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Genesis

Version 85

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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

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. Alternate translation: [At the beginning of time] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1554)**)

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.

created

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. Alternate translation: [made]

the heavens

This phrase, **the heavens**, refers here to the region where all the stars and planets would later exist. Keep that in mind as you translate this term. Alternate translation: [the sky] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and the earth

This phrase refers to the planet earth.

Genesis 1:2

Now 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. Alternate translation: [Now at first after that, the earth]

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}

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [It was completely dark, there was deep water everywhere] or [everywhere there was deep water that was surrounded by total darkness]

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

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. Alternate translation: [over the surface of the water] or [above the waters]

Genesis 1:3

Then God said

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. Alternate translation: [Then God commanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let there be light

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. Alternate translation: [Let light exist] or [I command there to be light]

Genesis 1:4

And God saw

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. Alternate translation: [And he saw] or [He saw] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases** (p.1600))

the light, that {it was} good

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. The word **good** 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. Alternate translation: [that the light was good]

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.1701))

Then God separated between the light and the darkness

Alternate translation: [Then he caused the light to have its own time and the darkness to have its own time] or [Then 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

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. Alternate translation: [Then He called] or [God named] (See:

Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600))

the light Day

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.

Then there was evening, and there was morning

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. Alternate translation: [Then evening came, and then morning came] (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p. 1596))**

one 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. Alternate translation: [and that was day one] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1685))**

Genesis 1:6

Then God said

See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: [Then God commanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let there be an expanse

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 it 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. Alternate translation: [Let there be a vast space] or [I command there to be a vast space] or [I command a vast space to form] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

in the middle of the waters

See how you translated **waters** in verse 2.

and let it separate the waters from the waters

Alternate translation: [and let it divide the water above it from the water below it] or [so that it separates the waters into two different places]

Genesis 1:7

So God made

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.

Alternate translation: [In that way God made] or [That is how he made]

the expanse

Alternate translation: [a vast space]

and separated

Alternate translation: [and divided] or [and used it to separate]

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

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. Alternate translation: [the water that was under it from the water that was above it] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

And it was so

Alternate translation: [That is the way it happened] or [Everything was exactly as he commanded it to be] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 1:8

And God called

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.

Alternate translation: [He called] or [and he called] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

the expanse

See how you translated this phrase in verses 6 and 7. Alternate translation: [the vast space] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Heavens

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.

Then there was evening, and there was morning

See how you translated this sentence in verse 5, and see the note about that there. Alternate translation: [Then evening came, and then morning came]

the second day

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use an ordinal number (**second**) here or a cardinal number ("two"). Alternate translation: [and the second day ended] or [and that was the end of day two] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1685)**)

Genesis 1:9

Then God said

See how you translated this phrase in verses 3 and 6. Alternate translation: [Then God commanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let the waters under the heavens be gathered

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"). Alternate translation: [Let the water that is under the sky come together] or [I command the water that is below the heavens to come together] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

to one place

Alternate translation: [in one area] or [into one area]

and let the dry ground appear

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. Alternate translation: [so that there is dry land] or [so that dry land can be seen] or [so that land is uncovered and dries off]

And it was so

See how you translated this sentence in verse 7. It may be necessary to translate it in different ways, depending on the context. Alternate translation: [And it was exactly as God commanded it to be]

Genesis 1:10

And God called

Alternate translation: [Then he named]

the dry ground

Alternate translation: [the dry land] or [the land that had dried off]

Land

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. Alternate translation: [Ground]

and the gathered waters he called

See how you translated a sentence in verse 5 that is similar in structure to this sentence. Alternate translation: [and the waters that he had gathered together he named] or [and he called the gathered waters] or [and he called the waters that had come together] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Seas

At that time there was probably just one very large body of water and one very large landmass 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. Alternate translation: [Oceans]

And God saw

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. Alternate translation: [And he saw] or [He saw] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

that {it was} good

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. Alternate translation: [that what he had made was good] or [that the land and the seas were good]

Genesis 1:11

Then God said

Alternate translation: [Then God commanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let the land sprout vegetation

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. Alternate translation: [I command the ground to grow green plants] or [The ground must now be covered with green plants]

every} plant yielding seed

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. Alternate translation: [including every kind of plant that has seeds] or [including all kinds of plants that bear seeds]

every} fruit tree bearing fruit according to its kind

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. Alternate translation: [and fruit trees that bear fruit, each according to its own kind] or [and every kind of fruit tree that bears its own kind of fruit] or [and all kinds of fruit trees that bear their own kind of fruit]

that {has} its seed inside it

Alternate translation: [that has seeds inside] or [with its own kind of seeds inside it]

on 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. Alternate translation: [throughout the earth] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And it was so

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. Alternate translation: [And it happened exactly as God commanded it to happen:]

Genesis 1:12

So the land brought out vegetation

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.

Alternate translation: [The land sprouted plants] or [The land started growing green plants]

every} plant yielding seed according to its kind

Alternate translation: [including plants that have seeds, each according to its own kind] or [including every kind of plant that has seeds that grow into the same kind of plant] or [including all kinds of plants that have their own type of seeds]

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

Alternate translation: [and trees that bear fruit with seeds inside, each according to its own kind] or [and every kind of tree that has fruit with seeds that grow into the same kind of tree] or [and all kinds of trees that have their own kind of seed-bearing fruit]

And God saw

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin this sentence with a conjunction. Alternate translation: [And he saw] or [He saw] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

that {it was} good

See how you translated this clause in verse 10. Some languages have to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [that what he had made was good] or [that all the plants and trees were good] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 1:13

Then there was evening, and there was morning

See how you translated this sentence in verses 5 and 8. Alternate translation: [Then evening came, and then morning came]

the third day

Alternate translation: [and the third day ended] or [and that was the end of day three] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1685)**)

Genesis 1:14

Then God said

Alternate translation: [Then God commanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let there be lights

These lights refer to the sun, the 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. Alternate translation: [Let there be objects that give light]

in the expanse of the heavens

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. Alternate translation: [in the space of the sky] or [in the open space of the sky] or [in the heavens]

to separate

Alternate translation: [to divide] or [that separate]

And let them be for signs

Alternate translation: [Let those lights also be] or [They will also serve as markers] or [I also command those lights to serve as]

And let them be for signs

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could mean: (1) signs/markers of special/important events. Alternate translation: [They must/will also mark/indicate when important things happen] 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

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. The **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

Alternate translation: [And they will be sources of light] or [They will serve as lights] or [Their purpose is to serve as sources of light]

in the expanse of the heavens

See how you translated this phrase in verse 14. Alternate translation: [in the space called the sky] or [in the open space of the sky] or [in the heavens]

to shine on the earth

See how you translated **the earth** in verses 1-2. Alternate translation: [to shine light on the earth] or [so that they give light to the earth]

And it was so

Alternate translation: [And it was exactly as he commanded it to be]

Genesis 1:16

So God made

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. Alternate translation: [In that way God made] or [That is how he made]

the two great 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. Alternate translation: [the two big lights]

the greater light

The focus is on the relative brightness or strength of the lights, not on their size. Alternate translation: [the stronger light]

to rule 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. Alternate translation: [to govern the day] (See: **Personification (p.1690)**)

and the lesser light

Alternate translation: [and the dimmer light]

to rule the night

Be consistent here with how you translated **rule** previously in this verse. Alternate translation: [to govern the night]

and 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. Alternate translation: [and he also made the stars] or [That is also when he created the stars] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

Genesis 1:17

And God set them

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to God and the lights at this point in the paragraph.

Alternate translation: [God put them] or [God placed the lights] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

in the expanse of the heavens

See how you translated this phrase in verses 14 and 15. Alternate translation: [in the space called the sky] or [in the open space of the sky] or [in the heavens]

to shine on the earth

See how you translated this phrase in verse 15. Alternate translation: [to provide light to the earth]

Genesis 1:18

and to rule over the day and over the night

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. Alternate translation: [and to dominate the daytime or the nighttime] or [and to shine during the daytime and during the nighttime] (See: **Personification (p.1690)**)

and to separate between the light and the darkness

Consider again how you translated **separate** in verses 4, 6-7, 14 and 18. Alternate translation: [and to distinguish the light from the darkness] or [and to separate the time of light from the time of darkness]

And God saw

Alternate translation: [And he saw] or [He saw]

that {it was} good

Some languages need to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [that what he had made was good] or [that the lights in the sky were good] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 1:19

Then there was evening, and there was morning

Alternate translation: [Then evening came, and then morning came]

the fourth day

Alternate translation: [and the fourth day ended] or [and that was the end of day four] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1685)**)

Genesis 1:20

Then God said

Alternate translation: [Then God commanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

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

Alternate translation: [I command the water to be full of large groups of living creatures] or [I command there to be large numbers of water animals that live everywhere in the water]

and let bird{s} 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. Alternate translation: [and let there be birds that fly] or [Also let there be winged creatures that fly]

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

Alternate translation: [above the earth, through the air] or [across the sky above the earth]

Genesis 1:21

So God created

See how you translated **created** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [That is how he made] or [In that way he made] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

the great sea creatures

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. Alternate translation: [the huge ocean animals]

and every living creature that moves

Alternate translation: [and every kind of fish and every other animal that lives] or [and all the fish and other kinds of animals that live]

which the waters swarm with

Alternate translation: [throughout the ocean in large groups] or [in the water and fills it] or [everywhere in the ocean]

according to their kind

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. Alternate translation: [each according to its own kind] or [each that has its own kind of young]

and

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. Alternate translation: [and how he created] or [That is also how he created]

every winged bird

See how you translated “birds” in verse 20. Alternate translation: [every kind of bird] or [all the different kinds of birds] or [every kind of winged creature]

according to its kind

See how you translated this phrase earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: [each according to its own kind] or [each that has its own kind of young]

And God saw

Alternate translation: [And He saw] or [He saw]

that {it was} good

Some languages need to specify what was good. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [that what he had made was good] or [that the water animals and the birds were good] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 1:22

Then God blessed them

For some languages it is necessary to specify to what **them** refers. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Then God caused them all to prosper] or [Then God blessed the water creatures and the birds] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

saying

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. Alternate translation: [and said first to the water animals] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Be fruitful

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. Alternate translation: [Reproduce] or [You water animals will produce many young] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

and multiply

Alternate translation: [so that you and your offspring will multiply greatly in number] or [so that you and your offspring will become very many] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1591)**)

and fill

Alternate translation: [and live throughout]

the waters in the seas

For some languages, “waters 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. Alternate translation: [the water of the sea] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.1664)**)

and let the bird{s} multiply

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. Alternate translation: [And the birds will also increase greatly in number] or [You birds will also become very many]

on the earth

Alternate translation: [throughout the earth] or [and live all over the earth]

Genesis 1:23

Then there was evening, and there was morning

Alternate translation: [Then evening came, and then morning came]

the fifth day

Alternate translation: [and the fifth day ended] or [and that was the end of day five] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1685)**)

Genesis 1:24

Then God said

Alternate translation: [Then God commanded]

Let the land bring forth

See how you translated a similar command to the land in verse 11. Alternate translation: [I command the land to yield] or [The land must now produce]

every} living creature

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. Alternate translation: [every type of living animal] or [all kinds of animals]

according to its kind

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. Alternate translation: [each that has its own kind of young] or [each having its own kind of young]

livestock

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. Alternate translation: [including farm animals]

and {every} crawling creature

Alternate translation: [every type of animal that crawls] or [all kinds of animals that crawl]

and {every} living thing of the earth

This phrase refers in general to animals that are normally not raised by people but live in the wild. Alternate translation: [and every other kind of wild animal that lives on the land] or [and all the other kinds of wild animals that live on the land]

each} according to its kind

See how you translated this phrase earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: [each that has its own kind of offspring] or [each having its own kind of offspring]

And it was so

Alternate translation: [It happened exactly as he commanded it to happen]

Genesis 1:25

So God made

Alternate translation: [That is how God created] or [In that way God made]

every} creature of the earth

See how you translated **every creature of the earth** in verse 24. Alternate translation: [every kind of wild animal] or [all the different kinds of wild animals]

according to its kind

Alternate translation: [each that bears its own kind of young] or [each having its own kind of young]

and the livestock

See how you translated **livestock** in verse 24. Alternate translation: [and every kind of farm animal] or [and all the farm animals]

according to its kind

Alternate translation: [each that bears its own kind of young] or [each having its own kind of young]

and every crawling creature of the ground

See how you translated **crawling creature** in verse 24. Alternate translation: [and every kind of creature that crawls along the ground] or [and all different kinds of animals that crawl along the ground]

according to its kind

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. Alternate translation: [each that bears its own kind of offspring] or [each having its own kind of young]

And God saw

Alternate translation: [And he saw] or [He saw]

that {it was} good

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. Alternate translation: [that what he had made was good] or [that all the animals that he had made were good] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 1:26

Then God said

Here God is not commanding anything to happen, but is getting ready to personally create mankind (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.1704)**)

Let us make

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. Alternate translation: [Now we will make]

man

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. Alternate translation: [mankind] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1578)**)

in our image, according to our likeness

These two phrases have similar meanings and emphasize that God made mankind to be like himself in many ways. Alternate translation: [to be like us, so that they are similar to us in many ways] (See: **Doublet (p.1611)**)

and let them rule

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and let us put them in control of] or [We will give them authority to rule]

over the fish of the sea

Alternate translation: [the fish in the sea]

and over the bird{s} of the sky

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. Alternate translation: [the birds that fly in the sky] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.1664)**)

and over the livestock

Consider again how you translated **livestock** in verses 24-26. Alternate translation: [the farm animals]

and over all the 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

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. Alternate translation: [including every creature that moves on the earth] or [and all the animals that live on the earth]

Genesis 1:27

Then God created

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. Alternate translation: [So God made] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

man

Be consistent here with how you translated this term in verse 26. Alternate translation: [mankind]

in his image

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. Alternate translation: [in his own image] or [to be similar to himself in many ways]

In the image of God he created him

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. Alternate translation: [Yes he made them in his image] or [Indeed he created them to be like himself] or [Yes, God made them to be similar to himself in many ways] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

In the image of God he created him

The pronoun **him** refers to the collective noun **man**, which in this case refers to human beings in general, not just one person. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

male and female he created them

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. Alternate translation: [He also made them to be male or female]

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them

See how you translated **blessed** in verse 22. Alternate translation: [Then God showed his favor to them] or [Then God caused them to prosper]

and God said to them

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. Alternate translation: [and said] or [He said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Be fruitful

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. Alternate translation: [Bear many children] or [You will bear many children] (See: **Blessings (p.1576)**)

and multiply

Alternate translation: [so that you and your descendants will multiply greatly in number] or [so that you and your descendants will become very many] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1591)**)

and fill the earth

For some languages, it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and inhabit the whole earth] or [Fill the earth]

and subdue it

Alternate translation: [and take care of it] or [and bring it under your control]

And rule

See how you translated **rule** in verse 26. Alternate translation: [You must rule over] or [I am giving you authority to rule]

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

See how you translated these phrases in verse 26. Alternate translation: [the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly in the sky]

and over every living thing that moves on the earth

This phrase refers generally here to every kind of creature that lives on land. Alternate translation: [and every animal that moves on the land] or [and all the animals that move on the land]

Genesis 1:29

Then God said

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 it may be to emphasize what he says next. So if it is natural to keep the quote margin here in your language, that is best. Alternate translation: [Then God also said to them] or [Then he added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

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. Alternate translation: [Look] or [Listen to this] or [I want you to know that] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

I have given to you

Alternate translation: [I am now giving to you as 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

See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 11 and 12. Alternate translation: [every kind of seed-bearing plant that grows] or [every kind of plant with seeds that grows] or [all the different kinds of plants that yield seeds and grow]

on the surface of the whole earth

Alternate translation: [anywhere throughout the earth]

and every tree that {has

Alternate translation: [as well as every kind of tree that bears] or [and all the different kinds of trees that bear]

tree fruit {that} yields seed inside it

See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 11 and 12. Alternate translation: [seed-bearing fruit]

They will be yours for food

Alternate translation: [You may eat from any of those plants]

Genesis 1:30

And to every living thing of the earth

See how you translated similar phrases in verses 24 and 25. Alternate translation: [In the same way, to every kind of wild creature that lives on the land] or [Likewise, to all the wild creatures that live on the land] or [In the same way, to all the wild animals]

and to every bird of the sky

Alternate translation: [and every kind of bird that flies in the sky]

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

See how you translated “that moves on the earth” in verse 28. Alternate translation: [and every other kind of creature that moves on the land and has the breath of life] or [and all the other creatures that move on the earth and breathe air to live]

I have given} every green plant for 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. Alternate translation: [I give every kind of green plant as food] or [I have given all the green plants as food] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And it was so

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. Alternate translation: [And it was exactly as God said it would be]

Genesis 1:31

Then God saw

See how you translated “God saw ...” in verse 4. Alternate translation: [Then God observed]

all that he had made

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. Alternate translation: [everything that he had created]

and behold

This word calls attention to what God is looking at and helps emphasize that what he saw was very good. Alternate translation: [and indeed] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

it was} very good

Consider again how you translated “good/excellent” in verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31. Alternate translation: [it was all very good]

Then there was evening, and there was morning

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. Alternate translation: [Then evening came, and then morning came]

the sixth day

Alternate translation: [and the sixth day ended] or [and that was the end of day six] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1685)**)

Genesis 2

Genesis 2:1

So the heavens and the earth were completed

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. Alternate translation: [So it was that the heavens and the earth were finished by God] or [That is how God concluded making the heavens and the earth] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1556)**)

Genesis 2:2

by the seventh day

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. Alternate translation: [By day seven] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1685)**)

And & God had completed

Decide whether it is better in your language to refer to God with a title (**God**) or a pronoun (**he**) in this context. Alternate translation: [he had completed] or [God was finished with] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

so he rested on the seventh day from all

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.” Alternate translation: [so he ceased on that day from all] or [so on the seventh day he no longer did]

his work that he had done

Alternate translation: [the work that he had been doing]

Genesis 2:3

And God blessed 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. Alternate translation: [Then he designated the seventh day as a day to bless people] or [He honored the seventh day] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

and sanctified it

Alternate translation: [and made it a holy day] or [and set it apart as a day especially devoted to him] or [by setting it apart as a special day for people to rest and worship him]

because on it

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [because during that day] or [He did that because during that day]

he rested from all his work

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 2. Alternate translation: [he ceased from all the work] or [he did not do any more work]

of creating that God had done

Alternate translation: [of creating that he had been doing] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 2:4

These {are

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. Alternate translation: [These are more details about] or [This is more about] or [What follows gives more details about]

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

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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

in the day {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. Alternate translation: [during the days when] or [During the days when]

Yahweh God

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.") Alternate translation: [God whose name is Yahweh]

made the earth and the heavens

This clause forms a poetic device called 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. Alternate translation: [created the earth and the heavens] (See: **Poetry (p.1692)**)

Genesis 2:5

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

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. Alternate translation: [Now for a while, there were not yet any shrubs in the fields on the earth] or [For a while, no wild shrubs had yet started growing on the earth] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

and every plant of the field had not yet sprung up

See how you translated “plants” in Gen 1:11-12, 29-30. Alternate translation: [nor had any other plants started growing yet]

because Yahweh 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. Alternate translation: [because he] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

had not caused it to rain on the earth

See how you translated **earth** in Gen 1:1 and 2:1. Alternate translation: [had not yet caused it to rain on the earth] or [had not yet caused rain to water the earth]

and there was no man

Alternate translation: [and there were no human beings yet] or [and mankind did not exist yet]

to work the ground

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. Alternate translation: [to farm the land] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 2:6

But mist

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. Alternate translation: [But at that time mist] or [At that time mist] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

came up

This verb describes a repeated or continuous action. Alternate translation: [seeped up]

from the earth

Alternate translation: [from the ground] or [from underground]

and watered

Alternate translation: [and irrigated] or [and spread over]

all of the surface of the ground

Alternate translation: [the whole surface of the earth] or [the ground everywhere]

Genesis 2:7

Then Yahweh God formed

The word **formed** describes what an expert craftsmen would do; it implies artistic skills and design. See how you translated **Yahweh God** in Gen 2:4-5. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh who is God shaped]

the 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 else to not use an article at all. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [the first man]

out of} dust

The word used here in the Hebrew text is usually translated as **dust** (as in Gen 13:16, 28:14), but it can also be translated as “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. Alternate translation: [out of mud]

from the ground

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. Alternate translation: [from the earth]

and he breathed

For some languages, it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and he blew] or [Then he exhaled]

into his nostrils the breath of life

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.1701)**)

and the man became a living being

Consider what is the most natural way in your language to refer to the man throughout verse 7. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

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.1563)**)

a garden

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. Alternate translation: [a large park]

in Eden, in the east

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). Alternate translation: [in the region called Eden, which was to the east] or [in the eastern part of the land of Eden]

and there he put the man

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

whom he had formed

See how you translated **formed** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [whom he had shaped] or [whom he had created]

Genesis 2:9

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

See how you translated **Yahweh God** in verse 5, and how you translated **every tree** in Gen 1:29. Alternate translation: [There he had caused to grow from the ground every type of tree that is beautiful] or [He had made all kinds of trees to grow from the ground that are pleasant] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

to the sight

Alternate translation: [to the eyes] or [in appearance]

and good

Alternate translation: [and that have fruit that is good] or [and whose fruit is good]

for food

Alternate translation: [for eating]

and the tree of life in the middle of the garden

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [including the tree whose fruit gives people eternal life, which was in the middle of the garden]

and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

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. Alternate translation: [as well as the tree whose fruit enables people to discern what is right and what is wrong]

Genesis 2:10

And a river was going out

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. Alternate translation: [Now a river was flowing] or [A river was flowing] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

from Eden

The garden was inside the land of Eden, so as the river flowed through Eden, it watered the garden. Alternate translation: [from the land of Eden]

to water

See how you translated “watered” in verse 6. Alternate translation: [to irrigate] or [to provide water for] or [that watered]

the garden

See how you translated this phrase in verse 8. Alternate translation: [the park]

and from there

For some languages it is better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and from the garden] or [From Eden]

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

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. Alternate translation: [The first river is named] or [The first river is]

Pishon

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.1634)**)

It winds through

The words **winds** or “meanders” mean 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. Alternate translation: [It meanders through] or [which flows around]

all of the land of Havilah

Be consistent in how you translate **land of** throughout this section. Alternate translation: [the whole region called Havilah] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

where gold {is

Alternate translation: [a place where there is much gold] or [which has a lot of gold]

Genesis 2:12

And the gold of that land

This sentence emphasizes the previous statement about the gold and gives more information about it. Alternate translation: [In fact, the gold from that land] or [Indeed, the gold that is found in that land]

is} good

Alternate translation: [is very pure] or [is very high quality]

Bdellium

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. Alternate translation: [A kind of sweet-smelling resin called bdellium] or [A kind of fragrant perfume] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and onyx stone

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. Alternate translation: [and valuable stones called onyx] or [and valuable gemstones] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

are} there

Make sure the verb tense you choose here fits with the way you translated verse 11. Alternate translation: [are also found there] or [are also in that land]

Genesis 2:13

And the name of the second river {is

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 11. Alternate translation: [The name of the second river is] or [The second river is named] or [The second river is] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

It winds 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. Alternate translation: [It meanders through] or [which wanders throughout]

all of the land of Cush

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 11. Alternate translation: [the whole region of Cush]

Genesis 2:14

And the name of the third river {is

Alternate translation: [The name of the third river is] or [The third river is named] or [The third river is]

It goes east of

The word **east** refers to where the river was located, not the direction it was flowing. Alternate translation: [It flows in an area east of] or [which flows in an area east of] or [which was located east of]

Asshur

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. Alternate translation: [the land of Asshur] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

And the fourth river {is

See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 11 and 13-14. Also consider again whether it is best in your language to use present tense or past tense in verses 10-14. Alternate translation: [The name of the fourth river is] or [and the fourth river is] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Euphrates

Consider again how you translated the names of rivers in verses 11, 13-14. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1634)**)

Genesis 2:15

And Yahweh God took the man and put him

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. Alternate translation: [Now Yahweh God had already situated the man] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

in the Garden of Eden

Notice that **Garden** is capitalized when it is part of a name. Alternate translation: [in the garden in the land called Eden] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

to work it

See how you translated **work** in verse 5. Alternate translation: [to farm it] or [so that he would farm it]

and tend it

Alternate translation: [and maintain it]

Genesis 2:16

Then Yahweh God commanded the man, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Then he directed the man] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them** (p.1701))

From every tree of the garden you may freely eat

Alternate translation: [You may eat all the fruit you want to eat from every tree in the garden] or [You are permitted to eat whatever fruit that you want to eat from every tree in the garden]

Genesis 2:17

but you must not eat from the tree of

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." Alternate translation: [except you may not eat any fruit from the tree] or [except for one: you may not eat the fruit that grows on the tree] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

the knowledge of good and evil

See how you translated this phrase in verse 9. Alternate translation: [whose fruit enables people to discern what is good and what is wrong]

because on the day you eat from it

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [because on the same day that you eat fruit from that tree] or [If you eat any fruit from that tree, on that same day] or [for as soon as you eat fruit from that tree]

you will surely die

Alternate translation: [you will certainly die]

Genesis 2:18

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

Alternate translation: [Next, Yahweh who is God declared, “It is not good]

a suitable helper for him

Alternate translation: [a helper who is just right for him] or [someone who is right for him and will help him]

Genesis 2:19

Now Yahweh God had formed from the ground

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. Alternate translation: [Now before that, Yahweh God had shaped from the dust on the ground] or [Now previously, he had used dust from the ground to form] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

every living thing of the field

Consider how you translated a similar phrase (“every living creature of the earth”) in Gen 1:24, 30. Alternate translation: [every type of creature that lives in the fields] or [all the different kinds of animals that live in the fields] or [all the different kinds of wild animals]

and every bird of the sky

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 1:30. Alternate translation: [and every kind of bird that flies in the sky] or [and all the different kinds of birds that fly in the sky] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.1664)**)

So he brought {them

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. Alternate translation: [So he took them all] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

to the man

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. Alternate translation: [to Adam] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

to see

Alternate translation: [to watch] or [to find out]

what he would call them

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

and whatever the man called

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and whatever Adam called] or [Whatever name the man assigned to]

a living creature

Alternate translation: [each kind of living creature] or [each type of animal]

that {was} its name

Alternate translation: [that became its name] or [that became the name of that type of animal]

Genesis 2:20

And the man gave names to all the livestock

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. Alternate translation: [The man assigned names to all the different types of livestock] or [Adam named all the different types of tame animals]

and to the bird{s} of the sky

Alternate translation: [and to all the different types of birds that fly in the sky] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.1664)**)

and to every living thing of the field

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 19. Alternate translation: [and to all the other different types of creatures that live in the wild] or [and to all the wild animals]

but for the man a suitable helper was not found

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. Alternate translation: [but he could not find a fitting helper for himself among them] or [but none of them was a helper who was just right for him] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1556)**)

Genesis 2:21

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

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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh God caused the man to go into a deep sleep] or [Then Yahweh God made the man sleep very deeply] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And {while} he was sleeping

Consider whether it is best in your language to use a pronoun or a noun here to refer to the man. Alternate translation: [Then while the man was sleeping] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

then he took

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. Alternate translation: [he took out] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

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

In this context, the term **flesh** probably includes muscles and skin. Alternate translation: [and filled in the hole where it had been with flesh and healed it] or [and replaced it with flesh and healed him]

Genesis 2:22

Then Yahweh God built

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. Alternate translation: [Next he] or [After that, he] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

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

See how you translated **rib** in verse 21 and see the note about that there. Alternate translation: [used the part which he taken from the man to construct a woman from it]

and he brought her to the man

See how you translated **brought** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [Then he took her to Adam] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

Genesis 2:23

And the man said

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. Alternate translation: [Then the man said] or [When the man saw her, he said] or [When the man woke up and saw the woman, he said] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

This {one} now

Alternate translation: [Now there is a person who] or [At last here is a person like me who] or [Ahh! Here is someone like me who]

is} bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh

Alternate translation: [was made out of my own bones and flesh!]

She will be called '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

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [because she was taken by God from the body of a man] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 2:24

For that {reason

Alternate translation: [That is why]

a man will leave

Alternate translation: [a man who marries must leave] or [when a man gets married, he must move away from]

and he will cling to 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. Alternate translation: [and he must join with his wife] or [and he must live in close relationship with his wife] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and they will become

Some languages have a special dual pronoun for **they** that fits well here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p. 1622)**)

one flesh

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. Alternate translation: [completely one] or [joined in body and spirit] or [united like one person] (See: **Idiom (p. 1645)**)

Genesis 2:25

And the man and his wife were both naked

Alternate translation: [Now at that time both the man and his wife were naked] or [At that time the man and his wife did not wear any clothes]

but they were not ashamed

Some languages have an idiom for this clause that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [but yet they were not embarrassed about it] or [but yet they did not feel embarrassed about being naked]

Genesis 3

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent

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.1581)**)

was more crafty than every living thing of the field

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. Alternate translation: [was more deceptive and clever than any of the other creatures that live in the wild]

that Yahweh God had made

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. Alternate translation: [that Yahweh who is God had made] or [that God whose name is Yahweh had made]

And he said to the woman

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. Alternate translation: [One day the snake went to the woman and asked her] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Did God really say, ‘You must not eat

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [Did God actually command you to not eat] or [Is it true that God commanded you not to eat] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

from any tree of the garden

See how you translated **garden** in Genesis 2, beginning in verse 8. Alternate translation: [fruit from any of the trees that is in the garden?] or [any fruit from the trees in the garden?]

Genesis 3:2

Then the woman said to the serpent

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. Alternate translation: [The woman answered the snake, saying] or [The woman responded to him] or [The woman replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We may eat

The woman is not including the snake when she says “we” here. Alternate translation: [No, we have permission from God to eat] or [No, God has given us permission to eat] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

from the fruit of

See how you translated **fruit** in Gen 1:11-12, 29. Alternate translation: [the fruit from]

the tree{s} of the garden

Alternate translation: [all of the trees 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

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. Alternate translation: [except fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden] or [except there is one tree that we may not eat fruit from, which is in the center of the garden] (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1727)**)

God said, 'You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it, or else you will die

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [God told us to not eat any of that fruit or touch it, or else we will die!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

or else you 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. Alternate translation: [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!"] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 3:4

But the serpent said to the woman

See how you translated **serpent** in verses 1-2. Alternate translation: [But the snake replied to her] or [But the snake replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 3:5

For God knows

The connecting word **For** introduces an explanation here. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Alternate translation: [Actually, he knows] or [The reason God said that is because he knows]

that on the day

Alternate translation: [that if]

you eat from it

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. Alternate translation: [you eat any of that fruit] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

then your eyes will be opened

Consider whether your language has an idiom like **your eyes will be opened** that would fit well here. Alternate translation: [your mind will be opened] or [you will gain new understanding] or [you will know new things] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and you will be like God in knowing good and evil

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. Alternate translation: [and as a result you will be like God because you will know what is good and what is evil] or [so that you will know what is good and what is evil, just like God does]

Genesis 3:6

And the woman saw that

Alternate translation: [The woman observed that]

the tree

The word **tree** refers here to the fruit that is produced by that tree. Make sure that is clear in your translation.

Alternate translation: [the tree produced fruit that] or [the fruit of that tree] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

was} good for food

Alternate translation: [was good to eat]

and that it {was} pleasant to the eyes

Alternate translation: [and that the tree itself looked very beautiful]

and {that} the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and she thought that the fruit from the tree would make her wise]

So she took some of its fruit and ate {it

Alternate translation: [So she took some of the fruit off the tree and ate it]

and he ate {it

Alternate translation: [and he ate some too] or [and he also ate it]

Genesis 3:7

Then the eyes of them both were opened

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. Alternate translation: [Immediately it was as if their minds were opened] or [Immediately they both had new understanding] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and they knew

Alternate translation: [so that they became aware]

that they {were} naked

The author assumes that his readers will understand that this sense of nakedness led to a sense of shame. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [that their bodies were bare, and they felt ashamed] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

So they sewed & 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. Alternate translation: [So they joined together] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

fig leaves

Historical facts should not be changed in a translation, including the historical fact that Adam and Eve used the leaves of the fig tree 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.” Alternate translation: [some large leaves from a fig tree] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and made aprons for themselves

These aprons/skirts probably covered them from the waist down to somewhere around the knees. Alternate translation: [and used them as aprons to cover their bodies] or [and wore them around their waists to cover their bodies] or [and used them to make clothes for themselves]

Genesis 3:8

Then they 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. Alternate translation: [Then the man and his wife heard] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

the sound of Yahweh God walking

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. Alternate translation: [the sound of Yahweh God's steps as he walked]

in the garden

Alternate translation: [around in the garden] or [through the garden]

in the breeze of the day

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. Alternate translation: [late in the afternoon, in the breezy time of the day] or [late that day when there was a cool breeze blowing] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

but the man and his wife hid

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. Alternate translation: [so they hid themselves] or [so they tried to hide themselves] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

from the presence of Yahweh God

Consider what is the best way to refer to Yahweh at this point in the paragraph in your language. Alternate translation: [from Yahweh God] or [from his sight] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

among the tree{s} of the garden

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. Alternate translation: [in the midst of the trees in the garden] or [behind some trees there] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.1664)**)

Genesis 3:9

So Yahweh God called

See how you translated this name for God in verses 1 and 8. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh God called out]

to the man and said to him

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. Alternate translation: [to the man and asked him] or [to Adam] (See:

Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704))

Where {are} you

Notice that the word **you** is singular here because God is only addressing the man. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624))**

Genesis 3:10

And he said

Alternate translation: [He answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I heard your sound

See how you translated **sound** in verse 8. Alternate translation: [I heard your voice] or [I heard the sound of your voice as you walked]

in the garden

Alternate translation: [through the garden]

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

Alternate translation: [but I was naked, so I 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

Make sure your translation of **he** refers to Yahweh here, not the man. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh God asked him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Who told you that you {were} naked

The pronoun **you** is still singular here. Alternate translation: [What made you realize that you were naked?] or [How did you find out that you were naked?] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

that I commanded you not to eat from

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.1707)**)

Genesis 3:12

Then the man said

Alternate translation: [But the man replied to him] or [The man answered him]

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

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. Alternate translation: [The woman whom you put here to live with me, she is the one who] or [It was the woman you gave to me who]

gave me {fruit} from the tree

See how you translated **fruit** in verses 1-6. Alternate translation: [gave me some fruit from that tree]

and I ate {it

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [That is why I ate it]

Genesis 3:13

Then Yahweh God said to the woman

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh God asked the woman] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} this 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. Alternate translation: [What have you done?] or [Tell me what you have done] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And the woman said

Alternate translation: [Then the woman answered] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The serpent

This phrase is emphasized in the Hebrew text. Alternate translation: [It was the snake that]

deceived me

Alternate translation: [lied to me]

so I ate {it}

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [so I ate some of that fruit] or [That is why I ate it]

Genesis 3:14

Because you have done this

Alternate translation: [Since you did that] or [Since you tricked the woman]

you are cursed

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. Alternate translation: [you are cursed by me] or [I will cause you to suffer] or [I will punish you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

above all the livestock

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. Alternate translation: [more harshly than all the tame animals]

and above every living thing of the field

See how you translated **every living thing of the field** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [and more harshly than all the creatures of the fields] or [and more harshly than all the wild animals]

You will move on your belly

Alternate translation: [As a result, you will move on the ground on your stomach]

and you will eat dust

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. Alternate translation: [and you will eat dirt with your food]

all the days of your life

Alternate translation: [your entire life]

Genesis 3:15

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

Alternate translation: [I will also cause you and the woman to be enemies with each other, and your offspring and her offspring to also be enemies]

He

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, her offspring] or [In fact, one of her descendants] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

will strike you {on} the head, and you will strike him {on} the 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. Alternate translation: [will crush your head, and you will bruise his heel] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said

Consider what is the best way to refer to God here in your language. Alternate translation: [Then he said to the woman] or [Then Yahweh God turned to the woman and said to her] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

To multiply I will multiply your pain

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb **multiply** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I will cause you to have much pain] or [I will cause childbirth to be very painful] (See: **Reduplication (p.1710)**)

in pain you will bear children

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. Alternate translation: [yes, you will suffer much pain when you give birth] or [yes, bearing children will be very painful for you] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [and he will control you] or [and he will lord it over you]

Genesis 3:17

Then to the man he said

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. Alternate translation: [Next God said to the man] or [Next Yahweh God turned to Adam and said to him]

Since you listened to the voice of your wife

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. Alternate translation: [Since you disobeyed me and did what your wife said] or [Since you did what your wife told you to do] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [from which I told you not to eat any fruit] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

the ground is cursed because of you

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. Alternate translation: [the ground is cursed by me because of what you did] or [I have cursed the ground because you sinned] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

By painful toil you will eat {from} it

Alternate translation: [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 get enough food to eat] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

all the days of your life

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. Alternate translation: [every day of your life] or [for your entire life] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 3:18

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

The thorn and thistle plants represent all types of weeds, which are useless and possibly harmful plants. Alternate translation: [In fact, the ground will produce thorn plants and thistle plants and other weeds] (See: **Synecdoche (p. 1720)**)

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

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 loaves of 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. Alternate translation: [Only by the sweat of your face will you be able to have enough food to eat] or [You will have to work hard and sweat a lot in order to have enough food to eat] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

until you return to the ground

Alternate translation: [until you die and again become dust]

since from it you were taken

Alternate translation: [which you were made from by me] or [which I took you from] or [which I made you out of]

For

This sentence rephrases and emphasizes what God just said. Alternate translation: [Indeed] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

you {are} dust

Alternate translation: [your bodies were made by me from dust] or [I made you out of dust]

Genesis 3:20

Then the man called the name of his wife

Some translations use Adam's name here because he is naming Eve. See what you did in verse 17. Alternate translation: [Then Adam called his wife] or [Then the man gave his wife the name] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Eve

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.1634)**)

because

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He did that because]

she was the mother of

Alternate translation: [she would be the ancestor of]

Genesis 3:21

and he clothed them

Alternate translation: [and he dressed them] or [and he put the garments on them]

Genesis 3:22

Then Yahweh God said

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. Alternate translation: [Then he said] or [Then he said to himself] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Behold

This word expresses emotion and calls attention to what God says next. See how you translated this term in Gen 1:29. Alternate translation: [Listen] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

the man

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. Alternate translation: [the man and his wife] or [mankind] or [human beings] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

has become like one of us

The pronoun **us** is inclusive because God is talking to himself. Alternate translation: [have become like us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

in knowing good and 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

See how you translated “took/picked ... fruit” in verse 6. Alternate translation: [So now, they must not be allowed by us to also pick] or [So we must not allow them to also pick] or [So now we must do something so that they can not also pick]

fruit} from the tree of life and eat it

See how you translated **the tree of life** in Gen 2:9. Alternate translation: [fruit from the tree of eternal life and eat some of it]

and live forever

Alternate translation: [and so live forever!] or [which would make them live forever!]

Genesis 3:23

So Yahweh God sent him

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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh God banished the man and his wife] or [So then Yahweh God forced them to leave] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1729)**)

out of the Garden of Eden

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 2:15. Alternate translation: [the garden in the land of Eden]

to work the ground

See how you translated **work the ground** in Gen 2:5 and “work it” in 2:15. Alternate translation: [to farm the land]

which he had been taken from

It does not refer to the exact ground that he was made from. See how you translated **taken from** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [from which they had been taken by him] or [from which he had taken them]

Genesis 3:24

And after he drove the man out

Alternate translation: [Then after God drove the man and his wife out of the garden] or [After God banished them from the garden]

then he placed

Alternate translation: [then he stationed] or [then he placed]

on the east side of the Garden of Eden

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. Alternate translation: [on the east side of the garden at its entrance] or [at the entrance to the garden, which was on its east side] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

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. Alternate translation: [some powerful beings called cherubim angels] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1724)**)

and a flaming sword

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. Alternate translation: [and a fiery sword] or [and a sword made of flames] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

that was turning in every direction

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

to guard the way of

Alternate translation: [to keep everyone away from the way that leads to] or [so that no one could go near]

the tree of life

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 2:9 and 3:22. Alternate translation: [the tree of eternal life] or [the tree whose fruit gives people eternal life]

Genesis 4

Genesis 4:1

Then the man

For a note about when to begin referring to the man as Adam, see Gen 2:19. Alternate translation: [Then the man Adam] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

knew Eve his wife

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. Alternate translation: [slept with his wife Eve] or [was intimate with his wife Eve] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and she conceived and bore

Translate this clause in a way that will not embarrass people, especially when read aloud. Alternate translation: [so that she became pregnant and later gave birth to] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Cain

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. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

And she said, "I have obtained

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. 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. Alternate translation: [because she exclaimed, "I have obtained"] or [They named him that because Eve had said, "I have obtained"] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

a man

For some languages it is confusing to refer to a newborn baby as a man. Do what is clear and natural in your language. Alternate translation: [a male child] or [a boy] or [a baby boy]

with Yahweh

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. Alternate translation: [with help from Yahweh!] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 4:2

Then she continued on to bear

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. Cain and Abel may have been twins, or Abel may have been born sometime later, when 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. Alternate translation: [Then she also gave birth to] or [After that, Eve gave birth to] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

his 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.1660)**)

Abel

Alternate translation: [whose name was Abel]

Now Abel became

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. Alternate translation: [Now when the boys had grown up, Abel] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

a keeper of flock{s

A flock can be a large group of sheep or goats, or a mixture of both. Alternate translation: [was a keeper of sheep] or [was a shepherd] or [raised sheep and goats] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and Cain

Consider what is the best way in your language to contrast Cain and his work with Abel and his work. Alternate translation: [but Cain] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

became a worker of the ground

Cain raised crops, not animals. See how you translated a similar phrase (“work the ground”) in Gen 2:5. Alternate translation: [was a tiller of the soil] or [was a crop farmer] or [grew food crops] (See: **Background Information (p. 1563)**)

Genesis 4:3

And it happened in the course of days

These phrases introduce an important new event. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Alternate translation: [Then one day it happened that] or [As time went on one day] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

that Cain brought

Alternate translation: [Cain offered]

some of the fruit of the ground

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. Alternate translation: [some of the crops that he had raised in his fields] or [some of the edible plants that he had harvested from his fields] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1626)**)

as} an offering to Yahweh

The term **offering** refers to something that is given. Alternate translation: [to Yahweh as an gift to worship him]

Genesis 4:4

And Abel also brought

There is a contrast between Abel and Cain and between their offerings. Alternate translation: [Abel also offered an offering to Yahweh, but what he gave was] or [But Abel gave to Yahweh]

some of the firstborn of his flock{s

See how you translated **flocks** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [some of the firstborn animals from his sheep]

and some of their fat

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. Alternate translation: [and some of the fat portions of the meat] or [and some of their best parts] or [and the best parts of the meat] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

And Yahweh looked {favorably} on

Alternate translation: [Yahweh was happy with] or [Yahweh accepted]

Abel and his offering

Alternate translation: [Abel and his sacrifice] or [Abel and what he gave to him]

Genesis 4:5

But he did not look {favorably} on Cain

See how you translated “looked favorably on” in verse 4. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh was not happy with Cain] or [However, he did not accept Cain]

and his offering

Alternate translation: [and his gift] or [and what he gave to him]

So Cain burned with intense anger

Many languages have a similar idiom that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [So Cain was extremely angry] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and his face fell

Alternate translation: [and his face showed that he was angry] or [and he scowled] or [and his face showed it] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 4:6

Then Yahweh said to Cain

The way you translate this quote margin should fit with the way that you translated the following three rhetorical questions. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh asked Cain] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [Why are you so angry? And why are you scowling?] or [There is no reason for you to be angry and scowling] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 4:7

will {you} not {be} accepted

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. Alternate translation: [you know that you will be accepted by me] or [you know that I will be pleased with you and your gift too] or [I will accept you and your gift too] (See: **Rhetorical Question** (p.1711))

But if you do not do right

Alternate translation: [But if you do what is wrong]

sin is crouching

In verse 7 sin is personified, that is, it is treated as if it were alive, like a lion or some other fierce animal preparing 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.” Alternate translation: [then sin is like a dangerous animal that is waiting] or [then sin will be waiting like a wild animal] (See: **Personification** (p.1690))

at the door

Alternate translation: [outside the door of your heart to tempt you]

and its desire {is} for you

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Sin wants to destroy you]

but you must rule over it

Alternate translation: [but you must master it so that you do not sin] or [but you must keep it from destroying you] or [but you must keep it from doing that]

Genesis 4:8

Then Cain spoke

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. Alternate translation: [Later, Cain spoke] (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p. 1596)**)

to Abel his brother

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. Alternate translation: [with his brother Abel] (See: **Textual Variants (p.1722)**)

And it happened while they were in the field

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. Alternate translation: [So they went out to the field to work together, but while they were there] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Abel his brother

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. Alternate translation: [his own brother Abel] or [his own brother] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

Genesis 4:9

Then Yahweh said to Cain

Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh asked Cain] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Where {is} Abel your brother

See how you translated “Abel ... brother” in verse 8. (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

And he replied

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. Alternate translation: [Then He said to him] or [He answered him] or [He retorted] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I do not know

Alternate translation: [How should I know that?]

Am I my brother's keeper

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. Alternate translation: [Am I in charge of my brother?] or [Is it my responsibility to take care of my brother?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 4:10

Then he said

Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Yahweh, not Cain. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh asked] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

What have you done

God uses this rhetorical question to condemn what Cain had done. Consider whether or not a rhetorical question works well here in your language. Alternate translation: [What you have done is very horrible!] or [You have done a horrible thing!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

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

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.1690)**)

Genesis 4:11

So now

Alternate translation: [Therefore from now on] or [Because of what you did]

you are cursed

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Also see how you translated this in Gen 3:14. Alternate translation: [you are cursed by me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

from the ground

Alternate translation: [so that you will not be able to grow food from the soil] or [so that you are banished from farming the soil] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [which is covered with blood from your brother] (See: **Personification (p.1690)**)

from your hand

Alternate translation: [when you killed him]

Genesis 4:12

When

Alternate translation: [As a result, whenever]

you work the ground

See how you translated **work the ground** in Gen 2:5 and 3:23; also see similar phrases in 4:2, 11. Alternate translation: [you try to farm the soil] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

it will not continue to yield its strength for you

Alternate translation: [it will no longer grow good crops for you] or [it will not grow enough food for you anymore]

You will be

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and you will also]

You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth

The phrase **a fugitive and a wanderer** forms a hendiadys, a phrase that expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. Consider what is the best way to translate that phrase in your language. Alternate translation: [be a homeless outcast on the earth] or [be rejected by people so that you have no permanent home and have to move from place to place] (See: **Hendiadys (p.1630)**)

Genesis 4:13

Then Cain said to Yahweh

Alternate translation: [But Cain replied to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

My punishment {is} greater

Alternate translation: [Your punishment of me will cause me more suffering] or [You are punishing me more harshly] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1554)**)

than I can bear

Alternate translation: [than I am able to cope with]

Genesis 4:14

Behold

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. Alternate translation: [Listen] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

today you are driving me

See how you translated “drove/expelled” in Gen 3:24. Alternate translation: [today you are forcing me away] or [you have now prevented me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

from the surface of the ground

Alternate translation: [from working the land]

and I will be hidden from your presence

This clause is probably an idiom that means Cain will be cursed and no longer blessed by God. Alternate translation: [and I will be separated from you] or [and you will no longer bless me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

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

See how you translated this phrase in verse 12. Alternate translation: [I will be a fugitive who wanders around on the earth without a permanent home] or [I will be a wandering outcast on the earth] (See: **Hendiadys (p.1630)**)

everyone who finds 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 felt. Alternate translation: [anyone who meets me will kill me!] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

Genesis 4:15

Then Yahweh said to him

Alternate translation: [So Yahweh said to him] or [Yahweh said to Cain] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

For that {reason

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. Alternate translation: [In that case] (See: **Textual Variants (p.1722)**)

anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance

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. Alternate translation: [I will warn everyone that if anyone kills you, I will take revenge on him for you] or [I will make it clear to everyone that I will take revenge on anyone who kills you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Then Yahweh put a mark on Cain

We do not know exactly how Yahweh marked Cain, so keep your translation of this clause general (like the Hebrew text is). Alternate translation: [Then he put a special symbol on Cain] or [Then he marked Cain with a special mark] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

so that everyone who found him would not strike him

The phrase **strike him** is used here as an idiom that means “kill him.” Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [so that anyone who saw him would not kill him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 4:16

Then Cain went away

Alternate translation: [After that, Cain went away]

from the presence of Yahweh

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

and lived

Alternate translation: [and settled] or [and started living]

in the land of Nod

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.1634)**)

east of Eden

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. Alternate translation: [which was east of the land called Eden] or [which was east of Eden Land]

Genesis 4:17

Then Cain knew his wife

See how you translated this idiom in Gen 4:1. Alternate translation: [Then Cain slept with his wife] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and she conceived and bore

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

And he was building a city

Make sure that your translation of this clause refers to Cain, not Enoch. Alternate translation: [Now at that time, Cain was in the process of constructing a city] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

so he called the name of the city

Alternate translation: [so he called the city]

after the name of his son Enoch

Alternate translation: [Enoch, after his son] or [Enoch, the same name as his son]

Genesis 4:18

Then to Enoch was born

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. Alternate translation: [Later on, Enoch fathered] or [When Enoch grew up, he fathered] or [Enoch was the father of] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

Irad

Alternate translation: [a son whose name was Irad]

and Irad fathered

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. Alternate translation: [Then Irad fathered] or [When Irad grew up, he had] or [Irad was the father of]

Mehujael

Alternate translation: [a son whose name was Mehujael]

and Mehujael fathered

Alternate translation: [Mehujael was the father of]

Methushael

Alternate translation: [a son whose name was Methushael]

and Methushael fathered

Alternate translation: [Then Methushael fathered] or [When Methushael grew up, he had] or [Methushael was the father of]

Genesis 4:19

Then Lamech took for himself two wives

In this context, the phrase **took for himself** is an idiom that means “married.” Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom. Alternate translation: [Then Lamech grew up, and he chose two women to be his wives] or [When Lamech grew up, he married two women] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 4:20

Jabal

Alternate translation: [a son whose name was Jabal]

He was

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [who was] or [who grew up and became]

the father of {those} who live

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. Alternate translation: [the first of all people who] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

those} who live {in} tents

A tent is a portable living space that has walls made of cloth or animal skins; they are 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. Alternate translation: [are tent dwellers] or [live in portable shelters] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and own livestock

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. Alternate translation: [and raise animals for a living] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 4:21

And the name of his brother {was} Jubal

Jubal was probably younger than Jabal. See how you translated **brother** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [Jabal had a brother named Jubal] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

He was

Alternate translation: [who was] or [He grew up and became]

the father of all

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 20. Alternate translation: [the ancestor of all people who]

who play harps and flutes

Alternate translation: [play musical instruments called lyres and pipes] or [play stringed instruments and wind instruments] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 4:22

also bore

Alternate translation: [also became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him]

Tubal Cain

Be consistent with how you spell this name both times in verse 22. Alternate translation: [Tubal-Cain] or [Tubal-cain] or [Tubalcain] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

who forged

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 this skill. Alternate translation: [He was the first person to forge] or [He was the first blacksmith and forged] or [He was the first of all people who forge] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

all {kinds} of tools out of bronze and iron

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. Alternate translation: [all kinds of tools and other things out of brass and iron] or [all kinds of brass and iron things] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1626)**)

Genesis 4:23

And Lamech said

Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this new event. Alternate translation: [One time, Lamech said proudly] or [One day, Lamech boasted] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

to his wives, Adah and Zillah

Be consistent with how you spelled these names in verses 19-20, 22-23.

hear my voice

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. Alternate translation: [listen to what I am going to tell you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Wives of Lamech, give ear to my word{s

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**. Alternate translation: [My wives, listen to me carefully] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

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

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [Since God has promised to avenge Cain seven times, then] or [Cain is avenged by God seven times, but] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

then Lamech {is avenged} seventy-seven 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. Alternate translation: [I, Lamech avenge myself seventy-seven times!] or [I avenge myself 77 times!] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

Genesis 4:25

Then Adam knew his wife again

See how you translated the idiom **knew** in 4:1, 17. Alternate translation: [Then Adam slept with his wife Eve again] or [Again Adam had marital relations with his wife Eve] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and she bore a son

Alternate translation: [so that she conceived and had a son] or [with the result that she became pregnant and gave birth to a son] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

and she called his name

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 3:20. Alternate translation: [and she gave him the name]

because {she had said

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. Alternate translation: [She named him that because when he was born, she had exclaimed] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

God has appointed for 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. Alternate translation: [God has given to me]

in place of Abel

Alternate translation: [to take the place of Abel]

since Cain killed him

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. Alternate translation: [whom Cain murdered] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 4:26

And to Seth also a son was born

The word order in the Hebrew text here emphasizes Seth. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Later on, Seth also had a son]

Then

Alternate translation: [At that time] or [That is when]

people} began to call on the name of Yahweh

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. Alternate translation: [people began to address God by his name, Yahweh, as they worshiped him] or [people began to praise Yahweh by name] or [people first called Yahweh by name in their prayers and worship] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 5

Genesis 5:1

This {is

Alternate translation: [What follows is]

the generations of Adam

Alternate translation: [about Adam and his descendants:]

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

See how you translated **created** in Gen 1:1, 27; 2:4, and “man” in Gen 1:26-27. Alternate translation: [On the day that God made human beings, he made them]

in the likeness of God

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

Genesis 5:2

He created them male and female

See how you translated this clause in Gen 1:27.

and he blessed them

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. Alternate translation: [He blessed them] or [He said that he would make them prosper]

and called their name

See how you translated the phrase “called ... name” in Gen 4:17, 25, 26. Alternate translation: [and called them] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

man{kind

Be consistent here with how you translated this term in verse 1. (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1626)**)

on the day they were created

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. Alternate translation: [on the same day that they were created by him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 5:3

And Adam lived 130 years, then he fathered {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 and thirty” here. Be consistent in what you do throughout your translation. Alternate translation: [When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son] or [When Adam was 130 years old, he fathered a son] (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

in his own likeness, according to his image

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. Alternate translation: [who was a human being like himself and looked like him] (See: **Doublet (p.1611)**)

and he called his name Seth

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and Adam named him Seth] or [Adam named his son Seth] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 5:4

And the days of Adam after he fathered Seth were

Alternate translation: [After he had Seth, he lived] or [After Seth was born, Adam lived]

800 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. Alternate translation: [800 more years] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and he fathered

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. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Adam also had] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 5:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 5:6

And Seth lived 105 years

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. Alternate translation: [After Seth had lived 105 years] or [After Seth was 105 years old] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

then he fathered 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). Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Enosh] or [he had a son they named Enosh] or [he had a son whose name was Enosh] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 5:7

Then after he fathered Enosh, Seth lived

In fact, throughout chapter 5, make sure it is clear in your translation whom each pronoun refers to. Alternate translation: [After he had Enosh, he lived] or [After Enosh was born, Seth lived] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

807 years

Alternate translation: [807 more years]

and he fathered

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. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Seth also had] or [He was also the father of]

Genesis 5:8

So all the days of Seth were 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. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 912 years] or [All together he lived 912 years] (See: **How to Translate Names** (p. 1634))

Genesis 5:9

And Enosh lived ninety years

See how you translated the beginning of a similar new paragraph in this genealogy at verse 6. Alternate translation: [After Enosh had lived 90 years] or [After Enosh was 90 years old] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

Genesis 5:10

Then after he fathered Kenan, Enosh lived

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 7, and see the notes about that there. Alternate translation: [After he had Kenan, he lived] or [After Kenan was born, Enosh lived] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

815 years

Alternate translation: [815 more years]

and he fathered

Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Enosh also had] or [He was also the father of]

Genesis 5:11

So all the days of Enosh were 905 years

Make sure that the name **Enosh** is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 6-7, 9-11. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 905 years] or [All together he lived 905 years] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and he died

Alternate translation: [before he died]

Genesis 5:12

And Kenan lived seventy years

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. Alternate translation: [After Kenan had lived seventy years] or [After Kenan was seventy years old] (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

Genesis 5:13

Then after he fathered Mahalalel, Kenan lived

Alternate translation: [After Kenan had Mahalalel, he lived] or [After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

840 years

Alternate translation: [840 more years]

and he fathered

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Kenan at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Kenan also had] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 5:14

So all the days of Kenan were 910 years

Make sure that the name **Kenan** is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 9-10, 12-14. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 910 years] or [All together he lived 910 years] (See: **How to Translate Names** (p. 1634))

and he died

Alternate translation: [before he died]

Genesis 5:15

And Mahalalel lived sixty-five years

Alternate translation: [After Mahalalel had lived 65 years] or [After Mahalalel was 65 years old]

Genesis 5:16

Then after he fathered Jared, Mahalalel lived

Alternate translation: [After he had Jared, he lived] or [After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

830 years

Alternate translation: [830 more years]

and he fathered

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [He also fathered] or [He was also the father of]

Genesis 5:17

So all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years

Make sure that the name **Mahalalel** is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 12-13, 15-17. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 895 years] or [All together he lived 895 years] (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1634)**)

and he died

Alternate translation: [before he died]

Genesis 5:18

And Jared lived 162 years

Alternate translation: [After Jared had lived 162 years] or [After Jared was 162 years old]

Genesis 5:19

Then after he fathered Enoch, Jared lived

Alternate translation: [After Jared had Enoch, he lived] or [After Enoch was born, Jared lived]

800 years

Alternate translation: [800 more years]

and he fathered

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Jared at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Jared also had] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 5:20

So all the days of Jared were 962 years

Make sure that the name **Jared** is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 15-16, 18-20. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 962 years] or [All together he lived 962 years] (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1634)**)

and he died

Alternate translation: [before he died]

Genesis 5:21

And Enoch lived sixty-five years

Consider again how you translated double-digit numbers in verses 9, 12, 15, 21. Alternate translation: [After Enoch had lived 65 years] or [After Enoch was 65 years old]

Genesis 5:22

after he fathered Methuselah

Alternate translation: [After he had Methuselah] or [After Methuselah was born]

Then & Enoch walked 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. Alternate translation: [Enoch lived faithfully with God] or [Enoch lived in a faithful relationship with God] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

300 years

Alternate translation: [for 300 more years]

and he fathered

Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Enoch also had] or [He was also the father of]

Genesis 5:23

So all the days of Enoch were 365 years

Make sure that the name **Enoch** is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 18-19, 21-24. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 365 years] or [All together he lived 365 years]

Genesis 5:24

And Enoch walked with God

Alternate translation: [All his life Enoch lived in a faithful relationship with God]

and {then} he was not {there

Alternate translation: [and suddenly he was not on earth anymore] or [and he suddenly disappeared from earth]

because God took him away

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.1651)**)

Genesis 5:25

And Methuselah lived 187 years

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. Alternate translation: [After Methuselah had lived 187 years] or [After Methuselah was 187 years old]

Genesis 5:26

Then after he fathered Lamech, Methuselah lived

Alternate translation: [After he had Lamech, he lived] or [After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived]

782 years

Alternate translation: [782 more years]

and he fathered

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Methuselah at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [He also fathered] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 5:27

So all the days of Methuselah were 969 years

Make sure that the name **Methuselah** is spelled consistently in your translation of verses 21-22, 25-27. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 969 years] or [So all together he lived 969 years] (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.1634))

and he died

Alternate translation, without the preceding comma: [before he died]

Genesis 5:28

And Lamech lived 182 years

Alternate translation: [After Lamech had lived 182 years] or [After Lamech was 182 years old]

Genesis 5:29

and he called his name

Alternate translation: [whom he named] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Noah

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 that it is clear why he was given that name. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

saying

What Lamech says next is the reason why he named his son Noah. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Alternate translation: [He named him that because he had said about him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

This {one} will comfort us

Alternate translation: [This son will relieve us] or [This son will give us relief]

from our labors and from the toil of our hands

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. Alternate translation: [from the difficult labor and work we have to do with our hands] or [from the agonizing work that we have to do] (See: **Doublet (p.1611)**)

because of the ground which Yahweh has cursed

Alternate translation: [as we farm the ground that Yahweh has cursed]

Genesis 5:30

Then after he fathered Noah, 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. Alternate translation: [After he fathered Noah, he lived] or [After Noah was born, Lamech lived]

595 years

Alternate translation: [595 more years]

and he fathered

Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Lamech also had] or [He was also the father of]

Genesis 5:31

So all the days of Lamech were 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. Alternate translation: [So he lived a total of 777 years] or [All together he lived 777 years] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and he died

Alternate translation: [before he died]

Genesis 5:32

And Noah was a son of 500 years

Here, **a son of 500 years** is a common expression that means “was 500 years old.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And Noah saw his 500th year] or [Noah turned 500 years old] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

then Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth

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: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

then Noah fathered

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. Alternate translation: [he fathered]

Genesis 6

Genesis 6:1

And 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.1581)**)

when

Alternate translation: [that as] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

mankind

See how you translated **mankind** in Gen 5:1-2. Alternate translation: [human beings]

began to multiply

Alternate translation: [began to increase in number] or [began to be more numerous]

on the surface of the earth

Alternate translation: [throughout the world]

and daughters were born to them

Alternate translation: [and they were having many daughters]

Genesis 6:2

then & saw

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. Alternate translation: [Then when those girls grew up] or [When those daughters grew up]

the sons of God

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. Alternate translation: [some angels] or [some supernatural beings] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

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

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [so they married any of them that they wanted to marry]

Genesis 6:3

Then Yahweh said

The implication is that Yahweh is speaking 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. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh said to himself] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [because they are very sinful] or [because they are only sinful mortals] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [Giants called the Nephilim] or [Giants] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

in those days and also after that

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.1651)**)

when

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [That was when]

the sons of God

Be consistent here with how you translated this phrase in verse 2, and see the important note about that there. Alternate translation: [angels] or [supernatural beings]

went to

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. Alternate translation: [slept with] or [had sexual relations with] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

the daughters of mankind

See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [human women]

and they bore children for them

Alternate translation: [and those women had children fathered by the sons of God]

They {were

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. Alternate translation: [Those children grew up and were the Nephilim, who were] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

the mighty {ones

Alternate translation: [the powerful men] or [heroes]

who {were} from long ago

Alternate translation: [who lived a long time ago] or [who lived many years ago]

the men of renown

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. Alternate translation: [who were famous men] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 6:5

And Yahweh saw

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. Alternate translation: [Yahweh knew] or [Yahweh was aware] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

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

Alternate translation: [how evil mankind had become on the earth] or [that the people on the earth had become very wicked]

and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts

In Hebrew culture the heart is considered the center of thoughts and desires. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom. Alternate translation: [and that every desire they had in their minds] or [and that everything they thought about and wanted] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

all day long

Alternate translation: [constantly]

Genesis 6:6

So Yahweh was sorry

Alternate translation: [As a result, Yahweh regretted] or [So Yahweh regretted] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

that he had made mankind

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. Alternate translation: [that he had created them] or [that he had created human beings] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and he was grieved in his heart

Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. Alternate translation: [and his heart was filled with pain] or [and he was very sad] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 6:7

Then Yahweh said

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. The implication is that Yahweh is speaking to himself. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Then he said to himself] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

I will wipe away

Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. Alternate translation: [I will wash away] or [I will blot out] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

mankind whom I created off the surface of the ground

Alternate translation: [all the human beings whom I created, from the surface of the earth]

both mankind and animals

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [In fact, I will destroy not just all the people, but also all the animals]

and crawling creatures

Alternate translation: [and the creatures that move on the ground]

and the birds of the sky

It might seem that the expression **birds of the sky** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [and all the birds] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.1664)**)

because I am sorry

See how you translated “was sorry” or “regretted” in verse 6. Alternate translation: [because I am sad]

that I made them

Alternate translation: [that I ever created them]

Genesis 6:8

But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh

The idiom **found favor** means “pleased 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. Alternate translation: [But Noah pleased God] or [However, Yahweh was pleased with Noah] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 6:9

These {are} the generations of Noah

Some of Noah's history has already been given in Gen 5:29, 32, and 6:8. What follows tells more about him.

Alternate translation: [This is more of the record of Noah and his family:] or [What follows tells more about Noah and his family:] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

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.1701)**)

a righteous man

Alternate translation: [a good man]

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. Alternate translation: [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. 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. Alternate translation: [His contemporaries considered him to be a man of integrity] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Noah walked 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. Alternate translation: [and he walked closely with God] or [and he lived in a faithful relationship with God] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 6:10

And Noah fathered

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. Alternate translation: [Eventually he had] or [And as mentioned before, he had]

three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth

Alternate translation: [three sons, namely Shem, Ham, and Japheth]

Genesis 6:11

Now the earth was corrupt

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. Alternate translation: [Now the people of the earth had become corrupt] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the earth was filled {with} violence

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. Alternate translation: [and they had filled the earth with their destructive brutality] or [and all over the earth they were forcefully doing harm] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

Genesis 6:12

And 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

See how you translated “corrupt” and **the earth** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [that everyone on the earth was very wicked] or [how dishonest everyone on the earth had become] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

because all flesh on the earth

The phrase **all flesh** refers here to all people and probably implies that people are mortal (verse 3). Alternate translation: [because everyone living on earth] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

had corrupted its way

Alternate translation: [were living wicked lives] or [were continually doing wicked things]

Genesis 6:13

So God said to Noah

Alternate translation: [Then God said to Noah]

The end of all flesh has come before me

Be consistent here with how you translated **flesh** in verse 12. Alternate translation: [I have decided to put an end to all human beings] or [I am going to destroy all flesh] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

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

See how you translated **violence** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [because they have filled the earth with their brutality] or [because all over the earth they are doing harmful things]

So behold, I

This phrase draws extra attention to what God says next. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Alternate translation: [Now listen] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

am destroying them

Alternate translation: [I plan to destroy them] or [I will destroy them]

with the earth

This phrase includes everything on the earth, not just the people. Alternate translation: [as well as everything else on the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 6:14

Make

Alternate translation: [Consequently, you must make] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

an ark

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. Alternate translation: [a very large houseboat] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1604)**)

out of gopher wood

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. Alternate translation: [from cypress wood, which is good for building boats] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Make the ark {with} rooms

Alternate translation: [Build the ark with stalls inside] or [Make rooms inside the ark]

and cover it inside and outside

Alternate translation: [and completely coat it inside and outside]

with a covering

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. Alternate translation: [with pitch to keep water out] or [with pitch to keep the boat from leaking]

Genesis 6:15

And this {is} how you must make it

Alternate translation: [Build the ark with these dimensions] or [You must build the ark like this:]

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

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. Alternate translation: [It must be 140 meters long, 23 meters wide, and 14 meters high] or [It must be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high] (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1566)**)

Genesis 6:16

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

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. Alternate translation: [Build a skylight for the boat by finishing the sides of the ark to within one cubit below the top of the ark] or [Build a half-meter high window between the top of the sides of the ark and its roof all the way around, to let light and air in] (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1566)**)

And put the door of the ark in its side

Some translations begin this sentence without a conjunction (**And** or “Also”). Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Also put a door in the side of the ark] or [Put a door for the ark in its side] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

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

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Build a lower deck, a middle deck, and an upper deck on the inside] or [and build a lower, middle, and upper story on the inside] or [and make three complete floors on the inside]

Genesis 6:17

And I, behold, 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. Alternate translation: [Behold, I myself] (See: **Pronouns (p.1699)**)

am bringing floodwaters on the earth

Alternate translation: [am going to send an excessive water on the whole earth] or [am going to flood the entire earth with water]

to destroy

See how you translated **destroy** in verse 13. Alternate translation: [in order to destroy]

all flesh

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). Alternate translation: [all the beings] or [every creature]

that {has} the breath of life in it

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 1:30. Alternate translation: [that breathes air]

from under the heavens

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. Alternate translation: [from under the sky] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Everything that {is} on the earth

Alternate translation: [So, every living being that lives on land]

will expire

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. Alternate translation: [will breathe out its last breath!] or [will perish!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 6:18

But I will establish

The word **establish** means to deliberately and formally put something into effect. Alternate translation: [However, I will make] or [However, I will set up] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

my covenant with 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.” Alternate translation: [a covenant between me and you] or [a peace agreement between me and you]

so you must go into the ark

Alternate translation: [so you must enter the ark]

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

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [Also, from every kind of living creature, yes, from every kind of animal, you must take pairs of each kind into the ark] or [You must also bring into the ark pairs of every kind of living creature, including every kind of animal]

to keep alive with you

Alternate translation: [in order to keep them alive with you]

They must be male and female

Alternate translation: [They must be pairs with one male and one female each] or [Make sure that each pair has one male and one female]

Genesis 6:20

From the birds according to their kinds

Alternate translation: [Males and females of every type of bird]

and from the animals according to their kinds

Alternate translation: [and of every kind of animal]

from every moving creature of the ground according to its kind

This phrase emphasizes that the birds and animals mentioned in the first half of this verse lived on land. Alternate translation: [including every kind of creature that lives on the land]

two from every {kind} 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. Alternate translation: [two of every kind of animal will come to you] or [two of each kind of animal will come to you] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

to keep alive

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses, since the second clause explains the purpose for the action that the previous clause describes. Alternate translation: [to keep them alive on the ark] or [so that you keep them alive in the ark] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1591)**)

Genesis 6:21

And you

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. Alternate translation: [You and your family] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

must take with you

Alternate translation: [must also gather and take]

some of every food

Alternate translation: [all kinds of food]

that is eaten

Alternate translation: [that is eaten by people and animals] or [that you and all the animals will need]

and store it with you

Alternate translation: [and put it on the ark with you]

and it will be food

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [This will be the food supply]

for you

Consider again how you translated the pronoun **you** in this verse. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

Genesis 6:22

And Noah did {that

Some translations begin verse 22 without a conjunction. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Noah did all of that]

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

Alternate translation: [he did all the things just as God had told him to do]

Genesis 7

Genesis 7:1

Then Yahweh said to 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. Alternate translation: [Then after they had finished building the ark Yahweh told Noah] or [After the ark was finished, Yahweh told Noah] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

Go into the ark, you and all your household

See how you translated “ark/boat” in Gen 6:14-16. Alternate translation: [Board the ark along with your entire family] or [You and your entire family must get into the ark]

because I have seen

Alternate translation: [because I have found] or [because I see]

that} you {are} righteous

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. Alternate translation: [that you alone are upright] or [that you are the only one who is living rightly] or [... living the right way]

before me

Alternate translation: [in my eyes] or [according to my will]

in this generation

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.1651))

Genesis 7:2

From every clean animal

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. Alternate translation: [From every kind of pure animal] or [From every kind of animal that is acceptable to sacrifice]

take with you

The pronoun **you** is singular in the Hebrew text, but could be translated as a plural to include Noah's family. Alternate translation: [bring with you] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1624)**)

seven pairs, a male and its female

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

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

Alternate translation: [and from every kind of impure animal] or [and from every kind of animal that is not acceptable to sacrifice]

take} two, a male and its female

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. Alternate translation: [take a male and female pair] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 7:3**also**

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and also] or [In addition]

from {every} bird of the sky

Alternate translation: [from every type of bird that flies in the sky] or [from every type of bird]

take} seven pairs, male and female

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.1651)**)

to keep {their} offspring alive

Alternate translation: [so that later they will have offspring that will live]

on the surface of the whole earth

Alternate translation: [and spread all over the earth] or [to repopulate the whole earth]

Genesis 7:4

because

For many languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [The reason you must do that is] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

in seven more days

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. Alternate translation: [seven days from now]

I will cause it to rain

Alternate translation: [I will send rain]

on the earth

Alternate translation: [all over the world]

for} forty days and forty nights

This phrase refers to forty complete 24-hour days.

and I will wipe

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. Alternate translation: [in order to blot out] or [That will wash away] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

every living thing that I have made

See how you translated a similar phrase (“living creature”) in Gen 6:19. Alternate translation: [all the living things that I have made]

off the surface of the ground

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. Alternate translation: [off the surface of the earth] or [off the land] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 7:5

Then Noah did all that

Alternate translation: [So Noah did everything that] or [So Noah did everything exactly as]

Yahweh had commanded him

See how you translated Gen 6:22 which is similar to 7:5. Alternate translation: [Yahweh had told him to do]

Genesis 7:6

Now Noah {was} a son of 600 years

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. Alternate translation: [He was 600 years old] (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

when the floodwaters came on the earth

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. Alternate translation: [when the earth was covered with deep water] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 7:7

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

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. Alternate translation: [That is when Noah and his wife, and his sons and their wives, went together into the ark]

from the presence of

Alternate translation: [because of] or [to escape from] or [to keep them safe from]

the waters of the flood

Alternate translation: [the floodwaters]

Genesis 7:8

Pairs} from the clean animal{s} and from the animal{s} that are not clean

See how you translated **clean** and “unclean” animals in verse 2. Alternate translation: [Also, every kind of clean animal and every kind of unclean animal]

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

Alternate translation: [came to Noah in pairs and went into the ark] or [came in pairs and entered the ark with Noah]

male and female

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Each pair had one male and one female]

just as God had commanded Noah

Alternate translation: [which was exactly what God had told Noah to bring along]

Genesis 7:10

And it happened

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. Alternate translation: [Then]

after the 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. Alternate translation: [after seven days] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

then the waters of the flood came on

Alternate translation: [the floodwaters started to come on] or [water started to cover]

the earth

Alternate translation: [the whole earth]

Genesis 7:11

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life

Compare how you translated Noah's age in verse 6. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1685)**)

in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month

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.1651)**)

on that day

Alternate translation: [on that same day] or [that is the day when]

all the fountains of

Alternate translation: [all the underground water sources]

burst open

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. Alternate translation: [split open] or [started gushing out water] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and the windows of the heavens were opened

This metaphor describes the beginning of a very heavy rainfall; it does not refer to actual windows. Alternate translation: [and all the windows in the sky were opened by God] or [God also caused the water in the heavens to start coming down, as if he had opened huge faucets in the heavens] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

Genesis 7:12

so that the rain fell

Alternate translation: [so that heavy rain poured continuously]

on the earth

Alternate translation: [all over the world]

forty days and forty nights

See how you translated this phrase in verse 4.

Genesis 7:13

On that same day

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. Alternate translation: [So it was that on the very same day that the rain started]

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

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 7. Alternate translation: [Noah and his wife and their sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their three wives all]

went into the ark

Alternate translation: [boarded the ark]

Genesis 7:14

they and every

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They took with them every]

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

Alternate translation: [every kind of 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

This phrase probably refers not only to birds, but also to other creatures that have wings and fly, such as bats and insects. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 7:15

So they went to Noah into the ark

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 9. Alternate translation: [They came to Noah and came into the ark] or [They entered the ark with Noah]

two {by} two from all flesh

The word **flesh** refers here to any kind of creature or animal. Alternate translation: [pairs of every kind of animal] or [pairs of every kind of living thing] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

which {has} in it the breath of life

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.1651)**)

Genesis 7:16

And those that went in

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. Alternate translation: [The pairs that came into the ark] or [Those animals] (See: **Go and Come** (p.1628))

from all flesh

See how you translated **all flesh** in verse 15. Alternate translation: [of every kind of creature] or [of every kind of living thing] (See: **Synecdoche** (p.1720))

they went in just as God had commanded him

See how you translated “just as God commanded him” in verse 9. Alternate translation: [which was exactly what God had commanded him to bring along]

Then Yahweh shut him in

Alternate translation: [After that, Yahweh shut them in the ark] or [Then after they were all inside, Yahweh shut the door of the ark behind him]

Genesis 7:17

Then the flood came

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. Alternate translation: [After that the floodwaters kept getting deeper and deeper] or [The water kept coming] (See: **Connect** — **Sequential Time Relationship** (p.1596))

for} forty days

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. Alternate translation: [for forty days and forty nights] (See: **Information Structure** (p.1651))

and the waters increased

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [it lifted up the ark so that it floated on the water high above the earth] or [it made the ark rise up off the ground and float]

Genesis 7:18

And the waters rose

Verse 18 repeats some of verse 17 to emphasize what happened. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language. Alternate translation: [So the floodwaters continued to rise and get much higher] or [Yes, the water continued ...] or [The water continued ...] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

on the earth

Alternate translation: [all over the world]

and the ark went

Alternate translation: [but the ark floated safely] or [so that the ark moved about]

on the surface of the waters

Alternate translation: [on the surface of the water] or [on top of the water]

Genesis 7:19

And the waters rose very greatly on the earth

Alternate translation: [At last, the waters became very deep over the world, so that] or [Eventually the water became so deep on the world that]

so that & were covered

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. Alternate translation: [were covered by water] or [were submerged in water] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1556)**)

Genesis 7:20

The waters rose fifteen cubits above {them

See how you translated **cubits** in Gen 6:15-16. Alternate translation: [In fact, the highest mountain tops were covered by at least twenty-two feet of water] (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1566)**)

so that the mountains were covered

See how you translated **were covered** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [so that they were completely covered with water] or [... completely submerged in water] or [... completely under water] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 7:21

all flesh

This phrase refers to everything listed in verse 21, including people. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 6:17. Alternate translation: [Then all the beings] or [Then every creature] or [Then every living thing]

that moved on the earth

Alternate translation: [that moved on the ground]

Then & expired

See how you translated this idiom in Gen 6:17. Alternate translation: [breathed out its last breath] or [perished] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

including the birds and the livestock

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [including all the birds, the tame animals]

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

Alternate translation: [including every kind of animal that lived in large numbers on the earth]

and all mankind

Alternate translation: [in addition to all the human beings]

Genesis 7:22

Everything that {had} the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 15. Alternate translation: [Every living thing that breathed air]

everything that {lived} on dry land, died

Alternate translation: [and was on dry land died]

Genesis 7:23

So he wiped away

See how you translated this idiom in verse 4. Alternate translation: [That is how Yahweh washed away] or [In that way, Yahweh blotted out] or [... completely destroyed]

every living thing

See how you translated this phrase in verse 4. Alternate translation: [every living creature] or [all living things]

that {was} on the surface of the ground

See how you translated **the surface of the ground** in verse 4. Alternate translation: [that was on the surface of the earth] or [that were on the land]

including mankind

See how you translated **mankind** in verse 21. Alternate translation: [including all mankind]

and livestock and crawling creatures

Alternate translation: [and all the livestock and all the other animals that moved on the ground] or [and all the animals, including smaller animals that crawl on the ground]

and also the birds of the sky

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

See how you translated “wipe ... off” in verse 4. Alternate translation: [All of them were completely washed off the earth by God] or [He completely destroyed them all from the earth] or [Yes, God completely destroyed everything that lived on the earth] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and only Noah was left

Some translations leave out the first conjunction and begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [so that only Noah was left alive, along with] or [so that the only ones who were left alive were Noah and] or [Only Noah survived, along with]

and {those} who {were} with him in the ark

Alternate translation: [and his family and the animals that were with him in the ark] or [along with his family ...]

Genesis 7:24

And the waters prevailed over

Alternate translation: [Deep water continued to flood] or [The floodwaters stayed deep over]

the earth {for} 150 days

See how you handled a large number in verse 6. Alternate translation: [the entire earth for 150 days] (See: **Numbers (p.1678)**)

Genesis 8

Genesis 8:1

But God remembered

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. Alternate translation: [God kept in mind] or [But God did not forget] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Noah

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.1559)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [all the tame animals that were with him in the ark] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and God caused a wind to pass over

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and he sent a wind over] or [So God sent a wind to blow over] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

the earth

Alternate translation: [the water that was over the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the waters subsided

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. Alternate translation: [so that the water started to recede] or [so that the water level started to go down] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 8:2

And the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed

See how you translated some of the same words and phrases in Gen 7:11. Alternate translation: [He also caused the fountains in the deep ocean to stop gushing out water, and he caused the rain to stop pouring from the sky] or [God also stopped the water from gushing out of springs at the bottom of the ocean, and the rain from coming from the heavens] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

and the rain from the heavens was stopped

Consider whether it is better in your language to use an active or a passive verb here and in the previous clause. Alternate translation: [so that rain stopped falling from the sky] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 8:3

Then the waters receded steadily

Alternate translation: [Then the floodwaters gradually went down]

from the earth

Alternate translation: [from the surface of the ground]

at} the end of the 150 days

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. Alternate translation: [so that after the 150 days had passed]

the waters

Make sure the way you translate this phrase fits with the way you translated the beginning of the verse. Alternate translation: [the water level] or [it]

and {& had decreased

Alternate translation: [had subsided]

Genesis 8:4

so that & rested

Alternate translation: [so low that] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month

See how you translated a similar time phrase in Gen 7:11. (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

so that & the ark rested

Alternate translation: [the ark came to rest] or [the ark landed]

on the mountains

The ark landed on one mountain in a mountain range. Alternate translation: [on a mountain] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

of Ararat

Alternate translation: [in the land of Ararat]

Genesis 8:5

And the waters

Alternate translation: [Then the water] or [The water]

continued to decrease

See how you translated “decreased” in verse 3. Alternate translation: [continued to go away] or [kept subsiding]

until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first of the month

See how you translated a similar time phrase in verse 4. Alternate translation: [until the tenth month of the year. On the first day of that month] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

the tops of the mountains

Alternate translation: [the mountaintops]

could be seen

Alternate translation: [could be seen above the water by Noah] or [appeared above the surface of the water] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 8:6

Then it happened {at} the end of forty days

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.1654)**)

that Noah opened the 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

Alternate translation: [that he had made in the ark]

Genesis 8:7

and he sent out

Alternate translation: [and he set free]

the 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. Alternate translation: [a large black bird called a raven] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and it kept flying out and returning

Alternate translation: [which continued flying back and forth outside the boat] or [but it kept flying around outside the boat]

until the waters

Alternate translation: [until the floodwaters]

dried up from the earth

This phrase refers to the ground/land (as verse 8 confirms), not the entire planet. Alternate translation: [had dried up more from the ground]

Genesis 8:8

Then he sent out

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. Alternate translation: [Then he also sent out] or [Then he also released] (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1598)**)

the dove from him

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. Alternate translation: [a dove that was with him] or [a dove from the ark] or [a small bird called a dove] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

to see if the waters had subsided

Alternate translation: [to find out if the floodwaters had receded]

from the surface of the ground

Alternate translation: [from the surface of the land] or [from the ground]

Genesis 8:9

But the dove did not find

Consider what is the best way to refer to the dove at this point in the paragraph in your language. Alternate translation: [But the dove could not find] or [But it was not able to find] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

a resting place for the sole of its foot

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. Alternate translation: [anywhere to perch and rest]

so it returned

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [So it returned] or [So the dove flew back]

to him in the ark

Alternate translation: [flew back to him at the ark]

for the waters {were} over the face of all of the earth

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. Alternate translation: [because water was still covering the entire world] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And he reached out his hand

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [So he reached out] or [and he reached out]

to him into the ark

Alternate translation: [back to himself in the ark] or [back into the ark]

Genesis 8:10

Then he waited

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin this sentence with or without a conjunction. Alternate translation: [He waited] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

and again sent out the dove from the ark

Alternate translation: [then he sent the dove out from the ark another time] or [then he released the dove from the ark again]

Genesis 8:11

Then the dove returned to him at evening time

Alternate translation: [That evening the dove returned to Noah] or [When it was evening, the dove returned to him]

and behold

Alternate translation: [and surprisingly] or [and Noah saw that]

there was} a freshly picked olive leaf in its mouth

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. Alternate translation: [it was holding a newly picked green leaf from an olive tree in its mouth] or [the dove had a green leaf in its mouth that it had just picked from an olive tree] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

So Noah knew

Alternate translation: [Then Noah realized] or [That is how he knew]

that the waters

Alternate translation: [that the floodwaters]

had subsided

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. Alternate translation: [had receded] or [had gone down more]

from the earth

See how you translated this phrase in verse 7. Alternate translation: [from the ground]

Genesis 8:12

Then he waited another seven days, and he sent out the dove

See how you translated **sent out** in verses 7, 8, and 10. Alternate translation: [He waited another seven days, then he released the dove again] or [After he waited seven more days, he released the dove again]

but it did not return to him again

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. Alternate translation: [but this time it did not fly back to him again because it found a dry place to land] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 8:13

So it happened

Alternate translation: [So it happened that]

in the six hundred and first year

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 7:11.

in the first {month}, on the first {day} of the month

Alternate translation: [in the first month of the year, on the first day of the month] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1685)**)

the waters were drying 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). Alternate translation: [the water was drying up]

from the earth

Alternate translation: [from the ground]

Then Noah removed

Alternate translation: [So he took off part of] or [made an opening in]

the covering of the ark

Alternate translation: [the roof that was covering the ark] or [the roof of the ark]

and looked

Alternate translation: [and looked out]

and behold

See how you translated this phrase in verse 11. Alternate translation: [and indeed]

was drying

Alternate translation: [was drying off]

Genesis 8:14

Then in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month

See how you translated similar time phrases in verses 4, 5, and 13.

the earth

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. Alternate translation: [the ground]

was dry

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

See how you translated **said to Noah** in Gen 7:1. Alternate translation: [So God said to Noah] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 8:16

Go out of the ark

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. Alternate translation: [Come out of the ark] or [Disembark from the ark] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

and the wives of your sons with you

Alternate translation: [and their wives]

Genesis 8:17

Bring out with you

Consider whether “bring” or “take” is more natural here in your language. Alternate translation: [Take with you] or [Take out] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

every living thing that {is

Alternate translation: [all the living things that are]

with you

Alternate translation: [with you in the ark] or [in the ark]

all flesh

See how you translated **flesh** in Gen 7:15-16. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

including the birds and the livestock

Alternate translation: [including the birds, domestic animals]

and every creeper creeping

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

Alternate translation: [on the ground]

so that they will abound on the earth

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then they can spread all over the world]

and be fruitful

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. Alternate translation: [yes, they will have many offspring] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

and multiply

See how you translated **be fruitful** and **multiply** in Gen 1:22, 28. Alternate translation: [and become very many]

over the earth

Alternate translation: [all over the world] or [throughout the earth]

Genesis 8:18

Then Noah went out

Alternate translation: [Then Noah went out of the ark] or [So Noah disembarked from the ark] or [Then Noah got off the ark] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

and his sons and his wife and the wives of his sons with him

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. Alternate translation: [together with his wife and his sons and their wives]

Genesis 8:19

Every living thing

Alternate translation: [Every living creature]

every crawling thing

Alternate translation: [including every animal that crawls] or [including all the creatures that crawl]

everything

Alternate translation: [yes, every creature]

moving on the earth

This phrase refers here to the land, not the entire planet earth. See how you translated this phrase in verse 17.

Alternate translation: [that moves on the ground]

went out of the ark

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. Alternate translation: [also came out of the ark] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

by their families

Alternate translation: [grouped by their kinds] or [one family after another]

Genesis 8:20

Then Noah built an altar

An altar was an elevated, often table-shaped structure made out of stones where certain animals and crops were burned as sacrifices to God. Alternate translation: [Then Noah built an altar out of large stones] or [Then Noah made a sacrifice table with large stones]

to Yahweh

Alternate translation: [dedicated to Yahweh] or [to worship Yahweh]

and he took

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then he chose]

from every clean animal and from every clean bird

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. Alternate translation: [some of every kind of pure animal and one of every kind of clean bird] or [some of every kind of animal and bird that are acceptable to sacrifice]

and he offered burnt offerings on the altar

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. Alternate translation: [and he killed them and offered them as burnt offerings to Yahweh on the altar] or [and he killed them and burned their bodies on the altar as gifts to Yahweh to honor him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 8:21

And Yahweh smelled the pleasant aroma

Alternate translation: [Yahweh smelled the sweet smell of the sacrifices] or [When Yahweh smelled the aroma of the sacrifices, he was pleased]

and Yahweh said in his heart

Consider whether or not your language has this idiom or a similar idiom that would work well here. Alternate translation: [so he said to himself] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Never again will I curse the ground

Make sure that your translation of **curse** does not imply the use of magic. Alternate translation: [I will never again curse the earth]

because of mankind

Alternate translation: [to punish mankind for their sins]

though the inclination of mankind's hearts {is} evil

See how you translated **inclination** in a similar phrase in Gen 6:5. Alternate translation: [even though the desires of their hearts are evil] or [even though everything they desire is evil] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

from their youth

Alternate translation: [from youth onward] or [from the time they are young]

And never again will I

Alternate translation: [I will never again] or [Nor will I ever again]

strike

Consider whether your language has this idiom or a similar idiom that fits well here. Alternate translation: [kill] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

every living {thing}

Alternate translation: [every living creature] or [all living things]

as I have done

Alternate translation: [as I just did]

Genesis 8:22

While all of the days of the earth continue

Alternate translation: [As long as the earth still lasts]

seed time

Alternate translation: [seed-planting time] or [the time for planting seeds]

and harvest

Alternate translation: [and harvest time] or [the time for gathering crops]

and cold and heat

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. Alternate translation: [cold season and hot season] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

and 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.

shall not cease

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. Alternate translation: [will never stop] or [will always continue to occur each year] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 9

Genesis 9:1

Then God blessed Noah and his sons

See how you translated **blessed** in Gen 1:22, 28. Alternate translation: [Then God showed favor to Noah and his sons] or [Then God caused Noah and his sons to flourish]

and said to them

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. Alternate translation: [He said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Be fruitful

Alternate translation: [Bear many children] or [You will bear many children] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and multiply

See how you translated “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” in Gen 1:28. Alternate translation: [so that you and your descendants will increase greatly in number] or [so that you and your descendants will become very many] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1591)**)

and fill the earth

Alternate translation: [and fill the earth with people] or [and inhabit the whole earth] or [and live all over the world]

Genesis 9:2

And the fear of you and the dread of you will be on every living thing of the earth

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. Alternate translation: [Every living thing on the earth will be afraid and terrified of you] or [All the animals on earth will be very afraid of you] (See: **Doublet (p.1611)**)

including on every bird of

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. Alternate translation: [including every bird that flies in the air] or [including all the birds that fly in the sky]

on everything that moves

Alternate translation: [along with every animal that lives on land] or [as well as all animals that live on land]

and on all the fish of the sea

Alternate translation: [and all the fish in the sea]

Into your hand they are given

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. Alternate translation: [I have put you in charge of them all] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 9:3

Every moving creature that lives

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. Alternate translation: [From now on every kind of living thing that moves] or [From now on every animal that is alive and moves]

will be for you for 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. Alternate translation: [is available for you to eat as food] (See:

Information Structure (p.1651))

Just as the green plants

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. Alternate translation: [plants to eat]

I give you everything

Make sure that the way you translate this phrase means that God is now permitting people to eat both plants and animals. Alternate translation: [now I give 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]

Genesis 9:4

But

God is putting a limit on the way that people may eat meat. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

you must not eat flesh

Alternate translation: [you must never eat animal flesh]

with its life, {that is,} its blood

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. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 9:5

And surely I will demand your blood for your lives

Alternate translation: [Also, I will definitely require an accounting for your lifeblood]

From the hand of every living thing

In this verse, the phrase **the hand of** refers to the animal or the person that is responsible for killing someone.

Alternate translation: [From any animal that kills a person] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

I will demand it

Alternate translation: [I will demand its blood] or [I require it to be killed] or [I demand that it must die]

and from the hand of mankind

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and that is also true for human beings]

from the hand of a man {who kills

Alternate translation: [If a man kills] or [If anyone kills]

his brother

This phrase is used here as a general reference to any human being, not just biological brothers. Alternate translation: [a fellow human being] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

I will demand the life of the man

Alternate translation: [I require him to be executed] or [I demand that he must die]

Genesis 9:6

The one shedding

The first half of verse 6 repeats and summarizes verse 5. Alternate translation: [Yes if anyone]

The one shedding the blood 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.

Alternate translation: [Yes if anyone kills] or [Whoever takes the life of] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

a man

Alternate translation: [a person] or [another human being] or [someone]

by mankind his blood must be shed

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. Alternate translation: [people must execute him] or [people must put him to death] or [he must be executed] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

because in the image of God he made mankind

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. Alternate translation: [because I, God made people in my own image] or [because I created human beings to be like myself] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 9:7

And 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. Alternate translation: [And as for you] or [As for you]

be fruitful

See how you translated **be fruitful and multiply** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [bear many children] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and multiply

Alternate translation: [so that you and your descendants become very many] or [so that you have many descendants]

Abound on the earth

Alternate translation: [Live all over the earth]

and multiply

Alternate translation: [and increase in numbers]

on it

Alternate translation: [throughout it]

Genesis 9:8

Then God said

Alternate translation: [Then God continued speaking]

to Noah and to his sons with him, saying

God is still speaking to the same people. This phrase emphasizes what he says next to them. Alternate translation: [to Noah and his sons who were with him, and said] or [to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 9:9

And I, behold, 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. Alternate translation: [Now listen carefully to me: I]

am establishing

See how you translated “establish my covenant with” in Gen 6:18, and see the note about that there. Alternate translation: [am instituting] or [am setting up]

my covenant with you and with your offspring after you

Notice that the pronouns **you** and **your** are plural throughout verses 2-15, since God is speaking to Noah and his sons. Alternate translation: [my special agreement with you and your descendants who come after you] or [my covenant between me and you and your offspring]

Genesis 9:10

and with

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to break up this long sentence and begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [along with] or [The covenant is also with]

and with every living thing of the earth

Alternate translation: [and all the other living things on the earth] or [and all the wild animals]

from all that came 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. Alternate translation: [That includes all those that went out of the ark]

to every living thing

Alternate translation: [and all the living things] or [and all the animals]

living thing of the earth

Alternate translation: [that live on the earth]

Genesis 9:11

And I am establishing my covenant with you

See how you translated **my covenant** and “establish” in verse 9. Alternate translation: [The covenant that I am making with you is that]

that never again & all flesh

The phrase **all flesh** refers here to all people and animals. Alternate translation: [never again will all life] or [never again will all living creatures] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

will & be cut off

Alternate translation: [be killed by] or [be wiped out by] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

by the waters of a flood

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 7:10. Alternate translation: [water from a flood]

and never again will there be a flood

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [I promise that I will never again use a flood]

to destroy

See how you translated “destroying” in Gen 6:13. Alternate translation: [that destroys]

the earth

This phrase refers here to everything that lives on the earth. Alternate translation: [life on the earth] or [all living creatures on the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 9:12

Then God said

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. Alternate translation: [Then God also said to them] or [Then God added] or [Then God continued talking to Noah and his sons] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

This {is} the sign of the covenant that I am making

Alternate translation: [This is the sign which shows that I promise to always keep the covenant that I am making] or [This is how I will remind everyone that I have made this covenant]

for generations forever

Alternate translation: [for all future generations:] or [and with all generations to come:] or [as well as with all the people and creatures that will ever live:]

Genesis 9:13

I have set my rainbow

Alternate translation: [I have put my rainbow] or [I am placing my rainbow]

and it will be the sign of

See how you translated **the sign of the covenant** in verse 12. Alternate translation: [where it will show everyone] or [to show everyone] or [and it will serve as the sign which shows]

the covenant between me and

Alternate translation: [that I have made my covenant with] or [that I pledge to always keep my covenant with]

the earth

This phrase refers here to mankind and all the animals. See how you translated the same phrase in verse 11. Alternate translation: [every living thing on the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 9:14

And it will be when I bring clouds

Alternate translation: [So it will happen that whenever I bring clouds together] or [So whenever I cause clouds to appear]

over the earth

Alternate translation: [in the sky over the earth]

and the rainbow is seen in the clouds

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a passive or active verb here. Alternate translation: [and a rainbow forms among the clouds] or [and you see a rainbow among the clouds] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 9:15

then I will remember my covenant

See how you translated **remember** in Gen 8:1. It may need to be translated differently in different contexts.

Alternate translation: [then I will remember and keep my covenant] or [then I will not forget to keep my treaty] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

that {is} between me and you

Alternate translation: [that I have made between me and you] or [that I have 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

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. Alternate translation: [that never again will there be a flood that destroys] or [I vow that never again will I use a flood to destroy]

of all flesh

Alternate translation: [all life] or [all people and animals]

Genesis 9:16

So the rainbow will be

In verse 16, God repeats and emphasizes what he said in verses 12-15. Alternate translation: [So whenever a rainbow forms] or [That is how it will be: Whenever there is a rainbow]

in the clouds

See how you translated this phrase in verses 13 and 14. Alternate translation: [among the clouds]

and I will see it

Alternate translation: [I will look at it]

to remember

See how you translated **remember** in verse 15. Alternate translation: [and fulfill] or [and not forget to keep] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the everlasting covenant

Alternate translation: [my permanent covenant] or [my covenant that lasts forever] or [my covenant that never ends]

between God and

Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is referring to himself here. Alternate translation: [between me and] or [which I have made with] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

every living creature, with all flesh

See how you translated this phrase in verse 15 and how you translated **every living creature** in verses 10 and 12. Alternate translation: [all living beings of every kind]

that {is} on the earth

Alternate translation: [that are on the earth] or [that live in the world]

Genesis 9:17

Then God said to Noah

Alternate translation: [Finally, God said to Noah] or [Then God finished by saying to Noah] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

the sign of the covenant that I have established

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. Alternate translation: [the sign which shows that I promise to always keep the covenant that I am making] or [what I will use to show everyone that I have made this treaty]

all flesh that {is} 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. Alternate translation: [all living creatures] or [all the people and creatures that are on the earth]

Genesis 9:18

the ark

Be consistent here with how you translated “ark/boat” in chapters 6-8, and see the note about this at Gen 6:14.

Alternate translation: [who went out from the ark after the flood] or [who disembarked from ...] or [who got off ...]

And & were Shem and Ham and Japheth

Consider what is the best way to list names in your language.

and Ham, he

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. Alternate translation: [Ham was the one who]

was} the father of Canaan

Alternate translation: [fathered Canaan]

Genesis 9:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 9:20

Now Noah, a man of the soil, began and planted

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”
Alternate translation: [Now later on, Noah]

a vineyard

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. Alternate translation: [some grapevines and made wine from the grapes] or [a field with grapevines. And he made wine from the grapes] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 9:21

Then he drank some of the wine

Alternate translation: [One day he drank a lot of the wine]

and he became drunk, and he uncovered himself

It is implied from verse 24 that Noah had fallen asleep. Alternate translation: [so that he became so intoxicated that he fell asleep uncovered] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

inside his tent

See how you translated **tent** in Gen 4:20.

Genesis 9:22

the nakedness of his father

Alternate translation: [that his father was uncovered]

and he told his two brothers outside

Alternate translation: [and he went out and told his two brothers that their father was drunk and naked]

Genesis 9:23

But Shem and Japheth took

Alternate translation: [Then Shem and Japheth took]

a garment

This garment would have probably been fairly large, big enough to cover Noah's body. Alternate translation: [a cloak]

and laid it across the shoulders of the two of them

Alternate translation: [put it between them over their shoulders]

and walked backward

Alternate translation: [and went backward into the tent]

and covered the nakedness of their father

Alternate translation: [and used it to cover their naked father]

And their faces were turned away

Alternate translation: [As they did that, they kept their eyes 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

Consider whether it is better here in your language to refer to Noah with a noun phrase or a pronoun. Alternate translation: [so that they did not see his nakedness] or [so that they did not see him naked] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 9:24

Then Noah woke up

Alternate translation: [Later he woke up]

from his wine

Alternate translation: [sober from the effects of the wine] or [sober]

and he learned

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. Alternate translation: [and he heard about]

what his youngest son had done to him

Alternate translation: [that his youngest son Ham had disrespected him]

Genesis 9:25

and he said

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [So he exclaimed about Ham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Cursed be

Alternate translation: [I hereby ask God to curse] or [May God curse]

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

Alternate translation: [I proclaim that he will be]

a slave of slaves

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. Alternate translation: [the lowest slave]

for his brothers

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

Alternate translation: [Then he also said] or [He also said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Praised be 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). Alternate translation: [I praise Yahweh]

the God of Shem

Alternate translation: [who is the God whom Shem worships]

And may Canaan be

Alternate translation: [May he cause Canaan to be] or [May he make Canaan] or [I ask him to make Canaan]

a slave for him

Alternate translation: [a servant for him]

Genesis 9:27

May God enlarge Japheth

In this context, **Japheth** refers to the territory or land where he lived. Alternate translation: [... give Japheth more land] (See: **Metonymy** (p.1674))

and may he live

Alternate translation: [and enable him and his family to live]

in the tents of Shem

Alternate translation: [together in harmony with Shem and his family] or [peacefully among Shem and his family]

And may Canaan be

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 26. Alternate translation: [I also ask God to make Canaan] or [Canaan will also be]

a slave for him

Compare how you translated **slave** or “servant” in verses 25-27. Alternate translation: [a servant for him]

Genesis 9:28

after 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. Alternate translation: [After the time that the flood began] or [From the beginning of the flood] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

And & Noah lived 350 years

Alternate translation: [Noah lived 350 more years]

Genesis 9:29

So all the days of Noah were

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. Alternate translation: [so that Noah lived a total of 950 years] or [So all together Noah lived 950 years]

and he died

Alternate translation: [and then he died]

Genesis 10

Genesis 10:1

Now these {are} the generations of

This sentence begins a new section. Alternate translation: [Here is the list of the names of]

the sons of Noah: 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.1634)**)

and sons were born to them

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). Alternate translation: [and their sons and other descendants who were born] or [and the sons they had]

after the flood

Alternate translation: [after the flood was gone]

Genesis 10:2

The sons of Japheth {were

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

Translate the lists of names in this chapter in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Jubal, Meshech, and Tiras]

Genesis 10:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 10:4

And the sons of Javan {were

Compare how you translated a similar clause in verses 2 and 3.

Elishah and Tarshish

These are the names of Javan's sons, but the next two names are the names of people groups that descended from him. Alternate translation: [named Elishah and Tarshish, and he was the ancestor of] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

the Kittim and the Dodanim

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. Alternate translation: [the Kitt people group and the Dodan people group] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 10:5

From those

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

Alternate translation: [came the people groups who lived in regions beside the sea. They moved to different places and settled]

into their lands

Alternate translation: [in their own regions] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

each with its own language

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). Alternate translation: [They all spoke their own languages]

according to their clans

The word "clan" refers to a group of families who are descended from a common ancestor. Alternate translation: [and each of them lived in their own extended families] or [They each had their own family groups]

in their nations

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. Alternate translation: [and they formed their own people groups] or [which grew and became their own distinct ethnic groups] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 10:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 10:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 10:8

Cush also fathered 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. Alternate translation: [Cush also fathered a son named Nimrod]

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

There were other mighty men before Nimrod, but apparently he was the first one to have a kingdom (verse 10). Alternate translation: [a powerful warrior] or [a powerful king]

on the earth

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. Alternate translation: [in the world] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 10:9

He was a mighty hunter

Alternate translation: [Nimrod was also a excellent hunter]

before Yahweh

Alternate translation: [whom Yahweh helped] or [because Yahweh helped him]

it is said

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. Alternate translation: [we have the saying about other great men:]

Like Nimrod

Alternate translation: [So and so is like Nimrod]

He was a mighty hunter

Alternate translation: [Nimrod was also a excellent hunter]

before Yahweh

Be consistent here with how you translated this phrase earlier in verse 9. Alternate translation: [whom Yahweh helped] or [because Yahweh helped him]

Genesis 10:10

And the beginning of his kingdom was

Alternate translation: [He started ruling as king over] or [The first cities that Nimrod ruled as king were]

in the land of Shinar

Shinar is another name for the land/country of Babylonia. You could put that information in a footnote. Alternate translation: [which were all located in the land called Shinar]

Genesis 10:11

From that land

Alternate translation: [From that region] or [From the land of Shinar]

he went to Asshur

See how you translated “the land/region of/called Asshur/Assyria” in Gen 2:14. Alternate translation: [he moved to the land called Asshur]

and he built

Alternate translation: [and there he built]

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

Alternate translation: [Mizraim was the father of]

the Ludim and the Anamim and the Lehabim and the Naphtuhim

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.1634)**)

Genesis 10:14

and the Pathrusim and the Casluhim (whom the Philistim came from) and the Capthorim

Alternate translation: [Pathrusites, Casluhites (whom the Philistines came from), and Capthorites] or [Pathrusites, Casluhites, and Capthorites. The Philistines came from the Casluhites]

Genesis 10:15

And Canaan fathered

See how you translated **fathered** in verses 8 and 13.

then 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," Alternate translation: [then he had a son named Heth]

Genesis 10:16

and the Jebusites and the Amorites and the 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. Alternate translation: [and Canaan was also the ancestor of the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites]

Genesis 10:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 10:18

And afterward

Alternate translation: [As time went by]

scattered

Alternate translation: [moved to different places]

Genesis 10:19

so the border{s} of the Canaanites were

Alternate translation: [and eventually the borders of their land extended] or [so that eventually the land where they lived extended]

from Sidon

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. Alternate translation: [from Sidon City in the north] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

then} you go toward Gerar as far as Gaza

The Canaanites’ border reached Gaza, but did not extend down to Gerar, which was farther south. Alternate translation: [all the way down toward the city of Gerar to the city of Gaza] or [down to Gaza City, which is on the road to Gerar City] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

as far as Lasha

Alternate translation: [until you reach Lasha City]

Genesis 10:20

Those {are

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. Alternate translation: [Those are the names of] or [Those men are]

the sons of Ham

Alternate translation: [the descendants of Ham]

according to their clans

See how you translated **clans** in verse 5. Alternate translation: [according to their family groups] or [and each one had his own clan] or [and their extended families]

according to their languages, in their lands, in their nations

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. Alternate translation: [Each family spoke its own language and lived in its own territory and eventually became its own people group] or [Each family multiplied and established its own ethnic group that had its own language and lived in its own region]

Genesis 10:21

And sons were also born to Shem

In the Hebrew text, **to Shem** comes first in this sentence after **And**, to emphasize Shem. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Shem also fathered some sons]

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

Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and 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.
Alternate translation: [Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram]

Genesis 10:23

Uz and Hul and 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

Be consistent here with how you spelled "Arpachshad/Arphaxad" in verse 22. Alternate translation: [Arphaxad had a son named Shelah]

Genesis 10:25

Then two sons were born to Eber

Alternate translation: [Then Eber fathered two sons]

The name of the one {was

Alternate translation: [The name of the first son was] or [The first son was named]

Peleg

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.

the earth was divided

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). Alternate translation: [the people on the earth separated into separate groups and scattered everywhere] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

And the name of his brother {was} Joktan

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.1701)**)

Genesis 10:26

And Joktan fathered

Notice that the list of Joktan's sons continues through verse 29. Alternate translation: [Joktan fathered sons named] or [Joktan had the following sons:]

Genesis 10:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 10:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 10:29

and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab

Consider again how you translated lists of names throughout chapter 10.

All those {were

Alternate translation: [All those were the names of] or [All those men were]

Genesis 10:30

And their dwelling was

Alternate translation: [Their dwelling place] or [Their region] or [The area where they and their descendants lived]

And & was from Mesha

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 19. Alternate translation: [extended from the city of Mesha in the west] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

then} you go to Sephar

Alternate translation: [as far as]

to Sephar

Sephar might refer to a city, a mountain, or a region (that was named after the city or mountain). Alternate translation: [the town of Sephar, which is in]

the mountain{s} of the east

The word **mountains** 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. Alternate translation: [the mountain range that is in the east] or [the eastern hill country]

Genesis 10:31

Those {are

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. Alternate translation: [Those are the names of] or [Those men are]

the sons of Shem

Alternate translation: [the descendants of Shem]

according to their clans

See how you translated **clans** in verses 5 and 20. Alternate translation: [and each one had his own clan]

according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations

Alternate translation: [Each family spoke its own language and lived in its own territory, and eventually became its own people group] or [Each family multiplied and established its own ethnic group that had its own language and lived in its own territory]

Genesis 10:32

Those {are} the clans of the sons of Noah

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

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. Alternate translation: [Each clan had its own genealogy and became its own ethnic group]

And from those the nations spread out on the earth after the flood

Consider again how you translated **nations** in verses 5, 20, 31-32. Alternate translation: [From those people came all the ethnic groups who spread out over the earth after the flood] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 11

Genesis 11:1

Now the whole earth had 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. Alternate translation: [Now at first, everyone on the earth shared the same language] or [Now for a while, all the people on the earth spoke one language] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

and the same words

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. Alternate translation: [and shared the same vocabulary] or [and spoke words everyone knew] (See: **Doublet (p.1611)**)

Genesis 11:2

And it happened

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. Alternate translation: [After a while, as] or [When] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

as they migrated

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a pronoun (**they**) or a noun phrase (“the people”) here. Alternate translation: [they traveled] or [the people moved] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

from the east

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. Alternate translation: [around in the eastern regions]

that they found

Make sure the way you translate this phrase fits with the way you translated the first half of this verse. Alternate translation: [they discovered] or [they eventually came to]

a plain in the land of 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. Alternate translation: [a wide flat area in the land called Shinar]

and settled there

Alternate translation: [and lived there] or [and began to live there]

Genesis 11:3

Then they said to 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. Alternate translation: [Then one day they urged each other] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

Come

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.1645)**)

let us make

The pronoun **us** is inclusive here and refers to the people who are talking to each other. Alternate translation: [we should work together and make] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

bricks

Alternate translation: [some mud blocks] or [some blocks from mud] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and bake them with fire

Alternate translation: [and harden them with fire] or [and use fire to bake them] or [and put them over fire to make them hard]

And they had

Alternate translation: [So they did that, and they had] or [They had]

bricks for stones

Alternate translation: [blocks to build with instead of stone]

and they had tar

Alternate translation: [and they used tar between the blocks]

for mortar

Alternate translation: [to hold the blocks together]

Genesis 11:4

Then they said

Alternate translation: [Then they said to each other]

Come

See how you translated this idiom in verse 3.

let us build

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: [let us work together and build]

and a tower

Alternate translation: [that has a high tower] or [with a very tall building]

with its top in the heavens

Alternate translation: [that reaches high into the heavens] or [that reaches up to heaven]

and let us make a name for ourselves, so that we are not scattered

The phrase **make a name for ourselves** is a 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. Alternate translation: [We should do that to make ourselves famous and to keep us from spreading out] or [That way we will become well-known and we will not separate from each other and live] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

over the face of the whole earth

Alternate translation: [all over the world] or [around the world] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 11:5

Then Yahweh came down

Alternate translation: [Then one day Yahweh came down from heaven] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

to see 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. Alternate translation: [and inspected the city]

and the tower

See how you translated this word in verse 4.

had built

Make sure the way you translate this verb fits with the fact that the people had not yet finished building the city (verse 8). Alternate translation: [had started building]

Genesis 11:6

And Yahweh said

Consider what is the best way to refer to Yahweh here in your language. Alternate translation: [And he said (to himself)] or [He said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Behold

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

See how you translated **have one language** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [and they all share the same language]

So this {is} what they have begun to do

Alternate translation: [This is only the beginning of what they will do together]

and now

Alternate translation: [Now]

everything that they plan to do will not be impossible for them

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. Alternate translation: [nothing that they plan to do will be impossible for them] or [anything they attempt to do will be possible for them] or [they will be able to do whatever they try to do] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1608)**)

Genesis 11:7

Come

Alternate translation: [So come on]

let us go down & there

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.

Alternate translation: [let us go to them]

and & confuse their language

Alternate translation: [and scramble their language]

so that they will not understand

Alternate translation: [so that they will not be able to understand] or [so that they cannot understand]

Genesis 11:8

Then Yahweh scattered them from there

Alternate translation: [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 in different places]

over the face of the whole earth

Alternate translation: [over the surface of the entire earth] or [all over the earth] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and they stopped building

Alternate translation: [so that they had to stop constructing]

the city

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.
Alternate translation: [the city and the tower] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 11:9

they called its name

Frequently in the Hebrew text, this phrase has a general meaning and does not refer to someone specific.
Alternate translation: [people named the city] or [the name of that city is] or [the city was named]

Babel

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

Alternate translation: [because it was in that city that Yahweh]

confused

Alternate translation: [scrambled]

the language of the whole earth

Alternate translation: [the language that everyone on the earth spoke]

and from there Yahweh scattered them

Alternate translation: [and in that way Yahweh made them spread out from there]

over the face of the whole earth

See how you translated this phrase in verses 4 and 8. Alternate translation: [over the surface of the entire earth] or [all over the world]

Genesis 11:10

Shem {was} the son of 100 years, then he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood

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. Alternate translation: [Two years after the flood began, when Shem was 100 years old, he had a son named Arphaxad] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 11:11

Then after he fathered Arpachshad, 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. Alternate translation: [After he had Arphaxad, he lived] or [After Arphaxad was born, Shem lived] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

500 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. Alternate translation: [500 more years] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and he fathered

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. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Shem also had] or [He was also the father of]

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:12

And Arpachshad lived thirty-five years

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. Alternate translation: [When Arphaxad had lived 35 years] or [When Arphaxad was 35 years old]

then he fathered Shelah

See how you translated Gen 5:6, which has the same sentence structure as 11:12. Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Shelah] or [he fathered a son they named Shelah] or [he fathered a son whose name was Shelah]

Genesis 11:13

Then after he fathered Shelah, Arpachshad lived

Be consistent with how you spell the name “Arpachshad/Arphaxad” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:22, 24; 11:10-13. Alternate translation: [After he had Shelah, Arphaxad lived] or [After Shelah was born, Arphaxad lived] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

403 years

Alternate translation: [403 more years]

and he fathered

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Arpachshad at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [He also fathered] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:14

And Shelah lived thirty years

Alternate translation: [When Shelah had lived 30 years] or [When Shelah was 30 years old]

then he fathered Eber

Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Eber] or [he had a son whose name was Eber]

Genesis 11:15

Then after he fathered Eber, Shelah lived

Be consistent with how you spell the name **Shelah** in Gen 10:24; 11:12-15. Alternate translation: [After he had Eber, he lived] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

403 years

Alternate translation: [403 more years]

and he fathered

Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Shelah also had] or [He was also the father of]

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:16

And Eber lived thirty-four years

Alternate translation: [When Eber had lived 34 years] or [When Eber was 34 years old]

then he fathered Peleg

Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Peleg] or [he had a son whose name was Peleg] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 11:17

Then after he fathered Peleg, Eber lived

Be consistent with how you spell the name **Eber** in Gen 10:24-25; 11:14-17. Alternate translation: [After he had Peleg, he lived] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

430 years

Alternate translation: [430 more years]

and he fathered

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Eber at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Eber also had] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:18

And Peleg lived thirty years

Alternate translation: [When Peleg had lived 30 years] or [When Peleg was 30 years old]

then he fathered Reu

Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Reu] or [he had a son whose name was Reu]

Genesis 11:19

Then after he fathered Reu, Peleg lived

Be consistent with how you spell the name **Peleg** in Gen 10:25; 11:16-19. Alternate translation: [After he had Reu, he lived] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

209 years

Alternate translation: [209 more years]

and he fathered

Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Peleg also had] or [He was also the father of]

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:20

And Reu lived thirty-two years

Alternate translation: [When Reu had lived 32 years] or [When Reu was 32 years old]

then he fathered Serug

Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Serug] or [he had a son whose name was Serug]

Genesis 11:21

Then after he fathered Serug, Reu lived

Be consistent with how you spell **Reu** in Gen 11:18-21. Alternate translation: [After Reu had Serug, he lived] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

207 years

Alternate translation: [207 more years]

and he fathered

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Reu at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Reu also had] or [He was also the father of] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:22

And Serug lived thirty years

Alternate translation: [When Serug had lived 30 years] or [When Serug was 30 years old]

then he fathered Nahor

Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Nahor] or [he had a son whose name was Nahor]

Genesis 11:23

Then after he fathered Nahor, Serug lived

Be consistent with how you spell the name **Serug** in Gen 11:20-23. Alternate translation: [After he had Nahor, he lived] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

200 years

Alternate translation: [200 more years]

and he fathered

Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Serug also had] or [He was also the father of]

other} sons and daughters

Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:24

And Nahor lived twenty-nine years

Alternate translation: [When Nahor had lived 29 years] or [When Nahor was 29 years old]

then he fathered Terah

Consider again how you translated verses 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24, which all have the same sentence structure. Alternate translation: [he fathered a son named Terah] or [he had a son whose name was Terah]

Genesis 11:25

Then after he fathered Terah, Nahor lived

Alternate translation: [After he had Terah, he lived] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

119 years

Alternate translation: [119 more years]

and he fathered

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and he also had] or [Nahor also had] or [He was also the father of]

other} sons and daughters

Consider again how you translated verses 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25, which all have the same sentence structure. Alternate translation: [other sons as well as daughters]

Genesis 11:26

And Terah lived seventy years

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. Alternate translation: [After Terah had lived 70 years] or [After Terah turned 70 years old]

then he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran

Alternate translation: [he had sons named Abram, Nahor, and Haran] or [he fathered sons whose names were Abram, Nahor, and Haran]

Genesis 11:27

Now these {are} the generations of Terah

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. Alternate translation: [This is the account about Terah and his family:]

Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran

Alternate translation: [Terah had sons named Abram, Nahor, and Haran;]

and Haran fathered Lot

Alternate translation: [and Haran had a son 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

Alternate translation: [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, & Chaldeans

Alternate translation: [in his native land]

in Ur of the

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). Alternate translation: [in the city of Ur which was ruled by the Kasdim] or [in the city of Ur where the Kasdim people lived]

Genesis 11:29

And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves

Alternate translation: [Meanwhile Abram and Nahor each got married]

Genesis 11:30

But Sarai was barren

Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information about Sarai. Alternate translation: [Now Sarai was unable to conceive] or [Sarai was not able to get pregnant] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

she did not have a child

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. Alternate translation: [so she had no children] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 11:31

Then Terah took

Consider what is the best way to begin this new paragraph in your language. Alternate translation: [One day, Terah called together] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

Abram his son

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

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

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.

and they went out together

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and all of them set out together] or [Then they all left]

from Ur of the

See the note at Gen 10:19 about how to translate the names of cities. Alternate translation: [from Ur City] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Chaldeans

See how you translated this phrase in verse 28. Alternate translation: [of the Chaldeans] or [where the Kasdim people lived]

to go to the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [to go to the region of Canaan] or [to go to Canaan Land]

But they came to Haran

The city of Haran was not in the land of Canaan, rather it was around 450 kilometers (280 miles) northeast of there. Alternate translation: [But on the way there, they came to the city of Haran, and] or [But along the way, when they stopped at the city of Haran]

and they settled there

Alternate translation: [they stayed there instead] or [they decided to settle there instead]

Genesis 11:32

And the days of Terah were 205 years

Alternate translation: [When Terah reached the age of 205 years]

in Haran

Alternate translation: [in Haran City]

Genesis 12

Genesis 12:1

Then Yahweh said to 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. Alternate translation: [Then one day Yahweh told Abram] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

You yourself must go from your land

Alternate translation: [Get yourself away from your country] or [You must move away from your country] or [You must leave behind the land where you are living]

and from your relatives

Alternate translation: [and your people]

and from the house of your father

The phrase **the house** refers here to everyone who was a member of Terah's household. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

to the land

Alternate translation: [and go to the place]

Genesis 12:2

And I will make you

Alternate translation: [I will make you the father of]

into a great nation

Alternate translation: [an large people group] or [a large, important ethnic group]

and I will bless you

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. Alternate translation: [and I will bless you and them] or [and I will cause you all to flourish]

and I will make your name great

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. Alternate translation: [I will make you important and famous] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and you shall be a blessing

Alternate translation: [and you will be a blessing to many people] or [and I will use you and your descendants to bless many people] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 12:3

but whoever curses you I will curse

See how you translated **curse** in Gen 8:21.

in you

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. Alternate translation: [Through you and your offspring] or [Because of you and your offspring] or [By means of you and your offspring] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

And & all the families of the earth will be blessed

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. Alternate translation: [all the people on the earth will be blessed by me] or [I will bless all the people on the earth] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 12:4

Then Abram went, just as Yahweh had told him

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). Alternate translation: [Then Abram left the city of Haran, just as Yahweh had told him to do] or [Then Abram did what Yahweh had told him to do and left the city of Haran] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

and Lot went with him

Alternate translation: [and his nephew Lot left with him]

And Abram

Many translations omit the conjunction **And** or “Now” here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Now Abram] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

was the son of

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 5:32 and 11:10. Alternate translation: [was 75 years old]

when he departed

Alternate translation: [when he set out]

from Haran

Alternate translation: [from the city of Haran]

Genesis 12:5

And Abram took Sarai his wife

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Sarai** in Gen 11:29-31. Alternate translation: [He brought with him his wife Sarai] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

and Lot the son of his brother

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.1559)**)

and all their possessions that they had accumulated and the people whom they had acquired

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. Alternate translation: [everything that they owned, including slaves and everything else they had gotten]

in Haran

“in the city of Haran,” or “in Haran City”

to the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [to the land called Canaan] or [to Canaan Land]

Then they came to the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [Then they arrived in Canaan] or [When they reached Canaan] or [When they got there]

Genesis 12:6

Then Abram passed

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. Alternate translation: [Abram went] or [Abram and his family went] or [they went] (See: **Metonymy** (p.1674))

through the land

See how you translated **land** in verse 5. Alternate translation: [through that land]

as far as

Alternate translation: [until they arrived at]

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

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.1724))

And the Canaanites {were} in the land at that time

For some languages it is clearer and more natural to put the time phrase (**at that time**) first in this sentence. Alternate translation: [At that time the Canaanites were still living in that region] (See: **Information Structure** (p.1651))

Genesis 12:7

Then Yahweh appeared to 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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh came to Abram] or [but Yahweh visited Abram]

and said

Alternate translation: [and promised to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

To your offspring I will give this land

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. Alternate translation: [I will give this land to your offspring] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So he built an altar

Consider what is the best way to refer to Abram here in your language. See how you translated **altar** in Gen 8:20. Alternate translation: [So he made an altar out of large stones] or [So he built a sacrifice mound with stones] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

there

Alternate translation: [near the tree]

to Yahweh

Alternate translation: [and burned sacrifices on it to thank and worship Yahweh]

who had appeared to him

See how you translated **appeared** earlier in verse 7. Alternate translation: [who had come to him there] or [because he had come to him there]

Genesis 12:8

Then from there he went on

Alternate translation: [From the place of Shechem, he and his family moved south to] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

to the mountains to the east of Bethel

Alternate translation: [the mountainous region east of the town of Bethel]

and pitched his tents

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. Alternate translation: [and put up his tents there] or [They set up their camp]

with} Bethel on the west and Ai on the east

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Bethel was to the west of them and the town of Ai was to the east]

And there he built

Alternate translation: [There he made]

an altar

See how you translated **altar** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [another sacrifice mound]

to Yahweh

See how you translated **to Yahweh** in verse 7.

and he called on the name of Yahweh

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 4:26. Alternate translation: [and he praised him by name] or [he addressed him by his name as he praised him] or [he praised him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 12:9

Then Abram set out and continued to travel

Alternate translation: [After that, he and his family traveled in stages] or [Then he and his family moved from place to place]

toward the Negev

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.

Alternate translation: [south toward the Negev Wilderness] or [southward until they reached the Southern Wilderness] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 12:10

Then 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 **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. Alternate translation: [a serious lack of food] or [a hungry time when food was very scarce]

in the land

Alternate translation: [in that area] or [in the Negev Desert]

so Abram went down

This phrase refers to the fact that Egypt is lower in elevation than Canaan (verse 5). It is also located southwest of Canaan. Alternate translation: [so Abram and his family traveled southwest] or [so Abram and his family moved further south]

to Egypt

Alternate translation: [to the land of Egypt]

to sojourn there

Alternate translation: [to live there for a while]

because the famine {was} heavy

Alternate translation: [because the food shortage was very severe]

in the land

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. Alternate translation: [in that land] or [in the Negev Desert so they could not survive there] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 12:11

And it happened that as he was about to enter Egypt

Alternate translation: [As they approached Egypt]

then he said to Sarai his wife

Alternate translation: [he told his wife Sarai]

Behold please

Alternate translation: [Listen please] or [Please listen to this:]

I know that you {are} a woman beautiful in appearance

Alternate translation: [I know that you are a very beautiful woman]

Genesis 12:12

So it will happen when

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin this sentence with or without a conjunction (**So**). Alternate translation: [So when] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

the Egyptians

Alternate translation: [the people of Egypt]

see you

Alternate translation: [notice you with me]

then they will say, 'This {is} his wife

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [they will know that you are my wife] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

and they will kill me but let you live

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then they will kill me but let you live so that they can have you]

Genesis 12:13

Please say

Alternate translation: [So please tell them]

that} you {are} my sister

Consider whether an indirect quote or direct quote is best here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

so that it will go well for me

Alternate translation: [so that I will be treated well] or [so that people will treat me well]

and my life will live because of you

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. Alternate translation: [and my life will be spared by them] or [and they will spare my life] or [and they will let me live]

Genesis 12:14

when Abram came into Egypt

Although Abram is in focus here, your translation should not sound like he was traveling alone. Alternate translation: [When Abram and his family entered the land of Egypt] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

then the Egyptians saw

Alternate translation: [the Egyptian people saw] or [the people living there saw]

the woman, that she {was} very beautiful

Alternate translation: [that the woman with him was indeed very beautiful] or [that Sarai was indeed very beautiful]

Genesis 12:15

And the officials of Pharaoh saw 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. Alternate translation: [Some of the officers who ruled under the Egyptian king spotted her, so] or [When some officials of Pharaoh the king of Egypt saw her] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

so they praised her to Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [they told him how beautiful she was] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and the woman was taken

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. Alternate translation: [and she was brought] or [So he had them bring Sarai] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

into Pharaoh’s house

Alternate translation: [into his palace to be one of his wives]

Genesis 12:16

Then he treated Abram well for her sake

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh treated Abram well because of her]

so that he had

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. Alternate translation: [and Abram acquired from him] or [and he gave him] or [He gave Abram] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

flock{s} and herd{s}

Alternate translation: [flocks of sheep and herds of cattle]

and male donkeys and male slaves and female slaves and female donkeys

Alternate translation: [as well as men and women servants, and male and female donkeys]

and 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. Alternate translation: [and larger load-bearing animals called camels] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 12:17

But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house

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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh struck the king and the people in his household] or [Then Yahweh caused King Pharaoh and the people in his household to get very sick] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

with} great plagues

Alternate translation: [with severe diseases]

on account of Sarai the wife of Abram

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.1651)**)

Genesis 12:18

So Pharaoh called

Alternate translation: [So King Pharaoh sent for Abram] or [Then Pharaoh summoned Abram before him] or [Then the king sent for Abram to come to him]

and said

Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way that you translate the following quote.

Alternate translation: [and asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} this you have done to me

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. Alternate translation: [Why have you treated me so badly?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Why did you not tell me that she {was} your wife

Alternate translation: [You should have informed me that she is your wife!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 12:19

Why did you say, 'She {is} my 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. Alternate translation: [Why did you say that she is your sister] or [You should not have pretended that she is your sister] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

so that I took her to me as a wife

For some languages it is clearer and more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [so that I chose her to be a wife!] or [I believed you and took her to be my wife!] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

Now then

Alternate translation: [Now therefore]

behold, your wife

Alternate translation: [here is your wife back]

Genesis 12:20

Then Pharaoh commanded

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. Alternate translation: [Then King Pharaoh gave orders to] or [Then the Egyptian king ordered] or [Then the king of Egypt ordered]

his men

Alternate translation: [some of his men]

concerning him

Throughout this verse, make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to. Alternate translation: [about him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and they sent him away

Alternate translation: [so they forced him to leave their country] or [so they expelled him from Egypt] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

and everything that {belonged} to him

This included Abram's slaves, animals, and everything else that he owned. Alternate translation: [and all that he had] or [all his possessions]

Genesis 13

Genesis 13:1

Then Abram went up from 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. Alternate translation: [So Abram went northeast from the country of Egypt] or [Then Abram left the land of Egypt]

he and his wife

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [taking with him his wife]

and everything that {belonged} to him

Alternate translation: [and everything that he had]

and Lot with him

Alternate translation: [as well as his nephew Lot] or [and his nephew Lot went with him]

to the Negev

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. Alternate translation: [and they all went back to the Negev Desert] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 13:2

And Abram

Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information about Abram. Alternate translation: [Now] or [By this time Abram] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

was} very wealthy

Alternate translation: [had become very wealthy]

in livestock

The term **livestock** includes all kinds of domestic animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats, camels and donkeys.
Alternate translation: [with many livestock]

in silver, and in 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

See how you translated **the Negev** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [From the Southern Desert]

Then he went on his journeys

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. Alternate translation: [Abram and his family moved from place to place northward] or [Abram and his family continued traveling northward] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

as far as Bethel

Alternate translation: [until he came to the town of Bethel]

to the place where his tents had been

Alternate translation: [to the site where they had camped in tents] or [where he had pitched his tents]

at the beginning

Alternate translation: [previously] or [the first time he was there]

between 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.1634)**)

Genesis 13:4

to the place of the altar that he had made there at first

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. Alternate translation: [to the same site where he had made an altar before] or [That is the same site where he had first made an altar]

and there Abram called on the name of Yahweh

See how you translated **called on the name of Yahweh** in Gen 12:8. Alternate translation: [There again Abram sacrificed animals on that altar and addressed Yahweh by his name as he praised him] or [So Abram again used that altar there and praised Yahweh by name] or [... praised Yahweh] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 13:5

Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had

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. Alternate translation: [Lot was traveling with his uncle Abram, and he and his family also had] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

flock{s} and herd{s}

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle]

and tents

Alternate translation: [and many tents]

Genesis 13:6

But the land could not support them

Alternate translation: [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 enough food and water for both families and their animals]

while they stayed together

Alternate translation: [if they lived near each other] or [if they lived in the same region]

because their possessions were great

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. Alternate translation: [because their belongings were so abundant that] or [because they owned so many servants and livestock that] or [They each owned so many servants and livestock that]

so that they were not able to stay together

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. Alternate translation: [they could not all live near each other] or [it was not possible for them to all live in the same area] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 13:7

Then there was

Alternate translation: [In fact]

Then there was strife

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. Alternate translation: [there was arguing] or [quarreling erupted]

between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of 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.1651)**)

And the Canaanites

Alternate translation: [Adding to that problem was the fact that]

And the Canaanites and the Perizzites

See how you translated the names of people groups in Gen 10, and see how you translated **the Canaanites** in Gen 12:6. Alternate translation: [the Canaanite people and the Perizzite people] or [the descendants of Canaan and Perez] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

were living in the land

Alternate translation: [were also living in the area]

then

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.1651)**)

Genesis 13:8

So Abram said to Lot

Alternate translation: [Then one day Abram said to Lot]

Please do not let there be

Alternate translation: [Please, we should not allow] or [We need to do something so that there is not any]

strife

See how you translated **strife** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [arguing]

between me and you

Alternate translation: [between you and me] or [between us]

or between my herdsmen and your herdsmen

See how you translated **herdsmen** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [or between the men tending my livestock and the men tending your livestock] or [or between our herdsmen]

because we {are} men, brothers

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. Alternate translation: [because we are men who are also relatives] or [because we are close relatives] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 13:9

Is not the whole land before you

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. Alternate translation: [You can choose to live anywhere in this entire land] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Please separate from me

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.1695)**)

If {you go to} the left

Alternate translation: [if you decide to live in the land to our left]

then I will go right

Alternate translation: [then I will choose the land to the right] or [then I will live in the land to our right]

or if {you go to} the right

For some languages, it may be more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Or if you decide to live in the land to our right]

then I will go left

Alternate translation: [then I will 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

Alternate translation: [So Lot looked all around] or [Lot looked around carefully] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and saw all the plain of the Jordan as you go {toward} Zoar, that all of it

The Jordan Plain is the wide, flat valley where the Jordan River flows between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

Alternate translation: [and he observed that the whole Jordan River Valley, all the way to the town of Zoar]

was} well-watered

Alternate translation: [had a lot of water]

like Yahweh's garden

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

Alternate translation: [and like the country of Egypt]

before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah

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

See how you translated **plain of the Jordan** in verse 10. Alternate translation: [Then Lot chose the whole Jordan River Plain for himself] or [Then Lot decided to live in the valley that surrounded the Jordan River]

and Lot traveled

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. Alternate translation: [and he moved] or [Then Lot left Abram and moved] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [So in this way they lived separately from each other] or [That is how Abram and Lot ended up living in separate places] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 13:12

Abram settled

Alternate translation: [Abram settled where he was] or [Abram continued to live]

in the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [in that part of the land of Canaan]

and Lot settled

Alternate translation: [but Lot lived]

in the cities of the plain

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). Alternate translation: [in another part of the land in the cities of the Jordan River valley] or [in another part of the land in the cities in the valley surrounding the Jordan River] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and moved his tents as far as

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He eventually pitched his tents in] or [and eventually moved his tents near]

Sodom

Alternate translation: [the city of Sodom and settled there]

Genesis 13:13

Now the men 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

Alternate translation: [were very evil]

and sinful 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. Alternate translation: [were terrible sinners against Yahweh] or [were always rebelling against Yahweh]

Genesis 13:14

Lift up your eyes please

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. Alternate translation: [Look around now] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

from the place where you {are

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. Alternate translation: [from where you are standing] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and look

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

northward and southward and eastward and westward

See how you translated “east” and “west” in Gen 12:8. Alternate translation: [to the north, south, east, and west] or [in all directions: north, south, east, and west] or [around you in every direction]

Genesis 13:15

because all the land that you see

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [All that land, as far as you can see]

I will give to you and to your offspring

See how you translated **offspring** in Gen 12:7.

forever

Alternate translation: [to possess forever]

Genesis 13:16

And I will make your offspring

Alternate translation: [Besides that, I will also cause your descendants to be] or [In fact, I will also give you so many offspring that they will be]

like the dust of the earth

See how you translated “dust/dirt” in Gen 3:19. Alternate translation: [as numerous as the specks of dirt on the earth]

which if anyone were 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. Alternate translation: [Just as it is impossible to count] or [Just as no one is able to count] (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p. 1584)**)

like the dust of the earth

For some languages it is not natural to repeat “of/on the earth” here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [all the dirt specks] or [how many specks of dirt there are]

your offspring could also be counted

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. Alternate translation: [so it will be impossible to count all your offspring because they will be so numerous] or [no one will be able to count how many descendants you have] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 13:17

Get up and walk

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. Alternate translation: [Now go walk]

through the land

Alternate translation: [throughout the land in all directions]

through its length and through its width

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. Alternate translation: [including its length and its width, and look it over] or [Walk throughout the entire land and look it over] (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

because to you I am giving it

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. Alternate translation: [because you are the one I am giving it to]

Genesis 13:18

So Abram moved 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. Alternate translation: [Then Abram did what Yahweh commanded and moved his tents] or [Abram obeyed Yahweh and relocated his tents]

and went and settled

Alternate translation: [and went to live]

by the terebinth trees of Mamre

See how you translated **terebinth** in Gen 12:6. Alternate translation: [near the terebinth trees on the land owned by a man named Mamre]

and there he built an altar

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

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:7 and how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 8:20 and 12:8. Alternate translation: [and offered sacrifices on it to thank and worship Yahweh]

Genesis 14

Genesis 14:1

Now it happened in the days of

Alternate translation: [Then it happened that during the time when]

Amraphel king of

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. Alternate translation: [Amraphel was the ruler over] or [King Amraphel was ruling]

Shinar

Alternate translation: [the region of Shinar]

Arioch king of

It is not known whether Ellasar was the name of a city or the name of a kingdom that had one or more cities. Alternate translation: [Arioch was the ruler over] or [King Arioch was ruling]

Ellasar

Alternate translation: [the kingdom of Ellasar]

Chedorlaomer king of

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). Alternate translation: [Kedorlaomer was the ruler over] or [King Kedorlaomer was ruling] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Elam

Alternate translation: [the land of the Elamites]

and Tidal king of

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. Alternate translation: [and Tidal was the ruler over] or [and King Tidal was ruling] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

the Goiim

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.1634)**)

Genesis 14:2

they made war against

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here, which depends on how you translated verse 1. Alternate translation: [those four kings became allies and made war] or [those four kings joined forces and went to war]

Bera king of

Alternate translation: [Bera who was the ruler over] or [King Bera who was ruling]

and against Birsha king of

Alternate translation: [Birsha who was the ruler over] or [King Birsha who was ruling]

Shinab king of

Alternate translation: [Shinab who was the ruler over] or [King Shinab who was ruling]

and Shemeber king of

Alternate translation: [Shemeber who was the ruler over] or [King Shemeber who was ruling]

and the king of

Alternate translation: [and the ruler over] or [and the ruler who was ruling]

which {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. Alternate translation: [which is now called Zoar] or [which was later called Zoar] or [that is, Zoar] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 14:3

All these

Consider whether it is necessary to make it explicit in your translation that **these** refers to the five kings just mentioned in verse 2. Alternate translation: [These five kings all] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

joined together

Alternate translation: [combined their forces as partners and fought against the four kings]

which {is now} the Sea of Salt

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. Alternate translation: [which later became the Salt Sea]

Genesis 14:4

For} 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. Alternate translation: [This is what happened: For twelve years] or [This is why they were fighting: During twelve years] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

they had served

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. Alternate translation: [the five kings had paid taxes to] or [the five kings had been subject to] or [they had been ruled by] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Chedorlaomer

Be consistent here with how you spelled this name in verse 1. Alternate translation: [King Kedorlaomer]

but the thirteenth year

Alternate translation: [but sometime in the thirteenth year]

they rebelled

Alternate translation: [they started to revolt against him]

Genesis 14:5

Then in the fourteenth year

Alternate translation: [Then sometime in the fourteenth year]

Chedorlaomer

Alternate translation: [King Kedorlaomer]

who {were} with him

Alternate translation: [who were allied with him] or [who were his partners]

went

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. Alternate translation: [combined their armies and went to fight against all their enemies] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and struck

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [First, they conquered] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the Raphaites

See how you translated the names of people groups in Gen 10:4, 13-18, and see the note about that at 10:4.

Alternate translation: [the Repha people] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and the Zuzites

Alternate translation: [and the Zuzites] or [and the Zuz people]

the Emites

Alternate translation: [the Em people]

Genesis 14:6

and the Horites

Alternate translation: [and the Hor people]

in their hill country of Seir

Alternate translation: [who lived in the hill country of the region of Seir] or [who lived in the Seir Hills]

which {is} by

Alternate translation: [which is located beside] or [which is on the edge of]

the wilderness

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). Alternate translation: [a desert]

Genesis 14:7

Then they turned back

Alternate translation: [Next the four kings and their armies]

Then they turned back

Alternate translation: [started to return home]

which {is} Kadesh

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [which is now called Kadesh] or [which was later called Kadesh] or [that is, Kadesh]

and they struck

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They defeated]

the entire territory of the Amalekites

Alternate translation: [the whole area where the Amalekites lived] or [... where the Amalek people group lived]

and also the Amorites

Be consistent here with how you translated **Amorites** in Gen 10:16. Alternate translation: [as well as the Amor people group]

Genesis 14:8

Then & went out

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.1600))

the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela

Be consistent in verse 8 with how you spelled the names of these cities in verse 2 and in Gen 10:19. Alternate translation: [the kings over the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Bela]

which {is} Zoar

See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [which is now called Zoar] or [that is, Zoar]

Then & went out

Alternate translation: [went out with their armies]

into the Valley of Siddim

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 Chedorlaomer king of

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. Alternate translation: [against Kedorlaomer who was the ruler over] or [against King Kedorlaomer who was ruling] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Elam

Alternate translation: [the region of Elam]

and Tidal king of

Alternate translation: [Tidal who was the ruler over] or [King Tidal who was ruling]

Goiim

Be consistent here with how you translated this people group name in verse 1. Alternate translation: [the Goyim people]

and Amraphel king of

Alternate translation: [Amraphel who was the ruler over] or [King Amraphel who was ruling]

Shinar

Alternate translation: [the region of Shinar]

and Arioch king of

Alternate translation: [and Arioch who was the ruler over] or [and King Arioch who was ruling]

Ellasar

Alternate translation: [the city of Ellasar]

four kings against

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [It was four kings who started fighting against] or [Then those four kings attacked]

the five

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.1559)**)

Genesis 14:10

Now the Valley of Siddim {had} many tar pits

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. Alternate translation: [The Siddim Valley was full of tar pits] or [There were many tar pits in the Siddim Valley] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled

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. Alternate translation: [As the kings of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies were running away from the battle] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

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

See how you translated **fled** earlier in this verse.

to the hill country

See how you translated **hill country** in verse 6. Alternate translation: [to the hills to hide]

Genesis 14:11

Then they took

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to the four kings at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [Then the four kings took by force] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

all the possessions 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. Alternate translation: [all the possessions from the people of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and all their food

Alternate translation: [even all their food] or [as well as all their food]

and left

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [They also took with them] or [They also carried away] or [The four kings also captured]

since he was living in 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.1651)**)

Genesis 14:13

Then someone who escaped came

Alternate translation: [Then someone from Sodom escaped from the battle and came]

and reported to Abram the Hebrew

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

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. Alternate translation: [Now at that time he] or [At that time he] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

was living by the terebinth trees of Mamre

See how you translated this clause in Gen 13:18. Alternate translation: [was still living by the oak trees that were owned by Mamre] or [was still living by the oak trees on the land owned by Mamre]

the Amorite

See how you translated "Amorites" in verse 7. Alternate translation: [who was a member of the Amorite people group]

the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner

Alternate translation: [whose brothers were Eshcol and Aner]

and they {were

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

owners of a covenant with Abram

Alternate translation: [had made a covenant with Abram to be his allies] or [and Abram had made a pact together that they would help each other against their enemies]

Genesis 14:14

And when Abram heard

Alternate translation: [When Abram found out]

that his relative had been taken captive

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [that his nephew Lot had been captured] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

then he led out

Alternate translation: [he called together for battle] or [he summoned for battle]

his 318 trained men who had been born in his house

It is clear from verse 15 that these men were Abram's servants. Alternate translation: [318 of the servants who had been born in his household and were trained warriors] or [318 of his servants born in his household whom he had trained to fight]

and he pursued {his enemies

In this sentence the pronoun **he** refers to Abram and all those who had united with him as his allies. Alternate translation: [Then he and his men and his allies went after the invaders] or [Then together with his allies they all pursued the four kings and their armies] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

as far as

Alternate translation: [until they caught up with them at]

Genesis 14:15

Then he divided against them during the night, he and his servants

Alternate translation: [Then during the night he and his servants divided into groups, surprise attacked the four kings and their soldiers]

and struck them

Alternate translation: [and routed them] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and pursued them

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then they went after them]

to Hobah

Alternate translation: [all the way to the town of Hobah]

Genesis 14:16

And he brought back

Alternate translation: [As a result, he got back] or [He recovered]

and he also brought back

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He also got back] or [He also recovered]

and his possessions

Alternate translation: [and all his belongings]

Genesis 14:17

Then the king of Sodom came out

Alternate translation: [Then the king over the city of Sodom]

Then the king of Sodom came out

Consider whether **came** or “went” is more natural here in your language. Alternate translation: [Then the king over the city of Sodom went out] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

to meet him

Alternate translation: [to greet him] or [and welcomed Abram] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

in the Valley of Shaveh

Alternate translation: [in the Shaveh Valley]

after he returned

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). Alternate translation: [as he was returning home] or [as he was going back home]

from striking

See how you translated “struck” in verse 15. Alternate translation: [after defeating] or [after he defeated] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Chedorlaomer

Be consistent here with how you spelled this name previously in this chapter; see verses 1, 4-5, 9, 17. Alternate translation: [King Kedorlaomer and his army]

and the kings

Alternate translation: [and the armies of the other three kings]

who {were} with him

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. Alternate translation: [who had joined themselves with Kedorlaomer] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 14:18

Then Melchizedek the king of Salem

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. Alternate translation: [Then Melchizedek who was the king over the city of Salem also went there, and he]

brought out bread and wine

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. Alternate translation: [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]

And he {was

Alternate translation: [He was also]

a priest

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. Alternate translation: [a priest for]

to God Most High

Alternate translation: [the most high God] or [the highest God] or [God who is higher than all other gods]

Genesis 14:19

And he blessed him

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. Alternate translation: [He blessed Abram] or [So Melchizedek blessed Abram]

May Abram be blessed

Alternate translation: [I pray that you Abram will be blessed]

by God Most High

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. Alternate translation: [by the most high God] or [by the highest God] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

the Possessor of 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. Alternate translation: [who is the Owner of heaven and earth] or [who created heaven and earth]

Genesis 14:20

And praised be

See how you translated “Praised be” in Gen 9:26. Alternate translation: [Give praise to] or [Let everyone praise]

God Most High

See how you translated this phrase in verses 18-19. Alternate translation: [the most high God] or [the highest God]

who delivered your enemies into your hand

The phrase “delivered ... into your hand” is an idiom. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom that fits well here. Alternate translation: [because he gave you victory over your enemies!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Then he gave to him

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

a tenth

Alternate translation: [one-tenth]

of everything

This phrase refers to the belongings of the people of Sodom that Abram had recovered from the kings who stole them. Alternate translation: [of everything that he had captured in the battle] or [of all the plunder he had brought back from the battle]

Genesis 14:21

Then the king of Sodom said to Abram

Alternate translation: [Then the king of Sodom requested of Abram] or [After that, the king over the city of Sodom urged Abram]

Give to me

Make sure in your translation that the king of Sodom's request to Abram sounds polite, not rude or demanding.

Alternate translation: [Please give to me] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

the people

Alternate translation: [my people whom you saved] or [the people from Sodom whom you rescued]

but the possessions take for yourself

See how you translated **possessions** in verses 11-12,16. Alternate translation: [but the plunder you may keep for yourself] or [but take for yourself the belongings that you recovered]

Genesis 14:22

But Abram said to the king of Sodom

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. Alternate translation: [But he replied to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

I raise my hand to Yahweh

It was the custom that when a person made an oath, he raised his hand as an appeal to God to witness his oath and to hold him accountable and punish him if he were to break his oath. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action in the text or in a footnote. Alternate translation: [As a witness to this oath, I call on Yahweh] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

I raise my hand to Yahweh

The phrase **I raise my hand to Yahweh** begins an oath formula. Use a natural way in your language to express an oath. Alternate translation: [I pledge before Yahweh] (See: **Oath Formulas (p.1681)**)

God Most High

See how you translated this phrase in verses 18-20. Alternate translation: [who is the highest God]

the possessor of heaven and earth

See how you translated this phrase in verse 19. Alternate translation: [and the owner of heaven and earth] or [and the one who created heaven and earth]

Genesis 14:23

if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal

Abram is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from later in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [if I take anything from a thread even to the strap of a sandal] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you

According to custom, Abram is leaving out the part of his oath that tells what Yahweh will do to him if he does the things that he mentions in his oath. Because of the power of spoken words, people left that part to be understood silently. You could supply these words if it would be clearer and not offensive in your language. Alternate translation: [if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or I take from anything that {belongs} to you, may Yahweh punish me severely] or [...may Yahweh strike me dead] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

from a thread even to the strap of a sandal

Abram is mentioning things that are so small and insignificant that no one would want them in order to make the point that he doesn't want anything from the king of Sodom. Alternate translation: [even a thread or the strap from a sandal] or [even something as small as a piece of string or a sandal strap] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

or if I take from anything

This clause emphasizes Abram's point by repeating the meaning of the previous phrase in different words. Consider what is the best way to emphasize a point in your language. Also, consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [No I will not keep anything] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

that {belongs} to you

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. Alternate translation: [that belongs to you or your people] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

so that you will not say

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

I made Abram 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. Alternate translation: [I am the one who made Abram wealthy!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 14:24

I {will take} nothing, except

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this exception sentence. Alternate translation: [So I will not keep anything, except] or [So I will only accept] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

what the young men have eaten

These young men were Abram's trained servants or warriors who are mentioned in verses 14-15. Alternate translation: [what my servants who fought with me have eaten] or [what my men ate]

and the share of the other men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre

Alternate translation: [and the share of the plunder that Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre deserve for being my allies] or [and what Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre deserve for helping me in the battle]

Let them take

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. Alternate translation: [Please let them take] or [Please give them] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

their share

Alternate translation: [their share of the plunder] or [their part of what we recovered]

Genesis 15

Genesis 15:1

After those things

Alternate translation: [After those events happened]

the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Yahweh appeared to Abram visually and said to him]

I {am} a shield for 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. Alternate translation: [I am your shield] or [I protect you like a shield] or [I will shield you] (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

The way you translate this quote margin may depend on how you translate the following rhetorical question.

Alternate translation: [Then Abram said to him] or [Then Abram asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

My Lord Yahweh

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. Alternate translation: [My Master Yahweh] or [Yahweh my Lord]

what will you give to 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. Alternate translation: [what reward can you give to me that would benefit me] or [even if you reward me greatly, that will not help me] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

since I go childless

Alternate translation: [since I remain childless]

and the son of the inheritance of

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. Alternate translation: [so that after I die, the heir of] or [So when I die, the one who will own] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

my house

This phrase refers here to all Abram’s belongings. Alternate translation: [my estate] or [all that I own] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

is} the Damascan, Eliezer

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. Alternate translation: [is my foreign servant Eliezer from Damascus] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 15:3

Then Abram said

Some languages omit these words, because the same speaker is still speaking to the same audience. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Then he added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Some translations omit this phrase to prevent Abram from sounding rude. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Look]

to me you have given no seed

In the Hebrew text **to me** is before **you have not given** to emphasize Abram. Do what is natural in your language.

and behold

Alternate translation: [so that now after I die]

a servant of my house

Alternate translation: [a servant from my household]

is my heir

Alternate translation: [will be my heir!] or [will get everything I own!]

Genesis 15:4

Then behold

Alternate translation: [Immediately]

the word of Yahweh {came} to him, saying

See how you translated this idiom in verse 1. It may be necessary to translate it differently here because of the different context. Alternate translation: [Yahweh said to him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

That {man

Alternate translation: [No, that man]

will not be your heir, but rather

Alternate translation: [will not get your estate rather]

a son who comes from your bowels, he

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. Alternate translation: [a son whom you father] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

will be your heir

Alternate translation: [will own your estate] or [will own it]

Genesis 15:5

Then he brought him

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Yahweh and Abram at this point in the paragraph.
Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh led Abram] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

outside

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.1559)**)

Please look

See how you translated “please” in Gen 13:14. Make sure your translation does not sound like God is begging.
Alternate translation: [Now look up]

at the heavens

Alternate translation: [into the heavens] or [into the night sky]

and count the stars, if you are able to count them

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. Alternate translation: [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 count them all] (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.1584)**)

Then he said 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. Alternate translation: [While Abram was looking at the stars, Yahweh said to Abram] or [So Abram looked up at the stars, and Yahweh continued speaking to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

So will your offspring be

Alternate translation: [That is how many your offspring will be] or [That is how many offspring you will have]

Genesis 15:6

And he trusted

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). Alternate translation: [He believed Yahweh] or [He believed what Yahweh said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

and he counted it to him {as} righteousness

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. Alternate translation: [and so Yahweh credited it to him as righteousness] or [and because of that, Yahweh reckoned Abram to be righteous] or [so Yahweh considered Abram to have a right relationship with him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 15:7

Then he said to him

Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh said to Abram]

I {am} Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of

Alternate translation: [I am Yahweh who led you here from the city of Ur] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

the Chaldeans

See how you translated “Ur of the Kasdim/Chaldeans” in Gen 11:28, 31, and see the note about that there.

Alternate translation: [which is ruled by the Kasdim] or [that the Kasdim rule] or [where the Kasdim live]

to possess it

Alternate translation: [as your homeland] or [to be your own]

Genesis 15:8

Then he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abram is the one speaking here, not Yahweh. Alternate translation: [Then Abram said to him] or [But he asked him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

My Lord Yahweh

See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [My Master Yahweh] or [Yahweh my Lord]

how will I know

Alternate translation: [how can I know for sure] or [how will I be sure]

that I will possess it

Alternate translation: [that I will possess this territory?]

Genesis 15:9

Then he said to him

Alternate translation: [Yahweh said to him]

a three-year-old heifer

Alternate translation: [a cow that is three years old]

and a three-year-old she-goat

Alternate translation: [a female goat that is three years old]

and a three-year-old ram

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. Alternate translation: [and a male sheep that is three years old]

and a turtledove 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. Alternate translation: [as well as a turtledove and a young pigeon] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 15:10

So he brought

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. Alternate translation: [So the next day Abram took]

all those to him

Some languages need to make explicit that Abram killed the animals first, before cutting them in half. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [all those animals to him and killed them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

down the middle

Abram probably cut the animals down the middle lengthwise, which means that each half had one front leg, and one back leg. Alternate translation: [into two parts lengthwise]

and laid the halves opposite to each other

Alternate translation: [and placed each half a short distance across from its other half in two rows] or [and laid the right half of each animal across from its left half in two rows]

but the birds he did not cut in two

See how you translated “cut ... in two” earlier in verse 10. Alternate translation: [but he did not divide the bodies of the birds in two] or [except for the birds, which he did not cut in two]

Genesis 15:11

Then birds of prey came down

This phrase refers to large birds that eat dead animal meat. Examples of these birds include vultures, buzzards, condors, eagles, and crows. Alternate translation: [Then some birds of prey landed] or [Then some vultures swooped down and landed] or [Then some meat-eating birds]

on the carcasses

Alternate translation: [the dead animal parts to eat them] or [the dead animals to eat them]

and Abram drove them away

Alternate translation: [but Abram scared them away] or [but Abram made them go away]

Genesis 15:12

Then it happened

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. Alternate translation: [Then it happened that]

the sun was setting

Alternate translation: [when the sun was going down] or [as it was starting to become night]

and a deep sleep fell on Abram

See how you translated a similar idiom in Gen 2:21. Alternate translation: [Abram went into a sound sleep] or [Abram went soundly asleep] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and behold

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then suddenly]

terror {and} great darkness fell on him

Alternate translation: [a great terrifying darkness came over him] or [it became very dark, and he was terrified] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 15:13

Then he said to Abram

Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh said to Abram] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Know for certain that

Alternate translation: [You can be sure that]

your offspring

See how you translated this phrase in verse 5.

will be strangers

The word **strangers** refers to people who live temporarily in a city, country, or region, but they do not settle there permanently. Alternate translation: [will live as sojourners]

that} {does} not {belong} to them

Alternate translation: [that is not their home]

and they will serve them

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. Alternate translation: [They will serve the people in that land as slaves] or [They will be slaves for the people who live in that land] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and they will afflict them

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. Alternate translation: [and those people will oppress them] or [and those people will treat them badly] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

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." Alternate translation: [for a period of 400 years] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 15:14

But also

Alternate translation: [And you can also be sure that]

the nation

Alternate translation: [the people of that nation] or [the people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

that they serve

Alternate translation: [whom they serve as slaves] or [who made them slaves]

I will judge

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.1651)**)

and after that

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then]

they will come out

Alternate translation: [your offspring will leave that land]

with great possessions

See how you translated **possessions** in Gen 14:16, 21. Alternate translation: [with many possessions] or [with much wealth] or [and take many riches with them]

Genesis 15:15

And 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. Alternate translation: [Now as for you]

you will go to your fathers in peace

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.

Alternate translation: [you will be at peace when you die and join your forefathers who have gone before you] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

you will be buried at a good old age

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, you will not die until you have lived a blessed, long life] or [In fact, you will live a blessed, long life before you die] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 15:16

Then in the fourth generation

Alternate translation: [Then after four generations have passed]

they will come back here

Alternate translation: [your descendants will come back to this land and live here]

because the sin of the Amorites {will} not {be} complete until 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. Alternate translation: [because that is when the Amorite 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 Amor people, whose sin will have reached its limit by then] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 15:17

Then it happened

See how you translated this phrase in verse 12, and see the note about that there. Alternate translation: [Then it happened that]

the sun went down

The sun had started to go down in verse 12. Here it had completely set. Alternate translation: [after the sun had gone down] or [after the sun had set]

and darkness came

This Hebrew word for **darkness** implies that it was darker than normal, so that not even light from the moon and stars was visible. Alternate translation: [it was very dark]

and behold

For some languages it is better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and suddenly]

and a flaming torch

Alternate translation: [and also a burning torch]

that passed

Alternate translation: [and they both passed]

between those pieces

Alternate translation: [between the two rows of animal parts]

Genesis 15:18

On that day

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. Alternate translation: [On that very day]

Yahweh cut

Alternate translation: [Yahweh established] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

a covenant with Abram

See how you translated **covenant** in Gen 9:9, 11-13, 15-17. Alternate translation: [a peace covenant with Abram]

saying

Alternate translation: [by saying] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

To your offspring I have given this land

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. Alternate translation: [I am giving your offspring this land] or [I hereby give this land to your offspring] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

from the river of Egypt

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

Alternate translation: [to the big Euphrates River in the north]

Genesis 15:19

the land of

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [including the land which is owned by] or [That is the land which belongs to]

the land of} the Kenites and the Kenizzites and the 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. Alternate translation: [Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites]

Genesis 15:20

and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Rephaim

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. Alternate translation: [the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaites] or [Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites]

Genesis 15:21

and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Girgashites and the Jebusites

Be consistent here with how you translated **the Amorites** in verse 18 and **Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites** in Gen 10:15-18. Alternate translation: [Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites]

Genesis 16

Genesis 16:1

Now Sarai, the wife of Abram

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.1563)**)

had not born {children} for him

Sarai's barrenness is first mentioned in Gen 11:30. Alternate translation: [still had not had any children for him]

but she had

Alternate translation: [but she did have]

an Egyptian maidservant

See how you translated "female slaves/servants" in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [an Egyptian slave woman] or [a female slave from the country of Egypt]

and her name {was} Hagar

Alternate translation: [named Hagar]

Genesis 16:2

So Sarai said to Abram

Alternate translation: [Then she told Abram]

Behold please

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:11. Alternate translation: [Listen now:] or [Please listen to me]

Yahweh has prevented me from bearing {children

Alternate translation: [Since Yahweh has not permitted me to bear any children] or [As you know, Yahweh has not permitted me to bear any children, so]

Please go to

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. Alternate translation: [please sleep with] or [please have sexual relations with] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

my maidservant

See how you translated **maidservant** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [my slave woman Hagar]

Perhaps

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Maybe] or [so that perhaps]

I can be built up from her

Alternate translation: [I can build a family through her children] or [she can have children for me so that I can build a family]

And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai

Alternate translation: [Abram agreed to do what she requested] or [So Abram listened to Sarai] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1674)**)

Genesis 16:3

So Sarai, the wife of Abram, took

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. Alternate translation: [Then Sarai took]

Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant

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. Alternate translation: [her Egyptian servant woman Hagar] or [her servant Hagar]

at the end of ten years that Abram had lived in the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [after Abram and Sarai had lived in the land of Canaan for ten years]

and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife for him

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. Alternate translation: [and she gave her to her husband Abram to be his second wife] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 16:4

Then he went to 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. Alternate translation: [So Abram slept with Hagar] or [So he had marital relations with Hagar] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and she conceived

Alternate translation: [and as a result] or [and so] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

and she conceived

Make sure that the way you translate this phrase will not be embarrassing or offensive to people, especially when it is read aloud. Alternate translation: [and as a result, she became pregnant] or [and so she became pregnant]

And she saw that she had conceived

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. Alternate translation: [But when she saw that she was pregnant] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and her mistress was despised in her eyes

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. Alternate translation: [she despised her owner Sarai] or [she treated her owner Sarai with contempt] or [she started to look down on her mistress Sarai] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 16:5

Then Sarai said to Abram

Alternate translation: [Then Sarai complained to Abram] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

My wrong {is} on you

Alternate translation: [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]

I myself put my maidservant into your arms

The idiom “put ... into your arms” refers to Abram’s relationship with Hagar. Make sure that your translation of this clause is not offensive. Alternate translation: [I gave my servant to you to be your wife] or [I allowed my servant to have marital relations with you] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

but she sees that she has conceived

Alternate translation: [but now that she knows that she is pregnant]

and I am despised in her eyes

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. Alternate translation: [she despises me!] or [she treats me with disdain] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

May Yahweh judge between me and you

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. Alternate translation: [I ask Yahweh to decide between you and me who is responsible for this!] or [I ask Yahweh to decide who is wrong, you or me!] or [May Yahweh judge whether it is you or I who is responsible for this!] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 16:6

Then Abram said to Sarai

Alternate translation: [But Abram said to her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look]

your maidservant {is} in your hand

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. Alternate translation: [your slave woman is under your authority] or [you have authority over your slave] (See: **Idiom (p. 1645)**)

Do to her

Alternate translation: [So you can do to her]

what {is} good in your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [whatever you decide is good] or [whatever pleases you]

Then Sarai afflicted her

See how you translated "afflict" in Gen 15:13. Alternate translation: [So Sarai oppressed her so] or [So Sarai treated her so badly that]

and she fled from her face

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Hagar is the one who fled, not Sarai. Alternate translation: [she ran away from her] or [she ran away from home to get away from Sarai] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

Genesis 16:7

Then the angel of Yahweh found her

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. Alternate translation: [But an messenger sent from Yahweh found Hagar]

at a spring of water

Alternate translation: [beside a spring of water] or [beside a spring]

in the wilderness

See how you translated **wilderness** in Gen 14:6.

at the spring

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [She was at the spring]

beside the road of Shur

Alternate translation: [that was by the road that goes to the city of Shur] or [that was by the road near the city of Shur]

Genesis 16:8

And he said

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. Alternate translation: [And the angel said to her] or [The angel asked her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

And she said

Alternate translation: [She said to him] or [Hagar answered him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

I am fleeing from the face of Sarai, my mistress

See how you translated “fled from ... face” in verse 6 and how you translated **mistress** in verse 4. Alternate translation: [I am running away from my owner Sarai]

Genesis 16:9

Then the angel of Yahweh said to her

Consider what is the best way to begin this verse in your translation, after what Hagar said in verse 8. Alternate translation: [But he told Hagar] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

Return to your mistress

See how you translated “mistress/owner” in verses 4 and 8. Alternate translation: [Go back home to your owner Sarai]

and submit under her hands

See how you translated a similar idiom (“in your hand”) in verse 6. Alternate translation: [and humbly submit yourself to her authority] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 16:10

Then the angel of Yahweh said to her

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. Alternate translation: [Then the angel told her] or [Then he added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will greatly increase your offspring

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. Alternate translation: [I Yahweh will greatly multiply the number of your offspring so that] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1559)**)

so that they cannot be counted

Alternate translation: [there will be too many to count]

because of their abundance

Alternate translation: [because of their large number]

Genesis 16:11

Then the angel of Yahweh said to her

Alternate translation: [Finally the angel also said to her] or [Finally he also told her] or [Then the angel added] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Behold, {you are} pregnant, and you will bear a son

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. Alternate translation: [Look as you know, you are expecting a child You will bear a son, and] or [Look you are pregnant with a son. After he is born]

and you will call his name

Alternate translation: [give him the name]

Ishmael

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

If you include the meaning of Ishmael's name earlier in this verse, make sure it fits with how you translate this clause. Alternate translation: [because Yahweh heard] or [because Yahweh paid attention to] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

your misery

The word that means **listened to** implies here that God also took action to help Hagar. Alternate translation: [your cries of misery and has helped you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 16:12

And he

The pronoun **he** is emphatic here, to emphasize Ishmael. Make sure that your translation refers here to Ishmael, not Yahweh. Alternate translation: [As for Ishmael, when he grows up, he] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

will be a wild donkey of a man

The angel compares Ishmael to a wild donkey. Consider whether or not your language can use a similar metaphor or a simile here. Alternate translation: [will be proud and free like a untamed donkey] or [will be like a untamed donkey that no one can control] or [will not be ruled by anyone else] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

his hand against everyone and the hand of everyone against him

Alternate translation: [He will be enemies with everyone]

and he will live in the faces of

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. Alternate translation: [Yes he will even fight against] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

all of his brothers

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. Alternate translation: [all of his own relatives] or [all of his own family members] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 16:13

Then she called the name of Yahweh who had spoken to her, “You {are} El Roi

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.1634)**)

because she said

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [She named him that, because she had said to herself]

Have I really seen here the back of {the one who} sees me

Hagar’s rhetorical question shows surprise and amazement. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your translation. Alternate translation: [How can it be that I was able to look at the back of the God who looks after me?] or [I just now saw the back of him who sees me!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 16:14

For that {reason

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 11:9.

they call the well

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. Alternate translation: [the well is named] or [people call that well] or [the name of the well is]

Behold

Alternate translation: [That well is still there]

it is} between 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

Alternate translation: [After that, she returned home and gave birth to a son for Abram]

and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael

Alternate translation: [and he called his son whom she had Ishmael] or [and he named their son Ishmael]

Genesis 16:16

And 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.1600)**)

a son of

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 5:32. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

when Hagar bore Ishmael for Abram

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. Alternate translation: [when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael for him]

Genesis 17

Genesis 17:1

Then Abram was a son of ninety-nine years

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. Alternate translation: [Years later, when Abram was 99 years old] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

and Yahweh appeared to Abram

See how you translated this clause in Gen 12:7. Alternate translation: [Yahweh appeared to him] or [Yahweh visited him]

I {am} God Almighty

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. Alternate translation: [I am Almighty God] or [I am the all-powerful God] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Walk before me

This phrase is an idiom that means to habitually live according to God’s will. Alternate translation: [Walk in my presence] or [Live according to my will] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and be

Alternate translation: [yes, you must be]

without blemish

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. Alternate translation: [without fault] or [upright] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 17:2

And I will make my covenant

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"). Alternate translation: [I will institute my covenant]

and I will multiply you very greatly

Alternate translation: [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 numerous]

Genesis 17:3

Then Abram fell on his face

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. Alternate translation: [Then Abram prostrated himself before God to show him respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

and God spoke with him, saying

Some translations omit **saying** here because it is not natural in those languages. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and God spoke to him and said] or [and God continued speaking with Abram] or [and God added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 17:4

Me, behold, my covenant will be with you, and you shall be

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. Alternate translation: [Look, this is my responsibility in my covenant with you: I will cause you to be] or [Look, this is what I will do to fulfill my covenant with you: I will make you]

the father of

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 4:20, 21; 10:21.

a multitude of

Alternate translation: [a large number of]

nations

See how you translated this term in Gen 10:5, 20, 31, 32. Alternate translation: [ethnic groups]

Genesis 17:5

And your name will not be called Abram anymore

Alternate translation: [So your name will not be Abram anymore] or [Your name will no longer be Abram]

but your name will be Abraham

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Instead, from now on it will be Abraham] or [Rather, I am changing it now to Abraham]

because I have made you

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. Alternate translation: [because I will make you]

the father of a multitude of nations

See how you translated this phrase in verse 4. Alternate translation: [the ancestor of many ethnic groups]

Genesis 17:6

And I will make you very, very fruitful

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, I will make you exceedingly fruitful] or [I will give you very many offspring] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

and I will make you into nations

Alternate translation: [so that you will be the father of many ethnic groups] or [and I will cause your descendants to become many ethnic groups]

and kings will come from you

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, there will be kings who descend from you] or [In fact, some of your descendants will become kings]

Genesis 17:7

And I will establish my covenant between me and 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. Alternate translation: [I will make my covenant with you] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p. 1624)**)

and your offspring after you

Alternate translation: [and all your offspring who live after you] or [as well as all your offspring]

throughout their generations

Alternate translation: [for all future generations]

as an eternal covenant

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. Alternate translation: [It will be a covenant that never ends] or [It will be a covenant that lasts forever]

to be God to you and to your offspring after you

Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 17:8

And I will give to you and to your offspring after you

Alternate translation: [I will also give to you and your offspring]

the land of your sojournings

Alternate translation: [the land where you have been living as a outsider]

all the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [yes, the entire land of Canaan]

as an eternal possession

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [It will be their land forever]

and I will be God to them

See how you translated the phrase “be God to you” in verse 7. Alternate translation: [and I will be the God who takes care of them] or [I will be the God whom they worship]

Genesis 17:9

Then God said to Abraham

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

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. Alternate translation: [As for you] or [Now as for your part in my covenant] or [Your responsibility in my agreement is that]

you must keep my covenant

Alternate translation: [you must keep the requirements of my agreement]

you and your offspring

For some languages it is better to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [both you and] or [That includes you and]

and your offspring after you

Alternate translation: [all your descendants who live after you] or [all your offspring]

throughout their generations

See how you translated this phrase in verse 7, and a similar phrase in verse 8. Alternate translation: [including all generations to come] or [for all future generations]

Genesis 17:10

This {is} my covenant

Alternate translation: [This is what I require in my covenant] or [This is one of the requirements of my agreement]

which you must keep

Notice that the pronoun **you** is plural here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

between me and you and

The pronoun **you** is plural here and probably refers to Abraham and his family or household. Alternate translation: [the covenant that is between me and you all, including] or [the covenant I have made with all of you, including] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

your offspring after you

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. Alternate translation: [your descendants who will live after you:] or [all your descendants:] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Every male among you must be circumcised

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. Alternate translation: [You must circumcise all males who live with you] or [You must cut off the male foreskin of every boy and man who lives among you]

Genesis 17:11

Indeed, you must be circumcised {in} the flesh of your foreskins

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, all the males among you must have your foreskins cut off] or [Indeed you must circumcise the foreskin of all the males among you] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1624)**)

and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you

The pronoun **you** is plural here. Alternate translation: [and that practice will serve as the sign that reminds you of my agreement I made with all of you] or [and that practice will show you all that I made my covenant with you] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.1624)**)

Genesis 17:12

So a son of eight days must be circumcised

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [Every eight-day-old baby boy must be circumcised by you] or [So you must circumcise every eight-day-old baby boy] (See:

Active or Passive (p.1556))

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.

throughout your 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. Alternate translation: [for all future generations] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651))**

the one born in {your} house

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. Alternate translation: [including males who are born in your family] or [That includes those from your own family]

and the one bought with money from any son of a foreigner, who {is} not your offspring

Alternate translation: [and those whom you buy from foreigners as slaves who are not your descendants] or [as well as those who are not your offspring but are slaves whom you have bought from foreigners]

Genesis 17:13

He must surely be circumcised

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, you must surely circumcise all of them]

the one born in your house and the one bought with your money

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. Alternate translation: [including those who are born in your household as well as those whom you buy as a slave] or [regardless of whether they are males from your own household or slaves whom you have bought]

So my covenant will be

Alternate translation: [That is how the sign of my agreement must be marked] or [That is how you must mark my covenant]

in your flesh

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.1720)**)

as an eternal covenant

See how you translated **an eternal covenant** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [to show that it is an permanent covenant] or [to show that it is a covenant that never ends]

Genesis 17:14

And {as for} an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

In this context, **male** refers to men who refuse to be circumcised, not baby boys. Alternate translation: [But as for every man who is not circumcised] or [In fact, if a man refuses to let you circumcise him] or [If a man refuses to be circumcised]

indeed that person must be cut off from his 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. Alternate translation: [that person must be sent away and not be allowed to fellowship with his people] or [you must send him away and not allow him to fellowship with his people] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

he has broken

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. Alternate translation: [because he has not kept] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

my covenant

Alternate translation: [the rules of my covenant] or [what I require in my covenant]

Genesis 17:15

Then God said to Abraham

Alternate translation: [Later God also said to Abraham]

As for} Sarai your wife

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

Alternate translation: [her name will no longer be Sarai]

because her name {will be} Sarah

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [because from now on her name will be Sarah] or [Rather her name is now Sarah] or [Rather, from now on it will be Sarah]

Genesis 17:16

and I will also give to you a son from her

Alternate translation: [and I will definitely enable her to have a son for you] or [and I will definitely give you a son by her]

Indeed I will bless her

Alternate translation: [In fact, I will prosper her] or [Yes, I will bless her]

and she will become nations

See how you translated **nations** in verses 4-6. Alternate translation: [so that she will become the mother of many ethnic groups] or [so much that she will have many descendants that will form new ethnic groups]

kings of peoples will come from her

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 6. Alternate translation: [and kings over peoples will descend from her] or [and some of her descendants will even be kings who rule over many ethnic groups]

Genesis 17:17

Then Abraham fell on his face

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 3. Alternate translation: [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: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

and he laughed and said in his heart

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. Alternate translation: [but he laughed to himself and thought] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Will {a child} be born to a son of 100 years

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. Alternate translation: [How can a hundred-year-old man like myself father a son] or [Certainly it is not possible for a hundred-year-old man like me to father a son] or [Certainly a hundred-year-old man like myself cannot father a child, can he?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And will Sarah who is a daughter of ninety years bear {a child

Alternate translation: [And how can Sarah who is 90 years old still have a baby] or [And certainly it is not possible for a 90-year-old woman like Sarah to still bear a baby] or [And certainly a 90-year-old woman like Sarah cannot still give birth to a baby can she?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 17:18

Then Abraham said to God

Alternate translation: [So he said to God] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

If only Ishmael

Consider what is the best way to express this strong wish or hope in your language. Alternate translation: [Oh, that Ishmael could]

might live before you

This idiom means to live under God's care and be blessed by him. Alternate translation: [live in your presence!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 17:19

Then God said

Alternate translation: [God said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

No

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. Alternate translation: [No, rather] or [Yes, however]

Sarah your wife

Here God emphasizes what he said in verse 16 about Sarah. Alternate translation: [as I said, your wife Sarah is the one who]

is bearing a son for you

Alternate translation: [will bear you a son]

and you will call his 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. Alternate translation: [and you must name him Isaac] or [You must give him the name Isaac]

And I will establish my covenant with him

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 7. Alternate translation: [I will make my covenant with him] or [He is the one I will establish my covenant with]

as an eternal covenant

Alternate translation: [as a permanent covenant]

for his offspring after him

Alternate translation: [that will also be for all his offspring who live after him] or [that I will also keep with all his offspring who live after him]

Genesis 17:20

And as for Ishmael, I have heard you

Alternate translation: [As for Ishmael, I have heard your request for him]

Behold

Alternate translation: [So behold] or [So here is what I will do:]

I will bless him

See how you translated **bless** in verse 16. Alternate translation: [I will also prosper him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and multiply him very greatly

Alternate translation: [so that he has a great many descendants]

He will father

Alternate translation: [In fact, he will have]

twelve rulers

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. Alternate translation: [twelve sons who become chiefs] or [twelve sons who will be great leaders]

and I will make him into a great nation

Alternate translation: [and I will make him the father of a great ethnic group] or [and I will make him and his descendants become a great ethnic group]

Genesis 17:21

However, my covenant I will establish

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. Alternate translation: [But I will make my covenant]

whom Sarah will bear for you

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. Alternate translation: [whom Sarah will give birth to for you]

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

See how you translated “spoke with him” in verse 3. Alternate translation: [When God had finished speaking with Abraham]

and God went up from Abraham

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. Alternate translation: [he went up from Abraham to heaven] or [he left him and ascended to heaven] or [he left him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 17:23

Then Abraham took

Alternate translation: [Then Abraham brought together]

and everyone bought with his money

Alternate translation: [as well as all the male slaves whom he had bought]

every male among the men of Abraham's house

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

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and on that same day he cut off their foreskins]

just as God had told him

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. Alternate translation: [just as God had commanded him to do] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 17:24

And 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. Alternate translation: [Now Abraham] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

was} a son of 99 years

See how you translated “a son of ... years” in verse 1. Alternate translation: [was ninety-nine years old]

when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

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. Alternate translation: [when his foreskin was cut off] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 17:25

and Ishmael his son

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [His son Ishmael]

was} a son of thirteen years

Alternate translation: [was 13 years old]

when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin

See how you translated this clause in verse 24. Alternate translation: [when his foreskin was cut off] or [when he was circumcised] or [when he circumcised him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 17:26

On that very 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. Alternate translation: [So it was, on that very day]

Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son

Abraham is the one who circumcised his son Ishmael (verse 23). See how you translated “he was circumcised” in verse 24. Alternate translation: [Abraham was circumcised, and he circumcised his son Ishmael] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 17:27

the one born in his house

See how you translated this phrase in verses 12 and 23.

and the one bought with money

See how you translated a similar clause in verses 12 and 23. Alternate translation: [as well as those whom he had bought as slaves]

from the son of a foreigner

See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

were circumcised with him

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. 1556)**)

Genesis 18

Genesis 18:1

Then Yahweh appeared to him

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. Alternate translation: [Then one day Yahweh came again to him] or [One day Yahweh visited Abraham again]

by the terebinth trees of Mamre

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 13:18, 14:13, and a similar phrase in Gen 12:6.

and he was sitting

Alternate translation: [as Abraham was sitting] (See: **Pronouns (p.1699)**)

at} the opening of the 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. Alternate translation: [at the doorway of his tent] or [by the front of his tent]

in the heat of the day

Alternate translation: [during the hot time of the day]

Genesis 18:2

And he lifted his eyes and looked

See how you translate this phrase in Gen 22:13. Alternate translation: [He looked up] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and behold, three men were standing

Alternate translation: [and noticed that there were three men standing] or [and was surprised to see three men standing]

nearby 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). Alternate translation: [not too far away from him]

And {when} he saw {them

Alternate translation: [When he saw them]

then he ran from the entrance of the tent

Alternate translation: [he got up from where he was and ran] or [he got up and ran to them]

to meet them

Alternate translation: [to welcome them]

Then he bowed to the ground

Compare how you translated a phrase that has a similar meaning ("fell on his face") in Gen 17:3, 17. Alternate translation: [Then he bowed low before them with his forehead to the ground to show respect] or [Then he prostrated himself on the ground in front of them to show respect]

Genesis 18:3

and he said

Alternate translation: [and said to them]

My lords

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). Alternate translation: [My masters] or [Gentlemen] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

if I have found favor in your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [if you are satisfied with me] or [if you would honor me with your presence]

please do not pass by your servant

Abraham refers to himself as a servant here in order to show respect to his guests. Alternate translation: [please stay here for a while as my guests] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 18:4

Please let a little water be brought

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. Alternate translation: [Let my servants bring you some water] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Then you can wash 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. Alternate translation: [That way you all can wash the dust off your feet] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

and rest yourselves

Alternate translation: [and then relax here]

Genesis 18:5

And I will bring

Alternate translation: [I will also get you] or [Let me also get you]

a morsel of

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. Alternate translation: [a little bit of]

bread

Since bread was a common staple of their diet, it is often used in the Bible to refer to food in general. Alternate translation: [bread for you to eat] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

so that you can refresh your hearts

Notice that the pronouns **you** and **your** are plural in this quote in the Hebrew text and refer to Abraham's three guests. Alternate translation: [Then you can be refreshed] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

before you go away

Alternate translation: [and then continue on your way] or [before you continue traveling]

since you have come to your servant

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. Alternate translation: [now that you have come to me] or [since you are here with me] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And they said

Alternate translation: [So they said to him] or [The men replied to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Alright

The word used here in the Hebrew text shows agreement or acceptance. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Very well] or [That is good]

do as you have said

Alternate translation: [do what you have suggested]

Genesis 18:6

into the tent to Sarah

Alternate translation: [to Sarah inside the tent]

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to her]

Hurry! {Prepare

Alternate translation: [Quickly use] or [Quickly prepare]

three seahs of

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.

Alternate translation: [three large scoops] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

fine flour

Alternate translation: [of good quality flour] or [of the best flour]

Knead {it} and make loaves

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.

Alternate translation: [Knead the dough and make it into loaves] or [and bake some loaves of flat bread] or [and make some bread]

Genesis 18:7

Then Abraham ran to the herd

Alternate translation: [Then he hurriedly left the tent and went to his herd of cattle] or [Next he quickly went outside to his herd of cattle] (See: **Pronouns (p.1699)**)

and selected

Alternate translation: [and picked out]

a tender and choice calf

Alternate translation: [one of his best calves that would be tasty to eat]

Then he gave it

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. Alternate translation: [Then he took the calf] or [Then he turned it over]

and he hurried to prepare it

Make sure it is clear in your translation that this clause refers to the servant, not Abraham. Alternate translation: [and his servant quickly prepared it] or [who quickly slaughtered it and roasted it] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 18:8

Then he took

Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Abraham, not his servant. Alternate translation: [Then he got] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

curds

This term refers to churned, fermented milk that has curdled. Alternate translation: [some curds]

and milk

Alternate translation: [along with milk] or [as well as milk]

and the calf

Alternate translation: [and the meat from the calf]

that he had prepared

Alternate translation: [that he had his servant prepare] or [that the servant had cooked]

and he set it before them

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. Alternate translation: [and he served all of it to the three men to eat] or [and he set it all before his three guests to eat] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and 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. Alternate translation: [and waited on them while they ate] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 18:9

Then they said to him

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. Alternate translation: [Then one of the men asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

And he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham is the one speaking here. Alternate translation: [He answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, in the tent

Alternate translation: [She is there inside the tent]

Genesis 18:10

Then he said

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. Alternate translation: [Then that man]

Then he said

Alternate translation: [said to him] or [spoke again to Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will surely return

Alternate translation: [I will certainly come back]

to you

Alternate translation: [to you here]

at the time of life

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. Alternate translation: [at this season next year] or [next year at this time] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and behold

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and when I do] or [At that time]

Sarah your wife will have a son

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. Alternate translation: [your wife Sarah will have a baby boy with her] or [your wife Sarah will already have a baby son]

And Sarah was listening

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. Alternate translation: [Now Sarah was eavesdropping] or [Sarah was eavesdropping] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

at} the opening of the tent

See how you translated “the entrance of the tent” in verse 1. Alternate translation: [inside the doorway of the tent]

and it {was} behind him

Notice that the pronoun **it** refers to the entrance to the tent (where Sarah was). Alternate translation: [which was right behind]

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

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. Alternate translation: [Abraham and she] or [Sarah and Abraham] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

were} old, advanced in days

Alternate translation: [were already quite old] or [were very elderly]

the way of women had ceased to be with Sarah

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. Alternate translation: [so that she was much older than the normal age for bearing children] or [so that she was far past the time that she could bear children] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 18:12

So Sarah laughed within herself

See how you translated **laughed** in Gen 17:17 where Abraham also laughed to himself. Alternate translation: [So Sarah laughed to herself in disbelief]

and said

Alternate translation: [and thought to herself] or [and asked herself]

After I am worn out

Alternate translation: [Since my body is now worn out] or [Now that I am too old to conceive] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

will I have pleasure

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. Alternate translation: [will I still have this pleasure?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And my lord {is} 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. Alternate translation: [Besides that, my master is also too old!] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 18:13

Then Yahweh said to 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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh asked Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Why {is it} that Sarah laughed, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Why did Sarah laugh to herself and say] or [Sarah should not have laughed and thought to herself] or [Sarah should not have laughed, thinking] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Will I really bear {a child} when I am 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. Alternate translation: [I am too old to bear a child!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 18:14

Is anything too hard for Yahweh

Alternate translation: [Is there anything that is too hard for Yahweh to do?] or [Nothing is too hard for Yahweh to do!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

At the appointed time

Alternate translation: [At the time that I have decided]

I will return to you

Consider how you translated this in verse 10. Alternate translation: [I will come back here to visit you]

at the time of life

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, I will return at this time next year] or [—it will be at this time next year—] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and Sarah will have a son

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 10. Alternate translation: [and Sarah will have a baby son with her] or [and Sarah will already have a baby boy]

Genesis 18:15

But Sarah denied it

The Hebrew verb here includes the meaning of lying or deceiving. Alternate translation: [But Sarah lied to him]

by saying

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

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. Alternate translation: [that she did not laugh. She said that, because she was afraid] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

But he said

Alternate translation: [But he replied to her]

No, but you did laugh

Consider whether Yahweh’s reply to Sarah here should begin with **No** or “Yes” in your language. Alternate translation: [Yes, you did laugh]

Genesis 18:16

Then the men got up from there

Alternate translation: [After they had finished eating, the three men got up to leave]

and looked down toward Sodom

This phrase reflects the fact that the city of Sodom was lower in elevation than the city of Hebron, where Abraham was living. Alternate translation: [and started heading down toward the city of Sodom]

And Abraham went with them

Alternate translation: [Abraham walked with them for a while] or [Abraham accompanied them for a while]

to send them off

Alternate translation: [as they were leaving]

Genesis 18:17

And Yahweh said

The context implies that Yahweh said this to himself, without Abraham hearing him. See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 11:6. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh said to himself] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Should I hide from Abraham

Alternate translation: [I will not conceal from Abraham] or [I will tell Abraham] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

what I am doing

Whether you end this sentence with a question mark or a period will depend on how you choose to translate this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: [what I am going to do to the city of Sodom]

Genesis 18:18

And Abraham will surely 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. Alternate translation: [he will surely be the ancestor of] or [After all, Abraham and his descendants will surely multiply and become]

a great and mighty nation

See how you translated “great nation” in Gen 12:2. Alternate translation: [a great and powerful ethnic group]

in him

This phrase refers to Abraham and his descendants, including ultimately the Messiah. See the note about this at Gen 12:3. Alternate translation: [and through him] or [and because of him] or [and by means of him] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and & all the nations of the earth will be blessed

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 12:3. Alternate translation: [all the ethnic groups in the world will be blessed by me] or [I will bless all the ethnic groups in the world] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 18:19

For

Alternate translation: [Indeed]

I have known him

Consider whether or not your language has an idiom that fits well here. Alternate translation: [I have chosen Abraham] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

so that he will command his children

Alternate translation: [so that he will guide his children]

and his house after him

Alternate translation: [grandchildren, and other descendants who will live after him]

and they will keep the way of Yahweh

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is speaking about himself here. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

by doing righteousness and justice

Alternate translation: [and do what is right and just in my eyes] or [and do what is right including treat people justly]

so that

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [So]

Yahweh will bring about

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is referring to himself here. Alternate translation: [I will accomplish] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

for Abraham what he has said to him

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. Alternate translation: [for him what I have promised him that I will do] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 18:20

Then Yahweh said

Alternate translation: [So Yahweh told Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous

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. Alternate translation: [I have heard many terrible accusations against the people of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because they are sinning so grievously So] or [I have heard many people crying out against the people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because they are committing very evil things] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 18:21

I will go down 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. Alternate translation: [I am going to those cities now]

and see

Alternate translation: [to investigate] or [in order to find out] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship** (p. 1591))

whether they have done altogether according to its outcry

Alternate translation: [whether or not the people in those cities are guilty of everything] or [if the people there have done all the terrible sins]

that has come to me

Alternate translation: [that I have heard about them] or [that I have heard they are guilty of]

And if not

Alternate translation: [If those things are not true]

Genesis 18:22

Then the men turned away from there

Alternate translation: [Then the other two men left from there]

toward Sodom

Alternate translation: [and continued heading toward the city of Sodom] or [and headed toward the city of Sodom]

and Abraham was still standing

Alternate translation: [and Abraham stood there]

Genesis 18:23

Then Abraham approached {him

Alternate translation: [Then Abraham came closer to him]

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Will you really sweep away

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. Alternate translation: [Would you indeed wipe out] or [Surely you would not destroy] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

the righteous

Alternate translation: [the good people in the city]

with

Alternate translation: [together with] or [when you destroy]

the wicked

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. Alternate translation: [the wicked people there] or [the people there who are evil] or [the wicked people there, would you?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 18:24

Suppose

Alternate translation: [Suppose that]

there are fifty righteous in the city

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. Alternate translation: [there are 50 good people living in the city of Sodom?]

Will you really sweep away

See how you translated this phrase in verse 23. Alternate translation: [Will you actually still destroy] or [Certainly you will not still destroy] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

and not spare the place

Alternate translation: [the place and all its inhabitants rather than spare them] or [all the people in the place rather than let them all live]

for the sake of

Alternate translation: [in order to save]

the fifty righteous

Alternate translation: [the 50 good people]

who {are} in it

The way you translate this rhetorical question will determine what punctuation mark you end this sentence with. Alternate translation: [who live in it] or [who live there, will you?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 18:25

Far be it from you

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. Alternate translation: [Surely you would never] or [It seems impossible that you would ever] or [I hope that you would never] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the righteous

See how you translated this phrase in verse 23. Alternate translation: [good people]

with

Alternate translation: [along with] or [when you destroy]

the wicked

See how you translated **the wicked** in verse 23. Alternate translation: [wicked people]

so that the righteous are like the wicked

If exclamation points are used in this chapter, make sure it does not sound like Abraham is angry, shouting, or being disrespectful. Alternate translation: [so that good people are punished by you as if they were evil!]

Far be it from you

See how you translated a similar phrase at the beginning of this verse. Alternate translation: [Surely you would never do such a thing!] or [It seems impossible that you would ever do such a thing!] or [I hope that you would never do such a thing!]

Will the one who judges all the earth not do justice

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. Alternate translation: [As the judge of everyone on the earth, surely you will treat people rightly] or [You are the one who judges all the people on the earth. Surely you will do what is right] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 18:26

Then Yahweh said

Make sure that the various quote margins in this long conversation (verses 23-32) are clear and natural in your translation. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

in Sodom fifty righteous in the city

Alternate translation: [50 godly people living in the city of Sodom] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1676)**)

then I will spare the whole place

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. Alternate translation: [then I will spare the entire city and everyone who lives there] or [then I will not destroy the city or anyone in it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

for their sake

Alternate translation: [for the sake of those righteous people] or [in order to save those good people]

Genesis 18:27

Then Abraham spoke up

Alternate translation: [Then Abraham responded]

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and asked him] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Behold, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to

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. Alternate translation: [Listen, please, since I have been bold to speak to you] or [Please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

my Lord

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. Alternate translation: [my Master] or [Master] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

although I

Alternate translation: [in spite of the fact that]

although I {am} dust and ashes

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. Alternate translation: [I am as unimportant as dust and ashes compared to you] or [I am nothing compared to you] or [I have no status compared to you] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

Genesis 18:28

Suppose

See how you translated this term in verse 24. Alternate translation: [But suppose that]

the fifty righteous lack five

Alternate translation: [there are five fewer than 50 righteous people living in the city?] or [there are only 45 righteous people in the city instead of 50?]

Will you destroy the whole city

See how you translated “the whole place” in verse 26. Alternate translation: [Will you still destroy the whole city and everyone in it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

because of five

Alternate translation: [because the number of righteous people is five persons low?]

And he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is speaking here, not Abraham. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh said to him] or [Yahweh answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there

Make sure it is clear in your translation what “forty-five/45” refers to. Alternate translation: [I will not destroy the city if there are 45 righteous people living there] or [if I find 45 righteous people living in the city, I will not destroy it] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

Genesis 18:29

Then he continued again to speak to him

Alternate translation: [Then he spoke again to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and said

Alternate translation: [and asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Suppose

Alternate translation: [Suppose that]

forty are found

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [only 40 righteous people are found by you] or [you find only 40 righteous people] or [there are only 40 righteous people] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

there

Alternate translation: [living there?] or [living in the city? Will you destroy it then?]

And he said

Alternate translation: [And Yahweh replied] or [He answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

for the sake of

Alternate translation: [because of]

the forty

Alternate translation: [the 40 righteous people] or [those 40 people] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

Genesis 18:30

Then he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham is speaking here, not Yahweh. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham asked him] or [Then Abraham pleaded with Yahweh] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Please do not let my Lord be angry

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. Alternate translation: [My Master, please do not be angry at me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

and let me speak

Alternate translation: [but let me say something else:] or [rather let me ask you another question:]

Suppose

Alternate translation: [Suppose that]

thirty are found

If you use the numeral “30” here in your translation, make sure that it will not get confused with the verse number. Alternate translation: [only 30 righteous people are found] or [you find only 30 righteous people] or [there are only 30 righteous people] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

there

Alternate translation: [living in the city?]

And he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Yahweh is speaking here, not Abraham. Alternate translation: [Yahweh replied] or [He answered him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

I will not do it if I find thirty there

See how you translated a similar sentence at the end of verse 28. Alternate translation: [I will not destroy the city if I find 30 righteous people living there] or [If I find 30 righteous people living in the city, I will not destroy it] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

Genesis 18:31

Then he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Abraham is speaking here, not Yahweh. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham said to him] or [Then Abraham asked Yahweh] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to my Lord

See how you translated this clause in verse 27. Alternate translation: [Listen, please, since I have been bold to speak to you, my Lord] or [My Lord please excuse me for speaking to you so boldly] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Suppose

Alternate translation: [Suppose that]

twenty are found

Alternate translation: [only 20 righteous people are found by you] or [you find only 20 righteous people] or [there are only 20 righteous people] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

there

Alternate translation: [living there?]

And he said

Alternate translation: [He replied] or [Then he answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

for the sake of

Alternate translation: [because of]

the twenty

Alternate translation: [the 20 righteous people] or [those 20 people] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

Genesis 18:32

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Finally he said to him] or [Then he asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

Please do not let my Lord be angry

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. Alternate translation: [My Master, please do not be angry at me]

and let me speak just once more

Alternate translation: [rather, let me say one more thing:] or [and let me ask you just one more thing]

Suppose

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. Alternate translation: [Suppose that]

ten are found

Consider again how you translated **found** and “find” in verses 26, 28-32. Alternate translation: [only ten righteous people are found] or [you find only ten righteous people] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

there

Alternate translation: [living there?] or [living in the city? Will you destroy it then?]

And he said

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. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh replied] or [He answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

for the sake of

Consider again how you translated this phrase in verses 24, 26, 29, 31, 32. Alternate translation: [because of]

the ten

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. Alternate translation: [those ten righteous people] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

Genesis 18:33

Then Yahweh left as soon as he finished speaking to Abraham

Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh left Abraham as soon as he finished speaking with him]

and Abraham returned to his place

Alternate translation: [and Abraham went home]

Genesis 19

Genesis 19:1

Then the two angels came to Sodom in the evening

See how you translated “angel” in Gen 16:7-11.

at the gate of Sodom

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. Alternate translation: [by the gate of the city] or [at the city gate]

And Lot saw them, and he got 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. Alternate translation: [When Lot saw them, he got up] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

to meet them

Alternate translation: [to greet them]

and bowed down {with} nose to the ground

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 18:2. Alternate translation: [and then bowed before them with his forehead to the ground to show respect] or [and then kneeled in front of them and bowed his forehead to the ground to show them respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 19:2

Behold, please, my lords

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. Alternate translation: [Listen to me please, my lords] or [Sirs please listen to this:] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

Please turn aside to

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. Alternate translation: [Please stop in at] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

the house of your servant and spend the night

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.1620)**)

and spend the night, and wash your feet

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. Alternate translation: [You can wash the dust off your feet and stay for the night there]

Then you can get up early

Alternate translation: [Then early in the morning you can get up]

and go on your way

Alternate translation: [and continue on your way]

But they said

Alternate translation: [The two angels said to him]

No, rather

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. Alternate translation: [No, thank you, rather] or [That is kind of you, but] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

we will spend the night in the street

This refers to a public, outdoor place inside the city, perhaps the open place inside the city gate where people would meet. Alternate translation: [we will just stay in the city square tonight] or [we plan to stay the night in the square]

Genesis 19:3

But he urged them strongly

Alternate translation: [But Lot insisted urgently] or [However he continued to urge them earnestly] or [However he continued to urgently invite them]

so that they turned aside with him

Alternate translation: [until he finally convinced them and they went with him]

and entered into his house

Alternate translation: [to his house and entered it]

Then he prepared a feast 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. Alternate translation: [Then he made a big meal for them] or [Then Lot had a big meal prepared for them]

and he baked unleavened bread

Alternate translation: [including some bread without yeast in it]

Genesis 19:4

Before they lay down

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [all the men of the city of Sodom]

from the young and to the old

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. Alternate translation: [from the youngest to the oldest] (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

all the people from the edge{s

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, all the people from every section of the city were there] or [so that people from the entire city were there] or [In fact, everyone from all parts of the city had come there] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

Genesis 19:5

Then they called

Consider what is the best way to refer to these people at this point in the paragraph in your translation. Alternate translation: [Then the mob of people called out to Lot] or [Then the mob of men shouted to Lot] (See: **Pronouns (p. 1699)**)

who came to you tonight

Alternate translation: [who came to your house tonight?]

Bring them out to us

Alternate translation: [Bring them to us out here] or [We demand that you bring them out here to us]

so that we can know 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. Alternate translation: [so that we can have sex with them!] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 19:6

Then Lot went out to them at the entrance

Alternate translation: [But Lot went outside near the entrance to talk to them]

and shut the door behind him

Alternate translation: [and he shut the door of the house behind him]

Genesis 19:7

and he said

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then he said to them] or [and he pleaded with them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please, my brothers

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. Alternate translation: [No, please, my friends] or [I beg you, my brothers] or [No, my brothers please] (See: **Politeness (p. 1695)**)

do not do evil

Alternate translation: [do not do this evil!] or [do not do such an wicked thing!]

Genesis 19:8

Behold, please

See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [Listen to me please:] or [Please listen to me]

have not known a man

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. Alternate translation: [have not had sexual relations with a man] or [have never slept with a man] or [are virgins] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Please let me bring them out to you, and you do to them

Alternate translation: [Allow me to bring them out to you instead so that you may do to them] or [If you will let me bring them out here to you, then you may do to them]

as {is} good in your eyes

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 16:6. Alternate translation: [whatever you like] or [whatever pleases you]

But do not do anything to these men

Alternate translation: [But you must not do anything to harm these men] or [But do not violate these men]

because for that {reason} they have come under the shadow of my rafters

Alternate translation: [because they have come under the shelter of my roof] or [because they are my guests and I am responsible for their well-being] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 19:9

But they said

Alternate translation: [But the men of Sodom responded to him] or [But the men of Sodom shouted at Lot] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Get back

Alternate translation: [Stand aside!] or [Get out of the way!]

Then they said

Alternate translation: [Then they said to each other]

This one came

The phrase “this one/guy” shows disdain and disrespect for Lot. If possible, use a similar term in your language here.

to sojourn

See how you translated **sojourn** in Gen 12:10. Here it has the negative meaning that Lot does not belong there. Alternate translation: [to live temporarily] or [as a outsider]

and now he is judging {us

Alternate translation: [and now he wants to judge us!]

We will treat you worse than them

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.1559)**)

Then they pressed hard against the man Lot

Alternate translation: [Then they started shoving hard against him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and came near to break down the door

Alternate translation: [and moved forward to break down the door of his house]

Genesis 19:10

and brought Lot

Alternate translation: [and quickly pulled Lot]

and shut the door

Alternate translation: [and slammed the door shut]

Genesis 19:11

Then they struck the men who {were at} the entrance of the house with blindness

Alternate translation: [Then those two guests who were angels caused the men of Sodom who were outside the door of the house to be blind] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

from the small and to the great

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. Alternate translation: [from the youngest to the oldest] (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

so that they became weary {trying} to find the door

Alternate translation: [so that they wearied themselves 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

Alternate translation: [Then the two men asked Lot] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Who else {belongs} to you here

Alternate translation: [What other family members do you have here] or [Do you have any other relatives here in this city]

a son-in-law or your sons or your daughters

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or later in this verse. Alternate translation: [such as sons-in-law or sons or daughters] or [If you have sons-in-law, sons, daughters]

or anyone {else} who {belongs} to you

Alternate translation: [or any other relatives]

in the city

The punctuation you use here depends on whether or not you began a new sentence earlier in this quote.

Alternate translation: [in this city]

Take {them} out

Whether or not you begin a new sentence here will depend on whether you began a new sentence earlier in this quote. Alternate translation: [then quickly take them out]

from this place

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. Alternate translation: [from here]

Genesis 19:13

because we are destroying

The pronoun **we** refers here only to the two angels, not Lot or anyone else. Alternate translation: [because we are going to destroy] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

this place

The way you translate this phrase will depend on how you translated the end of verse 12.

For their outcry before Yahweh {is} great

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). Alternate translation: [Yahweh has heard that the people of this city are guilty of terrible sins] or [Yahweh has heard serious accusations against the people who live here] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them** (p.1701))

so Yahweh has sent us

Alternate translation: [so he has ordered us] (See: **Pronouns** (p.1699))

to destroy it

Make sure the way you translate this phrase fits with how you translated the first part of this sentence. Alternate translation: [to destroy them and their city]

Genesis 19:14

Then Lot went out and spoke to

Alternate translation: [So Lot went and spoke to] or [So Lot went to speak to] or [So went to]

who were to take 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. Alternate translation: [who were going to marry his daughters] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he said

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and he said to them] or [and he urged them] or [He told them]

Get up

This phrase communicates urgency here. Alternate translation: [Come on! We must]

get out of

Alternate translation: [get away from] or [flee from]

because Yahweh is destroying

See how you translated “are destroying” in verse 13. Alternate translation: [because Yahweh is going to destroy]

the city

Alternate translation: [the place!]

But it seemed like he was joking in the eyes of his sons-in-law

Alternate translation: [But his sons-in-law did not listen to him, because they thought he was joking] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 19:15

Then when the dawn came

Dawn is the time before sunrise when it starts getting light. Alternate translation: [Very early the next morning]

the angels urged Lot, saying

See how you translated **angels** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [the two messengers urged Lot]

Get up

Alternate translation: [You must quickly]

take your wife and your two daughters who are here

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [so that you will not be destroyed] or [or else you will be destroyed] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

in the punishment of the city

Alternate translation: [when the people of the city are punished by God] or [when God punishes the people in the city]

Genesis 19:16

But he lingered

Consider what is the best way to refer to Lot at this point in the paragraph in your language. Alternate translation: [But Lot did not leave immediately] or [Lot delayed] (See: **Pronouns (p.1699)**)

so the men grabbed his hand and the hand of his wife and the hand{s} of his two daughters

Alternate translation: [so the two men 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

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. Alternate translation: [because Yahweh was being kind to him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and brought him out and set him

Alternate translation: [and led him safely]

Genesis 19:17

And it happened when they had brought them out to the outside

See how you translated **brought** in verse 16. Alternate translation: [As soon as the angels had led them outside the city] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

then he said

Alternate translation: [one of them said to them] or [one of the angels said to Lot] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Flee for your life

Alternate translation: [Run for your lives!] or [Run to save your lives!]

Do not look behind you

Alternate translation: [Do not look behind you at Sodom] or [Do not look back at the city]

and do not stop anywhere in the plain

This plain or valley was a wide, flat area between mountains. See how you translated “plain/valley” in Gen 13:10-12. Alternate translation: [and do not delay anywhere in the plain] or [and do not stop in the plain for any reason!]

Escape

Alternate translation: [Hurry]

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

See how you translated this clause in verse 15. Alternate translation: [so that you will not be destroyed!] or [so that you will not die!] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 19:18

Then Lot said to them

Some languages have a special dual pronoun for **them** that fits well here. Do what is best in your language.
Alternate translation: [But Lot pleaded with them] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

Please, no, my lords

See how you translated “my lords/masters” in verse 2. Alternate translation: [Please, my masters, do not make us go that far!]

Genesis 19:19

Behold, please

Alternate translation: [Listen to this please:] or [Please listen to me]

Your servant has found favor in your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [I, your servant, have been treated well by you] or [You have treated me kindly even though I am unimportant] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

and you have magnified your mercy that you have shown 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. Alternate translation: [and you have shown me great mercy] or [and you have been very merciful to me]

But I am not able to escape to the mountain{s

See how you translated **the mountains** in verse 17. Alternate translation: [But I am not able to flee all the way to the hills] or [But there is no way that I can make it safely all the way to the hills] or [But the hills are too far away for me to make it there safely]

because the disaster will overtake me and I will die

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. Alternate translation: [before the disaster catches up with me and kills me] or [before the disaster strikes and kills me] (See: **Personification (p.1690)**)

Genesis 19:20

Behold, 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

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. Alternate translation: [That town over there]

is} near to flee to

Alternate translation: [is close enough to run to in time]

and it {is} a little one

Alternate translation: [and it is only a small town] or [and it is little]

Please let me escape there

Alternate translation: [Please let us flee there, and do not destroy it]

Is it not a little one

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. Alternate translation: [After all, it is only a small place] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Then my life will live

Lot says “my life,” but he is probably also including his family who is with him. Alternate translation: [Then I 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 spared] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 19:21

Then he said

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. Alternate translation: [The angel said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Listen] or [Here is what I will do:]

I have also lifted up your face concerning this thing

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate the idiom **lifted up your face** here. Alternate translation: [I will grant your request] or [I will permit you to do what you have requested] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

so I will not overthrow

Alternate translation: [so I will not overturn]

the town that you are talking about

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. Alternate translation: [the small town that you mentioned] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 19:22

Hurry up

Alternate translation: [But go quickly now and]

escape there

Consider again how you translated **escape** in verses 17, 19-20, 22. Alternate translation: [flee there] or [flee to that town]

because I am not able to do

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. Alternate translation: [because I am not allowed to do anything] or [because I must wait to do anything] or [because God will not allow me to do anything]

until you go there

Alternate translation: [until you reach there safely] or [until you are safely there]

For that {reason

This phrase refers back to what Lot said in verse 20, not what the angel just said. Alternate translation: [That is why] or [Since Lot said the town was little]

they called the name of the town

See how you translated **they called the name** in Gen 11:9 and 16:14. Alternate translation: [the town was called] or [they called that town]

Zoar

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

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

In that culture the father was often the only one mentioned and the other family members were assumed to be with him. Alternate translation: [when Lot and his family] (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p. 1598)**)

came to Zoar

Alternate translation: [arrived 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

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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh poured down burning sulfur and fire on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah] or [Then Yahweh caused fire and burning sulfur to pour down on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah]

from Yahweh out of the heavens

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. Alternate translation: [from himself in heaven] or [from out of the sky] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 19:25

and he overthrew

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. Alternate translation: [and (so) Yahweh completely destroyed] or [In that way, Yahweh completely destroyed] or [That is how Yahweh completely destroyed]

and all of the plain

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. Alternate translation: [and the whole valley] or [and the rest of the plain]

including all the inhabitants of the cities

This phrase refers to Sodom and Gomorrah and at least two other cities in the valley (Deuteronomy 29:23). Alternate translation: [including all the people who lived in the cities of that valley] or [including everyone who lived in the cities there]

and the vegetation

Alternate translation: [and even all the plants]

and the vegetation of the ground

Alternate translation: [that were growing on the land] or [of the area]

Genesis 19:26

But his wife from behind him looked back

Alternate translation: [... looked back at Sodom]

and she became

Alternate translation: [and immediately her body turned into] or [and immediately Yahweh turned her into]

a pillar of salt

Alternate translation: [a column of solid salt rock and she died] or [salt rock that was in the shape of a column]

Genesis 19:27

Abraham got up early in the morning

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). Alternate translation: [Meanwhile, Abraham got up early that same morning]

and went to the place

Alternate translation: [and returned to the spot]

where he had stood before Yahweh

Alternate translation: [where he had been with Yahweh the previous day]

Genesis 19:28

and 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. Alternate translation: [Then he looked down] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

toward

Alternate translation: [in the direction of]

and toward all the surface of the land of the plain

Alternate translation: [and all the rest of the plain]

And he saw that, behold

Alternate translation: [And he was amazed to see that]

smoke was rising from the land

Alternate translation: [lots of thick smoke was billowing up from the land] or [a large amount of smoke was ...]

like smoke from a furnace

During that time period, a furnace was heated by fire. Alternate translation: [like smoke that comes from the fire in a large oven] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

Genesis 19:29

So it was, when God destroyed

See how you translated **destroyed** in verses 13-14, 17. Alternate translation: [So it was that when God destroyed]

the cities of the plain

Consider again how you translated “plain/valley” in Gen 13:10-12; 19:17, 25, 28, 29. Alternate translation: [the cities on the plain] or [the cities in the plain]

that God remembered Abraham

Make sure your translation of this clause does not imply that God forgot Abraham. See how you translated **God remembered** in Gen 8:1. Alternate translation: [he kept Abraham and his request in mind]

and sent Lot out of the middle of

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and brought Lot safely away from] or [So he rescued Lot from]

the overthrow

Alternate translation: [the disaster]

when he overthrew the cities

Alternate translation: [when he completely destroyed the cities] or [that he had used to completely destroy the cities]

Genesis 19:30

Then Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the mountain{s}, and his two daughters {were} with him

Be consistent here with how you translated **the mountains** in verses 17 and 19. Alternate translation: [After that, Lot moved with his two daughters from the town of Zoar up into the hills and settled there] or [Sometime later, Lot and his two daughters left the town of Zoar and moved to the hills]

because he was afraid to settle in 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. Alternate translation: [because he was afraid to stay in the town of Zoar] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So he lived in a cave, he and his two daughters

Alternate translation: [So he and his two daughters lived in a cave in the hills]

Genesis 19:31

Then the firstborn said to

Alternate translation: [Then one day his oldest daughter said to]

the younger

Alternate translation: [his younger one] or [her younger sister] or [her sister]

Our father is old

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. Alternate translation: [Our father is getting along in years] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

and there is not a man

Alternate translation: [and there is no man]

on the earth

Lot's daughter is exaggerating here, to emphasize her point. Alternate translation: [in this land] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

to come to us

See how you translated the idiom "went to" in Gen 6:4, which is the same meaning as **come to** here. Alternate translation: [to be with us] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

as {is} the way of all the earth

Alternate translation: [as is the way of all the people on the earth] or [which is normal for people all over the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 19:32

Come on

See how you translated this in Gen 14:7.

let us get our father to drink wine

Consider what is the best way to translate this proposal or suggestion in your language.

and let us lie with him

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and then we should sleep with him] or [Then we can have physical relations with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

so that we will give life to

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [That way we can have descendants] or [so that we can preserve our family line] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

through our father

Alternate translation: [by our father] or [through him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 19:33

So they got their father to drink wine on that night

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Lot's daughters at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [So they got their father drunk on wine that very night] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

and the firstborn went

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then his oldest daughter went to him]

and lay with her father

Make sure that the way you translate the euphemism **lay with** will not be too offensive to be read aloud in public. Alternate translation: [and slept with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

but he did not know

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [But he was so drunk that he did not even know] or [But he was so drunk that he was completely unaware]

when she lay down or when she got up

Alternate translation: [that she had been with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 19:34

Then it happened on 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. Alternate translation: [The next day, this is what happened:]

the younger

See how you translated this phrase in verse 31. Alternate translation: [his younger one] or [her younger sister] or [her sister]

Behold, 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.1651)**)

I lay with my father

See how you translated **lay with** in verse 33. Alternate translation: [I slept with our father] or [I had physical relations with our father] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Let us get him to drink wine again tonight

Consider whether it is better in your language to put the time word **tonight** first or last in this clause. Alternate translation: [Tonight we should get him drunk again] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

lie with him

Alternate translation: [sleep with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

so that we will give life

See how you translated the last clause in verse 32, which is the same as the rest of verse 34. Alternate translation: [so that we can have descendants] or [so that we can preserve our family line]

through our father

Alternate translation: [by our father] or [through him] (See: **Pronouns (p.1699)**)

Genesis 19:35

So on that night also they got their father to drink wine

Alternate translation: [So they got their father drunk on wine that night, also]

Then the younger went and lay with him

Alternate translation: [Then his younger daughter went to him and slept with him] or [Then his younger daughter went to him and had sexual relations with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

but he did not know

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. Alternate translation: [But once again he was so drunk that he did not even know] or [but ... he was not even aware] or [But ... he was completely unaware]

when she lay down or when she got up

Alternate translation: [that she had been with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 19:36

So both of the daughters of Lot conceived

Alternate translation: [As a result ...]

from their father

Alternate translation: [by having relations with their father] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 19:37

Then the firstborn bore a son

Make sure that the way you translate “Later” fits with the fact that several months have gone by. Alternate translation: [Later the oldest daughter gave birth to a son] or [... had a son]

and she called his name

See how you translated **called his name** in Gen 5:29. Alternate translation: [and she called him] or [whom she named]

Moab

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.1634)**)

He {is} the father of

Alternate translation: [He was the ancestor of]

the Moabites to this day

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. Alternate translation: [the people group who are called the Moabites today]

Genesis 19:38

bore 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.
Alternate translation: [had a son]

and she called his name

Alternate translation: [and she called him] or [whom she named]

Ben-Ammi

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.1634)**)

He {is} the father of

Alternate translation: [He was the forefather of]

the sons of Ammon to this day

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 37. Alternate translation: [the people group who are called the Ammonites today]

Genesis 20

Genesis 20:1

Then Abraham traveled

Consider what is the best way to introduce this new episode in your language, where the focus shifts to Abraham. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham and his family left]

from there

Abraham and Sarah had been living by the trees of Mamre, near the city of Hebron (Gen 13:18; 18:1). Alternate translation: [from the place where he were living] or [from near the city of Hebron]

to the land of the Negev

See how you translated “the Negev Wilderness/Desert” in Gen 12:9 (note); 13:1, 3. Alternate translation: [and went south to the Negev Desert area] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and he settled between 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. Alternate translation: [There he lived between the cities of Kadesh and Shur]

and sojourned in Gerar

See how you translated “sojourn” in Gen 12:10. Also be consistent here with how you translated **Gerar** in Gen 10:19. Alternate translation: [and they stayed there for a while as foreigners, in the city of Gerar] or [and they stayed in the city of Gerar for a while]

Genesis 20:2

And Abraham said about Sarah his wife, “She {is} my sister

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. Alternate translation: [While they were there, he told people that his wife Sarah was his sister] or [While they were there, he told people that Sarah was his sister, not his wife] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

So Abimelech the king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her

The city of Gerar was the Philistines' capital city where King Abimelech ruled from (Gen 21:2, 32; 26:1). Alternate translation: [So one day Abimelech, who was the king over the city of Gerar, had some of his servants bring Sarah to his home to be his wife] or [So one day King Abimelech, who ruled the Philistines from the city of Gerar, had Sarah brought to him to be his wife]

Genesis 20:3

But God came to 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. Alternate translation: [But God appeared to King Abimelech in a dream] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

in} the 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. Alternate translation: [during the night] or [by night] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and said to him

Alternate translation: [and told him]

Behold, you are dead

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. Alternate translation: [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]

because of the woman whom you have taken, because she

See how you translated “took” in verse 2.

is married to a husband

Alternate translation: [is a married woman!]

Genesis 20:4

Now Abimelech

Consider what is the best way in your language to introduce this background information. Alternate translation: [Now King Abimelech] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

had not gone near to her

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. Alternate translation: [had not yet slept with her] or [had not had marital relations with Sarah] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

so he said

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.1704)**)

My Lord

See how you translated this title of respect for God in Gen 18:27, 30-32. Alternate translation: [My Master] or [Master]

will you kill a nation even though

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. Alternate translation: [will you kill me and my people group even if] or [please do not kill me and my people group, since] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

it is} righteous

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. Alternate translation: [we are actually righteous] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 20:5

Did not he himself say to me, 'She {is} my 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. Alternate translation: [He himself told me that she was his sister] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And she herself also said, 'He {is} my brother

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [And Sarah herself also claimed that he was her brother] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

I did this

Alternate translation: [So I did what I did]

in the integrity of my heart

Alternate translation: [with a clear conscience] or [with pure motives] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and in the innocence of my hands

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. Alternate translation: [and with clean hands!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 20:6

Then God said to him in the dream

Alternate translation: [God answered King Abimelech in the dream]

Yes, I know that

Alternate translation: [Yes, I know that it was] or [I am aware that it was]

in the integrity of your heart

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 5. Alternate translation: [with a clear conscience] or [with pure motives] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

you did this

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. Alternate translation: [that you did this] or [that you took her to be your wife] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and indeed I kept 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. Alternate translation: [and in fact, it is I who kept you from doing this sin against me] or [In fact, I am the one who prevented you from sinning against me]

I did not allow you

Alternate translation: [I did not permit you to]

to touch 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. Alternate translation: [have sexual relations with her] or [do anything to her] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 20:7

return the wife of the man

Alternate translation: [return her to her husband Abraham]

because he {is} a prophet

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. Alternate translation: [He is a prophet for me]

and he will pray for you

Alternate translation: [so he will ask me to be kind to you]

and you will live

Alternate translation: [and I will let you live]

But if you do not

Alternate translation: [But if you will not] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

return her

Alternate translation: [give her back to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

know that

Alternate translation: [you need to know that] or [be aware that]

you will surely die, you and all who {belong} to you

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. Alternate translation: [you and all your people will surely die!] or [I will surely kill you and all your people!]

Genesis 20:8

So Abimelech got up early in the morning

Alternate translation: [So the next morning King Abimelech got up early]

and called

Alternate translation: [summoned]

for all of his servants

Alternate translation: [all his officials and other servants]

and he told all those things in their ears

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then he told them about everything that God had said to him in the dream] or [He told told them everything that had happened] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and the men were very afraid

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to King Abimelech's servants at each point in this verse. Alternate translation: [and they felt terrified] or [When they heard that, they were very afraid that God would kill them] or [As soon as they heard that, the men were very afraid of what might happen next] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 20:9

Then Abimelech called

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to King Abimelech at this point in the paragraph. Alternate translation: [Then King Abimelech summoned Abraham] or [Then the king called Abraham in to see him] or [Then he had Abraham brought to him]

and said to him

The way you translate this quote margin will depend on how you translate the rhetorical question that follows it. Alternate translation: [and asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What have you done to us

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. Alternate translation: [Why have you treated us like this?] or [What you have done to us is not right!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And how have I sinned against you so that

Alternate translation: [What did I do wrong to you so that] or [I never did anything wrong to you, but yet] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

you brought a great sin on me and on my kingdom

Make sure your punctuation here fits with how you translate this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: [you brought on me and my people the guilt of a terrible sin!] or [you have caused me and the kingdom that I rule to be guilty of sinning terribly!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

You have done deeds to me that should not be done

Alternate translation: [No one should ever wrong someone the way you have wronged me!]

Genesis 20:10

Then Abimelech said to Abraham

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.1704)**)

What were you looking for when you did

Alternate translation: [What did you expect to benefit from doing] or [What were your reasons for doing] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

this thing

Alternate translation: [this terrible thing?]

Genesis 20:11

And Abraham answered

Alternate translation: [Abraham replied to him]

Because

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [I thought that there was certainly no one in this place who obeyed God, so I was afraid that they would kill me in order to take my wife for themselves] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 20:12

And also

Alternate translation: [In addition to that]

she truly {is} my sister

Alternate translation: [it is true that she is my sister] or [she actually is my sister]

the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother

Alternate translation: [because she and I have the same father, but not the same mother]

and she became my wife

Alternate translation: [and when we were old enough, I married her]

Genesis 20:13

And it happened

Alternate translation: [It happened that]

when God caused me to wander

Alternate translation: [when God commanded me to leave] or [when God led me to travel away from]

from the house of my father

See how you translated “house of ... father” in Gen 12:1. Alternate translation: [the place where my father and other relatives were living] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

then I said to her

Alternate translation: [I told her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

This {is} your kindness that you can do for me: At every place where we go, say about me, “He {is} my brother

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate these embedded quotes as direct or indirect quotes. Alternate translation: [to please do me a special favor and tell people wherever we go that I am her brother] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 20:14

flocks and herds

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [flocks of sheep and herds of cattle]

and men slaves and women slaves

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [and men and women slaves to Abraham] or [and male and female slaves to Abraham]

and gave them to Abraham

Alternate translation: [and gave them all to Abraham] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and he returned Sarah his wife 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. Alternate translation: [He also gave back to Abraham his wife Sarah]

Genesis 20:15

Then Abimelech said

Alternate translation: [Then he said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Listen]

my land {is} before you

See how you translated the idiom “before your face” in Gen 13:9. Alternate translation: [my land is in front of you] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Settle

See how you translated this verb in verse 1. Alternate translation: [You may live] or [I invite you to live]

wherever {is} good in your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [wherever you decide is best for you] or [wherever you want] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 20:16

And to Sarah he said

Alternate translation: [Then King Abimelech said to Sarah]

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look] or [Listen to this:]

I have given 1,000 {shekels of} silver to your brother

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. Alternate translation: [I have given 1,000 pieces of silver to your brother] or [I have given your brother 1,000 pieces of silver] (See: **Biblical Money (p.1572)**)

Behold, that {is

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [to show everyone that you are innocent of any wrongdoing] or [to show to everyone that you are an honorable woman] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

so that you are vindicated for everything

Alternate translation: [and to make it clear that you are not at fault for anything that happened] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 20:17

Then Abraham prayed to God

See how you translated “pray” in Gen 20:7. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham prayed to God for King Abimelech] or [asked God to be kind to the king]

and God healed Abimelech

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [So God healed him]

and his wife and his slave women

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.1701)**)

so that they bore children

Alternate translation: [and they were able to conceive and bear children again]

Genesis 20:18

because Yahweh

For some languages it may be more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language.
Alternate translation: [because previously Yahweh]

had completely closed up every womb in the house of Abimelech

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.1633)**)

because of

Alternate translation: [on account of] or [to punish him for taking]

Sarah, the wife of Abraham

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.1727)**)

Genesis 21

Genesis 21:1

Then Yahweh visited Sarah as he had said

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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh blessed Sarah as he had promised that he would] or [Then Yahweh was gracious to Sarah just as he had promised he would be] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and Yahweh did for Sarah

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, Yahweh did for her] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

as he had said

Alternate translation: [just as he had said he would do]

Genesis 21:2

so that Sarah 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. Alternate translation: [So she became pregnant] or [As a result, Sarah conceived]

and bore a son

Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a son] or [and had a son]

at the appointed time

See how you translated **appointed time** in Gen 18:14. Alternate translation: [at the set time] or [at the time God had set] or [That happened at the exact time]

which God had told him

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. Alternate translation: [when God had told him it would happen] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 21:3

And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him

Alternate translation: [Then Abraham called his son]

whom Sarah bore for him, Isaac

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.1634)**)

Genesis 21:4

And Abraham 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. Alternate translation: [And he also circumcised]

his son Isaac

Consider what is the best way to refer to Isaac at this point in the paragraph, in your language. Alternate translation: [his son] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

a son of eight days

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. Alternate translation: [who was eight days old] or [when he was eight days old] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

just as God had commanded him

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He did exactly what God had commanded him to do]

Genesis 21:5

And Abraham {was} a son of 100 years

See how you translated this clause in Gen 17:17. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

when Isaac his son was born to him

Alternate translation: [when Isaac was born]

Genesis 21:6

And Sarah said

Alternate translation: [When Isaac was born, Sarah said]

God has brought laughter to me

Alternate translation: [God has enabled me to rejoice and laugh!]

Everyone who hears

Alternate translation: [Everyone who finds out what he has done for me]

will laugh with me

Alternate translation: [will rejoice and laugh with me!]

Genesis 21:7

And she said

Alternate translation: [Then she added] or [She also said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Who would have said to 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. Alternate translation: [No one would have ever told Abraham] or [No one would have ever thought of telling Abraham] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

that} Sarah would nurse children

Alternate translation: [that I would bear children]

Yet

Alternate translation: [But yet] or [In spite of that]

I have born a son

See how you translated “bear” in Gen 18:13. Alternate translation: [I have had a son for him]

in his old age

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. Alternate translation: [even though he is old!]

Genesis 21:8

Then the child grew

Alternate translation: [The boy Isaac grew]

and was weaned

Children in that culture were often weaned around the age of three. Translate **weaned** in a way that will not embarrass or offend people. Alternate translation: [and his mother weaned him] or [and reached the age when his mother stopped breast-feeding him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and Abraham made a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [When that happened, Abraham held a elaborate feast to celebrate] or [On that same day, Abraham had his servants prepare an elaborate feast to celebrate]

Genesis 21:9

And Sarah saw

Alternate translation: [But at the feast Sarah saw]

that} the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born for Abraham

Also see how you translated “have born” in verse 8. Alternate translation: [that the son whom Hagar, her handmaid from the country of Egypt, had given birth to for Abraham]

was mocking

Alternate translation: [was mocking Isaac] or [was laughing at Isaac]

Genesis 21:10

So she said to Abraham

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [So she was upset and told Abraham]

Drive away

Alternate translation: [Send away]

that slave woman

See how you translated “slave women” in Gen 20:17. Some languages may have a single word (as Hebrew does) that means this. Alternate translation: [that female slave]

and her son

Alternate translation: [along with her son!]

because the son of that slave woman

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [The son of that slave woman]

will not inherit with my son, with Isaac

Alternate translation: [will never inherit any part of what our son Isaac inherits from you!] or [will not get anything from you! Only my son Isaac should inherit your estate!]

Genesis 21:11

And the matter was very distressing in the eyes of Abraham

Alternate translation: [Abraham felt very grieved about that] or [What Sarah said grieved Abraham very much] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

on account of his son

Alternate translation: [because of his son Ishmael] or [because he also cared about his son Ishmael]

Genesis 21:12

But God said to Abraham

Alternate translation: [Then God said to him] or [Then God told him]

Do not be distressed in your eyes

See how you translated “distressing” in verse 11. Alternate translation: [Do not be sad] or [Do not let yourself be upset] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

because of the boy and because of your slave 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. Alternate translation: [about the boy or your slave woman]

All that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice

The word **listen** means to hear and do what is being asked. Also, the phrase **her voice** refers to Sarah and what she said. Alternate translation: [Rather, listen to whatever Sarah tells you to do, and do it] or [Do everything that Sarah told you to do] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

because in Isaac, offspring will be called yours

Alternate translation: [because it is in Isaac that the descendants I promised you will be reckoned] or [because Isaac is the one who will be the ancestor of the descendants that I promised to give you] or [because the offspring that I promised to you will come from Isaac]

Genesis 21:13

And the son of the slave woman I will also make

Alternate translation: [But I will also make the son of your servant woman] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

into a nation

Alternate translation: [become the ancestor of an important people group]

because he {is} your offspring

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. Alternate translation: [since he is your descendant] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 21:14

Then Abraham got up early in the morning

Alternate translation: [So Abraham got up early the next morning]

and took bread

This phrase may refer to bread or more generally to food. Alternate translation: [got some food] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and a skin of water

The word **skin** refers here to an animal skin or hide. Alternate translation: [and a leather bag full of water] or [and a full water bag made of animal hide] or [and a water bag full of water]

and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder

Alternate translation: [to Hagar and put them on her shoulder]

Then {he gave her} the child and sent her away

Alternate translation: [Then he sent her and the boy away] or [Then he sent her off with the youth]

and she left and wandered

Alternate translation: [and she left and wandered around] or [and they wandered around]

in the wilderness of 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. Alternate translation: [in the Beersheba Desert] or [in the desert near the city that was later called Beersheba]

Genesis 21:15

And when the water from the skin was gone

See how you translated **skin** in verse 14. Alternate translation: [When they had drunk all the water that they had in the water container] or [When there was no more water in the water skin] or [When the water bag was empty]

then she threw

Make sure your translation of this idiom does not mean that Hagar literally threw Ishmael through the air. Alternate translation: [Hagar hurriedly put] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the child

Alternate translation: [the boy]

under one of the bushes

Alternate translation: [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

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then she went away from him and sat down by herself]

as far away as they shoot a bow

If you do not translate the text literally, the literal text could be put in a footnote. Alternate translation: [about as far away as someone can shoot a bow] or [about a hundred yards away] (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1566)**)

because she said

Alternate translation: [because she said to herself] or [She said to herself]

Do not let me look on the death of the child

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. Alternate translation: [I cannot bear to see my son die!] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1554)**)

And {as} she sat at a distance, then she lifted her voice and sobbed

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. Alternate translation: [As she sat there, she started sobbing loudly] or [Then she started sobbing loudly] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 21:17

And God heard the voice of the boy

Alternate translation: [God also heard the youth crying]

so the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her

See how you translated the key term **angel** in Gen 16:7. Alternate translation: [so one of his messengers called to Hagar from heaven and said] or [so he had one of his messengers call to Hagar from heaven and say]

What {troubles} you, Hagar

For some languages it is necessary to put **Hagar** first in this quote. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Hagar, why are you upset?]

Do not be afraid, because God has listened to the voice of the boy where he {is} there

The phrase **has listened to** means that God heard the boy and that he will help him. Alternate translation: [Do not be afraid, because God has heard the cries of the boy where he is lying and will take care of him] or [Do not be afraid. God has heard the youth crying over there and will take care of him] or [God has heard the youth crying over there, so do not be afraid because he will take care of you both] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 21:18

Get up, lift the boy

Alternate translation: [So go help the youth to stand up] or [So now, go to your son, help him get up]

and hold on to him with your hand

Alternate translation: [and lead him by the hand to help him walk]

because I will make him

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. Alternate translation: [because Yahweh will make his descendants become]

into a great nation

See how you translated **nation** in verse 13. Alternate translation: [an large ethnic group]

Genesis 21:19

Then God opened her eyes and she saw

Alternate translation: [Then God helped her to see] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

a well of water

See how you translated **well** in Gen 16:14. Alternate translation: [a well]

So she went

Alternate translation: [So she walked over to the well]

and filled the skin {with} water

See how you translated **skin** in verses 14-15. Alternate translation: [filled the water bag with water]

and gave the boy a drink

Alternate translation: [and gave Ishmael a drink from it]

Genesis 21:20

And God was with the boy

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. Alternate translation: [God was with the boy and blessed him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he grew up. And he lived

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. Alternate translation: [as he grew up] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And he lived in the wilderness

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. Alternate translation: [And he lived in the desert of Paran] or [He lived in the Paran Wilderness]

and became a great bowman

Alternate translation: [and became a skilled bowhunter]

Genesis 21:21

And {while} he was living in the wilderness of Paran

See how you translated **wilderness** in verse 20. Alternate translation: [While he was living in the Paran Wilderness] or [While he was living in that desert]

then his mother took a wife for him

Alternate translation: [his mother chose a wife for him] or [his mother arranged for him to marry a woman] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

from the land of Egypt

See how you translated **the land of Egypt** in Gen 13:10. Alternate translation: [who came from the country of Egypt] or [who was Egyptian]

Genesis 21:22

And it happened at that time

Consider what is the best way to introduce a new episode here in your language. Alternate translation: [Around that same time] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying

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. Alternate translation: [King Abimelech went with his army commander Phicol to Abraham and said to him] or [King Abimelech and his army commander Phicol went to Abraham and said to him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

God {is} with you in all that you do

See how you translated a similar phrase (“God was with ...”) in verse 20. Alternate translation: [I have noticed that God is with you and blesses you in everything that you do] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 21:23

So now

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. Alternate translation: [So now, please]

swear to me here by God

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. Alternate translation: [solemnly promise me here with God as your witness] (See: **Oath Formulas (p.1681)**)

if you will deal falsely with me

According to custom, Abimelech is leaving out the part of the oath that tells what Yahweh will do to Abraham if he violates the oath. Because of the power of spoken words, people left that part to be understood silently. You could supply these words if it would be clearer and not offensive in your language. Alternate translation: [that he will punish you severely if you deal falsely with me] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1613)**)

According to the kindness that I have done to you

Alternate translation: [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

In this context, the phrase **the land** refers to the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: [vow that you will also be kind to me and the people in this land] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

which you are sojourning in

Alternate translation: [where you are sojourning] or [where you are living as a foreigner]

Genesis 21:24

And Abraham said

Alternate translation: [Abraham said to Abimelech] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I swear

See how you translated **swear** in verse 23. Alternate translation: [I swear that I will do those things] or [I solemnly promise that I will do that] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 21:25

Then Abraham complained to

Alternate translation: [But then he confronted] or [Then he also protested to]

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

Alternate translation: [regarding]

the well of water

See how you translated **well of water** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [a well of water] or [the water well] or [a well]

Genesis 21:26

Then Abimelech said

Alternate translation: [But Abimelech responded to him] or [When King Abimelech heard that, he said]

who has done this thing

Alternate translation: [who took your well from you] or [who took control of your well]

And also

Here Abimelech is introducing an additional explanation of his innocence in this matter. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Alternate translation: [Furthermore]

you did not tell me

Alternate translation: [you did not inform me about that before] or [you never told me about this]

and also

Here Abimelech adds a third reason why he is innocent in this matter. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Alternate translation: [furthermore] or [and finally]

I have not heard about it until today

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated **sheep and cattle** in Gen 20:14. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham brought some of his sheep and cattle, and gave them to Abimelech]

and the two of them cut a covenant

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 15:18. Alternate translation: [and he and Abimelech made a peace agreement with one another] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 21:28

Then Abraham set apart

Alternate translation: [Abraham also isolated]

seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves

Alternate translation: [seven female lambs from the rest of the sheep] or [seven young female sheep from the rest of the sheep]

Genesis 21:29

So Abimelech said to Abraham

Alternate translation: [So Abimelech asked Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {are} they, these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart by themselves

See how you translated **set apart** in verse 28. Alternate translation: [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 those seven lambs from the rest of the sheep?]

Genesis 21:30

And he said

Alternate translation: [Abraham answered him]

Because you must take the seven ewe lambs

Alternate translation: [Those seven lambs are for you to accept] or [Because I want you to take them]

so that it can be a witness for me

Alternate translation: [to verify to everyone]

that I dug this well

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [That is why] or [So]

he called that place

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. Alternate translation: [Abraham called that place] or [they call that place] or [that place was called]

Beersheba

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. Alternate translation: [Well of the Oath]

because there

Alternate translation: [because it was there that] or [because that is where]

the two of them

See how you translated this phrase in verse 27. Alternate translation: [he and Abimelech both]

swore an oath

See how you translated “swear” in verses 23-24. Alternate translation: [made a vow to each other] or [solemnly promised each other to live in peace]

Genesis 21:32

So they cut the covenant 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. Alternate translation: [After Abraham and King Abimelech established their peace agreement at Beersheba] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Then Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, got up

See how you translated **got up** in verse 22. Alternate translation: [Abimelech and Phicol, his army commander left from there] or [Abimelech and his army commander Phicol left Abraham] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

to the land of the Philistines

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. Alternate translation: [to the land where the Philistines lived]

Genesis 21:33

a tamarisk tree

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. Alternate translation: [a salt-cedar tree] or [an evergreen tree named salt-cedar] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and there he called on the name of Yahweh

See how you translated this clause in Gen 12:8 and a similar clause in 13:4. Alternate translation: [and he praised Yahweh by name there] or [and he addressed Yahweh there by his name as he praised him] or [and there he praised Yahweh] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the God of eternity

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. Alternate translation: [who is the Eternal God] or [who is the God who has always existed]

Genesis 21:34

Then Abraham sojourned

See how you translated “sojourning” in verse 23. Alternate translation: [After that, he stayed there]

in the land of the Philistines

Alternate translation: [in the territory that was occupied by the Philistines] or [in the territory where the Philistines lived]

many days

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.1651)**)

Genesis 22

Genesis 22:1

Then it happened after those things

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. Alternate translation: [Sometime after those things happened] or [Several years later] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

that God tested 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. Alternate translation: [God wanted to test Abraham]

And he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking here. Alternate translation: [Abraham replied to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Behold me

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, Master?] or [What is it, Lord] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 22:2

Then he said

Translate this quote margin in a way that fits this context well. Alternate translation: [Then God said to him] or [Then God told him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please take your son

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

This phrase repeats part of the previous phrase in order to emphasize it. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [yes your only son Isaac whom you love]

and go yourself

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. Alternate translation: [and go with him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

to the land of Moriah

Alternate translation: [to the region called Moriah] or [to the Moriah Region] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering

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. Alternate translation: [and offer him there to me as a burnt offering] or [There you are to burn him up on an altar as a offering to me]

on one of the mountains

Alternate translation: [on top of one of the mountains] or [on top of a mountain]

that I will tell to you

Alternate translation: [that I will point out to you]

Genesis 22:3

So Abraham got up early in the morning

See how you translated **got up early in the morning** in Gen 20:8. Alternate translation: [So the next morning, Abraham got up early] or [Early the next morning Abraham got up]

and saddled his donkey

A donkey is like a small horse that people used to carry loads (as here). Alternate translation: [and got his donkey ready for the trip] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Then he took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son

Alternate translation: [He took two of his servants with him and his son Isaac] or [Then he took his son Isaac and two of his servants]

and he cut wood

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. Alternate translation: [and he split some firewood with them] or [and they chopped some firewood together] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

for the burnt offering

Some languages must translate this noun phrase using a verb. Do what is natural in your language. See what you did in verse 2. Alternate translation: [to use for the burnt offering and loaded it on the donkey] or [that they would use to burn the offering and loaded it on the donkey] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1554)**)

Then he got up and left for the place

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. Alternate translation: [Then he set out with them for the place] or [Then they started traveling to the mountain] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

that God had told to him

Alternate translation: [that God had told him to go to]

Genesis 22:4

On the third day

Alternate translation: [After walking for three days]

Abraham lifted his eyes

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. Alternate translation: [he looked up] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he saw the place from a distance

Consider where it is best in your language to put the location phrase **from a distance** or “in the distance.”

Alternate translation: [and he could see the place where they were headed in the distance] or [and in the distance he could see the place where they were going] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 22:5

Then Abraham said to his young men

Be consistent here with how you translated **young men** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham told his servants]

Stay here by yourselves 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.1622)**)

and I and the boy will 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. Alternate translation: [while the young man and I go]

over there

Alternate translation: [over there to that mountain]

and bow down

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. Alternate translation: [and bow down to worship God] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Then we will come back to you

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated “firewood” and **burnt offering** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [Then he took the firewood for the burnt offering off the donkey] or [Then he took the firewood that they would use to burn the sacrifice]

and put {it} on Isaac his son

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. Alternate translation: [and gave it to his son Isaac to carry] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and he took in his hand{s

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [and he himself carried]

the fire {pot

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. Alternate translation: [a fire pot with hot embers in it] or [the other things to make a fire] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the knife

Alternate translation: [and a sacrifice knife]

Then the two of them went on together

Some languages have a dual pronoun that could be used here. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham and Isaac walked on together] or [Then they continued walking toward the mountain] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

Genesis 22:7

and Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. Alternate translation: [and as they went Isaac said to his father Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

And he said

Consider what is the best way to refer to Abraham at this point in the paragraph in your language. Alternate translation: [Abraham said to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Behold me, my son

See how you translated the idiom **Behold me** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [What is it, my son?] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Then he said

Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits well with what Isaac says next. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Here is]

the fire and the wood

Alternate translation: [the fire pot and the firewood] or [what we need to make a fire to burn the sacrifice]

but where {is} the lamb

Alternate translation: [but where is the sheep] or [but why is there no lamb]

for the burnt offering

Alternate translation: [for us to use as the burnt offering?] or [for us to burn as our sacrifice to God?] or [that we will burn as our offering to God?]

Genesis 22:8

And Abraham said

Alternate translation: [Then Abraham said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

God will see for himself

This is an idiom that means God will provide the lamb. Make sure this meaning is clear in your translation.

Alternate translation: [God himself will see to it that there is] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the lamb for the burnt offering

See how you translated this phrase in verse 7. Alternate translation: [a lamb for the burnt offering] or [a lamb for us to burn as a offering to him]

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.1651)**)

Then the two of them went on

See how you translated **the two of them** in verse 6. Alternate translation: [So the two of them walked on together] or [So they continued walking together toward the mountain] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

Genesis 22:9

Then they came to

Alternate translation: [After they got to] or [After they arrived at] or [After they reached]

the place that God had told to him

See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: [the mountain that God had told him to go to]

and there Abraham built the altar

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. Alternate translation: [Abraham made a stone altar there]

and arranged the wood

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. Alternate translation: [and laid the wood on top of it]

and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood

Consider which order of these phrases is the clearest and most natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and put him on top of the wood that was on the altar] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 22:10

Then Abraham reached out his hand and took 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. Alternate translation: [Then he took the knife in his hand] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

to kill his son

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. Alternate translation: [in order to kill his son before sacrificing his body on the altar] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 22:11

But an angel of Yahweh called

Make sure in your translation that it does not sound like Abraham killed Isaac. See how you translated this phrase in Gen 21:17. Alternate translation: [But before Abraham could use the knife, an angel from Yahweh called]

to him from heaven and said, “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

Alternate translation: [Abraham replied to the angel] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold me

See how you translated **Behold me** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [What is it, Master?] or [Yes, Master?] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 22:12

Then he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation that the angel is speaking here, not Abraham. Alternate translation: [Then the angel said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Do not reach out your hand against

Consider whether your language has an idiom that has the same meaning as the Hebrew idiom here. Alternate translation: [Do not lay your hands on] or [Do not kill] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the boy

See how you translated this in verse 5. Alternate translation: [the young man]

And {do} not do anything to him

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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

because now I know

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. Alternate translation: [Now I see] or [You have shown me]

that you fear God

See how you translated **fear** in Gen 20:11. Alternate translation: [that you fear me] or [that you deeply respect me]

since you have not withheld your son, your only {son}, from me

Alternate translation: [because you obeyed me and did not hold back your son from me, yes your only son] or [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

See how you translated **lifted his eyes and looked** in Gen 18:2. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and behold, a ram {was} behind {him

A ram is an adult male sheep or goat. See how you translated this term in Gen 15:9. Alternate translation: [and suddenly he saw a ram behind him]

caught in the thicket by its horns

Alternate translation: [that had caught its horns in the thicket] or [that had its horns caught in a bush] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

So Abraham went and took the ram

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. Alternate translation: [So after releasing Isaac, he took the ram from the thicket] or [So he untied Isaac, went over to the ram and untangled it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and sacrificed it as a burnt offering

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. Alternate translation: [Then he killed the ram and burned it on the altar as a offering to God] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

instead of his son

Alternate translation: [as a substitute for his son]

Genesis 22:14

So Abraham called the name of 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. Alternate translation: [That is why Abraham called that place] or [Because God provided the ram, Abraham called that place]

Yahweh-Yireh

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.1634)**)

as it is said {to} this day

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. Alternate translation: [Even now people still say]

it will be seen

See how you translated this idiom in verse 8. Alternate translation: [it will be provided by him] or [he will see to it that we have what we need] or [he will provide what we need] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 22:15

Then the angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second {time} from heaven

See how you translated “called ... from heaven” in verse 11, and how you translated **angel** in verses 11-12.

Genesis 22:16

and 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

See how you translated **swear** in Gen 21:23-24.

that it is because you have done this thing

Alternate translation: [that since you have done what I said] or [that since you obeyed me]

and have not withheld your son

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 12. Alternate translation: [and did not refuse to sacrifice your son to me] or [were willing to give your son to me]

your only {son

See how you translated this in verse 12. Alternate translation: [even though he is your only son]

Genesis 22:17

that I will greatly bless you

Alternate translation: [I will surely bless you] or [I will surely cause you to prosper greatly]

and I will greatly multiply your offspring

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [I will greatly increase the number of your descendants so that they will be] or [In fact, I will give you so many offspring that they will be]

as the stars of the heavens

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). Alternate translation: [as many as the stars in the sky] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

and as the sand that {is} on the shore of the sea

Alternate translation: [and as many as the grains of sand on the seashore]

and your offspring will possess the gate{s} of their enemies

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. Alternate translation: [and they will conquer the cities of all their enemies] or [They will conquer all their enemies and rule over them] or [Your offspring will ...] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 22:18

in your offspring

See how you translated **offspring** in verse 17. Alternate translation: [In your offspring] or [Because of your offspring] or [By means of your offspring]

And & all the nations of the earth will be blessed

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. Alternate translation: [all the peoples of the earth will be blessed by me] or [I will bless all the ethnic groups that live on the earth] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

because you listened to my voice

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. Alternate translation: [because you heeded my command] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 22:19

Then Abraham returned

Make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham returned alone (without Isaac). Alternate translation: [Afterwards Abraham and Isaac went back] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

to his young men

Be consistent here with how you translated **young men** in verses 3 and 5. Alternate translation: [to the two servants]

and they got up and went together to 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. Alternate translation: [Then they returned home together to the city of Beersheba] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

And Abraham stayed at Beersheba

Make sure your translation does not sound like Abraham was living alone in Beersheba apart from his family. Alternate translation: [and Abraham continued to live there with his family] or [where Abraham and his family continued to live] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 22:20

Then it happened after those things

This phrase introduces a new topic. Consider what is the best way to do that in your language. Alternate translation: [Sometime after that] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

that it was told to Abraham, saying

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Listen] or [I have some news for you:]

Milcah, she too, has born sons for Nahor your brother

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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 22:21

Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [including their oldest son Uz, then Buz and Kemuel] or [The first one is Uz, the second is Buz, and the third is Kemuel]

the father of Aram

Alternate translation: [who fathered Aram] or [whose son is Aram]

Genesis 22:22

and

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

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

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.
Alternate translation: [Bethuel was the father of Rebekah]

Genesis 22:24

And his concubine, and her name {was} Reumah, and she also bore

Alternate translation: [In addition to that, Nahor and his concubine Reumah also had some sons, including]

Tebah and Gaham and 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

Alternate translation: [Sarah lived 127 years]

the years of the life of Sarah

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 ..." Alternate translation: [Yes, that is how long she lived] or [That is how old she lived to be] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 23:2

Then Sarah died

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence. Alternate translation: [Then she died] or [before she died]

in 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. Alternate translation: [in the city of Kiriath-arba] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

which {is} Hebron

The city of Kiriath Arba was later named Hebron (Joshua 14:15). Alternate translation: [which is also named Hebron] or [also known as Hebron] or [that is, Hebron]

in the land of 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. Alternate translation: [in the land called Canaan] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And Abraham went

Alternate translation: [Then Abraham came to her] or [Abraham came to her side]

to mourn for Sarah and to weep 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. Alternate translation: [to mourn and cry for her]

Genesis 23:3

Then Abraham got up from beside

Alternate translation: [Later he got up from mourning beside] or [After a while, Abraham left]

his dead one

Alternate translation: [her body]

and he spoke to the sons of Heth, saying

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. Alternate translation: [and he went to the elders of the Hittites at the city gates and said to them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 23:4

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. Alternate translation: [I am coming to you as] or [Since I am] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

a foreigner and a sojourner

See how you translated **foreigner** in Gen 15:13. Alternate translation: [a outsider who has settled] or [a outsider who is living]

among you

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. Alternate translation: [among you and I have no land of my own] or [in your land and I do not own any property here] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Give to me

Make sure that the way you translate this phrase sounds polite, not rude or demanding. Alternate translation: [Please give me] or [Please let me buy] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

property for a burial place among you

Alternate translation: [some land among you] or [some of your property]

so that I can bury my dead from before me

Translate this clause in a way that shows respect for the person who has died. Alternate translation: [so I have a place to take my dead 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 burial]

Genesis 23:5

Then the sons of Heth replied to Abraham, saying to him

See how you translated **the sons of Heth** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [The elders of the Hittites replied to him] or [When the leaders of the Hittites heard that, they responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 23:6

Listen to us, my lord

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. Alternate translation: [Please listen to our proposal, my lord] (See: **Honorifics (p. 1633)**)

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

Alternate translation: [who lives among our people]

Bury

Make sure that the reply of the Hittites sounds polite here in your translation. Alternate translation: [So you may put]

your dead

Alternate translation: [your dead wife]

our burial places

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. Alternate translation: [places to bury people who have died] or [tombs] (See: **Information Structure (p. 1651)**)

Each of us will not withhold from you his burial place to bury

Alternate translation: [Each of us is happy to give you some of his land where you can bury] or [All of us are happy for you to use any of our burial sites to bury] (See: **Litotes (p. 1662)**)

your dead

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. Alternate translation: [your dead wife]

Genesis 23:7

Then Abraham got 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. Alternate translation: [So Abraham got up]

and bowed

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. Alternate translation: [and bowed low to the ground in respect] or [and kneeled and touched his forehead to the ground in respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth

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. Alternate translation: [in front of the elders of the Hittites, who owned the land in the area] or [before the elders over the Hittites]

Genesis 23:8

and he said to them, saying

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. Alternate translation: [and said to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

to bury my dead from before me

See how you translated this phrase in verse 4. Alternate translation: [for me to bury my dead wife here] or [to allow me to bury the body of my wife who has died] or [to let me give my deceased wife a proper burial here]

listen to me and intercede for me with Ephron, the son of Zohar

Alternate translation: [please appeal to Ephron the son of Zohar on my behalf]

Genesis 23:9

so that he will give to me

Alternate translation: [to give to me]

the cave of Machpelah, which {belongs} to him, which {is} at the end of his field

Machpelah is the name of the area or neighborhood where Ephron's cave and field were located (verse 17).

Alternate translation: [his cave that is at the end of his field in the Machpelah area] (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.1634))

For full price let him give it to me

Alternate translation: [Ask him to give it to me for its full value] or [Ask him to sell it to me and I will pay him the full amount that it is worth]

among you

Alternate translation: [in front of you all] or [with all of you present to witness the sale]

as property for a burial place

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [so that I will have land 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]

Genesis 23:10

Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth

Alternate translation: [Now Ephron the Hittite was sitting there at the meeting among the other Hittite elders] or [Ephron was one of the Hittite elders who had gathered there at the meeting]

so Ephron the Hittite responded to Abraham

Alternate translation: [and he replied to Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

in the ears of the sons of Heth

Alternate translation: [in the hearing of the elders of the Hittites] or [as the other elders listened] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

for everyone who had come {to} the gate of his city

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. Alternate translation: [including everyone who had gathered there at their city gate]

saying

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [This is what he said:] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 23:11

No, my lord

Make sure your translation of this phrase sounds polite. In some cultures it is rude to say **No** too directly. Alternate translation: [That is not necessary, sir] or [Sir, there is no need for that] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

Listen to me

Alternate translation: [Please listen to my proposal:] or [Please accept this proposal:] or [Please listen to what I am proposing:]

I give to you the field

Ephron is making a formal proposal or offer. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. Alternate translation: [I hereby offer you the entire field]

and I give to you the cave that {is} in it

Alternate translation: [as well as the cave that is in it]

before the eyes of the sons of my people

Alternate translation: [in the sight of the elders of my people] or [as the elders of my people listen as witnesses] or [and all the elders of my people here are witnesses of this]

Bury your dead

Alternate translation: [You can bury your dead wife there] or [Please go ahead and bury your dead wife on that land]

Genesis 23:12

Then Abraham bowed

See how you translated **bowed** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [Once again, Abraham bowed] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

the people of the land

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. Alternate translation: [in front of the people who owned the land in the area] or [to the elders of the Hittites]

Genesis 23:13

and he spoke to Ephron in the ears of the people of the land, saying

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. Alternate translation: [and he said to Ephron while the rest of the elders listened] or [As they all listened, he said to Ephron] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

But

Alternate translation: [Instead of doing that]

if you would, please

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. Alternate translation: [if you are willing]

listen to me

Alternate translation: [please accept my proposal] or [please listen to what I am offering]

I will give the price of the field

Alternate translation: [I will give you the full price of what the field is worth] or [I want to give you the full price of the field]

Take it from me

Alternate translation: [Please take my money] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

and I will bury my dead there

Alternate translation: [so that I can bury the body of my dead 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 deceased wife]

Genesis 23:14

Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him

Alternate translation: [Then Ephron said to Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 23:15

My lord

See how you translated this respectful form of address in verses 6 and 11. (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

listen to me

See how you translated this clause in verse 13. Make sure Ephron sounds polite here in your translation. (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

Land {worth} 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. Alternate translation: [The field is worth 400 shekels of silver] or [If I were selling that land, it would cost 400 shekels of silver] (See: **Biblical Money (p.1572)**)

between me and you

Alternate translation: [However, since you and I are friends] or [But as far as you and I are concerned]

what {is} that

Decide whether or not a rhetorical question fits here well in your language. Alternate translation: [what significance is that?] or [that is not important] or [I would not ask you to pay that] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

So bury your dead

Consider again how you translated “bury ... dead” in verses 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 15. Alternate translation: [So go ahead and bury your dead wife there]

Genesis 23:16

So Abraham listened to Ephron

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

Alternate translation: [so he paid him]

the price that he had mentioned

Alternate translation: [the amount of silver that he had stated]

in the ears of the sons of Heth

See how you translated this phrase in verse 10. You might need to translate it differently here because of the different context. Alternate translation: [in the hearing of the other Hittite elders] or [as the rest of the elders of the Hittites watched and listened] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

400 shekels of silver

Alternate translation: [which was 400 shekels of silver]

the currency among the merchants

Alternate translation: [using the same kind of weights that merchants used to accurately weigh silver] or [using the standard shekel that traders used at that time]

Genesis 23:17

So the field of Ephron & was deeded

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. Alternate translation: [That is how the field that belonged to Ephron]

that {was} in Machpelah

Alternate translation: [that was in the Machpelah area]

which {was} before 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). Alternate translation: [east of the city of Mamre]

the field and the cave that {was} in it

Alternate translation: [including both the field and the cave that was in it]

in the field, that {was} within all of its surrounding borders

Alternate translation: [in the field, whatever was inside its borders] or [anywhere inside the borders of the field]

So & was deeded

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. Alternate translation: [was legally sold by Ephron] or [Ephron sold all of that] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 23:18

to Abraham as his possession

Alternate translation: [to Abraham as his property] or [to Abraham, and it became his possession]

before the eyes of the sons of Heth

See how you translated the idiom **before the eyes of** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [in the sight of the elders of the Hittites] or [while the leaders of the Hittites watched as witnesses] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

before everyone who had come to the gate of his city

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. Alternate translation: [including everyone who had gathered at their city gate] or [That included everyone who had met together at their city gates]

Genesis 23:19

Then after that

Alternate translation: [After he bought the field]

Abraham buried Sarah his wife

Alternate translation: [he placed the body of his wife Sarah]

in the cave of the field of Machpelah

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Machpelah** in verses 9 and 17. Alternate translation: [in the cave in the field in the Machpelah area] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

before 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. Alternate translation: [near the city of Mamre]

which {is} Hebron

Alternate translation: [which is also called Hebron] or [also known as Hebron]

in the land of Canaan

See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [in the land called Canaan]

Genesis 23:20

So the field and the cave that {was} in it were deeded to Abraham

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. Alternate translation: [So that is how that field, including the cave that was in the field, were legally sold to Abraham] or [So in that way, the field of Ephron, including ...]

as property for a burial place from the sons of Heth

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. Alternate translation: [by the Hittites as a burial site]

Genesis 24

Genesis 24:1

Now Abraham was old, advanced in days

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. Alternate translation: [Abraham was very old now. He had lived many years] or [Now Abraham had become very old] (See: **Doublet (p.1611)**)

and Yahweh had blessed Abraham

See how you translated “bless” in Gen 12:2-3. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh had caused him to prosper]

in all {things

Alternate translation: [in everything he had done]

Genesis 24:2

Then Abraham said to

Consider what is the best way to introduce the first event in this episode in your language. Alternate translation: [One day he told] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

his oldest servant of his house

Alternate translation: [the oldest servant in his household] or [his senior household servant]

who was in charge of everything

Alternate translation: [who managed everything that he owned] or [who took care of his entire estate for him]

Please put your hand under my thigh

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. Alternate translation: [Please put your hand under my leg to show that you will do what I ask] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 24:3

and I will have you swear

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. Alternate translation: [and vow to me] or [and make an unbreakable promise to me] (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.1648)**)

by Yahweh, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth

See how you translated “the heavens and the earth” in Gen 1:1. Alternate translation: [with Yahweh as your witness, the God who rules the heavens and the earth]

that you will not take a wife for my son

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. Alternate translation: [that you will not get a woman for my son Isaac to marry from among] (See: **Idiom (p. 1645)**)

from the daughters of the Canaanites whom I am living among

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. Alternate translation: [the Canaanite women whom we live among]

Genesis 24:4

but you will go

Alternate translation: [Instead, you must go] or [Instead, I want you to go] (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p. 1648)**)

to my country

Alternate translation: [to my home country] or [to the region where I grew up] or [to the country that I came from]

and to my relatives

Alternate translation: [to my kinfolk who live there]

and take a wife for my son, for Isaac

The way you refer to Isaac here will depend on how you referred to him in verse 3. Alternate translation: [and find a wife from there for my son Isaac to marry] or [and get a wife from among them for him to marry] or [and arrange for him to marry one of their daughters]

Genesis 24:5

Then the servant said to him

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language so that it fits the context well.
Alternate translation: [Then the servant asked Abraham] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Suppose

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 18:24, 28, 29. Alternate translation: [Suppose that] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

the woman

Alternate translation: [the young woman I choose] or [when I find that young woman, she]

is not willing

Alternate translation: [does not want]

to come with me

Alternate translation: [to go back with me] or [to follow me back]

to this land

Alternate translation: [to live in this land?]

Should I take your son back

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [to live in your home country?]

Genesis 24:6

Then Abraham said to him

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin at this point in the conversation. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham replied to his servant] or [Abraham replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Be sure that you do not take my son back

Alternate translation: [No, make sure that you never take my son back] or [No, you must definitely not take my son back]

there

Alternate translation: [to my home land to live]

Genesis 24:7

Yahweh, the God of 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. Alternate translation: [because Yahweh, the God who created the heavens]

and from the land of my relatives

Alternate translation: [and from the land where the rest of my family live]

and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying

Alternate translation: [and he made an vow to me and said] or [and he made an unbreakable promise to me and said]

To your offspring I will give this land

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. Alternate translation: [I will give this land to your offspring] or [that he will give this land where we live to my descendants] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

he will send his angel before 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. Alternate translation: [He will send one of his angels ahead of you to guide you]

and you will take

Alternate translation: [so that you will be able to find] or [so that you can get]

a wife for my son from there

See how you translated "take/find a wife for" in verses 3-4. Alternate translation: [a wife from there for my son to marry] or [a wife from my home land for my son to marry]

Genesis 24:8

But if the woman

Alternate translation: [However, if the woman you find]

is not willing

See how you translated this phrase in verse 5. Alternate translation: [does not want]

to come with you

See how you translated a similar phrase (“to come with me”) in verse 5. Alternate translation: [to follow you back here]

from this oath of mine

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. Alternate translation: [then you will be released from keeping this oath that I am requesting you to swear now] or [then you will not have to fulfill this binding promise that you are swearing to me now]

Only

Alternate translation: [Just]

do not take my son back there

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 6. Alternate translation: [you must not take my son back to my home land!]

Genesis 24:9

Then the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master

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.1718)**)

and swore to him

See how you translated **swore** in verse 7 and "swear" in verse 3. Alternate translation: [and made an vow to him] or [and made an unbreakable promise to him]

concerning this matter

Some languages need to make explicit what **this matter** refers to. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [that he would do what he had told him to do] or [that he would go find a wife for Isaac] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 24:10

Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master

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

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.1559)**)

and went 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. Alternate translation: [and made the long journey to] or [Then he traveled to]

to the city of Nahor

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

by the well of water

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. Alternate translation: [near its well] or [by the public well that was there]

at 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

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. Alternate translation: [the time when the young women of the city came out to draw water from the well for their families] or [when the young women of the city were starting to come out to the well to get water for their families] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 24:12

Then he said

Consider what is the best way to begin this paragraph in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

Yahweh

Consider what is the best way to begin this prayer in your language. Alternate translation: [Oh Yahweh]

God of my master Abraham

Alternate translation: [who is the God whom my master Abraham 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.1651)**)

please cause it to happen before me today

Alternate translation: [please help me do what I have come here to do today]

that you show kindness toward

Alternate translation: [and in that way show kindness to] or [and be kind to]

my master Abraham

Alternate translation: [him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 24:13

Behold, I am standing by

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. Alternate translation: [Look here I am, standing near] or [As you know, I am standing here beside] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

this spring of water

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. Alternate translation: [this spring-fed well]

and the daughters of the people of the city

Alternate translation: [and the daughters of the townspeople] or [and the young women of the city]

are coming out to draw water

See how you translated "draw/get water" in verse 11. Alternate translation: [are coming out here to get water]

Genesis 24:14

And let it be {that

Make sure that your translation of the servant's request to God sounds polite. (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

the young woman whom I say to her

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

The water containers that people used were usually made out of clay. Alternate translation: [Please lower your water jug]

so that I may drink

Alternate translation: [so that I can drink some water] or [so that I can take a drink of water]

and she says

Alternate translation: [if she says to me]

Drink and I will also water 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. Alternate translation: [Have a drink, and I will also get water for your camels] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

let} her {be the one} you have appointed

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

for your servant, for Isaac

Alternate translation: [as a wife for your servant Isaac]

And by her I will know that you have shown kindness toward my master

See how you translated “show kindness toward” in verse 12. Alternate translation: [and that you have been kind to my master Abraham]

Genesis 24:15

Then it happened before he had finished speaking

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

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. Alternate translation: [just then he saw] or [suddenly he saw]

Rebekah was coming out

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.1657)**)

who was born to Bethuel

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Her father was Bethuel]

And her water jar {was} 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. Alternate translation: [She was carrying a water jug on her shoulder] or [She had a water jug on her shoulder] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 24:16

And the young woman {was} a very beautiful-looking virgin

See how you translated **young woman** in verses 14 and 15. Alternate translation: [Rebekah was a very beautiful unmarried young woman]

and a man had not known her

See how you translated the idiom “not known a man” in Gen 19:8. Alternate translation: [whom no man had ever slept with] or [who had never slept with a man] or [who had never had sexual relations with a man] (See: **Idiom (p. 1645)**)

And she went down

Notice that the spring or well was at a place that was lower than the place where Abraham’s servant was standing. Alternate translation: [She went down]

to the spring

See how you translated **spring** in verse 13. Alternate translation: [to the spring-fed well]

and filled her jar

Alternate translation: [filled her jar with water]

and came up

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. Alternate translation: [and came back up with it on her shoulder] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 24:17

Then the servant ran to meet her

Alternate translation: [Then the servant ran up to her]

and said

Alternate translation: [and requested] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please let me drink a little water from your jar

Alternate translation: [Please let me have a little water to drink from your jar] or [Please give me a little drink from your jar]

Genesis 24:18

Drink, my lord

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.

Alternate translation: [Certainly, sir, you may have a drink] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

Then she hurried and lowered her jar to her hand{s

Alternate translation: [Then she quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder to her hands] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and gave him a drink

Alternate translation: [and let him have a drink]

Genesis 24:19

And {after} she finished giving him a drink

Alternate translation: [After he finished drinking]

then she said

Alternate translation: [she offered to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will also draw water for your camels

Alternate translation: [Let me also get water for all your camels]

until they have finished drinking

Alternate translation: [until they are done]

Genesis 24:20

Then she hurried and emptied her jar

See how you translated **Then she hurried and** in verse 18. Alternate translation: [So she quickly poured the rest of the water from her jug]

into the trough

The drinking trough was a long, open stone container that several animals could drink from at the same time. Alternate translation: [into the animal drinking place that was there] or [into the stone thing that was there for animals to drink out of] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and ran back to the well to draw water

Alternate translation: [and ran back and forth to the well to get more water]

and she drew water for all his camels

Alternate translation: [until she had brought enough for all of the camels]

Genesis 24:21

And the man watched her silently

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.1657)**)

to know whether Yahweh had made his journey succeed or not

Alternate translation: [to find out whether or not Yahweh had made him successful on his trip to find a wife for Isaac] or [to see for sure if Yahweh had given him success on his trip] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 24:22

Then it happened, when the camels had finished drinking

Alternate translation: [After all the camels had drunk as much water as they wanted and Rebekah had stopped drawing water] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

then the man took out a gold nose ring, its weight a 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). Alternate translation: [the servant brought out a gold nose ring weighing one beka and gave it to her] or [the servant gave her a gold nose ring that weighed one beka] (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1574)**)

and two gold bracelets

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He also gave her two gold bracelets]

for her arms

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

Alternate translation: [Each bracelet weighed ten shekels] (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1574)**)

Genesis 24:23

And he said

Alternate translation: [Then he said to her] or [Then he asked Rebekah] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

Whose daughter {are} you? Please tell me

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

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. Alternate translation: [Also, is there enough room in his house] or [Also, does your father have any room in his house] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

for us

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.1618)**)

to lodge

Alternate translation: [to stay there tonight?]

Genesis 24:24

Then she said to him

Alternate translation: [She answered him] or [She replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I {am} the daughter of Bethuel

Alternate translation: [Bethuel is my father]

the son of Milcah, whom she bore for Nahor

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. Alternate translation: [who is a son of Milcah and Nahor] or [and his parents are Nahor and Milcah]

Genesis 24:25

Then she said to him

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. Alternate translation: [Then she continued] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Plenty of both straw and fodder {are} with us

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. Alternate translation: [We have plenty of both straw and other feed at our house for your camels to eat]

There is} also a place

Alternate translation: [and there is also enough room in his house for all of you]

to lodge

See how you translated this in verse 23. Alternate translation: [to spend the night there]

Genesis 24:26

Then the man bowed down and prostrated himself before 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.1718)**)

Genesis 24:27

and said

The servant is worshiping God by bowing down and by what he says in verse 27. Alternate translation: [He said]

Praised be Yahweh

See how you translated this in Gen 9:26. Alternate translation: [I praise Yahweh]

the God of my master Abraham

See how you translated **God of my master Abraham** in verse 12. Alternate translation: [who is the God whom my master Abraham worships]

who has not abandoned his kindness and his faithfulness toward 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. Alternate translation: [He has always been kind and faithful to my master] (See: **Litotes (p.1662)**)

As for} me, Yahweh has led me on the road

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. Alternate translation: [and he has guided me on the road here] or [Yes, he guided me on my trip here]

Genesis 24:28

Then the young woman ran

See how you translated **young woman** previously in this chapter, and consider what is the best way to refer to Rebekah here. Alternate translation: [Then Rebekah ran home]

and announced

Alternate translation: [and reported to] or [and shared the news with]

about those things

Alternate translation: [about what the man had said to her]

Genesis 24:29

Now 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. Alternate translation: [Now it so happened that Rebekah had a brother] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

and his name {was} Laban

Alternate translation: [named Laban]

and Laban ran

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. Alternate translation: [and he ran] or [He ran] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

to the man outside at the spring

Alternate translation: [out to the spring where the man was] or [to where the man was standing beside the well]

Genesis 24:30

And it was when he 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. Alternate translation: [This is how it was When he had seen] or [As soon as he had seen] (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1727)**)

the nose ring and the bracelets on the arms of his sister

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. Alternate translation: [the nose ring and the bracelets that his sister was wearing]

and when he had heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, “This {is} what the man said to me

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. Alternate translation: [and had heard her tell what the man at the well had said to her] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

then he went to the man

Alternate translation: [he went out to where the man was] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and behold, he was standing

The word **behold** emphasizes what follows it. Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and there he was, standing] or [He saw him standing]

by the camels at the spring

Alternate translation: [with his camels at the spring] or [near the well with his camels]

Genesis 24:31

Then he said

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. Alternate translation: [Then Laban said to the man] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Come

Alternate translation: [Please come stay with us]

blessed of Yahweh

Alternate translation: [you who are blessed by Yahweh]

Why are you standing 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.1711)**)

For I have prepared the house

Consider whether or not it is necessary in your translation to make any implied information explicit in this sentence. Alternate translation: [because the house is ready for you and your men to lodge there] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and a place

Alternate translation: [and we also have room there]

for the camels

Alternate translation: [where your camels can stay]

Genesis 24:32

So the man went to the 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. Alternate translation: [Then the man went home with Laban] (See: **Go and Come (p. 1628)**)

Then he unloaded 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. Alternate translation: [There Laban took the loads off the camels]

and gave straw and fodder to the camels

See how you translated **straw and fodder** in verse 25. Alternate translation: [and fed them straw and other fodder]

and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who {were} with him

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.1559)**)

Genesis 24:33

Then food was set before him to eat

Consider whether it is best in your language to use a passive or active construction here. Alternate translation: [Then they brought the servant and his men some food] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

but he said

Alternate translation: [but the man said to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will not eat until I have spoken my words

Alternate translation: [I will not eat anything until I have told you my message] or [Before I can eat anything, I need to tell you why I am here]

So he said

Alternate translation: [So Laban replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Speak

Make sure the way you translate this sounds polite. Alternate translation: [Please tell us what you want to say] or [Go ahead and tell us your message] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

Genesis 24:34

Then he said

Consider again how you referred to “the man” in verses 21, 22, 26, 29-34, and see the note about that at verse 21.
Alternate translation: [Then the man told them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 24:35

And Yahweh has greatly blessed my master

Alternate translation: [Yahweh has abundantly prospered my master]

so that he has become great

Alternate translation: [so that he is wealthy] or [and as a result, he is very wealthy] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

And he has given him flock{s} and herd{s}

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

See how you translated **silver and gold** in Gen 13:2.

and men slaves and women slaves

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 20:14. Alternate translation: [many men and women slaves] or [many male and female slaves]

and camels and donkeys

See how you translated **donkeys** in Gen 22:3. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 24:36

after her old age

Alternate translation: [in her old age] or [when she was very old]

and he has given to him

Alternate translation: [and my master has given his son]

everything that {belongs} to him

Alternate translation: [all of his property]

Genesis 24:37

And my master made me swear

See how you translated **swear** in verse 3, and “swore” in verses 7 and 9. Alternate translation: [Before I came here, my master had me vow to do something for him] or [Before I came here, my master asked me to make an unbreakable promise to him]

saying

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and he said to me] or [This is what he said to me:] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

You must not take a wife for my son

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: [You must not get a woman for my son to marry]

from the daughters of the Canaanites

Alternate translation: [from among the Canaanite women]

whose land I am living in

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. Alternate translation: [whom we live among in this land]

Genesis 24:38

but rather

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. Alternate translation: [Instead]

you must go to the house of my father

See how you translated **house of my father** in verse 7.

and take a wife for my son

Alternate translation: [and find a wife from among them for my son to marry]

Genesis 24:39

Suppose

See how you translated this phrase in verse 5. Alternate translation: [Suppose that] (See: **Hypothetical Situations** (p.1642))

the woman

Alternate translation: [the young woman I choose] or [when I find that young woman, she]

will not come with me

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 5. Alternate translation: [does not want to go back with me?]

Genesis 24:40

And he said to me

Alternate translation: [He told me] or [He replied to me]

Yahweh, whom I walk before

See how you translated “walk/live before” in Gen 17:1. This idiom implies that Abraham lived according to God's will. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, whose presence I walk in] or [Yahweh whom I obey] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

will send his angel

See how you translated this phrase in verse 7.

with you

Alternate translation: [to go with you] or [to accompany you]

and make & succeed

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [to make your journey successful]

so that you will take a wife for my son from my clan

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. Alternate translation: [so that you can get 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]

and from the house of my father

See how you translated **house of my father** in verse 38.

Genesis 24:41

Then

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. Alternate translation: [At this time] or [But if this happens] or [There is a situation when]

you will be clear from my oath

Alternate translation: [you will be released from keeping your vow you are making to me:] or [you will not have to fulfill the vow to me:]

When you go to my clan, and if they will not give her to you

Alternate translation: [After you go to my clan and find a 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 chosen leave with you]

then you will be clear from my oath

See how you translated **clear from** earlier in this verse and in verse 8. Alternate translation: [you will be released from keeping the vow that you are making to me] or [you will not have to keep the unbreakable promise you are making to me]

Genesis 24:42

Then today I came to the spring

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

See how you began the prayer in verse 12.

God of my master Abraham

See how you translated this phrase in verse 12. Alternate translation: [who is the God whom my master Abraham serves]

if it is your will

Alternate translation: [if you agree]

please make my journey succeed

See how you translated this clause in verses 21 and 40. Alternate translation: [please give me success during this trip] or [please make me successful on this trip]

that I have come on

Alternate translation: [that I have undertaken]

Genesis 24:43

Behold, I am standing by

See how you translated this in verse 13. Alternate translation: [Look here I am, standing beside] or [As you know, I am standing here near] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

this} spring of water

See how you translated this phrase in verse 13. Alternate translation: [this spring-fed well]

And let it be {that

See how you translated this phrase in verse 14. (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

and I say to her, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar

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. Alternate translation: [and I ask her to let me drink some water from her water jar] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 24:44

and she says to me, “Both you drink and I will also draw water for your camels

See how you translated the embedded direct quote in verse 43. Alternate translation: [if she gives me a drink and also offers to draw water for my camels] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

let} her {be} the wife whom Yahweh has chosen for the son of my master

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. 1559)**)

Genesis 24:45

Before I had finished

Alternate translation: [Before I could even finish]

speaking in my heart

Alternate translation: [praying to God in my heart] or [praying to God quietly] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

then behold

Alternate translation: [just then I saw] or [there was]

Rebekah was coming out

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

Alternate translation: [with her empty water jar on her shoulder]

And she went down to the spring and drew 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. Alternate translation: [She walked down to the spring and filled up her jar with water]

and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink

Consider what is the best way to translate this embedded quote in your language. Alternate translation: [so I asked her to please give me a drink] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 24:46

And she hurried and lowered her jar

Consider again how you translated **jar** in verses 14-18, 20, 43, 45-46. Alternate translation: [She quickly lowered her jar] or [She quickly brought her jar down]

from her

Alternate translation: [off her shoulder]

and said, 'Drink

Make sure Rebekah sounds polite here in your translation. (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

and I will also water your camels

See how you translated this clause in verse 14. Also see verse 18, which is similar. Alternate translation: [and I will also give water to your camels] or [and I will also get water for your camels]

So I drank

Alternate translation: [So I drank some water from her jar] or [So I took a drink from her jar]

and she also watered the camels

Alternate translation: [and she also drew water to my camels]

Genesis 24:47

Whose daughter {are} you

See how you translated this question in verse 23.

And she said

Alternate translation: [She answered me] or [She replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The daughter of Bethuel

See how you translated this phrase in verse 24. Alternate translation: [I am the daughter of Bethuel]

a son of Nahor whom Milcah bore for him

Alternate translation: [who is a son of Nahor and his wife Milcah] or [and his parents are Nahor and Milcah]

Then I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms

See how you translated “nose ring,” **bracelets**, and **arms** in verse 22. Alternate translation: [So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists] or [After that I gave her the nose ring and bracelets to wear]

Genesis 24:48

And I bowed down and prostrated myself before Yahweh, and I praised Yahweh

See how you translated “bowed down and prostrated himself” in verse 26, and see the note about that there.

Alternate translation: [Next I bowed to the ground and worshiped and praised Yahweh] (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1718)**)

the God of my master Abraham

See how you translated this phrase in verses 12 and 42. Alternate translation: [the God whom my master Abraham serves]

who led me

Alternate translation: [because he led me]

on the right way

Alternate translation: [the right direction] or [exactly where I should go]

to take

Alternate translation: [to get]

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

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

Throughout this verse “you” is plural. Alternate translation: [So now if you are willing]

to show kindness and faithfulness to my master

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. Alternate translation: [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: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

tell me. But if not, 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. Alternate translation: [please tell me, or if you are not willing, tell me] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

so that I will turn to the right or to the left

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. Alternate translation: [so that I can know which way to turn] or [so that I can know what to do next] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 24:50

The thing has come from Yahweh

Alternate translation: [We can clearly see that Yahweh has made all this happen] or [It is obvious that all this is the will of Yahweh]

we are not able

Some languages have a dual pronoun that is used here. Alternate translation: [so it is not our right] or [so we have no right] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

to tell you bad or good

Alternate translation: [to tell you anything different from what he has done] or [to decide anything against what he has decided] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 24:51

Behold, Rebekah {is} before you

Alternate translation: [See Rebekah is in front of you]

Take her and go

Alternate translation: [You may take her with you and go home] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

as Yahweh has spoken

Alternate translation: [just as Yahweh has decided it should be]

Genesis 24:52

Then it happened, when the servant of Abraham heard their words

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

See how you translated **bowed down** in verse 48. Notice that here in verse 52, the phrase **to the ground** is explicit and emphasized. Alternate translation: [he bowed low to the ground and praised Yahweh] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 24:53

Then the servant brought out

Alternate translation: [Then he brought out]

jewelry of silver and jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah

Alternate translation: [silver and gold jewelry and other expensive gifts, including beautiful clothing, and gave them to Rebekah] or [valuable gifts, including silver and gold jewelry, and also beautiful clothing, and gave them to Rebekah]

And he gave valuable things

Alternate translation: [He also gave expensive gifts]

to her brother and to her mother

Alternate translation: [to her mother and brother]

Genesis 24:54

Then he and the men who {were} with him ate and drank and lodged

See how you translated **lodged** in verses 23, 25, and 31.

Send me to my master

Make sure that what Abraham's servant says here sounds polite in your translation, not rude or demanding.

Alternate translation: [Please let us return home now to my master] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

Genesis 24:55

Let the young woman stay with us

Alternate translation: [Please let the young woman remain here with us] or [Please let Rebekah remain here with us] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

a few days, at least ten

Alternate translation: [around ten more days]

After that she will go

Alternate translation: [Then she can go with you] or [Then you can leave and take her with you]

Genesis 24:56

But he said to them

Some languages have a dual pronoun that could be used here. However the servant is probably still addressing the whole family. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

Do not detain me, since Yahweh has made my journey succeed. Send me off

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.
Alternate translation: [Please do not detain me. Since Yahweh has made me successful on my journey, send us off]
or [Please do not detain me, now that Yahweh has given me success on my journey. Let us leave]

so that I will go to my master

Alternate translation: [so that I can go home to my master]

Genesis 24:57

Then they said

Alternate translation: [They replied to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let's call for the young woman

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

Alternate translation: [and ask her to tell us what she wants to do] or [and ask her if she is willing to go now] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 24:58

So they called for Rebekah

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. Alternate translation: [Then they summoned her] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Will you go with this man

Alternate translation: [Are you willing to go now with this man?]

I will go

Alternate translation: [Yes, I am willing to go now]

Genesis 24:59

Then they sent off Rebekah their sister

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. Alternate translation: [So they decided to send their sister Rebekah] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and her nurse

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

Alternate translation: [with Abraham's servant and his men]

Genesis 24:60

And they blessed Rebekah and said to her

Make sure your translation of “blessed ... and said” refers to the same event, not two separate events.

Our 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. Alternate translation: [Dear little sister]

may you become

Alternate translation: [may you become the mother of] or [we pray that you will have]

thousands of myriads

Alternate translation: [thousands and thousands of descendants] or [many thousands of descendants]

and may your offspring possess

Alternate translation: [and we pray that your descendants will defeat] or [and we pray that God will help them defeat]

the gates of {those} hating them

See how you translated the phrase **possess the gates** in Gen 22:17. Alternate translation: [the cities of all their enemies!] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 24:61

Then Rebekah got up and her maids

Alternate translation: [Then Rebekah and her maids who were going with her got ready to go, and] or [After Rebekah and her maids who were going with her packed their things]

and went with the man

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

Alternate translation: [So he took her with him]

and left

Alternate translation: [and left to return home]

Genesis 24:62

Meanwhile Isaac came from going to

Alternate translation: [While they were traveling, Isaac returned home from a trip he had made to]

Beer Lahai Roi

See how you translated the name of this place in Gen 16:14. Alternate translation: [the well called Beer Lahai Roi] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and he was living

Alternate translation: [so he was back home where he lived]

in the land of the Negev

See how you translated **the land of the Negev** in Gen 20:1, and **the Negev** in Gen 12:9; 13:1, 3. Alternate translation: [in the Negev Desert region] or [in the Negev Desert]

Genesis 24:63

And Isaac went to meditate in the field

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. Alternate translation: [One day he went out in the field to pray] or [After he had returned home, one day he was meditating out in the fields]

as it was turning toward evening

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. Alternate translation: [as it was becoming dusk] or [late in the afternoon] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and he lifted his eyes

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and saw that, behold

Alternate translation: [and saw in the distance that there were]

camels were coming

Alternate translation: [some camels heading toward him] or [some camels approaching him]

Genesis 24:64

And Rebekah lifted her eyes and saw Isaac

Alternate translation: [Then Rebekah, as she looked ahead of her, saw Isaac]

Then she dismounted

Alternate translation: [Then she quickly jumped down]

from the camel

Consider again how you translated **camel** throughout chapter 24. Alternate translation: [off the camel that she was riding]

Genesis 24:65

Who {is} that man in the field who is coming to meet us

Alternate translation: [Who is that man walking towards us in the field?]

And the servant said, “He {is} my master

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

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. Alternate translation: [So she took her veil and covered her face with it to show modesty] or [So she covered herself with her veil to show modesty] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 24:66

Then the servant reported to Isaac

Alternate translation: [When they reached Isaac, the servant told him]

all the things that he had done

Alternate translation: [all that he had done during the trip] or [all that had happened on his journey]

Genesis 24:67

Then Isaac brought her

Alternate translation: [So Isaac took Rebekah]

into the tent of Sarah his mother

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). Alternate translation: [into the tent where his mother Sarah had lived before she died]

And Isaac loved her

Alternate translation: [Isaac loved Rebekah] or [Isaac fell in love with her]

and he was comforted

Alternate translation: [and he was consoled by her] or [and she made him happy again] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1556)**)

after his mother

Make sure it is clear in your translation here why Isaac needed comforting. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25

Genesis 25:1

Then Abraham added and took a wife, and her 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. Alternate translation: [Then Abraham married another woman, who was named Keturah]

Genesis 25:2

And she bore for him

See how you translated **bore for him** in Gen 21:3; 24:47. Alternate translation: [Keturah gave birth to sons for him whose names were] or [She bore sons for him whom they named] or [They had sons together whom they named]

Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and 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.1634)**)

Genesis 25:3

And Jokshan fathered

See how you translated **fathered** in Gen 11:27. Alternate translation: [Jokshan was the father of]

Sheba and Dedan

Alternate translation: [sons whom they named Sheba and Dedan] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

And the descendants of Dedan were the Asshurim and the Letushim and the Leummim

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.1559)**)

Genesis 25:4

Ephah and Ephher and Hanoah and 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.1600))

All of those {were} the descendants of Keturah

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. Alternate translation: [All those were the descendants of Keturah and Abraham]

Genesis 25:5

And Abraham gave everything that {belonged} to him to Isaac

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. Alternate translation: [Abraham willed everything that he owned to Isaac] or [And Isaac inherited all that Abraham owned]

Genesis 25:6

And to the sons of the concubines who {belonged} to Abraham, Abraham gave gifts

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. Alternate translation: [Abraham also gave valuable gifts to the sons he had with his concubines] or [Abraham also gave (valuable gifts) to the sons that his servant wives had for him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and while he was still alive he sent them eastward to the land of Kedem

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. Alternate translation: [then while he was still alive he sent them eastward to the region in the East] or [but after that he sent them to the east country] or [and after that he made them move away to the east country] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

away from Isaac his son

Alternate translation: [to be far away from his son Isaac] or [so that they would be far away from his son Isaac] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25:7

And these {are} the days of the years of the life of Abraham that he lived: 175 years

Alternate translation: [Abraham lived a total of 175 years]

Genesis 25:8

Then Abraham exhaled

Alternate translation: [Then he breathed out for the last time] or [Then he took his final breath]

and died at a good old age

Alternate translation: [and died at a ripe old age] or [and died when he was very old]

elderly and full

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. Alternate translation: [an old man who had lived a full life, and] or [After he had lived a long and blessed life] (See: **Idiom (p. 1645)**)

and he was gathered to

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. Alternate translation: [he was taken by God to be with] or [God took his spirit to be with] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

his people

Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like these ancestors were still alive. They had already died before Abraham died. Alternate translation: [his relatives who had already died] or [his ancestors who had gone before him] or [his deceased relatives] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25:9

Then Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him

Alternate translation: [His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried his body]

in the cave of Machpelah

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. Alternate translation: [in the cave of the Machpelah area]

in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite

Ephron no longer owned the field (See: verse 10).

which {was} before 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. Alternate translation: [near the city of Mamre] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 25:10

from the sons of Heth

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 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. Alternate translation: [Abraham was buried in that cave, where his wife Sarah had also been buried] or [That is where Sarah had been buried, and they buried Abraham next to her] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25:11

then God blessed Isaac his son

Use the phrase order in your language that is most natural in this context. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

And Isaac lived near

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [who settled near] or [Isaac lived in the region near]

Beer Lahai Roi

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Beer Lahai Roi** in Gen 24:62. Alternate translation: [the well called Beer Lahai Roi] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 25:12

Now these {are} the generations 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. Alternate translation: [Here is the genealogy of] or [Here is the list of the descendants of] or [What follows is the record of the descendants of] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

Genesis 25:13

by their names according to their births

Alternate translation: [listed in the order that they were born:]

the firstborn of Ishmael {was} Nebaioth

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [His oldest child was Nebaioth] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

then Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [After him came Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam]

Genesis 25:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 25:15

Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedermah

See how you translated a similar list of names in verses 2-4. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

Genesis 25:16

and those {are} their names by their settlements and by their camps, twelve rulers according to their tribes

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. Alternate translation: [who became the rulers of twelve tribes that were named after them, and each tribe lived in its own settlements and camps] or [Each of them became the ruler of a tribe that was named after him, and each tribe had its own villages and tent settlements]

Genesis 25:17

And these {are} the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 7.

Then he exhaled and died

See how you translated **exhaled** in verse 8. Alternate translation: [Then Ishmael breathed out for the last time and died] or [Then Ishmael took his final breath and died]

and he was gathered to

See how you translated this phrase in verse 8. Alternate translation: [and he was taken by God to be with] or [and God took his spirit to be with the spirits of]

his people

Alternate translation: [his relatives who had already died] or [his relatives who had gone before him] or [his deceased relatives] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25:18

from Havilah to 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). Alternate translation: [throughout the area that extended from the region of Havilah to the desert of Shur] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

that {is} near Egypt

Alternate translation: [that is east of the land of Egypt]

as you go

Alternate translation: [as you go from there] or [as one goes]

toward Asshur

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. Alternate translation: [to the city of Asshur in Assyria] or [in the direction of the land of Assyria]

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.1645)**)

Genesis 25:19

And these {are} the generations of Isaac the son of Abraham

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

See how you translated **fathered** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [After Abraham had his son Isaac]

Genesis 25:20

then Isaac was a son of forty years when he took Rebekah for himself as a wife

See how you translated “was a son of ... years” in Gen 21:5. Alternate translation: [Isaac grew up and married Rebekah when he was 40 years old]

the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram

Alternate translation: [She was a daughter of Bethuel, who was an Aramean from the land of Paddan Aram]

the sister of Laban

Alternate translation: [and she was a sister of Laban]

Genesis 25:21

And Isaac entreated Yahweh on behalf of his wife because she {was} barren

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. Alternate translation: [Isaac prayed earnestly to Yahweh for his wife to have children because she was barren] or [But for many years Rebekah was not able to get pregnant, so Isaac prayed that Yahweh would give her children] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So Yahweh was entreated by him

Alternate translation: [Yahweh did what he prayed for]

and Rebekah his wife conceived

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. Alternate translation: [so that Rebekah became pregnant with twins] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25:22

And the children struggled against each other inside her

Alternate translation: [And the two babies inside her kept pushing against each other] or [After a while the twins wrestled with each other inside her]

so she said

Alternate translation: [so Rebekah asked] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Why {is this} so? Why {am} I {like} this

Alternate translation: [What is happening inside me?]

And she went to inquire of Yahweh

Alternate translation: [Then she went to Yahweh to ask him what was happening] or [Then she prayed to Yahweh about it]

Genesis 25:23

And Yahweh said to her

Alternate translation: [He answered her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Two nations {are} inside your womb

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. Alternate translation: [Inside you are the ancestors of two people groups] or [The two babies inside your womb will become the fathers of two nations]

and two peoples

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Those two people groups] or [Those two ancestors]

will be divided

Alternate translation: [will be hostile against each other] or [will be rivals]

from inside your womb

Alternate translation: [starting now even while they are still inside you]

Genesis 25:24

Then her days were fulfilled to deliver

Alternate translation: [Later when it was time for her to give birth]

and behold, twins {were} inside her womb

Alternate translation: [sure enough, there were twin sons inside her!]

Genesis 25:25

And the first came out red; all of him {was} like a garment of hair

Alternate translation: [When the first baby came out, he was covered with thick red hair so that he was as hairy as a fur robe] or [The first baby who was born was completely covered with thick red hair] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

so they called his name

The Hebrew text has **they** here, which probably refers to Esau's parents and may include people in general after his parents named him. Alternate translation: [So he was named]

Esau

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.1634)**)

Genesis 25:26

his brother came out

Some languages have a specific term for a younger brother that fits here. See what you did in Gen 4:2.

so he called his name

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 25 that probably has the same meaning. Alternate translation: [So they called him] or [So he was named]

Jacob

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.1634)**)

And Isaac {was} a son of sixty years

See how you translated the idiom “was a son of ... years” in verse 20. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

when she bore them

Alternate translation: [when Rebekah gave birth to them]

Genesis 25:27

Then the boys grew up

Alternate translation: [As the boys grew up]

and Esau became a man who knew hunting

See how you translated a similar phrase (“mighty hunter”) in Gen 10:9. Alternate translation: [Esau became a expert hunter] or [Esau became good at hunting animals for food]

a man of the field

Alternate translation: [and he preferred being in the open country] or [and he was an outdoorsman]

and Jacob {was} a quiet man

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. Alternate translation: [but Jacob was a quiet man] or [Jacob, on the other hand, had a mild-mannered personality] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

who stayed among the tents

Alternate translation: [and worked close to home] or [and liked to be at home]

Genesis 25:28

And Isaac loved Esau

Your translation should not sound like Isaac and Rebekah did not love both of their sons. Rather, they each had their favorite son. Alternate translation: [Isaac loved Esau most]

because {he liked} game meat in his mouth

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. Alternate translation: [because he liked to eat the meat of wild deer that he hunted] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

but Rebekah loved Jacob

See how you translated a similar clause earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: [but Rebekah loved Jacob most]

Genesis 25:29

Now Jacob was cooking stew

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). Alternate translation: [Once Jacob was making some stew] or [One day when Jacob was making some stew] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

and Esau came in from the field

See how you translated **field** in verse 27. Alternate translation: [Esau came home from working out in the fields]

and he {was} exhausted

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. Alternate translation: [and he felt weak from hunger] or [and he was weak and hungry] or [very tired and hungry]

Genesis 25:30

Then Esau said to Jacob

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. Alternate translation: [So Esau asked Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please let me devour

Alternate translation: [Please let me eat]

some of that very red stuff

Alternate translation: [some of that dark red stew you are making]

because I {am} exhausted

See how you translated **exhausted** in verse 29. Alternate translation: [because I am weak from hunger!] or [because I am hungry and weak!]

For that {reason

Alternate translation: [Because he said that]

they called his name

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. Alternate translation: [he is also called] or [they called him]

Edom

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.1634)**)

Genesis 25:31

But Jacob said

Alternate translation: [But Jacob said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

On this day

Alternate translation: [Today right now] or [Right now]

sell your birthright to me

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. Alternate translation: [give your birthright to me in exchange for some stew] or [trade your rights as the firstborn son to me for some stew then I will give you some] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 25:32

And Esau said

Alternate translation: [Esau said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, I am about 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. Alternate translation: [Listen, I am so hungry that I feel like I am going to die!] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

So for what use {is} that to me, a birthright

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. Alternate translation: [So how will my birthright benefit me if I die?] or [So my birthright is of no benefit to me right now!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 25:33

Swear to me on this day

See how you translated “swear to me by God” in Gen 21:23. Alternate translation: [First make an oath to me today before God that your rights are now mine!] or [You must first promise to me right now that you give your rights to me] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

So he swore to him

Make sure the way you translate this clause fits well with what Jacob just said. Alternate translation: [So he vowed to him] or [So Esau made an unbreakable vow to him]

and sold his birthright to Jacob

See how you translated “sell your birthright” in verse 31. Also see how Hebrews 12:16 is translated, which refers to the same event. Alternate translation: [that he had sold his rights as the firstborn son to Jacob for the stew] or [that he was selling his firstborn-son-rights to him in exchange for the stew]

Genesis 25:34

Then Jacob gave to Esau bread and lentil stew

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.” Alternate translation: [Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some of the lentil stew] or [Then Jacob gave Esau some of the lentil stew with some bread] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and he ate and drank, and got up 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. Alternate translation: [and Esau ate, drank, stood up, and left] or [and Esau hurriedly ate the meal and left]

So Esau despised his birthright

See how you translated **birthright** in verses 31-33. Alternate translation: [So Esau showed that he did not value his rights as the firstborn son] or [In that way, Esau treated his birthright flippantly as if it had little value]

Genesis 26

Genesis 26:1

Then there was

Consider what is the best way in your language to begin this new episode. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1654)**)

a famine

See how you translated **famine** in Gen 12:10. Alternate translation: [another famine] or [another extreme lack of food] or [another time of severe food shortage]

besides the earlier famine that was

Alternate translation: [in addition to the previous one that occurred] or [This was a different famine from the one that had happened years before]

So Isaac 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.1559)**)

to Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, to Gerar

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. Alternate translation: [went for help to the Philistine king Abimelech, who lived in the city of Gerar]

Genesis 26:2

Then Yahweh appeared to him

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. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh came to Isaac] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and said

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and told him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Do not go down

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. Alternate translation: [Do not go south] or [Do not travel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

to Egypt

Alternate translation: [to the land of Egypt]

live in the land that I tell you

Alternate translation: [but rather live in the land wherever I tell you to live] or [but rather live wherever I tell you to live]

Genesis 26:3

Sojourn

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. Alternate translation: [You must live for a while] or [Stay temporarily as a foreigner]

and I will be with you

This clause means that God will guide, help, and protect Isaac and provide for his needs. Alternate translation: [and I will be right beside you]

and bless you

Alternate translation: [cause you and your family to prosper]

For to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, I will give all the surrounding lands to you and your offspring] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

and I will confirm

Alternate translation: [and I will continue to fulfill]

the oath that I swore to Abraham your father

Consider again how you translated **oath** in Gen 24:8. It may be necessary to translate this word differently in different contexts. Alternate translation: [the promise that I made to your father Abraham]

Genesis 26:4

And 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. Alternate translation: [Yes, I will multiply] or [that I will multiply]

your offspring as the stars of

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 22:17. Alternate translation: [increase the number of your offspring so that they are as numerous as] or [make your offspring as many as] or [give you so many offspring that they will be as numerous as] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

as the stars of the heavens

Alternate translation: [as the number of stars in the sky]

and I will give

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

to your offspring

Alternate translation: [to your descendants] or [to them]

all these lands

See how you translated this phrase in verse 3.

in your offspring

See how you translated this phrase and the following clause in Gen 22:18. Alternate translation: [In fact, through your offspring] or [And because of your offspring] or [In fact, by means of your offspring]

And & all the nations of the earth will be blessed

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this passive clause. Alternate translation: [all the people groups on earth will be blessed by me] or [I will bless all the ethnic groups on the earth] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 26:5

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. Alternate translation: [all because]

Abraham obeyed my voice

The phrase **my voice** stands for what Yahweh said to Abraham and also represents Yahweh himself. Alternate translation: [Abraham always did what I told him] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees, and my laws

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, he kept all my requirements, including all my commands, decrees, and laws] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

Genesis 26:6

So Isaac stayed in Gerar

In your translation it should not sound like Isaac lived alone; the rest of his family lived with him. Alternate translation: [So Isaac obeyed what God commanded and stayed with his family in the city of Gerar] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 26:7

Then the men of the place asked about his wife

Alternate translation: [After a while the men from that place started asking him about Rebekah] or [When the men from there started asking him about Rebekah]

and he said

Alternate translation: [he said to them] or [he deceived them by saying] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

She {is} my sister

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a direct quote or an indirect quote here. Alternate translation: [that she was his sister] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

because he was afraid to say, "{She is} my 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. Alternate translation: [He was afraid to say that she was his wife] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

He thought,} "Lest the men of the place kill me

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. Alternate translation: [He thought that the men of that city might kill him] or [He was afraid that the men in that place would kill him] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

on account of Rebekah

Alternate translation: [because of Rebekah] or [so that they could take Rebekah]

because she {is} beautiful of appearance

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. Alternate translation: [because she is very beautiful] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 26:8

Then it happened, when the days had been long for him there

Alternate translation: [One day when he and his family had been there a long time]

then Abimelech the king of the Philistines looked down

Alternate translation: [Abimelech who was king over the Philistines looked out] or [King Abimelech looked out]

from a window

Alternate translation: [from a window of his house]

and saw that, behold

In this context, **behold** means that King Abimelech was surprised at what he saw. Alternate translation: [and was surprised to see]

Isaac was laughing with Rebekah his wife

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. Alternate translation: [that Isaac was flirting with his wife Rebekah]

Genesis 26:9

So Abimelech called for Isaac

King Abimelech probably sent a servant to tell Isaac to come talk to him. Alternate translation: [So King Abimelech summoned Isaac] or [Then King Abimelech sent someone to bring Isaac to him]

and said

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and scolded him by saying] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, she {is} really 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. Alternate translation: [It is clear that she is actually your wife!]

So how could you say, ‘She {is} my 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.1707)**)

And Isaac said to him

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Because I said, ‘I might die because of her

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [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 her as a wife] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 26:10

Then Abimelech said

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language to fit this context. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} this you have done 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. Alternate translation: [Why did you treat us this way?] or [You should not have done this to us!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

One of the people might easily have lain 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. Alternate translation: [Sooner or later, one of the men whom I rule could have slept with your wife] or [... had physical relations with your wife] or [... committed adultery with your wife] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and you would have brought guilt on us

The pronoun **us** in this verse refers to King Abimelech and the Philistines whom he ruled; it does not include Isaac. Alternate translation: [with the result that you would have brought punishment on us!] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

Genesis 26:11

Then Abimelech ordered all the people by saying

Alternate translation: [Then King Abimelech told all his people]

Whoever touches this man or his wife will surely be killed

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. Alternate translation: [If anyone harms this man Isaac or his wife in any way, I will surely have that person executed!] or [I will surely execute anyone who harms Isaac or his wife in any way!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 26:12

Then Isaac sowed seeds in that land

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.” Alternate translation: [Isaac planted crops in that land]

and in that year he obtained a hundredfold

Alternate translation: [and during that year he 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]

and Yahweh blessed him

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 13. Alternate translation: [because Yahweh blessed him]

Genesis 26:13

And the man became great, and he continued to become even greater

Alternate translation: [In that way Isaac kept getting more and more wealthy] or [so that he grew richer and richer]

until he was exceedingly great

Alternate translation: [until eventually he was very rich]

Genesis 26:14

And he had possession of flocks and possession of herds

See how you translated **flocks** and **herds** in Gen 24:35. Alternate translation: [He had many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle] or [He had many sheep and cattle]

and many servants

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. Alternate translation: [and he also had many slaves] or [He also had many slaves]

So the Philistines envied him

Alternate translation: [Because of that, the Philistines envied him] or [As a result, the Philistines were envious of him] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

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**

See how you translated "well" in Gen 21:30-31.

Genesis 26:16

Then Abimelech said to Isaac

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. Alternate translation: [Finally King Abimelech said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Go away from us

Although King Abimelech is asking Isaac to leave, he is still trying to be polite. Alternate translation: [We want you to move somewhere else away from us] (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

because you are more powerful than we {are

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. Alternate translation: [because you are too powerful for us] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 26:17

So Isaac went from there

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. Alternate translation: [So Isaac moved away from the city of Gerar with his family] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and camped

Alternate translation: [and set up his tents]

in the Valley of Gerar

Alternate translation: [in the valley near Gerar]

and settled there

Alternate translation: [and 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

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

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. Alternate translation: [that the Philistines had plugged up with dirt after Abraham had died] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and he called them names like the names

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He gave those wells the same names] or [He named the wells with the same names]

that his father had called them

Alternate translation: [that his father had named them]

Genesis 26:19

and found a well of living 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. Alternate translation: [and struck a spring of flowing water there] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 26:20

The water {belongs} to us

Consider whether it is best in your language to use a direct quote or an indirect quote here. Alternate translation: [That water is ours!] or [that the well belonged to them] or [that they owned that water] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

So he called the name of the well

Alternate translation: [So Isaac named that well]

Esek

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.1634)**)

because they disputed with him

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. Alternate translation: [because they disputed with his herdsmen about it]

Genesis 26:21

but they quarreled over it too

Be consistent here with how you translated **quarreled** in the first part of verse 20. Alternate translation: [but once again the herdsmen from Gerar disputed with them about that well too]

so he called its name

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [so he named it] or [So he named the well]

Genesis 26:22

Then he moved from there

In your translation it should not sound like Isaac moved by himself. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

and he dug

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 18. Alternate translation: [and he had his men dig] or [and his servants dug]

another well

Alternate translation: [a new well]

and they did not quarrel over it

Alternate translation: [but this time the herdsmen of Gerar did not quarrel about it] or [This time Gerar's herdsmen did not quarrel about it]

so he called its name

See how you translated this clause in verses 20 and 21. Alternate translation: [so he named the well] or [so he gave it the name]

Rehoboth

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Rehoboth** in Gen 10:11.

has made space for us

Alternate translation: [has provided room for us] or [given my family enough room to live]

and we will be fruitful in the land

Alternate translation: [so that we will flourish here in this land]

Genesis 26:23

Then from there he went up to 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. Alternate translation: [From there he and his family moved south to the city of Beersheba] or [One day he and his family moved from there to the city of Beersheba]

Genesis 26:24

And Yahweh appeared to him during that night and said

See how you translated **Yahweh appeared to him** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [That night Yahweh came to him and said to him]

I {am} the God of Abraham your father

Alternate translation: [I am the God whom your father Abraham worships] or [I am the God who takes care of your father Abraham]

Do not be afraid, because I {am} with you

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. Alternate translation: [I will always be with you, so do not be afraid] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And I will bless you

See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: [I will prosper you]

and multiply your offspring

See how you translated this phrase in verse 4. Alternate translation: [and multiply the number of your offspring] or [and make your offspring numerous] or [and give you many offspring]

for the sake of

Alternate translation: [because of my promise to] or [in order to keep my promise to]

Abraham my servant

Alternate translation: [my servant Abraham]

Genesis 26:25

Then he built an altar there

See how you translated **altar** in Gen 22:9. Alternate translation: [Then Isaac built an altar there at Beersheba]

and called on the name of Yahweh

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. Alternate translation: [and offered sacrifices on it to Yahweh as he worshiped him by name]

And he pitched his tents there

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 17. Alternate translation: [He also set up his camp there]

and the servants of Isaac dug a well there

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

Alternate translation: [Then King Abimelech came to him from the city of Gerar]

and Ahuzzath his friend

King Abimelech's friend Ahuzzath was probably his adviser.

and Phicol the commander of his army

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 21:22, 32. Alternate translation: [and his army captain Phicol]

Genesis 26:27

Why have you come to 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. Alternate translation: [Why did you come here] (See: **Rhetorical Question** (p.1711))

since you hate me

Alternate translation: [especially since you have treated me hatefully] or [especially since you have been hateful toward me]

and you sent me away from you

Alternate translation: [and forced me to go away from you!]

Genesis 26:28

And they said

Alternate translation: [They replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We have clearly seen

Make sure your translation of the pronoun **we** does not include Isaac here. Alternate translation: [It is very clear to us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

that Yahweh has been with you

See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 3 and 24. Alternate translation: [that Yahweh is with you and prospering you]

so we said

Alternate translation: [so we said to each other] or [so we decided]

There should be an oath between us'—between us and you

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. Alternate translation: [that there should be an vow between us and you] or [that we should make a vow to each other] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

So let us cut a covenant

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. Alternate translation: [So please let us make a peace agreement] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

with you

Alternate translation: [with each other]

Genesis 26:29

that you will not do evil against 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

See how you translated **touch** or “harm” in verse 11. Alternate translation: [just as we never harmed you in any way] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and just as we did only good to you

Alternate translation: [but only treated you kindly]

and sent you away in peace

Alternate translation: [and sent you away peacefully] or [and in a peaceful manner asked you to leave]

Now you are blessed by Yahweh

Alternate translation: [Now because of that, Yahweh has greatly prospered you] or [As a result, Yahweh has now greatly prospered you]

Genesis 26:30

and they ate and drank

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

See how you translated **got up early in the morning** in Gen 20:8; 21:14, 22:3.

and swore to each other

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. Alternate translation: [and made unbreakable oaths to each other to keep their covenant] or [and made oaths to one another that they would keep their treaty]

Then Isaac sent them on their way

Alternate translation: [Then Isaac told them goodbye]

and they left from him in peace

Alternate translation: [and they left him on peaceful terms and returned home]

Genesis 26:32

Then it happened on that day

Alternate translation: [On that same day] or [Later that same day]

about the matter of the well that they had dug

This is the same well that Isaac's servants started digging in verse 25.

and said to him

Consider what is the best way to translate this quote margin in your language. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We have found water

See how you translated **found** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [We have reached water!]

Genesis 26:33

So he called it Shibah

The name of this well can be spelled **Shibah** or “Shebah.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

the name of the city {is} Beersheba to this day

See how you translated **Beersheba** and its meaning in Gen 21:31.

Genesis 26:34

And Esau was a son of forty years

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. Alternate translation: [Now Esau was 40 years old, and] or [When Esau was 40 years old]

and he took {as} a wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Basemath was Esau's second wife, not Beeri's wife. Alternate translation: [he married a woman named Judith, who was the daughter of a Hittite man named Beeri, and he also married a woman named Basemath, who was the daughter of a Hittite man named Elon]

Genesis 26:35

And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah

Alternate translation: [Those foreign women caused Isaac and Rebekah to be very distressed] or [Isaac and Rebekah were very 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.1559)**)

Genesis 27

Genesis 27:1

Then it happened, 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. Alternate translation: [Now when] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1654)**)

Isaac was old

Alternate translation: [Isaac was very old]

and his eyes were too dim to see

Isaac was either totally blind or so blind that he could not recognize people anymore (See: verses 18-27, 32-33). Alternate translation: [and his eyes were so weak that he could not see] or [and he was almost blind]

then he called

Isaac probably told a servant to go and tell Esau to come to him. Alternate translation: [he called for] or [he summoned]

And he said to him

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. Alternate translation: [Esau replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold me

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 22:1,7,11. Alternate translation: [Here I am] or [Yes, sir what is it?]

Genesis 27:2

Then he said

Consider what is the best way in your language to translate this quote margin. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, please

Alternate translation: [Listen carefully, please:] or [Please listen carefully:]

I am old

See how you translated **old** or “an old man” in verse 1. Alternate translation: [I am very old]

I do not know the day of my death

Alternate translation: [and I might die soon] or [and I might not live much longer]

Genesis 27:3

please take your weapons, your quiver, and your bow

Consider what is the most natural way to refer to a bow and arrows in your language. Alternate translation: [take your hunting gear, your quiver of arrows, and your bow] or [take your bow and arrows]

and go out

Alternate translation: [then go out]

in} the field

See how you translated **the field** in Gen 25:27. Alternate translation: [to the fields] or [to the open country]

and hunt game for me

See how you translated **game** in Gen 25:28. Alternate translation: [and hunt some wild animal meat for me] or [and go hunting for me]

Genesis 27:4

Then prepare

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. Alternate translation: [Then use the meat to cook] or [Next butcher the deer and cook] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

tasty food for me

Alternate translation: [some tasty food for me] or [a tasty meal for me]

such as I love

Alternate translation: [the kind I like best] or [just the way that I like it]

my soul can bless you before I die

Isaac uses the phrase **my soul** to refer to himself. Alternate translation: [before I die I can ask God to prosper you] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 27:5

And Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to Esau his son

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. Alternate translation: [Rebekah overheard what Isaac said to their son Esau] or [Now while Isaac was speaking to his son Esau, Rebekah was listening] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Then Esau went {to} the field to hunt game to bring it back

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. Alternate translation: [So after Esau went out to the country to get wild animal meat] or [So after Esau had left to go hunting in the open country]

Genesis 27:6

Then Rebekah said to Jacob her son, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Rebekah said to their son Jacob]

Behold

Alternate translation: [Listen to this:]

I heard your father

Alternate translation: [I just heard your father]

speaking to Esau your brother, saying

Some languages have a special term for "older brother" that is used here. Do what is best in your language.
Alternate translation: [say to your brother Esau] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

Genesis 27:7

Bring game for me

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. Alternate translation: [to bring him some wild deer meat] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

and prepare tasty food for me so that I can eat it

See how you translated this clause in verse 4. Alternate translation: [and use it to cook a tasty meal for him to eat]

and I can bless you in the presence of Yahweh, before my death

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). Alternate translation: [Then before he dies, he will ask Yahweh to bless Esau] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 27:8

So now, my 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," Alternate translation: [Now son]

listen to my voice

See how you translated **my voice** in Gen 26:5. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

to what I command you

Alternate translation: [and obey me]

Genesis 27:9

Please go to the flock

Alternate translation: [Go to our flock of goats]

and bring to me from there

Alternate translation: [and bring me]

two good kids of the goats

Alternate translation: [two fine kid goats] or [two of our best kid goats]

so that I will prepare from them

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [so that I can use the meat from them to cook] or [I will use their meat to cook]

tasty food for your father

See how you translated “prepare some tasty food for” in verses 4 and 7. Alternate translation: [some savory food for your father] or [a tasty meal for your father]

such as he loves

See how you translated this phrase in verse 4. Alternate translation: [the kind he likes best]

Genesis 27:10

Then you take it to your father

Alternate translation: [Then you can take the food to your father]

and he will eat {it}, so that he will bless you before his death

See how you translated **will bless** in verses 4 and 7. Alternate translation: [so that he will eat it, and then before he dies, he will ask Yahweh to prosper you]

Genesis 27:11

Then Jacob said

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

to Rebekah his mother

Alternate translation: [to her]

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look] or [Remember that]

Esau my brother

See how you translated **brother** in verse 11.

is} a hairy man

See how you talked about Esau's hairy body in Gen 25:25. Alternate translation: [has a lot of hair on his body]

but I {am} a smooth man

Alternate translation: [but I have non-hairy skin] or [but I am not hairy]

Genesis 27:12

Suppose

Alternate translation: [What would happen if] or [I am afraid of what will happen if]

my father touches me

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. Alternate translation: [my father feels my arms]

Then I will be in his eyes as a deceiver

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. Alternate translation: [Certainly he would recognize me and know that I am trying to trick him] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

and I will bring a curse on me and not a blessing

Alternate translation: [Then I would cause myself to be cursed instead of blessed]

Genesis 27:13

But his mother said to him

Alternate translation: [But his mother responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let your curse be on me, 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. Alternate translation: [My son, if your father curses you, may that curse fall on me and not on you]

Just listen to my voice

Alternate translation: [Please just do what I say] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and go get {them} for me

Alternate translation: [and go and bring two goats to me]

Genesis 27:14

So he went

Alternate translation: [So Jacob went to their flock]

and got {them}

Alternate translation: [and got the goats] or [chose two goats]

and brought {them} to his mother

Alternate translation: [and brought them to her]

Then his mother prepared

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. Alternate translation: [Then she had them butchered and she made] or [Then she used the butchered meat from the goats to cook] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

tasty food

See how you translated this phrase in verses 4, 7 and 9. Alternate translation: [some savory food] or [a tasty meal]

such as his father loved

See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 4 and 9. Alternate translation: [just the way that his father liked it]

Genesis 27:15

Then Rebekah took

Alternate translation: [She also took out]

and put them on Jacob her younger son

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. Alternate translation: [and gave them to her younger son Jacob to put on]

Genesis 27:16

And she put the skins of the kid goats over his hands and over

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

See how you translated **smooth** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [the non-hairy part of his neck]

Genesis 27:17

Then she gave the tasty food and the bread that she had made into the hand{s} of Jacob her son

Alternate translation: [Then Rebekah gave to him the savory goat meat dish and some bread she had made] or
[Then she gave the tasty food to him, including some bread that she had made]

Genesis 27:18

and he went to his father

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Jacob took the meal to his father]

and said, "My father." And he said

His father answered/replied, " (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold me. Who {are} you, my son

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. Alternate translation: [Here I am, my son. Who are you?] or [Yes? Which one of my sons are you?]

Genesis 27:19

Then Jacob said to his father

Alternate translation: [Jacob lied to his father] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I {am} Esau, your firstborn

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. Alternate translation: [I am Esau, your firstborn son]

I have done as you told me

Alternate translation: [I have done what you told me to do]

Please get up, sit and eat some of my game

See how you translated "game meat" in verses 3, 5 and 7. Alternate translation: [So now, please sit up and eat some of the game meat that I have prepared for you]

so that your soul will bless me

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 4. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 27:20

How {is} this you were quick to find {it}, my son

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to put the address **my son** first in this quote. Alternate translation: [How were you able to get the animal so quickly, my son?]

And he said

Alternate translation: [Jacob answered him]

Because Yahweh your God

Alternate translation: [I was successful because Yahweh, the God you worship]

caused {it} to happen before me

See how you translated this clause in Gen 24:12. Alternate translation: [helped me to hunt it] or [brought it to me]

Genesis 27:21

Then Isaac said to Jacob

Alternate translation: [But Isaac said to him]

Please come close, so that I can touch you, my son

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. Alternate translation: [Please come close to me, my son, so that I can touch you] or [My son, please come here so that I can touch you]

and know} whether you are really my son Esau or not

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and be sure that you are really my son Esau] or [I want to know for sure whether or not you really are my son Esau]

Genesis 27:22

So Jacob went close to Isaac his father

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob came close to his father Isaac]

and he touched him

See how you translated “touch” or “feel” in verses 12 and 21. Alternate translation: [and his father touched him] or [and his father felt his arms]

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to himself]

The voice {is} the voice of Jacob

Alternate translation: [Hmm, he talks like Jacob] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

but the hands {are} the hands of Esau

In Hebrew, the word for “hand” is the same word as for “arm.” Isaac probably felt Esau’s hands and arms. Alternate translation: [but he feels like Esau]

Genesis 27:23

So he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like the hands of Esau his brother

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.1651)**)

and he was about to bless him

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here that continues into verse 24.
Alternate translation: [Then Isaac was prepared to bless him] or [Isaac was getting ready to bless him]

Genesis 27:24

But he said

Alternate translation: [But he still was not certain, so he asked him] or [but first he wanted to be completely certain, so he asked him]

Are} you really my son Esau

Alternate translation: [Are you truly my son Esau?]

And he said

Alternate translation: [Jacob answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I {am

Alternate translation: [Yes, I am Esau] or [Yes, Father I am]

Genesis 27:25

Then he said

Alternate translation: [So his father said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Bring {the food} to me

Your translation of Isaac's request should sound polite, not rude or demanding. It should also not sound like he was begging or pleading. Alternate translation: [Please bring me the food] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness]])

and I will eat some of my son's game, so that my soul will bless you

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 19. Alternate translation: [so that I can eat some of your wild animal meat and bless you]

Then he brought {it} to him, and he ate

Alternate translation: [So Jacob brought the meal to his father, and he ate it]

and he brought wine to him, and he drank

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. Alternate translation: [Jacob also brought him wine, and he drank it]

Genesis 27:26

Then Isaac his father said to him

Alternate translation: [Then Isaac said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please come close

See how you translated this phrase in verse 21. Alternate translation: [Come near to me]

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

See how you translated **went close** in verse 22. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob came close to his father]

and kissed him

Alternate translation: [and kissed him on his cheek]

so he blessed him

Alternate translation: [Then he blessed him]

and said

Alternate translation: [by saying to him] or [He said to him]

See, the smell of my son is

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. Alternate translation: [Ahh, my son smells]

like the smell of a field

Alternate translation: [wonderful like the fragrance of a green field] or [wonderful the way a green field smells]

that Yahweh has blessed

Alternate translation: [that Yahweh has caused to be very productive!]

Genesis 27:28

And may God give to you

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. Alternate translation: [May God give you and your descendants] or [I pray that God will give you and your descendants] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

from the dew of the heavens and from the fatness of the earth

Alternate translation: [plenty of dew from the heavens for your crops and animals and riches from the soil] or [plenty of rain and rich soil]

and an abundance of grain and wine

Alternate translation: [including an abundance of food and drink] or [so that you have abundant food and much wine] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 27:29

May peoples serve you, and may nations bow down to you

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. Alternate translation: [May people groups serve you and your descendants, and may they bow down to you in respect] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

Be master

Alternate translation: [May you rule] or [You will even rule]

over your brothers

Jacob only had one brother, so this phrase refers here to Esau and his descendants. Alternate translation: [over your brother and his descendants]

and may the sons of your mother 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." Alternate translation: [and they will bow down to you in submission] or [Yes, they too will submit to you and bow down to you] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

May} those {who} curse you be cursed, and {may} those {who} bless you be blessed

See how you translated **curse** in Gen 12:3. Alternate translation: [Whoever curses you will be cursed by God, but whoever blesses you will be blessed by him] or [I ask God to curse those who curse you, and I ask him to bless those who bless you]

Genesis 27:30

Then it happened, just as Isaac finished blessing Jacob

Alternate translation: [Just as Isaac finished blessing Jacob]

came in from his hunt

Alternate translation: [came back from hunting]

Genesis 27:31

Then he too prepared tasty food

Consider again how you translated **prepared tasty food** in verses 4, 7, 9, 14, 31 and **tasty** in verse 17. Alternate translation: [Then Esau also cooked a tasty meal with the meat he had hunted]

and he brought {it} to his father

Alternate translation: [and he carried it to his father Isaac]

and said to his father

Alternate translation: [and requested] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let my father get up

Esau's request to his father should sound polite in your translation, not rude or demanding. (See: **Politeness (p. 1695)**)

and eat from his son's game

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Esau is referring to himself in this phrase. Alternate translation: [and eat some of my wild animal meat] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

so that your soul can bless me

See how you translated a similar phrase in verses 4, 19, 25 and 31. Alternate translation: [and then you can bless me]

Genesis 27:32

But Isaac his father said to him

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. Alternate translation: [Then his father asked him] or [But his father exclaimed]

Who {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. Alternate translation: [Which of my sons are you?!]

And he said

Alternate translation: [Esau answered him] or [Esau replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I {am} your son, your firstborn Esau

See how you translated **firstborn** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [I am your firstborn son Esau] or [I am Esau, your oldest son]

Genesis 27:33

Then Isaac trembled a very great tremble

Alternate translation: [Then Isaac became so upset that he shook very violently] or [Then Isaac was very upset, so that he began to shake all over]

Then who {was} it

Alternate translation: [Then where is the one]

that hunted game and brought {it} to me

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. Alternate translation: [who hunted game meat and brought a meal to me?] or [who brought to me a meal made from wild animal meat?]

And I ate from {it} all just before you came

Alternate translation: [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

Consider where it is most natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and then I blessed him. And God will surely bless him] or [Then I asked God to bless him, so God will definitely bless him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 27:34

When Esau heard the words of his father

Alternate translation: [When Esau heard what his father said to him]

then he cried out a great and exceedingly bitter cry

Alternate translation: [he burst out with an extremely loud and bitter cry] or [he was so upset that he yelled out loudly]

and said to his father

Alternate translation: [and begged him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Bless me, me too, my father

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. Alternate translation: [Father, please bless me too!]

Genesis 27:35

And he said

Alternate translation: [But his father replied to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Your brother came in deceit and took your blessing

Alternate translation: [Your brother came to me and deceived me and stole the blessing that I was planning to give you] or [Your brother deceived me so that I blessed him instead of you!]

Genesis 27:36

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then Esau exclaimed angrily] or [When Esau heard that, he said angrily]

Is it because his name is called Jacob that he has defrauded me these two times

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). Alternate translation: [It is no wonder that he is called Jacob, since he has cheated me two times!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

He took my birthright, and behold, now

Alternate translation: [First he stole my rights as the oldest son, and now see what he has done:] or [Not only did he take my birthright, but now see what he has done:]

he has taken my blessing

Alternate translation: [he has also stolen my blessing!] or [he has tricked you into blessing him instead of me!]

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then he begged his father] or [Then he pleaded with his father]

Have you not reserved a blessing for me

Alternate translation: [Is there still some way you can ask God to bless me?]

Genesis 27:37

But Isaac responded and said to Esau

Alternate translation: [Isaac replied to Esau] or [Isaac answered him]

Behold, I have made him master over you

See how you translated **master** in verse 29. Alternate translation: [Look I have already appointed Jacob to be your master]

and I have given all his brothers to him as servants

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. Alternate translation: [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]

And I have sustained him with grain and wine

See how you translated **grain and wine** in verse 28. Alternate translation: [Besides that, I have also supplied him with abundant food and wine] or [I have also asked God to supply him with plenty of food and wine] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

So then, what can I do for you, my son

Isaac uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that there is no blessing left for Esau. Alternate translation: [So my son, there is no blessing left for you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 27:38

But Esau said to his father

Alternate translation: [But Esau continued to beg his father and said] or [But again Esau begged] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Is there one blessing that you have, my father

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

See how you translated this sentence in verse 34. Alternate translation: [Father, please bless me too!]

Then Esau lifted his voice and sobbed

See how you translated “lifted ... voice and sobbed” in Gen 21:16. Alternate translation: [Then Esau started sobbing loudly] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 27:39

Then Isaac his father responded and said to him

Alternate translation: [So his father Isaac said to him] or [His father replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, your dwelling will be

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

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. Alternate translation: [You and your descendants will survive by using your swords to protect yourselves] or [You and your descendants will continually be fighting battles with other peoples] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and you will serve your brother

Alternate translation: [and you and your descendants will serve your brother and his descendants] or [and you and your descendants will be servants for your brother and his descendants]

But it will happen when you become restless

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. Alternate translation: [But when you revolt against him] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

then you will break his yoke off of your neck

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. Alternate translation: [you will get free from his rule over you] or [you will no longer be under his rule] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

Genesis 27:41

Then Esau hated Jacob

Alternate translation: [After that, Esau held a grudge against Jacob] or [Esau continued to be very angry at Jacob]

because of the blessing that his father had blessed him with

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. Alternate translation: [because his father had given his blessing to Jacob] or [because their father had blessed Jacob instead of him]

and Esau said in his heart

Alternate translation: [So Esau said to himself] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The days of the mourning of my father are near

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. Alternate translation: [Soon my father will die, and we will have a time of mourning for him, then]

then I will kill

Alternate translation: [I am going to kill] or [I plan to kill]

Genesis 27:42

But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah

It was probably a servant who told Rebekah about Esau's plan to kill Jacob. Alternate translation: [Then someone told Rebekah what Esau was saying so] or [Then Rebekah heard about what her older son Esau was planning, so] or [When Rebekah heard what Esau was planning to do] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

so she sent and called for Jacob her younger son

Alternate translation: [she sent for her younger 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

Alternate translation: [and warned him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, Esau your brother is consoling himself about you, planning to kill you

Alternate translation: [Look your brother Esau is making himself feel better by planning to kill you]

Genesis 27:43

So now, my son

See how you translated **So now** in verses 3 and 8. Alternate translation: [Now son]

listen to my voice

See how you translated this phrase in verses 8 and 13. It may be necessary to translate it differently here because of the context. Alternate translation: [do what I tell you:] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and get up, flee for yourself

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [get ready immediately and flee] or [Hurry and flee] or [Flee immediately]

to Laban my brother in Haran

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. Alternate translation: [to my brother Laban who lives in the city of Haran!] or [to the city of Haran, to the house of my brother Laban!]

Genesis 27:44

And stay with him for a few days

Alternate translation: [Stay with him for a short time]

until the fury of your brother turns away

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.”

Alternate translation: [until your brother is no longer furious with you] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 27:45

until the anger of your brother turns away from 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. Alternate translation: [until his anger against you is gone] or [After a while, when your brother is no longer angry with you] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he forgets what you have done to him

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. Alternate translation: [and he no longer thinks about what you did]

Then I will send and get you from there

Alternate translation: [I will send someone to tell you when it is safe to come back home]

Why should I also lose both of you {in} one day

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. Alternate translation: [I do not want both my sons to be killed!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 27:46

Then Rebekah said to Isaac

Alternate translation: [Soon after that, Rebekah said to Isaac] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I am disgusted with my life

Rebekah is exaggerating how she feels to influence Isaac to do what she wants. Alternate translation: [I do not enjoy living] or [I am very upset] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

because of the daughters of Heth

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. Alternate translation: [because of the Hittite women whom Esau married!]

If Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these, from daughters of the land

Alternate translation: [If Jacob also marries a Hittite woman from around here]

what {would} life {be} to me

Rebekah uses a rhetorical question and hyperbole to emphasize how upset she would be if Jacob married a Hittite woman. Alternate translation: [my life will not be worth living!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 28

Genesis 28:1

Then Isaac called for Jacob

Alternate translation: [So Isaac sent for Jacob to come to him] or [Because of what Rebekah said, Isaac summoned Jacob]

and 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. Alternate translation: [Then he blessed him] or [After he came, Isaac blessed him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and commanded him and said to him

Alternate translation: [and instructed him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan

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. Alternate translation: [Do not marry a woman who is a descendant of Canaan] or [You must not take a wife from among the Canaanite women] or [Do not marry a Canaanite woman]

Genesis 28:2

Get up, go

See how you translated “get up” in Gen 27:43. Alternate translation: [Rather get up and go] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

to Paddan Aram

Be consistent here with how you translated **Paddan Aram** in Gen 25:20. Alternate translation: [to the land of Paddan Aram] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and take a wife for yourself from there

Alternate translation: [and find a woman from there to marry]

from the daughters of Laban the brother of your mother

Laban was Rebekah’s older brother. Some languages have a special term for this that is used here. (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

Genesis 28:3

And may God Almighty bless 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.

Alternate translation: [I pray that Almighty God will bless you] or [I ask God, who is all-powerful, to bless you] or [I pray that God, who is all-powerful, will prosper you]

and make you fruitful

Alternate translation: [and enable you to have many children]

and multiply you

See how you translated **fruitful and multiply** in Gen 17:20. It may need to be translated in different ways, depending on the context. Alternate translation: [so that you have many descendants and]

so that you become a community of peoples

Alternate translation: [so that you become the ancestor of many ethnic groups] or [so that many people groups will descend from you] or [so that they become many ethnic groups]

Genesis 28:4

And may he give the blessing of Abraham to you, to you and to your offspring with you

Alternate translation: [I also ask God to bless you and your descendants the same way that he blessed Abraham]

so that you possess the land of

Alternate translation: [so that you will own the land] or [so that you will take possession of the land]

your sojournings

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. Alternate translation: [where you have been residing as a outsider] or [where you and your ancestors have been living as outsiders]

which God gave to Abraham

Alternate translation: [the same land which God promised to him]

Genesis 28:5

Then Isaac sent Jacob

Alternate translation: [Then Isaac said good-bye to Jacob]

and he went

Make sure your translation of this phrase does not sound like Jacob had already arrived at Paddan Aram. Alternate translation: [and he left to go] or [and Jacob started traveling]

to Paddan Aram, to Laban

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. Alternate translation: [to the land of Paddan Aram, to Laban] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

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. Alternate translation: [who was the son of Bethuel the Aramean]

Genesis 28:6

Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram

Alternate translation: [Now Esau had observed Isaac bless Jacob and send him to the land of Paddan Aram]

to take a wife for himself from there

Alternate translation: [to marry a wife from among his relatives there]

and that} when he blessed him, then he commanded him, saying

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. Alternate translation: [and that as Isaac was blessing Jacob, he told him] or [As Isaac was blessing Jacob, Esau heard him tell him]

Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to translate this direct quote as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: [You must not take a woman who is a descendant of Canaan] or [that he must not choose a wife from among the Canaanite women] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 28:7

and {that} Jacob listened to his father and to his mother

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and he also observed that Jacob obeyed his father and mother] or [Esau also noticed that Jacob obeyed his parents]

and went to Paddan Aram

Alternate translation: [and immediately left to go to Paddan Aram]

Genesis 28:8

Then Esau saw that

Alternate translation: [That is how Esau understood that]

the daughters of Canaan were displeasing in the eyes of Isaac his father

Alternate translation: [his father Isaac did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women]

Genesis 28:9

So Esau went to Ishmael

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. Alternate translation: [Then Esau traveled to the clan of Ishmael]

the sister of 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. Alternate translation: [and who was the younger sister of Nebaioth] or [and whose older brother was Nebaioth] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

in addition to his wives {who belonged} to him

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. Alternate translation: [besides the two wives he already had] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 28:10

And Jacob left from Beersheba and set out

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. Alternate translation: [Meanwhile Jacob had left the city of Beersheba and was traveling] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1559)**)

for Haran

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. Alternate translation: [toward the city of Haran in the region of Paddan Aram] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 28:11

Then he reached a {certain} place, and he stopped there

Alternate translation: [That evening he reached a good place to camp so he stayed the night there] or [Late that evening he came to a place where he stayed for the night]

because the sun had gone

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. Alternate translation: [because the sun had gone down] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And he took {one} of the stones of the place

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. Alternate translation: [He picked out a large flat stone that he found there]

and put it under his head

Alternate translation: [and rested his head on it as a pillow] or [and used it as a headrest] or [to use as a pillow]

and he lay down in that place

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 28:12

And he dreamed

Alternate translation: [And as he dreamed] or [As he slept, he had a dream and]

and behold, a stairway was set up on the earth

This stairway was wide enough for there to be angels moving up and down on it at the same time. Alternate translation: [he saw a staircase whose base was resting on the ground] or [he saw a staircase. The base of the stairway was on the ground] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and its top reached to the heavens

Alternate translation: [and the top of it went all the way up into the sky]

and behold, angels of God were ascending and descending on it

See how you translated “angel” in Gen 24:7, 40. Alternate translation: [and there were angels of God who were going up and down on the stairway]

Genesis 28:13

And behold, Yahweh was standing above it

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. Alternate translation: [Then suddenly Yahweh was standing at the top of the stairway] or [And Yahweh was also there, standing at the top of the stairway]

the God of Abraham your grandfather and the God of Isaac

Abraham was Jacob’s grandfather and ancestor. Alternate translation: [the God whom your forefathers Abraham and Isaac serve] or [the God who takes care of your forefathers Abraham and Isaac]

The land that you are lying on I will give to you and to your offspring

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. Alternate translation: [The land where you are lying I am giving to you and your descendants] or [I will give you and your descendants this land that you are sleeping on] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 28:14

And your offspring will be

Alternate translation: [And your descendants will be] or [You will have so many descendants that they will be]

like the dust of the earth

See how you translated **dust** in Gen 13:16. Alternate translation: [as many as the dust specks on the ground] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

and you will spread out

In this clause **you** refers to Jacob's descendants. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Alternate translation: [and your people will spread out] or [so that they expand their territory] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south

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. Alternate translation: [to the west, east, north, and south] or [to the north, south, east, and west]

in you and in your offspring

Be consistent here with how you translated **your offspring** in Gen 22:18 and 26:4. Alternate translation: [In you and your offspring] or [Because of you and your offspring] or [By means of you and your offspring]

And & all the families of the earth will be blessed

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. Alternate translation: [all the families on the earth will be blessed by me] or [I will bless all the clans in the world] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 28:15

And behold

Alternate translation: [Listen to this:]

I {am} with you

See how you translated **I am with you** in Gen 26:24 and “I will be with you” in Gen 26:3. Alternate translation: [I will always stay with you] or [I promise to always be with you and help you]

and I will watch over you

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [I will guard you] or [I will take care of you]

in every {place} that you go

Alternate translation: [everywhere that you go] or [wherever you live]

and I will bring you back to this land

Alternate translation: [and I will guide you back to this land]

For I will not leave you

Alternate translation: [In fact, I will never abandon you]

until I have done what I have spoken to you

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

Alternate translation: [Suddenly Jacob woke up from his dream and said to himself] or [When Jacob woke up from his dream, he said to himself]

Surely Yahweh is in this place

Alternate translation: [Certainly Yahweh is here in this place] or [Yahweh definitely lives here]

but I did not know {it

Alternate translation: [but I did not realize it before now!] or [but I was not aware of that before!]

Genesis 28:17

So he was afraid and said

Alternate translation: [He was afraid, so he also said]

How awesome this place is

The word **awesome** refers here to the terror that Jacob was feeling from being in the holy presence of Almighty God. Alternate translation: [This is an awesome place!] or [This place is terrifying!]

This is nothing other than the house of God

Alternate translation: [It must be the house where God himself lives!]

and this {is} the gateway of heaven

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [It can only be the gateway to heaven!] or [It must be the gateway to heaven!]

Genesis 28:18

Then in the morning Jacob got up early

Alternate translation: [Jacob got up early the next morning]

and he took the stone that he had put under his head

See how you translated **stone** and **under his head** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [took the stone that he had used as a headrest]

and stood it up

Alternate translation: [and stood it up on its end]

as} a pillar

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. Alternate translation: [as a marker] or [as a memorial stone] or [to mark that place where God had appeared to him]

and he poured oil on its top

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. Alternate translation: [Then he poured some olive oil on top of the pillar to dedicate the place to God] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 28:19

And he called the name of that place Bethel

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

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [even though originally that town was called Luz] or [Originally the name of that town had been Luz]

Genesis 28:20

Then Jacob vowed a vow, saying

See how you translated a clause that has a similar meaning ("swear to ...") in Gen 21:23, 31. Alternate translation: [Then he made a pledge to God and said]

If God will be 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. Alternate translation: [God, if you will be with me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

and watch over me

See how you translated **watch over** in verse 15. Alternate translation: [and guard me] or [and take care of me]

on this road that I am walking on

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. Alternate translation: [on this long journey I am taking] or [as I travel on this long journey]

and give to me bread to eat and clothes to wear

In this context **bread** refers to food in general, not just bread. Alternate translation: [and if you give me food to eat and clothes to wear] or [and if you provide me with food and clothes] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 28:21

and {if} I return in peace

Alternate translation: [and if I come back safely]

to the home of my father

This phrase especially refers to Jacob's father's family members, not just the physical home. Alternate translation: [to my family] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

then Yahweh will be God to me

Alternate translation: [then Yahweh, you will be the God whom I worship] or [then I will serve you Yahweh as my God] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 28:22

and this stone that I have stood up {as} a pillar will be the house of God

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. Alternate translation: [This stone that I have set up will be your house and will mark this place where you appeared to me] or [and this memorial stone that I set up will remind people that you live here]

and all that you give to me I will tithe a tenth to you

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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 29

Genesis 29:1

Then Jacob lifted his feet and went

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob continued traveling until he came]

to the land of the sons of the east

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. Alternate translation: [to the land in the east where various ethnic groups lived] or [to the region that was east of the land of Canaan where the eastern ethnic groups lived]

Genesis 29:2

And he looked

Jacob was now near the city of Haran (verse 4), which was in the land east of Canaan (verse 1). Alternate translation: [Then he looked around] or [When he got there, he looked around] or [When he arrived at a place near the city of Haran, he looked around] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and behold, a well {was} in the field

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. Alternate translation: [and he saw a well in an open area] or [and there in an open field was a well]

and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He saw three flocks of sheep that were lying down] or [There were three flocks of sheep lying down]

near it

Alternate translation: [beside it] or [beside the well waiting for water] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

because from that well the flocks were watered

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [because that was the well where the shepherds got water for the flocks] or [That was the well that sheep drank water from]

and the stone over the mouth of the well {was} large

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. Alternate translation: [but the stone covering the top of the well was large and heavy] or [but there was a heavy large stone over the opening of the well] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 29:3

And all the flocks would be gathered there, then they would roll 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. Alternate translation: [Every day shepherds would bring all their flocks of sheep there. They would work together to roll the stone] or [After all the shepherds brought their flocks there, together they would remove the stone]

from over the mouth of the well

Alternate translation: [off the top of the well]

and water the sheep

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. Alternate translation: [and get water from it for the sheep to drink]

Then they would return the stone to its place

Alternate translation: [Then they would roll the stone back]

from over the mouth of the well

Alternate translation: [over the opening of the well]

Genesis 29:4

Then Jacob said to them

Alternate translation: [Jacob greeted the shepherds] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

My brothers

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. Alternate translation: [Friends] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And they said

Alternate translation: [They replied to him] or [They answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We {are} from Haran

Your translation should not sound like the city of Haran was far away from there; it was nearby. Alternate translation: [We live in the city of Haran]

Genesis 29:5

Then he said to them

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.1606)**)

Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nahor

Consider what is the best way to order this question in your language. (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And they said

Alternate translation: [They replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We know him

Hebrew does not have a single word for “Yes,” but rather repeats words from what was asked. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Yes, we know him]

Genesis 29:6

Then he said to them

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob asked] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Are {things} well for him

Jacob is asking about Laban's general well-being, not just his health. Alternate translation: [Are things going well for him?]

Things are} well

Alternate translation: [Yes, things are good for him]

Genesis 29:7

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob said to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold, the day {is} still large

This is an idiom that means there are still many more hours of daytime left. Consider whether your language has an idiom for this. Alternate translation: [Look, it is still the middle of the day] or [Look, the sun is still high in the sky] or [There is still a lot of daylight left] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

It is} not time for the livestock to be gathered

Alternate translation: [so it is too soon to gather the flocks for the night]

Water the 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. Alternate translation: [You ought to get water for them] or [It seems like you should water your sheep] or [So why not water your sheep] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

and go pasture {them

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [But they said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We cannot

Alternate translation: [We have to wait]

until all the flocks are gathered

Alternate translation: [until all the shepherds have brought their flocks here]

and they roll 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. Alternate translation: [and we all remove the stone] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

from over the mouth of the well

See how you translated this phrase in verses 2 and 3. Alternate translation: [off the top of the well]

Then we will water the sheep

Alternate translation: [and draw water for the flocks]

Genesis 29:9

He was still talking with them

Alternate translation: [While Jacob was still talking to the shepherds]

because she was tending them

Alternate translation: [because she was the one who tended them]

Genesis 29:10

Then it happened, when

Alternate translation: [When]

then Jacob went over

Alternate translation: [he went over to the well]

and rolled the stone from over the mouth of the well

Alternate translation: [and took the stone off the top of the well] or [removed the stone that was covering it]

and watered

See how you translated **watered** in verses 2-3, 7-8, and in 24:14, 20. Alternate translation: [and got water for]

Genesis 29:11

Then Jacob kissed Rachel

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. Alternate translation: [Then he kissed Rachel on the cheek] or [Then he greeted Rachel enthusiastically as one of his relatives]

and lifted his voice and cried

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. Alternate translation: [and he started crying loudly because he was so happy]

Genesis 29:12

Then Jacob told Rachel

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.1701)**)

that he {was} a relative of her father and that he {was} a son of Rebekah

Consider whether it is best in your language to use an indirect quote here or a direct quote. Alternate translation: [that her father Laban was his uncle and that her aunt Rebekah was his mother] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Then she ran and told her father

Alternate translation: [Then she ran home and told her father the news] or [So she ran home to her father and informed him about Jacob]

Genesis 29:13

And it happened, when Laban heard

Alternate translation: [When Laban found out] or [As soon as Laban heard]

the news about Jacob the son of his sister

Alternate translation: [that his nephew Jacob was there]

then he ran to meet him

Alternate translation: [he ran out to meet him]

Then he embraced him

Alternate translation: [Then he hugged Jacob] or [He gave him a hug]

and kissed him

See how you translated **kissed** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [and kissed him on his cheeks] or [and greeted him warmly as one of his relatives]

and brought him to his house

Alternate translation: [and took him back to his house] or [and took him home]

Then he told Laban all these things

Laban's response in verse 14 implies that Jacob told him about himself here in verse 13. Alternate translation: [Then he told Laban about himself and everything that had happened] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

Genesis 29:14

and Laban said to him

Alternate translation: [and Laban responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

You {are} indeed my bone and my flesh

This is an idiom that means Jacob is a close, biological relative of Laban. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom. Alternate translation: [You are definitely my own flesh and blood!] or [You are definitely my close relative!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Then he stayed with 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. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob stayed and served for Laban]

a month of days

Alternate translation: [for thirty days]

Genesis 29:15

Then Laban said to Jacob

Alternate translation: [Laban asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Because you {are} my relative, should you then serve me for nothing

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. Alternate translation: [Just because you are my nephew, does that mean that you should work for me without pay?] or [Even though you are my relative 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 just because you are my nephew!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Tell me, what {are} your wages

Alternate translation: [So tell me what your wages should be] or [So tell me what you want me to pay you for your work]

Genesis 29:16

Now 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. Alternate translation: [Now it so happened that Laban had two daughters:] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

The name of the older {was} Leah, and the name of the younger {was} Rachel

Alternate translation: [The name of the older daughter was Leah, and the younger daughter was Rachel] or [The older one was named Leah and the younger daughter was named Rachel]

Genesis 29:17

And the eyes of Leah {were} delicate

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

Alternate translation: [whereas Rachel was extremely beautiful in every way]

Genesis 29:18

And Jacob loved Rachel

Alternate translation: [Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel]

so he said

Alternate translation: [so he responded to Laban] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will serve you seven years

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

Alternate translation: [in exchange for your younger daughter Rachel as my wife] or [if you will give me your younger daughter Rachel to be my wife]

Genesis 29:19

It is} better for me to give her to you than for me to give her to & man

Alternate translation: [I agree to your terms. I would much rather give her to you to marry than give her to some other man]

Stay with me

Alternate translation: [So stay and work with me]

Genesis 29:20

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob worked seven years for Laban so that he could have Rachel]

but in his eyes they were like a few days because of his love for her

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. Alternate translation: [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 years seemed to pass quickly like only a few days] (See:

Information Structure (p.1651))

Genesis 29:21

Then Jacob said to Laban

Alternate translation: [After that, Jacob requested of Laban]

Give {me} my wife, because my days are completed, so that I may go to 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. Alternate translation: [Please let me marry your daughter Rachel now so that I can live with her as my wife, because I have finished my seven years of service for you] or [I have fulfilled the seven years of service that we agreed on, so please let me have your daughter Rachel so that I can marry her and live with her] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 29:22

Then Laban gathered all the people of the place and made a feast

Consider what is the best way to order these events in your language. Alternate translation: [Then Laban gathered all the local people and held a wedding feast] or [Then Laban prepared a marriage feast and invited everyone who lived in town to attend] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 29:23

But it happened in the evening

Alternate translation: [However this is what happened that evening:]

that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him

Alternate translation: [Laban took Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel]

and he went

Make sure it is clear in your translation that **he** refers here to Jacob, not Laban. Alternate translation: [so he] or [so that Jacob] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and he went to her

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. Alternate translation: [so that he had sexual relations with Leah] or [so he slept with Leah] or [spent the night with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 29:24

And 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. Alternate translation: [In addition, Laban gave]

to her Zilpah his maidservant, to Leah his daughter

Alternate translation: [to Leah a female servant named Zilpah]

to be} a maidservant

Alternate translation: [to be her personal attendant] or [to serve her] or [to attend to her]

Genesis 29:25

Then it happened in the morning

Alternate translation: [The next morning]

that behold, she {was} Leah

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).

Alternate translation: [Jacob saw that his new wife was Leah!] or [Jacob was shocked to discover that it was Leah he had married!] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

So he said to Laban

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. Alternate translation: [So he complained to his father-in-law Laban] or [So he rebuked Laban and said] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

What {is} this you have done to me

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. Alternate translation: [Why have you treated me like this?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Was {it} not for Rachel that I served with you

Alternate translation: [You know very well that I worked for you in order to marry Rachel!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

So why have you deceived me

See how you translated a different word (“deceit”) that has a similar meaning in Gen 27:35. Alternate translation: [So why did you deceive me?] or [Tell me why you tricked me!]

Genesis 29:26

But Laban said

Alternate translation: [But Laban said to him] or [Laban responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

It is not done so in our place

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 daughters/ones get married." Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [It is not customary In our land] or [It is not the custom here] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

to give the younger

Alternate translation: [to give the younger daughter in marriage] or [to marry off the younger daughter]

before the firstborn

Alternate translation: [before the oldest one marries]

Genesis 29:27

Fulfill the week of this {one

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. Alternate translation: [So then, complete this week of celebrating your wedding to my daughter Leah] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

then we will also give you this {one

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then our family will also give you my other daughter to marry] or [Then you may also marry my other daughter]

for service that you will serve with me

See how you translated **serve** in verses 15, 18, 20, 21 and 25. Alternate translation: [in exchange for working for me]

for another seven years

Alternate translation: [for seven more years]

Genesis 29:28

So Jacob did so

Alternate translation: [So that is what Jacob did:]

and he fulfilled the week {for} that {one

See how you translated “fulfill” in verse 27. Alternate translation: [he completed his wedding week with Leah]

Then he gave to him Rachel his daughter as a wife for him

Alternate translation: [Then Laban gave 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

See how you translated verse 24, which is similar to verse 29. Alternate translation: [he also gave] or [In addition, Laban gave]

Bilhah his maidservant to Rachel his daughter

Alternate translation: [his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel] or [Rachel a female servant named Bilhah]

as a maidservant for her

Alternate translation: [to be her personal servant] or [to serve her]

Genesis 29:30

Then he also went to Rachel

See how you translated **went to** in verse 23. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob slept with Rachel] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

And he served him

At this point Jacob begins another seven years of work, but he does not finish the work until Gen 30:25-26.
Alternate translation: [Then he worked for Laban]

for another seven years

See how you translated this phrase in verse 27.

Genesis 29:31

Now Yahweh saw

Alternate translation: [Meanwhile Yahweh knew] or [During that time, Yahweh saw]

that Leah was hated

Jacob did not actually hate Leah. Rather, this is hyperbole that emphasizes how much he loved Rachel compared to Leah (verse 30). Alternate translation: [that Leah was loved less than Rachel] or [that Jacob did not love Leah very much] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

so he opened her womb

Alternate translation: [so he made it so that she could conceive] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

but Rachel {was} barren

See how you translated **barren** in Gen 11:30 and 25:21. Alternate translation: [but he did not enable Rachel to have children]

Genesis 29:32

and bore a son

Alternate translation: [and had a son]

and she called his name Reuben

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.1634)**)

because she said

Alternate translation: [because when he was born she had said]

Because Yahweh has looked on my misery, surely now my husband will love me

Consider what is the best way to order these clauses in your language. Also see how you translated **misery** in Gen 16:11. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 29:33

and bore a son

Alternate translation: [and had another son]

and she said

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [so she exclaimed]

Because Yahweh heard that I am hated

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. Alternate translation: [Yahweh heard that I am not loved, so] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

then he gave to me this {son} also

Alternate translation: [he has given me this son too!] or [he has given me another son]

So she called his name

Alternate translation: [So she named that son] or [So she gave him the name]

Simeon

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.1634)**)

Genesis 29:34

Then she conceived again

Alternate translation: [Once again Leah became pregnant]

and bore a son

Alternate translation: [and had another son]

and she said

Alternate translation: [She exclaimed] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

will be joined to me

Many languages have an idiom that is similar to the Hebrew idiom and fits well here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [will become attached to me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

because I have born three sons for him

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. Alternate translation: [because I have had three sons for him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

For that {reason

Alternate translation: [Because she had said that]

he called his name

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. Alternate translation: [he was named]

Levi

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.1634)**)

Genesis 29:35

Then she conceived again

Alternate translation: [Then Leah became pregnant again]

and bore a son

See how you translated this phrase in verse 34. Alternate translation: [and had a son]

and she said

Alternate translation: [She said]

This time I will praise Yahweh

Alternate translation: [Now I will praise Yahweh for giving me this son!]

For that {reason

See how you translated this phrase in verse 34. You may need to translate it in different ways, depending on the context. Alternate translation: [Because she praised Yahweh]

she called his name

See how you translated this phrase in verse 33. Alternate translation: [she named that son] or [she gave him the name]

Judah

See how you translated **praise** earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Then she stopped bearing

Leah had more children at a later time. So it was only temporarily that she stopped having children. Alternate translation: [Then Leah stopped bearing babies for a while] or [After that, Leah did not give birth to any more babies for a while] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 30

Genesis 30:1

Now Rachel saw that she was not bearing {children} for Jacob

Alternate translation: [Now when Rachel saw that she was not able to have any children for Jacob]

so Rachel envied her sister

Alternate translation: [she was envious of her sister Leah]

and she said to Jacob

Use a quote margin here in your language that fits the context well. Alternate translation: [and she pleaded with Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Give me children, and if not

Alternate translation: [Help me get pregnant! Otherwise]

I will die

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). Alternate translation: [I have no reason to live!] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

Genesis 30:2

And Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said

Some languages have an idiom that is similar to the Hebrew idiom here. Do what is best in your language.
Alternate translation: [Jacob became very angry with Rachel and said] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Am I in the place of God, who has kept the fruit of the womb from you

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. Alternate translation: [I am not in the place of God, who has kept you from having children!] or [I am not God! He is the one who has kept you from having children!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 30:3

Then she said

Alternate translation: [Rachel replied to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold my slave woman Bilhah

Alternate translation: [Here is my servant woman Bilhah] or [You can take my servant woman Bilhah as a wife]

Go to her

See how you translated this euphemism in Gen 16:2. Alternate translation: [Sleep with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

so that she will bear {children

Alternate translation: [so that she can give birth to children] or [so that she can have children]

on my knees

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. Alternate translation: [for me who will sit on my lap] or [as my surrogate] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and I also will be built up from her

See how you translated **built up from her** in Gen 16:2. Alternate translation: [so that from her children I too can build a family] or [so that I too can build a family]

Genesis 30:4

And she gave to him Bilhah her maidservant

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. Alternate translation: [So Rachel gave Jacob her maid Bilhah]

as a wife

Make sure your translation does not sound like Bilhah replaced Rachel as Jacob's wife; Bilhah was an additional wife. Alternate translation: [as his wife] or [to be a wife for him]

and Jacob went to her

See how you translated “go to” in verse 3 and **went to** in Gen 16:3. Alternate translation: [and Jacob slept with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 30:5

and bore a son for Jacob

Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a son for Jacob]

Genesis 30:6

and Rachel said

Consider whether it is more natural here in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 5. Alternate translation: [Then Rachel said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

God has vindicated me

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

Alternate translation: [Yes indeed, he has heard my request and given me a son!]

For that {reason

Alternate translation: [Because of that]

she called his name

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. Alternate translation: [she called him] or [she gave him the name] or [she named her baby]

Dan

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.1634)**)

Genesis 30:7

Then Bilhah the maidservant of Rachel conceived again

See how you translated verse 5 which is very similar to verse 7.

and bore a second son for Jacob

Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a second son for Jacob]

Genesis 30:8

So Rachel said

Alternate translation: [So 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

Alternate translation: [and I have won!] or [but now I have defeated her!] or [but now I am winning!]

And she called his name

See how you translated **called his name** in verse 6. Alternate translation: [So she called him] or [So she called that son] or [So she gave him the name]

Naphtali

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.1634)**)

Genesis 30:9

Now Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing {children

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 1. Alternate translation: [When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing children]

so she took Zilpah her maidservant

Alternate translation: [she took her servant Zilpah to Jacob]

and gave her to Jacob as a wife

See how you translated “gave ... as a wife” in verse 4. Alternate translation: [and gave her to him as his wife] or [and gave her to Jacob to be another wife for him]

Genesis 30:10

Then Zilpah the maidservant of Leah bore a son for Jacob

See how you translated verses 5-8, which are very similar in structure to verses 10-13.

Genesis 30:11

What good fortune

Alternate translation: [What good luck!] or [I am very lucky!]

So she called his name

Alternate translation: [So she called him] or [So she called him] or [So she gave him the name]

Gad

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.1634)**)

Genesis 30:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 30:13

How blessed I am

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. Alternate translation: [I am truly blessed!] or [God has greatly blessed me!]

For women will call me blessed

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [So she named him] or [So she gave him the name]

Asher

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.1634)**)

Genesis 30:14

Then in the days of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out

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. Alternate translation: [One day during ...]

and found mandrakes in the field

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. Alternate translation: [and found some love plants called mandrakes in a field] or [in a field and found some love plants there] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and he brought them to Leah his mother

Alternate translation: [and he took them to his mother] or [and he took the plants to his mother]

Then Rachel said to Leah

Alternate translation: [When Rachel found out about the plants, she asked Leah]

Please give to me some of your son's mandrakes

See how you translated **mandrakes** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: [Please give me some of the love plants that your son found] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 30:15

Is it a small matter you have taken my husband

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. Alternate translation: [No! It was bad enough that you took my husband from me!] or [You already took my husband from me!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Then Rachel said

Alternate translation: [Rachel said to her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Therefore

Rachel's response shows that she realizes that even though Leah was scolding her, she was also bargaining with her. Alternate translation: [Very well]

he may lie with you tonight

Alternate translation: [I will let him stay with you tonight] or [Jacob can stay with you tonight] or [Jacob can spend tonight with you] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

for your son's mandrakes

See how you translated "in exchange for" in Gen 29:18.

Genesis 30:16

Then Jacob came from the field in the evening

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. Alternate translation: [So as Jacob came back that evening from working in the fields] or [That evening as Jacob was coming home from working in the fields] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and Leah went out to meet him

Alternate translation: [Leah came out to greet him]

and said

Alternate translation: [and she said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

You must come to me

Alternate translation: [You must lie with me tonight] or [You must spend tonight with me] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

because I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes

See how you translated **mandrakes** in verses 14 and 15.

So he lay with her during that night

Alternate translation: [So that night Jacob slept with her] or [So Jacob spent that night with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 30:17

and God listened to Leah

See how you translated **listened to** in verse 6. Alternate translation: [God heard Leah and answered her prayers] or [God did what Leah had been asking him to do]

and bore a fifth son for Jacob

Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob]

Genesis 30:18

Then Leah said

Alternate translation: [Then she exclaimed] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

God has given {me} my reward

Some languages must translate the noun **reward** as a verb. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1554)**)

because I gave my maidservant to my husband

Alternate translation: [for giving my servant to my husband as another wife]

So she called his 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). Alternate translation: [So she called him] or [So she gave him the name]

Issachar

See how you translated **reward** earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 30:19

and bore a sixth son for Jacob

Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob]

Genesis 30:20

And Leah said

Alternate translation: [Then she exclaimed]

God has presented me a good present

Alternate translation: [God has given me a precious gift]

This time my husband will honor me

Alternate translation: [so now my husband will honor me]

because I have born six sons for him

Alternate translation: [because I have given him six sons]

So she called his 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). Alternate translation: [So she called him] or [So she named that son] or [So she gave him the name]

Zebulun

See how you translated **honor** earlier in this verse. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 30:21

Then later

Alternate translation: [Sometime later]

she bore a daughter

Alternate translation: [Leah gave birth to a daughter] or [she had a daughter]

and called her name Dinah

Alternate translation: [and called her Dinah] or [whom she named Dinah]

Genesis 30:22

Then God remembered 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. Alternate translation: [God had kept Rachel in mind]

and God listened to her

See how you translated **listened to** in verses 6 and 17. Alternate translation: [so he heard her requests] or [so he did what she had been asking him to do]

and opened her womb

See how you translated this idiom in Gen 29:31. Alternate translation: [and made it so that she could conceive] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 30:23

Then she conceived

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 22. Alternate translation: [so that finally she conceived] or [So Rachel became pregnant]

and bore a son

Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a son]

and she said

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then she said]

God has taken away my disgrace

Alternate translation: [God has removed my shame] or [God has made it so that I am no longer barren and humiliated!]

Genesis 30:24

And she called his name

Alternate translation: [She called her son] or [She gave him the name]

Joseph

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.1634)**)

saying

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.1651)**)

May Yahweh add another son to me

Alternate translation: [I 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

Alternate translation: [Soon after Rachel gave birth to Joseph]

then Jacob said to Laban

Alternate translation: [Jacob went to Laban and said to him]

Send me off

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. Alternate translation: [Please send me on my way] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

so that I may go to my place and to my land

Alternate translation: [so that I may return to my own home in my own country] or [so that I can go to my homeland]

Genesis 30:26

Give me my wives and my children

Alternate translation: [Let me have my wives and my children]

for whom I have served you

Alternate translation: [whom I have finished serving you for]

so that I may go

Alternate translation: [so that I may leave with them] or [and let me go with them] or [so that I can take them with me]

For you yourself know

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.
Alternate translation: [because you yourself know]

my service that I have served you

Alternate translation: [that I have served you well] or [how well I have served you] or [how faithfully I have worked for you]

Genesis 30:27

Then Laban said to him

Alternate translation: [But Laban responded to Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please {stay}, if I have found favor in your eyes

Alternate translation: [If you are pleased with me, please stay] or [Please be gracious to me and stay] or [Please do me a favor and do not go] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

I have learned by divination

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. Alternate translation: [because I have learned from experience]

that Yahweh has blessed me

Alternate translation: [that Yahweh has caused me to prosper]

because of you

Alternate translation: [because you have been working for me]

Genesis 30:28

Then he said

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. Alternate translation: [Then he said to him] or [Then Laban added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Name your wages to me, and I will give {them

See how you translated **wages** in Gen 29:15. Alternate translation: [Tell me what you want your wages to be, and that is what I will give 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]

Genesis 30:29

And he said to him

Alternate translation: [Jacob said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

You yourself know how I have served you

See how you translated “you yourself know” in verse 26. Alternate translation: [You yourself know how well I have worked for you]

and how your livestock have been

Alternate translation: [and how well your flocks have fared]

with me

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [Before I came, you had very little wealth, but now you are prospering abundantly] or [The few animals that you owned before I came have increased greatly] or [Before I worked for you, you owned very few animals, but now you have a huge number of animals]

and Yahweh has blessed you

See how you translated **blessed** in verse 27. Alternate translation: [That is how Yahweh has prospered you] or [Yes, Yahweh has prospered you]

at my feet

Alternate translation: [because I am here] or [because I have been working for you] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

But now, when will I also do something for my household

Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to express his strong feelings. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [But now I need to also provide for my own household] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 30:31

Then he said

Alternate translation: [So Laban asked Jacob] or [Laban responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What should I give to you

Alternate translation: [What do you want me to give you so that you will stay and work for me?] or [What can I give you to persuade you to stay here?]

And Jacob said

Alternate translation: [Jacob replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Do not give anything to me

Alternate translation: [Do not give me anything] or [You do not need to give me anything]

If you will do this thing for me

Alternate translation: [But if you will do this one thing for me]

I will continue tending your flock{s} watching over {them

See how you translated “watches over” in Gen 28:20. Alternate translation: [I will continue to tend and watch over your flocks:] or [I will keep taking care of your flocks:]

Genesis 30:32

I will pass through all your flock{s} today

Alternate translation: [Let me go through all your flocks today] or [Today I will go through all your sheep and goats]

to remove from there

Alternate translation: [and take away from them]

every speckled and spotted lamb and every dark-colored lamb among the sheep

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. Alternate translation: [all the lambs that have speckles or spots, or that are dark-colored]

and the spotted and speckled {young} among the goats

Alternate translation: [and all the kid goats that are spotted or speckled]

And that will be my wages

Alternate translation: [They will be my wages] or [Those animals will be my wages]

Genesis 30:33

So my righteousness will testify for me in future days

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. Alternate translation: [Also, in the future you will know whether or not I am being honest] or [That way too, in the future it will be easy for everyone to know whether or not I am being honest] (See: **Personification (p.1690)**)

when you go over my wages in front of you

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. Alternate translation: [whenever you check the animals you have given me] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

any that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and dark-colored among the sheep

Alternate translation: [If you see that I have any sheep or goats that are not speckled or spotted or any sheep that are not dark-colored] or [If you see any sheep or goats among my flocks that do not have speckles or spots or any sheep that are not dark-colored]

it was stolen {if it is} with me

Alternate translation: [it will be obvious that I stole them from you]

Genesis 30:34

And Laban said

Alternate translation: [Laban said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Yes] or [I agree with that;]

let it be according to your word

Alternate translation: [we will do exactly what you have said]

Genesis 30:35

Then on that day he removed

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. Alternate translation: [But that very day, he removed from his flocks] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [any that had any white marks on them]

and all the dark-colored {ones} among the lambs

Alternate translation: [as well as all the lambs that were dark-colored]

Then he gave {them} into the hand of his sons

Alternate translation: [Then he had his sons tend them] or [Then he put his sons in charge of them] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 30:36

and he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated **tending** in verse 31 and Gen 13:7.

Genesis 30:37

of poplar and almond and plane 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). Alternate translation: [from poplar trees, hazel trees, and plane trees] or [from three different kinds of trees] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and peeled white stripes in them

Alternate translation: [and peeled off long pieces of bark] or [and made white stripes on them by stripping off long pieces of bark]

exposing the white that {was} inside the branches

Alternate translation: [which showed the white wood under the bark] or [so that the white wood that was inside the branches was exposed]

Genesis 30:38

Then he put the branches that he had peeled in the troughs, in the water troughs

See how you translated “trough” in Gen 24:20. Alternate translation: [Then he set those striped branches in all the stone drinking tubs]

where the flock{s} came to drink

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}

Alternate translation: [in front of them] or [so that the flocks would see the branches there]

And they were in heat when they came 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. Alternate translation: [The flocks often mated when they came to the tubs to drink] or [That way, whenever the animals that were ready to breed came to the tubs to drink]

Genesis 30:39

and the flock{s} would mate by the branches

Make sure your translation of the verbs in this verse refers to a repeated or habitual activity, not a one-time event. Alternate translation: [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 breeding]

and the flock{s} would bear streaked, speckled, and spotted {young

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. Alternate translation: [As a result, they would bear offspring that were streaked or speckled or spotted] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 30:40

and he made the faces of the flock{s} look at

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.1645)**)

the streaked and all the 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. Alternate translation: [all the striped animals and dark-colored animals]

in the flock{s} of Laban

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.1559)**)

And he put flocks for himself by themselves

Alternate translation: [In that way, over time he made separate flocks of sheep and goats for himself]

Genesis 30:41

So it happened whenever

This verse includes more details about what Jacob was doing on a regular basis. Alternate translation: [So whenever]

the strong animals

Alternate translation: [the best female animals] or [the hardy female sheep and goats]

were in heat

See how you translated this phrase in verse 38. Alternate translation: [were ready to breed]

then Jacob put the branches in the troughs

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 38. Alternate translation: [Jacob set the striped branches in the watering tubs]

before the eyes of the flocks so that they would mate by the branches

See how you translated **mate** and **the branches** in verse 39. Alternate translation: [in front of those animals so that they would see the branches as they were breeding] or [so that as they were mating, they would see the branches] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1591)**)

Genesis 30:42

But when the animals were weak

Alternate translation: [But whenever the feeble female animals were ready to mate] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship** (p.1587))

he did not put {them} {in

Alternate translation: [Jacob did not set the branches in the tubs] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

the weak {ones

Alternate translation: [the young from the feeble animals] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

and the strong {ones

See how you translated **strong** in verse 41. Alternate translation: [and the young from the hardy animals] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

to Jacob

Alternate translation: [went to Jacob]

Genesis 30:43

so that the man prospered

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. Alternate translation: [So Jacob became very wealthy] or [As a result, Jacob became very rich]

and he owned large flock{s

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and owned large flocks of sheep and goats] or [He owned many sheep and goats]

and maidservants and menservants and 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

Alternate translation: [Then one day someone told Jacob]

Jacob has taken everything that {belonged} to our father

Alternate translation: [Jacob has taken for himself all that our father owned]

and from what {belonged} to our father he has gained all this wealth

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.1687)**)

Genesis 31:2

And Jacob saw

Alternate translation: [Jacob also saw]

the face of Laban, and behold, he was not with him as yesterday {and} three days ago

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. Alternate translation: [that Laban no longer looked at him in a friendly way like he did previously] or [that Laban was no longer happy with him like he was previously] or [that Laban no longer acted kind toward him the way he did in the past] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 31:3

Then Yahweh said to Jacob

Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh commanded Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives

Alternate translation: [Return to the land where your ancestors lived and where your other relatives also live]

and I will be with you

See how you translated this clause in Gen 26:3 and how you translated similar clauses in Gen 26:8, 24; 28:15.

Alternate translation: [and I will stay with you and bless you]

Genesis 31:4

Then Jacob sent and called for Rachel and Leah to the field

See how you translated **sent and called for** in Gen 27:42. Alternate translation: [So Jacob sent for Rachel and Leah to come to the pasture] or [Then Jacob sent a message to Rachel and Leah that they should meet him in the pasture]

to his flock{s

Alternate translation: [where he was tending his flocks of sheep and goats]

Genesis 31:5

Then he said to 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. Alternate translation: [There he told them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

the face of your father, that he is not toward me as yesterday {and} three days ago

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 2. Alternate translation: [that your father no longer looks at me in a kind way like he did in the past] or [that your father is no longer happy with me as he was previously] or [that your father no longer acts friendly toward me the way he did before]

but the God of my father

See how you translated “the God of ...” in Gen 28:13. Alternate translation: [but the God whom my father worships] or [but the God who takes care of my father]

has been with me

See how you translated the idiom “be with you” in verse 3. Alternate translation: [has stayed with me and has blessed me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 31:6

And you 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.1622)**)

that with all my might I have served your father

Alternate translation: [that I have served your father with all my might] or [that I have tried as hard as I could to serve your father well] or [how I have worked for your father as faithfully as I could]

Genesis 31:7

but your father has deceived me

Alternate translation: [but in spite of that, he has deceived me] or [but yet he has treated me unfairly]

and changed my wages ten times

Alternate translation: [and ten times he has changed what he said that he would pay me]

However, God has not allowed him to harm me

In this context, **harm** especially refers to financial harm, but it can also include physical harm. Alternate translation: [However, God has not permitted him to harm me] or [But God has kept him from hurting me] or [But God has protected me so that he could not hurt me]

Genesis 31:8

If he said like this

The examples Jacob is describing in verse 8 took place repeatedly (as verse 7 indicates). Alternate translation: [For example, if he told me]

The speckled {animals} will be your wages

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. Alternate translation: [that only the speckled animals would be my pay] or [that he would pay me by giving me only the animals with speckles on them] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

then all the flock{s} bore

Alternate translation: [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.1559)**)

speckled {young

Alternate translation: [speckled babies] or [young that were speckled]

But if he said like this

Alternate translation: [But if he said to me] or [Then if he changed his mind and told me]

The streaked {ones} will be your wages

See how you translated **streaked** in Gen 30:35, 39, 40. Alternate translation: [that only the striped animals would be my pay] or [that he would pay me by giving me only the animals with stripes on them] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

then all the flock{s} bore

Alternate translation: [then all the females in the flocks gave birth to] or [then all the female sheep and goats had]

streaked {young

Alternate translation: [striped young] or [young that had stripes on them]

Genesis 31:9

the livestock of your father

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. Alternate translation: [many of the animals that belonged to your father]

and gave {them} to me

Alternate translation: [and gave them to me instead]

Genesis 31:10

And it happened

Alternate translation: [One night]

in the season

Alternate translation: [during the time] or [during the time of year]

the flock{s} were in heat

Alternate translation: [that the female sheep and goats were in heat] or [that the flocks of sheep and goats were mating]

and I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream that, behold

The word **behold** emphasizes what Jacob saw and might also express that he was surprised at what he saw.
Alternate translation: [I had a dream and in the dream I looked around and saw that]

the he-goats that were mounting the flock{s}

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

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. Alternate translation: [were streaked speckled, or spotted] or [had a striped, speckled, or blotched pattern in their fur] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 31:11

Then an angel of God said to me in the dream, '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.

and I said

Alternate translation: [and I responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold me

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 22:1 and 27:11. Alternate translation: [Here I am!] or [Yes, sir?] or [Yes, I am listening]

Genesis 31:12

Then he said

Alternate translation: [The angel said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please lift up your eyes

See how you translated this idiom in Gen 22:13. Also see how you translated Gen 22:2, another passage where Yahweh uses **Please**. Alternate translation: [Look around you] or [Look carefully] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and see

Alternate translation: [and observe that]

all the he-goats that are mounting the flock{s

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 10.

are} streaked, speckled, and spotted

See how you translated this phrase in verses 8 and 10. Alternate translation: [are streaked speckled, or spotted] or [have a streaked speckled, or spotted pattern in their fur]

because I have seen

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. Alternate translation: [I, Yahweh, have caused that to happen, because I have observed] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

all that Laban is doing to you

Alternate translation: [all the wrong things that Laban has done to you] or [all the ways that Laban has been treating you badly]

Genesis 31:13

where you anointed a pillar

See how you translated “poured oil on top of” in Gen 28:38 and **pillar** in Gen 28:18, 22. Alternate translation: [where you poured olive oil on top of a memorial pillar to dedicate the place to me] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

where you vowed a vow to me

See how you translated **vowed a vow** in Gen 28:20. Alternate translation: [and where you made a vow to me]

Now get up, go out from this land

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. Alternate translation: [So now get up and leave this region immediately] or [Now go at once from this land]

and return to

Alternate translation: [and travel back to]

the land of your birth

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. Alternate translation: [the land where you were born] or [the land where your relatives live] or [your native land]

Genesis 31:14

Then Rachel replied, and Leah, and they said to him

Alternate translation: [Then Rachel and Leah responded to him] or [Rachel and Leah replied to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Is there still for us a portion or inheritance

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. Alternate translation: [We no longer have any part in the inheritance] or [We will never inherit anything] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 31:15

Are we not regarded by him

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. Alternate translation: [It is obvious that he regards us] or [He obviously is treating us] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

as} foreigners

Make sure that the punctuation you use here fits with how you translate this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: [like outsiders and not family] or [as if we were foreigners instead of family]

For he sold us

This sentence is an example of how Laban treated his daughters like foreigners. Alternate translation: [After all, he sold us to you]

and he has indeed completely eaten up

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. Alternate translation: [and then he used up all] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

our silver

In that culture at that time, silver was a currency used to buy and sell things. Alternate translation: [the wealth that should have been ours] or [the money that belonged to us] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 31:16

For all the wealth that God took from our father

Alternate translation: [In fact, all the abundance of flocks that God has taken from our father] or [In reality, all the flocks that made our father wealthy and that God has taken from him]

belongs} to us and to our children

Alternate translation: [actually belongs to us and our children] or [should have been given to us and our children anyway]

So now, 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. Alternate translation: [So go ahead and do] or [So we totally agree that you should do]

all that God has said to you

Alternate translation: [everything God has commanded you to do] or [exactly what God told you to do]

Genesis 31:17

So Jacob got up

See how you translated “get up” in verse 13. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob immediately got packed for the journey]

and put his sons and his wives on the camels

Jacob took all his children with him, not just his sons. Alternate translation: [and helped his wives and his sons mount up onto the camels] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 31:18

Then he drove

Alternate translation: [Then he led] or [Then he started driving]

all his livestock and all his property that he had acquired, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired

The word **livestock** is general here and includes all of Jacob's animals. Alternate translation: [the camels and all his other livestock and along with them, he also took all the other possessions that he had acquired]

in Paddan Aram

Be consistent here with how you translated "the land/region of Paddan Aram" in Gen 25:20. Alternate translation: [while living in the land of Paddan Aram]

to go to Isaac his father, to the land of Canaan

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. Alternate translation: [to go to Canaan, to the home of his father Isaac] or [to the land of Canaan, where his father Isaac lived] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 31:19

Now Laban

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.1563)**)

had gone to shear 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. Alternate translation: [had gone away for several days to cut the wool off his sheep]

so Rachel stole

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [While he was gone, Rachel entered his tent and took] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

the idols that {belonged} to her father

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. Alternate translation: [his family gods] or [the gods that he had] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 31:20

and Jacob stole the heart of

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and Jacob tricked] or [At the same time, Jacob tricked] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Laban the Aramean

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

Alternate translation: [by not telling him that he was fleeing] or [by leaving secretly without informing him that he was leaving] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 31:21

And he fled

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." Alternate translation: [So Jacob and his family ran away]

and all

Alternate translation: [with all] or [and took all]

that {belonged} to him

Make sure that your choice of pronouns throughout this verse fits with how you translate the beginning of this sentence. Alternate translation: [that belonged to them] or [that he had] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

And he got up and crossed the 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. Alternate translation: [He quickly crossed the Euphrates River] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and set his face {toward

Alternate translation: [and went in the direction of] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the mountain{s} of Gilead

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. It could refer to: (1) mountains or hill country; or (2) a specific mountain ("Mount Gilead"). Alternate translation: [the mountain region called Gilead] or [the hill country called Gilead]

Genesis 31:22

And on the third day it was told to Laban

Alternate translation: [Three days after they had left, someone informed Laban] or [Three days later Laban found out] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

that Jacob had fled

See how you translated “fleeing” and **fled** in verses 20-21. Alternate translation: [that Jacob and his family had run away]

Genesis 31:23

So he took his relatives with him

Alternate translation: [So Laban gathered some of his relatives]

and pursued after him a seven-day journey

Alternate translation: [and followed after Jacob and his household for seven days]

and overtook him

Alternate translation: [until they overtook them] or [until they caught up with him]

in the mountain{s} of Gilead

See how you translated this phrase in verse 21. Alternate translation: [in the mountain region called Gilead] or [in the hill country called Gilead]

Genesis 31:24

But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream that night

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 20:3. Also see how you translated **Laban the Aramean** in verse 20. Alternate translation: [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]

Watch yourself that you do not speak with Jacob either good or bad

God is warning Laban not to say or do anything that would harm Jacob (See verse 29). Alternate translation: [Be careful that you do not say or do anything to Jacob to try to stop him from leaving] or [Be sure that you do not harm Jacob in any way] (See: **Merism (p.1666)**)

Genesis 31:25

And Laban overtook 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. Alternate translation: [So when Laban overtook Jacob] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

and Jacob had pitched his tent{s}

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. Alternate translation: [Jacob and his family had already put up his tents] or [Jacob and his family had already set up camp] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

in the mountain{s}

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 **mountains of Gilead** in verses 21 and 23. Alternate translation: [in the mountain region of Gilead] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

so Laban with his relatives

Alternate translation: [so Laban and all his relatives that were with him]

pitched {theirs}

Alternate translation: [also put up their tents] or [also camped]

in the mountain{s} of Gilead

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.1651)**)

Genesis 31:26

Then Laban said to Jacob

See how you translated a similar quote margin in 29:25, when the roles were reversed and Jacob confronted Laban. Alternate translation: [Then the next day Laban came to Jacob and complained to Jacob] or [The next day Laban met with Jacob and rebuked Jacob and said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What have you done

Laban uses a rhetorical question here to express his anger at Jacob. Do what is best in your language to communicate that. Alternate translation: [Why have you done this?] or [What you have done is wrong!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And you have stolen my heart

See how you translated the idiom “stole the heart of” in verse 20. Alternate translation: [You have tricked me] or [You have acted deceitfully toward me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and carried away my daughters

Laban uses exaggeration to show he is angry and to try to make Jacob feel guilty for what he did. Alternate translation: [and dragged away my daughters with you] or [and forced my daughters to leave with you] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

like captives of the sword

Alternate translation: [as if you had captured them in battle!] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

Genesis 31:27

Why did you secretly flee and deceive me

Alternate translation: [Why did you trick me and secretly run away] or [Why did you deceive me by secretly running away]

and not tell me

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. Alternate translation: [without telling me you were leaving!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

For I would have sent you with joy and with songs

Make sure it is clear in your translation that the events in this clause are contrary-to-fact (hypothetical). Alternate translation: [If I had known, I would have held a feast and sent you on your way, singing joyful songs together] or [If I had known, I could have sent you on your way by having a feast and singing joyful songs together] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

with tambourine{s} and with lyre{s}

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. Alternate translation: [with tambourines and harps playing!] or [with the music of musical instruments!] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 31:28

And you did not let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters

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. Alternate translation: [You did not even let me kiss my daughters and my grandchildren goodbye before they left!] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Now you have acted foolishly by doing {that

Alternate translation: [What you have done is very 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

The pronoun **you** is plural here, so it probably refers to Jacob and everyone in his household. Alternate translation: [I and my men have the ability to harm all of you] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

but last night the God of your father

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.1651)**)

said to me, saying, 'Keep yourself from speaking with Jacob either good or bad

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. Alternate translation: [warned me to not harm you in any way] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 31:30

So now, you have surely gone

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. Alternate translation: [Now then, I know that you left] or [Now, I know that you ran away] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

because you greatly long

Alternate translation: [because you longed so much] or [because you were very homesick]

for the house of your father

This phrase refers to the people in Jacob's father's household and other relatives living nearby. Alternate translation: [to return home to your father and other relatives] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Why did you steal my gods

Alternate translation: [but what is the reason that you stole my gods?]

Genesis 31:31

Then Jacob answered and said to Laban

Alternate translation: [Jacob answered him] or [Then Jacob told Laban] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

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.1559)**)

because I said

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [I told myself that if you knew]

that perhaps you would seize your daughters from me

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.1642)**)

Genesis 31:32

Whoever you find your gods with

See how you translated **gods** in verse 30. Alternate translation: [However we did not steal your gods. In fact, if you find your gods with anyone here]

will not live

Alternate translation: [that person will be put to death as punishment for stealing them!]

In front of our relatives

Make sure your translation of this phrase refers to both Jacob's and Laban's relatives. Alternate translation: [So with our relatives as witnesses] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

observe for yourself what {is} with me

Alternate translation: [search for yourself what I have with me here]

and take {what belongs} to you

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and take whatever you find that is yours]

Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them

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.1563)**)

Genesis 31:33

Then Laban went into the tent of Jacob

See how you translated **tent** in verse 25.

and into the tent of Leah

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

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. Alternate translation: [and in the tent where the two maidservants lived]

but he did not find {anything

Alternate translation: [but he did not find his gods]

Genesis 31:34

Now Rachel had taken the idols and put them inside the camel's saddle

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. Alternate translation: [But Rachel had put the idols inside her camel saddlebag to hide them] or [But Rachel had hidden the idols inside her camel saddlebag] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

and was sitting on them

Alternate translation: [and she was sitting on the gods]

And Laban felt throughout the entire tent

Alternate translation: [Laban rummaged through everything else in the tent, but] or [So when Laban searched everywhere else in her tent]

but he did not find {them

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." Alternate translation: [he could not find anything] or [he did not find his idols]

Genesis 31:35

And she said to her father

Alternate translation: [Rather Rachel had said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Do not let it burn in the eyes of my lord

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. Alternate translation: [Please do not be angry at me, sir] or [Sir please do not be angry at me] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

that I am not able to stand up in your presence

Alternate translation: [that I am not able to stand up to greet you]

because the way of women {is} on me

Translate this in a way that will not offend or embarrass people when this is read aloud in public. Alternate translation: [because it is that time of the month when I feel weak] or [because I am having my monthly cycle] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 31:36

Then it burned within Jacob

See how you translated the idiom “burn” in verse 35. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he disputed with Laban, and Jacob responded and said to Laban

Alternate translation: [and contended with him and said] or [and rebuked him by saying to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} my crime

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. Alternate translation: [Tell me what crime I have done] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

What {is} my sin, that you have hotly pursued after me

Alternate translation: [How have I sinned against you so that you have a reason to pursue me so intensely] or [Tell me what sin I have committed against you that gives you the right to pursue after me!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 31:37

Since you have felt through all my things

See how you translated **felt through** in verse 34. Alternate translation: [Now that you have felt through all my things]

what have you found from any of the things of your house? Put {it} here

Alternate translation: [did you find anything that anyone took from your household? If so, bring it here] or [show us what you have found that belongs to you! If you found anything, put it here] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

in front of my relatives and your relatives

Alternate translation: [where all our relatives can see it]

and let them judge

Alternate translation: [so that they can judge whether you or I am right!] or [and they will judge which one of us is right!]

Genesis 31:38

These twenty years I {have been} with you

Alternate translation: [For the past twenty years I have worked for you!]

Your ewes and your she-goats

Alternate translation: [During those years your female sheep and goats]

did not miscarry

Alternate translation: [bore their young without any problems]

and I have not eaten rams from your flocks

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. Alternate translation: [and I have never killed and eaten any rams from your flocks] or [and I never took any animals from your flocks to eat] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 31:39

I did not bring torn {animals} to you

Alternate translation: [And whenever wild animals killed any of your animals, I never brought the dead animal to you to show I was innocent]

I bore the loss of it myself

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. Alternate translation: [Rather I paid for that loss myself] or [Rather I replaced them at my own expense]

You required it from my hand

Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. Alternate translation: [You also made me pay for] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

those} stolen by day and {those} stolen by night

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [any animals that got stolen by thieves, whether it happened in the day or at night] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 31:40

There I was

Alternate translation: [That is how it was for me!] or [That was my life]

In the day, heat devoured me

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. Alternate translation: [During the day the heat of the sun pounded me] (See:

Personification (p.1690))

and in the night the frost, so that & fled

Alternate translation: [and at night I suffered from the cold, so that I could hardly sleep] or [and during the nights it was so cold that I could hardly sleep]

Genesis 31:41

That {is how it was} for me

Alternate translation: [That is what it was like for me]

twenty years in your house

Alternate translation: [for the twenty years that I worked for you]

I served you fourteen years for your two daughters

Alternate translation: [For fourteen years I worked for you in exchange for marrying your two daughters]

and six years for your flock{s

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 7. Alternate translation: [even though you changed my wages ten times] or [even though ten times you changed what you said you would pay me]

Genesis 31:42

If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, & not

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. Alternate translation: [If God, the Awesome One, whom my father Isaac and grandfather Abraham serve] or [If God, whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac serve and fear]

If & had not been with 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. Alternate translation: [had not been with me protecting me and guiding me] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

surely now you would have sent me away

Alternate translation: [you would certainly be sending me away now] or [there is no question that I would now be leaving here]

empty-handed

Alternate translation: [without anything at all]

God has seen my affliction

Alternate translation: [But God knows how much I have suffered under you] or [But God knows how much you have oppressed me]

and the toil of my palms

Alternate translation: [and the hard work I did with my hands for you] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and he judged {you} last night

See how you translated “judge” in verse 37. It may be necessary to translate this word in different ways, depending on the context. Alternate translation: [so last night he judged against you in my favor]

Genesis 31:43

And Laban responded and said to Jacob

Alternate translation: [Laban replied to Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The daughters {are} my daughters, and the children {are} my grandchildren

Alternate translation: [These are my daughters and my grandchildren]

and the flock{s} {are} my flock{s}

Alternate translation: [and these flocks also belong to me]

And everything that you see {belongs} to me

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, everything that you see here is mine!] or [Yes, everything that is here with you is actually mine!] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

But what can I do today about these daughters of mine or about their children whom they have born

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. Alternate translation: [But there is nothing I can do now to keep my daughters and grandchildren from leaving!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 31:44

So now, come, let us cut a covenant, I and you

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. Alternate translation: [So then, you and I should make a peace covenant with each other] or [So I invite you to make a covenant with me] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and let it 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. Alternate translation: [and let there be]

a witness between me and you

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. Alternate translation: [a memorial to remind us of our covenant] or [something to remind us to keep that covenant] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

Genesis 31:45

So Jacob took a stone

See how you translated **stone** in Gen 28:18.

and set it up {as} a pillar

See how you translated **pillar** in verse 13 and **set it up as a pillar** in Gen 28:18, 22. Alternate translation: [and stood it up on its end as a monument to mark the place where they made their covenant] or [and set it up as a reminder stone to mark the place as special]

Genesis 31:46

Then Jacob said to 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. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob told his relatives]

Gather stones

Make sure that your translation of Jacob's request sounds polite here, not rude or demanding, but also not begging. Alternate translation: [Please gather some stones] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness]])

So they took stones and made a heap

Alternate translation: [So they all brought stones and put them in a large pile]

Then they ate there

Make sure your translation does not sound like Jacob ate without Laban and his men. Alternate translation: [Then they ate a meal together there]

by the heap

Alternate translation: [near the heap of stones] or [next to the mound of stones]

Genesis 31:47

And Laban called it

Alternate translation: [Laban gave the heap the Aramaic name]

Jegar Sahadutha

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.1634)**)

but Jacob called it Galeed

Alternate translation: [whereas Jacob gave it the Hebrew name Galeed, which has the same meaning]

Genesis 31:48

And Laban said

Alternate translation: [Then Laban said to Jacob] or [Laban said to Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

This heap {is} a witness between me and you today

Alternate translation: [This pile of stones is to remind us to keep our peace covenant] or [Starting today, when we see this mound of stones, we will remember our peace covenant]

For that {reason}

Alternate translation: [That is the reason]

he called its name 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. Alternate translation: [they call it Galeed] or [that place is called Galeed]

Genesis 31:49

It is} also Mizpah

Alternate translation: [It was also named Mizpah] or [People also call the place, Mizpah]

because he said

Make sure that your translation of **he** refers here to Laban. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

May Yahweh watch between me and you

Alternate translation: [May Yahweh watch each of us] or [May Yahweh keep watch on us]

when we are hidden one from the 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. Alternate translation: [to make sure we keep our covenant while we are away from each other] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

Genesis 31:50

If you afflict 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. Alternate translation: [If you oppress my daughters]

or if you take wives besides my daughters

Alternate translation: [or if you marry other women besides them]

even though} there is not someone with us, behold

See how you translated the pronoun “we” in verse 49. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

God {is} a witness between me and you

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. Alternate translation: [God always sees us and will punish us if we break our covenant] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 31:51

Behold

Alternate translation: [See] or [Look at]

this heap

See how you translated **heap** in verses 46 and 48. Alternate translation: [this mound of stones]

and behold

Alternate translation: [and see] or [and look at]

the pillar

See how you translated **pillar** in verse 45. Alternate translation: [this memorial stone]

which I set up between me and you

Jacob set up the stone as a pillar, but Laban and Jacob, along with their relatives, worked together to make the pile of stones. Alternate translation: [which I helped set up between us to remind us to keep our peace treaty] or [which we set up between us to remind us about our peace covenant]

Genesis 31:52

This heap {is} a witness and the pillar {is} a witness

See how you translated **witness** in verses 44 and 48. Alternate translation: [This heap of stones is a reminder and this pillar is also a witness] or [This mound of stones and this memorial both remind us]

that I will not pass by this heap to you

Laban and Jacob could go to each other's homes in peace but not to harm each other. Alternate translation: [that I will never go past this heap to harm you]

and that you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, to do harm

Alternate translation: [and that you will never go past this pile and this memorial to harm me]

Genesis 31:53

the God of Abraham

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 28:13. Alternate translation: [May the God whom your grandfather Abraham served]

and the gods of Nahor, the gods of their father

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. Alternate translation: [and the gods that my grandfather Nahor and his father Terah worshiped]

May & judge between us

Alternate translation: [judge between us and punish us if we break our covenant]

Then Jacob swore

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. Alternate translation: [But Jacob swore] or [But Jacob vowed a vow]

by the Fear of his father Isaac

See how you translated “the Fear of Isaac” in verse 42. Alternate translation: [by the God whom his father Isaac feared that he would keep their treaty] or [with the Fear of his father Isaac as his witness]

Genesis 31:54

and Jacob sacrificed a sacrifice on the mountain

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. Alternate translation: [and he offered an animal sacrifice to God on an altar on a hill] or [and Jacob burned the body of an animal on an altar as a sacrifice to God on a hill]

Then he called his relatives to eat bread

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.1720)**)

Then they ate bread and spent the night on the mountain

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. Alternate translation: [Then after they had eaten the meal, they spent the night there on the hill] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 31:55

Then in the morning Laban got up early

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 28:18. Alternate translation: [The next morning Laban got up early]

and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters

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. Alternate translation: [said goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren and kissed them on the cheeks] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Then Laban left and returned to his place

Alternate translation: [Then Laban and his men left from there and returned home] or [Then he left from there with his men and went back home]

Genesis 32

Genesis 32:1

Then Jacob went on his way

You can make implied information explicit in your translation if it is necessary to make the meaning accurate and clear. Alternate translation: [Meanwhile Jacob also left from there and continued on his journey home with his family] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and angels of God met 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. Alternate translation: [and some angels from God encountered him]

Genesis 32:2

And when he saw them, Jacob said

Make sure that you refer to Jacob and the angels here in a way that is accurate and natural in your language.

Alternate translation: [When Jacob saw the angels, he said in surprise] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

So he called the name of that place Mahanaim

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.1634)**)

Genesis 32:3

Then Jacob sent messengers before him

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob sent some of his servants ahead of him to deliver a message to his brother Esau]

to the land of Seir

Alternate translation: [who was living in the land of Seir]

the country of Edom

Alternate translation: [that is, the land of Edom] or [which was also called the land of Edom]

Genesis 32:4

And he commanded them, saying

Alternate translation: [As they left, he instructed them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

This {is what} you will say to my lord, to Esau

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. Alternate translation: [I want you to tell Esau whom I highly respect:] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

This {is what} your servant Jacob says

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. Alternate translation: [This is a message from Jacob who wants to serve you:] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

I have been sojourning with Laban and have remained there until now

Alternate translation: [Since we last saw each other, I have been living with Uncle Laban]

Genesis 32:5

And I have

Consider whether it is more natural to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. Alternate translation: [I now have] or [Also tell him that I own] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

cattle and donkey{s}, flock{s}

See how you translated **donkeys** and **flocks** in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [many cattle, donkeys, and flocks of sheep and goats]

and menservant{s} and maidservant{s}

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [as well as many men and women slaves]

And I have sent {messengers} to speak with my lord

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. Alternate translation: [Sir, I sent these messengers to you] (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

so that I will find favor in your eyes

See how you translated the idiom “found favor in your eyes” in Gen 30:27. Alternate translation: [hoping that you will be gracious to me when I arrive] or [so that when we see each other you will be pleased with me and welcome me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 32:6

saying

Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and informed him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We went to your brother, to Esau

Alternate translation: [We went to your brother Esau and told him your message] or [We delivered the message to your brother Esau]

And also, he is coming 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. Alternate translation: [and he is already headed here to meet you]

and 400 men with him

Alternate translation: [and there are also 400 men coming with him!] or [and he has 400 men with him!]

Genesis 32:7

And Jacob was exceedingly afraid

Alternate translation: [When Jacob heard the report, he was terrified]

and it was distressing for him

Alternate translation: [and very worried]

so he divided the people who {were} with him and the flock{s} and the herd{s} and the camels into two camps

Consider what phrase order for this sentence is best in your language. Alternate translation: [So he divided all the people and animals that were with him into two large camps including his family, his servants and all his flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle and camels] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 32:8

And he said

Alternate translation: [He was thinking]

If Esau comes to one camp and strikes them

Alternate translation: [If Esau and his men come and attack the people in one camp]

then the camp that is left will escape

Alternate translation: [then the people in the other camp can escape] or [then the other camp might be able to escape] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

Genesis 32:9

Then Jacob said

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob prayed] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh

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. Alternate translation: [Dear Yahweh, the God whom my grandfather Abraham and my father Isaac worshiped]

who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives

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. Alternate translation: [you told me to go back to my homeland where my relatives live] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

and I will cause things to prosper with you

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. Alternate translation: [and that you would make things go well for me] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 32:10

I am unworthy

Alternate translation: [I do not deserve]

of all the kindnesses and of all the faithfulness that you have shown your servant

Alternate translation: [the way you have always treated me so kindly and faithfully as your servant] or [how kind and loyal you have always been to me as I have served you]

For I crossed this Jordan with my staff

Alternate translation: [I crossed the Jordan River with only my staff] or [When I first left home and crossed the Jordan River, all that I had was my walking stick]

but now I have become two camps

Alternate translation: [but now I have so many people in my household and so many possessions that there are two large camps] or [but now my family and belongings are enough to make two large groups]

Genesis 32:11

from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau

Alternate translation: [from the power of my brother Esau] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

because I am afraid of him, that

Alternate translation: [I am very worried that]

he will come and strike me {and} the mothers with the children

Alternate translation: [he and his men will come and attack me as well as these mothers with their children!] or [he and his men will attack and kill us all, including these mothers with their children!]

Genesis 32:12

But you said

Alternate translation: [For you told 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

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. Alternate translation: [that you would surely prosper me, and that you would make my descendants as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

which cannot be counted from {their} abundance

Alternate translation: [which cannot be counted because there are so many] or [which are so many that no one can count them all] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 32:13

and he took gifts from what was in his hand

Alternate translation: [and during that time he selected many of his animals as gifts] or [and while he was there he picked out many of the animals he had with him]

Genesis 32:14

two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams

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. Alternate translation: [including 200 nanny goats and twenty billy goats, 200 female sheep and twenty male sheep] or [including 200 nanny goats, twenty billy goats, 200 female sheep, twenty male sheep]

Genesis 32:15

thirty nursing camels and their young

Alternate translation: [thirty mother camels with their young]

forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys

See how you translated **female donkeys** and **male donkeys** in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys]

Genesis 32:16

And he gave them into the hand{s} of his servants

Alternate translation: [He put his servants in charge of the animals] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

each herd by itself

Alternate translation: [with each kind of animal in a separate herd] or [and had them put the different kinds of animals in different groups]

And he said to his servants

Alternate translation: [Then he told his servants]

Go before me, and put space between each herd

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. Alternate translation: [Go ahead of me, one herd at a time, and keep some space between each herd of animals] or [to go ahead of him, one herd at a time, keeping some distance between each herd] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 32:17

And he commanded the first {one}, saying

Alternate translation: [He also instructed the servant in charge of the first herd of animals]

Whom do you {belong} to, and where are you going

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to use a direct or indirect quote in verses 17-20a. Alternate translation: [who your master is and where you are going] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

And whom do these {animals} {belong} to {that are} before you

Alternate translation: [and asks who owns the animals that you are herding] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 32:18

then you say

Alternate translation: [then you must tell him] or [then you are to answer him]

They belong} to your servant, to Jacob. They {are} a gift sent to my lord, to Esau

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

Notice that the pronoun **us** is exclusive here.

Genesis 32:19

Then he also commanded

See how you translated **commanded** in verse 17. Alternate translation: [In the same way, Jacob instructed] or [Jacob gave the same orders to]

the second {servant}, also the third

Alternate translation: [the servant in charge of the second herd and the servant in charge of the third group] or [the servants who were in charge of the second and third herds of animals]

also all who followed behind the herds, saying

Alternate translation: [as well as all the other servants who were in charge of the other herds]

Say the same thing to Esau when you find him

Alternate translation: [When you meet 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

See how you translated **is behind us** in verse 18. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

For he said

Alternate translation: [Jacob did all that, because he said]

I will cover his face with the gift

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. Alternate translation: [I can pacify Esau by sending] or [Perhaps Esau will stop being angry at me if I send] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

with the gift that is going before 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. Alternate translation: [him this gift of animals ahead of me] or [this gift of animals to him ahead of me] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and after that, when I see his face, perhaps he will receive my face

Make sure that the way you translate this clause fits with how you translated the previous clauses as either a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [After that, perhaps he will forgive me and welcome me when we see each other face to face] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 32:21

Then the gift went before him

See how you translated **gift** in verses 13, 18, 20. Alternate translation: [So the animal gifts for Esau were taken ahead of Jacob by his servants]

and he himself stayed for that night in the camp

Alternate translation: [but Jacob and his family stayed behind at the camp that night] or [but Jacob himself slept for part of the night in the camp]

Genesis 32:22

Then during that night he got up

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. Alternate translation: [Later that same night Jacob woke up and took] or [Sometime during that night]

his two wives and his two maidservants and his 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. Alternate translation: [his two wives, two concubines and eleven sons]

and crossed over

Alternate translation: [and walked across]

the ford of the Jabbok

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. Alternate translation: [a shallow place on the Jabbok River] or [a place in the Jabbok Stream that was shallow]

Genesis 32:23

So he took them and had them cross over the stream

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. Alternate translation: [After he had taken them across the river] or [After he did that]

and he sent what {belonged} to him across

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. Alternate translation: [he went back and had his servants take everything that he owned across the river too] or [he went back and had his servants take all his livestock and other possessions across the river too] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 32:24

Then Jacob was left alone

Alternate translation: [After that, Jacob was alone there for a while]

and a man wrestled 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. Alternate translation: [and then a man came and wrestled with him] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

until the dawn came up

The word **dawn** refers to the time before sunrise when the sky begins to get light. Alternate translation: [until dawn] or [until daylight started to appear]

Genesis 32:25

And he saw that he was not prevailing over him

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to in verses 25-29. Alternate translation: [Then the man realized that he could not defeat him so] or [When the man saw that he was not able to defeat him] (See:

Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701))

so he touched {him} on the socket of his hip

Alternate translation: [he hit him on his hip] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701))**)

so that the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated

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. Alternate translation: [so that it was put out of place] or [and his hip joint went out of place] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701))**)

as he wrestled with him

Alternate translation: [as he fought with the man] or [as they fought against each other]

Genesis 32:26

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then the man said to Jacob] or [Then the man demanded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Release me

Alternate translation: [You must let me go now]

because the dawn has come up

See how you translated “the dawn came up” in verse 24. Alternate translation: [because it is dawn] or [because daylight is beginning to come!]

But he said

Alternate translation: [But Jacob said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I will not release you unless you bless me

Alternate translation: [No! First you must bless me, and then I will let you go!] or [I will let you go only if you bless me!] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

Genesis 32:27

So he said to him

Alternate translation: [Then the man asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} your name

Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. Alternate translation: [Tell me your name] or [what his name was] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

And he said, “Jacob

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.1606)**)

Genesis 32:28

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then the man said to Jacob]

Your name will not be called Jacob anymore

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. Alternate translation: [You will no longer be named Jacob]

but Israel

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.1634)**)

because you have struggled with God and with men

The Hebrew word for **struggled** here is more general than the word for "wrestled" in verses 24 and 25. Alternate translation: [because you have struggled against both God and men]

and you have prevailed

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. Alternate translation: [and you have overcome]

Genesis 32:29

Then Jacob asked and said

Consider again whether or not you have capitalized references to the man in verses 24-29. See the note about this at verse 24. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob asked him] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

Please tell {me} your name

Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. Alternate translation: [What is your name?] or [what his name was] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

But he said

Alternate translation: [But the man replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Why {is} this you are asking

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. Alternate translation: [You do not need to ask me] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

for my name

Alternate translation: [to tell you my name!]

Genesis 32:30

I saw God face to face

Alternate translation: [I saw God in person here] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

but my life was preserved

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. Alternate translation: [but yet my life was spared by him!] or [but yet he has allowed me to live!]

Genesis 32:31

And the sun rose on him

Alternate translation: [The sun shined on Jacob] or [The sun was rising]

as he passed Penuel

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. Alternate translation: [as he left Penuel and returned to his family] (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1634)**)

and he was limping

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [As he walked, he was limping]

because of his hip

Alternate translation: [because his hip joint was injured]

Genesis 32:32

to this day

Alternate translation: [even now] or [even in the present]

the sons of Israel

Alternate translation: [the descendants of Israel] or [the Israelites]

do not eat the muscle of the tendon

Alternate translation: [do not eat the tendon]

that {is} on the socket of the hip

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.1559)**)

because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the muscle of the tendon

See how you translated the idiom **touched** in verse 25. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 33

Genesis 33:1

Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked

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). Alternate translation: [Then Jacob looked up and saw] or [Then Jacob looked ahead of him and saw] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and behold, Esau was coming

Esau was still a fair distance away, which gave Jacob time to do everything that he does in verses 1-3. Alternate translation: [that Esau was in the distance coming his way]

and with him 400 men

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [So he quickly put his children into groups with their own mothers, Leah, Rachel and his two servant wives] or [So he had his children quickly gather with their own mothers, so that Leah, Rachel and his two concubines were each with her own children]

Genesis 33:2

And he put the maidservants and their children

See how you translated “his two maidservants” in Gen 32:22. Alternate translation: [He put his two servant wives with their children] or [He put the group that had his two servant wives and their children]

first

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. Alternate translation: [in front of all the others] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and Leah and her children

Alternate translation: [then he put Leah and her children]

after them

Alternate translation: [next]

and Rachel and Joseph

Alternate translation: [and he put Rachel and her son Joseph]

after them

Alternate translation: [behind them all] or [in the rear]

Genesis 33:3

Then he himself went before them

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob himself walked ahead of them all toward his brother] or [Then he started going toward his brother ahead of them all]

and he bowed to the ground seven times as he came near to his brother

See how you translated “bow down” in Gen 27:29. Alternate translation: [and he bowed with his face to the ground seven times to show respect as he went closer to him] or [As he approached Esau, he prostrated himself with his face to the ground seven times to show respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 33:4

But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him

This sentence shows a contrast between what Jacob was expecting and what actually happened. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

and he fell on his neck and kissed him

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. Alternate translation: [and he threw his arms around his shoulders and kissed him] or [He held Jacob tightly and kissed him on the cheek] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and they cried

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. Alternate translation: [and they both cried for joy] or [Both of them cried because they were so happy to see each other again] (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

Genesis 33:5

Then he lifted his eyes

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. Alternate translation: [Then Esau looked up] (See: **Idiom (p. 1645)**)

and saw the women and the children

Alternate translation: [and saw the women and children who were there with Jacob]

and he said

Alternate translation: [so he asked him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Who {are} these with 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. Alternate translation: [How are these people related to you?]

And he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking to whom here. Alternate translation: [He answered him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

The children

Alternate translation: [They are the children and the wives] or [They are my wives and my children]

whom God has graciously given to your servant

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. Alternate translation: [whom God has kindly given to me, your servant] or [whom God has graciously given to me, sir] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 33:6

Then the maidservants came near, they and their children

See how you translated **maidservants** in verses 1-2. Alternate translation: [Then the two maidservants came closer to Esau along with their children]

and they bowed down

See how you translated **bowed down** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [and they all bowed to the ground in front of him to show respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 33:7

Then Leah also came near and her children

Alternate translation: [Then Leah also came closer to Esau along with her children] or [Next Leah and her children also came closer]

Then after {that}, Joseph came near and Rachel

Alternate translation: [Then last of all, Joseph and his mother Rachel came closer]

and they bowed down

Some languages have a dual pronoun for **they** that fits here well. See what you did in verse 4. (See: **Forms of 'You'** — **Dual/Plural (p.1622)**)

Genesis 33:8

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then Esau said to Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What to you {are

Alternate translation: [What do you mean by] or [What is the purpose of]

all these groups

Alternate translation: [all those groups of livestock]

that I met

Alternate translation: [that I saw on my way here?] or [that came to me on my way here?]

And he said

Alternate translation: [Jacob said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

To find favor in the eyes of my lord

See how you translated **my lord** and the idiom “find favor in ... eyes” in Gen 32:5. Alternate translation: [I sent them so that you would be gracious to me, sir] or [They are gifts for you so that you would be pleased with me, sir] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 33:9

Then Esau said

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. Alternate translation: [Esau said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

I have plenty, my brother

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. Alternate translation: [My brother, I already own enough livestock] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Let what {belongs} to you be yours

Alternate translation: [Keep what you own for yourself] or [so keep your livestock for yourself]

Genesis 33:10

But Jacob said

Alternate translation: [But Jacob responded to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

No, please

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. Alternate translation: [No, I beg you]

If, please, I have found favor in your eyes

See how you translated the idiom “find/gain favor in your eyes” in verse 8. Alternate translation: [Rather, if you are pleased with me] or [Rather, if you want to be gracious to me, then]

then take my gift from my hand

Alternate translation: [please accept from me what I have given you] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

For indeed

Alternate translation: [The fact is]

I have seen your face, {which is} like seeing the face of God, and you have received 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. Alternate translation: [I thought you were still angry at me, so I was afraid of seeing you again in person, just as I would be afraid of meeting God in person, but you forgave me and welcomed me!] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

Genesis 33:11

Please take my blessing that was brought to you

Alternate translation: [So please accept my gift of livestock that my servants brought to you] or [So please accept the livestock from me that I sent to you] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

because God has been gracious to me

Alternate translation: [because God has been generous to me] or [because God has blessed me]

and because I have everything

Alternate translation: [and he has given me everything that I need] or [so that I own all that I need]

And he urged him

Make sure it is clear in your translation who and what is being referred to at every point in this sentence. Alternate translation: [He kept urging him to accept his gift] or [He kept insisting that he accept the livestock from him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

so he took {it

Alternate translation: [until finally Esau accepted it]

Genesis 33:12

Then he said

Alternate translation: [Then Esau said to Jacob]

and I will go in front of you

Esau is suggesting that he would accompany or escort Jacob and his family, not that he would go far ahead of them. Alternate translation: [and I will lead you]

Genesis 33:13

But he said to him

Alternate translation: [But he replied to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

My lord knows that

See how you translated “my lord” in verse 8. Alternate translation: [Sir, you know that]

the children {are} tender

Alternate translation: [my children are weak]

and the flock{s} and the herd{s} {that} are nursing {are} with me

See how you translated “flocks and herds” in Gen 12:16. Alternate translation: [and some of my sheep and cattle are nursing their young]

And if they drive them one day

Alternate translation: [If my men drive the livestock too hard in one day] or [If I force the livestock to go too fast for even one day]

then all the flock{s} 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. Alternate translation: [then all the flocks and herds will die] or [then all of them will die] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

Genesis 33:14

Please let my lord go on before his servant

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

Alternate translation: [Then I will travel along slowly at a speed that is good for the livestock and children that are with me]

until I come to my lord

Alternate translation: [until we reach you, sir] or [We will catch up to you later, sir]

in 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. Alternate translation: [in the land of Seir]

Genesis 33:15

And Esau said

Alternate translation: [Then Esau said to Jacob]

Please let me leave with you some of the people who {are} with me

Alternate translation: [Okay, then please let me leave you some of my men to escort you] or [Okay, then may I leave some of my men with you to escort you?]

But he said

Make sure the way you translate this quote margin fits with how you translate the previous and following sentences. Alternate translation: [Jacob said to him] or [Jacob answered him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Why {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.1711)**)

Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord

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. Alternate translation: [Just please continue to be gracious to me, sir] or [Sir, please just continue to treat me kindly] (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics\]\]](#))

Genesis 33:16

So on that day Esau went on his way back

Alternate translation: [So that very day Esau and his men started on their way back] or [So that very day Esau and his men left and headed back]

to Seir

See how you translated **Seir** in verse 14. Alternate translation: [home to the region of Seir]

Genesis 33:17

And Jacob traveled to 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. Alternate translation: [But Jacob went to the town of Succoth instead] or [Meanwhile, instead of going to Seir, Jacob and his family went to the town of Succoth] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

and he built a house for himself

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [There he and his servants built a house for himself and his family] or [where he and his men built a house for his family]

and for his livestock he made shelters

The term **livestock** is general here and includes all of Jacob’s animals. Alternate translation: [and they also built some shelters for his livestock] or [and shelters for his animals]

For that {reason

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 32:32. Alternate translation: [Because of that]

he called the name of the place Succoth

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.1634)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [Later Jacob and his family arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan, as he continued traveling home from the region of Paddan Aram] or [After that, Jacob and his family continued their journey home from the region of Paddan Aram, until eventually they arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan]

and he camped

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. Alternate translation: [and he set up camp in a field] or [Then he set up his tents in a field]

before the city

Alternate translation: [near the city] or [on the edge of the city]

Genesis 33:19

And he bought the portion of the field

Alternate translation: [Then he bought the plot of land]

where he pitched his tent{s

Alternate translation: [where they had set up their camp] or [where he were camping]

from the hand{s} of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitahs

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.” Alternate translation: [for one hundred pieces of money from the sons of Hamor who was the father of Shechem] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 33:20

And there he set up an altar

See how you translated **altar** in Gen 26:25. Alternate translation: [On that land Jacob also built a stone altar] or [Jacob also made an altar out of stones on that land]

and he called it El Elohe 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. 1634)**)

Genesis 34

Genesis 34:1

Then Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she had born for Jacob, went out

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. Alternate translation: [Now one day Dinah, who was the daughter whom Leah had for Jacob, went out] or [One day, Dinah, who was the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went to the city] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

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.1645)**)

the daughters of the land

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. Alternate translation: [some of the women who were native to that area] or [some of the native women]

Genesis 34:2

And Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of the land, 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. Alternate translation: [Then Shechem, who was the son of the Hivite named Hamor who ruled that region, saw] or [Now the ruler of that region was a Hivite named Hamor. His son Shechem saw] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

her, and he took her

Alternate translation: [Dinah, and he grabbed hold of her] or [how beautiful Dinah was, so he took hold of her]

and lay with her and violated 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. Alternate translation: [and forced her to go to bed with him] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 34:3

And his soul was attached to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved

Alternate translation: [He admired her so much that he fell in love with her]

and spoke to the heart of the young woman

See how you translated **young woman** in Gen 24:14, and see the note about that there. Alternate translation: [and spoke tenderly to her to try to persuade her] or [and tried to win her heart by speaking kindly to her]

Genesis 34:4

Then Shechem said to Hamor his father, saying

Alternate translation: [Then Shechem went to his father Hamor and requested]

Get this girl for me as a wife

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

Alternate translation: [When Jacob was told by someone that]

he had defiled Dinah his daughter

Alternate translation: [Shechem had disgraced his daughter Dinah] or [his daughter Dinah had been disgraced by Shechem]

and his sons were with his livestock in the fields

Alternate translation: [his sons were still tending his livestock out in the fields] or [his sons were still out in the fields taking care of his livestock]

so Jacob kept quiet

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

Alternate translation: [until they came back home]

Genesis 34:6

And Hamor the father of Shechem came out

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. 1559))

to Jacob to talk with him

Alternate translation: [to talk with Jacob]

Genesis 34:7

When they heard

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. Alternate translation: [When they heard that Shechem had raped their sister]

then the men were grieved

See how you translated **grieved** in Gen 6:6. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context. Alternate translation: [they were very shocked]

and it burned within them greatly

See how you translated the idiom “it/anger burned within ...” in Gen 32:36. Alternate translation: [and filled with anger] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

because he had done something disgraceful to Israel

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. Alternate translation: [that Shechem had disgraced the family of Israel]

and such a thing should not have been done

Alternate translation: [Such a wicked thing should never be done by anyone!] or [No one should ever do such a wicked crime!]

Genesis 34:8

But Hamor spoke with them, saying

Alternate translation: [But Hamor pleaded with Jacob and his sons and said] or [But Hamor begged Jacob and his sons]

to your daughter

The pronoun **your** is plural here, which shows that Hamor is addressing not only Jacob but also his sons. Alternate translation: [My son Shechem has fallen completely in love with your daughter and sister] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

Please give her to him as a wife

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. Alternate translation: [So please permit him to marry her]

Genesis 34:9

Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves

Alternate translation: [so that your daughters will marry our young men and your young men 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

Alternate translation: [You can also live among us] or [We also invite you to live among us]

And the land is before you. Settle and trade in it

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. Alternate translation: [The land is available for you to choose what you want; settle in it wherever you want. You can also trade freely here] or [You can settle wherever you want in the land. You can also do business buying and selling things wherever you want]

and acquire {property} in it

Alternate translation: [and you can buy your own property]

Genesis 34:11

Let me find favor in your eyes

See how you translated the idiom “Let me find favor in the eyes of ...” in Gen 33:15. Alternate translation: [Please be gracious to me and let me marry Dinah] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and what you say to me I will give

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then I will give you whatever you ask from me for her]

Genesis 34:12

Increase greatly the dowry and gift for me

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. Alternate translation: [Set the dowry and wedding gifts that I must pay to marry her as high as you want] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and I will give according to what you say to me

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 11. Alternate translation: [and I will give you whatever you ask from me]

Then give the young woman to me as a wife

See how you translated **young woman** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [Only please let me marry the young woman]

Genesis 34:13

because he had defiled Dinah their sister

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. Alternate translation: [because he had disgraced their sister Dinah] or [because he had done a shameful thing to their sister Dinah] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 34:14

And 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. Alternate translation: [and said to them]

We are not able to do this thing

Alternate translation: [We are not able to do such a thing as] or [It would be not be right for us]

to give our sister to a man who has a foreskin

Translate **who has a foreskin** in a way that will not offend or embarrass people, especially when hearing your translation read aloud. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

because that {is} a disgrace to us

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [because that would humiliate our family!] or [That would cause great shame to our family!]

Genesis 34:15

Only on this {condition} will we consent with you

Alternate translation: [The only way that we will agree with your proposal is] or [We will do what you ask only if you do this one thing:]

if you become like us

Alternate translation: [You and your people must first become like us]

by every male among you being circumcised

See how you translated **circumcised** in Gen 17:10. Alternate translation: [by circumcising all your males]

Genesis 34:16

Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for us

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. Alternate translation: [Then we will let our daughters marry your young men, and our young men will marry your daughters] or [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] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

And we will settle with you

See how you translated **settle with** in verse 10. Alternate translation: [We will also settle among you in this land]

and we will become one people

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. Alternate translation: [and as a result we will all be one ethnic group] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

Genesis 34:17

But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised

Alternate translation: [But if you refuse to agree with our requirement that you circumcise your males] or [But if you do not circumcise your males as we say]

then we will take our daughter and go

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.
Alternate translation: [then we will leave and take our sister with us]

Genesis 34:18

And their words were good in the eyes of Hamor and in the eyes of Shechem, Hamor's son

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.1645)**)

Genesis 34:19

So the young man did not delay

Alternate translation: [So Shechem immediately started] or [So right away Shechem took action]

to do the thing

Alternate translation: [to do what they proposed] or [to do their requirement]

and he was honored more than all of the house of his father

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.1651)**)

Genesis 34:20

and they spoke to the men of their city, saying

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. Alternate translation: [and they spoke to the city elders who had gathered there. They said] or [and they told the leaders of their city about Jacob and his sons]

Genesis 34:21

These men {are} peaceful with us

Here **us** includes Hamor, Shechem and the men they are talking to. Alternate translation: [Jacob and his family are at peace with us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

so let them settle in the land

See how you translated **settle** in verse 10. Alternate translation: [so we should let them live in our land]

and let them trade in it

See how you translated **trade in it** in verse 10. Alternate translation: [and let them buy and sell things wherever they want]

And behold, the land {is} broad of hands before them

Alternate translation: [Look, there is enough land to support them and us] or [After all, there is more than enough room in this land for them too] (See: **Idiom** (p.1645))

We can take their daughters for ourselves as wives, and we can give our daughters to them

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. Alternate translation: [That way too, we can choose their daughters to be our wives, and we can let their young men marry our daughters]

Genesis 34:22

Only on this {condition} will the men consent with us to settle with us

See how you began verse 15, which is very similar to verse 22. Alternate translation: [There is just one requirement: They will only agree to settle among us] or [But they will only consent to live among us]

to become one people

See how you translated this phrase in verse 16.

when every male among us is circumcised

See how you translated “every male among ... circumcised” in verse 15. Alternate translation: [if all our males are circumcised]

just as they are circumcised

Alternate translation: [as their males are]

Genesis 34:23

Their livestock and their property and all their animals

Alternate translation: [Then all their livestock and animals, and all their other property] or [But if we do that, all their possessions, including their livestock and all their other animals]

will they not {belong} to us

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. Alternate translation: [will be ours!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Only let us consent with them

Alternate translation: [So we should just do what they propose]

and they will settle with us

See how you translated **settle with us** in verses 10 and 22. Alternate translation: [so that they will settle among us!]

Genesis 34:24

And all who went out of the gate of his city listened

Make sure that your translation of this idiom refers here to the same men who had gathered at the city gates in verse 20. Alternate translation: [All the men who were elders of the city] or [All the men who were there at the city gate] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And & listened to Hamor and to Shechem his son

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [so all of them and all the other males in the city were circumcised]

Genesis 34:25

Then it happened on the third day

Alternate translation: [On the third day after that]

when they were in pain

Alternate translation: [when it was still painful for the men of the city to move]

then two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dinah, each 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.1660)**)

his sword and went upon the city boldly

See how you translated **sword** in Gen 27:40. Alternate translation: [their swords and attacked the city, with no one resisting them]

and killed every male

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. Alternate translation: [They killed all the males there]

Genesis 34:26

And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the mouth of the sword

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.1622)**)

and left

Alternate translation: [and returned home]

Genesis 34:27

The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered 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

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. Alternate translation: [They did that because that was where Shechem had disgraced their sister] or [to get revenge for the shameful thing that had been done to their sister there]

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}

See how you translated **donkeys** in Gen 32:15. (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

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

See how you translated **plundered** in verse 27. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 34:30

Then Jacob said to Simeon and to Levi

Alternate translation: [Later when they came home, Jacob scolded Simeon and Levi by saying]

You have brought trouble on me

Alternate translation: [You have caused me serious problems] or [You have put me in great danger]

by making me stink among {those} who live in the land, among the Canaanites and among the Perizzites

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. Alternate translation: [by causing the people who live in this land to despise us, including the Canaanites and Perizzites!] or [by causing the Canaanites and Perizzites who live in this land to hate me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And I am few of number

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. Alternate translation: [We only have a few men to defend us] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and if they gather together against me and attack me

Make sure your use of the pronouns **me** or "us" fits with the way you translate the rest of this sentence. Alternate translation: [so if they all join forces against me and attack me]

then I will be destroyed, I and my house

Alternate translation: [then I and my family will be killed!] or [they will kill us and the rest of my household!]

Genesis 34:31

But they said

Alternate translation: [But Simeon and Levi replied angrily]

Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute

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. Alternate translation: [He should not have treated our sister as a prostitute] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 35

Genesis 35:1

Then God said to Jacob

Translate this quote margin in a way that is natural in your language and that fits with what God says. Alternate translation: [Then God told Jacob] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Get up

Alternate translation: [Get packed]

go up to Bethel and settle there

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. Alternate translation: [and travel to the town of Bethel and live there]

and make an altar there

See how you translated **altar** in Gen 33:20. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

to the God

Make sure it is clear in your translation that God is referring to himself as he speaks here to Jacob. Alternate translation: [to me as the God] or [to me, the God] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

who appeared to you

See how you translated **appeared** in Gen 26:2, 24. Alternate translation: [who came to you there] or [who introduced myself to you there]

when you were fleeing

See how you translated “flee” in Gen 31:20-21, 27.

from the presence of Esau your brother

Alternate translation: [from the anger of your brother Esau]

Genesis 35:2

So Jacob said to his household

Alternate translation: [So Jacob told the members of his family]

and to all who {were} 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

See how you translated "idols" and **gods** in Gen 31:19, 30, 32. Alternate translation: [Get rid of the idols you have that pagan ethnic groups worship] or [Give up the idols that you have from foreigners]

and purify yourselves

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. Alternate translation: [and cleanse yourselves]

and change your clothes

Alternate translation: [and get on clean clothes]

Genesis 35:3

Then let us get up

See how you translated **get up** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [Then we must pack up our things] or [Then we must leave here]

and go up to Bethel

See how you translated **go up** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [and go to the town of Bethel]

and there I will make an altar to 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. Alternate translation: [where I will build an altar to worship God] or [There I will build an altar and worship God]

who answered me

Alternate translation: [because he answered me] or [who granted my prayers for help]

in the day of my distress

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. Alternate translation: [during the days when I was in trouble] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And he has been with me

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. Alternate translation: [He has always stayed with me and taken care of me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

in the way that I have gone

Alternate translation: [everywhere that I have gone]

Genesis 35:4

So they gave to Jacob

Alternate translation: [Then they gave Jacob] or [Then they turned over to Jacob]

all the foreign gods that {were} in their hand{s}

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. Alternate translation: [all the pagan gods that they had with them]

and the rings that {were} in their ears

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. Alternate translation: [and the earrings they wore on their ears]

and Jacob hid them

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob hid everything in the ground] or [Then Jacob hid all those things in the ground]

under

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. Alternate translation: [beside] or [at the foot of]

the terebinth 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.” Alternate translation: [a oak tree] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 35:5

Then they set out

Alternate translation: [Then they all left there and started traveling]

and the dread of God was on the cities that {were} around them, so that & not

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. Alternate translation: [and God caused the people in the nearby cities to be afraid, so that] or [and God made the people in the nearby cities so afraid that]

so that they did not pursue after

Make sure your translation of **they** refers here to the people in the surrounding towns, not Jacob’s sons. Alternate translation: [no one attacked] or [none of them came after]

the sons of Jacob

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. Alternate translation: [them] or [Jacob and his family] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 35:6

Then Jacob came to Luz

Be consistent in this verse with how you spelled **Luz** and **Bethel** in Gen 28:19. Alternate translation: [Soon Jacob arrived at the town of Luz]

which {is} Bethel

See how you translated **which is** in Gen 23:2, 19. Alternate translation: [which is also called Bethel] or [that is, Bethel] or [which now has the name Bethel]

which {is} in the land of 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. Alternate translation: [which is also in Canaan] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

he and all the people who {were} with him

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. Alternate translation: [he and his whole family] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 35:7

And there he built an altar

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. Alternate translation: [There he built an altar] or [Then he built an altar there]

and he called the place

Alternate translation: [and he named that place] or [and he named it]

because there

Alternate translation: [because it was at Bethel that]

God had revealed himself to him

Compare how you translated a different Hebrew word that has a similar meaning (“appeared”) in verses 1 and 9. Alternate translation: [God had first introduced himself to him] or [God had first appeared to Jacob]

when he was fleeing

See how you translated **fleeing** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [while he was running away]

from the presence of his brother

See how you translated **from the presence of** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [from the anger of his brother]

Genesis 35:8

Then Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, died

See how you translated **nurse** in Gen 24:59.

and was buried

Alternate translation: [and her body was buried by Jacob in the ground] or [They buried her body in the ground]

below 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. Alternate translation: [in the valley below the town of Bethel] or [at a place south of the town of Bethel]

under the 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. Alternate translation: [beside an oak tree] or [at the foot of an oak tree] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So he called its name

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. Alternate translation: [So he named the tree] or [That is why the place is known as]

Allon Bacuth

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.1634)**)

Genesis 35:9

Then God appeared to Jacob again when he had come from Paddan Aram

Alternate translation: [Now that Jacob had come from the land of Paddan Aram, God appeared to him at Bethel again] or [Now that Jacob had returned to Bethel from the land of Paddan Aram, God appeared to him there again] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and he blessed him

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and blessed him] or [and showed his goodness toward him]

Genesis 35:10

and God said 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. Alternate translation: [by saying to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Your name {is} 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

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. Alternate translation: [that will no longer be your only name] or [it will no longer be that]

but Israel will be your name

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Rather, your name will also be Israel!] or [Rather, you will also have the name Israel!]

So he called his 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.1559)**)

Genesis 35:11

Then God said to him

In verse 11, God continues the blessing that he started in verse 10, perhaps after a pause. Alternate translation: [Then God also said to him] or [Then God also blessed him by saying] or [God continued blessing him by saying to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I {am} God Almighty

See how you translated the title **God Almighty** in Gen 17:1 and 28:3. Alternate translation: [I am God who is all-powerful]

Be fruitful

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

Alternate translation: [and increase in number] or [so that you and your descendants become very many]

A nation and a community of nations will be from you

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. Alternate translation: [Your descendants will become a large people group. In fact, many ethnic groups will descend from you] or [Your descendants will become many ethnic groups]

and kings will come from your loins

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. Alternate translation: [and kings will descend from you] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

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

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated **went up from** in Gen 17:22. Alternate translation: [Then God left Jacob there where he had been speaking to him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 35:14

Then Jacob set up a pillar

See how you translated a similar passage in Gen 28:18 about Jacob setting up a memorial stone pillar. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob set a large stone up on its end] or [Then Jacob chose a large stone that was there and set it up on its end]

at the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone

Alternate translation: [at the place where God had spoken to him, to mark the place as special] or [as a memorial stone to remember the place where God had talked to him]

and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it

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. Alternate translation: [Then he poured some wine and some olive oil on the stone pillar to thank God and dedicate the place to him] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 35:15

And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him Bethel

See how you translated “called the name of that place Bethel” in Gen 28:19.

Genesis 35:16

Then they set out from 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. Alternate translation: [Then they left the town of Bethel] or [Later Jacob and his family moved on from the town of Bethel]

and there was still a distance of land to come to Ephrath

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). Alternate translation: [and started heading toward the town of Ephrath. But while they were still a distance away from there]

but was having great difficulty while she was giving birth

Alternate translation: [but she was having a very difficult time delivering the baby]

Genesis 35:17

And it happened when she was in hard labor

The phrase **hard labor** refers to when childbirth contractions are close together and very painful, often right before a baby is born. Alternate translation: [Then when she was at the most difficult time in her labor] or [Then when her childbirth pains were the most severe]

then the midwife said to her

Alternate translation: [the midwife told her] or [the baby was born and the midwife who was helping her deliver exclaimed to her]

Do not be afraid

Alternate translation: [Do not worry]

because this {is} also a son for you

Alternate translation: [You now have another boy!] or [You just gave birth to another son]

Genesis 35:18

Then it happened as her soul was leaving {her}—for she was dying

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. Alternate translation: [But Rachel was dying, and as her soul was leaving her body] or [But in fact Rachel was about to die, and just before her soul left her]

then she called his name Ben-oni

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.1634)**)

but his father

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.1559)**)

called him Benjamin

The phrase “son of my right hand” is an idiom that means “favored son” or “son of strength.” Alternate translation: [named him Benjamin instead] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 35:19

So Rachel died and was buried

See how you translated **was buried** in verse 8. Alternate translation: [After Rachel died, her body was buried by Jacob] or [After Rachel died, Jacob buried her body] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

on the way to Ephrath

Alternate translation: [beside the road that goes to the town of Ephrath]

which {is} Bethlehem

See how you translated a similar phrase (“which is Bethel”) in verse 6. Alternate translation: [which is also called Bethlehem] or [that is, Bethlehem]

Genesis 35:20

And Jacob set up a pillar

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. Alternate translation: [Jacob set a large stone up on its end]

over her grave

Alternate translation: [over her burial place to show where it was] or [to show where her tomb was] or [to mark the place where he had buried her body]

to this day

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. Alternate translation: [in the present day] or [now]

Genesis 35:21

Then Israel set out

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. Alternate translation: [Then Israel that is, Jacob, and his family moved on from there] or [Then Israel and his family started traveling again]

and pitched his tents

Alternate translation: [and put up his tents]

beyond

This phrase reflects the perspective of Jacob, who was traveling south. Alternate translation: [on the other side of]

Migdal Eder

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. Alternate translation: [Eder Tower] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 35:22

And it happened while Israel was living

Alternate translation: [While Israel and his family were still living] or [During the time that they were living]

in that land

Alternate translation: [in that region] or [there]

then Reuben went and lay 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.1616)**)

and Israel heard

See how you translated **heard** in Gen 34:5, 7. Alternate translation: [but Israel found out about it] or [and Israel was told by someone about it]

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve

Alternate translation: [After the birth of Benjamin, Jacob now had a total of twelve sons]

Genesis 35:23

The sons of Leah {were

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. Alternate translation: [The sons he had with his wife Leah were] or [These are the names of the sons he had with his wife Leah:]

Genesis 35:24

The sons of Rachel {were} Joseph and Benjamin

Alternate translation: [The sons Jacob had with Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin] or [These are the names of the sons that Jacob had with his wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin]

Genesis 35:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 35:26

And the sons of Zilpah, the maidservant of Leah, {were} 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.

Those {are} the sons of Jacob who were born to him

Alternate translation: [All those were the sons Jacob had]

in 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

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob came home to his father Isaac who was living] or [Then Jacob continued traveling and came to where his father Isaac was living]

in Mamre

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Mamre** in Gen 23:17, 19. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Kiriath Arba, which {is} Hebron

See how you translated Gen 23:2, which says that Kiriath Arba (where Sarah died) was also known as Hebron. Alternate translation: [which is now called Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron] or [which is also known as Kiriath Arba or Hebron]

where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [where Abraham and Isaac and their families had stayed for a while as outsiders] or [That is where Isaac and his family had been staying for a while as foreigners and where his father Abraham had also stayed for a while]

Genesis 35:28

And the days of Isaac were 180 years

See how you translated **the days of** in Gen 5:4-31 and 11:32.

Genesis 35:29

Then Isaac exhaled and died

See how you translated **exhaled** in Gen 25:8 and 17. Alternate translation: [Then he breathed out for the last time and died] or [Then he took his final breath and died] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and he was gathered to

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 25:8 and 17. Alternate translation: [and he was taken by God to be with] or [and God took his spirit to be with]

his people

Alternate translation: [his relatives who had already died] or [his relatives who had gone before him] or [his deceased relatives]

old and full of days

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. Alternate translation: [He was very old and had lived a long, full life] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And Esau and Jacob, his sons, buried him

See how you translated “his sons ... buried him” in Gen 25:9.

Genesis 36

Genesis 36:1

And these {are} the generations of Esau

See how you translated **the generations of** in 25:12, 19. Alternate translation: [Now this is the family-line of Esau] or [These are the descendants of Esau] or [Here is the history about the family of Esau]

who {is} 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. Alternate translation: [who was also called Edom] or [that is, Edom] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 36:2

Esau had taken his wives from the daughters 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. Alternate translation: [Esau had chosen two of his wives from among the Canaanite women:] or [Esau had married two women who were descendants of Canaan] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Adah

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [whose names were Adah]

the daughter of Elon the Hittite

Make sure your translation does not sound like Elon was the only Hittite. See how you translated "Hittites" in Gen 27:46. Alternate translation: [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 people group] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

and 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. Alternate translation: [and also Oholibamah] or [as well as Oholibamah]

the daughter of Anah {and} the {grand}daughter of

Notice that Elon, Anah, and Zibeon are the names of men here, not women. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1634)**)

Zibeon the Hivite

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. Alternate translation: [Zibeon who was a descendant of Hivi] or [Zibeon who was a member of the Hivi people group] (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1634)**)

Genesis 36:3

and 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

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. Alternate translation: [whose father was Ishmael and whose older brother was Nebaioth] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

Genesis 36:4

And Adah bore Eliphaz for Esau

Alternate translation: [Adah had a son for Esau whom they named Eliphaz]

and Basemath bore Reuel

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to break this long sentence into two or more shorter sentences.

Alternate translation: [while his wife Basemath bore a son named Reuel]

Genesis 36:5

Jeush and Jalam and Korah

Alternate translation: [sons whom they named Jeush, Jalam, and Korah]

Genesis 36:6

Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters

Alternate translation: [Later Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters]

and all the people of his house

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}

Alternate translation: [as well as his livestock and all the rest of his animals and all the other possessions]

that he had acquired in the land of Canaan

See how you translated **acquired** and **land of Canaan** in Gen 12:5 and 31:18. Alternate translation: [that he had gotten while they lived in the land of Canaan]

and he went to a land from the presence of Jacob his brother

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. Alternate translation: [and he moved to an area that was away from his brother Jacob] or [and he traveled to a different region and settled there, away from where his brother Jacob was living] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:7

because

Alternate translation: [He did that because] or [The reason Esau moved away is that]

their possession{s} were {too} great for them to remain together

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. Alternate translation: [he and Jacob both owned so many livestock that they could no longer live near each other] or [they both owned so many livestock that they could not live together in the same area] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

the land of their sojournings

See how you translated Gen 13:6, which is similar in content to this verse. Alternate translation: [The land where they were living]

and & was not able to support them because of their livestock

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." Alternate translation: [was just not big enough to feed them all because they owned so many animals] or [did not have enough grazing areas or water to support all the livestock that both families owned] (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1727)**)

Genesis 36:8

So Esau settled

Alternate translation: [That is why Esau and his family] or [That is the reason Esau took his family and]

in the mountains of Seir

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. Alternate translation: [moved to the hill-country in the land of Seir] or [went to live in the Seir Mountains]

Esau

Alternate translation: [That is the history about Esau]

who {is} 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. Alternate translation: [who was also known as Edom] or [who was also called Edom] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:9

Now these {are} the generations 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. Alternate translation: [What follows is more of the history of Esau] or [This is a more detailed genealogy about the descendants of Esau]

the father of the Edomites

Alternate translation: [who was the ancestor of the Edom people group]

in the 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. Alternate translation: [who live in the Seir Hills] or [who live in the hill-country of Seir]

Genesis 36:10

These {are} the names of the sons of Esau

Only two of Esau's many sons are listed in verse 10.

Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Eliphaz** and **Adah** in verse 4. Alternate translation: [Eliphaz, who was the son of his wife Adah] or [Eliphaz, whom Esau had with his wife Adah]

and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath

See how you spelled **Basemath** and **Reuel** in verse 4. Alternate translation: [and Reuel, who was the son of his wife Basemath] or [and Reuel, whom Esau had with his wife Basemath]

Genesis 36:11

And the sons of Eliphaz were

Alternate translation: [The sons of Eliphaz and his wife were]

Genesis 36:12

And Timna was a concubine for Esau's son Eliphaz, and she bore Amalek for Eliphaz

See how you translated **concubine** in Gen 22:24, 25:6; 35:22. Alternate translation: [Eliphaz also had a servant-wife named Timna, and she had a son with him named Amalek] or [Eliphaz and his concubine Timna had a son they named Amalek]

Those {were} the grandsons of

Alternate translation: [All those sons of Eliphaz were grandsons of]

Adah, the wife of Esau

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Adah's grandsons were also Esau's grandsons. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 36:13

And these {were} the sons of Reuel

Alternate translation: [The sons of Reuel were named] or [Reuel and his wife had these sons:]

Those were the grandsons of

Alternate translation: [Those sons of Reuel were grandsons of]

Basemath, the wife of Esau

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.1559)**)

Genesis 36:14

And these were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah

Alternate translation: [Here are the sons that Esau had with his wife Oholibamah]

the daughter of Anah {and} the {grand}daughter of Zibeon

See how you translated these phrases in verse 2. Alternate translation: [whose father was Anah and whose grandfather was Zibeon:]

and she bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah for Esau

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. Alternate translation: [She had sons whom they named Jeush, Jalam, and Korah] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:15

These {were

Alternate translation: [Here is a list of] or [The following are]

were} Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz

Alternate translation: [who became chiefs were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz] or [who became tribal leaders were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz]

Genesis 36:16

Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, Chief 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

Be consistent with how you spelled **Eliphaz** throughout this chapter; see verses 4, 10-12, 15-16. Alternate translation: [Those are the chiefs who descended from Eliphaz and lived in the region called Edom] or [All those sons of Eliphaz were tribal leaders who lived in the region of Edom]

Those {were} the grandsons of

Alternate translation: [They were the grandsons of]

Adah

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

Those {were} the chiefs of Reuel in the land 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. Alternate translation: [They were the chiefs who descended from Reuel and lived in the region called Edom] or [All those sons of Reuel were clan leaders who lived in the region of Edom]

Those {were} the grandsons of

See how you translated this phrase in verses 12, 13 and 16. Alternate translation: [All those sons of Reuel were grandsons of]

Basemath, the wife of Esau

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

Those {were} the chiefs of Esau's wife Oholibamah

Alternate translation: [They were the chiefs who descended from Esau and his wife Oholibamah] or [They were the tribal leaders ...]

Genesis 36:19

He {is} 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. Alternate translation: [Esau was also known as Edom] or [Esau was also called Edom] or [That is the record about Edom] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:20

These {were} the sons of Seir the Horite who were inhabiting the land

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. Alternate translation: [Here is a list of the descendants of Seir the Horite who were also living in that land:] or [The sons of Seir the Horite who were also living in that land were]

Genesis 36:21

Those {were} the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir

See how you translated the names of people groups in verses 2. Alternate translation: [Those descendants of Seir became the chiefs of the Horites] or [They were the descendants of Seir who became tribal leaders for the Horites]

in the land of Edom

Alternate translation: [who were living in the region of Edom]

Genesis 36:22

And the sons of Lotan 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

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. Alternate translation: [and the name of his sister was Timna] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

Genesis 36:23

Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam

Alternate translation: [Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam]

Genesis 36:24

He {is} Anah who found

Alternate translation: [He is the same Anah who found] or [Anah is the one who found]

the hot springs

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.” Alternate translation: [water]

in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys for Zibeon his father

See how you translated “pasture” in Gen 29:7. (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 36:26

Hemdan and Eshban and 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

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Ezer** in verses 20-21.

Genesis 36:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 36:29

These {were} the chiefs of the Horites

Alternate translation: [The leaders over the Horite clans were] or [The Horites who became chiefs were]

Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief 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

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

Be consistent with how you translated **Horites** in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:6; 36:20-21, 29-30. Alternate translation: [Those were the Horite chiefs. They had their own family groups] or [Those were the tribal leaders for the Horites. They had their own tribes]

in the land 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. Alternate translation: [and lived in the region of Seir] or [who were living in the region of Seir]

Genesis 36:31

And these {were} 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. Alternate translation: [These are the names of the kings] or [This is a history about the kings]

who reigned in the land of Edom

Alternate translation: [who ruled over the people of the region of Edom]

before a king reigned for the sons of Israel

See how you translated **the sons of Israel** in Gen 32:3. Alternate translation: [before there were any kings ruling over the descendants of Israel] or [during the time period when the Israelites did not yet have their own king]

Genesis 36:32

And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom

Alternate translation: [Bela, who was the son of Beor, was the first king to rule over the people of the region of Edom] or [The first king to reign over the people of the region of Edom was Bela, the son of Beor] (See:

Information Structure (p.1651))

and the name of his city {was} Dinhabah

Dinhabah was probably King Bela's hometown and his capital city that he ruled the land of Edom from. Alternate translation: [His capital city that he ruled from was Dinhabah]

Genesis 36:33

and Jobab the son of Zerah from Bozrah reigned in his place

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. Alternate translation: [Jobab, who was the son of Zerah, succeeded Bela as king and ruled from his hometown of Bozrah] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:34

and Husham from the land of the Temanites reigned in his place

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. Alternate translation: [Husham succeeded Jobab as king and reigned from his hometown, which was in the region where the Temanites lived] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:35

and & reigned in his place

Alternate translation: [succeeded him as king]

who struck the Midianites

See how you translated the idiom **struck** in Gen 14:5, 7. Alternate translation: [King Hadad is the one who defeated the Midianites in war] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

in the field 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. Alternate translation: [in a field in the region of Moab] or [in the country of Moab]

And the name of his city {was} Avith

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 32. Alternate translation: [His capital city that he ruled from was Avith]

Genesis 36:36

and Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place

Alternate translation: [Samlah succeeded Hadad as king and ruled from his hometown of Masrekah] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:37

and Shaul from Rehoboth {on} the river reigned in his place

See how you translated similar sentences in verses 33, 34 and 36. Alternate translation: [Shaul succeeded him as king and ruled from his hometown of Rehoboth, which was beside the Euphrates River] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 36:38

Then Shaul died, and Baal-Hanan the son of Acbor reigned in his place

Alternate translation: [When King Shaul died, Baal-Hanan, who was the son of Acbor, took his place as king] or [... succeeded him as king]

Genesis 36:39

Then Baal-Hanan the son of Acbor died, and Hadar reigned

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.1634)**)

and & reigned in his place

Consider again how you translated this phrase in verses 33-39. Alternate translation: [took his place as king] or [succeeded him as king]

and the name of his city {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. Alternate translation: [His capital city that he ruled from was Pau]

the daughter of Matred {and} the granddaughter of Me-Zahab

Notice that **Matred** and **Me-Zahab** are the names of men. See how you translated similar phrases in verses 2 and 14. Alternate translation: [whose father was Matred and whose grandfather was Me-Zahab] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 36:40

And these {are} the names of

Alternate translation: [The following list of names includes]

the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans, according to their places, by their names

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. Alternate translation: [more of the chiefs who descended from Esau. These chiefs led their own family groups in their own territories, which were named after them:] or [more of the descendants of Esau who were tribal leaders; the tribes and the regions where they lived were named after them:] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Chief Timna, Chief Alvah, Chief 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

Make sure that the way you translate verses 41-43 fits with the interpretation you followed in verse 40.

Genesis 36:42

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 36:43

Chief Magdiel, Chief Iram

Make sure you are consistent in whether or not you use the title **Chief** in verses 40-43.

Those {were} the chiefs of

Consider again how you translated “chief” throughout this chapter; see verses 15-19, 21, 29-30, 40-43. Alternate translation: [Those were the names of more of the chiefs over] or [All of those were chiefs over] or [Those were more of the clan leaders of]

Edom

Alternate translation: [the Edom people group;]

according to their dwellings

Alternate translation: [each of them led their own tribes in the places where they lived]

in the land of their possession

Alternate translation: [in the land that they owned]

That {was} Esau

Alternate translation: [That was the record about Esau] or [This concludes the history about Esau]

the father of the Edomites

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. Alternate translation: [who was the ancestor of the Edom people group]

Genesis 37

Genesis 37:1

And Jacob lived

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). Alternate translation: [Now Jacob was still living]

in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan

See how you translated "sojourning" in Gen 35:27 and **the land of Canaan** in Gen 35:6. Alternate translation: [in the land of Canaan where his father Isaac had lived for a while as a outsider]

Genesis 37:2

These {are} the generations of Jacob

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. Alternate translation: [This is more of the history about Jacob and his family:] or [What follows tells more about Jacob and his family:]

Joseph, a son of seventeen years

This verse may be referring to a single incident or it may be referring to what happened regularly.

was shepherding the flock{s}

See how you translated **flocks** in Gen 4:2.

with his brothers, and he {was} a young man with

As the youngest of these brothers, Joseph was their helper as they took care of their father's flocks. Alternate translation: [as an helper for his brothers who were]

the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives

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

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. Alternate translation: [and he told his father about the bad things they were doing] or [and he gave bad reports to his father about them] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 37:3

Now Israel

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.

Alternate translation: [Now Jacob, whose other name was Israel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

because he {was} a son of his old age

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.

Alternate translation: [because Joseph was born to him when he was old] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So he made a multicolored tunic for him

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. Alternate translation: [So he made a beautiful tunic for him that had many colors] or [So he made a special colorful robe for him] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 37:4

so they hated him and were not able to speak to him peaceably

Make sure it is clear here in your translation that the brothers hated Joseph, not their father. Alternate translation: [they despised Joseph so much that they could not speak to him kindly] or [... they refused to speak to him in a kind way] or [... they always spoke unkindly to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 37:5

Then Joseph dreamed a dream

Alternate translation: [Then one night Joseph had a dream]

and told it to his brothers

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [The next day he told his brothers what he dreamed]

and they continued to hate him even more

Alternate translation: [and they became even more hateful toward him] or [That made them despise him even more than before]

Genesis 37:6

And he said to them

Alternate translation: [He told them]

Please hear this dream that I dreamed

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [In my dream I saw]

we were binding sheaves in the middle of a field

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.

Alternate translation: [that we all were out in the middle of a field cutting stalks of grain and tying the stalks into sheaves] or [us working together out in a field cutting and tying sheaves of wheat stalks]

and behold

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

my sheaf

Alternate translation: [my sheaf of grain] or [the sheaf that I had made]

got up and also stood upright

Alternate translation: [stood up on its end]

and behold

Alternate translation: [Then behold]

your sheaves

Alternate translation: [your sheaves of grain] or [the bundles that you had made]

gathered around

Alternate translation: [stood around my sheaf] or [stood in a circle around my bundle]

and bowed down to my sheaf

Alternate translation: [and bowed down to the ground to my sheaf to show submission] or [and bowed respectfully to my sheaf] or [and bowed down in front of it in respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 37:8

Then his brothers said to him

Alternate translation: [His brothers retorted angrily]

Will & really

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.1711)**)

you & reign over us

For languages that mark inclusive and exclusive pronouns, **us** excludes Joseph in this sentence. Alternate translation: [reign over us!] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

And they continued to hate him even more

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. Alternate translation: [So they despised him even more strongly than they did before]

because of his dreams and because of his words

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. Alternate translation: [for his dreams and for what he told them about the dreams] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 37:9

Then he dreamed yet another dream, and he related it to his brothers

Alternate translation: [Sometime after that, Joseph told his brothers about another dream that he had]

And he said

Alternate translation: [Here is what he said:]

and behold

Alternate translation: [and amazingly in this dream]

were bowing down

See how you translated “bowed down” in verse 7. Alternate translation: [were bowing down to the ground]

to 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). Alternate translation: [to me to show respect] or [in front of me to honor me] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

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

Your translation of this quote margin should not sound like two separate events; the verbs **rebuked** and **said** refer to the same event. Alternate translation: [but his father rebuked him by saying] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} this dream that you dreamed

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. Alternate translation: [Your dream is ridiculous] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1711)**)

Will your mother and I and your brothers really

See how you translated a similar rhetorical question in verse 8. Alternate translation: [Your mother and I and your brothers will never] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

come to bow down to the ground

See how you translated **bow down** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [come to you and bow down to the ground]

to you

Alternate translation: [in front of you]

Genesis 37:11

And his brothers envied him

See how you translated **envied** in Gen 26:14; 30:1.

but his father kept the matter {in mind

Alternate translation: [but his father continued to wonder about what it all could mean] or [but his father kept thinking about the dreams and wondered what they meant]

Genesis 37:12

near Shechem

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Shechem** in Gen 35:4.

Genesis 37:13

And Israel said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [So one day Israel said to Joseph]

Aren't your brothers shepherding

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. Alternate translation: [As you know, your brothers are pasturing our flocks] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

near Shechem

See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

And he said to him

Alternate translation: [He responded] or [He answered him]

Behold me

Alternate translation: [Yes, sir]

Genesis 37:14

Then he said to him

Alternate translation: [Then Israel told Joseph]

Please go and see

Alternate translation: [Please go find out]

the well-being of your brothers and the well-being of the flock{s

Alternate translation: [whether or not things are going well for your brothers and the flocks]

and bring me word

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then come tell me how they are doing]

So he sent him

Alternate translation: [So Israel sent Joseph on his way]

from the valley 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

The trip from the city of Hebron to the city of Shechem was about 100 kilometers (60 miles). Alternate translation: [and he went to the city of Shechem]

Genesis 37:15

And a man found him, and behold

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. Alternate translation: [There he met a man who had seen him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

he was wandering around in the fields. So the man asked him, saying

The word **fields** refers here to large, open places with no fences and few trees, where sheep and goats could easily graze. Alternate translation: [searching around in the nearby countryside and asked him]

What are you looking for

Consider whether it is better to use a direct or an indirect quote here in your language. Alternate translation: [Who are you looking for?] or [what he was looking for] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 37:16

Please tell me

Alternate translation: [Do you know]

where they are shepherding

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. Alternate translation: [where they are pasturing their flocks?] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 37:17

Then the man said

Alternate translation: [The man answered him] or [The man replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

They set out from here

Alternate translation: [I saw them, but then they left from here]

For I heard them say

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [In fact, I heard them say to each other] or [but I overheard them say to each other]

Let us go to Dothan

Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your translation. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Then Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan

Alternate translation: [So Joseph went to the town of Dothan and found his brothers near there]

Genesis 37:18

But they saw him from a distance

Alternate translation: [While he was still some distance away from them, they saw him]

and before he came near to them

Alternate translation: [and before he got close to where they were]

then they conspired against him to kill him

Alternate translation: [they plotted to kill him]

Genesis 37:19

Behold, that master of dreams is coming

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph's brothers are being sarcastic and disrespectful here as they make fun of Joseph. Alternate translation: [Look here comes that master dreamer!]

Genesis 37:20

into one of the cisterns

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. Alternate translation: [into one of the empty pits here] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Then we will say an evil animal

Alternate translation: [Then we will tell people that a ferocious wild animal]

devoured him

Alternate translation: [has eaten him] or [ate him down]

and we will see

Alternate translation: [and everyone will see]

what his dreams become

Joseph's brothers are speaking here in a disdainful way, continuing to mock him. Alternate translation: [what will become of his dreams!] or [what happens to his great dreams!] or [if his great dreams come true!]

Genesis 37:21

But Reuben heard

Alternate translation: [When Reuben heard what they were planning]

and he rescued him from their hand{s

The phrase **their hands** refers to Joseph's brothers and their power to harm him. Consider whether you have a similar figure of speech in your language. Alternate translation: [he tried to save Joseph from them] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Let us not strike his life

Consider again how you translated the idiom **strike** in Gen 4:15; 34:30; 37:21. Alternate translation: [We must not take his life] or [We must not kill him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 37:22

And Reuben said to them

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. Alternate translation: [Then he added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Do not shed blood

See how you translated the idiom **shed blood** in Gen 9:6. Alternate translation: [Do not kill him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Throw him into this cistern

See how you translated **cistern** in verse 20. Alternate translation: [Instead put him into this dry well]

which {is} in the wilderness

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. Alternate translation: [here in the wilderness]

but do not lay a hand on him

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. Alternate translation: [but you must not harm him in any way]

in order to rescue him from their hand{s

See how you translated “rescued him from their hands” in verse 21. Alternate translation: [Reuben was planning to save him from them] or [He said that in order to save him from being killed by them] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

to return him to his father

Make sure your translation of **his father** does not sound like Joseph had a different father than his brothers had. Alternate translation: [so that he could return him safely to his father] or [and take him back home to his father]

Genesis 37:23

Then it happened when Joseph came to 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

See how you translated **multicolored tunic** in verse 3. Alternate translation: [they grabbed hold of him and tore off his colorful robe]

that {was} on him

Alternate translation: [he had on]

Genesis 37:24

Then they took 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

See how you translated “throw him” and **cistern** in verse 20. Alternate translation: [and put him into the well]

And the cistern {was} empty; there was not water in it

Alternate translation: [Now the well was empty; it had no water in it] or [The well was empty and completely dry inside]

Genesis 37:25

Then they sat down to eat bread

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.1559)**)

and they lifted their eyes and looked

See how you translated the idiom “lifted ... eyes” in Gen 22:13. Alternate translation: [and while they were eating, they looked around] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and behold

Alternate translation: [and saw that] or [and they saw that]

a caravan of

A **caravan** is a large group of people who are traveling together. Alternate translation: [a large company of]

Ishmaelites

See how you translated the names of other people groups in Gen 15:19-21. Alternate translation: [Ishmaelite merchants] or [traders from the Ishmael people group] or [traders who were descendants of Ishmael]

was coming from Gilead

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. Alternate translation: [was coming toward them from the region of Gilead] or [was traveling from the region of Gilead and was headed their way] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And their camels were carrying

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

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. Alternate translation: [expensive spices, healing resin and incense] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

that} they were going to take down to Egypt

Alternate translation: [that they were 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

Alternate translation: [Then Judah asked his brothers]

What gain {is there

Judah uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize his point. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [What will we gain] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

if we kill our brother and cover up his blood

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. Alternate translation: [if we kill our brother and try to keep people from finding out about it] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 37:27

Come and let us sell him

See how you translated “come and” in verse 20. Alternate translation: [Instead, we should sell him]

to the Ishmaelites

See how you translated **Ishmaelites** in verse 25. Alternate translation: [to those Ishmaelites over there] or [to those Ishmaelite merchants over there]

so that our hand{s} will not be on him

Translate this idiom in a way that is natural and clear in your language. Alternate translation: [so that we do not harm him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

For he {is} our brother, our flesh

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. Alternate translation: [After all, as our brother, he is member of our family] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And his brothers listened

See how you translated **listened** in Gen 34:24.

Genesis 37:28

Then the Midianite men, traders, passed by

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. Alternate translation: [So as the Midianite (that is, Ishmaelite) merchants came by them] or [So when the Ishmaelite traders who were also called Midianites were going by them]

and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the cistern

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.1559)**)

and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty {shekels 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. Alternate translation: [and sold him to the Ishmaelite traders for twenty pieces of silver] (See: **Biblical Money (p.1572)**)

Genesis 37:29

Then Reuben returned to the cistern

Consider again how you translated **cistern** in verses 20, 22, 24, 28-29. Alternate translation: [Later Reuben who had been gone for a while returned to the well] or [Then Reuben went back to the well to get Joseph]

but behold, Joseph was not in the cistern

Alternate translation: [but to his surprise Joseph was gone!]

so he tore his clothes

Alternate translation: [So he tore his clothes to show grief] or [Then he was so grieved that he tore his clothes] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 37:30

Then he returned to his brothers

Alternate translation: [Then he went back to where his brothers were]

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The boy

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. Alternate translation: [The lad] or [Our younger brother]

is not {there

Alternate translation: [is missing!]

And I, where am I going

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. Alternate translation: [Now what can I do?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 37:31

Then they took

Alternate translation: [So they]

Then they took Joseph's tunic

Alternate translation: [took his robe] or [picked up his tunic]

and slaughtered a kid of the goats

Alternate translation: [killed a male goat]

and dipped the tunic in the 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. Alternate translation: [and dipped the robe in its blood] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 37:32

Then they sent the multicolored tunic and had it brought to their father and said

Consider again how you translated “multicolored/colorful tunic/robe” in verses 3, 23, 32. Alternate translation: [Then they had someone bring the colorful tunic back to their father and say to him for them]

We found this. Please examine

See how you translated **examine** in Gen 31:32. Alternate translation: [We found this tunic Please look at it to see]

Genesis 37:33

And he examined it and said

Alternate translation: [Jacob examined the robe and exclaimed]

It is} my son's tunic

Alternate translation: [This robe belongs to my son Joseph!]

An evil animal has devoured him! Surely Joseph was torn to pieces

See how you translated “an evil animal devoured him” in verse 20. Alternate translation: [Surely a fierce wild animal has torn Joseph to pieces and eaten him up!]

Genesis 37:34

Then Jacob tore his clothes

See how you translated **tore his clothes** in verse 29. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob tore his clothes in sorrow] or [Jacob was so grieved that he tore his clothes] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

and put sackcloth on his loins

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. Alternate translation: [put on sackcloth] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and he mourned for his son many days

See how you translated "mourn" in Gen 27:41. Alternate translation: [and for many days he grieved that his son had died] or [and for a very long time he grieved because his son was gone]

Genesis 37:35

but he refused to be comforted

Alternate translation: [but he did not want to be consoled] or [but he did not let them console him]

and said

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

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. Alternate translation: [No, I will continue to mourn until I die and join my son down in Sheol] (See:

Translate Unknowns (p.1724))

Genesis 37:36

And the Midianites sold him in Egypt

The event in verse 36 occurred during the time that the events in verses 29-35 happened. Alternate translation: [Meanwhile, when the Midianite traders got to the country of Egypt, they sold Joseph]

to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh

See how you translated **Pharaoh** in Gen 12:15-20. Alternate translation: [to Potiphar, who was an official under Pharaoh the king over Egypt;]

the chief of the guards

Alternate translation: [he was the captain over the royal guards] or [he was the leader of the soldiers who guarded the king]

Genesis 38

Genesis 38:1

And it happened at that time

The phrase **And it happened** introduces a new episode here. Some translations leave it implied. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Meanwhile] or [At this time] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

that Judah went down from his brothers

Alternate translation: [Judah left his brothers and traveled down]

and settled near an Adullamite man

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. Alternate translation: [and lived in the town of Adullam near the home of a man from there] or [to the town of Adullam and lived near the home of a man from there]

Genesis 38:2

And there Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man, and his name {was} Shua

Alternate translation: [While he was living there, Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua] or [While he was living there, Judah met a Canaanite woman whose father was Shua]

and he took her

See how you translated a similar idiom ("took a wife") in Gen 25:1. Alternate translation: [and he took her as his wife] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Then he went to her

See how you translated the idiom **went to** in Gen 6:4. Alternate translation: [Then he lay with her] or [Then he had sexual relations with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 38:3

and bore a son

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [and gave birth to a son]

and he called his name Er

Throughout Genesis, sometimes the father, sometimes the mother, and sometimes both are said to give their child his name. Alternate translation: [whom he named Er]

Genesis 38:4

Then she conceived again

See how you translated verse 3, which is similar to verse 4.

Genesis 38:5

Then she continued further

Alternate translation: [Then she conceived again]

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

See how you translated the phrase **took a wife for** in Gen 21:21. Alternate translation: [Years later, Judah chose a wife named Tamar for his firstborn son Er]

Genesis 38:7

But Er, the firstborn of Judah, was

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

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. Alternate translation: [did something that Yahweh judged to be evil] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

so Yahweh killed him

Alternate translation: [so Yahweh took his life]

Genesis 38:8

Go to the wife of your brother

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

Alternate translation: [so that you fulfill your duty to her as her brother-in-law]

and produce offspring

Alternate translation: [and produce children with her]

for your brother

Alternate translation: [to carry on the name of your brother Er]

Genesis 38:9

However, Onan knew that the offspring would not be his

Alternate translation: [But Onan knew that the children they would have together would not belong to him]

so it happened when

Alternate translation: [So every time]

he went to

Alternate translation: [he lay with] or [he had physical relations with] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

then he spilled {it} 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. Alternate translation: [he let his semen to go on the ground]

so that he would not give offspring to his brother

Alternate translation: [so that he would not have offspring for his brother] or [to keep her from getting pregnant and having any offspring for his brother]

Genesis 38:10

And what he did was evil in the eyes of Yahweh

See how you translated **evil in the eyes of Yahweh** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [Yahweh judged what he did to be evil]

so he killed him also

Alternate translation: [so he took his life too] or [so Yahweh caused him to die too]

Genesis 38:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 38:12

Then the days were many

Alternate translation: [Many years later] or [Years went by and then]

and Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, 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

See how you translated **comforted** in Gen 37:35. Alternate translation: [After Judah finished grieving for her, one day] or [After Judah had completed the customary time of mourning for her]

and he went up to 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

See how you translated "shear his sheep" in Gen 31:19 and see the note about that there. Alternate translation: [where his men were shearing his sheep for him]

he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite

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. Alternate translation: [His friend Hirah the Adullamite went with him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 38:13

And it was told to Tamar, saying

Alternate translation: [Then someone told Tamar] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep

See how you translated “shearing his sheep” in verse 12. Alternate translation: [is on his way to shear his sheep in the town of Timnah]

Genesis 38:14

So she took off her widow's clothes from her

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. Alternate translation: [So she changed into different clothes from the kind of clothes that widows wear] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and covered herself with a veil

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. Alternate translation: [and covered herself with a large veil] or [and covered her face with a thin veil]

and wrapped herself

Alternate translation: [and disguised herself as a prostitute] or [to disguise herself]

Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which {is} on the road to Timnah

Some languages need to specify that Tamar traveled to Enaim before she sat down there. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Then she sat by the gateway to the town of Enaim, which was on the way to the town of Timnah] or [Then she went toward the town of Timnah and sat down at the entrance of the town of Enaim, which was along the way] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

because she saw that Shelah had grown up

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

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. Alternate translation: [but Judah had not given her to Shelah to marry as he was required to do] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 38:15

and he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face

See how you translated **prostitute** in Gen 34:31 and **covered her face** in verse 14. Alternate translation: [but since she had covered her face with a veil he could not see who she was and he thought that she was a prostitute] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 38:16

So he turned to her beside the road

Alternate translation: [So he went over to where she was sitting by the road] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and said

Alternate translation: [and propositioned her by saying] or [and requested]

Please come, let me come to you

Alternate translation: [Let me lie with you] or [Let me have relations with you] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

because he did not know that she {was} his daughter-in-law

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 ..." Alternate translation: [He said that because he did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law Tamar]

What will you give to me

Alternate translation: [What will you give me in exchange]

if you will come

Alternate translation: [if I allow you to]

you will come to me

See how you translated the idiom **come to** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: [lie with me?] or [have relations with me?] or [do that?] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 38:17

I will send a kid goat from the flock

See how you translated **kid goat** in Gen 27:9, 16.

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

Alternate translation: [until you send the goat to me]

Genesis 38:18

Then he said

Alternate translation: [So Judah asked her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} the pledge that I should give to you

Alternate translation: [What should I give to you as a pledge]

Your signet and your cord

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. Alternate translation: [Give me your signature thing with its string that you wear around your neck] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and your staff

Alternate translation: [and your cane]

and went to 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. Alternate translation: [Then he lay with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and she conceived by him

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. Alternate translation: [and she became pregnant by him] or [and he caused her to become pregnant]

Genesis 38:19

Then she got up and left

Alternate translation: [After that, Tamar left Judah and went home] or [After Tamar left Judah, she went home]

and she took off her veil from her

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. See how you translated **veil** in verse 14. Alternate translation: [took off her shawl] or [Then she took her veil off]

and put on her widow's clothes

See how you translated **widow's clothes** in verse 14. Alternate translation: [and put back on her clothes that showed she was a widow] or [and put back on the kind of clothes that widows wear]

Genesis 38:20

Then Judah sent the kid goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite

See how you translated “his friend ... the Adullamite” in verse 12 and **kid goat** in verse 17. Alternate translation: [After that, Judah sent his friend Hirah the Adullamite with a young goat]

to get back the pledge from the hand of the woman

Alternate translation: [to retrieve his things from the woman whom he had given them to] or [to exchange it for the things he had left with the woman] or [to get back from the woman the things he had left with her]

but he did not find her

Alternate translation: [but Hirah could not find her]

Genesis 38:21

So he asked the men of her place, saying

Alternate translation: [So 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

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. Alternate translation: [Where is the shrine prostitute who was sitting beside the road near the town of Enaim?]

There has not been a temple prostitute

Alternate translation: [There has never been a shrine prostitute] or [No shrine prostitute has ever been]

in this place

Alternate translation: [in this town]

Genesis 38:22

So he returned to Judah

Alternate translation: [So Hirah came back to Judah]

and said

Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and informed him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I did not find her

Alternate translation: [I was not able to find the woman]

And also

Alternate translation: [And besides that]

the men of the place

Alternate translation: [the men who live around there] or [the men who live in that town]

said, 'There has not been a temple prostitute in this {place

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. Alternate translation: [say that there has never been a shrine prostitute near there] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 38:23

And Judah said

Alternate translation: [Then Judah said to him] or [Judah replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

so that we do not become a laughingstock

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. Alternate translation: [so that people do not laugh at us] or [so that we are not publicly shamed] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [After all]

I sent this kid

Alternate translation: [I did try to deliver this goat to her] or [I sent you to deliver this goat to her]

but you did not find her

Alternate translation: [but you could not find her]

Genesis 38:24

Then it happened 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

Alternate translation: [someone said to Judah] or [someone informed Judah] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Tamar your daughter-in-law

Consider again how you translated **daughter-in-law** in the book of Genesis. See Gen 11:31; 38:11, 16, 24.

has prostituted herself

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. Alternate translation: [has acted as a prostitute]

and also, behold, {she is} pregnant by her prostitutions

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [In fact, as a result of her immoral behavior she has become pregnant!] or [and even worse, she is now pregnant because of that!]

So Judah said

Alternate translation: [Judah said angrily] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Bring her out

Executions were normally done outside of the city walls. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1559)**)

and let her be burned

Alternate translation: [and punish her by burning her to death!]

Genesis 38:25

She was being brought out

Alternate translation: [So they went to get Tamar, but as they were taking her out of the town]

and she sent {a message} to her father-in-law, saying

See how you translated **father-in-law** in verse 13.

Then she said, “Please identify whose signet and cords and staff these {are

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. Alternate translation: [Please identify the man who owns this name thing with its string and this walking stick] or [Please look at this name seal with its cord and this walking stick. Do you know who they belong to?] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Genesis 38:26

And Judah identified {the things

Alternate translation: [Judah saw that the things she had were his]

and said

Alternate translation: [and admitted]

She is more righteous than I {am

Alternate translation: [She is right, and I am wrong]

because I did not give her to Shelah my son

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Shelah** in verses 5, 11, 14. Alternate translation: [because I refused to have my son Shelah marry her as I was required to!] or [because I did not let her marry my son Shelah as I was required to!]

And he did not continue to know her more

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. Alternate translation: [So they released her and after that he never again slept with her] or [... never had sexual relations with Tamar again] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 38:27

Then it happened when {it was} time for her 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

Alternate translation: [amazingly there were twins inside her!] or [they saw 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

See how you translated **giving birth** in Gen 35:16. This may need to be translated differently here because of the different context. Alternate translation: [As she was starting to deliver her babies]

then {one} put out a hand

Alternate translation: [one of the twins put out his hand]

and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied {it} on his hand, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Then the midwife who was there tied a bright red thread on his wrist and said] or [So the midwife who was helping her ...]

This {one} came out first

Alternate translation: [This one was born first]

Genesis 38:29

But it happened, when he drew his hand back in, then behold

Alternate translation: [But then that baby pulled his hand back inside, and suddenly]

his brother came out

Alternate translation: [his brother came out first instead] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1559)**)

Then she said

Alternate translation: [So the midwife said to the baby] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

How have you breached for yourself a breach

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. Alternate translation: [How did you burst yourself out like that?] or [What a powerful way for you to burst out!] or [Just look at how you have forced your way out!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

So he called his name

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. Alternate translation: [So they named him]

Perez

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.1634)**)

Genesis 38:30

And afterwards, his brother

Alternate translation: [After that, his twin brother]

came out

Alternate translation: [was born]

who {had} the scarlet thread on his hand

See how you translated **scarlet thread** in verse 28. Alternate translation: [who had the bright red thread on his wrist] or [with the bright red string on his wrist]

and he called his name

See how you translated **he called his name** in verse 29. Alternate translation: [So they named him]

Genesis 39

Genesis 39:1

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt

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. Alternate translation: [Now as you know, Ishmaelite merchants had brought Joseph down to the country of Egypt] or [Returning now to Joseph: Remember that he had been taken down to the country of Egypt by Ishmaelite traders] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

Potiphar, an Egyptian man, an official of Pharaoh, the chief of the 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

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. Alternate translation: [had bought him as a slave from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 39:2

And Yahweh was with Joseph

See how you translated **was with** in Gen 21:20; 26:28. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh was with Joseph and helped him]

and he was a successful man

Alternate translation: [so that he succeeded in what he did] or [so that he did everything very well]

and he was in the house of his Egyptian master

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.1651)**)

Genesis 39:3

And his master saw that Yahweh {was} with him

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

See how you translated **successful** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [and was helping Joseph to prosper in everything that he did] or [and was helping Joseph to do everything very well]

Genesis 39:4

So Joseph found favor in his eyes, and he served him

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. Alternate translation: [So he was pleased with him and made him his personal servant] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

And he put him in charge over his house and gave into his hand all {that} was his

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. Alternate translation: [He also put Joseph in charge of managing his household and taking care of everything else that he owned] or [He also appointed him as the overseer of his entire household and entrusted into his care everything that belonged to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 39:5

And it happened from the time

Alternate translation: [Beginning from the time that]

he put him in charge in his house and over all that was his

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.
Alternate translation: [he put him in charge of managing everything that belonged to him]

then Yahweh blessed the house of the Egyptian

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

Alternate translation: [because Joseph was working for him]

So the blessing of Yahweh was on all that was his

Alternate translation: [Yahweh blessed everything that belonged to him] or [He caused everything that he owned to prosper]

in the house and in the fields

In this context, **house** especially refers to the people in the house and **fields** refers to what is in the fields.
Alternate translation: [including everything in his household and in his fields] or [including his family and servants in his household, as well as the crops and livestock in his fields] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 39:6

And he left all that {belonged} to him in the hand of Joseph

See how you translated a similar idiom (“gave into his hand”) in verse 4. Alternate translation: [In fact, he gave Joseph the responsibility of managing everything that he had, so that] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he did not think to himself {about} anything except for the bread that he ate

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. Alternate translation: [he did not need to concern himself with anything in his household except for personal things like deciding what kind of food he wanted to eat] or [the only thing he needed to decide about in his household was personal things like what food he wanted to eat] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

Now Joseph was handsome in form and handsome in appearance

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. Alternate translation: [Joseph was muscular and good-looking] or [Now Joseph was a very handsome young man] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

Genesis 39:7

And it happened after those things

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. Alternate translation: [After he had been there for a while]

then the wife of his master lifted her eyes toward Joseph

Many languages have a similar idiom that fits well here. Do what is best in your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and said

Translate this quote introduction in a way that fits well with what Potiphar's wife says to Joseph. Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and demanded him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Lie with me

See how you translated the idiom "lie with" in Gen 19:32. Alternate translation: [Sleep with me!] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 39:8

But he refused

Alternate translation: [But he rejected her demand]

and said to the wife of his master

Alternate translation: [and told her] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look] or [Notice that]

with me {here

Alternate translation: [with me in charge] or [since I am working here]

my master does not think {about

Alternate translation: [my owner does not need to worry about] or [my owner does not need to concern himself with]

what {is} in the house

Alternate translation: [managing anything in his household]

and all that is his he has given into my hand

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, everything that he owns he has entrusted to my care] or [In fact, he has put me in charge of everything that he has] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 39:9

He is not greater than me in this house

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. Alternate translation: [As a result, even he does not exercise more authority in his household than I do]

and he has not withheld anything from me except for you, because you {are} 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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Litotes (p.1662)**)

So how can I do this great evil, and sin against God

Joseph uses this rhetorical question to emphasize why he will not do what Potiphar's wife wants. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [So I refuse to do such an evil thing, which would be a terrible sin against God!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 39:10

Then it happened even though she kept speaking to Joseph day {after} day

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

Alternate translation: [he did not do what she wanted, but refused to lie with her] or [he refused her demands]

to be with her

Alternate translation: [and he stayed away from her] or [and would not even go near her]

Genesis 39:11

Then it happened on such a day

Alternate translation: [But then on a day like that] or [But one such day] or [But one day]

and there were no other men of the house there in the house

Alternate translation: [none of the other household menservants were there]

Genesis 39:12

So she caught him by his garment

The word **garment** is very general and probably refers to an outer article of clothing, such as a robe or tunic.

saying

See how you translated this quote introduction in verse 7. Alternate translation: [and said to him] or [and said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Lie with me

See how you translated this quote in verse 7. Alternate translation: [Sleep with me!] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

But he left his garment in her hand and fled and went outside

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. Alternate translation: [But immediately he fled and left his tunic behind in her hands as he ran outside] or [But he immediately got away from her and fled outdoors, leaving his tunic behind in her hands]

Genesis 39:13

Then it happened when she saw

Alternate translation: [After she saw]

that he had left his garment in her hands and had fled outside

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 12. Alternate translation: [that Joseph had left his tunic behind in her hands as he ran outside] or [that Joseph had fled outside and left his tunic behind in her hands] (See:

Information Structure (p.1651))

Genesis 39:14

then she called for the men of her house

See how you translated “men of the house” in verse 11. Alternate translation: [she called out for the other household menservants to come to her] or [she summoned the other menservants of her household to come] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and said to them, saying

Alternate translation: [Then when they came, she exclaimed to them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Look

As Potiphar’s wife speaks, she is probably showing the servants Joseph’s garment in her hands. Alternate translation: [Look at this!] or [See what happened!] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

He brought to us a Hebrew man

Make sure that your translation of **He brought** refers here to Potiphar (as verse 17 confirms), not Joseph. Alternate translation: [My husband brought this Hebrew slave here to us] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

to laugh at us

In this context, **us** is general and includes Potiphar’s wife and the people she is talking to. Alternate translation: [to mock us!] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

He came 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). Alternate translation: [That man came here to me]

to lie with me

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. Alternate translation: [to force me to lie with him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

but I called out with a loud voice

Alternate translation: [but I cried out for help!] or [but I shouted loudly for help!]

Genesis 39:15

Then it happened when he heard

Alternate translation: [Then when]

Then it happened when he heard that I raised my voice and called out

Alternate translation: [Then when he heard me cry out loudly] or [Then as soon as he heard me shout like that]

then he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside

See how you translated a similar clause in verses 12 and 13. Alternate translation: [he left his tunic with me and fled outside] or [he immediately fled outdoors and he left his tunic behind!]

Genesis 39:16

Then she kept

Alternate translation: [So she kept]

until his master

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.1559)**)

came to his house

Alternate translation: [came back to his home] or [came home]

Genesis 39:17

Then she spoke to him

Alternate translation: [Then when he arrived, she told him]

according to those words

Alternate translation: [the same thing she had told the others]

saying

Alternate translation: [This is what she said:] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The Hebrew slave whom you brought

Alternate translation: [That Hebrew slave whom you brought]

to us

Here the pronoun **us** includes Potiphar, his wife and their household. Alternate translation: [to work for us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

came to me to laugh at me

See how you translated **laugh at** in verse 14. Alternate translation: [just now came to me to mock me!]

Genesis 39:18

Then it happened when I raised my voice and called out

See how you translated verse 15, which is similar to verse 18. Alternate translation: [But as soon as I shouted loudly] or [But when I shouted for help]

then he left his garment beside me and fled outside

Consider again how you translated **garment** in verses 12-13, 15-16, 18. Alternate translation: [he left his tunic beside me and ran outside]

Genesis 39:19

the words of his wife that she spoke to him, saying, “Such {are} the things your slave did to me

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.1606)**)

then his anger burned

Consider whether or not your language has a similar idiom that would fit well here. Alternate translation: [he burned with anger] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 39:20

Then Joseph's master took him and put him in the round-house

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. Alternate translation: [Then he had Joseph arrested and put in the jail] or [And he had soldiers arrest Joseph and put him in the jail] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

the place where the prisoners of the king were bound

Alternate translation: [where they imprisoned people who had committed crimes against the king]

So he was there in the round-house

Alternate translation: [So Joseph was there in the prison]

Genesis 39:21

and showed kindness to him

See how you translated “show kindness” in Gen 24:12. Alternate translation: [and was gracious to him]

and gave him favor in the eyes of the chief of the round-house

See how you translated a similar phrase (“favor in ... eyes”) in verse 4. Alternate translation: [and caused the prison warden to be pleased with him, so that he treated him favorably] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 39:22

And the chief of the round-house gave into the hand of Joseph

Alternate translation: [Soon the warden of the prison gave Joseph the responsibility for taking care of] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

all the prisoners who {were} in the round-house

Alternate translation: [all the other prisoners who were in the prison]

and all that they were doing there, he was {the one} doing {it

Alternate translation: [so that he was in charge of everything that was done there]

Genesis 39:23

The chief of the round-house

Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [So the warden] or [As a result the jail warden] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1594)**)

did not look {at} anything

Alternate translation: [did not need to supervise anything]

in his hand

Alternate translation: [that Joseph was managing]

because Yahweh was with him

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.1651)**)

and Yahweh made what he was doing successful

See how you translated a similar clause (“Yahweh made all that he was doing successful”) in verse 3. Alternate translation: [and gave him success in whatever he did] or [and helped him to succeed at everything he did]

Genesis 40

Genesis 40:1

Then it happened after those things {that

Alternate translation: [After some time, one day]

the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and the baker

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. Alternate translation: [the chief wine-server and the chief baker for the king over Egypt] or [the man who was in charge of those who served wine to the king over Egypt and the man who was in charge of those who baked bread for the king] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

sinned

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. Alternate translation: [displeased] or [offended]

against their lord, against the king of 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. Alternate translation: [their master, who was Pharaoh the king over Egypt]

Genesis 40:2

And Pharaoh broke out in anger

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. Alternate translation: [So he] or [So the king] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

And Pharaoh broke out in anger against

Consider whether or not your language has an idiom similar to **broke out in anger** that fits well here. Alternate translation: [was very angry at] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

his two officials, against the chief of the cupbearers and against the chief of the bakers

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. Alternate translation: [the official in charge of serving wine to him and the official in charge of baking bread for him] or [his head wine-server and head baker] or [those two officials] (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1727)**)

Genesis 40:3

and he 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. Alternate translation: [So he had them arrested and put] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

in custody

Alternate translation: [under guard]

in the house of the chief of 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. Alternate translation: [in the house of the captain of the guards]

in the round-house, the place where Joseph was bound

See how you translated **bound** in Gen 39:20. Alternate translation: [that is, in the round-house jail, the same prison where Joseph was imprisoned]

Genesis 40:4

And the chief of the guards assigned Joseph to them

Alternate translation: [There the captain of the guards assigned Joseph to take care of them]

so he attended them

Alternate translation: [and so he waited on them]

and they were in custody

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 ..." Alternate translation: [and they were kept in custody] or [and they remained in custody] (See: **Information Structure (p. 1651)**)

for} days

The phrase **for days** is a general expression that refers to an unspecified length of time. Alternate translation: [for some days] or [for a while]

Genesis 40:5

Then the two of them dreamed a dream. Each {had} his {own} dream in the same night

Alternate translation: [Then one night the two of them each had a dream] or [One night they both had a dream]
(See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and} each {man's} dream had its own interpretation

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and each of the dreams had its own meaning] or [each with its own meaning]

They were} the cupbearer and the baker who {belonged} to the king of Egypt, who were bound in the round-house

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. Alternate translation: [This is talking about the wine-server and the baker, who had served the king of Egypt but were in prison] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 40:6

And Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them, and behold

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to have the time phrase **in the morning** first this verse. Alternate translation: [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 that] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

they were upset

Alternate translation: [they were troubled] or [they looked distressed]

Genesis 40:7

So he asked Pharaoh's officials who {were} with him in custody {in} the house of his master, saying

Alternate translation: [And he asked them] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Why {are} your faces sad today

Some languages have an idiom that fits well here. Do what is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Why do your faces look so downcast today?] or [Why do you look so sad today?]

Genesis 40:8

And they said to him

Alternate translation: [They replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We dreamed a dream

Alternate translation: [Last night we each had a dream]

but {there is} no one to interpret it

Alternate translation: [but we do not have anyone here to explain them for us]

Then Joseph said to them

Alternate translation: [So Joseph replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Don't interpretations {belong} to God

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. Alternate translation: [God is the only one who can explain the meaning of dreams] or [God is the only one who gives people the ability to interpret the meaning of dreams] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Please tell {them} to me

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. Alternate translation: [Please tell your dreams to me and God will reveal to me what they mean] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 40:9

Then the chief of the cupbearers told his dream to Joseph

See how you translated **chief of the cupbearers** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [So the head wine-server told Joseph what was in his dream] or [So the officer who was in charge over the wine-servers described to Joseph what he had seen in his dream]

and said to him

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [by saying] or [This is what he said:]

And behold, in my dream a grapevine

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. Alternate translation: [In my dream there was a vine] or [While I was dreaming, I saw a grapevine]

Genesis 40:10

and on the grapevine {were} three branches

Consider whether or not it is more natural to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [The vine had three branches]

Then while it was budding

Alternate translation: [As soon as it started budding] or [Soon buds started forming on the vine Then]

its blossoms came out

Alternate translation: [suddenly there were flowers] or [the buds became blossoms]

and} its clusters ripened {into} grapes

Alternate translation: [and its clusters of flowers became clusters of ripe fruit] or [and the flowers became clusters of ripe fruit]

Genesis 40:11

and I took the grapes

Alternate translation: [so I picked some fruit from the vine]

and squeezed them

Alternate translation: [and squeezed them so that the juice went]

Then I put the cup into the hand of Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh and he drank from it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 40:12

Then Joseph said to him

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph told him]

This {is} its interpretation

Alternate translation: [This is the meaning of your dream:] or [Here is what your dream means:]

The three branches {are} three days

Alternate translation: [The three branches symbolize three days]

Genesis 40:13

Within three days

Alternate translation: [In three more days] or [Three days from now]

Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [the king] (See: **Honorifics (p. 1633)**)

will lift up your head

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. Alternate translation: [will have you brought up out of prison] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and restore you to your position

Alternate translation: [and reappoint you to your previous work] or [and give you back your status]

and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand

Alternate translation: [so that you will again serve wine to Pharaoh] or [so that you will again have the duty of serving him his cup of wine]

according to the former custom when you were his cupbearer

Alternate translation: [as you used to do when you were his cupbearer] or [the way you did before as his cupbearer]

Genesis 40:14

But if you remember me with you, when it goes well for you

Alternate translation: [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 you]

then please show kindness to me

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. Alternate translation: [and please be gracious to me] or [and please do me a favor]

and mention me to Pharaoh

Make sure that the way Joseph refers to King Pharaoh sounds respectful in your translation. Alternate translation: [and tell King Pharaoh about me and how I was falsely accused] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

and get me out from this house

Alternate translation: [so that I can get out of this prison] or [so that he frees me from this prison]

Genesis 40:15

For indeed, I was stolen

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language to emphasize Joseph. Alternate translation: [Surely I was taken by force] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

from the land of the Hebrews

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. Alternate translation: [from the land where the Hebrew people live]

And also here

Alternate translation: [And while I have been here in Egypt] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

I did not do anything

Alternate translation: [I have not done anything wrong]

that they should put me in the pit

Alternate translation: [to be put into this prison] or [to deserve being in a prison]

Genesis 40:16

And the chief of the bakers saw that he interpreted favorably

See how you translated a related word (“interpreter”) in verse 8. Alternate translation: [When the head baker heard Joseph explain that dream in a positive way] or [When the head baker heard the positive interpretation that Joseph gave for the first dream]

so he said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [he said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

I also {was} in my dream, and behold

Alternate translation: [I also had a dream, and in it there were]

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

These baskets would have been carried on the head, each one above the other. Alternate translation: [stacked on top of each other on my head]

Genesis 40:17

And in the top basket {were} all {kinds} of

Alternate translation: [The top basket was full of]

all {kinds} of food for Pharaoh, baker's goods

Make sure that the way the chief baker refers to King Pharaoh sounds respectful in your translation. Alternate translation: [all kinds of baked goods for King Pharaoh to eat] or [many kinds of special bread and cakes that had been made for King Pharaoh to eat] (See: **Honorifics (p.1633)**)

but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head

Alternate translation: [but some birds were eating everything up from the basket] or [but instead, some birds came and devoured all the food in the basket on my head]

Genesis 40:18

Then Joseph responded and said

Alternate translation: [Joseph told the baker] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

This {is} its interpretation

See how you translated this in verse 12. Alternate translation: [This is the meaning of your dream:] or [Here is what your dream means:]

The three baskets {are} three days

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 12. Alternate translation: [The three baskets symbolize three days]

Genesis 40:19

Within three days

See how you translated this phrase in verse 13. Alternate translation: [Three days from now]

Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [the king]

will lift up your head from you

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. Alternate translation: [will have his soldiers cut off your head] or [will have you beheaded]

and hang you on a tree

Alternate translation: [and hang your body on a stake]

and the birds will eat your flesh from you

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. Alternate translation: [and birds will eat all your flesh off your bones]

Genesis 40:20

Then it happened on the third day, the day Pharaoh was born

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

See how you translated **feast** or “banquet” in Gen 21:8. Alternate translation: [he held a banquet for all of his officials to attend] or [he invited all his officials to attend a birthday feast]

And he lifted up the head of the chief of the cupbearers and the head of the chief of the bakers

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. Alternate translation: [During the feast he had soldiers bring his chief wine-server and chief baker out of prison to the banquet]

in the presence of his servants

Alternate translation: [in front of all his other officials] or [where all his other officers were]

Genesis 40:21

Then he restored

See how you translated “restore ... to ... position” in verse 13. Alternate translation: [Then he reappointed]

the chief of the cupbearers to his position

Alternate translation: [the chief wine-server to his previous work]

and he put the cup into the hand of Pharaoh

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 13. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 40:22

but the chief of the bakers he hanged

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. Alternate translation: [But as for the chief baker, Pharaoh had him executed and hanged on a tree] or [But Pharaoh had his soldiers behead the head baker and impale his body on a pole]

just as Joseph had interpreted for them

Alternate translation: [Everything happened exactly the way Joseph had interpreted 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

Alternate translation: [But the chief cupbearer did not remember to tell Pharaoh about Joseph, but 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

Alternate translation: [After two full years had passed] or [Two complete years later]

that Pharaoh was dreaming and behold, he was standing

See how you translated **Pharaoh** in Gen 40:2. Alternate translation: [King Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

beside the 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.1559)**)

Genesis 41:2

Then behold

Alternate translation: [Then suddenly] or [Then he saw that]

from the river came up seven cows, fine-looking and fat-fleshed

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. Alternate translation: [seven cows that were healthy-looking and well-fed came up out of the river onto the bank] or [seven healthy-looking, well-fed cows came up out of the river onto the bank]

and they grazed among the reeds

Alternate translation: [and started grazing on the grass that was there] or [and started eating the marsh grass beside the river]

Genesis 41:3

Then behold

Alternate translation: [Then suddenly] or [Then he saw that]

seven other cows came up after them from the river, ugly-looking and thin-fleshed

Alternate translation: [seven cows that were sickly-looking and skinny walked up out of the river] or [seven sickly-looking, skinny cows came up out of the river] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and they stood beside the {other} cows

Alternate translation: [and stood next to the healthy cows]

on the bank of the river

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

See how you translated this phrase in verse 3. Alternate translation: [Then the sickly-looking, skinny cows devoured] or [Then the cows that were sickly-looking and scrawny ate down]

the seven fine-looking and fat cows

See how you translated this phrase in verse 2. Alternate translation: [the seven healthy-looking, well-fed cows] or [the seven cows that were healthy-looking and fat]

and Pharaoh woke up

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Pharaoh at each point/occurrence in this chapter. Alternate translation: [Just then King Pharaoh woke up] or [After that, the king woke up]

Genesis 41:5

Then he fell asleep

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh] or [Then the king]

Then he fell asleep

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh went to sleep again] or [The the king went back to sleep] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and dreamed a second {time

Alternate translation: [and started dreaming again]

And behold

Alternate translation: [In this dream there were]

seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, fat and good

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. Alternate translation: [seven big beautiful heads of grain growing on the same stem]

Genesis 41:6

Then behold

Alternate translation: [Then suddenly] or [Next he saw that]

seven heads of grain, thin and scorched {by} the east wind

This wind was from the desert in the east, so it was hot and dry. Alternate translation: [seven shriveled heads of grain that were dried out by the hot east wind] or [seven shriveled heads of grain that the hot east wind had dried out] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

sprouted

Alternate translation: [grew up] or [were growing]

after them

Consider whether it is better in your language to refer to the first heads here with a pronoun (**them**) or a noun phrase. Alternate translation: [next to them on the same stalk] or [on the same stalk beside the well-formed heads] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 41:7

Then the thin heads of grain swallowed up

See how you translated **thin** in verse 6 and **heads of grain** in verses 5-6. Alternate translation: [Next, the shriveled heads of grain devoured] or [... ate up]

the seven fat and full heads

The word **full** here describes heads of grain that have many seeds in them. See how you translated **fat** in verse 5. Alternate translation: [the seven plump, well-formed heads]

Then Pharaoh woke up

See how you translated this clause in verse 4. Alternate translation: [Just then Pharaoh woke up] or [After that, Pharaoh woke up]

and behold, {it was} a dream

Alternate translation: [and suddenly knew that he had been dreaming]

Genesis 41:8

Then it happened in the 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. Alternate translation: [In the morning]

that his spirit was agitated

Alternate translation: [Pharaoh felt upset about the dreams]

so he sent and called for

Alternate translation: [so he sent servants to summon] or [so he had messengers summon]

all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men

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. Alternate translation: [all the magicians and other wise men in the country of Egypt to come to him]

Then Pharaoh told his dreams to them

Alternate translation: [When they arrived, Pharaoh told them what he had dreamed] or [Then he related to them what he had seen in his dreams]

but no one

Alternate translation: [but none of those men]

could interpret them for Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [could tell him what the dreams meant]

Genesis 41:9

the chief of the cupbearers

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. Alternate translation: [But the head wine-server]

Then the chief of the cupbearers spoke with Pharaoh, saying

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. Alternate translation: [But the head wine-server spoke up and said to Pharaoh] or [But the head wine-server said to Pharaoh] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Today I 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. Alternate translation: [Your Majesty I now remember] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

my offenses

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. Alternate translation: [my sins]

Genesis 41:10

Pharaoh broke out in anger against

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. Alternate translation: [Some time ago, King Pharaoh, you were very angry at] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

his servants

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. Alternate translation: [his officers] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

and he put me in custody {in} the house of the chief of the guards, me and the chief of the bakers

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. Alternate translation: [and he put the head baker and me in the prison that is in the house of the captain of the guards]

Genesis 41:11

And we dreamed a dream in the same night, he and I

See how you translated a similar sentence in Gen 40:5. In verses 11-13, the pronouns **we** and **us** exclude Pharaoh. Alternate translation: [One time while we were there, we each dreamed a dream during the same night] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his dream

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. Alternate translation: [and each of our dreams had its own meaning]

Genesis 41:12

Now there with us {was} a young Hebrew man

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

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. Alternate translation: [who was a servant for the captain of the guards]

And we told {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. Alternate translation: [After we described our dreams to him]

and he interpreted our dreams for us

Alternate translation: [he told us what they meant]

He interpreted {for} each according to his dream

Alternate translation: [He told each of us the meaning of our dreams]

Genesis 41:13

And it happened, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened

Alternate translation: [And sure enough, everything happened exactly the way he had interpreted the dreams to us:]

me he restored to my position

See how you translated “restored to ... position” in Gen 40:21. Alternate translation: [you reinstated me to my previous work as your cupbearer]

and him he hanged

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. Alternate translation: [but you had your soldiers execute the baker and hang his body on a pole] or [but you had your soldiers execute the baker] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 41:14

Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph

See how you translated **sent and called for** in verse 8. Alternate translation: [Immediately Pharaoh sent servants to summon Joseph] or [When Pharaoh heard that, immediately he had messengers summon Joseph]

So they quickly brought him from the pit

See how you translated **pit** in Gen 40:15. Alternate translation: [So they hurriedly got Joseph out of the dungeon] or [So they went right away and got ...]

Then he shaved and changed his clothes

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. Alternate translation: [Then he shaved his head and face, changed into suitable clothes and] or [Then after he shaved his head and face and changed into clean clothing, he] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and came to Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [came before Pharaoh] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

Genesis 41:15

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh told him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

but no one could interpret it

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 40:8.

But I heard about you, saying

Alternate translation: [But I was told]

that} you hear a dream {and are able} to interpret it

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. Alternate translation: [that when you hear a dream, you are able to interpret what it means] or [that when someone tells you a dream, you are able to interpret its meaning]

Genesis 41:16

And Joseph responded to Pharaoh, saying

Alternate translation: [Joseph replied to Pharaoh] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

It is} not in me

Make sure your translation of Joseph's response sounds polite. See what you did in verse 9. Alternate translation: [Your Majesty, I cannot do that by myself] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

God will answer

Alternate translation: [but God will interpret your dream]

with Pharaoh's peace

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..." Alternate translation: [for your well-being King Pharaoh] or [so that you, King Pharaoh, will have peace in your spirit] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 41:17

Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph

Alternate translation: [So Pharaoh told him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

In my dream, behold, I was standing

Alternate translation: [I dreamed that I was standing]

on the bank of the 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. Alternate translation: [on the bank of the Nile River] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1559)**)

Genesis 41:18

Then behold

Compare how you translated verse 2, which is similar but not identical to verse 18. Alternate translation: [Then I saw that]

from the river came up seven cows, fat-fleshed and of fine form

Alternate translation: [seven cows that were fat and healthy-looking came up out of the river onto the bank] or [seven well-fed, healthy-looking cows came up out of the river onto the bank] (See: **Information Structure (p. 1651)**)

and they grazed among the reeds

Alternate translation: [and started grazing on]

among the reeds

Alternate translation: [the plants that were there] or [the tall grass beside the river]

Genesis 41:19

Then behold

See how you translated verse 3, which is similar to the first half of verse 19. Alternate translation: [Then suddenly] or [Next I saw that]

seven other cows came up after them

Alternate translation: [seven other cows came up out of the river behind the first cows;]

poor and very ugly of form and thin-fleshed

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. Alternate translation: [they were in horrible condition, very sickly-looking and scrawny] (See:

Information Structure (p.1651))

I have not seen

Alternate translation: [In fact, I have not seen]

cows} as ugly as those

Alternate translation: [cows in such bad condition]

in all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [in the whole country of Egypt!] or [anywhere in the country of Egypt!]

Genesis 41:20

Then the thin and ugly cows ate

See how you translated **ate** in verse 4. Alternate translation: [Then the skinny, unhealthy cows devoured] or [Then the cows that were scrawny and sickly swallowed up]

the first seven fat cows

See how you translated **fat** or “fat-fleshed” in verses 2, 4, 18 and 20. Alternate translation: [the seven well-fed cows]

Genesis 41:21

So they went into their bellies, but it could not be known

Alternate translation: [But even after they had eaten them, no one would ever know] or [But although the scrawny cows had swallowed the fat ones, it could not be seen]

that they had gone into their bellies

Alternate translation: [that they had eaten them]

and their appearance {was} just as ugly as at the beginning

Alternate translation: [because they still looked just as scrawny as they had before]

Then I woke up

Alternate translation: [At that point, I woke up]

Genesis 41:22

Then I saw in my dream, and behold

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated verse 5, which is similar to verse 22. Alternate translation: [seven heads of grain growing on a single plant. They were full of ripe grain kernels] or [seven full beautiful heads of grain growing on the same stalk] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:23

Then behold

See how you translated verse 6, which is similar to verse 23. Alternate translation: [Next I saw that]

seven heads of grain, withered, thin {and} scorched {by} the east wind

Alternate translation: [seven heads of grain that were small and withered because they were dried out by the hot east wind] or [seven small, withered heads of grain that the hot east wind had dried out]

sprouted

Alternate translation: [grew up] or [were growing]

after them

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. Alternate translation: [next to them on the same stalk] or [on the same stalk beside the first heads] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:24

Then the thin heads of grain swallowed up

See how you translated the first half of verse 7, which is similar to the first half of verse 24. Alternate translation: [Then the small heads of grain ate up] or [... swallowed down] or [... devoured]

the seven good heads of grain

See how you translated **good** in verses 5 and 22. Alternate translation: [the seven beautiful heads]

And I told {this} to the magicians

See how you translated **magicians** in verse 8. Alternate translation: [I told my dreams to my magicians]

but no one {could} explain {it} to me

See how you translated a different Hebrew word that means **explain** or “interpret” in verse 8. Alternate translation: [but they could not explain them for me]

Genesis 41:25

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph responded to Pharaoh] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Pharaoh's dreams {are} one

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. Alternate translation: [Your Honor, both of your dreams mean the same thing] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

What God is doing he has shown to Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [Through them, God is showing to you what he will do] or [God has revealed to you, King Pharaoh, what he is planning to do] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:26

The seven good cows {are} seven years

Alternate translation: [The seven healthy cows in your dream symbolize seven years]

and the seven good heads of grain {are} seven years

Alternate translation: [and the seven beautiful heads of grain symbolize the same seven years]

The dreams {are} one

See how you translated **dreams are one** in verse 25. Alternate translation: [Both dreams have the same meaning]

Genesis 41:27

And the seven thin and ugly cows

See how you translated **thin and ugly cows** in verse 20, and how you translated **thin** in verse 19. Alternate translation: [The seven skinny and sickly cows]

that came up after them

Alternate translation: [that came up out of the river behind the first cows]

are} seven years, and {so are} the seven thin 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. Alternate translation: [symbolize a different seven years, and so do the seven small heads of grain]

scorched by the east wind

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. Alternate translation: [that the hot east wind had dried up] or [that the desert wind from the east had dried up]

There will be seven years of famine

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. Alternate translation: [Both dreams mean that there will be seven years when food will be very scarce]

Genesis 41:28

That {is} the word that I have spoken to Pharaoh

Consider what is the best way to refer to Pharaoh here in your language. See what you did in verse 25. Alternate translation: [Your Honor, as I told you before] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

What God is doing he has shown to Pharaoh

See how you translated this clause in verse 25. Alternate translation: [God is showing to you what he will do] or [God has shown to you what he is about to do] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:29

of} great abundance

Alternate translation: [when crops are abundant] or [when everyone will have plenty of food to eat]

in all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [throughout the whole land of Egypt]

Genesis 41:30

But seven years of famine will rise up after them

See how you translated **famine** in verse 27. Alternate translation: [But after them there will be a famine that lasts seven years] or [But after those prosperous years, there will be seven years when food is very scarce]

so that all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [So people in the country of Egypt will forget how good it was during the time when they had plenty of food]

and the famine will consume the land

The phrase **the land** here probably also includes the people who lived in that country. Alternate translation: [because the famine will destroy the land and the people] or [because the severe food shortage will ravage the land so that many people will starve] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 41:31

And the abundance in the land will not be remembered

Verse 31 restates much of the content of verse 30, so keep that in mind as you translate the beginning of this verse. Alternate translation: [Indeed, there will be no evidence left that there were years when there was more than enough food] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1600)**)

because of that famine after it, because it {will be} very heavy

For some languages, it is 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. Alternate translation: [because the famine that happens after that will be very oppressive] or [because the following years when food is scarce will be so terrible] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:32

And as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, {it is} because

Alternate translation: [The reason you had the same dream in two different ways is that] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

the matter has been established by God

Alternate translation: [God has firmly decided what he is going to do] or [God wants you to know that this will definitely happen]

and God will soon do it

Alternate translation: [and he will cause it to happen very soon]

Genesis 41:33

And now let Pharaoh seek a man

Alternate translation: [So King Pharaoh, you should now look for a man] or [So now, your Highness, I recommend that you choose a man] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

who is} discerning and wise

Alternate translation: [who is insightful and knows what to do] or [who is wise and can make good decisions]

and set him over

Alternate translation: [and put him in charge of] or [and give him authority over]

the land of Egypt

See how you translated **the land** in verse 30. Alternate translation: [the country of Egypt and its people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 41:34

Let Pharaoh do {this}: Let him set supervisors

Alternate translation: [King Pharaoh, I also recommend that you appoint regional administrators] or [Sir, you should also appoint ...] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

over the land

Alternate translation: [to be in charge of different regions of the country] or [to manage different regions of the country]

and let him take a fifth

Consider whether or not it is more natural to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [and have them gather from the people one-fifth] or [Then command them to collect ...]

of the land of Egypt

In this context, “the land/country” refers to the crops that were growing in Egypt. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Alternate translation: [of all the grain that they harvest in the country of Egypt] or [of everything the land of Egypt produces] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

in the seven years of abundance

See how you translated **abundance** in verses 29-31. Alternate translation: [during the seven years when crops are abundant] or [during the seven years when there will be more than enough crops]

Genesis 41:35

And they should gather

Alternate translation: [Have them gather]

all the food of the good years that are coming

Alternate translation: [all that extra grain from the prosperous years that will come] or [all that extra food during the good years ahead when there will be plenty of food]

And they should store {that} grain

Alternate translation: [Have them stockpile that grain] or [Command them to store up that grain]

under Pharaoh's hand

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. Alternate translation: [with your authority, King Pharaoh] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

for} food in the cities and guard {it

Alternate translation: [in the cities for food and have soldiers keep it safe]

Genesis 41:36

And the food should be in reserve

Alternate translation: [That extra food should be kept in storage] or [That grain should stay in storage] or [They must continue to store that surplus grain]

for the land

The phrase **the land** refers here to the people who live in the land of Egypt. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Alternate translation: [for the people of the land to eat] or [so that the people of the land have it to eat] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

for the seven years of famine that will come

Alternate translation: [during the seven years when food is very scarce]

on the land of Egypt

Consider whether or not it is natural in your language to repeat “the land/country” in this sentence. Alternate translation: [in Egypt]

so that the land will not be cut off

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. Alternate translation: [so that the people in the land] or [so that the people] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

so that the land will not be cut off

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. Alternate translation: [will not be destroyed by] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

by the famine

Alternate translation: [the severe food scarcity]

Genesis 41:37

And the word was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants

See how you translated the idiom **in the eyes of** in Gen 34:18. Alternate translation: [What Joseph said seemed like a good plan to King Pharaoh and all his servants] or [King Pharaoh and all his servants agreed that what Joseph had proposed was good] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 41:38

Then Pharaoh said to his servants

Alternate translation: [So Pharaoh said to his officials]

Can we find a man like this

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. Alternate translation: [It is obvious that we will never find a man as qualified as Joseph] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

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

Alternate translation: [Then he turned to Joseph and said]

Since God has shown all this to you

Alternate translation: [God has revealed to you what he is going to do, so]

there is} no one {as} discerning and wise as you

See how you translated **discerning and wise** in verse 33. Alternate translation: [no one else is as insightful as you are and knows what to do in this situation] or [... or knows how to manage this situation wisely]

Genesis 41:40

You will be over my house

The phrase **my house** refers here to Pharaoh's household and all the other people he rules as king. Alternate translation: [So I am putting you in charge of my household and my country] or [So I am giving you authority over the people in my palace and the rest of my country] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and all my people will kiss on your mouth

Consider whether you have a similar idiom in your language or if you need to say this without an idiom. Alternate translation: [so that all the people in my kingdom must do whatever you say] or [so that all the people I reign over will respect and obey whatever you tell them to do] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Only I {on} the throne will be greater than you

In this context, **the throne** refers to Pharaoh's position as the king. Make sure that is clear in your translation. Alternate translation: [Only I who sit on the throne as king will have more authority than you] or [Only I who am king will ...] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 41:41

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

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. Alternate translation: [Pharaoh added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

See, I have put you over

The word **See** emphasizes what Pharaoh says next. Alternate translation: [Look I now put you in charge of] or [I am now appointing you to be the supervisor over]

all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [the whole land of Egypt]

Genesis 41:42

Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand

The signet ring was the identification ring that the king used to seal official documents. See how you translated **signet** in Gen 38:18. Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh took off his royal identification ring] or [Then Pharaoh took from his finger the ring that he used to mark letters] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and put it on Joseph's hand

The signet ring showed that Joseph represented Pharaoh and had his complete authority. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

And he dressed him {in} garments of fine linen

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. Alternate translation: [He also had Joseph put on fine linen robes] or [He also gave Joseph high-quality robes to wear] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and put a gold chain on his neck

Alternate translation: [and put a collar made of gold around his neck] or [and put around his neck a necklace made of gold]

Genesis 41:43

in the second chariot that {belonged} to him

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. Alternate translation: [in a royal horse-drawn cart as his second-in-command] or [in the horse-drawn cart that showed he was the second highest ruler in the country] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

and they shouted before him

Make sure the way you translate **shouted** does not sound angry. Rather they were calling out loudly enough for people to hear them. Alternate translation: [As he rode, heralds walked in the streets ahead of him calling out to everyone]

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.1718)**)

So he put him over

See how you translated a similar sentence in verse 41. Alternate translation: [So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of] or [In that way, Pharaoh officially installed Joseph to be the manager over]

all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [the whole land of Egypt]

Genesis 41:44

I {am} Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [I, Pharaoh, hereby decree that]

and without you a person will not lift his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt

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. Alternate translation: [no one throughout the entire country of Egypt may do anything unless you tell them to do it!] or [throughout the entire country of Egypt, everyone must only do what you tell them to do!] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

Genesis 41:45

Then Pharaoh called Joseph's name

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh called Joseph by the Egyptian name]

and he gave to him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of On, as a wife

Potiphera was a pagan priest, and he led people in worshiping the Egyptians' gods, not Yahweh. See how you translated **priest** in Gen 14:18. Alternate translation: [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 at the city of On]

Then Joseph went out over the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph started going around all over the land of Egypt] or [Then Joseph started his work and traveled throughout the land of Egypt]

Genesis 41:46

Now Joseph {was} a son of thirty years

Consider what is the best way to begin this new paragraph in your language.

when he stood before

This phrase refers to when Joseph stood before Pharaoh and was commissioned to serve as the second-highest ruler in Egypt. Alternate translation: [when he had that audience with]

and passed through all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [and traveled throughout the 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

Compare how you translated **seven years of abundance** in verse 34. Alternate translation: [During the seven years when food was abundant] or [For seven years the harvests were plentiful and]

And & the land produced {grain} by the handfuls

The idiom **by the handfuls** refers here to large amounts of grain. Consider whether your language has a similar idiom you could use here. Alternate translation: [the land produced large amounts of grain] or [the people harvested large amounts of grain from the land] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 41:48

So he gathered

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. Alternate translation: [So Joseph told the supervisors under him to collect] or [So Joseph had his helpers gather] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

all the food of the seven years that were in the land of Egypt

See how you translated **all the food** in verse 35. Alternate translation: [all the extra food that was produced in the land of Egypt during those seven years] or [all the extra grain that people produced during those seven years in the land of Egypt]

and he put the food in the cities

Alternate translation: [and he had them store that grain in the cities]

The food of the fields that surrounded {each} city he put inside it

Consider what phrase order is best for this sentence in your language. Alternate translation: [The food that people had harvested from the fields, he had his supervisors stockpile in the nearby cities] or [In each city he had them store the food that people had harvested from the nearby fields] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:49

So Joseph stored up

See how you translated “store/stockpile” in verse 35. Alternate translation: [Joseph had his helpers store up]

grain like the sand of the sea

See how you translated “as the sand of the sea” in Gen 32:12 and a similar phrase in Gen 22:17. Alternate translation: [so much grain that it looked as plentiful as grains of sand beside the sea] or [... as plentiful as the grains of sand on the beach]

very much, until

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [In fact, there was so much that] or [In fact, it was so plentiful that after a while]

he stopped measuring {it

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. Alternate translation: [he had them stop keeping track of it] or [they had to stop writing down how much there was]

because it was without number

Alternate translation: [because there was so much that they could no longer record it]

Genesis 41:50

before the years of the famine came

Consider what is the best way to change topics and begin this new paragraph in your language. Alternate translation: [Now it so happened that before the seven years of famine came] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

And & two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On, bore for him

See how you translated **Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On** in verse 45. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 41:51

And Joseph called the name of

See how you translated the idiom **called the name of** in Gen 21:3.

the firstborn {son

Alternate translation: [his first son]

Manasseh

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.1634)**)

because {he said}, “God has made me forget

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. Alternate translation: [... to stop thinking about]

all my toil and

Alternate translation: [all my hardships and about]

all of my father’s house

Alternate translation: [how much I have missed all of my family back home]

Genesis 41:52

And the name of the second {son} he called

Alternate translation: [And Joseph named his second son]

Ephraim

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.1634)**)

because {he said}, "God has made me fruitful

Consider again how you translated the idiom **fruitful** in the book of Genesis. See Gen 17:6; 26:22; 41:52. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 41:53

Then the seven years of abundance that was & ended

See how you translated **the seven years of abundance** in verses 34 and 47, and a similar phrase in verse 29.
Alternate translation: [Finally the seven years when food was abundant]

Then & ended

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. Alternate translation: [came to an end] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 41:54

and the seven years of famine started to come

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then the seven years of famine began]

just as Joseph had said

Alternate translation: [just as Joseph had predicted would happen] or [which is exactly what Joseph had said would happen]

And there was famine in all the lands

Alternate translation: [The severe food shortage began to affect all countries]

but in all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [but everywhere in the land of Egypt] or [but throughout the entire land of Egypt]

there was bread

In this context, **bread** refers to all food in general. Alternate translation: [there was still plenty of food stored up] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 41:55

Then all the land of Egypt became famished

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. Alternate translation: [Then all the people in the land of Egypt began to suffer from the famine, so] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the people cried to Pharaoh for the bread

Alternate translation: [they begged Pharaoh for food] or [they pleaded with Pharaoh to give them food]

So Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians

Alternate translation: [So King Pharaoh told them] or [So he told them]

Go to Joseph

Alternate translation: [Go ask Joseph for food] or [You must go to Joseph and ask him for help]

Whatever he says to you, do {it

Consider whether or not it is best to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [and do whatever he tells you to do]

Genesis 41:56

And the famine was over all the face of the land, so & opened

Alternate translation: [Since the famine had spread throughout the whole country] or [Since the severe food shortage was affecting the entire country]

so Joseph opened

See how you translated verses 48 and 49, where Joseph is said to do something that he had his helpers do.

Alternate translation: [Joseph ordered the supervisors under him to open up] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

all {the buildings} that {had grain} in them

Alternate translation: [all the storage barns where grain was being stored]

and sold {grain} to the Egyptians

Alternate translation: [and they started selling the grain to the people of Egypt]

And the famine was severe

Alternate translation: [Then the famine kept getting more and more severe]

in the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [throughout the land of Egypt] or [throughout their country]

Genesis 41:57

Then all the earth

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. Alternate translation: [In fact, people from all over the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

came to Egypt to Joseph to buy {grain

Alternate translation: [started traveling to Egypt to buy food from Joseph]

because the famine was severe in all the earth

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. Alternate translation: [because the food shortage was so severe throughout the entire world] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 42

Genesis 42:1

Then Jacob saw that there was 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. Alternate translation: [Meanwhile in the land of Canaan, when Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in the country of Egypt] or [... when Jacob found out that he could buy grain in Egypt] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1654)**)

so Jacob said to his sons

Alternate translation: [he asked his sons]

Why are you looking at each other

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. Alternate translation: [What are you waiting for?] or [Do not just sit here staring at each other!] or [Do not just stand there doing nothing!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 42:2

And he said

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. Alternate translation: [Then he added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look]

I have heard

Alternate translation: [I learned] or [Someone told me]

that there is grain in Egypt

Alternate translation: [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

Make sure that the way you translate Jacob's command to his sons does not sound rude or harsh. Alternate translation: [So I want you to go there] or [So please go down there] (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-politeness\]\]](#))

and buy {some} for us from there

Alternate translation: [and buy some grain for us all]

so that we will live

Alternate translation: [so that we will survive] or [so that we will stay alive]

and not die

Alternate translation: [and not die from hunger]

Genesis 42:3

Then ten of Joseph's brothers went 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.1660)**)

Genesis 42:4

But Jacob did not send Benjamin, the brother of Joseph

Benjamin was younger than Joseph and had the same mother (Rachel) and father. (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

with his brothers

Alternate translation: [with his other brothers]

because he said, “So that harm does not meet 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. Alternate translation: [because Jacob thought that he might be harmed] or [because he was concerned that something terrible might happen to him] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Genesis 42:5

And the sons of Israel came

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. Alternate translation: [The sons of Israel that is, Jacob] or [So the sons of Jacob, who was also called Israel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

And & came

Alternate translation: [came to Egypt] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

among {those} who came

Alternate translation: [along with many other people who were going there] or [along with many other travelers]

because the famine

See how you translated **because the famine** in Gen 41:57. Alternate translation: [because the extreme food shortage] or [because the extreme lack of food]

was in the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [was also affecting everyone in the land of Canaan] or [was also affecting the entire land of Canaan]

Genesis 42:6

Now Joseph {was} the governor over the land

Alternate translation: [Since Joseph was the administrator over the land of Egypt] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

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

See how you translated “bow down” in Gen 37:7, 9-10. Alternate translation: [before him like everyone else and bowed down with their foreheads toward the ground to show him respect] or [to him and prostrated themselves before him to show respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 42:7

And Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them

Alternate translation: [Joseph immediately recognized his brothers]

but he acted like a stranger to 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. Alternate translation: [but he treated them like strangers] or [But he pretended that he did not know them]

and he spoke with them harshly

Consider whether or not it is more natural to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [and spoke to them in a harsh way] or [In fact, he spoke to them roughly]

and said to them

Alternate translation: [and questioned them] or [and demanded]

Where did you come from

Alternate translation: [Where are you from?]

From the land of Canaan to buy food

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. Alternate translation: [Sir, we came from the land of Canaan to buy some grain] or [Sir, we are from the land of Canaan and we came to buy some grain] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

Genesis 42:8

And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him

Alternate translation: [Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not know who he was]

Genesis 42:9

about them

Alternate translation: [about them long ago]

and he said to them

Alternate translation: [so he told them]

You {are} spies

Alternate translation: [You are spying on our country!]

You have come

Alternate translation: [The reason you came here is]

to see the nakedness of the land

Alternate translation: [to find out where our country is vulnerable!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 42:10

No, my lord

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. Alternate translation: [No, sir] (See: **Politeness (p.1695)**)

but your servants have come

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. Alternate translation: [but rather we come before you humbly] or [Rather, we are just humble men who have come here] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

to buy food

Alternate translation: [only to buy some food]

Genesis 42:11

sons of one man

Alternate translation: [the sons of the same man]

We {are} honest. Your servants are not spies

Alternate translation: [We are trustworthy people who highly respect you. We are not spies] or [We are humble, honest people, not spies] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 42:12

But he said to them

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph replied] or [But he accused them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

No, indeed you have come

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

See how you translated this phrase in verse 9. Alternate translation: [to find out where our country is vulnerable!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 42:13

But they said

Alternate translation: [Then they responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Your servants {are} twelve brothers

Alternate translation: [Sir, there are twelve of us brothers]

We {are} sons of one man

Alternate translation: [We are all sons of the same man] or [We all have the same father]

in the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [who lives in the land of Canaan] or [and we live in the land of Canaan]

And behold, the youngest

The word **behold** calls attention to what the brothers say next. Some translations leave it implied. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [In fact, our youngest brother]

is} with our father today

Alternate translation: [is presently back at home with our father] or [is there with our father right now]

and the one

Alternate translation: [but the other one]

is not {alive}

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. Alternate translation: [is no more] or [is no longer with us] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 42:14

Then Joseph said to them

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph accused them] or [Then Joseph responded] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

It {is} just as I told you, saying, 'You {are} spies

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to translate the embedded quote **You are spies** as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [What I told you is right You are spying on our country!] or [I was right when I said that you are secretly gathering information about our country!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 42:15

By this

Alternate translation: [In this way]

you will be tested

Alternate translation: [I will test 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

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. Alternate translation: [As certain as King Pharaoh lives, I vow that]

you will not leave

Alternate translation: [you will definitely not leave] or [I will not let you leave]

from this {place

Alternate translation: [from here]

unless your youngest brother comes 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. Alternate translation: [until your youngest brother comes here] or [until I see that your youngest brother is here] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

Genesis 42:16

Send one of you

Alternate translation: [Choose one of you to go home]

and let him bring your brother

Alternate translation: [to get your youngest brother and bring him here]

and you

In this verse, the pronouns **you** and **your** are plural. Alternate translation: [You who are left] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

will be bound

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. Alternate translation: [will be put in prison]

Then your words will be tested {as to whether} the truth {is} in you

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [But if you are not telling the truth]

by} the life of Pharaoh

See how you translated this phrase in verse 15.

surely you {are} spies

Alternate translation: [that means you are definitely spies!]

Genesis 42:17

Then he put them together in custody {for} three days

See how you translated **in custody** in Gen 40:3-4, 7. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph had his soldiers put them in custody for three days]

Genesis 42:18

Then Joseph said to them on the third day

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. Alternate translation: [After three days, Joseph said to them]

Do this

Alternate translation: [Do what I say and] or [If you do this] or [If you do what I say]

and live

Alternate translation: [you will live] or [I will spare your lives]

because} I fear 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. Alternate translation: [since I respect and obey God:] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 42:19

If you {are} honest

See how you translated **honest** in verse 11. Alternate translation: [If you truly are honest men as you say] or [Since you claim to be honest men]

let one of your brothers be bound in your prison house

See how you translated **be bound** in verse 16. Alternate translation: [I will make just one of you brothers remain where you have been, in prison] or [just one of you brothers must remain confined where you have been]

and you go take grain back

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [while the rest of you go back home now with grain] or [The rest of you may go and take grain back home]

for} the famine of your households

Alternate translation: [for your hungry families to eat] or [to feed your hungry households]

Genesis 42:20

Then you will bring your youngest brother to me

Alternate translation: [After that, you must come back here to me with your youngest brother]

so that your words will be verified

See how you translated a similar clause in verse 16. Alternate translation: [so that what you have told me will be proven to be true]

and you will not die

In this context, the word **die** refers to execution, not death by natural causes. Alternate translation: [and I will spare your lives and not execute you for being spies] (See: **Litotes (p.1662)**)

And they did so

Alternate translation: [... agreed to do what he said] or [... accepted his proposal]

Genesis 42:21

We {are} truly guilty concerning our brother

Alternate translation: [This is happening because we sinned badly against our brother Joseph long ago]

because we saw the distress of his soul

The phrase **his soul** refers here to Joseph. Alternate translation: [We saw how distressed he was] or [We saw how terribly he was suffering] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

when he pleaded with us

Alternate translation: [when he urgently asked us to free him]

but we did not listen

Alternate translation: [but we refused to let him go]

For that {reason

Alternate translation: [That is the reason that]

this distress has come upon us

Alternate translation: [we are now experiencing so much trouble] or [we are suffering like this now]

Genesis 42:22

Then Reuben responded to them, saying

Alternate translation: [Reuben reproached them by saying]

Did I not tell you, saying

Reuben uses this rhetorical question to scold his brothers. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language. Alternate translation: [Remember that I told you] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Do not sin against the lad

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. Alternate translation: [that you must not harm the boy!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

But you did not listen

Alternate translation: [But you did not obey me]

so now behold

Alternate translation: [so now, see what is happening:] or [so now look]

his blood is being accounted for

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. Alternate translation: [we are being held responsible by God for his death!] or [We are getting what we deserve for causing his death!] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

Genesis 42:23

that Joseph understood {them

Alternate translation: [that Joseph could understand what they were saying to each other] or [that he was listening to what they were saying] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

because the interpreter {was} between them

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.1651)**)

Genesis 42:24

And he turned away

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. Alternate translation: [So he turned] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

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

Alternate translation: [to hide his tears]

Then he turned back toward them

Make sure that the way you translate this sentence fits with the way you translated the last sentence in verse 23. Alternate translation: [Then after he recovered, Joseph turned back around] or [When he had composed himself, he came back to them]

and spoke to them

Alternate translation: [and spoke to them again using his translator] or [and continued speaking to them]

Then he took Simeon from them

Alternate translation: [Next he chose Simeon from among them] or [Then he separated Simeon from the rest of the brothers]

and bound him

Joseph probably had soldiers bind Simeon. See how you translated a similar case in Gen 40:3. Alternate translation: [and had him bound] or [and had his soldiers confine him with ropes] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

before their eyes

Alternate translation: [as they watched] or [in front of them] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 42:25

Then Joseph ordered {his servants} and they filled

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph commanded his servants to fill] or [Then Joseph had his servants fill]

their bags {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

Joseph had his servants to do this without his brothers knowing about it. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and to give provisions to them for the road

Alternate translation: [and to supply them with food to eat on the journey home] or [and to give them food to eat as they traveled home]

And he did that for them

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. Alternate translation: [So, that is what was done for them] or [That is what Joseph did for them]

Genesis 42:26

Then they loaded

Make sure your choice here fits with the way you translated the end of verse 25. Alternate translation: [Then his brothers put] or [they put] or [his brothers put]

and went from there

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). Alternate translation: [and left there to go home]

Genesis 42:27

Then one {of them} opened his sack to give fodder to his donkey at the lodging place

See how you translated **fodder** in Gen 24:25, 32. Alternate translation: [Later, when they stopped at a place to lodge for the night, one of them opened his sack to get some feed to feed his donkey]

and he saw his silver, and behold, it {was} in the mouth of his sack

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Suddenly he saw that the silver he had paid for the grain was right there in the opening of his sack!] or [There in the top of his sack he saw the money that he had paid to buy grain!]

Genesis 42:28

So he said to his brothers

Alternate translation: [Then he exclaimed to his brothers] or [Then he exclaimed to the others] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

My silver has been returned

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [Here it is in my grain sack!] or [It is right here in my grain sack!]

Then their hearts went out

Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. Alternate translation: [They looked, and their hearts sank] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and each {man} trembled to his brother, saying

Alternate translation: [and they all started shaking with fear and said to each other] or [and they trembled with fear. They asked each other]

What {is} this God has done to us

Alternate translation: [What is God doing 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

Alternate translation: [When they got back home to their father Jacob in the region of Canaan] or [When they reached their home in the land of Canaan where their father Jacob was]

and they reported to him all

See how you translated **reported to** in Gen 38:13. Alternate translation: [they explained to him all]

Genesis 42:30

The man, the lord of the land

Alternate translation: [The man who is the ruler over the land of Egypt] or [The man who controls the land of Egypt]

spoke to us harshly

See how you translated **harshly** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [spoke to us roughly] or [was very harsh when he spoke to us]

and treated us as {if we were} spying out

Alternate translation: [He even accused us of being spies!]

Genesis 42:31

But we said to him, 'We {are} honest. We are not spies

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. Alternate translation: [We told him that we are not spies, but rather trustworthy men] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 42:32

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.
Alternate translation: [We told him that we are twelve brothers] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

the sons of our father

Alternate translation: [sons of one father]

is not {alive}

See how you translated this idiom in verse 13. Alternate translation: [is no more] or [is no longer with us] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

and the youngest

Alternate translation: [and our youngest one]

is} with our father today

Alternate translation: [is right now with our father at home]

Genesis 42:33

Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us

See how you translated **the man, the lord of the land** in verse 30. Alternate translation: [Then the ruler of the land said to us] or [But the man who rules the land told us]

By this

See how you translated **By this** in verse 15. Alternate translation: [In this way]

I will know that you {are} honest

Alternate translation: [I will know that you are trustworthy men]

Leave one of your brothers with me

Alternate translation: [One of you brothers will stay here with me]

and take {grain} {for} the famine of your households and go

Alternate translation: [while the rest of you buy grain to relieve the hunger of your families and go home] or [and the rest of you go home with grain for your hungry households]

Genesis 42:34

Then bring your youngest brother to me

See how you translated a similar clause at the beginning of verse 20. Alternate translation: [Then bring your youngest brother back here to me] or [After that, you must come back here to me with your youngest brother]

so that I will know that you {are} not spies

Consider again how you translated **spies** in Gen 42:9-11, 14, 16, 30, 31, 34. Alternate translation: [Then I will know that you are not spies]

that you {are} honest

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. Alternate translation: [but are honest men] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Then} I will give your brother to you

Alternate translation: [Then I will release to you your brother who is in prison]

Genesis 42:35

Then it happened they were emptying their sacks

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [and they were surprised to see their bags of money inside their sacks!]

And they and their father saw the pouches of their silver, and they were afraid

Alternate translation: [When they and their father Jacob saw the bags of silver they were terrified]

Genesis 42:36

Then Jacob their father said to them

If you make **Jacob** explicit in verse 35, you could leave it implied here in verse 36. Alternate translation: [Then their father said to them]

You have bereaved me

Alternate translation: [You have deprived me of my sons!]

Joseph is not {here}! And Simeon is not {here}

Alternate translation: [Joseph and Simeon are no longer with us!]

All {these} things are against me

Alternate translation: [Everything is against me!] or [Everything is going badly for me!]

Genesis 42:37

Then Reuben said to his father, saying

Alternate translation: [Then Reuben responded to his father] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him to you

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. Alternate translation: [You may punish me by killing my sons if I do not bring Benjamin back to you] or [If I fail to bring Benjamin back to you safely, you can punish me by killing my two sons] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Put him in my hand

The phrase **in my hand** is used here as an idiom that means that Reuben was going to be responsible for Benjamin's welfare. Alternate translation: [Entrust him to my care as we travel to Egypt] or [Let me be responsible for taking care of Benjamin on our trip to Egypt] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and I will return him to you

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. Alternate translation: [and I promise that I will bring him back to you safely] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 42:38

But he said

Alternate translation: [But his father insisted] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

My son will not go down with you

Notice that the pronoun **you** is plural in this verse. Also, see how you translated **go down** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [My son Benjamin may not go with you to Egypt]

because 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.1660)**)

and he alone is left

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). Alternate translation: [so he is the only one I have left from his mother]

And {if} harm were to meet him on the road that you are going on

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. Alternate translation: [So if he were to be killed during your journey] or [So if anything bad happened to him while you are traveling] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

then you would bring my gray head down in sorrow

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. Alternate translation: [you would cause me, your gray-haired father, to grieve so deeply that I would die and go down] or [you would cause me, your gray-haired father, so much grief that I would die and go down]

to Sheol

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.1724)**)

Genesis 43

Genesis 43:1

Now the famine

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. Alternate translation: [The food shortage] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

was} heavy

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. Alternate translation: [was oppressive] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

in the land

Alternate translation: [in the land of Canaan]

Genesis 43:2

So it happened

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. Alternate translation: [So it happened that]

when they finished

Consider whether it is clearer in your language to use a pronoun or a noun phrase here. Alternate translation: [when Jacob and his family had finished eating] or [... had used up] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

the grain that they had brought

The pronoun **they** refers here to Jacob's sons, not Jacob's family (as it did earlier in this sentence). Alternate translation: [all the grain that his sons had bought and brought home] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

then their father said to them

Alternate translation: [their father Jacob told them] or [he told them]

buy a little food

Alternate translation: [and buy some more food]

for us

The pronoun **us** includes Jacob and his sons and their families here. Alternate translation: [for our family] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1618)**)

Genesis 43:3

But Judah said to him, saying

Alternate translation: [His son Judah replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The man

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. Alternate translation: [The man who governs the country there]

strongly warned us, saying

Alternate translation: [sternly told us] or [was serious when he warned us]

You will not see my face

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [that we cannot see him again] or [that we cannot come to him again to buy grain] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

unless your brother {is} with you

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!” Alternate translation: [unless our youngest brother is with us!] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

Genesis 43:4

If you will send our brother with us

In verses 3-5, the pronouns **us** and **we** are exclusive since they do not include Jacob (whom Judah is talking to).
Alternate translation: [So if you will permit our youngest brother to go with us] or [So if you will let our youngest brother go with us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

we will go down

Alternate translation: [then we can travel to Egypt]

and buy food for you

Alternate translation: [and buy more grain for you and the rest of the family]

Genesis 43:5

send {him

See how you translated **send** in verse 4. Alternate translation: [allow him to go with us]

we will not go down

See how you translated **go down** and “went down” in Gen 42:2-3. Alternate translation: [we cannot go down there] or [we must not go there to buy grain]

because the man said to us

Alternate translation: [because the man told us]

You will not see my face

See how you translated this quote in verse 3. Alternate translation: [that we cannot see him again] or [that we cannot go to him again to buy grain] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

unless your brother {is} with you

See how you translated this clause in verse 3. Alternate translation: [unless our youngest brother is with us!] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.1589)**)

Genesis 43:6

Then Israel said

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.1559)**)

Why did you treat me badly by telling

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. Alternate translation: [Why did you cause distress for me by telling] or [You caused me a lot of distress because you told] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

the man

See how you translated **the man** in verses 3 and 5. Alternate translation: [that man] or [that governor]

you have yet {another} brother

If you translate this rhetorical question as a statement, make sure that you end it with a period or exclamation point. Alternate translation: [that you have another brother!]

Genesis 43:7

The man asked persistently

Alternate translation: [The man questioned us intensely] or [The man asked us many questions]

about us and our relatives, saying

In verses 7-8, the pronouns “us,” “our,” and **we** are exclusive since they do not include Jacob (whom the sons are talking to). Alternate translation: [about ourselves and about the rest of our family] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’** (p.1618))

Is your father still alive? Do you have {another} brother

Consider whether it is more natural in your language to translate this embedded quote with a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [He specifically asked us whether our father was still alive and if we had another brother] (See: **Quotes within Quotes** (p.1707))

And we answered him according to those words

Alternate translation: [So we just answered his questions honestly] or [All we did was answer his questions]

How could we possibly know

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. Alternate translation: [We could not possibly have known] (See: **Rhetorical Question** (p.1711))

that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down

If you translate this rhetorical question as a statement, make sure that you end it with a period or exclamation point. Alternate translation: [that he would tell us to bring our brother down there to him!]

Genesis 43:8

Then Judah said to Israel his father

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.1559)**)

Send the young man with me

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. Alternate translation: [Allow the young man to come with me and I will watch over him]

and we will get up and go

Alternate translation: [so we can leave right away to buy grain in Egypt]

so that both we and you and our little ones will live

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. Alternate translation: [Then all of us, including our children, will survive] or [... can stay alive]

and not die

Alternate translation: [and not die from hunger]

Genesis 43:9

I myself will guarantee him

Alternate translation: [I personally guarantee to keep him safe] or [I personally guarantee his safety]

From my hand you can require him

See how you translated a similar idiom in Gen 31:39. Alternate translation: [You can make me liable for him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

If I do not bring him {back} to you and set him before you

Consider what is the best way to translate this hypothetical sentence in your language. Alternate translation: [so that if I do not bring him back home to you alive] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

then I will have sinned against you

Alternate translation: [you can blame me for this sin]

all the days

Alternate translation: [all the days of my life] or [forever]

Genesis 43:10

Surely if we had not delayed

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. Alternate translation: [As it is, if we had not delayed such a long time] or [In any case, if we had not delayed this long] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

surely we could have returned here twice by now

Alternate translation: [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

See how you translated **Israel their father** in verse 8.

If {it must be} so

Alternate translation: [If 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.1559)**)

then do this

Alternate translation: [then this is what you must do:]

Take {some} of the choice produce of the land in your bags

Alternate translation: [Put some of the best 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

Alternate translation: [and take them to the man in Egypt]

as} a gift

Consider what punctuation is best to use here in your language.

a little balm, and a little 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. Alternate translation: [including some sweet-smelling tree sap, some honey] or [Include some healing salve, honey] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

spices and myrrh

See how you translated **spices** and **myrrh** in Gen 37:25. Alternate translation: [some food spices and incense] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

pistachio nuts and almonds

Alternate translation: [and some sweet-tasting tree nuts] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

Genesis 43:12

And take double the silver in your hand{s

Alternate translation: [Also take with you twice as much silver as you took the first time]

because you must return in your hand{s} the silver

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [because you must give back the silver] or [You must give back the silver]

that was returned

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a passive or active clause here. Alternate translation: [that was given back to you by someone] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

in the mouth of your sacks

See how you translated a similar phrase in Gen 42:27. Alternate translation: [in the top of your sacks]

Perhaps it {was} a mistake

Alternate translation: [That might have happened by mistake] or [Maybe someone did that by mistake]

Genesis 43:13

So take your brother

Alternate translation: [So then take your youngest brother]

and get up, return to the man

See how you translated “get up and ...” in verse 8. Alternate translation: [and return right away to the man] or [and immediately go back to the man]

Genesis 43:14

And may God Almighty give

Alternate translation: [May Almighty God]

And may God Almighty give you mercies before the man

Alternate translation: [be kind to you as you go before the man] or [cause the man to be kind to you] or [cause him to treat you mercifully]

and may he send

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”

and may he send your other brother and Benjamin

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. Alternate translation: [allow your other brother and Benjamin to go] or [let your brothers Simeon and Benjamin go] (See: **Kinship (p. 1660)**)

And I, if

The pronoun **I** is emphatic here in the Hebrew text. If possible, keep that emphasis in your translation. Alternate translation: [As for me, if I]

I am bereaved, I am bereaved

See how you translated **bereaved** in Gen 42:36. Alternate translation: [must be deprived of them, then I will be deprived] or [must suffer loss, then I will suffer loss]

Genesis 43:15

Then the men took that gift

See how you translated **gift** in verse 11 and in Gen 33:10-11. Alternate translation: [So the brothers packed those gifts in their sacks] or [So the brothers got all those gifts and packed them]

and they took double the silver in their hand{s

See how you translated this phrase in verse 12. Alternate translation: [along with twice as much silver as the grain would cost] or [and they also packed double the amount of silver that they needed to pay for the grain]

and Benjamin. Then they got up and went down {to} Egypt

See how you translated “get up and go” in verse 8. Alternate translation: [They also got Benjamin and together they immediately traveled down to the country of Egypt] or [Then they took Benjamin with them and immediately traveled down to the country of Egypt]

and stood before Joseph

Alternate translation: [and presented themselves to Joseph] or [and came directly to Joseph]

Genesis 43:16

And Joseph saw Benjamin with them. Then he said

Alternate translation: [Joseph saw Benjamin with the rest of his brothers. So he told] or [When Joseph saw Benjamin with his other brothers, he told]

to {the one} who {was} over his house

Alternate translation: [the servant who managed his household]

Take the men to the house

Alternate translation: [Lead the men to my house]

and slaughter an animal

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. Alternate translation: [then kill one of my livestock] or [Then butcher an calf]

and prepare {a meal}

Alternate translation: [and cook the meat to prepare a meal] or [and prepare a feast with its meat]

because the men will eat with me at noon

Alternate translation: [because I have planned 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

Alternate translation: [The servant did exactly what Joseph had commanded him to do]

and the man brought

Alternate translation: [and led]

the men 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 they said

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then they said to each other]

Because of the matter of the silver that was returned in our sacks the first time, we have been brought

Alternate translation: [We have been brought here because of the money that was returned to us in our sacks the first time we came here] or [He has taken us here because of our silver that someone gave back to us in our sacks on our first trip here] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

He wants} to roll himself over us and throw himself on us

Consider what is the best way to translate these idioms in your language. Alternate translation: [He is planning to seize us by force] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and take us as slaves

Alternate translation: [and keep us as slaves] or [and make us his slaves]

and our donkeys

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He will also take our donkeys!]

Genesis 43:19

Then they went near to

Alternate translation: [So they went up to] or [So they approached]

the man who {was} over Joseph's house

See how you translated a similar phrase in verse 16.

and spoke to him {at} the entrance of the house

Alternate translation: [to speak to him at the door to his house] or [outside the door to the house in order to speak to him]

Genesis 43:20

And they said

Alternate translation: [They said to him] or [One of them said to him on behalf of them all] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Please, my lord

The brothers are asking the servant for permission to speak. Translate this in a way that is respectful in your language. Alternate translation: [Excuse me sir] or [Sir, please allow us to speak to you] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

we surely came down {here} the first time to buy food

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [the previous time we came down here to Egypt, we came to buy some food] or [one time before this, we traveled all the way down here to Egypt and bought some food]

Genesis 43:21

But it happened

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. Alternate translation: [But it so happened that]

when we came to the lodging place, we opened our sacks

See how you translated **the lodging place** in Gen 42:27. Alternate translation: [when we arrived at the place where we stayed for the night, we opened our sacks]

and behold, {each} man's silver {was} in the mouth of his sack

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. Alternate translation: [and we were surprised to see that our bags of money were in the top of each of our sacks!] or [There in the opening of each of our sacks was the silver we had given to you for the grain!] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

our silver {was there} in its {full} weight

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. Alternate translation: [The full weight of money was there!] or [The silver was all there!] (See: **Biblical Money (p.1572)**)

So we have brought it back

Alternate translation: [But we brought it all back] or [So we brought all that money back]

in our hand{s}

Alternate translation: [with us to return to you]

Genesis 43:22

And we have brought down other silver

Alternate translation: [We also brought enough extra money with us] or [We have also brought additional money with us]

to buy food

Alternate translation: [so that we can buy some more food now]

who put our silver in our sacks

Alternate translation: [who gave that money back to us in our sacks] or [how our silver got into our sacks like that]

Genesis 43:23

Peace {be} to you

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. Alternate translation: [Be at peace, and] or [All is well for you, so] or [Everything is all right, so]

do not be afraid

Alternate translation: [do not be anxious]

Your God and the God of your father

Make sure that your translation of these phrases refers to the same God, not two different Gods. Alternate translation: [The God whom you and your father worship]

has given you hidden treasure in your sacks

Alternate translation: [must have put the silver in your sacks]

your silver came to me

Alternate translation: [because I definitely received the silver that you paid for the grain] or [because I know that you paid me money to pay for the grain]

Genesis 43:24

and they washed their feet

Consider again how you translated “wash ... feet” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24. Alternate translation: [and they washed the dirt off their feet]

and he gave fodder to 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. Alternate translation: [and he provided feed for their donkeys]

Genesis 43:25

for Joseph's arrival at noon

Alternate translation: [to give to Joseph when he got home at noon]

because they had heard

Alternate translation: [because they had been told] or [because someone had told them]

that they would eat bread there

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. Alternate translation: [that they were going to eat a meal with him there at his house] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 43:26

Then Joseph came to the house

Alternate translation: [When Joseph came to his house] or [When Joseph got home]

and they brought to him the gift that {was} in their hand{s} into the house

Alternate translation: [his brothers presented to him the gift that they had brought with them into the house]

and they bowed down to him to the ground

See how you translated “bowed down ... ground” in Gen 42:6. Alternate translation: [Then they bowed themselves down before him with their faces to the ground to show him honor] or [Then they prostrated themselves on the ground to respect him] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 43:27

Then he asked them about {their} wellbeing

Alternate translation: [Then he greeted them]

and he said

Consider whether or not it is more natural in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He also asked them]

Are things} well {for} your aged father

Alternate translation: [Is your aged father doing well] or [Is your aged father in good health]

whom you spoke about

Alternate translation: [whom you spoke about to me before?]

Genesis 43:28

Things are} well for your servant our father. He {is} still alive

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. Alternate translation: [Yes sir, our father, who highly respects you, is still alive and blessed] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

Then they bowed

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. Alternate translation: [Then they knelt]

and bowed down

See how you translated **bowed down** in verse 26. Alternate translation: [and prostrated themselves in front of him again] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 43:29

Then he lifted his eyes and saw Benjamin his brother

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. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph looked up and saw his brother Benjamin] or [When Joseph looked around at them all, he saw his brother Benjamin] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

the son of his mother

Alternate translation: [who was the only other son of his own mother]

and he said

Alternate translation: [and he asked them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Is this 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). Alternate translation: [So this young man must be your youngest brother] or [I suppose this young man is your youngest brother] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

whom you spoke to me {about

Make sure that your punctuation here fits with the way you translated this sentence, either as a question or a statement.

May God be gracious 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. Alternate translation: [I pray that God will be gracious to you]

my son

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

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph quickly left the room] or [Then Joseph rushed out of the room]

because his emotions boiled over for his brother

Alternate translation: [because he was feeling deeply emotional about his brother] or [because he felt overwhelmed with emotions for 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

Alternate translation: [so he went to his private room]

and cried there

Alternate translation: [so that he could cry there]

Genesis 43:31

Then he washed his face and came out. Then he controlled himself

Alternate translation: [After a while, he stopped crying, washed the tears off his face and came out of his room]

and said

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and told his servants] or [Then he told his servants]

Serve the bread

The word **bread** refers to all the food they ate at this meal, not just bread. Alternate translation: [Serve the meal to us] or [It is time to serve the meal to us] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 43:32

So they served to him by himself

Alternate translation: [Then they brought food to Joseph at his own table]

and to the Egyptians who were eating with him by themselves

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [and the Egyptians who were eating as his guests at their own table] or [They also served food to some Egyptian guests at a separate table]

because Egyptians cannot eat bread with Hebrews, because that {is} an abomination to Egyptians

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. Alternate translation: [Egyptians do not eat at the same table as Hebrew people, because they consider it detestable to do that] or [The servants did that, because Egyptians consider it unacceptable to eat with Hebrew people at the same table]

Genesis 43:33

before him

Alternate translation: [in front of him]

the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth

Alternate translation: [according to their age order, from oldest to youngest] or [in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest]

and the men were astonished each to his neighbor

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [so they looked at each other in amazement] or [When they saw that, they were amazed and stared at one another]

Genesis 43:34

Then he served to them servings {of food} from before him

As a person of high position and status, Joseph probably had his servants serve the food rather than doing it himself. Decide whether you want to make that information explicit in your translation or include it in a footnote. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph served his brothers food from his table] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.1559))

but Benjamin's serving was five times larger

Alternate translation: [but the amount of food that was served to Benjamin was five times more]

than any of their servings

Alternate translation: [than the amount of food that was served to any of the rest of them]

And they drank and became drunk with him

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. Alternate translation: [Then they ate food, drank wine and feasted with him] or [Then they feasted and drank wine freely with him until they were very merry]

Genesis 44

Genesis 44:1

the one} who {was} over his house

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 43:16. Alternate translation: [the servant who managed his household]

saying, “Fill the men’s sacks {with} food, as much 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

Alternate translation: [the bags can hold]

and put the silver of each {one} in the mouth of his sack

See how you translated “silver/money” in Gen 42:25, 27-28. Alternate translation: [and put their grain money in the opening of their grain bags] or [and in the top of their sacks put the silver that each of them paid for the grain]

Genesis 44:2

And put my cup, the silver cup

Notice that this cup was made out of silver; it was not just silver in color. Alternate translation: [And put my cup, the one that is made of silver]

and his grain's silver

Alternate translation: [and his grain money] or [along with the silver that he paid for the grain]

So he did according to Joseph's word that he spoke

See how you translated “according to ... words” in Gen 43:7. Alternate translation: [So the servant did exactly as he had told him to do]

Genesis 44:3

The morning became light

Alternate translation: [The next morning as it was becoming light] or [The next morning at dawn]

and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive sentence in your language. Alternate translation: [the brothers were sent on their way with their donkeys by Joseph] or [Joseph sent the men on their way, along with their donkeys] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 44:4

They had left the city, they had not gone far

Alternate translation: [But after they left the city, before they had gone very far]

and Joseph said to {the one} who {was} over his house

Alternate translation: [he told the servant who managed his household] or [he ordered his head-servant]

Get up

Alternate translation: [Immediately]

follow after the men

Alternate translation: [go after the men]

and {when} you overtake them

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [When you reach them]

then say to them

Make sure that the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way you translate the following rhetorical question. Alternate translation: [tell them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Why have you repaid evil for good

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. Alternate translation: [Why have you treated my master so badly 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 well, but in return you have treated him very badly!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1711)**)

Genesis 44:5

Is this not what my lord 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. Alternate translation: [Why do you have the cup that my master drinks from] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

and what he indeed divines with

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. Alternate translation: [It is the one he regularly uses for divination!]

You have done evil {in} what you have done

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. Alternate translation: [What you have done is very evil]

Genesis 44:6

Then he overtook them

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

Alternate translation: [he said to them what Joseph had told him to say]

Genesis 44:7

But they said to him

Alternate translation: [But they exclaimed] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Why does my lord speak words like those

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. Alternate translation: [Master we do not know why you are saying that!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Far be it from your servants to do

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. Alternate translation: [We swear as your humble servants that we would never even think of doing] or [We would never even consider doing] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

something like that

Alternate translation: [such a thing!]

Genesis 44:8

Behold

Alternate translation: [After all]

the silver that we found in the mouth of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan

Consider what is the best way in your language to order the clauses in this sentence. Alternate translation: [we returned to you the money that we found in our grain sacks last time. We brought it all the way from our home in the land of Canaan!] or [as soon as we came back here from the land of Canaan, we returned to you the money we had discovered inside our grain sacks] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So how would we steal

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. Alternate translation: [So why would we ever take] or [So we would never take] or [So there is no reason that we would ever take] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

silver or gold

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.1720)**)

Genesis 44:9

Whoever of your servants is found with it

The brothers refer to themselves as **your servants** in order to show respect to Joseph's head-servant. Alternate translation: [In fact, sir, if you discover that any of us does have the cup] or [If any one of us does have the cup, sir] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

then he will die

Alternate translation: [then he must die] or [then he should be executed] or [then you may kill that man]

and we also will be slaves for my lord

See how you translated **my lord** in verse 7. Alternate translation: [and besides that, the rest of us will become servants for you, sir] or [and the rest of us, sir, will become your servants] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

Genesis 44:10

Indeed now

Alternate translation: [So then] or [Very well then]

according to your words, so it {will be

Alternate translation: [based on what you have said I will do this:]

will be a slave for me

Alternate translation: [is the only one who will be my slave]

but you {others} will be blameless

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [but the rest of you will be free to go]

Genesis 44:11

Then they each hurried and lowered his sack to the ground

Alternate translation: [So each of them immediately lowered his bag of grain from his donkey to the ground] or [Then each of the men immediately took his grain sack off his donkey and put it on the ground]

and they each opened his sack

Alternate translation: [and each of them opened his own sack] or [and opened it]

Genesis 44:12

Then he searched

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.1701)**)

beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [beginning with the oldest brother and finishing with the youngest one] or [He started with the oldest brother and continued until he came to the youngest one]

and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 44:13

Then they tore their clothes

See how you translated “tore ... clothes in distress” in Gen 37:29, 34. Alternate translation: [In response to that, the brothers tore their clothes in grief] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

and each {one} loaded up his donkey

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to the brothers in each context throughout this chapter. Alternate translation: [Then each of them put his sack back on his own donkey] or [Then each of the men loaded up his own donkey again] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and they returned to the city

Alternate translation: [and they all returned to the city] or [then they all turned around and went back to the city]

Genesis 44:14

and he was still there

Alternate translation: [Joseph was still there]

so they fell to the ground before him

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then they prostrated themselves on the ground before him to show respect] or [So they bowed all the way to the ground in front of him to honor him] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 44:15

Then Joseph said to them

Make sure the way you translate this quote margin fits with the way you translate the following rhetorical question. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph told them] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What {is} this deed that you have done

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. Alternate translation: [Why did you do such a terrible thing?] or [You should never have done such a thing!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

that a man who {is} like me

Alternate translation: [that a ruler like me]

indeed divines

See how you translated **divines** in verse 5. Alternate translation: [regularly practices divination!] or [could use divination to find out what you did!]

Genesis 44:16

And Judah said

Alternate translation: [Judah answered] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

What can we say to my lord

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.1711)**)

What can we speak

Alternate translation: [We cannot explain this] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

And how can we justify ourselves

Alternate translation: [We do not know how to show to you that we did not do this] or [There is no way we can show to you that we are innocent] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

God has found out the sin of your servants

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. Alternate translation: [God has exposed our guilt for our past sin] or [God is punishing us, your humble servants, for our past sin] or [God is using this occasion to punish us for our past sin] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Behold, we {are} slaves for my lord

Alternate translation: [Here we all are, ready to be servants for you, sir] or [So now, sir, we are all here to be your servants] (See: [\[\[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics\]\]](#))

both we and {the one

Alternate translation: [including the man]

the one} in whose hand the cup was found

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [who was found with your cup in his grain sack] or [in whose grain bag your house-servant found the cup] or [whom your house-servant found with your cup in his sack] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

Genesis 44:17

But he said

Alternate translation: [But Joseph exclaimed] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Far be it from me to do that

See how you translated “Far be it from ...” in verse 7. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

The man in whose hand the cup was found, he

See how you translated **in whose hand the cup was found** in verse 16. Alternate translation: [Only the one who was found with my cup in his bag] or [Only the man in whose bag my servant found the cup] or [Rather only the one whom my servant found with my cup in his bag] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

will be a slave for me

Alternate translation: [will become my slave] or [will stay and serve me as a slave]

But you, go up in peace 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. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 44:18

Then Judah went near to him and said

See how you translated **went near** in Gen 43:19. Alternate translation: [Then Judah came up to Joseph and said]

Please, my lord

Compare how you translated this phrase in Gen 43:20. Alternate translation: [Please, master] or [Excuse me, sir] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears

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. Alternate translation: [I humbly ask you to let me speak plainly to you] or [will you please allow me your humble servant to say something to you] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

and do not let your anger burn against your servant

Compare how you translated the idiom “his anger burned” in Gen 39:19. Alternate translation: [Please do not be angry at me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

since you {are} like

Alternate translation: [even though you are equal in rank to]

Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [the king himself]

Genesis 44:19

My lord asked

Alternate translation: [Sir, the last time we were here, you asked]

his servants

Make sure it is clear in your translation of **his servants** that Judah is referring to himself and his brothers. Alternate translation: [us your humble servants] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

saying, 'Do you have a father or {another} brother

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate the embedded quotes in verses 19-23 as direct or indirect quotes. Alternate translation: [Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?] or [whether our father was still alive and whether we had any other brothers] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 44:20

And we said to my lord

Alternate translation: [We answered you, sir, that] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We have an aged father

Alternate translation: [our aged father is still alive] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

and the youngest son of {his} old age

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [That son is the only one left alive from his mother, since his brother died] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

and his father loves him

Alternate translation: [So his father loves him very much] or [So his father especially loves our youngest brother]

Genesis 44:21

Then you said to your servants

Judah uses the humble term **your servants** to show respect and honor to someone of higher status and authority. Alternate translation: [Then you told us, who are your humble servants] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

Bring him down to me, and I will set my eyes on him

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. Alternate translation: [Bring your youngest brother to me so that I can meet him] or [to bring our youngest brother here to you so that you can see him for yourself] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 44:22

And we said to my lord, 'The young man is not able to leave his father

Alternate translation: [But we told you, sir, that the young man must not leave his father and come here] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

because {if} he leaves his father, then he will die

Make sure the way you translate this clause fits with how you translated the previous clause, as either a direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [because if he did his father will die from anxiety] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 44:23

But you said to your servants

Alternate translation: [But you told us that]

If your youngest brother does not come down with you

Consider again whether to translate the embedded quotes in verses 19-23 as direct or indirect quotes. Alternate translation: [if our youngest brother did not come back here with us] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

you will not see my face 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. Alternate translation: [you would not allow us to see you again] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 44:24

Then it happened when we went up

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. Alternate translation: [So after we got back home again]

to your servant my father

See how you translated “your servant ... father” in Gen 43:28. Alternate translation: [to my father, who is your humble servant] or [to my father, who highly respects you] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

then we related to him

Alternate translation: [we told him]

the words of my lord

Alternate translation: [what you had said to us]

Genesis 44:25

Then our father said

The pronouns **our** and **us** are exclusive here because they do not include Joseph. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

Return, buy a little food for 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. Alternate translation: [Go back to Egypt and buy some more grain for all of us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

Genesis 44:26

We cannot go down. {But} if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go

See how you translated "... down" in verses 21 and 23. Alternate translation: [We can only go down there if our youngest brother is with us]

For we are not able to see the man's face

The phrase **the man's face** refers to the governor (Joseph) himself. Translate this in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [We will not be allowed to go to the man who sells grain there] or [The man who sells grain there will not permit us to see him again] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 44:27

Then your servant my 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. Alternate translation: [Then my father who is your humble servant said to us] or [Then my father said to us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.1618))

You know that

The pronoun “you” is plural here, referring to all the brothers. Alternate translation: [As you all know] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular** (p.1624))

my wife bore two {sons} for me

Alternate translation: [my wife Rachel bore only two sons for me]

Genesis 44:28

And the one went away from me

Alternate translation: [One of those 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

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. Alternate translation: [I have thought that he must have been killed and torn to pieces by a fierce animal. I have never seen him again] or [and I have not seen him since then. I am sure that a fierce animal must have killed him and torn him apart] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 44:29

So {if} you also take this {one} from my presence

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. Alternate translation: [So if you also take this son away from me] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

and harm were to meet him

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 42:38. Alternate translation: [and something terrible happens to him] or [and if anything bad happens to him] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

then you would bring my gray head down in misery

See how you translated **bring my gray head down** in Gen 42:38. Alternate translation: [you will cause me, your elderly father, to grieve so deeply that I will die and go down] or [you will cause me, your elderly father, so much sorrow that I will die and go down] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

to Sheol

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.1724)**)

Genesis 44:30

And now

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. Alternate translation: [So then]

when I go to your servant my father

See how you translated **your servant my father** in verses 24 and 27. Alternate translation: [when we return home to my father, who highly respects you] or [if I go home to my father, sir] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

since his soul is bound to his soul

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. Alternate translation: [since our father is deeply attached to his son] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 44:31

then it will happen when he sees that the young man is not {there}, then he will die

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. Alternate translation: [if he sees that his son is gone he will die!] or [then he will die when he sees that his youngest son is not with us!] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

And your servants will bring the gray head of your servant our father down in sorrow

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, we would bring our elderly father so much sorrow that he would die and go] or [In that way, we would be responsible for bringing our elderly father ...] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

to Sheol

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

See how you translated the verb “guarantee” in Gen 43:9. Alternate translation: [Besides that, sir, I guaranteed my father that I would return his son to him safely. I told him that]

If I do not bring him {back} to you

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

then I will have sinned against my father

See how you translated a similar clause in Gen 43:9. Alternate translation: [then this would be a terrible sin against him] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

all the days

Be consistent here with your choice in Gen 43:9. Alternate translation: [all the days of my life] or [for the rest of my life]

Genesis 44:33

And now

This phrase introduces the conclusion to what Judah said in verses 30-32. See how you translated this phrase in verse 30. Alternate translation: [So now]

please let your servant stay

Consider again how you translated **your servant** and “your servants” throughout this chapter. See verses 7, 9, 18, 24, 27, 30-32. Alternate translation: [I urge you to allow me your servant to be the one to stay here] or [sir, I urge you to let me stay here] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

as} a slave for my lord

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. Alternate translation: [as a slave for you] or [and be your servant]

instead of

Alternate translation: [to take the place of]

Genesis 44:34

For how will I go up

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. Alternate translation: [I could never] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

will I go up 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. Alternate translation: [return home to my father]

if the young man is not with me

Alternate translation: [if our youngest brother is not with me!] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

I fear to see

Alternate translation: [I do not want to see]

the misery that would find my father

See how you translated **misery** in verse 29. Alternate translation: [the terrible grief that it would cause my father!] or [how much my father would grieve!] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1642)**)

Genesis 45

Genesis 45:1

Then Joseph was not able

Alternate translation: [When Joseph heard what Judah said, he was no longer able to]

to control himself

Alternate translation: [hide his feelings]

before all who were standing by him

Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Joseph's servants, not his brothers. Alternate translation: [in front of all his servants who were with him] or [in front of all his attendants]

and he called out

Alternate translation: [and he shouted to them] or [so he said loudly to them]

Have every man leave

Alternate translation: [All of you, leave]

So no man stood with him when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers

Make sure your use of nouns or pronouns to refer to Joseph and his brothers here is clear and natural in your language. Alternate translation: [So Joseph was alone with his brothers when he made himself known to them] or [Immediately his servants left the room, so that no one else was with him when he told his brothers who he was] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 45:2

And he gave his voice in crying

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. Alternate translation: [Then he raised his voice and cried loudly so that] (See: **Idiom** (p. 1645))

and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard

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

In this chapter, the word **brothers** refers to Joseph's older brothers (from different mothers) and his younger brother (from the same mother). Alternate translation: [Then Joseph exclaimed to his brothers in their language] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

I {am} Joseph

Alternate translation: [I am Joseph, your brother!]

Is my 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. Alternate translation: [Is our father still alive?]

But his brothers were not able to answer him

Alternate translation: [His brothers could not say a word]

because they were terrified at his presence

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. Alternate translation: [because they were shocked to realize that they were in his presence] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 45:4

Please come close to me

Alternate translation: [Please come near to me]

So they came close, and he said

Alternate translation: [When they went closer to him, he said to them] or [After they did that, he said to them]

I {am} Joseph your brother

Alternate translation: [I truly am your brother Joseph]

whom you sold into 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. Alternate translation: [whom you sold as a slave that was taken here to Egypt] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 45:5

do not be grieved

Alternate translation: [do not be distressed]

and do not let it burn in your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [or angry at yourselves] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

that you sold me here

Alternate translation: [that you sold me and caused me to be a slave here] or [for selling me as a slave]

because God sent me

Alternate translation: [because God sent me here]

ahead of you

Alternate translation: [before you got here]

for the preservation of life

Alternate translation: [to keep many people from dying] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1554)**)

Genesis 45:6

For this {is} two years

Alternate translation: [The past two years]

the famine {has been} in the midst of the land

See how you translated **famine** in Gen 12:10. Alternate translation: [there has been a famine throughout this country] or [a famine has been affecting this whole region]

and {there are} still five years {in} which

Alternate translation: [and for another five years it will be so 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

Alternate translation: [there will be no plowing of fields or harvesting of crops]

Genesis 45:7

But God sent me

Alternate translation: [God caused me to come here]

ahead of you

Alternate translation: [before you got here]

to preserve a remnant for you

Alternate translation: [so that you will have descendants 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

Alternate translation: [by helping you stay live] or [by saving your lives]

by a great deliverance

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. Alternate translation: [through his amazing rescue] or [in this powerful way] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 45:8

it was} not you

Alternate translation: [you are not the ones]

who} sent me here

Alternate translation: [who brought me here]

but God

Alternate translation: [but rather it was God who brought me] or [but rather God is the one who did it]

And he has made me father to 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. Alternate translation: [He has even made me like a father to King Pharaoh] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

and lord over all his house

See how you translated **lord** in Gen 42:30, 33, and how you translated **house** in Gen 41:40. Alternate translation: [so that I am the master of his entire household] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and the ruler

Alternate translation: [and also the highest official]

in all the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [in the whole country of Egypt]

Genesis 45:9

Hurry and go up

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. Alternate translation: [Hurry up] or [Leave quickly and go back] or [Return quickly]

to my father

See how you translated **my father** in verse 3.

and say to him, 'This {is what} your son Joseph says

Consider whether it is best in your language to translate this embedded quote as a direct or indirect quote. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

God has made me lord over all 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 ..." Alternate translation: [God has made me ruler over the entire country of Egypt] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

do not delay

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. Alternate translation: [and do not wait] or [and do not take very long to come] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 45:10

And you will live

The pronouns **you** and **your** in this verse are singular, but Joseph's message to his father includes the whole family. Alternate translation: [You and your family may live] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p. 1559))

in the land of Goshen

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. Alternate translation: [in the region of Goshen] or [in Goshen County]

so that you will be near to me

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and that way you can be near me] or [That way you can live close to me]

and your flocks and your herds

Alternate translation: [as well as all your domestic animals]

and all that {belongs} to you

Alternate translation: [and all your other belongings]

Genesis 45:11

And I will provide for you there

Alternate translation: [I will support you there]

because {there are} still five years of famine

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. Alternate translation: [since there are still five more years of famine ahead] or [because the famine will last five more years] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

so that you will not become impoverished, you and your household and all that {belongs} to you

The verb **become impoverished** can include losing livestock, other belongings, and the lives of their servants and family members. Alternate translation: [That way you and your extended family will not become poor and die] or [Please come so that the famine does not cause you and your family to lose everything you own and die]

Genesis 45:12

And behold

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. Alternate translation: [Now look] or [Then Joseph said to his brothers, Look!]

your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [I can tell that all of you] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and the eyes of my brother Benjamin

See how you translated **brother** in Gen 43:29. (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

see that {it is} my mouth

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. Alternate translation: [can see that I Joseph am the one] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 45:13

So report to my father

Alternate translation: [So go and tell my father]

all my glory in Egypt

Alternate translation: [about my high position in Egypt] or [about how honored I am in Egypt]

Then hurry and bring my father down here

See how you translated **down** in verse 9. Alternate translation: [Then hurry and bring him down here to me] or [Then quickly bring him here to me]

Genesis 45:14

Then he fell on the neck of Benjamin his brother

See how you translated the idiom “fell on his neck” in Gen 33:4. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin strongly] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and cried

Alternate translation: [and started crying because he was so happy]

and Benjamin cried on his neck

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Benjamin also cried as he hugged him back]

Genesis 45:15

Then he kissed all his brothers

See how you translated “kissed ... on the cheeks” in Gen 33:4. Alternate translation: [Next Joseph kissed all his brothers on their cheeks] or [Next Joseph greeted all his brothers with a kiss on their cheeks]

and cried over them

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. Alternate translation: [with tears of joy] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

And after that his brothers talked 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

The brothers of Joseph have come

Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your language. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

And it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants

Alternate translation: [it was pleasing to Pharaoh and all his officials] or [Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased]

Genesis 45:17

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh told Joseph] or [Then Pharaoh gave these instructions to Joseph:] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals

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. Alternate translation: [Tell your brothers to load their pack animals with grain] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

and leave; go

The two verbs **leave** and **go** emphasize that Joseph's brothers should go back immediately to their father in Canaan. Alternate translation: [and quickly return]

to the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [to region of Canaan]

Genesis 45:18

Then get your father and your households, and come 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. Alternate translation: [Then tell them to bring their father and their families back here to me] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

and I will give to you

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [I will give them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

the best of the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [the best land in the country of Egypt to live in]

and you will eat the fat of the land

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.1645)**)

Genesis 45:19

And you are commanded

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. Alternate translation: [You are also directed to tell them]

Do this: Take carts with you

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. Alternate translation: [Take some of my carts with you] or [to take some of my carts with them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

for your little ones and for your wives

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. Alternate translation: [for your young children and wives to ride in] or [for your wives and young children to ride in] (See: **Information Structure (p. 1651)**)

and get your father and come

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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 45:20

And do not let your eyes grieve

Alternate translation: [And do not be concerned] or [You should not worry] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

over your belongings

Alternate translation: [about leaving some of your belongings behind] or [if you have to leave behind some of your possessions] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

because the best of all the land 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. Alternate translation: [because the best of everything in the land of Egypt] or [because the most valuable things in all the land of Egypt]

Genesis 45:21

Then the sons of Israel did so

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. Alternate translation: [... agreed to do what Pharaoh said]

And Joseph gave to them carts

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph gave them carts to use]

according to the mouth of Pharaoh

This phrase refers to what Pharaoh said. Alternate translation: [as King Pharaoh had directed him] (See: **Metonymy** (p.1674))

and he gave provisions to them

Alternate translation: [and he provided them with food to eat] or [and he gave them food]

for the road

Alternate translation: [to eat on their trip home]

Genesis 45:22

To all of them, to each {one}, he gave changes of clothes

Alternate translation: [To each of them he gave a new set of clothes] or [He also gave a new change of clothes to each one of his brothers]

but to Benjamin he gave 300 {shekels} of silver and five changes of clothes

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). Alternate translation: [but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of silver money and five new changes of clothes] or [but to Benjamin he gave five new changes of clothes plus 300 pieces of silver money] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 45:23

And to his father he sent this

Alternate translation: [Besides that, he sent with them the following gifts for his father:] or [He also gave them the following things to give to his father:]

with the best of Egypt

Alternate translation: [some of the best products from Egypt] or [some of the most valuable things produced in the country of Egypt]

grain and bread and provisions

Alternate translation: [bags of grain, bread, and other food] or [food provisions, including grain and bread]

for his father

Alternate translation: [for his father and family] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

for the road

See how you translated “provisions ... for the road” in verse 21 and Gen 42:25. Alternate translation: [to eat on his trip to Egypt] or [to eat as he traveled to Egypt]

Genesis 45:24

Then he sent his brothers

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph saw his brothers off on their way home] or [After that, Joseph got his brothers started on their journey home] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and {as} they left

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

then he said to them, “Do not quarrel

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. Alternate translation: [he told them not to argue with one another] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

on the road

Alternate translation: [on the journey] or [as you travel]

Genesis 45:25

Then they went up from Egypt

See how you translated **up** in verse 9.

and came {to} the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father

Alternate translation: [and went back home to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan]

Genesis 45:26

And they reported to him, saying

Alternate translation: [They immediately announced to him] or [When they arrived, they exclaimed to him]

Joseph {is} still alive! And in fact, he {is} the ruler over all the land of Egypt

See how you translated **ruler** in verse 8. Alternate translation: [Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is the governor of the entire country of Egypt!]

But his heart went numb

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. Alternate translation: [When Jacob heard that, he was completely shocked] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

because he did not believe them

Alternate translation: [because he thought it could not be true]

Genesis 45:27

Then they told him

Alternate translation: [But then they reported to him]

and he saw the carts

See how you translated **carts** in verses 19 and 21. Alternate translation: [and when he saw the carts]

then the spirit of Jacob their father revived

Alternate translation: [their father Jacob felt much better]

Genesis 45:28

And Israel said

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. Alternate translation: [Then Israel exclaimed to them]

Joseph my son {is} still alive

Alternate translation: [My son Joseph must still be alive!]

Genesis 46

Genesis 46:1

Then Israel set out and all that {belonged} to him

Alternate translation: [So Israel started the journey to Egypt with all his family members and belongings] or [So Israel and his family started traveling toward Egypt with all his belongings]

and he sacrificed sacrifices

See how you translated **sacrificed** in Gen 31:54. Alternate translation: [he offered offerings] or [burned some of his animals on an altar there as sacrifices]

to the God of his father Isaac

Alternate translation: [to God, whom his father Isaac had served]

Genesis 46:2

And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “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

For some languages, it is more natural to put this quotation margin (**he said**) after the quote. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Jacob replied to him] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Behold me

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. Alternate translation: [Here I am, Lord] or [Yes, Master?] or [I am listening, Lord] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 46:3

I {am} God, the God of your father

See how you translated **the God of** in verse 1. Alternate translation: [I am God, the God whom your father served]

Do not be afraid

Alternate translation: [You must not be afraid]

to go down to Egypt

Alternate translation: [to move down to the country of Egypt] or [to go to the country of Egypt and settle there]

because I will make you

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. Alternate translation: [because I will make you and your descendants] or [because I will make your family] or [because I will give you many descendants, who will] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

into a great nation there

Alternate translation: [multiply and become an important ethnic group there]

Genesis 46:4

I myself will go down with you to Egypt

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. Alternate translation: [I personally will go with you to Egypt]

and I myself will also surely bring you up

The pronoun **you** refers here to Jacob's descendants. (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

And Joseph will put his hand over your eyes

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. Alternate translation: [And when you die, Joseph will be right there to close your eyes] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

Genesis 46:5

Then Jacob got up from 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. Alternate translation: [So Jacob left the city of Beersheba] or [After that, Jacob whose other name was Israel left the city of Beersheba]

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. Alternate translation: [and his sons, the sons of Israel, took him their father] or [and his sons, that is the sons of Israel, took him] or [and his sons transported him]

and their little ones and their wives

See how you translated “little ones and ... wives” in Gen 45:19. Alternate translation: [as well as their children and wives] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

in the carts

See how you translated **carts** in Gen 45:19, 21, 27.

that Pharaoh

For a note about how **Pharaoh** is used like a name in the Bible, see Gen 12:15. Alternate translation: [that Pharaoh the king of Egypt] or [that the king of Egypt] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

had sent

Alternate translation: [had sent to Canaan]

to carry him

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. Alternate translation: [to transport him to Egypt] or [for them to ride on to Egypt] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 46:6

And they took their livestock

Alternate translation: [They also took with them their animals]

and their possessions

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

Consider again how you translated **acquired** in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:5; 31:18; 36:6; 46:6. Alternate translation: [that they had accumulated]

in the land of Canaan

Alternate translation: [in Canaan]

Genesis 46:7

his sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters

Consider what is the best way in your language to list these descendants. Alternate translation: [including his sons and grandsons, and his daughters and granddaughters] or [including his sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters] (See: **Kinship (p.1660)**)

So all his offspring he brought with him to 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. Alternate translation: [Yes, Jacob brought his entire family with him to Egypt] or [Jacob had all his descendants with him when he arrived in Egypt] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 46:8

the firstborn of Jacob {was} Reuben

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

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

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 Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman

In this list, only Shaul had a Canaanite mother. See how you translated **Canaanite** in Gen 38:2. Alternate translation: [and Shaul, whose mother was a Canaanite] or [and Shaul. (Shaul had a Canaanite mother.)]

Genesis 46:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 46:12

Er and Onan and Shelah and 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

Alternate translation: [actually, Er and Onan had already died in the land of Canaan]

And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul

Alternate translation: [Perez had sons named Hezron and Hamul]

Genesis 46:13

Tola and Puvah and Job 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. Alternate translation: [Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1634)**)

Genesis 46:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Genesis 46:15

Those {were} the sons of

Alternate translation: [All those were the descendants]

Leah, whom she bore for Jacob

Alternate translation: [of Leah and Jacob who were born]

in Paddan Aram

Alternate translation: [in the land of Paddan Aram]

and Dinah his daughter

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. Alternate translation: [as well as Dinah their daughter] or [in addition to their daughter Dinah]

All the souls of his sons and his daughters {were} thirty-three

Alternate translation: [All together those sons, daughters and grandchildren totaled thirty-three persons]

Genesis 46:16

And the sons of Gad {were

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 46:17

and Serah their sister

Alternate translation: [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

Alternate translation: [Beriah had sons named Heber and Malkiel]

Genesis 46:18

Those {were} the sons of 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. Alternate translation: [Those were the descendants of Jacob and Zilpah]

And she bore those sixteen souls for Jacob

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.” Alternate translation: [Zilpah and Jacob had those sixteen descendants] or [The total number of those descendants that Zilpah and Jacob had together was sixteen] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 46:19

The sons of Rachel, the wife of Jacob, {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

whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of On, bore for him

See how you translated "Asenath ... daughter of Potiphera the priest of On" in Gen 41:45.

Genesis 46:21

Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and 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

Alternate translation: [All those were the descendants]

Rachel, whom she bore for Jacob

Your punctuation here will depend on how you translate the rest of this verse. Alternate translation: [that Jacob and his wife Rachel had together] or [who came from Rachel and Jacob]

all the souls {were} fourteen

Alternate translation: [The total number of those descendants was fourteen]

Genesis 46:23

And the sons of Dan {were} 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

Jahziel and Guni and 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

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. Alternate translation: [Those were the descendants of Jacob and Bilhah]

whom Laban had given to Rachel his daughter

Alternate translation: [who was the servant woman whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel]

And she bore those for Jacob; all the souls {were} seven

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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 46:26

All the souls who went with Jacob to Egypt

Alternate translation: [The total number of people who traveled with Jacob to Egypt]

who came out of his thigh

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. Alternate translation: [who came from him] or [who were his blood relatives] or [who were his biological descendants] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

apart from the wives of Jacob's sons

Alternate translation: [not including his wives or the wives of his sons]

all the souls {were} sixty-six

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. Alternate translation: [was sixty-six people in all] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 46:27

And the sons of Joseph who were born for him in Egypt {were} two souls

Alternate translation: [Joseph and his two sons were already in Egypt, so, including Jacob]

Genesis 46:28

And he sent Judah

Alternate translation: [Then he told Judah to go] or [When they reached Egypt, he had Judah go]

before him to Joseph

Alternate translation: [ahead of them to Joseph]

to show {the way} before him

Alternate translation: [to find out which way to go] or [to ask him how to get]

to Goshen

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. Alternate translation: [to the region of Goshen] or [to Goshen County] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

And they came

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to here. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob and his family traveled to] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

to the land of 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. Alternate translation: [the region of Goshen] or [Goshen County]

Genesis 46:29

Then Joseph harnessed his chariot

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. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph got his cart ready] or [Then Joseph had his servants get his cart ready] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen

See how you translated **went up** in Gen 13:1 and “go up” in Gen 45:9.

And he appeared to him

Alternate translation: [When he got there, Joseph went up to his father]

and he fell on his neck

See how you translated “fell on ... neck” in Gen 45:14. Alternate translation: [and put his arms around his neck] or [and hugged him strongly] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 46:30

Then Israel said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [Then Israel exclaimed to him]

Now I can die

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. Alternate translation: [Now I will die happy]

since I have seen your face

In this context, **your face** refers to Joseph, not just his face. Decide what is the best way to communicate that in your language. Alternate translation: [since I have seen you face to face] or [since I have seen you in person] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 46:31

Then Joseph said to his brothers

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph told his brothers]

I will go up and report to Pharaoh, and I will say to him

Make sure that the way Joseph refers to Pharaoh here sounds respectful in your translation. See what you did in Gen 41:35. Alternate translation: [I will go to King Pharaoh and tell him] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/translate-honorifics]])

My brothers and the household of my father

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.1707)**)

who {were living} in the land of Canaan have come to me

Alternate translation: [have come here from the land of Canaan to live near me]

Genesis 46:32

And the men {are} herders of sheep

Be consistent here with whether you are translating this embedded quote (that began in verse 31) as an direct or indirect quote. Alternate translation: [The men of my family tend sheep and goats] or [I will also tell him that you men in my family raise sheep and goats] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

for they are livestock men

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [for they are livestock raisers]

and everything

Alternate translation: [as well as everything else]

that {belongs} to them

Alternate translation: [that they have] or [that is theirs]

Genesis 46:33

Then it will be

This phrase introduces and emphasizes what Joseph says next. Consider what is the best way to communicate that in your language.

when Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [when King Pharaoh]

calls for you and says, 'What {is} your work

Consider whether it is better in your language to translate this embedded quotation with a direct or indirect quote.
Alternate translation: [summons you and asks you what your work is] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1707)**)

Genesis 46:34

then you should say

Alternate translation: [you must tell him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Your servants have been livestock men from our youth and until now

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. Alternate translation: [Your Majesty we have raised livestock since the time we were young] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

both we {and} also our fathers

See how you translated **fathers** in Gen 15:15. Alternate translation: [which is the same occupation that our forefathers had]

so that

Alternate translation: [If you say that, then]

you can settle

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. Alternate translation: [you will be allowed to live privately] or [he will permit you to live privately] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

in the land of Goshen

Alternate translation: [in the region of Goshen] or [in Goshen County]

because

Alternate translation: [especially because]

every herder of sheep {is} an abomination {to} Egyptians

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. Alternate translation: [sheep herders are detestable to Egyptians] or [the people of Egypt have disdain for sheep herders] or [Egyptians detest everyone who raises sheep] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 47

Genesis 47:1

Then Joseph went and reported to Pharaoh and said

See how you translated “report to Pharaoh” in Gen 46:31. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph went to King Pharaoh and told him]

My father and my brothers

It is implied that the brothers brought their families with them. Consider whether or not to make that explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: [My father, my brothers and their families] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

and their flock{s} and their herd{s}

Alternate translation: [and their flocks of sheep and goats and their herds of cattle] or [along with their sheep, goats, cattle]

have come from the land 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. Alternate translation: [have come here from the land of Canaan] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and behold, they {are}

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They are staying now] or [and they have already arrived]

in the land of Goshen

Alternate translation: [in the region of Goshen] or [in Goshen County]

Genesis 47:2

Then he took five men from among his brothers, and he presented them before Pharaoh

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). Alternate translation: [Then he took five of his brothers to Pharaoh and presented them to him] or [Joseph had brought five of his brothers with him from Goshen, so he brought them before Pharaoh and presented them to him]

Genesis 47:3

Then Pharaoh said to his brothers

Make sure that your translation of **his brothers** refers to Joseph's brothers, not Pharaoh's. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

What {is} your work

Alternate translation: [What kind of work do you do?] or [What do you do for a living?]

And they said to Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [They answered Pharaoh] or [One of them said]

Your servants

See how you translated “your servants” in Gen 46:34. Alternate translation: [We, your humble servants] or [Your Majesty we] or [Sir, we] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

are} herders of sheep

Alternate translation: [are herdsmen]

both we and our fathers

Alternate translation: [just as our ancestors were] or [which is the same kind of work that our forefathers did]

Genesis 47:4

Then they said to Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [Then they added] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We have come to sojourn

Alternate translation: [We have come here to stay for a while] or [We came here to stay temporarily]

in the land

Alternate translation: [in this country] or [in your land]

because there is not pasture for the flock{s} that {belong} to your servants

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [because there was not enough grass for our flocks of sheep and goats] or [Our flocks, sir, did not have enough grass to eat]

because the famine {is} heavy in the land of Canaan

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. Alternate translation: [in the region of Canaan where we are from, because the famine is so severe there] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So now, please let your servants settle

See how you translated **your servants** in verse 3 to show respect. Alternate translation: [So now please let us your humble servants live] or [So then, sir, please let us settle] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

in the land of Goshen

Alternate translation: [in the region of Goshen]

Genesis 47:5

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, saying

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh turned to Joseph and said] or [When Pharaoh heard that, he said to Joseph]

Your father and your brothers have come to 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

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the sentence from verse 5. Alternate translation: [the entire land of Egypt is available to you to choose from]

Settle your father and your brothers

Alternate translation: [So have your father and your brothers settle] or [In fact, they may settle] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

in the best land; let them settle in the land of Goshen

Alternate translation: [in the finest land in the country, in Goshen Province] or [in the region of Goshen, which is the finest land in the country]

And if you know that there are men of ability among them

Alternate translation: [And if you know that some of them are very skilled at raising livestock]

then appoint them overseers of livestock over {those} that {belong} to me

Alternate translation: [then make them herdsman over my livestock also]

Genesis 47:7

Then Joseph brought Jacob his father

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph brought his father Jacob]

and presented him before Pharaoh

See how you translated **presented** in verse 2. Alternate translation: [and presented him to King Pharaoh] or [to King Pharaoh and introduced them to each other]

and Jacob blessed Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [and Jacob greeted and blessed Pharaoh] or [and Jacob asked God to prosper Pharaoh] or [and Jacob greeted Pharaoh with a blessing]

Genesis 47:8

How many {are} the days of the years of your life

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

Alternate translation: [Jacob replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

The days of the years of my sojournings {are} 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. Alternate translation: [The length of my life so far has been 130 years]

The days of the years of my life have been few and difficult

Alternate translation: [I have not lived very long, and I have had many difficulties] or [My life has been short, with many difficulties]

and they have not reached the days of the years of my fathers’ lives

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [In fact, I have lived less years than my forefathers did] or [In fact, I have not lived nearly as long as my forefathers did]

in the days of their sojournings

Alternate translation: [during the time that they lived on earth] or [during their years on earth]

Genesis 47:10

Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [Then Jacob said goodbye to Pharaoh with a blessing]

and left from the presence of Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [and left his presence]

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

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). Alternate translation: [So Joseph gave his father and his brothers the choicest land in the country of Egypt, and they and their families settled there. The property was in Rameses Count, that is, Goshen 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] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

as Pharaoh had commanded

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. Alternate translation: [just as Pharaoh had told him to do] or [He did exactly as Pharaoh had commanded him to do] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 47:12

bread, according to the mouth{s} of the little ones

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. Alternate translation: [food, based on how many children were in each family] or [as much food as each family needed to feed all the children in their family] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Genesis 47:13

Now there was no bread

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. Alternate translation: [Now meanwhile, there was no more food] or [Meanwhile, there was almost no food] or [After a while, there was very little food available] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

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

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. Alternate translation: [because the famine was so severe] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were languishing

Make sure your translation of this phrase refers to the people who live in Egypt and Canaan, not just the lands. Alternate translation: [As a result, the people in the country of Egypt and the region of Canaan] or [In fact, the people living in the lands of Egypt and Canaan] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and & were languishing

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. Alternate translation: [were weak] or [were suffering terribly] or [were wasting away]

because of the famine

Alternate translation: [because of the severe lack of food] 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

Alternate translation: [So the people spent their money buying grain from Joseph until he had collected all their money] or [So they bought grain from Joseph until there was no more silver left in the country of Egypt or the land of Canaan]

and Joseph brought the silver to the house of Pharaoh

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

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a passive or active clause here. Alternate translation: [So when all the silver in the country of Egypt and the region of Canaan had been used up] or [After the people in Egypt and Canaan had spent all their money] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

all 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. Alternate translation: [all the people in Egypt] or [the Egyptians all] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1638)**)

and & came to Joseph

Consider whether **came** or “went” is more natural here in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

saying

Alternate translation: [and pleaded with him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Give us bread

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. Alternate translation: [Sir, please give us food] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

And why should we die before you

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. Alternate translation: [so that we do not die right here in front of you!] or [and do not let us starve to death!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

For the silver is gone

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. Alternate translation: [There is no more money to buy food] or [We have no more money to buy food] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 47:16

And Joseph said

Alternate translation: [Joseph said to them] or [Joseph replied] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Bring your livestock

The word **livestock** is general here and includes all the different kinds of animals that are specified in verse 17.

Alternate translation: [Give me your animals]

and I will give {grain} to you {in exchange} for your livestock

Alternate translation: [and I will sell you grain when you give me your animals to pay for it] or [and in exchange for them I will give you grain]

since the silver is gone

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.

Alternate translation: [since all your money is gone] or [since you have spent all your money] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 47:17

So they brought their livestock to Joseph

Alternate translation: [So the people took their 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

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and gave him their horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys to pay for the food that he gave them] or [They gave him their horses, ...]

So he provided them with bread in that year

Alternate translation: [In that way Joseph supplied the people with grain that year]

in exchange} for all their livestock

Alternate translation: [and they gave him all their animals to pay for it]

Genesis 47:18

And {when} that year had ended

Alternate translation: [When that year was over]

then they came to him in the second year

Alternate translation: [the people came to Joseph again in the next year] (See: **Go and Come (p.1628)**)

and said to him

Alternate translation: [and told him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

We cannot hide {it} from my lord that since

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. Alternate translation: [Our lord we cannot hide from you the fact that] (See: [[rc://*/ta/man/translate/figs-honorifics]])

the silver is consumed and the herd{s} of livestock

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. Alternate translation: [our money is gone and our animals] or [not only is our silver all gone, but all our animals also]

belong} to my lord

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. Alternate translation: [belong to you, our lord] or [are yours, sir] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

there is nothing left before my lord except our bodies and our lands

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). Alternate translation: [We have nothing left to pay you, sir, for grain except ourselves and our land] or [The only way we can pay you for grain is to give you our land and work for you, sir]

Genesis 47:19

Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land

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. Alternate translation: [What good would it do for us to die and our fields to become ruined] or [Please do not just watch us die or let our land become empty] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Buy us and our land {in exchange} for the bread

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. Alternate translation: [Instead, please take us and our fields in exchange for food] or [Instead please give us food and we will give you our farmland and ourselves to pay for it] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Then our fields will belong to King Pharaoh and we will work for him as his servants]

Give {us} seed

Alternate translation: [Please give us seeds to sow] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

so that we will live

Alternate translation: [so that we can survive] or [so that we will stay alive]

and not die

See how you translated **so that we will live and not die** in Gen 42:2. Alternate translation: [and not die from hunger]

and the land will not be desolate

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. Alternate translation: [and so that the land will grow crops again!] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 47:20

Then Joseph bought

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. Alternate translation: [So Joseph agreed and bought] or [Joseph did what they asked and bought] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

all the {farm}land of Egypt for Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [all the farmland in the country of Egypt for Pharaoh]

because every Egyptian sold his field

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [All the Egyptians gave their fields to him in exchange for grain]

because & the famine

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.

Alternate translation: [because the food scarcity]

was heavy for them

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. Alternate translation: [was very severe] or [was so severe that they did not have enough to eat] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So the land became Pharaoh's

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [Joseph also moved all the people from their farmlands to the nearby cities] (See: **Textual Variants (p.1722)**)

from {one} end of the border of Egypt to its {other} end

Alternate translation: [in every part of the country of Egypt]

Genesis 47:22

because {there was} an allotment for the priests from Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [because Pharaoh gave them a regular food allowance]

and they ate {from} their allotment that Pharaoh gave to them

Alternate translation: [so that they had plenty to eat]

For that {reason} they did not sell their land

Alternate translation: [That is why they did not need to sell their farmland to buy food]

Genesis 47:23

Then Joseph said to the people

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph declared to the Egyptian people] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look]

today I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [now that I have acquired you and your fields for King Pharaoh] or [now that you and your fields belong to King Pharaoh]

Here {is} seed for you

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [I am giving you some seeds]

so that you can sow the ground

See how you translated “sowed” in Gen 26:12. Alternate translation: [to plant in the fields]

Genesis 47:24

And it will happen in the harvests

Alternate translation: [Then whenever you gather the crops] or [Then every harvest time]

that you must give a fifth to Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [you are required to give one-fifth of the crops to him] or [you must give Pharaoh one-fifth of the crops you gather]

and the four parts

Consider whether or not it is best in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [but the other four-fifths] or [The other four-fifths of your harvest] or [The rest of what you gather]

will be for you

Alternate translation: [you may keep for yourselves]

as seed of the field

Alternate translation: [as seed to plant the fields] or [to plant seeds in the fields]

and as your food and for those in your houses

Alternate translation: [and as food for you and your households] or [and for you and your households to eat]

Genesis 47:25

And they said

Alternate translation: [Then they responded] or [The people said to him] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

You have kept us alive

Alternate translation: [You have made it so we can live!]

Let us find favor in the eyes of my lord

Alternate translation: [May we continue to find favor in your eyes sir] or [Please continue to be kind to us, master]

and we will be slaves for Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [and we will serve King Pharaoh as his slaves]

Genesis 47:26

And Joseph established it as a law

Alternate translation: [So Joseph established a law]

to this day

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. Alternate translation: [that is still in force now] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

concerning the {farm}land of Egypt, {that} the fifth {belongs} to Pharaoh

See how you translated "a fifth" in verse 24. Alternate translation: [concerning the fields in the country of Egypt: one-fifth of the crops belongs to Pharaoh] or [that required people to give to Pharaoh one-fifth of all the crops they harvested from the farmland in Egypt]

Only the land of the priests by itself did not become Pharaoh's

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. Alternate translation: [The only land that Pharaoh did not own was the land that belonged to the priests]

Genesis 47:27

And & settled

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. Alternate translation: [So] or [Meanwhile] (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1581)**)

Israel

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. Alternate translation: [Israel that is, Jacob] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

And & settled

Alternate translation: [had settled with his family] or [was dwelling with his family]

in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen

See how you translated **in the land of Goshen** in Gen 45:10. Alternate translation: [in the region of Goshen in the land of Egypt] or [in Goshen County in the country of Egypt]

and they acquired {possessions}

This phrase is general here and refers to acquiring land and other possessions. Alternate translation: [and they gained many possessions] or [and owned much land] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

in it

Alternate translation: [in that region]

And they were fruitful

See how you translated a similar phrase (“be fruitful and multiply”) in Gen 35:11. Alternate translation: [They were fruitful] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and multiplied greatly

Alternate translation: [and their numbers increased greatly] or [and became very many]

Genesis 47:28

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years

Alternate translation: [When Jacob had lived in the country of Egypt for seventeen years]

and the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years

Alternate translation: [he reached the age of 147 years]

Genesis 47:29

and the days of Israel drew near {for him} to die

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [When it was almost time for Israel to die] or [He knew that it was almost time for him to die, so]

So he called for his son, for Joseph

Alternate translation: [he asked for his son Joseph to come to him]

If, please, I have found favor in your eyes

Alternate translation: [Please show your favor toward me and] or [Please, if you truly love me] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

please put your hand under my thigh

See how you translated this clause in Gen 24:2, and see the note about this custom there. Alternate translation: [put your hand under my leg to show that you will do what I ask] or [make a vow by putting your hand under my leg] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

and deal with me {in} kindness and faithfulness

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

Make sure your translation of **bury me** does not sound like Israel would still be alive when he was buried. Alternate translation: [Please promise that you will not bury my bones]

in Egypt

Alternate translation: [here in the land of Egypt]

Genesis 47:30

And {when} I lie down with my fathers

The phrase **lie down with my fathers** is a idiom that refers to Jacob's death. See how you translated an idiom with a similar meaning in Gen 15:15. Alternate translation: [When I die and rest with my ancestors] or [Rather, after I die and join my ancestors who have gone before me] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

then carry me out of Egypt

See how you translated **me** in verse 29. Alternate translation: [carry my body out of Egypt to the region of Canaan]

and bury me in their tomb

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. Alternate translation: [and bury me in the same burial place where their bodies are]

And he said

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. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph replied to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

I will do according to your word

Alternate translation: [I will do as you requested of me] or [I will do exactly what you asked me to do]

Genesis 47:31

Then he said

Consider what is the best way to refer to Joseph's father Israel here in your language. Alternate translation: [But he urged him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Swear to me

See how you translated “swear to me” in Gen 21:23. Alternate translation: [Vow to me by Yahweh that you will do it] or [With God as your witness, make an oath to me that you will do it]

And he swore to him

Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph is the one speaking here. Alternate translation: [So Joseph swore that he would do it] or [So Joseph promised his father with an oath to do what he had requested] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Then Israel bowed

If it is not clear in your culture why Israel bowed, you could make that explicit. Alternate translation: [Then Israel bowed down to thank God] or [Then his father Israel bowed his head and thanked God] (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 1718)**)

at the head of the 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. Alternate translation: [as he sat at the top of his bed] or [as he was lying on his bed]

Genesis 48

Genesis 48:1

Then it happened after those things

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.1654)**)

that {someone} said to Joseph, “Behold, your father is sick

For some languages it may be more natural to use an indirect quote here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [Joseph was told by someone that his father was sick] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

So he took his two sons with him, Manasseh and Ephraim

Consider what is the best way to refer to Joseph in this sentence in your language. Alternate translation: [So Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him to visit his father] or [So he went to visit his father and took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 48:2

And {someone} announced to Jacob and said, “Behold, your son Joseph has come to you

Consider whether it is better in your language to use a direct or indirect quote here. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

Then Israel gathered his strength

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. Alternate translation: [Then Israel rallied his strength] or [Immediately Israel, who was lying down, used all his strength] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and sat up on the bed

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. Alternate translation: [and sat up on the edge of his bed and they greeted each other] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

Genesis 48:3

Then Jacob said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [Then Jacob recounted to Joseph the following:] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p. 1704)**)

God Almighty

Consider again how you translated **God Almighty** in the book of Genesis. See Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14.

Alternate translation: [Almighty God]

appeared to me

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. Alternate translation: [came to me in a vision long ago]

at Luz in the land of Canaan

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. Alternate translation: [when I was at the town of Luz in the land of Canaan] or [in the land of Canaan at the town of Luz] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and he blessed me

For some languages it is more natural to begin a new sentence here. Do what is best in your language. Alternate translation: [He pronounced a blessing over me there]

Genesis 48:4**and said to me**

Make sure your translation of “blessed ... and said” (verses 3-4) refers to the same event, not two separate events.
Alternate translation: [He said]

Behold, I am making you fruitful, and I will multiply you and make you

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. Alternate translation: [Look I will give you many descendants who will increase in number and become] or [Look I will give you and your descendants many children so that your descendants will become]

into a community of peoples

See how you translated this phrase in Gen 28:3, and a similar phrase (“a community of nations”) in 35:11. Alternate translation: [many ethnic groups]

as} an everlasting possession

Alternate translation: [for an eternal possession] or [and it will always belong to them]

Genesis 48:5

And now, 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.1704)**)

in the land of Egypt

Alternate translation: [here in the land of Egypt]

before I came to you in Egypt

Alternate translation: [before I arrived]

they {are} mine, Ephraim and Manasseh

Alternate translation: [Ephraim and Manasseh, they now belong to me] or [Ephraim and Manasseh, will be my sons]

just as Reuben and Simeon are mine

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. Alternate translation: [just as Reuben and Simeon are my sons] or [just as my sons Reuben and Simeon] (See: **Information Structure (p. 1651)**)

Genesis 48:6

But your children whom you father after them will be yours

Alternate translation: [But any other children that you have later on will be yours] or [If you father any other children, they will belong to you]

They will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance

Consider whether it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here or to continue the previous sentence.

Alternate translation: [So they will share in some of what their brothers inherit from me]

Genesis 48:7

And I

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. Alternate translation: [I want it this way because] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

as I was coming

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. Alternate translation: [as I and our family were coming home] or [as our family was coming home] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

from Paddan

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. Alternate translation: [from the land of Paddan Aram]

Rachel

Alternate translation: [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"

on the way, while {there was} still a distance of land to go to Ephrath

Be consistent here with how you spelled **Ephrath** in Gen 35:16, 19, and how you spelled **Bethlehem** in 35:19.

which {is} 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

and said

Alternate translation: [and asked Joseph]

Who {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). Alternate translation: [Whose sons are these?]

Genesis 48:9

And Joseph said to his father

Alternate translation: [Joseph said to him] or [Joseph replied]

They {are} my sons whom God has given to me

Alternate translation: [They are my sons whom God gave to me]

Then he said

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is speaking here. Alternate translation: [Then Israel said to him] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Please bring them 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.1622)**)

and I will bless them

Alternate translation: [so that I can ask God to prosper them]

Genesis 48:10

Now the eyes of Israel were heavy

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. Alternate translation: [Israel had very bad eyesight] (See: **Background Information (p.1563)**)

from age

Alternate translation: [because he was very old]

so that} he was not able to see

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. Alternate translation: [so that he could not see very well] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

So he brought them near to him

Make sure it is clear in your translation whom is being referred to at each point in this sentence. Alternate translation: [So Joseph brought his sons near to his father] or [So he had his sons stand near to his father] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and he kissed them

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. Alternate translation: [and Israel kissed them on the cheeks] or [and his father kissed ...] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and embraced 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

I did not expect to see your face

Alternate translation: [I did not think I would ever see you again]

but behold

Alternate translation: [but amazingly]

God has let me see also your offspring

Alternate translation: [God has allowed me to see even your offspring] or [God has also allowed me to see your offspring]

Genesis 48:12

Then Joseph removed them

Alternate translation: [Then Joseph took his sons away] or [Then Joseph had his sons step away]

from beside his knees

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. Alternate translation: [from near his father] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and he bowed down

Alternate translation: [and he prostrated himself before him]

with his nose to the ground

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. Alternate translation: [with his face toward the ground in thankfulness and respect] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 48:13

Then Joseph took

Alternate translation: [Then he took]

both of them

Alternate translation: [both of his sons]

Ephraim on his right

Alternate translation: [with Ephraim at his right hand]

and Manasseh on his left

Alternate translation: [and with Manasseh at his left hand]

and brought {them} near to him

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. Alternate translation: [and he took them close to his father again] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 48:14

and {he placed} his left hand on the head of Manasseh. He guided his hands

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.1718)**)

because

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). Alternate translation: [in spite of the fact that]

Genesis 48:15

Then he blessed Joseph and said

Israel blessed Joseph by blessing Joseph's sons (verses 15-16, 19-20). Alternate translation: [Then Israel blessed Joseph by blessing his sons and saying]

May 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. Alternate translation: [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] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac

Alternate translation: [whom my forefathers Abraham and Isaac]

walked before

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. Alternate translation: [walked with according to his will] or [lived obediently in the presence of] or [obeyed] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the God who has been shepherding 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.” Alternate translation: [the same God who has watched over me] or [He is the same God who has taken care of me] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

from since I {was born} until this day

Alternate translation: [from the beginning of my life until the present day]

Genesis 48:16

the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil

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. Alternate translation: [He is also the Angel who rescued me continually from all harm]

may he bless {these} boys

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. Alternate translation: [I ask that he will cause these young men to prosper greatly]

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

Alternate translation: [so that my family name and the family name 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 for me and for my forefathers Abraham and Isaac]

Genesis 48:17

And Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim

See how you translated **placed** in verse 14.

and it was displeasing in his eyes

Alternate translation: [it displeased him] or [he was unhappy about it] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

so he took hold of the hand of his father

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here.

Genesis 48:18

Not so, my father, because that {one} {is} the firstborn son

Alternate translation: [Not like that, Father. It is the other son who is my firstborn] or [That is the wrong one Father. The other one is my oldest son]

Put your right hand on his head

Alternate translation: [So you need to put your right hand on his head]

Genesis 48:19

But his father refused

Alternate translation: [But his father refused to move his hands]

I know, my son, I know

Alternate translation: [I know it 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

Consider what is the best way in your language to refer to Joseph's firstborn in these two clauses. Alternate translation: [In fact, the descendants of your firstborn son will also become a ethnic group, and he will be a great man] or [In fact, your firstborn son will also be a important man, and he will be the ancestor of a people group] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than he

Alternate translation: [However, his younger brother Ephraim will be even greater than he will be]

and his offspring

Make sure that your translation of this phrase refers to Ephraim's descendants, not Manasseh's. Alternate translation: [with many descendants, who]

will become a multitude of nations

Compare how you translated a similar phrase ("a community of peoples") in verse 4. Alternate translation: [will become many ethnic groups]

Genesis 48:20

And he blessed them on that day

Alternate translation: [That same day, Israel blessed both of them]

saying

Alternate translation: [and said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

By you Israel will bless {people}

Alternate translation: [The people of Israel will use your names when they bless someone] or [When the people of Israel say a blessing over someone, they will use your names]

May God make you

Alternate translation: [May God bless you] or [We ask God to make you great]

like Ephraim and like Manasseh

Alternate translation: [like he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh]

So he put Ephraim before Manasseh

Alternate translation: [When he said that, he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh] or [In that way, he made Ephraim greater than Manasseh]

Genesis 48:21

Then Israel said to Joseph

Alternate translation: [Next Israel spoke to Joseph. He said] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look]

I am dying

Alternate translation: [I will die soon]

and God will be with 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. Alternate translation: [but God will always stay with all of you and help you] or [but God will always stay with you and your brothers and all your descendants and help you] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1624)**)

and he will bring you back

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He will also bring you back]

to the land of your fathers

Alternate translation: [to the land that he gave to your forefathers]

Genesis 48:22

And I give you

The pronouns **you** and **your** shift to singular in verse 22. Alternate translation: [And I bequeath to you as part of your inheritance]

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

Alternate translation: [which is more land than I am giving to your brothers and]

which I took from the hand of

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [which I took control of from] or [I took that land from]

the Amorite{s} with my sword and with my bow

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 Amorites 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 **Amorites** in the book of Genesis. See Gen 10:16; 14:7, 13; 15:16, 21; 48:22. Alternate translation: [the Amorites in battle using my sword and my bow] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 49

Genesis 49:1

Then Jacob called for 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

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

Gather together

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. Alternate translation: [Gather yourselves together before me] (See: **Poetry (p.1692)**)

and I will reveal to you

Alternate translation: [and I will declare to you] or [so that I can inform you]

what will meet you

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.1559)**)

in the end of days

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. Alternate translation: [in the days ahead] or [in future days] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 49:2

Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob

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.1620)**)

and listen to Israel your father

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. Alternate translation: [Pay attention to me, your father Israel]

Genesis 49:3

Reuben, you {are} my firstborn

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

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. Alternate translation: [the result of my fertility, and the first child I had as a young man] or [You are the first sign of my manhood and strength] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

excelling {in} rank and excelling {in} power

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [You had higher honor and authority than all your brothers]

Genesis 49:4

Turbulent

Alternate translation: [However, you are uncontrollable] or [However, you are reckless]

like waters

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. Alternate translation: [like a flood of water] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

you will not excel

Alternate translation: [so you will no longer have your high 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

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). Alternate translation: [because you got into my bed with my wife and dishonored me!] or [because you dishonored me by getting into my bed and committing adultery with my concubine] (See: **Euphemism (p.1616)**)

He went up {onto} my couch

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.1620)**)

Genesis 49:5

Simeon and Levi

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. Alternate translation: [As for Simeon and Levi, they] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

are} brothers

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. Alternate translation: [are close brothers] or [are partners in crime] or [do evil things together]

Their swords {are} weapons of violence

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. Alternate translation: [They use their weapons to do violent things together]

Genesis 49:6

Do not let my soul enter

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. Alternate translation: [Do not ever let me] or [May I never] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

Do not let & enter into their council

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. Alternate translation: [take part in their evil plans] or [participate with them when you plan evil things!]

Do not let my glory join in their assembly

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. Alternate translation: [Do not let my honor be associated with your evil plans] or [I never want to be linked with their evil plans] or [I refuse to make evil plans with them] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

because in their anger they killed a man

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). Alternate translation: [because you became angry and murdered many men]

and for their pleasure they hamstrung an ox

This may have happened during the time that Simeon and Levi took revenge on the people of Shechem. Alternate translation: [and just to please yourselves, you crippled some oxen so they could not walk] or [and you cut the leg tendons of some oxen just for the fun of it]

Genesis 49:7

Cursed {be} their anger because {it is} strong, and their fury because {it is} cruel

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. Alternate translation: [May God curse them for your intense anger and your malicious fury!] or [I ask God to punish them for being so intensely angry and malicious!] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

I will divide them

The last half of verse 7 specifies how Jacob is asking God to curse Simeon and Levi. Alternate translation: [I ask God to disperse them and their descendants] or [May he cause them and their descendants to be spread out]

in Jacob

In this context, the name **Jacob** refers to his family and especially his descendants. Alternate translation: [among the family of Jacob] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

and I will scatter them

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, I will] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

and I will scatter them

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. Alternate translation: [disperse you] or [cause them to be spread out]

in 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. Alternate translation: [throughout the descendants of Israel]

Genesis 49:8

Judah, {it is} you your brothers will praise

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. Alternate translation: [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]

Your hand {will be} on the neck of

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. Alternate translation: [You will be victorious over] or [You will defeat] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

those opposing you

Alternate translation: [those who are against you] or [your adversaries]

The sons of your father

Make sure that your translation of **your father** refers to Jacob. Alternate translation: [Your brothers] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

will bow down to you

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. Alternate translation: [and their descendants will bow themselves before you and your descendants in submission] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Genesis 49:9

Judah {is} the cub of a lion. From the prey, my son, you have gone up

Alternate translation: [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.1569)**)

He crouches {and} lies down like a lion

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. Alternate translation: [You are like a lion that stretches out and lies down to rest after eating] (See: **Simile (p.1715)**)

And like a lioness, who will rouse him

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. Alternate translation: [Yes, you are like a lion that no one dares to awaken] or [No one dares to disrespect that lion] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 49:10

The scepter will not depart from Judah

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. Alternate translation: [Judah, the authority to rule will always belong to you and your descendants] (See: **Metonymy (p.1674)**)

nor the staff from between his feet

This phrase forms a parallelism with the previous clause and emphasizes the authority that Judah and his descendants will have. (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

until Shiloh comes

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. Alternate translation: [until the highest king arrives] or [until the One whom the scepter belongs to comes]

and to him {belongs} the obedience of the peoples

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [and the nations of the earth obey him] or [and all people obey him] or [All people will obey him]

Genesis 49:11

He will tether

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. Alternate translation: [Judah and his descendants] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1559)**)

He will tether his donkey to the {grape}vine

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. Alternate translation: [will be so wealthy that they will tie their donkeys to your grapevines to eat the valuable fruit] or [let your donkeys eat your valuable grapevines] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1724)**)

and the son of his donkey to the choice branch

This clause forms a parallelism with the previous one to emphasize how wealthy Judah and his descendants will be. (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

He will wash his garment{s} in wine and his robe{s} in the blood of grapes

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. Alternate translation: [They will still have so much wine from other vines that you could even use the wine like water to wash your robes and other clothes] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

Genesis 49:12

His} eyes

Alternate translation: [Their eyes] or [You will be so blessed that 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.1651)**)

Genesis 49:13

Zebulun

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). Alternate translation: [As for Zebulun, he and his descendants]

will settle at the shore of the sea

Alternate translation: [will live at the coast]

and he {will live} at the shore of ships

This clause forms a parallelism with the previous clause to emphasize where Zebulun and his descendants will live. Alternate translation: [yes, they will settle at a harbor for ships] or [where there will be a safe place for ships to load and unload their cargo] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

and his border {will reach

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [Their territory will extend]

to Sidon

Alternate translation: [all the way up to the city of Sidon]

Genesis 49:14

Issachar

Alternate translation: [As for Issachar, he and his descendants]

is} a strong 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. Alternate translation: [will be like a strong donkey] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1569)**)

lying down

Alternate translation: [lying down resting]

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

Alternate translation: [They will have a good place to live, in a enjoyable land] (See: **Parallelism (p.1687)**)

Then he will bend his shoulder

Consider what is the best way to translate this Hebrew idiom in your language. Alternate translation: [However, you will also have to exert yourselves] or [But you will work hard] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

to bear {the loads}

Alternate translation: [to carry heavy loads]

and he will be a forced labor servant

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [In fact, you will be forced to be slaves] or [They will have to work very hard for others as slaves] or [People will force you to be their slaves]

Genesis 49:16

Dan

Alternate translation: [As for Dan, he and his descendants]

will judge his people

Alternate translation: [will govern their own people group]

as one of the tribes of Israel

Alternate translation: [just as the other tribes of Israel govern their own people]

Genesis 49:17

Dan

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. Alternate translation: [They] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1701)**)

will be a snake beside the road, a viper beside the path

Alternate translation: [will be cunning like a poisonous snake lying beside a road] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1569)**)

and its rider falls off backward

Alternate translation: [so that it rears up and the rider falls off backward to the ground] or [... is thrown off the horse and defeated]

Genesis 49:18

I am waiting for your salvation, Yahweh

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.1559)**)

Genesis 49:19

raider{s} will attack him

Alternate translation: [a group of robbers will attack him and his descendants] or [you and your descendants will be attacked by enemies]

but he will attack {their} heel{s}

Make sure it is clear in your translation who is being referred to at each point in this sentence. Alternate translation: [but they will hunt them down and defeat them] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

Genesis 49:20

From Asher, his bread {will be} fat

Here the word **bread** refers to food in general and **fat** refers to the best kinds of food. Alternate translation: [Asher and his descendants will produce rich food] or [Asher, you and your descendants will be wealthy and produce the finest food] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

and he will provide king's delicacies

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. Alternate translation: [He will even supply food that is fancy enough for a king] or [In fact, they will supply fine foods that are fit for kings to eat]

Genesis 49:21

Naphtali

Alternate translation: [As for Naphtali, he and his descendants]

is} a doe

This metaphor pictures a deer that swiftly runs away after being released from captivity. Alternate translation: [will be swift like a doe] or [will be warriors who are swift like a deer] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

that is let loose

Alternate translation: [that is set free] or [that has been released to run freely] or [that is free to 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.1620)**)

Genesis 49:22

Joseph {is

Alternate translation: [As for Joseph, he and his descendants]

the son of a fruit-bearing {vine}, the son of a fruit-bearing {vine

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. Alternate translation: [will be like the branch of a fruitful tree, yes, like a fruitful tree] or [will be very successful and flourish like a fruitful branch of a vine] or [will be very fruitful like the fruit on a fruitful vine] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1569)**)

beside a spring

Alternate translation: [that is planted next to a spring of water]

whose} daughters go up

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. Alternate translation: [with branches extending] or [with branches full of fruit that extend] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1569)**)

over a wall

Alternate translation: [over a surrounding wall]

Genesis 49:23

And & will attack him

Be consistent with your choice of third person or second person (singular or plural) references to Joseph (and his descendants) throughout verses 22-26. Alternate translation: [Skillful bowmen will fiercely attack them and their descendants] or [Enemy soldiers will ...] or [Your enemies will ...] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

and shoot

Alternate translation: [and shoot arrows at them]

and harass him

Alternate translation: [and treat them hatefully] or [and try to destroy them]

Genesis 49:24

But his bow will remain in strength

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. Alternate translation: [But as they fight back, you will hold your bows steady] or [... you will use your bows well]

and the arms of his hands will be made limber

Alternate translation: [and their powerful arms will stay agile]

by the hands of the Mighty {One} of Jacob

Consider what is the best way to translate this idiom in your language. Alternate translation: [because of the power] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

the Mighty {One} of Jacob

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. Alternate translation: [of the Powerful God whom I worship] or [that the Powerful God of Jacob gives you] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

by the name of the Shepherd

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. Alternate translation: [He takes care of his people the way that a shepherd takes care of his sheep] (See: **Metaphor (p.1668)**)

the Rock of Israel

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.1620)**)

Genesis 49:25

by the God of

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [That power is from]

by the God of your father, and he will help you

Alternate translation: [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

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. Alternate translation: [He is the all-powerful God, who will bless you all] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

with} blessings of the heavens above

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He will provide you with rain from the sky]

blessings of the deep that lies below

This phrase refers to water that comes from under the ground and supplies springs, wells, and rivers. Alternate translation: [and bless you with water from under the ground]

blessings of breasts and womb

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. Alternate translation: [May your wives bear many children and your animals bear many young] (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.1722)**)

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

Alternate translation: [the everlasting mountains]

May they rest on the head of Joseph

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. Alternate translation: [May God also give those blessings to you Joseph, as] or [I pray that God will abundantly bless you too, Joseph, since you are] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1720)**)

the one consecrated from {among

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive phrase in your language. Alternate translation: [the one who has been set apart by God as ruler] or [the one who is honored by God] or [the one whom he chose to set apart and honor] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

his brothers

Make sure your choice of **his** or **your** here fits with how you translated the beginning of this sentence. Alternate translation: [over his brothers] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 49:27

Benjamin

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.

Alternate translation: [As for Benjamin, he and his descendants] or [Benjamin, you and your descendants]

is} a ravenous wolf

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. Alternate translation: [is like a fierce wolf] or [will be fierce warriors like hungry wolves] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.1569)**)

In the morning it devours {its} prey, and in the evening it divides the plunder

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. Alternate translation: [You defeat their enemies in the morning and share the plunder of battle with your warriors in the evening] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1620)**)

Genesis 49:28

All those {are} the twelve tribes of Israel

This clause refers back to Jacob's sons who are mentioned in verses 1-27. Alternate translation: [Those twelve sons are the forefathers of the twelve tribes that came from Israel]

and that {is} what their father said to them

Alternate translation: [and those were the words that their father spoke to them]

And he blessed

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [when he blessed]

them, each one

Alternate translation: [each of them] or [each son]

according to his blessing he blessed them

Alternate translation: [with blessings that were right for them and their descendants] or [in a way that was fitting for them and their descendants]

Genesis 49:29

Then he commanded them

Alternate translation: [After that, he instructed his sons]

and said 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.1704)**)

I am being gathered to

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [I will soon die and be taken by God to be with] or [God will soon take my spirit to be with] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

my people

Alternate translation: [my relatives who have already died] or [my relatives who have gone before me] or [my deceased ancestors]

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. Alternate translation: [Please bury my body] or [When that happens, please bury me]

with my fathers

Alternate translation: [with the bodies of my ancestors] or [next to them]

in the cave that {is} in the field of Ephron the Hittite

Make sure your translation of this clause does not sound like Ephron still owned that property. Alternate translation: [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]

Genesis 49:30

in the cave that {is} in the field of Machpelah

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

Alternate translation: [that is east of the city of Mamre]

as property {for} a burial place

Alternate translation: [to use for a family burial site] or [in order to possess a place to bury his dead relatives]

Genesis 49:31

There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife

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.

and there

Alternate translation: [That is also where]

Genesis 49:32

The purchase of the field and the cave that {is} in it {was

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. Alternate translation: [That field and cave were bought by Abraham] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

from the sons of Heth

Compare how you translated “Hittite” in verse 29, which refers to the same people group as here. Alternate translation: [from the descendants of Heth] or [from the Hittite people]

Genesis 49:33

and he drew his feet into the bed

This clause means that Jacob lay back down after being in a sitting position on the side of his bed (Gen 48:2).
Alternate translation: [he lay down and lifted his feet up into his bed]

and exhaled

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. Alternate translation: [and breathed out his last breath] or [Then he took his final breath and died] (See: **Euphemism (p. 1616)**)

and was gathered to his people

Consider again how you translated this phrase in the book of Genesis. See Gen 25:8 (and note), 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33.
Alternate translation: [and was taken by God to be with his deceased relatives]

Genesis 50

Genesis 50:1

Then Joseph fell on

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. Alternate translation: [Immediately Joseph embraced his father in sorrow] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and he wept 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.1651)**)

and kissed him

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. Alternate translation: [and kissed him goodbye on the forehead]

Genesis 50:2

Then Joseph commanded

Alternate translation: [Then he told] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1704)**)

his servants the physicians

Alternate translation: [his servants who were doctors] or [his physicians who served him]

to embalm his father

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.1724)**)

Genesis 50:3

and they completed forty days for him

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [which took them forty days] or [The work took forty days]

for so they complete the days of embalmings

Alternate translation: [because that is the usual amount of time needed to embalm a body] or [which is how long it usually takes to embalm a body]

And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days

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." Alternate translation: [The people in Egypt wept for him for seventy days] or [For seventy days the people of Egypt mourned for him]

Genesis 50:4

And the days of his mourning passed

Alternate translation: [When those seventy days of mourning for him were over]

then Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh, saying

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

Alternate translation: [Please do this kindness for me:] or [Please show me kindness and do this:]

please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying

Alternate translation: [please speak to King Pharaoh for me and say to 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

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.1606)**)

So now, please let me go up {there} and bury my father

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.1606)**)

then I will return

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [After I have done that, I will return to Egypt]

Genesis 50:6

And Pharaoh said

Alternate translation: [Pharaoh sent back this reply to him]

Go up and bury your father just as he made you swear

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.1606)**)

Genesis 50:7

So Joseph went up

Joseph did not arrive in Canaan until later (verse 10). Alternate translation: [So Joseph started traveling to Canaan] or [So Joseph started the journey to Canaan] or [So Joseph left Egypt]

and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [All the officials of Pharaoh went with him to escort him]

the elders of his house

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

Alternate translation: [and all the other senior men in the country of Egypt]

Genesis 50:8

and all of the house of Joseph

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.

Only their little ones

Alternate translation: [Only their children]

and their flock{s} and their herd{s}

Consider again how you translated “flocks and herds” 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. Alternate translation: [and their sheep and cattle]

they left

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. Alternate translation: [they left behind] or [were left behind with servants] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

in the land of Goshen

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. Alternate translation: [in the region of Goshen]

Genesis 50:9

And with him went up both chariot{s} and horsemen

Consider again how you translated “chariot” in Gen 41:43; 46:29; 50:9. Alternate translation: [There were men riding chariots and men riding horses who also went with Joseph] or [Many soldiers also escorted him including those who were riding chariots and those who were riding horses]

and the company was very great

Alternate translation: [so that the entire 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

Alternate translation: [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

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). Alternate translation: [which was located across the Jordan River] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

and they lamented there

Alternate translation: [they began to mourn]

with} a very great and heavy lamentation

Alternate translation: [with a very loud and sorrowful lamentation]

And he did seven days {of} mourning for 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. Alternate translation: [For seven days Joseph and the others grieved the death of his father] or [and for seven days, Joseph led everyone in mourning the death of his father] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 50:11

And the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad

See how you translated **threshing floor of Atad** in verse 10.

This {is} a heavy mourning for the Egyptians

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. Alternate translation: [Wow! Those people of Egypt are mourning very sorrowfully for someone who died!]

For that {reason

Alternate translation: [That is the reason that]

they called its name

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. Alternate translation: [people call that place] or [the name of that place is] or [that place is called]

which {is} beyond

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [which is located] or [The place is]

beyond the Jordan

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.1651)**)

Genesis 50:12

he had commanded them

Alternate translation: [he had told them to do:]

Genesis 50:13

And his sons carried him

Alternate translation: [They brought his body]

to the land 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

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. Alternate translation: [and buried him in the cave that is in the field in the Machpelah area]

which Abraham had bought with the field as property for a burial place from Ephron the Hittite

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. Alternate translation: [It was the field and cave that Abraham had bought from Ephron the Hittite as a property to bury his dead relatives]

in front 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.1651)**)

Genesis 50:14

Then & Joseph returned to Egypt

Alternate translation: [Joseph returned to the country of Egypt]

who had gone up with him

Alternate translation: [who had gone to Canaan with him]

to bury his father

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

What if Joseph hates us

Alternate translation: [What if Joseph is holding a grudge against us?]

Then he will surely repay us

Consider whether or not it is better to begin a new sentence here in your language. Alternate translation: [Then certainly he will pay us back] or [then he will certainly take revenge on us and punish us severely]

for} all the evil that we did to him

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. Alternate translation: [for all the ways that we harmed him!] or [for the completely evil way that we treated him!] or [because we treated him so badly] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 50:16

Then they ordered {a messenger to go} to Joseph, saying

Alternate translation: [So they sent a message to Joseph which said]

Your father commanded before his death, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Our father commanded us before he died] or [Before your father died, he commanded us] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1618)**)

Genesis 50:17

This you must say to Joseph: “I beg {you

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. Alternate translation: [to tell you that he asks you to] or [to ask you on his behalf to] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

please forgive the crime of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you

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. Alternate translation: [please forgive your brothers for all the evil they did to you and for their offenses against you, even though what they did was very evil] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1606)**)

So now, please forgive the crime of the servants of your father’s God

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. Alternate translation: [So then, as servants of God whom our father served, we beg you to forgive us for sinning against you]

And Joseph cried when they spoke to him

Alternate translation: [Joseph cried when he heard that message]

Genesis 50:18

and fell before him and said

See how you translated “fell ... before him” in Gen 44:14. Compare that to how you translated “bowed down to/ before ...” (See: 49:8). Alternate translation: [and threw themselves on the ground in front of him and said] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1718)**)

Behold us

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

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. Alternate translation: [we will be your slaves] or [we will serve you as slaves]

Genesis 50:19

Do not be afraid

Alternate translation: [You have nothing to fear]

For {am} I in place of God

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. Alternate translation: [After all, I am not God! So I have no right to judge you] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1711)**)

Genesis 50:20

And {as for} you, you intended evil against me

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. Alternate translation: [Although you intentionally treated me very badly] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1587)**)

but} God intended it for good

Alternate translation: [God is using that evil to benefit us all] or [God planned that what you did would turn out to be good for me and everyone else]

in order to do as {he is doing} this day

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [to accomplish what he is doing these days]

to save many people

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. Alternate translation: [to save the lives of many people] or [to keep many people alive] or [keeping many people from dying]

Genesis 50:21

So now

Alternate translation: [So again I tell you]

do not be afraid

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. Alternate translation: [you have nothing to fear]

I will support you and your little ones

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. Alternate translation: [I myself will take care of you and your children]

So he comforted 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. Alternate translation: [In that way, Joseph consoled them that he had forgiven them]

and he spoke to their heart{s

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. Alternate translation: [and he also said other things to comfort them] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 50:22

Then Joseph stayed

Alternate translation: [Joseph remained] or [Joseph continued to stay]

in Egypt

Alternate translation: [in the land of Egypt]

And Joseph lived 110 years

Consider whether or not it is better in your language to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [He lived to be 110 years old]

Genesis 50:23

And Joseph saw

Alternate translation: [So he was able to see] or [He lived long enough to know] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1701)**)

were born on the knees of Joseph

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 Machir’s children as his descendants and that they grew up during his lifetime and spent time with him. (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

Genesis 50:24

I am dying

Consider again how you translated **I am dying** in Gen 35:18; 48:21; 50:5, 24.

and God will surely visit 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. Alternate translation: [but God will certainly help you] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and take you up from this land

Alternate translation: [and lead you and your descendants from this land]

to the land that he swore

Alternate translation: [to the land that he swore with an vow]

Genesis 50:25

Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear {an oath}, saying

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. Alternate translation: [Then Joseph told his brothers and the rest of the descendants of Israel to promise with an oath that they would do something for him. He said]

Surely God will visit you

See how you translated **visit you** in verse 24. Alternate translation: [Yes, God will definitely help you, and when he does] or [When God helps you that way] (See: **Idiom (p.1645)**)

and you must take my bones up from this {place}

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. Alternate translation: [you must take my bones back to Canaan with you and bury it there] (See: **Information Structure (p.1651)**)

Genesis 50:26

Then Joseph died, a son of 110 years

Alternate translation: [So Joseph died when he was 110 years old]

Then they embalmed him

See how you translated **embalmed** in verses 2-3, and how you translated “physicians/doctors” in verse 2. Alternate translation: [And his morticians preserved his body for burial]

and he was put

Consider what is the best way to translate this passive clause in your language. Alternate translation: [and they put him] or [and put his body] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1556)**)

in a coffin

Alternate translation: [in a burial chest]

in Egypt

Alternate translation: [in the land of Egypt]



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Version 85

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 21:16](#); [Genesis 22:3](#); [Genesis 30:18](#); [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 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 19:15](#); [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 3:7](#); [Genesis 3:14](#); [Genesis 3:22](#); [Genesis 3:24](#); [Genesis 4:4](#); [Genesis 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:11](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 4:22](#); [Genesis 4:25](#); [Genesis 5:4](#); [Genesis 5:6](#); [Genesis 5:29](#); [Genesis 5:32](#); [Genesis 6:3](#); [Genesis 6:7](#); [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 22:10](#); [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 26:22; 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; Genesis 36:40; Genesis 37:3; Genesis
37:25; Genesis 37:28; Genesis 38:14; Genesis 38:15; Genesis 38:16; Genesis 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 a section of background information about Jesus' age and ancestors (Luke 3:23-38). 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. A set of parentheses is also a way to mark background information. Here, "as it was assumed" gives background information to the phrase, "He was the son." People assumed that Joseph was Jesus' father, although his true father was God.

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 4:2](#); [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.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

| Original Measure | Metric Measure |
|------------------|----------------|
| handbreadth | 8 centimeters |
| span | 23 centimeters |
| cubit | 46 centimeters |
| "long" cubit | 54 centimeters |
| stadia | 185 meters |

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.

Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.

Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.

If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."

Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.

When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal]]
Fractions (UTA PDF)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)
- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

- (1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See [Copy or Borrow Words](#).)

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**."

- (2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

- (4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**."

- (5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

"They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹ its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

“They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; ¹
its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; ² and its height will be **two thirds
of a meter.**”

The footnotes would look like:

^[1] two and a half cubits ^[2] one cubit and a half

”

Referenced in: [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.

1 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.](#))

1 "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.

1 "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.

1 "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.

1 "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

1 [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

1 "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](#)

Blessings

Description

Blessings are short sayings that people use to ask God to do something good for another person. In the Bible, the person saying the blessing speaks or writes directly to the person who will receive the blessing. The person who says the blessing does not directly speak to God, but it is understood that God is the one who will do the good thing mentioned. It is also understood that God hears the blessing, whether he is mentioned by name or not.

This page answers the question: *What are blessings, and how can I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Poetry ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying blessings. There are many blessings in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say blessings in your language, so that people recognize them as blessings and understand what one person wants God to do for another.

Examples From the Bible

In the Bible, people often said a blessing when they met someone or when they were leaving someone or sending someone off.

In the book of Ruth, when Boaz meets his workers in the fields, he greets them with a blessing:

Then behold, Boaz coming from Bethlehem! And he said to the reapers, "Yahweh be with you."
And they said to him, "May Yahweh bless you." (Ruth 2:4 ULT)

Similarly, when Rebekah leaves her family, they say farewell with a blessing:

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

In a similar way, the writers of letters in the New Testament often wrote a blessing at the beginning of their letters as well as at the end. Here are examples from the beginning and end of Paul's second letter to Timothy:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2 Tim 1:2 ULT) The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Find out how people say blessings in your language. Collect a list of common blessings, noting the form of the verb, the use of certain words, and the words that are not used in a blessing but would normally be in a sentence. Also find out what differences there might be between blessings that people use when they are speaking to each other and when they are writing to each other.

If translating a blessing literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

■ The Lord with your spirit. The grace with you. (2 Tim 4:22, literal from the Greek)

In the Greek of this verse, there is no verb 'be.' However, in blessings in English, it is natural to use a verb. The idea that the 'grace' from God will be or remain with the person is implied in Greek.

The Lord **be** with your spirit. Grace **be** with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

(2) Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

If people expect a blessing to refer to God in your language, you might have to provide 'God' as the subject or as the source of the blessing. In Greek and Hebrew, usually God is not explicitly mentioned in the blessing, but it is implied that God is the one acting to show his kindness to the person being addressed.

■ The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

The Lord be with your spirit. **May God give** grace to you.

■ They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may **God grant that** you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may **God empower** your descendants **to** possess the gate of those who hate them."

(3) Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a blessing in their language.

■ The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

May the Lord be with your spirit. May God cause his grace to be with you.

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience grace from God.

■ "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

"Our sister, we pray to God that you may be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and appeal to him that your descendants may possess the gate of those who hate them."

"Our sister, by God's power you will be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and your descendants will possess the gate of those who hate them."

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:28](#)

Collective Nouns

Description

This page answers the question: *What are collective nouns and how can I translate them?*

A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family**, **clan**, or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

There are several issues that require care when translating collective nouns. Further care is needed because the language you are translating into may not use collective nouns in the same way as the language you are translating from. Issues include:

The source language may have a collective noun for a group that the target language does not and vice-versa. You may have to translate a collective noun with a plural noun in your language, or you may need to translate a plural noun with a collective noun in your language.

Subject-verb agreement. Different languages or dialects may have different rules about using singular or plural verbs with collective nouns. Examples (from Wikipedia):

a singular noun with a singular verb: The team *is* in the dressing room.

a singular noun with a plural verb which is correct in British, but not American, English: The team *are* fighting among themselves. The team *have* finished the project.

Pronoun agreement. Similar to the previous, care needs to be taken to use the correct pronoun plurality and possibly gender or noun class to agree with the number/gender/class of the noun used. See the biblical examples below.

Clarity of referent. Especially if there is a mismatch in your translation between the verb and noun or pronoun concerning any of the factors above, readers may be confused about who or what is being referenced.

Examples from the Bible

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

The word in bold is written in singular form in both Hebrew and English, but it refers to a group of warriors that fight together.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

The word in bold is singular and refers to a group of sheep.

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

Note in this example that the noun is singular but the pronoun is plural. This may or may not be allowed or natural in your language.

Do not let **your heart** be troubled. **You** believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1 ULT)

In this verse, the words translated “your” and “you” are plural, referring to many people. The word “heart” is singular in form, but it refers to all of their hearts as a group.

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

The word **hair** is singular, but it refers to many hairs, not just one.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

Here, “Israel” is singular, but means “the Israelites” by metonymy.

Translation Strategies

If your language has a collective (singular) noun that refers to the same group as referenced by the collective noun in the source text, then translate the word using that term. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.
- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.
- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.
- (4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the Israelites** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the Israelites** go.”

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

And he shall take the **hairs** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **them** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

And Joab and all the **army men who were** with him arrived

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **people of the crowd were** coming to him, and he was teaching **them**.

- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

and though the **group of sheep** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls.

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go." (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the people of Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the people of Israel** go."

(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Now this John had his clothing from the **hairs** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (Matthew 3:4a ULT)

Now this John had his clothing from the **hair** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that {is} in **the heavens** above, or that {is} in the earth beneath, or that {is} in **the waters** under the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:8 ULT)

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that is in **heaven** above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in **the water** under the earth.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:26](#)

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.

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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.**

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Referenced in: [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 1:28](#); [Genesis 6:20](#); [Genesis 9:1](#); [Genesis 18:21](#); [Genesis 30:41](#)

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — “I did Y because I wanted X to happen.” But usually it is looking backward — “X happened, and so I did Y.” Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are “because,” “so,” “therefore,” and “for.” Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a [Verse Bridge](#).

Examples From OBS and the Bible

The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
(Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
(Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

“Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
- (2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
- (3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

- (1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

- (1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.
- (2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.
- (3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

Since he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

- (1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.
- (2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.
- (3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

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Referenced in: [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 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 4:8](#); [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.

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Referenced in: [Genesis 8:8](#); [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 6:9](#); [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 25:11](#); [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.

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](#))

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!**'

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 “**useless**.” Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as “lack” or “reject,” or even “fight” or “evil.”

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)

And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **unpunished**. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. The Spanish sentence, “No vi a nadie,” literally says “I did not see no one.” It has both the word ‘no’ next to the verb and ‘nadie,’ which means “no one.” The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, “I did not see anyone.”
- In some languages, a double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” means, “He is somewhat intelligent.”
- In some languages, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is very intelligent.” In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called [litotes](#).

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

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.

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν
Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

...ἰῶτα 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 ellipsis^[^1] occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**
(Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[^1]: English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

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:

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](#))

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:16](#); [Genesis 14:23](#); [Genesis 18:28](#); [Genesis 18:29](#); [Genesis 18:30](#); [Genesis 18:31](#); [Genesis 18:32](#); [Genesis 21:23](#)

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 31:49](#); [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 3:5](#); [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 19:1](#); [Genesis 22:5](#); [Genesis 22:6](#); [Genesis 22:8](#); [Genesis 24:50](#); [Genesis 24:56](#); [Genesis 31:6](#); [Genesis 31:50](#); [Genesis 33:4](#); [Genesis 33:7](#); [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](#)

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

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

This page answers the question: *What are generic noun phrases and how can I translate them?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife; the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.

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

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

(2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain."

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain"

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain."

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Genesis 4:3](#); [Genesis 4:22](#); [Genesis 5:2](#)

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 14:17](#); [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.

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](#))

... 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

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 20:18](#); [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 2:13](#); [Genesis 2:14](#); [Genesis 2:15](#); [Genesis 2:19](#); [Genesis 3:20](#); [Genesis 4:1](#); [Genesis 4:16](#); [Genesis 4:22](#); [Genesis 5:2](#); [Genesis 5:3](#); [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 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 26:33](#); [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 35:8](#); [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 41:51](#); [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 4:24](#); [Genesis 14:23](#); [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 2:5](#); [Genesis 2:21](#); [Genesis 2:24](#); [Genesis 3:5](#); [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 3:8](#); [Genesis 3:19](#); [Genesis 4:5](#); [Genesis 4:12](#); [Genesis 4:14](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 4:19](#); [Genesis 4:20](#); [Genesis 4:26](#); [Genesis 5:22](#); [Genesis 5:29](#); [Genesis 5:32](#); [Genesis 6:3](#); [Genesis 6:5](#); [Genesis 6:6](#); [Genesis 6:7](#); [Genesis 6:8](#); [Genesis 6:9](#); [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 13:10](#); [Genesis 14:5](#); [Genesis 14:15](#); [Genesis 14:17](#); [Genesis 14:20](#); [Genesis 15:2](#); [Genesis 15:4](#); [Genesis 15:12](#); [Genesis 15:18](#); [Genesis 16:4](#); [Genesis 16:6](#); [Genesis 16:9](#); [Genesis 16:16](#); [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 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)

Imperatives that function as good results

An imperative sentence can also describe a desirable result. In Proverbs 3:3-4, several imperatives give instructions, then the final imperative describes the good outcome of following those instructions.

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you; tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and **find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man!
(Proverbs 3:3-4 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.”

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you; tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, **and find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man! (Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you; tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, **then you will find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man!

(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.”

”

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.

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](#))

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.

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.

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

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

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Order of Events ([UTA PDF](#))

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

Examples From the Bible

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase “And it happened that” in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

And it happened that in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way. His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word “then” shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**.
This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
- (2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
- (3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
- (4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**.
This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.

One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.

As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him ... (Mark 2:14a ULT)

As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as “another time,” or “someone.”

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase “after that” can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.

After that, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.

Again he began to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone’s house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.

Another time Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.

Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language’s way of showing that it is a summary.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)

Now this is what happened when Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.

This part tells about what happened when the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Now this is what happened when Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come.**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Introduction of New and Old Participants ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [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, “nevěstka” 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 4:8](#); [Genesis 4:9](#); [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 Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

Description

Some languages have ways of saying things that are natural for them but sound strange when translated into Other Languages. One of the reasons for this is that some languages say things explicitly that some Other Languages would leave as implicit information.

This page answers the question: *What can I do if some of the explicit information seems confusing, unnatural, or unnecessary in our language?*

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

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information ([UTA PDF](#))

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

If you translate all of the explicit information from the source language into the explicit information in the target language, it could sound foreign, unnatural, or perhaps even unintelligent if the target language would not make that information explicit. Instead, it is best to leave that kind of information implicit in the target language.

Examples from the Bible

And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower **to burn it with fire**. (Judges 9:52 ESV)

In Biblical Hebrew, it is normal to start most sentences with a conjunction such as “and” to show the connection between sentences. In English, it is not natural to do so, it is quite tiresome for the English reader, and it gives the impression that the author is uneducated. In English, it is best to leave the idea of connection between sentences implicit in most cases and not translate the conjunction explicitly.

In Biblical Hebrew, it is normal to say that something was burned with fire. In English, the idea of fire is included in the action of burning, and so it is unnatural to state both ideas explicitly. It is enough to say that something was burned and leave the idea of fire implicit.

But the centurion **answered and said**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” (Matthew 8:8a ULT)

In the biblical languages, it was normal to introduce direct speech with two verbs of speaking. One verb indicated the action, and the other introduced the words of the speaker. English speakers do not do this, so it is very unnatural and confusing to use two verbs. For the English speaker, the idea of speaking is included in the idea of answering. Using two verbs in English implies two separate speeches, rather than just one. So in English, it is better to use only one verb of speaking.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the explicit information of the source language sounds natural in the target language, then translate it as explicit information.
- (2) If the explicit information does not sound natural in the target language or seems unnecessary or confusing, leave the explicit information implicit. Only do this if the reader can understand this information from the context. You can test this by asking the reader a question about the passage.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the explicit information of the source language sounds natural in the target language, then translate it as explicit information.

- There would be no change to the text using this strategy, so no examples are given here.

(2) If the explicit information does not sound natural in the target language or seems unnecessary or confusing, make the explicit information implicit. Only do this if the reader can understand this information from the context. You can test this by asking the reader a question about the passage.

And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower **to burn it with fire**. (Judges 9:52 ESV)

Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and he approached the door of the tower **to burn it**. (Or) ... **to set it on fire**.

In English, it is clear that the action of this verse follows the action of the previous verse without the use of the connector “and” at the beginning, so it was omitted. Also, the words “with fire” were left out, because this information is communicated implicitly by the word “burn.” An alternative translation for “to burn it” is “to set it on fire.” It is not natural in English to use both “burn” and “fire,” so the English translator should choose only one of them. You can test if the readers understood the implicit information by asking, “How would the door burn?” If they knew it was by fire, then they have understood the implicit information. Or, if you chose the second option, you could ask, “What happens to a door that is set on fire?” If the readers answer, “It burns,” then they have understood the implicit information.

But the centurion **answered and said**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” (Matthew 8:8a ULT)

The centurion **answered**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof”

In English, the information that the centurion responded by speaking is included in the verb “answered,” so the verb “said” can be left implicit. You can test if the readers understood the implicit information by asking, “How did the centurion answer?” If they knew it was by speaking, then they have understood the implicit information.

He opened his mouth and taught them, saying, (Matthew 5:2 ULT)

He began to teach them, saying, (Or) He taught them, saying,

In English, it would be very strange to include the information that Jesus opened his mouth when he spoke. That information is included in the verbs “taught” and “saying,” so that phrase can be omitted and that information left implicit. However, “he opened his mouth” is an idiom that indicates the beginning of a speech, so that information may be included, or it may also be left implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

When to Keep Information Implicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Genesis 1:22](#); [Genesis 1:26](#); [Genesis 2:19](#); [Genesis 2:20](#); [Genesis 3:8](#); [Genesis 6:7](#)

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 1:29](#); [Genesis 1:31](#); [Genesis 3:22](#); [Genesis 4:14](#); [Genesis 6:13](#); [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 24:60](#); [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](#)

Oath Formulas

An oath is a solemn promise that someone makes to another person to do something or to solemnly testify that something is true. The oath includes the idea that a bad thing will happen if the person making the oath does not do the thing promised or if what the person says is not true.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate oath formulas into my language?*

Description

There are two types of oath in the Bible. We can call the first type a "Promise" oath, and the second type a "Truth" oath.

Promise Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is promising to do something. As a guarantee that the person taking the oath will do what he promises, the person calls on God to witness the oath and to punish him severely if he does not do the thing promised. A complete Promise oath has four parts, but some of them are often left unspoken and only implied: 1. Calling on God to witness the oath and judge the person making it 2. Making the promise (may be implied as the opposite of the violation) 3. Telling what would be a violation of the oath (may be implied as the opposite of the promise) 4. Saying what punishment God would do if the person violates the oath (often implied)

Truth Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is affirming that what he is saying is true, and he guarantees that it is true by naming the life of God. Sometimes the person will not name God directly but will instead name something holy that is associated with God, such as the temple. In some situations, a person might name a revered person, such as a king. The implication is that if the person's statement proves to be false, that person will lose any relationship to God or to the revered person. These oaths have three parts, but the third part is implied and not stated: 1. Naming something holy, usually the life of God or of someone who is revered. 2. Making the statement. 3. Implied: The speaker and hearers of the oath understand that the speaker forfeits his relationship to God or to the revered person if his statement is false.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

People in some cultures may not be familiar with the practice of taking oaths, and so they may not understand what the people in the Bible are doing. In many languages, people would not take an oath the way that people did in the Bible, and so they might not recognize that the person is taking an oath. In the Old Testament, people often did not speak one or more parts of the oath, leaving those parts implied. The part that was most often left unspoken was the part that would tell what would happen if they break the oath. People believed that spoken words have power, and that speaking the part about punishment might cause the punishment to happen, so they often left that part to be understood silently. Because of these things, people might think that the person in the Bible is not making a real oath or they may not understand what the verse is talking about at all.

Examples From the Bible

Promise Oath

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

In the verse above, Abram describes a symbolic action (raising his hand to Yahweh) to signal that he is taking an oath and calling on Yahweh as witness and judge. He says what would violate his oath (thus promising to do the opposite). Then he leaves out the part that would describe how Yahweh would punish him if he fails to do what he is promising.

May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Ruth calls on Yahweh and includes the part about Yahweh punishing her, says what the violation would be (thus promising to do the opposite), but does not say what the punishment would be.

And Saul said, "Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan." (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

Saul takes an oath that Jonathan will die, but does not specifically say whom God would punish, what the punishment would be, or what the person would do that would violate the oath and bring about God's punishment.

Truth Oath

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step!" (1 Samuel 20:3)

Here David uses a truth oath to convince Jonathan that Saul does indeed want to kill David. David says this because Jonathan had been trying to assure David that he had nothing to fear from Saul. But Jonathan knows that David holds both Yahweh's and Jonathan's life as sacred, and so this oath convinces Jonathan that David truly believes what he is saying.

The life of your soul, my lord, I {am} the woman having stationed herself with you in this {place} to pray to Yahweh. (1 Samuel 1:26 ULT)

Hannah is speaking to the priest Eli. She demonstrates that she holds the priest's life as sacred by swearing by it that what she is saying is true.

And Elijah said, "The life of Yahweh of armies, before whom I stand, that I will appear before him today." (1 Kings 18:15 ULT)

Elijah uses this oath to convince Obadiah to announce his arrival to Ahab. Obadiah knows that Elijah would never break his relationship to Yahweh.

Combination oath

The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

Joseph is speaking to his brothers as an Egyptian official, and so he swears by the life of Pharaoh rather than by the life of the God of the Hebrews. Joseph combines the two types of oaths here by using a conditional "if" statement (part 3 of the "Promise" oath). He leaves unstated the "then" part of the oath which would be either a punishment from Pharaoh (as with a Promise oath) or a breaking of relationship with Pharaoh (as with a "Truth" oath) if this conditional statement proves true.

Translation Strategies

If people who speak your language would recognize the oath as it is in the ULT, consider translating it in its current form. If not, consider using the following strategies.

- (1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.
- (2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.
- (3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **and ask him to punish me severely** if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

And Saul said, "Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan." (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

And Saul said, "May God **punish me severely** and may he add **even more punishment if I do not kill you**, for dying you will die, Jonathan."

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **I swear by** Yahweh's life and **by** the life of yourself that **it is true that** between me and death is like a step!

The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

I swear by the life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here, **may Pharaoh punish me severely**.

- (2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.

May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Then Ruth called on Yahweh to enforce her promise: "May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you."

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

Then David made a statement to Jonathan to convince him that he truly believed that he was in danger: "But indeed, **I forfeit my relationship to** Yahweh and **to you** yourself **if it is not true** that between me and death is like a step!"

- (3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"I solemnly swear before Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **that I will not take** from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or from anything that {belongs} to you, **so help me God**, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

May Yahweh **strike me dead right where I stand** if death separates between me and between you.

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **before** Yahweh and **before you** yourself, **I swear** that between me and death is like a step!

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 14:22](#); [Genesis 21:23](#)

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.

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](#))

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)

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 14:23](#); [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 describes 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. Abraham also uses a word translated as "please" to make his request more polite.

■ Then he brought him outside and said, "**Please** look at the heavens and count the stars..." (Genesis 15:5)

In the above example, God is speaking to Abram, inviting him to look at the stars. He also uses the word translated as "please." God has no need to be polite, but this communicates respect for Abram.

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

| **"Please** look at the heavens and count the stars..." (Genesis 15:5)

"Look up at the heavens, **if you will**, and count the stars..."

| **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 1:27](#); [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 3:15; Genesis 3:16; Genesis 3:22; Genesis 4:2; 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 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 30:39; Genesis 31:21; Genesis 31:49; Genesis 32:2; Genesis 32:25; 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 40:7; Genesis 41:6; Genesis 41:36; 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 50:23

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 4:1; 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 15:13; 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 19:7; 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 24:19; 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 24:57; Genesis 25:22; Genesis 25:23; Genesis 25:30; Genesis 25:31; Genesis 25:32; Genesis 26:2; Genesis 26:7; Genesis 26:9; Genesis 26:10; Genesis 26:16; 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 27:24; Genesis 27:25; Genesis 27:26; Genesis 27:31; Genesis 27:32; 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 29:4; Genesis 29:5; Genesis 29:6; Genesis 29:7; Genesis 29:8; Genesis 29:14; Genesis 29:15; Genesis 29:18; Genesis 29:26; Genesis 29:34; Genesis 30:1; Genesis 30:3; Genesis 30:6; 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 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 35:1; Genesis 35:10; Genesis 35:11; Genesis
37:10; Genesis 37:17; Genesis 37:21; Genesis 37:22; Genesis 37:30; Genesis 38:18; 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 42:12; Genesis 42:13; Genesis 42:14; Genesis 42:28; Genesis
42:37; Genesis 42:38; Genesis 43:3; Genesis 43:20; Genesis 43:29; Genesis 44:4; Genesis 44:7; Genesis 44:15;
Genesis 44:16; Genesis 44:17; Genesis 44:20; Genesis 45:17; 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 48:3; Genesis 48:5; 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](#)

Reduplication

This is a placeholder for an article to be written about reduplication in the biblical text, such as infinitive-absolute + indicative or other repeated words.

This page answers the question: *What is reduplication?*

Description

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Examples From the Bible

Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deut 2:31 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

"

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:16](#)

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 3:13; 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 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 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 1:1](#); [Genesis 1:6](#); [Genesis 1:8](#); [Genesis 2:12](#); [Genesis 3:7](#); [Genesis 3:24](#); [Genesis 4:2](#); [Genesis 4:15](#); [Genesis 4:20](#); [Genesis 4:21](#); [Genesis 6:2](#); [Genesis 6:14](#); [Genesis 8:7](#); [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 28:12](#); [Genesis 29:2](#); [Genesis 30:14](#); [Genesis 30:37](#); [Genesis 31:15](#); [Genesis 31:19](#); [Genesis 33:19](#); [Genesis 34:12](#); [Genesis 35:4](#); [Genesis 37:3](#); [Genesis 37:20](#); [Genesis 37:25](#); [Genesis 37:34](#); [Genesis 37:35](#); [Genesis 38:18](#); [Genesis 41:42](#); [Genesis 42:38](#); [Genesis 43:11](#); [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](#)

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

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

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

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Translation Principles

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

Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

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

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

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.” “Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
(Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

”

Referenced in: [Genesis 3:23](#)

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