afraid.” or “you have nothing to fear.” Consider again how you translated “do not be afraid” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; 35:17; 43:23; 46:3; 50:19, 21.

I will support you and your little ones

“I {myself} will take care of you and your children.” or “I {myself} will provide {everything} that you and your children need.” In the Hebrew text here, “I” is an emphatic pronoun. Consider what is the best way to translate that in your language. Also, consider again how you translated “little ones” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 34:29; 43:8; 45:19; 46:5; 47:12, 24; 50:8, 21. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

So he comforted them

“In that way, Joseph consoled/assured them {that he had forgiven them},” Consider again how you translated “comforted” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 24:67; 27:42; 37:35; 38:12; 50:21. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

and he spoke to their heart{s

“and he {also} said {other} things to comfort/encourage them.” The phrase “spoke to their hearts” is an idiom that means Joseph said things to comfort and encourage his brothers. Consider whether or not your language has an idiom with the same meaning that would work well here. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

Genesis 50:22

Then Joseph stayed

“Joseph remained/lived” or “Joseph continued to stay/live”

in Egypt

“in {the land/country of} Egypt,”

he and the house of his father

“along with {the rest of} his father {Jacob}'s household/family,”

And Joseph lived 110 years

“until he was 110 years old.” or “Joseph/He lived to be 110 years old.” Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 50:23

And Joseph saw

“So he {was able/alive to} see/know” or “He lived {long enough} to see/know” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1696)**)

Ephraim’s sons {to} the third {generation}

“Ephraim’s descendants, {down to} the third {generation}.” or “{his son} Ephraim’s children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.”

Also, the sons of Machir

“The children of {his grandson} Machir;”

the son of Manasseh

“{who was} Manasseh’s son,”

were born on the knees of Joseph

“also grew up during his lifetime.” For some languages it is better to change the order of the phrases in this sentence and say, “He also lived to see {his son} Manasseh’s son Machir grow up, {as well as Machir’s} children.” or “He also lived to see the children of {his grandson} Machir grow up, who was Manasseh’s son.” Do what is best in your language. Also, the phrase “born on Joseph’s knees” is an idiom that means Joseph recognized Makir’s children as his descendants and that they grew up during his lifetime and spent time with him. (See: **Idiom (p. 1646)**)

Genesis 50:24

Then Joseph said to his brothers

“Then {one day} Joseph said to his brothers,”

I am dying

“I am about to die,” Consider again how you translated “I am dying” in Gen 35:18; 48:21; 50:5, 24.

and God will surely visit you

“but God will certainly/definitely help you”. The word “visit” is used here as an idiom that refers to God helping his people in a powerful way. See how you translated this idiom in Gen 21:1, where it has a slightly different meaning. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and take you up from this land

“and take/lead you {and your descendants} from this land/country”

to the land that he swore

“to the land that he swore/vowed/promised {with an oath/vow}”

to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob

“{to give} to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Genesis 50:25

Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear {an oath}, saying

“Then Joseph told {his brothers and} {the rest of} the descendants of Israel to swear/promise {with an oath} {that they would do something for him}. He said,” Consider again how you translated “swear” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 21:23 (and note), 24, 31; 22:16; 24:3, 7, 9, 37; 25:33; 26:3, 31; 31:53; 47:31; 50:5-6, 24-25.

Surely God will visit you

“{Yes,} God will certainly/definitely visit/help you, and {when he does,}” or “When God visits/helps you {that way},” or “When God does that,” See how you translated “visit you” in verse 24. (See: **Idiom (p.1646)**)

and you must take my bones up from this {place

“you must take my bones/body back {to Canaan} {with you} {and bury them/it there}.” For some languages it may be clearer or more natural to change the order of clauses in this verse and say, “When God does that, you must take my body back {to Canaan} {with you} {and bury it there}.” Then Joseph made/had {his brothers and} {the rest of} the descendants of Israel swear/promise {with an oath}{that they would do that}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1652)**)

Genesis 50:26

וַיָּמָת בֶּן־מֵאָה הָיָה שָׂרְשָׁן יָמָיו

“So Joseph died at the age of 110 years.” or “So Joseph died when he was 110 years old.”

Then they embalmed him

“Then/And his physicians/doctors/morticians prepared/preserved his body for burial,” See how you translated “embalmed” in verses 2-3, and how you translated “physicians/doctors” in verse 2.

and he was put

“and they put/placed him/it” or “and put/placed his body”. Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1564)**)

in a coffin

“in a burial chest/box”

in Egypt

“in {the land/country of} Egypt.”



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Version 80

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: [Genesis 1:1](#); [Genesis 4:13](#); [Genesis 22:3](#); [Genesis 30:18](#); [Genesis 41:52](#); [Genesis 45:5](#)

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.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Abstract Nouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: Genesis 1:9; Genesis 2:1; Genesis 2:4; Genesis 2:20; Genesis 2:23; Genesis 4:11; Genesis 4:24; Genesis 7:19; Genesis 7:20; Genesis 8:2; Genesis 9:11; Genesis 9:14; Genesis 9:19; Genesis 12:3; Genesis 12:15; Genesis 14:14; Genesis 16:4; Genesis 16:5; Genesis 17:12; Genesis 17:24; Genesis 17:25; Genesis 17:26; Genesis 17:27; Genesis 18:4; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 18:29; Genesis 18:32; Genesis 19:17; Genesis 20:16; Genesis 22:13; Genesis 22:18; Genesis 22:20; Genesis 24:33; Genesis 24:67; Genesis 26:4; Genesis 27:33; Genesis 27:42; Genesis 28:14; Genesis 29:33; Genesis 31:22; Genesis 31:39; Genesis 32:12; Genesis 33:11; Genesis 35:19; Genesis 38:13; Genesis 40:15; Genesis 43:12; Genesis 44:3; Genesis 44:12; Genesis 44:16; Genesis 44:17; Genesis 47:15; Genesis 49:26; Genesis 49:29; Genesis 49:32; Genesis 50:26

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: [Genesis 1:7](#); [Genesis 1:12](#); [Genesis 1:18](#); [Genesis 1:21](#); [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 1:25](#); [Genesis 2:23](#); [Genesis 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:11](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 4:17](#); [Genesis 4:22](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 5:6](#); [Genesis 5:9](#); [Genesis 5:12](#); [Genesis 5:15](#); [Genesis 5:18](#); [Genesis 5:21](#); [Genesis 5:25](#); [Genesis 5:29](#); [Genesis 5:32](#); [Genesis 6:3](#); [Genesis 6:14](#); [Genesis 7:1](#); [Genesis 7:4](#); [Genesis 7:10](#); [Genesis 8:1](#); [Genesis 8:5](#); [Genesis 8:12](#); [Genesis 8:20](#); [Genesis 9:20](#); [Genesis 9:21](#); [Genesis 9:28](#); [Genesis 10:19](#); [Genesis 10:30](#); [Genesis 11:3](#); [Genesis 11:5](#); [Genesis 11:31](#); [Genesis 12:2](#); [Genesis 12:5](#); [Genesis 12:14](#); [Genesis 13:3](#); [Genesis 13:12](#); [Genesis 14:2](#); [Genesis 14:3](#); [Genesis 14:5](#); [Genesis 14:9](#); [Genesis 14:10](#); [Genesis 14:14](#); [Genesis 15:5](#); [Genesis 15:10](#); [Genesis 15:16](#); [Genesis 16:5](#); [Genesis 16:10](#); [Genesis 16:11](#); [Genesis 18:8](#); [Genesis 18:26](#); [Genesis 18:28](#); [Genesis 19:9](#); [Genesis 19:14](#); [Genesis 21:17](#); [Genesis 21:22](#); [Genesis 21:24](#); [Genesis 22:2](#); [Genesis 22:3](#); [Genesis 22:6](#); [Genesis 22:9](#); [Genesis 22:10](#); [Genesis 22:13](#); [Genesis 22:19](#); [Genesis 23:3](#); [Genesis 23:4](#); [Genesis 24:9](#); [Genesis 24:10](#); [Genesis 24:11](#); [Genesis 24:16](#); [Genesis 24:18](#); [Genesis 24:22](#); [Genesis 24:31](#); [Genesis 24:32](#); [Genesis 24:44](#); [Genesis 24:49](#); [Genesis 24:59](#); [Genesis 24:67](#); [Genesis 25:3](#); [Genesis](#)

25:6; Genesis 25:8; Genesis 25:10; Genesis 25:17; Genesis 25:21; Genesis 25:31; Genesis 25:33; Genesis 26:1;
Genesis 26:2; Genesis 26:6; Genesis 26:17; Genesis 26:19; Genesis 26:22; Genesis 26:35; Genesis 27:4; Genesis
27:14; Genesis 28:1; Genesis 28:10; Genesis 29:2; Genesis 29:13; Genesis 29:27; Genesis 29:35; Genesis 30:40;
Genesis 30:42; Genesis 31:5; Genesis 31:8; Genesis 31:12; Genesis 31:19; Genesis 31:21; Genesis 31:25; Genesis
31:31; Genesis 31:37; Genesis 31:38; Genesis 31:50; Genesis 31:55; Genesis 32:1; Genesis 32:23; Genesis 32:32;
Genesis 34:6; Genesis 35:1; Genesis 35:10; Genesis 35:18; Genesis 36:1; Genesis 36:2; Genesis 36:12; Genesis 36:13;
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38:24; Genesis 38:29; Genesis 39:14; Genesis 39:16; Genesis 40:1; Genesis 40:3; Genesis 40:8; Genesis 40:11;
Genesis 40:15; Genesis 41:1; Genesis 41:6; Genesis 41:10; Genesis 41:14; Genesis 41:17; Genesis 41:48; Genesis
41:56; Genesis 42:5; Genesis 42:23; Genesis 42:24; Genesis 42:25; Genesis 43:6; Genesis 43:8; Genesis 43:11;
Genesis 43:34; Genesis 45:4; Genesis 45:10; Genesis 45:23; Genesis 46:28; Genesis 46:29; Genesis 46:34; Genesis
47:1; Genesis 47:11; Genesis 47:19; Genesis 47:20; Genesis 47:27; Genesis 48:2; Genesis 48:7; Genesis 48:15;
Genesis 49:1; Genesis 49:11; Genesis 49:18

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: [Genesis 2:8](#); [Genesis 2:15](#); [Genesis 2:19](#); [Genesis 6:1](#); [Genesis 11:30](#); [Genesis 14:4](#); [Genesis 16:1](#); [Genesis 31:19](#); [Genesis 31:25](#); [Genesis 31:32](#); [Genesis 31:34](#); [Genesis 39:1](#); [Genesis 39:6](#); [Genesis 42:6](#); [Genesis 48:10](#)

Biblical Distance

Description

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man’s hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man’s hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man’s forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **“long” cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as “furlong,” which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal\]\]](#)
Fractions (UTA PDF)

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.

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: [Genesis 6:15](#); [Genesis 6:16](#); [Genesis 7:20](#); [Genesis 21:16](#)

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a **simple metaphor**, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a **complex metaphor** is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

This page answers the question: *What is an extended metaphor?*

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

[Metaphor \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Simile \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Explanation of an Extended Metaphor

When using a metaphor, a writer/speaker uses a physical Image in order to express an abstract Idea about some immediate Topic, with at least one point of comparison between the Topic and the Image. In an extended metaphor, the writer/speaker explicitly states the Topic, and then describes multiple images and communicates multiple ideas.

In Isaiah 5:1b-7, the prophet Isaiah uses a vineyard (the **Image**) to express God's disappointment (the **Idea**) with the nation of Israel (the **Topic**) for their unfaithfulness to God and his covenant with them as his people. Farmers care for their gardens, and a farmer would feel disappointed if his vineyard produced bad fruit. If a vineyard produced only bad fruit for a long enough time, the farmer would eventually stop caring for it. We call this an extended metaphor because the prophet describes in detail multiple images relating to a vineyard as well as multiple aspects of God's disappointment.

1b My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. 2 He **spaded it, removed the stones,** and **planted it** with an excellent kind of vine. He **built a tower** in the middle of it, and also **built a winepress. He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes.** 3 So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah; judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it? **When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes?** 5 Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge; I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. Instead, briars and thorns will spring up. I will also command the clouds not to rain on it. 7 For **the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel,** and the man of Judah his pleasant planting; **he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help.** (Isa 5:1b-7 ULT)

Other Examples From the Bible

In Psalm 23, the psalmist uses the physical **Image** of a shepherd to describe the way that God (the **Topic**) shows great concern and care (the **Idea**) for his people. The psalmist describes multiple aspects of what shepherds do for sheep (leads them to pasture and to water, protects them, etc.). The psalmist also describes multiple aspects of how God takes care of him (gives him life, righteousness, comfort, etc.). Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. 2 He **makes me** to lie down in green pastures; he **leads me** beside tranquil water. 3 He **brings back** my life; he **guides me** along right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow, I will not fear harm since you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 ULT)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Translation Principles

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

Can be translated as:

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

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

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

May be translated as:

My well beloved had a **grapevine garden** on a very fertile hill. He **dug up the ground** and removed the stones, and planted it with **the best grapevines**. He built a **watchtower** in the middle of it, and also built **a tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes**. He

waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced **wild grapes that were not good for making wine.**

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

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULT)

“Yahweh **cares for me** like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing.”

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

Can be translated as:

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

or as:

So as a farmer stops caring for a grapevine garden that produces bad fruit, Yahweh will stop protecting Israel and Judah, **because they do not do what is right.** He waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: [Genesis 49:9](#); [Genesis 49:14](#); [Genesis 49:17](#); [Genesis 49:22](#); [Genesis 49:27](#)

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: [Genesis 20:16](#); [Genesis 23:15](#); [Genesis 37:28](#); [Genesis 43:21](#)

Biblical Weight

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of weight in the Bible?*

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

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 gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”

When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

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 38:29 below.

█ The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

(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](#).)

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talentes and 2,400 sekeles**."

(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.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

█ "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms) and 2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

█ "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. 1"

The footnote would look like:

█ [1] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Fractions \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 24:22](#)

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.

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 2:5](#); [Genesis 3:1](#); [Genesis 4:2](#); [Genesis 5:6](#); [Genesis 5:9](#); [Genesis 6:1](#); [Genesis 11:1](#); [Genesis 12:4](#); [Genesis 13:2](#); [Genesis 13:5](#); [Genesis 14:10](#); [Genesis 14:13](#); [Genesis 17:24](#); [Genesis 18:10](#); [Genesis 18:11](#); [Genesis 20:4](#); [Genesis 24:29](#); [Genesis 29:16](#); [Genesis 43:1](#); [Genesis 47:27](#)

Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate contrary-to-fact conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, “if ... then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Contrary-to-Fact Conditions

Description

A Contrary-to-Fact Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical, but the speaker is already certain that it is NOT true.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Usually there are no special words that indicate a Contrary-to-Fact Condition. The writer assumes that the reader knows that it is NOT a true condition. For this reason it often requires knowledge of implied information to know that it is not true. If this kind of condition is difficult for translators to communicate, they may want to consider using the same strategies that they used for [Rhetorical Questions](#) or [Implied Information](#).

Examples From OBS and the Bible

But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you keep changing your mind? If Yahweh is God, follow him. But **if Baal is God**, then follow him.” Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

Baal is not God. Elijah is not suggesting that Baal might be God, and he does not want the people to follow Baal. But Elijah used a conditional statement to show them that what they were doing was wrong. In the example above, we see two conditions that have the same construction. The first one, “If Yahweh is God,” is a Factual Condition because Elijah is certain that it is true. The second one, “if Baal is God,” is a Contrary-to-Fact Condition because Elijah is certain that it is not true. You will need to consider if people would say both of these in the same way in your language or if they would say them in different ways.

But his wife replied to him, “**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this.” (Judges 13:23 ULT)

Manoah’s wife thinks that the second part of her conditional statement is not true, therefore the first part is also not true. God received their burnt offering; therefore, He does not want to kill them.

“**If only we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full.” (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)

Of course the people speaking here did not die in Egypt, and so this is a Contrary-to-Fact condition that is used to express a wish.

“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.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

The English reader knows that these last two examples are Contrary-to-Fact conditions because of the past-tense verbs used in the first part (they are not things that might happen). The last example also has a second part that uses “would have.” These words also signal something that did not happen.

Translation Strategies

If Contrary-to-Fact conditions are clear in your language, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.
- (2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.
- (3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.
- (4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.
- (5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.

But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

If you believe that Baal is God, then worship him!

- (2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.

If Baal is not God, then you should not worship him!

But his wife replied to him, “**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this.” (Judges 13:23 ULT)

“**Yahweh does not want to kill us**, or he would not have received the burnt offering and the offering we gave him.”

- (3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.

“**If only we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full.” (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)

“**I wish we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt...”

- (4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.

“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.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! The mighty deeds which were done in you **were not done** in Tyre and Sidon. But **if they had been**

done there, those people would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

(5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact Conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

Is Baal the one who is truly God? Should you worship him?

“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.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! You think that you are better than Tyre and Sidon, but you are not! **They would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes at seeing the mighty deeds that you have seen! **You should be like them!**”

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 13:16](#); [Genesis 15:5](#)

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.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 4:2](#); [Genesis 6:18](#); [Genesis 19:18](#); [Genesis 20:7](#); [Genesis 21:13](#); [Genesis 25:27](#); [Genesis 28:2](#); [Genesis 30:35](#); [Genesis 30:42](#); [Genesis 33:4](#); [Genesis 33:17](#); [Genesis 50:20](#)

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate exception clauses?*

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

English indicates exceptional relationships by first describing a group (Part 1) and then stating what is not in that group by using words like “except,” “but not,” “other than,” “besides,” “unless,” “however ... not,” and “only” (Part 2). Some languages do not indicate in this way that one or more items or people are excluded from a group. Instead, they have other ways of doing this. In some languages this type of construction does not make sense because the exception in Part 2 seems to contradict the statement in Part 1. Translators need to understand who (or what) is in the group and who (or what) is excluded in order to be able to accurately communicate this in their language.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4b ULT)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not** a man escaped **except for** 400 young men, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If the way that Exceptional Clauses are marked in the source language is also clear in your language, then translate the Exceptional Clauses in the same way.

(1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

(1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

- Part 1: (**Not** a man escaped)
- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me." (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will let you go **only if** you bless me."

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 2:17](#); [Genesis 9:4](#); [Genesis 14:24](#); [Genesis 32:26](#); [Genesis 39:6](#); [Genesis 42:15](#); [Genesis 43:3](#); [Genesis 43:5](#)

Connect — Goal (Purpose) 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 goal (purpose) relationship?*

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are “in order to,” “in order that” or “so that.” It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison.** (Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman’s false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian.** (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with “in order to.”

Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes.** Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God’s ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean,** and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened,** which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

“... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.’ So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with “and.” Then the word “so” marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
- (2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!” (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!”

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.”

- (2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

“... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

“... keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**.” or: “... keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**.”

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.’ So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance.**

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 1:28](#); [Genesis 9:1](#); [Genesis 18:21](#)

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.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 6:14](#); [Genesis 8:4](#); [Genesis 12:12](#); [Genesis 12:19](#); [Genesis 12:20](#); [Genesis 16:4](#); [Genesis 19:32](#); [Genesis 24:35](#); [Genesis 26:14](#); [Genesis 27:3](#); [Genesis 30:42](#); [Genesis 39:23](#)

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: [Genesis 1:5](#); [Genesis 7:17](#)

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.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 8:8](#); [Genesis 19:1](#); [Genesis 19:23](#)

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

Now I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- [Sequential Clause](#) — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- [Simultaneous Clause](#) — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- [Background Clause](#) — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- [Exceptional Relationship](#) — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- [Hypothetical Condition](#) — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- [Factual Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- [Contrary-to-Fact Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- [Goal Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- [Reason and Result Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- [Contrast Relationship](#) — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words "instead" or "then" here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

Because of that, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
And whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:4](#); [Genesis 1:5](#); [Genesis 1:8](#); [Genesis 1:12](#); [Genesis 1:27](#); [Genesis 2:3](#); [Genesis 2:6](#); [Genesis 2:10](#); [Genesis 3:19](#); [Genesis 4:18](#); [Genesis 5:32](#); [Genesis 6:16](#); [Genesis 7:18](#); [Genesis 8:10](#); [Genesis 12:4](#); [Genesis 14:8](#); [Genesis 16:9](#); [Genesis 16:16](#); [Genesis 17:6](#); [Genesis 25:4](#); [Genesis 25:15](#); [Genesis 26:3](#); [Genesis 31:30](#); [Genesis 41:31](#)

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See [Translate Unknowns](#).)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

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

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָהּ

"Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.

"Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."

"Sefania"

"Sefanaia"

"Sefanaya"

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 6:14](#)

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you."
(Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Quotations and Quote Margins \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about: " [Quotes within Quotes \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 12:12](#); [Genesis 12:13](#); [Genesis 16:11](#); [Genesis 18:15](#); [Genesis 18:27](#); [Genesis 22:20](#); [Genesis 24:30](#); [Genesis 26:7](#); [Genesis 26:20](#); [Genesis 27:7](#); [Genesis 28:6](#); [Genesis 29:5](#); [Genesis 29:12](#); [Genesis 31:8](#); [Genesis 32:16](#); [Genesis 32:20](#); [Genesis 32:27](#); [Genesis 32:29](#); [Genesis 37:15](#); [Genesis 37:17](#); [Genesis 38:22](#); [Genesis 39:19](#); [Genesis 42:4](#); [Genesis 45:16](#); [Genesis 45:24](#); [Genesis 48:1](#); [Genesis 48:2](#); [Genesis 50:5](#); [Genesis 50:6](#); [Genesis 50:17](#)

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 “use**less**.” 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 **un**punished. (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:

χωρίς 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.

χωρίς ἑμοῦ **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 ἐν ἡ 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: [Genesis 11:6](#)

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: [Genesis 1:26](#); [Genesis 5:3](#); [Genesis 5:29](#); [Genesis 9:2](#); [Genesis 11:1](#); [Genesis 24:1](#)

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ 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)

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)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

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.

English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:16](#); [Genesis 18:28](#); [Genesis 18:29](#); [Genesis 18:30](#); [Genesis 18:31](#); [Genesis 18:32](#)

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.

... 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.

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)

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: [Genesis 4:1](#); [Genesis 4:17](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 6:4](#); [Genesis 15:15](#); [Genesis 16:2](#); [Genesis 16:4](#); [Genesis 16:5](#); [Genesis 18:11](#); [Genesis 19:5](#); [Genesis 19:8](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 19:32](#); [Genesis 19:33](#); [Genesis 19:34](#); [Genesis 19:35](#); [Genesis 19:36](#); [Genesis 20:4](#); [Genesis 21:8](#); [Genesis 25:8](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 29:23](#); [Genesis 29:30](#); [Genesis 30:3](#); [Genesis 30:4](#); [Genesis 30:15](#); [Genesis 30:16](#); [Genesis 31:35](#); [Genesis 34:2](#); [Genesis 34:14](#); [Genesis 35:11](#); [Genesis 35:22](#); [Genesis 35:29](#); [Genesis 38:2](#); [Genesis 38:9](#); [Genesis 38:16](#); [Genesis 38:18](#); [Genesis 38:26](#); [Genesis 39:7](#); [Genesis 39:12](#); [Genesis 42:13](#); [Genesis 42:32](#); [Genesis 46:4](#); [Genesis 46:26](#); [Genesis 47:30](#); [Genesis 49:3](#); [Genesis 49:4](#); [Genesis 49:33](#)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

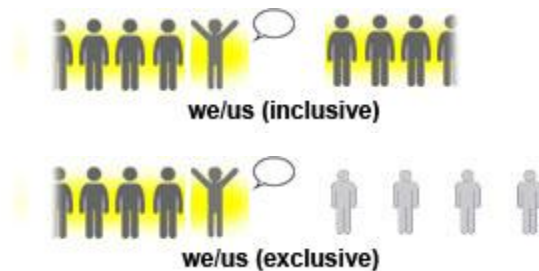
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for "us," "our," "ours," and "ourselves." Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive "we" and the exclusive "we" refer to.



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for "we." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

We have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about: "

[When Masculine Words Include Women \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:2](#); [Genesis 3:22](#); [Genesis 11:3](#); [Genesis 19:13](#); [Genesis 24:23](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 26:28](#); [Genesis 31:32](#); [Genesis 31:44](#); [Genesis 34:16](#); [Genesis 34:21](#); [Genesis 37:8](#); [Genesis 38:23](#); [Genesis 39:14](#); [Genesis 39:17](#); [Genesis 41:11](#); [Genesis 43:2](#); [Genesis 43:4](#); [Genesis 43:7](#); [Genesis 44:25](#); [Genesis 44:27](#); [Genesis 50:16](#)

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: [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 9:6](#); [Genesis 9:16](#); [Genesis 18:3](#); [Genesis 18:19](#); [Genesis 18:27](#); [Genesis 18:30](#); [Genesis 18:31](#); [Genesis 19:2](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 27:31](#); [Genesis 28:20](#); [Genesis 28:21](#); [Genesis 28:22](#); [Genesis 29:8](#); [Genesis 41:10](#); [Genesis 41:13](#); [Genesis 41:16](#); [Genesis 41:25](#); [Genesis 41:28](#); [Genesis 41:32](#); [Genesis 41:33](#); [Genesis 41:34](#); [Genesis 41:35](#); [Genesis 42:10](#); [Genesis 42:11](#); [Genesis 44:16](#); [Genesis 44:19](#); [Genesis 46:34](#); [Genesis 47:3](#); [Genesis 47:4](#); [Genesis 47:18](#); [Genesis 49:2](#); [Genesis 49:4](#); [Genesis 49:5](#); [Genesis 49:8](#); [Genesis 49:21](#); [Genesis 49:24](#); [Genesis 49:26](#); [Genesis 49:27](#)

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: [Genesis 2:24](#); [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 19:1](#); [Genesis 22:5](#); [Genesis 31:6](#); [Genesis 33:4](#); [Genesis 34:26](#); [Genesis 48:9](#)

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 and he used the singular form. So languages that have singular and plural forms of “you” need the singular form here, as well as for the verbs “sell,” “distribute,” “come,” and “follow.”

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 angel used singular forms here and the context makes it clear that he 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,” “put on,” and “follow” need the form that indicates a singular subject.

All the ones {who are} with me greet **you**. **Greet** the ones loving us in faith. Grace {be} with all of **you**. (Titus 3:15 ULT)

Paul wrote this letter to one person, Titus, so most of the time the word “you” in this letter is singular and refers only to Titus. In this verse, the first “you” is singular, so the greeting is for Titus, as well as the instruction to greet the others there. The second “you,” however, is plural, so the blessing is for Titus and for all of the believers there in Crete.

“Having gone, **search** carefully for the young child, and after **you** have found him, **report** to me so that I also, having come, might worship him.” (Matthew 2:8 ULT)

Since Herod is speaking to all of the learned men, the word “you” and the commands “search” and “report” are plural.

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: [Genesis 3:9](#); [Genesis 3:11](#); [Genesis 6:21](#); [Genesis 7:2](#); [Genesis 17:7](#); [Genesis 17:10](#); [Genesis 17:11](#); [Genesis 18:4](#); [Genesis 31:29](#); [Genesis 34:8](#); [Genesis 42:16](#); [Genesis 44:27](#); [Genesis 48:21](#)

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 2:19](#); [Genesis 2:22](#); [Genesis 7:16](#); [Genesis 8:16](#); [Genesis 8:17](#); [Genesis 8:18](#); [Genesis 8:19](#); [Genesis 12:5](#); [Genesis 14:7](#); [Genesis 14:17](#); [Genesis 15:7](#); [Genesis 19:17](#); [Genesis 24:32](#); [Genesis 41:14](#); [Genesis 42:5](#); [Genesis 47:15](#); [Genesis 47:18](#)

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.
- (4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the

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)

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**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Doublet ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Genesis 4:12](#); [Genesis 4:14](#)

Honorifics

Description

This is the placeholder for an article about discussion of honorifics in biblical literature. This article is still being developed.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate honorifics into my language?*

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

Text

Examples From the Bible

Text

Translation Strategies

Text

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Text

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 12:17](#); [Genesis 18:3](#); [Genesis 20:3](#); [Genesis 20:14](#); [Genesis 20:18](#); [Genesis 23:6](#); [Genesis 23:15](#); [Genesis 24:18](#); [Genesis 32:24](#); [Genesis 32:29](#); [Genesis 40:13](#); [Genesis 40:14](#); [Genesis 40:17](#)

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: Genesis 2:11; Genesis 2:14; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 2:19; Genesis 3:20; Genesis 4:16; Genesis 4:22; Genesis 4:25; Genesis 5:5; Genesis 5:8; Genesis 5:11; Genesis 5:14; Genesis 5:17; Genesis 5:20; Genesis 5:27; Genesis 5:29; Genesis 5:31; Genesis 6:4; Genesis 10:1; Genesis 10:4; Genesis 10:13; Genesis 11:13; Genesis 11:15; Genesis 11:16; Genesis 11:17; Genesis 11:19; Genesis 11:21; Genesis 11:23; Genesis 12:9; Genesis 12:15; Genesis 13:3; Genesis 13:7; Genesis 14:1; Genesis 14:5; Genesis 14:9; Genesis 16:11; Genesis 16:13; Genesis 16:14; Genesis 17:1; Genesis 19:37; Genesis 19:38; Genesis 20:1; Genesis 21:3; Genesis 22:2; Genesis 22:14; Genesis 23:2; Genesis 23:9; Genesis 23:19; Genesis 24:62; Genesis 25:2; Genesis 25:3; Genesis 25:6; Genesis 25:11; Genesis 25:13; Genesis 25:18; Genesis 25:25; Genesis 25:26; Genesis 25:30; Genesis 26:18; Genesis 26:20; Genesis 26:21; Genesis 26:33; Genesis 28:2; Genesis 29:32; Genesis 29:33; Genesis 29:34; Genesis 29:35; Genesis 30:6; Genesis 30:8; Genesis 30:11; Genesis 30:13; Genesis 30:18; Genesis 30:20; Genesis 30:24; Genesis 31:47; Genesis 32:2; Genesis 32:28; Genesis 32:31; Genesis 33:17; Genesis 33:20; Genesis 35:7; Genesis 35:8; Genesis 35:18; Genesis 35:21; Genesis 35:27; Genesis 36:2; Genesis 36:39; Genesis 38:29; Genesis 40:2; Genesis 41:1; Genesis 41:45; Genesis 41:51; Genesis 41:52; Genesis 46:5; Genesis 46:13

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.

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Referenced in: [Genesis 4:14](#); [Genesis 19:4](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 25:32](#); [Genesis 27:46](#); [Genesis 29:31](#); [Genesis 30:1](#); [Genesis 31:26](#); [Genesis 31:43](#); [Genesis 33:13](#); [Genesis 41:44](#); [Genesis 47:13](#); [Genesis 47:15](#)

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

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

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“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.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

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Referenced in: [Genesis 24:5](#); [Genesis 24:39](#); [Genesis 27:12](#); [Genesis 31:27](#); [Genesis 31:31](#); [Genesis 31:42](#); [Genesis 32:8](#); [Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 43:9](#); [Genesis 43:10](#); [Genesis 44:29](#); [Genesis 44:31](#); [Genesis 44:32](#); [Genesis 44:34](#)

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**

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Referenced in: [Genesis 2:21](#); [Genesis 2:24](#); [Genesis 3:5](#); [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 3:8](#); [Genesis 3:19](#); [Genesis 4:5](#); [Genesis 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:14](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 4:19](#); [Genesis 4:20](#); [Genesis 4:26](#); [Genesis 5:22](#); [Genesis 6:3](#); [Genesis 6:5](#); [Genesis 6:6](#); [Genesis 6:7](#); [Genesis 6:8](#); [Genesis 6:9](#); [Genesis 6:11](#); [Genesis 6:17](#); [Genesis 7:4](#); [Genesis 7:21](#); [Genesis 7:23](#); [Genesis 8:1](#); [Genesis 8:21](#); [Genesis 9:1](#); [Genesis 9:2](#); [Genesis 9:6](#); [Genesis 9:7](#); [Genesis 9:15](#); [Genesis 9:16](#); [Genesis 11:3](#); [Genesis 11:4](#); [Genesis 11:8](#); [Genesis 12:2](#); [Genesis 12:8](#); [Genesis 13:4](#); [Genesis 14:5](#); [Genesis 14:15](#); [Genesis 14:17](#); [Genesis 14:20](#); [Genesis 15:2](#); [Genesis 15:4](#); [Genesis 15:12](#); [Genesis 16:4](#); [Genesis 16:6](#); [Genesis 16:9](#); [Genesis 17:1](#); [Genesis 17:14](#); [Genesis 17:17](#); [Genesis 17:18](#); [Genesis 17:20](#); [Genesis 18:2](#); [Genesis 18:5](#); [Genesis 18:10](#); [Genesis 18:12](#); [Genesis 18:19](#); [Genesis 18:25](#); [Genesis 18:27](#); [Genesis 19:8](#); [Genesis 19:11](#); [Genesis 19:14](#); [Genesis 19:21](#); [Genesis 20:5](#); [Genesis 20:6](#); [Genesis 20:8](#); [Genesis 20:10](#); [Genesis 20:15](#); [Genesis 20:16](#); [Genesis 21:1](#); [Genesis 21:5](#); [Genesis 21:11](#); [Genesis 21:12](#); [Genesis 21:15](#); [Genesis 21:19](#); [Genesis 21:20](#); [Genesis 21:21](#); [Genesis 21:22](#); [Genesis 21:27](#); [Genesis 21:32](#); [Genesis 21:33](#); [Genesis 22:1](#); [Genesis 22:3](#); [Genesis 22:4](#); [Genesis 22:7](#); [Genesis 22:8](#); [Genesis 22:11](#); [Genesis 22:12](#); [Genesis 22:13](#); [Genesis 22:14](#); [Genesis 22:17](#); [Genesis 23:10](#); [Genesis 23:16](#); [Genesis 23:18](#); [Genesis 24:3](#); [Genesis 24:16](#); [Genesis 24:40](#); [Genesis 24:45](#); [Genesis 24:49](#); [Genesis 24:50](#); [Genesis](#)

24:57; Genesis 24:63; Genesis 24:67; Genesis 25:8; Genesis 25:18; Genesis 25:26; Genesis 26:11; Genesis 26:19; Genesis 26:29; Genesis 27:38; Genesis 27:40; Genesis 27:44; Genesis 27:45; Genesis 29:4; Genesis 29:7; Genesis 29:14; Genesis 29:31; Genesis 29:34; Genesis 30:2; Genesis 30:3; Genesis 30:22; Genesis 30:27; Genesis 30:30; Genesis 30:35; Genesis 30:40; Genesis 31:2; Genesis 31:5; Genesis 31:12; Genesis 31:15; Genesis 31:20; Genesis 31:21; Genesis 31:26; Genesis 31:36; Genesis 31:39; Genesis 32:5; Genesis 32:16; Genesis 32:20; Genesis 32:30; Genesis 32:32; Genesis 33:1; Genesis 33:4; Genesis 33:5; Genesis 33:8; Genesis 34:1; Genesis 34:7; Genesis 34:11; Genesis 34:18; Genesis 34:21; Genesis 34:24; Genesis 34:30; Genesis 35:3; Genesis 36:35; Genesis 37:21; Genesis 37:22; Genesis 37:25; Genesis 37:26; Genesis 37:27; Genesis 38:2; Genesis 38:7; Genesis 38:16; Genesis 39:4; Genesis 39:6; Genesis 39:7; Genesis 39:8; Genesis 39:14; Genesis 39:19; Genesis 39:21; Genesis 39:22; Genesis 40:2; Genesis 40:13; Genesis 41:5; Genesis 41:36; Genesis 41:37; Genesis 41:40; Genesis 41:47; Genesis 41:52; Genesis 42:9; Genesis 42:12; Genesis 42:24; Genesis 42:28; Genesis 42:37; Genesis 43:1; Genesis 43:9; Genesis 43:18; Genesis 43:21; Genesis 44:17; Genesis 44:18; Genesis 44:29; Genesis 44:30; Genesis 45:2; Genesis 45:5; Genesis 45:14; Genesis 45:18; Genesis 45:26; Genesis 46:2; Genesis 46:29; Genesis 47:27; Genesis 47:29; Genesis 48:2; Genesis 48:15; Genesis 48:17; Genesis 49:1; Genesis 49:8; Genesis 49:15; Genesis 49:24; Genesis 50:1; Genesis 50:21; Genesis 50:23; Genesis 50:24; Genesis 50:25

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

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

[Sentence Types \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, “**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in.” (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command “Be clean” means to “be healed” so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

“I am willing. **Be clean.**” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like “light must be.”

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

Do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you; **love** her and she will keep you safe.
(Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

Be clean. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

“You are now clean.” “I now cleanse you.”

God said, “**Let there be light,**” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, “**There is now light**” and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful, and multiply. Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

God blessed them and said to them, “**My will for you is that you be fruitful, and multiply. Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

God said, “**Let there be light,**” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light. God said, “Light must be;” **as a result**, there was light.

- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

"If you teach a child the way he should go, **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction."

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Referenced in: [Genesis 24:3](#); [Genesis 24:4](#)

Information Structure

Description

Different languages arrange the parts of the sentence in different ways. In English, a sentence normally has the subject first, then the verb, then the object, then other modifiers, like this: Peter painted his house yesterday.

Many other languages normally put these things in a different order such as: Painted yesterday Peter his house.

Although all languages have a normal order for parts of a sentence, this order can change depending on what information the speaker or writer considers to be the most important.

Suppose that someone is answering the question, "What did Peter paint yesterday?" The person asking the question already knows all of the information in our sentence above except for the object, "his house." Therefore, that becomes the most important part of the information, and a person answering in English might say "His house is what Peter painted (yesterday)."

This puts the most important information first, which is normal for English. Many Other Languages would normally put the most important information last. In the flow of a text, the most important information is usually what the writer considers to be new information for the reader. In some languages the new information comes first, and in others it comes last.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Different languages arrange the parts of a sentence in different ways. If you (the translator) copy the order of the parts of a sentence from the source, it may not make sense in your language.
- Different languages put important or new information in different places in the sentence. If you keep the important or new information in the same place that it had in the source language, it may be confusing or give the wrong message in your language.

Examples From the Bible

They all ate until they were satisfied. (Mark 6:42 ULT)

The parts of this sentence were in a different order in the original Greek source language. They were like this: And they ate all and they were satisfied.

In English, this means that the people ate everything. But the next verse says that they took up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces of food. In order for this to not be so confusing, the translators of the ULT put the parts of the sentence in the right order for English.

And the day began to end, and the twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in an desolate place." (Luke 9:12 ULT)

In this verse, what the disciples say to Jesus puts the important information first, that he should send the crowd away. In languages that put the important information last, people would understand that the reason that they gave, being in an isolated place, is the most important part of their message to Jesus. They might then think that the disciples are afraid of the spirits in that place, and that sending the people to buy food is a way to protect them from the spirits. That is the wrong message.

This page answers the question: *How do languages arrange the parts of a sentence?*

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

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

In this verse, the most important part of the information is first, that “woe” is coming on the people for what they are doing. The reason that supports that warning comes last. This could be confusing for people who expect the important information to come last.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.
- (2) Study where your language puts the new or important information, and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.

This is the verse in the original Greek order:

And he went out from there and came to the hometown his, and they followed him the disciples his. (Mark 6:1)

The ULT has put this into the normal order for English:

Now Jesus went out from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. (Mark 6:1 ULT)

- (2) Study where your language puts the new or important information and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

And the day began to end, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in a desolate place.” (Luke 9:12 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

Now the day was about to come to an end, and the twelve came to him and said, “Because we are here in an desolate place, send the crowd away that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and food.”

Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

When all men speak well of you, which is just as people’s ancestors treated the false prophets, then woe to you!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:10](#); [Genesis 1:11](#); [Genesis 1:30](#); [Genesis 3:15](#); [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 4:1](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 5:2](#); [Genesis 5:4](#); [Genesis 5:24](#); [Genesis 6:4](#); [Genesis 6:17](#); [Genesis 6:20](#); [Genesis 7:1](#); [Genesis 7:2](#); [Genesis](#)

7:3; Genesis 7:4; Genesis 7:6; Genesis 7:11; Genesis 7:15; Genesis 7:17; Genesis 8:1; Genesis 8:4; Genesis 8:5; Genesis 8:9; Genesis 8:22; Genesis 9:3; Genesis 9:6; Genesis 10:5; Genesis 10:8; Genesis 10:32; Genesis 11:8; Genesis 11:10; Genesis 11:11; Genesis 11:30; Genesis 12:6; Genesis 12:7; Genesis 12:10; Genesis 12:17; Genesis 13:1; Genesis 13:6; Genesis 13:7; Genesis 13:8; Genesis 13:14; Genesis 13:16; Genesis 14:12; Genesis 14:17; Genesis 14:19; Genesis 14:23; Genesis 15:13; Genesis 15:14; Genesis 15:15; Genesis 15:18; Genesis 16:3; Genesis 17:10; Genesis 17:12; Genesis 17:23; Genesis 18:5; Genesis 18:12; Genesis 18:14; Genesis 19:16; Genesis 19:21; Genesis 19:24; Genesis 19:30; Genesis 19:34; Genesis 20:3; Genesis 20:6; Genesis 21:2; Genesis 21:4; Genesis 21:13; Genesis 21:16; Genesis 21:20; Genesis 21:34; Genesis 22:4; Genesis 22:8; Genesis 22:9; Genesis 23:1; Genesis 23:2; Genesis 23:6; Genesis 23:17; Genesis 24:12; Genesis 24:15; Genesis 24:21; Genesis 24:49; Genesis 24:63; Genesis 25:6; Genesis 25:9; Genesis 25:21; Genesis 25:28; Genesis 26:7; Genesis 26:16; Genesis 26:24; Genesis 27:5; Genesis 27:23; Genesis 28:5; Genesis 28:9; Genesis 28:11; Genesis 28:13; Genesis 29:5; Genesis 29:20; Genesis 29:21; Genesis 29:22; Genesis 29:26; Genesis 29:32; Genesis 29:34; Genesis 30:16; Genesis 30:24; Genesis 30:33; Genesis 31:10; Genesis 31:18; Genesis 31:20; Genesis 31:25; Genesis 31:27; Genesis 31:28; Genesis 31:29; Genesis 31:44; Genesis 32:7; Genesis 32:20; Genesis 33:2; Genesis 33:5; Genesis 33:9; Genesis 34:2; Genesis 34:13; Genesis 34:19; Genesis 34:28; Genesis 35:6; Genesis 35:8; Genesis 35:9; Genesis 35:13; Genesis 35:29; Genesis 36:6; Genesis 36:8; Genesis 36:14; Genesis 36:19; Genesis 36:24; Genesis 36:32; Genesis 36:33; Genesis 36:34; Genesis 36:36; Genesis 36:37; Genesis 37:3; Genesis 37:8; Genesis 37:15; Genesis 37:16; Genesis 37:25; Genesis 37:31; Genesis 38:12; Genesis 38:14; Genesis 39:1; Genesis 39:2; Genesis 39:13; Genesis 39:23; Genesis 40:4; Genesis 40:5; Genesis 40:6; Genesis 41:3; Genesis 41:18; Genesis 41:19; Genesis 41:22; Genesis 41:23; Genesis 41:25; Genesis 41:28; Genesis 41:31; Genesis 41:48; Genesis 41:53; Genesis 41:57; Genesis 42:18; Genesis 42:23; Genesis 42:34; Genesis 42:37; Genesis 43:18; Genesis 43:25; Genesis 44:8; Genesis 45:3; Genesis 45:7; Genesis 45:9; Genesis 45:11; Genesis 45:15; Genesis 45:19; Genesis 45:22; Genesis 46:2; Genesis 46:5; Genesis 46:7; Genesis 46:18; Genesis 46:25; Genesis 46:26; Genesis 46:34; Genesis 47:1; Genesis 47:4; Genesis 47:11; Genesis 47:13; Genesis 47:15; Genesis 47:16; Genesis 47:19; Genesis 47:20; Genesis 47:26; Genesis 48:3; Genesis 48:5; Genesis 48:10; Genesis 48:13; Genesis 48:22; Genesis 49:12; Genesis 49:24; Genesis 49:25; Genesis 50:1; Genesis 50:8; Genesis 50:10; Genesis 50:11; Genesis 50:13; Genesis 50:15; Genesis 50:25

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.

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.

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 \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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 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: [Genesis 4:3](#); [Genesis 4:23](#); [Genesis 8:6](#); [Genesis 11:2](#); [Genesis 11:3](#); [Genesis 11:31](#); [Genesis 12:1](#); [Genesis 17:1](#); [Genesis 21:22](#); [Genesis 22:1](#); [Genesis 22:20](#); [Genesis 24:2](#); [Genesis 25:12](#); [Genesis 25:29](#); [Genesis 26:1](#); [Genesis 27:1](#); [Genesis 34:1](#); [Genesis 38:1](#); [Genesis 41:50](#); [Genesis 42:1](#); [Genesis 48:1](#)

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: [Genesis 24:15](#); [Genesis 24:21](#)

Kinship

Description

This page answers the question: *What are kinship terms and how can I translate them?*

Kinship terms refer to those words used to describe people related to one another in familial relationships. These terms vary widely in their specificity from language to language. They range from the (Western) nuclear or immediate family (father-son, husband-wife) out to broad clan relationships in other cultures.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Depending on the language translators may need to use specific terms to designate the accurate kinship relationship. In some languages a different term may be used based on siblings' birth order. In others, the side of the family (father's or mother's), age, marital status, etc. may determine the term used. Different terms may be used based on the gender of the speaker and/or addressee. Translators may need to make sure they know the exact relationship between two related people in the Bible to find the correct term. Sometimes these terms are difficult even for native speakers to remember and translators may need to seek community help in finding the correct term. Another complicating issue is that the Bible may not give enough information about the relationship for translators to determine the correct term in the language being translated into. In this case, translators will have to use a more general term or simply pick a satisfactory term based on the limited information available.

Sometimes terms that seem like kinship terms are used for people who are not necessarily related. For instance, an older person may refer to a younger man or woman as "my son" or "my daughter."

Examples from the Bible

Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel **your brother?**" He said, "I do not know. Am I **my brother's** keeper?" (Genesis 4:9 ULT)

Abel was Cain's younger brother.

Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock and said to them, "I see **your father's** attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me." (Genesis 31:4-5 ULT)

Jacob is referring here to his father-in-law. In some languages there may be a specific term for a man's father-in-law, however, in this case it is better to retain the form **your father** as Jacob may be using it to distance himself from Laban.

And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro **his father-in-law**, the priest of Midian. (Exodus 3:1a ULT)

Unlike the previous instance, if your language has a term for a man's father-in-law this is a good place to use it.

And **his sister** stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him. (Exodus 2:4 ULT)

From context we know that this was Miriam, Moses's older sister. In some languages this may require a specific term. In others, the term for older sister may be only used when the younger sibling is addressing and/or referring to his or her sister.

Then she and **her daughters-in-law** arose to return from the fields of Moab (Ruth 1:6a ULT)

Ruth & Orpah are Naomi's daughters-in-law.

Then she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has turned back to her people and to her gods.” (Ruth 1:15 ULT)

Orpah had been the wife of Ruth’s husband’s brother. This may be a different term in your language than if she had been Ruth’s husband’s sister.

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Will you not listen to me, **my daughter?**” (Ruth 2:8a ULT)

Boaz is not Ruth’s father; he is simply using the term to address a younger woman.

And behold, **your relative** Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36 ULT)

While the KJV translated this as **cousin**, the term simply means a related woman.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Find out the exact relationship specified and translate using the term your language uses.
- (2) If the text does not specify the relationship as clearly as your language would, either:
 - (a) settle on a more general term.
 - (b) use a specific term if required by your language, choosing the one that is most likely to be correct.

Translation Strategies Applied

This is not an issue in English, so the following illustrations draw on other languages.

In Korean, there are several terms for brother and sister; the use of them depends on the speaker’s (or referent’s) sex and birth order. Examples are from the Korean Living Bible, found on biblegateway.com

Genesis 30:1 Rachel is jealous of her “eonni,” which is the term a woman uses for her older sister.

Genesis 34:31 Simeon and Levi refer to Dinah as “nui,” a general term for sister.

Genesis 37:16 Joseph refers to his brothers as “hyeong,” which is the term a man uses for his older brother(s).

Genesis 45:12 Joseph refers to Benjamin as “dongsaeng,” which roughly means sibling, usually younger.

In Russian, in-law terms are complex. For instance, “nevéstka” is the term for a brother’s (or brother-in-law’s) wife; a woman uses the same term for her daughter-in-law but her husband would call the same daughter-in-law “snoxá.” Examples from the Russian Synodal Version.

Genesis 38:25 Tamar sends a message to her father-in-law, Judah. The term used is “svekor.” This is used for a woman’s husband’s father.

Exodus 3:1 Moses is watching his father-in-law’s herd. The term used is “test’.” This is used for a man’s wife’s father.

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 4:2](#); [Genesis 4:21](#); [Genesis 27:6](#); [Genesis 28:2](#); [Genesis 28:9](#); [Genesis 34:25](#); [Genesis 36:3](#); [Genesis 36:22](#); [Genesis 42:3](#); [Genesis 42:4](#); [Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 43:14](#); [Genesis 43:29](#); [Genesis 44:20](#); [Genesis 45:3](#); [Genesis 45:12](#); [Genesis 46:7](#)

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as "not bad." The difference between a litotes and a **double negative** is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

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

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

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

"For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**."

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 23:6](#); [Genesis 24:27](#); [Genesis 39:9](#); [Genesis 42:20](#)

Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet

Making a Key Terms Spreadsheet

This page answers the question: *How do I make a key terms spreadsheet?*

- Make a list of the key terms in the story or Bible passage that you translate, along with the term that you choose for each of them in the target language. It is best if you can do this on a spreadsheet so that you can list the source word or phrase in one column and the target word or phrase in another column. Further columns could list equivalent terms in other languages and the references where these terms occur in the Bible. Make sure that everyone translating Bible books that use these terms has access to the spreadsheet, or a chart on paper, so that you can all use the same words or phrases in your translation.
- Use the list of words and definitions in the unfoldingWord® translation Words resource to help you to make a list of these words and to understand what they mean. The translationStudio tool will show you these words and their definitions as you encounter them in the source text, and the translationWords tool in translationCore will give you a list of all of the key terms in each book of the Bible.
- Each time the key word occurs in the source text, make sure that the term you have chosen for the translation still makes sense in that context. If it does not, discuss the problem with others on the translation team and try to find a solution together. You may need to use a different term, or you may need to use more than one term for the different contexts, or you may need to find another way to communicate the term that includes all of the meanings, such as using a longer phrase.
- When you have decided that you need to use different target language words or phrases to translate one source language word in different contexts, then make a new line on the spreadsheet for each different way that you are translating the source word. Repeat the source term in the source column, and put the new translation in the next column, under the first translation. Share this spreadsheet with everyone on the translation team so that they can choose the right translation for the key term in the context that they are translating.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:1](#); [Genesis 1:4](#); [Genesis 1:8](#); [Genesis 1:27](#); [Genesis 1:29](#); [Genesis 2:3](#); [Genesis 2:4](#); [Genesis 2:9](#); [Genesis 3:14](#); [Genesis 4:3](#); [Genesis 6:9](#); [Genesis 6:18](#); [Genesis 7:23](#); [Genesis 8:20](#); [Genesis 8:21](#); [Genesis 9:11](#); [Genesis 9:17](#); [Genesis 9:26](#); [Genesis 14:18](#); [Genesis 14:19](#); [Genesis 15:1](#); [Genesis 15:2](#); [Genesis 16:7](#); [Genesis 17:2](#); [Genesis 17:4](#); [Genesis 17:10](#); [Genesis 17:21](#); [Genesis 19:1](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 20:7](#); [Genesis 21:17](#); [Genesis 22:12](#); [Genesis 26:14](#); [Genesis 26:24](#); [Genesis 27:19](#); [Genesis 27:41](#); [Genesis 28:12](#); [Genesis 31:11](#); [Genesis 34:15](#); [Genesis 35:2](#); [Genesis 35:7](#); [Genesis 35:9](#); [Genesis 35:26](#); [Genesis 36:9](#); [Genesis 40:1](#); [Genesis 48:16](#)

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: [Genesis 13:17](#); [Genesis 19:4](#); [Genesis 19:11](#); [Genesis 31:24](#)

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](#).

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Referenced in: [Genesis 7:11](#); [Genesis 15:1](#); [Genesis 16:12](#); [Genesis 18:27](#); [Genesis 27:40](#); [Genesis 45:8](#); [Genesis 48:15](#); [Genesis 48:22](#); [Genesis 49:21](#); [Genesis 49:24](#)

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](#).

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Referenced in: [Genesis 3:6](#); [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 4:16](#); [Genesis 4:23](#); [Genesis 6:11](#); [Genesis 6:12](#); [Genesis 6:13](#); [Genesis 8:1](#); [Genesis 9:11](#); [Genesis 9:13](#); [Genesis 9:25](#); [Genesis 9:27](#); [Genesis 10:25](#); [Genesis 12:1](#); [Genesis 12:3](#); [Genesis 12:6](#); [Genesis 13:13](#); [Genesis 14:11](#); [Genesis 15:14](#); [Genesis 16:2](#); [Genesis 18:5](#); [Genesis 18:18](#); [Genesis 18:20](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 20:13](#); [Genesis 21:23](#); [Genesis 22:6](#); [Genesis 22:18](#); [Genesis 24:27](#); [Genesis 24:60](#); [Genesis 26:5](#); [Genesis 26:18](#); [Genesis 27:8](#); [Genesis 27:13](#); [Genesis 27:22](#); [Genesis 27:28](#); [Genesis 27:37](#); [Genesis 27:39](#); [Genesis 27:40](#); [Genesis 27:43](#); [Genesis 28:14](#); [Genesis 28:20](#); [Genesis 28:21](#); [Genesis 31:30](#); [Genesis 32:11](#); [Genesis 35:5](#); [Genesis 39:5](#); [Genesis 41:30](#); [Genesis 41:33](#); [Genesis 41:34](#); [Genesis 41:36](#); [Genesis 41:40](#); [Genesis 41:55](#); [Genesis 41:57](#); [Genesis 42:22](#); [Genesis 45:2](#); [Genesis 45:8](#); [Genesis 45:21](#); [Genesis 46:3](#); [Genesis 46:4](#); [Genesis 47:13](#); [Genesis 47:14](#); [Genesis 49:7](#); [Genesis 49:10](#); [Genesis 49:25](#); [Genesis 50:4](#)

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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

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

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

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

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

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

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

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.
- Some languages do not use adjectives in this way.
- Readers of these languages may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about the group of people whom the adjective describes.

Examples From the Bible

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

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

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

“The meek” here are all people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

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

▮ The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **righteous people**.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

▮ Blessed are **people who are meek**.

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 18:26](#)

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: [Genesis 5:3](#); [Genesis 5:12](#); [Genesis 7:6](#); [Genesis 7:24](#)

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: [Genesis 1:5](#); [Genesis 1:8](#); [Genesis 1:13](#); [Genesis 1:19](#); [Genesis 1:23](#); [Genesis 1:31](#); [Genesis 2:2](#); [Genesis 7:11](#); [Genesis 8:13](#)

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: [Genesis 1:27](#); [Genesis 3:16](#); [Genesis 4:23](#); [Genesis 6:11](#); [Genesis 8:17](#); [Genesis 8:22](#); [Genesis 16:12](#); [Genesis 21:1](#); [Genesis 22:12](#); [Genesis 26:5](#); [Genesis 27:29](#); [Genesis 31:1](#); [Genesis 49:6](#); [Genesis 49:7](#); [Genesis 49:10](#); [Genesis 49:11](#); [Genesis 49:13](#); [Genesis 49:15](#)

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: [Genesis 1:16](#); [Genesis 1:18](#); [Genesis 4:7](#); [Genesis 4:10](#); [Genesis 4:11](#); [Genesis 19:19](#); [Genesis 30:33](#); [Genesis 31:40](#)

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

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

[Figures of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#)
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
 - parallel lines (See [Parallelism](#))
 - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
 - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):

You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
 and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
 Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
 and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

Listen to my call to you,
 Yahweh; think about my groanings.
 Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
 for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

“Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**.” (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

“Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater” (from an English rhyme)

- The same root word used as both a verb and as a noun:

Your old men will **dream dreams** (Joel 2:28 ULT)
 Yahweh,...**light lightning** and scatter them (Psalm 144:5-6 ULT)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:
 - incomplete sentences
 - lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games

Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors

Prayers, blessings, and curses

Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of [Parallelism](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See [Parallelism](#).)

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See [Personification](#).)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,

for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
 for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
 (Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

“Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin**. God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:
[Symbolic Language \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Politeness

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate politeness into my language?*

People say certain things, or say things in a certain way, in order to communicate that they respect the people to whom they are speaking. We can refer to this as speaking politely. The ways of speaking politely are generally agreed on by those who share a culture. People also use polite ways of speaking to avoid offending others. This can be especially important if the person being addressed has an influential or powerful position.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

Every language has ways to communicate politeness to other speakers of that language, but different languages do not communicate politeness in the same ways. A phrase that is polite in one language may be offensive in another language, or it may simply be confusing. Translators need to recognize politeness in the Bible and communicate the same polite meaning using the appropriate form of politeness in the target language.

Examples From the Bible

▮ **do not trouble yourself** (Luke 7:6 ULT)

The centurion sent friends to give Jesus this polite message that Jesus should not come to his house.

▮ **I ask you, have me excused** (Luke 14:18 ULT)

In this culture, this was a polite formula for declining a social invitation.

▮ **May I find favor in your eyes, my lord**, since you have comforted me, and since you have spoken to the heart of **your female servant**. (Ruth 2:13 ULT)

Ruth uses several phrases of politeness as she talks to Boaz. **May I find favor in your eyes** is an idiomatic phrase that communicates that Boaz is in a high position, **my lord** is an honorific form of address, and she refers to herself humbly as **your female servant** even though she is not actually one of his servants.

▮ Please let **a little** water be brought... Let me also bring **a bit** of bread (Genesis 18:4-5 ULT)

Abraham described his generosity as something small in order to be polite. This was a way to communicate to his guests that they were not imposing on him at all.

Honorifics

A specific category of politeness is the way that people address other people who are important, powerful, or worthy of honor in other ways. We can refer to this form of politeness as using honorific language. Honorific language can be in the form of special titles or, in some languages, special forms of the words used.

▮ to the **most excellent** Governor Felix (Acts 23:26 ULT)

The expression **most excellent** was an honorific title by which people addressed Roman government officials.

▮ **O king, live forever!** (Daniel 5:10 ULT)

This was the polite and respectful way to address the king before saying anything else to him.

Politeness under other categories

People often use language that is non-standard or figurative to communicate politeness. In these cases, there will be a Translation Note under the category of the figure of speech rather than under the category of politeness. The Note will discuss the issue of the figurative speech and then also mention that this is being used to be polite. For example, the following verses will have Translation Notes under the categories given rather than under politeness.

Metaphor

Men, **brothers and fathers**, hear my defense to you now. (Acts 22:1 ULT)

Paul is using the word **brothers** to refer to his fellow Israelites. He is using the word **fathers** to refer either to Jewish leaders who may be present or to Jewish men who are older than he is. In both cases he is speaking respectfully.

Idiom

I beg of you, about whom is the prophet saying this...? (Acts 8:34 ULT)

The Ethiopian official is using an idiomatic expression as a polite way to introduce a request.

Symbolic action

And having fallen down, they worshiped him (Matt 2:11 ULT)

The act of kneeling down before someone showed deep respect for the person.

Speaking of oneself in the third person

please do not pass by **your servant**. (Gen 18:3 ULT)

Abraham refers to himself as **your servant** here in order to show respect to his guests.

Euphemism

And having said this, **he fell asleep**. (Acts 7:60 ULT)

Luke is describing the death of Stephen when he says **he fell asleep**. He is using this polite way of referring to something unpleasant to avoid offending his readers.

Other Uses of the Imperative

You pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me. (Acts 8:24 ULT)

The verb **pray** is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command.

Rhetorical question

Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve? (Luke 10:40 ULT)

Martha is complaining that Jesus is allowing Mary to sit listening to him when there is so much work to do. But Martha respects Jesus, so she uses the question form to make her complaint more polite.

Translation Strategies

If the phrase used in the ULT would be natural and be a polite expression in your language, consider using it. If not, use the strategy below.

(1) Use a phrase that would be both natural and polite in your language for this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a phrase that would be both natural and polite in your language for this situation.

█ **do not trouble yourself** (Luke 7:6 ULT)

I do not want you to go out of your way
or
Please do not bother

█ **I ask you, have me excused** (Luke 14:18 ULT)

Please accept my apology for not being able to attend

█ **May I find favor in your eyes, my lord**, since you have comforted me, and since you have spoken to the heart of **your female servant**. (Ruth 2:13 ULT)

You are too kind to me, good sir; you have comforted me and you have spoken to my heart even though I am not worthy of it.

█ Please let **a little** water be brought... Let me also bring **a bit** of bread (Genesis 18:4-5 ULT)

I have plenty of water... I also have plenty of food

█ **O king, live forever!** (Daniel 5:10 ULT)

Your majesty, I wish you well

█ **I beg of you**, about whom is the prophet saying this...? (Acts 8:34 ULT)

Please tell me, about whom is the prophet saying this...?

█ **You pray to the Lord for me**, so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me. (Acts 8:24 ULT)

Please pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me.

or

I ask you to pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me.

█ **Lord, are you not concerned that my sister has left me alone to serve?** (Luke 10:40 ULT)

Lord, it seems as if you do not care that my sister has left me alone to serve.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 13:9](#); [Genesis 13:14](#); [Genesis 14:21](#); [Genesis 14:24](#); [Genesis 19:2](#); [Genesis 19:7](#); [Genesis 19:31](#); [Genesis 23:4](#); [Genesis 23:11](#); [Genesis 23:13](#); [Genesis 23:15](#); [Genesis 24:13](#); [Genesis 24:14](#); [Genesis 24:33](#); [Genesis 24:43](#); [Genesis 24:46](#); [Genesis 24:51](#); [Genesis 24:54](#); [Genesis 24:55](#); [Genesis 27:31](#); [Genesis 29:7](#); [Genesis 30:25](#); [Genesis 42:10](#)

Pronouns

Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are “I,” “you,” “he,” “it,” “this,” “that,” “himself,” “someone,” and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
 - [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#)
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - [Forms of You](#)
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
 - [Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups](#)
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word “himself” refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 6:17](#); [Genesis 18:1](#); [Genesis 18:7](#); [Genesis 19:5](#); [Genesis 19:13](#); [Genesis 19:16](#); [Genesis 19:34](#)

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See [Verbs](#).) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom “he” in the second sentence refers to.

Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **he** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:4](#); [Genesis 1:7](#); [Genesis 1:10](#); [Genesis 1:17](#); [Genesis 1:21](#); [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 2:2](#); [Genesis 2:3](#); [Genesis 2:5](#); [Genesis 2:7](#); [Genesis 2:9](#); [Genesis 2:16](#); [Genesis 2:21](#); [Genesis 2:22](#); [Genesis 3:1](#); [Genesis](#)

3:8; Genesis 3:11; Genesis 3:16; Genesis 3:22; Genesis 4:2; Genesis 4:8; Genesis 4:10; Genesis 4:17; Genesis 5:7; Genesis 5:10; Genesis 5:13; Genesis 5:16; Genesis 5:19; Genesis 5:26; Genesis 6:4; Genesis 6:6; Genesis 6:9; Genesis 6:21; Genesis 8:1; Genesis 8:9; Genesis 9:23; Genesis 9:26; Genesis 10:25; Genesis 11:2; Genesis 11:6; Genesis 11:11; Genesis 11:13; Genesis 11:17; Genesis 11:21; Genesis 11:25; Genesis 12:7; Genesis 12:8; Genesis 12:15; Genesis 12:16; Genesis 12:20; Genesis 13:11; Genesis 14:4; Genesis 14:11; Genesis 14:17; Genesis 14:20; Genesis 14:22; Genesis 15:5; Genesis 15:6; Genesis 15:8; Genesis 15:13; Genesis 16:6; Genesis 16:8; Genesis 16:12; Genesis 17:22; Genesis 18:7; Genesis 18:8; Genesis 18:19; Genesis 18:29; Genesis 18:30; Genesis 19:9; Genesis 19:13; Genesis 19:21; Genesis 19:28; Genesis 19:32; Genesis 19:33; Genesis 20:7; Genesis 20:8; Genesis 20:14; Genesis 20:17; Genesis 21:4; Genesis 22:1; Genesis 22:7; Genesis 22:10; Genesis 22:12; Genesis 24:12; Genesis 24:23; Genesis 24:29; Genesis 24:30; Genesis 24:58; Genesis 26:2; Genesis 29:12; Genesis 29:23; Genesis 29:25; Genesis 29:30; Genesis 30:39; Genesis 31:21; Genesis 31:49; Genesis 32:2; Genesis 32:25; Genesis 32:29; Genesis 33:5; Genesis 33:11; Genesis 33:13; Genesis 37:2; Genesis 37:4; Genesis 39:4; Genesis 39:14; Genesis 39:20; Genesis 39:21; Genesis 40:7; Genesis 41:6; Genesis 41:36; Genesis 42:23; Genesis 42:24; Genesis 43:2; Genesis 44:12; Genesis 44:13; Genesis 45:1; Genesis 45:24; Genesis 46:28; Genesis 47:3; Genesis 47:6; Genesis 47:30; Genesis 47:31; Genesis 48:1; Genesis 48:9; Genesis 48:10; Genesis 48:12; Genesis 48:19; Genesis 49:17; Genesis 49:19; Genesis 49:23; Genesis 50:2; Genesis 50:23

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, “The food is ready. Come and eat.”
- “The food is ready. Come and eat,” **she said**.
- “The food is ready,” **she said**. “Come and eat.”

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning “said.”

But his mother **answered** and **said**, “No. Rather, he will be called John.” (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (“ ”). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning “said.”
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days.” (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, “Teacher, what should we do?” (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, “Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered.” (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. “It will not happen,” **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

“I will hide my face from them,” **he said**, “and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful.” (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh’s declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, "Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULT)

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us," **he said**. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him," **he said**.

"Therefore, those who can," **he said**, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about: "

[Direct and Indirect Quotations \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:3](#); [Genesis 1:6](#); [Genesis 1:9](#); [Genesis 1:11](#); [Genesis 1:14](#); [Genesis 1:20](#); [Genesis 1:26](#); [Genesis 1:28](#); [Genesis 1:29](#); [Genesis 3:2](#); [Genesis 3:4](#); [Genesis 3:9](#); [Genesis 3:10](#); [Genesis 3:13](#); [Genesis 4:6](#); [Genesis 4:9](#); [Genesis 4:13](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 8:15](#); [Genesis 9:1](#); [Genesis 9:8](#); [Genesis 9:12](#); [Genesis 9:17](#); [Genesis 9:25](#); [Genesis 12:7](#); [Genesis 12:18](#); [Genesis 15:2](#); [Genesis 15:3](#); [Genesis 15:5](#); [Genesis 15:13](#); [Genesis 15:18](#); [Genesis 16:5](#); [Genesis 16:6](#); [Genesis 16:8](#); [Genesis 16:10](#); [Genesis 17:3](#); [Genesis 17:18](#); [Genesis 17:19](#); [Genesis 18:5](#); [Genesis 18:9](#); [Genesis 18:10](#); [Genesis 18:13](#); [Genesis 18:17](#); [Genesis 18:20](#); [Genesis 18:23](#); [Genesis 18:26](#); [Genesis 18:28](#); [Genesis 18:29](#); [Genesis 18:31](#); [Genesis 18:32](#); [Genesis 19:2](#); [Genesis 19:7](#); [Genesis 19:9](#); [Genesis 19:12](#); [Genesis 19:17](#); [Genesis 20:4](#); [Genesis 20:9](#); [Genesis 20:10](#); [Genesis 20:13](#); [Genesis 20:15](#); [Genesis 21:7](#); [Genesis 21:24](#); [Genesis 21:29](#); [Genesis 22:2](#); [Genesis 22:7](#); [Genesis 22:8](#); [Genesis 22:11](#); [Genesis 23:5](#); [Genesis 23:8](#); [Genesis 23:10](#); [Genesis 23:13](#); [Genesis 23:14](#); [Genesis 24:5](#); [Genesis 24:6](#); [Genesis 24:12](#); [Genesis 24:17](#); [Genesis 24:18](#); [Genesis 24:19](#); [Genesis 24:23](#); [Genesis 24:24](#); [Genesis 24:25](#); [Genesis 24:31](#); [Genesis 24:33](#); [Genesis 24:34](#); [Genesis 24:37](#); [Genesis 24:47](#); [Genesis 24:50](#); [Genesis 24:57](#); [Genesis 24:58](#); [Genesis 24:65](#); [Genesis 25:22](#); [Genesis 25:23](#); [Genesis 25:30](#); [Genesis 25:31](#); [Genesis 25:32](#); [Genesis 25:33](#); [Genesis 26:2](#); [Genesis 26:7](#); [Genesis 26:9](#); [Genesis 26:10](#); [Genesis 26:16](#); [Genesis 26:27](#); [Genesis 26:28](#); [Genesis 26:32](#); [Genesis 27:1](#); [Genesis 27:2](#); [Genesis 27:11](#); [Genesis 27:13](#); [Genesis 27:18](#); [Genesis 27:19](#); [Genesis 27:20](#); [Genesis 27:24](#); [Genesis 27:25](#); [Genesis 27:26](#); [Genesis 27:31](#); [Genesis 27:32](#); [Genesis 27:33](#); [Genesis 27:34](#); [Genesis 27:35](#); [Genesis 27:38](#); [Genesis 27:39](#); [Genesis 27:41](#); [Genesis 27:42](#); [Genesis 27:46](#); [Genesis 28:1](#); [Genesis 28:13](#); [Genesis 29:4](#); [Genesis 29:5](#); [Genesis 29:6](#); [Genesis 29:7](#); [Genesis 29:8](#); [Genesis 29:14](#); [Genesis 29:15](#); [Genesis 29:18](#); [Genesis 29:19](#); [Genesis 29:26](#); [Genesis 29:34](#); [Genesis 30:1](#); [Genesis 30:3](#); [Genesis 30:6](#); [Genesis 30:11](#); [Genesis 30:13](#); [Genesis 30:15](#); [Genesis 30:16](#); [Genesis 30:18](#); [Genesis 30:27](#);

Genesis 30:28; Genesis 30:29; Genesis 30:31; Genesis 30:34; Genesis 31:3; Genesis 31:11; Genesis 31:12; Genesis 31:14; Genesis 31:26; Genesis 31:31; Genesis 31:35; Genesis 31:36; Genesis 31:43; Genesis 31:48; Genesis 31:51; Genesis 32:4; Genesis 32:6; Genesis 32:9; Genesis 32:26; Genesis 32:27; Genesis 32:29; Genesis 33:5; Genesis 33:8; Genesis 33:9; Genesis 33:10; Genesis 33:15; Genesis 34:11; Genesis 35:1; Genesis 35:10; Genesis 35:11; Genesis 37:10; Genesis 37:17; Genesis 37:21; Genesis 37:22; Genesis 37:30; Genesis 38:16; Genesis 38:17; Genesis 38:18; Genesis 38:22; Genesis 38:23; Genesis 38:24; Genesis 38:25; Genesis 38:29; Genesis 39:7; Genesis 39:8; Genesis 39:12; Genesis 39:14; Genesis 39:17; Genesis 40:8; Genesis 40:16; Genesis 40:18; Genesis 41:9; Genesis 41:15; Genesis 41:16; Genesis 41:17; Genesis 41:25; Genesis 41:41; Genesis 42:2; Genesis 42:7; Genesis 42:12; Genesis 42:13; Genesis 42:14; Genesis 42:28; Genesis 42:37; Genesis 42:38; Genesis 43:3; Genesis 43:7; Genesis 43:20; Genesis 43:29; Genesis 44:1; Genesis 44:4; Genesis 44:7; Genesis 44:10; Genesis 44:15; Genesis 44:16; Genesis 44:17; Genesis 44:20; Genesis 44:26; Genesis 45:17; Genesis 46:3; Genesis 46:34; Genesis 47:4; Genesis 47:9; Genesis 47:15; Genesis 47:16; Genesis 47:18; Genesis 47:23; Genesis 47:25; Genesis 47:29; Genesis 48:3; Genesis 48:5; Genesis 48:11; Genesis 48:20; Genesis 48:21; Genesis 49:1; Genesis 49:29; Genesis 50:2

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are “layers” of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

Direct and Indirect Quotations (UTA PDF)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word “I,” the listener needs to know whether “I” refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.

Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes. They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others. Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

But Paul said, “I, however, was indeed born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will lead many astray.” (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king.” (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

Abraham said, “... I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **“He is my brother.”**” (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’**” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)

Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, **'Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?'** But when Paul said, **'I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,'** I told the guard, **'Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.'**"

- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God."

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.''" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

[Quote Markings \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Quote Markings \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:1](#); [Genesis 3:3](#); [Genesis 3:11](#); [Genesis 3:17](#); [Genesis 14:23](#); [Genesis 18:13](#); [Genesis 20:2](#); [Genesis 20:5](#); [Genesis 20:11](#); [Genesis 20:13](#); [Genesis 24:7](#); [Genesis 24:14](#); [Genesis 24:43](#); [Genesis 24:44](#); [Genesis 24:45](#); [Genesis 26:9](#); [Genesis 27:7](#); [Genesis 31:29](#); [Genesis 32:4](#); [Genesis 32:5](#); [Genesis 32:9](#); [Genesis 32:12](#); [Genesis 32:17](#); [Genesis 32:20](#); [Genesis 42:14](#); [Genesis 42:22](#); [Genesis 42:31](#); [Genesis 42:32](#); [Genesis 43:3](#); [Genesis 43:5](#); [Genesis 43:7](#); [Genesis 44:19](#); [Genesis 44:20](#); [Genesis 44:21](#); [Genesis 44:22](#); [Genesis 44:23](#); [Genesis 44:28](#); [Genesis 44:32](#); [Genesis 45:9](#); [Genesis 45:17](#); [Genesis 45:18](#); [Genesis 45:19](#); [Genesis 45:20](#); [Genesis 46:31](#); [Genesis 46:32](#); [Genesis 46:33](#)

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.

But you, why do you judge your brother? And you also, why do you despise your brother? (Romans 14:10 ULT)

Paul used these rhetorical questions **to rebuke** the Romans for doing what they should not do.

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 express surprise or other emotion? 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!

But you, **why do you judge your brother?** And you also, **why do you despise your brother?** (Romans 14:10 ULT)

Do you think it is good to judge your brother? Do you think it is good to despise your brother?

..

Referenced in: Genesis 4:6; Genesis 4:7; Genesis 4:9; Genesis 4:10; Genesis 12:18; Genesis 12:19; Genesis 13:9; Genesis 15:2; Genesis 16:13; Genesis 17:17; Genesis 18:12; Genesis 18:13; Genesis 18:14; Genesis 18:17; Genesis 18:23; Genesis 18:24; Genesis 18:25; Genesis 19:20; Genesis 20:4; Genesis 20:5; Genesis 20:9; Genesis 21:7; Genesis 23:15; Genesis 24:31; Genesis 25:32; Genesis 26:10; Genesis 26:27; Genesis 27:36; Genesis 27:37; Genesis 27:45; Genesis 27:46; Genesis 29:15; Genesis 29:25; Genesis 30:2; Genesis 30:15; Genesis 30:30; Genesis 31:14; Genesis 31:15; Genesis 31:26; Genesis 31:27; Genesis 31:36; Genesis 31:43; Genesis 32:29; Genesis 33:15; Genesis 34:23; Genesis 34:31; Genesis 37:8; Genesis 37:10; Genesis 37:13; Genesis 37:26; Genesis 37:30; Genesis 38:29; Genesis 39:9; Genesis 40:8; Genesis 41:38; Genesis 42:1; Genesis 42:22; Genesis 43:6; Genesis 43:7; Genesis 43:29; Genesis 44:4; Genesis 44:5; Genesis 44:7; Genesis 44:8; Genesis 44:15; Genesis 44:16; Genesis 44:34; Genesis 47:15; Genesis 47:19; Genesis 49:9; Genesis 50:19

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience. (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote. (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metaphor \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 19:28](#); [Genesis 22:17](#); [Genesis 25:25](#); [Genesis 26:4](#); [Genesis 28:14](#); [Genesis 31:26](#); [Genesis 33:10](#); [Genesis 49:4](#); [Genesis 49:9](#)

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.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 14:22](#); [Genesis 17:3](#); [Genesis 17:17](#); [Genesis 19:1](#); [Genesis 22:5](#); [Genesis 23:7](#); [Genesis 23:12](#); [Genesis 24:2](#); [Genesis 24:9](#); [Genesis 24:26](#); [Genesis 24:48](#); [Genesis 24:52](#); [Genesis 24:65](#); [Genesis 28:18](#); [Genesis 31:13](#); [Genesis 31:54](#); [Genesis 33:3](#); [Genesis 33:6](#); [Genesis 33:7](#); [Genesis 35:14](#); [Genesis 37:7](#); [Genesis 37:9](#); [Genesis 37:29](#); [Genesis 37:34](#); [Genesis 41:42](#); [Genesis 41:43](#); [Genesis 42:6](#); [Genesis 43:26](#); [Genesis 43:28](#); [Genesis 44:13](#); [Genesis 44:14](#); [Genesis 47:29](#); [Genesis 47:31](#); [Genesis 48:12](#); [Genesis 48:14](#); [Genesis 49:8](#); [Genesis 50:18](#)

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](#))

[Metonymy \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:18](#); [Genesis 6:12](#); [Genesis 6:13](#); [Genesis 7:15](#); [Genesis 7:16](#); [Genesis 8:4](#); [Genesis 8:17](#); [Genesis 9:5](#); [Genesis 9:11](#); [Genesis 15:2](#); [Genesis 16:12](#); [Genesis 17:13](#); [Genesis 19:20](#); [Genesis 21:12](#); [Genesis 21:14](#); [Genesis 21:30](#); [Genesis 27:4](#); [Genesis 27:19](#); [Genesis 31:17](#); [Genesis 31:42](#); [Genesis 31:54](#); [Genesis 33:10](#); [Genesis 34:30](#); [Genesis 36:7](#); [Genesis 37:21](#); [Genesis 37:22](#); [Genesis 41:54](#); [Genesis 42:21](#); [Genesis 43:31](#); [Genesis 44:8](#); [Genesis 44:26](#); [Genesis 45:12](#); [Genesis 46:5](#); [Genesis 46:30](#); [Genesis 47:12](#); [Genesis 47:15](#); [Genesis 47:19](#); [Genesis 49:6](#); [Genesis 49:20](#); [Genesis 49:26](#)

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

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

[Choosing a Source Text \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Original Manuscripts \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Chapter and Verse Numbers \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Original Manuscripts \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Terms to Know \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[The Original and Source Languages \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Genesis 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 47:21](#); [Genesis 49:26](#)

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: [Genesis 2:12](#); [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 3:24](#); [Genesis 4:20](#); [Genesis 4:21](#); [Genesis 6:14](#); [Genesis 8:8](#);
[Genesis 8:11](#); [Genesis 12:6](#); [Genesis 12:16](#); [Genesis 15:9](#); [Genesis 18:6](#); [Genesis 21:33](#); [Genesis 22:3](#); [Genesis 24:20](#);
[Genesis 24:35](#); [Genesis 25:34](#); [Genesis 29:2](#); [Genesis 30:14](#); [Genesis 31:15](#); [Genesis 31:19](#); [Genesis 33:19](#); [Genesis](#)
[34:12](#); [Genesis 35:4](#); [Genesis 37:3](#); [Genesis 37:20](#); [Genesis 37:34](#); [Genesis 37:35](#); [Genesis 38:18](#); [Genesis 41:42](#);
[Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 44:29](#); [Genesis 49:11](#); [Genesis 50:2](#)

Verse Bridges

Description

In some cases, you will see in the unfoldingWord® Simplified Text (UST) that two or more verse numbers are combined, such as 17-18. This is called a verse bridge. This means that the information in the verses was rearranged so that the story or message could be more easily understood.

This page answers the question: *Why are some verse numbers combined in the UST, such as "3-5" or "17-18"?*

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

Structure of the Bible (UTA PDF)

29 These were the clans of the Horites: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah, 30 Dishon, Ezer, Dishan: these are clans of the Horites, according to their clan lists in the land of Seir. (Genesis 36:29-30 ULT)

29-30 The people groups who were descendants of Hor lived in Seir land. The names of the people groups are Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. (Genesis 36:29-30 UST)

In the ULT text, verses 29 and 30 are separate, and the information about the people living in Seir is at the end of verse 30. In the UST text, the verses are joined, and the information about them living in Seir is at the beginning. For many languages, this is a more logical order of information.

Examples From the Bible

Where the UST has a verse bridge, the ULT will have separate verses.

⁴⁻⁵ Yahweh our God will bless you in the land that he is giving to you. If you obey Yahweh our God and obey all the commandments that I am giving to you today, there will not be any poor people among you. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 UST)

⁴ However, there should be no poor among you (for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land that he gives you as an inheritance to possess), ⁵ if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all these commandments that I am commanding you today. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 ULT)

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ But Yahweh said to him, "I will not permit you to eat the fruit of the tree that will enable you to know what actions are good to do and what actions are evil to do. If you eat any fruit from that tree, on the day you eat it you will surely die. But I will permit you to eat the fruit of any of the other trees in the park." (Genesis 2:16-17 UST)

¹⁶ Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "From every tree in the garden you may freely eat. ¹⁷ But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Order the information in a way that will be clear to your readers. If the order of information is clear as it is in the ULT, then use that order. But if the order is confusing or gives the wrong meaning, then change the order so that it is more clear.

(1) If you put information from one verse before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put a hyphen between the two verse numbers.

See how to mark verses in [translationStudio](#).

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If information from one verse is put before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put the verse numbers before the first verse with a hyphen between them.

2 You must select three cities for yourself in the middle of your land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess. 3 You must build a road and divide the borders of your land into three parts, the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, so that everyone who kills another person may flee there. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 ULT)

2-3 You must divide into three parts the land that he is giving to you. Then select a city in each part. You must make good roads in order that people can get to those cities easily. Someone who kills another person can escape to one of those cities to be safe. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 UST)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:3](#); [Genesis 20:18](#); [Genesis 24:30](#); [Genesis 36:7](#); [Genesis 40:2](#)

Word Order

Description

Most languages have a normal way of ordering the parts of a sentence. It is not the same in all languages. You (the translator) need to know what the normal word order is in your language.

The Main Parts of a Sentence

Most sentences have three basic important parts: subject, object, and verb. Subjects and objects are usually nouns (i.e., a person, place, thing, or idea) or pronouns. Verbs show action or a state of being.

This page answers the question: *What does “word order” mean?*

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

[Grammar Topics \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Parts of Speech \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Subject

The subject is usually what the sentence is about. It usually performs some action or is being described. A subject may be **active**, meaning that it does something, such as sing, work, or teach.

- **Peter** sings the song well.

A subject may have something done to it.

- **Peter** was fed good food.

A subject can be described as being in a **state**, such as being happy, sad, or angry.

- **He** is tall.
- **The boy** is happy.

Object

The **object** is often the thing that the subject does something to.

- Peter hit **the ball**.
- Peter read **a book**.
- Peter sang **the song** well.
- Peter ate **good food**.

Verb

The verb shows an action or a state of being.

- Peter **sings** the song well.
- Peter **is singing**.
- Peter **is** tall.

Preferred Word Order

All languages have a preferred word order. However, word order is more important in some languages than in others. The examples below show the order of the subject, object, and verb in “Peter hit the ball” for some languages.

In some languages the order is Subject-Verb-Object. This is normal word order for English.

- Peter hit the ball.

In some languages the order is Subject-Object-Verb.

- Peter the ball hit.

In some languages the order is Verb-Subject-Object. This is normal word order for [Biblical Hebrew](#).

- Hit Peter the ball.

In some languages the order is not important for the meaning of the sentence because the language uses other ways to indicate whether a word is the subject, the verb, or the object. Both [Biblical Aramaic](#) and [Koiné Greek](#) are languages like this.

Changes in Word Order

Word order can change if the sentence:

- is a question or command
- describes a state of being (He is happy. He is tall.)
- expresses a condition, such as with the the word "if"
- has a location
- has a time element
- is in a poem

Word order can also change

- if there is some kind of emphasis on a certain part of the sentence
- if the sentence is really about something other than the subject

Translation Principles

- Know which word order is preferred in your language.
- Use your language's preferred word order unless there is some reason in your language to change it.
- Translate the sentence so that the meaning is accurate and clear and so that it sounds natural.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_order.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 25:11](#); [Genesis 25:12](#)

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